
NEWS RELEASE

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NECAP results: Reading scores remain strong, high-school scores improve

Assessment results improved significantly this year in both mathematics and reading for Rhode Island high-school students, and results for students in grades 3 through 8 were stable, based on the latest assessment results.

Reading scores remain strong in all tested grade levels in Rhode Island, and scores have improved in both mathematics and reading over the past five years.

Based on the percentage of students who achieved proficiency or better, Rhode Island high-school students are tops among the NECAP states in reading and writing, and Rhode Island students in grades 3 through 8 scored higher than Maine students and only one point below Vermont students in reading.

The percentage of high-school students (grade 11) scoring “substantially below proficient” in mathematics improved significantly this year, down from 44 percent to 40 percent. These students will take the test again in their senior year. They must show improvement on the assessment, which is one of three graduation requirements. The others are completing coursework and a performance-based demonstration of proficiency, such as a senior project.

“I am pleased to see the overall improvement in high-school results and our strong performance in reading and writing across all grades,” said Governor Lincoln D. Chafee. “Although I am concerned about our mathematics scores statewide, I congratulate Rhode Island teachers and students for the improvements made this year and over the past five years.”

“As we move forward in our work toward transforming education in Rhode Island, our students continue to make progress, particularly at the high-school level,” said Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist. “We hope and expect to see continued improvement for all student groups in the coming years as we implement the new Common Core State Standards and as our accountability system focuses ever-greater attention on closing achievement gaps.”

The assessment results are from the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests, administered in October 2012 to all students in grades 3 through 8 plus grade 11 in Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont (and to all students in grades 3 through 8 in Maine). Governor Chafee and Commissioner Gist released the results at a news conference today at the State House.

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Overall, 72 percent of Rhode Island students in grades 3 through 8 and 79 percent of grade-11 students were proficient in reading

In mathematics, 61 percent of Rhode Island students in grades 3 through 8 but only 34 percent of grade-11 students were proficient in mathematics.

Though most student groups have made significant gains in achievement levels in both mathematics and reading over the last five years, achievement gaps have generally widened at most grade levels.

In other data that the Governor and the Commissioner released today, the Rhode Island four-year graduation rate remains unchanged at 77 percent, the five-year graduation rate improved by one percentage point, to 81 percent, and the six-year graduation rate improved by two points, also to 81 percent.

Representatives from several high schools that made significant improvements this year joined Governor Chafee and Commissioner Gist at today's news conference: Mt. Hope High School (Bristol Warren), North Providence High School, and Smithfield Senior High School. Commissioner Gist also recognized two high schools – Ponaganset High School (Foster-Glocester) and West Warwick Senior High School – for dramatically reducing the percentage of students scoring “substantially below proficient.”

Several elementary schools made significant gains this year, including the Agnes B. Hennessey School (East Providence), up 17 points in reading; the Suzanne M. Henseler Quidnesset Elementary School (North Kingstown) and the Stephen Olney School (North Providence), each up 16 points in mathematics; and the Vartan Gregorian Elementary School (Providence), up 14 points in reading.

Governor Chafee and Commissioner Gist recognized three middle schools for significant gains over the past four years in both mathematics and reading and continued improvement in 2012: Burrillville Middle Schools, North Smithfield Middle School, and Times2 Academy. They also recognized the Blackstone Academy, a charter public school, for improving by 41 points in mathematics over the past four years.

The grade-11 students who scored “substantially below proficient” in either mathematics or reading will take the NECAP assessment again in October and, if necessary, once again in the spring of their senior year. If their results improve, they will meet this graduation requirement, even if they do not attain the level of “partially proficient.” Students also have the opportunity to take an approved alternate test, to seek a waiver from this requirement, and to appeal decisions about graduation. To prepare students for graduation, Rhode Island Secondary School Regulations require that schools provide additional, intensive support and instruction to all students who fall below partially proficient on the NECAP assessments.

“It is important that we strike a balance and maintain high standards for our students,” Governor Chafee stated. “We all have the same goal: to see our students succeed in school, their careers, and well beyond.”

“With good instruction and with the will to succeed, our students can learn, improve, and earn a meaningful high-school diploma,” said Commissioner Gist. “I understand that our Diploma System demands a lot of our teachers, of our students, and of their families. I appreciate all that educators across Rhode Island are doing to prepare our students for success.”

For a copy of the RIDE report on the 2012 NECAP results and graduation rates, see:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment/NECAP.aspx>

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