

**HISD fifth- and eighth-graders make strides in**

**math and reading on STAAR exams**

*May 10, 2018* – Fifth- and eighth-grade students in the Houston Independent School District achieved significant gains in both reading and mathematics on the first administration of the STAAR test.

Passing rates in math showed improvement from last year, as both fifth- and eighth-graders posted an increase at every performance level. Of note, HISD fifth-grade students saw their strongest growth in math at the Meets Grade Level Standard with a gain of 6 percentage points. Eighth-grade students showed the most growth in math at the Approaches Grade Level Standard with a gain of 5 percentage points from the previous year.

From 2015 to 2018, HISD students have achieved double-digit gains at the Meets Grade Level Standard in mathematics. HISD fifth-graders reaching that level increased 13 percentage points, while eighth-graders improved by 15 percentage points.

Overall, passing rates for district fifth-graders in reading increased by 6 percentage points from last year; passing rates for district eighth-graders increased by 1 percentage point. Houston eighth-graders achieving the Masters Grade Level Standard in reading increased 5 percentage points.

In math, district results mirrored trends statewide. In fifth-grade math, district scores increased by 3  percentage points, as did state scores. In eighth-grade math, district scores increased by 5 percentage points from the previous year, while state scores increased by 4 percentage points.

In fifth-grade reading, district scores increased by 6 percentage points from the previous year, and state scores increased by 7 percentage points. In eighth-grade reading, district scores increased by 1 percentage point, while the state’s scores remained flat.

The district also saw progress on closing the achievement gap in both fifth and eighth grades. In fifth grade, passing rates for African-American students increased 3 and 5 percentage points in math and reading, respectively. For Hispanic students, passing rates in math increased 3 percentage points, and passing rates in reading increased 8 percentage points.

In eighth grade, passing rates for African-American students increased 2 percentage points in math from last year. Hispanic students showed an increase of 7 and 2 percentage points in math and reading, respectively.

The district saw greater performance increases among fifth- and eighth-grade English language learners at the Approaches Grade Level Standard in both reading and math than the overall fifth- and eighth-grade student population in both subjects.

“Our students and staff have worked tirelessly this year, and I’m excited to see their work reflected in these scores,” Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. “We are proud of the improvement our students have shown on this year’s STAAR math and reading assessments despite the difficult year our district has had. The focus of our efforts continues to be on our students and their continued academic progress.”

These results are based on the approximately 16,000 HISD students in grade five and approximately 13,000 students in grade eight who took the STAAR reading and math exams in April.

If unsuccessful after the first administration, students receive additional state-mandated accelerated instruction and take the second administration of the reading and math tests May 14–15, 2018.

Due to the impact of Hurricane Harvey, Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath waived the fifth- and eighth-grade retention requirements for HISD. Any fifth- or eighth-grader who has not passed the second administration of the STAAR reading or math tests will not be required to take the third administration. Retention for these students will be at the discretion of campuses and district. Students who do not pass the first administration will still be required to take the second administration because these results will be included in the accountability system.

The results of the first administration provide an indication of how the STAAR fifth- and eighth-grade reading and math assessments will impact district and campus accountability ratings. Under HB 22, districts will get their first A-F letter ratings in August 2018. However, schools will still be rated as Met Standard or Improvement Required. Schools will be given an A-F rating for the first time in August 2019.

The TEA is expected to announce whether accountability waivers will be granted to school districts affected by Hurricane Harvey in June.