

NAEP 2007 Writing Report for New Jersey



This report provides selected results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for New Jersey's public school students at grade 8. Beginning in 1998, writing has been assessed in three different years at the state level (at grade 4 in 2002, and at grade 8 in 1998, 2002, and 2007).

The 2007 state-level writing assessment was conducted only at grade 8 and 46 jurisdictions participated: 45 states and the Department of Defense Schools (domestic and overseas). New Jersey participated and met the criteria for reporting public school results. Writing results are reported by average scale scores (on a 0–300 point scale) and by achievement levels (*Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*).

NAEP is a project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). For more information about the assessment, see *The Nation's Report Card, Writing 2007*, which is available on the NAEP website along with the full set of national and state results in an interactive database (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>). Released test questions, scoring guides, and question-level performance data are also available on the website.

K E Y F I N D I N G S F O R 2 0 0 7

Grade 8:

- New Jersey's average score (175) was higher than that of the nation's public schools (154).
- In New Jersey, the percentage of students who performed at or above *Proficient* (56 percent) was greater than that for the nation's public schools (31 percent).
- In New Jersey, the percentage of students who performed at or above *Basic* (95 percent) was greater than that for the nation's public schools (87 percent).

The U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has provided software that generated user-selectable data, statistical significance test result statements, and technical descriptions of the NAEP assessments for this report. Content may be added or edited by states or other jurisdictions. This document, therefore, is not an official publication of the National Center for Education Statistics.

Introduction

What Was Assessed?

The content for each NAEP assessment is determined by the National Assessment Governing Board. The objectives for each NAEP assessment are described in a framework, a document that delineates the content and skills to be measured, as well as the types of questions to be included in the assessment.

The NAEP writing framework serves as the blueprint for the writing assessment, specifying the skills that should be assessed. It represents ideas from a wide range of organizations that are part of writing education, as well as writing experts, school administrators, policymakers, teachers, parents, and others.

The current NAEP writing framework was used to guide the development of the 1998, 2002 and 2007 assessments. (A new framework will be used for the 2011 NAEP writing assessment.) Updates to the framework over the years provided more details about the kinds of writing tasks to include in the assessment but did not change the content, allowing students' performance in 2007 to be compared with previous years.

Informed by writing research and theory, the NAEP writing framework emphasizes that writing is done for a variety of specific situations and that good writers can communicate effectively in these different situations. In addition, writing is as much thought as communication, and a thoughtful writing process includes both composing and revising.

Given that writing is done for many reasons, the framework specifies that students' writing skills be measured by asking students to write for different purposes and audiences. Tasks on the assessment require students to inform, to persuade, and to tell stories, real or imagined, and to do so for a range of audiences, among them teachers, newspaper editors, potential employers, and peers. For more information on the framework, see <http://www.nagb.org>.

Unlike other NAEP assessments, which use a combination of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions, the writing assessment consists entirely of students' writing for the purposes described in the framework. Released test questions, along with student performance data by state, are available on the NAEP website at (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls/>).

Purposes for Writing	Description
Narrative	Narrative writing encourages writers to incorporate their imagination and creativity in the production of stories and personal essays. At its best, narrative writing fosters imagination, creativity, and speculation by allowing writers to express their thoughts and to analyze and understand their actions and emotions.
Informative	In informative writing, the writer provides the reader with information. This type of writing is used to share knowledge and to convey messages, instructions, and ideas. When used as a means of exploration, informative writing helps both the writer and the reader to learn new ideas and to reexamine old conclusions.
Persuasive	Persuasive writing seeks to persuade the reader to take action or bring about change. This type of writing involves a clear awareness of what arguments might most affect the audience being addressed. Writing persuasively also requires the use of such skills as analysis, inference, synthesis, and evaluation.

Who Was Assessed?

The 2007 NAEP writing assessment was conducted at the state and national level at grade 8, and at the national level only at grade 12. Therefore, grade 12 results are not presented in this state report. Forty-six jurisdictions participated in the NAEP writing assessment at grade 8 in 2007: forty-five states and the Department of Defense Education Activity Schools (domestic and overseas). The District of Columbia, which participated in the reading and mathematics assessments in 2007, did not have a sufficient number of students to participate in all three simultaneous assessments. Therefore, the District of Columbia did not participate in the 2007 writing assessment. The target sample for each state or other jurisdiction was approximately 100 schools at each grade tested and approximately 3,000 students for each subject at each grade. States containing trial urban districts had larger samples.

The sample of schools and students was chosen in a two-stage sampling process. First, the sample of schools was selected by probability sampling methods. Then, within the participating schools, random samples of students were chosen.

The nationally representative sample of eighth-graders assessed in 2007 consisted of the combined sample of public school students assessed in each participating state, plus an additional sample of students from states for which results are not reported separately and students in nonpublic schools (i.e., private, Bureau of Indian Education, and the Department of Defense schools). The national sample for grade 12 was chosen using a multistage design that involved drawing students from the sampled public and nonpublic schools across the country. Grade 8 state-level results in this report reflect the performance of public school students only. At grade 8, approximately 6,810 schools and 139,900 students participated in 2007. At grade 12, the national-only sample included approximately 660 schools and 27,900 students in 2007.

The overall participation rates for schools and students must meet guidelines established by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Assessment Governing Board for assessment results to be reported publicly. A participation rate of at least 85 percent for schools in each subject and grade was required, and these standards were met for each of the 46 jurisdictions. Participation rates for the 2007 writing assessment are available at the NAEP website (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/writing/sampledesign.asp>).

How Is Student Writing Performance Reported?

The results of student performance on the NAEP assessments in 2007 are reported for various groups of students (e.g., eighth-grade female students or students who took the assessment in a particular year). NAEP does not produce scores for individual students, nor does it report scores for schools or for school districts. Some large urban districts, however, have voluntarily participated in the assessment on a trial basis and were sampled as states were sampled. Writing performance for groups of students is reported in two ways: as average scale scores and as percentages of students performing at various achievement levels.

Scale Scores

NAEP writing results are reported on a 0–300 scale. Because NAEP scales are developed independently for each subject, average scores cannot be compared across subjects even when the scale has the same range. Although the writing scale score ranges are identical for both grades 8 and 12, they were derived independently and, therefore, scores cannot be compared across grades.

In addition to reporting an overall writing score for each grade, scores are reported at five percentiles (10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th) to show trends in performance for lower-, middle-, and higher-performing students.

NAEP Achievement Levels

Based on recommendations from policymakers, educators, and members of the general public, the Governing Board sets specific achievement levels for each subject area and grade. Achievement levels are performance standards defining what students should know and be able to do. They provide another perspective with which to interpret student performance. NAEP results are reported as percentages of students performing at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels and at the *Advanced* level.

As provided by law, NCES, upon review of congressionally mandated evaluations of NAEP, has determined that achievement levels are to be used on a trial basis and should be interpreted with caution. The NAEP achievement levels have been widely used by national and state officials.

- *Basic* denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade.
- *Proficient* represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter.
- *Advanced* represents superior performance.

The achievement levels are cumulative. Therefore, students performing at the *Proficient* level also display the competencies associated with the *Basic* level, and students at the *Advanced* level demonstrate the competencies associated with both the *Basic* and the *Proficient* levels. The writing achievement-level descriptions for grade 8 are summarized in figure 1. These achievement levels are applied to first drafts (not final or polished student writing) that are generated within limited time constraints in a large-scale assessment environment.

Figure 1	The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
	Descriptions of eighth-grade achievement levels for 2007 NAEP writing assessment

Basic Level (114)	<i>Basic</i> denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade.
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Eighth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should be able to produce an effective response within the time allowed that shows a general understanding of the writing task they have been assigned. Their writing should show that these students are aware of the audience they are expected to address, and it should include supporting details in an organized way. The grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in the work should be accurate enough to communicate to a reader, although there may be mistakes that get in the way of meaning.

Proficient Level (173)	<i>Proficient</i> represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter.
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Eighth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should be able to produce an effective response within the time allowed that shows an understanding of both the writing task they have been assigned and the audience they are expected to address. Their writing should be organized, making use of techniques such as sequencing or a clearly marked beginning and ending, and it should make use of details and some elaboration to support and develop the main idea of the piece. Their writing should include precise language and some variety in sentence structure, and it may show analytical, evaluative, or creative thinking. The grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in the work should be accurate enough to communicate to a reader; there may be some errors, but these should not get in the way of meaning.

Advanced Level (224)	<i>Advanced</i> represents superior performance.
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Eighth-grade students performing at the *Advanced* level should be able to produce an effective and fully developed response within the time allowed that shows a clear understanding of both the writing task they have been assigned and the audience they are expected to address. Their writing should show some analytical, evaluative, or creative thinking, and should demonstrate precise word choice and varied sentence structure. Their work should include details and elaboration that support and develop the main idea of the piece, and it may make use of strategies such as analogies, illustrations, examples, anecdotes, or figurative language to clarify a point. At the same time, the writing should show that these students can keep their work clearly and consistently organized. Writing by eighth-grade students performing at the *Advanced* level should contain few errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure. These writers should demonstrate good control of these elements and may use them for stylistic effect in their work.

NOTE: The scores in parentheses indicate the cut point on the scale at which the achievement-level range begins.
SOURCE: National Assessment Governing Board. (2007). *Writing Framework for the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: Author.

Assessing Students With Disabilities (SD) and/or English Language Learners (ELL)

The results displayed in this report and official publications of NAEP 2007 results are based on representative samples that include students with disabilities (SD) and students who are English language learners (ELL). Some of these students were assessed using accommodations (such as extra time and testing in small groups). The identified SD and ELL students who typically received accommodations in their classroom testing and required these accommodations to participate, also received them in the NAEP assessment, provided the accommodations did not change the nature of what was tested.

School staff make the decisions about whether to include an SD or ELL student in a NAEP assessment and which testing accommodations, if any, the student should receive. All ELL students are assessed in NAEP the same way they are in their state assessments. If an ELL student takes a simplified English or native language academic assessment, NAEP staff work with the school to determine if the student could take NAEP assessments with any of the allowable accommodations. The NAEP program furnishes tools to assist school personnel in making those decisions.

A sampling procedure is used to select students at each grade being tested. Students are selected on a random basis, without regard to SD or ELL status. Once the students are selected, the schools identify those who have SD or ELL status. School staff familiar with these students are asked a series of questions to help them decide whether each student should participate in the assessment and whether the student needs accommodations.

Inclusion in NAEP of an SD or ELL student is encouraged (a) if that student participated in the regular state academic assessment in the subject being tested, and (b) if that student can participate in NAEP with the accommodations NAEP allows. Even if the student did not participate in the regular state assessment, or if the student needs accommodations NAEP does not allow, school staff are asked whether that student could participate in NAEP with the allowable accommodations. (For example, extending testing over several days is not allowed for NAEP because NAEP administrators are in each school for only one day.)

Many of the same testing accommodations (e.g., extra testing time or individual rather than group administration) are provided for SD or ELL students who participated in NAEP. Even with the availability of accommodations, some students are excluded from the NAEP assessments by their schools. States vary in their proportions of special-needs students (especially English language learners). These variations, as well as differences in policies and practices regarding the identification and inclusion of special-needs students, lead to differences in exclusion and accommodation rates. These differences should be considered when comparing student performance over time and across states. More information about NAEP's policy on inclusion of special-needs students is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/inclusion.asp>.

Cautions in Interpreting Results

The averages and percentages in this report are estimates based on samples of students rather than on entire populations. Moreover, the collection of questions used at each grade level is only a sample of the many questions that could have been asked to assess the skills and abilities described in the NAEP framework. Therefore, the results are subject to a measure of uncertainty, reflected in the standard error of the estimates—a range of up to a few points above or below the score or percentage—which takes into account potential score fluctuation due to sampling error and measurement error. Statistical tests that factor in these standard errors are used to determine whether the differences between average scores or percentages are significant. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level. Significance tests for most NAEP variables are available in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

Results from the 2007 writing assessment are compared to results from two previous assessment years. Changes in performance results over time may reflect not only changes in students' knowledge and skills but also other factors, such as changes in student demographics, education programs and policies (including policies on accommodations and exclusions), and teacher qualifications.

NAEP sample sizes have increased since 2002 compared to previous years, resulting in smaller standard errors. As a consequence, smaller differences are detected as statistically significant than were detected in previous assessments. In addition, estimates based on smaller groups are likely to have relatively large standard errors. Thus, some seemingly large differences may not be statistically significant. That is, it cannot be determined whether these differences are due to sampling error or to true differences in the population of interest.

Differences between scores or between percentages are discussed in this report only when they are significant from a statistical perspective. Statistically significant differences are referred to as "significant differences" or "significantly different." Significant differences between 2007 and prior assessments are marked with a notation (*) in the tables. Any differences in scores within a year or across years that are mentioned in the text as "higher," "lower," "greater," or "smaller" are statistically significant.

Score differences or gaps cited in this report are calculated based on differences between unrounded numbers. Therefore, the reader may find that the score difference cited in the text may not be identical to the difference obtained from subtracting the rounded values shown in the accompanying tables or figures.

It is important to note that simple cross-tabulations of a variable with measures of educational achievement, like the ones presented in this report, cannot constitute proof that a difference in the variable causes differences in educational achievement. There might be several reasons why the performance of one group of students might differ from another. Only through controlled experiments with random assignment of students to groups can hypotheses about the causes of performance differences be tested.

NAEP 2007 Writing Overall Scale Score and Achievement-Level Results for Public School Students

Overall Scale Score Results

In this section student performance is reported as an average score based on the NAEP writing scale, which ranges from 0 to 300 for each grade. Scores on this scale are comparable from 1998 through 2007.

Table 1 shows the overall performance results of grade 8 public school students in New Jersey, the nation (public), and the region. The list of states making up a given region for NAEP prior to 2003 differed from the list used by the U.S. Census Bureau, which has been used in NAEP from 2003 onward. Therefore, the data for the state's region are given only for 2007. The first column of results presents the average score on the NAEP writing scale. The remaining columns show the scores at selected percentiles. The percentile indicates the percentage of students whose score fell at or below a particular point on the NAEP writing scale. For example, the 25th percentile score was 132 for public school eighth-graders in the nation in 2007, indicating that 25 percent of grade 8 public school students scored at or below 132.

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Grade 8 Scale Score Results

- In 2007, the average scale score for students in New Jersey was 175. This was higher than that for students across the nation (154).

Table 1

The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment

Average scale scores and selected percentile scores in NAEP writing for eighth-grade public school students, by jurisdiction: 2007

Year and jurisdiction	Average scale score	10th percentile	25th percentile	50th percentile	75th percentile	90th percentile
2007 Nation (public)	154*	108*	132*	156*	178*	198*
New Jersey	175	129	154	178	200	218

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same group in New Jersey.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.

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Overall Achievement-Level Results

In this section, student performance is reported as the percentage of students performing relative to performance standards set by the National Assessment Governing Board. These performance standards for what students should know and be able to do are based on the recommendations of broadly representative panels of educators and members of the public.

Table 2 presents the percentage of students at grade 8 who performed below *Basic*, at or above *Basic*, at or above *Proficient*, and at the *Advanced* level. Because the percentages are cumulative from *Basic* to *Proficient* to *Advanced*, they sum to more than 100 percent. Only the percentage of students performing at or above *Basic* (which includes the students at *Proficient* and *Advanced*) plus the students below *Basic* will sum to 100 percent.

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Grade 8 Achievement-Level Results

- In 2007, the percentage of New Jersey's students who performed at or above *Proficient* was 56 percent. This was greater than the percentage of the nation's public school students who performed at or above *Proficient* (31 percent).

Table 2

The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment

Percentage of eighth-grade public school students at or above NAEP writing achievement levels, by jurisdiction: 2007

Year and jurisdiction		Below <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
2007	Nation (public)	13*	87*	31*	2*
	New Jersey	5	95	56	7

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same group in New Jersey.

NOTE: Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below *Basic*, 113 or lower; *Basic*, 114–172; *Proficient*, 173–223; and *Advanced*, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.

Comparisons Between New Jersey, the Nation, and Other Participating States and Jurisdictions

Forty-six jurisdictions participated in the writing assessment in 2007. These include 45 states and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools (domestic and overseas). Prior to 2005, NAEP reports presented results for the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) overseas and the Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) in the United States separately. Data for the two jurisdictions in prior years have been retroactively combined to provide comparable data for the single DoDEA jurisdiction.

Comparisons by Average Scale Scores

Figure 2 compares New Jersey's 2007 overall writing scale scores at grade 8 with those of public schools in the nation and all other participating states and jurisdictions. The different shadings indicate whether the average score of the nation (public), a state, or a jurisdiction was found to be higher than, lower than, or not significantly different from that of New Jersey in the NAEP 2007 writing assessment.

Grade 8 Scale Score Comparison Results

- Students' average score in New Jersey was higher than the scores in 44 jurisdictions, and not significantly different from those in 1 jurisdiction.

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Figure 2

The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment

New Jersey's average scale score in NAEP writing for eighth-grade public school students compared with scores for the nation and other participating jurisdictions: 2007

Writing Grade 8
Comparisons Between New Jersey and the Nation and Other Participating States and Jurisdictions

Comparisons by Achievement Levels

Figure 3 permits comparisons of all jurisdictions (and the nation) participating in the NAEP 2007 writing assessment in terms of percentages of grade 8 students performing at or above *Basic*. The participating states and jurisdictions are grouped into categories reflecting whether the percentage of their students performing at or above *Basic* (including *Proficient* and *Advanced*) was found to be higher than, not significantly different from, or lower than the percentage in New Jersey. Note that the selected state is listed first in its category, and the other states and jurisdictions within each category are listed alphabetically; statistical comparisons among jurisdictions in each of the three categories are not included in this report. However, comparisons among states on many NAEP variables can be made with the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>. The comparisons of all jurisdictions (and the nation) in terms of the percentage at or above *Proficient* are available on the NAEP website at http://nationsreportcard.gov/writing_2007/w0006.asp.

Grade 8 Achievement-Level Comparison Results

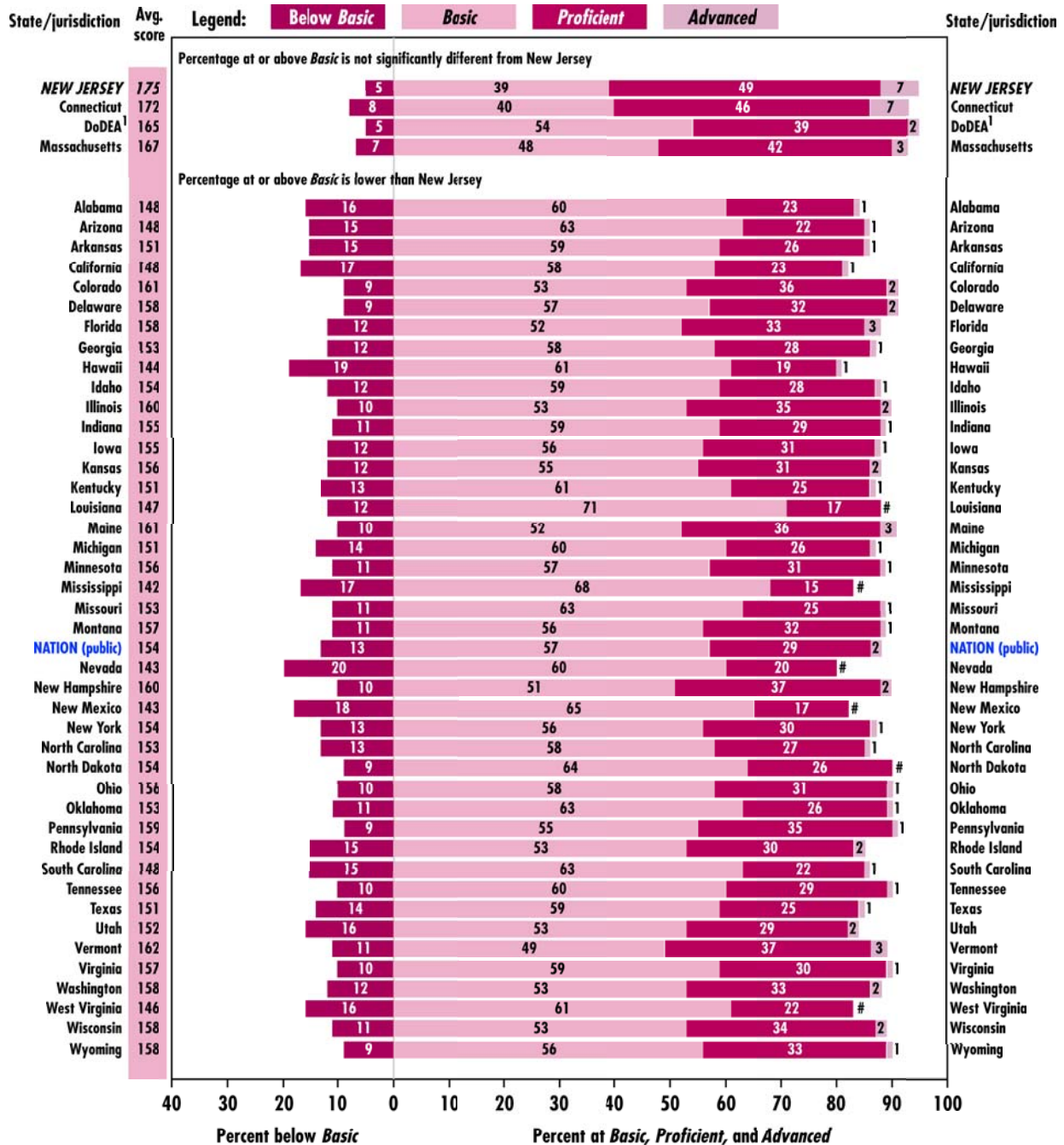
- The percentage of students performing at or above *Basic* level in New Jersey was higher than the percentages in 42 jurisdictions, and not significantly different from those in 3 jurisdictions.

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The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment

Figure 3

Average scale scores in NAEP writing for eighth-grade public school students, percentage within each achievement level, and New Jersey's percentage at or above *Basic* compared with the nation and other participating jurisdictions, by state: 2007



Rounds to zero.

¹ Department of Defense Education Activity schools (domestic and overseas).

NOTE: The bars above contain percentages of students in each NAEP writing achievement level. Achievement levels corresponding to each population of students are aligned at the point where the *Basic* category begins, so that they may be compared at *Basic* and above. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. The shaded bars are graphed using unrounded numbers. Significance tests used a multiple-comparison procedure based on all jurisdictions that participated.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.

Writing Performance of Selected Student Groups

This section of the report presents results for students in New Jersey and the nation by demographic characteristics. Student performance data are reported for

- gender;
- race/ethnicity;
- student eligibility for the National School Lunch Program;
- type of location (for 2007 only); and
- parents' highest level of education.

Definitions of NAEP reporting groups are available on the NAEP website (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/writing/results2007/interpret-results.asp#RepGroups>).

Each of the variables is reported in tables that present the percentage of students belonging to each group in the first column and the average scale score in the second column. The columns to the right show the percentage of students below *Basic* and at or above each achievement level.

Differences between scores or percentages mentioned in the text are calculated using unrounded values. The results of subtracting the rounded values displayed in the tables may differ (usually by no more than one point) from the results that would be obtained by subtracting the unrounded values.

The reader is cautioned against making causal inferences about the performance of groups of students relative to demographic variables. Many factors other than those discussed here, including home and school factors, may affect student performance.

NAEP collects information on many additional variables, including school and home factors related to achievement. All of this information is in an interactive database available on the NAEP website (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>).

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Gender

Information on student gender was reported by the student's school when rosters of the students eligible to be assessed were submitted to NAEP.

Table 3 shows average scale scores and achievement-level data for public school students at grade 8 in New Jersey and the nation, by gender.

Score "gaps". In the bulleted text that follows, statements that compare the score gap between male and female students first make the comparison for the current year, and then for the initial year of the assessment if the state participated. Intervening years are not compared. If the size of the score gap has changed significantly from the initial assessment year to the current year, the bullet will indicate a narrowing or widening of the score gap.

Grade 8 Scale Score Results by Gender

- In 2007, male students in New Jersey had an average score that was lower than that of female students by 15 points. This performance gap was narrower than that of the nation (20 points in favor of females).
- In 2007, male students in New Jersey had an average scale score in writing (168) that was higher than that of male students in public schools across the nation (144). Similarly, female students in New Jersey had an average scale score (183) that was higher than that of female students across the nation (164).

Grade 8 Achievement-Level Results by Gender

- In the 2007 assessment, 47 percent of male students and 65 percent of female students performed at or above *Proficient* in New Jersey. The difference between these percentages was statistically significant.
- The percentage of male students in New Jersey's public schools who were at or above *Proficient* in 2007 (47 percent) was greater than that of males in the nation (20 percent).
- The percentage of female students in New Jersey's public schools who were at or above *Proficient* in 2007 (65 percent) was greater than that of females in the nation (41 percent).

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The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment

**Table
3**

Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by gender, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 2007

Gender, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
Male							
2007	Nation (public)	51	144*	18*	82*	20*	1*
	New Jersey	50	168	7	93	47	4
Female							
2007	Nation (public)	49	164*	7*	93*	41*	3*
	New Jersey	50	183	4	96	65	10

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same group in New Jersey.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below *Basic*, 113 or lower; *Basic*, 114–172; *Proficient*, 173–223; and *Advanced*, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.

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Race/Ethnicity

Schools reported the racial/ethnic subgroup that best described the students eligible to be assessed. The six mutually exclusive categories are *White*, *Black*, *Hispanic*, *Asian/Pacific Islander*, *American Indian/Alaska Native*, and *Unclassified*. *Black* includes African American, *Hispanic* includes Latino, and *Pacific Islander* includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Table 4 shows average scale scores and achievement-level data for public school students at grade 8 in New Jersey and the nation, by race/ethnicity.

Score "gaps". In the bulleted text that follows, statements that compare the score gap between *White* and *Black* or *White* and *Hispanic* students first make the comparison for the current year, and then for the initial year of the assessment if the state participated. Intervening years are not compared. If the size of the score gap has changed significantly from the initial assessment year to the current year, the bullet will indicate a narrowing or widening of the score gap.

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Grade 8 Scale Score Results by Race/Ethnicity

- In 2007, White students in New Jersey had an average scale score that was higher than the scores of Black and Hispanic students, but was lower than the score of Asian/Pacific Islander students.
- In 2007, Black students in New Jersey had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 32 points. This performance gap was wider than that of the nation (22 points).
- In 2007, Hispanic students in New Jersey had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 22 points. In the nation, the average score for Hispanic students was lower than that of White students by 21 points.

Grade 8 Achievement-Level Results by Race/Ethnicity

- In New Jersey in 2007, the percentage of White students performing at or above *Proficient* was greater than the percentages of Black and Hispanic students, but was not found to be significantly different from the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students.

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The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment

**Table
4**

Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by race/ethnicity, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 2007

Race/ethnicity, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
White							
2007	Nation (public)	58	162*	8*	92*	39*	2*
	New Jersey	58	184	2	98	66	9
Black							
2007	Nation (public)	17	140*	20*	80*	15*	#
	New Jersey	16	152	13	87	27	2
Hispanic							
2007	Nation (public)	19	141*	21*	79*	17*	#
	New Jersey	18	162	10	90	41	3
Asian/Pacific Islander							
2007	Nation (public)	5*	166*	8*	92*	45*	5*
	New Jersey	8	191	2	98	73	14
American Indian/Alaska Native							
2007	Nation (public)	1	143	21	79	21	1
	New Jersey	#	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
Unclassified¹							
2007	Nation (public)	1	158	11	89	34	2
	New Jersey	#	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same group in New Jersey.

¹ The Unclassified category includes students whose school-reported race/ethnicity was "other" or unavailable, or was missing, and whose race/ethnicity category could not be determined from self-reported information.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below *Basic*, 113 or lower; *Basic*, 114–172; *Proficient*, 173–223; and *Advanced*, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.

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Student Eligibility for the National School Lunch Program

NAEP collects data on eligibility for the federal program providing free or reduced-price school lunches. The free/reduced-price lunch component of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is designed to ensure that children near or below the poverty line receive nourishing meals. Eligibility is determined through the USDA's Income Eligibility Guidelines, and results for this category of students are included as an indicator of lower family income.

Table 5 shows average scale scores and achievement-level data for public school students at grade 8 in New Jersey and the nation, by student eligibility for the National School Lunch Program.

Score "gaps". In the bulleted text that follows, statements that compare the score gap between eligible and not eligible students first make the comparison for the current year, and then for the initial year of the assessment if the state participated. Intervening years are not compared. If the size of the score gap has changed significantly from the initial assessment year to the current year, the bullet will indicate a narrowing or widening of the score gap.

Grade 8 Scale Score Results by Free/Reduced-Price School Lunch Eligibility

- In 2007, eligible students in New Jersey had an average writing scale score of 155. This was lower than that of students in New Jersey who were not eligible (183).
- In 2007, eligible students had an average score that was lower than that of students who were not eligible by 28 points. In the nation, the average score for eligible students was lower than the score of those not eligible by 23 points.
- Eligible students in New Jersey had an average scale score (155) in 2007 that was higher than that of eligible students in the nation (141).

Grade 8 Achievement-Level Results by Free/Reduced-Price School Lunch Eligibility

- In New Jersey in 2007, 33 percent of eligible students and 64 percent of those who were not eligible performed at or above *Proficient*. These percentages were found to be significantly different from one another.
- For eligible students in New Jersey in 2007, the percentage at or above *Proficient* (33 percent) was greater than the corresponding percentage for their counterparts around the nation (17 percent).

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**Table
5**

Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by eligibility for National School Lunch Program, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 2007

Eligibility status, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
Eligible							
2007	Nation (public)	41*	141*	20*	80*	17*	#
	New Jersey	26	155	13	87	33	2
Not eligible							
2007	Nation (public)	58*	164*	7*	93*	40*	3*
	New Jersey	72	183	3	97	64	9
Information not available							
2007	Nation (public)	1	149	15	85	25	2
	New Jersey	2	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same group in New Jersey.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below *Basic*, 113 or lower; *Basic*, 114–172; *Proficient*, 173–223; and *Advanced*, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.

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Type of Location

Schools that participated in the assessment were classified as being located in four mutually exclusive types of community: city, suburb, town, and rural. These categories indicate the geographic locations of schools. "City" is a geographical term meaning the principal city of a U.S. Census Bureau-defined Core-Based Statistical Area and is not synonymous with "inner city." The criteria for classifying schools with respect to type of location changed for 2007; therefore, comparisons with prior years are not provided. More detail on the changes for the classification of type of location is available at http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/Rural_Locales.asp.

Table 6 shows average scale scores and achievement-level data for public school students at grade 8 in New Jersey and the nation, by type of location (for 2007 only).

Grade 8 Scale Score Results by Type of Location

- In 2007 in New Jersey, the average score of students attending schools in city locations was not found to be significantly different from the scores of these students in suburban and rural schools.
- In 2007, students attending public schools in suburban and rural locations in New Jersey had average scores that were higher than the average scores of these students in suburban and rural locations in the nation.
- In 2007, students attending public schools in city locations in New Jersey had an average score that was not significantly different from the average score of these students in city locations in the nation.

Grade 8 Achievement-Level Results by Type of Location

- In 2007, the percentage of students in New Jersey's public schools in city locations who performed at or above *Proficient* was not found to be significantly different from the corresponding percentages of students in suburban and rural schools.
- The percentages of students in New Jersey's public schools in suburban and rural locations who performed at or above *Proficient* in 2007 were higher than those of students in suburban and rural locations in the nation.
- The percentage of students in New Jersey's public schools in city locations who performed at or above *Proficient* in 2007 was not found to be significantly different from that of students in city locations in the nation.

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**Table
6**

Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by type of location, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 2007

Type of location, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
City							
2007	Nation (public)	28*	148	17	83	25	1
	New Jersey	5	153	18	82	34	6
Suburb							
2007	Nation (public)	36*	159*	10*	90*	36*	2*
	New Jersey	84	176	5	95	57	7
Town							
2007	Nation (public)	13	152	13	87	28	1
	New Jersey	#	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
Rural							
2007	Nation (public)	23*	155*	11*	89*	30*	1
	New Jersey	11	180	4	96	62	8

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same group in New Jersey.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below *Basic*, 113 or lower; *Basic*, 114–172; *Proficient*, 173–223; and *Advanced*, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.

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Parents' Highest Level of Education

Eighth-grade students who participated in the NAEP 2007 assessment were asked to indicate the highest level of education they thought their father and their mother had completed. Five response options—did not finish high school, graduated from high school, some education after high school, graduated from college, and "I don't know"—were offered. The highest level of education reported for either parent was used in the analysis.

The results by highest level of parental education are shown in table 7.

Grade 8 Scale Score Results by Parents' Highest Level of Education

- In 2007, students in New Jersey who reported that a parent had graduated from college had an average scale score that was higher than the average scores of students with a parent in any of the following education categories: did not finish high school and graduated from high school.
- In 2007, students in New Jersey who reported that a parent had graduated from college had an average scale score that was not significantly different from the scores of students with a parent in the following education category: some education after high school.

Grade 8 Achievement-Level Results by Parents' Highest Level of Education

- In 2007, the percentage of students performing at or above *Proficient* in New Jersey who reported that a parent had graduated from college was higher than the percentage for students whose parents' highest level of education was in any of the following education categories: did not finish high school and graduated from high school.
- In 2007, the percentage of students performing at or above *Proficient* in New Jersey who reported that a parent had graduated from college was not significantly different from the percentage for students whose parents' highest level of education was in the following education category: some education after high school.

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**Table
7**

Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by student-reported highest level of parental education, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 2007

Parental education level, year, and jurisdiction	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below Basic	At or above Basic	At or above Proficient	At Advanced
Did not finish high school						
2007 Nation (public)	8*	139*	21	79	13*	#
New Jersey	3	153	13	87	31	1
Graduated from high school						
2007 Nation (public)	18*	146*	16*	84*	21*	#
New Jersey	15	162	10	90	42	2
Some education after high school						
2007 Nation (public)	17*	158*	9*	91*	32*	1*
New Jersey	15	178	4	96	60	6
Graduated from college						
2007 Nation (public)	46*	164*	8*	92*	42*	3*
New Jersey	58	183	3	97	64	10
Unknown						
2007 Nation (public)	11*	135*	26*	74*	12*	#
New Jersey	8	154	12	88	31	1

Rounds to zero.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same group in New Jersey.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below *Basic*, 113 or lower; *Basic*, 114–172; *Proficient*, 173–223; and *Advanced*, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.

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Where to Find More Information

The NAEP Writing Assessment

The latest news about the NAEP 2007 writing assessment and the national results can be found on the NAEP website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/writing/>. The individual snapshot reports for each participating state and other jurisdictions are also available in the state results section of the website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>.

The Nation's Report Card: Writing 2007 may be ordered or downloaded at the NAEP website.

The *Writing Framework for the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, on which this assessment is based, is available at the National Assessment Governing Board website at <http://nagb.org/frameworks/writing-framework-07.pdf>

Additional Results From the Writing Assessment

For more findings from the 2007 writing assessment, refer to the NAEP 2007 results at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>. The interactive database at this site includes student, teacher, and school variables for all participating states and other jurisdictions, the nation, and the four census regions. Data tables are also available for each jurisdiction, with all background questions cross-tabulated with the major demographic variables. Users can design and create tables and can perform tests of statistical significance at this website. Released test questions, scoring guides, and question-level performance data are also available on the website (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls/>).

Technical Documentation

For explanations of NAEP survey procedures, see Allen, N.L., Donoghue, J.R., and Schoeps, T.L. (2001). *The NAEP 1998 Technical Report*. (NCES 2001-509). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics. Technical information may also be found on the NAEP website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/tdw/>.

Publications on the Inclusion of Students With Disabilities and English Language Learners

Olson, J.F., and Goldstein, A.A. (1997). *The Inclusion of Students With Disabilities and Limited-English-Proficient Students in Large-Scale Assessments: A Summary of Recent Progress* (NCES 97-482). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics.

Mazzeo, J., Carlson, J.E., Voelkl, K.E., and Lutkus, A.D. (2000). *Increasing the Participation of Special-Needs Students in NAEP: A Report on 1996 Research Activities* (NCES 2000-473). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics.

Lutkus, A.D., and Mazzeo, J. (2003). *Including Special-Needs Students in the NAEP 1998 Reading Assessment, Part I: Comparison of Overall Results With and Without Accommodations* (NCES 2003-467). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics.

Lutkus, A.D. (2004). *Including Special-Needs Students in the NAEP 1998 Reading Assessment, Part II: Results for Students With Disabilities and Limited-English-Proficient Students* (ETS-NAEP 04-R01). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

To Order Publications

Recent NAEP publications related to writing are listed on the writing page of the NAEP website and are available electronically. Publications can also be ordered from

Education Publications Center (ED Pubs)
U.S. Department of Education
P.O. Box 1398
Jessup, MD 20794-1398

Call toll free: 1-877-4ED Pubs (1-877-433-7827)
TTY/TDD: 1-877-576-7734
FAX: 1-301-470-1244

The NAEP State Report Generator was developed for the NAEP 2007 reports by Phillip Leung, Anthony Lutkus, Paul Gazzillo, Mike Narcowich, Ming Kuang, Janice Lukas, and Linda Myers.

What is the Nation's Report Card™?

The Nation's Report Card informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the only continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time. *The Nation's Report Card* compares performance among states, urban districts, public and private schools, and student demographic groups.

For over three decades, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, geography, and other subjects. By making objective information available on student performance at the national, state, and local levels, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only information related to academic achievement and relevant variables is collected. The privacy of individual students is protected, and the identities of participating schools are not released.

NAEP is a congressionally authorized project of the National Center for Education Statistics within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. By law, the Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible for carrying out the NAEP project. The National Assessment Governing Board oversees and sets policy for NAEP. The Governing Board is an independent, bipartisan group whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. The Governing Board's mission is, "to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation."

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