



NEWS

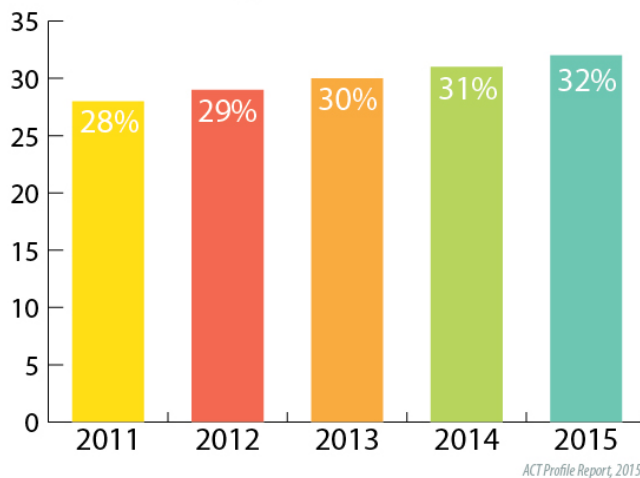
Denise Kahler, Director of Communications (785) 296-4876

September 8, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kansas Schools Raising the Bar on Student Success

TOPEKA – The Kansas State Board of Education this morning reviewed a series of academic performance outcomes for Kansas students as measured by the ACT, SAT, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Kansas College and Career Ready Academic Assessment. Kansas students consistently outperform the nation on standardized tests and on the ACT assessment. Kansas has increased the percentage of high school graduates meeting all four ACT college readiness benchmarks by five percent since 2011. Even with this consistent growth, however, nearly 30 percent of those students who pursue post-secondary education still require remedial coursework upon entrance. Kansas schools are working hard to change this statistic.

Kansas Five Year Trend Percent of Students Who Met College Readiness Benchmarks



In 2010, the Kansas State Department of Education adopted the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards (KCCRS). In addition to being more rigorous than any previous standards, the KCCRS

emphasize the need for students not only to know the content being taught, but also to be able to demonstrate their knowledge through their ability to reason and think critically in order to craft solutions to problems.

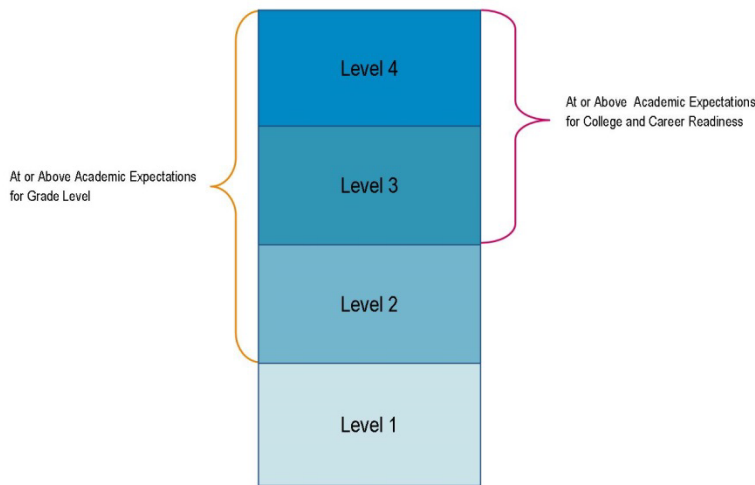
“Kansas has always performed well academically, but the remediation rates tell us that we need to make sure our students are learning at the depth needed to be academically ready for whatever path they choose after high school,” said Kansas Education Commissioner Randy Watson. “The shift towards the higher standards is in direct response to the increased demands of the workforce and post-secondary education. We want Kansas students well prepared and through the adoption of higher standards and better academic measures, Kansas schools are meeting that challenge.”

This year marks the first time Kansas students were assessed in English language arts and mathematics using the new Kansas College and Career Ready Academic Assessment developed by the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE) and fully aligned to the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards. Unlike previous assessments, this new computer assessment employs technology-enhanced items that require a student to go beyond simply answering a multiple-choice question. Students were required, for example, to highlight passages of text and plot graphs in order to demonstrate their knowledge and critical thinking skills. Because of the dramatic shift in assessment format as well as the increased rigor, results cannot be compared to any previous assessment. The 2015 results will serve as a benchmark by which to measure future progress.

Student performance was scored using four levels. Level 1 indicates that a student is not performing at grade level standards, and additional supports are needed. Level 2 indicates that the student is doing grade-level work as defined by the standards but not at the depth or level of rigor to be considered on-track for college readiness. Level 3 indicates that the student is performing at academic expectations for that grade level and is on track to being college ready. Level 4 indicates that the student is performing above expectations for that grade level and is on track to being college ready.

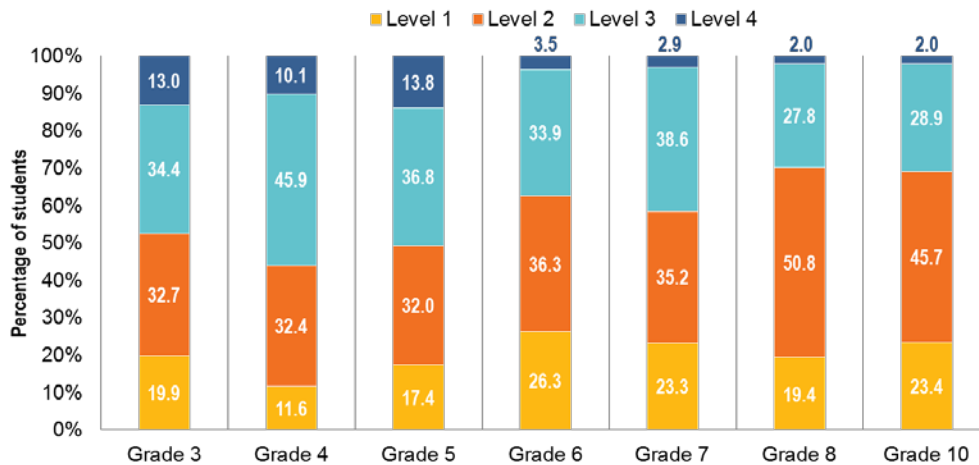
The following chart depicts the Kansas College and Career Ready Academic Assessment performance measurements:

Kansas Assessment Performance Levels



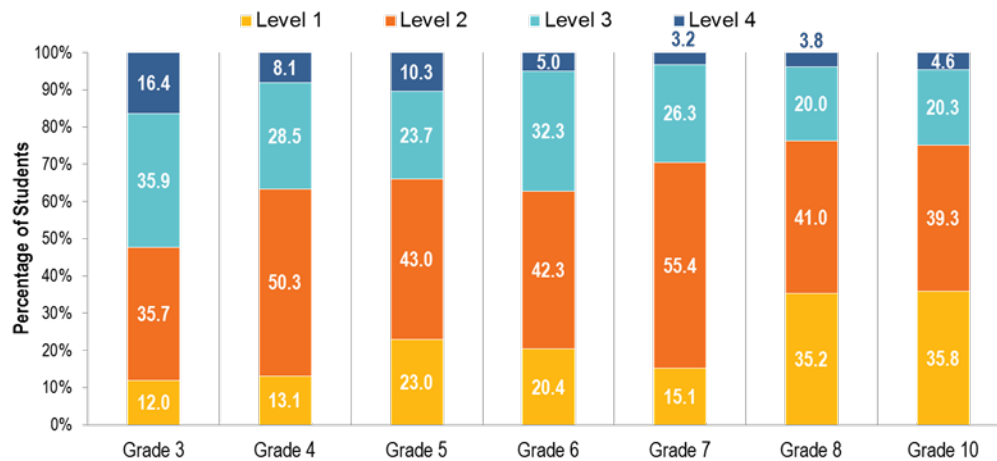
Kansas Results: English language arts

- An average of 79.8% of all students tested met or exceeded English language arts grade-level academic expectations.
- An average of 41.9% of all students tested met or exceeded English language arts grade-level academic expectations for college readiness.



Kansas Results: Mathematics

- An average of 77.9% of all students tested met or exceeded math grade-level academic expectations.
- An average of 34% of all students tested met or exceeded math grade-level academic expectations for college readiness.



Approximately 160 Kansas English language arts and mathematics educators worked with CETE over an intensive four-day period this summer to set performance standards, which define the range of scores qualifying for each of the four performance levels. Following that work, an education policy group made up of representatives from higher education, several education advisory councils, Kansas National Education Association, Kansas Board of Regents and the Kansas State Board of Education, was assembled to review the recommended performance standards as well as the impact when applied to actual 2015 assessment results and determine whether any adjustments should be made before gaining final approval from the state board. According to Commissioner Watson, Kansas educators were not afraid to set performance standards high. “That speaks volumes about the integrity of our teachers. They are committed to doing what’s right and that’s raising the bar on what students should know and be able to demonstrate to meet the demands of today’s world. They believe in the standards and they believe in their students’ abilities to, over time, meet those standards. We have to give students and schools the time needed to reach this higher academic bar. This academic work coupled with the work the State Board of Education is doing on their vision of education, will prepare all Kansas students academically and with the soft skills necessary to be successful after high school.”

Schools will be sending out parent letters in late October detailing individual student results and the Building Report Card, which reports district and building-level results, will be published on the KSDE website on December 8.

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