



PRICHARD COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

STUDY • INFORM • ENGAGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAEP Results Signal Serious Concern About Declining Progress in Education Sense of Urgency Necessary to Return Kentucky to a Positive Path

LEXINGTON, Ky. – The latest results from the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), released today, show a decline in fourth grade reading results and no meaningful improvement in eighth grade reading and fourth and eighth grade mathematics. That pattern, seen for students of all backgrounds, will require both careful analysis to understand weaknesses in current efforts and robust new efforts to strengthen teaching and learning across the commonwealth.

Compared to results for the nation as a whole, Kentucky's NAEP results now show our students:

- Doing only slightly better than the national average in fourth grade reading, with a statistically significant declining average reading score.
- Slipping back to matching the national average in eighth grade reading, ending a multi-year pattern of results above the national average.
- Tied with national average in fourth grade mathematics.
- Staying below the national average in eighth grade math.

The 2017 results also do not show gains in Kentucky's pursuit of excellence with equity. Kentucky saw no significant gains for historically underserved groups, including English learners, African American students, Hispanic students, students of two or more races, students with identified disabilities, and students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. While most results showed insignificant change, there were statistically significant declines for:

- Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals in grade 4 reading, grade 8 reading, and grade 4 mathematics;
- English learners in grade 4 reading; and,
- African American students and students with identified disabilities in grade 4 mathematics.

Overall, these results signal an urgent need for recommitment to building learning opportunities that develop the talents of each and every Kentucky student. That renewed commitment must include both new civic engagement with our public schools and new resource investments to support those schools' success. The ambitious new goals set by the Kentucky Board of Education are important statements of what we must achieve together, and today's data confirms the need for intensive efforts to meet those goals and equip Kentucky students for full and successful participation in our economy, community life, and civic responsibility.

To support those efforts, the Prichard Committee has identified five key strategic issues that need particularly intensive work:

- Ensuring that Kentucky's young children benefit from high quality early learning that keeps each and every child on a path toward proficiency in reading and mathematics by the end of third grade;
- Providing all Kentucky students with access to an excellent K-12 public education that allows them to reach their potential and prepare for the future, while ensuring a meaningful high school diploma;
- Offering all Kentuckians the opportunity for postsecondary success by ensuring access to high quality, affordable postsecondary education;
- Building local communities' capacity and willingness to support public education; and,
- Making excellent education the top priority for Kentucky.

For Kentucky's economy and quality of life to flourish, we need students of every background to reach their potential and join in building a strong, shared future.

For additional analyses, please visit the Prichard Committee Blog at prichblog.blogspot.com.

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The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is an independent, non-partisan citizens' advocacy group. Since 1983, the Committee, made up of volunteer parents and citizens from across Kentucky, has worked tirelessly to improve education for Kentuckians of all ages.