



The Daily Dish

A National Disgrace

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

Just the [facts](#) from *The Wall Street Journal*:

American high-school seniors' scores on major math and reading tests fell to their lowest levels on record, according to results released Tuesday by the U.S. Education Department.

Twelfth-graders' average math score was the worst since the current test began in 2005, and reading was below any point since that assessment started in 1992. The share of 12th-graders who were proficient slid by 2 percentage points between 2019 and 2024—to 35% in reading and 22% in math.

There also were drops in the proportion of students who were able to reach at least a basic level of performance, a tier below proficiency.

These results are, objectively, terrible. One in three high school seniors can read. One in five can do math. And these results are not a surprise. Performance on the ironically named National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been declining for years (and it is not a COVID-related phenomenon).

What does the future hold for these young Americans? The lucky ones will simply be unable to compete in the labor market. The unlucky ones will pretend to go to college (there will always be some cash-strapped school prepared to admit them), run up a fortune in student loan debt that they will be unable to pay, torch their credit rating, and end up playing checkers with the lucky ones. There are dystopian dramas that are more uplifting.

But that's not the disgrace. The disgrace is that **NOBODY IS TALKING ABOUT THIS!** America's future is at risk and the House is talking about a dead pedophile, the Senate is rubber-stamping an administration mole for the Fed, and the White House is building a better ballroom.

Maybe our elected officials need a NAEP test.