



NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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Connecticut among top 5 states in nation on school quality report

Education Week's annual *Quality Counts* report gives state top marks

(HARTFORD, CT)—Connecticut's public schools continue to be among the national leaders in Education Week's annual *Quality Counts* report, which was released this week.

Now in its 20th year, the report by the research center of the nationally acclaimed education publication used federal and state data to grade the 50 U.S. states in three categories: the Chance-for-Success Index, school finance, and the K-12 Achievement Index.

Connecticut received an overall score of 82.5 points out of 100 (B-), which placed Connecticut in the top five states in the nation and topped the national overall score of 74.4 points (C).

"In Connecticut we strive to give all students access to the kind of high-quality education that will prepare them for success in college, career and life. This report provides an overview of public education across the nation and Connecticut continues to perform near the top," Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell said. "Everyone connected to public education in our state shares the credit for this placement. It is critical that we continue to push ourselves to ensure we are delivering on our promise of an excellent public education for all Connecticut kids."

Connecticut and Minnesota tied for fourth nationwide with a B+ in the Chance-for-Success Index, which captures the role of education in supporting positive outcomes in a person's life from cradle to career, according to Education Week. Nationally, the Chance for Success grade was a C+.

In school finance – an important measure of equity and educational spending – Connecticut received a B+, ranking it third in the nation. The school finance category examines educational spending patterns and the distribution of those funds within states. The nation as a whole earned a C.

Connecticut ranked in the top quarter of states in the K-12 Achievement Index with an average grade of C, higher than the national average of C-, but evidence that more work needs to be done to ensure all of our students have access to a top quality education. The index assesses the performance of a state's public schools against 18 indicators capturing current achievement levels, improvements over time, and poverty-based gaps.

Connecticut students are among the top performers nationwide in reading, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the "Nation's Report Card," which is one of the measures considered in Education Week's report. Also included is the high school graduation rate. Connecticut's graduate rate has increased 5.2 points since 2010 to 87 percent, which is higher than the national average of 81 percent.

On Advanced Placement (AP) exams, only three other states saw a greater increase in the percentage of students posting high scores (3 or above) from 2000 to 2014.

“Although this data point shows Connecticut doing better than more than three-quarters of the nation, we know we have more work to do to deliver on our promise to our kids,” Commissioner Wentzell said. “We continue to focus on raising achievement levels, ensuring students who need help receive it, and sustaining gains for all Connecticut students.”

Poverty-based gaps continue to be among Connecticut’s biggest educational challenges. Statewide, the Commissioner’s Network and the Alliance Districts programs were established in 2012 as important strategies aimed at narrowing the achievement gap between students living in high-poverty districts and their peers.

For more information about *Education Week’s Quality Counts 2016*, visit <http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2016/01/07/index.html>.

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