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ABSTRACT

New York Networks for School Renewal (NYNSR) is a 5-year collaborative project begun in 1995 as part of an effort to revitalize U.S. schools through public-private partnerships. Four New York organizations with years of experience in public education reform have joined in the NYNSR collaboration. An outcomes evaluation collected and analyzed both school-level and student-level data from NYNSR schools using databases constructed for the program. The NYNSR began with 80 founding schools and added an additional 60 public schools and programs, many in low-income areas. These 140 schools, which have a larger population of African American and Latino students than other New York City public schools, serve some 50,000 students. Between spring 1996 and spring 1997, the proportion of students in the 80 "founding schools" who read at or above the national norms for grades 3 through 8 rose 5%. More than 70% of parents and guardians surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of teaching, what students learn, and safety in the schools. Although the smaller schools had a somewhat higher cost per student, their higher graduation rates and lower dropout rates mean that they have produced the lowest cost per graduate in the city school system. In addition to increasing student achievement, NYNSR has expanded community and outside institutional involvement in the creation, governance, and culture of public schools. (Contains 6 tables, 5 figures, 21 graphs, and 1 map.) (SLD)

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ED 429 158

NYU INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION & SOCIAL POLICY  
 PROGRESS REPORT  
 OUTCOMES STUDY

JANUARY 1999

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**NEW YORK  
 NETWORKS  
 FOR SCHOOL  
 RENEWAL**

An Annenberg Foundation  
 Challenge for New York City

2

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# NEW YORK NETWORKS FOR SCHOOL RENEWAL

*Initiated by a five-year, \$25 million Annenberg Foundation challenge grant being matched by other contributors, New York Networks for School Renewal is developing and nurturing a rapidly increasing number of small public schools in New York City that are now offering quality education to nearly 50,000 students of highly diverse backgrounds. Linking these schools in networks, the project seeks to empower school practitioners, parents and students in ways that lead to greater student achievement and school accountability.*

## Project Sponsors

ACORN

(N.Y. Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now)

Center for Collaborative Education

Center for Educational Innovation

New Visions for Public Schools

**Lucille Renwick, Director**

## NYNSR Research Collaborative

Institute for Education & Social Policy, New York University

Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College

Lang College, The New School for Social Research

Community Service Society of New York City

*The NYNSR Research Collaborative will issue a series of reports from 1997 through 2001 about various aspects of the NYNSR Project.*

### THIS OUTCOMES STUDY WAS PREPARED BY:



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NYU INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION & SOCIAL POLICY  
PROGRESS REPORT

OUTCOMES STUDY

JANUARY 1999

**NEW YORK  
NETWORKS  
FOR SCHOOL  
RENEWAL**

An Annenberg Foundation  
Challenge for New York City

**NYU IESP Progress Report  
Outcomes Study  
January 1999**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Evaluation Design, Analytic Issues

The outcomes evaluation of the NYNSR project, conducted by NYU's Institute for Education and Social Policy, seeks to answer two basic questions: who are the students in NYNSR schools, and how well are they doing in terms of academic performance?

Our evaluation design answers the first question two ways: by collecting, aggregating and analyzing **school-level data** about NYNSR schools; and by collecting, aggregating and analyzing **student-level data** for the students in NYNSR schools. Who We Are, the first report of the outcomes study, published by NYNSR in 1997, analyzed student demographics from the 1995-96 school-level data for NYNSR schools. This Progress Report analyzes some additional school-level data for the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years, but concentrates mostly on new student-level data for NYNSR students and schools for 1995-96 and 1996-97. Most of our findings in this report confirm the earlier results reported in Who We Are. But we also offer some new findings, and correct a few findings reported in Who We Are, by using the greater precision that student-level data offer.

The second question our evaluation design asks -- how well are the students in NYNSR schools doing -- will be answered through a series of comparisons. One set of longitudinal comparisons is based on following students in the 80 founding NYNSR schools across time, using student-level data from the 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. To compare the performance of these NYNSR students across time, we will examine patterns of attendance; enrollment consistency or its converse, mobility; graduation or dropout in high schools; and the year-to-year gain or loss in test score results.

Another set of comparisons is between particular groups of NYNSR students and students in non-NYNSR schools selected for their demographic similarities. We have matched many of the NYNSR founding schools with non-NYNSR New York City public schools on a variety of student demographic and outcome characteristics. We will compare what we call our Panel 1 students (students who were in NYNSR founding schools in 1995-96) with

students in our matched **comparison sample**, across a range of demographic and performance indicators, to answer the question of how well NYNSR students are doing. We will record the year-to-year changes in Panel 1 students as they move from 1995-96 to 1996-97 and 1997-98, and compare those year-to-year changes with the changes for students in the comparison pool.

To provide yet another assessment of how well NYNSR students are doing, we will compare our panel of students, on all demographic and outcome measures, and for year-to-year changes, to students from a **random sample** drawn from all non-NYNSR New York City public schools.

**Figure 1**

<b>Comparison for the NYNSR evaluation</b>			
	<b>1995-96</b>	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>
<b>NYNSR Students Panel 1</b>	Baseline Cohort File	Year 1 Cohort File	Year 2 Cohort File
<b>Students in Matched Schools</b>	Baseline Cohort File	Year 1 Cohort File	Year 2 Cohort File
<b>Students in Random Sample Schools</b>	Baseline Cohort File	Year 1 Cohort File	Year 2 Cohort File

Our evaluation design is structured, through all these comparative analyses, to allow us to say: students in NYNSR schools have made X amount of progress on all these indicators, and this is more or less progress than students in other similar New York City public schools have made. This Progress Report uses only 1995-96 and 1996-97 student-level data to analyze within-year and year-to-year student mobility in NYNSR founding schools, and also reports preliminary outcomes on reading test scores for the same students. We present findings only for NYNSR students in founding schools in 1995-96 and 1996-97; our next progress report will present comparative findings using our comparison and random samples of students in the rest of the NYC system.

### **Status of NYNSR School-level Databases**

As of December, 1998, IESP has recorded in Board of Education (BOE) databases 130 distinct NYNSR school units, some of which are small schools sharing a building with other NYNSR or non-NYNSR schools. (Another nine schools were slated to open during the 1998-99 school year.) We continue to struggle with multiple BOE school identifiers for schools with K-8 or 6-12 grade configurations; thus, for example, the School for the Physical City might be identified as a 6-8 middle school in District 2's aggregate data, and as a 9-12 high school in the Manhattan Borough Superintendency's aggregate data.

The school-level data we use in this report is for the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years. Student- and school-level data for the 1997-98 school year is expected to become available during the first quarter of 1999. When we receive the high school data from the 1997-98 BOE cohort report, we will update the graduation and dropout analysis of founding NYNSR high schools (see Attachment A of the July 98 Progress Report).

### **Status of NYNSR Student-level Databases**

At this point, we have constructed student demographics and outcome databases for each of the 130 NYNSR schools we have identified, from student-level data provided by the BOE, for the first two years of the NYNSR project, 1995-96 and 1996-97. When, later in this report, we describe the demographics of the students served by the project, as well as their mobility and their reading progress, we are reporting from data that covers up to the Spring of 1997. We have not yet received Math test data for any students for any year.

The following diagram indicates which student-level data we have obtained from the BOE, and which data we are awaiting.



**Figure 2**

<b>Status of Databases for the NYNSR evaluation</b>			
	<b>1995-96</b>	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>
<b>NYNSR Students</b>	Baseline Cohort File (obtained July 98) N=24,468	Year 1 Cohort File (obtained Dec 98) N=52,649	Year 2 Cohort File  <b>Not Yet Obtained from BOE</b>
<b>Students in Matched</b>	Baseline Cohort File  <b>Received 2/99 Not yet analyzed</b>	Year 1 Cohort File (obtained Dec 98) N=53704	Year 2 Cohort File  <b>Not Yet Obtained from BOE</b>
<b>Students in Random Sample Schools</b>	Baseline Cohort File  <b>Received 2/99 Not yet analyzed</b>	Year 1 Cohort File (obtained Dec 98) N=72219	Year 2 Cohort File  <b>Not Yet Obtained from BOE</b>

IESP completed its nonrandom and random comparison sampling strategies during the summer of 1998, and submitted its listing of comparison schools for which we needed student-level data to the BOE. By February 1999, IESP had received 1995-96 and 1996-97 data from the BOE for 125,923 students in the comparison schools, both non-random and random. But because we have only just begun to analyze this data, aggregate comparisons between NYNSR and non-NYNSR students will be presented in the next progress report.

## II. THE STATE OF THE NYNSR PROJECT

### NYNSR Schools by Sponsoring Organization

Table 2a presents participating NYNSR schools by sponsoring organization. Throughout the first three years of the evaluation, New Visions has brought new schools into the project by providing planning grants for groups seeking to start new schools. Almost half of the founding schools<sup>1</sup> were sponsored by the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE). The Center for Educational Innovation's strategy involves supporting large existing elementary schools as they restructure into smaller, more effective units.

**Table 2a**  
Total number of NYNSR schools  
By Sponsor and Project Year

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Project Total as of June 98
ACORN	2	1	0	3
Center for Collaborative Education	37	1	0	38
Center for Education Innovation (CEI)	19	27	0	46
New Visions (NV)	19	10	11	40
Jointly sponsored (NV, CCE)	3	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>130</b>

By the end of the 1997-98 academic year, we have identified 130 public schools affiliated with the NYNSR initiative in New York City. Another nine NYNSR schools were slated to open for the 1998-99 school year. The data in Section III of this report focuses only on the 119 NYNSR schools serving students during the 1995-96 (80 schools) and 1996-97 (another 39 schools) school years.<sup>2</sup>

### NYNSR School Configurations

Table 2b presents NYNSR schools by school level and project year. In 1995-96, almost half of all NYNSR founding students were high school students. A large group of NYNSR

<sup>1</sup> "Founding schools" refers to NYNSR schools that joined the project at the start of the 1995-96 school year.

<sup>2</sup> One founding school sponsored by ACORN, The Rockaway New School, closed after the 1995-96 year. Since this school did not have a school identifier or BDS code, their data has never been available for analysis.

schools (17 schools) bridge the middle school-high school transition and serve students from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Table 2b**  
**NYNSR Schools**  
By Project Year and Grade Configuration

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Project Total to date
Lower grades only (ES)	20	16	2	38
Lower and middle	1	5	0	6
Middle grades only (JHS or IS)	15	12	4	31
Middle and high grades	16	1	0	17
High grades only (HS)	27	5	5	37
K-12	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>130</b>

As Table 2c indicates, more than one quarter of the NYNSR project students attended elementary schools in 1995-96, but this proportion increased to over one third in 1996-97. Over the past two years, CEI and New Visions have sponsored more elementary and middle schools, so now the project has a slightly higher proportion of students in the early grades.

**Table 2c**  
**NYNSR Students**  
By School level

Grades served	1995-96		1996-97	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Elementary	6679	27.3	18652	35.3
Middle	6290	25.7	17454	33.2
High	11499	47.0	16632	31.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>24468</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>52468</b>	<b>100.0</b>

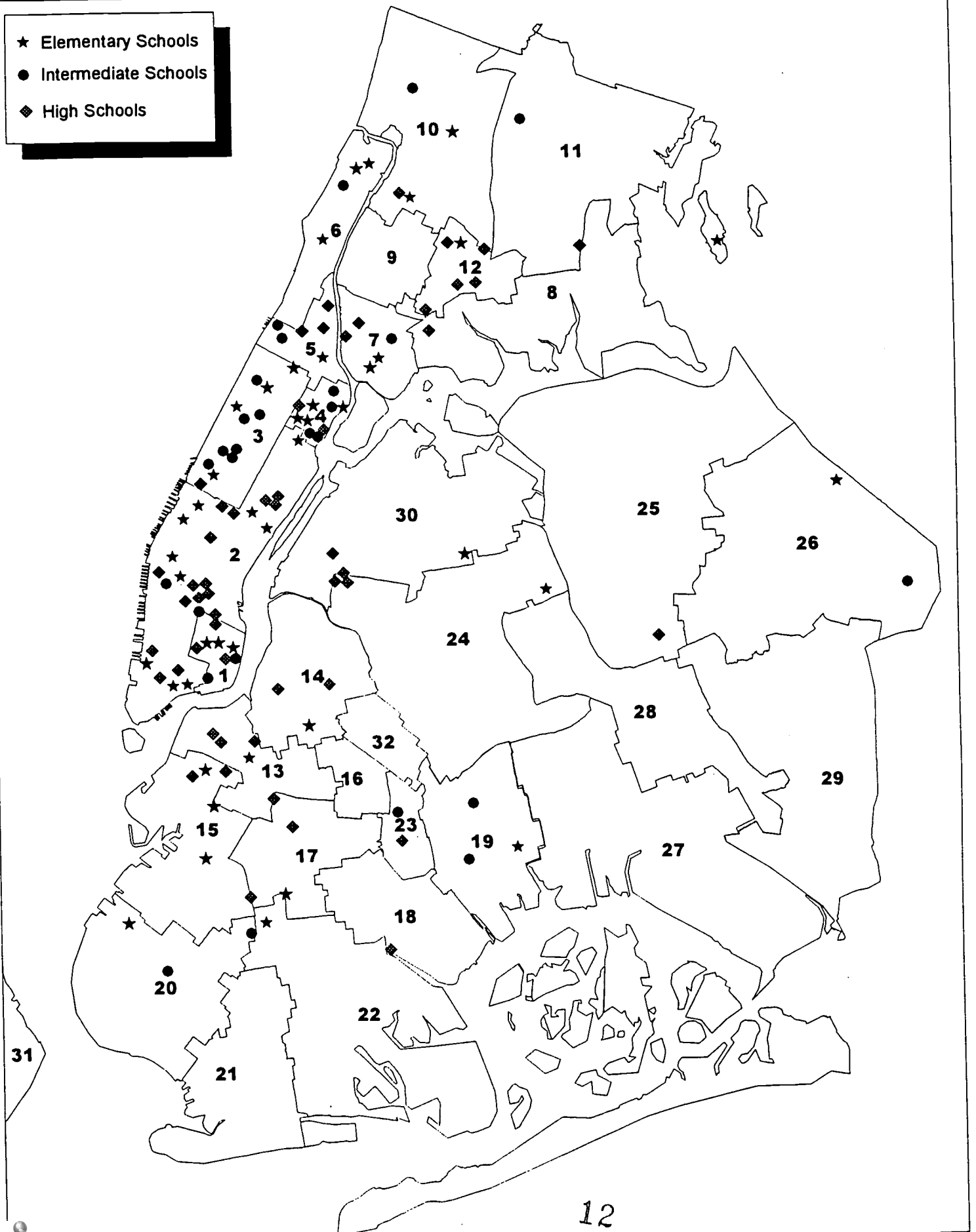
### **Geographic Distribution of NYNSR Schools Across New York City**

The map on the next page shows the geographic distribution of NYNSR schools as of June 1997. The project is still heavily centered in Manhattan, but there has been a substantial expansion into the Bronx and other boroughs in the 1996-97 year.

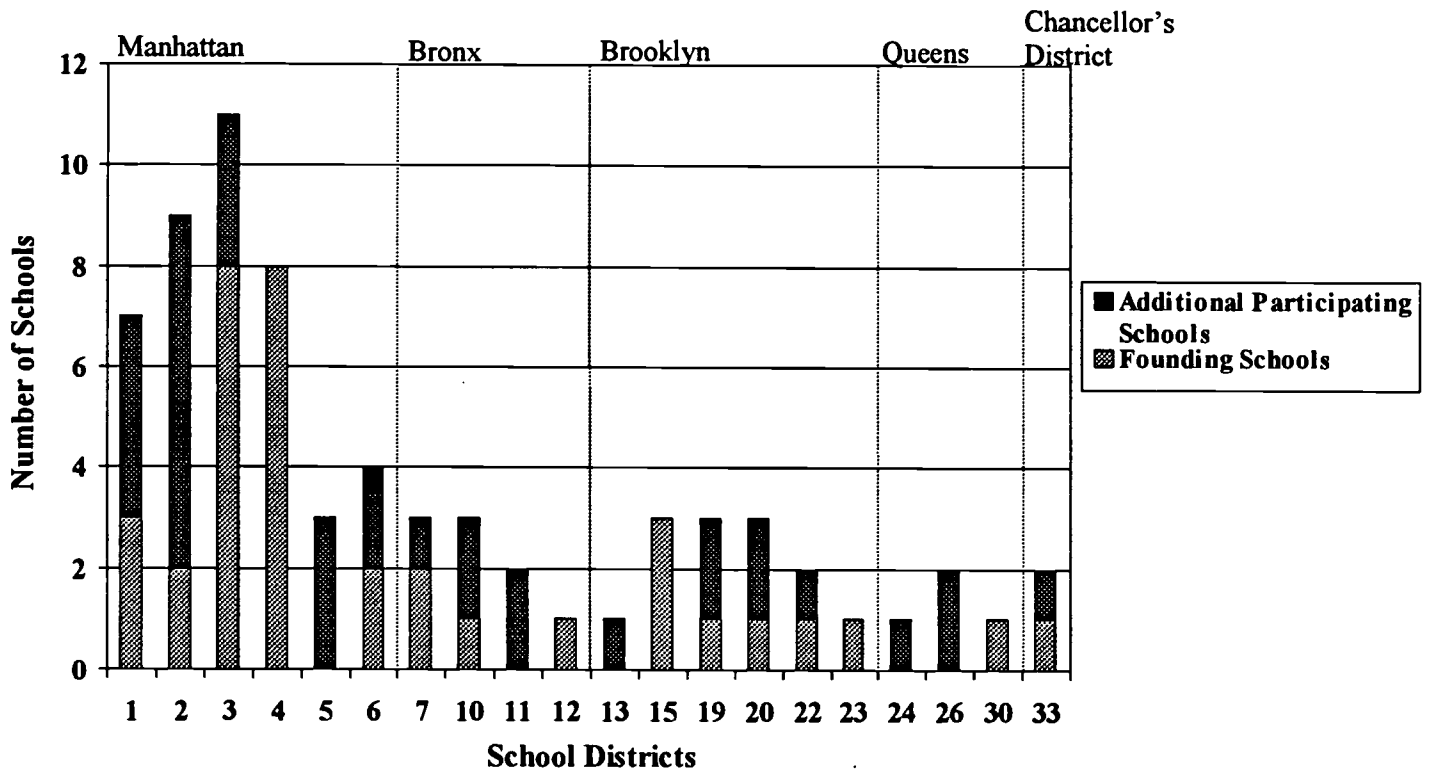
The bar charts on the page following the map show the distribution of elementary, middle and high schools in NYC. The bar chart at the top of the page displays the distribution of elementary and middle schools. Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Manhattan have the largest

# NYNSR Schools as of June 1997

- ★ Elementary Schools
- Intermediate Schools
- ◆ High Schools



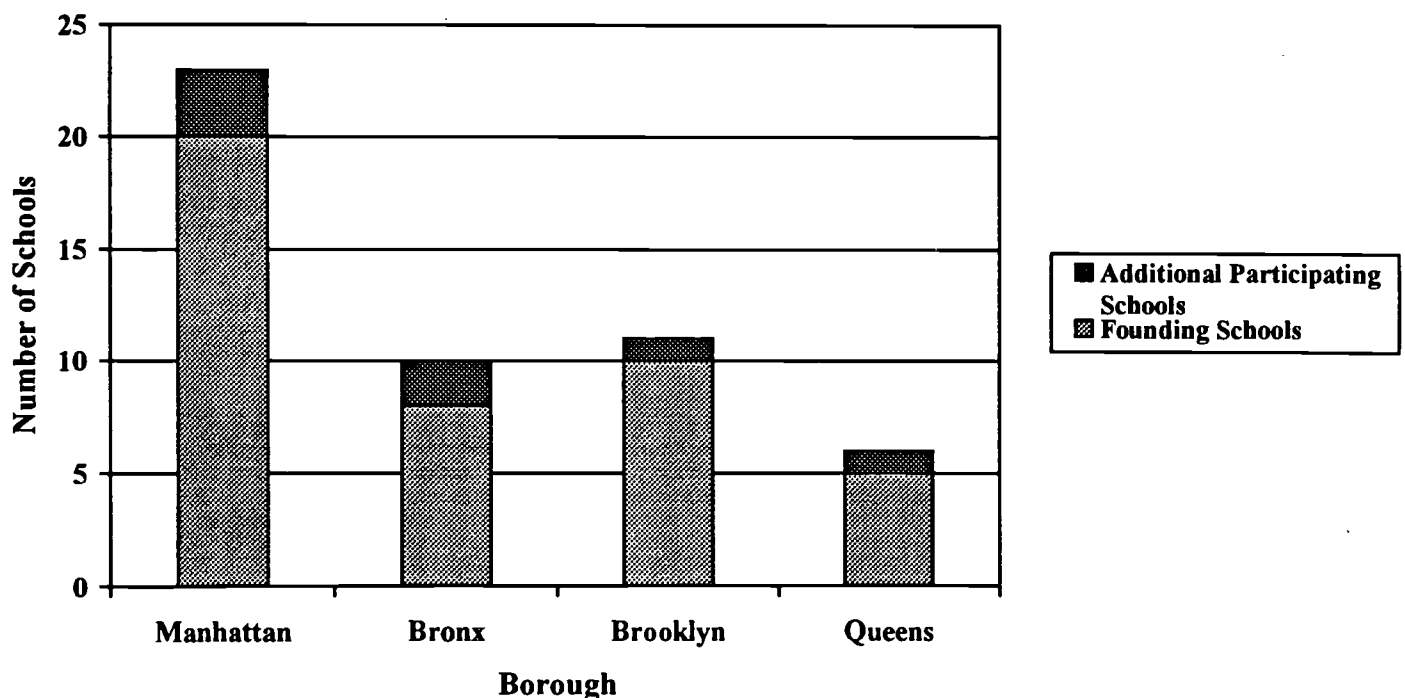
## Distribution of NYNSR Elementary and Middle Schools by Community School District as of June 1997



\* Districts not included in this chart did not have NYNSR schools as of June 1997.

\*\* Middle Schools in Community School Districts that are part of a larger high school (often grades six through twelve) are counted as high schools and thus not represented here.

## Distribution of NYNSR High Schools by Borough as of June 1997



number of NYNSR schools and Districts 1 and 2 also have the largest number of additional participating schools. Districts 5, 11, 13, 24 and 26 joined NYNSR in its second year with a number of additional participating schools.

The bar chart on the previous page displays the distribution of NYNSR high schools by borough. Again, Manhattan has a larger number of schools compared to the other boroughs. Additional participating schools have been added to four boroughs: three in Manhattan, two in the Bronx, one in Brooklyn and one in Queens.

### School Size

Most of the NYNSR schools have small student populations. The addition of a number of large restructuring elementary schools to the project in the 1996-97 year has raised the average size of a NYNSR elementary school from 356 students in 1995-96 to 506 students in 1996-97. The average size of NYNSR schools at each school level is shown in Table 2d.

**Table 2d**  
Average Registers of NYNSR and NYC schools  
1995-96, and 1996-97

	Average NYNSR School Register		Average NYC School Register	
	1995-96	1996-97	1995-96	1996-97
Elementary school	356	506	762	773
Middle school	351	709	876	851
High school	326	340	1595	1483

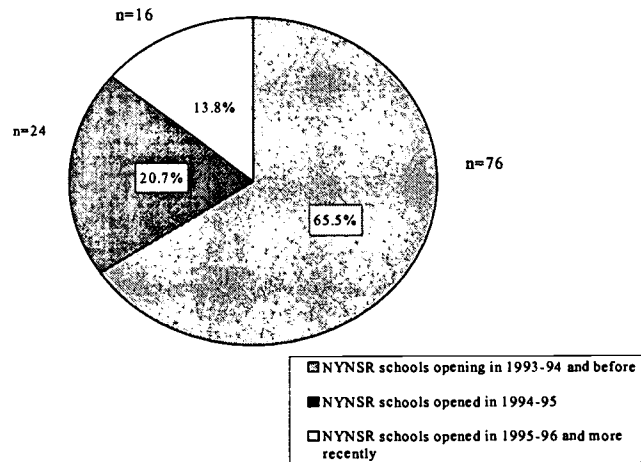
Note: NYNSR Middle-high schools are included in the high school averages.

The average size of a NYNSR middle school also jumped considerably due to the addition of a number of large schools (roughly 1000-1500 students) undergoing restructuring. The average size of a NYNSR elementary school would be quite a bit lower if we were able to calculate student registers by mini-schools. For example, our databases only recognize the 13 elementary school buildings that house a reported 40 mini-schools created by CEI in the 1996-97 year.

## New vs. Existing Schools

Figure 5

Length of Time NYNSR Schools Have Been in Existence  
as of June 1997



Note: Three NYNSR schools are not represented because we cannot verify their starting date.

### III. WHO ARE THE STUDENTS IN THE NYNSR PROJECT?

The information in this section of the report relies on cross-sectional data for the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years.<sup>3</sup> Different schools and students participated in each year. Where we draw comparisons with citywide demographics, we use school-level data from the Board of Education's Annual School Reports or High School Overviews. In all cases, comparison data here represents all NYC public school students including NYNSR students. In future reports, NYNSR students will be compared with samples of non-project student specific data drawn for the evaluation.

#### Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Tables 3a, 3b and 3c describe the gender and ethnicity of students attending NYNSR founding schools during the 1995-96 year. Overall, the gender distribution in NYNSR schools was 51.5% female in 1995-96 and 50.4% in 1996-97. NYNSR elementary and middle schools served almost equal numbers of males and females, but more females than males were attending NYNSR high schools in 1995-96 (53.9%, n=6115).<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3a**  
NYNSR Students, Percent Female  
1995-96 and 1996-97

	1995-96		1996-97	
	N	%	N	%
Percent Female	12601	51.5	26558	50.4

<sup>3</sup> For the most part, 1995-96 data represents 80 schools, and 1996-97 data represents 119 schools.

<sup>4</sup> This may reflect dropout trends that show more boys than girls dropping out of high school.



**Table 3b**  
All NYNSR Students, 1995-96  
by Race/Ethnicity and School level

	NYNSR*		School level					
			Elementary		Middle		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hispanic	9955	45.4	3531	55.1	2774	46.6	3650	38.1
Black (non Hispanic)	8572	39.1	1717	26.8	2442	41.1	4413	46.1
White (non Hispanic)	2300	10.5	756	11.8	509	8.6	1035	10.8
Asian or Other	1112	5.1	410	6.4	223	3.7	479	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21939</b>		<b>6414</b>		<b>5948</b>		<b>9577</b>	

\*Note: 2529 (10.3%) students are missing ethnicity data.

In 1995-96, about 84.5% of all students in NYNSR founding schools were Hispanic or Black (45.4% Hispanic, 39.1% Black)<sup>5</sup>. There were different racial/ethnic distributions, however, across the school levels. NYNSR schools with elementary grades were 55% Hispanic, whereas NYNSR high schools served a larger proportion of Black students (46.1%).

**Table 3c**  
All NYNSR Students, 1996-97  
by Race/Ethnicity and School level

	NYNSR*		School level					
			Elementary		Middle		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hispanic	20040	38.3	8321	45.0	5444	31.3	6275	38.2
Black (non Hispanic)	21141	40.4	5419	29.3	7905	45.5	7817	47.6
White (non Hispanic)	6506	12.4	2661	14.4	2322	13.4	1523	9.3
Asian or Other	4593	8.8	2092	11.3	1698	9.8	803	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>52280</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>18493</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17369</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16418</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: Only 368 (0.7%) of all students in the 1996-97 databases are missing ethnicity data.

In 1996-97, about 78.7% of all students in the NYNSR founding schools were Hispanic or Black (38.3% Hispanic, 40.4% Black). There were different racial/ethnic distributions, however, across school levels. Whereas NYNSR schools with elementary grades were 45% Hispanic, both the middle schools and high schools served a larger proportion of Black students than Hispanic students (45.5% vs. 31.3% in middle schools and 47.6% vs. 38.2% in high schools).

<sup>5</sup> 10.3% of all students in the 1995-96 NYNSR database were missing ethnicity data. In this report, whenever we cross two variables, missing cases on either of the variables or both will be missing in the table.

Tables 3d and 3e contrast NYNSR student race/ethnicity with the race/ethnicity of all students in NYC public schools by school level.

Table 3d shows that in 1995-96, a higher proportion of NYNSR students were Hispanic at all school levels, although the difference is smaller at the high school level. NYNSR founding schools served a slightly larger proportion of Black students when compared with schools in NYC at the middle school and high school levels. The proportion of Black students in NYNSR elementary schools was lower than in schools in NYC.

**Table 3d**  
 NYNSR Students vs. All NYC Public School Students, 1995-96  
 By Ethnicity and School level

	Elementary		Middle		High	
	NYNSR	NYC	NYNSR	NYC	NYNSR	NYC
Hispanic	55.1	38.3	46.6	37.2	38.1	34.8
Black (non Hispanic)	26.8	35.0	41.1	35.5	46.1	37.8
White (non Hispanic)	11.8	16.7	8.6	17.1	10.8	16.4
Asian or Other	6.4	10.0	3.7	10.1	5.0	11.0

Source for all NYC comparison data: 1995-96 Annual School Reports and High School Overviews

Table 3e shows that in 1996-97, a higher proportion of NYNSR students were Hispanic at the elementary and high school levels. NYNSR founding schools served a slightly larger proportion of Black students when compared with schools in NYC at the middle school and high school levels. The proportion of Black students in NYNSR elementary schools was lower than in schools in NYC.

**Table 3e**  
 NYNSR Students vs. All NYC Public School Students, 1996-97  
 by Ethnicity and School level

	Elementary		Middle		High	
	NYNSR	NYC	NYNSR	NYC	NYNSR	NYC
Hispanic	45.0	38.7	31.3	36.9	38.2	34.9
Black (non Hispanic)	29.3	34.9	45.5	35.0	47.6	37.0
White (non Hispanic)	14.4	16.1	13.4	17.2	9.3	16.0
Asian and Other	11.3	10.2	9.8	10.6	4.9	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: These 1996-97 data include students in additional participating schools. Source for all NYC comparison data: 1996-97 Annual School Reports and High School Overviews.

## Students Eligible for Free Lunch

Eligibility for the federal free and reduced price lunch program is a very limited and imperfect indicator, but it is frequently used as a proxy for student economic need or poverty status. Table 3f contrasts the percent of NYNSR and all NYC public school students eligible for free or reduced price lunches in 1995-96. Students eligible for free or reduced price lunches were slightly over represented in NYNSR schools, particularly at the middle school level.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 3f**  
NYNSR and NYC Students  
Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch  
1995-96, By School level

Students in:	NYNSR		All NYC*	
	N	%	N	%
Elementary schools	5275	79.0	N/A	76.3
Middle schools	4761	75.7	N/A	69.1

\*Source: 1995-96 and 1996-97 Annual School Reports

## English Language Learners

Overall, 12.9% of all NYNSR students (n=3166) were designated as English Language Learners (ELL) in 1995-96<sup>7</sup>. This percentage remained roughly the same as the project expanded to serve a total of 6212 (11.8%) ELL students in 1996-97. These percents are higher than we were able to detect with the school-level data used in our earlier report, *Who We Are*, NYNSR, 1997. We have no comparable ELL percent for the NYC public school system as a whole.

Table 3g indicates that in 1995-96, NYNSR English Language Learners were fairly equally represented at all school levels. Of the total number of ELL students, (n=3158) 37.7% were in elementary school, 26.4% were in middle schools, and 35.7% were in high schools.

<sup>6</sup> Analysis of free lunch information for students at the high school level is not presented here due to large amounts of missing data.

<sup>7</sup> Although the state and city refer to the population of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, the NYNSR project prefers to use the term "English Language Learner" or ELL. The LEP and ELL abbreviations are used interchangeably in this document.

**Table 3g**  
**English Language Learners in NYNSR Schools**  
 By School level

	1995-96		1996-97	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Elementary	1195	37.7	2526	40.7
Middle	835	26.4	2055	33.1
High	1129	35.7	1631	26.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3158</b>		<b>6212</b>	

\*Note: 0.2% of ELL students (n=8) are missing level data.  
 Percents may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

### NYNSR ELL Students Compared with NYC Averages

Table 3h compares ELL students in NYNSR schools to those in NYC as a whole. Fewer NYNSR students are ELL across all school levels, and in both years.

**Table 3h**  
**NYNSR ELL Students vs. All NYC ELL Students**  
 by School level

	NYNSR		NYC	
	1995-96	1996-97	1995-96	1996-97
Elementary	17.9	13.6	20.2	18.3
Middle	13.3	11.8	16.3	14.7
High	9.9	9.8	15.2	14.8

Source for NYC comparisons: Annual School Reports and High School Overviews

Table 3i shows that ELL students were primarily Hispanic (78.2%, n=2297). The next largest group of NYNSR English Language Learners were Asian/Other (10.3%, n=302). In 1996-97, there was a rise to 17.2% ELL for Asian students (n=1070).

**Table 3i**  
**English Language Learners in NYNSR Schools**  
 By Ethnicity

	1995-96		1996-97	
	N	%	N	%
Hispanic	2297	78.2	4275	68.9
Black (non Hispanic)	158	5.4	437	7
White (non Hispanic)	179	6.1	425	6.8
Asian or Other	302	10.3	1070	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2936</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6212</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Note: 7.2% of ELL students (n=230) are missing ethnicity data.

## Special Education Students

Overall, 3.9% (n=961) of all NYNSR students (n=961) were designated as Special Education students (SE) in 1995-96.<sup>8</sup> This increased to 5.2% of all project students (n=2755) in 1996-97.

Table 3j presents Special Education students by school level. Most NYNSR Special Education students were enrolled in middle schools (58%). Another quarter were registered in elementary schools (24.6%). Only 17% of NYNSR Special Education students were enrolled in high schools.

**Table 3j**  
NYNSR Special Education Students  
by School level

	1995-96		1996-97	
	N	%	N	%
Elementary	234	24.3	955	34.7
Middle	564	58.7	1348	48.9
High	163	17.0	452	16.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2755</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: These numbers do not include District 75 students or Pre-Kindergarten students.

Source: Annual School Reports and High School Overviews

Table 3k presents data on the ethnicity of Special Education students in NYNSR schools. In 1995-96, Black and Hispanic students together comprised 95.3% of the NYNSR Special Education student population (56.1% and 39.2%). In 1996-97, the combined percentage was 91%, a slight decline in the proportion of Hispanics and Blacks among Special Education students in NYNSR.

<sup>8</sup> These figures are for full-time Special Education students only and do not include students receiving resource room or consultant services.

**Table 3k**  
**Special Education Students in NYNSR Schools**  
 by Ethnicity

	1995-96		1996-97	
	N	%	N	%
Hispanic	507	56.1	1253	45.5
Black (non Hispanic)	354	39.2	1252	45.4
White (non Hispanic)	33	3.7	169	6.1
Asian or Other	9	1.0	81	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2755</b>	<b>99.9</b>

\*Note: 6.1% of SE students (n=58) are missing ethnicity data.

A closer look at NYNSR Special Education students by school level in comparison to NYC Special Education students (Table 3l) suggests that, in both years, a greater proportion of NYNSR middle school students out of the entire NYNSR student population were categorized as Special Education students (1995-96, 8.8%; 1996-97, 7.5%).

**Table 3l**  
**NYNSR SE Students vs. All NYC SE Students**  
 by School level

	NYNSR				NYC			
	1995-96		1996-97		1995-96		1996-97	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Elementary	234	3.5	955	5.1	N/A	6.9	N/A	5.8
Middle	564	9.0	1348	7.7	N/A	7.5	N/A	7.5
High	163	1.4	452	2.7	N/A	6.3	N/A	5.5

Note: 1996-97 NYNSR data includes additional participating schools.  
 Source: Annual School Reports and High School Overviews.

In 1996-97, NYNSR schools served roughly the same percentages of elementary and middle school students in special education as were served in all NYC schools. The percentage of high school students in special education served by NYNSR high schools was roughly half the percent served by all NYC schools.

## Students Overage for Grade

**Table 3m**  
**Students Years Overage for Grade**  
 1995-96

	NYNSR High Schools		NYC High Schools	
	N	%	N	%
All 9 <sup>th</sup> or 10 <sup>th</sup> graders entering Articulated Alternative high schools	2312	42.3	20902	33.0

\*Note: "Overage" applies only to General Education students. Only students entering traditionally structured (grades 9-12) high schools in Grade 9 are included in NYNSR figures. Students in alternative transfer high schools, and retained students are not included in figures. Source for NYC comparison data: 1995-96 and 1996-97 High School Overview Reports: Profile of the Entering Class.

Overage for grade means that a student is more than one year older than his or her normal grade-level age should be. A large proportion of overage students suggests that these students have been retained earlier in their education. This table indicates that more NYNSR 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students were overage for grade in 1995-96 than were their counterparts in similar settings in the NYC high school system.

## IV. STUDENT MOBILITY

The effect of student mobility on instruction and subsequent student performance is a concern in New York City. A 1992 study by the New York State Education Department found high student mobility rates in New York City were consistently related to low student performance on state mandated tests.<sup>9</sup>

Student mobility is an important variable in our analyses for two reasons. First, substantial student movement during the school year often affects classroom environments, makes instruction more difficult, and lowers student performance. Moreover, large numbers of students changing schools between any two academic years can reduce the validity of cross-sectional analyses of reading performance data used to indicate school-level achievement, if different students are represented in the school data for each year. The following analyses explore levels of student mobility in NYNSR and NYC public schools. Comparable analysis for non-NYNSR students will be presented in the next progress report.

### **Within-Year Mobility In NYNSR Founding Schools**

To estimate the amount of student movement in NYNSR schools during the 1995-96 year, we constructed a baseline cohort file comprising all students enrolled in all founding NYNSR schools at any of the following points in time: October 1995, March 1996, or June 1996. NYNSR students changing schools within the 1995-96 year were assigned to a 'home NYNSR school' for all analyses.<sup>10</sup>

What we found is important: more than 94% of all founding elementary and middle school students remained in the same NYNSR school during the year, whereas approximately 91% of all NYC public elementary and middle school students remained in the same public school during the year. Table 4a presents the percent of NYNSR students remaining in the same school between October 1995 and June 1996, compared to all NYC students.

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<sup>9</sup> Student and Teacher Mobility: Impact on School Performance in New York City public schools. New York State Education Department, Albany. Office for Planning, Research and Support Services. 1992.

<sup>10</sup> We assigned a 'home school' for the 1995-96 year by examining the student's school location for three separate points in time: October 1995, March 1996, and June 1996. If two points in time (or more) were available and the same, we assigned the student to that school. If the schools attended differed, and/or some data were missing, we assigned the student to the last school attended during the 1995-96 year.



**Table 4a**  
 Percent of NYNSR and NYC students in the same school  
 Between Oct 95 and June 96

	NYNSR	NYC
All elementary schools	94.2%	91.2%
All middle schools	94.4%	91.5%

\*Note: Source for NYC comparison data is 1995-96 Annual School Reports.

**Table 4b**  
 Within-year Mobility between project and non-project schools  
 NYNSR founding students  
 as of June 1996

	Number	Percent
Students remaining in the project throughout 1995-96	22440	91.7
Students moving into NYNSR schools	992	4.1
Students moving out of NYNSR schools	1036	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>24468</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Note: More than three changes of schools could not be detected in our analyses.

When students did move between schools during the 1995-96 year, equal proportions of the students moved to and from the NYNSR project, as seen in Table 4b. There does not appear to be a large influx or exodus from founding project schools over the course of the 1995-96 school year.

### **Persisters and Leavers: Annual Student Mobility**

It has long been obvious that students who continue their education produce better academic outcomes than students who interrupt or terminate their education short of graduation. The research literature on schooling outcomes has established that schooling persisters produce better lifetime outcomes, particularly in terms of aggregate earnings, than school leavers. The following table presents the proportion of students in founding NYNSR schools in 1995-96 who remained in the NYC public school system a year later.

**Table 4c**  
**Who Stays and Who Leaves?**  
**Status of founding 1995-96 NYNSR Students**  
**as of June 1997**

	Number	Percent
Persisters	20221	90.2
Leavers	2187	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>22408</b>	<b>99.9</b>

Note: This table does not include Pre-K students, students who began the year in Special Education, or students missing level data in either of the two years.

Table 4c reports that 90.2% (n=20,221) of the NYNSR founding students persisted in NYC public schools a full year after the project began. "Persisters" includes students who were promoted to the next grade, graduated from high school, were retained on grade, or were demoted to the prior grade, as well as students who were referred and transferred to self-contained Special Education classes or GED programs. "Leavers" includes students who transferred out of the NYC public schools, students who dropped out of school, or students whose reasons for leaving are unknown as of June 1997. Comparable data for non-NYNSR students was not yet available at the time we released this report.

### Grade Promotion/Grade Retention

Table 4d presents the proportion of founding NYNSR students who were promoted or retained on grade between 1995-96 and 1996-97. Approximately seventy-two percent (72.4%, 16,223 students) of the NYNSR students in founding schools were promoted to the next grade between these two years.

**Table 4d**  
**Grade Promotion and Retention in NYNSR Schools**  
**Status of Founding NYNSR Students**  
**as of June 1997**

	Number	Percent
Promoted	16233	72.4
Retained	3463	15.5
Other	2712	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22408</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: "Other" includes students transferred to SPE, GED or non-NYC public school programs, dropped out, or unknown reason for discharge. This table does not include Pre-K students, students who began the year as a Special Education student, or students missing data in either of the two years.

## V. PRELIMINARY OUTCOME ANALYSIS OF FOUNDING NYNSR STUDENTS

Each year, all New York City public school students in grades 3 through 8 take a standardized reading test. A variety of other reading or language assessments are administered to elementary and middle school students, including the Performance Assessment in Language Arts (PAL) exam in Grade 4. A number of NYNSR schools have implemented sophisticated portfolio requirements in addition to the required standardized tests.

This report is limited to a preliminary analysis of standardized reading test data because these are the *only* data available for both NYNSR and non-project comparison schools. Despite their limitations, these data are regularly used by administrators to make important decisions about individual schools including whether they are put on registration review or sanctioned in other ways. Parents and the public have learned to use the standardized test data to press for additional support for, or structural changes in their schools. The following analysis is exploratory, and future reports will present additional longitudinal work.

### Methodology

The NYC public schools regularly report on student reading performance, and their reports are almost always aggregated to the school- or grade- level. The student outcomes data used for all analyses in this section are based on the CTB Reading Test (CTB-R) administered every Spring to NYC public school students in Grades 3 through 8.<sup>11</sup> Comparable analysis for non-NYNSR students will be presented in the next progress report.<sup>12</sup>

This discussion is based on the test scores of 6,461 founding NYNSR students in general education who were tested on the CTB in Spring 1996 and again in the Spring of 1997 in

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<sup>11</sup> The CTB Reading Test (CTB-R), published by CTB/McGraw-Hill is a norm-referenced assessment system. The CTB-R consists of two English Language Arts tests. One is a multiple-choice test of reading comprehension, called *CTB Reading*. The other is called the *Performance Assessment in Language Arts (PAL)*, in which students write their own responses to the questions. The test data for this evaluation utilize only the multiple-choice component of the CTB-R.

<sup>12</sup> Beginning in 1986, the citywide assessment system in New York City for English Language Arts was the Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.). For ten years, this test served as the single-component citywide exam for New York City Public schools. The New York City Public schools system switched to the CTB-R from the Degrees of Reading Power or DRP after the Spring of 1995, to improve the alignment between citywide assessment and the new, higher-order learning standards established by both the state and the city system.

NYNSR founding schools.<sup>13</sup> We obtained test data for the selected students by taking the list of 1995-96 founding student IDs and matching them to each year's test files, thereby obtaining testing data for each student regardless of whether the student moved to a new school (or out of the NYNSR project) in the subsequent year. (These students may represent a selected group if students who leave NYNSR schools differ from those who remain.<sup>14</sup>) This strategy attempts to avoid biases that result from selecting only students who remain in NYNSR for two consecutive years.

In this part of the NYNSR progress report, we measure student achievement gains on several levels. We begin by measuring whole project gains and then compare and contrast the gains of students of different ethnic groups. Next, we examine gains of particular students in each grade level (e.g. students who were 5<sup>th</sup> graders in 1995-96 and their test performance in the subsequent year).

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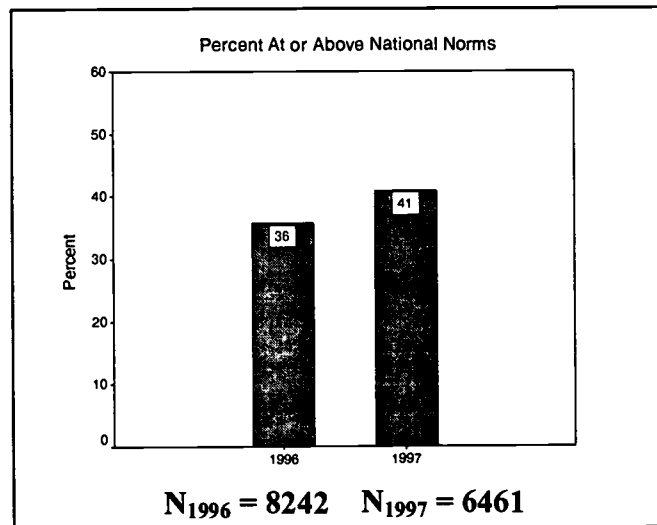
<sup>13</sup> All limited English proficient students who have been in an English language school system for less than five years AND who scored below the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile on the English Reading sub-test of the LAB are exempt from testing in all subjects areas, and thus are not represented in the data in this report.

<sup>14</sup> An analysis of attrition from NYNSR schools is planned when 1997-98 data becomes available.

## Gains in Reading

The charts below indicate that between Spring 1996 and Spring 1997, the percent of NYNSR students reading at or above the national norms increased from 36% to 41%, an increase of 5%.

**Percent of NYNSR Students Reading at or above National Norms  
Spring 1996 and Spring 1997**



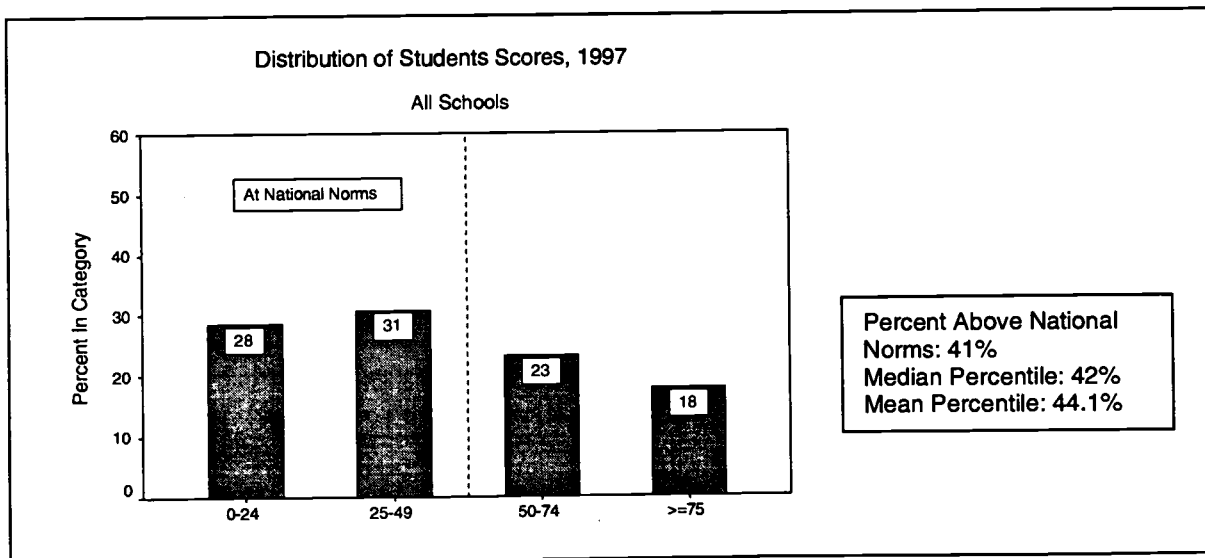
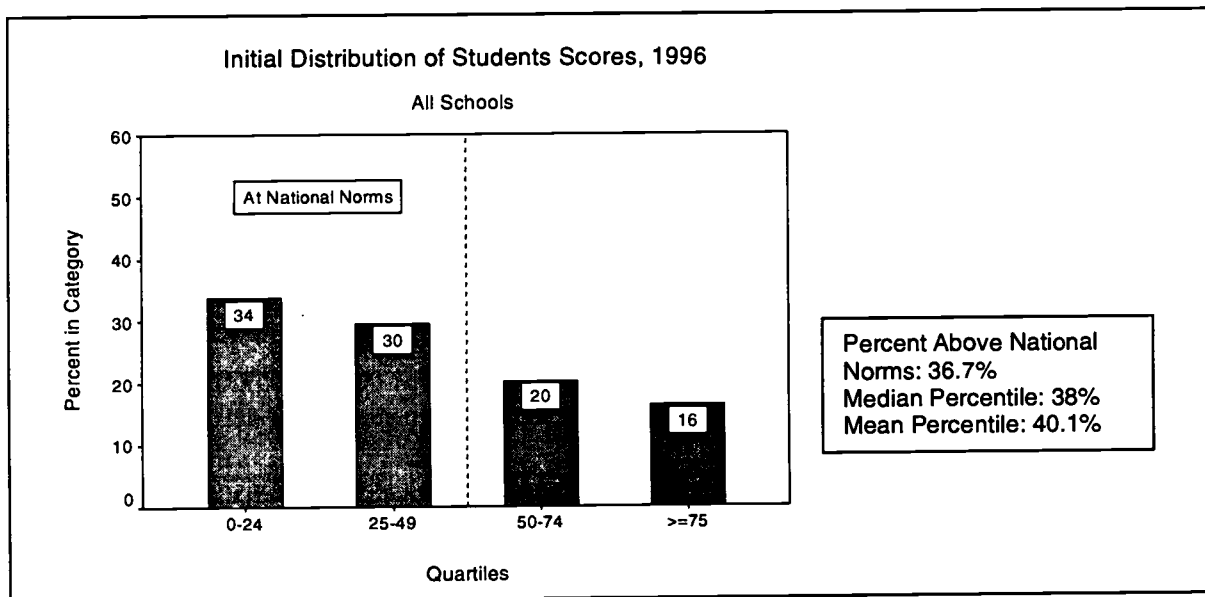
The problem with using the statistic “percent of students at or above national norms” is that it is *insensitive* to any improvement in performance of a subgroup of students far from the national norms. An intervention that leads to a significant improvement in the learning of the lowest percentile of students, for example, can go undetected since it will not change the percent above national norms. An important paper by Tony Bryk and colleagues, **Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Elementary Schools**,<sup>15</sup> uses percentile ranges to demonstrate the shortcomings of using only “the percent of students scoring at or above national norms” to measure improvements in student achievement. Bryk recommends that we use mean improvement in concert with a value-added technique to reflect the improvement in reading of all the students (the lowest percentile as well as the highest).

<sup>15</sup> Bryk et al, *Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Elementary Schools*, A Technical Report Sponsored by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, Chicago, March 1998.

## Quartile Analysis

A more detailed analysis of the same NYNSR test score results reveals that the lowest scoring student group, the lowest quartile, experienced the greatest gains between 1996 and 1997. In 1996, 34% of the NYNSR students ranked in the lowest quartile nationally. One year later, only 28% of all founding students in NYNSR schools remained in the lowest quartile.<sup>16</sup>

### Quartile Analysis, NYNSR Students, 1996 and 1997



**Table 6a**  
**Distribution of Student Scores, NYNSR Students**  
 By Quartiles

	1995-96		1996-97	
	N	%	N	%
First Quartile (0-24)	2780	33.7	1839	28.5
Second Quartile (25-49)	2434	29.5	1985	30.7
Third Quartile (50-74)	1677	20.3	1494	23.1
Fourth Quartile (>=75)	1351	16.4	1143	17.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>8242</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>6461</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Reading Analysis by Ethnicity**

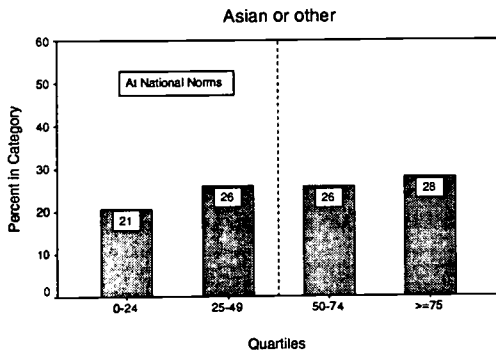
Table 6b indicates that the percent of students reading at or above the national norms increased in every ethnic group from 1995-96 to 1996-97. After one year in a NYNSR school, the group experiencing the greatest change was the Hispanic students, gaining 6% between 1996 and 1997. Note that examining the means or medians alone would lead to the conclusion that all ethnic groups benefited to about the same extent from different starting points. All groups moved up from 2.7%-4.0% points in the mean and about 5%-6% in the median.

**Table 6b**  
**Reading Performance Statistics by Ethnicity, NYNSR Students**

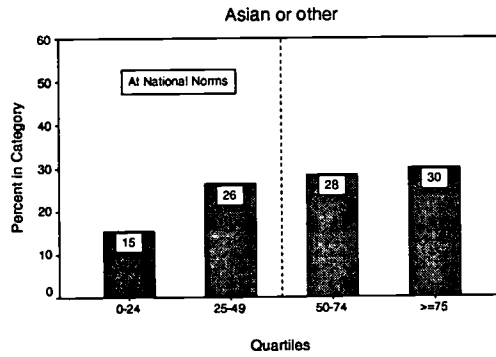
	Percent above National Norms			Median			Mean		
	1996	1997	Change	1996	1997	Change	1996	1997	Change
Asian and other	54	58	+4	51	56	+5	51.2	54.9	+2.7
Hispanic	29	35	+6	32	38	+6	35.8	40.1	+4.3
Black	35	37	+2	36	41	+5	38.3	42.4	+4.1
White	72	73	+1	63	69	+6	61.4	65.3	+3.9

# Quartile Analysis by Ethnicity, NYNSR Students 1996 and 1997

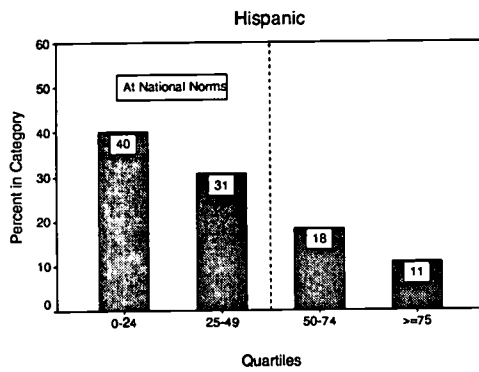
Initial Distribution of Students Scores, 1996



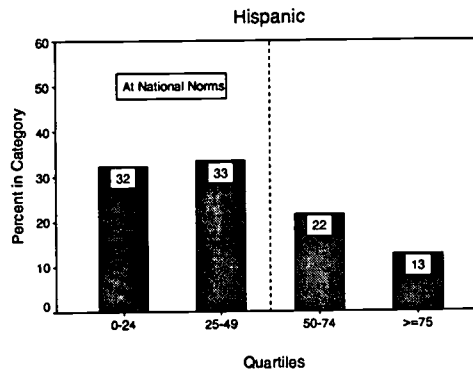
Distribution of Students Scores, 1997



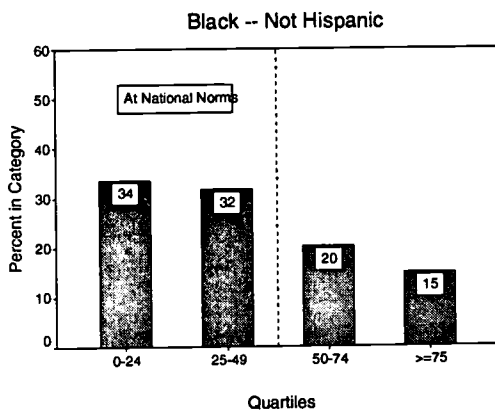
Initial Distribution of Students Scores, 1996



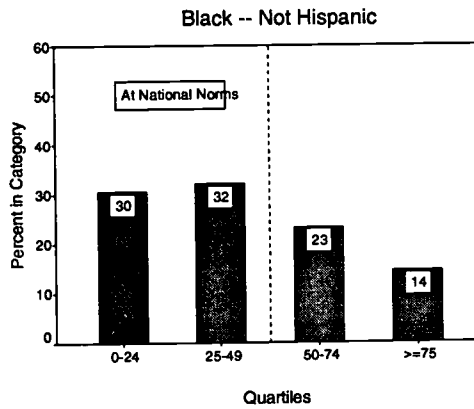
Distribution of Students Scores, 1997



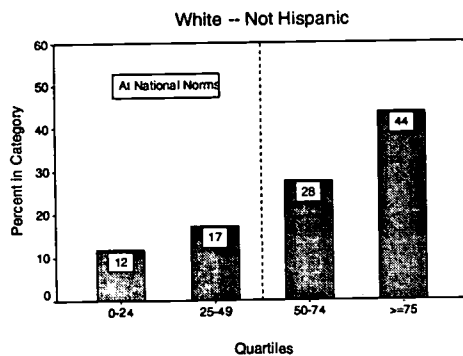
Initial Distribution of Students Scores, 1996



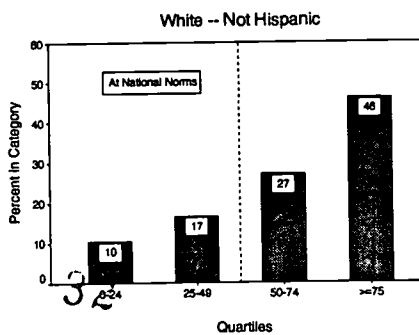
Initial Distribution of Students Scores, 1997



Initial Distribution of Students Scores, 1996



Distribution of Students Scores, 1997





The charts illustrate the differences among ethnic groups in terms of their gains after one year in a NYNSR school. Overall, all ethnic groups had fewer students in the lowest quartile in 1997 than they did in 1996. Students with the poorest performance appear to have benefited the most after attending a NYNSR school. There was no change from 1996 to 1997 in the percentage of students scoring in the 25-49 quartile nationally. In all probability, some students in the 25-49 quartile moved above the national average in percentages roughly equal to the number of students that moved up from the lowest quartile.

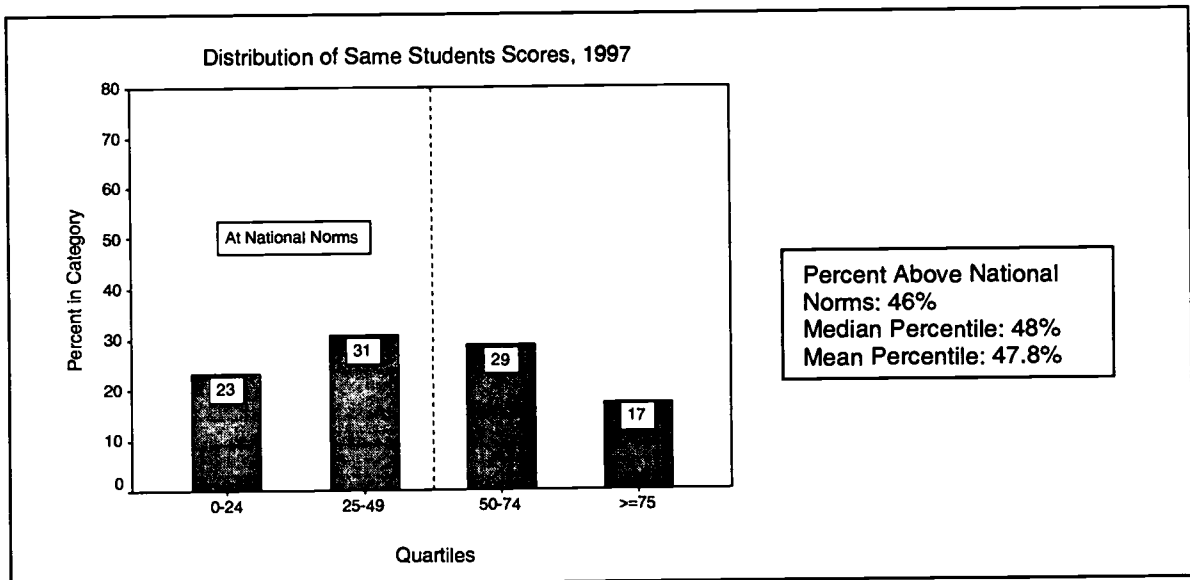
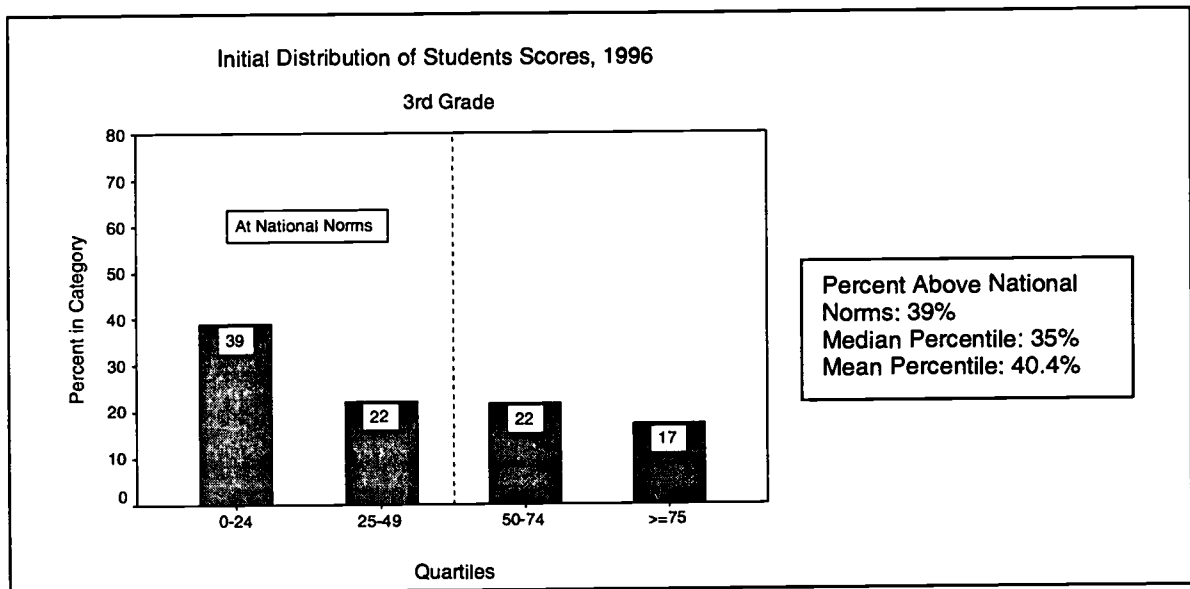
The charts show that the students in Asian and Other group who ranked in the lowest quartile nationally dropped from 21% to 15%, while the percentage above the national norms increased by 4%. The percent of Hispanic students that ranked in the lowest quartile dropped from 40% to 32%, while the percentage above the national norms increased by 6%. The percent of Black students who ranked in the lowest quartile dropped from 34% to 30% while the percentage above the national norms increased by 2%. Fewer White students ranked in the lowest quartile than in any other quartile, with the percentage in the lowest quartile decreasing from 12% to 10%. The percentage above the national norms for White students, which was highest among the four groups, had the lowest increase of 1% (from 72% to 73%).

## Grade by Grade Reading Analysis

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders from 1996 to 1997

In Spring 1996, 39% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders ranked above the national norms. In Spring 1997, the percent ranking above the national norms went up to 46%, an increase of 7%. In 1996, 39% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders ranked in the lowest quartile nationally, while in 1997, only 23% of the cohort were in the lowest quartile nationally. Clearly, project students in the lowest quartile are doing better.

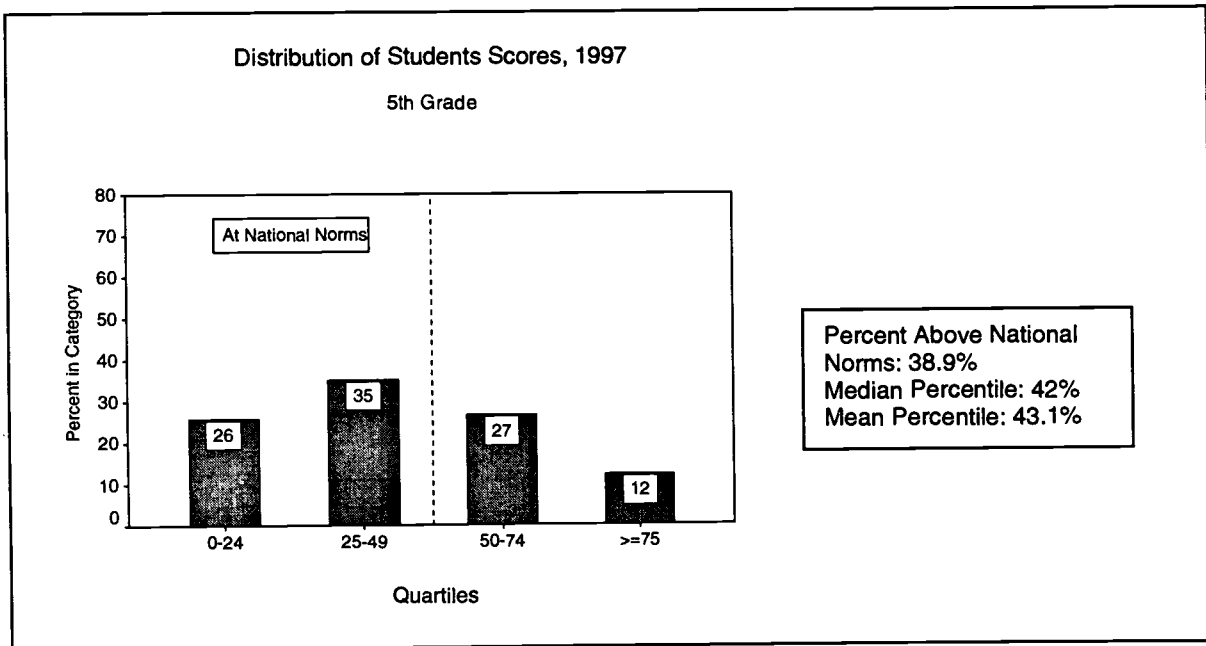
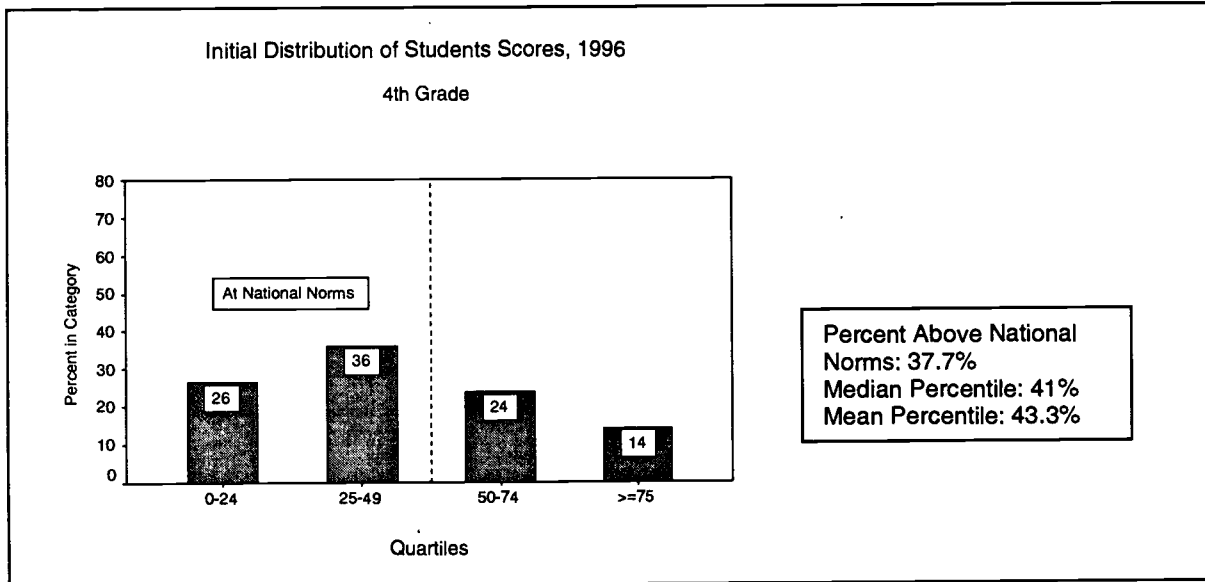
### Quartile Analysis, NYNSR Students 1996 and 1997



### 4<sup>th</sup> Graders from 1996 to 1997

In 1996, 37.7% of the 4<sup>th</sup> graders ranked above the national norms. In 1997, the percent ranking above the national norms went up to 38.9%, a slight increase.

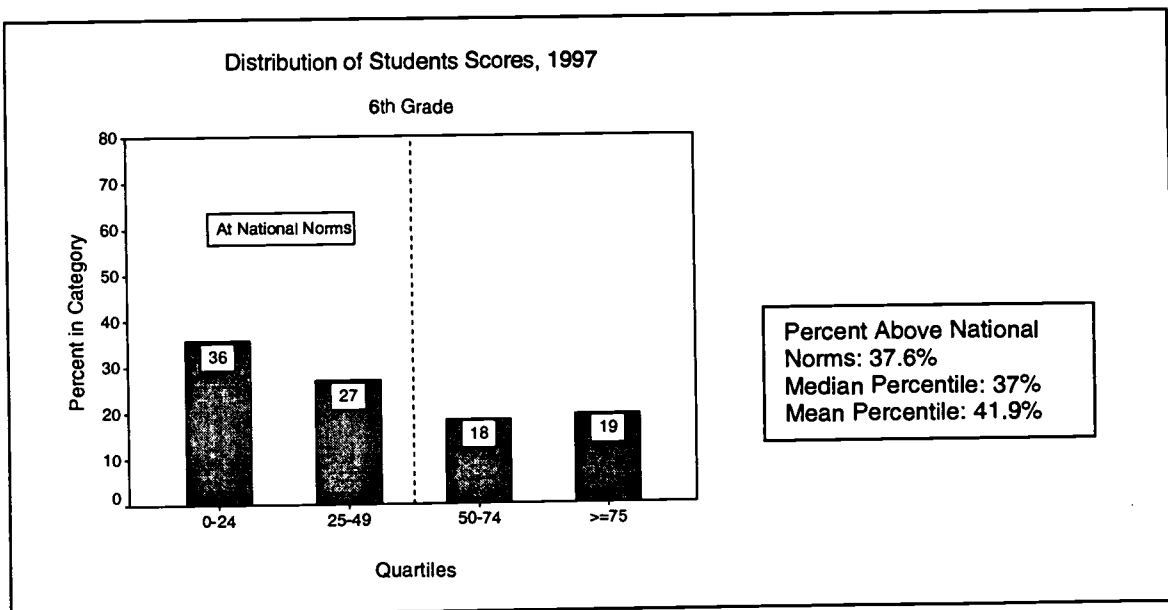
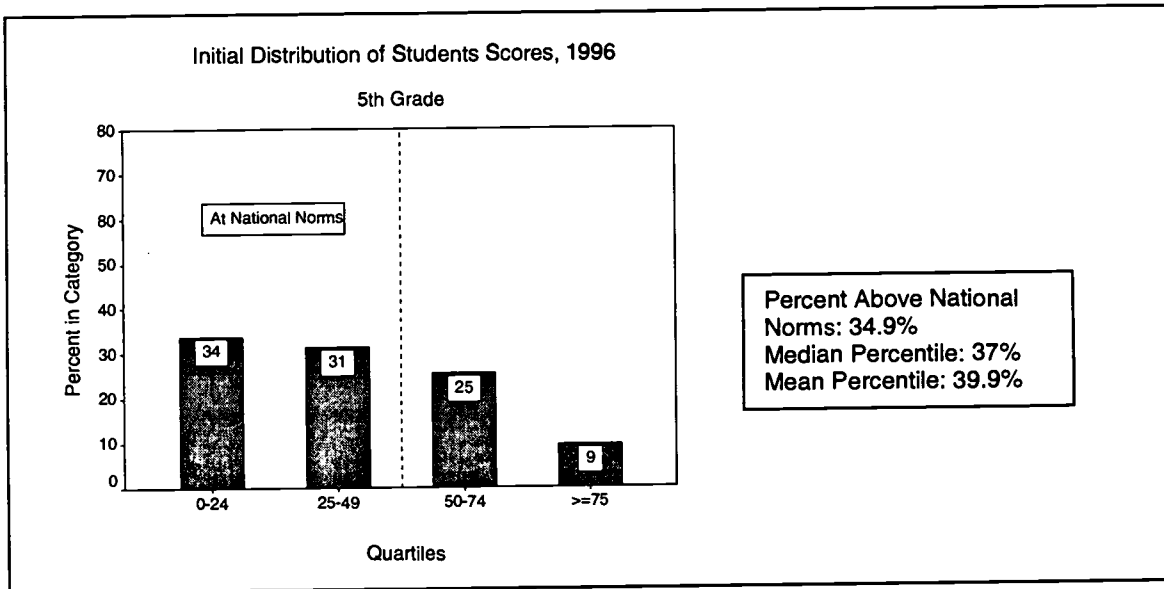
### Quartile Analysis, NYNSR Students 1996 and 1997



### 5<sup>th</sup> Graders from 1996 to 1997

In Spring 1996, 34.9% of the 5<sup>th</sup> graders ranked above the national norms. In Spring 1997, the percent ranking above the national norms went up to 37.6%, an increase of 2.7%. 33.8% of the 5<sup>th</sup> graders ranked in the lowest quartile nationally in 1996. In 1997, 35.6% of this cohort were in the lowest quartile nationally, a 1.8% increase in the lowest group.

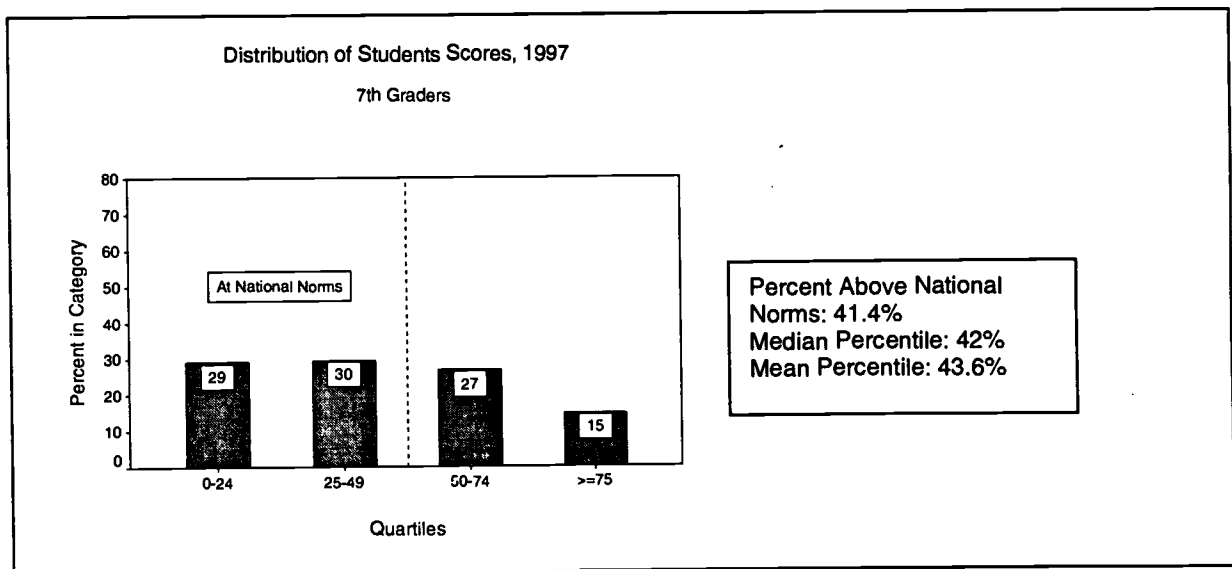
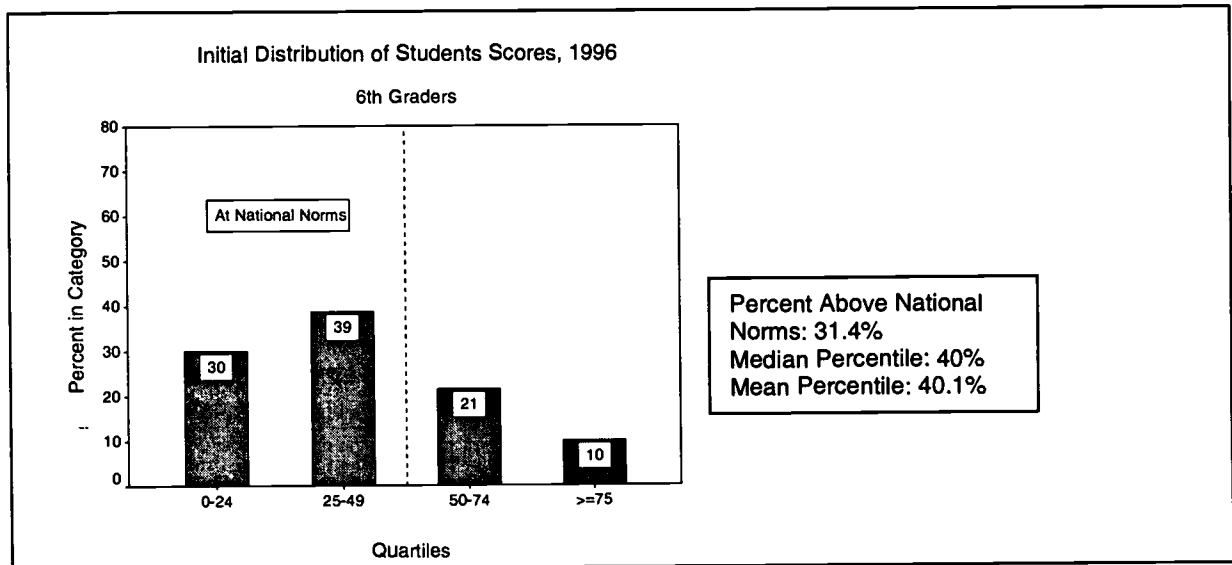
### Quartile Analysis, NYNSR Students 1996 and 1997



### 6<sup>th</sup> Graders from 1996 to 1997

In Spring 1996, 29.9% of the 6<sup>th</sup> graders ranked in the lowest quartile nationally. In Spring 1997, 29.1% of this cohort were in the lowest quartile nationally, an improvement of 0.8%. In 1996, 31.4% of the 6<sup>th</sup> graders ranked above the national norms. In 1997, the percent ranking above the national norms went up to 41.4%, an increase of 10%. Clearly the lowest quartile has not been affected; the improvement in reading seems to occur among those students in 25-49 quartile. In 1996, 38.7% of the 6<sup>th</sup> graders ranked in the 25-49 quartile nationally, whereas in 1997, only 29.5% were in this quartile.

### Quartile Analysis, NYNSR Students 1996 and 1997



## VI. CONCLUSION

The data and findings provided in this January 1999 Progress Report considerably advance the discussion begun in Who We Are (NYNSR, 1997). We used school-level data to analyze the student and school demographics reported in Who We Are, and to demonstrate that NYNSR schools had higher percentages of students of color, and higher percentages of low-income students, than schools in the rest of the New York City system. This report uses student-level data to confirm those findings, and to refine some of the findings reported in Who We Are about the percentages of special education students and English Language Learners in NYNSR schools.

This report also provides the first comparative findings based on student-level data. We compare the performance of NYNSR students in 1995-96, on indicators such as persistence and leaving and reading test scores, to the performance of those same NYNSR students in 1996-97. We also compare NYNSR students to the *entire* New York City system on indicators such as within-year mobility and overage for grade.

These initial findings suggest the power of the analytic comparisons that will become possible when we complete the analyses of the matched sample and random sample of New York City schools discussed on pages 2-3 of this report. In subsequent reports, we will compare NYNSR students to their counterparts in the rest of the city system on a very wide range of indicators, including all those presented in this report. We look forward to providing the first round of these new comparative findings in our July 1999 Progress Report.



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