

# District Achieves AYP

## Pittsburgh Public Schools Makes History Becoming Largest District in State to Achieve AYP

On August 10, 2009, a group of civic leaders, community partners, school board directors and District staff gathered at a historic place for a historic moment as Superintendent Mark Roosevelt announced the good news - Pittsburgh Public Schools is the largest school district in the State to have ever achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

The announcement by the Superintendent at the Senator John Heinz History Center marked a first for the District and highlights the substantial progress Pittsburgh Public Schools is making. By achieving AYP, the District has met state and federal targets set under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This is the first time the District has made AYP in the seven school years since NCLB was signed into law in January 2002. As a result, the District will move into the Making Progress status under NCLB.

"Three years after launching *Excellence for All*, our plan for increasing student achievement, the District has made AYP for the first time in its history," said Roosevelt. "I want to applaud the hard work and accomplishments of our teachers, principals and all of our staff at every level. It is an honor to thank you on behalf of all of our students and their families."

» [Download Press Release](#)



### More Information

#### Downloads:

- [AYP Achievement Announcement Press Release](#)
- [Video of John Heinz History Center Press Event](#)
- [Summary of 2008-2009 Student Achievement and AYP Results](#)
- [Education Committee Presentation](#)
- [2009 Adequate Yearly Progress Report: Current and Prior Status Chart](#)
- [Education Committee Press Release](#)

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## What It Takes to Achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) | [\(Return\)](#)

Achieving AYP for 2008-09 means that the District has met all of its targets on each of three standards - high school graduation, test participation and academic performance. To meet the targets for the third component of AYP - academic performance - a district must have at least 63% of its students score proficient or advanced in Reading (compared with 54% in 2007) and at least 56% score proficient or advanced in Mathematics (compared with 45% in 2007) on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams. Additionally, in order to meet the performance targets, a district must meet these Reading and Mathematics targets for all students and all student subgroups in at least one grade band. Grade bands consist of grades 3-5, 6-8 and 11.

For 2008-09, the District did meet all targets for the grade span 3-5 for both Reading and Mathematics across all of its eight student subgroups: White, African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multi-Racial/Ethnic, Limited English Proficiency, Economically Disadvantaged and Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Special Education. Since it made AYP for 2009, the District's NCLB status will improve from Corrective Action II to Making Progress. The District must meet federal and state targets for a second consecutive year and achieve AYP in 2010 in order to be considered on track to meet the NCLB goal.

## District Increases Percentage of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Targets Met | [Return](#)

The State standards have been established so that districts and schools will continue to have to meet higher expectations over time in order to meet the federal requirement of 100% proficiency by the 2013-14 school year. Over the past four years, the District has increased the percentage of AYP targets it has met even as the number of targets continues to increase. The number of targets is based on the number of student subgroups. "What's amazing about the District making AYP in 2009 is that we did so as the complexity and difficulty of achieving AYP continues to increase," commented Roosevelt.

In 2005, when the only grades tested in Pennsylvania were 5, 8 and 11, the District met 50 of 70 AYP targets, or 71.4%. The addition of testing in grades 3, 4, 6 and 7 has increased the number of AYP targets the District must meet. The District's targets continue to increase because unlike many rural and suburban districts, urban districts have diverse student populations, resulting in a higher number of student subgroups. A subgroup is identified once there are 40 or more students that meet the definition of a subgroup.

In 2009, the District met 86 of 98 AYP targets, or 87.8%, as compared to 78 of 96 targets, or 81.3% in 2007, the first year that testing occurred across all grades 3-8 and 11.

## District Initiatives Taking Hold | [Return](#)

Pittsburgh Public Schools student achievement results provide evidence that the District's systemic initiatives to improve the academic performance are taking hold. Over the past three years, the District has put into place the core elements for improving student achievement, including:

- Implementing a new, rigorous PreK-12 curriculum;
- Launching The Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System of Excellence (PULSE), a comprehensive system to recruit, train, support, evaluate, improve and compensate principals in order to ensure strong school leadership;
- Providing ongoing training for instructional staff so that they continually enhance the engagement of students and teach the curriculum at a high level;
- Using diagnostic assessments to improve student learning;
- Providing instructional coaches in every school to deepen the work;
- Introducing the Positive Behavior Intervention Support program to establish common expectations for good behavior; and,
- Expanding early childhood offerings so a child's school experience gets off to a better start when transitioning to Kindergarten.

Increases in student achievement bode well for ensuring that District students will reap the benefit of The Pittsburgh Promise™, a unique community commitment that eliminates money as a barrier to higher education. "We're committed to improving our children's life prospects," said Roosevelt. "This means students need to dream big, work hard and be Promise-Ready so that they can receive Promise scholarships and pursue education beyond high school"

## Pittsburgh Students Continue to Make Academic Progress on State

### Exams | [Download this Press Release](#) | [Return to Top](#)

Building on last year's substantial gains, District students continue to show academic progress on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). For 2008-09, students made gains in Reading and Mathematics proficiency on 11 of 14 PSSA exams.

District students additionally exceeded No Child Left Behind (NCLB) expectations, which focus on students reaching the proficient level, as they showed progress moving to advanced in Reading and Mathematics on 10 of 14 exams. Some of the progress to the advanced level is an indication that the Pittsburgh Public Schools can advance student achievement to levels not usually seen in urban settings; for example in the critical eighth-grade year 45.2% of District students are advanced in Reading, a remarkable 105.5% increase over the last four years.

More Information

#### Downloads:

- [Download Highlights of Preliminary Results in 2008-2009 PSSAs](#)
- [Appendix: Download Preliminary Results of 2008-2009 PSSAs](#)

- [Video of Presentation of Preliminary Student Achievement Results](#)

**Topics:**

- [District Achieves Adequate Yearly Progress in 2008-09](#)
- [PSSA Results Over Four Years](#)
- [Accelerated Learning Academies Continue to Accelerate Student Achievement](#)
- [Making Progress Eliminating the Disparity](#)
- [Accelerated Learning Academies Continue to Accelerate Student Achievement](#)
- [Results Reaffirm the Need to Continue With Dramatic Changes at the High School Level](#)
- [Schools Led by Graduates of the District's Principal Leadership Program Show Substantial Progress](#)

Each year, students across the state take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) examinations in Reading and Mathematics in grades 3–8 and 11. For the 2008-2009 school year, Pittsburgh Public Schools students continued to make substantial progress in student achievement at almost all grade levels, making gains in proficiency on 11 of 14 exams and showing progress in the advanced category on 10 of 14 exams.

Building on last year's substantial gains, District students continue to show academic progress on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Based on preliminary district-level results, students made gains in Reading and Mathematics proficiency on 11 of 14 PSSA exams. Community leadership gathered on July 23rd, 2009, at Pittsburgh Sunnyside K-8 as Superintendent Mark Roosevelt, along with District leadership, teachers and students, highlighted the District's 2009 student achievement results. District students additionally exceeded No Child Left Behind (NCLB) expectations, which focus on students reaching the proficient level, as they showed progress moving to advanced in Reading and Mathematics on 10 of 14 exams. Students additionally showed progress in moving out of below basic on 9 of 14 PSSA exams.

"We continue to see significant progress on District goals aimed at increasing student achievement, meaning more students are on course to being 'Promise-Ready,'" said Roosevelt. "We will continue to deepen our ongoing work so that all students achieve at greater levels."

Pittsburgh Public Schools released [a complete listing of the preliminary district-level PSSA results by grade level](#) and [spotlighted categories and schools](#) that represented accelerated progress based on District priorities. The PSSA measures individual student growth and determines the level to which students reach Pennsylvania Reading and Mathematics standards in grades 3 – 8 and 11. PSSA results are used to determine a district's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The State has not yet released AYP information or statewide PSSA data for 2009.

### **PSSA Results Over Four Years | [\(Return\)](#)**

At the July 23rd briefing, the Superintendent highlighted student achievement progress within key District priorities over the past four years. District 8th graders are increasingly prepared to meet the challenges of transitioning to high school. Over the past four years, students in Grade 8 have made the most dramatic improvement, increasing 12.6 points from 50.3% to 71.4% proficient or above in Reading. Furthermore for Reading in 2008-09, 45.2% of 8th graders scored at the advanced level compared to 22.0% in 2004-05, which is an increase of 23.3 points over four years. In Mathematics, 8th grade students demonstrating proficient or above increased from 46.8% in 2004-05 to 59.4% in 2008-09, which is an increase of 6.9 points over four years.

"To take full advantage of the Pittsburgh Promise students need to enter the 9th grade ready for the rigorous curriculum and to be fully engage in the management of their own learning," said Roosevelt. "That's why the dramatic gains we are seeing in the 8th grade are tremendously encouraging."

Pittsburgh Sunnyside K-8 was among those spotlighted today for ranking among the District's top ten schools with the greatest improvements in advanced Reading in Grade 8. The school's 8th graders posted large gains in advanced Reading, improving 29.5 points from 29.6% in 2007-08 to 59.1% in 2008-09.

This year, Mathematics proficiency in the 5th grade increased 5.2 points, which means students have improved 6.9 points over four years. Additionally, this year's Reading proficiency in Grade 5 improved 9.5 points to 52.1%, up 22.3% from last

year's 42.6%. Last year's substantial gains in 3rd grade Reading dropped slightly to 62.3% compared the previous 64.1%. Despite this 1.8 point decrease, students have improved 12.6 points in grade 3 Reading over the past four years.

### **Making Progress Eliminating the Disparity** | [\(Return\)](#)

A disproportionate number of the District's African-American students are not achieving at grade level, which makes the elimination of the academic disparity between African-American and White students one of the priorities of the District. The District made progress in reducing the disparity on 9 of the 14 PSSA exams. Since 2005-06, the most progress was made in grades 4, 5, and 8. In the 8th grade, progress was made in eliminating the disparity in Reading by 5.5 points and in Mathematics the disparity decreased by 4.3 points. In grade 4, the Mathematics disparity decreased by 4.6 points. In grade 5, the Mathematics disparity decreased by 6.8 points.

### **Accelerated Learning Academies Continue to Accelerate Student Achievement** | [\(Return\)](#)

Designed to increase and accelerate student achievement, the District's Accelerated Learning Academies (ALAs), posted increases at the advanced level in Reading that are 1.4 times greater than the remainder of the District and 3.5 times greater in Mathematics over last year. Additionally, students in the ALAs showed growth in proficiency equal to the remainder of the District in Reading and 2.3 times greater in Mathematics over last year. ALA students also posted percentage point reductions in below basic 2.0 times greater than the remainder of District in Reading and 2.1 times greater in Mathematic over last year.

"We are pleased to see accelerated gains in student achievement at the advanced level, while at the same time dramatically reducing the number of students performing at below basic levels at our ALAs," said Deputy Superintendent Linda Lane.

### **Results Reaffirm the Need to Continue With Dramatic Changes at the High School Level** | [\(Return\)](#)

Over four years, students in grade 11 have increased 5.0 points in Mathematics proficiency, while Reading has remained flat. This year, 50.7% of 11th graders demonstrated proficiency or above in Reading while Mathematics decreased from 52.3% to 43.3%. Strong gains were seen in both Reading and Mathematics at Pittsburgh Carrick High School, which was spotlighted at today's event. Students at Pittsburgh Carrick improved 14.3 points in Reading proficiency, 6.8 points in advanced Reading and 5.4 points in advanced Mathematics.

### **Schools Led by Graduates of the District's Principal Leadership Program Show Substantial Progress** | [\(Return\)](#)

One of the District's major reform efforts is its Pittsburgh Emerging Leadership Academy (PELA). PELA is a component of the District's Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System for Excellence (PULSE) accountability system to recruit, train, support, evaluate and compensate principals. The PELA program provides a corps of highly skilled administrators prepared to meet the District's needs.

In 2008-09, the first year of implementation for PELA, schools led by principals who graduated from the PELA program saw increases in Reading proficiency that exceeded District increases in six of the seven grades tested. Additionally, increases in Mathematics proficiency at schools led by PELA principals exceeded the District increases in five of the seven grades tested. For the 2008-09 school year, PELA principals were placed at Pittsburgh Arsenal K-5, Pittsburgh Peabody High School, Pittsburgh Schiller 6-8, Pittsburgh Rooney 6-8 and Pittsburgh West Liberty K-5. For the upcoming school year, an additional four PELA graduates will take the lead as principals at Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12, Pittsburgh Langley High School, Pittsburgh Morrow PreK-5 and Pittsburgh Westinghouse High School.

July 23<sup>rd</sup> Preliminary PSSA Results Presentation



The District plans to provide the Board and the public with a full presentation of the 2009 PSSA results at the Board's August 11th Education Committee meeting.

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