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Wagner: PARCC results show improvements are needed

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The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) announced Tuesday the results of the state's first set of PARCC results.

Education Commissioner Ken Wagner says the tests show that improvements are needed in teaching and learning in English language arts and mathematics.

The results show about 36 percent of students in grades 3 through 10 are meeting expectations in English language arts and about 25 percent of students are meeting expectations in mathematics.

"These latest results track closely with previous data from other assessments such as the SAT and with college-readiness rates, and these results show, once again, that we have work to do," Wagner said. "We must prepare our students for their futures with challenging coursework and great teaching tailored to their strengths and interests. If we stay focused and work together, we will be successful."

Around 75,000 students participated in the assessments.

Among the results are opportunity gaps for low-income students and students of color. Only 20 percent of Black and Hispanic students are proficient in English and only 10 percent in Math, while White students doubled and tripled these results, respectively.

"That's alarming," remarked Jim Vincent, president of the NAACP Providence Branch. "We're in a crisis. We've got to do something about it. The future of our state depends on dealing with this issue directly."

To help with this gap, Wagner says he is looking into hiring more people of color as teachers and administrators and is open to more suggestions.

By 2020, PARCC results will be a part of high school graduation requirements, which has many parents concerned. "I don't think it's appropriate to have kids under an enormous amount of stress when you make a test something that is high stakes," commented Tracy Ramos, head of Parents Across Rhode Island.

RIDE also provided ways they hope to improve scores in the future. They include investing in our teachers through high-quality preparation programs and continuous professional development; empowering our principals to lead strong school communities; ensuring that every student has access to rigorous coursework that builds upon their strengths and interests and prepares them for their futures; and partner with parents and families.

For the complete assessment results, click [here](#).

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