

For immediate release:

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

City Schools' NAEP Results Issue a Call to Action for Intense Focus on the Classroom

Inclusion rate increases, providing more comprehensive picture of student achievement

(Baltimore, MD)—The National Assessment Governing Board today released the 2015 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) report, a disaggregation of results for 21 large, urban school districts on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP. As seen with NAEP results nationally, Baltimore City Public Schools saw a decline in its 2015 scores.

“These results are a call to action for City Schools,” said district CEO Gregory E. Thornton. “It is our responsibility to Baltimore’s students to make improving outcomes our most urgent priority. We are looking to these results and other achievement data to inform our path forward.”

“Some of the dips in the district’s scores are reflected in national and state trends and some present City Schools’ leadership with a chance to revitalize the district’s instructional program,” said Mike Casserly, executive director of the Council of Great City Schools.

“Improving student outcomes is the first priority of the district’s strategic plan,” said Marnell Cooper, chair of the Board of School Commissioners.

“We are reviewing curricula and instructional practices to guide revisions in English language arts and math, and we are implementing an approach to differentiated instruction that will provide both intervention and enrichment based on individual need,” said Chief Academic Officer Linda Chen.

Increase in Inclusion Rates

The NAEP is administered in reading and math every other year to students in grades 4 and 8. In past NAEP administrations, many Maryland students were excluded based on provisions in their Individualized Education Programs, or IEPs. This year, state education officials encouraged schools to include more students with disabilities and English language learners in the NAEP administration. Baltimore City had the largest increase in its inclusion rate on 8th-grade reading of any TUDA district, and second largest in 4th-grade reading.

As a result, City Schools’ NAEP results provide a more accurate picture of all students’ achievement. “City Schools will now have more consistent achievement data,” said Chen. “This is important as we work to support all students to graduate high school prepared for their next steps.”

- In 4th-grade reading, Baltimore’s inclusion rate increased from 84 percent in 2013 to 92 percent in 2015.
- In 8th-grade reading, Baltimore’s inclusion rate increased from 84 percent in 2013 to 91 percent in 2015.

“The state’s decision to include more children in NAEP testing should accrue to the academic benefit of the city’s kids, as it so often does in other major cities’ school systems,” said Casserly.

City Schools’ 2015 NAEP Results

The 21 TUDA districts represent urban centers with populations of 250,000 or more and school district enrollment of at least 35,000 students. As a TUDA member, City Schools receives district-level NAEP results and is able to compare its performance with demographic peers. Results are issued both as scale scores (0 to 500) and proficiency rates (basic, proficient, or advanced).

Nationally, 2015 NAEP scores decreased in 4th- and 8th-grade math and in 8th-grade reading when compared to the 2013 administration. Maryland saw statistically significant decreases in both subjects and both grades. City Schools saw decreases in both subjects and both grades.

- 4th-grade reading: 5-point decrease (from 204 in 2013 to 199 in 2015)
- 8th-grade reading: 8-point decrease (from 252 in 2013 to 243 in 2015)*
- 4th-grade math: 8-point decrease (from 223 in 2013 to 215 in 2015)
- 8th-grade math: 5-point decrease (from 260 in 2013 to 255 in 2015)

The decreases in 4th- and 8th-grade reading and 4th-grade math are considered statistically significant and reflect the lowest scores the district has received since becoming a TUDA district in 2009. In 4th- and 8th-grade reading, the decreases represent the largest of any TUDA district. In 4th-grade math, Baltimore and San Diego both saw 8-point decreases, the largest of any TUDA district. Baltimore’s decrease in 8th-grade math is not statistically significant.

Based on average scale scores, City Schools ranks 19th among the TUDA districts in 4th-grade reading, 18th in 8th-grade reading, 20th in 4th-grade math, and 19th in 8th-grade math.

NAEP and PARCC

In terms of rigor, NAEP is comparable to the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC, assessment, which aligns with new Common Core-based standards now in place in many states. It was administered to students in grades 3 to 11 in Maryland and elsewhere in spring 2015. Results from the NAEP offer an indication of how students across the country are likely to do on the PARCC in English language arts and math.

“City Schools, along with the rest of the country, is setting a new, higher bar for students, so they are well prepared for college and career success,” said CEO Thornton. “Results from PARCC, and these current results from NAEP, will be a new baseline for us moving forward and will give us detailed information about what students know and where they may need help. The district will dig deep into these data to better inform professional development for principals and teachers, so that they can provide more individualized instruction for all students.”

*Because the scale scores are rounded, the decrease is rounded, too. The actual value of the decrease is 8.4.