

**2008 MCA II Test Result Talking Points**  
from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)  
and Minnesota School Public Relations Association (MinnSPRA)

**2008 Math and Reading MCA-II results are up slightly, but an achievement gap persists.**

**Math and Reading MCA-II assessment results were up slightly in 2008.**

**Minnesota students made the biggest improvement in 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading, with a 9 percent increase.** The dramatic increase in 10<sup>th</sup> grade can be attributed to the new reading graduation requirement (GRAD) embedded within the MCA-II, thus providing a more meaningful incentive for students to take the test seriously and perform well. Remember that the main purpose of the MCA-II is *system* accountability, while the GRAD (like the old BST) is intended for *student* accountability. Next year 11<sup>th</sup> graders will have a math requirement for graduation (GRAD) embedded in the MCA-II; it is anticipated that similar increases in test scores may result in 2009 for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade MCA-II in mathematics.

**Other noted improvements were seen in 5<sup>th</sup> grade math and 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading, both of which increased by approximately 3 percent.**

**All other grade and subject results increased slightly or remained constant when compared to 2007.**

**The 2008 results continue to reflect a persistent achievement gap between student subgroups.** This achievement gap is among the largest in the nation. That is, while some gains were made for ethnic subgroups, they mirrored or were worse than gains made by white students.

**The number of schools of schools and districts that will not be making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2008 is expected to increase.** This increase will be the result of only slight improvements in proficiency while at the same time required increases in reading and math targets in order to meet the federal government's 100 percent proficient by 2014 requirement.

**Other notes:**

- Remember that reading scores dropped from 2006 to 2007, as anticipated, due to the elimination of the TEAE reading test for ELL students (thus ELL students now must take the MCA-II). Results seem to have bounced back this year.
- Similarly, math scores increased from 2007 to 2008 due to the allowance of ELL students to take the MTELL test (the opposite of reading); therefore, we did not see much of a change from 2007 to 2008.
- Finally, significantly cognitively delayed students still can take an alternate assessment, MTAS, in both reading and math – and so are not included in MCA-II results.