



Impact on Student Achievement in New York City School Year 2008-09

Analysis of New York City Progress Report

Introduction

In an effort to understand the impact of the School Leaders Network (SLN) on school performance and, in particular, student achievement we focused on the New York City Cohort of principals. We selected NYC as the focus cohort for four reasons.

First, the SLN mission is focused on supporting principals in high need schools. The vast majority of principals enrolled in the NYC cohort lead schools where greater than 70% of students receive free or reduced lunch.

Second, the NYC cohorts are well established and provided us with a sample large enough to make statistical inferences about the general impact of SLN.

Third, New York City provides clear and usable data for us to generate analyses of SLN. New York's accountability system is multi-faceted and provides us with a broad-range of data from student achievement scores, to parent evaluations, to surveys of teachers. All of this data is useful in gauging a principal's impact on school success and student learning.

Fourth, New York City uses a variety of metrics to track school performance. The data we used in our SLN evaluation* is drawn from the NYC Progress Report. The report measures student year-to-year progress and compares each school to peer schools. Peer schools are those NYC public schools with a student population most like the school's population. Each school is compared to an aggregate of 40 similar schools.

The information presented here is not an exhaustive list of all results, but should be considered a high-level view of selected academic and other results for the most recent year.

Understanding Peer Horizon Scores

Each school is compared to its peer group of 40 schools and given a peer horizon score, which can be interpreted as the percentage of the predicted range of scores it covers in that year's progress report. The range is calculated using peer groups average achievement scores for the three years prior to the progress report. For instance, a value of 50 can be interpreted as a school covering 50% of the weighted range of scores in its peer group.

It should be noted that the average peer horizon scores are based on previous years of achievement, so test differences across years may affect the overall average of peer horizon scores, leading to a higher average attainment by schools across the board. Additionally, a school has the potential to outperform its peer range, which could lead to a score over 100.

Methodology

There were 51 schools eligible to be included in the analysis:

- 37 K-8 schools – all of which had a progress report grade
- 14 High schools – 2 did not receive progress report grades (Louis Brandeis High School and Foundations Academy). Brandeis did have some progress report data, but did not receive a final grade.

Peer Comparisons – New York City Department of Education determines a peer group of 40 schools for every school in the city using a weighted average of student characteristics, including the percentage of students receiving Title I services, demographics, special education and English language learners.

Selected Results

Academic Achievement for principals with 3 years of SLN programming

- High poverty schools with SLN principals who participated in programming for three years had average lower starting points, but made significant ground on their less disadvantaged counterparts in the SLN network. With starting points of 42% in ELA and 65% in Math in 2006-07, **high poverty schools moved up to 88% in ELA and 86% in Math in 2008-09**

Academic Achievement for principals with 2 years of SLN programming

- **Principals who have participated in SLN programming for two years have moved their schools from average peer horizon scores before they started programming of 50% and 62% in ELA and Math, respectively, up to 77% and 80% in 2008-09.**
- High poverty schools with 2 years of programming made significant ground in their peer groups as well with a peer horizon score of 81% in both ELA and Math.

Culture Indicators

- Safety increased from 60% to 67% in all SLN-led schools and from 64% to 69% in high poverty schools.
- Communication had a lower starting point in 2007-08 at 49%, but moved up to 65% in 2008-09 in all SLN-led schools, while high poverty schools moved from 55% to 66%.
- SLN principals with 2 years of programming had sizable percentage point gains for their schools in 2008-09 in safety, academic expectations and engagement scores since 2006-07, and jumped almost 25 points in communication scores.

*This independent evaluation was conducted by Joshua Marland who analyzed data from the NYC Progress report.

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High School Results

Academic Achievement

The high school results shown below are a peer comparison of the weighted pass rates of students on the New York State Regents Exam:

- High schools led by principals receiving School Leaders Network programming in 2008-09 had an average peer horizon score in the **Math Regents pass rate of 85%, an increase of 25 percentage points** from 2007-08.
- High schools led by principals receiving three years of SLN programming increased from 35% to 53% in Math peer horizon scores from 2006-07. **Principals receiving two years of programming had an average peer horizon score of 95%, a gain of more than 45 percentage points** since 2006-07.
- High School progress report grades stayed roughly the same from last year, with 33% receiving an A this year and 30% in 2007-08. This is also an improvement over 2006-07 where no SLN high schools received an A.

Success Highlights

- Five SLN-led high schools exceeded their predicted target scores for their peer group in math Regents in 2009: **High School for Environmental Studies, Williamsburg Preparatory High School, Truman, Excelsior, and Collegiate Institute for Math and Science.**
- **Williamsburg Preparatory**, a high poverty school with 90% of students receiving Free / Reduced lunch, exceeded its peer group targets in both the ELA and math Regents this year.

Culture Indicators

The gains related to culture as reported by teachers, parents and students:

- High Schools led by principals receiving SLN programming had an average peer horizon score in excess of 50% in 2008-09, and increased on all relevant culture indicators from 2007-08.
- High poverty SLN-led high schools averaged peer horizon scores over 70% in Academic Expectations, Engagement and Communication in 2008-09.



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K-8 Results

Academic Achievement

The results below are a peer comparison of the percentage of students in a school scoring in proficient or advanced:

- Principals who have participated in SLN programming for at least 3 years have jumped from an average peer horizon score of 46% in 2006-07 to 94% in 2008-09 in English Language Arts (ELA) and from 66% to 90% in Math in the same years. **This is 5 percentage points higher in ELA and 8 points higher in math than schools that did not receive SLN programming.**
- SLN-led schools increased its peer horizon scores by nearly 25 percentage points in ELA and 12 percentage points in Math to scores of 84% in ELA and 82% in Math.
- SLN high-poverty schools had an average peer horizon score of 89% in ELA and 84% in Math.
- In 2008-09, 84% of SLN-led schools received an A on their progress report, a significant increase over 2007-08 where 29% received an A.

Success Highlights

- In the three years the principal at **Jose Celso Barbosa** has received SLN programming, ELA scores rose from 40 to 62% and from 58 to 85% in Math. In 2008-09, the nearly 100 percent Free/Reduced lunch students at the school surpassed predicted achievement scores for the entire peer group in ELA (a peer horizon score of 112) and approached similar results in Math (a peer horizon score of 95).
- **P.S. 102 Jacques Cartier** exceeded its predicted scores in ELA and approached similar results in math in 2008-09 after only one year of SLN programming.

Culture Indicators

The gains related to culture as reported by teachers, parents and students are:

- All SLN-led schools had an average Academic Expectations peer horizon score of 69%, an increase of 12 percentage points, high poverty schools had an average score of 73%, an increase of 9 points from 2007-08.
- SLN principals also performed well in keeping students engaged, with an average score of 69%, which is an increase of 10 percentage points from 2007-08.
- **SLN-led schools had an average safety score of 77% - an increase of almost 50 percentage points since starting programming in 2006-07.** These schools had nearly 40 percentage point increases on all other culture indicators, with an average engagement score of 72%, academic expectation score of 60%, and communication score of 65%.