



Submitted by:

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Date: Wednesday, February 26th, 2025 08:30 AM

Meeting: Minnesota Committee on Education Finance

Chair: Sen. Mary K. Kunesch

Location: 1150 Minnesota Senate Bldg.

Dear Chair Kunesch, members of the Senate Committee on Education Finance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the pilot program for automatic enrollment policy as presented in [SF 510](#). My name is [Christy Hovanetz](#), and I am Senior Policy Fellow for [ExcelinEd](#), a national non-profit organization focused on student-centered policies that improve outcomes in the states. I am a certified Minnesota teacher and a former Assistant Commissioner at the Minnesota Department of Education. I am here today to discuss the pilot, and hopefully, the expansion of automatic enrollment in advanced courses policy to all Minnesota kids.

ExcelinEd has a [model policy specifically to promote middle school auto enrollment in advanced math](#) but supports the policy in other subjects as well. Recognizing higher performing middle school students and placing them on an advanced coursework track ensures they will be prepared to succeed in high school and beyond.

### **Automatic Enrollment is Bipartisan.**

The policy has been adopted in bipartisan fashion in Virginia, Texas, Washington and North Carolina. These states represent the full political spectrum of states (red, blue, purple) and auto-enrollment policies have seen bipartisan support in each of them – including being unanimously passed by the [North Carolina legislature in 2018](#), the [Washington legislature in 2019](#), and the [Texas Senate in 2023](#).

### **Automatic Enrollment Shows Clear Results.**

The [Associated Press reported](#) that after instituting an automatic enrollment policy, Dallas Independent School District in Texas saw more than a 25-percentage point increase in the



number of Black and Hispanic students enrolled in honors math; white student enrollment has also increased.

Since the 2021-2022 school year, the number of students placed in [advanced math courses in North Carolina has doubled](#), creating more opportunities for students! And, have a [high success rates in the advanced math](#) pathways.

[Washington state experience similar results](#) in districts that implemented advanced enrollment policies as cited in the report by the American Institutes for Research.

### **Automatic Enrollment is an easy policy lift that requires little to no funding.**

States already fund districts and schools to provide math, ELA, and science instruction, this policy ensures advanced courses are included in the offerings.

### **Automatic Enrollment Helps Improve Our State Workforce.**

Automatic enrollment will better prepare students for the workforce needs of today and tomorrow. When more students take advanced math, our workforce is stronger, as the [Bureau of Labor Statistics reports](#) that STEM-related careers are expected to grow at rates 3.5 times higher than non-STEM occupations.

### **Automatic Enrollment Ensures No Student is Overlooked.**

Automatic enrollment ensures students who are ready for advanced courses are not overlooked. Enrollment in advanced courses, especially math, greatly influences opportunities and economic mobility that will shape their, and Minnesota's future. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the [median salary for math-related careers](#) in 2022 was \$99,590, more than double, the national figure of \$46,310 for all other occupations.

### **Parents maintain the ultimate authority to decide whether their children are enrolled in advanced math.**

Data should drive the assurance that every kid has the opportunity and access to advanced course work.

Thank you for your service to the state of Minnesota and promoting education to secure our future.



### **National Assessment of Educational Progress Data**

**Minnesota student performance was trending down for five years before the pandemic, which has exacerbated the decline.**

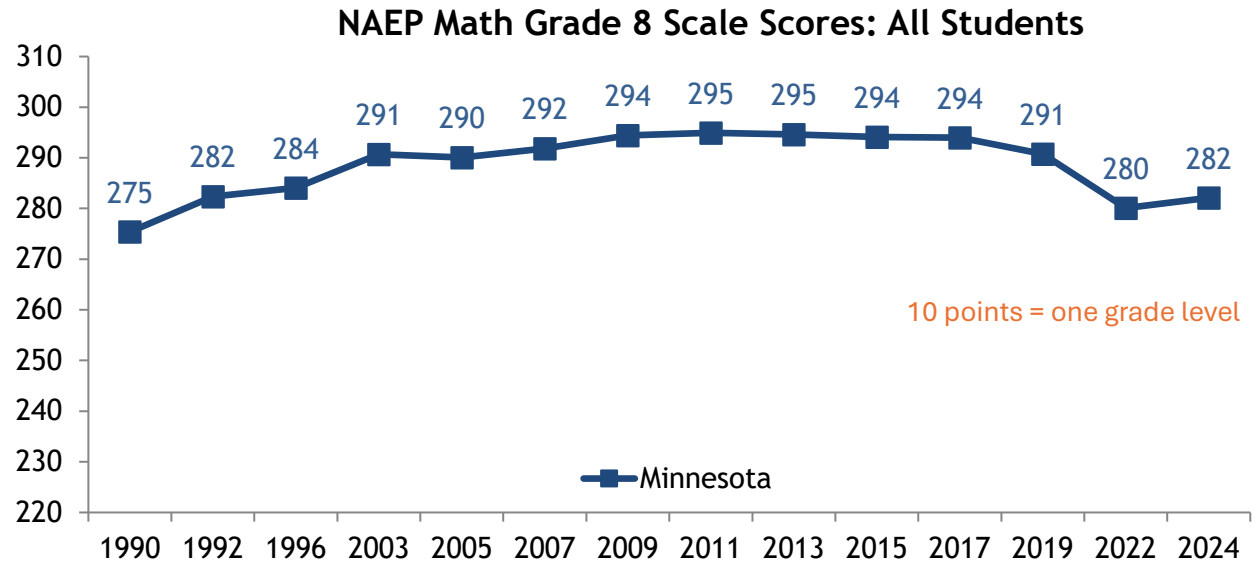
- Minnesota students perform better in math than in reading, which hovers around the national average.
- Minnesota retains relatively high national rankings, specifically in math, but this is mainly due to the demographic composition of the state.

**Minnesota students are performing worse than their Minnesota peers 20 years ago.**

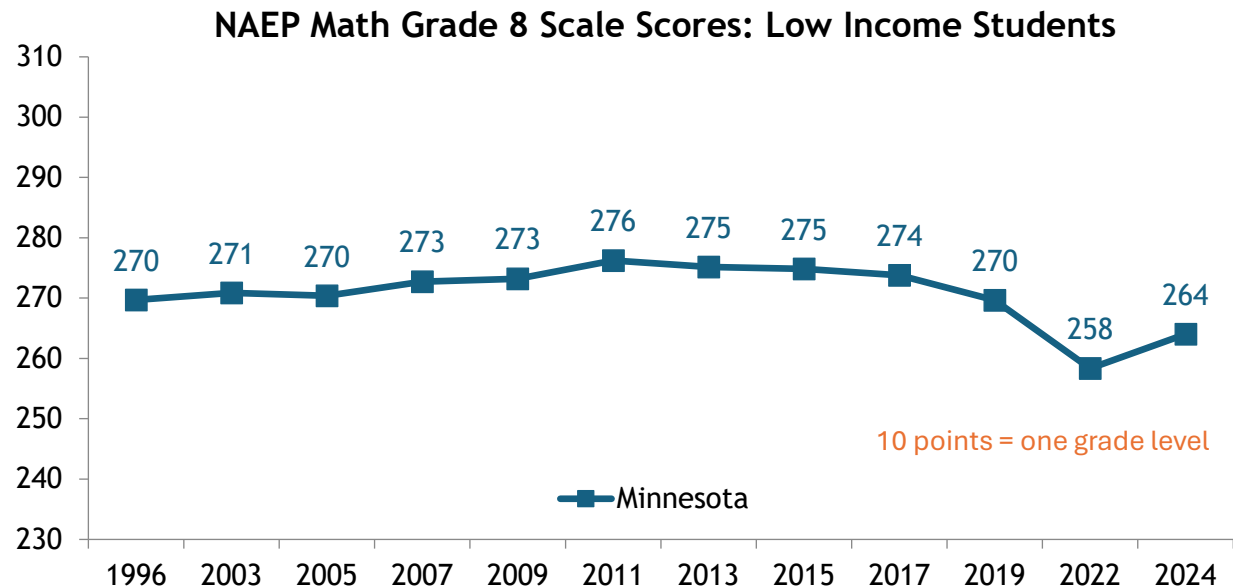
Minnesota highest performance on the National Assessment of Education Progress is in grade 8 math. Using grade 8 Math as an example, the trends in performance have placed 2024 Minnesota students more than a grade level behind their peers a decade ago and have regressed to perform at the same level as in 1992!

- Low Income students are performing at the lowest level since the student group was tested in 1996 and more than a grade level behind their peers a decade ago.
- Black students are performing at the lowest level since in nearly 20 years and more than half a grade level behind their peers a decade ago.
- Hispanic students are performing at the lowest level since the student group was tested in 2003 and more than one and a half grades level behind their peers a decade ago.
- Native American students are performing at the lowest level since the student group was tested in 2007 and more than a grade level behind their 2007 peers.
- White students are performing at the lowest level since 1996, and more than half a grade level behind their 2003 peers.

In 2024, Minnesota students scored more than a grade level behind their peers a decade ago and have regressed to perform at the same level as in 1992.

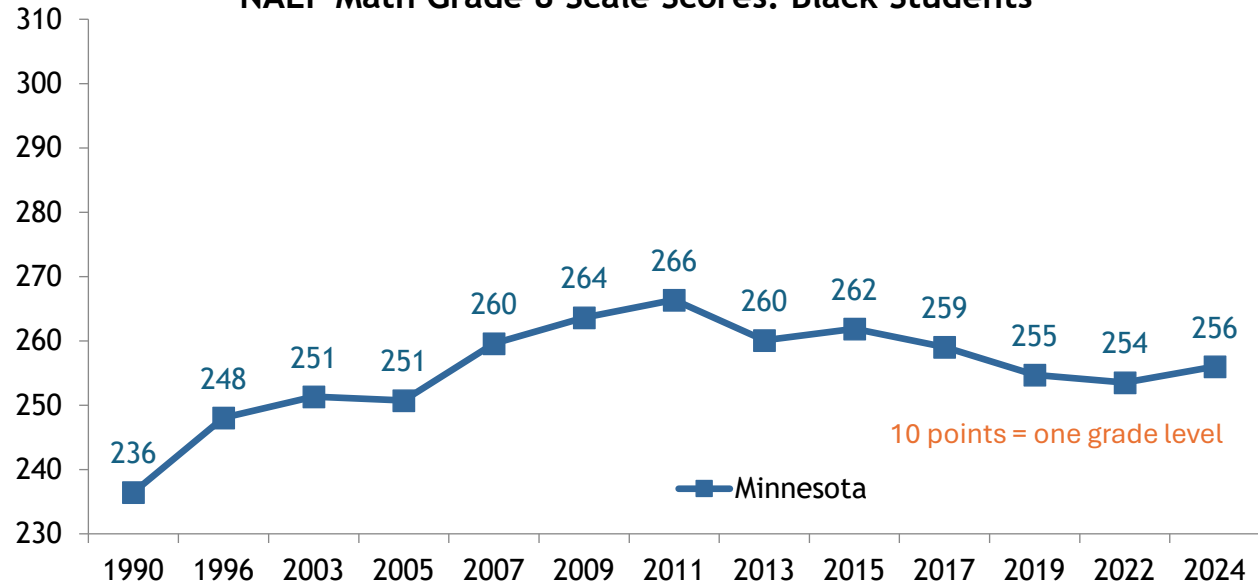


Low Income students are performing at the lowest level since the student group was tested in 1996 and more than a grade level behind their peers a decade ago.



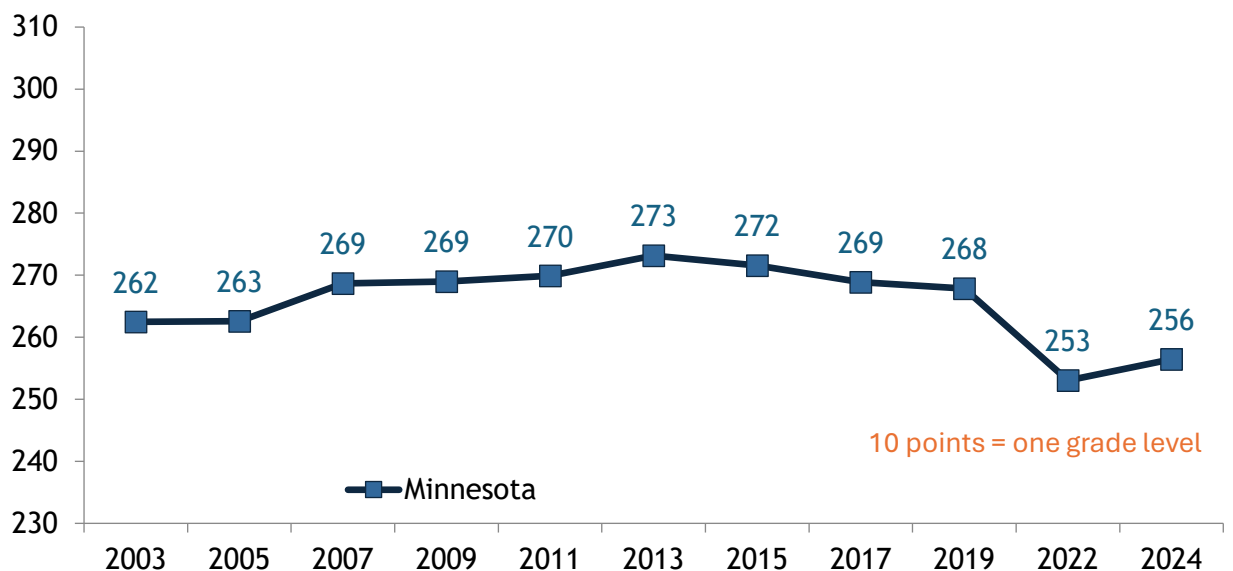
Black students are performing at the lowest level since in nearly 20 years and more than half a grade level behind their peers a decade ago.

### NAEP Math Grade 8 Scale Scores: Black Students

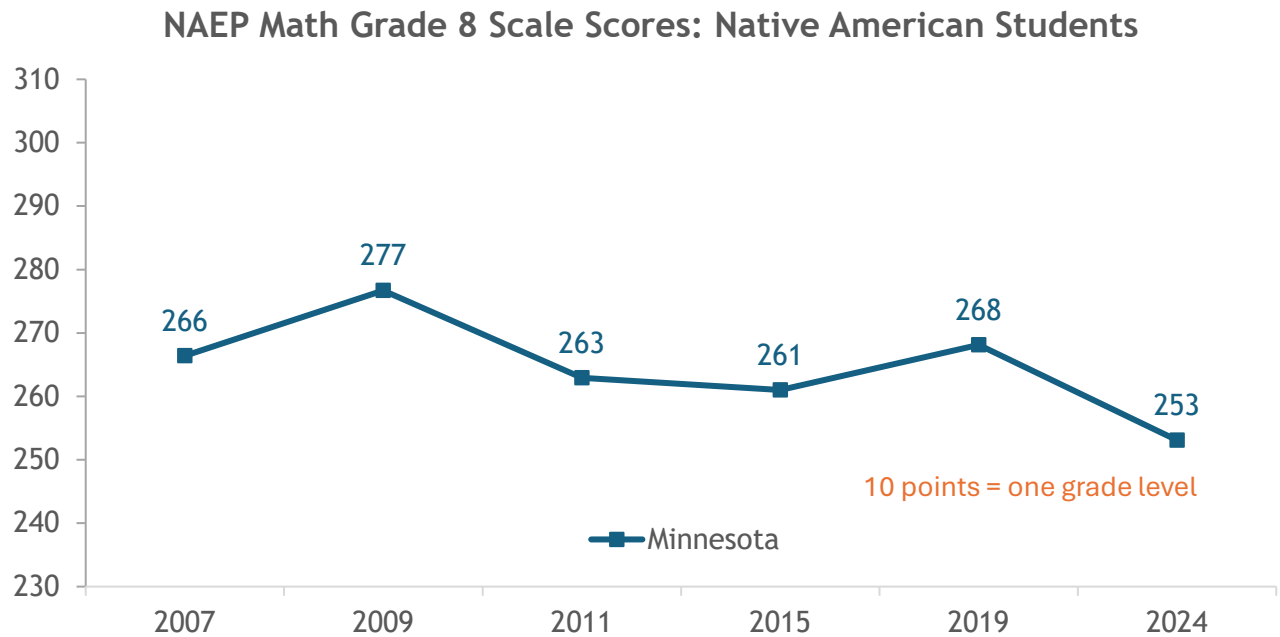


Hispanic students are performing at the lowest level since the student group was tested in 2003 and more than one and a half grades level behind their peers a decade ago.

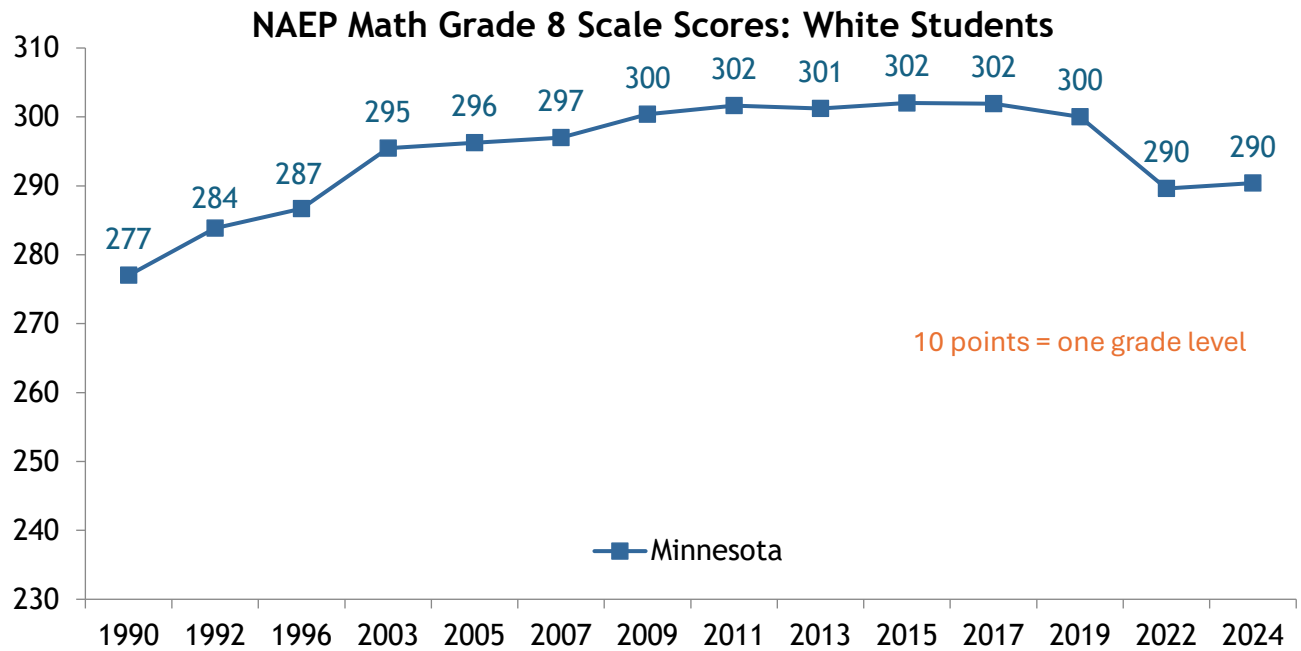
### NAEP Math Grade 8 Scale Scores: Hispanic Students



Native American students are performing at the lowest level since the student group was tested in 2007 and more than a grade level behind their 2007 peers.



White students are performing at the lowest level since 1996, and more than half a grade level behind their 2003 peers.



## National Assessment of Educational Progress 2019, 2022, 2024: Scale Score, National Rank, and Achievement Gap

| NAEP         | Minnesota 2024 |      |     | Minnesota 2022 |      |     | Minnesota 2019 |      |     |
|--------------|----------------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|
| Grade 4 Read | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap |
| All Students | 214            | 27   |     | 215            | 29   |     | 222            | 12   |     |
| White        | 224            | 25   |     | 226            | 22   |     | 231            | 15   |     |
| Black        | 195            | 24   | 29  | 193            | 28   | 33  | 201            | 22   | 30  |
| Hispanic     | 197            | 44   | 27  | 197            | 41   | 29  | 202            | 43   | 29  |
| FRL          | 197            | 41   | 32  | 194            | 46   | 32  | 205            | 40   | 29  |

| NAEP         | Minnesota 2024 |      |     | Minnesota 2022 |      |     | Minnesota 2019 |      |     |
|--------------|----------------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|
| Grade 8 Read | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap |
| All Students | 260            | 14   |     | 260            | 18   |     | 264            | 20   |     |
| White        | 266            | 20   |     | 269            | 19   |     | 271            | 20   |     |
| Black        | 240            | 24   | 27  | 237            | 34   | 32  | 236            | 38   | 36  |
| Hispanic     | 243            | 35   | 23  | 242            | 47   | 27  | 247            | 44   | 24  |
| FRL          | 248            | 12   | 20  | 242            | 46   | 26  | 247            | 41   | 26  |

| NAEP         | Minnesota 2024 |      |     | Minnesota 2022 |      |     | Minnesota 2019 |      |     |
|--------------|----------------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|
| Grade 4 Math | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap |
| All Students | 241            | 7    |     | 239            | 12   |     | 248            | 1    |     |
| White        | 252            | 7    |     | 250            | 4    |     | 258            | 2    |     |
| Black        | 218            | 20   | 34  | 214            | 20   | 36  | 226            | 14   | 31  |
| Hispanic     | 224            | 27   | 27  | 217            | 44   | 32  | 224            | 43   | 34  |
| FRL          | 226            | 21   | 26  | 219            | 38   | 29  | 231            | 12   | 28  |

| NAEP         | Minnesota 2024 |      |     | Minnesota 2022 |      |     | Minnesota 2019 |      |     |
|--------------|----------------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|----------------|------|-----|
| Grade 8 Math | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap | Scale Score    | Rank | Gap |
| All Students | 282            | 3    |     | 280            | 8    |     | 291            | 3    |     |
| White        | 290            | 7    |     | 290            | 7    |     | 300            | 4    |     |
| Black        | 256            | 8    | 34  | 254            | 11   | 36  | 255            | 30   | 45  |
| Hispanic     | 256            | 30   | 34  | 253            | 44   | 37  | 268            | 29   | 32  |
| FRL          | 264            | 6    | 29  | 258            | 32   | 31  | 270            | 10   | 33  |