

# NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

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Commissioner



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## Nearly Half Achieve Goal on Connecticut Academic Performance Test 8 in 10 Sophomores Are Proficient in Math, Reading, Writing, Science

(HARTFORD, CONN.) Nearly half of Connecticut’s high school sophomores scored at the Goal level – the state’s target for academic performance – in mathematics, science, reading and writing in 2007. Statewide, nearly 8 out of 10 scored at or above the Proficient level, the standard used to determine whether schools and districts are making adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

The scores are released as state leaders are considering a series of high school reforms designed to improve student achievement, increase graduation rates and provide for a smoother transition to higher education.

“High school reform is very much on our agenda this year,” said state education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan in releasing this year’s CAPT3 results. “We are looking at ways we can strengthen our high schools to engage and challenge our students more and to prepare them for the rigors of college or meaningful work in Connecticut’s technology-based economy.” The commissioner said the State Board of Education is developing recommendations for the Governor and General Assembly on how high schools must change, including new graduation requirements and new opportunities for learning.

The chart at right contains a summary of the percentages of students – statewide and by demographic subgroups – scoring at or above the Goal and Proficient levels in each of the four disciplines.

This year is the first administration of the “third generation” of the CAPT, which began in 1994 with the original version of the test, CAPT1. The test results provide important information about Grade 10 students’ knowledge of critical skills and concepts in mathematics, science, reading

	MATHEMATICS		SCIENCE		READING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES		WRITING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES	
	% At/above Goal	% At/Above Proficient	% At/above Goal	% At/Above Proficient	% At/above Goal	% At/Above Proficient	% At/above Goal	% At/Above Proficient
State	45	77	44	81	46	80	53	82
Male	47	78	47	81	39	75	44	77
Female	43	77	42	82	53	84	62	88
Black	11	43	10	52	16	54	24	63
Hispanic	15	50	13	56	18	57	25	62
White	57	88	56	92	56	89	63	89
Asian American	60	87	56	88	56	86	61	88
American Indian	29	63	30	75	27	65	35	75
F/R Meals	14	49	14	55	17	55	23	61
Full Price	55	86	54	90	54	87	62	89
Special Ed.	13	39	15	48	11	40	13	41
Not Special Ed.	49	82	48	85	49	84	57	87
ELL	9	34	5	33	8	38	9	41
Not ELL	46	79	46	83	47	81	54	84

and writing. Five levels of performance have been established for each of the four content areas: **Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal** and **Advanced**. Historically, Goal has been an important benchmark for judging the quality of education in Connecticut for more than a decade. It represents a challenging, yet reasonable, level of expectation for Connecticut students.

The third generation CAPT3 is a new test with changes in content, format, length and scoring from the previous generation. The expectations of what students should know and be able to do have increased from the previous generation, based on changes in the state's curriculum frameworks.

**In review of these results, it must be noted that these data cannot be compared with the first two versions of the test. True comparisons of CAPT3 results will only be possible after the second administration of the test in 2008.**

“Despite these caveats, the data does tell a story,” said Commissioner McQuillan.

“What is clearly evident,” Commissioner McQuillan noted, “is that we need to find more ways to move more students to Goal. While Proficiency may be a standard to satisfy the requirements of NCLB, our true standard must always be Goal, and in this context, significant achievement gaps persist – between males and females in reading and writing, in all disciplines between White students and their Black and Hispanic classmates, between middle income and poor students, between students who require special education programs and those who do not, and between students who have limited command of English and those whose primary language is English. These data spell out the work we have ahead of us.”

Following are highlights of what the scores reveal:

#### Gender

- In mathematics and science, the percentage of males scoring at or above the Goal level exceeded the percentage of females by 4 to 5 percentage points, while at the Proficient level the percentages were about the same for male and female students for the two disciplines.
- In reading and writing, female Grade 10 students outperformed male students by 14 percentage points and 18 percentage points, respectively at the Goal level. The disparity in performance was narrower at the Proficient level, with female outperforming males by 9 percentage points in reading and 11 percentage points in writing.

#### Race/Ethnicity

- White and Asian American students' performance is similar across disciplines, with about 60 percent of each group scoring at or above the Goal level and about 90 percent scoring at or above the Proficient level.
- Noticeably large gaps in performance persist between Grade 10 White students and Black and Hispanic students, the state's two largest minority subgroups. Fewer than 2 in 10 Black or Hispanic students scored at or above Goal in mathematics, science and reading, while slightly more than 2 in 10 did so in writing, compared to 6 in 10 White students for each discipline. The largest disparity, 46 percentage points between Black and White students, is at the Goal levels in mathematics and science. Only about half of the state's Black and Hispanic students met the proficiency standard compared with 9 out of 10 White students.

#### Poverty

- Eligibility for federally funded free or reduced-priced meals is a proxy for poverty. Between 14 and 23 percent of the students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals scored at the Goal level for each discipline,

compared with more than half of the students who were not eligible for subsidized meals. Proficiency statistics are similar to those of Black and Hispanic students. At Goal, the gap in performance between students who are able to pay the full price for a meal and those who cannot was 41 and 40 percentage points respectively in mathematics and science and 37 and 39 percentage points in reading and writing, respectively. At the Proficient level, the difference in performance was 37 percentage points in mathematics, 35 percentage points in science, 32 percentage points in reading and 28 percentage points in writing.

**Special Education**

- Non special education students performed at higher levels than 10<sup>th</sup> graders who received special education services, with about half of the non special education students in the state scoring at or above Goal for each of the four disciplines compared with 11 to 15 percent of the special education students. More than 80 percent of the non special education students scored at or above Proficient compared with between 39 and 48 percent of the special education population.

**English Language Learners**

- For English language learners (ELLs), less than 10 percent scored at or above the Goal level in each of the four disciplines compared with nearly half of Grade 10 non-ELL students. About 3 in 10 ELL students scored at or above Proficient in mathematics and science and 4 in 10 scored at or above Proficient in reading and writing, compared with 8 in 10 non-ELL students across the four disciplines. The largest gaps between ELL and non-ELL students exist at the Goal level in mathematics (45 points) and science (50 points).

**Retesting of Juniors and Seniors**

Students who did not achieve goal on any test are encouraged to retake the exams in their remaining years in high school. Between 4,500 and 6,900 juniors and seniors retook each subtest this year.

Following are the results for retest students on the 2007 CAPT:

2007 CAPT Retest Results	Math	Science	Reading	Writing
Grade 11 (N Tested)	6623	4248	5727	4898
Grade 11 (% At/Above Goal)	10.0	12.6	12.1	14.7
Grade 12 (N Tested)	294	249	247	207
Grade 12 (% At/Above Goal)	3.4	3.6	4.5	2.9

**CAPT3: A New Lens on Future Learning**

The results from the spring 2007 CAPT provide a new baseline for examining student achievement for Grade 10 students between 2007 and 2010. District and state reports include additional information for students, parents, teachers and administrators to help identify and address the educational needs of individual students, schools and districts.

For information on individual high school and district scores, go to [ctreports.com](http://ctreports.com).