



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Virginia Recognized in National Report for Narrowing Achievement Gaps between Black & White Students**

A new U.S. Department of Education (USED) report recognizes Virginia for narrowing achievement gaps between black and white students in reading and mathematics. The report, *Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)*, compares student achievement in 2007 with performance in previous years.

In comparing the performance of students nationwide with state-level achievement on the national fourth- and eighth-grade reading tests, the USED National Center for Educational Statistics reports that:

- Virginia is one of only five states with achievement gaps in reading smaller than the nation's in both grades.
- Virginia is one of only three states where the achievement gap in grade-four reading narrowed between 2005 and 2007 because of increased black achievement.
- Virginia's achievement gap in grade-four reading is a statistically significant 7 points smaller than the gap nationwide, and in grade-eight, the gap is a statistically significant six points smaller.
- Virginia is one of 13 states where fourth-grade reading achievement is higher for both black and white students than in 1992, the first year of NAEP reading tests in grade four.

The report also credits Virginia for narrowing achievement gaps in mathematics:

- Virginia is one of only four states where fourth-grade mathematics scores increased for both black and white students between 2005 and 2007.
- Virginia is one of 15 states to narrow the achievement gap in fourth-grade mathematics as a result of black students outpacing the gains of white students since 1992, when grade-four NAEP mathematics testing began.
- Virginia is one of 26 states where mathematics scores for both black and white eighth graders increased since grade-eight NAEP mathematics testing began in 1990.

“Closing these gaps will require the continued commitment of educators, parents and community leaders to high standards and accountability,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said. “The progress cited in today’s report provides encouragement that we can eliminate historic disparities even as we seek to raise the achievement of all students.”

The NAEP, also known as The Nation’s Report Card, is an assessment taken by samples of students representative of the nation and each state. Tests in reading and mathematics are administered every two years. *Achievement Gaps* is available from USED online at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/gaps/>