



Wyoming Department of Education

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

September 25, 2007

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2007 Wyoming NAEP scores released

Cheyenne – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Jim McBride today announced Wyoming’s performance on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as the Nation’s Report Card or NAEP. Wyoming’s fourth and eighth grade students continue to outperform national average test scores, and generally held onto or increased past gains in reading and mathematics skills.

“Wyoming continues to perform well on NAEP and at the national level,” Dr. McBride said. “I want to commend our districts, educators and students for their hard work.

“We continue to perform well because we are working together to ensure our students and staff receive the best education, resources and training possible,” he said. “And by following the commitment that ‘It’s always about the kids’ I believe we will see continuous improvements.

“Our performance as compared to other states is relatively good,” Dr. McBride said. “While we are pleased, we all know that our job is to increase achievement for every Wyoming student every year.”

NAEP testing is an integral part of the nation’s No Child Left Behind legislation, and is administered to Wyoming students every two years. All states, including the District of Columbia and Department of Defense (DoD) schools, are assessed. Wyoming’s reading and mathematics scores this year for fourth and eighth grade were above national averages for the nation as a whole—as was the case in 2003, and again in 2005.

In reading, scores edged up in fourth grade, but in eighth grade were unchanged from the previous assessment in 2005. For fourth grade, the estimated average score rose two scale points from 223 in 2005 to 225 this year. Only three jurisdictions this year (DoD schools, Massachusetts, and New Jersey) had a higher percentage of students than Wyoming’s performing at or above NAEP’s Basic achievement level in fourth grade reading.

In eighth grade, reading scores were essentially unchanged—from 268 scale points in 2005 to 266 this year. Because of the sampling procedures NAEP uses to assess students and combine their responses, the year-to-year results since 2005 for grade eight reading are not statistically different.

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Six jurisdictions (DoD schools, Massachusetts, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont) had a higher percentage of students than Wyoming's that scored at or above NAEP's Basic achievement level in eighth grade NAEP reading

In mathematics, scores increased strongly from 2005 for eighth graders and were unchanged for fourth grade. For eighth grade, the estimated scores rose five scale points from 242 in 2005 to 287 this year. Only two states (Massachusetts and North Dakota) had a higher percentage of students than Wyoming scoring at or above NAEP's Basic achievement level in eighth grade math.

In fourth grade math, the estimated average score was essentially unchanged from 243 scale points in 2005 to 244 this year. As was the case for eighth reading, this difference was marginal, and does not reflect a reliable year-to-year increase in test results. Only three states (Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and North Dakota) had a higher percentage of students than Wyoming scoring at or above NAEP's Basic achievement level in fourth grade math.

Overall, Wyoming's NAEP results tended to mirror national trends where greater gains in assessment results since 2005 were shown in mathematics than for reading. National reading results increased from 2005 by one scale score point each in grades four and eight, while increases in mathematics were twice that amount (two scale score points) in both grades over the same reporting period. Because of the large numbers of students sampled across the country (e.g., nearly 190,000 fourth graders are assessed in mathematics), these year-to-year changes reflect reliable increases nationally.

In 2007, Wyoming retained some of the smallest educational gaps in the nation between students of different socioeconomic standing, as indicated by student eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). For example, estimated differences in average scores for Wyoming NSLP eligible and non-eligible students this year in fourth grade mathematics was 12 scale points. Only five states (Maine, New Hampshire, Nevada, North Dakota, and Oklahoma) showed smaller poverty "gaps" in fourth grade mathematics.

Gaps in performance between white and non-white (Hispanic and American Indian) students in Wyoming remained unchanged—neither narrowing or widening—from previous NAEP results in 2005.

Gaps in student reading—Wyoming girls outperform boys in both grades four and eight—also remain unchanged from the prior reporting period. These differences certainly remain as areas of concern for all educators in Wyoming, as reducing and maintaining learning gaps between student groups is a key aspect of elementary and secondary education under No Child Left Behind.

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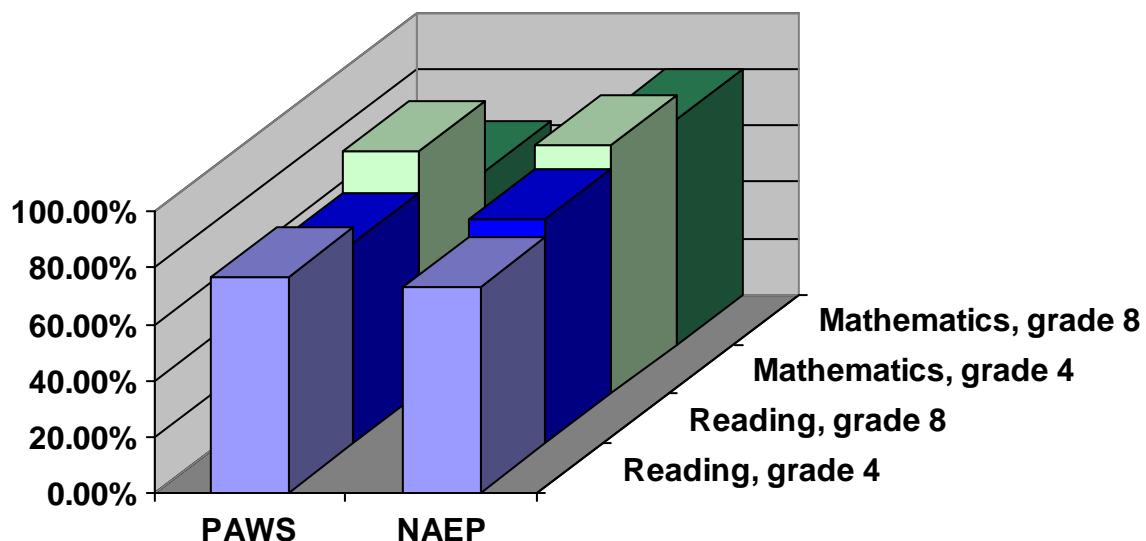
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Wyoming also continues to fare favorably in NAEP performance in comparison to its neighboring states. As noted above, only North Dakota consistently had higher percentages of students than Wyoming scoring at or above NAEP's Basic achievement level in reading (both grades) and fourth grade mathematics.

One purpose of NAEP under No Child Left Behind is to serve as an external reference, and a point of comparison in understanding each state's academic testing program and educational progress. This year's NAEP results provide an initial opportunity to directly compare results on the national assessment for students in Wyoming to the state's Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students, or PAWS, since its deployment in spring 2006.

The percentage of students meeting Wyoming academic standards as measured by PAWS, and the percentage of students scoring at or above NAEP's Basic achievement levels are as follows:

Subject/Level	PAWS	NAEP
Reading, grade 4	76.6%	73.5%
Reading, grade 8	71.3%	79.7%
Mathematics, grade 4	86.5%	88.5%
Mathematics, grade 8	61.3%	79.8%



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When making comparisons, it's critical to note that PAWS is distinctive from NAEP because its primary assessment purpose involves measuring *individual student achievement* and providing instructional advice to teachers. NAEP, on the other hand, employs various sampling procedures to measure a state's educational progress, and provides a standard metric in making direct state-to-state comparisons.

Focusing on individual student achievement—and providing assessment results to teachers to address learning gaps—is critical to ensuring that each student meets the academic bar set by No Child Left Behind.

For additional information, please visit the Wyoming Department of Education at www.k12.wy.us or NAEP at www.nationsreportcard.gov

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If you would prefer to receive this and other announcements or press releases in electronic format, please contact Public Information Officer Tim Lockwood at (307) 777-6386 or by e-mail at tlockw@educ.state.wy.us

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