

NAEP 2026 in Minnesota

Facts for Schools

Pilot Program | Administrative Model: NAEP Device

"NAEP is the only assessment providing half a century of performance data to measure what students know and can do. The state and national trends inform local, state, and national program and policy discussions that improve teaching and learning."

—David Atherton, EdD, Principal, Clear Creek Middle School, Gresham, OR

What is NAEP?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest, ongoing, nationally representative assessment of what our nation's students know and can do in core subjects like mathematics, reading, science, civics, and U.S. history.

Known as The Nation's Report Card, NAEP provides a snapshot of student achievement that can be compared across the nation and over time. It also collects valuable information about students' educational experiences—both in and outside the classroom.

NAEP is congressionally mandated and administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

Why should my school participate in NAEP?

Each school selected for NAEP represents many other across the state and nation. Your school's participation is essential to provide an accurate picture of student achievement in the nation.

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, public districts and states that receive Title I funds are required to participate in the mathematics and reading assessments at grades 4 and 8, if selected.

2026 Program Overview

Details	Pilot Program
Subjects	Mathematics and Reading ¹
Grades	4 or 8 or 12
Assessment Window	Jan. 26 to Mar. 20, 2026
Administrative Model	NAEP device
Assessment Administrators	NAEP representatives
Student Time	About 120 minutes ²
Student Sample	Up to 50 students
Results	No public results

1. While a school is selected for two subjects, a student will only take one subject.
2. This estimation includes responding to the subject-matter questions and the survey questionnaire as well as time for directions, a tutorial, and transition time to and from class.

Why NAEP Matters: A Unique Role in Education

NAEP plays a unique and essential role in education in the United States.

- **A Reliable National Snapshot:** NAEP offers a consistent, nationwide measure of student achievement, helping evaluate progress and shape national education policy.
- **Trusted Trends Over Time:** NAEP has reported on student achievement for over 20 years, delivering consistent and trustworthy insights into educational progress over time.
- **A Common Benchmark:** Unlike state assessments, which follow different standards, NAEP administers the same assessment in every state, allowing for accurate, fair comparisons between states.
- **The Gold Standard of Assessment:** NAEP is widely recognized as the gold standard in educational assessment, due to its rigorous development process, expert collaboration, and high technical quality.
- **More Than Just Scores:** NAEP collects valuable data on students' educational experiences, access to resources, and learning environments, going beyond test scores to provide a better understanding of the factors that may influence learning.

What Should School Staff Expect?

Principal's Role: Principals play a key role by supporting the NAEP process and encouraging student participation.

School Coordinator: A staff member will be designated as the NAEP school coordinator—the main point of contact. This person will complete important preassessment activities to help prepare for the assessment.

Facilities and Equipment: School must provide a testing space.

Survey Questionnaires: NAEP administers survey questionnaires which provide contextual information for the assessment results, as well as information about factors that may be related to students' learning. For the NAEP 2026 pilot program, survey questionnaires will be completed by:

- At grade 4: The principal and relevant subject-area teachers
- At grade 12: The principal

Note: There are no teacher questionnaires at grades 8 or 12 and no principal questionnaires at grade 8.

Do teachers need to prepare students?

No special preparation is needed for the NAEP assessments. However, teachers should encourage students to do their best.

What can be expected on assessment day?

The administration of the digital NAEP assessment includes instructions, a brief tutorial, subject-area questions, and survey questionnaire. Students will use NAEP-provided devices to take the assessment. The devices will connect to a private, secure wireless network provided by NAEP. No school devices or internet access are needed.

The NAEP team will bring the NAEP student devices (Chromebooks) and a NAEP router. The NAEP team only has 25 student devices, so only 25 students can test at one time.

The NAEP team will administer the assessment. However, it is strongly recommended that a school staff member be present to assist with classroom management.

How are parents/guardians notified?

Federal law requires that parents/guardians of selected students selected are notified in writing before the assessment day. Sending these notices is one of the preassessment activities.

How are schools and students selected for NAEP?

A carefully designed sampling process ensures that NAEP-selected schools and students are representative of all students in the state and the nation. To ensure the sample represents all students, a wide range of accommodations are allowed for students with disabilities and English learners.

How can educators use NAEP resources to help students?

Released NAEP items can be used as a helpful educational resource in the classroom. Teachers and district staff can use the [NAEP Questions Tool](#) to create a test and see how your students' performance compares nationally on specific items. Released NAEP items come with a scoring guide, sample student responses, and performance data.

Where can I find more information?

To find more information about NAEP, visit the [NAEP program website](#). To explore the latest released NAEP reports and more results, visit [The Nation's Report Card](#).

To find more NAEP 2026 information, contact your NAEP State Coordinator at jennifer.cain@state.mn.us.

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