

Report lauds school district

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A new report on academic progress by the nation's biggest urban public-school districts gives Orange County high marks for boosting the performance of children from all racial and economic backgrounds.

"We're encouraged by the progress Orange County has made over the last several years," said Michael Casserly of the Council of the Great City Schools, which published the study Wednesday.

Since 2000, Orange has raised standardized-test scores in both proficient students and low-scorers. It has also narrowed the disparity in those results among minorities and the poor and their white or affluent peers, the report found.

The group also commended the Orange district for meeting or exceeding state averages for eighth-grade proficiency in both math and reading. Out of 67 districts in the study, Orange was one of nine to do that in reading, and one of eight to do so in math.

"This report validates the hard work that OCPS educators are doing," Superintendent Ron Blocker said. The data, he added, show "that we are doing a better job preparing students for high school."