

Boys' Scores Show Improvement; Race, Class Gaps Remain

BOYS. From A1

misplaced and why some fear a focus on sex differences could sidetrack federal, state and private efforts to put more resources into inner-city and rural schools, where both boys and girls need better instruction.

"There's no doubt that some groups of boys — particularly Hispanic and black boys and boys from low-income homes — are in real trouble," Education Sector senior policy analyst Sara Mead says in the report. "But the predominant issues for them are race and class, not gender."

Black and Hispanic boys test far below white boys, the report notes. The difference between white and black boys in fourth-grade reading last year was 10 times as great as the improvement for all boys on that test since 1992. Still, the report notes, the performance of black and Hispanic boys is not getting worse. The average fourth-grade reading scores for black boys improved more than those of whites and Hispanics of both sexes.

Craig Jerald, an educational consultant who has analyzed trends for

the federal government and the newspaper Education Week, said that "Ed Sector is right to call foul on all the crisis rhetoric, and we should stop using that word, though there are a few troubling statistics and trends that deserve further investigation." He noted a huge gap in writing skills between girls and boys, bad results in reading among older boys, and a sharp drop in high school seniors' positive feelings toward school that is worse among girls than boys.

Michael Gurian, a best-selling author who says boys are in trouble, said in reaction to the report: "I truly don't mind if everyone took the word 'crisis' out of the dialogue." But he said he thought the report "missed the cumulative nature of the problems boys face." The federal education data it cites, he said, are "just a small piece of the puzzle."

According to the report, reading achievement by 9-year-old boys increased 15 points on a 500-point scale between 1971 and 2004, and girls that age increased seven points, remaining five points ahead of boys. Reading achievement for 13-year-olds improved four points

for boys and three points for girls, with girls 10 points ahead. Among 17-year-olds, there was almost no change in reading achievement, with girls up one point, boys down one point and girls 14 points ahead.

In mathematics achievement between 1973 and 2004, 9-year-old boys gained 25 points and girls gained 20 points, with boys ending up three points ahead. Thirteen-year-old boys increased 18 points and girls 12 points, with boys three points ahead. Among 17-year-olds, boys lost one point, girls gained four and boys were three points ahead.

The report notes that boys are far more likely to be diagnosed with learning disabilities. Two-thirds of students in special education classes are male. But, it notes, "the number of girls with disabilities has also grown rapidly in recent decades, meaning this is not just a boy issue."

To some, however, it's all about the boys. "At every level of education, they're falling behind," Newsweek reported.

Esquire proclaimed: "We're faced with the accrual of a significant population of boys who aren't

well prepared for either school or work."

The Detroit News said that "every year, women increase their presence on campuses nationwide, while men do not."

Some of today's focus on boys might be backlash to legal remedies such as the 1972 Title IX law set up to ensure equality in education for girls, critics say. For several decades, school systems have worked to steer girls into more skilled math and science classes. Now girls in high school appear to be better prepared for college than boys, the report said. But, it adds, both sexes are taking more college-level courses, such as calculus, than ever.

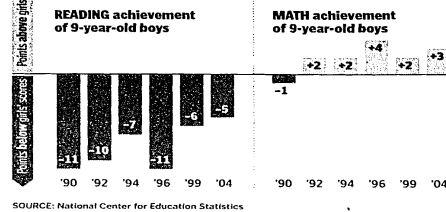
More men are enrolling in college, and the share of men ages 25 to 29 with a college degree, 22 percent, is significantly higher than that of older men. The study did note that women are enrolling and graduating from college at higher rates than men.

The "boy crisis," the report says, has been used by conservative authors who accuse "misguided feminists" of lavishing resources on female students at the expense of males and by liberal authors who

The Truth About Boys

Boys have lower reading scores than girls, but their performance has been rising since the 1990s.

Their math scores are also on the rise.



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics

say schools are "forcing all children into a teacher-led pedagogical box that is particularly ill-suited to boys' interests and learning styles."

"Yet there is not sufficient evidence — or the right kind of evidence — available to draw firm conclusions," the report says. "As a result, there is a sort of free market for theories about why boys are underperforming girls in school, with parents, educators, media, and the public choosing to give credence to the explanations that are the best marketed and that most appeal to their pre-existing preferences."

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President Bush Betrays Murdered Americans for Big Oil, Undermining the War on Terrorism

Imagine President Bush forgiving Osama bin Laden and forgetting about 9/11 at the behest of Big Oil!

Ridiculous? President Bush engaged in a similar act of betrayal on May 12th, signing an Executive order to Congress removing Libya from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list, effective on June 26, 2006.

This is more than a betrayal of our loved ones, who were murdered by the Libyan bombing of Pan Am flight 103. It's also a betrayal of the American people in the war on terrorism, sending a message to other rogue states that our national security is for sale if the price is right for Big Oil.

Consider these facts:

- Libya refuses to acknowledge its culpability and turn over all evidence of its involvement in the mass murder of Americans in the bombing of Pan Am 103, funding years of appeals for Al-Megrahi, the only Libyan official criminally convicted of mass murder (whom we know did not act alone).
- Libya offered, but *has never paid in full* a "No-Fault Settlement" in 2003 to the victims of Pan Am flight 103. It has not fully compensated the families of Americans killed by Libyan bombings of UTA flight 772 and Berlin's La Belle discotheque, among numerous others.
- Libya continues sponsoring terror related activities. Just two years ago, Libya hatched a plot to assassinate Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdullah, a terrorist conspiracy for which the Libyan "hit man" was convicted in U.S. Court.

Already, the U.S. government has issued visas to Seif Qadhafi and other Libyan officials, *from the same terrorist regime* that murdered Americans, allowing terrorist supporters and sympathizers to freely roam the American homeland, which President Bush and Congress are supposed to secure and protect.

The waiting period for Libya to be removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list should be extended from 45 to 180 days, so Congress can review the president. Libya should stay on the List until it confesses its crimes, makes full amends to all victims of the terrorist acts it sponsored, and demonstrates by words and deeds that it no longer supports terrorism in any form.

Call your members of Congress at (202) 224-3121.

Tell them to overturn the President, choose country over party and support the war on terrorism by keeping Libya on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list.

Extend the Congressional Review Period to 180 days

Families of Pan Am Flight 103/Lockerbie (An association of some of the Pan Am Flight 103 victim family members established in 1989.)

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