



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **R.I. Students Make Significant Gains on 2004 State Assessments Test Results Released Today Show Improvements in All Subjects, Grade Levels**

Results of the 2004 state assessments released today by the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) showed significant improvements at all grade levels in both English language arts and mathematics.

The test results showed that more than two-thirds of the elementary-school pupils in the state and more than half of the secondary-school students have met the state standard in English. More than half of the elementary-school pupils have met the state standard in mathematics.

Middle-school and high-school students made the biggest gains, increasing their scores by 11 percentage points in English. Here are the statewide results:

#### **Percent of Students Who Met the State Standards**

	<b>English Language Arts</b>			<b>Mathematics</b>		
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>% change</b>
<b>Elementary</b>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>67.0</b>	<b>+ 5.2%</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>+ 9.5%</b>
<b>Middle</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>+ 11%</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>+5.2 %</b>
<b>High</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>53.3</b>	<b>+ 11%</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>+ 10.3%</b>

Governor Donald L. Carcieri released the results this morning at a news conference at the Kent Heights Elementary School, in East Providence, one of the many school districts that showed significant improvement on the statewide tests. Other urban districts showing significant improvements included Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

“During my first State of the State Address, I committed my administration to raising the achievement of our low-performing schools,” said Governor Carcieri. “Today, I am here to deliver the good news. Rhode Island students demonstrated dramatic improvements on state tests administered in the 2003-2004 school year.

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“I am extremely proud of Rhode Island’s students,” Carcieri continued. “I want to commend our teachers and thank our parents and other community members who have gotten involved in our schools.”

Overall, 22 of the 36 school districts in the state improved substantially (3 percent or more) at all grade levels in at least one of the subjects.

The results are similarly impressive when disaggregated by groups of students. Federal law requires that the assessment results be reported for eight groups: racial or ethnic groups (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, White), students with disabilities, students with limited knowledge of English, and students living in poverty. In seven of the eight groups, students improved in both subjects at all three school levels.

There was substantial improvement (3 percent or more) on 20 of the 21 subtests (seven subtests in each of three school levels).

“The improvements we are celebrating today are not part of an overnight process,” said James A. DiPrete, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “For at least a decade, we have focused our efforts on school improvement and accountability. We have adopted high standards and given teachers the help they need to bring students to those standards – and we are beginning to see the results of our efforts.”

“The consistent focus on reform and on the standards movement is really beginning to improve learning and teaching throughout the state,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “Educators have access to the state standards, and they are incorporating these standards into the teaching practices, which leads to much better results on the state tests. Educators are also analyzing the data, looking to see where their students might have fallen short in past years, so that they can improve their teaching and focus on the areas of need.”

Rhode Island uses the New Standards Reference Examinations for its statewide assessments in English language arts and mathematics. The tests were administered last March in grades 4, 8, and 11. The tests have been administered since 1997, and they form the basis for the Rhode Island School Classification and Accountability system. RIDE plans to release the 2004 school-performance classifications, which is based on a number of targets set by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The state also administers Rhode Island assessments in writing and in health education; the results of these tests, also released today, are not used for school classification.

Rhode Island is in the process of revising its assessment system to meet the requirements of NCLB. Beginning in the fall of 2005, all students in grades 3 through 8 will take a new set of tests, being developed in collaboration with the states of New Hampshire and Vermont.

A complete list of the 2004 assessments results – statewide, by district, and by school, along with a fact sheet on the assessment system – is posted on the RIDE Web site, [www.ridoe.net](http://www.ridoe.net).