



Analysis: Niche.com rankings deceive parents on the quality of education

Niche.com just released its list of the best school districts in Kansas, and they are about as reliable as a boat made of cheesecloth. School districts tout these rankings as a measure of the quality of education, as in, having high proficiency levels in core subjects. But that clearly isn't the case.

Only one school district among the [25 best in Kansas](#) as identified by Niche.com has reading and math proficiency above 50%, but Niche.com gives most of them an "A" for academics. Most districts on the list have less than 50% proficiency in both subjects, and some have proficiency levels in the 30s. West Elk is ranked #4 in Kansas even though it has more students below grade level than are proficient.

The Niche.com [methodology](#) doesn't explain how achievement scores are weighted, or even which scores are included. But results must be graded on an extraordinarily generous curve.

Math and ELA Proficiency for Districts on the Niche.com List of 'Best Districts'						
School District	Math			English language arts		
	Below Grade Level	At Grade Level, Needs Remedial Training	Proficient	Below Grade Level	At Grade Level, Needs Remedial Training	Proficient
Blue Valley	16%	33%	51%	14%	31%	55%
De Soto	15%	36%	48%	16%	34%	50%
Olathe	24%	35%	40%	26%	35%	39%
West Elk	47%	36%	17%	39%	39%	22%
Auburn-Washburn	28%	37%	35%	32%	33%	34%
Shawnee Mission	26%	34%	40%	24%	32%	43%
Maize	24%	40%	36%	25%	35%	40%
Pawnee Heights	22%	40%	38%	29%	30%	41%
Silver Lake	12%	35%	53%	19%	34%	47%
Triplains	18%	39%	42%	42%	33%	24%
Goddard	26%	37%	47%	23%	34%	43%
Lawrence	33%	35%	32%	30%	32%	38%
Manhattan-Ogden	29%	36%	35%	25%	33%	42%
Hesston	14%	36%	50%	21%	36%	43%
Sterling	15%	32%	53%	21%	34%	44%
Weskan	13%	43%	45%	14%	42%	44%
Andover	17%	34%	49%	17%	34%	49%
Rock Creek	17%	39%	44%	16%	38%	47%
Renwick	15%	34%	51%	18%	38%	45%
Durham-Hillsboro	26%	33%	41%	25%	35%	40%
Piper KC	21%	36%	43%	25%	35%	40%
Cheylin	16%	40%	44%	27%	41%	32%
Royal Valley	24%	44%	32%	26%	42%	32%
Chapman	28%	42%	30%	25%	41%	34%
Rock Hills	33%	41%	26%	31%	32%	37%
State Average	34%	36%	29%	34%	34%	32%

Source: KSDE, all students tested on 2022 state assessment rounded to whole number