

## No progress + lower standards = progress

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The Department of Education has released a new report that shows a disturbing trend in state educational standards.

The [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) (NAEP) report found that many states are setting educational standards so low that they can claim they made progress when none was made. States also continue to get federal dollars through the [No Child Left Behind](#) program. Neal McClusky, associate director of the Cato Institute's [Center for Educational Freedom](#), believes the report will be used to argue in favor of stricter federal standards in education.



"Well, if you see almost everybody setting the lowest standards [they] can, [and] almost every politician setting the lowest standards they can set, why would you ever think, 'If we put it at the federal level, then everything we've seen in politics will change, and somehow they'll set high standards?' Of course they won't because all of the incentives are to set low standards, so they're easy to meet," argues McClusky.



The Center's associate director contends that control of education needs to be given over to parents so that they can decide which schools their children attend. With control then taken away from the federal and even the state governments, he says schools will have to compete for dollars and students. That way, he says, failing institutions will not be able to survive.