



ChildrenFirst

A Bold, Common-Sense Plan
to **Create Great Schools** for
All New York City Children

Updated
2008-09
School Year





The magnitude of our challenge

Current and future generations of New York City students will face unprecedented challenges—competing with well-educated students from across the globe and living in an increasingly diverse, multi-cultural, and, in many ways, divided world. More than ever, success depends on a high-quality education.

We've made a great deal of progress over the past several years and built a foundation for even greater strides in the future. But the enormous scope of the continuing challenge must be frankly acknowledged. Consider:

- The number of **students graduating with Regents and Local Diplomas** is up 10 points since 2002, but almost 4 in 10 students still don't earn a Regents or Local Diploma in four years.
- Student performance on the State's tests has jumped almost 30 points in **mathematics** and almost 15 points in **English language arts** since 2002. Our gains far exceed averages for the State and other large cities.

- But, systemwide, more than **3 in 10 students** still do not meet or exceed the standards in these basic subjects.

- Moreover, the situation is far worse for our **African-American, Latino, and low-income students**, who, on average, score several grade levels below their peers.

We must always remember that these data aren't just numbers. They measure real human lives. Our country is founded on the simple ideal of equality of opportunity, and public education is indeed the great equalizer. We betray that ideal every time we launch a child into life—rich or poor, African-American, Latino, or white, native-born or not—who is not positioned to achieve the American dream.

The human stakes could not be higher. We recognized from the start that only by honestly facing the enormity of the challenge could we respond effectively to the moral urgency of our mission.

Please join us.

One Focus:

Student Success

In 2003, under the leadership of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, we began a **bold transformation** of New York City's public schools.

We call our school reform plan Children First, and we mean it. Our goal is to focus everything we do on the only outcome that really matters: student success. That means preparing our students to graduate from our high schools prepared to take on the challenges of college, of work, and of life.

There is no question that the most important responsibility of the Department of Education's (DOE) 135,000 employees is to help all of our 1.1 million students succeed in life—in their families, in their jobs, in their communities. This is our opportunity and our promise to all New Yorkers. This is the moral responsibility of every adult in this system. And we have no time to lose.

Putting children's needs ahead of special interests

Achieving our goal means putting children's needs first. This means putting children ahead of the special interest politics and bureaucratic inertia that too often drove decisions and got in the way of quality learning in the past. That is why we spent the first few years of the Bloomberg administration creating systemwide coherence and stability. We set new academic standards; implemented a

core curriculum in reading and mathematics; built a new, streamlined management structure; created the nation's finest principal development program; put a parent coordinator in every school; and began holding everyone in the system accountable for results.

Once we created stability and coherence in the system, we took the logical next steps by focusing on the three areas that are most likely to produce the bold improvements our system needs and our children deserve: leadership, empowerment, and accountability. Recognizing that a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach couldn't possibly give all children the best education, we deliberately set out to find the best and brightest educators to lead our schools (leadership). We then gave them and their teachers the tools to do their jobs well (empowerment). And we made them responsible for the success or failure of their students (accountability).

Results from Children First are very promising: improved academic achievement, higher graduation rates, safer schools, more high-quality school options, a smaller bureaucracy, higher teacher salaries, new buildings and thousands of new seats, and significant increases in private support (see sidebar on page 4).

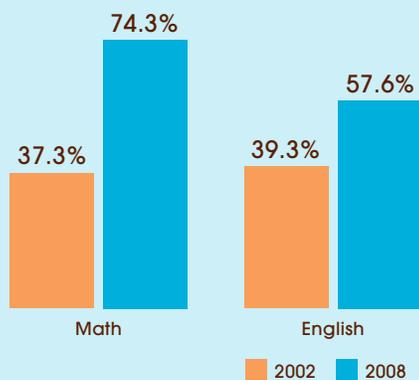
A next wave of bold changes to accelerate reform

As heartening as these gains are, we still have a very long way to go before all of our students receive the education they need and deserve.

Accomplishments

- **58.9%** of students graduated with Local and Regents diplomas in 2007, up from 48.6% in 2002
- **\$350 million** cut from DOE and redirected to schools and classrooms
- **34%** fewer major school crimes in 2007 than in 2002
- **More than 350** new district and charter schools
- **336** new school leaders from the Leadership Academy
- **43%** more pay for starting teachers, plus innovative bonus plans for teachers and principals
- **\$13.1 billion** facilities plan, with more than 100 new schools built or planned
- **More than \$230 million** in private contributions
- **Parent coordinator** in every school
- **Social promotion** ended in grades 3, 5, 7, and 8
- **Class size decreased** at every grade level by as much as 11%

Percentage of students in grades 3–8 meeting or exceeding standards



Source: NYCDOE (2008)

There isn't a moment to spare. Not when about 140,000 students, ages 16 to 21, have dropped out or are at risk of doing so; not when so many students are still not reading or doing math at grade level; not when the average African-American, Latino, and low-income high school students perform several grade levels below their peers.

That is why we are continuing to strive to sustain and accelerate our progress.

Our reforms represent a mix of **boldness** and **common sense**.

Bold because we are the first urban school district in the country to undertake such comprehensive and innovative reforms.

Bold because incremental changes — piloting a program here and there, tinkering around the edges, relying on the traditional reform proposals that haven't worked in the past — will not deliver the results that the public has a right to expect and our parents have a right to demand.

And **bold** because we have to be to change the culture of the system ...

- From a culture of excuses, where educators too often blame students and their families for low performance, to a culture of accountability, where adults take responsibility for ensuring that *all* children, regardless of their circumstances, learn and achieve.
- From a culture of compliance, where educators waste too much time doing paperwork and following one-size-fits-all directions from administrators, to a culture of achievement, where the central focus is on results and doing whatever it takes to help each student learn.
- From a culture of top-down bureaucracy, where central and regional offices make most decisions, to a culture of individual great schools, where principals and their teams design the programs that their particular students need to succeed.

Common sense because every plan, every program, every initiative is driven by a single, simple question: Is this in the best interest of children? In other words, will this help ensure that *all* our schools become schools that each of us would send our own children?



And **common sense** because each of our plans and initiatives is designed to help educators learn what works and what doesn't and adjust their teaching accordingly.

We need your help

We know these reforms are not easy. Defenders of the old ways of doing things in public schools have always found a million reasons for opposing real change. But we are not here to serve and satisfy the protectors of the status quo. Our job is to educate children to succeed in an increasingly competitive and diverse society.

Successfully carrying out our program will require honesty and transparency. We don't have all the answers. We are committed to telling the truth about all of our outcomes, whatever they may be. Working closely with parents and educators, we will continue

On the move ...

- From a culture of excuses to a culture of accountability
- From a culture of compliance to a culture of achievement
- From a culture of top-down bureaucracy to a culture of individual great schools

to strengthen our approaches to get it right for our children. Only one test applies: Does the idea work for students? If not, we will work with parents, teachers, principals, and others to find a better way. **Children First.**

“Empowerment allows us decisionmaking within our own schools. And who knows our schools better than us?”

—Leslie Hammer, Health Coordinator, P.S. 43, Queens

Creating great schools throughout the City

We are accelerating our efforts to create a system of great schools led by great principals, with the authority, resources, and responsibility to teach all of our students. We want our principals and teachers to be doers and decisionmakers. We are continuing our commitment to high standards and effective teaching.

We are giving parents more quality choices for their children, along with timely information to help them make good choices. And we are creating a new sense of urgency among the adults in the system and the City—our kids can't wait. Our plan rests on three big ideas:

1. Those closest to the students should make the key decisions about what will best help students succeed

This means principals and their teams have much broader discretion over what happens in their schools, including which teachers and assistant principals to hire and retain and which instructional strategies and supports to use. When principals and their teams have the right to choose services and practices that best meet the particular needs of their schools, they are able to improve the quality of education for students. And, since we know that education happens in classrooms, more money is flowing directly to schools and classrooms, giving principals and their teams greater flexibility to allocate resources in ways that are best for students.

This plan continues to shrink the bureaucracy and create a culture of **innovation, fairness, and accountability** in our schools.

2. Our schools should be able to count on sufficient, fairer, and more transparent funding

We have increased the DOE's operating budget by nearly 60 percent, with the lion's share of funds going directly to schools and classrooms. We also have introduced a bold new initiative to ensure that school funding is simpler and fairer. Funds follow students to the schools they attend. Students with the same characteristics (grade level, poverty, special needs, etc.) get the same level of funding.

3. Empowered schools must be accountable for results

When schools have the authority to make decisions and the resources to back them up, they also must be held accountable for results. Are a school's strategies helping students learn? If so, that school is eligible for rewards. If, on the other hand, the school is not helping students make academic progress, there are consequences.

To help educators monitor how well they are serving children, we have created better tools to monitor and evaluate student performance. Information is now clearer and more transparent so parents can better understand how their children are doing and make smarter choices about the best schools for them.



School-based implementation, with systemwide standards

The Department of Education (DOE) is responsible for setting and enforcing standards, establishing high expectations and ensuring they are met, providing resources, and building capacity. One of our chief responsibilities also is communicating with and engaging our broad school community to ensure that all New Yorkers—from parents to community-based organizations—are involved in improving our schools. The Chancellor and his team set clear standards and expectations about how much students must learn, and then they vigilantly measure students' performance and progress against those standards.

The DOE provides clear information to our community and trains our professionals to ensure schools have what they need to teach students. We provide the basic systems (financial, legal, human resources, and data) to serve schools so they don't have to reinvent their own infrastructure. And we set clear standards for who is accountable for what. This means holding everyone from teachers to principals to the Chancellor accountable for students' academic progress. Regardless of the support organization serving a school, the Chancellor at all times reserves the authority to intervene when a school needs help or is failing its students. The community superintendents retain all the authority conferred by law.



1. Those closest to the students should make the key decisions about what will best help students succeed

- Education programs
- Choice of partners and supports
- Staffing
- Budgets, including more resources from central office

2. Our schools should be able to count on sufficient, fairer, and more transparent funding

- Annual spending up nearly 60 percent, bureaucracy cut by \$350 million
- Fair Student Funding that meets individual student needs
- Expanded partnerships with community-based organizations

3. Empowered schools must be accountable for results

- Fair and comprehensive evaluation of schools
- Timely and accurate data to principals and teachers
- Clear reports to parents and the public
- Rewards for success; consequences for failure



Those closest to the students should make the key decisions about what will best help students succeed

The only way we'll educate all students to high standards is by having a strong leader in each of our approximately 1,500 schools. To attract the best and brightest, we must give them greater control over what matters most: staffing, instructional strategies, budget, and an entire system of external supports to meet their needs. It is not fair to hold principals accountable for the performance of their students without also giving them the freedom to organize their schools for success.

Principals have the ability to recruit and keep the best teachers

We know how important good teachers are. They have the ability to help students master new skills, overcome challenges, and make academic progress. Studies have proven that good teachers literally have the power to eliminate the persistent achievement gap that separates African-American and Latino students from their white and Asian peers. The same studies show that students who have ineffective teachers for several years will fall farther behind.

The vast majority of the 80,000 teachers in our schools are hard-working, competent, and committed. Our challenge is to make sure that *all* students are taught by quality teachers.

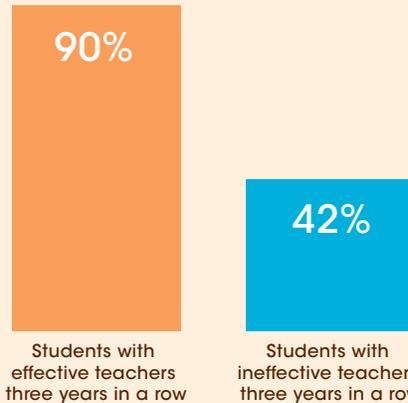
Over the past few years, we have made significant progress in improving teaching. Major efforts include:

- A 43 percent increase in starting teacher salaries;



- The creation of housing bonuses that provide a \$15,000 incentive to help recruit teachers in shortage areas such as math, science, and special education;
- The Lead Teacher program, which allows us to reward excellent teachers with an additional \$10,000 a year to mentor and coach other teachers; and
- Schoolwide performance bonuses for teachers who help students make academic progress in more than 200 high-needs schools.

Effective vs. ineffective teachers: percentage of students passing 7th grade math exams



Source: Sitha Babu and Robert Mendro, "Teacher Accountability: HLM-Based Teacher Effectiveness Indices in the Investigation of Teacher Effects in a State Assessment Program," AERA Annual Meeting, 2003.

We also ended “bumping” and “force-placing,” practices that forced principals to hire teachers even if they weren’t qualified or a good fit for the school. Now, through a new “open market hiring system,” more than 3,000 experienced teachers applied for open jobs and were selected by principals for vacancies across the system. And our Teaching Fellows program and Teach for America are bringing many excellent teachers to our schools.

We are making tenure a well-deserved honor, not a routine right

Because teachers are so important and so powerful, we must do all that we can to make sure that only teachers who are up to the task are teaching our children. One of the best ways to do this is to ensure that principals are granting tenure only to those teachers who are effective at helping children to learn. In New York, teachers are eligible to receive tenure after three years. Once they receive tenure, they have what amounts to lifetime job security.

We want as many teachers as possible to earn tenure, but we want to make sure teachers earn it through good teaching, not just the passage of time. To that end, we have taken steps to make sure principals make thoughtful decisions about which teachers receive tenure. Principals now receive automatic reminders before teachers are up for tenure; the decision no longer just slips by.

To help principals both support the development of their new teachers and make good decisions, we are providing several new tools: intensive training to help teachers diagnose students’ needs, set meaningful goals, assess outcomes, and adjust interventions as appropriate; new timetables and benchmarks for principals to provide timely feedback to teachers during their first three years; and timely reminders of key evaluation milestones.

We are offering new tools for teachers and principals

Also, in our last contract negotiation, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) agreed to participate in a new peer intervention program for teachers who are struggling. We are working with the UFT to put that program in

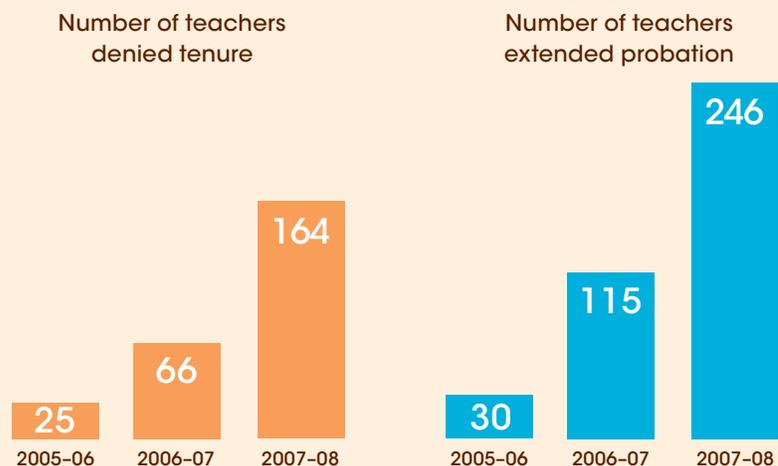
Improving teaching and leadership

We have taken a number of steps to recruit, train, and retain highly effective teachers and principals.

- **100 percent** of teachers now **certified**
- **Teachers’ starting salaries up 43 percent** since 2003
- **Principals’ salaries are up 23 percent** since 2002
- **\$15,000 housing bonuses** for effective math and science teachers to transfer to high-needs schools
- **\$10,000 bonus** for accomplished reading and math coaches
- **Schoolwide performance bonuses** for all teachers in 200 high-needs schools that are making strong gains in student achievement
- Principals eligible for **\$25,000 performance bonuses**
- **Eliminated practice** that allowed senior teachers automatically to **“bump” more qualified younger teachers** from jobs
- Huge increases in **professional development**, including our nationally renowned Leadership Academy
- **More rigorous tenure review process**

Source: NYCDOE, 2008.

Tenure now has to be earned



Note: Through the Tenure Notification System, principals receive e-mail alerts for all teachers in their school within one year of earning tenure. Through these alerts, principals can access professional development to help struggling teachers improve before they earn tenure.

Source: NYCDOC DHR, 2008.

“We have more quality school choices available to us than ever before—we aren’t limited to just our neighborhood schools. Parents and students now have many options, and that’s a real plus for my family and my community.”

—Sergio Lora, Parent, The Mott Hall School, Manhattan



place. To make sure peer intervention works, we are providing principals with two other kinds of support:

- A small team of expert retired principals will help with observations, write-ups, and efforts to help teachers improve their work in the classroom or, if necessary, document continued poor performance.
- In cases where remediation fails, we will give principals additional support to help them remove the lowest performers.

These interventions send an essential message to everyone: results matter. When dedicated principals, teachers, and parents see teachers who are consistently falling far short of expectations, they no longer will have to stand by in frustration while that teacher undermines the future of the children in their care. It’s not fair to hold students accountable for high achievement without also holding adults accountable for their own performance. **Children First.**

Principals have the flexibility to choose the supports their students need to succeed

A great school is a place where all students learn and make academic progress. To keep things running

smoothly, all schools need support and assistance from people outside their buildings: help identifying best practices in education; help translating mandates into action; and help prioritizing among competing demands on resources and time. When expectations are clear for school leaders and schools, however, the educators in the schools need to be able to define for themselves what supports they need to serve the needs of their students.

Starting in the 2007–08 school year, each school was able to evaluate and select support services best suited to help its students succeed. Some selected high levels of support. Some wanted support tailored to a particular part of their school operation, be it their curriculum, their educational focus, or their culture. Some needed help revising their professional development program ... or rethinking how they use the school day and week ... or increasing the involvement of parents and families ... or using the arts to help reinforce literature and math. To ensure that the support from outside the school is consistent with and advances the priorities and focus inside the buildings, school leaders need the ability to choose the kind of support that best meets their needs.

Principals chose from among three types of support organizations, which took over the services and supports traditionally provided centrally by the DOE:

Learning Support Organizations (LSOs) are led and operated by four accomplished New York City educational leaders who previously were successful regional superintendents. These veteran educators have drawn on their successful records and experiences to develop theme-based comprehensive service packages. Some 745 schools initially selected one of these models.

Partnership Support Organizations (PSOs) are nonprofit groups that have strong records of supporting schools and communities, from the City University of New York (CUNY) to New Visions for Public Schools. The DOE selected these six PSOs through a rigorous competitive process. Some of these organizations have developed service packages that are for specific types of schools (e.g., a particular grade configuration). Some 187 schools are working with one of these organizations.

The Empowerment Support Organization (ESO) includes networks of about two dozen self-affiliated schools supported by an integrated team of instructional and business staff selected by the schools. Conceived in 2004 as a small pilot program, there are now more than 500 empowerment schools in the 2008–09 school year.

With help from these support organizations, principals and schools are now in the driver’s seat. They have the freedom and expertise to choose the approach or partnership that best meets the needs of the students in their buildings. **Children First.**

While schools have increased decisionmaking power, they remain public schools, subject to public authority and control. Under all the support options:

- The DOE continues to set and enforce rules and requirements and hold schools to a common and rigorous set of standards;
- All employment decisions, including whether to hire or terminate principals, remain with the DOE, and all collective bargaining agreements continue to apply;

Four Learning Support Organizations

- Community Learning Support Organization
- Integrated Curriculum and Instruction Learning Support Organization
- Knowledge Network Learning Support Organization
- Leadership Learning Support Organization

Six Partnership Support Organizations

- Academy for Educational Development
- Center for Educational Innovation-Public Education Association (CEI-PEA)
- City University of New York (CUNY)
- Fordham University
- New Visions for Public Schools
- Replications, Inc.

Empowerment Support Organization

- Community superintendents retain all the rights and authority conferred by law;
- The Chancellor retains the right to intervene if things are headed in the wrong direction at a school; and
- The DOE continues to provide the basic systems (financial, legal, human resources, and data) to serve schools.

2.

Our schools should be able to count on sufficient, fairer, and more transparent funding

Principals, working closely with teachers and families, are in a much better position than distant bureaucrats to know what students need to be successful. And since they are accountable for results, it is only fair that they receive sufficient resources to chart their own path to success.

That is why since 2002, we have:

- Increased the overall operating budget by more than 63 percent;
- Boosted spending from about \$11,000 per student to more than \$15,000;
- Shifted \$350 million from the central office to schools and classrooms by downsizing the bureaucracy;
- Given principals discretion over much more of their spending—from staffing to supplies to professional development;
- Increased salaries for teachers and principals, and initiated incentive bonuses to recruit and reward outstanding educators; and
- Expanded professional development by nearly 70 percent.

These additional funds have helped us reduce class sizes at all grade levels; provide extended instructional time for students who are falling behind; connect thousands of new classrooms to the Internet; and purchase new computers, textbooks, and other instructional materials.

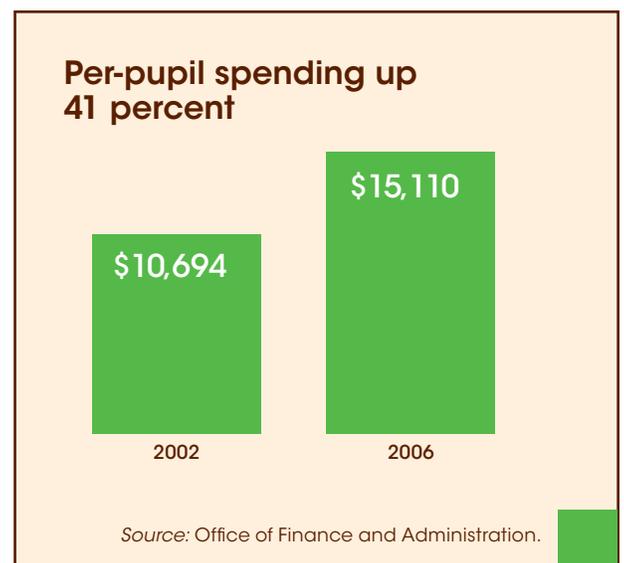
We also have invested heavily in new and modernized schools. Our unprecedented \$13.1 billion capital budget is



paying for more than 100 new schools and allowing us to refurbish hundreds of others. Plus, we have created more than 350 new small schools and hundreds of additional “small learning communities” within larger schools.

Funding the needs of individual students

If we want principals to meet the needs of each and every one of their students, then our funding system also must treat students as individuals. Common sense and research show us that some students need more than others to meet our high expectations. Funds should follow individual students, not be tied to arcane



funding formulas that often have more to do with long-ago political deals than with meeting our current educational goals.

The old school funding system was rife with inequities. Many schools (high poverty and low poverty) received thousands of City taxpayer dollars *less* for every student’s basic education than other schools with very similar numbers and types of students. Two schools with similar student mixes could receive budgets that differed by more than \$1 million.

Plus, the old process for allocating funds to schools was impossibly complex. School budgets were based on 90 separate funding streams, covering items from unpacking boxes to grading tests. Final budget allocations were often difficult to understand or justify and, in some cases, perpetuated political decisions made long ago. As a result, many students were chronically under-funded, most educators and parents were in the dark, and many principals felt their hands were tied by centralized budget mandates.

To transform this picture, we joined the growing number of school districts that are choosing to “fund the child.” We are phasing in a system through which all dollars follow the student to the public school that he or she attends. Schools receive a base allocation for each student. They receive additional funds for students who

“*Never before have I seen principals have the freedom to make the decisions they need to in order to shape their schools to meet the unique needs of their students.*”

—Iris Zucker, Leadership Development Facilitator for New Visions PSO

cost more to educate. For example, there are weights for English language learners, special education students, and middle school students. On top of these additional, City-generated dollars, Federal and State programs continue to provide extra funding for low-income and non-English-speaking students.

Our new Fair Student Funding system is equitable. It is easy to understand; about two-thirds of a school’s budget is now presented on a single, simple page. It is empowering; principals have more control over their budgets and additional incentives to welcome new students. And it makes good common sense. If we are going to meet the needs of all students, we must do so with fair and transparent funding. **Children First.**

Before Children First, similar schools received very different funding

Elementary school A		Elementary school B	
Enrollment	750	Enrollment	800
Poverty %	86%	Poverty %	95%
English language learners %	12%	English language learners %	10%
Tax levy general education funds	\$4,200,000	Tax levy general education funds	\$2,970,000
Tax levy general education per student	\$5,600	Tax levy general education per student	\$3,713

\$1,887 difference per student

Source: NYCDOE, 2006.

3.

Empowered schools must be accountable for results

In return for increased autonomy, flexibility, and resources, we are holding school leaders accountable for educating all of their students to meet our challenging standards. Our expectations are clearer, more transparent, and easier to understand by educators and parents alike. Our tools are more powerful, designed to help principals and teachers pinpoint weaknesses in instruction and address problems with solutions tailored to what students need. And our commitment to deal forcefully with chronically low-performing schools is firm.

Parents can tell how schools are performing and how they compare

Parents are our partners in helping make sure that every child succeeds. But to be effective advocates for their children, they need good information. Making school reports easier to understand and accessible helps parents make better choices for their children. And improved reports help us fulfill our commitment to honesty, transparency, and continuous improvement; no more surprises or mysteries about how well we are doing.



Progress Reports

Every school now receives an overall letter grade and category grades (A–F) and subscores that compare it both to similar schools and to the City’s best schools. The grade is based on performance (numbers of students at or above proficiency on tests in reading and math), progress (how much learning has taken place since the student entered the school), and the school environment (attendance, safety, and parent/student/teacher evaluation of academic rigor, safety and respect, communication, and engagement in school life). Schools get additional recognition for improving the learning of low-performing students enough to close the achievement gap between them and other students.

Evaluations such as these are fairer and make much more sense than the single snapshots used by the federal No Child Left Behind law. Principals and teachers get credit for *all* progress students make, including progress on a child’s way toward proficiency and progress *beyond* proficiency to full mastery.

“*The Children First initiative has leveled the playing field for all students. Progress Reports, Quality Reviews, and other evaluation tools allow me to better measure the progress of our students and our school. The tools have helped me become a stronger leader.*”

—Reginald Landeau, Principal,
J.H.S. 216, Queens

Quality Reviews

Schools also are being evaluated by skilled educators who spend up to three days observing the teaching that occurs in classrooms and interviewing the principal, teachers, parents, and students. A short report summarizes the observations, gives each school an overall score, and scores subcategories of special focus. These kinds of in-depth profiles give parents much better information to choose the best school for their children. And they help overcome the limitations of barebones statistical reports and consider not only outcomes but how well schools are organized to succeed.

Learning Environment Surveys

The annual surveys, started in 2006–07, allow parents, teachers, and students to provide unprecedented feedback on multiple aspects of school life, from safety to instructional quality and leadership. This input counts in two important ways: Survey results are reported to school communities and the public through Survey Reports, and survey results also count for 10 percent of schools' yearly Progress Report grades. More than 800,000 New Yorkers completed a Learning Environment Survey in 2007–08.

Using parent, teacher, and student surveys to measure a school's environment vastly expands what we can learn about our schools from the people most affected by them. Comparing a school to others facing the same challenges provides a much more reliable evaluation than comparing it only to schools with highly selective admissions criteria.

Arts reports

In the 2007–08 school year, the DOE published the first *Annual Arts in Schools Report*, a comprehensive analysis of arts education in New York City public schools. Each school now also receives an individual report on its performance in the arts. These reports help schools measure their progress and develop targeted strategies to provide high-quality arts education for all of their students. Principals are held accountable

Find reports for each school

Find Progress Reports, Quality Reviews, and Learning Environment Surveys for every school at www.nyc.gov/schools/accountability. They are published in multiple languages.

for arts education in their Progress Reports, Quality Reviews, and annual performance reviews as well.

Reports on special education

The DOE now publishes individualized reports on all schools that serve students with disabilities. These reports are easily accessible to parents and the public on each school's Web site, and they provide data on the school's special education enrollment, how efficiently the school evaluates students with special education needs, the movement of students with disabilities to other educational settings, and other important information related to special education.

Progress Reports offer a balanced view

Elementary and middle school reports

School environment

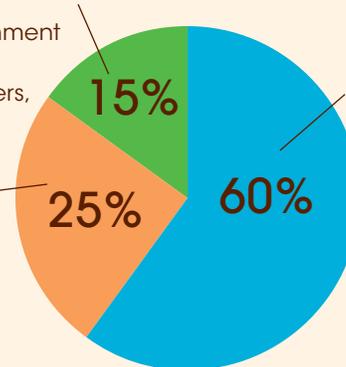
- Attendance
- Learning Environment Survey results (parents, teachers, and students)

Student performance

- Percentage of students at proficiency in ELA and math

Student progress

- Change in student proficiency from one year to the next in ELA and math



Plus extra credit for closing achievement gap for English language learners, special education students, and students performing in the lowest one-third.

Educators have a broader set of tools to accurately measure and analyze student achievement

Periodic Assessments

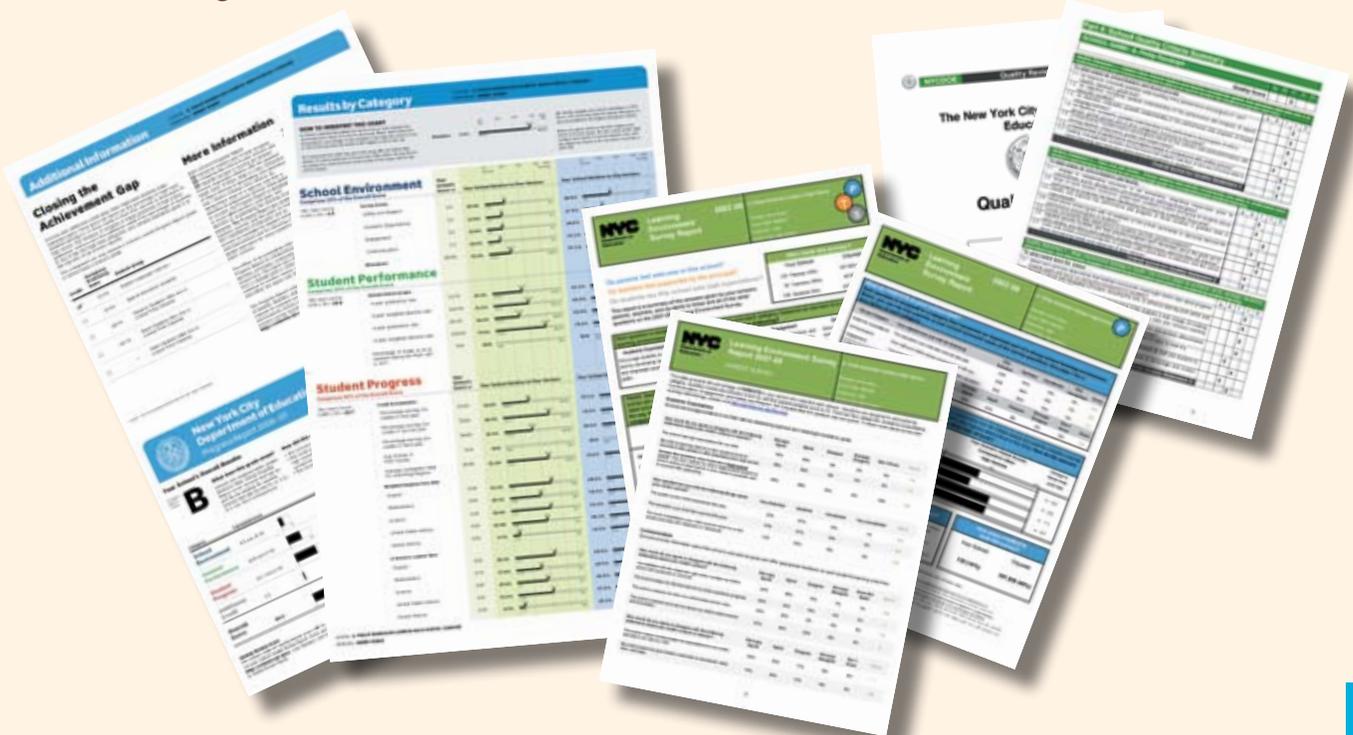
Instead of waiting until the end of the year to see how well students are doing in reading and math, schools now can measure student progress in all grades throughout the year. These targeted assessments help teachers adjust their instruction while there is still time to make a difference. If Jessica needs more help in vocabulary and Jose needs more help in fractions, it makes no sense to wait until June to have that information and act on it. By sharing this information with parents throughout the year, parents can work more closely with the teacher to help their children achieve. This doesn't mean more high-stakes testing; it means better and more specific assessments so that results reflecting each student's strengths and needs can be used every day to make a difference in learning.

Powerful data system and collaboration platform

Through the new Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS), principals, teachers, and parents will have at their fingertips information that allows them to answer questions such as:

- How well are students doing in each subject and subset (fractions, vocabulary, etc.)—sliced and diced by grade, by school, by classroom, by student?
- Are trends going up ... or down?
- Where do we need to intensify training and other support?
- Do certain school conditions, such as a specific curriculum or specific type of teacher development, influence student performance more than others?
- Which schools and classrooms are models of effective practice from which others can learn?

Examples of Progress Reports, Quality Reviews, and Learning Environment Surveys



This online system helps to take the guesswork out of good teaching. It allows schools to closely monitor the progress of each individual student as he or she advances through the grades and moves from one school to another and provides teachers access to helpful resources. And it helps principals and teachers to continue to transform schools from a culture of uniformity, where every student gets the same instruction even if he or she already knows the material, to a culture of customization, where teachers use the best methods and thinking available throughout the City to tailor instruction to the learning needs of each individual student.

Inquiry teams

Each school has an inquiry team, made up of teachers and administrators, who come together to focus on helping individual students—and schools—improve. Inquiry teams focus on a group of struggling students, information such as Learning Environment Survey results, Periodic Assessment data and Progress Report scores to help the students make gains and become successful. The team members apply lessons they've learned to other students to help entire schools improve.

The emphasis of our work here is to transform data and information into action that is focused on advancing student achievement. Too often in the past, principals, teachers, and parents either didn't have access to timely information, didn't understand it or, just as troubling, didn't know what to do with it. That has changed.

We are rewarding strong performance and enforcing consequences for chronically low-performing schools

To be sure that powerful new tools change behavior, it is important that educators, parents, and the public know that we are serious about rewarding success and dealing with failure.

All schools are graded based on their outcomes, focused heavily on year-to-year student progress and how well a school is progressing compared to schools serving similar students and all schools across the City.



“The information that’s coming out of here is good for children. It’s helping children learn. It’s helping us to be better teachers, to be better at our profession. And it’s helping the self esteem of the youngsters because they are feeling like they’re succeeding and they want to come to school.”

—Ourania Pappas, Principal,
J.H.S. 143, Manhattan



What you can expect to see in all of our schools

With the changes described in the previous pages, we are continuing the bold transformation of schools that we began several years ago. In the process, we are fulfilling our commitment to students, parents, and New Yorkers to create a system of great schools that will provide opportunities for each student to thrive in the 21st century.

Before	Under the new system
<p>All schools were automatically supported by one of the regions, and before that, the districts, based solely on geography.</p> <p>Central office mandates frequently dictated district spending decisions.</p> <p>Teacher tenure was virtually automatic, and removing even the lowest-performing tenured teacher rarely happened.</p>	<p>Principals choose their own support from an array of options: being an Empowerment School, working with an external Partnership Support Organization (nonprofit, university, etc.), or working with an internal Learning Support Organization.</p> <p>Resources and decisionmaking power are being put directly in the hands of principals, who can decide with their teams which strategies and supports will best serve their students.</p> <p>Teacher tenure is being earned, not awarded by default.</p>
<p>Too much was spent on administration.</p> <p>Schools also were funded by a dizzyingly complex system that obscured the reality that schools were given drastically different levels of funding even if they were serving similar populations of students.</p>	<p>Investment in quality schools has risen by nearly 60 percent, the bureaucracy is significantly smaller, and local schools control more of their spending.</p> <p>Funding is fairer and more transparent. Schools receive additional funds based on the learning challenges of the children they serve.</p>
<p>Accountability was focused on one-time, year-end snapshots, with no credit for individual student progress. There were no incentives for schools to take needier students and not enough effective diagnostic tools.</p>	<p>Schools get credit for many kinds of improvements in student learning; qualitative reports supplement test scores; all schools are graded; and schools earn extra credit for gains by their neediest students.</p>

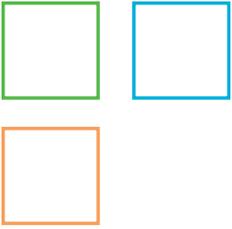
Check out our Web site for additional information

The DOE's Web site contains a wealth of information for parents, families, students, staff, and all New Yorkers, including:

- Find A School, which helps you locate schools and find detailed information about them
- School Enrollment forms and information about school choices
- Standards, assessments, and curricula
- School meals and health programs
- Transportation options
- Accountability reports
- Rules and policies
- Programs to support students, including athletics, arts/music, extracurriculars, and counseling

www.nyc.gov/schools

The screenshot shows the NYC Department of Education website interface. At the top left is the NYC Department of Education logo with the text 'text only | printer friendly' and 'Joel I. Klein, Chancellor'. A search bar is located below the logo. The main navigation menu includes: ABOUT US, ACADEMICS, CHOICES & ENROLLMENT, FACILITIES, OFFICES & PROGRAMS, RULES & POLICIES, STUDENT PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY, and STUDENT SUPPORT, SAFETY, AND ACTIVITIES. There are also sections for 'Careers', 'Teacher Page', and 'Community Partners'. The main content area features a 'SPOTLIGHT' section with a welcome message and links to 'Family Guide' and 'Great Expectations Learning Guides'. Below this is a 'FIND A SCHOOL' section with a search form and a map of New York City. On the right side, there are sections for 'Welcome' with language options (Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish), 'IN OUR SCHOOLS TODAY' with a photo of a teacher and students, and 'NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS' with several news items.



“Our mission over the next four years will be: To create—from preschool through high school—a public education system second to none. We will strengthen the three pillars of our school reform: **Leadership, Accountability, and Empowerment**, putting resources and authority where they belong: in the schools of our City. And because the eyes of the nation are on our efforts, our successes hold the promise of hope for schools across the land. What a wonderful gift for New York to share with the rest of our country.”

—Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg,
January 1, 2006

