



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**For Immediate Release
October 14, 2009**

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LITTLE ROCK: Arkansas' fourth- and eighth-grade public school students maintained the gains students in those grades have made on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics exam in recent years, according to results released today by the National Assessment Governing Board and the U.S. Department of Education. The NAEP test, which is known as The Nation's Report Card, was administered in the spring semester of 2009 to a sample of Arkansas students of about 10,000 each in the fourth and eighth grades attending more than 300 Arkansas schools.

"We are proud to have maintained the gains we have made on this most recent round of NAEP mathematics exams," said Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Arkansas Commissioner of Education. "When you look at performance on this test over the last decade, Arkansas is one of the top states in terms of gains in scores over that time. That said, we still have room for improvement, and we know that our students, teachers and administrators are working toward that."

On a 0-500 scale, Arkansas fourth graders averaged a score of 238, no different from the average of 238 in 2007. When classified into NAEP's performance levels, 36 percent of fourth-graders performed at "proficient" or "advanced" in 2009. (While the labels are the same, these performance categories do not correspond directly with those of the state's Benchmark exams.)

Likewise, eighth graders averaged 276 on this year's exam, not statistically different from the average 274 two years ago. Twenty-seven percent scored at or above "proficient" in 2009.

Nationally, fourth graders maintained a score of 240, exactly the same as in 2007. Eighth graders, however, showed improvement increasing to a score of 283 in 2009 from 281 in 2007. The increase is considered statistically significant at a .05 probability level.

NAEP is administered to a sample of students that is large enough to show average scores for each of the states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense schools. One difference between the states that can affect scores is the fact that states do not all allow the same accommodations for students needing some assistance in taking the exam or the same reasons for exclusion from the exams, resulting in varying rates in accommodations and exclusions. Arkansas policy is to include all students possible in assessments in order to glean information on the performance of all students. Therefore, Arkansas is one of the more restrictive states in both instances, leading to both lower accommodation and exclusion rates than in most other states.

Summary sheets for each grade are attached, and complete results are available online at <http://nationsreportcard.gov>.