

American students' performance lags on Nation's Report Card

October 31, 2019

WASHINGTON (AP) — The latest Nation's Report Card is painting a dismal picture of math and reading achievement among American fourth and eighth graders despite a few bright spots.

Students in the nation's capital, which faced multiple scandals in its public school system last year, made significant gains in both reading and math this year, according to the National Assessment of Education Progress. There also were major improvements in Mississippi, bucking a national trend that showed America's eighth graders falling behind in math and reading and declines among fourth graders in math.

Nationwide, a little more than a third of eighth graders are proficient in reading and math. About a third of fourth graders are proficient in reading, while more than 40% of fourth graders are proficient in math.

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said the overall national results demonstrated a "student achievement crisis" that can't be fixed by pouring more money into the traditional public school system. She renewed her pitch for expanded school choice, including her proposals for federal tax credits for donations made to groups offering scholarships for private schools, apprenticeships, school vouchers and greater reliance on privately run charter schools.

"Our children continue to fall further and further behind their international peers," she said in a speech Wednesday. "If we embrace education freedom, American students can achieve. American students can compete."