



## **Big Cities School Districts Show Significant Progress on Student Performance, Achievement Gaps**

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The nation's 67 big-city school districts in 37 states continue to show gains in reading and mathematics on fourth and eighth grade state-mandated tests. The test scores are higher than last year and show significant gains from 2002. Also, these results indicate evidence of a narrowing of the racial achievement gap according to a newly released study by the Council of Great City Schools of the 2005-2006 school year. Many of these districts where improvements have been made are those where mayors have taken an active role in working with school leaders to assist in improving teaching and learning, and investing in educational opportunities that have an impact on student achievement.

This year's report, "Beating the Odds: A City-by-City Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement Gaps on State Assessments," is the seventh annual analysis and paints a picture of progress in city schools. Between 2002 and 2006, 67 percent of the urban districts in the study narrowed the gap between fourth grade African-American students and their white peers in math proficiency. In eighth grade, it's 60 percent of the districts. Among Hispanic students in math, 62 percent of the districts narrowed the gap between their fourth graders and white peers, while 53 percent did in the eighth grade.

For reading, the gap reduction for African-American students in fourth grade was 77 percent of the districts, and for eighth it was 67 percent. Among Hispanic students, 67 percent of the districts narrowed the reading gap in fourth grade, and 60 percent of eighth graders did the same.

Districts in cities that showed significant progress for both reading scores equal to or greater than their state's score were Anchorage, Broward County (Fort Lauderdale), Portland and San Diego. Seattle, Long Beach and Norfolk had their fourth grade reading score equal to or greater than their state's score, and Charleston, Orange County (Orlando), and Tucson had equal to the state score in eighth grade reading.

In mathematics Anchorage, Broward County (Fort Lauderdale), Portland, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco had fourth and eighth grade scores equal to or greater than their state's. For fourth grade, those having a score equal to or greater than their state's were Charleston, Long Beach and Seattle, and in eighth grade the cities were Omaha, Hillsborough County (Tampa) and Orange County (Orlando).

The nation cannot meet the broad goals of No Child Left Behind and raise achievement across the board without paying attention to students enrolled in urban schools. The nation's mayors understand this, and are increasingly taking on leadership roles and becoming more personally engaged in education in their cities.