



Bits 'n Pieces Winter 2005-2006

Just the Facts

Measuring success

According to Iris Rotberg, research professor of education policy at The George Washington University in Washington and editor of *Balancing Change and Tradition in Global Education Reform*, international test-score rankings are virtually impossible to interpret. In part because of difficulty finding comparable samplings across countries.

The Government Accounting Office, the Center for Research in Evaluation, Student Standards and Testing, the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Education all rejected the NAEP proficiency measure as “fundamentally flawed... NAEP achievement levels do not accord with any other performance evaluations, especially results from international comparisons” – Gerald Bracey, Educational researcher and author

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) warns, and is quoted in the NAEP report, that NAEP current achievement level setting procedures remain fundamentally flawed. The judgment tasks are difficult and confusing; raters’ judgments of different item types are internally inconsistent; appropriate validity evidence for the cut scores is lacking; and the process has produced unreasonable results.

"Most people are unaware that countries often cited for their high rankings on international comparisons do not use tests to hold schools accountable as with the administration's education law, and many do not even administer standardized tests until secondary school," said Iris Rotberg, research professor of education policy at The George Washington University

Parenting

The strongest predictor of school success is the amount of one-to-one conversation in the first three years of life according to the National Institute on Media and the Family™.

The Search Institute™ recommends the following:

- Engage adults from all walks of life in sustained, strength-building relationships with children and adolescents, both within families and in neighborhoods.
- Mobilize young people to use their power as asset builders and change agents. This means listening to their input and including them in decision making.

Red Flags

According to the National Institute of Media and the Family:

- 25% of babies under 2 have television sets in their rooms
- 68% of school age kids have television sets in their rooms
- 87% of boys play “M” rated video games
- 93% of American kids play video games on a regular basis
- “Screen time” is the leading cause of obesity in children

According to Public Agenda Online:

- The federal government requires local schools to provide special education, but only covers about 15% of the cost.
- 70% of special education parents said they thought too many children with special needs lose out because their parents don’t know what is available to them.

Stateline.org obtained a First Class Education memo circulated among lawmakers in several states that lists "political benefits" of putting the 65 percent proposal on the ballot...It says that backing the 65 percent plan will boost credibility on education issues and make it easier to build support for charter schools and school vouchers, which "the voting public -- especially suburban, affluent women voters -- view as an abandonment of public education."



Bragging Rights*

More Americans are completing high school (up 10%) or college (up 8%) than were in 1985.

The number of high school students taking a more challenging curriculum – including four years of English and three years each of math science and social studies quadrupled from 14% to 57% between 1982 and 2000.

The number of high school students completing advanced math courses has risen from 26% in 1982 to 45% in 2000.

The number of high school students completing advanced science course has risen from 35% in 1982 to 63% in 2000.

Some achievement gaps are narrowing on long-term NAEP trend assessments in math and reading.

Test score gaps between white and minority students have narrowed to the smallest margins in three decades.

Students are safer at school. The rates of school-related crime and violence fell by half between 1992 and 2002.

Every disabled child is entitled to help under federal law.

*According to the Center on Education Policy (CEP). CEP is a national independent organization that helps citizens make sense of the conflicting opinions and perceptions about public education and create conditions that will lead to better public schools.



Quotes and Quotables

Leadership

“Management works in the system; Leadership works on the system.” – Stephen Covey, *First Things First*

“Doing more things faster is no substitute for doing the right things.” – “Stephen Covey, *First Things First*

“Becoming a leader is an act of self-invention. Imagine yourself as a leader; act as if you are a leader until you actually become one.” – Lorraine Monroe, Founder of the Frederick Douglass Academy, Harlem, New York

“The most powerful weapon on earth is the human soul on fire.” – Ferdinand Foch

“Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other.” – Edmund Burke

“Noticing small changes early helps you adapt to the bigger changes that are to come.” – Spencer Johnson, M.D., *Who Moved My Cheese?*

Progress

“We can reform our society only if every place we live—every school, workplace, church, and family—becomes a site of reform.” – Lorraine Monroe, Founder of the Frederick Douglass Academy, Harlem, New York

“When you move beyond your fear, you feel free.” – Spencer Johnson, M.D., *Who Moved My Cheese?*

“Nothing great or new can be done without enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the fly-wheel which carries your saw through the knots in the log.” – Dr. Harvey Cushing

“It is amazing how much people can get done if they do not worry about who gets the credit.” – Sandra Swinney

Education

“We all have one mission to make sure America remains free. We can only be free when all of our children are educated.” -- Consuelo Castillo Kickbush

“Education and the process of educating is a total integral, contextual situation which includes students, teachers, parents, administration, and environment.” – Jean Houston

“We don’t start to raise readers when they go to school – We start to raise readers from the moment they are born.” – David Walsh, Ph.D., President and founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family

Communications

“The real power of the media is its ability to shape norms.” David Walsh, Ph.D., President and founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family

“If you are selling something complex, simplify it with a metaphor.” – Harry Beckwith, *Selling the Invisible*

Just for Fun

The cost of raising a medium-size dog to the age of eleven: \$6,400

The State with the highest percentage of people who walk to work: Alaska

The number of numbers you would have to spell out before you would find the letter "A"?



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