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**GEORGE W. BUSH INSTITUTE UNVEILS GLOBAL REPORT CARD**

*First of its kind study measures how U.S. school districts stack up against global competitors; finds U.S. students lagging behind, even in affluent suburban school districts*

**DALLAS**—A new study has found that, when compared with foreign counterparts, U.S. student performance is surprisingly mediocre in school districts that are often viewed as the pride of American K-12 education.

The study's findings are encompassed in a new Global Report Card for America's schools (GRC), unveiled today by the George W. Bush Institute. The GRC compares student achievement in virtually every U.S. school district with academic achievement in other developed countries. The comparison is intended to provide a true measure of how America's students stack up against international competitors.

"President Bush understands that in order for our children to succeed and prosper, they must have a strong academic foundation, which is why education reform was a priority for his administration and why we have made it a major area of focus at the Bush Institute," said Dr. Kerri Briggs, program director for education reform at the Bush Institute and former U.S. assistant secretary for education. "The results of this study should inspire parents and influential citizens to get engaged in the reform effort. American students in both poor urban districts and some of the wealthiest suburbs are trailing behind the international competition."

The GRC study, conducted by Jay Greene, a fellow at the George W. Bush Institute and professor of education at the University of Arkansas, along with co-author Josh B. McGee, compares academic performance, based on test scores, of nearly 14,000 U.S. school districts to the average of a group of 25 developed countries – including France, Australia, Israel, Slovenia, and Singapore. All but two of the 25 have lower per-capita GDP than the United States. The findings from the GRC are being published in *Education Next* ([www.educationnext.org](http://www.educationnext.org)), a public policy journal, and are also available at [www.globalreportcard.org](http://www.globalreportcard.org) where visitors can compare school district data.

"The Global Report Card reveals that many of our most affluent suburban school districts rank near the middle when compared with the student achievement of our international peers," said Dr. Greene. "Parents should be concerned that their children will be competing in the jobs market with young people abroad who are outperforming their kids."

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Even in public school districts that contain America’s 50 wealthiest suburbs with populations of at least 50,000 – such as Greenwich, CT; Palo Alto, CA; and Reston, VA, student achievement is mediocre relative to students in other developed countries. While students in these 50 districts register test scores far in excess of large urban districts in the U.S., they barely edge out the *average* student in our comparison group of 25 countries. These affluent suburbs fell into the 52nd percentile in mathematics compared to international competitors in 2007, the most recent year for statistics. That means their scores were exceeded by 48 percent of students in the typical developed country.

“Never before has anyone put virtually every school district in the United States on the same level playing field on which all the industrialized nations of the world are performing,” said Paul Peterson, editor-in-chief of *Education Next*. “Now that Greene and McGee have done just that, we learn, unfortunately, that very few schools in the United States are capable of bringing their students up to major-league levels.”

Education reform is one of four major areas of focus at the Bush Institute. The Global Report Card is the third major initiative launched by the Institute in the area of education reform. The first effort, the Alliance to Reform Education Leadership (AREL), is based on the principle that leadership makes a difference in successful schools. AREL networks innovative sites across the country to change the paradigm by which principals are recruited, selected, prepared, certified, empowered and evaluated. Middle School Matters (MSM) is the second education program launched by the Institute. Knowing that middle school is a critical intervention point to keep students on the path to high school graduation, the program integrates research based strategies and support tools to assess leadership, effective teaching methods, achievement, academic data and dropout prevention programs to overhaul the traditional middle school model.

**About the Global Report Card:**

Based on the groundbreaking educational reforms of “No Child Left Behind,” the Bush Institute champions change formulated around the principles of accountability. The goal of the GRC is to provide easy-to-understand and widely accessible information about student performance to inform and inspire America’s families to stand for excellence in our nation’s schools. The GRC compares student achievement in U.S. school districts with international academic achievement to provide a true global measure of how America’s schools stack up. The results of the Global Report Card can be found and explored at [www.globalreportcard.org](http://www.globalreportcard.org).

**About the George W. Bush Institute:**

The George W. Bush Institute seeks to improve the human condition through human freedom, educational reform, global health, and economic growth. In all its programming, the Institute integrates initiatives that empower women and support social enterprise as proven catalysts for change. The Bush Institute is the innovation policy arm of the George W. Bush Presidential Center, which supports the Presidential library, located on the campus of SMU in Dallas. For more information, please visit [www.bushcenter.com](http://www.bushcenter.com).

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