

National Assessment of Educational Progress Releases 2019 Results

Vermont's Performance Declines Again for Some Student Groups

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MONTPELIER, Vt. – The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) today released the nationwide performance results from the 2019 assessments in reading and mathematics. The NAEP is administered every two years to students in grades Four and Eight across the nation.

Students in Vermont scored above the national average in all the 2019 assessments but Grade Four mathematics. However, while Vermont students continued to perform at or above the national average, students showed a decline in average scale scores compared to Vermont's 2017 results. This decline follows a downward trend going back roughly a decade or more.

"This year's NAEP scores paint a concerning picture for Vermont," said Secretary of Education **Dan French**. "Many of these metrics have been declining for years now, and while Vermont students are still performing above the national average, we clearly have more to do as a state to ensure our students are prepared for success. I urge school districts to pay attention to these results and make sure we are focused on providing high-quality instruction in core skills like literacy and mathematics."

Nationwide, NAEP scores have declined, with most testing years showing similar small declines. The national Grade Four mathematics and both Grade Eight mathematics and reading results showed statistically significant declines in average scale scores compared to 2017 results.

NAEP is the largest nationally representative assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Assessments are conducted periodically in various subjects, including reading, language arts, mathematics, science and the arts. NAEP provides state and national level results, but does not report results for individual students, classrooms, schools or school districts.

In Vermont, public school students in grades Four and Eight were assessed in reading and mathematics in 2019. The results are reported as average scores on a zero to 500-point scale. For a full breakdown of scale scores and summary of findings, see the [attached fact sheet](#).

Because NAEP results are state-level averages, the U.S. Department of Education cautions against using them to make causal inferences.

"While the NAEP results are a useful barometer – they help us understand what's happening – we shouldn't use the data to leap to conclusions about why we see the trends that we do," said **Wendy Geller**, Director of the Data Management and Analysis Division at the Vermont Agency of Education. "They are a signpost for us to dig deeper, not an answer or an indication of a cause and effect relationship."

The Agency of Education views these results as a helpful general metric for understanding where we are as a state in reading and math achievement. When Vermont has seen declines in

previous assessments, the agency has taken the opportunity to draw attention to the importance of core skills instruction.

“We will be taking a deeper look at the NAEP data along with Smarter Balanced data to determine if trends can be identified and patterns established,” said Deputy Secretary **Heather Bouchey**. “It’s important that we work together and do everything we can to ensure the success of Vermont students.”

In the coming months, the Agency of Education will make recommendations to school districts about possible approaches to program and practice, as well as how to incorporate these results in the context of ongoing continuous improvement efforts happening in every Vermont school district. In particular, the agency is exploring how an increased focus on literacy can be leveraged to improve student outcomes.

NAEP results are publicly available at nationsreportcard.gov.

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