

**U.S. EDUCATION SECRETARY DUNCAN CHALLENGES NATION TO WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE
HISPANIC EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE A PRIORITY**

*New Report on Comprehensive National and State Performance Data Shows Hispanic-White Achievement Gap
Unchanged Over Last Two Decades*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan today urged parents, educators and school leaders at every level of government to make Hispanic educational excellence a national priority. Secretary Duncan’s challenge follows the release of a sobering [new report on the Hispanic achievement gap](#) by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the U.S. Department of Education’s statistical center.

Mathematics and reading scores for Hispanic students have increased over time, but the gap between Hispanic students and their white counterparts on the National Assessment of Educational Progress has not changed since the 1990s, according to the comprehensive report by NCES. Over the same period, the gap between non-limited English proficient Hispanic students and their white peers narrowed.

In the knowledge economy, Secretary Duncan said it is more vital than ever that every child in America be able to go as far as his or her potential, talent and energy will allow.

“Race and ethnicity shouldn’t be factors in the success of any child in America,” said Secretary Duncan. “Hispanic students are the largest minority group in our nation’s schools. But they face grave educational challenges that are hindering their ability to pursue the American dream. We must expand their educational opportunities at every level of the P–12 system to compete with the rest of the world.”

Expanding opportunities is crucial to reaching the Obama Administration’s goal of having the world’s highest share of college graduates by 2020. “We cannot achieve the 2020 goal without challenging every level of government to make the educational success of Latinos a top priority,” said Secretary Duncan. “America’s future depends on it.”

Juan Sepúlveda, the director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, noted that the Obama Administration is working in partnership with communities across the country.

“Low Hispanic educational attainment levels aren’t just a problem for the Latino community. Every American has a stake in this,” said Sepúlveda. “We’ve brought major organizations and key people from inside and outside the education system together to tackle this challenge. We’re focused on advancing and accelerating achievement, access and attainment for Hispanic students so they’re ready for college and a career and to compete globally.”

At the national level, the achievement gaps between Hispanic and white students at grades 4 and 8 in mathematics and reading are about 20 points on the NAEP scale, according to the [NCES report](#). California and Connecticut each had a Hispanic-white gap larger than that of the nation for grades 4 and 8 in mathematics and for grade 4 in reading, while Department of Defense Education Activity schools, Florida, Kentucky, Missouri and Wyoming had smaller gaps than those of the nation for both reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8.

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****NOTE: An electronic copy of the full NCES achievement gap report is available at <http://go.usa.gov/W6E>.****

STATE-BY-STATE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Hispanic-white achievement score gap in mathematics and reading for public school students, by state (2009), from the [National Center for Education Statistics' June 2011 report](#)

[STATE, NAEP gap in Mathematics Grade 4, Mathematics Grade 8, Reading Grade 4, Reading Grade 8]

--NATIONAL PUBLIC, 21, 26, 25, 24
--ALABAMA, 17, 20, 25, 19
--ALASKA, 17, 18*, 11*, 9*
--ARIZONA, 23, 26, 27, 24
--ARKANSAS, 12, 15*, 22, 17
--CALIFORNIA, 28*, 33*, 31*, 28
--COLORADO, 23, 32*, 32*, 24
--CONNECTICUT, 26*, 34*, 33*, 27
--DELAWARE, 18, 16*, 18*, 16
--DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 43*, n/a, 49*, n/a
--DOD EDU ACTIVITY, 10*, 13*, 11*, 9*
--FLORIDA, 12*, 15*, 10*, 11*
--GEORGIA, 15*, 19*, 21, 14
--HAWAII, 17, 6*, 12*, 15
--IDAHO, 19, 28, 24, 28
--ILLINOIS, 21, 25, 28, 21
--INDIANA, 16, 18*, 24, 18
--IOWA, 22, 21, 16*, 18
--KANSAS, 18, 20, 19, 22
--KENTUCKY, 14*, 10*, 13*, 3*
--LOUISIANA, 10*, n/a, 13*, n/a
--MARYLAND, 17, 28, 15*, 20
--MASSACHUSETTS, 26*, 34, 30, 28
--MICHIGAN, 16, 17*, 19, 15
--MINNESOTA, 23, 31, 36*, 28
--MISSISSIPPI, n/a, n/a, 12, n/a
--MISSOURI, 8*, 6*, 12*, 10*
--MONTANA, 6*, 17, 9*, n/a
--NEBRASKA, 21, 29, 21, 19
--NEVADA, 19, 25, 23, 22
--NEW HAMPSHIRE, 18, 23, 13, 14
--NEW JERSEY, 24, 30, 24, 25
--NEW MEXICO, 21, 26, 22, 24
--NEW YORK, 17*, 32*, 22, 27
--NORTH CAROLINA, 18, 23, 26, 22
--OHIO, 16, 24, 15, 22
--OKLAHOMA, 12*, 19*, 16, 18
--OREGON, 21, 26, 27, 22
--PENNSYLVANIA, 22, 28, 31, 28
--RHODE ISLAND, 28*, 31*, 31, 26
--SOUTH CAROLINA, 13, 23, 22, 8*
--SOUTH DAKOTA, 13, 27, 11*, n/a
--TENNESSEE, 14, 12*, 22, 16
--TEXAS, 20, 24, 22, 22
--UTAH, 27*, 30, 31*, 24
--VIRGINIA, 17, 19*, 20, 16
--WASHINGTON, 20, 32*, 28, 24
--WISCONSIN, 22, 26, 25, 21
--WYOMING, 13*, 20*, 13*, 11*

* Difference ($p < .05$) is statistically significant from the national public schools scores when comparing the results of one state at a time to the national score.

**NOTE: Figures for Maine, North Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia and selected categories in other states (n/a) were not included because reporting standards were not met due to Hispanic student population size or because unrounded average scores were insufficient for comparison. **