

Good News about Public Schools in Minnesota

- * Minnesota students are bringing home some of the best report cards in every subject in the latest exams from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP):
- * Minnesota is one of the top four states in the nation in the proportion of 8th graders scoring at the highest two levels in reading. [NCES, *Digest of Educational Statistics 1999*](#).
- * Minnesota is one of the top six states in the nation in the proportion of 4th graders scoring at the highest two levels in reading. [NCES, *Digest of Educational Statistics 1999*](#).
- * Minnesota 8th-grade students are among the top in the country in writing. The overall average score of Minnesota public school students is among the top 10 in the nation. [NCES, *NAEP 1998 Writing: Report Card for the Nation and the States*, September 1999](#).
- * Minnesota ranks 1st in the nation in the proportion of 8th graders scoring at the highest two levels in math. The proportion of Minnesota 8th graders who scored at the highest two levels in math increased by 74% between 1990 and 2000. [NCES, *Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2000*, August 2001](#).
- * Minnesota ranks 1st in the nation in the proportion of 4th graders scoring at the highest two levels in math. The proportion of Minnesota 4th graders who scored at the highest two levels in math increased by 31% between 1992 and 2000. [NCES, *Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2000*, August 2001](#).
- * Minnesota ranks 2nd in the nation for having the highest proportion of public school 8th graders scoring at the highest two levels in science. The proportion of Minnesota public school 8th graders who scored at the highest two levels in science increased 14% between 1996 and 2000. [NCES, *Nation's Report Card: State Science 2000 Reports*, November 2001](#).
- * Minnesota ranks 8th in the nation for having the highest percentage of public school 4th graders scoring at the highest two levels in science. [NCES, *Nation's Report Card: State Science 2000 Reports*, November 2001](#).
- * Minnesota 4th graders have the 2nd highest science scores in the world. [NCES, *NAEP 1996 Science: Report Card for the Nation and the States*, June 1997](#).
- * Minnesota's ACT college entrance examination scores rank 2nd highest out of the 25 states in which more than half the graduating seniors took the ACT. [ACT, Inc., *ACT Composite Averages by State, 1994-2002*](#).
- * Since 1994 the proportion of Minnesota graduating seniors taking the ACT exams has increased by 5%. [ACT, Inc., *ACT Composite Averages by State, 1994-2002*](#).
- * More Minnesota students are getting high scores on their SAT college entrance examinations. The proportion of graduating seniors getting high scores on the Verbal SAT has increased by 31% since 1994; the proportion of graduating seniors getting high scores on the Math SAT has increased by 23% since 1994. (A high score is defined as 600 or above.) [College Board, *2002 SAT State Results*](#).
- * Since 1989 Minnesota's combined SAT scores have risen five times faster than the national average. [College Board, *College Bound Seniors 2002*](#).
- * Since 1989 Minnesota's Math SAT scores have risen two and a half times faster than the national average. [College Board, *College Bound Seniors 2002*](#).

- * Almost all of the public schools in Minnesota (95%) have Internet access. [Market Data Retrieval, Technology in Education 2001.](#)
- * The number of Minnesota teachers being honored with certification from the prestigious National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has increased 84% since 1999. [NBPTS, State-by-State Listing. November 2001.](#)
- * Minnesota ranks among the best — 4th out of 50 states — in the proportion of high school graduates with scores in the top 20% nationally on either ACT or SAT exams. [NCPPE, Measuring Up 2000: The State-by-State Report Card for Higher Education.](#)
- * Minnesota has one of the highest high school completion rates — 6th out of 50 states — in the country. [NCES, Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000. November 2001.](#)
- * Minnesota's public high schools are offering more and more challenging courses. Since 1997 the proportion of public high schools offering Advanced Placement (AP) courses has increased by 12%. [College Board, 2001 AP State and National Summary Report.](#)
- * Forty-nine percent (49%) of Minnesota's public high schools offer AP courses, through which students can earn college credit. Just 43% of Minnesota's private high schools offer these advanced courses. [College Board, 2001 AP State and National Summary Report.](#)
- * Minnesota ranks 1st in the nation in the proportion of secondary school teachers with a degree in their main teaching assignment (81%). [NEGP, 1999 National Education Goals Report.](#)
- * Eighty-two percent (82%) of Minnesota public school teachers in core academic fields have full certification and a major in their field, ranking Minnesota as one of the top states (5th out of 50) in teacher qualification. [NCTAF, Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Teacher Qualification. November 1997.](#)
- * Minnesota public schools teachers are the most qualified teachers in the country. They rank 1st out of 50 states, based on 12 indicators of teacher qualification. [NCTAF, Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Teacher Qualification. November 1997.](#)
- * Minnesota has some of the safest schools in the country. Minnesota is one of the top four states in the country in the percentage of public school 4th graders and 8th graders who report feeling safe in their school. [Education Week, Quality Counts 2002.](#)
- * Minnesota is one of the top nine states in the percentage of public school 8th graders attending schools without a tardiness problem. [Education Week, Quality Counts 2002.](#)
- * There is one computer available for instruction for every 3.2 public school students in Minnesota, making Minnesota one of the top eight states in computer availability for students. [Market Data Retrieval, Technology in Education 2001.](#)
- * Parents in Minnesota are getting involved in their children's education. In Minnesota, 99% of 4th-grade parents participate in parent-teacher conferences. [Education Week, Quality Counts 2002.](#)
- * The Fordham Foundation gave Minnesota the highest possible grade for having high standards for students in science. [Fordham Foundation, The State of State Standards 2000.](#)

Challenges Facing Minnesota's Public Schools

- * Nationwide in the past 10 years, teacher salaries have increased in constant dollars. However, in Minnesota, teacher salaries have actually declined by 2%. [NEA, Rankings and Estimates, 2002.](#)

* Public education spending per pupil has declined in Minnesota. Since 1999 per-pupil spending in constant dollars has declined 3%. [NCES, Digest of Education Statistics 2001. February 2002](#) and [NCES, Early Estimates of Public Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics, School Year 2001-2002. April 2002.](#)

* The number of students for every teacher is increasing in Minnesota and, as a result, students are getting less individual attention. The number of students per public school teacher has increased by 5% since 2001. [NCES, Early Estimates of Public Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics, School Year 2001-2002. April 2002.](#)

* Minnesota schools have the highest proportion of crumbling roofs of all states in the nation (62%). Thirty-eight percent (38%) of Minnesota schools have a building that needs extensive repair or should be replaced. Sixty-six percent (66%) of schools are in unsatisfactory environmental condition with 36% poorly ventilated. Thirty-three percent (33%) have bad plumbing, and one-fourth lack adequate power and wiring for classroom computers. [ASCE's 2001 Report Card for America's Infrastructure](#)