

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

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Commissioner

EMBARGOED UNTIL:

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NAEP 2009 Reading Results Provide Positive News for Connecticut

Results of the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show Connecticut's Grade 8 proficiency rates in reading increased by six percentage points when compared to the 2007 results. In the case of fourth grade, the percentage of students reaching proficiency is not significantly different than the performance reported in 2007.

Connecticut NAEP Performance 2003-2009				
	GRADE 4		GRADE 8	
	AVG. SCALE SCORE	% OF STUDENTS AT/ABOVE PROFICIENT	AVG. SCALE SCORE	% OF STUDENTS AT/ABOVE PROFICIENT
2003	228	43	267*	37*
2005	226*	38*	264*	34*
2007	227	41	267*	37*
2009	229	42	272	43

** indicates a statistically significant difference when compared to performance in 2009.*

NAEP, also known as "The Nation's Report Card," is the only ongoing nationally representative assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. NAEP is designed to measure student performance over long periods of time and allows states to compare the performance of their students to the performance of students in other states throughout the country. It is the only state-by-state assessment of student achievement. Although NAEP reading data show that Connecticut students overall consistently outperform the national average, disaggregated results reveal our state's large achievement gaps among student subgroups and the prevalence of this problem nationally.

The improvements seen in the Grade 8 NAEP results, place Connecticut among the highest performing states in the nation. No state outperforms Connecticut eighth graders. In the case of Grade 4, only fourth grade students in Massachusetts outperform Connecticut students.

"We are pleased with our students' overall performance on NAEP and encouraged by the improvement we see among some of our student subgroups," said state Education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan. "Of course, our schools face tremendous challenges in effectively meeting the needs of all students, but

given the strides we have seen in our middle schools based on the NAEP 2009 mathematics and reading results and the positive changes we saw on the 2009 Connecticut Mastery Test, we know that progress is possible.”

While NAEP is designed to provide every state with reliable student performance data over time, the assessment alone cannot provide information about why scores change. Connecticut educators must provide the contextual information to support these explanations. When asked about the reasons behind the improvements at Grade 8, Patricia Foley, English Language Arts and Accountability Specialist for the State Department of Education explained, “There has been such a strong commitment by districts to focus attention on providing support to schools and teachers to enhance and improve literacy instruction in order to accelerate learning for all students. The NAEP results are likely a direct reflection of these ongoing efforts.”

NAEP is administered biennially in reading and mathematics to a representative sample of students in Grades 4 and 8 from each state; state-level results have been reported since the early 1990s. State legislation requires Connecticut public school districts to participate and the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires all states to participate.

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[See attached highlights](#)

2009 READING HIGHLIGHTS

GRADE 4 READING (number of students tested = 2900)

- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above (42%) is higher than that of students across the nation (32%).
- Connecticut's Grade 4 students performed as well as or better than Grade 4 students in 48 other states. Only one state, Massachusetts, had a significantly higher percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. The performance of students in 5 states was equal to that of Connecticut students, while 43 states had a significantly lower percentage of students who scored at or above proficient.
- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level or above in 2009 (42%) is not significantly different from that in 2007 (41%), 2003 (43%), 2002 (43%), and 1998 (43%). However, 2009 scores exceed performance reported in 2005 (38%), 1994 (38%) and 1992 (34%).
- Connecticut females achieved proficiency at a rate of 47% in 2009, while 38% of males did so. For female and male students, proficiency rates in 2009 are unchanged when compared to every NAEP reading administration dating back to 1994. It is only when 2009 performance is compared to 1992 that a statistically significant improvement in proficiency rates for female and male students is reported.
- While 18% of Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students performed at the proficient level and above, 52% of their nondisadvantaged peers achieved proficiency.
- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at proficient or higher in 2009 is not significantly different from any previous administration year. However, Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students have shown improvement in average scale scores over time. This student subgroup earned an average scale score of 207 in 2009, which is better than the performance reported in 2007 (201) and 2005 (202). The 2009 average scale score is not significantly different from performance reported in 2003, 2002, and 1998.
- The percentage of Connecticut white students scoring at or above the proficient level is not significantly different from the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students scoring at or above the proficient level. The performance of both of these subgroups is higher than that of black and Hispanic students.
- The performance gap, based on average scale scores, between white and black students is narrower in 2009 (29 points) than in 2003 (37 points) and 1994 (45 points), but the gap has not changed when comparing the 2009 results to the 1992, 1998, 2002, 2005 and 2007 administrations of NAEP reading.
- The performance gap, based on average scale scores, between white and Hispanic students has remained large over many NAEP administrations. The gap in 2009 (33 points) is narrower than the performance gap reported in 1994 (51 points), but the gap has not improved when comparing 2009 results to those of 1992, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2007.
- With regard to proficiency, white and black students performed above the national average in 2009, while Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander student performance was not significantly different from the national averages of their counterparts.

GRADE 8 READING (number of students tested = 2800)

- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at or above the proficient level (43%) is higher than that of students across the nation (30%).
- Connecticut's Grade 8 students outperformed their counterparts in 43 states relative to the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level. Connecticut performance was not significantly different from that of the six highest performing states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont). No state had a greater percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level compared to Connecticut.
- Connecticut female students achieved proficiency at a rate of 48% in 2009, while 37% of male students did so. Both groups of students demonstrated improved performance compared to 2007, 2005 and 2003. Scores in 2009 for male students are also higher than scores earned in 2002 but not significantly different from 1998. Scores for female students in 2009 are not significantly different from scores earned in 2002 or 1998.
- While 18% of Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students performed at the proficient level and above, 51% of their nondisadvantaged peers achieved proficiency.
- The performance gap based on average scale scores between economically disadvantaged students and their nondisadvantaged peers is 29 points. There have been no statistically significant changes in this gap over time.
- The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students and white students scoring at or above the proficient level (64% and 51%) was higher than black and Hispanic students (11% and 19%).
- The performance gap based on average scale scores between white and black students (34 points) has not changed significantly over time.
- The performance gap based on average scale scores between white and Hispanic students in 2009 (27 points) is narrower than the gap reported in 2002 (38 points) but is not significantly different than the performance gaps reported in 1998, 2003, 2005 and 2007.
- With regard to proficiency, in 2009 black students and Hispanic students in Connecticut performed at the same level as the national average for each of the respective subgroups while white and Asian/Pacific Islander students outperformed the reported national averages for these student groups.

The official NAEP website is <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>