



American Students Failing to Meet Global Standards

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American students continue to lag behind students internationally, a trend that is threatening our nation's global standing. Despite spending more than \$11,000 per student annually on education, the United States ranks towards the bottom in international testing and is forced to dedicate \$16.6 billion each year to remedial education for high school graduates who still lack the skills needed to go on to college or join the work force.

"The American Education Diet: Can U.S. Students Survive on Junk Food?", released today as an action paper by the Center for Education Reform (CER), reveals the shocking state of American education and calls for the necessary reforms to put America back on the path to academic prominence.

"Our current education system refuses to accept change and adjust to the growing global economy," said CER President Jeanne Allen. "If we continue to accept the status quo and act as if nothing is wrong, the effects on our country's economy and culture will be felt for decades. Failure to embrace dramatic education reforms threatens the nation's long-range future as a global power."

"The American Education Diet" looks at U.S. student achievement in math and science, reading, language, history, and cultural studies. It also examines some of the causes and effects of our failing system, including the misappropriation of time and money, teacher quality, grade inflation, dropout rates, and the achievement gap.

Some of the more disturbing findings include:

- In 2003, American 15-year-olds trailed most industrialized nations in science and math, according to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Education Indicators 2005, finishing 19th out of 30 nations in science and 21st out of 29 countries in math.
- Seventy-one percent of U.S. students told the Public Agenda Foundation that they do the bare minimum to get by.
- Seventy-four percent of professors and 73 percent of employers told Public Agenda that American students lack basic grammar and spelling skills. Roughly the same percentages said they also lack the ability to write clearly.
- In 2004, over half of those teaching physical science classes (chemistry, physics, earth, or space sciences) are without a major or minor in any of the physical sciences. In high poverty schools, nearly 70 percent were without a major or minor in science.

Last released by CER in 2001, "The American Education Diet" is a composite of evidence compiled by various sources. The action paper finds that American education has not improved in the last five years, and in fact students are falling further behind academically, compared with their international peers.

[Click here to download the report.](#)

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The Center for Education Reform (CER) creates opportunities for and challenges obstacles to better education for America's communities. Founded in 1993, CER combines education policy with grassroots advocacy to foster positive and bold education reforms. For more information, contact CER at (202) 822-9000 or [send us email](#).

