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BOARD RELEASES FALL ISAT SCORES

BOISE - Fall Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) results released by the State Board of Education show strong scores for many Idaho students in language usage and reading, but additional effort will be needed in math to reach the proficient mark by spring.

Initial analysis of the fall test results shows the state average in grades 4 to 10 in language usage and grades 5 to 10 in reading are already at the proficiency mark.

"This is the second year Idaho students have taken the fall ISAT and the State Board is pleased with how teachers and students responded. The fall ISAT is intended to give teachers and students a snapshot of what each student knows as they begin the academic year. Based on ISAT results, teachers can tailor an academic plan for each student. By reviewing this information, students can receive the extra help they may need or move forward on the skills they have mastered," said Dr. Randy Thompson, chief academic officer for the State Board of Education.

Approximately 177,000 Idaho students took ISAT tests in language usage, reading and math in fall 2003. The test uses a RIT score, or Raush Unit, and the ISAT tests are on a continuous scale from 140 to 300 RIT points. RIT points are applied to measure the level of mastery the student demonstrates on the test and is unrelated to the age and gender of the student. Higher RIT scores indicate a higher level of concept mastery by the student. For example, a score of 160 may correspond with the ability to add and subtract simple numbers, while a score of 245 may indicate mastery of algebra.

The Board will release a more detailed analysis of the ISAT in February, but beginning analysis of fall ISAT scores shows the following:

- Male students score slightly better in math than female students, but on average female students outscore male students in language usage and reading.
- Tenth grade male students had an average math RIT of 240, while female students averaged 239.2.
- The gap between males and females widens in language usage and reading, where females score an average of 3.8 and 2.3 RIT points higher, respectively.
- Tenth grade female students had an average reading RIT of 227.8, and male students scored an average of 225.8.
- For language usage, tenth grade female students had an average score of 227.3, and males average was 222.9.

Results from the fall 2003 ISAT indicate differences between students in ethnic/racial groups:

- Spanning all grades from 2 to 10, Asian students had the highest average RIT scores in both math and language usage, followed by Caucasian students. Hispanic students had the lowest average RIT scores, followed by Native American and African American students.
- In reading, Asian students had the highest average RIT score in grades 2 to 4, and 7. Caucasian students had the highest average scores in grades 5 and 6, and 8 to 10 for reading.