



NAEP and State Assessments

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuous assessment of what America’s students know and can do. Since 1969, NAEP has measured the academic progress of students nationwide. NAEP assesses fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students in subjects such as reading, mathematics, science, writing, and U.S. history. The results of NAEP are published as The Nation’s Report Card and include information on student performance for the nation, states, and in some cases, urban districts.

As part of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), each state must administer annual assessments based on its academic content standards in mathematics, reading, and science at varying grade levels. Direct comparisons of state-to-state results cannot be made with these assessments. NCLB requires that states receiving Title I funding participate in NAEP mathematics and reading assessments in grades 4 and 8 every other year. NAEP asks the same questions and is administered in the same way in every state. Because the same assessment is administered nationwide, it provides a common yardstick for measuring student progress and makes state comparisons possible. While NAEP and state assessments may differ in scope and content, both can be used to assess progress and develop ways to improve education in America.

	NAEP	State Assessments
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures student performance nationally and reports changes over time Provides results for the nation, states, and some urban districts Allows comparisons between states and the nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure progress of schools, districts, and the state toward adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals as required by NCLB Provide state, district, school, and individual student data Track progress toward state education goals Assess individual state content standards
Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Assessment Governing Board develops a content framework that specifies what students should know and be able to do at a given grade level Not aligned to any particular content standards Reflects the knowledge and experience of subject-area experts, school administrators, policymakers, teachers, parents, and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set and defined by each state based on its content standards Include involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders, including policymakers and educators
Achievement Levels (also referred to as “Performance Standards”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Assessment Governing Board sets the NAEP achievement levels—<i>Basic</i>, <i>Proficient</i>, and <i>Advanced</i> <i>Proficient</i> is defined as “competency over challenging subject matter” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set and defined by each state <i>Proficient</i> is defined as “at grade level” Performance

NAEP and State Assessments

	NAEP	State Assessments
About the Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes multiple-choice, short constructed-response, extended-response, and computer-based questions • Assesses students with disabilities and English language learners based on NAEP allowable accommodations • Administered by NAEP field staff during regular school hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a variety of formats, which vary by state, such as multiple-choice, constructed-response, performance events, portfolios, alternative assessments, and computer-based assessments • Assess students with disabilities and English language learners according to the state's accommodation policy • Administered by school and district personnel during regular school hours
Assessment Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative sample of students in grades 4 and 8 from each state participate in reading and mathematics every other year • National and state samples of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders are periodically assessed in other subject areas such as science, writing, U.S. history, and civics • Student participation is voluntary but highly encouraged • Students with disabilities and English language learners who require test accommodations other than those allowed by NAEP can be excluded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students in grades 3 through 8 are assessed every year in reading and mathematics • Students in grades 3 through 8 are assessed at least once in elementary (3-5) school and once in middle (6-8) school in science • High school students are assessed at least once in reading, mathematics, and science • Offer alternative or modified assessments, when necessary, to students with disabilities and English language learners • Participation is required for all schools
Assessment Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by the President, Congress, and state leaders to develop ways to improve education in America • Makes comparisons between states and the nation • Makes trend comparisons over time • Does not report performance for individual schools, students, or most school districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by governors, state legislatures, state leaders, and state educators for setting education policy and examining school and group performance • Used by teachers, parents, and other school staff to examine individual student performance • Aid in making local decisions about curriculum and instruction • May also be used for promotion/retention decisions and/or graduation requirements • May be used to inform state accreditation decisions

NAEP is a congressionally-mandated project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education.

For more information, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>