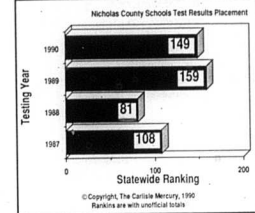
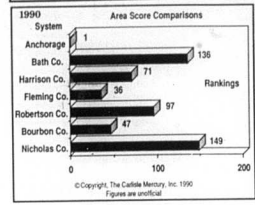


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Gilbert: "Scores will go up"

By Tim Jones
 The Carlisle Mercury Staff

CARLISLE — Superintendent Ceibert Gilbert, in a Friday afternoon interview, said Nicholas County is a good school system and will probably see an increase in test scores in the future.

Gilbert was referring to the scores published in the Lexington Herald-Leader. The scores, which were the results of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills given at the end of the last school year, show Nicholas County moving up but still placing 149 out of 179 state school systems.

Gilbert expressed reservations about the use of a standardized test to determine a school's ability to instruct. "We should use the tests to improve ourselves and not as a tool to compare ourselves with other districts. The test was not intended to be used in this fashion."

Gilbert said he felt standardized tests do not always reflect a child's ability and should not be used to group students in ability groups.

"I have a problem with ability grouping anyway," the first year chief of Nicholas County schools said. "I'm not sure it's the best way to educate children."

Gilbert felt the CTBS specifically has problems when used to compare school districts and the abilities of the children in those districts.

"The CTBS only deals with the third, fifth, seventh and 10th grades. I do not feel this

gives an accurate reading of an entire school system's students," he said.

"I also believe there is too much emphasis placed on the test in the Department of Education and by the media," Gilbert stated, "but we have to take the tests to meet various federal programs and guidelines."

The CTBS will not be taken in the future in the state of Kentucky will be replaced by a more sophisticated performance based test, Gilbert believes. Nicholas County students will score better on these types of tests in the coming years.

"I believe closing the elementary school into classrooms will help testing and I think most people would agree on that point," Gilbert said.

"Once we get the building program in place and classes rooms closed I think you will see an increase in test scores and I also believe the test scores would go up if the seventh grader were in a middle school situation," Gilbert noted.

The superintendent also said the Education Reform Act passed by the 1990 Kentucky Legislature would also help Nicholas County increase test scores.

"We'll get people interested in education," Gilbert said, "and this means involved parents and other people who will have a say in the way schools are run."

The additional money the act will provide will also help Nicholas County, according to the school chief. "More money will help us find the best qualified people and this district is interested in bringing the best people to the job of teaching."

Gilbert also believes an innovative approach to education, such as envisioned in the act, will help Nicholas County improve academics, instruction and testing.

"We can now take the experience of the forties, fifties, sixties, seventies and eighties and tie them together to figure out the best possible method of education. What we have to remember is many of today's business leaders and other

leaders were educated in one room schoolhouses where the faster and older children helped the younger ones. We can learn from this."

Gilbert said he felt test scores are only one way to judge a school system.

"We can look at other ways of determining if Nicholas County is successful. I think we're successful because we have one of the highest attendance rates in Kentucky. If parents weren't convinced their children were being educated they wouldn't be making us sure that they're going to school," he said.

The first year superintendent also gave high marks to Nicholas County students.

"I believe the children in Nicholas County are as well-mannered and well behaved as any students in the nation," Gilbert said, "and they come from good homes and good families. These things, along with the school system, will make them successful people in the future."



Ceibert Gilbert Gerald Hammons Greg Reid

There's few surprises

By Tim Jones
 The Carlisle Mercury Staff

CARLISLE — An examination of scores on the last Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills completed in Nicholas County generally considered to be an educational doomsday, scored higher than the national average.

A second surprise was the strong showing of many rural Western Kentucky county school systems.

Of the top scoring 25 school systems in Kentucky, 15 were wealthy, independent school districts and two were suburban county systems (Franklin and Oldham). The other seven were rural county systems in far western Kentucky.

Ballard County and Hickman County placed 11th and 12th and first and second among county school systems in the state. Lyon County came in at 18, Callaway, Carlisle and Trigg counties placed 21, 22 and 23 respectively.

McCracken County, which contains Paducah and is less rural than the other six counties, placed 24th on the test score list.

The most surprising aspect of Western Kentucky's strong showing are the systems they outperformed, namely the wealthier, more cosmopolitan, suburban districts like Fayette, Jefferson, Warren, Davess, Campbell, Kenton and Boone Counties.

Ken Traut, director of unit assessment at the Kentucky Department of Education, felt the western Kentucky schools had a financial advantage over other schools, especially those in Eastern Kentucky.

"Some districts in Eastern Kentucky have 85 percent of their children on free lunch programs," Traut said, "which means 88 percent of them come from families at or near the poverty level."

"I think Western Kentucky generally has lower poverty rates and lower unemployment rates," Traut continued, although Hickman County, with thirty-nine percent of their children on free lunch is not exactly a wealthy county.

Watkins' office earns good auditor's report

CARLISLE — State auditor Bob Babbage has released the audit of the office of Nicholas Circuit Court Clerk Sally Watkins for the fiscal year which ended June 30, 1989.

The report shows that the total receipts for the office during the fiscal year was \$179,223 and the total disbursements were \$178,297.

The report also shows that Watkins' investment fund earned \$1,364 in interest income during the period audited.

The report notes that since the implementation of the Judicial Amendment in 1976, the fiscal responsibility of the Circuit Court Clerk has been to account for assets received by the clerk for and disbursed

Nicholas scores improve

By Tim Jones
 The Carlisle Mercury Staff

CARLISLE — The results of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills were released last week and show Nicholas County moving up ten places in the Lexington Herald-Leader's ranking of the state's school systems based on test scores.

The CTBS, developed by McGraw Hill, a California based publishing company, tests students in 19 different areas. These areas include such diverse topics as reading skills, study skills, reference skills, library skills, spelling, math, English and social studies.

Results on the CTBS are reported in statistical terms and dealt with equivalents as opposed to percentages. A score of 50 is a median, meaning half of the students who took the test in the 1989 national sample scored above a 50 and half below a 50. A score of 55, for example, equals a test score about 60 percent.

The results of the test are based on the scores of students in the third, fifth, seventh and 10th grades. Nicholas County school administration officials indicated all students in Nicholas County take the test, with the exception of outgoing seniors.

Nicholas County scored above the national average on the test with a 50.6. According to the Herald-Leader, this put the county system at 149 in the state, up ten places from last year.

Scores broken down by

Council discusses benefits

By Kara Reed
 The Carlisle City Council

CARLISLE — The Carlisle City Council discussed possible insurance benefits for city employees during its Monday night meeting.

The council is now in the process of reviewing life insurance policies for city employees and a cafeteria plan which would affect the payroll of employees.

The cafeteria plan was presented by representatives from American Family Life Assurance Company.

Don Allen, agent of the company, explained the plan will allow employees to deduct insurance premiums, child care and other benefits, from their paychecks before taxes are taken out, making their actual gross pay smaller.

Taxes would then be smaller because gross pay would be lower, Allen said.

Allen said the city would benefit also because it would have to pay less F.I.C.A. taxes.

He said the city would also pay less in taxes because the gross pay of city employees

would be less.

Allen said his company would provide the city with the plan, called Flex One, free of charge.

He said his company hopes this will increase the amount of coverage his company provides for Carlisle city employees since those employees would have more actual take home pay. He said this additional money could be used for increased insurance coverage.

"Hopefully it will increase

Board fixes tax proposals

By Tim Jones
 The Carlisle Mercury Staff

CARLISLE — Nicholas County Board of Education finalized the tax proposals required under the new Kentucky educational laws in its Monday night meeting.

The first step to finalize taxation was the board's approval of increasing the tax rate on motor vehicles to 5.42 rate. The tax will be levied beginning June 1, 1991.

Allen said the city would create an actual dollar increase of \$10 on a \$180,000 vehicle, according to Nicholas County Superintendent Ceibert Gilbert.

Board member John Cleaver opposed the increase in the motor vehicle tax.

In another measure dealing with tax rates the board approved the funding level necessary for Nicholas County schools to qualify for the Tier I financial program which has established under the education reform act.

The state sets the level of Tier I and the counties are responsible for generating the level of money so they can qualify for state funds. In order for Nicholas County to qualify for state funds, the board passed a motion setting the general property tax rate at 38 cents, the facility support tax at 62 cents and the motor vehicle tax at 5.42 cents, as mentioned above.

Board member John Cleaver also voted against this measure.

Superintendent Ceibert Gilbert said he thought the tax rates were a "little high" because of collecting processes, but said a large majority of school districts are in the same situation because the state is insisting that local governments generate a certain amount of funds before coming to the state for money.

The board also heard from transportation chief Rob Lane, who gave a report concerning the readiness of the bus fleet and future needs.

Lane reported the purchase

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