

# Feinstein students testing to see where RI ranks

## FMS 8th-graders will participate in assessment today

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COVENTRY —After months of organizing by Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School guidance counselor Trish Dorchies, The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) will be taking place Monday, February 9.

A percent of students in grades 4, 8 and 12 are chosen by the NAEP at random throughout the state and because the middle school is the largest middle school in the state, the sample is the largest — 260 students out of 384, according to Dorchies.

Representatives from NAEP not only chose the schools that will take part, they go into the schools for the one-day testing and administer the test.

Testing is conducted every two years and lasts 90 minutes and both Assistant Principal Mary Lou Bettez and Dorchies agree that the purpose of the test is to see where students, by state, compare to their peers nationally.

“It’s not something they need to prepare for, it’s just based on what they know and that information just contributed to the state’s profile,” Dorchies explained.

The NAEP is an assessment that produces a national report card that shows the public about the academic achievements of elementary and secondary students throughout the country.

First sponsored by the Department of Education in 1969, the test assesses reading, writing, math, science, U.S. history, civics, geography and other subjects. The national sample is composed of all state samples of public school students.

The program has two goals: to compare student achievement in states and other jurisdictions and to track changes in achievement of fourth, eighth and 12-grade students over time in various subjects.

The assessment is voluntary for every student, school, school district and state; however, the law does require the states that receive Title 1 funds to participate in the reading and math assessments in the fourth and eighth-grade level.

The recent analysis from the National Center for Educational Statistics

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(NCES) show that according to the data profile from 2011, Rhode Island was exactly even with the national rate of a 239 scale score for fourth-grade math. In fourth grade reading, Rhode Island's score was only one point below the national average of 220. The grade four science for the state was three points below the national average of 149 and grade four writing was four points higher than the national average at 157 compared to 153.

Grade eight math was four points below the national average of 282, grade eighth reading only three points below the national of 261 and science just one point below national at 146.

According to NCES, in an effort to meet the growing need for information about what students know and can do, the NAEP assessment instruments must meet the highest standards of measurement reliability and validity and must measure changes over time and must reflect changes in curriculum and instruction in diverse subject areas.

Dorchies explained why organization has to begin so early in the school year.

"I receive the list of students involved, then questions go out to each teacher in reading, math, writing and science and then I go through the list of sample students and add anyone new into the sample formula and making sure the students who need special accommodations are set up for those," she said. "Then we go through the list of those students and see how they can be assessed. It's a lot of work and hours but I have great teachers and we all work together as a group."

Once all the "basics" are organized, Dorchies takes part in a conference call to ensure all the stipulations have been met.