



The Daily Dish

NAEP? Nope!

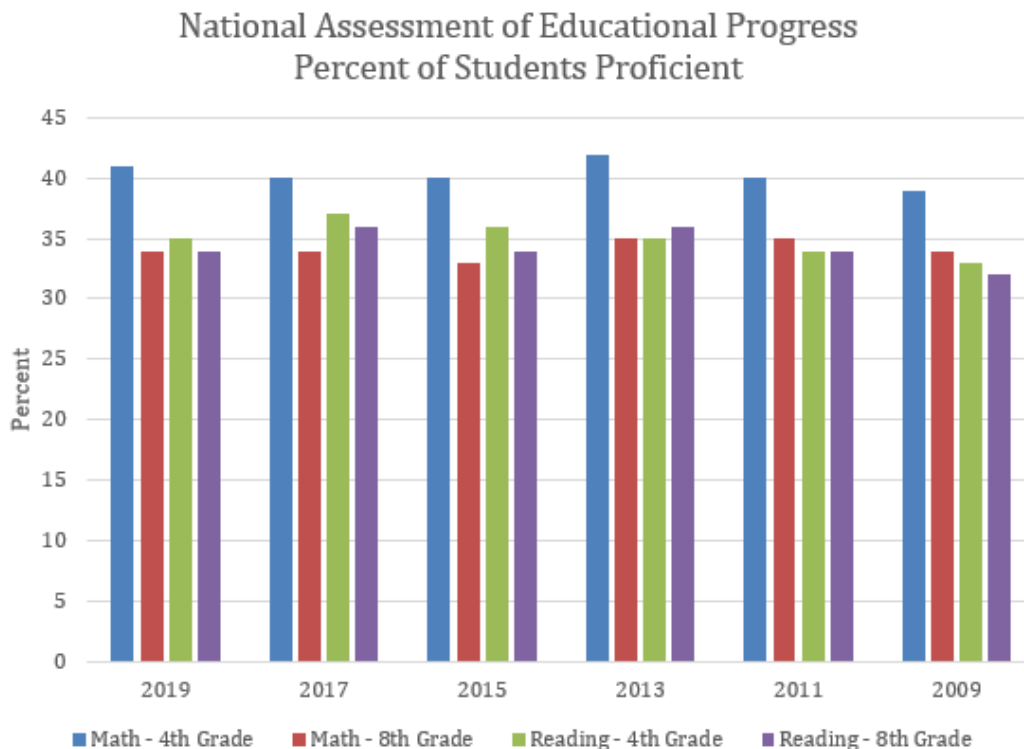
DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | OCTOBER 31, 2019

Eakinomics: NAEP? Nope!

The Department of Education has released the 2019 results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress ([NAEP](#)). Sigh.

The short version is in the chart below, which shows the percent of 4th and 8th grade students who have achieved grade-level proficiency (not stardom, mind you – proficiency) in math and reading. Looking, for example, at the blue bars for 4th graders in math, 41 percent were proficient in 2019. Moving back in time (left to right), one sees that this is little changed from the 39 percent 10 years ago. 8th graders (red bars) have the same basic story in math. Indeed, looking at the chart as a whole, two major lessons jump out:

- American students are horribly non-proficient; every combination of grade and subject clocks in at under 45 percent; and
- This dismal picture is essentially unchanged from the dismal picture in the 2009 data.



Eakinomics has weighed in on this topic [before](#), and those sentiments are unchanged by the new data. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos [summarized](#) the 2019 results succinctly: “This country is in a student achievement crisis, and over the past decade it has continued to worsen, especially for our most vulnerable students.”

Failure to improve educational attainment is a guarantee of continued failure in achieving high-school graduation, failure in obtaining additional training and certification, failure in college and graduate education, failure in the future labor market, and failure to bridge social divisions. It is the most pressing economic and social-policy issue.