

Why “International Benchmarking” is an Important Principle of a Comprehensive Assessment System

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The paradigm of the state testing system in America

- ▶ Each state develops its own academic *content standards*
- ▶ Each state develops its own *performance standards*
- ▶ Each state develops its own test
- ▶ Each state reports adequate yearly progress to the federal government based on
 - different content standards,
 - different performance standards,
 - different tests.



What is wrong with this picture?

- ▶ Data from the 50 states are not comparable.
 - No inference about national progress is possible.
 - We cannot tell if progress in one state is better than progress in another state.
- ▶ From a scientific point of view the system lacks transparency.
 - Transparency in measurement is the first and most fundamental requirement for progress in science.
 - Common metrics are needed for transparency.
 - The ability to derive comparable measures from different measuring devices is the very definition of transparency.



A lack of transparency...

- ▶ Leads to policy jabberwocky.
 - Without a common metric the word “proficiency” means whatever you want it to mean.
- ▶ Misleads the public.
 - Low performance standards can be used to artificially jack up adequate yearly progress.
- ▶ Denies students the opportunity to learn career ready and college ready skills.
 - If all students are proficient, what is the motivation to teach them a more challenging curriculum?



***International benchmarking* can be used to obtain transparency by deriving comparable measures from different measuring devices**

- ▶ We compare each state achievement standard to a high common international standard.
- ▶ This gives us a comparable measure against which state standards from different tests can be compared.



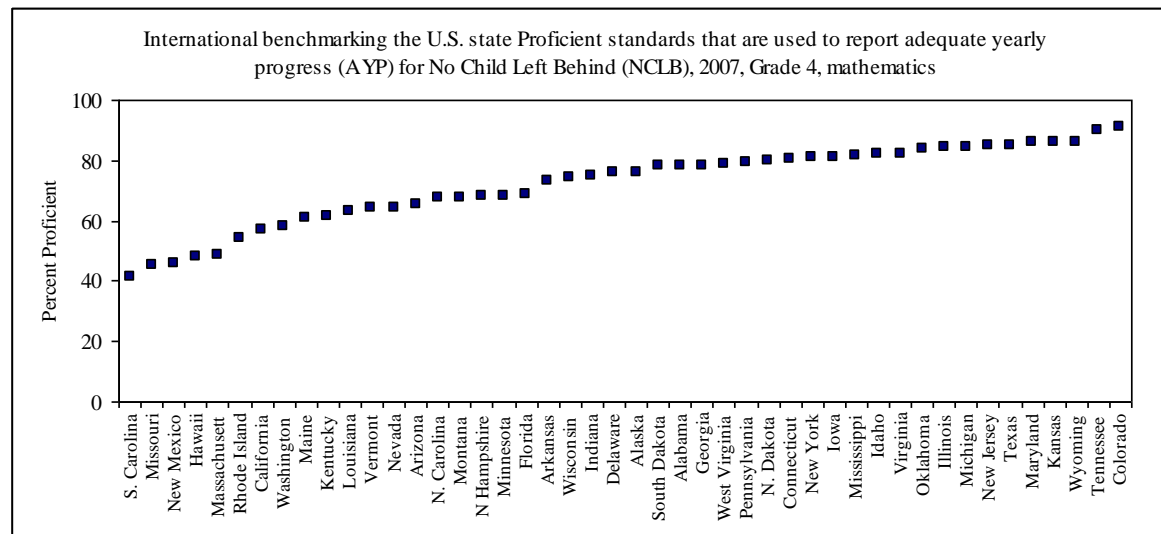
Using Grades to Communicate Common International Benchmarks

Benchmark on TIMSS & PIRLS	Cut-score on TIMSS & PIRLS	Phillips (2009) Benchmark Grade
Advanced	650 625 600	A+ A A-
High	575 550 525	B+ B B-
Intermediate	500 475 450	C+ C C-
Low	425 400 375	D+ D D-
Below Low		BD



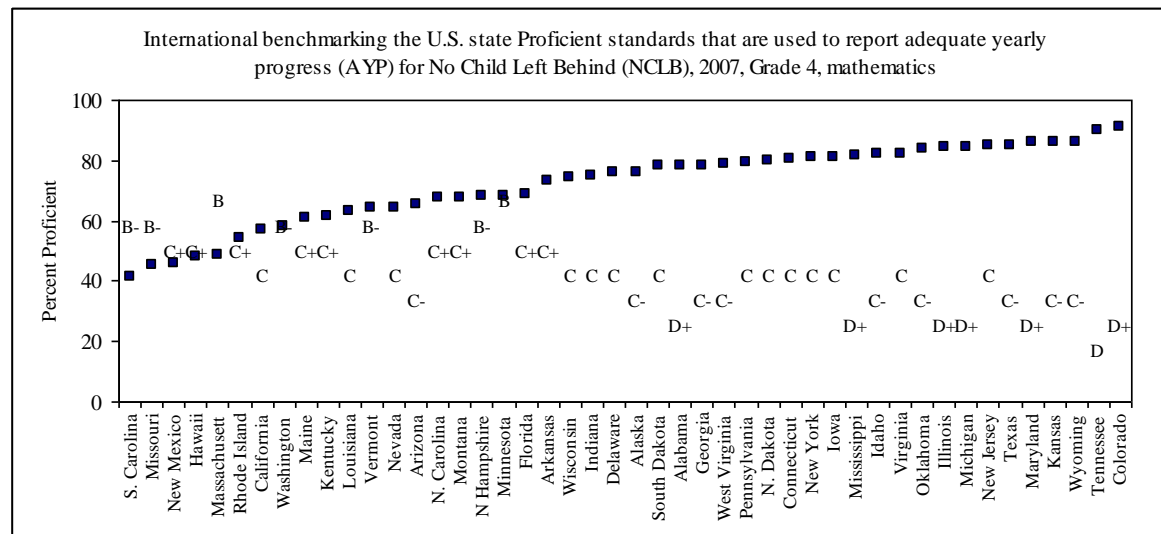
International Benchmarking with TIMSS: Grade 4, Mathematics

References: (1) Bandeira de Mello, V., Blankenship, C., & McLaughlin, D. H. (2009). *Mapping state proficiency standards onto NAEP scales: 2005-2007* (NCES 2010-456). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, IES, U.S. DOE, and (2) Phillips and Jiang (2010), *Internationally Benchmarking State Achievement Standards in Massachusetts*. American Institutes for Research, Washington DC (to be released in 2010).



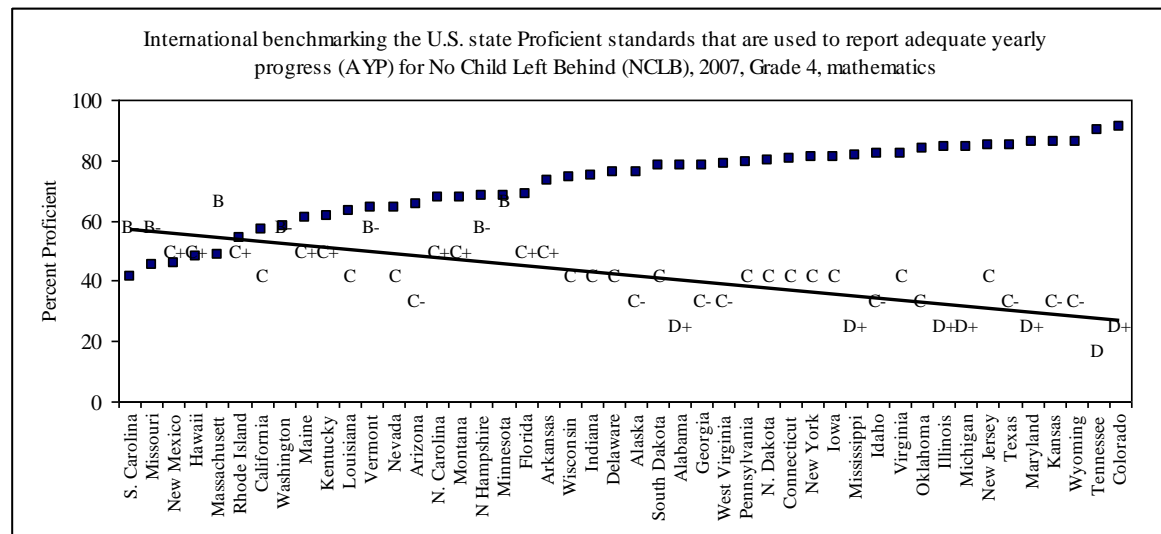
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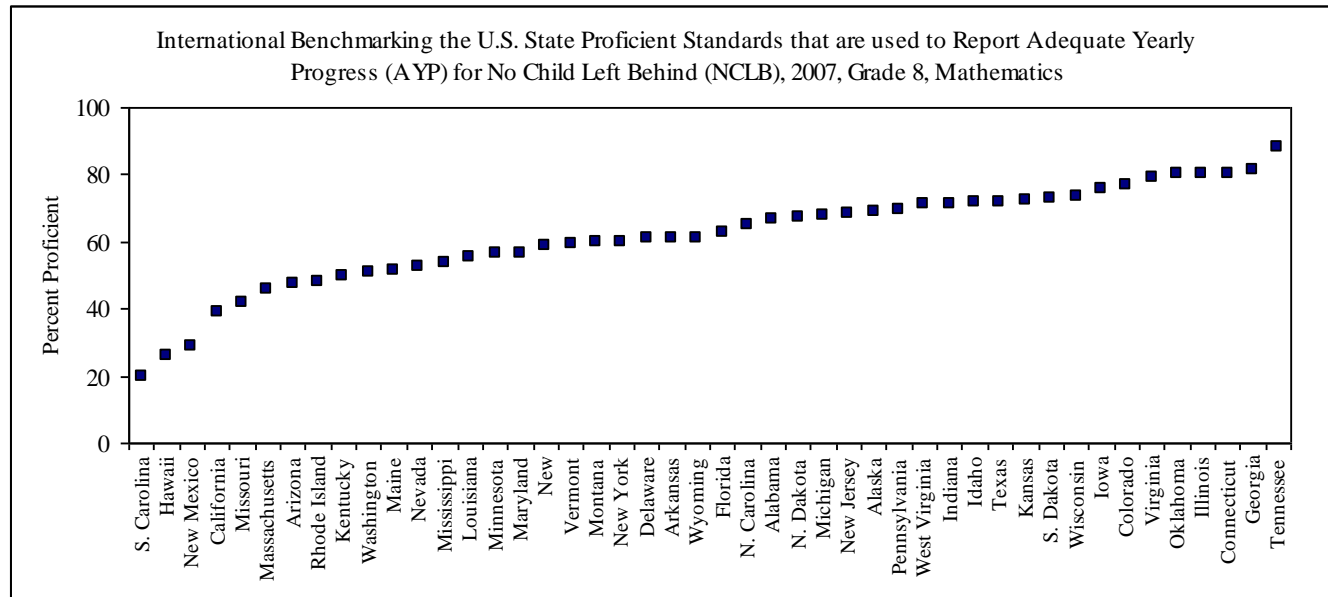
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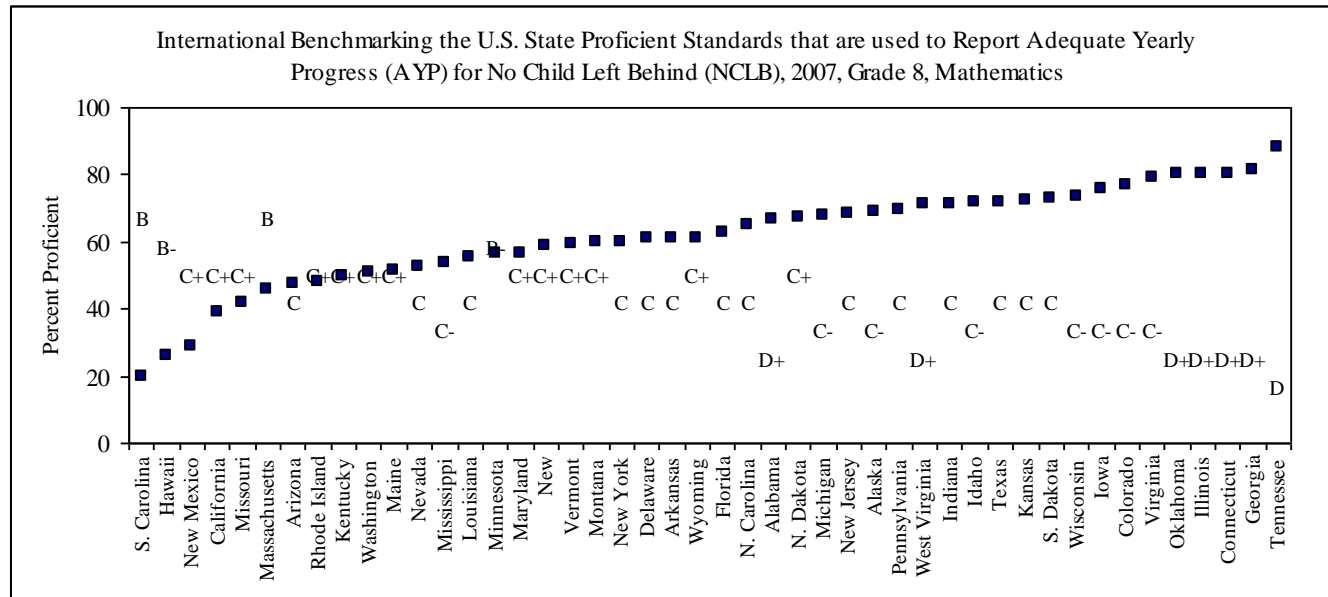
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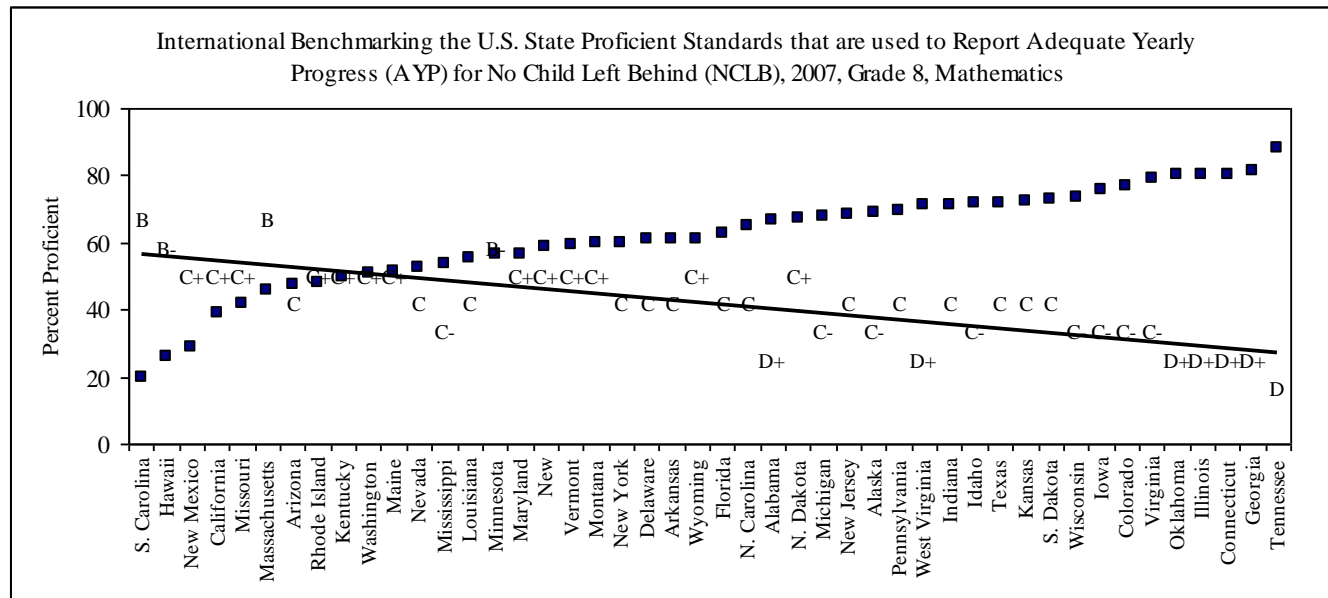
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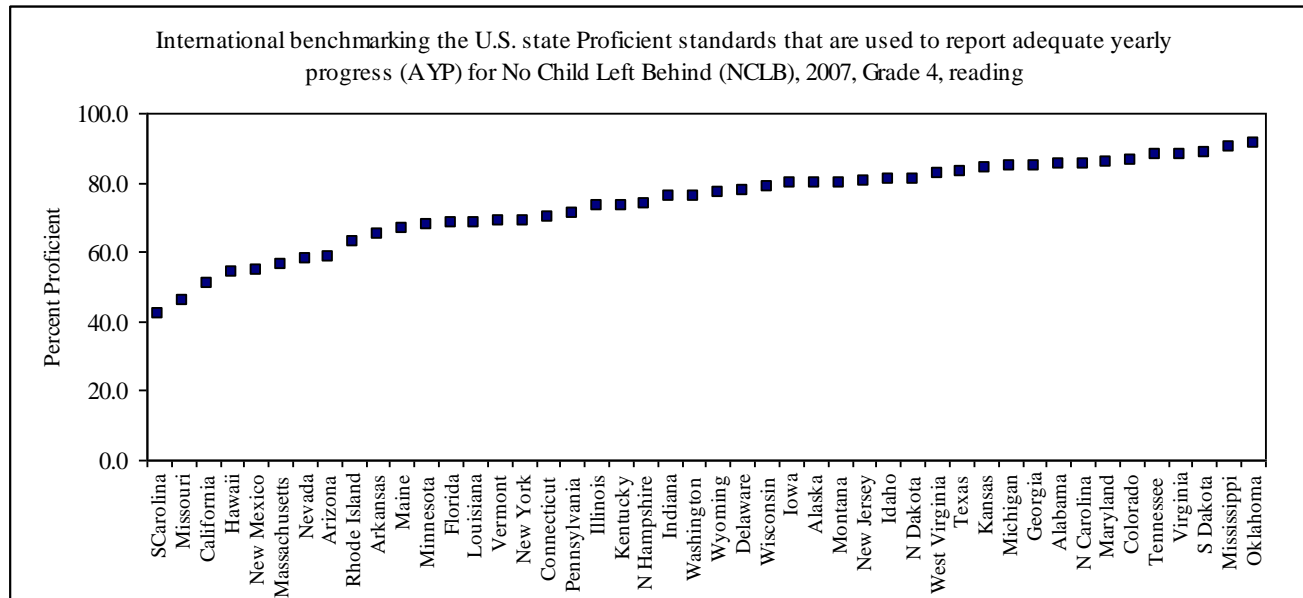
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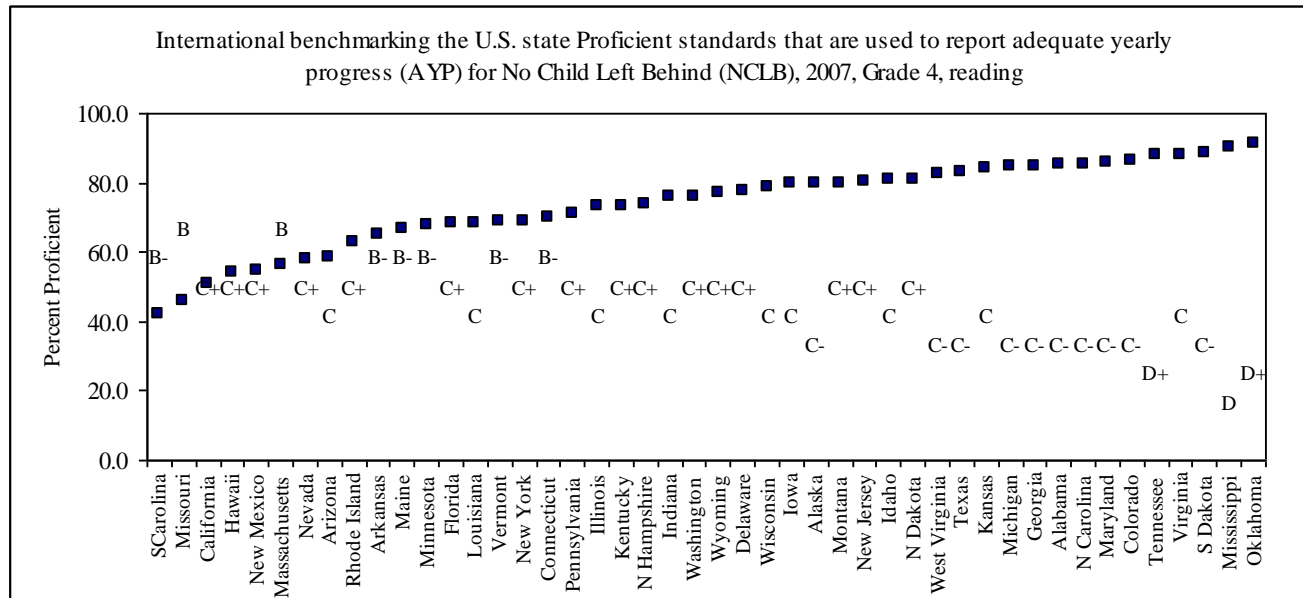
International Benchmarking with PIRLS: Grade 4, Reading

References: (1) Bandeira de Mello, V., Blankenship, C., & McLaughlin, D. H. (2009). *Mapping state proficiency standards onto NAEP scales: 2005–2007* (NCES 2010–456). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, IES, U.S. DOE, and (2) Figure provided by Phillips, 2010, American Institutes for Research, Washington DC.



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