



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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**Contact: Julie Johnson Thompson  
(501) 683-4786 / (501) 580-6508  
[julie.thompson@arkansas.gov](mailto:julie.thompson@arkansas.gov)**

## **GAINS MADE ON END-OF-COURSE, LITERACY EXAMS**

LITTLE ROCK: Arkansas students improved performance in geometry and algebra in 2008 from the previous year, while performance remained constant in literacy, according to the latest round of Arkansas assessment scores.

“Earlier this month we announced improved performance on our mathematics and literacy benchmark examinations for third- through eighth-graders,” said Dr. Ken James, Commissioner of Education. “I’m happy to report similar progress for our end-of-course exams in algebra and geometry.”

Each year students take the mathematics end-of-course benchmark tests at the end of their Algebra I and geometry classes. The Grade 11 Literacy Examination is administered to all high school juniors in the spring of the year.

The majority of students take the end-of-course exams in April 2008, but several take the exam in January 2008 due to block scheduling. The scores for each exam are:

- Of the 872 students taking the Algebra I end-of-course exam in January, 53 percent scored proficient and above. That compares to 55 percent in 2007.
- Of the 35,602 student taking the Algebra I end-of-course exam in April, 66 percent scored proficient and above. That compares to 61 percent in 2007.
- Of the 986 students taking the geometry end-of-course exam in January, 68 percent scored proficient and above. That compares to 61 percent in 2007.
- Of the 33,875 students taking the geometry end-of-course exam in April, 60 percent scored proficient and above. That compares to 59 percent in 2007.
- Of the 31075 students taking the Grade 11 Literacy Exam, 51 percent scored proficient and above. That compares to 51 percent in 2007.

“Again, our schools and students are demonstrating steady progress in the area of mathematics that is encouraging because we know that with a continued focus on improved instruction and interventions and on resources in terms of professional development and policies, all students should be able to achieve proficiency,” Dr. James said. “In terms of literacy, I am glad that we still have more than half of our students scoring proficient and above, but we know there are tweaks we need to make

to improve literacy scores. Just how to do that is something we at the Department of Education are considering seriously.”

A district- and school-level report of the End-of-Course and Grade 11 Literacy examinations are available at **ArkansasEd.org**, as is a PowerPoint with charts showing the historical progress of the scores.

*The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.*