# 2010 State School Report Card 

## A state-by-state analysis of learning, efficiency, and standards

## By Herbert J. Walberg and Marc Oestreich ${ }^{1}$

## 1. Introduction

A Nation at Risk ${ }^{2}$ pointed out more than 25 years ago that the poor quality of public schools in the United States is a threat to the continuing prosperity of the country. Despite substantially increased spending and many reforms, the failure of today's school system to provide a quality education for all students poses an even greater threat to the nation.

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American students' achievement scores on international tests have been relatively poor and stagnant for the past quarter-century, while per-pupil spending increased by more than

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65 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars. ${ }^{3}$ The 2009 Digest of Education Statistics shows employment in K-12 education nearly doubled, while enrollment rose by less than 9 percent, over the past 40 years. ${ }^{4}$ School failure and inefficiency, moreover, are much better known today than in past decades. In a national survey, less than 20 percent of Americans gave the nation's schools a grade of "A" or "B."5

State governments bear the major responsibility for public schools, which should make a 50 -state ranking of school performance of keen interest to legislators, citizens, educators, and parents. This report presents such a ranking based on four indices of school performance:

1. learning
2. efficiency
3. standards
4. overall performance

This report brings the information together and uses it to grade the states according to learning progress, progress in relation to spending, and state standards.

The data on which these indices are based have been separately published on hundreds of somewhat-inaccessible-pages by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Educational Statistics, and several think tanks. This report brings the information together and uses it to grade the states according to learning progress, progress in relation to spending, and state standards.

Part 2 of this report presents the methodology used to create the indices and grade the 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Part 3 reports the results, giving each state a grade for each of the three indices and a final grade for overall performance. Part 4 briefly discusses the policy implications of the findings. The appendix provides data used in calculating the indices.

[^1]
## 2. Methodology

The methodology used to construct the four indices used in this report is explained below. Internet links for the data sources refer the reader to the original data used for such measures as reading and mathematics proficiency. Much of the data used in our calculations appear in the appendix.

## A. Learning

This index is based on gains (or losses) in test scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics and reading tests in each state from 2005 to 2009 - what we call time gain - and, to measure typical recent progress, the grade gain in NAEP proficiency between 4th graders and 8th graders in 2009, the latest year for which data were available.

These changes and differences are preferred to the states' status at a single point in time, the index used by some other rankings of states, because achievement proficiency is determined to a great extent by family demographics such as socioeconomic status

Some states may be making exemplary progress but still be far behind other states, which ought not to count against that state's overall grade. rather than by the effectiveness of the state's schools. ${ }^{6}$ Some states may be making exemplary progress but still be far behind other states, which ought not to count against that state's overall grade. A fast rate of improvement over the long run would eventually put lagging states in leading positions. The present study assesses recent progress and makes no claim to assess long-run, decades-long progress in the past or future.

An aggregate score for time gain was created by summing average math and reading scores in each state. ${ }^{7}$ Aggregate scores for Grade 4 students in 2005 were subtracted from aggregate scores for Grade 8 students in 2009. The resulting number was then assigned a rank ( 1 being greatest gain and 51 being least).

The grade gain indicator uses a similar calculation, but uses only data from the 2009 NAEP assessment. Aggregate math and reading scores for Grade 4 students were subtracted from

[^2]aggregate math and reading scores for Grade 8 students. The resulting number was then assigned a rank ( 1 being largest difference and 51 being least).

## B. Efficiency

Efficiency is an index of outcomes relative to how much each state spends per student adjusted for state cost of living. Five indices of efficiency were used:

1. Cost per graduate
2. Cost per student
3. Cost per unit of learning gain over time
4. Cost per unit of learning gain between grades
5. Ratio of teachers to staff

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These rankings are summed and divided by five, and their average was used to determine a final 1-51 rank.

Per Graduate - The National Center for Education Statistics' report on 2007 public school expenditures provided a measure of total spending on education in each state. ${ }^{8}$

The data were adjusted by a per-state cost of living index. ${ }^{9}$ The cost of living index was expressed as a percentage of the mean score and its inverse multiplied by each state's total expenditures to create an adjusted spending figure. The resulting number - "adjusted state expenditures" - was divided by the number of public school diplomas issued by each state, as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics in $2007^{10}$, to calculate a per-graduate spending indicator. The indicator is assigned a 1-51 rank (best to worst).

[^3]Per Pupil - To find a per-pupil spending indicator, the adjusted state expenditures were divided by total public school enrollment figures reported by the National Center for Education Statistics in 2009. ${ }^{11}$ The indicator was assigned a 1-51 rank (best to worst).

Per Unit of Learning over Time - To find an efficiency per time indicator, the adjusted state expenditures were divided by the time gain measure from the achievement analysis. The indicator was assigned a 1-51 rank (best to worst).

Per Unit of Learning Between Grades - To find an efficiency per grade indicator, the adjusted state expenditures were divided by the grade gain measure from the achievement analysis above. The indicator was assigned a 1-51 rank (best to worst).

Ratio of Teachers to Staff - The National Center for Education Statistics' 2009 report ${ }^{12}$ includes both the number of public school teachers per state and the number of non-teaching staff, including administrators. The raw indicator (before ranking) was expressed as a ratio (teachers divided by all staff) and assigned a 1-51 rank (best to worst, fewer staff per teacher being considered desirable).

## C. Standards

State standards are indicated by an average of two rankings. The first, calculated by Paul Peterson at Education Next (EdNext), the

State standards are indicated by an average of two rankings. Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Government and director of the Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard University, ranks state standards as of 2009 according to how they compare to NAEP test scores for the state. ${ }^{13}$ To the extent that a state claimed higher proficiency levels than the national test score results reveal, the state's standard is taken as commensurately lower. For example, if the state claimed 70 percent of its students were proficient, but if the NAEP test scores showed only 25 percent were proficient, the state ranks relatively low in Peterson's report.

[^4]The second indicator is a rank from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, which assigns scores to each state based on the rigor and content of its math, reading, and science standards. ${ }^{14}$ The institute has, for more than a decade, been examining and grading state standards; its most recent assessment, published in 2010, is used here.

The standards category is calculated as a 1-51 ranking of the averages of the two indicators. Each state is ranked twice; the ranks are summed and divided by two; and the concluding number is assigned a final 1-51 rank.

## D. Overall

A composite score was calculated for each state using the average of the three individual rankings with no differential weighting. Each state's rankings for learning, efficiency, and standards were summed, divided by three, and ranked from 1-51 (with 1 being most desirable).

[^5]
## 3. Results and Rankings

## A. Learning

Table 1 ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia according to the amount of learning taking place in the state's schools. Ties are indicated by more than one state having the same ranking. Each state and the District of Columbia is assigned a letter grade of A to F based on a curve with the ten highest-scorers getting As, the next ten getting Bs, and so on until the final 11 receive Fs.

Of the top ten states, seven are west of the Mississippi-Arizona at the top, followed by South Dakota, Montana, Alaska, Oregon, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The non-western states in the top ten are New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Illinois.

Starting with West Virginia in last place, the bottom states in reverse rank order are Florida, Arkansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Delaware, Virginia, California, New York, and Oklahoma. Half of these are in the South.

| Ranking of States by Learning Achievement |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| A | B | C | D | F |
| 1. Arizona | 11. Missouri | 21. New Mexico | 31. Georgia | 41. Oklahoma |
| 2. South Dakota | 12. Vermont | 22. Idaho | 31. Maine | 42. New York |
| 3. Montana | 13. Washington | 23. Tennessee | 31. Nevada | 43. California |
| 4. Alaska | 14. Wisconsin | 24. Wyoming | 31. New Hampshire | 43. Virginia |
| 5. Oregon | 15. Nebraska | 25. Kentucky | 35. District of Columbia | 45. Delaware |
| 6. New Jersey | 16. Maryland | 26. Kansas | 36. lowa | 46. Rhode Island |
| 6. Pennsylvania | 17. Indiana | 27. Ohio | 37. Alabama | 47. North Carolina |
| 8. Illinois | 18. Massachusetts | 27. Louisiana | 37. Hawaii | 48. Mississippi |
| 9. North Dakota | 19. Utah | 29. Colorado | 39. South Carolina | 49. Arkansas |
| 10. Minnesota | 20. Connecticut | 30. Texas | 40. Michigan | 50. Florida |
|  |  |  |  | 51. West Virginia |

## B. Efficiency

Table 2 ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia according to their relative efficiency in producing the learning outcomes ranked in Table 1. It shows Hawaii leading the states. Seven of the other top ten states are also west of the Mississippi; Tennessee and North Carolina are the remaining two states. Of the 11 states receiving a grade of F , eight are located along the Atlantic coast. Wyoming, however, was the least efficient state.

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

It may seem surprising that the much-criticized California school system ranks fourth. Two reasons may account for its high efficiency: California spends surprisingly little per student, and its cost per high school graduate is among the lowest of all states - about half the cost of the District of Columbia.

It is noteworthy that Hawaii educates students at less than half the cost of the least-efficient states, such as Florida, New York, and Wyoming. The District of Columbia, with the only public school system for which the federal government is ultimately responsible, graduates students at more than twice the cost of Hawaii ( $\$ 465,000$ vs. $\$ 202,000$ ).

Efficient states, like Hawaii, Idaho, Utah, California, and South Dakota, provide models for other states. On average, their schools perform relatively well, at relatively low cost.

## C. Standards

Table 3 ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia according to the quality of their academic standards. The top ten states are located in all parts of the country. Massachusetts, California, and the state of Washington rank in the top ten of both indicators used to rank the quality of academic standards. Colorado, Florida, Minnesota, Indiana, Oklahoma, Hawaii, and Maine are the other top ten states in the composite index. The Midwest dominates the 10 worst states with five of the six worst states: Kansas, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Nebraska.

| Table 3 <br> Ranking of States by the Quality of Academic Standards |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| A | B | C | D | F |
| 1. Massachusetts | 11. New Jersey | 21. Arizona | 30. Louisiana | 40. South Carolina |
| 2. California | 12. Delaware | 21. Mississippi | 32. Kentucky | 42. Connecticut |
| 3. Washington | 13. New Hampshire | 21. Ohio | 32. Virginia | 42. Montana |
| 4. Colorado | 13. New Mexico | 24. South Dakota | 34. North Dakota | 44. North Carolina |
| 5. Florida | 15. Missouri | 25. Rhode Island | 35. Maryland | 44. Pennsylvania |
| 5. Minnesota | 16. West Virginia | 26. New York | 35. Wyoming | 46. Kansas |
| 7. Indiana | 17. Nevada | 27. Georgia | 37. Arkansas | 47. Illinois |
| 8. Oklahoma | 17. Oregon | 28. Texas | 38. Tennessee | 48. Iowa |
| 9. Hawaii | 17. Utah | 28. Vermont | 39. Michigan | 49. Wisconsin |
| 10. Maine | 20. District of Columbia | 30. Alabama | 40. Idaho | 50. Alaska |
|  |  |  |  | 51. Nebraska |

## D. Overall

Table 4 ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia according to the overall quality of their $\mathrm{K}-12$ education systems using an average of the ranks reported in the three earlier tables. A high rank requires a state to show substantial learning progress at relatively low cost and to hold itself to high standards.

Arizona, Washington, South Dakota, Oregon, and Utah—five Western states-have the highest ranks and consistently rank in the top half of states among indices. Also receiving "A" grades are Minnesota, Missouri, Hawaii, Massachusetts, and California.

The five states that tended to make least learning progress, to be most inefficient, and to have poor academic standards include the jointly worst-ranked Virginia and Arkansas together with Michigan, New York, and Wyoming.

| Ranking of States by Overall Achievement |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| A | Table 4 |  |  |  |
| B | C | D | F |  |
| 1. Arizona | 9. Colorado | 21. Tennessee | 31. Pennsylvania | 41. District of Columbia |
| 1. Washington | 12. Montana | 22. Maryland | 31. Wisconsin | 42. Nebraska |
| 3. South Dakota | 13. North Dakota | 22. New Hampshire | 33. Kentucky | 43. South Carolina |
| 4. Oregon | 13. New Mexico | 24. Illinois | 34. West Virginia | 43. Rhode Island |
| 5. Utah | 15. Oklahoma | 25. Vermont | 35. Kansas | 43. lowa |
| 6. Minnesota | 16. Indiana | 26. Mississippi | 36. Florida | 46. Connecticut |
| 7. Missouri | 17. New Jersey | 27. Alabama | 37. Ohio | 47. Wyoming |
| 8. Hawaii | 18. Nevada | 28. Alaska | 38. North Carolina | 48. New York |
| 9. Massachusetts | 19. Maine | 28. Louisiana | 39. Georgia | 49. Michigan |
| 9. California | 20. Idaho | 30. Texas | 40. Delaware | 50. Arkansas |
|  |  |  |  | 50. Virginia |

California, the largest state when ranked by population with 37 million residents in 2009, tied for ninth in overall performance. Next-largest Texas ranked 30th, then New York at 48th, Florida at 36th, and Illinois, with 13 million residents, at 24th. Neither the large states nor those with small populations, such as New Mexico with 2 million residents or Nevada, Utah, Kansas, and Arkansas with 2.5 million, showed any consistent advantage.

## 4. Policy Implications

The present study shows that some states - Arizona, South Dakota, Washington, Oregon, and Utah, to name the top five -- are doing better than others in achieving learning outcomes, spending taxpayers' money efficiently on schools, and holding themselves to high standards. If the United States is to maintain its traditions of relative prosperity and high economic growth, more states need to follow the lead of these high-performers.

Other states - Virginia, Arkansas, Michigan, New York, and Wyoming, to name the bottom five - are plainly doing worse. Students in these states tend to achieve less than would be expected, and the schools are high-cost and have weak standards. Parents and taxpayers in those states - indeed, in any

> If the United States is to maintain its traditions of relative prosperity and high economic growth, more states need to follow the lead of these high-performing states.
of the states receiving grades lower than an
"A" - ought to be upset and demanding change.
What are the highest-ranking states doing right? While there is a voluminous literature that purports to describe "what works" in K-12 schooling, there is actually very little empirical data on why some states achieve more or are more efficient achievers than other states. The closest we have come to finding a 50 -state study of this kind is the Education Freedom Index, last updated in 2001 by Jay Greene, an endowed professor of education reform at the University of Arkansas, who found that the greater the degree of school choice within a state, the better its achievement. ${ }^{15}$

Greene's index is based on the percentage of charter schools in the state, the freedom of parents to send their children to schools outside their home school districts, the percentage of students enrolled in voucher programs, the size of tax credits for parents' private school expenses, parents' freedom to home-school their children, and the percentage of home-schooled children in the state. Greene statistically adjusted differences among states in median household income, per-pupil spending, previous achievement test scores, and the percentage of ethnic minorities in the state.

According to Greene, "if a state could improve its Education Freedom Index Score by one point, we would expect that an additional $4.1 \%$ of its students would perform proficiently on the NAEP math test. ${ }^{, 16}$ Per-student spending, per-capita income, and other factors were statistically controlled; the states with superior achievement did not excel because they spend more on each student or because they have higher average state incomes.

[^6]> A recent and promising innovation to accelerate school choice is the "Parent Trigger," legislation passed by the California legislature and signed into law in January 2010.

Greene's work corroborates many smaller-scale, within-state comparative studies of school choice including those of charter schools, private schools, and vouchers that enable parents to send their children to schools of their choice rather than being restricted by school districts to an assigned school ${ }^{17}$ Private and charter schools cost less, on average, than public schools (charter schools cost on average about 80 percent of nearby traditional public schools), while their students learn more than average. There is evidence, moreover, that competition from choice schools prompts traditional public schools to improve. ${ }^{18}$

Even so, ten states have no legislative provision for charter schools and other states place caps on the number of charter schools. Relatively few states give parents vouchers or tax credits to enable their children to attend private schools, though the number and size of such programs are growing. ${ }^{19}$

A recent and promising innovation to accelerate school choice is the "Parent Trigger," legislation passed by the California legislature and signed into law in January 2010. The law allows parents whose children attend a failing public school to sign a petition demanding immediate reform of their school. If more than half of the parents sign the petition, the school district must either close the school and allow parents to choose another public school, convert the failing school into a charter school, or implement one of two other school reform plans ("turn-around" or "transformation") described by the federal Race to the Top legislation. ${ }^{20}$ If

[^7]Parent Trigger legislation were adopted in other states, the number of charter schools probably would increase dramatically.

Researchers at The Heartland Institute have proposed replacing the "turn-around" and "transformation" options of California's Parent Trigger with a provision that would grant parents vouchers or scholarships to pay for tuition at independent, parochial, or other public schools for their children. ${ }^{21}$ Such a

We hope the results reported here will motivate legislators, governors, and others to further assess their states' learning progress and standards and to make the changes needed. revised Parent Trigger could boost dramatically the number of students participating in school voucher programs. Based on Greene's work and now ours, this outcome is likely to improve student achievement and possibly efficiency and overall performance. Given the increasing inefficiency of traditional public schools and slow pace of school reform over the past half-century, this idea might be a much-needed breakthrough for school reformers nationwide.

We hope the results reported here will motivate legislators, governors, and others to further assess their states' learning progress and standards and to make the changes needed to substantially improve student proficiency and benefit the nation as a whole.

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## About the Authors

Herbert J. Walberg is distinguished visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and chief scientific advisor to the U.S. Department of Education-sponsored Center on Innovation and Improvement. He has written and edited more than 65 books and written some 350 articles on such topics as school choice, the psychology of learning, testing and evaluation, and exceptional human accomplishments. He served as a professor at Harvard University and the University of Illinois at Chicago for 35 years after earning a Ph.D. in educational psychology at The University of Chicago. Walberg has given invited lectures in Australia, Belgium, China, England, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, the United States, and Venezuela. He has frequently testified before congressional committees, state legislatures, and federal courts. He is the only American to have served on the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and the presidentially appointed National Board for Educational Sciences. He has served on seven boards, including that of the California-based Foundation for Teaching Economics. He currently chairs the boards of the Beck Foundation and The Heartland Institute.

Marc Oestreich is legislative specialist on education and telecommunications at The Heartland Institute, where his responsibilities include interacting with elected officials and staff on those issues, tracking new legislation, and drafting responses to emerging issues. Prior to joining Heartland he was a graduate student at Purdue University studying political psychology and education policy.

## Appendix

## Data Used in Making the Final Calculations

|  | Achievement |  | Efficiency |  |  |  |  | Standards |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Time Gain | Grade Gain | Cost Per Graduate | Cost Per Pupil | Cost Per Time Gain | Cost Per Grade Gain | Teacher/ Other Staff | EdNext | Fordham |
| Alabama | 91 | 79 | \$181,809.00 | \$9,498 | \$119.11 | \$136 | 0.82 | 48 | 9 |
| Alaska | 96 | 94 | \$252,096.67 | \$14,749 | \$119.82 | \$122 | 0.85 | 40 | 45 |
| Arizona | 98 | 95 | \$169,496.01 | \$8,721 | \$89.09 | \$92 | 1.07 | 35 | 12 |
| Arkansas | 81 | 80 | \$170,003.18 | \$9,641 | \$137.03 | \$139 | 0.93 | 30 | 32 |
| California | 86 | 82 | \$193,322.36 | \$10,869 | \$100.10 | \$106 | 1.10 | 8 | 1 |
| Colorado | 90 | 84 | \$175,619.94 | \$9,993 | \$114.92 | \$123 | 0.93 | 3 | 16 |
| Connecticut | 93 | 87 | \$243,959.88 | \$16,050 | \$140.53 | \$150 | 0.83 | 28 | 38 |
| Delaware | 83 | 84 | \$239,205.53 | \$14,061 | \$175.44 | \$174 | 1.12 | 37 | 32 |
| District of Columbia | 94 | 75 | \$464,980.34 | \$17,456 | \$140.28 | \$177 | 1.03 | 14 | 1 |
| Florida | 85 | 76 | \$207,980.39 | \$11,097 | \$138.55 | \$155 | 1.05 | 17 | 4 |
| Georgia | 90 | 84 | \$221,825.53 | \$10,466 | \$131.72 | \$141 | 0.99 | 49 | 4 |
| Hawaii | 89 | 82 | \$201,891.61 | \$12,416 | \$89.50 | \$97 | 1.11 | 9 | 22 |
| Idaho | 89 | 90 | \$132,029.59 | \$7,880 | \$100.79 | \$99 | 1.24 | 45 | 20 |
| Illinois | 97 | 89 | \$176,646.03 | \$10,887 | \$119.67 | \$130 | 1.75 | 43 | 38 |
| Indiana | 94 | 87 | \$180,490.11 | \$10,326 | \$120.20 | \$130 | 0.81 | 24 | 1 |
| Iowa | 88 | 85 | \$145,444.49 | \$10,232 | \$127.51 | \$133 | 1.01 | 38 | 45 |
| Kansas | 89 | 86 | \$161,356.85 | \$10,385 | \$132.91 | \$138 | 1.87 | 42 | 38 |
| Kentucky | 95 | 82 | \$161,240.06 | \$9,463 | \$116.92 | \$136 | 0.77 | 20 | 38 |
| Louisiana | 86 | 89 | \$197,580.76 | \$9,943 | \$124.07 | \$121 | 0.95 | 41 | 16 |
| Maine | 89 | 86 | \$182,238.11 | \$12,212 | \$120.42 | \$125 | 0.71 | 11 | 22 |
| Maryland | 97 | 86 | \$200,161.29 | \$13,624 | \$116.67 | \$132 | 1.03 | 32 | 29 |
| Massachusetts | 94 | 86 | \$209,036.55 | \$13,872 | \$131.77 | \$143 | 1.35 | 1 | 4 |
| Michigan | 84 | 86 | \$175,105.57 | \$11,569 | \$146.93 | \$144 | 0.85 | 44 | 20 |
| Minnesota | 93 | 91 | \$160,767.41 | \$11,420 | \$125.88 | \$128 | 0.96 | 5 | 16 |
| Mississippi | 85 | 79 | \$167,739.29 | \$8,210 | \$109.98 | \$119 | 0.89 | 18 | 29 |
| Missouri | 96 | 88 | \$152,123.20 | \$9,997 | \$119.11 | \$128 | 1.05 | 2 | 38 |
| Montana | 97 | 93 | \$142,257.91 | \$10,082 | \$107.30 | \$112 | 1.21 | 15 | 51 |


|  | Achievement |  | Efficiency |  |  |  |  | Standards |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Time Gain | Grade Gain | Cost Per Graduate | Cost Per Pupil | Cost Per Time Gain | Cost Per Grade Gain | Teacher/ Other Staff | EdNext | Fordham |
| Nebraska | 92 | 90 | \$163,028.97 | \$11,124 | \$137.30 | \$141 | 1.01 | 50 | 38 |
| Nevada | 91 | 82 | \$258,541.07 | \$9,908 | \$110.95 | \$124 | 1.93 | 21 | 22 |
| New Hampshire | 90 | 83 | \$173,412.05 | \$12,483 | \$123.61 | \$134 | 0.91 | 7 | 32 |
| New Jersey | 98 | 90 | \$265,693.09 | \$17,877 | \$149.37 | \$164 | 1.24 | 12 | 22 |
| New Mexico | 93 | 86 | \$200,689.49 | \$9,839 | \$110.51 | \$119 | 0.91 | 10 | 29 |
| New York | 86 | 82 | \$283,428.13 | \$17,252 | \$163.56 | \$172 | 1.31 | 36 | 16 |
| North Carolina | 85 | 81 | \$168,077.38 | \$8,579 | \$108.62 | \$115 | 1.10 | 29 | 38 |
| North Dakota | 95 | 91 | \$131,267.95 | \$9,886 | \$115.25 | \$120 | 1.10 | 27 | 32 |
| Ohio | 90 | 86 | \$180,604.06 | \$11,630 | \$144.63 | \$151 | 0.82 | 25 | 22 |
| Oklahoma | 87 | 81 | \$140,587.08 | \$8,123 | \$108.42 | \$117 | 1.17 | 23 | 7 |
| Oregon | 95 | 94 | \$166,056.49 | \$9,820 | \$102.82 | \$104 | 0.87 | 31 | 12 |
| Pennsylvania | 96 | 92 | \$185,636.46 | \$13,248 | \$143.30 | \$149 | 1.13 | 22 | 45 |
| Rhode Island | 88 | 76 | \$203,876.61 | \$14,340 | \$139.86 | \$161 | 1.79 | 13 | 37 |
| South Carolina | 86 | 86 | \$216,682.04 | \$10,680 | \$131.19 | \$131 | 2.53 | 33 | 32 |
| South Dakota | 97 | 96 | \$132,162.13 | \$9,070 | \$105.51 | \$106 | 1.24 | 26 | 22 |
| Tennessee | 90 | 87 | \$141,314.15 | \$7,987 | \$104.25 | \$107 | 1.04 | 51 | 12 |
| Texas | 86 | 88 | \$186,041.10 | \$9,599 | \$127.16 | \$125 | 1.03 | 47 | 9 |
| Utah | 90 | 90 | \$131,409.38 | \$6,448 | \$78.90 | \$78 | 1.01 | 34 | 9 |
| Vermont | 95 | 89 | \$189,419.11 | \$14,739 | \$135.39 | \$145 | 0.84 | 6 | 50 |
| Virginia | 85 | 82 | \$191,322.03 | \$11,502 | \$143.44 | \$149 | 0.54 | 46 | 12 |
| Washington | 90 | 92 | \$171,401.61 | \$10,448 | \$116.36 | \$114 | 1.08 | 4 | 7 |
| West Virginia | 80 | 78 | \$161,305.30 | \$9,938 | \$137.62 | \$141 | 1.13 | 19 | 22 |
| Wisconsin | 92 | 90 | \$158,064.23 | \$11,560 | \$135.14 | \$138 | 1.28 | 39 | 45 |
| Wyoming | 88 | 90 | \$252,123.16 | \$15,873 | \$191.42 | \$188 | 0.81 | 16 | 45 |


[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ Herbert Walberg is distinguished visiting fellow at the Stanford University Hoover Institution and board chairman of The Heartland Institute, where Marc Oestreich is legislative specialist. More complete bios appear on page 14. Spreadsheets presenting the underlying data on which this report is based are available upon request.

    The authors thank George Clowes for extensive comments on a previous version of this study; Joe Bast for organizational and editorial suggestions; and Diane Bast for skillful copy editing.
    ${ }^{2}$ National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1983).

[^1]:    ${ }^{3}$ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics: 2009, Table 80. http://www.nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/. Retrieved June 09, 2010.
    ${ }^{4}$ Ibid. Table 33, "Historical summary of public elementary and secondary school statistics: Selected years, 1869-70 through 2006-07." http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/. Retrieved June 09, 2010.
    ${ }^{5}$ Paul E. Peterson, "What do Americans Think of the Nation's Schools?" Education Next, August 31, 2010. http://educationnext.org/what-do-americans-think-of-the-nations-schools-how-widespread-is-the-support-fo r-charter-schools/.

[^2]:    ${ }^{6}$ No claim is made here that the proficiency gains control for all state variations in demographic and other factors. Some states, such as Florida and Texas, are attracting migrants from other states, while California and New York are losing migrants to other states.
    ${ }^{7}$ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005 and 2009 Mathematics and Reading Assessments. http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/. Retrieved June 21, 2010.

[^3]:    ${ }^{8}$ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "National Public Education Financial Survey (State Fiscal)" 2006-07 (FY 2007) v.1a, in Common Core of Data (CCD). http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/stfis.asp. Retrieved June 21, 2010.
    ${ }^{9}$ The Council for Community and Economic Research, ACCRA Cost of Living Index, 1st Quarter 2010. http://www.coli.org/store.asp.
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[^4]:    ${ }^{11}$ Supra note 8.
    ${ }^{12}$ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education" 2006-07 v.1c, 2007-08 v.1a, in Common Core of Data (CCD). http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/stNfis.asp. Retrieved June 21, 2010.
    ${ }^{13}$ Paul Peterson, "State Standards Rising in Reading but Not in Math," Education Next 10:4 (Fall 2010). http://educationnext.org/state-standards-rising-in-reading-but-not-in-math/.

[^5]:    ${ }^{14}$ S.B. Carmichael, et al., The State of State Standards - and The Common Core - In 2010 (Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, July 2010).

[^6]:    ${ }^{15}$ Jay Greene, 2001 Education Freedom Index (New York, NY: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, 2001). http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_24.htm.
    ${ }^{16}$ Ibid.

[^7]:    ${ }^{17}$ For a comprehensive review of this literature, see Herbert J. Walberg, School Choice: the Evidence (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2007) and Herbert J. Walberg, Advancing Student Achievement (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2010). The correlation between Greene's 2000 measure of education freedom and our overall outcome at roughly the year 2009 is not significant ( $r=0.20, \mathrm{p}>.05$ ). Aside from the time difference, school spending, efficiency, and standards would not necessarily be expected to be related to the amount of school choice in a state for several reasons. Our measure of learning is contemporary, roughly a decade more recent than Greene's, and too few students are in schools of choice to affect the overall efficiency of state school systems. A new study comparable to Greene's that links outcomes to choice would require contemporary measures of school choice. In any case, however, many studies discussed subsequently link school choice and outcomes including not only student achievement but parent satisfaction.
    ${ }^{18}$ Ibid.
    ${ }^{19}$ Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, ABCs of School Choice, October 2009. http://www.edchoice.org/Foundation-Services/Publications/ABCs-of-School-Choice.aspx.
    ${ }^{20}$ See California Education Code, Section 53300-53303, Article 3 - Parent Empowerment. The text appears in Appendix 1 of Joseph L. Bast, Bruno Behrend, Ben Boychuk, and Marc Oestreich, "The Parent Trigger: A Model for Transforming Leadership," Policy Brief, The Heartland Institute, August 2010. http://www.schoolreform-news.org/article/28202.

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[^9]:    ${ }^{21}$ Bast et al., ibid.

