



**STATEMENT ON *THE NATION'S REPORT CARD*:
2013 Mathematics and Reading, Grades 4 and 8**

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It is encouraging to see that, although the progress is not dramatic, there has been a steady upward trend of performance on both of these assessments for over 20 years for both fourth graders and eighth graders.

Focusing on the reading results, fourth graders show a national scale score average of 222 in 2013, which lies almost evenly between the *Basic* and the *Proficient* NAEP achievement levels. On the other hand, eighth graders' national scale score average of 268 is closer to the *Proficient* achievement level, and that is very encouraging.

This report is helpful to me as an administrator in my school district because it points to areas we need to address. Using the NAEP frameworks, we are able to articulate to teachers, students, and parents what "proficient" really is in reading. When we noticed that NAEP results for Oklahoma coincided with stagnant or decreased state test performance by our students, we made more informed decisions about curriculum. For example, data from this and other NAEP reports have influenced our district, particularly at the elementary level. We began deploying personnel in a way that would allow us to break students into flex groups to teach specific reading skills. This allowed us to use all of the testing data to determine areas of weakness and focus teaching strategies to address students' deficiencies in reading.

In 2009, Oklahoma established new cut scores for state assessments in reading and math. The result was a dramatic drop in the percentage of students scoring at the state's proficient level. That same year our district began administering a reading benchmark assessment to elementary students three times a year. Since that implementation we have seen the number of fourth graders scoring at the proficient level on state-mandated tests increase by 2 percentage points. Over that same time period, eighth graders scoring at the proficient level has decreased by 8 percentage points. Consequently, we are currently in the process of implementing that same benchmark assessment at the middle school in our efforts to raise student achievement.

In summary, we utilize the district benchmark data, state test results, and NAEP data—a local source, a state source, and a national source—to provide information to assist us in raising our students' performance levels.