

the condition of education 2008



INDICATOR 15

Economics Performance of Students in Grade 12

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2008*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2008*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008031>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Academic Outcomes

Economics Performance of Students in Grade 12

On the 2006 12th-grade economics assessment, students who reported higher levels of parental education outperformed their peers who reported lower levels of parental education.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) conducted its first assessment of economics in 2006. The assessment evaluated 12th-grade students' understanding of economics and markets, the benefits and costs of economic interaction and interdependence, and choices made because of limited resources in three areas: market, national, and international economics.¹

About 79 percent of 12th-graders performed at or above the *Basic* level² on this assessment, and 42 percent performed at or above the *Proficient* level (indicating solid academic achievement), including 3 percent at the *Advanced* level (indicating superior performance; see supplemental table 15-1). Reported on a scale of 0 to 300, the average score of 12th-graders was set at 150; this score fell within the *Basic* achievement level (indicating partial mastery of fundamental skills).³

Results from the assessment varied by student characteristics, including parental education and sex. Students who reported higher levels of parental education outperformed those who reported lower levels of parental education. For example, 54 percent of students whose parents were college graduates performed at or above

the *Proficient* level, compared with 17 percent of students whose parents did not finish high school. In addition, males outperformed females on the assessment overall. About 45 percent of male students performed at or above the *Proficient* level, compared with 38 percent of female students. Student performance in the three content areas also followed the above patterns for parental education and sex (see supplemental table 15-2).

Student exposure to economics in the classroom was also highlighted in the assessment. Previous findings show that economic content in the high school curriculum has increased in recent decades: in 2005, some 66 percent of graduates reported that they had taken an economics course, compared with 49 percent in 1982 (NCES 2007-475).⁴ In the 2006 NAEP assessment, most 12th-graders reported exposure to economics content: 16 percent had taken an advanced economics course,⁵ and 49 percent had taken general economics. Twenty-three percent indicated that they had taken a business or personal finance course, or a course that combined economics with another subject. Thirteen percent said that they had not had any economics instruction.

Rounds to zero.

¹ Market economy—traditionally described as “microeconomics”—covers how individuals, businesses, and institutions make decisions about allocating resources in the marketplace. National economy—traditionally described as “macroeconomics”—encompasses the sum of decisions made by individuals, businesses, and government. International economy concentrates on international trade—that is, how individuals and businesses interact in foreign markets.

² The percentage of students at or above *Proficient* includes students at the *Advanced* achievement level. Similarly, the percentage of students at or above *Basic* includes students at the *Basic*, those at the *Proficient*, and those at the *Advanced* achievement levels.

³ The cutoff scores for economics achievement levels were as follows: *Basic* (123), *Proficient* (160), and *Advanced* (208).

⁴ These estimates are taken from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) High School Transcript Study.

⁵ For example, Advanced Placement economics.

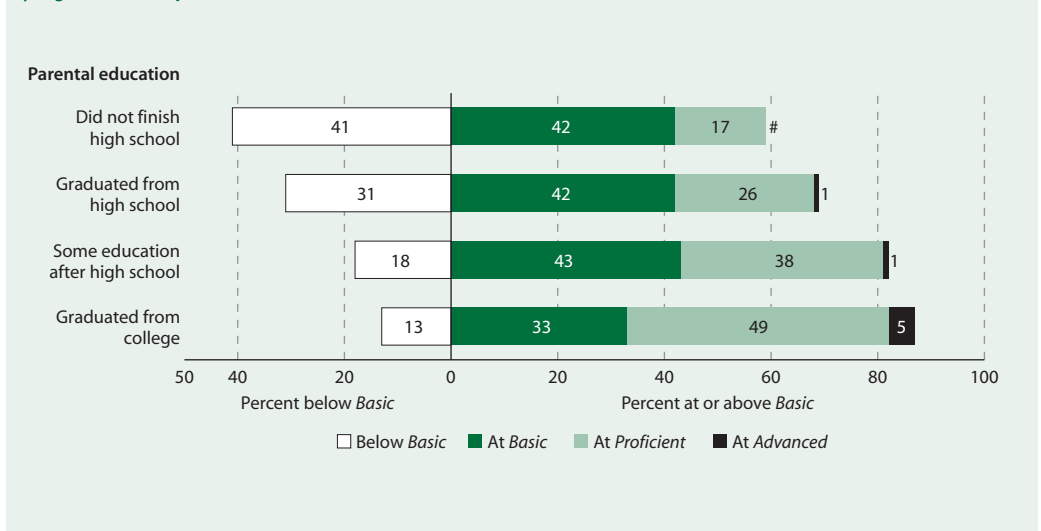
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. See supplemental note 4 for more information on the NAEP and NAEP achievement levels.

SOURCE: Mead, N., and Sandene, B. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Economics 2006* (NCES 2007-475), data from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 1, 4
Supplemental Tables 15-1,
15-2

ECONOMICS PERFORMANCE: Percentage distribution of 12th-grade students across NAEP economics achievement levels, by highest level of parental education: 2006



Economics Performance of Students in Grade 12

Table 15-1. Percentage of 12th-grade students at each economics achievement level, by student and school characteristics: 2006

| Student or school characteristic | Below <i>Basic</i> | At or above <i>Basic</i> ¹ | At or above <i>Proficient</i> ¹ | At <i>Advanced</i> ¹ |
|--|--------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Total | 21 | 79 | 42 | 3 |
| Sex | | | | |
| Male | 21 | 79 | 45 | 4 |
| Female | 21 | 79 | 38 | 2 |
| Race/ethnicity ² | | | | |
| White | 13 | 87 | 51 | 4 |
| Black | 43 | 57 | 16 | # |
| Hispanic | 36 | 64 | 21 | # |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 20 | 80 | 44 | 4! |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 28 | 72 | 26 | 2 |
| Highest level of parental education | | | | |
| Did not finish high school | 41 | 59 | 17 | # |
| Graduated from high school | 31 | 69 | 27 | 1! |
| Some education after high school | 18 | 82 | 39 | 1 |
| Graduated from college | 13 | 87 | 54 | 5 |
| Region | | | | |
| West | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ |
| Midwest | 17 | 83 | 45 | 3 |
| South | 23 | 77 | 37 | 2 |
| Northeast | 19 | 81 | 46 | 4 |
| Locale | | | | |
| City | 25 | 75 | 39 | 4 |
| Suburban | 19 | 81 | 45 | 4 |
| Town | 21 | 79 | 38 | 2 |
| Rural | 20 | 80 | 40 | 2 |
| Students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch | | | | |
| 10 percent or less | 10 | 90 | 58 | 6 |
| 11–25 percent | 17 | 83 | 46 | 3 |
| 26–50 percent | 23 | 77 | 37 | 2 |
| 51–75 percent | 35 | 65 | 23 | 1! |
| More than 75 percent | 42 | 58 | 18 | 1 |

Rounds to zero.

! Interpret data with caution (estimates are unstable).

‡ Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

¹ Included in the at or above *Proficient* achievement level is the at *Advanced* achievement level; included in the at or above *Basic* achievement level is the at or above *Proficient* achievement level.

² Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 4* for more information on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and NAEP achievement levels.

SOURCE: Mead, N., and Sandene, B. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Economics 2006* (NCES 2007-475), data from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer.

Economics Performance of Students in Grade 12

Table 15-2. Average economics scale scores of 12th-grade students, by content area and student and school characteristics: 2006

| Student or school characteristic | Overall | Content area | | |
|---|------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Market economy | National economy | International economy |
| Total | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| Sex | | | | |
| Male | 152 | 152 | 152 | 152 |
| Female | 148 | 148 | 148 | 148 |
| Race/ethnicity ¹ | | | | |
| White | 158 | 158 | 158 | 158 |
| Black | 127 | 128 | 127 | 129 |
| Hispanic | 133 | 133 | 132 | 133 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 153 | 153 | 153 | 152 |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 137 | 138 | 138 | 134 |
| Highest level of parental education | | | | |
| Did not finish high school | 129 | 128 | 129 | 133 |
| Graduated from high school | 138 | 138 | 137 | 138 |
| Some education after high school | 150 | 151 | 150 | 149 |
| Graduated from college | 160 | 160 | 161 | 160 |
| Region | | | | |
| West | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ | ‡ |
| Midwest | 153 | 153 | 154 | 153 |
| South | 147 | 147 | 147 | 147 |
| Northeast | 153 | 153 | 153 | 154 |
| Locale | | | | |
| City | 148 | 148 | 148 | 148 |
| Suburban | 153 | 153 | 153 | 152 |
| Town | 148 | 147 | 148 | 149 |
| Rural | 149 | 149 | 149 | 149 |
| Students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch | | | | |
| 10 percent or less | 164 | 164 | 164 | 163 |
| 11–25 percent | 153 | 153 | 154 | 153 |
| 26–50 percent | 147 | 147 | 146 | 147 |
| 51–75 percent | 134 | 134 | 134 | 134 |
| More than 75 percent | 130 | 130 | 129 | 132 |

‡ Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

¹ Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 4* for more information on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

SOURCE: Mead, N., and Sandene, B. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Economics 2006* (NCES 2007-475), data from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer.

Economics Performance of Students in Grade 12

Table S15-1. Standard errors for the percentage of 12th-grade students at each economics achievement level, by student and school characteristics: 2006

| Student or school characteristic | Below <i>Basic</i> | At or above <i>Basic</i> | At or above <i>Proficient</i> | At <i>Advanced</i> |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Total | 0.8 | 0.8 | 1.1 | 0.3 |
| Sex | | | | |
| Male | 0.8 | 0.8 | 1.3 | 0.5 |
| Female | 0.9 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 0.3 |
| Race/ethnicity | | | | |
| White | 0.7 | 0.7 | 1.2 | 0.4 |
| Black | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.3 | † |
| Hispanic | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.2 | † |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 1.4 |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 5.6 | 5.6 | 4.8 | — |
| Highest level of parental education | | | | |
| Did not finish high school | 2.1 | 2.1 | 1.7 | — |
| Graduated from high school | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 0.3 |
| Some education after high school | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 0.4 |
| Graduated from college | 0.8 | 0.8 | 1.3 | 0.6 |
| Region | | | | |
| West | † | † | † | † |
| Midwest | 1.4 | 1.4 | 2.0 | 0.6 |
| South | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 0.5 |
| Northeast | 1.7 | 1.7 | 2.6 | 0.9 |
| Locale | | | | |
| City | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 0.7 |
| Suburban | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.6 | 0.6 |
| Town | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 0.5 |
| Rural | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 0.4 |
| Students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch | | | | |
| 10 percent or less | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 0.8 |
| 11–25 percent | 1.5 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 0.6 |
| 26–50 percent | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 0.5 |
| 51–75 percent | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.3 | 0.3 |
| More than 75 percent | 3.4 | 3.4 | 2.6 | — |

— Not available (standard error estimates cannot be determined).

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: Mead, N., and Sandene, B. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Economics 2006* (NCES 2007-475), data from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer.

Economics Performance of Students in Grade 12

Table S15-2. Standard errors for the average economics scale scores of 12th-grade students, by content area and student and school characteristics: 2006

| Student or school characteristic | Overall | Content area | | |
|---|------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Market economy | National economy | International economy |
| Total | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Sex | | | | |
| Male | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.2 |
| Female | 0.9 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 0.9 |
| Race/ethnicity | | | | |
| White | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Black | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| Hispanic | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 2.1 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 3.5 | 3.1 | 3.9 | 4.1 |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 4.1 | 4.3 | 4.8 | 6.7 |
| Highest level of parental education | | | | |
| Did not finish high school | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| Graduated from high school | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| Some education after high school | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Graduated from college | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Region | | | | |
| West | † | † | † | † |
| Midwest | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.8 |
| South | 1.4 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| Northeast | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.0 |
| Locale | | | | |
| City | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| Suburban | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.4 |
| Town | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.3 |
| Rural | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| Students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch | | | | |
| 10 percent or less | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| 11–25 percent | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| 26–50 percent | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.4 |
| 51–75 percent | 1.8 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| More than 75 percent | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.6 | 2.4 |

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: Mead, N., and Sandene, B. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Economics 2006* (NCES 2007-475), data from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer.