



## Suggestions for better measurement of intelligence

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Earlier this year, Inc. magazine published an article ranking all 50 states according to the average IQ scores reported for their residents. Interestingly, Kentucky ranked 34th, with an average IQ of 99.4, which is slightly above the national average of 98.

And although we are somewhat smarter than our neighbors in Tennessee, who average 97.7, we are still well below our friends in Ohio, who average 101.8.

Aside from the obvious conclusion that intelligence increases as you move north, I think there are tangible things we can do to raise our standing among our peers.

The first task involves defining what intelligence is. Historically, intelligence has been measured by IQ tests, which are often supplemented with ACT and SAT scores, as was the case with the rankings noted above.

Thinking outside the box, I'd like to suggest we determine intelligence based on whether one can distinguish fact from fiction. This seems like a reasonable approach; certainly, it's more practical than relying on abstract psychological instruments.

The premise is straightforward. Stupid people tend to take everything literally, whereas smarter people seem to instinctively know when there's more going on than meets the eye.

Perhaps we could devise an IQ assessment built around the notion that smarter people have a more developed sense of humor. For example, individuals who can recognize sarcasm and satire are clearly more intelligent than those who can't.

So, if we really want to increase our ranking on the nationwide IQ scale, I think we need to make sure our schools work more diligently to produce citizens who can see the absurdity embedded in the world around them – and not take themselves too seriously.

The legislature needs to make sure comedy as well as critical thinking are both emphasized in the curriculum. It's simply a matter of priorities.

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