



“The State of Learning” In New York: An Annual Snapshot with Comparisons of Select Counties Around the State

(Key Findings from the 2003 State of Learning “655 Reports” issued by the Regents and the State Education Department)

INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes key findings of the 2003 *State of Learning*, generally known as the “655 reports,” issued annually by the Regents and the State Education Department. This document is organized as follows:

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“Throughout this report...we document a dismaying alignment of disadvantaged students (disproportionately children of color), schools with the poorest educational resources (fiscal and human), and substandard achievement. Conversely, we find that those schools that serve the fewest at-risk children have the greatest financial resources, teachers with the best credentials, and the highest level of achievements. Perhaps the sharpest contrasts exist between public schools in New York City and those in districts (most suburban) with low percentages of students in poverty and high levels of income and property wealth.”

-*State of Learning*, July 2003

The State Obligation to Educate

• The New York State Constitution mandates that the state “provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated.” The Court of Appeals, New York’s highest court, has elaborated that this requires the state to provide the opportunity for a “sound basic education,” specifically a “meaningful high school education,” to all students.

New York State Constitution (Article XI)

“...the legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated.”

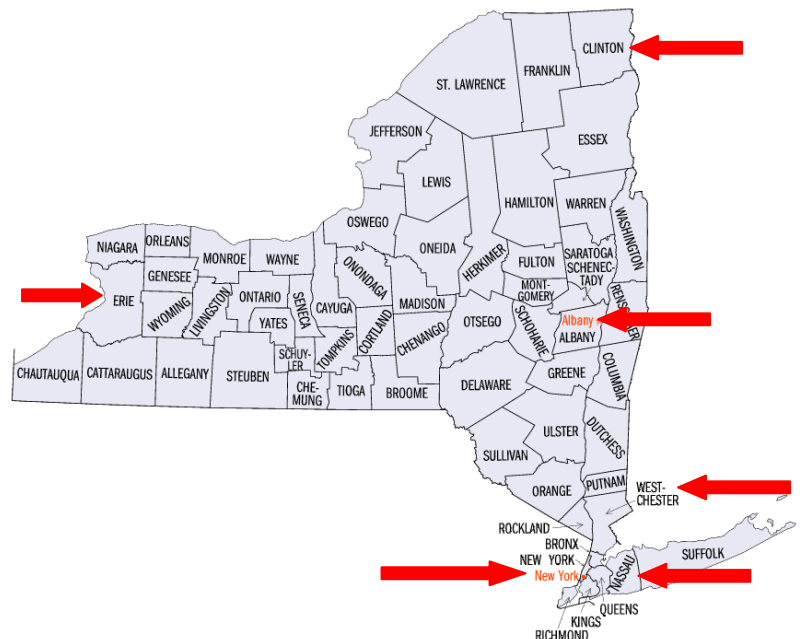
New York Court of Appeals Rulings

-1995: the state must offer all children “the opportunity for a sound basic education” namely “the basic literacy, calculating, and verbal skills necessary to enable children to eventually function productively as civic participants capable of voting and serving on a jury.”

-2003: the state Constitutional requirement for a sound basic education, means specifically “the opportunity for a meaningful high school education.”

State County Comparison

• New York State has 62 counties. Since each has different local resources and faces unique challenges, this document compares New York City and 5 counties statewide - Albany, Clinton, Erie, Nassau, and Westchester - to illustrate some of the key findings reported in the 2003 *State of Learning*. Although these six do not represent every county, they cover the state geographically - urban, suburban and rural areas, and three of the Big 5 districts, namely Buffalo (Erie), New York City, and Yonkers (Westchester). They also represent a broad spectrum in terms of local wealth, enrollment, and student need.





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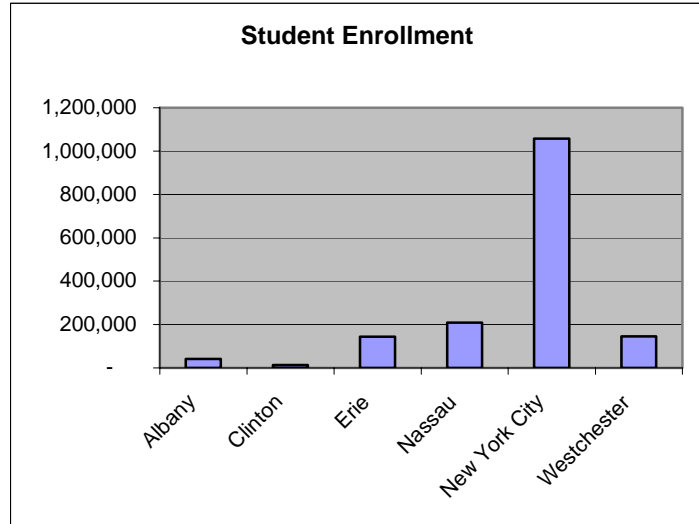
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OVERVIEW

Enrollment

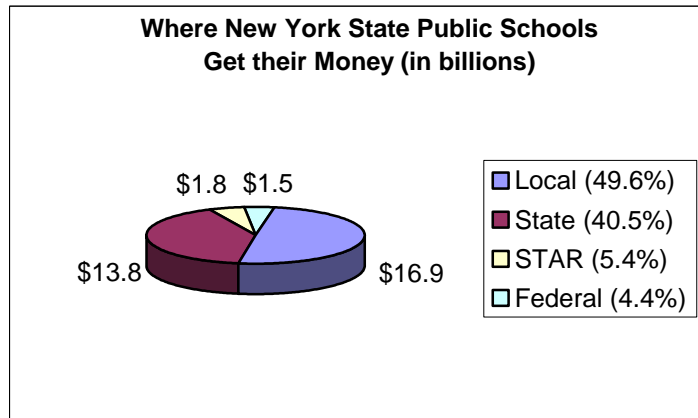
- There are 2.84 million students in New York State’s public schools, accounting for 85% of all school children in the state. New York City, the largest of the state’s 700 school districts, and the country’s largest district as well, serves 1.057 million children, more than a third of the state’s public school students.

- Although there are 25 other school districts with over 9,000 students (e.g. Buffalo - 44,849; Rochester - 36,235; Yonkers - 26,447; Syracuse - 22,796), the typical district – including more than 540 of the state’s 700 districts - has fewer than 3,000 students.



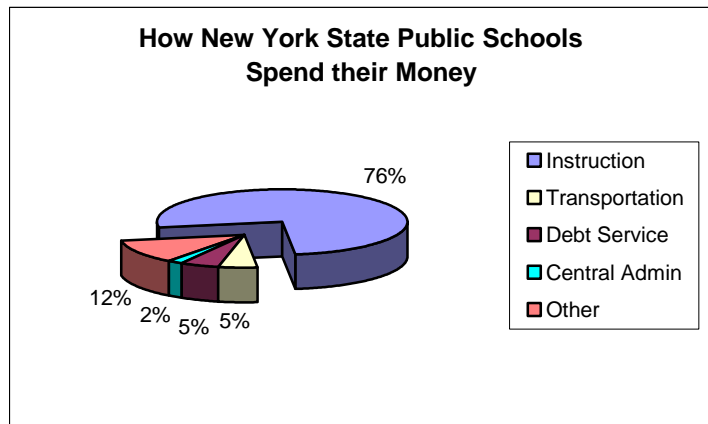
Where the Money Comes From

- Of the more than \$34 billion in 2000-01 school district revenues, districts provided approximately 49.6%, the State 40.5%, and the federal government 4.4%. 5.4% came from School Tax Relief (STAR).



Where the Money Goes

- The average district spends the majority of its money – 76% - on instruction and only 2% on central administration. 5% goes to transportation, 5% to debt service, and 12% to other categories. New York City spends its money similarly, except that it spends more on instruction, 80%, and less on debt service, 3%, and other categories, 10%.





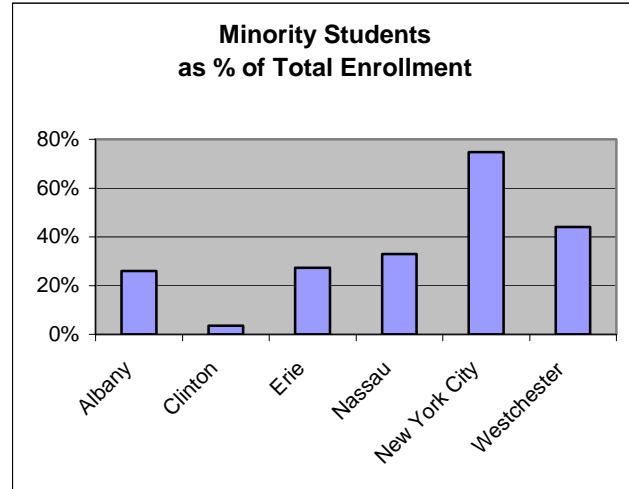
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STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

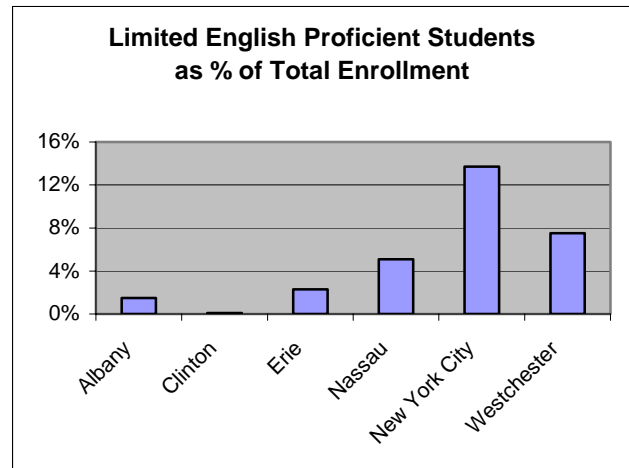
Minority Students

- Statewide, minority students comprise 45% of total public school enrollment. However, minority students are not enrolled uniformly in districts around the state. Whereas average and low need districts have 14% minority enrollment, high need urban/suburban districts have 51% minority enrollment, and large city districts 75%. Although New York City accounts for 37% of the state’s public school students, it educates 69% of the state’s 1.3 million minority students, including 75% of all Hispanic public school students in New York State, 73% of all Asians, and 63% of all African Americans.



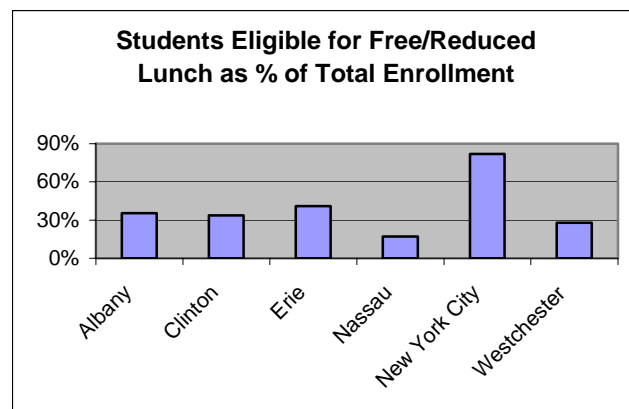
Limited English Proficient Students

- Statewide, limited English proficient (LEP) students comprise 6.8% of total public school enrollment. However, LEP students are not enrolled uniformly in districts around the state. Whereas average and low need districts have 1.9% and 2.3% LEP enrollment respectively, high need urban/suburban districts have 6.9%, and large city districts 8%. New York City, with 13.7% LEP enrollment, educates 73% of the students in the state who have limited English proficiency. Forty-four of the state’s 62 counties have fewer than 2% LEP students.



Impoverished Students

- Statewide, 50% of public school students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. In average and low need districts fewer are eligible for free/reduced lunch, 23% and 5% respectively, compared to 46% in high need rural districts, 64% in high need urban/suburban districts, and 79% in large city districts. In New York City 82% are eligible.





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EXPENDITURES

Expenditure Disparities

• The statewide average expenditure per pupil in 2000-01 was \$11,584. Some districts, however, spent much more or much less. Those districts with the greatest financial resources, tended to be the schools that serve the fewest at-risk children. Conversely, those schools serving the most disadvantaged students were disproportionately those with the poorest educational resources. The result of local fiscal constraints and unfair state funding formulas was that expenditure was often insufficient for meeting the needs of students.

Average Per Pupil Expenditures

- \$13,810 • Low Needs District
- \$12,634 • Large City Districts
- \$12,129 • High Need Urban/Suburban Districts
- \$11,584 • State Average
- \$11,474 • New York City
- \$11,470 • Average Needs District
- \$11,176 • High Need Rural Districts

Disparities in Every County

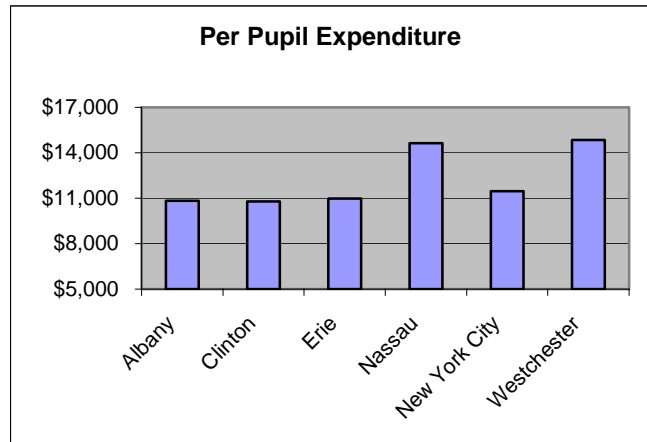
• Since most of the state’s schools obtain local funding through property taxes, school districts with high property wealth can often invest more per pupil than those with lower property wealth. The result is that within each of the state’s 62 counties there are districts that spend more and some that spend less per pupil. In more than half of the state’s counties the district that spends the least per pupil has \$3,000 to \$7,000 less per pupil than the district in the county that spends the most. In seven counties around the state, one district spent at least twice as much per pupil than another in the same county.

Expenditure Disparities Within Counties

County	Low	High
Albany County	\$8,215	\$12,589
Clinton County	\$9,464	\$11,964
Erie County	\$9,107	\$14,359
Nassau County	\$9,599	\$22,348
Westchester County	\$12,420	\$24,898

New York City Expenditure

• Despite the high needs of its students and high local costs, New York City expenditure per pupil, \$11,474, was just below the state average. This expenditure is also low compared with low needs districts statewide, which spent an average of \$13,810 per pupil, and the average downstate suburb, which spent \$13,680 per pupil.





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INPUTS

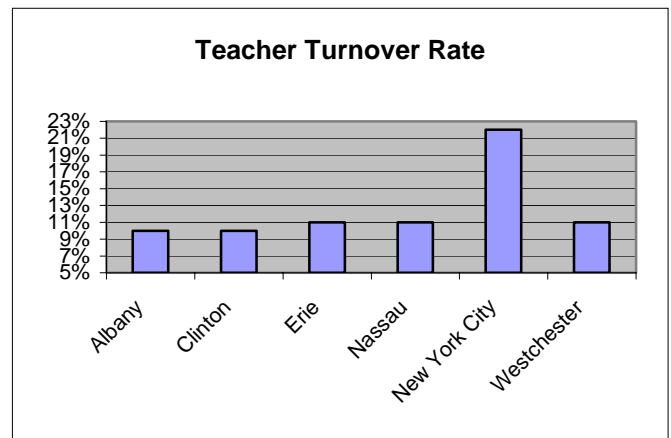
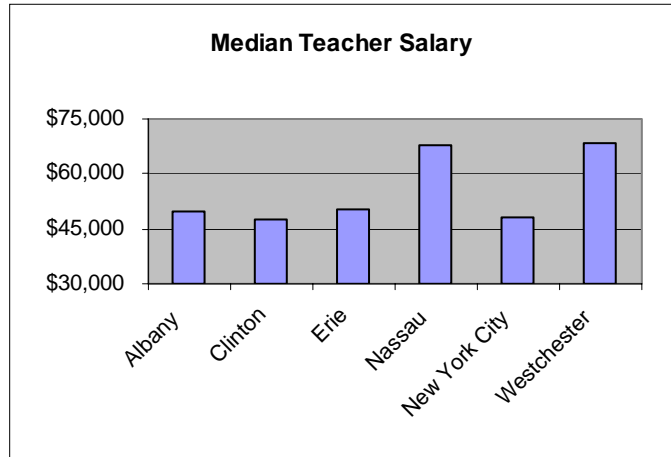
Teachers

- Students who attend schools in low need districts in New York State have the best-paid teachers, who are, on average, more likely to be certified and less likely to leave their job than teachers in average and high need districts.

- Statewide, average teacher salary was \$51,020, but low need districts paid their teachers \$62,736 on average, compared to \$53,245 in high need urban/suburban areas, and \$49,786 in large city districts. Median salary in New York City was \$48,152 and averaged \$43,159 in high need rural districts.

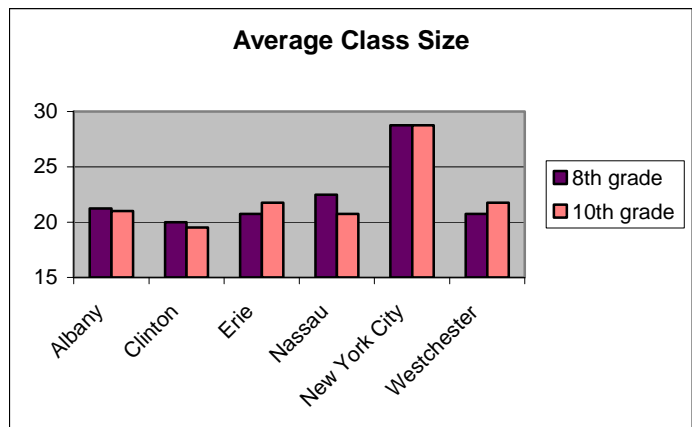
- Around the state – whether in average, low, or even high need rural and urban/suburban districts – teacher turnover rate was 11%. In large city districts, teacher turnover rate was 13% and in New York City it was 22%.

- Statewide, 87% of teachers have either permanent or provisional certification. However, whereas 96% of teachers in low and average needs districts have permanent or provisional certification (95% in high need rural districts and 94% in high need urban/suburban districts), only 85% are certified in large city districts and only 71% in New York City.



Class Size

- In 8th and 10th grade classes - including math, English, science, and social studies – high need rural districts averaged 18-20 students per class, high need urban/suburban districts 21-22 students, and New York City 28-29. Other large city districts averaged 22-24 students per class. On average, New York City elementary classes had four more students and secondary classes seven more students than classes outside the Big 5 in 2001-2002.





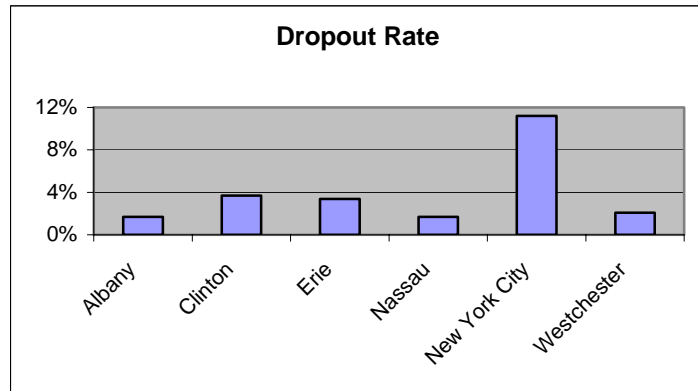
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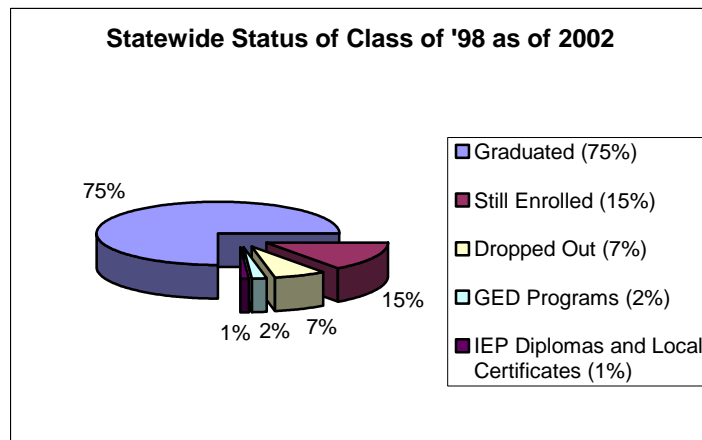
Dropout Rates

• In 2001-02, the statewide public school dropout rate was 5.7%. In low and average needs districts the dropout rate was much lower, 1.1% and 2% respectively. Large city districts had 5.3% of their students drop out, compared to 5% in high need urban/suburban districts and 3.2% in high need rural districts. New York City’s dropout rate was 11.2%.



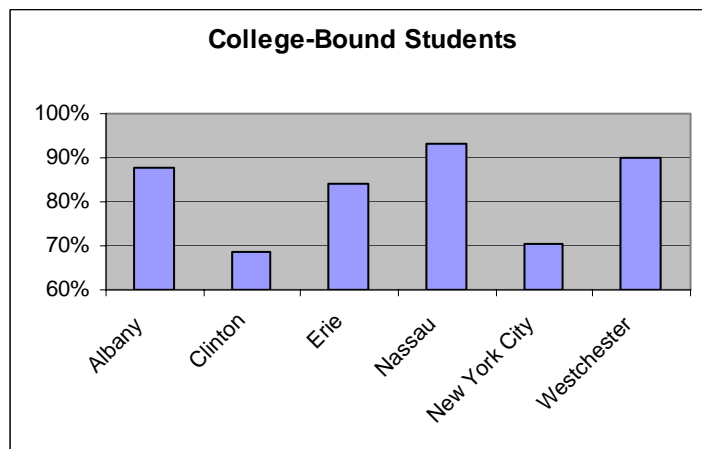
Graduation Rates

• In 2002, 75% of public school students in New York State received their diploma on time, while 15% were still enrolled behind grade level. The rest dropped out or transferred to GED. In New York City only 53% received their diplomas on time, and 29% were still enrolled behind grade level. Graduation rates for students with disabilities were also significantly lower in New York City (25%) compared to the rest of the state (55%).



College-Bound Students

• Low needs districts have consistently sent 93% of their students to college over the last three years, whereas high need rural, suburban, and urban districts have sent approximately 75%. New York City has just raised the percentage of its college-going population to 71% from previous rates of 64% in 2000 and 59% in 1999.





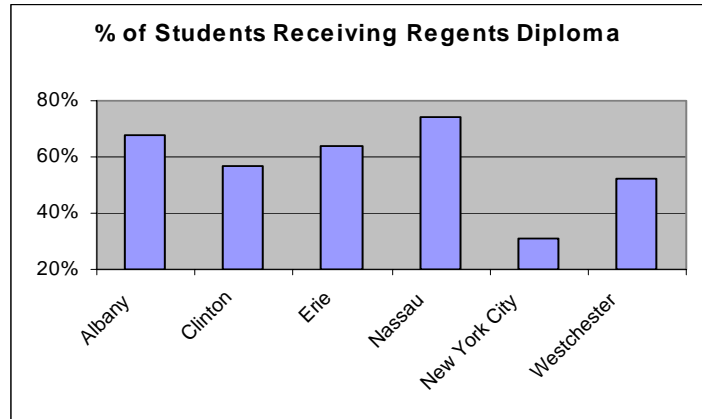
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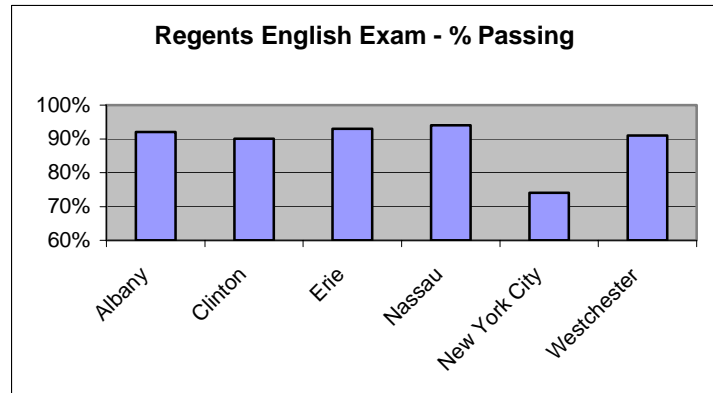
Regents Diplomas

- In 2001-02, 55% of the state’s high school graduates earned a Regents diploma. However, in many high-needs districts, which lack the resources to meet their students’ special needs, far fewer students earned these diplomas (Albany-37%; Buffalo-32%; Schenectady-32%; Syracuse-44%; Yonkers-24%). 74% of students in low need districts received a Regents diploma, compared to 57% of students in high need rural districts, 47% in high need urban/suburban districts, 31% in New York City, and only 28% in large city districts.



Regents Examinations

- In addition to fulfilling state and district course requirements, every student must pass five Regents examinations - in English, math, science, and two in social studies – in order to graduate, as mandated by the state’s Board of Regents. Students in New York City and other high needs districts consistently pass the Regents exams at lower levels than their counterparts elsewhere around the state.



- On the Regents English exam, statewide 87% of students passed, however 97% passed in low needs districts compared to 85% in high need urban/suburban districts, 82% in large city districts, and 75% in New York City.

- On the Regents math exams, more than 80% of students in low need districts passed, whereas only approximately 70% passed in high need rural districts, 60% in high need urban/suburban districts, and 50% in New York City.

