

# Wisconsin math, reading scores drop, but not as much as national average

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Fourth- and eighth-grade students' reading and math scores declined in Wisconsin as in most states since 2019, but overall scores remained higher than the national average across grade levels.

Nationally, the average math score for fourth graders dropped five points compared to 2019, while the score for eighth graders declined by eight points. Reading scores for both fourth and eighth graders dropped three points.

By comparison, the average math score for fourth graders in Wisconsin public schools decreased by 1.41 points compared to 2019 and eighth graders' math score went down 7.52 points. Meanwhile, the average reading score for Wisconsin fourth graders dropped by 2.33 points and eighth graders' reading scores went down 5.15 points.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress, or "Nation's Report Card," lists the District of Columbia as having the highest racial achievement gaps in math and reading scores for Black and white students in the country. Wisconsin has the highest Black-white racial gap of any state in the country based on average scores for both grades in each subject.

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The data show no improvements in math in any state or large urban district since the pre-pandemic era as the national average score in math was the lowest ever recorded.

State schools Superintendent Jill Underly said the results reflect national trends

showing students are recovering from disruptions to learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Recovery is a continuous journey, and we haven’t yet reached a destination we are satisfied with, nor do we just want to return to where we were before,” Underly said.

She added students, educators and schools “need our support more than ever.”

Education has become an important issue in the gov’s race, with GOP gov candidate Tim Michels knocking Dem Gov. Tony Evers over various school test scores.

“Tony Evers has failed us for four years as governor and for four decades as an education ‘leader,’” Michels said in a tweet. “Wisconsin has the worst racial achievement gap of any state in the nation. We now trail even Illinois in 4th grade reading proficiency. Time for a change.”

Evers’ campaign spokesperson Sam Roecker in a statement to WisPolitics.com touted the former state schools superintendent’s efforts to increase public school funding and knocked Michels.

“Instead of supporting parents, students, and teachers, Tim Michels wants to bring his radical and divisive brand of politics to our kids’ classrooms — his agenda for our schools could lead to endless lawsuits against school districts, and could raise property taxes by hundreds of millions of dollars,” Roecker said.

The assessment provides math and reading scores on a scale of 0 to 500 and rates the percentage of students who have reached NAEP achievement levels: basic, proficient and advanced.

The data show the average math score for fourth graders is 240.26, a 1.41-point decrease from the most recent data in 2019. That level is 5.40 points higher than the national average. Of the students, 42.90 percent were at or above proficient.

Average scores by race include:

- \*248 for white students;
- \*225 for Hispanic students; and
- \*201 for Black students.

Eighth graders had an average math score of 281.14, a 7.52-point decrease from 2019, but still 8.01 points higher than the national average. The amount of students

at or above proficient is 33.22 percent.

Average scores by race include:

- \*291 for white students;
- \*264 for Hispanic students; and
- \*237 for Black students.

Meanwhile, the average reading score for fourth graders was 217.37, down by 2.33 points from 2019 but still 1.26 points above the national average. That includes 32.60 percent of students who scored at or above proficient.

Average scores by race include:

- \*226 for white students;
- \*202 for Hispanic students; and
- \*186 for Black students.

Eighth graders had an average reading score of 262.23, 3.12 points above the national average. That includes 32.39 percent at or above proficient levels. The average score is down 5.15 points from 2019.

Average scores by race include:

- \*269 for white students;
- \*250 for Hispanic students; and
- \*231 for Black students.

See the NAEP data for Wisconsin:

[https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/WI?cti=PgTab\\_OT&chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=WI&fs=Grade&st=MN&year=2022R3&sg=Gender%3A%20Male%20vs.%20Female&sgv=Difference&ts=Single%20Year&sfj=NP](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/WI?cti=PgTab_OT&chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=WI&fs=Grade&st=MN&year=2022R3&sg=Gender%3A%20Male%20vs.%20Female&sgv=Difference&ts=Single%20Year&sfj=NP)