



NEWS RELEASE

**Embargoed, Hold For Release Until:
Wednesday, Nov. 15, 11 a.m. EST**

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Science Achievement For Students In 10 Urban School Districts Similar To Performance Of Peer Groups Nationwide

WASHINGTON (November 15, 2006) – Students in 10 of the largest school districts in the U.S. scored at or below national public school averages in science. However, when separated into racial and ethnic subgroups, scores were often at or above those for similar groups nationally, according to results from *The Nation's Report Card: Trial Urban District Assessment Science 2005*.

The report provides fourth- and eighth-grade student achievement data for 10 big-city school districts that voluntarily participated in the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in science, administered by the National Center for Education Statistics. The districts are Atlanta; Austin, Texas; Boston; Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago; Cleveland; Houston; Los Angeles; New York City; and San Diego.

While all 10 school districts have large minority and low-income student populations, in many cases White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and low-income student scores in these districts were higher than or not significantly different from the national averages for their peers.

“The similarities between urban student groups and their counterparts nationwide are encouraging, although lackluster achievement in an important subject area such as science and the troubling achievement gaps for minorities continue to be causes for concern,” said Darvin M. Winick, the chairman of the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees and sets policy for NAEP.

In seven of the 10 districts, fourth-graders scored as well as or better than public school students in large central cities – U.S. cities with populations of 250,000 or more – while eighth-grade students in six of the 10 districts did so.

All of the districts had fourth- and eighth-grade students scoring in the *Proficient* and *Advanced* achievement levels. In about half of the districts, the percentages of students performing at or above the *Basic* level were about the same as or higher than the percentage at or above *Basic* in large central cities nationwide.

Launched in 2002, the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) is a joint effort developed by the National Assessment Governing Board, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the Council of the Great City Schools. The 2005 TUDA science assessment is the first to measure urban student achievement in that subject; therefore, no trend data are available.

The Nation's Report Card: Trial Urban District Assessment Science 2005 is 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.