

# Chalkboard

By

Judy Winslett, District Test Coordinator/GHS Assistant Principal  
Gentry Public Schools

Students enrolled at Gentry Public Schools, along with students across the state, participated in the 2005-06 Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP). ACTAAP consists of both criterion-referenced tests (measures how well the student learned a specific body of knowledge/skills) and norm-referenced tests (compares test results with the performance of a sample of students from across the state and nation). The state-mandated criterion-referenced testing includes the Benchmark Exams at grades 3-8, End-of-Course Exams in Algebra I and Geometry, and a Grade 11 Literacy Exam. Students scoring at either the *Proficient* or *Advanced* performance levels demonstrate solid academic performance for the grade/subject tested and are thought to be well prepared for the next level of schooling. The chart below indicates the percent of students scoring Proficient and Advanced in the areas of literacy and math.

## Spring 2006 Benchmark/EOC Test Scores

Grade	Literacy	Math
3	55%	69%
4	59%	60%
5	72%	59%
6	74%	67%
7	63%	56%
8	77%	55%
11	59%	
Algebra I		95%
Geometry		79%

The End-of-Course Exams will be expanded during the 2006-07 school year with the addition of a test in Biology.

Test scores are reported in the categories of *Below Basic*, *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. This categorical grouping is then reported comparing percentages at the district, region, and state level. The Gentry School District, I believe, has reason for celebration in the area of test results. Of the seven Literacy exams administered, only two grades did not meet or exceed the state average, falling short by only two percentage points. In the area of Math eight different exams were given with Gentry students meeting or exceeding the state average in proficient and advanced scoring. Ninety-five percent of the students taking the Algebra I End-of-Course Exam scored in the Proficient/Advanced range, exceeding the state average by thirty percent!

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is norm-referenced and is administered in grades Kindergarten through 9 and tests reading, language and math. The scores stated in the chart below are reported by national percentile rank. (Scores ranked on a scale of 1-99

with 40-59 as an average range. For example, if Gentry's third grade ranked at the 61 percentile, they scored higher than 61 percent of the comparison group).

Iowa Test of Basic Skills

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Math</b>
K	61	62	58
1	71	72	68
2	76	72	74
3	61	62	64
4	59	61	70
5	65	62	72
6	54	45	60
7	50	45	52
8	52	46	55
9	49	50	54

(Scores reported in National Percentile Rank.)

The 2006-07 testing schedule has been established by the Arkansas Department of Education and Gentry Public Schools. The following are scheduled test dates for the Gentry School District:

October 11, 2006	Literacy Field Test – grade 11
January 23-24, 2007	Mid-Year EOC Algebra I
January 25-26, 2007	Mid-Year EOC Geometry
March 5-9, 2007	K-9 ITBS
March 13-14, 2007	Grade 11 Literacy
April 17-20, 2007	Grade 3-8 Benchmark
April 23, 2007	EOC Biology Field Test
April 24-25, 2007	EOC Geometry
April 26-27, 2007	EOC Algebra I

It is essential that parents be involved in students' ongoing preparation for testing, as well as preparation immediately preceding testing. When a test is to be given, you can help by making sure your student:

- gets plenty of sleep the night before the test;
- has breakfast on the morning of the test;
- goes to school on the day of the test;
- knows you think he/she will do well on the test; and
- knows you understand the test is important.

The following charts demonstrate how Gentry Public Schools compares to the region and state on the last Benchmark exams. The percentages are for students scoring proficient or advanced.



