Test Scores Better Than Last Year

"Smith Local School District students scored higher this year on their annual achievement tests than they did last year," said Superintendent John Jefferson at a special news conference held at Smith Local High School.

According to a State Department of Education report delivered to Jefferson, high school and junior high students scored an average of two to three percentile points higher than last year. Elementary students scored three to five percentile points higher.

"We can't be exactly sure why our students are doing better," Jefferson said. "But we think the increase is related to the changes we have made in our reading and math courses."

For the past year, teachers and curriculum specialists in the district have been revising the math and reading courses. These revisions were requested by the school board in April, 1987, in response to parents' concerns about reading and math achievement.

Jefferson offered another explanation for the improved scores. "During the last few years, students and teachers may not have been taking the tests as seriously as we think they deserve to be taken. This year, however, attendance on the test days was higher than it's been during the past five years," he said.

Dr. Mary Whit, district director of curriculum and instruction, added, "Our research staff monitored the testing. We made unannounced visits to five percent of the classes when testing occurred and found that correct testing procedures were followed closely."

Students will receive their individual scores at the end of May with brochures that explain the results to parents. Students are being asked to take the brochures home to their parents.

The tests were given to students during mid-April. High school students took the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (reading, math, science and social studies). Elementary and junior high school students took the California Achievement Tests (reading and mathematics).