

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

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EMBARGOED

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For Immediate Release

Connecticut Reports Performance on National Assessment of Educational Progress

Connecticut results on the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that the percentage of Grade 4 and 8 students scoring at or above the NAEP proficient level in mathematics and reading continues to remain consistently above the national average.

The percentage of Connecticut students excluded from the assessments is lower than the national average and decreased from 2003, the last time the tests were given.

Another important trend is that although Connecticut students continue to score above the national average, there are persistent gaps in the performance of gender, racial/ethnic and economic subgroups of the state's students that must be addressed.

NAEP is now administered biennially in reading and mathematics to a representative sample of students in Grades 4 and 8 from each state; state-level results have been reported since the early 1990s. State legislation requires Connecticut public school districts to participate and the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires all states to participate. The Nation's Report Card, based on NAEP results, compares state 2005 performance with previous years' performance and compares performance across states as a whole and by subgroup. NAEP reports results for four levels of performance: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced.

“Although Connecticut's performance is stronger than that of most other states, we still have unacceptable gaps in achievement between wealthy students and their less-wealthy counterparts, minority and nonminority students, and males and females,” said Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Commissioner of Education. “To close these gaps, we need to continue to focus on five fundamental efforts: high-quality preschool for all 3- and 4- year-old children in our neediest communities; programs and services to meet the literacy needs of their parents; programs and services to meet the physical and mental health needs of students and parents; high-quality

curriculum that includes embedded assessments and technology; and a longer school day and year.

“It will take hard work, but Connecticut can help all students achieve success.”

Percentages of students excluded from NAEP vary across states and across administrations of the tests. Therefore, comparisons of results should be made with caution. For example, while some states score significantly higher than Connecticut, in some cases, their exclusion rates are considerably higher than that of Connecticut.

2005 HIGHLIGHTS

GRADE 4 MATHEMATICS (number of students tested = 2787)

Percent at/above proficient

- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above (42%) is higher than that of students across the nation (35%).
- Connecticut’s Grade 4 students performed as well as or better than Grade 4 students in 46 other states. Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Hampshire had a significantly higher percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. The performance of students in 18 states was equal to that of Connecticut students, while 28 states had a significantly lower percentage of students who scored at or above proficient.
- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above in 2005 (42%) is not significantly different from that in 2003 (41%). However, over time, student performance has improved. In 1992, 24 percent of Connecticut students scored at the proficient level or above; in 1996 and in 2000, that figure was 31 percent.
- Gender differences continue: 45 percent of Connecticut males achieved proficiency or higher in 2005, while 40 percent of females did so. The performance of both groups is not significantly different from 2003.
- While 16 percent of Connecticut’s economically disadvantaged students performed at the proficient level and above, 52 percent of their nondisadvantaged peers achieved proficiency. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at proficient or higher in 2005 is not statistically different from 2003 but is higher than 2000 and 1996.
- The percentage of Connecticut white students scoring at or above the proficient level is not significantly different from the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students scoring at or above the proficient level. The performance of both of these subgroups is higher than that of black and Hispanic students. The performance gap, based on average scale scores, between white and black students has not narrowed since 1992; between white and Hispanic students, since 1996.

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- With regard to proficiency, white students perform above the national average, while black and Hispanic student performance is not significantly different from the national averages of their counterparts.

Percent at advanced

- The percentage of Grade 4 students performing at the advanced level on the 2005 assessment (7%) increased significantly when compared to the 2000 NAEP administration (3%), but was not significantly different from 2003 (5%).

GRADE 8 MATHEMATICS (number of students tested = 2711)

Percent at/above proficient

- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above (35%) is higher than that of students across the nation (28%).
- Connecticut's Grade 8 students outperformed their counterparts in 29 states relative to the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level. Connecticut performance was not significantly different from that of 18 states. Only Massachusetts and Minnesota had a higher percentage of students scoring at or above proficient
- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above (35%) is not significantly different from 1996, 2000 or 2003, but is significantly higher than 1990 and 1992.
- There was virtually no difference between Connecticut male and female students: 35 percent of males achieved proficiency, while 34 percent of females performed at the same level. These results are not significantly different from the 2003 performance.
- The percentage of white students scoring at or above the proficient level was not significantly different from the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students scoring at or above the proficient level. The performance of both of these subgroups is higher than that of black and Hispanic students.
- With regard to proficiency, white students perform above the national average, while black and Hispanic student performance is not significantly different from the national averages of their counterparts.

Percent at advanced

- The percentage of Grade 8 students performing at the advanced level on the 2005 assessment (8%) has increased significantly when compared to the 2000 NAEP administration (6%) and remained the same compared to 2003 (8%).

GRADE 4 READING (number of students tested = 2756)

Percent at/above proficient

- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above (38%) is significantly higher than that of students across the nation (30%).
- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above is greater than the percentage in 1992 (34%), but significantly lower than 2002 and 2003 (43%).
- Except for Massachusetts, Connecticut performed as well as or better than all other states in the nation; 13 states were equal to Connecticut and 35 states had a significantly lower percentage of students at or above proficient. It should be noted that Connecticut's exclusion rate was 3 percent while Massachusetts excluded 8 percent.
- Gender differences also were evident in Grade 4 reading: 43 percent of females scored at or above the proficient level, while 34 percent of males did so. Both subgroups outperformed their peers in the nation's public schools (females, 33% at or above proficient; males, 27% at or above proficient).
- The percentage of males scoring at or above proficient has not been significantly different across NAEP administrations since 1992 (includes 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2003).
- The percentage of females scoring at or above proficient has increased since the 1992 administration but has remained the same in subsequent years.
- Fourteen percent of Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students scored at or above the proficient level, while 48 percent of their nondisadvantaged peers reached this level. The disparity in performance has persisted since 1998.
- While 3 percent of Connecticut students were excluded from the NAEP assessments, the national exclusion rate was 7 percent.
- The percentage of Connecticut white students scoring at or above the proficient level is not significantly different from the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students scoring at or above the proficient level. The performance of both of these subgroups is higher than that of black and Hispanic students. The performance gap based on average scale scores between white and black students has not narrowed since 1992; between white and Hispanic students, since 1994.
- With regard to proficiency, white students perform above the national average, while black and Hispanic student performance is not significantly different from the national averages of their counterparts.

Percent at advanced

- Twelve percent of Connecticut students scored at the advanced level, compared to 7 percent nationally. Nine percent of students in the Northeast scored at the advanced level.

GRADE 8 READING (number of students tested = 2675)

Percent at/above proficient

- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above (34%) is significantly higher than that of students across the nation (29%).
- The percentage of Connecticut students performing at the proficient level and above (34%) is statistically lower than the percentage in 1998 (40%) and not different from the 2002 and 2003 performance.
- Except for Massachusetts, Connecticut performed as well as or better than all other states in the nation. Connecticut was equal to 26 states and had a significantly higher percentage of students at or above proficient than 22 states. Again it should be noted that Connecticut's exclusion rate was 3 percent compared with 7 percent in Massachusetts.
- Females continue to outperform males: 40 percent of females scored at or above proficient, while 28 percent of males did so. There have been no significant differences in the percentages of females and males achieving proficiency when comparing average scale scores across years (2002, 2003, 2005).
- While the percentage of white students scoring at or above the proficient level (42%) is not significantly different from the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students scoring at the same level (50%), both subgroups continue to perform at significantly higher levels than black (11%) and Hispanic (13%) students.
- Three percent of Connecticut students were excluded from NAEP in Grade 8 reading, compared to 5 percent nationally.
- With regard to proficiency, white students perform above the national average, while black and Hispanic student performance is not significantly different from the national averages of their counterparts.

The National Report is available on the web: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>

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