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## **Minnesota Math and Reading Assessment Scores Released**

*Students show slight improvement in reading, set baseline for rigorous new math assessments*

Roseville, MN – Math and Reading assessment results released by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) today show that student scores in reading showed slight improvement. Minnesota students showed mixed results in math; grade 11 students made significant gains in proficiency, while students in grades 3-8 took rigorous new math assessments aligned to higher standards for the first time.

“We continue to set the bar high for Minnesota students with tougher new standards, and to improve the ways in which we help children master them,” said Minnesota Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius. “The good news is that our high school students are rising to the challenge. However, these results also show us we have some work to do to ensure all of our kids are well prepared for success in a competitive global economy.”

### **Highlights of the 2011 MCA Math and Reading Assessments include:**

- Students in 11th grade taking the math MCA showed a 5.3% increase in proficiency
- Students in grades 3-8 took a new math assessment for the first time that reflected more rigorous standards, setting a new baseline for measurement.
- Reading scores showed a 1.6% increase in students scoring proficient

Commissioner Cassellius said the increased scores in 11th grade math may be attributable to an increased expectation that students will take three years of rigorous math coursework in high school. She also noted fewer students in grades 3-8 tested at a proficient level, due in large part to a new assessment designed to measure student’s grasp of more difficult content. Seventy-four percent of the students in grades 3-8 took the MCA online.

“This year’s test will set a baseline for us to measure our improvement over the next several years,” said Commissioner Cassellius. “Just as we have with 11th grade math scores and grades 3 – 8 MCA II reading scores, we believe we’ll continue to see continued gains in student mastery of the new rigorous standards.”

As with other assessment results released this year, Cassellius noted disparities in academic performance among various groups of students.

“We continue to see a persistent disparity in achievement between students of color, students in poverty and their white counterparts,” said Cassellius. “This achievement gap reinforces the urgent need to focus time, attention and resources to making sure all children achieve at high levels. I’m hopeful that Minnesota’s recent efforts to enact meaningful accountability and get additional flexibility from the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) will allow us to provide even more support to the students and schools that need it most.”

The release of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports are currently on hold pending the U.S. Department of Education’s ruling on Minnesota’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waiver request.

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