

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, October 24, 2022

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STEEP NATIONAL DECLINES AND WIDENING GAPS IN STUDENT MATH AND READING PERFORMANCE REINFORCES URGENT NEED FOR SUPPORTING A HIGH-QUALITY, DIVERSE TEACHER WORKFORCE

Newly Released NAEP 2022 Scores Demonstrate the Severity of Instructional Loss During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Washington, D.C. – The education community has anxiously awaited the release today of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores—also known as the Nation's Report Card. The [2022 scores for fourth and eighth grade students](#) reveal steep and historic national declines in student math and reading performance. In the months and years ahead, helping students' academic recovery will require significant investment and attention to the preparation and support we provide public school teachers, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources to accelerate student learning.

"There will be an inappropriate amount of attention on who or what to blame for these devastating NAEP results," said Dr. Heather Peske, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality. "Instead we should be laser focused on how we make this right for our children. We know students urgently need our support to recover academically, and we know that teachers are the ones who can make it happen. While the NAEP results confirmed our fears, they also underscore how much schools and teachers matter to students."

Effective teachers deliver educational opportunities that improve individual lives and uplift entire communities. Research shows that teachers who are [well-prepared in content and pedagogical knowledge](#), [reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of their students](#), and are [supported to grow and thrive](#) are the most powerful in-school factor that drives student learning.

"Teacher quality must be front and center now more than ever," continued Dr. Peske. "No one can look at these math and reading results, particularly the disproportionate declines for some of our most vulnerable students, and not realize that making sure all students have access to an effective and diverse teacher workforce that is knowledgeable in research-based math instruction and the science of reading must be our top priority."

The National Council on Teacher Quality has the following priorities for supporting students' academic recovery:

- **Encourage strong policies and practices that prepare, attract, support, develop, and retain a highly-skilled, diverse teacher workforce.** A strong teacher pipeline will ensure more impactful teachers who are more likely to stay in teaching, while strategic policies around teacher hiring, [compensation](#), [evaluation and feedback](#), and [career growth](#) will help support teachers continue to develop and advance in service of accelerating student learning.

- **Increase teachers' capacity to improve elementary student reading and math outcomes.** Research shows elementary students' [reading](#) and [math achievement](#) is linked to future educational attainment, career opportunities, and life outcomes. While weak instruction in elementary reading and math is not new, the pandemic has exacerbated learning gaps, especially at the elementary level, with devastating consequences for historically underserved students. Both [teacher preparation programs](#) and [state policies](#) play essential roles in addressing these pernicious educational inequities by ensuring elementary teachers have the knowledge and skill to effectively teach reading and math.
- **Support a data-driven approach to understanding—and fixing—teacher labor market issues.** In nearly every state, [there are gaping holes in the most fundamental teacher workforce data](#), making it nearly impossible for most states to have a nuanced understanding of their teacher workforce needs. Without accurate, timely, and disaggregated data about where and in which subjects teacher shortages exist, education leaders risk implementing [overly broad solutions to staffing challenges](#) that harm teacher quality and, ultimately, student learning. Moreover, improving teacher workforce data is critical to [identifying and addressing inequitable access to effective teachers for our most vulnerable students](#).

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To schedule an interview with NCTQ President Dr. Heather Peske, contact Nicole Gerber at (202) 393-0020 ext. 712 or by email at ngerber@nctq.org.

About the National Council on Teacher Quality: NCTQ is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. We recognize that it is not teachers who bear responsibility for their profession's many challenges, but the institutions with the greatest authority and influence over teachers. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.