

Uncommon Schools

EXCELLENCE NORTH STAR COLLEGIATE TRUE NORTH PREPARATORY

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PRESS RELEASE

UNCOMMON SCHOOLS CLOSES ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN 2008 Uncommon New York Students Ace New York State Math and Reading Tests

June 25, 2008. New York, New York. On the 2008 New York Math and English/Language Arts exams, Uncommon Schools' 480 students, grades three through eight – 99% of whom are Black and Latino – collectively closed the “achievement gap,” out-performing the state’s White students. The ELA exam was administered in January, the Math exam in March, and the scores were released this week.

Across four schools, 96% of Uncommon’s Black and Latino students, 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.

The release of the 2008 New York State Math and English Language Arts exam results yesterday highlights the exceptional performance of Uncommon’s four campuses – three in Brooklyn and one in Rochester.

- **Excellence Charter School** in Brooklyn, an all-boys school where 98% of the student body is African-American, was one of the highest performers on the state exams. 100% of the 3rd and 4th grade students scored advanced or proficient on the 2008 New York State Math exam, with 2/3 of its 4th graders scoring “advanced.” Meanwhile, 97% of the 4th graders and 90% of the 3rd graders scored proficient or advanced proficient on the ELA test. Whereas girls across New York State outscored boys by 6-7% on the 3rd and 4th grade ELA tests last year, Excellence all-male scholars are closing the gender gap, too.
- **Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School** in Brooklyn, where 81% of the student body is low-income, ranked as the number one public school in New York City according to this year’s NYC Department of Education progress reports. 100% of its 7th graders scored advanced or proficient on the 2008 New York State Math exam, compared to 79% statewide and 69% across New York City. This same cohort posted a 92% rate of advanced or proficient performance on the 2008 New York State 7th grade ELA exam.
- At **True North Rochester Preparatory Charter School** in Rochester, where 79% of the student body is low-income, 98% of 6th graders scored advanced or proficient on the 2008 New York State Math exam, compared to 79% statewide and 56% across Rochester district schools. These results mark Rochester Prep as the top performing public school in Monroe County (which includes Rochester and surrounding suburbs) on that exam, even while its

students are eight to ten times more likely to live in poverty than students in top performing suburban schools.

- At **Kings Collegiate Charter School** in the Brownsville/East Flatbush section of Brooklyn, in its very first year of operation, 91% of 5th graders scored advanced or proficient on the 2008 New York State Math exam, compared to 83% statewide and 79% across New York City.

Uncommon's other New York City charter school, Leadership Prep, which has students in grades K-2, will be tested for the first time in 2009. The school's initial reading assessments and national tests show very strong student achievement gains. In August 2008, Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate, the newest member of the Collegiate network, will open its doors to 81 fifth graders.

"At a time when we are preparing to open and grow more schools in New York City and upstate New York, these results demonstrate that our students can achieve at the same level as their more affluent peers," said Norman Atkins, CEO of Uncommon Schools. "By closing the achievement gap between black and white, rich and poor, our students are changing our cities and fulfilling the promise of our nation."

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 charter management organization that starts and manages among the most outstanding urban college preparatory charter schools working to close the achievement gap in the Northeast. 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 nine 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 Uncommon Schools CEO Norman Atkins, please contact Megan C. Zug at 617-645-4063 or by email at mzug@uncommonschools.org.