

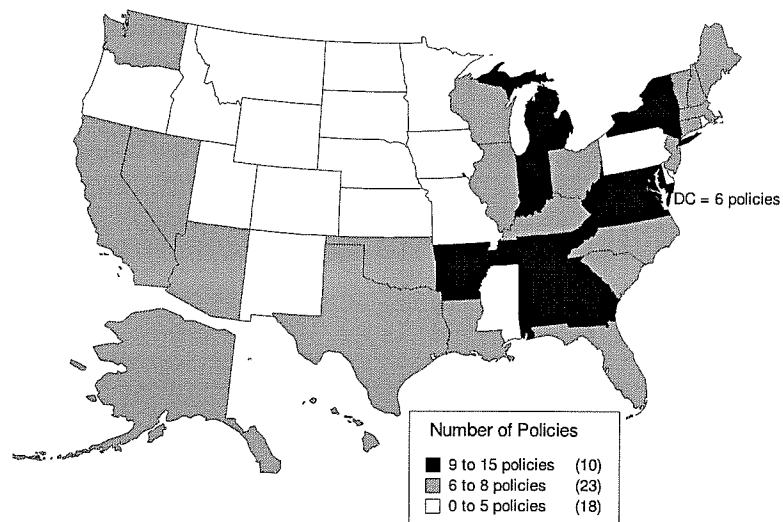
Aligning Education from Cradle to Career

	Arkansas	Nation
Education Alignment Policies		
Early-Childhood Education		
Early learning – State early-learning standards aligned with K-12 standards (2006-07)	Yes	42 states
School-readiness definition – State formally defines school readiness (2006-07)	Yes	13 states
School-readiness assessment – Readiness of entering students assessed (2006-07)	Yes	16 states
School-readiness intervention – Programs for students not deemed ready (2006-07)	Yes	18 states
Kindergarten standards – Learning expectations aligned with elementary (2006-07)	Yes	45 states
Postsecondary Education		
College readiness – State defines college readiness (2006-07)	Yes	11 states
College preparation – College prep required to earn a high school diploma (2006-07)	Yes	9 states
Course alignment – Credits for H.S. diploma aligned with postsecondary system (2006-07)	No	5 states
Assessment alignment – H.S. assessment aligned with postsecondary system (2006-07)	No	6 states
Postsecondary decisions – H.S. assessment used for postsecondary decisions (2006-07)	No	9 states
Economy and Workforce		
Work readiness – State K-12 system defines work readiness (2006-07)	No	21 states
Work-ready distinction – Work-ready definition differs from college readiness (2006-07)	No	19 states
Career-tech diploma – State offers H.S. diploma with career specialization (2006-07)	Yes	35 states
Industry certification – K-12 has path for industry-recognized certificate or license (2006-07)	Yes	38 states
Portable credits – K-12 pathway to earn career-tech. credits for postsecondary (2006-07)	Yes	38 states
Number of policies:		10
State rank:		6

A National Perspective

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 policy.





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.

Achievement Indicators	Arkansas		National Average
	State Average	Points Awarded	
Achievement Levels			
4th grade math – Percent proficient on NAEP (2005)	34.0%	0	35.3%
8th grade math – Percent proficient on NAEP (2005)	22.0%	-2	28.5%
4th grade reading – Percent proficient on NAEP (2005)	29.7%	0	29.8%
8th grade reading – Percent proficient on NAEP (2005)	25.9%	-1	28.9%
Achievement Gains			
4th grade math – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2005)	+6.5	+2	+3.1
8th grade math – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2005)	+5.9	+2	+1.4
4th grade reading – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2005)	+3.5	+1	+0.8
8th grade reading – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2005)	-0.3	0	-0.9
Poverty Gap (National School Lunch Program, noneligible vs. eligible)			
Size of gap – 8th grade math scale score (2005)	22.7	+1	26.7
Change in gap – 8th grade math (2003-2005), negative value = closing gap	+2.7	0	-1.7
High School Graduation			
Graduation rate – Public schools (2003)	71.8%	+2	69.6%
Change in graduation rate – Public schools (2000-2003)	+2.6%	+1	+2.9%
Advanced Placement			
High AP test scores – Scores of 3 or above per 100 students (2005)	9.9	-2	15.7
Change in AP Scores – Change in high scores per 100 students (2000-2005)	+5.5	+2	+4.8
Bonus Indicator			
8th grade math excellence – Percent advanced on NAEP (2005)	3.0%	-2	5.6%
State score:		+4	
State rank:		29	