

TO: Vermont Legislators Serving on the Senate and House Education Committees
FROM: Dorinne Dorfman, Ed. S., Ed. D., OG/A, Fulbright Scholar
RE: **Testimony Appendix I: Vermont 4th and 8th grader Performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress**
DATE: Thursday, February 20, 2025

Contact:
Dr. Dorinne Dorfman
458 Woodcock Road
Plainfield, VT 05667
dorinnedorfman@gmail.com
802.355.9035

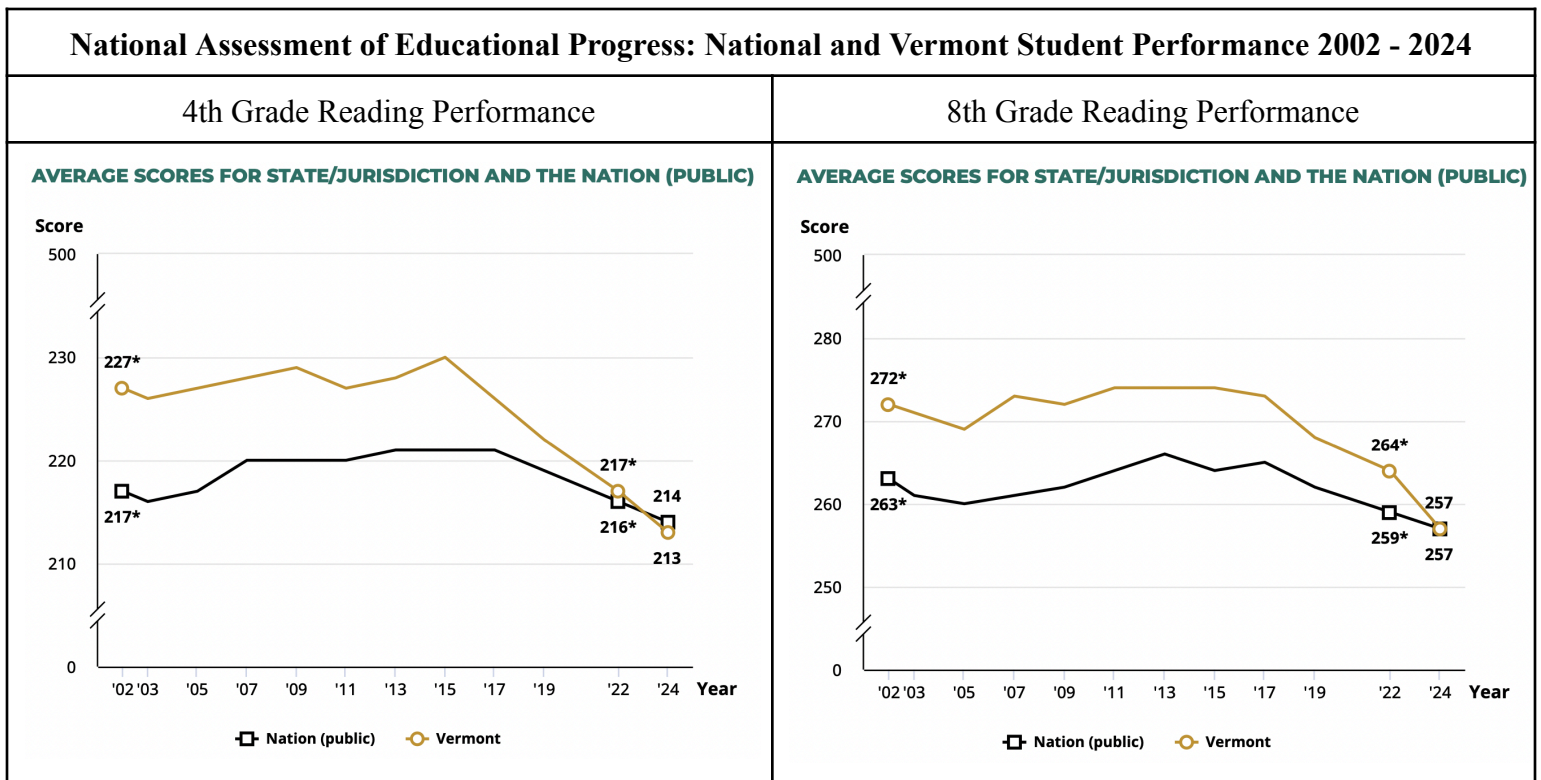
How did we get here? (Part II)

Twenty-five years ago, the National Reading Panel, led in part by Saint Michael's College professors Drs. Reid Lyon and Louisa Moats, contributed to the meta-analysis of reading research that established the five components of reading necessary for teaching all children to read. But this shift to evidence-based literacy did not catch on in our state at a wide scale. Pockets of schools with teachers and leaders knowledgeable in reading science took steps, while the others were steeped in commonly used approaches that were disproven by reading science. This is not the fault of teachers, who have practiced what they learned in teachers' colleges and popular professional training.

Meanwhile, Vermont student reading performance in grades 4 and 8, as measured on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, called the NAEP and the Nation's Report Card, has significantly declined. The newly released 2024 results show that less than one-third (31%) of Vermont 4th graders can read on grade level. Among the about 69-70% who were not proficient, 42% read at Below Basic, which means they can't read. In 2002, twenty-three years ago, just over a quarter of 4th graders (27%) were Below Basic. Our 4th graders' NAEP scores were once among

the highest in the country at 227. In 2024, we declined to 213 placing use below the national average of 214.

Vermont 8th grade results are very similar, with only 30% reading proficiently and one-third (33%) reading at Below Basic. Back in 2002, just 18% of Vermont 8th graders were Below Basic. These were not good results back then, but the *proportion of our students unable to read* has soared over these two decades. In 2002, our eighth graders had achieved a NAEP score of 272. Our 2024 score dropped to 257, falling 15 points, on par with the national average. These numbers represent thousands of students who need supplemental reading instruction grounded in evidence-based practices. We can catch them up to read on grade level.



https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reports/reading/2024/g4_8/state-district-trends/?grade=8#score-trends-by-state