



**Testimony of the New York City Department of Education
Before the Committee on Education, New York City Council**

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Good morning Chair Jackson and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to discuss the City's Progress Reports this morning.

My name is Shael Polakow-Suransky. I took on the role of Chief Accountability Officer of the Department of Education this past July. Previously, I led the instructional work in Empowerment Schools. I began my career as a teacher in 1994 teaching sixth grade math, and worked as an assistant principal, and then as principal at the Morris Campus in the Bronx where I started a school for recent immigrant students. I'd also like to introduce two members of my staff: Phil Vaccaro, Executive Director of School Performance, and Adina Lopatin, my Chief of Staff.

CHILDREN FIRST: EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In 2002, Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein introduced public school reforms designed to put the academic success of children first. Since then, we have seen real progress in student learning. In 2002, just 39% of students were on grade level in English. Today, 70% of students are proficient or above in English. In 2002, just 43% of students were proficient or above in math. Today, 82% of students are proficient or above in math.

And, we've closed the gap between New York City and the rest of New York State by nine points in ELA and by 18 points in math since 2002.

After remaining nearly flat for 16 years, our graduation rate has increased every year under this administration—from 46.5 to 56.4% since 2005 alone, according to New York State's measure.

When we started the reform, one of the central questions we asked was: what kind of changes do we need to make to improve these outcomes?

In 2007, principals signed a landmark performance agreement with the City, winning increased autonomy to run their schools in exchange for increased responsibility for the outcomes of their students. With this agreement, the educators who know best what each student needs to succeed got the authority and the resources to make the best decisions for the students in their schools. In

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return, they agreed to be judged on the results they deliver: the academic progress of their students.

This exchange of empowerment for accountability marked a fundamental change in the way our schools operate, introducing a paradigm shift in New York City's approach to education and making a big difference in the lives of City students.

Before this exchange took place, the adults in our system were accountable for all kinds of things other than student learning. The accountability of the principal was to keep school running, submit reports on time, and keep kids in order—bureaucratic responsibilities with no link to student achievement—and “good principals” were principals who completed the right number of fire drills on time and stayed out of the newspapers. As a middle school teacher in Harlem, I watched as my principal struggled with her supervisors to enable me and my fellow teachers to teach our kids reading and math. When I left to start my own school in the Bronx, it took a lot of convincing to create the kind of school I knew my students—recent immigrants entering high school an average of three years behind—needed in order to learn.

As teachers' union leader Albert Shanker said, “Unless there is accountability, we will never get the right system. As long as there are no consequences if kids or adults don't perform, as long as the discussion is not about education and student outcomes, then we're playing a game as to who has the power.” Since the City began holding principals accountable for student outcomes, things have changed – for the better. Today, the accountability of the principal is to prepare students to graduate from high school on time and ready for college.

Holding empowered educators accountable for learning outcomes is critical for all New York students. But it is especially critical for the many children whose parents' work or other obligations keep them from effectively monitoring their children's schools and progress. If the City and the public don't track these students' outcomes, no one else will. And, indeed, before the Progress Reports -- no one did.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY: PROGRESS REPORTS IN CONTEXT

The Progress Reports are best understood in the broader context of New York City's accountability system, which uses a diverse range of measures that collectively provide essential information and tools to improve teaching and learning.

Our accountability system is new, and, like all new systems, it isn't perfect. But with feedback from educators and community leaders, we're learning what's working and what's not, and making improvements all the time.

The Quality Review is a process through which experienced educators assess how well schools are organized to promote student learning, through a two-day site visit including classroom observations and conversations with teachers and parents. Through the Quality Review, schools are evaluated on a range of quality standards including rigor of curriculum, student engagement, school culture, professional development, and quality of instruction.

The annual Learning Environment Survey collects parent, teacher, and student observations about each school's environment. More than 800,000 New Yorkers participated last year, and survey results help school leaders identify areas where improvement is needed.

The Progress Report analyzes student attendance and school environment data along with information about how proficient students are in reading and math, and how much progress they make each year; the number of credits students accumulate toward graduation each year, and the percentage of students who graduate from high school on time and ready for college.

To enhance the power of these evaluations to motivate educators, we have built a system of rewards and consequences based on the results of the Progress Reports and the Quality Reviews. Principals and teachers at schools receiving high scores are eligible for monetary bonuses. Schools receiving low scores are subject to leadership change after two years, and restructuring or closure after four.

Combined with the State evaluations required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, these measures provide a powerful and comprehensive set of information about how well our schools are doing their job: enabling student learning.

To build the capacity of our schools to get that job done, our accountability system includes a set of tools designed to help educators diagnose student learning needs and develop instructional strategies to meet them. As Harvard professor and educational leader Richard Elmore wrote, "Accountability must be a reciprocal process. For every increment of performance I demand from you, I have an equal responsibility to provide you with the capacity to meet that expectation. Likewise, for every investment you make in my skill and knowledge, I have a reciprocal responsibility to demonstrate some new increment in performance."

New York City today is investing heavily in teachers' skill and knowledge. Across the city, teachers are using the results of Periodic Assessments to identify the areas of learning in which individual students are strong and the areas in which they need more help. In hundreds of schools, teachers are learning to design their own assessments – generating customized and targeted information about their students, and building their own capacity to strengthen instruction. In some cases, these are paper and pencil or online assessments. But in many cases, teachers use what are called "performance assessments" – asking students to build a portfolio of work over time, or to present their work before a group.

For the first time, teachers have access to this diagnostic information, along with all the other data the City collects on their students, all in one place. Instead of spending valuable time hunting down files locked up in closets, teachers are logging into the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS), and finding all their students' information online, up-to-date, and easy to access. Teachers are using reporting and analysis tools in ARIS to measure their students' progress over time and across assessments and to identify colleagues who have made progress with students facing similar challenges. And, teachers are accessing instructional resources and collaborating with colleagues within their schools and across the City.

The significant gains our students are making are the result of the hard work teachers are doing to diagnose students' needs and try out new instructional strategies to improve learning.

Educational experts and researchers agree that teacher collaboration generates significant instructional improvement, and New York City teachers are proving the point.

That's why New York City schools are giving teams of teachers the tools and the responsibility to improve learning outcomes among students previously left outside their schools' sphere of success. Working together, educators across the City are identifying and filling the instructional gaps in their schools – giving targeted support to particular students and improving the quality of education their schools offer overall. In 2007-08, each school formed one "Inquiry Team" to conduct this work. Educators saw immediate improvements in instruction and outcomes, and invited more teachers to participate. At the end of last year, principals reported that over 24,000 teachers—33% of teachers in the City—were engaged in this kind of collaborative work.

This work is enabled by support teams who help educators citywide to analyze data, identify student needs, and target effective instructional programs and strategies to students based on that analysis. Schools have long benefited from external assistance with identifying best practices in education, providing targeted strategies to specific student needs, and prioritizing among competing demands on resources and time. But with over 1,500 schools in our system, it is essential that external support is consistent with each school's focus and advances each school's unique priorities. Put simply, school leaders need the ability to choose the kind of support that meets their particular needs.

In 2007, when principals accepted empowerment in exchange for accountability, the City shifted its structure, empowering principals to define the particular coaching, professional development, and other supports that best meet the needs of their students.

Now, School Support Organizations (SSOs) form the primary structure of support for New York City schools. Each SSO is organized into networks of approximately 20-25 schools, and each network is supported by an instructional and operational team comprised of experienced educators and administrators, who work very closely with each of their schools on a day-to-day basis. With an intimate knowledge of the strengths and development areas of each of their schools, these network teams are best positioned to integrate professional development, technical support, and new resources into the life and culture of their schools.

PROGRESS REPORTS: INCENTIVIZING PROGRESS TOWARDS GRADUATION

Like all of the City's accountability tools, the Progress Reports evaluate schools and provide a rich set of diagnostic information, which principals and school support staff use to target areas for school improvement.

I want to start by thanking the many educational and community leaders who have helped us develop and continue to refine the reports. We are grateful to the educators who helped us to improve our measures to better reflect their schools' achievements and to the community leaders who helped us to identify ways to improve the way we communicate about the reports to parents and the public.

Before I explain what the Progress Reports measure, I want to be clear about how evaluation works. People and institutions naturally prefer not to be evaluated. Some argue against evaluation by demanding "perfection" in our measures, in hopes of making the unattainable

“perfect” into the enemy of the good. But our students can’t wait for perfection. Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein have made it clear that we all have a public responsibility to evaluate ourselves based on our students’ success. If we don’t, we’re not putting children first.

As business leader Jim Collins has written, “to throw up our hands and say ‘But we cannot measure performance in social sectors the way we do in business’ is simply lack of discipline. All indicators are flawed, whether qualitative or quantitative. Test scores are flawed, mammograms are flawed, crime data are flawed, customer service data are flawed, patient-outcome data are flawed. What matters is not finding the perfect indicator,” but defining a “method of assessing your output results, and then tracking your trajectory with rigor.”

To develop our measures of success, we started with the simplest and least controversial of measures: A crucial objective of our schools and our City is to enable all students to graduate from high school on time, ready for college. We empower educators to make choices about *how* to accomplish this goal, and we use Progress Reports to measure *whether* they are succeeding.

At the high school level, our Progress Reports do this by measuring directly what we’re after (high rates of graduation with college-ready diplomas) and by evaluating the raw materials for success (how many credits students earn and Regents Exams they pass).

It is less well understood that our elementary and middle school Progress Reports also measure progress towards this same goal: how well schools prepare students to succeed in high school, particularly students who start the school year at a distance from that goal. The progress metrics on the elementary, middle, and K-8 Progress Reports evaluate how well schools advance students toward and beyond proficiency in ELA and math because students’ advancement toward and beyond proficiency is directly linked to the rate at which they graduate from high school on time with a Regents diploma.

Proficiency is also the key metric that state and federal accountability use to evaluate school performance.

In a recent speech, Sir Michael Barber, who was the education adviser to British Prime Minister Tony Blair from 1997 to 2005 and a close student of American education policy, emphasized the importance to the United States of increasing students’ longitudinal progress in the elementary and middle years: “In international comparisons of younger children, the US does relatively well, which, given the country’s wealth, is what you would expect. The problem is that, as they get older, children make less progress each year than children in the best performing countries. Here we’re not just talking about poor kids in poor neighborhoods; we’re talking about most kids in most neighborhoods.”

Our data prove the point. New York City students with higher eighth-grade proficiency ratings graduate from high school, ready for college, at a higher rate than do students with lower eighth-grade proficiency ratings.

This chart shows that when the students who earn a 700 on their 8th grade ELA tests in 2004 reached their senior year in high school in 2008, they graduated at a rate of 55%. When their peers who earned a 718 on the same test reached high school, they graduated at a much higher

rate – 77%. In other words, small gains in scale score points at the middle school level translate to significant increases in rate of graduation from high school on time and ready for college.

In any given year and across grade levels, exact numbers vary but the pattern holds true: test scores at the elementary and middle grades are highly predictive of high school graduation and thus are an important measure of school performance.

PROGRESS REPORTS: MEASURING WHAT SCHOOLS CONTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS

Now, I want to talk you through what the Progress Reports measure. Like the No Child Left Behind Act and New York State's accountability system, the Progress Reports evaluate schools based on student learning *outcomes*: how well students read and write, how proficient they are in math and whether they graduate from high school. These foundational skills are the key prerequisites for higher education, a living wage and a fulfilling life.

But existing state and federal accountability systems are limited. Often, they compare the performance of different groups of students. For example, they'll look to see how a school's fourth graders performed this year compared to how that school's fourth graders performed last year. This is not an apples-to-apples comparison because schools educate different fourth graders each year. In addition, these systems typically use a single measure of success: the percentage of students at or above proficiency in ELA or math. This measure is valuable, and we use it in the Student Performance section of the Progress Reports, but it is limited: it does not consider a student's growth over time. A static view of proficiency ignores whether students who are already proficient continue to make progress or whether students who are not yet proficient make significant progress but do not quite cross the line of "proficiency."

These are major accomplishments for many of our schools and students, but the schools get no credit for such accomplishments in the state and federal systems. These systems only reward schools who are able to get kids over the proficiency line, which often focuses schools' attention on those students who are just at or below the proficiency line to the detriment of the highest-performing and the lowest-performing students in our system.

At the same time, existing measures compare schools only to all other schools, giving many an excuse for poor performance: some say that poor, low-performing or ELL and special education students pose greater educational challenges than the more privileged or affluent students at schools to which they are compared. These accountability systems send the message that schools that want to get higher accountability ratings should find ways to enroll more affluent and lower-need students who perform well from the start. This is a recipe for leaving the most struggling students behind.

New York City's accountability system sends a different message: the central goal of every school is to improve the performance of any student who arrives on the first day, regardless of the student's starting performance. Rather than comparing only this year's cohort of students to last year's, our focus is on how well each child does this year compared to the *same* child's learning last year – an apples-to-apples indication of progress. And, rather than comparing schools only to other schools in the City, our focus is also on how well schools perform compared to schools serving similar populations. Schools that enroll poor, minority, special

education, ELL, and other students who begin at low levels of performance are not penalized for accepting that important challenge. In short, our new accountability system rewards schools for the contribution they make to children, not for the strengths and weaknesses that children bring to schools when they walk through the door in September.

PROGRESS REPORTS: COMPONENTS OF THE REPORT

On the Progress Report, each school receives a score out of one hundred points and an overall grade from A through F, providing an overall assessment of the school's contribution to student learning in three main areas of measurement: School Environment, Student Performance, and Student Progress. Schools also receive separate grades in each of these three categories. Additionally, schools also receive recognition for Exemplary Student Progress by students most in need of attention and improvement.

School Environment counts for 15% of a school's overall score. School Environment measures necessary preconditions for learning, including student attendance, communication, engagement, academic expectations, and safety and respect – based on the results of surveys completed by more than 800,000 parents, teachers, and students annually.

Student Performance counts for 25% of a school's overall score. At the elementary and middle school levels, Student Performance measures the number of students at a school that have reached the crucial goal of proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. In particular, Student Performance measures the percent of students achieving proficiency in the school as well as the median proficiency of all students in the school. These indicators provide a snapshot of the ELA and mathematics proficiency levels of all students at a school in a given year.

At the high school level, Student Performance measures the percentage of students at a school who have reached the crucial goal of graduation, with emphasis on the number of students graduating with the Regents Diploma that State law now establishes as the goal for all students. In particular, Student Performance measures the four- and six-year diploma rates. Schools that award diplomas that better prepare students for college earn higher scores.

Student Progress counts for 60% of a school's overall score. At the elementary and middle school level, Student Progress measures how student proficiency has changed in the past year. Progress indicators track the yearly gain or loss in ELA and mathematics proficiency of the same students as they move from one grade to the next. These measures focus on the capacities students develop as a result of attending the school, not the capacities they bring with them to school on the first day. Student Progress measures the percentage of students that have made at least one year of progress and also measures how much progress those students make. Attention is given to all students in each school, with particular emphasis given to students in each school's lowest one-third of proficiency at the outset of the school year, as determined by students' previous ELA and Math proficiency.

At the high school level, Student Progress measures the ability of a school to enhance the performance levels of students from one year to the next as well as the incremental gains students make toward the long-term goal of earning a Regents diploma. The measure focuses on the capacities students develop as a result of attending the school, not the capacities they bring with them on the first day. Again, attention is given to all students in each school, with special

emphasis given to the one-third of students who entered high school at the lowest performance level. In particular, Student Progress measures the percent of students earning ten or more credits each year, as well as progress towards passing the five Regents subject exams required by the State to earn a Regents diploma.

In addition, schools can earn up to 15 additional points on the Progress Report if they are among the top 40% of schools in the City helping to close the achievement gap. Specifically, we reward schools that show exemplary progress with groups of students who have historically performed lower than their peers. At the elementary- and middle-school levels, schools where designated groups of high-need students show an increase of at least half of a proficiency rating during the year receive additional credit for exemplary gains. At the high school level, schools where high-need students earn eleven or more credits in their first, second, or third years of school earn additional credit. Schools where high-need students earn a 75 or higher for the first time on an ELA or Math Regents or graduate with a Regents diploma also earn additional credit. The student groups whose gains can result in additional credit for Exemplary Student Progress are: English language learners, special education students, and Hispanic students in the lowest third citywide, black students in the lowest third citywide, and other students in the lowest third citywide.

Across all measures, we use peer groups to contextualize the performance and progress of students facing similar challenges. Schools are evaluated based on how their students' performance compares to that of students in their peer schools (75% of the grade) and in schools citywide (25% of the grade). At the elementary and K-8 levels, peer schools are determined by the percentage of students at the school eligible for free lunch (the Title I poverty rate) (30%), percentage of Black and Hispanic students (30%), percentage of the student population enrolled in Special Education (30%), and the percentage of the student population made up of English Language Learners (10%). At the middle school level, peer schools are determined by the proficiency of its students in state ELA and mathematics exams prior to attending middle school. At the high school level, peer schools are determined by the proficiency ratings its students had earned on their eighth grade State ELA and mathematics exams, and by the percentage of special education students and overage students in their population.

By looking not only at each school's overall letter grade, but also its overall numerical score and its component scores for student progress, student performance and school environment, you can discern variations among schools with the same letter grades and get a fuller picture of how our schools are doing.

This information is powerful: for parents, as they make choices about where to send their kids to school; for educators, as they work to identify areas for improvement; and for the Department, as we evaluate which schools are succeeding, which need extra support, and which schools are persistently failing our students.

PROGRESS REPORT: GRADES

Now, I want to discuss how and why we grade the Progress Reports the way we do.

When principals agreed to new performance terms with the City back in 2007, they got increased authority over their schools and agreed to be judged based on their performance – measured in

terms of the actual gains their students make each year. The Progress Reports are the mechanism we use to evaluate and manage principals' performance.

Here's how it works: at the beginning of each year, we set growth targets for every school. We tell principals that if they meet the targets we set, they get an A. If they don't, they get a B, C, D, or F, depending on how far below the target they fall.

Each year, we make decisions about how to set the cut scores required for each grade on the Progress Report. When we make these decisions, long before students sit for the tests, we weigh two competing priorities.

The first is to differentiate among schools—giving parents information they can use as they make decisions about where to send their kids; giving educators information they can use to identify schools serving similar populations better; and giving the Department information we can use to determine which schools are succeeding, which need improving, and which are failing our students.

The second is to manage principals' performance—setting ambitious targets for student achievement, giving principals the authority and resources they need to move their students forward, and rewarding principals who meet their targets—driving the system forward.

Now, I'm going to walk you through the distribution of elementary and middle school grades between 2007 and 2009, the three years the reports were published. This chart, created by the *New York Times*, shows the number of elementary and middle schools receiving each overall score in each school year. Unfortunately, high school results will not be available until next month—so we can only discuss this year's elementary and middle school results today.

In 2007, the first year Progress Reports were published, we defined the cut scores required to achieve each grade such that grades would be distributed from A through F, differentiating among schools. Principals received their grades, learned what their targets would be for the next year, and began working to meet or exceed those targets.

During the school year, students made progress, and their gains were reflected on the Progress Reports published the following year, in 2008. You can see in the chart at the middle of the page that the curve remained similar, but moved slightly to the right, reflecting the gains of the system. Because the goal of the system is to push schools to make as much progress as they can with every child, we raised the bar—increasing the cut scores required to achieve each grade.

During the school year, students' scores on the State tests across the State, but especially in New York City, increased significantly—more significantly than they ever had before. These gains were reflected in the 2009 Progress Reports published this fall. You can see, at the bottom of the page that the curve jumped significantly to the right—reflecting the substantial increases in test scores across the system.

That jump between 2008 and 2009 led the increase in As and Bs awarded on this year's elementary, middle and K-8 Progress Reports. 87% of elementary schools, 78% of middle schools, and 85% of K-8 schools met the targets we set the previous year, dwarfing our projections and moving the curve to the right.

If we had known how much growth our students would make when we set targets for principals right after the previous years' reports were published in fall 2008, we would have set them higher. We made decisions about how high to set those targets using projections based on historical data about how much scores had increased from year to year in the past.

The actual increases in test scores later that year were much greater than ever before. Here you can see that the in ELA, the percentage of students making progress jumped three points from 2007 to 2008 and seven points from 2008 to 2009. And in math, the percentage of students jumped one point from 2007 to 2008 and seven points from 2008 to 2009.

The same is true for special education students. From 2008 to 2009, the percent of special education students making one year of progress increased by eight points in ELA and by eight points in math.

Gains were even more pronounced among English Language Learners. From 2008 to 2009, the percent of English Language Learners making one year of progress increased by ten points in ELA and by eight points in math.

Some amount of this growth is a testament to the increase in learning in our schools, and we celebrate that achievement. But there is some debate at the state and national levels about the rigor of these tests. New leadership in Albany and Washington is facing this problem head on. We support their call for higher standards and more rigorous tests, and look forward to raising the bar here in New York City.

For example, some have argued that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a more rigorous test than the New York State tests. We agree that NAEP is an important summative assessment.

But unfortunately, it is not aligned to the New York State standards, so it's not useful as a measure of how well our schools are doing the job for which they're accountable—teaching the standards required by the State. And the way NAEP works is that a statistical sample of students nationwide is chosen to participate. So, only a small number of our students take the NAEP exam -- last year, just 4,300 students in 180 schools in New York City. So we can't use it on the Progress Report.

Our schools are accountable under the No Child Left Behind Act to help our students master New York State standards and to demonstrate progress on the New York State tests. We support the call for higher standards and more rigorous tests.

In fact, New York and 47 other states have signed on to a joint effort led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Achieve, ACT, and the College Board to develop new, national standards in ELA and mathematics for grades K-12. The first step of this initiative is developing college- and career-readiness standards, followed by K-12 standards. These standards will be research- and evidence-based, internationally benchmarked, aligned with college and work expectations, and will include rigorous content and skills. I encourage you to look at the drafts of the new standards that this consortium is publishing online at corestandards.org, because they represent the kind of rigor and depth we want to see in our schools.

But until these standards are set and new tests are in place, we're accountable under state and federal law for the standards and the tests we have.

When we learned about the significant increases in scores on the 2009 tests, we faced a difficult decision. We could change the cut scores before publishing the reports, creating the kind of grade distribution that enables easier differentiation among schools but changing the rules we set for principals in the middle of the game. Or, we could stick with the cut scores we had established the previous year, producing a distribution of grades that enables less differentiation among schools but keeping our promise to principals.

Because it's our primary goal to increase the achievement of every student, we made the choice to stick with the cut scores we had established the previous year. In making this choice, we are rewarding principals for their significant achievements. And, we are preparing to raise the bar higher for next year.

As you and your communities look for ways to use the reports to differentiate among schools, I encourage you to look carefully at the more detailed elements of the Progress Reports, including the category grades and the overall score from 1 through 100. At the level of detail one level below the overall grade, the Progress Reports provide information that differentiates among schools, even those that received the same letter grade.

The challenge of balancing performance management and differentiation is not unique to New York. For example, the state of Florida, which began grading schools in 1999, has faced similar challenges. As we look towards next year's reports, we are exploring changes in methodology to increase the stability of grade distribution from year-to-year, enabling us to set high targets for our principals and differentiate among schools at the same time. We will be gathering feedback as we make those decisions and we will share information about planned changes with educators and the public in the coming months, as we do every year.

NEW YORK CITY PERFORMANCE

As a longtime educator, I'm struck by how much the conversation we're having about our schools has changed since the accountability system went into effect. Today, while we try to figure out whether our measures are good enough, tens of thousands of teachers and principals are trying to figure out how to get every child to learn more. That's a direct result of the development of our accountability system in general and the Progress Reports in particular – an accomplishment for which New York City should be very proud – and one we *cannot* afford to walk away from simply because the system isn't perfect, as some would have us do.

One way to see the effects of our accountability system is to look at New York City's performance on the State tests compared to that of the rest of New York State, on the same tests. If our accountability system is working, you'd expect to see New York City schools performing better than the rest of New York State on the same tests.

This is just what you see when you look at the data. No matter how you cut it, New York City students are learning at a faster rate than students elsewhere in the State.

Eight years ago, New York City's counties were the lowest achieving of all 62 counties in New York State.

Today, New York City's five counties are the five most improved counties in the state. Queens, in purple, jumped 44 places in the rankings.

If you look at progress – the five counties that have shown improvement over the last seven years, shown here in green, are New York City counties. In blue are other counties in the state -- in which scale score has, on average, decreased.

The same is true at the school district level. The 15 most improved school districts over the past seven years were in New York City. And 27 out of the top 30 improved districts were New York City school districts.

There are some especially notable successes I want to highlight. District 26 in Queens is the highest performing out of the largest 64 districts in the state. District 2 is in the top ten, and District 1 is the single most improved district in the State.

Some have suggested that New York City districts made more progress than other districts because it is easier for districts with lower starting points to make progress. This is not the case.

Compared to districts outside of New York City that started lower, New York City districts made more progress. Compared to districts that started higher, New York City districts declined less.

Regardless of starting point, New York City made more progress than elsewhere in New York State.

What does this mean for our schools?

More and more New York City schools are outperforming most schools in the State.

Over the last decade, we have doubled the percentage of our schools outperforming other schools in the State. And, we've doubled the percentage of our schools scoring in the top 25% of schools citywide.

That means that a New York City child entering school is about twice as likely to go to a top school in 2009 as he or she was in 2002. That's real progress.

NEW YORK CITY ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM: A NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MODEL

The data show that our accountability system is working. And independent experts agree. Columbia University Professor Jonah Rockoff wrote: "Although schools had only a few months to respond to the release of accountability grades, we find that receipt of a low grade significantly increased students achievement in both subjects [ELA and Math], with larger effects in math."

Our accountability system—in particular, our focus on progress—has become a model across the country and around the world. Over the past two years, the Education Ministers of Great Britain and Australia have proposed national school scorecards, citing New York City’s Progress Report as the model. Los Angeles, California, and Charlotte, North Carolina are designing scorecards similar to New York City’s Progress Report, and Denver, Colorado has already adopted a similar strategy. Charlotte, North Carolina has implemented quality reviews based on our model.

We are proud that the Obama administration is shaping major components of its national education policy around encouraging other school systems to follow our lead and develop comprehensive systems to hold schools accountable for student achievement.

Most of all, we are proud of our principals, our teachers, our parents, and especially our students, whose hard work is the foundation for our achievements and the reason why so many people are looking to New York City as a model for education nationwide and around the world.

Thank you, Chairman Jackson and members of the Education Committee, for the opportunity to present this testimony.

Have there been any changes to the Progress Report since it was first released for 2006-07?

Based on feedback from educators during a comprehensive review process, several changes have been made to the Progress Report since 2006-07:

Changes impacting all schools:

Change #1: Category Weights

The weights corresponding to each category have been modified slightly.

- 15% School Environment (no change)
- 25% Student Performance (formerly 30%)
- 60% Student Progress (formerly 55%)

Change #2: Peer/City Horizons

The weights corresponding to the peer and City horizons have been modified slightly.

- 75% Peer (formerly 67%)
- 25% City (formerly 33%)

Change #3: Category Letter Grades

Schools now receive a letter grade (A through F) in each category (e.g., School Environment), in addition to an overall grade.

Change #4: Student Attendance

To ensure that no schools were adversely affected by the impact of the H1N1 virus on student attendance in the Spring of 2009, the 2008-09 Progress Reports only included attendance outcomes up through and including April 30, 2009.

Changes impacting Elementary/Middle/K-8 Schools:

Change #1: Elementary/K-8 Peer Index

The Elementary and K-8 School peer index still incorporates the same four student characteristics at each school, but applies different weights.

- Percentage of Special Education students (30%) (formerly 10%)
- Percentage of Title I (free lunch) students (30%) (formerly 40%)
- Percentage of Black/Hispanic students (30%) (formerly 40%)
- Percentage of English Language Learners (10%) (no change)

Change #2: Progress for Students with an IEP

To reflect the additional challenge schools undertake in serving students with an IEP, all students with an IEP receive a 0.2 proficiency rating adjustment in the progress measures.

Change #3: Progress for Level 4 Students

A Level 4 student is surpassing the learning expectations of his grade level. As such, any student who is a Level 4 in consecutive years qualifies as making on year of progress (however, the change in proficiency from one year to the next, even if the change is negative, still counts toward the “average change in proficiency” measure).

Change #4: Regents Exams in Middle Schools

Any middle school student who earns 85 or higher on the Math A or Integrated Algebra Regents is automatically considered as making one year of progress in Math.

Change #5: Student Progress Measures

The Student Progress measures have changed since 2006-07. The table below identifies these changes:

2006-07	2007-08 and 2008-09*
Percentage of students making one year of progress	Percentage of students making one year of progress
Average change in student proficiency	Two measures**: 1. Average change in student proficiency for Level 1 and Level 2 students 2. Average change in student proficiency for Level 3 and Level 4 students
Average change in student proficiency for the school's lowest third	Percentage of students in the school's lowest third making one year of progress

*Student Progress measures now include changes #2 - #4 above, which were not part of the Student Progress measures in 2006-07.

**These two measures are weighted proportionately based on the percentage of students at the school represented in each measure.

Change #6: Shared Accountability

To the greatest extent possible, students with disabilities should be served in the school they currently attend. If, however, it is determined that the student requires services that cannot be provided at the school and needs to transfer to another DOE school to obtain those services, there will be shared accountability for the student. Such students will be on the Progress Report of both the sending school and the receiving school until the student completes the next articulation grade (e.g. 5th or 8th grade). There is shared accountability for students who transfer schools because of the following changes in their educational services:

- From general education to collaborative team teaching, special class, or a special education school (District 75)
- From related services only to collaborative team teaching, special class, or a special education school (District 75)
- From special education teacher support services to collaborative team teaching, special class, or a special education school (District 75)
- From collaborative team teaching to special class or a special education school (District 75)
- From special class to a special class with a more intensive student/adult ratio (e.g. 12:1 to 12:1:1)
- From special class to special education school (District 75)

At both the sending and the receiving school, the student who transfers will be given the same weight in accountability metric calculations as any other student in the school.

Information regarding changes in program recommendations and subsequent changes in school placement are tracked in our special education data systems. This information is monitored by

the Office of Special Education Initiatives and the Office of Student Enrollment and provided to the Office of Accountability to be incorporated into the Progress Reports.

Change #7: Change in Grade Cut Scores

	Elementary		Middle		K-8	
	2007-08	2008-09	2007-08	2008-09	2007-08	2008-09
A	59.6	68	65.9	68	66.7	68
B	45.8	54	49.7	54	49.7	54
C	32.6	43	39.0	43	38.4	43
D	28.4	33	29.4	33	23.4	33

Changes impacting high schools

Change #1: High School Peer Index

A high school's peer index was originally based on the average 8th grade ELA and Math proficiency of its students. Beginning in 2007-08, the high school peer index incorporated two additional components—the percentage of Special Education students and the percentage of students who are over-age on entry (2 or more years). Note: 2 or more years over-age on entry includes any student who turns 16 on or before December 31st of his/her first year of high school. The formula for the high school peer index is:

Average student proficiency
 minus
 (2 X percentage of Special Education students)
 minus
 (percentage of over-age students)

Sample calculation:

- Average student proficiency (based on 8th grade test scores) – 3.38
 - Percentage of Special Education students – 12%
 - Percentage of over-age (2+ years) students – 5%
- $3.38 - 2(0.12) - 0.05 = 3.09$

Change #2: New Graduation Weights in the Weighted Diploma Rates

There are a number of graduation distinctions that reflect additional educational investment. The following diploma types are now given additional weight on the Progress Report:

- Career and Technology Education-endorsed diplomas – additional 0.5 weight
- Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation through the Arts – additional 0.5 weight
- Associates Degrees – additional 0.5 weight
- IEP Diplomas – weight of 1.0 for Special Education students that qualify for the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

In addition, the diploma weight is doubled for any graduation designation (Local Diploma or higher) for students that are Special Education or over-age on entry (2 or more years).

Change #3: Student Progress Measures

The five Student Progress measures corresponding to the Weighted Regents Pass Rate for the school's lowest third were eliminated. In their place, there are three new Student Progress measures associating the school's lowest third with credits earned:

- Percentage of students in the school's lowest third earning 10+ credits in their first year
- Percentage of students in the school's lowest third earning 10+ credits in their second year
- Percentage of students in the school's lowest third earning 10+ credits in their third year

Change #4: Weighted Regents Pass Rates for students without 8th grade test scores

These measures award credit to schools for students who pass a Regents exam (with a 65 or higher), where the amount of credit is based on a student's starting proficiency. In previous years, students without 8th grade test scores were excluded from these measures. Beginning in 2008-09, a student without 8th grade test scores is assigned a weight which is a function of his demographic characteristics. The amount of credit awarded to a school for a student without 8th grade test scores is now a function of that student's weight.

<i>Demographic Characteristic</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Black / Hispanic	+1
Free Lunch	+1
Special Education	+2
English Language Learner	+2 (English Regents only)
Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE)	+1 (English Regents only)

Change #5: Change in Grade Cut Scores

	High Schools	
	2007-08	2008-09
A	64.2	70
B	43.5	54
C	34.3	44
D	29.7	36

Have there been any changes to the Survey since it was first released in 2007?

Between the 2007 and 2008 Surveys, changes were made to question wording based on feedback from student, parent, teacher, principal, and parent coordinator focus groups. Edits were largely focused on making existing questions more relevant or clear.

Parent examples include:

- There is gang activity AT my child's school --> There is gang activity IN my child's school.
- I know how to contact someone at the school when I have questions and concerns --> I am satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school with questions or concerns.

Teacher examples include:

- How long have you been a teacher at this school? --> How long have you been a teacher?
- Replacement of "principal" references with "school leader" references

Between the 2008 and 2009 Surveys, changes in page layout were made to decrease survey length and paper output. No changes in content were made.

NEW YORK CITY PROGRESS REPORTS



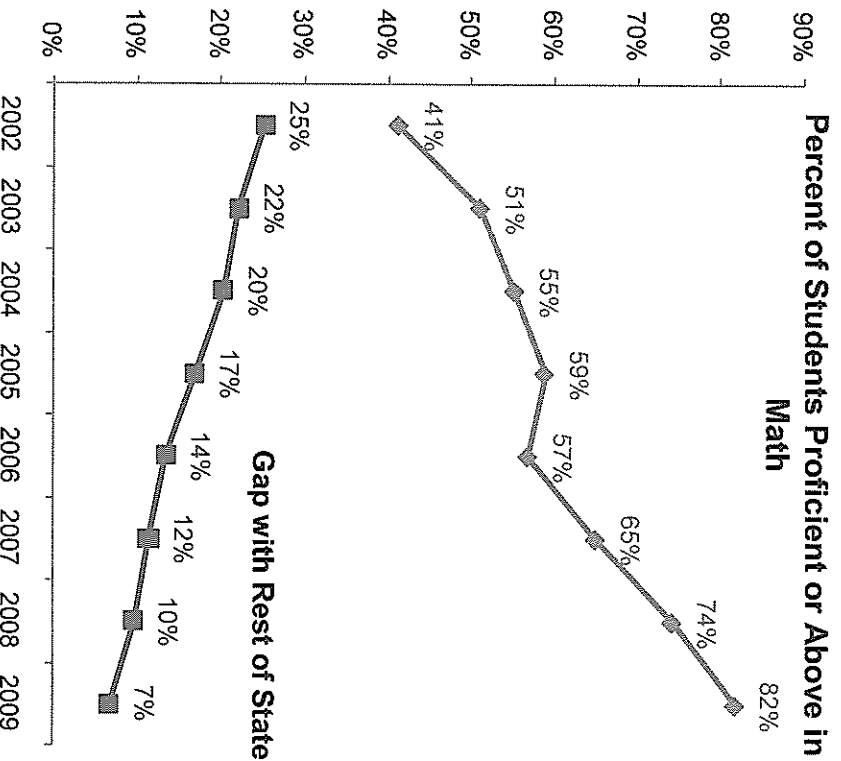
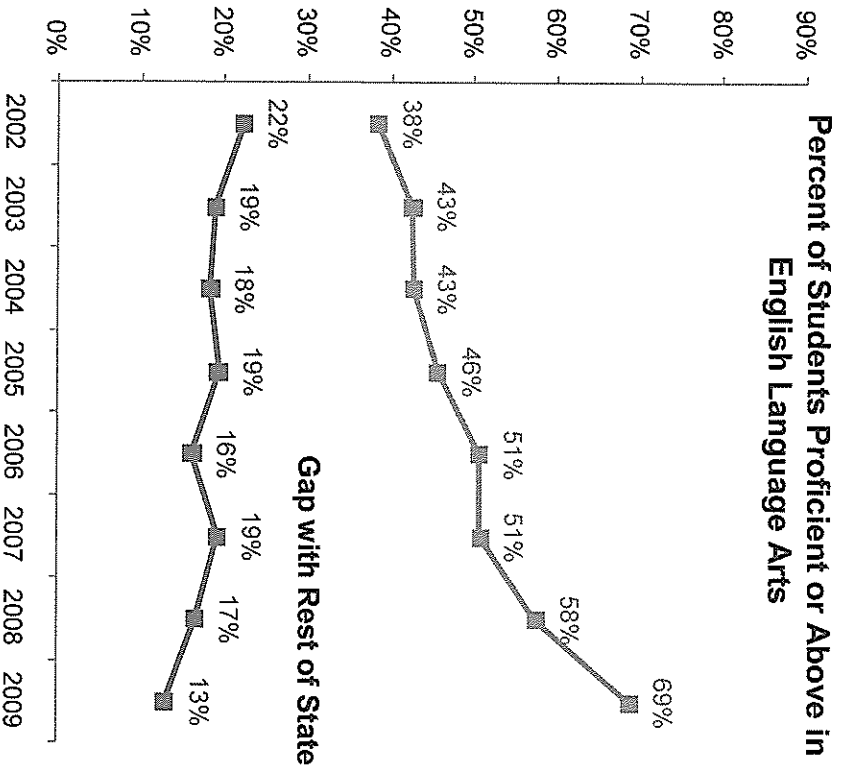
City Council Education Committee
October 30, 2009

NYC

**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

MORE NYC STUDENTS ARE MEETING OR EXCEEDING STATE STANDARDS, AND NYC HAS CLOSED THE GAP CONSIDERABLY WITH THE REST OF THE STATE

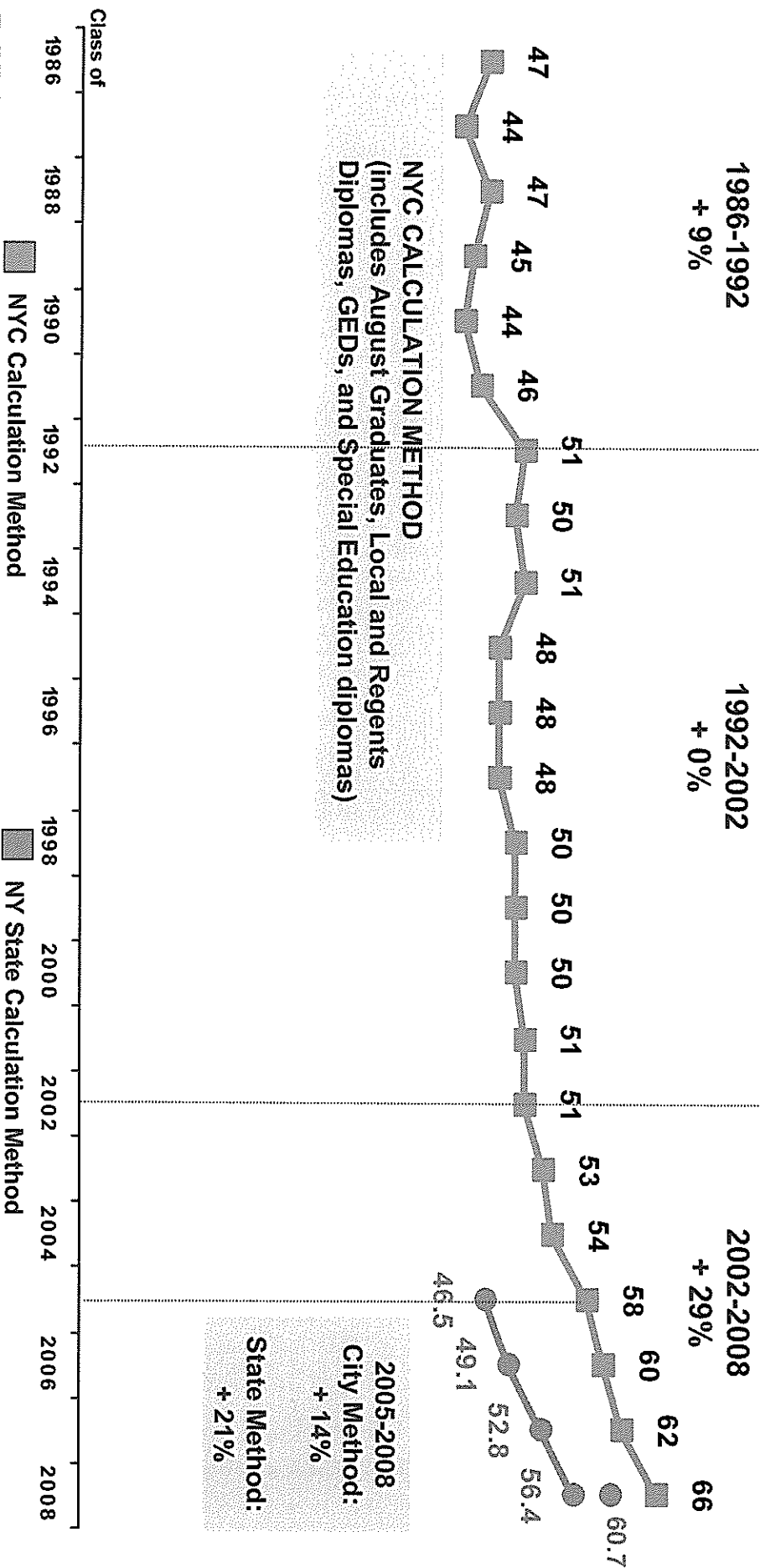


Department of Education
 Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

Note: Results reflect State tests in grades 4 and 8 from 2002-2005 and grades 3-8 from 2006-09. State tests were rescaled in 2005/06 as well as expanded to include all grades 3-8. State testing policy changed in 2006/07 to include more ELL students in the English Language Arts test.

AFTER REMAINING NEARLY FLAT FOR 16 YEARS, THE NYC GRADUATION RATE HAS INCREASED BY 29% SINCE 2002

Percent of Students in a Cohort Graduating from High School in 4 Years



NYC CALCULATION METHOD
(includes August Graduates, Local and Regents Diplomas, GEDs, and Special Education diplomas)

2005-2008
City Method: + 14%
State Method: + 21%



Department of Education
Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

Note: NYC traditional calculation includes Local and Regents Diplomas, GEDs, Special Education diplomas, and August graduates. It does not include disabled students in self-contained classrooms or District 75 students. The NYS calculation, used since 2005, includes Local and Regents Diplomas 3 and all disabled students. It does not include GEDs and Special Education diplomas.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY IN NEW YORK CITY

WHAT

EVALUATE

Progress Reports
Grades based on student outcomes

Quality Reviews
Scores based on performance management criteria

Learning Environment Survey
Parent, teacher, and student surveys about school environment

Federal and State Evaluation
Measures of schools' Adequate Yearly Progress and accountability standing

ENFORCE CONSEQUENCES

Rewards
Monetary bonuses

Consequences
Immediate restructuring of chronically failing schools. Target setting for other D/F schools; if no improvement, leadership change after 2 and closure after 4 years

Aligned Mechanisms
City and SSO performance targets, Principals' Performance Review and bonuses, school-wide teacher performance bonuses

ENABLE

Periodic Assessments
Diagnose and track progress

Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS)
Fully integrated knowledge and data management

Children First Intensive
Hands-on data training through Inquiry Teams

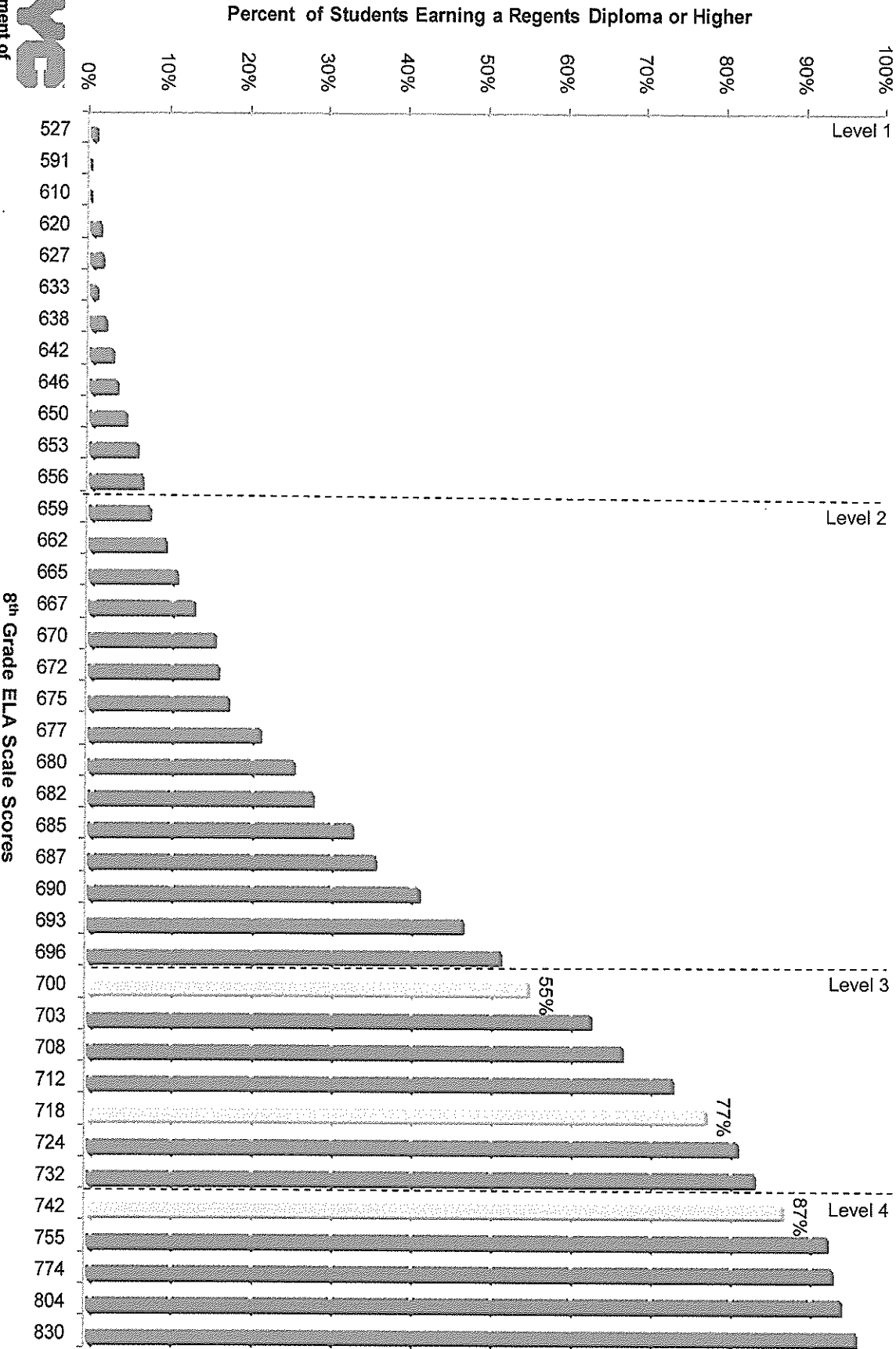
Knowledge Management
Support structures and tools for collaboration and knowledge sharing

HOW



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Education
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8TH GRADE TEST SCORES PREDICT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION



8th Grade ELA Scale Scores

Note: This chart reflects students with 8th grade ELA test scores in 2004 and their graduation outcomes for the same group of students four years later as 12th graders. Scale scores of 700, 718, and 742 correspond to proficiency ratings of 3.0, 3.5 and 4.0, respectively.



Department of Education
Ideal / Kein, Character

PROGRESS REPORT MEASURES

Grade and Overall Score
Out of 100 points
(front page)

School Environment
15 points

Student Performance
25 points

Student Progress
60 points

Additional Credit
Up to 15 points

Elementary, Middle, and K-8 Schools

- Learning Environment Survey results
- Attendance
- Student scores in ELA and Math (median proficiency and % Level 3/4)
- Student progress on ELA and Math test scores (avg. change and % making progress)
- Exemplary progress on test scores with high need students

High Schools

- Learning Environment Survey results
- Attendance
- Graduation rates (4-year and 6-year)
- Credit accumulation
- Regents completion and pass rates
- Exemplary progress in credit gains with high need students



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PROGRESS REPORT PEER GROUPS

A peer group is a group of up to 40 schools with similar student populations that serve approximately the same grade levels.

- Elementary and K-8 school peer groups are determined based on a comparison of student demographics across schools
- Middle and high school peer groups are determined based on a comparison of student performance on ELA and Math test scores

The Peer Horizon scores count three times as much as the City Horizon scores because we want to emphasize the relative performance of schools with similar student populations.

Peer Comparison (75%)

- Each school's performance is compared to the performance of schools in its peer group
- The "Peer Horizon" is the range of outcomes achieved by the peer group (i.e., the top and the bottom score in the peer group for each measure)

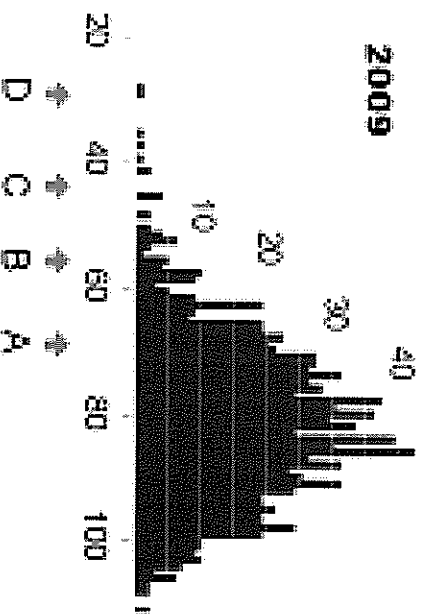
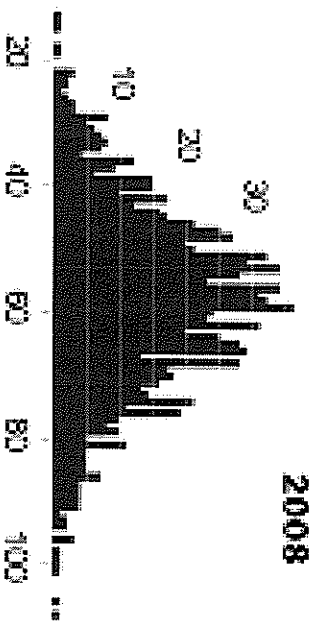
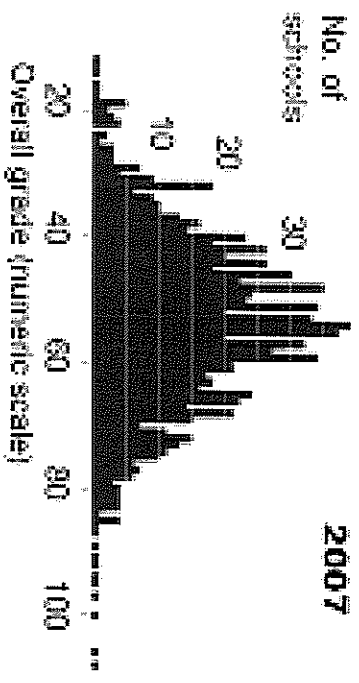
City Comparison (25%)

- Each school's performance is also compared to the performance of all schools Citywide
- The "City Horizon" is the range of outcomes achieved by all schools Citywide (i.e., the top and the bottom score in the City for each measure)



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PROGRESS REPORT GRADE DISTRIBUTION: 2007-2009



Cutoff points for letter grades, 2009

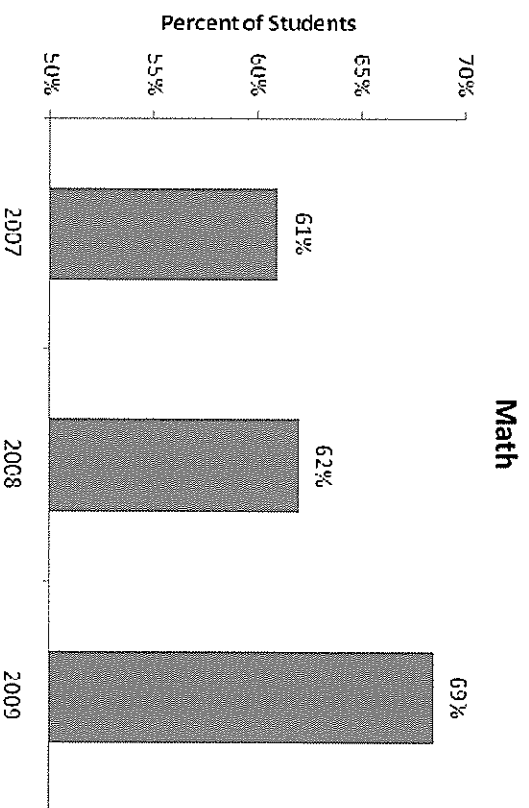
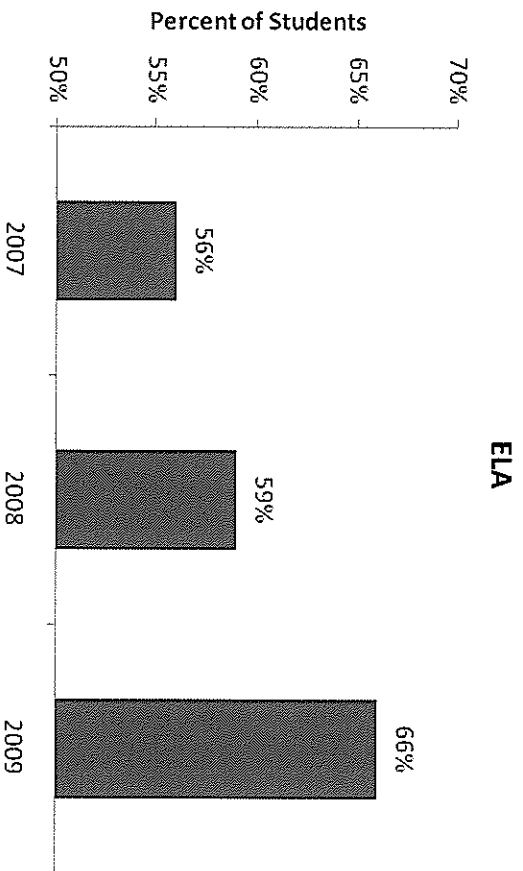
PROGRESS REPORT GRADE DISTRIBUTION: 2009

Grade Level	A	B	C	D	F
Elementary School	87%	11%	1%	0%	0%
Middle School	78%	18%	3%	1%	0%
K-8 School	85%	13%	1%	0%	0%
High School	<i>Not yet available; scheduled to be published in November 2009.</i>				

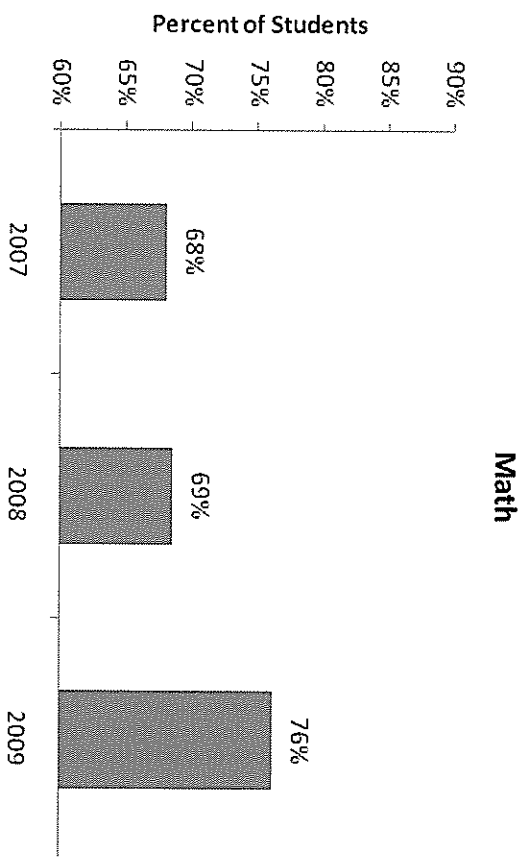
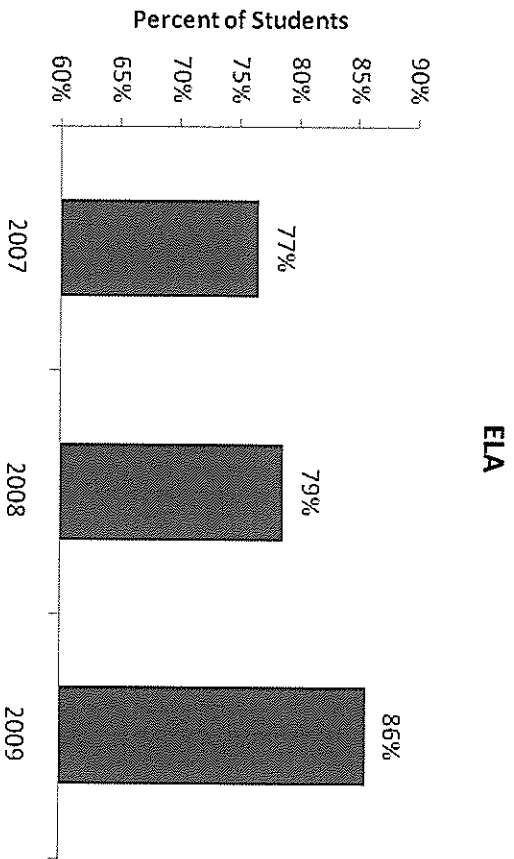


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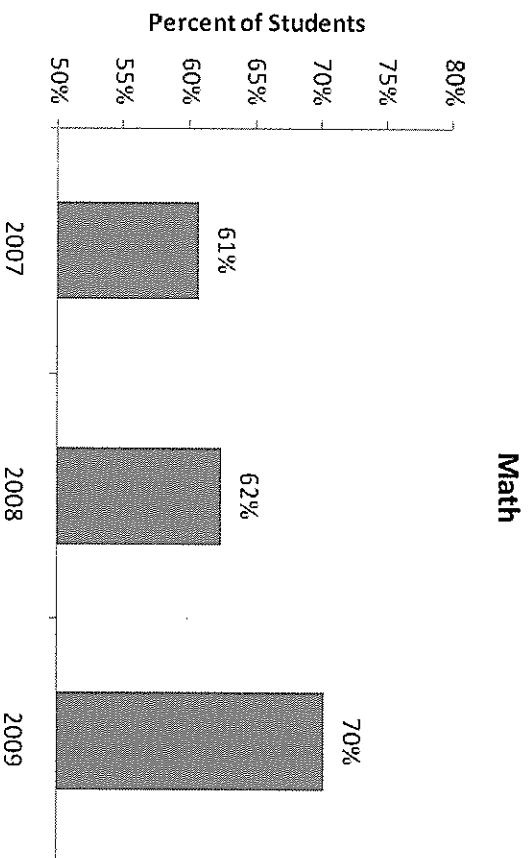
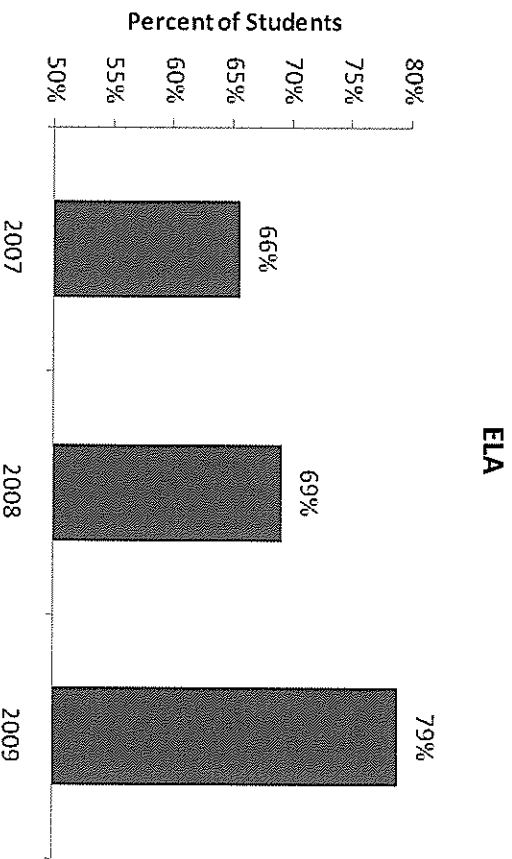
THE PERCENT OF NEW YORK CITY STUDENTS MAKING GAINS IN ELA AND MATH HAS INCREASED EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS



THE PERCENT OF NEW YORK CITY SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS MAKING GAINS IN ELA AND MATH HAS INCREASED EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS



THE PERCENT OF NEW YORK CITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS MAKING GAINS IN ELA AND MATH HAS INCREASED EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS

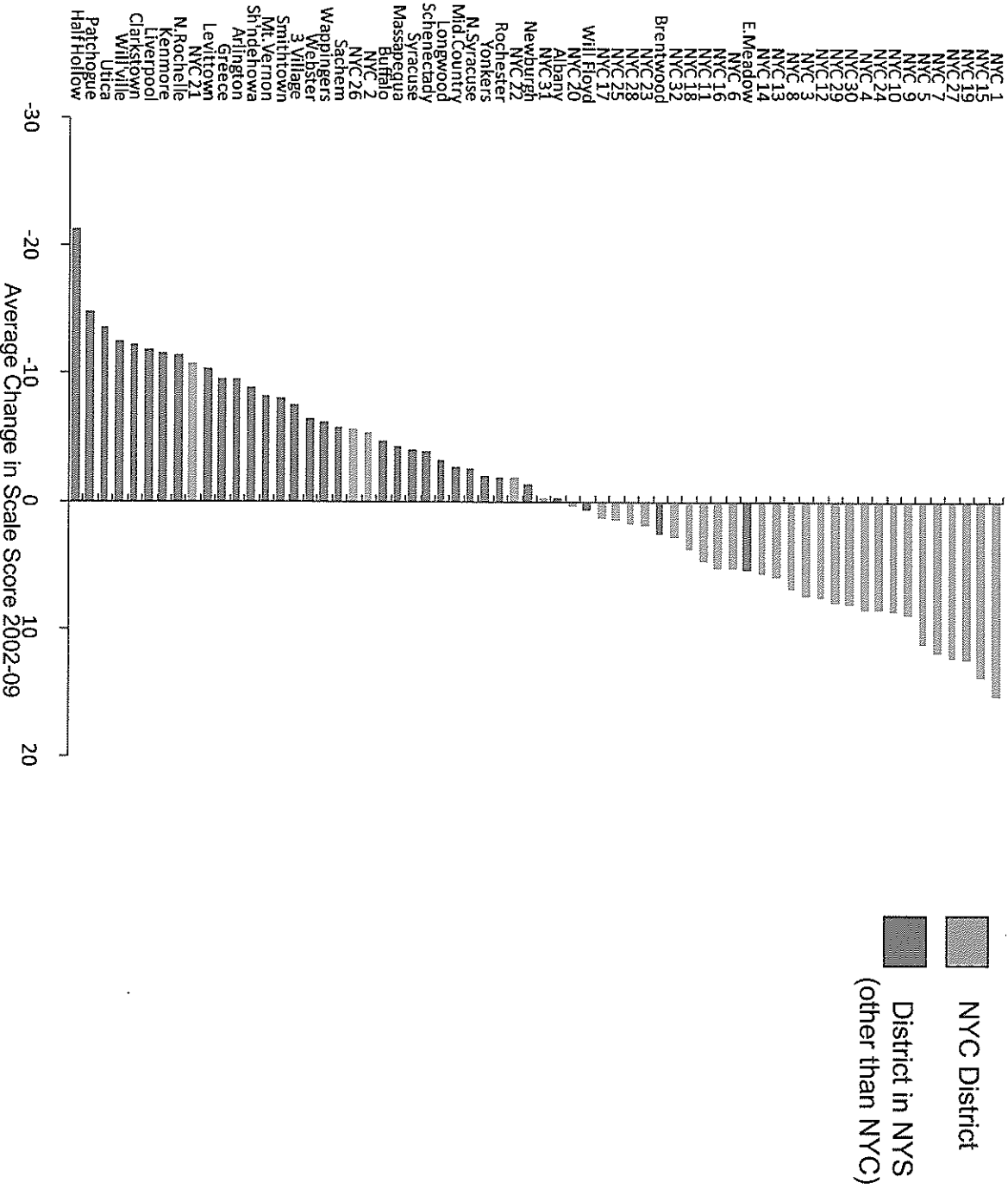


NEW YORK CITY COUNTIES HAVE IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTIES IN NEW YORK STATE

Rank 2002	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Rank 2009
1	Nassau (63564, 698)	Nassau (63648, 700)	Nassau (66159, 702)	Nassau (64343, 707)	Nassau (191983, 678)	Nassau (192130, 682)	Nassau (190376, 685)	Nassau (189725, 689)	1
2	Putnam (5204, 695)	Westchester (42985, 695)	Westchester (43642, 697)	Westchester (43553, 701)	Putnam (15662, 673)	Putnam (15638, 678)	Putnam (15312, 682)	Putnam (15273, 685)	2
3	Westchester (41344, 695)	Putnam (5187, 692)	Putnam (5187, 692)	Putnam (53197, 695)	Westchester (129821, 672)	Saratoga (33319, 677)	Saratoga (33054, 680)	Saratoga (32837, 684)	3
4	Rockland (12361, 692)	Saratoga (11000, 692)	Saratoga (11223, 694)	Saratoga (12716, 694)	Saratoga (32911, 672)	Westchester (131693, 675)	Westchester (131115, 679)	Saratoga (32837, 684)	4
5	Saratoga (10829, 691)	Rockland (12822, 691)	Suffolk (82154, 684)	Rockland (12228, 689)	Suffolk (237873, 670)	Suffolk (237873, 674)	Suffolk (236172, 678)	Westchester (131115, 679)	5
6	Tompkins (3930, 691)	Suffolk (80120, 691)	Warren (3507, 694)	Suffolk (81313, 697)	Warren (9924, 669)	Suffolk (398023, 673)	Suffolk (398023, 673)	Suffolk (234801, 682)	6
7	Warren (3561, 690)	Suffolk (3858, 690)	Rockland (12716, 694)	Saratoga (110761, 697)	Warren (9924, 669)	Warren (9950, 673)	Warren (9950, 677)	Suffolk (234801, 682)	7
8	Lewis (1560, 689)	Ontario (5743, 689)	Ontario (5629, 695)	Ontario (5629, 695)	Tompkins (10485, 672)	Tompkins (10485, 672)	Rockland (37541, 681)	Ontario (15438, 681)	8
9	Livingston (3190, 689)	Yates (928, 688)	Tioga (2642, 691)	Hamilton (16400, 667)	Ontario (16400, 667)	Madison (161810, 672)	Hamilton (488, 676)	Warren (8944, 680)	9
10	Ontario (6621, 689)	Madison (6805, 689)	Madison (3866, 691)	Genesee (3219, 694)	Hamilton (652, 669)	Madison (10623, 669)	Hamilton (10407, 673)	Hamilton (10182, 678)	10
11	Suffolk (78421, 689)	Genesee (3250, 689)	Genesee (3233, 690)	Madison (3542, 693)	Albany (38013, 695)	Livingston (80281, 689)	Albany (10407, 673)	Albany (38310, 678)	11
12	Broome (10161, 689)	Livingston (3045, 689)	Tompkins (4087, 699)	Broome (9916, 693)	Dutchess (43753, 664)	Hamilton (525, 669)	Livingston (7939, 673)	Livingston (7939, 673)	12
13	Tioga (2881, 689)	Warren (3358, 689)	Niagara (10658, 690)	Tioga (2735, 693)	Livingston (9512, 664)	Dutchess (43284, 669)	Tompkins (10422, 673)	Madison (8146, 678)	13
14	Madison (3729, 687)	Albany (12490, 687)	Broome (9715, 690)	Tompkins (3735, 693)	Niagara (29806, 664)	Broome (27328, 669)	Broome (26711, 673)	Broome (26711, 673)	14
15	Essex (1412, 687)	Rensselaer (6805, 687)	Livingston (3050, 689)	Wyoming (1701, 693)	Madison (10801, 664)	Albany (37306, 669)	Tioga (7267, 672)	Tioga (7267, 672)	15
16	Albany (12392, 687)	Tioga (2800, 687)	Hamilton (170, 689)	Washington (3263, 692)	Madison (10801, 664)	Albany (37306, 669)	Genesee (9482, 668)	Genesee (9482, 668)	16
17	Genesee (3318, 687)	Wyoming (1770, 687)	Albany (13094, 689)	Livingston (2831, 692)	Genesee (8908, 664)	Niagara (29244, 668)	Niagara (29244, 668)	Dutchess (42440, 672)	17
18	Washington (3473, 687)	Niagara (10560, 689)	Essex (5373, 699)	Wayne (5373, 692)	Wayne (5373, 692)	Tioga (7469, 669)	Tioga (7469, 669)	Niagara (28672, 672)	18
19	Niagara (10860, 689)	Dutchess (15009, 689)	Dutchess (14535, 688)	Niagara (10371, 691)	Wayne (15238, 662)	Orange (65345, 667)	Orange (65345, 667)	Dutchess (42440, 672)	19
20	Wyoming (1736, 686)	Washington (3212, 686)	St. Lawrence (4526, 687)	Albany (12908, 691)	Wayne (15238, 662)	Orange (65345, 667)	Orange (65345, 667)	Dutchess (42440, 672)	20
21	Hamilton (199, 686)	Oneida (11586, 686)	Oneida (9738, 686)	Dutchess (15011, 691)	Orange (59696, 661)	Essex (3930, 665)	Essex (3930, 665)	Montone (103543, 671)	21
22	Rensselaer (6866, 685)	Broome (9738, 686)	Orange (20655, 687)	Oneida (11183, 691)	Montone (108281, 661)	Oneida (32524, 661)	Oneida (32524, 661)	Montone (103095, 676)	22
23	Delaware (2320, 685)	Oneida (11257, 685)	Oneida (11431, 687)	Essex (837, 689)	Montone (108281, 661)	Oneida (32524, 661)	Montone (108281, 661)	Essex (58738, 671)	23
24	Oneida (1257, 685)	Essex (2966, 685)	Wayne (5705, 687)	Essex (837, 689)	Montone (108281, 661)	Oneida (32524, 661)	Montone (108281, 661)	Essex (58738, 671)	24
25	Dutchess (14482, 685)	Essex (45337, 685)	Erie (43037, 685)	St. Lawrence (2332, 689)	Jefferson (16870, 661)	Erie (122286, 666)	Erie (122286, 666)	Essex (58738, 671)	25
26	Chenango (3020, 684)	Erie (43037, 685)	St. Lawrence (6300, 685)	St. Lawrence (2332, 689)	Jefferson (16870, 661)	Erie (122286, 666)	Erie (122286, 666)	Essex (58738, 671)	26
27	St. Lawrence (2861, 684)	Wayne (5564, 686)	Wayne (5564, 686)	Orange (20236, 686)	Jefferson (16870, 661)	Erie (122286, 666)	Erie (122286, 666)	Essex (58738, 671)	27
28	St. Lawrence (5458, 684)	Orleans (2528, 686)	Orleans (2528, 686)	Schenectady (2912, 685)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	28
29	Cayuga (3748, 684)	Orange (20683, 684)	Schenectady (7318, 685)	Chenango (2904, 689)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	29
30	Erie (42761, 683)	Hamilton (194, 684)	Hamilton (194, 684)	Orleans (2353, 689)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	30
31	Schenectady (7208, 683)	Chautauqua (4709, 684)	Schenectady (7318, 685)	Orleans (2353, 689)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	31
32	Yates (676, 683)	Chautauqua (4709, 684)	Schenectady (7318, 685)	Orleans (2353, 689)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	32
33	Wayne (5624, 682)	Chautauqua (4709, 684)	Schenectady (7318, 685)	Orleans (2353, 689)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	33
34	Franklin (2691, 682)	Essex (1444, 684)	Essex (1444, 684)	Chautauqua (7004, 685)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	34
35	Clinton (4308, 682)	Cayuga (3533, 683)	Essex (1630, 684)	Essex (1630, 684)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	35
36	Cattaraugus (6947, 682)	Schenectady (7075, 683)	Yates (926, 684)	Essex (1630, 684)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	36
37	Chautauqua (7331, 682)	Oswego (7689, 683)	Chenango (2904, 689)	Chenango (2904, 689)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	37
38	Columbia (3070, 682)	Jefferson (5441, 684)	Clinton (4264, 684)	Chenango (2904, 689)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	38
39	Montonega (23180, 682)	Delaware (2253, 683)	Rensselaer (7118, 684)	Chenango (2904, 689)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	39
40	Montone (37504, 682)	Fulton (2877, 682)	Montonega (23915, 684)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	40
41	Fulton (3021, 682)	Alegany (2461, 682)	Wyoming (1604, 684)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	41
42	Orleans (2569, 682)	Suffolk (9017, 682)	Jefferson (5441, 684)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	42
43	Orange (18982, 682)	Schoharie (1627, 682)	Sheuben (5741, 684)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	43
44	Sheuben (5797, 681)	Herkimer (3314, 682)	Oswego (7983, 683)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	44
45	Seneca (1592, 681)	Montone (37458, 681)	Delaware (2133, 683)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	45
46	Ulster (8952, 681)	Stauben (5352, 681)	Chenango (2939, 683)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	46
47	Herkimer (6632, 680)	Columbia (2954, 681)	Seneca (1536, 683)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	47
48	Jefferson (3512, 680)	Greena (2395, 681)	Chemung (3989, 683)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	48
49	Schoharie (1678, 680)	Clinton (4098, 681)	Columbia (2988, 682)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	49
50	Corland (1244, 680)	Chemung (4041, 680)	Alegany (2450, 682)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	50
51	Alegany (2315, 679)	Franklin (2728, 680)	Herkimer (3506, 682)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	51
52	Chemung (4084, 679)	Chenango (3097, 680)	Greena (2389, 682)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	52
53	Oswego (7741, 679)	Corland (2422, 681)	Greena (2389, 682)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	53
54	Greena (2361, 679)	Franklin (2716, 681)	Franklin (2716, 681)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	54
55	Montgomery (2470, 678)	Montgomery (2385, 680)	Sullivan (5703, 681)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	55
56	Sullivan (5392, 677)	Sullivan (3591, 679)	Montgomery (2322, 680)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	56
57	Schoharie (1678, 679)	Seneca (1628, 679)	Essex (1414, 688)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	57
58	Essex (1414, 688)	Schuyler (1628, 677)	Essex (1414, 688)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	58
59	Queens (64154, 676)	Queens (64154, 676)	Schuyler (1628, 677)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	59
60	Queens (64154, 676)	Queens (64154, 676)	Schuyler (1628, 677)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	60
61	Queens (64154, 676)	Queens (64154, 676)	Schuyler (1628, 677)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	61
62	Queens (64154, 676)	Queens (64154, 676)	Schuyler (1628, 677)	Essex (1414, 688)	Rensselaer (20817, 660)	Washington (8942, 666)	Washington (8942, 666)	St. Lawrence (13563, 670)	62

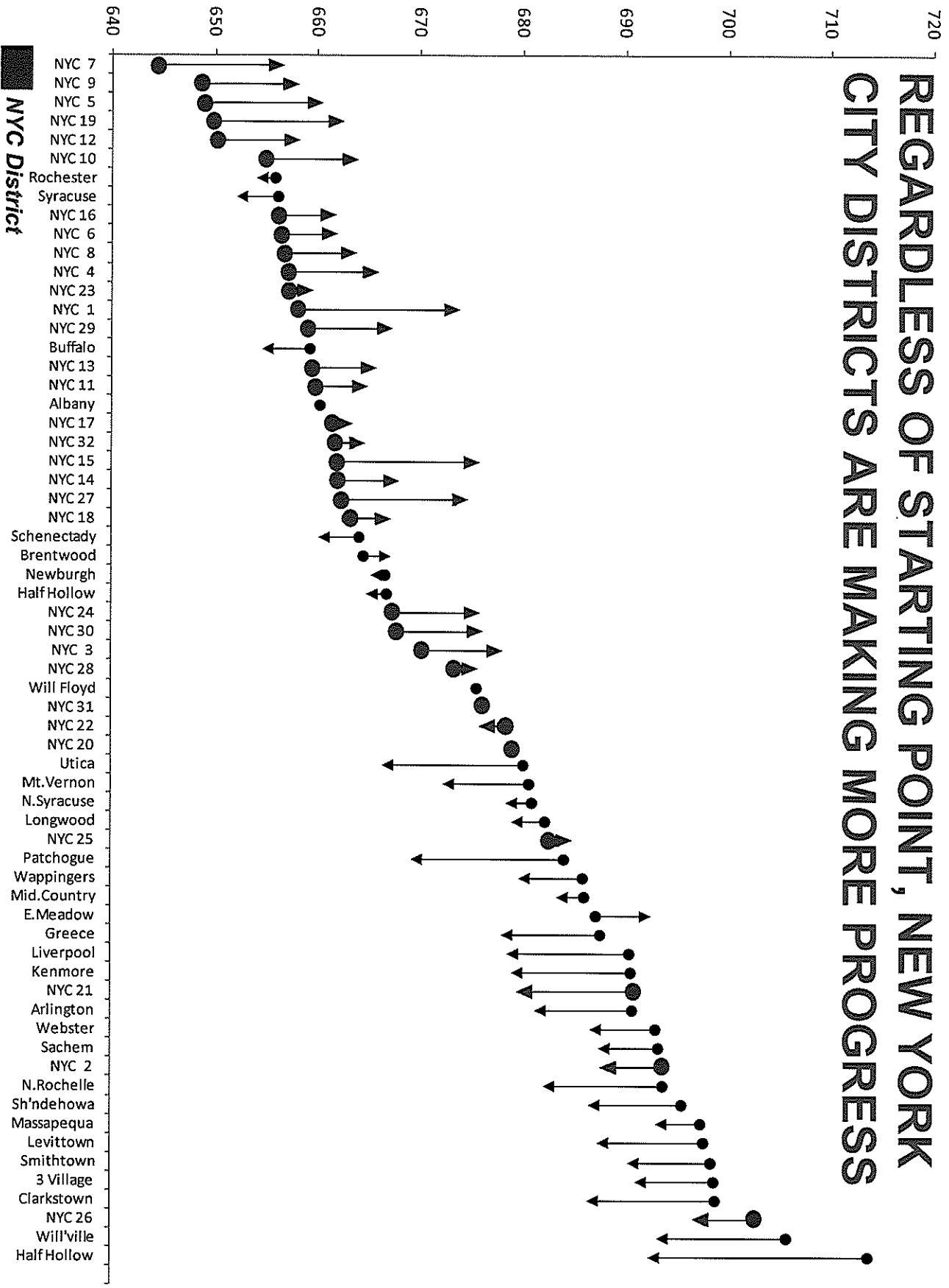
Note: Results reflect combined average results of State ELLA and main tests in grades 4 and 8 from 2002-2005 and grades 3-8 from 2006-09. In school years where NYSSED reports scale scores rounded to the nearest integer, ties between counties are broken by prior year rank. The State rescaled the tests in 2005/06, leading to reductions in average scale scores that year.

THE 17 MOST IMPROVED DISTRICTS OUT OF THE LARGEST 64 DISTRICTS IN NEW YORK STATE ARE IN NEW YORK CITY



Note: Results reflect combined average results of State ELA and math tests in grades 4 and 8 from 2002-2005 and grades 3-8 from 2006-09. The State rescaled the tests in 2005/06, leading to reductions in average scale scores that year. Chancellor's District schools are included in analysis by assigning schools to districts in 2002 and 2003 based on 2004 school district locations.

REGARDLESS OF STARTING POINT, NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTS ARE MAKING MORE PROGRESS

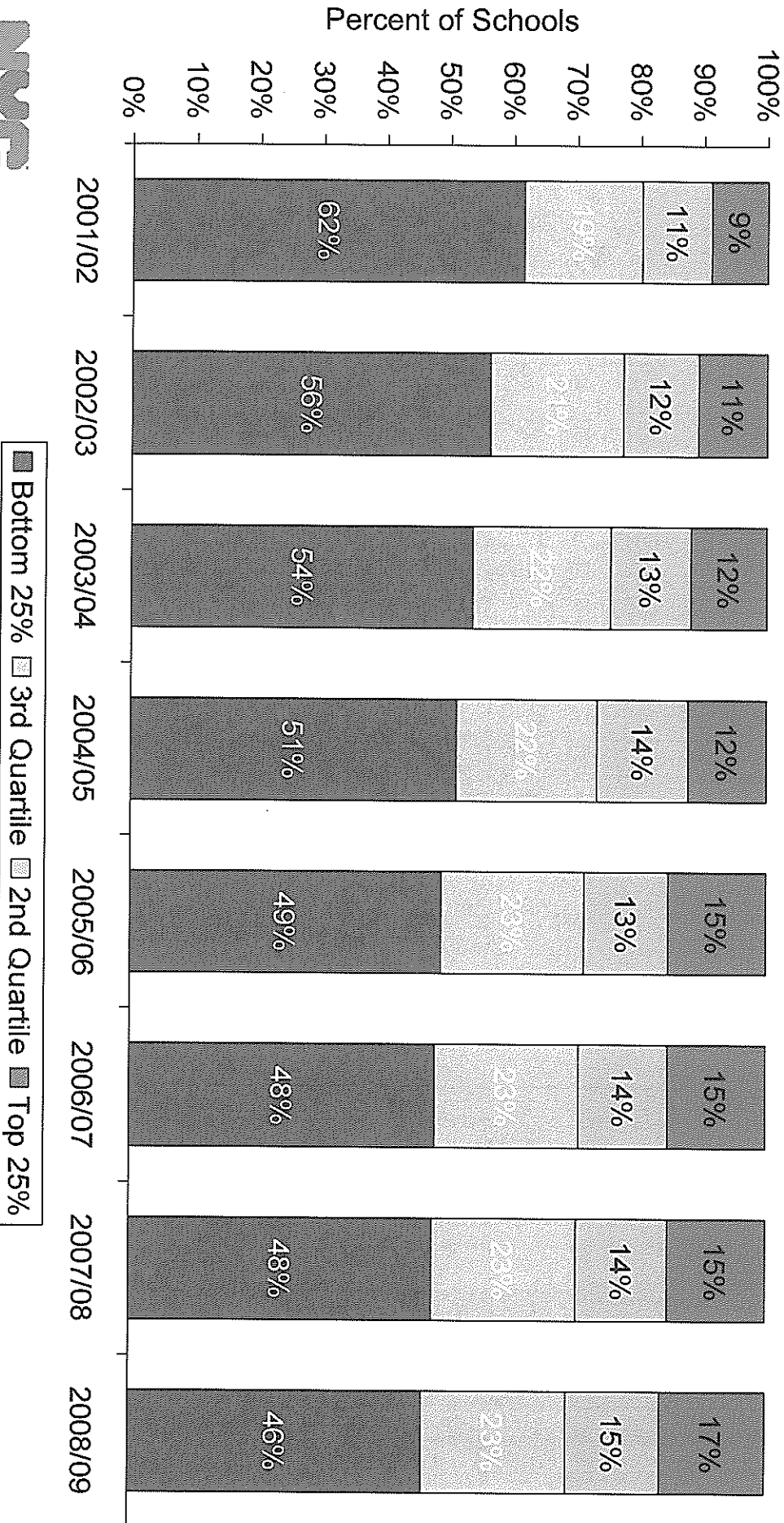


Note: Results reflect combined average results of State ELA and math tests in grades 4 and 8 from 2002-2003 and grades 3-8 from 2006-07. The State rescaled the tests in 2006/07, leading to reductions in average scale scores that year. Chancellor's District schools are included in analysis by assigning schools to districts in 2002 and 2003 based on 2004 school district locations. NYC districts are plotted in red.

De
Education
Joel A. Klein, Chancellor

NYC District

IN MATH AND ELA, THE PERCENTAGE OF NYC SCHOOLS IN THE TOP 25% OF SCHOOLS IN THE STATE HAS ALMOST DOUBLED SINCE 2002



The New York Times

City Room

Blogging From the Five Boroughs

OCTOBER 29, 2009, 4:04 PM

Lehman High Principal in Grade-Tampering Inquiry

By JENNIFER MEDINA

A principal who took over Herbert H. Lehman High School in the Bronx last year is under investigation by the Department of Education over accusations that she changed grades to help students graduate.

The principal, Janet Saraceno, came to the school, with more than 4,000 students one of the city's largest, as a so-called "executive principal" who received an additional \$25,000 for taking over a school that the department said was struggling. She is also eligible for an additional \$25,000 if the school shows improvement in its graduation rate and in other student performance measures. Lehman's graduation rate was 48 percent in 2008, according to the most recent city statistics; the citywide rate was 56 percent.

According to GothamSchools, a Web site covering New York City education that first reported the investigation, several teachers accused Dr. Saraceno of giving dozens of students credit for courses they had not passed.

Teachers from the school approached Chancellor Joel I. Klein about the changes last spring, and the department's Office of Special Investigations has been looking into the accusations since April, said David Cantor, a spokesman for the department. He said officials had no timeline for when the investigation would be complete.

Dr. Saraceno, who had previously run the High School for Media and Communications in Manhattan, did not return phone calls seeking comment on Thursday.

In some cases described by GothamSchools, the teachers claimed that students were given credit for classes they had not taken. But in other cases, transcripts were said to show students passing with "credit recovery," a permitted but controversial practice in which schools let failing students obtain credits with alternative methods like attending weeklong cram sessions or completing worksheets.

The Education Department said it did not track how many students received such credits, which are noted with a "CR" on a student's report card.

"We don't have a database that has the capability of providing that information," Mr. Cantor said. "We've never tracked how a child earns the credit so long as the principal has approved it."

The former principal of Lehman, Robert Leder, stepped down in June 2008 after investigators found that two of his assistant principals had been improperly paid overtime wages for years.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg has boasted of the city's increasing graduation rates during his re-election campaign, and his opponent, William C. Thompson Jr., the city comptroller, said in a statement that the Lehman investigation was "another appalling example of Mike Bloomberg's corrupt Department of Education."

"Bloomberg and Joel Klein have created a high-stakes environment of pressure and manipulation for our educators," Mr. Thompson, the Democratic nominee, said.

Christopher Cerf, a former deputy schools chancellor who is now an adviser for the Bloomberg campaign, said he could not comment on the case because the investigation was ongoing. But he said that Mr. Thompson "continues to belittle the hard work of parents, students and teachers and educators by wildly generalizing from specific allegations."

A Proposal for Healthy School Report Cards

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Testimony to the Education Committee
Of the New York City Council
On School Report Cards
October 30, 2009

Honored Chairman and Members of the Education Committee of the New York City Council

My name is Joseph Mugivan. I have been an advocate for school indoor air quality since I left my school as a teacher in Elmhurst Queens in 2003. I believe that it may be premature to create a school report card based on reading and math scores in light of recent reports that these educational assessments have been inflated and would undermine the purpose of an educational report card. What I do recommend, is that this committee investigate the creation of a Healthy School Report Card.

With the declaration of a pandemic of Swine Flu, we have the legal opportunity under State and Federal Law to investigate the health conditions of our school children collectively and to learn about the underlying conditions in each school which may be compounding this epidemic and causing fatalities.

According to the data available through Toxic Targeting, it is apparent that nearly all of the schools in Queens that closed with Swine flu, are within one block of at least one State Spill Site. We may have to reevaluate the term 'underlying conditions' when speaking of flu symptoms.

A Healthy School Report Card would provide independent data about indoor and outdoor air quality along with any vapors that are entering the school from the surrounding soil environment.

In 1977, New York State, with Assembly Leader Shelly Silvers leadership, enacted a comprehensive law that requires, among other items, that all public schools in New York State make public annual visual inspections of schools as well as five (5) year inspections which must include building systems associated with indoor air quality, roofs, walls, windows, heating, etc. This directive did not include chemical spills which require testing and not visual verification [Healthy Schools Network]

New provisions could be enacted by your Education Committee which would:

- A) Require that, for a few hundred dollars per school, Summa Canister testing can be performed biannually in the basement of each school building to detect the possibility of vapor intrusion of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the surrounding environment.

B) Require that The State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) would retain independent hygenists to do indoor and outdoor sampling for particulate matter from outdoor air pollution, which accumulates in the schools in high volumes, VOC's, mold and possible PCB levels from window caulking.

A Healthy School Report Cards would provide the testing results for each school as well as the collective pathologies, such as diabetes and respiratory disease, which may be at epidemic levels.

The results would enable The New York City Heath Department to focus on these schools and neighborhoods and support healthy remedies and nutritional efforts that would be required.

A correlational study relating to health conditions and low performance in education could determine what role environmental health conditions affect learning, particularly in early childhood.

I propose that this school children's health initiative be partnered with various institutions of health and learning.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Council on one type of School Report Card, which could create a foundation for addressing the environmental health issues of the children in New York City.

TESTIMONY

Oversight - Department of Education's Progress Reports

Presented to:

New York City Council, Committee on Education
Hon. Robert Jackson, Chair

Friday, October 30, 2009



The Council of School Supervisors & Administrators
(CSA)

Ernest Logan, President
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Good morning, Chairman Jackson and distinguished members of the New York City Council's Committee on Education. My name is Ernest Logan, and I am the President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA).

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to present testimony at this oversight hearing regarding the New York City Department of Education (DoE)'s Progress Reports. CSA is the collective bargaining unit for 6,100 Principals, Assistant Principals, Supervisors and Education Administrators who work in the NYC public schools and 400 Directors and Assistant Directors who work in city-subsidized Day Care Centers. CSA also has nearly 7,000 retired school supervisors in its Retiree Chapter as well as nearly 4,000 of their spouses and domestic partners.

I applaud you for recognizing the critical importance of quality school leadership in our public schools and thank each of you for your continued advocacy and support for public education.

SUMMARY

We believe that Progress Reports have been a good thing for our students, our school leaders, and our schools. Given that Progress Report Grades have been seen by many as a reflection of the hard work of school Principals, we are proud of the success that they demonstrate.

We believe that the improvements in Progress Report Grades have come partly as a result of the CSA Executive Leadership Institute's professional development training on DoE's accountability measures. This training has provided school leaders with an understanding of the metrics for education evaluation. Clearly, it is important that more school leaders receive this professional development training on Progress Reports and the DoE's accountability framework.

Looking ahead, we believe that Progress Reports could be improved and we are open to new measurements that could be added.

ABOUT PROGRESS REPORTS

In April 2006, as a part of the Children's First reforms to hold educators accountable for student achievement, Chancellor Joel Klein announced a plan to have all New York City schools graded each year by Progress Reports, just as students are graded, from A to F.

The stated purpose of the Progress Reports was to hold schools accountable for student achievement and help schools chart a course of action to improve student learning. Since 2007, Progress Reports have been released for the last three years for elementary and middle schools, and for the last two years for high schools.

RESULTS OF PROGRESS REPORTS

We are deeply proud of the role that many school leaders have played in the improved academic performance in our schools, which are reflected in the significant gains in Progress Reports grades.

- In the Fall 2009 Progress Reports, 84% of elementary and middle schools received an A; 13% received a B; 2% received a C; fewer than 1% received a D; and fewer than 1% received an F.
- Overall, in the last three years, elementary and middle schools have had a 61% increase in A grades; a 25% reduction in B grades; a 24% reduction in C grades; an 8% reduction in D grades; and a 3% reduction in F grades.
- While the fall 2009 Progress Reports have yet to be released for high schools, they too have had gains in the last two years with a 17% increase in A grades, a 4% increase in B grades, a 15% reduction in C grades, a 3% reduction in D grades, and 3% reduction in F grades.

REASONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT

We believe that the improvements in Progress Reports grades indicate that school leaders have accepted the accountability framework and are working to ensure that each of their students is making academic progress. To make these improvements, many school leaders have received substantial professional development training to understand how their schools are being evaluated in Progress Reports. In the last few years, more than 2,000 school leaders have received professional development training by CSA's Executive Leadership Institute (ELI), which has resulted in improvements in areas measured by Progress Reports.

In our training, we have helped school leaders to develop a rigorous instructional program which covers all the components that make up a Progress Report. Participants have gained a more detailed understanding of how data is used to generate their Progress Report, how it is organized, scored and compared to peer schools and the city. By working with school data, participants have been able to better analyze the trends and patterns of student performance in their schools. Participants have also been equipped with strategies on using data to set high learning goals and developing plans to improve student learning both at the school and classroom levels.

We believe that the more we train people in Progress Reports, the better they do. When our leaders better understand the metrics of the Progress Reports and what is being asked of them, they are better able to help move students forward.

MOVING FORWARD

In the last few years, CSA's position on Progress Reports has evolved significantly. When the Progress Reports were first announced, CSA did not endorse them because we believed there were shortcomings that needed to be addressed. We were troubled by

reports from the field about inaccuracies in student and demographic data leading to inappropriate school groupings and unfair comparisons. As a result, the data did not fairly represent the wonderful work going on in our schools.

However, since Progress Reports were here to stay, we also believed then that we should take the time to ensure that they provide a fair assessment of all schools. We believed then as we do now that the Progress Reports should meet four basic challenges: they must be accurate, transparent, equitable and understandable. Eventually, as a result of a commitment from Chancellor Klein to improve upon Progress Reports, CSA began to meet with DoE staff to collaborate and cooperate on making modifications. These modifications began to address the key areas of concern for our members. As a result, we were able to resolve many problems so that the public now has a clearer and less biased picture of our schools.

AREAS IN NEED OF MODICATIONS

Today, in the spirit of collaboration, we continue to meet regularly with the DoE and other stakeholders to address additional modifications in Progress Reports that we believe are in the best interest of our students. Let me now share some of CSA's current issues for attention and improvement with Progress Reports:

- With the likely scenario that NYC schools will face mid-year budget cuts in state funding, our school leaders will confront serious resources constraints, which will impact their ability to sustain or make any improvements in Progress Reports. For instance, school budget cuts may force Principals to eliminate afterschool academic enrichment programs that have helped students to master their subjects and score well on standardized tests. Given the likelihood that budget cuts would bring down ratings, it is possible that the DoE accountability criteria used to evaluate schools for Progress Reports may need to be modified.
- Recently, concerns have been raised about the contrast between national NAEP math test scores and New York State math scores for elementary and middle school students. Student performance accounts for 30% of the overall letter grade that is given to each school in Progress Reports, as measured by elementary and middle school students' scores each year on the New York State tests in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Significantly, the state and national math tests use different measurements to look at the same thing and get different results. To improve Progress Reports, there needs to be a meeting of minds on math metrics, in terms of how achievement is measured.
- Since the start of Progress Reports, concerns have been raised about the methodology of using cohorts, which loses sight of individual students. Currently, Progress Reports look at the achievements of targeted cohorts of students at each school. More should be done in Progress Reports to preserve the integrity of individual students.

- To make Progress Reports more effective, the DoE's Learning Environmental Survey should be made more objective and concrete. A school's learning environment accounts for 15% of the overall letter grade that is given to each school in Progress Reports. The Learning Environment is an annual citywide survey of students, parents and teachers in the NYC school system. The survey's questions explore issues relating to school safety and respect, engagement, communication, and academic expectations. More concrete questions and examples should be added to the survey in the teacher and parent sections.

CONCLUSION

Progress Reports hold our school leaders accountable and we are not afraid of continuing to be held accountable. The enormous amount of data now being collected for Progress Reports has opened new doors. We have a unique opportunity to develop solid, specific and meaningful solutions for each individual school and student. A big part of that will mean continuing to give struggling schools additional resources and support, even in increasingly hard times. We look forward to playing our part and working together to bring about positive change.

Due to the strong leadership of Principals and Assistant Principals, the tireless efforts of the teachers and other professional staff in their schools, and the determination of parents and their children to realize their full potential as students, our school system is gradually moving toward becoming a model for educational success in urban America.

CSA applauds the Council's Education Committee for understanding the importance of public input on this important issue by inviting our testimony at today's oversight hearing. We are grateful for the opportunity to speak today, and would be pleased to provide whatever additional information you may require.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest Logan
President, CSA

Testimony

Of

Aminda Gentile
Vice President for Education Issues
United Federation of Teachers

Before

The New York City Council Education Committee

Re

The New York City School Progress Reports

October 30, 2009

Good morning, Chairman Jackson and distinguished members of the Education Committee. My name is Aminda Gentile, and I am the United Federation of Teachers' Vice President for Education Issues. On behalf of the UFT, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the Department of Education's (DOE) School Progress Reports.

Since the DOE first proposed using progress reports, we at the UFT have cautioned that using such a high stakes and limited measure system to rate schools could be misleading and risky. Any system rating schools so heavily based on a single measure such as standardized test scores is inherently flawed. That's why the UFT has pressed for multiple measures in evaluating schools. As we saw two weeks ago with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math scores, even standardized test results can give contradictory information about how well a school is educating its students.

As a result, administrators feel pressured to have educators teach to the test, which our members tell us results in endless test preparation instead of real learning.

The reports assign a letter grade to every school. That cannot help but be simplistic. What's even more troubling to us as educators is the fact that there is nothing in the Progress Reports to show the way to improvement.

Teachers rarely describe what students know and are able to do with a single letter grade. And they do not use grades to show how students can improve. They engage with their students in multiple ways using many different indicators of deficiency and progress. The Progress Reports are really at odds with how educators do assessment.

Like other DOE data initiatives, the Progress Reports are a sincere attempt to gather information about the schools and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. But they are skewed toward certain data at the expense of other richer data. And although this may not have been the intent, they have too often become a blunt instrument in the hands of administrators. They are at best, if you'll forgive the term, a work in progress.

These reports evaluate four different areas, but when all is said and done, 85% of the final grade for elementary and middle schools is based on state standardized test scores in math and English Language Arts (ELA). In elementary schools that means the work schools do for kindergartners, first graders and second graders is not included in the reports. Third graders are only partially included, and so the reports rely almost exclusively on the work of fourth and fifth graders in exactly two subjects. But the only underlying numbers for this 85% are two state test scores. Untested subjects are not part of the grade. Portfolios and student class work have no place in the reports.

It's true that 10 percent of that Progress Report grade is based on school surveys, which measure school climate, parent satisfaction, staff communication and other areas. But the survey data are too small a percentage. The remaining 5% is based on student attendance.

In the high schools the metrics are different. Progress Report grades are based on graduation rates, accumulated credits and Regents passing rates. The data here are more comprehensive, but there are two big problems.

First, the process of comparing high schools based on Progress Report grades leads to very unfair comparisons. Although peer schools take into consideration the numbers of special education and over-age students as well as entering 8th-grade scores, high schools serving high percentages of full-time special education students or schools with high numbers of new immigrants are compared to schools with students with lower levels of special needs, and schools that have hard-to-educate populations are unfairly penalized.

Second, the metrics sometimes lead to bad education practice.

The emphasis on credit accumulation in the reports has led to expanded "credit recovery" schemes by which students are allowed – even encouraged – to make up work in classes they rarely attended, turning in a single essay or project, often to a different teacher. A high school English teacher explained how the push to accumulate credits for the Progress Reports is corrupting the education mission:

“Credit recovery ... wreaks havoc from within by overturning teachers’ grades once failing students complete a make-up project outside the teacher’s own control. This cheapens education for everyone. . . . And what is the value of a passing grade when the student who earns it discovers it could have been shoplifted with much less effort and with the shopkeeper’s consent?”

Also keep in mind that the Progress Reports are high-stakes instruments. A school can be closed based largely on its failure to boost two failing grades. Parents and the public are presented with the grade as an assessment of whether this is a “good” or “bad” school. The grades carry huge consequences, and the result is that schools focus on bumping the short-term annual scores rather than on addressing the underlying causes of failure. It is a system built in ways akin to the recent failures we have seen on Wall Street where investors ran after the short term money gains – never mind whether the fundamental system was sound. The nation suffered as a result. Similar behavior is encouraged in the schools by high stakes, short term accountability measures such as these progress reports. Principals and schools do everything they can to get the grade up. The way to get the grade up is to improve the scores. And so this creates an unhealthy drive to get scores up and accumulate credits by any means.

The “snapshot” look that the Progress Reports produce tells you very little about a school’s environment and history, the nature of its instruction and pedagogy, the characteristics of its students or the challenges the school faces. The “progress” that the reports measure is, for the most part, a one-year gain or loss in the students’ average standardized score. Maybe the school did get its average score up a little, but at what cost? Giving up arts and science instruction? Getting rid of special programs or events—the annual school play, the traveling chorus, the science fair? Are the students and staff disrespectful toward each other and sick of school by January?

Our members have done an extraordinary job over the last few years. We all have concerns about the reliability of the state tests and their ability to reflect the real work of our schools. And, like others, we too are surprised that entire districts suddenly eradicated the difficulties of all struggling students (some districts had virtually no Level 1 students). Nonetheless, in spite of those concerns, scores have been rising for our students for the past 10

years because of the work of our teachers, regardless of the systems under which they work. We would be happier with progress reports that reflected the true work of our teachers, which cannot even come close to being measured simply by manipulating test scores into high stakes documents like these.

As I said, the reports are a work in progress. We at the UFT hope that you will consider the concerns we've raised as the Department of Education decides how best to proceed with their continued use in our school system. Thank you.



Testimony of

Glenn von Nostitz
Director of Policy Management
Office of the New York City Comptroller

Before the
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
Education Committee

Regarding Oversight of the
New York City Department of Education's
School Progress Reports

October 30, 2009

WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR.
NEW YORK CITY COMPTROLLER

TESTIMONY PREPARED FOR SUBMISSION TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
REGARDING THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S
SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORTS

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2009
10:00 AM

Good morning, Committee Chair Jackson and honorable members of the Education Committee.

I appear before you today to express my deep concerns regarding the accuracy, the meaning, and the educational consequences of the New York City Department of Education's School Progress Reports.

Just last month, the DOE released progress reports for the 2008-2009 school year. Incredibly, 97 percent of our city's schools received an A or a B grade. Does anyone truly believe that practically every school in our city deserves an "A" or a "B"?

Of course not.

The main reason why this year's letter grades are grossly inflated is that DOE based them overwhelmingly on scores on the State's standardized math and English Language Arts, or ELA, exams.

Eighty-five percent of the Progress Report letter grade is determined by the results of these tests. For a number of reasons, these results should not serve as the basis for any sort of school letter grade system.

First, the massive increases in State test pass rates in recent years defy credulity.

Last spring, the State reported that nearly 85 percent of 4th graders in New York City were suddenly proficient in math according to the results of the 2009 State exams.

The State added that from 2006 to 2009, New York City's math test pass rate for grades 3 through 8 jumped from 57 percent to nearly 82 percent – an increase of 25 points.

For the same time period, the math test pass rate in Buffalo climbed from 29 percent to over 63 percent – an increase of over 34 points.

Is there a single educator who believes that this increase had any correlation at all to actual increases in student academic proficiency? If it did, we would all be discussing how to replicate the “Buffalo miracle.”

During the same period, Rochester saw a 31.4 point pass rate increase and Syracuse’s pass rate rose 28.1 points – both exceeding New York City’s 25-point increase.

Similar increases were seen on State’s ELA tests.

Educational testing experts will tell you that it is highly implausible for any district to achieve pass rate increases of ten percentage points or more in a single year – as occurred on the ELA tests in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers and New York City from 2008 to 2009 – and for scores to keep on increasing, year after year.

This is simply magical thinking.

So what’s happening? This brings me to my second point, which is that test scores soared in part because grading of the State tests has become easier.

As the *New York Times* has reported, whereas three years ago 7th graders in New York were required to answer 60 percent of questions correctly to receive a passing grade on the State math exam, for the most recent test, the threshold to pass was lowered to 44 percent. The threshold was lowered in every other grade as well.

While the resulting 86 percent pass rate statewide on the math tests may seem impressive, the improved scores clearly reflect scoring gimmicks rather than improved performance.

The suggestion that State test grading has gotten easier is also supported by the fact that virtually no students scored at Level 1 in 2009.

It has been noted, for example, that out of about 70,000 6th graders who took the ELA test this year, a mere two-tenths of a percent scored at Level 1 – that’s two out of every one thousand students.

That’s amazing. Back in 2005, the Education Department trumpeted a 12.5 percent ELA Level 1 rate as a major accomplishment.

In an appalling revelation, the *New York Daily News* reported this summer that it was possible to score a Level 2 on the State exams by ignoring all written questions and guessing on the multiple choice questions.

A reporter for the Gotham Schools website conducted her own experiment, using both a 6th grade ELA exam and a 7th grade math test. She scored a 2 in both cases without looking at or reading a single question or math problem.

That is truly a disgrace.

Thousands of children wrongly received Level 2 scores this year despite the fact that they cannot read or comprehend at or close to grade level.

Had they received the more appropriate Level 1 grade, these students would have been required to attend summer school. Denying students that opportunity flies in the face of the mayor's supposed commitment to eliminating social promotion and reveals a truly breathtaking cynicism.

The third reason why the State's standardized exams must not be so closely tied to our schools' Progress Reports is that these tests have become entirely too predictable, enabling – and, in fact, encouraging – our teachers to teach to the test.

One expert who analyzed the State's 4th grade math tests found that by 2009, 90 percent of the test's points were determined by topics that appeared multiple times in four years, "often in questions virtually identical to past years."

Another expert found that at least 14 of 30 multiple choice questions in the 2009 7th grade math test had appeared in similar form in previous tests. She also found that only about half the math skills the State requires 7th graders to learn have ever been tested in the four years the State has administered the exam.

The release two weeks ago of state scores on the 4th and 8th grade National Assessment of Educational Progress in math provides us with conclusive evidence that the New York State tests do not credibly measure changes in academic proficiency.

Instead of an 87 percent pass rate for New York State fourth graders on math tests, the NAEP exams show that a paltry 40 percent met the minimum standard. In 8th grade, only 34 percent of students passed. That's barely a third.

The NAEP tests are given every two years and are known as "the nation's report card." They are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and considered to be the gold standard of educational testing.

The previous NAEP exams were given in 2007. Between that year and 2009, the average score for New York State *decreased* by 0.8% in 4th grade, while on the State's test the pass rate *increased* by 9.0%.

The curricular content of the NAEP and the New York State assessment are similar. But because the NAEP is administered to a scientific sampling of students – designed by leading statisticians to be representative of the entire student body -- teachers do not "teach to" the NAEP.

The NAEP exam is therefore a fairer assessment of educational progress than the State tests. It is not susceptible to manipulation by the State in terms of its difficulty or grading.

Yet DOE and this administration continue to trumpet the wildly exaggerated gains suggested by the State test results.

The stakes are too high for these publicity games. We find ourselves in the midst of the greatest economic downturn since the Depression, with over 200,000 young men and women between the ages of 16 and 24 – most of them persons of color – who are neither in school nor employed.

The ruling in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case required that we provide all New York City children with a sound basic education. But by attempting to game the system, the administration has sadly lowered standards instead.

The *New York Times* has posted an interactive online feature that permits anyone to look up the pass rate rankings of the State's 695 school districts on the most recent ELA and math tests, as well as the State social studies and science tests.

My office analyzed that data and discovered that even with the huge gains trumpeted by the Bloomberg administration, many of our school districts *still* rank at the bottom of New York State's 695 districts.

The pass rates for nine of the city's 32 districts ranked in the 3rd percentile or lower on the ELA exam. Five of our districts also ranked in the 3rd percentile or lower for the math test.

And while Tweed claims to have reduced the achievement gap between white students and students of color, the NAEP exams show the exact opposite.

Whereas the State exams suggest that 63 percent of black 8th graders have basic math proficiency, the NAEP tests show that number is a mere 13 percent. Where State tests suggest that 69 percent of Hispanic 8th graders have basic math proficiency, the NAEP exams show that number is 15 percent.

Barely a tenth of our African American and Latino 8th graders have the basic skills to help them succeed. That is unacceptable, and what is happening here in New York City today is educational malpractice.

There is no question that as our workplace requires greater technical and analytic skills than ever before, our challenge is not limited simply to improvements in math and English.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing consequences of using the State tests as the basis for Progress Report letter grades is that it discourages the teaching of other

critical subjects. Because letter grades are based on ELA and math test results, there is a disincentive to spend class time teaching science and social studies.

The Bloomberg administration conveniently does not mention the City's scores on the State standardized tests in science (given in grades 4 and 8) and social studies (given in grades 5 and 8). Maybe that's because New York City's results have been much worse than on the ELA and math tests.

When my office averaged the New York City rankings on the New York Times website, our city was at the 18th percentile on ELA results statewide, and at the 30th percentile on math. However, in science we were at only the 7th percentile and on social studies the 9th percentile.

Even our districts that did comparatively well on ELA and math did not do nearly as well on science and social studies. This is even more disturbing when seen against results on national science tests. When the federal government tested science in 2005, two-thirds of New York City's eighth grade students were at the lowest possible rating.

Our success as a city requires that we make a more concerted effort to teach these subjects. How will future generations compete for technology jobs, seek solutions to conflicts in our many communities, or find energy savings through green building if we do not spark our children's interest in science and civics at an early age?

Fifty years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision struck at the fundamental unfairness of the "separate but equal" standard in education, gross disparities remain. Rather than mask these disparities with imaginary achievement gains, it's time to get back to the basic priorities like curriculum, instruction and learning.

Those are the priorities that will open new doors of opportunity for our young people and give them hope. And those are the priorities that will help us to grow our local economy and keep us strong long into the new century.

Thank you very much.

Testimony Before the Education Committee of the New York City Council

Hearings on the DOE's School Progress Reports – October 30, 2009

Martha Foote, Time Out From Testing, Public School Parent

Thank you, Chairman Jackson and Members of the Education Committee, for granting me this opportunity to speak. My name is Martha Foote. I am a New York City public school parent and a member of Time Out From Testing, ^{parent} an organization that advocates against the misuse of standardized testing.

Simply put – the Department of Education, under Chancellor Joel Klein and former-Accountability Chief Jim Liebman, with blessings from Mayor Bloomberg, has implemented a patently flawed system for judging schools. As other speakers have testified, this system overly relies on the state's standardized tests, uses a statistically unsound definition of progress, and ignores myriad important factors that make up a good school. And I have to mention: as a parent, I bristle at the DOE's assertions that the report cards are a useful tool for us. The formula is incomprehensible, the granting of a single letter grade is demeaning, and the fact that 97% of elementary and middle schools received an A or a B this year is further proof of how invalid and useless these grades are. As the principal at my son's school told the parent body, "We got an A this year. So did 87% of the elementary schools in the city. It means nothing." I could go on and on. But I want to bring up one point that ^{the DOE} ~~Chancellor Klein~~ has repeatedly glossed over – the punishing effect this system of grades has had on many of our schools, principals, teachers and children. Maybe not so much this year, an *election* year, when Mayor

Bloomberg wants us to feel good about ^{all} our improved schools, but certainly in years one and two, and, as is being promised, for the future.

Schools are now branded with a simple-minded letter grade derived from a formula riddled with errors. Those schools unfortunate enough to have received a C, D or F in the past two years have had to endure public humiliation, a perpetual threat of school closure, ^{a drop in applications} ~~enrollment~~, and hour upon hour of extra paperwork demonstrating their improvement plans. Many of these schools are excellent schools on any reliable measure, but still they have had to unfairly bear the stigma of an erroneous judgment. Bloomberg and Klein have declared that this is a good thing, that these grades are a way to prod principals into improving their schools – but what's their favored method of improvement? More test prep perhaps? Gotta get those test scores up! And what happens when nearly every school receives an A? With an A, where's the motivation for a school to look honestly at itself and discover new ways to help students?

So, what do we at Time Out recommend to assess and improve our schools? Scrap the school progress reports, stop relying ^{so heavily} on these perpetually flawed standardized tests, and stop this infantile policy of shaming and ^{paying} ~~acclaiming~~. Instead, the DOE should work *with* schools, not against them. Some quick ideas: Use an inspectorate system similar to that used by the National Association of Independent Schools, which entails teams of principals and teachers who truly understand schools to visit, observe, interview, report and recommend. Treat teachers as professionals and set up structures within schools so faculty can regularly observe and give one another feedback for improvement. Allow

time for faculty to discuss among themselves the important work of teaching and curriculum. Have schools demonstrate that each student is known well for all her complexity as a learner and ^{as an individual, for} ~~a person,~~ ^{child,} not just her test scores.

School Progress Reports are an
~~Please help put an end to this~~ invidious policy that is hurting our schools and hurting our children who are being under-educated with a steady diet of test prep. Help the schools that truly need help, but stop this political game of mock accountability. Thank you.



Quick Facts on the 2008-2009 Academic Achievement of
P.S. 366: Washington Heights Academy

FACTS:

- The New York City DOE Progress Report assessed the 2008-09 fourth grade of PS 366: Washington Heights Academy as failing to show sufficient progress on New York State Math and English Language Art (ELA) tests, compared with DOE designated peer schools.
- *A low progress report grade does not mean a low performing school.* On many measures, WHA has shown itself to be a high achieving school with a strong commitment to academic rigor:
 - Out of 18 elementary schools in District 6, WHA had the 4th highest percentage of students scoring a 3 or 4 on the State ELA test and the 7th highest percentage of students scoring a 3 or 4 on the State Math test (on a 4.5-point scale).
 - The Median ELA Score at WHA is a 3.0 and the Median Math Score at WHA is a 3.56.
 - 100% of WHA third graders achieved either 3s or 4s on their New York State English and Math exams in 2009.
 - New York City DOE Quality Review of WHA: "Proficient."
 - New York State/NCLB Accountability Standards for WHA: "School in Good Standing" by wide margins.
 - New York City DOE School Surveys for WHA: "98% parent satisfaction."
- Many schools who received A's and B's on their progress reports are designated as "failing" by NCLB standards because their students have not met basic levels of proficiency. WHA is a high achieving school who received a low progress report despite the fact that a high percentage of our students performed at or above grade level on NY State exams.



**Facts on the 2008-2009 Progress Report
P.S. 366: Washington Heights Academy**

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) Progress Report assessed the 2008-09 fourth grade of PS 366: Washington Heights Academy (WHA) as failing to show sufficient progress on New York State Math and English Language Arts (ELA) tests compared with DOE designated peer schools. As a result, WHA received an “F” rating on its Progress Report.

As concerned parents of WHA we take this grade seriously and believe it will help our school find ways to become more effective in ensuring the higher levels of annual growth for all students. **However, we do not believe that WHA’s progress report grade is an accurate reflection of the achievements and success of our school.**

FACT: The DOE states that its Progress Report is only one measure used to evaluate school performance. Based on DOE’s two other “equally” important measures, WHA provides a superior learning environment:

- On DOE’s on-site *Quality Review* WHA received a Proficient, the second highest of four possible scores, and was told that our young school has firm structures in place to support the professional performance of our teachers and the academic achievement of our students.
- WHA is a “School in Good Standing” under federal *No Child Left Behind* guidelines and exceeded New York State standards by wide margins in literacy, math and science.

FACT: WHA students performed well on their state exams, and ranked higher than the majority of other District 6 elementary schools:

- WHA’s Median ELA Score is 3.07 and its Median Math Score is 3.56 (scores are from 1 – 4.5 with 3 and 4 indicating that students met or exceeded performance for their grade level).
- 100% of WHA third graders achieved either 3s or 4s on their New York State ELA and Math exams in 2009.
- Out of 18 elementary schools in District 6, WHA had the 4th highest percentage of students scoring a 3 or 4 on the State ELA test and the 7th highest percentage of students scoring a 3 or 4 on the State Math test.

FACT: WHA’s Progress Report grade was driven largely by its student progress compared to its designated citywide peer group (60% of its grade). We believe that this measure is not an accurate reflection of our educational success:

- WHA made overall progress on its test scores from 2007/08 to 2008/09: ELA scores increased by 19% and Math scores increased by 4%.
- WHA is a new, small school growing by one grade each year. The student progress component was based on the test scores of an unusually small sample of 33 students who were at WHA for the full year between 3rd and 4th grades. Many of the students are English Language Learners, who performed well compared to peers at other District 6 schools.

FACT: Most schools that received a low grade on their first Progress Report improved substantially in just one year. Of the 52 schools that received an F in 2006-07, the first year grades were given, most received an A or B the next year.

ManhattanTimes

5030 Broadway, Suite 801, NY, NY 10034 212-569-5800 info@manhattantimesnews.com

October 1, 2009

DOE letter grades not the whole picture

To the Editor:

Your September 3 article on school report cards correctly notes that the letter grades given to each school by the New York City Department of Education are the subject of intense debate across the city.

However, the article does little to explain the reasons for this controversy. As a parent at a new elementary school – P.S 366: Washington Heights Academy – that received its first “grade” this year, I have a new appreciation of the mixed blessing of this system.

Our progress report contains data that is helping our school leaders to identify areas that need improvement and our teachers to refine instruction and assessment strategies. But reducing this complex data to a single grade based on one year of test scores (and in our case determined by an unusually small sample size of students) can grossly misrepresent the quality of a school.

There is ample evidence that students at Washington Heights Academy are thriving in a quality educational environment. Although we are only entering our third year, the DOE Web site presents several measures of our school’s success. Our recent DOE Quality Review gave us the second highest rating of Proficient.

Our testing results exceeded New York State accountability standards in literacy, math and science by a wide margin and we are a “School in Good Standing” under federal guidelines for No Child Left Behind. The DOE’s survey of our school reflected 98% parent satisfaction with the quality of education provided.

The DOE is clear that the progress report grade should not be viewed in isolation, and that these other measures are equally important in evaluating schools. Yet the only measure that gets any publicity is the grade itself. In spite of our accomplishments, all many people will now know about us is that we received an F on our report card. They won’t know that most schools receiving a similar grade on their first report card went on to get an A or B the following year. The progress report can provide valuable information to help schools, parents and students, but the grade alone can lead to misleading judgments about a school’s success.

Christopher Jones

Parent of 3rd grade student at Washington Heights Academy

ManhattanTimes

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1 de octubre 2009

Reportes escolares no ofrecen el panorama completo de nuestras escuelas

Para el editor:

Su artículo del 3 de septiembre sobre las tarjetas escolares señala correctamente que los grados en las cartas dados a cada escuela por el Departamento de Educación de la ciudad de Nueva York son asunto de intenso debate a través de la ciudad.

Sin embargo, el artículo hace muy poco para explicar las razones detrás de esta controversia. Como padre en una nueva escuela elemental – P.S. 366: Washington Heights Academy – que recibió su primer reporte este año, tengo una nueva apreciación de las mezcladas bendiciones de este sistema. Nuestro reporte de progreso contiene información que está ayudando a nuestros líderes escolares a identificar áreas que necesitan mejoramiento y nuestros maestros para refinar y calcular las estrategias de instrucción. Pero el reducir esta compleja información a una sencilla nota basada en un año de puntajes de exámenes (y en nuestro caso, determinada por un pequeño grupo de estudiantes) puede desvirtuar ampliamente la calidad de una escuela.

Hay una amplia evidencia de que estudiantes en Washington Heights Academy están prosperando en un ambiente de calidad educativa. Aunque solo estamos entrando a nuestro tercer año, la página electrónica de la DOE presenta varias medidas del éxito de nuestra escuela. Por ejemplo, nuestra más reciente Revisión de Calidad de la DOE nos dio la segunda nota más alta en el sistema.

Nuestros resultados de los exámenes sobrepasaron los niveles en alfabetización, matemática y ciencia del Estado de Nueva York por un amplio margen y somos una “Escuela en Buena Forma” bajo las guías federales de Ningún Niño Dejado Atrás. La revisión del DOE de nuestra escuela reflejó una satisfacción de 98% de parte de los padres.

La DOE está clara de que el reporte de notas de progreso no debe de ser visto aisladamente, y que estas otras medidas son también tan importantes en evaluar las escuelas. Aunque la única medida que recibe publicidad es la de las notas. A pesar de nuestros logros, ahora muchas personas lo que sabrán acerca de nosotros es que recibimos una F en nuestro reporte de notas. Ellos no sabrán que la mayoría de las escuelas que recibieron una nota similar en su primer reporte pasaron a tener una A o B el próximo año. El reporte de progreso puede proveer una importante información para ayudar a las escuelas, los padres y los estudiantes, pero la nota sola puede conducir a juicios engañosos acerca del éxito de una escuela.

Christopher Jones

Padre de un estudiante de tercer grado en Washington Heights Academy

10/30 Testimony to City Council by Martin Krongold, 2nd Vice President Citywide Council on High Schools

There has been much criticism of the DOE's use of data via the Progress Reports and other measures. The most bally-hooed alternate has been the Federal NAEP Reports- yet another data measure! I've never been comfortable with the use of NAEP data because it assumes the Bloomberg administration has been the sole reason why the Board of Education was finally excised as an incompetent oversight body. In truth, the responsibility for gutting the BOE and starting to dismantle its bureaucracy started about seven years before in the Giuliani administration who under a few Chancellors demanded less politics and more accountability. This has been extended with a measured vengeance by this administration.

I did a Google on NAEP and it turns out the feds have been doing these tests since 1969. I've found New York State data going back to 1990. NYC and other large urban area data go back to 2002 for English and 2003 for math. Nice coincidence. When you compare New York City to New York State, NYC has outperformed NYS in 3 out of 4 categories. They are all directionally significant, though not likely statistically significant. To be statistically accurate, NAEP is a different measurement than the Progress Reports and more statistically accurate longitudinally, BUT Progress Reports do what they're supposed to do and that is compare year-to-year improvement or decline of statistical progress on the yearly NYS tests. More importantly, Progress Reports show where great schools and leadership are regardless of location or socio-economic status. Kids aren't blamed for lack of progress and school leadership is more focused with the info it needs to make informed decisions. What we don't know is how the numbers are raised or lowered each year to determine the "1, 2, 3, and 4's". We don't know whether getting 40%, 50%, or 90% of the answers correct on a standardized test reflects adequate knowledge for a student who gets a "3". No matter how these numbers are finessed, when we compare to NY State year-to-year any inherent bias in them still reflects progress or lack of it for that year-over-year comparison. Comparing it over several years would be a hoax and should be resisted by independent thinking people. The NAEP is better for long-term comparison.

Despite Diane Ravitch's contention that the NAEP is the Gold Standard, it depends how you look at it. NYC data has not been around that long. If you look at NY State going back to early 1990's there has been significant improvement (between 10 and 25 points in each category except 8th grade English where data only goes back to 1998 and the results are flat). Under Rudy Giuliani, the increases in Progress Reports based on Bloomberg variables would likely have been much greater since statistical jumps are greatest when troubled institutions first experience a turnaround (e.g. PS 35 on Staten Island got a Progress Report F and then zoomed to an A in one year. This great school fell flat after its successful principal left and then rebounded the following year when the tests rebounded.)

We should also take administration claims about tremendous improvements with a grain of, well, grade inflation. There is progress, but 97% of our schools are A and B schools because this year's test passage rates were inflated. Previous years' Progress Reports were more meaningful. Shame on this administration for not pointing this out publicly. The high school Progress Reports will be more realistic since they incorporate more instructive variables- did you graduate or not, did you pass enough classes or not, and did you pass enough Regents tests or not? Hopefully after the mayoral election the NYS Department of Education returns to grading normalcy.

Here's hoping for a great year.

Thank you.

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I represent: NYC Comptroller

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Address: W 96th St

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I represent: PS: 366 Washington Heights Academy

Address: Nasle Ave, NY NY 10040

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I represent: School Indoor Air Quality 11050

Address: "Healthy School Report Cards"

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Name: GRECIA TESALONA

Address: 99 HILL SIDE AVE, NYC, 10040

I represent: PARENTS OF PS. 366 (WASHINGTON HEIGHTS ACADEMY)

Address: NAGLE AVE, NYC, 10040

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I represent: Citywide Council on High Schools

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I represent: CSA

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I represent: UFT

Address: 52 Broadway

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Name: PHIL VACCARO (PLEASE PRINT)

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I represent: NYC Dept of Education

Address: 182 Chambers St

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Address: 50 Chambers St

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