



NJDOE News

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New Jersey Fourth-Graders Among Top Readers in the Nation

Fourth-graders in New Jersey are among the best readers in the nation, according to a study released today by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

The results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests show New Jersey students trailing only Massachusetts in fourth-grade reading results and tied with three other states – Vermont, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

The jump in the statewide scale score from 223 in 2005 to 231 in 2007 is the second-highest increase in the nation, behind only Alabama. Fourth-graders' scores increased across the board in seven out of the eight major demographic groups tested earlier this year.

"The findings of this study exemplify our commitment to improving educational attainment in our elementary schools," said Gov. Jon S. Corzine. "We equate our increases to sound preschool and early childhood education programs in New Jersey. They are providing our youngest students with a solid foundation of basic fundamentals, and the efforts are achieving positive results.

"This is the news we've been waiting for," said Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "For the past six years, the department has stressed early childhood literacy and that hard work – and, in particular, the hard work of teachers and their young students – has produced results worth celebrating today."

The news in fourth-grade math results is equally telling, DOE officials said. New Jersey fourth-grade math students fared better than students in every state in the nation except Vermont, New Hampshire, Minnesota and Kansas. As in the reading results, only Massachusetts scored higher.

The state NAEP assessment is administered biennially at randomly selected schools in all states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Department of Defense domestic and overseas schools. It is the only standardized test for which valid state-to-state score comparisons can be made.

The results, known as "The Nation's Report Card," routinely place New Jersey among the top states in the nation in both fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math results.

In addition to the fourth-grade reading results, the following trends are noteworthy:

- **Grade 4 Reading:** From 2003 to 2007, the achievement gap between black and white students significantly decreased. Black students' scores increased by 12 points, and the gap between black and white students decreased by 10 points. This was the largest gap reduction in the nation. New Jersey was one of three states with a 10-point decrease.
- **Grade 4 Math:** The achievement gap between black and white students significantly decreased in math, as well. The gap between black and white students decreased by seven points – which again is one of the largest decreases in the nation. Black students' scores increased 15 points, the largest such increase in the nation.

Compared to the nation's average scale scores, New Jersey students fared better in all four test areas:

- **Grade 4 Reading:** 231 in New Jersey, 220 in the nation. Also, the average score for male, female, black, white and Hispanic students, as well as students both eligible and not eligible for the National School Lunch Program increased since 2005;
- **Grade 4 Math:** 249 in New Jersey, 239 in the nation. Average scale scores increased in each of the following categories: male, female, black, and white students;
- **Grade 8 Reading:** 270 in New Jersey, 261 in the nation; and
- **Grade 8 Math:** 289 in New Jersey, 280 in the nation.

Since 1969, NAEP has periodically conducted assessments in [reading](#), [mathematics](#), [science](#), [writing](#), [U.S. history](#), [civics](#), [geography](#), and

[the arts](#). The announced results are from the state NAEP assessment that was administered during January and March of 2007.

The scoring range for both math and reading is 0-500 and the achievement level descriptions are "Basic," "Proficient," and "Advanced." NAEP does not provide scores for individual students or schools, but offers results regarding instructional experiences, school environment for populations of students (for example, fourth-graders and eighth-graders) and subgroups of those populations (for example, male students, students with disabilities).

To view the results at the time of the test results release, please visit the following Web site: <http://nationsreportcard.gov>. For more information about NAEP in general and its report results, please log onto <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

For more information, please contact the New Jersey Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.