

2007 NAEP Writing Results:

Summary of Results
for Massachusetts

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I. Executive Summary

This report provides selected results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2007 Writing for Massachusetts' public school students at grade 8.

Background

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment was conducted at the state and national level at grade 8, and at the national level only at grade 12. NAEP assesses three types of writing: narrative, informative, and persuasive. Students write two drafts responding to two separate prompts with two separate purposes.
- The 2007 8th Grade Writing Assessment was the third administered. Previous writing assessments took place in 1998 and 2002.
- 135 schools and 3,437 students in Massachusetts participated in the 2007 NAEP assessment.

Performance by Students in Massachusetts on the 2007 Grade 8 Writing Assessment

Performance by students in Massachusetts is “at the very top of the pack.”

- Of the 45 states and the Department of Defense schools that participated in the 2007 8th grade writing assessment, Massachusetts came in third behind New Jersey and Connecticut.
- Forty-six percent of students in Massachusetts performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level; 31% of students nationally performed at this level. The average scale score of students in Massachusetts (167) was significantly higher than that of students nationally (154).

Performance has improved significantly since 1998.

- The average scale score in 2007 was 167. There was no statistically significant difference between the 2007 and 2002 scale scores, but there was a statistically significant difference between the 2007 and 1998 scale scores.
- The percentage of students performing at Proficient in Massachusetts was not significantly different from the percent Proficient in 2002 (42%) but was significantly larger than the percent proficient in 1998 (31%).

Performance gaps among subgroups are an area of critical concern.

- The performance gap in writing has closed slightly since 2002 for all subgroups except for the gap between performance of female and male students.
- Females outscored males by 21 scale score points. The gap for the nation is 20 points.
- Whites outscored Blacks by 27 scale score points. The gap for the nation is 22 points.
- Whites outscored Hispanics by 35 scale score points. The gap for the nation is 21 points. The White-Hispanic gap in Massachusetts is the largest in the nation.
- Students ineligible for the National School Lunch Program outscored eligible students by 28 scale score points. The gap for the nation is 23 points.
- From 1998-2007, the gaps have narrowed slightly for all subgroups except females and males.

II. Summary of 2007 NAEP Grade 8 Writing Results for Massachusetts

Overall Scale Score Results

In this section, student performance is reported as an average score based on the NAEP writing scale, which ranges from 0 to 300 for each grade. Scores on this scale are comparable from 1998 through 2007.

Table 1 shows the overall performance results of grade 8 public school students in Massachusetts, the nation (public), and the region. The percentile indicates the percentage of students whose score fell at or below a particular point on the NAEP writing scale. For example, the 25th percentile score was 132 for public school eighth-graders in the nation in 2007, indicating that 25 percent of grade 8 public school students scores at or below 132.

Table 1 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Average scale scores and selected percentile scores in NAEP writing for eighth-grade public school students, by assessment year and jurisdiction: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Year and jurisdiction		Average scale score	10th percentile	25th percentile	50th percentile	75th percentile	90th percentile
1998	Nation (public)	148*	102*	124*	149*	172*	192*
	Massachusetts	155*	109*	131*	156*	180*	202*
2002	Nation (public)	152*	102*	127*	153*	178	199
	Massachusetts	163	115*	139*	165	190	210
2007	Nation (public)	154	108	132	156	178	198
	Northeast ²	162	115	140	164	187	206
	Massachusetts	167	122	145	169	191	208

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction in 2007.

² Region in which state is located. Regional data are not provided for years prior to 2003 because the region definitions were changed. In 2003, NAEP adopted the U.S. Census Bureau defined regions: Northeast, South, Midwest, and West.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing Assessments.

Overall Achievement–Level Results

In this section, student performance is reported as the percentage of students performing relative to performance standards set by the National Assessment Governing Board.

Table 2 presents the percentage of students at grade 8 who performed below *Basic*, at or above *Basic*, at or above *Proficient*, and at the *Advanced* level.

Table 2 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Percentage of eighth-grade public school students at or above NAEP writing achievement levels, by assessment year and jurisdiction: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Year and jurisdiction		Below <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
1998	Nation (public)	17*	83*	24*	1*
	Massachusetts	13*	87*	31*	2
2002	Nation (public)	16*	84*	30	2
	Massachusetts	10	90	42	4
2007	Nation (public)	13	87	31	2
	Northeast ²	10	90	40	3
	Massachusetts	7	93	46	3

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction in 2007.

² Region in which state is located. Regional data are not provided for years prior to 2003 because the region definitions were changed. In 2003, NAEP adopted the U.S. Census Bureau defined regions: Northeast, South, Midwest, and West.

NOTE: Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below Basic, 113 or lower; Basic, 114–172; Proficient, 173–223; and Advanced, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing Assessments.

Figure 1 below shows the comparison of the achievement levels of Massachusetts students and students in national public schools on the 2007 NAEP Grade 8 Writing Assessment.

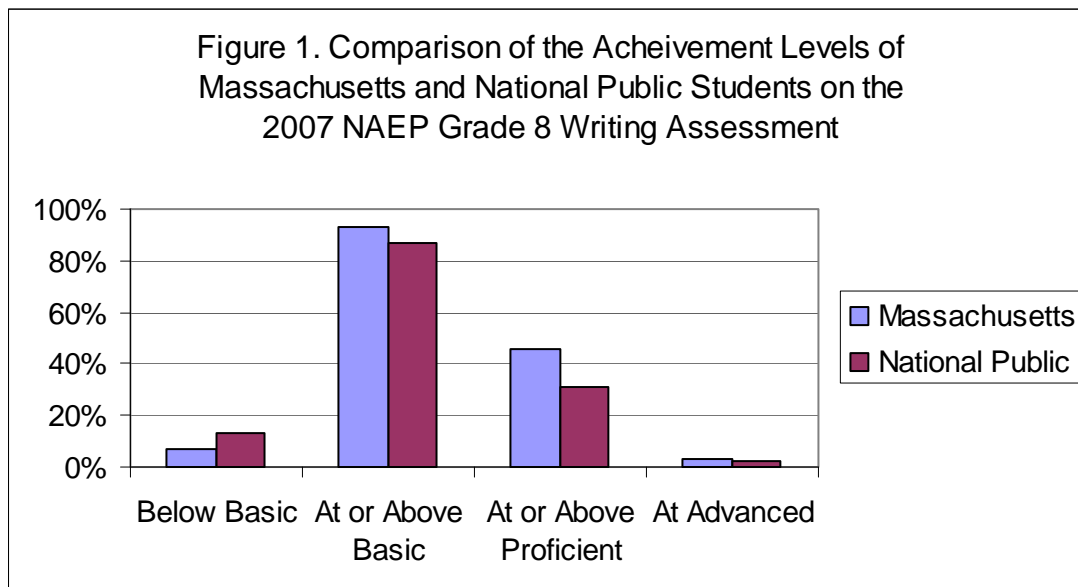
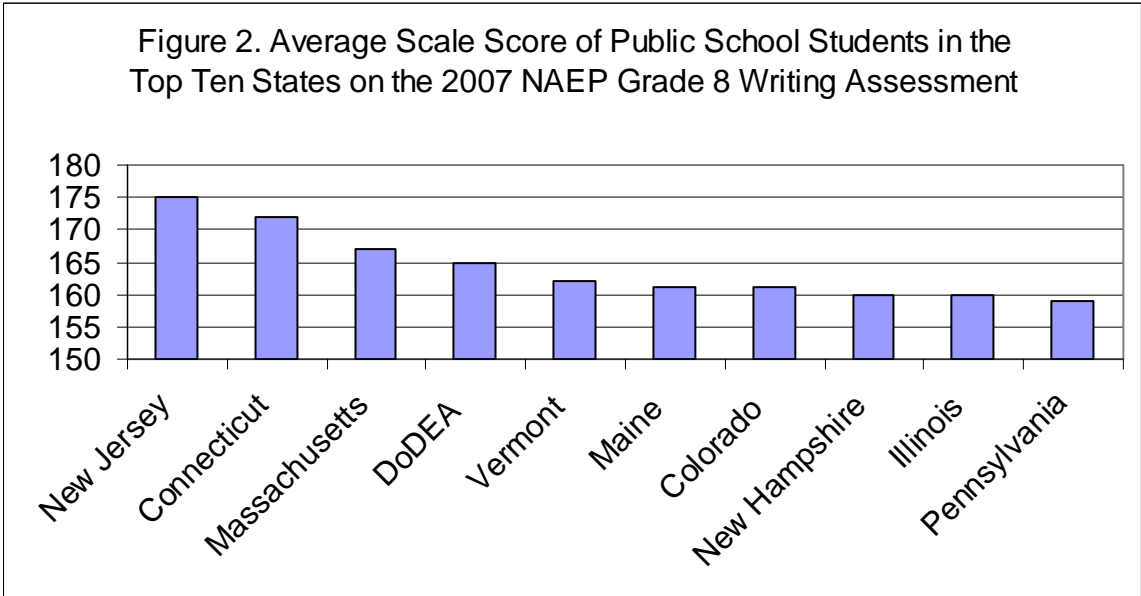


Figure 2 below compares the scale scores of Massachusetts public students with the public school students in the top ten scoring states on the 2007 NAEP Grade 8 Writing Assessment.



III. NAEP Background Information

What is NAEP?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as “The Nation’s Report Card,” is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in various subjects. NAEP assesses representative samples of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 in core academic subjects. For more than 30 years, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography and the arts. NAEP is also developing assessments in world history, economics, and foreign language.

NAEP is mandated by the U.S. Congress and is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at the U.S. Department of Education. Policies for NAEP are set by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), whose members are appointed by the Secretary of Education.

NAEP collectively encompasses national assessments, long-term trend assessments, and state assessments. For national assessments, NAEP samples students from grades 4, 8, and 12 in public and nonpublic schools. For long-term trend assessments, NAEP samples students at ages 9, 13, and 17.

What is a NAEP State Assessment?

Since 1990, NAEP assessments have also been conducted to give results for participating states. For the state assessments, NAEP samples students from grades 4 and 8 and administers assessments in reading, mathematics, writing, and science. According to the provisions of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, NAEP must assess fourth and eighth grade students every two years in reading and mathematics.

In its content, the state assessment is identical to the assessment conducted nationally. However, because the national NAEP samples were not designed to support the reporting of accurate and representative state-level results, separate representative samples of students were selected for each participating state and jurisdiction. Beginning with the 2002 assessments, a combined sample of public schools was selected for both state and national NAEP. The national sample is a subset of the combined sample of students assessed in each participating state, plus an additional sample from the states that did not participate in the state assessment. This additional sample ensures that the national sample is representative of the total national student population.

NAEP does not provide scores for individual students or schools; instead, it offers results regarding subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment for national and state populations of students (e.g., fourth graders) and subgroups of those populations (e.g., female students, Hispanic students). NAEP results are based on a sample of student populations of interest.

How Is Student Writing Performance on the Writing Assessment Reported?

The results of student performance on the NAEP assessments in 2007 are reported for various groups of students. NAEP does not produce scores for individual students, nor does it report scores for schools or for school districts. Some large urban districts, however, have voluntarily participated in the assessment on a trial basis and were sampled as states were sampled. Writing performance for groups of students is reported in two ways: as average scale scores and as percentages of students performing at various achievement levels.

Scale Scores

NAEP writing results are reported on a 0–300 scale. Because NAEP scales are developed independently for each subject, average scores cannot be compared across subjects even when the scale has the same range. Although the writing scale score ranges are identical for both grades 8 and 12, they were derived independently and, therefore, scores cannot be compared across grades.

In addition to reporting an overall writing score for each grade, scores are reported at five percentiles (10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th) to show trends in performance for lower-, middle-, and higher-performing students.

NAEP Achievement Levels

Based on recommendations from policymakers, educators, and members of the general public, the Governing Board sets specific achievement levels for each subject area and grade. Achievement levels are performance standards defining what students should know and be able to do. They provide another perspective with which to interpret student performance. NAEP results are reported as percentages of students performing at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels and at the *Advanced* level.

The NAEP achievement levels have been widely used by national and state officials.

- *Basic* denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade.
- *Proficient* represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter.
- *Advanced* represents superior performance.

The achievement levels are cumulative. Therefore, students performing at the *Proficient* level also display the competencies associated with the *Basic* level, and students at the *Advanced* level demonstrate the competencies associated with both the *Basic* and the *Proficient* levels. The writing achievement-level descriptions for grade 8 are summarized in figure 1. These achievement levels are applied to first drafts (not final or polished student writing) that are generated within limited time constraints in a large-scale assessment environment. Students are allowed 25 minutes to complete the assignment.

How are Students with Disabilities (SD) and/or English Language Learners (ELL) Assessed?

The results displayed in this report and official publications of NAEP 2007 results are based on representative samples that include students with disabilities (SD) and students who are English language learners (ELL). Some of these students were assessed using accommodations (such as extra time and testing in small groups). The identified SD and ELL students, who typically received accommodations in their classroom testing and required these accommodations to participate, also received them in the NAEP assessment, provided the accommodations did not change the nature of what was tested.

School staff make the decisions about whether to include an SD or ELL student in a NAEP assessment and which testing accommodations, if any, the student should receive. All ELL students are assessed in NAEP the same way they are in their state assessments. If an ELL student takes a simplified English or native language academic assessment, NAEP staff work with the school to determine if the student could take NAEP assessments with any of the allowable accommodations. The NAEP program furnishes tools to assist school personnel in making those decisions.

A sampling procedure is used to select students at each grade being tested. Students are selected on a random basis, without regard to SD or ELL status. Once the students are selected, the schools identify those who have SD or ELL status. School staff familiar with these students are asked a series of questions to help them decide whether each student should participate in the assessment and whether the student needs accommodations.

Inclusion in NAEP of an SD or ELL student is encouraged (a) if that student participated in the regular state academic assessment in the subject being tested, and (b) if that student can participate in NAEP with the accommodations NAEP allows. Even if the student did not participate in the regular state assessment, or if the student needs accommodations NAEP does not allow, school staff are asked whether that student could participate in NAEP with the allowable accommodations. (For example, extending testing over several days is not allowed for NAEP because NAEP administrators are in each school for only one day.)

Many of the same testing accommodations (e.g., extra testing time or individual rather than group administration) are provided for SD or ELL students who participated in NAEP. Even with the availability of accommodations, some students are excluded from the NAEP assessments by their schools. States vary in their proportions of special-needs students (especially English language learners). These variations, as well as differences in policies and practices regarding the identification and inclusion of special-needs students, lead to differences in exclusion and accommodation rates. These differences should be considered when comparing student performance over time and across states. More information about NAEP's policy on inclusion of special-needs students is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/inclusion.asp>.

Caution in Interpreting Results

The averages and percentages in this report are estimates based on samples of students rather than on entire populations. Moreover, the collection of questions used at each grade level is only a sample of the many questions that could have been asked to assess the skills and abilities described in the NAEP framework. Therefore, the results are subject to a measure of uncertainty, reflected in the standard error of the estimates—a range of up to a few points above or below the score or percentage—which takes into account potential score fluctuation due to sampling error and measurement error. Statistical tests that factor in these standard errors are used to determine whether the differences between average scores or percentages are significant. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level. Significance tests for most NAEP variables are available in the NAEP Data Explorer at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

Results from the 2007 writing assessment are compared to results from two previous assessment years. Changes in performance results over time may reflect not only changes in students' knowledge and skills but also other factors, such as changes in student demographics, education programs and policies (including policies on accommodations and exclusions), and teacher qualifications.

NAEP sample sizes have increased since 2002 compared to previous years, resulting in smaller standard errors. As a consequence, smaller differences are detected more statistically significant than were detected in previous assessments. In addition, estimates based on smaller groups are likely to have relatively large standard errors. Thus, some seemingly large differences may not be statistically significant. That is, it cannot be determined whether these differences are due to sampling error or to true differences in the population of interest.

Differences between scores or between percentages are discussed in this report only when they are significant from a statistical perspective. Statistically significant differences are referred to as “significant differences” or “significantly different.” Significant differences between 2007 and prior assessments are marked with a notation (*) in the tables. Any differences in scores within a year or across years that are mentioned in the text as “higher,” “lower,” “greater,” or “smaller” are statistically significant.

Score differences or gaps cited in this report are calculated based on differences between unrounded numbers. Therefore, the reader may find that the score difference cited in the text may not be identical to the difference obtained from subtracting the rounded values shown in the accompanying tables or figures.

It is important to note that simple cross-tabulations of a variable with measures of educational achievement, like the ones presented in this report, cannot constitute proof that a difference in the variable causes differences in educational achievement. There might be several reasons why the performance of one group of students might differ from another. Only through controlled experiments with random assignment of students to groups can hypotheses about the causes of performance differences be tested.

IV. The 2007 NAEP Writing Assessment

What Was Assessed?

The content for each NAEP assessment is determined by the National Assessment Governing Board. The objectives for each NAEP assessment are described in a framework, a document that delineates the content and skills to be measured, as well as the types of questions to be included in the assessment.

The NAEP writing framework serves as the blueprint for the writing assessment, specifying the skills that should be assessed. It represents ideas from a wide range of organizations that are part of writing education, as well as writing experts, school administrators, policymakers, teachers, parents, and others.

The current NAEP writing framework was used to guide the development of the 1998, 2002 and 2007 assessments. (A new framework will be used for the 2011 NAEP writing assessment.) Updates to the framework over the years provided more details about the kinds of writing tasks to include in the assessment but did not change the content, allowing students' performance in 2007 to be compared with previous years.

Informed by writing research and theory, the NAEP writing framework emphasizes that writing is done for a variety of specific situations and that good writers can communicate effectively in these different situations. In addition, writing is as much thought as communication, and a thoughtful writing process includes both composing and revising.

Given that writing is done for many reasons, the framework specifies that students' writing skills be measured by asking students to write for different purposes and audiences. Tasks on the assessment require students to inform, to persuade, and to tell stories, real or imagined, and to do so for a range of audiences, among them teachers, newspaper editors, potential employers, and peers. For more information on the framework, see <http://www.nagb.org>.

Unlike other NAEP assessments, which use a combination of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions, the writing assessment consists entirely of students' writing for the purposes described in the framework. Released test questions, along with student performance data by state, are available on the NAEP website at (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls/>).

Purposes for Writing	Description
Narrative	Narrative writing encourages writers to incorporate their imagination and creativity in the production of stories and personal essays. At its best, narrative writing fosters imagination, creativity, and speculation by allowing writers to express their thoughts and to analyze and understand their actions and emotions.
Informative	In informative writing, the writer provides the reader with information. This type of writing is used to share knowledge and to convey messages, instructions, and ideas. When used as a means of exploration, informative writing helps both the writer and the reader to learn new ideas and to reexamine old conclusions.
Persuasive	Persuasive writing seeks to persuade the reader to take action or bring about change. This type of writing involves a clear awareness of what arguments might most affect the audience being addressed. Writing persuasively also requires the use of such skills as analysis, inference, synthesis, and evaluation.

Who Was Assessed?

The 2007 NAEP writing assessment was conducted at the state and national level at grade 8, and at the national level only at grade 12. Therefore, grade 12 results are not presented in this state report. Forty-six jurisdictions participated in the NAEP writing assessment at grade 8 in 2007: forty-five states and the Department of Defense Education Activity Schools (domestic and overseas). The District of Columbia, which participated in the reading and mathematics assessments in 2007, did not have a sufficient number of students to participate in all three simultaneous assessments. Therefore, the District of Columbia did not participate in the 2007 writing assessment. The target sample for each state or other jurisdiction was approximately 100 schools at each grade tested and approximately 3,000 students for each subject at each grade. States containing trial urban districts had larger samples.

The sample of schools and students was chosen in a two-stage sampling process. First, the sample of schools was selected by probability sampling methods. Then, within the participating schools, random samples of students were chosen.

The nationally representative sample of eighth-graders assessed in 2007 consisted of the combined sample of public school students assessed in each participating state, plus an additional sample of students from states for which results are not reported separately and students in nonpublic schools (i.e., private, Bureau of Indian Education, and the Department of Defense schools). The national sample for grade 12 was chosen using a multistage design that involved drawing students from the sampled public and nonpublic schools across the country. Grade 8 state-level results in this report reflect the performance of public school students only. At grade 8, approximately 6,810 schools and 139,900 students participated in 2007. At grade 12, the national-only sample included approximately 660 schools and 27,900 students in 2007.

The overall participation rates for schools and students must meet guidelines established by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Assessment Governing Board for assessment results to be reported publicly. A participation rate of at least 85 percent for schools in each subject and grade was required, and these standards were met for each of the 46 jurisdictions. Participation rates for the 2007 writing assessment are available at the NAEP website (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/writing/sampledesign.asp>).

V. Writing Performance of Selected Student Groups

This section of the report presents results for students in Massachusetts and the nation by demographic characteristics. Student performance data are reported for:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Student eligibility for the National School Lunch Program
- Type of location

Gender

Table 3 shows average scale scores and achievement-level data for grade 8 public school students by gender.

Table 3 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by gender, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Gender, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below Basic	At or above Basic	At or above Proficient	At Advanced
Male							
1998	Nation (public)	51	138*	24*	76*	15*	#*
	Massachusetts	51	144*	19*	81*	20*	1
2002	Nation (public)	50	141*	23*	77*	20	1
	Massachusetts	53	155	13	87	32	2
2007	Nation (public)	51	144	18	82	20	1
	Massachusetts	52	157	10	90	32	1
Female							
1998	Nation (public)	49	158*	10*	90*	34*	2*
	Massachusetts	49	166*	7*	93*	44*	4
2002	Nation (public)	50	162*	9*	91*	40	3
	Massachusetts	47	173	6	94	53	7
2007	Nation (public)	49	164	7	93	41	3
	Massachusetts	48	178	4	96	60	6

Rounds to zero.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction and student group in 2007.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below Basic, 113 or lower; Basic, 114–172; Proficient, 173–223; and Advanced, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing assessments.

Race/Ethnicity

Table 4 shows average scale scores and achievement-level data for public school students at grade 8 in Massachusetts and the nation by race/ethnicity.

Race/ethnicity, year, and jurisdiction		The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment					
		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below Basic	At or above Basic	At or above Proficient	At Advanced
White							
1998	Nation (public)	69*	155*	12*	88*	31*	1*
	Massachusetts	81*	160*	9*	91*	36*	3
2002	Nation (public)	64*	159*	11*	89*	37*	3
	Massachusetts	75	171	5	95	49	5
2007	Nation (public)	58	162	8	92	39	2
	Massachusetts	74	173	3	97	52	4
Black							
1998	Nation (public)	16*	130*	30*	70*	7*	#
	Massachusetts	6	134*	25	75	9	#
2002	Nation (public)	15*	134*	27*	73*	13*	#
	Massachusetts	9	139	25	75	18	1
2007	Nation (public)	17	140	20	80	15	#
	Massachusetts	9	146	14	86	19	#
Hispanic							
1998	Nation (public)	11*	130*	31*	69*	9*	#*
	Massachusetts	9	122*	39	61	6*	#
2002	Nation (public)	14*	135*	28*	72*	15	1
	Massachusetts	10	132	27	73	10	#
2007	Nation (public)	19	141	21	79	17	#
	Massachusetts	10	138	25	75	16	#
Asian/Pacific Islander							
1998	Nation (public)	3*	152	16	84	30	2
	Massachusetts	4	159*	9	91	36	1
2002	Nation (public)	4	159*	13*	87*	39	3
	Massachusetts	5	167	10	90	45	7
2007	Nation (public)	5	166	8	92	45	5
	Massachusetts	5	175	4	96	55	6

See notes at end of table.

**Table
4**

Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by race/ethnicity, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Race/ethnicity, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below Basic	At or above Basic	At or above Proficient	At Advanced
American Indian/Alaska Native							
1998	Nation (public)	1	130	33	67	11	#
	Massachusetts	#	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
2002	Nation (public)	1	138	25	75	17	1
	Massachusetts	#	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
2007	Nation (public)	1	143	21	79	21	1
	Massachusetts	#	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
Unclassified²							
1998	Nation (public)	#*	143*	18	82	20	#
	Massachusetts	#	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
2002	Nation (public)	1*	150	17	83	28	1
	Massachusetts	1	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
2007	Nation (public)	1	158	11	89	34	2
	Massachusetts	1	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction and student group in 2007.

² The Unclassified category includes students whose school-reported race/ethnicity was "other" or unavailable, or was missing, and whose race/ethnicity category could not be determined from self-reported information.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below Basic, 113 or lower; Basic, 114–172; Proficient, 173–223; and Advanced, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing Assessments.

Student Eligibility for the National School Lunch Program

NAEP collects data on eligibility for the federal program providing free or reduced-price school lunches. The free/reduced-price lunch component of the National School Lunch program (NSLP) offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is designed to ensure that children near or below the poverty line receive nourishing meals. Eligibility is determined through the USDA's Income Eligibility Guidelines, and results for this category of students are included as an indicator of family income.

Table 5 shows average scale scores and achievement-level data for public school students at grade 8 in Massachusetts and the nation by student eligibility for the National School Lunch Program.

Table 5 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by eligibility for National School Lunch Program, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Eligibility status, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below Basic	At or above Basic	At or above Proficient	At Advanced
Eligible							
1998	Nation (public)	30*	131*	29*	71*	10*	#*
	Massachusetts	23	131*	28*	72*	8*	#
2002	Nation (public)	34*	136*	27*	73*	15	#
	Massachusetts	29	141	22	78	20	1
2007	Nation (public)	41	141	20	80	17	#
	Massachusetts	27	146	16	84	21	1
Not eligible							
1998	Nation (public)	58	156*	11*	89*	32*	1*
	Massachusetts	73	162*	8*	92*	39*	3
2002	Nation (public)	56	161*	10*	90*	38	3
	Massachusetts	69	173	5	95	52	6
2007	Nation (public)	58	164	7	93	40	3
	Massachusetts	73	174	4	96	54	4
Information not available							
1998	Nation (public)	12*	150	17	83	27	1
	Massachusetts	5	153	17	83	31	3
2002	Nation (public)	10*	154	15	85	32	3
	Massachusetts	2	161	6	94	30	3
2007	Nation (public)	1	149	15	85	25	2
	Massachusetts	#	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction and student group in 2007.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below Basic, 113 or lower; Basic, 114–172; Proficient, 173–223; and Advanced, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Performance comparisons may be affected by differences in exclusion rates for English language learners in the NAEP samples and by differences in sample sizes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing Assessments.

Types of Location

Schools that participated in the assessment were classified as being located in four mutually exclusive types of community: city, suburb, town, and rural.

Table 6 show average scale scores and achievement-level data for public school students at grade 8 in Massachusetts and the nation by type of location.

Table 6 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Percentage of eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by type of location, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 2007

Type of location, year, and jurisdiction	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below Basic	At or above Basic	At or above Proficient	At Advanced
City 2007						
Nation (public)	28*	148*	17*	83*	25*	1
Massachusetts	21	157	12	88	35	2
Suburb 2007						
Nation (public)	36*	159*	10*	90*	36*	2
Massachusetts	65	170	6	94	49	4
Town 2007						
Nation (public)	13*	152	13	87	28	1
Massachusetts	3	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
Rural 2007						
Nation (public)	23*	155*	11*	89*	30*	1
Massachusetts	12	167	4	96	44	2

‡ Reporting standards not met.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same group in Massachusetts.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below Basic, 113 or lower; Basic, 114–172; Proficient, 173–223; and Advanced, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing Assessment.

Toward a More Inclusive NAEP: Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

It is important to assess all students chosen through the sampling process, including students with disabilities (SD) and students who are classified by their schools as English language learners (ELL). Some students sampled for participation in NAEP can be excluded from the sample according to carefully defined criteria.

School staff make the decisions about whether to include an SD or ELL student in a NAEP assessment, and which testing accommodations, if any, they should receive. The NAEP program furnishes tools to assist school personnel in making those decisions.

A sampling procedure is used to select students at each grade being tested. Students are selected on a random basis, without regard to SD or ELL status. Once the students are selected, the schools identify those who have SD or ELL status. School staff that are familiar with these students are asked a series of questions to help them decide whether each student should participate in the assessment and whether the student needs accommodations.

Inclusion in NAEP of an SD or ELL student is encouraged (a) if that student participated in the regular state academic assessment in the subject being tested, and (b) if that student can participate in NAEP with the accommodations NAEP allows. Even if the student did not participate in the regular state assessment, or took the state's alternate assessment, or needs accommodations NAEP does not allow, school staff are asked whether that student could participate in NAEP with the allowable accommodations. (One of the examples of testing accommodations not allowed for NAEP is extending testing over several days because NAEP administrators are in each school for only one day.)

The results displayed in this report and in other publications of the NAEP 2007 writing results are based on representative samples that include SD and ELL students who were assessed either with or without accommodations, based on NAEP's guidelines.

Percentages of students excluded from NAEP may vary considerably across states and within a state across years. Comparisons of results across states and within a state across years should be interpreted with caution if the exclusion rates vary widely. The percentages of assessed students classified as SD or ELL, as well as their NAEP performance in each participating state and jurisdiction, are available in an interactive database at the NAEP website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>.

Prior to 1998, no testing accommodations were made available to the samples of students with disabilities and the English language learners in state NAEP writing assessments that served as the basis for reported results. In the 1996 national and 2000 national and state mathematics and reading assessments, NAEP researchers drew a second representative sample of schools. Accommodations were made available for students in this sample who required them, provided the accommodation did not change the nature of what was tested. For example, students could be assessed one-on-one or in small groups, receive extended time, or use a large-print test booklet. In mathematics, students had the option of having the test questions read aloud in English or using a bilingual English-Spanish test booklet. However, in the mathematics assessment, students were not allowed to use calculators for any questions on which calculators were not permitted. NAEP has used these comparable samples to study the effects of allowing accommodations for students categorized as SD or ELL in the assessments. A series of technical research papers covering various NAEP subject areas has been published with the results of these comparisons (see <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/inclusion.asp#research>). In writing, when a new framework was introduced in 1998, accommodations were permitted and have continued to be permitted in the subsequent assessments.

Table 7 displays the percentages of students with disabilities and English language learners in Massachusetts identified, excluded, and assessed under standard and accommodated conditions at grade 8.

Table 7 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Eighth-grade public school students identified as students with disabilities (SD) and/or English language learners (ELL) in NAEP writing, as a percentage of all students, by assessment year and testing status: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Year and testing status	SD and/or ELL		SD		ELL		
	Massachusetts	Nation	Massachusetts	Nation	Massachusetts	Nation	
1998	Identified	17	14	15	11	2	3
	Excluded	5	4	3	4	2	1
	Assessed under standard conditions	7	7	6	5	#	2
Assessed with accommodations	5	3	5	3	#	#	
2002	Identified	20	18	17	13	4	6
	Excluded	3	4	2	3	2	1
	Assessed under standard conditions	7	8	6	5	2	4
Assessed with accommodations	10	5	9	5	1	1	
2007	Identified	22	18	19	13	4	7
	Excluded	6	3	6	3	1	1
	Assessed under standard conditions	3	6	2	3	1	4
Assessed with accommodations	13	9	11	8	2	2	

¹# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Students identified as both SD and ELL were counted only once under the combined SD and/or ELL category, but were counted separately under the SD and ELL categories. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing Assessments.

Table 8 shows the percentages of students in Massachusetts by disability status and their performance on the NAEP assessment in terms of average scale scores and percentages performing below *Basic*, at or above *Basic*, at or above *Proficient*, and at *Advanced* for grade 8.

Table 8 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Percentage of assessed eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by students with disabilities (SD) status, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 1998, 2002, and 2007

SD status, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
SD							
1998	Nation (public)	8*	109*	58*	42*	2*	#
	Massachusetts	12	122*	40*	60*	5*	#
2002	Nation (public)	11	112*	54*	46*	4	#
	Massachusetts	15	129*	34*	66*	12	#
2007	Nation (public)	11	118	46	54	6	#
	Massachusetts	14	139	20	80	14	#
Not SD							
1998	Nation (public)	92*	151*	13*	87*	26*	1*
	Massachusetts	88	160*	9*	91*	35*	2
2002	Nation (public)	89	156*	12*	88*	33	2
	Massachusetts	85	170	5	95	47	5
2007	Nation (public)	89	159	9	91	33	2
	Massachusetts	86	171	5	95	51	4

Rounds to zero.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction and student group in 2007.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below *Basic*, 113 or lower; *Basic*, 114–172; *Proficient*, 173–223; and *Advanced*, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Performance comparisons may be affected by differences in exclusion rates for English language learners in the NAEP samples and by differences in sample sizes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing Assessments.

Table 9 presents the percentages of students assessed in Massachusetts by ELL status, their average scale scores, and their performance in terms of the percentage below *Basic*, the percentages at or above *Basic*, at or above *Proficient*, and at *Advanced*.

Table 9 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Percentage of assessed eighth-grade public school students, average scale scores, and percentage at or above achievement levels in NAEP writing, by English language learners (ELL) status, assessment year, and jurisdiction: 1998, 2002, and 2007

ELL status, year, and jurisdiction		Percentage of students	Average scale score	Below <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Basic</i>	At or above <i>Proficient</i>	At <i>Advanced</i>
ELL							
1998	Nation (public)	2*	107*	59*	41*	2*	#
	Massachusetts	1*	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
2002	Nation (public)	5*	115*	49*	51*	6	#
	Massachusetts	3	110	55	45	4	1
2007	Nation (public)	6	120	42	58	5	#
	Massachusetts	4	113	53	47	5	#
Not ELL							
1998	Nation (public)	98*	149*	16*	84*	25*	1*
	Massachusetts	99*	155*	13*	87*	32*	2
2002	Nation (public)	95*	153*	14*	86*	31	2
	Massachusetts	97	165	9*	91*	43	4
2007	Nation (public)	94	156	11	89	32	2
	Massachusetts	96	169	5	95	47	3

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction and student group in 2007.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. Achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale: below Basic, 113 or lower; Basic, 114–172; Proficient, 173–223; and Advanced, 224 and above. All differences were tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Performance comparisons may be affected by differences in exclusion rates for English language learners in the NAEP samples and by differences in sample sizes.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 writing Assessments.

Table 10 presents the percentages of students with disabilities and English language learners in each participating state identified, excluded, and assessed with and without accommodations at grade 8.

Table 10 The Nation's Report Card 2007 State Assessment
Eighth-grade public school students with disabilities and/or English language learners identified, excluded, and assessed in NAEP writing, as a percentage of all students, by jurisdiction: 2007

State/jurisdiction	Identified	Excluded	Assessed	Assessed without accommodations	Assessed with accommodations
Nation (public)	18	3	15	6	9
Alabama	14	2	12	8	3
Arizona	19	3	16	10	6
Arkansas	16	2	14	4	10
California	27	2	25	20	5
Colorado	15	3	12	4	8
Connecticut	14	2	13	3	9
Delaware	16	5	11	3	8
Florida	19	3	17	2	15
Georgia	13	2	11	3	8
Hawaii	19	1	18	8	11
Idaho	14	2	12	6	6
Illinois	17	3	14	3	11
Indiana	16	3	13	3	10
Iowa	16	2	15	3	12
Kansas	17	4	13	4	9
Kentucky	15	6	9	2	6
Louisiana	14	2	12	1	10
Maine	20	4	16	4	12
Massachusetts	22	6	16	3	13
Michigan	16	4	12	3	9
Minnesota	17	2	15	6	9
Mississippi	10	2	9	1	7
Missouri	15	2	12	3	9
Montana	16	2	14	4	10
Nevada	21	3	18	11	7
New Hampshire	20	3	17	5	12
New Jersey	18	3	15	2	13
New Mexico	27	5	23	13	9
New York	19	3	17	1	16
North Carolina	18	2	16	3	13
North Dakota	16	5	10	3	7
Ohio	15	4	11	2	9
Oklahoma	19	4	15	6	9
Pennsylvania	18	3	15	4	11
Rhode Island	21	3	19	5	13
South Carolina	15	3	12	5	8
Tennessee	13	3	10	5	5
Texas	18	7	12	8	4
Utah	19	3	16	9	7
Vermont	22	4	18	5	13
Virginia	18	6	12	4	8
Washington	16	4	12	5	7
West Virginia	16	1	15	5	9
Wisconsin	18	4	14	3	11
Wyoming	16	3	13	5	8
Other jurisdictions					
DoDEA ¹	11	2	9	3	6

Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Writing Assessment.