

# Lit Scan

Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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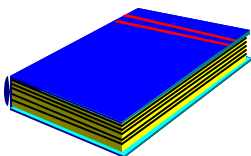
October 9, 2000

## Parental Education a Persistent & Powerful Predictor of NAEP Test Scores at All Grade Levels

For the past three decades, children of high school graduates have scored consistently higher on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests than children whose parents failed to complete high school. Children of parents who pursued education beyond high school earned even higher test scores than children whose parents did not pursue higher education.

This relationship is consistent, regardless of the grade level of the students and the subject of the test.

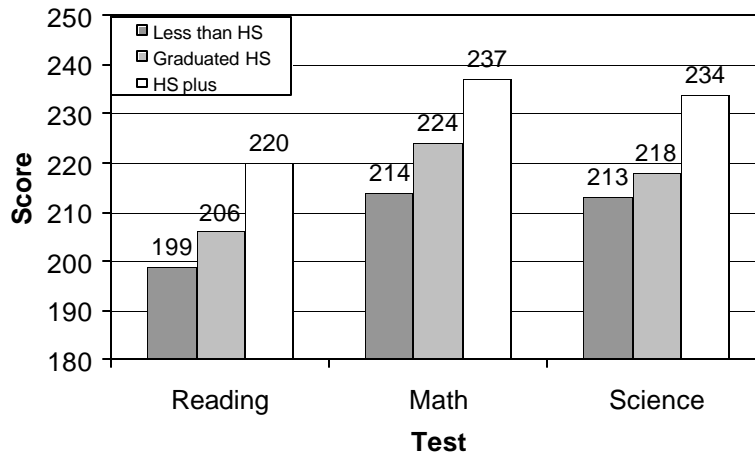
At the elementary level, students whose parents pursued higher education scored 10 percent higher than those whose parents failed to complete high school. (See Figure 1.)



### HIGHLIGHTS

- For 30 years, parental education has proven to be a persistent and powerful predictor of NAEP reading, math, and science scores at elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- Scores for 1999 provide the latest confirmation of this important relationship.

**Figure 1.**  
1999 NAEP Scores for 9 Year Olds by Parental Education

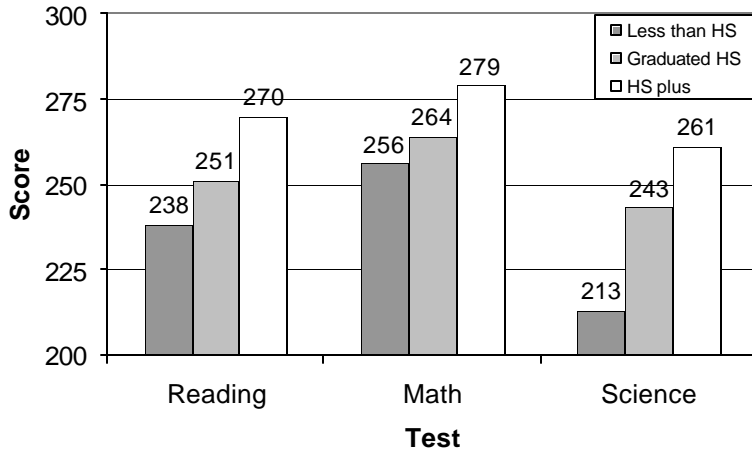


Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 1999, **Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance**, National Center for Education Statistics, August 2000.

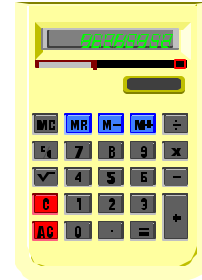
**CARE**  
Center for At-Risk Education coe

Colorado Literacy Research Initiative (CLRI)  
CARE—Adult Education & Family Literacy  
201 East Colfax Avenue ♦ Denver, Colorado 80203-1799  
Tel.: (303) 866-6737 ♦ Fax: (303) 866-6940  
Web: [www.lrs.org/clri](http://www.lrs.org/clri) ♦ © 2000

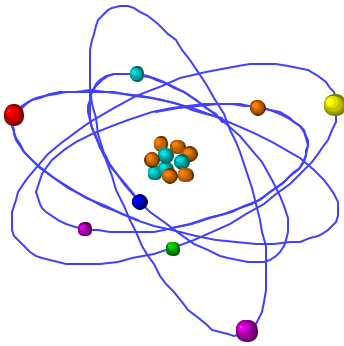
**Figure 2.**  
1999 NAEP Scores for 13 Year Olds by Parental Education



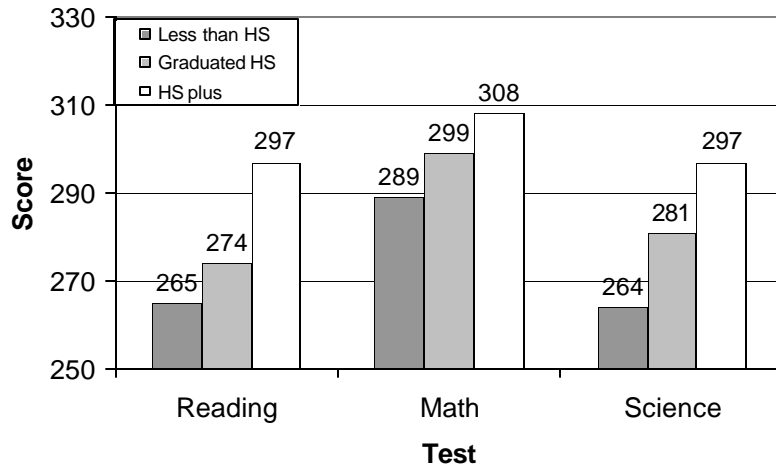
At the middle school level, students whose parents pursued higher education scored nine percent higher on math, 13 percent higher on reading, and 22 percent higher on science than students with dropout parents. (See Figure 2.)



At the high school level, students whose parents attended at least some college scored seven percent higher on math, 12 percent higher on reading, and 13 percent higher on science. (See Figure 3.)



**Figure 3.**  
1999 NAEP Scores for 17 Year Olds by Parental Education



The persistence and strength of the relationship between parents' education and students' academic achievement suggests that addressing the intergenerational legacy of academic failure is an essential part of the long-term success of educational reform. Academic success requires strong and consistent support from both home and classroom.