

Dame-Dame Schools

Close and Reverse Racial Achievement Gaps

Educational Justice Project

Department of Africana Studies

University of Pittsburgh

Jerome Taylor, PhD, Convener

Research Team

Kevin Kim, PhD, Chair

Abi Fapohunda, DrPH

Feifei Ye, PhD

Angela Allie, MAT

Abiola Oke, BS

What are Dame-Dame Schools?

Dame-Dame Schools are 75%+ black and 75%+ poor where:

- 85% of students are proficient in reading and math (**Gold Awardee**); or
- 75% of students are proficient in reading and math (**Silver Awardee**); or
- 75% of students are proficient in reading or math (**Bronze Award**).

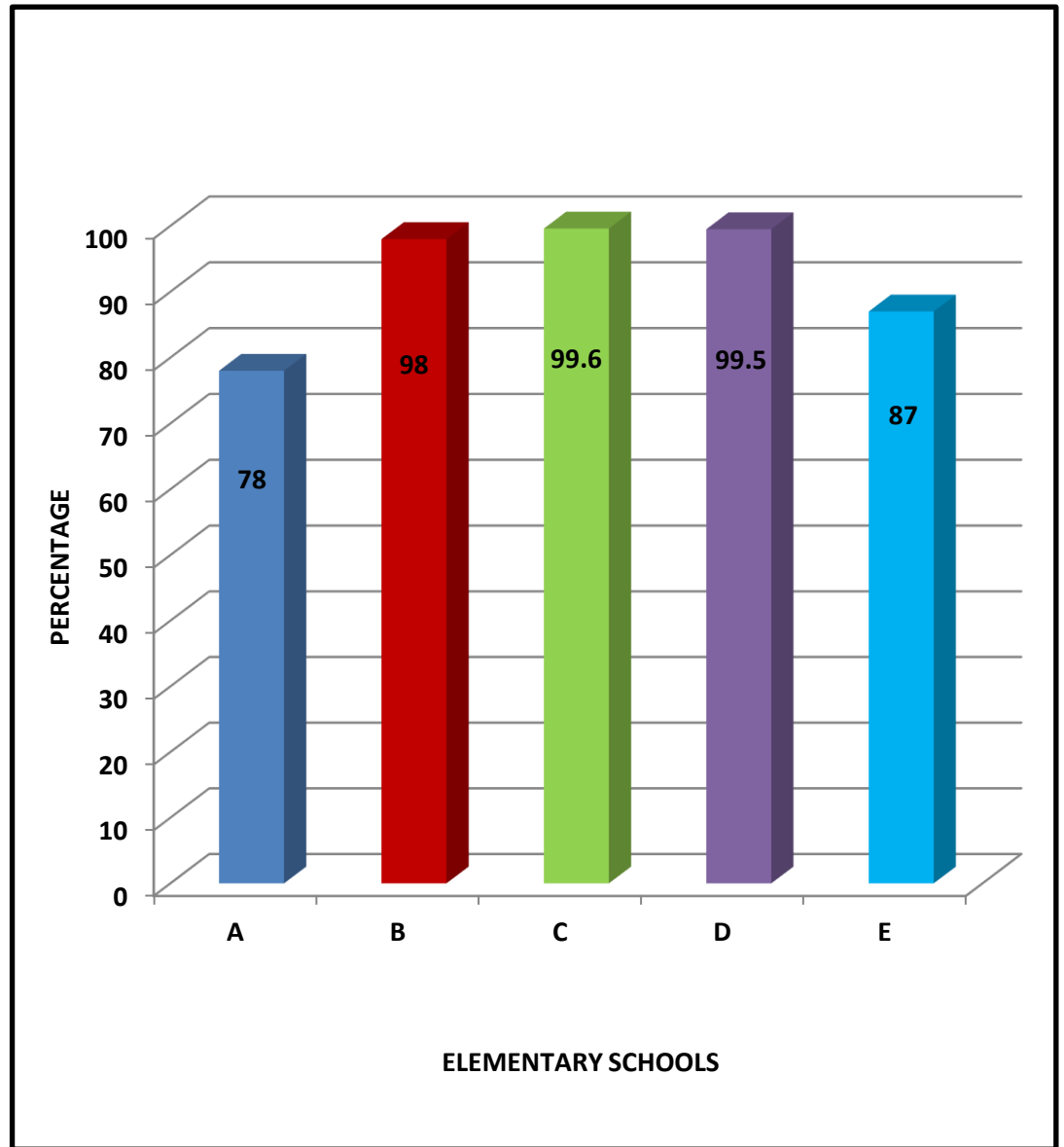
Conceptual Model Used in Evaluating Dame-Dame Schools



Sample Characteristics: Five Dame-Dame Schools

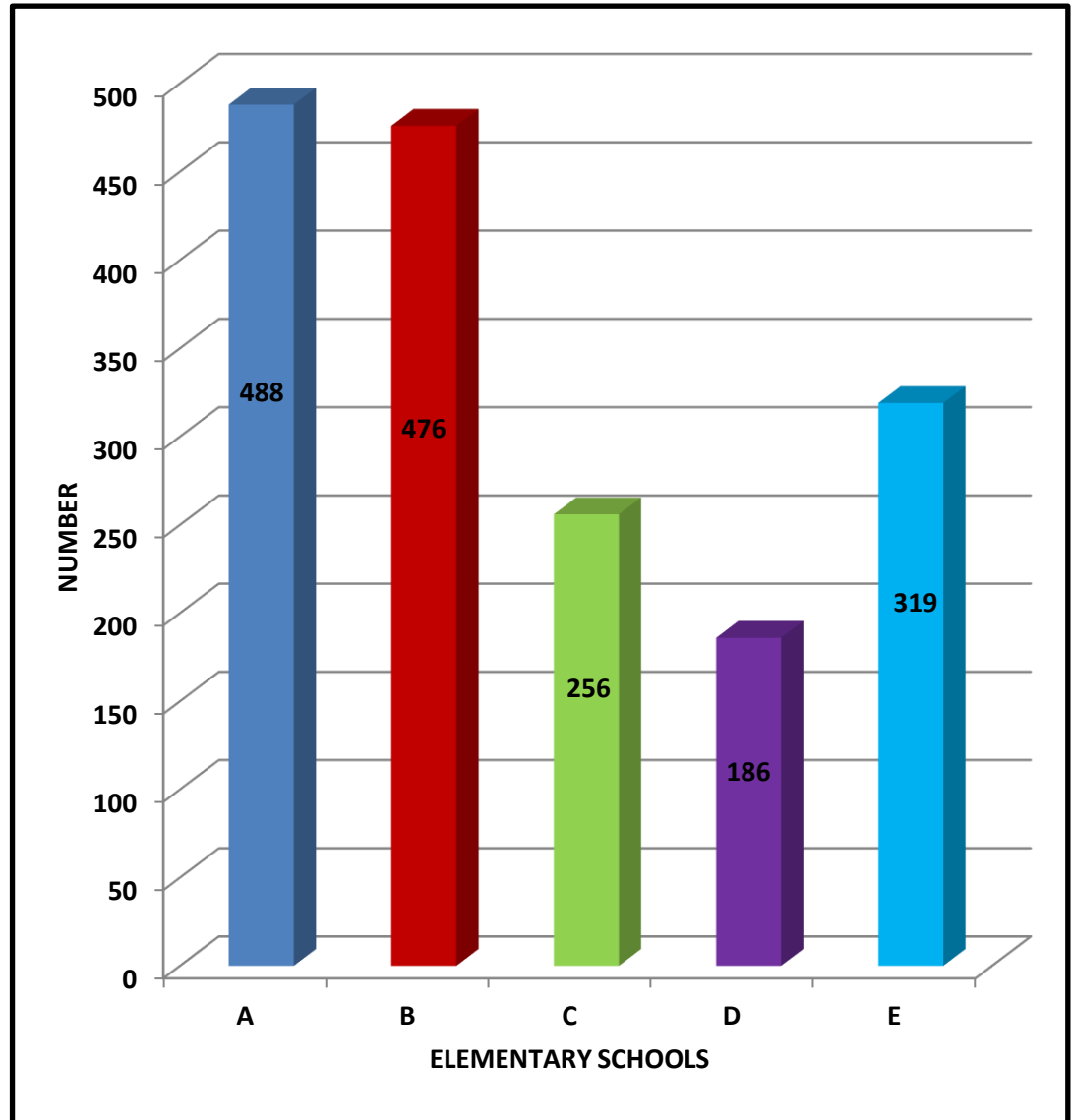
Percent Black

Schools B - E students are predominately African American; School A has an ethnically mixed population of African American (78%) and Hispanic {22%} .



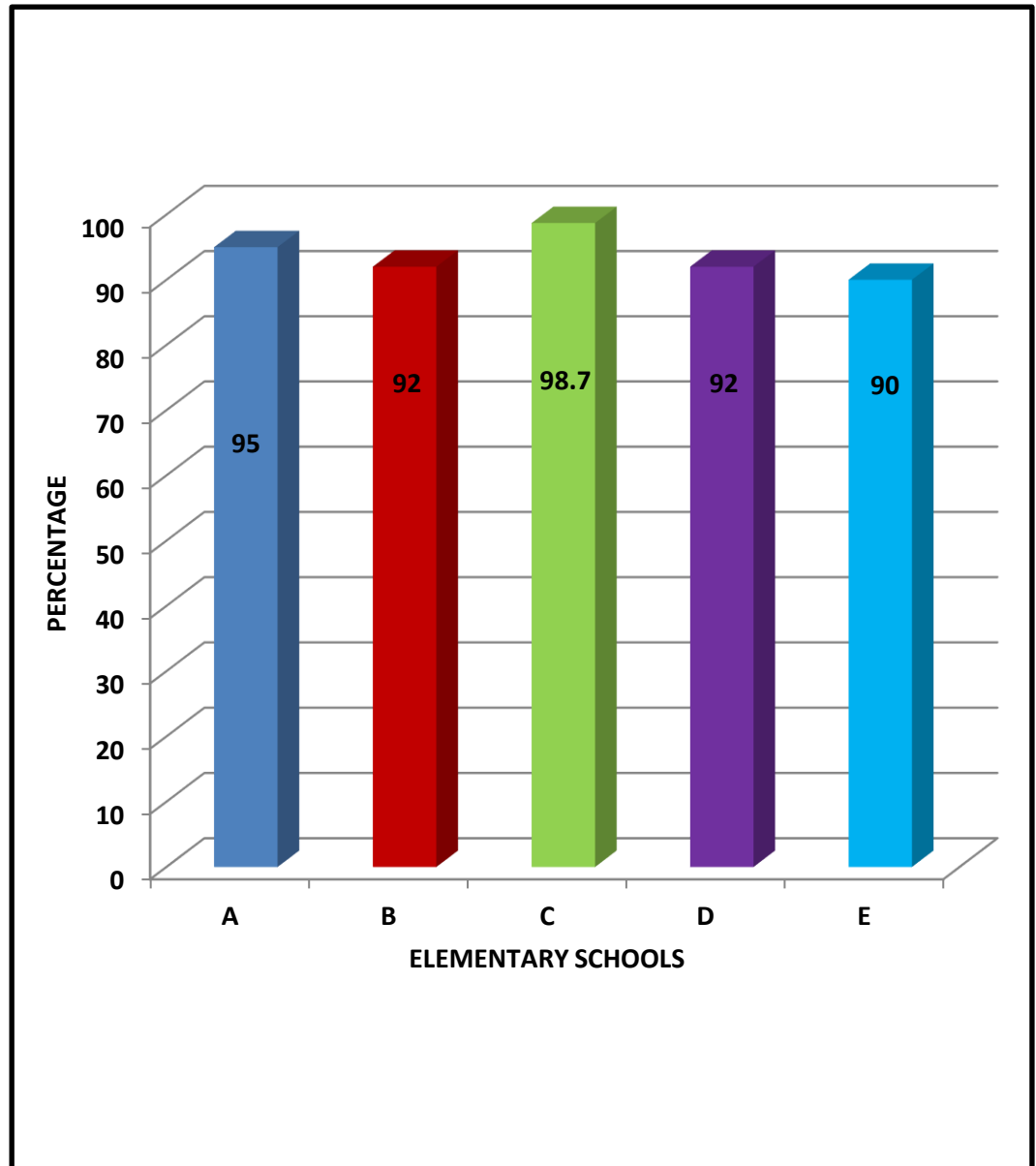
Student Enrollment

Schools A, B and E (Pre-K to 5th grade) have more students 488, 476 and 319, respectively, relative to schools C (Pre-K to 3rd grade) with 256 students and D (Pre-K to 5th grade) with 186 students.



%Free/Reduced Lunch

An overwhelming majority of the students from all the five elementary schools are economically disadvantaged .



Data Sources Available for 3 of the 5 Dame-Dame Principals

- Public Lecture
- Interview Protocol
- A Gardening Metaphor Inventory

Findings: Input and Process

Principal Background and Engagement Practices

Principal Leadership

Decision Making

School Culture

Professional Development

Data Utilization

Community Involvement

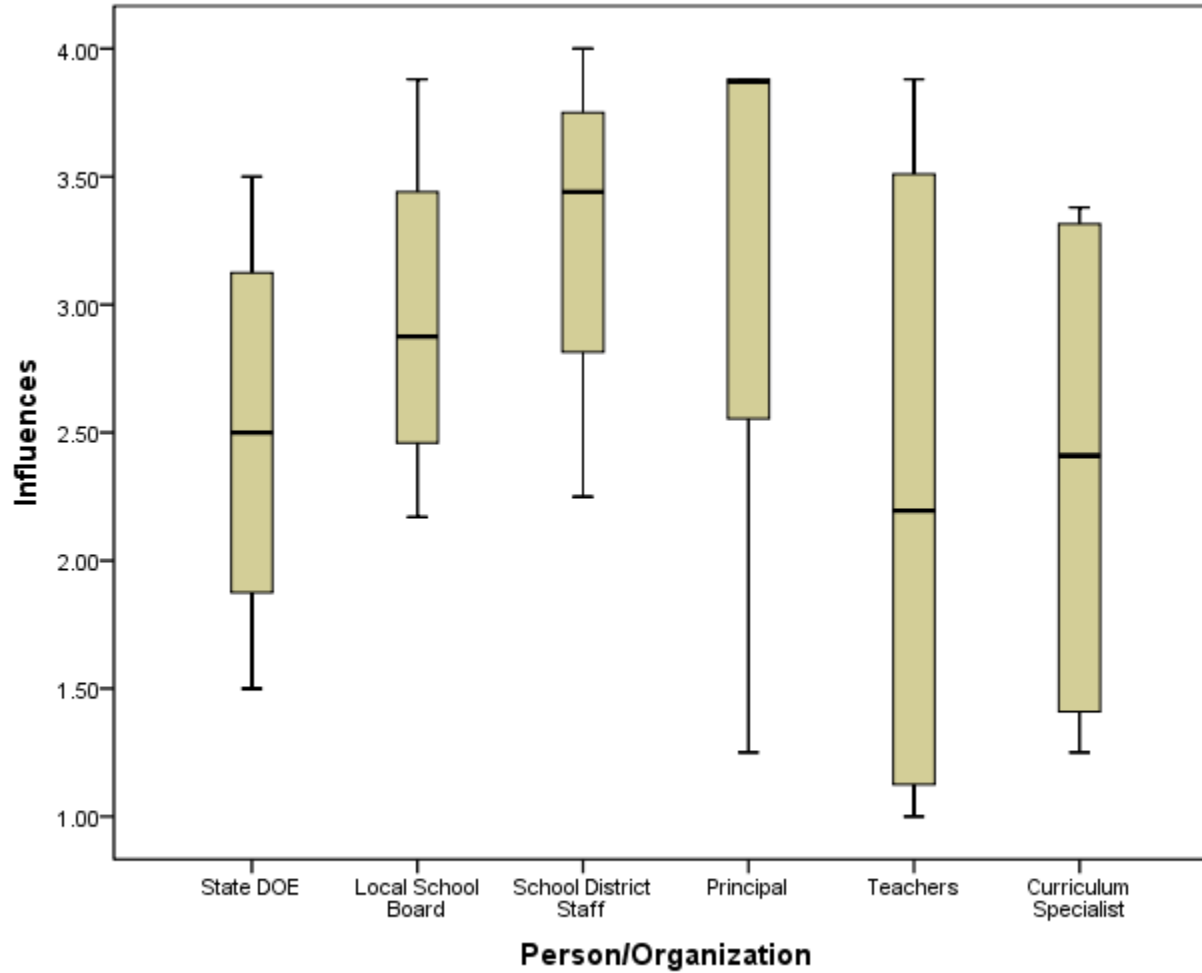
Principal Background and Engagement Practices

See Handout:
Appendix A

Principal Leadership

1. Dame-Dame principals were strong leaders who took primary responsibility for schoolwide policies and practices;
2. Dame-Dame principals strongly believed in their students, carried exceptionally high expectations for them, and created environments necessary for them to excel;
3. Dame-Dame principals required exemplary/near perfect student attendance;
4. Dame-Dame principals required exemplary/near perfect teacher attendance;
5. Dame-Dame principals expected and fostered collaboration between teachers and principal, teachers and teachers, and teachers and parents;
6. Dame-Dame principals spent an exceptional amount of time observing teachers in classrooms and interacting with students in and outside classrooms.

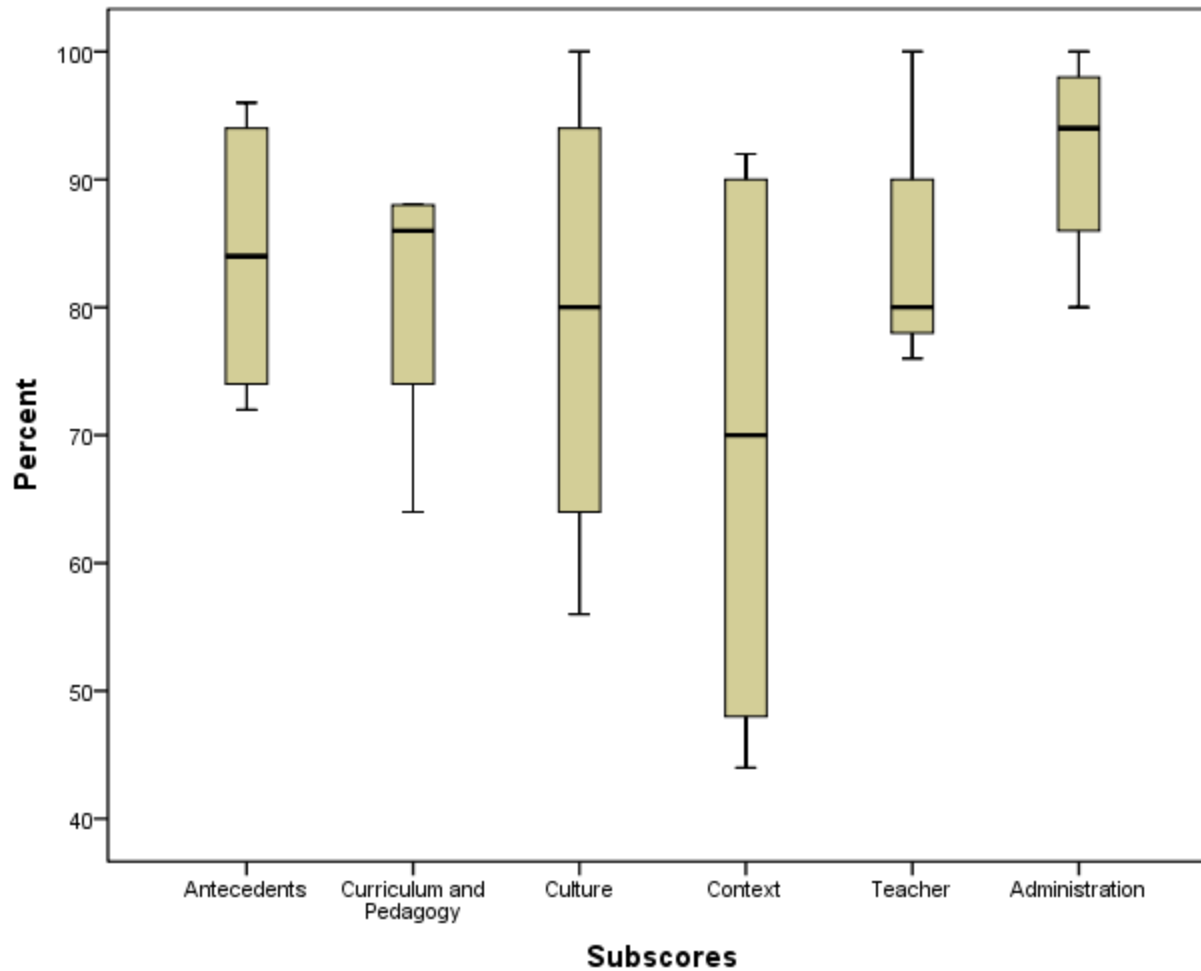
Decision Making



School Culture: Qualitative

1. In Dame-Dame Schools, principals expect teachers to be well versed in their subjects and committed to working extra hours before and after school in order to ensure high student achievement on standardized tests;
2. In Dame-Dame Schools, the level of principal and teacher turnover may be lower than in comparison public schools serving predomi-nately black low-income schools; and
3. In Dame-Dame Schools, the level of teacher satisfaction may be higher in than in compari-son public schools serving predominately black low-income students.

School Culture: Quantitative—AGM Inventory



Professional Development

- The overwhelming majority of all professional development was organized and implemented by the principal or at the behest of the principal;
- Principal provided combination of individual and staff-wide professional development, often going into classrooms not only to observe with feedback but also to demonstrate instructional methods;
- Alignment of instruction to proficiency and advanced proficiency attainment. In one instance, e.g., pre-K and K instruction was developmentally aligned with what 3rd graders needed to know for proficient performance in math and reading; and
- Supported the development and management of small but flexible groups to facilitate positive learning environments for all students.

Data Utilization

- ❑ Student growth was continuously monitored and assessment results used to inform individual plans that worked best for each student;
- ❑ Committed to revise individual plans as often as necessary to enhance student's rate of achievement;
- ❑ Willingness to use time creatively before, during, and after school to enhance the achievement of every student; and
- ❑ Interim assessments utilized for reading and math often involved measures or inventories not included in state assessments.

Community Involvement

- ❑ As estimated from A Gardening Metaphor Inventory, community involvement was rated in the moderate to high range except for School C which was relatively low.
- ❑ Without exception, however, qualitative data from interviews suggested that all Dame-Dame Schools found creative ways of engaging parents.

Outcomes

Student Engagement

Academic Achievement

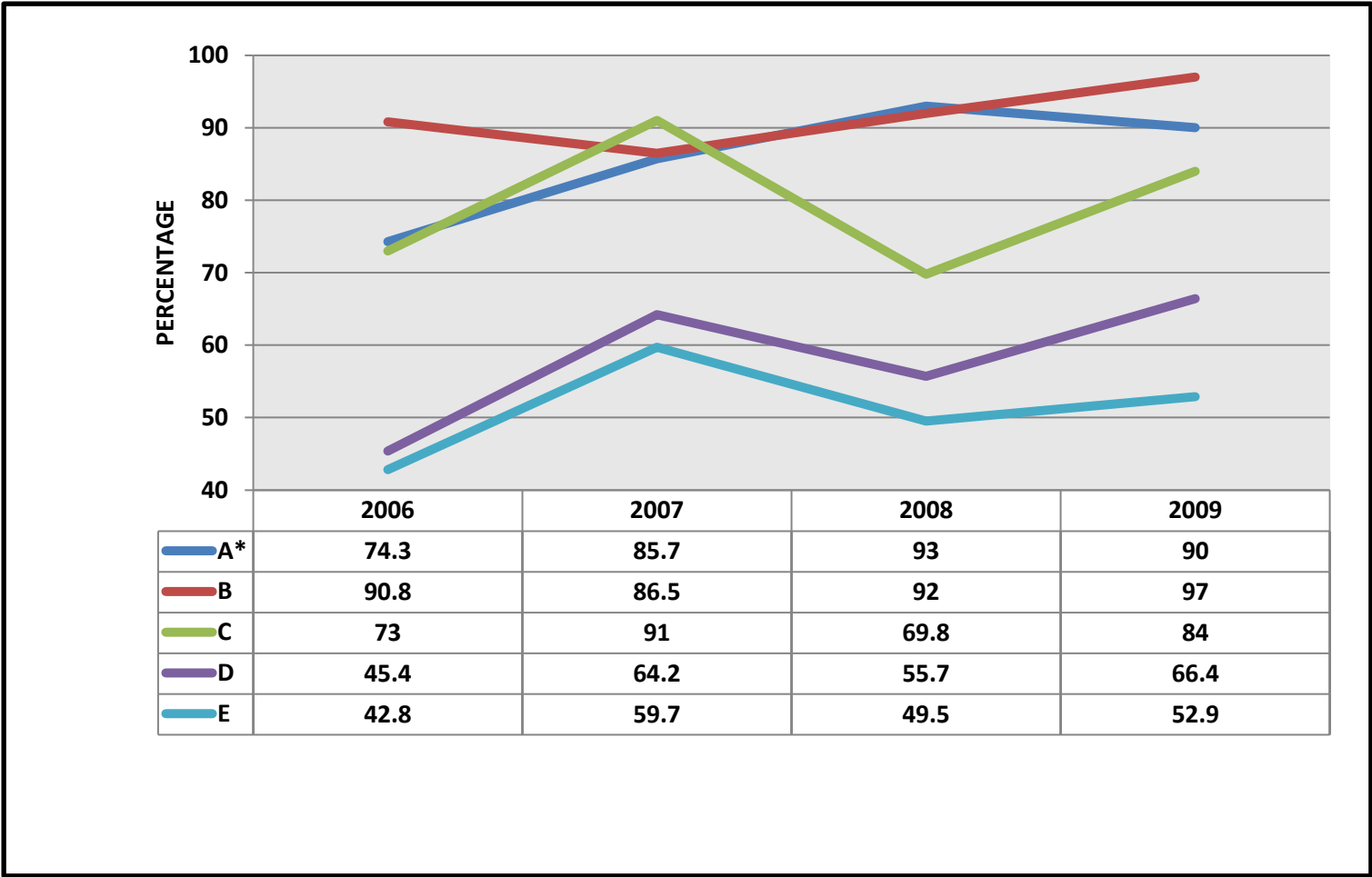
Student Engagement

- ❑ These schools tended to be a beehives of activities, students being exposed to a wide range of academic competitions along with extracurricular activities such as fine arts, dance, art, music, technology and science, debates, and spelling bees;
- ❑ Students were regularly and quickly recognized by teachers and principals for achieving significant milestones in academic growth or achievement;
- ❑ Students were reported to be eager to achieve high standards set by their principal and teachers.

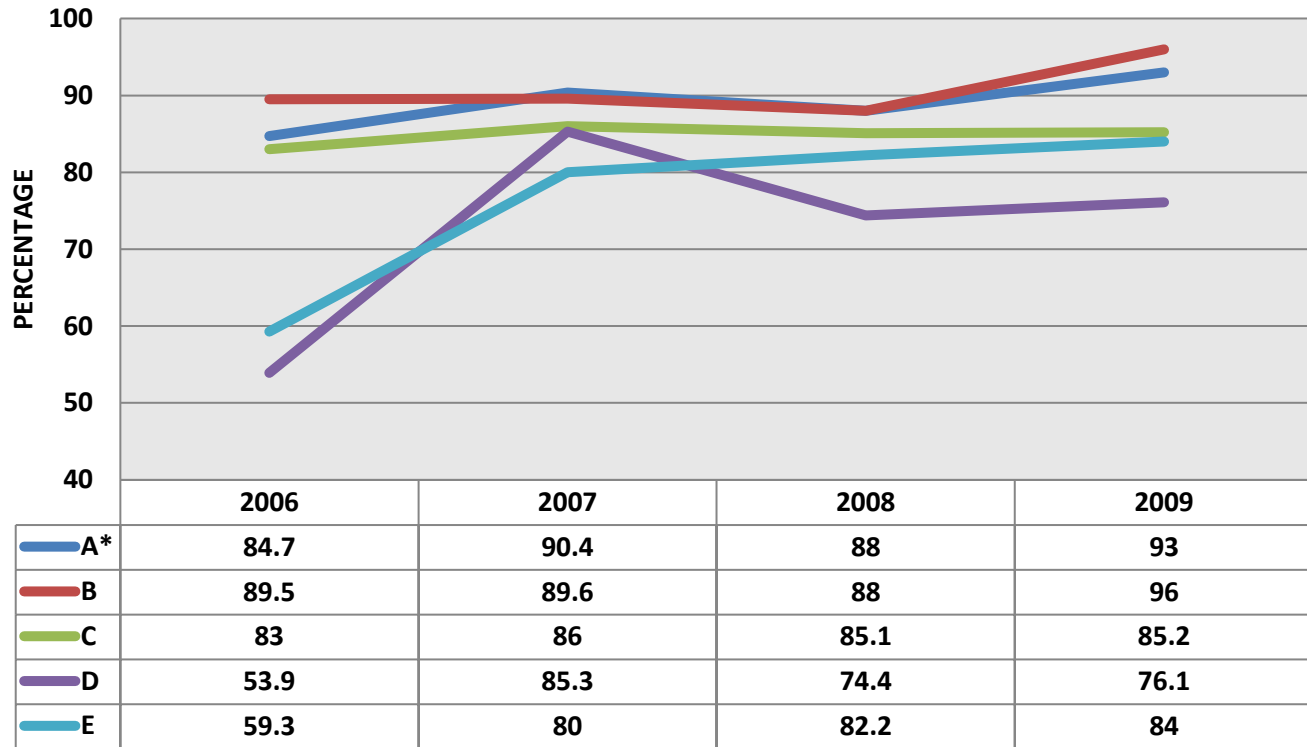
Academic Achievement Trends

- ❑ All three Gold Awardees show a trend of academic success in both Math and Reading over the past four years;
- ❑ Gold Awardee C faced some challenges in reading in 2008, but it was able to bounce back with higher student achievement in 2009; and
- ❑ The majority of students attending Gold Awardee schools met or exceeded school, district, and state standards over the last four years, *i.e.*, racial achievement gaps were mostly reversed for this period.
- ❑ Bronze Awardees D and E met or exceeded our 75% proficiency standard in math but not reading over the period 2007-2009.

Reading Achievement (State Assessments)



Math Achievement (State Assessments)



Conclusions

In this work conference, we decided to encourage participants to think through implications of this work from their own personal and professional perspectives.

So, then, let's spend the remaining time working and imagining together implications of these findings for our profession and most urgently of all for our children.

Who wants to help us get started?