



## NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

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### **MATH SCORES SHOW IMPROVEMENT** ***But 'Achievement Gap' Persists***

WASHINGTON, DC – More than a decade's focus on standards in math education is paying off for American students, but the good news is tempered by a persistent gap in achievement between white and minority students, according to a new report from the National Education Goals Panel.

“This report shows that a sustained focus on standards works, but it also tells us that millions of children are being left behind,” said John Barth, acting executive director of the National Education Goals Panel. “The across the board achievement in mathematics confirms the value of standards-based reform. Unfortunately, the gaps in performance between white and minority students, and poor and better off students are not closing. This report comes at a key moment in education reform, as President Bush signs new legislation aimed at raising standards and reducing the achievement gap. It shows the enormous challenge states are facing.”

The report, *Raising Achievement and Reducing Gaps: Reporting Progress Toward Goals for Academic Achievement in Mathematics* is an in-depth analysis of the most recent data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. It provides state-by-state data on student progress in mathematics for 4<sup>th</sup> graders between 1992 and 2000 and for 8<sup>th</sup> graders between 1990 and 2000. This new analysis also provides new information on achievements based on economic status, race, and the best and poorest performing students. According to the report, student math scores improved in nearly all of the 36 states that participate in NAEP (the District of Columbia and Guam are counted as states). The percent of students reaching or exceeding the “proficient level of performance” also improved. The scores are for students in public schools only.

Despite overall gains, states made little progress in narrowing the persistent gap in achievement between white and minority students. In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, no states narrowed the gap; and in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the gap narrowed in only two states (Georgia and North Carolina). At the same time, the achievement gap grew in two states in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (Alabama and Louisiana) and in one state in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade (Utah).

The report was prepared by Paul Barton, a former director of the Policy Information Center at Educational Testing Service (ETS) where he also served as associate director of NAEP.

The report can be found on line at [www.negp.gov](http://www.negp.gov). For electronic and hard copy formats, contact Eugenie Devine, 202-842-3600, Ext. 229, or at [edevine@hagerssharp.com](mailto:edevine@hagerssharp.com).