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The Nation's Report Card (NAEP) Shows More Than Half of Minnesota's Fourth-, Eighth-Graders are Not Proficient in Science

~ Education Commissioner Cassellius calls results a wake-up call ~

Roseville, MN – Calling today's release of the 2009 NAEP Science Assessment results "disappointing and troubling," Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius said the report is further proof that Minnesota needs to step up its efforts in educating all students.

"Today's results should be a wake-up call for Minnesotans," said Dr. Brenda Cassellius, recently appointed to serve as Governor Dayton's new Commissioner of Education. "The NAEP science scores are one more objective measure showing that far from being an "education leader," Minnesota – in reality – is losing ground."

The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress assessments were administered January through March 2009. While overall scores showed Minnesota fourth and eighth graders rate relatively high in overall performance compared to other states, Minnesota is barely ranked in the top one-third of the nation's states on the 2009 NAEP science assessments.

Only 43 percent of Minnesota's fourth-graders scored proficient. Minnesota's fourth-grade proficiency rates are:

- White students 51 percent
- Black students 12 percent
- Hispanic students 16 percent
- Asian students 31 percent
- American Indian students 12 percent

Forty percent of eighth-graders scored proficient in the science test. Minnesota's eighth-grade proficiency rates are:

- White students: 46 percent
- Black students: 11 percent
- Hispanic students: 14 percent
- Asian students: 23 percent
- American Indian students: 14 percent

"Just last week, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan challenged Minnesota to create a sense of urgency about the need to educate all kids," said Commissioner Cassellius. "Governor

Dayton already shares this sense of urgency and has promised to make education one of his administration's top priorities.

"If there was ever a time for Minnesotans to step up and fuel that sense of urgency, that time is now," Cassellius continued. "Our state's sustained economic success and our global competitive edge will come from our ability to create a highly-skilled and educated workforce – a workforce that starts in our schools by creating a culture where students come first and by making sure all of our children are learning to their full potential."

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