



NEWS

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District 64 Reports Strong ISAT Scores for 2007

District 64 students performed extremely well again on the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) administered in March 2007, according to Larry Sorensen, Director of Technology Planning & Assessments. Mr. Sorensen reported to the Board of Education at its October 22 meeting that all District 64 schools also had made "Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)" goals established by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

"ISAT scores have remained very stable in math, reading and science when compared to the past year," Mr. Sorensen stated. He noted this was only the second year that a new ISAT assessment was used, making it difficult to compare performance over a long period. All students in grades 3-8 were assessed in reading and math, while students in grades 4 and 7 also took a science test. In addition, students in grades 5 and 8 took a writing ISAT for the first time in many years.

In math, 95% of District 64 students in grades 3-8 scored in the "meets or exceeds" categories, with every grade scoring at least 90% or above. In reading, 89% of students scored in the "meets or exceeds" groups, with every grade scoring at least 86% or above. And in science, 93% of students in grades 4 and 7 scored in the "meets or exceeds" categories, with both grades scoring at least 90% or above.

Turning to writing, Mr. Sorensen noted that a state writing assessment had last been administered in 2004, making this the first time grade 5 students had ever taken an ISAT writing test. 65% of District 64 fifth graders scored in the "meets or exceeds" category. The ISBE announced that state-wide, "meets or exceeds" scores for grade 5 are at 50%. ISBE also reminded districts that students wrote only a single composition, when they used to write two, so that only one writing sample was used for scoring. The ISBE urged districts to use the reintroduced writing ISAT scores as a "baseline" for comparison to future scores.

In contrast, grade 8 students had taken the test previously during third and fifth grade, and provided two compositions during the spring 2007 test. 79% of District 64 eighth graders scored in the "meets or exceeds" category. State-wide, meets or exceeds scores are at 63%. "Writing is a curricular area currently being reviewed in the District, and will be a focus for improvement moving forward," Mr. Sorensen noted.

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“Overall, ISAT data are used in a variety of ways to improve instruction and learning in our District,” Sorensen explained. Administrators, school Quality Improvement Teams, individual grade levels at schools and teachers meet to analyze results and plan for improvement strategies. ISAT information also is used to help make decisions on curriculum needs. “We also incorporate ISAT results into the District’s Educational Ends scorecard to show student progress,” Mr. Sorensen added.

ISAT student reports were sent to parents on October 11. Complete grade-level scores will be added in coming weeks to the District 64 Web site: www.d64.org.

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