



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Fourth- and Eighth-Grade Mathematics Scores Rise in Several Urban School Districts; Reading Scores, Following National Trend, Remain Flat** *Math Scores in Two Districts Surpass National Average for Both Grades*

(Washington, D.C.) – Reading scores of fourth- and eighth-grade students in 21 urban public school districts on the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) followed the national trend by remaining mostly flat, with no significant change from 2009. However, average mathematics scores rose in several districts, including some districts where scores were higher than those of large cities and the nation.

In mathematics, scores at grade 4 were higher in 2011 than in 2009 in four districts—Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore City and Philadelphia—and at grade 8 in six districts—Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Detroit, the District of Columbia and Jefferson County, Ky. Compared to the first TUDA in 2003, nine of the 10 districts that participated in both years scored higher in 2011 at both grades 4 and 8. In 2011, scores for both fourth- and eighth- grade students in six districts were higher than the scores for their peers in large cities. In three districts—Austin, Charlotte and Hillsborough County, Fla.—fourth graders scored higher than fourth graders in both large cities and the nation. In Austin and Charlotte, eighth-grade students scored higher than eighth-grade students in large cities and nationwide.

In reading, most districts showed no significant change in their overall scores in 2011 compared to 2009. Charlotte was the only district that achieved an increase in 2011 compared to 2009 in the reading score at grade 8. The six districts that participated in the first TUDA in 2002 scored higher in 2011. Both fourth graders and eighth graders in five districts—Austin, Charlotte, Hillsborough County, Jefferson County and Miami-Dade—had average scores in 2011 that were higher than the scores of their peers in large cities.

The National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education administered the 2011 NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in Mathematics and Reading to representative samples of students in grades 4 and 8 in each district. Of the 21 TUDA districts that volunteered to have their NAEP results separately reported, three participated for the first time in 2011: Albuquerque Public Schools, Dallas Independent School District and Hillsborough County (Fla.) Public Schools. The 18 other participating districts are Atlanta Public Schools, Austin Independent School District, Baltimore City Public Schools, Boston Public Schools, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Detroit Public Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools, Fresno Unified School District, Houston Independent School District, Jefferson County Public Schools (Louisville, Ky.), Los Angeles Unified School District, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Milwaukee Public Schools, New York City Department of Education, San Diego Unified School District and School District of Philadelphia.

“Despite their distinct challenges, many of these districts are making steady progress in math. But, like school districts nationwide, they need to find ways to raise student achievement in reading,” said David P. Driscoll, chair of the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP.

NAEP is the only continuing and nationally representative assessment of what students know and can do. The results are reported as average scores on a scale of 0 to 500 and broken down by three achievement levels: *Basic*, which denotes partial mastery of the skills and knowledge students need for proficient work; *Proficient*, which represents solid academic performance; and *Advanced*, which represents superior work. The results can be compared to average scores nationwide and also to the scores of large cities (all cities with populations of 250,000 or more). The results allow for comparisons over time; the original six participating TUDA districts have established a trend line back to 2002 in reading. Ten districts participated in the first mathematics TUDA and have established a trend line back to 2003.

The majority of students in TUDA districts are Black, Hispanic or from lower-income households, and in many of these districts, concentrations of these populations are higher than in the nation. For example, nationwide the percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch is 52 percent, but in large cities and TUDA districts it can be as

high as 100 percent. Some TUDA districts also have higher percentages of English language learners than many other districts have.

Districts showed a wide disparity in performance on both assessments, with low overall results. In eighth-grade math, for example, the percentages of students performing at or above *Basic* ranged from 29 percent to 74 percent in the districts.

Gaps between students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds and income levels remained. While smaller gaps were not always associated with higher scores for lower-income students or Black or Hispanic students, higher scores for these groups in some districts contributed to score gaps that were smaller than the gaps for large cities. For example, in Jefferson County, the reading score for Black fourth graders was higher than the score for their peers in large cities, and the score for White students was not significantly different from their peers in large cities. In eighth-grade math, the gaps between the 2011 scores of White and Hispanic students were smaller in Hillsborough County and Miami-Dade, where Hispanic students scored higher than their peers in large cities, and the scores for White students in those districts were not significantly different from the score for White students in large cities.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### **Fourth-grade highlights:**

- Scores were higher in 2011 than in 2003 in 9 out of 10 districts that participated in both years.
- Students showed widely varying skill levels in a question on four-digit subtraction, from 41 percent answering correctly in Detroit to 77 percent answering correctly in Austin.
- Boston was the only one of the 21 districts participating in 2011 to have a score gap between higher-income and lower-income students that was smaller than the gap between their peers in large cities.

### **Eighth-grade highlights:**

- The percentage of students performing below the *Basic* level was lower in 2011 than in 2003 for all but one of the TUDA districts that participated in both years. The percentages of students in Atlanta and Chicago performing below *Basic* were lower in 2011 than they were in 2009, and the percentages at *Proficient* were higher.
- Scores for lower-income students in Dallas, Houston and New York were higher than the scores for lower-income students in large cities overall, even though scores for higher-income students in those three districts were not significantly different from the scores for their peers in large cities.
- Four districts—Dallas, Detroit, Houston and Miami-Dade—showed smaller gaps between average scores of higher-income and lower-income students than the gaps for higher- and lower-income students in the nation and in large cities overall.

## **READING**

### **Fourth-grade highlights:**

- Scores in three districts—Charlotte, Hillsborough and Jefferson County—were higher than scores for the nation and in large cities overall.
- The percentages of students scoring at *Proficient* and at *Advanced* were higher in 2011 than in 2002 in three districts—Atlanta, Chicago and the District of Columbia.
- Score gaps between White and Hispanic students in 2011 were smaller than the gap in large cities in four districts—Cleveland, Hillsborough County, Jefferson County and Miami-Dade.

### **Eighth-grade highlights:**

- Scores were higher in 2011 than in 2002 in three districts—Atlanta, Houston and Los Angeles—although the average reading score for eighth graders in the nation did not change significantly over the same period.
- The percentages of students scoring at and above *Proficient* were higher in 2011 than in 2002 in four districts—Atlanta, Chicago, the District of Columbia and Los Angeles. The percentages of students performing below the *Basic* level were lower in 2011 in three of the five districts, as well as in large cities.
- The White-Black score gap in one district—the District of Columbia—was larger than the gap for large cities, and no district had a score gap that was smaller. White-Hispanic score gaps were smaller in three districts—Hillsborough County, Miami-Dade and Milwaukee—and larger in three districts—Austin, the District of Columbia and Houston.

*The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2011, Trial Urban District Assessment and The Nation's Report Card: Reading, 2011, Trial Urban District Assessment* are available at [www.nationsreportcard.gov](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov). Visit <http://www.nagb.org/reading-math-2011-tuda> for more information on recent results.

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*The National Assessment of Educational Progress is the only nationally representative, continuing evaluation of the condition of education in the United States. It has served as a national yardstick of student achievement since 1969. Through the Nation's Report Card, NAEP informs the public about what American students know and can do in various subject areas and compares achievement between states, large urban districts, 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 oversee and set policy for NAEP.*