

Our Children, Our Future



Education Fact of the Week: Iowa's Schools Elevate Student Learning

Iowa educators, communities, parents, and students have been working hard over the last decade. We have much to show to demonstrate improvement in student outcomes despite growth from 27% to 41% in the number of students living in low-income families and a doubling of the percent of non-English speaking students enrolled in our schools over the last twelve years. (Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, Basic Educational Data Survey and EASIER, 2001-01 through 2013-14). Unless otherwise indicated, the following statistics were reported in the Iowa Department of Education's [2013 Annual Condition of Education Report](#).

Highlights shared in the 2013 Annual Condition of Education Report include: graduation rate, ACT performance, and Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities.

- The four-year cohort graduation rate for the class of 2012 was 89.3%. Iowa continues to have one of the highest graduation rates in the nation.
- The percentage of Iowa students taking the ACT was 66% for the class of 2013. The national percentage of students taking the ACT continues to increase, but at 54% in 2013, has not yet caught up to Iowa's performance.
- Iowa students continue to score well on the ACT. Among 28 states for which ACT

is the primary college entrance exam (greater than 50%), Iowa's average composite score (22.1) continues to rank second.

Increased Opportunities and Expectations:

- Increased graduation requirements from 1997 to 2011 as follows:
 - Mathematics increased from 2.17 to 3.03 units
 - Science increased from 2.08 to 3.01 units
- The number of Iowa students taking AP courses continues to climb, from 16,552 in 2007-08 to 21,909 in 2013. Mathematics accounts for nearly 1,000 of the increase. There were also 11,084 AP exams taken in 2013 an increase of more than 1,200 from 2012.
- The number of concurrent enrollment courses, qualifying for community college credit, has more than doubled, from 36,330 in 2006-07 to 73,834 in 2012-13. (College credit saving parents and students tuition payments later.)
- Preschool growth: 5,126 4-year olds were in Iowa's new statewide voluntary preschool program in 2008. By 2012-13, that number had grown to 21,429. Meanwhile, 337 districts in 2012-13 now offer all-day kindergarten.

Test scores: NAEP on the National Level and Iowa Tests Here at Home

The National Assessment of Educational Progress ([NAEP](#)) otherwise known as the Nation's Report Card measures 4th and 8th grade mathematics and reading. Consider what's happened for our students (remember, more of them low income and more learning English as a second language over this time frame):

- Iowa 4th grade mathematics scale scores are up 8 points since 2003
- Iowa 8th grade mathematics scale scores are up 1 point since 2003
- Iowa 4th grade reading scale scores are up 1 point since 2003
- Iowa 8th grade reading scale scores are up 1 point since 2003

Iowa Assessments (as reported in the Iowa Condition of Education Report)

For the years 2011-13, there were notable differences in student performance for both reading and mathematics across grades 4, 8 and 11 from the prior year. The differences are due to the introduction of new Iowa Assessment forms although many grade levels were showing slight growth in reading and mathematics on the Iowa tests prior to the

change of the forms for the 2011-13 timeframe.

Investing in Continued Success

Imagine what would be possible if Iowa students were funded at the national average, an additional \$1,612 more per pupil than is currently spent (see the Jan. 13 Education Fact of the Week for more details about the spending gap.) The Education Coalition calls on our Legislature and Governor to prioritize the education of Iowa children and set a 6% growth rate per student for the 2015-16 school year. Setting the 2015-16 per pupil rate needs to be done within the first 30 days. The 2016-17 rate should be set within 30 days of the release of the Governor's budget, returning to the practice required in Iowa law (Iowa Code 257.8).

Schools need sufficient notice to anticipate revenue, make timely staffing decisions and thoughtfully plan to invest the funds wisely for student learning. The future of Iowa's students and our state's continued success depend on a solid investment in the priority of public education.

Brought to you by the joint efforts of Iowa Association of School Boards, School Administrators of Iowa, Iowa Area Education Agencies, Iowa State Education Association, the Rural Schools Advocates of Iowa, and the Urban Education Network of Iowa in support of adequate and timely school funding.

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