

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

Dr. Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner



EMBARGOED UNTIL:

10:00 a.m., Tuesday, July 15, 2008

Contact: Tom Murphy 860.713.6525

Grade 10 students make gains on 2008 Connecticut Academic Performance Test

Table 1: CAPT Performance for Percent At/Above Proficient and At/Above Goal

(HARTFORD, CONN.) – Connecticut’s Grade 10 public school students showed improved performance from last year in reading, writing, mathematics and science as measured by the 2008 Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT.)

	Mathematics		Science		Reading		Writing	
	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal
2007	77.3	45.3	81.4	44.5	79.7	45.5	82.3	53.0
2008	79.7	50.2	80.5	46.5	82.7	45.5	88.2	57.8
	+2.4	+4.9	-.9	+2.0	+3.0	-	+5.9	+4.8

“While we still have continuing academic challenges in our high schools, this year’s test results show solid growth in student performance. Our results show many schools closing persistent achievement gaps that have been so hard to overcome in this state,” said state Education Commissioner Dr. Mark K. McQuillan in releasing the 2008 results. “We still have far to go, but this is a step forward for our state.”

The State Education Department has begun work with 12 urban school districts that had been identified under the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law as in need of improvement. An audit of each school district revealed not only what each district does well, specifically, but also where it can improve.

“This year’s CAPT results underscore the progress that several of these school districts have been making, even as we begin our process to help them to improve,” said McQuillan. The Commissioner cited several districts, including Hartford and New Haven, that “already have effective strategies for school improvement in place and are beginning to realize a return on their investments. “We have waited for a long time to see progress in Hartford, for example, and this is a good start,” said Commissioner McQuillan.

“Improved student performance in several of our largest districts, as well as the continued strong performance of students in our state’s Technical High Schools, are helping to close achievement gaps in Connecticut; some of these gains are striking.” Black and also Hispanic students realized double digit gains in percentages of students performing at or above the proficient level in writing, for example, this year.

Table 2: CAPT Performance for Percent Below Basic and At Basic

	Mathematics		Science		Reading		Writing	
	% below Basic	% at Basic	% below Basic	% at Basic	% below Basic	% at Basic	% below Basic	% at Basic
2007	10.3	12.4	7.6	10.9	7.5	12.7	7.1	10.7
2008	8.4	12.0	9.4	10.1	7.4	10.0	3.8	8.0
	-1.9	-.4	+1.8	-.8	-.1	-2.7	-3.3	-2.7

“While these gains are genuinely encouraging, it is important to remember that far lower percentages of minority students perform at proficient and goal levels than white students,” the Commissioner pointed out.

Table 3 contains the percentages of students scoring at or above the goal level and at or above

the proficient level for each of the CAPT content tests, statewide and by demographic subgroups for 2007 and 2008.

Table 3: CAPT Performance by Year and Subgroup for Percent At/Above Proficient and Percent At/Above Goal

SUBGROUP	YEAR	Mathematics		Science		Reading		Writing	
		% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal
State	2007	77.3	45.3	81.4	44.5	79.7	45.5	82.3	53.0
	2008	79.7	50.2	80.5	46.5	82.7	45.5	88.2	57.8
Female	2007	76.6	43.3	82.0	41.9	84.4	52.7	87.8	61.9
	2008	78.7	47.0	80.5	43.1	86.2	50.6	92.2	65.2
Male	2007	77.9	47.3	80.8	47.0	75.1	38.6	76.8	44.3
	2008	80.6	53.3	80.5	49.8	79.2	40.6	84.2	50.5
Black	2007	43.4	10.5	52.1	10.4	54.4	15.6	63.1	24.2
	2008	49.5	14.6	52.9	13.0	60.9	15.1	75.0	28.8
Hispanic	2007	50.5	14.6	55.9	13.1	57.2	18.4	61.8	25.1
	2008	54.8	18.2	53.6	15.9	61.7	18.0	72.4	28.1
White	2007	88.4	57.1	91.6	56.5	88.6	56.0	89.4	63.3
	2008	90.3	63.1	91.2	58.9	91.0	56.7	93.7	69.1
Asian American	2007	86.7	60.3	87.8	55.5	86.0	56.1	87.8	61.6
	2008	89.2	66.3	88.6	58.3	89.8	57.5	93.9	70.3
American Indian	2007	63.3	29.4	75.2	30.3	64.5	27.3	75.0	35.2
	2008	72.7	29.7	76.6	28.9	70.4	27.2	83.7	43.4
F/R Lunch	2007	48.8	14.4	55.0	13.7	54.9	16.8	60.9	23.4
	2008	53.4	17.9	53.2	15.8	60.4	16.2	72.2	27.2
Full Price	2007	85.9	54.7	89.5	53.9	87.3	54.3	88.7	61.9
	2008	88.3	60.8	89.5	56.6	90.0	55.2	93.4	67.8
SPED	2007	39.1	12.8	47.9	14.8	40.4	11.3	40.5	12.8
	2008	43.5	14.7	47.1	14.4	47.3	11.4	53.8	16.3
Not SPED	2007	81.6	49.0	85.3	47.9	84.2	49.4	86.9	57.5
	2008	83.7	54.2	84.3	50.1	86.6	49.3	92.0	62.4
ELL	2007	34.1	9.4	32.6	5.4	37.7	7.8	41.3	8.9
	2008	35.3	8.4	25.1	3.9	38.0	6.0	46.9	8.7
Not ELL	2007	78.6	46.5	83.0	45.8	81.0	46.7	83.5	54.4
	2008	81.1	51.6	82.3	47.9	84.0	46.7	89.5	59.3

Connecticut Technical High Schools

The tables below show results for Grade 10 students in the Connecticut Technical High Schools (CTHSS) for 2007 and 2008. The percentage of students achieving at/above goal and at/above proficient levels improved in seven of eight categories. This builds on gains made during the last years of the previous CAPT generation.

Table 4: Percentage of CTHSS Students Scoring at/above Proficient

CTHSS	Math	Science	Reading	Writing
2007	74.8	80.3	77.3	79.6
2008	80.7	80.3	82.0	90
Gain (+)/Loss (-)	+5.9	No change	+4.7	+10.4

Table 5: Percentage of CTHSS Students Scoring at/above Goal

CTHSS	Math	Science	Reading	Writing
2007	27.6	26.0	27.1	31.8
2008	35.9	31.6	27.3	40.5
Gain/Loss	+8.3	+5.6	+2	+8.7

“CAPT scores also tell a remarkable story of very significant improvement in our state’s technical high schools each year since 2004. A new curriculum, improvements in instructional practice, the creation of language arts and mathematics labs and greater teamwork between academic and trade/technology teachers have made a tremendous difference in student academic performance. They are becoming a national model for school reform and I am very proud of their achievements. I commend the hard work of the faculty and administration in bringing about this change,” said the Commissioner.

2008 Statewide Performance Compared with 2007

This is the second administration of the Third Generation CAPT. The results from the March 2007 CAPT, which was the first administration of the Third Generation, provided a baseline for examining the achievement of Connecticut high school students in 2007 and 2008. CAPT has five levels of performance for each of the content area tests: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal and Advanced. Historically, the percentage of students scoring at or above the goal level has been an important indicator of the quality of public school education in Connecticut. Goal represents a challenging, yet reasonable level of performance for students to attain. The percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level on the CAPT is used to identify schools and districts that are making ‘adequate yearly progress’ (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. In 2008, 42,637 students took the CAPT, approximately 95 percent of Connecticut’s Grade 10 students.

Because 2007 was the first administration of the Third Generation CAPT, the data could not be compared with previous administrations. However, 2008 data is comparable to 2007 and does provide important insights into changes in student performance statewide and among various subgroups of students throughout the state. The following summarizes statewide changes in performance between 2007 and 2008, by content area:

Mathematics

- For mathematics, the percentage of Grade 10 students scoring at or above goal increased from 45.3 percent in 2007 to 50.2 percent in 2008, an increase of 4.9 percentage points. The percent of students scoring at or above the proficient level increased from 77.3 percent to 79.7 percent, an increase of 2.4 percentage points.

Science

- The percentage of Grade 10 students scoring at or above the goal level on the science portion of the CAPT increased from 44.5 percent in 2007 to 46.5 percent in 2008, for an increase of 2.0 percentage

points. The percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level declined from 81.4 percent to 80.5 percent, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points between 2007 and 2008.

Reading

- In 2008, 45.5 percent of Grade 10 students scored at or above goal in reading, about the same as the 46.5 percent scoring at or above goal in 2007, and 82.7 percent scored at or above proficient, reflecting an increase of 3.0 percentage points above the 2007 level of 79.7 percent.

Writing

- In 2008, Connecticut Grade 10 students exhibited their strongest performance in writing with 57.8 percent scoring at or above goal, an increase of 4.8 percentage points over 2007, and 88.2 percent scoring at or above proficient, up 5.9 percentage points from the 2007 level of 82.3 percent.

Subgroup Performance – Closing the Achievement Gaps

The following summarizes notable changes in student achievement between 2007 and 2008, by subgroup:

Gender

- Female students performed at higher levels than male students in both reading and writing in 2008. In reading, 50.6 percent of females scored at or above goal compared with 40.6 percent of male students, for a difference of 10 percentage points, which was lower than the 2007 difference of 14.1 percentage points. In writing, 65.2 percent of female students scored at or above goal compared with 50.5 percent of male students, for a difference of 14.7 percentage points, a decrease from the 2007 gap of 17.6 percentage points. The gap in performance decreased between 2007 and 2008, because the percentages of male students scoring at or above goal and at or above proficient increased more than their female peers.
- In mathematics, 53.3 percent of male students scored at or above goal compared with 47.0 percent of female students and 80.6 percent of male students scored at or above the proficient level compared with 78.7 percent of female students. The performance gap has increased slightly between 2007 and 2008 for both the goal and proficient levels. For science, 49.8 percent of male students performed at or above goal compared with 43.1 percent of female students. In addition, at least 80.5 percent of both male and female students scored at or above the proficient level. The gap for science declined slightly between 2007 and 2008.

Race

- Between 2007 and 2008, there was an increase in the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient for each racial/ethnic subgroup in mathematics, reading and writing. For science there was an increase for each subgroup, except Hispanic and white students.
- Approximately 60 percent of white and Asian American students scored at or above goal and approximately 90 percent scored at or above proficient on each CAPT content test. The percentages of students scoring at or above goal are considerably lower for black, Hispanic and American Indian students.
- While large gaps in performance persist among the racial/ethnic subgroups, the increase in the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient between 2007 and 2008 in mathematics, reading

and writing was greater for black, Hispanic and American Indian students than white and Asian American students.

- The percentage of students scoring at or above goal in mathematics and writing between 2007 and 2008 increased for all subgroups. Science performance increased for all subgroups, except American Indians, and reading performance was relatively unchanged across all subgroups.

Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Meals

A student's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals is a measure of the student's family's economic need or poverty.

- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above proficient in 2008 in mathematics, reading and writing increased from 2007 to 2008 and decreased slightly in science.
- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above goal in 2008 in mathematics, science and writing increased from 2007 to 2008 and declined slightly in reading. The percentages of non-disadvantaged students scoring at or above proficient and at or above goal increased in 2008 or remained stable when compared with 2007.
- Large gaps in performance between poor students and their more affluent classmates continue to persist.

Special Education

- The percentages of students receiving special education (SPED) services who scored at or above proficient and at or above goal in 2008 increased from 2007 for mathematics, reading and writing, but remained relatively unchanged for science.
- The scores for non-SPED students are considerably higher than those for SPED students, although the gaps at the proficient level have declined in mathematics, reading and writing.

English Language Learners

- Between 2007 and 2008, there was a small increase in the percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) scoring at or above proficient in mathematics, a modest increase in writing, virtually no change in reading and a decline in science.
- There were decreases between 2007 and 2008 in the percentages of ELL students scoring at or above the goal level, with less than 10 percent of ELL students meeting goal in any content area. For all four content areas, the gap in performance between Connecticut's ELL and non-ELL students increased between 2007 and 2008.

Percentages of Students Scoring At or Above Proficient and Goal in Multiple Content Areas

Table 6 compares student performance across multiple CAPT subsets, identifying the number and percent of Grade 10 students who met the state goal and proficient standards on none of the content subtests to all four content subtests in 2007 and 2008.

Table 6: Students At/Above the Goal and At/Above the Proficient Level on the Content Areas of Mathematics, Science, Reading and Writing

Performance at or Above		Tested	None of the Areas		Only One Area		Only Two Areas		Only Three Areas		All Four Areas	
		N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Goal	2007	42901	14650	34.1	5839	13.6	5522	12.9	5527	12.9	11363	26.5
	2008	42637	13478	31.6	5664	13.3	5277	12.4	5691	13.3	12527	29.4
Proficient	2007	42901	4587	10.7	2711	6.3	3111	7.3	4529	10.6	27963	65.2
	2008	42637	3486	8.2	2673	6.3	3101	7.3	4323	10.1	29054	68.1

In 2008, nearly 3 in 10 (29.4 percent) Grade 10 students taking the CAPT scored at or above goal on all four subtests, an increase of 2.9 percentage points from the previous year. In addition, nearly 7 in 10 students (68.1 percent) scored at or above proficient on all subtests in 2008, also a 2.9 percentage point increase. The percentage of students not meeting goal on any of the CAPT subtests in 2008 was 31.6 percent, down 2.5 percent from the previous year, while the percentage of students not meeting the proficient level was 8.2 percent, a decrease of 2.5 percentage points from 2007.

In reflecting on the implications of these data, Commissioner McQuillan offered these observations: “The 2008 CAPT results tell us a very compelling story. Our results show that Connecticut’s high school students can and will achieve at high levels when they are challenged, receive quality academic instruction, and are supported in their efforts to overcome learning gaps and weaknesses. Sustainable progress will only come when we make certain that our middle schools are a vital part of secondary school reform and draw upon the lessons learned from our technical high schools. Connecticut’s high schools are prepared for change and it is now time to move forward with comprehensive secondary school reform, statewide.”

-end-