



YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## **A Model for Success Prekindergarten through Grade 8 Schools**

*Absenteeism, State Assessments, Suspension, Tardiness*

- **For Grades Prekindergarten through Five**  
Comparison of Prekindergarten through Grade Eight school configuration to Prekindergarten through Grade Five school configuration
- **For Grades Six through Eight**  
Comparison of Prekindergarten through Grade Eight school configuration to Middle School configuration

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data analysis



## An Evaluation of YPS Pre-Kindergarten through 8 Schools

Inspired by the study titled “Going Small: Progress and Challenges of Philadelphia’s Small High Schools,” Yonkers Public Schools’ evaluation of Pre-Kindergarten through 8 (PreK8) schools will examine the following variables: absenteeism, results of the grades 3-8 2009 NYS ELA and Math exams, suspensions<sup>1</sup> and tardiness.<sup>1</sup> Each variable analyzed will be examined in two parts:

- A Comparison of PreK8 and Pre-Kindergarten through 5 (PreK5) Schools
- A Comparison of PreK8 and Middle Schools (MS)

Results reveal that PreK8 schools outperform PreK5 and middle schools on all measured variables<sup>2</sup>. However, this trend is largest at grades 6-8. PreK8 students are reported absent less than students at PreK5 and middle schools. Moreover, in 2009 more students achieved proficiency on the ELA and math exams at PreK8 schools than at PreK5 schools and middle schools. These results held true for all minority subgroups and most majority subgroups. Even though no causal relationship was established between school type and student performance, such a definitive correlation suggests that the PreK8 school model offers students real advantages. These advantages are often greatest at the higher grade levels and for those subgroups who struggle the most.

### 2009: Absenteeism

More students at PreK5 and middle schools are reported absent than students at PreK8 schools. The largest gap exists between PreK8 and middle schools. Specifically, students in grades 6-8 at PreK8 schools were absent an average of 11 days in 2009, compared to an average of 15 absent days at the middle schools (Tables 1). An interesting trend reveals that the lowest and highest grade levels report the most days absent, regardless of school type. Furthermore, absences decrease between grades PreK-5 and rise in grades 6-8 (Tables 2a-2b).

**Table 1: 2009: Average Number of Days Absent per Student**

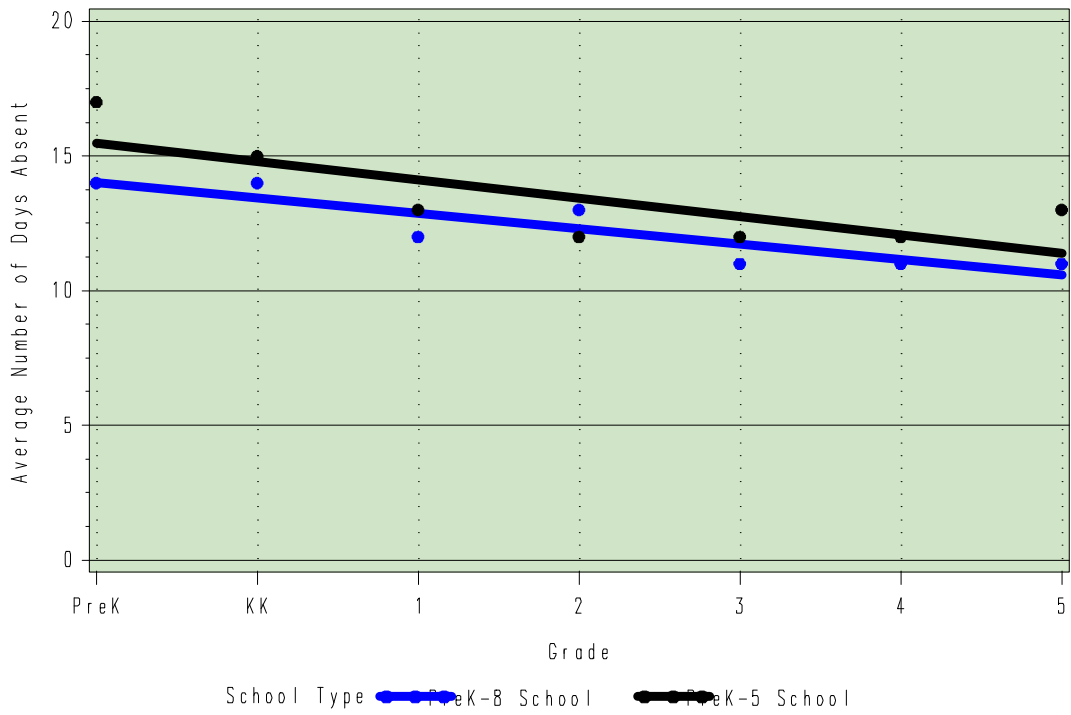
Grade Levels:	School Type	Average Number of Days Absent	Lowest Number of Days Absent	Highest Number of Days Absent
PreK5	PreK8 School	12	1	102
	PreK5 School	13	1	114
6-8	PreK8 School	11	1	95
	Middle School	15	1	136

<sup>1</sup> The Data Processing Department is unable to provide tardiness and suspension data until sometime in November.

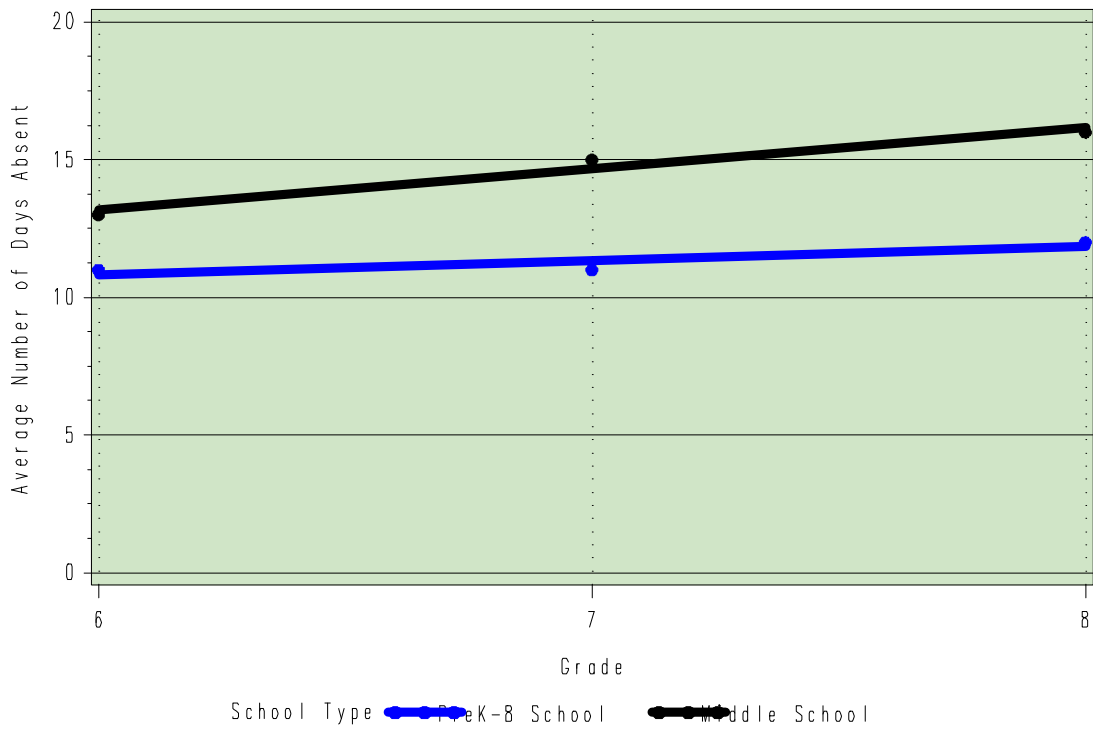
<sup>2</sup> For convenience this trend will be called “The Prek-8 Advantage.”

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**Table 2a PreK5 vs. PreK8: Average Number of Days Absent per Student**



**Table 2b PreK8 vs. MS: Average Number of Days Absent per Student**

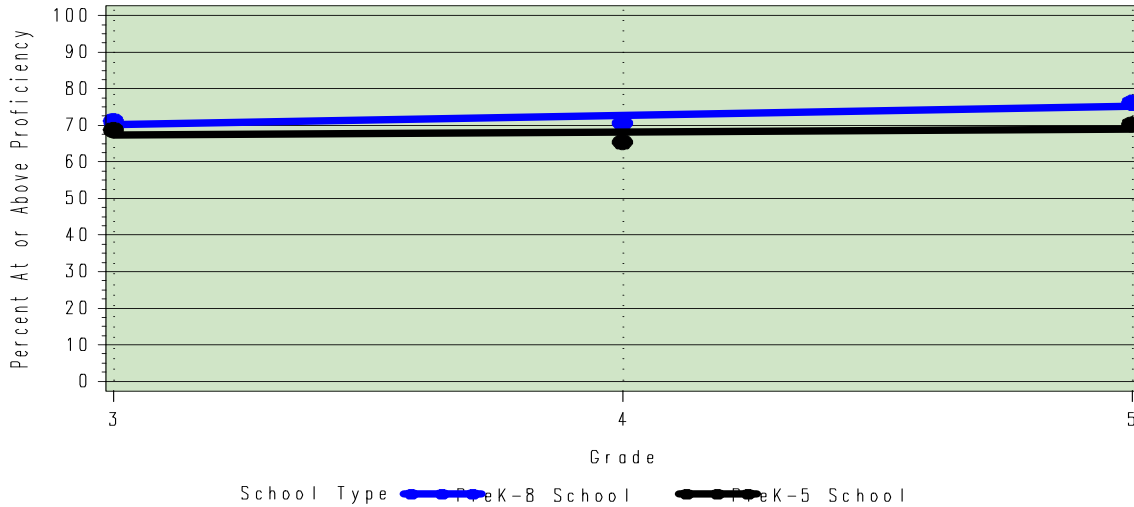


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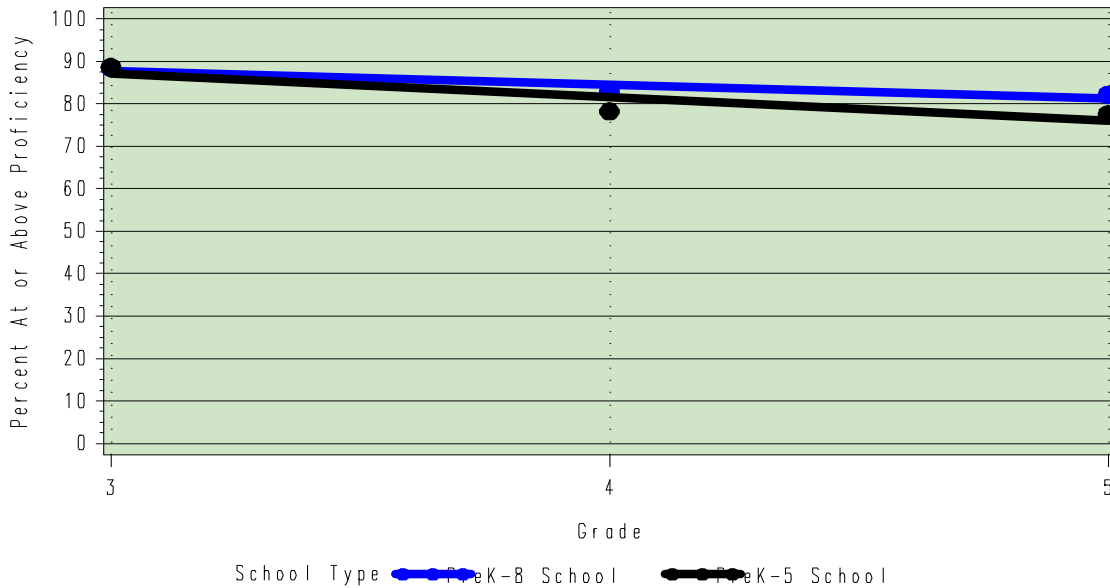
**2009 ELA & Math Grades 3-8 Achievement:**

In most grades, a larger proportion of students in PreK8 schools achieved proficiency on the ELA and math exams, as compared to PreK5 and middle schools (Tables 3-6). While the PreK8 advantage in grades 3-5 is small it more than doubles in grades 6-8; specifically, approximately 10% more students achieved proficiency in both ELA and math at PreK8 schools than at middle schools. A closer look at the grade level results reveals that there is no PreK8 advantage at grades 3, 4 and 7.

**Table 3 Prek5 vs. Prek8: Percent of Students At or Above ELA Proficiency in 2009**

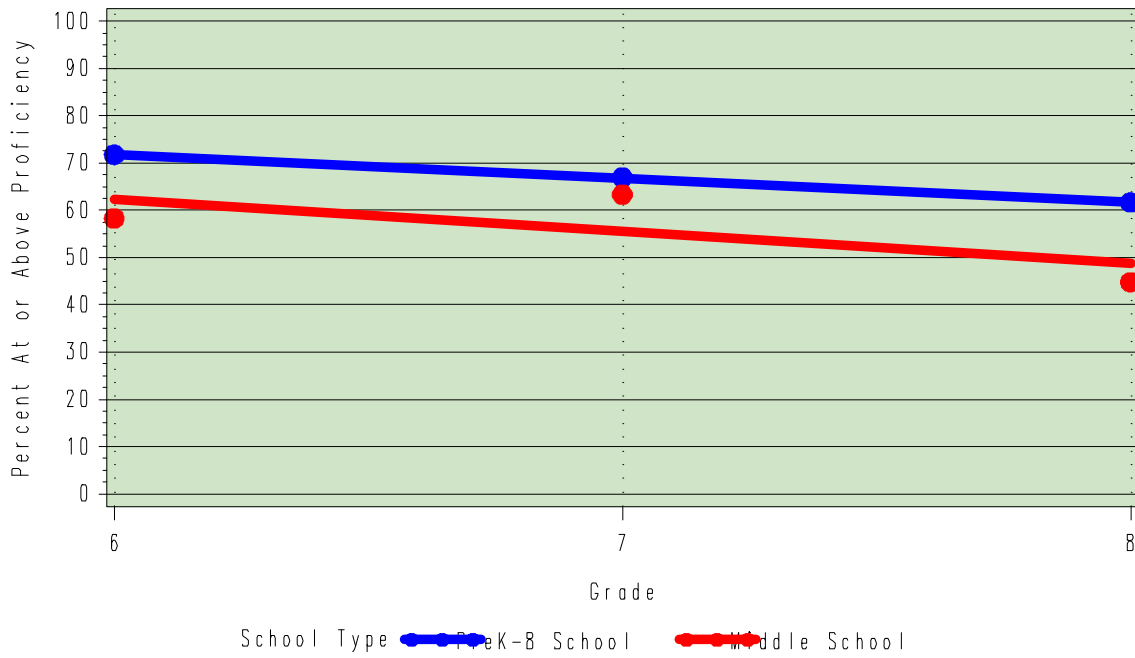


**Table 4 Prek5 vs. Prek8: Percent of Students At or Above Math Proficiency in 2009**

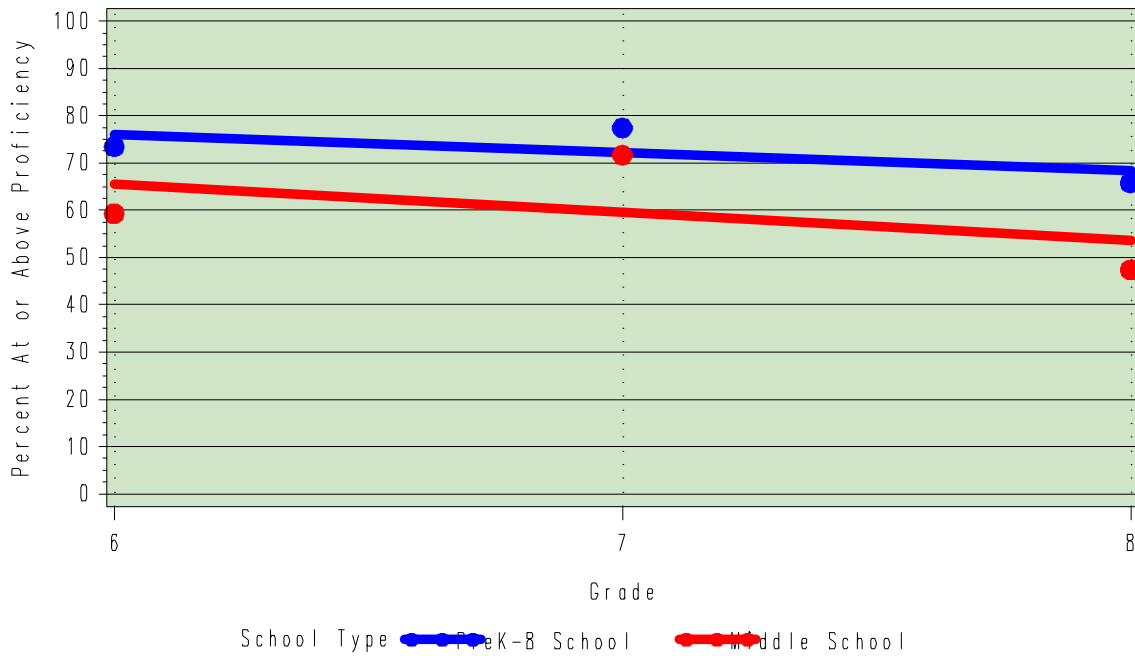


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## Table 5 Prek8 vs. MS: Percent of Students At or Above ELA Proficiency in 2009



## Table 6 Prek8 vs. MS: Percent of Students At or Above Math Proficiency in 2009



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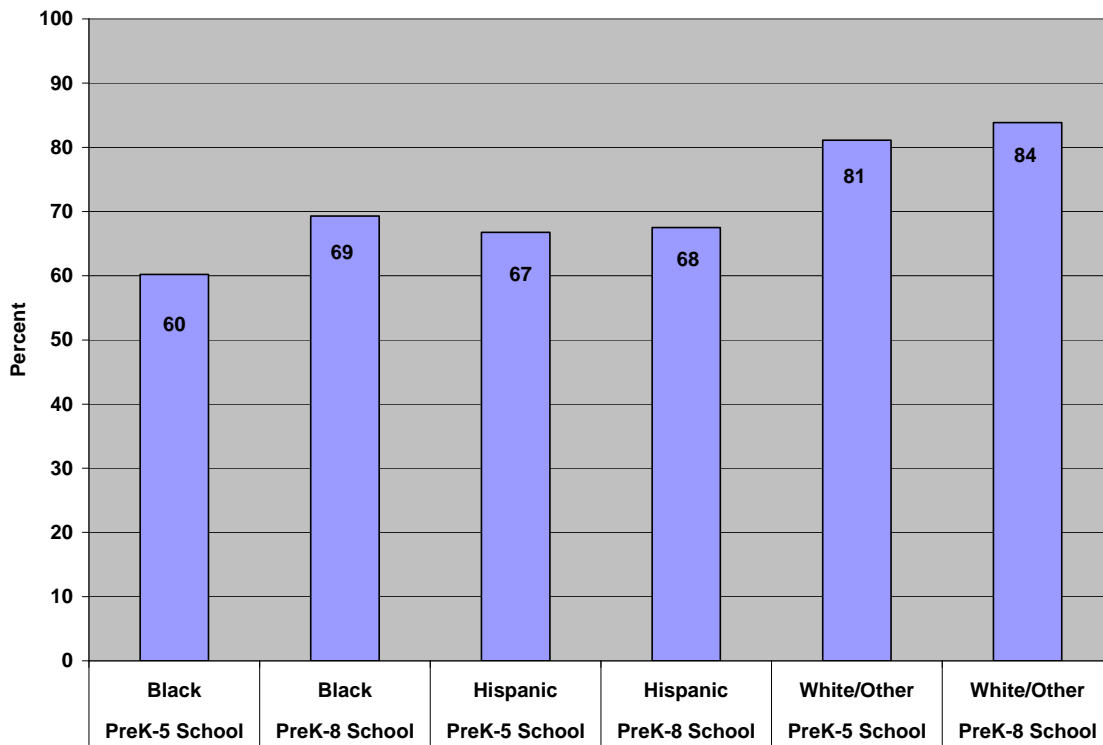
**Subgroup Analysis: 2009 ELA Grades 3-8 Achievement<sup>3</sup>**

In order to measure the strength of the relationship between school-type and proficiency on the ELA exam, the following demographic variables are controlled: ethnicity, disability status, gender and free or reduced lunch status. Most subgroup analyses reveal that students enrolled in PreK8 schools outperform their grade-level counterparts at both PreK5 schools and middle schools. Furthermore, the PreK8 advantage is often twice as large at grades 6-8.

**Ethnicity**

The PreK8 advantage exists for all ethnicities but is most substantial for Black students. In 2009, 9% more Black students achieved proficiency on the ELA exam at PreK8 schools than at PreK5 schools. The PreK8 advantage for White/Other and Hispanic students in grades 3-5 is substantially smaller with a 4% advantage for White/Other students and 1% for Hispanic students (Table 7). When compared to Middle Schools, the PreK8 advantage is considerably larger. Almost 20% more Black students in grades 6-8 achieved ELA proficiency at PreK8 schools than at Middle Schools; 13% more Whites/Others; and 5% more Hispanics.

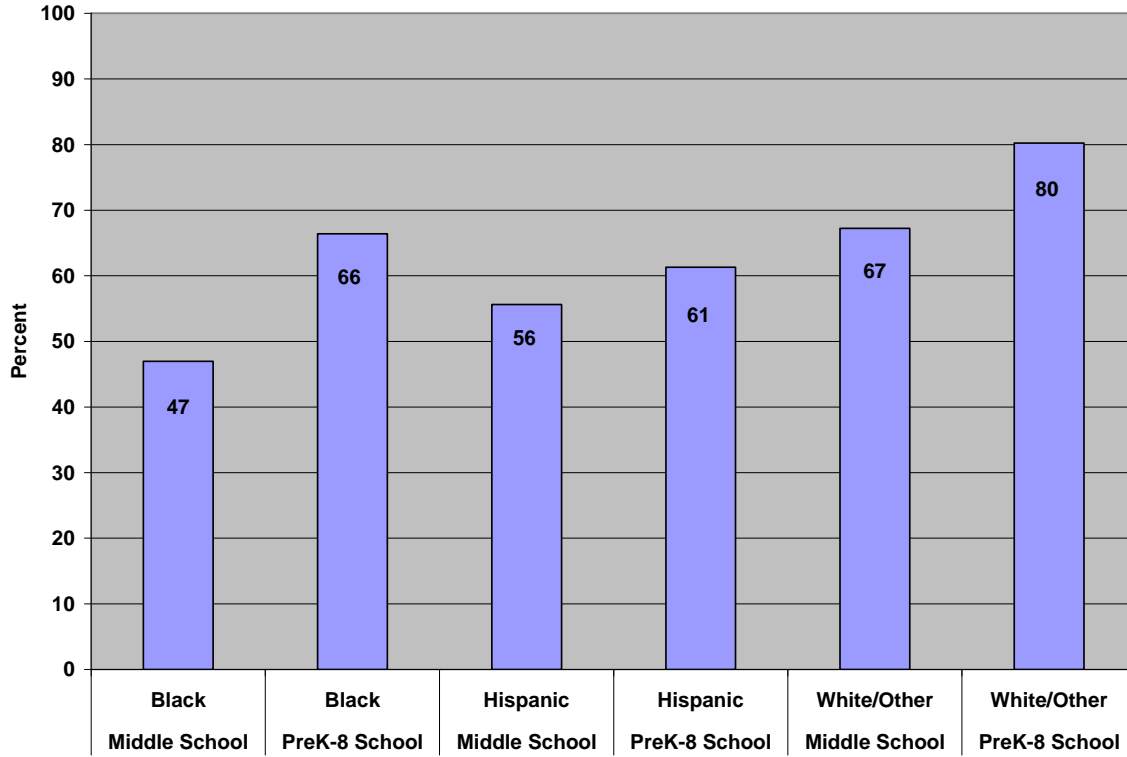
**Table 7: PreK5 vs. PreK8: ELA Proficiency in 2009 by Ethnicity**



<sup>3</sup> Note: Since results are virtually identical for ELA and math, this subgroup analysis will focus only on the results of the ELA exam.

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**Table 8: PreK8 vs. MS: ELA Proficiency in 2009 by Ethnicity**

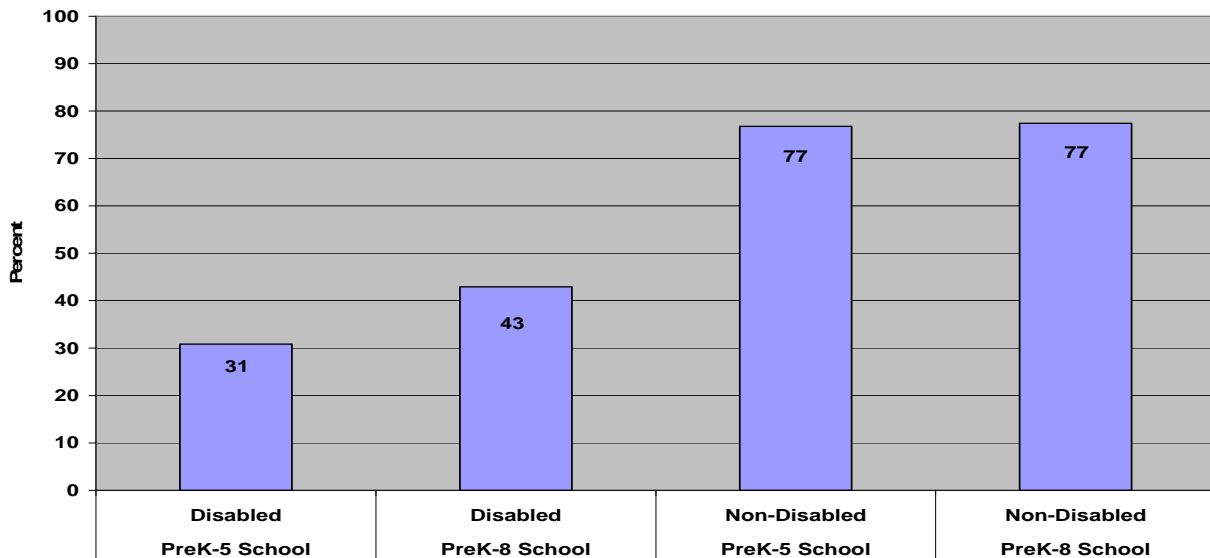


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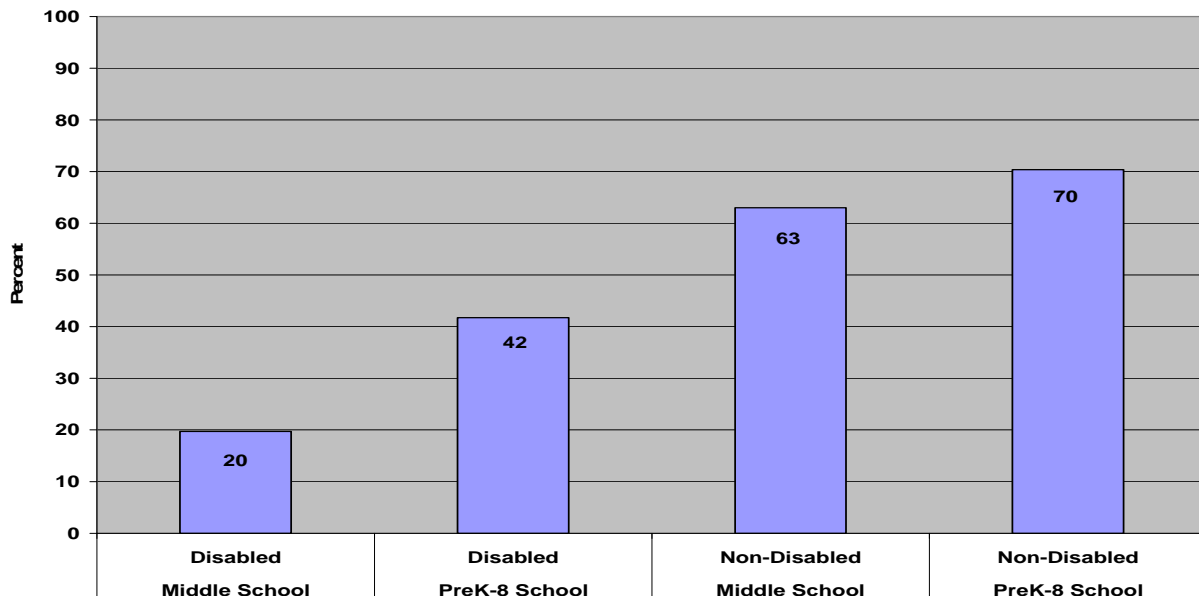
### Disability Status

For students with disabilities, attending a PreK8 school rather than a PreK5 or Middle School is associated with achieving proficiency on the ELA exam. In grades 3-5, students with disabilities at PreK8 schools outperformed their counterparts at PreK5 schools by 12% (Table 9); students with disabilities in grades 6-8 at PreK8 schools outperformed their Middle school counterparts by 22% (Table 10). For non-disabled students the PreK8 advantage is non-existent at the lower grade levels yet substantial at the higher grades. In grades 6-8, non-disabled students at PreK8 schools outperformed their middle school counterparts by 7%.

**Table 9: PreK5 vs. PreK8: ELA Proficiency in 2009 by Disability Status**



**Table 10: PreK8 vs. MS: ELA Proficiency in 2009 by Disability Status**

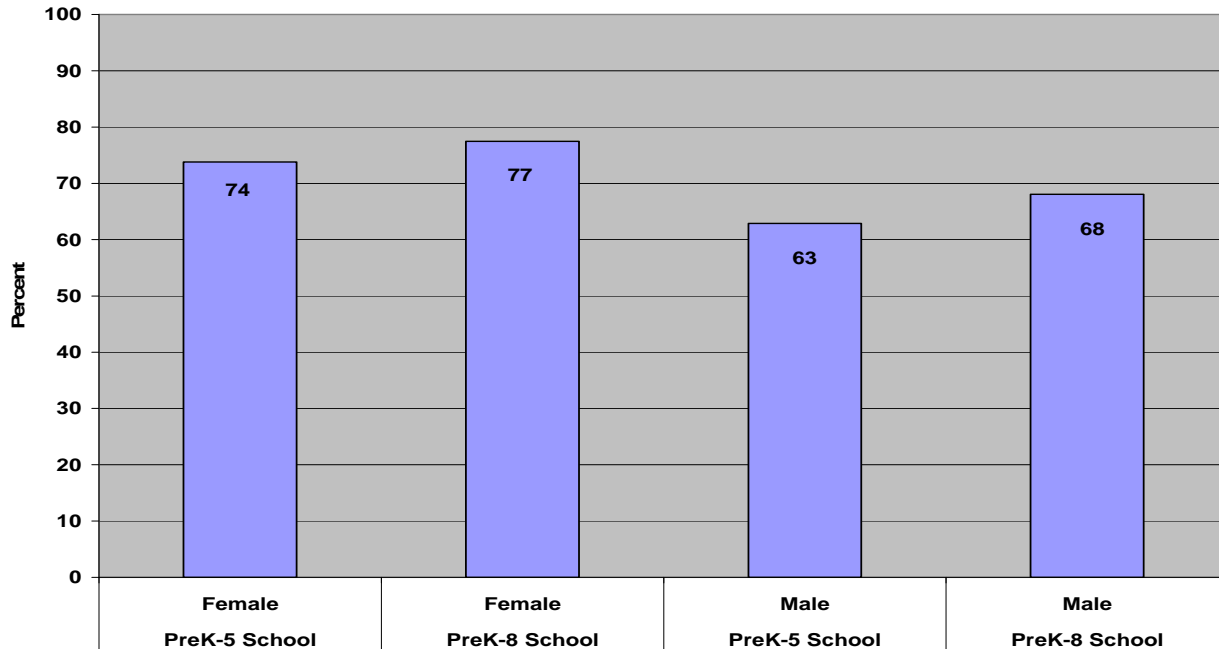


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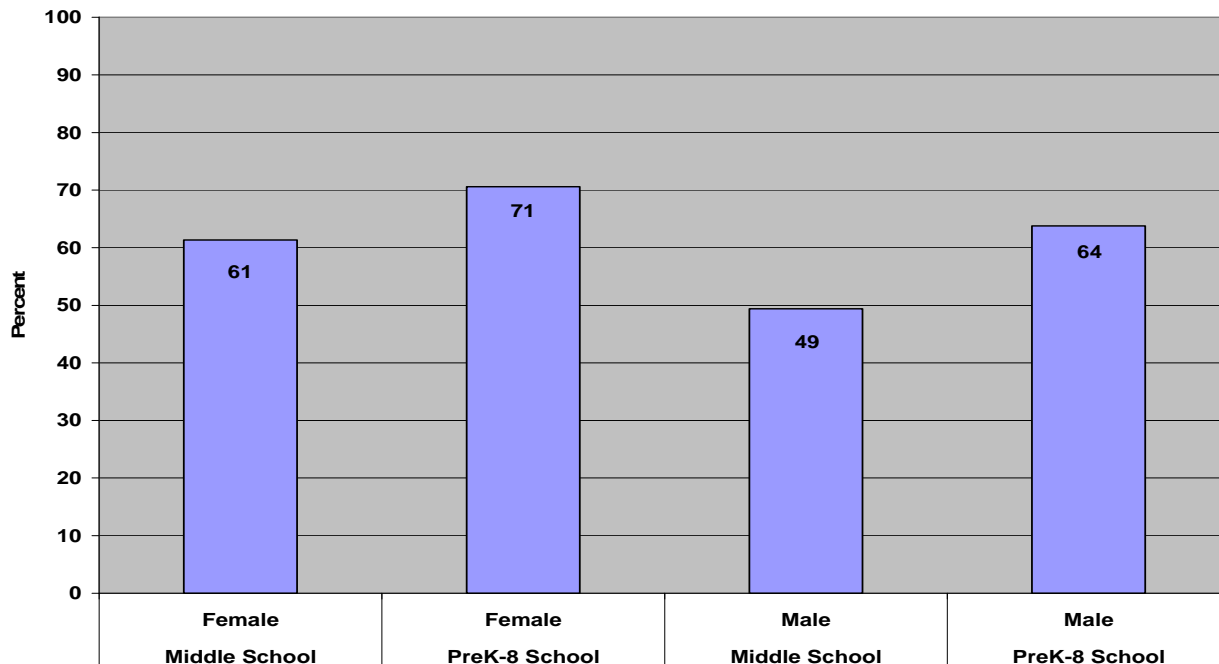
### Gender

The PreK8 advantage persists with males and females in all grades. Specifically, females in PreK8 schools outperformed their grade level counterparts at PreK5 schools by 3% and at middle schools by 10%. Similar results were found for male students. Males in PreK8 schools outperformed their counterparts at PreK5 schools by 5% and at middle schools by 15%.

**Table 11: PreK5 vs. PreK8: ELA Proficiency in 2009 by Gender**



**Table 12: PreK8 vs. MS: ELA Proficiency in 2009 by Gender**

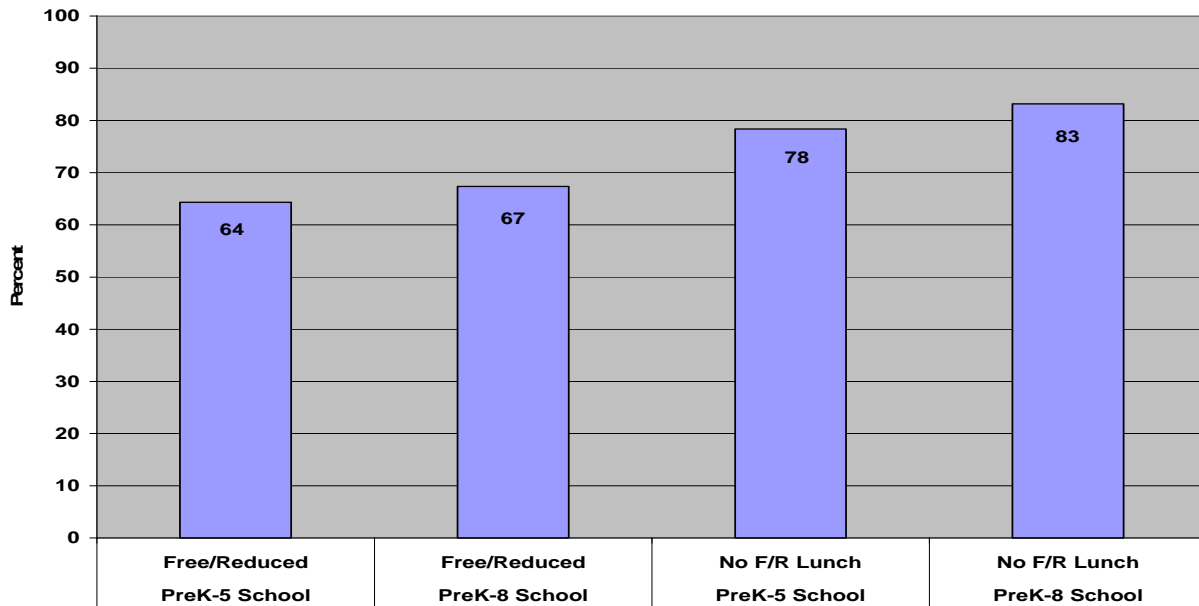


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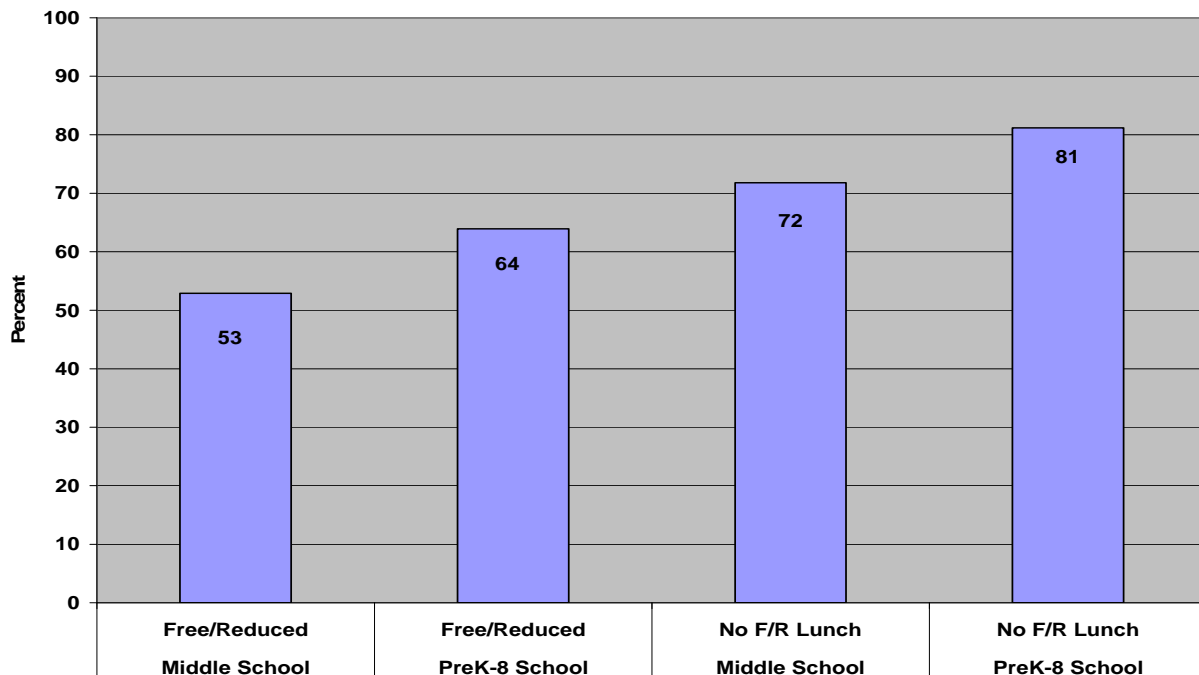
**Free or Reduced Lunch**

For students with Free/Reduced Lunch Status (FRLS), attending a PreK8 school rather than a PreK5 or Middle School is associated with achieving proficiency on the ELA exam. For students with FRLS, the PreK8 advantage is small at the lower grade levels, 3%, but more than triples in grades 6-8, 11%. A similar trend exists for students without FRLS; 5% more students are proficient when compared to PreK5 schools and 9% more when compared to middle schools.

**Table 13: PreK5 vs. PreK8: ELA Proficiency in 2009 by Free/Reduced Lunch Status**



**Table 14: PreK8 vs. MS: ELA Proficiency in 2009 by Free/Reduced Lunch Status**



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### Summary

Students who attend PreK8 schools have less absences and higher achievement on the 2009 ELA and math exams than students who attend PreK5 schools and middle schools. Moreover, this superior ELA and math achievement extend to most subgroups examined.

Even though no causal relationship is established between school type and student performance, such consistent results suggests that the PreK8 school model offers students advantages that may not exist at Perk-5 and middle schools. Moreover, these advantages tend to be greatest for those student groups that struggle the most.



Yonkers Public Schools is the fourth largest school district in New York State, located in the lower Hudson Valley, immediately north of New York City.

Since its inception in 1881, Yonkers Public Schools has changed in many ways, but remains steadfastly committed to challenging the city's youth to aspire to their highest potential, and to inspire a life-long love of learning.

Today a vibrant learning community of 25,000 students from 109 cultures, backgrounds and nationalities in grades prekindergarten through 12 is challenged by a rigorous core curriculum and innovative programs in 39 schools throughout the City of Yonkers. Students participate in learning opportunities in the classroom, on the stage, on the playing field and with colleges and universities, museums and cultural institutions, major corporations and local businesses, as well as non-profit and community groups, and government agencies.

As the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest employer in Westchester County, Yonkers Public Schools' diverse workforce of 4,000 educators and support staff enthusiastically shares the district's mission to empower all students to take their place in the world as knowledgeable, competent, responsible citizens.

Well-known for its award winning magnet programs, Yonkers is a complete district of choice through a controlled school choice plan, one of the few such models in New York State. Yonkers Public Schools offers students and families a wide range of educational options including:

- 4 International Baccalaureate Programmes crossing all grade levels
- 3 Montessori schools for grades prekindergarten through 8
- 15 traditional elementary schools, each with a unique magnet program
- 11 schools with grades prekindergarten through 8, each with a unique magnet program
- 1 dedicated academically talented program for grades prekindergarten through 8
- 1 College Board Preparatory Academy for grades 6 through 12
- 6 comprehensive high schools, each with unique magnet programs
- Twilight high school credit recovery program
- Integrated adult, early childhood and parent education center
- Adult education and job training

### **Who are the Yonkers Public Schools?**

- Student population is 25% Black, 24% White & Other, and 51% Hispanic
- 73% of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch
- 16% of the students are English Language Learners
- 16% of the students receive Special Education services
- 1,400 graduates of the Class of 2009 earned over \$30 million in scholarships
- 99.6% of the teachers are highly qualified according to New York State Education Department
- Yonkers High School ranked #1 in Westchester County and 37th in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report's* Top High Schools. Saunders Trades & Technical High School ranked among the top 1,500 high schools, further complementing the school's national Blue Ribbon and New American High School rankings.



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