About 93 percent of Louisiana's public high school seniors now have passed the state-mandated examination required for graduation, the state's top education administrator said Friday.

Education Superintendent Wilmer Cody made the announcement after receiving the results of February's "seniors-only" graduation exit examination.

Last month, the state retested 4,430 seniors who previously failed to pass one or more parts of the test. As a result, 2,259 seniors must retake one or more components of the exam next month to graduate on time.

The statewide senior class includes about 42,000 students.

The exit exam consists of tests in written composition, English language arts, science, and social studies. Public school students must pass all components to graduate.

After reviewing the results, Cody said the state's seniors "have made considerable progress." He said he expects almost all of this year's seniors to graduate on schedule because of "concerted remediation programs and the continued effort on the part of students and teachers alike."

"We expect that about half of those (retested in April) who have still not yet satisfied the requirements will do so," Cody said in a telephone interview.

And, the state is not forgetting the number that still won't pass after next month's retesting.

Currently under consideration is a plan that would allow students who have otherwise satisfied their graduation requirements to still be eligible to continue to take the test even after they leave school.

The test will be administered again in August for juniors, but seniors who have not yet passed will be given another shot then, Cody said.

"Our objective is to keep working with these students to help them pass this test, even if it takes more time beyond this year," Cody said.

Below are the results of the "seniors-only" examination:

- Of 2,899 seniors tested in science, 1,864 passed.
- Of 2,391 seniors retested in social studies, 1,675 passed.
- Of 544 seniors retested in written composition, 380 passed.
- Of 755 seniors retested in English language arts, 507 passed.
- Of 1,146 seniors retested in mathematics, 560 seniors passed.

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Exit

CONTINUED FROM 1A

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