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## **District Press Release**

For Immediate Release

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### **Students Improve on Graduation Tests**

Students at Buffalo High School (BHS) outperformed the Minnesota average on graduation tests that were administered this spring. BHS sophomores (83 percent) met the state's reading requirement on their first attempt by earning a proficient score on MCA-II (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments) or by earning a passing score on the GRAD (Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma). This represents an impressive nine percent increase over last year's results. Overall, 78 percent of Minnesota students met the state's reading graduation requirement on their first attempt. The GRAD reading test is embedded into the MCA-II.

BHS juniors participated in the first administration of the state's new math graduation requirement. Sixty percent of BHS juniors met the state's new, more rigorous math requirement on the first attempt by earning a proficient score on MCA-II or by earning a passing score on the GRAD. This exceeded the Minnesota average of 57 percent.

Both the GRAD math and reading assessments are more rigorous than the Basic Skills Tests that they replaced. Both assessments are embedded into the MCA-II, which are administered in April. This is the first year the GRAD math test was administered, and the second for reading.

The performance by BHS freshmen was also impressive with 97 percent passing the GRAD writing assessment. Results are substantially higher than the 89 percent of Minnesota freshmen who met the writing graduation requirement by passing the Writing GRAD. The Writing GRAD assessment, which is not embedded into an MCA-II, is designed to measure whether or not a student has attained basic writing skills before graduation. Those skills include the ability to formulate and communicate a written message in English to an adult reader. Several factors are taken into account, including composition, style, sentence formation, grammar, and mechanics and spelling. The assessments are graded as passing or not passing.

Graduation requirements are designed to ensure that students have the needed academic skills and knowledge before they graduate high school. Students must meet math, reading and writing graduation requirements in order to graduate. Students who do not pass a GRAD assessment will have opportunities to retest during statewide testing windows. Schools provide remediation to those students prior to taking the GRAD retests. However, under legislation passed this session, for the next five years, students in 11th grade who do not meet the math graduation requirement can still graduate if they:

- \* Complete all coursework and credits required for graduation.
- \* Participate in district-prescribed academic remediation in math.
- \* Participate in at least two retests of the math GRAD exam or pass the math GRAD exam, whichever happens first.