

Why NAEP is important for Oregon

Each year some Oregon schools participate in the [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) (NAEP). In odd years, such as 2023, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) selects a small number of Oregon schools for national assessments. In even years such as 2022, NCES [selects a much larger number](#) of Oregon schools to produce state results in math and reading.

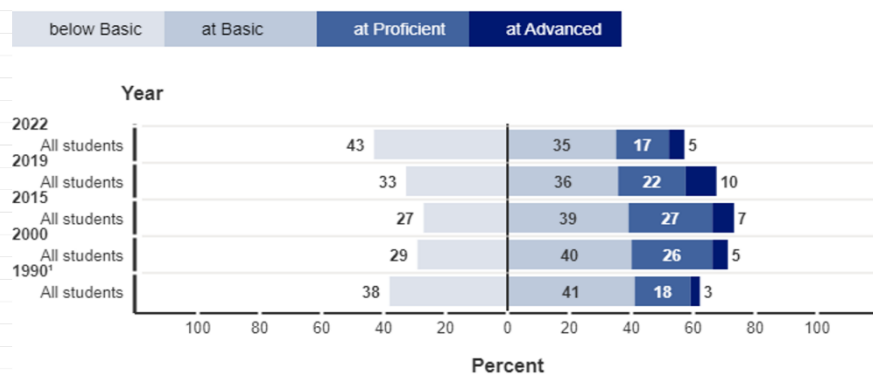
School leaders, teachers, parents, and students in Oregon often ask why participation in NAEP is worth their time and energy. This brief summarizes how NAEP provides Oregon with valuable information not available from other sources.

- NAEP has been a stable measure of student achievement since 1990;
- NAEP is the only source of comparable achievement data from all 50 states;
- NAEP informs educators, policymakers, parents and the public about the rigor of Oregon’s expectations for students.

NAEP: A Stable Measure of Student Achievement

NAEP has maintained assessment trend lines for over 30 years. Oregon’s NAEP results date back to 1990, when 8th graders participated in the first state-level NAEP math assessment. The grade 4 NAEP math trend line for Oregon begins in 1996, while the reading trend lines start in 1998. NAEP maintains the consistent administrative and technical procedures necessary to measure the same knowledge and skills over time.

Oregon Grade 8 NAEP Math Achievement Levels¹



There is value in having an historical perspective on achievement. With the impacts of the COVID pandemic, the percentage of Oregon 8th graders performing below the NAEP basic level rose to a level not seen since the 1990 assessment (the estimate of 43% in 2022 is statistically the same as the estimate of 38% in 1990).

Students who do not reach the NAEP Basic level cannot demonstrate partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for performance at the NAEP Proficient level. These students may require extensive support to reach grade level expectations.

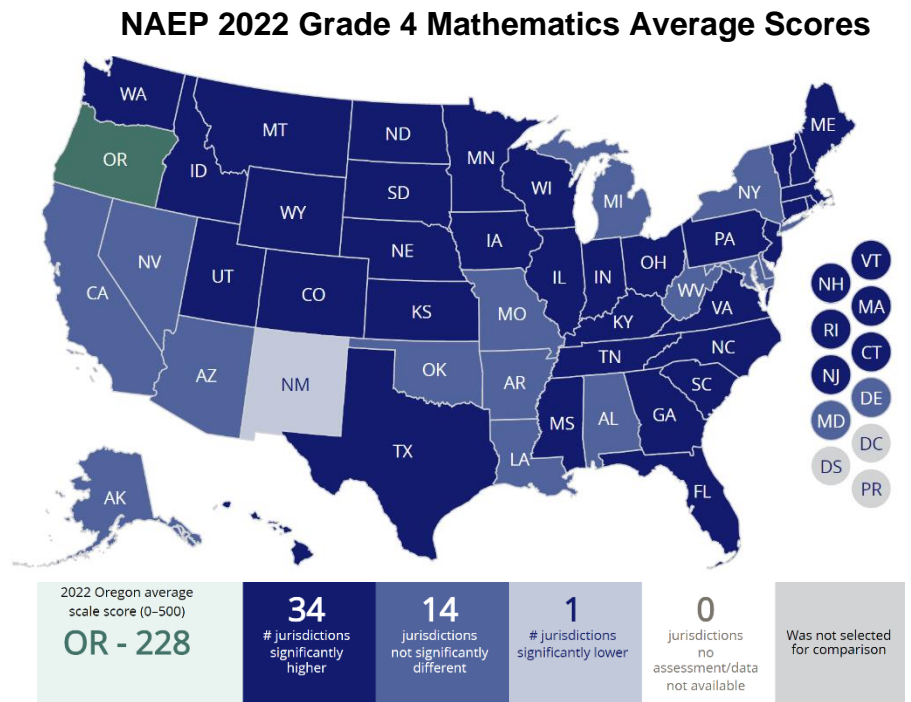
The percentages of students performing below the NAEP Basic level in 2022 increased in both reading and math. In grade 4 math, 34% of students scored below NAEP Basic; in grade 4 reading, 44%; and in grade 8 reading, 33%.

Additional information about NAEP trends in Oregon is available in [the Oregon Statewide Report Card](#) and from the [NAEP website](#).

NAEP: The Only Source of Comparable Achievement Data From All States

NAEP delivers the same assessments in the same way in every state. The content tested by NAEP is defined in [assessment frameworks](#) written by national committees that include content experts, teachers, school administrators, parents, and members of the general public.² The NAEP assessments are designed to be “curriculum neutral” since content may be taught in different ways in different states and districts. Thousands of NAEP test items have been released for public use through the online [NAEP Questions Tool](#).

State comparisons show that Oregon has weak relative performance at grade 4. The average NAEP math score for Oregon 4th graders is higher than average score in just one other state, while the average NAEP reading score in Oregon is higher than average scores in only three states. The average NAEP math and reading scores for Oregon 8th graders are above average scores in seven states.



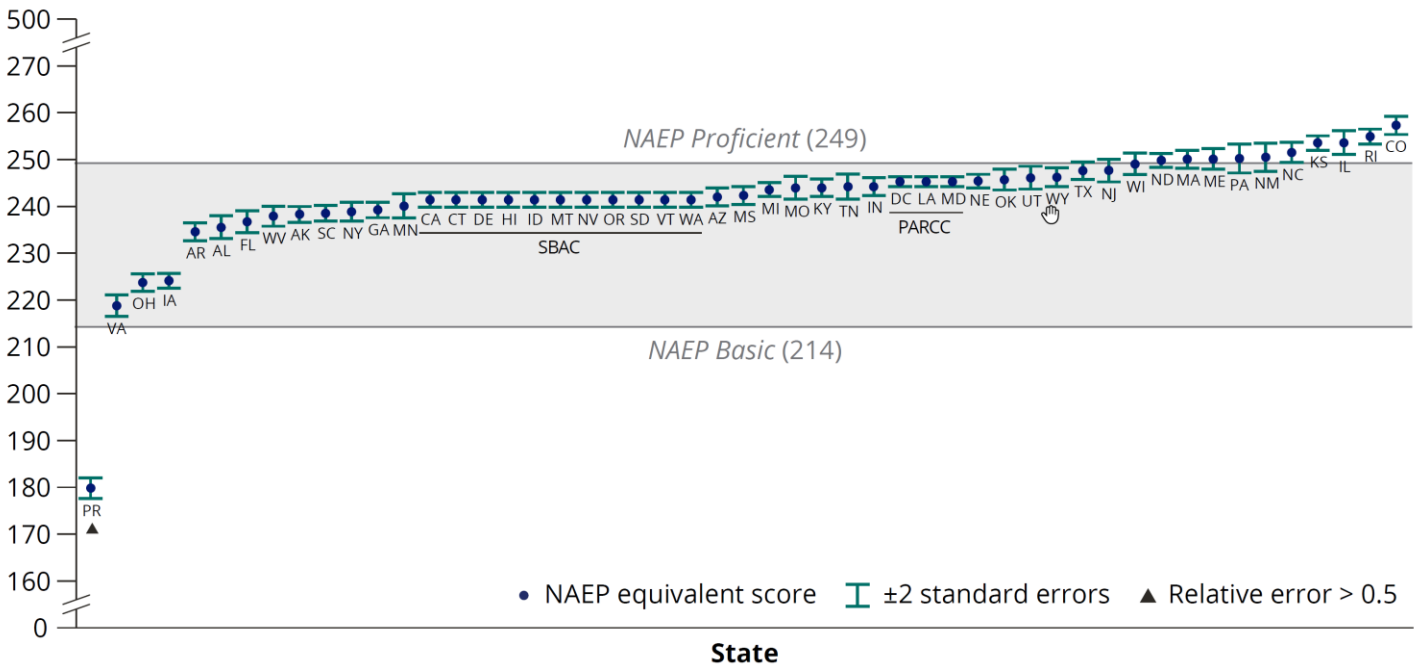
NAEP: A Common Scale for Comparing State Expectations for Students

Because NAEP delivers the same assessments in the same way in every state, NAEP can serve as a common measure for comparing state expectations for student performance. State expectations are operationalized as achievement standards, which are the cut scores set on state assessments. NAEP [research](#) shows that achievement standards are very different in different states. NAEP illustrates this by mapping state assessment cut scores onto the common NAEP scale.

The report [Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto NAEP Scales: Results from the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments](#) shows that Oregon’s expectations for students on the Smarter Balanced mathematics and English language arts assessments administered in the 2018 - 2019 school year fell in the middle of the range of expectations across states. In the graphs below for grade 4 math and grade 8 reading, states that shared a common assessment in 2018 - 2019 are labeled with the acronym for the common assessment: SBAC for [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium](#); and PARCC for the [Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers](#).

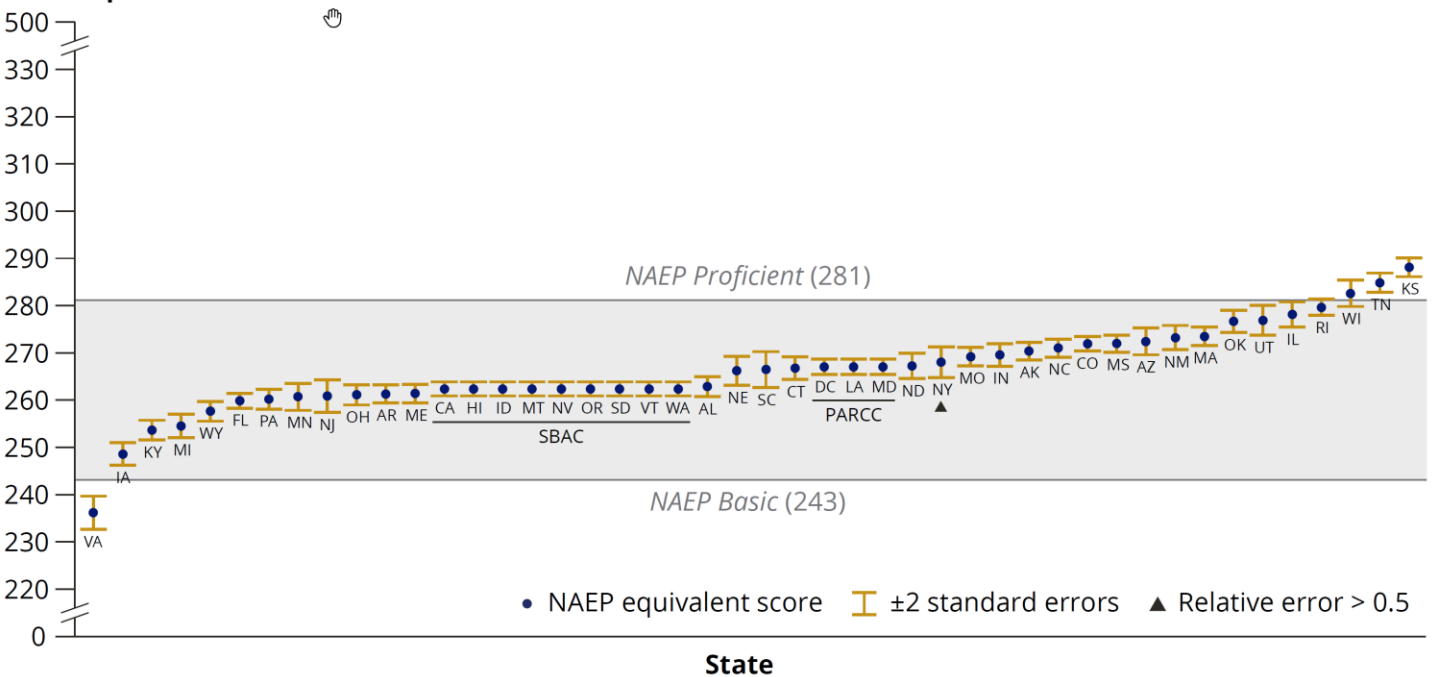
NAEP equivalent scores of state grade 4 mathematics standards for proficient performance, by state: 2019

NAEP equivalent score



NAEP equivalent scores of state grade 8 reading standards for proficient performance, by state: 2019

NAEP equivalent score



Source: [Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto NAEP Scales: Results from the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments](#)

NAEP has served a unique role in American education since its creation in 1969. By providing a stable measure delivered in the same way across states, NAEP allows policymakers to make important comparisons of student performance over time and across state lines. In May 2015, the [National Assessment Governing Board](#) unanimously adopted a resolution to maintain NAEP trends even as state tests and testing policies continue to differ and to change over time.

For more information, contact Oregon's NAEP State Coordinator, Beth LaDuca, at beth.laduca@ode.oregon.gov or (971) 208 – 0091.

Endnotes

1 Accommodations were not permitted for the 1990 assessment. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Some apparent differences between estimates may not be statistically significant. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), selected assessment years, Mathematics Assessments.

2 The NAEP frameworks were written prior to the development of the Common Core State Standards. The NAEP Validity Studies Panel examined the relationship between the NAEP reading, writing, and math frameworks and the Common Core State Standards in a [2013 report](#) which recommended “. . .that NAEP continue to play its historical role as an independent monitor.”

3 Ji, C.S., Rahman, T., and Yee, D.S. (2021). *Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales: Results From the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments* (NCES 2021-036). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved 1 June 2021 from the [NAEP Mapping Study website](#).