

## Falls City Schools Show Improvement in Latest State Assessment Report

(KTNC) - The Nebraska State Department of Education released the annual State of the Schools report last week. The report included results of the state standardized tests and the Nebraska Performance Accountability System, which ranks public schools in the state on three criteria – status, improvement, and growth.

Statewide, most school districts saw improvement in their reading and math test scores. Falls City Schools Superintendent Tim Heckenlively says District 56 students showed improvement in assessment scores. (play audio :60 “back in 2010.”)

The state writing scores for grades four, eight, and 11, which were initially released last May, show nearly 75-percent of Falls City Public School students met or exceeded the state writing assessment, compared to a state average of 72-percent. Nearly 77-percent of Falls City students met or exceeded the state science standards, compared to a state average of 67-percent.

Falls City ranks among the top schools in the state in reading performance – with Falls City High 20th out of 227 districts and the elementary in the top half of schools in the state. Math and science are also strengths for Falls City Public Schools.

A primary area Heckenlively says the district needs to improve is its middle level achievement. (play audio :35 “at the middle level.”)

Heckenlively says District 56 will also focus on improving its graduation rate, which he says is lower than what they would like. Part of that is due to the new method the state uses to calculate a school’s graduation rate – based on a four-year cohort method. (play audio :49)

Heckenlively says many school districts are frustrated that it counts against their graduation rate when a student moves into the district without enough credits to be able to graduate on time. He says Falls City’s Life Skills Special Education Program – where many students don’t graduate until they’re 21 years old – also affects the graduation rate. The Falls City Public School graduation rate was at 79.45-percent based on the four-year cohort method.

Heckenlively says, overall, District 56 is pleased with the results of the recent assessment report.