

“People have been talking about the K-12 education crisis for over 30 years with no overall improvement. After endless debate, disagreements, and lack of broad-based action, this book shows what works and provides a roadmap for improvement. I believe our children deserve what we all know a good education system can provide. It’s time for every state to get started on the reforms listed by Ladner, LeFevre, and Lips.”

Craig Barrett, Former Chairman of the Board and CEO of Intel Corporation

“This is an incredibly useful ‘how to’ manual for education reformers in every state. Want to know where your state’s education system is falling short? Want to know what to do to improve it? The answers are right here.”

Jay P. Greene, Ph.D., Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research

“Everyone interested in education reform should read this book. Using a method that—by focusing on the achievement of low-income children—allows for apples-to-apples comparisons across the states, the authors present a treasure trove of eye-opening performance data and arrive at a ranking of state performance that reveals both surprising success and shocking failure. The book is well worth reading for the data alone. But it also offers a good deal more, from research summaries to methodological clarifications to model legislation—and concludes with an insightful discussion of the high-powered reforms that have helped some states out-perform others, and that offer the nation a path to improvement. I should add, finally—and with genuine admiration—that the book is beautifully written and a pleasure to read: something I can rarely say about a data analysis.”

Terry Moe, Senior Fellow at Hoover, and Professor of Political Science at Stanford

American Legislative Exchange Council
1101 Vermont Ave., NW, 11th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Ph: (202) 466-3800
Fax: (202) 466-3801

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16th
EDITION

Report Card on American Education

ALEC

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REPORT CARD_{on} American Education

RANKING STATE K-12 PERFORMANCE, PROGRESS, AND REFORM



Dr. Matthew Ladner
Andrew T. LeFevre
Dan Lips
Foreword by Jeb Bush

AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL
ALEC

Report Card on American Education

Ranking State K-12 Performance, Progress, and Reform

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*Report Card on American Education:
Ranking State K-12 Performance, Progress, and Reform*
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Fax: (202) 466-3801

www.alec.org

For more information, contact
the ALEC Public Affairs office.

Dr. Matthew Ladner, Andrew T. LeFevre,
and Dan Lips

David J. Myslinski, Director, Education Task Force

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About the Authors

DR. MATTHEW LADNER

Dr. Matthew Ladner is vice president of research for the Goldwater Institute. Prior to joining Goldwater, Dr. Ladner was director of state projects at the Alliance for School Choice, where he provided support and resources for state-based school choice efforts. Dr. Ladner has written numerous studies on school choice, charter schools, and special education reform. Dr. Ladner has provided testimony to Congress, a number of state legislatures, and the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Dr. Ladner lives in Phoenix with his wife Anne and three children Benjamin, Jacob, and Abigail.

ANDREW T. LEFEVRE

Andrew T. LeFevre is president of LeFevre Associates, LLC, a government relations and public affairs consulting firm located in the Phoenix, Arizona metropolitan area. Prior to relocating to Arizona, Mr. LeFevre served as executive director of the REACH Alliance and REACH Foundation in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, which seeks to educate the public on the benefits that school choice can bring to Pennsylvania's children. Prior to REACH, Mr. LeFevre served as the executive director for the Association of Private Correctional and Treatment Organizations, serving the private correctional and treatment industry. Before that, he served as the director of ALEC's Criminal Justice and Education Task Forces.

Mr. LeFevre's extensive media background includes appearing in *The New York Times*, *New York Newsday*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *The Houston Chronicle*, and *The Washington Times*; on the radio on *The G. Gordon Liddy Show*, *CNN Radio*, and *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio; and on TV on *Burden of Proof* on CNN, *Closing Bell* on CNBC, *Washington Journal* on C-SPAN, *Fox in Depth* and *The O'Reilly Report* on the Fox National News Network, and *Today's Topic* on MSNBC.

Mr. LeFevre holds a B.A. in political science from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. He is married and has two children, both of whom attend public school.

DAN LIPS

Dan Lips was formerly a senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation specializing in education policy. His views and research have appeared in prominent media outlets including *The Washington Post* and *National Review Online* as well as in academic journals like the *Georgetown Journal of Law and Public Policy* and *Education Next*. Mr. Lips has testified before Congress and state legislative committees and appeared on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News. He currently serves as the Chairman of the D.C. Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Mr. Lips is a senior fellow with the Goldwater Institute and the Maryland Public Policy Institute.

Mr. Lips earned his bachelor's degree in politics from Princeton University and master's degree in national security affairs from the Institute of World Politics in Washington, D.C.

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Foreword

by Jeb Bush, former governor of Florida

The United States is in an educational arms race.

We live in an era of global competition. Our world today is more interconnected and interdependent. American students coming of age are competing for jobs and opportunities with students from around the world. The security and standard of living of current and future generations depend on whether we succeed in preparing students to meet this challenge.

As a nation, are we doing what we need to win this race? The answer is no. The sad truth is that millions of children pass through our nation's schools year after year without obtaining the knowledge and skills to succeed in the 21st century economy.

Nevertheless, there is hope for the future. Across the country, in many states, school districts, and schools, there are beacons of rising achievement and models of excellence. Smart reforms are changing the landscape of American education—holding schools accountable for results, expanding choices for parents and students, strengthening the quality of our teacher workforce, and harnessing the power of technology to expand learning opportunities. These common-sense reforms are making a difference in the lives of students.

I have seen first-hand the powerful effects

that real education reform can make. A decade ago, Florida's schools ranked near the bottom in nearly every national survey. More than half of the state's public school students could not read or do math on grade level. More and more students were dropping out and high school graduates only had to demonstrate the aptitude of an eighth-grader to earn a diploma.

Then, in 1999, we stopped accepting excuses for poor performance and embraced the core belief that all children can achieve when schools organize around the singular goal of learning. During the decade that followed, we ushered in sweeping reforms that fundamentally changed Florida's education system. Our plan set high standards and expectations, established clear accountability, created rewards and consequences for results, and provided an unprecedented array of alternatives to traditional public school.

Ten years later, Sunshine State students are above the national average in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Florida's fourth-graders are also above the national average in math, and eighth-graders are closing in on that benchmark. Best of all, Florida's Hispanic and African-American students are making the greatest gains, narrowing the achievement gap for the first time in our lifetime.

While much progress has been made, we have so much further to go to ensure that all children receive a world-class education in Florida and across the nation.

ALEC's *Report Card on American Education* is a helpful guide for anyone who wants to achieve a quality education for all students. The book answers two questions facing everyone involved in the education reform debate: Where are we today? Moreover, where do we need to go? It explains why the status quo is unacceptable, and offers a blueprint for reform to create the kind of education system and learning opportunities American students deserve.

I can tell you from experience: Enacting reform

is difficult. There is a huge difference between the theory of reform and the reality of it—it is a lot harder than it looks. It requires full transparency, unyielding tenacity, continuous communication, relentless advocacy, and the courage to measure progress and then deal with the results, whatever they may be.

The United States can win the international education arms race. However, it will require bold leadership from lawmakers and policy-shapers across the ideological spectrum. Everyone can agree that all children deserve a first-class education. The challenge of our time is delivering on that promise by enacting reforms that lead to success in school—and beyond.

Education Reform

Homework for Adults

In the fall of 2009, millions of American students were greeted by a special guest lecturer—the President of the United States.

President Barack Obama broadcast his address to students at a Virginia high school to classrooms across the country on Sept. 8, 2009. To his listeners, the president offered a positive, inspirational message: Work hard, set goals, and take responsibility, particularly in schooling. That, he explained, will bring great success to their lives, their communities, and their country.

It was an important message for students to hear. One can only hope that every student who listened to President Obama's speech that day took his words to heart.

If the president earned an "A" for good advice, he surely deserved an "F" for picking his audience: It is American adults who need a good tongue-lashing.

Consider the challenge with which the Commander in Chief tasked students in his closing words. "I'm working hard to fix up your classrooms and get you the books, equipment, and computers you need [in order] to learn," President Obama explained. "But you've got to do your part, too. So I expect you to get serious this year. I expect you to put your best effort into everything you do. I expect great things from each of you. So don't let us down ..."¹

With all due respect, Mr. President, we *adults* have also let *them* down. American kids do need to focus more on achievement. Some kids have

the deck stacked for them, others against them. Some kids will attend great schools with a real opportunity to learn, thrive, and prepare for their futures. Other kids, through no fault of their own, will not.

Therefore, this *Report Card on American Education: Ranking State K-12 Performance, Progress, and Reform* is written for every adult in America who is ready to "get serious," "do their part," and "work hard" to ensure that every child in America receives their birthright—the opportunity to pursue the American dream.

For reformers of the past, present, and future, this publication will inform you—state by state—who is succeeding, and who's not, when it comes to academics and our proposed set of reforms. The *Report Card* comprises four chapters, the first of which examines the need for transforming America's public schools by shedding light on the "seen" and "unseen" costs of pervasive academic stagnancy and failure. The second chapter offers a report card for each state's education system, grading both their academic performance and their education reform environment. The third chapter provides steps to improve states' educational opportunities—offering a glimpse of what is possible through reforms and providing specific recommendations for the types of policies that can transform American education. The concluding chapter asks the simple but pivotal question: How can you champion reforms for public education?

Indeed, how?

Those familiar with the education reform “movement” know that a bipartisan consensus on the need for serious changes in our nation’s schools is forming. Even Newt Gingrich and Al Sharpton have been able to agree on one thing: We need education reform leaders.

We agree.

It is for that reason the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is publishing this completely revised 16th edition of its annual *Report Card on American Education*. This is the homework, cliff notes, and cheat sheet should you want to be a reform champion. The homework: Study this guide and understand the specific recommendations for what you can do to make a dif-

ference in the lives of our nation’s schoolchildren. The cheat sheets are the extensive resources available, through organizations like ALEC, that can assist you as you work to bring real change to your state’s public school system.

The change agent is you.

Let us be clear: This is not a walk in the park. Even with the diverse set of tools, resources, and allies at your disposal, there are entrenched interests who will fight your work every step of the way. Therefore, it is our hope, through this publication, that when the questions arise as to who’s passing and who’s failing, your opponents won’t have the right answers.

But you will.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The White House. “Remarks by the President in a National Address to America’s Schoolchildren.” September 8, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-in-a-National-Address-to-Americas-Schoolchildren/ (accessed November 13, 2009).

CHAPTER 1

Winners and Losers in
America's Education Lottery

Winners and Losers in America's Education Lottery

Parents and students packed the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York, to capacity on a rainy April night in 2009. Those who arrived late waited in the lobby; others stood outside in the rain. Drama students from Democracy Prep Charter School entertained the crowded auditorium—singing songs from the classic musical *Annie*.¹

The purpose of the gathering: a lottery that determined which students would have the chance to enroll in the highly regarded Democracy Prep Charter School. In all, 1,500 kids had applied for the school's 100 open spots. Students on stage sang, "It's a hard-knock life." Children in the audience crossed their fingers and held their breath—hoping to beat the odds and hear their names called.

Jayden Gonzalez was one of the lucky ones. His was the hundredth name announced—the last to be guaranteed a seat in Democracy Prep's newest class. Jayden's mother, Belicia, had entered her 14-year-old son in the drawing just before deadline. "I'm so happy," she told the *New York Post*. "It's unbelievable."²

Student Anthony Johnson was not as fortunate: "When I heard my name wasn't picked, I was just so mad."³ He was not alone.

Alicia Wilson had enrolled her 11-year-old daughter Samantha in the lottery, too. Living in Staten Island where there are no charter schools and the public schools are lacking, Wilson was prepared to accompany her daughter on a two-hour commute into Harlem by bus, boat, and train to attend Democracy Prep. "The payoff would be

her getting an education," Wilson explained. They never called Samantha's name. "I'm gonna [sic] keep trying," said her mom.⁴

Lotteries like this are an all-too-common occurrence in American education. When given a chance to transfer their children out of low-performing public schools, parents sign up in droves—whether it is an opportunity to attend a charter school or to receive a scholarship to go to private school.

In 1999, after a New York-based charity announced it was contributing 40,000 private school scholarships to low-income students, sponsors held lotteries in the country's biggest cities to determine the recipients. To be eligible, families whose incomes were barely above the poverty line had to agree to make a tuition co-payment of \$1,000. Word quickly swept through the inner cities. In all, more than *one million students applied* for 40,000 scholarships.⁵ Again, there were more losers than winners.

Something is abhorrently wrong with our nation's education system when a lottery determines a child's future.

Imagine if all children's schools were decided this way. Envision parents' understandable outrage if the annual "back to school" season included a new tradition:

Each August, American families would turn on their television sets to "The Lottery." Ryan Seacrest of *American Idol* fame could host the sure-to-be ratings phenomenon. Seacrest could place ping-pong balls—365 to be exact—in a box. The program's producers would stamp each ball with

a date. One by one, Seacrest pulls the ping-pong balls, influencing the education fates of millions of children.

The arrangement of numbers carries a weighty significance: A child whose birth date drawn from the box first would have the choice to attend any school in his or her state. The unfortunate students whose birth dates pulled last would choose last. In all likelihood, they would have little choice at all, leaving them only spots in the least desirable schools.

Now *that* would be gripping reality television.

Would most parents feel satisfied with such a process for allocating school placements? Would they be confident their sons or daughters would receive a quality education even if their ball came up late? The answers to these questions are obvious.

If we decided every child's education this way, parents likely would flood their school boards, state legislatures, and courtrooms with demands for reforms to assure that every child has access to a first-class education. However, our current system really is not so different from that scenario. The only difference is now, people buy the lottery balls when they purchase expensive homes in leafy suburbs or pay private school tuition. The rest get whatever the system decides to give them, which is all too often a dysfunctional school with a history of academic failure.

So where's the outrage?

Today, many families do not feel the urgency of the crisis in American education or recognize the pressing need for improvement. To be sure, the emergency is most dire in poorer communities, where students are more likely attending lesser quality schools. But anyone who does a little homework will recognize that public education's problems are not reserved for the underprivileged. Some of the early ball winners did not actually receive the prize they thought they had won.

The Urgent Crisis in American Education

Picture any fourth-grade classroom. In the typical American elementary school, you could expect to

see about 16 nine- and 10-year-old students. By this point, they have spent four years in school, or about 900 days worth of instruction.⁶ Assuming they all have attended public school since kindergarten, each child probably has had as much as \$50,000 invested in his or her education by taxpayers.⁷

As you imagine those 16 smiling faces, know that at least five of them are unable to read. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—the so-called Nation's Report Card—33 percent of American fourth-graders scored “below Basic” in reading.⁸ This means the students fail to “demonstrate an understanding of the overall meaning of what they read.”⁹ “Below Basic” is a polite term for illiterate. It gets worse.

Imagine only low-income or minority children in this classroom. Achievement levels would be substantially lower. On the 2009 NAEP reading test, among fourth-graders, 49 percent—yes, nearly half—of all students eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches scored “below Basic” in reading.¹⁰ Among African-American fourth-graders eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, 58 percent scored “below Basic” in reading.¹¹

This is what political leaders have coined the “achievement gap” in American education. Twenty-two percent of white students score “below Basic” in reading while 53 percent of African-American students fall into this category.¹² Hispanic children perform only slightly better—52 percent score “below Basic.”

The bottom line is that after as many as 900 days of instruction—and \$50,000 in taxpayer dollars spent on his or her education—a child from a minority or economically disadvantaged family has basically a 50-50 chance of being able to read by the end of the fourth grade. Their schools have failed to give them the essential key that unlocks the doors to every area of learning.

For the millions of American kids who are “below Basic” in reading by fourth grade, consider the implications. These students relentlessly fall further and further behind grade level. Their lifetime opportunities are slowly slipping away like sand through an hourglass.

Four years pass. You now are standing in front of an eighth-grade classroom. The innocent faces of 10-year-olds have transformed into teenagers who are enjoying and struggling with the anxieties of adolescence. By now, these student have gone to school for as many as 1,620 days. On average, the typical student will have had as much as \$90,000 spent on his or her public education by taxpayers.

Again, this investment of time and resources has not ensured that all children have mastered even basic skills. In the average eighth-grade classroom, more than a quarter of all students, 26 percent, scored “below Basic” in reading on NAEP in 2009.¹³ This means they have failed to “demonstrate a literal understanding of what they read and be able to make some interpretations” when reading an eighth-grade text.¹⁴ If we raise the bar higher, *only 30 percent* of these eighth-graders would likely be scoring “Proficient” on the NAEP reading test, meaning that they were on grade level.

The \$100,000 Question

By the time the average public school student approaches the age of 18, taxpayers will have spent more than \$100,000 to provide him or her with an education. The size of this investment demonstrates our country’s commitment to education.

So what are we getting for this six-figure investment? Not enough.

American students’ scores on the 12th-grade NAEP tests highlight the pervasive mediocrity in K-12 public schools. On the most recent mathematics exam, only 23 percent of 12th graders scored “Proficient” in mathematics.¹⁵ Further, 39 percent scored “below Basic,” meaning that they could not “perform computations with real numbers and estimate the results of numerical calculations.”¹⁶

In reading, only 35 percent of high school seniors scored “Proficient,” indicating that they are able “to show an overall understanding of the text which includes inferential as well as literal information.”¹⁷ That is to say, only 35 percent of high school seniors could read and fully under-

stand a grade-appropriate text. Despite having at least \$100,000 spent on their education in grades K-12, the majority of American students are likely to finish high school without mastering reading or mathematics.

High school graduation rates are another indicator of public schools’ underperformance. According to government and independent reports, the estimated average high school graduation rate is between 71 percent and 74 percent. Again, minority children lag behind the national average. In 2002, only 56 percent of black and 52 percent of Hispanic students graduated. In contrast, 78 percent of white students earned their high school degrees.¹⁸

In many large American cities, the high school graduation rates are much, much worse. A 2009 study published by *Education Week* estimated that the high school graduation rate for all students in the school districts serving the nation’s 50 largest cities was only 52 percent.¹⁹ Fewer than four in 10 students graduate in the following cities: Detroit (38 percent), Cleveland (34 percent), and Indianapolis (31 percent).²⁰

American students also are performing behind many of their peers in countries around the world. The U.S. Department of Education published a report in 2009 comparing the performance of U.S. students on international tests with children in other countries.²¹ On the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) exam in 2006, for example, American 15-year-olds were outperformed by 23 of 29 participating countries in mathematics. In science, students in 16 countries outperformed U.S. students.

Who Pays the Price for Continual Failure in American Education?

Looking at the dismal performance in America’s public schools, one can scarcely imagine the implications—for students and our society.

For students, there is the cost of a lower quality of living. Statistics and research suggest that a young person who graduates high school can expect to live a more productive and longer life

TABLE 1 | Average Scores for 15-year-old Students on the Mathematics and Science Literacy Exams in 2006 by Country

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Mathematics		Science	
OECD Countries	Average Score	OECD Countries	Average Score
Finland	548	Finland	563
Korea, Republic of	547	Canada	534
Netherlands	531	Japan	531
Switzerland	530	New Zealand	530
Canada	527	Australia	527
Japan	523	Netherlands	525
New Zealand	522	Korea, Republic of	522
Belgium	520	Germany	516
Australia	520	United Kingdom	515
Denmark	513	Czech Republic	513
Czech Republic	510	Switzerland	512
Iceland	506	Austria	511
Austria	505	Belgium	510
Germany	504	Ireland	508
Sweden	502	Hungary	504
Ireland	501	Sweden	503
France	496	Poland	498
United Kingdom	495	Denmark	496
Poland	495	France	495
Slovak Republic	492	Iceland	491
Hungary	491	United States	489
Luxembourg	490	Slovak Republic	488
Norway	490	Spain	488
Spain	480	Norway	487
United States	474	Luxembourg	486
Portugal	466	Italy	475
Italy	462	Portugal	474
Greece	459	Greece	473
Turkey	424	Turkey	424
Mexico	406	Mexico	410

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. "U.S. Performance Across International Assessments of Student Achievement: Special Supplement to The Condition of Education 2009." Figures 6 and 9. U.S. Department of Education. August 2009, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009083>.

than a student who drops out. Those young people who go even further in their education can expect to experience even greater benefits.

Lower Lifetime Earnings

The U.S. Census Bureau published a report called “The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings,” which projected how educational attainment is linked to a person’s expected lifetime earnings.²² The Census Bureau’s estimates projected that the average full-time worker with a high school degree would earn about \$30,400 per year—compared to just \$23,400 for the typical high school dropout.²³ This adds up considerably over the course of a lifetime with high school graduates earning about \$200,000 more than dropouts do.

Students who continue their educations beyond high school can expect even more. The Census Bureau estimates that those with bachelor’s degrees will earn almost a million dollars more during their working years compared to high school graduates.

Of course, simply earning a high school or college degree does not guarantee a person higher earnings. The Census Bureau’s analysis, however, confirms what probably seems like common sense: Students who succeed can expect to take advantage of better opportunities in the workforce than students who do not.

Lower Life Expectancy

The federal government has found that succeeding in school can also improve a person’s odds of living a longer life. In 2008, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that “mortality is inversely associated with educational attainment; that is, the average risk of death decreased markedly with increasing educational attainment.”²⁴ Moreover, a Teachers College of Columbia University analysis found the life expectancy of dropouts to be about nine years shorter than high school graduates.²⁵

Not to be outdone, researchers from Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania

examined data from the ’80s and ’90s and found that education’s positive effects on life expectancy grew even bigger.²⁶ “The 1980s and 1990s were periods of rapidly rising life expectancy, but the mortality declines that yielded these gains did not occur evenly by education group,” they wrote. “On average, we find very little change in life expectancy among less-educated black and white non-Hispanics and very substantial increases in life expectancy among the more educated.”²⁷

The Cost for Communities and the Country

Beyond the individual costs, failure in the classroom imposes significant ramifications on our communities and the nation as a whole. It worsens the quality of life, drives up our taxes, weakens our economy, and threatens our security.

Increasing Social Risk Factors and Costs

In terms of our quality of life, adults with limited or no education are more likely to create problems in the community. Professor Enrico Moretti of the University of California at Berkeley studied the link between educational attainment and criminal activity. Moretti projects that increasing the average person’s educational attainment by just one year would reduce murder and assault by almost 30 percent, motor vehicle theft by 20 percent, arson by 13 percent, and burglary and larceny by about 6 percent.²⁸ Lower educational attainment also contributes to higher rates of child poverty, out-of-wedlock birth, and general economic insecurity.

Increasing the Tax Burden

Less educated adults are more likely to become dependent on government services. Those dependent on government and paying fewer taxes drive up the amount taxpayers must foot for an already expensive government. Dr. Brian Gottlob—with The Foundation for Educational Choice—analyzed the fiscal effects high school dropouts have on federal and state governments. He reports that if every student simply earned a high school degree, the number of Medicaid beneficia-

ries would drop by 3.5 million, saving taxpayers \$7 billion every year. Increasing the educational attainment of the workforce also would shrink welfare rolls and dependence on other government assistance programs.²⁹

However, that is just looking at one side of government's ledger. Poor performance in school not only causes increased government spending on social programs, but it also reduces government revenues. Professor Cecilia Rouse of Princeton University—now a senior economic advisor to President Barack Obama—examined the link between educational attainment and government revenues and found that the lower wages of high school dropouts result in \$158 billion in lost earnings and \$36 billion in reduced federal and state income tax revenue.³⁰ The bottom line: Everyone who wants lower taxes should recognize that fixing our education system would lower government costs and increase the number of taxpayers who can help shoulder those costs.

Damaging the Economy

McKinsey and Company, in a 2009 study, calculated that the inability to eliminate the education achievement gap creates what amounts to a permanent national recession.³¹ McKinsey projected that closing the achievement gap between poor students and their peers would have increased our national economic output in 2008 by between \$400 billion to \$670 billion, or 3 to 5 percent.

Undermining Civic Values

American leaders have warned about the importance of maintaining an educated populace to our democratic republic from the founding to the present day. As Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1816, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."³² Imagine what our third president would think if he were alive today.

We would suspect shock—shock at what the typical American student *does not know* about our country, our system of governance, and the principles Mr. Jefferson and others so bravely espoused

and defended.

Only 13 percent of American 12th-graders scored "Proficient" on the NAEP history exam.³³ Less than 30 percent could correctly identify the main issue in the Lincoln-Douglas debates. This ignorance continues through college. In 2008, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute and the University of Connecticut conducted a survey of 14,000 college students, administering a multiple-choice test that measured their knowledge about American history, government, international relations, and the market economy. The survey found that the average score for *college seniors* was 53 percent.³⁴

A Failure to Prepare the Next Generation for the New Century

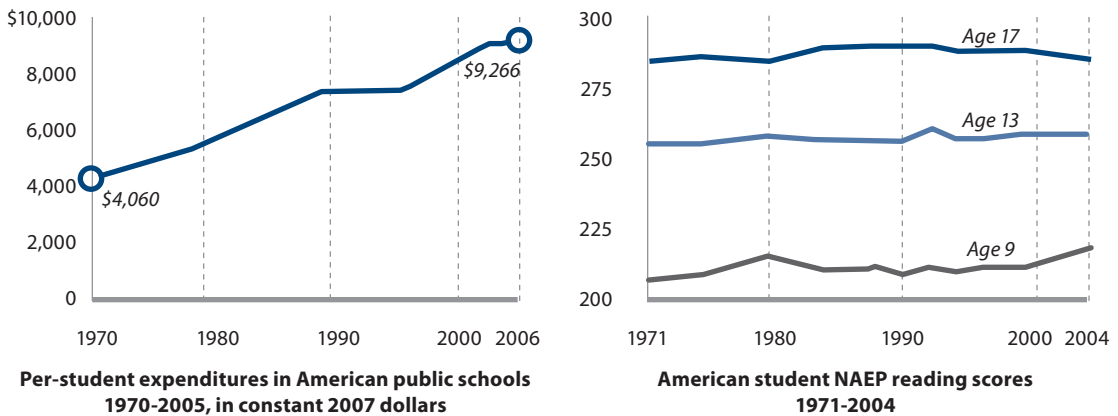
Our nation's education system is failing its fundamental responsibility: preparing the next generation to ensure the continuation of our free society, to lead our communities and nation wisely, and to meet the challenges of the new century. Knowing these things, why and how is this happening? What explains our national failure?

Drowning in Money, Thirsting for Achievement

We would be happy to wager on what is the most commonly cited "problem" with American education: insufficient funding. In their book *Education Myths*, Dr. Jay Greene of the University of Arkansas and his coauthors call this the "Money Myth."

"The pervasiveness of this assumption that schools are inadequately funded says more about the state of our public thought about education than anything else," they write. "It is simultaneously the most widely held idea about education in America and the one that is most directly at odds with the available evidence."³⁵

This contradiction was evident in a recent public opinion survey on registered voters' views about public education in Washington, D.C.³⁶ A majority of the respondents believed that funding for D.C. public schools was too low. Specifically, 70 percent of those polled believed the D.C. government was spending less than \$12,000 per student. In truth, per-pupil spending in the nation's

FIGURE 1 | Trends in Spending and Academic Achievement

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, "National Trends in Reading by Average Scale Scores," updated July 6, 2005, at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ltr/results2004/naat-reading-scalescore.asp> (April 14, 2008), and *Digest of Education Statistics 2007*, Table 174, at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_174.asp. (August 19, 2008).

capital tops \$15,000. It is not hard for one to imagine finding a similar underestimation if voters were surveyed in other states.

Nationally, the United States now spends, on average, more than \$10,000 per pupil. Back in 1970-1971, the national average per-pupil expenditure was only \$4,060 (after adjusting for inflation). That means taxpayers are paying more than double what they were spending on the average student's education four decades ago. However, have we seen a corresponding increase in students' academic achievement? Unfortunately ... well, you probably know the answer.

Just in case, Figure 1 presents a comparison between inflation-adjusted per-pupil expenditures and long-term reading test scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. While per-pupil expenditures have more than doubled, long-term reading test scores for American students have remained essentially flat. High school graduation rates provide another historical measure. Between the 1990-1991 and 2005-2006 school years, graduation rates have actually dropped, albeit slightly, to 73.4 percent from 73.7 percent.

Not a Failure to Spend, But a Failure to Reform
The fact that American education needs urgent

change is not exactly news. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education released the landmark report "A Nation at Risk," highlighting the dismal condition of American public schools. Such poor academic performance was allowing students from around the globe to outperform ours. The report's language was dire: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war."³⁷ Sadly, we could make the same warnings today.

Still, "A Nation at Risk" greatly influenced our public education system in two major ways. First, it resulted in a massive introduction of new spending on public education. Second, it was a turning point in the modern school reform movement.

In the years that followed "A Nation at Risk," some policymakers began to spend, while others pursued standards-based reform and other free-market initiatives that aimed to improve educational achievement. Although they succeeded in implementing reforms, the sweeping changes needed to bring about real improvement in American schools hit a roadblock. Can you guess what stood in the way of real reform?

Although reformers then and now face a pow-

erful opposition, we ask that you do not throw in the towel just yet. There is growing evidence on the significant improvements that can occur when reformers introduce the right reforms into the public education system. As we will argue in the pages that follow, we know what types of changes can unleash the meaningful improvement American students so desperately need. We have compelling

evidence that when policymakers implement the right combinations of reforms, American students can make significant progress.

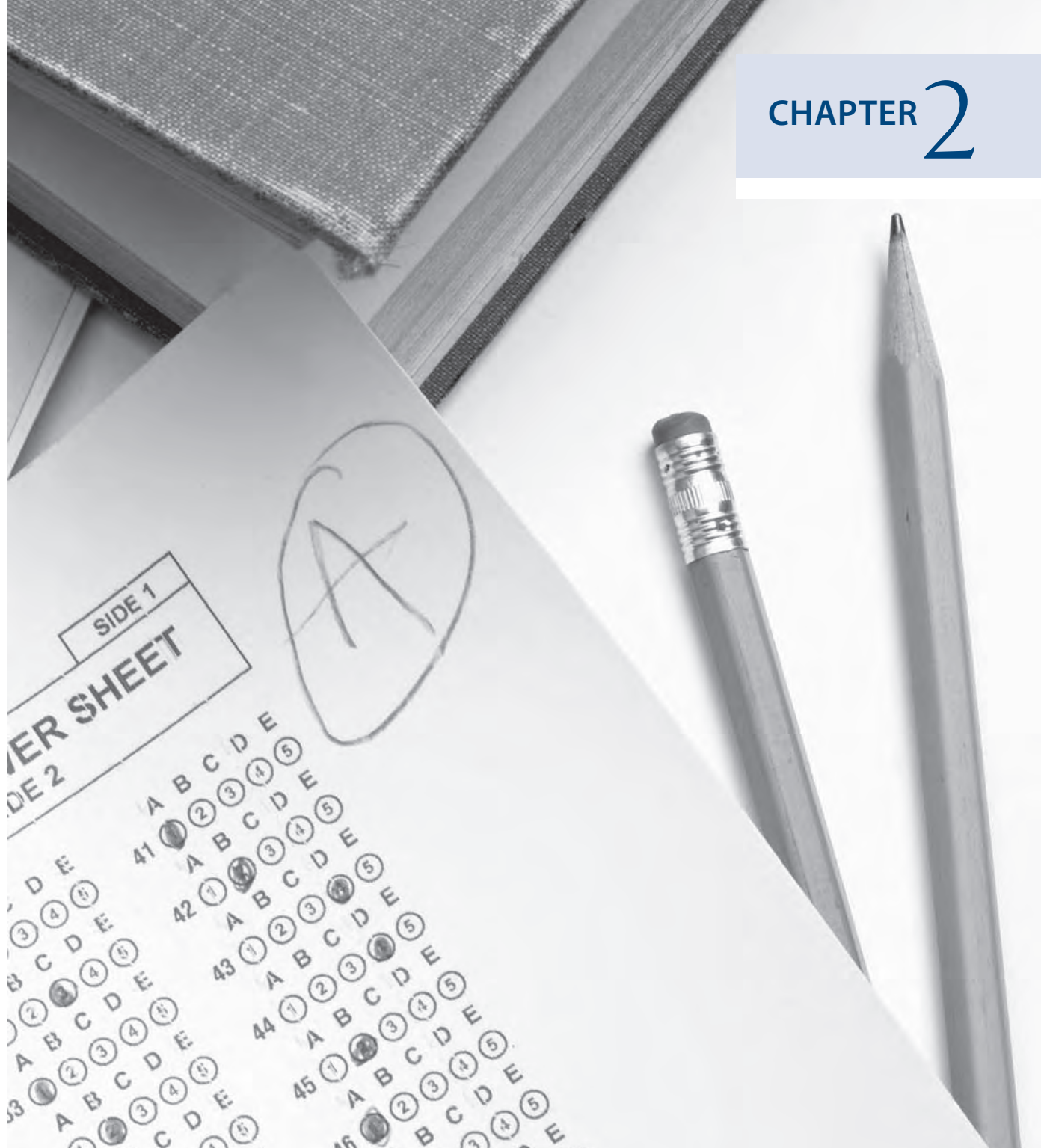
The only question is whether we—as a nation—can muster the necessary political will. The costs of inaction are monumental. The futures of millions of American children hang in the balance.

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CHAPTER 2



Grading State Education Performance and Reform

Grading State Education Performance and Reform

In sports, there is the scoreboard. In business, there is the balance sheet. In school, teachers give report cards.

In the preceding chapter, we examined the performance of the nation's public schools, the widespread failure of which is costing taxpayers their earnings—and children their futures. Anyone familiar with American governance knows we do not have a nationwide system of public education. Instead, we have a country with 50 different state education systems.

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously called states the laboratories of our democracy. To apply this analogy to education policy, the United States has 50 different “classrooms” that can be graded on their achievement levels and governance policies. Studying these differences and identifying best practices can help state policymakers determine how to improve their own state's schools.

In this chapter, we present a “report card” of each state's education system—ranking its academic achievement and grading its implementation of policies and reforms that hold promise for improving student learning.

If you are like us, you can recall your school days waiting to open your report card—judgment day. Like that eager (or perhaps anxious) student, you probably are tempted to skip ahead to your state's page. We ask you to resist that temptation because it is important for you to understand our methodology.

Okay, go ahead and do it. Just come back here so you will understand the material at which you are peeking.

Ranking Methods for States' Education Performance

In order to rank each state's academic achievement, we analyzed National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The federal government administers the NAEP to random samples of students. It effectively serves as an audit of states' standards and assessments—enabling comparisons across states with an objective measure. Unlike myriad state exams, schools lack the incentive or the ability to “teach to the test” when it comes to the NAEP.

Since the passage of the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act in 2002, all states have been giving NAEP reading and mathematics tests to both fourth and eighth-graders. Before NCLB, that was an option. For example, 12 states chose not to participate in the NAEP 2002 fourth-grade reading exam.

Since 2003, NAEP has administered reading and mathematics exams every other year. Accordingly, we begin ranking with the 2003 exams and equally weigh two factors: overall academic performance from 2009, and changes in NAEP scores between the 2003 and 2009 exams.

The “best” state in this ranking would be one that not only had a high average score for all four exams in 2009, but also one that made relatively impressive *gains* on those same four exams during the 2003-2009 period. Likewise, the lowest ranking state not only would have low overall scores, but also little or no improvements.

Therefore, our rankings give credit to states with low overall performance that have moved in

the right direction. States with high overall performance that have stalled or regressed in academic improvement fell back in the rankings.

Maximizing Comparability Among the States

The rankings also take into account the varying effects that parental income, students with disabilities (consequently having Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and English Language Learners (ELL)) have on states' academic performance—for several important reasons.

High-income children score better, on average, than children from low-income families. In 2009, the Census Bureau reports that the per-capita income of the wealthiest state (Connecticut) was almost 88 percent higher than that of the poorest state (Mississippi).¹ Unsurprisingly, in Connecticut, 27 percent of children qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch under federal standards, while in Mississippi 68 percent qualify. Because Connecticut schools brim with middle- and high-income children, whereas Mississippi schools have far more low-income children, one should not be surprised to find that Connecticut has higher NAEP scores than Mississippi. Low-income students can learn, mind you, but higher-income children tend to learn much more at home, and generally enter school with an advantage over their peers.

When ranking states' academic performance, we ought not to simply congratulate Connecticut schools for the good fortune of having relatively wealthy student bodies. Nor should we castigate Mississippi schools for the poverty levels of their students. Instead, our rankings seek to make as much of an "apples-to-apples" comparison as possible by grading states based on similar students.

States also vary in the number of children identified for special education services and in the percentage of students who are not native English speakers. In New Mexico, schools have designated more than 18 percent of their students as English Language Learners (ELL) while in West Virginia less than 1 percent of students are ELL. The fact that New Mexico has a rate of non-native

English speakers more than 18 times higher than West Virginia's makes a straightforward comparison of states' academic performance problematic.

Grading States on the Performance of the "Typical Low-Income Child"

In order to maximize comparability, our ranking system judges each state based on the NAEP performance of children eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (FRL) based on their family income who are not enrolled in either special education or English Language Learner programs. By tracking the absolute performance and progress (or lack thereof) of what one might describe as "generic low-income children," we minimize the vast differences among state K-12 populations to a relatively common metric. There are several advantages to this approach.

First, every state has sizeable populations of low-income students. If one were to focus on, say, racial and ethnic achievement gaps, he or she would have to accept that many states' samples of African-American or Hispanic students are too small for the NAEP to reliably report.

For example, the 2009 NAEP reading exam did not report African-American subgroups' scores for Idaho, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Wyoming. The NAEP simply cannot give a solid estimate of African-American scores in these states because there are too few of them in the population, and thus in the sample. Similarly, NAEP gave no Hispanic subgroup results for Maine, North Dakota, Vermont, or West Virginia on the same exam. Racial and ethnic achievement gaps are important and worthy of study. Unfortunately, they do not lend themselves to a comprehensive state ranking of educational performance.

The NAEP, however, does have scores for low-income children in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In addition to the fact that low-income children are ubiquitous, there is also less economic variation between such students from state to state.

In 2009, a family of four could earn no more than \$40,793 for their child to qualify for a

reduced-price lunch. Nationwide, approximately four times as many students receive free lunches than reduced-price lunches. A family of four could earn a maximum of \$28,665 to qualify for a free lunch in 2009.² In short, the students in the free or reduced-price lunch pool all come from modest incomes. On the other hand, the variation in incomes among students from families with incomes *too high* to qualify for the free or reduced-price lunch program will be much greater. One would expect, for example, that the number of non-FRL eligible students barely above the guidelines would be much greater in states with lower average incomes.

High-income states, of course, will have school systems relatively flush with students far above the FRL income limits. Both the family headed by a modestly successful manual laborer and that headed by a billionaire will be included in the “Not Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch” category. The wider variation, therefore, limits the utility of the non-FRL category for purposes of ranking the quality of state education efforts. Lower-income children are on average more academically reliant on their schools. Higher-income children, on the other hand, have greater prospects to overcome deficits in their education through learning at home or private tutoring.

This is not to say that the education of middle- and higher-income children, special education children, and non-native English speakers is unimportant. Let us be clear: All children matter. For the purposes of this study, we can most readily compare low-income children outside special programs across jurisdictions, and that such children are more reflective of the relative success and/or failure of public policy. We make no claim that these comparisons are perfect, merely much more equitable than a simple comparison of state scores. While there will be variation among mainstream low-income students, the variation will be dramatically lower than the usual presentation of statewide average scores.

Despite the huge gain in comparability across states, should we be judging state performance

based upon the success and failure of what are among the least advantaged students? American liberals would likely argue that we should do so even without the advantage of enhancing comparability. The progressive political philosopher John Rawls, a hugely influential thinker among American liberals, argued that we should judge societal efforts behind a “veil of ignorance.” Behind the veil, no one would know his or her position in a forthcoming society. In this theoretical society, you might be born the child of a billionaire, or you might be born the child of a single mother in the inner city. Rawlsians argue then that given this situation, everyone would have the incentive to create a path out of poverty—just in case.³

Readers have interpreted Rawls’ work in a variety of ways, and he does not lack for critics. Progressives often invoke Rawls to justify a variety of inappropriate, ineffective, and even harmful government policies. We certainly do not endorse this, and we will return to a discussion of his philosophy in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, in our ranking, we pose the question: If you were a loser of this theoretical lottery (and, therefore, entered life as an economically disadvantaged child), in which states would you hope to be born based on their schools’ average performance? Which states would be most likely to provide an educational opportunity that would equip you with the academic skills necessary to succeed in life? Which states have been making gains among low-income children, and which have not? Which states should you be desperate to avoid if you were a low-income child?

The answer, we believe, can be found in the following pages.

Variation in “Typical Low-Income Children” Across Jurisdictions

Our methodology does not control for race. In some states, the typical poor child will be an Anglo. In many, the average poor child will be an African American. In some, the typical poor child will be a Latino. Does this make our rankings unfair?

In our view, it does not.

We view differences among racial and ethnic

groups as a cultural and policy-related issue rather than a genetic phenomenon. Further, we believe strongly that the difference between effective and ineffective schools lies almost entirely in the extent to which the adult leadership controls the culture of their school. Effective schools have strong cultures led by the teachers and principals that focus on academic achievement. Ineffective schools have cultures led by students and focused on things other than academics.

In the most dysfunctional schools, the staff fails to command the culture. Instead, the students do. With the inmates running the proverbial asylum, academic achievement is not prized but actually *stigmatized*. Students displaying academic acumen are ridiculed and even bullied. One can say the same for the staff. In these worst cases, the school “leaders” strike an implicit bargain with the students: *We won’t require you to do anything, just please don’t brutalize us.*

Such schools fail to teach much in the way of academics, regardless of what they spend.

The first duty of every school staff should be to control the culture of the school. Schools with strong leadership can and have succeeded in improving academic achievement *despite* a challenging student demographic profile. High-quality charter schools such as the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), Amistad Academies, Green Dot Schools, Yes Academies, and others have proved that this task is achievable. “No Excuses”-type public schools have proved that low-income minority children can achieve at high levels.

Notice that while you have heard of a racial achievement gap in K-12 schools, you have strangely never heard of a combat effectiveness gap in the United States Marine Corps. The Marine Corps, unlike many schools, is an organization with a strong culture shaping those entering its ranks regardless of race or ethnicity.

In a similar manner, effective schools shape everyone entering them, if not into a scholar, at least into a young person demonstrably equipped with the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to succeed in life.

We could control for race simply by judging states by the academic performance of Anglo children who qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch. We, nevertheless, refuse to do so explicitly because we believe that schools can and must overcome ethnic and racial achievement gaps.

Today’s education policies tend to sponsor and promote achievement gaps, rather than reduce them. As we will discuss in the next chapter, research on the quality of teachers shows the system tends to pair the *most disadvantaged students* with the *least effective teachers*. Likewise, the poorest students typically exercise the least amount of choice between schools. These facts are not products of fate or genetics, but of malicious policy that policymakers can and should change. Our fault lies not in our stars, but in ourselves.

Taxpayers in every state provide funds for a general diffusion of knowledge and skills, and states should accomplish this task regardless of the ethnicity of the students. Successful inner-city educators refuse to use race as an excuse for poor performance. We will do the same in ranking the performance of state school systems.

THE RESULTS | Part 1

Overall Scores for Low-Income Students

Our rankings begin by listing the scores for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. First displayed are states’ average scores for low-income children utilizing neither an Individualized Education Program (IEP)—used by students with special needs—nor an English Language Learner (ELL) program. Table 7 (page 113) displays the fourth-grade reading, fourth-grade mathematics, eighth-grade reading, and eighth-grade mathematics scores for these students. In the column after each score is a ranking for that subject, 1 being best and 51 worst.

Notice the broad powerful role that demographics play in the Table 7 average scores for generic poor children. First, states such as Montana, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Wyoming, in which the generic poor child is likely to be white, dominate the top 10 states. Some majority-minority states, however, do crack the top 10. Texas,

despite an overall K-12 population that is only 34.8 percent Anglo, holds the 10th rank in eighth-grade mathematics. Florida also has a majority-minority K-12 population and thus a typical low-income child population dominated by minority students. Nevertheless, Florida holds the second-highest score for fourth-grade reading for the generic low-income child.

Notice also that states with heavily minority populations tend to dominate the bottom 10 positions, but again, not exclusively. One of Connecticut's four scores falls in the bottom 10. The generic low-income child in Connecticut is likely to be an African-American student attending an urban school district, and Connecticut has one of the largest racial achievement gaps in the nation. Likewise, Michigan is a state that does fairly well on overall achievement on NAEP, but whose rankings by low-income children look very poor indeed. The longstanding disaster of Detroit Public Schools obviously plays a large role in this outcome. New Jersey's overall NAEP scores are among the highest, but fall to the middle of the pack when judged by the performance of low-income children.

Overall, however, the results largely follow expectations. Vermont is the number one state for overall scores; Washington, D.C. has the lowest overall scores. However, remember, our rankings give equal weight for changes in academic performance. (See page 112 for a 1-51 ranking of scores.)

THE RESULTS | PART 2

Changes in Scores for Low-Income Students

Our rankings ultimately average out overall scores with academic gains or losses for generic low-income students from 2003-2009. So if you wanted to judge the education legacy of, say, Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico, you not only would want to examine overall scores, but also look at the trends. New Mexico has some of the lowest NAEP scores in the country; however, it is crucial to consider whether the state is going in the right direction, and if so, how fast compared to the rest of the country.

Table 8 (see pages 114 and 115) presents the academic gains and losses for generic low-income children on NAEP exams for the 2003 to 2009 period.

Some jurisdictions did considerably better in changes in NAEP scores than in overall scores. Alabama had the largest gain for fourth-grade reading. The District of Columbia's improvements are in the top five for three of the four exams. Wisconsin had the seventh largest gain on eighth-grade reading, and the fifth largest gain on eighth-grade math. Maryland students score first on improvements in fourth-grade math and sixth on fourth-grade reading.

The chart becomes interesting to comb through when you consider that a 10-point gain on NAEP approximately equals a grade level's worth of learning.⁴ Several states had their low-income fourth or eighth-graders in 2009 demonstrating a better grasp—almost an entire grade level better—of the material than their peers in 2003. Florida shows the largest overall gains, as can be seen in Table 8.

It is also worth noting that a large number of states have been heading in the wrong direction—especially on eighth-grade reading. Fourteen states suffered declines in their eighth-grade reading scores, with the most serious reversals suffered in South Dakota. South Dakota declined more than half a grade level in performance between 2003 and 2009 for our sample of students. Overall, reading gains have proved harder to come by than math gains.

Final Rank of State Education Performance

We now have eight rankings per state in four areas: four absolute score rankings and four rankings on changes in scores between 2003 and 2009. All eight rankings again vary from 1 (best) to 51 (worst). To produce a final ranking, we average all eight ranking scores. In doing so, we treat relative progress and overall academic level equally.

TABLE 2 | State Final Ranking for Low-Income Children Overall Scores/Change in Scores on 4th- and 8th-Grade Reading and Mathematics, 2003-2009

Jurisdiction	Rank
Alabama	40
Alaska	11
Arizona	45
Arkansas	44
California	30
Colorado	17
Connecticut	29
Delaware	19
District of Columbia	26
Florida	3
Georgia	27
Hawaii	15
Idaho	22
Illinois	38
Indiana	13
Iowa	31
Kansas	7
Kentucky	37
Louisiana	47
Maine	14
Maryland	20
Massachusetts	2
Michigan	49
Minnesota	23
Mississippi	46
Missouri	34
Montana	9
Nebraska	33
Nevada	18
New Hampshire	4
New Jersey	10
New Mexico	48
New York	5
North Carolina	41
North Dakota	24
Ohio	35
Oklahoma	43
Oregon	32
Pennsylvania	6
Rhode Island	25
South Carolina	51
South Dakota	39
Tennessee	36
Texas	8
Utah	42
Vermont	1
Virginia	12
Washington	16
West Virginia	50
Wisconsin	21
Wyoming	28

Learning by Examining the Outliers

One clearly can observe the persistence of the racial achievement gap in the final rankings. All but one of the top 10 states have predominantly Anglo K-12 demographic profiles, often by wide margins. Our top scoring state, Vermont, for example, has a K-12 population more than 96 percent Anglo. The median low-income child in Vermont is certainly an Anglo, which is nothing to be ashamed of, given that the same is true in many of these states. Vermont ranks first because of both high scores and gains.

Three states in the top 10, however, have a free or reduced-price lunch demographic profile likely dominated by minority students: Florida (ranked 3rd), Texas (8th), and New Jersey (10th). In Florida, Anglo students only constitute approximately a quarter of FRL eligible fourth-graders. Florida's largest group of FRL students are African Americans, followed by Hispanics. In Colorado, the average FRL eligible child is Hispanic, as 72 percent of Colorado's Hispanic students taking the NAEP fourth-grade reading exam qualified by family income.

New Jersey represents an interesting case. Its statewide FRL eligibility rate is rather low (around 27 percent) and a majority of the K-12 population is Anglo. The FRL eligibility rate among Anglos is so low, however—around 11 percent in the 2009 fourth-grade NAEP sample—that Hispanics and African Americans make up the bulk of low-income children.

All three of these student populations constitute some of the toughest demographic challenges in the nation. African Americans, including Haitian immigrants, constitute Florida's largest free or reduced-price lunch eligible population. Hispanics of a variety of national origins—in the 2000 Census, Cubans comprised only 31 percent of Florida's Latinos—constitute the next largest student group.⁵ Hispanics dominate Texas' free or reduced-price lunch population, primarily but not exclusively of Mexican ancestry. New Jersey's urban minorities also represent a challenging group of students to educate.

There also are some surprises with the overall rankings. The District of Columbia comes in at number 26 entirely on the strength of score gains (the District's scores are still generally rock bottom in absolute terms). The citizens of states scoring below the District of Columbia should be deeply concerned with regard to how they are educating low-income children.

The fact that the NAEP draws District scores from a single large urban school district and inner-city charter schools leads us to believe some things are going right in D.C. More than a third of D.C. children now attend charter schools (25,385 in charters, 45,422 in DCPS). Not so long ago, DCPS had 67,000 students (in 2000).⁶

In addition, the District itself is under new leadership with the mayor seizing control of the school system and appointing a reform-minded school chancellor. We are eager to follow progress in the nation's capital on NAEP in the coming years.

Thinking back to philosopher John Rawls' theoretical "life lottery," the states in which you want to avoid being born as a generic low-income child are: Utah, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Arizona, Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico, Michigan, West Virginia, and especially South Carolina. To the citizens and lawmakers of these states, we deliver the bad news that the District of Columbia has passed you by and that you are delivering nothing close to a nationally competitive or excellent education for disadvantaged students.

Some readers from these states may feel the urge to write us to explain how it is that the poor children of *their* state are the most difficult to educate in the nation. If you feel so inclined to claim there is a great deal of lead in the water in Detroit, Hartford, Lexington, Phoenix, or _____ (fill in the blank) feel free, but do not bother to do so without proof. We are big on proof.

We view the fact that a majority-minority state with a high percentage of low-income children scored third in the ranking as proof that demography is not destiny in education. We will return to this subject in the proceeding pages.

Elements for Ranking

State Education Spending

Statisticians have studied the relationship between per-student spending and achievement test scores since the publication of the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study (also known as "The Coleman Report") in 1966.⁷ This study on student academic achievement, funded by the federal government, produced surprising results. James Coleman, a leading sociologist, concluded that factors such as per-pupil spending and class size *do not* have statistically significant impacts on student achievement.

Economist Erik Hanushek and others have replicated Coleman's work and even extended it to international studies of student achievement, and the findings from 31 years of research are clear: Policymakers cannot buy improved scores by simply throwing more money at schools. There are schools, states, and countries that spend a great deal of money per pupil with poor results (such as the United States), while others spend less and get much better outcomes.⁸ Why then the constant calls in our country for more education spending?

In 2005, Dr. Vicki Murray, in a column for the *Arizona Republic*, exposed one of the education establishment's oldest tricks: manipulating numbers to claim to be 49th in spending. Murray wrote:

It may be lonely at the top, but when it comes to education funding, Arizona has plenty of company at the bottom. Or so they say. At last count, more than half a dozen states claimed to be 49th in education funding:

"The political reality is that (Florida) lawmakers are cheap and entirely too satisfied with education spending that ranks 49th of the 50 states." St. Petersburg Times editorial, October 15, 2004.

"Illinois ranks 49th in the nation in the proportion of state school funding it provides, caucus

officials said.” Chicago Tribune, August 13, 2004.

“Tennessee ... ranks 49th out of 50 states in per-pupil spending.” Amy Ritchart, Leaf Chronicle, October 17, 2004.

Add to that list, Idaho, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Utah, and ... Arizona.⁹

At any given time, education establishment groups in multiple states are claiming their state ranks 49th in K-12 spending, likely, to spur further investments. Apparently no one wants to be 50th—perhaps one off from 50th draws the same level of outrage but less suspicion.

Although it is theoretically possible for states to tie in a ranking of spending per pupil, it is highly unlikely, given that we can reduce these numbers down to dollars and even dollars and cents per pupil. The problem starts with the fact that there are multiple rankings of state spending, each taking into account different factors. The Census Bureau keeps a set of numbers, which includes some types of capital funding. Not so for the National Education Association numbers and *Education Week’s* Quality Counts report, which exclude capital dollars. Nor do the national numbers line up with those produced by the states.

For example, the Census Bureau listed the spending per pupil for Arizona at \$7,196. Meanwhile, Arizona’s own Joint Legislative Budget Committee, which provides fiscal analysis for the Arizona legislature, gave the Maintenance and Operation (M&O) funding for that year at \$6,263 and the total spending per pupil that year at \$9,399.¹⁰

Pick a number: any number!

Similarly, the Census Bureau reports a 2006-2007 per-pupil number for Texas of \$7,818. The Texas Education Agency reports a similar number for M&O expenditures of \$7,826 but a total spending per pupil figure of \$10,162 per pupil.

Obviously, there is a big difference between \$7,826 and \$10,162 per pupil, and kudos to the

Texas Education Agency for reporting a total spending per pupil number in an easily accessible and completely transparent fashion. Many states fail to do so.

The difference between the two Texas numbers—with the total 30 percent higher than the operating number—demonstrates a trick of issue framing used across the country: *Discuss the operating number as if it were the total number.*

In the transparent Texas case, we can read the online reports and discern what it is that is missing between the operating and expenditure budgets. With Texas, we can explain the difference primarily by the \$10 billion, in 2006-2007, for capital outlay (mostly for new buildings) and debt service (mostly paying off newish buildings).

Of course, \$10 billion is a large sum of money to pretend that schools never spent. Fortunately, the good folks in Texas do not attempt to do so in reporting a total expenditure per pupil. If only we were so fortunate in the rest of the country.

We have heard (and you may have as well) arguments that capital and debt service expenditures either “shouldn’t count” or “are not an educational expenditure.” We are not metaphysicians, nor are we accountants, but our view goes something like this: If it is not necessary to educate children then let’s stop spending it. If buildings are necessary to educate students, then we need to count the expense.

If schools spent it, states should count it. You cannot eat your cake and have it, too.

In an effort to arrive at a spending level that made the most sense to us based on commonly reported data, we looked at information provided by the states to two sources: the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Educational Statistics’ National Public Education Finance Survey and the U.S. Census Survey of Local Government Finances. Again, we note that the amounts reported to these two agencies vary, thus strengthening our argument that it is extremely difficult to know exactly which numbers to use. For example, the numbers reported for the 2006-2007 school year by the state of Texas for each report were:

	NCES Report	Census Report
Total Educational Revenues	\$43,282,278	\$44,220,225
Total Educational Expenditures	\$44,872,498	\$45,807,489
Per-Pupil Expenditure	\$9,756	\$7,818

After reviewing the two reports, we decided to use the information provided in the NCES report as being more representative of accurate and consistent information provided by the states.

Therefore, we use total educational revenues in this report as a more reliable measure of true educational resource levels.

STATE PAGES: GRADING CRITERIA AND SOURCES

Data points on the state pages are divided into two main categories—education performance and education reforms—and for education reforms, a final letter grade is calculated in order to provide an easily recognizable and understandable frame of reference for policymakers.

Education Performance

This section contains the scores, information, and rankings for the 50 states' and the District of Columbia's academic performance. The information includes comparisons between state academic performance and international benchmarks of achievement.

Education Performance Rank lists each state's final rank as determined in Table 9 (on pages 116-117). This rank measures the performance of low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) based on their overall scores on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams, and the changes in those NAEP scores from 2003 to 2009 (overall performance and gains equally weighted).

State Performance on International Mathematics Exam provides a letter grade for each state

and the District of Columbia to benchmark their performance on the 2009 NAEP exams against international standards as comprised in the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). *The Second Derivative: International Benchmarks in Mathematics for U.S. States and School Districts* conducted by the American Institute for Research in 2009 serves as the source. As a point of reference, the top three performing countries in the TIMSS study received grades of B+, B+, and B for the fourth grade, and the same countries scored B, B+, and B+ for the eighth grade. This comparison is especially poignant when it becomes apparent that state grades either tend to remain the same or trend lower from fourth to eighth grade suggesting that many of our students are losing ground against their more proficient counterparts around the world.¹¹

Grading State Education Reform

This section contains the scores, information, and grades for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia for their enactment of public policies that allow reform to their educational systems through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. We derived these measures on data from education organizations or experts that analyzed various aspects of education reform.

We calculated the **Education Reform Grade** in the following manner: First, we converted all rankings into letter grades where possible. For example, we converted homeschooling regulation levels as such: none = A, low = B, moderate = C, and high = D. Next all letter grades were converted to a numerical score (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and F=0), tallied, and divided by the number of categories in which a score was present. Alabama received an initial score of 2 (12 total points/6 categories). States could "earn" extra credit of 0.25 for each "Yes" answer that it received in four possible categories. Alabama earned an additional 0.25 score for its "Yes" in the alternative teacher certification category, bringing its total score up to 2.25. Finally, we graded states on the following scale:

A+	4.26 and above
A	3.76 to 4.25
A-	3.51 to 3.75
B+	3.26 to 3.5
B	2.76 to 3.25
B-	2.51 to 2.75
C+	2.26 to 2.5
C	1.76 to 2.25
C-	1.51 to 1.75
D+	1.26 to 1.5
D	0.76 to 1.25
D-	0.51 to 0.75
F	0.5 and below

On this scale, Alabama with a score of 2.25 received a final policy grade of C.

The following is an overview of the different components that determine each state's Education Reform Grade:

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP, 2007) measures how rigorous a state's academic proficiency standards are when converted to be comparable to the NAEP exam. We retrieved this information from Paul Peterson's and Frederick Hess' "Few States Set World-Class Standards," which determined that most states have failed to set rigorous state proficiency standards since the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the requirement of states to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Receiving a lower grade by Peterson and Hess might indicate that the state has been "gaming the system" by lowering their state proficiency standards to reach AYP goals.¹²

Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007) shows whether policymakers have raised or weakened a state's standards between 2003 and 2007.¹³ Peterson and Hess provide this measure as a means of determining if a state is moving toward or away from rigorous academic standards.

Private School Choice gives states a "Yes" or "No" for whether they have adopted a private school

choice program. We retrieved this information from The Foundation for Educational Choice in its annual "ABCs of School Choice" report. These publicly funded programs allow parents to choose the schools that best fit their children's needs, including private schools. Such programs allow public dollars to follow students—through the form of vouchers or tax credits—to private educational institutions.¹⁴

Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs denotes if a school choice program provides the most flexibility and purchasing power when being utilized by parents to put their child in a private school. The Foundation for Educational Choice's "Grading School Choice Programs: Evaluating School Choice Programs by the Friedman Gold Standard" provides the grades used here. Only six states—Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, and Ohio—have multiple publicly funded private school choice programs. Only Florida's McKay Scholarships Program for Students with Disabilities received a grade of A.¹⁵

Charter School Law lists whether a state has a charter school law. The Center for Education Reform provides this information. Charter schools are innovative public schools that agree to meet performance standards set by governing authorities but are otherwise free from the bureaucratic rules and regulations that encumber traditional public schools. This autonomy allows for new teaching methods, special curricula and academic programs, and flexible governance policies, like holding longer school days.

Charter School Law Grade specifies the relative strength or weakness of a state's charter school law as it relates to how that law will foster the creation and growth of public charter schools. Each year, The Center for Education Reform reviews and grades the nation's 39 charter school laws to determine how they stack up against one another. The Center for Education Reform rates each state on such factors as allowing multiple authorizers,

TABLE 3 | Education Reform Grades by State

Jurisdiction	Grade
Alabama	C
Alaska	C
Arizona	B-
Arkansas	B-
California	C
Colorado	B
Connecticut	C-
Delaware	C
District of Columbia	C
Florida	B+
Georgia	C
Hawaii	C
Idaho	B-
Illinois	C
Indiana	C+
Iowa	C
Kansas	D+
Kentucky	C+
Louisiana	B
Maine	D+
Maryland	C
Massachusetts	C
Michigan	B-
Minnesota	B
Mississippi	D+
Missouri	B
Montana	D+
Nebraska	D
Nevada	C
New Hampshire	C
New Jersey	C
New Mexico	B
New York	D+
North Carolina	C
North Dakota	D
Ohio	B-
Oklahoma	C
Oregon	C
Pennsylvania	C
Rhode Island	D
South Carolina	B
South Dakota	C
Tennessee	D
Texas	C
Utah	C+
Vermont	D
Virginia	C-
Washington	C+
West Virginia	C
Wisconsin	C
Wyoming	C

not capping the number of public charter schools, and providing equitable funding for students who attend public charter schools—important factors for whether a state has a strong or anemic charter school environment.¹⁶

Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment allow parents to send their child to any public school either within their home school district or outside their district. We obtained this information from the National Center for Education Statistics’ “State Education Reforms” reports. Because the vast majority of students are educated in traditional brick and mortar public schools, it is important to allow parents to move their child within that system to try to find the best educational match.¹⁷

Online Learning Policies and Programs The Center for Digital Education’s “Survey of the States” reviews and ranks state online policies. Whereas the current public education system predominantly uses a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching students, educators can use technology and the Internet to tailor educational services to individual students.¹⁸

Homeschooling Regulation Levels indicates the reporting and regulatory requirements parents must face when deciding to home school their children. The Home School Legal Defense Association rates the states’ oversight of homeschooling into four categories (none, low, moderate, and high). Millions of American students are home-schooled each year.¹⁹

Grades for whether states are **Identifying High Quality Teachers**, **Retaining Effective Teachers**, and **Removing Ineffective Teachers** are obtained from the National Council on Teacher Quality’s 2008 report “State Teacher Policy Yearbook: What States Can Do to Retain Effective New Teachers.” Numerous studies show that the most determinative factor regarding a student’s academic success within school walls is whether he or she has an effective teacher.²⁰

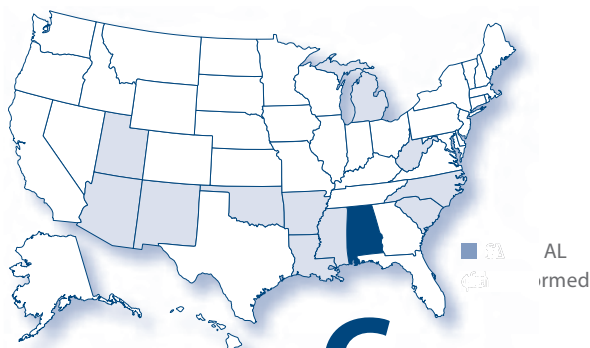
Finally, Daniel Nadler and Paul Peterson's paper, "What Happens When States Have Genuine Alternative Teacher Certification," determines the *Alternative Teacher Certification Route* ranking. That is, has the state created a pathway to allow individuals to enter the teaching profession that is outside the traditional certification method? Many professionals seeking a mid-career change could bring years of practical experience into classrooms to benefit students. Unfortunately, those individuals must take 30 credit hours of education-related coursework in order to earn a teaching degree—a barrier to entry.²¹

Results of Education Reform Grades

Table 3 (on page 22) summarizes the average education reform grades for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Interestingly, the results do not conform to a bell-curve: No state received an overall A grade, nor did any receive an F. Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, and South Carolina scored highest with grades of B or better. Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Vermont shared grades in the D range.

Alabama

The Cotton State

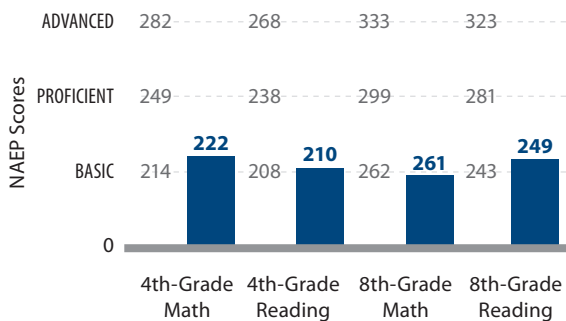


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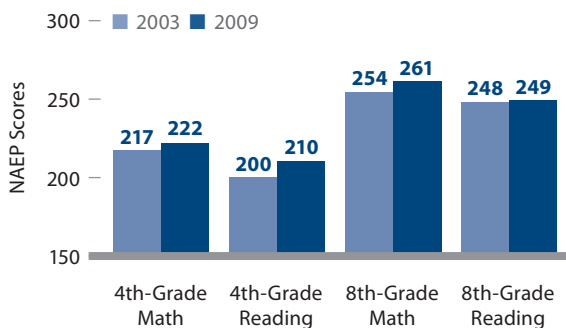
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	23
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

The following information for Alabama is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
56,720	\$9,548	16,449	29%	71%

Alaska

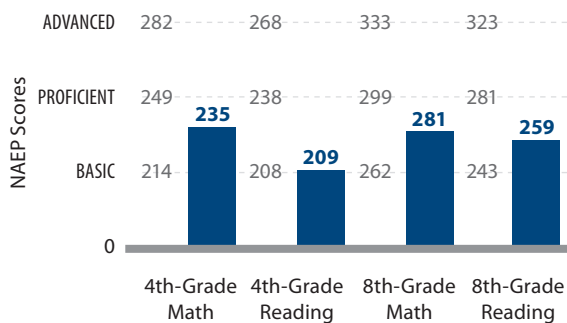
The Last Frontier

11

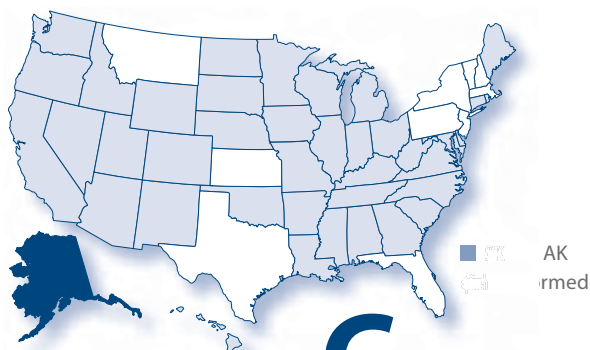
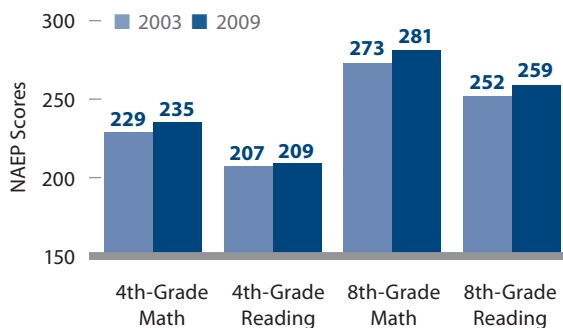
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	27
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

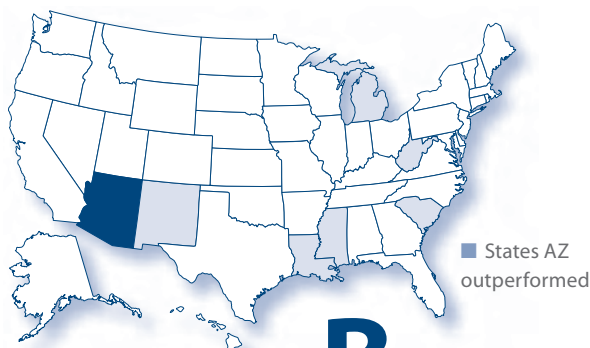
The following information for Alaska is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
9,589	\$14,304	2,685	28%	72%

Arizona

The Grand Canyon State

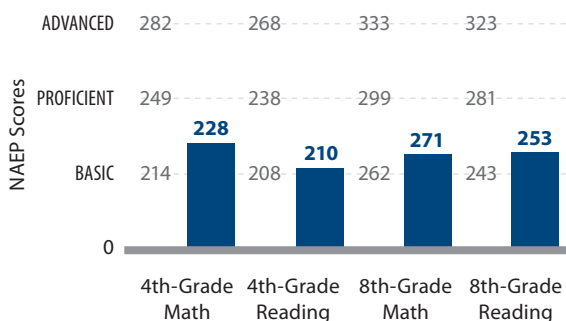


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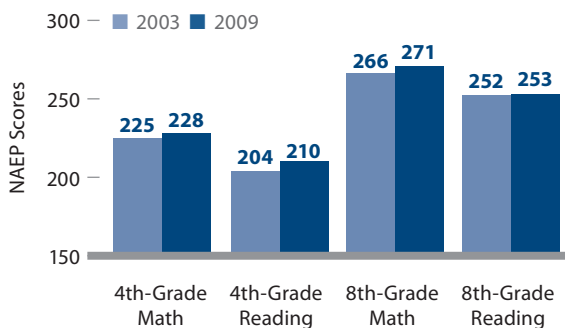
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

B-

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	Yes
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	38
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

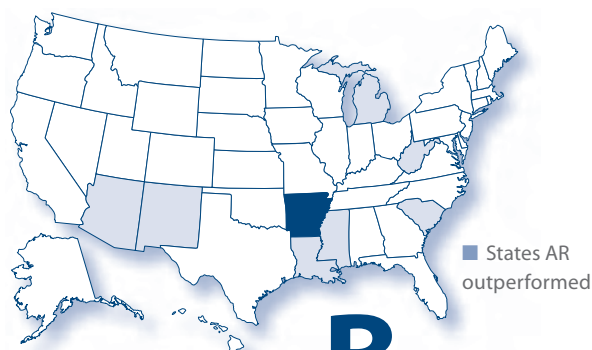
The following information for Arizona is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
81,388	\$9,023	20,347	25%	75%

Arkansas

The Natural State



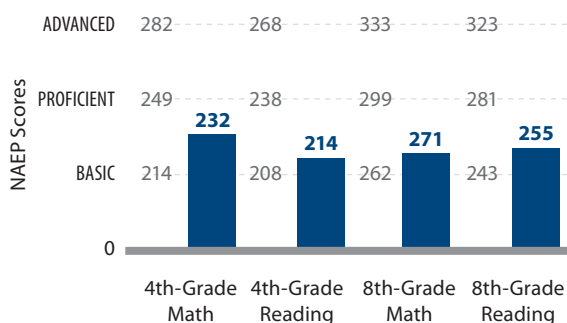
44

B-

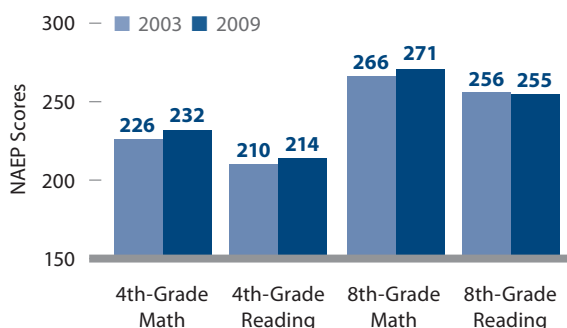
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	4
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

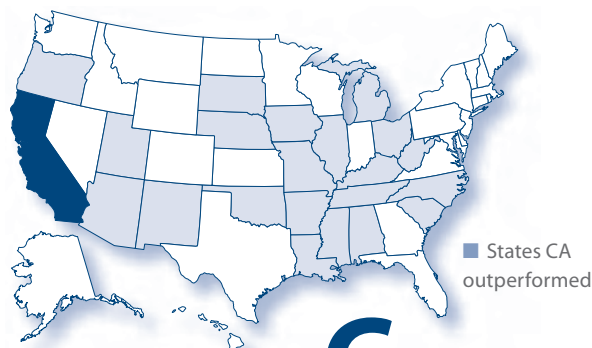
The following information for Arkansas is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
35,581	\$9,362	9,963	28%	72%

California

The Golden State

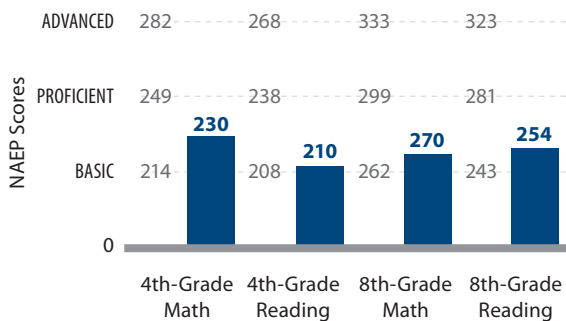


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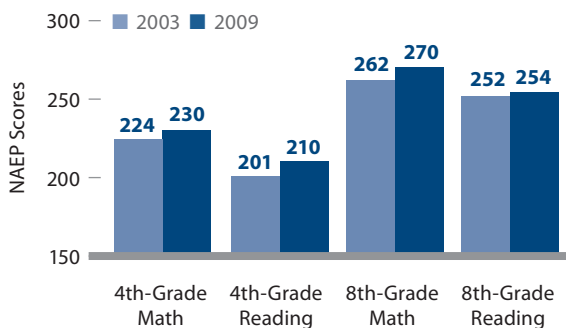
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	B
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	A
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	49
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

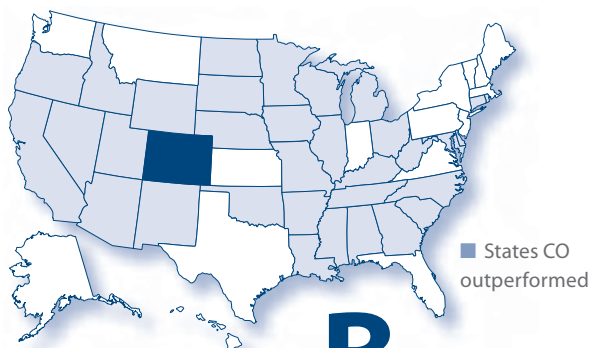
The following information for California is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
470,542	\$10,857	108,225	23%	77%

Colorado

The Centennial State

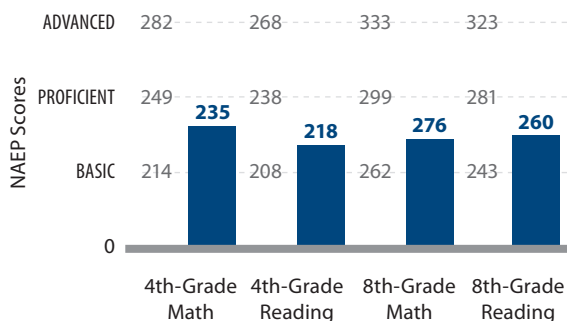


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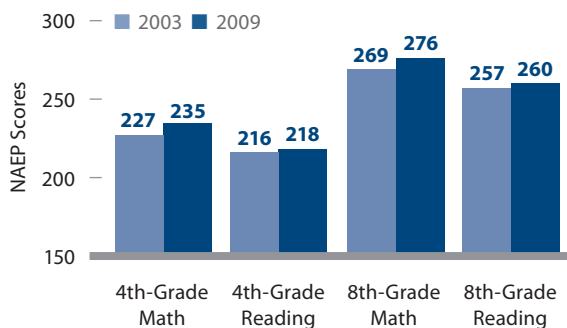
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

B

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	B-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	14
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

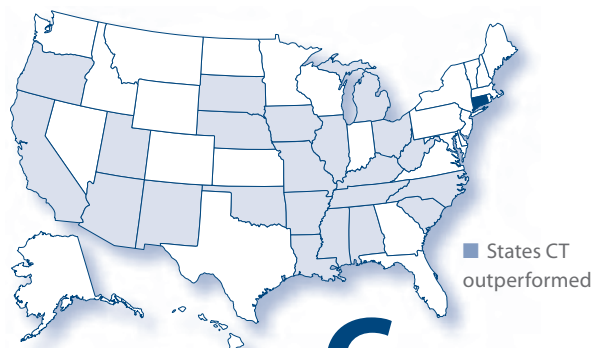
The following information for Colorado is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
57,877	\$9,720	20,836	36%	64%

Connecticut

The Constitution State

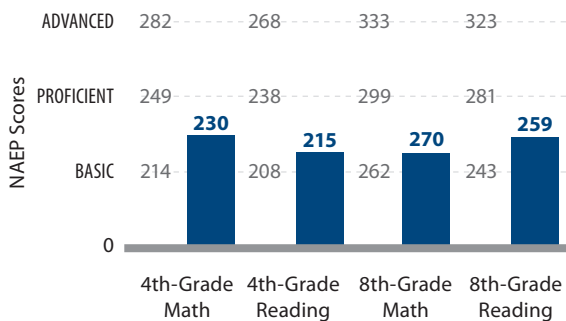


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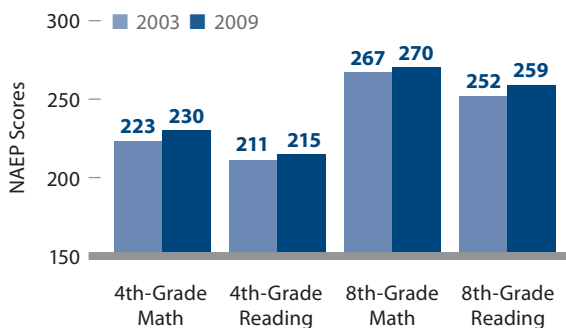
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	48
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

The following information for Connecticut is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

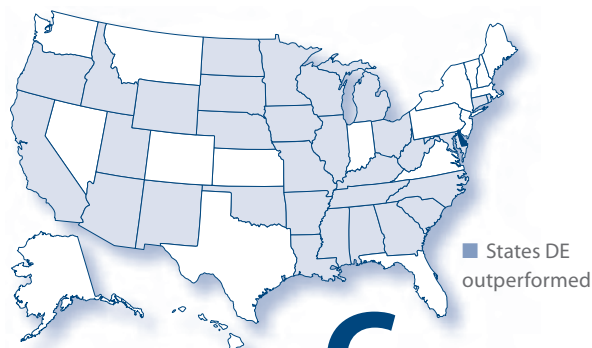
2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
42,107	\$15,737	17,264	41%	59%

Delaware

The First State

19

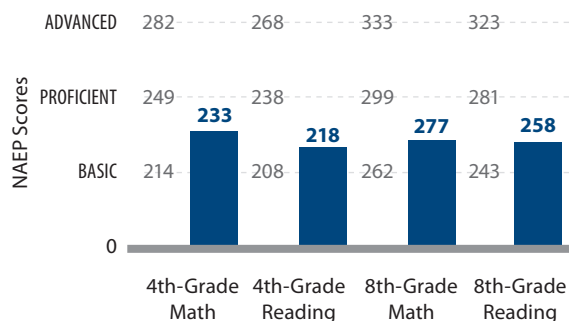


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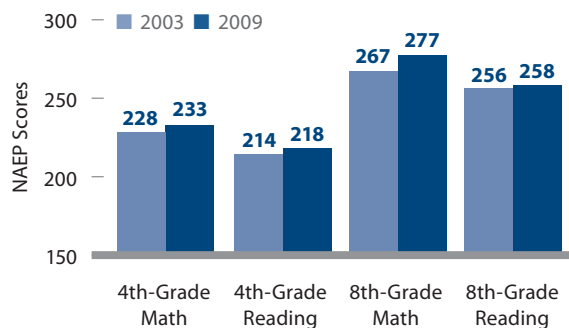
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	44
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

The following information for Delaware is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
8,982	\$13,345	3,054	34%	66%

District of Columbia

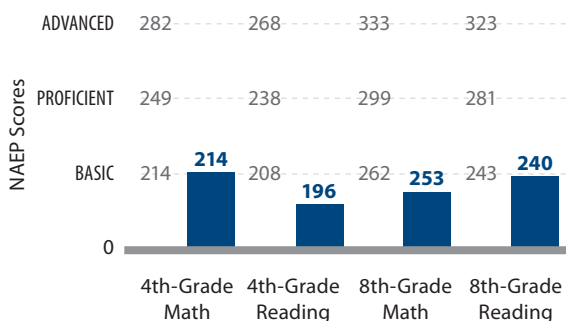
The Federal City

26

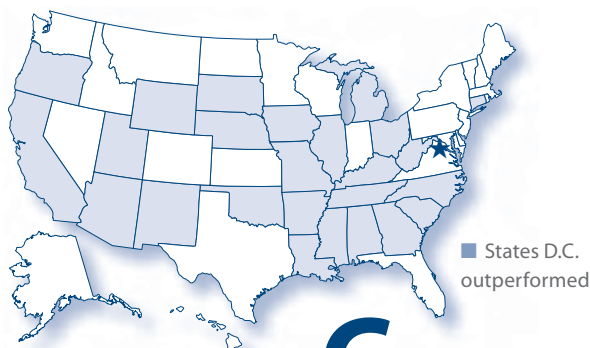
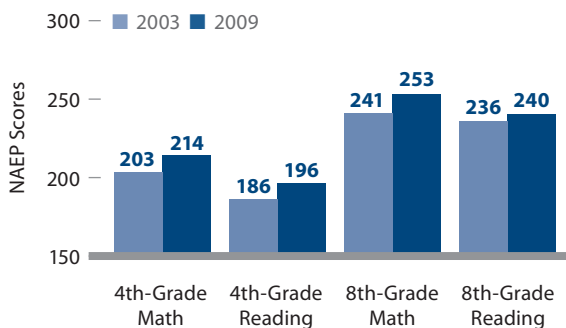
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	A
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	-
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	F
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	-

The following information for the District of Columbia is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
4,577	\$17,602	1,556	34%	66%

Florida

The Sunshine State

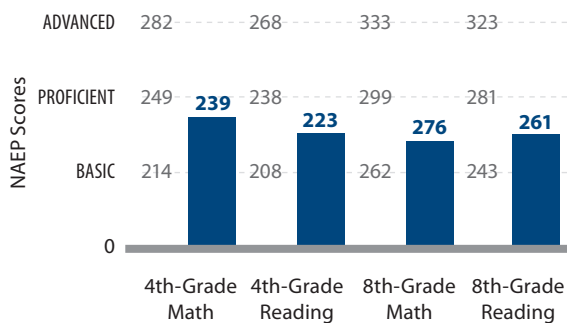


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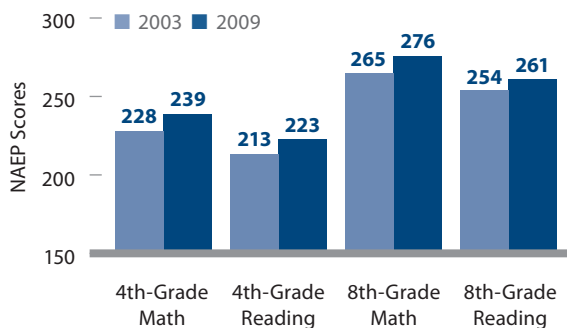
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

B+

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	Yes
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	1
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	C
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

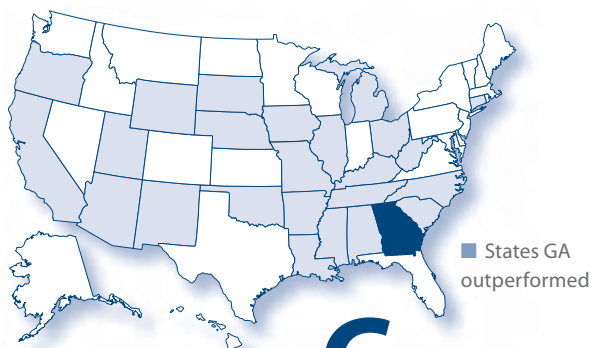
The following information for Florida is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
199,686	\$10,246	27,956	14%	86%

Georgia

The Peach State

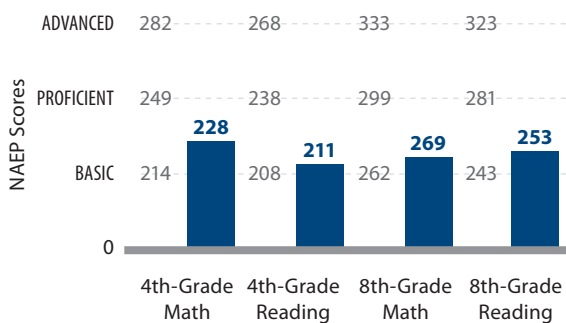


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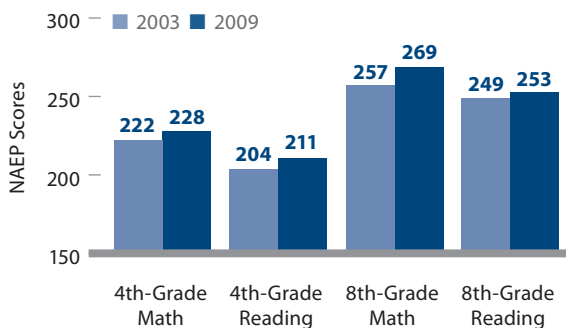
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	F
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	26
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

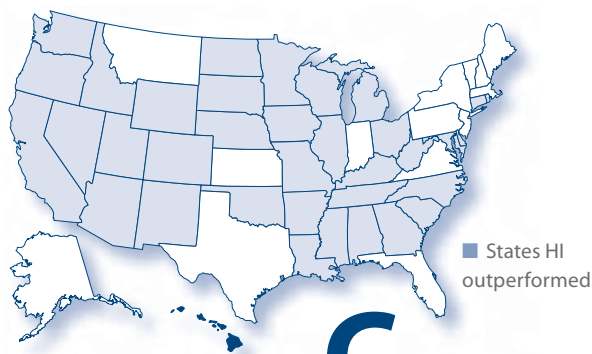
The following information for Georgia is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
121,155	\$10,874	33,923	28%	72%

Hawaii

The Aloha State



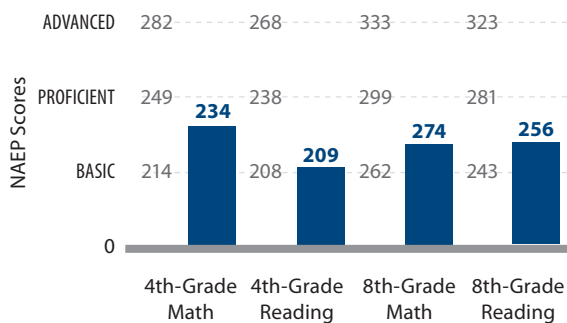
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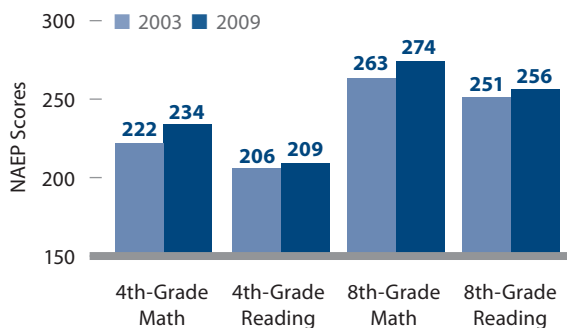
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	B+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	10
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

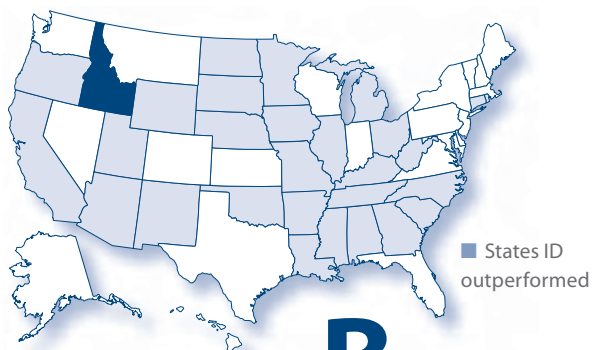
The following information for Hawaii is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
13,687	\$16,327	3,422	25%	75%

Idaho

The Gem State

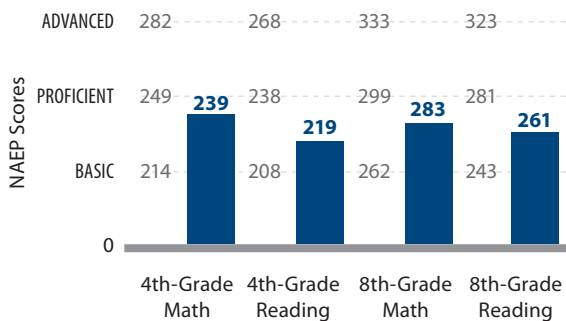


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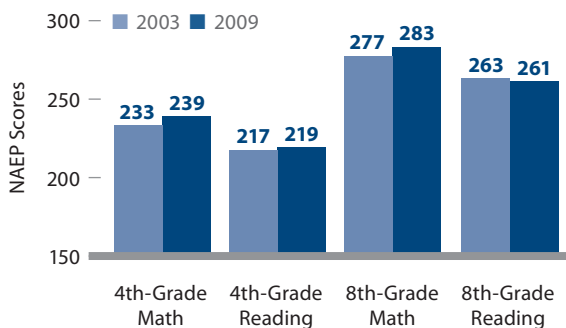
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

B-

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	3
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

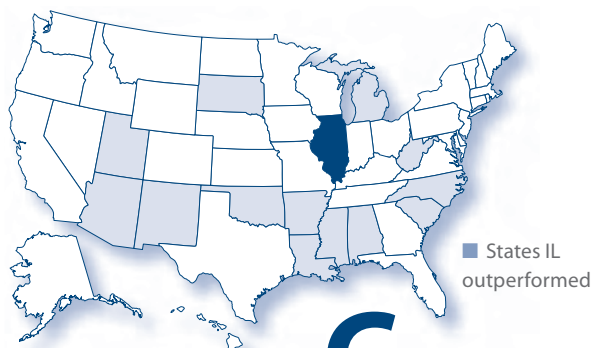
The following information for Idaho is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
19,989	\$7,627	6,996	35%	65%

Illinois

The Prairie State

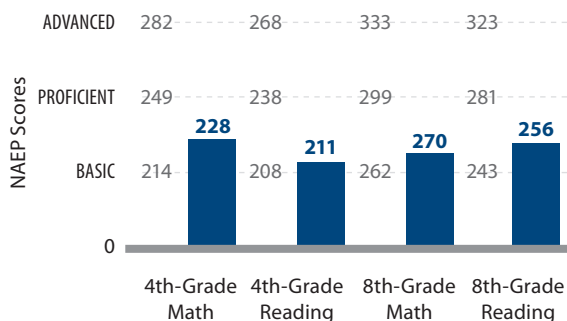


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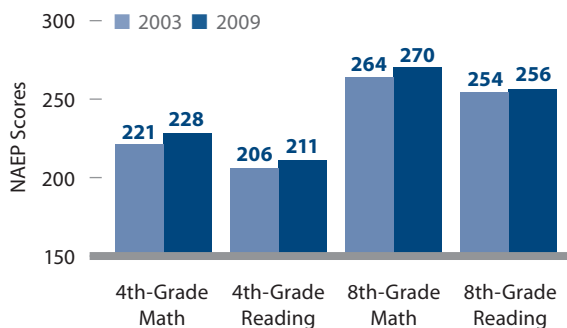
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	13
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D
Retaining Effective Teachers	D-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

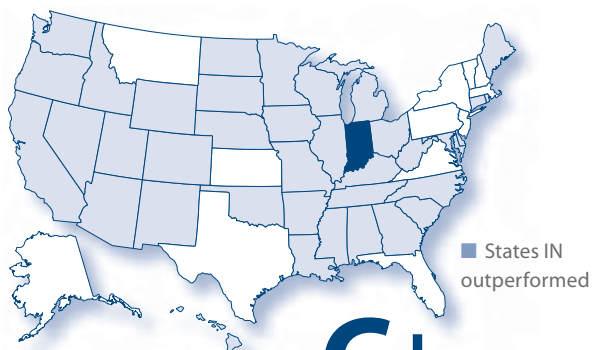
The following information for Illinois is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
153,480	\$11,342	49,114	32%	68%

Indiana

The Hoosier State

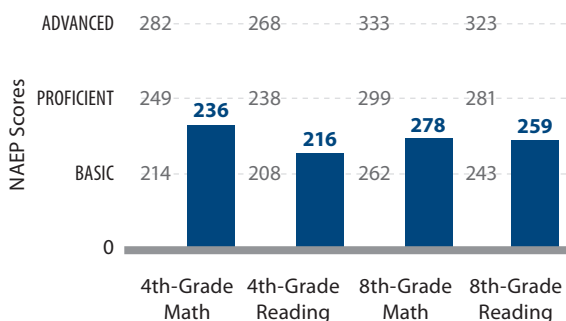


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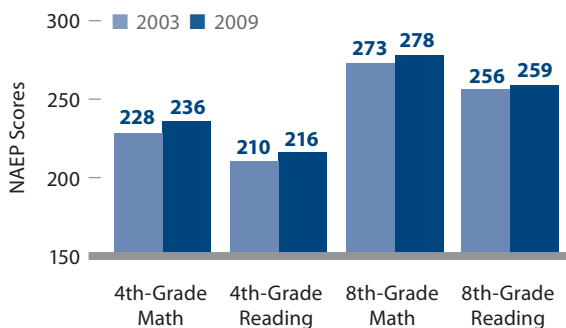
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

C+

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	35
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

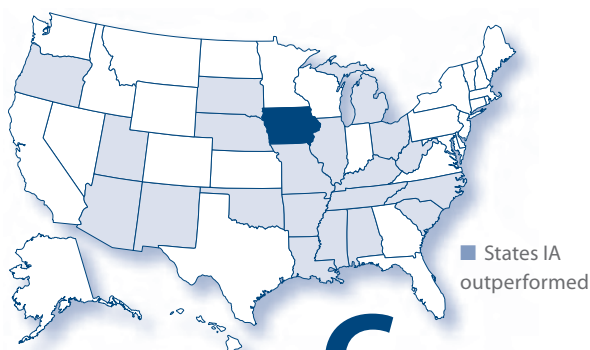
The following information for Indiana is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
78,177	\$9,621	25,798	33%	67%

Iowa

The Hawkeye State

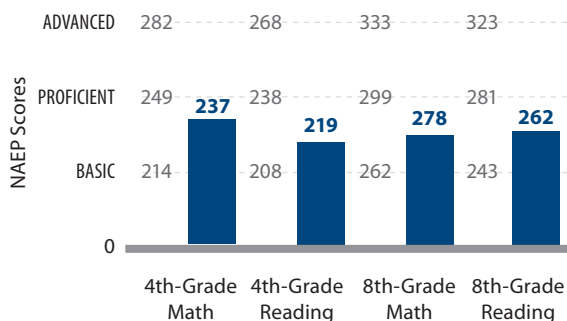


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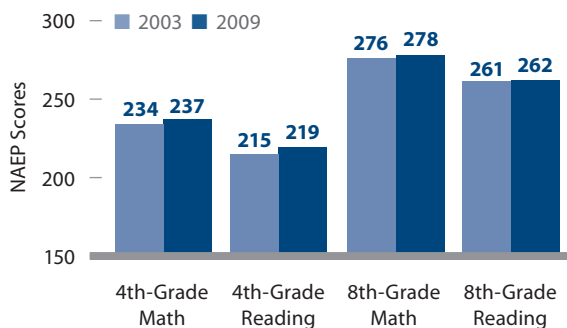
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	Yes
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	F
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	20
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

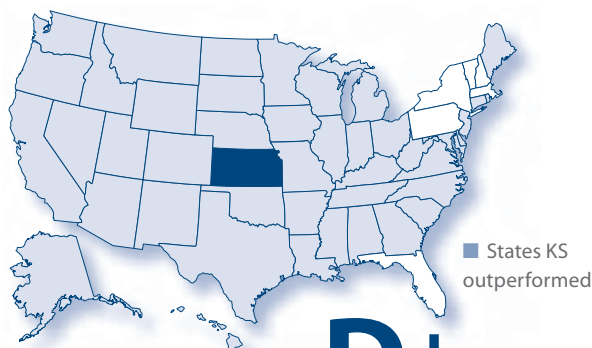
The following information for Iowa is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
34,245	\$10,369	12,328	36%	64%

Kansas

The Sunflower State

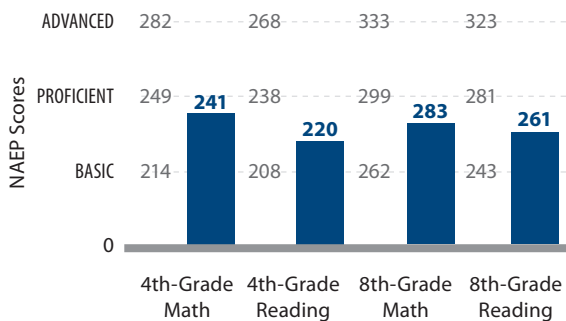


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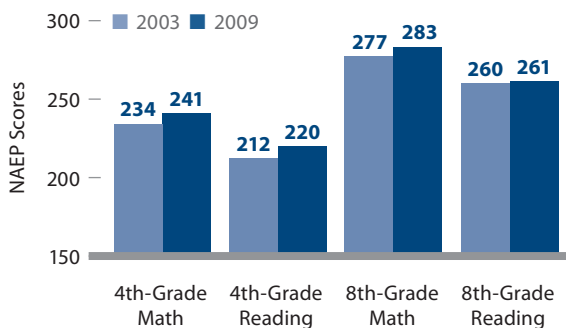
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

D+

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	F
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	22
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

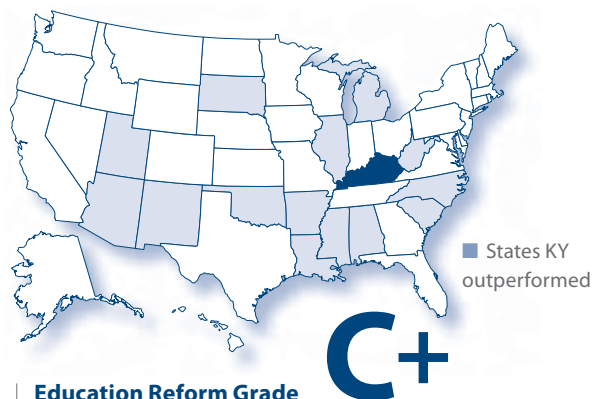
The following information for Kansas is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
33,101	\$11,202	11,916	36%	64%

Kentucky

The Bluegrass State

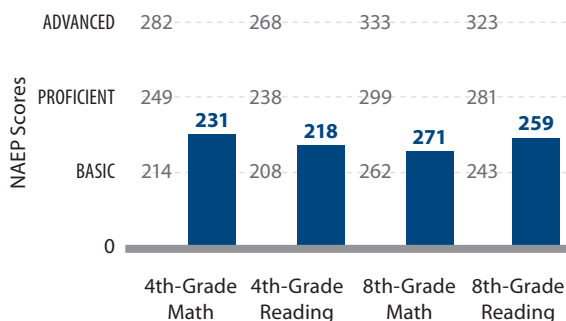


Education Performance Rank

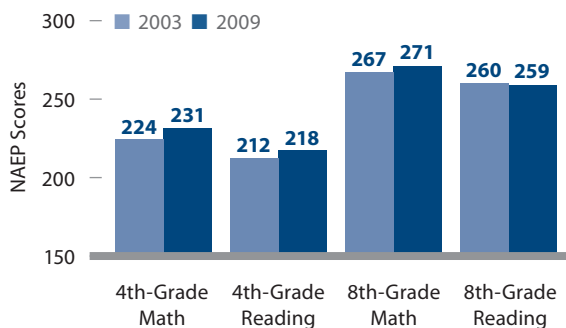
37

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	19
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

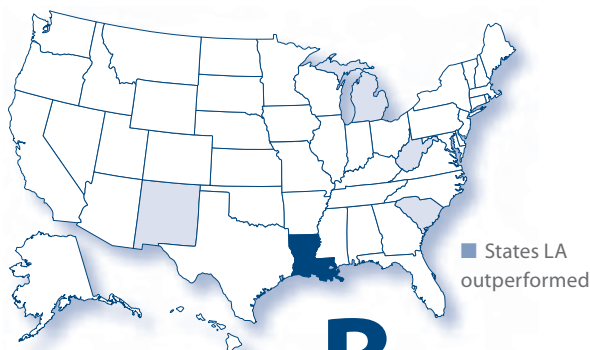
The following information for Kentucky is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
47,975	\$8,990	15,832	33%	67%

Louisiana

The Pelican State

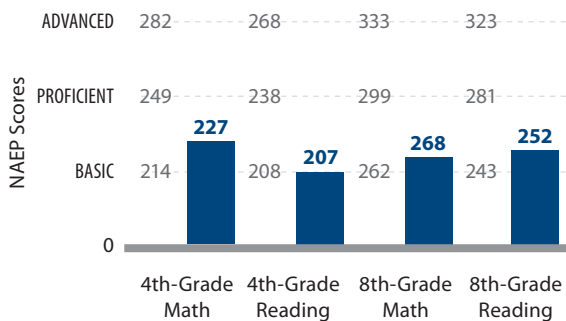


47

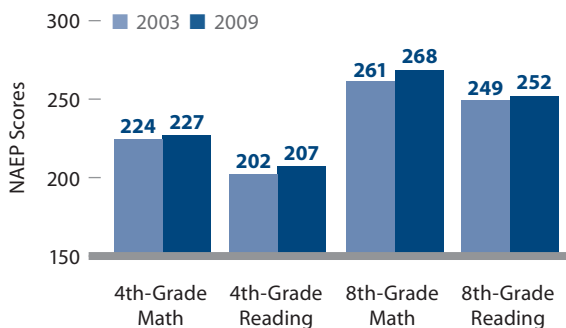
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

B

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	5
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	C
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

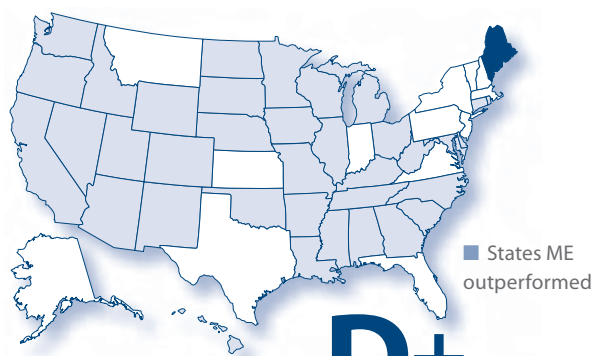
The following information for Louisiana is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
51,624	\$10,568	10,325	20%	80%

Maine

The Pine Tree State



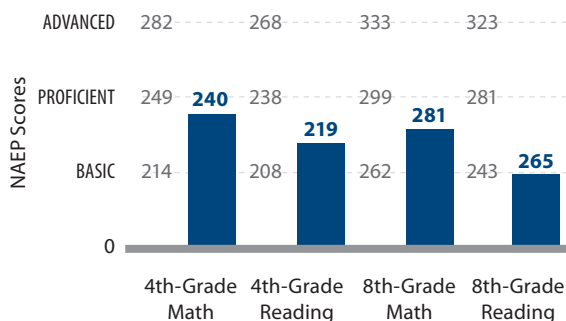
14

D+

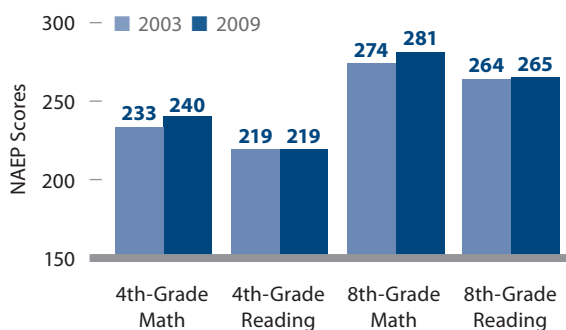
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	B-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	50
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

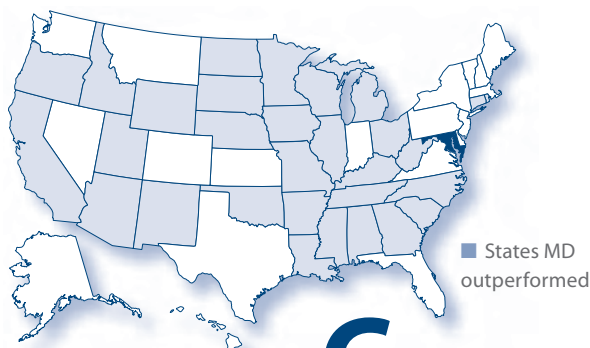
The following information for Maine is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
14,192	\$13,079	4,967	35%	65%

Maryland

The Old Line State

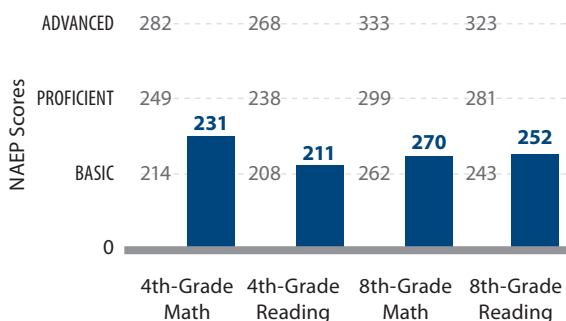


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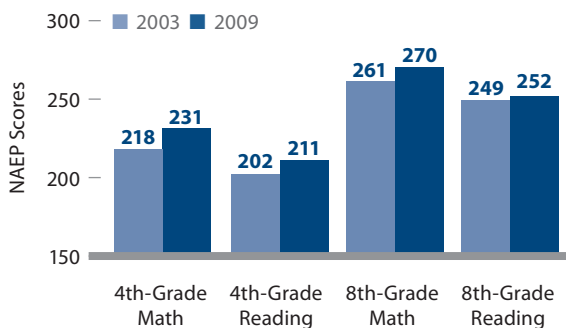
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	24
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

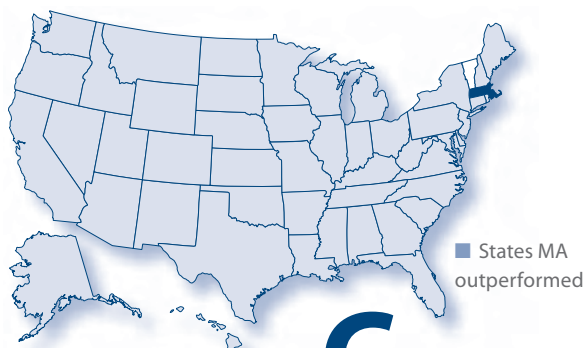
The following information for Maryland is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
61,045	\$13,635	21,976	36%	64%

Massachusetts

The Bay State

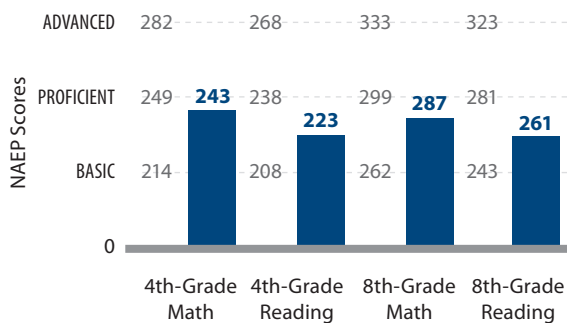


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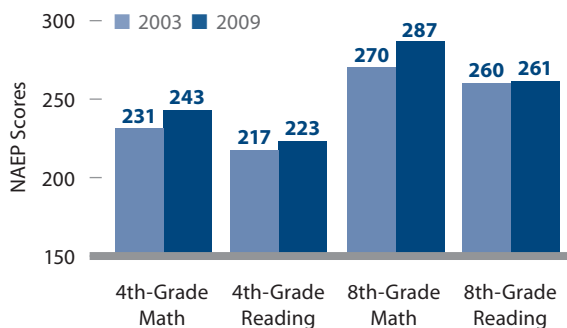
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



C

Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	A
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	21
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	D
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

The following information for Massachusetts is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
70,752	\$14,638	34,668	49%	51%

Michigan

The Great Lakes State

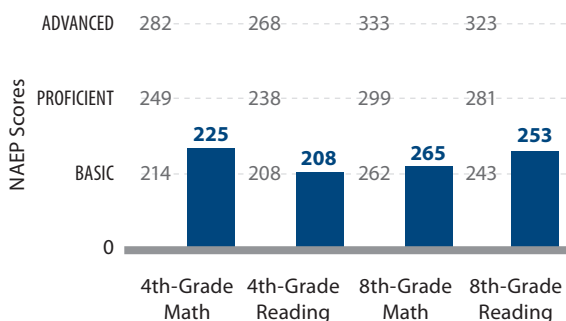


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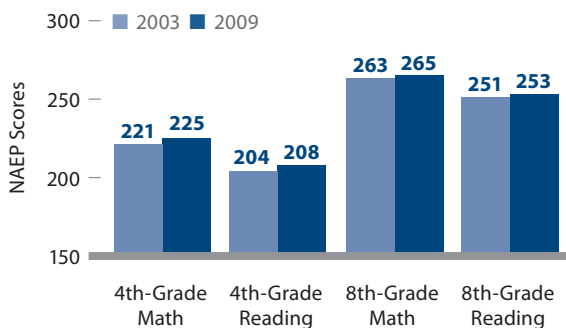
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

B-

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	2
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

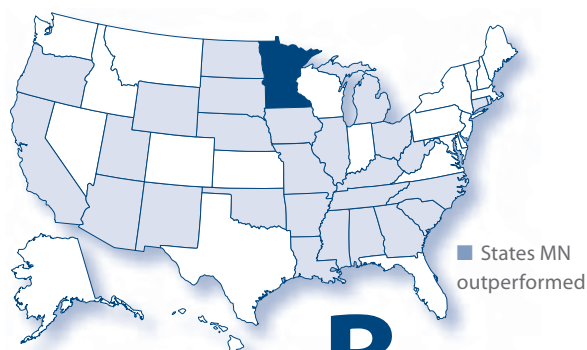
The following information for Michigan is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
120,173	\$11,369	42,061	35%	65%

Minnesota

The North Star State

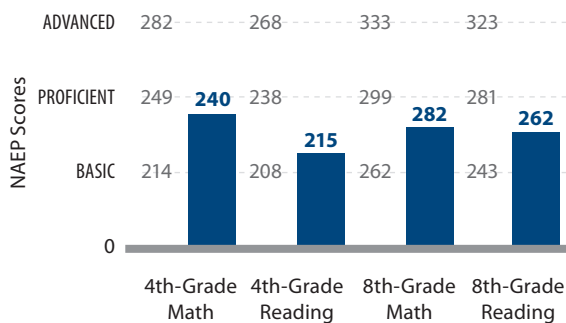


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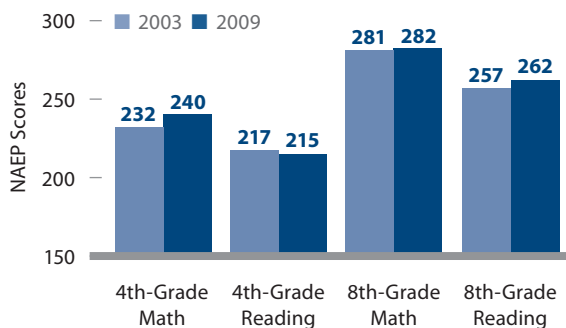
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

B

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	B-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	A
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	9
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

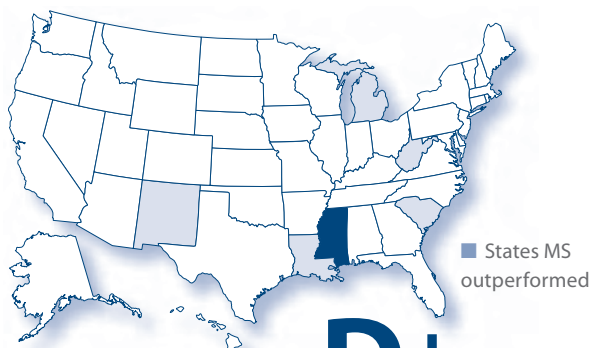
The following information for Minnesota is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
59,257	\$11,558	21,925	37%	63%

Mississippi

The Magnolia State

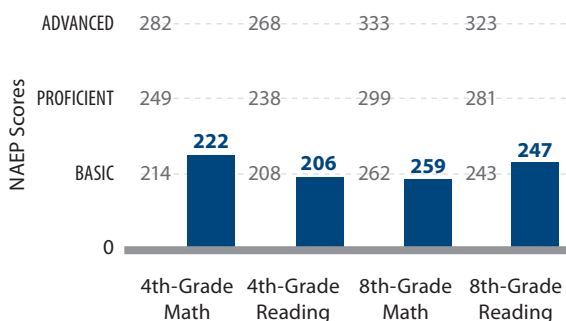


Education Performance Rank

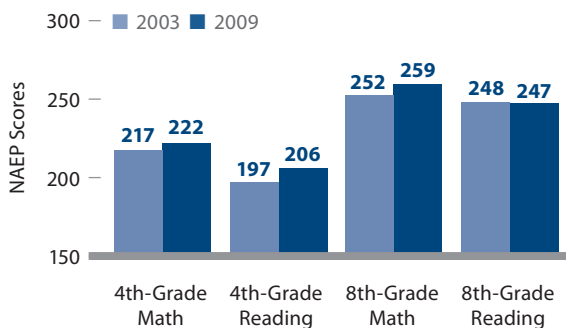
46

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	F
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	32
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

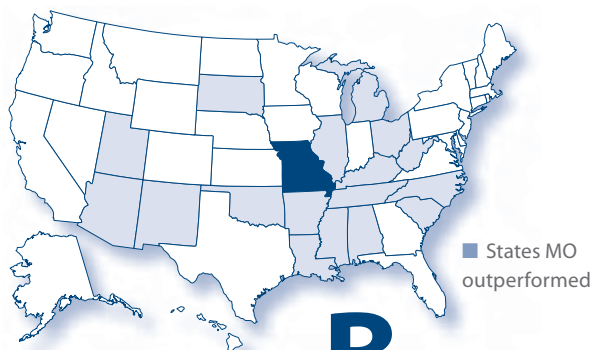
The following information for Mississippi is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
36,873	\$8,399	7,006	19%	81%

Missouri

The Show-Me State

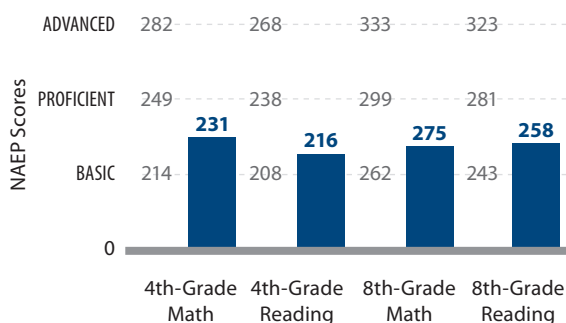


34

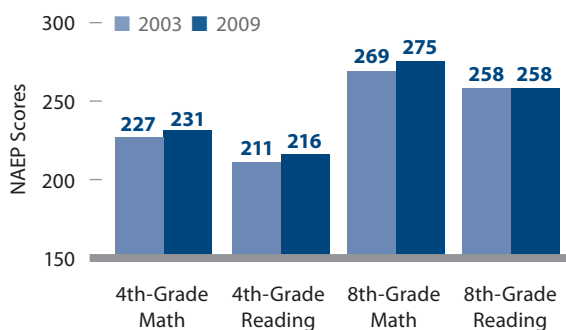
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	A
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	18
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	C-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

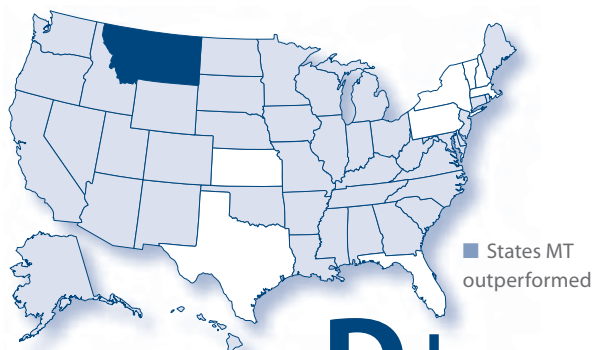
The following information for Missouri is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
66,268	\$10,154	21,206	32%	68%

Montana

The Treasure State

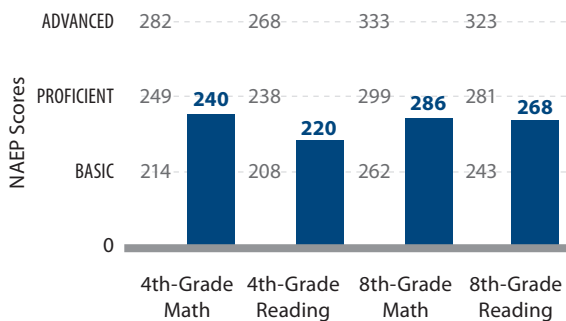


9

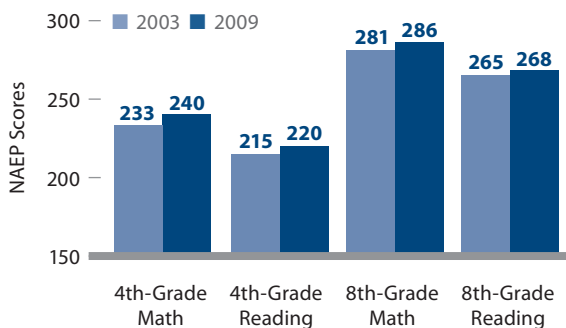
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

D+

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	39
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	D-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

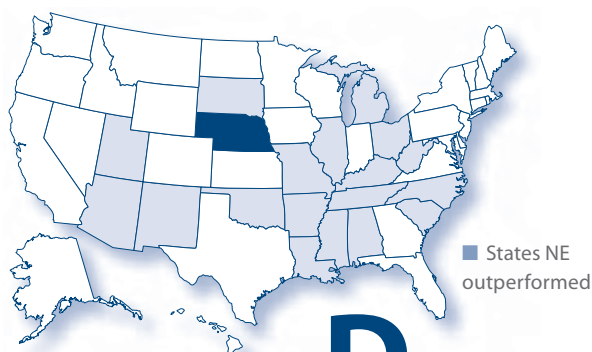
The following information for Montana is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
10,311	\$10,209	4,021	39%	61%

Nebraska

The Cornhusker State

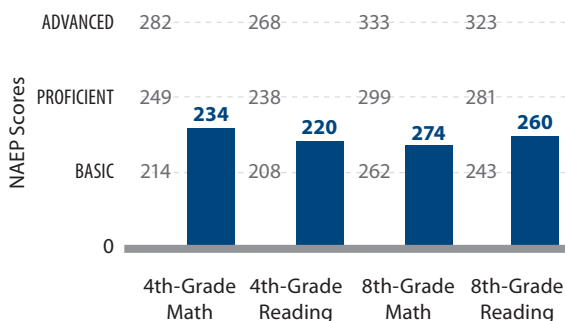


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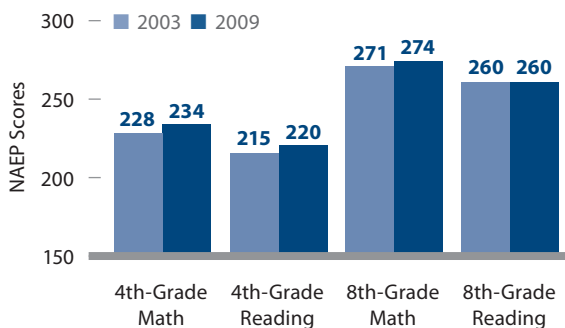
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	46
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

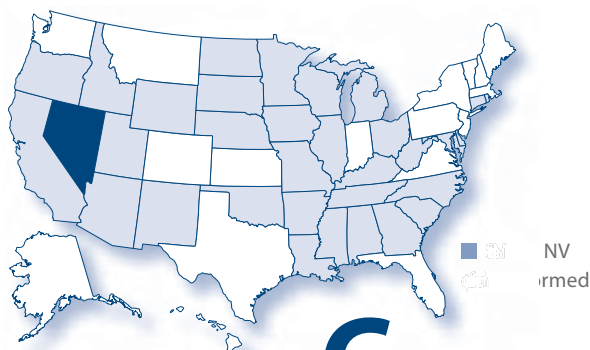
The following information for Nebraska is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
20,338	\$10,861	7,118	35%	65%

Nevada

The Silver State

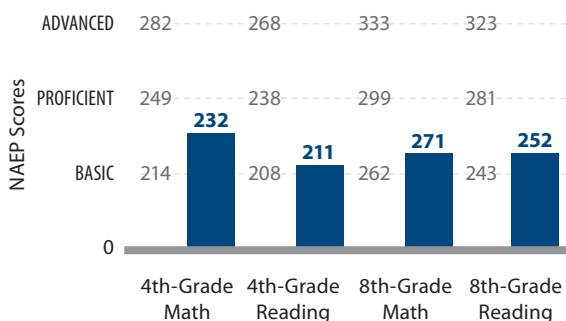


18

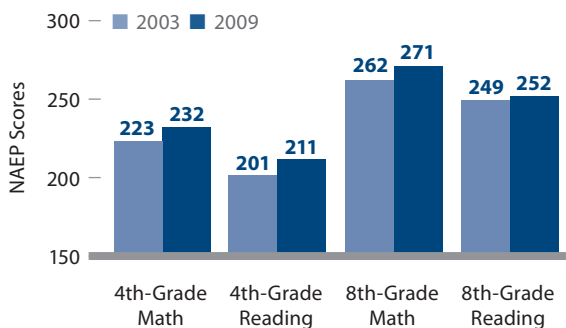
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	25
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

The following information for Nevada is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
32,711	\$9,436	8,178	25%	75%

New Hampshire

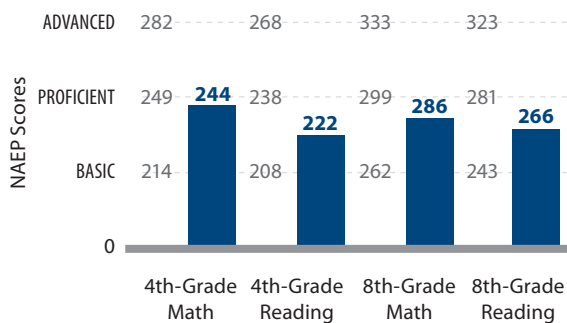
The Granite State

4

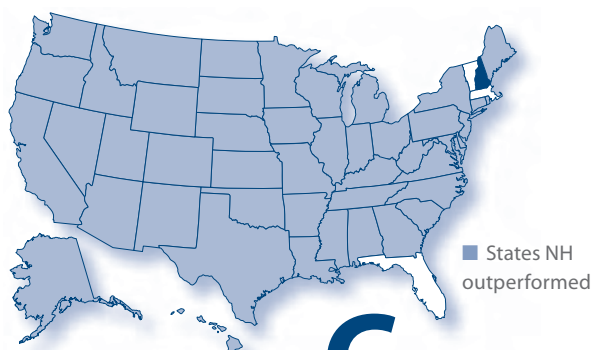
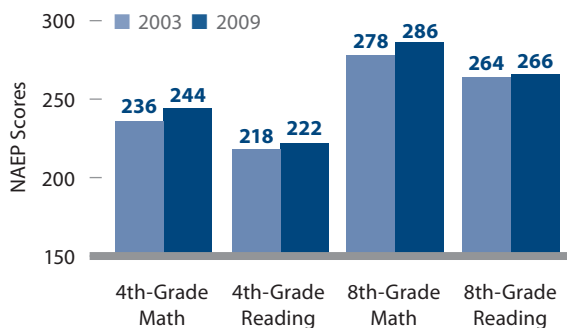
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	B-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	36
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	D-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

The following information for New Hampshire is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
15,080	\$12,292	6,334	42%	58%

New Jersey

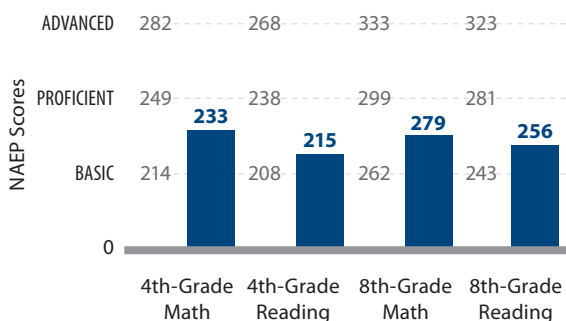
The Garden State

10

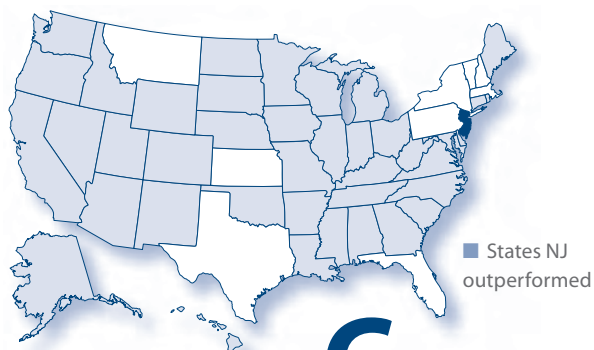
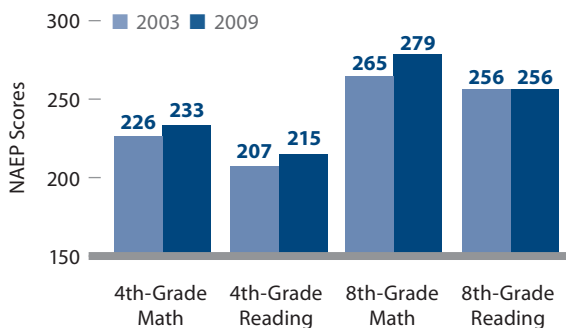
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	43
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

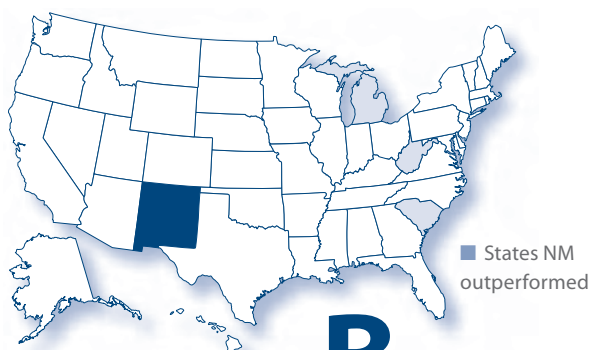
The following information for New Jersey is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
98,149	\$17,418	42,204	43%	57%

New Mexico

The Land of Enchantment

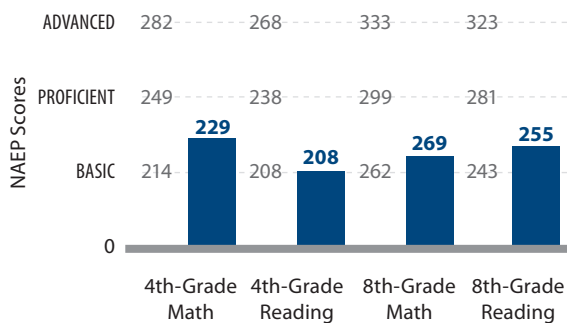


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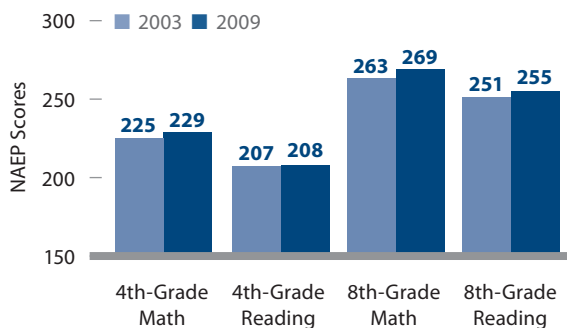
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	6
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	C-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

The following information for New Mexico is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
24,311	\$10,213	5,835	24%	76%

New York

The Empire State

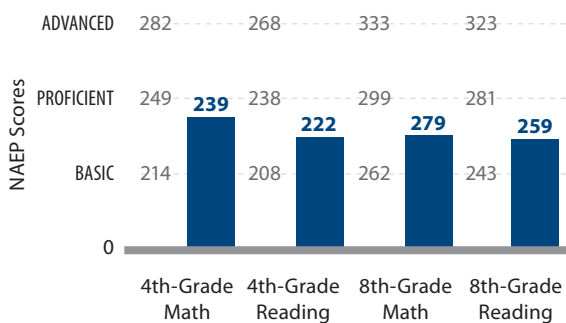


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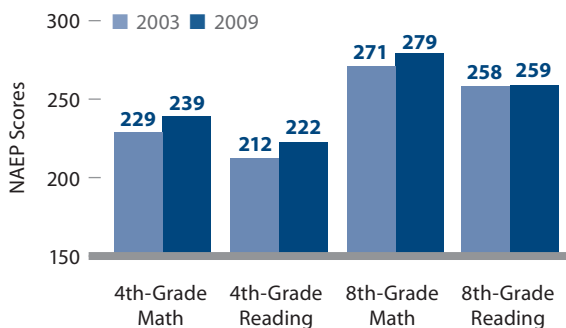
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

D+

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	47
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	D
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

The following information for New York is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
192,095	\$17,707	69,154	36%	64%

North Carolina

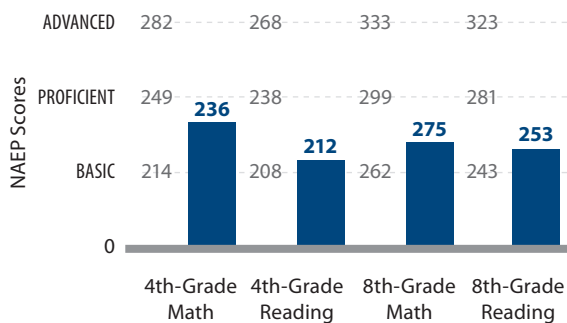
The Old North State

41

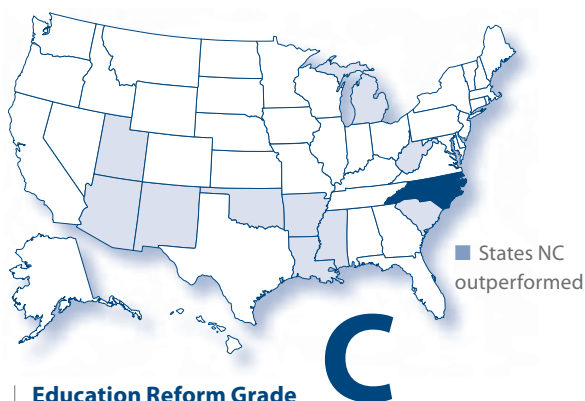
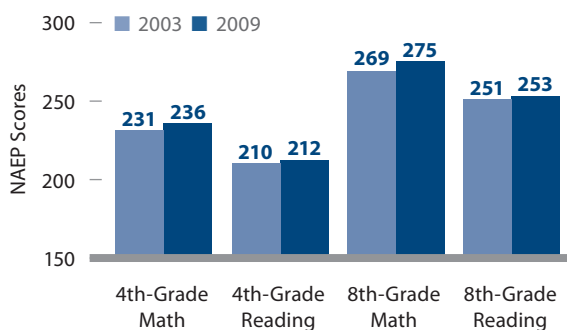
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	8
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	C
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

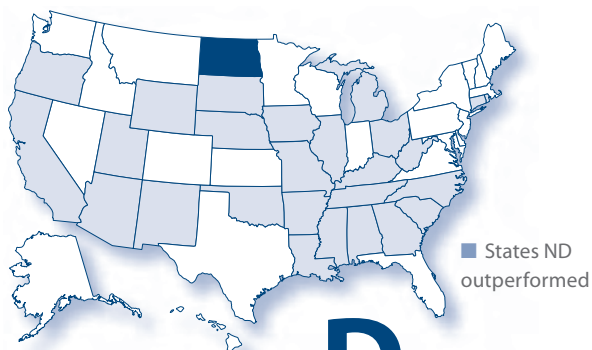
The following information for North Carolina is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
108,731	\$8,301	31,532	29%	71%

North Dakota

The Peace Garden State

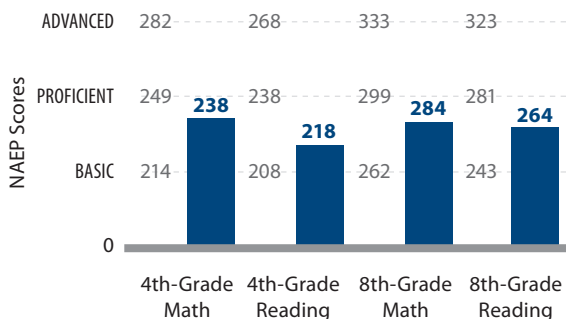


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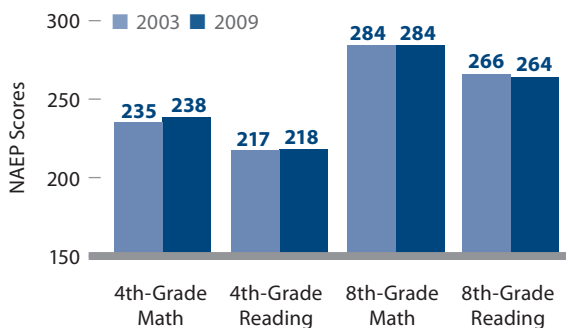
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	31
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	D
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	D-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

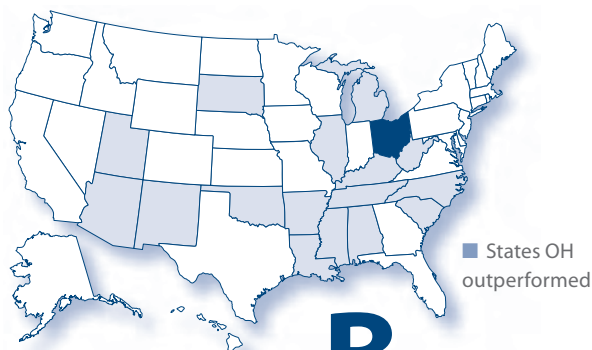
The following information for North Dakota is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
6,931	\$10,297	2,426	35%	65%

Ohio

The Buckeye State

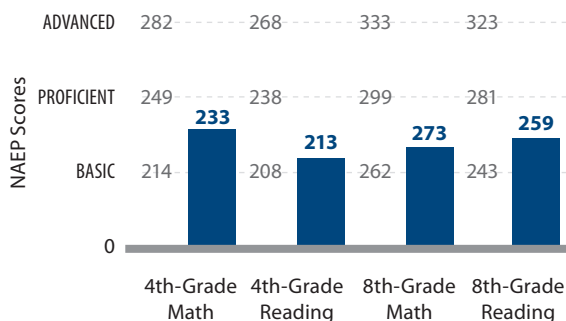


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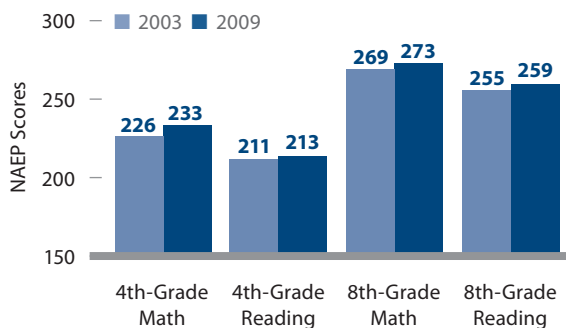
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

B-

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	Yes
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	11
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D+
Retaining Effective Teachers	C+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

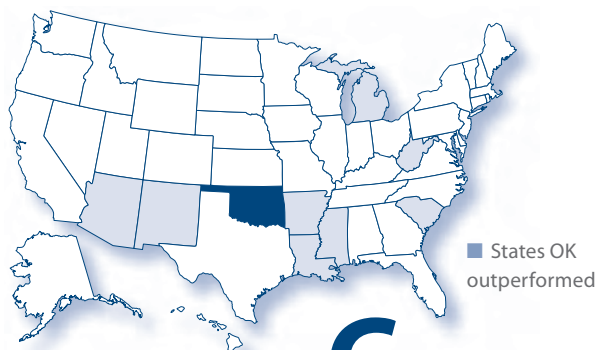
The following information for Ohio is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
131,258	\$12,110	47,253	36%	64%

Oklahoma

The Sooner State

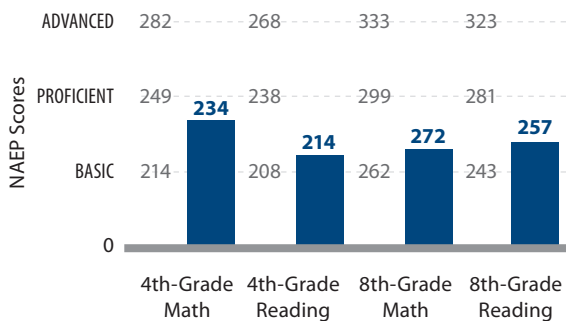


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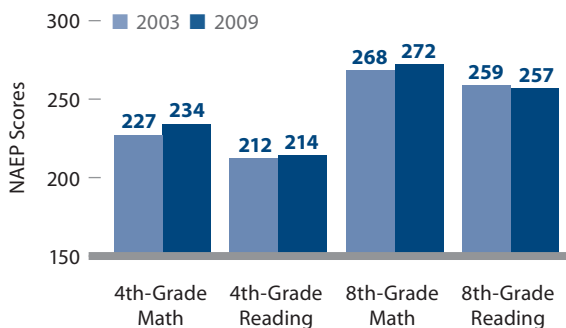
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	F
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	15
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

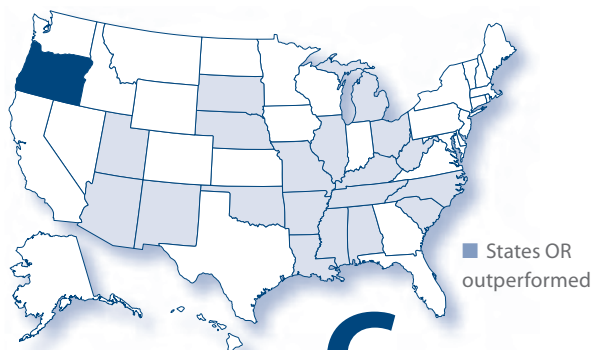
The following information for Oklahoma is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
45,369	\$8,184	11,796	26%	74%

Oregon

The Beaver State

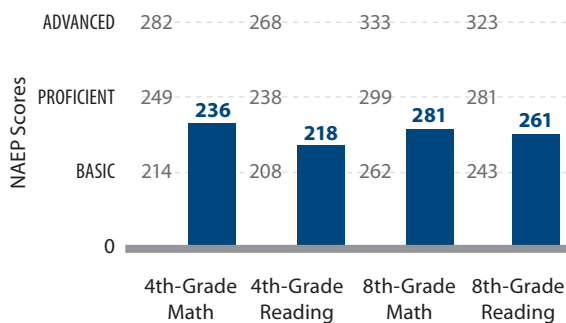


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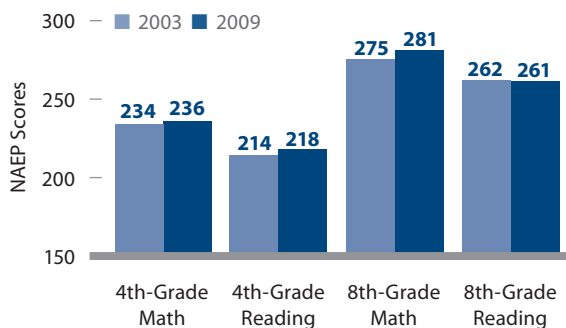
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	30
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

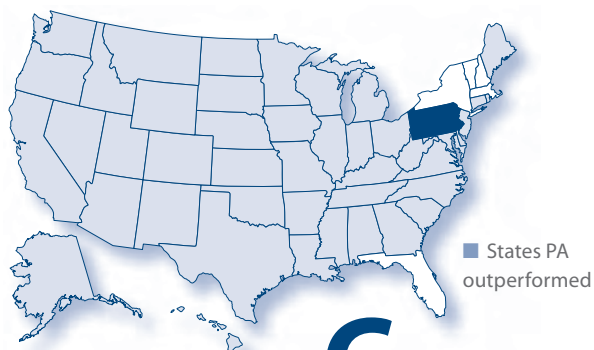
The following information for Oregon is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
41,754	\$10,064	11,691	28%	72%

Pennsylvania

The Keystone State

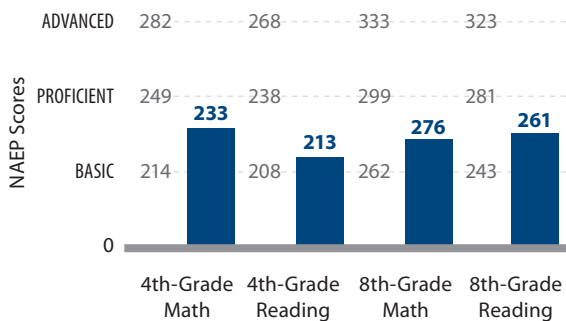


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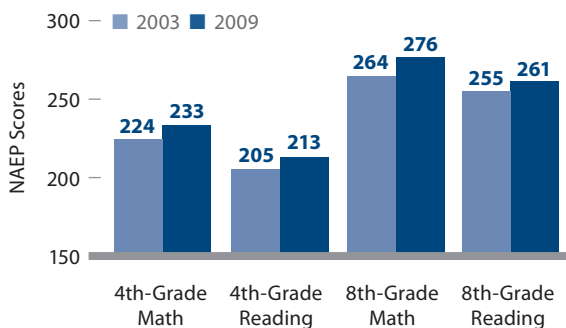
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	34
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	D
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

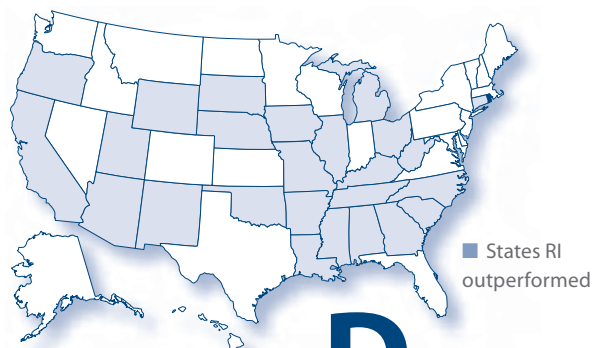
The following information for Pennsylvania is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
129,546	\$12,821	51,818	40%	60%

Rhode Island

The Ocean State



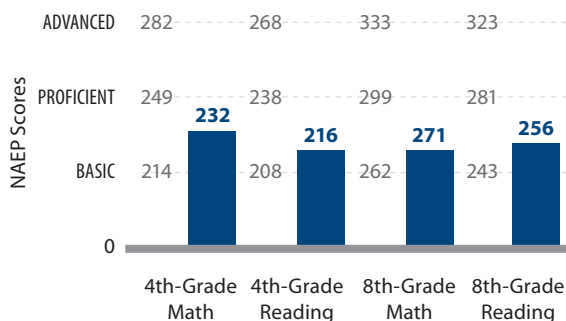
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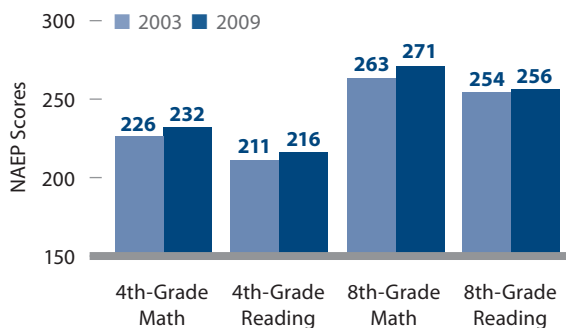
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	42
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	D
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

The following information for Rhode Island is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
11,135	\$14,153	3,452	31%	69%

South Carolina

The Palmetto State

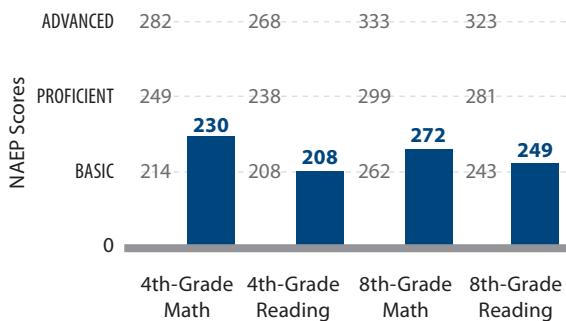


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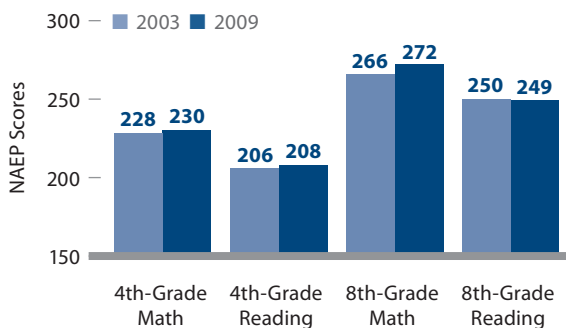
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

B

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	A
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	17
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	C
Retaining Effective Teachers	C+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

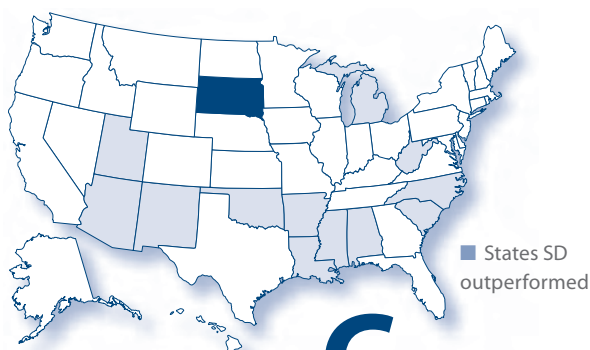
The following information for South Carolina is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
51,217	\$10,070	12,804	25%	75%

South Dakota

The Mount Rushmore State

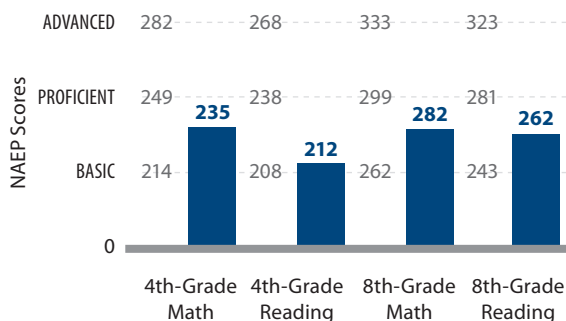


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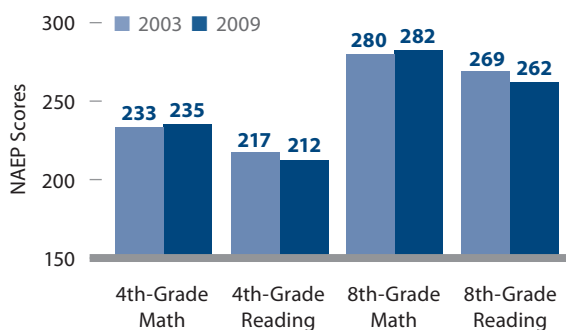
Education Performance Rank

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	16
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	C
Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

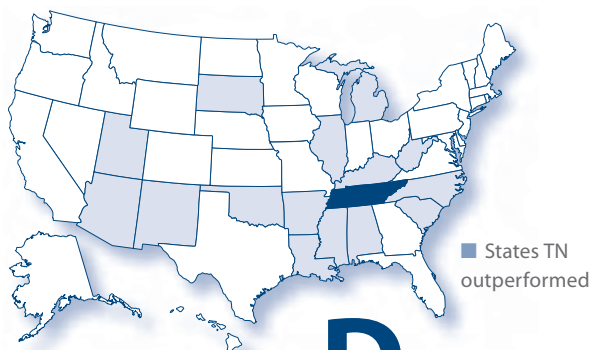
The following information for South Dakota is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
8,866	\$9,398	3,014	34%	66%

Tennessee

The Volunteer State

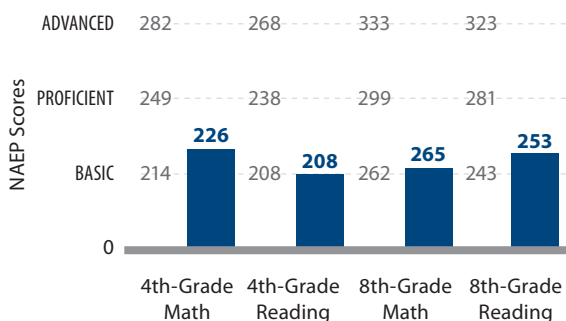


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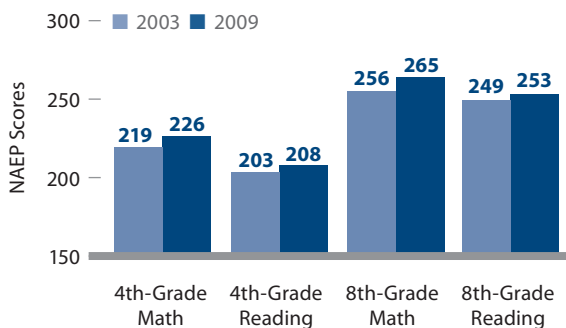
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

D

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	F
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	45
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	B
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

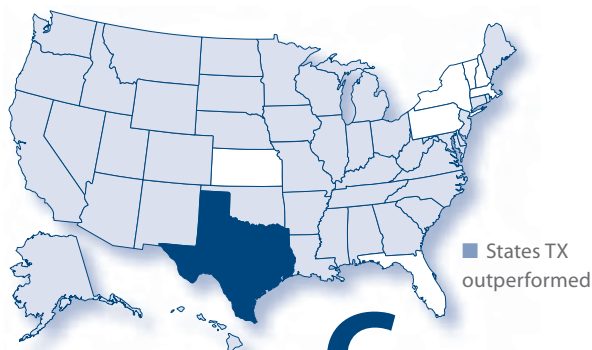
The following information for Tennessee is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
71,857	\$7,897	19,401	27%	73%

Texas

The Lone Star State

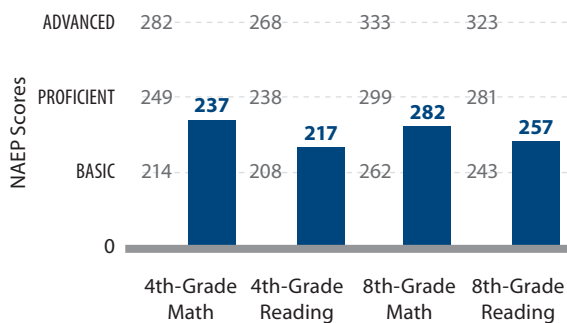


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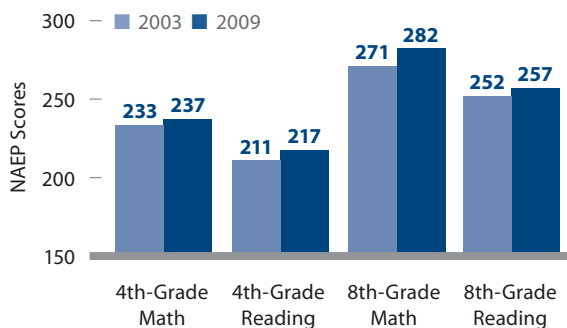
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	40
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	A
Identifying High Quality Teachers	C-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D+
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

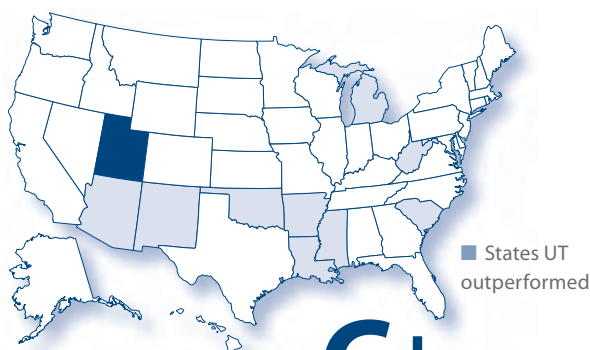
The following information for Texas is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
340,488	\$9,410	98,742	29%	71%

Utah

The Beehive State

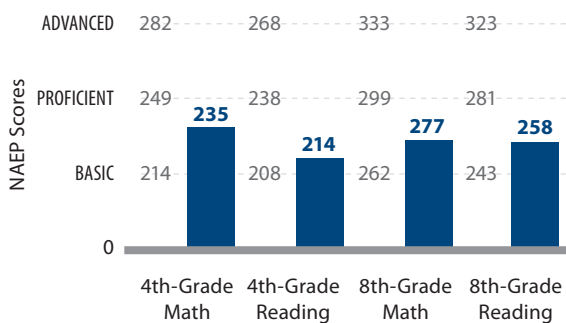


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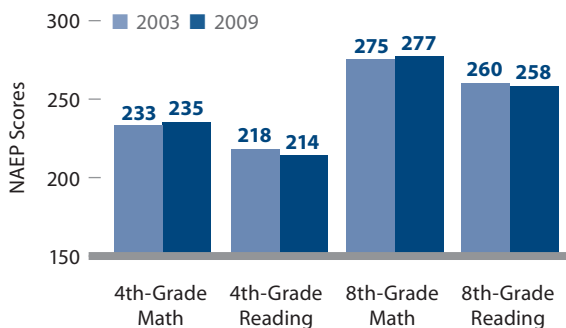
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	B
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	33
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D
Retaining Effective Teachers	C
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

The following information for Utah is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
40,477	\$7,218	13,762	34%	66%

Vermont

The Green Mountain State

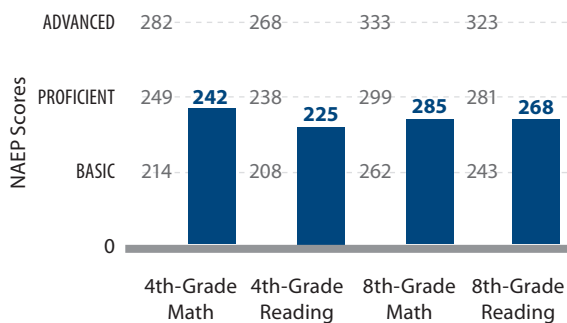


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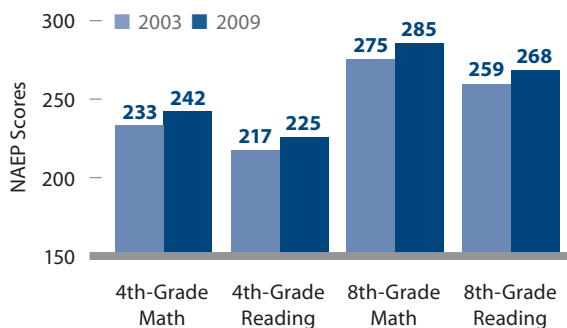
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	B
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	41
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	D
Identifying High Quality Teachers	F
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

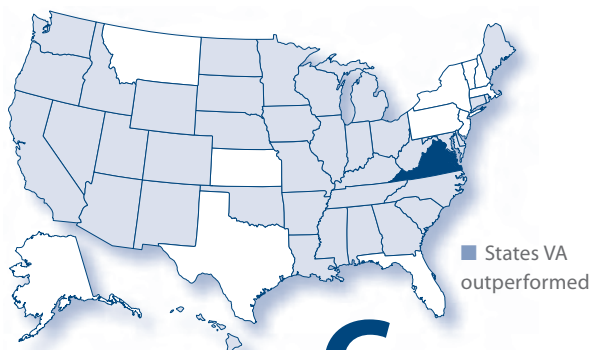
The following information for Vermont is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
6,521	\$15,107	2,674	41%	59%

Virginia

The Old Dominion

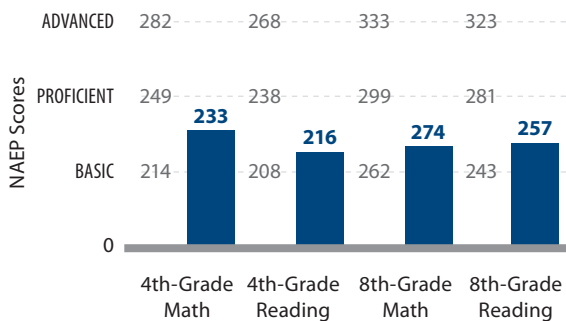


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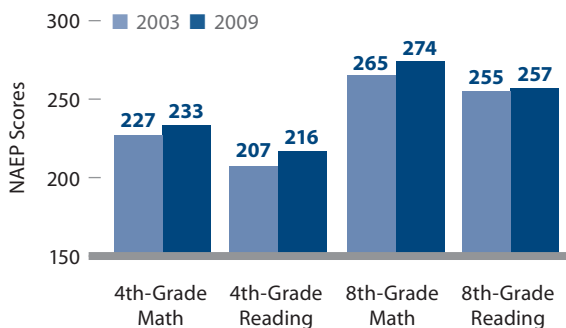
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D+
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	F
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	12
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

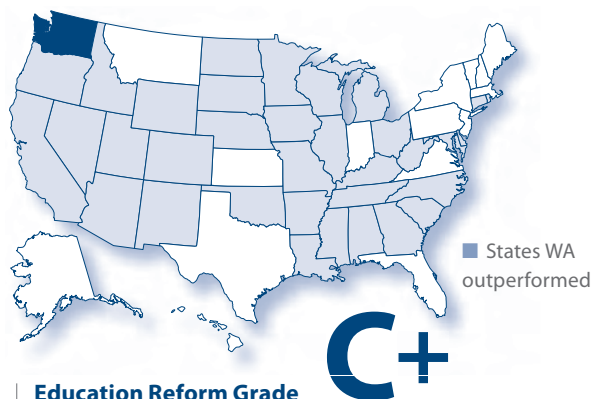
The following information for Virginia is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
88,527	\$11,440	33,640	38%	62%

Washington

The Evergreen State

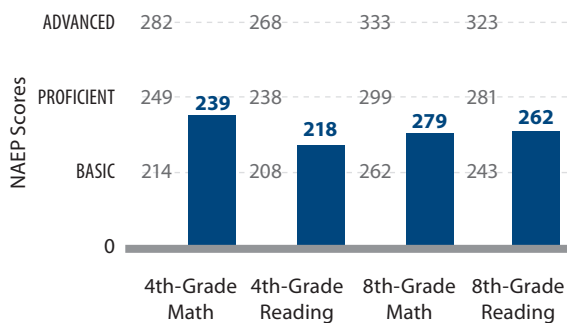


Education Performance Rank

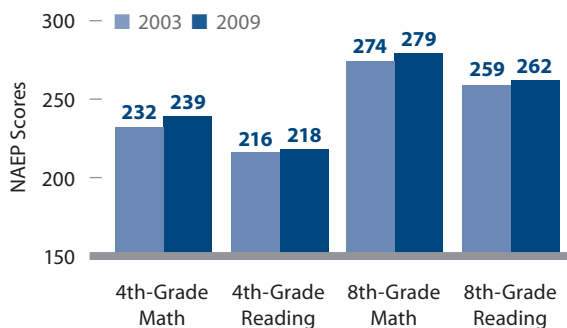
Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

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Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	B-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Yes
Online Learning Policies and Programs	28
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	Yes

The following information for Washington is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
75,695	\$10,178	28,007	37%	63%

West Virginia

The Mountain State

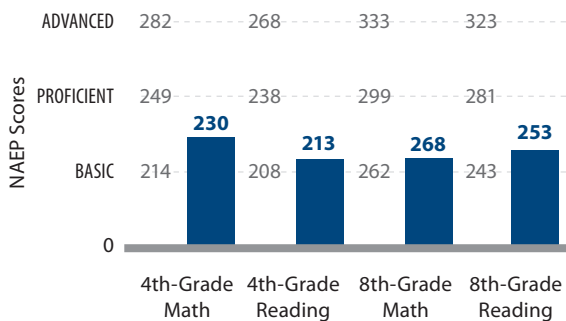


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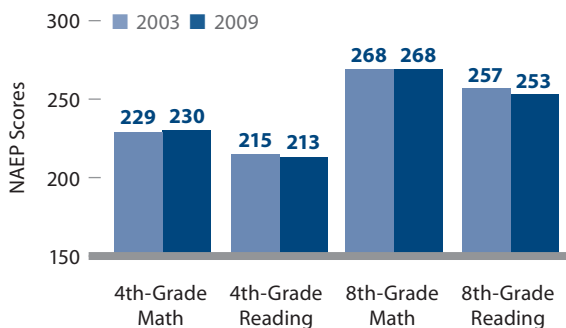
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	D-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	-
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	No
Charter School Law Grade	n/a
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	7
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	C
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

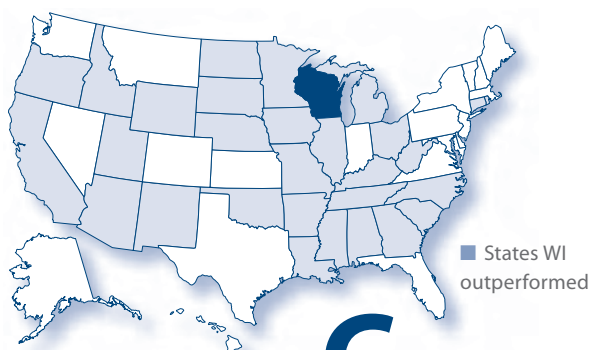
The following information for West Virginia is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
19,935	\$10,780	5,582	28%	72%

Wisconsin

America's Dairyland

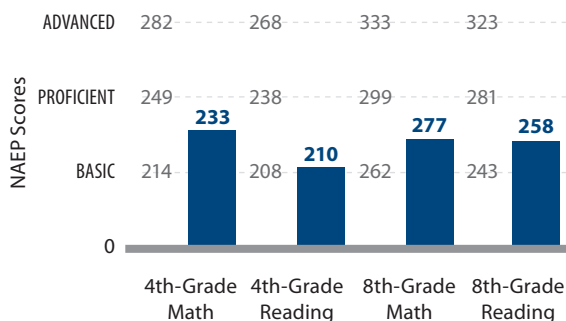


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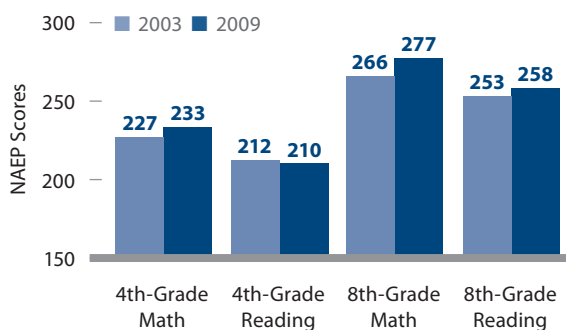
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C-
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Raised
Private School Choice	Yes
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	C
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	37
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Removing Ineffective Teachers	D-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

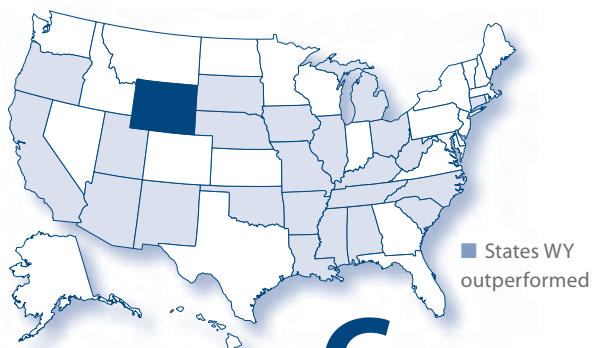
The following information for Wisconsin is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
59,356	\$11,486	20,775	35%	65%

Wyoming

The Equality State

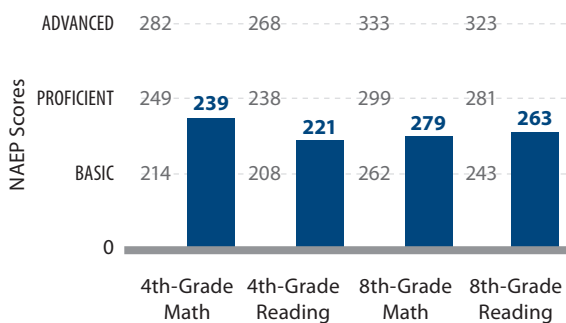


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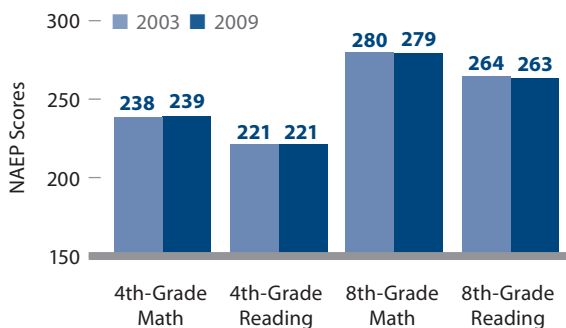
Education Performance Rank

Measures the overall 2009 scores for low-income children (non-ELL and/or non-IEP) and their gains/losses on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics exams from 2003 to 2009.

Overall NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children (2009)



Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Children



Education Reform Grade

Contains scores and grades for policies that allow reform to the state's education system through accountability, teacher quality, flexibility, innovation, and parental choice. Based on data from education organizations and experts.

State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	C
Change in State Proficiency Standards (compared to NAEP 2003-2007)	Lowered
Private School Choice	No
Private School Choice: "A" Grade or Multiple Programs	No
Charter School Law	Yes
Charter School Law Grade	D
Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	No
Online Learning Policies and Programs	29
Homeschooling Regulation Levels (A=None, B=Low, C=Moderate, D=High)	B
Identifying High Quality Teachers	D-
Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Removing Ineffective Teachers	C-
Alternative Teacher Certification Route	No

The following information for Wyoming is provided solely for informative reasons. This does not influence the above grades.

2007 Per Pupil Cost, 4th-Grade and NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam Results

Number of 4th-Graders	Cost Per Child	Number of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students at Proficient or Above	Percent of Students Not Proficient
6,191	\$17,326	2,291	37%	63%

ENDNOTES

- 1 U.S. Bureau of the Census. *State Rankings – Statistical Abstract of the United States. Personal Income per Capita in Current Dollars, 2007*. Census Bureau. March, 2008, <http://www.census.gov/statab/ranks/rank29.html>.
- 2 For more details on income eligibility for the free or reduced-price lunch program, see: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/notices/iegs/IEGs09-10.pdf>.
- 3 See Matthew Miller's fascinating discussion of Rawls, including an interview with Milton Friedman, in Chapter 4, "Taking Luck Seriously," of his 2003 book *The 2% Solution: Fixing America's Problems in Ways Liberals and Conservatives Can Love*.
- 4 Kress, Alexander B. "Let's Not Kill Off NCLB." Article in the June 11, 2009 edition of *Education Week*, <http://www.edweek.org/login.html?source=http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/06/11/35kress.h28.html&destination=http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/06/11/35kress.h28.html&levelId=1000>.
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- 11 Phillips, Gary W. "The Second Derivative: International Benchmarks in Mathematics for U.S. States and School Districts." American Institute for Research. 2009.
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- 13 *Ibid*.
- 14 "The ABCs of School Choice: 2009-2010 Edition." The Foundation for Educational Choice. 2009, <http://www.edchoice.org/downloadFile.do?id=394>.
- 15 Enlow, Robert C. "Grading School Choice: Evaluating School Choice Programs by the Friedman Gold Standard." The Foundation for Educational Choice. 2008, <http://www.edchoice.org/research/ShowResearchItem.do?id=10089>.
- 16 The Center for Education Reform. "Race to the Top for Charter Schools: 2009 Ranking and Scorecard." Charter Connection. 2009, http://www.edreform.com/Issues/Charter_Connection/?Race_to_the_Top_for_Charter_Schools.
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CHAPTER 3

The Way Forward
on Education Reform

The Way Forward on Education Reform

In the opening scene of the film *Saving Private Ryan*, Capt. John Miller (played by Tom Hanks) leads American troops in storming the beaches of Normandy. Pinned down behind inadequate cover and facing heavy Nazi gunfire, Miller orders his men to move out. Frightened and bewildered, one of Miller's soldiers asked where it is they should go. Miller belows back, "Anywhere but here!"

Americans should feel a similar sense of urgency when it comes to our public schools. Their test scores are stagnant. Their graduation rates remain too low. Approximately 1.2 million students drop out of high school every year—about one every 26 seconds. For the American teens who do stay in school, they continue to fall behind their peers around the world, despite historic levels of per-pupil funding.

Sadder still, most of America's political class, while eager to appear as "pro-education," have been content to fiddle while Rome burns. Indeed, one reason why education spending has increased exponentially over the past two decades is that, for many legislators and governors, it is the easy thing to do. Couple increasing school expenditures with mouthing the clichéd platitudes for reform, and you have done your educational duty (and subsequently kicked the can down the road for future lawmakers).

Thankfully, the education reform movement has had its own share of Capt. John Millers—individuals who led public school students out of the direst of situations. In the pages that follow, we will outline those reforms, which caused improvement from the bottom up (through paren-

tal choice) and the top down (through improved transparency, accountability, and regulatory changes).

Like the scene on Omaha beach, the current crisis in our nation's public schools may seem hopeless at first glance, but there is a way forward through even the biggest blockades and the heaviest barrage of attacks.

Is Demography Destiny?

Most agree there are few problems bigger, more important in American education than the racial achievement gap. However, we lack a consensus on what to do about it.

Demographic trends show that minority children will continue to make up a growing share of the American student population. In 2009, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that more than 40 percent of all students in U.S. K-12 schools were minorities, including Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans, and others.¹ The Census projects this population will grow—with minorities expected to eclipse half of the student enrollment population by 2023.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanic students are the fastest growing minority group in public schools, accounting for approximately 20 percent of the entire K-12 student population and a quarter of all kindergarten students. While many states experience increases in the number of Hispanics attending K-12 public schools, Southwestern states (like Arizona, California, Nevada, and New Mexico) actually have "majority minority" K-12 populations led by the rapid growth of the Hispanic population.

This has resulted in some academics drawing stark conclusions: The boom in the Hispanic population will lead to an explosion in uneducated citizens, which will have measurable negative impacts on the economy and standards of living in certain communities. After all, Hispanic students underperform academically, drop out of school in high numbers, attend colleges and universities in low numbers, and finish college in still smaller numbers.²

A straight projection of the recent past into the future does indeed look bleak for states with rapidly growing Hispanic populations, Southwestern or otherwise. At a recent academic conference, a demographer even went so far as to dub the American Southwest “the Appalachia region of the 21st century.” When asked to explain, the presenter responded, “Because demography is destiny.”³

We completely disagree. As one state has shown—with the right policies in place—states can radically improve academic performance across the board, including for low-income and minority children.

Demography need not equal destiny.

Demographic Determinism Defeated in Florida

In the previous chapter ranking states’ scores and gains for low-income children, Florida earned the highest ranking (3rd overall) for a state with a majority-minority K-12 population. Florida also had the nation’s largest NAEP gains. Florida’s progress is no fluke.

Over the past decade, Florida has gone further than any state in reforming its public school system. As a result, students in the Sunshine State—led by gains among minority children—have made remarkable academic progress.

After years of embarrassingly low and shamefully flat student test scores, leaders in Florida had had enough. During his campaign for governor in 1998, Jeb Bush called aggressive education reform a top priority if elected. Entering office, he worked to deliver on that promise.

In his first State of the State address, Gov. Bush told lawmakers they would “send an unmis-

takeable message for our children—in Florida, failure is no longer an option.”

“Education will remain my top priority until we can honestly say that our system no longer leaves any child behind,” Gov. Bush declared. “I will never waiver in my dedication to transforming our public schools into centers of excellence.”⁴

In the years that followed that statement, Gov. Bush and leaders in the state legislature implemented a sweeping series of educational reforms that expanded school choice, strengthened teacher quality, provided aggressive remediation, focused on proper reading instruction, and harnessed the power of new technologies to deliver education. In addition, Florida began grading schools with clear “A” to “F” labels, holding them accountable for failure, and rewarding them for progress.

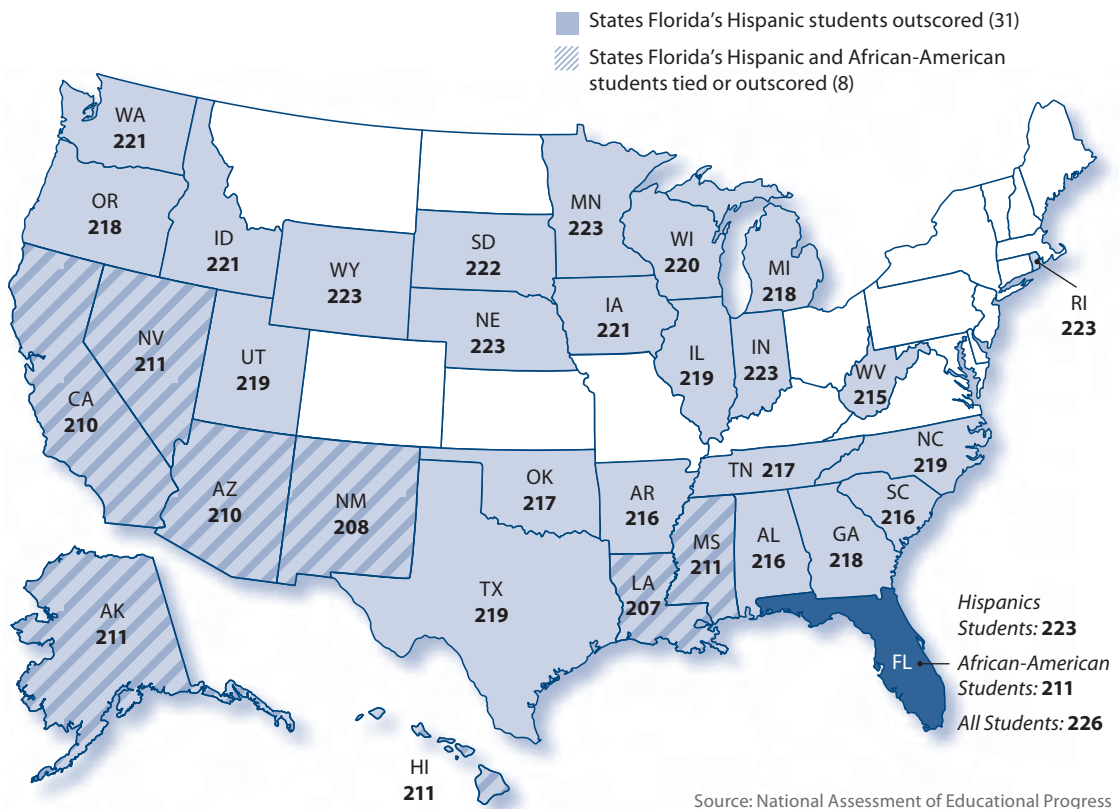
A decade after Florida’s reforms, its students have made dramatic academic improvement. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Florida students are outpacing the national average on improvement in reading and math. Between 1998 and 2009, Florida fourth-graders gained 9 percent on the NAEP reading test compared to 4 percent improvement across the nation. Florida students also are outpacing the nation in progress on math exams.

Impressively, Hispanic and African-American students have made the largest gains.

On NAEP’s fourth-grade reading exam, African-American and Hispanic students’ scores have risen by 12 percent and 10 percent respectively since 1998, ahead of their national peers. In fact, Hispanic fourth-graders in Florida now have higher reading scores than, or tie, the statewide averages of all students in 31 states: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Moreover, Florida’s African-American students

FIGURE 2 | Florida's Hispanic and African-American Scores vs. Statewide Average Scores, 2009 4th-Grade Reading NAEP



exceed or tie the statewide averages for all students in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, and New Mexico on the same exam, and are within striking distance of overtaking several other statewide averages. We provide detail below on Florida's "cocktail" of education reforms—the catalyst for the state's academic success.

Florida's Education Reform Strategy

Implementing Standards and Accountability

Florida implemented a plan to test the majority of public school students annually and grade schools based on students' achievement levels three years before the passage of the federal NCLB Act. Test scores track their progress over time to allow parents and teachers to gauge whether a child is learning.

Expanding School Choice Options

Florida is a leader in offering families options for picking schools outside the traditional public school system. The state has more than 300 public charter schools educating some 100,000 students. In addition, tens of thousands of disadvantaged children and special education students are attending private schools using state-provided tuition scholarships.

Ending Social Promotion

Third-grade students in Florida must pass the state's reading test before moving on to the fourth grade. In 2006, Florida schools identified approximately 29,000 students for retention. Schools provided struggling students with remedial instruction and a powerful incentive to improve.

Focusing on Reading

Through a statewide initiative enacted by Florida lawmakers, educators created reading academies to train teachers on best instruction practices. Schools also hired 2,000 reading coaches, and students in grades 6 through 12 now have access to reading instruction remediation.

Improving Teacher Quality

Florida implemented policies to attract talented teachers and reward those who are succeeding in the classroom. Through an alternative certification program, experienced professionals who do not have traditional teaching credentials can be public school teachers. Approximately half of new Florida teachers now enter the profession after demonstrating strong content knowledge through approved alternative routes. In addition, the state provides performance bonuses to successful schools to reward teachers who are lifting students' academic achievement levels.

Harnessing the Power of New Technology

Nationwide, Florida is a leading provider of virtual or online learning. The state-funded Florida Virtual School, which offers more than 90 online courses (ranging from GED to Advanced Placement curricula), is recognized as a model statewide online learning program.⁵ The Data Quality Campaign also recognizes Florida as a leader

in using computer-based assessments to measure student performance and teacher effectiveness.⁶

The NAEP fourth-grade reading exam—in our view, the most important national indicator of a state's educational performance—shows what Florida students have accomplished in the wake of the aforementioned reforms.

As shown in Figure 3, the percentage of Florida children scoring “Basic or better” on the NAEP fourth-grade reading exam improved by more than 37 percent between 1998 and 2009. Additionally, Florida expanded the percentage of students scoring “Proficient or better” by 54 percent and doubled the number scoring “Advanced.”

TABLE 4 | Percentage of States and Jurisdictions Florida Outperformed by Race and Ethnicity on the NAEP 4th-Grade Reading Exam

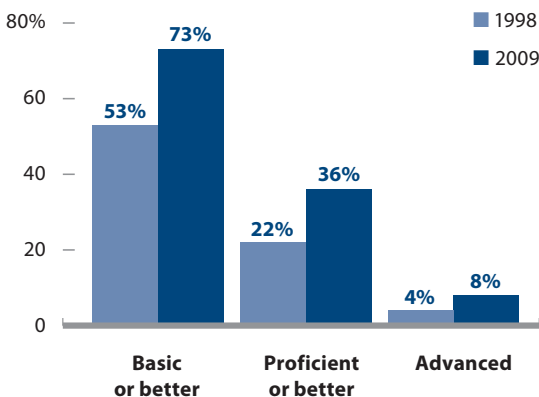
based on average scores, 1998-2007

	All Students	White	African American	Hispanic
1998	15	17	17	52
2002	29	56	31	64
2003	36	77	42	84
2005	44	70	69	86
2007	58	75	73	93

Table 4 shows the percentage of students nationwide that Florida students outperformed on the 4th-grade reading NAEP. The table presents numbers both for students overall, and by ethnicity. Notice that in 1998, Florida's fourth-graders outscored only 15 percent of students nationwide, but by 2007 that had increased to 58 percent. Florida's African Americans went from outscoring 17 percent of African Americans nationwide in 1998 to 73 percent in 2007. Florida's Hispanic students also made strong gains, outscoring 93 percent of Hispanics of the nation in 2007.

In fairness, Florida—like the rest of the nation—has further to go. Despite the state's remarkable progress, many students continue to perform at low levels. However, Florida's experience after a decade of reform shows that all children can improve academically.

FIGURE 3 | Florida 4th-Grade NAEP Reading Achievement, 1998 and 2009



Florida's Lesson(s) for the Nation

Because Florida simultaneously pursued multiple educational reforms, we cannot confidently identify which policy made the biggest contribution to the state's academic gains. In all likelihood, they are all responsible.

Having reviewed the available academic research, we have good reason to believe that holding schools accountable, ending social promotion, improving teacher quality, and expanding school choice each contributed to Florida's success.⁷ We are certain they also can contribute to your success in your state.

Therefore, this chapter offers starting points, or "assignments," for far-reaching reform. For those who care about the quality of America's schools—from influential politicians to concerned parents and taxpayers—there is some serious homework to do. Here are your assignments.

ASSIGNMENT #1

Revolutionize the Teaching Profession

As almost any parent knows, a good teacher can make a profound difference in a child's education. As almost any education reformer knows, our public school system has a strange way of identifying, hiring, compensating, and retaining good teachers.

First, would-be teachers must obtain a college degree and complete a regimen of educa-

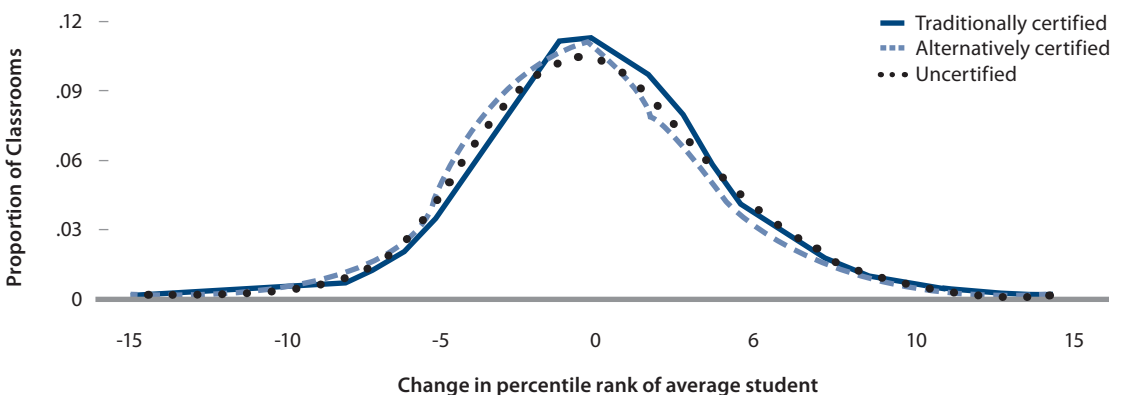
tion-related coursework in order to be eligible for a teaching license. In layman's terms, under this process Albert Einstein could not teach a high school physics class.

Second, public schools generally pay teachers on a uniform pay scale. That is, compensation policies tie teachers' compensation to their time of service and level of education rather than to their performance or effectiveness.

Third, our country largely has focused on increasing the number of teachers rather than increasing teachers' effectiveness. A long-held goal of many education officials has been to reduce teacher-to-student class size ratios, believing that having fewer students in the classroom will increase their abilities to learn. This assumption makes sense; however, mounting evidence suggests it is wrong.

A 2006 report by the Brookings Institution, which measured the performance of roughly 150,000 students in 9,400 classrooms in the Los Angeles Unified School District over three years, found a wide variance in teachers' relative effectiveness, but no link between certification status and quality.⁸ After controlling for students' background differences, the evaluation found "there is no statistically significant difference in achievement for students assigned to certified and uncertified teachers."⁹

FIGURE 4 | Teacher Impacts on Math Performance by Initial Certification



Classroom-level impacts on average student performance, controlling for baseline scores, student demographics, and program participation. LAUSD elementary teachers, grade three through five.

CREATING NEW PATHWAYS

Alternative Teacher Certification

A growing number of states have adopted the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) as an alternate route to teacher certification. To date, ABCTE's programs have helped more than 1,000 individuals enter the teaching profession. According to an ABCTE survey, 95 percent of principals who hired ABCTE teachers rated the organization's alternatively certified teachers to be as or more effective than their peers.¹⁵

Traci Brown and Nick Gastelecutto are two of ABCTE's "alumni."¹⁶ Brown earned her biology certificate and is currently teaching in Hillsborough County, Florida. Having grown up in inner city Los Angeles, she is confident in her abilities to help high-needs students.

"I can give children the inspiration and encouragement to confront their own challenges, overcome negativity, and persevere," said Brown, who previously had worked in business sales in the biology field. "As an African-American woman, I can serve as a positive role model for students of color."

Nick Gastelecutto is currently teaching biology at a Title I high school in Idaho; prior to this he served as a biologist with the Idaho Fish and Game department. Gastelecutto said he believes his professional experience is an asset that other teachers do not necessarily have.

"A lot of times, I think you get teachers who come straight out of school without a whole lot of life experience and they just go from the book and ... the curriculum," said Gastelecutto. "If you have the outside, real world experience, and you can relate the material to what you're talking about, I think it brings a whole new aspect to teaching."

Gastelecutto also is coaching football, wrestling, and baseball. After just one year of teaching, he finds he is already making a positive difference.

"One kid was going to drop out, but he came to talk to me before he did it," noted Gastelecutto. "Now he's going to graduate here in a couple weeks."

A difference indeed.

The figure from the Brookings report reveals two points. First, it shows that teachers who entered the classroom through different certification paths (traditional, alternative, or no certification) are scattered relatively evenly across the bell curve of student outcomes. This suggests that a principal should be unable to predict which type of teacher would be more effective based on what kind of certification he or she has.

However, the Brookings chart also reveals another critically important finding: Among

teachers of the different certification types, there were wide differences in the teachers' relative effectiveness. The difference between having a great teacher (on the right side of the curve) and having a poor teacher (on the left side) could influence a student's academic achievement level by up to 30 percent.

Another report, "An Evaluation of Teachers Trained Through Different Routes to Certification," released by the U.S. Department of Education, presented the results of a similar testing

experiment, which included 2,600 students in 63 schools in 20 districts. The evaluation compared the effectiveness of teachers who had earned traditional teacher certification credentials with those from an alternative certification program.¹⁰ It was a randomized experiment (considered the “gold standard” of research designs) that compared the test scores of students assigned randomly to a classroom with either an alternatively certified (AC) or a traditionally certified (TC) teacher in the same grade in the same school.¹¹

The study found that “there was no statistically significant difference in performance between students of AC teachers and those of TC teachers,” leading to the conclusion that “the route to certification selected by a prospective teacher is unlikely to provide information, on average, about the expected quality of that teacher in terms of student achievement.”¹² Moreover, the evaluation found that “there is no evidence from this study that greater levels of teacher training coursework were associated with the effectiveness of AC teachers in the classroom” and, similarly, that the content of AC coursework was not correlated with teacher effectiveness.¹³

Across the country, states are increasingly adopting alternative teacher certification policies to give qualified professionals a new path to enter the teaching workforce. Recent studies reveal that alternative certification is a promising approach to expand the population of potential teachers and, combined with other reforms, improve teacher quality. In fact, a recent study by Harvard University concluded that states with a genuine alternative teacher certification program saw greater test score gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, between 2003 and 2007, than states that did not offer genuine alternative teacher certification.¹⁴

Performance-Based Pay to Reward Talented and Effective Teachers

In most professions, tying an employee’s compensation to his or her performance is the modus operandi. Typically, those who do their job well

earn more than those who do not, which incentivizes hard work. In public education, however, the concept of performance-based pay is curiously controversial.

Traditionally, public schools have paid teachers based on their credentials and time of service. Teachers’ unions have fiercely opposed programs that would depart from this pay process. However, a growing number of states and communities are doing just that, implementing various forms of performance-based pay for instructors and providing teachers or schools bonuses for demonstrating effectiveness. Parents and taxpayers should welcome these initiatives.

The existing body of academic research supports the theory that providing performance rewards to teachers can have positive benefits on student learning. In 2007, Michael Podgursky and Matthew Springer reviewed the academic literature on merit-pay programs for the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Acknowledging that the literature was limited and that more research was needed, the authors reported, “the studies that have been conducted to date are generally positive and provide a strong case for further policy experimentation in this area by state and districts (combined with rigorous evaluation).”¹⁷ For example, an academic evaluation of a merit-pay program in Little Rock, Arkansas, linked performance pay to higher test scores.¹⁸ Students attending schools where teachers were eligible for performance bonuses made gains on standardized test scores compared with their peers in schools that did not offer merit pay.

The Need for Thoughtful Experimentation on Merit Pay

Enthusiasm for merit pay must be tempered by the complexity of getting such policies right.

A *New York Times* article called “The No-Stats All-Star” by Michael Lewis, the best selling author of *Moneyball* and *The Blind Side*, sheds light on why policymakers, who are interested in merit-pay models, must appreciate the nuances and recognize all persons who contribute to collective suc-

cess.¹⁹ (For those non-sports fans, bear with us.)

Lewis writes that although basketball is a team sport, the National Basketball Association's rulebook fuels selfish individualism. For example, for many years, players would not shoot half-court shots (or longer) in games' closing seconds because it would lower their shooting percentages—understandably, individual players want to have high statistics, and thus high market value. Of course, that is a detriment to teams because there is a (slim) chance the shots could go in. So what did the NBA do? It stopped counting last second attempts in statistics to incent players to continue shooting them.

At the same time, there are unselfish players like Shane Battier, of whom you have probably never heard, who requires no such incentives. As Lewis explains, Battier has helped every NBA team he has ever been on to succeed through his strong defense, hustling, and smarts—areas often unmeasured by NBA statistics.

So the question is, how can the NBA encourage and reward both superstardom and the non-celebrity hard workers that don't make the front page like Battier? How can owners and coaches align the interests of individuals with those of the team?

Lewis' article provides much food for thought as school leaders consider merit-pay programs. Policymakers should not base rewards exclusively on student learning gains for individual classes—but should also recognize the achievement of

school-wide goals. Otherwise math teachers will be incentivized to assign six hours of math homework a night and to blaze with other teachers' assignments and expectations.

Collective goals must be included heavily in merit-pay formula to avoid such issues. Policy-makers must also align principals' interests to the success of schools.

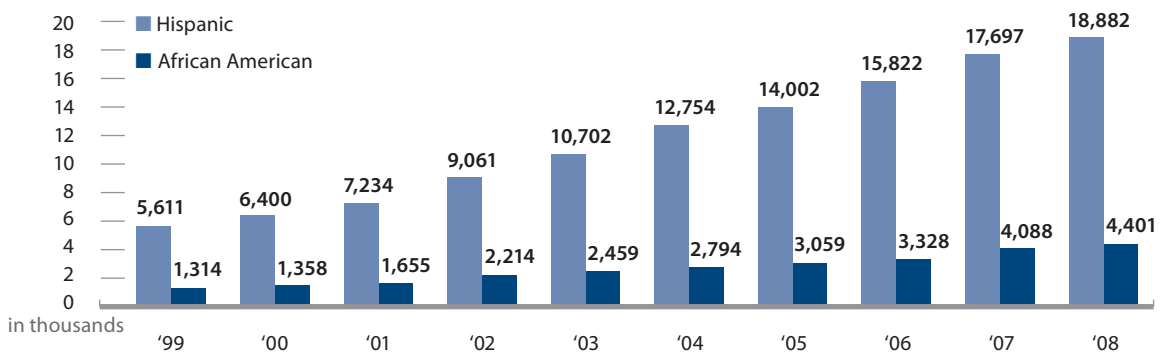
Of course, schools are more complex social organizations than basketball teams, so education statisticians have a great amount of work ahead of them. The good news, however, is that it cannot be hard to improve a system that generally only rewards teachers for length of service and often meaningless certifications and degrees.

Currently, there is no reward for being a Battier-type player or even a superstar in the system of teacher compensation—the system reserves rewards only for the older “players.” Imagine if a player from the 1980s like Larry Bird were still riding the pine on NBA squads, cashing in larger paychecks than LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, or Battier. Even though he is a seasoned veteran, would you really want him in the game?

School and Teacher Financial Incentives for AP Completion

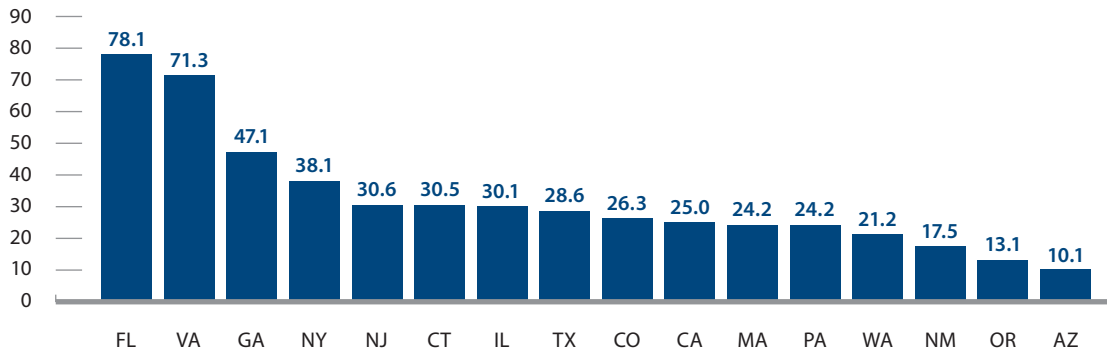
One example of a uniquely tailored, successful merit-pay program is providing teacher bonuses for when students earn passing grades on Advanced Placement (AP) exams. In Florida, where policy-

FIGURE 5 | Florida AP Passing Scores: Hispanics and African Americans, 1999-2008



Source: The National Math and Science Initiative

FIGURE 6 | Math, Science, and English AP Passing Test Score per 1,000 Students for States with 7,000 or More Hispanic Junior and Senior Students, 2006



Source: The National Math and Science Initiative

makers implemented statewide incentive, teachers earn \$50 for every passing score on an AP math or science exam, up to \$2,000 per teacher. The program also aimed to set higher expectations in traditionally low-performing schools by providing teachers bonuses of \$500 per student, again based on AP exam performance.²⁰

Recently collected data by the National Math and Science Initiative show that between 1999 and 2007 the number of Florida students passing AP math and science tests increased by 154 percent. Looking specifically at ethnicity, the numbers are even more encouraging. Florida leads the nation in the rate of Hispanics passing AP exams. And, as shown in Figure 5, the numbers of Hispanic and African-American students passing AP exams have more than tripled since 1999.

In addition, the National Math and Science Initiative collected data regarding the AP passing rates for Hispanic students in states with sizeable Hispanic K-12 populations. The Initiative data focused on Hispanic junior and senior students having passed an AP math, science, and/or English exam per 1,000 Hispanic junior and senior students. Florida not only led the nation, but it displayed a passing rate almost eight times higher than the lowest performing state.

Quality Teachers for Underserved Students

We know much of the public school system strongly tilts against producing high-quality

schools for disadvantaged students. In fact, recent advances in the analysis of student test scores have revealed that the most disadvantaged students systematically receive the lowest caliber teachers.

William Sanders, currently of the SAS Institute, pioneered a method of teacher evaluation known as “value-added assessment.” Using a vast amount of testing data from Tennessee public schools, Sanders’ research focused on what students *learned* throughout the year, rather than on how much they knew at the end of the year. Using state examinations, Sanders measured gains by following the year-to-year progress of students from the end of year X to the end of school year X+1 and then to year X+2, etc. Therefore, the research focused on *growth* in student achievement rather than proficiency.

By measuring student progress, Sanders established that teachers vary widely in terms of effectiveness—some teachers add tremendous value to student learning; many are in the middle; and some add very little. Some classes even experience learning drains rather than gains. The differences in effectiveness were largely irrespective of student profiles and did not vary with average class size.

Sanders summarized the findings of his research as follows: “Research conducted utilizing data from the TVAAS (Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System) database has shown that

race, socioeconomic level, class size, and classroom heterogeneity are poor predictors of student academic growth. Rather, the effectiveness of the teacher is the major determinant of student academic progress.”²¹

Effective teachers produce greater gains regardless of student demographics, raising an appalling equity issue in the distribution of quality teachers. Dr. Sanders wrote:

*African-American students and white students with the same level of prior achievement make comparable academic progress when they are assigned to teachers of comparable effectiveness. However, at least in the system studied, black students were disproportionately assigned to the least effective teachers. Regardless of race, students who are assigned disproportionately to ineffective teachers will be severely academically handicapped relative to students with other teacher assignment patterns.*²²

The difference between highly ineffective teachers and highly effective ones proved profound. For example, Sanders discovered that the impact of teacher effectiveness is 10 to 20 times larger than that of variations in average class size, within the observable range. Sanders also found that having an instructor in the bottom 20 percent of effectiveness for three years in a row results in a student learning 50 percent less than those being taught by instructors in the top 20 percent.²³

These findings have deep implications. In early childhood reading instruction, for example, the effectiveness of instructors makes the difference between literacy and illiteracy. Students subjected to a series of poor instructors early on often get so far behind that they benefit little from high-quality instructors later in their academic careers. Intuitively, this squares with much of what we know about high school dropouts, since they often lack the ability to read their textbooks and subsequently give up on any aspiration they may once have had to go to college.

Looking at the current distribution of quality instructors reveals a staggering equity issue, but when considering the ratio of highly effective teachers to teachers overall, the challenge of attracting greater numbers of quality instructors becomes even more daunting—hence, the need to complete Assignment #1.

ASSIGNMENT #2

Empower Parents to Choose Schools

Sweeping the landscape of American education is the idea that families should have the ability to choose the schools that they deem best for their children. Twenty-five years ago, the system assigned almost all children to a public school based on where they lived. Under that system, students were largely separated into two categories—those whose families had the financial means to afford a neighborhood with a quality school (or pay private school tuition) and those who did not. Among the latter group, which included most children in the larger cities, families had little choice but to attend a government-zoned public school, regardless of whether it was safe or effective.

Slowly but surely, this system of government-assigned schooling is eroding thanks to policies that give families more flexibility to decide where and how their children are educated. These school choice initiatives range from voucher and scholarship programs, which help families select private schools, to charter schools and open-enrollment policies that let families choose within the public school system. What these policies have in common is that they provide some form of “backpack” funding—that is, allowing a child’s share of public school funding to “follow” her to a school chosen by her parents.

Today, millions of children have the opportunity to attend a family-picked school regardless of their home address through:

- **Private School Choice:** In all, 15 states and Washington, D.C. have some form of private school choice (including vouchers,

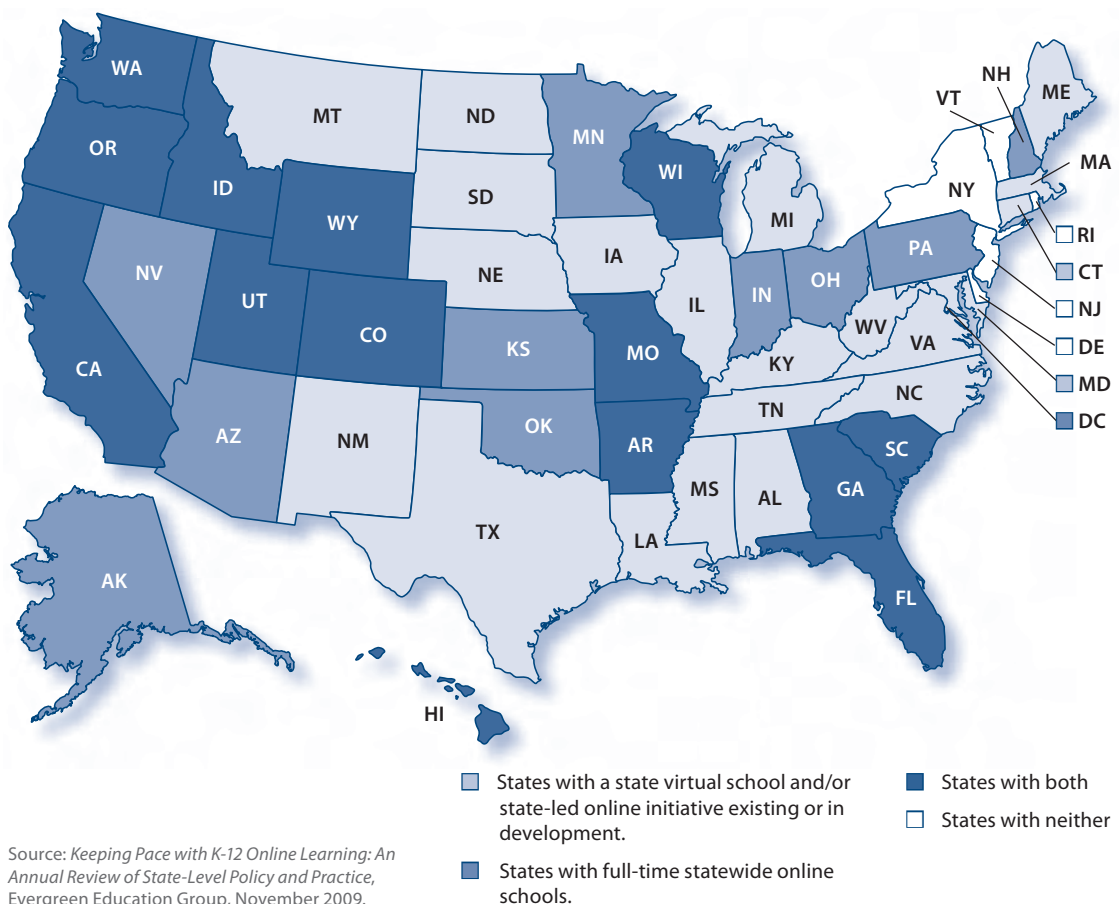
scholarships, and tuition or scholarship tax credits). Approximately 190,000 children attended private schools using publicly financed scholarships in 2009.²⁴

- **Public Charter Schools:** At the time of this writing, 39 states and the District of Columbia have charter schools—innovative public schools that agree to meet performance standards set by governing authorities but are otherwise free from the bureaucratic rules and regulations that encumber traditional public schools. This autonomy allows for new teaching methods, special curricula and academic programs, and flexible governance policies, like holding longer school

days. More than 1.5 million students are attending an estimated 4,600 public charter schools across the United States.²⁵

- **Public School Choice:** A majority of states—all but four—and school districts now offer families some ability to pick their children's school within the public school system, according to the Education Commission of the States. Some urban school systems like New York City and San Francisco have gone even further by implementing “backpack” funding formulas—bringing widespread school choice and decentralized funding to the public education system (see Assignment #4).

FIGURE 7 | **Online Learning Opportunities by State**



- **Homeschooling**

With every state allowing homeschooling, this form of choice is one of the fastest growing trends in the United States—the Department of Education reports that the percentage of students being home-schooled grew by 74 percent since 1999. And, in 2008, families taught approximately 1.5 million children at home.²⁶

- **Online Learning and Virtual Education**

Increasingly, technology is expanding the number of quality learning opportunities available for American students. The International Association for K-12 Online Learning reports that 45 states, plus Washington, D.C., have a state virtual school or online-learning program.²⁷ Currently, 57 percent of secondary schools provide access to online learning.²⁸ The total overall number of American students participating in online learning also topped one million as of 2007-2008.²⁹

More than ever, American families have a wide range of options for choosing where and how their children are educated. Nevertheless, despite school choice programs' continued growth, districts still assign most children to schools based on where they live. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that 74 percent of all students still attend government-assigned public schools.³⁰ Because of the high degrees of socioeconomic and racial segregation in housing, the system continues to largely consign the most disadvantaged students to the least effective schools.

Greater school choice can remedy this imprisonment. A growing body of evidence is proving that school choice policies have a positive impact not only on boosting students' academic achievement and improving parental satisfaction, but also on raising the overall quality of school systems. School choice also can save taxpayers considerable resources.

Improving Family Satisfaction

Families report higher levels of satisfaction with their schools when they have the power to choose, according to multiple surveys and focus groups. For example, the federally mandated evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship program has repeatedly found that families with children who are participating and attending private schools were more satisfied with their children's school.³¹ In addition, a survey of parents by the U.S. Department of Education found that "students enrolled in assigned public schools tended to have parents who were less satisfied with the schools than students enrolled in either a chosen public school or a private school."³²

Boosting Academic Achievement

The creation of multiple private school voucher or scholarship programs has given researchers the ability to conduct some of the most rigorous academic evaluation experiments ever performed in the education field. Like medical clinical trials, these experiments measure the performance of a "treatment group" (those who are offered scholarships) with a "control group" (those who applied for scholarships but were not offered them) sorted by a lottery. Researchers refer to this as a "randomized experiment"—often considered the "gold standard" in empirical research. In 2008, Dr. Patrick Wolf summarized the findings of these studies in a *Brigham Young University Law Review* article:

*The high-quality studies on school voucher programs generally reach positive conclusions about vouchers... Of the ten separate analyses of data from the "gold standard" experimental studies of voucher programs, nine conclude that some or all of the participants benefited academically from using a voucher to attend private school. The evidence to date suggests that school voucher programs benefit many of the disadvantaged students and parents that they serve.*³³

Improving Traditional Schools

Through Competition

In addition to helping those children actually receiving scholarships, school choice programs introduce competition into public school systems, which then drives public schools to improve academically or risk losing students. In 2009, Dr. Greg Forster, with The Foundation for Educational Choice, reviewed the empirical research studies on the effects private school choice programs (and competition) had on traditional public schools: “A total of 17 empirical studies have examined how vouchers affect academic achievement in public schools,” Forster explained. “Of these studies, 16 find that vouchers improved public schools and one finds no visible impact. No empirical studies find that vouchers harm public schools.”³⁴

Saving Taxpayer Resources

The amount of funds distributed through private school choice policies oftentimes costs well below the average per-pupil expenditures for students who are in public schools. For example, in Washington, D.C., average per-pupil expenditures in public schools are more than \$15,000 per year. Meanwhile, scholarships offered through the District’s Opportunity Scholarship Program—a private school choice program for low-income students—do not exceed \$7,500. That means when students transfer out of public schools, those schools *and* taxpayers likely save some portion of the funding that otherwise would have been spent had those children stayed in their public schools. If thousands of students transfer, these fiscal savings can certainly add up.

Dr. Susan Aud—then with The Foundation for Educational Choice—reviewed the fiscal impact of scholarship and voucher programs from 1990 to 2006 and found that “[s]chool choice programs have saved a total of about \$444 million” during that period, including “\$22 million saved in state budgets and \$422 million saved in local public school districts.”³⁵ This is just the evidence from a small, albeit important, number of programs. Imagine if every state had a private school choice program.

Positively Changing Public Schools

Since the early 1990s, charter-school operators have created some of the greatest schooling models in our nation’s public school systems—from the growing network of KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) academies, which serve as beacons of hope in urban school districts, to the BASIS charter schools in Arizona, which have become national models of excellence. In fairness, not all charter schools are successful. Thankfully, states and parents have closed down a number of poor performing charter schools. Poorly performing charters risk closure to a higher degree than failing traditional public schools, which, in most cities, lawmakers have allowed to stay open for far too long.

Personalizing Learning

Technology and virtual learning offer American students educational opportunities that were once unimaginable. Online-learning programs allow students to learn at their own pace, receive customized instruction, and take unique courses like Mandarin Chinese. According to the Evergreen Education Group, as many as one million students—roughly 2 percent of the K-12 student population—are currently participating in some form of online learning.³⁶

Although the practical experience and empirical evidence about online learning is more limited, there is good reason for optimism that virtual-learning opportunities can benefit students. In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education’s Center for Technology in Learning published a report presenting the findings of a meta-analysis of the evidence-based studies of higher education and K-12 online-learning programs.³⁷ The Department of Education’s researchers identified 51 studies that met their requirements for inclusion. Overall, this meta-analysis found that “[s]tudents who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction.”

In their book, *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive*

Technologies Will Change the Way the World Learns, Clayton Christensen and his coauthors argue that online technology will reformat American K-12 education, gradually at first, and then rapidly.³⁸ Projecting from data available and based on past experiences, the authors estimate students will take 50 percent of K-12 courses online by 2019.

Although education likely will remain a social enterprise, mixed models of classroom and online instruction are already underway and are proving a success. The Arizona Charter School Association, which calculates student-learning gains in grades three through eight for Arizona district and charter schools, found the same school was top in both math and reading—Carpe Diem E-Learning in Yuma, Arizona.³⁹ Yuma, a geographically isolated border city with challenging student demographics and an agriculture-based economy, serves as a delightfully unlikely home for an effective school.

So, what is Carpe Diem's secret? It is right on the school's Web page:

Our academic program is a "hybrid" program consisting of on-site teacher-facilitators (coaches) and computer-assisted instruction (CAI) utilizing a computer-based learning and management system. Our program offers an extensive online library of interactive instructional courseware, providing learners and teachers with access to thousands of hours of self-paced, mastery-based instruction.

Our program considers individual differences in ability, knowledge, interests, goals, contexts and learning styles. Our instructional resources and strategies give our "coaches" the power to effectively tailor their instructional practices, accommodating the individual needs of the learner with the goal of achieving student mastery.

In the Carpe Diem Collegiate High School and Middle School (CDCHS), we believe that all students should have a high quality experience

*and technology-based education designed to help them be successful today, tomorrow and in the future. What is "success?" At Carpe Diem, success means the student must demonstrate appropriate character and content proficiency (learning mastery), not just course completion.*⁴⁰

Hybrid models mix classroom instruction with technology-delivered content. Teachers actually serve as coaches, or as "a guide on the side rather than a sage on a stage" to use the rhetoric of the progressive educators. The big difference: Within the Carpe Diem context, it may finally make sense.

Students Participating in School Choice Programs

Policymakers should not just look at empirical research to understand how school choice is benefiting the lives of American students. They can and should meet the students and families who feel thankful for these new opportunities.

Cyber Schools in Pennsylvania

PA Cyber, an online charter school in Pennsylvania, is an example of a highly popular online-learning program. In 2006, the school served 6,000 students—one of whom is Ashley.⁴¹

"It is wonderful to be able to have choices and to be able to make your own decisions as to your education," explained Ashley. "This school has enough flexibility that I am able to do volunteer work in my spare time, which I want to continue into my adult life."

"I also enjoy that I have teachers that I may contact whenever I need assistance," added Ashley. "They are always there and willing to help. The virtual classes are nice as well. I like that I can discuss things with fellow classmates whenever I would like to. It is great that I can be at home but still interact with kids my age. It has helped me realize I have an interest in photography; from my perspective, it is the best school you could ever attend."

Private School Choice Scholarships in Washington, D.C.

Since 2004, thousands of low-income students in the nation's capital have attended private schools thanks to the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. This federal initiative provides scholarships worth up to \$7,500 to approximately 1,700 students. Because D.C. Public Schools are some of the worst in the nation, this program is a godsend for families in need.

Unsurprisingly, multiple federally mandated evaluations have reported that families participating in the scholarship program are more satisfied with the safety and quality of their children's new schools. A 2009 evaluation published by the U.S. Department of Education also found that students participating in the Opportunity Scholarship Program made statistically significant gains in reading achievement compared with their peers who did not receive scholarships. Despite this clear success, the future of the Opportunity Scholarship Program is unknown, as Congress and Presi-

dent Barack Obama approved the slow phase-out of this program in 2009.

Policymakers considering the Opportunity Scholarship Program's future should meet students like Tiffany Dunston, Jordan White, and Carlos Battle. Tiffany currently attends Syracuse University. In 2008, she was the valedictorian at Archbishop Carroll High School, where she enrolled thanks to a private school scholarship. "Being selected for a scholarship changed my life, and I hope to be the first college graduate in my family," Tiffany told a U.S. Senate committee in May 2009.⁴² "My motivation to get the best education possible was my cousin James, who was shot and killed at 17. My cousin was going to be the first college graduate in my family, but he died before he was given that opportunity. Now I'm trying to step in his shoes and finish what he started. ... With the help of the scholarship my dream was realized."

Jordan White is a student at Oberlin College in Ohio. She used an Opportunity Scholarship to attend Georgetown Day School in 2009. At a graduation ceremony, she told the assembled audience, "I'd like to say to the decision-makers on Capitol Hill and of the District of Columbia before any political decisions are made against a program such as this, look at us here today! Talk to us! Listen to us! ... [M]ore importantly, look toward the future of the children coming up after us who need the same opportunity that we have been given. Every parent and every child should have a choice in education."⁴³

Carlos Battle uses an Opportunity Scholarship to attend Georgetown Day School, where he is the senior class president. Carlos recently commented on what an Opportunity Scholarship has meant to him: "The school choice program is the ladder holding me up. If the program goes away, the ladder will too, and there will be no more climbing for me."⁴⁴

Surrender Me

by Carlos Battle

Surrender me from the typical
stereotype of a black young man,
One who slings rock, smokes weed, and
keeps a gun at hand.
I'm a whole different guy.
One who reads books and wears a tie.
You see, I'm changing the perception of
a young black man.
I'm not going to be thrown into
the category of jailed or shot.
I'm the new face of black youth,
like it or not.
You see, I'm the descendent of
Nubian kings.
And I'm changing what it means to be
a black teen.

School Choice Tax Credits in Florida and Pennsylvania

Scholarship tax-credit programs provide people and/or businesses a state tax credit for contributions made to organizations that award private school scholarships. In 2009, seven states—Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island—had tax credit programs to raise funds for scholarships.⁴⁵

Florida and Pennsylvania have had corporate scholarship tax credit programs for nearly a decade. Together, these programs are helping approximately 75,000 children attend schools of their parents' choosing.

Antonio is one of the thousands of students benefiting from Florida's "Step Up For Students" scholarship program. Raised by his grandmother, Antonio was struggling in school before receiving an opportunity to attend Mt. Olivet Seventh-Day Adventist School in Fort Lauderdale in seventh grade. There, Antonio thrived. By the eighth grade, he was scoring two grade levels ahead on national standardized testing. In the spring of 2009, Antonio graduated from the eighth grade as the valedictorian of his class. Now, he is using a "Step Up For Students" scholarship to attend Miami Union Academy.

Like Antonio, Sekou is attending sixth grade at the Nativity School in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania thanks to a similar tax credit program. Sekou enjoys going to Nativity for many reasons, one of which is there are smaller class sizes so he can pay better attention without girls distracting him or getting him in trouble—we had that problem in school, too. Another difference is that the classes are harder, which forces Sekou to study more. Sekou aspires to attend college and hopes to take care of his family one day.

These are not statistics or graphs. They are stories of people. Student-centered education reform policies like private school choice, charter schools, and online learning are improving the lives of students like Sekou, Antonio, Carlos, Jordan, Tiffany, and Ashley. All children deserve the same opportunity to receive a first-class education.

ASSIGNMENT #3

Set High Standards and

Hold Schools Accountable for Results

A key focus for education reformers has been to create academic accountability in America's schools by setting standards, measuring students' performance against those standards (through testing), and reporting students' and schools' results to parents and the public. This is an important and valuable shift in American thinking vis-à-vis public education. For too long, the conversation about how to improve schools focused merely on inputs, such as spending. Today's push to provide more information about school and student performance is a welcomed change. Still, it is critical that policymakers advocate for setting the performance bar high, providing information on student and school performance against that bar, and holding those parties accountable for their results.

The Case for High Standards

Education reformers—and the public—should require their states to establish high academic standards—in the form of testing—for a number of reasons.

First, high standards create real transparency about school and student academic performance. Are students succeeding? Are teachers effective? Are taxpayers getting their money's worth? Just like profits and losses in the business world, academic gains and losses provide a treasure trove of information on what is and what is not working in a state's public schools.

Second, because state academic standards set the expectation level for how much students should be learning, placing the bar high can be an effective step toward expecting more from students. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has demonstrated how setting strong standards and expectations can spur great improvement in students' academic achievement.

In the 1990s, the Bay State implemented a sweeping reform agenda focused chiefly on high academic standards. According to Paul Peterson

of Harvard University and Frederick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute, Massachusetts was one of only three states to earn an “A” on their “Strength of State Proficiency Standards” rankings in 2003, 2005, and 2007.⁴⁶

Massachusetts’ experience over the past decade highlights the promise of strong standardized testing. Charles D. Chieppo and James T. Gass of the Pioneer Institute, a Massachusetts public-policy think tank, summarized the commonwealth’s record of strong academic achievement in *Education Next*:

*In 2005, Massachusetts became the first state ever to finish first in four categories of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): 4th-grade reading and math and 8th-grade reading and math. The next time the test was administered, Bay State students did it again. Late last year, results from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) demonstrated that Massachusetts students are not only the best in the country, they are globally competitive as well. The Commonwealth’s 8th graders tied for first in the world in science and were sixth in math; 4th graders scored second in science and third in math.*⁴⁷

Massachusetts also performs well on the ranking of state NAEP scores and progress for low-income students presented in the previous chapter. Massachusetts ranks eighth out of the 50 states in the overall score and change in scores of low-income students between 2003 and 2009. It would be an oversimplification to attribute Massachusetts’ good performance to a single policy (standards and testing) or even entirely to policy. Massachusetts is one of the nation’s wealthier states with one of the least challenging student demographic profiles. Still, the Manhattan Institute carried out a thorough investigation of state NAEP performance relative to a 16-factor student “teachability index” and found that Massachusetts scored somewhat higher than what their favorable demographics would predict on the 2001 NAEP.

Further, scores have continued to improve since 2001.⁴⁸ While we cannot be certain the degree to which high standards contribute to Massachusetts’ strong performance vis-à-vis other policies and favorable demographics, we are on very safe ground concluding that they played a major role in improving student learning.

High standards are a needed first step for lifting learning goals and expectations, increasing transparency about performance, and, ideally, spurring greater student achievement. In order to ensure the latter is not a hoped-for but rather an achieved result, states must adopt strong accountability measures.

Public School Accountability

One promising way to hold public educators accountable for results is to create meaningful sanctions for schools that fail to meet goals on state tests and standards. As briefly noted earlier in this chapter, Florida’s pioneering reforms in 1999 included a provision to grade schools on an “A” to “F” scale. If a school received an “F” on the state’s grading system for multiple years, children at those low-performing schools could attend an alternative public school or even a private school. Through that policy, hundreds of parents and students exercised the opportunity to pick better performing schools.

Evidence suggests that this accountability policy—both the threat of bad publicity for certain public schools or the earning of an “F” and the prospect of seeing enrolled students switch to different schools—created incentives for public schools to improve. Evaluations published by the Manhattan Institute and the Urban Institute reported that this threat and potential competition resulted in public school improvement.⁴⁹ Moreover, the 2007 Urban Institute analysis studied how failing schools responded to this pressure by implementing reforms to improve performance:

[W]hen faced with increased accountability pressure, schools appear to focus on low-performing students, lengthen the amount of time

*devoted to instruction, adopt different ways of organizing the day and learning environment of the students and teachers, increase resources available to teachers, and decrease principal control.*⁵⁰

Student Accountability

We opened this publication with a statement by President Barack Obama regarding student responsibilities. Although we extended some criticism to the president (and many other adults), we noted that his message was a sound one: Students need to take charge of their educations. With that in mind, policymakers should hold students accountable for their personal performance.

Traditionally, most school systems have effectively allowed social promotion—allowing students to proceed to higher grades regardless of whether they have demonstrated mastery of their current grade level’s coursework. After all, how is it that many students arrive in high school without even mastering literacy? The answer is social promotion.

Some states and districts have worked to curb this practice by, well, ending it—requiring students to demonstrate grade-level competency before proceeding to a higher grade. Schools retain failing students and provide remediation and additional instruction. Florida and New York City are examples of having implemented such policies, both of which have proved a success.

A study of Florida’s policy to end social promotion for third-grade students who failed the state reading exam resulted in long-term improvement.⁵¹ The study’s authors reported that retained students made significant gains in reading achievement compared with peers allowed to advance. Importantly, they found that the academic benefit increased after the second year—suggesting that students who were socially promoted likely fall further behind over time.⁵²

In 2009, a study by RAND Corporation evaluated New York City’s policies of ending social promotion for certain students in grades three, five, seven, and eight. RAND reports that the policy of

retaining students and providing additional remediation benefited retained students over time.

The Next Generation of Standards, Transparency, and Accountability

The reforms outlined above that aim to improve transparency, set high expectations, and hold schools and students accountable have proved beneficial. But education reformers of the future should not limit new policies strictly to what has been done in the past.

In today’s high-tech world we can see real-time updates on the location of our FedEx or UPS packages. Our cars’ GPS systems tell us precisely where we are, point us in the right direction when we’re lost, and tell us our estimated time of arrival. And, of course, our iPhones can do, well, just about anything. So when will these technological innovations arrive in our schools? We hope sooner rather than later.

Today, hospitals are moving toward using real-time data to more quickly diagnose patients, track their health fluctuations, and better treat them and their unique needs. The same attention to detail should be happening in our schools to better treat students’ needs.

ASSIGNMENT #4

Modernize School Governance and Finance

At the time of the American Revolution, many Europeans scoffed at Americans’ notion that the people could govern a nation without a king. Threatening the establishment and its hold on a people or practice is not without controversy or consequences. However, the new hope and opportunities realized after liberation are well worth it. Public schools and school districts need a similar shakeup—minus the bloodshed of course—for a hopeful future.

There are some obvious good government fixes to the problems besetting school districts, such as requiring them to use uniform election dates to improve the public’s awareness of and participation in the education community. Reformers today, however, should be even bolder in their thinking.

If one were to start an education system from scratch in the 21st century, he hardly would be inclined to set up a network of schools with students assigned by ZIP Code and governed by large bureaucratic districts. After all, in today's high-tech world, there are exponential opportunities thanks to less control and unlimited boundaries. Accordingly, this theoretical architect should ask: Why establish school districts at all?

Although districts have long been the dominant fashion for organizing schools, it is plainly not a model without serious problems. In theory, school districts represent paragons of local democracy: The public elects school board members to oversee the policy of the district. In practice, especially in large sprawling districts, school board elections involve little information regarding the stances of candidates, and are prone toward "capture" by narrow, organized interests.

Organized factions defeat unorganized ones on a regular basis in American politics. For example, although only around 1 percent of Americans work in farming, agricultural interests—through lobbyists in Washington, D.C.—have created and maintained a near impenetrable system of dishing out farm subsidies. (As any economist will tell you, subsidies support low productivity and poor products.) Similarly, powerful representation has upheld the business-as-usual model in public education, which is hugely unproductive.

For instance, consider the bracingly honest evaluation of the role played by organized Illinois teachers' unions in local school board elections by the *Small Newspaper Group Springfield Bureau*:

Illinois' two major teacher unions not only exert their political clout through lobbying the legislature but also through tough negotiating and politicking on a local level.

"One of the wonderful things about being a teacher is that you get to help elect your own bosses," said Illinois AFL-CIO president Margaret Blackshere, a former kindergarten teacher.

She said teacher unions on a local level often become involved in school board races through endorsing candidates and having members actively campaign for them. Limited revenues often keep union-friendly boards from giving pay raises as large as some teachers might like, but there are less visible ways that board members can assist a union agenda.

Unions routinely push for adding procedural hoops for the district to jump through when evaluating teachers as a tradeoff for not receiving quite as large a pay raise as the union originally called for.

Chicago-attorney Fred Lifton has represented school districts in more than 1,000 labor contract negotiations during the past 35 years.

"Generally, job security issues are more important at the negotiating table than compensation issues. I wouldn't say that school boards have so much a pro-union viewpoint as a pro-teacher one. They ran for school board because they care about education. They want to be loved. It's a very parental, almost family-like relationship they have with teachers.

"So when unions push for making it harder to fire teachers, they often give in. They don't realize the long-term costs of not being able to get rid of someone who is incompetent."

Lifton added it is not uncommon for Illinois school board members to belong to teachers unions in neighboring school districts where they are employed or have family members working in the school district they are involved in governing.

"They will tell you this doesn't pose a conflict of interest and legally it doesn't. But it does certainly create a certain sympathy for what the union is requesting," he said.

*In fact, it has become routine for school boards to give away much of the authority they have in the evaluation process during contract negotiations.*⁵³

Large urban school districts, the vast majority of which have decades-long records of academic failure, paint an even clearer picture. In *Spinning Wheels: The Politics of Urban School Reform*, author Frederick Hess makes the convincing case that rather than truly changing, many “captured” and/or otherwise dysfunctional school districts go through a charade of perpetual reform.

For example, school systems will cycle through superintendents to come across as pro-reform when they are really ensuring their stranglehold against substantive systemic changes.⁵⁴ A new “savior” superintendent will arrive, “try” to implement reforms, and will receive a layoff notice about three years later for lack of “success.” The new superintendent finds a group of half-implemented reforms lying around and discards them to put in his or her own new program. Repeat process indefinitely.

We can do much better than this in the 21st century. Through new funding and governance structures, we can shift power from an elite few to the many, i.e., teachers, principals, and parents.

One approach, known as student-centered funding, inverts the power structure of a school district away from central administration and down to the level of schools. As of 2009, one state and 15 different school districts had adopted student-centered funding (although details of the systems vary widely).⁵⁵ In 2006, a bipartisan group of education reformers signed on as supporters of the concept in a report by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, which outlined the following principles:

- Funding should follow the child, on a per-student basis, to the public school that he/she attends.
- Per-student funding should vary according

to a child’s needs and other relevant circumstances.

- The funds should arrive at the school as real dollars (i.e., not teaching positions, ratios, or staffing norms) that can be spent flexibly, with accountability gauged by results, not inputs, programs, or activities.
- These principles for allocating money to schools should apply to all levels (e.g., federal funds going to states, state funds going to districts, districts to schools).
- All funding systems should be simplified and made transparent.⁵⁶

The basic idea of student-centered funding is that states should fund the education of individual students by giving money primarily to individual schools, which should have flexibility over how the money is spent. Every system retains some funds for the district, but the stronger systems send more money to the school level. For example, schools should have the ability to purchase services from multiple sources, including from the school district, if they wish.⁵⁷

San Francisco has been a leader in this approach since 2000, thanks to the efforts of former school superintendent Arlene Ackerman. Today, the 60,000-student district has open enrollment and real school-based management. It also has some of the highest test scores of any city in California.

Ackerman, now a professor at Columbia University’s Teachers College, recently described the district’s experience in the *New York Daily News*:

*In the period after the weighted formula was implemented, San Francisco experienced six consecutive years of academic gains. The system’s principals, teachers, and parents now are among the biggest advocates for our student funding reforms—because they have seen them succeed.*⁵⁸

Such policies are not limited to the United States. New Zealand took the revolutionary step of moving governance down to the school level in the early 1990s. Rather than remote districts governing schools, New Zealand has self-governed schools run by principals and elected boards of parents whose children attend the school. These reforms enabled New Zealand schools to spend more on classroom instruction and less on bureaucratic overhead.⁵⁹

If we wish to hold schools accountable for results—in addition to suggestions in Assignment #3—we need to give principals the necessary tools to achieve results. Currently, districts far too often do not hold principals accountable for their schools' performance, and fail to give them the decision-making authority needed for implementing change. Responsibility without power is a losing proposition to which we should not aspire—principals need both autonomy and accountability.

Conclusion: Reforms Work, But Do Reformers?

Whether you are a state leader, a concerned par-

ent, or a worn-out taxpayer, you can become involved in the national movement to reform and subsequently improve American education. In so doing, you are joining a growing movement that already has made a tremendous difference in the lives of students around the country.

Reforms like improving teacher quality, expanding students' learning options, and measuring results and holding schools accountable have proved successful. Florida's pioneering reform efforts have shown that a reform strategy that accomplishes our "assignments" can lead to dramatic academic improvement, particularly among those children who are most at risk.

The question is no longer whether education reforms work, but whether reformers can succeed in overcoming the powerful opposition and changing the status quo. That is, can education reforms succeed in the political arena to deliver the kind of education system American students deserve and need for the 21st century? We address this question in the final chapter.

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CHAPTER 4



Championing Reforms,
Overcoming Politics

Championing Reforms, Overcoming Politics

So, now that you have likely perused the state snapshot pages, you know where your state ranks academically, and where it falls short vis-à-vis public-policy efforts for real education reform. Whether your state grades relatively well, or is on academic probation, we hope you have gained a clearer picture on where to improve. Now it just comes down to how you can do it *politically*.

One political strategy—made famous by our 26th U.S. president—says to “speak softly and carry a big stick.” We agree. However, not to be outdone, we have two sticks for you.

First, we have shown you the overall academic performance levels of your state’s K-12 public schools—and we have graded each state accordingly. Second, we have provided you with a blueprint of sensible policies, which can help improve student academic achievement—we have shown you where your state is lacking in those areas. Others have shown that the right policies can improve performance. All you need to do is to pass and implement them.

That’s the real trick, isn’t it?

Indeed, carrying the torch and advocating for education reform is a daunting task. Fortunately, there are tools to assist you, history to guide you, and even now a broad consensus on both the right and left sides of the political aisle for truly reforming our public schools.

Philosophical conservatives and liberals operate under often profoundly different models of reality. They disagree on both what the problems are, and thus what the solutions should be. Some might argue that conservatives are from Mars, lib-

erals are from Venus, and never the twain shall meet.

Although that is often the case, we do not believe it is so regarding education reform. Liberals and conservatives do have very different mindsets. Still, an understanding of their respective philosophies and critiques can and does lead to a broad set of mutually agreeable goals and policies.

The Liberal Case for ALEC’s Education Reforms A Rawlsian Case for Reform...

Today’s liberalism is far different from the original, or classical, liberalism. Modern liberals are of the progressive mindset—we will use those terms interchangeably—believing that using government to help the less fortunate in our society is a good thing. That being the case, today’s progressives should have a keen interest in education reform. Increasingly, they have shown that they do.

In Chapter 2, we attributed the reasoning behind our performance rankings to the progressive political philosopher John Rawls. Just to reiterate, Rawls’ hugely influential work, *A Theory of Justice*, argued that we ought to decide societal ethics and actions as if everyone were behind a theoretical “veil of ignorance.” That is, the “veil” says if your role in society were to be refashioned tomorrow, how would you change your opinions of today? Wikipedia offers an illustration of Rawls’ theory:

[W]hites in the southern United States, pre-Civil War, did indeed condone slavery, but they most likely would not have done so had

there been a refashioning of society so that they would not know if they would be the ones enslaved.

Rawls argues that the veil creates an incentive for today's "winners" to create a path for individuals out of their "losing" situations. For most liberals, that involves offering housing assistance, creating welfare programs, and strongly supporting public education, among other things. After all, public education provides those on the "losing end" of economic outcomes an equal chance at a bright future. We, as conservative free-market thinkers, believe in public education; we just disagree with its structure and delivery.

Public education does not even come close to passing Rawls' veil of ignorance test. Poorer students find themselves confined to some of the worst schools with some of the most ineffective teachers. In fact, public education is almost the complete opposite of Rawls' philosophy.

In Chapter 3, we mentioned how the public school system assigns 74 percent of public school students to schools based on where they live, which is heavily influenced by family earnings. It should come as no surprise then that the higher quality schools are often in richer communities, whereas the poorer quality schools are in the more derelict areas. Liberals feel horrified by this practice (as they should).

Now, we will note, our intention is not to take resources, money, or anything away from high-quality schools to "level the playing field" with the lower-quality schools. We know spending more on any school often does little to affect children's academic success. Rather, our intention is to give the "losers" of Rawls' theoretical lottery a chance out of their current predicament.

Rawls would say if low-quality schools in poor neighborhoods are not suitable for you in theory, then they are not suitable for inner-city children in practice. Liberals should not only work closely with the education-reform community in order to secure equality of opportunity for all children, they should be *leading that effort*.



QUOTED

"People have said to me 'Chancellor, we will never fix education in America until we fix poverty in America.' Now I care about fixing poverty, but those people have got it exactly backwards folks. We are never going to fix poverty in America until we fix education in America."¹

Joel Klein, former head of the Clinton administration's anti-trust efforts against Microsoft; went on to become chancellor of New York City Schools.

"The question is whether or not ordinary parents, who can't work the system, are able to get their kids into a decent school, and that's what I need to fight for and will fight for as president of the United States."

Then-senator Barack Obama speaking at the CNN/YouTube-hosted Democratic Primary Debate, July 23, 2007.

"They (low-income parents) need something wealthier Americans have always had: the power to choose their children's schools. The reason school choice succeeds is no mystery: it gives power to the people who have the most at stake—parents."

Democrat John O. Norquist, former mayor of Milwaukee, in *Reader's Digest*, May 1996.

Liberals should be tireless in demanding that the K-12 public education system changes to better meet the goals of social mobility and equality of opportunity. We must have an education system maximizing opportunity and squarely putting the best interests of children first. We believe John Rawls' theory provides a good foundation for how public education *should* work—giving less fortunate children educations equal to their more fortunate peers. However, we know this is not the case in practice. Even if it were, children are not widgets. We must stop presuming every child can consume the same exact education. Children are unique with unique needs.

The Conservative Case for ALEC's Education Reforms

...A Milton Friedman Answer to Reform

From the New Deal to the Great Society to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, conservatives have been wary of greater government involvement in Americans' lives and in the private sector in general. Big government, conservatives claim, is unproductive and incapable of fulfilling every American's unique wants and needs. Along those lines, our reforms will pare the size of government and introduce marketplace-like ideas into our schooling system to maximize productivity and to better satisfy all parties involved in American education.

William Voegeli, writing about economic problems in California, captured the essence of conservatives' views on public-sector productivity:

*Bill Watkins, executive director of the Economic Forecast Project at the University of California at Santa Barbara, has calculated that once you adjust for population growth and inflation, the state government spent 26 percent more in 2007-08 than in 1997-98. Back then, "California had teachers. Prisoners were in jail. Health care was provided for those with the least resources." Today, Watkins asks, "Are the roads 26 percent better? Are schools 26 percent better? What is 26 percent better?"*²

In essence, California's government was doing the same things in 2008 that they were doing in 1998. They are not doing them measurably better; they just spend 26 percent more. We can say the same of public education.

The average American public school student cost taxpayers \$4,060 in 1970, but \$9,391 in 2006 (adjusted for inflation). Are students learning more today than they did in 1970? As we showed in the previous chapters, no, they really are not. If schools today were as efficient as those in 1970 were, lawmakers could reduce state spending and tax burdens by 25 percent. That is encouraging news in today's economic climate when education expenditures typically comprise half of state budgets—half!

The collapse in public education productivity is a prime cause of government's expansion. We believe, oftentimes, this is no accident. There are actually beneficiaries of public education's inefficiencies who have cleverly disguised more of the same (increased spending) as a cure for declining productivity. The reforms outlined in this report can help cure this educational disease.

ALEC's reforms not only will improve student learning, they will reduce the size of government and make government more productive. Alternatively, to quote Ronald Reagan, our intention through our proposed reforms is not "to do away with government. It is rather to make it work—work with us, not over us; to stand by our side, not ride on our back."

In order to achieve greater productivity in public education, reformers must introduce the free-market tenets of incentives and competition.

Any economics 101 lesson will tell you that competition drives prices down and quality up (if this is news to you, encourage your state legislators to take a look at ALEC's *Personal Financial Literacy Act*, which requires high school students to pass economic literacy tests). Moreover, lack of incentives stifles individuals' desires to innovate and to be more productive. Schools need strong incentives for success.

Conservatives' advocacy for introducing such

ideas into the public education system stems largely from the late Nobel-winning economist Milton Friedman. According to Dr. Friedman (and his wife, Rose):

“[Our] interest (in education) began in 1955 when we reached the conclusion that government financing of primary and secondary schooling is entirely consistent with private administration of schooling, and that such a combination is both more equitable and more efficient than the existing linkage of financing with administration. We suggested that a way to separate financing and administration is to give parents who choose to send their children to private schools a sum equal to the estimated cost of educating a child in a government school, provided that at least this sum was spent on education in an approved school. ... The interjection of competition would do much to promote a healthy variety of schools. It would do much, also, to introduce flexibility into school systems. Not least of its benefits would be to make the salaries of school teachers responsive to market forces.”

Simply put, the Friedmans believed that private school choice—or vouchers—would improve “the quality of the education available to children of all income and social classes” through competition.

Today, that idea has evolved to include not only vouchers but also public school choice like charter schools and open-enrollment policies. Moreover, allowing alternatively certified teachers to enter the profession introduces competition. Even placing the expectation level high in student testing encourages students themselves to compete to the top.

Families need a market for K-12 schools. The market mechanism rewards success, and either improves or eliminates failure. This has been sorely lacking in the past, and will be increasingly beneficial in the future. The biggest winners will be those suffering most under the status quo.



QUOTED

“It’s time to admit that public education operates like a planned economy, a bureaucratic system in which everybody’s role is spelled out in advance, and there are few incentives for innovation and productivity. It’s no surprise that our school system doesn’t improve: It more resembles the communist economy than our own market economy.”³

Albert Shanker, the late president of the American Federation of Teachers.

“All parents, regardless of income, should be able to choose places where they know their children will learn. And they should be able to choose environments where their own values will be extended instead of lost. It’s possible that there are some public schools nobody would choose. They are so bad that they might suddenly find themselves without any students. But I have no idea why we should be interested in protecting schools like that from competition—or any schools from competition. Our worst schools are our non-competitive ones, and that’s no coincidence.”

William Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education, writing in *The De-Valuing of America*.

Competing with the public sector's bureaucratic hold on education, a new generation has begun to offer innovative schools directly to parents. Some have succeeded brilliantly, and some states have been much keener than others to help this process along. Expect the laggards to fall in line eventually. Conservative (and liberal) lawmakers should not cower in fear that someone somewhere might open a bad school when, in reality, we are surrounded by them now. Competition will force out those bad schools.

Competition and incentives work in every sector of the American economy. K-12 education is not "too important to leave to the market" as some of Friedman's critics claim. Rather, it is too important to divorce from the market.



QUOTED

"We should vigorously promote educational choice and the voucher system to instill competition in our failing schools. By doing so, we will be giving lower- and middle-class families the same mobility as the wealthy by providing them the means to choose the best schools for their children, rather than imprisoning many of them in inferior public schools that are all too often urban war zones."

Syndicated radio talk-show host
Rush Limbaugh in *See, I Told You So*

The Emerging Bipartisan Consensus for Reform

The debate over school reform has become increasingly less theoretical. We know now what has utterly failed to move academic achievement, and the evidence on what has succeeded continues to grow. Whether you are a liberal, a conservative, a libertarian, or a vegetarian, you ought to believe in maximizing the positive impact of every tax dollar spent on education. As a reformer, you should be willing to put aside other differences to build a broad-based coalition against academic failure. You cannot get broad bipartisan support unless you work hard to secure it.

To all the Republican lawmakers out there tackling public education reform, there are Democrats ready to stand by your side. To all the Democrats, there are Republicans ready to champion your cause.

Consider an Oct. 29, 2009, *Chicago Tribune* column by Democrat State Sen. James T. Meeks of Chicago, who is a pastor at Salem Baptist Church. Reacting to decades of academic failure and a recent string of violent deaths in Chicago, Reverend Meeks shared his despair, frustration, and optimism, writing:

When a child reaches high school at a fifth-grade reading level, society offers no hope, no future and illiteracy as a way of life because we have failed that child for eight years. What college would accept a student at a fifth-grade reading level? Hope for the future becomes further obscured. Without question, the lack of preparedness of students leads to despair, disruption and ultimately violence.

You would think that Chicago teachers, Mayor Richard Daley, churches and elected officials would care enough to work together to improve the system. But instead, the Chicago Teachers Union has figured out a way for teachers to not be evaluated on obvious criteria, such as how well they perform in the classroom.

Nobody wants to be held accountable, but the blood of every child is on our hands...

*For the first time in my personal and political career, I am exploring the idea of vouchers and charter schools to help facilitate choice and enhance academic performance. Why should we continue to make investments in a system that is bankrupt and weighed down with bureaucracy?**

Lawmakers desiring to build a bipartisan coalition should look to individuals like Sen. Meeks as well as groups like the Education Equality Project, formed in 2008. Signatories of that organization's manifesto—which calls for merit-pay models for teachers, choice for families, and accountability for schools—include Republicans Sen. John McCain and Jeb Bush, and Democrats Rep. John Conyers, Harold Ford, Jr., and Jim Hunt, former governor of North Carolina. Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, a Democrat and former teacher union organizer, also signed the document. In addition, as we mentioned in our introduction, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and civil rights activist Reverend Al Sharpton put aside their political differences to tour the nation in support of education reform.

The support is there, and the reformers are ready. Whether you are a liberal or a conservative, or whatever, get it done where you live.

The Way of the Reform Warrior: Resolved and Transparent

When former Florida governor Jeb Bush spoke at a policy event in October of 2009, an audience member asked Gov. Bush how he got his many K-12 education reforms done politically. The former governor paused and replied:

During the campaign, I told people what I was going to do. Once I was elected, I did it.

Gov. Bush employed a bit of humorous understatement, as the “how” was far more complex—

policy development, implementation, legislation, and advocacy all require hard work. Bush's comment, however, gets to the core requirement of a successful education reformer: courage.

Florida's reformers did not achieve their far-reaching policy changes easily or deceptively—there was no broad-based uprising of support, no clever strategies or stealth tactics employed. It really came down to determination.

Education reform is always a contentious issue (anywhere), but in Florida it became more so following 1999's legislative session. The 2000 presidential recount battle was underway, contributing heavily to the state's already highly charged partisan atmosphere. As a result, Gov. Bush's efforts drew fierce pushback. The governor soldiered on.

Of course, no good deed goes unpunished, especially with education reform. One of Florida's newspapers started an almost daily campaign against the governor's plan. The state's most powerful education union even mortgaged its headquarters in Tallahassee in a desperate attempt to thwart Gov. Bush's reelection. They were unsuccessful.

Years later, the reforms have proved a success—and the new coalition behind them could not be stronger. On the final day of Florida's 2008 legislative session, lawmakers passed a robust improvement to the state's “Step Up For Students” tax-credit program. Most exciting of all, the bill passed with strong bipartisan backing. Almost half of the joint House and Senate African-American caucus voted for the expansion bill, as did the entire Hispanic caucus and a third of the combined House and Senate Democratic caucus. In 2009, a similar bipartisan coalition increased the cap and set it to automatically increase in the future.

This achievement did not signal the beginning of a new enlightened age of political consensus. Florida's example does show, however, that when a group of people sticks to their guns, they can achieve success. Some Florida lawmakers who were not on board initially have changed their mind. Thanks to them, more children have greater educational opportunities.

Florida's K-12 reform is not anywhere near finished—reform is never finished. The state still has a ways to go for its students to achieve international competitiveness. Florida however has a considerable lead among states moving in the right direction.

Reforming Then, and Reforming Now

Education reformers today have many advantages over those of the past. Decades ago, reformers had to walk 10 miles uphill in the snow ... without shoes, and ... well, let us just say it was daunting.

In all seriousness, the education reformers of yesteryear often were working on a purely theoretical basis, making the job much more difficult. Today, we have a much better understanding of what works in improving K-12 schools. From the outset, we supported charter schools and vouchers because we had what we believed was a sound theory they would be more effective and prompt district schools to be more effective as well. The random assignment evidence on the efficacy of charter schools from New York and school vouchers in the District of Columbia and elsewhere were still years away.⁵

In addition to all the empirical evidence and proof that reforms work, current policymakers have many tools at their disposal for designing, championing, and implementing effective education policies. One tool is model legislation, a large number of which is available through ALEC. You can use these carefully constructed pieces of K-12 model bills as blueprints for building educational changes in your state (see Appendix C). Additionally, a national network of educational nonprofits stands ready to assist education reform efforts from both the conservative and liberal perspectives (see Appendix D).

Rest assured that in the not-so-distant past, policymakers had far fewer resources available and less bipartisanship. As a reformer in the modern era, you have your work cut out for you, but you are standing on the shoulders of giants and have more help available than did your predecessors.

The Future and Its Enemies

For all we have covered in this publication, we have refrained, for the most part, from discussing the role teachers' unions play in education reform. As you probably know, they play a large one.

Let us be clear: We support good teachers wholeheartedly. We think bad teachers are good people who should find new jobs. If you have read this report and our recommendations, you will know we believe teachers are the key to student learning. Teachers' unions are not.

At some point in time, unions have opposed every reform we have discussed in these pages. They have lobbied for more tax dollars to prop up their stranglehold on public schools and to keep productivity as low as possible. Any lawmaker who has carried the banner for education reform has likely run into these powerful, rich, self-interested foes. More often than not, the results have been ugly.

Teachers' unions are as strong as ever in American politics and likely not going away any time soon. How then can you reform around them? We offer three strategies:

First, be courageous; there is no substitute for courage.

Second, do not simply just introduce one reform in the legislature—build a consensus for reform and introduce a lot, like the ones proposed in this publication. Across the country for the past two decades, education reform efforts have popped up in legislatures at different times in different places. As a result, teachers' unions have been playing something akin to “whack-a-mole”—you know the game—striking down as many education reform efforts as possible. Many times, the unions successfully “whack” the “mole,” i.e., the reform legislation. Sometimes, however, they miss. If all the moles pop up at once, there is no way the person with the mallet can get them all. Introduce comprehensive reform packages.

Third, engage in and win the communications battle. Teachers' unions have swaths of money—money they use to influence John and Jane Q. Public. For legislators introducing bills,

do not just issue a press release and be done with it. Appear on your local (and statewide) talk radio programs; write opinion-editorial columns or set up interviews with your local (and statewide) newspapers; the same goes for television; and hold town-hall meetings with your constituents. Build a coalition. With the evidence available, we believe the public will support our cause—if they know about it and are a part of it.

Technology Will Change the K-12 Game

Finally, as you pursue your policy endeavors, understand the impact technological changes, in particular, can have on student learning.

Consider how Tom Vander Ark, the first executive director of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, explains how technology is broadening the way that people will think about parental choice in education:

We're headed for radical choice—not just school choice but choice to the lesson level. We'll soon have adaptive content libraries and smart recommendation engines that string together a unique “playlist” for every student everyday. These smart platforms will consider learning level, interests, and best learning modality (i.e., motivational profile and learning style to optimize understanding and persistence).

Smart learning platforms will be used by some students that learn at home, by some students that connect through hybrid schools with a day or two onsite, and by most students through blended schools that mix online learning with onsite support systems.

Choice between physical schools will increasingly be about the learning community they create in terms of the application and extra-curricular opportunities and guidance and support systems. In some states, families will gain the ability to construct a series of learning experiences that fit family needs, schedules, preferences, and interests.⁶

In their book, *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Technologies Will Change the Way the World Learns*, Clayton Christensen and his coauthors argue that online technology will reformat American K-12 education, gradually at first, and then rapidly.⁷

Clayton Christensen, a Harvard Business professor and best-selling author, argues that online learning will have a “disruptive” effect on public education. That is to say, although current “consumers” of online learning are few in number, a “disruption” will occur when the market realizes the benefits of this practice. Then, it will become the dominant provider. (Think personal computer versus the mainframe computer.)

Guardians of the status-quo, however, will attempt to thwart customized learning.

In *Liberating Learning: Technology, Politics and the Future of American Education*, authors Terry Moe and John Chubb instill hope and enthusiasm in online learning's abilities to not only better meet children's needs but also to chip away at unions' iron grasp on public schools.

Keep in mind, of course, the implementation will be difficult. The authors note:

It is a fact that they (the teachers' unions) are more powerful—by far—than any other groups involved in the politics of education. And it is a fact that in a government of checks and balances they can use their power to block or weaken most reforms they do not like. To recognize as much is not to launch ideological attacks against the unions. It is simply to recognize the world as it is.

Because the politics of blocking is very real, and because it has long kept the lid on American education reform, the challenge of “A Nation at Risk” has gone unmet and many reforms have yet to reach a wide audience.

Conclusion: Incremental Reforms Will Leave American Children Behind

In December 2006, the New Commission on Skills and the American Workforce, which included in

its ranks two former U.S. Secretaries of Education, released “Tough Choices or Tough Times.” In that report, the commission warned, “If we continue on our current course, and the number of nations outpacing us in the education race continues to grow at its current rate, the American standard of living will steadily fall relative to those nations, rich and poor, that are doing a better job.”⁸

Commenting on that report, Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy, told the *Christian Science Monitor*, “I think we’ve tried to do what we can to improve American schools within the current context. Now we need to think much more daringly.”⁹

Indeed, these and other observers have reached an unavoidable conclusion: The traditional model of delivering public education requires a drastic overhaul, not incremental tweaks.

No longer should we let school districts confine children to schools geographically. The parents and students assigned to government-zoned schools have widely differing views of what constitutes a high-quality education. ZIP Codes should not determine a child’s future. Parents should have the ability to choose the best school for their child. Transform the system, do not tweak it.

Because of low turnout in school board elections and because the amount of information available to voters about the candidates is even lower, school boards are being “captured” by narrow interests. We must modernize school finance and governance to end this dated process. Transform, do not tweak.

Why do state lawmakers focus more on reducing class sizes than on improving teacher quality? Shrinking class size does little to improve academic gains, and it is costly. Moreover, to paraphrase the Clinton campaign: It’s the teacher quality, stupid! We must change the teaching profession to reward success instead of length of service and degree acquisition. We must stop letting great teachers leave the profession, and quit discouraging college graduates from entering it. It is time to create incentives in public education. Transform the system, do not tweak it.

Do you know whether your state’s students are gaining academically year to year? If not, find out. Quit letting academic gains or losses go unmeasured. Is your state holding schools accountable? If so, make sure schools and administrators are not “gaming” the system.

Show some respect to taxpayers by using their hard-earned dollars efficiently and effectively in public schools. They have paid for high costs and poor results long enough. Transform the system, don’t tweak it.

Most important of all, remember children come first. Have decades of the same ole, same ole policies improved student learning and students’ chances at fair and fruitful lives? In too many cases, no, they have not. It is long past time for big changes, not incremental steps.

Marc Tucker, vice chairman of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, told the *Christian Science Monitor*, “We’ve squeezed everything we can out of a system that was designed a century ago. We’ve not only put in lots more money and not gotten significantly better results, we’ve also tried every program we can think of and not gotten significantly better results at scale. This is the sign of a system that has reached its limits.”

States cannot afford to drag along the bottom of the world in academic performance and expect to remain prosperous and free. We cannot achieve global competitiveness through minor tweaks of a largely underperforming system. We have been tweaking public education for decades. Let’s change. Let’s act.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT

You know the challenges. You know the solutions. The task outlined in this publication is a difficult one, but we can and we must do it. American lawmakers simply cannot allow the collapse in K-12 productivity to continue.

To that end, we have one final question for you: What are you going to do about it?

Knowledge carries responsibility. You now

carry the responsibility to aid in correcting a longstanding source of national shame affecting millions of children already, and potentially millions of children yet to be born.

Whatever you have to give in moving forward, America needs it: your talent, your sweat, and your inexhaustible toil—your courage. When you suffer setbacks, let the opponents of progress know that they celebrate what will prove a temporary victory. Have the justice of your cause gnaw at their conscience; let their knowledge of your resolve spoil their satisfaction. Give your foes plenty of things to cry about.

Our time is limited and the task is great. Greater still will be the reward of knowing, if you

do your part, that you have contributed to something greater than yourself, something that made a meaningful difference for children. Thomas Paine wrote:

Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value.

We hope that you are up to the challenge. Do not wait for someone else to do it.

This task falls to you.

ENDNOTES

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TABLE 5 | Education Performance Rank

Rank	Jurisdiction
1	Vermont
2	Massachusetts
3	Florida
4	New Hampshire
5	New York
6	Pennsylvania
7	Kansas
8	Texas
9	Montana
10	New Jersey
11	Alaska
12	Virginia
13	Indiana
14	Maine
15	Hawaii
16	Washington
17	Colorado
18	Nevada
19	Delaware
20	Maryland
21	Wisconsin
22	Idaho
23	Minnesota
24	North Dakota
25	Rhode Island
26	District of Columbia
27	Georgia
28	Wyoming
29	Connecticut
30	California
31	Iowa
32	Oregon
33	Nebraska
34	Missouri
35	Ohio
36	Tennessee
37	Kentucky
38	Illinois
39	South Dakota
40	Alabama
41	North Carolina
42	Utah
43	Oklahoma
44	Arkansas
45	Arizona
46	Mississippi
47	Louisiana
48	New Mexico
49	Michigan
50	West Virginia
51	South Carolina

TABLE 6 | Education Reform Grade

Grade	Jurisdiction
B+	Florida
B	Colorado
B	Louisiana
B	Minnesota
B	Missouri
B	New Mexico
B	South Carolina
B-	Arizona
B-	Arkansas
B-	Idaho
B-	Michigan
B-	Ohio
C+	Indiana
C+	Kentucky
C+	Utah
C+	Washington
C	Alabama
C	Alaska
C	California
C	Delaware
C	District of Columbia
C	Georgia
C	Hawaii
C	Illinois
C	Iowa
C	Maryland
C	Massachusetts
C	Nevada
C	New Hampshire
C	New Jersey
C	North Carolina
C	Oklahoma
C	Oregon
C	Pennsylvania
C	South Dakota
C	Texas
C	West Virginia
C	Wisconsin
C	Wyoming
C-	Connecticut
C-	Virginia
D+	Kansas
D+	Maine
D+	Mississippi
D+	Montana
D+	New York
D	Nebraska
D	North Dakota
D	Rhode Island
D	Tennessee
D	Vermont

TABLE 7 | 2009 NAEP Scores for Low-Income Students

(Non-IEP, Non-ELL) Average scores (0-500) and Rank (1-51)

Jurisdiction	4th-Grade Reading Score	2009 Rank	4th-Grade Math Score	2009 Rank	8th-Grade Reading Score	2009 Rank	8th-Grade Math Score	2009 Rank
Alabama	210	39	222	50	249	49	261	49
Alaska	209	43	235	22	259	19	281	11
Arizona	210	42	228	44	253	42	271	35
Arkansas	214	27	232	33	255	36	271	38
California	210	41	230	39	254	38	270	41
Colorado	218	14	235	20	260	18	276	24
Connecticut	215	26	230	40	259	21	270	39
Delaware	218	15	233	28	258	28	277	22
District of Columbia	196	51	214	51	240	51	253	51
Florida	223	2	239	12	261	15	276	25
Georgia	211	37	228	43	253	41	269	44
Hawaii	209	44	234	25	256	33	274	29
Idaho	219	11	239	9	261	12	283	6
Illinois	211	38	228	45	256	34	270	42
Indiana	216	21	236	16	259	22	278	18
Iowa	219	12	237	14	262	7	278	19
Kansas	220	8	241	4	261	16	283	7
Kentucky	218	17	231	37	259	20	271	36
Louisiana	207	49	227	46	252	45	268	45
Maine	219	10	240	6	265	4	281	12
Maryland	211	36	231	36	252	47	270	40
Massachusetts	223	3	243	2	261	14	287	1
Michigan	208	45	225	48	253	43	265	47
Minnesota	215	25	240	5	262	9	282	8
Mississippi	206	50	222	49	247	50	259	50
Missouri	216	23	231	35	258	27	275	26
Montana	220	9	240	7	268	2	286	2
Nebraska	220	7	234	24	260	17	274	28
Nevada	211	35	232	32	252	46	271	37
New Hampshire	222	4	244	1	266	3	286	3
New Jersey	215	24	233	29	256	32	279	14
New Mexico	208	48	229	42	255	37	269	43
New York	222	5	239	11	259	23	279	17
North Carolina	212	34	236	18	253	39	275	27
North Dakota	218	13	238	13	264	5	284	5
Ohio	213	32	233	31	259	24	273	31
Oklahoma	214	29	234	23	257	29	272	33
Oregon	218	16	236	17	261	13	281	13
Pennsylvania	213	30	233	30	261	11	276	23
Rhode Island	216	20	232	34	256	35	271	34
South Carolina	208	47	230	41	249	48	272	32
South Dakota	212	33	235	19	262	8	282	9
Tennessee	208	46	226	47	253	44	265	48
Texas	217	19	237	15	257	30	282	10
Utah	214	28	235	21	258	25	277	20
Vermont	225	1	242	3	268	1	285	4
Virginia	216	22	233	26	257	31	274	30
Washington	218	18	239	8	262	10	279	16
West Virginia	213	31	230	38	253	40	268	46
Wisconsin	210	40	233	27	258	26	277	21
Wyoming	221	6	239	10	263	6	279	15

TABLE 8 | Change in NAEP Scores for Low-Income Students from 2003 to 2009

(Non-IEP, Non-ELL) Average scores (0-500) and Rank (1-51)

Jurisdiction	Change in 4th-Grade Reading Scores	Improvement Rank	Change in 4th-Grade Math Scores	Improvement Rank
Alabama	10.78	1	4.78	37
Alaska	2.04	37	5.13	34
Arizona	5.61	20	3.65	42
Arkansas	4.18	30	5.95	28
California	8.68	9	6.1	27
Colorado	1.75	40	8.37	10
Connecticut	4.05	31	6.66	22
Delaware	4.24	28	4.81	36
District of Columbia	9.04	5	11.49	4
Florida	9.83	3	10.84	5
Georgia	6.45	14	5.76	30
Hawaii	3.18	34	11.73	3
Idaho	2.22	36	5.81	29
Illinois	4.59	26	7.11	15
Indiana	5.67	18	7.51	14
Iowa	3.3	33	3.73	41
Kansas	7.71	11	6.32	26
Kentucky	5.55	21	7.02	17
Louisiana	5.21	22	2.56	45
Maine	0.64	45	6.65	23
Maryland	8.98	6	13.65	1
Massachusetts	5.8	16	12.33	2
Michigan	4.71	25	4.16	39
Minnesota	-1.7	48	7.65	13
Mississippi	8.32	10	5.41	32
Missouri	4.46	27	4.87	35
Montana	4.2	29	6.75	20
Nebraska	5.07	23	5.28	33
Nevada	9.92	2	9.04	8
New Hampshire	4.73	24	8.19	11
New Jersey	7.57	12	7.02	18
New Mexico	1.16	44	4.05	40
New York	9.49	4	9.51	6
North Carolina	2.01	38	4.65	38
North Dakota	1.47	42	3.34	44
Ohio	1.98	39	6.67	21
Oklahoma	1.39	43	7.71	12
Oregon	3.52	32	1.55	48
Pennsylvania	8.89	8	9.17	7
Rhode Island	5.71	17	5.68	31
South Carolina	2.63	35	1.38	50
South Dakota	-5.27	51	2.2	46
Tennessee	5.64	19	6.48	25
Texas	6	15	3.57	43
Utah	-4.47	50	1.71	47
Vermont	7.48	13	8.9	9
Virginia	8.93	7	6.9	19
Washington	1.5	41	7.06	16
West Virginia	-1.65	47	1.48	49
Wisconsin	-2.14	49	6.58	24
Wyoming	-0.25	46	1.07	51

Jurisdiction	Change in 8th-Grade Reading Scores	Improvement Rank	Change in 8th-Grade Math Scores	Improvement Rank
Alabama	0.5	36	6.78	24
Alaska	7.27	2	8.43	17
Arizona	0.7	34	5.49	34
Arkansas	-0.97	43	4.92	37
California	1.81	26	7.32	20
Colorado	2.72	17	6.47	25
Connecticut	6.74	3	3.47	42
Delaware	1.65	30	9.49	12
District of Columbia	3.88	11	12.62	3
Florida	6.49	4	10.77	9
Georgia	3.61	12	11.42	6
Hawaii	5.38	6	10.78	8
Idaho	-2.09	49	5.74	31
Illinois	1.99	24	5.97	29
Indiana	2.56	19	5.26	35
Iowa	1.68	29	1.43	47
Kansas	0.89	32	5.98	28
Kentucky	-1.24	45	3.96	41
Louisiana	2.68	18	6.87	23
Maine	0.14	37	7.25	21
Maryland	2.85	16	9.55	11
Massachusetts	0.71	33	17.09	1
Michigan	1.81	27	2.3	44
Minnesota	4.97	8	1.08	48
Mississippi	-0.32	39	7.12	22
Missouri	-0.35	40	5.89	30
Montana	3.1	15	4.49	39
Nebraska	-0.13	38	2.7	43
Nevada	2.32	21	8.63	14
New Hampshire	1.91	25	8.14	18
New Jersey	0.63	35	14.41	2
New Mexico	4.37	10	5.72	32
New York	0.89	31	7.58	19
North Carolina	2.27	22	5.59	33
North Dakota	-1.68	47	0.59	49
Ohio	3.34	14	4.76	38
Oklahoma	-1.95	48	4.43	40
Oregon	-0.95	42	6.04	27
Pennsylvania	5.95	5	12.13	4
Rhode Island	2.21	23	8.51	16
South Carolina	-0.78	41	6.44	26
South Dakota	-6.31	51	1.63	46
Tennessee	3.37	13	8.59	15
Texas	4.49	9	11.05	7
Utah	-1.35	46	1.98	45
Vermont	9.01	1	10.26	10
Virginia	1.73	28	8.64	13
Washington	2.36	20	4.92	36
West Virginia	-3.35	50	-0.58	50
Wisconsin	5.37	7	11.46	5
Wyoming	-0.97	44	-0.93	51

TABLE 9 | Final Ranking for NAEP Overall Scores and Gains

Jurisdiction	4th-Grade Reading Rank	Improvement Rank	4th-Grade Math Rank	Improvement Rank
Alabama	39	1	50	37
Alaska	43	37	22	34
Arizona	42	20	44	42
Arkansas	27	30	33	28
California	41	9	39	27
Colorado	14	40	20	10
Connecticut	26	31	40	22
Delaware	15	28	28	36
District of Columbia	51	5	51	4
Florida	2	3	12	5
Georgia	37	14	43	30
Hawaii	44	34	25	3
Idaho	11	36	9	29
Illinois	38	26	45	15
Indiana	21	18	16	14
Iowa	12	33	14	41
Kansas	8	11	4	26
Kentucky	17	21	37	17
Louisiana	49	22	46	45
Maine	10	45	6	23
Maryland	36	6	36	1
Massachusetts	3	16	2	2
Michigan	45	25	48	39
Minnesota	25	48	5	13
Mississippi	50	10	49	32
Missouri	23	27	35	35
Montana	9	29	7	20
Nebraska	7	23	24	33
Nevada	35	2	32	8
New Hampshire	4	24	1	11
New Jersey	24	12	29	18
New Mexico	48	44	42	40
New York	5	4	11	6
North Carolina	34	38	18	38
North Dakota	13	42	13	44
Ohio	32	39	31	21
Oklahoma	29	43	23	12
Oregon	16	32	17	48
Pennsylvania	30	8	30	7
Rhode Island	20	17	34	31
South Carolina	47	35	41	50
South Dakota	33	51	19	46
Tennessee	46	19	47	25
Texas	19	15	15	43
Utah	28	50	21	47
Vermont	1	13	3	9
Virginia	22	7	26	19
Washington	18	41	8	16
West Virginia	31	47	38	49
Wisconsin	40	49	27	24
Wyoming	6	46	10	51

Jurisdiction	8th-Grade Reading Rank	Improvement Rank	8th-Grade Math Rank	Improvement Rank	Final Rank
Alabama	49	36	49	24	40
Alaska	19	2	11	17	11
Arizona	42	34	35	34	45
Arkansas	36	43	38	37	44
California	38	26	41	20	30
Colorado	18	17	24	25	17
Connecticut	21	3	39	42	29
Delaware	28	30	22	12	19
District of Columbia	51	11	51	3	26
Florida	15	4	25	9	3
Georgia	41	12	44	6	27
Hawaii	33	6	29	8	15
Idaho	12	49	6	31	22
Illinois	34	24	42	29	38
Indiana	22	19	18	35	13
Iowa	7	29	19	47	31
Kansas	16	32	7	28	7
Kentucky	20	45	36	41	37
Louisiana	45	18	45	23	47
Maine	4	37	12	21	14
Maryland	47	16	40	11	20
Massachusetts	14	33	1	1	2
Michigan	43	27	47	44	49
Minnesota	9	8	8	48	23
Mississippi	50	39	50	22	46
Missouri	27	40	26	30	34
Montana	2	15	2	39	9
Nebraska	17	38	28	43	33
Nevada	46	21	37	14	18
New Hampshire	3	25	3	18	4
New Jersey	32	35	14	2	10
New Mexico	37	10	43	32	48
New York	23	31	17	19	5
North Carolina	39	22	27	33	41
North Dakota	5	47	5	49	24
Ohio	24	14	31	38	35
Oklahoma	29	48	33	40	43
Oregon	13	42	13	27	32
Pennsylvania	11	5	23	4	6
Rhode Island	35	23	34	16	25
South Carolina	48	41	32	26	51
South Dakota	8	51	9	46	39
Tennessee	44	13	48	15	36
Texas	30	9	10	7	8
Utah	25	46	20	45	42
Vermont	1	1	4	10	1
Virginia	31	28	30	13	12
Washington	10	20	16	36	16
West Virginia	40	50	46	50	50
Wisconsin	26	7	21	5	21
Wyoming	6	44	15	51	28

TABLE 10 | Education Reform Grade Criteria

Jurisdiction	State Academic Standards (compared to NAEP 2007)	Change in State Proficiency Standards	Private School Choice	School Choice "A" grade/multiple programs
Alabama	D-	-	No	No
Alaska	D	Lowered	No	No
Arizona	C-	Lowered	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	C+	Lowered	No	No
California	B	Lowered	No	No
Colorado	B-	Raised	No	No
Connecticut	C	Raised	No	No
Delaware	C-	Lowered	No	No
District of Columbia	-	-	Yes	No
Florida	C+	Raised	Yes	Yes
Georgia	F	Lowered	Yes	No
Hawaii	B+	Raised	No	No
Idaho	D+	Lowered	No	No
Illinois	D	Lowered	Yes	No
Indiana	C	Raised	Yes	No
Iowa	C-	-	Yes	Yes
Kansas	C-	Lowered	No	No
Kentucky	C	Lowered	No	No
Louisiana	C-	Lowered	Yes	No
Maine	B-	Lowered	Yes	No
Maryland	C	Lowered	No	No
Massachusetts	A	Raised	No	No
Michigan	D	Lowered	No	No
Minnesota	B-	-	Yes	No
Mississippi	D-	Raised	No	No
Missouri	A	Lowered	No	No
Montana	C	Raised	No	No
Nebraska	D-	-	No	No
Nevada	C	-	No	No
New Hampshire	B-	-	No	No
New Jersey	C	Raised	No	No
New Mexico	C+	-	No	No
New York	C+	Raised	No	No
North Carolina	D+	Raised	No	No
North Dakota	C	Lowered	No	No
Ohio	C-	Lowered	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	F	Raised	No	No
Oregon	C-	-	No	No
Pennsylvania	C	Raised	Yes	No
Rhode Island	C+	Lowered	Yes	No
South Carolina	A	Raised	No	No
South Dakota	C-	Raised	No	No
Tennessee	F	Lowered	No	No
Texas	D+	Raised	No	No
Utah	D+	-	Yes	No
Vermont	B	Raised	Yes	No
Virginia	D+	Raised	No	No
Washington	B-	Raised	No	No
West Virginia	D-	-	No	No
Wisconsin	C-	Raised	Yes	No
Wyoming	C	Lowered	No	No

Jurisdiction	Charter School Law	Charter School Law Grade	Mandatory Inter- and Intra-District Open Enrollment	Online Learning Policies and Programs	Homeschooling Regulation Levels
Alabama	No	-	No	23	B
Alaska	Yes	D	No	27	A
Arizona	Yes	B	Yes	38	B
Arkansas	Yes	D	Yes	4	C
California	Yes	A	No	49	B
Colorado	Yes	B	Yes	14	C
Connecticut	Yes	D	No	48	A
Delaware	Yes	B	No	44	B
District of Columbia	Yes	A	No	-	C
Florida	Yes	B	No	1	C
Georgia	Yes	C	Yes	26	C
Hawaii	Yes	D	No	10	C
Idaho	Yes	C	No	3	A
Illinois	Yes	D	No	13	A
Indiana	Yes	B	No	35	A
Iowa	Yes	F	No	20	C
Kansas	Yes	F	No	22	B
Kentucky	No	-	Yes	19	B
Louisiana	Yes	C	Yes	5	C
Maine	No	-	No	50	C
Maryland	Yes	D	No	24	C
Massachusetts	Yes	C	No	21	D
Michigan	Yes	B	No	2	A
Minnesota	Yes	A	No	9	C
Mississippi	Yes	F	No	32	B
Missouri	Yes	B	No	18	A
Montana	No	-	No	39	B
Nebraska	No	-	No	46	B
Nevada	Yes	C	No	25	B
New Hampshire	Yes	D	No	36	C
New Jersey	Yes	C	No	43	A
New Mexico	Yes	B	No	6	B
New York	Yes	B	No	47	D
North Carolina	Yes	D	No	8	C
North Dakota	No	-	No	31	D
Ohio	Yes	C	No	11	C
Oklahoma	Yes	D	Yes	15	A
Oregon	Yes	C	No	30	C
Pennsylvania	Yes	B	No	34	D
Rhode Island	Yes	D	No	42	D
South Carolina	Yes	C	No	17	C
South Dakota	No	-	Yes	16	C
Tennessee	Yes	D	No	45	C
Texas	Yes	D	No	40	A
Utah	Yes	B	Yes	33	B
Vermont	No	-	No	41	D
Virginia	Yes	F	No	12	C
Washington	No	-	Yes	28	C
West Virginia	No	-	No	7	C
Wisconsin	Yes	C	No	37	B
Wyoming	Yes	D	No	29	B

Jurisdiction	Identifying High Quality Teachers	Retaining Effective Teachers	Removing Ineffective Teachers	Alternative Teacher Certification Route
Alabama	D+	C-	B	Yes
Alaska	D-	C-	C-	No
Arizona	D-	D+	D+	No
Arkansas	D-	C	C+	Yes
California	D-	C	D	Yes
Colorado	D-	C-	B	Yes
Connecticut	D+	D	C	Yes
Delaware	D+	D+	C+	Yes
District of Columbia	F	F	D	-
Florida	C	C-	C-	Yes
Georgia	D+	D	C+	Yes
Hawaii	D	D	D+	No
Idaho	F	D	D+	Yes
Illinois	D	D-	B	No
Indiana	D-	C-	D	No
Iowa	D+	C-	D+	No
Kansas	D-	C-	D+	No
Kentucky	D+	D+	D+	Yes
Louisiana	D+	C	C-	Yes
Maine	F	C-	F	No
Maryland	F	D+	D+	Yes
Massachusetts	D-	D+	D+	Yes
Michigan	D	C-	D+	No
Minnesota	D-	D+	D	No
Mississippi	D+	D	D+	Yes
Missouri	C-	D-	C-	No
Montana	F	D-	F	No
Nebraska	D-	C-	D+	No
Nevada	D-	D	B-	No
New Hampshire	F	D-	F	Yes
New Jersey	D+	C-	B	Yes
New Mexico	C-	D	B	No
New York	F	D+	D	No
North Carolina	D+	C	C-	No
North Dakota	F	D-	C+	No
Ohio	D+	C+	C+	No
Oklahoma	D	C-	B	No
Oregon	F	D	D	No
Pennsylvania	D	D	B-	Yes
Rhode Island	D-	D	F	No
South Carolina	C	C+	A	No
South Dakota	F	C	F	No
Tennessee	B	C-	D	Yes
Texas	C-	D+	D+	Yes
Utah	D	C	C-	No
Vermont	F	D	F	No
Virginia	D-	C	C-	Yes
Washington	D-	C-	B-	Yes
West Virginia	D	D	B	No
Wisconsin	D-	D+	D-	No
Wyoming	D-	D	C-	No

Listed below are summaries for relevant pieces of ALEC model legislation. The full texts of these bills are available at ALEC's website, www.alec.org, or by contacting a staff member for ALEC's Education Task Force.

Alternative Certification Act

Teacher quality is crucial to the improvement of instruction and student performance. However, certification requirements that correspond to state-approved education programs in most states prevent many individuals from entering the teaching profession. To obtain an education degree, students must often complete requirements in educational methods, theory, and style rather than in-depth study in a chosen subject area. Comprehensive alternative certification programs improve teacher quality by opening up the profession to well-educated, qualified, and mature individuals. States should enact alternative teacher certification programs to prepare persons with subject area expertise and life experience to become teachers through a demonstration of competency and a comprehensive mentoring program.

Autism Scholarship Program Act

The Autism Scholarship Program Act would create a scholarship program that provides students with autism the option to attend the public or private elementary or secondary school of their parents' choice.

Career Ladder Opportunity Act

The Career Ladder Opportunity Act requires school districts to adopt extraordinary performance pay plans for elementary and secondary public school teachers who demonstrate success in the classroom. The local school district must design the plan in consultation with teachers and administrators. Because reward systems in the past have often failed because of premature abandonment, the district must keep the plan for three years and make improvements on it when necessary.

Charter Schools Act

The Charter Schools Act would allow groups of citizens to seek charters from the state to create and operate innovative, outcome-based schools. These schools would be exempt from many of the state laws and regulations that apply to traditional public schools. Schools are funded on a per-pupil rate, the same as public schools. Currently, 39 states plus the District of Columbia allow charter schools.

Family Education Savings Account Act

The Family Education Savings Account Act would create a tax deduction/credit for contributions made by state taxpayers into students' Coverdell education savings accounts, which allow tax-free savings for both K-12 and higher education expenses.

Family Education Tax Credit Program Act

The Family Education Tax Credit Program Act would create a family education tax credit for payment of tuition, fees, and certain other educational expenses and a tax credit for individual and corporate contributions to organizations that provide educational scholarships to eligible students so they can attend the public or private schools of their parents' choice.

Foster Child Scholarship Program Act

The Foster Child Scholarship Program Act would create a scholarship program that provides children who have been placed in foster care the option to attend the public or private elementary or secondary school of their guardians' choice.

Great Schools Tax Credit Act

The Great Schools Tax Credit Act would authorize a tax credit for individual and corporate contributions to organizations that provide educational scholarships to eligible students so they can attend qualifying public or private schools of their parents' choice.

Longitudinal Student Growth Act

The Longitudinal Student Growth Act would require the state department of education to implement a state data management system for collecting and reporting student assessment data and identifies the duties and responsibilities of the state department of education and the school districts in implementing the data management system. The legislation instructs the state board of education to adopt a mixed-effects statistical model to diagnostically calculate students' annual academic growth over the periods between the administration of the statewide assessments, based on the students' assessment scores. The legislation next requires the department to provide to each school district and each charter school an academic growth information report for each student enrolled in the school district or charter school, and requires the school district or charter school to adopt a policy for using the information in the report and communicating the information in the report to students and their parents.

Next Generation Charter Schools Act

The Next Generation Charter Schools Act recognizes charters schools are a necessity to improve the opportunities of all families and that charter schools serve a distinct purpose in supporting innovations and best practices that can be adopted among all public schools. Further, this act recognizes that there must be a variety of public institutions that can authorize the establishment of charter schools as defined by law, and recognizes that independent but publicly accountable multiple authorizing authorities, such as independent state commissions or universities, contribute to the health and growth of strong public charter schools. This act establishes that existing or new public entities may be created to approve and monitor charter schools in addition to public school district boards. This act also removes procedural and funding barriers to charter school success.

Open Enrollment Act

The Open Enrollment Act stipulates that a student may, with the assistance of the state, attend any public school in the state. The legislation allows the parents of the student to apply for attendance in any nonresident school. The nonresident school district would advise the parent within an established time whether the application was accepted or rejected. The nonresident school district would be obligated to adopt standards for consideration of such applications. State aid follows the transferring student from

the resident to the nonresident district. State funds are thus used to facilitate the expansion of educational choice available to the student and the parent.

Parental Choice Scholarship Program Act (Means-Tested Eligibility)

The Parental Choice Scholarship Program Act creates a scholarship program that provides children from low- and middle-income families the option to attend the public or private elementary or secondary school of their parents' choice.

Parental Choice Scholarship Program Act (Universal Eligibility)

The Parental Choice Scholarship Program Act creates a scholarship program that provides all children the option to attend the public or private elementary or secondary school of their parents' choice.

Parental Choice Scholarship Program Act (Universal Eligibility, Means-Tested Scholarship Amount)

The Parental Choice Scholarship Program Act creates a scholarship program that provides all children the option to attend the public or private elementary or secondary school of their parents' choice.

Public School Financial Transparency Act

The Public School Financial Transparency Act would require each local education provider in the state to create and maintain a searchable expenditure and revenue Web site database that includes detailed data of revenues and expenditures. It also would require each local education provider to maintain the data in a format that is easily accessible, searchable, and downloadable.

Special Needs Scholarship Program Act

The Special Needs Scholarship Program Act creates a scholarship program that provides students with special needs the option to attend the public or private elementary or secondary school of their parents' choice.

Student-Centered Funding Act

The Student-Centered Funding would create a student-centered finance model based on a weighted student formula in which money “follows” a child to his or her school. Funds follow students to whichever public school they attend, both district and charter, which better ensures that funding can be more accurately adjusted to meet the real costs to schools of all sizes and locations of educating various students based on their unique characteristics. Parents, regardless of income or address, have a greater array of education options for their children based on their unique, individual needs.

Teacher Choice Compensation Act

The Teacher Choice Compensation Act would create a program where by teachers may be eligible for performance-based salary stipends if they opt out of their permanent contract and meet measurable student performance goals based on a value-added test instrument developed by the state department of education.

Teacher Quality and Recognition Demonstration Act

The need for quality teachers in improving student achievement is generally recognized as one of the most crucial elements of state reform efforts. A primary concern in the quality of the performance of

teachers is the forecast for an increasing need for more teachers. This bill is directed toward creating a new structure of the current teaching system that will promote the retention and reward of good teachers and attract new talent to the profession. This bill establishes teacher quality demonstration projects wherein local education agencies are exempt from education rules and regulations regarding teacher certification, tenure, recruitment, and compensation, and are granted funding for the purpose of creating new models of teacher hiring, professional growth and development, compensation and recruitment.

Virtual Public Schools Act

The Virtual Public Schools Act would allow the use of computer- and Internet-based instruction for students in a virtual or remote setting.

All Children Matterwww.allchildrenmatter.org

All Children Matter works for the election of public officials who are committed to the enactment of meaningful reforms to ensure that all children in America—without regard to race or family income—have equal access to a quality education.

Alliance for School Choicewww.allianceforschoolchoice.org

The Alliance for School Choice is a national leader in promoting school vouchers and scholarship tax credit programs. The Alliance works to improve K-12 education by advancing public policy that empowers parents, particularly those in low-income families, to choose the education they determine is best for their children.

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellencewww.abcte.org

The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence recruits, prepares, certifies, and supports dedicated professionals to improve student achievement through quality teaching.

American Enterprise Institutewww.aei.org

The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research is a private, nonpartisan, not-for-profit institution dedicated to research and education on issues of government, politics, economics, and social welfare.

American Federation for Childrenwww.federationforchildren.com

The American Federation for Children is a leading national advocacy organization promoting school choice, with a specific focus on advocating for school vouchers and scholarship tax credit programs. The American Federation for Children is a 501(c)(4) organization and works closely with its educational partner, the Alliance for School Choice, to promote the benefits of—and the need for—school choice.

American Solutions for Winning the Futurewww.americansolutions.com

American Solutions is a tri-partisan citizen action network of more than 1.5 million members. Its goal is to create the next generation of solutions that will ensure that the United States remains the safest, freest, and most prosperous country in the world.

Black Alliance for Educational Optionswww.baeo.org

The Black Alliance for Educational Options works to increase access to high-quality educational options for Black children by actively supporting parental choice policies and programs that empower low-income and working-class Black families.

Cato Institutewww.cato.org

The Cato Institute's education research is founded on the principle that parents are best suited to make important decisions regarding the care and education of their children. Cato's researchers seek to shift the terms of public debate in favor of the fundamental right of parents.

Center for Digital Educationwww.centerdigitaled.com

The Center for Digital Education is a resource on K-12 and higher education technologies. The Center provides dynamic and diverse opportunities for private- and public-sector leaders to succeed in 21st century education.

Center for Education Reformwww.edreform.com

The Center for Education Reform drives the creation of better educational opportunities for all children by leading parents, policymakers and the media in boldly advocating for school choice, advancing the charter school movement, and challenging the education establishment.

Center on Reinventing Public Educationwww.crpe.org

The Center on Reinventing Public Education engages in independent research and policy analysis on a range of K-12 public education reform issues, including choice and charters, finance and productivity, teachers, urban district reform, leadership, and state and federal reform.

Connections Academywww.connectionsacademy.com

Connections Academy provides a new form of free public school that students attend from home. Connections' unique program combines strong parental involvement of homeschooling; expertise and accountability of public funded education; and flexibility of online classes.

Education Equality Projectwww.educationequalityproject.org

The Education Equality Project is a non-partisan group of elected officials, civil rights leaders, and education reformers that has formed to help ensure that America finally brings equity to an educational system that continues to fail its highest needs students.

Education|Evolvingwww.educationevolving.org

Education|Evolving is a kind of "design shop" working to help public education with the difficult process of change. Education|Evolving is involved with the architecture and redesign of schooling.

Evergreen Education Groupwww.evergreenedgroup.com

The Evergreen Education Group seeks to understand the national landscape of K-12 online learning and apply its understanding to the challenges that schools, agencies, legislators, and others face.

Evergreen Freedom Foundationwww.ewffwa.org

The Evergreen Freedom Foundation's mission is to advance individual liberty, free enterprise,

and limited, accountable government. Its primary research areas are budget and taxes, education, labor, elections, and citizenship and governance.

Foundation for Excellence in Educationwww.excelined.org

The mission of the Foundation for Excellence in Education is answer the pivotal questions of what motivates students to exceed expectations, what are the secrets to successful teaching, and how do we replicate academic achievement?

Foundation for Educational Choicewww.edchoice.org

The Foundation for Educational Choice plays a critical and unique role in the school choice movement. As the only national organization dedicated solely to advancing Milton and Rose Friedman's vision of an education system where all parents are free to choose, the Foundation brings an unsurpassed clarity of purpose to the education reform debate.

Goldwater Institutewww.goldwaterinstitute.org

The Goldwater Institute is an independent government watchdog supported by people who are committed to expanding free enterprise and liberty. The Institute develops innovative, principled solutions to pressing issues facing the states and enforces constitutionally limited government through litigation.

Heartland Institutewww.heartland.org

Heartland's mission is to discover, develop, and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems. Such solutions include parental choice in education, choice and personal responsibility in health care, privatization of public services, and deregulation in areas where property rights and markets do a better job than government bureaucracies.

Heritage Foundationwww.heritage.org

The Heritage Foundation is the nation's most broadly supported public policy research institute. Heritage works to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense.

Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Optionswww.hcreo.com

The Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options works to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic children by empowering families through parental choice. It achieves this by providing parents with free information and resources.

Home School Legal Defense Associationwww.hslda.org

The Home School Legal Defense Association is a nonprofit advocacy organization established to defend and advance the constitutional right of parents to direct the education of their children and to protect family freedoms.

Hoover Institutionwww.hoover.org

The Hoover Institution seeks to secure and safeguard peace, improve the human condition, and limit government intrusion into the lives of individuals by collecting knowledge, generating ideas, and disseminating both.

Insight Schoolswww.insightschools.net

Insight Schools works to ensure online learning is delivering significant improvements in our educational system: helping to reduce the nation's high school dropout rate; bringing students back into public schools; providing new opportunities for students; and helping prepare them for college and life after high school.

Independence Institutewww.i2i.org

The Independence Institute is established upon the eternal truths of the Declaration of Independence dedicated to providing timely information to concerned citizens, government officials, and public opinion leaders.

Institute for Justicewww.ij.org

The Institute for Justice challenges the government when it stands in the way of people trying to earn an honest living, when it unconstitutionally takes away individuals' property, when bureaucrats instead of parents dictate the education of children, and when government stifles speech.

International Association for K-12 Online Learningwww.inacol.org

The International Association for K-12 Online Learning works to ensure all students have access to world-class education and quality online learning opportunities that prepare them for a lifetime of success.

Innosight Institutewww.innosightinstitute.org

Innosight Institute is a not-for-profit, non-partisan think tank whose mission is to apply Harvard Business School Professor Clayton M. Christensen's theories of disruptive innovation to develop and promote solutions to the most vexing problems in the social sector.

John Locke Foundationwww.johnlocke.org

The John Locke Foundation employs research, journalism, and outreach programs to transform government through competition, innovation, personal freedom, and personal responsibility. The Foundation seeks a better balance between the public sector and private institutions of family, faith, community, and enterprise.

K¹², Inc.www.k12.com

K¹², Inc.'s mission is to provide any child access to exceptional curriculum and tools that enable him or her to maximize his or her success in life, regardless of geographic, financial, or demographic circumstance.

Mackinac Center for Public Policywww.mackinac.org

The Mackinac Center for Public Policy is a non-partisan research and educational institute that promotes sound solutions to Michigan's state and local policy questions. The Center assists policy-makers, business people, the media, and the public by providing objective analysis of Michigan issues.

Maine Heritage Policy Centerwww.mainepolicy.org

The Maine Heritage Policy Center is a research and educational organization whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise; limited, constitutional government; individual freedom; and traditional American values.

National Alliance for Public Charter Schoolswww.publiccharters.org

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools works to increase the number of high-quality charter schools available to all families, particularly in disadvantaged communities that lack access to quality public schools.

National Association of Charter School**Authorizers**www.qualitycharters.org

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers works with local experts to create the conditions needed for quality charter schools to thrive. The Association pushes for high standards for authorizers and the environments in which they work.

National Coalition for Public School Optionswww.publicschooloptions.org

The National Coalition for Public School Options is an alliance of parents that supports and defends parents' rights to access the best public school options for their children. The Coalition supports charter schools, online schools, magnet schools, open enrollment policies, and other innovative education programs.

National Council on Teacher Qualitywww.nctq.org

The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research and advocacy group committed to restructuring the teaching profession, led by its vision that every child deserves effective teachers.

National Heritage Academieswww.heritageacademies.com

National Heritage Academies works with school boards that are looking to bring parents in their community another educational option for their children. NHA invests resources into its schools to ensure that in every classroom, in every school, it is challenging each child to achieve.

Pacific Research Institutewww.pacificresearch.org

The Pacific Research Institute champions freedom, opportunity, and personal responsibility for all individuals by advancing free-market policy solutions. The Institute's activities include publications, legislative testimony, and community outreach.

State Policy Networkwww.spn.org

The State Policy Network is dedicated solely to improving the practical effectiveness of independent, nonprofit, market-oriented, state-focused think tanks. SPN's programs enable these organizations to better educate local citizens, policy makers and opinion leaders about market-oriented alternatives to state and local policy challenges.

Texas Public Policy Foundation

www.texaspolicy.com

The Texas Public Policy Foundation's mission is to promote and defend liberty, personal responsibility, and free enterprise in Texas by educating and affecting policymakers and the Texas public policy debate with academically sound research and outreach.

Thomas B. Fordham Institute

www.edexcellence.net

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute believes all children deserve a high quality K-12 education at the school of their choice. The Institute strives to close America's vexing achievement gaps by raising standards, strengthening accountability, and expanding education options for parents and families.

Washington Policy Center

www.washingtonpolicy.org

Washington Policy Center improves the lives of Washington citizens by providing accurate, high-quality research for policymakers, the media, and the public. The Center provides innovative recommendations for improving education.

About the American Legislative Exchange Council

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is the nation's largest, nonpartisan, individual membership association of state legislators. With 2,000 members, ALEC's mission is to advance the Jeffersonian principles of limited government, federalism, and individual liberty through a nonpartisan public-private partnership of state legislators, the business community, the federal government, and the general public.

Founded in 1973, ALEC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that promotes free-market principles through "model legislation," developed by its public- and private-sector members in eight Task Forces:

CIVIL JUSTICE

To promote systematic fairness in the courts by discouraging frivolous lawsuits, fairly balancing judicial and legislative authority, treating defendants and plaintiffs in a consistent manner, and installing transparency and accountability in the trial system.

COMMERCE, INSURANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To enhance economic competitiveness, to promote employment and economic prosperity, to encourage innovation, and to limit government regulation imposed upon business.

EDUCATION

To promote excellence in the nation's educational system, to advance reforms through parental choice, to support efficiency, accountability, and transparency in all educational institutions, and to ensure America's youth are given the opportunity to succeed.

ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, AND AGRICULTURE

To operate under the principles of free-market environmentalism, that is to promote the mutually beneficial link between a robust economy and a healthy environment, to unleash the creative powers of the free market for environmental stewardship, and to enhance the quality and use of our natural and agricultural resources for the benefit of human health and well-being.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

To reduce governmental involvement in health care, to support a consumer-driven health care system, and to promote free-market, pro-patient health care reforms at the state level.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND ELECTIONS

To develop model policies that reduce crime and violence in our cities and neighborhoods, while also developing policies to ensure integrity and efficiency in our elections and systems of government.

TAX AND FISCAL POLICY

To reduce excessive government spending, to lower the overall tax burden, to enhance transparency of government operations, and to develop sound, free-market tax and fiscal policy.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

To advance consumer choice in the dynamic and converging areas of telecommunications and information technology by furthering public policies that preserve free-market principles, promote competitive federalism, uphold deregulation efforts, and keep industries free from new burdensome regulations.