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Nation's Report Card Shows Texas is Recovering from the Pandemic in Reading, Much Work Remains in Math

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2022 results for the US show broad learning declines, with Texas doing better than most.

AUSTIN, Texas – October 24, 2022 – As Texas educators continue to focus on the difficult task of recovering from pandemic-related learning loss, the 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often called the Nation's Report Card, shows both strengths and challenges for Texas, while painting a grim picture for the U.S. as a whole. NAEP is administered in reading and math for a sample of students in 4th and 8th grades roughly every two years in every state.

Texas's NAEP results show that students in the Lone Star State have shown more progress than most in their academic recovery. Texas's rank improved in both fourth and eighth grade reading, and in eighth grade math. In fourth grade math, Texas students performed better (239) than the national average (235) and exceptionally well when compared to their peers, with African American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged students ranking 1st, 4th, 2nd, and 6th in the U.S. African American students also rank 1st in math in eighth grade. Improvements in Texas's rank in reading for its students was also notable. In particular, the performance of students with disabilities jumped from 34th to 17th in fourth grade reading and from 48th to 14th in eighth grade reading.

While the performance of Texas relative to the rest of the country is notable and mostly positive, the impact of the pandemic on student performance remains stark. Average scores for the U.S. are down at a level that is statistically significant in all four tested grades and subjects on NAEP for 2022 vs 2019. In Texas, results in reading for 2022 are not statistically significantly different from 2019, an indicator that Texas is recovering well from the impacts of the pandemic in this subject. But Texas performance in math in 2022 is statistically significantly lower than it was in 2019, even though Texas students have seen fewer declines than those in other parts of the U.S.

Administered by the National Center for Education Statistics and overseen by the National Assessment Governing Board for the first time since 2019, NAEP serves as a "yardstick" and measures what students in the U.S. know and can do in various subjects over time and compares achievement among states, large urban districts, and various student groups. NAEP results are not available for individual students nor individual schools and are not available every year.

While NAEP serves as a good barometer of statewide performance for Texas vs. the U.S., state assessments provide additional insights. The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is administered each year, is based on Texas state standards, has repeatedly been proven (<https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/student-assessment-overview/assessment-reports-and-studies>) valid, reliable, and on-grade level, and results are provided to educators to help them plan specific supports for students every year. Parents can also log into [texasassessment.gov](https://www.texasassessment.gov/) (<https://www.texasassessment.gov/>) to see detailed STAAR results for their children, with clear information on where their children are academically, information on progress compared to previous years, and parents can view every question and response from their children on each STAAR test. For educational leaders across the state, STAAR results made available earlier this year (<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/news-releases/news-2022/tea-releases-2022-grades-3-8-staar-results>) provided important information about our state's learning recovery when compared against results also available in 2021, and schools are using STAAR to implement targeted action plans to help students. For analysis of statewide policy, when compared with results from 2019, STAAR results for 2022 yield similar conclusions as those from NAEP: Texas students are recovering in reading, but math performance is weaker today than it was pre-pandemic.

"Results from the 2022 Nation's Report Card highlight the hard work of Texas teachers and students. While we are largely recovering from the effects of the pandemic in reading, much work remains in math," said Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath. "Thanks to policies enacted by Governor Abbott and legislature, Texas is recovering from the educational impacts of the pandemic faster than most states, and we will continue to remain focused on meeting the needs of every Texas student."

Texas adopted a range of policies during the pandemic to continue the focus on meeting the needs of our students. The state worked to ensure in-person instruction remained available; ensured that both educators and parents could see grade-level proficiency results from STAAR to build student action plans accordingly; removed all high stakes for students from STAAR (HB 4545); ensured students most affected by the disruptions to learning had access to free tutoring (HB 4545); provided ongoing training on best practices in early reading instruction to teachers (HB 3); offered support to schools focused on ensuring they had access to rigorous curricular materials to support learning acceleration (HB 1525); and ensured transparency in student academic results remained high with the A-F system (HB 22 & SB 1365).

For more information on Texas's 2022 NAEP results, please visit: Texas Overview TX (nationsreportcard.gov)

(<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/TX?>

cti=PgTab_OT&chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=TX&fs=Grade&st=MN&year=2019R3&sg=Gender%3A%20Male%20vs.%20Female&sgv=Difference&ts=Single%20Year&tss=2019R38

And to learn more about this year's NAEP, please visit: Home (nagb.gov) (<https://www.nagb.gov/>).

Texas 4th Grade Reading		
	2019 Rank (Scale Score)	2022 Rank (Scale Score)
All Students	42nd (216)	33rd (214)
Black	25th (205)	6th (204)
White	12th (232)	15th (228)
Hispanic	13th (208)	21st (205)
English Learners	14th (196)	4th (199)
Nat'l School Lunch Prog.	31st (206)	20th (202)
Students w/ Disabilities	30th (181)	17th (184)

Texas 4th Grade Math		
	2019 Rank (Scale Score)	2022 Rank (Scale Score)
All Students	12th (244)	14th (239*)
Black	1st (233)	1st (226*)
White	3rd (254)	2nd (252)
Hispanic	5th (238)	4th (231*)
English Learners	2nd (233)	2nd (229*)
Nat'l School Lunch Prog.	4th (235)	6th (228*)
Students w/ Disabilities	10th (219)	4th (218)

Texas 8th Grade Reading		
	2019 Rank (Scale Score)	2022 Rank (Scale Score)
All Students	47th (256)	41st (255)
Black	34th (238)	6th (247*)
White	40th (267)	40th (264)
Hispanic	34th (250)	26th (248)
English Learners	8th (227)	1st (239*)
Nat'l School Lunch Prog.	43rd (246)	22nd (248)
Students w/ Disabilities	33rd (224)	14th (228)

Texas 8th Grade Math		
	2019 Rank (Scale Score)	2022 Rank (Scale Score)
All Students	32nd (280)	25th (273*)
Black	5th (265)	1st (260)
White	17th (293)	24th (284*)
Hispanic	15th (272)	7th (265*)
English Learners	4th (255)	2nd (255)
Nat'l School Lunch Prog.	8th (270)	9th (264*)
Students w/ Disabilities	8th (252)	21st (244*)

* Statistically significant differences between 2019 & 2022 scale score

Note: Disability status of student, including those with 504 plan

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October 21, 2022

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What Most People Don't Know About NAEP

2022 NAEP Results Arrive October 24

(Austin, Texas) — Scores on the [2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#) are expected to be released in the coming days, and as members of the public and the media receive these scores in Texas, it is important to remember some critical context. First, the NAEP scores are not adjusted for a state's demographic makeup. The test assumes that all states educate the same students, which is not true. In studies conducted by the [Urban Institute](#) that adjust NAEP scores for student demographics, Texas has done well in recent years.

It is also important to remember that NAEP is a far different test than the STAAR. The STAAR measures student performance on state curriculum standards. The NAEP is not aligned with state standards in Texas or any other state. Further, the NAEP tests are given to a relatively small, randomly selected sample of students in 4th and 8th grade for reading and math, whereas the STAAR is administered to millions of students across Texas.

For example, the 2019 4th grade NAEP Reading test was administered to a representative sample of 7,100 students in 360 Texas schools. (Note: Even within a school, not all of the students take the NAEP test, and student responses are combined with those from other participating students to produce the state's results.) In contrast, the 2019 4th grade STAAR Reading test was administered to approximately 380,000 students enrolled in 4,100 Texas public elementary schools because STAAR tests every student, every year, in every school in grades 3-8.

NAEP results may help measure the effectiveness of a state's approach to education policy and funding, but those results do not reflect the performance of individual students, schools or districts.

The Texas School Alliance (TSA) is a school district member organization that comprises 45 school districts in Texas and educates more than 2.2 million students or 41 percent of the state's total enrollment. As a superintendent-led organization, TSA utilizes a thorough process to research and consider significant policy issues – ranging from school finance to teaching and learning to assessment and accountability. TSA also studies specific topics and works on issues that will improve educational quality for Texas students, particularly those in large and urban districts. Our members cover the breadth of Texas' geographic expanse, with members from the Rio Grande Valley to the Texas Panhandle, from near the eastern border to far west Texas. The membership includes urban, mid-urban, and city- town districts and includes school districts that are both property wealthy and property poor. More information is available at



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NAEP scores show importance of investing in Texas students *2022 NAEP Results Released Today*

(Austin, Texas) — Scores released today from the [2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#) show that students across the country are still struggling from pandemic-related learning lag and point to the need for Texas legislators to make significant investments in public schools.

The NAEP test is given to a representative sample of students from across the country. The results released today indicate that students in Texas are recovering from learning loss at a faster pace than students from many other states, particularly when specific demographic groups are compared. These gains reflect the hard work of students, teachers and parents over the last couple of years.

Still, today's scores add to the data showing that there is still work to be done in Texas and nationally to help students fully recover from the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other challenges that schools continue to face, such as educator shortages and rising costs due to inflation.

"Texas public schools are doing well amid some very difficult circumstances," said Dr. Brian Woods, the President of the Texas School Alliance and the Superintendent of Northside ISD. "Now is the time to build on our schools' momentum and address the very real obstacles that Texas public schools are facing. In addition to pandemic-driven learning loss, schools are facing significant shortages of educators and rising costs for fuel and other operating expenses. Legislators must approach these issues with urgency and prioritize our students — especially at a time when state coffers are overflowing with surplus revenue. Our schools have done great work in difficult circumstances over the last few years, but they need more than election-season rhetoric. This is a moment to invest in students and teachers."

The Texas School Alliance (TSA) is a school district member organization that comprises 45 school districts in Texas and educates more than 2.2 million students or 41 percent of the state's total enrollment. As a superintendent-led organization, TSA utilizes a thorough process to research and consider significant policy issues — ranging from school finance to teaching and learning to assessment and accountability. TSA also studies specific topics and works on issues that will improve educational quality for Texas students, particularly those in large and urban districts. Our members cover the breadth of Texas' geographic expanse, with members from the Rio Grande Valley to the Texas Panhandle, from near the eastern border to far west Texas. The membership includes urban, mid-urban, and city- town districts and includes school districts that are both property wealthy and property poor. More information is available at TexasSchoolAlliance.org.

Beware of NAEP Test Score Spin

October 21, 2022

by Harry Feder

Today, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released state-by-state test scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Comparing 2022 scores with pre-COVID numbers from 2019 has been the major focus of media coverage.

Policymakers and the public are naturally eager to find out just how badly the pandemic damaged student learning. But reporters should be wary of NAEP data spin.

Those who want to radically alter our system of public education through privatization, charters, vouchers, and even more standardized testing will undoubtedly try to frame any score decrease as evidence for their preferred policies to alleviate “learning loss.” The numbers, however, will provide no such guidance.

Given that Monday’s state-by-state NAEP data mirror September’s national trends, as expected, we are getting an even greater cry of panic over “learning loss” and a call for dramatic interventions to catch students up. Such reactions are not justified. The September scores reflected the toll that the pandemic exacted. State-by-state numbers affirm what educators and parents already know – the pandemic was bad for kids. But now that children are back in school, in-person learning has gone back to normal.

In all likelihood, scores for future 4th and 8th graders will revert to more normal patterns. We will need to see what happens to students as they age to see whether the pandemic score plunge dissipates over time. Learning, however, should not be viewed as a race against the clock. The point is to get students to the finish line on the prescribed course accounting for the obstacles in their path.

In any event, claims that specific policy decisions in one state or district caused lower or higher scores [often rest on a shaky foundation](#). [NAEP data can show where scores are going up or down, but the test can’t say why](#). But that won’t stop interested advocates from making unfounded arguments of causation.

The politics of this NAEP release, given the capacity for state-by-state comparisons, promises to be heated. They will no doubt be wielded by politicians and ideologues to justify their policies regarding school closure during the pandemic. If any state fared significantly better than others, expect them to try to score points. If a state did worse than others, challengers for office will undoubtedly try to leverage that fact politically.

Assessment Reform
News: October 19-25, 2022

October 26, 2022
by FairTest

Assessment Reform
News: October 11-18, 2022

October 18, 2022
by FairTest

Assessment Reform
News: September 27-
October 5, 2022

October 6, 2022
by FairTest

While there is no question that in-person learning is superior to all-remote learning, test results are not a simple product of one particular factor or policy. Test scores cannot be the sole measure of school quality, as inputs, attendance, surveys of stakeholder satisfaction, success of graduates, and a variety of other factors should go into that determination. Nor should declining NAEP scores be used to conclude that public education is a failure. They are not evidence of the desirability of privatization, vouchers, untested classroom technology or any other radical silver bullets. In 2022, the overriding factor in any unusually large decline from 2019 to 2022 can be boiled down to one word–COVID.

Above all, the NAEP results shouldn't precipitate a call for more tests. The beauty of the NAEP sampling system is that standardized exam results do not have high stakes consequences for students and schools. The punitive testing regime of No Child Left Behind was an abject failure. Reverting to more testing of students, including commercially packaged interim assessments allegedly designed to help teachers target their practice, will only undermine student learning.

The one conclusion the NAEP results may give us is that classroom learning time matters. Time taken up by constant testing drains that essential resource. NAEP is enough; properly analyzing the results will tell us where we are and where we have to concentrate resources.

What does matter? That we invest in schools, that we make sure that there are qualified teachers in our neediest communities to address the disparities in learning among socioeconomic and racial subgroups, and that we deal with the social and emotional traumas that students have experienced as a result of the pandemic. If we focus on multiple indicators of school quality, maintaining an adequate supply of well-trained professional teachers, and providing schools with the resources they need, positive long-term trends in NAEP scores are more likely to follow.

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NEWS > EDUCATION

Texas is increasing Black students' reading scores more than any other state

Despite bright spots, data on national learning loss is gloomy



Texas schools still have a long road to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)



By [Talía Richman](#) and [Meghan Mangrum](#)
6:00 AM on Oct 28, 2022



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Texas boosted reading scores for Black students more than all other states over the past three years.

That bright spot comes out of overall gloomy testing data that researchers from Harvard and Stanford universities analyzed to reveal the extent of post-pandemic learning loss across America.

Overall, the average U.S. public school student in grades 3 through 8 lost about a half a year of learning in math and a quarter of a year in reading, the study found. But the losses vary widely between districts and states.

This newest data – shared exclusively with the Associated Press – builds upon a painful picture painted earlier this week with [the release of results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress](#), often referred to as the nation's report card.

“The pandemic was like a band of tornadoes that swept across the country,” said Thomas Kane, faculty director of Harvard's Center for Education Policy Research. “Some communities were left relatively untouched, while neighboring schools were devastated.”

Related: ‘Appalling and unacceptable’: Texas students struggle, test results reveal widespread loss

The new data from the [Education Recovery Scorecard](#) includes results from students who took state standardized tests in 3-8 grades as well as detailed data for 3,760 school districts and the recently released 2022 NAEP scores.

The researchers looked at state test scores from 2019 and 2022 and converted them to a common metric to compare learning loss despite states using different tests and uneven standards for what is considered “proficient.”

The analysis found several Texas districts — including Huntsville, which has a significant number of students in virtual schools — recorded some of the biggest

increases in reading scores when compared to schools across the majority of states.

Black students still lag behind their white peers in key metrics, but Texas' progress is a hopeful sign.

More must be done to recover from the pandemic's impact. The researchers found nearly 70% of students were in districts where recovery was likely to cost more than the schools' federal pandemic aid allotment.

Where does Texas stand

Texas [held mostly steady in reading](#), echoing the takeaway of other datasets, [including STAAR](#). But students lost about half-a-year in math.

Overall, the study found that learning losses were greater, on average, in high-poverty districts. Though many communities nationwide were working to close such gaps before the pandemic, many of those gains were wiped out, researchers found.

Texas schools opened up for in-person learning faster than several other states. But the connection between remote learning and achievement is not a simple, straight line.

“While we see evidence that achievement losses were larger, on average, the longer districts remained remote, there was still a ton of variation in achievement losses among districts that had the same amount of time remote,” Kane said. “Clearly, remote learning was not the only factor driving achievement losses.”

Top five school districts with largest gains in reading

Gains in average reading scores for third through eighth graders from 2019 to 2022, in grade levels

Huntsville ISD, Texas	1.13
Pleasanton ISD, Texas	0.88
Perryton ISD, Texas	0.84
Mohave Valley Elementary District	0.82

Even before the pandemic, Texas leaders made a concerted effort to improve literacy. The state required early-grade educators to attend Reading Academies and study the science behind how students learn to decode language.

The Legislature has also mandated extensive tutoring for students who failed the state’s standardized tests. Much of the tutoring effort was devoted to literacy.

But the state still lags behind others when it comes to reading achievement, with students now nearly half a year behind the national average, according to the analysis. In math, Texas students are lagging about one-third of a school year behind the national average.

Black students progress

While Texas topped the list of states when it came to increasing reading scores for Black students, much work remains to ensure Black children get a fair shot at academic success, experts say.

Black students have long lagged their white peers on standardized tests. For example, on NAEP, Black students in Texas had an average math score that was 26 points lower than white students.

And despite this year’s increase, Black students in Texas are still performing more than a grade level behind the national average in reading, according to the new data. Black students gained the equivalent of nearly 30% of a school year between 2019 and 2022.

Hispanic students — which make up a majority of Texas public school students — are also behind by more than a year.

Pre-existing achievement gaps, which experts tie to the lasting impacts of segregation, were exacerbated during the pandemic. [Many Black and Latino communities](#) were hard hit by the early waves of COVID-19, which triggered more housing instability and trauma for children.

Related: COVID's 'untold story': Texas Blacks and Latinos are dying in the prime of their lives

After historic protests in 2020 in response to the murder of George Floyd, many schools doubled down on promises to address historic disinvestment in Black students.

In Dallas, the district is working to expand the number of reading interventionists working at campuses serving predominantly Black students.

The new data can help pinpoint variabilities in recovery, researchers said.

“The better they know about the patterns of learning loss, the more they’re going to be able to target their resources effectively to reduce educational inequality of opportunity and help children and communities thrive,” said Sean Reardon, of the Stanford Graduate School of Education.

Dallas scores

The new data shows Dallas still lags in reading when compared to the rest of the nation and the state.

On NAEP, Dallas’ reading scores held steady at about 18% proficiency in fourth grade and roughly 12% in eighth grade. DISD officials note that the district didn’t decline as much as many other urban areas, many of which also serve fewer students living in poverty.

“We’ve got a lot of work to do in literacy,” Superintendent Stephanie Elizalde said.

Faced with data outlining the scope of learning loss, Elizalde said it’s important not to make knee-jerk reactions. The information must prompt questions about what teachers and students really need and where.

“We’ve got to peel back some more onions ... What does comprehension look like? Or what does decoding look like?” she said.

Persistent racial gaps are a focus area for the district, where Elizalde acknowledged Dallas is seeing better results, though she conceded not fast enough. The administration is working to analyze what specific interventions have the most impact for children.

“What is it going to take to get those students to get a year-and-a-half or two years of growth in one year?” she said.

The Education Trust, a nonprofit that works to close opportunity gaps, [recently highlighted Dallas ISD’s approach](#) to spending its federal pandemic aid money to promote equity.

DISD’s “high-priority schools” – which are often in low-income communities and serve many families of color and immigrants – were prioritized for robust, free after-school programming. The activities there included tutoring and other enrichments that are more often available to wealthier children.

Looking ahead

With a clearer picture of the impact of the pandemic on student learning, researchers say it is incumbent on district and state leaders to reevaluate whether their plans to catch students up aligns with actual needs.

Texas [received \\$18 billion in federal funding](#) to tackle the consequences of the pandemic.. As of July, schools across the state had tapped less than a third of the cash with only two years left to spend it all.

Many districts are using their funding to [provide tutoring or summer programs to students](#). However, the researchers say some of those efforts may not be big enough to capture every student who needs them.

“We cannot wait for the spring 2023 state test results next fall to tell us that we underinvested in recovery efforts,” Kane said.

The DMN Education Lab deepens the coverage and conversation about urgent education issues critical to the future of North Texas.

The DMN Education Lab is a community-funded journalism initiative, with support from The Beck Group, Bobby and Lottye Lyle, Communities Foundation of Texas, The Dallas Foundation, Dallas Regional Chamber, Deedie Rose, Garrett and Cecilia Boone, The Meadows Foundation, The Murrell Foundation, Solutions Journalism Network, Southern Methodist University, Sydney Smith Hicks, Todd A. Williams Family Foundation and the University of Texas at Dallas. The Dallas Morning News retains full editorial control of the Education Lab's journalism.



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