

**From:** [Bob Schaeffer](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 04, 2006 10:03 AM

**Subject:** New Education Week "Quality Counts" Report

Education Week's 10th Anniversary edition of Quality Counts, "grading" states on their standards and assessments, is now available on the web. Both national and state-by-state reports are accessible for free until February 4, though you may have to (re-)register, at:

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2006/01/05/index.html>

Here's a Stateline.org story summarizing the new report.

#### EDUCATION REFORM SHOWS MODEST RESULTS

Stateline.org -- January 4, 2006

by Kavan Peterson

State efforts over the past decade to improve public education through stricter standards and testing have increased student scores on national math tests but have failed to boost reading scores, a first-of-its-kind analysis shows.

Education Week's "Quality Counts at 10: A Decade of Standards-Based Education is the first in-depth look at how state education reforms have affected student scores on a series of federal tests designed to measure classroom performance from state to state. The so-called National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is also known as "The Nation's Report Card."

Ed Week's analysis, released Jan. 4, looked at NAEP tests administered to 4th- and 8th-graders nationwide in reading and math every two years since 1992. It found that the earliest, most fervent supporters of standards-based reforms -- including Delaware, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina and Texas -- made the most progress in boosting student achievement, particularly in mathematics and among those students who were farthest behind.

Accountability and testing systems adopted by North Carolina and Texas in particular have been touted as models for other states. Massachusetts and New York students have been among the highest scoring on NAEP exams since the 1990s. And Delaware was the only state to post significant gains in reading in both grades 4 and 8 in the past decade.

The analysis found that standards-based reforms have failed to raise national average reading scores, which have been stagnant for more than a decade.

"After a decade of tracking state policy efforts in education, our results are at once heartening and sobering," said Education Week editor Virginia B. Edwards, whose magazine has published the annual report on state education reform "Quality Counts" since 1997.

The report did not examine the more recent impact of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which President Bush signed into law in 2002, although it pointed out that student gains in math have stalled since 2003 and reading scores have declined.

NCLB codified many of the standards-based education reforms pioneered by states in the 1990s into national policy. The law aims to close achievement gaps and requires states to get 100 percent of students proficient in reading and math by 2014. The law penalizes schools that fall short of these goals.

The analysis graded all 50 states on their progress in implementing

education reforms and gave the nation a C-plus average, the same as last year. Education Week's publisher, The Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (EPE), conducted the study together with the Pew Center on the States. (The Pew Center on the States originally was the parent of Stateline.org, but the two organizations are now separate and independent. Both are funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.) The report painted a mixed picture of state progress in the past decade in boosting student achievement and closing the gap between black and white, Hispanic and white and poor and affluent students.

States education reforms so far have failed to significantly close the achievement gap. Although black, Hispanic and poor students made solid gains in math over the past decade, they still perform on average nearly two grade levels behind their more affluent and white peers in both reading and math in the 4th- and 8th-grades.

The most encouraging results occurred in math, with 4th-graders increasing achievement by nearly two grade levels and 8th-graders by one grade level since 1992, near the start of the standards-based education movement.

The report identified seven states -- Arkansas, Delaware, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas -- whose gains in mathematics significantly outpaced the national average: States that showed the least amount of improvement in math included Iowa, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma and Utah. In contrast, the national average in reading barely budged since 1992 and only Delaware boosted reading scores in both 4th- and 8th-grades during that time. Florida, Maryland and New York saw increases in 4th-grade reading and Massachusetts and Wyoming scored above average in 8th-grade reading.

#### Reports and Materials

All embargoed materials will be available today (Wed., 01/04/2006).

Quality Counts 2006 are available at:

<http://pull.xmr3.com/p/32-3027/46669581/http-www.edweek.org-qc06-qc06.html>

and

State Highlights Report are available at:

<http://pull.xmr3.com/p/32-F1A6/46669583/http-www.edweek.org-qc06-SHR.html>.