

Outperforming School Districts in New York, 2002-03

Summary Findings

A recent analysis by Standard & Poor's found that of the 636 school districts in New York that have sufficient data for analysis, 47 school districts, or 7.4 percent, outperformed demographically similar school districts in reading and math proficiency (RaMP) for two consecutive years (2001-02 and 2002-03). These "outperforming" school districts are diverse, serving student populations in 2002-03 that range from 0 to 70.7 percent economically disadvantaged, while achieving average proficiency rates in reading and math that range from 63.1 to 95 percent.

S&P believes that highlighting New York's 47 outperforming school districts is important because it may help shed light on effective strategies and "best practices" that can help lower-performing "peers" make needed improvements necessary to impact student achievement.

What does it mean to be an "outperforming school district"?

To identify school districts that consistently outperform demographically similar school districts, or peers, Standard & Poor's has developed the Outperformers Method. The method uses three fundamental criteria to identify outperforming school districts:

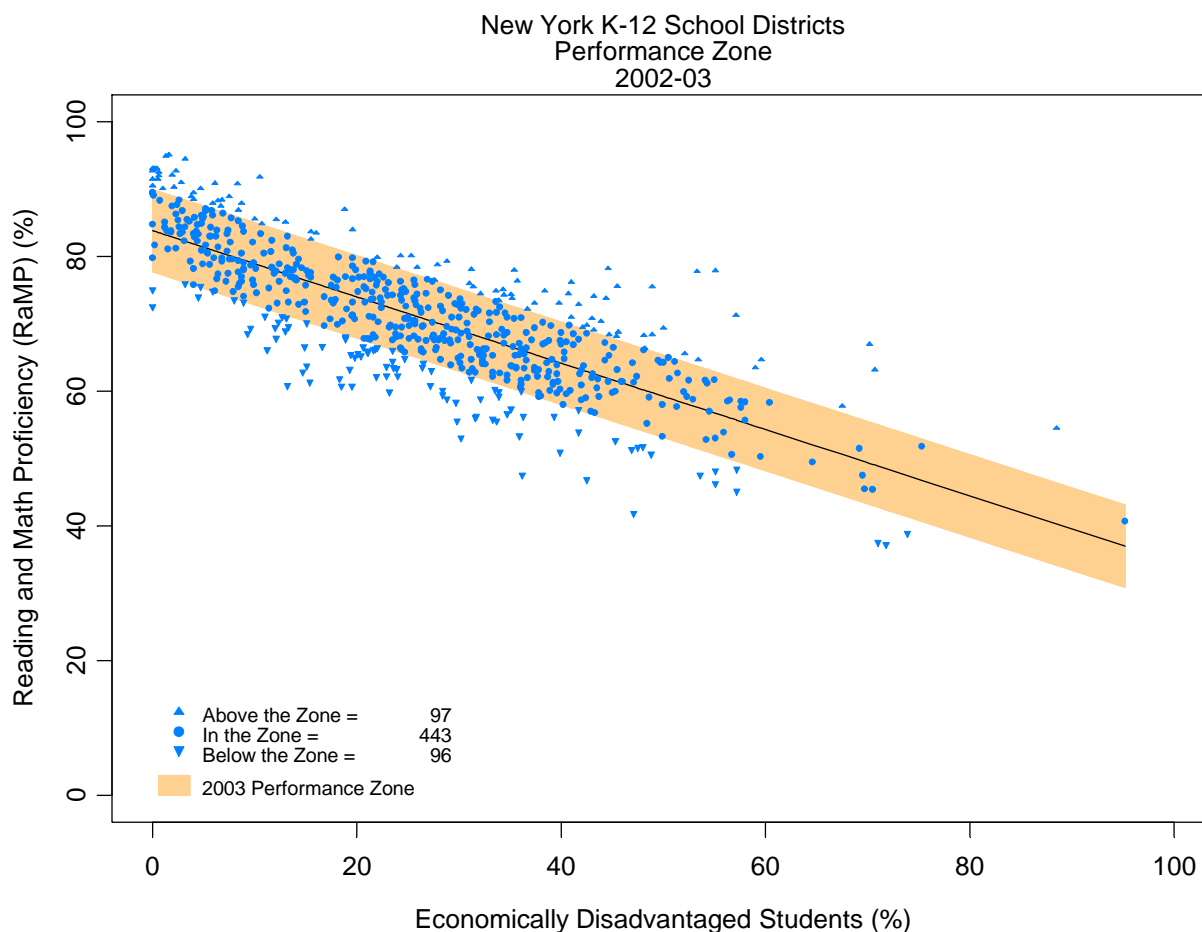
1. **School districts must achieve higher levels of student proficiency than peers.** Outperformers must report higher percentages of students that score at or above state standards on reading and math tests than other school districts that serve similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students.
2. **School districts must perform at a level that significantly exceeds statistical expectation.** Outperformers must achieve proficiency levels that fall above the threshold for the expected performance zone, as simply beating peers is not sufficient.
3. **School districts must outperform consistently.** Outperformers must repeat this performance for at least two consecutive years.

The analysis is limited to K-12 school districts and uses state-provided data where available. For states where enrollment data were not accessible, economically disadvantaged enrollment data are as reported by states to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

It is important to note that school districts may be identified as outperformers and still not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that the criteria used for determining outperformers differ from those used to determine if school districts make AYP, for example. The second reason is more fundamental: examining school districts that are not meeting AYP may nonetheless uncover practices that, if replicated, can help lower-performing school districts to improve.

During the last 40 years, the statistical relationship between student poverty and performance has been well documented in education research, and yet the true meaning of the relationship is often lost amidst the debate. Generally, the greater the concentration of economically disadvantaged students who are served, the lower student proficiency levels are, on average (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



However, this relationship does *not* indicate that “poor children” cannot learn; rather, it indicates that for *any given level of student poverty*, there is a fairly wide range of student proficiency. The Performance Zone method allows for the identification of the most exceptional school districts across the spectrum of student poverty. Using the Performance Zone method could address two goals shared by all states, and codified by NCLB: flattening the performance zone by eliminating achievement gaps between economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, and raising the performance zone to 100 percent so that all students can demonstrate proficiency in reading and math.

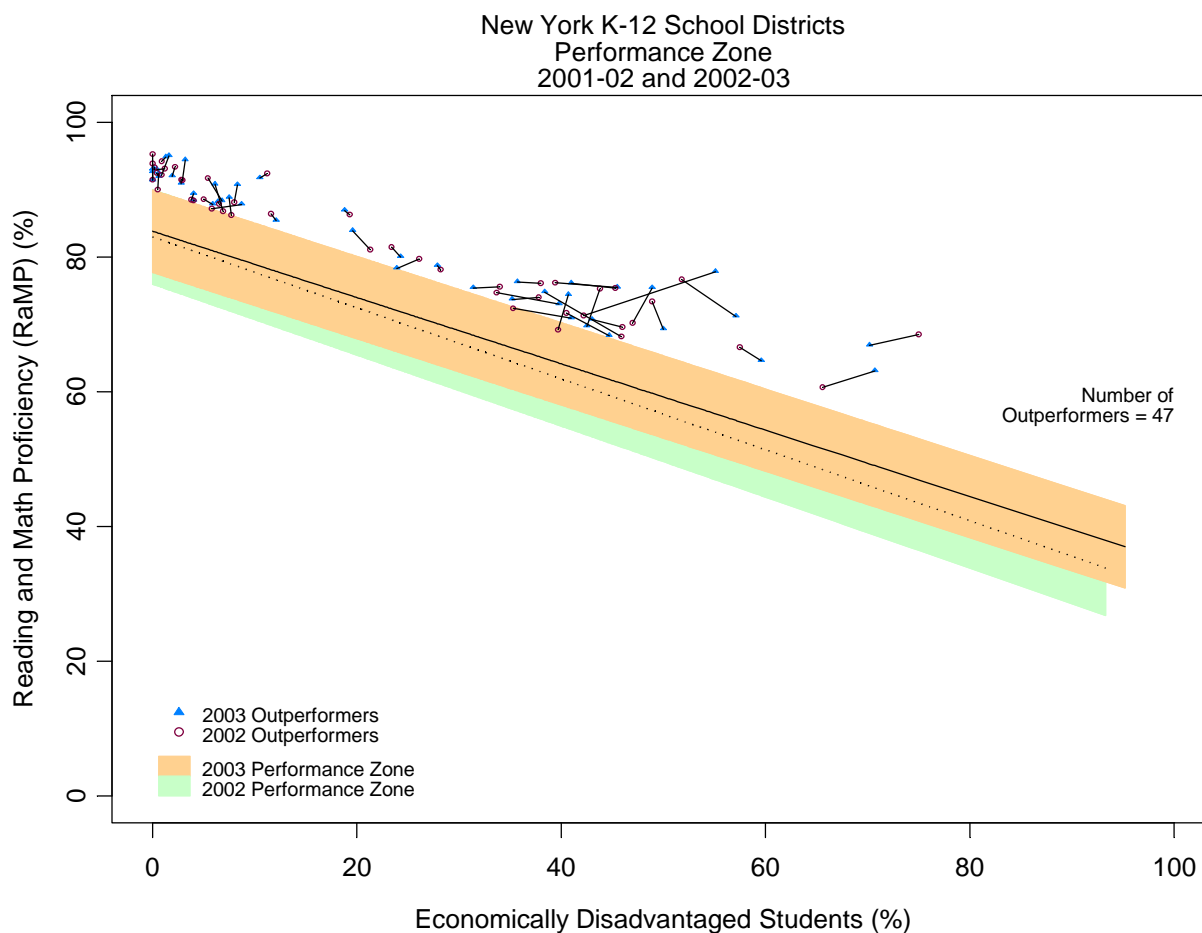
Looking for More about Outperformers?

A technical paper that explains the analytical method used to identify outperforming school systems can be found at www.schoolmatters.com in the **News & Publications** section.

Outperforming School Districts in New York

Figure 2 shows the 47 school districts that have consistently outperformed their peers over the past two years (2001-02 and 2002-03). Some of the outperformers improved their student proficiency levels while others saw declines between the two years. Overall, the state as a whole has posted gains in student proficiency since 2001-02 (note how the Performance Zone band has shifted upwards from 2001-02—the green/lighter band—to 2002-03—the orange/darker band).

Figure 2



New York's 47 outperforming school districts are listed in Figure 3 in alphabetical order.

Figure 3

New York's Outperforming School Districts, 2002-2003

School District	County	Economically Disadvantaged (%)	Reading and Math Proficiency (RaMP) (%)
Alden Central School District	Erie	19.6	83.9
Ardasley Union Free School District	Westchester	1.9	92.0
Beaver River Central School District	Lewis	31.4	75.4
Belleville Henderson Central School District	Jefferson	48.9	75.4
Briarcliff Manor Union Free School District	Westchester	0.4	93.0
Brighton Central School District	Monroe	6.8	88.3
Bronxville Union Free School District	Westchester	0.0	93.0
Byram Hills Central School District	Westchester	0.2	93.0
Chappaqua Central School District	Westchester	0.6	92.4
Cheektowaga-Sloan Union Free School District	Erie	41.0	70.9
Clifton-Fine Central School District	St. Lawrence	59.6	64.6
Clymer Central School District	Chautauqua	35.2	73.7
Colton-Pierrepont Central School District	St. Lawrence	35.7	76.3
Depew Union Free School District	Erie	27.9	78.7
Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District	Westchester	7.5	88.8
Edgemont Union Free School District	Westchester	0.0	91.4
Edwards-Knox Central School District	St. Lawrence	57.1	71.2
Great Neck Union Free School District	Nassau	10.5	91.7
Greenwood Central School District	Steuben	44.7	68.3
Half Hollow Hills Central School District	Suffolk	6.4	88.2
Herricks Union Free School District	Nassau	2.8	90.9
Jericho Union Free School District	Nassau	1.3	94.8
Keene Central School District	Essex	18.8	86.9

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Little Falls City School District	Herkimer	38.4	74.8
Lyme Central School District	Jefferson	39.8	73.0
Manhasset Union Free School District	Nassau	4.0	88.4
Milford Central School District	Otsego	50.0	69.3
Minerva Central School District	Essex	41	76.1
Naples Central School District	Ontario	24.3	80.0
North Colonie Central School District	Albany	8.7	87.8
Pelham Union Free School District	Westchester	4.0	89.4
Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District	Westchester	55.1	77.8
Randolph Central School District	Cattaraugus	40.7	74.4
Rockville Centre Union Free School District	Nassau	6.1	90.8
Roslyn Union Free School District	Nassau	8.3	90.7
Rye City School District	Westchester	1.6	95.0
Rye Neck Union Free School District	Westchester	3.2	94.4
Scarsdale Union Free School District	Westchester	0.0	92.6
Sherman Central School District	Chautauqua	43.0	70.7
Syosset Central School District	Nassau	0.6	91.9
Utica City School District	Oneida	70.7	63.1
Warrensburg Central School District	Warren	45.5	75.5
Weedsport Central School District	Cayuga	12.1	85.4
Westbury Union Free School District	Nassau	70.2	66.9
Williamsville Central School District	Erie	5.9	87.8
Wilson Central School District	Niagara	23.9	78.3
Yorkshire-Pioneer Central School District	Cattaraugus	42.5	69.7
State Average		26.6	63.1

Data displayed are for the 2002-03 school year.

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