

April 8, 2005

IDAHO STUDENTS BEGIN ISAT TESTING

Science Test Added in Grades 5, 7, 10

BOISE - More than 177,000 students will take the Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) in language usage, reading and math beginning April 11 and ending May 20, 2005.

Students in grades two through 10 take the tests to measure how well they know and understand Idaho standards. ISAT's are given to students at least twice a year - in the fall and spring. The tests are administered via computer and are not timed. Spring results are used to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the "No Child Left Behind" Act.

In preparation for a new federal requirement, students in grades 5, 7 and 10 will also take a new science ISAT. According to the "No Child Left Behind Act," schools must begin testing science in the 2007-2008 school year. Idaho is piloting the science test this spring in three grades. Science results will not be used to determine school and district Adequate Yearly Progress.

"The ISAT's are a tool for student instruction," said Gary Stivers, Executive Director of the State Board of Education. "With the ISAT's we are able to determine how much a student has learned and if the student is performing on grade level. The State Board of Education encourages parents to talk with teachers about their student's ISAT results and options for improving academic achievement."

The State Board of Education believes strongly that all students should have a basic level of knowledge in math, reading and language usage by the time they exit high school. To ensure students demonstrate minimum competency, 10th grade students, starting with the class of 2006, must also pass the ISAT's as a graduation requirement. The State Board of Education is phasing in the requirement. For the class of 2006, students must pass an 8th grade proficiency level and students in the class of 2007 must pass a 9th grade proficiency level. The full 10th grade requirement will be in effect for the class of 2008. Students may "bank" their scores once they pass each test and have up to nine opportunities to pass the tests.

The State Board of Education is expected to release statewide results for ISAT's in July.