



NEWS

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School District 64 Reports Upward Trend in Student Achievement Continues; More Students "Exceed" Standards and Reach Higher Levels

The upward trend of student achievement among Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 students is continuing, with more students "exceeding" standards and reaching higher performance levels, according to Dr. Lori Hinton, Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning. Dr. Hinton reported to the Board of Education on October 22 at a Committee-of-the-Whole on Student Achievement. She delivered a comprehensive review of three different assessments: District 64's unique Educational Ends assessments; Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing; and, the 2012 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).

Dr. Hinton compared assessment data spanning a five- to seven-year period. "The most compelling trends are the increase in students 'exceeding' standards on the ISAT, and the increase in students achieving at higher performance levels on the MAP," Dr. Hinton reported. Overall, District 64 performance in reading and math on the ISAT is at its highest level since 2006.

"In addition, the Educational Ends scorecard continues to offer valuable measures over time about how well we are meeting District 64's broader goals of educating the whole child," she added.

Dr. Hinton also briefed the Board on significant changes ahead in assessment. This spring, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will change the cutoff scores on the elementary ISAT to better align with the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) at the high school level. And by 2014-15, Illinois will have shifted to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and related new assessments developed by the nation-wide PARCC consortium as the ISAT is discontinued.

"This is effectively the last year to look at trend data on student performance gathered with the familiar ISAT," Dr. Hinton noted.

District 64 Superintendent Philip Bender reaffirmed the challenge ahead. "As we move through all the significant new state and national initiatives in curriculum and instruction, our shared commitment to student success in District 64 will require all of us – teachers, administrators, parents and our community – to continue our close collaboration in order to have the greatest impact on student learning."

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- **Educational Ends and Scorecard – measuring how District 64 educates the “whole child”**

For more than a decade, District 64 has captured a more robust view of what students need to learn as a result of their total educational experience. These indicators are part of the unique “Educational Ends” that track academics along with higher order thinking and problem-solving skills, social-emotional development, physical development, exposure to a wide range of experiences in the arts, and development of a positive attitude toward learning.

Dr. Hinton reported that of the 96 assessments administered during the 2011-12 school year, 88% reflect on-target performance and 11% are within 10% of the target. She noted that many of the assessments are being revamped in response to CCSS and the District’s work to identify Priority Standards through its Strategic Plan activities, now entering its third year.

- **MAP tests – measuring personal student growth**

District 64 also utilizes a unique kind of standardized testing, called MAP, to provide data on reading and math performance. Students in grades 3-7 take the test on a computer twice a year; students in grade 2 are tested mid-year and grade 8 students only in the fall. “The MAP tests actually adapt the questions each student is asked based on how the previous question was answered, so it can identify what each student knows and needs to learn next,” Dr. Hinton noted.

Because student scores are reported as a unique “RIT” number – which is an equal interval scale, like feet and inches – educational growth can be easily tracked from year to year, independent of grade level or age, she noted.

For 2011-12, Dr. Hinton reported that: “District 64 students continue to score at levels significantly higher than national means, and over the past five years, the District’s mean score has increased at all grade levels in reading and math.”

Most notably, over the past five years, the percentage of students performing above the 75th percentile for District 64 norms in reading has increased in grades 2-8, and in math, in grades 4-8. Dr. Hinton also noted that the percentage of students performing below the 25th percentile for District 64 norms has been decreasing as well for most grades.

MAP also identifies each student’s “expected” growth based on individual scores. More than half of students in grades 3-8 are meeting their growth targets in reading and math, with grades 6-8 students nearing 70% in math. Dr. Hinton pointed out that differentiation of instruction is allowing the District to support growth for every student.

- **ISAT – measuring how students meet state standards**

This was the seventh year that the ISBE administered the current ISAT assessment. All students in grades 3-8 took the tests in reading and math; only students in grades 4 and 7 were tested in science.

Dr. Hinton reported that: "Overall District 64 performance in reading and math is at its highest level since 2006, with 94.6% of students 'meeting or exceeding' standards in reading and 95.9% in math." In 2006, reading was at 89.4% and math at 93.4%. She noted that performance also continues to be strong in science, with the vast majority of students meeting or exceeding standards over the past seven years.

Looking at trend data since 2006, Dr. Hinton also observed:

- "Significant increases" in students scoring in the top "exceeds" category in reading in grades 3-7.
- "Significant increases" in students scoring in the top "exceeds" category in math at all grade levels.
- "Significant decreases" in the lowest categories of "academic warning" and "below standards" in reading at the elementary level.

"Over the past five years, District 64 educators have invested considerable effort into using data to identify student needs, differentiate lessons for small groups of students, and ultimately, improve student learning and achievement," Dr. Hinton commented. "Reviewing and responding to data is central to the Response to Intervention (RtI) model, a current District 64 initiative. It is important for our Instructional Technology coaches who work directly with teachers, our curriculum team, and the Student Learning Department to work collaboratively to expand our repertoire of differentiation strategies, resolve challenges, and replicate our successes," she added.

Another ISAT measure is adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. ISBE uses only reading and math scores to determine whether each school and the District overall is making AYP, along with figures on attendance and student participation in testing.

Illinois received a waiver this year to maintain the 2010-11 goal of having 85% of all students scoring in the combined "meets or exceeds" category on both the math and reading ISAT to achieve AYP. To meet AYP, ISBE also tracks performance of students in special subgroups of 45 or more students; one subgroup is for students with disabilities.

Dr. Hinton reported that all five elementary schools achieved AYP. However, based on scores in the Students with Disabilities (IEP) subgroup, Emerson and Lincoln middle schools did not achieve AYP, nor did District 64. She noted that District 64 does provide a comprehensive program to support students with learning difficulties, and that goals and progress are measured through a number of local and classroom assessments to ensure academic growth.

Individual student test results have already been shared with parents throughout the District.

▪ **District 64 website for reports and meeting video**

The student achievement reports, the Board meeting video and further information on the Educational Ends are available on the District 64 website (www.d64.org).

The 2012 Illinois Report Card for each school as well as the District will be available on the website and in school offices prior to the official ISBE release on Wednesday, October 31.