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**Council of the Great City Schools**

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**FOR RELEASE**

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## **Large City Schools Show Major Long-Term Gains In Reading and Math on National Test**

### ***Big-City Schools Narrow Gap with the Nation***

WASHINGTON, Oct. 30 –Students in the nation’s large city public schools continue to make long-term progress on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and narrow achievement gaps with the nation.

The *Nation’s Report Card: Mathematics and Reading Trial Urban District Assessment* (TUDA) reveals that large city schools have substantially improved their reading and math performance over the nearly twenty years they have volunteered for the test. During the same period, the achievement gap between big-city schools and the nation has narrowed by about 50 percent in reading and math, meaning that the nation’s large city public school systems have improved much faster than the nation at large. At this point, large city schools are only five to eight points below national averages on NAEP’s 500-point scale.

In all, some 93,000 more of our fourth graders and 71,000 more of our eighth graders are proficient in reading than when we first started this trial; and over 115,000 more of our fourth graders and 90,000 of our eighth graders are proficient in mathematics.

The fact that large city schools have cut their performance gap with the nation in about half is even more remarkable when you consider that our schools have substantially more poor students and English language learners than the average public school across the nation. According to a Council of the Great City Schools analysis of NAEP data, these two concurrent facts suggest that the nation’s urban public schools are adding substantially more educational value than the average school, amplifying the ability of our schools to overcome the immense challenges that our inner-city schoolchildren often face.

In addition, several city school districts demonstrated academic growth between 2017 and 2019, with the District of Columbia and Shelby County (Memphis) improving numerically in all four grade and subject combinations tested. Four city school districts saw numerically higher

scores in three subject/grade combinations: Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Denver, Miami-Dade County and San Diego. Six other cities showed numerically higher scores in two subject/grade combinations: Atlanta, Clark County (Las Vegas), Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit and Fresno. And nine cities showed numerically higher scores in one subject/grade combination: Albuquerque, Baltimore City, Chicago, Fort Worth, Guilford County (NC), Houston, Jefferson County (KY), New York City, and Philadelphia. Overall, 21 of the 27 TUDA districts showed numerical gains in at least one subject/grade combination between 2017 and 2019.

The new data also reveal that several urban school districts, including Austin, Charlotte, Duval County (Jacksonville), Hillsborough County (Tampa), Miami-Dade County, and San Diego, now score numerically at or above national averages in at least one subject and grade.

“We have made significant progress over the years in both reading and math and we have dramatically narrowed the gap with the nation,” said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools. “We still have more to do, but the era of poor performance in our nation’s urban public-school systems has ended, and it has been replaced by results, accountability, and promise.”

In 2000, the Council appealed to the National Assessment Governing Board and to Congress to allow urban school districts to participate independently in the rigorous national test so that the nation’s largest school systems could track their progress against other cities, states, and the nation. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> time that TUDA districts have taken NAEP since its inaugural year in 2002.

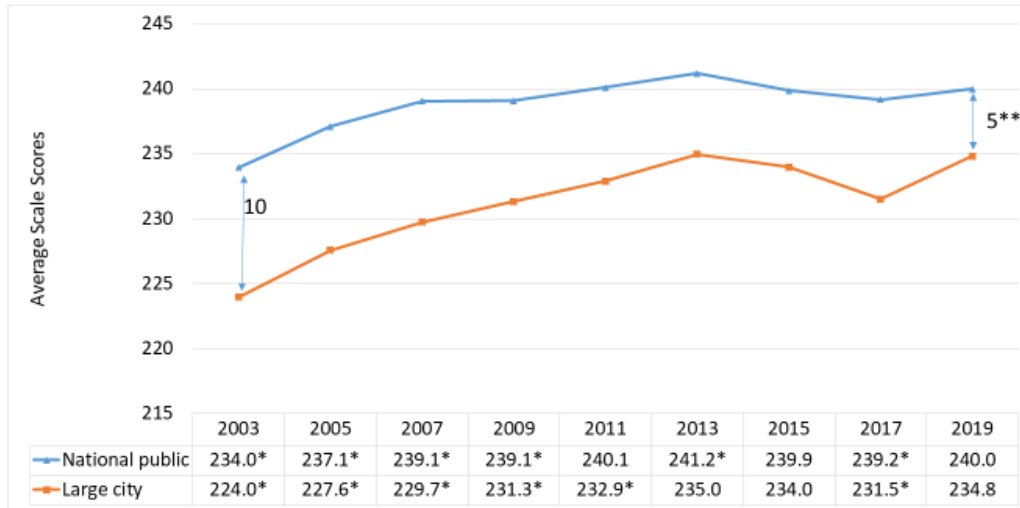
### **District Participants in TUDA**

Twenty-seven large urban school districts volunteered to participate for the 2019 urban NAEP. The districts are Albuquerque, Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Clark County, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, District of Columbia, Duval County, Fort Worth, Fresno, Guilford County, Hillsborough County, Houston, Jefferson County, Los Angeles, Miami-Dade County, Milwaukee, New York City, Philadelphia, San Diego, and Shelby County.

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Figure 1. Average National Public and Large City Scale Scores on NAEP Mathematics in Grade 4 for Public School Students, 2003 to 2019

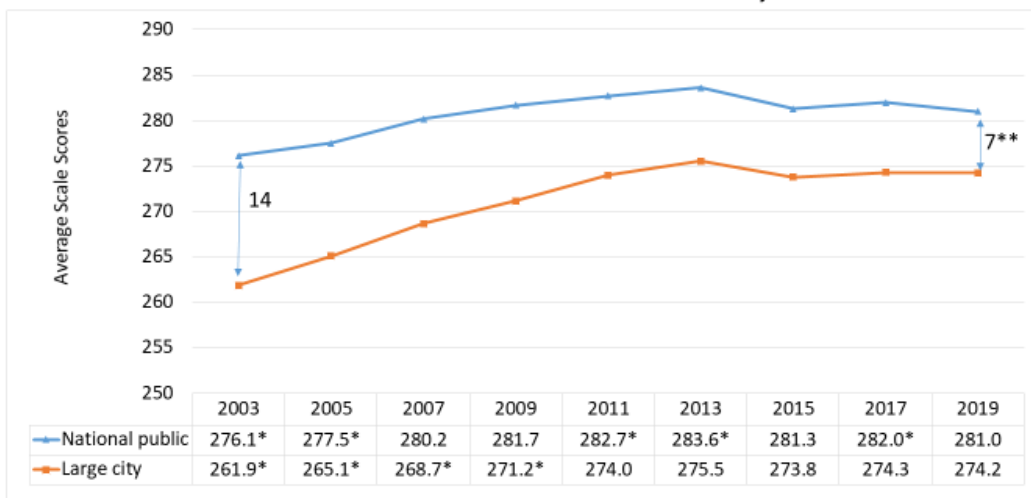
## Average Scale Scores on NAEP Mathematics in Grade 4 for Public School Students, 2003-2019



\*Value is significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from the value for the same jurisdiction and student group in 2019.  
 \*\*Gap is significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from the gap in 2003.

Figure 2. Average National Public and Large City Scale Scores on NAEP Mathematics in Grade 8 for Public School Students, 2003 to 2019

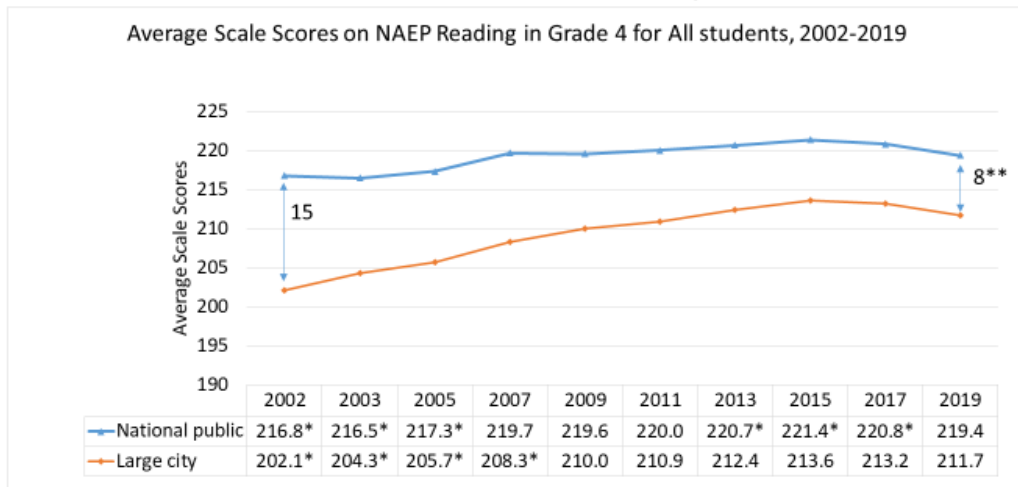
## Average Scale Scores on NAEP Mathematics in Grade 8 for Public School Students, 2003-2019



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Figure 3. Average National Public and Large City Scale Scores on NAEP Reading in Grade 4 for Public School Students, 2002 to 2019

## Average Scale Scores on NAEP Reading in Grade 4 for Public School Students, 2002-2019

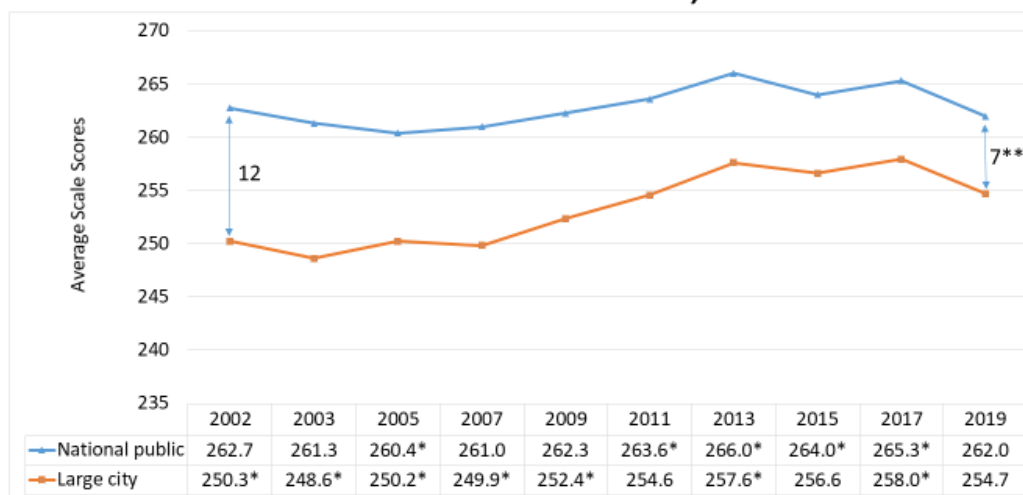


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Figure 4. Average National Public and Large City Scale Scores on NAEP Reading in Grade 8 for Public School Students, 2002 to 2019

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