

MISSOURI EDUCATION NEWS

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Education News

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Missouri Chosen for State Scholars Initiative

Missouri Added to Program Aimed at Increasing Number of Students Taking Rigorous High School Courses

Four new states have been selected for participation in the State Scholars Initiative, a national business-education partnership effort designed to increase the number of students who take a rigorous curriculum in high school, the U.S. Education Department announced today.

The states are: Missouri, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Wyoming. Under the State Scholars Initiative, each state will receive up to \$300,000 during a two-year period to implement scholars programs in at least four school districts. Local business-education partnerships will work with students in those districts, encouraging them to take a rigorous course of study—one that will give them a boost no matter whether they go to college or straight to work.

The Scholars Core Course of Study includes:

- Four years of English.
- Three years of math (algebra I and II and geometry).
- Three years of science (biology, chemistry and physics).
- Three and a half years of social studies (U.S. history, world history, geography, economics or government). And,
- Two years of a language other than English.

"Students who take rigorous courses in high school stand a far greater chance of succeeding in college and the workplace," said U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. "We congratulate the states of Missouri, New Hampshire, South Dakota, and Wyoming for recognizing the potential of this program and the considerable benefit that it can provide young people."

Besides the State Scholars Initiative, President Bush earlier this year launched two other significant programs designed to encourage students to take challenging courses in high school. In February, the president signed legislation setting aside more than \$790 million in Academic Competitiveness Grants and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (National SMART grants).

Those awards will encourage students to pursue rigorous classes in high school and college majors in high demand in the global economy, such as science, mathematics, technology, engineering and critical foreign languages. Academic Competitiveness Grants will be available to students for their first and second academic years of college, while National SMART Grants will help

support students in their third and fourth years of school.

In the State Scholars Initiative, a high-impact strategy is used to motivate students to tackle demanding high school courses that prepare them for college and careers. The program features business people making presentations to eighth-graders just before they select their high school courses.

Business volunteers help students understand the career options and monetary benefits of taking challenging courses. Students may receive academic support, incentives, and special recognition that help ensure their success, especially in the more difficult courses.

The four new states announced today join 20 others previously chosen for participation. They include: Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

For more information on the State Scholars Initiative, see the program's Web site, which includes a brochure, fact sheet, newsletter, as well as links to state briefs and each of the participating states' Web sites at www.wiche.edu/statescholars.

Details on the Academic Competitiveness and National SMART Grants can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/ac-smart.html>.

Missouri – *Education Counts* State Highlights 2007

Aligning Education from Cradle to Career

The EPE Research Center has examined state efforts to connect the K-12 education system with early learning, higher education, and the world of work. Fifteen key policies are considered in this highlights report. The states with the strongest alignment policies – Maryland, Michigan, and West Virginia – each have 12 of the 15 focal policies in place. At the other end of the spectrum,

Colorado, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania have each enacted a single alignment

Education Alignment Policies

Early-Childhood Education

Early learning – State early-learning standards aligned with K-12 standards (2006-07) Yes

School-readiness definition – State formally defines school readiness (2006-07) No

School-readiness assessment – Readiness of entering students assessed (2006-07) No

School-readiness intervention – Programs for students not deemed ready (2006-07) No

Kindergarten standards – Learning expectations aligned with elementary (2006-07) Yes

Postsecondary Education

College readiness – State defines college readiness (2006-07) No

College preparation – College prep required to earn a high school diploma (2006-07) No

Course alignment – Credits for H.S. diploma aligned with postsecondary system (2006-07) No

Assessment alignment – H.S. assessment aligned with postsecondary system (2006-07) No

Postsecondary decisions – H.S. assessment used for postsecondary decisions (2006-07) No

Economy and Workforce

Work readiness – State K-12 system defines work readiness (2006-07) No

Work-ready distinction – Work-ready definition differs from college readiness (2006-07) No

Career-tech diploma – State offers H.S. diploma with career specialization (2006-07) No

Industry certification – K-12 has path for industry-recognized certificate or license (2006-07) Yes

Portable credits – K-12 pathway to earn career-tech. credits for postsecondary

(2006-07) Yes

State rank: **39**

Elementary and Secondary Performance

K-12 Achievement Index

Quality Counts' new State Achievement Index gauges the achievement of the public school system based on absolute levels of performance (status) and improvements or changes over time in nearly equal measure. The index is based on 15 individual indicators related to reading and math performance, high school graduation rates, and the results of Advanced Placement exams. The EPE Research Center employed statistical tests to evaluate state performance on each indicator. States significantly exceeding the national average (for level indicators) or improving over time (change indicators) received a point, or 2 points if they excelled by a particularly large statistical margin. Conversely, low-performing states lost 1 or 2 points. A state's final score was calculated by tallying points across the set of 15 measures.

State rank: **33**

Standards, Assessments, and Accountability

Academic Standards

English/language arts standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels (2006) No

Mathematics standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels (2006) No

Science standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels (2006) Yes

Social Studies/history standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels (2006) No

Revision schedule – State has regular timeline for revising standards (2006-07) No

Assessments

English/language arts assessments are aligned to standards at all levels (2006-07) Yes

Mathematics assessments are aligned to standards at all levels (2006-07) Yes

Science assessments are aligned to standards at all levels (2006-07) No

Social studies/history assessments are aligned to standards at all levels (2006-07) No

Vertically equated scores on assessments in grades 3–8 in English and math (2006-07) No

School Accountability (policies must apply to Title I and non-Title I schools)

State ratings – State assigns ratings to all schools on criteria other than AYP (2006-07) No

Growth models – State ratings for schools measure individual student growth (2006-07) No

Rewards – State provides rewards to high-performing or improving schools (2006-07) No

Assistance – State provides assistance to low-performing schools (2006-07) No

Sanctions – State sanctions low-performing schools (2006-07) No

State rank: **48**

Complete Missouri Report:

<http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2007/17shr.mo.h26.pdf>

Children’s Chances for Success Vary Dramatically By State, Report Warns

Study Examines State Efforts to Connect Education & Training From Birth to Adulthood; Launches State Achievement Index for Grades K-12

A child born in Virginia is significantly more likely to experience success throughout life than the average child born in the United States, while a child

born in New Mexico is likely to face an accumulating series of hurdles both educationally and economically, according to an analysis published by *Education Week*.

The analysis by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center is based on the “Chance-for-Success Index,” which tracks state efforts to connect education from preschool through postsecondary education and training. The index was developed by the EPE Research Center for *Quality Counts 2007: From Cradle to Career, Connecting American Education From Birth to Adulthood*, produced by *Education Week* with support from the Pew Center on the States. The report is available online at www.edweek.org/go/qc07.

The Missouri report is available at:

<http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2007/17shr.mo.h26.pdf>

The Chance-for-Success Index provides a perspective on the importance of education throughout a person’s lifetime and is based on 13 indicators that highlight whether young children get off to a good start, succeed in elementary and secondary school, and hit key educational and income benchmarks as adults. Virginia, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire rank at the top of the index. Missouri ranked 33rd. Kentucky, Nevada, West Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Arizona, Louisiana, and New Mexico lag significantly behind the national average in descending order.

The 13 indicators that make up the index capture key performance or attainment outcomes at various stages in a person’s lifetime or are correlated with later success. For example, in the early-childhood years, indicators include the percent of children living in families that earn a decent wage and the percent of children with at least one parent who has a postsecondary degree – factors that research shows have an impact on how well children perform in school.

“Overall, the Index captures the cumulative effects of education experience from birth through adulthood and pinpoints the chance for success at each stage and for each state,” said Christopher B. Swanson, the director of the EPE Research Center. “We find that a child’s life prospects depend greatly on where he or she lives.”

Virginia, for example, earns the highest Chance-for-Success score. The average child in Virginia starts out ahead of the curve: less likely to live in a low-income family and more likely to have college-educated parents. Those early advantages are amplified during the elementary-through-postsecondary years, when the typical young person enjoys higher achievement and is more likely to finish high school and continue on to college than in other states. Virginia's well-educated adult population and strong economy offer ample opportunities to realize the returns to schooling as individuals enter the workforce. Similar conditions prevail in other high-ranking states, including Connecticut, Minnesota, and New Jersey.

A near-mirror image of this pattern occurs in the steadily declining trajectories of states like New Mexico. There, weak school performance is unable to overcome, and may exacerbate, the early sociodemographic disadvantages of poverty, linguistic isolation, and low parental education. Among adults in New Mexico, educational attainment, income, and rates of steady employment all fall significantly below the national average. Other low-ranking states, such as Louisiana, Arizona, and Texas, share many of the same characteristics.

Missouri Fails in 2006 NCEA Survey of State Data Collection Issues Related to Longitudinal Analysis

In preparation of the launch of the Data Quality Campaign, the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) conducted a survey, with the support of The Broad Foundation and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, about state data systems to determine the number of states that have built the infrastructure to tap into the power of longitudinal data. This report provides an overview of the findings of the August 2006 survey in addition to a state-by-state analysis of the policy implications of each state's data system.

The Power of Longitudinal Data

Longitudinal data matches individual student records *over time*, from pre-

kindergarten through 12th grade and into post secondary education. States are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to improve student achievement. But without quality data, they are essentially flying blind. Policymakers need to act now to put in place the policies and resources to ensure that each state has a longitudinal data system and the culture and capacity to translate the information into specific action steps to improve student achievement. When states collect the most relevant data and are able to match individual student records *over time*, they can answer the questions that are at the core of educational effectiveness. Longitudinal data (data gathered on the same student from year to year) makes it possible to:

- Determine the value-added of specific schools and programs by following individual students' academic growth;
- Identify consistently high-performing schools so that educators and the public can learn from best practices;
- Evaluate the impact of teacher preparation and training programs on student achievement; and
- Focus school systems on preparing a higher percentage of students to succeed in rigorous high school courses, college and challenging jobs.

Based on responses to the 2006 NCEA survey, only a few states can answer each of these priority questions facing policymakers and educators today. Which schools produce the strongest academic growth for their students? (23 states can answer this question)

What achievement levels in middle school indicate that a student is on track to succeed in rigorous courses in high school? (5 states can answer this question)

What is each school's graduation rate, according to the 2005 National Governors Association graduation compact? (26 states can answer this question)

What high school performance indicators (e.g., enrollment in rigorous courses or performance on state tests) are the best predictors of students' success in college or the workplace? (4 states can answer this question)

What percentage of high school graduates who go on to college take remedial courses? (14 states can answer this question)

Which teacher preparation programs produce the graduates whose students have the strongest academic growth? (9 states can answer this question)

For the complete report go to:

http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/

For Missouri's results go to:

http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Missouri

Key Education Facts and Figures for Missouri

The Education Watch State Summary Reports provide state-specific data on:

Achievement Gaps:

- How many students are proficient in reading and mathematics on state assessments? How do proficiency rates on state assessments compare to proficiency rates on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)?
- How do achievement gaps between groups compare across states? Where are gaps the smallest? Where are they the biggest?
- What are the trends in student achievement over time? Which states are making the biggest gains?

High School and College Attainment Gaps:

- What is the on-time high school graduation rate for different groups of students?
- How many high school graduates enroll in college?
- What is the college graduation rate for different groups of students?
- Opportunity Gaps
- What are the participation and success rates for different groups of students in high-level courses such as Advanced Placement (AP)?
- Which students are most likely to have teachers who have even a college minor in the subject they're teaching?
- How much state and local per-pupil funding is provided to schools in low-

- versus high-poverty districts? Which states provide the most funding to low-income districts? Which states provide the least?
- How affordable is college for each state's lowest income students?

A Deeper Look at Achievement across States: NAEP Data Tables

While no state is yet where it needs to be in terms of educating poor and minority students, some are doing a much better job than others. To help state leaders, researchers, and advocates explore these differences and identify states from which they might learn, the accompanying NAEP Data Tables allow for easy state-to-state comparisons of scale scores for different groups of students. They include tables that look at student achievement and gap trends over time. For example:

- Low-income eighth-graders in Massachusetts score 21 points higher in math than low-income eighth-graders in neighboring Rhode Island (273 vs. 252).
- In 2003, reading scores for African-American fourth-graders were 14 points higher in Connecticut than in Delaware. Over the last five years, however, African-American reading scores increased by 23 points in Delaware while in Connecticut, they decreased by 2 points. Delaware's African-American fourth-graders now read at higher levels than their peers in Connecticut.
- The gap in math achievement separating Latino from White eighth-graders in Minnesota is 10 points larger than the gap in Virginia, a state educating a similar proportion of Latino students (33 points vs. 23 points).

The wide variation between states in achievement for the same groups of students demonstrates just how important state policies and practices are. "If race and poverty mattered more than what happens in schools, then NAEP scores for low-income students and students of color would be more consistent from state to state," said Daria Hall, senior policy analyst for the Education Trust.

Focus on Opportunities to Learn

The data are clear: what states do matters a lot when it comes to student achievement. But far too often, state policies and practices work to the direct disadvantage of low-income and minority students. For example:

- In New York, schools in the highest poverty districts have \$2,065 less to

- spend per pupil than schools in the most affluent districts.
- In Illinois, students in high-poverty secondary schools are more than three times as likely as students in low-poverty schools to have a teacher lacking even a minor in the subject they're teaching (47 percent vs. 15 percent).
 - In Michigan, African-American students represent 20 percent of the state's K-12 enrollment but just 5 percent of the students enrolled in Advanced Placement English Language and Composition courses.

Missouri Report:

<http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/summaries2006/Missouri.pdf>

235 School Districts Earn Recognition For "Distinction in Performance"

More than 200 Missouri school districts have earned the state's "Distinction in Performance" award (<http://dese.mo.gov/news/2006/distinction.htm> - [Distinction in Performance Awards](#)) for their academic achievement and progress during the last school year (2005-06), state education officials announced today.

A total of 235 school districts qualified for the Distinction in Performance award, presented annually by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Of this year's recipients, 188 are K-12 districts; 47 are K-8 districts. Last year, 180 districts qualified for the award.

The Distinction in Performance award is based on the 14 academic performance standards that are now used in the accreditation of K-12 school districts. K-8 districts use a portion of these standards.

For the past five years, the award was based on 12 standards. The criteria were modified this year to reflect changes in the state's MAP testing program. A

standard also has been added to provide a measure of "adequate yearly progress," which is one of the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind act.

To qualify for the award this year, K-8 districts had to meet 6 of 7 performance standards, including all of those based on the results of MAP tests. K-12 districts had to meet 13 out of 14 standards, including all of the MAP-based measures.

Beginning this year, a district may be recognized for distinction based on high achievement or on improvement. To meet the "high achievement" standard, a district must meet at least 12 of 13 performance indicators at a prescribed level.

Under the state's accreditation process, known as the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), each school district is evaluated at least once every five years. The Distinction in Performance award is based on the same criteria used in the accreditation process, but it provides an annual confirmation and recognition of a district's consistent performance.

2005-06 "Report Cards" For the State and Local Public Schools

A new report with statewide statistics about Missouri's public school system (pre-kindergarten through grade 12) during the last school year has been released.

The statistical profiles about each school district, school building and charter school are prepared annually by DESE as required by state law. The reports provide key statistics and trend data about students, teachers, academic performance, finances and other topics.

This year, for the first time, DESE also has published a detailed "Special Education Profile" about every school district. Required by federal law, the profile provides data about achievement, graduation and other performance indicators for children with disabilities. This report is available online.

The education agency also released an updated profile of the state, called the *Missouri Public School Accountability Report*. It parallels the local school profiles to a great extent but includes some additional state-level indicators.

Highlights of the state-level report include:

Enrollment in kindergarten through grade 12 increased slightly in 2005-06 (less

than one-half of one percent) to 900,021. Including preschool students (pre-kindergarten), total public school enrollment increased to 928,768.

Preschool enrollment has more than doubled in the past five years, growing to nearly 29,000 last year. Public school districts are not required to offer preschool programs, but a majority of the state's 524 school districts now provide some type of services for 3- to 5-year-olds.

Statewide, the dropout rate increased slightly last year, up to 4% from 3.7% the prior year. The dropout rate has inched upward for three years in a row after declining steadily for several years.

There was no change last year in the percentage of Missouri students eligible for free or reduced-price meals at school (41.8%) or the percentage of students with limited English-speaking ability (2.1%).

The number of teachers in Missouri public schools increased to 68,557, and the average teacher's salary increased by about 3.4% to \$42,077.

To access the *Missouri Public School Accountability Report*:

<http://dese.mo.gov/commissioner/statereportcard/>