

## *Archived Information*

### *Voluntary National Tests*

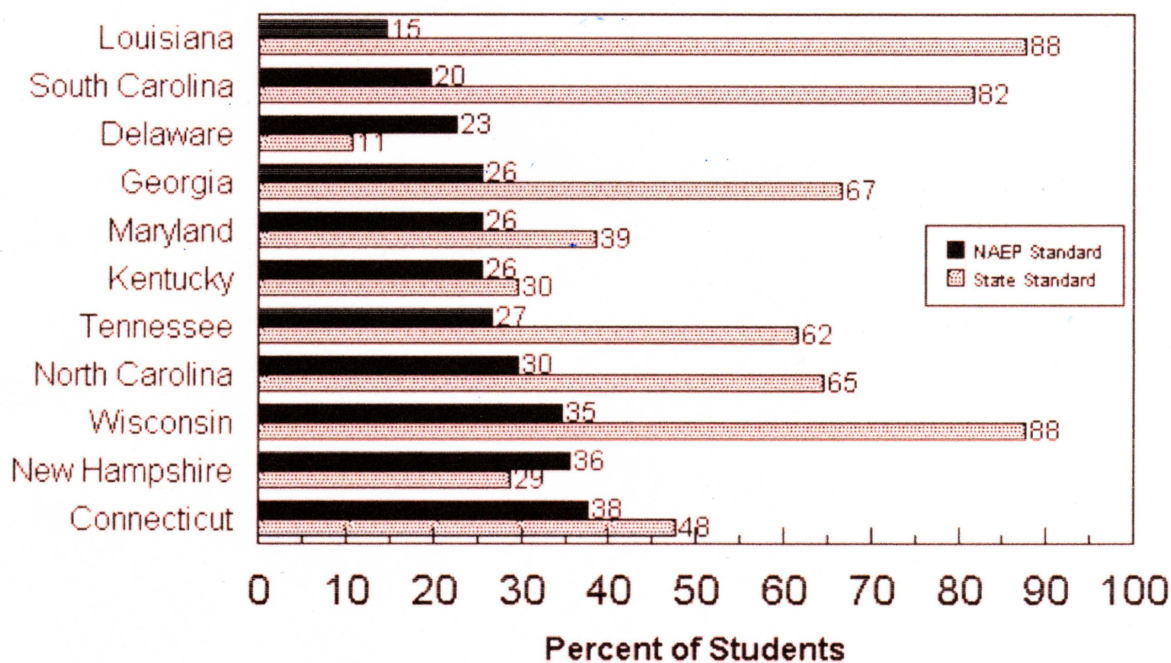
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## How would the voluntary national tests be different from other tests?

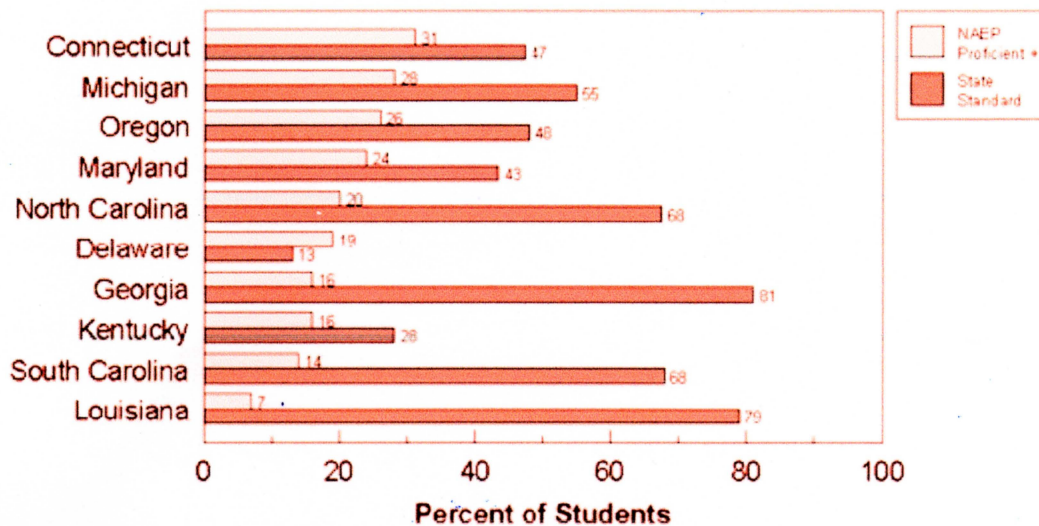
*Voluntary National Tests Would Improve Education*, a February 1998 paper, answers this question and makes these points:

- **Higher Academic Standards** -- The voluntary national tests would be based on the standards of the National Educational Assessment of Progress **NAEP**. In *Setting Education Standards High Enough*, the Southern Regional Education Board found that in some states, the NAEP standards were *higher* than the standards used in state assessments.

### State NAEP Scores for 4th Grade Reading Compared to States' Own Assessment



## State 1996 NAEP Scores for 8th Grade Math Compared to States' Own Assessments\*



★ State assessment results are for the 1995-96 school year. All are for grade 8 except for Michigan which is for grade 7. NAEP results are percentages of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level, state results reflect the state's standards.

Source: U.S. Department of Education and State Departments of Education: Individual State Reports.

- **Public Release of Tests** -- When parents and teachers receive individual students' results, they would also receive a widely distributed copy of the test questions and the correct answers. Together, the tests and test results would provide schools and school districts with detailed information to examine the effectiveness of their teaching methods and educational programs.
- **Step-by-Step Guide** -- In addition, parents and teachers would receive a widely distributed step-by-step guide on how to correctly answer each question. With this information, parents and teachers could help children improve their reading and mathematics skills. The answer guide and students' individual results would offer powerful information about which subject areas students have mastered and where additional attention is needed.
- **National Focus** -- The tests would focus the nation's attention on improving reading and mathematics. Parents and teachers throughout the nation would learn how to help children master the basics in reading and mathematics. Business and community leaders could address students' needs by creating tutoring programs, donating textbooks, or connecting schools to the Internet.

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