

English Language Arts Advisory Committee Recommendation for 2020

Recommendation #1 (also a past recommendation):

APS should adopt a rigorous high school writing curriculum incorporating instructional best practices for grades 9-12 that is continuous from year to year. The curriculum should reflect sufficient writing quantity, quality, and diversity over the 9-12 continuum. Teacher assessments and feedback should ensure that every student makes at least one year of growth each school year so that every student masters the fundamental writing skills required to be college and career ready by graduation. The Science, Gifted, Social Studies and World Languages Advisory Committees support this recommendation.

Last year one of our ELAAC members gathered qualitative data from recent APS alums. The Alums provided feedback and suggestions that APS consider less formulaic writing instruction and less writing-test prep during high school. The alums suggested that APS consider more research paper assignments, more teacher feedback, and more writing experience in general to better prepare current APS students for college. The big takeaway was that APS could improve by explicitly teaching research processes and methodologies (e.g., choosing a topic; finding, evaluating, and citing sources) and having students write multiple drafts of research papers, with substantive teacher feedback between drafts and on the final paper.

Recommendation #2 (ELA Dept. requesting as well- mentioned at Literacy work session):

APS should create, adopt, and implement a short-term plan to ensure that every teacher responsible for teaching a student to read has the LETRS reading training (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling). Details about who should be trained, when, and to what level of LETRS training should be required. This plan should be collaboratively discussed between ELAAC and the ELA Department. Until a training plan is developed, we will not know the budget implication of this recommendation.

“Developed by renowned literacy experts Dr. Louisa Moats and Dr. Carol Tolman, *LETRS*[®] is a flexible literacy professional development solution for preK–12 educators.” “*LETRS* provides teachers with the skills they need to master the fundamentals of reading instruction—phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and language.”

<https://www.voyagersopris.com/professional-development/letrs/overview>

“In the wake of falling reading scores on the test known as the Nation's Report Card, 12 major education groups are calling on schools to adopt evidence-based reading instruction.”

http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teaching_now/2019/11/schools_should_follow_the_sci_ence_of_reading_say_national_education_groups.html

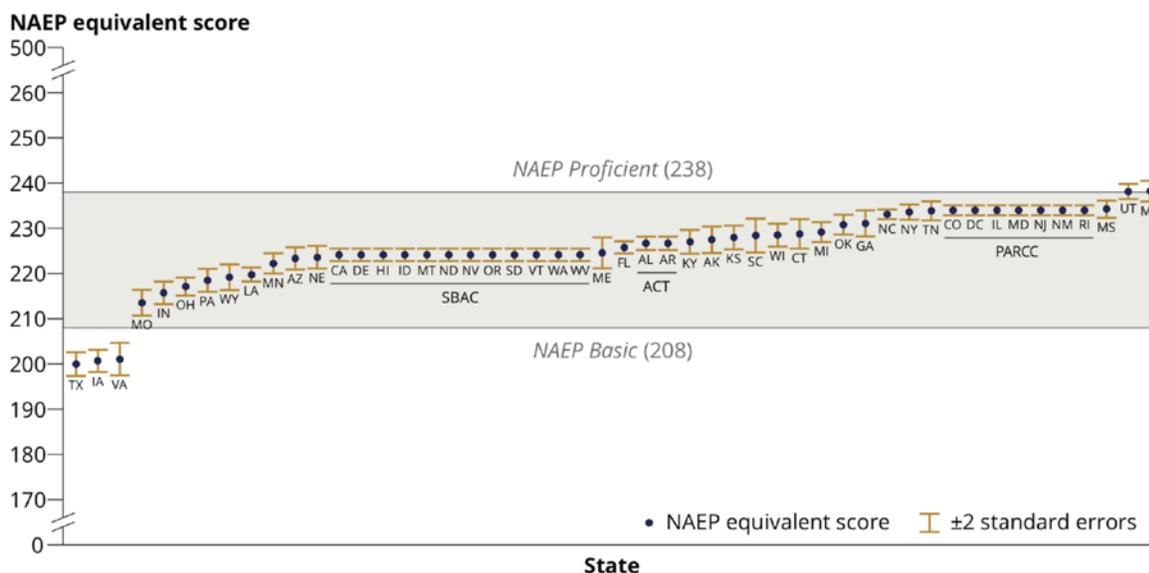
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The NCES recently released the 2019 Nation’s Report Card (the National Assessment of Educational Progress “NAEP”) and Virginia is among the lowest performing states on the 4th grade and 8th grade reading test. **On the 2019 NAEP, 38% of Virginia’s 4th graders scored a proficient or above on the Reading test, and 33% of 8th graders scored a proficient or above on the Reading test.**

https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/VA?cti=PgTab_OT&chart=2&sub=MAT&sj=VA

While Virginia uses its own standards within the state (the SOLs), this report maps the NAEP 2017 standards to each state’s own standards, and Virginia is 3rd from the lowest state in 4th grade reading standards, and the lowest state in 8th grade reading standards. **The NAEP and the Virginia SOLs tests are not measuring different things – the Virginia proficiency standards are simply lower --** See pages 6 and 10. (2019 NAEP mapping to each state’s standards are not yet available):

NAEP equivalent scores of state grade 4 reading standards for proficient performance, by state: 2017

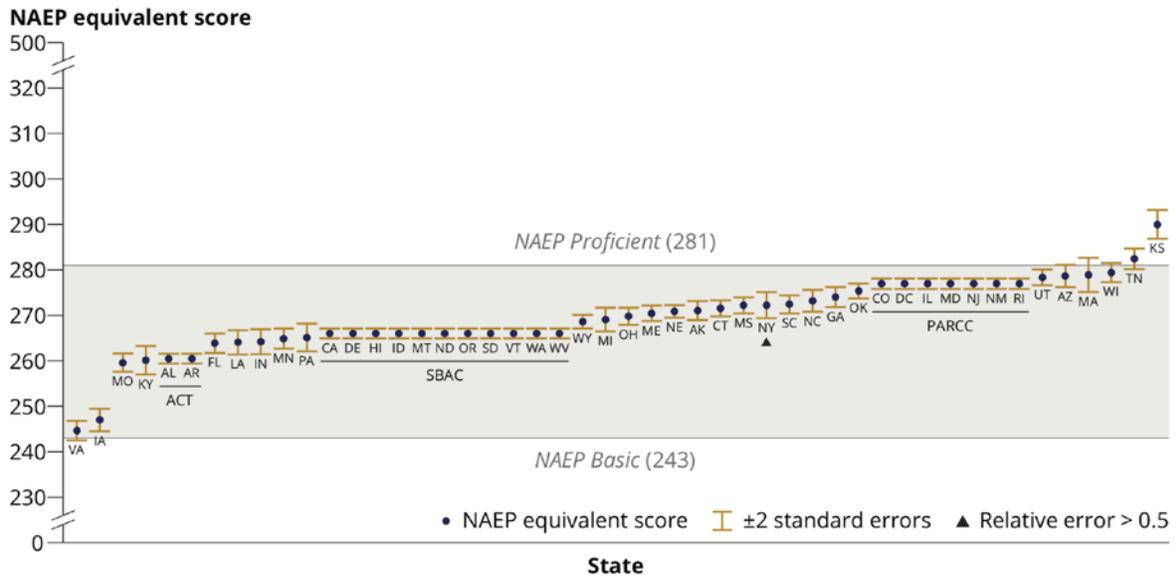


- In grade 4 reading, 47 of the 50 states included in the study had standards at or above the *NAEP Basic* level. Two states—Utah and Massachusetts—had standards at the *NAEP Proficient* level, while three states—Texas, Iowa, and Virginia—had standards below the *NAEP Basic* level.

<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/studies/pdf/2019040.pdf>

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NAEP equivalent scores of state grade 8 reading standards for proficient performance, by state: 2017



- In grade 8 reading, all of the 48 states included in the study had standards at or above the *NAEP Basic* level. Five states—Arizona, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Tennessee, and Kansas—had standards at the *NAEP Proficient* level.