

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

2013 GRADE 4 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

KEY RESULTS



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Overview

The twelfth Grade 4 National Assessment was held during October 2013. 1058 students (534 boys, 524 girls) from 57 schools were assessed in language arts (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and mathematics including mental maths. The assessments took the form of group administered written papers and one on one oral assessments. The assessments were developed, piloted, administered and scored by classroom teachers under the guidance of the Curriculum, Measurement and Evaluation Unit.

Most of the students assessed in the 2013 Grade 4 assessment were previously assessed in October 2011 as part of the 14th Grade 2 National Assessment. This has enabled some comparisons to be made.

Reading

- Reading levels showed a decrease for 2 consecutive years. 75.6% of the students (as compared to 77.8 % in 2012 and 87.4% in 2011) were assessed as reading at or above their grade level. 11% of this year's cohort were found to be functioning at two or three grades below their level (9.5% in 2012 and 6% in 2011)(see fig. 1).

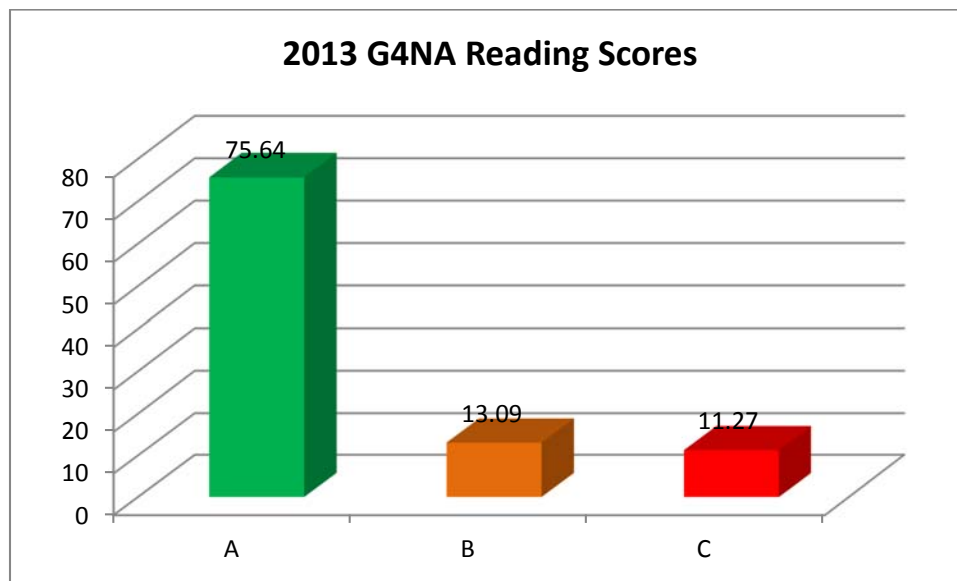


Fig 1. G4NA Reading levels 2002 – 2012

- **Gender differences in reading remained significant and the gap has widened.** 85.4% of the girls as compared to 66.9% (-18.5% difference) of the boys were reading satisfactorily in 2013. 11% of the girls were rated as reading at grade 2 level or below as compared to 28% of the boys.

- Reading levels of students in the northern districts were again higher than that of students in the other areas (fig. 2).

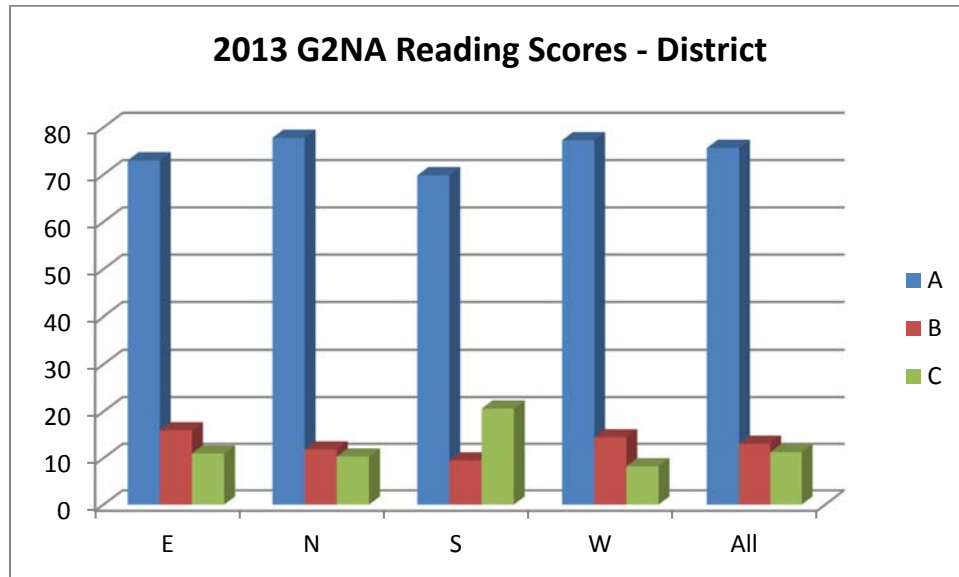


Fig. 2: Reading levels of grade 4 students by district

Silent Reading Comprehension

- Performance of students on the written comprehension passages was significantly worse than oral reading performance. 49.6% of the grade 5 students displayed a satisfactory understanding of passages in writing as compared to 32.4% in 2012. A significant increase over 17%. (fig 3).

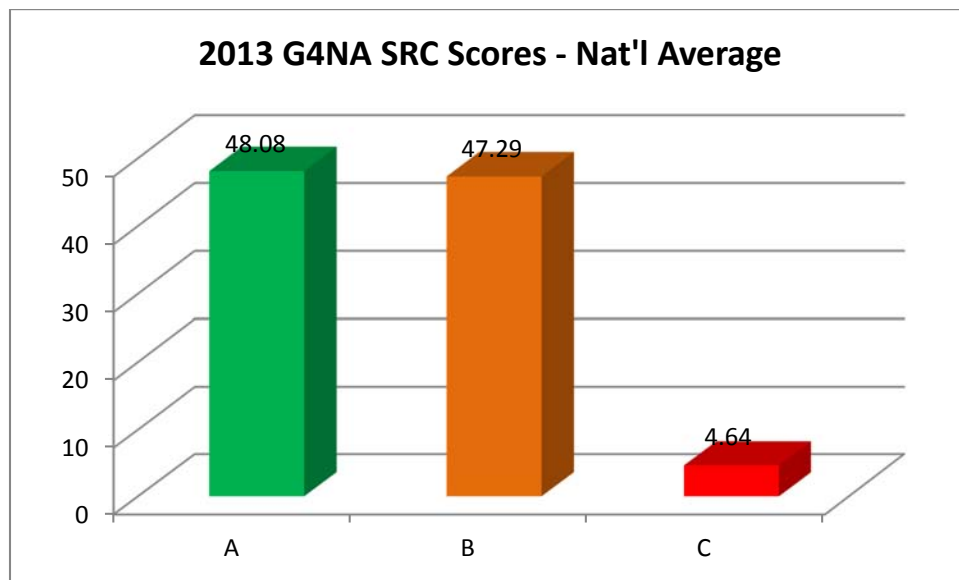


Fig. 3 – G4NA - Silent Reading Comprehension scores

- 23% of the boys (26% in 2011) and 12% of the girls (same as 2012) experienced serious difficulties with the passages (see fig 4).

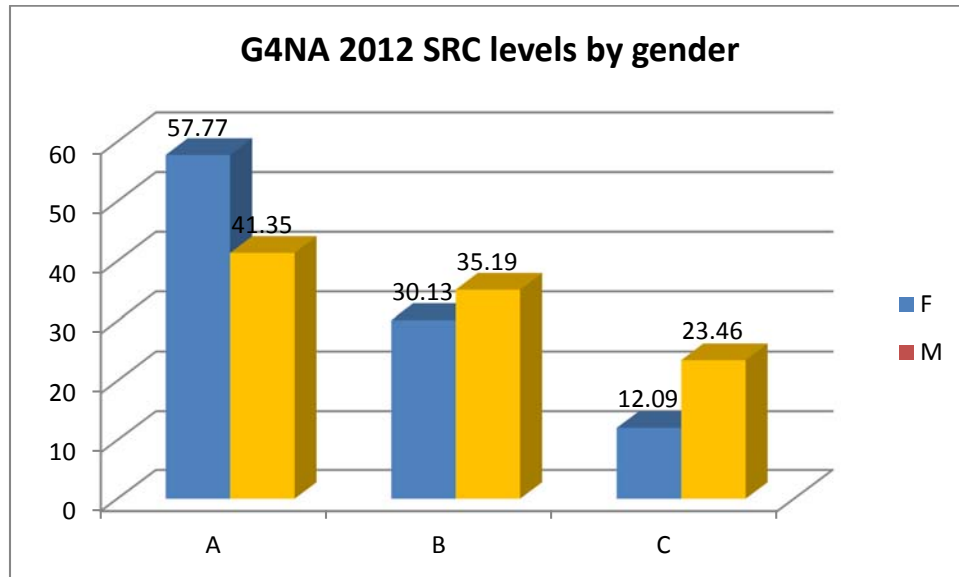


Fig.4: SRC levels of grade 4 students – Gender differences

Writing

- Writing performance has dropped significantly since the last assessment. Only 14% of grade 5 students as compared to 25.2% in 2012 were able to write a paragraph to a satisfactory standard (fig 5).
- 38% of the boys and 22% of the girls were unable to express themselves clearly in writing. Their work contained serious errors of style, sequencing, grammar, spelling, punctuation and creativity.

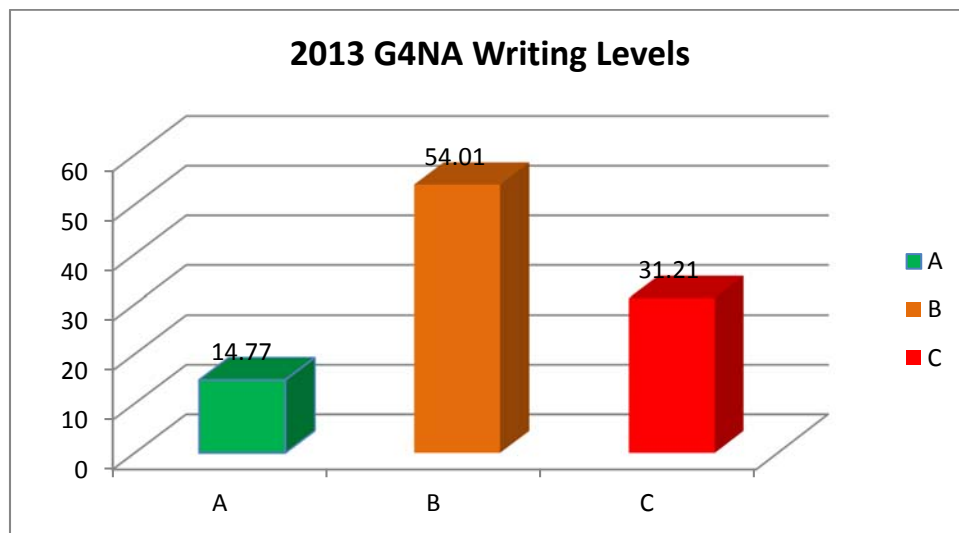


Fig. 5: Writing levels of grade 4 students (2013)

Mathematics

- **This year some 49% of the students were found to be working at or above grade level (compared to 46% in 2011). Only about 7% of the students are working at grade 2 level or below (see figure 6).**

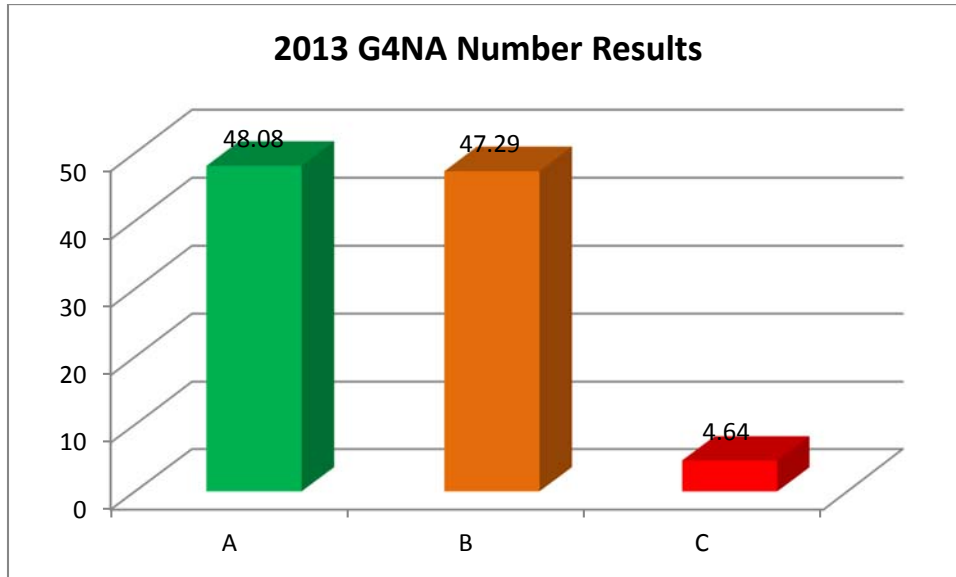


Fig.6: Number levels of grade 4 students (2013)

- **The performance of girls in number was also better than that of boys. Some 52% of the girls as compared to 45% of the boys were working at or above grade level in number (see figure 7).**

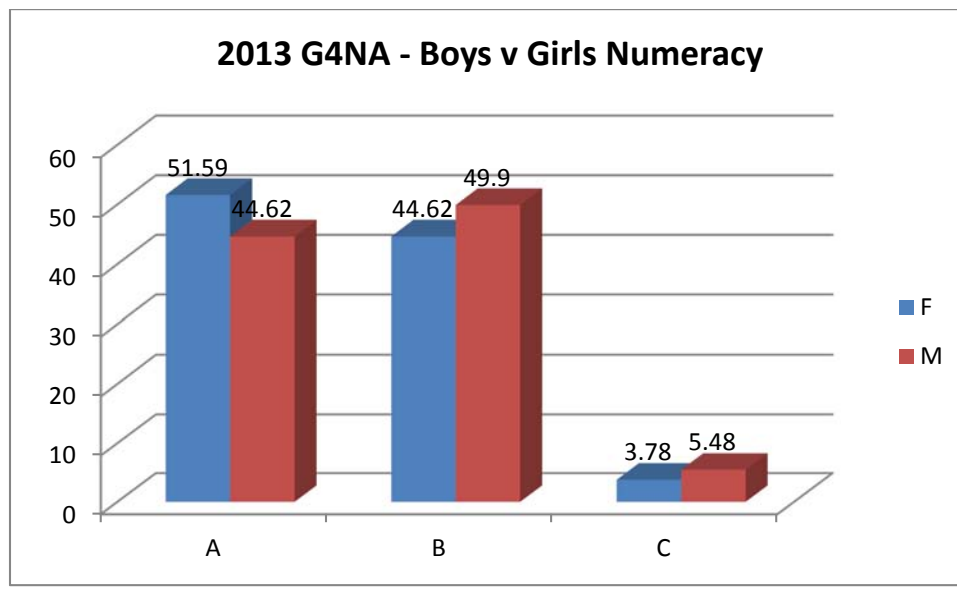


Fig. 7: Numeracy levels of grade 4 students (by gender)

Mental Mathematics

- The overall results in mental mathematics correlated very well ($r = 0.78$) with the written number assessments. About 42% of the students could be regarded as knowing their tables well with the majority having some knowledge.

Districts

- Performance in the western and northern districts was generally superior to that in the other districts. 72% of the western and 78% of the northern district students are working at or above their level in reading.
- **In each district twice as many boys as girls had serious reading difficulties(see figs 8 – 10).**

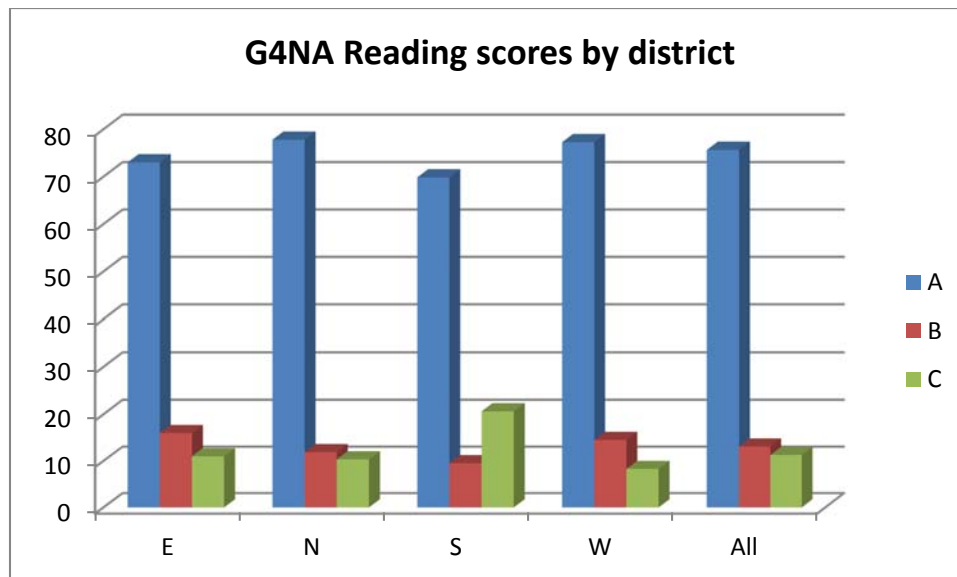


Fig. 8: 2012 District Reading levels

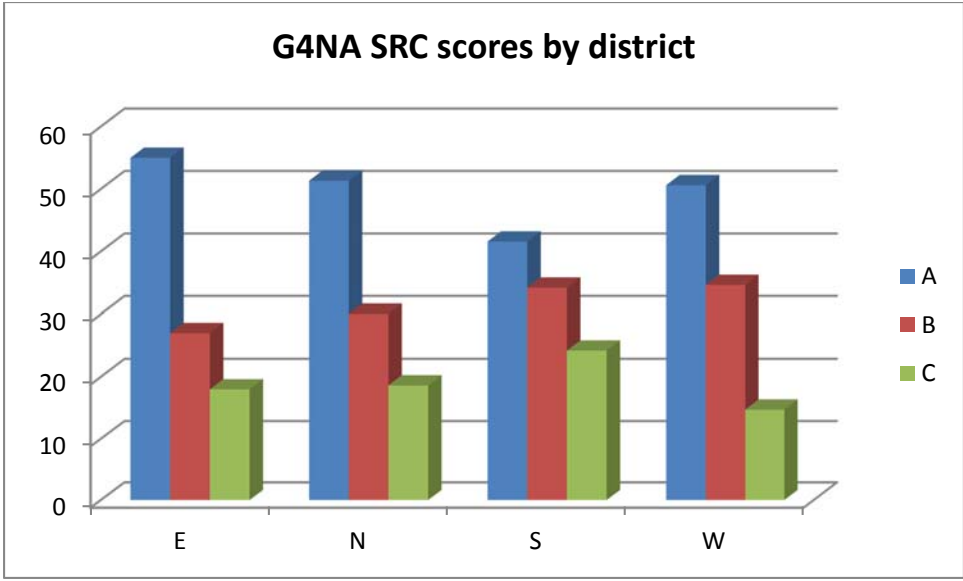


Fig. 9: 2012 District Silent Reading Comprehension levels

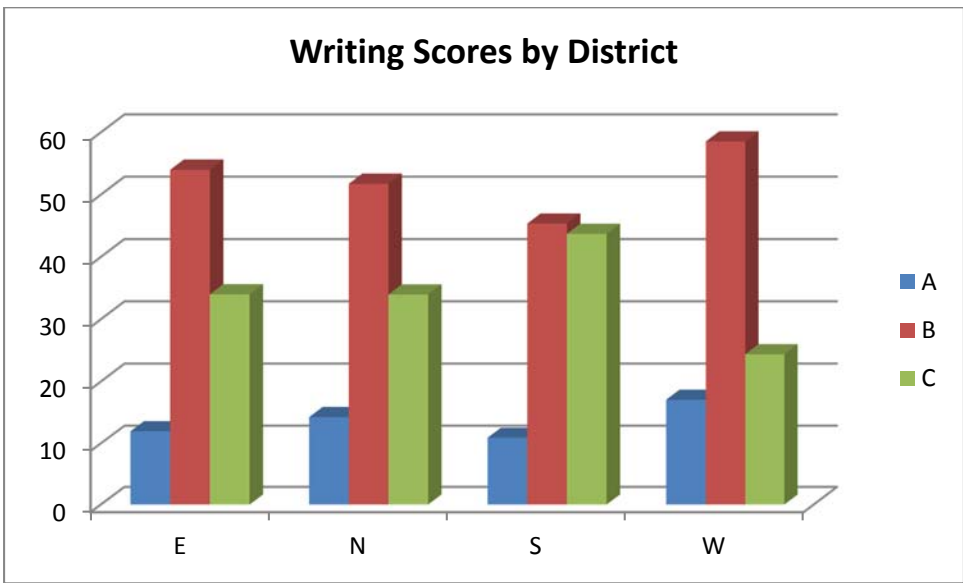


Fig. 10: 2012 District writing levels

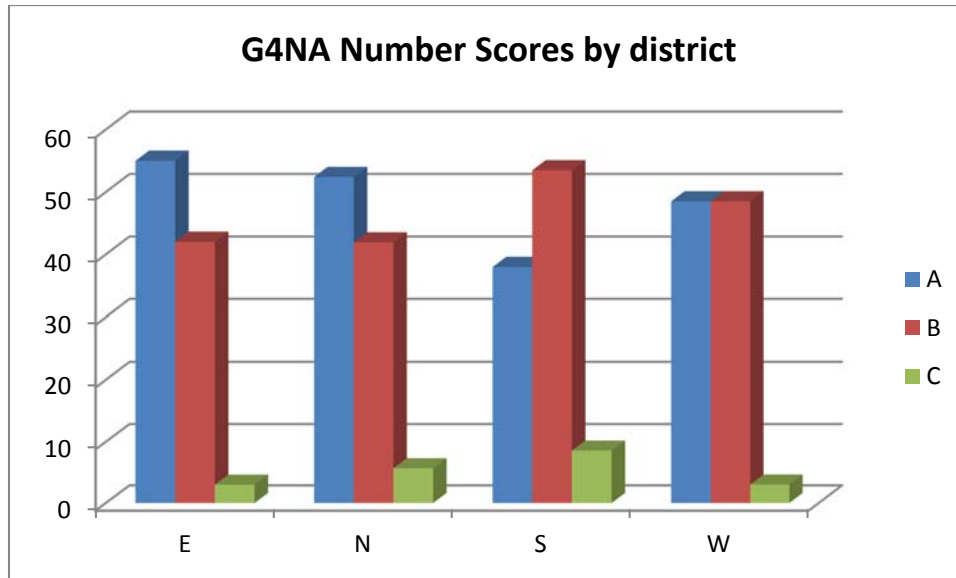


Fig. 11: 2012 District Numeracy levels

Schools

- **Dramatic student performance differences were observed between schools within districts.**
- In each district some schools were beacons of excellence, while others had made commendable improvements.

Conclusions

- **After five years of primary education about 12% of the boys and 7% of the girls can be classified as having serious reading problems.**
- **A few schools had results which are of serious concern, particularly, in regard to the performance of boys.**
- **The writing standards of the majority of students assessed are still weak.** Satisfactory writing was observed by only 45% of the students assessed.
- **Some improvement in student performance in number was observed. However, performance mental mathematics still leaves much to be desired.**
- Performance differences among schools seem to be more a function of school effectiveness than size or location of school. These differences were also manifest in schools of similar locality and economic background.

Recommendations

- It is advised that schools
 - a) monitor and regularly assess student performance from K onwards
 - b) provide suitable early intervention strategies for students who are falling behind
 - c) **pay particular attention to boys and reading**
so as to reduce the number of students reaching grade 2 with significant reading problems and hence lessen the difficulties schools have in dealing with older age students with reading difficulties.
- Schools need to continue their efforts to assist weak readers in the upper grades, **in particular boys.**
- **The Ministry of Education needs to work closely with schools whose performance raises concerns.**
- More attention should be focused on the teaching of writing.
- Performances suggest that more teaching time be allotted to the teaching of writing and mathematics. Students should do work in both areas every day.
- Students need to know the most appropriate method of performing calculations. In this regard, **schools should ensure that students know simple addition and subtraction facts and learn their multiplication tables** as this will facilitate their working with numbers. **Five to ten minutes at the start of all mathematics lessons could be devoted to such activities.**