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Districts review OCCT results

LACK OF FUNDING CITED AS CONTRIBUTOR TO LOW SCORES

Area school districts drew mixed results with scores released last week by the Oklahoma State Department of Education for third-graders taking the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test.

But at least one Washington County school district official points to a lack of funding as a contributor to low scores.

Copan and Caney Valley public school districts drew a comparatively high number of students performing "unsatisfactorily" on the state-issued test, when compared with Bartlesville and Dewey districts.

Caney Valley Public School District Superintendent Rick Peters said he is "disappointed" in the testing results

after 30.5 percent of CVPSD's third-graders scored "unsatisfactorily" on the OCCT.

"We have high expectations, so we're disappointed with the results," Peters said Monday. "We're going to dig deep into the data and our standards and work toward change for moving forward."

Peters said he believed a majority of the students who scored unsatisfactorily on the test are English-language learners (ELL) or special education students.

"This test was not created in the best interest for young

children," Peters said. "We want the kids to have a high level of success ... All kids don't learn to read at the same time; they're all on different levels."

"This test was created as a one-shoe-fits-all ... type of test, and that's not the case with reading and learning."

Peters said funding cuts are partially to blame.

"The students are suffering the consequences for legislation not doing the right thing (with the test)," he said. "We copycatted Florida's test, but you know what? We didn't

copycat their money. In fact, we cut money from our reading program last year.

"People are being heard today about rethinking this test."

Copan scores showed 43.3 percent of its students scoring proficient, with 31.3 percent scoring unsatisfactorily and two students scoring limited knowledge.

"It's really frustrating," said Copan Elementary Principal Chris Tanner. "Some of the kids missed passing by

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Bronze unveiled

Kumar Krishnan, president and CEO of Service & Manufacturing Corp. and Service & Technology Corp., speaks to a crowd gathered Monday afternoon at the SMC facility for the unveiling of an original 7-foot wingspan bronze eagle (see inset), the creation of area artist John Free of Bronze Horse Foundry in Pawhuska. Standing to Krishnan's left are SMC Manager Jerry Ruddick, U.S. Congressman Jim Bridenstine and K. Vasudaven, company founder and chairman. Bridenstine did the honors of unveiling the bronze eagle, which has long been a symbol used by the company. Following the unveiling ceremony, local citizens and dignitaries were given tours of the SMC facility located just west of the Bartlesville Municipal Airport.

Bill on reading proficiency passed by Oklahoma House

By Randy Ellis
The Oklahoman
(MCT)

A bill that would give parents and educators the joint ability to promote a student who fails the third-grade reading test was approved by the state House of Representatives Monday and sent to the governor.

The House vote was 89-6.

Linda Hampton, president of the Oklahoma Education Association, praised the vote on House Bill 2625.

"As an educator, parent and grandmother, I realize the value of local control and a parent's voice in the education process — this bill allows for both," Hampton said. "Today I witnessed what I consider to be the first step in

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Doubt cast on grading teachers by student performance

By Lyndsey Layton
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — In the first large-scale analysis of new systems that evaluate teachers based partly on student test scores, two researchers found little or no correlation between quality teaching and the appraisals teachers received.

The study, published Tuesday in Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Educational

Research Association, is the latest in a growing body of research that has cast doubt on whether it is possible for states to use empirical data in identifying good and bad teachers.

"The concern is that these state tests and these measures of evaluating teachers don't really seem to be associated with the things we think of as defining good teaching," said Morgan Polikoff, an assistant professor of education at the

Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. He worked on the analysis with Andrew Porter, dean and professor of education at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

The number of states using teacher-evaluation systems based in part on student test scores has surged during the past five years. Many states and school districts are using the evaluation systems to make personnel deci-

sions about hirings, firings and compensation.

The rapid adoption has been propelled by the Obama administration, which made the teacher-evaluation systems a requirement for any state that wanted to compete for Race to the Top grant money or receive a waiver from the most onerous demands of No Child Left Behind, the 2002 federal education law.

Thirty-five states and the District of Columbia require

student achievement to be a "significant" or the "most significant" factor in teacher evaluations. Just 10 states do not require student test scores to be used in teacher evaluations.

Most states are using "value-added models" — or VAMs — which are statistical algorithms designed to figure out how much teachers contribute to their students' learning, holding constant factors such as demographics.

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Skull found near Skiatook 'historic'

By Tim Hudson
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A human skull found in Washington County near Skiatook has been determined to be "historic." Washington County Sheriff's Office officials said this week.

"Preliminary results with the Oklahoma State Medical Examiner's Office indicates the found skull off Highway 11 in Washington County as historic," Sheriff Rick Silver said in a press release issued late Monday.

Silver told the Examiner-Enterprise that the department was contacted May 6 by an individual who had been looking for scrap material

on private property north of 186th Street on State Highway 11 near Skiatook.

"He found what looked to be a human skull," Silver said last week. "He took the skull and went to Skiatook Police Department, who in turn contacted us."

According to information released this week, at this point it is unknown if the skull belonged to a male or female.

Investigators have been focusing on the area where the skull was found to search for other bones.

"The (nearby) creek often floods and the area that the skull was found in is sometimes under water," Silver

"He found what looked to be a human skull. He took the skull and went to Skiatook Police ..."

— Rick Silver
Sheriff, WCSO

said. "Another possibility was that an animal could have found it and brought it to the area."

Silver said investigators are also trying to find out if there are any old known family or Native American graves within the area.

Keystone vote dies along with energy efficiency bill

By Sean Cockerham
McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The chances for a Senate vote to approve the Keystone pipeline died on Monday along with an energy efficiency bill, victims of Congress' inability to do anything regarding energy policy.

The Senate, paralyzed by partisan bickering, has not been able to pass a major energy bill since 2007, and it now appears unlikely to do so before the

November election.

Senate Majority Harry Reid, D-Nev., had agreed to schedule a vote on forcing President Barack Obama to approve the controversial Keystone XL pipeline from the Canadian oil sands to the U.S. Gulf Coast, a key issue in election races around the country. But Reid said he would only allow that vote if the Republicans agreed to the modest energy efficiency bill, which

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