

# Transforming Education Policy

Assessing 10 Years of Progress in the States

THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE  
EDUCATION INITIATIVE

June 1999



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## Assessing 10 Years of Progress in the States

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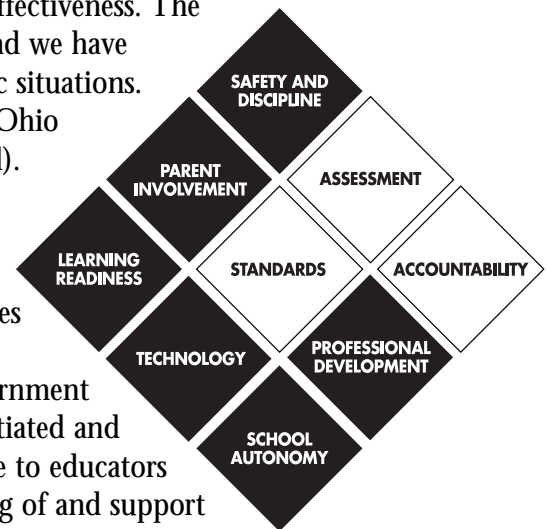
# Introduction

For the past 10 years, the corporate members of The Business Roundtable have led an unprecedented national effort to improve America's public schools. Our bedrock belief is that all students can and must learn at ever higher levels to be prepared for success in school, in the workplace and in life.

Because education policy is primarily the responsibility of state governments, we have focused our attention there. We identified nine essential components of a successful education system and emphasized that high performance necessitates a fundamental transformation of all of the interrelated parts of the system (see diamond diagram). We have been particularly active in advocating state policies that give educators and students clear, challenging expectations for academic achievement and appropriate incentives and supports for reaching those expectations.

We asked our corporate members to create or join state coalitions of business leaders and others committed to improving schools. These coalitions are central to the success of the BRT strategy; because of constant changes in political and business leadership, the organizations provide much-needed continuity and stability over time.

Some state business coalitions clearly are more influential than others in the state policy arena. On page 4, we list 10 lessons learned about state coalitions' effectiveness. The organizational structures and membership of the coalitions differ, and we have found a variety of models to be effective, depending on state-specific situations. In some states, CEOs turned to the state business roundtable (e.g., Ohio Business Roundtable) or business council (Oregon Business Council). In other states, CEOs created a new state business organization (Maryland Business Roundtable for Education), an umbrella group of business organizations and companies (California Business for Education Excellence), or a business-education coalition that includes business and education leaders (Texas Business and Education Coalition). Some of these newly created coalitions also include government and civic leaders (Partnership for Kentucky Schools). CEOs also initiated and funded state organizations that provide policy analysis and assistance to educators (Alabama's A+ Education Foundation) or build public understanding of and support for higher standards (Washington's Partnership for Learning). A few states have several state coalitions, each with a unique niche for business involvement (North Carolina).



This paper, *Transforming Education Policy: Assessing 10 Years of Progress in the States*, is a companion piece to *No Turning Back: A Progress Report on The Business Roundtable Education Initiative*. *No Turning Back* provides a summary analysis of progress since 1989 to the BRT membership from Edward B. Rust, Jr., Chairman and CEO, State Farm Insurance Companies and Chairman, BRT Education Task Force. For this paper, we asked the staff director of each state coalition to reflect on what the state accomplished over the past 10 years and identify challenges ahead. These brief state assessments were completed in the spring of 1999, prior to the end of legislative sessions in many states.

To capsulize a decade of reform, the following pages offer:

- an independent assessment of education reform from Harvard University's Richard Elmore;
- 10 lessons learned about state coalitions' effectiveness from our state advocacy efforts;
- illustrative highlights of noteworthy business leadership in a few states, from the perspectives of governors, journalists and other third-party observers;
- a summary of current student scores on the challenging reading, math and science tests administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress in participating states; and
- state-by-state self-assessment profiles submitted by 43 states.

This report is intended as a resource document for companies and coalitions working to improve student achievement in each state. The findings represent a work in progress. We're making gains. But we have a long way to go.

Susan Traiman  
Director, Education Initiative  
The Business Roundtable

June 1999

# Where Reform Stands:

## An Independent Assessment

*This assessment was excerpted from a paper prepared for the National Education Goals Panel by Richard F. Elmore of Harvard University's Graduate School of Education in November 1998. Emphasis added.*

**The nation has undergone a seismic shift in its political posture toward elementary and secondary education.** We have moved from a system in which there was virtually no discussion among state and local political leaders of what students actually learn in school — and virtually no state-level information on student academic performance — to a system in which governors and state legislators routinely discuss student performance on statewide tests and virtually all states now collect data on student performance for every school.

We have moved from a situation in which performance-based comparisons among schools, among states, or between the U.S. and its major industrialized competitors were discussed only in academic circles to one in which such comparisons are now a routine feature of political discourse.

**On some dimensions, this transformation is nearly complete.** Virtually all states now have statewide testing systems capable of producing performance data on individual schools. Virtually all states have some form of standards to offer guidance to local schools and school systems. **On some other dimensions, the transformation is far from complete.** Perhaps a third of the states have developed, or are in the final stages of developing, well-articulated systems of standards, assessments, and accountability measures that can be used to make judgments about individual schools' performance. More than half the states have charter school laws that offer a variety of arrangements for schools to operate in relative independence from the traditional regulatory structure.

But the over-riding signal coming from state and national opinion leaders is that the old institutional structure of public education needs a substantial overhaul, that schools should become more focused on results for students, and that state policies should focus on accountability for student learning, rather than the input and process regulation that characterized policy in the past.

**We must concede that performance has been disappointingly sparse on many important dimensions, especially on those having to do with student performance in basic academic subjects. There is no particularly polite or subtle way to deliver this message.** However, there is also abundant evidence that states and localities are facing the problems of low performance in schools, that there are significant policy changes underway, and that there is preliminary evidence that some states and localities are raising student performance.

**The current reforms are at a critical stage:** Schools and districts are beginning the complex and often painful process of adjusting to new expectations. **A number of political constituencies inside and outside the public education establishment are watching policymakers closely for signs of equivocation and retreat.** Teachers and principals are grappling with new demands, while at the same time calculating whether this reform, like so many others in the past, will eventually fade back into the existing institutional structure.

# 10 Lessons Learned

Ten years' experience with influencing state policy change has taught us a few lessons about how state business coalitions can be most effective in advocating standards-based education reform and higher student achievement.

**Speak with one voice.** If the business voice is fragmented, its impact is minimized. Thus, individual companies and business organizations should unite behind a common reform agenda and adapt and update it as needed, but be prepared to stick with it over time.

**Develop a strategic focus.** The more success business coalitions experience, the more business leaders are asked to do. Developing and adhering to a well-defined strategic focus keeps education reform efforts on target and helps coalitions avoid getting entangled in competing or peripheral agendas.

**Seek out allies.** Collaborate with educators who recognize the need for change and forge alliances with state leaders, from the governor to members of the state legislature.

**Take clear positions and lobby on their behalf.** Those who want to preserve the *status quo* are entrenched and powerful. As major employers and community leaders, CEOs are forceful, credible advocates of reform positions and can influence candidates' and elected/appointed officials' views on key education issues.

**Make strategic use of business expertise.** Strategic planning, using data to drive improvement, creating performance incentives for employees, measuring customer satisfaction, providing ongoing training to staff, using the tools of communications and marketing, and overseeing total quality management — these are among the areas where business' extensive in-house expertise can be invaluable to reform-minded schools and state education departments.

**Use research effectively.** Business can stimulate reform by supporting public opinion research, identifying gaps between employer needs and the skills of high school graduates, benchmarking best practices in the United States and around the world, and involving national experts on critical state issues.

**Recognize the importance of communications.** Many initiatives have failed — or achieved limited success — because of poor or nonexistent communications with the public. Business groups can spearhead ongoing efforts to listen to the public's concerns and help parents, educators and citizens understand the benefits of higher standards, better tests and sensible accountability systems.

**Balance agitation and collaboration.** The most difficult role for many business coalitions is to balance two potentially contradictory objectives: pushing constantly and aggressively for fundamental change while working with educators, legislators and citizens to forge consensus positions.

**Balance patience with urgency.** Many previous reform efforts floundered because advocates did not persevere and recognize that meaningful education improvement takes years to accomplish. At the same time, the system must be pressured to move as quickly as possible. Thus, business must stick with its reform agenda, continue to build public awareness and support, and push for accelerated improvements.

**Keep replenishing the leadership supply.** Most of the Roundtable's CEOs and 49 of the 50 governors were not in their current positions when the BRT's Education Initiative began in 1989. A central challenge for state coalitions is continually to identify and recruit top executives — and provide them with the background they need to be effective advocates.

# Examples of Effective Business Leadership

**In Kentucky,** CEOs repeatedly have “stepped up” to help keep education reform moving ahead. Personal intervention by business leaders in the mid-1990s helped persuade the Legislature to resist attempts to roll back the sweeping reform measures. At the time, David Hawpe of the influential *Louisville Courier-Journal* saluted the efforts of Ashland’s John Hall, Humana’s David Jones and UPS’ Oz Nelson: “This is an extraordinary commitment from top business leaders. Without it, the full credibility of the Kentucky reform effort could not have been established so quickly.” In 1998, many of the same business leaders were instrumental in saving key parts of the state’s assessment and accountability systems.

**In Maine,** business leaders are credited with providing the political support needed to convince lawmakers to pass comprehensive policy changes that center on higher academic standards. “The shift to standards-based education would not have happened without the commitment of the business community,” says Gov. Angus King. “In particular, Champion International and UNUM Corporation set a standard for leadership, collaboration and persistence that brought everyone into the debate, without losing sight of the goal of giving Maine kids the best education we can.”

**In Maryland,** the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT) focused on securing early and sustained buy-in for school reform from the governor, key legislators and other senior policy-makers. These efforts produced results. The state’s two-term governor has made education his top priority, including full support for MBRT’s call for increased technology in schools and stronger accountability for performance. Meanwhile, the state board of education, backed by unwavering business support, has remained steadfast in promoting rigorous new graduation requirements for high school students. “When I appear before the state Legislature to advocate for a new initiative or new funding, it sends a powerful message when I can say that the business community is behind me. To legislators, business support means that the issue has been well thought out, an accountability structure is in place, and priorities have been set according to a strategic plan,” says State School Superintendent Nancy Grasmick.

**In Ohio,** the Ohio Business Roundtable was instrumental in creating Ohio’s BEST (Building Excellent Schools for Today and the 21st Century) — representing individual companies and business associations; the state superintendent; the state board of education; higher education; classroom teachers; principals; superintendents; school boards; social service agencies; religious, charitable and civil rights groups; the AFL-CIO; parents and students. “As a result of our partnership with the CEOs of the Ohio Business Roundtable, we have made a measurable imprint on Ohio schools and improved the lives of millions of children in our state for generations to come,” says U.S. Senator and former Gov. George Voinovich. “I have always said, ‘Show me a school district where the business community is involved, and I’ll show you a district that’s improving.’”

**In Washington state,** the Boeing Company — joined by Washington Mutual Bank, GTE and the Washington Business Roundtable — has spearheaded a wide range of school-improvement efforts. “Business leaders have helped Washington set the course and stay the course in education reform,” says Larry Hanson, publisher of the *Everett Herald*, a well-respected daily newspaper north of Seattle. In particular, Hanson cites the business community’s leadership in helping the state set and implement higher standards, better tests and “real accountability provisions” for schools. “They also created the Partnership for Learning, which has been recognized nationally for its work to sustain public awareness and political support for these changes.”



# How Well Do U.S. Students Perform?

Percent of Public School Students “Proficient” or Above, by State, on NAEP\*

	Reading 4th Grade (1998)	Reading 8th Grade (1998)	Math 4th Grade (1996)	Math 8th Grade (1996)	Science 8th Grade (1996)
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>
Alabama	24	21	11	12	18
Alaska	n/a	n/a	21	30	31
Arizona	22	28	15	18	23
Arkansas	23	23	13	13	22
California	20	22	11	17	20
Colorado	34	30	22	25	32
Connecticut	46	42	31	31	36
Delaware	25	25	16	19	21
District of Columbia	10	12	5	5	5
Florida	23	23	15	17	21
Georgia	24	25	13	16	21
Hawaii	17	19	16	16	15
Indiana	n/a	n/a	24	24	30
Iowa	35	n/a	22	31	36
Kansas	34	35	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kentucky	29	29	16	16	23
Louisiana	19	18	8	7	13
Maine	36	42	27	31	41
Maryland	29	31	22	24	25
Massachusetts	37	36	24	28	37
Michigan	28	n/a	23	28	32
Minnesota	36	37	29	34	37
Mississippi	18	19	8	7	12
Missouri	29	29	20	22	28
Montana	37	38	22	32	41
Nebraska	n/a	n/a	24	31	35
Nevada	21	24	14	n/a	n/a
New Hampshire	38	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
New Jersey	n/a	n/a	25	n/a	n/a
New Mexico	22	24	13	14	19
New York	29	34	20	22	27
North Carolina	28	31	21	20	24
North Dakota	n/a	n/a	24	33	41
Oklahoma	30	29	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oregon	28	33	21	26	32
Pennsylvania	n/a	n/a	20	n/a	n/a
Rhode Island	32	30	17	20	26
South Carolina	22	22	12	14	17
Tennessee	25	26	17	15	22
Texas	29	28	25	21	23
Utah	28	31	23	24	32
Vermont	n/a	n/a	23	27	34
Virginia	30	33	19	21	27
Washington	29	32	21	26	27
West Virginia	29	27	19	14	21
Wisconsin	34	33	27	32	39
Wyoming	30	29	19	22	34

\*National Assessment of Educational Progress

Note: n/a indicates data not available. Not all states participate in NAEP.

# Alabama

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**Background:** The A+ Education Foundation and its sister organization, A+, The Coalition for Better Education, were founded in 1991 by Bill Smith, chairman of Royal Cup, Inc., and Caroline Novak, a Montgomery civic leader. Today, a 25-member board of directors and an eight-member executive committee oversee A+. Primary support for A+'s work comes from Alabama's business community.

**Accomplishments:** The members of A+ are committed to improving the quality of education for all children in Alabama. In A+'s early years, we introduced systemic education reform to the state through a series of 22 town meetings that drew more than 25,000 citizens. As part of this initial effort, we developed systemic reform legislation that was passed in the state Senate but defeated in the House.

A+ also helped create the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), a nationally acclaimed effort to significantly improve the reading skills of Alabama students by connecting teachers with training and ongoing support. The ARI was featured as a model for the nation in the latest issue of NEA's *Teaching and Change*. A+ also established and still coordinates the Coalition for Innovation, a group of superintendents and principals from 17 school systems who are interested in improving student achievement. This group meets semi-annually to interact with experts from the Center for Leadership in School Reform.

**Work in Progress:** In June 1999, A+ will release *Teaching and Learning: Meeting the Challenge of High Standards*, a report of the Task Force on Teaching and Student Achievement that summarizes over two years of research on student achievement issues by a diverse group of Alabama leaders. Using the work of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, the National Staff Development Council, and the Southern Regional Education Board, this report makes the case for why good teaching matters most and features profiles on outstanding teachers and practices in Alabama.

Currently, A+ is a source of information on education reform sought after by policymakers, educators, the media, parents and interested Alabamians. A+ also provides logistical support for the Alabama State Teachers Forum, an organization of exemplary teachers, and continues to work closely with members of Alabama's state board of education, the state superintendent, the Legislature and Alabama's new governor to provide information, research and recommendations on strategies for improving student achievement in the state.

**Challenges Ahead:** Alabama's education system faces a number of challenging adjustments in coming years, as the state's new assessment and accountability systems begin to take effect. Alabama's new high school exit exam, based on 11th-grade-level skills, was administered as a pilot test this year to the state's 10th-graders. Starting with the class of 2001, students will have to pass this more rigorous assessment to graduate. This is also the first year in which the state department of education will intervene in low-performing schools, based on student scores on the Stanford Achievement Test. Currently, 34 Alabama schools face intervention, and it is likely that five to 15 of those schools will not be able to meet the goals required to avoid intervention.

Another significant problem is that education funding in Alabama — both for K-12 and higher education — continues to lag behind regional and national averages. This situation often pits K-12 and higher education against each other and prevents policymakers from investing in meaningful programs to help improve student achievement.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Alabama public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading 4th Grade (1998)	Reading 8th Grade (1998)	Math 4th Grade (1996)	Math 8th Grade (1996)	Science 8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	1 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	19 (23)	20 (28)	10 (18)	11 (19)	17 (24)
Basic	32 (31)	45 (41)	37 (42)	33 (38)	29 (33)
Below Basic	44 (39)	34 (28)	52 (38)	55 (39)	53 (40)

# Arizona

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**Background:** In 1991, the Arizona business community created Arizona Business Leaders for Education (ABLE) to advocate the passage of statewide school reform legislation. The coalition's efforts were successful, and in 1994, the Legislature enacted a bill on decentralization of school authority (requiring the formation of site-based school councils), school report cards, open enrollment and charter schools. When the group completed its initial work, the organization disbanded; since then, education reform has been advanced through local chamber of commerce organizations, associations and individual businesses.

**Accomplishments:** In addition to the 1994 legislation, Arizona has made significant progress in school improvement. Gov. Hull, elected in 1998, is widely regarded as a supporter of education reform and has promoted legislation to increase funding for children's programs and education in the state budget. Arizona has approved new, higher academic standards — including workplace skills standards — that have been recognized as some of the best in the nation. The corresponding assessment program, Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS), currently is undergoing pilot testing. In coming years, students will be required to pass the assessments to receive a high school diploma. Comprehensive Teacher Certification Standards also were approved in 1998, requiring a two-year induction period for teachers prior to final certification and ongoing professional development throughout their careers.

The Arizona Board of Regents recently organized a statewide Roundtable meeting to discuss options for supporting K–12 education reform through the three state universities. As a result of this work, the governor has sponsored the creation of a tri-university K–12 education center to focus on research and implementation of best practices for teachers. Other accomplishments include the success of the Systemic Initiatives, which have resulted in increased student achievement, particularly in urban centers. The state's school-to-work programs have been reconfigured to align with the economic clusters identified by the state.

**Work in Progress:** Currently, the Arizona business community is again in the early stages of coalition building, with the short-term goal of addressing workforce development needs in the state. As part of this effort, the Greater Phoenix Leadership Organization is focusing on a strategy to give young workers more skills and improve the overall talent pool available to employers, and another strategy to identify current and future employment needs in order to provide that information to the supply side of workforce development.

**Challenges Ahead:** Garnering the support of local school boards will be crucial to the overall success of the education reform movement; often, school boards can prove to be formidable obstacles to improvement at the local level, where real change must take place. Funding for education, technology implementation and regulation of charter schools also will continue to present challenges to the statewide reform effort.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Arizona public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	2 (2)	1 (2)	2 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	17 (23)	26 (28)	14 (18)	16 (19)	21 (24)
Basic	31 (31)	45 (41)	42 (42)	39 (38)	32 (33)
Below Basic	47 (39)	27 (28)	43 (38)	43 (39)	45 (40)

# Arkansas

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**Background:** The Arkansas Business & Education Alliance (ABEA) was established in 1990 by a broad range of business and community leaders, including Hillary Rodham Clinton, who saw the need for increased business involvement in education. Southwestern Bell and other corporations provided substantial resources in ABEA's early years to help get the Alliance off the ground.

**Accomplishments:** ABEA has been the most consistent business voice for education reform in the state over the last decade. Through three governors, three state school officers and a state legislature influenced by term limits, ABEA has worked to make the unwavering case for higher student achievement and responsible investment in Arkansas' education system. ABEA also has clearly outlined for the public and educators what business is looking for in new entrants into the workforce.

**Work in Progress:** ABEA's Arkansas Scholars program is our most visible effort to improve student achievement. Arkansas Scholars reaches second-semester eighth-graders in the classroom with a slide-show program presented by local business leaders. The program provides information on employment trends, achievement expectations and income potential for different jobs. As well, the program asks students to: (1) take the recommended high school curriculum; (2) achieve semester grades of "C" or better; (3) maintain at least 95 percent attendance; and (4) finish high school in four years. One-third of Arkansas' eighth-graders will view the program this year, and over 200 business leaders will participate in spreading its message.

**Challenges Ahead:** There is clear evidence that raising the expectations of students, parents, teachers and others is the route to a better-educated Arkansas. For too many years, Arkansas has ranked in the bottom quartile of states in educational indices. ABEA, in concert with other organizations and leaders, will focus on raising individual and collective expectations for education. The state's education ethic must be enhanced, and business leaders may be in the best position to influence that change.

**Student Achievement:** While Arkansas has shown incremental improvement in NAEP scores for math, science and reading, there is still a considerable gap between Arkansas and national averages. The good news is in the growing percentage of Arkansas high school students completing a college-preparatory curriculum. The state also has dropped the two-track system, sending a message of higher expectations for all students. In the future, student assessment measures will need increased attention, to reflect the implementation of higher standards for student achievement.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Arkansas public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	4 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	2 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	19 (23)	22 (28)	12 (18)	11 (19)	21 (24)
Basic	32 (31)	45 (41)	41 (42)	39 (38)	33 (33)
Below Basic	45 (39)	32 (28)	46 (38)	48 (39)	45 (40)

# California

## California Business Roundtable

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**Background:** The California Business Roundtable (CBR) has provided leadership on California education issues since its inception in 1976.

**Accomplishments:** Over the past two years, CBR education committee members have led the push for the development and adoption in California of the most rigorous academic standards in the country. CBR also has been involved in the charter school movement and California's Digital High School Initiative, a four-year competitive grant program that provides computer technology resources to California high schools. In early 1999, CBR joined 10 other business organizations and businesses to form California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE), a coalition focused on four basic public education issues: promoting high academic standards, measuring student achievement, establishing accountability for educators and improving the competitiveness of the United States in the world economy.

**Work in Progress:** California faces a serious and growing education facilities crisis. The state's K-12 population is growing at a rate that will require adding the equivalent of six new classrooms every day for the next five years. To address this problem, CBR, along with other business and education groups, is supporting a state constitutional change to simplify the funding process for new education facilities.

Recognizing that California needs an assessment system that provides timely and useful data on student achievement to support its accountability system, CBEE is working with state policymakers to revamp the state tests and better align them with academic standards.

California's fragmented education system and partisan political climate have failed to foster accountability and innovation in schools at the local level. To improve this situation, CBEE is developing a master plan for K-12 public education that will clarify state and local responsibilities related to education.

**Challenges Ahead:** All of CBR's and CBEE's current priorities pose major political and policy obstacles. Convincing voters to approve a state constitutional change will require proponents to wage a well-coordinated, multimillion-dollar ballot campaign. To achieve a state assessment system that makes sense, the business community will have to facilitate major compromises among state officials and educators regarding testing strategies. And the implementation of a master plan for K-12 education will involve dramatic change for educators and require significant new state legislation.

**Student Achievement:** In the second year of its new assessments for students in grades 2-11, California focused on better aligning the tests with the state's new standards. While results from the test have not been released yet, many educators and community leaders are concerned about student scores, as the state has not improved curricula and teaching practices since the implementation of the tests to raise student achievement up to high levels.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for California public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	4 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	3 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	16 (23)	21 (28)	10 (18)	14 (19)	19 (24)
Basic	28 (31)	42 (41)	35 (42)	34 (38)	27 (33)
Below Basic	52 (39)	36 (28)	54 (38)	49 (39)	53 (40)

# Colorado

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**Background:** The Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC) was founded by the Colorado business community in the early 1980s to foster continuous improvement in K–12 public education and ensure a world-class workforce and an educated citizenry. The PEBC has worked toward these goals by sponsoring programs and policy initiatives that promote academic excellence and personal success in Colorado's students and professional excellence in the state's educators. The PEBC board consists of 34 business, education and community leaders.

**Accomplishments:** For the past 12 years, Colorado has been fortunate to have a governor who has been passionately dedicated to education reform. Under Gov. Romer's leadership, the state enacted standards legislation in 1993 and began the development and implementation of the Colorado State Assessment Program to monitor student progress against the standards. Although the business community's role in state policy during Romer's tenure was limited, in 1994, the PEBC began hosting Issues Forums to bring together people from business, education and government to discuss state education policy. These forums supported early efforts to forge a consensus agenda around state education reform.

**Work in Progress:** With a new governor in the statehouse, a unified business voice on education has become vital. In January 1999, PEBC convened the leadership of the state's three leading business groups to discuss the formation of a broad coalition around a jointly endorsed education agenda. Work is now under way to finalize the agenda, which likely will include four points: standards, assessments, accountability and teacher quality. A meeting is being planned with the new governor to present this new, united business voice on education issues. PEBC also is hosting a forum for Colorado business leaders on the successful role of business in education reform in other states; North Carolina, Texas and Maryland will be highlighted.

**Challenges Ahead:** Colorado is just beginning the difficult work of developing a state accountability system. In 1998, the state legislature enacted a law tying school accreditation to performance on standards, but much more work remains to be done. Business will have an important role to play in demanding accountability from schools while ensuring that the system is effective and fair. PEBC also must continue its efforts to garner public support for the education reforms that must take place in every school to ensure academic success for every student.

**Student Achievement:** NAEP achievement results in reading and math for Colorado between 1990 and 1998 show continuous improvement in scores, which remain slightly above the national averages.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Colorado public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	7 (6)	2 (2)	2 (2)	3 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	27 (23)	28 (28)	20 (18)	22 (19)	30 (24)
Basic	35 (31)	46 (41)	45 (42)	42 (38)	36 (33)
Below Basic	31 (39)	24 (28)	33 (38)	33 (39)	32 (40)



# Connecticut

## Connecticut Business and Industry Association

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**Background:** Connecticut Business Roundtable corporations and Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) member companies created the Connecticut Business for Education Coalition (CBEC) in 1990 as part of the Business Roundtable 50-state initiative. CBEC was officially dissolved in 1994, but education reform has remained a top legislative priority for CBIA, which is the state's largest business association.

**Accomplishments:** Over the past decade, the business community has been a strong and vocal advocate for education reform in Connecticut. CBEC and CBIA have focused the state on accountability, teacher and student standards, basic skills, technology, and early childhood education. Connecticut's mastery tests (CMT), which were instituted in 1986, now are administered to students in grades 4, 6 and 8. The CMTs are considered to be among the most rigorous and effective tests in the country and are used by all school districts statewide to measure student performance against curricula. The 10th-grade test also is regarded as an excellent assessment; however, it is not yet tied to any exit requirements for high school graduation. All schools now must compile annual performance profiles to provide parents and the community with data on a variety of indicators. CBIA also has been a leader in the development of the state's school-to-career system, which has received strong support and participation from employers.

**Work in Progress:** Strong accountability legislation likely will pass in the Connecticut General Assembly this session. This legislation will require the state for the first time to intervene in poorly performing schools that fail to improve student performance. After a number of interventions, the state will be able to close and reconstitute schools to meet the needs of students more effectively. Connecticut also has developed charter, interdistrict and magnet schools as school-choice models in an attempt to spur reform in the public schools.

**Challenges Ahead:** While Connecticut continues to score extremely well on national and international assessments, students in the state's urban districts continue to underperform their suburban counterparts by a significant margin. The state has stepped up its intervention in and technical assistance to districts where significant numbers of students are performing poorly on the CMTs, but much more will be required to raise student achievement and lower dropout rates in our urban communities.

**Student Achievement:** Connecticut student achievement continues to rise. Districts are aligning curricula and staff development to the state's curriculum frameworks and national standards and are successfully focusing on areas of weakness identified by the CMTs.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Connecticut public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	11 (6)	4 (2)	3 (2)	5 (4)	3 (3)
Proficient	35 (23)	38 (28)	28 (18)	26 (19)	33 (24)
Basic	32 (31)	40 (41)	44 (42)	39 (38)	32 (33)
Below Basic	22 (39)	18 (28)	25 (38)	30 (39)	32 (40)

# Delaware

**Business/Public Education Council**  
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**Background:** The Business/Public Education Council was created by the Delaware Business Roundtable in 1990 as part of The Business Roundtable 50-state initiative. Much of the initial leadership was provided by Ed Woolard of DuPont. Today, the Council consists of 39 CEOs, legislators, and college and university presidents.

**Accomplishments:** The Council has been a relentless advocate of education reform, prodding leaders in government, education and business to implement an agenda that includes rigorous standards, challenging tests and meaningful accountability. The standards and tests now are in place in Delaware, along with the beginnings of an accountability system. The Council's 1997 report, *The Missing Link*, set the parameters for necessary accountability measures and a related system of effective professional development for teachers. The Council also surveyed state employers for their views on high school graduates and recommended more effective ways to deliver child-related social services.

**Work in Progress:** With so much at stake in schools, the Council believes that both students and educators should be held accountable for academic achievement. Soon, graduation and grade promotion will depend on student performance on state tests. Current Council proposals would take student achievement into account in educator evaluations, stiffen certification requirements for teachers, require teacher recertification every five years (with continued tenure dependent upon such recertification), improve the value of professional development, and relate educators' compensation to the academic success of their students and schools.

**Challenges Ahead:** The reform effort in Delaware is focused increasingly on the most difficult and controversial issues, such as educator accountability and sanctions for continually failing schools. But it will take several more years to implement an effective and comprehensive accountability system. There are also new challenges to undertake, such as increasing parental involvement in schools and stimulating new approaches to teacher education. And there remain the daunting challenges of remedying socioeconomic problems related to poor academic performance and improving the overall school climate and learning environment. To meet these challenges, strong business support will be vital.

**Student Achievement:** Delaware established baseline state test scores in 1998 for math and English language arts and will do the same in 2000 for science and social studies. These scores will be used in coming years to assess progress against state standards in the core disciplines.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Delaware public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	2 (2)	1 (2)	3 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	20 (23)	23 (28)	15 (18)	16 (19)	20 (24)
Basic	32 (31)	41 (41)	38 (42)	36 (38)	30 (33)
Below Basic	43 (39)	34 (28)	46 (38)	45 (39)	49 (40)



# Florida

**The Florida Council of 100, Inc.**  
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**Background:** The Florida Council of 100 was formed in 1961 by Gov. Farris Bryant and a prominent group of business leaders. Today, the Council continues as a roundtable organization of 100 CEOs from Florida's leading businesses and firms, along with several out-of-state CEOs and Florida university presidents and state agency heads. With the mission of influencing public policy to enhance the quality of life and economic well-being of all Floridians, the Council has focused on a wide variety of issues over the years, including transportation, agriculture, health care and economic development. Throughout its history, the Council has made improving Florida's education system at all levels a high-interest issue.

**Accomplishments:** In 1994, the Council formed the Business/Higher Education Partnership to focus specifically on higher education issues. The Partnership continues to advocate adequate funding, improved quality of teaching and learning in schools, increased opportunities for students, and partnerships among sectors. From 1996–98, the Council joined with Gov. Lawton Chiles to form the Governor's Commission on Education. In this forum, the Council was active in helping to develop state education policy, securing increased funding for schools and helping to pass a constitutional amendment concerning state governance of education. The 1999 legislative session saw significant advances in the state's standards and accountability systems and important improvements in initiatives on school readiness, teacher quality and technology.

**Work in Progress:** Last fall, the Council recommitted to pre-K–12 education as its first policy priority. In cooperation with Gov. Jeb Bush, the Council has organized the Task Force on Closing the Achievement Gap, an initiative to help all of Florida's students achieve at high levels.

**Challenges Ahead:** Maintaining public support for and successfully implementing the governor's ambitious A+ Plan for standards and accountability will be major challenges for the Council in the near future. And to strengthen the overall advocacy for education reform in the state, the Council will work to coordinate its efforts with those of other business-led initiatives, such as the Florida Chamber's *WorldClass Schools* program.

**Student Achievement:** According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other measures, the achievement of Florida's students is below the national average and has not improved during the 1990s. In a statewide test of expository writing, Florida Writes, students have shown steady gains over the years — a tangible result of focusing the state curriculum on basic writing skills. To gain a more detailed picture of student performance, the state will be expanding the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) over the next few years to include grades 3–10.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Florida public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	2 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	18 (23)	22 (28)	14 (18)	15 (19)	20 (24)
Basic	31 (31)	42 (41)	40 (42)	37 (38)	30 (33)
Below Basic	46 (39)	35 (28)	45 (38)	46 (39)	49 (40)

# Georgia

**The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education**  
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**Background:** The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education was organized in 1990, when business leaders from the Georgia Chamber of Commerce identified education as a pressing concern for economic development in Georgia. The Partnership today consists of an alliance of over 150 leaders from business, education, government and communities who share a commitment to improving education.

**Accomplishments:** The Georgia Partnership has played an integral part in several key education reforms since 1989, including the passage of two state constitutional amendments. One amendment requires locally elected school boards to appoint superintendents. The Partnership also served as a key information resource in the passage of a Special Options Local Sales Tax, which will provide over \$5 billion in capital improvements for Georgia's schools. In 1993, the Partnership launched the Next Generation School Project (NGSP), an education reform initiative with goals for improved student learning, high expectations for achievement and a rigorous curriculum. Over the past six years, students in NGSP programs have surpassed national progress averages, and NGSP schools are recognized as school-improvement leaders in Georgia.

**Work in Progress:** The Partnership continues to push for stronger educational accountability measures, working with leaders from other states to develop effective accountability legislation. This summer, the Partnership will serve as a key advisor source and provide other resources to Gov. Barnes' education commission, which will review accountability as one of its main tasks. The Partnership also is collaborating with the Board of Regents on a U.S. Department of Education Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant to meet the goal of having a qualified teacher in every classroom by 2006.

**Challenges Ahead:** Creating an effective accountability plan for Georgia will be a tremendous task. Reaching consensus on sensitive issues such as rewards and sanctions and local control will require support from many groups; in this effort, the Partnership hopes to play a vital role in bringing these groups to the table and supplying them with relevant information and support. Many other challenges also lie ahead, such as stepping up teacher and principal recruitment and retention, enhancing reading programs, and improving school safety and discipline.

**Student Achievement:** Georgia lags behind other states in the Southeast and the nation on scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). While Georgia's students did improve their scores on the SAT from an average of 948 in 1990 to 961 in 1998, scores were still well below the national average of 1011 in 1998. In light of this, work on improving the state's assessment program — and student achievement in general — must continue; currently, Georgia is developing a Criterion Reference Test based on the state's Quality Core Curriculum to align state assessments with curricula and raise student scores.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Georgia public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	2 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	19 (23)	24 (28)	12 (18)	14 (19)	20 (24)
Basic	31 (31)	43 (41)	40 (42)	35 (38)	28 (33)
Below Basic	45 (39)	32 (28)	47 (38)	49 (39)	51 (40)

# Hawaii

## Hawaii Business Roundtable

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**Background:** The Hawaii Business Roundtable is an organization of CEOs from Hawaii's leading corporations who share a commitment to a common goal: a better future for the people of Hawaii. For the past 10 years, the Roundtable has been the leading business advocate for education reform in the state.

**Accomplishments:** The Roundtable has focused its energy on five key areas of systemic reform: local school autonomy, accountability, early child education and care, business/education partnerships, and governance. In support of these five reform areas, the Roundtable has pushed for the establishment of site-based management in nearly 90 percent of Hawaii's public schools; the development of statewide content and performance standards; the formation of the Good Beginnings Alliance, a unique private/public collaboration working to create a statewide system of quality early-childhood education and care; the initiation of model school-to-work programs; and the adoption of reform legislation that increased school-level autonomy.

**Work in Progress:** The Roundtable believes that the key to lasting reform is persistence; thus, we will continue to pursue further decentralization of the state department of education and the greater empowerment of schools. Our primary focus in the near future will be on the development and implementation of a statewide accountability system that is driven by effective measurements of student performance, gives every school a chance to perform and improve, includes both incentives and consequences for performance, and expects high levels of achievement from every child.

**Challenges Ahead:** In Hawaii, the only state in the nation with a single, unified school district, progress toward a transformed public education system has been slow. The challenge of obtaining adequate resources, particularly for professional development of teachers and principals, continues to hinder progress. However, with new leadership in the department of education and the University of Hawaii College of Education, there is hope for a renewed commitment to change. The Roundtable intends to work closely with state education leaders on a comprehensive standards-based reform effort.

**Student Achievement:** Hawaii's students have performed poorly on a consistent basis on both the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Stanford Achievement Test, and thus there is clearly a great deal of improvement needed in the area of student achievement.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Hawaii public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	3 (6)	1 (2)	2 (2)	2 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	14 (23)	18 (28)	14 (18)	14 (19)	14 (24)
Basic	28 (31)	41 (41)	37 (42)	35 (38)	27 (33)
Below Basic	55 (39)	40 (28)	47 (38)	49 (39)	58 (40)

# Illinois

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Illinois Business Education Coalition**  
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**Background:** The Illinois Business Roundtable (IBRT) was created in late 1989 to engage business executives statewide on the issues of education, environment and tort reform. Between 1989 and 1994, the IBRT education committee was involved in a number of school-reform and school-finance issues. During the summer of 1994, the IBRT and other statewide and regional business associations joined together to create the Illinois Business Education Coalition (IBEC). IBEC adopted an overarching school-reform agenda that addressed reform issues in four broad areas: accountability, innovation, efficiency and funding.

**Accomplishments:** In 1995, IBEC was involved extensively in the development of reforms in Chicago's public schools and efforts that resulted in the passage of Illinois' initial charter school law. In 1996, IBEC pushed successfully for the passage of high-stakes student tests and prohibition of social promotion. IBEC also worked with the State Board of Education to adopt academic standards. In 1997, IBEC's efforts led to the rewriting of teacher certification requirements and the adoption of policy measures that secured increased funding for Illinois' poorest school districts. The IBRT/IBEC hosted a successful Business Leaders' Education Summit in March 1999 to refocus and re-energize the business community's commitment to education reform.

**Work in Progress:** IBEC currently is working with the state board of education and Achieve to benchmark the new state assessments to ensure that the tests are aligned properly with high academic standards. IBEC also is pushing for legislation that would improve the quality of Illinois' school-finance data, improve the current charter school legislation and provide for education opportunity grants for poor students in failing schools.

**Challenges Ahead:** Maintaining the gains of the 1997 teacher certification legislation has been a tremendous challenge. Illinois will hire an estimated 80,000 new teachers during the next decade. In our state's rush to hire "more," we must be careful not to sacrifice improved teacher quality. In the coming years, IBEC also will concentrate on increasing support for school improvement with parents and business leaders at the district and school levels and build on the education change agenda — *One Vision, One Voice* — adopted by a unified business community at the March Summit.

**Student Achievement:** Illinois is one of only a handful of states that do not participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). However, IBEC will continue to work with the state board of education on improvements to our own state tests and to promote participation in NAEP and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), so that we can compare the performance of Illinois' students with that of their peers on the national and international levels.

No data for performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress is available for Illinois.

# Indiana

**Indiana Chamber of Commerce**  
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**Background:** The Indiana Chamber of Commerce was founded nearly 100 years ago and now represents approximately 5,000 businesses in the state. President and CEO Chris LaMothe is providing the initial leadership for education reform efforts.

**Accomplishments:** The Chamber has been the driving advocate for education reform in Indiana, pushing the governor, Legislature, educators and business community to implement an agenda that includes the development of world-class standards, an accountability system that makes schools and students responsible for achievement, the creation of charter schools, and a tuition tax credit that allows parents to send their children to the school of their choice.

**Work in Progress:** The Indiana Chamber recently helped pass legislation that created an Education Roundtable, chaired by the governor and superintendent of public instruction, that will review and recommend world-class academic standards to the state board of education. The roundtable will include representatives from the business community and elementary, secondary and higher education.

The Chamber also helped pass accountability legislation that holds schools and students accountable for meeting achievement standards. The legislation uses measures such as performance benchmarks to stimulate continuous improvement in academic achievement. The law also provides financial assistance for schools that meet the standards and levies sanctions — including a mandatory management team — against schools that do not. In addition, the legislation will allow communities to intervene in schools that do not show continuous improvement and requires schools to present an expanded report card to the community that details a number of performance measures.

**Challenges Ahead:** The current reform efforts are focused on difficult and controversial issues, such as student achievement and school accountability. It will take a few years to put these pieces into place, make adjustments and resist efforts to undo what has been done. There are also new challenges to undertake, such as giving parents control of the tax dollars spent on their child's education and stimulating school choice in the form of tax credits or charter school legislation. To meet these challenges, strong business support will be essential.

**Student Achievement:** The 21st century is just around the corner, and Indiana is facing serious problems in student achievement: the state is ranked 42nd in the nation in SAT scores; 45 percent of our 10th-graders cannot pass a 9th-grade assessment; we rank 50th among states in the proportion of labor force employed in professional and specialty occupations; and only 16 percent of our workforce holds a college degree, compared to the national average of 24 percent.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Indiana public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	n/a	n/a	2 (2)	3 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	n/a	n/a	22 (18)	21 (19)	28 (24)
Basic	n/a	n/a	48 (42)	44 (38)	35 (33)
Below Basic	n/a	n/a	28 (38)	32 (39)	35 (40)

*n/a: data not available*

# Iowa

**Iowa Business Council**  
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**Background:** In the early 1990s, the Iowa Business Council engaged the American College Testing program (ACT) to address the lack of available information on employer skills needs in the state. ACT profiled 25 nonexempt positions, including claim clerk, gas serviceman, maintenance mechanic and salesperson, identifying sets of job skills and the levels of those skills needed to perform adequately in four areas: reading for information, applied mathematics, listening and writing.

**Findings:** Following the profiling process, ACT overlaid scores on the Work Keys assessments from students nationwide onto the job profiles to identify skill gaps. Percentages of U.S. students who had the abilities to perform adequately in 90 percent of the jobs profiled were as follows:

- Reading for information      53%
- Applied mathematics        15%
- Listening                        7%
- Writing                         12%

**Work in Progress:** Since the publication of these findings in February 1995, Iowa Business Council members and staff have met with thousands of educators throughout the state to explain the findings, the changing nature of work and the value of having students demonstrate competencies needed for employment. Since then, over half of Iowa's school districts have adopted Work Keys assessments to allow students to demonstrate those competencies and help schools develop curricula. The Work Keys assessment program has received the support of both the governor and state Legislature.

**Challenges Ahead:** The Iowa Business Council just completed a new survey of Iowa employers, which is included in its latest report, *Iowa's Economic Future: People, Knowledge, and Know-How*. The report finds that there are significant shortages in the state in both the quantity and skills of available workers. Filling the large number of open positions with qualified workers remains a significant challenge for the state.

Ongoing research at ACT indicates that many students going to work directly from high school have higher skill requirements than students entering college. The main challenge, then, is to develop a learning environment that will prepare *all* students for future success. To do so, we must help teachers understand the skills needs of young workers and help educators, counselors and parents realize that Iowa's future economic development depends largely on the ability of these young workers — not just college-bound students — to compete and succeed in the workplace.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Iowa public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	7 (6)	n/a	1 (2)	4 (4)	3 (3)
Proficient	28 (23)	n/a	21 (18)	27 (19)	33 (24)
Basic	35 (31)	n/a	52 (42)	47 (38)	35 (33)
Below Basic	30 (39)	n/a	26 (38)	22 (39)	29 (40)

*n/a: data not available*



# Kansas

## Kansas Business Education Coalition

Kansas State Department of Education  
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**Background:** The Kansas Business Education Coalition was created in 1995 to develop a partnership between education, government and business in the state. Leadership for the initiative came from the Commissioner of Education, the Kansas State Board of Education and selected business leaders. The Coalition now includes 36 members from education, government and business.

**Accomplishments:** The Coalition's first education reform initiative was to identify issues of common interest and concern among business and community leaders, educators, and parents. Since then, the Coalition has sponsored a number of workshops and other activities across the state to better educate business representatives on how education is governed, supervised and financed and to promote partnerships between business and education.

**Work in Progress:** The Coalition currently is reassessing its organizational structure, membership, goals and future directions.

**Challenges:** In the short term, the Coalition's primary challenge is to generate stronger involvement and leadership from the business sector in pushing for school improvement. Once business has made this commitment, the Coalition will conduct a needs analysis to determine the perspective of business leaders on the state of education in Kansas. And once these needs are determined, the Coalition will develop a strategic plan to identify key goals for education reform policy.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Kansas public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	6 (6)	2 (2)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Proficient	28 (23)	33 (28)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Basic	37 (31)	46 (41)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Below Basic	29 (39)	19 (28)	n/a	n/a	n/a

*n/a: data not available*

# Kentucky

**Partnership for Kentucky Schools**  
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**Background:** The Partnership for Kentucky Schools is a nonpartisan coalition of business, education, government and civic leaders established in 1991 by three corporate executives on behalf of The Business Roundtable. Since its formation, the Partnership has worked with business leaders, educators, students, legislators and citizens to improve Kentucky's education system within the framework of the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act.

**Accomplishments:** The backbone of Kentucky's reforms has been equitable funding for all public schools. These new resources have been directed to implement curriculum changes, teacher training, school-based decisionmaking, family resource centers, new technologies, rigorous standards, an assessment that accurately evaluates students' progress toward those standards, accountability for student learning and expectations of high student achievement. The Partnership has used multiple strategies in these efforts, including aggressive public information campaigns, to ensure that reform implementation stays on track, despite opposition on several fronts.

**Work in Progress:** In the early years of the school-improvement effort, the Partnership addressed immediate education needs through broad communications designed to inform the public about school reform. A more comprehensive, in-depth focus is now necessary to ensure continuous improvement. The Partnership currently is working to (1) ensure that current and new legislators understand Kentucky's education system and encourage their support for school improvement, (2) establish a statewide network of education champions to identify and respond to challenges, (3) use business/community collaborations to distribute information and increase understanding with a priority on mobilizing local communities, (4) provide audience-specific messages to increase awareness and understanding of the effort to achieve high education standards, (5) conduct research that will address gaps in state and local school-improvement measures, and (6) publicly recognize successful improvement efforts and emphasize their impact on Kentucky's students.

**Challenges Ahead:** Nine years into the most sweeping education reform ever attempted, Kentucky still faces the challenge of keeping continuous academic improvement on track and moving ahead in the face of continuing opposition. Therefore, the Partnership maintains its commitment to keep the public informed about Kentucky's new education system and involved in substantive ways to improve local schools.

**Student Achievement:** Kentucky's commitment to equitable funding for all public schools has resulted in dramatic increases in the reading and mathematics abilities of all students. Kentucky's own index indicates that between 1993 and 1997, average reading scores for elementary students increased from 32.4 to 63.7; middle school scores rose from 38.4 to 49.2; and high school scores rose from 20.2 to 54. In mathematics, scores for elementary students increased from 22.3 to 44.7; middle school scores rose from 22.8 to 53.8; and high school scores rose from 22.2 to 50. We have seen encouraging progress in student achievement, but much work remains to be done to bring all students to a high level of achievement.

Many elementary schools with large proportions of students living in poverty have shown that economic status is not a predictor of success. On the 1998 Kentucky assessment in reading, 11 of the 20 top-scoring schools had 32 percent or more children on the federal school-lunch program (five of the top 20 schools had 50 percent or more living in poverty). In mathematics, nine of the 20 highest-scoring schools had 34 percent or more children in the school-lunch program (six of the top 20 schools had 50 percent or more living in poverty). And in science, 18 of the 20 top-scoring schools had 33 percent or more students on the school-lunch program (13 of the top 20 schools had 50 percent or more living in poverty). Some Kentucky middle and high schools with high levels of poverty were in the top 20 in core subjects, but the numbers were not as dramatic as in elementary schools.

*(over)*



The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Kentucky public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>
	<b>4th Grade (1998)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1998)</b>	<b>4th Grade (1996)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1996)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1996)</b>
Advanced	6 (6)	2 (2)	1 (2)	1 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	23 (23)	27 (28)	15 (18)	15 (19)	21 (24)
Basic	34 (31)	45 (41)	44 (42)	40 (38)	35 (33)
Below Basic	37 (39)	26 (28)	40 (38)	44 (39)	42 (40)

# Louisiana

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**Background:** Since 1962, the business-led Council for a Better Louisiana (CABL) has been formulating nonpartisan, research-based opinions to influence state-level decisionmaking. Since 1989, recognizing that Louisiana's economic future and quality of life are linked directly to the quality of education in the state, CABL has placed education reform at the top of its reform agenda. CABL provides leadership on education issues and collaborates with policymaking bodies to enact and implement meaningful change in schools.

**Accomplishments:** CABL's representatives serve on the state's LEARN Commission, a federally funded body that distributes and oversees millions of dollars from the Goals 2000 program, and the state's Accountability Commission, the group charged with creating a statewide accountability system. CABL also assisted in the development of rigorous statewide content standards — a key component of the accountability system — sponsoring forums to gather public feedback. In January, *Education Week* called Louisiana's accountability system "one of the nation's most comprehensive."

In collaboration with Southeastern Louisiana University, CABL helped create a principals' leadership academy that focuses on training newly appointed principals to develop school-improvement plans with business and community input. CABL also has provided incentive grants and technical assistance to start Local Education Funds, which are permanent, privately endowed funds that local school systems use to reward schools and teachers for developing innovative and creative approaches to education. Recently, CABL was awarded a grant by the BellSouth Foundation to recommend policy measures to improve the quality and delivery of teacher training and streamline the certification/licensure process. As part of this grant, CABL formed the Forum for Education Excellence, a privately supported consortium that will recommend policy, monitor progress and provide external pressure on education reform efforts in Louisiana.

**Work in Progress:** CABL is committed to maintaining high academic standards and bringing every student to meet or exceed national averages on norm-referenced tests. CABL also supports teacher accountability and will work with the new Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality to develop policy recommendations that will transform colleges of education and require teachers to have subject content mastery as well as pedagogical and classroom management skills. CABL supports incentive pay for teachers and recently endorsed a plan that would give additional pay to teachers who acquire certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

**Challenges Ahead:** Louisiana has the highest child-poverty rate in the nation; consequently, CABL believes that early childhood education is needed to ensure academic success for many children. CABL will work with the departments of education and social services and the governor's Children's Cabinet to offer early childhood opportunities to the underserved population in Louisiana. Another challenge will be improving the state's ability to provide remediation to students who score "unsatisfactory" on high-stakes tests and to provide alternative education opportunities or job skills training to students who fail repeatedly and are unable to progress to higher grades. Louisiana also must align and redirect resources, both financial and human, to maximize effectiveness. State support of public education historically has been lukewarm, and the state has yet to meet its constitutional mandate to fully fund the Minimum Foundation Program, a per-pupil funding formula designed to ensure a minimum — though not necessarily adequate — level of public education.

**Student Achievement:** Louisiana remains at the bottom on almost every indicator of student achievement. However, there are signs of improvement. Average ACT scores have improved. In addition, on this spring's achievement tests, 19 of 66 school systems exceeded the national median on 6th-grade test scores, and 40 systems improved compared with last year's scores. On the national level, 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading test scores were seven points higher than the 1994 scores — one of the biggest gains by any state. Due to this performance, NAEP has designated Louisiana as a "recovery" state.

(over)

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Louisiana public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>
	<b>4th Grade (1998)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1998)</b>	<b>4th Grade (1996)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1996)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1996)</b>
Advanced	3 (6)	1 (2)	0 (2)	0 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	16 (23)	17 (28)	8 (18)	7 (19)	12 (24)
Basic	29 (31)	46 (41)	36 (42)	31 (38)	27 (33)
Below Basic	52 (39)	36 (28)	56 (38)	62 (39)	60 (40)

# Maine

**Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education**  
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**Background:** The Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education grew out of a July 1990 symposium, *Rethinking Education for Maine's Children*, sponsored by the Maine Development Foundation. The Foundation assembled a planning committee under the leadership of UNUM Chairman and CEO Jim Orr, and in early 1991, created the Coalition. Today, the Coalition is a statewide partnership of nearly 50 leaders from business, education, government and the community who are committed to organizing a significant K-12 education reform effort in Maine.

**Accomplishments:** In September 1992, after nearly two years of discussion, research and meetings around the state, the Coalition issued its 15-point systemic blueprint for restructuring education in Maine, *Success Begins With Education*. The first goal cited in the report, "Learning Results," focused on creating a statewide system of academic standards. With strong leadership from the Coalition, legislation to establish these standards was enacted into law in June 1997.

**Work in Progress:** The Coalition currently is focusing much of its energy on three priorities: (1) building leadership capacity in public schools; (2) supporting an innovative, more equitable approach to state funding of Maine's schools; and (3) adequate funding for full implementation of the new academic standards. The Coalition also has played a leadership role in developing a statewide academy for principals and teacher-leaders, which will be offered by the Maine Development Foundation in collaboration with the Coalition, the Maine Leadership Consortium and the University of Maine system, with significant financial support from Maine businesses.

**Challenges Ahead:** Education reform is a difficult process. Over the next several years, our major challenge will be to maintain consistent support from major stakeholder groups. Because we have a good strategic plan, committed members who are leaders throughout the state and solid financial support from business, we anticipate making continuous progress. The ultimate goal is that all children achieve at high levels. For that to happen, we need to address the shortage of qualified teachers and administrators in the state; ensure a more equitable way of funding our schools; and make schools accountable for achieving the standards. One in four Maine students has not yet reached acceptable literacy standards, and the educational aspirations of our students currently are low. There is clearly much to be done.

**Student Achievement:** Maine students score at or near the top of the nation in math, reading and science on National Assessment of Educational Progress tests. Maine's 4th-, 8th- and 11th-grade students recently completed the first administration of the revised Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), which was redesigned to measure student achievement against Maine's new academic standards. As anticipated, the new MEA took longer to complete and was more difficult for students and more complex to administer. This first year of the new test has been a learning experience, and we will use the lessons learned to make progress in the development of next year's test. Nonetheless, we need to stay the course with regard to high expectations for our students and are committed to making the MEA a more rigorous examination.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Maine public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	8 (6)	4 (2)	3 (2)	6 (4)	4 (3)
Proficient	28 (23)	38 (28)	24 (18)	25 (19)	37 (24)
Basic	37 (31)	42 (41)	48 (42)	46 (38)	37 (33)
Below Basic	27 (39)	16 (28)	25 (38)	23 (39)	22 (40)

# Maryland

## Maryland Business Roundtable for Education

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**Background:** The Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT), a coalition of more than 100 employers, was founded in 1992. Promoting high standards, rigorous assessments and strong accountability, MBRT works with government officials, educators, parents, community leaders and other stakeholders to ensure that Maryland's students receive a quality education and perform at high levels.

**Accomplishments:** MBRT has worked to support and preserve key elements of school reform through leadership changes in the legislature, in the executive office and on the state board of education. Working with the state department of education and with the help of over 400 volunteers, MBRT has pushed for increased student and teacher access to technology by developing a statewide technology plan; put together a statewide plan for improved professional development; and developed a Web site that allows schools to access and analyze test data, compare performance with other schools, and identify best practices. MBRT also developed a model for school/business partnerships and produced a guidebook for business leaders and school principals. In addition, MBRT conducted a survey of 1,000 Maryland employers to determine needed workforce skills and employer satisfaction with high school graduates. In 1997, the National Alliance of Business named MBRT State Business Coalition of the Year. As a result of these efforts, *Education Week* has rated Maryland's reform program as one of the top three in the nation.

**Work in Progress:** As part of a national pilot project, MBRT launched *Achievement Counts*, a two-year campaign to encourage all employers in Maryland to use high school transcripts as part of the hiring process. This ambitious, comprehensive campaign will engage business leaders, local decisionmakers, parents and students in an effort to make the transcript meaningful. As part of the program, the MBRT will make presentations to Maryland's 9th-graders, visit local leaders in every county in the state, sponsor workshops for human resource directors, develop a Web site, organize focus groups among parents and students, and conduct periodic workforce surveys.

**Challenges Ahead:** We believe that Maryland is in a unique position to achieve educational excellence. Teaching and learning have been strengthened, and test scores are rising. These essential components of reform have withstood the test of controversy. Challenges, however, remain and require our diligent attention. Now that high school graduation requirements have been aligned with more rigorous standards, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to reach those standards is crucial.

**Student Achievement:** Standards and assessments have been in place in Maryland for elementary and middle schools since 1991 and are being used to gauge school effectiveness. The percentage of students passing the rigorous state assessments has increased from 31.7 in 1993 to 44.1 in 1998. As the next phase in the reform process, new high school standards and assessments have been developed, will be introduced for field testing in 2000, and will count as a graduation requirement for the class of 2005.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Maryland public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	7 (6)	4 (2)	3 (2)	5 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	22 (23)	27 (28)	19 (18)	19 (19)	23 (24)
Basic	32 (31)	41 (41)	37 (42)	33 (38)	30 (33)
Below Basic	39 (39)	28 (28)	41 (38)	43 (39)	45 (40)

# Massachusetts

**Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education**  
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**Background:** The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) was created in 1988 by a group of business leaders with extensive school-business partnership experience. In its formative stages, MBAE garnered statewide support from individual businesses and all the major business associations, crafted a reform agenda, and soon became the driving force behind the passage of the sweeping Education Reform Act of 1993, which introduced standards, assessment, accountability and major finance changes into state education policy.

**Accomplishments:** MBAE's chief accomplishments have been the design and passage of the state's multifaceted reform legislation. *Every Child A Winner!*, MBAE's seminal blueprint for school reform, was published in 1991. Since the passage of the legislation in 1993, MBAE has completed two major studies on the progress of reform implementation, *Within Our Reach* (1995) and *Every Child Achieving* (1999). From its inception, MBAE has cultivated discussion and genuine collaboration among all the major education stakeholders in the commonwealth. MBAE frequently influences the development, shaping and implementation of reform policy in Massachusetts.

**Work in Progress:** As education reform approaches its seventh year of implementation, MBAE continues to monitor and report on progress. Current MBAE priorities are the revision and updating of the school finance formula, development of a sophisticated accountability system, and improving teaching quality.

**Challenges Ahead:** With extensive turnover in the Legislature and new leadership at the department of education and board of education, the reform initiative in Massachusetts is at a crossroads. We believe this is an ideal time for renewal. The state still must make a number of key implementation decisions, such as setting performance levels for high-stakes 10th-grade assessments. The major challenge will be to close the student performance gap that was so evident on last year's first round of assessments. Massachusetts' business leaders and policymakers now must shift focus from developing policy to improving practice.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Massachusetts public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	8 (6)	3 (2)	2 (2)	5 (4)	4 (3)
Proficient	29 (23)	33 (28)	22 (18)	23 (19)	33 (24)
Basic	36 (31)	44 (41)	47 (42)	40 (38)	32 (33)
Below Basic	27 (39)	20 (28)	29 (38)	32 (39)	31 (40)

# Michigan

## Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence

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**Background:** Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence (MBLEE) was created in 1990 after President Bush asked national Business Roundtable CEOs to partner with the governors in their states to pursue a policy agenda that vigorously supported the systemic education reforms advanced by the 1989 National Education Summit in Charlottesville, Va. To this end, six Michigan BRT companies and the University of Michigan formed a coalition. Using the BRT's nine essential components, they formulated a broad vision and framework that would guide school-improvement efforts in the state. MBLEE now consists of 10 corporations, the Michigan Department of Education, the Governor's Office, the University of Michigan and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

**Accomplishments:** MBLEE has been a primary driver of education reform in Michigan. To identify the differences between Michigan's current education system and the BRT's nine essential components, MBLEE commissioned the University of Michigan to compile three GAP Analysis reports (1992, 1995, 1998). Many organizations now use the reports as guidelines for improving Michigan's public schools. MBLEE also is responsible for creating the Michigan School Report (MSR), a running report card that for the last four years has identified critical data for each school in the state. The report summarizes data such as state assessment scores, accreditation status and class size. In addition, the organization produced *Getting It Done*, a workbook designed to help local communities establish their own education reform efforts. The publication has been an effective tool for garnering local support.

**Work in Progress:** Last fall, MBLEE identified four areas where it could have the most impact on education reform: professional development, standards and assessment, accountability, and technology. Current projects under way in these areas include pushing for the enactment of an improved professional development policy, identifying career foundation skills and ensuring that all high school graduates have acquired these skills, promoting more school accountability and parental involvement, and developing criteria for the effective use of classroom technology. MBLEE also continues to work as an advocate for using school records in hiring and implementing a statewide core curriculum.

**Challenges Ahead:** School accountability is key to getting tangible results from the state core curriculum. To date, a comprehensive accountability system is not in place in Michigan. As a result, accreditation measurements, diploma standards and graduation requirements are not consistent in value for students entering the workforce. Achieving this consistency and improving the skills of young workers is a primary concern for MBLEE. Unqualified teachers and poor teacher attitudes toward professional development also are hurdles to overcome. In addition, the Michigan High School Test continues to face significant challenges, leaving this vital measurement tool in an uncertain state.

**Student Achievement:** Michigan has made solid advances in Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) scores at all grade levels in the areas of math and reading. At this time, more data is needed to make an informed measurement of progress in science.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Michigan public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading 4th Grade (1998)	Reading 8th Grade (1998)	Math 4th Grade (1996)	Math 8th Grade (1996)	Science 8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	n/a	2 (2)	4 (4)	3 (3)
Proficient	23 (23)	n/a	21 (18)	24 (19)	29 (24)
Basic	35 (31)	n/a	45 (42)	39 (38)	33 (33)
Below Basic	37 (39)	n/a	32 (38)	33 (39)	35 (40)

*n/a: data not available*



# Minnesota

**Minnesota Business Partnership**  
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**Background:** The Minnesota Business Partnership, founded in 1977, now is comprised of 103 CEOs representing the state's largest employers. From the outset, K–12 education and fiscal policy have been the Partnership's centerpiece issues. Our K–12 initiatives are based on three guiding principles: 1) accountability for student achievement, including a clear set of standards for all students, uniform assessments and public reporting of results; 2) increased opportunities for families to enroll their children in the schools and programs of their choice; and 3) freedom for educators to teach as they see fit.

**Accomplishments:** Beginning in the late 1980s, Minnesota developed a "Graduation Rule" intended to ensure that every student graduated with at least the basic skills necessary to succeed in either their career or higher education. The Graduation Rule includes two parts — the Basic Skills Tests and the Profile of Learning. First given in the 8th grade, students must pass Basic Skills Tests in math and reading and a 10th-grade writing test before they can graduate from high school. The tests were first administered to students in 1996, and average scores have increased since then. The Profile of Learning requires students to demonstrate what they've learned in 10 different learning areas. Though debate still rages over the Profile, it is now being implemented and will apply to graduating high school students beginning in 2002.

In 1991, Minnesota became the first state in the nation to pass charter school legislation. Today, the state has nearly 40 such schools. To foster the growth of charter schools, this year the Legislature passed a bill giving organizers more flexibility to start charter schools and pay facility costs.

In the mid-1980s, Minnesota became the first state to enact open enrollment among school districts, allowing families to send their children to the schools of their choice. In 1997, Minnesota further increased education choice by enacting the nation's first education tax credits and expanding existing tax deductions for certain education-related costs. Though tax credits are not available for private school tuition, they do help parents pay for individual tutoring, enrichment programs and similar expenses.

**Work in Progress:** The Partnership believes that the Graduation Rule should be refined and scaled back to the core subjects and that the Legislature should add a 10th-grade test to the statewide testing regimen. We also propose that assessing student progress toward fulfilling the Profile of Learning requirements be left to local communities.

Just as students are held accountable for learning, the Partnership believes that schools should be held accountable for teaching. To implement this aspect of accountability, we recommend that the Legislature set expectations for overall student academic achievement at the individual school level. With standards and assessments in place, the state's role in mandating school practices would be reduced, and responsibility for student success would be transferred to local communities. We believe the state would play a more valuable role in helping communities learn from those schools that are succeeding and in targeting aid where it is most needed. The challenge — as has been the case with all education reforms — is to keep the focus on continuous improvement in student achievement and battle efforts to maintain the status quo.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Minnesota public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	8 (6)	2 (2)	3 (2)	6 (4)	3 (3)
Proficient	28 (23)	35 (28)	26 (18)	28 (19)	34 (24)
Basic	33 (31)	44 (41)	47 (42)	41 (38)	35 (33)
Below Basic	31 (39)	19 (28)	24 (38)	25 (39)	28 (40)



# Mississippi

**Public Education Forum of Mississippi**  
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**Background:** The Public Education Forum of Mississippi was chartered in May 1989 by a broad cross-section of business, education and political leaders as a nonprofit, nonpartisan education policy research group. The organization seeks to identify issues and assist in developing policies that will lead to the continuous improvement of Mississippi's public education system.

**Accomplishments:** The Forum provides an effective mechanism for business leaders, educators and elected officials to influence the continued improvement of the state's public schools. In 1995, the Forum created the Center for Educational Analysis to collect, compile and disseminate objective, interagency educational data while identifying and evaluating major public education issues. The Center's research and analysis have influenced state policy on issues such as equity in educational funding, attrition and retention of teachers and administrators, and early childhood education initiatives.

The Forum also sponsors an annual legislative forum that offers leaders in business, government and education the opportunity to discuss key educational issues to be considered by the Mississippi Legislature.

**Work in Progress:** The Forum continues to focus on three issues that are fundamental to the improvement of the state's public education system: (1) the continuous development of the pool of teachers and administrators to meet the personnel demands of public schools; (2) the development of a systematic, statewide approach to early childhood development programs; and (3) collaboration among business and education leaders to promote school-to-work transition programs and the development of essential workplace skills.

**Challenges Ahead:** Many Mississippi school districts continue to face a shortage of qualified educators, despite the state's efforts in recent years to attract and retain a quality cadre of teachers and administrators. In addition, as the supply of low-skill, low-paying jobs in the state diminishes, Mississippi must develop more advanced training for today's workforce to meet the expectations of the technology-driven workplace.

**Student Achievement:** A new state system of assessment and accountability will focus on measuring continuous improvement of individual students and rate the performance of each public school in the state. School personnel who demonstrate extraordinary success will be rewarded. In addition, more demanding requirements for grade promotion have been implemented at the 3rd and 7th grades.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Mississippi public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	3 (6)	1 (2)	0 (2)	0 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	15 (23)	18 (28)	8 (18)	7 (19)	11 (24)
Basic	30 (31)	42 (41)	34 (42)	29 (38)	27 (33)
Below Basic	52 (39)	39 (28)	58 (38)	64 (39)	61 (40)

# Missouri

## Missouri Partnership for Outstanding Schools

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**Background:** The Missouri Partnership for Outstanding Schools was founded by business and education leaders in 1994 to help inform educators, policymakers and the public about the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993, which initiated the school-improvement process in the state. Today, the Partnership is working closely with the Missouri Private Sector Council, a number of Business Roundtable companies and community leaders to improve student learning.

**Accomplishments:** The Outstanding Schools Act, now an accepted part of Missouri's K-12 public education system, continues to be implemented in stages. To foster understanding of and create support for the school reforms resulting from the legislation, the Partnership has produced informational publications and sponsored events. The Partnership has remained neutral on most other educational issues, such as charter schools and vouchers, to maintain a nonpartisan, objective voice.

**Work in Progress:** As a neutral voice for K-12 education reform in Missouri, the Partnership has established the credibility to create a Public Education Report Card (PERC), with the goal of creating demand for educational change at the local level. In its first two years, PERC will compare similar Missouri districts using output measures such as Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) test scores, expenditures per pupil and other indicators of quality. In its third year and beyond, the report card program will make comparisons among individual schools, providing more detailed information for determining where changes are needed.

**Challenges Ahead:** The Partnership's primary challenges continue to involve advocacy and support of the reforms initiated by the Outstanding Schools Act, including the establishment of statewide standards, curriculum frameworks and assessments. These improvements have forced our communities and schools to look for new and better ways of educating our students and to focus on the ultimate goal of enabling Missouri's children to excel in school, the workplace and society.

**Student Achievement:** To measure student achievement more accurately against the state's new, more demanding statewide standards, implementation of the state assessment system continues. Mathematics, science and communication arts assessments now are mandatory for students; the social studies test is available on a voluntary basis; and fine arts and health and physical education tests are under development.

The A+ Schools Program is an effort to help local high schools reduce dropout rates, eliminate the general-track curriculum and provide stronger career pathways for all students. The program encourages local school adoption of more rigorous standards; provides for better coordination among high schools, vocational schools and colleges; and ensures that all graduating students are prepared to pursue advanced education and/or employment. To date, 57 public high schools have participated in the A+ Program, and 29 additional schools are being considered for inclusion. As a result of the program, more than 1,800 high school graduates have qualified for state-paid assistance (full tuition and books) to attend any Missouri public community college or technical school.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Missouri public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	2 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	24 (23)	28 (28)	19 (18)	20 (19)	26 (24)
Basic	34 (31)	47 (41)	46 (42)	42 (38)	36 (33)
Below Basic	37 (39)	24 (28)	34 (38)	36 (39)	36 (40)

# Nebraska

## OMAHA 2000

Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce  
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**Background:** In 1991, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce created OMAHA 2000 to work toward the six education goals outlined in President Bush's America 2000 strategy, making Omaha one of the first communities in the country to develop such an initiative. John Gottschalk, CEO of the *Omaha World-Herald*, has been the chairman of OMAHA 2000 since it was created, and two-thirds of the original steering committee actively participate in the initiative today.

**Accomplishments:** OMAHA 2000 has helped the city make major strides in early childhood education, raising private funding for a \$2 million state-of-the-art early childhood education center and child-care facility that is now under construction on a university campus. The number of nationally accredited child-care centers and in-home child-care facilities in the community has increased from four in 1994 to 19 today. Another 52 centers are working toward accreditation. In 1998, OMAHA 2000 collected baseline data on the quality and availability of child care and education, and we are using that data to set community-wide goals for improvement. On the testing front, OMAHA 2000 sponsored a three-year pilot program to help strengthen workplace skills, using the American College of Testing's Work Keys system. Since 1994, more than 18,000 students in grades 9–12 have taken the Work Keys assessment, and in 1999, the Omaha Public Schools adopted the Work Keys system. In 1998, OMAHA 2000 worked with the Nebraska State Board of Education to adopt academic standards in reading and writing, math, science and social studies. OMAHA 2000 also has been involved in efforts to reduce youth violence and drug abuse by helping create the Minors-in-Possession Diversion Program with the Health and Safety Council and TEAM NEBRASKA, an alternative drug prevention program.

**Work in Progress:** OMAHA 2000 is supporting the department of education's efforts to develop an assessment package aligned to the state standards and an accountability system to be implemented in 2000. We also continue to encourage Nebraska to develop a statewide school finance reporting system. OMAHA 2000 formed a new committee in 1998 to critically review Nebraska's teacher education institutions, advocate for national teacher certification and evaluate professional development. Another committee is developing strategies to encourage citizens to run for school boards.

**Challenges Ahead:** OMAHA 2000 has a key role to play in keeping the lines of communication open and fostering cooperation among business, the department of education and the state legislature on assessment and accountability issues at both the local and state levels. We recognize the strong connection between education and workforce development and are currently reorganizing to ensure better coordination.

**Student Achievement:** Nebraska is in the process of putting in place a statewide assessment system. The first set of assessments will focus on reading and writing, and the state will add assessments in math, science and social studies in subsequent years. The first annual report on results will be issued in Fall 2000. During the past five years, Nebraska students have ranked third or fourth nationally on the ACT and SAT.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Nebraska public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading 4th Grade (1998)	Reading 8th Grade (1998)	Math 4th Grade (1996)	Math 8th Grade (1996)	Science 8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	n/a	n/a	2 (2)	5 (4)	3 (3)
Proficient	n/a	n/a	22 (18)	26 (19)	32 (24)
Basic	n/a	n/a	46 (42)	45 (38)	36 (33)
Below Basic	n/a	n/a	30 (38)	24 (39)	29 (40)

*n/a: data not available*

# Nevada

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**Background:** In 1992, the Nevada Manufacturers Association (NMA), concerned about the quality of Nevada's K–12 system, began to participate in the state legislative process on education issues. At first, NMA was often the only business organization represented in legislative committee hearings on education. The resort, tourism and gaming industries, which employ nearly 40 percent of the state's workforce, have not been strong supporters of higher standards and quality measures in the K–12 education system. Today, the construction and mining industries and several chambers of commerce have joined NMA in working to improve the quality of K–12 education. Business involvement is still small, but it is growing.

**Accomplishments:** A small group of business leaders has communicated the magnitude of Nevada's education problems to the legislative leadership, particularly on the senate side. The state has passed a weak charter school bill; changes to strengthen it have been proposed for the 1999 session. In 1998, the legislature also passed a massive bill that paved the way for developing standards in math, English and science over the course of 18 months. Standards in social studies, arts, physical education and technology are due to be completed by 2000. Nevada also is in the process of developing an assessment system.

**Work in Progress:** The NMA is supporting a bill before the state Legislature that would change the elected state board of education — currently dominated by members of the teachers' union — to an appointed board and require representation from the business community. The same bill would make the standards council permanent and overhaul the teacher standards committee. The teachers' union has considerable influence in the state assembly, so there are serious doubts about the fate of this bill and other reform measures. Other bills address public school choice and vouchers, but committee action is unlikely. The business and education communities are discussing school-to-work initiatives, but the legislature is unlikely to approve state funding for school-to-work, due to budget constraints.

**Challenges Ahead:** On the SAT, Nevada students dropped from number 37 of 51 states and the District of Columbia in 1991 to number 45 by 1996, where we still rank. The state's 1997 education reform bill required full implementation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), but we do not yet have reliable indicators of current standings. Although Nevada's rate of economic growth is among the highest in the nation, so is our high school dropout rate. The percentage of students going on to postsecondary education or training is among the lowest in the country, but Nevada's higher education institutions spend more on remedial education than many other states.

**Student Achievement:** The department of education has a bill before the state Legislature that will delay testing on the new standards for at least three years. The state board continues to argue over the number of credits required for graduation instead of focusing on performance on the standards test. Nevada's scores on the Terra Nova are suspect because of the belief that our schools exclude more students from standardized testing than other states do. Nevada's high dropout rate eliminates many potential poor scores on the 10th-grade test. Our own 11th-grade proficiency test — a graduation requirement — is weak in math (the material is considered to be 8th-grade level), but the failure rate in the first year of testing was about 50 percent. However, recent scores rose modestly.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Nevada public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	4 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	n/a	n/a
Proficient	17 (23)	23 (28)	13 (18)	n/a	n/a
Basic	32 (31)	45 (41)	43 (42)	n/a	n/a
Below Basic	47 (39)	31 (28)	43 (38)	n/a	n/a

*n/a: data not available*

# New Hampshire

## Business & Industry Association of New Hampshire

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**Background:** The Business & Industry Association (BIA) has been focusing on continuous improvement in New Hampshire's school systems for many years. In 1991, the BIA published *What Should They Be Able To Do?*, a report that stressed the need to connect learning in school with the skills needed for the working world. The report also defined very specific roles and responsibilities for students, parents, faculty and administrators in the education reform movement. In 1993, the New Hampshire Business Roundtable on Education (NHBRE) was formed in partnership with the Business & Industry Association and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation to focus on the continuous improvement of our schools and the critical need to make high student achievement a local priority for all schools and communities.

**Accomplishments:** In 1994, the New Hampshire Education Improvement and Assessment Program (NHEIAP) — with the help of NHBRE — initiated curriculum standards and assessment testing in grades 3, 6 and 10. In 1996, the NHBRE and BIA merged to step up their continuous improvement efforts. First, NHBRE published *Gathering of Lessons Learned — The New Hampshire School Improvement Program*, research that continues to inform school-improvement efforts. During that same year, the BIA was heavily involved in the implementation of a statewide school-to-work program and published *An Agenda for Continued Economic Opportunity in New Hampshire*, which set education accountability as a priority for the state.

**Work in Progress:** New Hampshire currently is responding to a court challenge to the funding formula and the definition of “adequacy” for our K–12 schools. The BIA continues to advocate for the legislative adoption of stronger accountability standards. Outside of legislative initiatives, we are focusing our attention on the links between successful schools and successful communities. Current initiatives include the piloting of competency-based transcripts; benchmarking communities for accountability measures; improving teacher certification and recertification standards, adding work-based experience as a standard for all teachers; sustaining the statewide school-to-work initiative; linking the workforce investment initiative directly to secondary and postsecondary schools; and direct participation in Gov. Shaheen's Best Schools Initiative.

**Challenges Ahead:** New Hampshire will continue to struggle with the funding challenge, which has shifted public attention away from accountability and curriculum standards toward school-finance issues. Sustaining strong business support for schools and school accountability initiatives will become an increasingly important issue, due to turmoil caused by the current legal issues.

We also need to document evidence of change at the local school level that results from policy initiatives at the state level — a difficult task, given the highly contentious political climate of late. The challenging issues of local control over school curricula, appropriate professional development activities for educators and integration of student achievement efforts also persist. Amidst these issues, our message will continue to link a strong economy with a strong education system. Hence, our message: Successful schools lead to successful communities.

**Student Achievement:** NHEIAP began providing baseline information on student performance in 1994. However, we are only just beginning to use the information gained from NHEIAP to modify curriculum design. Progress is under way, but we have a long road ahead of us.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for New Hampshire public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading 4th Grade (1998)	Reading 8th Grade (1998)	Math 4th Grade (1996)	Math 8th Grade (1996)	Science 8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	7 (6)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Proficient	31 (23)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Basic	37 (31)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Below Basic	25 (39)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

*n/a: data not available*

*Note: The New Hampshire Education Improvement and Assessment Program tests at grades 3, 6 and 10.*



# New Jersey

**Business Coalition for Educational Excellence**  
 New Jersey Chamber of Commerce  
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**Background:** The Business Coalition for Educational Excellence (BCEE) was launched at the National Education Summit in 1996. Arthur Ryan, CEO of Prudential, has provided leadership since that time. Today, the BCEE is working with approximately 70 businesses in the state on a number of program and policy initiatives that support the 27 goals and objectives established at the Summit.

**Accomplishments:** The BCEE has been involved in developing a school-to-career policy that promotes rigorous standards and the teaching of relevant workplace skills in all grade levels. We also have been working to increase the role of technology in education through the Tech Corps New Jersey program, which has placed business volunteers in more than half of the state's school districts to help educators integrate technology into the teaching and learning process. In addition, the BCEE worked with the state department of education to support local teacher technology training centers. During the first year of operation, more than 23,000 teachers received training in computer software.

The BCEE also has strived to spur school-improvement efforts at the local level, awarding \$25,000 in grants to four school districts to implement outstanding strategic plans for workforce readiness initiatives. And in partnership with The College of New Jersey, the BCEE is using a \$1.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to develop contextual curricula in technology education for K–5 students.

**Work in Progress:** The BCEE is committed to recruiting 200 businesses to use high school transcripts in the hiring process in a three-county pilot initiative that also will test an alternative student record format.

**Challenges Ahead:** The BCEE will continue to emphasize the infusion of workforce readiness skills into the teaching and learning process, focusing on professional development to help educators align teaching strategies with the needs of today's workplace. The BCEE also will continue to promote the use of technology in the classroom and begin to address the issues of preservice education and accountability.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for New Jersey public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	n/a	n/a	3 (2)	n/a	n/a
Proficient	n/a	n/a	22 (18)	n/a	n/a
Basic	n/a	n/a	43 (42)	n/a	n/a
Below Basic	n/a	n/a	32 (38)	n/a	n/a

*n/a: data not available*

# New York

**The Business Council of New York State, Inc.**  
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**Background:** Formed in 1980, The Business Council is New York state's leading business-supported association. Our 4,500 members include local and regional Chambers of Commerce and other trade associations, as well as large and small businesses. While The Business Council's agenda encompasses all issues related to improving New York's business climate, education reform is our most important long-term priority.

**Accomplishments:** The Business Council has been a strong supporter of education reform through the years, concentrating our efforts on the public reporting of performance data. In 1988, we issued a report entitled *Measuring Up*, which began our advocacy of school report cards for every public school in the state. In 1996, New York became one of the first states to require uniform school-by-school report cards. The Council also led the charge for higher standards for all students, after discovering that the state's minimum graduation standards were not providing the skills needed for young people to succeed in entry-level jobs. The Council also has pushed for charter school legislation, which recently passed during the 1998 session.

**Work in Progress:** The higher standards and new graduation requirements for all students currently are under fire, and thus we are working to maintain public support for these reforms. As well, we are focusing on improving the state's accountability system — a vital element in the long-term success of the education system — advocating that students be given a way out of low-performing schools and that schools be recognized and rewarded for improved student achievement.

We also are working to secure extra funding to help disadvantaged students meet the higher standards, increase opportunities for professional development, step up teacher certification requirements and secure more local control over administration of new reforms.

**Challenges Ahead:** One of our most difficult challenges in the near future will be to maintain high expectations as the system struggles to help all students meet the new standards. In addition, developing an accountability system with incentives and rewards for educators will be crucial to success.

**Student Achievement:** Statewide scores have improved on the state's English and Math Regents Exams, which, starting in 2000, students must pass in order to graduate. In 1998, more than 73 percent of all seniors passed the English Regents Exam, and 70 percent passed the Regents Math Exam. While not all students currently are achieving to acceptable levels, there still is time for improvement before the new graduation requirements take effect; nonetheless, a great deal of work remains to bring all students up to high performance levels.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for New York public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	2 (2)	2 (2)	3 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	24 (23)	32 (28)	18 (18)	19 (19)	25 (24)
Basic	33 (31)	44 (41)	44 (42)	39 (38)	30 (33)
Below Basic	38 (39)	22 (28)	36 (38)	39 (39)	43 (40)

# North Carolina

**Education: Everybody's Business Coalition**  
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**Background:** The Education: Everybody's Business Coalition was created in 1994 through the support of national Business Roundtable members. It has expanded its support base since that time. The Coalition now consists of six organizations: North Carolina Citizens for Business & Industry, the state's largest business organization; the North Carolina Business Committee for Education, representing over 100 businesses in North Carolina; the Council of Local Chambers of Commerce; the North Carolina School Boards Association; the North Carolina Association of School Administrators; and the Public School Forum, an educational public-policy center.

**Accomplishments:** Since its inception, the Coalition has provided a collaborative voice of support for increasing student performance, driving educational standards upward, focusing resources on low-performing and demographically challenged schools, improving the quality of the educational workforce, and putting in place meaningful accountability incentives for high-performing schools and strong consequences for low-performing schools.

**Work in Progress:** With Coalition support, North Carolina is set to implement demanding grade-promotion policies in elementary and middle schools and rigorous graduation policies at the high school level. These graduation policies will ensure that high school diplomas signify mastery of the basics and that assessments at the secondary level measure both academic skills and employability. The Coalition also is pushing for increased education funding that will give all children an opportunity to meet these new standards.

**Challenges Ahead:** Based on previous years' performance data, thousands of young people might not be able to meet the state's more demanding standards in the years ahead. Those most likely to fall behind tend to be from low-income families, a large proportion of which are minority families. To remedy this pattern, the Coalition is taking a lead role in advocating for remediation and enrichment programs focused on disadvantaged young people. Recruiting and retaining quality teachers in low-performing schools also are growing problems; in response, the Coalition is working with policymakers to create incentives that will increase the number of capable teachers working in the state's most demanding schools.

**Student Achievement:** After over a decade of concentrated school-improvement efforts, North Carolina is able to point to strong, measurable gains in student performance. Last year, schools registered the strongest gains on record on the state's standardized testing program; these gains led to \$116 million in financial rewards for educators in high-performing schools as part of North Carolina's accountability system. On national tests, North Carolina has met or exceeded national averages on NAEP tests in core areas such as mathematics and reading. And recently, North Carolina was cited by the National Education Goals Panel, along with Texas, for having made the greatest progress toward reaching national goals.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for North Carolina public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	6 (6)	2 (2)	2 (2)	3 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	22 (23)	29 (28)	19 (18)	17 (19)	22 (24)
Basic	34 (31)	45 (41)	43 (42)	36 (38)	32 (33)
Below Basic	38 (39)	24 (28)	36 (38)	44 (39)	44 (40)



# Ohio

## Ohio Business Roundtable

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**Background:** The Ohio Business Roundtable was created in 1992, very much in the image of The Business Roundtable. Sustained leadership was provided by John Ong, then CEO of BFGoodrich and chairman of the national BRT, who was instrumental in galvanizing Ohio's business leaders around systemic education reform and a range of other issues affecting competitiveness. Today, the Ohio BRT consists of 80 CEOs, with Procter & Gamble's John Pepper, TRW's Joe Gorman, Ameritech's Jackie Woods, The Limited's Les Wexner, Ashland's Fred Brothers, Battelle's Doug Olesen, The Timken Company's Tim Timken and JM Smucker Company's Tim Smucker playing key leadership roles in advancing the standards-driven education agenda.

**Accomplishments:** We are advancing reform in Ohio along several parallel tracks. In 1994, the Ohio BRT helped create Ohio's BEST (Building Excellent Schools for Today and the 21st Century), regarded today as one of the broadest and deepest education reform coalitions in the nation. One of the keys to our success is that all the key players — business, labor, education, government, social service, civil rights and religious organizations — all are focused on a reform agenda that includes each of the national BRT's nine essential components. Through advocacy efforts and strong leadership by former Gov. Voinovich, Ohio has made substantial progress in capacity building — most notably in early childhood education, school technology and professional development for teachers. One of BEST's key initiatives is its annual search for and celebration of best practices in education. In 1998, the Ohio BRT released a report in conjunction with American College Testing that, for the first time ever, documents the real nature of the skills gap facing Ohio's high school seniors. This report provides a baseline measure with which we can assess Ohio's progress in the years to come.

**Work in Progress:** Recently, the Ohio BRT looked to Achieve and the national BRT for an objective, outside assessment of Ohio's progress toward systemic reform. The resulting report provides a roadmap for Ohio's ongoing initiatives and shows that the state has made considerable improvements in education. High school exit competencies currently are being developed. Rigorous content standards, by grade level and subject, will be defined explicitly and mapped to the exit competencies; these new standards will replace the state's current, rather vague model curricula. School report cards at the district and building levels have been issued for the first time and have served to raise public concern over student achievement. In addition to these standards and accountability initiatives, the Ohio BRT continues its advocacy for capacity building. Specifically, we are helping to create a world-class Leadership Academy for school principals. And, with the end of social promotion, the organization now is helping Gov. Taft recruit 20,000 reading tutors to help classroom teachers, parents and children meet Ohio's new "Fourth Grade Guarantee" to ensure that every child is reading at or above grade level by the end of 4th grade.

**Challenges Ahead:** Ohio's ongoing school-finance suit continues to cast a long shadow over the state's systemic reform initiative. Despite the efforts of Ohio's political leadership to resolve the "equity and adequacy" funding crisis, the situation is highly polarized into at least two camps: those who believe the state should commit billions more dollars to schools and those who believe that schools need to show greater results with the money they already have.

Ohio also needs to strengthen its accountability system to provide tangible consequences that are tied to results. Alignment of the standards and accountability systems will be crucial to meeting this challenge. Finally, the whole reform effort must adopt a sophisticated communications strategy to mobilize the support of parents, educators and policymakers and neutralize the extreme right and other opponents of reform.

**Student Achievement:** Student test scores on Ohio's proficiency tests show modest and sustained increases from year to year. Still, far too many students are being left behind. On the Ohio BRT's recent skills gap initiative, only one in 14 high school seniors, or less than 7 percent, is leaving high school well prepared to meet the skill-level requirements of entry-level jobs in Ohio's high-growth industries. Plans are under way for Ohio to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress beginning in 2000.

No data for performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress is available for Ohio.

# Oklahoma

## Business Council on Education

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**Background:** The Education and Business Coalition was established by The State Chamber of Oklahoma in 1988 as the foundation for its education department. Frank McPherson, then CEO of Kerr-McGee Oil Company, served as chairman and was assisted by numerous business and education leaders representing all areas of the state. In 1994, the coalition was restructured as the Business Council on Education. Members include representatives of small and large Oklahoma businesses in addition to the chancellor of higher education, state superintendent of public education, state director of vocational-technical education and the secretary of education.

**Accomplishments:** The Council began its intense and comprehensive efforts to achieve major statewide education reform in 1988. After months of tenacious effort, Oklahoma's major statewide reform legislation was passed in 1990. The business community then led a successful effort to block the repeal of that legislation. In April 1999, key business leaders representing The State Chamber, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber and Metro-Tulsa Chamber of Commerce formed the Tri-Chamber Task Force on Education. The 16-member task force and its nine-member staff team developed a short-term strategic plan for education reform in the state. Although the 1999 legislative session was just weeks away from adjournment, The State Chamber assumed a leadership role and was successful in achieving passage of three of the four priorities proposed in the plan.

**Work in Progress:** Much of the Council's current work is focused on drastically changing current state funding mechanisms to support higher student achievement. One major goal of this initiative is a thorough examination and simplification of the state funding formula to ensure that innovation and local efforts to achieve excellence are not stifled or penalized.

The Council also will step up its support of workforce development programs and work to get more chambers of commerce involved in local school-improvement efforts. In addition, we will make accountability for educators and improved and expanded professional development for teachers our front-burner issues.

**Challenges Ahead:** The Council believes that developing a master plan for increased funding for the state's public schools is an urgent priority. We also must work to improve the low test scores that continue to haunt many schools and increase parent involvement in local reform efforts.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Oklahoma public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	1 (2)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Proficient	25 (23)	28 (28)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Basic	36 (31)	51 (41)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Below Basic	34 (39)	20 (28)	n/a	n/a	n/a

*n/a: data not available*

# Oregon

**Oregon Business Council**  
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**Background:** For nearly a decade, the Oregon Business Council (OBC), an association of CEOs, has played a vital role in promoting standards-based school reform and school-to-work initiatives in Oregon. Through research and analysis, policy advocacy, and active partnerships with state and local school leaders, OBC has helped promote Oregon's goal of achieving the best schools in America.

**Accomplishments:** The OBC, through the work of its Education Task Force, has been a champion for the Education Act of the 21st Century, which created standards and assessments for all K–12 students, culminating in the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM). Implementation of the standards and assessments is well under way. Scores on tests are improving, and the first group of students will be eligible to receive their CIMs this year. In addition, OBC has taken the lead to encourage employer participation in school-to-work activities by creating *Oregon Worksite 21*, a consulting arm designed to help employers participate in school-to-work programs.

**Work in Progress:** Our current focus is on developing a system that ties school budget funding to performance expectations. The OBC is working with the governor, Legislature and school community to design and implement a Quality Education Model, which will include individual school reports on budgets, performance and practices.

**Challenges Ahead:** We will continue to communicate our vision for excellent, accountable schools and participate in policy forums as the state's standards and assessments are refined. At the same time, we will participate in the design of an accountability system that will create incentives for substantial school improvement. Finally, we will help form partnerships between Oregon businesses and schools to provide substantial work-based learning opportunities.

**Student Achievement:** Oregon has had an assessment system in place for reading and math for nearly a decade, and scores are improving. With the implementation of the CIM this year, schools are focused on academic performance more than ever.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Oregon public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	2 (2)	2 (2)	4 (4)	3 (3)
Proficient	23 (23)	31 (28)	19 (18)	22 (19)	29 (24)
Basic	33 (31)	45 (41)	44 (42)	41 (38)	36 (33)
Below Basic	39 (39)	22 (28)	35 (38)	33 (39)	32 (40)

# Pennsylvania

## Pennsylvania Business Roundtable

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**Background:** The Pennsylvania Business Roundtable is an association of CEOs from large Pennsylvania businesses. The Roundtable's central purpose is to work with policymakers and community leaders to develop public policy that will help Pennsylvania businesses compete in the world economy and provide a high quality of life for the state's citizens.

Pennsylvania's business leaders believe that all high school graduates entering the workforce should have the academic knowledge, skills and work habits required in today's high-performance workplaces. The challenges of global competition have changed business and industry conditions dramatically, and Roundtable members believe Pennsylvania's education system also must change to ensure the future success of our students. Toward this end, the Roundtable's role in the school-improvement campaign is to advocate the implementation of broad-based public education reform.

**Accomplishments:** The Roundtable has been a long-time advocate of statewide academic standards. Early in 1999, the state board of education approved legislation that includes standards in reading/writing and mathematics and sets the framework for statewide assessments. The legislation also calls for future standards to be developed in science/technology and humanities/arts. The academic standards and assessments will be mandatory for all public school students. Statewide assessments will cover reading/writing and mathematics and will be tied directly to the standards.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted charter school legislation several years ago that enables parents, teachers and other community stakeholders to play a more direct role in the local education planning and delivery process. Since then, numerous charter schools have been established across the Commonwealth.

**Work in Progress:** Pennsylvania's governor and the state department of education have the following initiatives on their agendas for the coming months.

- **Academic Recovery Act:** This proposal is aimed at school districts that are "academically bankrupt." These districts would be able to apply for exemption from state mandates and thus would be allowed to replace teachers and administrators. Students also would be provided with a "super voucher" of the state's share of per-pupil funding in their districts.
- **Voucher Pilot Program:** This is a proposed five-year pilot program to offer Education Opportunity Grants to lower-income families in six counties and an additional nine communities.
- **School District Empowerment Act:** This legislation would allow school districts to designate themselves as charter school districts and therefore receive relief from some state mandates.
- **Professional development legislation:** This legislation would require teachers to obtain a specific number of credits in preapproved continuing education programs in order to retain their teaching certificates.

**Challenges Ahead:** The Roundtable envisions a system that prepares children to learn and provides a safe and conducive learning environment for all students. We also believe that the state must establish an effective accountability system for educators; facilitate professional development for teachers; and promote continuous, lifelong learning.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Pennsylvania public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	n/a	n/a	1 (2)	n/a	n/a
Proficient	n/a	n/a	19 (18)	n/a	n/a
Basic	n/a	n/a	48 (42)	n/a	n/a
Below Basic	n/a	n/a	32 (38)	n/a	n/a

*n/a: data not available*

# Rhode Island

## Business Education Roundtable

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**Background:** In July 1998, Rhode Island became the 43rd state to establish a business/education partnership. The Business Education Roundtable (BER) was created through the efforts of Gary Sasse of the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council; Stanley Goldstein, chairman of the board of CVS Corporation; and Ronald Wolk, chairman of the board of *Education Week*. Today, the BER has 30 member CEOs and three active subcommittees.

**Accomplishments:** Creating a new organization is a tremendous challenge. Recognizing this, the BER has spent much of its time to date creating a solid foundation on which to conduct its reform efforts. During its first three months, the BER concentrated on creating a vision and developing a strategy to engage Rhode Island CEOs in the school-improvement initiative. In October 1998, during its charter meeting, the BER set goals for the organization, named an executive committee and obtained a commitment from CEOs to stay focused on improving student achievement. Since then, the BER has been working with a marketing firm to develop public relations strategies.

**Work in Progress:** In March 1999, the BER announced a major initiative, *Conversations with Principals: CEO Insights & Perspectives on School Leadership*, a program that will bring 30 CEOs into 90 Rhode Island schools to interview principals about the challenges they face as school leaders. Using a research instrument developed in conjunction with education advocates and representative groups from across the state, the CEOs will gather relevant information about schools' needs, work on establishing relationships between the BER and educators, and emphasize the importance of improved leadership in schools.

**Challenges Ahead:** Although Rhode Island is the smallest state geographically, it still features a complex political landscape. The BER will face the challenge of bringing together reform efforts directed by the department of education, the school-to-career office under the department of labor, and the various education co-ops and private-industry council initiatives. The BER also will be challenged to work with the state's labor unions, which maintain a strong political influence. To accomplish its goals, the BER will need to educate business leaders on the importance of improving schools and give them options for involvement in the reform movement. As well, the BER must focus its energy on publicizing the organization and establishing credibility with educators and the public. It likely will take several years for the BER to become firmly established, and ongoing financial support is critical to long-term success.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Rhode Island public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	7 (6)	2 (2)	1 (2)	3 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	25 (23)	28 (28)	16 (18)	17 (19)	24 (24)
Basic	33 (31)	44 (41)	44 (42)	40 (38)	33 (33)
Below Basic	35 (39)	26 (28)	39 (38)	40 (39)	41 (40)



# South Carolina

**South Carolina Chamber  
Excellence in Education Council**  
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**Background:** The South Carolina Chamber Excellence in Education Council was established in 1998 as the next generation of a business advisory group affiliated with the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce. For the last decade, business leaders in the state have been very involved in education policy by providing independent, action-oriented research. Now that the Council is part of the state Chamber, we are positioned to have a greater voice in shaping state education policy through use of the Chamber's lobbying resources. Today, the Council consists of 24 CEOs who are committed to education improvement.

**Accomplishments:** In 1998, Council members united in a bipartisan effort to pass the South Carolina Education Accountability Act (EAA). While almost every piece of education legislation passed in South Carolina over the last 10 years has been shaped in some way by the Chamber, Council members view the EAA as their most significant accomplishment. Business leaders from the Council were appointed as members of the governor's PASS (Performance and Accountability Standards for Schools) Commission, which was established to develop guidelines for a statewide accountability system. This commission issued a report outlining 10 recommendations that served as the foundation for the EAA legislation. While the PASS Commission disbanded after presenting its report to the governor, these business leaders worked diligently to see the recommendations become law.

**Work in Progress:** The Council is intent on continuous academic improvement in South Carolina. Council members are developing an integrated approach to the accountability issue that includes involving the public in education improvement. In addition, the Council is working to form partnerships between businesses and low-performing schools to put private-sector assistance to use where it is needed most.

**Challenges Ahead:** One very positive consequence of these partnerships between businesses and schools has been the realization of how complex and numerous are the factors that impact academic achievement. One challenge that lies ahead is to define and prioritize policies that address those factors.

**Student Achievement:** In spring 1999, South Carolina completed field testing the new Palmetto Academic Challenge Tests (PACT) in language arts and mathematics, which will establish baseline data for future administrations of the tests. Once the board of education gives final approval to new standards in science and social studies, additional PACT tests will be created, piloted and field tested in those subjects. Beginning in 2001, schools will be required to issue report cards to inform the public on student performance on the PACT tests.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for South Carolina public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	4 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	2 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	18 (23)	21 (28)	11 (18)	12 (19)	16 (24)
Basic	33 (31)	43 (41)	36 (42)	34 (38)	28 (33)
Below Basic	45 (39)	35 (28)	52 (38)	52 (39)	55 (40)

# Tennessee

**Tennessee Business Roundtable**  
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**Background:** The Tennessee Business Roundtable was established in 1983 to focus on key issues that affect quality of life and the state's business environment. While the Roundtable does address a number of business-related issues, excellence in education has always been at the heart and soul of our organization's advocacy agenda. Currently, the Roundtable consists of more than 170 top business executives from across the state who share our commitment to education reform.

**Accomplishments:** In 1992, Tennessee passed an education reform act that created the 21st Century Schools Program. With this legislation came a new funding formula, known as the Basic Education Plan, to provide equitable and adequate funding to both rural and urban districts. This funding formula now is fully implemented and has provided funds to the state's school districts to hire new teachers and reduce class sizes. Additionally, funds for textbooks, capital improvements and transportation have been increased. In return for the increased funding, the Tennessee Legislature now has the authority to hold school districts accountable for student performance.

**Work in Progress:** Since 1994, all students have been required to complete an academically challenging core curriculum. In addition, students are required to pass exit exams prior to graduation from high school. Each school district now is expected to meet state-mandated performance goals in the areas of dropout, promotion and attendance rates; proficiency in test scores; and yearly "value-added" assessments.

**Challenges Ahead:** Tennessee's primary future challenge will be to ensure that we continue to progress toward the goals of our 1992 education reform legislation — raising student performance standards and implementing a system of accountability for results. By 2001, school districts must reach state-mandated guidelines on class size or face losing state funds. And, beginning in 2005, Tennessee's high school seniors will have to pass end-of-course tests in mathematics, English and science before graduating. Although these deadlines are drawing near and standards still are not being met, we must resist any attempt to back away from our commitments.

The Roundtable also will continue to support Tennessee's school-to-career initiative, Education Edge, which strives to set higher standards and create greater ties between classroom learning and workplace skills. We will continue to serve as a strong advocate of school choice and work to pass charter school legislation.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Tennessee public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	1 (2)	1 (2)	2 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	20 (23)	25 (28)	16 (18)	13 (19)	20 (24)
Basic	33 (31)	45 (41)	41 (42)	38 (38)	31 (33)
Below Basic	42 (39)	29 (28)	42 (38)	47 (39)	47 (40)



# Texas

## Texas Business and Education Coalition

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## Texans for Education

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**Background:** The Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) and Texans for Education (TFE) were formed in 1989 in response to the national call to action to improve the U.S. education system. TBEC provides a mechanism through which business leaders can work with educators to improve the public school system. By creating these partnerships, the Coalition seeks to influence the direction of state education policy and stimulate local school-improvement activities. TBEC is a constant presence and a major force in the Texas education reform movement.

TFE is a business-only organization that exists to lobby the legislature and state board of education, providing an independent business voice on education matters.

**Accomplishments:** With the support of business leaders through TBEC and TFE, Texas has put into place a series of policy changes over the past decade that address most of the objectives in the BRT's nine-point agenda.

In 1991, all Texas school districts were required to develop a plan for the implementation of site-based decisionmaking that brought authority over the educational process down to the local school level.

In 1993, the Legislature established annual testing of students and the nation's strongest public-school accountability system. As well, TBEC adopted the Texas Scholars Program to encourage students to complete a rigorous program of study in high school.

In 1995, the Texas Legislature rewrote the entire Texas Education Code, including provisions that enhanced the safety and order of public schools, decentralized authority to local school districts, and authorized the state board of education and local school boards to establish charter schools.

In 1997, the Legislature enacted Gov. George W. Bush's Texas Reading Initiative, which provided resources to strengthen teacher in-service training and included a TBEC recommendation that all school districts be required to assess the reading development of kindergarten and 1st- and 2nd-grade students. TBEC also was involved heavily in the development of new student learning standards that were adopted by the state board of education.

**Work in Progress:** TBEC and TFE are seeking enactment of legislation that will strengthen these initiatives further, including:

- Gov. Bush's initiative to end "social promotion" in Texas' public schools;
- additional student testing at the high school level, including a new 11th-grade exit test that would evaluate student readiness for further education and work; and
- college financial-aid programs that would require students to complete the rigorous high school coursework of the Texas Scholars Program.

TBEC is working with state leaders to organize a comprehensive, community-based initiative to improve high school performance. This initiative will pull together several separate programs in an effort to increase high school graduation rates, encourage rigorous course taking, and prepare more students for success in college and high-skilled careers.

To ensure the most efficient use of resources, TBEC currently is developing a model of financial accountability for Texas public schools. We also are seeking to adjust our K-12 school-improvement activities to ensure more successful student transitions to postsecondary education, the military and the workplace.

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**Challenges Ahead:** Texas is a vast state, and likewise, the performance levels among schools ranges far and wide. So that all students can achieve at high levels, we are seeking ways to raise the performance of all schools and districts throughout the state. TBEC is working with a number of organizations to develop support mechanisms to help school districts apply the principles and methods of Total Quality Management to their organizational improvement activities.

**Student Achievement:** Students have shown dramatic improvement in performance as measured by the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills tests, which form the basis for the state's accountability system. The performance of minority students and students from low-income families has improved more quickly than that of their more advantaged counterparts, indicating that efforts to raise the academic achievement of disadvantaged students are yielding results. These improvements also can be seen in the outstanding performance of Texas students on the math and reading tests of the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Texas public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>
	<b>4th Grade (1998)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1998)</b>	<b>4th Grade (1996)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1996)</b>	<b>8th Grade (1996)</b>
Advanced	5 (6)	1 (2)	3 (2)	3 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	24 (23)	27 (28)	22 (18)	18 (19)	22 (24)
Basic	34 (31)	48 (41)	44 (42)	38 (38)	32 (33)
Below Basic	37 (39)	24 (28)	31 (38)	41 (39)	45 (40)

# Utah

**Utah Partners in Education**  
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**Background:** In 1990, Utah Partners in Education was created to foster collaboration among business, education and government to strengthen Utah's education, training and research systems — thereby enhancing the state's economy and quality of life for its citizens. The Board of Trustees of Utah Partners in Education now consists of 18 business executive officers and 18 education and government administrators, including legislators.

**Accomplishments:** Utah Partners in Education is recognized as the statewide facilitator for partnerships among business, education and government. Today, every K–12 public school, applied technology center, college and university in the state has at least one such partnership. In 1996, a study found that 83 percent of the state's principals and 73 percent of the state's business executives felt that their partnerships were having a positive impact on student achievement. Utah Partners in Education also provides oversight for the statewide School-to-Careers initiative, which has greatly expanded the scope of these partnerships. In face-to-face interviews with Utah employers, 90 percent reported that workforce issues were their primary challenge. When asked to define those workforce issues, 56 percent said that a lack of workforce skills was the biggest problem and that they felt it would get worse in the future. Nine out of 10 employers said they preferred to address this problem through partnerships with educators.

**Work in Progress:** Utah Partners in Education now is focusing on a small number of partnership models that have proven to be successful in Utah's reform movement. We also are developing an awareness campaign to assist Utah's employers in meeting the need for improved workforce skills.

**Challenges Ahead:** As Utah focuses on making education its top priority, the challenge given by state leaders is to show the "victory" or results of increased budget funding, so that taxpayers will be willing to provide continuing support. Another challenge will be to define a set of academic standards against which to measure progress in student achievement.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Utah public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	5 (6)	2 (2)	2 (2)	3 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	23 (23)	29 (28)	21 (18)	21 (19)	30 (24)
Basic	34 (31)	46 (41)	46 (42)	46 (38)	38 (33)
Below Basic	38 (39)	23 (28)	31 (38)	30 (39)	30 (40)

# Vermont

## Vermont Business Roundtable

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**Background:** Composed of CEOs from 115 Vermont companies, the Vermont Business Roundtable (VBR) works in partnership with public leaders to solve complex problems affecting the social and economic well-being of the state.

**Accomplishments:** VBR's first education report, released in 1989, asserted that building a superior education system is essential for economic vitality and continuing a high quality of life. Since then, VBR has aggressively pursued the development of high academic standards, statewide assessment of all students and public accountability for results, all of which now have been implemented. VBR also has published a number of policy papers on topics such as school choice, teacher compensation and school finance. And we distributed more than 150,000 copies of a VBR pamphlet on employers' expectations of high school graduates to secondary school students throughout the state. Since 1993, VBR has recognized outstanding schools through its annual Public School Medallion Award.

**Work in Progress:** VBR continues to support school choice, teacher testing and teacher evaluation that includes consideration of student achievement. VBR has sponsored three Leadership Strategy Sessions with Gov. Howard Dean on standards, assessment and accountability, and a fourth session is being planned for fall 1999. VBR also is developing a major initiative for the year 2000 on early childhood reading.

**Challenges Ahead:** Achieving the high standards that Vermont has set for students is our primary challenge. This long-term effort will require (1) sustaining the momentum and commitment of educators, community members, elected officials and business leaders and (2) adopting more effective strategies for communicating assessment results and their significance for students, parents, educators and employers.

**Student Achievement:** 1999 marks the second year of the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment System, which assesses student knowledge and skills in mathematics, science, early reading and English language arts and includes both standardized and portfolio assessments. Results from these assessments will be reported to the public and used in the development of local action plans aimed at improving student learning. On the 1998 tests, students' scores revealed that: 76 percent of 2nd-graders are reading at or above grade level; 4th- and 8th-grade students have made significant gains in all areas of mathematics; performance of 4th-, 8th- and 10th-graders in writing and writing conventions varied a great deal; and 34 percent of 6th-graders and 9 percent of 11th-graders met or exceeded the science standards.

In 1996, Vermont scored above the national averages in both science and mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Vermont public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	n/a	n/a	3 (2)	4 (4)	3 (3)
Proficient	n/a	n/a	20 (18)	23 (19)	31 (24)
Basic	n/a	n/a	44 (42)	45 (38)	36 (33)
Below Basic	n/a	n/a	33 (38)	28 (39)	30 (40)

*n/a: data not available*

# Virginia

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**Background:** The Virginia Business Council (VBC) is composed of the CEOs of Virginia's largest business entities. The Council meets semiannually to discuss and develop positions on various issues that affect Virginia's business environment. In the early 1990s, the VBC commissioned a study, *Virginia Education Gap Analysis*, to identify areas where improvement is needed in Virginia's schools. The study's findings led VBC member companies to form the Virginians for a World Class Education coalition in 1993. This group worked with Virginia officials to undertake comprehensive public education reform focused on standards and accountability.

**Accomplishments:** In 1995, the state began to implement significant reform measures by adopting rigorous Standards of Learning (SOLs) for students in each grade. Since then, the state also has initiated an assessment program aligned with the SOLs and has adopted new Standards of Accreditation, which incorporate results from the assessments into high school graduation requirements and accreditation criteria for individual schools. According to the Commonwealth of Virginia's Web site, "Virginia's new SOLs have received national acclaim for their clarity, content, and measurability. More than 20 other states have used Virginia's SOLs as a model for their own standards to some degree or another."

In spring 1999, for the first time, all schools were required to provide performance report cards that reported on a number of quality indicators to parents.

**Work in Progress:** Current school-improvement efforts in Virginia are focused on four primary objectives: (1) raising academic standards through the SOLs; (2) measuring student achievement and progress against the SOLs through the state's assessment program; (3) holding schools accountable for student achievement through the new Standards of Accreditation; and (4) communicating with parents, taxpayers and the community through school performance report cards.

**Challenges Ahead:** The most significant challenge facing Virginia schools, teachers and students is determining how to measure student performance and progress on the SOL tests fairly and accurately.

**Student Achievement:** The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Virginia public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	6 (6)	3 (2)	2 (2)	3 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	24 (23)	30 (28)	17 (18)	18 (19)	25 (24)
Basic	34 (31)	45 (41)	43 (42)	37 (38)	32 (33)
Below Basic	36 (39)	22 (28)	38 (38)	42 (39)	41 (40)

# Washington

## Washington Roundtable

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## Partnership for Learning

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**Background:** The Washington Roundtable was created in 1983 and has focused on education reform as one of its priority policy issues from the beginning. Leaders at the Roundtable helped create the Partnership for Learning in late 1994, after the passage of sweeping school-reform legislation in 1993. The sole mission of the Partnership, which is supported by over 40 companies and community foundations, is to build greater public awareness and sustain political support for the new standards and tests created by the 1993 law.

**Accomplishments:** The Washington Roundtable's advocacy for improvement in education culminated in the passage of the 1993 Education Reform Act. The law launched a three-pronged strategy for improvement: developing clear standards for what students should learn, regular tests to measure progress, and new requirements for accountability and improvement for both students and schools. The Roundtable took a leadership role in passing the legislation and continues to shape state education policy. The Partnership for Learning also has helped Washington state maintain its commitment to education reform — despite early skepticism from educators and changes in political leadership.

**Work in Progress:** In Washington, standards have been developed in eight core subject areas and now are being used to measure the performance of 4th-, 7th- and 10th-graders in four of these areas (reading, writing, mathematics and communication). Tests measuring science standards in middle and high school will be added during the 2000–01 school year. Testing for the remaining subject areas is still under consideration.

The Roundtable has been a key player in pushing for the adoption of a new school accountability system with performance goals and consequences, which was adopted by the state Legislature in April 1999. Student accountability — in the form of a “certificate of mastery” that students will need to earn before graduating from high school — was included in the original 1993 law but has yet to be implemented.

**Challenges Ahead:** Remaining challenges for the education reform movement in Washington include: (1) successful implementation of a new school accountability system with performance goals and rewards and consequences, (2) successful implementation of the “certificate of mastery,” (3) further alignment of state education policy to support the new standards, (4) ensuring teacher quality and effectiveness, and (5) maintaining public and political support and involvement in the face of new consequences for student and school performance.

**Student Achievement:** Washington began phasing in its new state testing system in 1997. Although a great deal of work remains, improvement in 4th-grade performance from 1997 to 1998 is an encouraging sign.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Washington public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading 4th Grade (1998)	Reading 8th Grade (1998)	Math 4th Grade (1996)	Math 8th Grade (1996)	Science 8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	6 (6)	2 (2)	1 (2)	4 (4)	2 (3)
Proficient	23 (23)	30 (28)	20 (18)	22 (19)	25 (24)
Basic	34 (31)	45 (41)	46 (42)	41 (38)	34 (33)
Below Basic	37 (39)	23 (28)	33 (38)	33 (39)	39 (40)



# West Virginia

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**Background:** The Business Council for Education was founded in 1991 as a unit of the Education Alliance (formerly the West Virginia Education Fund). Initial leadership was provided by CEO John Hall of Ashland Inc. Member companies now include American Electric Power, Arch Coal, Ashland Inc., Banc One, Bell Atlantic, DuPont, Union Carbide and UPS.

**Accomplishments:** Since its founding, the Business Council has been a strong advocate for school reform legislation such as the Jobs Through Education Act; conducted a gap analysis of the state's progress toward its educational goals; completed Ready for What?, a study that examined what graduates should know and be able to do; and provided training, support and recognition for Local School Improvement Councils (LSICs).

With support from the Council, West Virginia has implemented a number of school reforms in recent years, including the establishment of clear, rigorous academic standards that incorporate the need for students to obtain workplace skills. We also have worked to expand the state's assessment system and promote the use of data to drive decisionmaking. Every grade level now is tested each year, and results are published in comprehensive school report cards. Teachers also are required to participate in professional development programs that are aligned with the new standards.

The state recently has intensified its accountability system, which incorporates unannounced school-performance inspections as part of its performance-based accreditation program. In 1998, the Legislature established an independent Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA) to review and audit school performance. The state board of education now also has the authority to intervene and "take over" poor-performing school districts — and has exercised this authority on two occasions.

**Work in Progress:** The Council recently began a School Leadership Project in conjunction with OEPA, the secretary of education, the state board of education and others to determine the skills a school principal should have and how we can develop those skills to help principals be more effective. To accomplish this goal, we plan to develop various recommendations and identify best practices in schools and businesses. In addition, the Council continues to support LSICs and will sponsor a fourth statewide LSIC conference in the fall.

**Challenges Ahead:** Many challenges persist for West Virginia's education system. Student achievement remains low, despite recent improvements, and our college entrance and completion rates are among the lowest in the nation. On a systemic level, much of the initial opposition to school reform and the Jobs Through Education Act — which codified those reforms — has declined; however, some resistance remains. Accordingly, policymakers must stand committed to these reforms in order for progress to continue. Another major challenge facing the Business Council is changing corporate leadership and turnover among policymakers. Many of the leaders who originally created and led school reform efforts either have retired or changed positions. To maintain the current momentum, we must form new relationships and identify and recruit new leaders.

**Student Achievement:** While much remains to be accomplished, the state is making progress to improve student achievement. West Virginia was one of six states to earn two gold stars from the National Education Goals Panel for making progress on the 1992 and 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics tests in grades 4 and 8. West Virginia also ranked among the highest-performing states on five measures of progress on the National Education Goals and placed among the most-improved states on seven other measures of progress. Additionally, there have been significant gains in SAT scores; in 1998, all grade levels (3–11) in 75 percent of all county systems scored at or above the 50th percentile, and all counties exceeded the 50th percentile in grades 6 and 8.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for West Virginia public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading 4th Grade (1998)	Reading 8th Grade (1998)	Math 4th Grade (1996)	Math 8th Grade (1996)	Science 8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	6 (6)	1 (2)	2 (2)	1 (4)	1 (3)
Proficient	23 (23)	26 (28)	17 (18)	13 (19)	20 (24)
Basic	33 (31)	47 (41)	44 (42)	40 (38)	35 (33)
Below Basic	38 (39)	26 (28)	37 (38)	46 (39)	44 (40)



# Wisconsin

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**Background:** Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) is a 4,600-member statewide business association governed by a group of CEOs from around the state. The association's affiliate, The WMC Foundation, Inc., oversees its education-related activities.

**Accomplishments:** WMC has approached education reform in terms of both systemic and programmatic improvements. On the systemic side, WMC provides leadership training for school districts that incorporates the best practices of Wisconsin companies and covers such topics as accountability, quality and union-management relations. WMC also helped lead the movement to establish state education standards and initiate a state testing system in core subject areas at the 4th, 8th and 10th grades. The association also collects data on high-performing, low-spending school districts and gathers and shares information on best practices.

On the programmatic side, WMC works with schools and companies to establish high-quality school-to-work programs, offers summer programs on economics and business for more than 600 high school students and 200 teachers, and awards and recognizes outstanding schools and businesses.

**Work in Progress:** WMC continues to emphasize the need for student accountability for academic performance, pushing for the adoption of a high school graduation test. WMC also is considering an initiative aimed at ensuring that all Wisconsin 3rd-graders are reading at or above grade level. In addition, WMC has begun taking part in discussions on knowledge- and skill-based pay for teachers.

**Challenges Ahead:** Wisconsin is a state with relatively high-quality education and low unemployment. That combination has created two significant obstacles to education reform. First, due to the state's relative success, legislators, educators and the public have grown complacent about the need for continuous improvement in education. Second, tight labor markets are forcing employers to disregard student performance and hire every available person; thus, students have lost much of their incentive to strive for high academic achievement.

**Student Achievement:** Wisconsin recently established new assessments for the 4th, 8th and 10th grades in mathematics, science, language arts and social studies, including four benchmark categories: advanced, proficient, basic and minimally proficient. WMC will use data from these assessments to measure progress from year to year and compare performance among school districts.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress results for Wisconsin public schools are listed below, indicating percentages of students at each performance level, with national percentages in parentheses.

Performance Level	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Science
	4th Grade (1998)	8th Grade (1998)	4th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)	8th Grade (1996)
Advanced	6 (6)	2 (2)	3 (2)	5 (4)	4 (3)
Proficient	28 (23)	31 (28)	24 (18)	27 (19)	35 (24)
Basic	38 (31)	46 (41)	47 (42)	43 (38)	34 (33)
Below Basic	28 (39)	21 (28)	26 (38)	25 (39)	27 (40)



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