



# Wyoming Department of Education

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

May 24, 2006

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### Wyoming's 2005 NAEP Science scores released

**Cheyenne** – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Jim McBride today announced Wyoming's performance in science on the 2005 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 in science. Additionally, Wyoming's average eighth grade test scores were higher than when the state was last assessed in 2000.

NAEP plays an integral role within the nation's No Child Left Behind legislation. Statewide testing of science is scheduled and administered to Wyoming students every fourth year, along with NAEP testing of reading and mathematics skills which is conducted every two years. NAEP science results are reported on a 0 to 300 point scale at grades four and eight.

Grade 4 (Average Scale Score)	2000	2005	Change
Wyoming	156	157	--
Nation	145	149	↑
Grade 8 (Average Scale Score)	2000	2005	Change
Wyoming	156	159	↑
Nation	148	147	--

In eighth grade science, Wyoming scores were reliably (i.e., statistically) higher than the previous assessment—up from 156 scale points in 2000 to 159 points this year. Only four states this year were higher than Wyoming; 33 states scored lower, and seven were not significantly different from Wyoming. This placed Wyoming eighth nationally in terms of estimated average scale scores, compared to eleventh in 2000.

Seven states this year were statistically higher than Wyoming fourth graders; 28 states scored lower, and nine were not significantly different from Wyoming. Overall Wyoming placed twelfth in terms of grade four average scale scores among the forty-four states and Department of Defense schools administering NAEP science this year. This compares to a tenth place ranking in 2000, when Wyoming along with thirty-nine other states participated in the science assessment.

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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Wyoming also retained some of the smallest educational gaps nationally between White and Hispanic students as shown by current NAEP science results. For example, the estimated difference between White and Hispanic students in eighth grade science was 16 scale points this year for Wyoming.

Only two jurisdictions had a smaller difference between White and Hispanic students in eighth grade science than Wyoming. In fourth grade, only five jurisdictions had smaller scale score differences between White and Hispanic students than Wyoming.

In terms of gaps in science results between White and Native American student groups, sampling of fourth grade Native American students in Wyoming was insufficient to meet NAEP reporting requirements, i.e., for maintaining confidentiality of student scores, and reporting reliable results.

The same is also true for Wyoming Black and Asian/Pacific Islander students at both grades. Data for comparison of White and Native American students in eighth grade science were available, and they indicate that the performance gap between these student groups had not widened since the last assessment in 2000. Reducing learning gaps between diverse student groups is a key goal of elementary and secondary education under No Child Left Behind.

A key purpose of NAEP under No Child Left Behind is to serve as an external reference point when viewing a state's academic testing programs. A science version of Wyoming's new Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students or PAWS is currently under development and will be administered to all Wyoming fourth, eighth and eleventh grade students beginning in spring 2008.

First-time PAWS testing in reading, writing, and mathematics was completed in April, and results will be released later this summer. The PAWS is distinctive in its design, insofar as it focuses upon measuring *individual student skills* as a means of providing Wyoming teachers with instructional "next steps" for each student.

Focusing on individual student achievement and getting assessment results quickly to teachers to close each child's particular learning gaps will be critical to ensuring educational strides, as well as future improvements in PAWS and NAEP testing results.

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