

Guide to the

2004

Prairie State Achievement Examination



The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) measures student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. It recognizes the excellent achievement of individual students whose scores qualify them for honors, and it measures the progress that schools have made in helping their students meet the Illinois Learning Standards.

The PSAE comprises the ACT Assessment®, Work Keys® tests in reading and mathematics, and tests in writing, science, and social science developed by Illinois teachers and curriculum experts working in cooperation with the Illinois State Board of Education and its test development contractor. Grade 11 students took the PSAE in April/May 2004.

School and District Reports

Schools receive a summary report and school roster, individual reports for each student, and a student data file on disk or CD. Districts receive a summary report and copies of school summary reports. District superintendents also receive a District Summary, which is a roster of the results of all schools in the district for each of 21 comparison groups. In each subject, PSAE scores can range from 120 to 200.

Page 1 of the school and district reports (“PSAE Performance Profile”) presents the percent of student scores in each of four levels of achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards for all students tested. The four performance levels are described on the next page of this guide, in Table 1. The numeric cut scores on the 120-to-200 point scale follow in Table 2 (see page 3 of this guide). In reading, for example, a student must obtain a scale score of 155 or higher to achieve in the Meets Standards level and a scale score of 178 or higher to achieve in the Exceeds Standards level. These cut scores, which are based on standard setting conducted in 2001, do not change from administration to administration. However, the percent of student scores that fall at each level may shift over time.

Page 2 of the school and district reports shows the average scores for the school, district, and state on the PSAE tests and the component parts of those tests. This information can be used to identify areas of strength and target specific areas for improvement.

Pages 3 and 4 of the school and district reports present the percent of student scores in each of the four performance levels for subgroups designated by gender, race/ethnicity, income, English proficiency, disability, and migrant status.

Individual Student Reports

The Individual Student Report helps teachers and parents or guardians understand a student’s strengths and weaknesses in the areas tested. The report also compares each student’s achievement to that of other students in the school, district, and state.

The brochure, “A Guide to Your Scores,” that accompanies the Individual Student Report describes all elements of the report. A parents’ guide to scores is also available for Spanish-speaking parents.

The Individual Student Report begins with Chart A, which shows scores, performance levels, and the percent of scores in the school, district, and state at or below the student’s score for each subject.

Chart B shows individual student scores and average scores for the school, district, and state on the component parts of the PSAE tests.

Chart C describes the four performance levels and the score ranges that define each performance level. This is followed by Chart D, which shows the percent of student scores at each performance level for the school, district, and state.

Chart E compares the student’s score to the range of scores in the school. Horizontal bars show the approximate range scored by the middle half of students in the school, district, and state. If a score, represented by a diamond, falls to the left of the bar, it means the student scored in the bottom 25% of the corresponding reference group (school, district, state). If the score falls to the right of the bar, it means the student scored in the top 25%.

Blanks or “NA”s may appear on individual student reports. If any section of the report contains an “NA,” it means a score is not available because the student did not answer enough questions for a score to be generated. If a student was not present and did not take a test, a blank will appear on the report.

Table 1
PSAE Performance Level Descriptions

Performance Level	Description
Exceeds Standards	Student work demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in the subject. Students creatively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate the results.
Meets Standards	Student work demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in the subject. Students effectively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems.
Below Standards	Student work demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in the subject. However, because of gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills in limited ways.
Academic Warning	Student work demonstrates limited knowledge and skills in the subject. Because of major gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills ineffectively.

Spring 2004 Results (All Students)

School and district reports present statewide results for comparative purposes. This guide provides statewide results that may be useful in interpreting the reports.

Figure 1 on the next page shows student performance statewide relative to the Illinois Learning Standards across subjects. Table 2 shows the scale score ranges for the four PSAE performance levels and five subject areas. Table 3 (see page 4) shows the percent of student scores at each of these performance levels for 2004 as well as for 2001 through 2003. Table 3 also shows the percent of student scores that meet or exceed standards.

Figure 1
Percent of Student Scores in Each Performance Level (All Students): Spring 2004 Administration

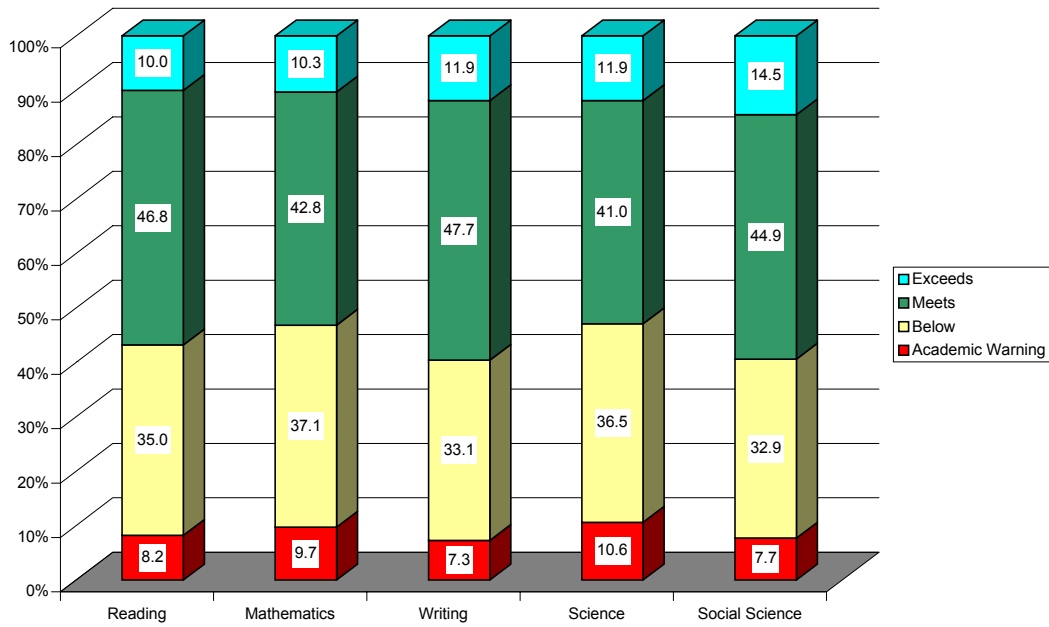


Table 2
Scale Score Ranges That Define PSAE Performance Levels

Subject	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
READING	120-134	135-154	155-177	178-200
MATHEMATICS	120-135	136-155	156-178	179-200
WRITING	120-132	133-154	155-178	179-200
SCIENCE	120-135	136-157	158-177	178-200
SOCIAL SCIENCE	120-136	137-153	154-173	174-200

Table 3
Percent of Student Scores in Each Performance Level (All Students)

Subject	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards	Meets + Exceeds
READING					
2001	8	34	46	12	58
2002	8	34	45	13	58
2003	7.5	36.1	44.8	11.6	56.4
2004	8.2	35.0	46.8	10.0	56.8
MATHEMATICS					
2001	9	37	45	9	54
2002	10	36	45	8	53
2003	9.5	37.2	46.6	6.7	53.3
2004	9.7	37.1	42.8	10.3	53.1
WRITING					
2001	6	35	50	9	59
2002	6	34	49	10	59
2003	6.3	34.8	49.5	9.4	58.9
2004	7.3	33.1	47.7	11.9	59.6
SCIENCE					
2001	12	38	39	11	50
2002	11	37	41	12	53
2003	10.7	38.0	40.0	11.3	51.3
2004	10.6	36.5	41.0	11.9	52.9
SOCIAL SCIENCE					
2001	9	33	43	15	58
2002	7	36	43	14	57
2003	8.0	35.8	41.7	14.5	56.2
2004	7.7	32.9	44.9	14.5	59.4