



## *Press Release*

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# **Michigan Makes Gains in National Rankings on Reading Test**

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LANSING – Michigan continues to climb in the national rankings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test, as released today by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). It marks the second straight two-year testing cycle in which Michigan has gained in the national rankings.

"It's great news for our students and families that we're making progress on literacy," said Governor Gretchen Whitmer. "And it's important to note that this would not have happened if not for the hardworking educators who have dedicated their lives to our kids. We've made a step in the right direction, and now we must continue to prioritize funding for early literacy and teacher pay and build a more equitable school funding system. When we put our students and educators first, we can build a Michigan where everyone can get ahead."

Michigan rose to 32<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in fourth grade reading – up from 35<sup>th</sup> in 2017 and 41<sup>st</sup> in 2015. In eighth-grade reading, Michigan advanced to 28<sup>th</sup> in the nation – up from 30<sup>th</sup> in 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> in 2015.

"Our national 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading rank is improving," said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice. "Kudos to our teachers, administrators, and support staff. Our professional development efforts are beginning to bear fruit."

"Our rank is improving in spite of two significant challenges: a statewide teacher shortage, which adversely affects most severely the highest poverty and/or most remote districts, and inadequate and inequitable state funding for our 1.5 million Michigan children," Dr. Rice said. "Imagine how much more rapid our improvement could be if we invested more in our children and funded their specific needs – consistent with School Finance Research Collaborative study recommendations – rather than to simply fund the number of students."

The improvement in NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading rank is consistent with recent increases in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade state M-STEP English language arts results.

Among the many factors that are contributing to Michigan's improvements are the collaborative early literacy efforts of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network/Early Literacy Task Force; the Reading Now Network; and the Michigan Department of Education.

Dr. Rice said much more work needs to be done. The drive to train more Michigan educators with the tools and techniques to teach every child to read will continue. After-school literacy, summer literacy, parent education and family literacy, and diversity in literacy are all areas in which the state has room to improve. Dr. Rice noted, "To paraphrase Robert Frost, we have miles to go before we sleep when it comes to literacy."

According to a Michigan State University study led by Dr. David Arsen and released early this year, Michigan ranked 50<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in total inflation-adjusted revenue growth from 1995 to 2015 and ranked 48<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in per pupil inflation-adjusted revenue growth from 1995 to 2015.

NAEP is the only assessment that measures what U.S. students know and can do in various subjects across the nation. Also known as The Nation's Report Card, NAEP has provided important information about how students are performing academically since 1969.

Michigan's scores on the NAEP math tests were also released today. The state's ranking in eighth grade math improved from 33<sup>rd</sup> in the nation to 28<sup>th</sup>, while the ranking in fourth grade math went from 38<sup>th</sup> in the nation to 42<sup>nd</sup>.

NAEP is a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

NAEP is given to a representative sample of students across the country. Results are reported for groups of students with similar characteristics (e.g., gender, race and ethnicity, school location), not individual students. National results are available for all subjects assessed by NAEP. State and selected urban district results are available for mathematics and reading, and in some assessment years for science and writing.

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