

DRAFT

PRESS RELEASE

Jackson, Mississippi
Mississippi Department of Education

Student Test Scores Released from the Spring 2003 Writing Assessment

During March, Mississippi public school students in Grades 4 and 7 were administered the Mississippi Writing Assessment. This was the fourth year that the Writing Assessment was administered in the state. The Writing Assessment is aligned with the Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2000 and assesses the student's ability to produce writing that reflects increasing proficiency. This is a goal for all Mississippi students.

Each student's writing is assigned to one of five score points (0-4) based on a scoring rubric. The average Grade 4 writing score on the Spring 2000 Writing Assessment was 2.0. The average increased to 2.1 in Spring 2001 and to 2.5 in Spring 2002. In Spring 2003, the average score was 2.2. At Grade 7, the average writing score for 2000 was 2.0. The average score increased to 2.3 in 2001 and remained the same in 2002 and 2003.

See the attached table of results. In addition to the average writing scores for each year, the table shows the number of students tested and the score distributions (the number and percentage of students falling at each score point).

Note: Annual changes in performance on the Writing Assessment must be interpreted with caution because the writing prompts change each year and cannot be statistically equated for difficulty as are the forms of the Mississippi Curriculum Test.