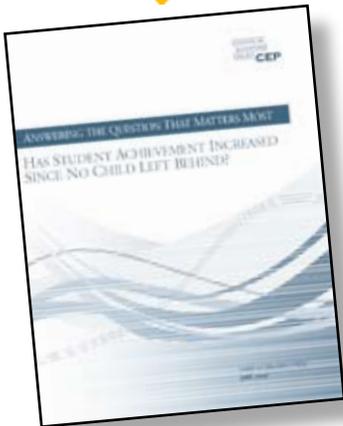


Looking At The ISSUES

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Since *No Child Left Behind*: Ohio Up In Math, But Not In Reading

Tests scores are not synonymous with achievement. Tests are imperfect and incomplete measures of how much students have learned. But for a wide-scale study of achievement, test scores are still the best means available to draw inferences about student learning. – CEP¹

It's being called the most comprehensive and thorough study ever done on the results of state tests required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. Certainly the study, conducted by the Washington-based Center on Education Policy (CEP), is unique in that it is the first to look at verified testing data from all 50 states.

The report on its findings, *Answering the Question that Matters Most: Has Student Achievement Increased Since No Child Left Behind?*,² was released on May 31st and shows that student achievement in math and reading has increased since the passage of the law. Greatest gains have been at the elementary level. Also, while the achievement gap among students has widened in some states, it has closed in many more.

Is all of this due to the law? CEP is cautious and well aware of the study's limitations. "American educators and students were asked to raise academic achievement, and they have done so," said Jack Jennings, the organization's president. "The weight of evidence indicates that state test scores in reading and mathematics have increased overall since *No Child Left Behind* was enacted. However, there should be no rush to judgment as there may be many factors contributing to the increased achievement." The study has identified several other possible reasons for the results, including increased learning, teaching to the test, more lenient tests, scoring or data analyses, and changes in the populations tested. "Any or all of these factors in combination could be contributing to these trends," the report indicates.

Following the national trend, student performance in math did increase in Ohio between 2004 and 2006, according to the study as measured by state standardized tests. The achievement gap in math also narrowed between African American and white students and between those students on free and reduced lunch and others. On the other hand, no consistent pattern of student progress was found in reading.

Looking At The Week

Adrienne O'Neill and Joe Rochford participated in the statewide conference *P-16 in Ohio: Building Momentum, Charting a New Course* in Columbus on Thursday. Dr. O'Neill was a panelist on state and local policy. Both Dr. O'Neill and Dr. Rochford hosted a breakout session on *Sustaining Success*. The conference, sponsored by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, brings together the state's emerging local and regional P-16s.

¹Chudowsky, N., Chudowsky, V., & Kober, N. (2007). *Answering the question that matters most: Has student achievement increased since No Child Left Behind?*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Education Policy, p.7.

²The report and individual state profiles are available online at <http://www.cep-dc.org>