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## **Minnesota Department of Education Announces Graduation Requirement Results**

*Department of Education also releases 10th-grade reading and 11th-grade math MCA-II results, both show improvement*

**Roseville --** The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) announced today that 57 percent of Minnesota 11<sup>th</sup>-graders met the state's new and more rigorous math graduation requirement on the first attempt. Additionally, 78 percent of Minnesota 10<sup>th</sup>-graders met the state's reading graduation requirement on the first attempt, a three percent increase from 2008.

MDE also announced that 42 percent of Minnesota 11<sup>th</sup>-graders scored proficient in the Math MCA-II, which is an eight percent increase from last year. Seventy-four percent of Minnesota 10<sup>th</sup>-graders are proficient on the Reading MCA-II, which is a three percent increase over last year.

"Like last year's reading results, this year's math results are another clear indication that if we raise expectations, more of our students will accept the challenge and meet those expectations," Minnesota Education Commissioner Alice Seagren said. "These results highlight the need for Minnesota to continue with its efforts to prepare every Minnesota student for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through greater academic rigor."

### **Reading, Math and Writing Graduation Requirements**

The graduation requirements are designed to ensure that students have the needed academic skills and knowledge before they graduate. This is the first year that Minnesota 11<sup>th</sup>-graders took the Math Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD), which is embedded in the 11<sup>th</sup>-grade Math MCA-II. Last year was the first year that Minnesota 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students took the more rigorous Reading GRAD, which is embedded in the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade Reading MCA-II.

Fifty-seven percent of Minnesota's 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students met the state's new more rigorous math requirement on the first attempt by earning a proficient score on MCA-II or by earning a passing score on the GRAD. Seventy-eight percent of Minnesota's 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students met the state's reading graduation requirement on the first attempt by earning a proficient score on MCA-II or by earning a passing score on the GRAD.

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Students must meet the math and reading graduation requirements in order to graduate. Multiple GRAD retest opportunities are available to students who did not meet the graduation requirement. Schools provide remediation to those students prior to taking the GRAD retest online. However, under legislation passed this session, for the next five years, students in 11<sup>th</sup>-grade who do not meet the math graduation requirement can still graduate if they:

- Complete all coursework and credits required for graduation.
- Participate in district-prescribed academic remediation in math.
- Participate in at least two retests of the math GRAD exam or pass the math GRAD exam, whichever happens first.

Under that new law, schools must also place a student's highest assessment score for Math MCA-II, Reading MCA-II, Writing GRAD, Math GRAD (if applicable), and Reading GRAD (if applicable) on a student's transcript.

MDE also announced that 89 percent of Minnesota 9<sup>th</sup>-graders met the writing graduation requirement by passing the Writing GRAD. Last year, 89 percent of Minnesota 9<sup>th</sup>-graders also passed the GRAD. The Writing GRAD assessment, which is not embedded into an MCA-II, is designed to measure whether or not a student has attained basic writing skills before graduation. Those skills include the ability to formulate and communicate a written message in English to an adult reader. Taking into account several factors, including composition, style, sentence formation, grammar, and mechanics and spelling, the assessments are graded as passing or not passing. Students who do not pass the Writing GRAD assessment will have opportunities to retest during statewide testing windows.

### **2009 Reading and Math MCA-II Results**

The MCA-IIs measure student performance on the Minnesota Academic Standards. Those standards define what students should know and be able to do in a particular grade and are developed in partnership with Minnesota educators. Students who meet or exceed standards on the MCA-II are considered proficient. This year, 42 percent of Minnesota 11<sup>th</sup>-graders were proficient in math on the MCA-II, which is up from 34 percent in 2008. While there continues to be an achievement gap, Math MCA-II scores for every subgroup of students increased.

This year, 74 percent of Minnesota 10<sup>th</sup>-graders were also proficient in reading on the MCA-II, which is up from 71 percent in 2008.

Complete Reading and Math MCA-II data, including school and district data, is scheduled to be released during the week of June 29. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results are scheduled to be released to the public in August.

"Minnesota must continue to prepare every student for success after high school and these results show that increased rigor and high expectations are key factors in moving closer to that goal," Commissioner Seagren said.

### **10th-Grade Reading Graduation Requirement and 11<sup>th</sup>-Grade Math Graduation Requirement**

	<b>Reading Meeting Graduation Requirement</b>	
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>All Students</b>	75	78
<b>White</b>	82	84
<b>Black</b>	41	48
<b>Hispanic</b>	48	52
<b>Asian</b>	63	62
<b>American Indian</b>	55	57
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	54	57
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	33	37
<b>English Language Learners</b>	29	31

	<b>Math Meeting Graduation Requirement</b>
	<b>2009</b>
<b>All Students</b>	57
<b>White</b>	63
<b>Black</b>	21
<b>Hispanic</b>	31
<b>Asian</b>	52
<b>American Indian</b>	30
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	34
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	14
<b>English Language Learners</b>	26

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### 9<sup>th</sup>-Grade Writing Graduation Requirement

	<b>Writing Meeting Graduation Requirement</b>	
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>All Students</b>	89	89
<b>White</b>	94	93
<b>Black</b>	69	72
<b>Hispanic</b>	74	75
<b>Asian</b>	81	83
<b>American Indian</b>	79	77
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	77	78
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	60	60
<b>English Language Learners</b>	56	57

### 10<sup>th</sup>-Grade Reading MCA–II

	<b>Percent Proficient 2008</b>	<b>Percent Proficient 2009</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>All Students</b>	71	74	+3
<b>White</b>	78	81	+3
<b>Black</b>	36	42	+6
<b>Hispanic</b>	42	47	+5
<b>Asian</b>	58	58	--
<b>American Indian</b>	48	50	+2
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	48	52	+4
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	26	31	+5
<b>English Language Learners</b>	23	27	+4

### 11<sup>th</sup>-Grade Math MCA–II

	<b>Percent Proficient 2008</b>	<b>Percent Proficient 2009</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
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<b>All Students</b>	34	42	+8
<b>White</b>	38	47	+9
<b>Black</b>	8	11	+3
<b>Hispanic</b>	14	17	+3
<b>Asian</b>	31	36	+5
<b>American Indian</b>	11	18	+7
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	16	20	+4
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	5	7	+2
<b>English Language Learners</b>	3	12	+9

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