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**Seventy five Percent of Minnesota
10th-graders Meet
New Graduation Reading Requirement
*Percent of Minnesota 10th-Graders Proficient
in Reading Increases Dramatically in 2008***

Roseville -- The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) announced today that 75 percent of Minnesota 10th-graders met the state's new, more rigorous, reading graduation requirement. MDE also announced that 71 percent of Minnesota 10th-graders are proficient on the Reading MCA-II, a nine percent increase from last year.

"These reading results show that if we increase rigor and we raise expectations, our students can and will rise up to meet the challenge," Minnesota Education Commissioner Alice Seagren said. "Minnesota students and educators deserve credit and praise for their outstanding effort."

Graduation Reading Requirement

Seventy five percent of Minnesota's 10th-grade students met the state's new, more rigorous, reading graduation requirement on the first attempt by earning a proficient score on MCA-II or by earning a passing score on the Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD). Multiple GRAD retest opportunities are available to students who did not meet the graduation requirement. Schools will provide remediation to those students prior to taking the GRAD retest online.

The GRAD replaces the state Basic Skills Test (BST) for students in eighth-grade in 2005-06 or later. Last year, ninth-graders took the Writing GRAD for the first time. This year, those students took the Reading GRAD as 10th-graders, and next year they will be taking the Math GRAD test as 11th-graders. In 1997, 59 percent of students met the graduation requirement on the first attempt when the Reading BST was first administered at its current level of rigor.

2008 Reading MCA-II Results

Results from the 2008 Reading MCA-II for 10th-graders increase dramatically in 2008, with 71 percent of students proficient, compared to 62 percent in 2007. More than 65,000 students took the reading assessment.

“The significant jump in this year’s Reading MCA-II scores can in large part be attributed to the fact that the graduation requirement was embedded into the MCA-II assessment, which provided extra incentive for students to take the assessment seriously,” Commissioner Seagren said.

(more)

MDE reprioritized scoring in order to get individual student results back to schools more quickly, to allow them to prepare options for students needing remediation over the summer prior to the multiple opportunities to retake the GRAD. As a result, MDE was able to release data sooner than originally scheduled.

Complete Reading and Math MCA-II data, including school and district data, is scheduled to be released on June 30, 2008. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results are scheduled to be released to the public August 5, 2008.

Reading Graduation Requirement

	Meeting Graduation Requirement
All Students	75
White	82
Black	41
Hispanic	48
Asian	63
American Indian	55
Free/Reduced Lunch	54
Students with Disabilities	33
English Language Learners	29

*Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners have additional ways to demonstrate that they have met the graduation requirements.

Reading MCA-II

	Percent Proficient 2007	Percent Proficient 2008	Percent Change
All Students	62	71	+9
White	69	78	+9
Black	26	36	+10
Hispanic	34	42	+8

Asian	48	58	+10
American Indian	36	48	+12
Free/Reduced Lunch	38	47	+9
Students with Disabilities	18	26	+8
English Language Learners	19	25	+6

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