



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Nation's Report Card Highlights Opportunities to Improve Alaska Student Achievement

Work began last year with Alaska's Education Challenge

JUNEAU -- Nationwide, state, and subgroup level results from the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are now available online. The assessment provides one piece of information to educators, policymakers, elected officials, and parents across the country about how states are performing in reading and mathematics.

Notable findings in the 2017 NAEP results for Alaska include:

- Compared to the nation, Alaska performed below the national average for grade 4 reading and mathematics and grade 8 reading and mathematics.
- In **grade 4 reading**, 28 percent of students in Alaska performed at or above the Proficient level.
- In **grade 4 mathematics**, 32 percent of students in Alaska performed at or above the Proficient level.
- In **grade 8 reading**, 26 percent of students in Alaska performed at or above the Proficient level.
- In **grade 8 mathematics**, 29 percent of students in Alaska performed at or above the Proficient level.

“Though many of our students are learning well at school, a large and tragic achievement gap exists,” [said Alaska Education Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson](#). “These results confirm what we learned from PEAKS last school year, our statewide summative assessment. We must be dissatisfied with these numbers. Hundreds of Alaskans, as committee members, partner organizations, and local school boards, have demonstrated through Alaska’s Education Challenge that they are unwilling to accept our current results. With the involvement of all Alaskans, I am confident that together we can close the achievement gap and implement positive changes to ensure every Alaskan student has the opportunity to learn and succeed.”

The 2017 NAEP results support Commissioner Johnson's call to action through Alaska's Education Challenge. He has asked that all Alaskans meet the educational challenges of our state by sharing three commitments:

- 1) Increase Student Success
- 2) Cultivate Safety and Well-Being
- 3) Support Responsible and Reflective Learners

Along with students, parents, educators, partner organizations, and policy makers across the state, the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) will work together with districts to reach local and statewide goals for academic achievement through a new accountability system. Coordinating local, state, and federal programs will focus these efforts on reading proficiency in the early grades with an increased availability for career and technical courses for middle and high school students. This focus will give students the opportunity to participate in engaging coursework and build their skill sets to increase student achievement and provide a clear path to post-secondary education programs.

Additionally, over the next several months, DEED will continue to enhance its online reporting system for data related to each school and district. This resource will provide parents and policy makers more information about our schools and the factors that affect student achievement.

Parents should contact their local school and district office to learn more about local plans for increasing student achievement.

The 2017 NAEP reading and mathematics assessments were given to a representative sample of grade 4 and grade 8 students in public schools in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Department of Defense schools at the beginning of 2017.

NAEP is not designed to report results for individual schools or students. A sampling procedure is used to ensure that NAEP participants are representative of the geographical, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of schools and students across the country. NAEP was administered to students as a digitally based assessment for the first time in 2017. Results from the 2017 administration are comparable to previous years; NAEP used a multistep process to protect trend reporting from paper to digital technology. In Alaska, each of the four assessments included approximately 2,200 students in about 130 schools.

Results for *The Nation's Report Card: 2017 Mathematics and Reading* are available in an interactive online format at www.nationsreportcard.gov.

NAEP is a congressionally authorized project of the National Center for Education Statistics within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. The Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible for carrying out the NAEP project. The National Assessment Governing Board oversees and sets policy for NAEP.

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