



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Nebraska Students are Competitive Compared to Other States on National Math and Reading Assessments**

Nebraska's 2024 fourth and eighth graders scored higher than the national average in math and close to the national average in reading. Nebraska students also outperformed most other states across the country in math scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

NAEP scores declined in most subjects both nationally and in Nebraska again this year. However, declines were much less than in 2022.

Nebraska's average math score is 238 for fourth grade, down four points from 2022 but one point higher than the national average of 237. Nebraska's eighth grade math score is 280, one point higher than 2022 and eight points higher than the national average of 272.

Nebraska's average reading score is 212 for fourth grade, seven points lower than 2022 and two points lower than the national average of 214. Nebraska's eighth grade reading score is 256, three points lower than 2022 and one point lower than the national average of 257.

"The latest scores from NAEP show Nebraska students performing near the national average on reading and math, but our scores have been on a downward trend since 2017," said Commissioner Brian Maher. "This year's declines are concerning and should be a call to action. I have full confidence in the educators in Nebraska to reverse this trend. The NDE is committed to raising state proficiency in literacy and has already begun investing in improvements we believe will address the NAEP results as well."

Literacy is a key priority for the state. The Nebraska State Board of Education has a goal to increase third grade proficiency in English Language Arts to 75% by 2030. In August 2024, the Nebraska Department of Education was awarded a federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant. The total award of \$55 million spans five years with the purpose of advancing literacy and pre-literacy skills for students from birth to grade 12, with emphasis on disadvantaged children.

The NAEP math assessment measures both mathematics knowledge and students' ability to apply their knowledge in problem-solving situations. The NAEP reading assessment measures reading comprehension by asking students to read selected grade-appropriate materials and answer questions based on what they have read. 8000 Nebraska students participated in this year's exams.

The following are among other key findings from this year's Nebraska NAEP math and reading assessment data:

- This year's fourth grade students were in kindergarten when the pandemic began in 2019-2020. This year's eighth grade students were in fourth grade.
- Only six states scored better than Nebraska in eighth grade math. After a six-point drop from 2019 to 2022, Nebraska students saw the state's only increase in this assessment.
- Nebraska's largest decline was in fourth grade reading, down seven points since 2022 and down ten points since before the pandemic in 2019.

The 2024 full NAEP report card can be viewed at: <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>.

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