



SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN UTAH'S PEER STATES

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Purpose of the Study

Review programs and practices of peer and benchmark states to determine what is working in those states to improve student achievement.

Research Methodology: Peer States

Peer States

- Colorado
- Minnesota
- Montana
- North Dakota
- South Dakota

Comparison to Utah

- Similarities
 - ▣ Parental education
 - ▣ Student race/ethnicity
 - ▣ Free and reduced lunch
- Differences
 - ▣ Typically have higher NAEP scores than Utah

Research Methodology: Benchmark States

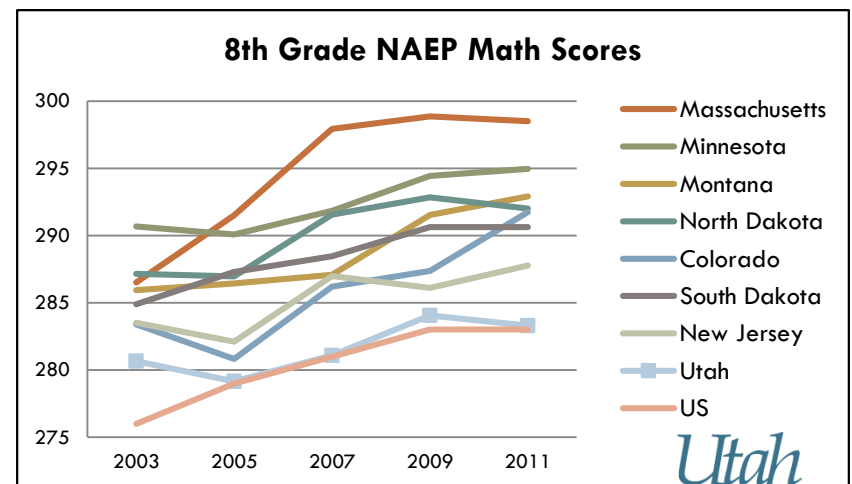
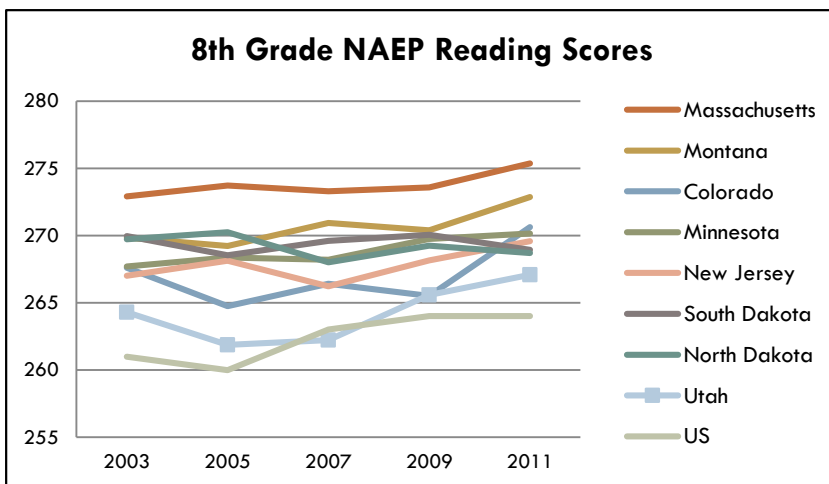
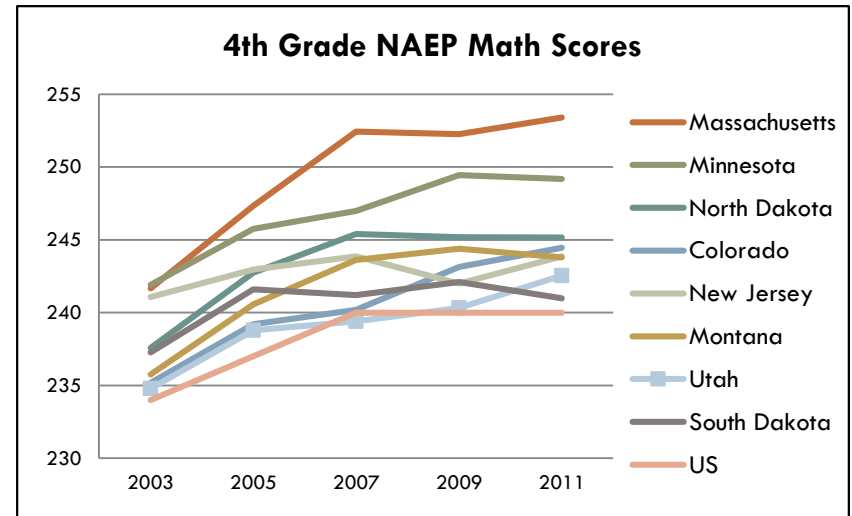
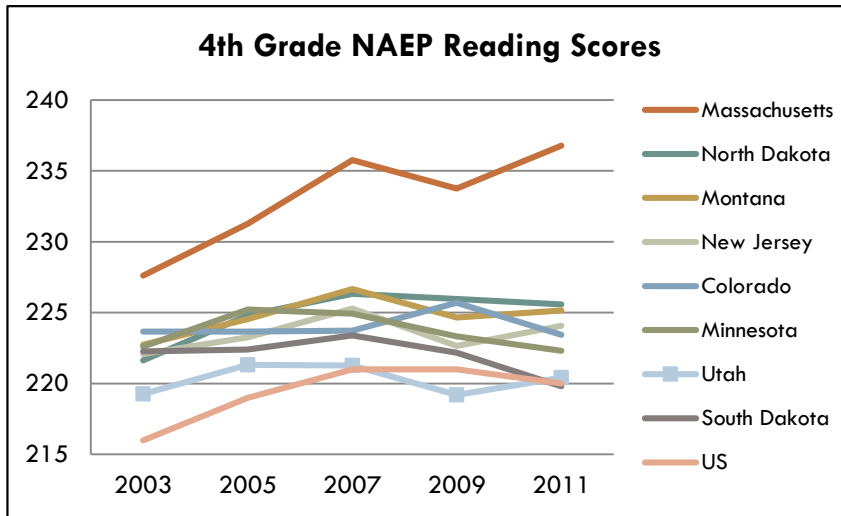
Benchmark States

- New Jersey
- Massachusetts

Characteristics

- Consistently high NAEP scores
- Higher per-pupil spending
- Larger and more diverse student populations
- Similar free and reduced lunch levels

Comparative NAEP Scores



Research Process

- Analysis of Race to the Top applications from 2010
- Literature review of studies by education economists and education researchers
- Interviews with state officials from peer states, benchmark states, and Utah:
 - ▣ State superintendents
 - ▣ State deputy superintendents
 - ▣ District superintendents
 - ▣ Student assessment specialists
- State education program reviews

Key Findings



Teacher Quality and Professional Development

- Target: Both novice and experienced teachers
- High-quality teacher induction and mentoring
- Research-based professional development
 - ▣ Pedagogical emphasis
 - ▣ Content knowledge
 - ▣ Classroom/teacher practice
 - ▣ Job-embedded training
- Personalized training that addresses both teacher and student needs
- Professional Learning Communities and Learning Walks

Standards-based Assessment

- Target: All K-12 students
- Implementation of rigorous standards
- Alignment of assessment with standards
- Informing of classroom instruction and teacher practice throughout the year
- Student growth models
- Data-driven assessment tools that provide immediate, timely feedback
- Competitive cut points

Early Childhood Education

- Target: Low-income and at-risk student populations
- High-quality pre-school programs
- Full-day kindergarten programs
- Positive return on investment:
 - ▣ Reduced grade retention
 - ▣ Decrease in use of special education services
 - ▣ Improved student achievement in elementary grades
- “Spillover” benefits for higher-income children

Early Childhood Programs

Pre-school Programs in the Peer and Benchmark States

State	Year Started	Name/Description of Program	Average Funding per Child	2011-2012 Enrollment	Percent of 4-year-olds Enrolled In State Pre-K
Colorado	1988	At-risk 3- and 4-year-olds	\$3,329	20,160	21%
Massachusetts	2005	Universal: 33 months to kindergarten age	\$4,058	13,139	14.3%
Minnesota	2005	Supplemental funding for Head Start and Early Start	\$7,592	1,731	1.2%
New Jersey	1999/2004	Abbott Schools/Non-Abbott Early Childhood program	\$11,659	51,540	28.2%

Full-day Kindergarten Programs in the Peer and Benchmark States

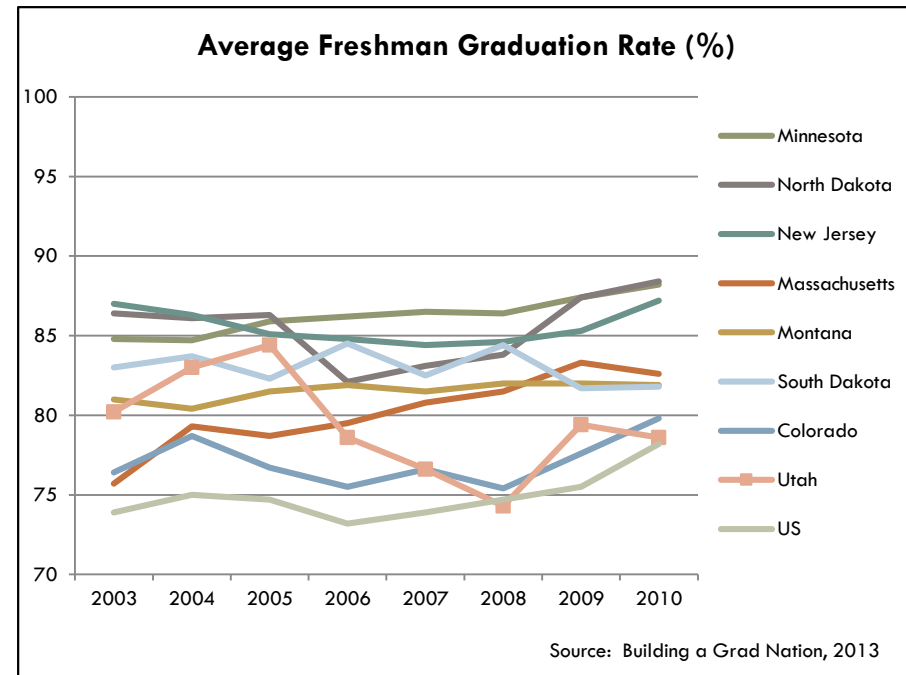
State	Year Started	FDK Offering	FDK Required by Statute	2011-2012 FDK Enrollment	Percent of Kindergarteners Enrolled In State FDK
Colorado	2005	Yes	No	44,728	67%
Massachusetts	2000	Yes	No	56,264	83%
Minnesota	2014	Yes	No	28,076*	49%
Montana	2007	Yes	No	10,138	94%**
New Jersey	1999	Yes/Mandatory in Abbott districts	No	66,239	74%

* Number of kindergarten students receiving free, full-day, every day kindergarten; does not include the number of students whose parents pay tuition for full-day kindergarten.

**2008-09 school year data

High School Interventions: Graduation Rate

- Target: At-risk high school students
- Personalized counseling
- Alternative routes to graduation
- Flexible scheduling and graduation requirements
- Leveraging proven national third-party organizations/programs
- Early warning systems for proactive interventions



High School Interventions: College and Career Readiness

- Target: All high school students
- Rigorous high school academic standards
- More options to gain college credit in high school
- Counseling for students and parents regarding college admissions, requirements, costs
- Options introduced in middle school or earlier
- Partnerships with third-parties: industry organizations, business, Higher Ed

Local Accountability

- States moving from a philosophy of “compliance” to one focused on “performance”
- State provides resources and support; districts and schools execute
- Locals choose curriculum
 - ▣ Small difference in cost between “great” and “average” curriculum
 - ▣ Large impact

