



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA AND RESEARCH

COSSBA Requests

- Support federal funding and staffing for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to provide nationally representative and longitudinally comparable national and state-level data to illuminate student performance.
- Support federal funding and requirements that all states administer an annual assessment, maintain an accountability system, and require the disaggregation of annual assessment data for underperforming student groups. COSSBA's position does not advocate for increasing the volume of required testing. Rather, it supports maintaining existing federal assessment and accountability structures to ensure that school boards and communities retain access to consistent, comparable, and transparent data necessary to evaluate student progress and inform governance decisions.
- Support continued funding of evidence-based federal research that provides school boards with the tools needed to increase student achievement and prioritizes the key challenges local school district leaders face in their efforts to improve achievement for all students.

Issue History

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data highlights the critical need to improve achievement for all students. September 2025 scores for 12th-grade students are the lowest scores ever recorded. The decline, which began well before the pandemic, is driven by the lowest-scoring students whose decrease in scores is greatest. In response, school board members must work to hold themselves and their school districts accountable to increase achievement for all students.

The federal government supports these essential responsibilities by providing nationally representative and longitudinally comparable national and state performance-level data through NAEP and statewide district-to-district comparability data through fair and balanced state assessment and accountability systems. In recognition of the federal role to assist students most in need of support, since 2002, these accountability systems require the disaggregation of student data by student groups to enable progress monitoring for these student groups most in need of accelerated growth.

The federal government also supports local school board and district leaders by engaging in federally funded evidence-based research and data analysis on practices to improve student achievement. This research helps to ensure that districts' limited funds go toward practices and services that will generate the greatest impact for students.

Funding proposals that dramatically underfund the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) and eliminate state assessment funding undermine these key areas of federal responsibility. The Department of Education has also issued a broad call for waivers to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which would allow the potential dismantling of assessment and accountability structures, including the requirement to disaggregate data. COSSBA opposes actions which prevent school board members and districts from accessing and using consistent data which allows them to hold themselves accountable for student progress.