



SEATTLE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

News Release

From Seattle Public Schools

For Immediate Release: August 30, 2007

**Contact: Patti Spencer, Communications Manager, (206) 252-0204; or
David Tucker, Media Relations, (206) 252-0203**

Academic gains made and sustained in reading, writing, math and science by Seattle elementary and middle school students

Recently released WASL scores indicate that gains made in 2006 in the percentage of Seattle Public Schools students meeting standard were sustained or increased in most areas in 2007. The exceptions to this trend were results for tenth grade (all subjects) and for eighth grade in reading. Detailed results by grade level, for 2001 through 2007, are included in the table at the end of this release.

Seattle continues to do well compared with state performance. Specifically, Seattle results were greater than, or within one point, of the state average in 13 out of 20 of the areas tested. In addition, the gains made by Seattle students exceeded state gains in 16 out of 20 areas tested. These results are notable. Across the nation, it is typical that the performance of large urban school districts is below state averages. A chart comparing Seattle results with the state is available at the end of this release.

Highlights of results for Seattle students include:

- In reading at fourth grade, students sustained the milestone achieved last year – with more than 80 percent meeting or exceeding standard.
- Reading achievement at seventh grade jumped by 8.2 points and at sixth grade by 4.6 points.
- Math achievement is up at Grades 3 through 8, with the greatest gains at fifth grade (6.1 points), seventh grade (5.7 points) and third grade (4.8 points).
- For the first time at any grade level, math achievement topped 70 percent – at third grade, 72.1 percent of students met or exceeded standards.
- In writing, gains were made at fourth grade (2.7 points) and seventh grade (2.0 points).
- Science scores increased 2.7 points at fifth grade and 4.8 points at eighth grade.

The achievement level for eighth grade reading dropped by 4.1 points and echoes the drop in state results, which were down by 5.3 points.

- more -

“Overall WASL results for elementary and middle school grades are good,” said Superintendent Maria Goodloe-Johnson. “I especially want to congratulate our middle school students, staff and families for the strong gains in nearly every area and grade level tested. The results reflect the increased collaboration and laser focus on standards of our middle school principals and staff as well as the work done in preparing students at the elementary level.”

At the high school level, achievement dropped by approximately 5 points in math (to 50.2 percent) and reading (to 77.7 percent). Science scores dropped by 6.5 points (to 32.5 percent). District staff are working with high schools to analyze these declines. In contrast, the writing gains made over the past several years (an increase of 24 points compared with 2005) were sustained.

Class of 2008

Based on preliminary analysis, 79 percent (or 2,361 students out of a total of 2,991 in the class of 2008) have passed both the reading and writing WASL tests, a state requirement for graduation. This compares with 83.6 percent at the state level. About 630 students have not yet passed one or both of the two required assessments and there are an additional 329 students in the class of 2008 for whom we do not have test data. In addition, more than 70 percent of the students in the class of 2009 have passed both assessments.

“I applaud those students who are on track to graduate and are now exploring the many exciting options available to them for higher education or the world of work,” said Superintendent Goodloe-Johnson. “We want every one of our students to be in that position, so we must closely examine individual progress. My expectation is that there will be a specific plan in place for every student that maps out how each part of graduation requirements will be met. Highest priority will be placed on the class of 2008, while we continue to offer interventions and supports for all students needing additional help.”

“As a former high school principal, I know the hard work and unrelenting attention it takes to help our youth succeed,” said Dr. Goodloe-Johnson. “I pledge to every high school student and to their families that I will work to assess what the needs are and to put in place programs and supports that we know, based on research, will help our students to be successful.”

Progress must accelerate in closing the achievement gap

Significant gains have been made over the past several years in narrowing the achievement gap between white students and students of color in reading and writing; but the gap has widened in math for nearly all levels and groups tested.

The gap continues to narrow in reading, with substantial gains in some areas.

- From 2006 to 2007, the gap in reading narrowed for black students by 4 points at fourth grade and 11 points at seventh grade; for Asian students by 8 points at seventh grade; and for Native American students by 9 points at seventh grade and 5 points at tenth grade.
- The gap in reading widened for Latino students at Grade 4 (-5 points) and Grade 10 (-2 points).

- more -

- Based on 2007 results, the achievement gap ranges between 7 points and 34 points, depending on the grade level and group tested.

The gap has widened in math.

- From 2006 to 2007, the gap in math has increased across Grades 4, 7, and 10, with the exception of Asian students in the fourth and seventh grades, and Native Americans in tenth grade.
- Based on 2007 results, the achievement gap in math ranges between 12 points and 51 points, depending on the grade level and group tested.

The gap has narrowed somewhat in writing.

- From 2006 to 2007, the gap in writing at tenth grade narrowed for Native American students (9 points), black students (5 points), Latino students (4 points) and Asian students (4 points).
- Results at Grades 4 and 7 are mixed.
- Based on 2007 results, the achievement gap in writing ranges between 2 points and 34 points, depending on the grade level and group tested.

“While some gains have been made over time, the size of the achievement gap for students of color is a profound and unacceptable reality,” said Superintendent Dr. Goodloe-Johnson. “Closing these gaps is hard work and a huge challenge for districts across the nation. We will make progress as we closely examine student achievement data and student work, identify specific needs, and implement research-based best practices that can be replicated across our system.”

“There are a number of strategies that are already in place, or will be implemented this year, that we believe will contribute to closing the achievement gap,” said Dr. Goodloe-Johnson. “One example is the adoption of an aligned math curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels. It is critical that our teachers receive support and training in the effective use of these materials. The materials are at our schools, initial training took place over the summer, and we will deepen knowledge and increase skills as we work throughout the year. Fidelity of implementation, which means using the math materials consistently and in the most effective manner, is essential for success. Other promising strategies include the expansion of the ‘Readers and Writers Workshop’ at the middle school level, extended learning opportunities such as Project Excel, and focused attention on individual students in the high school Pathways Program.”

Individual schools show improvements

Many schools have demonstrated strong improvements in performance this year. Some of the highlights include:

- In reading, 90 percent or more of fourth grade students met or exceeded standard at a total of 20 schools, including four schools (**Daniel Bagley**, **John Stanford International**, **Olympic View** and **West Woodland** elementary schools) that achieved this milestone for the first time.

- more -

- In math, 90 percent or more of fourth grade students met or exceeded standard at four schools – **Lawton, Lowell** (which houses the District’s Accelerated Progress Program (APP) students), **North Beach** and **Wedgwood** elementary schools. Fourth-grade students at a total of 14 schools achieved levels of 80 percent or higher.
- **At Daniel Bagley Elementary School**, the percentage of fourth-grade students reaching proficiency increased to 91 percent in reading (a gain of 8 points) and 83 percent in math (a gain of 30 points).
- **Olympic View Elementary School** posted outstanding results at fourth grade in all subjects. In reading, scores jumped 16 points to 97 percent of students meeting or exceeding standard; writing achievement is up 27 points to 84 percent; and math is up 30 points to 85 percent.
- **Pathfinder K-8** and **Hamilton International Middle School** both posted double-digit gains at seventh grade in reading and in math.
- At **Washington Middle School** seventh-grade students gained 8 points in math, and for the first time, more than 70 percent met or exceeded standards.

There are a number of examples of outstanding gains at very diverse schools where a relatively high percentage of the student body qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL percentage).

- Achievement at the **African American Academy** increased substantially at seventh grade – a jump of 55 points (to 74 percent meeting standard) in reading, and an increase of 18 points (to 24 percent meeting standard) in math. FRL is 86 percent.
- At **Denny Middle School**, students increased seventh grade achievement by 5 points in reading (to 53 percent); made a modest 3 point gain in writing; and jumped 12 points – to 40 percent – in math. Denny’s FRL is 66 percent.
- **Highland Park Elementary School** fourth grade students gained 27 points in math (to 55 percent meeting standard). FRL is 76 percent.
- **Aki Kurose Middle School Academy** increased seventh grade reading achievement by 25.8 points, to 55 percent of students meeting or exceeding standards. FRL is 70 percent.
- **Leschi Elementary School** fourth-grade students continued the outstanding progress in reading, increasing achievement by 18 points, and topping 80 percent of students meeting or exceeding standards for the first time. FRL at Leschi is 65 percent.
- **Madrona K-8** had excellent gains at fourth grade (reading up 21.9 points to 74 percent of students meeting or exceeding standard; and math up 13.7 points to 46 percent. There was also a 7.2-point gain at seventh grade in reading, to 53 percent. FRL is 61 percent.

- more -

- At **Mercer Middle School**, seventh-grade students increased scores by 12 points in reading (to 66 percent); and by 6 points in math (to 45 percent). FRL is 66 percent.
- **Rainier Beach High School** continued its multiyear trend of increasing achievement in reading and in math. Achievement in reading jumped an additional 8 points (to 70 percent of students meeting standard); and math 10 points, to 37 percent of students meeting standard. Rainier Beach FRL is 57 percent.
- **Van Asselt Elementary School** continued its trend of increasing achievement in reading, and for the first time nearly 80 percent of fourth-grade students met or exceeded standards. FRL at Van Asselt is 82 percent.

**Seattle Public Schools
Washington Assessment of Student Learning
System-wide Results, Percent Meeting Standard, 2001-2007**

Subject	Grade	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2007 v 2001	2007 v 2006
MATH	3						67.3%	72.1%	na	4.8
	4	43.5%	51.1%	53.1%	59.6%	59.1%	59.5%	61.8%	18.3	2.3
	5						57.0%	63.1%	na	6.1
	6						49.3%	49.6%	na	0.3
	7	29.9%	29.8%	33.9%	43.6%	47.3%	47.4%	53.1%	23.2	5.7
	8						47.5%	49.5%	na	2.0
	10*	33.7%	35.3%	34.9%	38.6%	40.8%	55.7%	50.2%	16.5	-5.5
READING	3						70.0%	72.1%	na	2.1
	4	63.5%	64.2%	64.0%	72.0%	77.3%	80.3%	80.3%	16.8	0.0
	5						76.3%	76.6%	na	0.3
	6						62.3%	66.9%	na	4.6
	7	38.9%	44.3%	47.9%	55.1%	63.5%	59.3%	67.5%	28.6	8.2
	8						67.7%	63.6%	na	-4.1
	10*	49.5%	52.4%	53.1%	55.1%	66.9%	82.4%	77.7%	28.2	-4.7
WRITING	4	44.1%	50.8%	58.5%	54.8%	57.6%	63.8%	66.5%	22.4	2.7
	7	45.3%	50.2%	54.2%	55.3%	57.8%	65.2%	67.2%	21.9	2.0
	10*	37.8%	47.3%	52.2%	54.5%	54.6%	79.8%	80.6%	42.8	0.8
SCIENCE	5				32.8%	37.0%	39.6%	42.3%	na	2.7
	8			32.0%	34.5%	31.7%	37.0%	41.8%	na	4.8
	10*			25.3%	28.0%	32.3%	39.0%	32.5%	na	-6.5

* In 2006, a board policy was enacted that defined grade level status based solely on accrued credits. As a result, 930 tenth-grade students who had not yet earned 5 credits were reclassified to the ninth grade and did not take the 2006 WASL. Preliminary analysis, comparing results for only those students who had earned five credits before taking the WASL in 2004 and 2005 with 2006 results, indicates that strong net gains were made in performance.

Change over time

Decrease of at least 1 percentage point
Increase of at least 1 percentage point

- more -

“Points” = percentage points; “percentage” or “percent” = percentage of students meeting or exceeding standard. Data for achievement gap and individual schools is rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Seattle Public Schools and Washington State Comparison
Washington Assessment of Student Learning
Percent Meeting Standard 2006 and 2007**

BASIC INFORMATION		SEATTLE			STATE		
Subject	Grade	2006	2007	1yr Change	2006	2007	1yr Change
MATH	3	67.3%	72.1%	4.8	64.2%	69.4%	5.2
	4	59.5%	61.8%	2.3	58.9%	57.9%	-1.0
	5	57.0%	63.1%	6.1	55.8%	59.3%	3.5
	6	49.3%	49.6%	0.3	49.5%	49.5%	0.0
	7	47.4%	53.1%	5.7	48.5%	54.4%	5.9
	8	47.5%	49.5%	2.0	48.9%	49.5%	0.6
	10	55.7%	50.2%	-5.5	51.0%	50.2%	-0.8
READING	3	70.0%	72.1%	2.1	68.3%	70.7%	2.4
	4	80.3%	80.3%	0.0	81.2%	76.4%	-4.8
	5	76.3%	76.6%	0.3	76.3%	71.7%	-4.6
	6	62.3%	66.9%	4.6	66.7%	67.8%	1.1
	7	59.3%	67.5%	8.2	61.5%	68.5%	7.0
	8	67.7%	63.6%	-4.1	70.1%	64.8%	-5.3
	10	82.4%	77.7%	-4.7	82.0%	80.6%	-1.4
WRITING	4	63.8%	66.5%	2.7	60.4%	60.1%	-0.3
	7	65.2%	67.2%	2.0	64.6%	68.1%	3.5
	10	79.8%	80.6%	0.8	79.8%	83.6%	3.8
SCIENCE	5	39.6%	42.3%	2.7	35.7%	36.4%	0.7
	8	37.0%	41.8%	4.8	42.9%	44.5%	1.5
	10	39.0%	32.5%	-6.5	35.0%	36.3%	1.3

Change over time

Decrease of at least 1 percentage point
Increase of at least 1 percentage point

For the **District's** school-by-school results, please visit **OSPI's Web site** at
<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>

###

“Points” = percentage points; “percentage” or “percent” = percentage of students meeting or exceeding standard. Data for achievement gap and individual schools is rounded to the nearest whole number.