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**July 29, 2008**

**News Release**

***Mixed Results From 2008 Scores; Growth Model Data Reveals Challenges Too***

Statewide results from the 2008 Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) reveal a mixed picture, according to data released today by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). To view the complete CSAP data results, visit [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/csap/csap\\_summary.html](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/csap/csap_summary.html)

CDE also unveiled results from Colorado's Growth Model, a new tool that yields student, school and district comparisons based on longitudinal data. Statewide results were released today; district and school information will be available within a few weeks. To view a summary of 2008 statewide results from Colorado's Growth Model, visit [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/index\\_res\\_eval.html](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/index_res_eval.html)

The growth model, developed with funding through the Colorado State Legislature, provides educators with a way to understand how much growth a student made from one year to the next, with a common and consistent means of understanding each student's progress, regardless of their starting point.

Viewed at the state level, the growth model data show that 84 percent of students are on track to remain proficient in reading, 77 percent are on track to remain proficient in writing, and 66 percent are on track to remain proficient in math.

Among students currently rated unsatisfactory or partially proficient in reading, however, only 30 percent are growing at a rate that will lift

them to proficiency within three years. In writing, only 26 percent of students rated unsatisfactory or partially proficient are making sufficient progress to reach proficiency. In math, only 13 percent of students rated unsatisfactory or partially proficient are growing at a sufficient rate; the current rate of growth in achievement for all other students is not enough to make significant progress.

"Colorado's Growth Model provides a wealth of relevant information about student achievement and it will no doubt trigger meaningful conversations among teachers, principals and parents about the learning needs of every student," said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. "The combination of one-year results of 2008 CSAP data and the longer lens provided by the growth model confirm the challenges ahead.

"Over the last year, the department of education has begun the process of re-deploying its resources and expertise to serve and support school districts and that effort will be renewed with zeal and determination. We have many standout schools that are helping all students achieve at high levels and we need to continue to shine a light on their success and spread the word about strategies that work."

Commissioner Jones added that the growth model is not geared solely to shine light on under-performing students, schools and districts, but to assist in setting real and meaningful growth targets across the spectrum of achievement.

Under "Forward Thinking," the department's roadmap for reform, a number of initiatives are underway.

- An effort to design and implement a more consistent and comprehensive statewide system of support that helps schools and districts build the capacity to achieve student outcomes.
- Partnerships have been forged with six school districts to close achievement gaps associated with race and income and deliver customized resources to needy districts.
- The department's student support unit has embarked on a statewide effort to promote Response to Intervention, an approach that reaches low-performing students with intense, academic and individualized instruction.

- The department is assembling a team of content and curriculum experts in the areas of math, science, arts, social studies and closing the achievement gap, backed by \$450,000 from the Colorado State Legislature. The team will develop model curricula and assist with disseminating best practices.
- The department is nurturing creative, innovative and high-quality choice solutions that are capable of efficiently delivering results.

A complete report on the first year of implementation of *Forward Thinking* is posted online at

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/index\\_commiss.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_commiss.htm)

## **2008 CSAP Results**

The purpose of the CSAP is to measure student proficiency on the Colorado Model Content Standards in grades three through 10 in the content areas of reading, writing and mathematics, and in grades 5, 8 and 10 for science. The Colorado Model Content Standards are available on the CDE Web site at the following link:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/index\\_osa.html](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/index_osa.html)

Initiated in 1997 with two tests, the CSAP has grown to include 31 tests in 2008.

Details of note from the 2008 CSAP results:

- 98.9 percent of students took the CSAP in 2008.
- In all, nearly 1.6 million tests were given.
- In reading, four grades were up, albeit slightly in most cases, and two were down. Two grades were unchanged. Proficiency levels range from 65 percent proficient and advanced in seventh grade to 71 percent proficient and advanced in third grade.
- In writing, three grades were up, three grades were down. Two grades were unchanged. Proficiency levels range from 47 percent proficient and advanced in tenth grade to 60 percent proficient and advanced in sixth grade.
- In mathematics, four grades were up, two grades were down and two grades remained unchanged. Proficiency levels range

from 30 percent proficient and advanced in tenth grade to 70 percent proficient and advanced in third grade.

- In science, the data are not comparable from one year to the next because the Colorado State Board of Education adopted revised model content standards for science in 2007 and with it came new cut scores for determining proficiency levels, from advanced to unsatisfactory. The 2008 science results reveal that 44 percent of students were proficient and advanced in fifth grade, 46 percent in eighth grade and 47 percent in tenth grade.

### **Lectura and Escritura**

- In 2008, 59 percent of third-grade students scored in the proficient and advanced categories on the Spanish reading test *Lectura*. The results matched 2007. The number of third grade students taking the third grade *Lectura* declined by 83 students from 1,581 in 2007 to 1,498 in 2008.
- In 2008, 39 percent of fourth grade students scored in the proficient and advanced categories on *Lectura*; in 2007, this percentage was 35 percent. The number of fourth grade students taking the *Lectura* in 2008 declined from 269 in 2007 to 178 in 2008.
- The percentage of students in the proficient and advanced categories on the third grade Spanish writing test, *Escritura*, decreased by three percentage points, from 54 percent proficient and advanced to 51 percent, between 2007 and 2008. Performance on the fourth grade *Escritura* also decreased by eight percentage points—from 29 percent proficient and advanced to 21 percent.

It should be noted that the number of fourth grade students taking the *Lectura* and *Escritura* has declined from 1,288 students in 2000 to 178 students in 2008. The number of third grade students taking the *Lectura* and *Escritura* has shown less of a decline between 2000 (1,721 students) and 2008 (1,498 students).

### **Results by Ethnic Group**

#### **Reading**

- On the 2008 reading assessment, the percentage of white students in the proficient and advanced categories improved in

grades four, five and eight while the Asian and Pacific Islanders group improved in grades four, five, six, seven, eight and nine.

- The percentage of black and Hispanic students in the proficient and advanced categories improved in grades four, five, six, seven and eight.
- Both black students and Hispanic students declined only in grade ten.
- Native Americans improved in grades four, six, seven, eight and 10 and declined in grades five and nine. Performance remained the same in grade three.

Among all 802,639 students in all grades statewide, 61.5 percent are white, 27.9 percent of students are Hispanic, six percent are black, 3.4 percent are Asian and 1.2 percent are American Indian.

### Writing

- On the 2008 writing assessment, the percentage of black students in the proficient and advanced categories improved in grades four, five and eight.
- Hispanic students improved in grades four, five, eight and nine in writing and Native American students improved in grades four, five, eight and 10.
- The percentage of white students in the proficient and advanced categories improved in grades four, five and eight.
- The group defined as Asian and Pacific Islanders also improved in three grades four, five and eight.

### Mathematics

- The percentage of black students in the proficient and advanced categories improved in five grades three, five, eight, nine and 10 on the 2008 mathematics assessment. Hispanic students in the proficient and advanced categories improved in grades three, six, eight and nine.

- The Asian and Pacific Islander group improved in the proficient and advanced categories in grades three, five, six, eight and nine.
- White students in the proficient and advanced categories increased in grades five, eight and nine.
- Native American students improved in grades three, six and 10.

## Science

- The 2008 science results revealed the same general achievement gaps as earlier science results with white students and students in the group representing Asian and Pacific Islanders having the largest percentages in the proficient and advanced categories. As noted earlier, the science results are not comparable with 2007. The achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students was 38 percentage points in all three grades.

## **Title I Students and Students with Individual Education Plans**

- The percentage of Title I students in the proficient and advanced categories increased on 17 of the 24 English assessments administered in both 2007 and 2008 (excluding science). For example, the percentage of students in the proficient and advanced categories on the eighth grade reading assessment increased from 33 percent in 2007 to 41 percent in 2008.
- The percentage of students on Individual Education Plans (IEP) in the proficient and advanced categories increased on 12 of the 24 assessments administered in English in both 2007 and 2008 (excluding science). For example, the percentage of students in the proficient and advanced categories on the eighth grade reading assessment increased from 17 percent in 2007 to 20 percent in 2008.

## **ACT Results**

- Results on all individual subjects increased and the overall composite is 19.4, up .3 percentage points from 2007. Note: all juniors in Colorado are required to take this college-entrance

exam, given in April and May. This year, 51,490 students took ACT.

## **CSAPA**

The CSAP alternate assessment is administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities, about 4,800 students during the 2007-2008 school year. The fully revised CSAPA results show students are demonstrating what they know and are able to do based on the state adopted standards.

The revised CSAPA reflects a strongly held belief that all students can learn content knowledge.

## **Growth Model Results**

Colorado's Growth Model tells us the growth rate a student needs to reach proficiency within three years. The model will help educators answers the question of how much growth is enough for a student and allows CDE to summarize the percentage of students that are making enough growth to reach proficiency within three years.

In reading, 30 percent of students not yet proficient were demonstrating enough growth to reach proficiency. In writing, 25.7 percent of students not yet proficient were growing at a rate that would move them to a higher level of performance and in math only 13 percent of students were showing enough growth.

Among students that scored unsatisfactory in reading in 2007, 10.7 percent made enough growth in 2008 to catch up to proficiency within three years and 46.8 percent were on track to reach partially proficient.

In writing, six percent of students scoring unsatisfactory in reading in 2007 made enough growth in 2008 to catch up to proficiency and 58.4 percent were on track to reach partially proficient.

In math, three percent of students scoring unsatisfactory in 2007 made enough growth in 2008 to catch up to proficiency and 21.7 percent were on track to reach partially proficient.

## **Do Gaps Exist in Student Growth over Time?**

The statewide Median Growth Percentile is the 50th percentile, defined as typical growth, or “a year’s growth in a year’s time.”

By comparing the Median Growth Percentiles among different groups of students, we can determine if gaps exist in how quickly students are progressing. To close achievement gaps, we need to eliminate gaps in how children are growing and ensure that our neediest students grow faster—more than a year’s growth in a year’s time— so that they catch up. For the first time, Colorado can measure whether or not this is happening.

The 2008 statewide results show that we do have substantial gaps in the academic growth of our poor and minority students and boys in general. These gaps were most pronounced for poor and minority students in the early elementary grades and diminished somewhat in higher grades. Gaps in reading growth closed most quickly. Gaps in mathematics growth diminished most slowly and were more persistent than in reading and writing.

The largest poverty and minority growth gaps exist among students already scoring proficient or advanced, with small or no gaps among students scoring unsatisfactory.

The 2008 data show encouraging results among English Language Learners. Gaps in growth existed among Non-English Proficient (NEP) students compared to other students but closed and sometimes reversed among LEP (Limited English Proficiency) and FEP (Fluent English Proficiency) students.

Where substantial growth gaps existed, they were among LEP students already scoring proficient in reading and writing—consistent with the findings for poor and minority students. These were not present for FEP students.

This encouraging news does not imply that our students are growing enough but rather indicates that the troubling gaps in growth rates that we see based on poverty or minority status are generally not present based simply on English language mastery. This suggests that some of our efforts are paying off but that we have a long way to go.

### **Best Practices Guide**

In September, the department will release the first “Best Practices Guide,” focusing on the successful strategies in 39 schools in Colorado



that have outperformed their peers, particularly in closing achievement gaps associated with poverty and race.

The guide will be distributed statewide in connection with the first “Commissioner’s Cup” annual luncheon on Sept. 17. The best practices themes are drawn from a report released earlier this year, “Profiles of Success.” That independent study uncovered a series of promising practices including setting a culture of high expectations and accountability for students, using targeted assessments and intensive use of data to guide instruction, individual support for struggling students, active engagement of teachers in school leadership, and more.

“We know success for students begins with commitment from the entire school community, as solid as a promise, to bring every student to proficiency,” said Commissioner Jones. “It takes teamwork, retraining in some cases, and a relentless focus on the needs of students. It is our assurance from the department of education that school districts will feel every ounce of support and leadership that we can provide.”

**For more information, contact** Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications.

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