

Education Debate: Here's what we know

- **The US lags behind many other countries using standardized tests**

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/15/u-s-students-internationally-math-science/>

- Compared to many other high performing countries, more US public school students come from socially disadvantaged groups

<https://data.oecd.org/inequality/poverty-rate.htm> (select the 0-17 age option from the menu)

- Controlling for these population differences, US students compare favorably to other developed countries

<https://ed.stanford.edu/news/poor-ranking-international-tests-misleading-about-us-performance-new-report-finds>

- The sole measure of social disadvantage in US studies is eligibility for free or subsidized school lunches. About 48% of public school students are eligible, and these students have substantially lower test scores.

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_046.asp

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/bobweeks#!/vizhome/NAEP2015-01-17/ProficientbyJurisdiction>

- While test scores are gradually improving, eligibility for free lunch programs have also expanded (from about 32% 10 years ago to 48% today). So it isn't clear whether test score improvement is due to actual improvement or to changes in group membership.

https://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/gains-by-group

Bottom line: US public school system is not worse (by the test score metric anyway). Overall performance in the US is lower *because a higher proportion of US public school students are from lower socio-economic classes.*

But this begs the question: **Why is socioeconomic class related to school performance, and what can be done about it?**