

Uncommon Schools

EXCELLENCE NORTH STAR COLLEGIATE TRUE NORTH PREPARATORY

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PRESS RELEASE

EXCELLENCE CHARTER SCHOOL RANKED TOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN NEW YORK CITY Uncommon Schools Posts Outstanding Results

September 17, 2008. *Brooklyn, New York.* Excellence Charter School is the highest ranking public elementary school in New York City based on the recently released New York City Department of Education Progress Reports. Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School, which like Excellence is part of the Uncommon Schools network, is one of the ten highest-ranked middle schools in the city. The New York City Progress Report is an accountability tool implemented by the Department of Education in 2007 to grade schools based on four areas: school environment, student academic performance, student progress, and success in closing the achievement gap.

Excellence Charter School is an all-boys school where 98% of the student body is African-American. Founded in 2004, the school was one of the highest performers on the 2008 New York State exams. 100% of Excellence's 3rd and 4th grade students scored advanced or proficient on the 2008 New York State Math exam, with two-thirds of the school's 4th graders scoring "advanced." Meanwhile, 97% of the 4th graders and 90% of the 3rd graders scored advanced or proficient on the English Language Arts test.

The mission of both Excellence and Williamsburg Collegiate is to prepare each student for college. Founding Excellence Principal Jabali Sawicki celebrated the announcement. Sawicki noted that, "The school welcomes the high level of accountability and is eager to be held to the same standard as every other public school in New York City. And as much as we believe that we are doing well and providing students with an exceptional, college-preparatory public education, it is meaningful to have this outside confirmation."

Excellence and Williamsburg Collegiate are among the eleven schools in the nonprofit Uncommon Schools network. Uncommon Schools CEO Evan Rudall notes that, "At a time when we are preparing to open and grow more schools in New York City, these results demonstrate that we are effectively closing the achievement gap and providing students with rigorous academic programs to prepare them for success in college and beyond."

On the 2008 New York Math and English/Language Arts exams, Uncommon Schools' 480 students in grades three through eight – 99% of whom are Black and Latino – collectively closed the "achievement gap," outperforming the state's White students. Across four schools, 96% of Uncommon's Black and Latino students in grades 3-8 scored advanced or proficient on the Math exam, besting the overall State average by 15 percentage points and the White student average by eight percentage points. On the ELA exam, 80% of Uncommon's Black and Latino students

scored advanced or proficient, topping the State average by 11 points and the New York State White students by one percentage point.

All schools across the Uncommon network consistently outperform their neighboring district schools and rank among the top schools in their cities and states. The schools share common elements proven to be successful in preparing urban students for academic and college success: a highly structured learning environment, a longer school day and a longer school year, standards-based instructional models, and proven curricula that are data-driven and informed by ongoing assessments.

Uncommon Schools is a nonprofit organization that starts and manages outstanding urban charter public schools that close the achievement gap and prepare low-income students to graduate from college. Uncommon builds uncommonly great schools by developing and managing regional networks that are philosophically aligned and highly accountable. Based in New York City, the organization has created a home office from which it provides management services that allow school leaders to focus on instructional leadership. Uncommon manages eleven schools in New York City, upstate New York, and Newark, New Jersey and has two associate member schools in Boston, Massachusetts. The organization will grow to include nearly 30 schools serving 8,000 students within five years and ultimately will encompass more than 30 schools, serving more than 11,000 K to 12th grade students. For more information, please visit <http://www.uncommonschools.org>.

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If you would like additional information on this topic, or to schedule an interview with Excellence Charter School Founding Principal Jabali Sawicki or Uncommon Schools CEO Evan Rudall, please contact Megan C. Zug at 617-645-4063 or by email at mzug@uncommonschools.org.