

August 10, 2015

### **2015 MAP Results Commissioner's Statement**

Good morning and thank you for joining us. We appreciate your taking the time to understand the context around the spring 2015 assessment as you report on this year's MAP results. Let me make clear at the start - this morning we will be discussing statewide results; we will not be discussing individual district results.

We are proud of Missouri students and our school districts for their hard work in adapting to change in this year's assessments. It is a year of transition.

This was the first time that students in all tested grades or courses were assessed on the new Missouri Learning Standards in English language arts and math. These new standards raised the expectations for learning in Missouri. The results reflect the time our teachers put into preparing for this transition over the past several years and their effort in providing effective instruction for students each day in our schools. The results also reflect our students' efforts in demonstrating what they have learned – and they did so, using a new testing format.

For the first time, assessments were administered online in grades 3 through 8. We are very pleased that students across the state are provided access to these 21st Century learning tools.

Since these are brand new tests that set a new baseline for student performance, we cannot compare the results with MAP tests of the past. We have, however, provided results from the Smarter Balanced field tests given in spring 2014. Missouri students exceeded our expectations. Results were higher on the MAP tests in nearly every category than results from the multi-state field test.

We are especially encouraged by what we are seeing in English; MANY of Missouri's students are demonstrating proficiency in reading and analyzing texts, writing and listening effectively, and planning research.

Math results may reflect the power of consistent instruction on the updated Missouri Learning Standards. Students in the lower grades who have been using the standards throughout their school years show higher levels of proficiency than students in upper grades who experienced changes during their school careers.

It is also important to note that 8<sup>th</sup> grade math scores do not include some of our highest achieving math students. Twenty percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders take Algebra I prior to high school. In an effort to reduce mandated testing requirements for students, Missouri does not "double test" these students. They take the Algebra I test in place of the grade-level test. Therefore, performance of students taking Algebra I is not reflected in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math test results you are seeing. If we look at 8<sup>th</sup> graders – irrespective of which test was taken – the proficiency rate is 40.8% (Grade-level = 28.3%).

While tests are only one way of measuring student learning – AND we certainly cannot draw too many conclusions with one year of baseline data – we are encouraged by what we see. We use a standardized process to help ensure we are meeting the needs of ALL Missouri students. High-quality assessments are effective tools that educators, parents and students can use to understand and measure student progress in a meaningful way. We use multiple assessments at the classroom, school, district and state levels to make critical decisions about instruction, interventions and support, and policies as we continue to strive for educational excellence for Missouri students.