

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

Performance levels recently released by the Nebraska Department of Education show that nearly 72 percent of Nebraska students met or exceeded state reading goals and about 63 percent met or exceeded the mathematics standards.

Students in grades three through eight and in the 11th grade were tested last spring to determine their proficiency on revised state reading and math standards.

With the exception of sixth grade, Perkins County Schools students met the performance standards based on average scale scores in reading and math.

Sixty-three percent of Perkins County sixth graders fell below the mathematics performance level.

Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed said the bar is held high in mathematics standards, which is to encourage students to take more rigorous math courses and four full years of mathematics at the high school level.

“Our goal is for Nebraska students to be college and career ready when they graduate from high school, said Breed.

Nebraska students have some work to do to improve math scores on state tests, he said. According to the latest statewide test results, more than 38 percent of the state’s students who were tested lack basic proficiency in math.

Fourth graders in the state had the best math scores with an average of 68 percent proficiency. Just over 16 percent of the students exceeded the standard.

Those with the lowest math scores were high school juniors—46 percent failed to meet the basic standards. However, 32.5 met the standard and 21.1 exceeded it.

In writing, 89 percent of the state’s fourth and eighth graders are proficient, according to the Nebraska Department of Education news release. Students have consistently improved their writing skills from 2001-11, increasing proficiency levels for fourth graders by 10 percent and eighth graders by 24 percent.

Performance Levels

Students tested in reading and math:

- Grade 3: Thirty-four students were tested.

Reading—68 percent met, 6 percent exceeded and 26 percent fell below standards.

Math: 50 percent met standards, 3 percent exceeded and 47 percent fell below standards.

- Grade 4: Twenty-eight fourth graders were tested in spring 2011.

Reading: 68 percent met standards, 14 percent exceeded standards and 18 percent fell below.

Math: 57 percent of students tested met the standards, 7 percent exceeded and 36 percent fell below the standards.

- Grade 5: Of 37 fifth graders tested, results are:

Reading: 54 percent met standards, 22 percent exceeded standards and 24 percent fell below standards.

Math: 46 percent met standards, 8 percent exceeded and 46 percent fell below standards.

- Grade 6: Twenty-nine students were tested in reading and 30 were tested in math.

Reading: 48 percent met standards, 3 percent exceeded and 48 percent fell below standards.

Math: Only 30 percent met the standards. Seven percent exceeded the math standards, however, 63 percent fell below the standards.

- Grade 7: Twenty-two seventh graders tested had the following results:

Reading: 41 percent met the standards, 14 percent exceeded and 45 percent fell below the standards.

Math: 36 percent met the standards, 9 percent exceeded standards and 55 percent fell below.

- Grade 8: The number of students tested in reading numbered 24, with 23 being tested in math.

Reading: 54 percent met standards, 38 percent exceeded standards, and only 8 percent fell below standards.

Math: 52 percent met the standards, 9 percent exceeded and 39 percent fell below the standards.

- 11th Grade: Twenty-six students were tested.

Reading: 50 percent met, 27 percent exceeded and 23 percent fell below the standards.

Math: 46 percent met standards, 15 percent exceeded the standards, and 38 percent fell below the state standards.

The performance scores released Aug. 29 could change slightly when the scores are finalized in October.

Complete score results are available online at www.education.ne.gov