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NEWS RELEASE

## NCTM Says “No One Should Be Pleased” with Latest NAEP Scores

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**Reston, Va. - October 30, 2020** - The [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics \(NCTM\)](https://www.nctm.org/) reacted to the latest results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for 12-graders in mathematics and reading.

The NAEP scores showed no significant change in the average mathematics score or the overall distribution as compared to 2015. Additionally, there has been no measurable difference in the overall score for 12th-graders, or in the scores for the various subgroups, with the exception of the very highest performers, who saw scores increase by two points since 2005.

NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students in the U.S. know and can do in various subject areas. The NAEP mathematics and reading assessments were administered to 52,100 12th-graders from public and private schools across the country between January and March 2019. This NAEP assessment marked the first time it was administered digitally at grade 12.

“No one should be pleased that the NAEP math scores have merely held steady,” said National Council of Teachers of Mathematics President Trena Wilkerson. “For students who are leaving high school when our democracy, economy, and personal safety all require more ability to understand, use, and apply math, holding steady is not success. Each and every student must be equipped to use math to make sense of our world and to increase their opportunities moving forward.”

Wilkerson continued, “NCTM has called for and is supporting schools and districts as they look at their policies and practices to provide each and every student with access to high-quality mathematics curriculum and instruction. We must also step back and see how our national policies are driving this generational stagnation in mathematics learning. We can and must do better.”

NCTM embarked on a comprehensive look at mathematics education from grades K-12, in part due to the fact that high school scores in mathematics have remained flat for nearly 50 years. This work involved administrators, higher education faculty, educators and leaders in mathematics education. Most recently NCTM is working to identify unjust policies and practices, and provide practical recommendations for systemic change through [Catalyzing Change](#). A goal of *Catalyzing Change* is a call to action for people to engage in the critical conversations and the needed actions to create mathematics learning which increases opportunities for each and every student.

Additionally, at the policy level there has been a move away from specific funding for mathematics teaching that was previously provided by the Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Act. The consistent growth seen in student



learning during these years has disappeared. The focus on problem solving and sense making, which drove this growth fell to policy changes and was replaced with high-stakes testing for every student every year, for grades three through eight. This has reduced - not increased - student learning and has adversely affected student success in high school and beyond.

For more information about Catalyzing Change including resources and tools visit:  
[nctm.org/change](https://nctm.org/change).

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#### About NCTM

The [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics](https://nctm.org) celebrates 100 years as the public voice of mathematics education, supporting teachers to ensure equitable mathematics learning of the highest quality for each and every student through vision, leadership, professional development and research. With 40,000 members and more than 200 Affiliates, it is the world's largest organization dedicated to improving mathematics education in prekindergarten through grade 12. NCTM is dedicated to ongoing dialogue and constructive discussion with all stakeholders about what is best for students and envisions a world where everyone is enthused about mathematics, sees the value and beauty of mathematics, and is empowered by the opportunities mathematics affords.