

No Time to Lose



How to Build a
World-Class
Education System
State by State



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NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

About NCSL

- Instrumentality of all 50 state and territorial legislatures
- Bipartisan
- Provides research, technical assistance and opportunities to exchange ideas
- Advocates on behalf of legislatures before the federal government

NCSL is committed to the success of state legislators and staff. Founded in 1975, we are a respected bipartisan organization providing states support, ideas, connections and a strong voice on Capitol Hill.



Takeaways

1. **States can learn from top performing countries** - other countries are moving all students upward while US student achievement is stagnant.
2. **There are certain policies that top performing countries have in common** - Top performing countries have strategically linked education reform to economic development and global competitiveness.
3. **There are steps states can take to begin implementing those policies** – states function similar to how top performing countries do, and so states are well positioned to lead this work.

International Surveys Sound Alarms

U.S. RANKING ON PISA

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a comparative study of 15-year-old students' knowledge in key areas including math, reading and science.

| YEAR (COUNTRIES TESTED) | U.S. RANKING | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------|---------|
| | READING | MATH | SCIENCE |
| 2000 (32) | 15th | 19th | 14th |
| 2003 (41) | 18th | 28th | 22nd |
| 2006 (57) | NR | 34th | 28th |
| 2009 (65) | 17th | 30th | 22nd |
| 2012 (65) | 24th | 36th | 28th |

NCSL Graphic | Source: National Center on Education and the Economy, Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2013

- U.S. rankings are sinking on PISA
- ETS analysis finds U.S. millennial generation workers ranked last in 2013 OECD PIAAC survey of worker numeracy, literacy and problem solving in 33 countries



NCSL International Education Study Group

- 22 legislators and 6 legislative staff
- Studied the 10 top performing countries/provinces:
(Alberta, Ontario, Estonia, Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, Poland, Shanghai, Singapore, Taiwan)
- Studied with 25 international/state education experts



NCSL Legislative Study Group Findings: Good News and Bad News

- **Bad news:** Most state education systems are falling dangerously behind the world in a number of international comparisons and on our own National Assessment of Educational Progress, leaving the United States overwhelmingly underprepared to succeed in the 21st century economy.
- **Good news:** The good news is, by studying these other high-performing systems, we are discovering what seems to work. If we get to work right away, we can quickly turn this around as high-performing countries have.



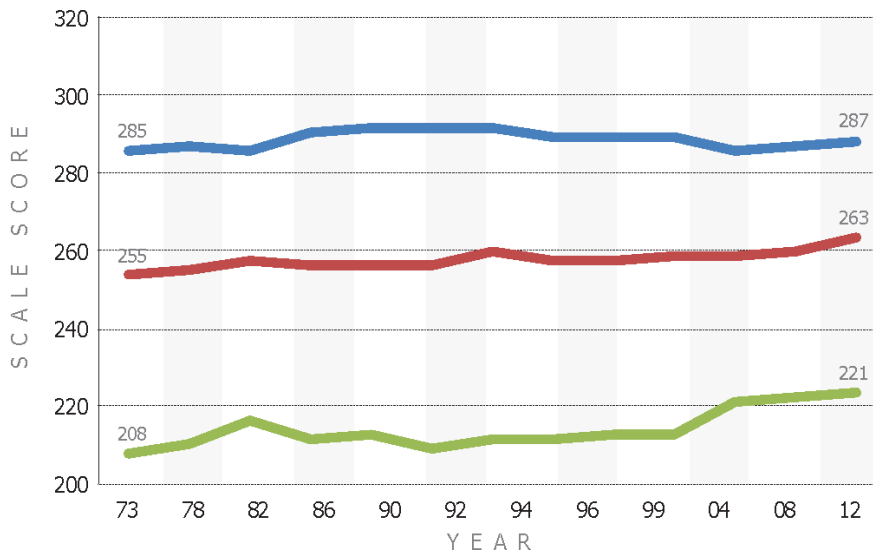
Our Own NAEP Sounds Alarms: Little to No Progress

LONG-TERM NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) SCORES

Over the past four decades, high school students in the U.S. have made little progress according to the "Nation's Report Card," administered by the NAEP.

READING

Ages: ● 17 ● 13 ● 9



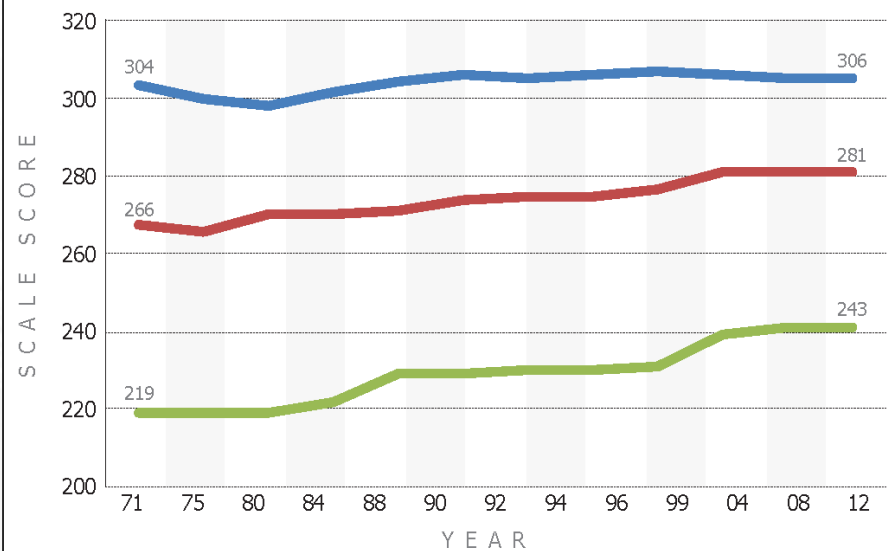
NCSL Graphic | Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2012). Trends in Academic Progress

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MATHEMATICS

Ages: ● 17 ● 13 ● 9



NCSL Graphic | Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2012). Trends in Academic Progress

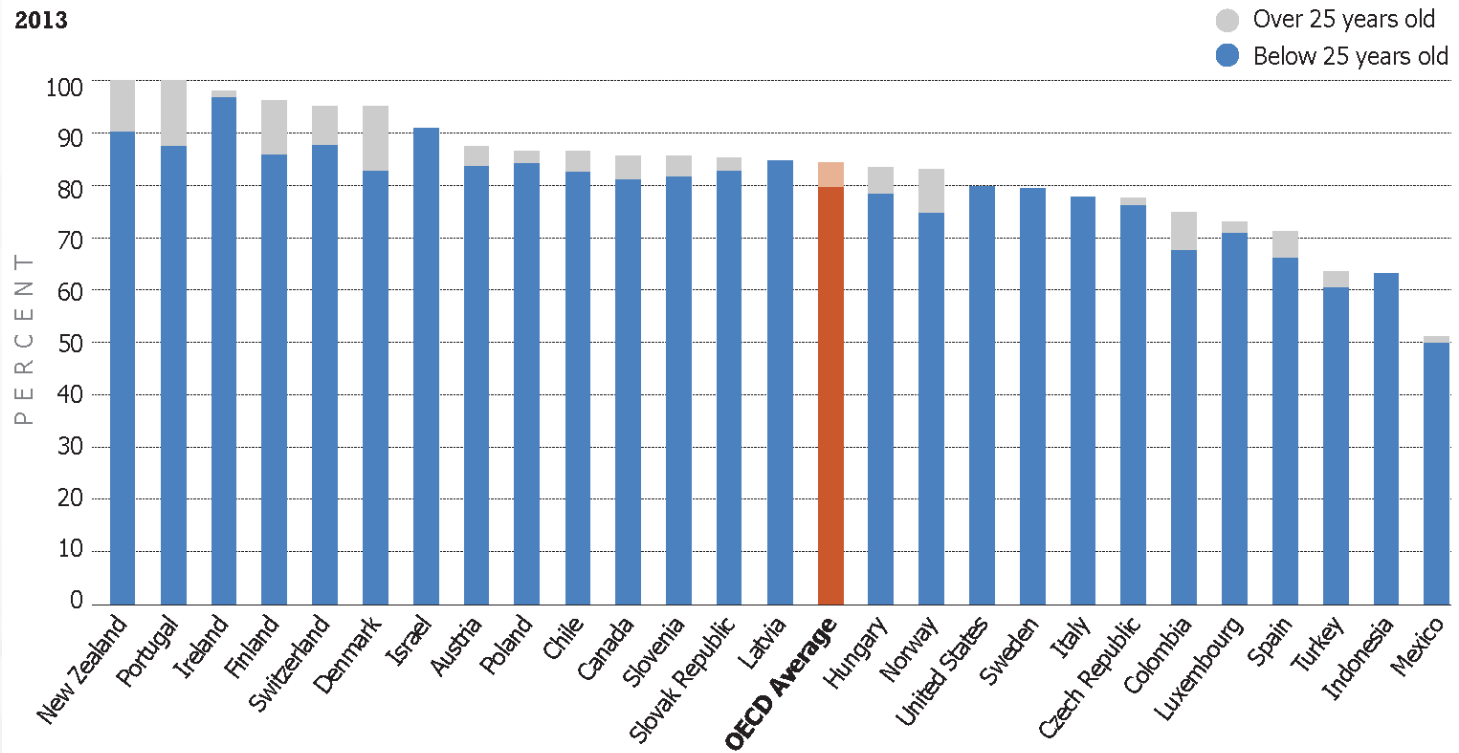


Myth: US Cannot be Fairly Compared to World Class Education Systems

UPPER SECONDARY GRADUATION RATES, 2013

The OECD reports that the U.S. graduation rate is 80 percent, lower than most other high-performing countries. This dispels the assertion that other high-performing countries educate only their elite.

2013



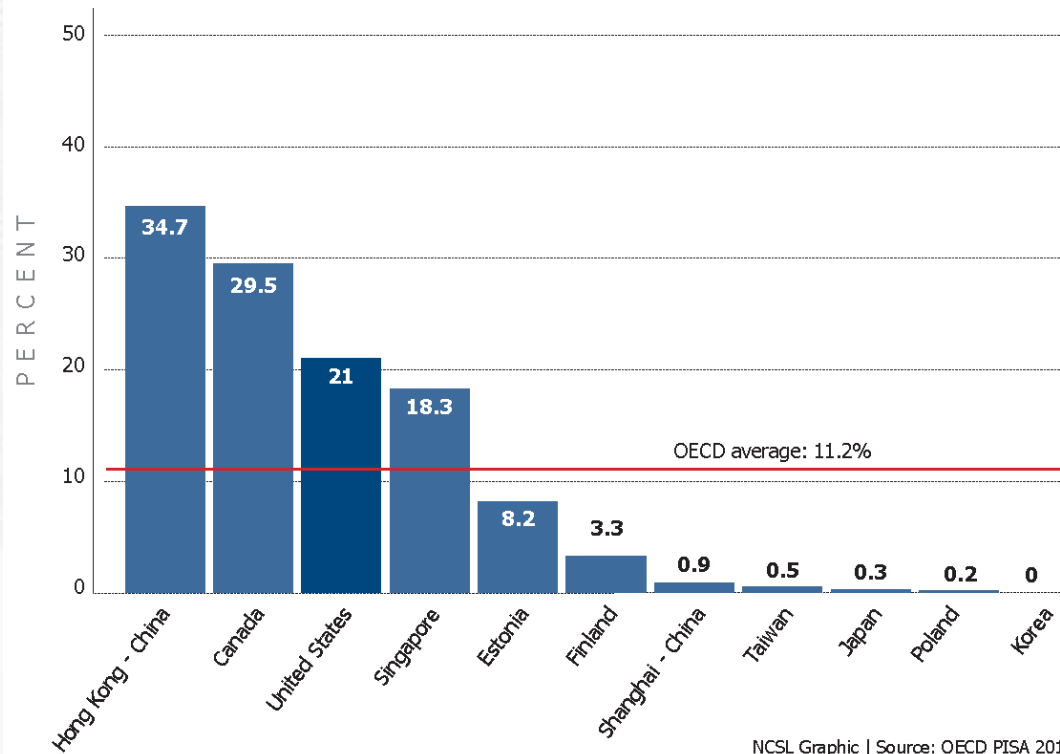
NCSL Graphic | Source: OECD (2015), Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en>, p. 48



Myth: US Cannot be Fairly Compared to World Class Education Systems

PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO ARE IMMIGRANTS

Europe and Asia have experienced an upsurge in immigration over the past several decades, and Asian countries have significant cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity.



Common Element #1:

Children come to school ready to learn, and extra support is given to struggling students so that all have the opportunity to achieve high standards.



Common Element #2:

A world-class teaching profession supports a world-class instructional system, where every student has access to highly-effective teachers and is expected to succeed.



Common Element #3:

A highly-effective, intellectually rigorous system of career and technical education is available to those preferring an applied education.



Common Element #4:

Individual reforms are connected and aligned as parts of a clearly planned and carefully designed comprehensive system.



Action Steps for States (not U.S.)

- ✓ **Build an Inclusive Team and Set Priorities.**
- ✓ **Study and Learn from Top Performers.**
- ✓ **Create a Shared Statewide Vision.**
- ✓ **Benchmark Policies.**
- ✓ **Get Started on One Piece.**
- ✓ **Work Through “Messiness.”**
- ✓ **Invest the Time.**



How States are Moving the Conversation

- Bringing conversation about top performing countries to a broad group of citizens
- Bringing policymakers, educators and citizens together to identify a vision, priorities and opportunities for action
- Linking these conversations to major reform occurring in the state (ESSA, school finance reform)
- Conducting gap analyses
- Considering benchmarking
- Finding an entity for hosting/sponsoring this ongoing work



Urgent Call to Action: No Time to Lose!

“As state policymakers, it is our responsibility to provide our citizens with a world-class education. We cannot let another generation settle for anything less. Our future workforce, national defense, economic vitality and democratic foundation depend on our ability and willingness to get this done.

If we assemble the best minds in policy and practice, implement what we know works, and commit ourselves to the time, effort and resources needed to make monumental changes, we can once again be among the best education systems in the world. If they can do it, so can we. But there’s no time to lose.”



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