MEDIA RELEASE

2012 State test scores released: Graduation rate, MCT2 results on the rise

Jackson, Miss. – In the results released Wednesday by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), students across the state increased Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2) scores in every grade tested. The MCT2 is given to students in grades 3 through 8 in Language Arts and Mathematics. The MCT2 was first implemented in 2007-08 to assess the state’s more rigorous curriculum standards for language arts and mathematics. Districts also showed a two percentage point increase in graduation rates, rising to 73.7%. Dropout rates also dropped slightly to 16.7%.

“We are pleased with the progress in these assessment scores, but what the results also show is we still have work to be done to effectively educate our children,” said Dr. Lynn House, Interim State Superintendent of Education. “We will continue to ask more of our students with the implementation of Common Core State Standards. If these scores demonstrate anything, it’s that our students will continue to meet the challenges we are presenting them with each year.”

In 2011, fourth, fifth and sixth grade math scores all declined from the previous year. The 2012 MCT 2 assessments show not only increases in those grades but scores topping the mark set two years ago. Language Arts scores also increased across each grade with the seventh grade scores showing the largest increase at six points over the 2011 score.

“The increase in student performance as evidenced by these scores is a direct result of increased rigor in the classroom. Teachers are becoming more aware and better trained in challenging students by using the Common Core State Standards. Student performance should continue to increase as we implement this much more rigorous and complex curriculum for our students,” said James Mason, Director of Student Assessment.

In the Subject Area Testing Program 2(SATP2), scores show increases in English and Biology over the previous year with Algebra showing a decrease from 2011. English scores increased for the second year in a row. During the 2011-2012 school year, a new US History assessment was implemented. This new test represents the fourth SATP2 course conversion to more rigorous assessments based upon national standards. This new exam represents the most challenging of the four SATP2 exams based upon the difficulty of what students are expected to know and do. A new test for Biology was implemented in 2010-2011.
High school students are assessed with the Subject Area Testing Program 2 (SATP2) on four content areas: Algebra I, Biology I, English II (both a Multiple Choice Assessment and Writing Assessment) and U.S. History. Students must earn a passing score on each test to be eligible for graduation. The test results listed represent first-time test takers. Students generally have up to three opportunities each year to earn a passing score on the SATP2 during high school.

SATP results:

- Algebra 82% passing
- Biology 75% passing
- English 73% passing
- U.S. History 72% passing*(a revised, more rigorous test)

“The rise in the English scores is encouraging, but we will keep working to get all the scores up to where they should be,” said Dr. House.

The assessment results will help determine performance classifications for schools and districts using the accountability model. Schools will be classified from highest to lowest: A-F. The 2012 school and district performance classifications will be released September 14th once the State Board of Education approves the results.

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