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Educators praise testing service

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February 26, 2009

WESTVILLE – School administrators had unanimous praise Wednesday for the online testing service that Westville schools began using this school year. In 2008, Westville school board members approved a one-year agreement with the North West Evaluation Association of Lake Oswego, Ore., to provide online testing to kindergarten-through-10th-grade students three times per school year to gauge their understanding and abilities in math and reading.

Students are tested for about an hour on each of the subjects.

Superintendent Jim Owens said that unlike the basic feedback given by ISAT and PSAE tests, the Measures of Academic Progress program tells teachers specifically where students' learning needs are. And the teachers have the test results in 24 hours, Owens said, as compared with the five-month wait for districts to get the results of the standardized state tests.

Westville High School Principal Guy Goodlove said his teachers tell him they are receiving useful information from the testing results.

Westville Junior High School Principal Greg Lewis said such test results can track an individual student's progress, or the progress of an entire class.

"It makes it easier for teachers to know who needs help in certain areas," Lewis said.

Judith Giacoma Elementary Principal Melinda Pollock said that when parents ask their children's teachers how they can improve their grades, the testing results show areas where the students need help.

"It is truly an awesome assessment tool," Pollock said.

Owens also praised the program.

"I would like to see the district continue to use this service," he said. "It allows us to be prescriptive in dealing with the students. We can find their academic strengths and weaknesses, and make adjustments accordingly."

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