

# INDICATOR 3

## *Student Achievement*



# Curriculum Standards and Assessment

## ***Standards and benchmarks describe what students should know and be able to do.***

All district curricula that have been adopted within the past five years are organized around standards and benchmarks. Standards define the learning that students should acquire in a specific content area. Benchmarks subdivide standards into what students should know and be able to do at a particular grade level. National and state standards are incorporated into each district curriculum. Additional influences on district standards and benchmarks come from educator and public surveys.

All curricular areas are comprehensive and reviewed continuously through implementation and assessment. Textbooks and other supplementary materials are reviewed, updated, or replaced on a regular cycle.

## ***Testing and assessment are used to support instruction.***

Teams of teachers and administrators meet regularly to analyze assessment results and to set district, building, and grade-level or class goals accordingly.

District-level assessments, such as end-of-semester and unit tests, writing samples, or standardized-test results, are used to measure student achievement, to set instructional goals, to determine consistency and balance in curriculum coverage, to provide staff development, and to target students needing special assistance.

## ***The following standardized tests are administered:***

- ITBS (Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, grades 1-8)
- ITED (Iowa Tests of Educational Development—9th-12th grade version of ITBS)
- ACT (American College Test)
- SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)
- PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)
- AP (Advanced Placement Tests)
- SSAT (Secondary School Admission Test— for qualifying for the Montana Cook Scholarship)

# Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Iowa Tests of Educational Development

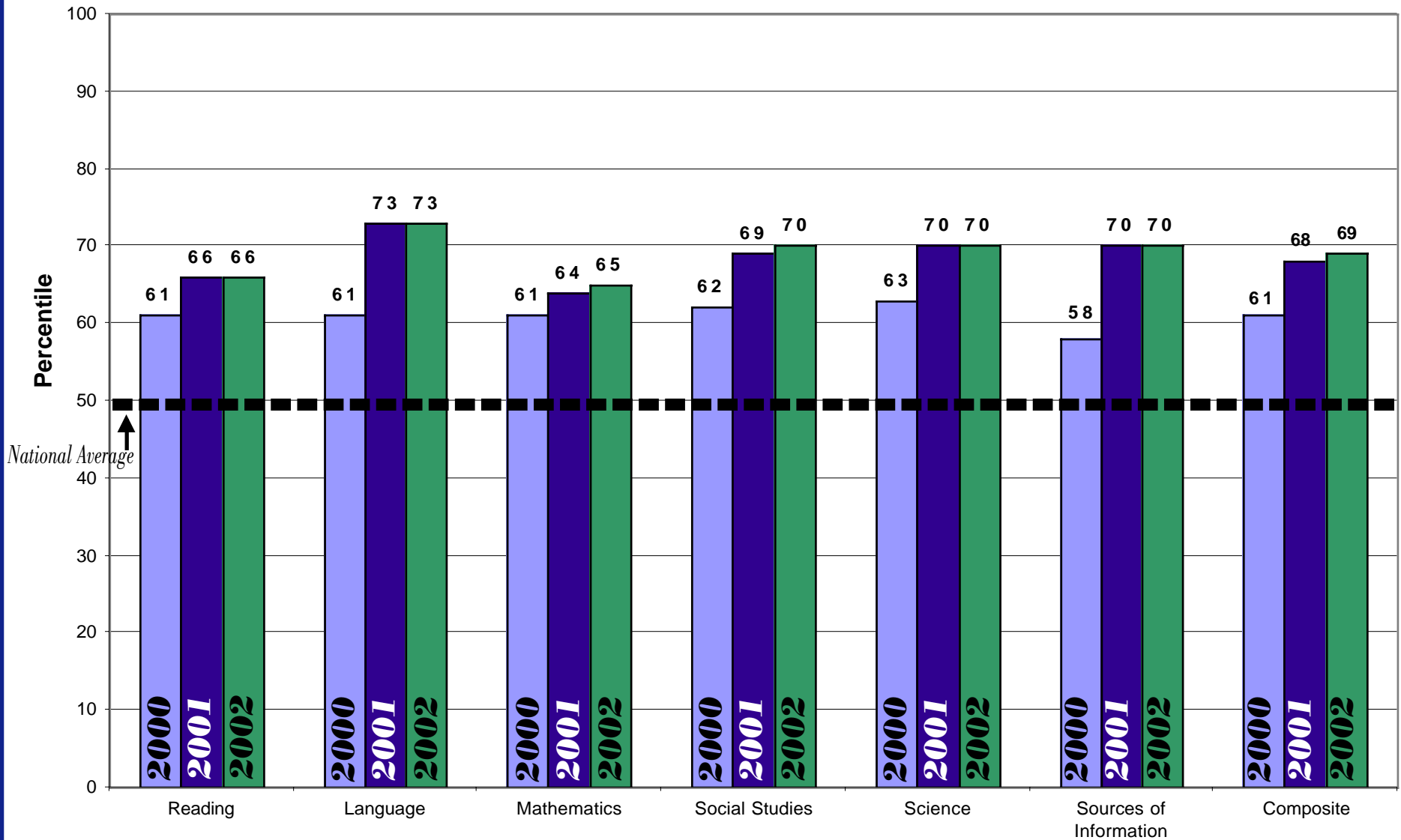
**T**he ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) is administered in mid-March of every year to students in grades one through eight. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive measurement of growth in the fundamental skills: reading, language, mathematics, social studies, science, and sources of information. The primary purpose is to provide parents, students, educators, and policy-makers with normative data that may be used for evaluating district, school, and student performance. The district uses the data for program improvement.

In ninth through 12th grades, the test is called the ITED (Iowa Tests of Educational Development). It provides a comprehensive appraisal of students' progress toward widely accepted goals of a high-school education. The tests include vocabulary, reading comprehension, written expression, math concepts and problem solving, math computation, social studies, science, and information processing.

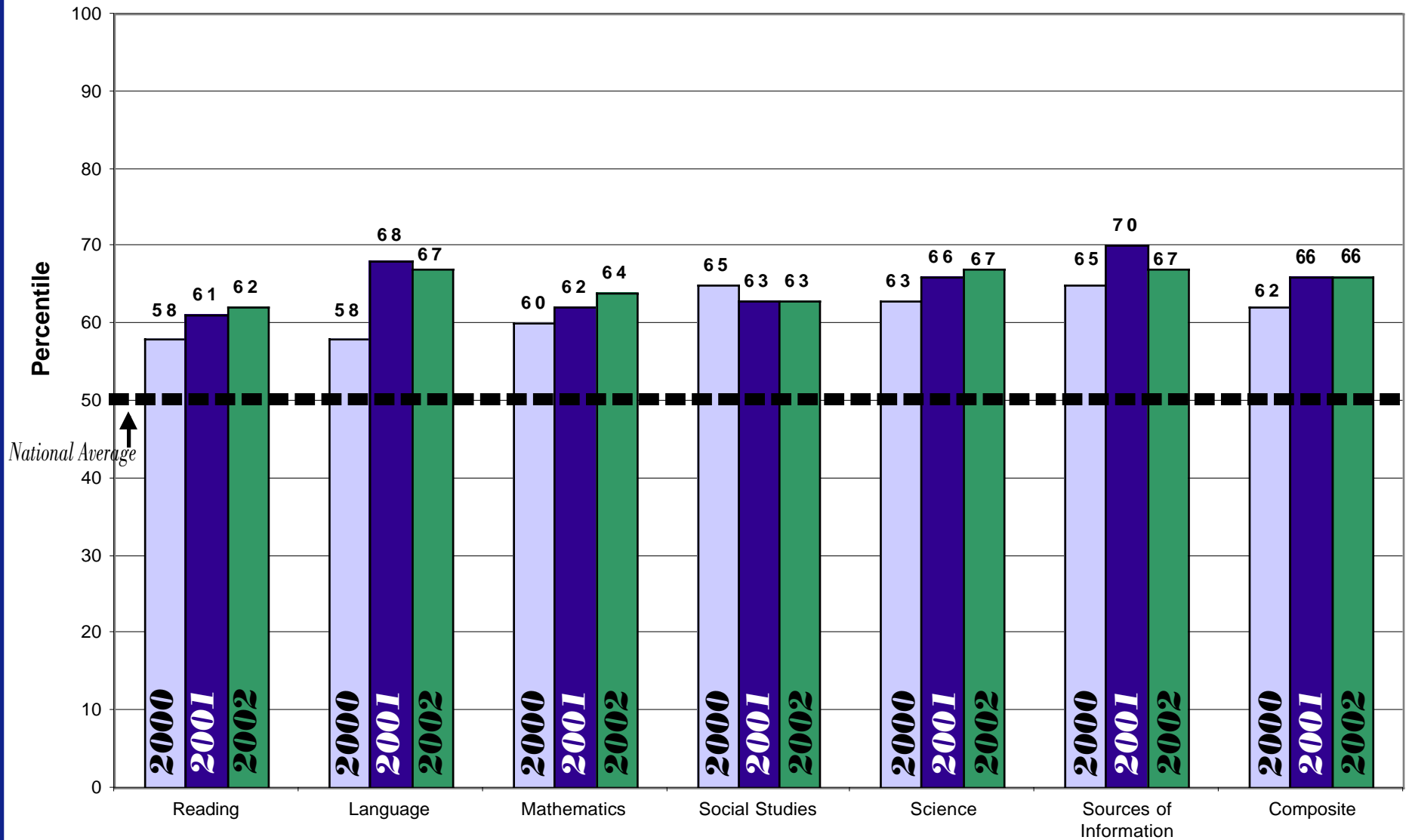
Results of these tests for grades four, eight, and eleven are reported to the Montana Office of Public Instruction, which releases the results statewide. Data includes both special-education and regular-education students. While the State of Montana only requires data for these three grade levels, the Great Falls Public School District now assesses all grades, one through 12. All scores become part of a student's cumulative record and are sent whenever transcripts are requested.

The total number of students tested for the 2001-2002 school year was 10,444.

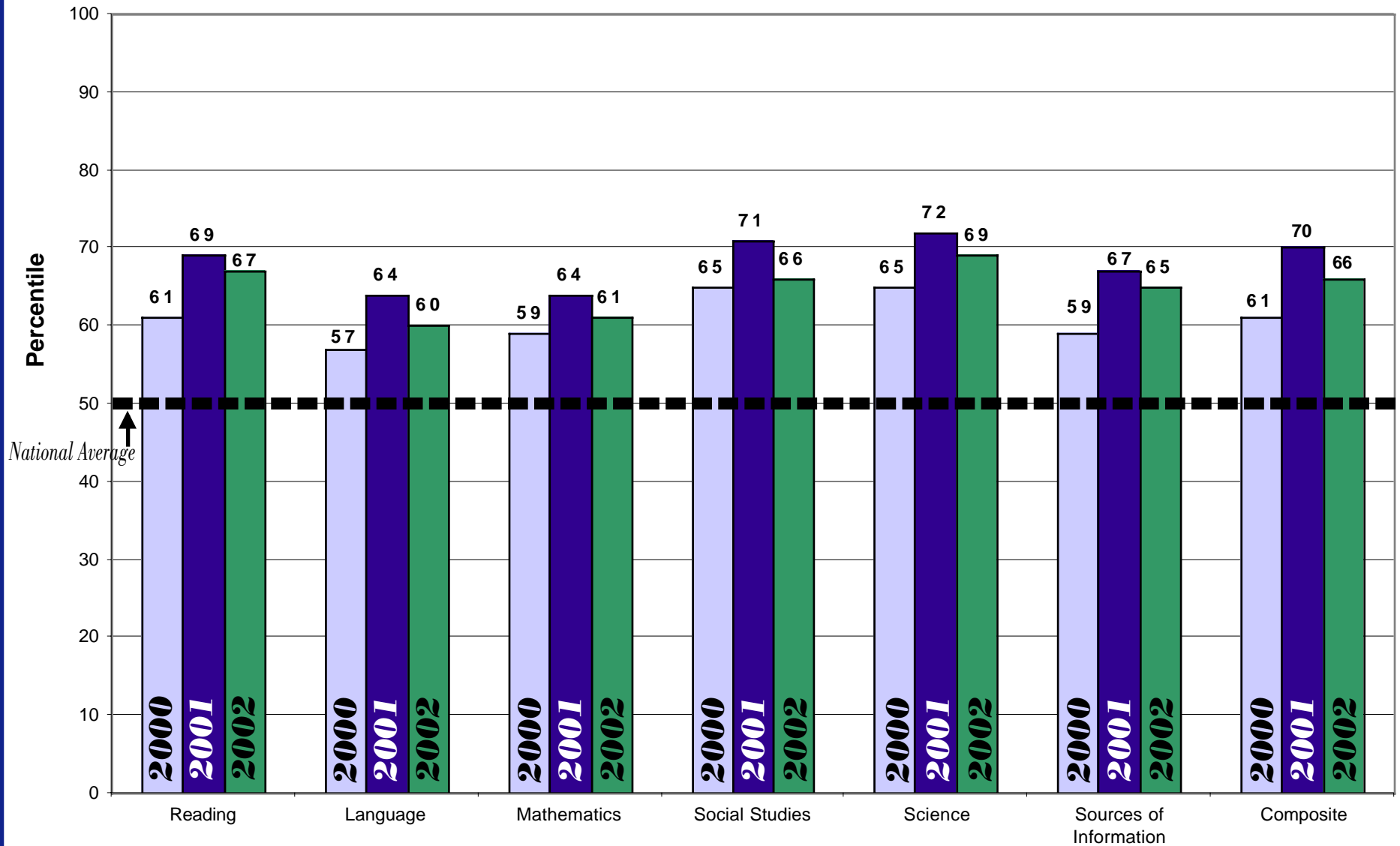
# GFPS Grade Four National Student Percentile Scores



# GFPS Grade Eight National Student Percentile Scores



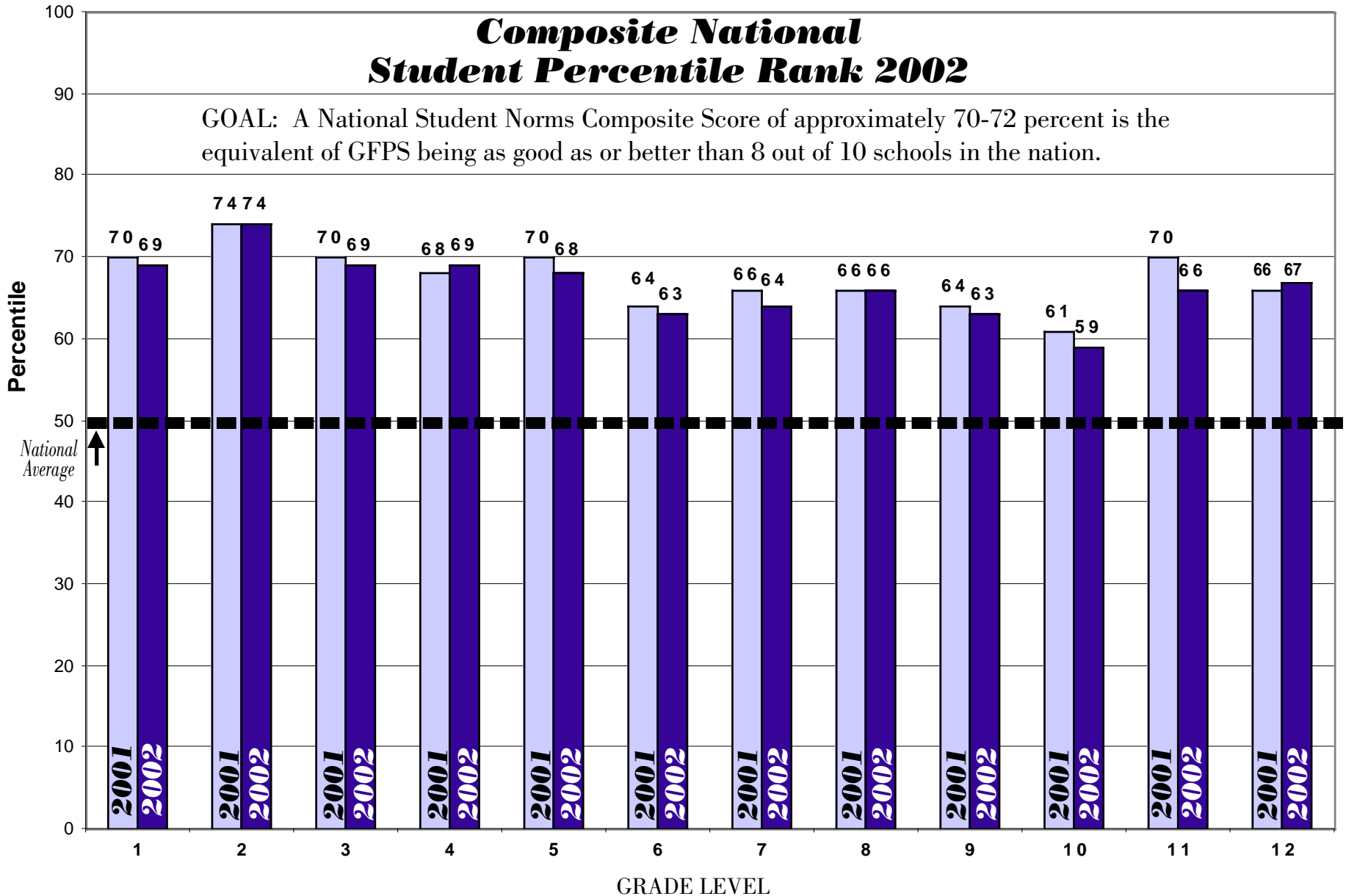
# GFPS Grade Eleven National Student Percentile Scores



# ITBS Scores Grades 1-12

## Composite National Student Percentile Rank 2002

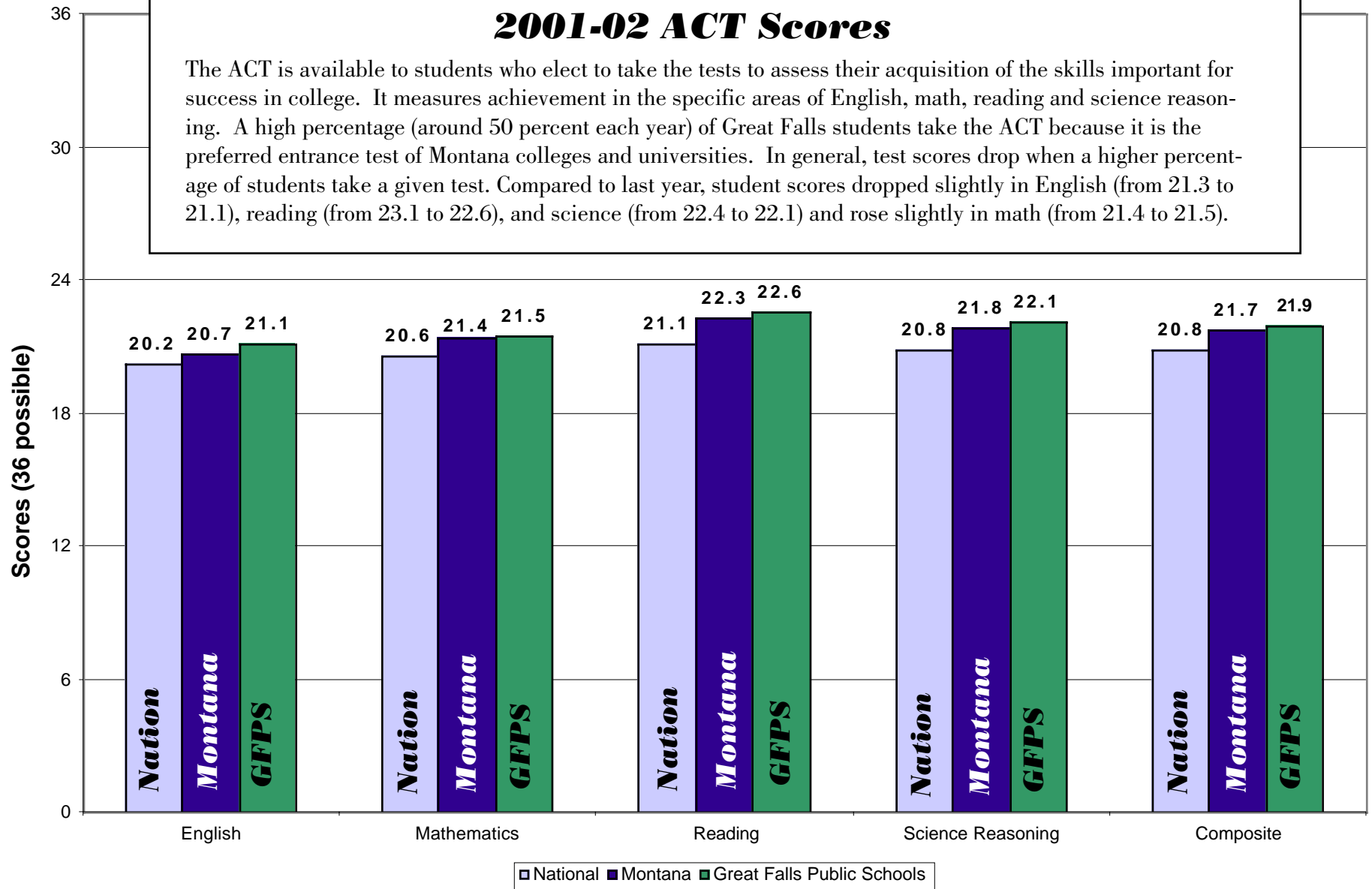
GOAL: A National Student Norms Composite Score of approximately 70-72 percent is the equivalent of GFPS being as good as or better than 8 out of 10 schools in the nation.



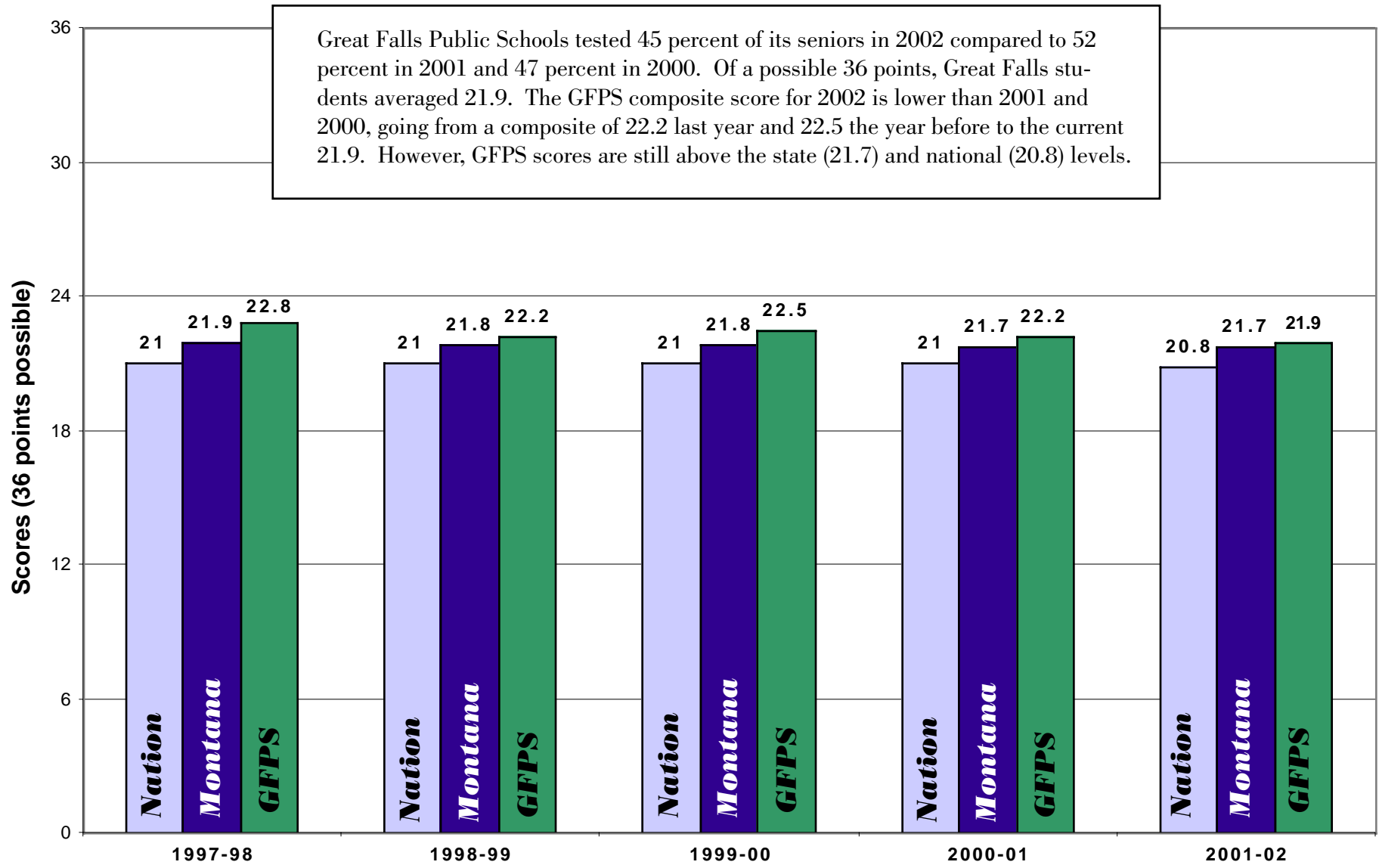
# ACT

## 2001-02 ACT Scores

The ACT is available to students who elect to take the tests to assess their acquisition of the skills important for success in college. It measures achievement in the specific areas of English, math, reading and science reasoning. A high percentage (around 50 percent each year) of Great Falls students take the ACT because it is the preferred entrance test of Montana colleges and universities. In general, test scores drop when a higher percentage of students take a given test. Compared to last year, student scores dropped slightly in English (from 21.3 to 21.1), reading (from 23.1 to 22.6), and science (from 22.4 to 22.1) and rose slightly in math (from 21.4 to 21.5).



# Composite ACT Scores

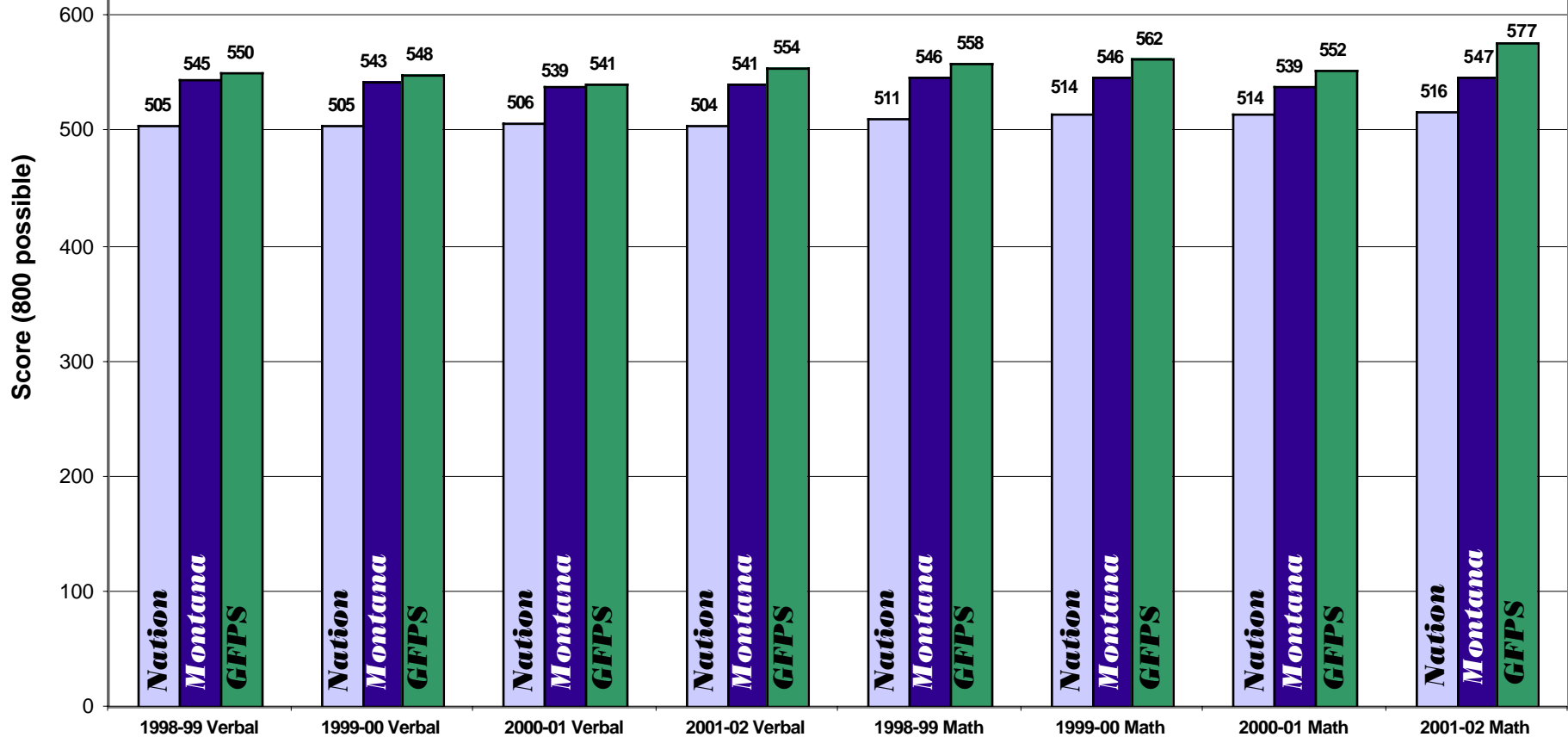


# SAT Score Comparisons

Approximately 25 percent of GFPS seniors take the SAT every year, an exam which is required by many out-of-state colleges and universities. This year, 23 percent took the test by the end of senior year. In general, test scores drop when a higher percentage of students take a given test. The figures represent average verbal and math scores. Of a possible 800 points in each area, GFPS scores for 2000-01 are higher than those of the state and nation. Locally, both verbal and math scores rose from the 2000-01 school year. Verbal jumped from 541 to 554 and math from 552 to 577.

## GFPS National Merit Scholars based on PSAT results

	Semifinalists	Finalists
1998-99	6	4
1999-00	3	3
2000-01	3	2
2001-02	3	3



# Advanced Placement Tests

**A**dvanced placement tests, administered in May of each year, measure the degree to which a student has mastered the challenging college-level course work that comprises an AP class. In general, AP scores of five and four are comparable to an “A” in a college course; an AP score of three is comparable to a “B.” Great Falls Public Schools offers six AP courses (English, calculus, biology, U.S. history, government, art); the statistics that follow are based upon the scores of students taking these specific AP-content classes. In addition, 11 students took tests independently in the following areas: French (1), chemistry (4), psychology (2), physics (1), statistics (5), and European history (3).

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Exams taken*</b>
<b>1997/98</b> .....	<b>229</b>
<b>1998/99</b> .....	<b>288</b>
<b>1999/00</b> .....	<b>196</b>
<b>2000/01</b> .....	<b>277</b>
<b>2001/02</b> .....	<b>336*</b>

\*The 16 students who took the test outside the framework of an AP course are not included in the data

## **Number of Students Taking AP Subject Exams (number scoring 3 or higher)**

	U.S. History	Government*	English**	Biology	Calculus	Art***
GFPS STATE	60 (35) 466 (297)	18 (14) 276 (213)	102 (70) 1013 (710)	88 (50) 202 (137)	49 (40) 313 (236)	19 (7) 51 (25)
GFPS% STATE%	58.3% 63.7%	77.8% 77.2%	68.6% 70.1%	56.8% 67.8%	81.6% 75.4%	36.8% 49%

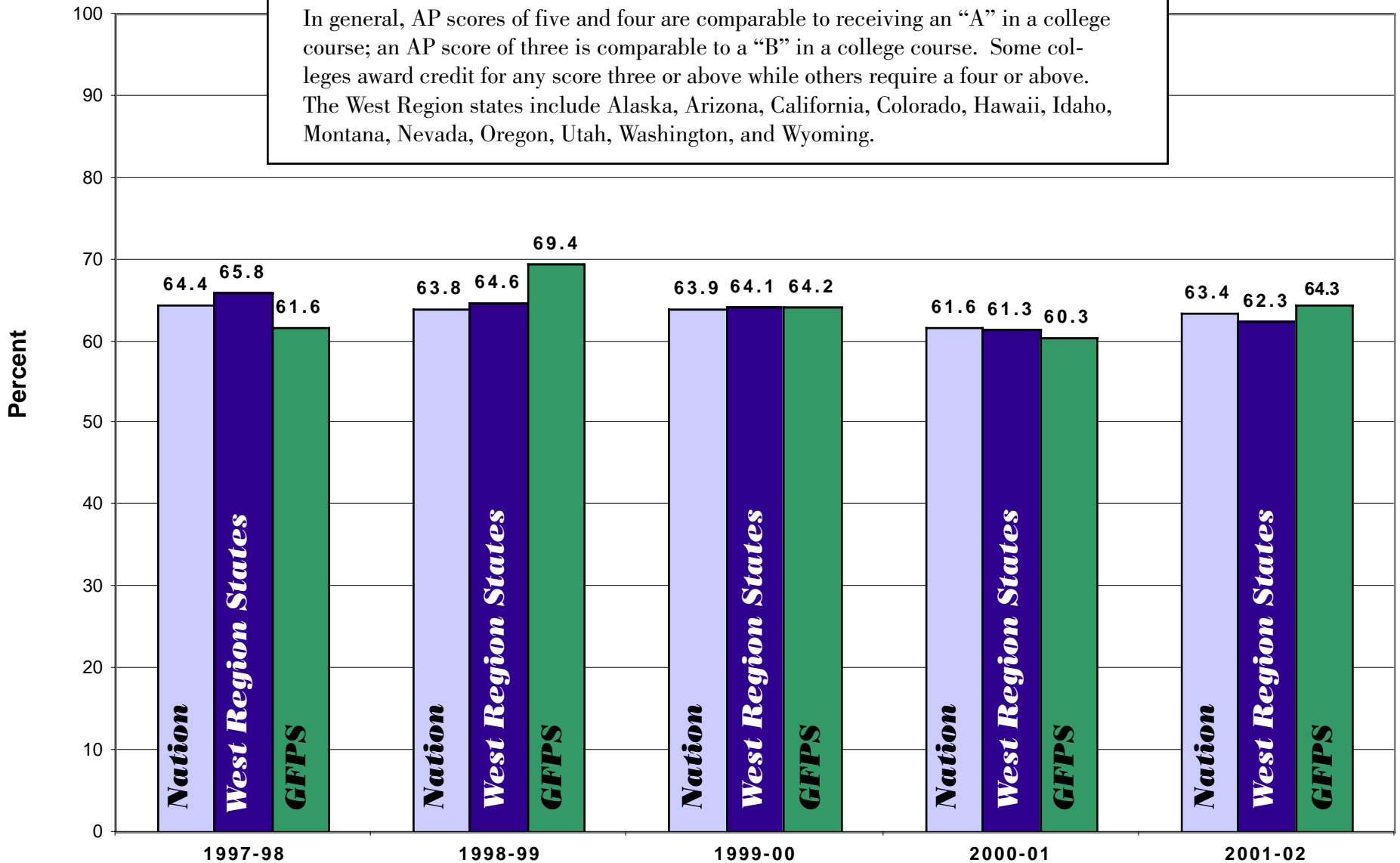
\*reflects combined total for two different exams: Government and Politics U.S.

\*\*reflects combined total for two different exams: English Language/Composition and English Literature/Composition

\*\*\* reflects combination for two different exams: Art-General and Art-Drawing

# Percentage of Students Scoring 3, 4, or 5 on AP Exams

In general, AP scores of five and four are comparable to receiving an “A” in a college course; an AP score of three is comparable to a “B” in a college course. Some colleges award credit for any score three or above while others require a four or above. The West Region states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.



# By Subject: Percentage of Students Scoring 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams

The following subject areas increased their pass rate from last year: English from 53.4 to 68.6, calculus from 63 to 81.6, and art from 35.3 to 36.8. The following areas saw a decline in pass percentage: U.S. history from 66.7 to 58.3, government from 90.9 to 77.8, and biology from 63.9 to 56.8. However, GFPS expected declines this year since students enrolled in AP courses were required to take the test; yet, the overall pass rate actually increased over four percentage points. Also as a result of the policy change, 59 more tests were taken, an increase of 21 percent.

