

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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Nevada's 2007 NAEP Results Released ***Improvements Made in Several Key Areas***

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Keith Rheault, released Nevada's 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results for grade 4 and 8 in Reading and Mathematics today. NAEP, also referred to as the Nations Report Card, is a nationally representative assessment of student performance in several content areas including, but not limited to reading, mathematics, science, and writing.

Results on NAEP are reported as both an average scale score, and at four different achievement levels: Below Basic, At or Above Basic, At or Above Proficient, and Advanced. The 2007 Grade 4 reading results in Nevada, as compared to the 2005 NAEP assessment in Nevada, showed a significant increase in the average scale score (211 v. 207) for all students. In addition, there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of students 'At or Above Proficient' (24% v. 21%) and in the percentage of students 'At or Above Basic' (57% v. 52%). Other significant gains included average scale score increases for Males, for students identified as White or Black, and for students eligible for free or reduced lunch under the National School Lunch Program, which is a proxy measure for socioeconomic status.

Grade 4 results in Mathematics, while not showing an overall increase in the average scale score from the 2005 NAEP administration, showed a significant increase in the number of students performing at the 'At or Above Proficient' level (30% v. 26%). Additionally, of the students assessed who were identified as having a disability there was a significant increase in the number of students At or Above Proficient (26% v. 13%). While these gains were not mirrored in Reading or Mathematics in grade 8, the gains made in previous administrations were retained.

The Grade 4 students assessed in the 2007 NAEP, in particular, continue to reflect the changing student population Nevada has experienced over the last decade. The percentage of students who were identified as English Language Learners (ELL) in Nevada increased to 23% as compared to 16% in 2005. Only California and New Mexico had higher percentages of ELL students being assessed.

While NAEP provides an opportunity for states to compare student performance to a national standard, interpretation when comparing states to one another must be made with caution as there are a number of factors that can affect the results. A review of Grade 4 reading and mathematics results show that 43 states had higher scale scores than Nevada. What is not evident when just the average scale scores are compared with other states is the student population being assessed. Rheault stated "Case in point, Nevada had more than double the national average of ELL students, who by their very designation have not fully grasped the English language. When approximately one in four students taking the assessment are still learning the English language, it is difficult to match up with the scores from higher performing states like New Jersey and Vermont with less than 4% ELL students."

Rheault went on to say that “Despite the educational barriers faced by Nevada’s students, there have been significant improvements in performance in part due to the school improvement funding provided by the Nevada Legislature and educational programs such as Reading First and the Nevada Early Literacy Intervention Program.”

Additional information regarding NAEP and Nevada’s results can be found at <http://naep.doe.nv.gov>.

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