

# DRAFT

## PRESS RELEASE

Jackson, Mississippi  
Mississippi Department of Education

### Student Test Scores Released from the Spring 2003 Mississippi Curriculum Test

During May, Mississippi public school students in grades 2 through 8 took the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT). This was the third year that this test was administered in the state. The MCT is a criterion-referenced test that is aligned with the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks 2000. The MCT results are reported in terms of the student performance standards that were established in September 2001. The test produces scores in three content areas - reading, language, and mathematics.

The 2003 MCT scale scores for Mississippi students were higher than the scores in 2002 in all content areas at all grade levels except for Grade 6 reading where the mean scale score was 1.6 point lower.

Another important way of assessing student performance is determining the percentage of students in the state that met or exceeded certain student performance standards. Every student's score falls into one of four proficiency levels on the MCT. The proficiency levels are (from lowest to highest) Minimal, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Students at the Basic level demonstrate partial mastery of the content area knowledge and skills required for success at the next grade level. Students at the Proficient level demonstrate solid academic performance and mastery of the content area knowledge and skills required for success at the next grade level.

The percentage of students scoring at the Basic level or higher increased at all grade levels in reading except for grade 2 where the percentage remained constant. In language, the percentage increased at every grade 2-8. In mathematics, the percentage increased at grades 4-8, dropped by one point at grade 2 and remained constant at grade 3.

The percentage of students scoring at the Proficient level or higher increased at all grade levels in all content areas except for grade 6 mathematics where the percentage remained constant.

See the attached tables showing the MCT results for 2001, 2002, and 2003.