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Utah Reducing Achievement Gap in Eighth Grade Reading, Test Shows

SALT LAKE CITY – Utah’s Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Island students, and economically-disadvantaged students fueled an overall increase in the state’s 2013 eighth grade reading scores, according to data released today by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Utah scores in eighth grade reading rose from 267 in 2011 to 270 in 2013; nationally scores rose from 264 to 266 at the same time, NAEP reported. Among racial and ethnic groups in Utah for whom scores were reported, white student scores went from 272 to 274 between 2011 and 2013 while Hispanic student scores went from 247 to 256, Asian and Pacific Islander student scores went from 257 to 264 over the same time period. Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch saw their scores increase from 254 to 260 and students who are not eligible saw scores increase from 274 to 276. Scores for black and American Indian students were not reported in the study because of their relatively small numbers in Utah’s population. White students comprise 77 percent of Utah’s eighth grade population, Hispanics 15 percent and Asian and Pacific Islanders 4 percent. Economically-disadvantaged students comprise 37 percent of Utah’s eighth grade population.

“It is gratifying to see populations that have traditionally struggled both nationally and here in Utah make such marked improvement in reading,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Martell Menlove. “This speaks to what is going on in Utah classrooms and our ability to prepare our students for college and careers.”

NAEP also today released 2013 results for fourth grade reading and math in both fourth and eighth grades. Scores for both Utah students and students nationally rose in fourth grade reading and eighth grade math, but the increases were not statistically significant. Utah fourth grade math scores were unchanged between 2011 and 2013; nationally, scores rose one point.

Here are the average scale scores for Utah and the nation for 2011 and 2013:

Reading:	Utah	Nation
4 th grade 2011	220	220
4 th grade 2013	223	221
8 th grade 2011	267	264
8 th grade 2013	270	266
Math:		
4 th grade 2011	243	240
4 th grade 2013	243	241
8 th grade 2011	283	283
8 th grade 2013	284	284

For a complete copy of the report, please visit http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/.