



NEWS RELEASE

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NAEP High School Transcript Study Sheds Light on U.S. History Course-Taking Patterns of 12th Graders

(Washington, D.C.) – The recently released NAEP High School Transcript Study (HSTS) provides some context for the twelfth-grade results for the *U.S. History 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) at Grades 4, 8, and 12*.

In 2010, the average NAEP U.S. history score for twelfth-graders who reported that they were either currently enrolled in or had taken an Advanced Placement (AP) course in U.S. history was 20 points higher than those students who reported not taking the course. This corresponds to a greater percentage of students taking this class. The percentage of graduates taking AP U.S. history, according to results of the HSTS, was higher in 2009 than 1990 for all ethnic groups except for Black students (which was not significantly different), and access to such courses improved: from 1990 to 2009, the percentage of twelfth-graders with access to AP U.S. history jumped from 51 percent to 80 percent.

Compared to 1990, when there was no difference in the percentage of AP U.S. history course-taking among Black and White students, a higher percentage of White students (14 percent) than Black students (8 percent) completed the course in 2009. Hispanics, however, closed their gap with White students with 12 percent taking AP U.S. history in 2010 compared to 14 percent for Whites.

Governing Board member Steven Paine, former West Virginia schools superintendent and a former history teacher, said the results underscore the need for access to more challenging curriculum and higher standards, such as those that have been implemented in his home state.

“It is no accident that there is a positive connection between the taking of AP courses and higher achievement in history,” said Paine. “A firm grounding in American history is vital to understanding our democracy. Without this context, we cannot fully engage in the processes that will shape our future and our world.”

The Nation’s Report Card: U.S. History 2010, Grades 4, 8, and 12 is available at www.nationsreportcard.gov. Additional information is available at www.nagb.org/history

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The National Assessment of Educational Progress is the only nationally representative, continuing evaluation of the condition of education in the United States. It has served as a national yardstick of student achievement since 1969. Through the Nation’s Report Card, NAEP informs the public about what American students know and can do in various subject areas and compares achievement between states, large urban districts, and various student demographic groups.

The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent, bipartisan board whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives and members of the general public. Congress created the 26-member Governing Board in 1988 to oversee and set policy for NAEP.