



# Guide to the **2014** **Prairie State Achievement Examination**

**Illinois State Board of Education**

The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) measures student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. It recognizes the excellent achievement of individual students whose scores qualify them for honors, and it measures the progress that schools have made in helping students meet the Illinois Learning Standards.

The 2014 PSAE is composed of the ACT® Plus Writing (PSAE Day 1), ACT WorkKeys® tests in reading and mathematics, and a science test developed by the Illinois State Board of Education with the assistance of Illinois teachers (PSAE Day 2). All eligible grade 11 students, as defined by the ISBE Rule\* adopted in January 2011, took the PSAE in April/May 2014.

## Reports Sent to Schools and Districts

Students' home schools receive a School Performance Profile report, a School Roster of Individual Student Results report that provides results for all tested subject areas, two copies of the Individual Student Report for each tested student, and a student data file on CD that contains results for all tested students. PSAE transcript labels and Prairie State Achievement Award certificates are also included with the reports sent to home schools in the fall.

Students' home schools also receive an Illinois State Goals School Report and two copies of the Illinois State Goals Student Report for each student who tested.

Students' home districts receive a District Performance Profile report, a District Roster of School Results report that provides results for all tested subject areas for all schools in the district, and a copy of the School Performance Profile report for each high school in the district. Districts that have more than one high school receive the student data files for their schools on CD.

One copy of the PSAE Individual Student Report will be sent to the student's testing school if it is different from the student's home high school.

All summary data in these reports include all students who tested, regardless of their enrollment date.

## Performance Profile Reports

Performance Profile reports show a summary of student scores for the school, district, and state (only district and state results are displayed in a District Performance Profile). Results are also displayed by gender, race/ethnicity, income level, English language proficiency, disability (IEP only), and migrant status.

The first page of the Performance Profile reports presents a summary of the percent of student scale scores in each of four levels of achievement relative to the Illinois

Learning Standards. The four performance levels are described at the top of page 1 of the report and in Table 1 of this guide. For each tested subject area, PSAE scores range from 120–200. The numeric cut scores on the 120-to-200-point scale follow in Table 2. In reading, for example, a student must obtain a scale score of 155 or higher to achieve the "Meets Standards" level and a scale score of 178 or higher to achieve the "Exceeds Standards" level. These cut scores—which for reading, mathematics, and science are based on standard setting conducted after the first administration of the PSAE in spring 2001, and for writing are based on standard setting conducted after the administration of the PSAE Writing Test in spring 2007—do not change from administration to administration. However, the percent of student scores that fall at each level may shift over time.

Also on page 1 of this report are the average scores for each of the tested subject areas. The reading and mathematics sections show average PSAE scores and average Day 1 and Day 2 scores for these subject areas. The science section shows average PSAE Science, Day 1 Science, and Day 2 Science scores. The Day 2 Science scores include a total score and four subscores. The writing section shows PSAE Writing scores and average Day 1 English and Day 1 Writing scores.

The other two pages of the Performance Profile reports present scores for reading, mathematics, science, and writing by each of 17 demographic subgroups. These pages identify, for all students and for each separate subgroup, the percent of student scores in each of the four performance levels. As with the summary on page 1, results are shown for the school, district, and state (only district and state results are displayed in a District Performance Profile). This information can be used to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement.

## District Roster Report

The District Roster of School Results report provides the following results for each tested subject area for each high school in the district, for all students: the number of student scores and the percent of student scores in each of four performance levels.

## School Roster Report

The School Roster of Individual Student Results report provides results for all tested subject areas: reading, mathematics, science, and writing. This report lists each tested student's name, state student ID number, date of birth, school and district enrollment status, performance level, and school percentile rank for each tested subject area. In addition, students' PSAE scores, Day 1 scores, and Day 2 scores are provided.

\* The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has amended its rules governing the State Assessment to define "grade 11" for the purpose of administering the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) or the Illinois Alternative Assessment (IAA). The text of the revised rule is presented below. This rule became effective on January 20, 2011.

Section 1.30(b)(4) Districts shall administer the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) or the Illinois Alternative Assessment (IAA), if applicable under subsection (d) of this Section, to students in

grade 11. (See Section 2-3.64 of the School Code.) For the purpose of this subsection (b)(4), "grade 11" means the point in time when a student has earned the number of credits necessary for enrollment in grade 11, as determined by his or her school district in accordance with Sections 1.420(b) and 1.440 of this Part. A district shall not promote a student to grade 12 status until that student has taken either the PSAE or IAA, as applicable.

## **Individual Student Report**

The Individual Student Report helps students, parents or guardians, and teachers understand a student's strengths and weaknesses in each tested subject area. The report also compares the student's achievement to that of other students in the school, district, and state.

The first page of the Individual Student Report provides information concerning the student's performance on the PSAE. This page identifies the student (by name, grade, date of birth, and state student ID), the student's home school and home district, the test date (i.e., administration and year) for which the results are reported, and the date of the report. For each tested subject area, the student's PSAE scale score, performance level, and school, district, and state percentile ranks are provided. The four performance levels referenced are defined at the top of page 1 of the report and in Table 1 of this guide.

The next two pages of the report provide additional information about the student's performance on the PSAE Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Writing tests and on each component test that is taken as part of the PSAE. The PSAE Reading Test includes the Day 1 Reading and the Day 2 Reading tests, the PSAE Mathematics Test includes the Day 1 Mathematics and the Day 2 Mathematics tests, the PSAE Science Test includes the Day 1 Science and the Day 2 Science tests, and the PSAE Writing Test includes the Day 1 English and Day 1 Writing tests.

Chart A on page 2 of the report shows the scale score range for each PSAE test (120–200), the student's PSAE scale score for each test, and average scale scores for the school, district, and state. This chart also shows scale score ranges and scale scores for each component test.

Chart B at the bottom of page 2 of the report shows (1) the student's PSAE scores and performance levels and (2) the percent of scores in each of the four performance levels at the school, district, and state levels.

Chart C on page 3 of the report shows the student's scores and performance levels compared with the approximate range scored by the middle half (50%) of students in the school, district, and state (represented by a horizontal bar). If a student's score (represented by a diamond) falls to the right of the bar, it means the student scored in the top 25% of the corresponding reference group (school, district, or state). If a student's score falls to the left of the bar, it means the student scored in the bottom 25%.

Chart D at the bottom of page 3 of the report shows a bar graph display of the student's scores and performance levels compared with averages for students in the school, district, and state.

Blanks or NAs may appear on reports for individual students. If an NA appears instead of a score, it means the student was present to test but the score is not available. This can happen for one of two reasons: the student did not answer enough questions for the score to be generated, or the student's answer document was voided (e.g., for prohibited behavior or because the test was not administered properly). If a student was not present to test, a blank will appear instead of a score.

## **Prairie State Achievement Award Certificates**

A Prairie State Achievement Award Certificate is provided for each student who achieved the "Exceeds Standards" performance level in at least one PSAE subject area. The certificate will contain the student's name and the applicable subject area(s) in which the student achieved the "Exceeds Standards" performance level. All Prairie State Achievement Awards earned are required to be entered on the student's transcript.

## **Transcript Labels**

A transcript label is provided for each student who appears on the School Roster. The label identifies the student (by name, date of birth, grade, and state student ID), the student's home school, and the student's home district. A scale score will be listed for each subject in which a score was earned. An asterisk and corresponding note appear if the student achieved the "Exceeds Standards" performance level in that particular subject area. NA will appear in a score position if a score was not earned. PSAE scores are required to be entered on the student's transcript.

## **ACT, ACT WorkKeys, and ISBE Science Scale Scores Compared to PSAE Scale Scores**

PSAE score reports provide separate scale scores for PSAE Day 1 and PSAE Day 2. The overall PSAE scale score for each subject area is computed separately, based on raw score data. For this reason, students whose PSAE Day 1 scale scores and PSAE Day 2 scale scores appear the same may have different overall PSAE scale scores for each tested subject.

An example from 2014 is as follows: Two students each earned a Day 1 Mathematics scale score of 18 and a Day 2 scale score of 5. One earned an overall PSAE Mathematics scale score of 155 (Below Standards) and the other earned an overall PSAE Mathematics scale score of 156 (Meets Standards). This is possible because the separate Day 1 and Day 2 scale scores are not used in the computation of the overall PSAE scale score. Students who miss more or fewer items can each have a Day 1 Mathematics scale score of 18; one is a "high 18" and one is a "low 18," but this distinction is not inherently visible in the reporting of this separate scale score.

## Illinois State Goals Reports

The Illinois State Goals reports provide information about students' PSAE performance by State Goal in English Language Arts (Reading and Writing), Mathematics, and Science.

The Illinois State Goals **School** report lists the school and district name and shows the distribution of student performance at the school level for each State Goal. The first page of the **School** report provides the number or range of number of test items for each State Goal and the average percent correct for the school, the district, and the state. The second page of the School report provides a description of each State Goal and the component tests that contribute to each of the PSAE subject scores.

The Illinois State Goals **Student** report lists the student's name, home school, and home district and provides information regarding individual student performance. The **Student** report helps students, parents or guardians, and teachers understand a student's strengths and weaknesses relative to the Illinois State Goals assessed by the PSAE. The first page of the **Student** report shows (1) the total number of test questions on the PSAE based on each State Goal, (2) the number of test questions a student answered correctly for each State Goal, and (3) the number of test questions a typical student who performed at the "Meets Standards" level answered correctly. The second page of the report provides additional explanation to help in interpreting student results.

## Spring 2014 Results

School and district reports present statewide results for comparative purposes. This guide provides statewide results that may be useful in interpreting the reports.

Figure 1 shows student performance statewide relative to the Illinois Learning Standards across assessed subject areas. Table 2 shows the scale score ranges for the four PSAE performance levels and the five subject areas that were assessed from 2001 through 2004. Due to a July 2004 change in state law, PSAE tests administered in 2005 and 2006 assessed reading, mathematics, and science only. From 2007 through 2011 and in 2014, writing was assessed again. Table 3 shows the statewide percent of student scores at each of these performance levels for 2001 through 2014. Table 3 also shows the percent of student scores that met or exceeded standards.

## Availability of PSAE Student Data

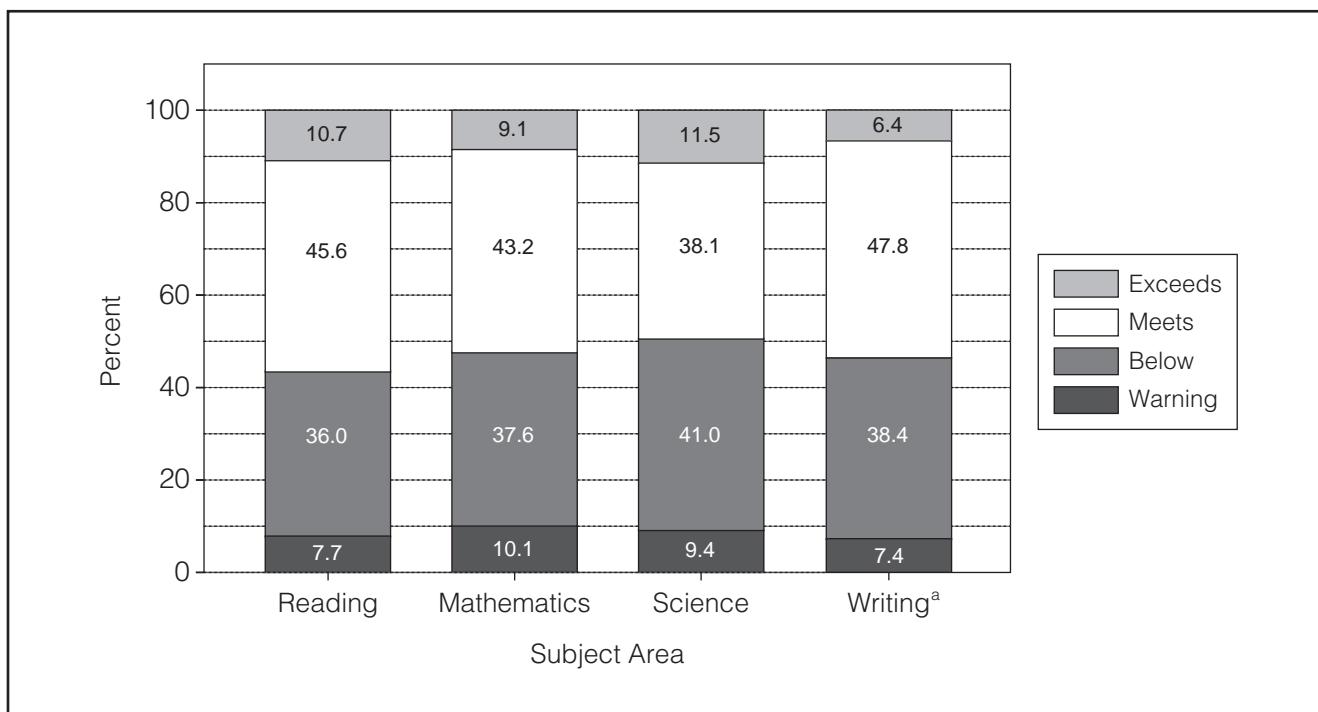
All student PSAE data are available through ISBE's secure IWAS system via the Student Information System—Statewide link. PSAE reports contain data for all students who tested, regardless of their enrollment date.

**Table 1**  
**PSAE Performance Level Descriptions**

Performance Level	Description
Exceeds Standards	Student work demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in the subject. Students creatively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate the results.
Meets Standards	Student work demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in the subject. Students effectively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems.
Below Standards	Student work demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in the subject. However, because of gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills in limited ways.
Academic Warning	Student work demonstrates limited knowledge and skills in the subject. Because of major gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills ineffectively.

**Figure 1**

**Statewide Percent of Student PSAE Scores in Each Performance Level (All Students)  
Spring 2014 Administration**



<sup>a</sup> Due to a 2005 change in state law, this subject was assessed from 2007 through 2011 and in 2014 using a different PSAE test than was given from 2001 through 2004. PSAE Writing was not assessed in 2012 or 2013.

**Table 2**

**Scale Score Ranges That Define PSAE Performance Levels**

Subject	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
READING	120–134	135–154	155–177	178–200
MATHEMATICS	120–135	136–155	156–178	179–200
SCIENCE	120–135	136–157	158–177	178–200
WRITING <sup>a</sup>	120–130	131–155	156–182	183–200
WRITING <sup>b</sup>	120–132	133–154	155–178	179–200
SOCIAL SCIENCE <sup>b</sup>	120–136	137–153	154–173	174–200

<sup>a</sup> Due to a 2005 change in state law, this subject was assessed from 2007 through 2011 and in 2014 using a different PSAE test than was given from 2001 through 2004. PSAE Writing was not assessed in 2012 or 2013.

<sup>b</sup> This subject was assessed from 2001 through 2004. Due to a July 2004 change in state law, the 2005 and 2006 PSAE assessed reading, mathematics, and science only.

**Table 3**  
**Statewide Percent of Student PSAE Scores in Each Performance Level (All Grade 11 Students)**

Subject	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards	Meets + Exceeds Standards <sup>c</sup>
<b>READING</b>					
2001	8	34	46	12	58
2002	8.0	33.9	45.2	13.0	58.2
2003	7.5	36.1	44.8	11.6	56.4
2004	8.2	35.0	46.8	10.0	56.8
2005	7.9	32.6	46.4	13.1	59.5
2006	8.4	33.2	44.4	14.0	58.4
2007	8.4	37.5	43.1	10.9	54.1
2008	10.1	36.6	42.9	10.4	53.3
2009	8.5	34.6	45.0	11.9	56.9
2010	9.0	37.0	44.1	9.9	54.0
2011	10.1	38.9	40.7	10.4	51.0
2012	9.9	39.4	41.6	9.0	50.7
2013	8.2	37.1	42.9	11.9	54.8
2014	7.7	36.0	45.6	10.7	56.3
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>					
2001	9	37	45	9	54
2002	10.0	36.4	45.2	8.4	53.6
2003	9.5	37.2	46.6	6.7	53.3
2004	9.7	37.1	42.8	10.3	53.1
2005	9.8	37.4	45.6	7.2	52.8
2006	9.8	36.6	45.8	7.9	53.6
2007	9.8	37.5	42.8	9.9	52.7
2008	11.1	35.9	42.2	10.8	53.0
2009	11.0	37.4	42.2	9.4	51.6
2010	10.6	36.7	42.4	10.3	52.7
2011	10.0	38.7	43.1	8.2	51.3
2012	10.7	37.7	42.2	9.4	51.6
2013	9.9	38.3	42.4	9.4	51.8
2014	10.1	37.6	43.2	9.1	52.4
<b>SCIENCE</b>					
2001	12	38	39	11	50
2002	10.6	36.6	41.1	11.7	52.8
2003	10.7	38.0	40.0	11.3	51.3
2004	10.6	36.5	41.0	11.9	52.9
2005	10.2	37.3	41.4	11.1	52.5
2006	8.3	40.9	40.1	10.7	50.8
2007	8.7	40.3	40.3	10.7	51.0
2008	9.5	39.3	40.4	10.8	51.2
2009	8.9	40.7	40.3	10.2	50.5
2010	9.7	37.9	41.6	10.8	52.4
2011	8.6	42.2	39.6	9.6	49.2
2012	8.8	39.6	41.1	10.6	51.7
2013	9.2	41.4	38.0	11.4	49.3
2014	9.4	41.0	38.1	11.5	49.6
<b>WRITING<sup>a</sup></b>					
2007	6.7	36.3	51.1	5.8	57.0
2008	6.7	37.3	50.0	6.0	56.0
2009	6.0	37.2	51.7	5.1	56.8
2010	6.6	38.1	49.8	5.5	55.3
2011	7.7	38.6	48.5	5.2	53.7
2014	7.4	38.4	47.8	6.4	54.2
<b>WRITING<sup>b</sup></b>					
2001	6	35	50	9	59
2002	6.4	34.1	49.5	10.0	59.5
2003	6.3	34.8	49.5	9.4	58.9
2004	7.3	33.1	47.7	11.9	59.6
<b>SOCIAL SCIENCE<sup>b</sup></b>					
2001	9	33	43	15	58
2002	7.1	36.1	42.7	14.0	56.7
2003	8.0	35.8	41.7	14.5	56.2
2004	7.7	32.9	44.9	14.5	59.4

<sup>a</sup> Due to a 2005 change in state law, this subject was assessed from 2007 through 2011 and in 2014 using a different PSAE test than was given from 2001 through 2004. PSAE Writing was not assessed in 2012 or 2013.

<sup>b</sup> This subject was assessed 2001 through 2004. Due to a July 2004 change in state law, the 2005 and 2006 PSAE assessed reading, mathematics, and science only.

<sup>c</sup> Due to rounding, the percents in the Meets + Exceeds Standards column may not equal the sum of the previous two columns.