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*“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”*

*Daniel Webster*

**Update from the Election and Key Issues for Christian Schools**

As the results from Tuesday’s election continue to be tallied, political pundits are analyzing the outcome, noting that while the red wave predicted by many Republicans did not materialize, power in at least one house of Congress will shift from Democrats to Republicans. The shift has the potential to significantly curtail the administration’s ability to advance progressive policies. Furthermore, a Republican-controlled House of Representatives will likely launch [investigations](#) into the actions of some federal agencies, including many of the COVID-19 health and education polices and the DOJ probe into parents’ involvement at contentious school board meetings. On the state level, several states considered abortion [ballot measures](#) in response to the Supreme Court’s *Dobbs* decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* that sent the abortion issue back to the legislatures for regulation. Backed by large national fundraising efforts, pro-abortion advocates prevailed in California, Michigan, and Vermont as voters approved state constitutional amendments to make abortion a right in their state constitutions. In Kentucky, voters rejected a constitutional amendment which would have declared no right to an abortion or funding of abortion. It should be noted that Kentucky [already has a law](#) in place which prohibits abortions except when the mother’s life is in danger; this law is being challenged in court, so the issue now rests with the state supreme court. Five states had ballot measures regarding the legalization of marijuana. While two states passed the measures (Maryland and Missouri), voters in Arkansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota [voted against](#) the measures, led by a large coalition of faith and civic leaders. Ben Johnson, writing for *The Washington Stand*, [noted](#) that “pro-family leaders cared less about the margin of victory than the quality, competence, and faith of the leaders empowered at the polls.”

In the Senate, the Georgia race appears to be headed for a run-off in December, the outcome of which could determine the majority party in the Senate. The impact of this run-off could significantly affect votes on issues concerning to Christian schools both in the lame duck and in the 118th Congress. The Respect for Marriage Act (RFMA) is waiting for a vote in the Senate, having already passed the House during the summer. The bill is presented as simply a codification of the Supreme Court’s *Obergefell* decision which legalized same-sex marriage; however, the language of RFMA goes beyond what the *Obergefell* decision approved, thereby endangering not just religious liberty, but also parental rights, child safety, Christian education, and school choice. The AACCS has prepared an [issue brief](#) which outlines these concerns. During the lame duck, the Senate is also likely to consider the inclusion of females in the draft when it reauthorizes the National Defense Authorization Act. This issue has been vigorously debated over the last year, and the AACCS has [joined other groups](#) in urging the Senate not to take this step. As the balance of power for the Senate remains at play, **we encourage those who are concerned about these issues to [contact your Senators](#) and urge them to oppose both the Respect for Marriage Act and the inclusion of females in the draft.**

## **Post-Pandemic Test Scores for AACCS Students Are Good News**

Recently released NAEP test scores document significant losses of learning in reading and math for 3rd-, 4th-, and 8th-grade students in U.S. schools. In contrast, students in AACCS member schools participating in the Iowa Assessments program mostly held steady in reading and math for the same period. In some cases, students even made small improvements. Almost 4,000 8th-grade students and 5,000 3rd- and 4th-grade students from more than 450 AACCS schools participated in the testing for the comparison period. When 2019 and 2022 scores are compared, AACCS student scores for reading and math either improved slightly or declined by numbers less significant than the NAEP declines. The AACCS comparison used standard scores, the same score type used for the NAEP. Standard scores measure student progress on an achievement continuum. For AACCS students on the Iowa Assessments, 3rd-grade reading declined 1.1 points while 3rd-grade math improved by 1.2 points. By comparison, 3rd-grade NAEP scores declined by 5 points in reading and 7 points in math. For 4th graders, AACCS scores declined by 3.6 points in reading but improved by 2.2 points in math. By comparison, 4th-grade NAEP reading scores declined by 3 points and math scores by 5 points. For 8th-grade students, AACCS scores declined by .7 (seven-tenths) of a point in reading and 3.8 points in math, compared to NAEP declines for 8th graders of 3 points in reading and 8 points in math.

Jeff Walton, the AACCS executive director, commented: “This is really good news for Christian schools and their students. While we can’t make a direct comparison of Iowa Assessment scores to NAEP scores, the comparison of Iowa scores to Iowa scores over the same period for a significant number of students is meaningful . . . and the data says that students in Christian schools generally maintained their academic progress through the disruptions of the pandemic. In fact, the data for students in all 13 grades of the AACCS Iowa program is very similar. The test data cannot identify a cause, but our member schools worked very hard to continue on-campus learning when other schools were sending kids home. When they were required by state and local authorities to shut their doors temporarily, many schools were very good about maintaining strong connections with their students and families and providing resources for distance learning. Learning was disrupted, but the Iowa data provides good evidence that it didn’t fall off the cliff that was the experience for many school kids in 2020 and 2021.”

### **In Case You Missed It:**

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACCS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Promise to America’s Children](#)

[Cal Thomas: Cheating the Children](#)