

Unequal Opportunity

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Unequal Results

"It's a very bad development. It's creating two societies. And it's based very much, I think, on educational differences. The unemployment rate we've been talking about. If you're a college graduate, unemployment is 5 percent. If you're a high school graduate, it's 10 percent or more. It's a very big difference. It leads to an unequal society, and a society which doesn't have the cohesion that we'd like to see."

-- Ben Bernanke, December, 6, 2010

**PUBLIC POLICY AND
EDUCATION FUND** OF NEW YORK



Unequal Opportunity =Unequal Results

This report was prepared by Marina Marcou-O'Malley, Public Policy and Education Fund Policy Analyst. PPEF would like to thank Sumaya Saati, consultant, for the data preparation and analysis.

Summary of Findings

- There are 461,074 students in the 532 schools that are on the state's *Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI)* list. There are 397,946 students in schools that the state classifies as *Low Need*—these are the highest income school districts in the state.
- The highest income districts spend \$1,712 more per pupil than the *Schools in Need of Improvement*. It would require \$788 million in additional funding for the *SINI* schools to spend as much per pupil as the high income districts. There is a \$788 million funding gap between *SINI* schools and high income schools despite the fact that there is much greater student need in the *SINI* schools.
- Higher income schools spend \$37,664 more a year in the average classroom than *SINI* schools do statewide.
- Less than 57% of students in *SINI* schools graduate on time, as opposed to more than 92% in *Low Needs* schools.
- In *SINI* schools, 68% of students are in poverty, whereas, only 6% of students in *Low Needs Districts* are in poverty.
- In *SINI* schools, 69% of students are African American and Hispanic compared to 9.73% in *Low Needs* schools.
- When it comes to college readiness, students in *SINI* schools are even further behind with 21% of graduates receiving an Advanced Regents Diploma compared with 61% in low need (higher income) schools.
- New York's statewide Campaign for Fiscal Equity investment was working to close the achievement and funding gap before the state froze and then cut this funding.
- The typical person in the work force with a Bachelor's Degree makes \$53,976. The typical person with only a High School Diploma makes \$32,552. The median income difference between a Bachelors Degree and a High School diploma is \$21,424 a year.

There are two education systems in this state. Not public-private. One for the rich and one for the poor and they are both public systems.

--Andrew Cuomo, October 18, 2010

Conclusions & Policy Implications

- There is tremendous inequity in New York's education system.
- Additional large education cuts will have the most devastating impact on African American students, Hispanic students and poor students of all races. As New York's highest court has ruled—the students in needy schools start out the furthest behind.
- New York State's *Low Need* (or higher income) schools generally provide a high quality education and include some of the best schools in the country. New York schools have 25% of the Intel Scholarship finalists in the nation's most prestigious science competition.
- Despite the failure to adequately address educational inequities, New York State schools are “a perennial top-ranking state,” ranking 8th out of 50 states in K-12 achievement and 2nd in overall policy and performance.
- Large cuts will undermine our best schools and set back those students in schools that are struggling.
- The consequences of education cuts are self-evident: more teachers leaving the classroom, fewer guidance counselors, reduction in AP courses, elimination of music, art or sports, less one-on-one attention, which all have an educational cost for students.
- Public opinion polls consistently show that New Yorkers continue to place a high value on educational opportunities for all students. The Siena Poll released on December 13 2010, found that 74% of New Yorkers oppose cuts to education funding, A Quinnipiac Poll released December 9, 2010 found that 78% oppose cuts to public schools.

What's the Plan to Get All New York Students Ready for College or Careers?

Governor Andrew Cuomo is right: New York State has a dramatic contrast in the quality of education available in different school districts. Nowhere are these lines of contrast clearer than in the *Schools In Need of Improvement (SINI)*. While the majority of our students are in schools with high rates of student success, too many students in *SINI* schools are not succeeding. Across the state 92% of students in the highest income districts graduate on time (these districts are classified by the State Education Department as *Low Need Districts*) and 81% in average need schools, while only 57% graduate on time in *SINI* schools. Every year, the New York State Education Department publishes a list of *SINI* schools as an accountability measure to make the public aware. But putting out a list is not enough, where is the plan to improve these schools? Governor Cuomo has warned that he plans to make large cuts to education. This is on top of \$1.4 billion cuts last year—the largest cuts in the history of the New York State. Will large cuts two years in a row improve our schools or undermine schools that are succeeding and increase educational inequity?

Where do New York State's Schools Rank?

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The Governor asserts that New York State is the first in education spending, but 34th in achievement. These numbers are in contrast to a new comprehensive comparison of all 50 states published by *Education Week*, the nation's leading education periodical. The *Quality Counts 2011*¹ report ranks New York 8th among the 50 states in K-12 achievement and 2nd in overall policy and performance. New York ranks third in spending per pupil once poverty, student need, and regional costs are taken into consideration. According to the report's publishers, New York "is actually a perennial top-ranking state."² The study looks at the National Assessment of Educational Progress Mathematics and English Language Arts tests, which are the only national assessments and are considered to be the most rigorous. The investment we make in education gives New York students a better chance of success than students in other states. New York placed 12th on the *Quality Counts Chance-for-Success Index* that examines the link between educational opportunity and likelihood of success later in life.³

New York is "a perennial top-ranking state"

New York, out of 50 states, ranks:

- 8th in K- 12 grade achievement
- 2nd overall policy & performance
- 12th on the students' Chance-for-Success Index

Source: Education Week's Quality Counts 2011

Painting a picture of New York's education system as failing is not accurate. More than 88% of the public schools⁴ in the state meet state proficiency standards. New York houses some of the greatest schools in the nation. We have consistently had the highest number of Intel Scholar Finalists. The Intel Science Talent Search (Intel STS) is the nation's most prestigious science research competition for high school seniors. In 2010 New York schools produced 25% of the finalists.⁵ Will cuts in education reduce the number of successful schools and highly successful students?

¹ www.edweek.org/go/qc11

² <http://www.wnyc.org/articles/wnyc-news/2011/jan/11/education-data-shows-new-yorks-number-2-or-34-according-cuomo/>

³ <http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2007/17csi.h26.html>

The index combines information from 13 indicators that span childhood through adulthood to capture three broad life stages: the early-childhood years, participation and performance in formal education, and educational attainment and workforce outcomes during adulthood. The Index includes indicators such as family income, parent education and employment, enrollment in prekindergarten and kindergarten, 4th grade reading and math proficiency, high school graduation, educational attainment, annual income and steady employment.

⁴ <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pressRelease/20101104/home.html>

⁵ <http://apps.societyforscience.org/sts/69sts/finalists.asp>

Educational Inequity: New York's Achilles Heal

From 1993 to 2006 the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit was in the courts. CFE exposed the great education civil rights divide based on poverty and race that exists in New York State. The New York State Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, found that New York State had failed to meet its obligation to provide a "sound basic education" or a "meaningful high school education" to students in schools with high rates of poverty. With tremendous public support from throughout the state and after 13 years of appeals and delays during which an entire generation in some communities was left in under-resourced schools, New York State finally began meeting its obligations in 2007. Until then, New York ranked first among the 50 states with the widest gap between spending per student in the wealthiest and poorest schools.⁶

In 2007, New York State made a commitment to finally close the gap in educational opportunity by investing in reform in our neediest schools. For two years the state met its obligations and made progress in closing the gap in educational opportunity. The statewide CFE investments made in 2007 and 2008 were closing the funding gap and the achievement gap.

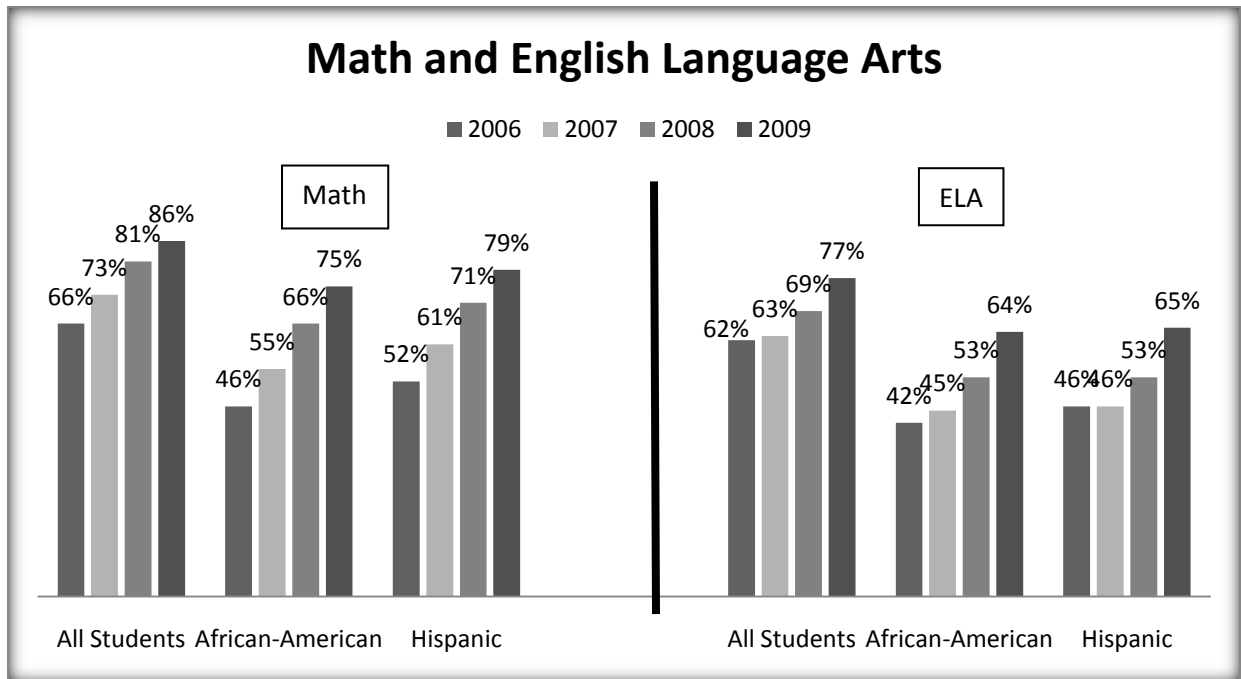


Figure 1 Source NYSED Math and ELA results 2009

This funding enabled "schools to provide more help for struggling students, to improve literacy instruction throughout the grades, to expand instructional time, to launch prekindergarten programs or to extend hours for kindergarten or pre-K, to maintain or reduce class sizes, and to begin or expand programs that make school more engaging for more students."⁷

⁶ The Education Trust, *Funding Gaps*, 2006

⁷ Robert Lowry, Deputy Director of the New York State Council of School Superintendents, Testimony, Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees January 28, 2009

A Few Examples of How CFE Money Improved the Quality of Education⁸

Elmira City School District used some of its CFE money to reduce class sizes in its eight elementary schools in order to implement the following research-based best practices:

- Direct, implicit instruction across all core curriculum areas;
- Support for implementation of 90-minute literacy blocks in all kindergarten classes;
- Teacher time for implementing research-based, prescriptive intervention for struggling students;
- Additional teacher time for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students;
- Additional time for implementing needs-based flexible grouping.

Yonkers City School District

- Used a portion of its CFE money to create seven new pre-kindergarten classrooms.

Middletown City School District

- In order to address the dramatic numbers of new students, including many English language learners, entering the school district without any academic records from a prior school, the created a program to evaluate and properly place students. Assessments in literacy, math, and English proficiency, conducted by a full-time school psychologist, were used to provide proper academic placement and differentiated instruction.
- After school Academic Intervention Services were provided to students not meeting state standards.
- Additional teachers for specializing in English language learners were placed in the middle and high school.
- Additional reading and math intervention teachers were hired to provide targeted instruction for struggling elementary school students.

But the fiscal crisis got in the way and in 2010 New York State cut \$1.4 billion from our schools—the largest cut in state history. The results are larger class sizes, less teachers, and cuts in tutoring, literacy classes, guidance counselors, school libraries, after school programs, arts, music and sports. The toll was the greatest in poor schools because students were already the furthest behind.

⁸ Alliance for Quality Education, [*Contracts for Excellence Year Two: Will Accountability be Enforced?*](#) 2008.

Poverty

In the 532 *SINI* schools 68% of students come from poor households (as measured by Free or Reduced Price Lunch or FRPL), by contrast only 6% of students in *Low Need* schools are poor. In addition, the vast majority of *SINI* schools are schools in high or extreme poverty.⁹ The UCLA Civil Rights Project classifies schools that have 50% or more of their students in poverty as high poverty schools; schools with 90% or more are considered to be extreme poverty. Twenty-seven percent of *SINI* schools are in extreme poverty and 80% are high poverty. None of the *Low Need* Schools are high poverty. (Figure 2, below).

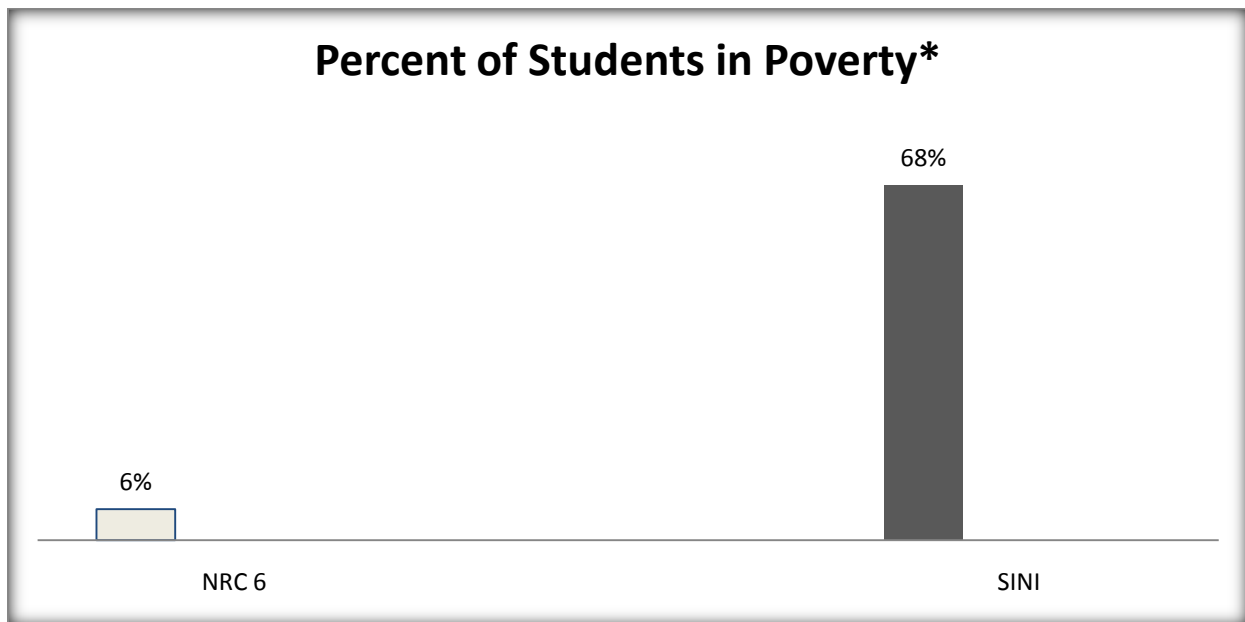


Figure 2 Source of Data: NYSED

*Students in Poverty as measured by Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Percentage

⁹ The definition of high poverty and extreme poverty is based on the work of the UCLA (formerly Harvard) Civil Rights Project. See Orfield, G. and C. Lee. 2005. "Why segregation matters: Poverty and educational inequality." Cambridge: Civil Rights Project, Harvard University.

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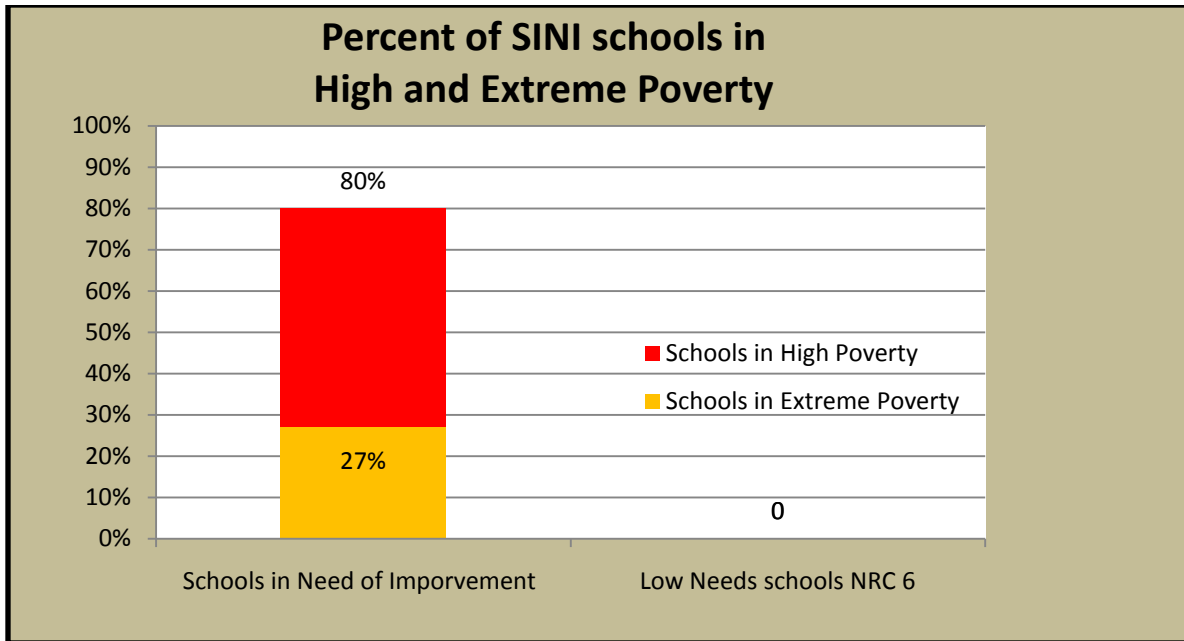


Figure 3 Source of Data: NYSED

Race

The failure of the state to meet its educational obligations has profound implications in terms of the impacts on New York’s communities of color. In *SINI* schools 69% of students are African American or Hispanic, while less than 10% of students in *Low Need* schools are African American or Hispanic. Another round of large budget cuts will disproportionately impact African American and Hispanic students because large numbers of these students are in the neediest schools that suffer the most as a result of education cuts.

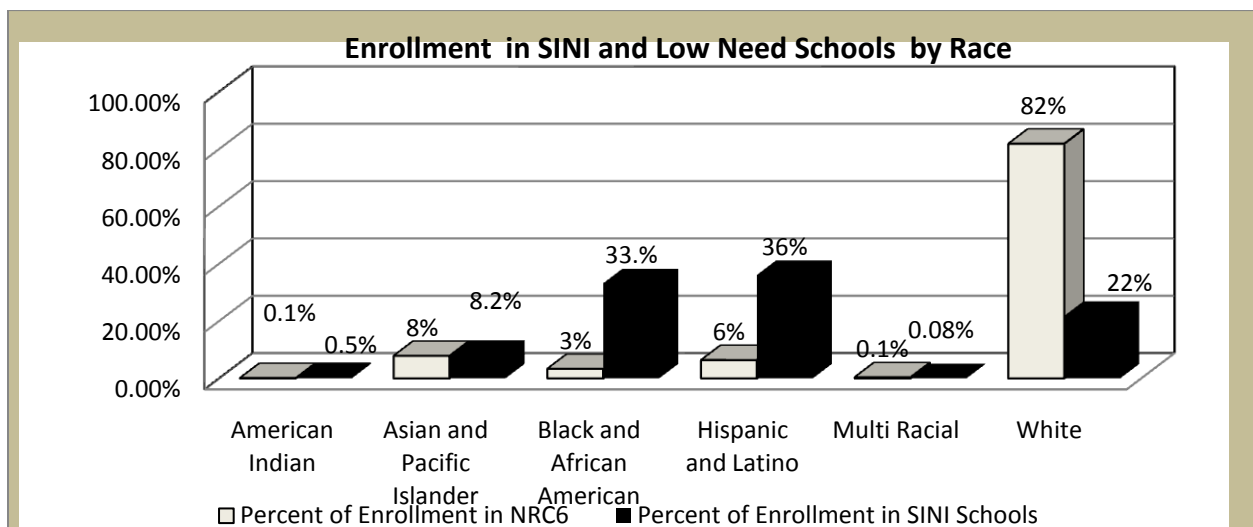


Figure 4 Source of Data: NYSED

Unequal Funding

Though some of the best school districts in the state, and country, spend as much as \$29,724 per pupil,¹⁰ the average spending per pupil in *Low Need Districts* is \$21,496 which is \$1,712 more than the average *SINI* school. With an average elementary school class size of 22 students statewide, \$1,712 amounts to \$37,664 per classroom, a huge disparity. The educational impact of this funding gap is even greater because the student needs in *SINI* schools are tremendous compared to the *Low Need* schools.

Spending in Low Need and SINI Schools

	Total Spending	Pupils	Spending Per Pupil	How much less per pupil than in Low Need Districts?
Low Need Districts	\$8,531,821,484	396,901	\$21,496	
SINI Statewide	\$9,107,149,824	460,319	\$19,784	\$1,712

If the additional \$1,712 per student spent in *Low Need* schools, were spent on the 460,319¹¹ students in *SINI* schools it would increase the expenditures in *SINI* schools by \$788 million. In other words there is a \$788 million funding gap between the wealthiest and the neediest schools in the state. The real gap in educational opportunities is even larger if we factor in the additional educational costs associated with higher need students. Nobody would argue that the \$788 million are not producing results in the *Low Need* schools.

What if SINI schools spent as much per pupil as the high income school districts?

Total students In SINI Schools		Difference in Funding Per Pupil		Total Funding Gap
460,319	X	\$1,712	=	\$788 million

“The state is supposed to equalize or come close to equalizing with its funding. That’s the CFE lawsuit that the state is yet to fully fund.”

--Andrew Cuomo, October 18, 2010

¹⁰ NYSED masterfileforweb0809 retrieved from http://www.oms.nysed.gov/faru/Profiles/profiles_cover.html

¹¹ Statewide there are 461,074 students in *SINI* schools -- however, as explained in the methodology not all of these schools had expenditure information available. There are 460,319 in schools with full expenditure information.

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The *SINI* schools, and other high need schools have not only faced cuts, as have all public schools in the state, New York State has failed to meet its obligations under the CFE settlement which was designed to raise the quality of education in high needs schools. In 2007 New York State enacted a four-year commitment to increase foundation aid, the basic classroom operating aid, by \$5.5 billion by 2011. By this year New York State was to complete its phase-in of the foundation formula, however, after two years of implementation there was one year of a freeze in funding followed by a \$1.4 billion cut.

Student Outcomes

The gap in graduation rates between students in *Low Needs* Districts and *SINI* schools is stark. The gap is also demonstrative of the difference adequate resources make. More than 92% of students in *Low Needs Districts* graduate on time, whereas less than 57% of students in *SINI* schools graduate on time.

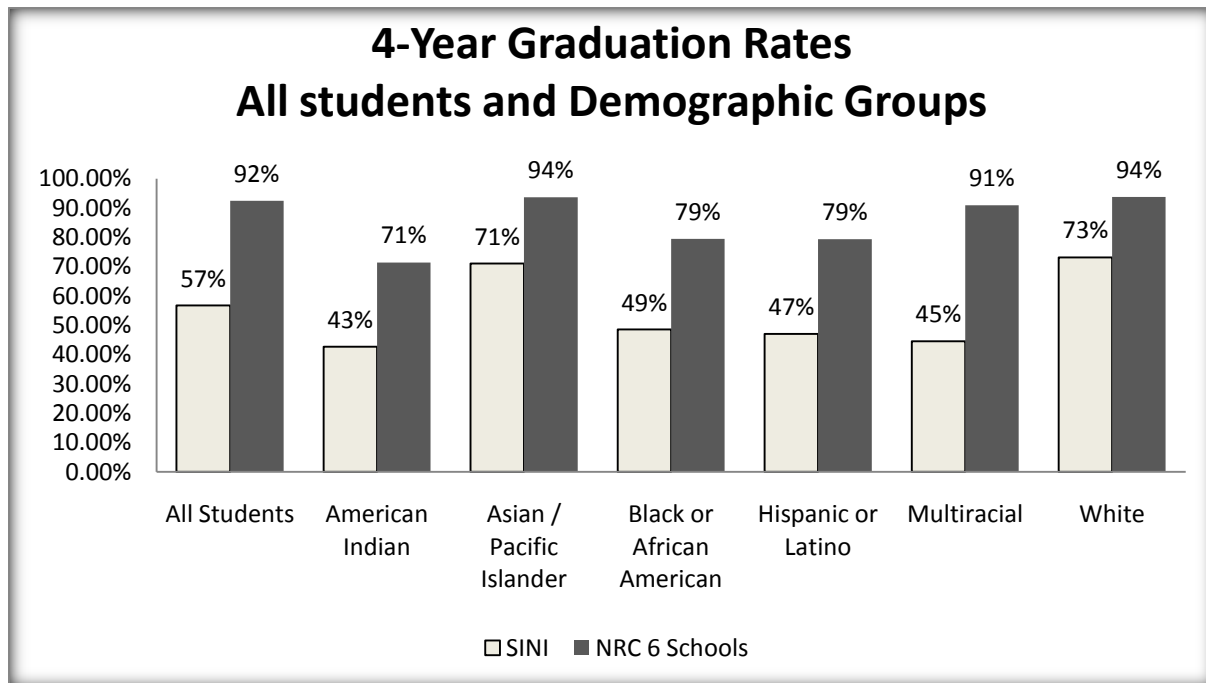


Figure 5 Source of Data: NYSED

When it comes to college readiness, *Low Needs* schools offer higher quality courses which provide students greater opportunity in pursuing higher education. Two thirds of the students who graduate from *Low Need* schools earn an advanced Regents diploma, whereas only one fifth of the students who graduate from *SINI* schools do so (Figure 6).

Portion of Students Graduating with Advanced Regents Diplomas

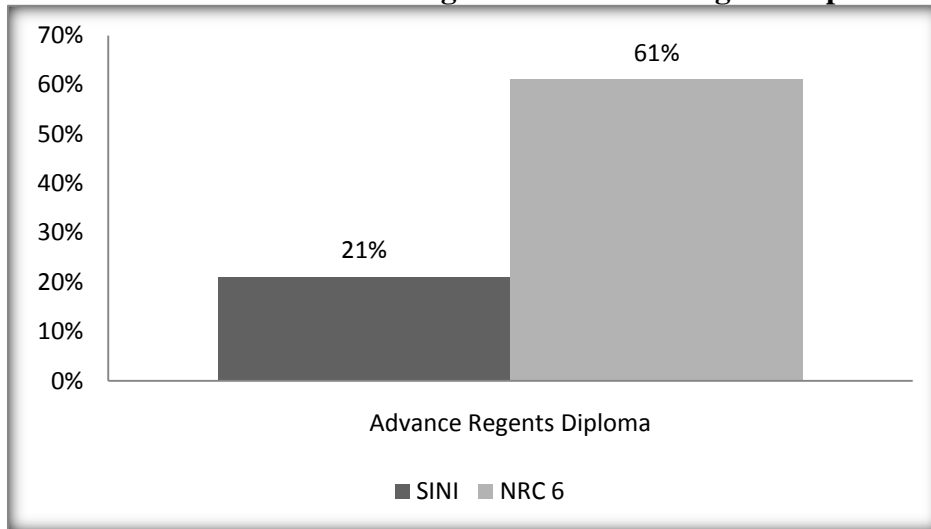


Figure 6 Source of Data: NYSED

In New York State:

- White Male students are five times as likely as their Black Male counterparts to take Advance Placement Science courses, and six times as likely to take Advance Placement Math.

Source: The 2010 Schott 50 State Report on Black Males in Public Education, Schott Foundation for Public Education, August 2010

When it comes to state tests, the achievement gap between *Low Needs* schools and *SINI* schools is wide. In *Low Needs* schools, more than 75% of students are proficient in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as opposed to barely 30% of students in *SINI* schools.

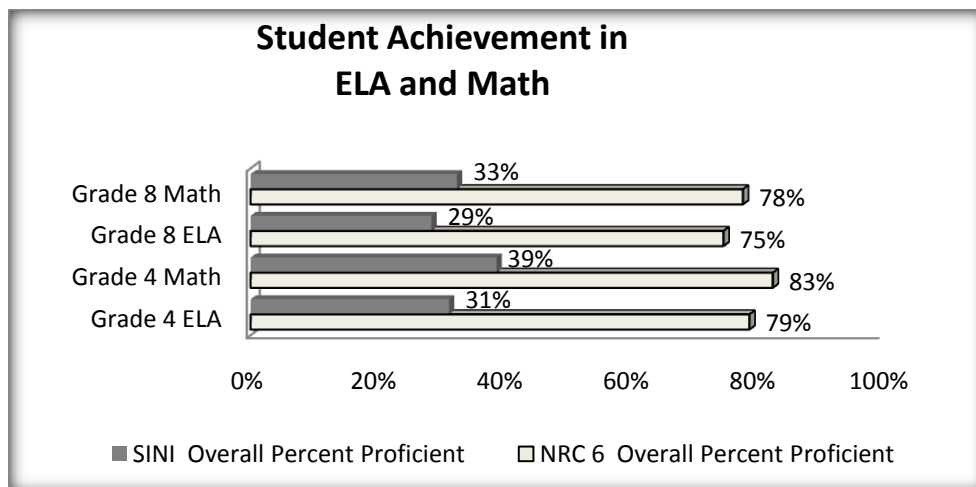


Figure 7 Source of Data NYSED

Long Term Consequences of Cuts in Educational Opportunity

The impacts of educational opportunities are not only measured in terms of test scores and graduation rates. New York's inequitable investments in public education and the inequitable outcomes that result produce permanent inequities in our state and have long term economic consequences for all of us.

The typical person in the work force with a Bachelor's Degree makes \$53,976. The typical person with only a High School Diploma makes \$32,552. The median income difference between a Bachelors Degree and a High School diploma is \$21,424 a year.

Wages Earned Based on Educational Achievement¹²

	All Workers	Whites	African American	Hispanics
Less than High School Diploma	\$23,088	\$23,192	\$22,152	\$21,528
High School Graduation	\$32,552	\$33,748	\$27,716	\$28,236
Some College /Associates Degree	\$38,220	\$39,416	\$31,928	\$34,320
Bachelors Degree	\$53,976	\$55,380	\$45,448	\$44,720

Table shows median wage earnings for fourth quarter 2010.

Cost Savings

AQE supports achieving cost savings that will allow more resources to be available to the classroom. In the past the cost savings we have supported included the sharing or consolidation of sharing administrative and "back office" functions for school districts. Governor Cuomo is proposing the creation of a \$250 million incentive fund for school districts that achieve cost savings. AQE supports the objective of the governor's proposal: administrative consolidation in order to achieve cost savings. We will review the specific proposal when it is released. This funding is designed to achieve administrative efficiency not to improve instruction and should not be considered school aid.

AQE will release additional cost savings after seeing the governor's proposal. We have issued cost savings proposals in the past some of which have been enacted and we will do so in the future.

¹² Usual Weekly Earnings Of Wage And Salary Workers, Fourth Quarter 2010, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, January 20, 2011.

School Improvement & Competitive Grants

The Governor will be proposing \$250 million for school improvement. Invested properly \$250 million can make an important contribution to improving educational opportunity, encouraging effective innovation, reducing inequity and closing the funding and achievement gaps. The governor's objective is to award these grants in a way that prioritizes student performance. The only details available so far are that the grants would be awarded on a competitive basis. Some factors that should be considered in formulating the details of such a proposal:

- There is no evidence that competitive grants improve student performance, this is an experimental concept without a base of support in educational research.
- Successfully competing for grants requires school districts to invest in highly-skilled grant writers, an administrative expense many poor districts cannot afford. For this reason, it is anticipated that needier schools and districts could be disadvantaged in such a competition.
- School improvement funding should prioritize investment in the highest need schools and districts, rather than forcing districts to compete, which creates a system where some students are winners and others are losers in their access to educational opportunity, school improvement funding should prioritize investment in the highest need schools and districts.
- The CFE investments implemented in 2007 and 2008 showed progress in student achievement. These investments should be evaluated and new investments should be targeted to replicate the most successful practices.
- The State Education Department should provide leadership to school districts regarding best practices for school improvement and should guide local school districts in developing and implementing effective plans for use of these funds to meet the specific needs of their students.
- In order to maximize improvement in educational outcomes these funds should be targeted to research supported educational reforms that have been demonstrated to improve student achievement.
- This inception of this new funding stream should not result in an equivalent reduction in school aid.

Research-Based Proven Educational Reforms

Research shows what is necessary for all schools and students to succeed. Adequate resources and investment in best practices yield excellent results. The Alliance for Quality Education proposes investment in the following proven-to-work areas:

1. **Quality Teaching:** Research has shown that effective teaching is developed over time, with the appropriate supports such as mentoring programs, induction programs, an opportunity for effective teachers to staff every school building and lead other teachers, are all components of how to have quality teaching in every school regardless of location.
2. **Extended and Expanded Learning Time:** An increasingly large amount of research shows that students benefit at many levels when they spend more time in school engaging

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in learning activities that provide additional help or enrichment opportunities. Extended and Expanded Learning time is:

- Time for students to “go deep” in core academic subjects, including time for project-based learning and hands-on activities;
 - Time for students who need it to get specific, intensive remediation on subjects where they’re struggling;
 - Enrichment programs in dance, music, art, and drama;
 - Outside partnerships, where students can work with local agencies, universities or service-providers on a range of projects including college and career prep classes, mentoring or tutoring, and more;
 - Time for teachers to work and plan together to strengthen instruction.
3. **Challenging Curriculum:** Access to a challenging curriculum and the resources necessary to be ready for college or a career: Students who have access to a school culture that focuses on college and career—even in the early years, supports to teachers so they continue to develop and provide students with the highest quality instruction, a continuum of growth based on the alignment of curriculum and instruction at all levels, to supports that provide ongoing motivation, and meaningful parent engagement, do better than others who do not have access.
 4. **Community Schools:** Research has consistently shown that community schools contribute to increased student academic performance, lower drop-out rates, higher attendance rates, fewer behavior problems and greater parent engagement than in schools not organized as community schools.
 5. **Parent and Family Engagement:** Putting and keeping parents at the decision making table, not only enables the creation of education policy that is more receptive of students’ needs, but also is proven to sustain school improvement.
 6. **Access to High Quality Early Childhood Education Programs:** Students who attend high quality early childhood programs have consistently performed better at school, graduated on time, went to college and graduated, have higher paying jobs, lead healthier lives, and are more likely to be happier in their lives. Research study after research study has illustrated and proven the benefits of high quality early childhood education. It is time that we provide it for all students.

APPENDIX

Methodology

Description of Data

The data used for this project is primarily derived from New York State Education Department's 2009 School Report Card database. The most recent year is the 2008-09 New York State School Report Card Database from the NYSED Information and Reporting Services website available at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/reportcard/>. The data includes the school and district name, unique codes, county, and Need Resource Category. The SRC database contained the following for the 2009 school year: number and percentage of students in free and reduced priced lunch programs, number and percent of students with Limited English Proficiency, number and percentage of students who are American Indian, Black, Hispanic, Asian, White and Multiracial. Available information also included student enrollment in each grade and the need resource category -- "1" - NYC, "2" - Big 4, "3" - High Needs Urban/Suburban, "4" - High Needs Rural, "5" - Average Needs Districts, and "6" - Low-Needs districts. AQE's focus of the report was a subset of 532 schools on the state's Accountability list -- for this, we used the 2010-11 Accountability Information released from SED <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/accountability/designations/home.html>. The list of these schools includes information such as what accountability level the school is at, and what subjects triggered the accountability status. In the original data set, information for four schools on the accountability list did not provide information on enrollment and demographics (Peace and Diversity Academy of NYC, College Prep Business, College Prep Music, and College Prep Math and Science of Long Island -- the College Prep schools did not have information on outcomes.

Performance Outcomes

The indicators of performance selected were statewide test results for: 4th and 8th grade ELA and Math exams taken in 2010 -- this reflects the most updated information and New York's alignment with new standards -- the data was from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pressRelease/20100728/>

For each grade level we included the number of students tested, and the percentage of students performing at each grade level (1-4) to show proficiency rates. (A few schools did not have any information for performance indicators, either because they did not have students tested in 4 or 8th grades, or did not graduate students -- including Woodside School in Peekskill, Haverstraw Middle School in Haverstraw-Stony Point, and the College Prep schools mentioned above.)

For schools that are high schools or graduate students, we provided information available from NYSED's 2009 School Report Card Access database. We have included information from the 2005 cohort and the 2009 graduating class to get the best view of on-time graduation rates for different student demographic groups in these schools.

The 2009 Graduating Class information includes, for all students, the number of high school graduates, the number and percentage of students attaining a Regents Diploma, Advanced Regents Diploma, IEP Diploma. The 2009 Graduating Class is an end of the year audit of which students graduate. The 2005 Cohort information reflects the student count at the beginning of the high school career. Information available from SRC includes the number of students in the cohort, the number and percent of graduates with diplomas, IEP Diplomas, GED transfers,

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students still enrolled, and students who drop out. This information is available aggregated for all students and for demographic groups -- American Indian, Asian, Black, Latino, Multiracial, White, Economically Disadvantaged, and Limited English Proficient.

Because SED does not disclose personally identifying information for students in groups where there are less than 5, we have excluded these student counts as well. This gave us a more accurate estimate of student performance, although a smaller sample size.

We lined the information with the school and all related outcome data in rows to facilitate sorting and arranging data.

Low Need School Districts

New York State has 133 school districts that fall under the NRC 6 category. A significant number of these school districts are feeder districts or do not graduate high school students -- additionally, two school districts' high schools do not separate diplomas (Bryham Hills and Bronxville) so they were removed from the count as well. We compared information from the 2005 cohort and the 2009 graduating class to estimate the on-time graduation rates for different student demographic groups. We did this by calculating the graduating class of 2009 and multiplying that by the 2005 Cohort outcomes by race for the NRC 6 and the 532 schools separately to compare overall outcomes. SED protects students confidentiality and does not release personally identifying information for sub-groups smaller than 5. Therefore, we removed these students from the overall count to better calculate the types of diplomas and on-time diploma attainment rates.

Expenditure Calculations

The Expenditure data was derived from the NYSED Fiscal Analysis and Research Unit (FARU) department, using the most up-to-date expenditure information (2008-09) available online at: http://www.oms.nysed.gov/faru/Profiles/profiles_cover.html

The expenditure figure is the 2008-09 total expenditure per pupil in the *school district in which the particular school is located*. Figures for spending per pupil were not available at the school level. This expenditure data set is from SED, and is not adjusted for poverty or any student need level.

Each school district that had one of the 532 schools on the Accountability list was counted only once to determine the average expenditures. There are 86 school districts that have schools on the accountability list -- however, a number of these school districts did not have information about the expenditures (Little Flower, George Junior Republic, Mount Pleasant-Cottage, Greenburg Eleven, and Abbott School District), therefore the total expenditures and pupil counts in these districts were excluded from the average expenditure calculations. We calculated the average spending per pupil in the NRC 6 districts by calculating the total spending by total number of pupils. Then we calculated the average spending in districts with the 532 schools by calculating the total expenditures and dividing by the total pupil count in the schools (where each district was counted one time.) Where expenditures were not available, we did not include the student count -- this led to a student count of 460,319 rather than the actual count of 461,074. We

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calculated the total average, New York City's average, and then removed NYC to get the Rest of State total.