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# North Carolina Teens Behind International Peers In Math

By LISA PHILIP • DEC 30, 2016

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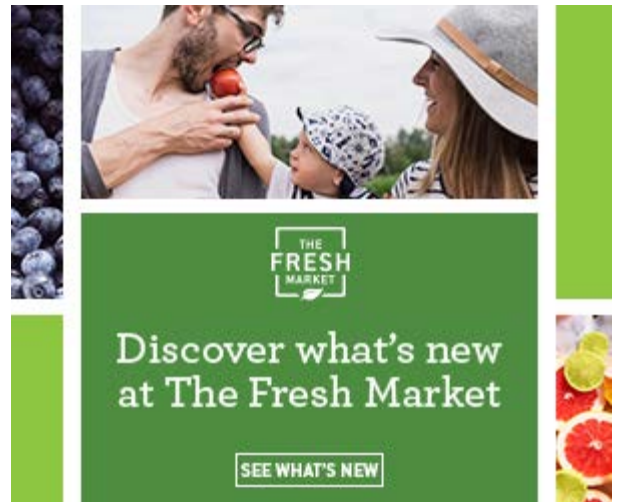


*North Carolina teens scored behind their counterparts in 36 other locations across the globe on the most recent version of an international math exam.*

CREDIT DAVE DEWITT / WUNC

Teens in North Carolina lag behind many of their international peers in math. That's according to the most recent results of the [Program of International School Assessment](#), which measures math, reading and literacy among 15-year-olds.

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around the world took the test last year, the first that North Carolina participated. Those scores were posted last month and put the state behind 36 locations in math.

In a statement, Brenda Berg, president of business advocacy group BEST NC, called the state's math results "alarming."

Scores here were roughly comparable with those in Lithuania, Hungary and Croatia, and behind those in Korea, Ireland and Vietnam.

"But this PISA analysis is helpful and tells us that equitable access to high-quality educators is important," Berg said. "To improve our standing in the country and the world, North Carolina must prioritize teacher and principal talent, especially for hard-to-staff subjects like math; and also for high-needs schools and students."

North Carolina's science and reading scores were on par with those in the United Kingdom, Denmark and Sweden and exceeded results in 40 other regions.

Singapore was the top performer in all three subjects tested.

North Carolina State Superintendent June Atkinson said in a statement that she is heartened that local students scored roughly in line with national averages on the math, science and reading portions of the test. Massachusetts and Puerto Rico were the only other American regions that participated.

"This information will help us as we review content standards and set expectations for the future," Atkinson said.

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