



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on June 23, 2018

Huge Cost of Bad Education

The U.S. Census Bureau and the National Assessment of Educational Progress issue both the costs and results of public school education in the United States. As in previous years, recent figures show that the cost went up and the performance remained abysmally low or even worse than in previous years. There were very few districts where even a slight increase in proficiency was found.



New York City led the nation in cost per pupil at \$24,109 in fiscal year 2016. Yet, despite that enormous expenditure, 72 percent of its public school students were deemed not proficient in both reading and mathematics. The dollars used while achieving such poor performances were not spent for capital outlays (construction of buildings and roads as well as purchasing equipment, land and already existing structures). Expenditures for teacher salaries, books and student equipment consumed most of the dollars.

Right below New York City in the spending sweepstakes was Boston, where the cost per pupil totaled \$22,082. Results in the Massachusetts capital city showed that 68 percent of its eighth graders were not proficient in reading and 67 percent were deficient in math.

In the nation's capital, spending of \$19,159 per pupil placed it third highest in spending, but the assessment of its student performance was the nation's most dismal. A total of 79 percent of the D.C. public school students were deemed not proficient in reading and 80 percent did not achieve a proficiency grade in math.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated project administered by several divisions of the U.S. Department of Education. Self-identified as "The Nation's Report Card," NAEP began issuing its findings every two years in 1969. Members of its National Assessment Governing Board include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. Its assessments are issued most frequently in mathematics, reading, science, and writing. Other subjects, such as arts, civics, economics, geography, and history, are reported on periodically.

If any undertaking other than one run by government produced such failing grades, it would be closed down. But the nation's public (government) school system continues its consumption of tax dollars and its miserable results. The sensible response to this situation is to close the system down. At very least, turn the government school system back to the states. Let's have no more federal involvement, something never authorized by the U.S. Constitution. If that simple but major step were taken, competition among the states would almost immediately see rising percentages of students reading more proficiently, learning mathematics at an increased rate, even graduating with an earned degree from high schools. There would be no more federal mandates such as Outcome Based Education, Race To the Top, No Child Left Behind, and Common Core.

While the education process is surely blameworthy for the steep decline in performance, the reasons for



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diminishing quality at the schools must also include the breakdown of the family and the attacks on the culture of the nation. Without the stability provided by parental guidance and laudable aspirations that could formerly be found in most, too many youngsters become disillusioned — even rebellious — when told they should study and learn.

As the “Nation’s Report Card” indicates, America is trending downward. More federal programs and more taxpayer dollars will not accomplish reversing the slide toward oblivion. The question is: Are there enough Americans to make needed changes? If there are, the future will be brighter. If the answer to that fundamental question is No, the nation will surely disappear.

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