

# **Cranston Educational Advisory Board**

## **Cranston Public Schools NECAP FAQs**

### **BACKGROUND**

**Q. What standardized tests do Cranston students take?**

A. Cranston students take the New England Common Assessments Program (NECAP), the IOWA Test of Basic Skills, and in some years the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

**Q. Why do they take the IOWA and the NAEP as well as the NECAP**

A. Each test is different and used for a different purpose. The IOWA is used to screen all Cranston students for needing extra help in personal learning plans (PLPs). The NAEP is a national assessment given every two years to some students to gather national data. The NECAP is a state assessment that measures student learning to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

**Q. Who writes the NECAP test questions?**

A. The test was a collaborative effort of the education departments and teachers from Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont. It was written, designed and published by Measured Progress.

**Q. How do the tests relate to the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for students?**

A. The NECAP was specifically designed to measure student's knowledge and application of the grade level expectations that guide curriculum. The test measures every GLE every year.

### **TYPES OF QUESTIONS**

**Q. What are the major subject areas covered by the NECAP?**

A. The content areas covered by the NECAP are: reading, writing, mathematics and science.

**Q. What students take which parts of NECAP?**

A. Reading and mathematics are tested every year from grades 3 through 8 and in grade 11. Writing is tested in grades 5, 8 and 11. Science is tested in grades 4, 8, and 11.

**Q. What types of questions are used?**

A. The question types are: multiple choice, short answer, and extended response.

**Q. Are sample questions released?**

A. Actual test questions are released each year and can be used for test practice. They are available at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/NECAP.aspx> and by clicking on NECAP released items.

**Q. What types of information are tested in Reading?**

A. The skills tested in reading are: word identification, vocabulary, initial understanding of literary text and informational text, analysis and interpretation of literary and informational text

**Q. What types of information are tested in Math?**

A. The math topics that are tested are: numbers and operations, geometry and measurement, functions and algebra, and data, statistics and probability

**Q. Are calculators allowable for the math section?**

A. Calculators are allowable for Day 2 and Day 3 of the math test. They are not allowable for the math computation section on Day 1

**Q. What types of information are tested in writing?**

A. The topics tested in writing are: structures of language, written response to literary and informational text, narrative and informational writing, and conventions (grammar). This assessment is only given in grades 5, 8 and 11.

**Q. What if a student is a messy writer?**

A. Handwriting does not count in scoring this assessment.

## **TEST PROCEDURES**

**Q. How long is the test period each day?**

A. Cranston students are given 90 minute test sessions daily.

**Q. Are there accommodations for special needs students?**

A. All students are entitled to accommodations if determined by a school team. There are many accommodations available such as extended time and alternative setting.

**Q. Does every school take the test on the same day?**

A. Every Cranston School takes the same test in the same grade level on the same day to ensure test security. All districts must administer the tests with a certain series of dates.

## **SCORES**

**Q. When and how are scores available at the district, school, and individual level?**

A. District and school scores are usually available in mid-January. Student scores are sent home with the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report card. Scores for individual schools and districts can be found at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/Results.aspx>

**Q. What happens at a School Report Night?**

A. The purpose of School Report Night is for principals to report NECAP results to their school community and explain their school results in comparison to the District and the State.

**Q. What do the numbers on school scores mean?**

A. Individual student scores are scaled and then converted into one of four categories Level 4 = Proficient with Distinction; Level 3 = Proficient; Level 2 = Partially Proficient; Level 1 = Substantially Below Proficient. School scores report the percentage of students falling into each category and compare them to other groups such as district or state results.

**Q. Why does it matter how well my school does?**

A. As part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, schools are judged by the achievement level of all students in all grades. The State has set goals for all grade levels and schools must meet these targets called AYP (adequate yearly progress) indexes.

**Q. What do scores show the school?**

A. By comparing scores over time, across classes, or across schools, schools can see whether their curriculum and teaching techniques are succeeding.

## **STUDENT SCORES**

**Q. What does it matter how well an individual student does?**

A. This test is evidence that a student can perform tasks that are appropriate for their grade level. It also helps teachers make informed decisions regarding instructional needs.

**Q. Who has access to individual student reports?**

A. Only authorized school district personnel have access to individual student scores.

**Q. How do I interpret the numbers on an individual student report?**

A. Student scores are reported as: 4 – proficient with distinction, 3 - proficient, 2 - partially proficient, and 1 – substantially below proficient.

**Q. What are scaled scores?**

A. Students also receive a scaled score. The first number indicates the grade level. The second and third indicate the range (00 – 80). For example a scaled score of 540 in reading would show a grade 5 student who scored half way (40) between 00-80 and therefore is considered proficient because 40 is the cut-off for meeting proficiency. These scores are not the percentage correct.

**Q. What are subcategory scores?**

A. Scores are also provided for the subcategories in the main areas (for example Numbers and Operations within Mathematics) to help assess particular strengths and weaknesses.

**Q. Where can I learn more about interpreting scores?**

A. More detail can be found at

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/DOCS/NECAP/Reports\\_Results/10.2009/Guide\\_to\\_Using\\_the\\_2009\\_NECAP\\_Reports\\_Full\\_Online\\_Version.pdf](http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/DOCS/NECAP/Reports_Results/10.2009/Guide_to_Using_the_2009_NECAP_Reports_Full_Online_Version.pdf)

**Q. Can I learn more about specific questions that a student got right or wrong?**

A. Your school has access to a list of questions that all students got right and wrong.

Teachers use this information to plan instruction. You may ask your child's teacher about your child's strengths and needs on this assessment.

**Q. Does a student need to pass NECAP to graduate from high school?**

A. NECAP is now a required component for graduation. Students must achieve a score of partially proficient to receive credit towards graduation requirements. It is only one part of the graduation requirements.