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News Release

“Nation’s Report Card” Shows Colorado Students Ahead on Reading and Mathematics

Results released today by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for 2007 show Colorado students performed higher than the national average in grades four and eight in reading and in grade eight in mathematics.

In fourth grade mathematics, Colorado students performed the same as the national average.

The percentage of Colorado students who performed at or above the NAEP Basic level was 70 percent or higher for grades four and eight reading and mathematics in 2007. Basic is defined by the National Assessment Governing Board as demonstrating “prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work” at each grade assessed.

“Colorado students for the most part are on the right side of the national averages—and that is encouraging news,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight Jones. “Nonetheless, too many students have not yet acquired the fundamental building blocks of reading and mathematics that they need to be successful in high school and reach graduation.”

NAEP, established in 1969, is the only federally mandated and nationally representative assessment of what young students know and can do in key subject areas. Commonly referred to as the “Nation’s Report Card,” it is used to provide a point of reference for

comparisons between states and to provide an accurate and representative picture of student performance over time.

Representative samples of students in grades four and eight from 50 states and two jurisdictions (the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Schools) participated in the 2007 NAEP reading and mathematics assessments.

Nationally, about 391,000 students in grade four and 316,000 students in grade eight nationwide took the tests. In Colorado, approximately 12,000 students participated. Students across the nation participated in the same assessment for each grade and subject.

Colorado eighth grade black students made a 16 point gain in average scale score in the mathematics assessments from 2005 to 2007, rising from a score of 256 to 272.

In addition, the gap between eighth-grade white and black students in mathematics has narrowed by 13 points since the test was given in 2003. That rate of closure in the gap led the nation.

In 2003, eighth-grade white students scored 292 and black students scored 255 in mathematics; in 2005 those numbers were 292 and 256 respectively; and in 2007, white students' scores increased to 296 and black students' scores increased to 272 (see chart below).

In grade eight reading, 79 percent of Colorado's students performed at or above Basic and exceeded the nation's score of 72 percent. On the grade eight mathematics test, Colorado students scored 75 percent at or above "Basic." That increase represents a significant improvement since the 2005 assessment score of 70 percent.

In grade four reading, only six states and jurisdictions outperformed Colorado students, whose average reading scale score of 224 surpassed the nation's average scale score of 220. Colorado's grade four students scored 82 percent at or above Basic in mathematics and have remained stable since the 2005 assessment (81 percent).

The President and Congress use NAEP results in setting education policy. States are neither rewarded nor sanctioned based on their results. The Nation's Report Card, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, has generated more than 600 reports in its history.

For more information about the 2007 NAEP results go to the Initial Release Site: <http://nationsreportcard.gov/> or the CDE web site, http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/NAEP/index_naep.html

CO NAEP Math Grade 8: Average Scale Score: White and Black Students		
Year	White	Black
2003	292	255
2005	292	256
2007	296	272 ↑

↑ = Significantly higher than 2003 and 2005

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