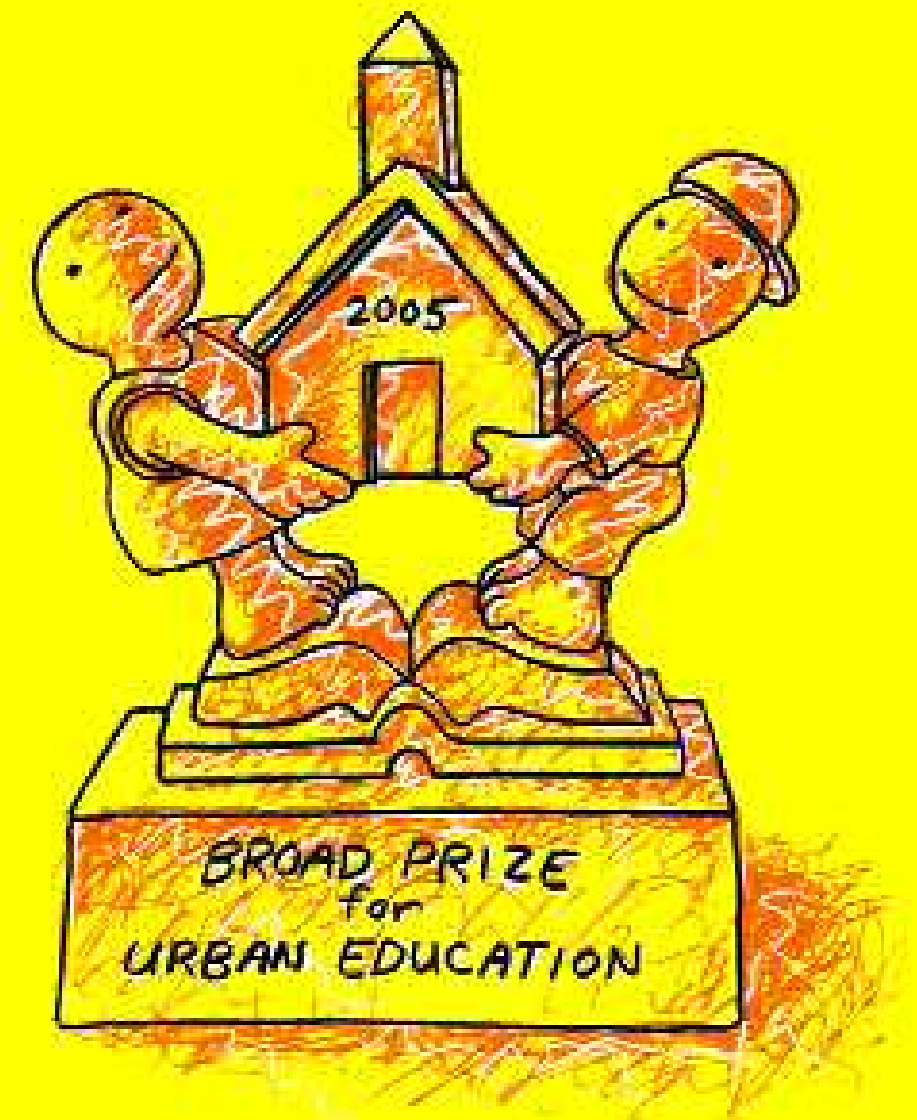


The Broad Foundation transforming public education

The \$1 Million
Broad Prize
for Urban
Education 2005

Data Drives Performance



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2005 BROAD PRIZE FINALIST DISTRICTS

Houston, Texas [Aldine Independent School District](#)
Boston, Massachusetts [Boston Public Schools](#)
New York, New York [New York City Department of Education](#)
Norfolk, Virginia [Norfolk Public Schools](#)
San Francisco, California [San Francisco Unified School District](#)

PREVIOUS BROAD PRIZE WINNERS

2004 Garden Grove, California [Garden Grove Unified School District](#)
2003 Long Beach, California [Long Beach Unified School District](#)
2002 Houston, Texas [Houston Independent School District](#)

On the cover:

The Broad Prize for Urban Education, designed by artist Tom Otterness, resides at the U.S. Department of Education and is inscribed with the winner's name each year. The winning school district also receives a bronze sculpture for its central office, and each finalist school receives a smaller sculpture.

The proof is in the numbers.

The \$1 million [Broad Prize for Urban Education](#) is an annual award that honors urban school districts that demonstrate dramatic improvements in student achievement, while also closing the achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between high- and low-income students. The winner of The Broad Prize receives \$500,000 in college scholarships for graduating seniors. The other four finalist districts each receive \$125,000 in scholarships.

As the largest education award in the country given to a single district, The Broad Prize was designed to: restore the public's confidence in our nation's public schools by highlighting success stories; reward districts that have improved the achievement levels of disadvantaged students; create competition among districts and an incentive for them to improve; and showcase the best practices of successful districts.

The National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) manages The Broad Prize for Urban Education through a rigorous and comprehensive process that collects a wealth of data on educational progress and engages the talents and expertise of researchers and leaders in education, business and public service.

A photograph of a city skyline with several tall skyscrapers, including a prominent blue glass one, viewed from across a river with lush green trees in the foreground. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Aldine Independent School District, TX

“We’re a very focused and proactive district. We are looking ahead and are not reactionary.” -First-year principal

“I’m always competitive by nature and looking at scores because I want to be at the top of the food chain.” -Experienced teacher

“Not a single superintendent has made this district about them.”

-Community member

Aldine Independent School District, just 15 miles outside Houston, is a two-year finalist for The Broad Prize. Aldine has a student population that is 58 percent Hispanic and 33 percent African-American, with 76 percent of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Using The Broad Prize methodology, Aldine outperformed similar districts in Texas in six of six areas (elementary, middle and high school; reading and math). The district is governed by a seven-member board elected to three-year terms, and Nadine Kujawa has been superintendent since 2000. Its teachers are represented by the American Federation of Teachers and the Texas State Teachers Association of the National Education Association.

Aldine Independent School District, TX

Walk into a classroom at any school in the Aldine Independent School District, and you'll see posted on chalkboards and whiteboards the learning objectives for the day. The schools measure student achievement with a common assessment every three weeks in all grades and subjects. Teachers are eager to monitor the data they receive regularly on their students, so that they can adjust lessons to keep children on track.

District-wide assessments, use of data and visible reminders of daily learning objectives are just some of the tools Aldine has implemented in its quest to make good on its motto: "To produce the nation's best." And they're making strides. Compared with similar districts in Texas, Aldine students perform better than expected in reading and math at all grade levels. And the graduation rate for its African-American high school students has increased from 55 percent to 68 percent over the past four years.

Use of Data

Aldine's most outstanding quality may be its innovative and extensive use of data. "We've been using data for the past 10 years," says Superintendent Nadine Kujawa, an Aldine High School alumna and 40-year district employee. "We even use it in our operations department and our food services department; it permeates the whole district."

Aldine purchased a custom-designed, integrated data system to connect all levels – district, school and classroom – so that everyone has access to information and can ensure they are on track toward meeting their goals. With the TRIAND system, teachers upload their classroom information onto the network, which also houses state test results, benchmark assessments and other student data. Administrators and teachers meet regularly to review and disaggregate the data.

As a result, educators can quickly spot a weakness in an individual or group of students. "Data is the first clue I have a problem," says one middle school teacher. "I need to see movement. I pull data every week." Administrators can tell which subject areas are bedeviling a class, grade level or school. And when it spots problems, the district can intervene with tutoring, special classes and other extra help.

Common Curriculum

Aldine ensures each student is prepared for the next grade level by aligning its curriculum between grade levels and setting up "vertical teams" – teachers in the same subject from different grades who meet regularly to make sure there are no gaps in curriculum from year to year so that every student is prepared to move on. This common curriculum also ensures that instruction is similar from school to school and from classroom to classroom, which helps meet the challenges of an extremely mobile high-poverty, high-minority student population.

Curriculum benchmarks are tracked every six weeks and listed in detail on the district's website. For example, the district has identified 27 benchmark tasks a second-grade math student should be able to perform after the first six weeks of school, such as identifying the place value of each digit of a three-digit number and knowing basic addition and subtraction facts to 18.

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wbamberg@aldine.k12.tx.us

The district has tackled the problem of ninth-grade academic failure with four dedicated ninth-grade campuses. "It gives ninth-graders one year to develop a little more maturity to handle the high school setting," Kujawa says. Before the ninth-grade schools were opened, about 33 percent of Aldine ninth-graders dropped out. Since the schools began, the number of dropouts has been reduced by two-thirds.

Homegrown Team

Aldine has benefited from a stable board of education and district executive team. Aldine pays special attention to homegrown talent. It's not unusual to find teachers who attended the schools where they now work. Principals are recruited mostly from within. To make sure there are qualified candidates, Aldine has in-house preparation programs to prepare teachers to become assistant principals and to prepare assistant principals to become principals. Aspiring principals help set the topics for their own training based on their needs and are paired with mentor principals for additional support.

Aldine retains principals and teachers with some of the highest salaries in Texas. But the support systems and collaborative culture also serve as a retention tool, and teachers view their evaluations as helpful, not punitive. "I have only been there five weeks and they have already evaluated me four times," a new teacher says. "They let me know that they are there to support me, not to catch me doing something wrong."

Community Involvement

The district doesn't work alone in its mission to improve student achievement. A popular feature of the district website is a "parent portal" that lets parents access their child's data and homework assignments. An open-door policy encourages parents to observe their child's classroom. Aldine offers parent workshops to give them study tips and holds night classes in English, math and reading so parents can help their children with their homework.

When one of the campuses held its first Saturday class to "re-teach" a particular math lesson, school officials were doubtful that students would come or that teachers would be eager to volunteer their Saturdays. By 8 a.m., 137 students had showed up and every teacher in the math department attended. Local businesses provided breakfast and lunch. Many campuses now hold Saturday classes regularly.

In the last three years, Aldine has focused on changing its culture from teacher-centered to student-centered – a particular challenge at the high school level where teachers have tended to place the burden on students to master a subject, says Kujawa. "It involves planning together and realizing, 'I may have taught this, but my students didn't master it.'" The result is that teachers take responsibility for student learning – and they figure out how to teach a subject in a different way.

"What is exciting about Aldine is that it is up to us to make sure the kids succeed," Kujawa says. "We are their ticket to everything good."



Aldine Independent School District

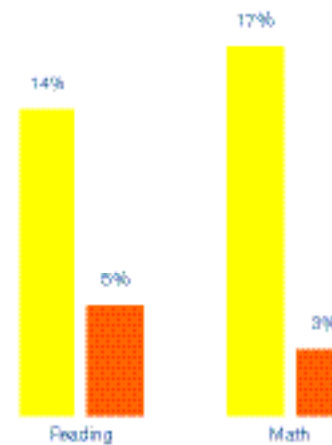
Rank Among U.S. School Districts (by size):
Number of Schools:
Number of Students:
Number of Teachers:
Annual Budget:

2004
73
66
56,292
3,616
\$372 million

Smaller Income Achievement Gaps for Reading and Math than the State of Texas

Income achievement gaps defined as difference between scores of non-low-income students and their low-income peers across all grade levels.

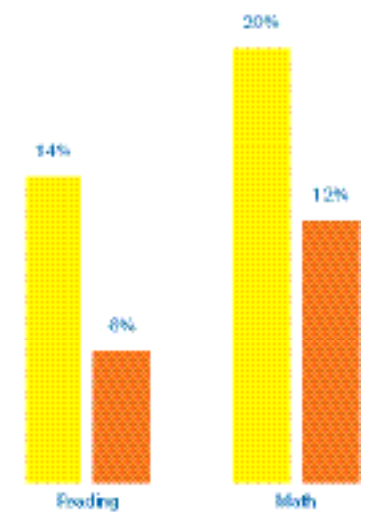
Texas
Aldine



Smaller Ethnic Achievement Gaps for Reading and Math than the State of Texas

Ethnic achievement gaps are defined as difference between scores of white students and the weighted average scores of African-American and Hispanic students across all grade levels.

Texas
Aldine





Boston Public Schools, MA

“Good enough isn’t good enough. The data doesn’t lie. You have a lower performing group, you have the data, you develop a strategy.” -Experienced principal

“The practice of teaching in classrooms has become more uplifting.” -Parent

“Teachers have high expectations for every child. Is every child there yet? No. Are we working towards it? You better believe it.”

-Experienced principal

Boston Public Schools is a four-year finalist for The Broad Prize. The district has a student population of 46 percent African-American and 30 percent Hispanic, with 73 percent of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Using The Broad Prize methodology, Boston outperformed similar districts in Massachusetts in six of six areas (elementary, middle and high school; reading and math). Since 1996, the district has been governed by a seven-member board appointed by the mayor. Thomas W. Payzant has been superintendent of schools since 1995. Teachers are represented by the Boston Teachers Union – Massachusetts Federation of Teachers.

Boston Public Schools, MA

If stability of leadership is key to the success of a school district's reform efforts, then Boston Public Schools is on the right track. With one of the longest-tenured superintendents in the country – Thomas Payzant has been superintendent of schools since 1995 – Boston's decade of working to improve student achievement has resulted in significant progress in narrowing the gap between student groups.

Compared to other districts in Massachusetts with similar levels of poverty, Boston performs better than expected in reading and math in all grade levels. And in the past four years, Boston has reduced the achievement gap between African American and Hispanic students and their White counterparts by double digits in high school reading and math.

Strategic Plan

In Boston, the school district is a city department, and its budget is a line item in the city budget. With strong support from the mayor, Boston Public Schools have embarked on an aggressive reform campaign. The district is on its second five-year strategic plan under Payzant's leadership, *Focus on Children II*. Every year, Payzant and the seven-member mayoral-appointed School Committee, which serves like a board of directors, set four to six goals for the entire system and for individual schools. At each campus, educators then take the school goals and develop plans for each grade level.

"Everyone is now a stakeholder," says an experienced principal. "It has gotten down to the level of the students. In the elementary school, the kids know the goal, and they know where they are relative to the goal."

Professional Development

To foster teamwork among teachers of the same grade and subject, Boston has adopted the Collaborative Coaching and Learning model, which involves an eight-week teaching cycle where teachers work in study groups that meet weekly to observe model lessons presented by the coach or one of their peers and to set goals and expectations for the next week. Teachers who have trouble meeting a specific goal can have a coach observe their lesson, give feedback and offer support.

"They don't learn all by themselves, sitting someplace listening to a lecture," says a community member. "They learn by doing their work and going back and forth with each other. It's very effective. You can't draw a line between professional development and student performance."

Data Tools

A web-based electronic data system called MyBPS enables teachers, principals, and central office administrators to view state assessment results, student report cards, and a PDF of each student's writing composition and score on the state test. MyBPS also offers interactive tools, such as tips on how to use and interpret the data. Teachers can sort data by student groups, subjects, even test items.

The district requires quarterly assessments in all subjects and grade levels, and benchmarks are reviewed every four to eight weeks. Boston retains students in grades 3, 6 and 9 if they are not proficient in math and reading after attending

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bconnolly@boston.k12.ma.us

summer school.

Rigorous State Standards

Massachusetts has among the nation's most rigorous state tests - the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. "Most adults with college degrees cannot pass that test," Payzant says. In 1999, when the local business community realized that students were struggling to meet the high academic standards, which translated into a less-prepared workforce, they developed a program for high school students.

The district requires students who are struggling to pass the MCAS to take summer school classes. But Classroom in the Workplace, a program developed by local businesses, allows students to hold summer jobs, as well. Under the seven-week program, students attend classes taught at their worksite by a Boston teacher for 90 minutes every day for seven weeks. "The business community are not just advocates for high standards, they are actually participants in them," says a local business leader.

Hire and Retain Talent

To increase the pool of teacher candidates and ensure that new teachers are successful, the district has implemented its Boston Teacher Residency in partnership with the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Modeled after a medical residency, the 12-month program combines intensive coursework with classroom teaching under the watchful eye of a mentor. If participants teach in the district for three years, the tuition payment is waived. The district also offers a mentoring program for all new teachers, who receive a two-day crash course in what to expect at BPS.

During Payzant's tenure, 75 percent of principals have either retired, resigned or been moved to other schools. As a result of this leadership turnover, the district makes a concerted effort to support principals and ensure the agenda does not change every year. The district's School Leadership Institute recruits and trains aspiring principals and provides ongoing professional development for new principals. The institute offers a fellowship where aspiring candidates spend four days a week "in residency," working in a school administrator role under an outstanding Boston principal, and complete 71 days of coursework on instructional leadership and operational management. Another program offered by the institute supports first- and second-year principals through a five-day summer training course and continuing support and mentoring.

And even with Payzant's pending retirement, the district is confident that the reforms well underway will continue. "If someone were to come in here and try to reverse the battleship, they wouldn't get the job," says an experienced principal, noting that the next superintendent will have to meet with the approval of "administrators, the community, the mayor. No one will come in without the core beliefs."

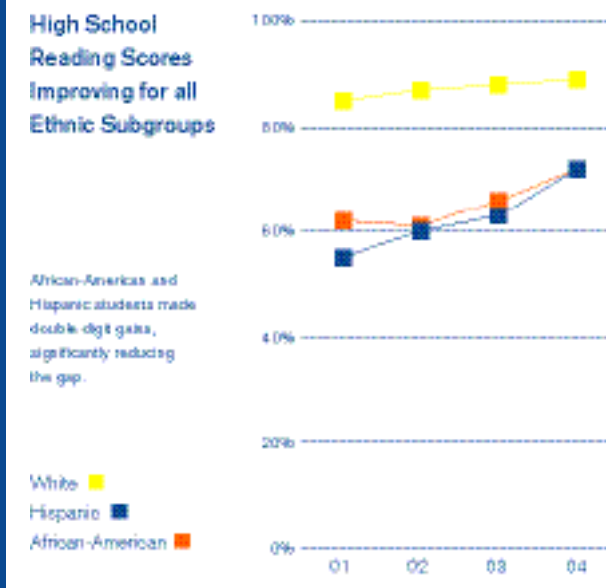


Boston Public Schools

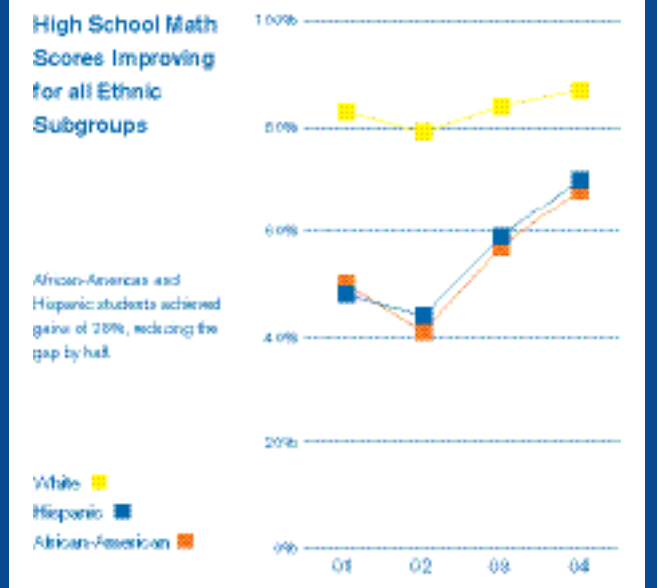
Rank Among U.S. School Districts (by size):
Number of Schools:
Number of Students:
Number of Teachers:
Annual Budget:

2004
67
136
60,150
3,696
\$861 million

High School Reading Scores Improving for all Ethnic Subgroups



High School Math Scores Improving for all Ethnic Subgroups





New York City Department of Education, NY

“Parent involvement is alive and well, where it wasn’t years ago. People whose grandchildren have graduated are involved.” -Parent

“Now you have a chance to look at instruction that is standards-based. You don’t have to go your own way.” -Experienced principal

“Even some of the naysayers realize this is working.” -Experienced principal

This is the first year the New York City Department of Education has been named a finalist for The Broad Prize. The nation's largest school system, New York City has a student population that is 38 percent Hispanic, 34 percent African-American, with 82 percent of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Using The Broad Prize methodology, New York City outperformed similar districts in New York State in six of six areas (elementary, middle and high school; reading and math), and also demonstrated greater improvement in those same six areas. The school system reports to the mayor of New York City, who appoints the chancellor. They are advised by a 13-member Panel for Educational Policy, composed of eight members appointed by the mayor, and five members appointed by borough presidents. Chancellor Joel Klein was appointed in 2002. Teachers are represented by the United Federation of Teachers.

New York City Department of Education, NY

It has more public school students than all the other Broad Prize finalists combined, and more teachers than most large districts have students. If it were a Fortune 500 company, it would be #157 on the list. With more than 1 million students, some 78,000 teachers and an annual budget of \$13.5 billion, the New York City Department of Education is the largest school system in the nation.

No one ever said that turning around the gargantuan New York City public school system would be easy. But Chancellor Joel Klein, appointed by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2002, and his staff have made some remarkable gains in just a few years.

Compared to other districts in the state with similar levels of poverty, New York City performs better than expected in reading and math at all grade levels. Last year, African-American and Hispanic students in grades 3 through 8 achieved their greatest one-year gains ever on math and reading proficiency, and over the past four years, math proficiency rates for those students have increased by more than 15 percentage points. The achievement gap between low-income and more affluent students is significantly smaller in New York City than for the state as a whole.

Mayoral Control

The recent academic results did not happen by chance. Widespread reform efforts stem from Michael Bloomberg's determination to be an "education mayor." After he was elected in 2001, he quickly and successfully fought for legislation giving him mayoral control of the schools. The legislation also replaced an elected school board with a 13-member appointed board. The following year, Bloomberg appointed Klein, a former federal prosecutor who successfully battled Microsoft, as chancellor of the school system. And to signal the importance of accountability, Bloomberg moved the district headquarters to the historic Tweed Courthouse, right across from City Hall. With the school system reporting to the mayor, "You know whose feet to hold to the fire," says one local businessman.

When Klein was named to the school system's top job, he was faced with 32 community school districts, six high school districts and two citywide districts that lacked integration or accountability. He quickly restructured them into 10 regions across the city, each with several districts and about 120 schools. Klein put in place 10 regional superintendents who each have a team of 10 to 12 local instructional superintendents and community superintendents to supervise principals at each school. As a result, teachers and principals say they get more time and personalized attention from the local superintendents, high school teams feel more connected to the system, and principals say they are able to operate with more budgetary autonomy.

Focus on Instruction

One of Klein's largest investments in support of curriculum has been hiring math and literacy coaches in schools to help students and teachers ensure mastery of core subjects. All schools in New York City have approximately 90 minutes of lit-

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(212) 374-0200
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eracy instruction and at least one hour of math every day.

One of New York City's more unusual innovations, introduced two years ago, was the hiring of a full-time parent coordinator at each school, partly to help parents negotiate the new school structure and reforms. Handling dozens of phone calls and appointments a day, the coordinators help parents with everything from finding bus stops for students to understanding the new curriculum. "I have an assistant principal who's like my right hand, but my parent coordinator is like my left hand," says a long-time principal.

End to Social Promotion

Despite political opposition, Bloomberg achieved one of his key education reforms: ending the practice of "social promotion," or passing along children to the next grade even if they are unprepared. Under Klein, the schools combined the new policy with interventions to help struggling students. The result has been rising test scores for the students held back as well as rising test scores overall. The policy started with third-graders, was expanded to cover fifth-graders this past year, and will be extended to seventh-graders in 2005-06.

Students in kindergarten through third grade are identified for reading interventions through a literacy program that twice a year assesses specific areas such as decoding, phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension. The NYC Department of Education also has benchmark assessments for grades 3 through 8 and online interim assessments three times a year.

Hiring and Retaining Talent

After the U.S. Military, the New York City Department of Education is the largest employer in the country. Hiring and providing professional development for such a large school system is a massive task, "so we launched the nation's largest effort to train new principals with more than \$60 million in private support," Klein says. New York City's DOE promotes retention of successful principals through a bonus system negotiated with the administrators union and support programs that include mentors, professional development and promotion opportunities.

The need for teachers is so great that the district recruits as far away as the Philippines, Spain and Canada to find certified teachers who are bilingual. In addition, the New Teacher Project recruits non-education students on college campuses who have strong majors in particular subject areas. New teachers are helped by mentors – experienced and skilled teachers who have been hired full-time to support their colleagues.

New York City still has a long way to go, Klein says. But whether a district has 100,000 or 1.1 million students, the same set of principles must be applied: focusing on instruction, achievement and accountability. "The challenges are different but the ingredients are the same."

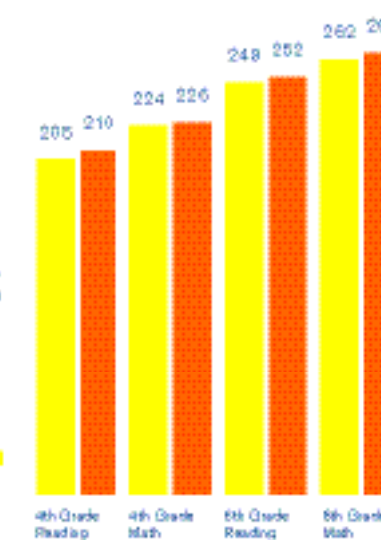


New York City Department of Education		2004
Rank Among U.S. School Districts (by size):		1
Number of Schools:		1,225
Number of Students:		1,023,674
Number of Teachers:		78,680
Annual Budget:		\$13.5 billion

Higher Performance on NAEP than Central City Average

Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) of the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

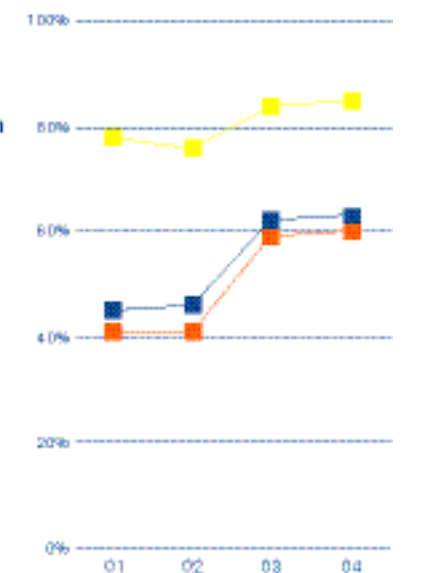
Central City Average
New York City



Ethnic Achievement Gaps Narrowing in Elementary Math

Gaps by African-American and Hispanic fourth-graders are more than two times those of White students since 2001.

White
Hispanic
African-American





Norfolk Public Schools, VA



“We’re not about programs, we’re about people.” -District administrator

“There is a magic bullet, I think, and it’s data-driven decision-making.”

-Elementary school principal

“Everything is focused on the same belief that every child will learn.” -Experienced principal

Norfolk Public Schools has been a finalist for The Broad Prize for the past three years. Approximately 69 percent of Norfolk’s students are African-American, and 58 percent are eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Using The Broad Prize methodology, Norfolk outperformed similar districts in Virginia in six of six areas (elementary, middle and high school; reading and math), and also demonstrated greater improvement in those same six areas. The district is governed by a seven-member board that is appointed to two-year terms by the Norfolk City Council. Under Virginia law, each board member is required to attend 12 hours of education training. Stephen C. Jones was named superintendent in July 2005. Previously, the district was led by John O. Simpson from 1998 through 2004 and by interim superintendent Denise Schnitzer. Virginia is a non-collective bargaining state, and its local affiliates of the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers operate under a memorandum of understanding with the district.

Norfolk Public Schools, VA

Years ago, when Navy families were transferred to Norfolk, Va., home of the world's largest naval station, real estate agents would steer them to neighboring Virginia Beach, a community that was larger, more affluent and with schools that had a better reputation.

No longer. "Everyone is looking around and saying, 'Wow, what's going on in Norfolk Public Schools? They're really shining,'" says a Norfolk principal. "There is excitement in our district. Everyone is seeing success."

Norfolk is a consistent high performer. In the past four years, the percentage of elementary students who reached proficiency in both reading and math increased by 14 percentage points. Middle school readers improved by 12 points, and middle school math scores jumped 23 points. In addition, Norfolk is closing the achievement gap between minority students and their White counterparts in all grade levels.

"All Means All"

In 2001, Superintendent John Simpson and the school board developed the mantra, "All means all," which signals Norfolk's commitment to strive for high levels of achievement for every student. "We didn't need a law called NCLB to know that we wouldn't leave a child behind," says a first-year principal. "That's already in place here." The district considers the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL), which require that 70 percent of students be proficient in a subject area, the "floor, not the ceiling," says Interim Superintendent Denise Schnitzer, who stepped in when Simpson retired in 2004. "We said 70 percent isn't good enough."

Powerful Literacy

Driven by the belief that literacy is the foundation for all learning, Norfolk schools have embraced the concept of "Powerful Literacy," a 14-characteristic skill set that ensures all students not only know how to read, write and compute, but also how to think critically, analyze and solve problems. The district gives each teacher in grades 4, 7 and 9 a CD with hyperlinks to specific activities and pacing guides for teaching each learning objective.

In the late 1990s, the district had 22 different reading programs. Now there's a standardized curriculum that is aligned with the state's educational standards, but the district sets the bar much higher. For example, while the state requires students to be proficient in reading by the third grade, Norfolk believes its students should read proficiently by the end of first grade. Toward this end, the district conducts quarterly assessments of kindergarteners through second-graders in reading fluency, phonics, comprehension and vocabulary. The result: a gain in 20 percentage points from first to second grade.

Student Monitoring

One of the district's major challenges is the transience of its students, many of whom are from Navy families. "In any given year, 40 percent of our students are in and out," Schnitzer says. The district has instituted a computerized database to track student progress, and a consistent curriculum means that students who transfer to another Norfolk school won't miss a step. "A

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teacher immediately knows what level a new student is," says a district administrator. "By the first week of April, we knew that 88 percent of second-graders were reading on target. Of the remaining 12 percent, we knew who the students were, what classes they were in and what areas they were deficient in."

Schools set goals for the number of hours of parental involvement, and each year, they increase the goal by 10 percent. One of the district's most popular programs is its Parent University, conducted twice a year. "They get classes on how to help their child, understand what Standards of Learning are, how we grade, and how to read a test report," Schnitzer says. The district provides buses, daycare and breakfast so parents can attend the workshops.

Time and Talent

In the late 1990s, then-superintendent Simpson was approached by the Greater Norfolk Corporation, an association of business executives that originally joined together to address economic development, about how they could help the city's schools. Simpson was struggling with how to address a block of pending principal retirements. When he shared his dilemma with local business leaders, they funded a leadership training program. "They bring a business perspective to our principals," Schnitzer said. "They run sessions for our principals on how to handle difficult customers, hire for talent and manage time."

Teachers and principals also conduct "walk-throughs" three times a year to observe other schools and classes and then bring those best practices to their home sites. "Kindergarten teachers need to see what fifth-grade teachers are doing," says one experienced principal.

Instructional specialists from the central office are required to spend 70 percent of their time in classrooms helping teachers implement the curriculum. "We had people resign and retire when we put the requirement in place," says Cathy Lassiter, executive director for middle schools. "It's not observation from the ivory tower. It's in-the-trenches, roll-up-your-sleeves." When a local power outage knocked out electricity one morning at an elementary school, "We got ten calls from the district asking, 'What can we do to help?'" says a long-time principal. "When I started 28 years ago, I was actually afraid to call the central office."

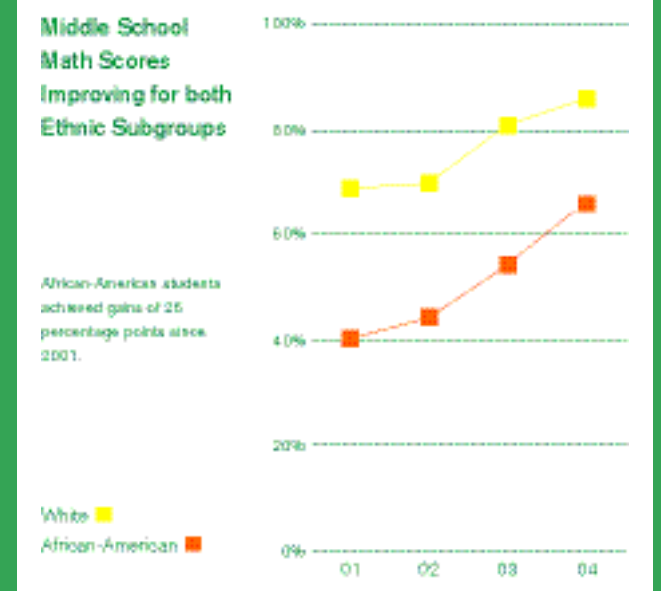
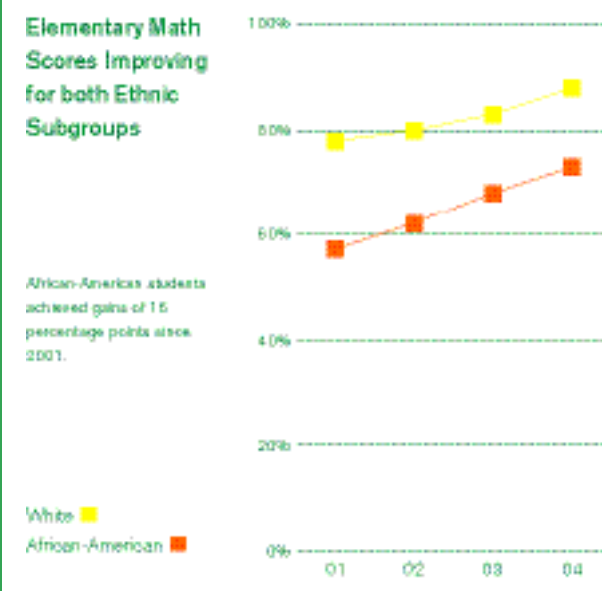
Data, Data, Data

As with other high-performing districts, Norfolk gathers data assiduously. The district has a Comprehensive Accountability System, a tool that holds all levels of the district accountable, from classrooms to schools to district departments.

The district collects quarterly benchmark assessments at all school levels, and 90 percent of its schools give common assessments at least every month. Teachers then meet in "data teams" to review the monthly data, make plans and adjust teaching strategies. Every school has a performance report on the district Website. Teaching becomes a more public act when teachers are more willing to open their classrooms, Schnitzer says. "A 'no-excuses' mentality has permeated the culture of the school district."



Norfolk Public Schools	2004
Rank Among U.S. School Districts (by size):	142
Number of Schools:	58
Number of Students:	36,724
Number of Teachers:	2,956
Annual Budget:	\$283.4 million





San Francisco Unified School District, CA

“It’s an expectation that principals share and analyze the data with staff and parents. Your whole academic plan is driven by the data.” -Experienced principal

“I have gotten phenomenal support from the district to teach reading and writing at the elementary level.”

-First-year teacher

“We are expected to have our students well-versed in core material every second of every day.” -Experienced teacher

This is the first year that the San Francisco Unified School district has been a finalist for The Broad Prize. The district has a student population that is 51 percent Asian, 21 percent Hispanic and 15 percent African-American. Nearly 62 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Using The Broad Prize methodology, San Francisco outperformed similar districts in California in six of six areas (elementary, middle and high school; reading and math). The district is governed by an elected board of seven members who serve four-year terms. The board-appointed superintendent is Arlene Ackerman, who has served since 2001. The teachers are represented by the United Educators of San Francisco.

San Francisco Unified School District, CA

San Francisco draws tourists from around the world to see its cable cars, fog-shrouded skyscrapers and working waterfront. But such scenes remain out of reach for some of its poorest residents. So when preschool teacher Demetria Williams was hired to teach at Charles Drew Elementary in the city's struggling Bayview-Hunters Point district, she took her charges on a field trip to landmarks they'd never seen: the Golden Gate Bridge, Coit Tower and those famous cable cars.

Williams teaches at one of nine schools in the San Francisco Unified School District turned into Dream Schools. A creation of Superintendent Arlene Ackerman, Dream Schools attempt to transform low-performing schools into high-powered learning academies.

"You see all the people coming from London, Paris – even Africa and Japan – to see what we have here, but we never get to do that living in the Bayview," Williams told the *San Francisco Chronicle* last year. "It's what the Dream Schools are trying to do – to give our kids the chance to do what kids in private schools get to do."

Dream Schools are just one of many initiatives that San Francisco has put in place to bring equity to the public schools in a city of stark socioeconomic contrasts. With a diverse student population where 59 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch, San Francisco performs better than expected in reading and math at all grade levels, compared to other California districts with similar levels of poverty. In addition, the achievement gap between low-income and more affluent students is significantly smaller in San Francisco than in California as a whole.

"We have a laser focus on data and teaching and learning," says Deborah Sims, chief of school operations. "We're always asking, what is the next benchmark? What is the next level?"

STAR Schools

The San Francisco Dream Schools, modeled after the Frederick Douglass Academy in Central Harlem, are an outgrowth of San Francisco's well-regarded STAR (Students and Teachers Achieving Results) Schools Initiative. The STAR schools were started in 2001, the year after Ackerman came to the district, as a way of giving underperforming schools extra help. Forty-seven of the district's 114 schools are currently STAR schools, which receive extra resources, such as targeted professional development, data analysis and supplies. "The most powerful resource to look at is leadership," Sims says, "but we realized that a principal can't do it all." So each STAR school has an instructional reform facilitator, an experienced teacher who has a track record of helping other teachers improve. Among other things, the reform facilitator makes sure teaching strategies are informed by district data about individual students and schools.

A central office support team meets with principals and assistant principals to review data, academic plans and priorities for the year. Central office staffers conduct walk-throughs three or four times a year to observe teaching practices.

Instructional Programs

Recognizing that teacher input is essential to the success

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of instructional programs, the district assembles a group of teachers from across the city to develop a list of nearly a dozen criteria they want to see in a specific teaching program. Based on that criteria, they then choose their top picks of instructional programs to pilot. Teachers field-test lessons from the new materials and forward rankings of the programs and feedback to the central office to decide which ones to adopt district-wide. Rather than mandate specific teaching practices and schedules, the district gives schools the choice of adopting research-based practices that best suit the needs of their students.

To help address its diverse student population, the district created one of the first dual-language programs in the country where children are being schooled in both English and Chinese. It has also created small learning communities at the high school level to help students enter fields like biotechnology, information technology and health-related fields. In other schools with large populations of English language learners, the district translation office provides translators and materials in Chinese and Spanish and supports the 49 languages spoken within the district.

Professional Development

San Francisco's professional development efforts include programs that focus on recruiting principals from within the district. One successful source for principal candidates is Project LEAD (Leadership Education for Administrator Development), which matches aspiring principals with retired principal mentors. New principals participate in a year-long orientation and are provided with coaches to help them analyze their practices and set goals for improvement. For teacher recruitment, two district programs target paraprofessionals and non-educators looking to become teachers, especially in high-need areas such as math, science and bilingual education.

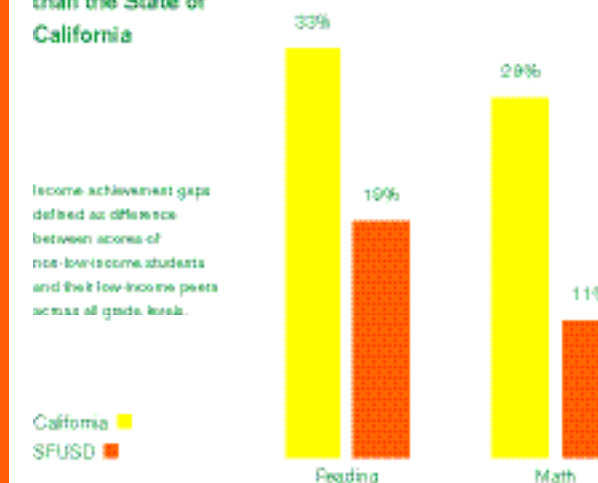
Ackerman, who is overseeing reforms under a five-year district plan called "Excellence for All," says she is heartened by what she has seen take place in San Francisco. "I am excited to see the ever-improving quality of teaching and learning going on in our schools every day," she says. "These improvements are showing up in test score gains for all students across the district. We are, indeed, raising the bar and closing the gap."



San Francisco Unified School District	2004
Rank Among U.S. School Districts (by size):	69
Number of Schools:	118
Number of Students:	57,805
Number of Teachers:	3,032
Annual Budget:	\$422.7 million

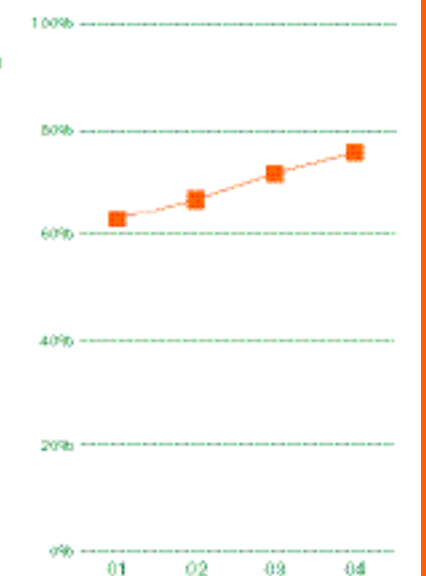
Smaller Income Achievement Gaps than the State of California

Income achievement gaps defined as difference between scores of high-income students and their low-income peers across all grade levels.



Improved High School Graduation Rate for Hispanic Students

Graduation rate based on the Manhattan Institute methodology.



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2005 SELECTION PROCESS

To ensure that The Broad Prize for Urban Education rewards urban school districts that truly are making significant overall improvement in student achievement while at the same time reducing performance gaps between ethnic and income groups, The Broad Foundation enlisted the assistance of The National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) to manage the selection process. NCEA is a joint venture of the Education Commission of the States, the University of Texas and Just for the Kids. NCEA collects and analyzes data on all of the eligible Broad Prize districts to present to a Review Board.

The **Review Board** is comprised of 17 prominent educational leaders representing a diverse range of educational leadership experience and perspectives. The Review Board examines performance indicators, demographic data and other detailed information on more than 80 eligible school districts. Based on that examination, the Review Board selects five school districts as finalists for The Broad Prize.

The finalist school districts are then researched further, and teams of educational researchers and practitioners visit the districts. During these three-day site visits, the teams gather detailed statistical and qualitative information about each district and visit one elementary, one middle and one high school in each district. In addition to interviewing the district superintendent, school board president, union leaders, parents and community representatives, principals and teachers, the team also conducts classroom observations and focus groups with new and experienced principals and teachers. The information obtained from these visits is compiled into reports on each finalist that is presented to the Selection Jury, along with the data that was collected for the Review Board.

The **Selection Jury** is comprised of eight nationally prominent individuals from business and industry, government and public service. The Selection Jury reviews the statistical data and on-site reports for each district and chooses one district as the winner of The Broad Prize for Urban Education.

"We are encouraged that large urban districts - which often face the toughest challenges - are having success in improving the education of all children, regardless of their race or family income. The Broad Prize is designed to reward and showcase their successes so that other districts can learn from their best practices."

-Eli Broad, founder of The Broad Foundation