



NAEP Results of 12th Graders Show New Jersey Leads Many States in Math and Reading

Achievement Gap Narrows Slightly, But Persists

For Immediate Release

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Trenton, NJ – New Jersey scored among the highest in states participating in a federal pilot testing program of 12th grade math and reading, according to 2013 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) results released today.

The NAEP exam, known as the "Nation's Report Card" because it is uniformly administered from state to state, measures student performance in various subjects and grade levels. The assessment of 12th graders in reading and math was first administered to samples of students in 2009.

In 2013, New Jersey seniors performed well compared to counterparts in the other 12 states that participated in the NAEP exam. New Jersey's average math score of 159 placed it in a statistical tie for first with Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut and South Dakota. New Jersey's average reading score of 292 placed it third among participating states, with only Connecticut and New Hampshire scoring higher.

The average New Jersey score in mathematics increased three points from 2009. The average New Jersey reading score of 292 was four points higher than the average score recorded four years earlier. The increases, which NAEP does not consider statistically significant, are similar to flat performance on the tests seen in other states.

"The overall results we see today reinforce the message from the 2009 NAEP assessments, as well as other measures such as the SAT," said Acting Commissioner of Education David Hespe. "Even though New Jersey schools continue to be among the leaders in the nation, educators across the state agree that we cannot become stagnant. We must remain steadfast in our efforts to embrace rigorous standards, close the achievement gap, and truly prepare children for college and career."

The NAEP report found the achievement gap in New Jersey, while narrowing slightly since 2009, still persists among racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The gap in mathematics between higher performing high school seniors (those at the 75th percentile) and the lower performing students (those at the 25th percentile) was 47 points. In reading, the gap among 12th graders was at 49 points, compared with a gap of 53 points recorded in 2009.

"The achievement gap between our highest performing and lowest performing students, and between our white students and our black and Hispanic students, is unacceptable to the Christie Administration," said Hespe. "Working with educators across the state, we will close this gap."

In addition to New Jersey, states that participated in the 2013 assessment were Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Tennessee and West Virginia.

NAEP is also used as a measure of academic preparedness. NAEP has set a score of 302 or higher (out of a possible 500) for what it considers to be academically prepared for college-level language arts. In New Jersey, the ratio of students whose reading scores were considered "college ready" rose from 38 percent in 2009 to 41 percent last year.

"The increases do represent movement in a positive direction, but educators widely agree that more can be done," said Hespe. "We acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all of the teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders who have made New Jersey a leader, and we're encouraged to know that our state will never stop working to improve the education we provide our children."

For details on the 2013 NAEP exam for 12th grade students, visit www.nationsreportcard.gov.