

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
Education 

NEWS RELEASE

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ARKANSAS RANKS IN TOP 10 IN NATION FOR EDUCATION

Arkansas placed eighth in the nation in Quality Counts, the annual report by Washington-based Education Week that ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia based on education policies and student achievement. Overall, the state earned an 80.5 (B-minus), fewer than five points behind top-scoring New York, which had an 84.9 (B). The 2008 Quality Counts was released today.

"This is a tremendous testament to all those who have worked so diligently to reform education in Arkansas over the past several years – policymakers, administrators, teachers, my staff here at the Arkansas Department of Education and, certainly not least, the state's students," said Dr. Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education.

The 2008 Quality Counts report judged states on numerous indicators grouped in six categories, the scores of which were then combined for the final grade. Arkansas ranked highest – second place with a B-plus – in "The Teaching Profession" category, which assessed state policies and practices to attract and retain quality talent and to allocate it equitably.

"We are proud that Arkansas is raising the stature of teaching as a profession in the state and, in the process, transforming Arkansas into one of the best places to teach in the nation," Dr. James said. "Arkansas requires teaching candidates to complete one of the more rigorous

processes for earning licensure, but it also has in place important supports for teachers, such as mentoring programs and sophisticated on-line professional development opportunities. Add to that salaries approaching the national average as well as those of comparable professions -- as Quality Counts shows ours do -- and you have a great environment to attract the best talent."

The state's complete grades in the 2008 Quality Counts, and their national comparisons, are:

Category	Arkansas	United States
Overall	B-	C
Chance for Success	C-	C+
K-12 Achievement	D	D+
Standards, Assessments and Accountability	B+	B
Transitions and Alignment	B	C
The Teaching Profession	B+	C
Finance	B-	C+

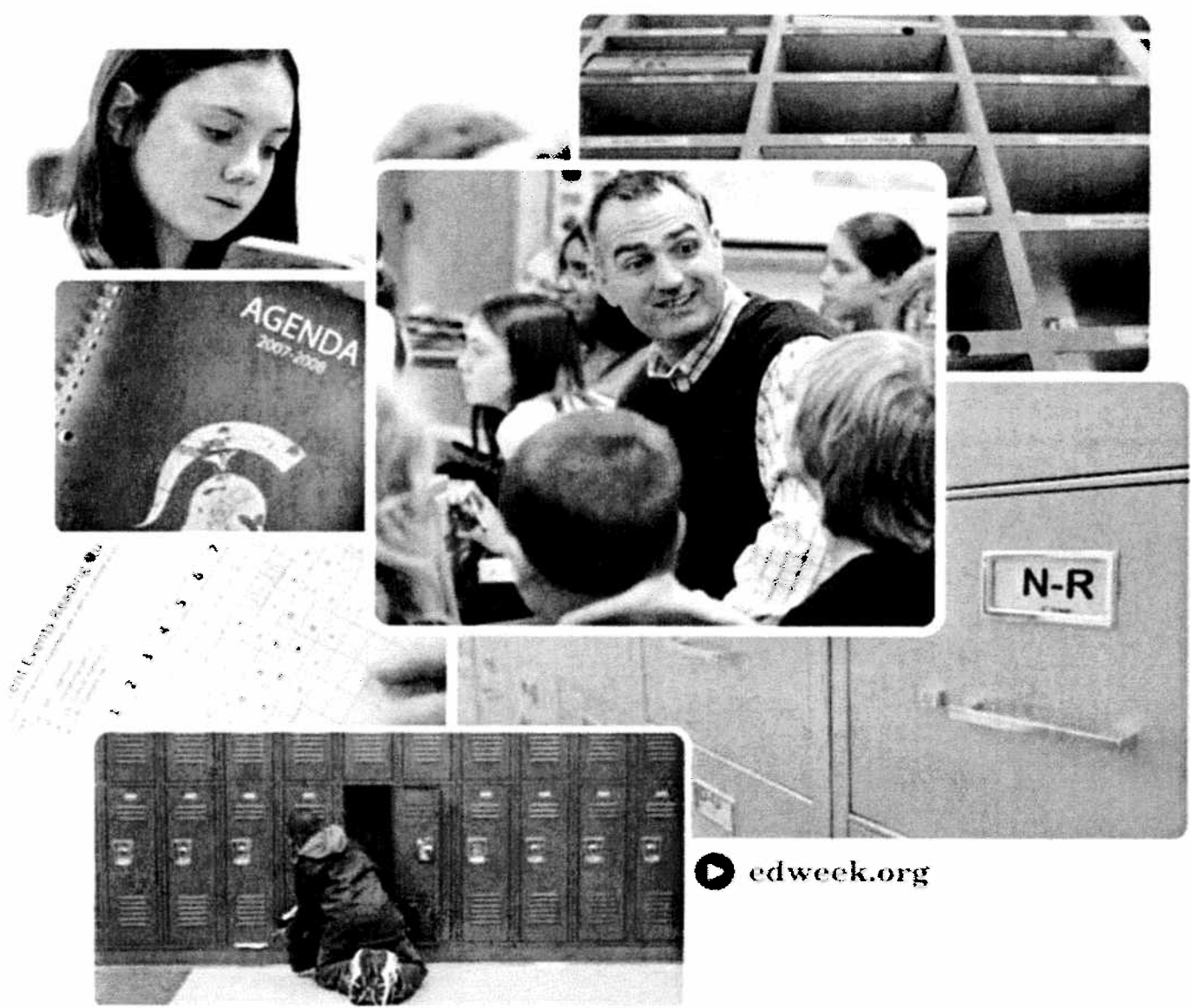
"Our lowest scores were in the 'Chance for Success' category, which considers a number of measures beyond educators' control, such as family income and parents' education level," Dr. James said, "as well as in 'Achievement.' No doubt, we have ample room for improvement, as does the nation as a whole. Knowing as we do that we have quality teachers and sound policies in place in this state, I am quite confident that we will see immense improvement in achievement in the near future."


To see the complete 2008 Quality Counts edition, go to www.edweek.org/go/qc08.

--ADE--

The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.

Arkansas



 edweek.org

A Special Supplement to *Education Week's*

QUALITY COUNTS

2008



With Support from the Pew Center on the States

Arkansas – State Highlights 2008

About this Report

The 12th annual edition of *Education Week's Quality Counts* continues the cradle-to-career framework launched in last year's report. But it also reintroduces some of the categories in which we have graded states in the past, though some of the indicators and the grading have changed. The cradle-to-career perspective emphasizes the connections between K-12 education and other systems with which it intersects: preschool education, other social and economic institutions, and further education and training.

To emphasize this approach, the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center last year created two new state-performance measures: the Chance-for-Success Index and the K-12 Achievement Index. These indicators, respectively, capture key learning foundations and outcomes at various stages in a person's life and the performance of the states' public schools. Coupled with that heightened attention to outcomes, the 2007 edition of *Quality Counts* examined a series of policies that states could pursue to better align public education from preschool to postsecondary education and into the workplace.

Even as we introduced those new measures last year, we put two of our traditional policy categories on hold: school finance and efforts to strengthen the teaching profession. We spent the past year revising those indicators to ensure the report reflects the field's best and most current thinking. Both categories have returned for this year's report. Indeed, teaching is the special theme of *Quality Counts 2008*.

Most of the 50-state indicators that appear in *Quality Counts* are based on original data analyses and state-survey data from the EPE Research Center. But we also draw on published information from a number of outside organizations. *Quality Counts* has always evolved over time, adding and subtracting indicators to better capture the most important and timely movements in state education policy. So the report's letter grades should not be compared from year to year. This caveat is particularly salient for *Quality Counts 2008*, given the many changes in the report since 2006, the last time we graded states.

States were awarded overall letter grades based on their ratings across six areas of performance and policy: chance-for-success; K-12 achievement; standards, assessments, and accountability; transitions and alignment; the teaching profession; and school finance. Some states performed consistently well or poorly across the full range of categories. But a closer examination of the rankings reveals that most states posted a strong showing in at least one area. This suggests that while broad evaluations of state performance can be useful, a more thorough reading of the results presented in this State Highlights Report will provide a more nuanced perspective on the educational condition of the nation and of individual states.

Editorial Projects in Education Research Center

January 2008

About Editorial Projects in Education

Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization based in Bethesda, Md. Its primary mission is to help raise the level of awareness and understanding among professionals and the public of important issues in American education. EPE covers local, state, national, and international news and issues from preschool through the 12th grade. Editorial Projects in Education Inc. publishes *Education Week*, America's newspaper of record for precollegiate education, *Teacher Magazine*, edweek.org, and the Agent K-12 employment resource. It also produces periodic special reports on issues ranging from technology to textbooks, as well as books of special interest to educators.

The **EPE Research Center** conducts annual policy surveys, collects data, and performs analyses that appear in the *Quality Counts*, *Technology Counts*, and *Diplomas Count* annual reports. The center also produces independent research reports, contributes original data and analysis to special coverage in *Education Week* and edweek.org, and maintains the Education Counts and EdWeek Maps online data resources.

Cover photographs by Sara D. Davis for Education Week

QUALITY COUNTS 2008 GRADING SUMMARY

OVERALL GRADE

A state's overall grade is the average of the scores for the six graded categories.

Arkansas: **B-**

Nation: **C**

Online extra
Calculate your own *Quality Counts*
grades at
www.edweek.org/go/qc08/calculator

	Arkansas	How did the average state score?
Chance for success	C-	C+
K-12 achievement	D	D+
Standards, assessments, and accountability	B+	B
Transitions and alignment	B	C
The teaching profession	B+	C
School finance	B-	C+

Quality Counts Grading Breakdown

This table reports the detailed scoring behind the grades for the six major topics examined in *Quality Counts*. Scores for those major categories are the average of the respective subcategory scores.

	Arkansas	U.S. Average		Arkansas	U.S. Average
Chance for success			Transitions and alignment		
<i>Early foundations</i>	75.2	81.4	<i>Early-childhood education</i>	100.0	78.6
<i>School years</i>	71.0	74.8	<i>College readiness</i>	60.0	58.4
<i>Adult outcomes</i>	68.4	81.6	<i>Economy and workforce</i>	100.0	85.3
K-12 achievement			The teaching profession		
<i>Status</i>	53.2	62.4	<i>Accountability for quality</i>	84.4	72.9
<i>Change</i>	76.4	71.5	<i>Incentives and allocation</i>	91.2	73.0
<i>Equity</i>	71.5	77.9	<i>Building and supporting capacity</i>	91.2	73.2
Standards, assessments, and accountability			School finance		
<i>Standards</i>	94.7	81.6	<i>Equity</i>	90.7	84.9
<i>Assessments</i>	83.3	83.9	<i>Spending</i>	71.5	70.3
<i>School accountability</i>	90.0	85.3			

Grading Curve A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), F (0-59)

CHANCE FOR SUCCESS

The Chance-for-Success Index

To better understand the part that education plays over a lifetime, the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center has developed the Chance-for-Success Index. Based on an original state-by-state analysis, this index combines information from 13 indicators that span an individual's life from cradle to career. The Chance-for-Success framework allows states to identify strong and weak links in its residents' educational life course – their typical trajectory from childhood through adulthood. More importantly, the index also provides information that could be used to target the efforts of public education systems in ways that better serve students of all ages.

State Success Indicators

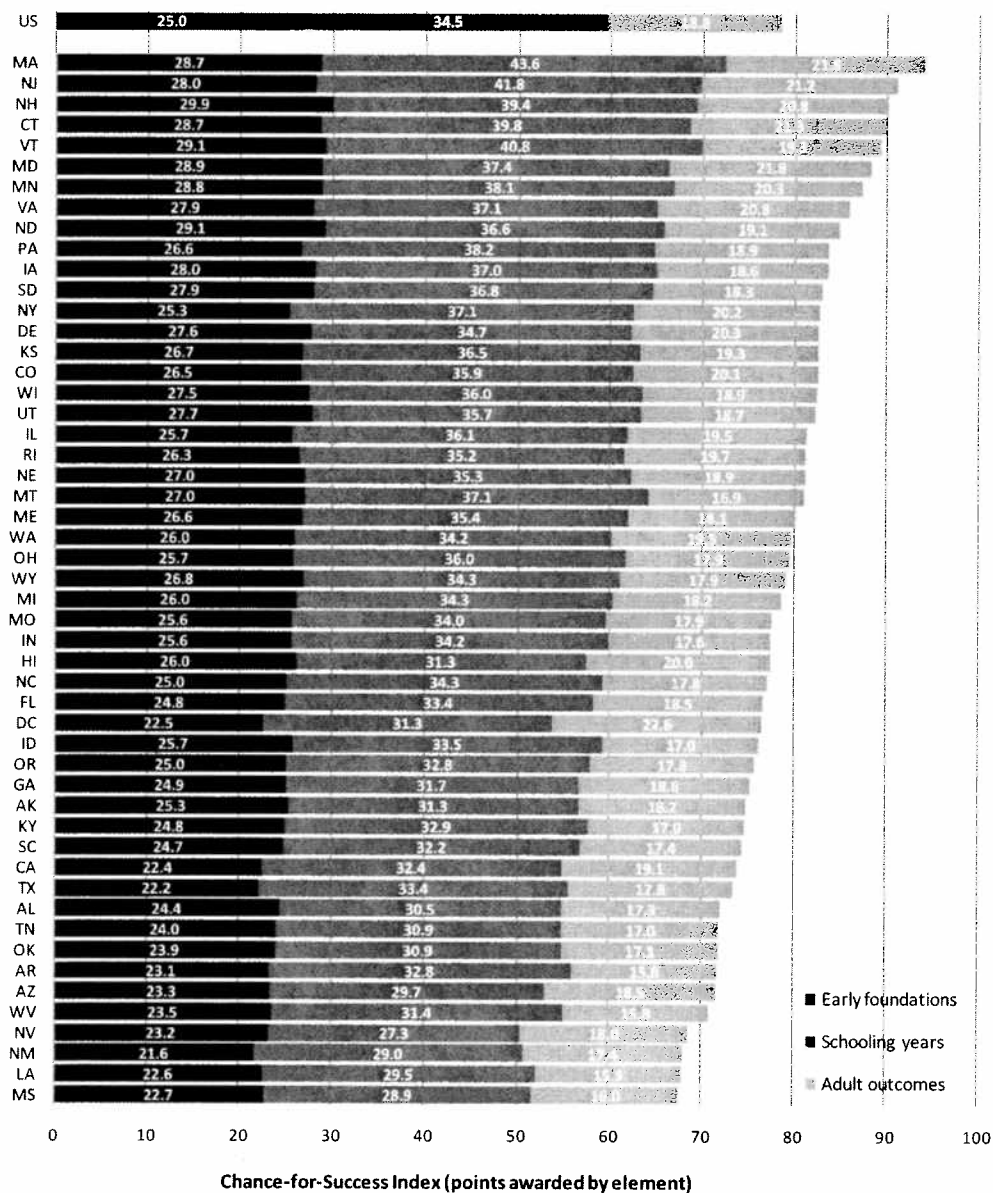
	Arkansas State Average	Rank	National Average
Early Foundations			
Family income Children from families with incomes at least 200% of poverty level (2006)	49.4%	48	60.1%
Parent education Children with at least one parent with a postsecondary degree (2006)	33.2	49	43.3
Parental employment Children with at least one parent working full time and year-round (2006)	68.9	43	71.8
Linguistic integration Children whose parents are fluent English speakers (2006)	94.3	19	84.3
The Schooling Years			
Preschool enrollment Three- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool (2006)	51.1	8	46.1
Kindergarten enrollment Eligible children enrolled in kindergarten programs (2006)	74.2	33	75.7
Elementary reading Fourth grade public school students proficient on NAEP (2007)	28.6	37	31.7
Middle school mathematics Eighth grade public school students proficient on NAEP (2007)	24.4	40	31.0
High school graduation Public high school students who graduate with a diploma (class of 2004)	72.2	26	69.9
Postsecondary participation Young adults enrolled in postsecondary or with a degree (2006)	44.1	44	51.8
Adult Outcomes			
Adult educational attainment Adults with a two- or four-year postsecondary degree (2006)	26.6	49	37.2
Annual income Adults with incomes at or above national median (2006)	38.1	49	50.1
Steady employment Adults in labor force working full time and year-round (2006)	68.1	29	68.2
	SCORE	71.7	45
	GRADE	C-	78.4
			C+

Arkansas – State Highlights 2008



Providing Opportunities for Success

The Chance-for-Success Index captures the importance of education in a person's lifetime from cradle to career. Its 13 individual indicators span a variety of factors, including preparation in early childhood, the performance of the public schools, and educational and economic outcomes in adulthood. The states are graded using a "best-in-class" rubric, where a score of 100 points on the index would mean that a state ranked first in the nation on each and every indicator. State scores range from 94.1 (Massachusetts, with an A) to 67.7 (Mississippi, with a D-plus). Further examination shows that while early foundations and adult outcomes contribute to the index, formal education (the schooling years) proves to be the driving force behind the state rankings.



ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PERFORMANCE

The K-12 Achievement Index

Quality Counts 2008 expands on the set of achievement indicators used in previous editions of the report. The K-12 Achievement Index examines 18 distinct state achievement measures related to reading and math performance, high school graduation rates, and the results of Advanced Placement exams. The index assigns equal weight to current levels of performance and changes over time. It also places an emphasis on equity, by examining both poverty-based achievement gaps and progress in closing those gaps.

State Achievement Indicators

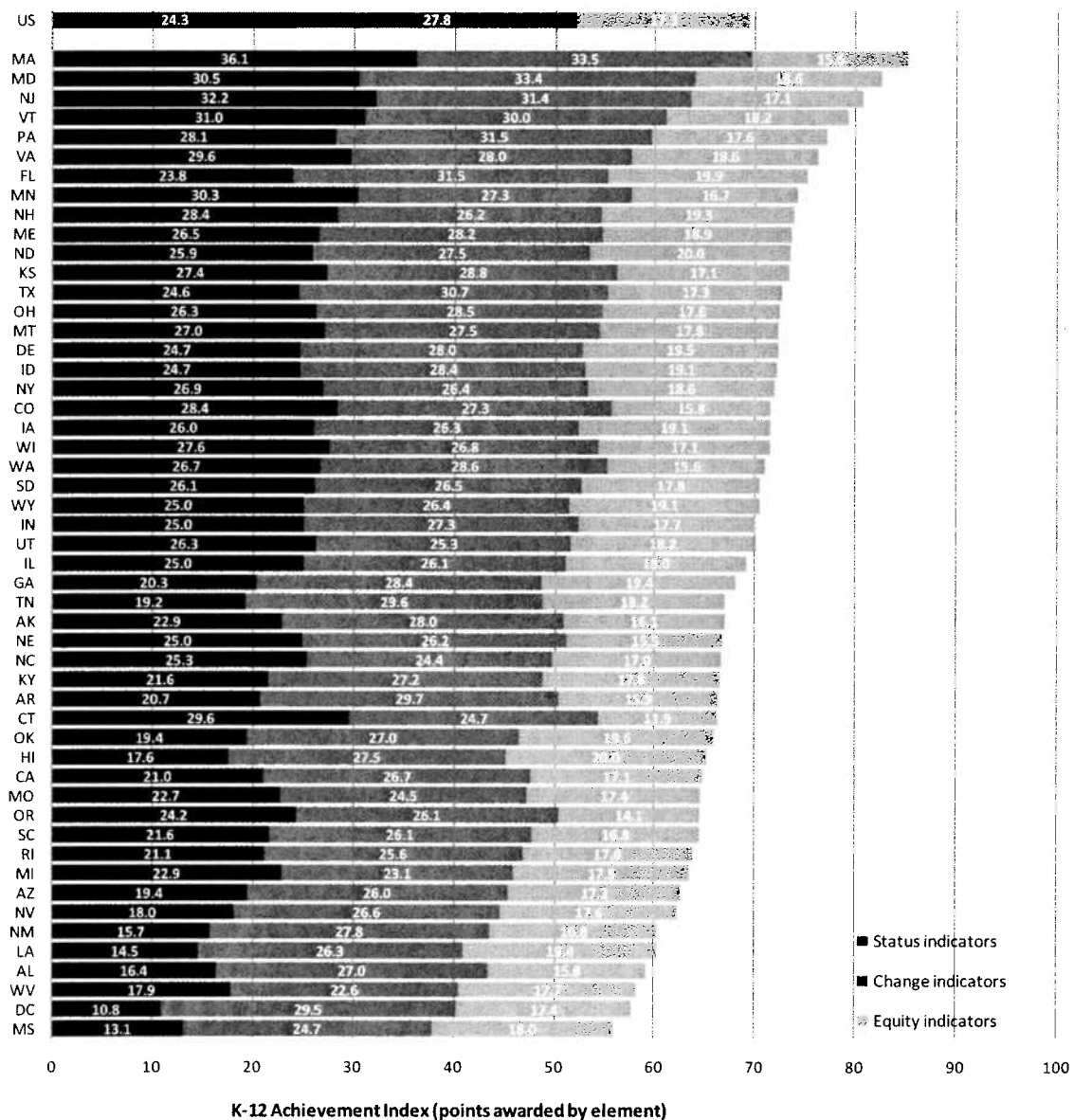
	Arkansas		National
	State Average	State Rank	Average
Achievement Levels			
4th grade math – Percent proficient on NAEP (2007)	36.7%	33	38.6%
8th grade math – Percent proficient on NAEP (2007)	24.4%	40	31.0%
4th grade reading – Percent proficient on NAEP (2007)	28.6%	37	31.7%
8th grade reading – Percent proficient on NAEP (2007)	25.4%	40	29.2%
Achievement Gains			
4th grade math – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2007)	+8.7	4	+5.1
8th grade math – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2007)	+8.1	3	+4.1
4th grade reading – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2007)	+3.4	20	+3.2
8th grade reading – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2007)	0	25	-0.3
Poverty Gap (National School Lunch Program, noneligible vs. eligible)			
Reading gap – 4th grade NAEP scale score (2007)	26.3	32	26.8
Math gap – 8th grade NAEP scale score (2007)	22.3	20	26.0
Reading-gap change – 4th grade NAEP (2003-2007), negative value = closing gap	+3.7	46	-1.1
Math-gap change – 8th grade NAEP (2003-2007), negative value = closing gap	+2.2	45	-2.4
Achieving Excellence			
Math excellence – Percent advanced on 8th grade NAEP (2007)	3.7%	42	6.6%
Change in math excellence - Percent advanced on NAEP (2003-2007)	+1.5%	27	+1.6%
High School Graduation			
Graduation rate – Public schools (class of 2004)	72.2%	26	69.9%
Change in graduation rate – Public schools (2000-2004)	+2.7%	23	+3.1%
Advanced Placement			
High AP test scores – Scores of 3 or higher per 100 students (2006)	11.1	28	16.9
Change in AP Scores – Change in high scores per 100 students (2000-2006)	+6.6	12	+6.0
	SCORE	34	69.4
	GRADE	D	D+

Arkansas – State Highlights 2008



Nation Receives Passing Grade on Achievement, But Just Barely

The EPE Research Center's K-12 Achievement Index awards states points based on three distinct aspects of student achievement: current levels of performance, improvements over time, and achievement equity between poor and nonpoor students. The nation as a whole earns 69 points, on a 100-point scale, for a grade of D-plus. The leading state, Massachusetts, earns 85 points and a B. These results suggest that no state excels across all three dimensions of achievement captured by the index. Massachusetts, for example, ranks first in the nation for current achievement levels and improvements, but 47th on equity. Despite below-average current achievement, Florida finishes seventh nationally, a result that can be attributed to very strong improvements in recent years and relatively small poverty gaps.



STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Policy Indicators

The national summary column indicates the number of states that have enacted a particular policy or, as applicable, the number of states with the specified policy enacted for all subject areas or at all grade spans.

	Arkansas	Nation
Academic Standards		
Academic content standards – State has adopted standards in the core subjects (2007-08)	EMSH	50 states
English/language arts standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels (2007)	ES HS	8
Mathematics standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels (2007)	ES MS HS	24
Science standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels (2007)	ES MS HS	22
Social studies/history standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels (2007)	MS HS	2
Revision schedule – State has regular timeline for revising standards (2007-08)	Yes	38
Supplementary resources – Materials elaborate on standards in all core subjects (2007-08)	Yes	43
Supplementary resources – Materials provided for particular student populations (2007-08)	Yes	35
Assessments		
Test items used to measure student performance		
Multiple-choice items (2007-08)	ES MS HS	50
Short-answer items (2007-08)	ES MS HS	29
Extended-response items – English/language arts (2007-08)	ES MS HS	45
Extended-response items – Other subjects (2007-08)	No	24
Portfolios of student work (2007-08)	No	1
Alignment of assessments to academic standards		
English/language arts (2007-08)	ES MS HS	51
Mathematics (2007-08)	ES MS HS	50
Science (2007-08)	ES MS HS	46
Social studies/history (2007-08)	No	12
Assessment systems		
Vertically equated scores on assessments in grades 3–8 in English (2007-08)	Yes	24
Vertically equated scores on assessments in grades 3–8 in math (2007-08)	Yes	24
Formative assessments or item banks provided to educators (2007-08)	No	21
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 (2007-08)	Yes	26
Statewide student ID – State has a statewide student-identification system (2007-08)	Yes	48
Rewards – State provides rewards to high-performing or improving schools (2007-08)	No	35
Assistance – State provides assistance to low-performing schools (2007-08)	Yes	39
Sanctions – State sanctions low-performing schools (2007-08)	Yes	32
GRADE		B+ (rank=18)
		B

Key: E= English, M= Math, S= Science, H= History/social studies
 ES= Elementary school, MS= Middle school, HS= High school

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TRANSITIONS AND ALIGNMENT

Education Alignment Policies

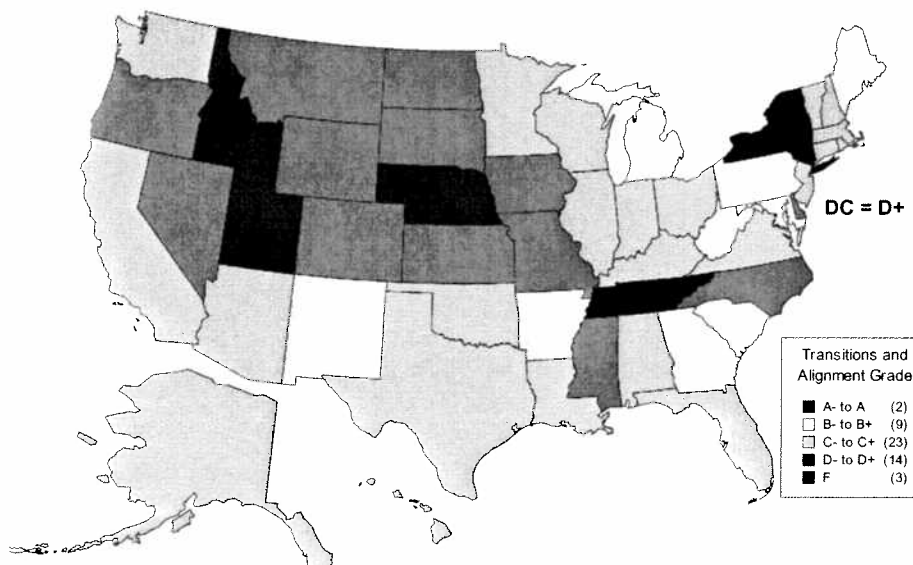
The national summary column indicates the number of states that have enacted a particular policy.

	Arkansas	Nation
Early-Childhood Education		
Early learning – State early-learning standards aligned with K-12 standards (2007-08)	Yes	42 states
School-readiness definition – State formally defines school readiness (2007-08)	Yes	13
School-readiness assessment – Readiness of entering students assessed (2007-08)	Yes	17
School-readiness intervention – Programs for students not deemed ready (2007-08)	Yes	21
Kindergarten standards – Learning expectations aligned with elementary (2007-08)	Yes	48
Postsecondary Education		
College readiness – State defines college readiness (2007-08)	Yes	15
College preparation – College prep required to earn a high school diploma (2007-08)	No	3
Course alignment – Credits for high school diploma aligned with postsecondary system (2007-08)	No	6
Assessment alignment – High school assessment aligned with postsecondary system (2007-08)	No	10
Postsecondary decisions – High school assessment used for postsecondary decisions (2007-08)	No	9
Economy and Workforce		
Work readiness – State K-12 system defines work readiness (2007-08)	Yes	26
Career-tech diploma – State offers high school diploma with career specialization (2007-08)	Yes	36
Industry certification – K-12 has path for industry-recognized certificate or license (2007-08)	Yes	40
Portable credits – K-12 pathway to earn career-tech. credits for postsecondary (2007-08)	Yes	42
	GRADE	B (rank=5) C

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. Fourteen key transition and alignment policies are included in *Quality Counts 2008*.

The states with the strongest alignment policies (grades of B or higher) each have at least 10 of the 14 focal policies in place. At the other end of the spectrum, Idaho and Utah have enacted just two such policies, and Nebraska only one.



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THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Efforts to Improve Teaching

The national summary column indicates the number of states that have enacted a particular policy.

	Arkansas	Nation
Accountability for Quality		
Requirements for initial licensure (2007-08)		
Substantial coursework in subject area(s) taught	No	27 states
Test of basic-skills	Yes	39
Test of subject-specific knowledge	Yes	42
Test of subject-specific pedagogy	Yes	6
Student teaching during teacher training	Yes	39
Other clinical experiences during teacher training	No	13
Discouraging out-of-field teaching (2007-08)		
Parental notification of out-of-field teachers	Yes	5
Ban or cap on the number of out-of-field teachers	No	4
Evaluating teacher performance (2007-08)		
Formal evaluations of all teachers' performance required	Yes	43
Student achievement is tied to teacher evaluations	No	12
Annual basis for teacher evaluations	Yes	12
Evaluators of teachers receive formal training	Yes	26
Teacher education programs (2007-08)		
Rankings/results published for teacher-preparation institutions	Yes	30
Programs accountable for graduates' classroom performance	No	18
Data systems to monitor quality (2007)		
Unique identification number assigned to each teacher by state	Yes	46
Link teacher and student records by course/subject and state assessment results	Yes	12
Incentives and Allocation		
Reduction of entry and transfer barriers (2007-08)		
Alternative-route program for teacher preparation	Yes	47
Teacher-license reciprocity or portability arrangement with other state(s)	Yes	38
Teacher-pension portability across state lines	Yes	20
Salaries and incentives		
Teacher-pay parity – Teacher salaries at least equal to comparable occupations (2006)	No	10
Districts report school-level salaries for teachers (2007-08)	No	12
Pay-for-performance program rewards teachers for raising student achievement (2007-08)	Yes	7
Differentiated roles for teachers formally recognized by state (2007-08)	Yes	20
Incentives for teacher-leadership roles (2007-08)	Yes	17
Incentives for teachers to earn national-board certification (2007-08)	Yes	38

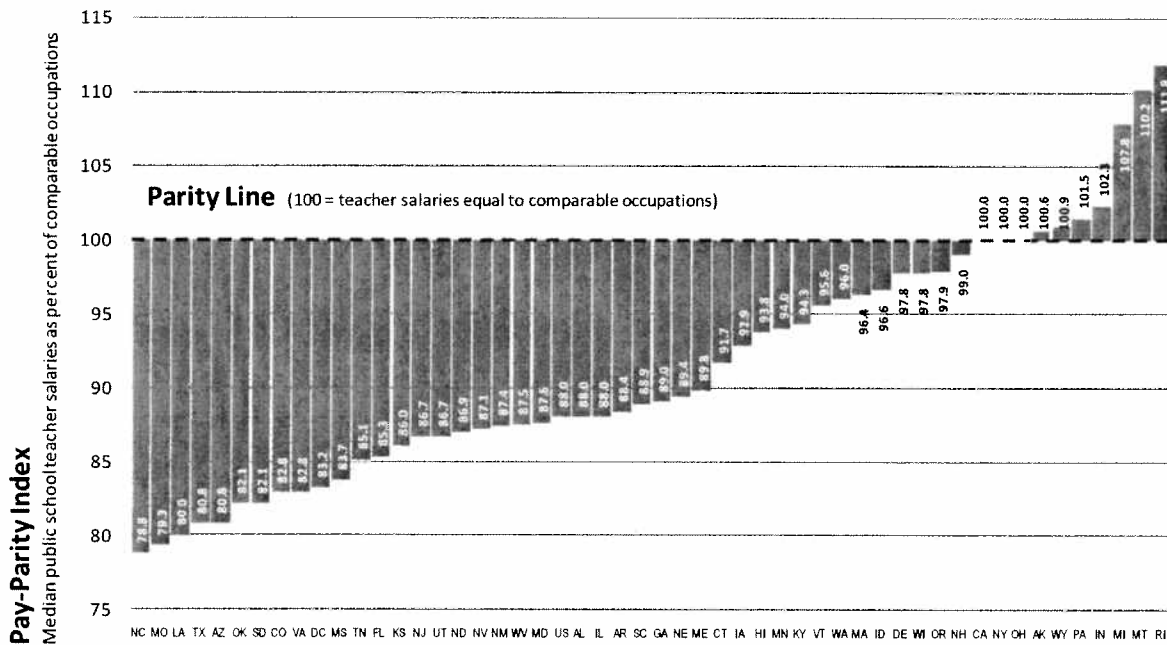
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Incentives and Allocation (cont.)	Arkansas	Nation
Managing and allocating teaching talent (2007-08)		
Fully licensed teachers tracked by state data system, by school-poverty level	Yes	42 states
Highly qualified teachers tracked by state data system, by school-poverty level	Yes	31
First-year teachers tracked by state data system, by school-poverty level	Yes	35
National Board certified teachers tracked by state data system, by school-poverty level	Yes	25
Incentives to teachers working in targeted schools	Yes	20
Incentives to teachers working in targeted teaching assignment areas	Yes	16
Incentives to board-certified teachers working in targeted schools	No	10
Incentives to principals working in targeted schools	Yes	10
Building and Supporting Capacity		
Supports for beginning teachers (2007-08)		
Induction program for all new teachers funded by state	Yes	22
Mentoring program for all new teachers funded by state	Yes	25
Mentoring program standards for selecting, training, and/or matching mentors	Yes	20
Reduced workload for all first-year teachers	No	2
Professional development (2007-08)		
Formal professional-development standards	Yes	41
Professional development financed by state for all districts	Yes	24
Districts/schools required to set aside time for professional development	Yes	16
Professional development aligned with local priorities	Yes	30
School leadership (2006)		
Standards for licensure of school administrators	Yes	48
Supervised internship for aspiring principals	Yes	28
Induction or mentoring program for aspiring principals	Yes	14
School working conditions		
Program to reduce or limit class size implemented by state (2007-08)	Yes	18
Student-teacher ratio median in elementary schools is 15:1 or less (2005)	No	26
State tracks condition of school facilities (2007-08)	Yes	22
State reports school-level information on climate and working conditions (2007-08)	No	3
State imposes penalties for school violence (2007-08)	Yes	36
State finances program to reduce school violence (2007-08)	Yes	28
GRADE B+ (rank=2) C		

Reaching the Parity Line

An original analysis by the EPE Research Center finds that public school teachers nationwide make 88 cents for every dollar earned in 16 comparable occupations. Ten states reach or surpass the pay-parity line, meaning teachers earn at least as much as comparable workers.



Occupations Comparable to K-12 Teachers

- Accountants and auditors
- Architects, except naval
- Archivists, curators, and museum technicians
- Clergy
- Compliance officers, except agriculture, construction, health and safety, and transportation
- Computer programmers
- Conservation scientists and foresters
- Counselors
- Editors, news analysts, reporters, and correspondents
- Human-resources, training, and labor-relations specialists
- Insurance underwriters
- Occupational therapists
- Other teachers and instructors (excludes preschool, K-12, and postsecondary)
- Physical therapists
- Registered nurses
- Technical writers

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2008. Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Occupational categories adapted from *How Does Teacher Pay Compare?* (Economic Policy Institute, 2004).

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SCHOOL FINANCE

Equity and Spending Indicators

	Arkansas		National Average
	State Average	Rank	
Equity (2005)			
Wealth Neutrality Score – Relationship between district funding and local property wealth	0.033	14	0.085
McLoone Index – Actual spending as percent of amount needed to bring all students to median level	93.9	19	92.6
Coefficient of Variation – Amount of disparity in spending across districts within a state	0.103	12	0.147
Restricted Range – Difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles	\$2,355	5	\$4,725
Spending (2005)			
Adjusted per-pupil expenditures (PPE) – Analysis accounts for regional cost differences	\$8,790	25	\$8,973
Students funded at or above national average – Percent of students in districts with PPE at or above U.S. average	39.5%	24	46.1%
Spending Index – Per-pupil spending levels weighted by the degree to which districts meet or approach the national average for expenditures	95.8	21	92.7
Spending on education – State expenditures on K-12 schooling as a percent of state taxable resources	4.1%	9	3.6%
	GRADE	B-	16
			C+

Definitions of School-Finance Indicators

Wealth Neutrality Score: The wealth-neutrality score shows the degree to which state and local revenue are related to the property wealth of districts. A negative score means that, on average, poorer districts actually have more funding per weighted pupil than wealthy districts do. A positive score means the opposite: Wealthy districts have more funding per weighted pupil than poor districts do.

McLoone Index: The McLoone Index is based on the assumption that if all students in the state were lined up according to the amount their districts spent on them, perfect equity would be achieved if every district spent at least as much as that spent on the pupil in the middle of the distribution, or the median. The McLoone Index is the ratio of the total amount spent on pupils below the median to the amount that would be needed to raise all students to the median per-pupil expenditure in the state.

Coefficient of Variation: The coefficient of variation is a measure of the disparity in funding across school districts in a state. The value is calculated by dividing the standard deviation of adjusted spending per pupil by the state's average spending per pupil. The standard deviation is a measure of dispersion (i.e., how spread out spending levels are across a state's districts). If all districts in a state spent exactly the same amount per pupil, its coefficient of variation would be zero. As the coefficient gets higher, the variation in the amounts spent across districts also gets higher. As the coefficient gets lower, it indicates greater equity.

Restricted Range: This indicator captures the differences in funding levels found between the highest- and lowest-spending districts in a state. The index value is calculated as the difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles. Districts enrolling fewer than 200 students are excluded from the analysis.

Spending Index: The Spending Index takes into account both the proportion of students enrolled in districts with spending at the national average, and the degree to which spending is below that benchmark in districts where per-pupil expenditures fall below the national average. Each district in which the per-pupil-spending figure (adjusted for student needs and cost differences) reaches or exceeds the national average receives a score of 1 times the number of students in the district. A district whose adjusted spending per pupil is below the national average receives a score equal to its per-pupil spending divided by the national average and then multiplied by the number of pupils in the district. The spending index is the sum of district scores divided by the total number of students in the state. If all districts spend above the U.S. average, the state attains a perfect index score of 100 points.

Note: The District of Columbia and Hawaii are single-district jurisdictions. As a result it is not possible to calculate measures of financial equity, which capture the distribution of funding across districts within a state. The District of Columbia and Hawaii do not receive grades for school finance and are not included in the rankings reported in this table.

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NOTES AND SOURCES

Quality Counts 2008

This year's 12th edition of the annual report from *Education Week* explores the most critical factor for improving student learning – high-quality teaching. *Quality Counts 2008* examines strategies that states can use to unlock the full potential of the teaching profession through policies that focus on: accountability for quality and results; incentives to attract and keep high-quality teachers; targeting teaching talent to high-needs schools and building capacity for effective teaching. *Quality Counts 2008* also grades the states based on performance and policy in six distinct areas: chance for success; achievement of K-12 schools; standards, assessments, and accountability; transitions and alignment; the teaching profession; and school finance. *Quality Counts 2008* can be accessed online at www.edweek.org/go/qc08.

The *State Highlights Reports* provide state-specific summaries of key findings from *Quality Counts 2008*. Reports for the 50 states and the District of Columbia are available on the Web at www.edweek.org/go/qc08/shr.

Indicator Sources

Quality Counts 2008 provides information on more than 150 different state-by-state indicators, spanning six categories of educational policymaking and performance. The majority of these 50-state indicators are based on original analyses and state-survey data from the EPE Research Center. In some cases, however, we also draw on published information from a number of outside organizations.

The methodology section of the full report provides detailed descriptions of our indicators and procedures for grading the states. That information can be accessed online at www.edweek.org/go/qc08.

Between August and November of 2007, the EPE Research Center conducted an original survey of state education agencies and the District of Columbia public schools. This survey provided information for most of our

state policy measures. Indicators derived from other sources are noted below.

Chance for Success

Elementary Reading and Middle School Mathematics: 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) State assessment. U.S. Department of Education, 2007.

High School Graduation: Cumulative Promotion Index, calculated using the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data, 2003-04. EPE Research Center, 2007.

Other Indicators: EPE Research Center analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2006.

K-12 Achievement

Reading and Mathematics Achievement: 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) State assessment. U.S. Department of Education, 2007.

High School Graduation: Cumulative Promotion Index, calculated using the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data, 2003-04. EPE Research Center, 2007.

Advanced Placement: EPE Research Center analysis of data from the College Board's AP Summary Reports and the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data, 2006.

Standards, Assessments, and Accountability

State has standards that are clear, specific, and grounded in content: American Federation of Teachers, unpublished review, October-November 2007.

Assessment item types and alignment to state standards: EPE Research Center review of testing calendars and other materials from state education agency Web sites, 2007.

State has a statewide student-identification system: Data Quality Campaign, 2007.

Other Indicators: EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2007.

Transitions and Alignment

All Indicators: EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2007.

The Teaching Profession

Data Systems to Monitor Quality: Data Quality Campaign, 2007.

Teacher-Salary Parity: EPE Research Center analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2005 and 2006.

Pay for Performance: Education Commission of the States' Redesigned Teacher Compensation Database (fall 2006), updated by *Education Week* (fall 2007).

School Leadership: Council of Chief State School Officers, Key State Education Policies on K-12 Education report (2006). Results for the District of Columbia compiled by the EPE Research Center (fall 2007).

Student-Teacher Ratio: EPE Research Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data, 2005-06.

Other Indicators: EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2007.

School Finance

Equity and Spending: The EPE Research Center conducted an original analysis to calculate eight distinct school-finance indicators. Data for these analyses were obtained from a variety of sources, including: U.S. Census Bureau's Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data for 2005; U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 (district-level data); National Center for Education Statistics' Geographic Cost of Education Index 1993-94; U.S. Census Bureau's Small-Area Income and Poverty Estimates 2004; U.S. Department of Education's School District Demographics data, based on the 2000 U.S. Census; National Center for Education Statistics, Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2004-05 (Fiscal Year 2005), April 2007; and 2005 gross-state-product data from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis. ■

Quality Counts

State by state Year after year

After more than a decade, *Quality Counts* remains the most trusted and definitive source for information on state efforts to improve public education. Year after year, educators, administrators, and policymakers rely on *Quality Counts* for insightful, unbiased analysis of the issues shaping American education.



JANUARY 2008

QUALITY COUNTS 2008: Tapping Into Teaching

The 12th edition of the annual report from *Education Week* explores the most critical factor for improving student learning — high-quality teaching. *Quality Counts 2008* examines strategies that states can use to unlock the full potential of the teaching profession.

Highlights from this year's report include:

A new framework for strengthening the **Teaching Profession** focusing on:

- Accountability** for quality and results
- Incentives** to attract and keep high-quality teachers
- Targeting** teaching talent to high-needs schools
- Building capacity** for effective teaching

Cradle-to-Career perspective on the importance of education throughout a person's lifetime, including 50-state ratings on:

- Chance-for-Success Index**
- K-12 Achievement Index**

State of the States — our comprehensive annual review of state policy, from academic standards to school finance

Online Extras

State Highlights Reports — individualized reports featuring state-specific findings from *Quality Counts*

Live Online Chats — with leading national authorities and experts from *Education Week* and the EPE Research Center

Education Counts — access hundreds of state indicators from *Quality Counts* using our exclusive online database



EDUCATION WEEK



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