

# A National Report Card

By Nicole Allan | Graphics by Kiss Me I'm Polish

## K-12 ACHIEVEMENT GRADE INDEX

As calculated by *Education Week* in its "Quality Counts 2012" report



## SPENDING PER PUPIL

As adjusted by *Education Week* for regional differences



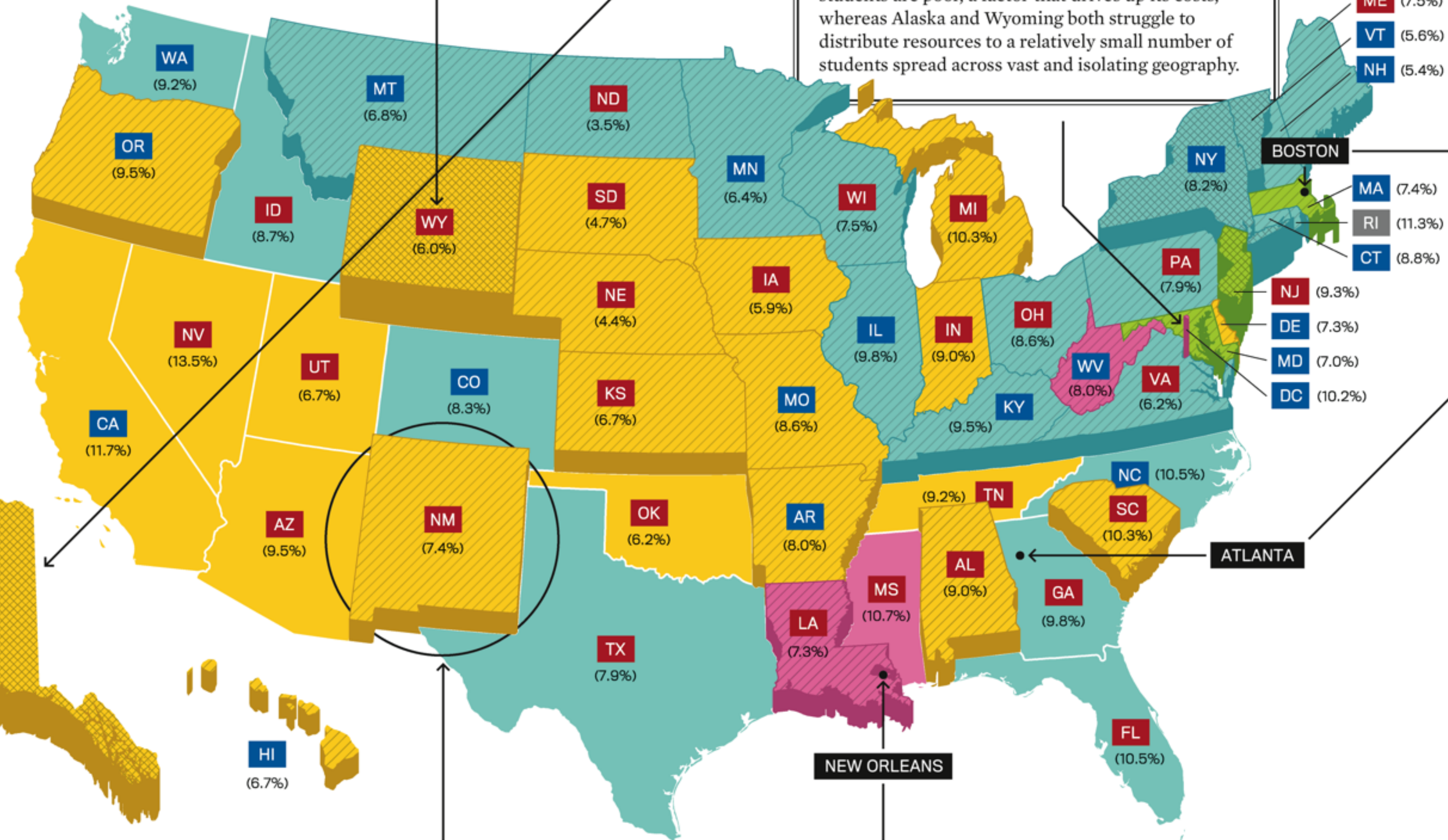
## GOVERNOR'S POLITICAL PARTY

Governors can be key drivers of education reform.



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2011)

U.S. (8.9%)



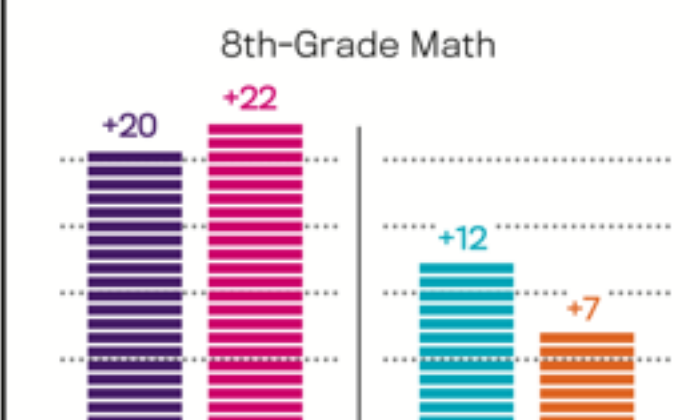
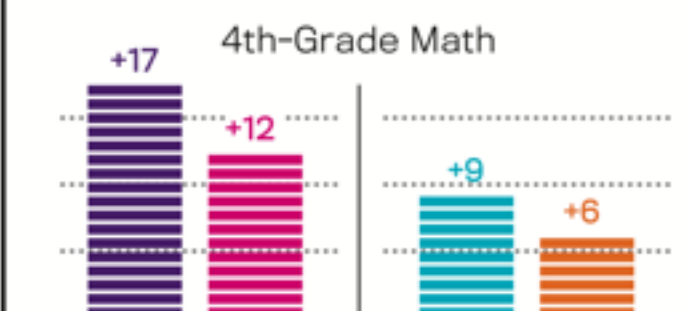
## MORE MONEY, MORE PROBLEMS?

Alaska, Wyoming, and the District of Columbia spend more money per pupil, on a regionally adjusted scale, than almost every other state, yet they get D's or F's in achievement. Seventy percent of the District's students are poor, a factor that drives up its costs, whereas Alaska and Wyoming both struggle to distribute resources to a relatively small number of students spread across vast and isolating geography.

## CITIES BOUNCE BACK

City schools—dogged by poverty and overcrowding—have traditionally lagged behind their counterparts elsewhere. Achievement in most American cities still trails the national average, but in recent years, urban districts have seen significantly more improvement.

## CHANGES IN TEST SCORES (2003–2011)



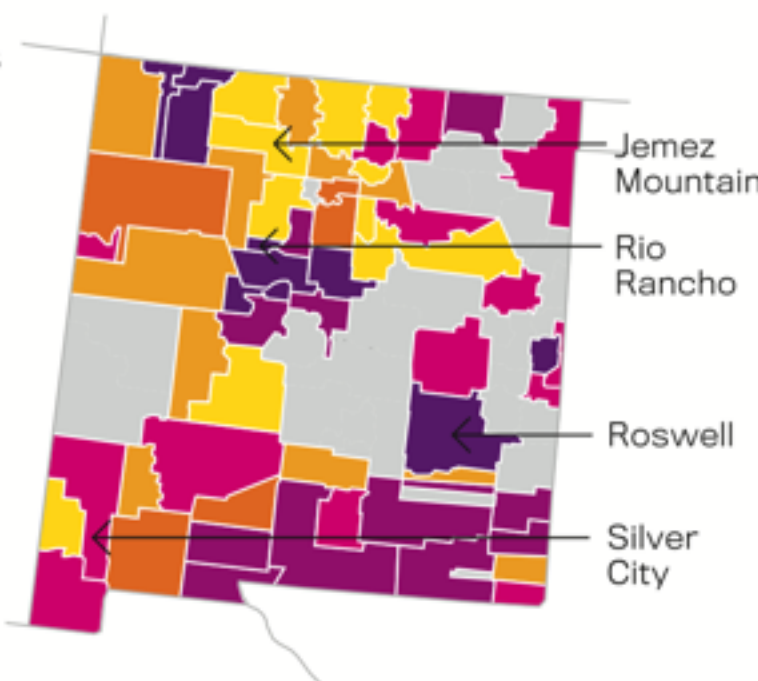
## SMART SPENDING PAYS OFF

Atlanta's reading gains and Boston's math gains may be partly attributed to decade-long initiatives in literacy and math, respectively. Boston's program may also have helped narrow its achievement gap: in 2011, the district's black, Hispanic, and poor students all outperformed their national peers in math.

## THE CASE OF NEW MEXICO

In 2011, researchers at the Center for American Progress calculated educational return on investment (ROI), district by district. They found wide variation within states, both in terms of money spent and results obtained.

### EDUCATIONAL ROI:



New Mexico's suburban Rio Rancho district had the best ROI in the state, spending just \$6,658 per pupil for an achievement score of 61, which CAP calculated on a scale of 1 to 100. Just two districts away, rural Jemez Mountain had the worst ROI, spending \$13,983 per pupil for an achievement score of 25.

Students in the Roswell and Silver City districts—both small, remote, and majority Hispanic—achieved at similar levels. Yet Roswell, despite having 81 percent low-income students compared with Silver City's 51 percent, spent \$2,589 less per pupil.

SOURCES: CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS; COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS; COWEN INSTITUTE; EDUCATION WEEK; LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS; U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

## REBIRTH ON THE BAYOU

After Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana transferred most New Orleans schools to the authority of the state-run Recovery School District. With the teachers union effectively obsolete, reform has flourished—about 80 percent of New Orleans students now attend charter schools, the highest proportion in the U.S.—and the city's historically rock-bottom test scores have shot up.

