

ROCHESTER SCHOOLS LAST IN U.S. IN GROWTH

Schools

STUDY

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Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

A novel, large-scale study from Stanford University shows Rochester- area primary schools are dead last among the 200 largest cities in the country for academic growth.

The study, from Stanford’s Center for Education Policy Analysis, examines standardized test score results for all Rochester children and reports the apparent progress by cohort year — that is, how much more 2017 eighth-graders know compared to 2016 seventh-graders.

According to the study, students in Rochester, including district and charter schools together, progressed 2.9 grade levels in five years from third grade to eighth grade, the worst mark among the 200 largest cities in the U.S.

The data also shows Rochester as one of the poorest in the country, but finds

little correlation between poverty and growth. It does find a correlation between poverty and thirdgrade achievement, the starting point of the analysis.

There as well, Rochester is among the worst-achieving cities in the

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country.

The study, compiled by researcher Sean Reardon using test results from more than 45 million students over six years, diverges from past work in a few interesting ways. It finds that some poor urban districts, notably Chicago, in fact out-perform wealthier districts in term of growth.

The data in the report shows that students in Chicago gained an average of six grade levels in five years —

While Rochester ranks as worst in the nation among large districts, at least two smaller districts in New York — Hempstead and Mount Vernon — are worse, according to the findings.

The study comes with several notable caveats. The lack of correlation between early achievement and growth over five years, Reardon writes, indicates that “measures of average test scores are likely very poor measures of school effectiveness.”

The cohorts he measures do not track individual students, only grade levels. Cities with a great deal of student mobility, then, would likely suffer in comparison to more stable ones.

The Rochester City School District’s woes on state testing are well documented. Kodak Park School 41 was recently ordered into state receivership as a result

equal to the growth in Pittsford schools, and better than every other Monroe County school district.

Still, the surprising growth achieved by some urban districts was not enough to make up for the initial gap in third grade. Students in even the highestperforming poor districts never managed to reach the levels of students in wealthier ones.

According to the data, students in five other Monroe County districts did not make five years' progress in five years: East and West Irondequoit, East Rochester, Greece and Wheatland-Chili.

of poor student performance on the tests. By comparison, many of the city's charter schools have achieved strikingly higher results.

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