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

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I am very pleased with what I see in the NAEP trend data for fourth-grade and eighth-grade mathematics. Scores have increased since 1990 with the 2013 average scores for both grade levels being higher than all previous years. The distribution of achievement-level results is even more encouraging. There has been a significant shift in the positive direction for all achievement levels. The percentage of students falling below *Basic* in fourth-grade mathematics has decreased from 50 percent in 1990 to 17 percent in 2013. That shows real progress! We also see progress when we look at the data for specific subgroups based on race/ethnicity or free/reduced price lunch status.

One challenge that still remains for educators, for school districts, and for policymakers is to close the achievement gaps that exist among the subgroups. This challenge becomes an even greater issue when you consider the changing demographics of our nation.