

**SUMMARY OF 2001 PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESMENT (PSSA)**  
**READING, MATHEMATICS AND WRITING**  
**SCHOOL-BY-SCHOOL SCALED SCORES**  
**November 2001**

**INTRODUCTION**

In an effort to further inform Pennsylvanians about the quality and characteristics of schools and other educational institutions in Pennsylvania, this report provides 2001 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) reading and mathematics performance level results and participation rates for individual schools throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, this report provides reading, mathematics, and eleventh grade writing scaled-score school level results. Parallel district performance level and scaled score results are provided as well.

The PSSA is a statewide test which is administered as required under the Chapter 4 Regulations of the State Board of Education as well as various Pennsylvania Statutes. The test is designed to assess academic levels of students, schools, and districts as well as to assist in identifying their strengths and weaknesses and foster improvements in academic achievement. The basis of the PSSA is the content contained in Pennsylvania's Academic Standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening and Mathematics.

The reading and mathematics PSSA is administered to students in grades five, eight and eleven, and was most recently administered in April 2001. The writing assessment is administered to students in grade 11 and was most recently administered in February 2001. All public school students are required to participate in the assessment unless they are excused by their parents for religious reasons. Information of previous test administrations can be found on the Department's website at [www.pde.psu.edu](http://www.pde.psu.edu). (The sixth and ninth grade writing PSSA was administered in October 2000 and those results are provided on the Department's website in the School Profiles section.)

Performance levels have now been established for the reading and mathematics PSSA. These performance levels, designated as advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic, are criteria based measures that represent how well a student is achieving in a particular area of Pennsylvania's academic standards. The performance levels were established by committees of Pennsylvania educators. The initial performance level reporting for writing will be based upon the October 2001 sixth and ninth grade and February 2002 eleventh grade assessment results. (More detailed information concerning Performance levels may be found on the Department's website using the "k-12 schools" drop down screen, click "assessment" to standards and assessment, then click "Performance Levels for PSSA".)

**READING THESE REPORTS**

These reports contain PSSA performance level (reading and mathematics) and scaled score (reading, mathematics, and writing) as well as participation rate results, by school, for public schools, including charter and vocational technical schools. Commensurate district PSSA results are also reported. These reports also include the PSSA results for intermediate units (IUs),

approved private schools (APs), and private residential rehabilitative institutions (PRRIs). These three types of schools are required to administer the PSSA. The students in these educational institutions are also public school students.

### **A. Overview of IU, APS, PRRI, and Nonpublic / private school PSSA participation**

**IUs** provide a wide variety of educational program services to special needs students with disabilities within 29 regions in Pennsylvania. The students served by IUs typically have severe disabilities which occur at relatively low incidence in the general school population.

**APs** provide specific special education programs for students with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, neurologically impairment, or serious emotional disturbance who cannot be adequately served by their school district or intermediate unit. An Approved Private School is a private school licensed by the State Board of Private Academic Schools.

**PRRIs** are residential facilities for court placed juveniles who are declared legally delinquent under the Juvenile Act. Educational services are provided to the PRRI students as part of their total rehabilitative package of services pursuant to a contract with the school district or IU.

**Non-public and private schools** are not required to participate in the PSSA. However, the Department offers these educational institutions the option of voluntarily participating in the PSSA provided they agree to include their results in Department reports and publications. Ninety-six participated in the 2001 assessment.

### **B. Data file presentation and statewide results**

There are two types of PSSA data files reported: School files and a District file.

#### **The School Files**

In the IU breakdown school files the presentation is by districts / educational institutions (including Vocational Technical – Career and Technical Centers) and arranged alphabetically within county and schools alphabetic within the district. The intermediate unit (IU) number is provided in the column headed as **IU**. APs and PRRIs as well as non-public and private school educational institutions are listed along with all other schools alphabetically by county. (For IUs, the mailing address is used to determine the county listing herein.) In the school level EXCEL files that include all IUs, the results are arranged in alphabetical order by county.

There are separate school files for performance levels and scaled score results.

The reading and mathematics school detail performance level files format displays each school by grade level combination for which there are PSSA results. **“Performance Levels”** indicate the percentage of students within each criterion referenced reading and mathematics academic achievement level for 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively. The advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic performance level criteria were determined by Pennsylvania educators along with parent and business representation.

The scaled score files format is slightly different in that it shows all PSSA grade levels for each school even if the school does not have PSSA results at a particular grade (because of the school's grade level configuration). "**Scaled scores**" are reported in reading mathematics, and writing. Scaled scores are included because of their ease of interpretation and because they allow comparisons of school results with district and statewide average scaled scores. Additionally, scaled scores provide one overall summary figure at the school (and district) level. Average Scaled Scores heading indicates the school scaled score in mathematics and reading for 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively as well as for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade writing.

Participation Rates heading in the school file detail scaled score presentation indicates the percent of 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in the school who responded to the PSSA and received a score for mathematics and reading. Parallel information is provided for 11<sup>th</sup> grade writing. The participation rate information is not reported in the performance level sections as it is already provided in the scaled score sections. The participation rate data may be found in the school detail scaled score files.

#### The District File

The District EXCEL file is also alphabetical within county and the intermediate unit number is shown in the column headed as **IU**. The district file contains all educational entities that have a unique administrative unit number that participated in the PSSA. The district file provides both scaled score and performance level PSSA data for grade 5, 8, and 11 reading and mathematics and PSSA scaled score information for grade 11 writing.

#### Statewide Results

The 2001 statewide performance level percentages (rounded) by content and grade are as follows: (ADV = advanced, PRO= proficient, BASIC = basic, BB = Below Basic)

<b>2001</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>
<b>Math</b>			
<b>ADV</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>21.1</b>
<b>PRO</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>26.8</b>
<b>BASIC</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>21.7</b>
<b>BB</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>30.4</b>
<b>Reading</b>			
<b>ADV</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>16.0</b>
<b>PRO</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>42.1</b>
<b>BASIC</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>19.3</b>
<b>BB</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>22.6</b>

The 2001 statewide scaled score averages (rounded) are as follows:

<b>2001</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>1310</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>1300</b>
<b>Writing</b>	--	--	<b>1320</b>

The 2001 statewide district scaled score ranges for each subject and grade are as follows:

<b>2001</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>870-1520</b>	<b>930-1500</b>	<b>820-1600</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>880-1500</b>	<b>830-1490</b>	<b>810-1520</b>

The statewide writing 2001 grade 11 district range is 560-1610.

The 2001 statewide school scaled score ranges for each subject and grade are as follows:

<b>2001</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>850-1630</b>	<b>930-1530</b>	<b>820-1630</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>790-1580</b>	<b>710-1540</b>	<b>800-1530</b>

The statewide writing 2001 grade 11 school range is 560-1610.

**Overall, the statewide PSSA participation rate in 2001 was approximately 97%; with the results varying slightly by content and grade level.**

### **C. Interpreting the results**

For reading and mathematics the 1996 PSSA is the base year. Because the 1997 through 2001 assessments were statistically equated (or linked) with the 1996 assessment reference year, the scaled scores from these years can reflect growth from 1996. For example, if a 2001 scaled score is higher than 1996 (or 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000) it can be interpreted as improvement from that year. Since the statewide writing assessment model and scoring guide changed in 2000, PSSA writing results from previous years are not directly comparable to the 2000 results and beyond.

In some cases in the scaled score sections, test data are not listed for a school. This occurs when a school does not have students in the grade(s) tested. For example, an elementary school that does not have fifth, eighth, or eleventh graders would not participate in the reading or mathematics PSSA. In addition, some educational institutions serve special populations, such as IUs, APSs, and PRRIs, and their results should not be viewed relative to schools with heterogeneous populations. Additionally, because each one of these educational institutions is highly unique, they should not be viewed relative to each other.

Further, the size of the school / educational institution should also be considered in interpreting the results from year to year. That is, institutions with a lesser number of children will tend to show more variability in scores from year to year. Schools that have less than 10 students assessed are noted by a double asterisk (\*\*).

Also, in some cases, schools did not have at least an 80 percent participation rate in one, both or all three subject areas. This 80 percent participation rate is not meant to be an absolute criterion in terms of understanding the school's participation in the reading, mathematics, or writing scores or programs. Rather, it is suggested as one reference to aid in interpreting the sample of students that were assessed in a particular school. (In many instances IUs, APSs, and PRRIs do not have an 80% participation rate in the PSSA because of the special educational population served.)

**In September 2001, each educational institution received detailed analyses of their performance on the PSSA. To fully understand these scores and receive detailed information on a program, please contact the institution directly. Individuals are also encouraged to contact the IU, APS, or PRRI of their interest to further understand the uniqueness of that particular educational program and the special student population served.**

These results are also available online at [www.pde.psu.edu](http://www.pde.psu.edu).