

NAEP 2026 in SD

Facts for Principals



Grades 4 and 8



Mathematics



Reading

National Assessment of
Educational Progress

NAEP is an integral part of education in the United States.

- ▶ Elected officials, policymakers, and educators all use NAEP results to inform ways to improve education.
- ▶ NAEP is a congressionally mandated program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.
- ▶ NAEP serves a different role than state assessments. While states have their own unique assessments with different content standards, the same NAEP assessment is administered in every state, providing a common measure of student achievement.
- ▶ Depending on the type of NAEP assessment that is administered, NAEP data are available for the nation, your state, districts that participate in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA), and student groups. NAEP is not designed to report results for individual students, classrooms, or schools.
- ▶ To provide a better understanding of educational experiences and factors that may be related to students' learning, teachers, and principals who participate in NAEP are asked to complete survey questionnaires.

Visit <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/covid19.aspx> for more information about NAEP health and safety protocols.

"NAEP is the only assessment providing half-a-century of performance data to measure what students know and can do. The state and national trends inform local, state, and national program and policy discussions that improve teaching and learning."

– David Atherton, EdD, Principal, Clear Creek Middle School, Gresham, OR

What is NAEP?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what our nation's students know and can do in various subjects such as civics, mathematics, reading, science, and U.S. history. The results of NAEP are released as The Nation's Report Card.

What can principals and schools expect?

NAEP representatives will provide significant support to your school on assessment day. As principals, you make an important contribution to the program by selecting and empowering a NAEP school coordinator, meeting with teachers and participating students, and encouraging your students to participate and do their best. You are essential partners in NAEP. Each school's participation is critical and contributes to the understanding of students' educational progress across the U.S.

In 2026, students in grades 4 and 8 will take NAEP mathematics and reading assessments. Each student will be assessed in only one subject. The assessments will be administered by NAEP representatives on school devices or NAEP devices. NAEP representatives will contact your school in the coming months with more information.

Schools will need to provide space for students to take the assessment, desks or tables, and an adequate number of electrical outlets in the assessment location. NAEP representatives will use school devices and Internet—when possible—to conduct the assessment. They will work with you or your district to determine if this is feasible for your school.

Results in mathematics and reading will be released for the nation, states, and selected urban districts.



For more information about NAEP, visit www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard.

NAEP was first administered in 1969 to measure student achievement nationally. In 1990, NAEP was administered at the state level for the first time. Students in grades 4 and 8 are currently assessed at the national and state level in mathematics and reading every 2 years and in other subjects periodically. The NAEP TUDA program, which measures student achievement in some of the nation's large urban districts, began in 2002.

From the development of assessment frameworks and questions to the reporting of results, NAEP delivers high technical quality and represents the best thinking of assessment and content specialists, state education staff, and teachers from around the nation. NAEP is a trusted resource that measures student progress and helps inform policy decisions that improve education in the United States.

How are NAEP results reported? NAEP results are reported for different demographic groups rather than for individual students or schools. Within a school, just some of the student population participates, and student responses are combined with those from other participating students to produce the results.

How are schools and students selected for NAEP? A carefully designed sampling process ensures that NAEP-selected schools and students are representative of all schools and students in their district, state, and across the United States. To ensure that the sample represents all students in the nation's schools, a broad range of accommodations are allowed for students with disabilities and English learners.

What can teachers and students expect? Including transition time, directions and tutorials, it takes approximately 2 hours for students to complete the assessment. Teachers do not need to prepare their students to take the assessment but should encourage them to do their best. NAEP representatives provide significant support to your school by working with the designated coordinator in your school to organize assessment activities.

How can educators use NAEP resources to help students? Released NAEP items can be used as a helpful educational resource in the classroom. Teachers and district staff can use the NAEP Questions Tool (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nqt>) to create a test and see how your students' performance compares nationally on specific items. Released NAEP items come with a scoring guide, sample student responses, and performance data.

Visit the NAEP website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard> to access this information and more.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducts the National Assessment of Educational Progress to evaluate federally supported education programs. All of the information you provide may only be used for the purposes of research, statistics, and evaluation under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA; 20 U.S.C. § 9543) and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law. Every NCES employee as well as every NCES agent, such as contractors and NAEP coordinators, has taken an oath and is subject to a jail term of up to 5 years, a fine of \$250,000, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you in any unauthorized manner. Electronic submission of your information will be monitored for viruses, malware, and other threats by Federal employees and contractors in accordance with the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015.

This publication was originally prepared for the National Assessment of Educational Progress by Manhattan Strategy Group under contract 91990018C0001 to the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. It has been modified to reflect NAEP testing in SD.