



NEWS RELEASE

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Urban Districts Gain in NAEP Math, But Progress in Reading is Mixed, According to The Nation's Report Card

WASHINGTON (November 15)—Most of the 11 big-city school districts taking part in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) continue to gain in mathematics, but progress in reading is mixed, according to The Nation's Report Card™. Overall, the districts participating in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) perform about as well as large central cities throughout the nation. The performance of their low-income and minority students is generally comparable to or better than that of similar students nationwide.

Two new reports from The Nation's Report Card highlight the achievement of 4th- and 8th-graders in 11 of the nation's largest cities on the NAEP reading and mathematics assessments, administered by the U.S. Department of Education earlier this year. The districts participated voluntarily in the representative-sample assessment, which provides a common yardstick of student achievement. The districts are Atlanta; Austin, Texas; Boston; Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago; Cleveland; Houston; Los Angeles; New York City; San Diego; and Washington, D.C.

The performance of the urban districts is being reported separately from the recently released national and state NAEP results.

In mathematics, the majority of the TUDA districts had higher percentages of 4th- and 8th-graders performing at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels of achievement on the test since 2003. Nearly half of all districts had higher percentages of 4th-graders reaching *Advanced*—the highest level of performance.

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In reading, gains have been less consistent and more modest, following the same pattern as the nation as a whole. For example, at 4th-grade, five districts improved the percentage of students at or above *Basic* since 2002, but only two of them—Atlanta and Washington, D.C.—had a significant improvement at this level compared with 2005. In terms of average scores, two of the TUDA districts—Atlanta and Washington, D.C.—had significant gains at both grades 4 and 8, compared to 2005. Two other districts—Cleveland and Houston—also improved at grade 8.

“Performance in the participating districts varies. Some are above the national averages for different groups of students and some are below,” said Darvin M. Winick, chair of the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP. “There is still quite a bit of room for improvement. But on average, when demographics are considered, student performance in the TUDA districts is similar to the performance of their peers nationwide.”

The TUDA districts have higher concentrations of minority and low-income students than the nation as a whole. For example, Black and Hispanic students make up about 37 percent of 4th-graders in the nation, but from 55 and 93 percent of 4th-graders in the 11 TUDA districts. At the 8th-grade level, 49 to 100 percent of students in TUDA districts are low-income, compared to 41 percent nationally.

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In 2007, about 37,000 students from the TUDA districts participated in the NAEP reading assessment, and about 38,000 participated in math. Launched in 2002, the Trial Urban District Assessment is a joint effort developed by the National Assessment Governing Board, the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education, and the Council of the Great City Schools.

The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2007: Trial Urban District Assessment and *The Nation's Report Card Reading 2007: Trial Urban District Assessment*, as well as additional information from the 2007 NAEP assessments, are available online at <http://nationsreportcard.gov>.

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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.