

# GUEST EDITORIAL

## No Child Left Behind ~ 2008 Report Card ~ Accountability Report

Submitted by Laura K. Schuster, Superintendent  
Groton Area School District  
October 15, 2008

In September 2008, the SD Department of Education (DOE) released statewide Dakota STEP results from the Spring 2008 testing period.

The DOE considers the state-funded Dakota STEP as a primary indicator used to evaluate the success of schools in South Dakota (Grades 3-8 & 11.) Other assessment tools that are very prominent in South Dakota are the American College Test (ACT) which is paid for by students/parents and the NAEP which is funded by the federal government. The Dakota STEP provides the DOE and school districts with a picture of students' abilities in the areas of reading and math. The area of science was also assessed during the Spring of 2008; however, the students' science test scores are not part of the State Report Card. The ACT which is taken by the majority of our juniors and seniors is a measurement to help determine whether or not students are adequately prepared for post-secondary education. The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) provides a means to compare the students of South Dakota with their counterparts in other states in the areas of reading and math. Groton Area students did not take the NAEP in the spring of 2008 because it is only administered every other year.

Groton Area School District's Dakota STEP results are certainly worth noting. We attribute this success to a dedicated administrative and teaching staff, a school board and community committed to providing quality educational programs, and parents and students that value education.

### The Dakota STEP assessment results are listed, as follows:

- Our reading scores for **all grades** (3-8 & 11) were 90% of students at proficient or advanced performance, compared to the state at 84%.
- Our math scores for **all grades** (3-8 & 11) were 87% of students at proficient or advanced performance, compared to the state at 76%.
  
- Reading scores for **grades 3-5** were 96% of students at proficient or advanced performance, compared to the state at 89%.
- Math scores for **grades 3-5** were 92% of students at proficient or advanced performance, compared to the state at 79%.
  
- Reading scores for **grades 6-8** were 91% of students at proficient or advanced performance, compared to the state at 83%.
- Math scores for **grades 6-8** were 88% of students at proficient or advanced performance, compared to the state at 76%.

- Reading scores for **grade 11** were 68% of students at proficient or advanced performance, compared to the state at 69%.
- Math scores for **grade 11** were 75% of students at proficient or advanced performance, compared to the state at 66%.
- The percentage of students, by grade level, who scored proficient or advanced levels in the areas of reading and math are as follows:

Reading Math

Grade 3 98% 88%  
 Grade 4 93% 95%  
 Grade 5 94% 93%  
 Grade 6 90% 85%  
 Grade 7 88% 83%  
 Grade 8 95% 96%  
 Grade 11 68% 75%

- In accordance with NCLB and South Dakota accountability measures of student performance in reading and math, as reflected in the Dakota STEP assessment results, **Groton Area students met or exceeded Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) at each grade level** and in each sub-category of minority students, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities (grades 3-5 & 11), and limited English proficiency students. The only sub-category in which we did not meet AYP was in reading for students with disabilities in grades 6-8.
- The task that lies ahead is to continue to show improvement and achieve 100% proficiency in the areas of reading and math. This becomes increasingly more difficult each year, since most of our students are already score high and the margin for improvement is narrow.
- **The District has also met or exceeded NCLB percentage requirements for student attendance and high school graduation rates.** The student attendance rate for 2007-2008 was 95.56% compared to the state at 95.21%, and the high school graduation rate was 100% compared to the state at 88.39%.
- **All classes for the 2007-2008 school year were taught by “highly qualified” teachers.** To be highly qualified, a teacher must have full certification, a bachelor’s degree, and demonstrated competence in subject knowledge and teaching.
- **The five-year trend of Average ACT scores are as follows:**

English Mathematics Reading Science Composite

Grad. Year	Groton	State	Groton	State	Groton	State	Groton	State	Groton	State
2007-2008	20.7	21.2	23.1	21.9	22.7	22.3	22.3	22.0	22.3	22.0
2006-2007	21.7	21.3	22.3	21.7	21.7	22.1	22.0	21.9	22.1	21.9

2005-2006 20.7 21.0 23.5 21.6 22.1 22.0 23.2 21.8 22.5 21.8

2004-2005 21.4 20.8 22.4 21.3 21.7 21.7 22.3 21.6 22.0 21.5

2003-2004 20.5 20.7 22.2 21.4 21.5 21.8 21.8 21.6 21.7 21.5

**The district will continue to set high standards for the staff and students. We are committed to providing quality curricular and co-curricular programs and staffing to meet the current and future needs of students of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

The full NCLB 2008 Report Card, including reports for individual schools and districts, is available on the DOE web-site at: <https://sis.ddncampus.net:8081/nclb/index.html>.