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Fewer than half achieve target proficiency in English and math on the more rigorous Smarter Balanced Assessment

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Only 76 Hawaii public schools achieved proficiency of at least 51 percent of students on the math portion of the Smarter Balanced Assessment last school year, according to an analysis of data released Tuesday by the state Department of Education.

Among the state's 288 schools, including department and charter schools, math results ranged from a low of 9 percent proficiency at Waianae High to a high of 84 percent at Waikiki Elementary. The statewide average for math was 41 percent on the more rigorous Common Core-aligned test.

A larger number of schools performed better on the English language arts portion of the test, which was administered for the first time last school year: 129 schools achieved proficiency of at least 51 percent of students. Scores ranged from a low of 16 percent at Na Wai Ola Public Charter School in Mountain View to 86 percent at Kaelepulu Elementary in Windward Oahu. The statewide language arts average was 48 percent.

The DOE last month announced statewide results on the test — more rigorous than its predecessor, the Hawaii State Assessment — and Tuesday released school-level data as part of its Strive HI accountability system, which credits schools for improvements in standardized test scores, ACT scores, attendance, graduation and college-going rates, and closing the achievement gap between high-needs students and their peers.

Highlights from the Strive HI results include:

>> Chronic absenteeism, an indicator of student success, in elementary schools continued to drop, to 10.9 percent from 11.2 percent, reflecting the percentage of students absent 15 days or more. Some 89 elementary schools improved their absenteeism rates over the past year. Three schools tied for the lowest chronic absenteeism rate of 2 percent: Momilani, Nimitz and Noelani elementary schools.

>> Overall 11th-grade ACT scores increased by 3 percentage points, meaning more students hit the benchmark of a composite score of 19 or higher on the college-readiness exam. Top scorers were charter schools Kihei Charter School (75 percent), University Lab School (72 percent) and Myron Thompson Academy (69 percent).

>> Statewide science proficiency on the Hawaii State Assessment held steady at 41 percent. Students are tested in grades 4 and 8 and once in high school. Top-scoring schools were Haleiwa Elementary (100 percent), Kaelepulu Elementary (98 percent) and Waikiki Elementary (98 percent).

>> The statewide graduation rate held at 82 percent, just above the national average. Schools with the highest rates were University Lab School (100 percent), Lanai High & Elementary (97 percent) and

Moanalua High and **Myron Thompson Academy (tied at 95 percent)**.

>> The statewide college-going rate dropped 1 percentage point to 62 percent, reflecting the number of students who enrolled in any college nationwide within 16 months of graduation. High schools with the highest college-going rates were University Lab School (91 percent), Kalani (85 percent) and Kaiser (84 percent).

“The results of the elementary schools, in terms of the improvement in scores, really demonstrates that we have a bright future in public education,” Brian De Lima, Board of Education vice chairman, said at Tuesday evening’s board meeting. “I think there’s a lot of positives, but as a board, for these annual reviews, it’s important for us to point out that there’s a lot more work to be done.”

De Lima and other board members cited concerns about the state’s overall achievement gap — the gap in test scores between high-needs students (special-education, low-income and English language learners) and their peers — holding steady at roughly 27 percentage points. He suggested the department address the achievement gap as a high priority.

First approved in 2013, the state-developed Strive HI system largely replaces federal mandates under the outdated No Child Left Behind law, which required schools to meet rising reading and math proficiency targets or face sanctions.

“What we’ve tried to do over the past few years is create an accountability system that aligns with our vision and find metrics that mattered and that were reflective of our values,” schools Deputy Superintendent Stephen Schatz said.

“In the old No Child Left Behind days, it was all about test scores in just two subjects — reading and math — and it was a question of whether or not you met the ‘adequate yearly progress’ that was required by the federal government,” he said.

Under Strive HI, schools receive a score out of a possible 400 points, which determines where they land in one of five categories: recognition (top 5 percent of schools); continuous improvement; focus; priority (lowest 5 percent of schools); and superintendent’s zone for persistently low-performing schools.

Momilani Elementary in Pearl City scored the highest with 361 points. Manoa, Helemano, Mililani Waena and Liholiho elementary schools rounded out the top five. On the opposite end of the scale, schools with the lowest index scores were Na Wai Ola, Kaewai Elementary in Kalihi, Waiahole Elementary, Mountain View Elementary and Pope Elementary in Waimanalo.

This year’s results show seven new schools moved into the recognition category while 20 schools improved enough to be moved out of the focus category and into continuous improvement, the DOE said.

“The data show that as a state our schools are maintaining recent gains, and the Strive HI reports provide important feedback to our schools and the state offices to support our students’ success,” schools Assistant Superintendent Tammi Oyadomari-Chun said in a statement.

In previous years the DOE has rewarded high-performing schools with cash awards, but legislators removed funding for prizes from the department’s budget request last year.

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**STRIVE HI HIGHLIGHTS**

Hawaii public schools are graded annually on the state-developed Strive HI accountability system. Schools are credited for how well students do on standardized tests, ACT college readiness exams and attendance as well as graduation and college-going rates. Here's a look at some of the state's highest-performing schools:

<b>Highest English language arts proficiency</b>	
Kaolepulu Elementary .....	86%
Noelani Elementary .....	82%
Waikiki Elementary .....	82%
Hawaii statewide average .....	48%
<b>Highest math proficiency</b>	
Waikiki Elementary .....	84%
Momilani Elementary .....	83%
Noelani Elementary .....	80%
Hawaii statewide average .....	41%
<b>Highest science proficiency</b>	
Halewa Elementary .....	100%
Kaolepulu Elementary .....	98%
Waikiki Elementary .....	98%
Hawaii statewide average .....	41%
<b>Lowest chronic absenteeism</b>	
Momilani Elementary .....	2%
Nimitz Elementary .....	2%
Noelani Elementary .....	2%
Hawaii statewide average .....	11%
<b>Highest on-time graduation rate</b>	
University Lab School .....	100%
Lanai High & Elementary .....	97%
Momaha High .....	95%
Hawaii statewide average .....	82%
<b>Highest college-going rate</b>	
University Lab School .....	91%
Kalani High .....	85%
Kaiser High .....	84%
Hawaii statewide average .....	62%

Source: Department of Education, 2014-15 Strive HI results

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