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Nation's Report Card released: South Dakota performing well compared to nation

PIERRE, S.D. – Results of the 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were released earlier today. While some states experienced double-digit declines in average test scores, South Dakota scores stayed above the national average and experienced less volatility than other states.

Known as the Nation's Report Card, NAEP is a nationwide assessment of reading and math administered to students in 4th and 8th grades across the United States every two years.

“South Dakota relies on a variety of data sources to drive decisions about how and where to invest our state-level efforts and dollars,” said Secretary of Education Tiffany Sanderson. “NAEP is one of those sources that can help us understand how our students are performing and areas that may need attention.”

Anticipating challenges coming out of the pandemic, the Department of Education is developing a statewide literacy initiative that will focus on research-based strategies for teaching students how to read, write, speak, and listen. The initiative will incorporate training for teachers to implement these best practices and a promotional campaign encouraging families to read with their youngsters.

“Up until 4th grade, students are mostly learning to read. It's at that point students start reading to learn. It's critical to have strong literacy skills in place by the end of 3rd grade, as that lays the foundation for future learning,” Sanderson said.

South Dakota's NAEP 4th grade reading score was 218, which was higher than the rest of the nation (216) but down from 222 in 2019. The state's 8th grade reading score was 262, which was also higher than the rest of nation (259) and similar to the score in 2019.

South Dakota's math scores at 4th and 8th grade followed a similar pattern with scores above the national average and lessor declines than other states.

“While I'm glad to see that our students have held their own compared to other states, South Dakota has room for improvement. Our scores have slipped over time, and we need to ensure our students are receiving the best instruction and learning opportunities available.”

To learn more, visit <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.