



Rio Grande High Makes Leap in Reading Proficiency, But Misses AYP

By Andrea Schoellkopf Journal Staff Writer

Nearly half of the 346 Rio Grande High juniors who took the Standards Based Assessment tested proficient in reading this year, up from only 21 percent last year.

It was the largest jump in the district, although it wasn't enough for the South Valley school to meet Adequate Yearly Progress.

"When Rio Grande High School can improve (that much) in reading and still not make AYP, they are not a failing school," Albuquerque Public Schools Superintendent Winston Brooks told a group of South Valley community members earlier this week.

For the team at Rio Grande, it was the culmination of several years of hard work that more than doubled the goal of a 10 percent improvement.

"This is absolutely not an aberration," said instructional coach Judy Stewart Vidal, who last year helped organize a reading program in which students always had a book of their choice to read, with accompanying discussions and papers.

The entire school, she said, understood that reading was the focus, with new paperbacks purchased for the classrooms, book clubs, prizes and the principal talking about his current book over the intercom.

While the 11th-graders were the only ones tested, she expects to see similar results with last year's ninth- and 10th-graders because it was a schoolwide effort.

Among the other bench marks: former English-Language Learners showed a 62 percent proficiency in reading, compared with 50 percent districtwide and 47 percent in the state.

Now, it's a matter of translating that success to math, which stayed roughly the same with 22 percent proficient. Principal Al Sanchez said, "It just means to me we need more work."

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