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**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON TODAY'S NATIONAL
ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN READING AND MATHEMATICS**

Students are making real progress in reading and math in the nation's classrooms. The hard work of school reform is beginning to pay off and the nation will be the real winner in the years ahead.

The improvement in math is especially significant. The number of students mastering the NAEP has doubled in eighth grade and nearly tripled in fourth grade since 1990. Achievement gaps have narrowed between African American and white students.

I'm especially proud of the progress made in Massachusetts, which scored higher than all other states in reading, and tied for first in the nation in math. We made a genuine commitment a decade ago to improve public schools, raise standards, expand training for teachers, and provide good after-school programs and extra help to students who need it most.

Such progress is hopeful, but it's clear that our work is far from over. Despite significant gains at home in math, still we lag well behind many other nations. The progress in our elementary school classrooms is gratifying, but it can't mask the obvious need for similar progress in reforming the nation's middle schools and high schools.

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