



New Jersey education system continues to improve overall national ranking on 2011 NAEP exam

Despite improvement from most student subgroups, closing New Jersey's substantial achievement gap remains a focus of Christie Administration education reform efforts

For Immediate Release

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Trenton, NJ – Under the Christie Administration, New Jersey continued to improve its overall national ranking on the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Between 2009 and 2011, New Jersey maintained its ranking as the 2nd highest performing state in the country in grade 4 and 8 reading, and improved from 5th to 4th in grade 4 math, and from 5th to 3rd in grade 8 math. Though nearly all subgroups have improved since 2003, the gap between low- and high-income students remains one of the largest in the country. In grade 8 reading, New Jersey ranks 50 out of 51 states plus DC in the size of its achievement gap.

"Under Governor Christie, New Jersey schools have continued to improve and on average remain among the top schools in the country by objective measures. We have some of the hardest working and best teachers in the country, and we owe them all a debt of gratitude for this significant achievement," said Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf. "In spite of our strong overall scores, we must find the right balance between celebrating our successes and a sense of urgency to improve a system where in too many places, the zip code in which you're born determines your educational outcomes. We must continue our work at the state level to ensure that we free high-performing schools and districts from bureaucratic red tape so that they can continue to succeed, while at the same time strengthen interventions for our lowest-performing students. In order to do this, we must continue to invest in the four building blocks of success – academics, performance and accountability, talent, and innovation."

New Jersey Overall State Ranking: 2009-2011		
	2009	2011
Grade 4 reading	2	2
Grade 8 reading	2	2
Grade 4 math	5	4
Grade 8 math	5	3

In both grades and subjects, the average scale scores for New Jersey students continued to increase between 2009 and 2011, though NAEP does not consider these results "statistically significant," in part because of the relatively small sample size at the state level.

New Jersey Scale Score: 2009-2011		
	2009	2011
Grade 4 reading	229	231
Grade 8 reading	273	275
Grade 4 math	247	248
Grade 8 math	293	294

In spite of these overall gains, significant achievement gaps continue to remain for low-income students across New Jersey. Though most subgroups have improved since 2003, the gaps have remained over the past 8 years. New Jersey continues to have one of the largest achievement gaps of any state in the country, and New Jersey's achievement gap is increasing compared to other states between 4th and 8th grade. In 8th grade reading, New Jersey ranks 50 out of 50 states in the size of its achievement gap, behind only Alaska.

New Jersey State Achievement Gap Ranking – ranking of states with smallest achievement gap for low income students: 2009-2011 (50 total states, plus DC)		
	2009	2011
Grade 4 reading	34	22

Grade 8 reading	49	50
Grade 4 math	47	41
Grade 8 math	49	46

The 2011 NAEP assessment was administered between January 24, 2011 and March 4, 2011. In New Jersey, fourth-graders from 115 schools participated and eighth-graders from 135 schools participated. Approximately 3,100 students took the fourth-grade reading assessment and 2,500 students took the eighth-grade reading assessment. There were 3,300 students assessed in fourth-grade math and 2,600 students assessed in eighth-grade math.

The Commissioner of Education Statistics, who heads the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education, is responsible by law for carrying out the NAEP project. The National Assessment Governing Board, appointed by the Secretary of Education but independent of the Department, sets policy for NAEP and is responsible for developing the framework and test specifications that serve as the blueprint for the assessments. The Governing Board is a bipartisan group whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. Congress created the 26-member Governing Board in 1988.