



# NEWS

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For Immediate Release:

November 1, 2011

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## NAEP 2011 Grade 4 and 8 Mathematics and Reading Results Reveal Many Concerns for Connecticut

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released results today from the 2011 administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Reports include state-level performance data in mathematics and reading for Grades 4 and 8. Most indicators in the NAEP 2011 reports show flat trends for Connecticut students. The only sign of progress is reported in Grade 8 reading where there is a modest upward trend in the overall average scale score and no meaningful change in the percent of students scoring at or above the Proficient level when comparing 2011 performance to the 2009 results.

### Connecticut NAEP Mathematics and Reading Performance 2003-2011

| YEAR               | GRADE 4          |   | GRADE 8          |   |
|--------------------|------------------|---|------------------|---|
|                    | AVG. SCALE SCORE | PERCENT OF STUDENTS AT/ABOVE PROFICIENT | AVG. SCALE SCORE | PERCENT OF STUDENTS AT/ABOVE PROFICIENT |
| <b>MATHEMATICS</b> |                  |   |                  |   |
| 2003               | 241              | 41*                                     | 284*             | 35                                      |
| 2005               | 242              | 42                                      | 281*             | 35                                      |
| 2007               | 243              | 45                                      | 282*             | 35                                      |
| 2009               | 245              | 46                                      | 289              | 40                                      |
| 2011               | 242              | 45                                      | 287              | 38                                      |
| <b>READING</b>     |                  |   |                  |   |
| 2003               | 228              | 43                                      | 267*             | 37*                                     |
| 2005               | 226              | 38                                      | 264*             | 34*                                     |
| 2007               | 227              | 41                                      | 267*             | 37*                                     |
| 2009               | 229              | 42                                      | 272*             | 43                                      |
| 2011               | 227              | 42                                      | 275              | 45                                      |

\* indicates a statistically significant difference when compared to performance in 2011.

For an explanation of statistical significance and why it is used in NAEP reporting, see Appendix A.

Connecticut's students have not shown the level of progress that other states have achieved. In mathematics, the 2011 results overall show no improvement compared to performance in 2009 in Grades 4 or 8. While Connecticut students traditionally have outperformed the national average for NAEP, the 2011 results show that the average Grade 4 mathematics scale score in Connecticut was not significantly different from the national public school average of 240. In reading, Connecticut's fourth grade scores have remained flat for more than a decade. The subgroup data underlying these trends provide us with continuing evidence of wide disparities in student performance—a truly troubling achievement gap. Connecticut is among the top 10 states with the largest achievement gaps based on every subgroup comparison; in many cases our state is in the first position.

“We don’t run away from problems in this Administration; we confront them head on, and we do our best to fix them. This news is a sobering reminder of the real disparity in our state between some of the highest performing school systems, and some of the lowest. Regardless of where a child lives, what their parents do or how much money they have, it’s our job to ensure they get an education that encourages them to grow and prepares them to succeed. It’s clear that we’re not there yet. But we will be, so long as we’re honest about the problems we face, and serious about putting student learning first and foremost,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

The performance trend table included below shows limited changes in subgroup performance in mathematics and no improvement in Grade 4 reading for any subgroup. Even with the small improvements reported in the Grade 8 reading results, none of the large performance differences between subgroups has narrowed in recent years.

### **Connecticut Student Subgroup Performance Trends on NAEP 2007-2011<sup>1</sup>**

|                            | MATHEMATICS |         | READING |         |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                            | Grade 4     | Grade 8 | Grade 4 | Grade 8 |
| Male                       | =           | ↑       | =       | ↑       |
| Female                     | =           | =       | =       | ↑       |
| White                      | =           | ↑       | =       | ↑       |
| Black                      | =           | =       | =       | =       |
| Hispanic                   | =           | =       | =       | ↑       |
| Asian/Pacific Islander     | =           | =       | =       | =       |
| Economically Disadvantaged | =           | ↑       | =       | ↑       |
| Students with Disabilities | =           | ↑       | =       | ↑       |
| English Language Learners  | =           | =       | =       | =       |

<sup>1</sup> All reported changes (↑) in performance are based on average scale scores and have been tested for statistical significance.

The performance gaps between our race/ethnicity subgroups range from 28-35 NAEP scale score points. Achievement differences based on eligibility for free- or reduced- price meals, an indicator of family income, similarly range from 27-35 points on the NAEP scale. The achievement gap based on family income is vast and is present in nearly all Connecticut communities.

In 2011, students who were economically disadvantaged represented approximately 38 percent of Grade 4 students. This percentage is higher than all previous NAEP administrations, which range from approximately one-quarter of students in 1996 up to 30 percent of students in 2009. In mathematics, Connecticut’s economically disadvantaged students score below the national public average for their peer group both in terms of average scale score and the percent at or above proficient at both grades.

“I look forward to working with Governor Malloy, the State Board of Education at our future meetings, and the General Assembly in the upcoming legislative session to strengthen our measures and create the tools necessary to improve student performance and narrow the achievement gap throughout the state,” said State Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor.

NAEP, a program of the U.S. Department of Education, is the largest nationally representative assessment of what American students know and are able to do in a variety of subjects. The results from NAEP, often called “The Nation’s Report Card,” report the educational progress of students across the nation and allow states to compare the performance of their students to the performance of students in other states throughout the country. Since NAEP selects a representative sample of students to be assessed rather than testing all students, NAEP does not report results for individual schools or students. However, NAEP reports do provide extensive details around the performance of student subgroups in every state over time, as well as achievement differences between groups.