



Making Schools Work Better for all Children

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SPECIAL ALERT :Texas Test Scores

Some are saying the Texas education miracle is a bust. Others say Texas has done more for minority children than almost any other state. The timing of a new report is being called into question by education experts, as it condemns any progress Governor George W. Bush is saying has been made in education in Texas.

We don't have a horse in this presidential race, but believe in giving credit where credit is due. There's no question that Texas has been a leader in accountability, and while we'd like to see more improvements, making a politically-motivated statement about education right now is uncalled for.

Today's USA Today Opinion, ["Gore Attack on Texas Schools Misses Mark."](#) is worth a look.

And read the words of the Education Trust, a non-partisan, well-regarded national organization that takes issue with critics of Texas education...

Statement of Kati Haycock, Director of the Education Trust, on the New RAND Issue Paper:

(Washington, D.C. 10/25/00) – "The new RAND issue paper offers an incomplete and misleading picture of the performance of Texas students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

"Texas is not perfect. And there is no overnight 'Texas miracle'. However, if Black fourth graders in every state scored as well on the NAEP mathematics test as those in Texas do, the national achievement gap between white and Black fourth graders in math would shrink by a third. If Black eighth graders everywhere wrote as well as their peers in Texas, the national achievement gap between white and black eighth graders would be cut in half. Something important is indeed happening in Texas, although it began well before the term of the current governor.

"It is easy to knock Texas—or, for that matter, any other state—for not being perfect. It is harder—though much more important—to muster the political will, as Texas has done and continues to do, to focus steadily on boosting the academic achievement of all groups of students."

A more complete picture of NAEP results over the past four years reveals the following about how Texas compares with other states:

ON THE 1996 MATHEMATICS EXAM

- Texas ranked among the top states in NAEP's 1996 fourth grade math assessment,

with Texas students tied for the highest gain in math achievement from 1992 to 1996.

- Black fourth graders in Texas outscored their peers in every other state. Hispanic students outscored their peers in all but five states.
- Texas eighth graders scored at about the national average on the 1996 math test. Black and Hispanic students scored higher than the national average for those groups of students, by seven points and six points respectively (in other words, in each case, over half of a grade level higher).

ON THE 1998 READING EXAM

- Texas fourth graders scored at about the national average on NAEP's 1998 fourth grade reading assessment, with gains between 1994 and 1998 that also reflected the national average.
- Black and Hispanic fourth graders in Texas scored somewhat above the national reading average for those groups, by four points and nine points respectively (one-third and two-thirds of a grade level higher).
- Texas eighth graders also scored at about the national average on the 1998 NAEP reading exam.
- Black and Hispanic eighth graders in Texas scored somewhat above the national reading average for those groups, again by four points and nine points respectively (one-third and two-thirds of a grade level higher, once again).

ON THE 1998 WRITING EXAM

- Texas ranked among the top states in NAEP's 1998 eighth grade writing assessment, with only one state – Connecticut – achieving an average score that was statistically higher.
- Black eighth graders in Texas scored well above the national average for such students on the 1998 writing test, and they outscored their peers in every other state. Hispanic students also scored well above the national average, and they outscored their peers in all but one state.
- Twenty percent of Black and Hispanic eighth graders met or exceeded NAEP's "proficient" level on the writing test. For Hispanic students, that was twice the national average. For Black students, that was nearly three times the national average, and five points higher than the next highest state.



