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Vermont Schools Closing Achievement Gap

MONTPELIER – Statewide assessment results for Fall 2010 were released by the Vermont Department of Education today at a special press conference held at the Pavilion Auditorium in Montpelier. The results are from the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) exams, given to Vermont public school students in grades three through eight and grade 11. Students were tested in Reading and Mathematics. Writing was assessed at grades 5, 8, and 11.

The following table illustrates the percent of Vermont students proficient in the content area by grade span:

Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing
Elementary/Middle School (3-8)	73%	65%	57%
High School (11)	72%	38%	50%

“I am proud to live and work in a state where local communities have worked so hard to build a reputation of high-quality education,” said Deputy Education Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf. “This year’s NECAP results are both an indicator of this success and a barometer that shows us where we still have room for improvement.”

The department invited all students who took the exam at Montgomery Elementary School and their teachers and principal to the press conference to recognize their achievement. Using groups of students enrolled at their school for three years or more, the department identified 14 schools across the state with high scores for all students, as well as students in poverty, and with at least 25% of their student population qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch. Of the schools identified, Montgomery had the highest percentage of students in poverty (63%), but also had the highest overall percent of students proficient and above (92.9%), and the highest percentage of students in poverty proficient and above (88.8%).

“These scores are the result of many years of hard work by every person in the building,” said Montgomery Center School Principal Beth O’Brien. “We are committed to continuous improvement, and using data and curriculum alignment to drive instruction. Our motivation and sense of accountability are deeply rooted in our recognition of the impact that excellent instruction has on student learning. Working collaboratively with a clear focus on improving student learning has helped us to create a culture of high expectations and achievement, which we hope keeps things moving in the right direction for many years to come. We realize that effective schools are the result of highly functioning systems, and know that we could not be successful without the support of an informed school board, involved parents, a dedicated and hard working supervisory union staff, and a vibrant community.”

Principal O’Brien cited a recent Vermont Department of Education study entitled *Roots of Success: Effective Practices in Vermont Schools* as outlining eight key characteristics of effective schools that she and her staff used as a blueprint for building a successful school. These characteristics include the belief that *all* students can succeed; effective school leadership; a professional teaching culture that supports high-quality instruction; supportive school climate; and building constructive relationships with families.

The NECAP exams are given in collaboration with Maine, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. These exams are designed to specifically assess how well Vermont students have learned the skills and content contained in *Vermont's Grade Expectations*. This is the sixth year of results on the NECAP exams for grades three through eight and the fourth year for grade 11. As required under the No Child Left Behind Act, a Science assessment is given each May in grades four, eight and 11.

For the complete packet of state results, including the Power Point from today's press conference, visit http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/press_releases.html.

For school-by-school results, visit:

http://www.education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment/data.html#necap.

Explanation of Identification of 14 Vermont Schools with High Achievement for All Students

Vermont students generally do well on standardized achievement tests such as those that comprise the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). Unfortunately, students from lower income families often do not share these academic successes with their classmates from higher income families. Test scores for economically disadvantaged students, defined by their eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL), tend to be significantly lower in all achievement areas, producing what has come to be known as the "Achievement Gap." This year, for example, barely half of Vermont's economically disadvantaged students in grades 3-8 scored proficient or higher on NECAP, twenty-five percentage points lower than their economically advantaged peers. The achievement discrepancy between these two student groups is not unique to Vermont, nor is it new. For more than a decade the Achievement Gap has been the major focus of research, legislation and school reform efforts across the country.

With the release of the fall 2010 NECAP results, the Vermont Department of Education has made an effort to identify schools with relatively high concentrations of poverty that demonstrate high achievement for ALL students, including students who are economically disadvantaged. The following criteria were used to select schools:

- The analysis was based on a cohort of students tested in 2010 who attended their school for at least three consecutive years (students whose achievement is truly representative of their school's systems and strategies);
- At least 25% of students in the cohort enrolled in the FRL program;
- The average of proficient NECAP reading and math scores for all students in the cohort is at least 80%, nearly 10 percentage points higher than the state average;
- The average of proficient NECAP reading and math scores for FRL students in the cohort is at least 70%, more than 10 percentage points higher than the state average.

The Vermont Department of Education is pleased to recognize the high achievement of the students in these schools, and plans to learn about and share the systems, programs and strategies that have contributed to their success.

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14 Effective Schools Closing the Poverty Gap

State of Vermont

40.0%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

23,911

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP

All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
67.3%	74.5%	70.9%	53.2%	61.8%	57.5%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Addison Central School

42.1%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

57

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP

All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
82.5%	82.5%	82.5%	83.3%	70.8%	77.0%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Brewster Pierce School

35.9%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

39

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP

All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
87.2%	82.1%	84.6%	85.7%	78.6%	82.2%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

14 Effective Schools Closing the Poverty Gap

Folsom Education & Community Center

30.0%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

70

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
80.0%	84.3%	82.1%	76.2%	81.0%	78.6%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Franklin Elementary School

25.9%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

58

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
86.2%	78.0%	82.1%	71.4%	80.0%	75.7%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Glover Community School

52.9%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

87

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
77.0%	90.8%	83.9%	69.6%	87.0%	78.3%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

14 Effective Schools Closing the Poverty Gap

Hartland Elementary School

33.9%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

183

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
76.0%	84.2%	80.1%	66.1%	75.8%	71.0%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Montgomery Center School

62.8%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

78

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
94.9%	91.0%	92.9%	91.8%	85.7%	88.8%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Mt. Holly School

47.8%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

46

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
84.8%	80.4%	82.6%	81.8%	77.3%	79.6%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

14 Effective Schools Closing the Poverty Gap

Newton School

25.7%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

70

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP

All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
87.1%	88.6%	87.9%	72.2%	77.8%	75.0%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Poultney Elementary School

47.5%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

80

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP

All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
81.2%	81.2%	81.2%	76.3%	76.3%	76.3%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Samuel Morey Elementary School

29.9%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

67

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP

All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
82.1%	82.1%	82.1%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

14 Effective Schools Closing the Poverty Gap

Townshend Village School

30.6%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

49

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
79.6%	83.7%	81.6%	66.7%	80.0%	73.4%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

Warren Elementary School

30.3%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

76

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
86.8%	92.0%	89.4%	69.6%	78.3%	74.0%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average

White River School

43.5%

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch

69

Students enrolled for past 3 years who took Fall 2010 NECAP

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficiently on 2010 NECAP					
All Students			Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch		
79.7%	81.2%	80.4%	73.3%	76.7%	75.0%
Math	Reading	Average	Math	Reading	Average