



Stamford Public Schools
2008-2009 School Year
Report to the Community





Stamford Public Schools 2008-2009 School Year Report to the Community

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Report Prepared by the Office of Performance Management & Accountability

Amy Karwan, Executive Director

Please send questions or comments
to SDIP@ci.stamford.ct.us

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



The 2008-2009 school year was a notable year for our community in many ways. Above all else, our students demonstrated excellent achievements academically: we saw exceptional gains on the Connect Mastery Tests, hundreds of our graduates have gone on to two- and four-year colleges and universities and I have personally observed countless examples of world-class teaching and learning in all of our schools. Our intensive curriculum & instruction development is resulting in district-wide, high-level math, literacy and science programs for all students. Our teachers continue to collaborate around achievement in Professional Learning Communities and are working diligently to raise the bar for all students. Our school administrators are leading the charge to eliminate low-level classes and instruction while raising standards for all of our students. It is truly an exciting time to be a member of the Stamford Public Schools community.

It gives me great pleasure to share our second annual Report to the Community. This report describes the progress we have made in the 2008-2009 school year and celebrates the hard work of our students and educators. One fundamental change that took shape in Spring 2009 was the development of our Strategic District Improvement Plan or SDIP. It is the latest iteration of our Strategic Plan and also the plan required by the State of Connecticut that describes our improvement strategies. The four areas of the SDIP—(1) Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, (2) De-Tracking/Instructional Grouping; (3) Professional Learning Communities/Data Teams and (4) School Culture—provide the focus and attention we need in order to achieve our mission to prepare each and every student for higher education and success in the 21st century. The SDIP was accepted by both the Stamford and the State Boards of Education in November 2009. From now on, we will align all of our progress reports, including the Report to the Community, to the work described in our SDIP. I encourage you to read more about our SDIP at www.stamfordpublicschools.org/SDIP. In this most challenging economic climate, we now have established priorities that require more of our collective attention and resources. While we may not be able to do everything we would prefer immediately, I am confident that the SDIP provides a roadmap to excellence for all of our students.

I remain privileged and honored to lead a district where the achievement of each and every student comes first. My continued and heartfelt thanks to our world-class teachers, administrators, paraeducators and support staff for their tireless efforts on behalf of our children.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joshua Starr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Joshua P. Starr, Ed.D
Superintendent
Stamford Public Schools

"I have personally observed countless examples of world-class teaching and learning in all of our schools. Our intensive curriculum & instruction development is resulting in district-wide, high-level math, literacy and science programs for all students."

STRATEGIC DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The first Report to the Community, for the 2007-08 school year, was based on the Stamford Public Schools (SPS) Strategic Plan (January 2007). SPS has recently finalized its Strategic District Improvement Plan (SDIP), a three-year improvement plan that is both the latest iteration of the Strategic Plan and the plan required by the State of Connecticut that describes district improvements. The SDIP was accepted by the Stamford Board of Education in October and approved by the State Board of Education in November 2009. The SPS District Data Team, which includes teachers, school administrators and Central Office leaders from all school levels, developed the SDIP through analysis of data and discussion about the high-leverage, priority work of all stakeholders to improve student outcomes. There are four areas of the SDIP, with two or three accompanying strategies for each area:



Our Mission

The Stamford Public Schools prepares each and every student for higher education and success in the 21st century.

SPS Board of Education Goals

(adopted November 2005)

Goal 1: SPS will increase academic achievement of all students

Goal 2: SPS will address the achievement gap

Goal 3: SPS will increase the meaningful engagement of all families and the community

Goal 4: SPS will provide all students with a world-class professional staff

Goal 5: SPS will maintain efficient and effective operations

A CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT

1. Developing, implementing and monitoring district-wide standards-based curriculum in Math, Literacy/English Language Arts and Science for all students
2. Developing and implementing District Benchmark Assessments
3. Creating a system of scientific research-based interventions (SRBI)

B DE-TRACKING/INSTRUCTIONAL GROUPING

1. Implementing more heterogeneous grouping in middle schools
2. Increasing small, flexible grouping in elementary schools
3. Increasing participation in AP and Honors courses and eliminating low-level coursework in high schools

C PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND DATA TEAMS

1. Continuing Professional Learning Communities for teachers to collaborate around student progress and instructional change
2. Developing School Data Teams to monitor and guide school-wide improvement
3. Leveraging the District Data Team to monitor the SDIP

D SCHOOL CULTURE

1. Developing a system of positive behavior supports and interventions to enhance student achievement
2. Increasing schools' capacity to connect with all students and families

The SDIP sets measurable targets to increase student achievement on the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMT) in grades 3-8 and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) in grade 10 and to decrease achievement gaps. The SDIP also lays out clear action steps for each area and includes *results indicators*—measurable progress checks—for adult actions and student outcomes to be tracked at regular intervals. Visit our website to read the SDIP and related documents, www.stamfordpublicschools.org/SDIP.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

In Spring 2009, SPS finalized its Plan For Curriculum Management, Design and Delivery, which standardizes the four phases of the curriculum development process.

Phase I: Assess and Review – Background Knowledge

Phase II: Write and Revise – Develop a Curriculum Guide

Phase III: Implement and Monitor the New Curriculum

Phase IV: Evaluate, Reflect, and Revise – Continue the Curriculum Cycle

TABLE 1: CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTATION AS OF NOVEMBER 2009

	MATH	LITERACY/ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	<p>PHASE: III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation of SPS math curriculum, grades K-4 Begin implementation of SPS math curriculum in grade 5 Math Liaison continues to support each school 	<p>PHASE: II and III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin implementation of new reading curriculum for grades K-2, all schools Begin implementation of Workshop Model in four schools, plus five “preview” schools Begin Leveled Literacy Intervention Program, all schools 	<p>PHASE: II and III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin implementation of one new life science module per grade, K-2 Continue implementation of the new science modules, grades 3 & 4 (two physical science and one life science per grade) Four science educational assistants continue to support elementary teachers
MIDDLE SCHOOL	<p>PHASE: II and III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation of SPS math curriculum in grade 6 Begin implementation of SPS math curriculum in grade 7 Math coach continues to support each school Extra period each day for acceleration in literacy or math in grade 6 	<p>PHASE: III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation of Book Club model and writing process in grades 6-8, all schools Extra period each day for acceleration in literacy or math in grade 6 	<p>PHASE: II and III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin implementation of new SPS science program in grade 6 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) SciPacks professional development for grade 7 & 8 teachers Grade 8 Long Island Sound watershed studies with Soundwaters
HIGH SCHOOL	<p>PHASE: II and III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin implementation of new district-wide curriculum in academic geometry and algebra II Continue course-alike meetings for teachers 	<p>PHASE: III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation of Literature Studies model and writing process in grades 9-12, all schools 	<p>PHASE: II and III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement District syllabi for all core courses Begin additional labs for physics Continue implementation of biology & chemistry labs Begin offering new biotechnology course NASA Coordinators continue to support programs

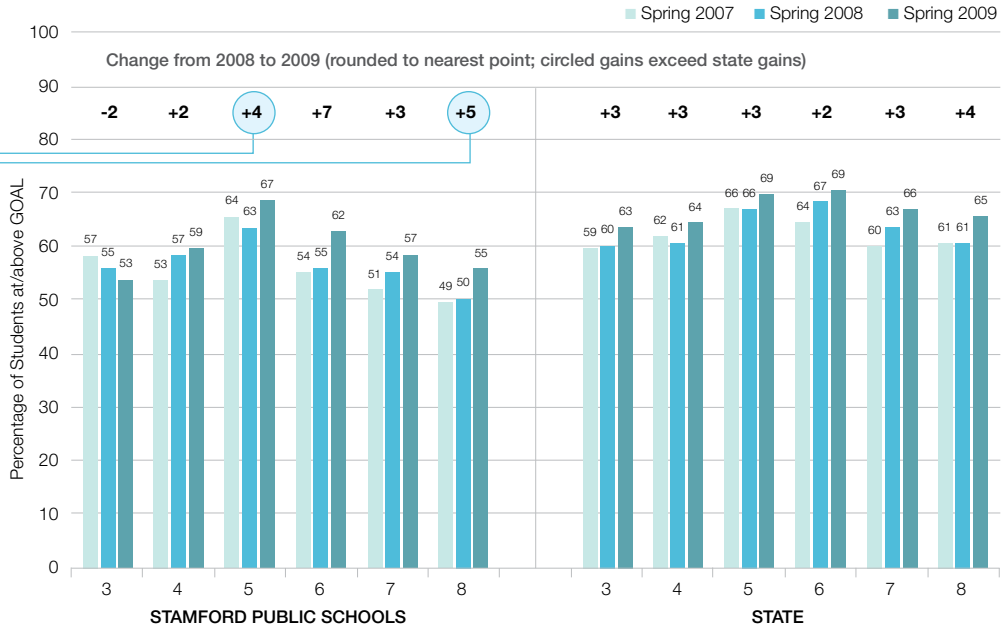
STUDENT OUTCOMES

CONNECTICUT MASTERY TEST RESULTS (GRADES 3-8)

SPS students demonstrated many grade-level gains on the 2009 CMTs in the percentage of students scoring at/above GOAL (Levels 4 and 5), particularly in grades 5 and 8 in math and reading, which are key transition points.

MATH

SPS CMT Results, Grades 3-8 in Math, 2007, 2008 and 2009
Percent of Students at/above GOAL



In grade 5 math, many NCLB categories of students demonstrated gains at/above the GOAL level:

- Asian+5
- Black+11
- Economically Disadvantaged.....+5
- Students with Disabilities.....+8
- White+4

In grade 8 math, nearly all NCLB categories of students demonstrated gains at/above GOAL:

- Black+4
- Economically Disadvantaged.....+10
- English Language Learners+2
- Hispanic.....+8
- Students with Disabilities.....+11
- White+4

In grade 5 reading, many NCLB categories of students demonstrated gains at/above the GOAL level:

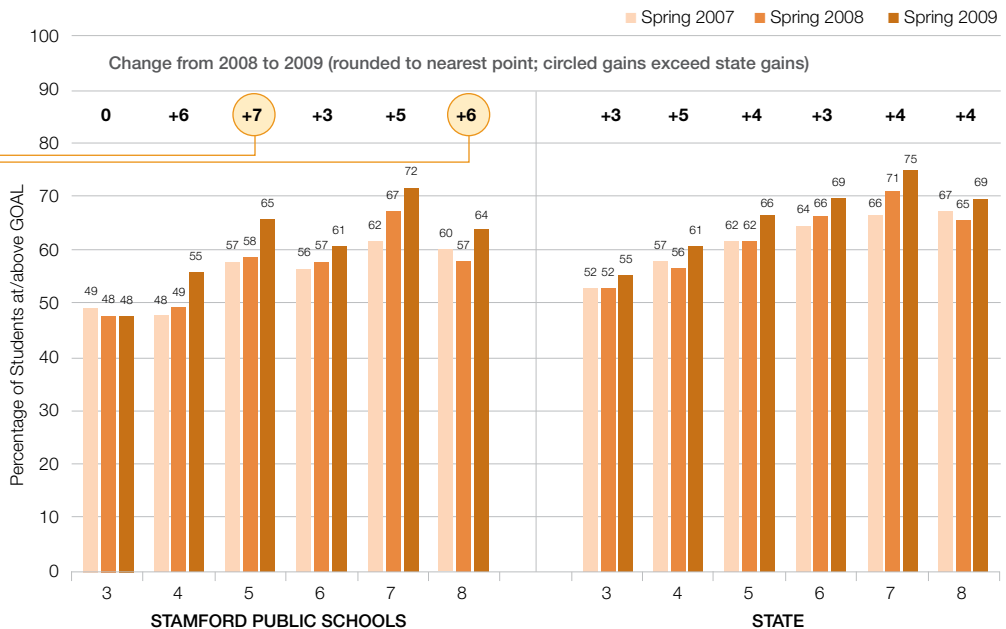
- Asian+3
- Black+14
- Economically Disadvantaged.....+9
- Hispanic.....+7
- Students with Disabilities.....+12
- White+4

In grade 8 reading, nearly all NCLB categories of students demonstrated gains at/above GOAL:

- Black+9
- Economically Disadvantaged.....+11
- English Language Learners+7
- Hispanic.....+13
- Students with Disabilities.....+7
- White+2

READING

SPS CMT Results, Grades 3-8 in Reading, 2007, 2008 and 2009
Percent of Students at/above GOAL



VERTICAL SCALE SCORE ANALYSIS

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) released the vertical scale scoring system for the CMTs in math and reading in 2008. The vertical scales enable longitudinal analysis across grade levels 3-8 and measurement of growth—both the growth of individual students and the growth of groups of students—over time. Analysis of vertical scale scores is one additional tool that educators and community members may use to assess student, school and district progress.

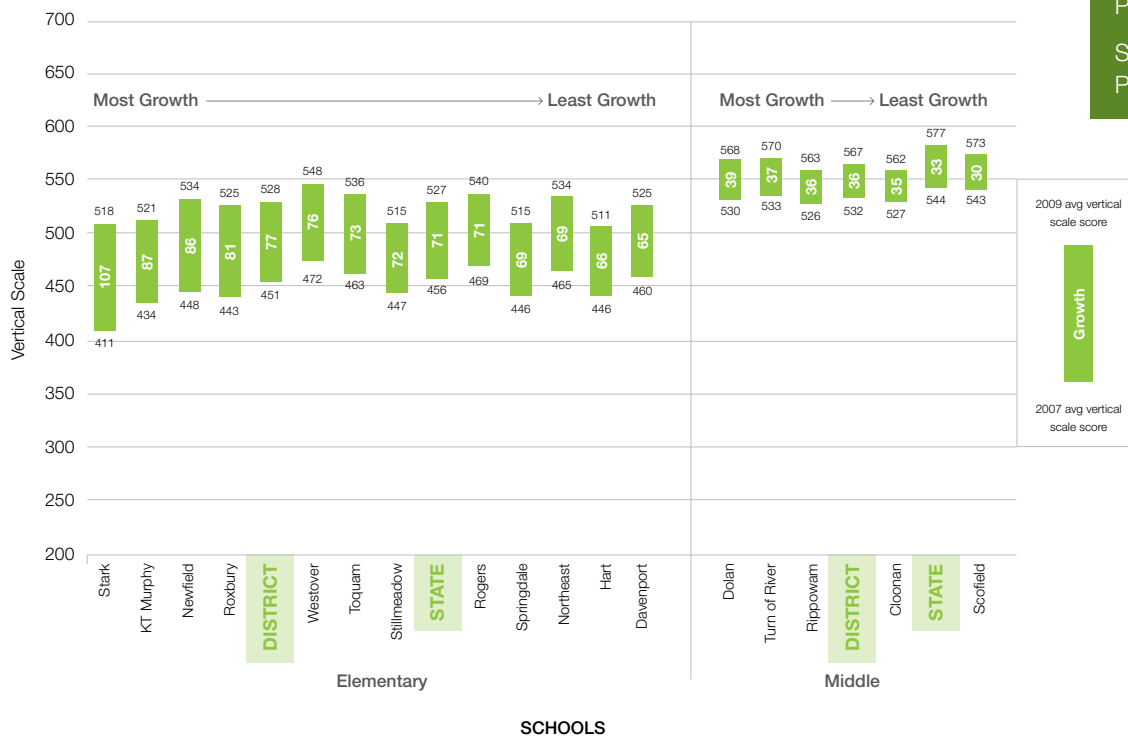
The following figures show the average two-year growth (i.e., average change in vertical scale score) for each SPS school from 2007 to 2009, for math and reading, respectively. Results are displayed most to least by amount of growth, including the district and state averages.

- In both math and reading, the SPS (district) average growth exceeds the average growth statewide at the elementary and middle school levels.
- Of the four elementary schools that received additional professional development and coaching in 2008-09 through the Stamford Excellence Team, three schools surpassed the district average growth in math: Stark, KT Murphy and Roxbury.

All vertical scale score results are aggregated for matched students: elementary school data include only students enrolled in SPS in grade 3 in 2007, grade 4 in 2008 and grade 5 in 2009; middle school data include only students enrolled in SPS in grade 6 in 2007, grade 7 in 2008 and grade 8 in 2009.

MATH

Average Vertical Scale Score Growth, 2007 to 2009
SPS Elementary and Middle Schools Compared to District and State



Our Students

Asian7%
Black.....21%
Hispanic32%
White.....40%

English Language Learners: 14%

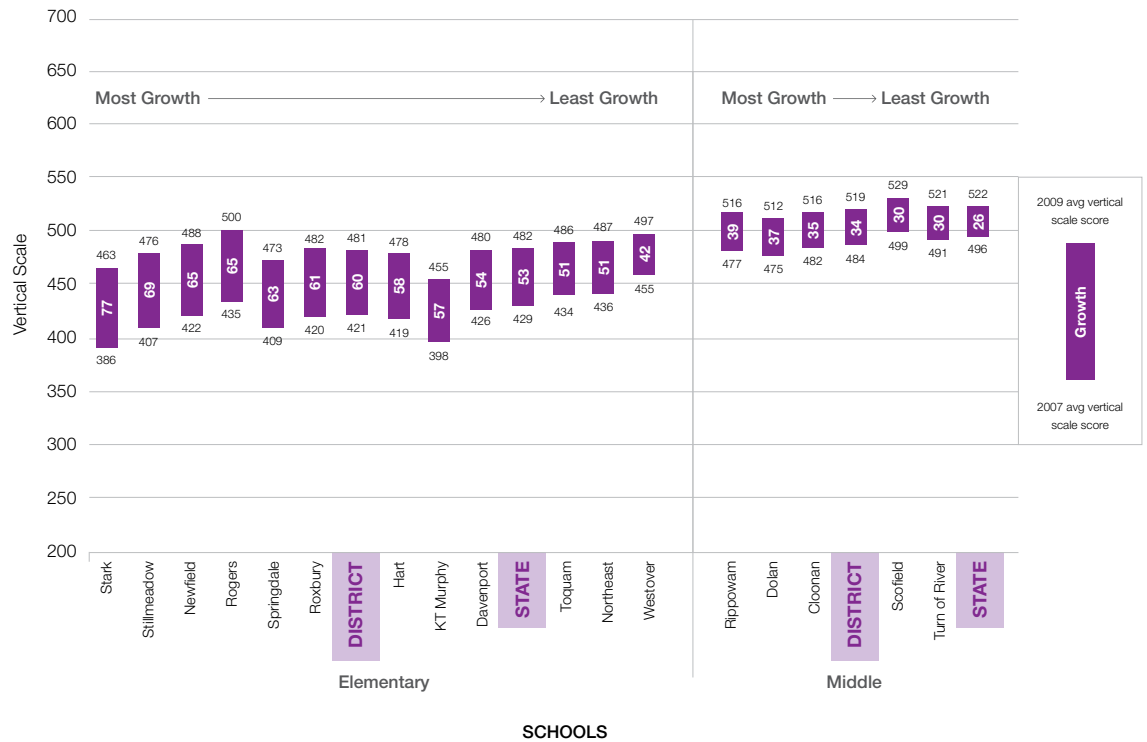
Special Education Students: 9%

Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 43%

SPS Strategic School Profiles, 2008-09

READING

Average Vertical Scale Score Growth, 2007 to 2009
SPS Elementary and Middle Schools Compared to District and State

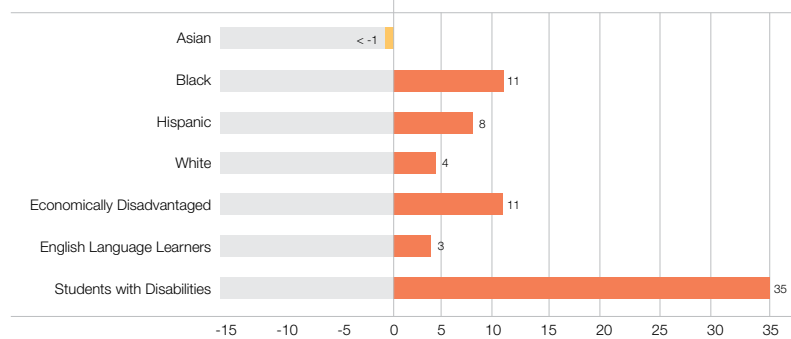


An analysis of student growth by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) categories indicates that, in nearly all cases, the growth made by SPS students exceeds the growth of similar students statewide.

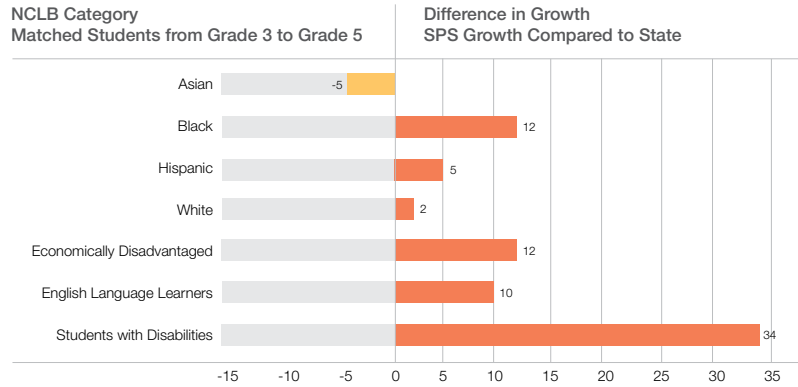
ELEMENTARY MATH

NCLB Category Matched Students from Grade 3 to Grade 5

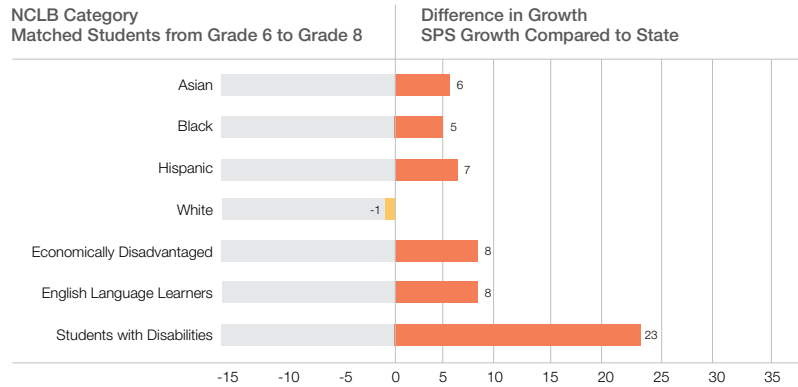
Difference in Growth SPS Growth Compared to State



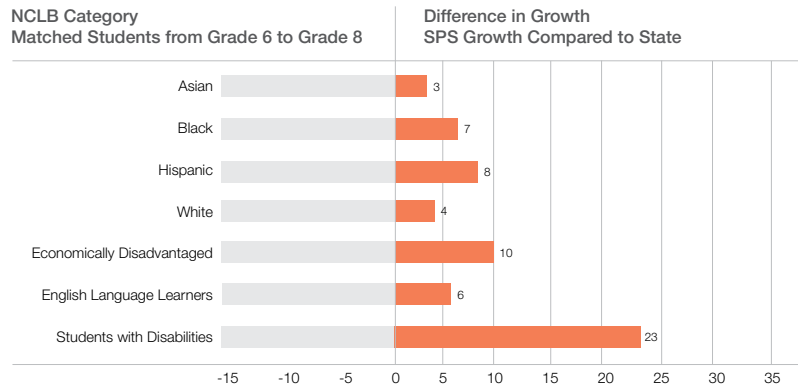
ELEMENTARY READING



MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH



MIDDLE SCHOOL READING



2008-09 Students Awards and Honors

Thirty-seven SPS students were recognized by State Commissioner of Education Mark McQuillan for scoring in Level V (Advanced) on all four sections of the 2009 Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT): math, reading, writing, and science. While most assessments typically measure what students know, the CAPT uses state-of-the-art assessment techniques, such as performance tasks, to also measure what students can do with what they know.

CONNECTICUT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TEST (GRADE 10)

- SPS Grade 10 students posted modest gains in the percentage of students at/above GOAL in reading (one point) and writing (two points). By comparison, students statewide only increased in the percentage at/above GOAL in reading (two points).
- The percentage of students with disabilities at/above GOAL increased in math by three points and in reading by six points, both of which outpace gains made at the state level.
- The percentage of black students at/above GOAL increased in reading by four points, compared to three points for students statewide.

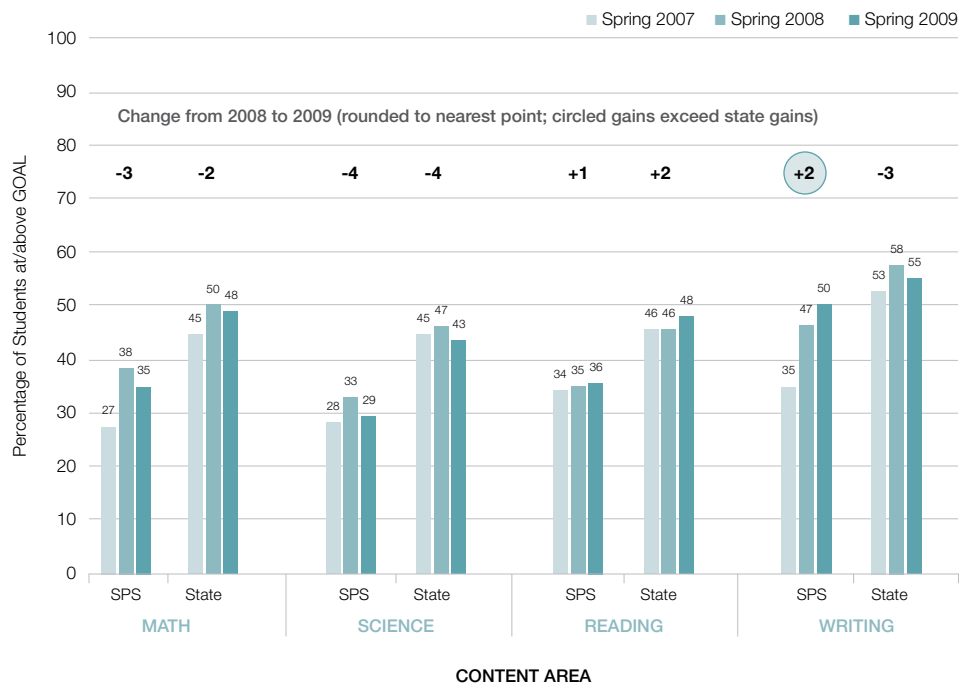


Class of 2009 College Plans

Class of 2009 graduates are attending many of the nation's most competitive colleges and universities. A complete list of schools is available at www.stamfordpublicschools.org/collegelist

SPS AND STATE CAPT COMPARISONS FOR MATH, SCIENCE, READING AND WRITING

Percent of Students at/above GOAL, 2007, 2008 and 2009



COLLEGE READINESS INDICATORS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

SPS has been tracking measures of high school student indicators of college readiness. Recognizing that preparing students to be college ready upon graduation begins as early as kindergarten, there are many other indicators of college readiness—academic, financial and emotional—that we will begin to measure in the near future. The following five indicators provide information about whether SPS students will be prepared for college upon graduation.

PERCENT OF SPS GRADUATES ELIGIBLE* FOR COLLEGE CREDIT**					
NCLB Group	Class of 2005	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
Asian	43%	56%	53%	55%	67%
Black	11%	7%	8%	12%	16%
Hispanic	22%	17%	15%	24%	26%
White	46%	41%	45%	54%	51%
Total	31%	27%	28%	36%	37%

* Requirements to receive credit vary by institution

** Data based on students who took one or more AP course, one or more AP exam and passed one or more AP course

PERCENT OF SPS GRADUATES ENROLLED IN ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES*					
NCLB Group	Class of 2005	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
Asian	45%	60%	55%	55%	67%
Black	14%	9%	9%	12%	16%
Hispanic	24%	22%	17%	26%	28%
White	48%	47%	48%	55%	52%
Total	32%	32%	30%	38%	38%

* Includes all graduates who had an AP final grade recorded

PERCENT OF SPS STUDENTS TAKING FOUR YEARS OF MATH*					
NCLB Group	Class of 2005	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
Asian	48%	62%	68%	66%	82%
Black	24%	29%	34%	37%	50%
Hispanic	21%	28%	39%	32%	49%
White	48%	46%	60%	58%	65%
Total	36%	38%	48%	47%	58%

* Includes students who passed four years of math. Current requirements for graduation include three years of math



Twenty-five students in Stamford Public Schools were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and the College Board for being top scorers on the 2008 PSAT/NMSQT. This honorary list includes seven National Merit Semifinalists, thirteen Commended Students, two National Achievement Scholars, and three National Hispanic Scholars. Some of these designations will lead to scholarships for students.

PERCENT OF SPS STUDENTS TAKING FOUR YEARS OF SCIENCE*					
NCLB Group	Class of 2005	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
Asian	70%	67%	58%	57%	73%
Black	28%	23%	18%	26%	29%
Hispanic	30%	22%	26%	26%	27%
White	44%	41%	56%	55%	55%
Total	38%	33%	38%	41%	43%

* Includes students who passed four years of science. Current requirements for graduation include two years of science.

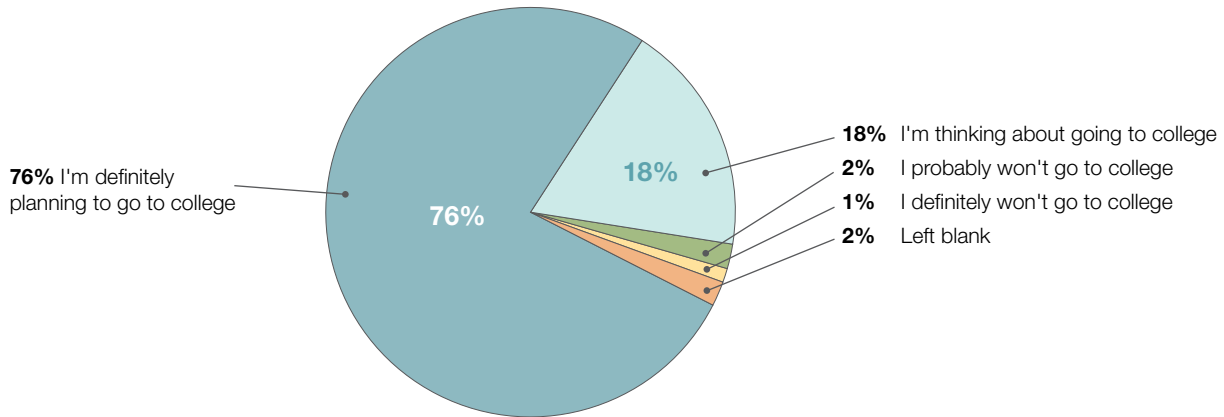
PERCENT OF SPS STUDENTS TAKING THE SAT*				
NCLB Group	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
Asian	83%	89%	80%	98%
Black	53%	60%	54%	58%
Hispanic	48%	44%	51%	49%
White	85%	90%	84%	79%
Total	67%	71%	68%	67%

* Includes grade 12 participation in the SAT among students who graduated. Previous calculations, including those published in the SPS Annual Report for 2007-08, were based on grade 12 participation in the SAT among students who reported intention to attend college. All rates included in the table above have been standardized to reflect SAT participation among students who graduated.

SURVEYS

For the first time in many years, Stamford Public Schools (SPS) administered surveys to all key stakeholder groups in our system: students (grades 7 & 10); teachers, educational assistants (paraeducators); school administrators and families. More than ever, perceptual data are critical to understanding our system's strengths and opportunities for growth. Each stakeholder group was asked questions in various domains. Some domains were common to all surveys (e.g., student academic success, school culture, safety), and some different. For example, students responded anonymously to questions about their exposure to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to develop our capacity to address risk behavior. Teachers were asked about their professional development experiences, including their participation in Professional Learning Communities. The full SPS survey report can be accessed on our website, www.stamfordpublicschools.org.

SPS STUDENT SURVEY HIGHLIGHT: PLANS TO ATTEND COLLEGE



* Results were similar across race/ethnicity categories

By and large, most students have their sights set on postsecondary education. Almost 95% of students felt certain or were thinking about attending college. Among students who report that they are definitely planning to go to college, nearly one-quarter also report not knowing whether they will have the skills needed to succeed in college. Over half of students who are on the fence about attending college report not knowing whether they will have the skills needed to succeed in college.

SPS FAMILY SURVEY HIGHLIGHT

Likelihood of recommending a friend send their children to my child's school

Least Likely → Most Likely										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4%	2%	3%	4%	3%	9%	6%	12%	15%	14%	27%
31%							68%			

One proxy for families' overall satisfaction with the education their child receives is the likelihood that they would recommend a friend send their child to SPS. Mirroring the Net Promoter Score evaluation tool developed by General Electric (GE),² on a scale of zero to ten, with '0' being least likely and '10' being most likely, 68% of families indicated seven or higher.

²The GE Net Promoter Score methodology measures customer satisfaction in order to change culture, not individual actions. Respondents are asked to rate their satisfaction through a question like, "How likely are you to recommend a friend send their children to my child's school?" on a scale from 0 to 10.

GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

SPS maintained an even level of federal, state and corporate grant funding in 2008-09, despite the harsh economic climate, with additional grant funding expected in 2009-10.

New grants in 2008-09 included the 21st Century Learning Grant, a community learning center program (in partnership with the YMCA) that enables students to meet after school and on Saturdays to facilitate academic, physical, and social-emotional achievement. The Project Opening Doors (POD) grant increases access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses, particularly for lower income and minority students, by offering support and cash bonuses for participating students and teachers.

The 2008-09 school year was Year 3 of 5 of our partnership with the GE Foundation, representing over \$15.3 million and the technical support of expert consultants. Our GE Foundation Developing Futures™ in Education programs to develop and implement world-class, standards-based curriculum & instruction in math and science, along with our college readiness goals for all students, are resulting in positive changes in instruction and student outcomes. SPS also continues to partner with the Panasonic Foundation and the Connecticut Center for School Change (PF/CCSC) to increase instructional leadership capacity towards increased achievement for all students. PF/CCSC partners provide ongoing on-site technical assistance with curriculum and other district leaders to align strategic and sustainable systems of support for improving student achievement.

SPS GRANT FUNDING

2007-2008, 2008-2009 and Estimated 2009-10

	GRANT AWARDS 2007-08	GRANT AWARDS* 2008-09	ESTIMATED* 2009-10
Total Grants Revenue	\$23,378,800	\$23,059,099	\$27,318,027
Number of Grants	42	35	35

*Latest estimate, may be subject to change.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

The following operational and fiscal improvements represent considerable savings realized during the 2008-09 school year.

OPERATIONAL AND FISCAL IMPROVEMENTS, 2008-2009	
FISCAL	
✓	Unaudited Fiscal Year surplus of \$344,315 due to fiscal “belt tightening” and conservation efforts returned to city
✓	Completed 2008-09 Fiscal Year with no Board of Education-specific audit findings
✓	Rebid copier contract at a \$200,688 (38.3%) savings
✓	Saved \$167,000 through implementation of internal audit findings
✓	Increased Medicaid reimbursements revenue by \$42,812 (14.9%)
✓	Increased Excess Cost/Agency Placement reimbursement revenue by \$232,943 (10.9%)
TRANSPORTATION	
✓	Bus “on-time” arrival rate of 99.6%
MAINTENANCE	
✓	\$100,000 savings in PTO-related custodial overtime through decentralization
✓	Increased School Building Use Fund balance by \$106,211 (36.0%)
✓	Board of Education Energy Saving Initiative resulting in over \$100,000 (5.1%) in electric savings
✓	Implemented part-time custodial cleaning crew in 2005-06 of 44 employees with 2008-09 savings of over \$500,000
SAFETY	
✓	Increased safety training, resulting in 3.0% reduction in incidents and 61.0% reduction in claims cost
✓	Over 2,000 employees received CPR, first aid, or “slip, trip, fall” prevention training in 2008-09
✓	255% increase in school safety committee meetings during 2008-09; all schools have active safety committees

TEACHERS OF COLOR IN SPS SCHOOLS

SPS has tracked the percentage of teachers of color over several years as a result of our longstanding commitment to developing diversity in our workforce.

SCHOOL	PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS OF COLOR		
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Davenport	4%	6%	4%
Hart	14%	13%	11%
KT Murphy	16%	9%	14%
Newfield	12%	13%	15%
Northeast	13%	12%	15%
Rogers	19%	17%	31%
Roxbury	11%	22%	2%
Springdale	10%	8%	14%
Stark	9%	8%	9%
Stillmeadow	13%	9%	13%
Toquam	8%	15%	7%
Westover	8%	6%	5%
Cloonan	13%	11%	16%
Dolan	7%	7%	17%
Rippowam	11%	12%	9%
Scofield	11%	16%	20%
Turn of River	9%	8%	13%
Stamford High	11%	12%	14%
WHS	16%	18%	18%
AITE	22%	26%	36%
Adult Ed	0%	13%	0%
Stamford School Readiness Program	7%	0%	8%
ARTS	13%	5%	0%
Central Office*	27%	14%	25%
DISTRICT TOTAL	12%	12%	14%

* Central Office counts include administrators and teachers



Stamford Public Schools

EXCELLENCE IS THE POINT.

Administrative Offices

Stamford Government Center

888 Washington Boulevard

Phone: (203) 977-4105

www.stamfordpublicschools.org