The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 1998 Civics Assessment found that 12th-graders who participated in volunteer service had higher scores than those who did not. Furthermore, 12th-graders who worked 6 to 15 hours a week had higher scores than those who either worked longer hours or did not work at all. (Contains two tables and Web sites for further information.) (MR)
Student Jobs and Volunteer Service

Carol Johnson and Alan Vanneman

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The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 1998 Civics Assessment found that 12th-graders who participated in volunteer service had higher scores than those who did not. Furthermore, 12th-graders who worked 6 to 15 hours a week had higher scores than those who either worked longer hours or did not work at all.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has been administering NAEP assessments since 1969. In addition to assessing student performance, NCES administers background questionnaires to students.

In the 1998 Civics Assessment, NCES added questions about student employment and participation in volunteer service. These questions were asked of 12th-grade students only. As table 1 indicates, 12th-graders who reported participating in volunteer work in their community had higher scores than those who reported that they had not engaged in volunteer work. Twenty-seven percent said they had engaged in volunteer work in connection with their school, and 31 percent said they had done so on their own.

Table 1.—Percentage of students and average civics scale scores by volunteer work status, grade 12: 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you do volunteer work in your community this year?</th>
<th>Percentage of students</th>
<th>Average scale score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, with my school</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>159*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, on my own</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>158*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Higher than “No.”

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Civics Assessment.

As table 2 indicates, 65 percent of all 12th-graders reported working at a job for pay during the school year, and 38 percent reported working more than 15 hours a week. Those 12th-graders who reported working 6 to 15 hours a week (some 20 percent of the whole) had higher scores than the 36 percent who said they did not work at all and the 38 percent who said they worked more. The scores of students who reported working 1 to 5 hours a week were not significantly different either from the scores of students who were not working at all or from those who were working 6 to 15 hours a week.

Conclusion

The data presented in this issue of *NAEPfacts* indicate that involvement with volunteer work is associated with higher scores among 12th-graders on the...
NAEP civics assessment, as is participation in a moderate level of paid employment. At the same time, students who work more than 15 hours a week show lower scores than some other students, at least in civics, and those who work more than 20 hours have scores that are lower than any other group.

Endnote

1 Only statistically significant differences are discussed in this issue of NAEPfacts. "Statistically significant" means that observed differences are unlikely to be due to chance factors associated with sampling variability. All differences reported are significant at the .05 level with appropriate adjustments for multiple comparisons.

For Further Information


The text of the Report Card and additional information about the Civics Assessment, including sample questions, may be obtained from the NAEP World Wide Web Home Page (see below).

NAEPfacts briefly summarize findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The series is a product of the National Center for Education Statistics, Gary Phillips, Acting Commissioner, and Peggy Carr, Associate Commissioner for Education Assessment. This issue of NAEPfacts was prepared by Carol Johnson of NCES and Alan Vanneman of the Education Statistics Services Institute, based on previously published material.

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The NCES World Wide Web Home Page is http://nces.ed.gov/

The NAEP World Wide Web Home Page is http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/
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