

## Science scores surpass state

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 23 August 2012 14:23 -

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NeSA SCIENCE SCORES				
Grade	Avg. scale score*	Below	Meets	Exceeds
Fifth	119	15%	54%	31%
State	101	34%	52%	14%
Eighth	108	26%	52%	21%
State	100	33%	52%	15%
Eleventh	117	17%	55%	28%
State	99	32%	54%	13%

\*A score of 135-200 exceeds standards, 85-134 meets standards and 64 is below standards.  
Nebraska Department of Education [www.education.ne.gov](http://www.education.ne.gov)

### Students hold own in math, reading results

A decent chunk of kids met or exceeded standards on the NeSA (Nebraska State Accountability) test, according to curriculum director and junior high principal Ryan Groene.

Results from NeSA tests taken last spring in science, math and reading were released Tuesday by the Nebraska Department of Education.

This year was the first time students in grades five, eight and 11 took the science test.

Students, grades three through 11th, took the NeSA math test for the second year and the reading test for the third year.

In science, student scores were above state averages in all grades.

Fifth graders had the highest average scale score of 119 compared to 101 for the state.

The same grade also had the most students exceeding standards at 31% compared to the state average of 14%.

Eighth graders had the lowest scale score (108) for the district which was still well above the state average of 100.

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In reading, the fifth graders topped the rest of the classes with a 123 average scale score. The state average was 114. However the class with the highest percentage (37%) of exceeding the standard was third graders.

Eighth graders received the lowest average scale score of 104 which dipped below the state average of 109.

NeSA READING SCORES				
Grade	Ave. score*	Below	Meets	Exceeds
Third	118	13%	56%	31%
State	109	22%	54%	22%
Fourth	118	16%	51%	33%
State	112	23%	50%	28%
Fifth	123	14%	51%	35%
State	114	24%	42%	34%
Sixth	115	26%	41%	33%
State	113	25%	44%	30%
Seventh	113	25%	45%	30%
State	118	22%	44%	34%
Eighth	104	29%	56%	18%
State	109	27%	47%	26%
Eleventh	100	27%	47%	27%
State	102	36%	39%	25%

\*A score of 125-200 exceeds standards, 85-124 meets standards and 0-84 is below standards.  
Nebraska Department of Education [www.education.ne.gov](http://www.education.ne.gov)

Both seventh graders (113) and eighth graders (104) had a lower average scale score than the state in reading.

Average scale scores in math remained above the state in all grades tested.

Both fifth and seventh graders had the highest average score in math (118) compared to 106 for the state for fifth graders and 104 for seventh graders.

Juniors had the lowest (100) average scale score.

Groene said individual NeSA test results will be mailed to parents this week or next.

Results for the second NeSA writing test were released in May.

With student and school accountability mandated on the federal level, Groene said schools don't have a choice about making students take norm-referenced, standardized tests.

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“One of the good things about assessments is that it gives us data so we can improve instruction,” he said. “The challenge is balancing assessment scores and regular classroom curriculum.”

District 20 is gearing up for a data analysis day on Friday, Aug. 31, when teachers will use results from NeSA, MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) and classroom assessments to improve instruction.

What’s unique about the day, when students will be dismissed from class, is that teachers who teach subjects that NeSA tests—reading, math, science and writing—will share their teaching strategies with non-NeSA subject teachers such as in art or industrial arts.

“It isn’t just a math, science or language arts issue,” Groene explained. “The entire school will find out ways to implement strategies.”

In addition to improving assessment scores, Groene said the district wants to strengthen K-12 instruction, create an atmosphere of data-driven decision making, encourage collaboration when working with data and get all teachers to use data to improve their instruction.

He added that students, K-2, focus on a language assessment called DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) and that sophomores take a PLAN test which is designed to help them build a readiness foundation to take the ACT.

Students also do ACT prep work in higher-level English, math and science classes.

Test results show that Nebraska public school students scored higher on their 2012 state reading and math tests than in previous years.

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About 74% met or exceeded state standards in reading, compared to 68.6%, and more than 67% tested proficient in math compared to about 63%.

Scores for individual districts are available at: [www.education.ne.gov](http://www.education.ne.gov).

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