



Ohio's Urban Students Outpace State Gains on Reading, Math Tests for Third Consecutive Year

(March 20, 2007 Cleveland) Students in Ohio's eight big city school districts are improving test scores by larger margins than school districts across the state, according to The Ohio 8 Coalition, an alliance of the state's big-city superintendents and teacher union presidents.

The Coalition tracked reading and math scores on the Ohio Proficiency Tests for fourth and sixth graders from the 1998-99 school year to the 2005-2006 school year, as reported by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The Coalition found similar gains in student achievement last year when comparing student test results from 1998-99 to 2004 – 2005.

During that time, students in our eight big-city school districts scored significant improvements:

- **In fourth-grade reading scores**, seven of the eight districts posted gains higher than the statewide gain. Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Toledo and Youngstown all posted gains of greater than 20.0 percentage points. The statewide average gain was 17.6 points
- **In fourth-grade math**, seven of the eight districts achieved higher test score increases than the statewide gain. Youngstown's gain was 45.2 points, with Akron and Cincinnati posted gains of greater than 30.0 points, compared with the statewide average of 26.3 points.
- **In sixth-grade reading**, all eight districts posted gains higher than the state as a whole. For instance, Cleveland posted a gain of 41.4 percentage points; Akron gained 41.2 points, and Canton, Cincinnati and Toledo gained more than 34.0 points. The statewide gain was 30.5 percentage points.
- **In sixth-grade math**, four of the urban districts surpassed the state gain of 17.0 percentage points. Cincinnati's and Cleveland's gains were greater than 20.0 points.

Performance Index Measurements

Broader benchmarks demonstrate a similar pattern of improvement. In progress assessed through Ohio's Performance Index – a calculation that measures test performance on all state indicator tests – our urban districts showed far greater rates of improvement than districts across the State of Ohio. The Ohio 8 districts averaged a gain of 19.6 percentage points, compared with the state average of 14.2 points since ODE began the calculations for the 2000-2001 school year. Cincinnati, Toledo, Youngstown, Akron and Dayton all posted gains of 20 points or greater.

Similarly, several of the Ohio 8 districts have shown steady progress on the state report card ratings, which look at test results, graduation rates and attendance. Five district – Akron, Canton,

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Cincinnati, Dayton and Toledo – achieved ratings of Continuous Improvement on the latest state report cards, and none of the Ohio 8 districts was in Academic Emergency.

Performance Index Measurements

Broader benchmarks demonstrate a similar pattern of improvement. In progress assessed through Ohio's Performance Index – a calculation that measures test performance on all state indicator tests – our urban districts showed far greater rates of improvement than districts across the State of Ohio. The Ohio 8 districts averaged a gain of 14.1 percentage points, compared with the state average of 9.1 points since ODE began the calculations for the 2000-2001 school year.

Similarly, several of the Ohio 8 districts have shown steady progress on the state report card ratings, which look at test results, graduation rates and attendance. For the most recent report, Akron, Cincinnati and Toledo achieved ratings of Continuous Improvement. Other districts, like Canton and Columbus, missed Continuous Improvement standing by a handful of students. Both Akron and Toledo met the standards for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

“The data clearly demonstrate that students in Ohio's urban districts have made a lot of progress over the past six years,” said William Wendling, executive director of The Ohio 8 Coalition. “We share these results not to declare the race is won but to demonstrate that high-poverty students in Ohio's big cities are making very significant progress. The urban districts have invested time and resources in focused instructional practices, curriculum alignment, more time on task for students, professional development for teachers and staff and other strategies.

“Certainly, these districts have a way to go in terms of meeting all of the state standards. But, it's important not to lose sight of the fact that the hard work of students, teachers, parents and administrators is clearly paying off for Ohio's urban students,” Wendling said.

The Ohio 8 Coalition was established in 2001 as a strategic alliance composed of the superintendents and teachers' union presidents from Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown. The Coalition represents more than 240,000 students. It is co-chaired by Dr. Eugene T. Sanders, superintendent and CEO of Toledo Public Schools, and Sam Dorto, president of the Canton Professional Educators Association.

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