National Assessment of Educational Progress Trial Urban District Assessment - Reading 2009

The Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in Reading 2009 is part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as "The Nation's Report Card." NAEP is the only nationally representative, continuing evaluation of what the nation's schoolchildren know and can do in various subjects. TUDA—a special, voluntary study—was administered to a representative sample of fourth and eighth grade public school students in 18 large urban school districts, who responded to questions designed to measure reading comprehension of both literary and informational texts. The results provide valuable information about the achievement of students in urban school districts and a comparison to the achievement of students in large cities and nationwide.

About NAEP TUDA

The NAEP TUDA originated in 2000 when the Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of the nation's large urban public school districts, asked the Governing Board to conduct a trial NAEP for large urban districts. First administered in 2002 to 5 districts and the District of Columbia, TUDA grew to 18 districts in 2009. For the next assessment in 2011, three new districts have agreed to participate: **Dallas Independent School District**, **Hillsborough County Public Schools** (Fla.), and **Albuquerque Public Schools**.

To be eligible to participate in the TUDA, a district must be in a city with a population of 250,000 or more, and at least half its students must be Black, and/or Hispanic, or eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Eleven districts that participated in 2009 also participated in TUDA in previous years: **Atlanta Public Schools**, **Austin Independent School District**, **Boston Public Schools**, **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools**, **Chicago Public Schools**, **Cleveland Metropolitan School District**, **District of Columbia Public Schools**, **Houston Independent School District**, **Los Angeles Unified School District**, **New York City Public Schools**, and **San Diego Unified School District**.

Seven districts participated for the first time in 2009: **Baltimore City Public Schools**, **Detroit Public Schools**, **Fresno Unified School District**, **Jefferson County Public Schools** (Louisville, KY), **Miami-Dade County Public Schools**, **Milwaukee Public Schools**, and **School District of Philadelphia**.

Demographic characteristics of the TUDA districts are different than those in the nation as a whole. Nationally, the percentages of White students at both grades 4 and 8 were higher than the combined percentages of Black and Hispanic students, while in most TUDA

districts the opposite was true. Almost all TUDA districts had significantly higher percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than the national average at both grades. The percentage of English language learners (ELL) in large cities at grade 4 (18 percent) was twice that of the nation, while the percentages of eighth graders eligible for free and reduced-price lunch in the TUDA districts were all higher than the national percentage—ranging from 46 percent in Charlotte to 100 percent in Cleveland.

Highlights of the 2009 Results

Overall

Results make it possible to compare the performance of students in urban districts to public school students in the nation and large cities (i.e., cities with populations of 250,000 or more).

Scores for student demographic groups in some TUDA districts were higher than those of their peers nationally, while one district—Charlotte—scored higher in 2009 than the national average scores at grade 4. However, few TUDA districts experienced the gains in eighth grade that the nation did on NAEP as a whole, and none scored higher than the national average at grade 8.

Fourth Grade

Average fourth grade reading scores increased in *4* of the 11 TUDA districts—Boston, the District of Columbia, Houston, and New York City—over 2007 scores. However, there were no significant changes in the overall scores for fourth graders nationwide or in large cities. Although the overall scores in 2009 were lower in most participating districts than in the nation, scores for certain demographic groups in some districts were higher than the scores for those groups nationally.

With few exceptions, scores in the TUDA districts, as in large cities overall, were lower than the scores nationwide. Charlotte was the only district with a higher score than the national average.

Six districts—Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Jefferson County (Louisville, KY), Miami-Dade, and New York City—scored higher than large cities nationally. Scores for specific ethnic/racial student groups were higher in several districts than the scores for those students nationally.

Among the *nine* districts where average scores were lower than the average scores in large cities, only Detroit and Philadelphia showed lower scores for all categories of students by race/ethnicity and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch (with samples large enough to report results). Although the scores in the District of Columbia were lower than those in large cities overall, the average score for White students was higher than the average scores for White students in large cities.

Eighth Grade

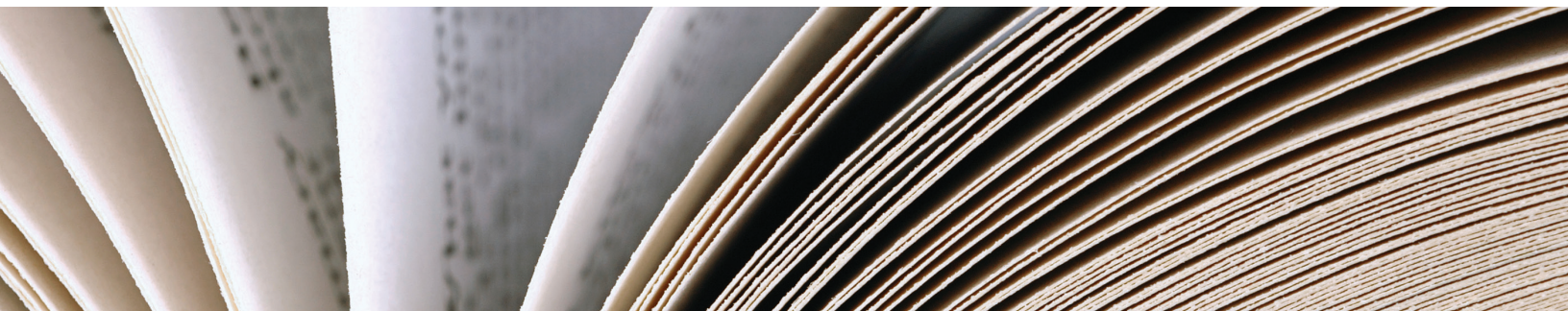
Only *2* of the 11 participating TUDA districts—Atlanta and Los Angeles—had gains in their eighth grade reading scores since 2007. Both districts also had higher scores than in 2002, even though there was no change in the scores of students nationwide or in large cities during that period.

In 2009 students who attended public schools in large cities scored 10 points lower than public school students nationwide. Scores in most of the TUDA districts were also lower than the national scores, although in 5 TUDA districts—Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Jefferson County (Louisville, KY), and Miami-Dade—students scored higher than students in large cities nationally.

Differences between average scores in TUDA districts and large cities overall sometimes varied depending on the student demographic group. For example, among the 7 districts where average scores were lower than the score for large cities, the scores of White students in 2 districts, of Black students in 3 districts, and of Hispanic students in 4 districts showed no significant difference compared to scores of students in large cities overall.

The NAEP Reading Framework

The Reading Framework, which describes the knowledge and skills to be assessed, is new for 2009 and includes changes from the previous framework. It increases the emphasis on high-quality literature and informational text, exposing students to more challenging test questions. It tests poetry in grade 4 for the first time. It asks students to do more than just locate and recall; to a greater degree than in the past, it asks students to draw conclusions and evaluate the quality of arguments. Finally, the 2009 Framework assesses vocabulary in a new and more extensive way. Instead of being asked simply to define words, students are assessed on how well they understand the meanings of words as used in the passage. NAEP still measures reading comprehension so the trend line can be maintained.

The full TUDA Reading Report Card 2009 is available at **http://nationsreportcard.gov**

The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent bipartisan board whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. Congress created the 26-member Governing Board in 1988 to set policy for NAEP.