

NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION NEWS

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Education News

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14 North Carolina Schools Recognized for Narrowing Achievement Gaps

Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services has announced it has identified 14 North Carolina schools that have significantly narrowed the achievement gap

(<http://www.schoolmatters.com/pdf/achievement-gap/nc-achievement-gap->

[schools-schoolmatters.pdf](#)) between higher- and lower-performing student groups during the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years.

The 14 schools are located in 12 school districts throughout the state. Two districts--Burke County School and Richmond County Schools--each have two schools that have significantly narrowed at least one achievement gap between student groups.

This report represents Standard & Poor's second analysis of achievement gaps in North Carolina, updating the initial study to analyze performance trends through the 2004-05 school year. Additionally, this study takes a closer look at achievement gaps by focusing on schools, rather than school districts, that have made significant progress in narrowing the achievement gap between student groups.

To be recognized for significantly narrowing these achievement gaps, schools had to meet all of the following criteria:

- test at least 30 students in each student group being analyzed;
- reduce at least one achievement gap between student groups in Reading and Math Proficiency (RaMPy) rates by more than five percentage points from one year to the next; and simultaneously raise the RaMP rates for each student group being compared; and
- reduce at least one achievement gap between student groups in a grade-level reading test by more than five percentage points from one year to the next; and simultaneously raise that grade-level reading proficiency rate for each student group being compared. Schools must demonstrate similar progress in math, though not necessarily at the same grade level. For example, an elementary school might reduce the achievement gap between black students and white students in third grade reading by at least five percentage points while raising reading proficiency rates for both black students and white students, while doing the same in fifth grade math.

Of the 14 schools in North Carolina that have been able to narrow the achievement gap, six are recognized for reducing their black-white gap, and nine schools are recognized for narrowing their economically-disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students tested gap. No schools in North Carolina are recognized for narrowing their Hispanic-white gap.

Particularly noteworthy is that one school--Williamston Middle School located in

the Martin County School District--is recognized for simultaneously narrowing both the black-white gap and the economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged gap among its students.

The eight North Carolina schools that closed the gap between economically disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students tested are: Peachland-Polkton Elementary School, Anson County Schools; Liberty Middle School, Burke County Schools; Southeast Middle School, Forsyth County Schools; John Chavis Middle School, Gaston County Schools; Boone Trail Elementary School, Harnett County Schools; Ebenezer Elementary School, Iredell-Statesville Schools; West McDowell Junior High School, McDowell County Schools; and A.G. Cox Middle School, Pitt County Schools.

The five schools recognized for narrowing the gap between black students and white students are: South Brunswick Middle School, Brunswick County Schools; Table Rock Middle School, Burke County Schools; L.J. Bell Elementary School and Richmond Primary School, Richmond County Schools; and Carroll Middle School, Wake County Schools.

To see how many percentage points and in which grades each school narrowed these gaps, reporters should consult the analytical report (<http://www.schoolmatters.com/pdf/achievement-gap/nc-achievement-gap-schools-schoolmatters.pdf>) on North Carolina's achievement gaps, located on the North Carolina homepage at <http://www.schoolmatters.com/>

State Board Approves Framework for Core Course of Study

The State Board of Education has approved a proposed core course of study framework that will guide high school course requirements beginning in 2008-09. Current seventh graders would be the first students potentially affected by this change.

This change would replace the current courses of study (college prep, college tech prep, career) from which students select their high school coursework. Graduates in the Class of 2011 could be the last group to graduate under the old courses of study framework, depending on the Board's final action on this plan later this winter. The occupational course of study will continue to be available for

students with disabilities if their individualized education program specifies it.

The proposed core framework requires that all freshmen entering high school in the fall 2008 participate in a 21 unit core course of study that will include a four-unit endorsement in a specialty area of their choice.

The new core course of study will require:

- 4 units of English
- 4 units of mathematics
- 3 units of science
- 3 units of social studies
- 2 units of a second language
- 1 unit of health/physical education
- an endorsement of at least four units in one of the following areas: Career-Technical Education, Arts Education, JROTC, Advanced Placement/IB, Second Language or other.

(The endorsement is in addition to the 17 specified core courses.)

State Board of Education's approval of the proposed framework is a product of work done by its Ad Hoc Academic Rigor, Relevance and Relationships committee over the past several months. This committee also has indicated strong support for a course substitution opportunity, which would enable students to take a substitute course if that course would better serve their academic needs. A professional review team consisting of a teacher, counselor and administrator would decide these requests. Parents would be required to sign off on the substitute courses recommended for their children.

This winter, the Board will hold town hall meetings across the state to receive input and ideas from local educators, parents and community members about implementing the core course of study. In approving the proposed framework, Board members noted that a number of implementation details need to be finalized and that community input will be invaluable in that process. Possible areas for input include course substitution, the sequence of mathematics courses in light of 21st century skills and objectives of a foreign language study. The schedule of meetings is being finalized and will be distributed widely soon.

Other graduation requirements will continue to be in place. These include passing the five common end-of-course tests (Algebra I, English I, US History, Civics and Economics and Biology) and successfully completing a graduation project in addition to local graduation requirements.

Key Education Facts and Figures for North Carolina

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.

North Carolina Report:

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

North Carolina 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)

Alaska (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Alaska),
Colorado (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Colorado),
Delaware (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Delaware), **Kansas** (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Kansas),
Kentucky (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Kentucky),
Louisiana (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Louisiana),
Massachusetts (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Massachusetts),
Minnesota (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Minnesota),
Nebraska (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Nebraska), **Nevada** (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Nevada),
New Mexico (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=New Mexico),
New York (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=New York),
North Dakota (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=North Dakota),
Ohio (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Ohio),
Rhode Island (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Rhode Island),
Tennessee (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Tennessee),
Texas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Texas),
Utah (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Utah),
Vermont (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Vermont),
Virginia (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Virginia),
Washington (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Washington),
West Virginia (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=West Virginia),
Wisconsin (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Wisconsin)

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)

Arkansas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Arkansas),
Florida (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Florida),

Georgia (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Georgia),
Texas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Texas),
Utah (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Utah)

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

Alabama (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Alabama),
Alaska (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Alaska),
Arizona (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Arizona),
Arkansas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Arkansas),
Colorado (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Colorado),
Delaware (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Delaware),
Florida (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Florida),
Iowa (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Iowa),
Kansas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Kansas), **Louisiana** (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Louisiana), **Massachusetts** (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Massachusetts), **Minnesota** (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Minnesota),
Nevada (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Nevada),
New Hampshire (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=New Hampshire),
New Mexico (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=New Mexico),
North Dakota (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=North Dakota),
Ohio (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Ohio)
Oregon (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Oregon),
South Dakota (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=South Dakota),
Texas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Texas),
Utah (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Utah),
Virginia (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Virginia),
Washington (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Washington),
West Virginia (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=West Virginia),
Wisconsin (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Wisconsin),
Wyoming (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Wyoming)

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)

Arkansas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Arkansas),
Florida (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Florida),
Georgia (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Georgia),
Texas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Texas)

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

Alabama (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Alabama),
Alaska (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Alaska),
Arkansas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Arkansas)
Florida (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Florida),
Georgia (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Georgia),
Hawaii (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Hawaii),
Louisiana (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Louisiana),
Massachusetts
(http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Massachusetts),
North Dakota (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=North Dakota)
Oregon (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Oregon),
Texas (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Texas),
Vermont (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Vermont),
Washington (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Washington),
Wyoming (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Wyoming)

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

Delaware (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Delaware),
Kentucky (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Kentucky),
Louisiana (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Louisiana),
New Mexico (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=New Mexico),
Ohio (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Ohio),
Rhode Island (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Rhode Island)

Tennessee (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Tennessee), **Utah** (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=Utah), **West Virginia** (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=West Virginia)

For the complete report go to:

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

For North Carolina results go to:

http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/state.cfm?st=North%20Carolina

Annual Report on School Crime and Violence

During last school year, North Carolina public schools reported 10,959 acts of crime and violence among the state's almost 1.4 million students, according to the 2005-06 Report on School Crime and Violence presented to State Board of Education members this morning.

This total correlates to 7.90 acts per 1,000 students, an increase from 2004-05 when that number was 7.49 acts per 1,000 students. Most of the increases were reported in categories of "possession" rather than acts of violence: possession of a controlled substance in violation of law, possession of a weapon excluding firearms and powerful explosives and possession of an alcoholic beverage.

Although the 2005-06 Report on School Crime and Violence shows increases in the number of acts reported by local school districts, it's important to note that nearly one-half (43 percent or 998 schools) of all schools reported no acts of crime or violence. In fact, 75 percent (1,746 schools) of all schools reported five or fewer acts last year.

As in past reports, four categories of incidents are responsible for 93 percent of all reported offenses. They are possession of a controlled substance in violation of law, possession of a weapon excluding firearms and powerful explosives, possession of an alcoholic beverage and assault on school personnel not resulting in serious injury.

Seven incident types decreased in 2005-06: assault resulting in serious injury, bomb threat, possession of a firearm or powerful explosives, sexual assault not involving rape or sexual offense, robbery without a dangerous weapon, burning of a school building and rape.

The total number of occurrences for each reportable act is listed below. Categories marked with an asterisk experienced an increase in 2005-06.

Possession of a controlled substance in violation of law	4,42
Possession of a weapon excluding firearms and powerful explosives	3,84
Possession of alcoholic beverage	1,05
Assault on school personnel not resulting in serious injury	86
Assault resulting in serious injury	17
Bomb threat	13
Possession of a firearm or powerful explosives	12
Assault involving use of a weapon	11
Sexual offense	8
Sexual assault not involving rape or sexual offense	6
Robbery without a dangerous weapon	4
Taking indecent liberties with a minor	20
Burning of school building	
Robbery with a dangerous weapon	3
Kidnapping	2
Death by other than natural causes	
Rape	

As in previous years, the number and frequency of acts is the lowest in elementary schools (grades pre-K-5) and highest at the high school level.

As with many types of crime reporting, it is difficult to gauge causes for annual increases or decreases. Changes in overall numbers and rates per 1,000 students can be the result of more thorough reporting and better enforcement of laws in addition to actual increases in the number of offenses committed on school grounds.

Today's report is based on information provided by all 115 local school districts and 94 public charter schools. Under North Carolina law, schools are required to report certain acts of crime and violence to law enforcement. In addition, the law

requires that the State Board of Education monitor and report annually on incidents of crime and violence in public schools. This reporting requirement began in 1997-98 with 14 reportable acts, a list that was expanded in 2001-02 to its current 17 reportable acts.

Charts are attached to provide local school district numbers by incident and act.

Table 6A. Total Number of Acts for Each LEA 2005-06:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/newsroom/news/2006-07/table6a.pdf>

Table 6B. Total Number of Acts for Individual Schools in each LEA 2005-06:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/newsroom/news/2006-07/table6b.pdf>

2005-2006 Annual Report on School Crime and Violence:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/schoolimprovement/alternative/reports/schoolviolence/2005-06schoolviolence.pdf>

Annual Report Charts North Carolina's Participation in School Breakfast Program

During the 2005-2006 school year, 285,754 low-income North Carolina students participated in the School Breakfast Program, according to the *School Breakfast Scorecard 2006*. The Scorecard is issued annually by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) to measure participation in the School Breakfast Program.

For every 100 low-income children that participated in the National School Lunch Program, 50.4 also received free and reduced-price breakfasts. If North Carolina schools increased school breakfast participation by serving 60 out of 100 low-income children eating lunch, they would help 54,415 more children and gain an additional \$11,354,732 in federal funding.

In North Carolina, 97.6 percent of schools that offer school lunch also offer school breakfast, ranking North Carolina 6th out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The School Breakfast Program began as a pilot program in 1966 as a way to make sure children were able to start the school day ready to learn.

Numerous studies have found that breakfast in the morning improves children's school achievement and health.

"Reaching a lot more children with breakfast in schools is probably the cheapest and fastest way to improve children's learning and health, improve attendance and, of course, reduce hunger," said Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). "It's essential that more schools serve breakfast, adopt steps like breakfast in the classroom and reach out to more children."

Nationally, the program has grown to include 7.7 million low-income children. To get even more children and schools participating, FRAC recommends that all schools participate in the school breakfast program, even offering universal breakfast, which provides breakfast at no charge to all students who want it. Schools can encourage higher participation among children by providing breakfast in the classroom, "grab and go" breakfast or offering breakfast after first period. These successful strategies have been used by states to boost participation in the program.

The full report, *School Breakfast Scorecard 2006*, is available at http://www.frac.org/pdf/2006_SBP.pdf