



Nation’s Report Card Shows National Score Declines in 4th and 8th Grade Math and Reading
Widespread Declines in 8th Grade Math
Pandemic Impact on Learning and Achievement Evident in Most States and Selected Districts

NEWS RELEASE

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Washington, D.C. — The [Nation’s Report Card released today](#) shows how deeply the pandemic impacted student learning nationally, in 53 states and jurisdictions, and in 26 urban districts, worsening pre-pandemic trends of growing gaps between higher- and lower-performing students.

Average scores in math and reading for both fourth- and eighth-grade students declined sharply since 2019, the last time students were assessed on the Nation’s Report Card (also called the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP). Nationally, students experienced the steepest declines ever in math, especially among 8th-grade students.

This is the first Nation’s Report Card since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic examining math and reading achievement in grades 4 and 8 for the nation, states, and Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) districts.

Today’s news follows the [September release](#) of the [Long-Term Trend report](#), a national snapshot of progress among 9-year-olds in reading and math, which showed historic declines in student achievement.

On the latest Nation’s Report Card, eighth-grade average math scores dropped by 8 points. Today, 38 percent of eighth-grade students are performing below the *NAEP Basic* achievement level in math. No state or jurisdiction posted gains in math in either grade, nor did any of the 26 participating TUDA districts. The vast majority posted declines.

“This must be a wake-up call for the country that we have to make education a priority. The eighth graders who took NAEP last spring are in high school today. We must invest in education so resources and supports are in place to accelerate student learning and close gaps that predated — but were exacerbated by — the pandemic. Otherwise, students will graduate and enter college and the workforce without the skills and knowledge we need to be globally competitive,” said Beverly Perdue, former governor of North Carolina and chair of the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets the policies and achievement levels for the Nation’s Report Card.

The Nation’s Report Card also showed declines in reading by 3 points at grades 4 and 8. Results show 37 percent of fourth-grade students nationally are below the *NAEP Basic* level in reading in 2022, and 30 percent of eighth graders scored below the *NAEP Basic* level. White eighth-grade students were the only racial and ethnic group with declines at eighth grade reading, a pattern not seen in other assessed grades and subjects.

"Reading is foundational to success in school and life. Schools need to take evidence-based action, aligned with the science of reading, and work closely with teachers to ensure that elementary and middle school students become strong readers and can access more complex work as they progress through their education," said Nardi Routten, a fourth-grade teacher in New Bern, N.C. and a member of the National Assessment Governing Board.

Students most impacted by the pandemic include struggling, or lower-performing, students. The pandemic worsened a pre-pandemic trend in math and reading among fourth graders, in which the gap between higher- and lower-performing students was widening.

The results spotlight the need to focus on historically marginalized students. Black and Hispanic students saw larger score drops than their White peers in fourth-grade math.

"We have to bring strong interventions to schools to help our most struggling students improve, and we have to address long-standing and systemic shortcomings of our education system so all students can succeed in school and in life," said Alberto Carvalho, superintendent of Los Angeles Unified School District and Governing Board member. **"While the pandemic was a blow to schools and communities, we cannot use it as an excuse. We have to stay committed to high standards and expectations and help every child succeed."**

Added New Hampshire Education Commissioner and Governing Board member Frank Edelblut, **"Now is the time for those of us in leadership positions to take a hard look at the data, what we're seeing on the Nation's Report Card and on other key measures, and use that to guide our decision making so that all students can overcome the challenges of the moment and access the kind of high-quality education that leads to bright futures."**

NAEP also included survey questions for students, teachers, and school administrators. Those questions indicated that struggling students were more likely than their higher-performing peers to have inconsistent access to learning resources like digital devices during remote schooling. Compared to the last administration in 2019, teachers surveyed reported feeling less inspired and more overworked. They also reported lacking confidence with helping students close knowledge and skill gaps.

For the full results of the Nation’s Report card, visit www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/. To read the National Center for Education Statistics press release on these results, visit www.nces.ed.gov.

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The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent, nonpartisan 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 the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For more information, visit www.nagb.gov.