

## **2003 CSAP & ACT SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

In 2003, the seventh year of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and the third year of the Colorado ACT program, 1,192,449 CSAP and 49,157 ACT assessments were administered to Colorado public school students. Results from the 2003 CSAP and ACT assessments are displayed in the accompanying tables.

### **Background**

Initiated in 1997 with two exams, the CSAP has grown to include twenty-seven exams in 2003. (Results for 25 tests are released here and results for the third grade reading tests in English and in Spanish were released in May 2003.) A new Spanish language-writing test for third grade was administered for the first time in 2003.

The expansion of the testing program provided an opportunity to develop tools for measuring student growth, such as aligned performance level definitions and a single score scale for each content area. These tools provide the ability to monitor student growth using both a student's year-to-year performance levels and year-to-year scale scores. Each time CSAP was administered grade-by-grade in a content area; a one-time alignment was made to the performance level cut-scores in that content area. For reading, the alignment occurred in 2001 and for writing and mathematics the alignment occurred in 2002. For valid comparisons of CSAP results over time, past data must be aligned to the new performance levels. All data presented in this press release has already been aligned, which means: *1) all data for all years reported here are comparable and 2) data reported here are different from data reported by CDE prior to the performance level alignment described above.* (Please see accompanying explanation entitled How Performance Alignment Works and Why Every State Does It.)

### **General Results: CSAP 2003**

This summary provides a brief overview of performance for the following groups: all students, gender, ethnic, special programs status (i.e., special education and Title I), schools rated “Unsatisfactory” on the School Accountability Reports and schools with high poverty levels.

#### **Reading Performance:**

Reading performance was assessed in grades four through ten in both 2002 and 2003. The results reveal an increase in percentage ‘Proficient and Advanced’ from 2002 to 2003 for all grades assessed except ninth grade, which showed a small decline. Over the past seven years (1997 to 2003), the percentage of fourth graders in the Proficient and Advanced categories has increased eight percentage points.

Reading performance of fourth graders on the Spanish CSAP also improved between 2002 and 2003. In 2003, the percentage of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories on the reading assessment was 44%; in 2002, this percentage was 39%.

Writing performance was assessed in grades three through ten in both 2002 and 2003. The writing results show substantial positive changes in the Proficient and Advanced category in third and sixth grades, slight changes in fourth, fifth, seventh, ninth and tenth grades, and a slight decline in eighth grade. Examining performance improvement over a longer period of time (1997 – 2003) shows that the percentage of fourth grade students in the Proficient and Advanced categories has increased ten percentage points during these seven years.

Performance of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories on the fourth grade Spanish writing assessment improved four percentage points between 2002 and 2003. For the first time in 2003, a Spanish writing assessment was

also given in third grade. Fifty-one percent of third graders taking the Spanish writing assessment in 2003 were in the Proficient and Advanced categories.

Of the six grades at which mathematics performance was assessed in both 2002 and 2003, results reveal improvement in both fifth and seventh grades. There were small declines at sixth and eighth grades, and unchanged results in ninth and tenth grades. Examining eighth grade mathematics achievement during the past four years reveals a three percentage-point increase in the percentage of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories.

Science performance in the eighth grade decreased one percentage point between 2002 and 2003. Examining three years of eighth grade science performance results shows a four percentage-point increase in the students in the Proficient and Advanced categories.

### **Results by Gender**

On the tests given in both 2002 and 2003, particularly math and science, the percentage of male and female students in the Proficient and Advanced levels increased, yet gender differences persist. For example, the percentage of male and female students in the Proficient and Advanced performance levels increased on the grade three writing assessment; males increased from 47% to 52% and females increased from 55% to 63%. Consistent with results from prior years, females outperformed males on the reading and writing assessments while males outperformed females on the science assessment.

The results for the math assessments in 2003 reveal a pattern that is somewhat different from previous years. There were equal percentages of males and females in the Proficient and Advanced categories in grades five, six and seven, while females had a slightly higher percentage in the Proficient and Advanced categories in grade eight. Males had higher percentages in the Proficient and Advanced categories in grades nine and ten.

## **Results by Ethnic Group**

On the majority of tests given in both 2002 and 2003 the percentage of students of all ethnicities in the Proficient and Advanced levels has increased. For example, the percentage of students in the Proficient and Advanced performance levels increased on the grade 6 writing assessment for each ethnic group; Black students increased by 7%, Hispanic and Native American students increased by 5%, White students increased by 4% and Asian students increased by 1%.

The percentage of White, and Hispanic students in the Proficient and Advanced performance levels increased on 15 of 25 tests administered in both 2002 and 2003. The percentage of Black students in the Proficient and Advanced performance levels increased on 14 of 25 tests, the percentage of Asian students in the Proficient and Advanced levels increased on 19 of 25 tests, and the percentage of Native American students in the Proficient and Advanced levels increased on 11 of 25 tests administered in both 2002 and 2003.

## **Results for Title I Students and Students with Individual Education Programs**

The percentage of Title I students in the Proficient and Advanced categories increased on eleven of the twenty five assessments administered in both 2002 and 2003. For example, the percentage of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories on the third grade reading assessment increased from 32% in 2002 to 39% in 2003.

The percentage of students on Individual Education Plans (IEP) in the Proficient and Advanced categories increased on thirteen of the twenty five assessments administered in both 2002 and 2003. For example, the percentage of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories on the tenth grade reading assessment increased from 14% in 2002 to 18% in 2003.

## **Results for Schools Rated “Unsatisfactory” on the School Accountability Reports**

For schools rated “Unsatisfactory” on the 2001 School Accountability Report, the percentages of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories increased on the grade 4 writing, grade 5 math, grade 8 math, grade 8 science, grade 9 and 10 reading, grade 10 writing and grade 4 Spanish reading & writing assessments. For example, schools with an unsatisfactory rating in 2001 increased the percentage of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories on the fifth grade math test by three percentage points from 2002 to 2003.

## **Results for Schools with High Poverty Levels**

For schools with extremely high levels of poverty, *which are defined here as schools where 70% of students or more qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch*, the percentage of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories increased from 2002 to 2003 on the English reading assessments in grades 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10. On the English writing assessments, the percentage increased in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10. There was improvement also on the Spanish Writing assessment in grade 4. On the mathematics assessments, the percentage increased in grades 5, 7, and 10. For example, the percentage of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories on the grade 5 writing assessment increased a little more than three percentage points from 2002 (22.9%) to 2003 (26.1%).

## **General Results: ACT 2003**

The ACT is administered to all eleventh grade students. There are four subtests on the ACT: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. In addition, there is a composite score based on the results for the four subtests. *This assessment does not have levels of proficiency, but provides a single score in each of the four content areas and an overall composite score.* These scores are averaged to provide scores at the state, district and school level.

When compared to the results for 2002, the 2003 statewide results showed improved scores in three of the four areas tested. There were increases in English, math, and reading with a very slight decline in the science reasoning. In terms of gender, females outperformed males in English and reading, while males outperformed females in math and science reasoning. Females and males had improved composite scores.

An examination of the results by ethnicity shows that Black, Native American and Mexican students improved slightly in math and reading, and remained at the same in English, and science reasoning. Native American and Mexican students also showed a slight improvement on the composite score. A group defined by Puerto Rican, Cuban or Hispanic background other than Mexican, showed improvement in all four content areas and on the composite score. White students improved in three content areas (English, math, and reading) and on the composite (English, math, and reading), and declined in one area (science reasoning).

## 2003 CSAP Highlights

- **Seventeen of twenty five tests show positive student gains. This is the highest level of growth experienced.**
- **For the fifth year in a row, disadvantaged students have made larger gains in achievement in third through seventh grade reading and writing than the state's average.**
- **60% of all 2002 “unsatisfactory rated” schools showed growth in the “proficient and advanced” reading scores, with 50% of the schools showing greater than seven percentage point gains in “proficient and advanced” reading scores**
- **Overall, Black and Hispanic students showed improvement in the “proficient and advanced” category over white students in reading in grades four through six; in writing Black students showed greater improvement than white students in grades three through six.**
- **Third grade Hispanics, made a 9% increase in the “proficient and advanced” category in writing on the English version of the CSAP**
- **Highest ever number of schools making 25% gain or above. Example: 70 elementary schools in writing. Thirty middle and ten high schools also in writing.**
- **A trend breaker in math is reflected in the equal number of males and females scoring in the “advanced and proficient” category in grades 5, 6, and 7. Gap also narrowing in grades 8, 9, and 10.**

**NOTICE!**

**2003 SCHOOL  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
REPORT RATINGS  
CANNOT BE  
CALCULATED USING  
THESE RESULTS!**

## **HOW PERFORMANCE ALIGNMENT WORKS AND WHY EVERY STATE DOES IT**

### **YEARLY TESTING**

With the passage of Senate Bill 186 in 2000, Colorado began the transition from one assessment per school level to every-grade assessments in reading, math, and writing. Because the performance levels for the original tests were set independently, they lacked continuity, a situation that was up to standard when the assessments were several grades apart, but not with every-grade assessments. In the spring of 2002, there was wide agreement by Colorado educators and policy makers that the *cut score levels had to be made consistent if the assessment results were to be useful for instructional improvement and school accreditation purposes.*

### **COLORADO EDUCATORS RECOMMENDED THE CHANGES**

Because aligned performance levels make the data much more usable for instruction and school and district accountability, Colorado educators were brought together to align performance levels across grades for reading, writing, and mathematics. The work of previous standard-setting groups (also consisting of Colorado educators) was honored in the alignment by using existing cut-scores to propose cut-scores for the new tests. Colorado educators then reacted to the proposed cut-scores, made appropriate modifications based on test content and the Colorado Model Content Standards and recommended new cut-scores. After review and approval of the process by the CSAP Technical Advisory Committee, the Colorado State Board of Education also approved the process and adopted the cut-scores that were recommended by the educators.

### **2001: READING PERFORMANCE LEVELS**

In **2001**, new reading assessments were introduced at grades 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10, now providing continuous reading assessments in grades 3 through grade 10. The existing performance expectations in reading were re-examined by teachers and modified to some extent, as described above. To maintain continuity, the reading modifications made in 2001 were not changed in 2002; they are now permanent.

### **2002: WRITING AND MATHEMATICS PERFORMANCE LEVELS**

In **2002**, new writing assessments were introduced at grades 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9, while new math assessments were introduced at grades 6, 7 and 9. As was the case in reading last year, this year's existing writing and math performance levels were re-examined by Colorado teachers, modified to some extent and are now permanent.

### **THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS**

The bottom line is that a continuous and reliable flow of performance thresholds exists among and between state assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics. This means that the data presented here can be used to measure progress from year-to-year. With aligned performance levels it is much easier to follow student cohorts across grades and monitor school effectiveness. This also means that the data presented in 2003 for previous years will differ from the original results released during those years.

Other states go through this as they, too, begin with three or four tests created by top teachers and assessment specialists and year-by-year, with different teachers and different grade level tests, adding new tests. Calibrating the cut scores so that each is in proportion with the new tests on line help classroom teachers move up in reasonable steps to the performance expectations in proportion to the other grade level assessments.

The adjustment helps educators follow cohorts of students across grades and compare test gains among and between each new grade level assessment.

The calibrated numbers will now reflect performance levels that are in sync across grade levels.

It is important to note that the **test content** has not been changed. The content of each test has been documented as well-aligned to the Colorado Model Content Standards.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Please contact the Student Assessment Unit at the Colorado Department of Education for further information (303-866-6664) or [delgado\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:delgado_m@cde.state.co.us).

**In the press release, past data for writing in grades 4, 7, and 10; and math in grades 5, 8, and 10 have been converted to the new 2003 performance level cut-scores.**

**In addition, both the original and the aligned results for these grades and subject areas are available on the web ([www.cde.state.co.us/index.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index.htm)), as are the conversion formulas and tables for reading, writing and mathematics ([www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/as\\_02contscaleR.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/as_02contscaleR.htm)).**