



# National Education Rankings: What Nevada Can Learn

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# Context of Our Report

- Context
  - Additional education funding (primarily through categorical funding since 2013)
  - New Pupil-Centered Funding Formula
  - State Board of Education citing Nevada is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the nation in K-12 achievement rankings
- What can the national ratings tell us about Nevada's recent efforts to improve student achievement?



# Three Phases of Our Research

- Phase I
  - What makes up 3 national education rankings (K-12 Education-Specific only)
    - Education Week's *Quality Counts* Rankings
    - Annie E Casey Foundation's *Kids Count* Rankings
    - Fordham Institute's *America's Best and Worst Metro Areas for School Quality*
- Phase II
  - How has Nevada Performed in Recent History
- Phase III
  - What policy options are available based on the findings in Phase I & II

Today we will review the findings from Phase I & II

Please read the full report for additional information.



Finding 1: Each national/metro ranking is unique, and they should not be compared to one another



# Each Ranking is Unique

Both *Quality Counts* and *Kids Count* rankings use results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), but...



## *Quality Counts* NAEP – 14 Indicators

- 4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency
- 4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency
- 4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Scale Score Change 2003-2019
- 4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Scale Score Change 2003-2019
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Scale Score Difference between FRL & non-FRL Students
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Scale Score Difference between FRL & non-FRL Students
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Poverty Gap Change 2003-2019
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Poverty Gap Change 2003-2019
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Students Scoring “Advanced”
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Change in Students Scoring “Advanced” 2003-2019



## *Kids Count* NAEP – 2 Indicators

- Percentage of 2018-2019 4<sup>th</sup> Graders Not Proficient in Reading
- Percentage of 2018-2019 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Not Proficient in Math



## Each Ranking is Unique

Each Ranking uses a different number and/or source of data points to arrive at their education rankings.

*Quality Counts* – 18 individual data points

*Kids Count* – 4 data points

*America's Best and Worst Metros* – 4 data points





# Finding 2: The choice of data points significantly influences the rankings

See Table 7 in report for all the various indicators used by the different rankings



## Nevada's Result in the Most Recent Rankings

- *Quality Counts* – 18<sup>th</sup>
- *Kids Count* – 45<sup>th</sup>
- *America's Best and Worst Metros* – 49<sup>th</sup>



Finding 3: The rankings are based upon a sample of students or challenging-to-interpret data



# Rankings Use Difficult to Interpret Data

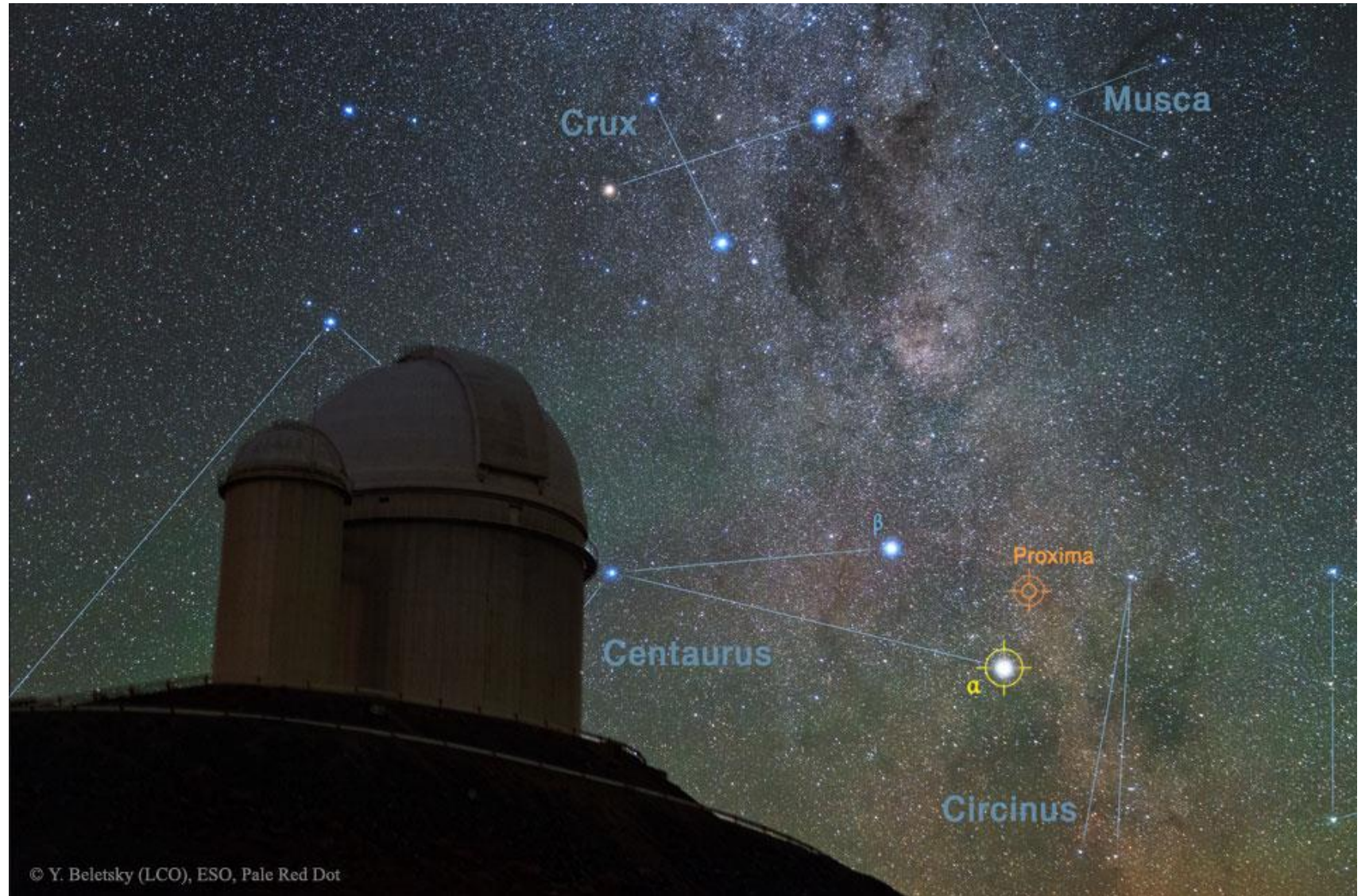
How should we measure academic achievement?

*Quality Counts & Kids Count* use NAEP

*America's Best and Worst Metros* uses the Stanford Education Data Archive



Finding 4: The data are dated – any new programs intended to improve Nevada’s national education ranking will not be reflected immediately.



Source: NASA (<https://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap160825.html>)



## The Data Is Dated

- *Quality Counts* 2021 Rankings are based on 2019 and 2020 data
- *Kids Count* 2021 Rankings based on 2017-2019 data
- *America's Best and Worst Metros* (2021) based on 2016-2018 data

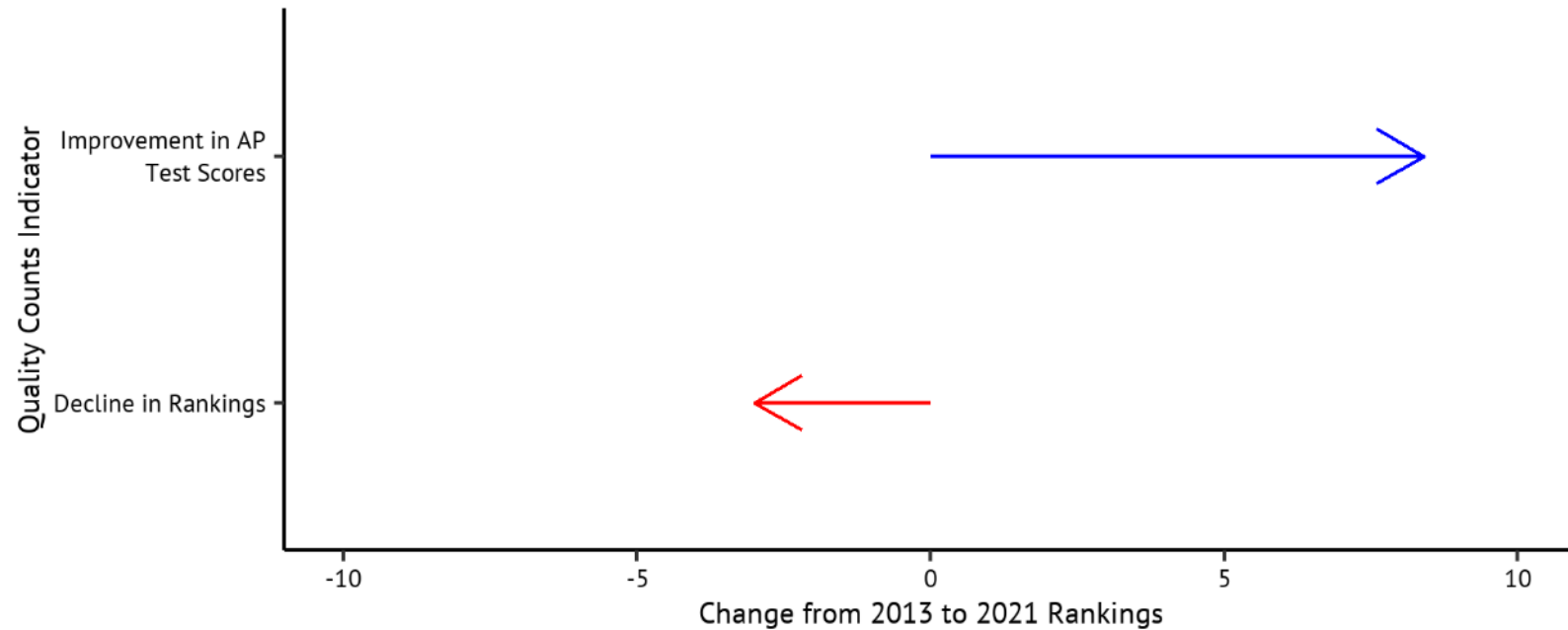


Finding 5: The rankings are relative



## Improving Outcomes does not Guarantee Improvement in Rankings

*Indicator: High AP Test Scores*



*Source: Education Week Quality Counts Reports*



## Findings from the Study – A Recap

- Each ranking is unique and should not be compared to one another
- The data points included (or excluded) in each ranking greatly impact the results
- The rankings are based upon a sample of students or hard to interpret data
- The data are dated
- The rankings are relative



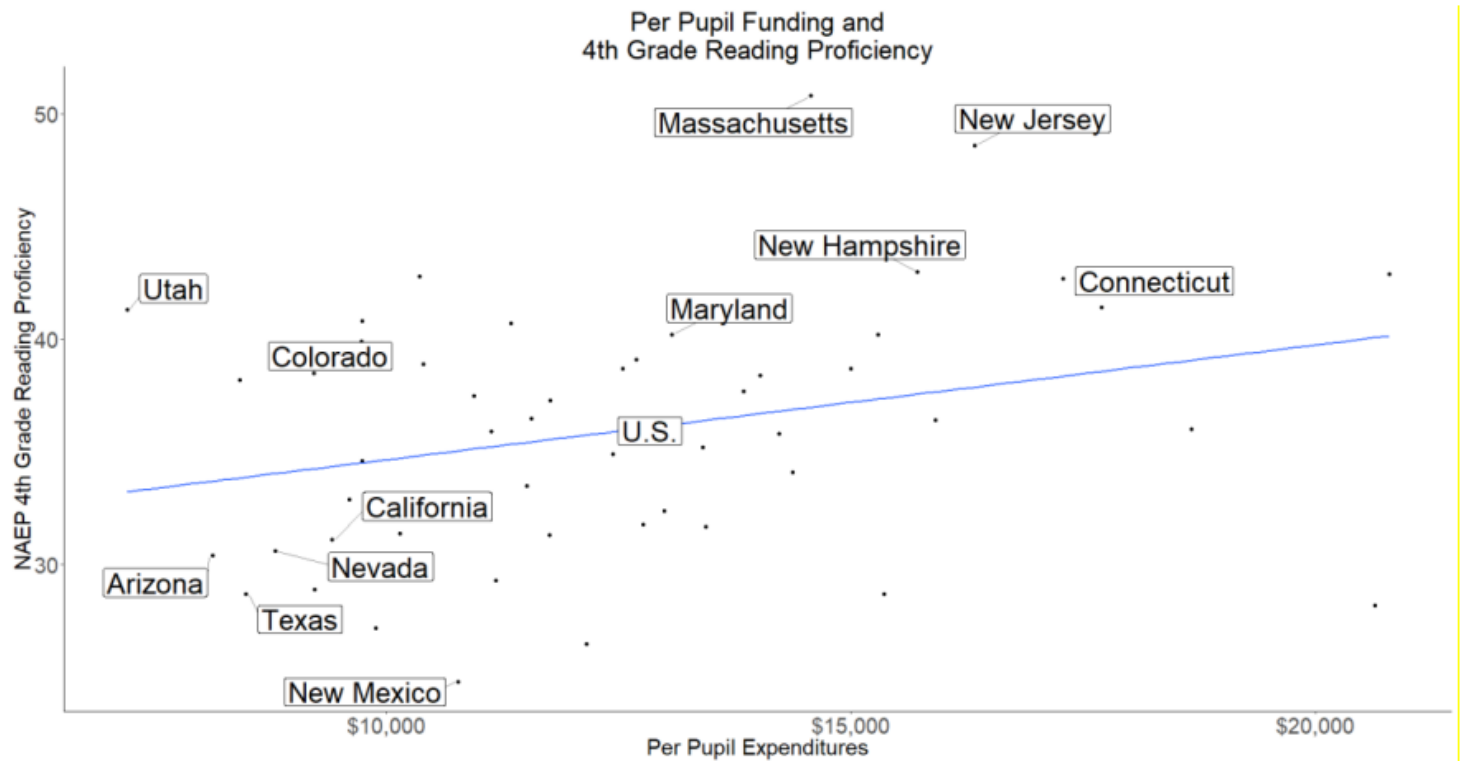
# Returning to the Initial Question that Framed this Research

What can the national ratings tell us about Nevada's recent efforts to improve student achievement?



# Other Guinn Center research suggests money has a positive effect on educational outcomes

Figure 8. Relationship between Per Pupil Funding and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency



From 2019 Guinn Center Report *Nevada K-12 Education Finance*.

<https://guinncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Guinn-Center-K-12-Education-Finance-2019.pdf>



## Considerations for Phase III

- Be careful with using these rankings as a proxy for student achievement and educational improvement.
- However, Phase III of this report will consider how these rankings can be influenced by more money.
  - Including potential strategies and policy levers that include consideration of funding.



Questions?