



NEWS

Dr. Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner

FOR SCHEDULED RELEASE:

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Connecticut's 12th Graders Score above the Nation in Reading and Math

Connecticut Seniors Show Solid Overall Performance in First State-Level High School NAEP,
but Mathematics and Gaps Still a Concern

Results from the first ever, state-level administration of the Grade 12 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that Connecticut's students score above the nation in both reading and mathematics.

"This assessment shows that overall, our students perform better than their counterparts across the country," said State Education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan in releasing the NAEP results. "However, the results also show that Connecticut's achievement gaps persist among racial and ethnic groups, and that we should be looking toward all students performing at higher levels in mathematics if we expect to have a competitive workforce in the future economy."

While the national results for high school seniors shown below in Table 1 are representative of public schools across the country, there were eleven states including Connecticut that participated in the first administration of Grade 12 State NAEP in 2009. These eleven states have access to state-level results for the graduating class of 2009.

Table 1

NAEP 2009 Grade 12 Performance: Connecticut and National Public Schools

	MATHEMATICS		READING	
	AVG. SCALE SCORE	% OF STUDENTS AT/ABOVE PROFICIENT	AVG. SCALE SCORE	% OF STUDENTS AT/ABOVE PROFICIENT
National Public	152	25	287	37
Connecticut	156*	29*	292*	43*

* indicates a statistically significant difference when compared to the performance of National Public.
For an explanation of statistical significance and why it is used in NAEP reporting see Appendix A.

NAEP, a program of the U.S. Department of Education, is the largest nationally representative assessment of what American students know and are able to do in a variety of subjects. The results from NAEP, often called "The Nation's Report Card," report the educational progress of students across the nation. While state-level results for 4th and 8th graders have been reported since 1990, only *national* data have been available to measure the progress of our nation's 12th graders.

The 2009 administration of Grade 12 NAEP marks an important milestone in the evolution of the NAEP program: States were invited to participate in the first Grade 12 state-level assessment on a voluntary basis. Figure 1 shows the states that participated in the 2009 Grade 12 State NAEP.

Figure 1: States participating in the first Grade 12 State NAEP



Eleven states, including Connecticut, saw the invitation to participate as a unique opportunity to access important information about their students at the end of high school. No other state or national assessment can provide data that is representative of all Grade 12 public school students at this point in their educational experience. “The timing of the invitation to participate in the Grade 12 State NAEP was ideal,” said Commissioner McQuillan. “In 2008-2009, Connecticut districts were just beginning to plan for secondary school reform efforts. We intend to use the NAEP results as a component of our baseline against which we will measure our progress in improving the high school experience and raising standards of performance for high school students statewide.”

“Although NAEP results show that Connecticut students overall consistently outperform the national average, there are many improvements that must be made in Connecticut’s secondary schools,” said McQuillan. “In reviewing our 12 Grade math performance, it is clear that we must do better if we expect our graduates to pursue post-secondary education and careers in STEM areas. This is why we have supported legislation to reform our secondary schools with a greater emphasis on math and science and more support for students to achieve.”

Disaggregated NAEP results highlight another urgent issue for Connecticut. “NAEP data confirm that the large achievement gaps evident in Grades 4 and 8 carry into Grade 12,” said Commissioner McQuillan. I remain extremely concerned about these unacceptable disparities in achievement among racial and ethnic groups in our state. Addressing these performance differences is the Department’s highest priority.”

“There is strong evidence that achievement gaps close when students of all racial, economic and ethnic groups are given opportunities to take more rigorous coursework. This is why secondary school reform is critical in our state and why we welcome the revision of Connecticut’s K-12 Standards for Reading and Mathematics, consistent with the national Common Core State Standards and assessment program.”

The sections that follow provide detailed performance information for the mathematics and reading components of NAEP.

Mathematics

Approximately 2800 students in 100 schools were administered the NAEP mathematics assessment. The administration of the assessment including background questions required about 90 minutes of testing time for every student. Mathematics results disaggregated by subgroup are included in Table 2.

Table 2

NAEP 2009 Grade 12 Mathematics Performance by Student Group: Connecticut and National Public

	All Students	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Eligible for NSLP ¹	Not Eligible for NSLP ¹
National Public	152	154	151	160	131	137	175	137	159
CT	156*	157	156*	165*	131	132	173	132	163*

The NAEP mathematics scale for Grade 12 ranges from 0 to 300.

** Value is significantly different ($p < .05$) from the value for the same National Public student group.*

¹NSLP is the National School Lunch Program. This reporting group is also referred to as "economically disadvantaged."

Results of the mathematics assessment show that the average scale score of Connecticut students overall (156) is higher than that of students across the nation (152).

Students in three states (MA, NH, and SD) earned higher average scale scores than Connecticut's Grade 12 students. Connecticut's seniors performed as well as or better than 12th graders in seven of the ten other participating states.

The average scale score for male students in Connecticut was 157. This score is statistically not different than the average scale score for females (156). While the performance of Connecticut's male students was not different than that of their peers nationally (154), female students in Connecticut outperformed females at the national level (151).

Eligibility for the National School Lunch program is used commonly in education as a measure of poverty. While these are the best data available to determine whether a student is "economically disadvantaged," it is widely known that the accuracy of these data for high school seniors may be questionable. Therefore, performance data for students identified as eligible for free or reduced price lunch should be interpreted with caution. While the difference in performance of Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students compared to their peers nationally is not statistically significant, Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students score well below the average of students in Connecticut who are not eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

In mathematics, Connecticut's students identified as Asian/Pacific Islander earned an average scale score of 173. This performance is better than the performance of white (165), black (131), and Hispanic (132) students in Connecticut.

How Connecticut’s racial/ethnic groups performed compared with their national counterparts in Math:

- The average scale score for white students in Connecticut was higher than the average scale score for white students at the national level.
- The performance of all other race/ethnicity groups in Connecticut was not significantly different than the average scale score of the same national public student groups.

Gaps Persist

The performance gap between white and black students in Connecticut is 33 points and the performance gap at the national level between the same two student groups is 29 points. The difference in performance gaps is not statistically significant. However, the performance gap between white and Hispanic students in Connecticut (32 points) is larger than the performance gap at the national level (23 points).

Since students selected for NAEP respond to a variety of background questions about themselves and their school experiences, we are able to more closely examine results given a variety of different contextual variables. For example, students taking the mathematics assessment were asked to indicate the highest level mathematics course they had taken. Table 3 shows the results of this question both in terms of the percentage of students reporting in each course category and the average scale score for those students.

Table 3

Connecticut Grade 12 Students: Highest Level Mathematics Course Taken and Average NAEP Scale Scores

Algebra I or less		Geometry		Trigonometry/ Algebra II		Precalculus		Calculus	
Avg. Scale Score	% of Students	Avg. Scale Score	% of Students	Avg. Scale Score	% of Students	Avg. Scale Score	% of Students	Avg. Scale Score	% of Students
122	4	125	8	144	40	167	30	193	18

The NAEP mathematics scale for Grade 12 ranges from 0 to 300.

Further examination of the performance gaps between the various race/ethnicity student groups in Connecticut, show that white and Asian/Pacific Islander students are enrolling in higher level mathematics courses at a greater rate than their black and Hispanic peers (see Table 4).

Table 4

Percentages of Connecticut Grade 12 Students by Race/Ethnicity and Highest Level Mathematics Course Taken

	Algebra I or less	Geometry	Trigonometry/ Algebra II	Precalculus	Calculus
White	3%	7%	38%	31%	21%
Black	4	10	46	30	9
Hispanic	4	18	52	21	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	4	27	28	38

Percentages within each student group may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

“Certainly these data show the strong positive relationship between enrollment in high-level mathematics courses such as Calculus and solid scale score achievement,” remarked Commissioner McQuillan. “Providing all students access to rigorous mathematics content with high quality instruction and appropriate supports is a cornerstone of the Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform. These data serve to reinforce the need for us to act immediately and deliberately to raise expectations for all students.”

Reading

Like the mathematics assessment, approximately 2800 students in 100 schools were administered the NAEP reading assessment. The administration of the NAEP reading test included a series of background questions for students. All participants were tested for about 90 minutes. Reading results disaggregated by subgroup are included in Table 5.

Table 5

NAEP 2009 Grade 12 Reading Performance by Student Group: Connecticut and National Public

	All Students	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Eligible for NSLP ¹	Not Eligible for NSLP ¹
National Public	287	281	293	295	268	273	298	273	293
CT	292*	285*	300*	301*	265	273	296	270	298*

Note: The NAEP reading scale for Grade 12 ranges from 0 to 500.

** Value is significantly different ($p < .05$) from the value for the same National Public student group.*

¹NSLP is the National School Lunch Program. This reporting group is also referred to as "economically disadvantaged."

Results of the reading assessment show that the average scale score of Connecticut students overall (292) is higher than that of students across the nation (287).

Connecticut's Grade 12 students earned an average scale score that was not different than the average scale score in 7 of the ten other states. No state earned an average scale score that was significantly higher than Connecticut's score of 292. This pattern of performance is consistent with the results of the NAEP 2009 Grade 8 reading assessment.

The average scale score for female students in Connecticut was 300. This score is statistically higher than the average scale score for males (285). Male and female students in Connecticut outperformed the national average for their respective student groups.

As explained previously, eligibility for the National School Lunch program is a commonly used indicator of poverty although it can be problematic at Grade 12. All performance data for students identified as eligible for free or reduced price lunch should be interpreted with caution. While the difference in performance of Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students compared to their peers nationally is not statistically significant, Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students score well below the average of their peers in Connecticut who are not eligible for free or reduced price lunch, a confirming reminder of the impact of wealth on the state's historic achievement gap.

In reading, the average scale score of Connecticut's white students (301) was not significantly different than students identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (296).

How Connecticut's racial/ethnic groups performed compared with their national counterparts in Reading:

- The performance of white students in Connecticut was better than white students at the national level (295).
- The performance of Connecticut's black, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific Islander students was not significantly different when compared to the same student groups at the national level.

The performance gap between white and black students in Connecticut is 36 points and the performance gap at the national level between the same two student groups is 27 points. This 9-point difference in performance gaps is statistically significant. However, the performance gap between white and Hispanic students in Connecticut (27 points) is not significantly different than the performance gap at the national level (22 points).

Further examination of the background information collected from the representative sample of students who took the NAEP reading assessment show a strong positive relationship between the frequency of students reading for enjoyment and NAEP performance. Data for Connecticut high school seniors are included in Table 6.

Table 6

NAEP 2009 Grade 12 Reading in Connecticut: Student Responses to “How often do you read for fun on your own time?”

Never or hardly ever		Once or twice a month		Once or twice a week		Almost every day	
Avg. Scale Score	% of students	Avg. Scale Score	% of students	Avg. Scale Score	% of students	Avg. Scale Score	% of students
276	33	295	28	303	22	311	17

Unfortunately, the NAEP data do not provide answers to why more students are not reading for pleasure. Certainly, we have evidence that our teenagers are busy and we know there are many competing leisure activities in their lives. But we also know that students who are not confident, independent readers will not select reading as their activity of choice when there is free time.

“This is yet another reason for us to strengthen our early reading programs and raise expectations for all students,” said Commissioner McQuillan. The newly adopted Common Core State Standards that will be implemented in Kindergarten through Grade 12 put forth the expectation that students will engage in independent reading across different types of texts. The goal of increased independent reading is critical. The Commissioner added, “When we are able to increase our students’ level of reading proficiency so that students are strong independent readers and foster a passion for reading through increasing relevance for students, we believe that Connecticut’s students will be well-prepared for post-secondary activities and will continue to learn from and enjoy reading throughout their lives.”

Attached are:

Appendix A: Statistical Significance and the National Assessment of Educational Progress

Appendix B: NAEP 2009 Grade 12 Mathematics Released Items

Appendix C: NAEP 2009 Grade 12 Reading Released Items

Appendix A

Statistical Significance and the National Assessment of Educational Progress

NAEP provides us with performance results for large groups of students without testing every student. Instead of testing every student, NAEP uses a complex sampling design to select representative groups of students for testing. So, in Connecticut not every school is selected for NAEP and within the schools selected for NAEP, it would be unusual to test every student. Even though NAEP tests a sample of Connecticut students, the program is able to report results for the state and subgroups of students within the state. This process of sampling schools and students reduces the burden on schools and increases the efficiency of the test administration overall.

By testing representative samples of students, NAEP is able to provide performance estimates for the nation, states, and subgroups. However, it is important to understand that whenever we select a sample and report results for a population, there will be variability from the total population value depending on the sample selected. This variability is referred to as statistical error. For example, political polling is designed to determine what a population thinks about an issue or candidate. The polling is conducted with a sample of the population and results typically are reported along with a *margin of error*. NAEP also uses a *margin of error* but presents the information in a slightly different manner. Rather than provide an interval or range of performance (e.g., the average scale score is 280 plus or minus five points), NAEP reports *standard error* values with all results.

In NAEP, the standard error values help people determine the amount of variability in the results that are reported. NAEP goes one step further in clarifying the information for the public by reporting all results in terms of statistical significance. Therefore, when NAEP states that one group of students is achieving proficiency at a higher rate than another group, the reader can be confident that there is a statistically significant difference (i.e., the reported results exceed the margin of error). NAEP does not make statements claiming performance differences unless there is a statistically significant difference. In other words, NAEP will not highlight an apparent difference unless the difference exceeds what we would expect due to variation (or error) that is a result of testing a sample of students rather than the entire population. This means that two states could have different average scale score values (e.g., 275 and 277), but there may not be a statistically significant difference because of the standard errors. As a result, NAEP will not claim that the average scale score of 277 is higher than the 275 value. Instead, the reporting will indicate that the states are performing at the same level or that the results are not statistically different.

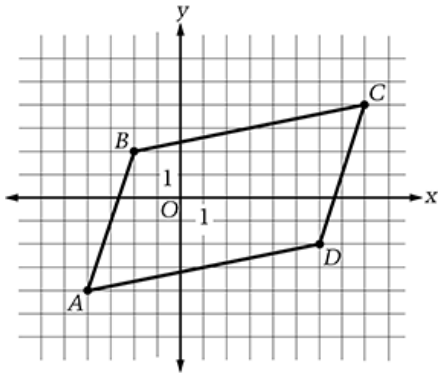
All NAEP reports issued by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) follow the same reporting conventions as the official NAEP reports issued by the National Center for Education Statistics. The CSDE will not claim changes in performance unless there are statistically significant differences.

Appendix B

NAEP 2009 Grade 12 Mathematics Released Items with Connecticut Data and Commentary

The following mathematics item was administered to a sample of Grade 12 students selected to take the NAEP 2009 Mathematics assessment. This item is classified as “hard,” meaning that less than 40% of students provided a correct response to this question.

Grade 12 NAEP Mathematics Item #1



In the figure above, the vertices of ABCD are $A(-4, -4)$, $B(-2, 2)$, $C(8, 4)$, and $D(6, -2)$.

Give a mathematical justification that ABCD is a parallelogram.

Percentages of Students in Each Score Category for Grade 12 NAEP Mathematics Item #1

	Unsatisfactory Response	Partial Response	Complete Response	Omitted	Off Task
National Public	63%	5%	8%	21%	3%
Connecticut	59%	4%	12%	23%	2%

Although the percentage of Connecticut students receiving scores of “Complete” or “Partial” on this item (16%) exceeds that of public school students nationwide (13%), the low percentage of students in Grade 12 able to complete this fairly standard geometry item highlights the importance of the state’s plan for Secondary School Reform and its transition to the Common Core State Standards.

The Connecticut 2005 curriculum frameworks document for grades 9-12 provides only a broad statement of what students are expected to do relative to geometric proofs.

CT.9-12.3.1.(b). Develop and evaluate mathematical arguments using reasoning and proof.

Under the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, the standards for reasoning and proof are much clearer, providing guidance for educators on some of the specific proofs that students should be able to complete.

CCSS.9-12.G.Co.11. Prove theorems about parallelograms. Theorems include: opposite sides are congruent, opposite angles are congruent, the diagonals of a parallelogram bisect each other, and conversely, rectangles are parallelograms with congruent diagonals.

The mathematics item below also was administered to a sample of Grade 12 students selected to take the NAEP 2009 Mathematics assessment. This item is classified as “easy,” meaning that at least 60% of students provided a correct response to this question.

Grade 12 NAEP Mathematics Item #2

360 x 0.3=

- A. 10.8
- B. 108
- C. 120
- D. 980
- E. 1,080

Percentages of Students Selecting Each Answer Choice for Grade 12 NAEP Mathematics Item #2

	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted
National Public	12%	64%	11%	5%	8%	1%
Connecticut	13%	59%	17%	5%	6%	2%

*Correct answer choice

The percentages of students answering this non-calculator item correctly overall are high for both Connecticut and the nation, but given the item’s content, which reflects the standards for grades 4 through 6, it is essential to understand why nearly 40% of students in Grade 12 are answering incorrectly. Misuses of the standard algorithm and careless calculations may easily result in an incorrect choice, but these are representative of one of the larger issues in mathematics education. Mathematics instruction must move beyond lower level skills such as calculating to emphasize the importance of students judging the reasonableness of their responses. Students with the ability to reason mathematically would immediately deem choices A, D, and E unreasonable, prior to applying an algorithm.

The progression of learning under the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) might allow students to more effectively apply such reasoning. Students develop an understanding of 0.3 as an equivalent form of 3/10, which in turn is equal to three of the unit fraction 1/10. Applying this to the current problem, 1/10 of 360 is 36 (making answer A unreasonable), and three times this would be 36 x 3, or 108. The standard algorithm for multiplication of decimals appears in Grade 6 under the CCSS, *following* the progression of learning described above, which occurs in Grades 4 and 5. As students learn the standard algorithm for multiplying decimals in Grade 6, they should consistently be asked to judge the reasonableness of their responses to determine whether or not an error has been made. Similarly, if students made the connection between this problem and “30% of 360,” they would again reasonably eliminate three of the five answer choices.

For access to additional released mathematics items, sample student responses, and performance data, visit the NAEP Questions Tool at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrlsx/landing.aspx>.

Appendix C

NAEP 2009 Grade 12 Reading Released Items with Connecticut Data and Commentary

A sample of Grade 12 students selected for the NAEP reading assessment, were asked to answer a series of questions based on a housing rental agreement. The three-page housing rental agreement is included below.

Page 1 of *Housing Rental Agreement*

HOUSING RENTAL AGREEMENT

Address _____

THIS AGREEMENT is made this ____ day of _____, by and between _____, herein called

"Landlord," and _____, herein called "Tenant." Landlord hereby agrees to rent to Tenant the real property located in the City of _____, State of _____, described as follows: _____. Lease commences on the 1st day of _____ and monthly thereafter until the _____th day of _____, at which time this agreement is terminated. Landlord rents the demised property to Tenant on the following terms and conditions:

1. Rent

Tenant agrees to pay Landlord as base rent the sum of \$_____ per month, due and payable monthly in advance on the first day of each month during the term of this agreement. Rent must be received by 5:00 p.m. If the rent has not been received by 9:00 a.m. on the second of the month, then a seven (7) day notice will be posted.

2. Payment of Rent

Monthly rent payments may be paid by check until the first check is dishonored and returned unpaid. Rent shall be made payable to _____ and hand delivered (or sent by mail at Tenant's risk) to Landlord at _____. Any rents lost in the mail will be treated as if unpaid until received by Landlord.

3. Bad-Check Servicing Charge

In the event Tenant's check is dishonored and returned for any reason to Landlord, Tenant agrees to pay as additional rent the sum equal to thirty-five dollars (\$35) for each occurrence. This amount shall be in addition to all late fees, if check is not paid prior to the first of the month. If for any reason a check is returned or dishonored, all future rent payments must be cash or money order.

4. Use

Tenant agrees to use the property only as a residence for self and those persons identified below.

Landlord will hold Tenant solely responsible for all damages to property or for violations against this rental agreement.

5. Appliances

The house is rented with the following appliances: Refrigerator and Stove. Other appliances that may be included in the rental property are the sole responsibility of Tenant to maintain. Landlord will not be responsible for the maintenance of these other appliances and does not warrant the condition of these appliances.

6. Repair Policy

Tenant shall use customary diligence in care of the Property. All minor repairs are expected to be performed by or at the direction of Tenant, at the sole responsibility of Tenant. Any and all repairs made at the direction of Tenant shall be done by a competent professional, or by Tenant provided that Tenant is capable and qualified to make said repairs. All repairs shall be done in compliance with all applicable codes and regulations. Any repair that is estimated to cost more than fifty dollars (\$50) must receive permission of Landlord prior to being made. Under no circumstances will Landlord be responsible for any improvements or repairs costing more than

\$50 unless Tenant is given written authorization to make repairs or improvements in advance.

7. Occupancy

Tenant is to maintain the dwelling unit as follows:

- a) Comply with all obligations primarily imposed upon Tenant by applicable provisions of building codes materially affecting health and safety.
- b) Keep that part of the property that Tenant occupies and uses as clean and safe as the condition of the property permits.
- c) Dispose from the dwelling unit all rubbish, garbage, and other waste in a clean and safe manner.
- d) Keep all plumbing fixtures in the dwelling unit as clean as their condition permits.
- e) Use in a reasonable manner all electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air-conditioning, and other facilities and appliances, including elevators, on the property.
- f) Not deliberately or negligently destroy, deface, damage, impair, or remove any part of the property or knowingly permit any person to do so.
- g) Not disturb neighbors' peaceful enjoyment of the property.

8. Security Deposit

Tenant has deposited with, and Landlord acknowledges receipt of, \$ _____ as a Security Deposit. This Security Deposit is to guarantee the return of the property to Landlord in the same or better condition as when accepted by Tenant, reasonable wear excepted, and to satisfy any obligations of Tenant unfulfilled at the termination of this Rental Agreement, as specified herein. Satisfactory compliance with this section includes removing all trash and belongings of Tenant. If any provision of this Rental Agreement is violated, the Security Deposit is forfeited. The Security Deposit may not be applied by Tenant as payment for any rent due to Landlord. Should Tenant be responsible for damage and/or loss of value to the property greater than the value of the Security Deposit, Tenant hereby agrees to reimburse Landlord for such loss immediately upon the presentation of a bill for said damage and/or loss. Landlord shall return the balance of said Security Deposit, if any, to Tenant at Tenant's forwarding address, upon Tenant's vacating the property and returning keys to Landlord and upon termination of this contract according to other terms herein agreed. The Security Deposit will be returned within thirty (30) days after Tenant vacates the property, along with an itemized statement as to the deductions, if any, from said Security Deposit.

9. Alterations

Tenant shall make no alterations, decorations, additions, or improvements in or to the property without Landlord's prior written consent, and then only by contractors or mechanics approved by Landlord. All alterations, additions, or improvements upon the property, made by either party, shall become the property of Landlord and shall remain upon, and be surrendered with, said property, as a part thereof, at the end of the term hereof.

10. Vehicle Policy

Tenant must follow rules and laws of the City Parking Department concerning parking. Tenant must obtain all necessary parking permits and information for self and guests. Landlord is not responsible for Tenant's parking needs. Off-street parking is not provided by Landlord, unless otherwise noted in this agreement.

11. Utilities

Tenant will be responsible for payment of all utility and garbage bills, water and sewer charges, telephone bills, gas bills, and any other bills incurred during residency. Tenant specifically authorizes Landlord to deduct amounts of unpaid bills from the Security Deposit in the event

early grades. Grade 12 students should navigate this type of passage and question easily. The data show that most of our students have demonstrated this necessary skill.

In contrast to the previous item, the second released NAEP reading item associated with the *Housing Rental Agreement* passage is classified as a “hard item,” meaning that less than 40% of students provided a correct response to the question.

Grade 12 NAEP Reading Item #2

Explain how the language used in Section 12 favors the landlord. Support your answer with an example from Section 12.

Percentages of Students in Each Score Category for Grade 12 NAEP Reading Item #2

	No Comprehension	Partial Comprehension	Full Comprehension	Omitted	Off Task
National Public	25%	58%	6%	9%	2%
Connecticut	24%	58%	8%	7%	2%

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

In Connecticut only 8% of students demonstrated full comprehension on this item. In order for a student to demonstrate full comprehension, the response had to explain how the language used in Section 12 favors the landlord **and** a specific example from Section 12 of the Housing Rental Agreement had to be included in the response. The sample response below earned the “full comprehension” designation because the student identifies appropriate terms in Section 12 **and** provides an explanation.

Sample “full comprehension” response to Grade 12 NAEP Reading Item #2

Section 12 favors the landlord in that it states
he/she can advertise the apartment while the
tenant occupies it, and can inspect the
apartment at will. "Whenever practicable, a 24-
hour notice of intent shall be given to the tenant"
This says that the landlord does not always have
to give warning before inspections.

This item requires students to evaluate and critique the language in section 12 of the *Housing Rental Agreement*. In order to do this, students first must have a clear understanding of the “big idea” of the section and then need to be able to evaluate its impact on landlords and tenants. The question requires students to apply higher-level critical thinking skills because students must move beyond the written text in order to formulate a complete response.

More than half of Connecticut’s students (58%) provided responses that were classified as demonstrating “partial comprehension.” These types of incomplete or partial responses are more common when an item requires the student to do two things—in this case, provide specific language **and** an explanation. Connecticut’s English language arts standards require students to explain and support with evidence beginning in the elementary grades. However, data from the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance test show us that moving beyond the text presents difficulties for many of our students.

For access to additional released reading items, sample student responses, and performance data, visit the NAEP Questions Tool at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrlsx/landing.aspx>.