

FairTest
National Center for Fair & Open Testing

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for immediate release, Wednesday, October 19, 2005

**FLATLINE NAEP SCORES SHOW FAILURE OF TEST-DRIVEN SCHOOL REFORM;
"NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND" HAS NOT IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

"The 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading and math scores show that high-stakes, punitive testing does not produce meaningful improvements in student achievement, contrary to the promises made by proponents of No Child Left Behind," said Monty Neill, Ed.D., co-director of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest), in response to today's release of the 2005 NAEP report.

NAEP Reading scores were essentially unchanged from 2002 to 2005 at grade 4 and declined markedly at grade 8. Math scores did not increase at a significantly faster rate than in the 1990s, well before most high-stakes exams for elementary and middle school were put in place. The NAEP 2003-2005 data covers the period when the Bush Administration and Congress imposed testing with severe sanctions as a requirement for states to receive federal funding.

While reading scores for Blacks and Hispanics rose in the 1990s at grade four, they have been flat since 2000. At grade eight, they have been flat since 1998. The math gains these groups made in the 1990s have tapered off.

"The drill and kill curriculum that accompanies high-stakes, one-size-fits-all testing programs undermines rather than improves the quality of education," explained Dr. Neill. "Intensified testing has especially hurt education for low-income, African American and Latino students, reinforcing the hard bigotry of inequality and segregation. Once again, independent data demonstrate that the nation cannot test its way to educational quality. It's time to abandon the failed test-and-punish quick fix and get on with the hard work of identifying the real causes of student learning problems, then addressing them effectively. Congress should follow the lead of the more than 60 national education, civil rights and religious organizations that have come together to call for an overall of this damaging federal law."

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The multi-organizational statement calling for an overhaul of "No Child Left Behind" and other assessment reform materials are available at <http://www.fairtest.org>