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For Immediate Release

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Utah Eighth Graders Top Nation in Science; Fourth Graders Ranked Eighth

SALT LAKE CITY – Utah eighth graders turned in the best science scores in the nation in 2015, collectively raising their average score by five points and beating the national average by 13 points, according to data released today by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation’s Report Card. Utah fourth graders raised their average score by six points, enough to rank eighth in the nation in 2015, NAEP also reported.

Utah’s eighth grade science scores improved between 2011 and 2015 for white, Hispanic, and American Indian students, as well as for students both eligible and not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and for boys as well as girls, NAEP reported. There were not enough Asian, black, or Pacific Islander students included in the NAEP sampling of 2,400 Utah students to determine academic progress. The overall percentage of Utah students who are at or above proficient levels in eighth grade science rose from 43 percent in 2011 to 50 percent – the highest in the nation – in 2015. Nationally, only 33 percent of eighth grade students were deemed at or above proficient in science, NAEP noted. Utah’s top-ranked scale score of 166 was matched only by schools operated by the U.S. Department of

Defense, but Utah had a larger percentage of students assessed at proficient or above. New Hampshire at 165 and Minnesota at 164 rounded out the top four, NAEP reported.

Similar across-the-board score increases were reported for Utah fourth graders. Overall, Utah fourth grade NAEP science scale scores rose from 154 to 160. Nationally scores rose from 149 to 153. Top states for fourth grade science were Department of Defense schools at 166, New Hampshire and Virginia at 165, Vermont at 163, Nebraska at 162, and Massachusetts and Wyoming at 161. 44 percent of Utah fourth graders were at proficient or above in science compared to 37 percent nationally.

“I am incredibly proud of our Utah students and teachers for turning in this level of performance in science,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson. “While there is still clearly room to grow and still achievement gaps that have to be erased, Utah should take pride in this accomplishment.”

No individual school or district data is available. For more information please visit

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

2015 NAEP 8th Grade Science Scale Score Comparison		
Group	Utah	Nation
All students	166	153
White	172	165
Hispanic	144	139
Asian/Pacific Islander	157	163
American Indian	138	140
Male	168	154
Female	164	151
Low income	152	140
Not low income	174	167

2015 NAEP 4th Grade Science Scale Score Comparison		
Group	Utah	Nation
All students	160	153
White	166	165
Hispanic	134	138
Asian/Pacific Islander	Not Available	Not Available
American Indian	Not Available	Not Available
Male	161	153
Female	158	153
Low income	146	140
Not low income	168	169

2015 NAEP 8th Grade Science Proficiency Comparison		
(Percentage of Students At or Above Proficient)		
Group	Utah	Nation
All students	50	33
White	57	46
Hispanic	23	18
Asian/Pacific Islander	36	46
American Indian	22	17
Male	54	36
Female	46	31
Low income	32	18
Not low income	59	49

2015 NAEP 4th Grade Science Proficiency Comparison		
(Percentage of Students At or Above Proficient)		
Group	Utah	Nation
All students	44	37
White	52	50
Hispanic	17	20
Asian/Pacific Islander	Not Available	Not Available
American Indian	Not Available	Not Available
Male	48	38
Female	42	36
Low income	30	22
Not low income	54	55

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