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Big-City Public Schools Make Gains in Grades 4 and 8 in Mathematics

Districts Show Progress on National Test Since 2003

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 – Public school fourth- and eighth-graders in the nation’s large cities made progress in mathematics achievement on the rigorous National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The *Nation’s Report Card: Trial Urban District Assessment Mathematics 2009* shows that in comparison to 2007, 2005 and 2003, average mathematics scores for students in large cities increased nationally in both grades 4 and 8.

The new report reveals that for 2009 Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Houston and San Diego had higher scores in both fourth and eighth grades compared to the average score for large cities nationally. Additionally, Miami-Dade and New York City had higher average scores for 2009 in grade 4 compared to large cities nationally.

Since 2007, overall district scores were higher in 2009 for Boston and the District of Columbia at grade 4 and for Austin and San Diego at grade 8.

In addition, no big-city school district showed a decline in scores from 2007 to 2009 at either grade, which is very significant, according to Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a Washington-based coalition of the nation’s largest urban public school systems that initiated the urban NAEP test. “These results show that urban school districts are implementing the necessary reforms to help their students academically, and as a result, we are seeing progress.”

Eighteen big-city school districts volunteered for the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in 2009, with seven of the districts participating for the first time. Newcomers are Baltimore, Detroit, Fresno, Jefferson County (Louisville, K.Y.), Miami-Dade, Milwaukee and Philadelphia. They join Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Cleveland, District of Columbia, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City and San Diego.

Math Gains in Grade 4

The new NAEP data show that scores for large cities increased when compared to 2003, 2005 and 2007. Data also show that from 2007 to 2009 scores increased for fourth-graders in large cities and were flat for the nation.

For 2009, Charlotte was also the only big-city school district to score higher than the national average for fourth-grade public school students. Average scores for Boston and DC increased when compared to 2007.

Eight districts -- Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, District of Columbia, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City and San Diego -- demonstrated an increase in the percentage of fourth-graders scoring at or above *Proficient* in 2009 when compared to 2003.

The new report also reveals that scores in 2009 were higher in Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Houston, Miami, New York City and San Diego compared to the average score for large cities nationally.

Math Progress in 8th Grade

On the *Nation's Report Card: Trial Urban District Assessment Mathematics 2009*, average mathematics scores for eighth-graders were higher in 2009 than in 2003, 2005 and 2007 in large cities nationally.

Scores for eighth-grade students in San Diego and Austin increased from 2007 and Austin was the only big-city school district to score higher than the national average for public school students in the nation. Austin and Charlotte also had the largest percentage of students to score at or above the *Basic* level.

When compared to the average scores for large cities nationally, scores were higher in Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Houston and San Diego.

Minority and Poor Students Advance in Math

Minority students made progress in the large cities, with Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, District of Columbia and New York City showing a higher average score for black students on NAEP in grades 4 and 8 compared to 2003. Boston, Chicago, District of Columbia, Houston, Los Angeles and San Diego had a higher average score for Hispanic students in grades 4 and 8 compared to 2003.

Scores from students eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch in some districts were comparable to the nation. In Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Houston, Miami-Dade and New York City, scores for eligible fourth-grade students were higher than the scores for those students nationally. In Austin, Boston, Houston and New York City, scores for

eighth-grade students eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch were higher than the scores for lower-income students nationally.

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