

NATION'S REPORT CARD SHOWS RECORD GAINS – AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

Achievement Gap Continues to Narrow As Student Population Becomes More Diverse

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"These results are the latest addition to a growing amount of data that proves *No Child Left Behind* is working. By setting high standards and holding schools accountable for results, our students are making more academic progress than ever before. The long-standing achievement gap continues to shrink even as the student population becomes more diverse. The work is getting harder, but we're doing it better. Teachers and students are rising to the challenge and they deserve tremendous praise for this latest success.

As we work to reauthorize No Child Left Behind this fall, it's important we maintain the core principles fueling the significant progress we're seeing for all students. I look forward to working with Congress to craft a bill that strengthens the law without undermining the foundation of accountability that has turned the tide in American education."

-- Secretary Margaret Spellings

Newest Nation's Report Card Shows Continued Progress

The latest Nation's Report Card, released today, shows continued growth and gains by America's schoolchildren, particularly among younger and minority students, including African-American students. The results, from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2007 benchmark exam of fourth- and eighth-graders, confirm that real progress is being made in realizing the promise of *No Child Left Behind* for millions of students.

Closing the Achievement Gap and Realizing the Promise of NCLB

The latest NAEP results show that achievement gaps are narrowing even as our student population continues to grow more diverse. The results also show African-American students posting all time highs in a number of categories.

Highlights include:

- African American fourth graders achieved their highest reading scores in the history of the test, and African-American fourth and eighth graders achieved their highest math scores in the history of the test.
- The achievement gap between white and African-American students in 4th grade reading narrowed to its lowest point since 1992.
- Compared to 2005, about 23,000 more African-American fourth graders have fundamental reading skills.
- In the four years between 2003 and 2007, math scores at 4th grade went up 5 points. That's equivalent to adding an extra half-year of instruction to 4th grade. These gains were driven in part by progress by African-American students (up 6 points since 2003).
- Since 2003, the achievement gap in math between white and African-American and white and Hispanic 8th graders narrowed by three points, while at the same time all three groups made significant academic gains.
- Math scores for 8th grade students rose significantly since 2005 (up 2 points), driven in part by gains among African-American students (up 5 points).

Advancing Academic Gains Under NCLB

The No Child Left Behind Act is working to bring all students up to grade level in reading and math, to close the achievement gap, and to hold schools accountable for results. With NCLB, we set an historic goal of every child reading and doing math on grade-level by 2014. The NAEP results prove that we are making significant progress towards that all important goal.

Across the country, forty-eight states and the District of Columbia either improved academically or held steady in all categories.

Highlights include:

- Reading scores for 4th graders were higher than they've ever been in the history of the Nation's Report Card.
- Math scores for 4th and 8th graders were higher than they've ever been in the history of the Nation's Report Card.
- Higher percentages of 4th grade students performed at or above Basic and Proficient in reading and math than in any previous assessment.
- Since 2002, 4th graders have shown significant increases in reading, with the highest rate of gains for lower-performing students. These are the kids who were previously left behind – the kids for whom we expect NCLB to have the greatest impact.
- All students are increasing achievement in math. Since 2003, gains in math have occurred for both higher and lower performing children at both 4th and 8th grades.

About the Nation's Report Card

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as the Nation's Report Card, is the yardstick used to measure learning in each state across the country. Through two components, the long-term trend assessment (released every four years) and the main and state-by-state assessment (now released every two years), the Nation's Report Card measures what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. The 2007 main assessment, released today, includes national and state-by-state scores for 388,700 fourth-graders and 313,700 eighth-graders tested in reading and mathematics. The NAEP is carried out by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education. It is overseen by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), a bipartisan group of governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public.

For More Information:

Please visit – <http://www.nationsreportcard.gov>