

Arkansas

State Highlights 2014



District Disruption & Revival

School Systems Reshape to
Compete and Improve

A Special Supplement to *Education Week's*

QUALITY COUNTS 2014



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Arkansas—State Highlights 2014

A special supplement to *Education Week's Quality Counts 2014*

District Disruption and Revival: School Systems Reshape to Compete and Improve

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Published by:
Editorial Projects in Education Inc.
6935 Arlington Road, Suite 100
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: (301) 280-3100
www.edweek.org

About this Report

The 18th annual edition of *Education Week's Quality Counts* continues the tradition of tracking key education indicators and grading the states on their performance and outcomes. This year's report also focuses on school district governance and operations as its special theme, examining the impact of the increasingly complex fiscal, political, and technological forces that are challenging school districts and prompting efforts to cope with new pressures. *Education Week* journalists take an in-depth look at the prominent developments—including school choice initiatives, district mergers, and federal policy shifts—transforming the traditional environment for education governance.

To complement the report's journalism, the Education Week Research Center conducted an original survey of school district administrators, who shared their insights and opinions on factors influencing governance and operations in their systems, high-profile reform options, and non-traditional schooling models. Highlights of the study are featured in the report.

This year's report also features newly updated 50-state information on results in three of the areas monitored by the report on an ongoing basis as part of *Quality Counts'* State of the States framework: the Chance for Success Index; the K-12 Achievement Index; and school finance.

To provide a comprehensive perspective on state policy and performance, the 2014 State Highlights Reports integrate updated findings for 2014 with policy data from previous editions of *Quality Counts*. Those policy categories include data for: standards, assessments, and accountability; the teaching profession; and transitions and alignment. Most of the indicators that appear in *Quality Counts* are based on original analyses and state-survey data from the Education Week Research Center, supplemented by information published by other organizations.

Overall findings from *Quality Counts* show that some states perform consistently well or poorly across the full range of graded categories. However, a closer examination of the results reveals that most states post a strong showing in at least one area. This suggests that while broad evaluations of state rankings and performance can be useful, a deeper reading of the results presented in this State Highlights Report will provide a more nuanced perspective on the educational condition of the nation and the states.

Education Week Research Center
January 2014

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 publishes *Education Week*, America's newspaper of record for precollegiate education, the online *Teacher*, *Digital Directions*, and *Industry & Innovation* channels, and the TopSchoolJobs 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 ***Education Week Research Center*** conducts policy surveys, collects data, and performs analyses that appear in *Education Week* and its special reports—*Quality Counts*, *Technology Counts*, and *Diplomas Count*. The center also conducts independent research studies and maintains the Education Counts and EdWeek Maps online data resources.

QUALITY COUNTS 2014 GRADING SUMMARY

	Arkansas		How did the average state score?
	grade	rank	
Chance for success (2014)	C-	45	C+
K-12 achievement (2014)	D+	37	C-
School finance analysis (2014)	C	25	C
Transitions and alignment (2013)	A	2	B-
Standards, assessments, and accountability (2012)	A	6	B
The teaching profession (2012)	B+	2	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 based on the respective subcategory scores.

	Arkansas	U.S. Average		Arkansas	U.S. Average
Chance for success (2014)			Transitions and alignment (2013)		
<i>Early foundations</i>	75.6	79.2	<i>Early-childhood education</i>	100.0	84.1
<i>School years</i>	70.6	76.2	<i>College readiness</i>	90.0	69.2
<i>Adult outcomes</i>	69.0	77.0	<i>Economy & workforce</i>	100.0	92.2
K-12 achievement (2014)			Standards, assessments, and accountability (2012)		
<i>Status</i>	56.3	65.6	<i>Standards</i>	100.0	87.3
<i>Change</i>	68.7	68.3	<i>Assessments</i>	83.3	83.3
<i>Equity</i>	81.0	81.7	<i>School accountability</i>	100.0	85.3
School finance analysis (2014)			The teaching profession (2012)		
<i>Equity</i>	87.6	85.6	<i>Accountability for quality</i>	82.4	74.5
<i>Spending</i>	60.7	65.4	<i>Incentives & allocation</i>	88.5	70.4
			<i>Building & supporting capacity</i>	93.3	72.6

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)

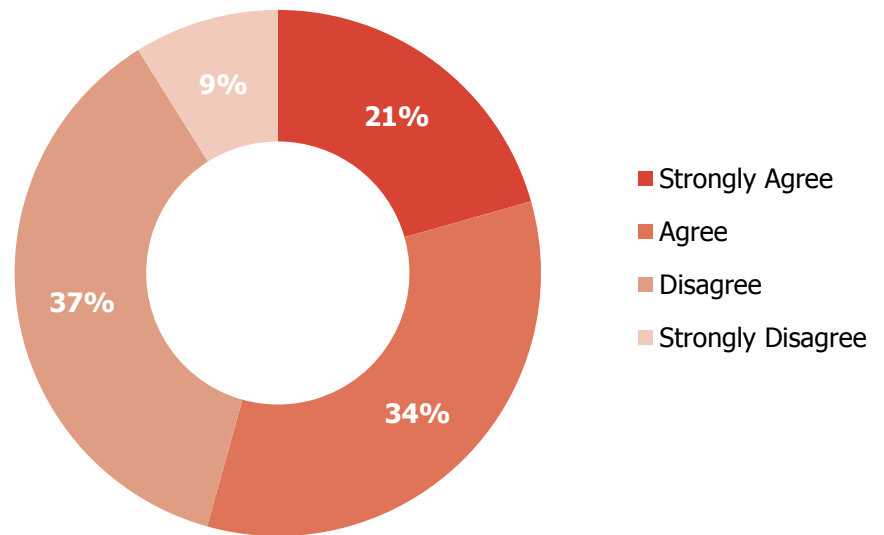
SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

Perspectives on a Changing Landscape

A range of powerful factors—including economic, political, and technological forces—are prompting changes in school system operations and in traditional models of education governance across the nation. District administrators are often charged with navigating this evolving environment. To gauge attitudes toward prominent management challenges and reform options, the Education Week Research Center conducted an online survey of more than 450 district administrators who are registered users of edweek.org, the *Education Week* website. The results provide a window into education leaders’ perspectives on important developments in district governance and operations.

A Need for Change

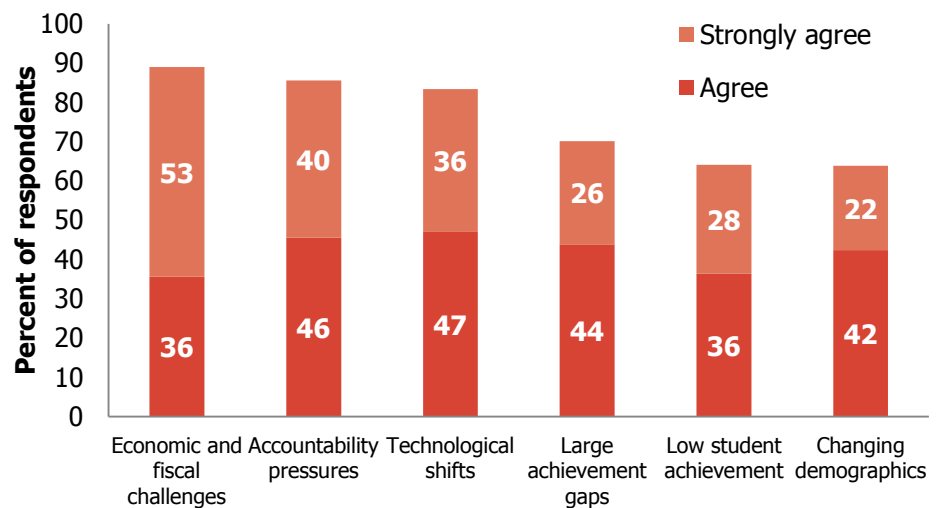
More than half of survey respondents (55%) agreed that significant changes in the governance or structure of their school districts are needed in order to address current challenges. District officials reported that a range of factors—among them fiscal challenges and accountability pressures—have prompted consideration of significant governance or structural changes in their school systems.



SOURCE: Education Week Research Center, 2014

Drivers of Change

A national sample of district administrators was asked whether a range of factors had prompted consideration of changes in district governance or structure. Nearly 90 percent of respondents reported that economic and fiscal challenges were important drivers of change, with 53 percent expressing strong agreement with that sentiment. More than 80 percent of respondents agreed that accountability pressures and technology shifts have led them to consider changes.



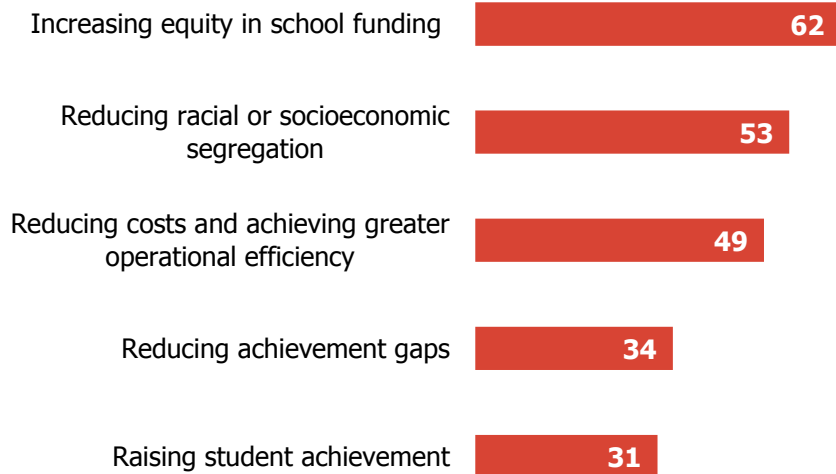
SOURCE: Education Week Research Center, 2014

Anticipated Results

Respondents were asked to share their views on the outcomes that would be likely to result from two frequently discussed structural and governance reforms: merging high- and low-poverty districts and establishing state-managed turnaround districts.

Merger of High- and Low-Poverty Districts

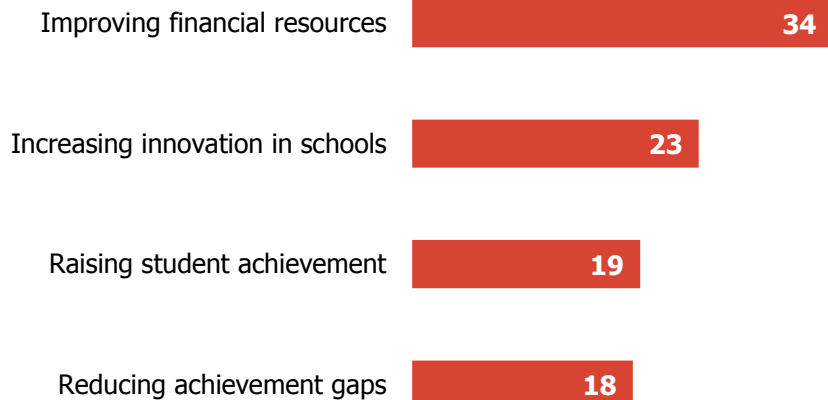
Administrators felt that district merger offers greater promise for addressing some challenges than others. Sixty-two percent of respondents agreed that consolidating high- and low-poverty districts would be a sound approach for increasing equity in school funding, and 53 percent believed the strategy would be likely to reduce racial or socioeconomic segregation. But one-third or fewer thought mergers would be an effective way to reduce achievement gaps or raise student achievement.



SOURCE: Education Week Research Center, 2014

State-led Turnaround

Respondents viewed the likely effects of state-run recovery or turnaround school districts comparatively less favorably. Thirty-four percent of administrators agreed that a state-run district could help improve a school system's financial resources. But fewer than one-quarter felt that such state-led initiatives would promote innovation in their schools. Fewer than 1 in 5 respondents said that state turnaround would improve student achievement or help to narrow achievement gaps.



SOURCE: Education Week Research Center, 2014

A Complex “District” Environment

The vast majority of students in the nation’s public schooling system have historically been served by traditional school districts, which operate within prescribed geographical boundaries under the management of a central office, superintendent, or other authority. That fact, however, belies the considerable and growing complexity that characterizes the public K-12 sector.

Today, schools are operated by and in conjunction with a variety of distinct governmental bodies and organizations, collectively known as local education agencies, or LEAs. In 2010-11, these nearly 18,000 agencies included regular independent school districts, as well as charter agencies (which operate one or more public charter schools), supervisory unions (which provide administrative services for multiple districts), regional service agencies, and state- and federally-operated agencies.

The number of agencies of each type varied considerably from state to state. An analysis of enrollment data also illustrates substantial differences in district size, both within and across states.

*The 1 million students of the New York City Public Schools are served by one supervisory union and 33 constituent school districts.

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center analysis of the U.S. Department of Education’s Common Core of Data, 2014

Educational Agency Data by State						
	Regular Districts	All-charter Agencies	Other Agencies	Regular District Enrollment		
				Median	Largest	Smallest
AL	133	0	38	2,984	62,016	509
AK	53	0	1	417	49,206	12
AZ	224	384	41	1,146	65,123	4
AR	239	17	33	1,014	25,685	362
CA	955	29	205	1,938	667,273	6
CO	178	1	80	591	85,979	33
CT	169	18	13	2,200	21,021	81
DE	19	19	3	4,723	17,190	1,185
DC	1	52	1	44,199	44,199	44,199
FL	67	0	8	12,931	347,366	1,104
GA	180	11	21	3,532	160,744	218
HI	1	0	0	179,601	179,601	179,601
ID	116	26	4	836	35,537	5
IL	868	2	208	953	405,644	31
IN	293	60	38	1,906	33,079	168
IA	359	0	9	660	33,091	69
KS	312	0	12	562	49,329	37
KY	174	0	20	2,310	97,331	121
LA	70	44	12	5,199	45,230	676
ME	235	0	17	564	6,970	5
MD	24	0	1	17,033	144,023	2,183
MA	244	63	87	2,314	56,037	4
MI	551	249	64	1,522	77,757	2
MN	337	149	69	923	39,158	55
MS	152	0	12	2,262	31,916	173
MO	522	36	9	618	25,084	18
MT	417	0	86	104	10,562	1
NE	251	0	39	362	49,405	81
NV	17	0	1	3,380	314,059	64
NH	178	10	89	550	15,731	18
NJ	613	73	4	1,287	41,235	5
NM	89	33	6	637	95,415	42
NY*	727	170	55	1,562	60,665	17
NC	115	99	21	6,786	144,173	607
ND	183	0	44	211	11,017	3
OH	615	339	109	1,685	51,134	10
OK	526	3	49	433	42,989	17
OR	186	11	24	906	45,818	2
PA	500	145	128	2,148	166,233	198
RI	32	12	10	2,966	23,573	128
SC	86	1	17	4,437	71,930	676
SD	152	0	20	318	21,390	20
TN	137	0	3	3,567	111,834	2
TX	1,031	210	34	941	204,245	20
UT	41	76	7	4,541	70,083	210
VT	294	0	66	212	3,632	3
VA	134	0	91	3,946	174,479	238
WA	295	0	19	1,074	47,735	5
WV	55	0	2	3,867	28,458	943
WI	424	18	19	958	80,934	53
WY	49	0	12	778	13,171	29
U.S.	13,623	2,360	1,961	1,146	667,273	1

CHANCE FOR SUCCESS

The Chance for Success Index

The Education Week Research Center developed the Chance for Success Index to better understand the role of education across an individual's lifetime. Based on an original state-by-state analysis, this index combines information from 13 indicators that span a person's life from cradle to career. The Chance for Success framework allows states to identify strong and weak links in their 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

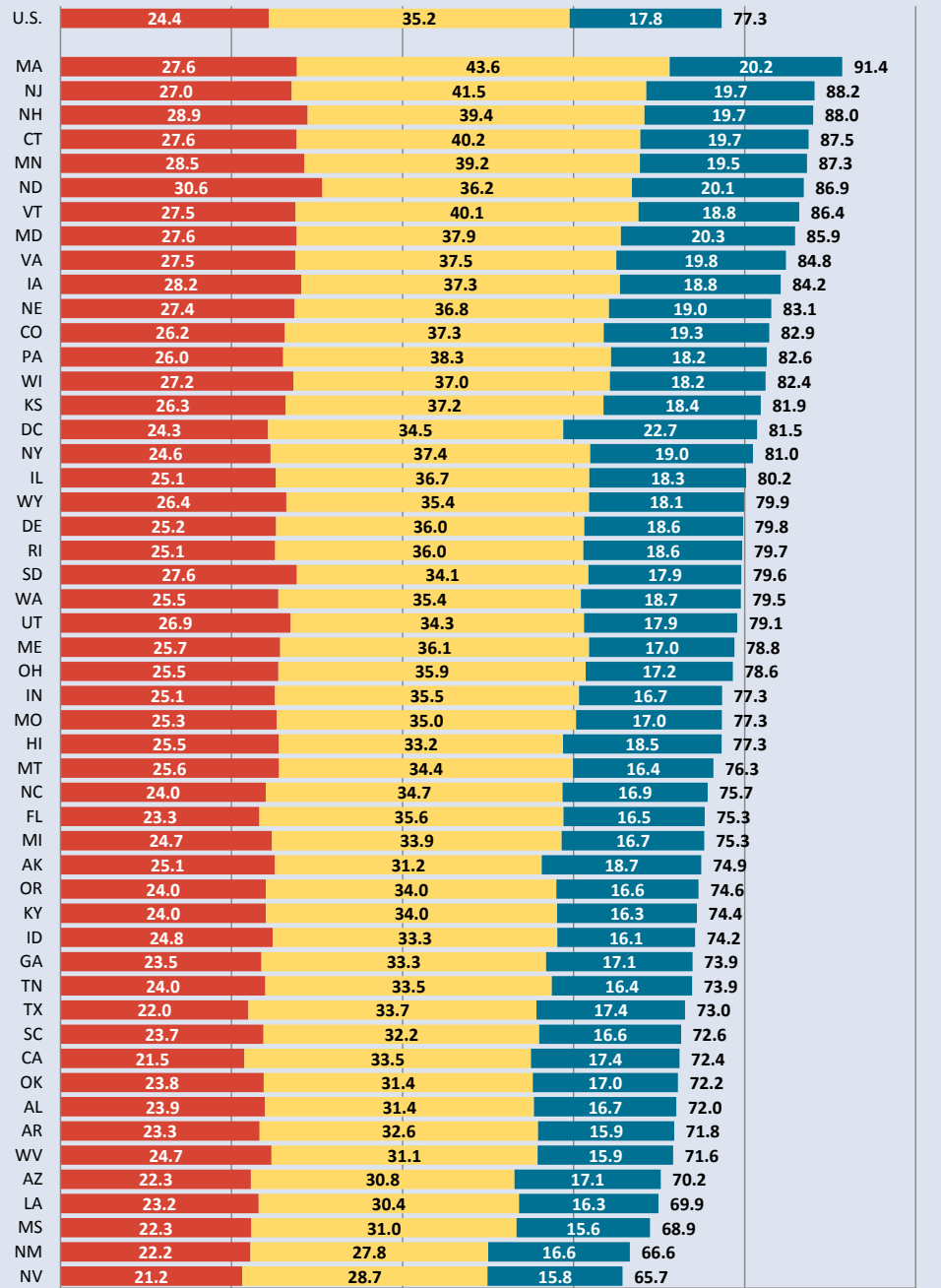
From <i>Quality Counts 2014</i>	Arkansas State Average	Rank	National Average	
Early Foundations				
Family income Children from families with incomes at least 200% of poverty level (2012)	46.2%	49	55.0%	
Parent education Children with at least one parent with a postsecondary degree (2012)	38.2	48	46.2	
Parental employment Children with at least one parent working full time and year-round (2012)	73.0	28	72.8	
Linguistic integration Children whose parents are fluent English-speakers (2012)	93.8	17	83.3	
School Years				
Preschool enrollment Three- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool (2012)	48.7	18	47.7	
Kindergarten enrollment Eligible children enrolled in kindergarten programs (2012)	77.0	27	77.9	
Elementary reading Fourth grade public school students proficient on NAEP (2013)	31.6	36	34.0	
Middle school mathematics Eighth grade public school students proficient on NAEP (2013)	27.7	42	34.4	
High school graduation Public high school students who graduate with a diploma (class of 2010)	72.3	35	74.7	
Postsecondary participation Young adults enrolled in postsecondary education or with a degree (2012)	45.9	48	55.8	
Adult Outcomes				
Adult educational attainment Adults with a two- or four-year postsecondary degree (2012)	29.8	49	39.5	
Annual income Adults with incomes at or above national median (2012)	41.8	50	50.2	
Steady employment Adults in labor force working full time and year-round (2012)	73.6	11	69.8	
	GRADE	C-	45	C+

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 91.4 (Massachusetts, earning the only A-minus) to 65.7 (Nevada, with a D). A closer examination of results shows that, while early foundations and adult outcomes do contribute to the index, indicators related to formal education (the schooling years) are the driving force behind the state rankings.



NOTE: State subscores may not sum to total score due to rounding.

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center, 2014

Chance-for-Success Index
(points awarded by element)

■ Early Foundations
■ School Years
■ Adult Outcomes

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PERFORMANCE

The K-12 Achievement Index

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

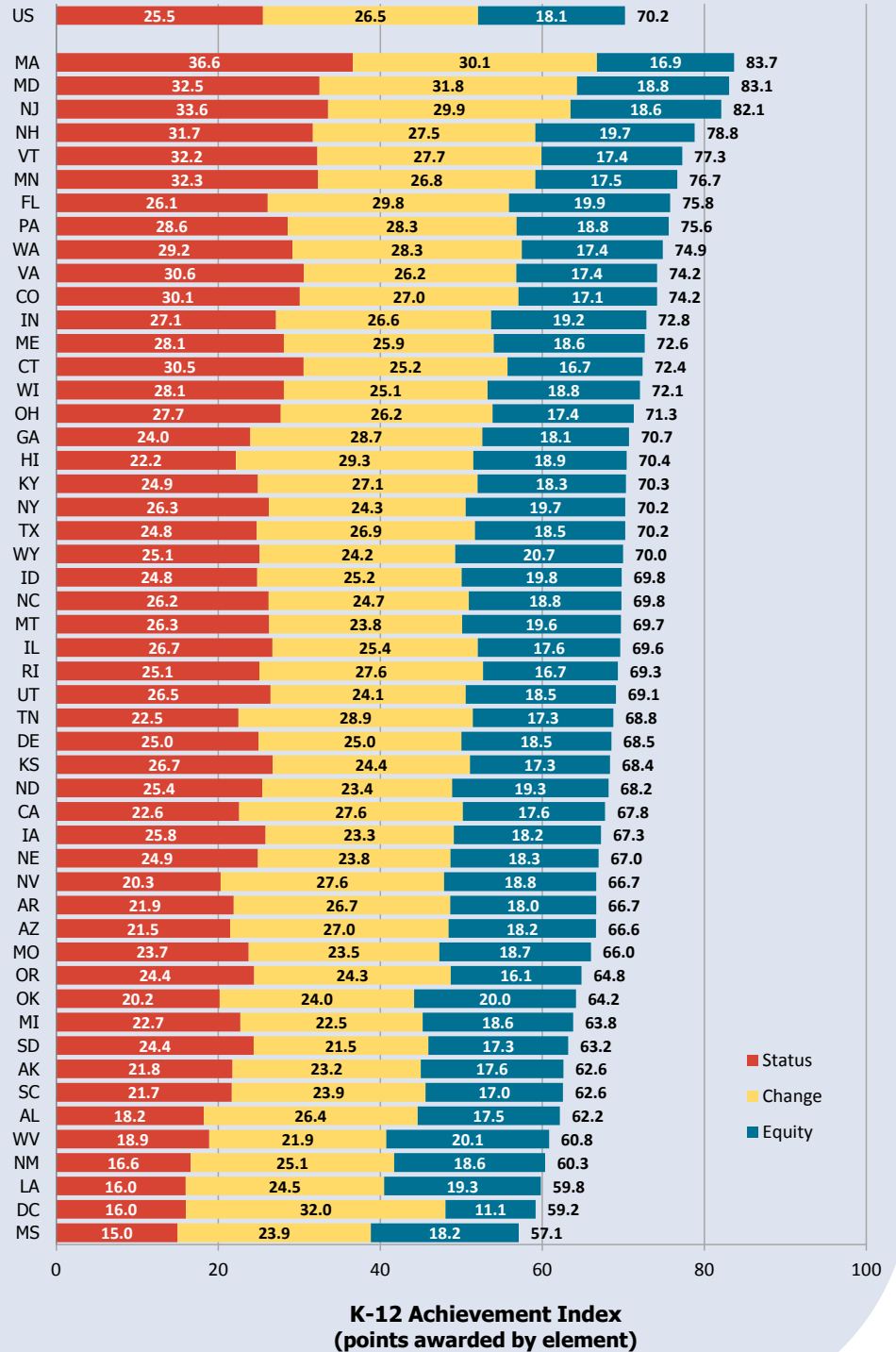
From <i>Quality Counts 2014</i>	Arkansas		National Average
	State Average	Rank	
Achievement Levels			
4th grade math – Percent proficient on NAEP (2013)	39.3%	37	41.3%
8th grade math – Percent proficient on NAEP (2013)	27.7%	42	34.4%
4th grade reading – Percent proficient on NAEP (2013)	31.6%	36	34.0%
8th grade reading – Percent proficient on NAEP (2013)	30.3%	40	34.3%
Achievement Gains			
4th grade math – Scale-score change on NAEP (2003-2013)	+10.9	11	+7.2
8th grade math – Scale-score change on NAEP (2003-2013)	+12.1	5	+7.5
4th grade reading – Scale-score change on NAEP (2003-2013)	+4.9	16	+4.2
8th grade reading – Scale-score change on NAEP (2003-2013)	+4.0	23	+4.7
Poverty Gap (National School Lunch Program, noneligible minus eligible)			
Reading gap – 4th grade NAEP scale score (2013)	24.3	14	28.6
Math gap – 8th grade NAEP scale score (2013)	25.0	23	27.2
Reading-gap change – 4th grade NAEP (2003-2013), negative value = closing gap	+1.7	28	+0.7
Math-gap change – 8th grade NAEP (2003-2013), negative value = closing gap	+4.9	47	-1.2
Achieving Excellence			
Math excellence – Percent advanced on 8th grade NAEP (2013)	4.5%	44	8.3%
Change in math excellence – Percent advanced on NAEP (2003-2013)	+2.3%	34	+3.4%
High School Graduation			
Graduation rate – Public schools (class of 2010)	72.3%	35	74.7%
Change in graduation rate – Public schools (2000-2010)	+2.8%	41	+7.9%
Advanced Placement			
High AP test scores – Scores of 3 or higher per 100 students (2012)	19.4	25	25.7
Change in AP Scores – Change in high scores per 100 students (2000-2012)	+15.1	20	+16.6
	GRADE	D+	37
			C-

Nation Earns Mediocre Grade on Achievement

The Education Week Research Center’s K-12 Achievement Index awards states points based on three distinct aspects of student achievement: current levels of performance (status), improvements over time (change), and achievement gaps between poor and nonpoor students (equity).

The nation as a whole earns 70.2 points, on a 100-point scale, for a grade of C-minus. The leading state, Massachusetts, earns 83.7 points and a B, while Mississippi finishes last with a score of 57.1.

Massachusetts is the only state to earn an A in the status category, while Maryland and New Jersey show grades of C+ or better across the three achievement dimensions.



NOTE: State subscores may not sum to total score due to rounding.

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center, 2014

K-12 Achievement Index
(points awarded by element)

SCHOOL FINANCE ANALYSIS

Equity and Spending Indicators

From <i>Quality Counts 2014</i>	Arkansas		National Average
	State Average	Rank	
Equity (2011)			
Wealth-Neutrality Score – Relationship between district funding and local property wealth	0.093	24	0.094
McLoone Index – Actual spending as percent of amount needed to bring all students to median level	90.5%	27	90.4%
Coefficient of Variation – Amount of disparity in spending across districts within a state	0.147	16	0.168
Restricted Range – Difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles	\$3,726	19	\$4,566
Spending (2011)			
Adjusted per-pupil expenditures (PPE) – Analysis accounts for regional cost differences	\$11,536	26	\$11,864
Students funded at or above national average – Percent of students in districts with PPE at or above U.S. average	21.4%	31	46.0%
Spending Index – Per-pupil spending levels weighted by the degree to which districts meet or approach the national average for expenditures	87.3	33	90.1
Spending on education – State expenditures on K-12 schooling as a percent of state taxable resources	4.1%	8	3.6%

GRADE C 25 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 spend more dollars per weighted pupil than do wealthy districts. A positive score means the opposite: Wealthy districts have more funding per weighted pupil than poor districts.

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 multiplied by 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.

TRANSITIONS AND ALIGNMENT

Education Alignment Policies

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

From <i>Quality Counts 2013</i>	Arkansas	Nation
Early-Childhood Education (2012-13)		
Early learning – State early-learning standards aligned with K-12 standards	Yes	47 states
School-readiness definition – State formally defines school readiness	Yes	26
School-readiness assessment – Readiness of entering students assessed	Yes	22
School-readiness intervention – Programs for students not deemed ready	Yes	28
Kindergarten standards – Learning expectations aligned with elementary	Yes	51
Postsecondary Education (2012-13)		
College readiness – State defines college readiness	Yes	38
College preparation – College prep required to earn a high school diploma	Yes	16
Course alignment – Credits for high school diploma aligned with postsecondary system	Yes	8
Assessment alignment – High school assessment aligned with postsecondary system	No	21
Postsecondary decisions – High school assessment used for postsecondary decisions	Yes	15
Economy and Workforce (2012-13)		
Work readiness – State K-12 system defines work readiness	Yes	38
Career-tech diploma – State offers high school diploma with career specialization	Yes	44
Industry certification – K-12 has path for industry-recognized certificate or license	Yes	42
Portable credits – K-12 pathway to earn career-tech. credits for postsecondary	Yes	48

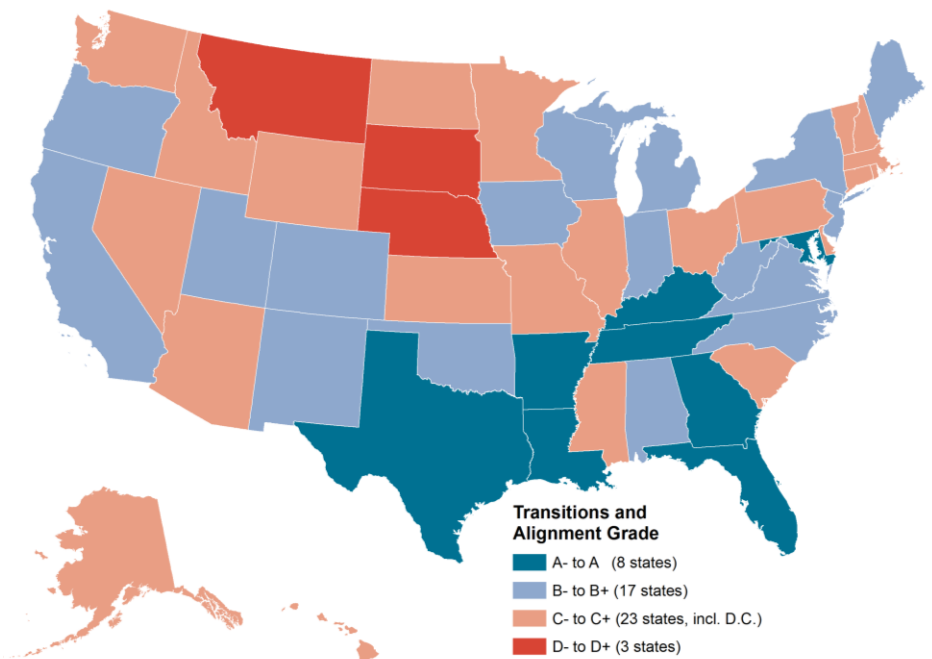
GRADE	A (rank=2)	B-
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A National Perspective

The Education Week Research Center examined state efforts to connect the K-12 education system with early learning, higher education, and the world of work. Fourteen key transitions and alignment policies were included in *Quality Counts 2013*.

By the 2012-13 school year, most states had enacted at least nine of the 14 tracked policies; 19 states had 10 or more policies in place. Georgia became the first state to earn a perfect score, having implemented all 14 policies. At the other end of the spectrum, Nebraska and South Dakota had just four such policies in place, and Montana only three.

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center, 2013



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.

From *Quality Counts 2012*

Academic Standards

	Arkansas	Nation
English/language arts standards are course- or grade-specific (2011-12)	ES MS HS	33 states
Mathematics standards are course- or grade-specific (2011-12)	ES MS HS	31
Science standards are course- or grade-specific (2011-12)	ES MS HS	26
Social studies/history standards are course- or grade-specific (2011-12)	ES MS HS	26
Supplementary resources – Materials elaborate on standards in all core subjects (2011-12)	Yes	43
Supplementary resources – Materials provided for particular student populations (2011-12)	Yes	45

Assessments

Test items used to measure student performance

Multiple-choice items (2011-12)	ES MS HS	51
Short-answer items (2011-12)	ES MS HS	27
Extended-response items – English/language arts (2011-12)	ES MS HS	38
Extended-response items – Other subjects (2011-12)	No	19
Portfolios of student work (2011-12)	No	0

Alignment of assessments to academic standards

English/language arts (2011-12)	ES MS HS	51
Mathematics (2011-12)	ES MS HS	51
Science (2011-12)	ES MS HS	51
Social studies/history (2011-12)	No	10

Assessment systems

Vertically equated scores on assessments in grades 3-8 in English (2011-12)	Yes	21
Vertically equated scores on assessments in grades 3-8 in math (2011-12)	Yes	22
Benchmark assessments or item banks provided to educators (2011-12)	No	32

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 (2011-12)	Yes	24
Statewide student ID – State has a statewide student-identification system (2010)	Yes	51
Rewards – State provides rewards to high-performing or improving schools (2011-12)	Yes	37
Assistance – State provides assistance to low-performing schools (2011-12)	Yes	36
Sanctions – State sanctions low-performing schools (2011-12)	Yes	32

GRADE

A (rank=6)

B

Key: E = English, M = Math, S = Science, H = History/social studies
ES = elementary school, MS = middle school, HS = high school

THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Efforts to Improve Teaching

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

From *Quality Counts 2012*

	Arkansas	Nation
Accountability for Quality		
Requirements for initial licensure (2011-12) (* indicates requirements that do not also apply to alternative-route candidates)		
Substantial coursework in subject area(s) taught	No	28 states
Test of basic skills	Yes	39
Test of subject-specific knowledge	Yes	43
Test of subject-specific pedagogy	No	4
Student-teaching during teacher training	Yes*	41
Other clinical experiences during teacher training	No	15
Discouraging out-of-field teaching (2011-12)		
Direct parental notification of out-of-field teachers	Yes	6
Ban or cap on the number of out-of-field teachers	No	7
Evaluating teacher performance (2011-12)		
Formal evaluations of all teachers' performance required	Yes	45
Student achievement is tied to teacher evaluations	No	17
Annual basis for teacher evaluations	Yes	20
All evaluators of teachers receive formal training	Yes	29
Teacher education programs (2011-12)		
Rankings/results published for teacher-preparation institutions	Yes	31
Programs accountable for graduates' classroom performance	No	16
Data systems to monitor quality (2011)		
State links teachers to student-growth data	Yes	26
State links teachers and their performance data back to teacher education programs	Yes	10
Incentives and Allocation		
Reduction of entry and transfer barriers (2011-12)		
Alternative-route program for teacher preparation	Yes	50
Teacher-license reciprocity or portability arrangement with other state(s)	Yes	44
Teacher-pension portability across state lines	Yes	25
Salaries and incentives		
Teacher-pay parity – Teacher salaries at least equal to comparable occupations (2010)	No	13
Districts report school-level salaries for teachers (2011-12)	No	12
Pay-for-performance program or pilot rewards teachers for raising student achievement (2011-12)	Yes	11
Differentiated roles for teachers formally recognized by state (2011-12)	Yes	22
Incentives for teachers taking on differentiated roles (2011-12)	Yes	15
Financial incentives for teachers to earn national-board certification (2011-12)	Yes	24

	Arkansas	Nation
Incentives and Allocation (cont.)		
Managing and allocating teaching talent (2011-12)		
Incentives to teachers working in targeted schools	Yes	20 states
Incentives to teachers working in hard-to-staff teaching-assignment areas	Yes	17
Incentives to board-certified teachers working in targeted schools	No	8
Incentives to principals working in targeted schools	Yes	10
Building and Supporting Capacity		
Supports for beginning teachers (2011-12)		
Induction program for all new teachers funded by state	Yes	14
Mentoring program for all new teachers funded by state	Yes	16
Mentoring-program standards for selecting, training, and/or matching mentors	Yes	13
Reduced workload for all first-year teachers	No	3
Professional development (2011-12)		
Formal professional-development standards	Yes	39
Professional development financed by state for all districts	Yes	23
Districts/schools required to set aside time for professional development	Yes	16
Professional development aligned with local priorities	Yes	31
School leadership (2011-12)		
Standards for licensure of school administrators	Yes	46
Required internship for aspiring principals	Yes	40
Induction or mentoring program for aspiring principals	Yes	19
School working conditions		
Program to reduce or limit class size implemented by state (2011-12)	Yes	24
Student-to-teacher ratio median in elementary schools is 15:1 or less (2009-10)	Yes	28
State tracks condition of school facilities (2011-12)	Yes	25
State posts school-level teacher-survey data on climate, working conditions (2011-12)	No	9
	GRADE	B+ (rank=2)
		C

NOTES AND SOURCES

Quality Counts 2014

This year's 18th edition of *Quality Counts* examines the impact of the increasingly complex fiscal, political, and technological forces that are challenging school districts and spurring efforts to grapple with a range of factors transforming the environment for education governance. The print edition of *Quality Counts 2014* provides a 50-state update on results in two distinct areas: K-12 achievement and school finance.

The State Highlights Reports present state-specific summaries of key findings across all six areas of policy and performance that comprise the report's state-grading rubric. Due to a delay in the release of U.S. Census Bureau data caused by the recent government shutdown, new results for the Chance for Success Index were not available for inclusion in the report's print edition. Updated data for that category are only available online and in the State Highlights Reports. Information is drawn from the 2012, 2013, and 2014 editions of *Quality Counts*. Reports for the 50 states and the District of Columbia are available on the Web at www.edweek.org/go/qc14.

State Policy Indicators

Quality Counts regularly tracks and grades state progress in six categories comprising more than 150 different state-by-state indicators. Most of these 50-state indicators are based on original analyses and state-survey data from the Education Week Research Center. The report also draws on published information from other organizations.

The methodology section of *Quality Counts* provides detailed descriptions of our indicators and procedures for grading the states. That information can be accessed online at www.edweek.org/go/qc14 (2014), www.edweek.org/go/qc13 (2013) and www.edweek.org/go/qc12 (2012).

Policy information for standards, assessments, and accountability; the teaching profession; and transitions and alignment is drawn from surveys of state education agencies

conducted for 2012 and 2013. Indicators derived from other sources are listed in the notes that follow.

Chance for Success (2014)

Elementary Reading and Middle School Mathematics: 2013 State NAEP assessment. U.S. Department of Education, 2013.

High School Graduation: Cumulative Promotion Index, calculated using the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data, 2009-10. Education Week Research Center, 2013.

Other Indicators: Education Week Research Center analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2012.

K-12 Achievement (2014)

Reading and Mathematics Achievement: 2013 State NAEP assessment. U.S. Department of Education, 2013.

High School Graduation: Cumulative Promotion Index, calculated using the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data, 2009-10. Education Week Research Center, 2013.

Advanced Placement: Education Week Research Center analysis of data from the College Board's AP Summary Reports 2012, and the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data, 2011.

School Finance Analysis (2014)

Original Education Week Research Center Analysis of Equity and Spending: Data for these analyses were obtained from a variety of sources, including: U.S. Census Bureau's Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data for 2011; U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data 2008-09 and 2010-11 (district-level data); NCES' Comparable Wage Index 2005; U.S. Census Bureau's Small-Area Income and Poverty Estimates 2011; U.S. Department of Education's School District Demographics data, based on the 2000 U.S. Census; NCES, Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School

Year 2010-11 (Fiscal Year 2011), July 2013; and 2011 gross-state-product data from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Transitions and Alignment (2013)

All Indicators: Education Week Research Center annual state policy survey, 2012.

Standards, Assessments, and Accountability (2012)

Assessment item types and alignment to state standards: Education Week Research Center review of testing calendars and other materials from state education agency websites, as verified by states, 2011.

State has a statewide student-identification system: Data Quality Campaign, 2010.

Other Indicators: Education Week Research Center annual state policy survey, 2011.

The Teaching Profession (2012)

Data Systems to Monitor Quality: Data Quality Campaign, 2011.

Teacher-Pay Parity: Education Week Research Center analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2009 and 2010.

Student-to-Teacher Ratio: Education Week Research Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data, 2009-10.

Other Indicators: Education Week Research Center annual state policy survey, 2011.

District Governance and Operations

In October 2013, the Education Week Research Center conducted an online survey of school district administrators who are registered users of the *Education Week* website. Key findings, based on their responses, are presented in this report.

QUALITY COUNTS 2014

District Disruption & Revival School Systems Reshape to Compete and Improve

The 18th edition of *Quality Counts* examines the impact of new pressures on school district governance and operations. The print edition of the report also provides a 50-state update of results in two of the areas monitored by the report on an ongoing basis: K-12 achievement and school finance.

Highlights from this year's report

A comprehensive look at **school district governance and operations**, including timely journalistic coverage and original survey data and analyses

Education Week Research Center's **K-12 Achievement Index**, a multi-dimensional analysis of current performance, equity, and gains over time

State of the States—Our comprehensive annual review of state performance, this year highlighting: K-12 achievement and school finance

Online Extras

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

Education Counts—Access hundreds of education indicators from *Quality Counts* using our exclusive online database

Interactive tools—Readers can delve into state data and use an online calculator to recompute grades based on the indicators they feel are most important



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