
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: NAEP 2002 WRITING SCORES TO BE RELEASED AT 10:00 (EST) ON THURSDAY, JULY 10
DATE 7/9/03
CC: MAYO, SEWELL, FILE

The 2002 writing NAEP assessment results are being released tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m. EST. I'm copying this memo to Lee Ann, John and other staff in case we get any phone calls from the press and so that they may prepare a media advisory as to the significant increases in 8th grade scores for release in the morning (the report is embargoed until 10:00 EST tomorrow). (*NOTE: Italicized table references are for Lee Ann and John's reference, as I've provided them with the supporting documentation.*)

We need to highlight the significant improvement in 8th graders' average scores between 1998 (134) to 2002 (141), with particular emphasis on black 8th graders' average score increase from 123 in 1998 to 132 in 2002. We've narrowed the gap between white and black 8th graders' average score by 5 points during the last 4 years. Our free and reduced lunch 8th graders also showed significant improvement. We also need to highlight the fact that you are 1 of 2 governors to serve on the National Assessment Governing Board.

National Results

- Students' average scores on the NAEP writing assessment increased between 1998 and 2002 at grades 4 and 8. However, there was no significant change detected in the average performance of 12th graders over the same time period.
- There has been an increase since 1998 in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders reaching the *Proficient* level, as well as increase in the percentage of 4th graders performing at or above *Basic*.
- The NAEP 1998 writing assessment was not administered at the state level at grade 4; therefore, state-level comparisons between 1998 and 2002 are only presented for grade 8.
- 4th graders had an average score of 153 in 2002.
- The 8th grade average score of 152 in 2002 is significantly higher than 1998's national average of 148.

- At grades 4 and 8, white, black and Hispanic students had higher average writing scores in 2002 than in 1998.
- Approximately 276,000 students from 11,000 schools were assessed.

Mississippi's 4th grade results

- Mississippi's 4th grade average scale score was 141, which was lower than the nation's average score of 153. (*Grade 4 MS Snapshot Report*)
- The percentage of 4th graders who performed at or above the NAEP *Proficient* level was 13%. The percentage of 4th graders who performed at or above the *Basic* level was 81%. (*Grade 4 MS Snapshot Report*)
- White 4th graders had an average score (151) that was 19 points higher than black 4th graders' average score (132). This performance gap was not significantly different from that of the nation (20 points). (*Grade 4 MS Snapshot Report and Table 3.20*)
- 4th graders who were not eligible for free/reduced lunch had an average score (157 points) that was 22 points higher than that of students who were eligible (135 points). This performance gap was not significantly different from that of the nation (22 points). (*Grade 4 MS Snapshot Report and Table 3.24*)

Mississippi's 8th grade results

- Mississippi's 8th graders 2002 average scale score of 141 was significantly different than 8th graders 1998 average scale score of 134. 141 was lower than the nation's average 8th grade scale score of 152. (*Grade 8 MS Snapshot Report and Table 2.3*)
- The percentage of 8th graders who performed at or above the NAEP *Proficient* level was 13%. This percentage was not found to be significantly different from 1998's 11% at or above *Proficient*, but did show an improvement. (*Grade 8 MS Snapshot Report*)
 - The percentage of both black and white 8th graders who performed at or above Proficient has increased: whites increased from 17% in 1998 to 20% in 2002, while blacks increased from 4% in 1998 to 6% in 2002. (*Table 3.23*)
- White 8th graders had an average score (149) that was 17 points higher than black 4th graders' average score (132). This performance gap was not significantly different from that of 1998 (22 points), although the gap has narrowed by 5 points during the last 4 years. (*Grade 8 MS Snapshot Report and Table 3.21*)
 - Black 8th graders' average score of 132 was significantly different than black 8th graders' 1998 average score of 123. This was an increase of 9 points,

while white 8th graders increased by 4 points during the same time period (from 145 in 1998 to 149 in 2002). (*Table 3.21*)

- 8th graders who were not eligible for free/reduced lunch had an average score (152 points) that was 18 points higher than that of students who were eligible (134 points). This performance gap was not significantly different from that of 1998 (20 points), although the gap has narrowed by 2 points. (*Grade 8 MS Snapshot Report and Table 3.25*)
 - Average scale scores for both eligible and non-eligible students were significantly different between 1998 and 2002. Average scale scores for eligible students increased from 124 in 1998 to 134 in 2002 (10 points), while average scale scores for non-eligible students increased from 144 in 1998 to 152 in 2002 (8 points). (*Table 3.25*)
- Both male and female 8th graders showed significantly different scores between 1998 and 2002. 8th grade males' average score increased from 125 in 1998 to 132 in 2002, while 8th grade females' average score increased from 143 in 1998 to 150 in 2002. (*Table 3.17*)