

MASSACHUSETTS STUDENTS EARN TOP SCORES ON NATION'S REPORT CARD FOR FOURTH CONSECUTIVE EXAM YEAR



Governor Patrick visits Cobbet Elementary School to make an announcement relative to National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) scores. (Photo: Matt Bennett/Governor's Office)

LYNN – Tuesday, November 1, 2011 – Governor Deval Patrick today announced that Massachusetts 4th and 8th graders lead the nation in reading and mathematics performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam. This is the fourth NAEP test in a row in which Massachusetts students have scored first or tied for first place.

According to the 2011 NAEP results, Massachusetts students ranked first alone among states in 4th grade reading and in 8th grade mathematics, and tied for first in 4th grade math and 8th grade reading. Massachusetts 4th graders scored higher in reading since the last test in 2009, and scores held steady for 4th graders in mathematics and for 8th graders in reading.

“These promising results reaffirm our position as a national leader in education,” said Governor Patrick. “I am extremely proud of the work our students and teachers put in to achieve these results and remain committed to ensuring that every child is prepared for success in the classroom and beyond.”

“These NAEP results reflect the hard work of Massachusetts students and teachers,” said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. “With Massachusetts once again ranking as a national leader in reading and math performance, we remain committed to providing our students with skills to succeed now and in the future.”

Governor Patrick, Executive Office of Education Secretary Paul Reville, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester and other state officials today celebrated the announcement with students and teachers at the Cobbet Elementary School in Lynn.

"NAEP sets a very high bar, as we do here in Massachusetts, and I am proud that our students have held their performance since last time – and even improved in grade 4 reading," said Commissioner Chester. "Our overall performance is a reflection of the high expectations and smart work by students and educators across the Commonwealth. At the same time, we have much work to do before all student groups enjoy a high level of success."

Overall, Massachusetts 4th graders had an average scaled score of 237 in reading, higher than in 2009 (234) and above the national average of 220. In mathematics, 4th graders scored 253, holding steady since 2009 (252) and higher than the national average of 240. At grade 8, Massachusetts students scored 275 in reading, holding steady since 2009 (274) but higher than the national average of 264. In mathematics, 8th graders scored 299, the same as in 2009 and higher than the national average of 283.

“These remarkable results are further proof that engaged students and talented teachers can produce and sustain high levels of achievement,” said Secretary Reville. “Now, more than ever, we must accelerate our efforts to help every student reach proficiency and higher.”

NAEP, known as "The Nation's Report Card," is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of student knowledge in core subjects. NAEP assesses representative samples of students in all 50 states every two years and reports state-level results at grades 4 and 8. In Massachusetts, 10,000 students were randomly selected at grade 4 to take a NAEP reading or mathematics test, and 7,400 students were randomly selected at grade 8 to take a reading, mathematics or science test. Grade 8 NAEP science results will be released in spring 2012. The scale for NAEP reading and mathematics ranges from 0 to 500.

Over the past two decades, African American and Hispanic students in Massachusetts have made particularly significant strides on the NAEP exams. In 2011, Hispanic students scored an average of 216 in Grade 4 Reading, a 20-point increase since 1992 that narrowed the gap with white students during that time from 34 to 27 points. Likewise in mathematics, Hispanic students made a 39-point gain since 1992 at grade 4 (from 197 to 236) and a 34-point gain at grade 8 (from 239 in 1992 to 273 in 2011). Over that time, the gap between Hispanic and white students closed in mathematics from 34 points in 1992 to 22 points in 2011 at grade 4; and from 38 points to 31 points at grade 8.

African American students increased their scale score in math by 40 points at grade 4 between 1992 and 2011, and by 34 points at grade 8. Over that time, the gap between African American and white students narrowed in mathematics from 36 points in 1992 to 24 points in 2011 at grade 4; and from 34 points to 29 points at grade 8.

Massachusetts continues to lead the nation in student achievement and education reform efforts. Recognizing that there is more to be accomplished ahead, Governor Patrick has named closing the achievement gap as a top priority for his second term. Since the Achievement Gap Act was signed by Governor Patrick in 2010, the Administration has been working on several fronts to implement the tools and flexibilities outlined in that plan to ensure that all students are prepared for success in school and beyond.

Other results for Massachusetts students include:

Grade 4 Reading:

- 50 percent of all Massachusetts students scored Proficient or above, substantially higher than the national average of 32 percent and higher than in 2009 (47 percent).
- In 2011, white students in Massachusetts scored 243, Asian/Pacific Islander students scored 243, African American students scored 216 and Hispanic students scored 216.
- 59 percent of white students scored Proficient or above, as did 56 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students, 24 percent of African American students and 23 percent of Hispanic students.
- Massachusetts' female students at grade 4 outperformed male students in reading both in terms of scaled scores (239 to 234) and the percent scoring Proficient or above (54 percent to 47 percent).
- The performance of students with disabilities (213), English language learners (204), and students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (218) did not change significantly between 2009 and 2011.

Grade 8 Reading:

- 46 percent of all Massachusetts students scored Proficient or above, significantly higher than the national average of 32 percent and compared to 43 percent in 2009.
- In 2011, Asian/Pacific Islander students in Massachusetts scored 288, white students scored 282, African American students scored 255 and Hispanic students scored 248.
- 61 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students scored Proficient or above as did 53 percent of white students, 20 percent of African American students and 18 percent of Hispanic students.
- Massachusetts' female students at grade 8 outperformed male students in reading both in terms of scaled scores (280 to 271) and the percent scoring Proficient or above (51 percent to 41 percent).
- The performance of students with disabilities (249), English language learners (211), and students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (257) did not change significantly between 2009 and 2011.

Grade 4 Mathematics:

- 58 percent of all Massachusetts students scored *Proficient* or above, similar to 2009 (57 percent) but significantly higher than the national average of 40 percent.
- In 2011, Asian/Pacific Islander students in Massachusetts scored 267, white students scored 258, Hispanic students scored 236 and African American students scored 235.
- 76 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students scored Proficient or above, as did 67 percent of white students, 32 percent of Hispanic students and 27 percent of African American students.
- Massachusetts' male and female students at grade 4 performed similarly in 2011 in mathematics both in terms of scaled scores (255 to 252) and the percent scoring Proficient or above (60 percent to 57 percent).
- The performance of students with disabilities (233), English language learners (228), and students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (239) did not change significantly between 2009 and 2011.

Grade 8 Mathematics:

- 51 percent of all Massachusetts students scored Proficient or above, similar to 2009 (52 percent) but significantly higher than the national average of 34 percent.
- In 2011, Asian/Pacific Islander students in Massachusetts scored 320, white students scored 304, African American students scored 275 and Hispanic students scored 273.
- 72 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students scored Proficient or above, as did 58 percent of white students, 26 percent of African American students and 21 percent of Hispanic students.
- Massachusetts' male and female students at grade 8 performed similarly in 2011 in mathematics both in terms of scaled scores (299 to 298) and the percent scoring Proficient or above (52 percent to 51 percent).
- The performance of students with disabilities (268), English language learners (247), and students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (280) did not change significantly between 2009 and 2011.

“Along with Governor Patrick, state officials, and local parents, I am extremely proud of our students. Our teachers, parents and students continue to excel and, in doing so, highlight the strength of our education system and our role as a national leader in education,” said Congressman John Tierney. “Moving forward, I will continue my efforts in support of our schools and work to provide every student with the tools needed to succeed.”

“It is great to see that the commitment of Massachusetts’ students, teachers, parents and policy makers has paid off with these impressive exam scores,” said Senator Thomas McGee. “The quality of education that a child receives can transform communities in countless ways and we must continue to make education a top priority.”

"Education is the foundation for future success and Massachusetts students and schools are setting a high watermark for the rest of the country," said Representative Lori A. Ehrlich. "I applaud the students and teachers who made these rankings a reality, and know they will continue to build on this achievement."

"I am pleased that Governor Patrick has chosen the Cobbet Elementary School in Lynn to make such an important announcement relative to the education of the Commonwealth's youth," said Representative Donald Wong. "The advancement of childhood and adolescent education has always been, and continues to be a top priority for the City of Lynn; and I am pleased to hear that it remains a leading priority in the Commonwealth as well."

"I applaud Governor Patrick and his administration as he visits the city of Lynn to announce the results of the 2011 NAEP exam and to recognize the hard work and commitment shown by our teachers, administrators and students here in Lynn and throughout the Commonwealth," said Representative Robert F. Fennell. "I look forward to working with the administration and my colleagues in continuing to provide the tools and resources that are necessary to reach these goals."

Additional information on NAEP is available on the Nation's Report Card website at www.nationsreportcard.gov.