

National Conference of State Legislatures



The Meaning of PISA 2012

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The Question



- Why has student performance in the United States been standing still while performance in so many other nations has been rapidly improving?
- Can this data from OECD-PISA be construed as a verdict on the reforms of the No Child Left Behind-Race to the Top era?

Education Reform, US Style



- More money
- Lower class size
- School competition (charters and vouchers)
- Tough test-based teacher-accountability systems
- Standards based on complex skills, matching tests

Which Are Supported By The PISA Data?



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Education Reform Agenda of the Top-Performing Countries



- More \$s behind hard to educate than easy to educate
- Strong support for young children
- Strong, coherent instructional systems
 - Standards, curriculum, examinations
 - No more than 3 high stakes (students, not teachers) exams
 - Exams at key “gateways”

Education Reform Agenda of the Top-Performing Countries



- **High quality teachers**
 - Before they join the teaching force
 - After they join the teaching force
 - Key importance of elementary school teachers
- **Schools for professionals to teach in**
 - Competitive compensation tied to expertise and career ladders
 - Time for teachers to work together
 - More autonomy (works **only** with qualified teachers, high standards, quality tests)
 - Competent leadership

The question, again



Isn't it time to build our education reform agenda around the strategies used by the nations with the best education systems?