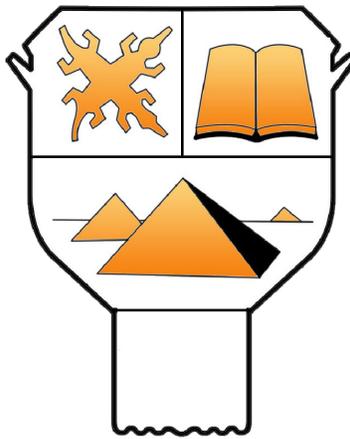


**The Common Core Promise:
A Baseline Assessment of New York City's
Implementation of
Common Core State Learning Standards**



National Urban Research Group
Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The National Urban Research Group conducted a baseline evaluation of New York City's large-scale implementation of Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core). As an early adopter, New York State is the second, only behind Kentucky, to administer standardized grade-level assessments aligned to the Common Core.¹ On August 7, 2013, the New York State Education Department released the results from the first mathematical standardized test explicitly aligned to the Common Core expectations for "college-and career readiness." The data from the test revealed that New York City math proficient rates dwindled.² Education Department officials quickly advised that, the decline in proficiency rates "did not reflect a drop in performance, but rather a rising of standards." In other words, the Common Core effectively created "a new baseline of student learning."³ Due to the controversy over declining student test scores, noteworthy Common Core math proficiency gaps received less attention. The National Urban Research Group utilizes data from 198,556 students in New York City Public Middle Schools who were administered the Common Core math assessment to address the following questions:

1. To what extent, if any, were *Common Core math proficiency gaps* attributable to differences between racial and ethnic subgroups?
2. To what extent, if any, were *Common Core proficiency gaps* attributable to differences in the racial composition of an individual school?
3. To what extent, if any, were *Common Core math proficiency gaps* attributable to differences within the five boroughs of New York City?
4. To what extent, if any, were *Common Core math proficiency gaps* attributable to variations in Community School Districts?
5. To what extent, if any, were *Common Core proficiency gaps* attributable to differences between traditional and charter middle schools?

¹ New York State Education Department awarded Pearson, the London-based global education firm, a five-year \$32 million contract that includes development and administration of grade 3-8 ELA and mathematics Common Core aligned assessments. For a review of assessment design approach see, *Considerations for Developing Test Specification for Common Core Standards*, available at,

http://images.pearsonassessments.com/images/tmrs/tmrs_rg/Common_Core_Test_Specifications12-01-10.pdf

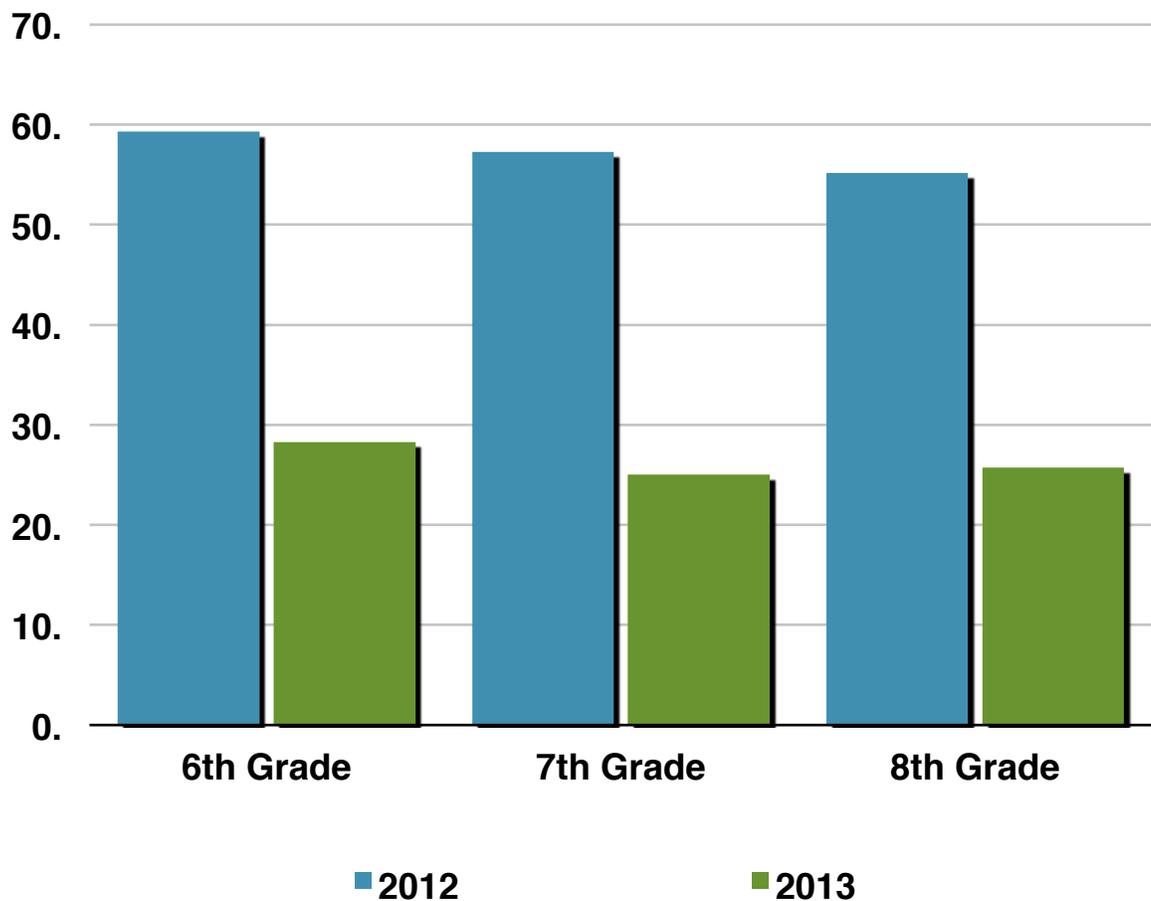
² New York Times, Test scores Drop under Tougher Standards, August 7, 2013, available at http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/08/08/nyregion/test-scores-drop-under-tougher-standards.html?_r=0

³ New York State Department of Education Release Grade 3-8 Assessment Results, available at <http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/grades-3-8-assessment-results-2013.html>

Overall Declines in Math Proficiency

The percentage of New York City middle school students scoring at math proficient dropped for all grade levels:

- The overall sixth grade proficiency rate dropped by 31.0 percentage points from 59.3 percent to 28.3 percent.
- In the seventh grade, the overall math proficiency rate dropped by 32.3 percentage points from 57.3 percent to 25.0 percent.
- In the eighth grade, the overall math proficiency rate dropped by 29.5 percentage points from 55.2 percent to 25.7 percent.



In the sixth grade, Hispanic students recorded the steepest declines at 33.0 percentage points from 50.4 percent in 2012 to 17.4 percent in 2013, followed by:

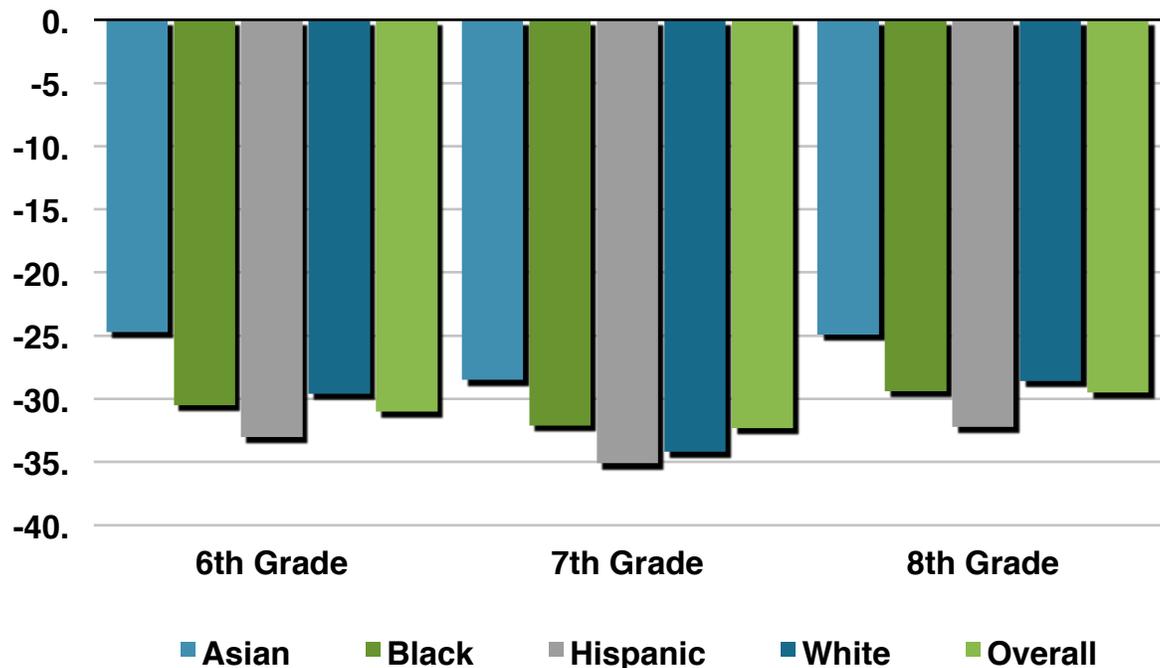
- Sixth grade black students declined 30.5 percentage points from 45.8 percent to 15.3 percent; Sixth grade white students declined 29.6 percentage points from 79.2 percent to 49.6 percent; Sixth grade Asian student declined 24.7 percentage points from 86.7 percent to 62.0 percent

In the seventh grade, Hispanic students recorded the steepest declines at 35.1 percentage points from 49.1 percent in 2012 to 14.0 percent in 2013, followed by:

- Seventh grade white students declined 34.2 percentage points from 79.3 percent to 45.1 percent; Seventh grade black students declined 32.1 percentage points from 43.1 percent to 11.0 percent; Seventh grade Asian students declined 28.5 percentage points from 85.9 percent to 57.4 percent

In the eighth grade, Hispanic students recorded the steepest declines at 32.2 percentage points from 47.8 percent in 2012 to 15.6 percent in 2013, followed by:

- Eighth grade black students declined 29.4 percentage points from 41.7 percent to 12.3 percent; Eighth grade white students declined 28.6 percentage points from 72.9 percent to 44.3 percent; Eighth grade Asian students declined 24.9 percentage points from 84.9 percent to 60.0 percent



Race matters

A pattern emerges where Asian students have higher proficient rates than their peer groups, white students surpass black and Hispanic students, and Hispanic students slightly outperform black students.

Sixth Graders

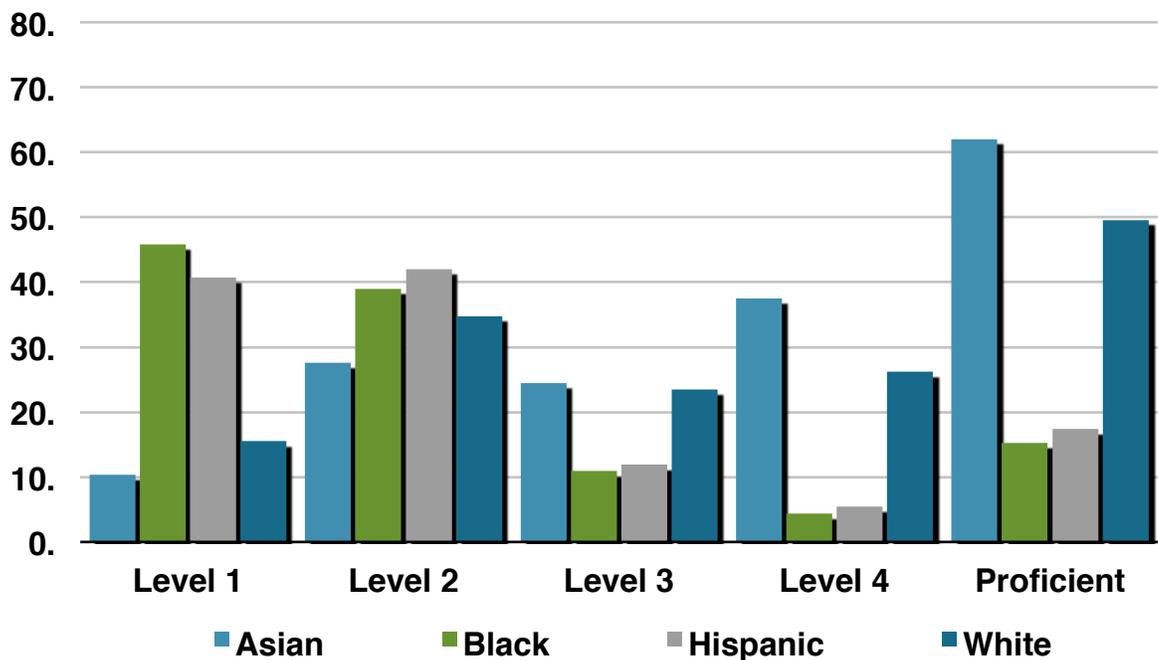
Asian (62.0 percent) and white (40.7 percent) students exceeded the overall sixth grade 2013 Common Core math proficiency rate of 28.3 percent; Black students scored at 15.3 percent, 13 percentage points below the citywide rate and Hispanic student proficiency rate of 17.4 percent was 10.9 percentage points below the overall rate.

A larger percentage of Asian and white students scored at the highest **Level 4** Common Core math proficiency rate than their black or Hispanic counterparts.

- Asian students were 8.5 times higher than black students (37.5 to 4.4) and 6.8 times greater than the number of Hispanic students (37.5 to 5.5) to score at Level 4. White students were 5.9 times greater than black students (26.2 to 4.4) and 4.7 times higher than the number of Hispanic students (26.2 to 5.5) to score at Level 4.

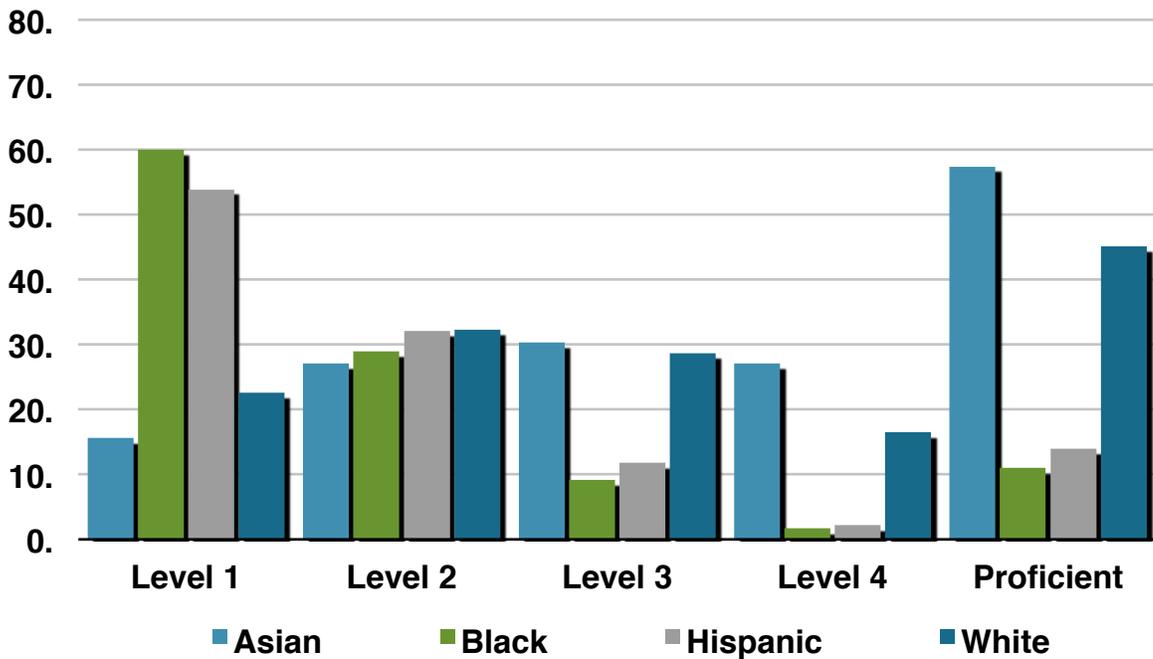
A larger percentage of black and Hispanic students scored at the “**well below proficient**” **Level 1** than their Asian or white counterparts.

- Black students were 4.4 times higher than Asian students (45.8 to 10.4) and 2.9 times greater than the number of white students (45.8 to 15.5) to score at Level 1; Hispanic students were 3.9 times greater than Asian students (40.7 to 10.4) and 2.6 times higher than the number of white students (40.7 to 15.5) to score at Level 1.



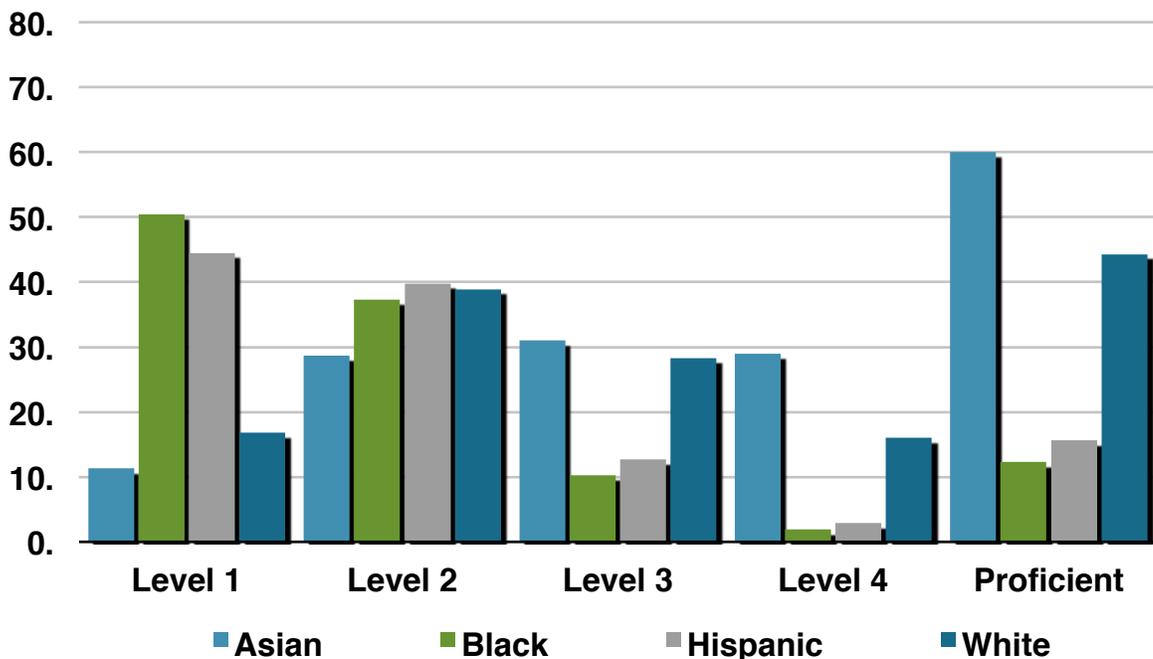
Seventh Graders

- Asian (57.4 percent) and white (45.1 percent) students exceeded the overall seventh grade 2013 Common Core math proficiency rate of 25.0 percent.
- Black students scored at 11.0 percent, 14 points below the citywide rate and Hispanic student proficiency rate of 14.0 percent was 11.0 percentages points below the overall rate.
- Asian students were **15.9 times higher** than black students (27.1 to 1.7) and **12.3 times greater** than the number of Hispanic students (27.1 to 2.2) at Level 4.
- White students were **9.7 times greater** than black students (16.5 to 1.7) and **7.5 times higher** than the number of Hispanic students (16.5 to 2.2) at Level 4.
- Black students were 3.8 times higher than Asian students (60 to 15.6) and 2.6 times greater than the number of white students (60 to 22.6) at Level 1
- Hispanic students were 3.4 times greater than Asian students (53.9 to 15.6) and 2.4 times higher than the number of white students (53.9 to 22.6) at Level 1



Eighth Graders

- Asian students (60.0 percent) and white (44.3 percent) students exceeded the overall eighth grade 2013 Common Core math proficiency rate of 25.7 percent.
- Black students scored at 12.3 points, 13.4 percentage points below the citywide rate and Hispanic student proficiency rate of 15.6 percent was 10.1 percentages points below the overall rate.
- Asian students were **15.3 times higher** than black students (29.0 to 1.9) and **10.0 times greater** than the number of Hispanic students (29.0 to 2.9) at Level 4.
- White students were 8.8 times greater than black students (16.8 to 1.9) and 5.7 times higher than the number of Hispanic students (16.8 to 2.9) at Level 4.
- Black students were 4.4 times higher than Asian students (50.4 to 11.3) and 3.0 times greater than the number of white students.(50.4 to 16.8) at Level 1.
- Hispanic students were 3.9 times greater than Asian students (44.5 to 11.3) and 2.6 times higher than the number of white students (44.5 to 16.8) at Level 1



Undeniably, left unchecked, the lack of demonstrated knowledge of the skills, and practices embodied by the New York Common Core Learning Standards for Mathematics will follow low performing black and Hispanic middle school students into high school. Common Core equity necessitates targeted interventions and innovative strategies to accelerate the learning curve for students considered “partial but insufficient” or “insufficient” for grade-level expectations.

The racial composition of the middle school matters.

Middle schools with a majority of Asian students had the highest scores where 100 percent of all middle school grade-levels scored at or above New York City math proficient averages.

The top five performers are:

1. 99.7 percent, *Christa McAuliffe School, I. S. 187*, (Grade 6)
2. 99.6 percent, *Christa McAuliffe School, I. S. 187*, (Grade 7)
3. 98.3 percent, *Christa McAuliffe School I. S. 187*, (Grade 8)
4. 90.9 percent *P.S. 184m Shuang Wen*, (Grade 8)
5. 86.0 percent *P.S. 184m Shuang Wen*, (Grade 6)

See [Appendix 4-1](#) for complete list of Majority Asian schools.

Majority white schools had 95 percent of sixth grade, 88 percent of seventh grade, and 88 percent of eighth grade scoring at or above the citywide grade-level averages.

The top five performers are:

1. 100 percent, *The Anderson School*, (Grade 6)
2. 98.5 percent, *The Anderson School*, (Grade 8)
3. 98.4 percent, *The Anderson School* (Grade 7)
4. 96.3 percent, *New Explorations Science, Technology and Math High School*, (Grade 7)
5. 93.8 percent, *Special Music School*, (Grade 7)

See [Appendix 4-2](#) for complete list of majority white schools.

A scant 16.0 percent of majority Hispanic schools sixth grade, 9.8 percent of seventh grade, and 12.5 percent in eighth grade scored at or above the citywide Common Core grade-level averages.

The top five performers are:

1. 76.3 percent, *All City Leadership Secondary School*, (Grade 7)
2. 57.8 percent, *Comprehensive Model School Project, M.S. 327*, (Grade 6)
3. 54.7 percent, *The Mott Hall School*, (Grade 7)
4. 54.6 percent, *P.S./M. S. 194*, (Grade 6)
5. 52.5 percent, *All City Leadership Secondary School*, (Grade 6)

See [Appendix 4-3](#) for complete list of majority Hispanic schools.

A meager 12.8 percent majority black schools sixth grade, 9.5 percent of seventh grade, and 13.6 percent in eighth grade scored at or above the citywide Common Core grade-level averages.

The top five performers are:

1. 87.5 percent, *PS. 235, Lenox School* (Grade 6)
2. 80.6 percent, *P.S. 235, Lenox School*, (Grade 7)
3. 73.2 percent, *P.S. 392*, (Grade 8)
4. 69.7 percent, *P.S. 235, Lenox School*, (Grade 8)
5. 65.9 percent, *Medgar Evers College Preparatory School*, (Grade 7)

See [Appendix 4-4](#) for complete list of majority black schools.

Community School District Matters

Community School District 2 (CSD 2) in Manhattan, a model of progressive educational reform in New York City, is located in the white upper-middle class neighborhoods below Central Park, including Wall Street, the Upper East Side, and Battery Park City. Fifty-two percent of CSD 2 sixth graders, 45.0 percent of seventh graders, and 48.1 percent of eighth graders scored at Common Core proficiency. Less than a mile away from CSD 2, a majority of students in Central Harlem CSD 5 are eligible for federal-assisted free meal programs (for students with family income less than 1.3 times the poverty level) or reduced priced meals (for students with family income less than 1.85 times the poverty line). In Central Harlem CSD 5 the *only middle school* at or above the citywide grade-level Common Core proficient averages is the highly praised *Columbia Secondary School*, 91.2 percent of sixth graders, 76.6 percent of seventh graders, and 51.0 percent of eighth graders met or exceeded math proficiency. ***All other CSD 5 sixth graders had a Common Core math proficient rate of 7.8 percent, seventh graders 2.8 percent, and eighth graders 6.9 percent.***

On first glance, a pattern comes into view where classrooms in higher income Community School Districts have ***more students*** who are Common Core proficient. On second glance, a pattern comes into view where classrooms in lower income Community School Districts have ***fewer students*** who demonstrated “the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York Common Core Learning Standards for Mathematics at or above the New York City grade-level averages.

In Queens CSD 26, located in close proximity to the wealthy Nassau County suburbs, 62.2 percent of sixth graders, 63.3 percent of seventh graders, and 64.0 percent of eighth graders scored at Common Core proficient. By contrast, in CSD 29, located in the majority black neighborhoods of Hollis Queens, 18.8 percent of sixth graders, 13.3 percent of seventh graders, and 15.8 percent of eighth graders are Common Core proficient.

In Brooklyn’s middle income CSD 20, located within the neighborhoods of Borough Park and Dyker Heights, fifty-five percent of sixth graders, 42.3 percent seventh graders, and 44.3 percent of eighth graders scored at Common Core proficient. At the same time, in CSD 16, located in the lower income black neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, ***only 8.8 percent of sixth graders, 4.1 percent of seventh graders, and 6.5 percent of eighth graders scored at Common Core proficient.***

- In Manhattan CSD 2/CSD 5 *Common Core proficiency gap*, in the sixth-grade, is 44.2 percentage points, 42.2 points in seventh-grade, and 41.2 percentage points in the eighth-grade;⁴
- In Queens CSD 26/CSD 29 *Common Core proficiency gap*, in the sixth-grade, is 43.4 percentage points, 50.0 points in seventh-grade, and 48.2 percentage points in the eighth-grade;
- In Brooklyn CSD 20/CSD 16 *Common Core proficiency gap*, in the sixth-grade, is 45.7 percentage points, 38.2 points in seventh-grade, and 37.8 percentage points in the eighth-grade;

⁴ *Columbia Secondary School* is excluded from averages

Common Core Proficiency Gap by Selected Community School District			
Manhattan	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
CSD 2	52.0	45.0	48.1
CSD 5	7.8	2.8	6.9
Common Core Gap	44.2	42.2	41.2

Queens

CSD 26	62.2	63.3	64.0
CSD 29	18.8	13.3	15.8
Common Core Gap	43.4	50.0	48.2

Brooklyn

CSD 20	54.5	42.3	44.3
CSD 16	8.8	4.1	6.5
Common Core Gap	45.7	38.2	37.8

A feasible explanation for such bleak Common Core math proficiency gaps is the fact that students in majority black and Hispanic Community School Districts have a better than average chance of ending up in a classroom where the teacher lacks basic mastery of the six mathematics instructional shifts required by the Common Core. *Education Redlining in New York City*, a study conducted by the Schott Foundation for Public Education, documented that students in higher income Community School Districts are more than twice as likely to have experienced and highly educated teachers (those with Master’s degrees plus 30 hours or more of further education) compared to students in lower income Community School Districts.⁵ Students in high poverty neighborhoods and low proficient schools are also more likely to have teachers with Unsatisfactory Ratings (U-Rating).⁶ Instead of highly qualified instruction, students in high-need schools are also more likely to attend classrooms taught by teachers from an alternative certification program. A fundamental element of any strategies to increase math proficiency, at a minimum, demands students have access to high quality instruction.

⁵ See, A Rotting Apple: Education Redlining in New York City, Community School District Teaching Resources Appendix, p. 169, available at <http://schottfoundation.org/drupal/docs/redlining-full-report.pdf>

⁶ StudentFirstNY: Unsatisfactory: The Distribution of Teacher Quality in New York City, available at <http://www.studentsfirstny.org/SFNY-Unsatisfactory-Report.pdf>

The Five Boroughs of New York City Matter

The borough of Queens has the greatest income equality by racial subgroups, with black and Hispanic households earning nearly as much as white households.⁷ Middle school students in Queens also have the highest proficiency levels: where 36.5 percent of sixth-graders, 32.7 percent of seventh graders, and 33.5 percent of eighth-graders tested at or above Common Core math proficiency. Asian sixth grade students in Manhattan recorded the highest level of math proficiency in New York City (73.5 percent). White sixth graders in Manhattan were three points behind at 70.6 percent. However, black (15.7 percent) and Hispanic (17.9 percent) sixth grade middle school students in Manhattan trailed their white and Asian Manhattan peer groups by 50 percent Common Core proficiency margins.

Common Core proficiency gaps are equally stark between racial and ethnic subgroups throughout the five boroughs of New York City

In the Bronx:

- The Asian/black *Common Core proficiency gap*, in the sixth-grade, is 36.5 percentage points, 32.6 points in seventh-grade and 32.1 percentage points in the eighth-grade. The Asian/Hispanic *Common Core proficiency gap*, in the sixth-grade, is 36.6 percentage points, 31.1 points in seventh-grade, and 30.9 percentage points in the eighth-grade.
- The white/black *Common Core proficiency gap*, in the sixth-grade, is 20.7 percentage points, 20.9 points in seventh-grade, and 19.6 percentage points in the eighth-grade. The white/Hispanic *Common Core proficiency gap*, in the sixth-grade, is 20.8 percentage points, 19.4 points in seventh-grade, and 18.4 percentage points in the eighth-grade.

In Brooklyn:

- The Asian/black math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 46.0 percentage points, 47.1 points in seventh-grade and 47.6 percentage points in the eighth-grade. The Asian/Hispanic math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 46.1 percentage points, 45.1 points in seventh-grade, and 46.4 percentage points in the eighth-grade.
- The white/black math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 34.7 percentage points, 33.6 points in seventh-grade, and 32.6 percentage points in the eighth-grade. The white/Hispanic math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 34.8 percentage points, 31.6 points in seventh-grade, and 31.4 percentage points in the eighth-grade.

In Manhattan:

- The Asian/black math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 57.8 percentage points, 58.5 points in seventh-grade and 58.4 percentage points in the eighth-grade. The Asian/Hispanic math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 55.6 percentage points, 56.0 points in seventh-grade, and 55.7 percentage points in the eighth-grade.

⁷ See, Poverty in New York City: Borough by Borough Analysis of Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey, September 2012, available at, <http://www.alignny.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/NYC-Poverty-Report-2012.pdf>

- The white/black math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 54.9 percentage points, 53.6 points in seventh-grade, and 52.6 percentage points in the eighth-grade. The white/Hispanic math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 52.7 percentage points, 51.1 points in seventh-grade, and 49.9 percentage points in the eighth-grade.

In Staten Island:

- The Asian/black math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 49.9 percentage points, 43.0 points in seventh-grade and 51.1 percentage points in the eighth-grade. The Asian/Hispanic math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 46.1 percentage points, 40.6 points in seventh-grade, and 43.7 percentage points in the eighth-grade.
- The white/black math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 31.0 percentage points, 27.4 points in seventh-grade, and 25.7 percentage points in the eighth-grade. The white/Hispanic math gap, in the sixth-grade, is 27.2 percentage points, 25.0 points in seventh-grade, and 18.3 percentage points in the eighth-grade.

There is a notable poverty dimension in percentages of Level 1 students:

Percentage Distribution of Students at Lowest Common Core Math Proficiency Level 1 and Level 2 (Borough and Grade)					
	<u>Bronx</u>	<u>Brooklyn</u>	<u>Manhattan</u>	<u>Queens</u>	<u>Staten Island</u>
<u>6th Grade</u>					
Level 1	46.8	34.0	30.4	24.7	29.3
Level 2	38.2	37.3	35.2	38.7	39.0
Proficient	15.0	28.7	34.3	36.5	31.7
<u>7th Grade</u>					
Level 1	60.1	45.9	41.7	34.7	35.3
Level 2	28.1	29.6	28.5	32.5	35.8
Proficient	11.7	24.5	29.8	32.7	28.9
<u>8th Grade</u>					
Level 1	51.9	37.6	34.8	27.6	28.6
Level 2	35.4	36.7	35.0	38.8	42.4
Proficient	12.6	25.7	30.2	33.5	29.0

Middle schools in the borough of the Bronx are located in the poorest Congressional District in the country where 67.3 percent of all residents and 72.3 percent of all children live in areas of concentrated poverty. Nearly **ninety percent** of all students in sixth grade in the Bronx (46.8 percent at Level 1 and 38.2 at Level 2), seventh grade (60.1 percent at Level 1 and 28.1 at Level

2) and eighth graders (51.9 percent at Level 1 and 35.4 percent at Level 2) lack a basic understanding of grade-level Common Core math concepts.

There is also a notable racial dimension in percentages of Level 1 students:

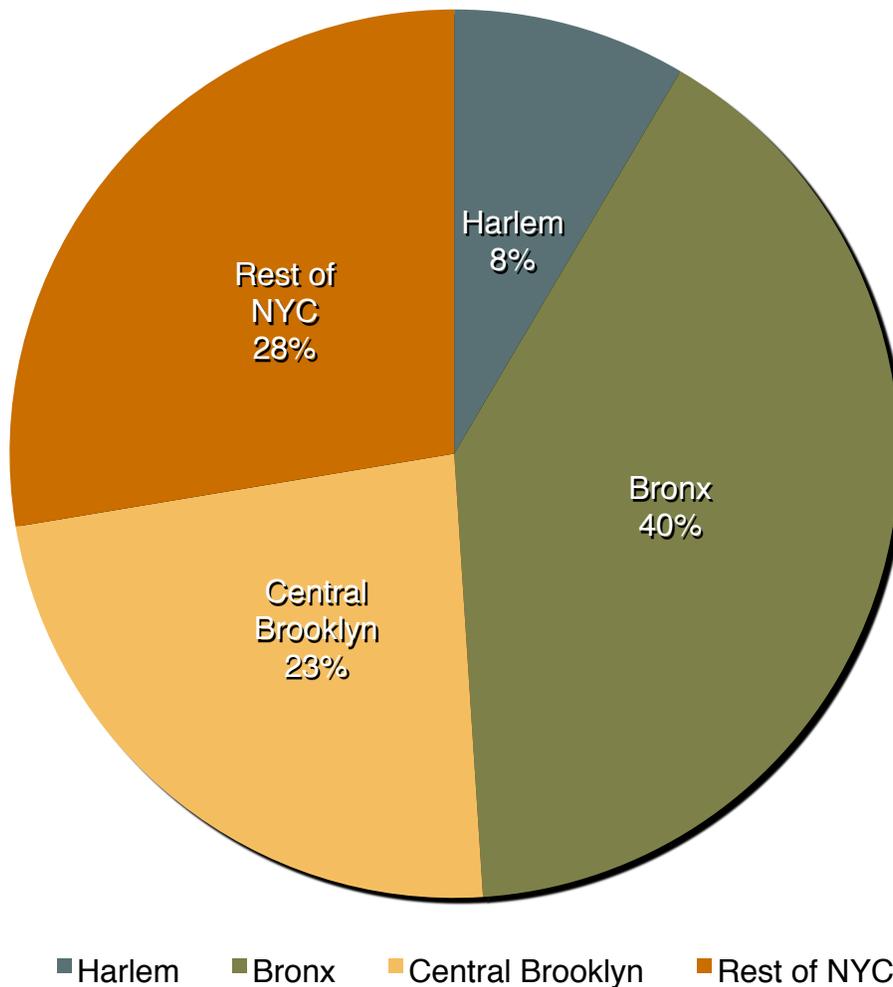
Percentage Level 1 at Common Core Math Proficiency (Borough and Grade)			
<u>Overall</u>	<u>Grade 6</u>	<u>Grade 7</u>	<u>Grade 8</u>
Bronx	46.8	60.1	51.9
Brooklyn	34.0	45.9	37.6
Manhattan	30.4	41.7	34.8
Queens	24.7	34.7	27.6
Staten Island	29.3	35.3	28/6
<u>Black</u>			
Bronx	50.6	64.1	55.8
Brooklyn	45.0	58.6	48.5
Manhattan	45.0	61.6	51.6
Queens	40.5	56.8	47.2
Staten Island	61.2	67.3	57.6
<u>Hispanic</u>			
Bronx	48.1	61.9	53.1
Brooklyn	41.3	54.7	44.9
Manhattan	39.4	52.4	43.0
Queens	30.6	43.5	33.3
Staten Island	44.5	50.5	44.2
<u>White</u>			
Bronx	26.0	37.2	30.3
Brooklyn	15.7	24.2	17.2
Manhattan	8.3	12.6	9.3
Queens	15.6	21.6	17.0
Staten Island	17.1	23.6	16.7

- A majority of black sixth graders in Staten Island (61.2 percent), seventh graders (67.3 percent), and eighth graders (57.6 percent) tested at Level 1, demonstrating an “insufficient” and “well below” basic understanding of grade-level Common Core math concepts.

- Over fifty percent of sixth grade black students in the Bronx (50.6 percent) tested “well below” Common Core math proficient.
- A vast majority of black students in seventh grade classrooms in the Bronx (64.1), Manhattan (61.1), Brooklyn (58.6) and Queens (56.8) tested “well below” Common Core math proficient.
- Over fifty percent of eighth grade black students in the Bronx (55.8 percent), and Manhattan (51.6 percent) tested “well below” Common Core math proficient.
- Over fifty percent of seventh grade Hispanic students in the Bronx (61.9 percent), Brooklyn (54.7), Manhattan (52.4), and Staten Island (50.5); as well as the eighth grade Hispanic students in the Bronx (53.1) tested “well below” Common Core math proficient.

Poverty Matter

A total number of 51,618 students, more than one-fourth of New York City’s middle school population, attend a school where 9 out of 10 students did not meet Common Core middle school math grade-level learning standards expectations. Nearly 90 percent of these lowest performing classrooms are located in three neighborhoods: the Bronx (40 percent), Central Brooklyn (23 percent), and Harlem (8 percent). A majority of families in these predominately African American and Latino neighborhoods of the Bronx (South Bronx), Brooklyn (including Central Brooklyn and Ocean Hill-Brownsville), and Manhattan (Central Harlem) struggle to meet their basic needs.⁸ See, [Appendix E-1](#) for complete list of Lowest Proficient schools by grade level.



⁸ The Self-sufficiency Standard measures how much income a family needs “to adequately meet their basic needs-*without public or private assistance.*” The standard is a measurement of the real cost of all major budget items families encounter: housing, child- care, food, health care, transportation, miscellaneous items, and taxes. See, the Self-sufficiency Standard for New York City, 2010, Diana Pearce, June 2010, available at <http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/docs/New%20York%20City%202010.pdf>

There is considerable evidence to be apprehensive of claims of a general failure of traditional middle schools or the academic superiority of charter schools.

New York City charter school organizations have long made a practice of ranking its schools against traditional public schools.⁹ In fact, much of the support for charter school expansion is the result of a commonly held wisdom that, on average, charter school students tend to have higher proficient rates on standardized assessments than students from traditional public schools. Under the New York City turnaround restart model, charter school growth has proliferated throughout New York City with the stated goal of providing students with alternatives to the poor-performing neighborhood schools.¹⁰ Over the past decade, total funding to support charter school expansion increased from \$32 million to \$659 million and the number of charter schools increased from 17 to 159, serving roughly 100,000 students representing ten percent of the total New York City school population.¹¹

At the discretion of Mayor Bloomberg, education official adopted the contentious practice of “co-locating” over sixty percent of New York City charter schools within exiting public school buildings.¹² A 2010 New York City Independent Budget Office report estimated that the co-located charter schools received roughly \$650 more per pupil cost than traditional public schools.¹³ Researchers at Rutgers University estimated that “well-endowed charters” received additional private funds exceeding \$10,000 per pupil more than traditional school receive. For example:

In 2008 the New Schools Venture Fund provided \$1.3 million to the Achievement First network and \$650,000 to the parent organization of Excellence of Bedford Stuyvesant, Kings Collegiate and Williamsburg Collegiate. The Walton Family Foundation provided an additional \$460,000 to Achievement First. Walton provided \$5.2 million to the national KIPP organization, and the Gates Foundation provided \$2 million. In addition, Walton provided smaller grants directly to schools such as Harlem Link Academy (\$50,000) and Girls Preparatory (\$50,000). The success academies (Harlem Success Academy) received \$510,000 from Walton and \$250,000 from New Venture Fund to support three new schools.¹⁴

In Grade 7, the following charter schools recorded Common Core proficient rates twice as high as the New York City seventh grade average of 25.0 percent.

⁹ New York City Charter School Center, The State of the NYC Charter School Sector 2012, available at, <http://c4258751.r51.cf2.rackcdn.com/state-of-the-sector-2012.pdf>

¹⁰ In his 2012 State of the City Address, Mayor Bloomberg announced the continue phase out of failing schools by “asking successful charter schools operator’s already in the city to expedite expansion plans and other high-performing charter operation to come to New York. The city’s 2013-2014 budget proposed \$1 billion on per pupil expenditures for the growing charter sector, including plans to increase the number of charters from 159 to 183 schools See, Geoff Decker, *City’s Charters school spending to exceed \$1 billion in 2013-2014*, available at, <http://gothamschools.org/2013/06/05/citys-charter-school-spending-to-exceed-1-billion-in-2013-2014/>

¹¹ See, Daily News, *Money for charter school balloon during Mayor Bloomberg tenure*, available at, <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/charter-school-funding-balloons-article-1.1398190>

¹² See, NYC Center for Charter Schools, *Co-location : How Public Schools Share Space in New York City* available at, http://www.nycharterschools.org/sites/default/files/resources/Facts_Colocation.pdf ; and

Press Release: *New York City Parents and Elected Officials File Suit Seeking Injunction to Stop Bloomberg’s 42 approved school co-locations*, available at <http://www.classsizematters.org/press-release-new-york-city-parents-and-elected-officials-file-suit-seeking-injunction-to-stop-bloombergs-42-recently-approved-school-co-locations/>

¹³ IBO Web Blog, *Charter Schools Housed in City’s School Building Get More Public Funding per student than traditional public schools*, available at, <http://ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park/?p=272>

¹⁴ The analysis is based on data from 2006 to 2008 contained in audited annual financial reports, IRS tax filings. Bruce D. Baker and Richard Ferris, *Adding Up the Spending: Fiscal Disparities and Philanthropy Among New York City Charter Schools*, available at, <http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/NEPC-NYCharter-aker-Ferris.pdf>

Top Ranking Middle Schools Charter Middle Schools (7th Grade)		
School Name		Proficiency Rate
1.	Harlem Success Academy Charter School	88.6
2.	Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School	69.1
3.	Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School	66.7
4.	Icahn Charter School 2	65.5
5.	Ocean Hill Collegiate Charter School	62.5
6.	Leadership Prep Bedford Stuyvesant Charter School	56.0
7.	Renaissance Charter School	51.9

However, for a number of charter schools math proficient rates plunged:

Grade 7th	2012	2013	Percent Change
Harlem Village Academy Charter School	100	21.3	-78.7
Harbor Science and Arts	79.3	7.1	-72.2
KIPP STAR Charter School	79.7	14.4	-65.3
Bronx Charter School for Excellence	96.0	33.3	-62.7
KIPP Infinity Charter School	89.5	29.1	-60.4
Girls Preparatory Charter School New York City	72.9	22.1	-50.8
Harlem Children Zone/Promise Academy II	76.5	26.3	-50.2

Strikingly, a number of New York City “majority-minority” traditional middle schools recorded Common Core math proficient rates surpassing their neighboring charter schools.

Top Ranking Middle Schools Traditional “Majority-Minority” (7th Grade)		
School Name		Proficiency Rate
1.	P.S. 235 Lenox School	80.6
2.	Columbia Secondary School	76.6
3.	All City Leadership Secondary School	76.3
4.	TAG Young Scholars	72.5
5.	Queens Gateway to Health Science Secondary School	69.3
6.	PS/MS 004	64.6
7.	Medgar Evers College Preparatory School	65.9
8.	Mott Hall II	57.9
9.	The Mott Hall School	54.7
10.	I.S. 392	52.0

While New York Common Core math is more rigorous, in both traditional and charter sectors, individual “best practice” middle schools have succeeded in meeting the demands of the learning standards. These schools provide empirical confirmation that race and socioeconomic status alone does not have to determine Common Core math destiny. Instead of the vociferous tone of an increasingly weary, politicized, and unproductive debate, it is essential to appreciate, comprehend and replicate the Common Core math implementation strategies used in effective teaching charter and traditional “minority-majority” classrooms.

Conclusion

New York Common Core State Standards for Mathematics identifies six major shifts in middle school math instruction. First, the standards advance the notion of *focus*: Teachers “*focus deeply on only the concepts that are prioritized in the standards so that students reach strong foundational knowledge and deep conceptual understanding and are able to transfer mathematical skills and understanding across concepts and grades.*”

- A second instructional shift, Common Core *coherence* puts emphasis on showing the vertical linkage of math concepts from one grade to the next building through a logical progression where “*each standard is not a new event, but an extension of previous learning.*”
- A third shift, *fluency*, expects students “*to have speed and accuracy with simple calculations; teachers structure class time and/or homework time for students to memorize, through repetition, core functions such as multiplication tables so they are more able to understand and manipulate more complex concepts.*”
- *Deep understanding*, the fourth shift, is a pedagogical approach firmly in the “problem-solving view of mathematics” rewarding a student’s ability to describe the best process for reaching the solution, not simply providing the correct answer.
- The fifth specific change to math teaching is the *concept applications* where students “*use math and choose the appropriate concept for application even when they are not prompted*” and teachers provide “*opportunities at all grade levels for students to apply math concepts in ‘real world’ situations.*”
- In the final Common Core instructional shift, *dual intensity*, *students are practicing and understanding. There is more than a balance between these two things in the classroom-- both are occurring with intensity.*

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Beginning in 2014, transition to the Common Core Regents Examination includes standardized assessments in Algebra I, Geometry in 2015, and Algebra II in 2016.¹⁶ Given that students are to be held accountability for meeting Common Core math learning standards, policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders are accountable for ensuring equal access to “opportunity-to-learn” standards —including Common Core aligned curriculum and assessments, well-prepared teachers, adequate safe facilities from which to learn, extended time to learn, and high expectation for all students.¹⁷

¹⁵ Instructional Shifts for the Common Core Mathematics, available at

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/About/InstructionalShifts/default.htm>

¹⁶ See, October 11, 2013, New York State Board of Regents, Proposed amendment of Section 100.5 of Regulation of the Commissioner relating to transition to Common Core aligned Regents Examination in English and Mathematics, available at <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2013Meetings/October2013/1013brca3.pdf>

¹⁷ For excellence review of “opportunity-to-learn standards” see, Darling-Hammond, L. (2000), New Standards and Old Inequalities: School Reform and the Education of African American Students, *Journal of Negro Education*, 69 (4), 263-289.

If properly implemented, the rigorous Common Core middle school learning standards hold the promise of elevating the mathematical knowledge and skills of every student in every classroom to levels competitive with the best in the world. Let us assume that the 2013 Common Core math assessments are sensible proxies for grade-level expectations. Then too many students in the New York City public school system are not prepared to meet the rigorous learning benchmarks. This is particularly the case for black students, Hispanic students, and students living in poverty. It will take a sustained effort for all students to realize the goal of “college-and-career readiness” offered by the Common Core. Now, the challenge is to ensure quality implementation at the community school district, school building, classroom, and individual student levels. If this link is broken at any stage, fissures between the Common Core promise and what students actual receive will remain.

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