

North Star High School best in Somerset County in academic results

By VICKI ROCK vickir@dailyamerican.com | Posted: Wednesday, November 4, 2015 10:52 pm

North Star High School had Somerset County's highest overall School Performance Profile score and Shade-Central City had the lowest in results released Wednesday.

A high school's School Performance Profile score relies heavily on state assessment scores, but also includes college readiness tests, industry standards-based assessments, and graduation, promotion and attendance rates. Schools may get extra points for students who earned advanced scores on the state, industry, advance placement and international baccalaureate exams. All Somerset County high schools fell into either the category of 60-69.9 or 70-79.9, with none under 60 and none over 80. The scores are based on a 100-point scale.

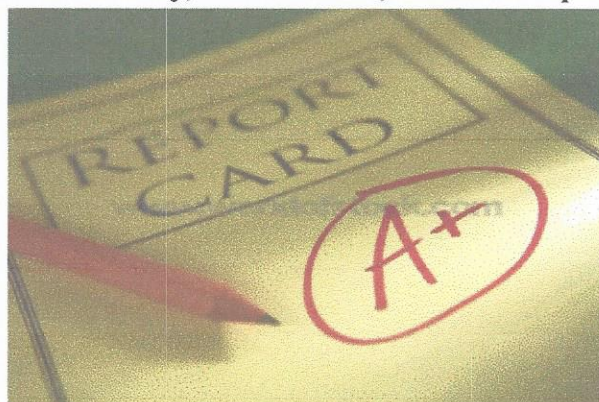
The Department of Education also released results for the high school Keystone Exams given in algebra, literature and biology. Those scores are "banked," meaning if a student has taken a Keystone Exam prior to 11th grade, the score will show up in their 11th grade year. A student may have taken a Keystone Exam more than once; however, only the highest score is used.

North Star High School's score of 79.6 just missed being in a higher category. That includes Keystone scores of 78.72 proficient or advanced in algebra, 88.30 in literature and 70.21 in biology. The district improved from last year's total of 73.7.

Superintendent Louis Lepley said he isn't surprised that the high school did so well because of the great staff. Lepley was principal at North Star High School before he became superintendent.

"I had the opportunity to work with the staff first hand, and I know that they bring hard work and dedication to the table every day," he said. "Just leaving the building, and the great staff, made me sad. I am proud of everyone — staff and students — for these results."

Shade-Central City High School had a score of 61.1 in the most recent results, down from 62 last year. That includes Keystone scores of 67.57 proficient or advanced in algebra, 76.32 in literature and



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Submitted graphic

35.14 in biology. Superintendent John Krupper could not be reached for comment on Wednesday.

Elementary and middle schools do not have a School Performance Profile this year under a one-year pause granted by the U.S. Department of Education. That is because last year was the first year that the state assessment was aligned to the more rigorous Pennsylvania Core Standards.

Matthew Stem, deputy secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, said in a conference call with reporters that statewide Keystone Exam scores in algebra are almost identical to the previous year's scores. There was an increase in biology scores and a slight decrease in literature scores.

"One thing we are looking at more closely is making it a more effective tool," he said. "We are looking at more holistic ways of evaluating achievement instead of heavily weighing so much on one test."

Results from the other high schools, with last year's scores in parenthesis, are: Berlin Brothersvalley 68.7 (59.1); Conemaugh Township 69.3 (69.7); Meyersdale 74.3 (70.4); Rockwood 78.8 (80.7); Salisbury-Elk Lick 62.0 (64.0); Shanksville-Stonycreek 68.4 (61.3); Somerset 70.8 (76.3); Turkeyfoot Valley 71.5 (71.3); and Windber 75.9 (80.1). Somerset County high schools' academic performance data are attached to the online version of this article at www.dailyamerican.com.