

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Sterling Lloyd, (301) 280-3100, sloyd@epe.org

Quality Counts 2018 Redoubles Focus on State-by-State K-12 Systems

Nation Earns C on Annual Report Card for Fourth Year in a Row; Massachusetts Takes Top Spot on 'Grading the States' Report Card

WASHINGTON—Jan. 17, 2018—*Education Week's* annual [Quality Counts](#) assessment of the nation's educational system takes on a new look and approach this year, with three in-depth reports being rolled out over the course of the year. As it has for more than two decades, *Quality Counts* will continue to rank the nation and the states, and delve into student achievement, K-12 funding, and educational factors that contribute to an individual's prospects from cradle to career. This new format, however, will deliver tightly focused insight into the data behind the annual grading, combined with multiple opportunities for policymakers, educators, and the public to engage with the findings and apply them to improving America's schools.

Released today, the first of these installments—[Grading the States: Quality Counts 2018](#)—features national and state-by-state grades, data, and analysis from the Education Week Research Center. The report also includes companion articles by *Education Week* reporters offering context about state and national performance.

The data and analysis in the follow-up installments will investigate school spending and finance (to be released in June) and K-12 achievement and *Education Week's* Chance-for-Success Index (September).

GRADING THE STATES

The centerpiece of *Quality Counts* remains its annual report card on the state of education for the nation and for each of the states. As in the past, this latest edition of *Quality Counts* provides overall summative grades, as well as scores in each of the three categories that make up the report's grading rubric: K-12 Achievement, Chance for Success, and School Finance.

The nation as a whole receives a grade of C on the 2018 annual report card with a score of 74.5 out of a possible 100, a slight uptick that continues several years of essentially flat performance. Massachusetts finished first in the overall ranking, with the only B-plus and a score of 86.8. It is followed closely by four states earning B grades: New Jersey (85.9), Vermont (84.1), New Hampshire (83.7) and Connecticut (83.0). With a grade of D, Nevada received the nation's lowest score (65.0); New Mexico also earns a D (66.2). Mississippi improves its ranking slightly to a D-plus, with a score of 66.8.

"The nation's grade of C reflects continued struggles with achievement and funding gaps even as postsecondary participation and graduation rates are higher than they were last year," said Holly Yettick, director of the Education Week Research Center.

The nation earns a C-plus on *Education Week's* proprietary Chance-for-Success Index, with Massachusetts leading the pack with an A-minus, finishing just ahead of New Hampshire (also with an A-minus). In the school finance category, the nation's grade is a C for 2018. There, Wyoming earns the only A-minus and seizes the top spot, which it has occupied for most of the past decade. Idaho ranks last on school finance with a D-minus. With a C-minus for the U.S. as a whole, the nation has its weakest showing on the K-12 Achievement Index, which was last updated in 2016.

In a package of articles accompanying the national and state-by-state grades, *Education Week's* reporters explore what makes some of the highest-performing states so successful, how some chronically challenged states are facing the hurdles holding them back, and key lessons for policymakers elsewhere. The report also highlights factors that experts and advocates see as systemic barriers to improvement nationally.

EXPLORE THE FULL QUALITY COUNTS 2018 RELEASE AT EDWEEK.ORG

- The first installment of **Quality Counts 2018**—Find national and state grades, and reporting on the stories behind the data: www.edweek.org/go/qc18
- **Interactive Map and Report Card**—Explore the state of the states and the nation, and delve into detailed grades in critical areas of educational performance: www.edweek.org/go/qc18map
- **State and National Highlights Reports**—These online-only reports assess each state's performance on key indicators: www.edweek.org/go/qc18shr