



NEWS RELEASE

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2009 Nation's Report Card in Mathematics Reveals No Change at 4th-Grade, But New High for 8th-Grade Score

WASHINGTON (Oct. 14, 2009) – There has been no significant change in the performance of the nation's 4th-graders in mathematics from 2007 to 2009, a contrast to the progress seen from 1990 to 2007 at that grade level and subject, according to the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics. But the 8th-grade mathematics score on the NAEP, which is also called The Nation's Report Card, continued to improve nationwide and reached its highest level since 1990.

The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2009, released today, details the achievement of 4th- and 8th-graders on the NAEP, administered by the U.S. Department of Education earlier this year. The report compares national results in 2009 with each prior assessment year going back to 1990, and state results going back to 1990 at grade 8 and 1992 at grade 4.

At the state level, scores improved at 4th-grade in eight states, while four states saw decreases from 2007. At the 8th-grade, scores increased from 2007 to 2009 in 15 states, and no states showed declines. Overall, four states and the District of Columbia saw increases at both 4th- and 8th-grades.

None of the gaps in either grade narrowed from 2007 to 2009. The gaps between Black and White students and between private and public school students narrowed from 1990 to 2009 for 4th-graders and remained unchanged for 8th-graders.

"While the scores for 8th-graders in math continue to be encouraging, the failure of our 4th-graders to make progress nationally is a cause for concern," said David P. Driscoll, chair of the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP. "With a lack of progress at 4th-grade and large achievement gaps that are relatively unchanged, we need to re-examine our efforts to improve student achievement in math."

While average scores for 4th-graders in all racial/ethnic groups reported in NAEP did not change significantly since 2007, they were higher than in 1990 for those groups with reportable results. Scores for 8th-graders were higher in 2009 than in both 2007 and 1990 for all racial/ethnic groups except American Indian/Alaska Native students, who showed no significant change since 2007.

The trends at different achievement levels mirrored the overall trends in scores. For example, the percentages of 4th-graders performing at or above *Basic* (82 percent) and at or above *Proficient* (39 percent) in 2009 were the same as those in 2007 but still higher than they were from 1990 to 2005. Improvements in national 8th-grade scores since 2007 and all previous assessment years were consistent with increases in the percentages of 8th-graders performing at or above *Basic* (73 percent) and at or above *Proficient* (34 percent) in 2009.

Results across NAEP performance levels were also consistent with national trends. In grade 4, there were no significant changes in scores from 2007 to 2009 for lower-performing students (at the 10th and 25th percentiles), middle-performing students (at the 50th percentile), or higher-performing students (at the 75th and 90th percentiles). The scores at grade 8 improved at all performance levels, except for the lowest-performing students (10th percentile) who saw no significant change since 2007.

Male students continue to score two points higher than female students in mathematics at both grades 4 and 8. The gaps have not widened, however, since 2007.

The 2009 NAEP assessment in mathematics was administered by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education to a nationally representative sample of 168,800 4th-grade and 161,700 8th-grade public and private school students. Results for representative samples of public school students only are also reported for each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense schools.

The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2009 and additional data collected from the 2009 mathematics assessment are available online at <http://nationsreportcard.gov>.

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The Nation's Report Card is the only nationally representative, continuing evaluation of the condition of education in the United States and has served as a national yardstick of student achievement since 1969. Through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), The Nation's Report Card informs the public about what America's students know and can do in various subject areas, and compares achievement data between states and various student demographic groups.

The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent, bipartisan board whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. Congress created the 26-member Governing Board in 1988 to set policy for NAEP.