

# NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

Dr. Mark K. McQuillan  
Commissioner



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## CAPT Results for Grade 10 Students Show Slight Declines at Both the Proficient and Goal Levels in all Content Areas Except Reading

Table 1: CAPT Performance for Percent At/Above Proficient and At/Above Goal

(HARTFORD, CT) Table 1 shows that Connecticut's Grade 10 public school students demonstrated gains over last year's Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) results in reading at the goal level. However, a slight downward turn was evident at the goal level in the areas of writing,

	Mathematics		Science		Reading		Writing	
	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal
2007	77.3	45.3	81.4	44.5	79.7	45.5	82.3	53.0
2008	79.7	50.2	80.5	46.5	82.7	45.5	88.2	57.9
2009	78.4	48.0	78.4	43.0	81.8	47.5	86.5	55.1

mathematics and science. At the proficient level, all content areas tested were down slightly from last year's administration. When the 2009 results are compared to the first administration of the Third Generation CAPT in 2007 however, there are overall gains in all content areas tested except science.

"This year's CAPT scores indicate that our high schools continue to face academic challenges and that we need to change what we are doing at the secondary level in our public schools," said state Education Commissioner Dr. Mark K. McQuillan. "While the results show that many of the state's high schools are realizing a measure of success in reading, scores are down in the other three academic areas from last year. The 2009 results signal a call to continue our efforts at secondary school reform in order to ensure the future success of our high school graduates."

The State Department of Education continues to work with 15 partner urban school districts that have been identified under the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act as in need of improvement. Improvement plans for each district were crafted following an external education audit of each school district, which reveals areas of strength as well as areas of concern.

"Even with the slight downturn statewide in this year's CAPT results, many of our partner school districts demonstrated gains over last year that outstripped statewide averages," said McQuillan. The Commissioner cited the following examples of gains at the proficient level (rounded to the nearest percent):

- Meriden posted gains of 6 percentage points in reading, 2 points in mathematics, 2 points in writing and 1 point in science; and
- New London posted gains of 2 percentage points in reading and 1 point in mathematics.

The following examples of gains were cited for the goal level (rounded to the nearest percent):

- Bridgeport posted gains of 2 percentage points in reading and 2 points in writing;
- East Hartford gained 3 percentage points in reading;
- Hartford gained 4 percentage points in reading and 1 point in mathematics;
- Meriden gained 9 percentage points in reading, 4 points in mathematics and 7 points in writing;
- Middletown gained 3 percentage points in reading, 2 points in mathematics and 4 points in science; and
- Stamford gained 1 percentage point in reading and 2 points in writing.

Gains like those cited above are beginning to narrow the performance gap between Connecticut's affluent school districts and their less affluent counterparts.

### **2009 Statewide Performance Compared with 2007 and 2008**

2009 represents the third administration of the Third Generation CAPT. The results from the March 2007 CAPT, which was the first administration of the Third Generation, provide a baseline for examining student performance statewide and among various subgroups of students throughout the state over a three-year period. The CAPT has five levels of performance for each of the content areas tested: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal and Advanced. Historically, the percentage of students scoring at or above the goal level has been an important indicator of the quality of secondary school education in Connecticut. The percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level on the CAPT is used to identify schools and districts that are making "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) under NCLB.

The 2009 data are comparable to the previous two administrations of CAPT and provide insight into changes in student performance statewide and among various subgroups of students throughout the state. The following summarizes statewide changes, shown in Table 1, in performance between 2007 and 2009, by content area:

#### **Mathematics**

- For mathematics, the percentage of Grade 10 students scoring at or above goal decreased from 50.2 percent in 2008 to 48.0 percent in 2009, a decrease of 2.2 percentage points. However, when compared to the base year there is still an overall increase of 2.7 percentage points.
- The percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level decreased from 79.7 percent to 78.4 percent, a decrease of 1.3 percentage points; however, this represented a gain of 1.1 percentage points over the 2007 results.

#### **Reading**

- In 2009, 47.5 percent of Grade 10 students scored at or above goal in reading, an increase of 2.0 percentage points over the results from 2007 and 2008.
- This year, 81.8 percent of Grade 10 students scored at or above proficient, reflecting a decrease of 0.9 percentage points from the 2008 results but a gain of 2.1 percentage points over the base year.

#### **Science**

- The percentage of Grade 10 students scoring at or above the goal level on the science portion of the CAPT decreased from 46.5 percent in 2008 to 43.0 percent in 2009, a decrease of 3.5 percentage points and a 1.5 percentage point decrease from the base year of 2007.
- The percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level declined from 80.5 percent in 2008 to 78.4 percent in 2009, a decrease of 2.1 percentage points. When comparing the 2007 results with 2009 results, there was a 3.0 percentage point decline.

#### **Writing**

- In 2009, the percentage of Grade 10 students scoring at or above goal was 55.1 percent compared to 57.9 percent in 2008, a decrease of 2.8 percentage points. However, compared to 2007 results, there was a 2.1 percentage point increase from the base year.

- The percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level in 2009 was 86.5 percent, a decrease of 1.7 percentage points from 2008, but a 4.2 percent increase over 2007.

Table 2 contains the percentages of students scoring at or above the proficient and at or above the goal levels for each of the CAPT content tests, statewide and by demographic subgroups for 2007 through 2009.

**Table 2: CAPT Performance by Year and Subgroup for Percent At/Above Proficient and Percent At/Above Goal**

SUBGROUP	YEAR	Mathematics		Science		Reading		Writing	
		% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal	% at/above Proficient	% at/above Goal
Female	2007	76.6	43.3	82.0	41.9	84.4	52.7	87.8	61.9
	2008	78.7	47.0	80.5	43.1	86.2	50.6	92.2	65.3
	2009	77.0	45.1	78.5	40.7	86.3	53.6	90.4	62.0
Male	2007	77.9	47.3	80.8	47.0	75.1	38.6	76.8	44.3
	2008	80.6	53.3	80.5	49.8	79.2	40.6	84.2	50.6
	2009	79.8	50.8	78.3	45.2	77.3	41.4	82.7	48.3
Black	2007	43.4	10.5	52.1	10.4	54.4	15.6	63.1	24.2
	2008	49.5	14.6	52.9	13.0	60.9	15.1	75.0	28.9
	2009	46.3	12.9	48.1	10.9	60.0	18.2	70.8	25.7
Hispanic	2007	50.5	14.6	55.9	13.1	57.2	18.4	61.8	25.1
	2008	54.8	18.2	53.6	15.9	61.7	18.0	72.4	28.3
	2009	54.3	17.3	50.4	13.7	61.3	20.5	71.0	26.4
White	2007	88.4	57.1	91.6	56.5	88.6	56.0	89.4	63.3
	2008	90.3	63.1	91.2	58.9	91.0	56.7	93.8	69.2
	2009	89.2	60.5	89.8	54.9	90.0	58.3	92.6	66.1
Asian American	2007	86.7	60.3	87.8	55.5	86.0	56.1	87.8	61.6
	2008	89.2	66.3	88.6	58.3	89.8	57.5	93.9	70.5
	2009	88.9	65.6	87.6	54.8	88.3	59.6	92.1	69.1
American Indian	2007	63.3	29.4	75.2	30.3	64.5	27.3	75.0	35.2
	2008	72.7	29.7	76.6	28.9	70.4	27.2	83.7	44.2
	2009	78.0	34.1	78.9	35.8	69.8	30.2	81.5	46.8
F/R Lunch	2007	48.8	14.4	55.0	13.7	54.9	16.8	60.9	23.4
	2008	53.4	17.9	53.2	15.8	60.4	16.2	72.2	27.3
	2009	51.9	17.0	50.5	13.5	59.8	19.1	69.2	25.2
Full Price	2007	85.9	54.7	89.5	53.9	87.3	54.3	88.7	61.9
	2008	88.3	60.8	89.5	56.6	90.0	55.2	93.4	68.0
	2009	87.4	58.5	88.0	53.2	89.3	57.1	92.4	65.3
SPED	2007	39.1	12.8	47.9	14.8	40.4	11.3	40.5	12.8
	2008	43.5	14.7	47.1	14.4	47.3	11.5	53.9	16.3
	2009	42.7	15.4	40.6	10.6	49.0	14.1	49.6	13.6
NOT SPED	2007	81.6	49.0	85.3	47.9	84.2	49.4	86.9	57.5
	2008	83.7	54.2	84.3	50.1	86.6	49.3	92.0	62.6
	2009	81.6	50.9	82.6	46.6	84.7	50.4	90.5	59.5
ELL	2007	34.1	9.4	32.6	5.4	37.7	7.8	41.3	8.9
	2008	35.3	8.4	25.1	3.9	38.0	6.0	46.9	8.8
	2009	35.8	9.0	23.8	2.7	35.1	6.6	46.7	8.1
NOT ELL	2007	78.6	46.5	83.0	45.8	81.0	46.7	83.5	54.4
	2008	81.1	51.6	82.3	47.9	84.0	46.7	89.5	59.5
	2009	79.8	49.2	80.1	44.2	83.2	48.7	87.7	56.5

## **Subgroup Performance – Closing the Achievement Gaps**

The following summarizes notable changes in student achievement between 2007 and 2009, by subgroup:

### **Gender**

- In 2009, female students continue to perform at higher levels than male students in both reading and writing. When compared to 2007 and 2008, the gap in performance between female and male students decreased between 2008 and 2009 in writing, but increased in reading, at both the goal and proficient levels. Male students continue to outperform their female peers in mathematics at both the proficient and goal levels and in science at the goal level. Performance at the proficient level in science is comparable between the two groups.
- The gap in performance between female and male students in mathematics and science appears to be closing at the goal level but not at the proficient level.

### **Race/Ethnicity**

- Overall, the trend line between 2007 and 2009 for mathematics, reading and writing is positive at both the proficient and goal levels for all subgroups, with small declines across most groups between 2008 and 2009; however, the science trend line is negative for most subgroups.
- The performance gaps between black and Hispanic students and the white and Asian American subgroups remain large. White and Asian American students are about three times more likely to score at the goal level in each content area and about 1.5 times as likely to score at the proficient level than black and Hispanic students.
- A comparison between the 2007 results and the 2009 results indicates that large gaps in performance still persist among the racial/ethnic subgroups, with white and Asian American students posting greater gains in the percentage of students reaching the goal level in all content areas except science.

### **Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Meals**

A student's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals is a measure of the economic need or poverty of the student's family.

- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above proficient in 2009 has decreased in all content areas. However, when compared to the base year, disadvantaged students still exhibit gains in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above goal in reading increased from 2008 to 2009, but declined in mathematics, writing and science. A similar pattern in results occurred for students who were not disadvantaged.

### **Special Education**

In 2009, 43,867 students took the CAPT, approximately 99 percent of Connecticut's Grade 10 student population. Of the Grade 10 students tested in 2009, 5,127 students were receiving special education (SPED)

services, most of whom (3,684) took the standard CAPT assessment either with or without accommodations. Over the course of the Third Generation CAPT a small number of the most significantly cognitively disabled special education students, approximately 1 percent of the total population, were administered an alternate assessment, the Skills Checklist. The Skills Checklist is a teacher observation-based instrument. Students who took this alternate assessment have not been included in the CAPT reporting for any of the three years of the Third Generation. About 900 special education students, who previously had taken the standard CAPT assessment, were administered a pilot Modified Assessment in the areas of mathematics and reading, but took the standard CAPT writing and science assessments. The students who took the Modified Assessment pilot this year are not included in the CAPT reporting for mathematics and reading, but are included in the results for writing and science.

- The percentages of students receiving SPED services scoring at or above goal in 2009 show a continued upward trend over the last two administrations for both reading and mathematics, although some of the gain between 2008 and 2009 may be attributed to a change in the population tested.
- In science performance, there is a downward trend for special education and non-special education students between 2007 and 2009, while there is an upward trend in writing, with small declines between 2008 and 2009.

### **English Language Learners**

- Between 2007 and 2009, the trend in performance continues upward for the English Language Learner (ELL) subgroup in the areas of mathematics and writing, while trending downward in science. Reading results are down from 2008 but up over the base year.
- There were slight increases between 2008 and 2009 in the percentages of ELL students scoring at or above the goal level in mathematics and reading, while we see slight decreases in the areas of science and writing. Fewer than 10 percent of the ELL students meet the goal standard in any of the content areas.

### **Connecticut Technical High Schools**

Tables 3 and 4 below present the results for Grade 10 students in the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) for 2007 through 2009. The results of the 2009 administration for the CTHSS also show a slight decrease in performance across the content areas tested. However, again this slight decline in the 2009 results does not erase the notable gains at the proficient level over the 2007 administration.

**Table 3: Percentage of CTHSS Students Scoring at/above Proficient**

CTHSS	Math	Science	Reading	Writing
2007	74.8	80.3	77.3	79.6
2008	80.7	80.3	82.0	90.0
2009	79.1	79.6	79.2	89.0

**Table 4: Percentage of CTHSS Students Scoring at/above Goal**

CTHSS	Math	Science	Reading	Writing
2007	27.6	26.0	27.1	31.8
2008	35.9	31.6	27.3	40.5
2009	33.1	27.3	26.3	32.8

“CAPT scores continue to support the substantial investments made in our state’s technical high schools since 2004. A new curriculum, improvements in instructional practice, the creation of language arts and mathematics labs and greater teamwork between academic and trade/technology teachers continue to have a clear impact on student academic performance,” said the Commissioner.

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