

# Test Scores Show Progress In Reading, Writing, Math

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska public school students showed improvement this year on statewide proficiency tests in reading, writing and math but held steady in science, according to results released Tuesday.

Roughly three-fourths of all students who took the 2015 test met state standards, but Education Commissioner Matthew Blomstedt said parents and the public should look at how the scores change over time instead of individual years. Test scores have improved incrementally since the first reading exam six years ago, followed by the other subjects.

"Moving the needle from year to year is not easy," Blomstedt said.

Roughly 451,000 students took this year's Nebraska State Accountability exam, according to the Nebraska Department of Education.

The report said 80 percent of students were deemed proficient this year, up from 77 percent in 2014. In math, 72 percent of students were proficient compared to 71 percent the previous year.

In writing, 72 percent were declared proficient compared to 68 percent in 2013. The 2014 writing results weren't counted because technology problems rendered them invalid.

Science scores were unchanged, with 72 percent of students considered proficient.

"Generally, we are seeing not only an increase in the percentage of students proficient on standards but also

an increase in the percentage of students exceeding the standards," Blomstedt said. "Nebraska teachers are successfully increasing their students' learning and knowledge of the standards, in general, at all grade levels."

Department officials have cautioned that the assessments are just one measure of achievement. Some of the improvement may also reflect teachers and students who have grown accustomed to the new tests, which were phased in by subject.

The tests were rewritten after the U.S. Department of Education said Nebraska had failed to show that its local assessments measured student achievement under the No Child Left Behind Act. Since that time, the percentage of students in the state who met or exceeded stand-

ards has increased. The exams are designed to show schools which education strategies have worked and where students need to improve.

Despite the improved scores, Blomstedt said the state should strive to deliver more. White and Asian students have traditionally outperformed black, Hispanic and Native American students on the exams. Students who are still learning English and those with special needs also have struggled compared to their peers.

"We know we must focus on equity of educational opportunity and work to close the educational achievement gap among groups of students," he said.

## Motorcycle Crash On Highway 81

From P&D Staff Reports

A motorcyclist was injured when the vehicle the individual was operating crashed on Highway 81 Monday afternoon.

The incident, which occurred shortly after 1 p.m. happened along the Yankton County-Hutchinson County

line between the two counties. The victim was transported to a Yankton medical facility with unknown injuries. Responding to the accident were the Yankton County Sheriff's Office, Yankton Fire Department and Yankton County ambulance.

## Bears Caused Trouble At Grand Teton

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A zoo in southeast South Dakota has taken in two black bears that caused some trouble at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming.

The Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum of Natural History in Sioux Falls will now be home to a 12-year-old female bear and her young cub. Zoo officials say the older bear has a long history of nuisance behavior at Grand Teton, where she had raided backpacks and campsites for food for several years.

The bears have been placed in quarantine and will join an exhibit in about a month. The exhibit already includes a 16-year-old male black bear.

Zoo President and CEO Elizabeth Whealy says the facility is proud to be able to provide the bears "a new lease on life."

## Not Guilty Plea Entered In Dentist Attack

CANTON (AP) — A Lincoln County judge has entered a not guilty plea on behalf of a man accused of assaulting his former dentist in a Sioux Falls parking lot.

Authorities allege 56-year-old David Yocom hit his former dentist with a car and threatened him with a hammer on Aug. 6. Authorities said the man who was assaulted did not have serious injuries and is back at work.

KELO-TV reports that Yocom faces aggravated assault and stalking charges that could land him in prison for 15 years if he's convicted.

Authorities haven't commented on a possible motive but say Yocom has a history of mental illness. His mother, Donna Yocom, told the Argus Leader earlier that her son is a diagnosed schizophrenic.

## Death Penalty Group To Submit Ballot

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A group that wants to reinstate Nebraska's death penalty through a ballot measure will submit its signatures to the secretary of state's office a day early.

Nebraskans for the Death Penalty will announce the number of signatures collected on Wednesday, a day before its submission deadline. The secretary of state's office will then send the boxes to counties, which have 40 days to verify all of the signatures.

The petition drive began after Nebraska lawmakers voted in May to abolish the death penalty, overriding Gov. Pete Ricketts' veto.

Nebraskans for the Death Penalty will release its signature count at 3 p.m. at the Capitol. Spokesman Chris Peterson says volunteers and paid circulators have collected signatures from all 93 counties.

## Robbery Suspect Caught While Shopping

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Police have arrested a robbery suspect while she was shopping at a drugstore across an Omaha street from a bank branch that had just been robbed.

Police say a woman went into the U.S. Bank branch a little before 10 a.m. Tuesday and gave a teller a note. The teller gave the robber an undisclosed amount of cash, and the robber left.

Police say the robber then went across a street to the drugstore to shop and was arrested there. She was taken back to the bank branch, where witnesses confirmed to police that she was the robber.

The woman's name hasn't been released.

## Man Arrested In Omaha Slaying

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A 25-year-old suspect has been arrested in connection with the fatal shooting of a man in southwest Omaha.

Police said Tuesday in a news release that Carl Heng, of Omaha, has been booked into jail on a homicide charge. It's unclear whether Heng has an attorney who could be contacted to comment on his behalf. The case isn't listed yet in online court records.

The shooting was reported a little before 10 p.m. Monday at an apartment complex. Police say officers who responded found the wounded man outside a building at the complex, and he was taken to an Omaha hospital, where he died. The man has been identified as 25-year-old Robert Lane, of Omaha.

## Judge Delays Trial Of Man Accused Of Killing 4

BY MARGERY A. BECK  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — The September murder trial of a man accused of killing four people with ties to an Omaha medical school was put on hold Tuesday when a judge ordered him to undergo another mental health evaluation.

Anthony Garcia was ordered to undergo the testing to see if he's mentally fit to stand trial following his allegations of being sexually abused by jail guards. In documents obtained by *The Omaha World-Herald*, officials responded that jailhouse videos don't support Garcia's allegations.

Garcia, 42, has pleaded not guilty to charges of first-degree murder in the March 2008 slayings of Dr. William Hunter's 11-year-old son, Thomas Hunter, and the family's housekeeper, Shirlee

Sherman, as well as the May 2013 killings of Dr. Roger Brumback and his wife, Mary.

Prosecutors believe Garcia was motivated by revenge in both attacks because he had been fired from the Creighton University Medical School pathology department in 2001. Roger Brumback and William Hunter had been instrumental in firing Garcia, and both men subsequently sent letters to medical boards that prevented Garcia from becoming licensed in several states and from finishing other residency programs.

One of his attorneys, Alison Motta of Chicago, said she learned of Garcia's latest allegations against jail guards at Tuesday's hearing. She said Garcia made similar allegations in December 2013 while he was jailed that were later deemed unfounded. The allegations led to his initial evaluation in which he was found competent to stand trial.

Motta speculated that prosecutors' request for the latest evaluation is a stall tactic.

"They know their case is falling apart," said Motta, who filed a motion last week saying Garcia has alibis for the killings.

Tuesday's hearing had originally been scheduled to address accusations of attorney misconduct against Motta. Prosecutors have said Motta threatened a key witness in the Garcia case — an accusation Motta strongly denies.

Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine did not immediately return a message left Tuesday seeking comment.

Prosecutors also have charged Garcia with burglary, saying forensic evidence linked him to an attempted break-in at the home of another Creighton University Medical School professor.

Garcia's trial had been scheduled to start Sept. 14. A new date trial hasn't been set.

## Smaller Businesses Show Little Interest In New Tax-Breaks Program For Projects

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The business and housing assistance programs created three years ago as part of the Building South Dakota program saw big demand so far. But one designed specifically to offer tax breaks for smaller business projects has found few takers.

There have been two refunds totaling \$36,480 for equipment upgrades by Yankton-area businesses Sapa Extrusions Inc. and TruXedo Inc. Meanwhile the program's fund balance has grown to more than \$1.3 million.

The refunds of sales and

use tax are available to businesses with projects smaller than \$20 million or purchasing equipment for less than \$2 million.

Pat Costello, state commissioner of economic development, told a panel of legislators Tuesday businesses "haven't found a tremendous lot of value" in the program.

Meanwhile the big-projects refund program for projects costing more than \$20 million or equipment purchases more than \$2 million is being used.

In the past fiscal year, the state Board of Economic Development approved six refunds of sales and use taxes totaling more than \$6.6 million. The amounts varied from

37 percent to 100 percent of the requests.

Only one request was rejected.

Costello told members of the Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee that a legislator — Rep. Dick Werner, R-Huron — suggested there be consideration to allow funds to be transferred between Building South Dakota's various programs.

Costello said that could be helpful in making best use of the money so large amounts aren't mothballed. He said it could work both ways for a program. "In future years it may reverse itself," he said.

The South Dakota Jobs program for smaller busi-

nesses receives a 5 percent share of the total funding for Building South Dakota.

"Originally this was one I thought needed more than 5 percent," Sen. Phyllis Heineman, R-Sioux Falls, said.

Sen. Larry Tidemann, R-Brookings, said it's important to remind legislators and the public with another column on the summary sheet showing the businesses receiving the refunds could have gone somewhere other than South Dakota to build.

"Sometimes I think we need to promo more what could have happened," Tidemann said.

## OBITUARIES

### Ella Bietz

Funeral services for Ella Mae Bietz, 91, of Scotland, South Dakota will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2015 at Zion Lutheran Church in Scotland. Burial will follow in Rosehill Cemetery, Scotland.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, August 26 at the Goglin Funeral Home in Scotland from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. with family present from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Ella passed away on Sunday, August 23, 2015 at Good Samaritan Society in Scotland. Funeral arrangements are being handled by the Goglin Funeral Home



Ella Bietz

of Scotland. Online condolences may be sent at [www.goglinfh.com](http://www.goglinfh.com).

Ella Mae Bietz was born on Thursday, December 20, 1923 to Herb and Lena (Winter) Bartel in Parkston, South Dakota. For a time, she worked at

the ASCS office in Parkston. On September 14, 1944, Ella was united in marriage to Eugene Bietz at the Congregational Church in rural Kaylor. Together they made their home on a farm 10 miles northwest of Scotland where Ella dutifully cared for her family and aided Eugene where ever she could on the farm. Ella loved hosting family gatherings and holidays on the farm, creating occasions many relatives looked forward to. After finishing their meal, a game or two of pinochle always followed and though Ella was a very soft spoken person, she tried her utmost to win.

In 1984, after 40 years on the farm, Eugene and Ella retired from farming and built their new home in Scotland. She kept busy by working in the Dietary Department at the Good Samaritan Society of Scotland, volunteering at the local blood drives, and helping with Meals on Wheels. Ella was a member of Zion Lutheran Church in Scotland where she was active in the ZLCW and enjoyed attending Friday night bible study. She also enjoyed spending time at the Senior Citizen Center, pinochle clubs and other card clubs.

She is survived and remembered by her hus-

band of nearly 71 years, Eugene Bietz of Scotland; son Dennis and Dorothy Bietz and family; Mike and Stephanie and their children Annaliese, Emerson and Polly; daughter Ron and Donna Nelson and family; Sarah and Kyle Streich and their children Carlie, Drew, and Lily, Justin and Dr. Ann Narmi/Nelson and their children Thomas and Charles, Christin Nelson, Emily Nelson, and Jarod Nelson; the late Sandy Yackley's family: Jill Ireland and Justin Weiland and their daughter Pearl, Jake and Kelli Ireland, Josh Ireland and fiancée Theresa, Jacki Ireland and her children Sophia and

Idan Jones, Jay Ireland and his children Jack, Isabella and Aiden; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brother, Ervin Bartel and sister, Norma Weisz.

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
August 26, 2015

Goglin  
Funeral Home

Tyndall - Scotland - Tripp



[www.goglinfh.com](http://www.goglinfh.com)

### David Kost

David Kost, 98, formerly of Hurley passed away on Monday, August 24, 2015 at the Pioneer Memorial Inn in Viborg.



Kost

Funeral services will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, August 27 at Grace Lutheran Church in Menno.

Visitation will begin at 5 p.m. on Wednesday at the church with the family present at 6 p.m. and a prayer service to be held at 6 p.m. Visitation will continue one hour prior to the funeral service on Thursday.

He is survived by his children Merle (Deborah) Kost, Hudson; and Delphine Andernacht, Davis. Three grandchildren, Troi (Stacy) Andernacht, Hurley; Krystil

(Philip) Smit, Centerville; Jordon (Stacey) Andernacht, Lennox; step grandchild Alexa Boyer (Evert Verdin), Long Beach, CA; eight great grandchildren and two step-great grandchildren.

Walter's Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
August 26, 2015

### Ida Foxhoven

Ida E. Foxhoven, 90, of Yankton passed away peacefully on early Monday morning, Aug. 24, 2015 at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

Funeral services will be 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 29, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Yankton, with the Rev. Larry Regynski officiating. Burial will be in the Sacred Heart Cemetery, Yankton.

Visitations will begin at 5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 28 at

the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, with a rosary at 7 p.m. and Scripture service at 7:30 p.m. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Online condolences can be sent at [www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com](http://www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com).

### Jeffrey Braxton

Jeffrey Braxton, 55, of Yankton died Monday, Aug. 24, 2015, at Avera Heart Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Funeral services are 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 29, at Calvary Baptist Church in Yankton with the Rev. Rick Slattery officiating. Burial will be in the Garden of Memories Cemetery in Yankton with military honors provided by the Ernest-Bowyer VFW Post No. 791 and S.D. Army National Guard. Visitation is from 5-8 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 28, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton with a prayer service at 7 p.m. Visitation continues one hour prior to the funeral at church.

To send an online message to the family, visit [www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com](http://www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com).

### Florence Koupal

Florence A. Koupal, 90, passed away Monday, Aug. 24, 2015, at the Golden Living Center in Pierre.

Funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 27 at Feigum Funeral Home, 808 W. Pleasant Drive, Pierre, SD 57501 with visitation from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Condolences may be conveyed to the family at [www.feigumfh.com/](http://www.feigumfh.com/).

### Kay Hubbard

Kay Hubbard, 78, died peacefully at home Aug. 22,

2015, surrounded by her family.

Visitation will be Friday, Aug. 28, from 10-11 a.m. at Grace Community Church, Bigfork Minnesota. Memorial Service will follow at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to be sent to Grace Community Church, Bigfork, in her name.

**IN REMEMBRANCE**

Ray Limoges  
10:00 AM, Wednesday  
St. John the Baptist  
Catholic Church  
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[www.heartlandhumaneociety.net](http://www.heartlandhumaneociety.net)  
or call 605-664-4244 for more info

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