

NCLB Making a Difference in Maine

- Between 2002 and 2004 (latest data available), fourth-grade mathematics achievement increased by nine percentage points. (*Education Trust*)
- “Aiming to improve student performance by highlighting school systems that are doing well, Standard & Poor’s has analyzed the 111 school districts in Maine that serve students in kindergarten through grade 12. According to the findings, nine school systems scored better on the reading and math portions of the Maine Educational Assessment in 2001-02 and 2002-03 than those with similar numbers of low-income students. In northern and central Maine, the ‘outperforming’ school systems are in Bangor, Easton, Guilford and Fort Kent. The other cited schools are in Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Falmouth, Scarborough and Yarmouth. ... Pondering Bangor’s recognition...Superintendent Robert Ervin quickly came up with a number of reasons for the school system’s success. Bangor focuses on strong intervention programs in basic skill areas; sets clear performance expectations for every class for every subject; continually evaluates what students know and what the next instructional steps must be; and perpetuates an attitude that ‘all children are capable of high achievement and that no child will fail in our schools,’ he said.” (*Bangor Daily News*, 5/26/05)
- “The [York] school district is making Adequate Yearly Progress in meeting requirements set by the federal No Child Left Behind Act... This year, however, every grade level and subgroup within the school system made AYP. According to [York Superintendent of Schools Henry] Scipione, this places the district above the levels of AYPM [Adequate Yearly Progress Monitor] and Continuous Improvement Priority District Status (CIPDS). Schools rated in the CIPD category must work even harder in order to improve students’ test scores and meet NCLB act requirements.” (*Foster’s Daily Democrat*, 2/17/05)
- “Created through the federal education reform law, No Child Left Behind, Early Reading First programs across the country aim to address the growing concern that many children begin kindergarten without the proper foundational skills to succeed. The Early Reading First project in Belfast, called the Alphabet Soup Curriculum, was established in 2003 by Waldo County Preschool and Family Services as one of 30 pilot programs in the nation – and the only one in New England – to receive a \$2 million No Child Left Behind grant. ... [And] recent studies by the Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine indicate that children in the Waldo County Preschool project have dramatically improved their literacy skills, said [Drew] Sullivan, [project director of the preschool program].... In the fall of 2004, 115 children entering the early reading program were tested and, as a group, were found to have lower than average reading skills. But when they were re-tested in the spring of 2005, they had caught up or even exceeded those children from the first group. The second year’s data showed a 100 percent improvement in overall pre-reading skills. The results are even more remarkable given that 46 percent of children in Early Reading First have been diagnosed as having special needs, and 50 percent are from low-income families. That puts them at risk of being behind in literacy skills, said Sullivan.” (*Bangor Daily News*, 6/20/05)

