



For Immediate Release:

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Connecticut Students Continue to Perform Better Than Peers Nationally

(HARTFORD-CT)— Known as the “Nation’s Report Card,” the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses students’ knowledge in reading and math on a state-by-state basis. Today, NAEP released results from the 2013 assessments, which showed that Connecticut remains among the top performers in the nation in reading in both grades 4 and 8 and that students continue to perform slightly above the national average on math.

“When you’re facing one of the widest achievement gaps in the nation – it is essential to implement new approaches that break away from the status quo,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. “What we’re doing is unprecedented in the State of Connecticut. I commend our dedicated teachers and administrators for our state’s accomplishments to date. Today’s announcement demonstrates that Connecticut students can and do succeed when successful models are in place.”

“Today’s NAEP scores offer encouraging signs in key areas and underscore the need for continuing commitment, reform, and progress,” said State Department of Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor. “Thanks to major resource investments by the Governor and General Assembly, we will build upon our significant strengths and further elevate education in our state.”

Over the past ten years, Connecticut exhibited significant gains in grade 8 reading performance. In 2003, 37 percent of grade 8 students were performing at or above proficient in reading. In 2013, 45 percent of students are performing at or above proficient—an eight percentage point gain. Regarding the 2013 reading results, in both grades analyzed, no other state has a score that can be considered statistically higher.

“Connecticut’s reading performance is in the highest tier. In fact, no other state has a score that, within the range of statistical significance, is higher. That’s cause for celebration,” said Commissioner Pryor.

In mathematics, ten states have statistically higher scores in grade 4 and fifteen states statistically exceed Connecticut's performance in grade 8.

"For both reading and mathematics, Connecticut should set the standard," said Commissioner Pryor. "In order to lead the way not only in reading but also in mathematics, we must gear up for the new Common Core standards in both subjects with a continuing sense of purpose. For its part, the state must provide ongoing and enhanced support for school leaders and teachers as well as parents and students regarding the Common Core."

NAEP data can be used to rank states in twelve different ways regarding the size of their achievement gaps. In 2011, on seven out of these twelve indicators, Connecticut ranked first in the nation for the size of the gap. Based on the results released today, Connecticut ranks first on five out of twelve indicators—two fewer than last time.

"This means that Connecticut no longer ranks first in the nation on a majority of gap measures, which was a particularly dubious distinction. By no means should we declare victory based upon these rankings, but it's certainly encouraging to see them moving in the right direction," said Commissioner Pryor.

"In order to close the still too sizable achievement gap in our state, we must continue to invest in efforts to turn around low-performing schools—efforts such as the Commissioner's Network, the Alliance District initiative, the early grade literacy effort, community school and school-linked support service programs, and parent partnerships. Working together at the state, district, school, and classroom levels, we have the potential to make great progress in the coming years. We can set the standard for the nation both for overall achievement and for closure of the achievement gap," said Commissioner Pryor.

The statewide scores are based on the performance of a sample of schools selected to statistically represent the whole state. Given that the scores are based on a representative sample, the differences between the 2013 scores to the 2011 scores are not considered statistically significant.

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