



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FL students perform well on MCA-II

Scores on state math and reading tests increase again

FOREST LAKE, MINN. – Students from Forest Lake Area Schools once again scored above state percentages in both reading and math in nearly every grade level, based on Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II (MCA-II) test results issued yesterday by the Minnesota Department of Education.

Historically, Forest Lake students have generally scored better than the state percentages on the MCA tests, and this year was no different. Also, the percentage of students scoring proficient on the test has increased every year since the 2006-2007 school year.

Overall, both math and reading scores district-wide increased once again in 2010. In math, 71 percent of Forest Lake students were proficient, up from 69 percent last year, and in reading 76 percent were proficient, compared to 75 percent last year. Statewide, 66 percent of students were proficient in math and 72 percent in reading.

MCA-II math and reading tests are administered annually for students in grades 3-8. At the high school level, MCA-II math tests are taken only by 11th graders statewide, and the reading tests are taken by 10th graders only.

Students in 10th grade saw an increase in reading performance. This year, 85 percent of 10th graders were proficient on the reading exam compared to 80 percent in 2009. Statewide, scores increased by only 1 percent, from 74 percent in 2009 to 75 percent in 2010.

(MORE)

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In 2009, math scores rose considerably, as 11th graders in the district saw a 20-percent gain over the previous year – 48 percent proficient compared to 28 percent in 2008. Again this year, 48 percent of 11th graders were proficient. Statewide math results showed that students' scores in grade 11 increased by 8 percent from 2008 to 2009, and 2 percent from 2009 to 2010.

“We’re pleased that our students are continuing to perform well on both of these important tests, and that our math scores are continuing to rise,” said Forest Lake Area Schools Superintendent Linda Madsen. “We’re hopeful that with the recent improvements we’ve made district-wide in our literacy programs, reading scores will start to increase at a similar rate.”

Madsen explained that both the MCA-II and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) tests are used to evaluate overall student performance.

“We are continuing to improve on math and we’re committed to producing better results in reading literacy in the coming years,” Madsen said. “The MCA’s are part of our evaluation process in these areas, but the biggest impact of this test – in terms of how it affects us overall as a district – is how it affects our AYP status.”

AYP, or Adequate Yearly Progress, is the standard by which schools are measured according to the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. Schools and districts that don’t meet AYP requirements are put on what is known as the “needs improvement list” and could face financial consequences if they do not meet the minimum targets in every demographic category that the state measures over more than one year.

This year’s final AYP results are expected to be released by MDE some time in August.

The potential consequences for failure to make AYP could include district-funded transportation to other schools or district-funded tutoring programs, or even a full restructuring of a school. But only schools that receive Title I funding are subject to these penalties, and last year all of the Title I schools in the Forest Lake Area Schools system met the AYP requirements.

But Madsen explained that every year, the bar is raised and the targets become more difficult to achieve. Every year, fewer and fewer Minnesota schools are making AYP; and last year more than half of all schools in Minnesota projected to receive 2009-2010 Title I funding did not make it – 444 that did not make AYP, compared to 418 that did.

“We are happy that all of our Title I schools met the standards last year, but every year is different,” Madsen said. “In past years, even some of the most prestigious and highly regarded schools in the state have failed to make AYP at times. Even schools that are making progress often don’t make progress fast enough to keep pace with the AYP requirements. It’s basically a goal-post that keeps moving.”

Last year, high schools such as Edina, Eden Prairie and Richfield did not make AYP, and neither did their districts as a whole.

The goal established by No Child Left Behind is that by 2014 every child in America will reach proficiency in reading and math. So every year, schools are expected to reach higher and higher levels of performance.

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“To me, it would be amazing that any school in America would achieve 100 percent proficiency,” Madsen said. “If the law remains the same, by 2014 any school with even one student who does not achieve proficiency will be labeled a failing school, and I think that is unfortunate.”

Yearly MCA-II Proficiency Across All Grades

		Math Proficiency	Reading Proficiency
06-07	FLAS	62.18%	72.73%
	Statewide	60.62%	68.22%
07-08	FLAS	63.63%	73.53%
	Statewide	62.03%	70.70%
08-09	FLAS	68.55%	74.57%
	Statewide	63.86%	71.92%
09-10	FLAS	71.35%	75.54%
	Statewide	65.89%	72.34%