

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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Nevada 2009 NAEP Results Released

Nevada One of Few State Leaders in Mathematics Improvement

Carson City, NV – October 14, 2009

Nevada's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Keith Rheault, released Nevada's 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results for grade 4 and grade 8 in 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.

While the average scale score for National Public schools in 2009 did not increase significantly from 2007, Nevada was one of only eight states that showed a significant improvement in 4th grade performance and one of only 16 states that showed a significant improvement in 8th grade performance. Nevada's 4th grade average scale score in 2009 (235) was significantly higher than any year since 1996, as was the 8th grade average scale score of 274.

Of particular interest were the patterns of results. Major gains were made in the traditionally lower-performing groups, suggesting that the intense outreach efforts at district and state levels are proving fruitful. Fourth grade students at the 10th, 25th, and 50th percentiles showed significant gains compared to 2007 indicating a dramatic improvement of scores at the lower end of the scale. This coincided with a significant reduction in the percentage of students

scoring in the *Below Basic* range (21%) and a significant increase in the number of students performing *At or Above Basic* (79%) as compared to 2007 and all years prior to 2007.

Particularly strong gains were seen in 4th grade students identified as English Language Learner/Limited English Proficient (ELL/LEP). The average scale score in 2009 (220) was dramatically higher than in 2007 (209) while the percentage of students *Below Basic* dropped from 55% to 39%. Significant gains were seen from 2007 to 2009 in the percentage of 4th grade students *At or Above Basic* (from 45% to 61%) and *At or Above Proficient* (from 7% to 12%).

Strong gains were also seen in 4th grade students qualifying for free or reduced lunch under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), an indicator of students living near or at the poverty level. The average scale score for students qualifying for aid under NSLP rose to 226, significantly greater than in any previous year. Similarly, the percentage of these students scoring *Below Basic* dropped to 31%, significantly lower than in any previous year. The percentage of students scoring *At or Above Basic* grew to 69%, significantly greater than any previous year. Such gains were not seen at the National level, implicating the efficacy of Nevada's extensive district- and state-level outreach efforts to these populations.

Dramatic progress was seen in 4th grade students identified as Hispanic. The average scale score of 227 was significantly higher than any previous year, as was the 70% of students performing *At or Above Basic*. There was a significant corresponding decrease to 30% in the proportion of students performing *Below Basic*. This was lower than any previous year.

Gains were also seen in 8th grade students who participated in the assessment. Although not as high as the average national performance, the Nevada average scale score of 274 was significantly higher than in any previous year. While 38 states ranked higher than Nevada in the percentage of 8th grade students *At or Above Basic*, this was an increase from Nevada's standing in 2007 when 43 states ranked higher. The 8th grade results showed significant increases in performance in multiple groups. The average scale scores of the Hispanic and White populations rose from 257 to 262 and 282 to 287 respectively, between the years 2007 and 2009. There was no significant change in any of the other race/ethnic groups. In addition,

the average scale score of 8th graders who qualified for NSLP aid was 263, significantly greater than in any previous year.

“In this time of furloughs and fiscal uncertainty in Nevada, these dramatic and meaningful advances in student achievement in mathematics at both 4th and 8th grades, particularly in the student groups that have traditionally been hard to serve, provides additional proof that the state is headed in the right direction with our K-12 education programs. It is a testament to the dedication and passion of the thousands of hard working teachers, school support staff, school and district administrators, and Nevada Department of Education staff who diligently go to work each day to improve the achievement of our students and schools, “ said Rheault.

Additional information regarding NAEP and Nevada’s results can be found at <http://naep.doe.nv.gov>, or by contacting Nevada’s NAEP State Coordinator, Tor Loring, Ph.D. at (775) 687-7287.

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