



Evaluation of the DC Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA)

September 9, 2013

The Education Consortium for Research and Evaluation (EdCORE)



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Evaluation of the DC Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA)

Report No. 2: School Year 2011-2012
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CONTRIBUTORS

Policy Studies Associates

Erikson Arcaira
Stephen Coleman
Jaclyn MacFarlane
Andrea Palmiter
Brenda Turnbull

American Institutes for Research

Beatrice Birman
Erin Dunlop
Jane Hannaway
Umut Ozek

Mathematica Policy Research

Steve Glazerman
Elias Walsh

George Washington University

Michael Feuer
Maxine Freund
Heather Harding
Taunya Nesin

The Education Consortium for Research and Evaluation (EdCORE) is led by the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the George Washington University, in partnership with American Institutes for Research, Mathematica Policy Research, Policy Studies Associates, Quill Research Associates, and RAND.

About EdCORE

EdCORE is a consortium led by the Graduate School of Education and Human Development of the George Washington University in partnership with American Institutes for Research (AIR), Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), Policy Studies Associates (PSA), Quill Research Associates, and RAND.

EdCORE was established in 2012, in response to the National Research Council's recommendation for a sustainable program of independent research and evaluation.* Our mission is to provide objective and reliable evidence to inform continuous improvement of public education, at all levels, in the District of Columbia.

The current EdCORE portfolio, of which this PERAA report series is a part, includes research on changes in special education policies; and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) course taking in DC schools. Future studies of teaching, learning, and school governance are planned.

* See: National Research Council, *A Plan for Evaluation the District of Columbia's Public Schools: From Impressions to Evidence*, Washington: National Academies Press, 2011.

Foreword

This EdCORE report is the second in a series responding to the mandate for independent evaluation included in the District of Columbia's Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA) of 2007. It includes selected "snapshot" data from the school year 2011-2012 and more comprehensive information about Academic Plans during the period since PERAA's enactment.

These reports are prepared by EdCORE under a subcontract to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), which will use the information in preparing a final evaluation report due to be issued in Fall 2014. The summative report will be written by the NAS Committee for the Five Year (2008-2013) Summative Evaluation of the District of Columbia Public Schools.

As explained in our first report, each one in this series provides an annual snapshot of selected events and indicators along with a trend analysis of one or more of the four broad topics mentioned in PERAA and further refined by the DC Auditor:

- *Business practices and strategies*, including organizational structure and roles, financial management, operations management, facilities and maintenance; resource allocations; public accountability; interagency collaboration; and stakeholder engagement and responsiveness.
- *Human resources operations and human capital strategies*, including the number (and percentage) of highly qualified teachers; retention rate for effective teachers; schools and wards served by effective teachers; length of time principals and administrators serve; types of leadership strategies used; and responsibilities of central office versus school level leadership.
- *Academic plans*, including integration of curriculum and program specific focus into schools and grade progression and credit accumulation.
- *Student achievement*, including a description of student achievement that includes academic growth; proficiency; and other (non-academic) educational outcomes.

In accordance with a request from the DC Auditor on behalf of the DC government, as specified in its contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), this second report pertains primarily to the 2011-2012 school year and provides trend analysis focused on **Academic Plans**.

We repeat the caution expressed in the first report: though informative, the data presented here are not sufficient to fully describe PERAA implementation or infer trends or their causes. In other words, it would be imprudent to assume any linear trends or to attribute observed differences between 2007 and 2012 to the enactment and implementation of PERAA. Causal inferences of this sort cannot be established without substantially more

information and statistical analysis. As a further reminder, we note that questions concerning the integrity of test score data during the period 2008-2012 make it imperative to view results that pertain to student achievement with caution. A more thorough analysis of the student test data is planned for a subsequent report in this series.

In addition to the direct support of the DC government through the NAS, the work reported here was supported indirectly by funds from a combination of public and private organizations that have helped create and build the EdCORE consortium. The National Science Foundation, an early supporter of the consortium as an innovation in the evaluation of urban education reform, provided a grant for general support and in-depth analysis of STEM course taking (which is not part of the PERAA mandate and is not covered in this series of reports). We are grateful to Janice Earle and her colleagues for their enthusiastic help.

We also wish to thank GW Vice President for Research, Leo Chalupa, and Provost Steven Lerman, for their institutional support, without which it would not have been possible to fulfill the demands of the PERAA evaluation and related activities. Current and past faculty of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD), including Rebecca Thessin, Sam Steen, Josh Glazer and Marian Robinson provided important input at various stages of the consortium's development. Taunya Nesin has been an extraordinary graduate research assistant.

In addition, we thank the American Institutes for Research (AIR), and David Myers, its President, for continued support—through grants and in-kind contributions. Former AIR President Sol Pelavin was an enthusiastic supporter of the concept and early work of the National Research Council study, for which we continue to be thankful. We wish to acknowledge also Katherine Bradley (CityBridge Foundation), and Judy and Peter Kovler for their generous financial support. Other members of the GSEHD National Council, in particular Elizabeth Perry, Ed Vest, and Gene Rotberg, are avid supporters of all our work.

We are especially grateful to our colleagues at the NAS – Stuart Elliott, Alix Beatty, committee co-chairs Lorraine McDonnell and Carl Cohn along with the members of their committee – for their confidence in EdCORE and for their wise counsel on matters technical and stylistic. Their comments on earlier drafts of the report contributed to its improvement, but EdCORE remains solely responsible for its contents.

Finally we wish to thank DC Auditor Yolanda Branche and Deputy Auditor Lawrence Perry for their consummate professionalism and gracious management of the contracting process.

This report was written by a team from EdCORE. Brenda Turnbull, Principal of Policy Studies Associates, with researchers Erikson Arcaira, Stephen Coleman, Jaclyn MacFarlane, and Andrea Palmiter, led the analysis of business practices and strategies (section 1) and academic plans (section 3). Elias Walsh, Researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, with Steven Glazerman, Senior Fellow, took the lead on human resources operations and human

capital strategies (section 2). Umut Ozek and Erin Dunlop, researchers at the AIR/National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER), with Jane Hannaway, Vice President, analyzed the student test data (section 4). Beatrice Birman (AIR) and Jennifer Steele (RAND) provided invaluable commentary and editorial contributions. Maxine Freund and Taunya Negin (GW) provided technical, logistical, and conceptual support at all phases of the work. The deft handling of contractual matters by Viola Horek (of the NRC) and Christine Tomasik and Charles Maples (of GW) is much appreciated.

We thank the EdCORE partners for their patience, perseverance, and extraordinary contributions of time and energy. They are exemplars of the very finest and most generous traditions of social scientists coming together for the public good.

*-Heather Harding, Ed.D
Executive Director
EdCORE*

*- Michael J. Feuer, PhD
Dean
Graduate School of Education and Human Development
The George Washington University*

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Section I

Business Practices and Strategies: School Year 2011-2012

This section of the report describes actions taken by education offices and agencies in the District of Columbia during 2011-2012 with respect to business practices in the following areas:

- Organizational structure and roles
- Financial management and resource allocations
- Facilities, maintenance, and operations
- Public accountability
- Stakeholder engagement and responsiveness
- Interagency collaboration

For each of these areas of business practices, we describe any specifically relevant requirements in PERAA and the ways in which they were or were not met during the year. In most of these areas, however, PERAA was not specific in its requirements. Thus the actions taken are compared against performance targets and benchmarks that the offices and agencies set for themselves for 2011-2012. (Because performance targets are set and achievements reported for fiscal years, data here are drawn from the reports for both Fiscal Years [FYs] 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.) This section of the report also summarizes assessments of DC practices that were offered during 2011-2012 by professional organizations, advocacy organizations, or commissions. Each subsection concludes with questions for more in-depth analysis in later EdCORE reports, which will place these business practices in a multi-year perspective.

Organizational Structure and Roles

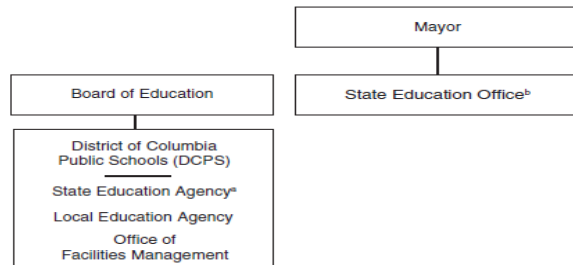
Much of the language in PERAA is devoted to the reorganization of structures and roles in DC's educational governance. The law abolished existing entities, such as the Board of Education that previously held authority over the DC Public Schools (DCPS), and established new ones (Exhibit 1).

Here, we describe PERAA's specifications and the ways in which organizational responsibilities and procedures carried out during 2011-2012 did or did not conform to PERAA requirements.

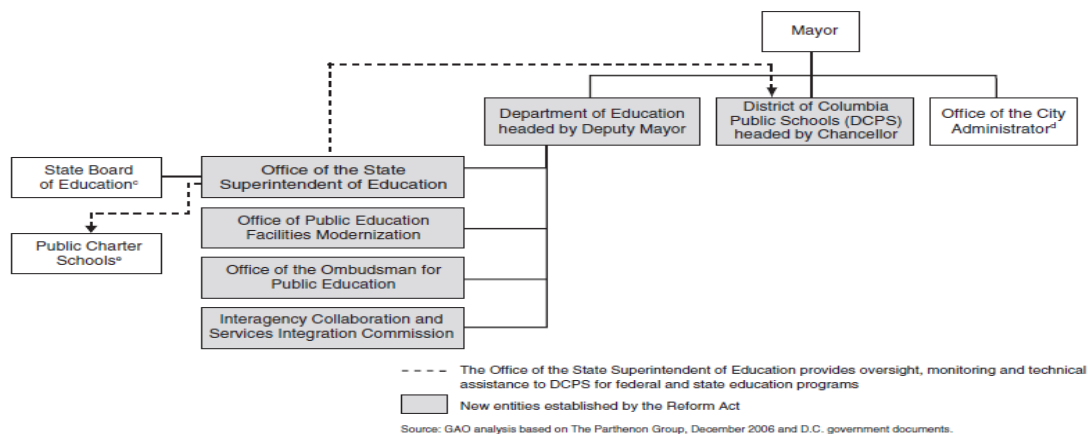
Exhibit 1

Figure 1: D.C. Public Schools Governance Structure, prior to the 2007 Reform Act and after the Reform Act

Before the Reform Act of 2007



After the Reform Act of 2007



Source: Government Accountability Office, (2009, p. 7).

PERAA Specifications and 2011-2012 Activities

One of the most significant changes under PERAA was placing the governance of traditional public schools under the Mayor rather than the former Board of Education. Under PERAA, the Mayor chooses the Chancellor of DCPS, and DCPS becomes a cabinet agency with the Chancellor reporting directly to the Mayor. PERAA also directs the Mayor to appoint a Deputy Mayor for Education, who heads the Department of Education (but does not have authority over DCPS).

Another new entity created by PERAA was the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), which replaced the State Education Agency and acts as the equivalent of a state department of education. OSSE is headed by the State Superintendent, who reports to the Deputy Mayor for Education, and it has responsibilities for developing standards, policies, and data systems for all local educational agencies (LEAs) in the

District, including DCPS as well as charter LEAs. (Some charter LEAs consist of a single school, while others comprise multiple campuses.)

OSSE works with a State Board of Education, which has eight members elected from DC's eight wards and one elected at large. The State Board of Education replaced the Board of Education. It plays a largely advisory role rather than the oversight role the Board of Education played prior to the enactment of PERAA and, unlike the Board of Education, it does not present monthly budget reports. The state board's functions are listed as follows in PERAA:

- (1) Advise the State Superintendent of Education on educational matters;
- (2) Approve state academic standards, following a recommendation by the State Superintendent of Education;
- (3) Approve high school graduation requirements;
- (4) Approve standards for high school equivalence credentials;
- (5) Approve a state definition of "adequate yearly progress," to be applied to all local education agencies, standards for "highly qualified teachers," ... and [a definition of] "proficiency" that ensures an accurate measure of student achievement;
- (6) Approve standards for accreditation and certification of teacher preparation programs of colleges and universities;
- (7) Approve the state accountability plan for the District of Columbia developed by the chief state school officer, [ensuring that all local education agencies make adequate yearly progress and are held accountable for student achievement]...;
- (8) Approve state policies for parental involvement;
- (9) Approve state policies for supplemental education service providers operating in the District;
- (10) Approve the rules for residency verification;
- (11) Approve the list of charter school accreditation organizations;
- (12) Approve the categories and format of the annual report card, pursuant to NCLB Act;
- (13) Approve the list of private placement accreditation organizations...;
- (14) Approve state rules for enforcing school attendance requirements; and
- (15) Approve state standards for home schooling (§403 (a)).

The state board held regular meetings on topics consistent with these prescribed responsibilities during 2011-2012. Monthly meeting topics were: (a) Findings of the HIV/AIDS Awareness Workshop; (b) U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top Application for the Early Learning Challenge; (c) Presentation on ESEA Waiver Application; (d) Graduation Requirements for High School Students in Social Studies, Physical and Health Education, Visual, Performing Arts and Music, Global Education, and Senior Thesis; (e) Community Service; (f) Requirements for Physical Education; (g) Next Generation Science Standards; and (h) Approved State Accountability Plan for District of Columbia.

PERAA called for the creation of an Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission "to address the needs of at-risk children by reducing juvenile and family violence through a comprehensive integrated service delivery system" (§503).

In addition to creating the Commission, PERAA called for coordination and collaboration among DC government agencies to support education. During the 2011-2012 school year, operations of this commission (also previously known as the Statewide Commission on Children, Youth, and their Families) transitioned to a new inter-sector entity known as Raise DC, a cradle to career initiative established by the Office of the Deputy Mayor. Raise DC is described below in the Interagency Collaboration subsection.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education was created by PERAA, reporting to the Deputy Mayor for Education. **This office remained vacant throughout 2011-2012**, having lost its funding earlier, in 2009.

In October 2011 the Department of General Services (DGS), which combined the Department of Real Estate Services and OPEFM, officially began operation. Its work is discussed below, in the subsection on facilities.

PERAA placed full responsibility for chartering, reviewing, and closing public charter schools under the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB), which had been created in 1996 as a second, independent authorizer alongside the DC Board of Education (BOE). The BOE relinquished its authorizing role in 2006, and PERAA, along with abolishing the BOE, transferred oversight responsibility for existing BOE-chartered schools to the PCSB in the following year. PERAA also specified the grounds for exercise of a major chartering responsibility, that of revoking a charter “...if the eligible chartering authority determines that the school (1) committed a violation of applicable law or a material violation of the conditions, terms, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter, including violations relating to the education of children with disabilities; or (2) has failed to meet the goals and student academic achievement expectations set forth in the charter” (§802 (e)).

Actions taken by the PCSB with respect to charter renewal and revocation during 2011-2012 are described in the subsection below on Public Accountability and the later section on Academic Plans.

Questions for Further Analysis

The focus in this subsection of the report has been on the extent of adherence during 2011-2012 to the organization that PERAA created. Although most of the major structures mandated by PERAA were in place in 2011-2012, some changes were made before and after that year, and the perceived results of these changes can be addressed in a more comprehensive report. Future reports, taking a multi-year perspective, will address such questions as:

- Did other offices carry out the functions that PERAA assigned to the Ombudsman? How and to what extent do stakeholders believe that the absence of an ombudsman may have made a difference in public accountability or engagement over time?
- What are the perceived effects of the somewhat complicated reporting arrangements for DCPS and OSSE? (OSSE is charged with developing standards and policies for DCPS

along with other LEAs but reports to the Deputy Mayor of Education, while DCPS reports directly to the Mayor).

Financial Management and Resource Allocations

PERAA prescribed very few specific procedures with respect to finances. Here we describe the Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) budget, the findings of the Public Education Finance Reform Commission report on the school funding equity, and issues raised during 2011-2012 about the budget process and resource allocations. Dissatisfaction with DC budget development and the opacity of education budgets and spending was voiced, not for the first time, during the FY12 budget development process. The findings of the Public Education Finance Reform Commission (PEFRC), which was tasked with examining equity and fairness in the school funding process, were released in 2012.

FY12 Budget Development Process

Concerns about the clarity and transparency of DC education budgets resurfaced during the FY12 budget development process. Of primary concern to local stakeholders were differences between internal budget documents and the publicly released FY12 budget book. For example, while the publicly released budget book reflected a \$77 million increase in budget from FY11 to FY12, the actual increase in budget was \$3.7 million, according to DCPS (DCPS, 2011). These accounting differences could cloud the public's ability to monitor the spending patterns in city schools and limit the public's ability to advocate for education priorities.

A notable public discussion during the budget development process centered on the shift in DCPS allocations from schools to central administration. The discussion highlighted that when district officials and advocates have access to different sets of financial data, they may not be on the same page when discussing spending patterns. The circulated budget documents were deemed "skimpy" and "confusing" by long-time DC education advocates Mark Simon and Mary Levy (Simon & Levy, 2011). One D.C. Council member called the budget "inscrutable" (Turque, 2011). In its review of the budget process, the Public Education Finance Reform Commission found that the Mayor's takeover of the public school system in 2008 had left a trail of uncertainty as to where to obtain information on education budgeting and resource allocation (PEFRC, 2012).

DCPS Budget Overrun

During the FY12 budget development process, Mayor Vincent Gray announced in the middle of the 2011-2012 school year that he would ask the D.C. Council to appropriate an additional \$21 million to cover DCPS cost overruns. DCPS incurred a \$21 million budget overrun due to "congressional cuts in federal payments (\$4.5 million); overruns in food service caused by higher labor and food costs and lower federal reimbursements (\$10.7 million); mandated merit-based salary increases for teachers (\$2.8 million); and the rising cost of excessed non-instructional employees who were removed from school budgets but are being carried on the central office books" (Turque, 2011).

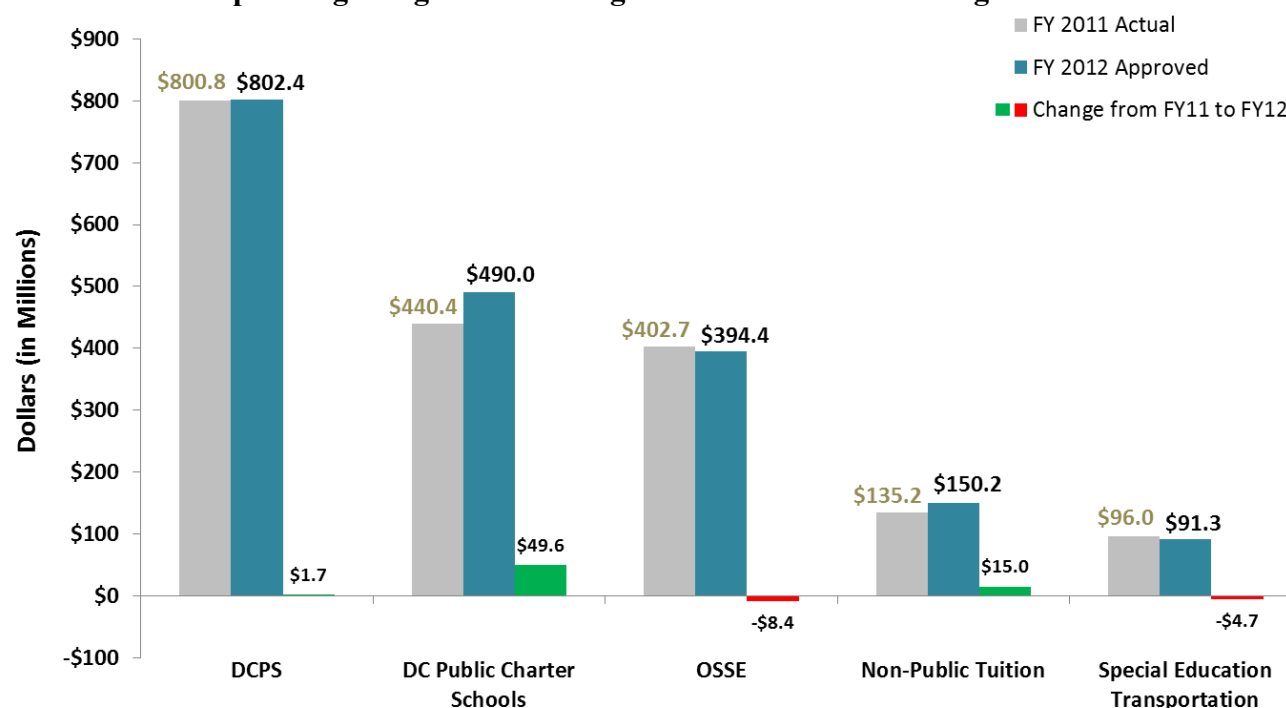
The largest budget overrun was related to food service spending. Chancellor Henderson reported that the school system had expected a higher federal reimbursement rate for food services. However, because DCPS was serving only supper (rather than serving both after-school snacks and supper), DCPS lost around \$9 million in expected funds (Turque, 2011).

The DCPS budget figures shown in Exhibit FM1 incorporate the midyear allocation of supplemental funding in any reported FY11 numbers. Charter advocates criticized Mayor Gray for providing supplemental funding, which they viewed as countering his political platform to ensure equitable and uniform funding for public and public charter schools (Turque, 2012). A recommendation to afford public charter schools the same option in midyear supplemental appropriations as DCPS did not reach consensus among the members of Public Education Finance Reform Commission, however (PEFRC, 2012).

FY12 Budget

The FY2012 budget maintained base per-pupil funding at the FY2011 level of \$8,945, but the overall budget for both traditional public schools and public charter schools increased as shown in Exhibit FM1.

Exhibit FM1: Operating Budgets of Five Highest Funded Education Agencies

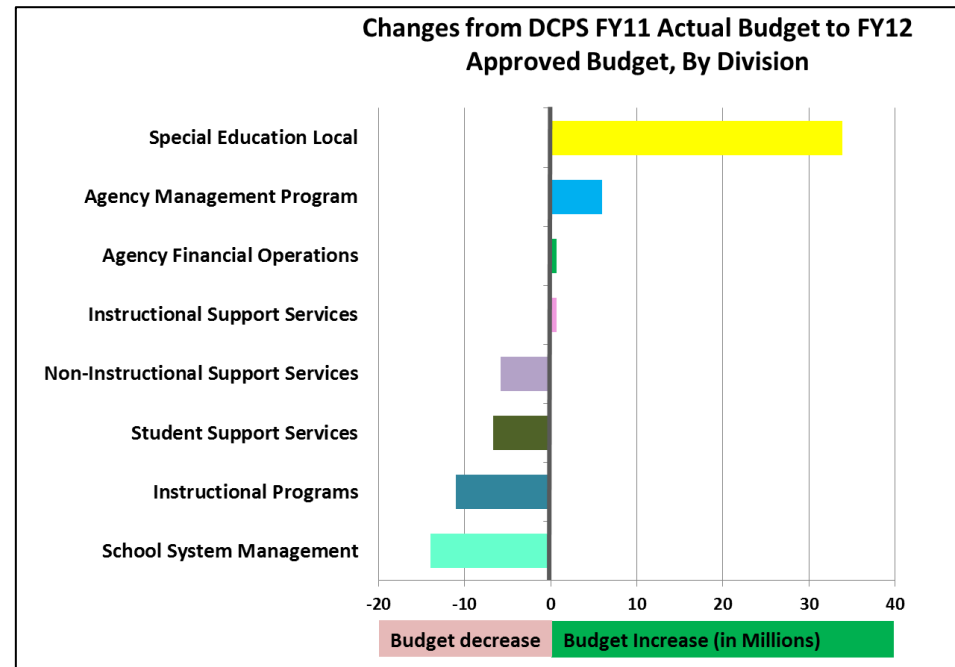
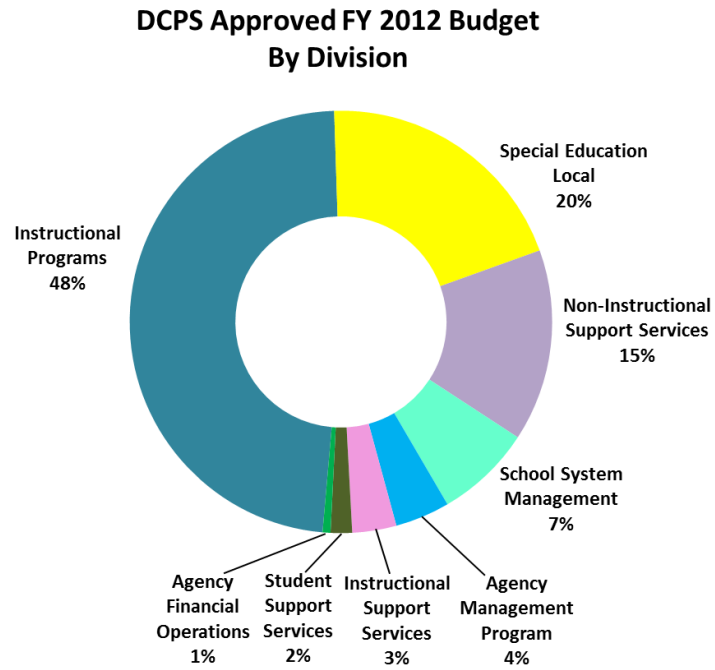


Sources: Government of the District of Columbia FY2012 and FY2013 Proposed Budget and Financial Plans

The increase in budget reflected an anticipated rise in student enrollment and higher funding for special education (DCFPI, 2011). As noted, the DCPS FY11 actual budget numbers reflects the midyear supplemental funding. The DCPS budget increased by \$1.7 million from \$800.8 million

to \$802.4 million. DCPS also reallocated resources to special education to improve services and address the remaining mandates of the Blackman-Jones special education lawsuit (Exhibit FM2).

Exhibit FM2: Changes from DCPS FY11 Actual Budget to FY12 Approved Budgets, By Division



OSSE's budget decreased by \$8 million from \$402 million in FY11 to \$394 million in FY12. Non-public tuition increased by \$15 million from \$135 million to \$150 million

Public Charter Sector

The FY2012 gross budget for public charter schools also increased by 10 percent, from \$440 million in FY2011 to \$490 million in FY2012 (DCFPI, 2011).

The PCSB revised its system for monitoring the fiscal health of charter LEAs and released its second public report on charter LEA finances for FY12. Because sometimes-sudden charter closures, which disrupted communities and incurred costs to the PCSB, often occurred for financial reasons (ranging from fiscal mismanagement to insufficient cash balances), the PCSB developed an early warning system for identifying charters at risk of losing their economic viability.

To improve its fiscal early warning system, the PCSB collaborated with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) and OSSE to create the Audit Management Unit (AMU) in January 2011. The AMU selected an independent financial consulting firm, bearsolutions LLC, to develop a new fiscal database with options for individual school reports as well as aggregate reports. The new system, called CHARM™ (Charter Audit Resource Management), incorporates the financial measures included in a previous system but added metrics used or recommended by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the US Department of Education, and the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. The new system allows the public to view some aggregate measures on charter school spending and view the number of charters considered at risk financially.

Public Education Finance Reform Commission Report

In July 2010, the D.C. Council had authorized the mayor to develop a commission that would examine DC's uniform per student funding formula and study equity in school funding. After some delays in start-up, the commission delivered its final report in January 2012. The report posed some fundamental questions about the funds and supports provided to DCPS and PCS schools.

The commission noted that some services and activities were provided by other city agencies and not incorporated in the DCPS budget, and that there was no way of knowing whether these city-wide services were provided on an "equal basis" between DCPS and PCS schools. It stated that DCPS was receiving between \$72M and \$127M in extra non-uniform local operating funds. The report described funding differences between sectors as "persistent" and "large," with extra appropriations and coverage of overspending alone ranging from \$12M to \$72M annually. It stated that subsidies and free in-kind services like facilities maintenance and legal costs totaled between \$40M to 60M annually.

Like the previous DC Auditor report conducted by an outside financial firm, the PEFRC report highlighted the different enrollment numbers used by the two sectors in determining their base funding. The report noted that DCPS's use of projected enrollment

and PCS's use of actual enrollment accounted for \$4M to \$45M in additional funding for DCPS. However, it also said that the use of projected enrollment to determine funding for special education students could underfund DCPS since its December enrollment numbers reflected an increase in special education students.

The commission also pointed to a variety of difficulties in quantifying the differences between DCPS and PCS. It highlighted the role of school boundaries; student mobility after the enrollment audit; and the costs associated with larger organizational size, government regulation, unionization, teacher certification, and pension arrangements. On facilities, the report said that the costs of DCPS facilities are in the separate capital budget while PCS receive a per-student facilities allotment.

Questions for Further Analysis

The District of Columbia's unique system for public education—characterized by school choice, mobility across sectors, and continued efforts to improve the academic experiences of students—raises some fundamental challenges for financial planning and fuels the annual debate on budget development and funding equity across sectors. Future reports in this series will take a multi-year perspective on questions such as the following:

- What have been the trends over time in the transparency of the budget itself and of the processes by which budgets are developed?
- To what extent are the timeline and approval requirements in budget development in DC consistent with best practice for major school systems?
- Under various assumptions and analytic approaches, what conclusions might reasonably be drawn about adequacy and equity in funding within and across sectors over time?

Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations

Before enactment of PERAA, the poor condition of school facilities and issues in basic operations such as issuing textbooks symbolized a public school system in disarray. PERAA established a new agency to deal with facilities. The Office of Public Education Facilities Management (OPEFM) served this function from 2007 until 2011. During 2011-2012, as described below, the city restructured to combine OPEFM with other real estate and management agencies. The new agency, the Department of General Services, continued the work planned in the November 2010 Master Facilities Plan created by OPEFM. DGS continued to process work orders at a rate that minimized a project backlog and progressed on longer term construction projects. The Public Education Finance Reform Commission also provided an analysis of education funding issues in DC, including an analysis of facilities funding equity across DCPS and charter schools.

PERAA Specifications and 2011-2012 Activities

In October 2011, the Office of Public Education Facilities and Modernization (OPEFM) merged with the capital construction and real property management functions of the Department of Real Estate Services (DRES) the Municipal Facilities: Non-Capital agency (ZXO), Fire and Emergency Management Services (FEMS), Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to create the Department of General Services (DGS). The purpose of the merger was to streamline construction, renovation, and management services for facilities within the District of Columbia. Brian Hanlon, Executive Program Manager at DRES, became interim director of DGS upon its creation and was confirmed as director in July 2012.

The integrated department made efforts to improve efficiency across the component agencies. DGS established an integrated workplace management system (IWMS) to track properties owned by the District of Columbia and the work associated with them. The system tracks the status of work orders, the condition of the property, and the value of the assets. The IWMS meets the criteria for a facilities database set forth in PERAA.

DGS achieved one of its five goals aligned with the November 2010 Master Facilities Plan (MFP) and partially achieved the remaining four (DGS, 2012). The 2010 MFP focused on “modernization” (bringing areas and systems into compliance with current standards). The MFP addressed the influence of school facilities on student classroom performance, included an analysis of demographics, and promised funding for green initiatives. DGS successfully established 16 new School Improvement Teams for ongoing school modernization projects. However, a goal related to addition projects was partially met: the agency had planned to begin three projects, and it did so; it had planned to complete two ongoing projects and completed one, with the remaining project completed in January 2013. Of the ten Phase I modernization projects the agency had planned to complete, two had lingering close-out issues and one had continued construction under a revised Capital Improvement Plan. The agency continued construction on six full modernization projects, completing only two. Planning began on three new full modernization projects, but the planning did not progress as far as the agency had intended.

In the FY11, OPEFM reported achieving all of its identified performance initiatives related to school modernization (OPEFM, 2011). These included completing three major modernization projects, completing six Phase 1 modernization projects, continuing two full modernization projects, and initiating two full modernization projects.

A 2012 analysis of the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) by the Public Education Finance Reform Commission (PEFRC) found funding issues associated with facilities, among other aspects of education within the District of Columbia. The commission (also discussed in the previous subsection of this report) identified multiple issues associated with funding of facilities for DCPS and public charter schools. For

example, the commission found that some charter schools effectively received double funding, receiving the UPSFF facilities allotment even if they had in-kind or monetary support for facilities from other sources. The UPSFF funding for facilities was not intended for maintenance and capital improvements, although some charter schools used these funds for this purpose; in DCPS, separate funds support these efforts. The commission report did not make recommendations on changes to the \$3,000 facilities allotment, but the report recommended further study of funding.

Charter schools are also entitled to first right of offer for unused DCPS buildings, but in practice this did not always occur. The PEFRC report reiterated the findings of a 2011 GAO study on charter school facilities, which noted that the DC government has not always given charter schools first right of refusal to vacant DCPS properties and has not been transparent about its reasons for rejections.

DGS achieved six of its seven goals on key performance indicators related to school facilities in FY12 (DGS, 2012). The department hoped to have 22 school modernization projects stay within project deadlines, and 26 did so; in addition, it set a goal of having 22 school modernization projects remain within budget, and achieved this goal on 84 projects. The department met its goal of 21 ongoing school improvement teams. It did not, however, achieve the goal for the number of modernized school facilities square feet: 1,223,590 square feet were completed of the 1,235,621 goal.

The department cleared 15,571 school facilities work orders (with a goal of 15,000) within an average of 7.06 days (with a goal of 18 days). In FY11, OPEFM cleared 27,067 work orders in an average of 25 days (OPEFM, 2011). OPEFM made extensive efforts in FY11 to reduce the backlog of work orders, allowing for a faster turnaround time and fewer projects needing completion in FY12 by DGS.

The department generated over \$3.7 million in revenue from school facilities, exceeding its goal of \$3.1 million for the year.

DCPS set few operations-related targets in FY12 (DCPS, 2012). The Office of the Chief Operating Officer partially achieved two goals: increasing the availability of nutritious food options that appeal to students, and increasing student enrollment at targeted schools. One goal was fully met: 100 percent of principals certified that they had the necessary textbooks for their school in FY12; DCPS had also achieved this benchmark in FY11.

Questions for Further Analysis

- Did the change from OPEFM to DGS, combining education facilities work with other real estate issues within DC, lead to more efficient execution of projects? Did the consolidation decrease transparency, as Councilmember Wells had initially warned it would?
- Do the standards and performance objectives applied to the quality of facilities, maintenance, and operations in DC resemble those of other major school systems? To what extent can it be determined whether DCPS has improved performance, over

time or relative to other systems, with respect to facilities, maintenance and operations?

- To what extent has the Master Facilities Plan been carried out?
- On the basis of data and perceptions, how can one assess equity in facilities and in the improvement of facilities, both across wards and across the traditional and charter sectors?
- Over time, how has the use of DCPS building by charter schools aligned with laws and other guidelines for facilities use?

Public Accountability

Although PERAA does not detail mechanisms for public accountability of the traditional or charter public school systems, it contains requirements for the data systems that may facilitate public accountability; it charges OSSE and the State Board of Education with developing and approving a plan that meets federal accountability requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB); and it authorizes the PCSB to hold charter schools accountable for their management and performance. More significantly, by giving the Mayor authority over schools, PERAA implicitly invited the public to hold the Mayor accountable for the schools' direction and success.

During 2011-2012, work on the Race to the Top (RTT) initiative, investigations into testing irregularities, and oversight of DCPS and charter schools continued. In its second year of implementing RTT, OSSE appointed a new RTT director in January 2012. However, according to the U.S. Department of Education report on RTT, "OSSE experienced several procurement delays that directly affected Race to the Top initiatives, including the Enterprise Grants Management System, CCSS resource website, statewide longitudinal data system [(SLEDs)], Expanded Growth Measures, and Teacher Preparation Program Scorecard projects" (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p.3).

While implementation of SLEDs continued, it was seven months behind schedule. In the summer of 2012, OSSE issued a contract to develop a web portal as part of the implementation of SLEDs. In August of 2012, OSSE released an interim SLED portal for use while the contractor developed a more comprehensive system. Once the comprehensive system is fully developed, the interim portal will be rolled into it (U.S. Department of Education, 2013; OSSE, 2012).

Investigations continued into testing irregularities first identified by *USA Today*. In response to criticism of the scope and rigor of a prior DCPS investigation carried out by the test security firm Caveon, OSSE hired the firm Alvarez and Marsal to investigate 60 classrooms across 30 schools for possible cheating. The Alvarez and Marsal investigation confirmed that cheating occurred in two classrooms but cleared the remaining 58 classrooms (DCPS, 2012). The U.S. Department of Education Inspector General (IG) also joined the investigation, though it was not clear whether IG joined on its own initiative or at the request of the DC IG (Winerip, 2012). An independent investigation into the District

of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) administered in 2011 confirmed cheating in two classrooms in two DC Public Schools.

As part of NCLB federally mandated school improvement, DCPS and PCSB continued to monitor and intervene in low performing schools. DCPS reconstituted five schools, requiring most teachers and staff to reapply for their positions (DCPS, 2011). DCPS released new school scorecards that replaced the school profiles released in 2010. The new scorecards include additional information like Advanced Placement data, college enrollment statistics, and academic performance relative to similar students from year-to-year (DCPS, 2012).

In 2011-2012, 16 charter schools underwent a five-year Charter Review. Based on these reviews, PCSB recommended revoking the charter of Community Academy due to the performance of one of its five campuses, the Rand Campus. The Community Academy Board of Trustees voted to close the Rand Campus as of June 30, 2012, to avoid losing its charter (PCSB, 2012). PCSB recommended continuance of Integrated Design Electronics Academy (IDEA) contingent upon its implementation of a turnaround plan. The PCSB released the results of its Performance Management Framework, which incorporated student growth and placed schools in one of three performance tiers. There were 22 Tier 1 schools, 34 Tier 2 schools, and 15 Tier 3 schools (PCSB, 2012).

DCPS publicly reports to the DC Council on a set of performance indicators after the end of each fiscal year, and for 2011-2012 these indicators included several related to student achievement. DCPS fell short on all four of its measures related to student proficiency in reading and mathematics and one of its two measures related to the black-white achievement gap.

- The percentage of secondary students proficient in mathematics remained the same at 46 percent, falling short of the target.
- The percentage of secondary students proficient in reading fell from 44 to 42 percent.
- The percentages of elementary students who were proficient rose in reading and math, from 43 to 45 percent in reading and from 42 to 46 percent in mathematics, but fell short of the targets in both subjects.
- The black-white achievement gap widened in reading, from 52 to 55 percent.
- The black-white achievement gap decreased in math, from 59 to 52 percent, meeting the target.

Questions for Further Analysis

The mechanisms for public accountability for DC schools include one strong remedy for publicly perceived shortcomings—voting a mayor out of office. They also include consequences for individual schools' performance, administered through mechanisms that predated PERAA under federal law and PCSB authority. Much of the apparatus of public accountability relies on student achievement as measured by DC CAS tests. This implicitly requires integrity in testing procedures, multiple sound measures of overall and subgroup performance, data systems that permit longitudinal analysis, and clear, intelligible

reporting for the broad public. Thus, questions for future reports will include the following:

- How have OSSE and the other agencies continued to carry out the Race to the Top plans for useful, publicly accessible data on progress and a common, citywide measure of student growth?
- What has been done to ensure that past and future test-based reports of student achievement are not tainted by irregularities?
- To what extent do public priorities for school accountability center on test performance, and what other standards of accountability, if any, do various constituencies apply in judging DC's schools?

Stakeholder Engagement and Responsiveness

Engagement by stakeholders and responsiveness by education agencies can take different forms. PERAA created the Office of the Ombudsman as a vehicle for attending to specific issues, especially those raised by individual families about their own children's education. It also required that the Chancellor, the State Board of Education, and the PCSB hold public meetings. Stakeholder engagement is often viewed considerably more broadly, however, as participation by parents and other concerned residents in agenda setting for public institutions—a process that can be facilitated by transparency in policy deliberations. Several stakeholders have testified publicly that transparency in the governance of DC public schools, especially in terms of the budget, has declined since PERAA was enacted (Levy, 2010; Simon, 2012).

DCPS conducted the Hopes and Dreams Campaign in an effort to inform the development of the DCPS 5-year strategic plan. The campaign included 33 public meetings and an online presence to gather input from stakeholders. It asked stakeholders to respond to three questions: (1) What are the three most urgent issues that you would like solved in your school or schools in your cluster or ward? (2) What three things most impress you about your dream school? And (3) What three words best describe who the person graduating has become that make you so proud? A report summarizing the results was produced in September 2011. Top priorities were reported to be a positive school climate, rigorous academic program, and “beautiful, clean, and modern facilities.” In 2011-2012 DCPS did not commission a stakeholder survey (DCPS, 2012). While the Hopes and Dreams Campaign provided qualitative feedback from stakeholders, it did not provide systematic feedback from students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other school staff on the performance of DCPS.

DCPS closed Parent Resource Centers in Wards 1, 7, and 8 because according to DCPS Chancellor Henderson they were underused and ineffective. The closings prompted criticism from some parent groups. While DCPS' Family Engagement Center originally indicated they would reopen in the fall (Turque, 2011, July; Turque, 2011, August), this did not occur.

OSSE was required to engage stakeholders in the development of an application for a waiver from some of the requirements of NCLB, but early efforts were poorly orchestrated. OSSE planned six town hall meeting in November but gave little advance notice for the meetings, cancelled three of them on short notice, provided the incorrect address for another, and scheduled several that competed with DCPS community meetings (Turque, 2011, November). Later efforts to engage were more successful with OSSE holding more than 55 meetings, town halls, and focus groups and providing opportunities for feedback on their website.

OSSE engaged stakeholders through its Race to the Top-specific task forces, including the Student Growth Measure Task Force and the Human Capital Task Force. Through interviews conducted by the U.S. Department of Education during its onsite monitoring visit in spring 2012, “both OSSE and LEA staff expressed satisfaction with the task forces and plan to continue them beyond the Race to the Top grant period” (U.S. Department of ED, 2013, p.7).

Questions for Further Analysis

Because public schools are a matter of public concern for families and other stakeholders, it will be important to analyze not only agencies’ year-to-year adherence to PERAA’s requirements—which center on providing regular, open public forums—but also evolving perceptions of the DC schools’ direction and of agencies’ responsiveness to public concerns. The District of Columbia has active public dialogue on many matters, including education, and policy makers can potentially use a range of vehicles for two-way communication with the public. Above, in discussing organizational roles under PERAA, we have already alluded to the need to track the effects of the absence of an ombudsman. Other questions for future reporting will include:

- What are the trends in measured public perceptions of DCPS and the broader education system? What has been done in response to data on public perceptions, and in response to data on rates of participation in the available channels for public engagement?
- In addition to addressing individual complaints, conducting surveys and public meetings, and disseminating the policies they have set, how do education authorities—the Mayor, the Chancellor, the PCSB, and others—invite and attend to expressions of the fundamental concerns held by residents and community organizations? How do advocates assess the adequacy of these forms of public engagement in the District of Columbia?

Interagency Collaboration

Much of the responsibility for coordination and collaboration among DC government agencies rests within the Department of Education, headed by the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME). In the mayoral transition year of 2010-2011, several DME initiatives

were revised or abandoned. However, during the 2011-2012 school year, the office of the Deputy Mayor for Education successfully planned and executed or oversaw a number of activities related to interagency collaboration, including establishing Raise DC, reducing nonpublic special education enrollments, developing an early childhood success framework, and creating the Deputy Mayor's Taskforce on Disconnected Youth and the Truancy Task Force. The DC Promise Neighborhoods Initiative (DCPNI) took steps toward interagency collaboration as well.

PERAA Specifications and 2011-2012 Interagency Collaboration Activities

PERAA required the creation of a commission to address the needs of vulnerable children and youth. The Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission was intended "to address the needs of at-risk children by reducing juvenile and family violence through a comprehensive integrated service delivery system." PERAA specifications include the following (§503):

- A service delivery system that includes assessment of children by school-based clinicians, the development and implementation of evidence-based preventative and intervention programs, and the development of integrated service plans for children and families.
- Multi-disciplinary assessments that are designed to determine risk and protective factors of children and the extent to which they are in need of services resulting from emotional disturbance, substance abuse, exposure to violence, or learning disabilities.
- Services and interventions that may include social and emotional development, violence and substance abuse prevention, and family resiliency. The system also allows for interagency exchange of information and resource sharing while still safeguarding confidential information.

PERAA identified 21 members for the Commission, including the Mayor (as chair), the Chairman of the DC Council and Chair of the Committee on Human Services, the Deputy Mayor for Education, the State Superintendent of Education, the DCPS Chancellor, the PCSB Chair, many leaders in the DC systems of criminal justice and youth services, and the Directors of Parks and Recreation and of the Public Libraries.

During the 2011-2012 school year, operations of this commission (also previously known as the Statewide Commission on Children, Youth, and their Families) transitioned to a new inter-sector entity known as Raise DC, a cradle to career initiative launched by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. Although the 2011-2012 commission report required by PERAA was not delivered, a baseline report card of the Raise DC initiative was released in winter 2013.

In April 2012, DME unveiled Raise DC, a cradle to career initiative that emphasized improving upon existing programs and resources through collaboration among city agencies. Mayor Gray and leaders from the public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors constitute a 34-member leadership council for the Raise DC partnership (Executive Office of the Mayor, 2012; Office of the Deputy Mayor, 2013; Raise DC, 2013). The Raise DC

baseline report card described the struggle of the Statewide Commission on Children, Youth, and their Families with long-term success. Raise DC focused on transitioning partnerships from within the DC government to an outside, neutral anchor institution to enhance the likelihood of long-term sustainability.

DME, in partnership with OSSE and DCPS, achieved its goal of reducing non-public placements for special education students. According the DCPS Performance Accountability Report for FY2011, the number of non-public special education placements was reduced from 2,599 to 1,789 for a savings of \$4 million (DCPS, 2012). In FY2012, non-public special education placements were further reduced to 1,446, well exceeding the goal outlined in the FY2012 Performance Plan of reducing non-public enrollment from 1,900 students to 1,650 students (Office of the Deputy Mayor, 2013; Office of the Deputy Mayor, 2012).

DME and the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services partnered to create the Mayor's Framework for Early Success. DME coordinated the application for the federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge in the summer and fall of 2011 (Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, 2012). Although DC was not selected as a recipient of the grant, the application process brought city agencies together around plans to meet the needs of young children and resulted in the development of the Mayor's Framework for Early Success, which rolled out in winter 2012.

During the 2011-2012 school year, DME developed the Deputy Mayor's Taskforce on Disconnected Youth. The purpose of the taskforce was to "identify, publically promote, build awareness of and champion best practices for reengaging disconnected youth" (Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, 2012). According to the DME FY2012 Performance Accountability Report, the taskforce was successfully created and a set of recommendations developed (Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, 2013).

The Truancy Taskforce, composed of members from DME, DCPS, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, DC Superior Courts, and other agencies, launched several initiatives during the 2011-2012 school year. In May 2011, Mayor Gray and Deputy Mayor for Education De'Shawn Wright announced a truancy reduction program to be coordinated with multiple agencies, including DCPS, private health and human service agencies, charter schools, and the court system (Executive Office of the Mayor, 2011). A goal was to ensure attendance intervention plans, case management, and follow up for truant 9th graders at several local high schools. In August 2011, the Taskforce established the Case Management Partnership Initiative (CMPI). The District of Columbia Crime Policy Institute (DCPI) and the Urban Institute conducted an evaluation of the pilot program of CMPI at Ballou and Anacostia high schools. This evaluation did not find strong evidence of reduced truancy, although it found that CMPI had created interagency partnerships through regular case management meetings between participating agencies (Lieberman & Cahill, 2012). The Truancy Court Diversion Program (TCDP), launched at Kramer and Johnson middle schools in spring 2012, struggled because there was not a shared understanding of the program or consistent communication between interagency partners. The Urban Institute and DCPI suggested that interagency coordination was

weakly implemented due to the lack of regular team meetings and of decision makers' involvement (Cahill & Liberman, 2012).

Additionally, in February 2012, Mayor Gray and Deputy Mayor for Education De'Shawn Wright unveiled an ad campaign to promote school attendance called *The More You Learn, the More You Earn* (Executive Office of the Mayor, 2012).

The DC Promise Neighborhoods Initiative (DCPNI) took steps toward interagency collaboration in fall 2011. DCPNI partners include the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, DC Housing Authority Choice Neighborhood, DCPS, DC Public Library, Metropolitan Police Department, OSSE, and Raise DC (DCPNI, 2013). In fall 2010, DCPNI won a \$500,000 federal planning grant, but the initiative failed to win a \$6 million grant in fall 2011 (Gordy, 2011; Perry, 2011). Despite not winning the grant, DCPNI raised \$6 million from other sources to continue its efforts. A major success of DCPNI was to bring together charter schools and public schools in the Kenilworth-Parkside community for joint strategic planning (Comey, Scott, Popkin, & Falkenburger, 2012).

Questions for Further Analysis

A multi-year perspective will allow identification of activities completed and results attained both before and after 2011-2012, including the roll-out and sustainability of RAISE DC through the establishment of a neutral anchor institution.

- How have various government agencies worked together over time in the pursuit of improved outcomes for children and youth, whether through the commission specified by PERAA or in other ways? In what ways have these efforts been consistent with the vision outlined in PERAA?
- What has facilitated interagency and inter-sector collaboration, and what has impeded it, as perceived by participants and knowledgeable observers?

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Section II

Human Resources Operations And Human Capital Strategies, School Year 2011–2012

This section addresses PERAA’s requirement for periodic assessments of the Act’s impact in the area of human resources and human capital strategies. The first report evaluating PERAA (EdCORE, 2013) described DCPS’s human resources and human capital strategies during the 2010–2011 school year. This section updates that description for the 2011–2012 school year. In many cases, our findings for this school year mirror findings from the first report. When the data reflect changes between the two school years, we discuss the differences and refer to results from the first report. Although the results for these two school years may be suggestive of the condition of DCPS more generally after PERAA’s passage in 2007, they cannot necessarily be attributed to policy changes as a result of PERAA.

Our analysis of DCPS human resources and human capital strategies addresses questions from the DC Auditor under three topic areas, as required by PERAA (see the Technical Appendix for methodological details):

1. **Retention of effective teachers.** Did DCPS retain its most effective teachers? How effective are teachers who are new to DCPS relative to more experienced teachers?
2. **Distribution of effective teachers.** Are students in high-poverty schools more or less likely to be taught by effective teachers? Are teachers’ decisions to remain at their school from one year to the next related to the percentage of students from low-income households at that school?
3. **Experience of principals.** How many years of experience within DCPS does the typical DCPS principal have? Is principal experience related to the percentage of students from low-income households at that school?

As in the previous report for the 2010–2011 school year, we measure teacher effectiveness using scores from the IMPACT system for teacher performance evaluation in DCPS. (The box below provides an overview for the 2011–2012 school year—the third year of IMPACT.) The previous report included a discussion of limitations to using IMPACT scores as our measure of teacher effectiveness, including misclassification error and possible breaches in test security. Although these limitations are important considerations for interpreting the results, the IMPACT score was specifically designed to evaluate DCPS teachers.

Also as in the previous report, we use principal experience to measure principal effectiveness. Most previous research has found a positive relationship between experience and direct estimates of principal contributions to student achievement; however,

experience is not a precise measure of effectiveness.¹ Principal contributions to student achievement are difficult to distinguish from other school-level contributions to student achievement (Lipscomb, Chiang, & Gill, 2012). A rigorous approach to measuring principals' contributions to student achievement would be to measure the change in student achievement when there is a change in school leadership; however, it is not possible to apply this strategy to measuring the effectiveness of DCPS principals, because nearly all principals lead only a single school in DCPS.

IMPACT: The DCPS Effectiveness Assessment System

Teachers receive annual evaluation scores under IMPACT that are used to make retention and performance pay decisions. The composition of a teacher's IMPACT score is based on that teacher's IMPACT group. For the 2011–2012 school year, Group 1 consisted of general education teachers of math and reading in grades 4 through 8, the grades for which test score data are needed to calculate teacher "value added"—a measure of teacher effectiveness that seeks to isolate how much a teacher contributes to student achievement from any confounding factors outside the teacher's control (Isenberg & Hock, 2012). Group 2 included all other general education teachers. Groups 3 through 7 included non-general education teachers such as special education and English-language-learner teachers.

Most teachers received an IMPACT evaluation score composed of (1) evaluations by school administrators and third-party trained observers using a classroom observation rubric; (2) an individual value-added (IVA) measure of student achievement growth for Group 1 or an alternative measure based on achievement targets determined by the teacher and principal for most other teachers; (3) a principal-assessed measure of the teacher's collaboration with colleagues and support of school initiatives and programs; (4) a principal-assessed measure of the teacher's attendance, adherence to school policies, and professionalism; and (5) a school value-added score.

The weights for each component in the total score depended on a teacher's IMPACT group. In the 2011–2012 school year, the IVA score constituted 50 percent of the total evaluation score for Group 1 teachers. For all groups, the total evaluation score ranged from 100 to 400 points. Based on this score, a teacher received one of four possible effectiveness ratings: highly effective (350 to 400 points), effective (250 to 349 points), minimally effective (175 to 249 points), or ineffective (100 to 174 points). Under IMPACT, teachers who earn a highly effective rating receive performance pay and those who earn an ineffective rating in one year or a minimally effective rating for two consecutive years are dismissed. The amount of performance pay highly effective teachers receive is twice as large for teachers in schools where at least 60 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL); bonuses can be as large as \$25,000 for Group 1 teachers. For the 2011–2012 school year, most teachers were in Group 1 or 2: 13 percent of teachers were in Group 1, and 50 percent of teachers were in Group 2.

Retention and Experience of Effective Teachers in DCPS

DCPS retained over 80 percent of teachers classified as effective or highly effective by IMPACT.² Overall, 78 percent of 2010–2011 teachers in DCPS were retained for the

¹ Previous work has shown that more experienced principals make greater contributions to student achievement (Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009; Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012; Dhuey & Smith, 2012b), though some studies have not confirmed a link between experience and principal effectiveness (Buck, 2012; Dhuey & Smith 2012a).

² Retention rates do not distinguish between teachers dismissed under IMPACT and teachers who exited voluntarily; for example, some teachers may have left to assume administrative roles. Our data do not allow us to track teachers into administrative roles.

2011–2012 school year (bottom row in first panel of Table II.1). DCPS retained 88 percent of teachers in the highly effective category and 84 percent in the next-highest IMPACT category, effective.³

Teachers with IVA scores—called Group 1 teachers—classified as highly effective were less likely to be retained compared to non-Group 1 teachers. The retention rate for teachers without IVA scores (Groups 2 through 7) classified as highly effective was 89 percent, 12 percentage points higher than the rate for highly effective Group 1 teachers (first row in the bottom two panels of Table II.1). However, this difference may be due to chance rather than a substantive difference in retention outcomes; only 17 Group 1 teachers were classified as highly effective, so retaining even one more Group 1 teacher would increase the retention rate from 77 percent to 82 percent. Consistent with an important role for chance, the retention rate for highly effective non-Group 1 teachers for the 2010–2011 school year was 8 percentage points *lower* than for Group 1 teachers. (Tables from the 2010–2011 report are provided in an appendix to this report for reference.)

DCPS retained fewer than half of teachers classified as minimally effective by IMPACT and only one teacher classified as ineffective. DCPS retained 48 percent of minimally effective teachers and one of the 65 ineffective teachers for 2011–2012.⁴ The lower retention rates for minimally effective and ineffective teachers are consistent with the DCPS IMPACT policy that teachers in the minimally effective category for two consecutive years or in the ineffective category for a single year are subject to separation.

Group 1 teachers classified as minimally effective were more likely to be retained than non-Group 1 teachers. Retention rates for teachers in these IMPACT groups who were rated minimally effective were 46 percent for non-Group 1 teachers, and 51 percent for Group 1 teachers (third row in the bottom two panels of Table II.1). This 5 percentage point difference is similar to the 8 percentage point difference for 2010–2011.

Retention of highly effective teachers was similar for the 2011–2012 school year and for the 2010–2011 school year. The rate of retention for highly effective teachers was 89 percent for the 2010–2011 school year, and 88 percent for 2011–2012.

Retention of minimally effective teachers was lower for the 2011–2012 school year than for the 2010–2011 school year. DCPS retained 70 percent of minimally effective 2009–2010 teachers, compared to 48 percent of minimally effective 2010–2011 teachers. Teachers received their second IMPACT score in the 2010–2011 school year, so DCPS could base its retention decisions on two years of IMPACT data for the first time at the end of that school year. Thus, the lower rate of retention for minimally effective 2010–2011 teachers reflects additional separations among this first cohort of teachers who could have received

³ Some differences in outcomes presented in this report, including for retention, may not be large enough to provide strong evidence of true differences. That is to say, differences that appear substantive may not always reflect differences that are statistically significant.

⁴ The one ineffective teacher who was retained was among 78 teachers with incomplete ratings. These teachers received IMPACT ratings but were exempt from any associated consequences.

IMPACT scores in the minimally effective category for two consecutive years. Specifically, 124 of the minimally effective 2010–2011 teachers received the same rating in 2009–2010; only 2 of these teachers with minimally effective ratings in consecutive years were retained for the 2011–2012 school year.

Table II.1. Retention of Effective Teachers in DCPS, 2011–2012 School Year

2010–2011 IMPACT Rating	Number of Teachers	Number Retained	Proportion Retained for 2011–2012 School Year
Groups 1 Through 7 (all teachers)			
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	488	431	88.3%
Effective (250 to 349 points)	2,428	2,038	83.9%
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	500	238	47.6%
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	65	1	1.5%
All IMPACT ratings	3,481	2,708	77.8%
Group 1 (teachers with IVA scores)			
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	17	13	76.5%
Effective (250 to 349 points)	308	257	83.4%
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	133	68	51.1%
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	13	0	0.0%
All IMPACT ratings	471	338	71.8%
Groups 2 Through 7 (teachers without IVA scores)			
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	471	418	88.7%
Effective (250 to 349 points)	2,120	1,781	84.0%
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	367	170	46.3%
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	52	1	1.9%
All IMPACT ratings	3,010	2,370	78.7%

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: The table includes all 3,481 Group 1 through 7 teachers in the 2010–2011 school year. Teachers are considered to have exited DCPS if they did not receive an IMPACT score in Groups 1 through 7 in the 2011–2012 school year.

More experienced DCPS teachers received higher IMPACT scores on average than less experienced teachers. In the 2011–2012 school year, 10 percent of new teachers, 20 percent of second-year teachers, and 26 percent of other returning teachers achieved ratings of highly effective (first column of Table II.2).⁵ The IMPACT scores also reflected the relationship between IMPACT ratings and experience. The average IMPACT score for new teachers was 289 points; the same averages were 313 points for second-year teachers and 317 for other returning teachers (bottom row of Table II.2). More experienced teachers were also more effective on average in the 2010–2011 school year. In both years, most teachers new to DCPS were rated effective or highly effective, although they were less effective on average than more experienced teachers.

⁵ Previous research has demonstrated that teachers tend to improve in their first few years of teaching (Rockoff, 2004; Hanushek et al., 2005; Harris & Sass, 2010).

Novice teachers may be less effective than veteran teachers, but they could nonetheless become more effective over time. The higher effectiveness of second-year teachers relative to new teachers could reflect the growth in effectiveness attributable to experience, differences in the quality of the two cohorts of new hires, or both.⁶ Understanding trends in teacher effectiveness over time—especially for new teachers—is an important topic for future research.

Table II.2. Effectiveness of New and Returning Teachers to DCPS, 2011–2012 School Year

2011–2012 IMPACT Rating	New Teachers		Second-Year Teachers		All Other Returning Teachers	
	Number of Teachers	Proportion of All New Teachers	Number of Teachers	Proportion of All Second-Year Teachers	Number of Teachers	Proportion of All Other Returning Teachers
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	77	10.4	95	19.7	567	25.5
Effective (250 to 349 points)	528	71.0	349	72.4	1,480	66.4
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	114	15.3	34	7.1	167	7.5
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	25	3.3	4	0.8	13	0.6
All Teachers	744	100.0	482	100.0	2,227	100.0
Average 2011–2012 IMPACT Score	289		313		317	

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: The table includes all 3,453 Group 1 through 7 teachers in the 2011–2012 school year. New teachers in the 2011–2012 school year did not teach during the 2010–2011 school year. Second-year teachers taught during the 2010–2011 school year but not in 2009–2010. All other returning teachers taught during both the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years.

Our conclusion based on data from the 2011–2012 school year is the same as that from the 2010–2011 school year. Relationships between teacher retention, experience, and effectiveness are consistent with progress on the IMPACT system’s primary goal: to improve the effectiveness of DCPS teachers. DCPS retains teachers identified by IMPACT as being the most effective at a higher rate than it does less effective teachers.

No measure of teacher effectiveness is perfect, however. Thus, some teachers may be misclassified. To the extent that IMPACT misclassifies teachers, those retained by DCPS may be less effective and dismissed teachers more effective than our results indicate. Additionally, the IVA component of some teachers’ IMPACT scores may be affected by compromised test scores, though DCPS has stated that they have not found evidence of widespread cheating.

⁶ A simple comparison of IMPACT scores for new teachers in 2010–2011 to second-year teachers in 2011–2012 would not measure growth in effectiveness because there is no guarantee that these scores are comparable on a year-to-year basis.

We also found that over 80 percent of new teachers hired to replace the teachers who left DCPS earned ratings of effective or highly effective. However, even though most new teachers to DCPS received high IMPACT ratings, their IMPACT scores indicated that these teachers were on average less effective than their more experienced colleagues; over 90 percent of the more experienced teachers scored effective or highly effective. The district's success in improving teacher effectiveness may depend on whether and how much new teachers improve over time.

Distribution of Effective DCPS Teachers

Access to effective teachers in DCPS may be related to poverty at the individual student or school level. Recent work has shown that disadvantaged students may be less likely to be taught by the most effective teachers (Tennessee Department of Education, 2007; Hahnel & Jackson, 2012), although some studies have shown that disadvantaged students do not always have less access to effective teaching, depending on districts or grade levels studied (Glazerman & Max, 2011; Sass et al., 2012).

To the extent that unequal access to effective teachers poses a challenge in DCPS, dismissal and performance pay incentives under IMPACT may help equalize access over time. For example, through IMPACT, DCPS offers monetary incentives that may induce highly effective teachers to teach in designated high-poverty schools at the same time DCPS is dismissing ineffective teachers. Such incentives could improve the average quality of teachers overall in DCPS as well as the quality of teachers in high-poverty schools. If high-poverty schools had the highest concentrations of ineffective teachers before IMPACT, then these schools may see the most teacher turnover as a result of IMPACT, a hypothesis we examine below.

On average, teachers in high-poverty schools received lower IMPACT scores than teachers in low-poverty schools. We classified schools as low, medium, or high poverty based on the percentage of students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch: below 60 percent, between 60 and 80 percent, or greater than 80 percent, respectively. Consistent with results from the 2010–2011 school year, we found that on average teachers in low-poverty schools were more likely to earn ratings of highly effective and receive higher IMPACT scores for 2011–2012. Thirty-eight percent of teachers in low-poverty schools received highly effective ratings, whereas only 17 percent in medium-poverty schools and 12 percent in high-poverty schools achieved highly effective ratings (first row of Table II.3). The average teacher in a low-poverty school received an IMPACT score of 329 points (second panel of Table II.3); by contrast the average score was 21 points lower for teachers in medium-poverty schools and 31 points lower for teachers in high-poverty schools. These gaps were 31 and 33 points for the 2010–2011 school year. Thus, the gap between the medium- and high-poverty schools rose from 2 points for the 2010–2011 school year to 10 points for 2011–2012, whereas the gap between low- and high-poverty schools decreased by 2 points.

Table II.3. Teacher Effectiveness by School Poverty in DCPS, 2011–2012 School Year

	School Poverty Subgroup			All Schools
	Low-Poverty	Medium-Poverty	High-Poverty	
Percentage of Teachers with a 2011–2012 IMPACT Rating of:				
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	37.8	17.2	12.3	20.4
Effective (250 to 349 points)	56.8	72.9	73.5	69.0
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	4.8	8.9	12.4	9.3
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	0.6	1.0	1.8	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average 2011–2012 IMPACT Score	329	308	298	309
Number of Teachers	856	1,079	1,410	3,345

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: The table includes the 3,345 Group 1 through 7 teachers in the 2011–2012 school year teaching in a school for which school poverty rates were available. School poverty is based on the proportion of students in the school eligible for FRPL. Low-poverty schools have less than 60 percent of students who are eligible, medium-poverty schools have between 60 and 80 percent of students who are eligible, and high-poverty schools have more than 80 percent of students who are eligible.

Teachers in high-poverty schools were less likely than teachers in medium- or low-poverty schools to remain in the same school, though this gap was narrower in the 2011–2012 school year than in 2010–2011. In the top panel of Table II.4, we show the proportion of teachers in low-, medium-, and high-poverty schools who remained in the same school (“stayers”), moved between two schools (“movers”), and left DCPS between these years (“leavers”). These categories are based on transitions between the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 school years. Whereas 78 percent of teachers in low- and medium-poverty schools remained in the same school from one year to the next, only 67 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools did so (first row of Table II.4). The difference reflects higher proportions of teachers in high-poverty schools moving to a new DCPS school (second row of Table II.4) or leaving DCPS (third row of Table II.4). The gap of 11 percentage points for the 2011–2012 school year represents a reduction by almost half from the gap for 2010–2011 (21 percentage points). The narrower gap for 2011–2012 is due to there being more leavers in low-poverty schools and fewer in high-poverty schools. Although there could be other explanations, the decline in the rate of leavers in high-poverty schools is consistent with incentives from additional performance pay for highly effective teachers to remain in these schools: highly effective teachers in medium- and high-poverty schools receive twice the performance pay of highly effective teachers in low-poverty schools.

Teachers in high-poverty schools who left were rated less effective, on average, than teachers who left medium- or low-poverty schools. The higher proportion of leavers in high-poverty schools relative to low-poverty schools could reflect an effort to dismiss the least effective teachers; as shown in Table II.3, high-poverty schools tend to have less effective teachers. We show in the second panel of Table II.4 that the teachers who left DCPS from high-poverty schools had an average IMPACT score of 253. By comparison, leavers from medium-poverty schools had an average score of 265, and those leaving low-poverty schools had an average score of 286. Not all exits from low-poverty schools result

from dismissals—a score of 253 is still 3 points above the threshold for a being rated effective rather than minimally effective. Even so, 52 percent of leavers from high-poverty schools were minimally effective or ineffective, whereas 36 percent of leavers from medium-poverty schools and 29 percent of leavers from low-poverty schools were minimally effective or ineffective. Many of the most effective teachers who were not retained in DCPS exited from low-poverty schools; of the highly effective teachers not retained, 42 percent exited from low-poverty schools. These findings are similar to those from the 2010–2011 school year.

Teachers who stayed at their schools were rated more effective, on average, than teachers who left. Similar to results from the 2010–2011 school year, stayers had higher average IMPACT scores than movers or leavers in all types of schools. For example, teachers who remained in their low-poverty schools achieved an average IMPACT score of 326, which was higher than the average scores of both 314 for movers from these schools and 286 for teachers who left DCPS from these schools (first column of second panel of Table II.4). The stayers in medium- and low-poverty schools were also more effective, on average, than movers and leavers, although all averages were lower for teachers in these schools.

Table II.4. Amount of Teacher Turnover and Effectiveness of Teachers by Mobility Category and School Poverty in DCPS, 2011–2012 School Year

	School Poverty Subgroup			All Schools
	Low-Poverty	Medium-Poverty	High-Poverty	
Percentage				
Stayers	78.3	70.1	67.4	71.0
Movers	4.8	6.1	8.1	6.7
Leavers	16.9	23.8	24.5	22.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average 2010–2011 IMPACT Score				
Stayers	326	302	297	306
Movers	314	290	273	286
Leavers	286	265	253	263
Number of Teachers	830	1,035	1,441	3,306

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: The table includes the 3,337 Group 1 through 7 teachers in the 2010–2011 school year teaching in a school for which school poverty rates were available. Teachers in the “stayers” category continue teaching at the same school, “movers” transfer to a different school within the district, and “leavers” leave teaching in the district. These categories are based on changes in teaching assignments between the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 school years. School poverty is based on the proportion of students in the school eligible for FRPL. Low-poverty schools have less than 60 percent of students who are eligible, medium-poverty schools have between 60 and 80 percent of students who are eligible, and high-poverty schools have more than 80 percent of students who are eligible.

Evidence suggests that DCPS has room to improve if an equitable distribution of teacher effectiveness, as measured by IMPACT, is a goal for the district. Although the gap in retention rates between high- and low-poverty schools narrowed between the 2010–2011

and 2011–2012 school years, the gap in effective teaching decreased by only two IMPACT points. High-poverty schools continued to have fewer highly effective teachers and experience the most turnover. Although not the case for these two school years, over time, IMPACT may help distribute teachers more equitably across schools, as ineffective teachers in high-poverty schools are dismissed or replaced and highly effective teachers take advantage of incentives to remain in DCPS.

Principal Experience

Principals in DCPS were more experienced in the 2011–2012 school year than in 2010–2011. Of the 112 principals leading a DCPS school in 2011–2012, 22 percent were new principals in DCPS and 31 percent had just two or three years of experience as principals in DCPS (Table II.5). The remaining 46 percent had four or more years of experience leading a school (sum of the third and fourth rows in Table II.5). In contrast, only 35 percent of 2010–2011 principals had at least four years of experience.

More principals in low-poverty schools were new to DCPS in 2011–2012 than in 2010–2011. In 2011–2012, almost half of new principals were hired into low-poverty schools and these new principals represented 32 percent of principals in low-poverty schools (first column of Table II.6). For the 2010–2011 school year, new principals composed just 5 percent of principals in low-poverty schools, despite a similar proportion of new principals to DCPS across all schools.

In the 2010–2011 school year, principals in high-poverty schools were more likely to have the least experience in DCPS than principals in low-poverty schools, but this was not the case in 2011–2012. In the 2011–2012 school year, 26 percent of principals in high-poverty schools were first-year DCPS principals, 6 percentage points *lower* than the percentage for low-poverty schools (first row of Table II.6). For 2010–2011, the percentage of first-year DCPS principals in high-poverty schools was 28 percentage points *higher* than the percentage for low-poverty schools. Leaders of high-poverty schools for 2011–2012 were also more likely to have the most experience in DCPS relative to that group of leaders in 2010–2011; whereas 24 percent of principals in high-poverty schools had more than six years of experience in DCPS in 2011–2012, just 13 percent of these principals had that amount of experience in 2010–2011.

Although principals in medium-poverty schools were more likely to have the most experience in DCPS than those in either low- or high-poverty schools in the 2010–2011 school year, we found the opposite pattern in 2011–2012. Of principals in low-poverty schools in 2011–2012, 27 percent had more than six years of experience, compared to 11 percent in medium-poverty schools, and 24 percent in high-poverty schools (last row of Table II.6). For the 2010–2011 school year, these percentages were 14, 18, and 13 respectively. Medium-poverty schools in 2011–2012 were also less likely to have principals with four or more years of experience in DCPS relative to low- and high-poverty schools; whereas 59 percent of principals in low-poverty schools had this amount

of experience, the percentages were 36 percent in medium-poverty schools and 45 percent in high-poverty schools.

Table II.5. Principal Experience in DCPS, 2011–2012 School Year

Years of Experience in DCPS	Number of Principals	Number as Proportion of All DCPS Principals
1 year	25	22.3
2 to 3 years	35	31.3
4 to 6 years	27	24.1
More than 6 years	25	22.3
All Principals	112	100.0

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: Experience in DCPS is the number of years the principal led any DCPS school, including the 2011–2012 school year.

Table II.6. Principal Experience by School Poverty, 2011–2012 School Year

Years of Experience in DCPS	School Poverty Subgroup			All Schools
	Low-Poverty	Medium-Poverty	High-Poverty	
1 year	31.8	10.7	25.9	23.2
2 to 3 years	9.1	53.6	29.3	31.5
4 to 6 years	31.8	25.0	20.7	24.1
More than 6 years	27.3	10.7	24.1	21.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Principals	22	28	58	108

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: Experience in DCPS is the number of years the principal led any DCPS school. School poverty is based on the proportion of students in the school eligible for FRPL. Low-poverty schools have less than 60 percent of students who are eligible, medium-poverty schools have between 60 and 80 percent of students who are eligible, and high-poverty schools have more than 80 percent of students who are eligible. The table excludes principals in four schools for which FRPL eligibility data were not available.

Our conclusions about the experience and effectiveness of DCPS principals are limited for two reasons. First, principal experience is not a precise measure of effectiveness. Second, the relationship between experience and school poverty depends largely on the poverty level of the schools for which new principals were hired, and this pattern was different for the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 school years.⁷ The 2011–2012 hires, combined with the retention of many of the most experienced principals in high-poverty schools, tended to reduce gaps in principal experience by school poverty. It remains to be seen whether the increase in the proportion of experienced principals in high-poverty schools is a trend that will continue beyond the 2011–2012 school year.

⁷ Principals rarely move between schools in DCPS. Thus, the locations of new hires and exits from DCPS instead of transitions between schools determine principal experience levels in a group of schools.

Questions for Further Analysis

The analysis of human capital strategies for the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 school years raises a number of important questions about IMPACT and changes in teacher and principal effectiveness over time in DCPS. We have addressed questions identified by the auditor, but there are other questions whose answers may be relevant for education policymakers and practitioners. These questions are outside the scope of the current report, but we list them here to guide future research. Some of these questions will need to address challenges in measuring changes in teacher effectiveness over time, whereas IMPACT was primarily designed to measure effectiveness within a school year.

Do IMPACT scores and IMPACT score components provide consistent and reliable measures of teacher effectiveness? Do teachers who have a high score on one IMPACT component also have a high score on others? If all IMPACT components contribute to a consistent measure of teacher effectiveness, concerns about mismeasurement in any single component are reduced. Does performance measured in one school year predict the same teacher's performance measured in a future school year? Although the effectiveness of individual teachers is expected to change from year to year, the success of retention decisions made by DCPS based on past IMPACT scores depend on these scores being predictive of future effectiveness.

Have retention rates of effective teachers changed since the first year of IMPACT? Also, has the overall retention rate changed since the years prior to IMPACT? Because teachers who earn an ineffective rating in one year or a minimally effective rating for two consecutive years are dismissed under IMPACT, overall retention rates may fall even as effective teachers are retained at higher rates.

How effective are novice teachers, and how do they compare with teachers who are returning to DCPS? How does the effectiveness of novice teachers compare to returning teachers in each school year since IMPACT, and how does the effectiveness of these same novice and returning teachers compare in subsequent years when they are more experienced? Teachers typically become more effective as they gain experience, which is why novice teachers are usually less effective than veteran teachers. The success of IMPACT in improving teacher effectiveness may depend on whether and how much novice teachers improve over time.

Is there a gap in teacher effectiveness between high- and low-poverty schools, and has it widened or narrowed since IMPACT? What are the trends over time in average effectiveness, the relationship between effectiveness and teacher mobility, and the relationship between effectiveness and teacher experience in low-, medium-, and high-poverty schools? Are changes in the gap were caused by changes in the identity of teachers in these schools (such as new hires, moves between schools, and teacher dismissals) and/or changes in the effectiveness of teachers who remained in a school?

Have teachers changed grade or subject assignments in response to IMPACT? The IVA component of IMPACT has been used to calculate IMPACT scores only for Group 1 teachers.

Because the IMPACT score is calculated differently for different IMPACT groups, teachers may respond by changing their subject or grade assignments. Changes in grade or subject assignments could be related to teacher effectiveness.

What more can be learned about principal effectiveness in DCPS? The analysis of principal experience raises questions about how experience is related to effectiveness, how DCPS recruits and retains effective principals, and how DCPS assigns principals to schools.

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Technical Appendix to Section II: Data and Analysis

We relied on data provided by DCPS that include (1) IMPACT scores and effectiveness categories for all DCPS teachers in the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 school years, (2) a list of teachers teaching in the 2009–2010 school year, (3) principals' school assignments for the 2000–2001 through 2011–2012 school years, and (4) individual student background characteristics.

We calculated teacher experience and retention rates by linking teachers across years in the IMPACT data. The IMPACT data include all teachers in IMPACT Groups 1 through 7.⁸ If a teacher was not listed in consecutive IMPACT files, we concluded that he or she was not retained for the second year. These files only include teachers; therefore, the group of teachers we classified as not retained for the second year may include some who assumed administrative roles.

We distinguished new teachers and second-year teachers from all other returning teachers by linking teachers across consecutive years in the data. New teachers in the 2011–2012 school year were those not teaching during the 2010–2011 school year. Second-year teachers were those who taught during the 2010–2011 school year but not during 2009–2010. All other returning teachers taught during both the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years. Our approach reflects the best data available to us; we recognize, however, that any teachers on leave for the 2010–2011 or 2009–2010 school years were misclassified as new or second-year teachers.

We defined low-, medium-, and high-poverty schools based on the proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) within the school. We used student background characteristics for the 2011–2012 school year to calculate students' poverty status. We classified schools with less than 60 percent of students with FRPL status as low-poverty schools and those with more than 80 percent of students with FRPL status as high-poverty schools. One reason for our choice of this cutoff for low-poverty schools is that highly effective teachers in these schools receive lower performance pay under IMPACT. According to these definitions, 24 percent of DCPS schools are classified as low poverty, 26 percent as medium poverty, and 50 percent as high poverty. Alternatively, 28 percent of DCPS students attend low-poverty schools, 20 percent attend medium-poverty schools, and 48 percent attend high-poverty schools.

Some DCPS schools—called community eligible schools—did not collect FRPL eligibility data for individual students in the 2011–2012 school year.⁹ In such cases, we used the

⁸ One Group 2 teacher in the 2010–2011 school year received no IMPACT rating and is excluded from all analyses.

⁹ A school is eligible to be designated community eligible if at least 40 percent of its students have an identified need for free lunch based on direct certification (that is, the students qualify based on their families' participation in state welfare or food stamp programs). Community eligible schools provide free breakfasts and lunches to all enrolled students and forgo collecting individual student FRPL applications.

FRPL status of students from a previous year in which FRPL status was collected, typically the 2010–2011 school year. If a student’s FRPL status was unknown in the 2010–2011 year, we retained the student’s 2011–2012 status as reported in the background data, although the status from that year may not reflect the student’s actual status. Additionally, a small number of schools cannot be assigned to one of the three poverty categories because their students are not included in the background data we received from DCPS.

Appendix to Section II: Results from the 2010–2011 School Year

In this appendix we provide the tables that were included in Section II of the Evaluation of the DC Public Education Reform Amendment Act: School Year 2010–2011. These tables are provided for reference because results from that previous report are referred to in this report for school year 2011–2012. The tables included in this appendix are identical to those from the report for school year 2010–2011.

Table A.1. Retention of Effective Teachers in DCPS, 2010–2011 School Year

2009–2010 IMPACT Rating	Number of Teachers	Number Retained	Proportion Retained for 2010–2011 School Year
Groups 1 Through 8 (all teachers)			
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	543	484	89.1%
Effective (250 to 349 points)	2,471	2,057	83.2%
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	459	321	69.9%
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	62	0	0.0%
All IMPACT ratings	3,535	2,862	81.0%
Group 1 (teachers with IVA scores)			
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	37	36	97.3%
Effective (250 to 349 points)	305	259	84.9%
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	124	94	75.8%
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	10	0	0.0%
All IMPACT ratings	476	389	81.7%
Groups 2 Through 8 (teachers without IVA scores)			
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	506	448	88.5%
Effective (250 to 349 points)	2,166	1,798	83.0%
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	335	227	67.8%
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	52	0	0.0%
All IMPACT ratings	3,059	2,473	80.8%

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: The table includes all 3,535 Group 1 through 8 teachers in the 2009–2010 school year. Teachers are considered to have exited DCPS if they do not receive an IMPACT score in Groups 1 through 7 in the 2010–2011 school year. IMPACT classified teachers into eight groups in the 2009–2010 school year, and seven in 2010–2011.

Table A.2. Effectiveness of New and Returning Teachers to DCPS, 2010–2011 School Year

2010–2011 IMPACT Rating	New Teachers		Second-Year Teachers		All Other Returning Teachers	
	Number of Teachers	Proportion of All New Teachers	Number of Teachers	Proportion of All Second-Year Teachers	Number of Teachers	Proportion of All Other Returning Teachers
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	48	7.7%	118	12.5%	322	16.8%
Effective (250 to 349 points)	440	71.0%	640	68.0%	1,348	70.2%
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	115	18.5%	157	16.7%	228	11.9%
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	17	2.7%	26	2.8%	22	1.1%
All Teachers	620	100%	941	100%	1,920	100%

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: The table includes all 3,481 Group 1 through 8 teachers in the 2010–2011 school year. New teachers in the 2010–2011 school year did not teach during the 2009–2010 school year. Second-year teachers taught during the 2009–2010 school year, but not in the previous year. All other returning teachers taught during both the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 school years.

Table A.3. Teacher Effectiveness by School Poverty in DCPS, 2010–2011 School Year

	School Poverty Subgroup			All Schools
	Low-Poverty	Medium-Poverty	High-Poverty	
Percentage of Teachers with a 2010-2011 IMPACT Rating of:				
Highly effective (350 to 400 points)	28.4%	9.6%	7.2%	13.4%
Effective (250 to 349 points)	64.3%	71.9%	72.4%	70.2%
Minimally effective (175 to 249 points)	6.2%	16.3%	18.5%	14.6%
Ineffective (100 to 174 points)	1.1%	2.2%	1.8%	1.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Average 2010–2011 IMPACT Score	320	289	287	296
Average Score by Component:				
Teaching and Learning Framework	3.2	3.0	2.9	3.0
Commitment to the School Community	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.2
Individual Value Added	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.5
School Value Added	3.0	2.4	2.4	2.6
Teacher-Assessed Student Achievement Data	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.0
Average Core Professionalism Penalty	-2.5	-4.0	-3.6	-3.5
Number of Teachers	818	1,492	1,091	3,401

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: The table includes the 3,401 Group 1 through 8 teachers in the 2010–2011 school year teaching in a school for which school poverty rates were available. School poverty is based on the proportion of students in the school eligible for FRPL. Low-poverty schools have less than 60 percent of students who are eligible, medium-poverty schools have between 60 and 80 percent of students who are eligible, and high-poverty schools have more than 80 percent of students who are eligible. Average scores for IMPACT components include only teachers with a valid score on the component.

Table A.4. Amount of Teacher Turnover and Effectiveness of Teachers by Mobility Category and School Poverty in DCPS, 2010–2011 School Year

	School Poverty Subgroup			
	Low-Poverty	Medium-Poverty	High-Poverty	All Schools
Percentage				
Stayers	83.0%	83.3%	61.6%	74.9%
Movers	3.8%	7.5%	6.0%	6.0%
Leavers	13.2%	9.2%	32.4%	19.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Average 2009–2010 IMPACT Score				
Stayers	327	299	294	304
Movers	296	283	289	287
Leavers	304	278	260	270
Number of Teachers	802	1,312	1,327	3,441

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: The table includes the 3,416 Group 1 through 8 teachers in the 2009–2010 school year teaching in a school for which school poverty rates were available. Teachers in the “stayers” category continue teaching at the same school, “movers” transfer to a different school within the district, and “leavers” leave teaching in the district. These categories are based on changes in teaching assignments between the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years. School poverty is based on the proportion of students in the school eligible for FRPL. Low-poverty schools have less than 60 percent of students who are eligible, medium-poverty schools have between 60 and 80 percent of students who are eligible, and high-poverty schools have more than 80 percent of students who are eligible.

Table A.5. Principal Experience in DCPS, 2010–2011 School Year

Years of Experience in DCPS	Number of Principals	Number as Proportion of All DCPS Principals
1 year	31	27.4%
2 to 3 years	42	37.2%
4 to 6 years	22	19.5%
More than 6 years	18	15.9%
All Principals	113	100%

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: Experience in DCPS is the number of years the principal led any DCPS school, including the 2010–2011 school year.

Table A.6. Principal Experience by School Poverty, 2010–2011 School Year

Years of Experience in DCPS	School Poverty Subgroup			All Schools
	Low-Poverty	Medium-Poverty	High-Poverty	
1 year	4.8%	31.8%	33.3%	27.3%
2 to 3 years	38.1%	36.4%	37.8%	37.3%
4 to 6 years	42.8%	13.6%	15.6%	20.0%
More than 6 years	14.3%	18.2%	13.3%	15.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Principals	21	44	45	110

Source: Mathematica calculations based on administrative data from DCPS.

Notes: Experience in DCPS is the number of years the principal led any DCPS school. School poverty is based on the proportion of students in the school eligible for FRPL. Low-poverty schools have less than 60 percent of students who are eligible, medium-poverty schools have between 60 and 80 percent of students who are eligible, and high-poverty schools have more than 80 percent of students who are eligible. The table excludes principals in three schools for which FRPL eligibility was not available.

Section III

Academic Plans: School Years 2008-2009 Through 2012-20113

Introduction

PERAA contains no specifications for the academic plans of public schools in DC, but it assigned functions related to academic plans to several offices and boards. The Mayor has authority over curricula (Sec. 103(a)). The DCPS Chancellor “exercise[s] the powers necessary and appropriate to operate the schools and school system” (Sec. 105(c)(3)). The State Board of Education approves state academic standards, having considered OSSE’s recommendations regarding standards (Sec. 403 (a)(2)). The PCSB grants charters after a review of proposed academic plans, and it has authority to revoke charters based on a school’s failure to meet academic expectations (Sec. 802(e)).

In this section of the report, we describe the adoption and implementation of academic plans in school years 2008-2009 through 2012-2013. Some plans have been city-wide, often launched in the office of the mayor or deputy mayor, and applying to both DCPS and charter schools. We discuss those in the first subsection below. Other plans are specific to DCPS, and those are discussed next. A third section describes the ways in which the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) addresses academic matters in the charter sector.

Data sources for this section are primarily public records, including not only the performance plans and reports of the DC education offices and agencies but also the reports of other agencies (such as the U.S. Department of Education), organizations (such as the Council of Great City Schools), and news media. We also gathered background information and perspectives on academic plans in interviews with four current and former officials of OSSE, DCPS, and PCSB. Quotations from prominent public officials have been drawn from transcripts and recordings of appearances on radio and other programs, as well as from published news accounts.

Academic Priorities Set in 2008-2009

The 2009 Working Draft: A 5-Year Action Plan for the D.C. Public Schools described a system that “boasts individual schools and classrooms with high quality programs and strong results,” but said that, “despite growing pockets of excellence, our school system’s shortcomings remain deep, widespread, and systemic.... our schools are under-performing and do not provide compelling, rigorous programs to students and their families.” DCPS officials also identified three related, central problems in the DCPS school system: 1) variation in the instructional expectations for teachers, 2) misalignment of the resources and supports provided to teachers (curricular resources, assessments, and professional development), and 3) insufficient observation and oversight of the adult and student work

occurring in classrooms. DCPS officials reported that these conditions contributed to inconsistencies in students' academic experiences across schools and classrooms.

At the end of the 2007-2008 school year, the public charter sector's share of the district's public school population had increased to 30 percent. Like DCPS, the public charter sector held some high-performing schools and a larger number of low-performing schools. The 2008 PCSB Annual Report stated that 18 charter schools met the benchmarks for adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind law, while 42 did not (DC PCSB, 2008). As described in this section of the report, the years since 2008 have seen the development and use of new procedures for academic oversight and support for charter schools.

Academic Plans District-wide

Described here are plans, initiatives, and associated issues that apply across public education in the District of Columbia. A note on terminology and organizational arrangements may be helpful here: the District of Columbia contains dozens of local educational agencies (LEAs), of which DCPS is the largest, each with independent authority to operate schools. Among the charter LEAs authorized by the PCSB at any given time, some operate multiple school campuses while others comprise a single school. As we will discuss, many charter LEAs voluntarily joined with DCPS in the District of Columbia's successful Race to the Top (RTT) application; they are obligated to follow the agreements made in that application, and they have had access to support and assistance from OSSE under RTT.

Expansion of Early Childhood Education

With the Pre-Kindergarten Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008, the District of Columbia's leaders put in place a plan to provide universal access to pre-kindergarten programming to DC residents. The Act increased funding for early childhood and expanded the number of available seats offered by DCPS, charter schools, and community-based organizations. As shown in Exhibit AP1, there has been growth in enrollment in preschool and pre-kindergarten over the last 5 years. From fall 2008 to fall 2012, the preschool enrollment increased from 2,710 to 4,929, an 81 percent increase, and pre-k enrollment increased from 4,675 to 6,499, a 39 percent increase (OSSE, 2012).

Exhibit AP1: Total Public School Enrollment from Pre-School to Grade 8, Fall 2002 – Fall 2012

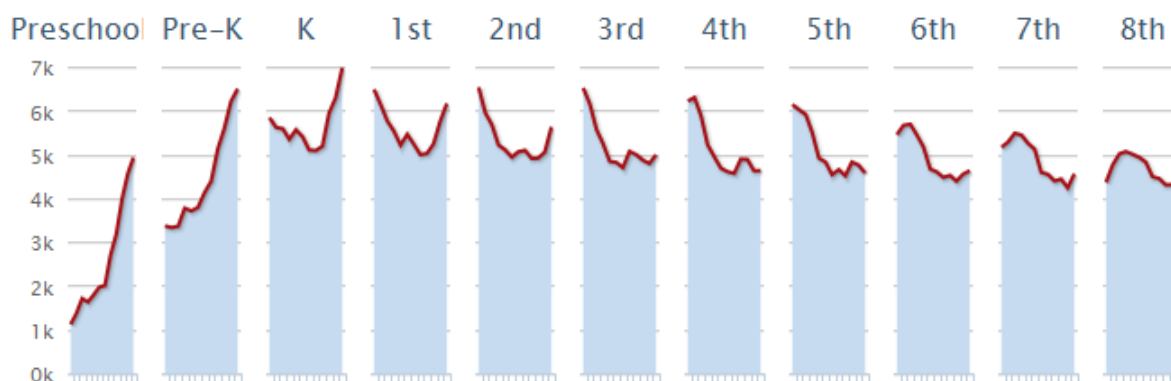


Chart Source: NeighborhoodInfo DC with data from OSSE

Along with expanding the number of early childhood seats, the District government has also sought to improve the quality of programs and to expand health services. The State Board of Education approved early learning standards in 2008, and OSSE adopted new regulations in 2010 defining components of a high-quality pre-kindergarten program. Mayor Gray subsequently announced the development of a new quality rating system and a kindergarten entrance assessment as part of a strategy for measuring the quality and impact of these programs; and, for the public charter sector, the PCSB recently piloted a Performance Management Framework (PMF) for measuring the quality of early learning programs (PCSB, 2012).

DCPS changed the use of Head Start funds to increase available seats and to expand Head Start-related services (vision, hearing, and dental screenings) in Title I schools. DCPS has also prioritized early identification for special education services, notably through the creation of its Early Stages Diagnostics Center. In addition, DCPS has adopted an early childhood curriculum (Tools of the Mind) and expanded the number of schools using a Montessori or Reggio Emilia child development model (DCPS, 2012).

The National Institute for Early Education Research has noted that DC has “a higher percentage of children enrolled at ages 3 and 4 and a higher expenditure per child than any of the states.” It also highlighted the district’s unique approach to expanding services by “aligning programs and funding that support preschool, pre-K, Head Start, and special education” (NIEER, 2012).

While the district has increased access and services to its youngest learners, some critics have noted that the program does not yet offer universal access. Ken Archer and David Alpert of Greater, Greater Washington, in a June 2012 commentary, questioned OSSE’s methodology for determining universal access. Specifically, they noted that the district’s use of “program utilization rates”—which report that most early childhood programs in district schools are at or near full capacity—do not necessarily indicate that all families seeking pre-K slots were able to obtain them during the enrollment lottery. They cited audits conducted by ChildTrends for the DC Auditor as evidence of increased but not

universal access to Pre-K programming. They also noted that Pre-K programming access depends on whether families receive seats to the potentially numerous school lotteries to which they've applied.

A number of research studies have found significant and positive associations of Pre-K participation with later student performance. A 2009 Brookings Institution review of 13 evaluations of pre-school programs in the 1980s and 1990s and 3 recent research studies using more rigorous research designs on state Pre-K programs found "good evidence that state pre-K programs have positive impacts on children's cognitive skills, including both pre-reading and pre-math skills" though the magnitude of effects varied across studies from "quite large" to "smaller impacts" (Isaacs, 2009).

Changes in State Standards

Policymakers in the District of Columbia have set standards reflecting changed beliefs about what students should know and be able to do to be college and career ready. DC now requires students to pursue Common Core State Standards, which are K-12 standards developed by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CCSSO).

Standards in DC had changed before, most recently two years before the enactment of PERAA. DC's previous state learning standards were adopted in April 2005, based on recommendations from five focus groups consisting of Board of Education members, education researchers, principals, teachers, and parents (OSSE, 2010). In School Year 2005-2006, DC changed its testing program, moving from the SAT-9 to the new DC-CAS in order to increase the level of rigor of the statewide assessment and to align it with the newly adopted state academic standards.

Under PERAA, the new State Board of Education used its authority to revamp learning standards once more through the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English/language arts (ELA) and mathematics in July 2010. The District's successful RTT application provided federal funding to support professional development and the alignment of curriculum and assessment with the new standards.

The CCSS emerged from a nationwide effort by state-based organizations. Concerns about the international competitiveness of U.S. educated workers in an increasingly global economy, questions about the quality and value of a high school diploma, and concerns about the preparedness of U.S. students for college and career prompted the NGA and the CCSSO to embark on a project to develop a set of optional, rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards in English Language Arts/literacy and mathematics. In 2009, the NGA, the CCSSO, and their partners began developing standards for kindergarten through grade 12. The CCSSO described these standards as "defining the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs," and added that they were:

- Aligned with college and work expectations
- Clear, understandable and consistent
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards
- Informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society
- Evidence- and research-based

Source: The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010

Achieve, Inc., one of the partner organizations, says that the CCSS “ensure comparability across states, districts, and schools, mitigating challenges with student and teacher mobility” and “will ensure that teachers teach and students learn the knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, including communication skills, perseverance in problem solving, technical reading and writing, literacy across disciplines, and the most important mathematical skills” (Achieve, 2012). In a recent 2013 survey of states conducted by the Center on Education Policy, all 40 responding states reported that the Common Core standards were more rigorous than their previous standards (CEP, 2013).

The federal Race to the Top (RTT) competition awarded points to states that adopted the CCSS, and the District of Columbia joined 45 states in doing so by the application deadline. The RTT application, coordinated by the office of the Deputy Mayor for Education and OSSE, secured the participation of a broad swath of the DC public and charter school sector, including 35 LEAs (nearly two-thirds of all LEAs, including charter LEAs as well as DCPS), 201 schools (87 percent), 5,800 teachers (90 percent), and 65,734 students (91 percent) (District of Columbia Race to the Top Phase II Application, 2010). As part of its RTT application, DC put forth a comprehensive state plan for implementing the Common Core.

Common Core Implementation

The US Department of Education’s yearly state reports on Race to the Top provide updates on how participating states and LEAs are implementing CCSS.

Overall, US ED found some early challenges in DC. The ED Year 1 report stated that “some LEAs have at times found the implementation of the CCSS unclear” and that “the District’s RTT team has struggled to coordinate efforts across the agency, leaving LEAs and other stakeholders unsure of which OSSE department to approach with concerns” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). ED noted that turnover at OSSE may have played a role in the delayed roll-out of CCSS, observing that all OSSE staff who had worked on the original application had left the agency. The ED report also noted that there were delays in OSSE’s roll out of the CCSS resource website.

Despite these delays, the second-year report indicated that the District of Columbia made progress on its implementation plan for providing professional development and aligning curriculum and assessments to the Common Core standards. Despite changes in OSSE

personnel and a change in mayoral administrations in the first months of the grant, ED determined that “all participating LEAs are currently implementing CCSS plans” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

- The ED Year 2 Report on Race to the Top implementation reported that the OSSE Race to the Top team has now been fully staffed and that Effectiveness managers have been hired to support work in implementing professional development plans and the work around supporting persistently low performing schools.
- ED also reported that OSSE has developed a system for monitoring the implementation of CCSS “through onsite visits, desk-top monitoring, and collection of annual deliverables.”
- The US ED Report on Year 2 noted that participating LEAs have followed through with their professional development plans to support teachers, highlighting that “LEAs developed and provided more than 70 professional development opportunities, including targeted PD for educators teaching special education and second language learners.”
- ED also described the technical assistance provided by OSSE to DCPS and the charter LEAs participating in RTT, which includes district-wide professional development; a CCSS resource website containing lesson plans, unit plans, and video samples; and a Standards Entry Points Differentiated Learning Manual that provides a number of resources intended to support teachers in differentiating instruction for students with disabilities.

Although research on Common Core implementation is still developing, early surveys place the district, and in particular DCPS, as one of the more aggressive implementers of Common Core. DCPS has developed comprehensive K-12 curricula in math and English Languages Arts to support teachers in translating the standards into classroom practice. The professional development structure in DCPS has also shifted toward integrating scope and sequence curriculum documents into daily instruction. (While ED noted that charter LEAs are implementing their stated plans, public information on how charter LEAs are supporting the transition from standards to instruction has been limited.) Unlike some states, in which political arguments on federalism have slowed or halted participation in Common Core, there has been significant support for the standards from DC political leaders, DCPS, PCSB, and the Washington Teachers Union (WTU).

OSSE developed a task force focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in December 2010, another area in which the RTT application had set ambitious academic plans for standards-based education. The task force partnered with local higher education institutions and business and industry groups to identify STEM priorities and develop a vision for supporting STEM education in the District. However, the ED Year 2 report indicated that participating LEAs had not progressed beyond these activities, and that the District was not on pace to meet its STEM-related implementation plans. DCPS Chief of Teaching and Learning Brian Pick explains that major curricular changes in science will follow the spring 2013 release of the Next Generation Science Standards (Interview, August 2013).

Aligning Assessments to Common Core

One of the primary mechanisms available to OSSE for influencing the academic experience of students is through the selection of assessments. While curricular alignment is left in the hands of the participating LEAs, OSSE has revised the DC-CAS and adopted paced interim assessments aligned to CCSS, with further changes expected as assessments are released by the nationwide interstate consortia (PARCC and Smarter Balanced). OSSE reported that “DC-CAS will align 100 percent with the CCSS in ELA in 2012 and mathematics in 2013.” ED reported that OSSE approved a set of vendors to provide interim assessments aligned with Common Core standards, that all LEAs participating in RTT selected an approved vendor, and that all participating LEAs are implementing CCSS-aligned interim assessments. OSSE also intends to incorporate writing and science assessments as part of the district’s accountability plan. In June 2013, OSSE piloted the Common Core writing assessment with 1350 8th graders in 16 DCPS and 9 charter schools (Wexler, 2013). Science performance is expected to be part of the district accountability system in June 2014 (OSSE, 2012). While other states (GA, PA, AL, OK, and UT) have dropped out of the Common Core assessment consortia due to concerns on costs and lack of technology infrastructure (Simon, 2013), OSSE has aligned the ELA and Math DC-CAS to the Common Core standards, has adopted CCSS-aligned interim assessments, has begun piloting Common Core writing assessments in June 2013, and is considered by US ED to be on track to meet assessment benchmarks.

Other District-Wide Standards Adoptions

The State Board of Education has also prioritized knowledge of science, the arts, world languages, and personal health.

- The Board, for the first time, approved standards and outlined expectations for arts education and world languages in 2008.
- It approved the inclusion of biology as a graduation requirement in 2009.
- It revised health and physical education standards in 2007 and then adopted comprehensive health standards, including an extensive sexual education program, in 2010. DC schools administered their first standardized assessment on sexual education in SY12-13.

The DC Council also passed the Healthy Schools Act of 2010 that mandated 30 minutes of physical education and 15 minutes of health education per week for kindergarten to Grade 5. Schools are mandated to provide 45 minutes of physical education and 15 minutes of health education to students in grade 6 through 8.

Standards Changes That Were Considered But Not Adopted

In SY2012-2013, the traditional public and charter sectors collaborated with advocacy groups in pushing back against graduation requirements proposed by the State Board of Education, an action that highlighted tensions around institutional authority that PERAA had left unaddressed. In 2012, the State Board of Education recommended changes to high school graduation requirements to increase the rigor of a high school diploma in DC. These changes included reducing social studies requirements by one credit and elective requirements by half a credit; increasing visual and performing arts requirements by one credit and physical education requirements by half a credit; requiring two units designated as “College Level or Career Prep”; changing the total number of required credits from 24 to 26; and adding a thesis or culminating project.

DC’s Children’s Law Center and the Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals, and Educators (SHAPPE) submitted concerns regarding the changes during the public comment period. Concerns included the need for procedural safeguards for waivers and denial of graduation; impact on homeless and transient students; lack of alignment with Maryland and Virginia graduation requirements; lack of policy on the transfer of credits; lack of “time of residency” requirements, giving transfer students time to earn a diploma; and the reduction in social studies credit hours.

DCPS and the seven largest charter LEAs also expressed concerns about the changes in the graduation requirements in a joint letter to the State Board of Education. They asked for a move away from the antiquated Carnegie unit as a measure of credits accumulated; clarification on the Algebra I requirement, increased flexibility for social studies requirements; and clarification on the foreign language requirement. They also noted that the increase in the number of credit would reduce academic rigor and require uniform high school scheduling, as well as affecting facilities and funding. Finally, they were concerned about the physical activity and thesis requirements.

New graduation requirements have not been finalized, and no changes were put in place for the 2013-14 school year.

Initiatives and Progress in Career and Technical Education

The restructuring of education administration within DC after PERAA led to the establishment of the State Office of Career and Technical Education in October 2007 (DC State Office of CTE, 2008). DC has substantially expanded its Career and Technical Education offerings. By 2012-2013, students could choose from 13 clusters of study offered by DCPS, 8 charter LEAs and the UDC community college, compared with 12 clusters provided by DCPS, 4 charter LEAs and the UDC-CC in 2007-2008; . The number of students participating increased over the years as well: 2,866 students were enrolled in CTE programs in 2008-2009, but in the 2012-2013 school year, 7,588 students completed two or more courses as part of a CTE sequence of courses.

In October 2012, the DC Council passed legislation requiring that the mayor establish a task force to develop a citywide strategic plan for career and technical education programs. The District Career and Technical Education Task Force included representatives from OSSE, DCPS, DME, PCSB, UDC, the Office of the Chairman of the Council's Committee on Economic Development and Housing, the Office of the Council's Committee on Jobs and Workforce, and the DC Workforce Investment Council. In December 2012, the committee submitted recommendations to align programs of study with the district's most promising occupations; establish rigorous CTE program quality requirements; increase CTE student concentration and completion rates; implement a pilot CTE transfer program; afford flexibility in hiring, scheduling and compensating CTE faculty; reengage disconnected youth through CTE; and support and incentivize CTE course offerings for adult district residents (The District Career and Technical Education Task Force, 2012). These build on the city's progress towards goals from 2009 and other benchmarks, while expanding the scope of CTE work.

In June 2013, Mayor Vincent Gray described his vision for aligning career and technical education programs with the city's Five-Year Economic Development Strategy:

For students in high school and beyond, we are investing in strategies to ensure that our students are prepared to succeed in the District's high-demand, high-wage careers. As part of this work, the District's Career and Technical Education Task Force is implementing an ambitious effort to establish National Academy Foundation career academies within DCPS and charter high schools in high-demand fields, aligned closely with our Five-Year Economic Development Strategy. The research is clear: students who attend high-quality career academies have greater high school and college completion rates, employment rates, and career earning rates than their peers who have not.

Although DC as a whole weathered the Great Recession with a relatively low unemployment rate, some communities in the District have suffered from high unemployment. In October 2012 the overall unemployment rate in DC was 8.5 percent, but in Ward 7 it was 13.8 and in Ward 8, 20.9 percent (Department of Employment Services). The Five-Year Economic Development Strategy seeks to address the city's unemployment issues by aligning resident training with the needs of available jobs. For example, in 2008 the Washington Post reported construction jobs from the development boom in the District frequently went to non-residents because of insufficient training programs in construction trades in DC (Haynes, 2008).

In a five-year action plan developed in 2009, DCPS described the following goals around career and technical education. Progress toward the goals has reflected activity not just in DCPS but also in public charter schools and other city agencies. The goals—and progress observable as of 2013—are as follows:

- *"Align DCPS career and technical offerings to the D.C. Workforce Development plan and local labor market trends."* The Five-Year Economic Development Strategy includes

plans to align CTE courses with high-demand careers in the District. No changes in program offerings have taken place yet.

- *“Align curricula within each field around industry-approved skill standards and core academic standards, to ensure that students leave prepared for both workforce and postsecondary success.”* In 2012-2013, programs in the District included career and technical courses in 13 clusters of study: arts, media and communication; biotechnology and environmental science; business, finance, and marketing; construction and design; engineering; health and medical sciences; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology; law, public safety, and security; mortuary sciences; and transportation. They included offerings from DCPS, 8 charter LEAs, and the University of the District of Columbia’s community college. All of these institutions provided opportunities for dual-enrollment for at least some of the CTE programming offerings.

In 2011, DCPS contracted with Meeder Consulting to create a set of standards and curriculum resources aligned with industry standards and college readiness skills. Meeder Consulting provided training to CTE teachers across the district on how to implement these standards.

- *“Ensure that Career Pathways coursework leads to national, industry approved certification or licensure.”* In 2012, the District Career and Technical Education Task Force laid out plans to reorganize CTE offerings in DC according to the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium’s career clusters in order to align with national best practices for CTE offerings (The District Career and Technical Education Task Force, 2012).
- *“Work with college and university partners to provide Career Pathways students with articulation certifications that guarantee college credit for Career Pathways coursework.”* In 2011-12, OSSE’s CTE office created a guidance document for each approved CTE program of study. The office developed a monitoring tool to be implemented during the 2012-13 school year.
- *“Increase student enrollment and parent involvement in Career Pathways programming by conducting outreach through a system-wide career day, middle school career fairs, monthly high school Career Academy open houses, and industry partner-sponsored parent workshops.”* In the 2010-2011 school year, approximately 6,400 public and charter high school students were enrolled in CTE programs (The District Career and Technical Education Task Force, 2012). This represents substantial growth from the 2,866 participants in the 2007-2008 school year (OSSE Five Year State Plan for Career and Technical Education). In 2012-2013, OSSE worked to increase the number of high school students participating in existing CTE programs. OSSE also developed CTE programs that aligned with secondary and post-secondary requirements to help students accumulate credits towards associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees, and certification; and OSSE established IT academies for high school students to increase digital literacy.

DC education agencies increased their outreach to improve college and career awareness. In 2012-13, OSSE implemented a college awareness program for Latino students and parents. They also conducted a series of workshops at high schools about financial aid and college selection.

- *“Provide career and technical education offerings at a wide range of high schools, including both comprehensive high schools and citywide selective high schools.”* Eighteen DCPS high schools offered at least one CTE program in 2012, in addition to the eight charter LEAs and UDC. As of 2013, DCPS has seven specialized citywide high schools and two Schools to Aid Youth (STAY). Students may also apply to CTE programs at out-of-boundary neighborhood schools if the program is not available at their school.

The 2013 DCPS consolidation and reorganization plan includes the closure of the Spingarn STAY senior high school, an alternative school for students who have dropped out. The school will be reopened as a CTE center focused on careers in transportation.

- *“Establish a parent advisory board to solicit feedback on Career Pathways strategic planning and to draft a Parent Handbook on Career Pathways offerings.”* DCPS created the Succeed DC guide to career and technical programs for students and parents to learn about available options within the district. Parent resources about career and technical education are also available on the DCPS website, in the IGP web portal, and in the general DCPS Parent Handbook.

Current Issues Around School Options and Student Mobility

Continued support for school choice and the expansion of the public charter sector mean that for a growing number of students, the basket of educational experiences is provided in part by DCPS and in part by public charter schools. Policy and management decisions with respect to issues of school closure, school quality, and student mobility take on added complexity in this mixed system. At the same time, instances of collaboration and cross-fertilization across sectors are arising and potentially enriching education offerings in DC.

In January 2012, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) released the report *Quality Schools: Every Child, Every School, Every Neighborhood* (IFF, 2012) conducted by the firm IFF. The purpose was to examine the capacity of DCPS and public charter schools relative to the number of students in DC to inform potential decisions on school closures and new starts. To do this, the report ranked all DCPS and public charter schools and placed each of them in one of four tiers based on students' performance on the DC-CAS from 2007 to 2011. It then measured the “performance gap,” which it defined as the difference between the number of seats available in Tier I schools (the top quartile of schools) and the population of students in each neighborhood, and identified the 10 neighborhood clusters with the largest performance gaps.

Based on this analysis, the report recommended that within the 10 neighborhood clusters with the biggest performance gaps, DCPS and PCSB take the following four steps: 1) Invest

in facilities and programs to accelerate; performance in Tier 2 schools. 2) Close or turnaround Tier 4 DCPS schools. Close Tier 4 charter schools. 3) Fill seats in Tier 1 schools. Sustain the performing capacity of Tier 1 schools. 4) Monitor Tier 3 schools.

Upon release of the report, critics charged that the methodology was flawed. One methodological criticism was that the report failed to use longitudinal data on student performance, but rather relied on cross-sectional data and therefore failed to take into account factors affecting school performance such as demographic changes in a neighborhood (Di Carlo, 2012; Glazerman, 2012). Another was that the report conflated current “seats” in high-performing schools with the potential performance of students who would move into those schools from low-performing schools—despite the paucity of evidence that either student transfers or school closure and replacement have resulted in wide-scale performance improvement in other cities (Siegel & Filardo, 2012).

Student mobility has been a pressing issue for policy and practice in DC. In February 12, 2013 OSSE released the first District of Columbia study on student movement in and out of district schools and between DCPS and PCS (OSSE, 2013). According to the study, during the 2011-2012 school year approximately 5,200 students entered and approximately 6,800 exited DCPS and PCS schools, without reentering, for a total of approximately 12,000 students entering and exiting during the school year. During the same time period, approximately 1,900 students moved from PCS to DCPS, while approximately 3,200 students moved from DCPS to PCS. The study did not examine the movement of students between schools within DCPS or within PCS during the school year.

The entrance and exit of 12,000 students from DCPS and PCS and the movement of an additional 5,100 students between DCPS and PCS is significant for a system that has a little over 73,000 students. DCPS Chancellor Kaya Henderson called the study “a good first step and an important conversation about student mobility within the District of Columbia... [which] demonstrates very clearly our need for citywide coordination on education to better support all our students and our schools” (OSSE, 2013). Scott Pearson, executive director of the D.C. Public Charter School Board, said in reaction to the study: “The level of mobility in this city is far higher than I think any of us imagined.... We need to understand better who those students are and why they’re moving” (Brown, 2013).

Research indicates that students who move between schools frequently, defined as four or more times between kindergarten and high school, are at greater risk for academic failure and that high rates of mobility tend to be concentrated at low performing schools (Buckner, 2008; Buckner, 2012; Cunningham & MacDonald, 2012; Rafferty, Shinn, & Weitzman, 2004). The cumulative effects of high rates of student mobility at individual schools can disrupt established classroom routines and procedures, so that even those students at the schools who do not move frequently are less likely to do well academically than their peers in schools with lower rates of overall school mobility (Buckner, 2012; Community Research Partners & Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2012). However, this research does not examine the reasons for students switching schools and does not distinguish between students who are forced to switch schools because of family issues such as homelessness and students who switch schools for more positive reasons, like the desire to attend a different school.

A better understanding of which students are moving and why will help officials better define the extent of the problem and target resources toward addressing it. When movement between schools is unavoidable or even desirable, facilitating the smooth transfer of students' records between schools, between sectors, and between districts can help facilitate students' entrance into a new school mid-year.

Meanwhile, data on the waitlists for entry into high-performing schools provide insight into family preferences and the geographic distribution of the desired opportunities (Exhibits AP2 and AP3).

Exhibit AP2: PCSB Waitlist Data as of July 31, 2013 (Not all schools submitted waitlist data)

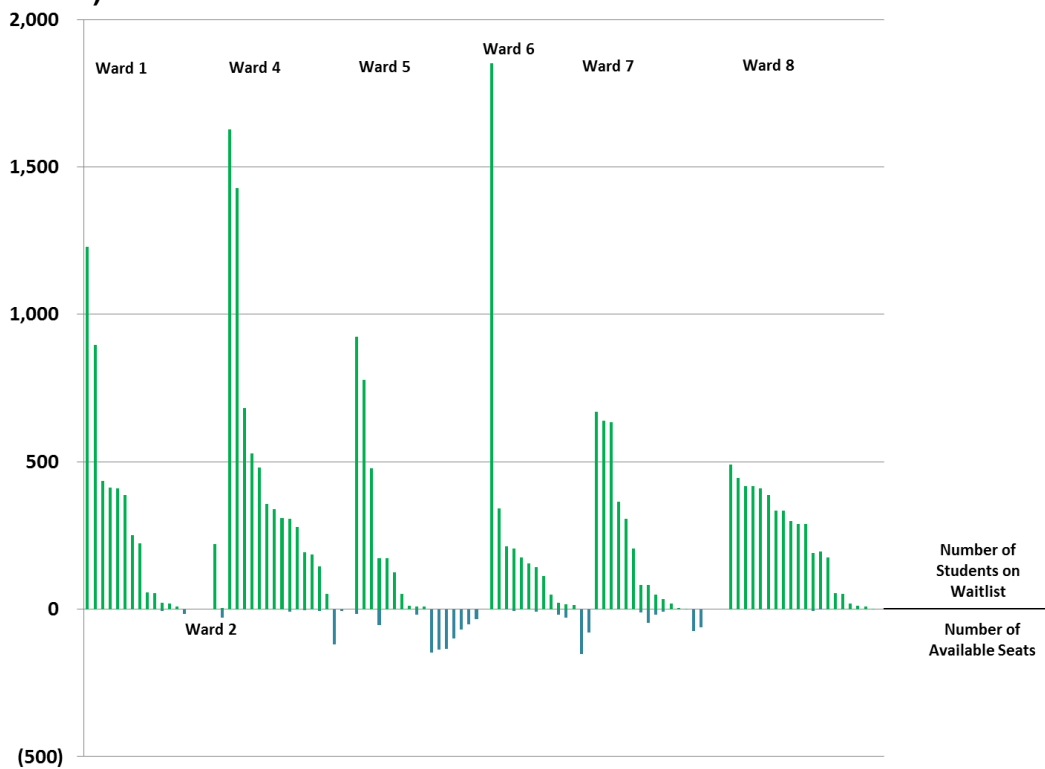
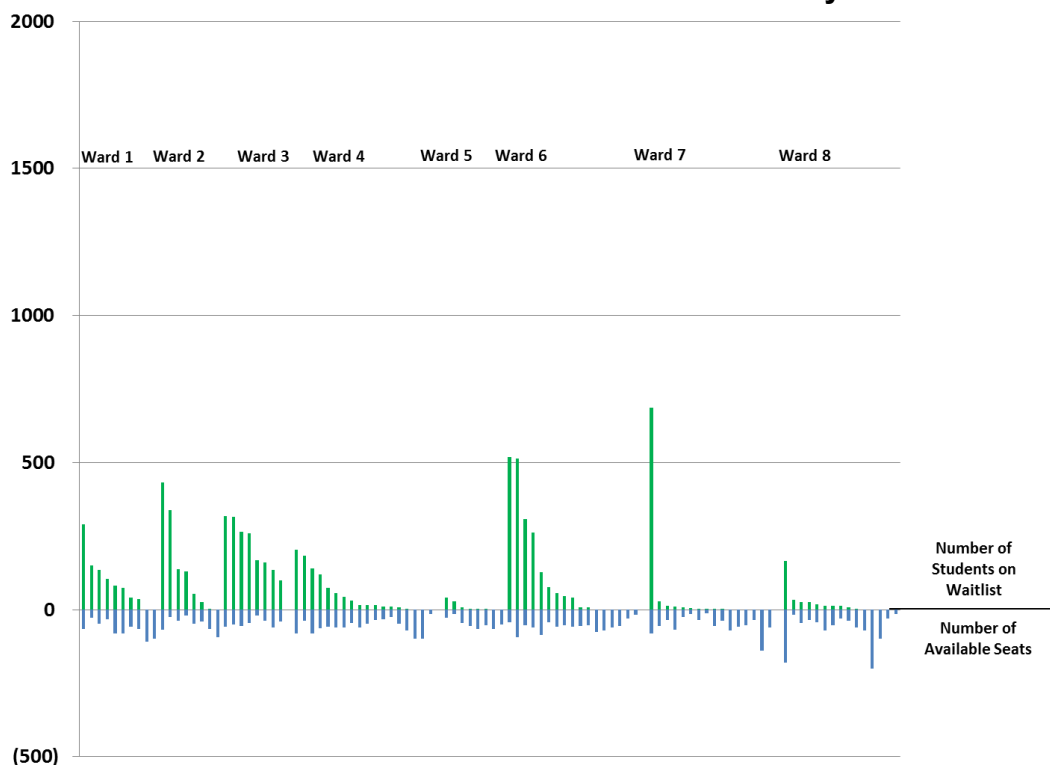


Exhibit AP3: DCPS SY2013-2014 School Lottery Results



Efforts are under way to ease the logistical burdens of the lottery process. Rather than each charter LEA conducting its own lottery at a date of its choosing, charter LEAs in SY2012-2013 agreed to adopt a common application and participate in a shared lottery. Mayor Vincent Gray and Chairman of the Council Education Committee David Catania have both proposed plans to further simplify the process for families by combining the DCPS and public charter lotteries.

The Mayor has also initiated plans to make school comparisons easier. Currently, DCPS and PCSB have different formats for their school profiles. The program characteristics listed are different, and the reported school performance data are not directly comparable. Mayor Gray gave a speech titled *Next Steps in Education Reform* on June 20, 2013, in which he spoke of “report cards and school profiles for all schools—charter and traditional public schools alike—that will include the same information such as enrollment, graduation rates, and other things that parents need to know in order to make informed choices” (Executive Office of the Mayor, 2013).

The Mayor has asked educational leaders to develop an enrollment platform that allows schools to be more easily compared and tasked OSSE to create a common school report card. As part of the development of this report card, OSSE surveyed the public online and held a focus group on June 6, 2013 to gather input on the type of information to include in the report card (Office of State Superintendent of Education, n.d.).

A 2013 DCPS consolidation plan renewed discussions about the value of small schools, the desire for walkable, neighborhood schools, and the role that public charter sector has played in the DCPS school closure process. Chancellor Henderson, in a radio interview on WAMU, suggested that greater coordination between sectors on campus expansion and location would support a more efficient use of city resources. In particular, she cited that when Terrell and McGogney Elementary Schools consolidated in 2008, an elementary charter school moved across the street and that the school was unable to sustain enrollment due to competition. She commented that better coordination and communication might have led that area to be served by a middle school or a specialized charter school. PCSB Chair Scott Pearson expressed interest in greater collaboration but stated that he was “not interested in joint planning as a cover for a moratorium on charters.” The lack of coordination about the best use for the vacant building represents another aspect of the tension between DCPS and charter schools with regard to school building usage, as discussed in Section I of this report.

With respect to academic plans for the classroom, the relationship between DCPS and the public charter sector is one of increasing collaboration. DCPS Chief of Teaching and Learning Brian Pick says that charter school partners have been helpful in thinking through the transition to Common Core, particularly in exploring ideas for the shift in assessments (Interview, August 2013). Following up on their joint work in developing a successful Race to the Top application, DCPS and charter LEAs have begun collaborating on ways to improve instruction.

Ten charter schools and ten DCPS schools are participating in a Common Core consortium using the lesson study approach to instructional improvement. The E.L Haynes Public Charter School’s website notes that the consortium “will create an online library of 350 Common Core Standard video lessons in math and reading, adopt the internationally-recognized technique of lesson study to develop content, and share best practices via innovative technology and a biannual lesson study film festival.” An official of a charter LEA participating in the consortium commented that it has “done really well,” in large part because it is “about teachers of the same discipline coming together in small groups to work on their practice” (Interview, Richard Pohlman, August 2013). Mr. Pohlman noted that the consortium allows peers from both sectors to work together with both an experienced instructional coach and a content-area expert. Teachers in the lesson study process are expected to develop and refine a small set of well-designed and student-tested lessons to share.

Beyond the Common Core consortium, DCPS Chief Brian Pick stated that “a number of charters have been helpful on identifying curricular programs, interventions, and enrichments that have proven successful at their sites, particularly on the blended learning side.... We can learn from each other—a number of programs have traveled in both directions based on their success in DC schools with DC students” (Interview, August 2013)

In addition to programmatic collaboration, DCPS and Achievement Prep Public Charter School decided in May 2013 to create a new partnership in Malcolm X Elementary school. Beyond sharing buildings, the Mayor described this collaboration as “a model where the

two schools are fully integrated, taking the strength of a neighborhood school and combining it with the innovation of a successful charter school.”

Chancellor Henderson has requested chartering authority, saying in a radio interview that the district has “learned a lot from 16 years of charters” (WAMU, 2013). She added that she has been unable to get charter management organizations offering innovative instructional strategies to lead district schools, because regulations limit their ability to implement their model. For example, although the high-performing Achievement Prep has expressed interest in managing operations in Malcolm X, it cannot have the autonomy it needs to implement the model it has successfully executed in charter schools. Chancellor Henderson also stated that she wanted to give high-performing principals “the ability to manage budget more freely because municipal regulations dictate some things that we can and can’t do,” adding that, “my people are spending time on compliance issues” (WAMU, 2013).

Thus we see that the traditional public schools and public charter schools in the District of Columbia have a working relationship on several matters related to academic plans. In some cases, citywide initiatives have impelled similar changes in both sectors: both sectors have enlarged their offerings in early childhood education and pre-kindergarten; both DCPS and most charter LEAs are moving to implement the Common Core State Standards as part of their RTT commitment; and DCPS and the PCSB may move toward a common format for school report cards. Cross-sector collaboration is visible at the school level, too, among practitioners working together to share lessons. At the same time, issues of resources—both funding and facilities—continue to be sources of tension between the sectors, and student mobility poses vexing challenges for both sectors.

Having discussed initiatives and challenges that cut across sectors, we turn next to academic plans and their implementation within DCPS in the years since PERAA enactment.

Academic Plans in DCPS: Major Planning Documents and Implementation Efforts

Four key documents have spelled out academic plans for DCPS, with varying emphases over the years: the 2009 Effective Schools Framework, the 2010 Teaching and Learning Framework, the 2011 Three-Year Academic Plan, and the 2012 statement of performance goals, A Capital Commitment. A common thread across them, despite their differences, has been the urgency of bringing more schools and classrooms to a higher level of academic quality.

Through various public forums, Chancellor Henderson has spoken about the conditions of the school system prior to the enactment of PERAA. Chancellor Henderson described a school system with major problems at the core of its enterprise—teaching and learning—which she summarized in a July 31, 2013 radio interview:

Before we made any choices, the first thing we did in 2007 was sit down and listen...[We] had more than 150 meetings with teachers, Now we didn't hit

every one of the 4100. But we listened to teachers, and what teachers were saying to us is: We don't know what we're supposed to be doing. Our principal is holding us accountable for one thing. The textbook is saying, teach this. The interim assessments are testing something different, and we have things that we want to teach. So we just want to know what your expectations are. We want to know what good teaching and learning and what you want us to be doing. And that's what led us to create the Teaching and Learning Framework and IMPACT, so that we could immediately show people where they were against that.

DCPS Chief of Teaching and Learning Brian Pick similarly described a heterogeneous education system in which “this school or that school or even this classroom or that classroom was doing something really different” (Interview, August 2013). In addition to launching a human capital strategy focused on teachers and principals (to be examined in greater detail in a future EdCore report), DCPS officials began to address some of the wide inconsistencies in instruction and curriculum by 1) setting expectations for schools and classroom instruction through the Effective Schools Framework, 2) defining the processes for curriculum design, assessment, instruction, and professional development through the Teaching and Learning Framework, and 3) identifying and developing instructional and curricular resources for teachers through the 2011 Academic Plan.

A Capital Commitment is a brief document, issued in 2012, that formally sets out the following five-year performance goals for DCPS:

- By 2017, at least 70 percent of students will be proficient in reading and math and the number of students achieving “advanced” status on their end of year assessments will double from the 2012 rates
- The proficiency rates in the 40 lowest performing schools will increase by 40 percentage points
- The 4-year graduation rate will increase from 53 percent to 75 percent
- Ninety percent of students will report liking their school
- Enrollment will rise over the next 5 years

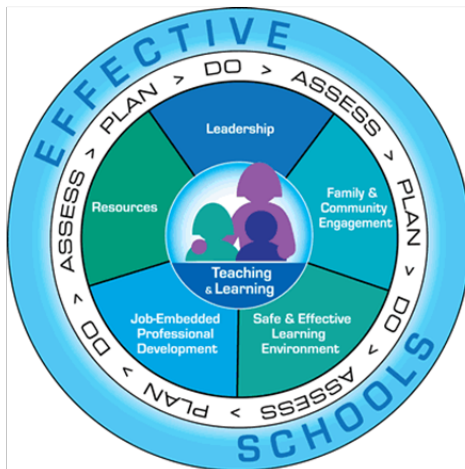
Each of the earlier documents was intended to lay a foundation for major improvements in DCPS classrooms, and each has embraced a somewhat different set of policy instruments for bringing about those improvements (Exhibit AP4). We discuss the evolution of academic plans in DCPS, along with related implementation activities and issues, in this subsection of the report.

Exhibit AP4: Setting a Vision for Instruction, Curriculum, and Outcomes

Effective Schools Framework

- Defined high quality instruction as being tailored to the needs of students
- Set a process for instructional improvement
- Defined administrators as instructional leaders
- Defined job-embedded professional development as a foundational support for teachers
- Opened classrooms for increased observations
- Integrated data use/assessments cycles into school schedules and classroom practice

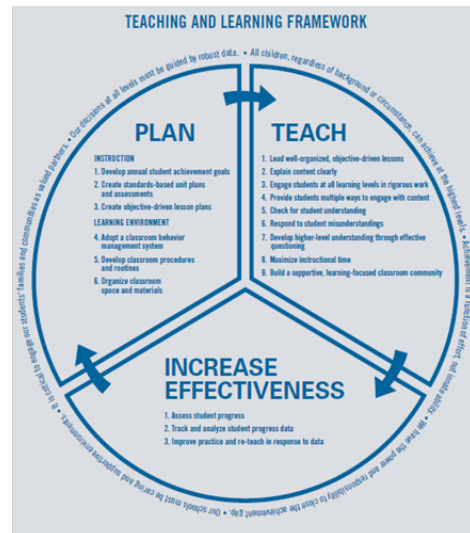
Expectations for Schools



Teaching and Learning Framework

- Outlined expectations for teaching and learning in greater detail
- Serves as core component of teacher evaluation system (DC IMPACT). Teachers observed at least 5 times during year using TLF
- Accompanied with curriculum materials

Expectations for Instruction



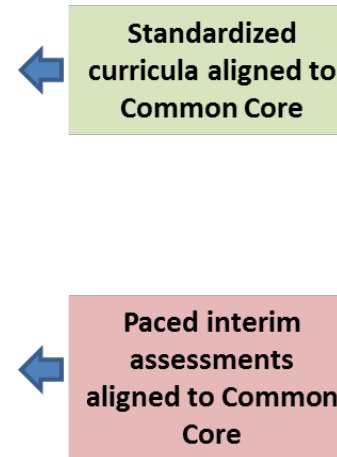
DCPS Academic Plan

- Addressed curricular and assessment misalignments
- Described three-year implementation plan for Common Core adoption
- Described development of standardized curricula in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Writing
- Outlined adoption for paced interim assessments aligned to Common Core standards

A Capital Commitment

- Set specific five-year goals for DCPS

Curriculum and Assessment Supports



Outcomes

- At least 70% proficiency rates in reading and math
- Double number of advanced students
- Increase proficiency rates of lowest 40 performing schools by 40 percentage points
- Increase 4-year graduation rates from 53% to 75%
- 90% of students will report liking school
- Enrollment increase over 5 years

Effective Schools Framework

DCPS sought to build a common language around instruction by developing the Effective Schools Framework. Released in 2009, this framework outlined expectations for schools, defined administrators as instructional leaders, and formalized a process for improving instruction through data use and site-based professional development.

The framework's vision for instruction emphasized 1) close alignment among content standards, assessments, and instructional strategies and 2) differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of both struggling and advanced students. It also set a goal of integrating special education students with their non-disabled peers.

The framework put process tools at the forefront of its vision. It introduced the Plan, Do, Study, and Act inquiry cycle that placed lesson planning, assessment, and instructional coaching in central roles in teachers' daily practice. The inquiry cycle was expected to be applied in "backward design" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2001), a process that DCPS Chief of Teaching and Learning Brian Pick describes as central to teaching and learning (Interview, August 2013). Backward design requires teachers to set "big year-end anchor goals" defining the skills and knowledge a student is expected to learn for the year, then moving backward through the steps of 1) setting specific standards for knowledge and skills, 2) developing a high-quality assessment for measuring student mastery of each standard, and 3) developing units and planning instruction "so that students are successful in that assessment." Data use and assessment of student performance are then expected to inform reteaching and development of the next set of instructional units and lesson plans.

In broad terms, the framework defined how instruction should look in classrooms and how administrators and staff should work to improve it. The release of the framework coincided with the hiring of 173 site-based instructional coaches in 2008-2009. While the Effective Schools framework described expectations for instructional practice, it was not a prescribed curriculum.

Teaching and Learning Framework

In 2009, DCPS launched its Teaching and Learning Framework (TLF). Designed as a part of the IMPACT evaluation system, this framework builds on the Effective Schools Framework and lays out expectations for teachers in greater detail. The TLF is intended to create a common language for teachers, administrators and other district staff to discuss instructional practices and other teacher actions. It also structures the observations for the IMPACT system.

The framework includes 18 components in three areas: planning, teaching, and increasing effectiveness. It was designed to be content neutral so that it applies to the work of all teachers. It draws on ten different evaluation frameworks, including Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teachers*, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the New Teacher Center's Developmental Continuum, Martin Haberman's *Star Teachers*, and the evaluation frameworks from six states. Designers also used a variety of other resources on

instructional practice to inform the framework. After one year of implementation, the school district modified the framework based on feedback from teachers, principals, and other district staff. Subsequent annual updates have made only minor changes in the framework.

Beginning to Set “Guard Rails” for Instruction

After setting expectations for instruction, providing training on instructional planning, and developing a teacher evaluation system, DCPS academic plans evolved further in the direction of identifying or developing curricular resources for teachers. According to Brian Pick, DCPS chose a middle ground between teacher autonomy and a scripted curriculum (Interview, August 2013). With autonomy, teachers would have continued to receive training in instructional design and could potentially have learned from the intensive work of analyzing standards, developing assessments, planning instruction, examining data, and reflecting on their practice. However, this process was time-intensive and in some cases, unsustainable, leading to “teacher burnout.” Alternatively, DCPS could have chosen to work toward faithful implementation of prescribed lesson plans. Instead, DCPS has chosen to combine optional curriculum resources with strong unit assessments occurring every 6 to 7 weeks. This principle of combining optional curriculum resources with mandated interim assessments has served as the DCPS model for instructional support before and after adoption of Common Core standards.

A first step was the development and dissemination of resource guides to accompany the Teaching and Learning Framework. The resource guides provided advice and templates on creating standards-based lesson plans; on designing unit and formative assessments; and on pacing, student grouping, and adapting instruction to students’ learning styles. They modeled lesson plans for various grade levels and subject areas that would align with the framework.

While the curricular resources provided to teachers were optional, the district was more prescriptive in two respects. In order to address students’ low literacy skills, the central office revamped literacy programs and mandated the adoption of phonics instruction. It also required the adoption of interim assessments. Chancellor Henderson, in a 2011 public forum, described her rationale for increased guidance on curriculum coupled with tighter mandates on assessments:

We are currently rolling out an academic plan. One of the things we are talking about is do we want everyone [adopting these curriculum resources]? Some people doing this? What does autonomy mean? Is it earned? Is it not earned? So I sit down with my instructional superintendents who manage my principals and we discuss our options. Choose A): if you want everybody to do this. B) if you want people to be able to petition their way out of doing this. C) if you want these to just be guidelines and people can either deal with it or not; or D) if you're good with letting everybody do what they want to do.

So my instructional superintendents all speak. What do they want? Option. A – command and control. Why? Because that makes it easier for them to manage. Fundamentally I am a D. But I chose C – I want to say these are the guard rails, and we need to set up accountability benchmarks that help us understand how people are progressing. The truth of the matter is I don't care if people use our stuff or not as long as you get there and are able to demonstrate results.
-Chancellor Henderson – NewSchools Summit forum 2011

DCPS Academic Plan and Common Core

In SY2010-2011, Chancellor Henderson formalized a new strategy through her announcement of a three-year Academic Plan. Dovetailing with the release of the Common Core standards and the Race to the Top award, the plan outlined an aggressive timeline for Common Core implementation, including professional development, curriculum development for English language arts, mathematics, and writing, and adoption of paced interim assessments aligned to the Common Core standards.

In a 2012 radio interview, Chancellor Henderson described this new reform step as a pivot in focus from “how to teach” to a focus on “what to teach and when” (WAMU, 2012). As Chief of Teaching and Learning Brian Pick has noted, “the idea is to provide a wealth of resources in a central location to help teachers know what to teach every day, so they don’t have to go home and Google a topic to figure out how to teach it” (quoted in ERS, 2013).

The transition to Common Core consisted of three major parts: the shift of interim assessments to include Common Core-aligned items, development of the district’s first standardized curriculum in core subject areas, and adaptation of professional development to support Common Core instruction.

The DCPS Academic Plan outlined an aggressive plan for developing curriculum aligned to the Common Core. The district developed a comprehensive K-12 English Language Arts curriculum in SY2011-2012; began implementing math CCSS standards for early grades (K-2) in SY2011-2012; and developed a comprehensive K-12 math curriculum in SY2012-2013. Scope and sequence documents including curriculum units and exemplar lessons have been developed for social studies, world languages, art, music, health, and PE. DCPS intends to target Common Core writing for SY2013-14, and science curriculum will be aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (Interview with Brian Pick, August 2013).

Since 2012 DCPS has sought to focus the work of instructional coaches and administrators on supporting Common Core implementation in schools. School-based professional development has centered on “learning cycles,” each consisting of a 5-6 week experience for a cohort of teachers in which they work with their instructional coach on a specific Common Core unit or standard. Teachers may focus on topics and instructional skills such as “how to plan questions during guided reading,” “how to use application and modeling in

math,” or “how to teach vocabulary.” They are expected to gain deeper understanding of the standard, the subject area, or the instructional skill by co-teaching, co-planning, modeling lessons, and giving feedback to other members of their cohort. Learning cycles also provide feedback on how students are engaging with the academic content and Common Core curriculum (Interview with Brian Pick, August 2013).

In addition to the learning cycles, DCPS has described in its annual performance accountability reports the following activities:

- In SY2010-2011, DCPS provided 20 mandatory districtwide professional development days on the Teaching and Learning Framework, DC IMPACT, and CCSS; and 10 hours of CCSS training to teachers and 16 hours to school leaders in SY 2010-2011.
- In SY2011-2012, DCPS provided approximately 20 hours of teacher professional development focused on the implementation of the Common Core ELA. DCPS implemented 4 Collaborative and Individual Learning Cycles designed to improve teaching and student learning, with over 900 teachers participating in each cycle.
- In SY2012-2013, DCPS launched an individualized PD Platform, which provides thousands of curriculum resources and videos of CCSS-aligned instruction.

Comparison with Other Districts and States

Recent national data suggest that DCPS is one of the most aggressive implementers of Common Core, in comparisons at the district or state level:

- While most states and districts are phasing in Common Core beginning with the early grades, DC is adopting standards at all grades and setting a faster timeline for implementation
- While other states (GA, PA, AL, OK, and UT) have dropped out of the Common Core assessment consortia, citing concerns about costs and lack of technology infrastructure (Simon, 2013), DCPS has partnered with OSSE to align the ELA and Math DC-CAS to the Common Core standards, has adopted CCSS-aligned interim assessments, and began piloting Common Core writing assessments in June 2013

The executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) has commented that “the district has done [Common Core] more comprehensively than most places in the country” (Gewertz, 2013). Based on an October 2012 CGCS survey of member districts, to which 36 urban districts responded, DCPS has set a more ambitious timeline and has outpaced other districts’ progress in several respects (Exhibit AP5):

Exhibit AP5: District Progress on Common Core Implementation, Compared with CGCS Districts

Common Core Implementation Topic	Council of Great City Schools Districts (n=36)	DCPS Progress
English Language Arts	• 50 percent of CGCS survey respondents began implementing the English Language Arts & Literacy CCSS during SY 2011-2012 with another 44 percent planning to begin implementation during SY 2012-2013. • The majority of responding school districts have plans to revise their ELA curriculum in nearly all grade levels in SY2012-2013, with curriculum in grades K-3 most likely to be revised.	• DCPS began implementing ELA CCSS standards for <u>grades K-12 in SY2011-2012.</u> • DCPS developed an ELA curriculum for <u>grades K-12</u> in SY2011-2012.
Mathematics	• 51 percent began implementing math CCSS standards during SY 2011-2012 with another 40 percent planning to begin during SY2012-2013 • The majority of responding school districts have plans to revise their curriculum in Mathematics in nearly all grade levels in SY2012-2013 with curriculum in grades K-2 and 6-9 being most likely to be revised.	• DCPS began implementing Math CCSS standards for early grades <u>(K-2) in SY2011-2012</u>, expanding to <u>remaining grades in SY2012-2013</u> • DCPS developed a math curriculum for <u>grades K-12</u> in SY2012-2013.
CCSS-aligned assessments	• 29 percent of respondents reported that their district has developed interim assessments aligned with the CCSS. Another 55 percent of respondents were in the process of doing so in SY2012-2013.	• OSSE reports that it has aligned the <u>ELA DC-CAS to ELA Common Core Standards in SY2011-2012</u> and the <u>Math DC-CAS to Math Common Core Standards in SY2012-2013.</u> DCPS and 9 other charter LEAs also piloted Writing Common Core assessments in June 2013. • DCPS has adopted CCSS-aligned interim assessments
Curriculum materials, textbook purchases, and technology	• Approximately 41 percent of respondents have integrated Student Achievement Partners' "Publishers Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts & Literacy" into recent textbook purchasing opportunities. • 53 percent of respondents have not pursued any new textbook purchasing opportunities.	• For DCPS, <u>new, standardized curriculum</u> for ELA and math with plans to develop scope and sequence documents for writing in SY2013-2014. • DCPS also reports purchasing new books as well as making a significant investment in technology

Common Core Implementation Topic	Council of Great City Schools Districts (n=36)	DCPS Progress
Professional development	• 40 percent of respondents estimated that less than 40 percent of their school-level staff has sufficient knowledge about the CCSS to discuss the implications for classroom instruction. • The organizational structures that CGCS districts found most common in their schools needed to support the implementation of the CCSS included school-based instructional leadership teams, focused faculty meetings, and common planning time for teachers.	• DCPS has instructional coaches supporting Common Core implementation in schools • DCPS provided 20 mandatory district wide PD days on TLF, DC IMPACT, and Common Core and 10 hours of CCSS training to teachers and 16 hours to school leaders in SY 2010-2011 • In SY2011-2012, DCPS provided approximately 20 hours of teacher professional development focused on the implementation of the Common Core ELA. DCPS implemented 4 Collaborative and Individual Learning Cycles designed to improve teaching and student learning with over 900 teachers participating in each cycle. • In SY12-13, DCPS launched individualized PD Platform, which provides thousands of curriculum resources and videos of CCSS-aligned instruction.

Comparisons at the state level, similarly, show that the District of Columbia has implemented a Common Core aligned curriculum in math and ELA earlier and at more grade levels than other states. As part of a series of studies examining Common Core implementation, the Center on Education Policy at the George Washington University surveyed state deputy superintendents or designees from February through May 2013. Only 12 of the 40 state respondents reported implementing a CCSS-aligned ELA curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12 in SY2012-2013 or earlier, and only 9 reported implementing a CCSS-aligned K-12 math curriculum in SY2012-2013 or earlier.

Implementation of Common Core in DCPS

In 2013, DCPS allowed *Education Week* significant access to schools for a four-part series on how DCPS was supporting implementation of Common Core. The series provided a nuanced, public assessment on early implementation and the challenges faced by teachers as they translated the new standards into classroom activities; integrated the new district curriculum, materials, and professional development into their practice; and prepared their students for the new assessments. Although centered on a case study in one school, the series identified challenges with system-wide implications. Specific challenges included (Gewertz, 2013):

- The challenge of ***integrating the new scope and sequence documents into lesson plans***. Some teachers questioned the content and fit of certain instructional units and materials, opted out of those units, and instead used lesson plans and books that they had identified as being successful in the past. In addition, despite district support and training, limited experience and practice with the new standards and curriculum has resulted in administrators stating that teachers “are just not there yet.”
- ***Variation in the activities of instructional coaches*** who are charged with providing professional development to teachers and leading the interim assessment cycles. The series author, *Education Week*’s Catherine Gewertz noted that “the district has been feeling its way toward the best use of the coaches over the past five years.” Tovah Koplow, supervisor of instructional coaches, said that “coaches have not been used well consistently.”
- ***Staff turnover*** among teachers, coaches, and administrators. Gewertz suggested that the strain of changing practice contributed to staff turnover.
- The article noted the challenge of ***introducing more difficult content and assessments to students*** who are less proficient on a number of basic skills.

As illustrated in the *Education Week* series, professional development on the new standards, curriculum, and assessments plays an important role in changing the instruction experienced by students in classrooms. While the series noted some key assets that DCPS brings to the work (optional model instructional units and lesson plans, thousands of new books, coaches who work with teachers in nearly every school, professional development that reaches all teachers and administrators at least five times a year), the Washington Teachers Union in a May 2013 press release reported that its members needed more “time, resources, and training” with Common Core. In a related video series, WTU members expressed their concerns regarding the lack of Common Core professional development as

well as the lack of a plan for implementing high-stakes assessments associated with Common Core.

Teacher survey data on professional development has also provided mixed results on the DCPS-provided professional development on previous strategic initiatives. A 2010 WTU survey of teachers on DC IMPACT reported that 38 percent of 850 WTU respondents reported they “received sufficient training in the Teaching and Learning Framework to successfully implement it into [their] instructional practice” (Washington Teachers Union, 2010). The 2011 stakeholder survey conducted by KPMG (the last set of teacher survey results publicly released by DCPS) found that “teachers appear less satisfied with professional development and instructional support at their school in 2011 than they were in 2009” (KPMG LLP, 2011). In addition, while the number of teachers reporting that they “[did] not have enough time in class to teach the standards to mastery” decreased from 61 percent to 54 percent in 2011, these survey responses suggest challenges implementing standards and instructional expectations, prior to the shift to the Common Core.

Calls for more professional development are not unique to the district. A 2013 poll of teachers conducted by the American Federation of Teachers reported that while large majorities (75 percent) support the Common Core standards, fewer than one-third said their districts have given them the training and resources to implement the standards (Layton, 2013).

Student Interventions in DCPS

Along with efforts to improve instruction and implement the Common Core standards, DCPS has taken steps to address the situations of individual students through policies and practices on grade progression, progress toward graduation, special education, and English language learners. These steps, and available data on their results, are described here.

Grade Progression

DCPS, like many large urban school systems, struggles with how to help students who have not met the requirements of a particular grade by the end of the school year. Should these students be promoted to the next grade (social promotion) or retained in their current grade? DCPS' current policy stipulates that grade retention can only occur "once in grades 3, 5 or 8 only when all other interventions have been unsuccessful and the student has not made sufficient academic progress during the course of the school year. Principals have the final authority for all first-time promotion/retention decisions" (DCPS, 2013). DCPS has also targeted resources to schools with low ninth-grade promotion rates and uses Student Support Teams to coordinate interventions for students at risk of retention.

In June 2013, a bill was introduced in the DC Council to repeal DCPS current policy on grade retention and focus on earlier intervention. According to Chair of the Education Committee David Catania, "We have an inexplicable municipal regulation that forces social promotion.... [and that has] taken any manner of discretion away from the school system" (Brown, 2013). The bill would allow schools to hold students back in any grade if they do not meet certain standards

There is a large body of research on the impact of grade retention on students' academic achievement and social-emotional adjustment. While a large majority of studies show a negative impact of retaining students on their subsequent academic achievement, the more recent studies using stronger research designs show neither a negative nor a positive statistically significant impact of grade retention on students' academic achievement or social-emotional adjustment (National Association of School Psychologists, 2011). A 2009 meta-analysis of the impact of grade retention on academic achievement that looked at 207 effect sizes across 22 studies from 1990 to 2007 found that those studies with medium to high quality designs showed no statistically significant impact on grade retention (Allen, Chen, Willson, & Hughes, 2009). The impact of retention or social promotion also seems to vary depending on what, if any, support services accompany the retention or promotion. For example, in one study of Chicago Public Schools' standard based accountability practices, grade retention coupled with summer school for those retained showed a small positive impact on student achievement (Jacobs & Lefgren, 2004).

Graduation Portfolios

DCPS created the Individual Graduation Portfolio (IGP) web portal to address some of the common obstacles associated with graduation. The interactive site provides tools and

resources to help students and parents work together to track progress towards graduation and prepare for life after high school. DCPS planned the system during the 2007-2008 school year and piloted it in 2008-2009.

DCPS students receive an IGP account to track their progress towards graduation. For high school students, the system includes a planner to help students record information on the same educational, personal and professional topics. The Ability Profiler and Do What You Are aptitude test help students self-assess to make more informed decisions about their future careers. The portal offers college preparation resources including PSAT and SAT instruction and information about colleges and financial aid. Students also have access to workplace skills tools to help with resumes, cover letter, and interviews.

In 2011-2012, the IGP web portal was expanded to include resources for middle school students; DCPS students receive an account upon entering the sixth grade. The middle school portion of the site provides resources to help students begin to plan for their futures and align their academic efforts with their career aspirations. Resources include a learning styles inventory and information about course selection, school choice, career choices, and personal activities such as recreation and extracurricular activities.

The IGP system is designed to help parents and student monitor whether a student is on track towards graduation and serves as an early warning system for potential problems. At all grade levels, the system organizes information on student grades and credit accumulation. The site also integrates information about graduation requirements to show student progress, and will notify students if they are off track. The career and interest assessments in the IGP also help students select appropriate career and technical offerings provided by the district.

In 2010-11, which was the first school year for IGP implementation in grades 6-12, 70 percent of students used the IGP for course selection. The percentage rose to 95 percent in 2011-2012.

In addition to instituting the IGP system, DCPS offers after school credit recovery courses to those who have fallen behind. Students may earn up to three credits during after school credit recovery programs.

In the 2010-2011 school year, DCPS piloted its Online College and Career Prep (OCCP) program to expand online learning options in five high schools. The program expanded to serve all high schools and some middle schools to aid in credit recovery.

Special Education

PERAA outlined basic requirements regarding special education, including developing a Special Education Task Force and a reform plan. DCPS has been active in reforming special education policies as they relate to academic plans in the years since PERAA. The following section describes actions taken by DCPS and other participating agencies in reducing non-public enrollments, the early identification of children with special education needs,

supportive classroom strategies, and meeting the Blackman Jones lawsuit statutes. In addition to the actions taken by DCPS and other government agencies, OSSE hired AIR to conduct a study of best practices in special education in winter 2012 (Turque, February 2012).

DCPS has so far succeeded in reducing the number of non-public placements for special education students. During FY2011, the Mayor declared a goal of decreasing non-public enrollments by 50% to just over 1,000 students by the end of the 2013-2014 school year (DCPS, 2012). According to the DCPS Performance Accountability Report for FY2011, non-public special education placements were reduced from 2,599 to 1,789 for a savings of \$4 million. In FY2012, non-public special education placements were further reduced to 1,446, well exceeding the goal outlined in the DME FY2012 Performance Plan of reducing non-public enrollment from 1,900 students to 1,650 students (Office of the Deputy Mayor, 2013; Office of the Deputy Mayor, 2012).

As DCPS has reduced non-public enrollments, more students have been mainstreamed into regular education settings (Cardoza, 2013). As part of the DCPS Office of Special Education Strategic Plan (2012), a major initiative is to manage non-public enrollments through building neighborhood capacity and increasing opportunities for inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Additionally, according to DC Council FY2013 Budget Hearings, DCPS has increased the capacity to serve students returning from non-public placements by increasing the number of school-based psychologists from nine to 78 and maintaining the number of special education coordinators (DCPS, 2012). The reduction in special education funding for non-public placements has allowed DCPS to increase staff including coaches for behavioral services, improve special education literacy services, and expand the number of behavior classrooms (DC Fiscal Policy Institute, 2013). Specifically, the FY2014 budget included 35 additional classrooms for students with behavioral needs.

In 2009, DCPS launched the Early Stages Center for early diagnosis of special education needs for young children (DCPS, 2010). According to the DCPS Performance Accountability Report for FY2011, the Early Stages Center improved DCPS's ability to identify young children for special education services and tripled the identification rate to 7.5 percent within two years of its opening (DCPS, 2012). However, a fall 2011 court ruling stated that the district had failed to identify adequate numbers of young children with special education needs (Turque, November 2011).

By the end of FY2012, the identification rate for 3-5 year old children increased to 8.7% (DCPS, 2013). Additionally, DCPS delivered professional development to child care, health care, and social service organizations; increased routine screening in child care centers; established a process for screening and referrals for children entering foster care; used GIS mapping to identify low and high identification rates; and increased the number of non-DCPS organizations referring to the Early Stages Center.

Within DCPS, several strategies including supportive classrooms for children with disabilities, specialized curricula, and a multi-tiered system of support/response to

intervention system have been implemented in order to provide necessary accommodations for children with special needs.

- During FY2009, DCPS piloted a full-school model to improve inclusion at 16 schools (DCPS, 2009). In FY2011, inclusion programs were developed in 40 neighborhood schools (DCPS, 2012).
- According to the DCPS FY2011 Performance Accountability Report, DCPS increased autism classrooms from 27 to 58 (DCPS, 2012).
- During FY2012, several programs that provided services and supports for students with emotional disturbance were developed, including behavior and education support (BES) classes and Readiness Scholarship Innovation (RISE) classes (DCPS, 2013). Four BES classes were established at the elementary level and were aligned to eight RISE classes at the secondary level. The Office of Special Education also transitioned from vendor-operated to DCPS-operated RISE classrooms.

According to the DCPS 2012 Performance Accountability Report, a Multi-tiered System of Support/Response to Intervention (RTI) was initially presented to administrators, school psychologists, and coordinators in summer and fall 2012 (DCPS, 2013). The RTI system integrates general and special education at various tiers of intervention “based on need rather than disability” (DCPS, 2013, p. 12).

In 1997, the Blackman Jones class action was brought by parents of DC special education students (Turque, June 2011), and in 2009, the Alternative Dispute Resolutions provision of the decree compelled the District to live up to agreements made. In July 2011, DCPS was released from the Blackman portion of the Blackman Jones consent decree by eliminating backlog of due process hearings for parents to secure services (Turque, July 2011; DCPS, 2012). The Jones portion, which involves the timely implementation of hearing officer decisions and settlement agreements, was still in dispute at that time. The court-appointed mediator said that the District was cutting corners to close out cases in order to count them as timely, and the court appointed evaluation team cited “fundamental misjudgments” and “short cuts” in handling and closure of cases (Turque, July 2011; Turque, June 2011). According to the DCPS Performance Accountability Report for FY2012, DCPS partially met benchmarks towards the termination of the Jones Consent Decree (DCPS, 2013). While the Office of Special Education developed infrastructure to adhere to protocols, it did not achieve the target of 90 percent timely implementation and no cases more than 90 days overdue. However, as of September 2012, DCPS was on track and had achieved 88 percent timeliness and fewer than 20 cases more than 90 days overdue.

English Language Learners

The majority of work involving English Language Learners (ELL) involved integrating ELL into evaluation criteria for IMPACT and developing targeted reading interventions. In FY2010, DCPS fully integrated measures of ELL instruction into evaluation criteria for IMPACT (DCPS, 2010). Additionally, a computerized targeted reading intervention for ELL students known as “Imagine Learning” was implemented during the 2010-2011 school year (DCPS, 2012). As of fall 2011, 12 elementary schools were implementing the “Imagine

Learning” program, and ELL students had access to other district-wide reading initiatives including READ 180 and System 44. Another program known as “ESL Reading Smart” was to be piloted during the 2011-2012 school year. The DCPS FY2013 Performance Plan outlined a plan to increase the number of teachers who were dually certified to provide opportunities for ELL students “to accelerate their academic progress as they increase their language acquisition, such as through original credit opportunities in the summer” (DCPS, 2013, p. 4).

Diversified Curriculum Offerings and School Foci in DCPS

Seeking to improve results and attract families to the traditional public schools, DCPS has made efforts to change its portfolio of schools, diversify curriculum offerings, and expand the student services available. In the early years after PERAA enactment, DCPS emphasized reducing inconsistency across schools in the basic curriculum offerings (including art, music, PE, and other subjects) across schools. More recently there has been a greater emphasis on school specialization and program differentiation. Exhibit AP6 provides a year-by-year summary of major programmatic and service changes pursued by DCPS.

Course Offerings Across Schools

A wave of school consolidations in 2008 combined struggling middle schools with elementary schools to develop K-8 education campuses. DCPS reported that the school consolidations allowed for increased staffing and therefore more specialized courses (such as foreign languages, art, and music).

Changes in school budget development—particularly the adoption of the comprehensive staffing model (CSM)—have also been expected to enrich the curriculum. The CSM laid out staff-student ratios that determined the minimum number of full-time equivalents for different staff positions such as art, music, and physical education teachers. As Chancellor Henderson noted in a July 2013 radio interview, the comprehensive staffing model has allowed schools “to provide at least 45 minutes of art, PE, and foreign language” whereas previously, these courses were offered “where principals thought it was a good idea” (WAMU, 2013). The first phase of the CSM occurred in SY2008-2009, with full implementation beginning in SY2010-2011 (Clifton, Larsen, & Allen LLP, 2012).

However, as noted in DCPS’s FY14 Budget Development Guide, an Education Resources Strategies (ERS) analysis found that implementation was uneven; “while DCPS allocated funds to all schools for required positions—such as art, music, and physical education—DCPS did not have consistency in programs across the District.” It added that “allocating money for a position did not mean that position was staffed in the school” (DCPS, 2013).

DCPS has increased the number of Advanced Placement courses available to high school students to 123 courses in 2011. In SY2011-2012, DCPS mandated that all high schools offer at least four Advanced Placement courses, in English, math, science, and history. The

College Board reported that more than 2,200 students took at least one AP exam in SY2011-2012 (Brown, 2012).

Exhibit AP6: DCPS Portfolio and Curriculum Changes

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
• Smaller portfolio of schools due to 2008 school consolidation • Creation of K-8 Education Campuses. Increased staff allow for more special subjects (foreign languages, art and music) • Creation of the Youth Engagement High School • Creation of Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High • External providers selected to manage three high schools • First phase of comprehensive staffing model (CSM) which required funding for specialized staff and programs • Curriculum expanded to provide art, music, and PE to some schools • Roll out of curriculum pacing guides tied to Teaching and Learning framework	• Launch of schools with expanded services: Full Service Schools (8) and Schoolwide Application Model (8) Schools • Increased access to HeadStart services for all PS/PK classrooms in Title I schools • Revised offerings in CTE • Revised and implemented new discipline policies and developed in-school suspension programs in secondary schools • New reading interventions at elementary level (BURST) and secondary level (READ 180)	• First full year implementation of CSM, which requires funding for specialized staff (music, art, PE) • Selection of external management partner (Scholar Academies) to manage Stanton ES • DCPS takes over management of Dunbar High Schools from external management partner (Friends of Bedford) • First year of themed/ Catalyst schools: ▪ 4 Arts Integration schools ▪ 6 STEM schools ▪ 3 World Languages schools • 3 elementary schools and 1 middle school received approval to become International Baccalaureate schools • Increased AP courses from 106 offerings in FY10 to 123 in FY11 • Career and Technical Education Programs revised and expanded based on labor market trends • Piloted Online College and Career Prep (OCCP) program in 5 high schools (with some MS had access to the program) • A number of technology-supported programs were adopted for reading: ▪ Wilson Just Words in 10 secondary schools to complement READ 180 ▪ Imagine Learning, a computer-based program to accelerate English Language acquisition in 12 schools. ESL Reading Smart was also piloted. ▪ BURST expanded to 13 elementary schools and Wilson Just Words in 15 schools serving grades 4-5 • Technology-supported programs adopted in Math: Launch of the Apangea Math program in 18 MS and ES schools	• Implemented new Common Core Reading curriculum for Grades K-12 • New comprehensive early childhood curriculum (Tools of the Mind) • All high schools required to offer AP courses in English, Math, Government and Science • Developed school reconfiguration plan for Ward 5: a stand-alone Arts Integration and World Language middle school, an IB program at Browne Education Campus, and a middle school STEM integration program at McKinley Tech • Pursued accreditation with the Association Montessori Internationale to be the only accredited Montessori program in the District • New CTE Programs for: Biomedical Sciences, Electro-Mechanical Technology, Renewable Energy, Communications Technology, & Law, Justice, and Poverty • Created Proving What's Possible Grants allowing for school-developed innovation projects in extended learning time, technology use, and other models • Expanded OCCP for credit recovery, remediation, or acceleration • Launched hybrid learning models in over a dozen projects across various grade levels • Adopted technology-supported STEM resources: 16 schools utilizing Think Through Math, 26 schools utilizing Mind ST Math, and 10 schools incorporating Sangari- an inquiry science model for elementary grades • All schools now have access to math manipulatives as well as online or hybrid resources such as Mathalicious and Explore Learning Gizmos • Common application for citywide high schools • Began efforts to develop a new mentor/internship program for special needs students	• Implemented new Common Core Math curriculum for Grades K-12 • Eastern SHS received approval to be an International Baccalaureate school (Fall 2013 launch) • 2 middle schools and 1 elementary school sought IB approval • Langdon Education Campus starts offering Montessori elementary grades • Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/RTI to School Support Teams • A new CTE assessment piloted

Theme-Based Schools and Programs

During the 2009-2010 school year, DCPS selected 13 Catalyst Schools to integrate STEM, world cultures, and the arts in their academic programming. Launched in the following 2010-2011 school year, the 13 Catalyst schools were distributed throughout DC, with at least one school in each of the eight wards receiving support to develop its plans. Private funds supported this initiative: the Phillip L. Graham Fund, the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, and the CityBridge Foundation donated funds to the DC Public Education Fund to provide financial support to the Catalyst Schools project. Each school pursued one of the following themes, as described on the DCPS website:

- Catalyst STEM schools design classrooms, lessons, and school culture to highlight STEM issues and skills as a theme within all core subjects. In a STEM classroom, at any level and in any subject, students actively learn through discovery and hands-on lessons.
- Catalyst Arts Integration schools weave the arts – movement, dance, visual arts, and other forms—into the classroom curriculum and methods of learning.
- Catalyst World Cultures schools foster appreciation for cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity in students by exposing them to a curriculum that promotes critical thinking and a global perspective. We also intend for all students who attend a World Culture school to graduate with communicative and intercultural competence in a language other than English.

During the 2011-2012 school year, DCPS developed a school reconfiguration plan for Ward 5. The plan called for a stand-alone Arts Integration and World Language middle school, an International Baccalaureate program at Browne Education Campus, and a middle school STEM integration program at McKinley Tech.

Along with the World Cultures Catalyst schools, DCPS also hosted seven schools offering dual language programs in Spanish and English. DCPS stated that students in these schools study grade level content curriculum in two languages.

DCPS also expanded the number of schools implementing the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. During the 2010-2011 school year, four schools (one middle and three elementary) received approval from the International Baccalaureate board to implement its program. In 2013, Eastern High School applied for and received approval to become an IB world school with a planned fall 2013 launch. Eastern HS joins Benneker HS as the only high school IB options in the district.

Five schools used the Montessori education model, which “emphasizes independence and child-directed activity, learning through physical activity, use of the five senses, and children teaching each other.” During the 2011-2012 school year, DCPS sought approval from Montessori Internationale to become the only accredited Montessori program in DC. The Montessori model drew so much interest from families in Langdon Education Campus that DCPS decided to experiment in SY2012-2013 and expand the Montessori model into elementary grades. The number of schools implementing the Reggio Emilia model also expanded to 5 schools in SY2012-2013. DCPS notes that the Reggio Emilia model supports

project-based activities and investigations in which “teachers and children act as co-learners, actively engaging in classroom activities alongside each other.”

The 2008-2009 school year saw the launch of the newly renovated Phelps High School. The new citywide application school provides enriched programming focused on Architecture, Construction, and Engineering. DCPS has also revised CTE programs based on labor market trends, adding new pathways in Biomedical Sciences, Electro-Mechanical Technology, Renewable Energy, Communications Technology, and Law, Justice, and Poverty.

Proving What's Possible Grants

Chancellor Henderson described in a 2011 NewSchools Summit discussion her plan to promote within DCPS the kinds of innovation pursued in the charter sector. She stated:

I actually think that some of the most innovative thinking that is happening is happening in school districts, in schools, and in classrooms. But we don't treat those people like professionals. We don't provide them with opportunities to unleash their potential. We don't give them money to fund their ideas. Half of charter operators are former district people who want to do something different. I don't believe that you have to go outside the district at this point. We should be able to create some kind of a structure where people who have great ideas and have the ability to prove that they can deliver, that they can do that.

As part of a strategy to both target the lowest performing schools and support innovation, DCPS allotted \$10 million to its innovation fund, the Proving What's Possible Grants initiative (Turque, 2012). Although primarily targeted for the 40 lowest performing schools, individual campuses can propose new ways to changing the academic interventions provided by their school. Most grants have supported an extended day and extended year as well as the adoption of new technologies.

Educational Technology

Along with program specialization of schools, DCPS officials identified education technology as a key part of their future work. DCPS has made substantive investments in online programs and computer adaptive technologies that differentiate academic content and skills practice based on continuously updated student data.

DCPS's early technology acquisitions focused on diagnosing and developing students' literacy skills. Early screening of student literacy skills was a priority of Chancellor Rhee, who piloted Wireless Generation's mobile assessment software during the 2007-2008 school year. Participating teachers used hand-held devices (initially Palm Pilots) to administer the DIBELS early literacy assessment and analyze student results. The software also provided guidance on student grouping with suggestions for instructional approaches.

Citing the lack of a research-based reading curriculum and DC-CAS data showing below grade level mastery of basic literacy skills, DCPS adopted literacy programs with data analysis supports. In SY2009-2010, DCPS adopted the BURST programs for elementary grades and READ180, a computer-based literacy program, for secondary grades. In addition, 12 schools adopted Imagine Learning, a computer-based program to accelerate English Language acquisition, and ESL Reading Smart was also piloted.

Chancellor Henderson recruited Rocketship Schools, a network of schools adopting a blended learning approach, to work in DCPS in SY2010-2011 (Turque, 2011). However, Rocketship Schools opted instead to apply as a charter LEA during the 2012-2013 school year. Rather than wait, DCPS launched blended learning models in "over a dozen projects across various grade levels" in SY2011-2012. DCPS adopted a number of programs supplementing math instruction. The adaptive programs analyzed student data, provided suggestions for student grouping, and targeted different skills such as problem solving, conceptual and non-verbal learning, and fact fluency, as described in Exhibit AP7. On average, students participating in these blended learning programs spend 90 minutes per week in virtual learning, divided over two 45-minute or three 30-minute sessions. One middle school (Hart MS) is piloting a full adaptive math curriculum, in which students can spend 90-minutes of their daily math block progressing through computer differentiated math lessons.

DCPS has also adopted technologies to develop writing skills and fluency in world languages. During the 2010-2011 school year, DCPS piloted the Online College and Career Prep (OCCP) program in five high-need high schools and additional middle schools. It expanded the OCCP program in SY2011-2012 as a means for credit recovery, remediation, or acceleration for advanced students. In addition, DCPS adopted Edmodo, a safe social networking program, to support peer learning and student engagement. In SY2012-2013, DCPS received \$1 million grant from the Gates Foundation to support its blended learning efforts.

Exhibit AP7: Educational Technology Adopted by DCPS

Content Area	Educational Technology	Description	Grade Levels	Implementation
Literacy/reading	Wireless Generation	Mobile assessment software	Elementary	Adopted in 2007-2008
	BURST programs	Literacy program with data analysis support and lesson plan customization	Elementary	Adopted in 2009-2010 and expanded in 2010-2011 in 13 elementary schools
	READ180	A computer-based literacy program	Secondary	Adopted in 2009-2010 for secondary schools
	Imagine Learning	A computer-based reading intervention for ELL students	Elementary	Adopted in 2010-2011 in 12 elementary schools
	ESL Reading Smart	A web-based program for developing English language proficiency	Varies	Piloted in 2011-2012
Math	Think Through Math	A math supplement for students to practice problem solving skills	Grades 4-9	Adopted in 2011-2012 in 16 schools
	ST Math	A math supplement developed to promote conceptual and non-verbal learning	Elementary	Adopted in 2011-2012 and expanded to 31 schools in 2012-2013
	Dreambox Learning	An adaptive learning math program that differentiates academic content and provides suggestions for student grouping	Elementary	Piloted in 2012-2013 in 16 schools
	Teach to One (TTO) New Classrooms	A full adaptive math curriculum, in which students can spend 90-minutes of their daily math block progressing through computer differentiated math lessons	Grades 6-8	Piloted in one school in 2012-2013
	First in Math	A math supplement for fact fluency	Grades K-9	Available to all schools
Writing	Write to Learn	A writing program that analyzes submitted text and provides recommendations for improvements	Grades 9-12	Launched in 2012-13 in 8 schools
	TextHELP Read & Write Gold	An electronic tool for decoding, reading comprehension, translation, research, and screen reading	Grades 6-12	Available to all schools
World languages	Rosetta Stone	A world language supplement	Grades 4-8	Adopted in 2012-2013 in 18 schools
Credit recovery or acceleration	PLATO Learning	An online program for credit recovery; remediation and acceleration; diagnostic for reading and math; and test prep for the ACT, SAT	Grades 6-12	Adopted in 2012-13, replacing
Varies	Edmodo	A safe social networking program to support peer learning and student engagement	Grades 6-12	Piloted in 20 schools in 2011-2012 and made available to MS and HS in 2012 -2013

DCPS Chief Brian Pick noted that blended learning programs have been a subject of collaboration between DCPS and its charter partners (Interview, August 2013). Because education technology is an emerging market, Mr. Pick stated that being able to observe blended learning models operating with DC students has been helpful:

With different programs, you want to see it for yourself. Often, you get a pitch from a vendor about how it worked in whatever jurisdiction. But when it is here, when it works here in the district, we can go see it at E.L. Haynes or Friendship or Thurgood Marshall [Public Charter Schools]. We can learn from each other – a number of programs have traveled in both directions based on their success in DC schools with DC students.

Some research has begun to address the effectiveness of technological innovations such as blended learning. In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education conducted a meta-analysis of 1,100 empirical studies examining online or blended learning from 1986 to 2008. Of the set of studies, 46 met the department's methodological standards to calculate or estimate 51 independent sizes. At the time of the meta-analysis, only 5 of the 46 studies examined K-12 online learning. Comparing online or blended learning to face-to-face K-12 instruction, the department found 5 positive effects for online or blended learning and 2 effects favoring face-to-face instruction across 5 studies (Means et al, 2010). The department cautioned that education decision-makers needed to conduct rigorous research for different types of students and subject matter. A more recent second-order meta-analysis over 1000 primary studies on the impact of technology on learning over the last forty years conducted in 2011 by Tamim et al. found positive trends across individual and meta-analyses with an overall effect size of 0.35, indicating value of integrating technology with instruction (Tamim, et al., 2011).

According to DCPS responses to DC Council performance oversight questions from FY08 to FY12, DCPS has completed an evaluation of its Read180 program. The study found that "Read180 participants gained, on average, 107 lexiles (roughly equivalent to 2 years gain for a HS student or 1.5 years gain for a middle school student), as opposed to non-participants who had an average gain of 66 lexiles over the previous year" (DCPS, 2011).

Summary

DCPS has made efforts toward its stated goals of increasing academic rigor; reducing heterogeneity in the quality of teaching and learning across wards, schools, and classrooms; and expanding the range and diversity of academic offerings for students:

- DCPS sought to establish "guard rails" by identifying or developing optional instructional and curricular resources to support teachers and requiring schools to participate in district-wide paced interim assessments to monitor student progress.

- DCPS adapted its standards, curriculum, and professional development work to focus on Common Core implementation.
- DCPS has reduced the number of special education students placed in non-public institutions and adopted a number of intervention programs targeted to low-performing students.
- DCPS mandated an expansion of arts, music, and physical education programming through the comprehensive staffing model; revised Career and Technical Education offerings; required that high schools provide AP courses in 4 content areas; and funded program specialization and innovation grants through the Catalyst Schools project and the Proving What Works Grants.
- DCPS has adopted a number of technology-based packages designed to differentiate academic content based on student data and inform teachers' instructional decisions.

While DCPS has set in place processes to reach its intended goals and is viewed as aggressively providing supports for Common Core, in comparison with other urban systems and with states, data on implementation indicate continuing challenges. Teacher survey data and anecdotal data from the *EDWeek's* reporting on Common Core continue to suggest challenges in implementing the standards and instructional expectations.

Academic Plans in the Public Charter Sector

The Public Charter School Board's primary approach to raising academic quality has been through oversight and accountability of charter schools. PCSB has also continued the expansion and diversification of the charter school portfolio by approving themed programs and diverse models. It has sought to streamline the application process for high-performing charter organizations in an effort to attract them to the District of Columbia.

Performance Management Framework

The PCSB developed and piloted the Performance Management Framework in 2009-2010 as a means to measure and compare school performance using common academic and non-academic measures. The new system incorporated student growth as a component in its indicators, placed schools in three performance tiers, and mandated school improvement plans in the lowest performance level (Tier III). The Elementary and Middle School PMF and High School PMF went live in 2010-2011 (PCSB, 2012).

The PMF formula measures a school's performance on four categories: student progress over time, student achievement, gateway measures, and leading indicators.

- PMF uses the "school-level median growth percentile" as its measure of progress over time. Controlling for various demographic variables, the MGP score compares the school's value added contribution to other schools serving similar students.

- The student achievement measure converts the number of students achieving proficient or advanced levels on the DC-CAS to an achievement score.
- The gateway measures are described as “outcomes in key subjects that predict future educational success.” Gateway measures vary depending on the grade level of the school. Elementary/ middle schools are assessed on 3rd grade reading or 8th grade math; secondary schools are measured based on graduation rates, average PSAT and SAT scores, and college acceptance rates.
- Leading indicators are composed of attendance rates and percentage of students re-enrolling in the school.

Charter schools’ performance in these four areas is aggregated and converted to a score on a 100-point scale. Schools are then ranked and placed in three tiers. PMF results are publicly released during November of the following school year, and a school’s Tier placement is displayed on its public profile.

Schools in Tier III, the lowest tier, receive greater oversight from the board and participate in program development reviews (Interview with Clara Hess, August 2013). The program development review rubric assesses schools on curriculum and standards, instruction, assessment, school climate, governance, and management. Review team members offer recommendations for the school, which must then develop a school plan for areas in need of improvement. The development and implementation of those school improvement plans are considered in the board’s decision to revoke a charter (Interview with Theola Labbé-DeBose, August 2013).

The PCSB has expanded the types of schools that must participate in the PMF and has made other changes to its oversight procedures (Interview with Clara Hess, August 2013). In 2012-2013, the PCSB approved PMF pilots for Early Childhood campuses and adult education programs. In January 2013, PCSB approved a policy that limits charters’ flexibility to amend their charter goals and academic achievement expectations: Changes must be submitted more than two years before the charter expiration and more than one year before a 5- or 10-year review. The Board specifically notes that it “does not believe it is appropriate” for stated goals to be changed “days, weeks, or several months before a charter’s high stakes review” (PCSB, 2013). In addition, qualitative site reviews now include both scheduled and unscheduled observations. After concerns were reported about special education students being turned away from charter schools, PCSB established its “mystery shopper” program, in which PCSB staff call schools and pose as parents seeking placement for their children (PCSB, 2012). However, the PCSB’s most potent power for monitoring quality is through the charter revocation process.

Charter Relinquishments or Revocations

In June 2012, PCSB formally approved amendments that permit the board to close individual campuses of multi-campus charter schools. Along with the voluntary charter relinquishments of several charter LEAs, 16 campuses have been closed. Exhibit AP8 shows the charter relinquishments and revocations during the study period. Including charter

closures from earlier years, the PCSB reports that the percentage of charters that opened and subsequently closed is 33 percent.

Supporting Low-Performing Charter Schools

While the PCSB has been active in revoking charters, it has also made efforts to guide low-performing charters rather than close them. PCSB directed some charters to contract by closing under-enrolled or low-performing grades or programs.

- In SY2011-2012, PCSB granted full continuance to Integrated Design and Electronic Academy (IDEA) but required it to develop a turnaround plan. In SY12-13, the PCSB and IDEA agreed on closing charter's middle school program.
- Rather than revoking Howard Road Academy's charter in 2013, the Board accepted its decision to close two campuses, so that it could focus solely on its early childhood education program (Brown, 2013).
- Rather than closing Imagine Southeast, PCSB mandated that it stop serving grades 7 and 8 and required that it bring in educators from other Imagine schools who have a record of improving schools.
- PCSB also accepted WEDJ and Ideal Academy's decisions to close their 9-12 grade program.
- Septima Clark PCS had school performance challenges, and a June 2013 lease expiration posed difficulties for continuation. Rather than closing the school, PCSB approved its charter amendment allowing the school to merge with Achievement Prep, a Tier I school (Interview with Theola Labbé-DeBose, August 2013).

Exhibit AP8: Charter Relinquishments and Revocations

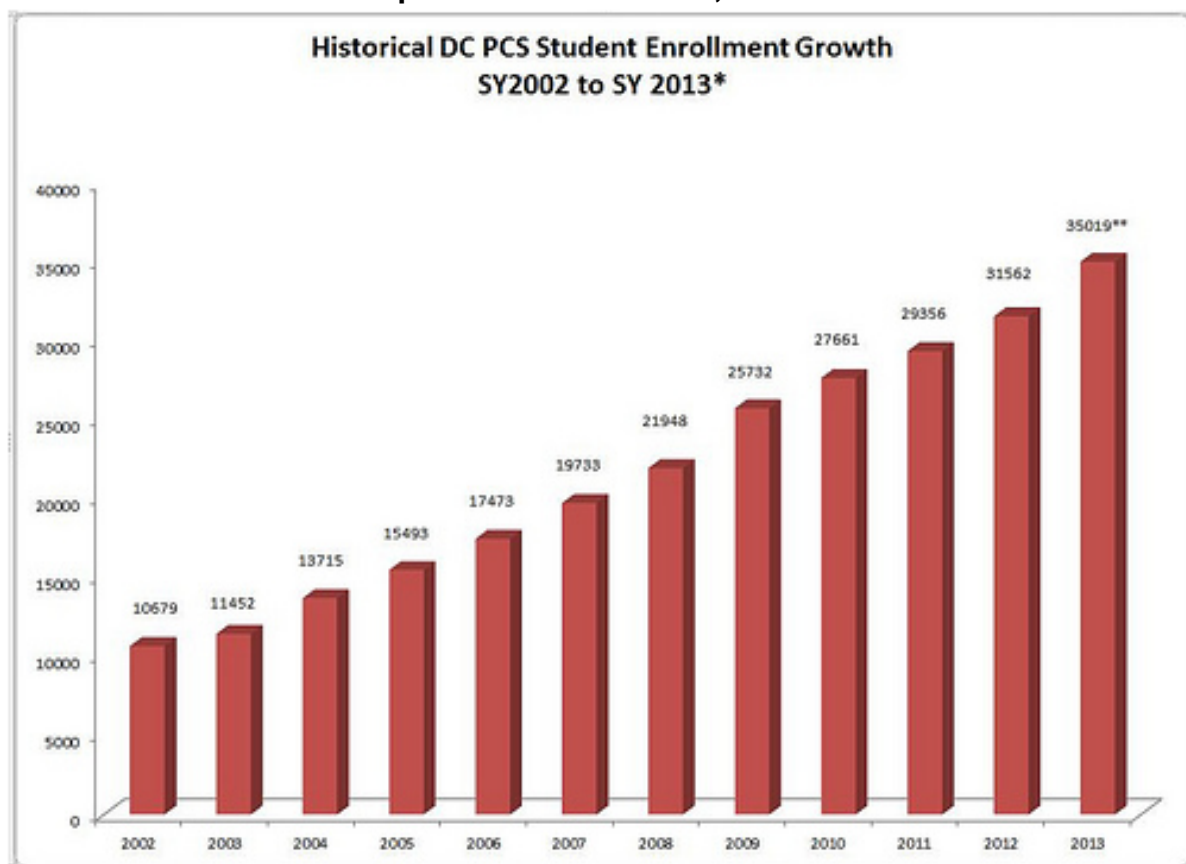
Charter relinquishments or revocations				
2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
-3 schools	-5 schools	-4 schools	-1 school	-3 schools
- Two schools relinquished their charters in July 2009 - City Lights PCS (July 2005 - July 2009) - Barbara Jordan PCS (2002 - July 2009) - PCSB revoked the charter of: (MEI) Meld Even Start Futures Academy, a boarding school offering day care/early childhood and high school curricula for teenage mothers and their children (2007-July 2009)	- Four schools relinquished their charters in June 2010: - City Collegiate PCS, a middle and high school program (2006 - June 2010) - Academy for Learning Through the Arts or ALTA, a year round arts integrated school serving PK-6th (2005 - June 2010) - Children's Studio School, a full day schools of the arts and architecture (1996 - June 2010) - ABC - Academia Bilingue de la Comunidad, a middle school program (2005-Aug 2009) - PCSB revoked the charter of: - Young America Works PCS, a vocational/technical career program (2004 - June 2010)	- PCSB accepted the voluntary charter relinquishment of two schools - Thea Bowman PCS, a 5th-8th school (Aug 2008 - June 2011) - SAIL Public Charter School PK-8th school (1998 - June 2011) - PCSB revoked the charter of two schools: - Kamit Institute for Magnificent Achievers PCS prior to the start of the 2010-2011 school year. - Nia Community PCS	PCSB voted to close Community Academy's Rand Campus	- PCSB voted to allow Septima Clark to merge with Achievement Prep - the only all boys school in the district - PCSB voted to close 2 of Howard Road Academy's campuses - PCSB voted to close Community Academy's Amos III campus

Expansion and Diversification of the Charter School Portfolio

Along with closing low-performing, under-enrolled, or poorly managed charter schools, PCSB has changed its portfolio of schools by approving school replication efforts, as well as campus and grade-level expansions. It has approved schools offering new educational models or themed programming and has expedited the charter approval process for charter operators with track records of student success.

Exhibit AP9 shows the increase in charter enrollment from 2001-2002 to the 2012-2013 school year. The public charter sector had a SY2012-2013 student population of 35,019 students and a 43 percent share of the district's public education population, a 13 percentage point increase from its 2008 share (OSSE, 2013).

Exhibit AP9: Growth in the public charter sector, 2001-2002 to 2012-2013



**Reported 2013 population based on unaudited fall enrollment

Chart Source: PCSB Data Center, Enrollment and Demographics

Exhibit AP10 presents the charter school openings and charter application approvals from the 2008-2009 school year to the 2012-2013 school year. Overall, 14 charter LEAs and 37 charter campuses opened during the study period although not all received continuance approvals by spring 2013.

Exhibit AP10: Expansion and diversification of the charter school portfolio

Charter school openings and application approvals				
2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Openings				
6 charter LEAs, 16 schools	1 charter LEA, 8 schools	0 charter LEAs, 4 schools	4 charter LEAs, 5 schools	3 charter LEAs 4 schools
- PCSB approved Center City Public Charter Schools expedited transition plan to convert 7 former Catholic schools 5 new schools opened: - Achievement Preparatory Academy PCS (4th-8th) - Excel Academy PCS (PS-K) - Imagine Southeast Academy PCS (PS-3rd) - Thea Bowman Preparatory Academy PCS (PS-3rd) - Washington Yu Ying PCS (PK-1st) 4 charter LEAs added additional campuses: - Capital City PCS Upper Schools (6th-9th) - Community Academy PCS - Armstrong Campus (PK-5th) - W.E. Doar Jr. PCS Northwest Campus (PK-5) - Washington Latin PCS (8th-9th)	- The National Collegiate Preparatory PCS High School was the only new public charter school to open in Fall 2009 - Four charter LEAs also expanded to 7 additional campuses: - Cesar Chavez PCS - Bruce Prep Campus Middle Schools (6th-8th) - Friendship PCS Tech Prep Campus (6th -7th) - Howard Road Academy PCS - Martin Luther Kind Avenue Campus (7th-8th) - KIPP DC PCS: - Promise Academy Campus (1st) - Discover Academy Campus (PK) - College Preparatory Campus (9th)	- PCSB did not approve charter applications during the 2008-2009 school year, therefore there no new charter schools authorized to open in Fall 2010 - Four charter LEAs also expanded to 4 additional campuses: - DC Prep - replication of its PS-3rd school - Appletree Early Learning PCS - Capitol Hill Campus - EL Haynes PCS Pre-K - KIPP DC PCS - Grow Academy Campus	- Four new charter schools opened in Fall 2011: - Inspired Teaching Demonstration (PK-3rd) - Mundo Verde Bilingual (PK-K) - Shining Stars Montessori Academy (PK-K) - Richard Wright School for Journalism and Media Arts (8th-9th) - KIPP DC opened its new Height campus	- Four new charter schools opened in Fall 2012: - Basis - Creative Minds - DC Scholars - LAYC Career Academy - Other public charter schools opened new campuses or moved to new, larger campuses, including Capital City PCS, Maya Angelou PCS, KIPP DC PCS, Meridian PCS, Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS, Shining Stars Montessori PCS, Mundo Verde PCS, National Collegiate Prep, Richard Wright PCS, Next Step PCS, Bridges PCS and Eagle PCS
Approvals				
The PCSB did not accept or approve any charter school applications during the 2008-2009 school year due to a change in the PCSB's operational calendar.	- PCSB approved 4 charter applications: - The Inspired Teaching Demonstration School - Mundo Verde Bilingual School - Shining Stars Montessori Academy - Richard Wright School for Journalism and Media Arts	- PCSB approved 4 charter applications: - Creative Minds - DC Scholars - Basis DC - LAYC Career Academy	- PCSB approved 4 applications: - Community College Preparatory Academy (an adult education school) - Ingenuity Prep (blended learning model) - Sela - (an elementary school offering Hebrew-English immersion) - Somerset Preparatory Academy - a middle school college preparatory program successful in other states	- PCSB approved 2 charter applications during the standard process - Lee Montessori - Academy of Hope - PCSB also approved the creation of a new middle and high school language immersion program serving students from a consortium of 5 charter schools - PCSB approved Rocketship Schools application under experienced operator guidelines to open 2 schools with the option to scale to 8 schools

Schools in the public charter sector also grew in other ways. The PCSB approved some charter requests for increases in their enrollment ceilings as well as charter moves to different facilities to support an increased student population. According to the board actions listed in PCSB annual reports from 2008 to 2012 (with the 2012-2013 annual report still being finalized at the time of this report), the PCSB approved more than 30 charter LEA requests for ceiling increases, with some charter LEAs submitting multiple requests during this period. In addition, some charters have expanded the grade levels they serve. By design, many charter schools offer only one or a few grades and expand to serve more grades each year. For example, a school might only offer 6th grade in its first year of operation, and then add 7th grade in its second year to serve the same students while enrolling a new cohort of sixth graders.

Fourteen charter schools operating in 2008-2009 expanded to serve different school levels by the 2012-2013 school year, as shown in Exhibit AP11; two of the fourteen schools expanded by two school levels. Eight added early childhood programs to their existing offerings, two added elementary school, four added middle school, one added high school, and one added an adult/ GED program.

**Exhibit AP11:
School levels added by 2012-2013 charter schools that existed in 2008-2009**

	Early Childhood	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Adult/GED
Number of schools adding school levels	8	2	4	1	1

Exhibit reads: Eight charter schools expanded to offer early childhood programs between 2008-2009 and 2012-2013.

Diversification in Program Focus

The public charter school portfolio has also diversified with board approval of a number of theme-based programs. During the study period, the PCSB approved two new language immersion schools, five arts and humanities themed programs, two STEM-focused schools, and two schools adopting a project-based or expeditionary learning model. The charter school portfolio is expected to continue diversifying with language immersion programs, blended learning schools, adult/vocational programs, and a Montessori school approved and expected to open in the next two years.

Encouragement for High Performing Charter Operators

In June 2012, the PCSB approved the Experienced Operator Guidelines, which accelerate the application and school opening process for high performing charter organizations (PCSB, 2012). Typically, approved charters must follow a 15-month planning and transition period before opening their doors. The new guidelines shorten the school-opening process

by allowing experienced operators to submit applications in fall, receive approval in winter, and open in the next school year.

Experienced charter operators must demonstrate a record of success in raising student achievement in other jurisdictions and must provide three years of financial audits, as well as a detailed curriculum tailored to DC students. PCSB received three experienced operator applications, with one organization (Nexus Academy) withdrawing during the review process. Both applicants proposed blended learning models, which integrate traditional classroom instruction with online instruction. In February 2013, PCSB approved Rocketship Schools application to open 2 schools with the option to expand to 8 total campuses, one of the largest campus approvals authorized by the board (Brown, 2013). As noted earlier, Chancellor Henderson recruited Rocketship Schools to implement its blended learning model in several DCPS schools.

Implementation of Common Core by Charter LEAs

Data on Common Core implementation by charter LEAs are not readily available. The PCSB annual reports have been limited to Board actions and do not provide an assessment of how Common Core implementation has fared. However, while the number of charters participating in Race to the Top decreased from 32 to 28 (Interview with Richard Pohlman, August 2013), US ED did determine that all participating charter LEAs were implementing the Common Core-related plans listed in the district's Race to the Top application.

In an interview, a former OSSE official described the development of LEA Common Core implementation plans as an intensive effort (Interview with Richard Pohlman, August 2013). Only a small number of LEA implementation plans were approved after their first reviews by a panel of LEA officials, and most LEAs were asked to develop more concrete plans for professional development. In Mr. Pohlman's view, the review process fostered collaboration among charter LEAs, with some of the higher performing LEAs contributing staff time to review implementation plans and coach the development teams of other LEAs.

The US ED annual reports noted the creation of charter school consortia to develop data and instructional improvement systems. The Instructional Improvement Systems Consortium, headed by E.L. Haynes, is an ongoing partnership of 10 charter schools serving more than 9,000 students in the District (E.L. Haynes, 2010). The consortium developed a system of 12 modules for integrating, examining, and using student data.

Summary

Over the last five years, the Public Charter School Board has changed the composition of charter school providers in the District, adopted new oversight methods for monitoring the performance of charter schools, and approved policy changes to attract experienced charter operators and support low-performing charter schools.

- Rather than rely solely on a five-year "high stakes" charter review, the PCSB now reviews charter school performance annually through its Performance Management

Framework. The PCSB has also approved policies restricting charter LEA's ability to revise their charter and student achievement goals prior to its high-stakes reviews.

- The PCSB has overseen the closure of 16 charter campuses and the opening of 37 campuses. The PCSB has also monitored the enrollment and grade-level expansions and contractions of charter LEAs.
- The PCSB has overseen an increase in the number of charter schools offering theme-based programs or utilizing different instructional styles. The public charter sector share of the District of Columbia public student population has increased from 30 percent in 2007-2008 to 43 percent in 2012-13.

The emphasis on autonomy, flexibility, and lean administrative structures, all of which are hallmarks of the DC charter sector, have the effect of limiting the summative information available to the public on the curricular, instructional, and staffing practices of charter schools.

Questions for Further Analysis

The District of Columbia's educational and political leaders have changed the academic plans pursued in DC. The basket of educational experiences to which DC families are entitled has changed in some fundamental ways. First, DC families today have an increased chance of securing free preschool or pre-kindergarten for their child than they did five years ago. Second, the package of knowledge and skills that a student is expected to master is different: in core subjects such as math and reading, each student is expected to follow a nationally aligned academic path that is more rigorous than previous academic goals. Third, DC families can mix and match the academic units in their child's education portfolio. Continued support for school choice and the expansion of the public charter sector means that for a growing number of students, the basket of educational experiences is provided in part by DCPS and in part by public charter schools. In addition, the diversification of academic courses, approaches to teaching, and academic supports both in DCPS and in charter LEAs offers students a wider array of academic experiences.

This section of the report has analyzed academic plans over the years and has offered available evidence to inform an assessment of these plans, but there is always more to be known. Future studies, using more in-depth empirical methods or taking a longer-term perspective, could more rigorously assess the implementation of academic plans and the experiences of students in public schools. For example, future studies could ask:

- How is DC progressing toward universal Pre-K access, based on analysis of actual Pre-K placements in relation to the requests for placements across all lotteries?
- To what extent does student mobility in DC result from circumstances such as family instability (homelessness, poverty, etc.), and to what extent does it reflect a desire for different opportunities? In both the traditional public and public charter sectors, how effective are the schools' procedures for serving newly arrived students?

- As DCPS continues to reduce non-public enrollments for special education students, are staff and services adequate to meet these students' needs? To what extent are special education students' needs being met in the charter sector?
- In both DCPS and charter schools, what supports for implementation of the Common Core are reaching classrooms? To what extent is classroom practice consistent with Common Core State Standards?

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Section IV

Student Achievement: 2006-2007 through 2011-2012

Overview

This section describes trends in student achievement using student-level administrative data on traditional public and charter schools in the District. We examine student performance in the 2006-2007 school year (the year before PERAA began) and in the five subsequent years, 2007-2008 through 2011-2012 using data provided to us by OSSE.

In this report, we do not evaluate changes in raw student test scores; that analysis will come in a later report. Our analysis focuses on proficiency levels, describing the fraction of students in the district that score at a “proficient” or “above proficient” level, and the fraction of students scoring below the “basic” level, on standardized reading and math tests.

We find overall increases in student proficiency (and decreases in “below basic” scores) during the six years examined. While much of the improvement occurs in the first few years, we observed meaningful improvements in the later years as well, especially for math.

CAUTION

It would be premature to attribute the observed changes in student proficiency directly to the PERAA legislation or its implementation for several reasons.

First, we cannot rule out the role of previous student performance trends, student compositional changes that we were unable to control for statistically, or policies or conditions outside of PERAA, as an explanation for the results. Our analysis also includes charter schools not subject to District policies.

Second, it is important to remember that our baseline period, school year 2006-2007, was the first time that students in the District took the DC CAS exam. The observed improvement, especially the improvement occurring in the first few years, is consistent with an “adjusting to a new test” hypothesis, and may suggest some fraction of the improvement in the earlier years is due to teachers and students becoming accustomed to the new test. We have no way of assessing the validity of this explanation with our current data.

Third, given the descriptive nature of the analysis, we are not able to assess the statistical significance of the changes in proficiency levels. A statistical assessment of changes in test performance will be included in our subsequent analysis of the raw student test scores.

Fourth, it is always the case that test scores provide estimates of broad and complex aspects of teaching and learning, and their precision should not be overstated.

Finally, as noted in the Foreword to this report, allegations of security breaches raise special concerns. We urge readers to recognize that until a more in-depth analysis of the scope and magnitude of the allegations is completed, the results presented here should be handled cautiously.

Results

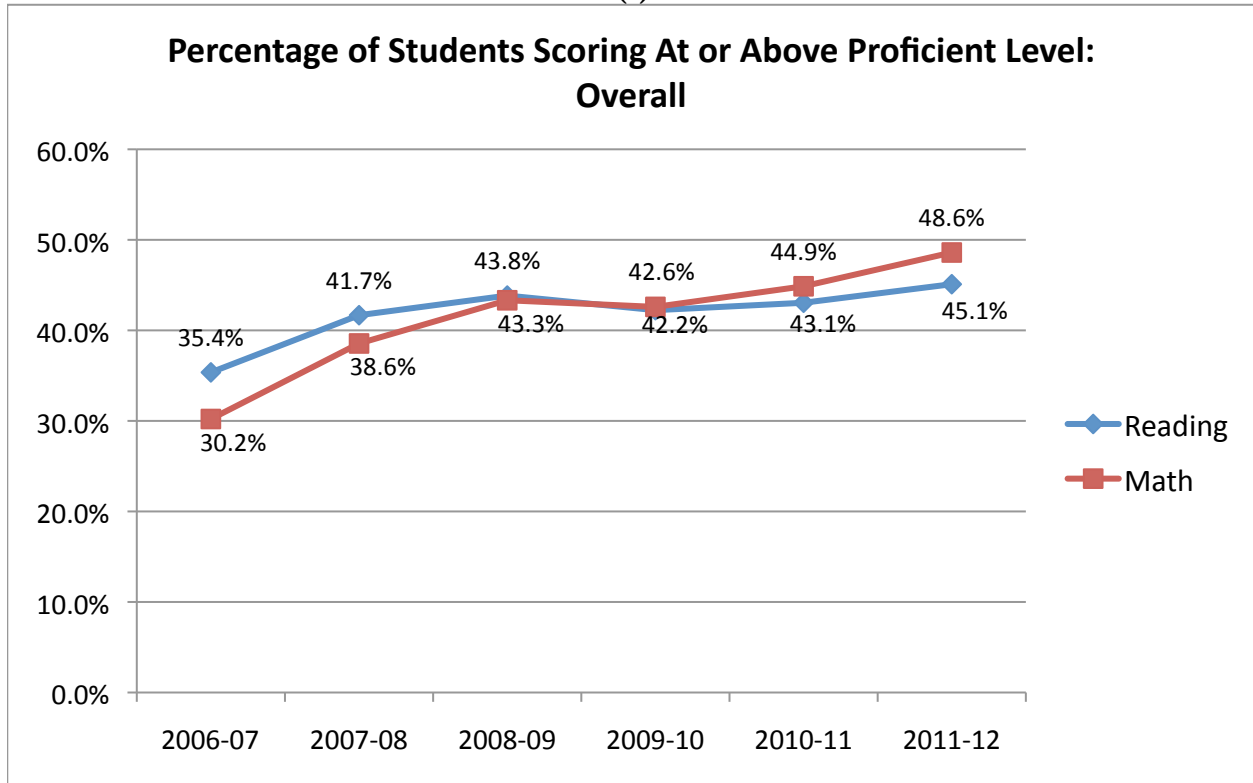
We present a series of graphs describing student performance during the 2006-2007 school year (the year immediately before the PERAA initiative) and the following five years, 2007-2008 through 2011-2012. We focus on the changes in (1) the percentage of students scoring at or above the “proficient” level; and (2) the percentage of students scoring below the “basic” level. The body of the report describes how these two performance statistics have changed over time for various subgroups in the District. In the appendix, we show the same statistics adjusted for observable differences in student composition between groups and over time. Overall, the two sets of graphs show similar patterns, although the improvements measured in the regression adjusted graphs are generally smaller.

Figure 1 presents the reading and math proficiency rates for the six years studied (upper panel), as well as the “below basic” rates (lower panel). Proficiency rates in reading and math increased by 9.7 and 18.4 percentage points, respectively, between 2006-2007 and 2011-2012. Much of this increase occurred in the first few years and the final year, with the growth during the middle years relatively flat.

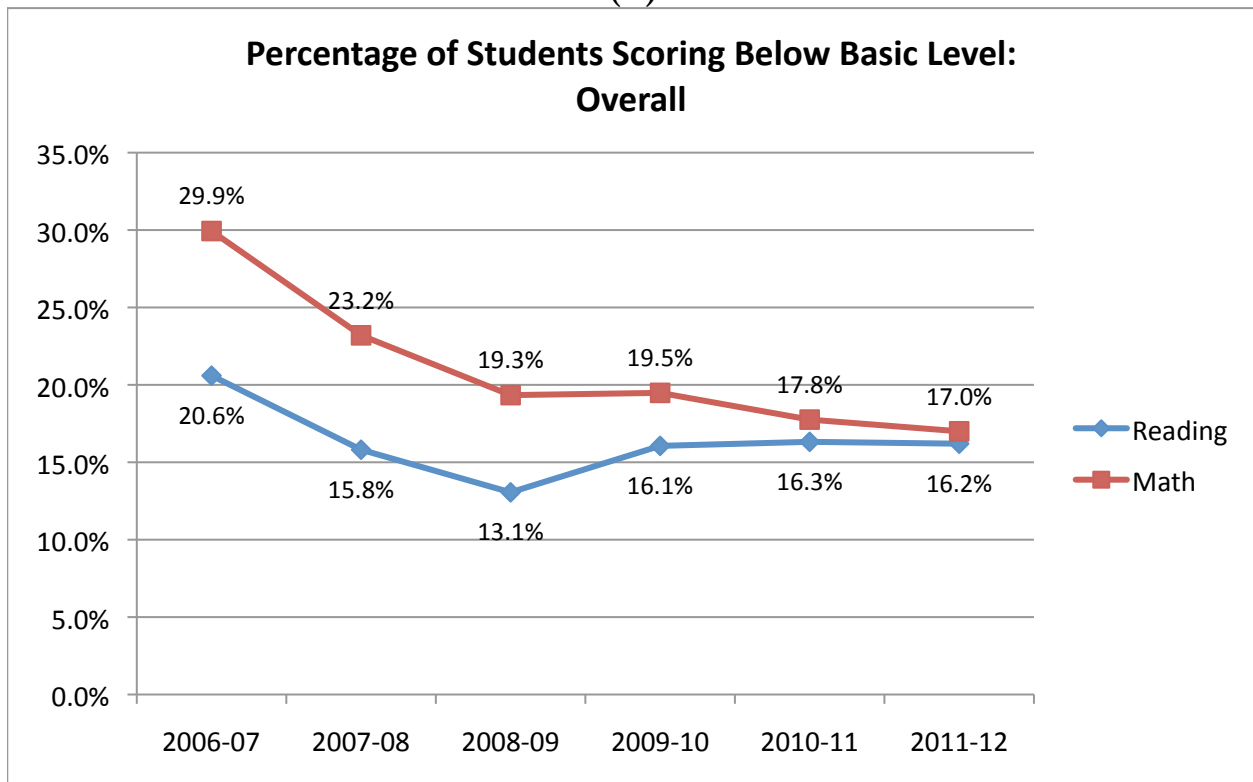
This increase in student performance did not occur only for those students at the top of the performance distribution; there also were decreases in the fraction of students classified as “below basic.” The percentage of students scoring “below basic” dropped 4.4 and 12.9 percentage points in reading and math, respectively. The majority of the decreases occurred in the early years, after which the below basic rates began to level off, and in the case in reading, rise.

Figure 1

(I)



(II)



Figures 2Aa – 4Bb repeat this analysis, using different subsamples defined by school characteristics. The first of these figures, 2Aa through 2Bb, examine changes in student achievement by school ward.¹⁰ To make the graphs easier to read, wards are divided so that wards 1-4 are shown on one graph and wards 5-8 are shown on a subsequent graph.¹¹

Overall, student achievement, as measured by proficiency levels, improved between 2006-2007 and 2011-2012 in all eight wards in the District. For reading scores (Figures 2Aa and 2Ab), the largest percentage point increase in proficiency was in Ward 1 (14.1 percentage points). The smallest increases were in Wards 4 and 7 (5.3 and 5.4 percentage points, respectively). In terms of overall proficiency levels, during the time period examined, Ward 3 had the highest proficiency rates in reading, while Ward 8 had the lowest.

“Below basic” reading scores in all 8 wards decreased over the six year period, although many wards experienced decreases in the first few years followed by rises in the later years. The largest decrease in below basic scores over the years studied was in Ward 1 (9.6 percentage points) and the smallest decrease was in Ward 7 (0.3 percentage points).

A similar pattern holds for math achievement (Figures 2Ba and 2Bb), with overall increases in student achievement in all 8 wards. Wards 1 and 6 showed the largest increases in math proficiency (22.6 and 22.3 percentage points, respectively) and Wards 3 and 5 showed the smallest increases (9.9 and 10.8 percentage points, respectively). As mentioned previously, much of the improvement in math scores occurred in the first few years and in the final few years examined. Again, the overall level of math proficiency was highest in Ward 3 and lowest in Ward 8.

Following the same pattern of the reading scores, the fraction of students scoring “below basic” in math decreased over the time period examined, but unlike the reading scores there was no rise in “below basic” levels in the later years. “Below basic” levels decreased the most in Ward 1 (14.3 percentage points) and Ward 8 (16.4 percentage points) and the least in Ward 3 (4.4 percentage points).

¹⁰ The District of Columbia is divided into eight geographical regions called wards. See Technical Appendix B for school locations by ward in 2008-09. There is significant variation across wards in terms of household socio-economic status. For instance, in 2009, the median household income in Ward 8 was roughly \$44,000 versus \$257,000 in Ward 3.

¹¹ Please keep in mind that the scales for the wards 1-4 and 5-8 graphs are not the same. This is done to show as much variation as possible for the wards displayed in each graph.

Figure 2Aa

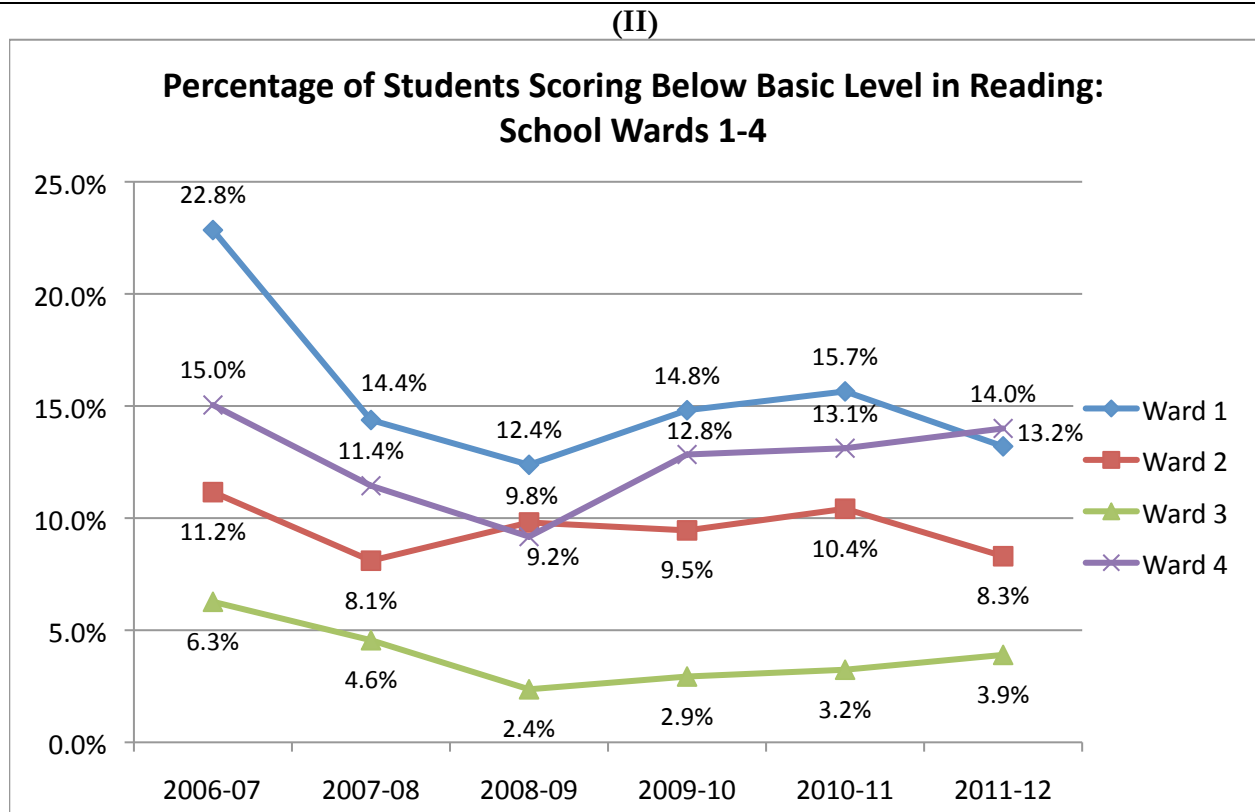
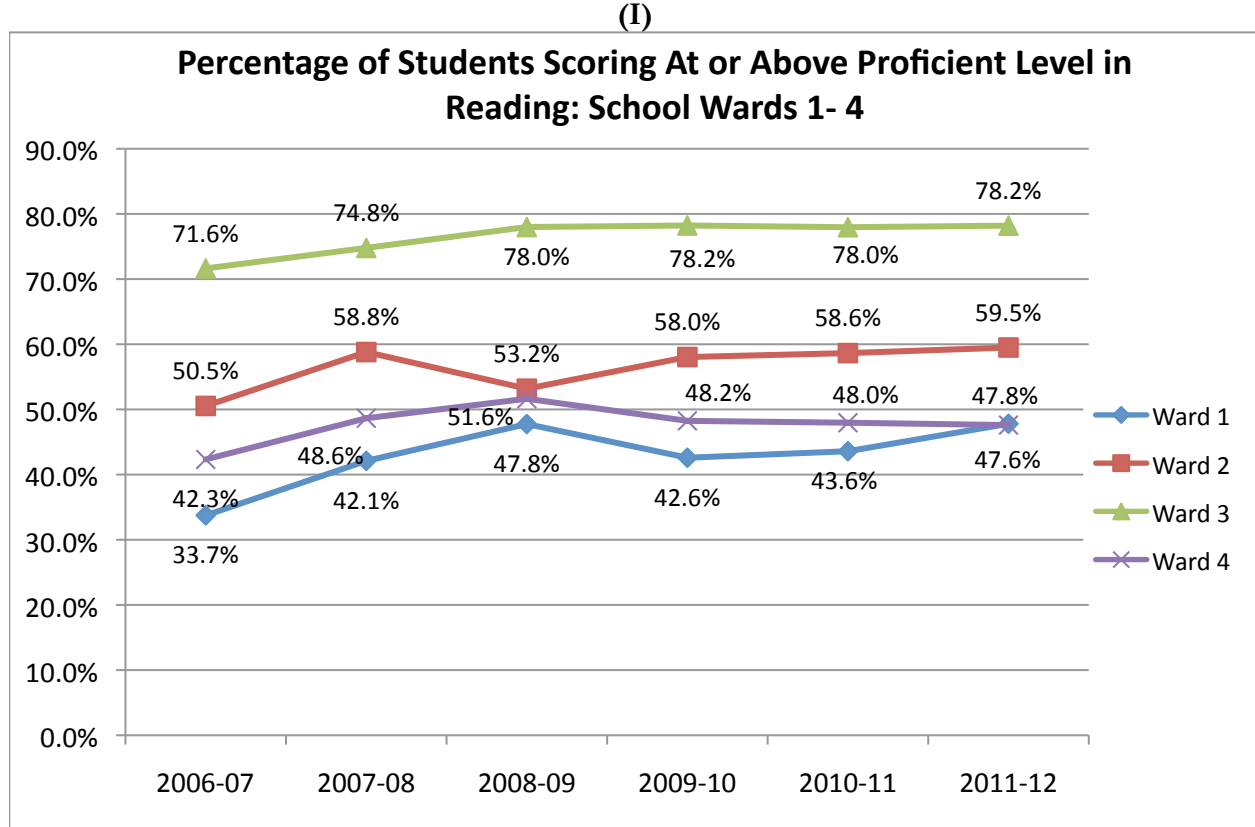
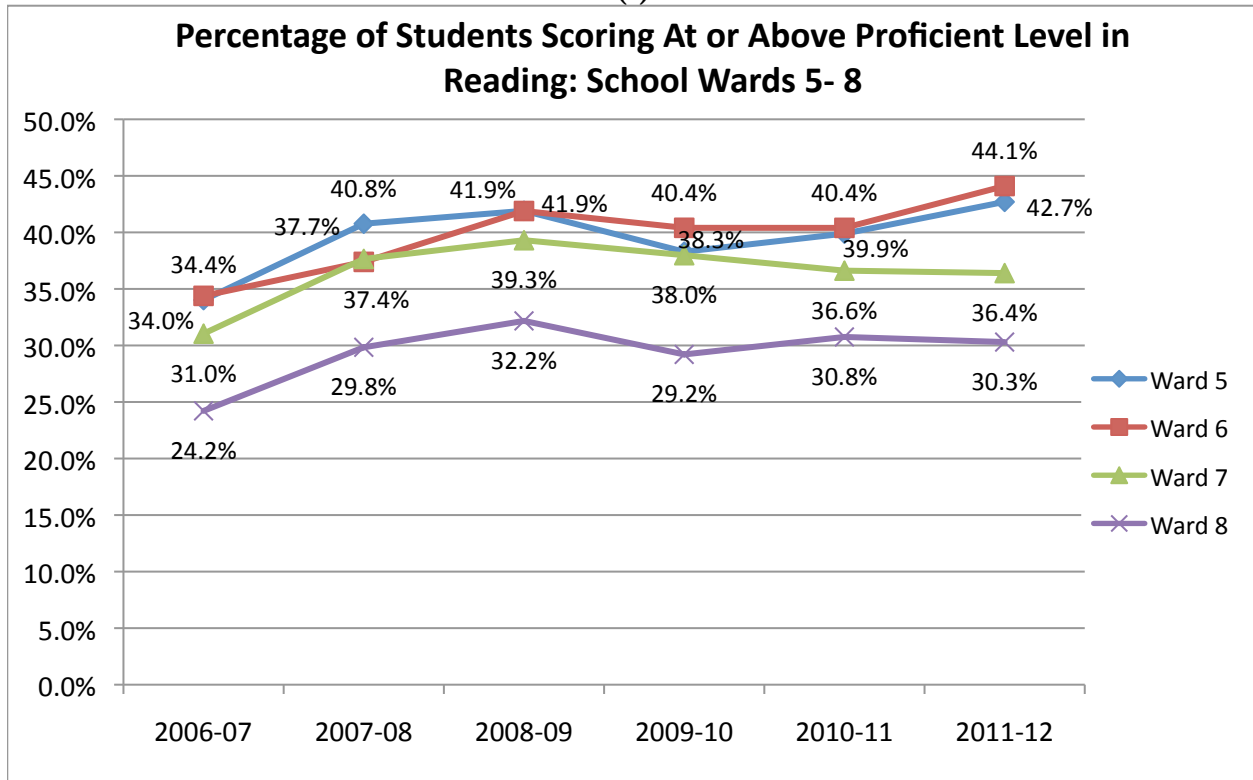


Figure 2Ab

(I)



(II)

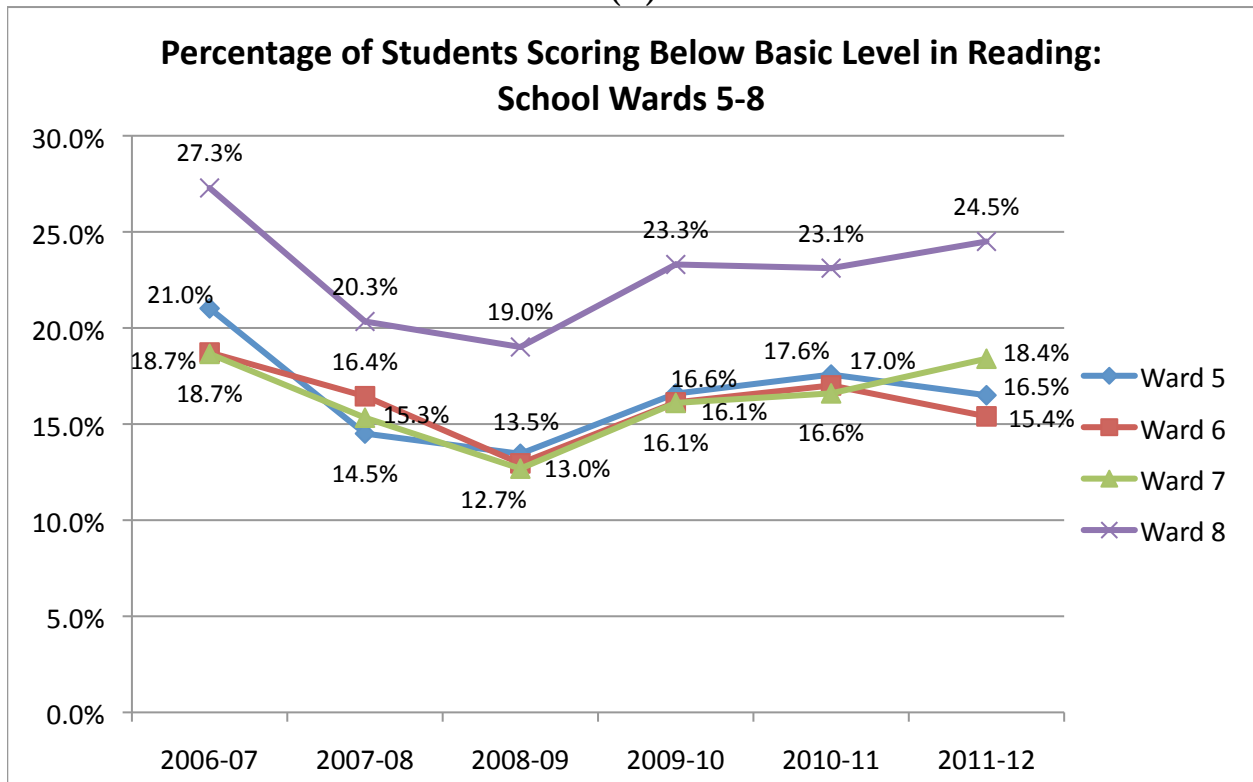
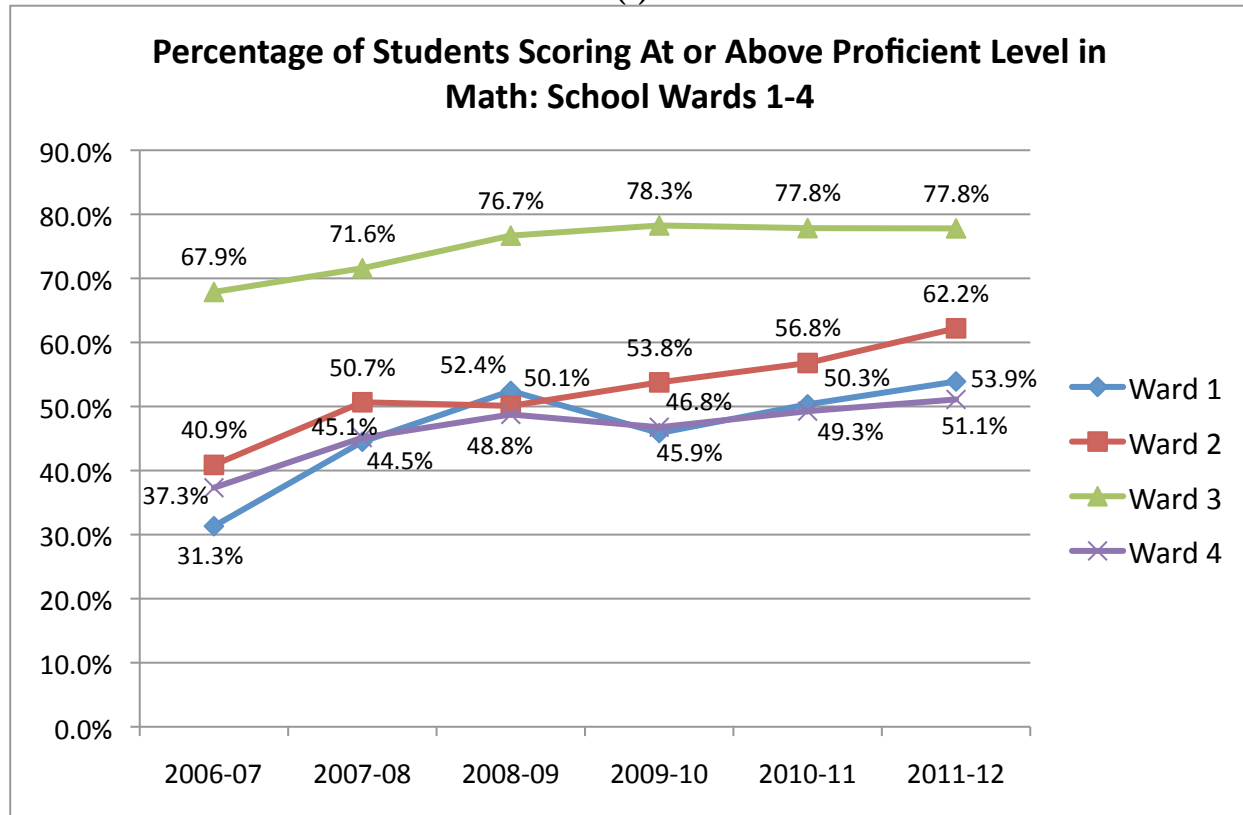


Figure 2Ba

(I)



(II)

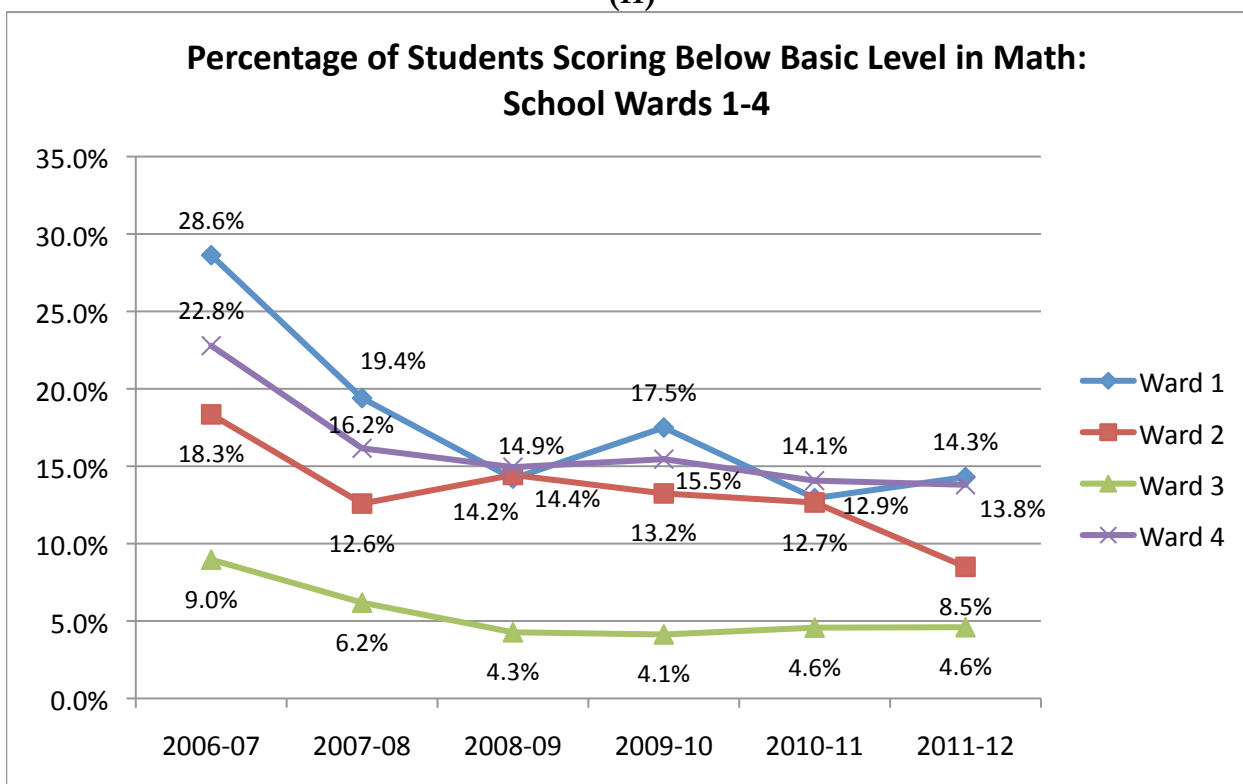
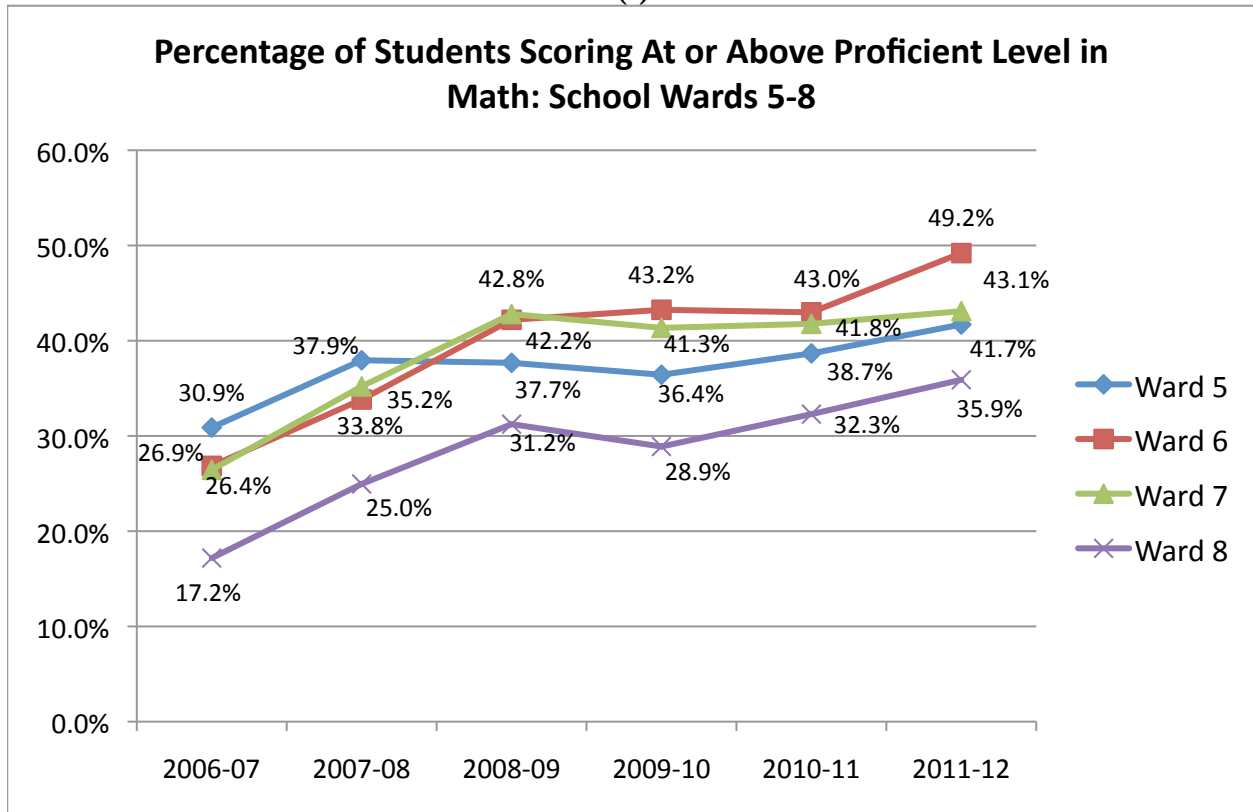
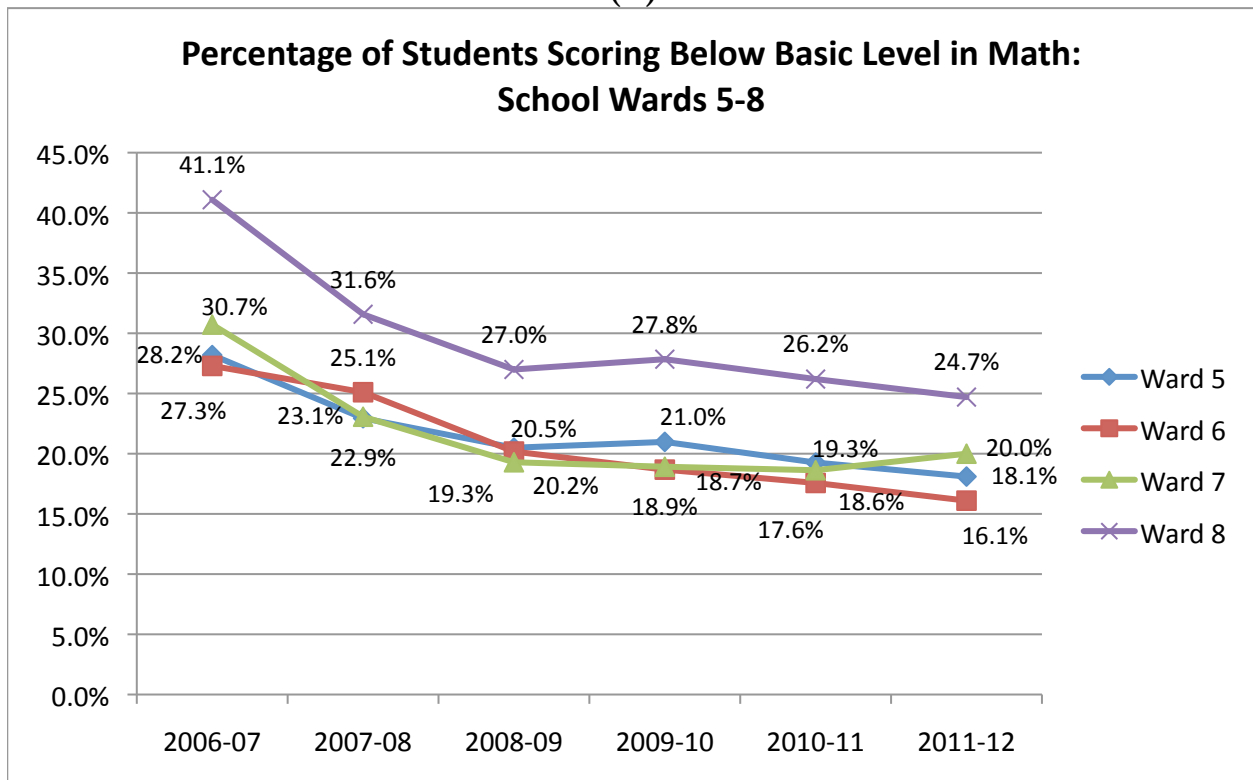


Figure 2Bb

(I)



(II)



Figures 3A and 3B break down the analysis into school types: traditional public schools versus charter schools. While charter schools have higher student achievement on average in both reading and math, during the time period studied, both types of schools experienced comparable improvements in student performance.

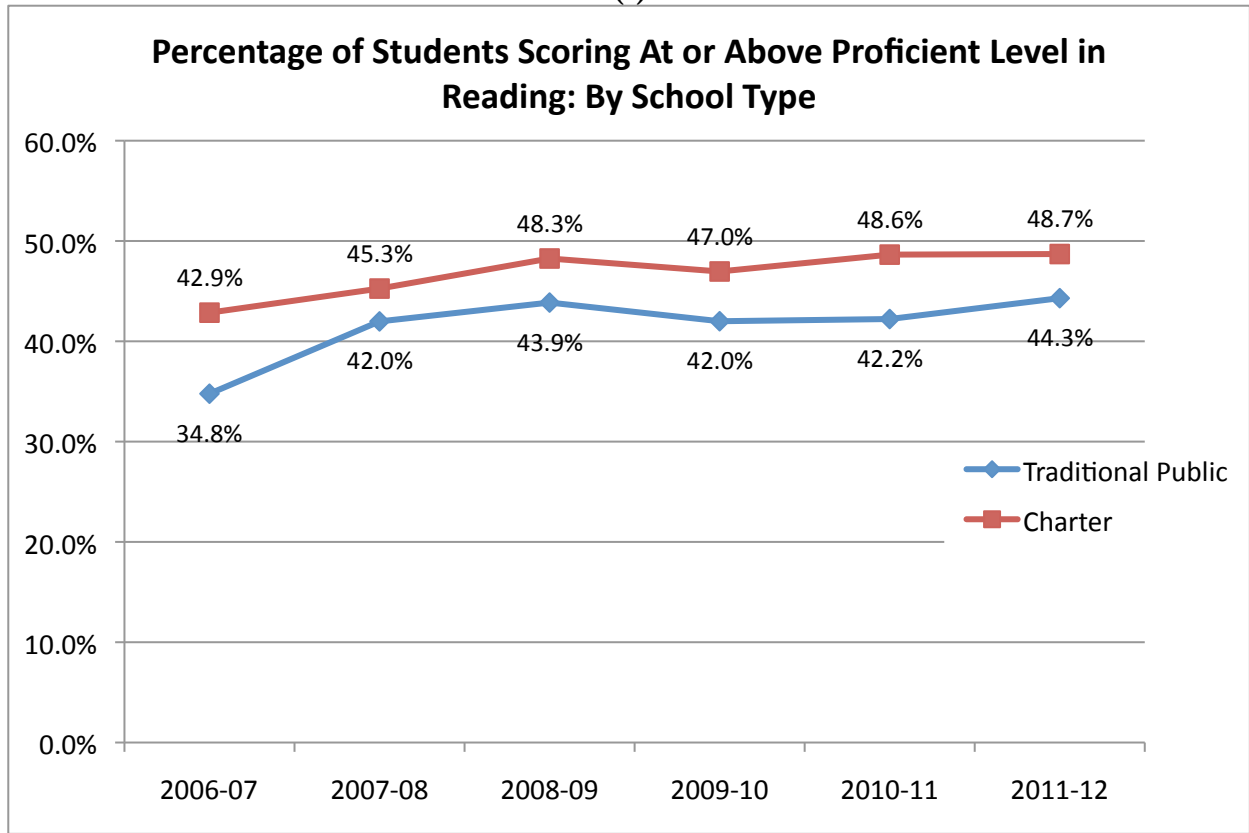
Over the entire period, the fraction of students in traditional public schools performing at or above the “proficient” level in reading increased by 9.5 percentage points, from 34.8 to 44.3 percent, whereas the fraction in charter schools increased 5.8 percentage points, from 42.9 to 48.7 percent. In both types of schools the rate of change was steeper in the earlier periods.

The fraction of low-performing students (those scoring below the “basic” level) in traditional public schools decreased from 21.7 percent in 2006-2007 to 14.4 percent in 2008-2009; then rose to 17.4 percent by 2011-2012 (for a net decrease over time of 4.3 percentage points). In the charter schools, the fraction of students performing “below basic” decreased from 10.4 percent to 8.5 percent over the first three years of the study, then rose to 11.5 percent by the final year (for a 1.1 percentage point net increase over the whole time period).

Traditional public and charter schools increased math proficiency by 18.4 and 14.1 percentage points respectively over the six years examined; and in both types of schools the fraction of students scoring “below basic” decreased as well, by 13.2 percentage points in the traditional schools and 6.0 percentage points in the charters.

Figure 3A

(I)



(II)

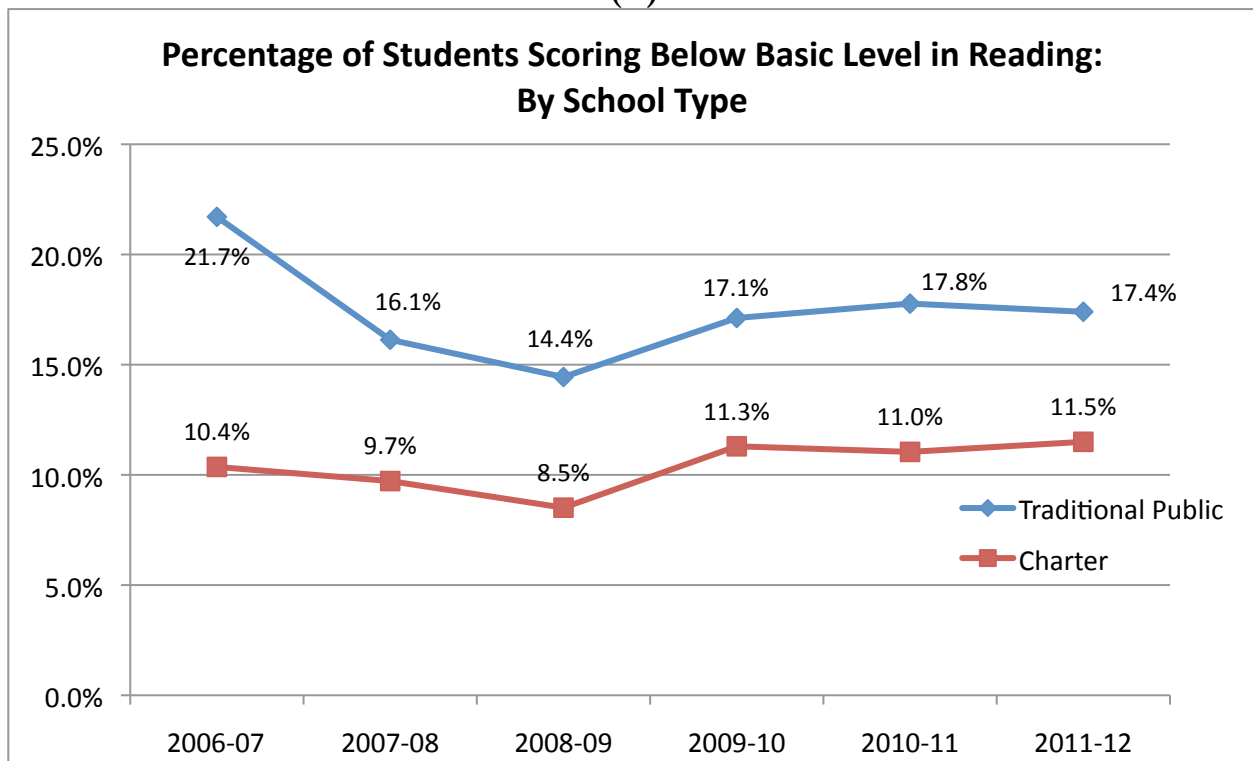
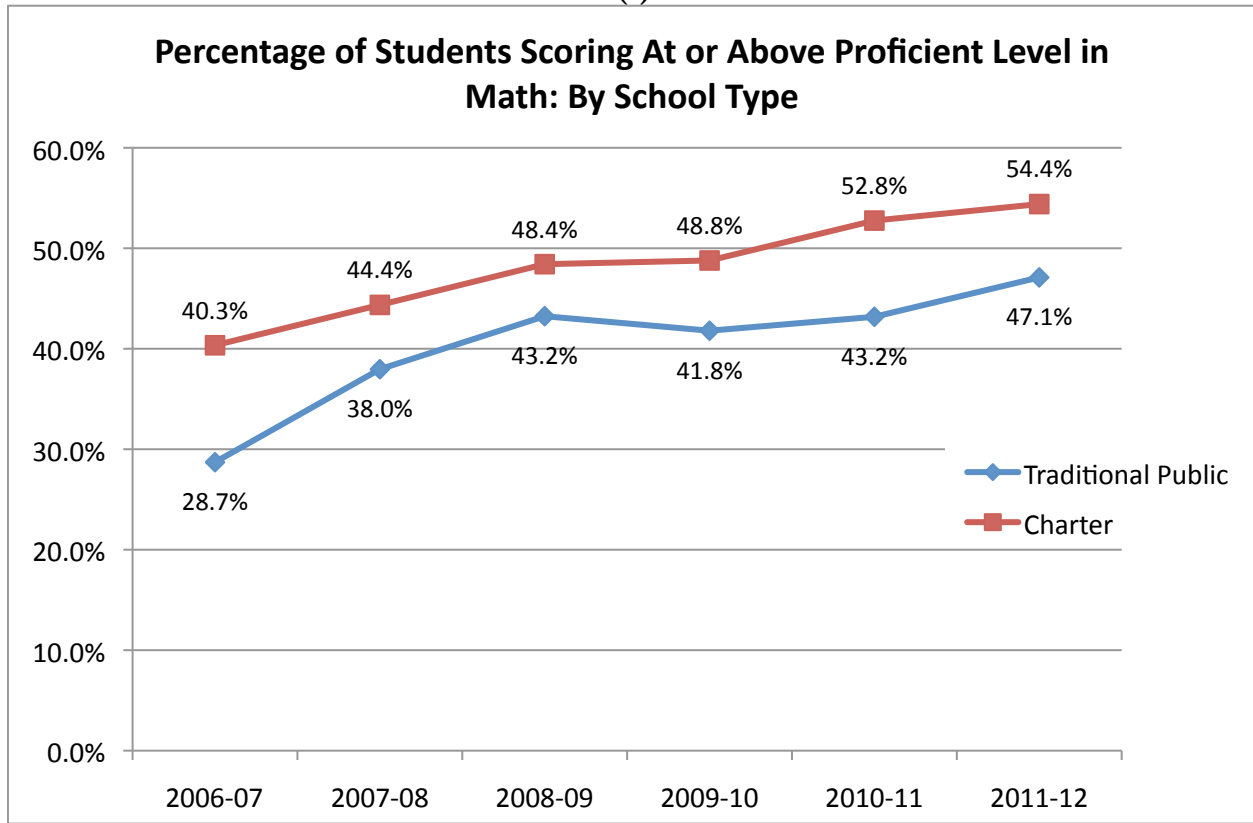
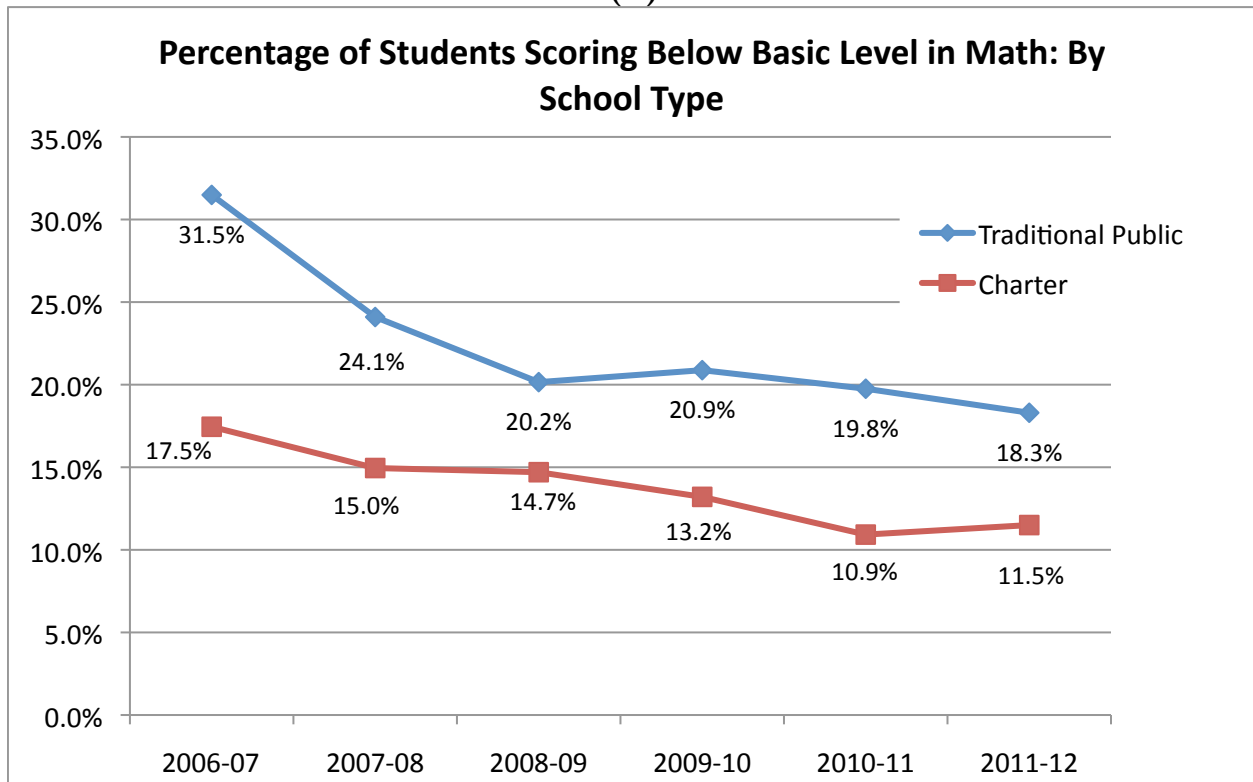


Figure 3B

(I)



(II)



We also investigated whether student achievement gains differed based on the affluence of a school's student population. In Figures 4Aa through 4Bb, schools are divided into poverty deciles, with decile 1 schools having the smallest percentage of free or reduced price lunch students. Figures 4Aa and 4Ba shows deciles 1-5, while figures 4Ab and 4Bb show deciles 6-10, to make the graphs more legible.¹²

In terms of reading achievement (Figures 4Aa and 4Ab), schools in deciles 1 and 2 – the lowest poverty schools – showed the largest increases in proficiency (18.2 and 12.8 percentage points, respectively), as well as the largest decreases in the “below basic” level (10.5 and 5.5 percentage points respectively), over the whole period. While the lowest poverty schools demonstrated the largest increases in student reading performance, all 10 deciles showed increases in reading proficiency rates over the time period examined. Additionally, all but one of the deciles (decile 9) showed decreases in their “below basic” reading rate. Similar to the previous patterns for “below basic” reading rates, the rates for many of the poverty deciles decreased in the early years, and began to rise in the later years.

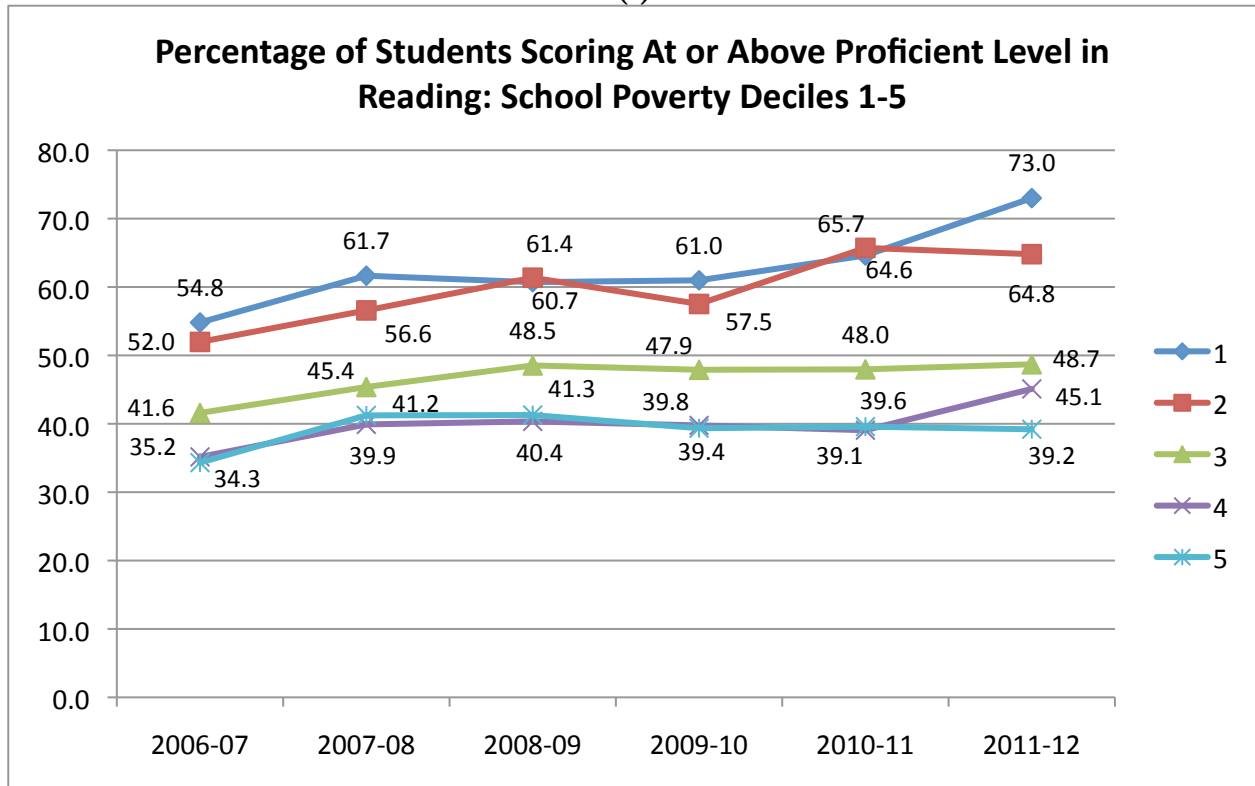
Similar to the reading scores, in math (Figures 4Ba and 4Bb), schools in the higher poverty deciles showed the greatest proficiency improvement. The largest increases in math proficiency were in deciles 1 and 2 (21.9 and 23.5 percentage points, respectively). It's important to note however, that even the poverty deciles with the smallest improvements still showed large gains over the time period; deciles 3 and 5 increased math proficiency by 12.1 and 12.0 percentage points, respectively.

The largest decreases in “below basic” math rates were not exclusively in the low poverty schools, with deciles 1, 4 and 7 showing substantial decreases (15.2, 13.8, and 17.3 percentage points, respectively). All 10 poverty deciles increased math proficiency and decreased “below basic” rates over the six year period.

¹² Please keep in mind that the scales for the deciles 1-5 and 6-10 graphs are not the same. This is done to show as much variation as possible for the school poverty deciles displayed in each graph.

Figure 4Aa

(I)



(II)

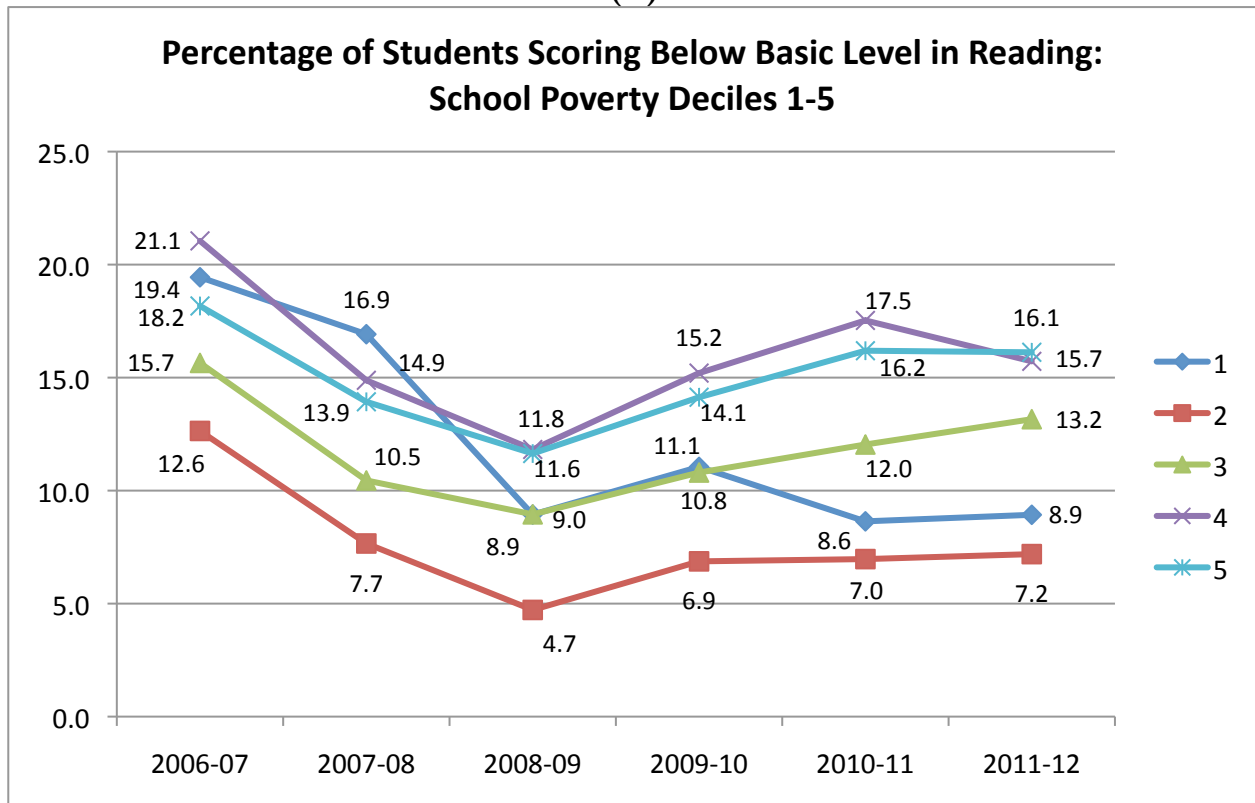
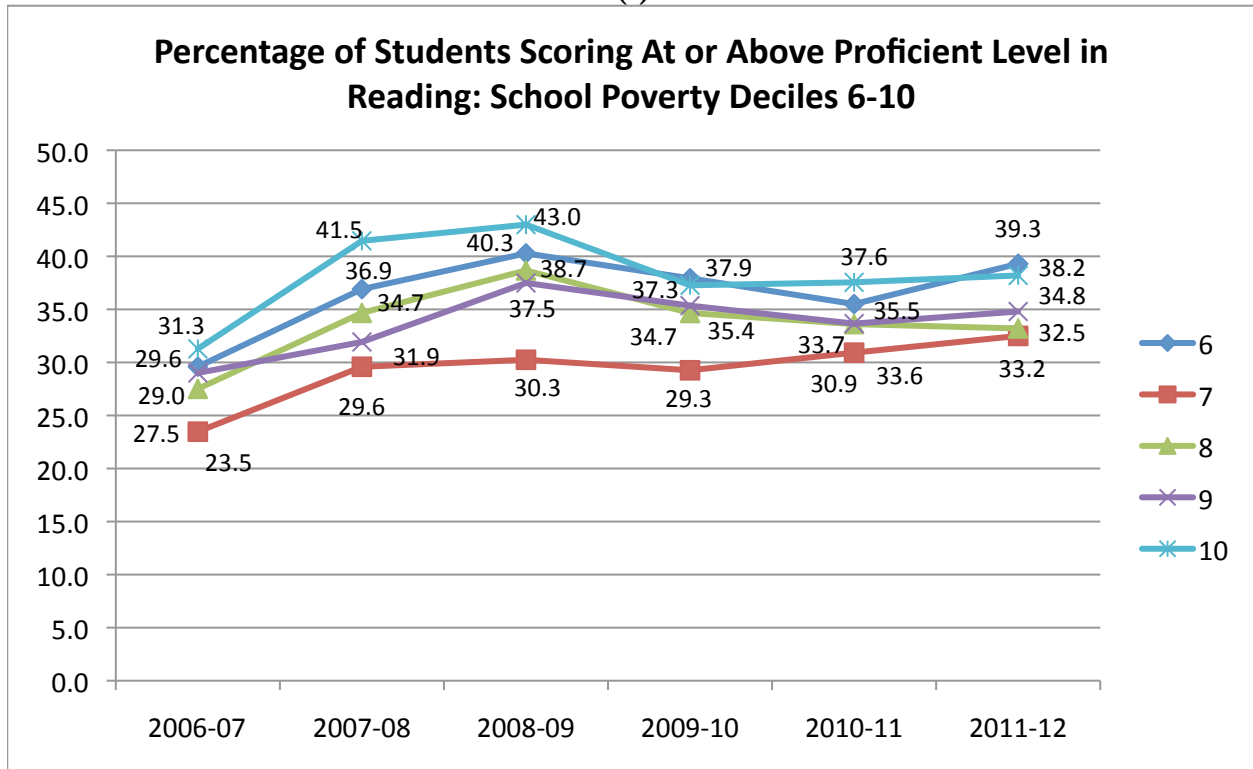


Figure 4Ab

(I)



(II)

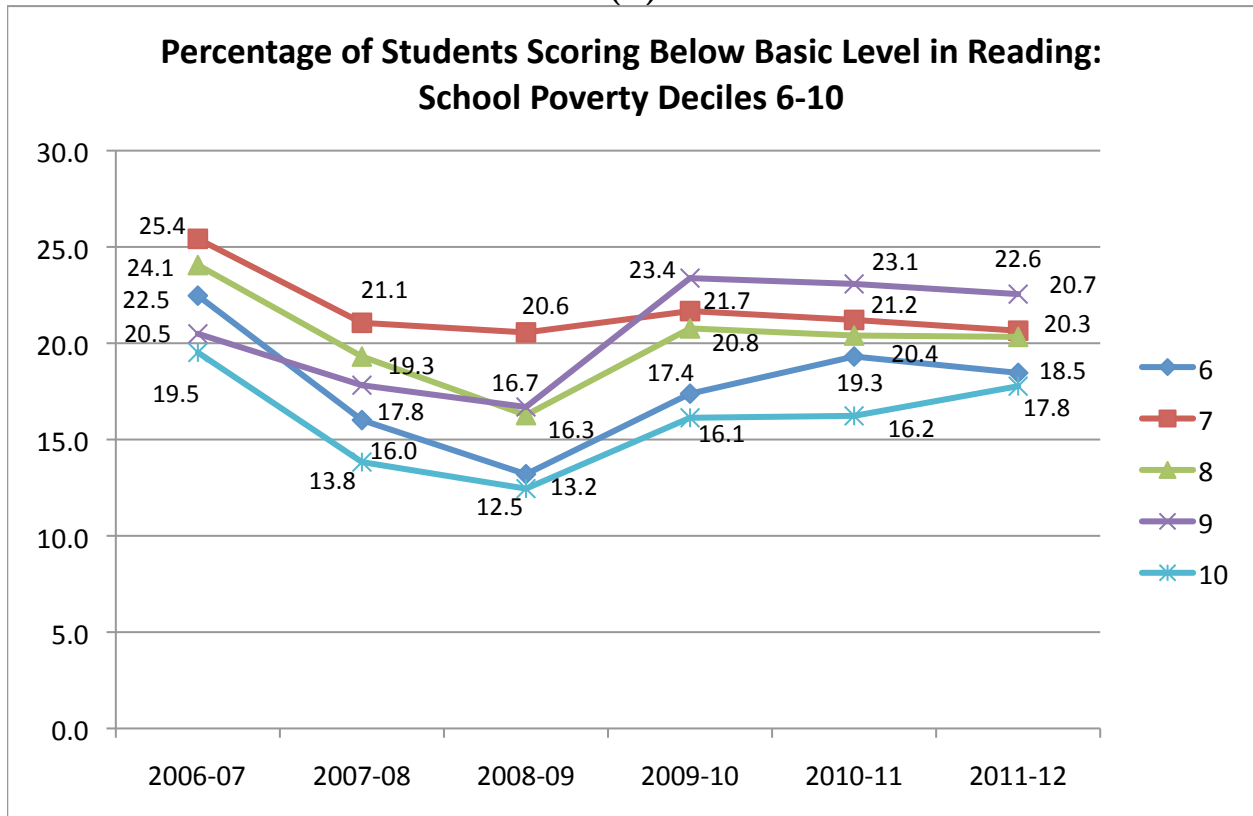
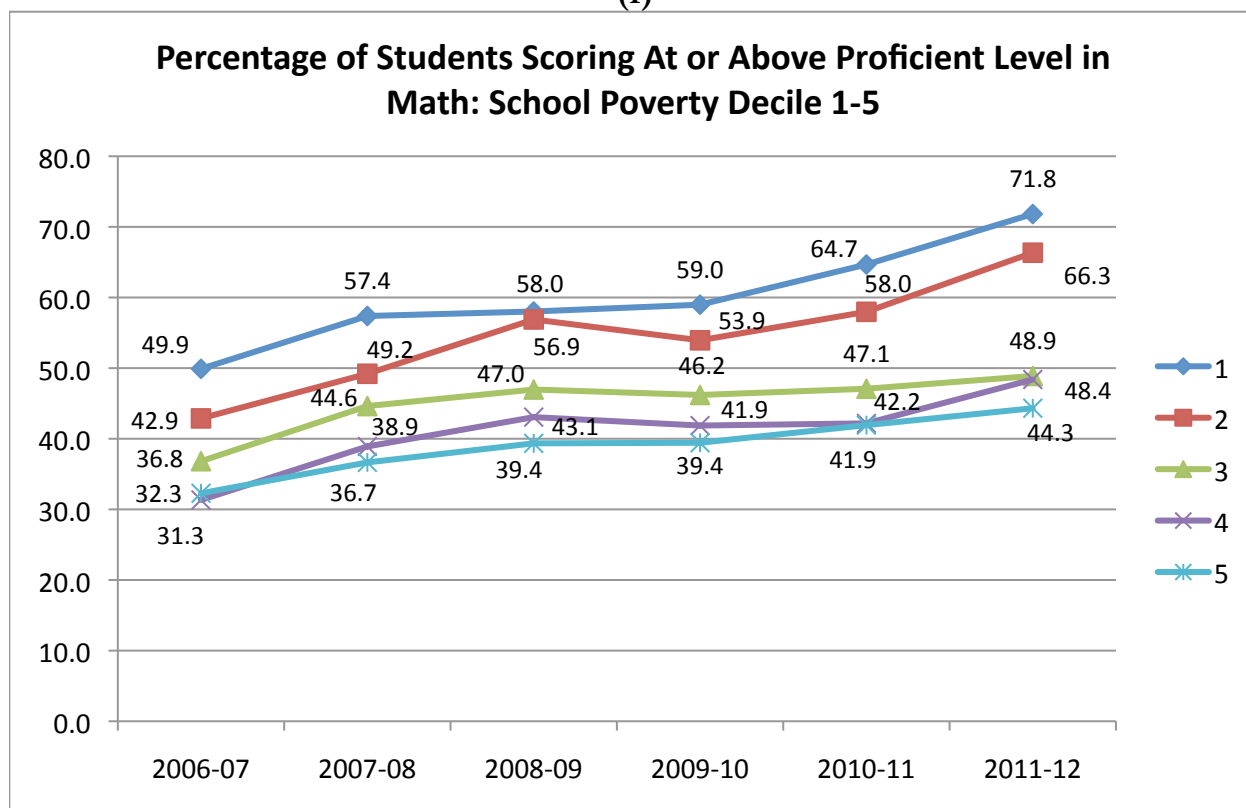


Figure 4Ba

(I)



(II)

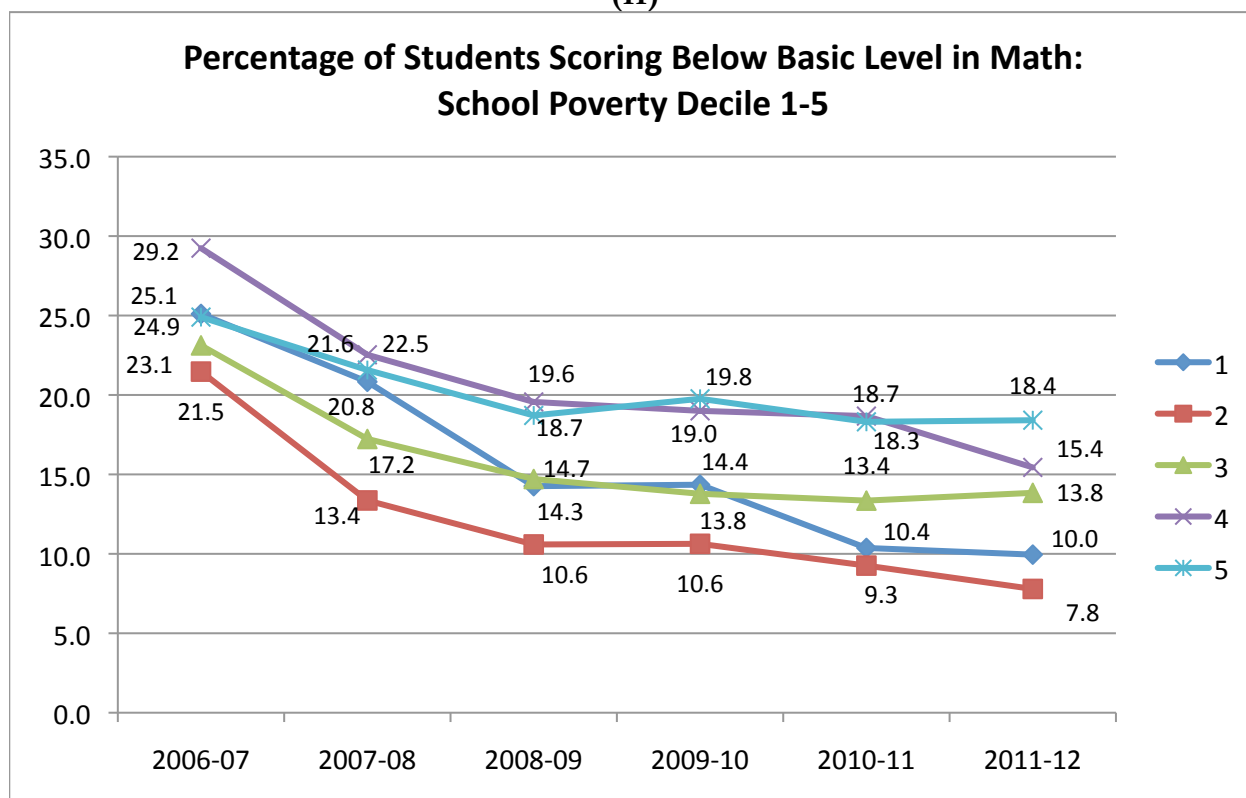
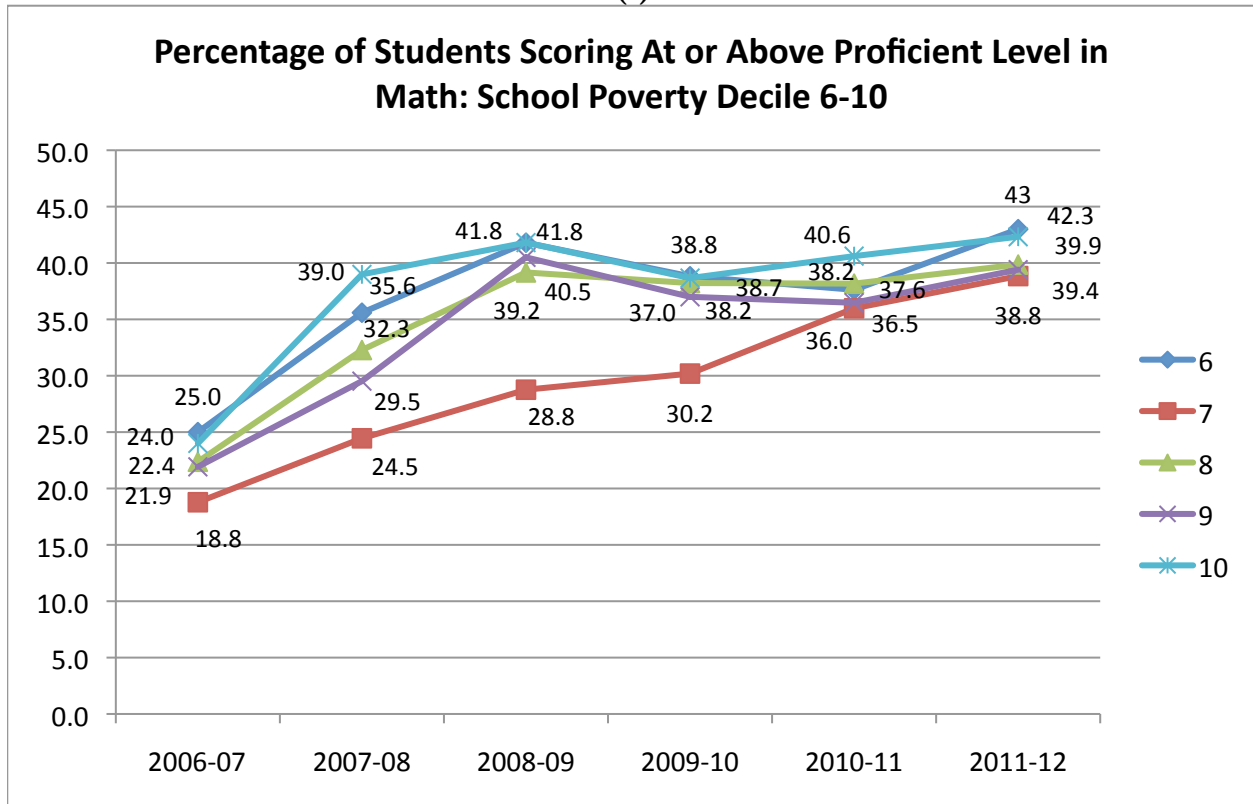
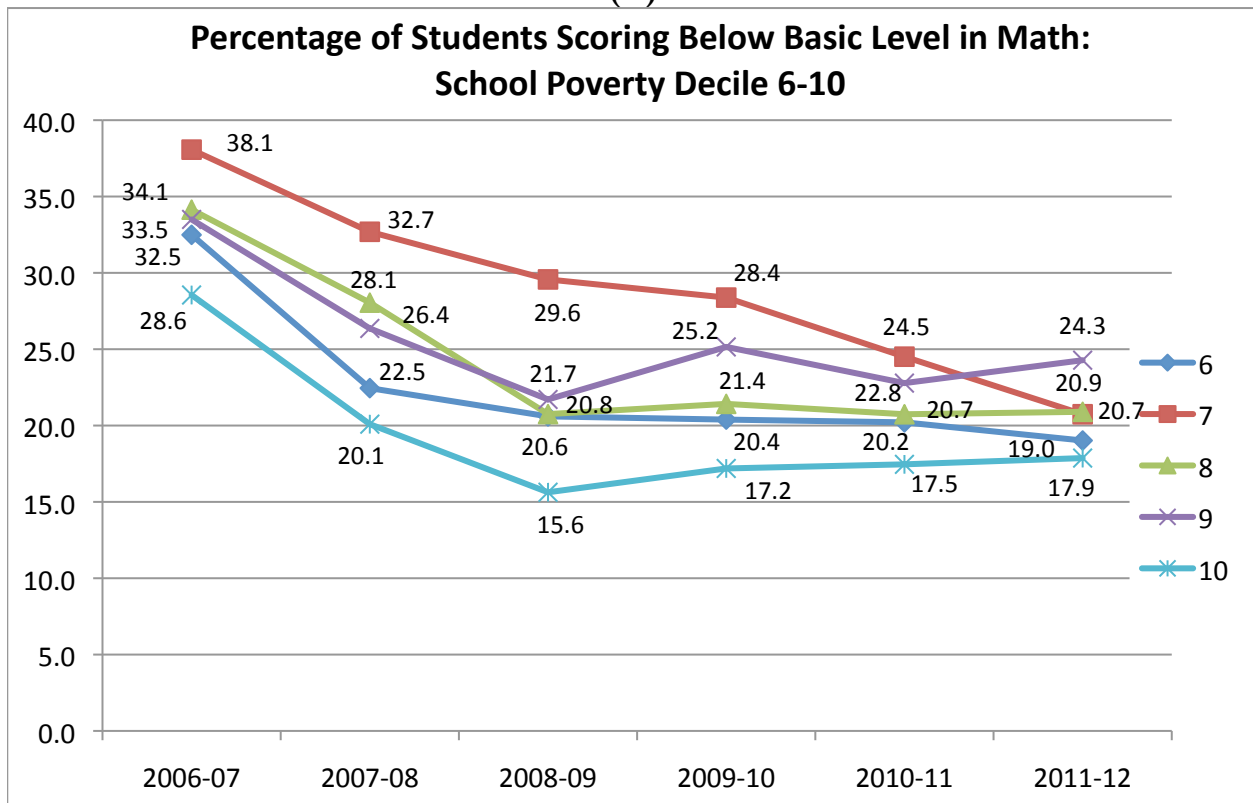


Figure 4Bb

(I)



(II)



Figures 5A and 5B show changes in student achievement separately by various student characteristics. Over the time period studied, racial minorities - and also relatively affluent students, as measured by their free or reduced priced lunch (FRPL) ineligibility - demonstrated the largest gains in performance in both reading and math. Between 2006-2007 and 2011-2012, reading proficiency rates for black and Hispanic students rose by 7.0 and 6.6 percentage points respectively, while reading proficiency fell for white students by 0.1 percentage point. Even though white students showed the smallest change, they have by far the highest average level of proficiency during this time period. Reading proficiency rates rose by 7.2 and 19.1 percentage points for FRPL eligible and ineligible students, respectively, over these six years.

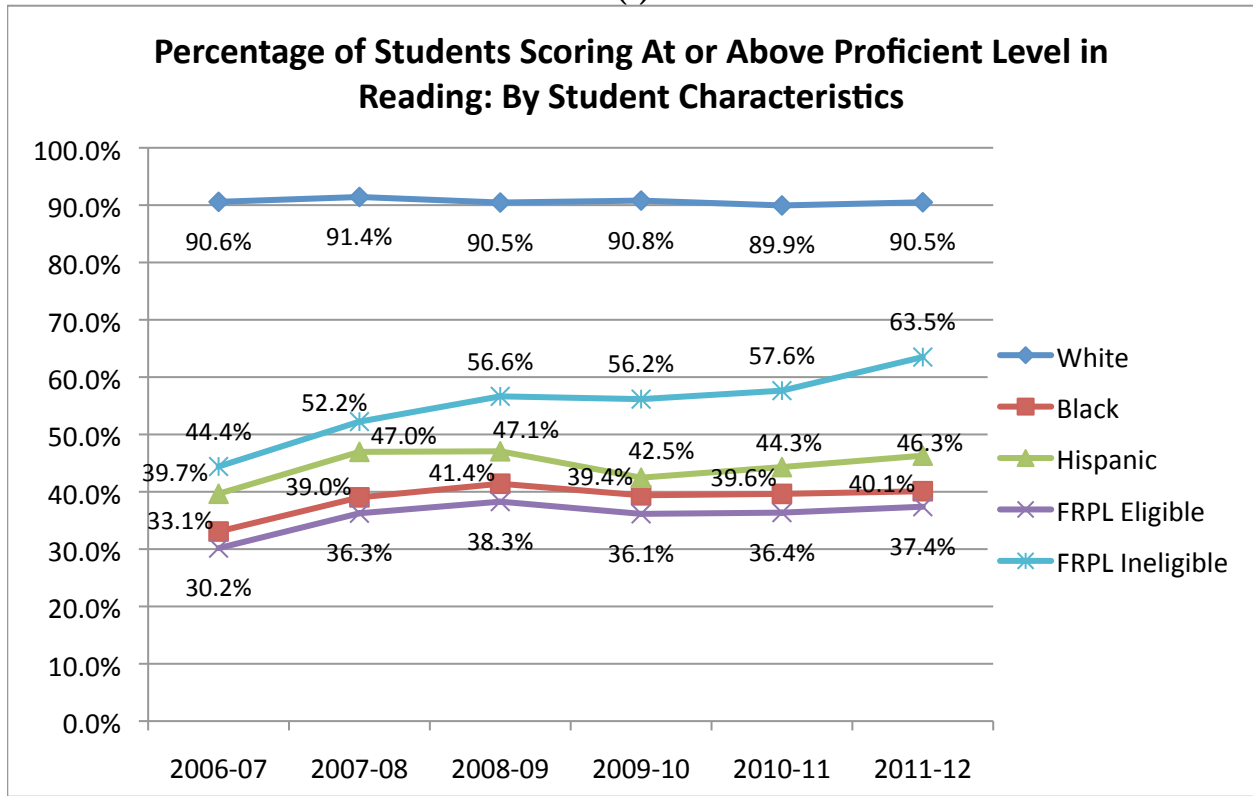
Similarly, the largest changes in “below basic” reading rates were for minority and non-FRPL students. Over the whole period, “below basic” rates dropped 1.6 and 6.8 percentage points for black and Hispanic students, while white students saw an increase of 0.1 percentage point. The fraction of “below basic” FRPL ineligible students dropped 8.7 percentage points from 18.6 percent to 9.9 percent, while the fraction for FRPL eligible students decreased 2.8 percentage points from 21.7 to 18.9 percent.

As seen in the previous graphs, even though the reading “below basic” rate decreased overall during the six years examined, most of the decrease occurred in the first few years of the study, and in the later years, the “below basic” reading rate began to rise. Further research is needed to understand this pattern.

Math student achievement follows a nearly identical pattern. All races and income groups saw increases in math proficiency and decreases in “below basic” rates. The changes were larger for black and Hispanic students (16.1 and 16.9 percentage point increases in proficiency, and 11.0 and 10.5 percentage point decreases in the “below basic” rate, respectively) compared to white students (1.5 percentage point increase in proficiency, 0.3 percentage point decrease in the “below basic” rate). The math improvement is also larger for FRPL ineligible students (25.2 percentage point increase in proficiency, 15.6 percentage point decrease in the “below basic” rate), compared to FRPL eligible students (16.9 percentage point increase in proficiency, 12.3 percentage point decrease in the “below basic” rate).

Figure 5A

(I)



(II)

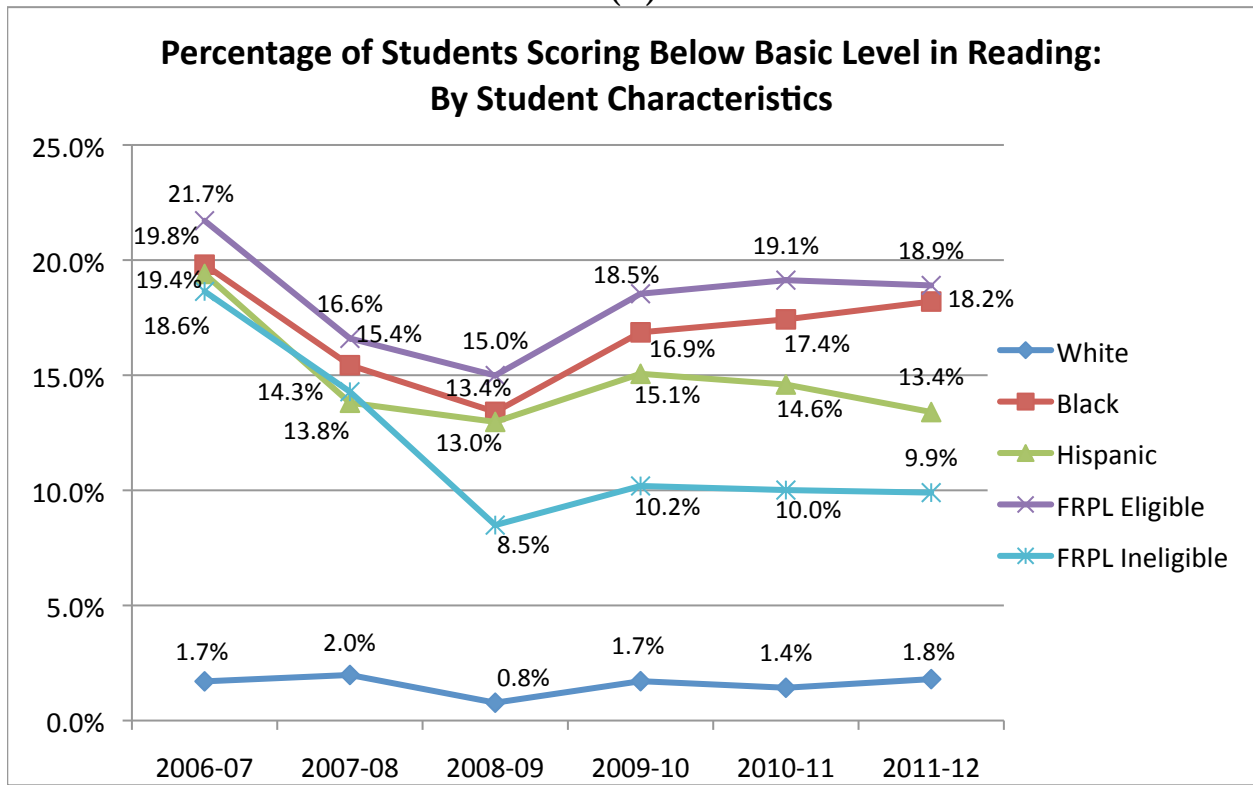
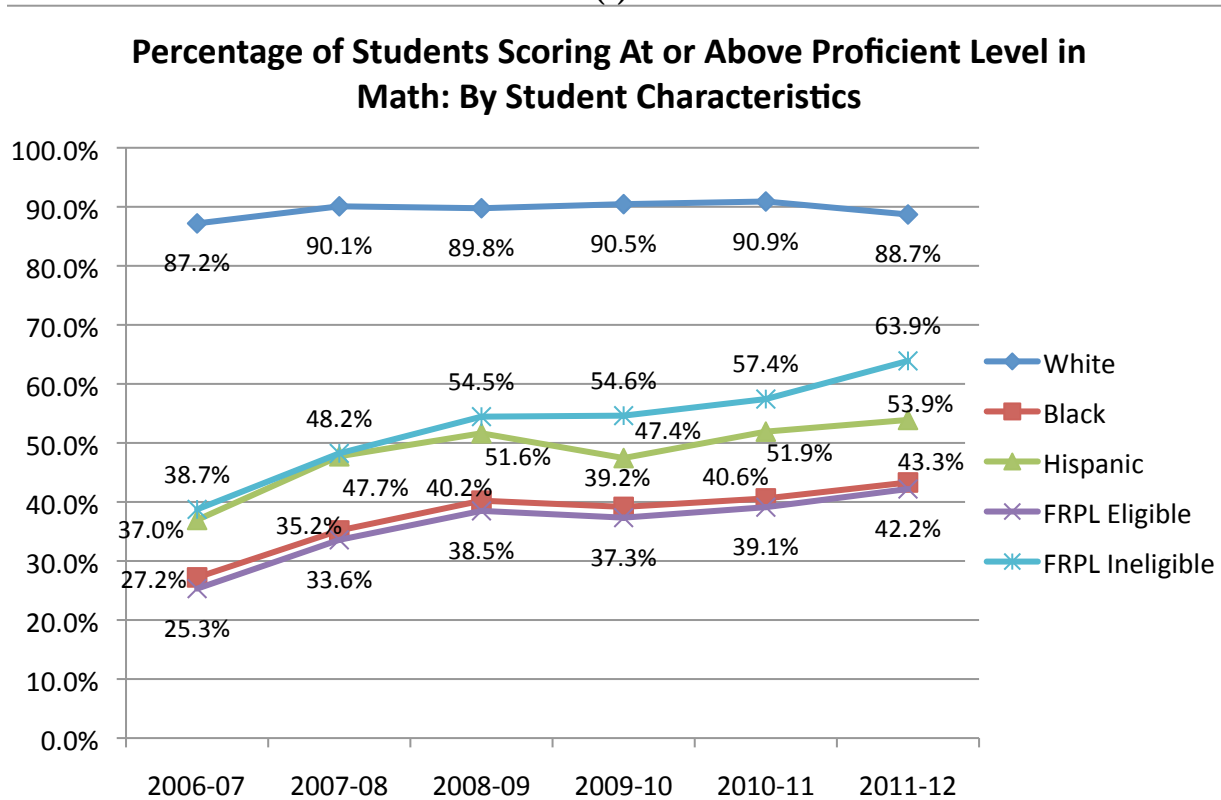
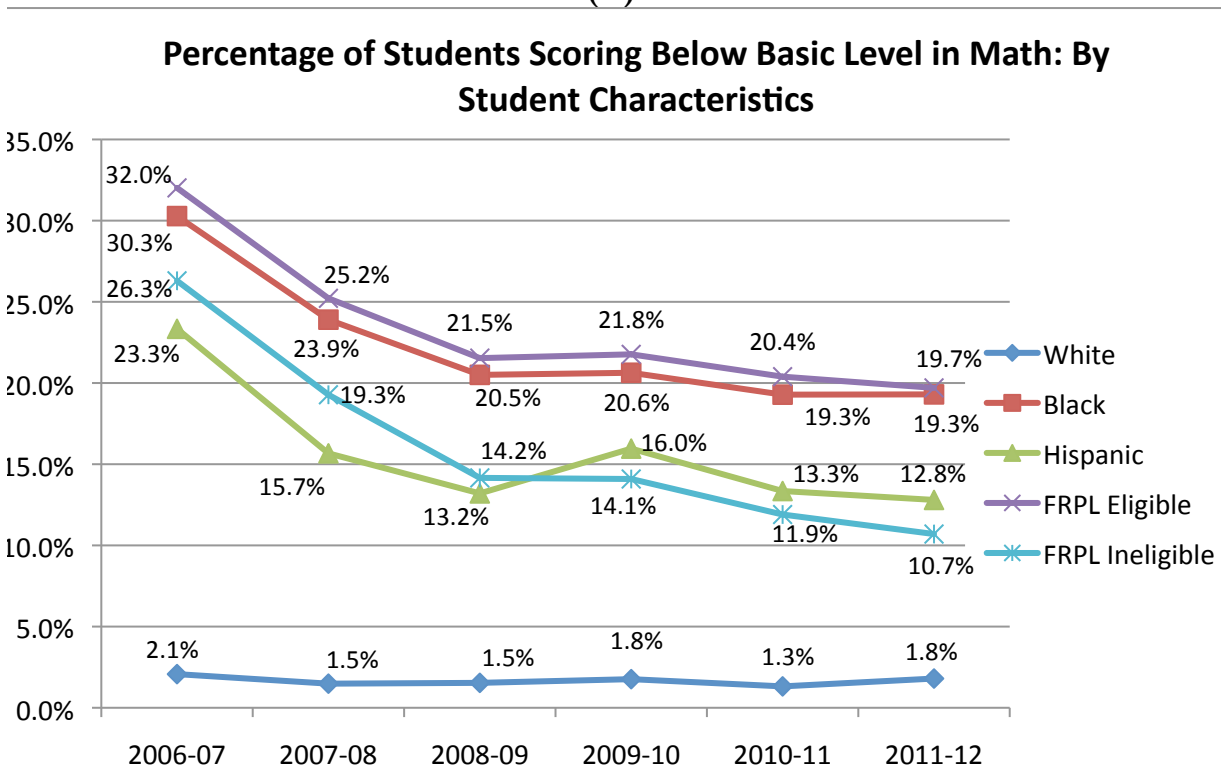


Figure 5B

(I)



(II)



Summary

Over the 2006-2012 period we find increases in proficiency and decreases in “below basic” rates for students in the District. The improvements tend to be greater in the early years and the later years examined (especially for math), with smaller improvements in the middle years. The increases in performance are larger for math scores than for reading. The increases in proficiency can be seen in all 8 wards in the District, as well as in both traditional public and charter schools. Both reading and math proficiency improvements (and reading “below basic” improvements) are largest in low poverty schools, while the math “below basic” improvements are large in schools of all poverty deciles. Performance gains are largest for minority and non-FRPL eligible students.

While this report only examines changes in proficiency and “below basic” rates, our subsequent study will examine changes in raw student test scores. That analysis will allow us to evaluate the statistical significance of the improvements in the District’s test scores over time.

It is worth repeating the cautions expressed earlier in this chapter. While the improvements in student achievement coincide with the enactment of PERAA, we have insufficient evidence to conclude that these increases are a direct *result* of the legislation. And because some of the improvement coincides with the adoption of a new standardized test, the DC CAS, it is important to keep in mind that some of the change may be due to adaptation by students and teachers to the new test or other factors not directly correlated with genuine gains in learning. While “learning to the test” is a possible explanation for the growth in performance in the earlier years examined, it is unlikely to be the cause of improvement in the later years. Overall, it is impossible based on this analysis to assess the magnitude of whatever potential bias may have resulted from factors other than the PERAA legislation.

In Technical Appendix A we repeat these analyses, but instead of reporting raw proficiency and “below basic” rates, we report “regression-adjusted” differences. By controlling for student characteristics in the regressions, the numbers presented in the Appendix describe changes in the proficiency and “below basic” rates, taking into account differences in observed student characteristics over time and between groups. For example, one hypothesis may be that test scores have increased in the District over time because, in part, District residents are becoming more white and more affluent. These Appendix regressions account for that concern by measuring changes in test performance over time, while holding constant the fraction of white and non-FRPL students in the district. While we control for all the student characteristics we observe in our data (gender, free or reduced priced lunch eligibility, race/ethnicity, grade, special education status, and limited English proficiency status), it is important to remember that there are many other student characteristics that are unobserved, and thus not controlled for in the Appendix regressions.

While the patterns in the regression adjusted results are slightly more complicated and improvements are smaller, the overarching theme is the same. Keeping in mind year-to-

year changes, the fraction of students who score at a “proficient” level and above on standardized tests (especially in math) has increased from 2006-2007 to 2011-2012, and the fraction of students scoring below the “basic” level has decreased (especially for math). While these trends hold true for different types of schools and students, it is important to remember that there is still large variation in test performance across the District’s wards and across student and school characteristics. In our next report where we examine actual test scores, we can evaluate these changes more fully, including their statistical significance.

Section IV

Technical Appendix A

To examine the changes in student achievement since the enactment of PERAA, we follow an interrupted time-series approach where we compare post-PERAA and pre-PERAA student outcomes. This framework, in practice, implies comparisons between the 2006-2007 school year (the only pre-PERAA year for which student performance levels are available) and post-PERAA years until 2010-2011. We are interested in two binary outcomes: one indicating whether students performed at or above the “proficient” level in a given subject/year and the other indicating students performing at the “below basic” level. Given the binary nature of the outcomes, we estimate the following probit regression model for each subject and proficiency measure:

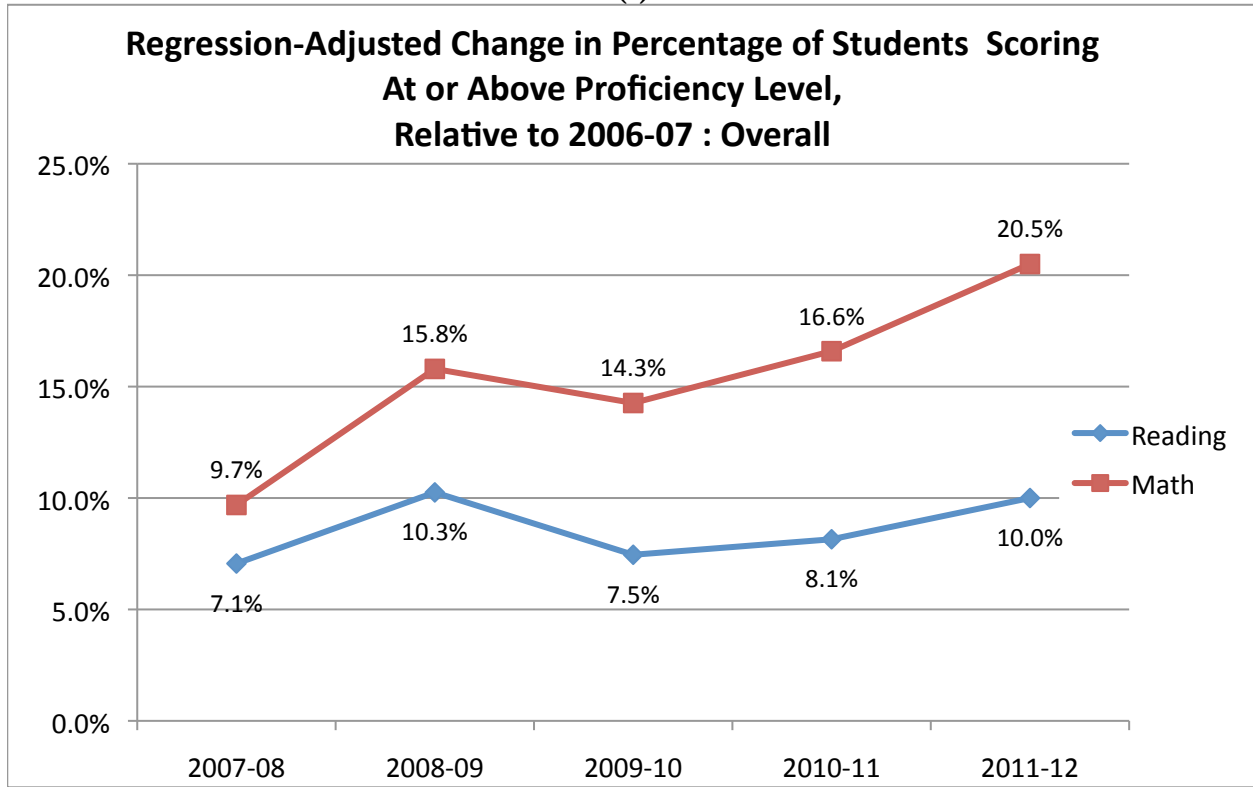
$$P_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Y_{07t} + \beta_2 Y_{08t} + \beta_3 Y_{09t} + \beta_4 Y_{10t} + \beta_5 X_{it} + \delta g + \epsilon_{it} \quad (B1)$$

The variables Y_{07t} – Y_{10t} are indicators for school years 2007-2008 through 2010-2011, X_{it} is the vector of student characteristics including FRPL eligibility, race/ethnicity, gender, special education status, and limited English proficiency status, and δg is a vector of grade indicators. In this specification, β_1 through β_4 reflect the differences in the proficiency rates between the corresponding post-PERAA school year and the 2006-2007 school year, taking differences in observed student characteristics into account.

Regression-Adjusted Figures

Figure 1

(I)



(II)

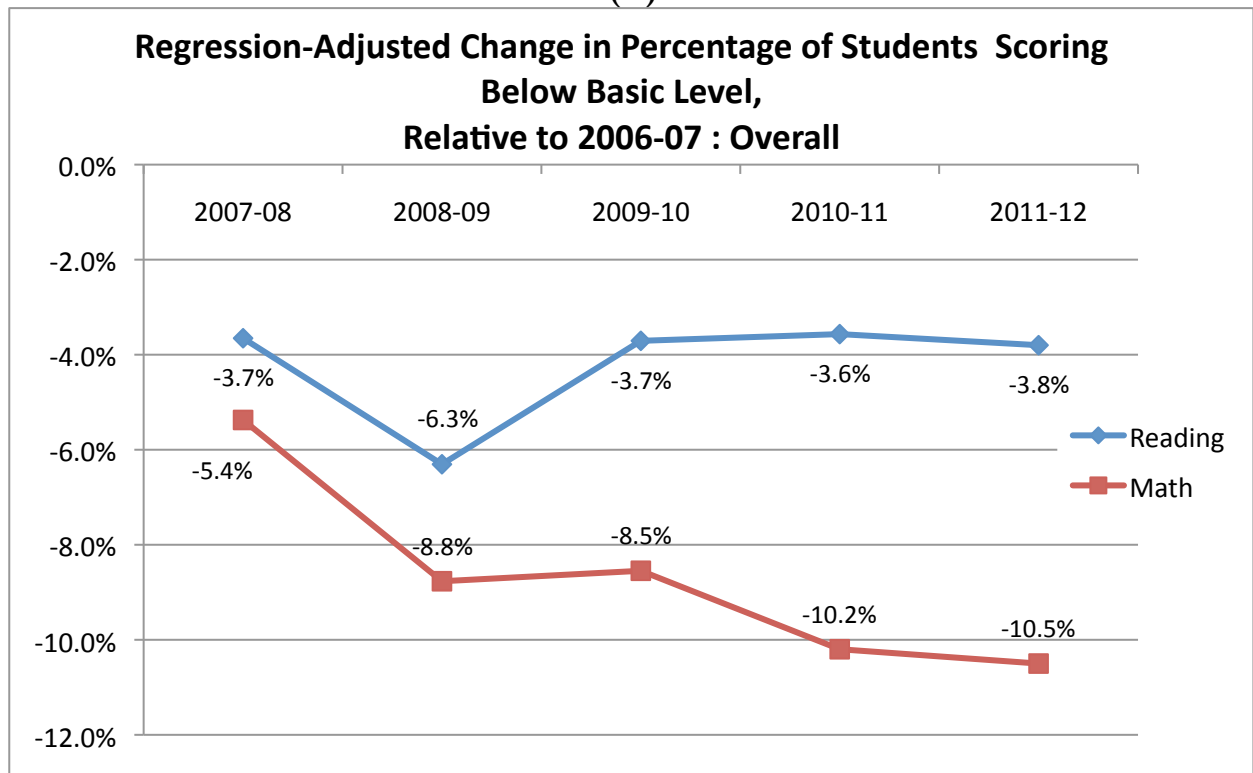
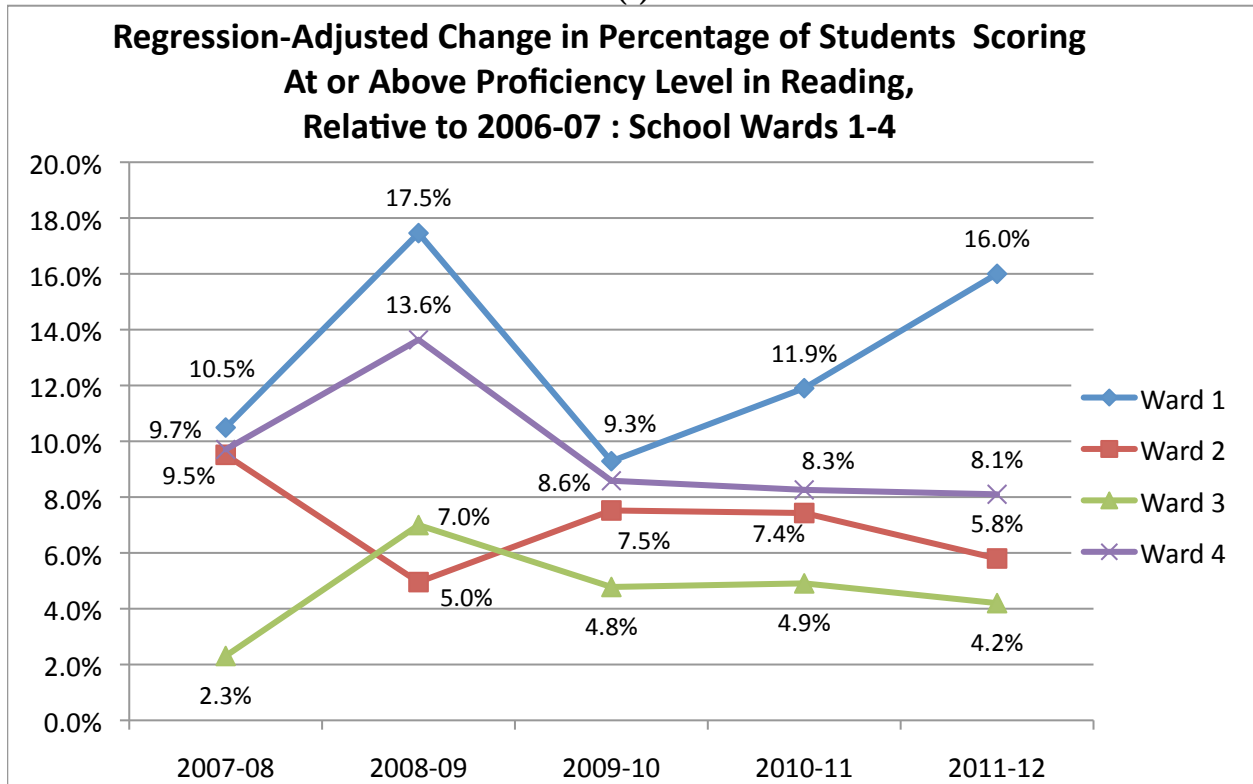


Figure 2Aa

(I)



(II)

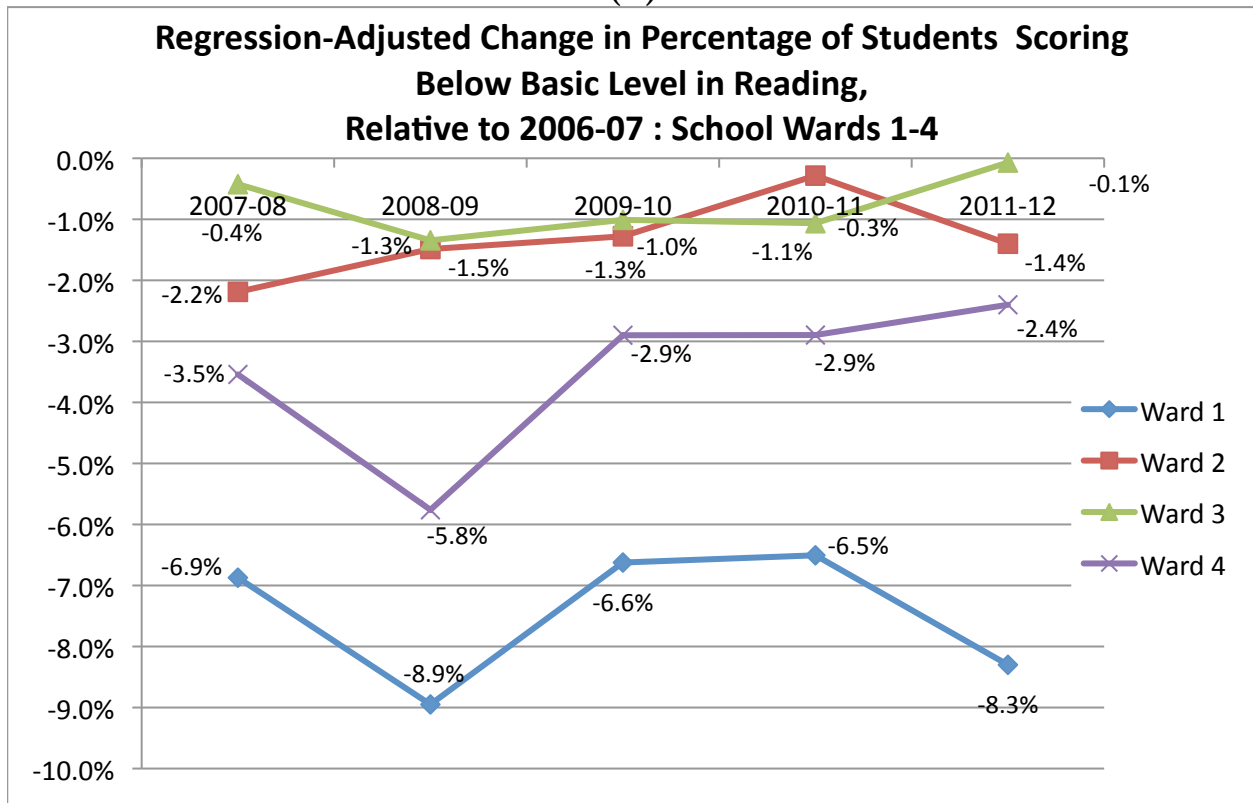
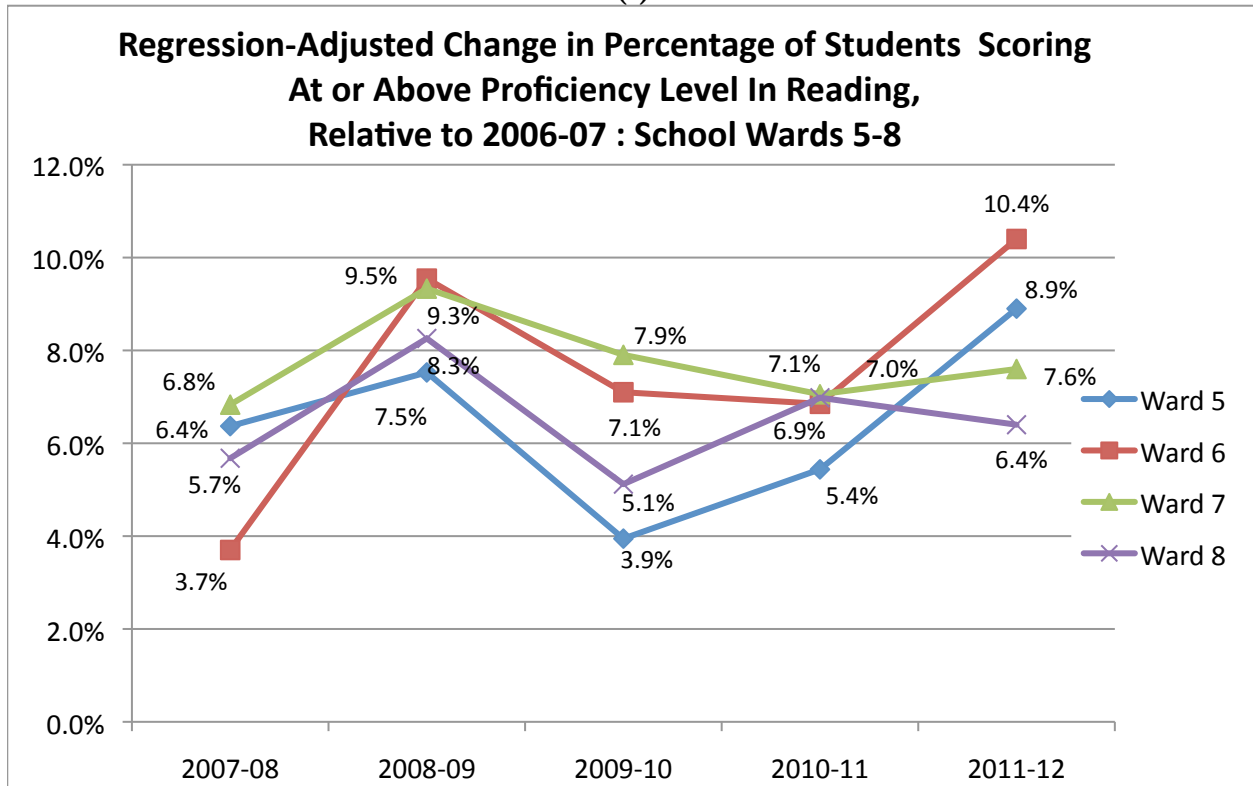


Figure 2Ab

(I)



(II)

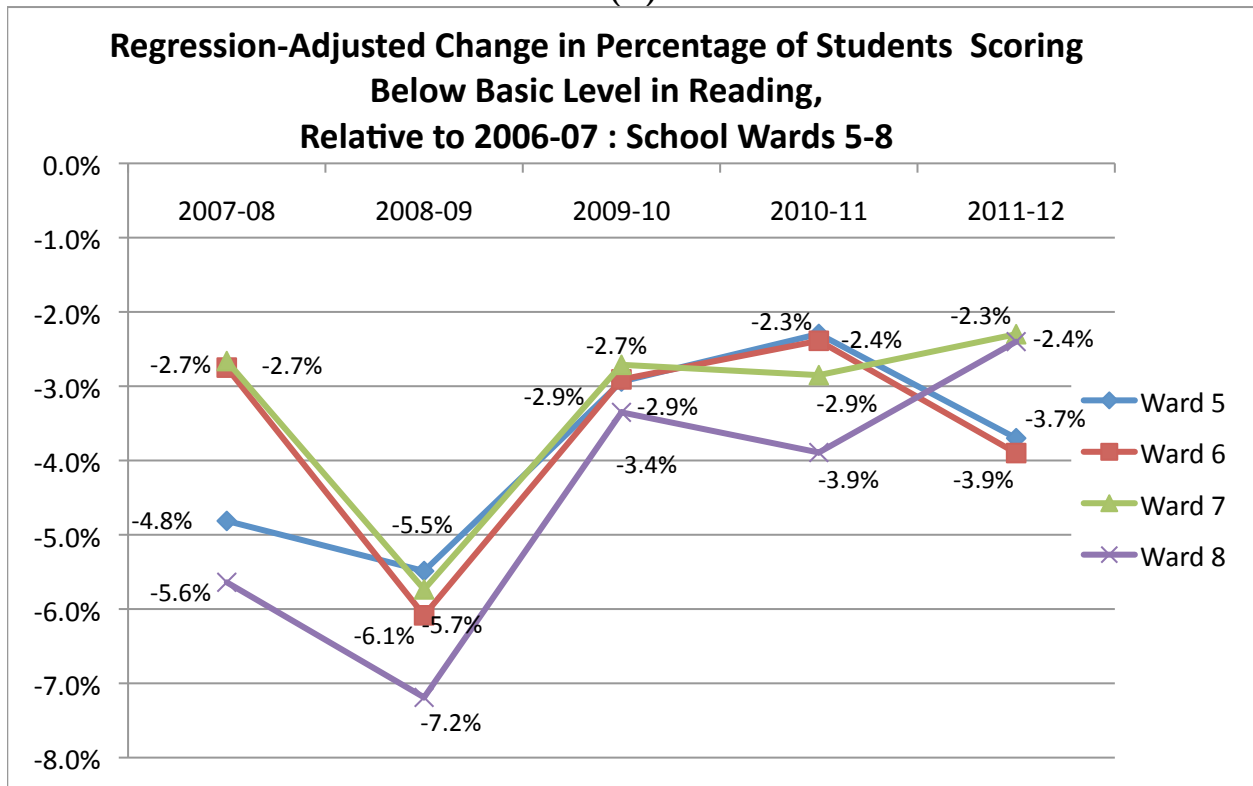
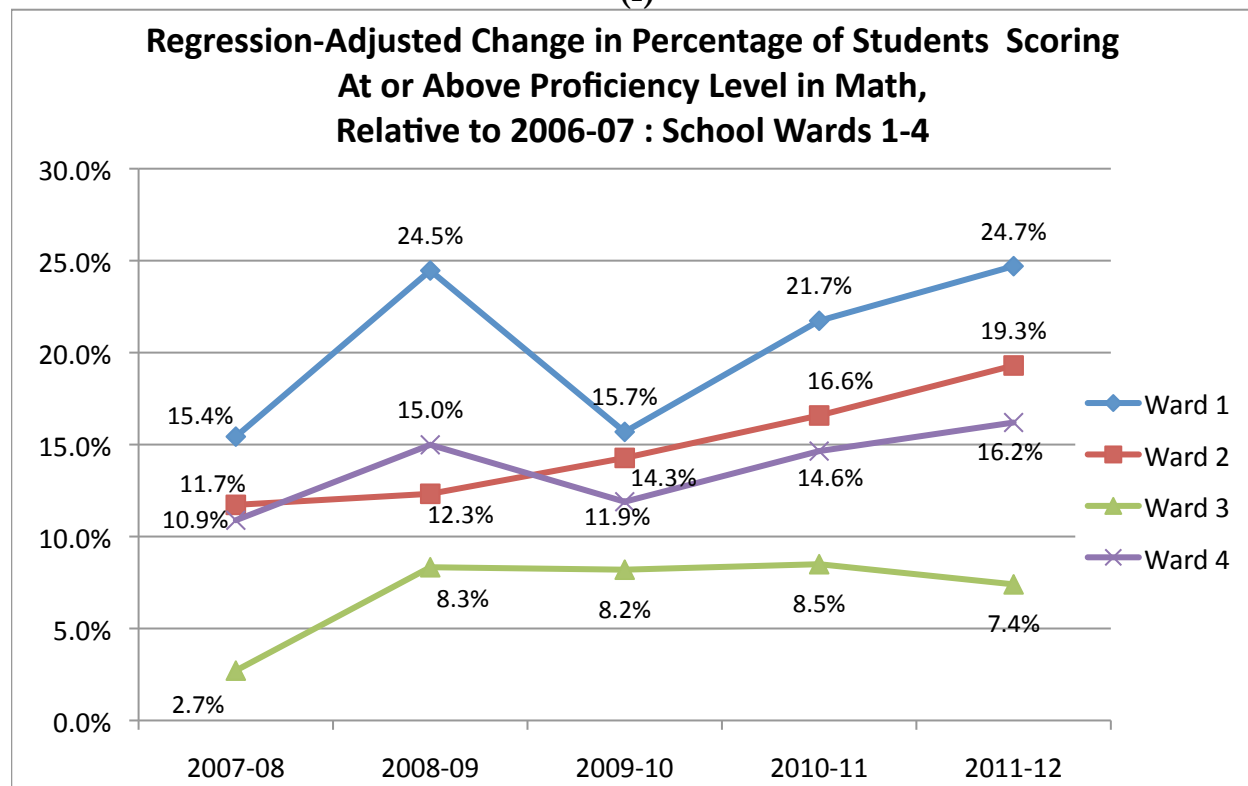


Figure 2Ba

(I)



(II)

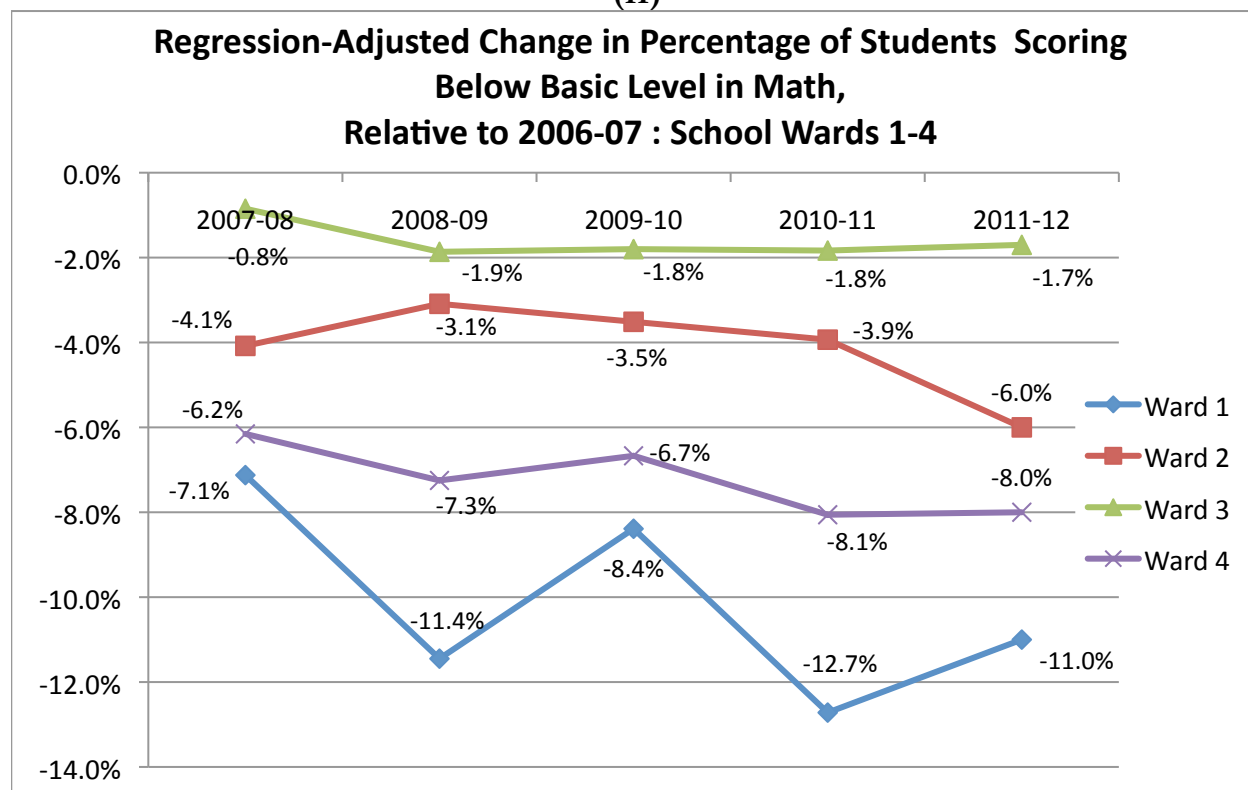
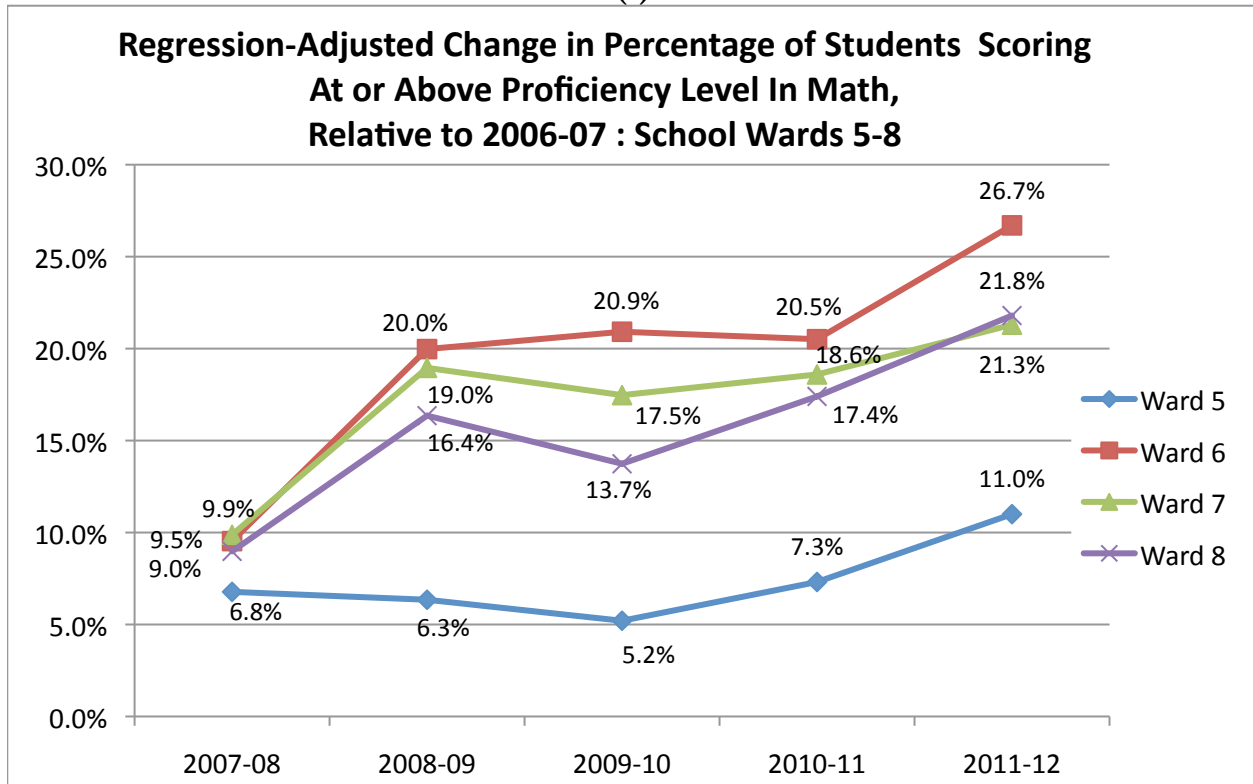


Figure 2Bb

(I)



(II)

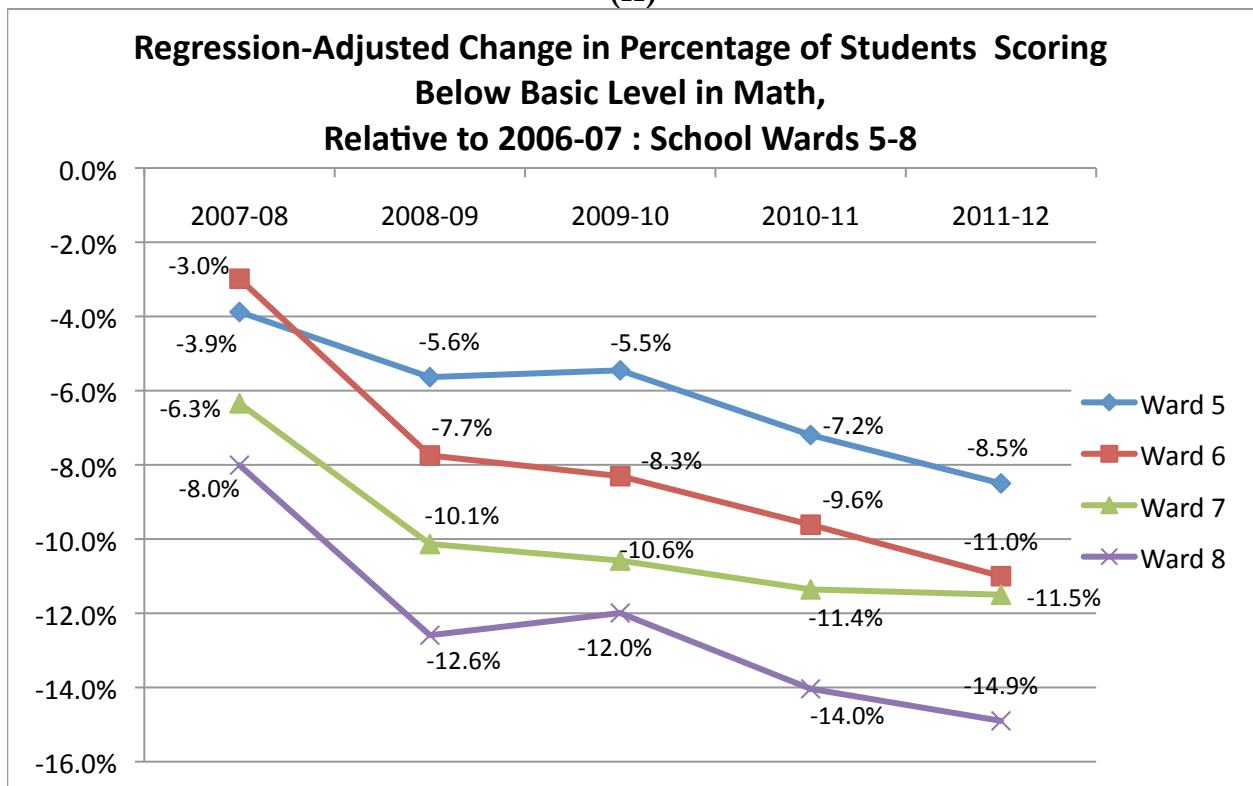
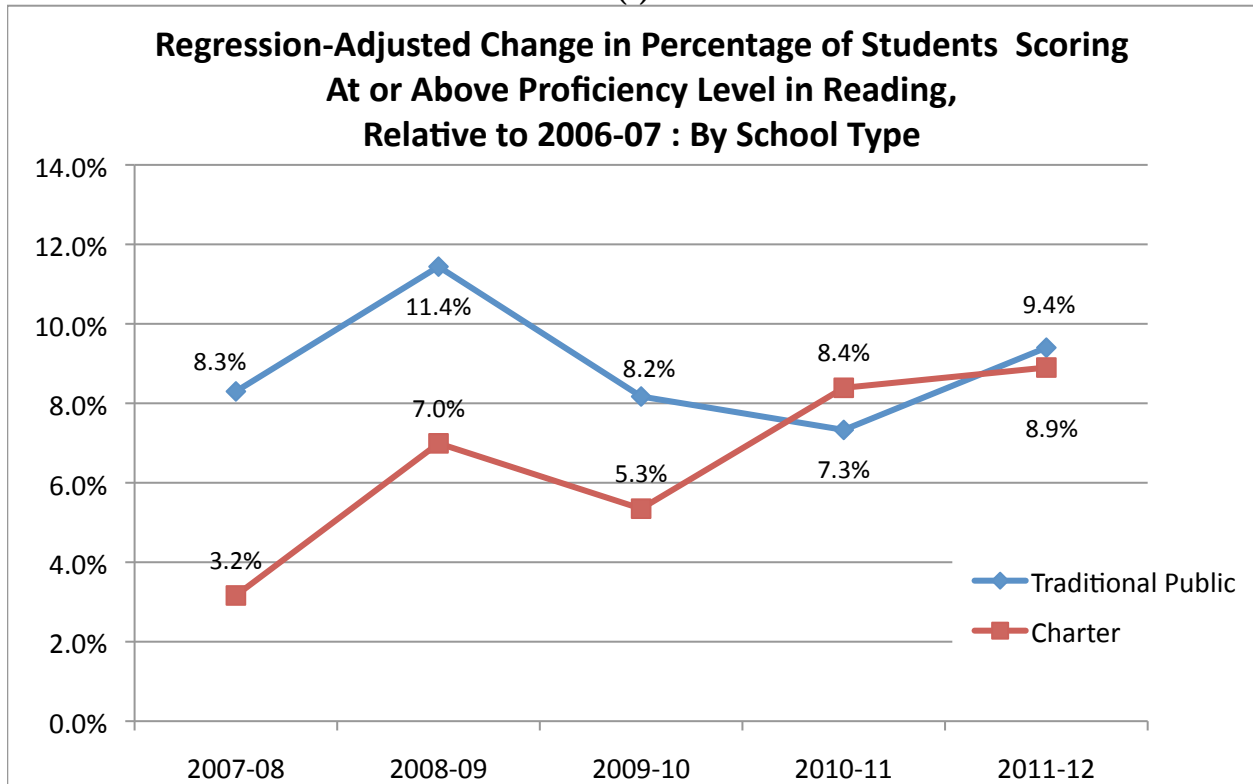


Figure 3A

(I)



(II)

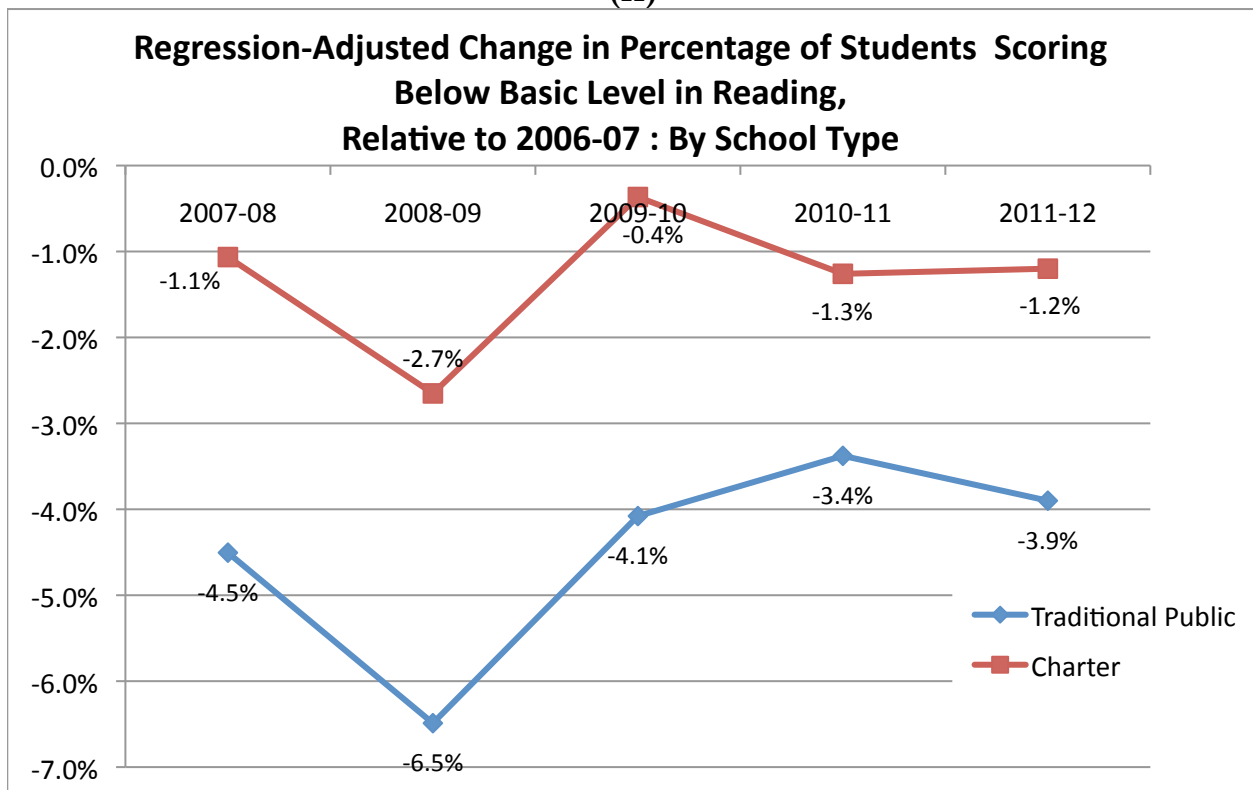
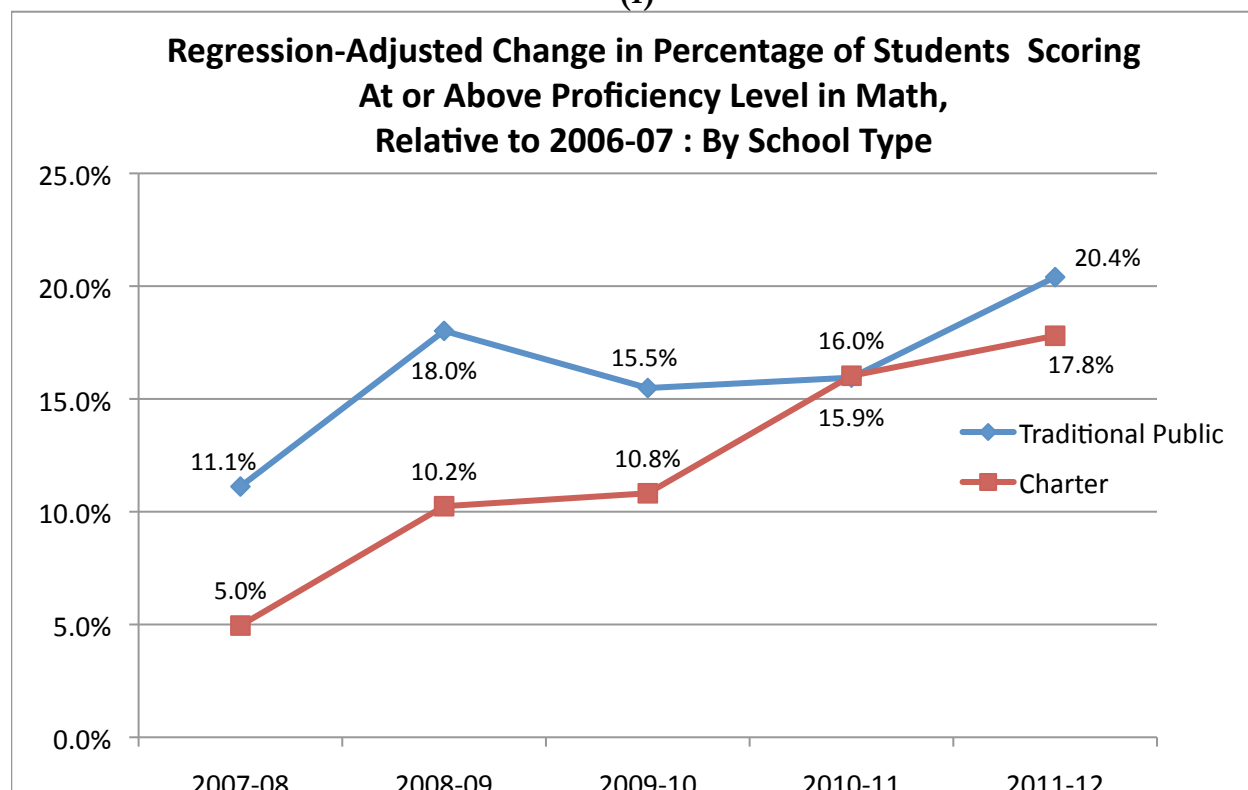


Figure 3B

(I)



(II)

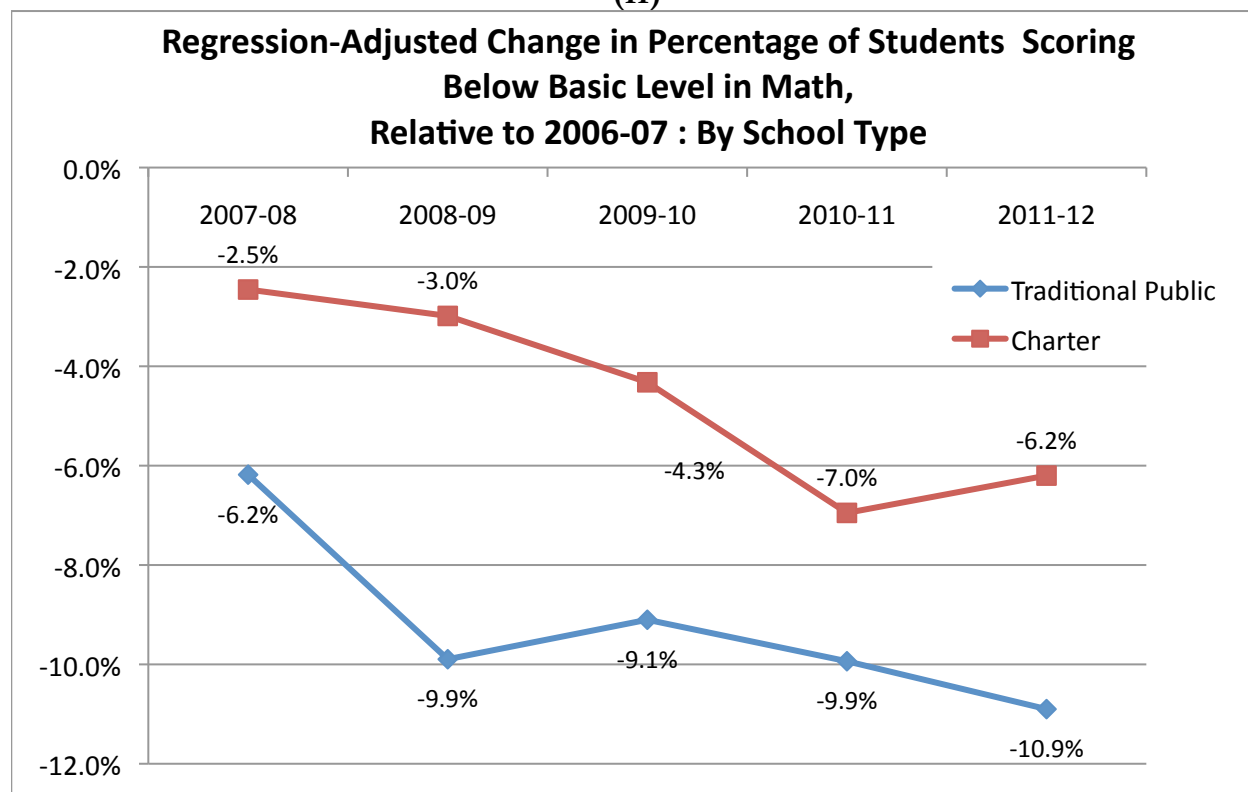
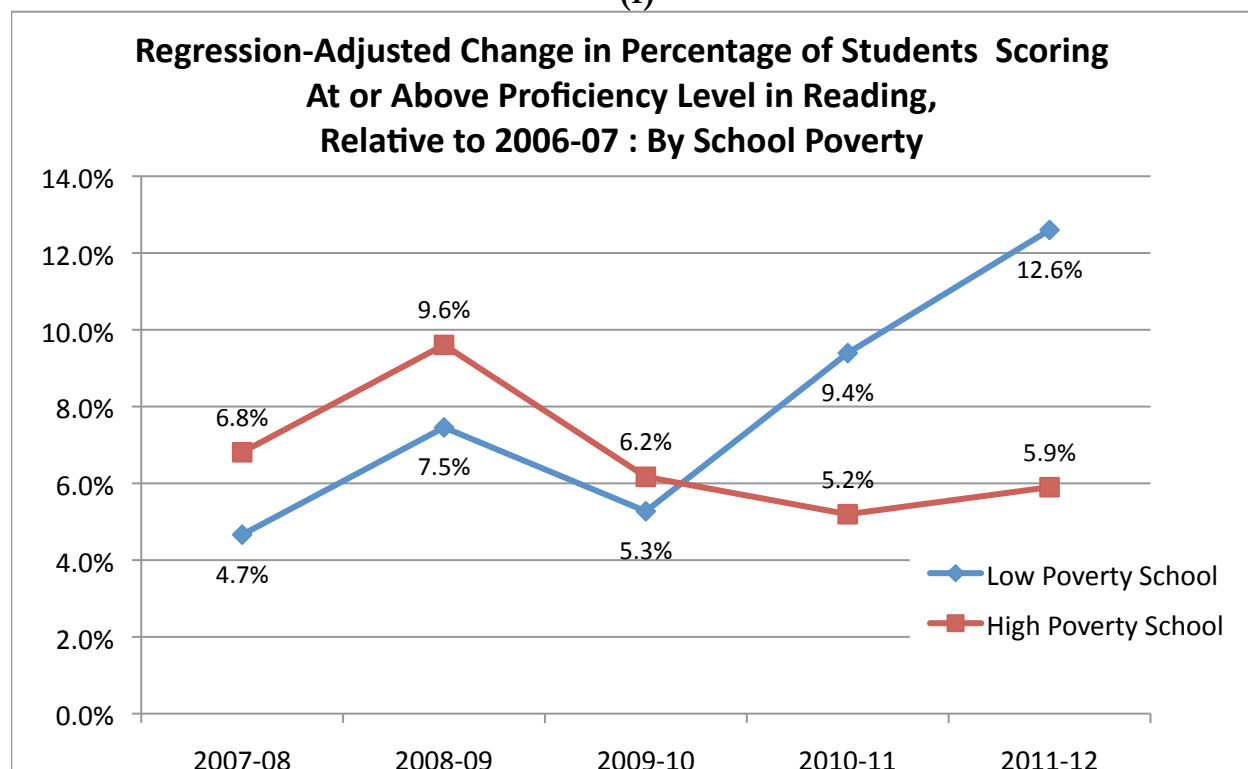
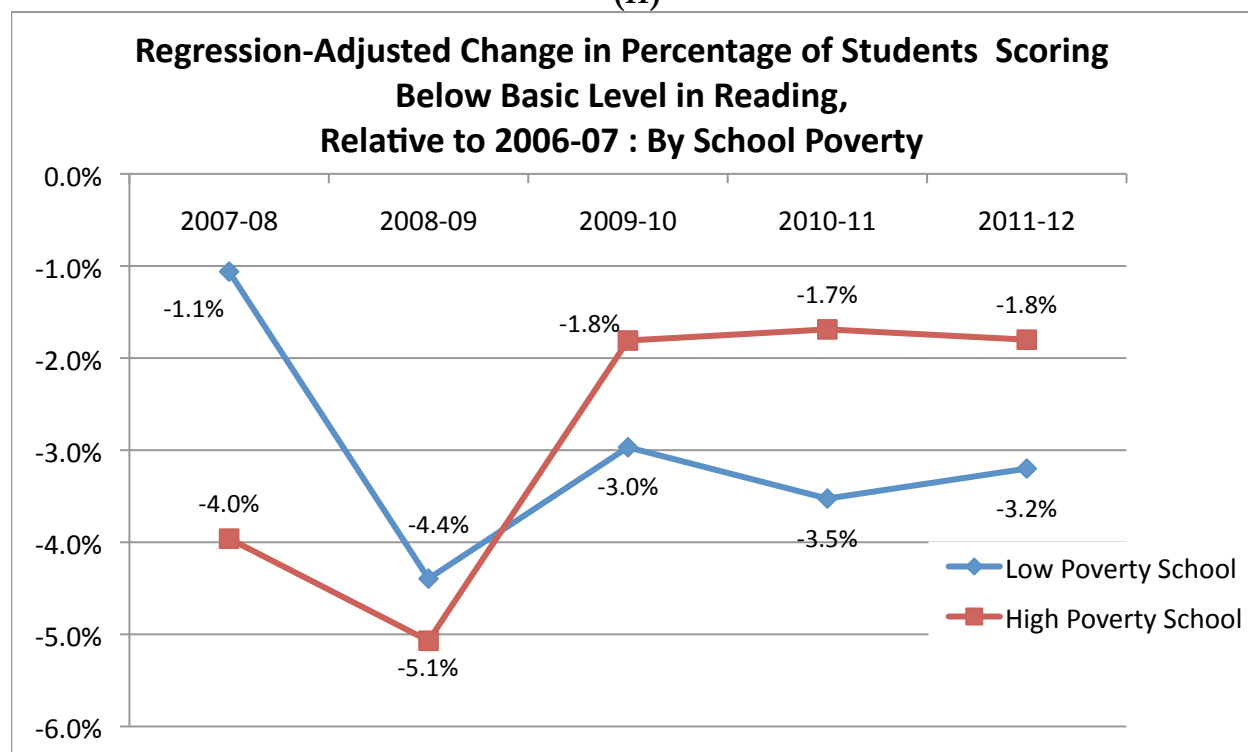


Figure 4A

(I)



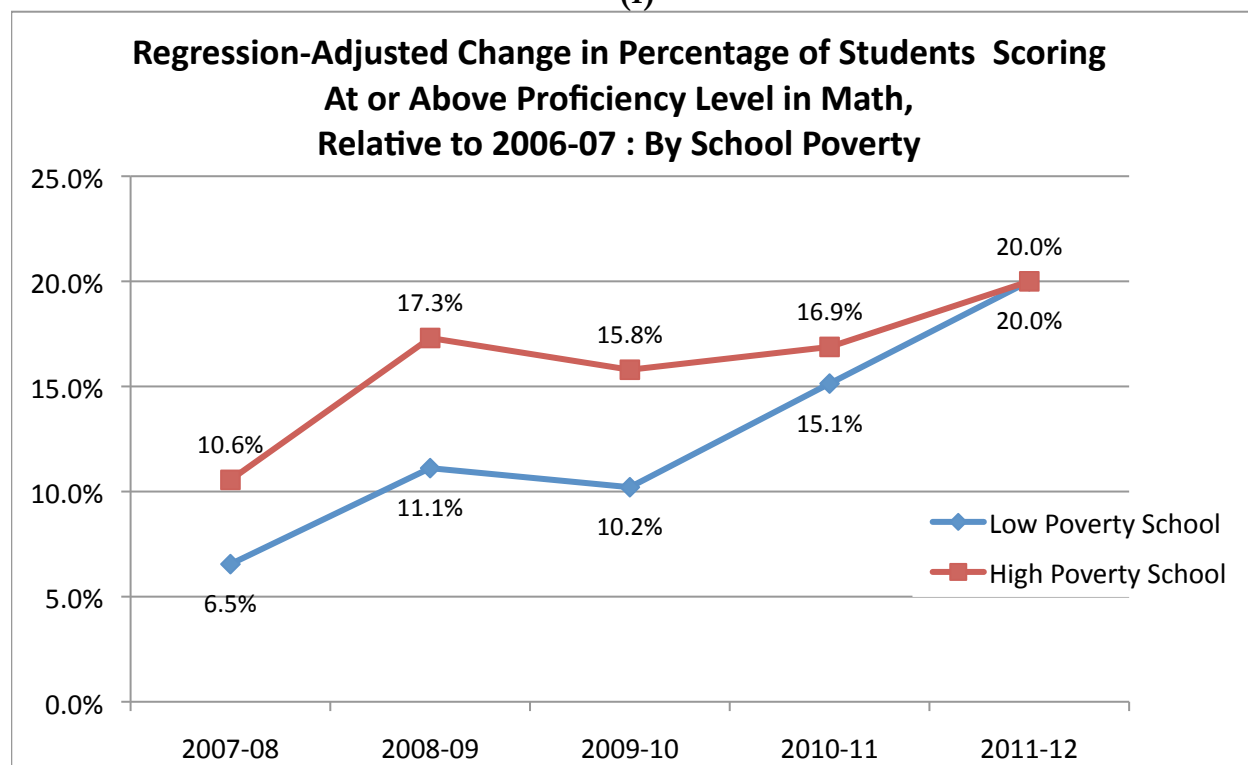
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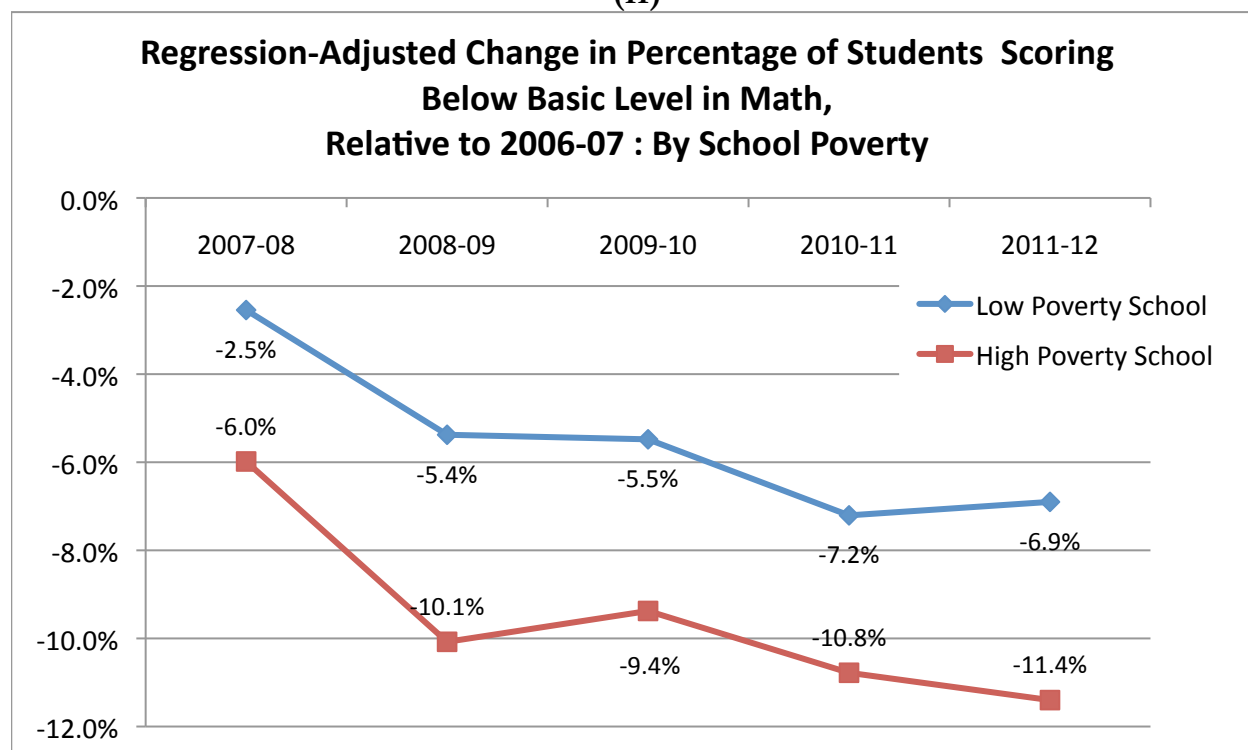
Notes: Schools are considered low poverty if less than 60 percent of their students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, whereas high-poverty schools are defined as schools with at least 80 percent of their students eligible.

Figure 4B

(I)



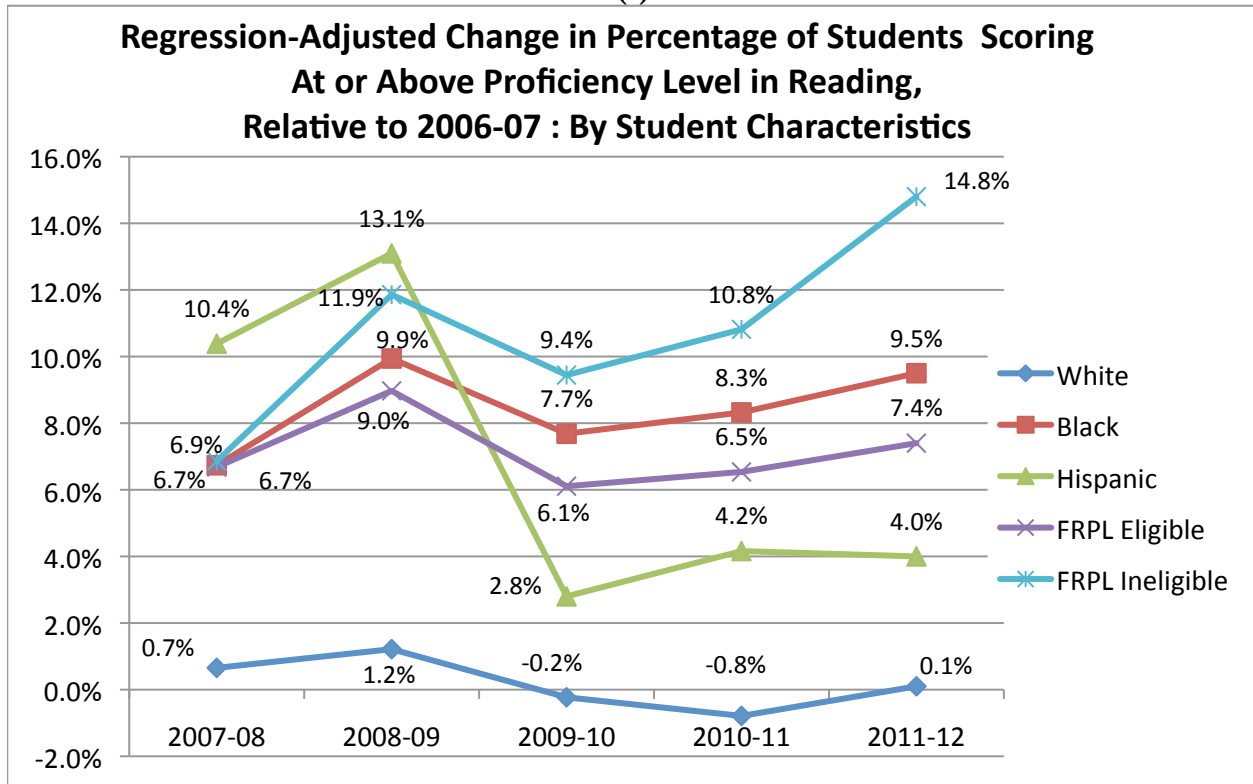
(II)



Notes: Schools are considered low poverty if less than 60 percent of their students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, whereas high-poverty schools are defined as schools with at least 80 percent of their students eligible.

Figure 5A

(I)



(II)

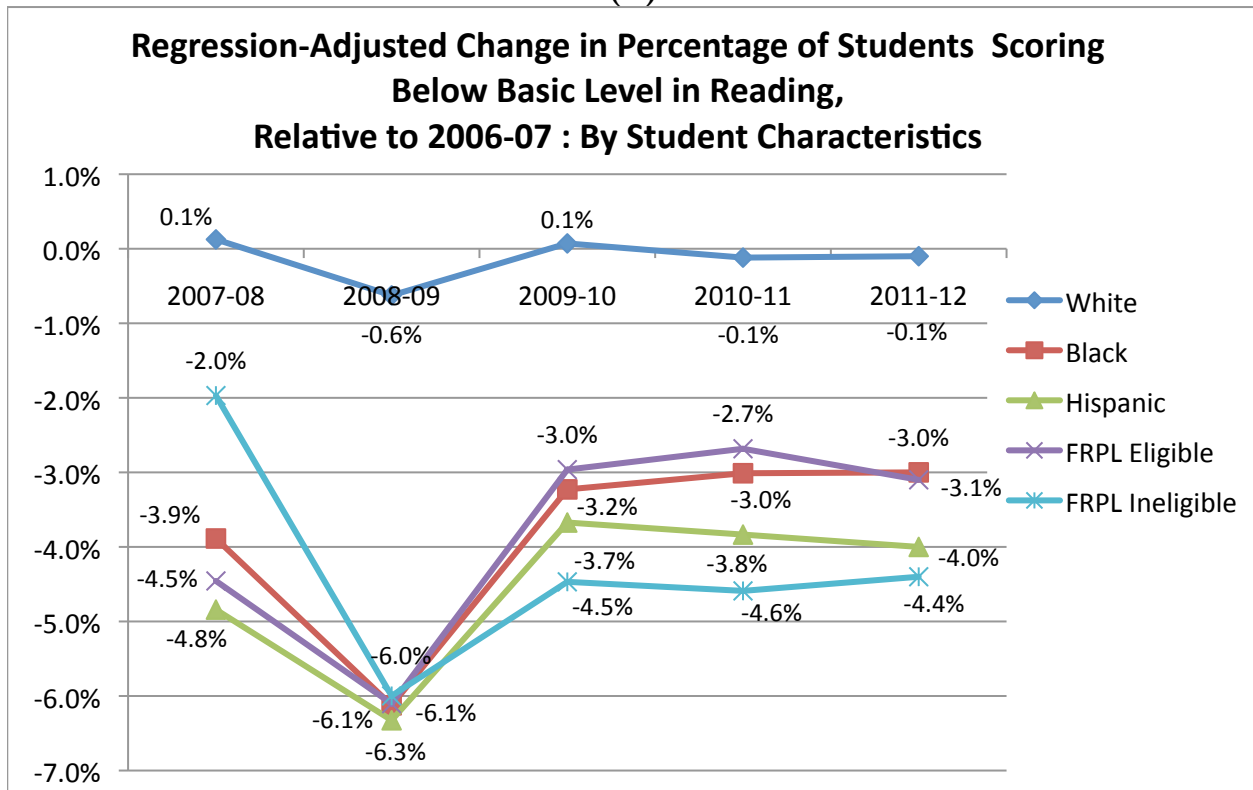
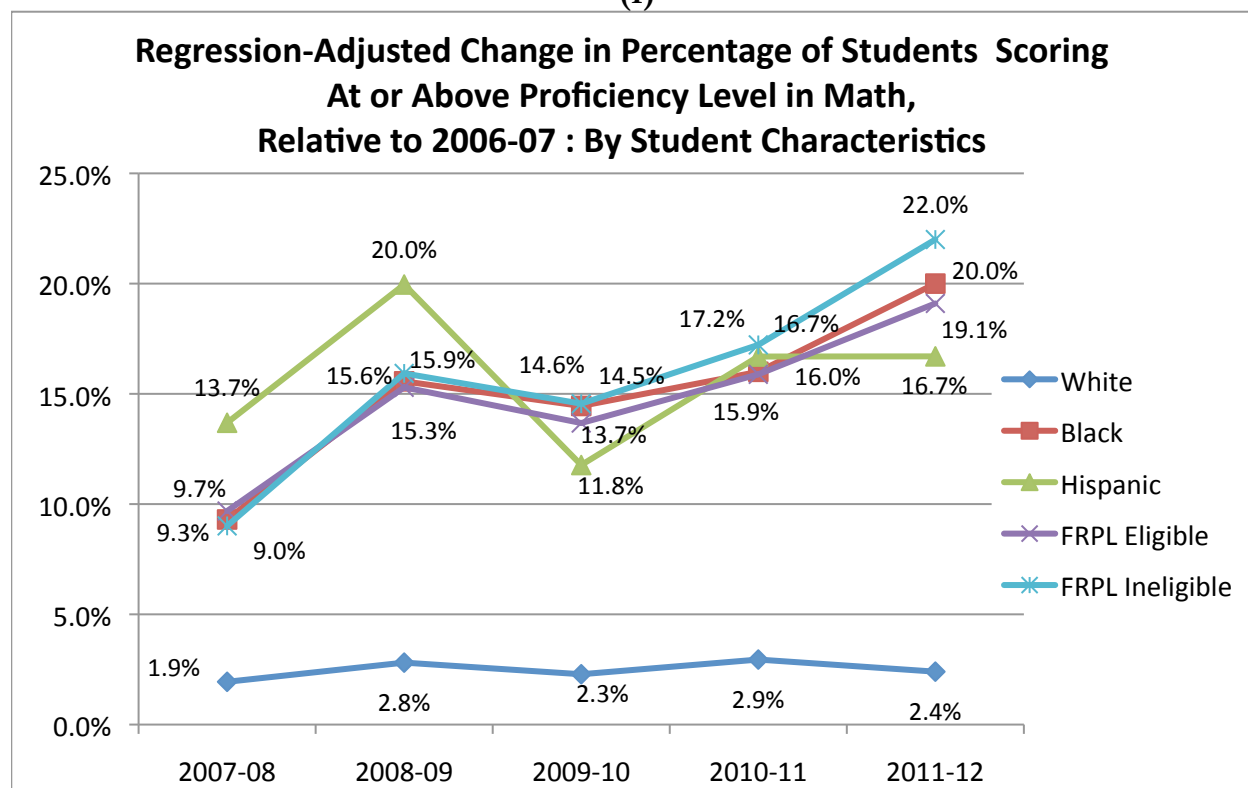
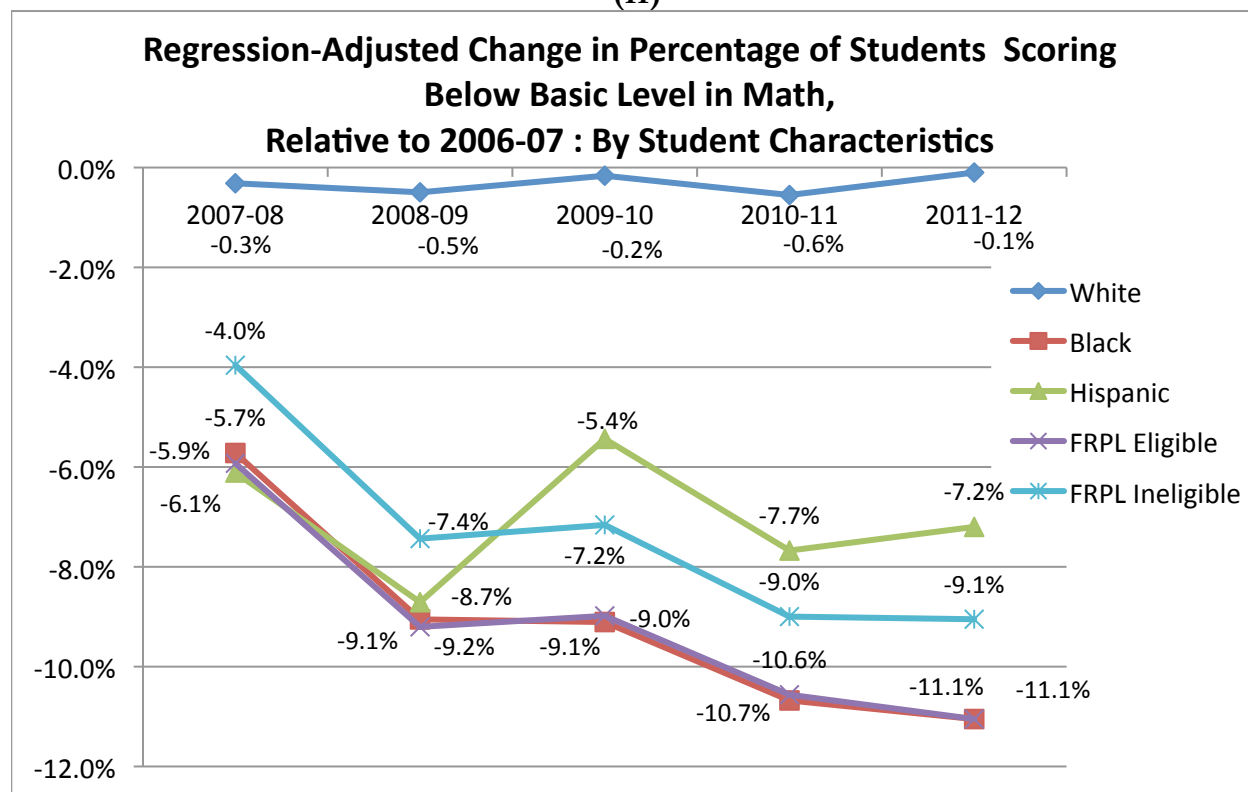


Figure 5B

(I)

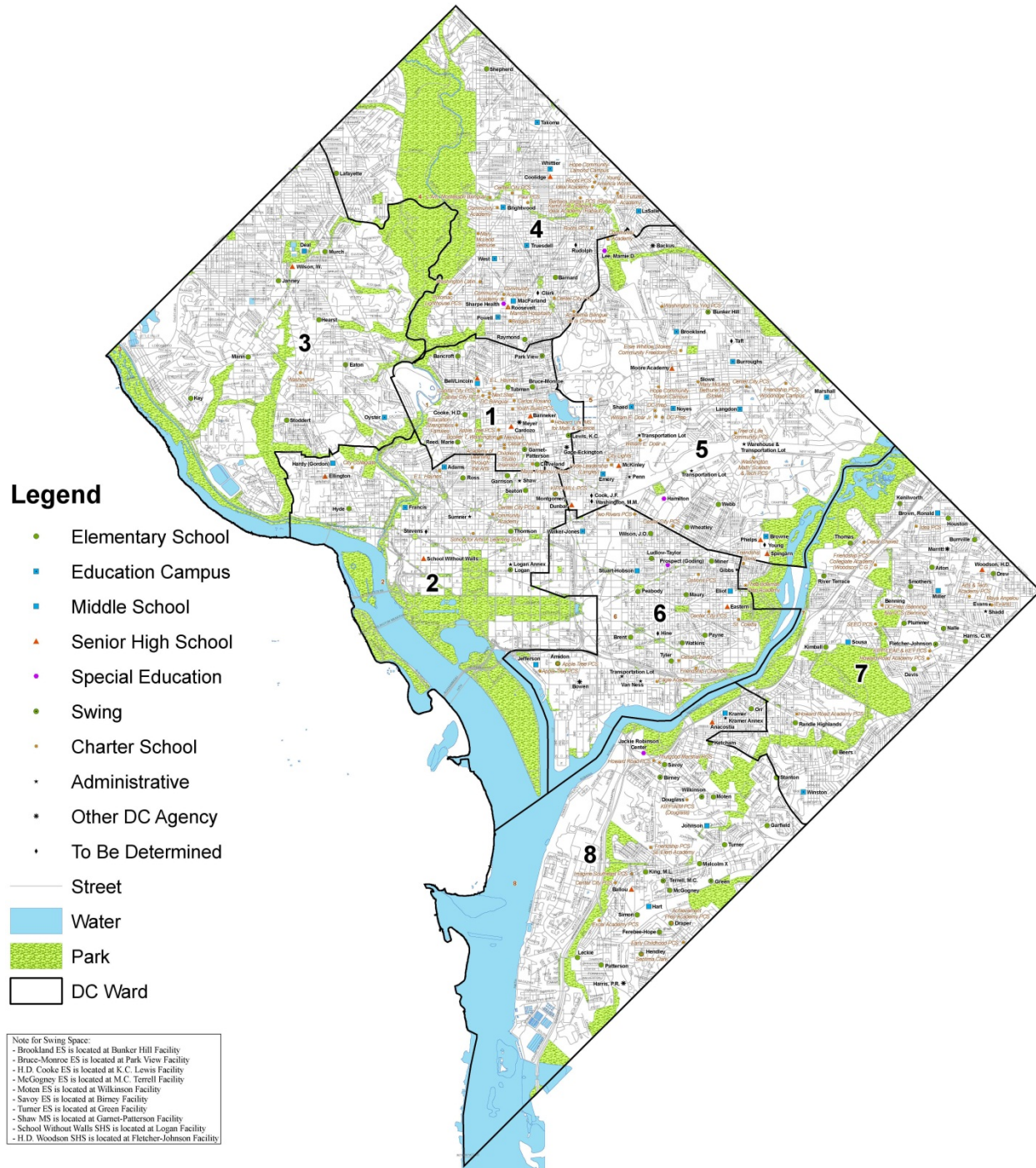


(II)



Section IV Technical Appendix B

Public Schools in DC, by Ward: 2008-2009



Source: <http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/maps> accessed on 10/08/2009.