

**July 8, 2010**

### ***NCSS RELEASES PRELIMINARY 2010 CRCT DATA***

According to preliminary test data released by the Georgia Department of Education, Newton County School System students posted gains on the pass percentage rate on every test in every grade level but three on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests in 2010 (retest date for 2010 is not included in this release). Of the remaining three—seventh grade Reading, and first and second grade Language Arts—students equaled their 2009 pass percentage. While the school system posted gains, the state also posted gains as well, and Newton County’s overall scores fell below the state averages in 2010 in 35 of 36 instances.

“I am very pleased to see that the vast majority of grades showed improvement over their 2009 results,” said Superintendent Gary Mathews. “We are definitely heading in the right direction but as the data indicate, there is room—and need, for improvement. Our most immediate goal is to continue to improve on these results and narrow the gap between the district and the state average. Ultimately our goal is to surpass the state average and have every student meet or exceed standards on every state assessment. We have our work cut out for us but given the improvement shown this year, I believe our teachers and our students are up to the challenge and will narrow the gap.”

Mathews added that district administrators would review all of the test data to determine strengths and weaknesses and develop an appropriate course of action for improvement.

#### ***Reading***

A breakdown of the tests indicate that over 86 percent of NCSS students in grades one through eight met or exceeded standards on the Reading portion of the CRCT; 90 percent of first graders and 94 percent of eighth graders met or exceeded standards on the Reading CRCT.

Although NCSS students met or exceeded their 2009 pass rates in every grade level, overall their pass rates—all 85 percent or above—are just below the state’s average pass rates in 2010. In most instances the difference is less than 4 percent. Students in grades three, five, and eight are required to pass the Reading CRCT in order to promote to the next grade level. In these key grades, the district’s pass rates were 89 percent in third grade, 87 percent in fifth grade, and 94 percent in eighth grade. Georgia’s pass rates in the same three grades were 90 percent, 90 percent, and 95 percent respectively.

Of particular note in school level breakdowns, over 95 percent of all Fairview Theme School elementary students passed the Reading CRCT in each grade level, with 100 percent of all third graders passing the test in 2010! Heard-Mixon Elementary, Mansfield Elementary, and Clements Theme School also had over 90 percent of all students in each grade level meet or exceed standards on the Reading CRCT in 2010.

#### ***English Language Arts***

In 2010, over eighty percent of NCSS students met or exceeded standards on the English Language Arts CRCT, with several grade levels—fifth grade, sixth grade, and eighth grade—posting a 90 percent or greater pass rate.

As with the Reading test, NCSS students increased their pass rates but still lagged just behind the state's average pass rates in 2010, with the exception of NCSS eighth graders, who matched Georgia's 92 percent pass rate.

Individual school level data indicate that Clements Theme School had over 90 percent of their elementary students pass the English Language Arts test in both grade levels—fourth and fifth. Fairview Theme School and Mansfield Elementary School just missed the all-90-percent-pass-rate in 2010. At Fairview, over 90 percent of first and third graders met or exceeded standards in 2010 and 87 percent of second grade students passed the test. At Mansfield, 90 percent or more of students in grades two through five passed the English Language Arts CRCT in 2010. Eighty-seven percent of Mansfield first graders met or exceeded standards on the test in 2010.

### *Math*

Each grade level across the system posted gains on the pass percentage rate in Math in 2010. Whereas four grade levels had less than 70 percent passing in 2009, all grade levels posted a 70 percent or higher pass rate in 2010. For instance, only 63 percent of NCSS eighth graders met or exceeded standards in 2009. This year 70 percent passed the test—an improvement of 7 percent. Three grade levels—first, second, and seventh—had over 83 percent of all students pass the Math CRCT in 2010.

NCSS students posted gains in math across the board in 2010 but still trailed the state's pass rate in each grade level. In both fifth and eighth grade—where students must pass the Math portion of the CRCT test in order to promote to the next grade level—the difference between the system's and state's pass rates was four percent. NCSS fifth graders had a 78 percent pass rate compared to the state's 82 percent, and NCSS eighth graders achieved a 70 percent pass rate compared to the state's 74 percent average.

School level data show that Fairview Theme School students posted a 90 percent or greater pass rate in each of its three grade levels tested—first, second, and third.

### *Science*

NCSS students continued to make strides in Science in 2010 and raised the pass percentage in each grade level. Over 70 percent of students in grades three, four, five, and seven met or exceeded standards in 2010. Seventh graders made the biggest gains in passing rate, going from only 69 percent in 2009 to 76 percent in 2010—an increase of 7 percent. First and second grade students do not take the Science portion of the CRCT.

Although NCSS students did make gains on the pass rate in 2010, they were still below the state average on the Science portion of the CRCT in each grade level. While the state had three out of the six grade levels taking the science test average an 80 percent pass rate—third grade, fourth grade, and seventh grade—no NCSS grade level had over a 78 percent pass rate. NCSS students in the same three grade levels—third, fourth, and seventh had pass rates of 78 percent, 75 percent, and 76 percent respectively.

District-wide, three schools—East Newton Elementary, Fairview Theme, and Mansfield Elementary had over 90 percent of students in third grade meet or exceed standards on the Science test in 2010. The state's pass rate for science in grade three was 78 percent.

### *Social Studies*

Social Studies continued to be a struggling point for many students in 2010 although all grade levels did post increases in the pass percentage rate. Overall, third grade students had the highest pass rate with 78 percent meeting or exceeding standards on the test in 2010. Only 50 percent of sixth grade students and 60 percent of seventh and eighth grade students passed the Social Studies CRCT in 2010. Fourth and fifth graders posted a 69 percent and 64 percent pass rate respectively.

Although state pass rates for the Social Studies test ranged from a low of 64 percent in sixth grade to a high of 79 percent in third grade, NCSS students fell well below the state in this subject in 2010. Only 50 percent of NCSS sixth graders and 60 percent of NCSS seventh graders passed the test in 2010. The state's average pass rates in the same two grade levels were 64 percent and 71 percent respectively.

Fairview Theme School third graders posted a 98 percent pass rate, and 93 percent of Heard-Mixon Elementary School third graders passed the Social Studies portion of the CRCT.

The CRCT is designed to measure how well students acquire the skills and knowledge described in the Georgia Performance Standards. The CRCT assessments yield information on academic achievement at the student, class, school, system, and state levels. This information is used to diagnose individual student strengths and weaknesses as related to the instruction of the GPS and to gauge the quality of education in the county and throughout Georgia. For students in third (Reading), fifth (Reading and Math), and eighth grade (Reading and Math), their results on the tests also determine if they promote to the next grade level.

For more information on the Newton County School System's Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) results, please contact Ms. Sherri Davis-Viniard, Director of Public Relations for Newton County Schools at [davis-viniard.sherri@newton.k12.ga.us](mailto:davis-viniard.sherri@newton.k12.ga.us) or Dr. Carl Skinner, Director of Testing, Research, and Evaluation for Newton County Schools, at [skinner.carl@newton.k12.ga.us](mailto:skinner.carl@newton.k12.ga.us).

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