



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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KENTUCKY SCIENCE SCORES FLAT; STILL LEAD NATIONAL AVERAGE

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kentucky's 4th and 8th graders continue to outperform their peers nationally in science, according to data from the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), released today by the Kentucky Department of Education.

While Kentucky's scores remain relatively flat from the last administration of the NAEP science tests, Kentucky students still perform significantly above the national average.

KENTUCKY AND NATIONAL SCALE SCORES¹ FOR NAEP SCIENCE

	4TH-GRADE		8TH-GRADE	
	KENTUCKY	NATIONAL AVERAGE	KENTUCKY	NATIONAL AVERAGE
2009	161	149	156	149
2011	*	*	157	151
2015	160	153	157	153

¹ The NAEP science grading scale ranges from 0 to 300.

* The National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP, cancelled the 2011 4th-grade science assessment.

“These scores are based on early implementation of Kentucky's Academic Standards in science,” Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt said. “I believe the next time we see NAEP science scores reported, we will see significant improvement, since Kentucky teachers will have had more time to align their teaching methods and materials with the standards and students will have had time to build a stronger foundation of learning based on the standards and what they demand.”

Pruitt said despite the overall good news that Kentucky performance remains strong in science as compared with the rest of the nation, the state cannot overlook the ongoing issue of achievement gaps between various groups of students.

“We see it on our state tests and this assessment is no different,” Pruitt said. “We have got to take action to close the achievement gap and eliminate what I believe is its root cause – the opportunity gap – for every student.”

The good news is that in Kentucky there is not a significant difference in science performance between male and female students.

(more)

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NAEP SCIENCE SCORES BY STUDENT GROUPS

	4TH-GRADE			8TH-GRADE		
	Average Score	Percent at or above:		Average Score	Percent at or above:	
		Basic	Proficient		Basic	Proficient
White	164	87	48	160	76	38
Black	138	60	22	134	45	10
Hispanic	149	73	30	155	72	30
Asian	#	#	#	#	#	#
Two or more races	159	81	41	#	#	#
Free/Reduced Price Meal: Eligible	152	77	34	149	63	23
Not Eligible	172	93	61	168	84	49
Male	161	84	46	159	74	38
Female	159	83	43	155	71	30

Insufficient number to report

For more than 30 years, NAEP, also known as the nation’s Report Card, has been the country’s only nationally representative and continuing survey of students’ educational achievement.

The assessment is authorized by Congress, directed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and developed by Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey.

Not all students in the designated grades or in every school take NAEP tests, only a sampling. Westat, Inc. of Rockville, Maryland, conducts sample selection and data collection. Because the national NAEP samples were not designed to support the reporting of state-level results, state NAEP samples were introduced in 1990 to provide participating states reliable data concerning the achievement of their students.

NAEP protects the confidentiality of students, teachers and schools that participate by not reporting individual student, teacher, school or district data.

KEY FINDINGS FOR 2015 NAEP SCIENCE – 4th grade

- In 2015, the average science score for 4th-grade students in Kentucky was 160. This was **higher** than the average score (153) for public school students in the nation.
- The average score for 4th grade students in Kentucky in 2015 (160) was **not significantly different** from that in 2009 (161).

(more)

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- In 2015, the percentage of 4th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above *Proficient* was 44 percent. This was **greater** than that for the nation's public schools (37 percent).
- The percentage of 4th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above *Proficient* in 2015 (44 percent) was **not significantly different** from that in 2009 (45 percent).
- In 2015, the percentage of 4th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above *Basic* was 83 percent. This was **greater** than that for the nation's public schools (76 percent).
- The percentage of 4th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above *Basic* in 2015 (83 percent) was **not significantly different** from that in 2009 (83 percent).

KEY FINDINGS FOR 2015 NAEP SCIENCE – 8th grade

- In 2015, the average science score for 8th-grade students in Kentucky was 157. This was **higher** than that of the nation's public schools (153).
- The average score for 8th grade students in Kentucky in 2015 (157) was **not significantly different** from that in 2011 (157) or in 2009 (156).
- In 2015, the percentage of 8th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above *Proficient* was 35 percent. This was **greater** than that for the nation's public schools (33 percent).
- The percentage of 8th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above *Proficient* in 2015 (35 percent) was **not significantly different** from that in 2011 (34 percent) or in 2009 (34 percent).
- In 2015, the percentage of 8th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above *Basic* was 73 percent. This was **greater** than that for the nation's public schools (67 percent).
- The percentage of 8th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above *Basic* in 2015 (73 percent) was **not significantly different** from that in 2011 (72 percent) or in 2009 (71 percent).

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