

# A parent guide to tests and assessments

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM



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Testing is just one tool that schools use to measure how well students understand and apply what they learn in class. WCPSS uses a variety of tests and assessments to track student growth, including multiple-choice tests, performance tests and essays. Some are required locally, while others are required by the North Carolina and United States governments.

WCPSS administers several state and federal assessments to measure student progress toward performance benchmarks.

Locally, WCPSS also administers tests and assessments to evaluate whether students need additional teaching or support in certain content areas. The district also uses tests to identify students to participate in programs such as the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program (AIG).

To help parents better understand what tests are required and how they support student achievement, WCPSS has developed this guide to tests and assessments.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

NAME OF ASSESSMENT	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL?	WHO TAKES IT?	WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	HOW ARE RESULTS USED?
<b>Kindergarten entry</b>				
Kindergarten Initial Assessment (KIA)	Required by district	Entering kindergarten students	Measures kindergarten readiness in literacy, math, physical, personal and social skills.	The results provide a baseline of student knowledge and informs instruction.
<b>English/ Language Arts</b>				
mCLASS Reading 3D	State mandated	Grades K-3	A universal screener that assesses a student's ability to hear beginning sounds, to separate words that they hear and to decode words. Screenings predict future reading success. The comprehension portion measures print concepts, and the student's ability to read text, orally retell and answer questions in written form. The assessments also measure reading gains during the beginning, middle and end of the year.	Results are used to inform small group reading instruction. Parents receive information about their student's progress and activities to do at home through a Home Connect Letter that is sent from the school three times each year.
mCLASS Reading 3D	State mandated	Grades 4-5	A universal screener that assesses fluency and comprehension.	Results are used to inform small-group reading instruction. Parents receive information about their student's progress and activities to do at home through a Home Connect Letter that is sent from the school three times each year.
Local Benchmark Assessments for English/ Language Arts	Required by district	Grades 2-5	Comprehensive assessments administered three times a year to determine student growth on ELA grade-level standards.	Teachers use these results to guide and to inform both individual and small-group reading instruction.

<b>Mathematics</b>				
K-1 Summative Assessments	Required by district	All K-1 students	Created by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction to assess students' understanding of standards.	Teachers use these results to determine areas for enrichment and remediation. Results are also used to conduct conferences with parents, and end-year results are included in cumulative folders for the following year's classroom teacher.
Local benchmark assessments for math	Required by district	Grades 2-5	Assess students' understanding of mathematics standards.	The results are used by teachers/schools to determine areas for enrichment and remediation aligned to standards that have been taught each quarter.
<b>Science</b>				
Local Benchmark Assessments for Science	Required by the district	Grade 5	The benchmark assessments are used to assess students' understanding of science standards.	Teachers and schools use results to determine areas for enrichment and remediation.
<b>English Language Learners</b>				
ACCESS for English language learners (ELLs)	State mandated	English language learners in grades K-12	The ACCESS for ELLs is a large-scale test of English language proficiency based on the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards.	Results are used to satisfy state and federal requirements for the annual assessment of the English language proficiency of English language learners.
World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)	State mandated	Students with a home language other than English	The W-APT placement test is used to identify students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).	This placement test is used to identify LEP students.
<b>State accountability</b>				
<b>N.C. Beginning-of-Grade (BOG)</b> • ELA/ Reading - Grade 3	State mandated	Grade 3	The Beginning of Grade (BOG) is the state's mandated reading assessment to collect baseline data in English/Language Arts (ELA).	Results are used to measure student growth and proficiency.
<b>N.C. End-of-Grade (EOG) Exams</b> • ELA/ Reading - Grade 3, 4, 5 • Math - Grades 3, 4, 5 • Science - Grade 5	State mandated	Grades 3-5	The EOG assessments are state-mandated tests that measure students' mastery of state standards in ELA/ Reading, math and science.	The N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) uses EOG results as one measure of school accountability. Summary results are also used for school improvement actions.
<b>N.C. Final Exams</b> • Science - Grade 4 • Social Studies - Grades 4, 5	State mandated	Grades 4-5 for subjects not assessed by the EOG exam	The N.C. Final Exams are state-mandated tests that measure a student's mastery of the Common Core State Standards and the N.C. Essential Standards.	The N.C. Final Exams are used to assess educators' performance in relation to Standard 6 and Standard 8 of the N.C. Educator Evaluation System. Both the teacher and the school executive evaluation processes include a student-growth component.
<b>Nationally normed tests</b>				
Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)	Required by district for Grade 3; optional for students in Grades 4-12	Grade 3  Grades 4-12 for students referred for AIG	Measures general thinking and problem-solving skills and indicates how well the student uses these skills to solve verbal, quantitative and nonverbal problems.	In combination with other relevant information about a student, scores can be used to adapt instruction in ways that enhance the student's success in learning. Scores may also be used as part of the identification process for the Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program.



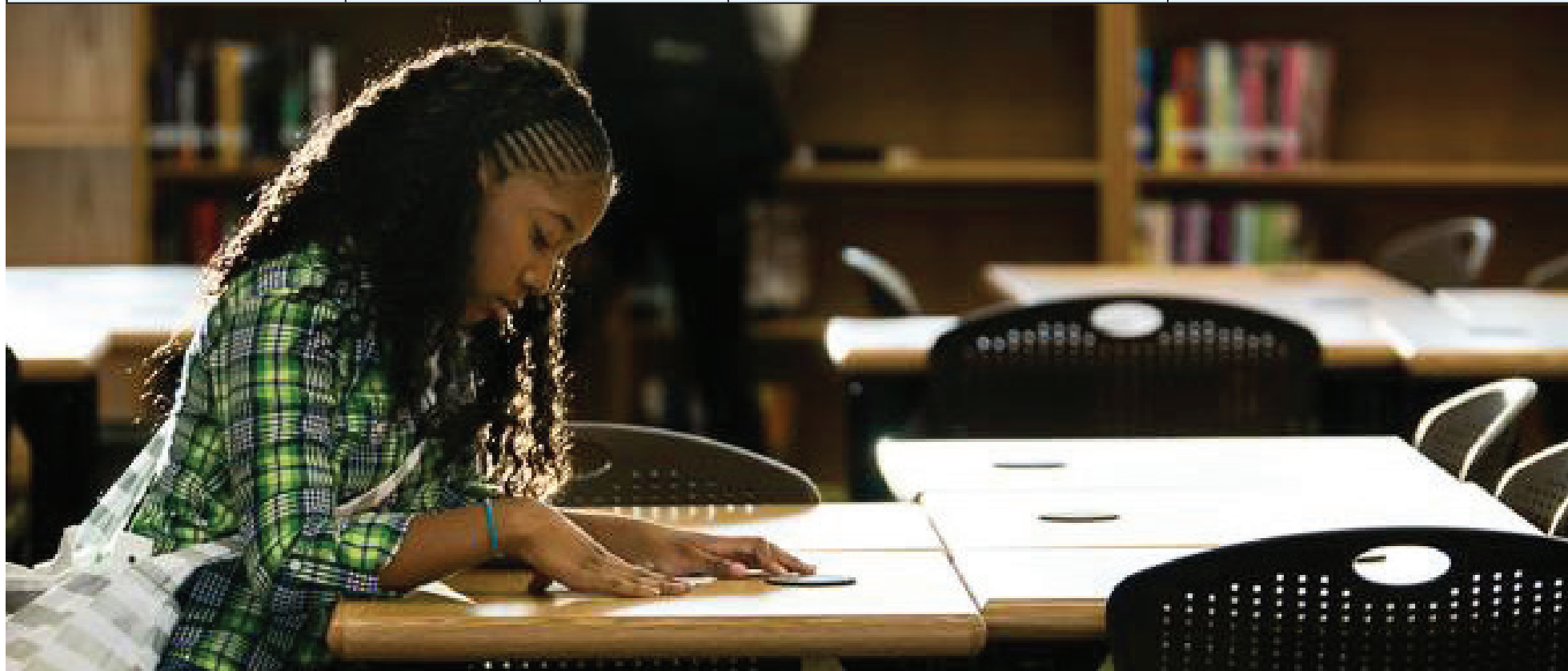
Iowa Assessment	Optional	Grade 3	The Iowa Assessment measures growth in fundamental areas of school achievement including reading comprehension and mathematics. Third-grade students who score 85 percent or higher on any of the subtests or composite scores on the CogAT have the option to take the Iowa Assessment for use with identification for the AIG program.	The results may be used in planning effective instructional programs and as part of the AIG identification process.
Iowa Assessment	Optional	Grades 4-12 for students referred for AIG	The Iowa Assessment measures growth in fundamental areas of school achievement including reading comprehension and mathematics.	The results may be used in planning effective instructional programs and as part of the AIG identification process.
Reynolds Intelligence Screening Test (RIST)	Optional	Select Grade 3-12 students needing additional aptitude testing for AIG identification	The RIST is an alternate screening measure of aptitude used for AIG identification.	The results may be used in planning effective instructional programs and as part of the AIG identification process.
Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices	Optional	Select Grade 3-12 students needing additional aptitude testing for AIG identification	The Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices is an alternative nonverbal, culturally unbiased aptitude assessment used for AIG identification.	The results may be used in planning effective instructional programs and as part of the AIG identification process.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

NAME OF ASSESSMENT	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL	WHO TAKES IT?	WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	HOW ARE RESULTS USED?
<b>Reading and mathematics screening</b>				
PathDriver for Reading and Math	Required by district	All students in Grades 6-8	PathDriver is a program that is used to give universal screenings in reading and mathematics. In reading, this includes measuring fluency. In math, questions may cover comparisons, computation and estimation.	This quick universal screener allows schools to monitor and predict growth in basic reading and math skills. Establishes a common language and tool for supporting literacy development at the middle-school level.
<b>Career &amp; Technical Education (CTE)</b>				
<b>N.C. Final Exams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business</li> <li>• Family &amp; Consumer Science</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	State mandated	Students enrolled in a middle-school Career and Technical Education (CTE) course	The N.C. Final Exams are state-mandated tests that measure a student's mastery of the Common Core State Standards and N.C. Essential Standards.	The N.C. Final Exams are used to assess educators' performance in relation to Standard 6 and Standard 8 of the N.C. Educator Evaluation System. For various high school credit courses taken in middle school, this test will also count as 20 percent of the student's overall grade in the course.
<b>English Language Learners</b>				
ACCESS for English language learners (ELLs)	State mandated	ELLs in grades K-12	The ACCESS for ELLs is a large-scale test of English language proficiency based on the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards.	Results are used to satisfy state and federal requirements for the annual assessment of the language proficiency of English language learners.
World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)	State mandated	Any student with a home language other than English	The W-APT placement test is used to identify students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).	This placement test is used to identify students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
<b>Health &amp; Fitness</b>				
Welnet Fitness Assessment	Optional	Grades 4-9	The Welnet assessment measures four major areas of fitness. Students are able to sign in online to Welnet to view personal scores and set goals for improvement. Studies show that fitness is correlated to positive gains in student achievement in all other academic areas, as well as attendance and behavior.	Teachers use summary reports to identify best practices and areas of need for instruction. Longitudinal data follows each student from Grade 4 through graduation.  The Healthful Living department is evaluating correlations between student fitness and academic achievement. This data will be used to inform the curricular path of the program.
<b>State accountability</b>				
<b>N.C. End-of-Course (EOC) Exams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math I</li> </ul>	State mandated	Students enrolled in an EOC course (i.e., Math I)	The EOC assessments are state-mandated tests that measure mastery of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts/Reading and mathematics, and the N.C. Essential Standards for science.	The results of the EOC tests are used for state accreditation and compliance with federal mandates. Individual student results are used as one measure to make educational decisions. Summary results are used as one measure to guide school improvement actions. Per N.C. State Board of Education policy. Schools are to use results from all EOC tests as at least 25 percent of the student's final grade for each respective course.

<b>N.C. End of Grade (EOG) Exams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading – Grades 6, 7, 8</li> <li>• Math – Grades 6, 7, 8</li> <li>• Science – Grade 8</li> </ul>	State mandated	All students enrolled in Grades 6-8 (except where exempted by Individual Education Plan or Limited English Proficiency policy)	The EOG assessments are state-mandated tests that measure mastery of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts/reading and mathematics and the North Carolina Essential Standards for Science.	The results of the EOG tests are used for overall school proficiency scores. Individual student results are used as one measure to make educational decisions. Summary results are used as one measure to guide school improvement actions.
<b>N.C. Final Exams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTE</li> <li>• High school credit courses as required</li> <li>• Middle School Social Studies – Grades 6-8</li> <li>• Middle School Science – Grades 6-7</li> </ul>	State mandated	Students enrolled in an NCFE course	The N.C. Final Exams are state-mandated tests that measure mastery of the Common Core State Standards and the N.C. Essential Standards.	The N.C. Final Exams are used to assess educators' performance in relation to Standard 6 and Standard 8 of the N.C. Educator Evaluation System. For various high school credit courses taken in middle school, this test will also count as 20 percent of the student's overall grade in the course.
<b>Local Assessments/Benchmarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading - Grades 6-8</li> <li>• Math - Grades 6-8, Math I</li> <li>• Science - Grade 8</li> <li>• Social Studies - Grades 6-8</li> <li>• Science – Grades 6-7</li> </ul>	Required by district; social studies (Grades 6-8) and science (Grades 6-7) are optional	Middle-school students enrolled in these courses	To inform instruction and provide feedback to students regarding their progress.	Results are used as formative assessments to inform students of their progress in these courses. Teachers also use the data to adapt instruction.



## HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

NAME OF ASSESSMENT	REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL?	WHO TAKES IT?	WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	HOW ARE RESULTS USED?
<b>Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate</b>				
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams	Optional	High school students who choose to take an exam, regardless of whether they are enrolled in an AP course.	The AP program allows students to take college-level courses and exams to earn college credit. There are 34 different AP exams that consist of multiple-choice and free-response items. All AP exams are optional for students.	Students' AP exam results enhance their college applications and eligibility for scholarships. Results are also used by high schools for advising and counseling students, by WCPSS for evaluating instructional effectiveness and planning curriculum, and by colleges and universities to make decisions regarding admissions and scholarships.
International Baccalaureate (IB) Course Exams	Required by IB	IB juniors and seniors in the final year of an IB course	At the end of each course, students sit for an external examination prepared by an International Board of Examiners, which has the final authority on the setting of examinations and the assessment of all candidates for the awarding of the IB diploma. International Baccalaureate course exams are rigorous, and performance is measured against predetermined criteria rather than the performance of other students taking the same examinations.	Results are used by high schools for advising and counseling students, by WCPSS and IB for evaluating instructional effectiveness and planning curriculum, to determine awarding of IB diplomas, and by colleges and universities to make decisions regarding admissions, scholarships and course credit or placement.
<b>College entrance exams</b>				
ACT	Required by the state and by many colleges for admission	Students in Grade 11	The ACT is a standardized, curriculum-based, multiple-choice achievement test that includes four areas: English, mathematics, reading and science. The ACT writing test is optional. The ACT assesses skills and knowledge that are important for success in college.	Results are used by high schools for advising and counseling students, by WCPSS for evaluating instructional effectiveness and planning curriculum, and by colleges and universities to make decisions regarding admissions, scholarships and loans and course placement.
PLAN	State mandated	Students in Grade 10	PLAN, also offered by the ACT corporation, is a curriculum-based educational and career-planning program for 10th-graders. PLAN includes four multiple-choice tests in English, math, reading and science.	The results are used by high schools for advising and counseling students, by WCPSS for evaluating instructional effectiveness and planning curriculum.
Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/ NMSQT)	Required by district	Students in Grade 10	The PSAT is a standardized, multiple-choice test that includes three sections: critical reading, mathematics and writing. The test provides practice for the SAT and allows students the opportunity to enter National Merit scholarship programs. Individual PSAT results are helpful for advising and counseling students.	At the high school and division levels, PSAT results are used to evaluate instructional effectiveness and to plan curriculum, serving as an additional piece of data for student placement.



Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)	Required by many colleges for admission	High school students bound for colleges	There are two types of SAT tests offered: the SAT and the SAT Subject Tests. The SAT is a standardized, multiple-choice test with three sections: critical reading, mathematics and writing. The SAT assesses skills students need to be successful in college.	Results are used by high schools for advising and counseling students, by WCPSS for evaluating instructional effectiveness and planning curriculum and by colleges and universities to make decisions regarding admissions, scholarships and loans, course placement and academic advising.
<b>Career and Technical Education (CTE)</b>				
WorkKeys	State mandated	Students enrolled in Grade 12 who are identified as Career and Technical Education concentrators	The three ACT WorkKeys assessments measure mastery of Applied Mathematics, Locating Information and Reading for Information.	Results are the basis of the National Career Readiness Certificate program and connect work skills, training and skill testing for educators and employers.
<b>CTE Post-Assessments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Education</li> <li>• Business, Finance and Information</li> <li>• Technology Education</li> <li>• Career Development</li> <li>• Family and Consumer Science Education</li> <li>• Health Science Education</li> <li>• Marketing and Entrepreneurship Education</li> <li>• Technology Engineering and Design Education</li> <li>• Trade and Industrial Education</li> </ul>	State mandated	Students who have completed a CTE course	The CTE post-assessments are state-mandated tests that measure mastery of state standards.	Results provide teachers and administrators feedback on curriculum and instructional practice.
<b>N.C. Final Exams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Education</li> <li>• Business</li> <li>• Career Development</li> <li>• Family &amp; Consumer Science</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	State mandated	Students enrolled in a CTE course	The N.C. Final Exams are state-mandated tests that measure mastery of the Common Core State Standards and the N.C. Essential Standards.	The N.C. Final Exams are used to assess educators' performance in relation to Standard 6 and Standard 8 of the N.C. Educator Evaluation System.
• Career and Technical Education (CTE) Industry Credential Assessments	Optional	Students who have completed a CTE course	N.C. Career and Technical Education industry credential assessment results are used for local and state reporting purposes and offers industry certification or state licensure for students. The assessments include, but are not limited to, AutoCAD, Adobe, EverFI, ServSafe, Microsoft Office Specialist, Nurse Aide, OSHA 10-Hour, MTA, FIP, and NATEF.	CTE industry credential assessment results are used for local and state reporting purposes, and in some cases offer industry certification or state licensure for students. This information is also used for feedback on curriculum and instructional practice.

Health and Fitness				
Welnet Fitness Assessment	Optional	Grades 4-9	The Welnet assessment measures four major areas of fitness. Students are able to sign in online to Welnet to view personal scores and set goals for improvement. Studies show that fitness is correlated to positive gains in student achievement in all other academic areas, as well as attendance and behavior.	Teachers use summary reports to identify best practices and areas of need for instruction. Longitudinal data follows each student from Grade 4 through graduation. The Healthful Living department is evaluating correlations between student fitness and academic achievement. This data will be used to inform the curricular path of the program.
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State accountability				
<b>N.C. End-of-Course (EOC) Exams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• English II</li> <li>• Math I</li> </ul>	State mandated	Students enrolled in an EOC course	The EOC assessments are state-mandated tests that measure mastery of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language arts/reading and mathematics and the North Carolina Essential Standards for Science.	The results of the EOC tests are used for state accreditation and compliance with federal mandates. Individual student results are used as one measure to make educational decisions. Summary results are used as one measure to guide school improvement actions. Per N.C. State Board of Education policy, schools are to use results from all EOC tests as at least 25 percent of the student's final grade for each respective course.
<b>N.C. Final Exams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English I</li> <li>• English III</li> <li>• English IV</li> <li>• Physical Science</li> <li>• Chemistry</li> <li>• Physics</li> <li>• Earth/Environmental Science</li> <li>• World History</li> <li>• American History I</li> <li>• American History II</li> <li>• Civics &amp; Economics</li> <li>• US History</li> <li>• Algebra II</li> <li>• Discrete Math</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• Pre-calculus</li> </ul>	State mandated	Students enrolled in an NCFE course	The N.C. Final Exams are state-mandated tests that measure mastery of the Common Core State Standards and the N.C. Essential Standards.	The N.C. Final Exams are used to assess educators' performance in relation to Standard 6 and Standard 8 of the N.C. Educator Evaluation System (State Board policy GCS-A-016). For various high school credit courses taken in middle school, this test will also count as 20 percent of the student's overall grade in the course.

<b>Local Assessments/Benchmarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Core Math 1</li> <li>• English II</li> <li>• Biology</li> </ul>	Required by district	High school students enrolled in these courses	To inform instruction and provide feedback to students regarding their progress.	Results are used as formative assessments to inform students of their progress in these courses. Teachers also use the data to inform instruction.
<b>Nationally normed tests</b>				
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	Federally mandated	Selected students in Grade 12	The NAEP is the largest nationally representative assessment of what U.S. students know and can do in various subject areas. The NAEP provides results on subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences and school environment for populations of students (e.g., all students in Grade 12) and groups within those populations (e.g., female students, Hispanic students). NAEP does not provide scores for individual students or schools.	Results serve as a common metric for all states and selected urban districts. The assessment stays essentially the same from year to year. This permits NAEP to provide a clear picture of student academic progress over time. The NAEP results are reported as The Nation's Report Card. Elected officials, policymakers and educators all use NAEP results to develop ways to improve education.



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