

**Lynn Olson, executive project editor, Education Week:**

For the past decade, *Quality Counts* has tracked state policies for improving elementary and secondary education. But children’s chances for success don’t just rest on what happens from kindergarten through high school. They are also shaped by experiences during the preschool years and by opportunities for continued education and training beyond high school.

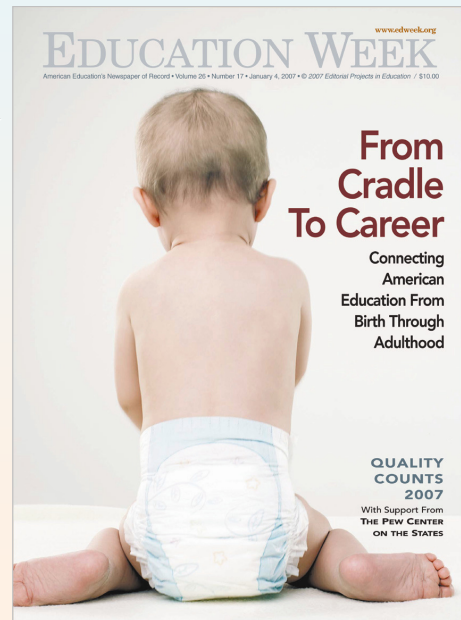
Smart states, like smart companies, try to make the most of their investments by ensuring that young people’s education is connected from one stage to the next—reducing the chances that students will be lost along the way or will require costly remedial programs to acquire skills or knowledge they could have learned right from the start.

Yet the historical splits between different levels of education in the United States have made such coordination difficult, with early-childhood education, elementary and secondary schooling, and postsecondary education and training often operating in separate silos, with different rules, different financial structures, different accountability systems, and different expectations for success.

Increasingly, states worried about the skills of their future workforce and stiffer economic competition from abroad are trying to connect education from birth to adulthood—or as the title of this report suggests, from cradle to career—so that more students are prepared for further study, work, and citizenship.

# The 11th Year of Quality Counts

- Annual report from *Education Week* and the EPE Research Center enters a new generation
- Viewing K-12 education through a wider lens
- Tracking state efforts to align education from childhood through adulthood



Quality Counts 2007

**LO:** *Quality Counts 2007* begins to track state efforts to create seamless education systems from early childhood to the world of work by looking at performance across the various sectors, and at state efforts to define students' "readiness" to succeed from one stage to the next.

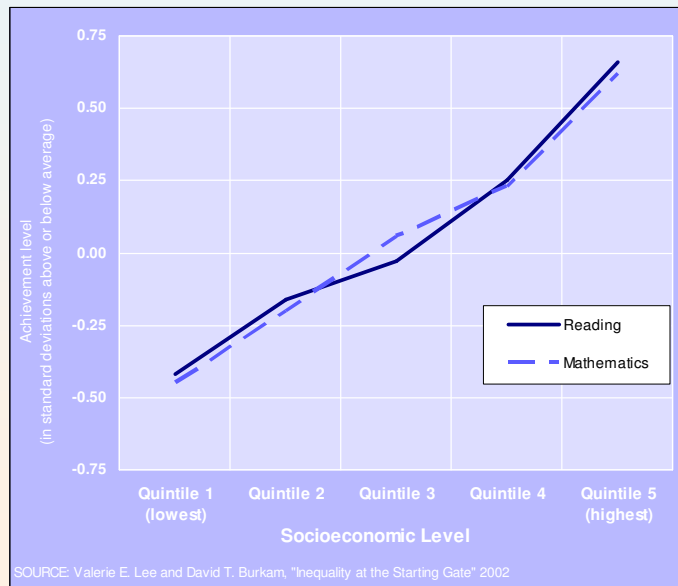
In a minute, I'll turn the microphone over to Chris Swanson, the director of the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, to explain our new Chance-for-Success Index. The index provides a state-focused perspective on the importance of education throughout a person's lifetime. It dramatically illustrates why states need to pay attention to human capital development at every step along the way if they want to have a vibrant economy.

But first, I'd like to set the stage for this lifetime learning perspective, by painting a broad picture of why this matters. Just consider:

# Off to a Shaky Start

## Poor Students Lag Behind in Kindergarten

- Children from low-income families perform significantly worse when they enter kindergarten
- Pattern found for both literacy and mathematics skills



Quality Counts 2007

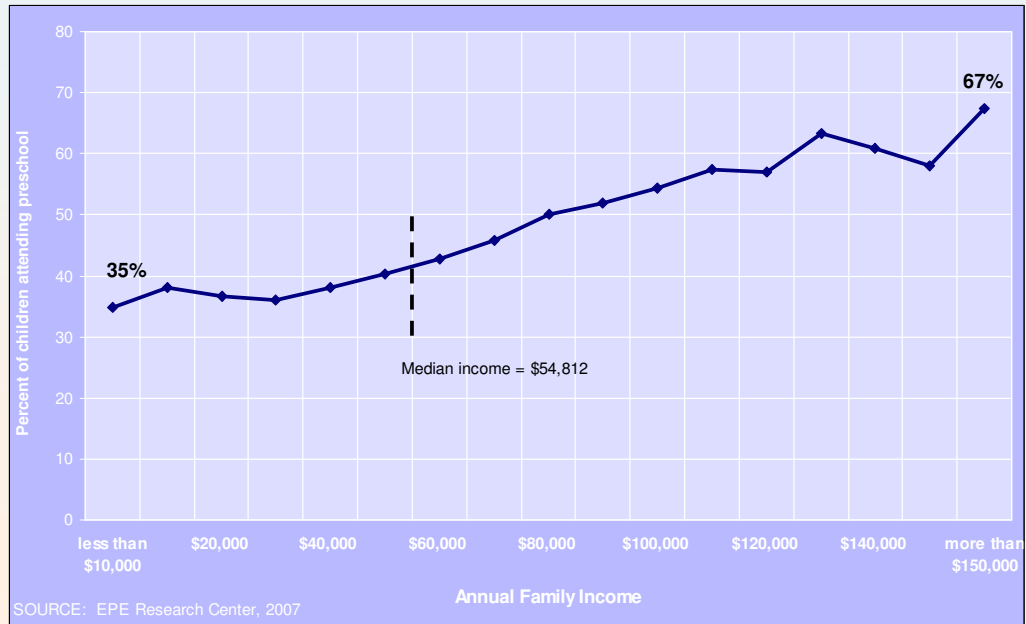
**LO:** Even before they enter school, the conditions in children's homes and communities shape their chances for success. Young children from low-income families, for example, perform significantly lower on tests of literacy and math achievement even before they begin kindergarten, based on longitudinal data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Similarly, children who come to school malnourished, having a mother with less than a high school education, or a parent whose primary language is not English are much more likely than classmates without those factors to have academic and behavioral problems later on.

# The Preschool Split

## Preschool attendance tied to family income

- Children from low-income families are far less likely to attend center-based preschool

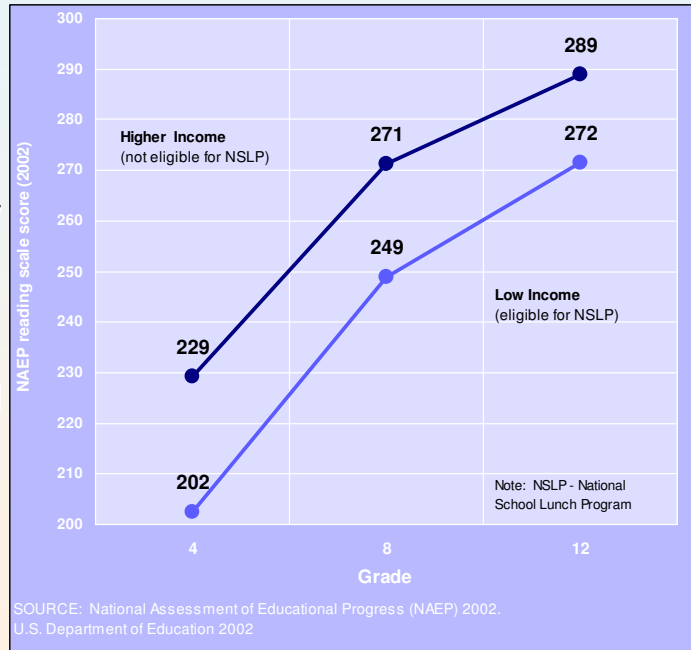


Quality Counts 2007

**LO:** Research has found that participating in intensive, high-quality early-childhood education can improve school readiness. Children who attend such programs are less likely to drop out of school, repeat grades, or need special education than children who have not had such experiences. Yet fewer than half of 3- and 4-year-olds in the United States are enrolled in preschool programs. The likelihood that a child will attend preschool also is strongly tied to family income, with low-income children far less likely to attend center-based programs of any kind than their more advantaged peers.

# Achievement Gaps Persist

- Significant income-based gaps in reading achievement persist through the elementary and secondary grades
- Poor 12th graders read on par with affluent 8th graders

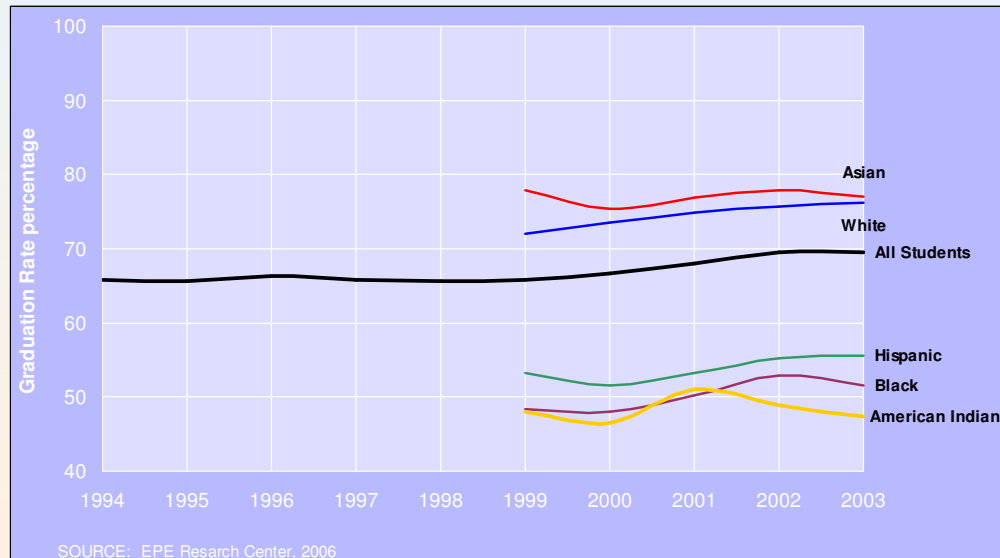


**LO:** Far from closing children's early learning gaps tend to persist throughout elementary and high school. Less than one-third of 4<sup>th</sup> graders read at the "proficient" level or higher on national tests, and less than a third of 8<sup>th</sup> graders reach that benchmark in reading or math. By the end of high school, seniors from low-income families read on a par with middle school students from more affluent families.

# High School Graduation Stalls

During much of the 1990s graduation rates stagnated

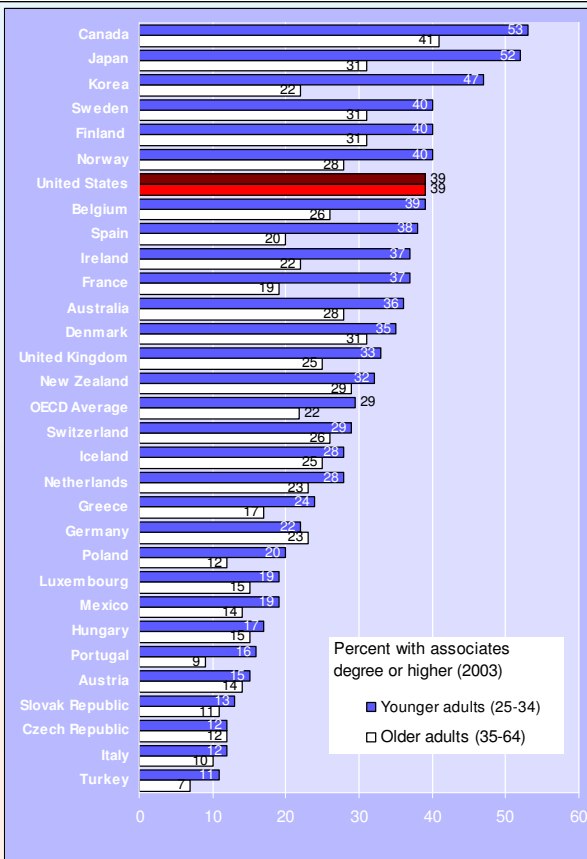
- Overall, 7 of every 10 students now graduate with a diploma
  - ◆ Large disparities exist among racial and ethnic groups



**LO:** And while high school completion rates have been rising in other nations, in the United States those rates stagnated for much of the 1990s. Today, only about 7 in 10 high school students graduate with a diploma in four years; a figure that drops to 52 percent for black students and 56 percent for Hispanic students.

# U.S. Bucks Attainment Trend

- In nearly all developed countries, younger generations are attaining higher educational levels.
- But in the U.S., younger adults have not surpassed the previous generation.



Quality Counts 2007

**LO:** Indeed, at a time when a high school diploma is typically the minimum requirement for a decent job, the United States has slipped to 11<sup>th</sup> among 30 OECD nations in the proportion of 25- to 34-year-olds with a high school credential.

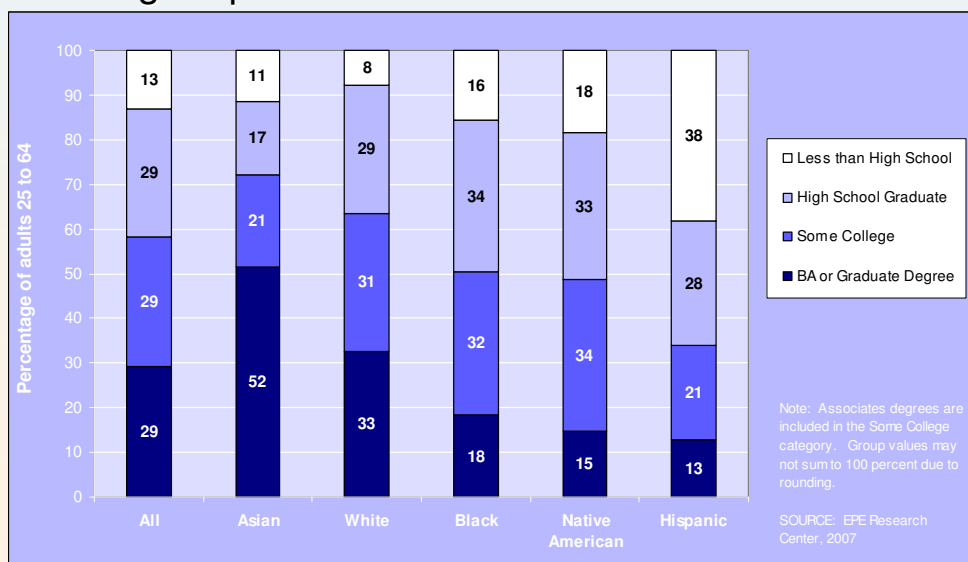
Long a leader in higher education, the United States also has dropped to seventh in the proportion of 25- to 34-year-olds with a college degree.

Indeed, as this chart shows, the educational attainment of younger generations is outstripping that of their elders in most other countries. But that's not true in the United States, where the proportion of those ages 25 to 34 and those 35 and older who have at least an associate's degree is dead even.

# An Attainment Divide in the U.S.

## Large disparities found in adult education levels

- Nearly three quarters of Asian Americans have some postsecondary education, more than twice the college-going rate among Hispanics



Quality Counts 2007

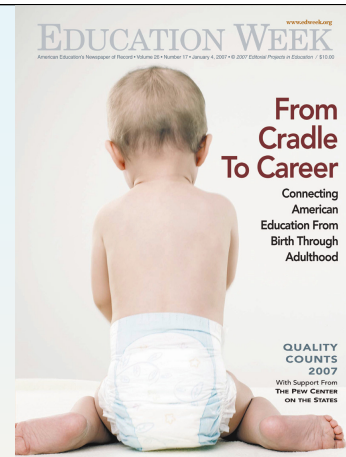
**LO:** Educational attainment in the United States also remains sharply divided by race and class. More than seven in 10 Asian-Americans ages 25 to 64 and more than 6 in 10 non-Hispanic white adults have completed at least some college. In contrast, nearly seven in 10 Hispanic Americans and half of black Americans have a high school diploma or less, according to 2005 data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

So what we have in the United States is a leaky pipeline all along the education continuum—from cradle to career. And the pipeline is leakiest for the most rapidly growing portion of our young people: those from ethnic minority and low-income groups.

And that doesn't bode well in a world where, as Norman R. Augustine, former chairman and CEO of the Lockheed Martin Corp. puts it, "Americans find themselves in competition for their jobs not just with their neighbors, but with individuals around the world."

# Inside Quality Counts 2007

- A cradle-to-career perspective
- Chance for Success Index
- State-by-state policy indicators
- Expert commentaries
- State of the States - Standards, Assessment, Accountability
- **New** K-12 State Achievement Index



Quality Counts 2007

**LO:** *Quality Counts 2007* includes more than 80 state-by-state indicators that look at children's chances for success from birth through adulthood, including indicators related to: early childhood well-being, early-childhood education, K-12 achievement, postsecondary education, and economic and workforce development. The report also includes a small set of international indicators to help put the U.S. educational system in a global context.

The report also includes commentaries by prominent experts outside of *Education Week* who make the case for why it's so important to connect education from one stage to the next. We'd like to thank Arthur J. Rolnick and Rob Grunewald of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Arthur E. Levine of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, David S. Spence of the Southern Regional Education Board, Charles Kolb of the Committee for Economic Development, and Andreas Schleicher of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for contributing to the report.

Finally, we'd like to thank the many organizations whose work we drew on this year to provide a broad perspective on the role of education throughout a person's lifetime. In particular, we'd like to offer special acknowledgment to W. Steven Barnett, the director of the National Institute for Early Education Research, based at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, who provided data from *The State of Preschool: 2005 State Preschool Yearbook*, and Patrick M. Callan, the president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, for information from *Measuring Up 2006: The National Report Card on Higher Education*.

I'd also like to note that, as we make the transition to this new framework, we are taking the time to revisit the core indicators that we collect on K-12 education across the 50 states. So while this year's report includes our ongoing indicators on standards, assessments, and accountability, which assistant research director Carole Bausell will describe in a moment, it does not include our usual indicators on teacher quality, school climate, or school finance. And the report does not grade the states on their performance, as we typically do. However, the report includes a new Achievement Index to provide a picture of K-12 performance across the states. Unlike the Chance-for-Success Index, the Achievement Index focuses solely on elementary and secondary education, and assigns points to state based on how they perform compared with the national average or whether they are making significant progress.

# Reframing K-12 Education

- *Quality Counts* reached a crossroads after its first decade
- **Our strategy:** work to better understanding the role of K-12 schooling within a broader educational, social, and economic landscape
- More emphasis on **hard outcomes**
- In a "flat world" *Quality Counts* cannot just be about education any more
- Retain our commitment to **state-by-state** policy and analysis



Quality Counts 2007

## **Christopher B. Swanson, director, Editorial Projects in Education Research Center:**

Last year's 10th edition of *Quality Counts* offered an opportunity for us to look back, not just at a decade of the report but also to look back at the standards movement that it has tracked over the years. This brought us to a crossroads of sorts. For our 11th installment of the annual report, we decided to look forward, not back.

In designing *Quality Counts 2007*, we encountered something of a dilemma, particularly from a research perspective. You can think of this as a fork in the crossroads. What do you do when the policy movement you have examined has, essentially, become institutionalized? Over the course of the past decade and especially with the passage of NCLB, standards-based reform has in many ways, become the law of the land.

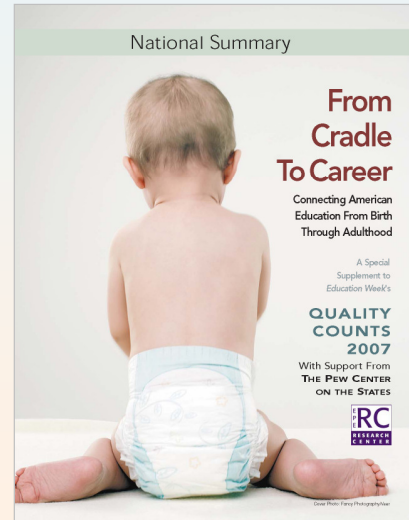
There seemed to be two options before us. Either we could go deep – getting underneath the adoption of state policies to investigate issues of implementation on the ground. Or we could go wide.

We chose to go wide and, as Lynn mentioned, explore the broader role of K-12 education as it connects with earlier and later stages of schooling and other social and economic sectors. The times just seemed, to us, to call for this more expansive type of reframing.

With this move to a new framework, you will see some changes in *Quality Counts*. There will be more emphasis on "hard" outcome indicators. And we will look outside schooling to the labor market and other social systems that impact and are impacted by education. But some things will stay the same – namely our 50-state focus and continued attention to the policy arena.

# Highlights from the EPE Research Center

- Chance for Success Index
- Alignment of state policies
- K-12 State Achievement Index



Quality Counts 2007

**CBS:** So I would like to take a few minutes to share some of the highlights from the research that you will find in this year's *Quality Counts*. This will give you a sense of the new direction the report will be taking.

There are:

- our Chance-for-Success Index, which traces the importance education through the life course;
- an overview of state policies that aim to align K-12 schooling with preschool, postsecondary, and the world of work; and
- our new K-12 State Achievement Index, which provides a summative overview of state performance at the elementary and secondary levels.

## Chance for Success - the Concept

- Education is a thread that weaves through our national consciousness
  
- Education is ...
  - ◆ a leveler
  - ◆ a stepping stone
  - ◆ a barometer of social and economic health
  - ◆ a foundation of the "American Dream"
  
- In the 21st century, education may be **the** most important factor determining one's life chances



Quality Counts 2007

**CBS:** It is probably no exaggeration to say that schooling, education, permeates our national consciousness unlike probably any other idea, concept, or institution.

Education is ... You can finish that line in any number of ways. Education is ... the foundation of a meritocratic society where every child – whether born rich or poor – has a shot at a successful life. Education levels tell us about the social and economic health of our communities, states, even the nation as a whole. Often, we even equate getting a good education with the American Dream, or at least it's an important part of that dream.

More than ever, education is essential for determining a child (or adult's) chances in life.

# A Thought Experiment

## What if ...

We took a newborn child in this country and randomly placed him or her in a given state (State A). That child would grow up, go to school, and eventually enter the labor force in that state.

## What if ...

That child grew up in State B instead.

## How much difference would that make?



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**CBS:** The idea behind Chance for Success is pretty simple, really. We can illustrate that with a basic thought experiment.

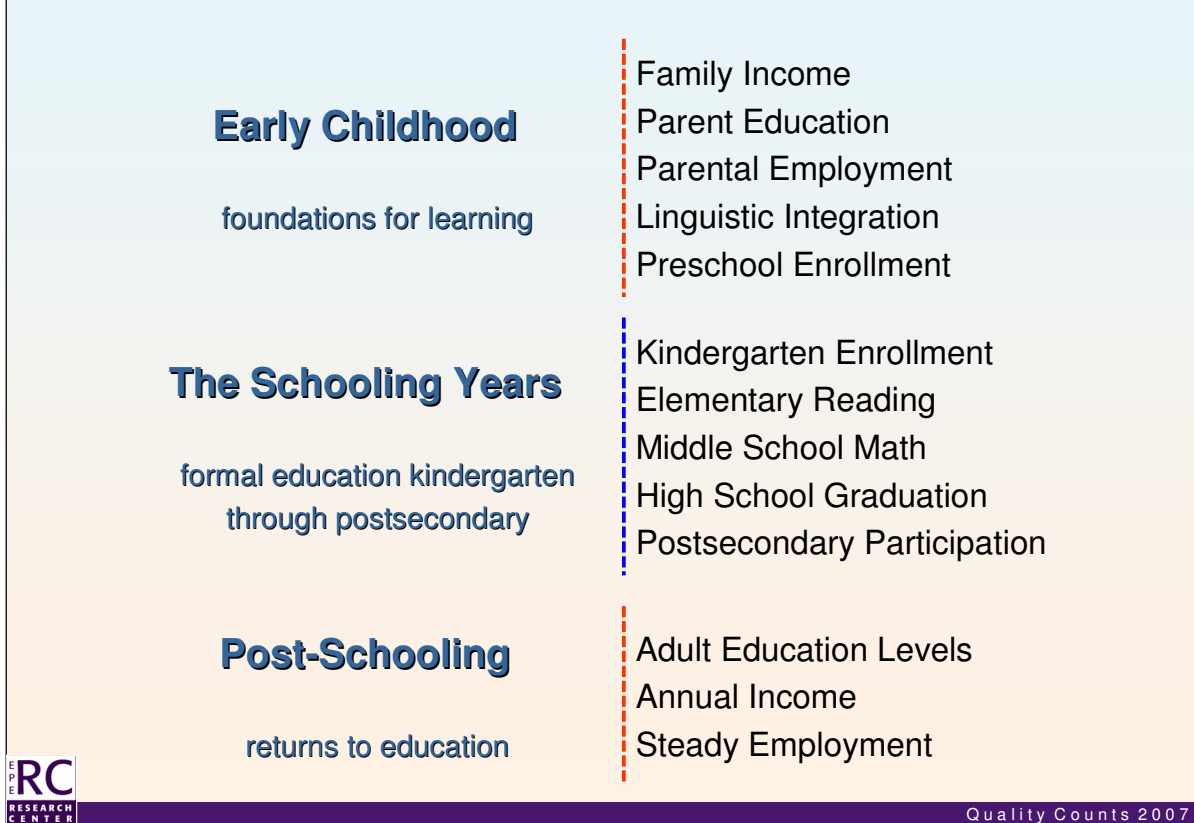
Let's say that we took a newborn child and dropped him or her at random into a state – State A. As part of this scenario, the child would have to grow up, attend school, and eventually go to work in that state. How likely would that child be to progress successfully at each stage of life?

Pretty easy. But here's the twist. What if – that child had grown up in another state – State B? Would he or she have been more likely to lead a successful life?

Our intuition says "Probably." But that begs a further question – How much of a difference would it have made?

Getting at that trickier question is the idea behind our Chance-for-Success Index.

# Chance for Success - the Indicators



**CBS:** To capture Chance for Success empirically, we first thought about a person's education lifetime in three stages:

- Early Childhood – where the foundations for learning are laid;
- the Schooling Years – spanning kindergarten through K-12, and higher education; and
- Post-Schooling – the later years where we see the eventual returns to education.

Then, within each stage, we identified critical indicators that capture the role of education and schooling from childhood through adulthood. There are 13 specific indicators in all.

This collection of measures includes things like parental education and conditions in the household during the early years, performance indicators for performance of a state's public elementary and secondary schools, and adult education levels and labor force outcomes.

# The Chance-for-Success Index

- Index based on an original EPE Research Center analysis of 50-state data from several sources
- Statistical tests were performed to evaluate states relative to a national norm and award points
  - ◆ 0 pts. = not statistically different than national avg.
  - ◆ +1 (-1) = statistically above (below) national avg.
  - ◆ +2 (-2) = above (below) national avg. with very high confidence
- Points tallied across the 13 indicators
- Possible range for index: -26 to +26



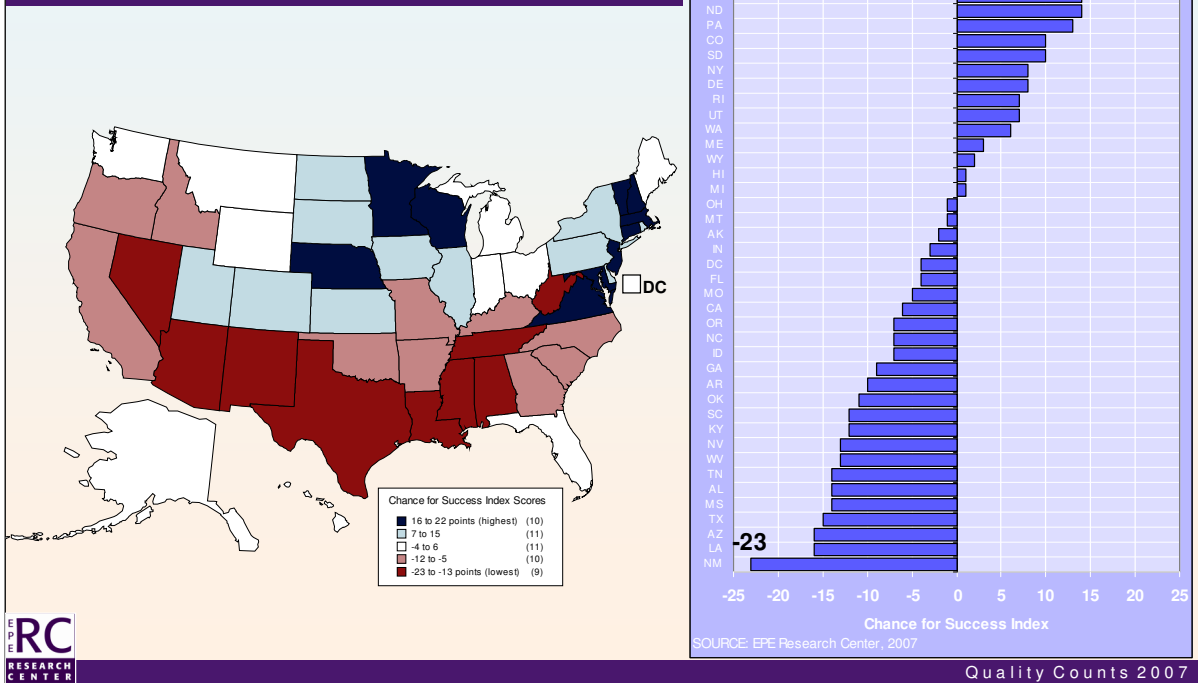
Quality Counts 2007

**CBS:** Our Chance-for-Success investigation is based on an original analysis of national and 50-state data from a number of sources. Incidentally, the District of Columbia is considered as a state here – so think of this as 50-plus-one states.

We conducted a series of statistical tests comparing state performance on each indicator against a national norm. States that were significantly above the national average got 1 point; states significantly below lost 1 point. If we found that the differences were very robust statistically, we added or subtracted 2 points.

We tallied up points across the 13 indicators and that value is the Chance for Success Index.

# Life Prospects Vary Dramatically Across States



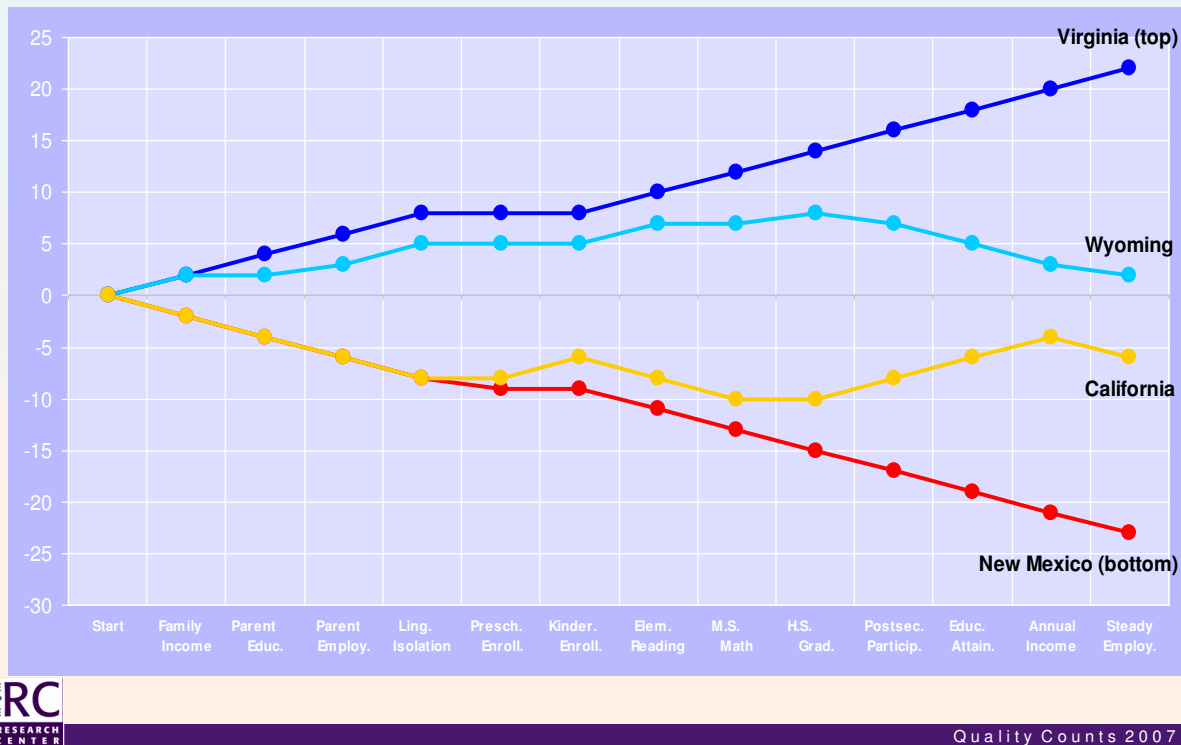
**CBS:** It won't surprise anyone to hear that we found some notable state-to-state differences. We did.

And when the high and low performers are laid out on a map, we probably aren't that surprised to see that states with low Chance-for-Success scores can be found in a band that stretches from the Southeast and parts of Appalachia, through the Deep South, and on the Southwest and West Coast. The states with the lowest Chances for Success are New Mexico, Arizona, Louisiana, and Texas. The states that fared best are generally found in New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and North Central regions. Virginia, Connecticut, Minnesota, and New Jersey lead the pack.

But what is most surprising is the tremendous disparities we see across the states. The state where a child has the best chances for success is Virginia, with a score of 22 points. This compares to a score of -23 points in New Mexico, the lowest ranked state. That's a difference of 45 points on the Chance for Success scale.

# Divergent State Paths

■ Where a child lives matters for his or her life prospects



**CBS:** But I think Chance for Success gives an even more telling perspective on the power of education and the great inequalities we found across the nation when we examine the index in a stepwise fashion.

We start with a score of zero and then tally points as we go from childhood family income and parent education all the way through adult income and steady employment levels. This shows, in a dramatic way, the cumulative impacts of education for the average resident of a state.

For example, if we take the top-ranked state – Virginia – we find a steadily climbing trajectory. At almost every stage of life, prospects improve from early childhood to the schooling years and into adult life.

By comparison, bottom-ranked New Mexico has the opposite pattern. Children start in more disadvantaged conditions than the average child in the U.S. Elementary and secondary schools perform below-average, and prospects are also poor for adults in the workforce.

But there are also other, in some ways more intriguing, stories.

Take Wyoming. The average child in the state starts out relatively advantaged in socioeconomic terms. K-12 schools also fare well for the most part. But the state loses points when it comes to college going rates and economic outcomes.

A good contrast to Wyoming is California. There the average child starts life with significant disadvantages (much as is the case for New Mexico). But the state manages to hold its own during the schooling years. And the state gains ground in later years with high college-going rates, adult education and income levels.

## Aligning Education from Cradle to Career

- The Chance-for-Success Index shows great variation in educational life prospects across states
- The Index could be used to
  - ◆ Identify strong and weak points in the education pipeline
  - ◆ Target state efforts accordingly
- *Quality Counts* also examines state policy efforts to align elementary and secondary systems with other stages of school and work life



Quality Counts 2007

**CBS:** The Chance-for-Success Index tells one part of the story by focusing on outcomes throughout the life course in which education plays an important role. We can find strong and weak links in the chain from childhood to adulthood. But what's next?

That's where policy comes into the picture – what states can do to improve the life prospects of the next generation.

# Alignment Efforts - State Policy

## Early Childhood Education

Early learning standards aligned	42 states
School-readiness definition	13 states
School-readiness assessment	16 states
School-readiness intervention	18 states
Kindergarten standards	45 states

## Postsecondary Education

College-readiness definition	11 states
College prep required	9 states
HS credits aligned	5 states
HS assessment aligned	6 states
Postsecondary decisions	9 states

## Economy and Workforce

Work-readiness defined	21 states
Work-readiness is distinct	19 states
Career-tech diploma	35 states
Industry certification	38 states
Portable HS credits	38 states



Quality Counts 2007

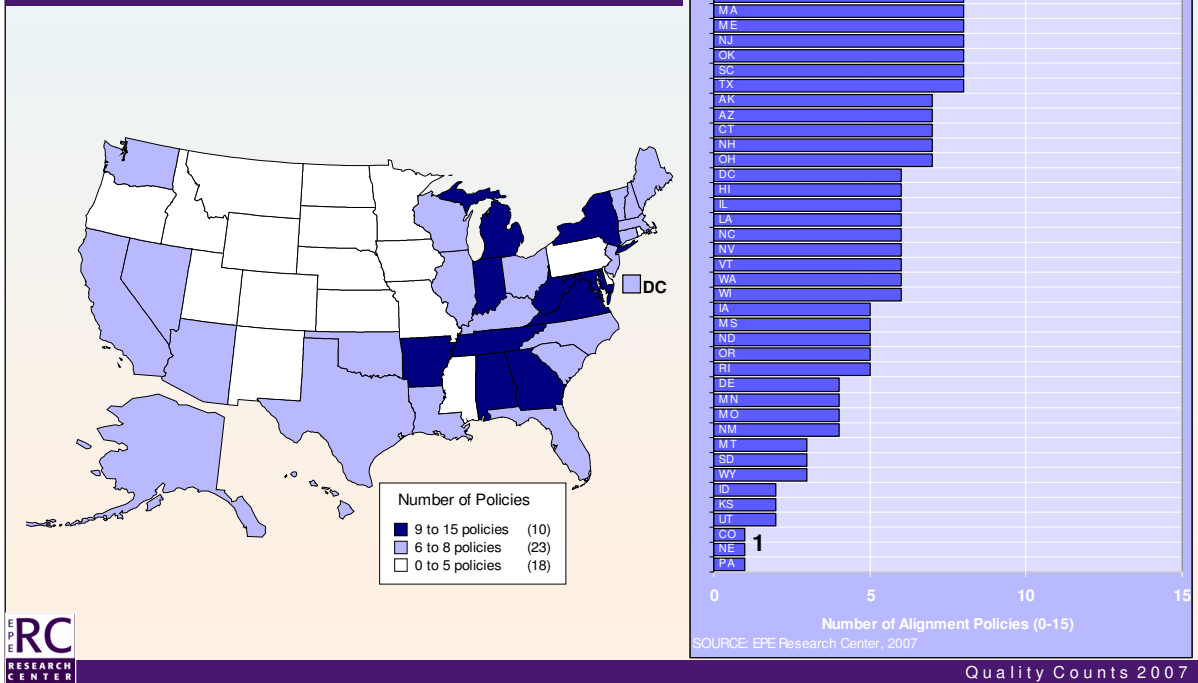
**CBS:** This year, *Quality Counts* examines state efforts to align K-12 schooling with early childhood education, postsecondary and the world of work.

Through our policy survey, which you'll hear more about in a moment, we can examine specific policies in these areas, such as efforts to:

- define, assess, and promote school readiness among young children;
- define college readiness and align high school credits and assessments with postsecondary; and
- clearly define work readiness and allow for valuable career-tech experiences during high school.

We find that states are at quite different places when it comes to aligning education. Some states have been very active in the areas of early childhood education and workforce preparation. However, there is much work still to be done when it comes to aligning high school and college, although this is a very active part of the policy arena right now.

# Policy Alignment at Different Stages across the States



**CBS:** When we tally up the 15 alignment policies, we find that some states are well ahead of the curve. At the head of the pack, Maryland, Michigan, and West Virginia each have 12 of the 15 policies in place. At the other end of the spectrum, Colorado, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania (all states with strong traditions of local control over education) have made little headway, with 1 policy each.

## Assessing K-12 Achievement

- For the first time, *Quality Counts 2007* evaluates states based on the performance of their public schools
- The **K-12 State Achievement Index**
  - ◆ 50-state data from reliable sources
  - ◆ spans the elementary and secondary grades
  - ◆ includes status and growth elements
- Important to consider achievement in light of social and demographic conditions and state policy activity



Quality Counts 2007

**CBS:** One other new feature of this year's report that I would like to briefly introduce is our K-12 State Achievement Index. This marks the first time that we have systematically evaluated states based on the performance of their public schools.

We believe that a more concerted effort to focus on achievement is an important part of the large educational puzzle. However, it should be understood in the context of both the social and demographic conditions of a state as well as its policy efforts.

# 15 Indicators of State Performance

<b>Achievement Levels</b>
<b>4th grade math</b> – Percent proficient on NAEP (2005)
<b>8th grade math</b> – Percent proficient on NAEP (2005)
<b>4th grade reading</b> – Percent proficient on NAEP (2005)
<b>8th grade reading</b> – Percent proficient on NAEP (2005)
<b>Achievement Gains</b>
<b>4th grade math</b> – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2005)
<b>8th grade math</b> – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2005)
<b>4th grade reading</b> – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2005)
<b>8th grade reading</b> – Scale score change on NAEP (2003-2005)
<b>Poverty Gap</b> (National School Lunch Program, noneligible vs. eligible)
<b>Size of gap</b> – 8th grade math scale score (2005)
<b>Change in gap</b> – 8th grade math (2003-2005), negative value = closing gap
<b>High School Graduation</b>
<b>Graduation rate</b> – Public schools (2003)
<b>Change in graduation rate</b> – Public schools (2000-2003)
<b>Advanced Placement</b>
<b>High AP test scores</b> – Scores of 3 or above per 100 students (2005)
<b>Change in AP Scores</b> – Change in high scores per 100 students (2000-2005)
<b>Bonus Indicator</b>
<b>8th grade math excellence</b> – Percent advanced on NAEP (2005)



Quality Counts 2007

**CBS:** Without going into too much detail right now, I will mention that our achievement index is based on 15 specific state indicators. These include measures of both a state's level of current achievement and its improvements over time. We also capture socioeconomic disparities in terms of poverty gaps in achievement.

A great deal of the information behind this indicator comes from the U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP, commonly known as the Nation's Report Card. In addition, we draw on our own analysis of high school graduation rates and data on Advanced Placement from the College Board.

## The Achievement Index

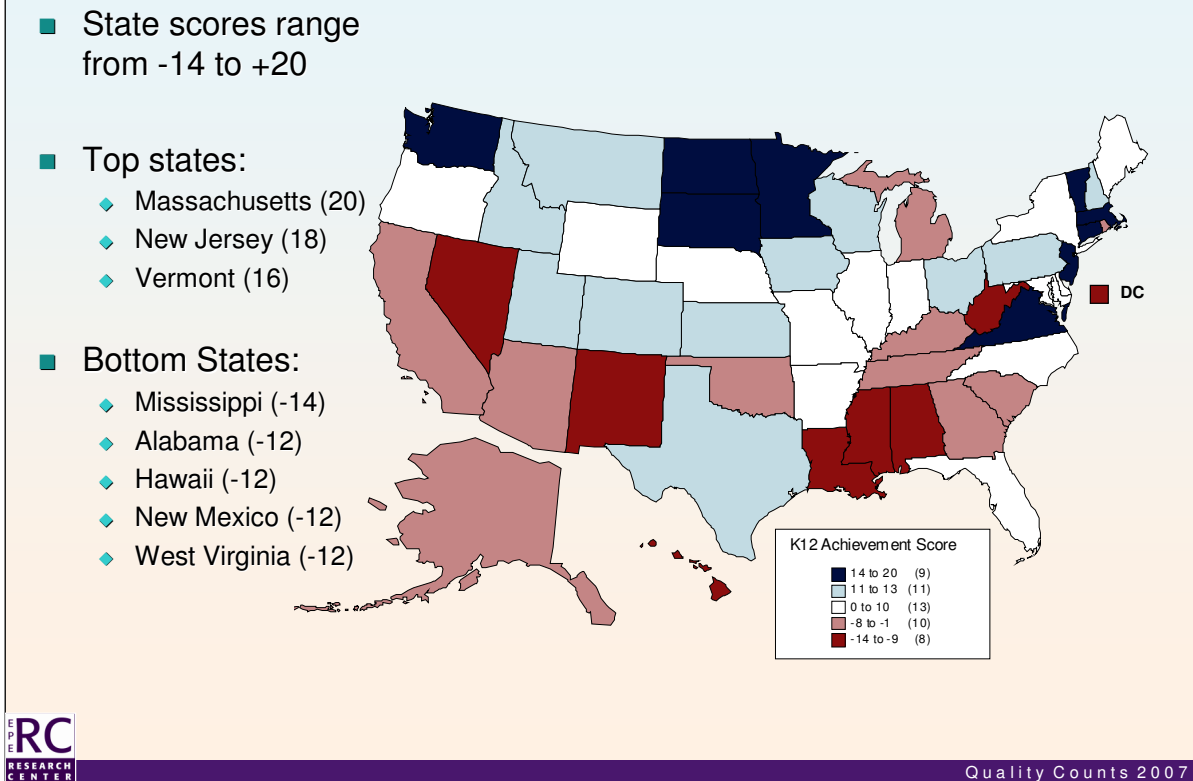
- Index based on an original EPE Research Center analysis of 50-state data from several sources
- Statistical tests were performed to evaluate states relative to a nation norm (or change benchmark) and award points
  - ◆ +1/+2 pts. = higher than national avg. (or gain over time)
  - ◆ 0 points = not different than national avg. (or no change over time)
  - ◆ -1/-2 pts. = lower than national avg. (or decline over time)
- Points tallied across the 15 indicators
- Possible range for index: -30 to +30



Quality Counts 2007

**CBS:** To calculate the Achievement Index value, we conducted an analysis similar to the one I described earlier for Chance for Success. States were awarded points based on performance relative to either a national norm or their own prior track record. After tallying points across the 15 indicators, scores could potentially range from -30 to +30.

# Mapping State Achievement



**CBS:** Actual state scores range from -14 to +20 points.

The top-ranked state, with 20 points, is Massachusetts, followed by New Jersey with 18 and Vermont with 16.

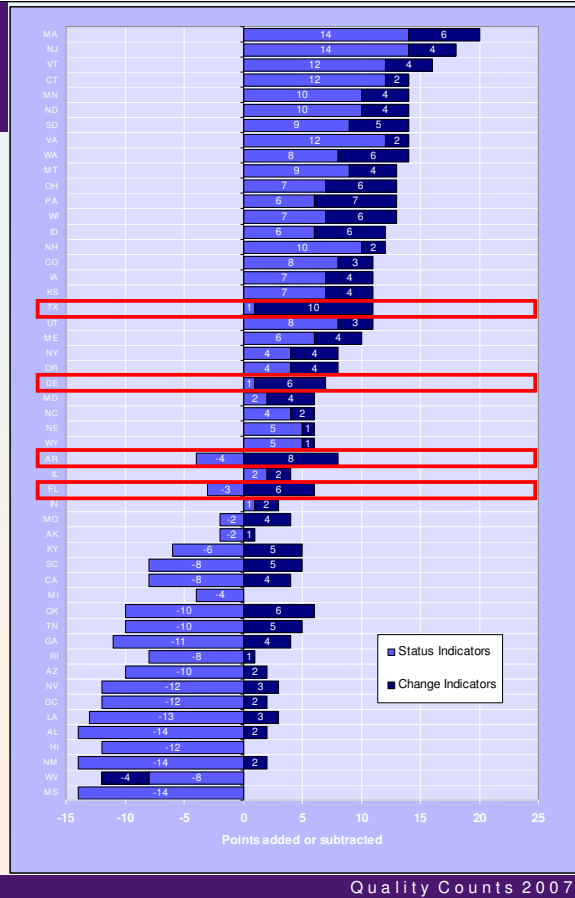
The lowest-ranking state is Mississippi, with -14 points, followed by Alabama, Hawaii, New Mexico, and West Virginia, each with -12 points.

We see some of the kind of geographical patterning we found for Chance for Success, although it is not quite as strong. In particular there seem to be some outliers – for example, Texas, Arkansas, and Florida – states that perform at or above average in a generally low-performing region.

# Achievement Status vs. Change

States gain (or lose) points for both achievement levels and gains

- Top-ranked states show both high performance and significant improvements
- Some low-ranking states lose points due to low performance and gain none or few for gains
- Several states show strong growth profiles
  - ◆ Texas, Arkansas, Florida, Delaware



**CBS:** We gain a deeper insight on these achievement patterns when we breakdown state scores into points for level of achievement (light blue in the graphic) versus improvement (dark blue).

The top states combine high current levels of performance with significant improvements.

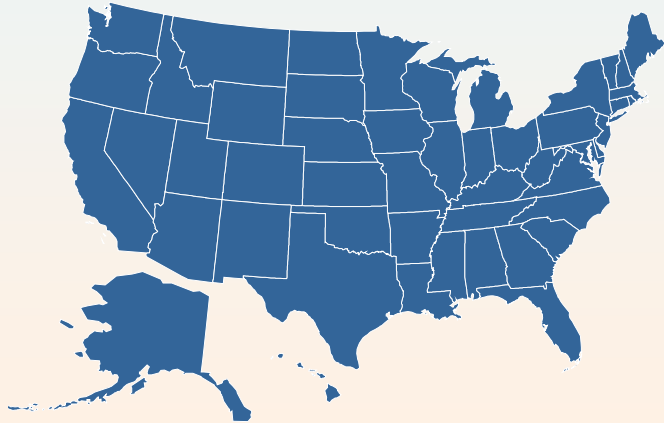
Many of the bottom-ranked states lost a substantial number of points for low performance but picked up few if any for improvements.

But there are some states that show particularly strong growth trajectories – where improvement points account for the bulk of their score. Good examples of strong growth states are Texas, Delaware, Arkansas, and Florida, a group that includes those outliers we noted earlier.

So that wraps up my overview of some of the new features from this year’s report. Now I would like to turn over the microphone to Carole Bausell, EPE Research Center assistant director, who will share some of the highlights from our annual state policy survey.

# State of the States 2007

- Academic Standards
- Student Assessment
- School Accountability



Quality Counts 2007

**Carole Vinograd Bausell, assistant director, Editorial Projects in Education Research Center:**

As we heard earlier from Lynn, Quality Counts has broadened its perspective to look at the connections between K-12 education and the other systems with which it intersects, and Chris has introduced us to the Chance for Success and Achievement indices that are central to this year's report.

But Quality Counts also continues to reflect a more than ten year commitment by the states to setting K-12 academic content standards and to holding schools and districts accountable for results.

In that regard I will share some of the highlights from our survey of the chief state school officers in the departments of education in the 50 states and the superintendent of the District of Columbia public schools with respect to state policies in these areas.

# The 2007 Policy Survey

- Each year, the EPE Research Center surveys the 50 states and District of Columbia
- Meticulous administration and vetting of surveys
  - ◆ State respondents complete survey
    - › Answers to questions about educational policies
    - › Supporting documentation for each response
  - ◆ EPE Research Center evaluates responses
  - ◆ States review final answers
- States not graded this year for policy implementation

Note: When describing survey highlights, the District of Columbia will be included in state tallies.



Quality Counts 2007

**CVB:** As those of you familiar with our survey may recall, we employ a rigorous methodology to try to insure that our findings are as accurate as possible. Respondents not only answer the survey questions but also must provide appropriate documentation so that policies can be verified independently. The EPE Research Center staff carefully vets each state's responses and documentary evidence to ensure that decisions we make in awarding states credit for their policies are consistent.

Unlike last year, Quality Counts 2007 does not grade the states in the standards, assessment, and accountability section of the report.

I will take a few minutes now to point out new developments in this policy arena.

# Academic Standards

## Highlights 2007

- **All 50 states and District of Columbia** have adopted standards in English/language arts, mathematics, and science
  - ◆ Only Iowa and Rhode Island lack history standards
- **40 states** have standards in Math **and** Science that are "clear, specific, and grounded in content" at all grade levels
  - ◆ Only 14 states meet that mark for English/language arts.
- **37 states** have resources to supplement standards documents
- **35 states** have a regular timeline for revising standards



Quality Counts 2007

**CVB:** For the first time in Quality Counts history, all 50 states and the District of Columbia receive credit for having adopted standards in three core subjects: English/language arts, mathematics, and science. And the fourth core subject is not far behind; only Iowa and Rhode Island have yet to adopt history standards.

Although states continue to develop and refine their standards over time, the American Federation of Teachers (or the AFT) reports that the quality of such efforts varies. According to an AFT analysis, 40 states have standards in mathematics and science that are "clear, specific, and grounded in content" at all grade levels. In contrast states fared less well on their English/language arts standards. Only 14 states have standards in English that meet the AFT criteria for quality at all grade spans, down from 31 states last year. This drop is due, in part, to changes in the AFT's evaluation criteria.

Having standards is clearly an important step. But it's not enough to make them useful to teachers and other educators. Quality Counts found that most states now supplement their content standards with resources or guides for teachers that elaborate on the standards themselves, making them more user friendly. Three fourths of the states provide such resources in all four core subjects of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and history, while only three states offer no supplementary materials at all.

Many states also choose to revise their standards on a periodic basis. More than two-thirds have a regular timeline for doing so. Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia have revised or adopted their academic content standards in at least one core subject as recently as the 2005-2006 school year.

# Assessments

## Highlights 2007

- **Nearly all states** have assessments aligned with their academic standards at all grade levels for English/language arts (49 states) and Math (48 states)
- Far fewer states have aligned assessments for other core subjects (25 for science and 11 for history)
- Testing requirements and Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB
  - ◆ English and Math - tested and part of AYP
  - ◆ Science - tested (by 2007-08) but not part of AYP
  - ◆ History/Social Science - testing not mandated under NCLB
- **21 states** have "vertically-equated" assessments for English and math in grades 3 through 8



Quality Counts 2007

**CVB:** Aligning state assessments to state content standards continues to be a priority for states. Nearly all states report that their tests are aligned with their content standards in both English/language arts and mathematics at all grade levels.

However, the number of states reporting aligned assessments plummets when it comes to the other core subjects. Only half of the states have aligned science tests at all grade levels and only 11 have aligned history tests.

We can clearly see the influence of No Child Left Behind in this pattern of assessment alignment. States are required to test and hold schools accountable for English and Math performance, the focus of the federal law. States must start testing in science next school year, although science performance will not be part of AYP (or adequate yearly progress) under NCLB. History testing is not required under NCLB.

As states track student progress from year to year, it's important for officials to have test scores that are comparable across the grades. In order for this to occur tests need to be constructed on a common scale. But fewer than half the states have assessment systems that score tests in grades 3-8 on a common metric.

# School Accountability

## Highlights 2007

- Many state accountability systems exceed what is required under federal law
- **29 states** rate all schools (Title 1 and non-Title 1) based state-developed criteria
- Consequences attached to school performance
  - ◆ **35 states** - assistance to low-performing schools
  - ◆ **33 states** - sanctions for low-performing schools
  - ◆ **17 states** - rewards for high-performing or improving schools
- States are beginning to use individual student growth for accountability
  - ◆ **5 states** for AYP
  - ◆ **9 states** for state-specific ratings



Quality Counts 2007

**CVB:** Under the No Child Left Behind Act, the results of state assessments can lead to consequences for public schools and districts that receive federal Title I money for disadvantaged students. It may come as no surprise that many states choose to go beyond the federal law. Some add other criteria for evaluating schools, while others choose to apply the same consequences to all schools (Title I and non-Title schools alike). For example 29 states rate schools on their own state-developed criteria.

Many states also have rewards, assistance, and sanctions for schools based on their performance, regardless of Title I status. Seventeen states reward high-performing schools with additional funds, 35 provide some form of help to low performers, and 33 apply similar sanctions to both Title I and non-Title I schools that fail to meet achievement targets.

In *Quality Counts*, we examine an array of 10 specific sanctions for low-performing schools that may be available to states. Those authorized by the greatest number of states (30 and 29 respectively) are replacing a school's staff members and restructuring schools. The least popular of the options examined is withholding funds from low-performing schools, found in only five states.

During the past year, there has been increased interest in the use of individual student growth data as part of school rating systems. As of now, however, only a small handful of states are using growth models for either federal or state accountability.

# Plans for the Future of Quality Counts

## Seeking input on Teacher Quality and School Finance

- In the coming year we will be seeking feedback to guide future approaches to teacher quality and finance
- Upcoming convenings:
  - ◆ March - at annual meeting of the American Education Finance Association in Baltimore
  - ◆ April - prior to the American Education Research Association conference in Chicago
- Online forum:
  - ◆ Talkback features to solicit comment
  - ◆ Whitepapers and other information
  - ◆ Stay tuned to the EPE Research Center website for details  
[www.edweek.org/rc](http://www.edweek.org/rc)



Quality Counts 2007

**CVB:** As we have mentioned, 2007 is a transitional year for *Quality Counts*. Part of our reframing of the report will involve rethinking our past approach to several policy categories in *Quality Counts* – specifically, teacher quality and school finance.

In the coming year we will be seeking feedback from the educational research and policy community by hosting a series of convenings and online forums. Please stay tuned to the EPE Research Center web site for information about proposed changes in these areas and how to weigh in on these topics.

# Editorial Projects in Education Research Center

## Online Extras

- **Quality Counts 2007:**  
[www.edweek.org/go/qc07](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc07)
- **National and State Highlights Reports:**  
[www.edweek.org/go/qc07/shr](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc07/shr)
- **Education Counts**  
[www.edweek.org/rc/edcounts](http://www.edweek.org/rc/edcounts)
- **Live Online Chats**



Quality Counts 2007

**CVB:** Finally I would like to call your attention to a number of online extras that come along with this year's *Quality Counts*. First, the full *Quality Counts* report is available online at [www.edweek.org/go/qc07](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc07).

The Research Center has also prepared a series of highlights reports for the nation and each state that summarize key findings from *Quality Counts*. These reports are a great quick reference for educators, policymakers, and media interested in how a particular state fares. State highlights reports are also available online.

Finally, at the Research Center website you can find Education Counts, our database of state policy information and indicators from over a decade of our annual reports (including *Quality Counts 2007*). You can view data and create tables and maps at [www.edweek.org/rc/edcounts](http://www.edweek.org/rc/edcounts).



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**From  
Cradle  
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Connecting  
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