



Reason

#426

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# Weighted Student Formula Yearbook

Newark

by Katie Furtick & Lisa Snell

# Newark Public School District

**Program Name:** Weighted Student Formula

**Implementation:** 2011–2012

**Program Type:** District-wide

**Legal Authorization:** State Superintendent and State Authorization

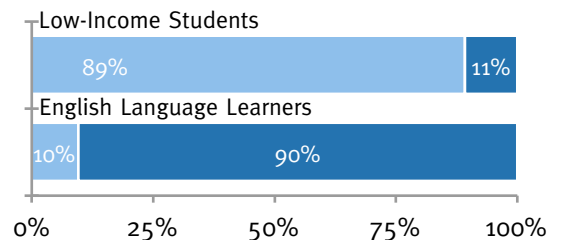
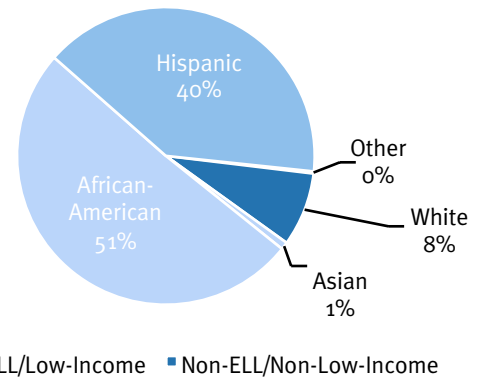
Overall Grade: **C-**

Category	Grade	Rank*
Overall Grade **	C-	12
Principal Autonomy	D	11
School Empowerment Benchmarks	A	6
2011 Proficiency Rates	D	13
Proficiency Rate Improvement	C+	8
Expected Proficiency vs. Actual	C	10
Expected Proficiency Improvement	F	14
2011 Graduation Rates	D	12
2011 Achievement Gaps	B+	4
Achievement Gap Improvement	C-	10
Achievement Gap Closures:		
■ <i>Internal District</i>	C	9
■ <i>Internal District vs. Internal State</i>	C+	8
■ <i>External Achievement Gaps</i>	C-	9

\* Tied with San Francisco Unified School District for "External Achievement Gap Closures." Tied with Minneapolis Public Schools, Houston Unified School District, Hartford Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, Boston Public Schools and Baltimore City Public Schools for "School Empowerment Benchmarks."

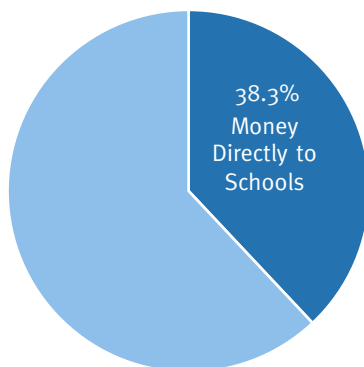
\*\* Overall grades and ranks may not equal the average of individual grades and ranks because categories are weighted differently to reflect their importance.

## Demographics



Source: NJ DOE, Newark City 2012–2013 Enrollment

## 2013–2014 Principal Autonomy



Source: NPS 2013–2014 Budget Hearing

## School Empowerment Benchmarks

School budgets based on students not staffing	Yes
Charge schools actual versus average salaries	No
School choice and open enrollment policies	Yes
Principal autonomy over budgets	Yes
Principal autonomy over hiring	Yes
Principal training and school capacity building	Yes
Published transparent school-level budgets	Yes
Published transparent school-level outcomes	Yes
Explicit accountability goals	Yes
Collective bargaining relief, flat contracts, etc.	Yes

NPS Met 9 out of 10 School Empowerment Benchmarks



## 1. Overview of Newark's Weighted Student Formula Program

The Newark Public Schools (NPS) has a student population of 35,588 with demographics that include 51 percent African-American students, 40 percent Hispanic, and 8 percent White students. Approximately 89 percent of students qualify for free and reduced price lunch and 10 percent of students are English Language Learners.<sup>1</sup>

The weighted student formula was introduced in 2011 by then-State Superintendent Clifford B. Janey as a means of providing more equity, in terms of dollars, to district schools allowing them to address the needs of their diverse student populations and giving principals more autonomy over school decisions. The new formula received a vote of approval from the Advisory Board and was first implemented during the 2011–2012 budget cycle.

NPS's weighted student formula (WSF) is designed to ensure that all schools offer all students the full complement of academic programming and wrap-around services that are believed to be essential for students to succeed. It allocates funding per pupil that is required to provide core resources to all schools with the flexibility of local school decision-making to ensure that each school program is tailored to meet the needs of particular school communities.<sup>2</sup>






The weighted student formula implemented by the district consists of two types of funds: non-discretionary and discretionary. Non-discretionary funds are restricted and can only be used to ensure that schools budget for the staff that the district has identified as required core staffing, such as principals, parent liaisons, mandated teacher aides, instructional support staff and other positions the central office designates that a school must have to function. The majority of the school funds are discretionary. These are unrestricted funds to finance the operation of each school and must be allocated by the principal to expenditures that would best support the school's academic achievement goals.

The principals also have discretion on what can be purchased with funds generated by an increase in enrollment. The district strongly recommends that such discretionary funds be used to improve or add programs that enhance academic achievement.

## 2. How Does Newark's Student-Based Budgeting Process Work?

In Newark the amount of money a school receives is based on individual student enrollment with a numerical weighting being given to each classification of student. Schools with students who have special needs or are in special categories receive additional resources. Table 1, below shows NPS's 2013–2013 weighted student formula.

**Table 1: Newark Public Schools 2012–2013 Weighted Student Formula**

	Base Allocation	Base \$7,100 1.00	Kindergarten \$450 0.0633	1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> \$600 0.0845	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> \$700 0.985	9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> \$1,400 0.1971
	Special Education	Cog. Mild \$7,275 1.0246	Cog. Moderate \$7,300 1.0281	Learning \$7,600 1.0704	Auditory \$8,400 1.1830	Behavioral \$8,000 1.1267
	Special Education Continued	Multiple Disabilities \$7,800 1.0985		Autism \$7,900 1.1126	Resource Room \$7,100 1.00	
	English Language Learners	\$800 0.1126				
	At Risk	\$640 0.0901				

### 3. How Much Autonomy Do Newark Public Schools Enjoy?

There are two ways to view school-level autonomy. First, autonomy at the school site can be evaluated by budget discretion—what proportion of funds is sent to the schools versus retained at the district level? Second, one can evaluate by planning discretion—how much control over staffing and programmatic offerings do principals have?

The letter grade given to school districts in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook* indicating the level of autonomy over school budgets is based on the percentage of yearly operating funds that are allocated to the school level. The higher the percentage of operating funds allocated to the school level, the greater budget autonomy the principal enjoys.<sup>3</sup>

In the 2012–2013 school year, NPS schools received 38.3 percent of funds through student-based budgeting allocations. Although principals do have some autonomy over budget decisions, that autonomy is constrained by NPS’s central office by requiring a large number of “core” staff positions from counselors to teacher aids. NPS’s percentage of budget autonomy is relatively small compared to other school districts highlighted in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*, giving NPS a “D” in principal autonomy.

In 2011, NPS school principals gained a greater share over planning discretion when Newark State Superintendent Cami Anderson announced that she would stop transferring teachers who are deemed ineffective from school to school and stop forced placements where a principal must accept a teacher from the district. She put in place a mutual consent policy that requires both principal and teacher to sign off on any new placement.<sup>4</sup>

"This new staffing policy, by ending the forced placement of teachers in core positions, gives principals the authority and responsibility to select the best teachers for their schools," Anderson said in a statement.<sup>5</sup> "This is the first step in our collective focus on leadership and teacher quality."<sup>6</sup>

#### **4. How Does NPS Support Principals?**

Principals and school staff who take part in the budget process are trained and supported by the district's financial operations staff. NPS has also implemented a streamlined budget technological interface called "MyBudget" to support the weighted student formula program.<sup>7</sup> The Web-based system, which is produced by MyBudgetFile Inc., eliminates the need for spreadsheets, while being extremely versatile and fast to operate. "The new MyBudgetFile.com system is excellent for a large organization such as the Newark Public Schools," said Newark Public Schools Business Administrator Valerie Wilson.<sup>8</sup> "Administrators at central and school locations require access to budget information at a moment's notice and the new system is extremely user friendly. This allows for more autonomy for principals and at the same time is less time-consuming so they can focus more on academics in the schools."<sup>9</sup>

In addition, the system is capable of tracking the district's finances in real time, thereby allowing the user or users to see exactly how much money is in an account. The system also calculates automatically.

#### **5. The Site-Based Management of Newark's Public Schools**

Each school in Newark has a School Leadership Council (SLC). The goal of the SLC is to develop a culture of cooperation, accountability and commitment—all with a focus on improving student achievement. The SLC is a school-based body responsible for advising the school administration on essential instructional, budgeting and personnel issues. Members of the SLC work with the principal to assess and improve the instructional culture of the school. The role of the SLC is to be a collaborative, cooperative, advisory and decision-making body to improve teaching and learning in the school.<sup>10</sup>

#### **6. The School Choice Component of Newark's Weighted Student Formula Program**

In June 2013 NPS introduced a plan that ends residential assignment and will allow students to choose any public school in Newark. The plan, called One Newark, would allow families to fill out one application

to apply to their school of choice—charter or regular—listed in order of preference. The new system will end the practices of automatically enrolling children at neighborhood schools or forcing parents interested in charter schools to enter multiple charter school lotteries.

For the 2013–2014 school year, 8<sup>th</sup> graders participated in a version of a high school “universal application” for all district high schools. Eighth graders had the opportunity to choose up to 12 school preferences and were matched with one of their school choices. In 2013, 74 percent of students were matched with one of their top five choices for high school.

## 7. Initiatives to Increase School-Level Accountability in Newark

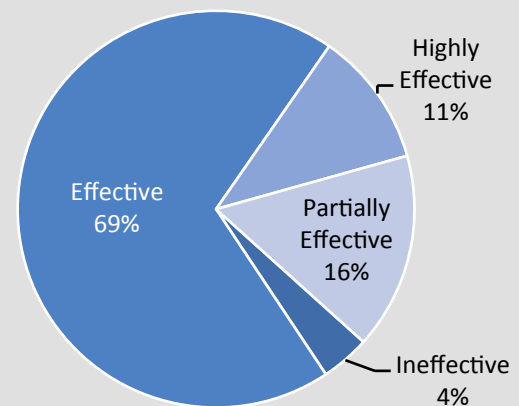
NPS enforces accountability through an innovative teacher evaluation system that holds teachers accountable for student learning. The district gives out bonuses of up to \$12,500 to its highest-rated teachers: \$5,000 for being rated highly effective, another \$5,000 for working at a poorly performing school and another \$2,500 for teaching a hard-to-staff subject including math, science and language subjects.<sup>11</sup>

The new pay system, which covers about two-thirds of Newark's public schoolteachers, has eliminated automatic annual raises for experience, made teachers eligible for bonuses and has ended automatic pay increases for advanced degrees.

Teachers had to be rated highly effective on the district's four-tiered evaluation system to get a bonus. But regardless of which pay scale teachers were on, they were only guaranteed an annual pay raise if they scored effective or highly effective. Figure 1 shows how all teachers rated, both those on the new pay scale and those who opted out.

Newark awarded about \$1.4 million in bonuses to teachers for the 2012–2013 school year. About 5 percent of the 3,200-member teaching force received a bonus, with 17 teachers receiving the top bonus of \$12,500.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 1: Newark Public Schools 2012–2013 Teacher Ratings**



Source: Newark Public School District, Office of the Superintendent

## 8. Performance Outcomes in Newark Public Schools

While compiling this *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*, Reason Foundation conducted an analysis to determine how the school districts that have adopted a weighted student formula are performing relative to other districts in their state, and relative to each other.

Reason’s analysis grades 10 performance metrics. Scores are determined by comparing the school district in question—in this case Newark Public Schools—with other school districts in the same state (New Jersey, in this instance), and sorting them into a decile ranking. Based on the school district’s decile rank within its own state, the analysis then compares it with the other districts studied in this *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*. Finally, this analysis assigns the studied school districts a grade based on how they measure up against one another. The analysis also grades and ranks studied school districts on two other measures: the number of school empowerment benchmarks the district has reached, and the degree of autonomy principals have over school budgets. In determining the grades on these two measures, districts are compared only with the other districts covered in this *Yearbook*. A detailed explanation of the methodology used to determine performance metrics and grading can be found in the methodology chapter of the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*.

Student proficiency rates, as determined by standardized state tests, and student enrollment data were used to calculate the following:

- 2011 proficiency rates;
- Improvement (average change) in proficiency rates from 2008 to 2011;
- Expected versus actual proficiency rates;
- Improvement in expected proficiency from 2008 to 2011;
- Achievement gap, and
- Each of three achievement gap closure metrics.

NPS proficiency rate data were obtained from the Broad Prize for Urban Education 2012 District Data Reports.<sup>13</sup> Elementary and middle school student proficiency rates in reading, mathematics and science are derived from New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) results. High school students’ proficiency rates in reading and mathematics are derived from High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) test results.

Newark high school students are tested for proficiency in biology. For purposes of comparison, biology is categorized as science. High school students’ science proficiency rates are derived from New Jersey Biology Competency Test (NJBCT) results.

The analysis discusses student achievement including 2012 proficiency rates, but 2012 data were not included because in many school districts the data were not yet available at the time of our analysis. Therefore, 2012 student achievement is mentioned, but not compared relative to other school districts in New Jersey and in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*.

Graduation rates were collected from Data.gov based on adjusted cohort graduation rates at the school level for school year 2010–11 (most recent data available).<sup>14</sup> Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates are calculated by state education agencies in accordance with U.S. Department of Education regulations on ESEA, Title I, published in 2008. Adjusted cohort graduation rates are reported for each school as a whole and for key sub-groups of students.

The grade given for school empowerment benchmarks is based on 10 benchmarks determined to be best practices within existing weighted student formula programs and recommendations of other studies on student-based budgeting.

The following sections expand upon each graded category by highlighting areas in which NPS performed exceptionally well relative to other districts in New Jersey, and to other districts in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*. This analysis also discusses areas in which NPS has fallen behind or could use improvement.

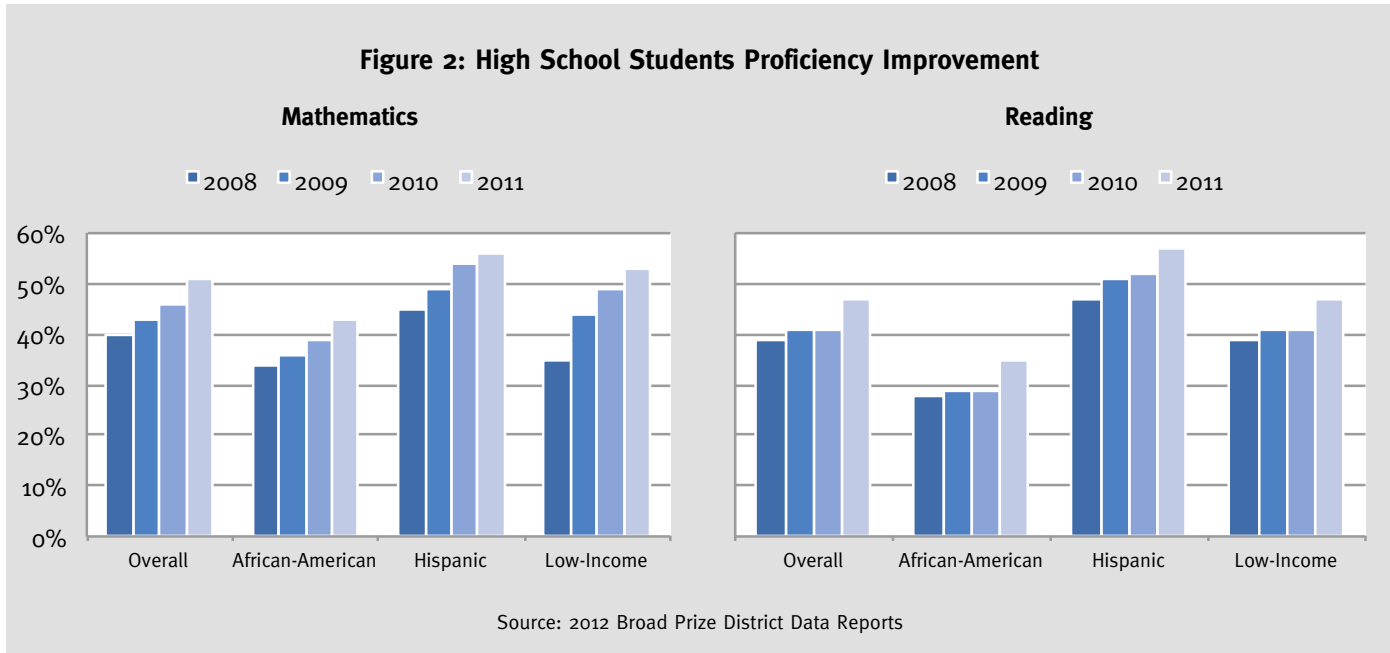
## Student Achievement

Category	Grade
2011 Proficiency Rates	D
Proficiency Rate Improvement	C+
Expected Proficiency vs. Actual	C
Expected Proficiency Improvement	F
Graduation Rates	D

**Newark Public School District had below average proficiency rates in 2011.** NPS performed below average relative to all other New Jersey school districts in 2011. The only student group and category with an average (50 percent) proficiency were elementary and middle school students' mathematics proficiency.

**More importantly though, is that NPS is improving student proficiency overall, across most school subjects and school levels.** Notably, the district is improving high school mathematics and reading faster than 90 percent of New Jersey school districts. Broken down by student group, African-American and Hispanic high school students are among the top 30 percent of the state's school districts for fastest improving mathematics proficiency. And NPS low-income high school students are among the top 10 percent of New Jersey school districts for fastest improving mathematics proficiency. NPS's high school students' improvement in reading and mathematics is shown in Figure 2 by student group.





The district's African-American and low-income high school students are also among the top 40 percent of New Jersey school districts for fastest increase in reading proficiency from 2008 to 2011, and Hispanic students are among the top 30 percent of school districts in this category.

NPS is among the highest ranked school districts in the *Yearbook* for improvement in high school mathematics proficiency, both overall and among African-American, Hispanic, and low-income students. NPS is also among the highest ranked *Yearbook* school districts for fastest increasing high school reading proficiency, both overall and among Hispanic students.

Predicted or expected proficiency rates are calculated relative to all other school districts in New Jersey, controlling for the percentage of low-income students at each grade level. Generally, a large, low-income student body is an indicator of low performance. Controlling for, or taking into account, the percentage of low-income students in each grade level across school districts enables this analysis to determine how well a given school district should be performing relative to others in their state.

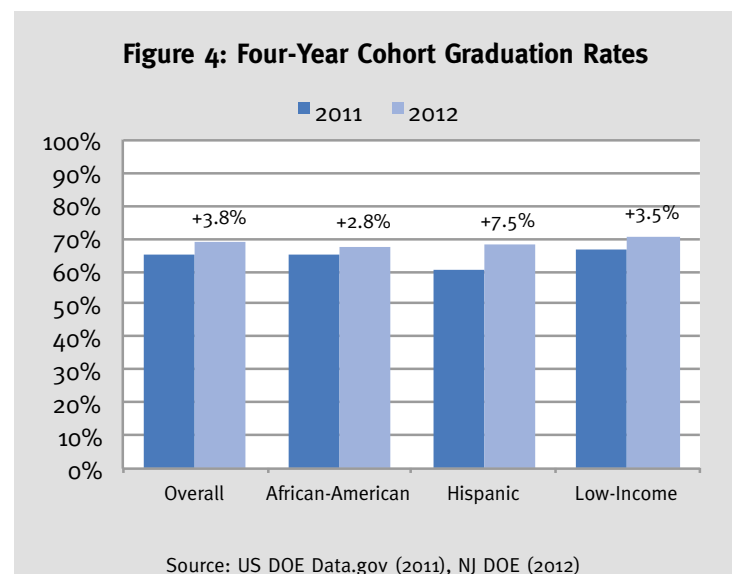
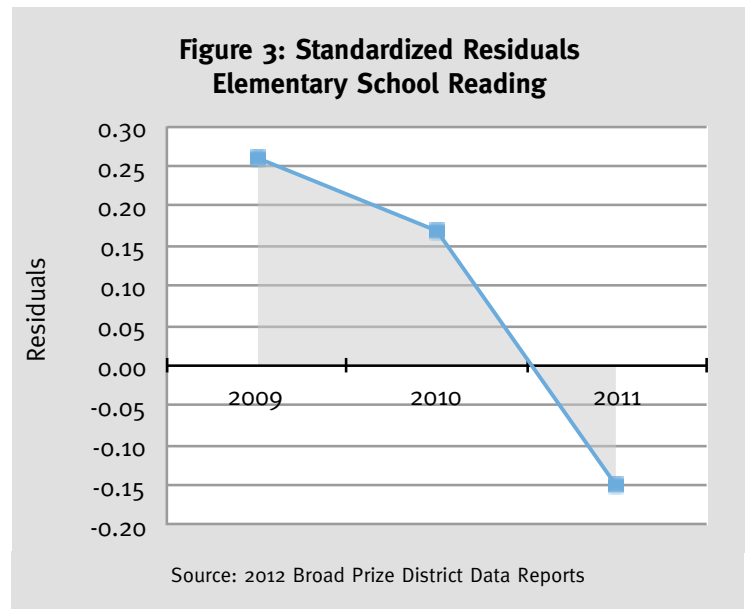
If the predicted proficiency rate is higher than the actual proficiency rate, then a school district is under-performing. In other words, the school district is not reaching its potential achievement level. If a school district's actual proficiency is above its predicted proficiency, the district is over-performing what is expected given the low-income student population.

**Newark Public Schools was among the top 50 percent of New Jersey school districts for expected proficiency in high school mathematics and elementary school reading.** In every other category the district fell below average relative to other school districts in the state. In most school levels and subjects, the district also fell below average relative to other New Jersey school districts for change in expected proficiency.<sup>15</sup> This means that, given the percentage of low-income students at each grade level, the district performed worse than expected relative to other districts in the state.

Moreover, even though NPS elementary school students were among the top 50 percent of New Jersey school districts for expected reading proficiency in 2011, it is clear that the district has been losing ground over time, with their actual proficiency rates falling below expected proficiency rates. This is highlighted by Figure 3, which shows standardized residuals for expected elementary reading proficiency. Positive residuals indicate that the district had better than expected proficiency; negative residuals show that the district had below expected proficiency.

**NPS had below-average 2011 graduation rates, falling among the bottom 50 percent of New Jersey school districts.** The district had the lowest graduation rates relative to other New Jersey school districts among African-American students—falling among the bottom 10 percent of school districts in the state with the class of 2011. Low-income and Hispanic students did not fare much better, with the district graduation rates among the bottom 30 and 40 percent of the state’s school districts, respectively.

According to the New Jersey Department of Education, 2012 four-year cohort graduation rates have improved from 2011 overall and among each student group, shown in Figure 4. Further improvement in graduation rates cannot be determined until further data are available, but the increase in graduation rates in 2012 is a promising sign.



## Achievement Gaps

The following three achievement gaps are measured across all grade levels (elementary, middle and high school) and school subjects (reading, mathematics and science):

- African-American versus White student proficiency;
- Hispanic versus White student proficiency, and
- Low-income versus non-low-income student proficiency.

Internal district achievement gaps (IDG) are measured as proficiency gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged student groups within a given district. Because this analysis assesses internal district achievement gaps for each district in the state, it can rank relative size of achievement gaps across districts in the state, and how quickly those achievement gaps are closing from 2008 to 2011.

An achievement gap is considered to be closing if the disadvantaged student group proficiency rate is increasing faster than the advantaged student group proficiency rate.

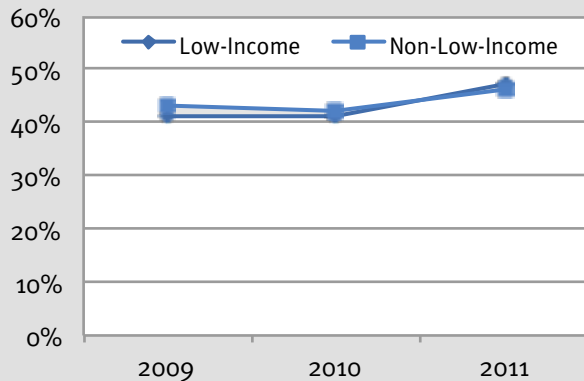
**Newark Public Schools had small achievement gaps in proficiency rates between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students relative to other New Jersey school districts.** In many cases, however, the small achievement gaps are due to low performance among both the advantaged student group and the disadvantaged student group. For this reason, it is important to look at trends in student proficiency over time in order to determine if achievement gaps are closing rather than advantaged student groups simply having lower proficiency.

For instance, in 2011 low-income high school students had higher proficiency rates in mathematics and reading than non-low-income students. However, data for non-low-income students proficiency rates prior to 2011 are unavailable due to unreliability. Therefore, until additional years of data are available for this student group, it is impossible to know for sure if these achievement gaps are small due to increased rates of proficiency among low-income students, or because of below-average proficiency rates of non-low-income students.

**The gap between low-income and non-low-income middle school students for mathematics proficiency is among the smallest 10 percent of school districts in the state, and among the top 40 percent of New Jersey districts for fastest closing gap.** This means that both non-low-income students and low-income students are increasing their proficiency rates, but low-income students are increasing proficiency at a faster rate, shown in Figure 5.

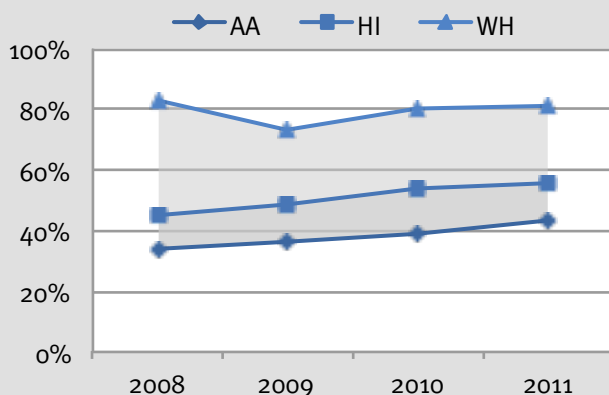
Category	Grade
2011 Achievement Gaps	B+
Improvement in Achievement Gaps	C-
Achievement Gap Closures:	
<i>Internal District</i>	C
<i>Internal District vs. Internal State</i>	C+
<i>External Achievement Gaps</i>	C-

**Figure 5: Achievement Gap Improvement Middle School Mathematics**



Source: 2012 Broad Prize District Data Reports

**Figure 6: Achievement Gap Improvement High School Mathematics**



Source: 2012 Broad Prize District Data Reports

NPS also is among the top 30 percent of school districts for fastest closing achievement gap between African-American and White, and Hispanic and White high school students' mathematics proficiency, shown in Figure 6. This achievement gap closure contributes to the evidence that Newark Public Schools is excelling at improving mathematics proficiency among its high school students.

In addition to internal district achievement gaps (IDG) discussed above, this analysis also measures internal district versus internal state (ID vs. IS) achievement gaps and external district achievement gaps (EDG).

Internal district achievement gaps (IDG) are measured between student groups within the district. Internal district versus internal state (ID vs. IS) achievement gaps are measured as the district's achievement gap versus the average achievement gap of every other district in New Jersey (excluding Newark Public Schools). If a given NPS achievement gap is closing faster than that of the rest of the state, the ID vs. IS gap is considered to be closing. Finally, external achievement gaps (EDG) are measured by the difference

between the district's disadvantaged student group proficiency rate and the advantaged student group average proficiency rate of all other districts in the state. External achievement gaps are considered to be closing if the district disadvantaged group proficiency rate is increasing faster than the state advantaged group. Table 2 shows which achievement gaps NPS is closing, and which achievement gaps are not closing, given the available data.



**Table 2: All Achievement Gap Closures**

Achievement Gap	School Level	Subject	IDG	ID vs. IS	EDG
African-American vs. White	Elementary	Math	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	Elementary	Math	X	X	X
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Elementary	Math	X	X	X
African-American vs. White	Elementary	Reading	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	Elementary	Reading	X	X	X
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Elementary	Reading	X	X	X
African-American vs. White	Elementary	Science	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	Elementary	Science	X	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Elementary	Science	X	X	X
African-American vs. White	Middle School	Math	X	X	√
Hispanic vs. White	Middle School	Math	X	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Middle School	Math	√	√	√
African-American vs. White	Middle School	Reading	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	Middle School	Reading	X	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Middle School	Reading	X	X	X
African-American vs. White	Middle School	Science	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	Middle School	Science	X	X	X
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Middle School	Science	X	X	X
African-American vs. White	High School	Math	√	√	√
Hispanic vs. White	High School	Math	√	√	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	High School	Math	†	†	√
African-American vs. White	High School	Reading	√	X	√
Hispanic vs. White	High School	Reading	√	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	High School	Reading	†	†	√
African-American vs. White	High School	Science	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	High School	Science	X	X	X
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	High School	Science	†	†	X
Total Gaps Closing out of Total Available:			5/24	3/24	11/27

† Data were suppressed due to unreliability or group represented less than 5 percent of test-takers at that grade level.

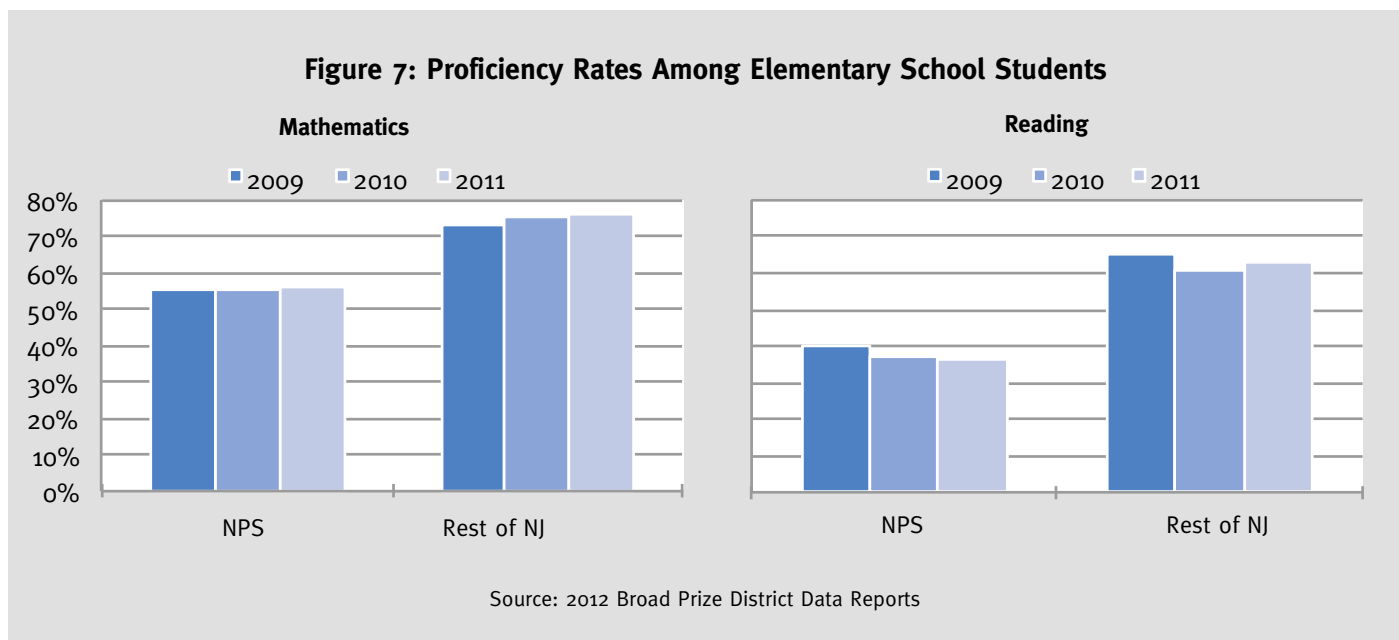
Newark Public Schools is closing the most internal district achievement gaps among its high schools students. Among elementary school students achievement gaps may be small, but that is due to advantaged student groups' loss of proficiency year-to-year rather than disadvantaged groups gaining proficiency.

The district is closing the most achievement gaps under the external district gap measurement. Again, the most achievement gaps that are closing are among high school students. That NPS is closing the most external district gaps means that the district's disadvantaged student groups are improving their proficiency rates faster than the state average advantaged student groups.

## Areas for Improvement

**Newark Public Schools has very low proficiency rates relative to other New Jersey school districts at all school levels and among all school subjects.** The district's middle and high school students are increasing their proficiency in reading and mathematics more quickly than most school districts in New Jersey overall and among each student group. Also, the aggregate student population, Hispanic and White middle school students are increasing reading proficiency at a faster rate than most other districts in the state.

Where NPS is struggling is among elementary school students in each school subject, and in increasing students' proficiency rates in science at all grade levels. Elementary school students overall, and among each student group, have lower-than-average proficiency rates in mathematics, reading and science and have shown slow improvement in proficiency (if any) of these school subjects from 2009 to 2011.<sup>16</sup>

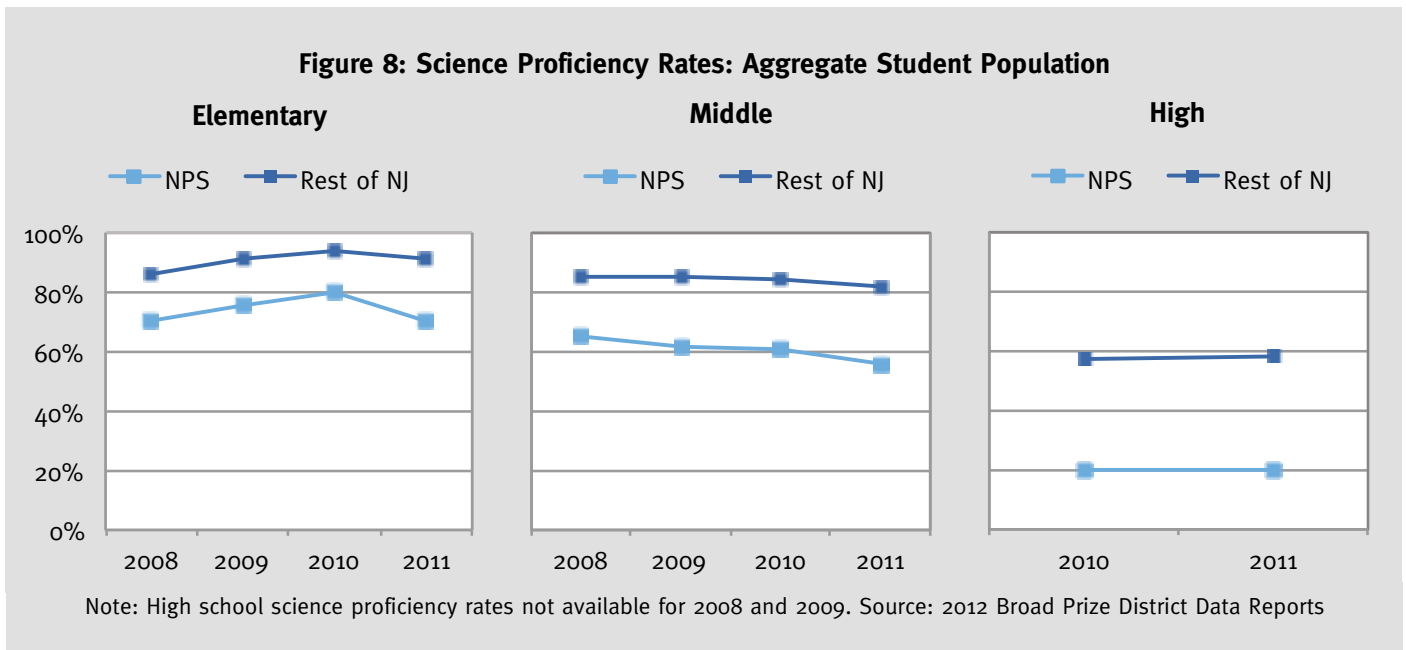


At all grade levels and across all student groups,<sup>17</sup> NPS had below-average proficiency rates in science, as shown in Figure 8. The district is not improving science proficiency quickly, if at all in many cases.

NPS is among the lowest ranked *Yearbook* school districts for 2011 science proficiency rates and improvement in science proficiency rates among middle school students. Also, the district is among the lowest ranked *Yearbook* districts for both 2011 science proficiency rates and increase in science proficiency rates among African-American elementary school students.

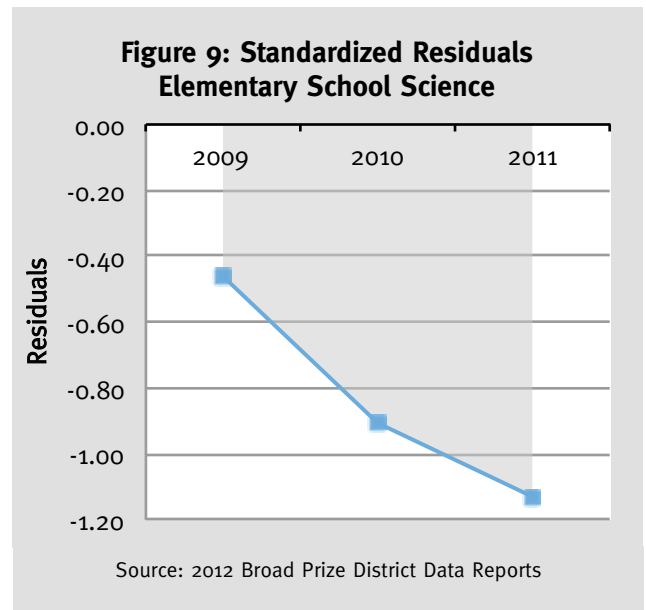
Students are most negatively affected in these areas because a relatively low percentage of the district's student population has reached proficiency as of 2011, and from 2008 to 2011 students have not improved their proficiency much, if at all. Without significant gains among elementary school students, and in science

proficiency at each grade level, Newark’s public school students will continue to trail behind their peers in the rest of the state.



**Newark Public Schools is failing to reach projected targets in proficiency rates, given the percentage of low-income students at each grade level.**

NPS students are failing to achieve proficiency at their full potential relative to the rest of New Jersey school districts; in most cases the gap is widening between actual and expected proficiency. This means that the district’s students should be able to reach higher levels of proficiency as have their peers in the rest of the state. Figure 9 shows standardized residuals of the district’s elementary school students’ average science proficiency.



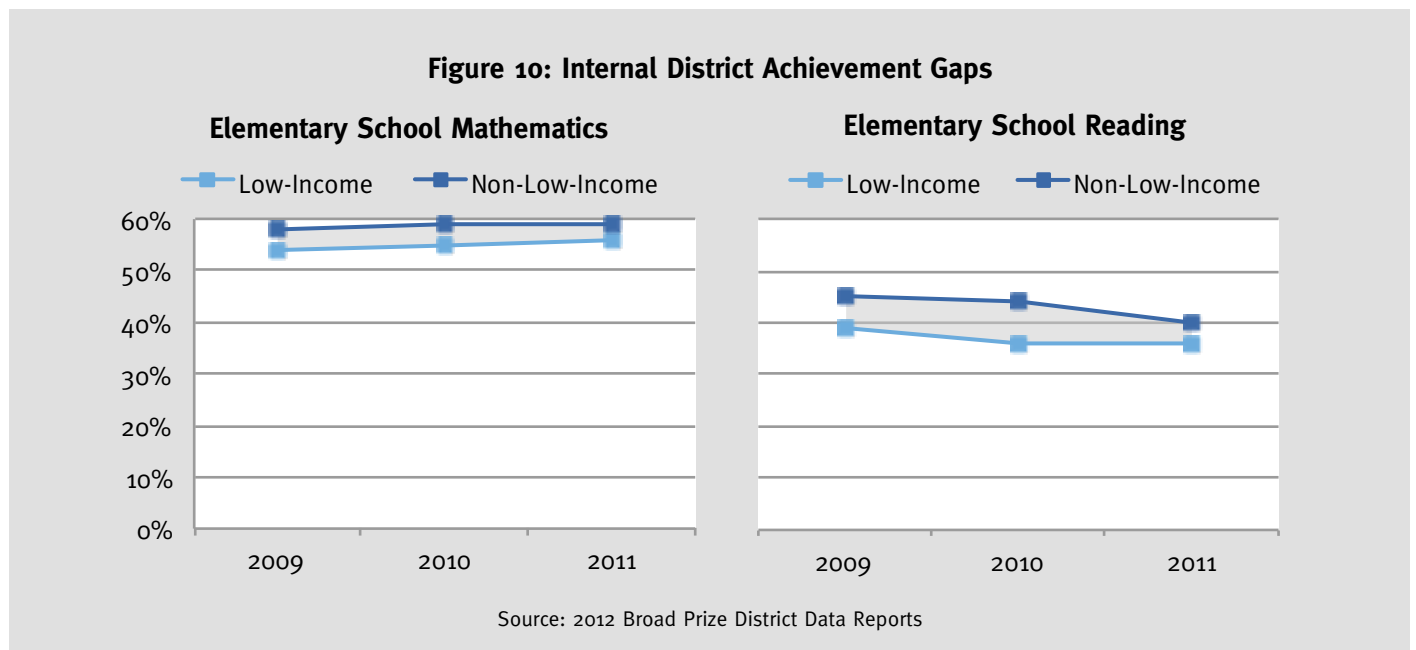
The negative residuals indicate that these students are performing lower than expected each year and to a larger degree.

Newark’s high school students were among the lowest ranked in the *Yearbook* for 2011 expected reading proficiency and average change in expected reading proficiency.

**NPS had low 2011 achievement gaps relative to other New Jersey school districts, but in many cases this is due to low performance by advantaged student groups.** Looking at trends in student achievement in addition to the 2011 gaps paints a picture of whether or not disadvantaged students are

actually improving at a level higher than advantaged student groups. This is the case between low-income and non-low-income elementary school students’ reading and mathematics proficiency.

In both subjects, the district’s low-income versus non-low-income student achievement gap ranked among the smallest 20 percent of New Jersey school districts in 2011. However, looking at trends over time shows that while low-income students are improving mathematics proficiency rates at a faster pace than non-low-income students, this is not the case with reading proficiency rates. As shown in Figure 10, both low-income and non-low-income students are losing proficiency in reading proficiency year-over-year, which is not a good outcome even if achievement gaps are small between the two student groups.



Small 2011 achievement gaps between low-income and non-low-income middle school students’ reading and science proficiency are also a product of this trend in proficiency rates.

**School Empowerment Benchmarks**

Category	Grade
School Empowerment Benchmarks	A
School budgets based on students not staffing	Yes
Charge schools actual versus average salaries	No
School choice and open enrollment policies	Yes
Principal autonomy over budgets	Yes
Principal autonomy over hiring	Yes
Principal training and school capacity building	Yes
Published transparent school-level budgets	Yes
Published transparent school-level outcomes	Yes
Explicit accountability goals	Yes
Collective bargaining relief, flat contracts, etc.	Yes

Newark Public Schools met nine out of the 10 school empowerment benchmarks, indicating a strong weighted student formula implementation.



## 9. Lessons Learned in Newark

1. Newark Public Schools has made school choice a priority by ending residential assignment and creating a user-friendly school enrollment process called “One Newark” that offers parents one application to rank up to 12 district traditional and charter schools in order of preference and ensures that all children have access to high quality schools. The unified application allows parents to be included in multiple lotteries for oversubscribed schools and simplifies the application process for parents.
2. Newark is enforcing accountability through a teacher evaluation and merit-based pay program where high achievement and highly effective ratings are tied to raises and bonuses. This program will provide even more incentives for teachers and principals to work to raise student achievement with the resources at their discretion.

## Resources

- *2013 Newark Education Policies and Issues Compendium*, Newark Trust for Education, <http://newarktrust.org/resources/201-2013-newark-education-policies-and-issues-compendium.html>.
- Newark Public Schools FY 2012–2013 Budget Hearing, [http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/cms/lib7/NJ01001467/Centricity/Domain/1/BUDGET\\_HEARING\\_AS\\_OF\\_MARCH\\_22\\_final.pdf](http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/cms/lib7/NJ01001467/Centricity/Domain/1/BUDGET_HEARING_AS_OF_MARCH_22_final.pdf).
- “Procedures for Weighted Student Formula Funding,” Newark Public Schools, Fiscal Year 2012, [http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/cms/lib7/nj01001467/centricity/domain/23/PROCEDURES%20FOR%20WEIGHTED%20FORMULA%20\(3\).pdf](http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/cms/lib7/nj01001467/centricity/domain/23/PROCEDURES%20FOR%20WEIGHTED%20FORMULA%20(3).pdf).

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> State of New Jersey Department of Education, Newark City Enrollment 2012–2013, <http://www.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/education/data/enr11plus.pl>.
- <sup>2</sup> *2013 Newark Education Policies and Issues Compendium*, Newark Trust for Education, March 2013, <http://newarktrust.org/resources/201-2013-newark-education-policies-and-issues-compendium.html>.
- <sup>3</sup> The methodology used for determining principal autonomy is explained in detail in section 2 of the methodology chapter of the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*.
- <sup>4</sup> John Mooney, Newark Superintendent Takes a New Tack on How and Where Teachers are Placed, NJ Spotlight, June 21, 2011. <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/11/0621/0132/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Newark Public Schools, “The Newark Public Schools Adopts New Staffing Policy to Strengthen Student Achievement,” Press Release, June 20, 2011. <http://www.nctq.org/docs/2342>.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> “Newark Public Schools’ New Streamlined Budget Systems Has Everyone on Board,” Newark Public Schools, July 27, 2011. [http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/2286107141510833/lib/2286107141510833/\\_files/Budget\\_-\\_mybudgetfile.pdf](http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/2286107141510833/lib/2286107141510833/_files/Budget_-_mybudgetfile.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> For example, see Barringer School Leadership Council, <http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/page/1661>.
- <sup>11</sup> Lisa Fleischer, “Newark’s Merit Pay Plan Begins,” *The Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2013.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> <http://www.broadprize.org/resources/reports2012.html>.
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Education, EDFacts, *Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates at the School Level: School Year 2010–11*, <https://explore.data.gov/Education/School-graduation-rates/5vtz-kvrk>, April 17, 2013.
- <sup>15</sup> With the exception of middle school mathematics, in which the district was among the top 50 percent of New Jersey districts for average change in expected proficiency.
- <sup>16</sup> Elementary school students’ 2008 mathematics and reading proficiency rates not comparable to other years due to changes in the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) test.
- <sup>17</sup> With the exception of White elementary and middle school students who fall among the middle 50 percent of New Jersey school districts for their 2011 science proficiency rates.