

LEADERS AND LAGGARDS:

A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness



The Institute for a Competitive Workforce (ICW) is a 501(c)3 affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and works to ensure that businesses have access—today and tomorrow—to an educated and skilled workforce. Through policy initiatives, business outreach, and a strong grassroots network, ICW finds solutions that will preserve the American workforce as this country's greatest business asset and its strongest resource.

Mission:

The Institute for a Competitive Workforce promotes high educational standards and effective workforce training systems so that they are aligned with each other and with today's rigorous business demands.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing more than 3 million businesses of every size, sector, and region.

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Overview

The United States in the 21st century faces unprecedented economic and social challenges, ranging from the forces of global competition to the impending retirement of 77 million baby boomers. Succeeding in this new era will require our children to be prepared for the intellectual demands of the modern workplace and a far more complex society. Yet the evidence indicates that our country is not ready. Despite decades of reform efforts and many trillions of dollars in public investment, U.S. schools are not equipping our children with the skills and knowledge they—and the nation—so badly need.

It has been nearly a quarter century since the seminal report *A Nation at Risk* was issued in 1983. Since that time, a knowledge-based economy has emerged, the Internet has reshaped commerce and communication, exemplars of creative commerce like Microsoft, eBay, and Southwest Airlines have revolutionized the way we live, and the global economy has undergone wrenching change. Throughout that period, education spending has steadily increased and rafts of well-intentioned school reforms have come and gone. But student achievement has remained stagnant, and our K-12 schools have stayed remarkably unchanged—preserving, as if in amber, the routines, culture, and operations of an obsolete 1930s manufacturing plant.

The measures of our educational shortcomings are stark indeed; most 4th and 8th graders are not proficient in either reading or mathematics.

The measures of our educational shortcomings are stark indeed; most 4th and 8th graders are not proficient in either reading or mathematics. Only about two-thirds of all 9th graders graduate from high school within four years. And those students who do receive diplomas are too often unprepared for college or the modern workplace.

Despite such grim data, for too long the business community has been willing to leave education to the politicians and the educators—standing aside and contenting itself with offers of money, support, and goodwill. But each passing year makes it clear that more, much more, is needed. America's dynamic, immensely productive private sector is the envy of the world. Are there ways in which business expertise, dynamism, accountability, and problem solving could

improve our schools? What would a business plan for reform include?

With these questions in mind, last year the U.S. Chamber of Commerce launched an effort to dig deeper into the nation's educational effectiveness.

We began with the premise that national statistics, while important for sketching the challenges ahead, mask tremendous variations in educational outcomes and delivery from state to state. It is the states, after all, that are ultimately responsible—both constitutionally and practically—for the quality of schooling. We decided on the following goal: to grade all 50 states and Washington, DC, on their K-12 school systems in order to identify both leaders and laggards in the tough business of school performance.

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Recognizing the complexity of this task, the Chamber assembled a team of national experts to aggregate and analyze existing state-by-state data and to use that data to construct innovative measures, including evaluating the relationship between spending and student achievement. Our principal partners were the Center for American Progress, a research and educational institute led by former White House Chief of Staff John Podesta; and Frederick M. Hess, Director of Education Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. The Chamber and its partners did not set out to conduct new research; we organized and analyzed existing evidence to inform and promote reform efforts across the nation.

We also shared our data and methodology with an outside panel of academic experts: Dan Goldhaber, Research Associate Professor of Public Affairs at the University of Washington; Richard Ingersoll, Professor of Education and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania; and Susanna Loeb, Associate Professor of Education and Business at Stanford University. The panel reviewed and provided helpful feedback on our methodology. However, the Chamber takes sole responsibility for the final determination of methodology and therefore the resulting state grades.

Our effort to evaluate the states is not the first such undertaking. In the past two decades, a range of groups have graded the states on education on numerous occasions. The most notable of these evaluations is perhaps the one issued by the newspaper *Education Week* in its annual *Quality Counts* report, with other evaluations that weigh various aspects of state systems issued by groups as diverse as the Education Commission of the States, the American Federation of Teachers, the Data Quality Campaign, the quarterly journal *Education Next*, the Education Trust, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. Where our project differs from previous efforts is its emphasis on coupling a focus on academic outcomes with attention to key business metrics: innovation, flexibility, management, and fiscal prudence.

The indicators used in this report, in other words, draw upon and reflect the business expertise of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and its members. We focused on the performance measures vital to competently operating—and improving—complex organizations in any sector. To our knowledge, for example, this is the first national report that has examined each state’s return on its educational investments. Where most previous report cards have focused primarily on inputs in terms of spending or regulations, this report card reflects our premise that American education should be accountable, rigorous, innovative—and focused on achievement.

The Chamber and its partners firmly believe that the traits that have long made the American private sector an engine of global prosperity—its dynamism, creativity, and relentless focus on efficiency and results—are essential to tapping the potential of our educators and schools. It is this understanding that informs and shapes this report.

Only about two-thirds of all 9th graders graduate from high school within four years. And those students who do receive a diploma are too often unprepared for college or the modern workplace.

Major Findings

The conclusion of this report card is unambiguous; the states need to do a far better job of monitoring and delivering quality schooling.

For starters, state education systems suffer from a severe information gap. The lack of reliable and available data on state performance is alarming and creates serious challenges in evaluating results on a state-by-state basis. The data must be compiled and monitored if we are to succeed in improving student performance nationwide. No responsible publicly or privately held firm could operate successfully with such a lack of data.

The conclusion of this report card is unambiguous; the states need to do a far better job of monitoring and delivering quality schooling.

As for educational quality, the states' current performance is unacceptable. While a number of states are engaged in promising efforts to build more innovative and accountable K-12 systems, there would have been far more Cs, Ds, and Fs had we not graded on a curve. The academic performance of every state needs to improve. This is true for all demographic groups, but especially for poor and minority students, who have too often been ill-served by today's schools.

Although there are state success stories that others can and should emulate, our major findings include much that should concern policymakers, business leaders, and our fellow citizens.

Return on investment varies greatly across states.

States like Utah and North Carolina appear to spend their education dollars far more efficiently than many of their peers, posting twice the rate of return on their education investments. Other states show disappointing academic results given their spending levels, even after accounting for student poverty, cost of living, and the number of pupils with special needs.

Certain states with a large percentage of low-income and minority students score far better than others on achievement tests.

Those seeking to improve their own students' academic results should look to high-achieving states with large percentages of traditionally low-scoring demographic groups, such as Florida, Kansas, Texas, and Virginia, to figure out how to succeed with low-income and minority

students. Although some states like Wyoming may seem relatively homogeneous they do, in fact, have significant populations of low-income students and some minority students. Because they are serving those students relatively well, they earned As in this category.

States could do much more to ensure a 21st century teaching workforce.

Almost all the states have basic skills tests and subject knowledge exams in place for new teachers. However, there are no clear data on what states are doing to evaluate teacher performance, reward good teachers, make it easier for talented candidates to compete for jobs, or remove ineffective educators.

Truth in advertising is inconsistent. Many states systematically paint a much rosier picture of how their schools are doing than is actually the case. This makes it tough for parents, voters, or business leaders to hold public officials and educators accountable. Alabama, for instance, reported in 2005 that 83% of its 4th graders were proficient in reading on its state test—seemingly making it one of the nation's highest-performing states. But according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only 22% of Alabama's 4th graders scored at or above the proficient level on reading, making it one of the nation's poorest performing states.

State standards are too often inadequate. Many states have done a mediocre job of establishing rigorous standards in key subject areas. Without clearer, rigorous guidelines about what students need to know, states will have a hard time measuring achievement and holding students and schools accountable for performance.

Forward-looking states are fostering innovation.

While progress is uneven, states such as Arizona and Colorado have moved aggressively to promote comprehensive charter school legislation and enable virtual schooling, thus helping establish the infrastructure for 21st century educational reinvention.

High school graduation rates and college preparation levels are much higher in some states than others.

Some states are successfully preparing students for college and the workforce, while others are falling short. Those that are not making the grade should

look to states such as New Jersey, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Illinois, which lead the nation in ensuring that students graduate from high school in four years, pass challenging Advanced Placement (AP) exams in core subject areas, and go on to enroll in college.

States have begun to improve data collection efforts. Despite widespread problems with securing adequate data, there are signs of improvement; forty-five states now use a unique statewide student identifier to track students over time and across campuses.

We approached this project knowing full well that research cannot always provide consistent, nuanced guidance when it comes to effective policies and management practices. The indicators we used reflect our considered judgment about what elements a high-quality 21st century educational system should include and what sort of results it ought to be expected to produce. In a world in which American students must compete globally—and in which 90% of the fastest-growing jobs will require some postsecondary education—our schools must do more than they historically have done to ensure that all students are prepared to succeed. In this new world, the goal must be that each and every student completes high school equipped for college or for a skilled, rewarding position in the workforce.

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State Report Cards

We graded each state in the following nine broad categories, using dozens of indicators that are described in further detail beginning on page 64:

Academic Achievement—based on all students’ performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Are students learning? Students’ achievement is job one in any evaluation of academic success. Known as “the nation’s report card,” the NAEP is the only source of comparable student performance data at the state level. It is overseen by the federal government and is administered to 4th and 8th graders in every state on a regular basis.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students—based on each state’s disadvantaged student performance on the NAEP.

Are low-income, African-American, and Hispanic students learning? Improving the success of these groups is at the heart of today’s reform efforts.

Return on Investment—comparing students’ scores on the NAEP with a state’s education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living).

Are taxpayers getting what they pay for? After inflation, education spending in the United States has tripled in the past four decades. Yet there is little evidence that student achievement has improved as a result. In fact, there has been a disconcerting lack of attention to efficiency or to ensuring that educational dollars are delivering real value. Educators and policymakers, focused for too long on inputs rather than outputs, have tolerated programs and reforms that have not yielded the returns we need.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency—looking at how credible states are when they report the percentage of students reaching proficiency in the core subjects of math and reading.

When states report how well their schools are doing, how much confidence can parents and voters have in the results? The proficiency scores on many state exams differ widely from the scores reported on the NAEP exam.

Rigor of Standards—evaluating each state’s curriculum and exit standards.

Do states set rigorous standards for students in the key subjects of English, math, and science? In business, measuring results is fairly straightforward; a firm that produces a good product or service knows it is doing well if it earns a solid profit. In education, however, for decades states did not detail what students were expected to know and be able to do. Changing this culture requires that states establish rigorous standards, which serve as the bedrock of an education system. They define what students should know and be able to do. Everything else—teaching, testing, and accountability—should build on these standards.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness—using Advanced Placement (AP) test scores, graduation rates, and other data.

Are students ready for college or the workplace? To succeed in the 21st century, high school graduates need much more than the three Rs. Students ready for a global, information-based economy must have problem-solving skills, high-level math and science knowledge, and a capacity for communicating complex ideas.

21st Century Teaching Force—using data on whether states are ensuring minimum standards for teachers, providing nontraditional alternatives to entering the teaching profession, and requiring subject knowledge tests.

Are states taking steps to produce a high-quality teaching workforce? Teacher salaries and benefits consume the majority of educational dollars, and of all school-related factors, teacher quality clearly has the biggest impact on student achievement.¹ In a world where professional opportunities abound and knowledge workers routinely switch jobs, it is critical that states make special efforts to reach out to new pools of teacher talent and ensure that all teachers have essential skills and knowledge.

Flexibility in Management and Policy—grading states on whether schools have the freedom and flexibility to meet standards.

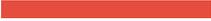
Do school leaders and reformers have the flexibility to promote excellent teaching and learning? Do reformers have the freedom to design new schools and use technology to improve performance? Limited choice, inflexible bureaucracies, and a lack of sensible managerial autonomy all prevent schools from innovating, improving, and ultimately succeeding.

Data Quality—grading states on their efforts to collect and report high-quality education data.

Do states have the data they need? Sound data are particularly important to educators because they help teachers and administrators identify struggling students early and provide targeted remediation.

For a technical explanation of our methodology, go to www.uschamber.com/reportcard.

Alabama

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	F	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	B	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Alabama is very poor—the state ranks among the lowest in the nation. Fourth graders stand 14 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Alabama posts failing marks in this category. Only 7% of African-American 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for African-American 4th graders is 13%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, Alabama's grade in this category is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Alabama is very low relative to state spending on education (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). As a result, Alabama earns a failing grade for its return on investment.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Alabama gets low marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified significant percentages of its students as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Alabama receives a solid grade for the rigor of its standards. The state has established a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate, and its English curriculum standards earn high marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Alabama earns a very poor grade in this category. Only 61% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years. The state's 11th and 12th graders also perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Alabama earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and has opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state does not have a charter school law, and 77% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring. The national average is 88%.

Data Quality

Alabama gets above average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most states, Alabama collects college readiness test scores and has the ability to match student records between pre-K-12 and higher education systems.

Alaska

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	F	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Alaska is lower than average. The state falls 3 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Alaska posts high marks in this category. Twenty-four percent of African-American 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for African-American 4th graders is 12%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Alaska is very low relative to state spending on education (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). Alaska earns a failing grade for its return on investment.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Alaska gets lower than average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified significant percentages of its students as proficient in math and reading on 2005 state assessments, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Alaska receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state has established a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate, its science curriculum standards receive very poor marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Alaska earns a below average grade in this category. Only 64% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%. And only 28% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

Alaska earns above average marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Only 68% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring. The national average is 88%.

Data Quality

Alaska gets above average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most states, it has the ability to match student records between pre-K-12 and higher education systems.

Arizona

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	B	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	D	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	A	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Arizona is lower than average. Fourth graders stand 7 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Arizona posts low marks in this category. Only 14% of the state's Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Arizona is middling relative to state spending on education (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This mediocre return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Arizona gets below average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified significant percentages of its students as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Arizona receives an above average grade for the rigor of its standards. Its English and science curriculum standards earn solid marks, and the state has established a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Arizona earns a very low grade in this category. Only 31% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Arizona earns low marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state does not test incoming teachers on their basic skills and has not opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives an excellent score on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Arizona's charter school laws receive high marks, and 94% of principals report having a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring. The national average is 88%.

Data Quality

Arizona gets middling marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth, it does not have a teacher-identifier system that would allow it to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Arkansas

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	B	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Arkansas is lower than average. Eighth graders stand 6 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Arkansas posts mediocre marks in this category. Only 4% of African-American 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for African-American 8th graders is 8%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Arkansas is disappointing relative to state spending on education (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). The state's poor return on investment earns it a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Arkansas gets above average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students reported as proficient in reading and math in 2005 and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Arkansas receives a mediocre grade for the rigor of its standards. While it has aligned its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations, the state's math curriculum standards receive very low marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Arkansas earns a middling grade in this category. High school graduation rates are average, as are students' chances for college attendance by age 19. Results for 11th and 12th graders on core Advanced Placement exams were mediocre.

21st Century Teaching Force

Arkansas earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

Arkansas receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While the state has established a virtual school, only 53% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets will be spent. The national average is 69%.

Data Quality

Arkansas gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, it collects student-level college readiness test scores and transcript information.

California

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	B	
Rigor of Standards	A	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	D	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in California is very poor—the state ranks among the lowest in the nation on academic achievement. The state’s 4th graders stand 9 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

California posts failing marks in this category. Only 10% of Hispanic 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 15%.

Return on Investment

California’s student achievement is low relative to state spending on education (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). The state’s poor return on investment earns it a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

California gets solid marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

California receives an excellent grade for the rigor of its standards. The state’s English, math, and science curriculum standards all receive high marks, and it has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

California earns a solid grade in this category. Seventy-one percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and the state’s 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

California earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

California receives an above average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state’s charter school laws earn high marks, and 77% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent.

Data Quality

California gets low marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. The state does not have the ability to match individual students’ test records from year to year to measure academic growth and it does not collect graduation and dropout data.

Colorado

Academic Achievement	B	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	A	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Colorado is higher than average. Fourth graders stand 7 percentage points above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Colorado posts solid marks in this category. Eighteen percent of African-American 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for African-American 8th graders is 11%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Colorado is very strong relative to state spending on education (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This high return on investment earns the state an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising about Student Proficiency

Colorado gets below average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified significant percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state reading and math exams, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Colorado receives a poor grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math curriculum standards earn low marks. Colorado also has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Colorado earns a relatively high grade in this category. Seventy-three percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Colorado earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, has opened up alternative routes into the profession, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives an excellent grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Colorado's charter school laws receive high marks, and 96% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Colorado gets modest marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth, it does not have a teacher-identifier system that would permit it to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness. The state also lacks the ability to match student records between pre-K-12 and higher education systems.

Connecticut

Academic Achievement	A	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	B	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Connecticut is very strong—the state ranks among the highest in the nation. Fourth graders stand 8 percentage points higher than the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Connecticut posts low scores in this category. Only 15% of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Connecticut is solid relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This positive return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Connecticut gets mediocre marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Connecticut receives a below average grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's English and math curriculum standards receive very poor marks. Connecticut also has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Connecticut earns a high grade in this category. Seventy-nine percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Connecticut earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling score on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 91% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Connecticut gets solid marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Connecticut collects student-level college readiness test scores.

Delaware

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Delaware is middling. The state stands just above the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Delaware posts solid scores in this category. Twenty-two percent of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 15%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Delaware is low relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This disappointing return on investment earns the state a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Delaware gets average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Delaware receives a poor grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math curriculum standards receive very low marks. Delaware also has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Delaware earns a very poor grade in this category. Only 61% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%. Thirty-six percent of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

Delaware earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid score on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state's charter school laws receive particularly high marks, and 93% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Delaware gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Delaware collects student-level transcript information and has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

District of Columbia

Academic Achievement	F 
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F 
Return on Investment	F 
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C 
Rigor of Standards	No grade
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	No grade
21st Century Teaching Force	A 
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C 
Data Quality	D 

Academic Achievement

Student performance in the nation's capital is very weak. The district stands 25 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of fourth graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

The district posts failing marks in this category. Only 5% of low-income 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in the district is very low relative to the capital city's education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This dismal return on investment earns the district a failing grade in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

The district gets mediocre marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 district assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

We did not grade the district on the rigor of its standards because of insufficient data.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

There was insufficient data in this category to give the district a grade.

21st Century Teaching Force

The nation's capital earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The district tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The district receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While the district's charter school laws earn high marks, only 65% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

The district gets low marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. It does not collect information on untested students, and it does not have a teacher-identifier system that would match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness. Because the district did not participate in the 2006 Data Quality Campaign survey, we used data from the 2005 report.

Florida

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Florida is lower than average. Eighth graders stand 4 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Florida posts high scores in this category. Twenty-five percent of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 15%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Florida is very strong relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). Florida's high return on investment earns the state an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Florida gets an average grade on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Florida receives a mediocre grade for the rigor of its standards. While Florida has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate, the state's math and science curriculum standards receive very low marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Florida earns a poor grade in this category. Only 58% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

Florida earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

Florida receives a relatively high score on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state's charter school laws receive good marks, and 92% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Florida gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Florida collects student-level college readiness test scores and transcript information, and it has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Georgia

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	B	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Georgia is lower than average. The state stands 5 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Georgia posts low scores in this category. Only 9% of low-income 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 13%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Georgia is middling relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This modest return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Georgia gets low marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified significant percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state reading and math exams, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Georgia receives a solid grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's English, math, and science curriculum standards all receive above average marks, and it has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Georgia earns a below average grade in this category. Only 56% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

Georgia earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid score on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has established a virtual school, and 94% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Georgia gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Georgia collects student-level college readiness test scores and transcript information, and it has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Hawaii

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	F	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	B	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Hawaii is very weak—the state ranks among the lowest in the nation. Eighth graders stand 11 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of students at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Hawaii posts mediocre scores in this category. Only 7% of low-income 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 13%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for African-American students were not met, Hawaii's grade is based solely on low-income and Hispanic student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Hawaii is very low relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This dismal return on investment earns the state a failing grade on this measure.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Hawaii gets above average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient on reading and math assessments in 2005 and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Hawaii receives a low grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math and science curriculum standards receive very poor marks. The state also has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Hawaii earns a very poor grade in this category. Only 64% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Hawaii earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and has opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state gets a solid score on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. It has established a virtual school, and 85% of its principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent.

Data Quality

Hawaii gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Hawaii collects student-level transcript information and has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Idaho

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	C	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	F	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Idaho is middling. The state stands just above the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders scoring at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Idaho posts high marks in this category. Twenty-eight percent of low-income 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 4th graders is 19%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for African-American students were not met, Idaho's grade is based solely on low-income and Hispanic student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Idaho is high relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This excellent return on investment earns the state an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Idaho gets low marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified significant percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state reading and math exams, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Idaho receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While Idaho has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate, its science curriculum standards receive very low marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Idaho earns a mediocre grade in this category. While 78% of the state's 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Idaho earns middling marks for its teacher workforce policies. While the state tests high school teachers on their subject matter knowledge, it does not require incoming teachers to pass a basic skills exam.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has established a virtual school, and 96% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Idaho gets very low marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. It lacks a unique statewide student identifier and does not collect student-level enrollment and demographic information or have the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth.

Illinois

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	B	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	F	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Illinois is middling. Fourth graders stand just below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams, while 8th grade students score just above the national average.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Illinois posts low marks in this category. Only 14% of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Illinois is solid relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This strong return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Illinois gets modest marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Illinois receives a mediocre grade for the rigor of its standards. While its English and science standards receive solid marks, the state has yet to align high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Illinois earns a high grade in this category. Seventy-six percent of the state's 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Illinois earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has established a virtual school, and 91% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Illinois gets very low marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. The state does not have the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth, and it does not collect student-level graduation and dropout data.

Indiana

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	A	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	D	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Indiana is modest. Fourth and 8th graders stand at or just below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading exams and just above the national average on NAEP math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Indiana posts mediocre marks in this category. Only 11% of 4th grade Hispanic students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 15%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Indiana is middling relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This mediocre return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Indiana gets average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Indiana gets an excellent grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's English, math, and science curriculum standards all receive high marks, and Indiana has aligned its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Indiana earns a mediocre grade in this category. While 73% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, the state's 11th and 12th graders had only middling results on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Indiana earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While the state's charter school laws receive high marks, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Indiana gets low marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. The state does not collect information on untested students, and it does not have a state audit system to assess data quality, validity, and reliability.

Iowa

Academic Achievement	B	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	B	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	No grade	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	D	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Iowa is higher than average. Eighth graders stand 6 percentage points higher than the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Iowa posts solid marks in this category. Twenty-two percent of low-income 8th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 15%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Iowa is strong relative to state spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This solid return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Iowa gets below average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified significant percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state reading and math exams, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

We did not grade Iowa on the rigor of its standards because of insufficient data.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Iowa earns an average grade in this category. While 83% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Iowa earns low marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state does not test incoming teachers on their basic skills or require high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests. It also does not require alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state gets a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While it has established a virtual school, its charter school laws receive very low marks.

Data Quality

Iowa gets average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. The state uses a unique statewide student identifier and has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth. However, it does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Kansas

Academic Achievement	A	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	C	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	D	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Kansas is very strong. Fourth graders stand 12 percentage points higher than the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Kansas posts high marks in this category. Thirty percent of low-income 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Kansas is high relative to state spending on education (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). The state's high return on its investment earns it an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Kansas gets mediocre marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Kansas receives a low grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math and science curriculum standards receive very poor marks. Kansas also has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Kansas earns an average grade in this category. While 75% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Kansas earns mediocre marks for its teacher workforce policies. While the state tests high school teachers on their subject matter knowledge, it does not require a basic skills exam of incoming teachers or require alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a low score on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Kansas's charter school laws receive below average marks, and only 55% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent.

Data Quality

Kansas gets middling marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state has the ability to track individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth, it does not have a teacher-identifier system that would allow it to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Kentucky

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	B	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	C	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	B	

Achievement

Student performance in Kentucky is lower than average. The state stands 9 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of 4th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Kentucky posts mediocre marks in this category. Only 9% of African-American 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for African-American 4th graders is 13%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, Kentucky's grade is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Kentucky is strong relative to state spending on education (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). The state's solid return on investment earns it a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Kentucky gets a modest score on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Kentucky receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While it has aligned its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations, the state's science curriculum standards earn low marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Kentucky earns a low grade in this category. Only 37% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Kentucky earns middling marks for its teacher workforce policies. While the state tests high school teachers on their subject matter knowledge, it does not require a basic skills exam of incoming teachers or require alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

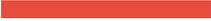
Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has established a virtual school, and 92% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Kentucky gets higher than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Kentucky has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Louisiana

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	F	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	B	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Louisiana is very weak—the state ranks among the lowest in the nation. Eighth graders stand 12 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Louisiana posts failing marks in this category. Only 8% of low-income 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 13%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, Louisiana's grade is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Louisiana is very low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). As a result, Louisiana earns a failing grade for its return on investment.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Louisiana gets average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Louisiana receives an above average grade on the rigor of its standards. The state's English curriculum standards receive high marks, and Louisiana has established a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Louisiana earns a very poor grade in this category. Only 61% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Louisiana earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Eighty-three percent of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent, and the state has established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Louisiana gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Louisiana collects student-level transcript information and has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Maine

Academic Achievement	B 
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	No grade
Return on Investment	D 
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	A 
Rigor of Standards	D 
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B 
21st Century Teaching Force	C 
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C 
Data Quality	F 

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Maine is higher than average. The state stands 9 percentage points above the national average in the percentage of 8th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Because the state does not have large enough African-American and Hispanic student populations to meet NAEP sampling requirements, Maine did not receive a grade for the academic achievement of low-income and minority students.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Maine is low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). As a result, Maine earns a D in our return on investment ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Maine gets high marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Maine receives a low grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math and science curriculum standards receive poor marks. Maine also has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Maine earns a solid grade in this category. Seventy-four percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Maine earns middling marks for its teacher workforce policies. While the state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, it has not opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a mediocre grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 94% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state does not have a charter school law.

Data Quality

Maine gets very poor marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. It lacks the ability most other states have to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth.

Maryland

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	F	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Maryland is modest. The state stands just above the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Maryland posts solid marks in this category. Twenty-three percent of Hispanic 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for Hispanic 8th graders is 14%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Maryland is middling relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This modest return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Maryland gets an average grade on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Maryland receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state's science curriculum standards receive above average marks, Maryland has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Maryland earns a high grade in this category. Seventy-four percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Maryland earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Ninety percent of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, and the state has established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Maryland gets very low marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. It does not use a unique statewide student identifier and lacks the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth.

Massachusetts

Academic Achievement	A	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	A	
Rigor of Standards	A	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Massachusetts students are among the highest achievers in the country. The state stands 15 percentage points higher than the national average in the percentage of eighth graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Massachusetts posts high marks in this category. Twenty-two percent of low-income 8th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 13%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Massachusetts is very strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This high return on investment earns Massachusetts an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Massachusetts gets high marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores on state assessments. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Massachusetts receives an excellent grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's English, math, and science curriculum standards all receive high marks, and Massachusetts has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Massachusetts earns a high grade in this category. Seventy-two percent of the state's 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Massachusetts earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 90% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Massachusetts gets solid marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike many states, Massachusetts has the ability to match student records between pre-K-12 and higher education systems.

Michigan

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	D	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Michigan is middling. While the state's 8th graders stand just below the national average in the percentage scoring at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam, its 4th graders score just above the national average on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Michigan posts mediocre marks in this category. Only 8% of African-American 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for African-American 4th graders is 13%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Michigan is modest relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This middling return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Michigan gets average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Michigan receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While Michigan has aligned its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations, the state's English and science standards receive low marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Michigan earns an average grade in this category. Results for 11th and 12th graders on core Advanced Placement exams were middling. Michigan scores slightly below the national average on high school graduation rates and students' chances for college attendance by age 19.

21st Century Teaching Force

Michigan earns a solid grade for its teacher workforce policies. The state has opened up alternative routes into the profession, tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, and requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has established a virtual school, and its charter school laws receive high marks.

Data Quality

Michigan gets below average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. The state does not collect information on untested students, and it does not have a state audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.

Minnesota

Academic Achievement	A	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	No grade	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Minnesota is very strong—the state ranks among the highest in the nation. Eighth graders stand 15 percentage points above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Minnesota posts solid marks in this category. Twenty-two percent of low-income 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 13%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Minnesota is very strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). The state's high return on investment earns it an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Minnesota did not test its students in 4th or 8th grade in 2005 and therefore did not receive a grade.

Rigor of Standards

Minnesota receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state's English and science curriculum standards receive solid marks, Minnesota has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Minnesota earns a high grade in this category. Seventy-nine percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

Minnesota earns a solid grade for its teacher workforce policies. The state has opened up alternative routes into the profession, tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, and requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests.

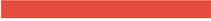
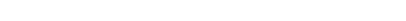
Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a modest grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While Minnesota's charter school law receives high marks, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Minnesota gets middling marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While it uses a unique statewide student identifier, it does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to measure teacher effectiveness.

Mississippi

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	F	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Mississippi is very weak—it ranks among the lowest in the nation. The state stands 16 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of 4th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Mississippi posts failing marks in this category. Only 12% of low-income 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 4th graders is 19%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, Mississippi's grade is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Mississippi is very low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). As a result, Mississippi earns a failing grade for its return on investment.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Mississippi gets below average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified significant percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state reading and math exams, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Mississippi receives a mediocre grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate, its science curriculum standards receive very poor marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Mississippi earns a very low grade in this category. Only 61% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Mississippi earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a solid grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has established a virtual school, and 94% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Mississippi gets higher than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Mississippi collects student-level transcript information and has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Missouri

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	B	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	A	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	D	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Missouri is lower than average. The state's 4th graders stand 4 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Missouri posts low marks in this category. Only 4% of African-American 8th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for African-American 8th graders is 8%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, Missouri's grade is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Missouri is strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This solid return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Missouri gets high marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Missouri receives a low grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math curriculum standards receive very poor marks, and it has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Missouri earns a low grade in this category. Results for 11th and 12th graders indicate they perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams, and only 40% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

Missouri earns a solid grade for its teacher workforce policies. The state has opened up alternative routes into the profession, tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, and requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While the state's charter school laws receive good marks, only 56% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent.

Data Quality

Missouri gets below average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Missouri lacks a unique statewide student identifier and does not collect student-level graduation and dropout data or enrollment and demographic information.

Montana

Academic Achievement	A	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	No grade	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	D	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	D	
Data Quality	D	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Montana is excellent—the state ranks among the highest in the nation. Eighth graders stand 8 percentage points above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Because the state does not have large enough African-American and Hispanic student populations to meet NAEP sampling requirements, Montana did not receive a grade for the academic achievement of low-income and minority students.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Montana is low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This disappointing return on investment earns the state a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Montana gets average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state tests and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Montana receives a below average grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's English and science curriculum standards receive very poor marks. Montana also has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Montana earns a modest grade in this category. While 76% of 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Montana earns poor marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state does not test incoming teachers on their basic skills, require high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, or require alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a low grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Montana does not have a charter school law and has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Montana gets lower than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. It does not collect student-level graduation and dropout data or information on untested students. The state also lacks a teacher-identifier system that would match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Nebraska

Academic Achievement	B	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	C	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	D	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Nebraska is higher than average. The state stands 7 percentage points above the national average in the percentage of 8th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Nebraska posts low marks in this category. Only 10% of Hispanic 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Nebraska is middling relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This modest return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Nebraska gets below average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Nebraska receives a poor grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's science curriculum standards receive very low marks, and the state has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Nebraska earns an average grade in this category. While 78% of 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Nebraska earns mediocre marks for its teacher workforce policies. While the state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, the state does not require high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests.

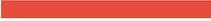
Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a below average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Nebraska does not have a charter school law and has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Nebraska gets middling marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state uses a unique statewide student identifier, it does not have a teacher-identifier system that matches teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Nevada

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Nevada is very poor—the state ranks among the lowest in the nation. Nebraska stands 9 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of 4th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Nevada posts failing marks in this category. Only 9% of low-income 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for low-income 4th graders is 15%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Nevada is low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). The state's poor return on investment earns it a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Nevada gets modest marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Nevada receives a mediocre grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's English curriculum standards receive solid marks, but Nevada has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Nevada earns a very low grade in this category. Only 56% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

Nevada earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 94% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Nevada gets higher than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Nevada collects student-level transcript information.

New Hampshire

Academic Achievement	A 
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	No grade
Return on Investment	B 
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	No grade
Rigor of Standards	D 
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B 
21st Century Teaching Force	B 
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C 
Data Quality	C 

Academic Achievement

Student performance in New Hampshire is very strong—the state ranks among the highest in the nation. Fourth graders stand 12 percentage points above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Because the state does not have large enough African-American and Hispanic student populations to meet NAEP sampling requirements, New Hampshire did not receive a grade for the academic achievement of low-income and minority students.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in New Hampshire is strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This solid return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

New Hampshire did not test its students in 4th or 8th grade in 2005 and therefore did not receive a grade.

Rigor of Standards

New Hampshire receives a low grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math and science curriculum standards receive very poor marks. New Hampshire also has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

New Hampshire earns a better than average grade in this category. Seventy-eight percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

New Hampshire earns above average marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state has opened up alternative routes into the profession, tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, and requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a modest grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 91% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

New Hampshire gets middling marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state collects information on untested students, it lacks the ability most other states have to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth.

New Jersey

Academic Achievement	A	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	F	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in New Jersey is very strong—the state ranks among the highest in the nation. Fourth graders stand 10 percentage points above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, New Jersey posts solid marks in this category. Twenty-five percent of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in New Jersey is poor relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This poor return on investment earns the state a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

New Jersey gets average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

New Jersey receives a mediocre grade for the rigor of its standards. While New Jersey has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate, the state's math curriculum standards receive poor marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

New Jersey earns a high grade in this category. Eighty-five percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and 54% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

New Jersey earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state has opened up alternative routes into the profession, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 86% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

New Jersey gets very low marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. It does not use a unique statewide student identifier or collect student-level graduation and dropout data or enrollment and demographic information.

New Mexico

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	F	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	B	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in New Mexico is very poor—the state ranks among the lowest in the nation. New Mexico stands 16 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of 4th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

New Mexico posts failing marks in this category. Only 7% of low-income 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 13%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in New Mexico is very low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This dismal return on investment earns the state a failing grade.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

New Mexico gets above average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

New Mexico receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state's science curriculum standards receive very high marks, New Mexico has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

New Mexico earns a very poor grade in this category. Only 57% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

New Mexico earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and has opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives an above average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. New Mexico's charter school laws receive good marks, and the state has established a virtual school.

Data Quality

New Mexico gets higher than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, it has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

New York

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	A	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in New York is middling. The state is just above the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, New York posts solid marks in this category. Nineteen percent of low-income 8th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 13%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in New York is low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This disappointing return on investment earns the state a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

New York gets mediocre marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores on state assessments. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

New York receives an excellent grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's science curriculum standards receive high marks. New York has aligned its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations and has enacted a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

New York earns a solid grade in this category. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

New York earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a modest grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While New York's charter school laws receive good marks, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

New York gets average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth, it does not have a state audit system to assess data quality, validity, and reliability.

North Carolina

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in North Carolina is middling. While the state's 4th and 8th graders score a few percentage points above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on NAEP math exams, they score below the national average on NAEP reading exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, North Carolina posts solid marks in this category. Twenty-six percent of Hispanic 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in North Carolina is very strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This high return on investment earns the state an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

North Carolina gets poor marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient in math and reading on 2005 state exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

North Carolina receives a middling grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state's English and science curriculum standards receive solid marks, the state has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

North Carolina earns a high grade in this category. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

North Carolina earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a relatively high grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Ninety-nine percent of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring. The national average is 88%.

Data Quality

North Carolina gets modest marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state collects student-level transcript information, it does not use a unique statewide student identifier.

North Dakota

Academic Achievement	A	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	No grade	
Return on Investment	B	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B	
21st Century Teaching Force	D	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in North Dakota is very strong—the state ranks among the highest in the nation. Eighth graders stand 8 percentage points higher than the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Because the state does not have large enough African-American and Hispanic student populations to meet NAEP sampling requirements, North Dakota did not receive a grade for the academic achievement of low-income and minority students.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in North Dakota is strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This solid return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

North Dakota gets average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores on state assessments. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

North Dakota receives a lower than average grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's science curriculum standards receive poor marks, and North Dakota has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

North Dakota earns an above average grade in this category. Eighty-three percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%. Fifty-seven percent of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

North Dakota earns lower than average marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state does not require high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests and has not opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state does not have a charter school law, and only 35% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent. The national average is 69%.

Data Quality

North Dakota gets above average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state uses a unique statewide student identifier, it does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Ohio

Academic Achievement	B	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Ohio is higher than average. The state stands 8 percentage points above the national average in the percentage of 4th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Ohio posts mediocre marks in this category. Only 10% of African-American 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for African-American 4th graders is 12%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Ohio is mediocre relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This middling return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Ohio gets modest marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Ohio receives a below average grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math curriculum standards receive poor marks, and the state has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Ohio earns a moderate grade in this category. While 77% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Ohio earns above average marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests. It has also opened up alternative routes into the profession and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives an average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While Ohio's charter school laws receive good marks, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Ohio gets better than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, it has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Oklahoma

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	F	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	D	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Oklahoma is very poor—the state ranks among the lowest in the nation. Oklahoma stands 7 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of eighth graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Oklahoma posts low marks in this category. Only 4% of African-American 8th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for African-American 8th graders is 8%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Oklahoma is middling relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This modest return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Oklahoma gets very poor marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Oklahoma receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While Oklahoma has aligned its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations, the state's science curriculum standards receive very poor marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Oklahoma earns a below average grade in this category. Only 39% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Oklahoma earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 90% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Oklahoma gets below average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. It lacks the ability many states have to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth, and it does not collect graduation and dropout data.

Oregon

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	B	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Oregon is middling. While the state's 8th graders score just above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on NAEP math and reading exams, the state's 4th graders score just below the national average on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Oregon posts mediocre marks in this category. Only 10% of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 15%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Oregon is strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This solid return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Oregon gets mediocre marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Oregon receives a poor grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's science curriculum standards receive very low marks, and Oregon has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Oregon earns a very low grade in this category. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams, and only 33% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

Oregon earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and has opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a higher than average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Ninety-eight percent of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring. The national average is 88%.

Data Quality

Oregon gets modest marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While Oregon uses a unique statewide student identifier, it does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Pennsylvania

Academic Achievement	B	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	D	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Pennsylvania is higher than average. The state stands 7 percentage points above the national average in the percentage of 8th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Pennsylvania posts mediocre marks in this category. Only 16% of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Pennsylvania is low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This poor return on investment earns the state a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Pennsylvania gets middling marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state tests and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Pennsylvania receives a lower than average grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math curriculum standards receive poor marks, and Pennsylvania has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Pennsylvania earns a better than average grade in this category. Seventy-nine percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

The state earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. It tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a below average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Pennsylvania has not established a virtual school, and only 69% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring. The national average is 88%.

Data Quality

Pennsylvania gets average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state has an audit system to assess data quality, validity, and reliability, it does not collect student-level enrollment and demographic data.

Rhode Island

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	F	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	B	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	F	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	F	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Rhode Island is below average. The state stands 4 percentage points below the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Rhode Island posts failing marks in this category. Only 9% of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Rhode Island is very low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). As a result, the state earns a failing grade for its return on investment.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Rhode Island gets above average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Rhode Island receives a poor grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's math curriculum standards receive very low marks, and the state has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Rhode Island earns a lower than average grade in this category. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams, and only 40% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

Rhode Island earns very low marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state does not test incoming teachers on their basic skills and has not opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a very poor grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Rhode Island's charter school laws receive low marks, and only 55% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Rhode Island gets average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While Rhode Island has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness, it does not collect graduation and dropout data.

South Carolina

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	A	
Rigor of Standards	B	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in South Carolina is lower than average. The state's 4th and 8th graders stand 4 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

South Carolina posts low marks in this category. Only 13% of low-income 8th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 15%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, South Carolina's grade is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in South Carolina is modest relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This middling return on investment earns a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

South Carolina gets high marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

South Carolina receives a solid grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's science curriculum standards receive very high marks, and the state has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

South Carolina earns a low grade in this category. Only 53% of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

South Carolina earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a modest grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 72% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent, South Carolina has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

South Carolina gets middling marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness, it does not have a state audit system to assess data quality, validity, and reliability.

South Dakota

Academic Achievement	B 
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	No grade
Return on Investment	B 
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D 
Rigor of Standards	C 
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A 
21st Century Teaching Force	B 
Flexibility in Management and Policy	D 
Data Quality	C 

Academic Achievement

Student performance in South Dakota is solid. The state stands 8 percentage points above the national average in the percentage of 8th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Because the state does not have large enough African-American and Hispanic student populations to meet NAEP sampling requirements, South Dakota did not receive a grade for the academic achievement of low-income and minority students.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in South Dakota is strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This solid return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

South Dakota gets below average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

South Dakota receives average marks on the rigor of its standards. While the state's English curriculum standards receive solid marks, South Dakota has yet to enact a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

South Dakota earns a high grade in this category. Seventy-five percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%. Fifty-six percent of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

South Dakota earns higher than average marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests. It has opened up alternative routes into the profession and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

South Dakota receives a below average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has not established a virtual school, and it does not have a charter school law. Only 49% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent.

Data Quality

South Dakota gets average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state uses a unique statewide student identifier, it does not have a teacher-identifier system that would match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Tennessee

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	F	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Tennessee is lower than average. Fourth and eighth graders stand 7 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Tennessee posts failing marks in this category. Only 14% of low-income 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 4th graders is 19%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, Tennessee's grade is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Tennessee is middling relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This mediocre return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Tennessee gets very poor marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Tennessee receives a modest grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state's science curriculum standards receive solid marks, Tennessee has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Tennessee earns a very poor grade in this category. Only 62% of its 9th graders receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%. And only 30% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

Tennessee earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills and requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests. The state has also opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 74% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Tennessee gets higher than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Tennessee has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Texas

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	B	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	B	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Texas is middling. While the state's 4th and 8th graders score just below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading exams, they score above the national average on NAEP math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Texas posts high marks in this category. Twenty-eight percent of Hispanic 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 19%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Texas is strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This solid return on investment earns the state a B in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Texas gets low marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient in math and reading on 2005 state math and reading exams, much smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Texas receives a solid grade for the rigor of its standards. The state has aligned its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations and has enacted a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Texas earns an above average grade in this category. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Texas earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests. It has also opened up alternative routes into the profession and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 95% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Texas gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Texas collects student-level college readiness test scores and transcript information.

Utah

Academic Achievement	C	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	B	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	D	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Utah is middling. The state is just above the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading and math exams.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Utah posts solid marks in this category. Twenty-two percent of low-income 8th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average is 15%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for African-American students were not met, Utah's grade is based solely on low-income and Hispanic student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Utah is very strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This high return on investment earns Utah an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Utah gets lower than average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Utah receives a mediocre grade for the rigor of its standards. While Utah has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate, the state's math curriculum standards receive low marks.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Utah earns a high grade in this category. Seventy-seven percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Utah earns poor marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state does not test incoming teachers on their basic skills, require high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, or require alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives an above average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Ninety-seven percent of principals report a major level of influence over new teacher hiring, and 85% report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent.

Data Quality

Utah gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Utah collects student-level college readiness test scores and transcript information, and it has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Vermont

Academic Achievement	A 
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	No grade
Return on Investment	F 
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	No grade
Rigor of Standards	No grade
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B 
21st Century Teaching Force	C 
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C 
Data Quality	C 

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Vermont is very strong—the state ranks among the highest in the nation. Eighth graders stand 10 percentage points above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Because the state does not have large enough African-American and Hispanic student populations to meet NAEP sampling requirements, Vermont did not receive a grade for the academic achievement of low-income and minority students.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Vermont is very poor relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This dismal return on investment earns the state a failing grade.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Vermont did not test its students in 4th or 8th grade in 2005 and therefore did not receive a grade.

Rigor of Standards

Because of insufficient data, we did not grade Vermont on the rigor of its standards.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Vermont earns a relatively high grade in this category. Eighty-one percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

Vermont earns middling marks for its teacher workforce policies. While the state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills and requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, it has not opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives an average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 96% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, Vermont does not have a charter school law.

Data Quality

Vermont gets modest marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state uses a unique statewide student identifier, it does not have an audit system to assess data quality, validity, and reliability.

Virginia

Academic Achievement	B	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	B	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	A	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	C	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Virginia is solid. The state stands 7 percentage points above the national average in the percentage of 4th and 8th graders at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading exams .

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Virginia posts high marks in this category. Twenty-six percent of Hispanic 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for Hispanic 4th graders is 15%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Virginia is very strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This high return on investment earns the state an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Virginia gets low marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Virginia receives a higher than average grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's science curriculum standards earn high marks, and Virginia has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Virginia earns a high grade in this category. Seventy-five percent of its 9th graders receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%. The state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Virginia earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives an above average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has established a virtual school, and 92% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Virginia gets modest marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. While the state uses a unique statewide student identifier, it does not have a teacher-identifier system that would match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Washington

Academic Achievement	A	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	A	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	C	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	B	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Washington state is very strong—the state ranks among the highest in the nation. Eighth graders stand 8 percentage points above the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Washington state posts high marks in this category. Twenty-seven percent of African-American 8th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP reading exam. The national average for African-American 8th graders is 11%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Washington state is very strong relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This high return on investment earns the state an A in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Washington state gets middling marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Washington state receives a modest grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state's English and math curriculum standards earn very poor marks, the state has enacted a rigorous exit exam that students must pass to graduate.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Washington state earns a moderate grade in this category. While the state's 11th and 12th graders perform very well on core Advanced Placement exams, only 30% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

21st Century Teaching Force

Washington state earns very good marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a higher than average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. The state has established a virtual school, and 94% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring.

Data Quality

Washington state gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Washington state collects student-level transcript information.

West Virginia

Academic Achievement	F	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	D	
Return on Investment	F	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	D	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	A	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	D	
Data Quality	A	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in West Virginia is very poor—the state ranks among the lowest in the nation. Fourth and 8th graders stand 10 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

West Virginia posts low marks in this category. Only 10% of low-income 8th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 8th graders is 13%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, West Virginia's grade is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in West Virginia is dismal relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This very poor return on investment earns the state a failing grade in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

West Virginia gets lower than average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

West Virginia receives an average grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state's science curriculum standards receive solid marks, the state has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

West Virginia earns a below average grade in this category. Only 39% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college, and the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

West Virginia earns high marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills, requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, and requires alternative route participants to demonstrate subject matter expertise.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a below average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. West Virginia does not have a charter school law, and only 29% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring. The national average is 88%.

Data Quality

West Virginia gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, it collects student-level college readiness test scores and has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Wisconsin

Academic Achievement	B	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	C	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	C	
Rigor of Standards	D	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	B	
21st Century Teaching Force	C	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Wisconsin is higher than average. The state stands 8 percentage points higher than the national average in the percentage of 8th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Wisconsin posts mediocre marks in this category. Only 7% of African-American 4th grade students score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for African-American 4th graders is 13%.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Wisconsin is middling relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This modest return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Wisconsin gets lackluster marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state exams and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Wisconsin receives a poor grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's science curriculum standards receive very low marks, and the state has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Wisconsin earns a relatively high grade in this category. Eighty-one percent of its 9th grade students receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%.

21st Century Teaching Force

Wisconsin earns average marks for its teacher workforce policies. While the state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills and requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests, it has not opened up alternative routes into the profession.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

Wisconsin receives a mediocre grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 94% of principals report a major degree of influence over new teacher hiring, the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Wisconsin gets higher than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, it collects student-level college readiness test scores.

Wyoming

Academic Achievement	B	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	A	
Return on Investment	D	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	A	
Rigor of Standards	F	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	D	
21st Century Teaching Force	D	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

Academic Achievement

Student performance in Wyoming is higher than average. The state stands 8 percentage points above the national average in the percentage of 4th graders at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Compared with the rest of the country, Wyoming posts high marks in this category. Thirty-two percent of low-income 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 4th graders is 19%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for African-American students were not met, Wyoming's grade is based solely on low-income and Hispanic student achievement.

Return on Investment

Student achievement in Wyoming is low relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This poor return on investment earns the state a D in our ranking.

Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Wyoming gets high marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. The grade is based on the difference between the percentage of students identified as proficient in reading and math on 2005 state assessments and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

Rigor of Standards

Wyoming receives a very poor grade for the rigor of its standards. The state's English, math, and science curriculum standards all receive very low marks, and the state has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations or to enact a rigorous graduation exit exam.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Wyoming earns a relatively low grade in this category. While 74% of the state's 9th graders will receive a diploma within four years, the state's 11th and 12th graders perform poorly on core Advanced Placement exams.

21st Century Teaching Force

Wyoming earns low marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state does not test incoming teachers on their basic skills or require high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests.

Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Seventy-two percent of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent compared with the national average of 69%. Wyoming's charter school laws receive poor marks, and the state has not established a virtual school.

Data Quality

Wyoming gets above average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, it has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Educational Effectiveness Across the States

State	Academic achievement	Academic achievement of low-income and minority students	Return on investment	Truth in advertising about student proficiency	Rigor of standards	Postsecondary and workforce readiness	21st century teaching force	Flexibility in management and policy	Data quality
Alabama	F	F	F	D	B	F	B	C	B
Alaska	D	A	F	D	C	D	B	C	B
Arizona	D	D	C	D	B	F	D	A	C
Arkansas	D	C	D	B	C	C	A	C	A
California	F	F	D	B	A	B	A	B	D
Colorado	B	B	A	D	D	B	B	A	C
Connecticut	A	D	B	C	D	A	A	C	B
Delaware	C	B	D	C	D	F	A	B	A
District of Columbia	F	F	F	C	—	—	A	C	D
Florida	D	A	A	C	C	D	A	B	A
Georgia	D	D	C	D	B	D	A	B	A
Hawaii	F	C	F	B	D	F	B	B	A
Idaho	C	A	A	D	C	C	C	B	F
Illinois	C	D	B	C	C	A	A	B	F
Indiana	C	C	C	C	A	C	A	C	D
Iowa	B	B	B	D	—	C	D	C	C
Kansas	A	A	A	C	D	C	C	D	C
Kentucky	D	C	B	C	C	D	C	B	B
Louisiana	F	F	F	C	B	F	A	B	A
Maine	B	—	D	A	D	B	C	C	F
Maryland	C	B	C	C	C	A	A	B	F
Massachusetts	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	C	B
Michigan	C	C	C	C	C	C	B	B	D
Minnesota	A	B	A	—	C	A	B	C	C
Mississippi	F	F	F	D	C	F	A	B	B
Missouri	D	D	B	A	D	D	B	C	D
Montana	A	—	D	C	D	C	D	D	D
Nebraska	B	D	C	D	D	C	C	D	C
Nevada	F	F	D	C	C	F	A	C	B
New Hampshire	A	—	B	—	D	B	B	C	C
New Jersey	A	B	D	C	C	A	B	C	F
New Mexico	F	F	F	B	C	F	B	B	B
New York	C	B	D	C	A	B	A	C	C
North Carolina	C	B	A	D	C	A	A	B	C
North Dakota	A	—	B	C	D	B	D	C	B
Ohio	B	C	C	C	D	C	B	C	B
Oklahoma	F	D	C	F	C	D	A	C	D
Oregon	C	C	B	C	D	F	B	B	C
Pennsylvania	B	C	D	C	D	B	A	D	C
Rhode Island	D	F	F	B	D	D	F	F	C
South Carolina	D	D	C	A	B	D	A	C	C
South Dakota	B	—	B	D	C	A	B	D	C
Tennessee	D	F	C	F	C	F	B	C	B
Texas	C	A	B	D	B	B	B	C	A
Utah	C	B	A	D	C	A	D	B	A
Vermont	A	—	F	—	—	B	C	C	C
Virginia	B	A	A	D	B	A	A	B	C
Washington	A	A	A	C	C	C	A	B	A
West Virginia	F	D	F	D	C	D	A	D	A
Wisconsin	B	C	C	C	D	B	C	C	B
Wyoming	B	A	D	A	F	D	D	C	B

— State did not receive a grade in this category.

How the Report Card Was Created

The following section gives an overview of each of the nine measures on which we graded the states. It explains what data we used and how we calculated grades in every category. Each explanation is accompanied by a table comparing the performance of the states on that measure.

A technical explanation of the methodology can be found at www.uschamber.com/reportcard.

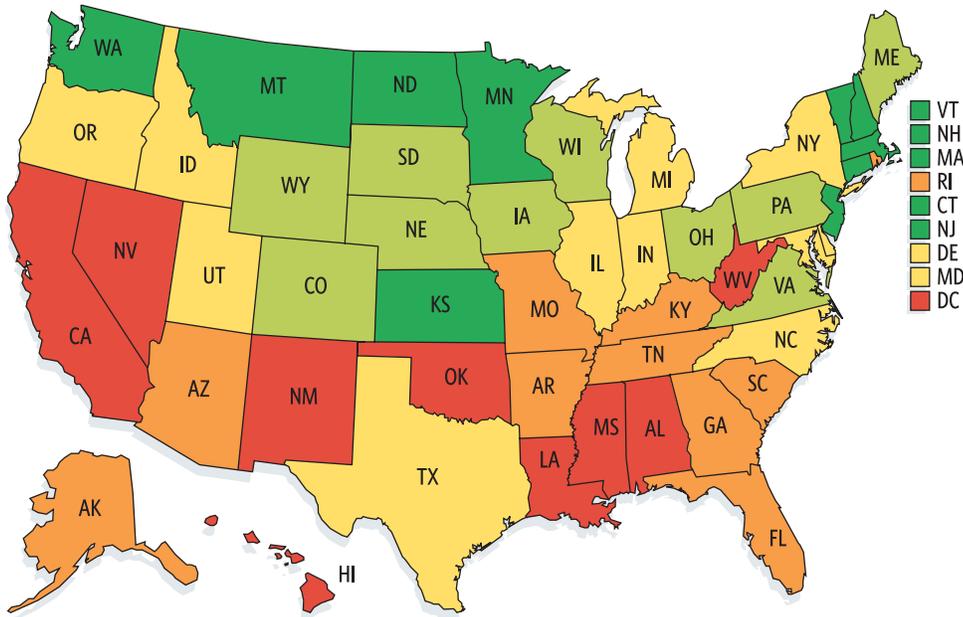
Note: States earning a given letter grade are not listed alphabetically within the tables in every category. Where relevant, the states are ranked from highest to lowest depending on how well they performed on that measure.

1. Academic Achievement

To grade each state's overall achievement, we relied on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The federally sponsored NAEP, the only available metric for comparing performance across states, has four achievement levels: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. We compared the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level because this level indicates that the student has solid mastery of the knowledge and skills needed for work at grade level.

To grade each state, we first created a NAEP index by averaging the percentage of 4th and 8th grade students scoring at or above the proficient level on math and reading on NAEP in 2005. We then distributed grades based on a curve: The top 10 states received As, the next 10 states received Bs, and so forth.

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F



Academic Achievement

State	Grade	Percentage of 4th graders scoring at or above the proficient level on NAEP 2005 reading exam	Percentage of 4th graders scoring at or above the proficient level on NAEP 2005 math exam	Percentage of 8th graders scoring at or above the proficient level on NAEP 2005 reading exam	Percentage of 8th graders scoring at or above the proficient level on NAEP 2005 math exam
Massachusetts	A	44%	49%	44%	43%
Minnesota	A	38	47	37	43
New Hampshire	A	39	47	38	35
Vermont	A	39	44	37	38
New Jersey	A	37	45	38	36
Connecticut	A	38	43	34	35
Kansas	A	33	47	35	34
Washington	A	36	42	34	36
North Dakota	A	36	40	37	35
Montana	A	36	38	37	36
Ohio	B	34	43	36	33
Virginia	B	37	39	36	33
South Dakota	B	33	41	35	37
Pennsylvania	B	36	42	36	31
Wisconsin	B	33	40	35	36
Maine	B	35	39	38	30
Wyoming	B	35	43	36	29
Colorado	B	37	39	32	32
Nebraska	B	34	36	35	35
Iowa	B	33	37	34	34
Idaho	C	33	40	32	30
New York	C	33	36	34	31
Oregon	C	29	37	33	34
Delaware	C	34	36	30	30
Maryland	C	32	38	30	30
Utah	C	34	37	29	30
North Carolina	C	29	40	27	32
Indiana	C	30	38	28	30
Michigan	C	32	38	29	29
Texas	C	29	40	26	31
Illinois	C	29	32	31	29
Missouri	D	33	31	31	26
Florida	D	30	37	25	26
South Carolina	D	26	36	25	30
Alaska	D	27	34	26	29
Rhode Island	D	30	31	29	24
Arkansas	D	30	34	26	22
Kentucky	D	31	26	31	23
Georgia	D	26	30	25	23
Tennessee	D	27	28	26	21
Arizona	D	24	28	23	26
Oklahoma	F	25	29	25	21
California	F	21	28	21	22
West Virginia	F	26	25	22	18
Nevada	F	21	26	22	21
Hawaii	F	23	27	18	18
Louisiana	F	20	24	20	16
Alabama	F	22	21	22	15
New Mexico	F	21	19	19	14
Mississippi	F	18	19	19	14
District of Columbia	F	11	10	12	7

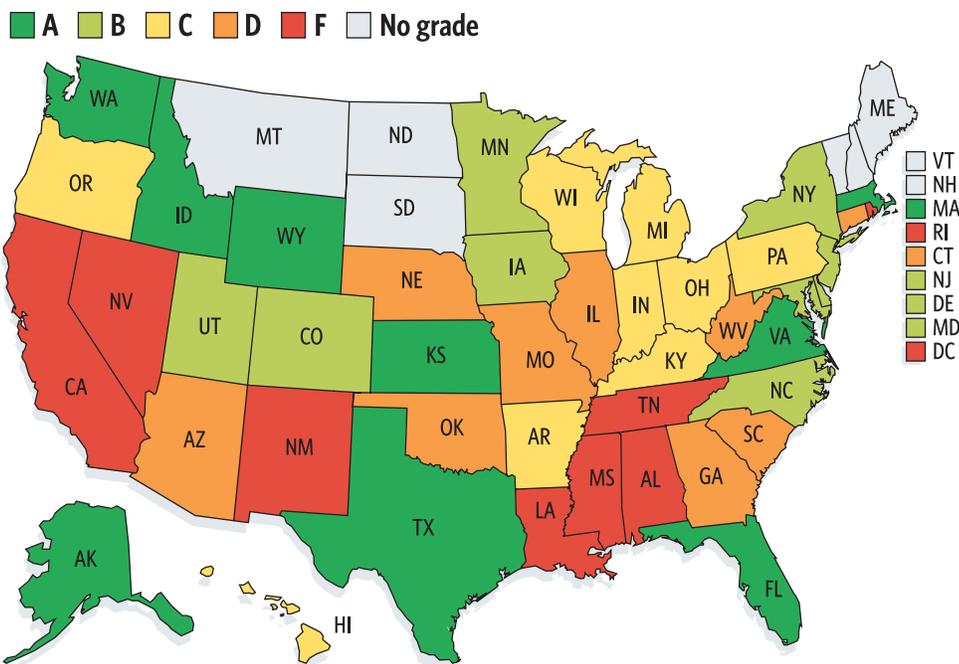
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress

2. Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

To produce a disadvantaged student achievement score for each state, we created several NAEP subgroup indices by averaging the percentage of 4th and 8th grade students scoring at or above the proficient level on math and reading on the 2005 NAEP for the African-American, Hispanic, and low-income subgroups.² We then averaged these indices to create a ranking and, as with overall student achievement, graded the states on a curve. Every state reported sufficient data for its low-income students. States that reported enough data for either African-Americans or Hispanics to meet NAEP sampling

requirements are included here; states that did not have adequate data for both subgroups did not receive a grade.

Under this methodology, we did not look at achievement gaps between subgroups. We believe that the most important question in judging the performance of minority and disadvantaged students in a state is what percentage are scoring at or above the proficient level, not how much distance there is between African-American, Hispanic, and low-income students and other subgroups.



Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

State	Grade	African-American student NAEP 2005 performance index	Percentage of all students in the state who are African-American	Hispanic student NAEP 2005 performance index	Percentage of all students in the state who are Hispanic	Low-income student NAEP 2005 performance index	Percentage of all students in the state who are low income
Wyoming*	A	‡	1%	20	9%	25	32%
Washington	A	22	6	15	13	22	36
Kansas	A	15	9	18	11	22	39
Alaska	A	20	5	21	4	14	29
Idaho*	A	‡	1	14	12	23	39
Texas	A	15	14	20	45	18	48
Massachusetts	A	18	9	14	12	22	28
Florida	A	12	24	22	23	18	47
Virginia	A	14	27	22	7	15	31
Utah*	B	‡	1	12	11	21	32
New Jersey	B	14	18	18	18	18	16
New York	B	13	20	16	20	20	18
Delaware	B	14	32	18	9	17	36
North Carolina	B	13	32	19	8	16	45
Iowa	B	12	5	15	5	21	31
Colorado	B	16	6	15	26	17	32
Minnesota	B	11	8	14	5	22	30
Maryland	B	12	38	22	7	12	32
Oregon	C	13	3	12	14	21	42
Ohio	C	11	17	17	2	18	31
Indiana	C	11	12	16	5	19	36
Kentucky**	C	12	10	‡	2	18	68
Hawaii*	C	‡	2	18	4	12	42
Pennsylvania	C	11	16	16	6	17	28
Arkansas	C	8	23	18	6	17	52
Wisconsin	C	8	10	18	6	17	29
Michigan	C	8	20	17	4	16	34
South Carolina**	D	11	41	‡	4	15	52
West Virginia**	D	12	5	‡	1	14	50
Oklahoma	D	9	11	14	8	16	54
Missouri**	D	9	18	‡	3	17	39
Georgia	D	11	38	15	8	12	48
Arizona	D	13	5	12	38	13	48
Illinois	D	9	21	15	18	13	37
Nebraska	D	8	7	11	11	18	35
Connecticut	D	10	14	13	15	13	26
New Mexico	F	‡	2	12	53	11	58
California	F	10	8	11	46	11	49
Nevada	F	9	10	12	29	11	29
Tennessee**	F	8	25	‡	3	13	42
Rhode Island	F	10	9	8	17	11	32
Louisiana**	F	8	48	‡	2	12	62
District of Columbia	F	6	84	12	9	6	66
Alabama**	F	7	36	‡	2	10	52
Mississippi**	F	6	51	‡	1	10	64
Maine***	‡	‡	2	‡	1	23	32
Montana***	‡	‡	1	‡	2	23	34
New Hampshire***	‡	‡	2	‡	3	21	17
North Dakota***	‡	‡	1	‡	2	24	29
South Dakota***	‡	‡	2	‡	2	23	30
Vermont***	‡	‡	1	‡	1	22	25

NOTE: The percentage of African-American, Hispanic, and low-income students in every state was listed for informational purposes only—the data were not used to calculate the final grades.

*Sampling requirements for African-American students were not met.

**Sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met.

***Sampling requirements for neither Hispanic nor African-American students were met.

‡Data did not meet NAEP sampling requirements.

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data

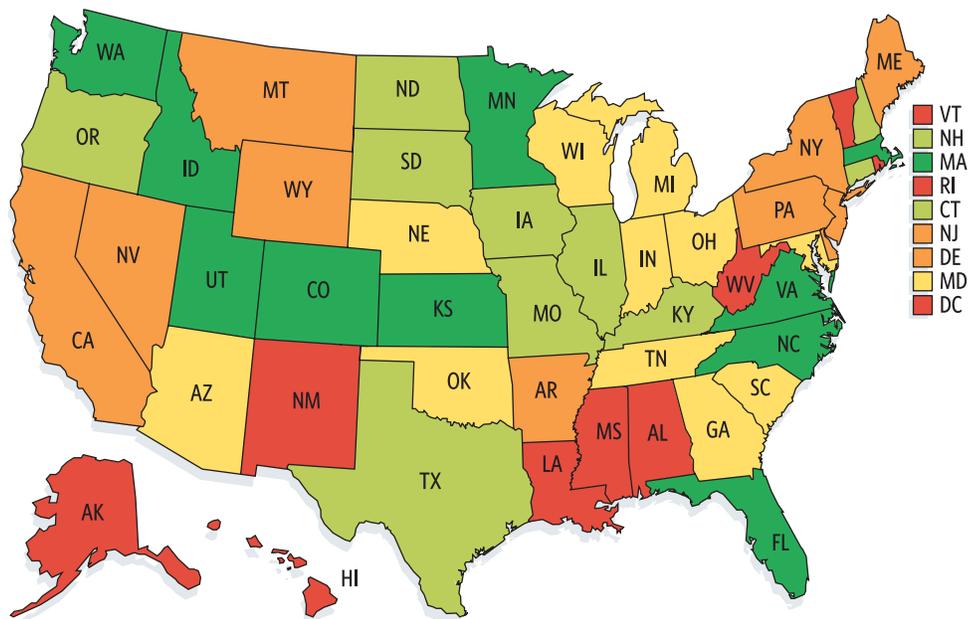
3. Return on Investment

To determine the return that various states get for their education expenditures, we created a return on investment index by dividing state expenditures into student achievement, after first controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living. Specifically, we divided the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level on the 4th and 8th grade NAEP reading

and math tests in 2003 by 2004 state expenditures. The expenditures were adjusted for cost of living and students' needs. We then graded the states on a curve.

If two states had the same expenditures and one state had better achievement than the other, the higher-achieving state received a higher index score.

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F



Return on Investment

State	Grade	NAEP 2003 performance index	Adjusted per pupil expenditures
Utah	A	32	\$4,671
North Carolina	A	34	5,698
Washington	A	34	6,132
Minnesota	A	40	7,350
Virginia	A	35	6,467
Colorado	A	35	6,732
Massachusetts	A	41	8,497
Kansas	A	36	7,581
Idaho	A	30	6,483
Florida	A	28	6,040
New Hampshire	B	39	8,509
Oregon	B	32	6,966
Texas	B	28	5,971
Missouri	B	32	6,856
North Dakota	B	35	7,734
Illinois	B	32	6,966
Kentucky	B	28	6,077
South Dakota	B	35	7,809
Iowa	B	35	7,740
Connecticut	B	39	8,971
Tennessee	C	24	5,599
Arizona	C	24	5,507
Wisconsin	C	35	8,205
Ohio	C	34	7,937
Indiana	C	33	7,770
South Carolina	C	27	6,398
Oklahoma	C	25	5,864
Maryland	C	31	7,488
Michigan	C	32	7,847
Nebraska	C	33	8,297
Georgia	C	25	6,491
Montana	D	35	8,905
Nevada	D	21	5,460
California	D	23	5,836
Pennsylvania	D	33	8,651
New Jersey	D	37	9,888
Arkansas	D	25	6,844
Wyoming	D	35	9,618
Delaware	D	30	8,384
Maine	D	34	9,635
New York	D	34	9,679
Vermont	F	38	11,159
Alabama	F	20	5,973
Rhode Island	F	28	8,711
Alaska	F	29	9,106
West Virginia	F	24	8,004
Louisiana	F	20	6,666
Mississippi	F	17	5,972
Hawaii	F	21	7,512
New Mexico	F	18	6,624
District of Columbia	F	9	8,546

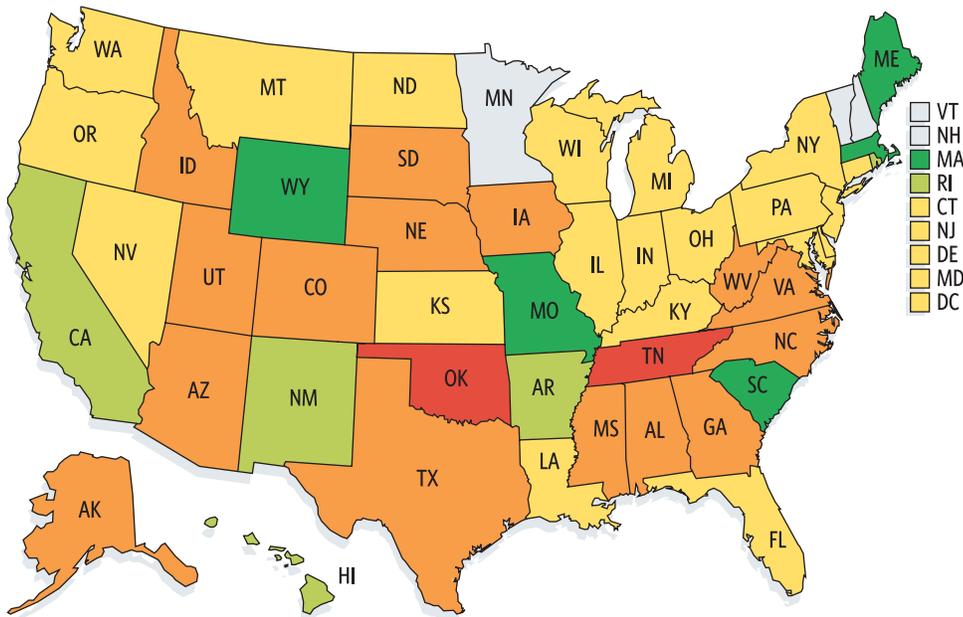
SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Current Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2003-04; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data; and Lori L. Taylor and William J. Fowler Jr., *A Comparable Wage Approach to Geographic Cost Adjustment*, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, June 6, 2006.

4. Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

To grade the states in this area, we depended on a study by Paul E. Peterson and Frederick M. Hess titled *Keeping an Eye on State Standards*. The authors calculated a grade for each state based on the difference between the percentage of students deemed proficient by the state and the percentage identified as proficient on the NAEP in 2005.

States that had large gaps did poorly; states that had small gaps received higher scores.³ Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Vermont did not test their students in the 4th or 8th grades in 2005, so we gave them hash marks (—). We also removed the pluses and minuses that had accompanied each state's grade in the original report.

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F ■ No grade



Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

State	Comparison of national and state student proficiency standards
Massachusetts	A
Maine	A
South Carolina	A
Wyoming	A
Missouri	A
Hawaii	B
California	B
Arkansas	B
Rhode Island	B
New Mexico	B
Kentucky	C
Montana	C
Florida	C
Nevada	C
Washington	C
New York	C
District of Columbia	C
Oregon	C
Pennsylvania	C
Ohio	C
New Jersey	C
North Dakota	C
Illinois	C
Louisiana	C
Connecticut	C
Maryland	C
Delaware	C
Indiana	C
Michigan	C
Kansas	C
Wisconsin	C
Iowa	D
Arizona	D
South Dakota	D
Utah	D
Alaska	D
Texas	D
Virginia	D
Idaho	D
Colorado	D
Nebraska	D
Alabama	D
Mississippi	D
Georgia	D
West Virginia	D
North Carolina	D
Oklahoma	F
Tennessee	F
Minnesota	—
New Hampshire	—
Vermont	—

—State did not receive a grade in this category.

SOURCE: Paul E. Peterson and Frederick M. Hess, "Keeping an Eye on State Standards: A Race to the Bottom." *Education Next*, Summer (2006): 28-29. The authors provided updated data on September 22, 2006.

5. Rigor of Standards

To grade the states in this category, we created a formula that takes into account the rigor of state academic standards, whether standards are aligned with college and workplace expectations, and whether the state has adopted rigorous high school exit exams. We then converted the numerical values produced by the formula into letter grades without using a curve.

State has high-quality English, math, and science standards

For almost a decade, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation has evaluated the quality, rigor, and specificity of each state's academic standards. As part of the project, Fordham taps a panel of academic experts to review the written standards, which are graded against a set of strict criteria. Fordham also gives states credit if they take certain curriculum approaches like including evolution in their science standards.⁴ We relied on Fordham's 2006 evaluation of the quality and rigor of each state's science, math, and English standards and converted Fordham's grades into numerical scores.

State has aligned high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations

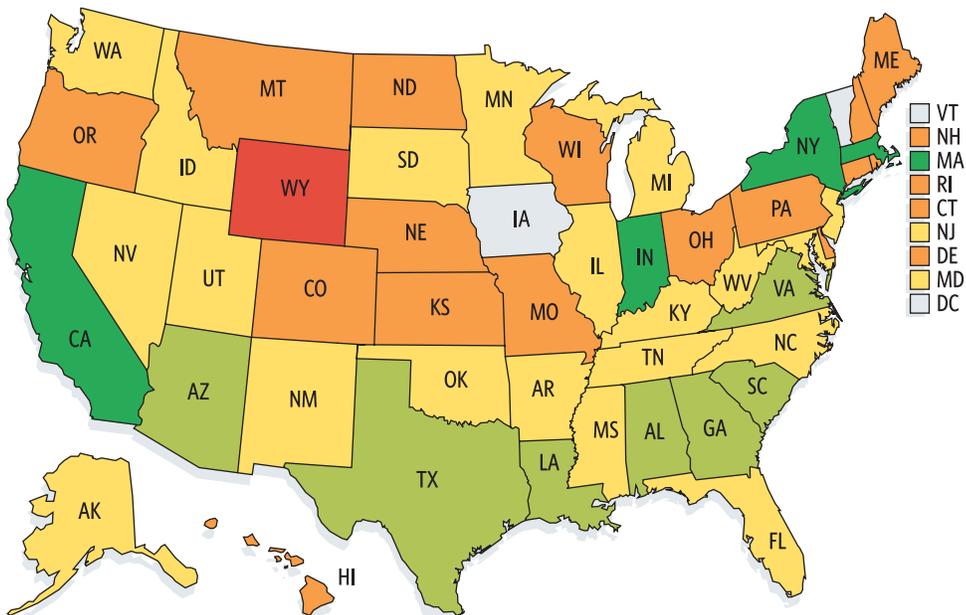
To understand what states have done in this regard, we used an indicator collected by Achieve's American

Diploma Project, a partnership of several national organizations and 26 states that aims to raise academic standards. According to the group's 2006 state survey, only eight states have taken the necessary steps to align their academic standards with college and workplace expectations. States that had a policy in place received full credit, while states that did not have a policy received a failing score. A dozen other states are planning to implement these procedures; we did not give them credit because it is difficult to determine how close they are to actually implementing the policy.

Graduation is contingent on passing statewide exit or end-of-course exams at the 10th grade level

To receive a high school diploma, students should demonstrate that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to pass a rigorous exam based on the state's high school academic standards. Such graduation-linked exit or end-of-course exams show that high school graduates are job ready and ensure that students and schools are held accountable for their performance. To grade the states on this indicator, we used information collected by the newspaper *Education Week* in 2005. States that had an exit exam policy in place received full credit, while states that did not have a policy received a failing score.

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F ■ No grade



Rigor of Standards

State	Grade	English standards	Math standards	Science standards	State has aligned high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations	Graduation contingent on performance on statewide exit or end-of-course exams at 10th grade level
New York	A	B	C	A	Yes	Yes
California	A	A	A	A		Yes
Indiana	A	A	A	A	Yes	
Massachusetts	A	A	A	A		Yes
Louisiana	B	A	C	B		Yes
Texas	B	B	C	F	Yes	Yes
Virginia	B	B	C	A		Yes
Georgia	B	B	B	B		Yes
South Carolina	B	B	D	A		Yes
Arizona	B	B	C	B		Yes
Alabama	B	A	B	F		Yes
Maryland	C	C	C	B		Yes
Nevada	C	B	C	D		Yes
New Jersey	C	C	D	B		Yes
South Dakota	C	B	C	D	Yes	
Kentucky	C	C	C	D	Yes	
Tennessee	C	D	D	B		Yes
Utah	C	C	D	C		Yes
Idaho	C	B	D	F		Yes
Mississippi	C	B	D	F		Yes
New Mexico	C	D	B	A		
Oklahoma	C	C	C	F	Yes	
Michigan	C	D	C	D	Yes	
Illinois	C	B	C	B		
North Carolina	C	B	C	B		
Arkansas	C	C	F	D	Yes	
Minnesota	C	B	D	B		
West Virginia	C	C	C	B		
Florida	C	C	F	F		Yes
Washington	C	F	F	C		Yes
Alaska	C	D	D	F		Yes
Colorado	D	C	D	B		
Ohio	D	C	D	B		class of 2007
North Dakota	D	C	C	D		
Pennsylvania	D	C	D	C		
Delaware	D	C	F	C		
Missouri	D	C	F	C		
Oregon	D	B	D	F		
Rhode Island	D	C	F	C		
Maine	D	C	D	D		
New Hampshire	D	B	F	F		
Nebraska	D	C	D	F		
Wisconsin	D	C	D	F		
Connecticut	D	F	F	C		
Hawaii	D	C	F	F		
Kansas	D	C	F	F		
Montana	D	F	D	F		
Wyoming	F	F	F	F		
District of Columbia	—	C	D	C		
Iowa	—	—	—	—		
Vermont	—	C	D	C		

—State did not receive a grade in this category.

SOURCES: Chester E. Finn Jr., Michael J. Petrilli, and Liam Julian, The State of State Standards, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, August 2006; *Closing the Expectations Gap*, February 2006; and Editorial Projects in Education, *Quality Counts 2006*, January 2006.

6. Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

To examine how well states are preparing graduates for college and the workplace, we examined the performance of the states in three areas that measure college readiness and also serve as an indirect proxy for workforce readiness: performance on Advanced Placement (AP) exams, high school graduation rates, and students' chances for college attendance by age 19. To grade the states, we averaged the indicators together and then distributed grades based on a curve.

AP quotient: students passing core AP tests divided by high school upperclassmen

The AP program offers challenging college-level courses to high school students, measuring their success by using rigorous exams on which a score of 3 out of 5 is considered a passing grade. To examine what states are doing to ensure college readiness, we created an "AP quotient" by first reporting the number of students passing AP exams in core subject areas. Next we divided the number of public school 11th and 12th graders in 2005 who passed AP Biology, AP Calculus AB, AP English Language, and AP U.S. History by the total number of public school 11th and 12th graders in the state that year. This approach has the desirable effect of rewarding states that work harder to have significant numbers of students pass AP exams without penalizing states that push large numbers of students to take challenging AP courses.

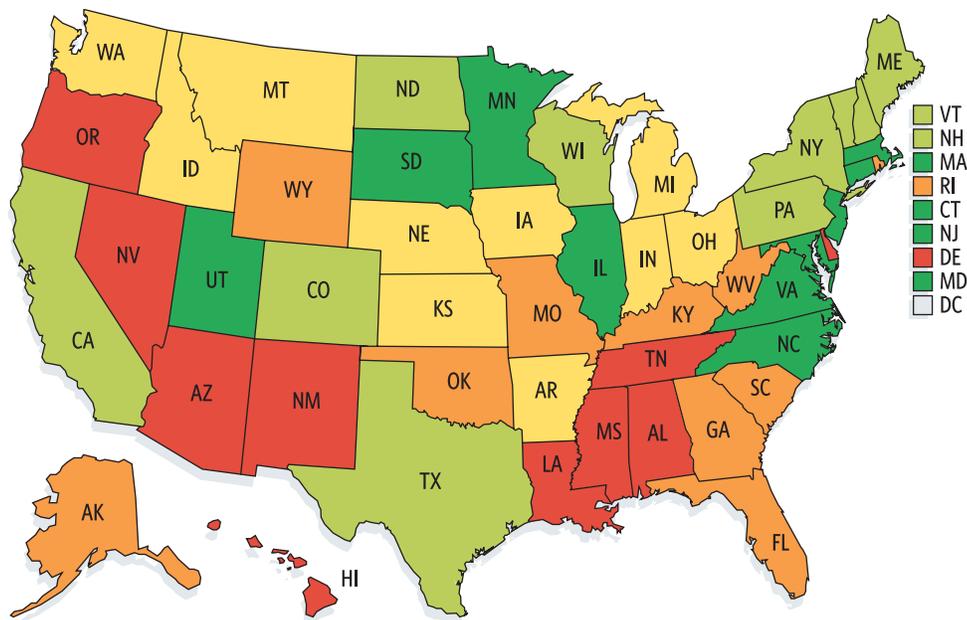
Percentage of students graduating from high school

For this project, we declined to use notoriously unreliable official state graduation rate data. Instead, we included an estimated four-year cohort graduation rate measure created by Christopher Swanson, the research director of *Education Week*. He calculated this data in 2006. The estimate relies on grade-by-grade enrollment counts from the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data to approximate how many 9th graders make it to graduation four years later.

Ninth graders' chances for college attendance by age 19

This information is compiled by Thomas Mortenson, a Senior Scholar at the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, and serves as a measure of students' persistence from high school to college. To calculate the figure, Mortenson looks at the number of fall first-time freshmen enrolled anywhere in the United States in 2004 and then divides by the number of 9th graders four years earlier in each state. The data do not account for high school transfers out of state or students who drop out of high school and earn a GED (General Education Diploma).

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F ■ No grade



Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

States	Grade	AP quotient: students passing core AP tests divided by high school upperclassmen	Percentage of students graduating from high school in four years with a regular diploma	Percentage of 9th graders who finish high school in four years and attend college
New Jersey	A	1.89	85%	54%
Connecticut	A	2.13	79	46
Massachusetts	A	2.12	72	47
Maryland	A	2.59	74	43
Virginia	A	2.48	75	42
Utah	A	1.92	77	35
Minnesota	A	1.01	79	55
North Carolina	A	1.91	66	41
South Dakota	A	1.14	75	56
Illinois	A	1.45	76	42
Vermont	B	1.46	81	36
Texas	B	1.94	67	35
New York	B	2.50	63	39
California	B	1.80	71	30
Wisconsin	B	1.30	81	46
Pennsylvania	B	1.02	79	46
Colorado	B	1.67	73	42
North Dakota	B	0.56	83	57
Maine	B	1.48	74	38
New Hampshire	B	1.06	78	42
Iowa	C	0.55	83	50
Indiana	C	1.20	73	43
Idaho	C	1.03	78	38
Arkansas	C	1.23	72	42
Nebraska	C	0.40	78	50
Montana	C	0.86	76	45
Kansas	C	0.86	75	46
Washington	C	1.35	68	30
Ohio	C	0.90	77	40
Michigan	C	1.04	66	40
Rhode Island	D	0.91	72	40
Wyoming	D	0.48	74	44
West Virginia	D	0.95	73	39
Alaska	D	1.45	64	28
Georgia	D	1.36	56	35
Oklahoma	D	1.01	71	39
Missouri	D	0.57	75	40
South Carolina	D	1.41	53	35
Florida	D	1.77	58	30
Kentucky	D	0.96	70	37
Delaware	F	1.26	61	36
Nevada	F	1.32	56	28
Arizona	F	0.85	70	31
Oregon	F	0.73	69	33
New Mexico	F	0.95	57	38
Tennessee	F	0.81	62	30
Louisiana	F	0.26	61	37
Alabama	F	0.66	61	37
Hawaii	F	0.74	64	33
Mississippi	F	0.39	61	35
District of Columbia	—	0.93	59	—

—State did not receive a grade in this category.

SOURCES: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, unpublished tabulations from College Board, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data; Editorial Projects in Education, *Diploma Counts 2006*, June 2006; and Thomas Mortensen, *Postsecondary Education Opportunity*, 2004. The author provided updated data on November 20, 2006.

7. 21st Century Teaching Force

We graded the states on their performance on the following four indicators using data from *Education Week* that were collected in 2005. If a state had all four policies, it received an A; if the state had three policies in place, it received a B; and so forth. States that had only pilot programs or future plans to implement such programs received no credit.

State requires teachers to pass basic tests

States should ensure the quality of their teaching pool by requiring a basic skills test of all incoming teachers. Numerous studies have shown that teachers with strong academic fundamentals help raise student achievement.⁵

State requires teachers to pass subject knowledge tests

There is also a growing consensus among education policymakers that teachers need strong content knowledge in the subjects they teach. To ensure that teachers enter the classroom with deep and relevant subject-matter expertise, states should test potential teachers and make sure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to teach students to reach high levels.

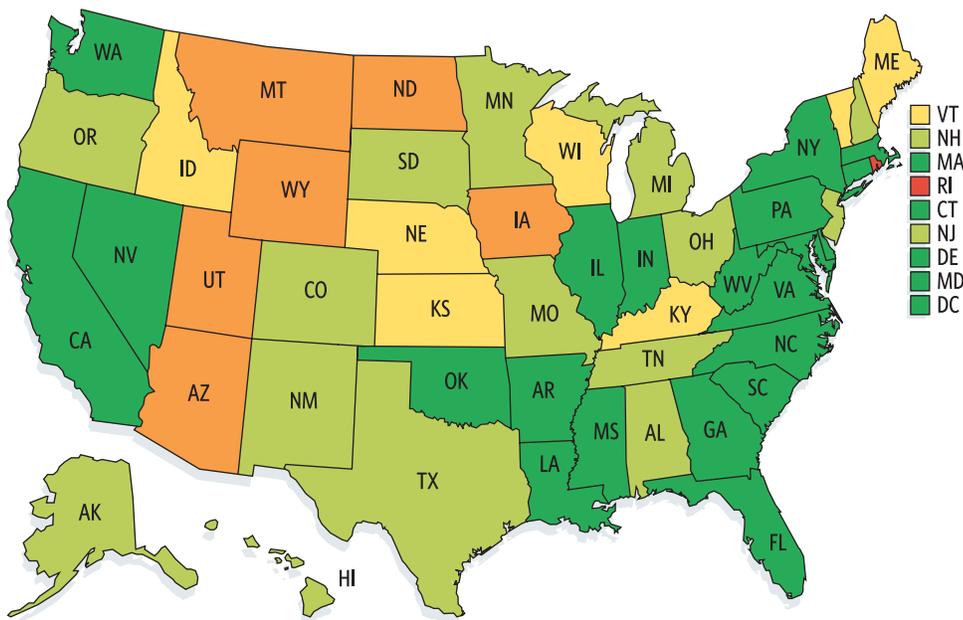
State has an alternative route program to recruit college graduates

Recruiting an effective teaching force, especially in areas like foreign languages, math, and science, is easier when states have sensibly designed programs for attracting nontraditional teachers. Alternative route programs can help attract second-career professionals and others with real-world experience who might not otherwise have pursued teaching.

State requires alternative route teachers to show subject matter expertise through test

Like conventionally prepared teachers, alternative route teachers should have to demonstrate their subject matter knowledge by passing a rigorous and appropriate assessment.

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F



21st Century Teaching Force

State	Grade	State requires teachers to pass written basic skills tests for beginning-teacher license	State requires high school teachers to pass written subject knowledge tests for beginning-teacher license	State has established an alternative route program to recruit college graduates	State requires participants in alternative routes to pass a subject matter test before teaching
Arkansas	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
California	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connecticut	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Delaware	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District of Columbia	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Florida	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Georgia	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Illinois	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indiana	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New York	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Virginia	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Washington	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
West Virginia	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alabama	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Alaska	B	Yes		Yes	Yes
Colorado	B		Yes	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Michigan	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Minnesota	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Missouri	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
New Hampshire	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
New Jersey	B		Yes	Yes	Yes
New Mexico	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Ohio	B		Yes	Yes	Yes
Oregon	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
South Dakota	B		Yes	Yes	Yes
Tennessee	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Texas	B		Yes	Yes	Yes
Idaho	C		Yes	Yes	
Kansas	C		Yes	Yes	
Kentucky	C		Yes	Yes	
Maine	C	Yes	Yes		
Nebraska	C	Yes		Yes	
Vermont	C	Yes	Yes		
Wisconsin	C	Yes	Yes	pilot	
Arizona	D		Yes	pilot	pilot
Iowa	D			Yes	
Montana	D			Yes	
North Dakota	D	Yes	2006-07		
Utah	D			Yes	
Wyoming	D			Yes	
Rhode Island	F				

SOURCE: Editorial Projects in Education, *Quality Counts 2006*, January 2006.

8. Flexibility in Management and Policy

To examine how well states manage their education system for schools, students, and parents, we examined three indicators and created a formula based on those indicators. We then converted the numerical values produced by the formula into letter grades without using a curve.

Strength of charter school law

Whatever the merits of any particular charter school model, the premise of charter schooling—heightened accountability for results coupled with enhanced flexibility—is clearly the future of American schooling. States that are pursuing this course aggressively—developing robust charter systems that include rigorous oversight and quality control—are equipping themselves for the new century. The data for this indicator come from a 2006 report from the Center for Education Reform (CER), an advocacy and research organization that evaluated each state’s charter law based upon strict criteria including equitable funding, number of charters allowed, and operational autonomy. We converted the CER grades into numerical values; states that did not have a charter school law received a failing score.

Whether state has established a virtual school

Schools in which instruction takes place over the Internet, also known as virtual or cyberschools, provide students, parents, and schools with choice and flexibility. Virtual schools are highly adaptive

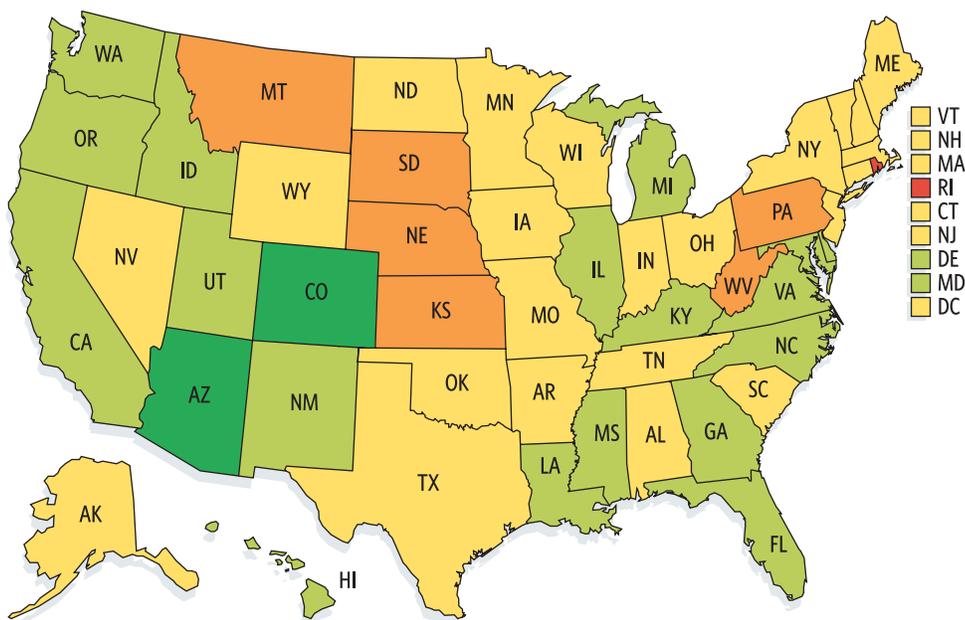
and offer states a potentially cost-effective way to reach a wide range of students, including those in rural areas, with advanced or specialized course work that might not otherwise be accessible to them. The data for this indicator come from an *Education Week* report published in 2006. States that had a policy in place received full credit; states that did not have a policy received a failing score.

Percentage of principals who report a major degree of influence over how school budgets will be spent and on new teacher hiring

Like other executives, principals need the authority to allocate resources within their organizations. It makes no sense to hold managers responsible for performance if they lack the ability to assemble their own teams or control the dollars they are asked to steward.

To examine this issue, we contracted with Richard Ingersoll, Professor of Education and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, to conduct an analysis of the 2004 Schools and Staffing Survey, a nationally representative survey of teachers administered every three years by the National Center for Education Statistics. Professor Ingersoll produced two indicators for our report, looking at the percentage of principals who reported a major degree of influence over school budgets and teacher hiring. This is the first time to our knowledge that these recent data have been published as part of a state-by-state report.

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F



Flexibility in Management and Policy

State	Grade	Strength of charter school law	State has established a virtual school	Percent of principals who report a major amount of influence over how school budget will be spent	Percent of principals who report a major amount of influence over new teacher hiring
Arizona	A	A	Yes	72%	94%
Colorado	A	B	Yes	83	96
Utah	B	C	Yes	85	97
Georgia	B	B	Yes	73	95
Michigan	B	A	Yes	62	85
Florida	B	B	Yes	69	92
Idaho	B	C	Yes	73	96
New Mexico	B	B	Yes	66	88
Hawaii	B	D	Yes	85	89
Kentucky	B	F	Yes	86	92
Delaware	B	A		83	93
Illinois	B	C	Yes	66	91
Louisiana	B	C	Yes	83	72
Maryland	B	D	Yes	74	90
Mississippi	B	F	Yes	75	94
Oregon	B	B		85	98
Virginia	B	D	Yes	70	92
Washington	B	F	Yes	75	94
North Carolina	B	B		84	99
California	B	A		77	84
Arkansas	C	C	Yes	53	85
Indiana	C	A		64	90
Minnesota	C	A		61	91
Nevada	C	C		81	94
Texas	C	C		78	95
Alabama	C	F	Yes	69	77
Wisconsin	C	B		66	94
New York	C	B		65	92
Iowa	C	F	Yes	54	87
Massachusetts	C	B		67	90
New Jersey	C	B		67	86
Alaska	C	D	Yes	62	68
South Carolina	C	C		72	89
New Hampshire	C	C		68	91
Connecticut	C	C		68	91
District of Columbia	C	A		67	65
Missouri	C	B		57	90
Vermont	C	F		75	96
Ohio	C	B		61	84
Wyoming	C	D		72	89
Tennessee	C	C		74	74
North Dakota	C	F	Yes	35	87
Maine	C	F		69	94
Oklahoma	C	B		46	90
Pennsylvania	D	B		62	70
Kansas	D	D		55	94
Nebraska	D	F		58	93
Montana	D	F		63	82
South Dakota	D	F		49	91
West Virginia	D	F	Yes	62	29
Rhode Island	F	D		48	55

SOURCES: Center for Education Reform, *Charter School Laws Across the States: Ranking and Scorecard*, February 2006; Editorial Projects in Education, *Technology Counts 2006*, May 2006; and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Schools and Staffing Survey 2003-2004*. Unpublished tabulations by Richard Ingersoll, University of Pennsylvania, October 2006.

Data Quality

State	Grade	Data Quality Index
Arkansas	A	9
Florida	A	9
Louisiana	A	9
Texas	A	9
Utah	A	9
Delaware	A	8
Georgia	A	8
Hawaii	A	8
Washington	A	8
West Virginia	A	8
Alabama	B	7
Alaska	B	7
Connecticut	B	7
Kentucky	B	7
Massachusetts	B	7
Mississippi	B	7
Nevada	B	7
New Mexico	B	7
North Dakota	B	7
Ohio	B	7
Tennessee	B	7
Wisconsin	B	7
Wyoming	B	7
Colorado	C	6
Kansas	C	6
Minnesota	C	6
Oregon	C	6
Vermont	C	6
Virginia	C	6
Arizona	C	5
Iowa	C	5
Nebraska	C	5
New Hampshire	C	5
New York	C	5
North Carolina	C	5
Pennsylvania	C	5
Rhode Island	C	5
South Carolina	C	5
South Dakota	C	5
California	D	4
District of Columbia*	D	4
Indiana	D	4
Michigan	D	4
Missouri	D	4
Montana	D	4
Oklahoma	D	4
Illinois	F	3
Maine	F	3
Maryland	F	3
Idaho	F	1
New Jersey	F	1

*Data for the District of Columbia came from the 2005 Data Quality Campaign survey.
SOURCE: Data Quality Campaign, *Data Quality Index*, 2006.

Conclusion

Any effort to grade states on school reform and performance quickly confronts the challenge that even today—after a massive amount of attention to educational information and research in recent years—the state of education data remains abysmal. No business could be run with such inadequate information. Can we imagine Southwest Airlines reshaping the airline industry without precise metrics on cost per passenger mile? Could General Electric have employed its highly productive defect-reduction approach so efficiently without rigorous employee evaluations and detailed data on error rates?

Yet such data continue to elude educational leaders. Not a single state can provide systematic data on how many teachers are being rewarded for essential skills or the quality of their work, how cost effective a remedial program in one district is compared with a similar program in another district, or how many teachers were terminated last year for poor performance. Education policymakers have invested great energy in gathering student achievement data, while paying inadequate attention to developing the kind of data essential to driving organizational improvement. The U.S. Department of Education and the states must do much more to collect and report crucial data on the performance of schools, educators, and students.

Obtaining better data is only a first step, of course. To boost student achievement and thus help individual Americans achieve economic success and mobility in the 21st century workforce, we need to fundamentally rethink how we provide education in this country.

That will require nothing less than restructuring the bureaucratic apparatus of American education. It will mean ensuring that states are honest about how well their students are performing and about the return that they are getting on their education expenditures. It will mean raising standards for all students and changing how teachers are hired and compensated. It will mean creating sensible incentives to reward principals for managing their schools effectively and then giving them the tools to do so. And it will mean creating opportunities for dynamic problem solving and the reinvention of outmoded routines, whether in the form of more flexible charter school laws, greater openness to online delivery of educational content, or other approaches that are still being developed.

Business leaders have too often been reluctant to wade into the substance of schooling. They have funded reform efforts, chaired commissions, and provided moral support, but they have been leery of seeming to promote “business” solutions for schooling. Nevertheless, much of what ails schooling today is a lack of management savvy, information, and organizational discipline. These are skills that business leaders practice every day. Business leaders can support educators’ efforts to reform curricula, teaching practices, and more by providing leadership and know-how in refashioning schools into accountable, flexible, high-achieving organizations.

Business leaders can support educators’ efforts to reform curricula, teaching practices, and more by providing leadership and know-how in refashioning schools into accountable, flexible, high-achieving organizations.

Such changes will happen neither quickly nor easily. Reform needs to be rigorous and well developed to best meet the needs of all students. Further, it will require a willingness to push both political and educational leaders to upend familiar arrangements and comfortable routines. State and local chambers are critical to the success of education reform efforts. We know that success is possible—we have seen glimmers of it here and there as we’ve looked across the nation—and we know that the opportunity for our children and our children’s children to live the American dream will depend on whether, and how, we rise to the challenges ahead.

Endnotes

1. "Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: Research Review." *The Center for Public Education*, November 1, 2005, <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org>.
2. Low-income is defined by students eligible for free- and reduced-priced lunch. To qualify for the federal National School Lunch Program, children need to come from families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level. Those students with incomes between 130% and 185% of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. Until June 2007, 130% of the poverty level is \$26,000 for a family of four; 185% is \$37,000. For more information, see the U.S. Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/AboutLunch/NSLPFactSheet.pdf>.
3. Paul E. Peterson and Frederick M. Hess, "Keeping an Eye on State Standards: A Race to the Bottom." *Education Next*, Summer 2006: 28-29. The authors provided updated data on September 22, 2006.
4. Chester E. Finn, Jr., Michael J. Petrilli, and Liam Julian, "The State of State Standards 2006," The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2006, <http://www.edexcellence.net>.
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