



NEWS RELEASE

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Puerto Rico Students Score Below U.S. Averages in Mathematics, According to The Nation's Report Card

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (March 29, 2007) – Results on a national mathematics test administered for the first time in Puerto Rico by the U.S. Department of Education show significant room for improvement, according to reports released today.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as The Nation's Report Card, makes objective information on student performance available to policymakers and the public at the national, state, and local levels. It has served an important role in evaluating the condition and progress of American education for more than three decades.

Public school students in Puerto Rico took part in a Spanish-language version of the NAEP mathematics assessment in 2003 and 2005 – marking the first time that a NAEP test has ever been conducted in an entire jurisdiction in a language other than English. Puerto Rico, like the U.S. states and District of Columbia, participates in NAEP mathematics assessments in grades 4 and 8 as a requirement of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

In both years, results for fourth- and eighth-graders in Puerto Rico were below the national average. In addition, the students in Puerto Rico – all of whom are considered low-income, by federal guidelines – scored lower than other low-income students throughout the U.S.

“These results suggest that there is considerable room for improvement, but they also provide a good understanding of where student performance in Puerto Rico is strongest, and what areas may need extra attention,” said Luis A. Ramos, member of the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees and sets policy for NAEP.

Geometry stands out as one area of relative strength for the students in Puerto Rico.

(more)

NAEP results also show that the majority of students in Puerto Rico fall short of demonstrating *Basic* achievement in mathematics, which signals “partial mastery” of the knowledge and skills needed for proficiency in the subject. In 2003, only 9 percent of fourth-graders and 4 percent of eighth-graders performed at the *Basic* level. In 2005, 12 percent of fourth-graders and 6 percent of eighth-graders reached the *Basic* level. Less than 1 percent of students reached the *Proficient* or *Advanced* levels of achievement in either year.

The 2003 and 2005 NAEP mathematics assessments were administered by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to a representative sample of approximately 3,000 students in 100 public schools in Puerto Rico at each grade. Seventy-three percent of all students in Puerto Rico are enrolled in public schools.

The NAEP mathematics assessments ask students to answer a series of multiple-choice questions and other questions that require them to show their work and explain their responses. Because of the differences in the way the 2003 and 2005 tests were administered in Puerto Rico, the results are not comparable.

Copies of *The Nation's Report Card Mathematics 2003 and 2005: Performance in Puerto Rico – Highlights* and *The Nation's Report Card Mathematics 2005: Performance in Puerto Rico – Focus on the Content Areas*, are available online at http://nationsreportcard.gov/puertorico_2005/.

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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.