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Sept. 25, 2007

## **Texas students outperform national average on NAEP mathematics tests and match national average on reading tests**

AUSTIN - Texas students outperformed the national average on the fourth and eighth grade 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics exams and matched the national average on the fourth and eighth grade reading results.

However, when the scores are examined by ethnic groups, Texas students in all major groups outpaced students in the same student groups across the country on both the NAEP mathematics and reading tests at both grade levels.

In addition, economically disadvantaged fourth-grade students in Texas achieved higher average scale scores on the reading exam compared to the national average. At grade 8, economically disadvantaged students achieved higher average scale scores than the equivalent national average in reading, and both economically disadvantaged and English language learners in Texas outpaced students in the same student groups across the country on the math exam.

The NAEP is known as the nation's report card because it is the only assessment test given to students of all academic levels in all states. Today's results are based on the performance of over 675,000 fourth and eighth-grade students across the country. There are four achievement levels: below basic, basic, proficient and advanced.

"The NAEP scores validate the progress we have seen on our state tests and validate what Texas educators are doing. Texas stacks up very well when the scores of individual student groups are compared nationally," interim Commissioner of Education Robert Scott said.

### **Eighth-grade math**

Texas eighth-grade students earned an average scale score of 286 this year on the NAEP mathematics test, a significant gain over their average scale score of 281 in 2005. This year's score exceeded the national average scale score of 280.

Texas had significantly more students scoring at the proficient level, with 35 percent of this year's eighth-graders performing at this high level, compared to 31 percent in 2005. At the national level, 31 percent of eighth-grade students performed at the proficient level. The percentage of grade 8 students in Texas performing at or above the NAEP basic level was 78 percent in 2007, a significant increase over the 72 percent scoring at this level in 2005.

Like the fourth-grade students, each major ethnic group at eighth-grade outperformed the national average. White students earned an average scale score of 300, compared to a score of

290 for whites nationally. African-American students in Texas earned an average scale score of 271, 12 points higher than the national average for this group. Hispanic Texans with an average scale score of 277 had a 13 point lead over Hispanics nationally. In addition, grade 8 English language learners, with an average scale score of 252, and economically disadvantaged students, with an average scale score of 275, each outperformed their national peers with average scale scores of 245 and 265, respectively.

### **Fourth-grade math**

On the fourth-grade mathematics test, Texas ranked in ninth place nationally with 87 percent of its students at or above the basic performance level, which includes performance at the basic, proficient and advanced levels.

The average scale scores of fourth-grade students in Texas remained stable, compared to scores in 2005 (242 in both years). The national average scale score was 239, significantly lower than the average scale score in Texas. Texas's African-American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students all outperformed their comparable student groups nationally, according to information from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which administers the NAEP program.

Texas's African-American students posted a score of 230, compared to 222 for the group nationally. Hispanic Texans earned a score of 236, nine points higher than their peers nationally.

The percentage of Texas' fourth-grade students scoring at or above the proficient level in 2007 remained stable compared to the state's test scores in 2005 but was higher than the national average. Forty percent of grade 4 Texas students were at the proficient level, the same as in 2005. Nationally, 38 percent of the students were proficient in math. A student who has earned a proficient achievement level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter, according to NCES.

Texas has also greatly reduced the percent of students who are performing below the basic level. In 1992, 44 percent of the state's fourth graders scored below the basic level, compared with 13 percent today.

### **Eighth-grade reading**

The average scale score on the eighth-grade reading exam was 261 for Texas students in 2007, significantly higher compared to their average scale score of 258 in 2005. Texas matched the national average score of 261. Twenty-eight percent of the Texans and 29 percent of the students nationally were at the proficient level.

Seventy-three percent of Texas eighth-grade students achieved at or above the basic level, a significant increase compared to the 69 percent achieving this level in 2005. Texas's ethnic groups earned higher scores than their classmates nationally. White Texans earned an average scale score of 275, compared to a national average of 270. Texans who are African-American earned a score of 249, five points higher than the national average for African Americans. Hispanic Texans had an average scale score of 251, five points higher than their peers nationally. In addition, economically disadvantaged students in Texas, with an average scale score of 249, had a significantly higher average scale score than their peers in the nation overall (247).

### **Fourth-grade reading**

Texas' fourth-grade students earned an average scale score of 220 on the reading NAEP, not significantly different from their average scale score of 219 in 2005. This average score matched the national average. Texas had 29 percent of the students at or above the proficient level, not significantly different than the percentage at that level nationally (31 percent). Texas and the nation overall had the same percentage of students performing at the below basic level, 34 percent.

Once again, students in Texas' major ethnic groups outperformed their peers across the country. Texas' white students earned an average scale score of 232, compared to an average scale score of 230 for white students nationally. African-American students in Texas achieved an average scale score of 207, compared to 203 nationally. Hispanic Texans received a score of 212, compared to 204 for Hispanic students across the country. In addition, grade 4 English language learners, with an average scale score of 196, and economically disadvantaged students, with an average scale score of 209, outperformed their national peers (with average scale scores of 188 and 205, respectively).

More information about NAEP and the 2007 results is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

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