



NJDOE News

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NAEP Results Identify Need for Improvement among New Jersey High School Seniors, Underscore Urgency of Enacting Christie Education Reforms

Acting Education Commissioner Rochelle R. Hendricks announced today that results released today from the statewide grade 12 NAEP (National Assessment of Education Progress) pilot test illustrate a clear need for improvement in the reading and math skills of New Jersey's high school seniors. They provide further evidence of the need for enacting the education reforms put forward by Governor Christie to increase the number of effective teachers for our students, and emphasize results for New Jersey children as the central measurement of success in public education. While New Jersey high school seniors outperformed some of their peers across the country in mathematics on the statewide grade 12 assessment, the first ever conducted of its kind, scores were lower – only average – in reading.

New Jersey is among 11 states that volunteered to participate in the pilot study to receive state-level 12th-grade results. In math, New Jersey students scored higher than students in four states, the same as students in three states, and lower than students in three states. In reading, New Jersey high school seniors scored better than students in two states, the same as students in six states, and lower than students in two states.

“New Jersey decided in 2009 to participate in this NAEP 12th-grade pilot assessment since we were interested in knowing how our high school seniors perform relative to students in other states – an assessment that was previously unavailable. While these results show that our seniors score well when compared to other participating states in math, the bigger picture is clear in that we must do better,” said Acting Commissioner Hendricks. “This pilot assessment intended to measure what our children have learned after completing our educational system. Though limited in its scope, these results and data will further inform our own evaluations, provide additional insight about where our schools are falling short, and help us determine where we need to focus our efforts.”

In New Jersey, approximately 3,200 high school seniors were assessed in mathematics, and 3,300 in reading in 90 New Jersey public high schools. Nationwide, approximately 100,000 high school seniors participated and attended almost 1,700 schools. The NAEP assessment window for the New Jersey high schools was from the last week in January 2009 through the end of February 2009.

Thirty-nine percent of New Jersey's students were proficient or above in reading, compared with 37 percent nationally. “Proficient” represents solid academic performance at, or above, grade level. Seventy-four percent of New Jersey's students had at least basic skills in reading, compared with 73 percent nationally. “Basic” scores show partial mastery of skills that are fundamental for proficient work at grade level, according to NAEP's scoring scale.

In math, 31 percent of New Jersey's students were proficient or above, compared with a national average of 25 percent. About 67 percent of New Jersey's students had acquired at least basic scores in math, compared with 63 percent nationally, according to *The Nation's Report Card: Grade 12 Reading and Mathematics 2009 National and Pilot State Results* issued today by the National Center for Educational Statistics under the direction of the National Assessment Governing Board.

The other participating states were: Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, South Dakota, and West Virginia. The participating states can use the NAEP results as a common yardstick for comparing grade 12 students in their states with students in the 10 other states that volunteered to administer the test to their students.

NAEP grade-twelve reading results: http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2009/

NAEP grade-twelve math results: http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2009/