

Seventh-Grade Reading Skills

DEFINITION

Seventh-grade reading skills is the percentage of seventh-grade students who met expectations in English language arts on the *Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)* test.

SIGNIFICANCE

Strong reading skills are essential for a student's academic success in high school and college.¹ Reading skills also are a powerful indicator of a student's ability to contribute to, participate in, and succeed in the workforce and the community.² Literacy demands intensify dramatically in grades four through 12, as students are expected to comprehend, synthesize, and analyze increasingly complex texts across academic disciplines. Even after mastering basic literacy skills, adolescents need ongoing support and instruction to develop advanced literacy skills required to succeed in middle and high school, such as applying critical thinking skills and drawing conclusions based on evidence.³

Reading difficulties can persist over time with long-term consequences for youth. Adolescents who are poor readers are more likely to drop out of high school, to have lower wages, and to rely on public assistance than their peers with higher levels of literacy.⁴ These problems are exacerbated for English Language Learners and low-income

students, who are more likely to have low literacy skills.⁵

There has been limited progress in improving literacy skills among secondary students.⁶ When literacy-specific instruction is used as remedial support for struggling adolescent students, the programs typically serve only a small proportion of students who need assistance.⁷ These supplementary programs are generally insufficient for dealing with the pervasive low levels of adolescent literacy in many schools and communities.⁸

Intensive individualized instruction can help improve adolescent literacy among struggling readers.⁹ Successful adolescent literacy programs include comprehensive professional development for teachers and principals in literacy instruction strategies, incorporating literacy instruction in content area classes, providing opportunities for student discussion, and using student assessments effectively.^{10,11}

| 8th-Grade NAEP Reading Proficiency | | |
|------------------------------------|------|------|
| | 2005 | 2015 |
| RI | 29% | 35% |
| US | 29% | 33% |
| National Rank* | 25th | |
| New England Rank** | 6th | |

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org

The *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)* measures proficiency nationally and across states every other year for grades 4 and 8.

Seventh Graders Meeting Expectations on the PARCC English Language Arts Assessment, by Student Subgroups, 2015

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Male Students | 31% |
| Female Students | 47% |
| English Language Learners | 5% |
| Non-English Language Learners | 40% |
| Students With Disabilities | 6% |
| Students Without Disabilities | 44% |
| Low-Income Students | 22% |
| Higher-Income Students | 53% |
| White Students | 48% |
| Asian Students | 46% |
| Black Students | 18% |
| Hispanic Students | 20% |
| Native American Students | 25% |
| ALL STUDENTS | 39% |

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)*, 2015. Low-income status is determined by eligibility for the free or reduced-price lunch program.

◆ In 2015, 39% of Rhode Island seventh graders met expectations on the *Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)* English language arts assessment.¹²

◆ In Rhode Island in 2015, 22% of low-income seventh graders met expectations in English language arts, compared with 53% of higher-income seventh graders.¹³

Statewide Assessments of Reading and English Language Arts

◆ The *NECAP* was Rhode Island's statewide assessment system from 2005 to 2013. Starting in the 2014-2015 school year, Rhode Island began using a new statewide assessment, the *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)*.¹⁴

◆ The *PARCC* is aligned to the *Common Core State Standards* in English language arts/literacy and assesses students' ability to read and comprehend complex texts, use different sources to compare and synthesize ideas, and write effectively.¹⁵

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Table 46. Seventh Graders Meeting Expectations in English Language Arts, Rhode Island, 2015

| SCHOOL DISTRICT | # OF SEVENTH GRADERS ENROLLED | # OF SEVENTH GRADERS TESTED | % OF SEVENTH GRADERS TESTED | # OF SEVENTH GRADERS MEETING EXPECTATIONS | % OF SEVENTH GRADERS MEETING EXPECTATIONS |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Barrington | 293 | 287 | 98% | 216 | 75% |
| Bristol Warren | 234 | 215 | 92% | 91 | 42% |
| Burrillville | 213 | 65 | 31% | 18 | 28% |
| Central Falls | 152 | 133 | 88% | 9 | 7% |
| Chariho | 250 | 236 | 94% | 163 | 69% |
| Coventry | 396 | 377 | 95% | 133 | 35% |
| Cranston | 857 | 802 | 94% | 395 | 49% |
| Cumberland | 375 | 361 | 96% | 160 | 44% |
| East Greenwich | 188 | 185 | 98% | 149 | 81% |
| East Providence | 373 | 311 | 83% | 92 | 30% |
| Exeter-West Greenwich | 134 | 127 | 95% | 73 | 57% |
| Foster-Glocester | 144 | 137 | 95% | 65 | 47% |
| Jamestown | 53 | 49 | 92% | 32 | 65% |
| Johnston | 265 | 257 | 97% | 130 | 51% |
| Lincoln | 254 | 239 | 94% | 123 | 51% |
| Little Compton | 37 | 33 | 89% | 20 | 61% |
| Middletown | 171 | 154 | 90% | 65 | 42% |
| Narragansett | 85 | 81 | 95% | 50 | 62% |
| New Shoreham | 11 | 9 | 82% | * | * |
| Newport | 154 | 144 | 94% | 53 | 37% |
| North Kingstown | 349 | 298 | 85% | 200 | 67% |
| North Providence | 281 | 244 | 87% | 87 | 36% |
| North Smithfield | 154 | 129 | 84% | 66 | 51% |
| Pawtucket | 657 | 628 | 96% | 105 | 17% |
| Portsmouth | 211 | 188 | 89% | 101 | 54% |
| Providence | 1,793 | 1,602 | 89% | 297 | 19% |
| Scituate | 115 | 53 | 46% | 14 | 26% |
| Smithfield | 202 | 188 | 93% | 97 | 52% |
| South Kingstown | 263 | 252 | 96% | 146 | 58% |
| Tiverton | 160 | 130 | 81% | 62 | 48% |
| Warwick | 703 | 619 | 88% | 191 | 31% |
| West Warwick | 238 | 215 | 90% | 78 | 36% |
| Westerly | 214 | 197 | 92% | 64 | 32% |
| Woonsocket | 432 | 383 | 89% | 55 | 14% |
| <i>Charter Schools</i> | <i>372</i> | <i>370</i> | <i>99%</i> | <i>124</i> | <i>34%</i> |
| <i>UCAP</i> | <i>39</i> | <i>38</i> | <i>97%</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>5%</i> |
| <i>Four Core Cities</i> | <i>3,034</i> | <i>2,746</i> | <i>91%</i> | <i>466</i> | <i>17%</i> |
| <i>Remainder of State</i> | <i>7,398</i> | <i>6,588</i> | <i>89%</i> | <i>3,142</i> | <i>48%</i> |
| <i>Rhode Island</i> | <i>10,843</i> | <i>9,742</i> | <i>90%</i> | <i>3,734</i> | <i>38%</i> |

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)*, 2015.

Due to the adoption of a new assessment tool by RIDE in 2015, Seventh-Grade Reading Skills cannot be compared with prior Factbooks.

% meeting expectations are the seventh-grade students who met or exceeded expectations for their grade on the English language arts section of the *PARCC*. Only students who actually took the test are counted in the denominator for the district and school proficiency rates. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) may participate in alternate assessments. English Language Learners in the U.S. less than one year are exempt from the English language arts assessment.

2015 *PARCC* data for independent charter schools include: Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, The Compass School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, Highlander Charter School, The Learning Community, Segue Institute for Learning, and Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts. Charter schools included in total differ by year, depending on the schools serving that grade level on the year of the test. UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program. Four core cities and remainder of state calculations do not include charter schools or UCAP.

*Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These students are still counted in district totals and four core cities, remainder of state, and state totals.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

See Methodology Section for more information.

References

- ^{1,6,10} Hervey, S. (2013). *Adolescent readers in middle school*. New York, NY: Generation Ready.
- ²⁴ Salinger, T. (2011). *Addressing the "crisis" in adolescent literacy*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Smaller Learning Communities Program.

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