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International Reading Association Responds To NAEP Reading Results

The International Reading Association applauds gains in reading as evidenced by new results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (The Nation's Report Card), but notes that much work remains to be done, especially in reducing the significant achievement gap that remains among major racial/ethnic groups.

"The NAEP reading results indicate that we need to increase our efforts to provide ongoing, high-quality professional development in reading to educators at all levels, from elementary school through high school," said International Reading Association President Patricia A. Edwards, a Distinguished Professor of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. "We would anticipate that this would result in helping to close the achievement gap and helping students meet standards."

"Furthermore, the results indicate a need for increased emphasis on supporting children living in poverty, English language learners, and struggling readers," Edwards added. "As the United States pushes to increase achievement levels and graduation rates, we need to focus on helping students develop advanced reading skills such as inferential thinking and problem solving and to apply these skills in a wide variety of content areas, including math, science, and social studies."

The overall average reading score for 12th graders in 2009 was 2 points higher than in 2005 but 4 points lower than in 1992. Seventy-four percent of students performed at or above the Basic level, 38% performed at or above the Proficient level, and 5% performed at the Advanced level.

Score gaps in reading persisted between White students and their Black and Hispanic peers. Neither the 27-point score gap in 2009 between White and Black students nor the 22-point gap between White and Hispanic students was significantly different from the score gap in previous assessment years.

Approximately 52,000 students took part in this assessment, and they were asked to read both literary and informational texts and then answer questions aligned with three reading behaviors, or cognitive targets: locate and recall, integrate and interpret, and critique and evaluate.

To learn more, visit the Nation's Report Card website at <http://nationsreportcard.gov>.

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The International Reading Association is a community of reading professionals with more than 65,000 members in 100 countries, dedicated to promoting higher achievement levels in reading worldwide.