



Wyoming Department of Education

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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2011 Wyoming NAEP scores released

Cheyenne – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Cindy Hill today announced Wyoming’s performance on the 2011 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 reading and mathematics.

	Wyoming	National Public Schools, Average
4 th Grade Reading	224	220
8 th Grade Reading	270	264
4 th Grade Math	244	240
8 th Grade Math	288	283

Wyoming students increased their achievement in fourth grade mathematics from 2009. However, Wyoming did not post similar year-to-year gains from 2009 in:

- eighth grade mathematics,
- fourth grade reading, or
- eighth grade reading.

For full details on Wyoming’s 2011 NAEP results, please direct your Internet web browser to http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/statewide_assessment_system/naep.aspx and then click the “2011 NAEP” button.

NAEP testing is part of the nation’s No Child Left Behind legislation, and is administered to Wyoming’s fourth and eighth grade students in reading and mathematics. All states and the District of Columbia and Department of Defense (DoD) schools, are assessed every two years.

A key role of NAEP under No Child Left Behind is to serve as an external audit or point-of-reference and comparison in understanding each state’s academic standards and educational testing program.

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NAEP scale scores operate like a thermometer that measures student achievement, and range on a scale from 0 to 500. Unlike PAWS testing, NAEP is administered to a statistical sample of students every two years and does not provide individual student test scores. Associated with the scale, are NAEP's achievement levels:

	Cut-Scores on NAEP's Measurement Scale		
	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
4 th Grade Reading	208	238	268
8 th Grade Reading	243	281	323
4 th Grade Math	214	249	282
8 th Grade Math	262	299	333

Cut scores signify differing levels of performance on NAEP's scale

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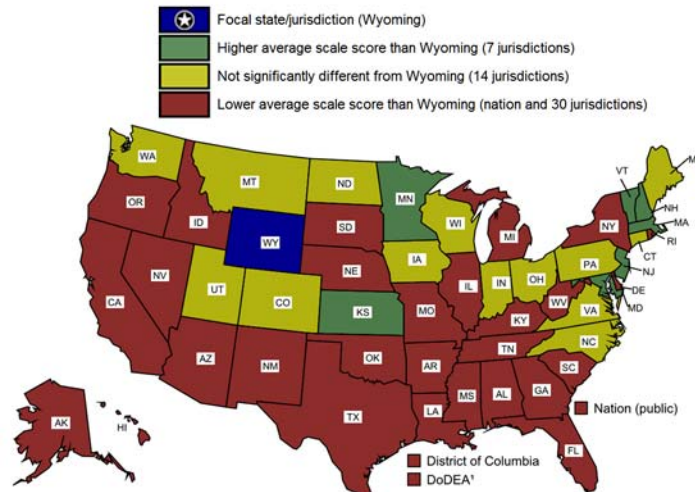
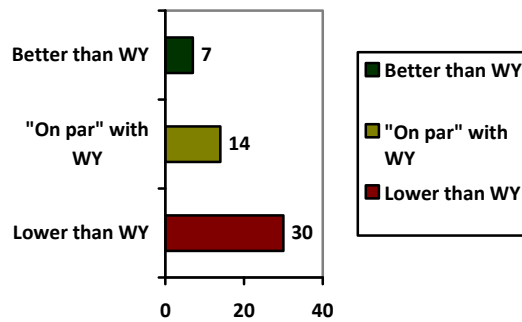
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In grade four mathematics, the year-to-year results are as follows:

	2009	2011
NAEP Scale Score, grade 4 math	242	244

Seven states and jurisdictions (the District of Columbia and Department of Defense schools) performed higher than Wyoming, thirty performed lower than Wyoming, and fourteen were not reliably different from Wyoming in grade 4 math.



For fourth grade, the average score rose two scale points from 242 in 2009 to 244 this year.

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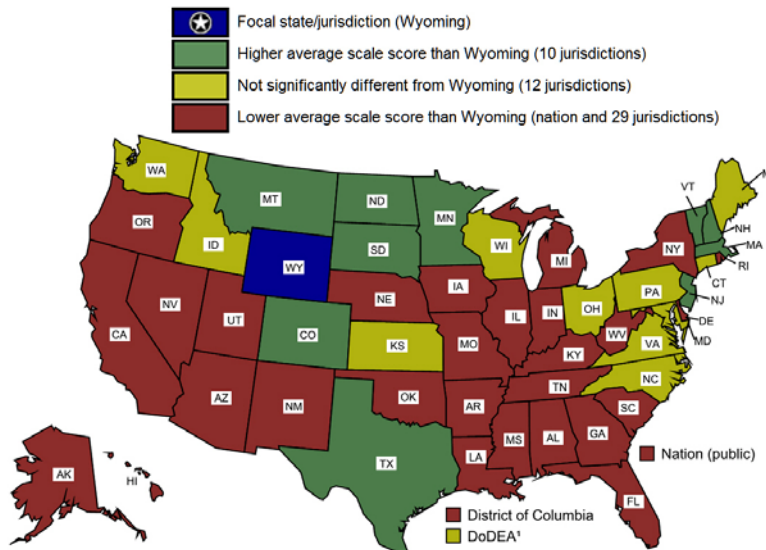
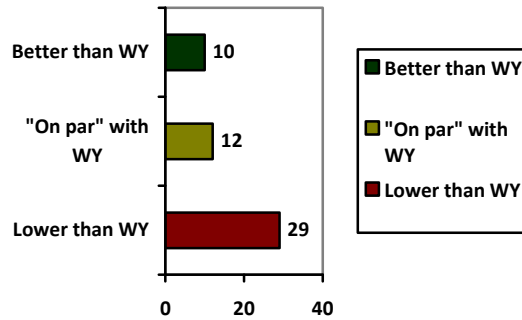


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In grade eight mathematics, the year-to-year results are as follows:

	2009	2011
NAEP Scale Score, grade 8 math	286	288

Ten states and jurisdictions (the District of Columbia and Department of Defense schools) performed higher than Wyoming, twenty-nine performed lower than Wyoming, and twelve were not reliably different from Wyoming in grade eight math.



Although there is a numerical increase—286 to 288—scores were statistically unchanged in eighth grade from the previous assessment in 2009. In this respect, NAEP works like a survey or poll. The two-point difference in year-to-year results reported since 2009 is not statistically significant, i.e., it falls inside NAEP’s margin-of-error given the sampling of students’ responses for each year.

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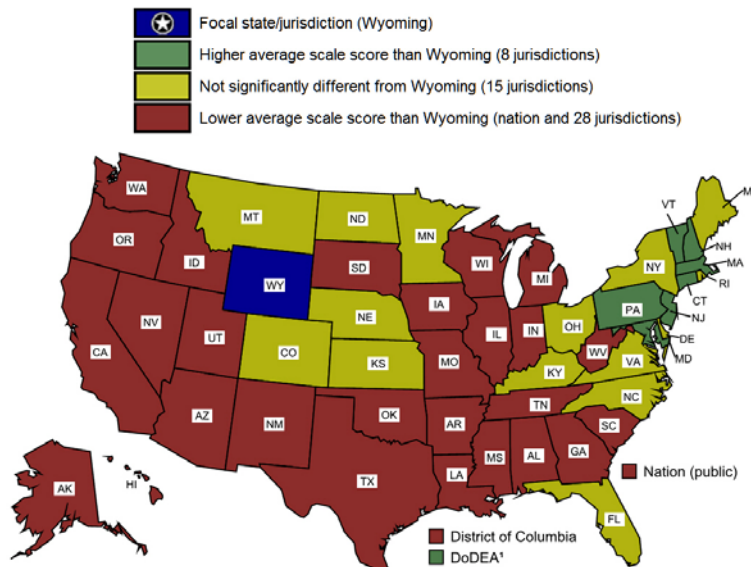
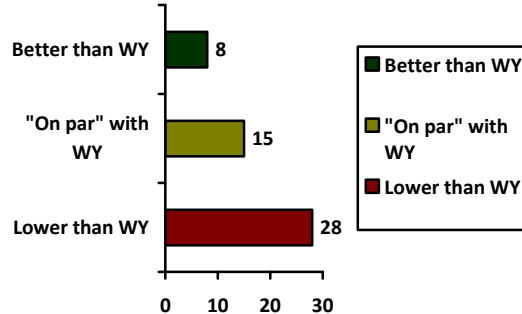
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In grade four reading, the year-to-year results were as follows:

	2009	2011
NAEP Scale Score, grade 4 reading	223	224

For fourth grade, Wyoming's estimated average reading scale score was 224 this year compared to 223 in 2009. The one-point change in scores was not a statistically reliable difference.

Eight states and jurisdictions (the District of Columbia and Department of Defense schools) performed higher than Wyoming, twenty-eight performed lower than Wyoming, and fifteen were not reliably different from Wyoming in grade four reading.



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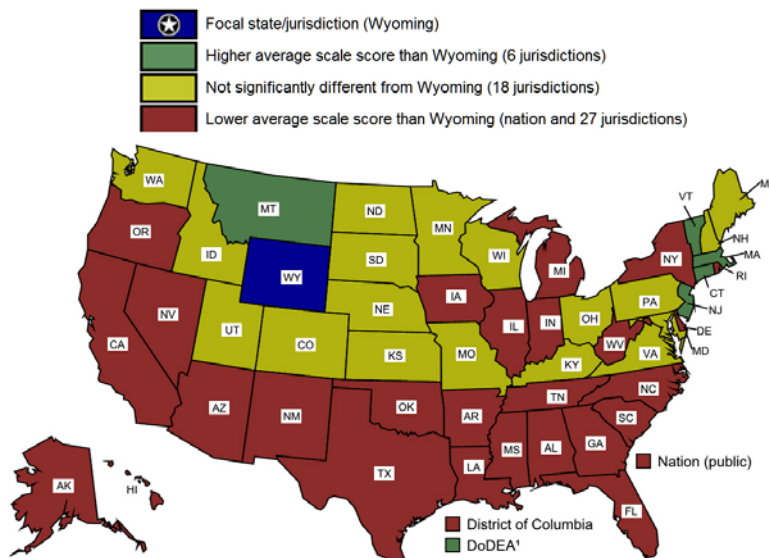
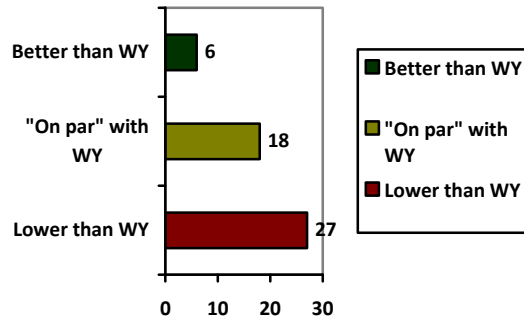
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In grade eight reading, the year-to-year results were as follows:

	2009	2011
NAEP Scale Score, grade 8 reading	268	270

Like the grade 4 reading results just discussed, the reported differences across years are not statistically significant.

Six states and jurisdictions (the District of Columbia and Department of Defense schools) performed higher than Wyoming, twenty-seven performed lower than Wyoming, and eighteen were not reliably different from Wyoming in grade eight reading.



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Overall Wyoming's NAEP results tended to mirror national trends, wherein gains since 2009 are more plentiful or apparent in mathematics than in reading. National reading scores increased from 2009 in grade eight, but were unchanged in fourth grade; by contrast, mathematics scores increased in both grades four and eight during the same period. Given the substantial number of students sampled across the country (e.g., nearly 214,200 fourth graders assessed in mathematics), national year-to-year changes, though relatively small, reflect statistically significant or reliable increases.

In 2011, Wyoming retained some of the smallest educational gaps nationally between high and low income students as indicated by eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The difference in average scores for Wyoming NSLP eligible and non-eligible students, this year in fourth grade mathematics, was 13 scale points. Only three states (Oklahoma, New Hampshire, and Vermont) showed comparably small "poverty gaps" in fourth grade mathematics as those in Wyoming. The percentage of eligible students increased in Wyoming from 35% in 2009 (in grade four mathematics) to 41% this year.

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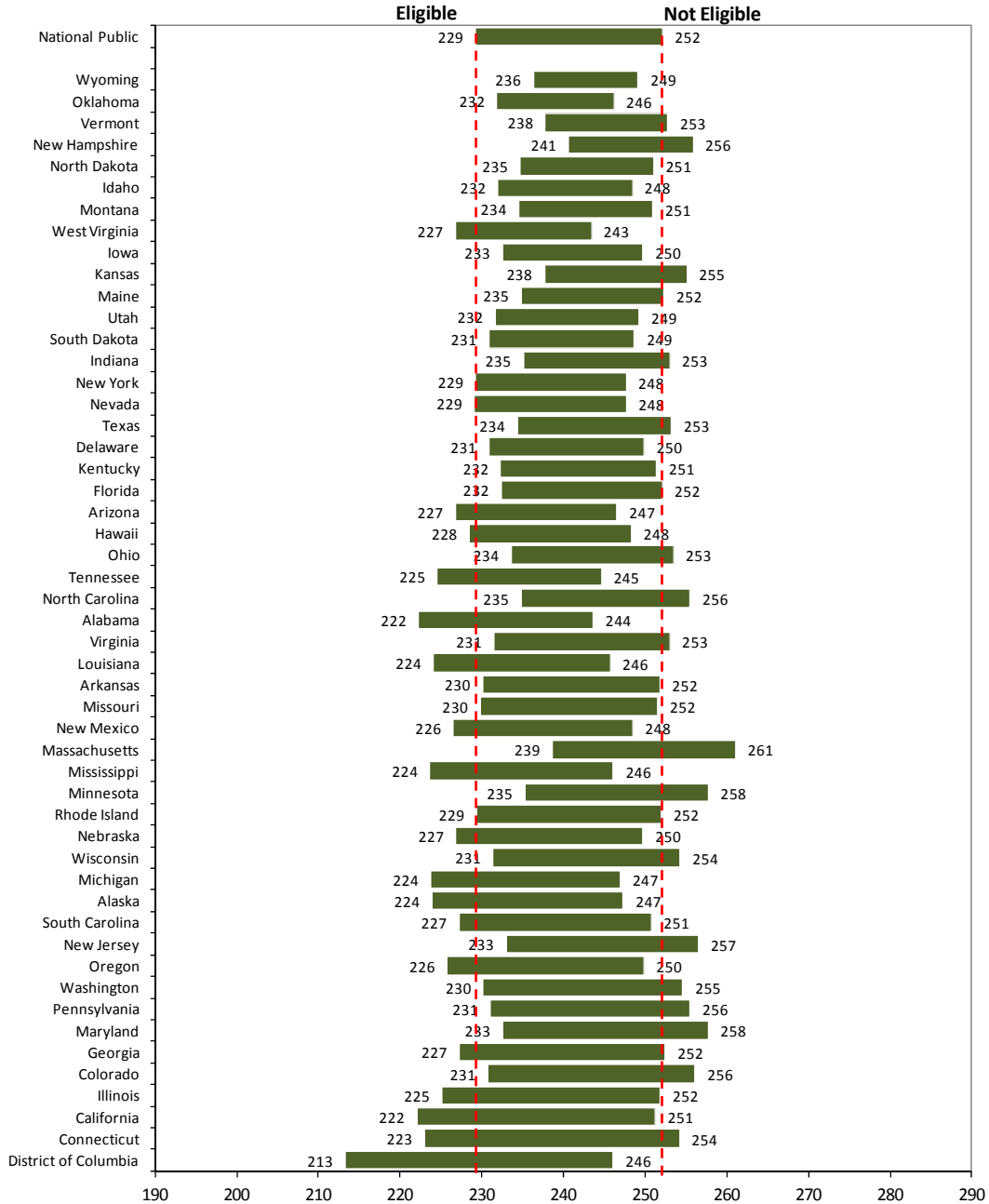
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NAEP Mathematics Grade 4 – National School Lunch Eligibility Gap - Average Scale Score: 2011



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Gaps in performance between white and non-white (Hispanic and American Indian) students in Wyoming remained unchanged during 2011—neither narrowing nor widening—from previous NAEP results in 2009. Gender gaps in grade 4 student reading (Wyoming girls outperform boys in both grades four and eight) also remain unchanged from the prior reporting period.

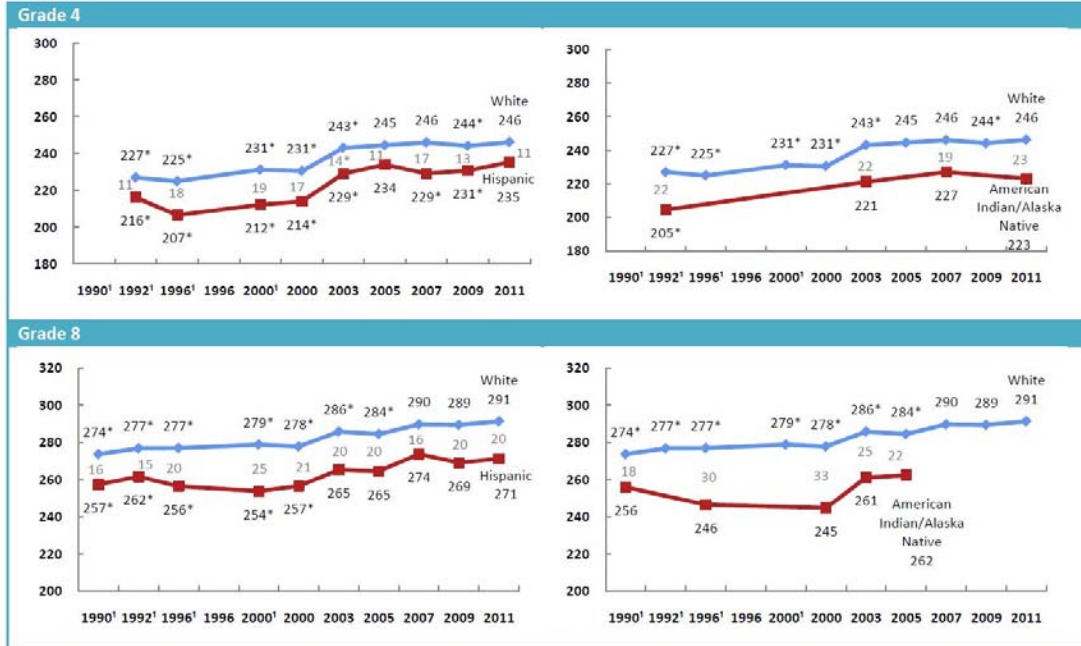
These certainly remain as areas of concern for all educators in Wyoming. Reducing and maintaining learning gaps between student groups is a key aspect of elementary and secondary education under No Child Left Behind.

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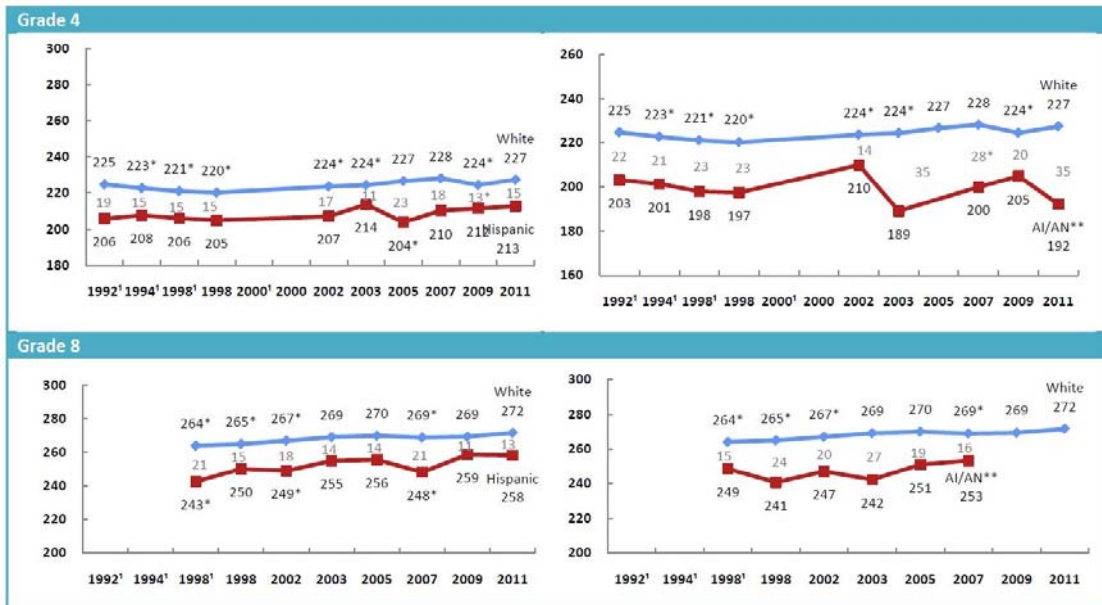
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Mathematics Gaps



- Sampling was insufficient to permit reporting of American Indian student in grade 8 reading

Reading Gaps



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As your State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I am cognizant of the factors cited in the [2007 Educational Testing Service Policy Report](#) (Barton, Coley, 37) estimating the impact of family and home factors on student achievement, as measured by NAEP:

This report describes a number of family characteristics and home conditions that influence children's cognitive development and school performance. These factors tend to be interrelated and rarely existing in isolation from one another. One way to view this is as stars comprising a constellation of family conditions and experiences that are associated with student achievement. We have chosen four factors here to represent the stars in this constellation; although we might have chosen others and found similar results.

These four factors are:

- ***The Parent-Student Ratio:*** The percentage of children under age 18 who live with one parent
- ***Absenteeism:*** The percentage of eighth-graders who missed three or more days in a single month
- ***Reading to young children:*** The percentage of children age 5 or younger whose parents read to them every day
- ***Excessive television watching:*** The percentage of eighth-graders who watch five or more hours of television on a school day

Reference

Barton, P., Coley, R.: *The Family: America's Smallest School*. ETS, 2007, Princeton, New Jersey, p 37.

Wyoming fared at/or above par in most comparisons to its neighboring states during 2011 NAEP testing. Only in one instance did an adjacent state have a greater percentage than Wyoming of students scoring at or above NAEP's *Basic* achievement level (Montana, in grade eight reading).

Wyoming had a higher percentage of students performing at NAEP's *Basic* benchmark than Colorado and Idaho (i.e., in grade four mathematics), Nebraska and/or Utah (i.e., in mathematics at both grades four and eight).

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This year's NAEP results provide another opportunity to directly compare results on the national assessment for students in Wyoming to the state's Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students or PAWS. The percentage of students meeting Wyoming academic standards as measured by PAWS during 2011, and those scoring at or above NAEP's *Basic* level—i.e., a roughly equivalent achievement bar on NAEP—are as follows:

Subject/Level	PAWS	NAEP
Reading, grade 4	83.6%	71.3%
Reading, grade 8	77.1%	81.6%
Mathematics, grade 4	81.1%	87.9%
Mathematics, grade 8	70.9%	80.3%

It's critical to note that PAWS is distinctive from NAEP; PAWS' primary assessment purpose is to measure an *individual student's achievement* and provide specific instructional advice to teachers. NAEP, on the other hand, employs various sampling procedures for measuring the educational progress for *groups of students* and providing a common yardstick 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 under No Child Left Behind.

-END-

If you would prefer to receive this and other announcements or press releases in electronic format, please contact Public Information Officer Jerry Zellars at (307) 777-6386 or by e-mail at jerry.zellars@wyoming.gov

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