

CEI SERVICES FACILITATE LEARNING GAINS IN LOW-PERFORMING NYC SCHOOLS

A Three-Year Trend Analysis

Introduction

While we now know that it is possible to turn around low-performing public schools, the critical question becomes: how? Because schools are complex organizations composed of many different people and constituencies, turning them around is no easy task. It requires significantly changing the expectations, beliefs and practices of many diverse individuals, even though people are often resistant to having to make major changes, as well as changing collective systems, structures and cultures.

Fortunately, research and experience have shown that successful turn-arounds share a number of common strategies¹: leadership development; instructional improvement; challenging curriculum; positive learning

climate; and parent engagement. Although there are many different ways that these

strategic elements might be supported and enhanced, the Center for Educational Innovation (CEI) has developed an approach that evidence suggests is making a substantial difference: *bring the very best talent in these key areas into the school to provide focused and sustained training and support to the staff.*

“There’s no doubt in my mind that one of the primary reasons our school has dramatically improved its level of student achievement is the support and assistance provided by CEI.”

*Dr. Reginald Landeau, Jr.
NYC Middle
School Principal*

CEI Professional Services:

- Leadership
- Struggling Schools
- Comprehensive Data Analysis
- Pre-Kindergarten and Early Childhood
- College and Career Readiness
- Students with Disabilities
- English Language Learners
- Instructional Technology and Technical Support
- Attendance Improvement and Youth Development
- Family Engagement

CEI: A Brief History

The Center for Educational Innovation (CEI) is a non-profit education organization, and for over four decades, a recognized leader in advancing meaningful reforms in public schools, particularly low-performing schools. CEI provides customized, hands-on support to principals, teachers, parents and staff to help them meet the unique needs of their students. CEI partners with schools to undertake the demanding work of the design, development, and implementation of effective and innovative practices.

The Center was founded to advance quality public education in New York City and other communities across the United States, with the goal of making a difference in the lives of students. To underscore

this point, CEI contracted with Measurement Incorporated to study the impact of its services on key school outcomes. The results demonstrate the positive role CEI plays in supporting and enhancing school improve-

¹ Bryk, A.S.; Sebring, P.B.; Allensworth, E.; Luppescu, S.; & Easton, J.Q. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL.

ment as well as student achievement in all types of NYC schools.

Methodology

Measurement Incorporated (MI) conducted a comparative analysis of New York State Assessment data in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA), school attendance data, and scores on the *New York City School Quality Review* for schools identified as receiving CEI school improvement services and a matched set of NYC *peer schools*¹. The time frame for the analysis encompassed three years, from 2012-2013 through 2014-2015, which matches the implementation of the current New York State Learning Standards and related statewide assessments.

Sample: The final database for the analysis consisted of a) 137 schools that had received three years of improvement services from CEI and had data available at all three points in time: 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015; and b) 741 peer schools that had data at all three points. Because there were multiple peer schools for every CEI school, the average peer school score was used in the analyses. Consequently, each CEI school was compared with the average score of approximately 18 peer schools². ***Of particular interest were the comparisons of low-performing schools³ served by CEI with their peer schools.***

Analysis. The metric used in the analysis was the percent of students meeting proficiency. This metric was calculated by adding the number of students scoring at levels 3 and 4, and dividing by the number of students tested. **Gain scores** (Year 3 % proficient – Year 1 % proficient) were then computed for 11 sub-groups of CEI and peer schools:

- All low-performing schools (n=34)
- Priority middle schools (9)
- Focus elementary schools (14)
- All elementary schools (68)
- Focus middle schools (5)
- Focus K-8 schools (6)
- Good-Standing middle schools (35)
- Good-Standing K-8 schools (14)
- All K-8 schools (20)
- Good-Standing elementary schools (54)
- All middle schools (49)

The gains were then disaggregated by the following student subgroups: English Language Learners (ELL), Hispanic students, and Students with Disabilities (SWD).

Of interest was the examination of the **net differences** between CEI and peer schools. In other words, were the changes over time made by CEI schools greater, the same, or less than the changes over time by made by peer schools? The balance of this report provides a series of findings derived from this analysis. Each finding is accompanied by a brief synopsis and a display of the data.

“By using Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching, we were able to focus on the key practices that needed significant improvement in this low performing school. If I was not intimately expert in that framework, little would have changed.”

*Martha Madera,
Director of ELL and
SWD Services*

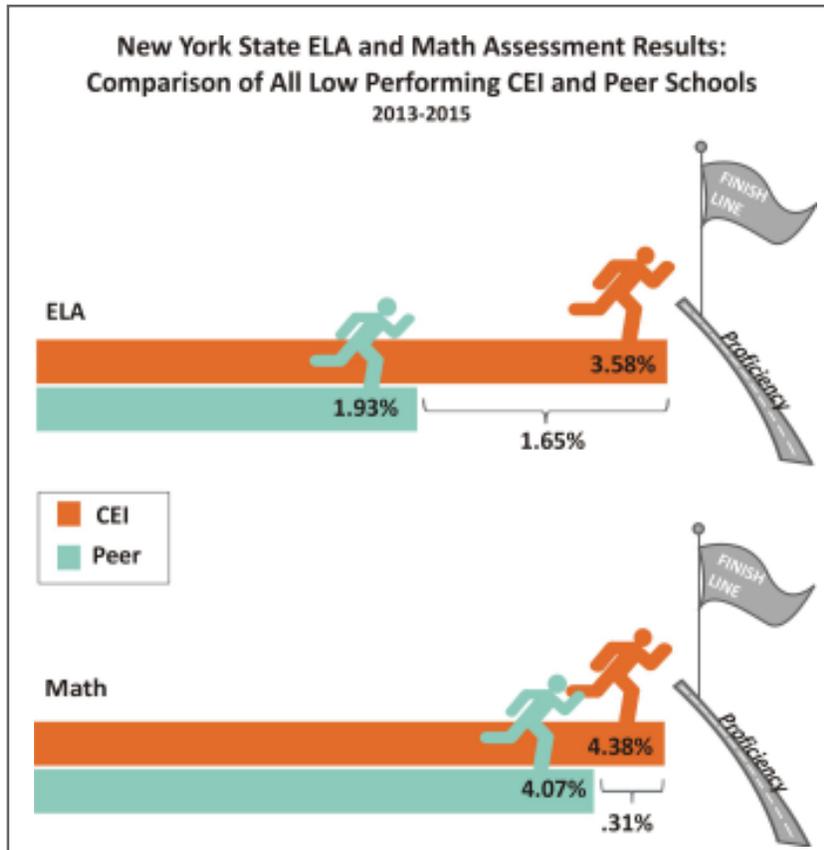
² For each student population characteristic, the mathematical difference between a given school’s result and that of all other potential peers is calculated separately. These differences are combined to create peer groups consisting of schools with the smallest difference on all characteristics.

³ While there were 741 unique peer schools, many times the same peer school was used as a comparison for different CEI schools. As a result, the total number of peer schools used in the analysis was 2,504.

⁴ Schools identified as either in the lowest 5% of schools statewide (i.e., “Priority” Schools) or in the lowest 10% of schools statewide (“Focus” Schools).

Achievement Gains Prevalled Across All Low-Performing Schools Served by CEI

Overall, between 2013 and 2015, the average gain score achieved by all of the different types of low-performing schools served by CEI was greater than the average gain score for low-performing peer schools. Indeed, in the area of ELA, the difference was nearly double.

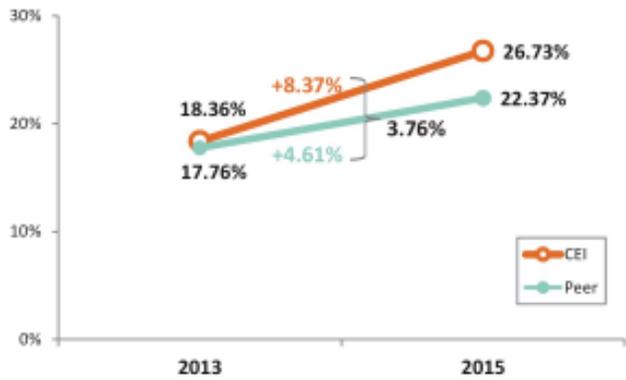


| | CEI | Peer | Net Difference |
|--------|-------|-------|----------------|
| | ELA | | |
| 2013 | 11.96 | 11.54 | |
| 2015 | 15.54 | 13.47 | |
| Change | 3.58 | 1.93 | 1.65 |
| | Math | | |
| 2013 | 11.97 | 11.28 | |
| 2015 | 16.36 | 15.35 | |
| Change | 4.38 | 4.07 | .31 |

CEI Facilitated a Larger Increase in English Language Arts and Math Achievement in Low-Performing NYC Middle Schools

In looking more carefully at the performance of low-performing schools, average gain score differences favoring CEI schools were seen at the middle school level for both ELA and math. In both cases, the trajectory of student achievement is promising and is evidence of ongoing improvement.

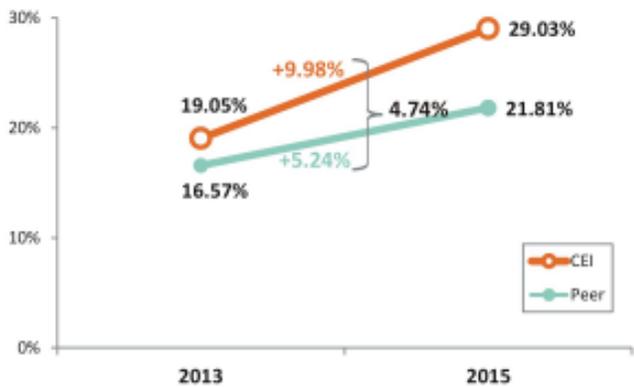
**New York State ELA Assessment Results:
Comparison of CEI and Peer Schools
2013-2015**



“The CEI consultant provided the guidance we needed to prioritize key activities. His support helped us do the work necessary to improve our daily attendance rate from 80% to 96%”

*Eric Sackler
NYC Middle School Principal*

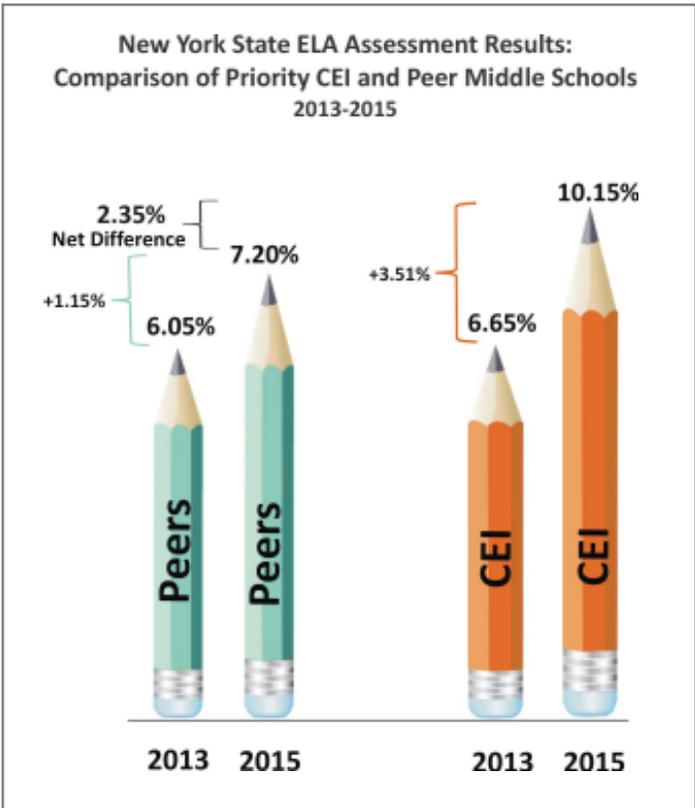
**New York State Math Assessment Results:
Comparison of CEI and Peer Schools
2013-2015**



| | CEI | Peer | Net Difference |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| ELA | | | |
| 2013 | 18.36 | 17.76 | |
| 2015 | 26.73 | 22.37 | |
| Change | 8.37 | 4.61 | 3.76 |
| Math | | | |
| 2013 | 19.05 | 16.57 | |
| 2015 | 29.03 | 21.81 | |
| Change | 9.98 | 5.24 | 4.74 |

CEI promoted greater ELA achievement in NYC’s most persistently struggling schools

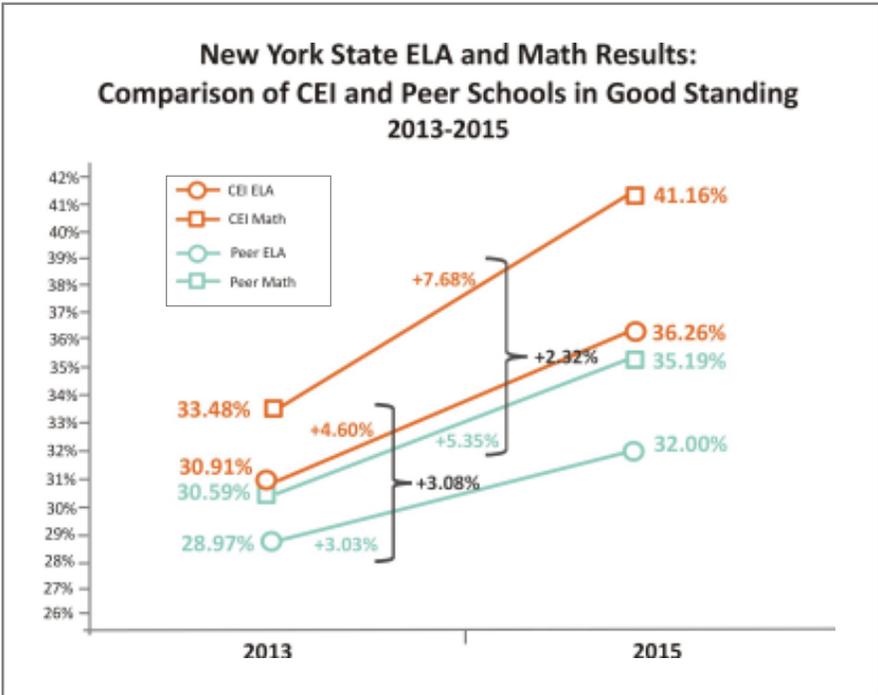
“Priority” New York City middle schools receiving CEI support had, on average, a greater gain score on the NYS ELA Assessment from 2013 to 2015 than peer schools. Moreover, this same result was seen when the data was disaggregated for English Language Learners, Hispanic students, and Students with Disabilities.



| | CEI | Peer | Net Difference |
|--------|-------|------|----------------|
| 2013 | 6.65 | 6.05 | |
| 2015 | 10.15 | 7.20 | |
| Change | 3.51 | 1.15 | 2.35 |

CEI provides highly effective support in all schools, including those that are already performing well

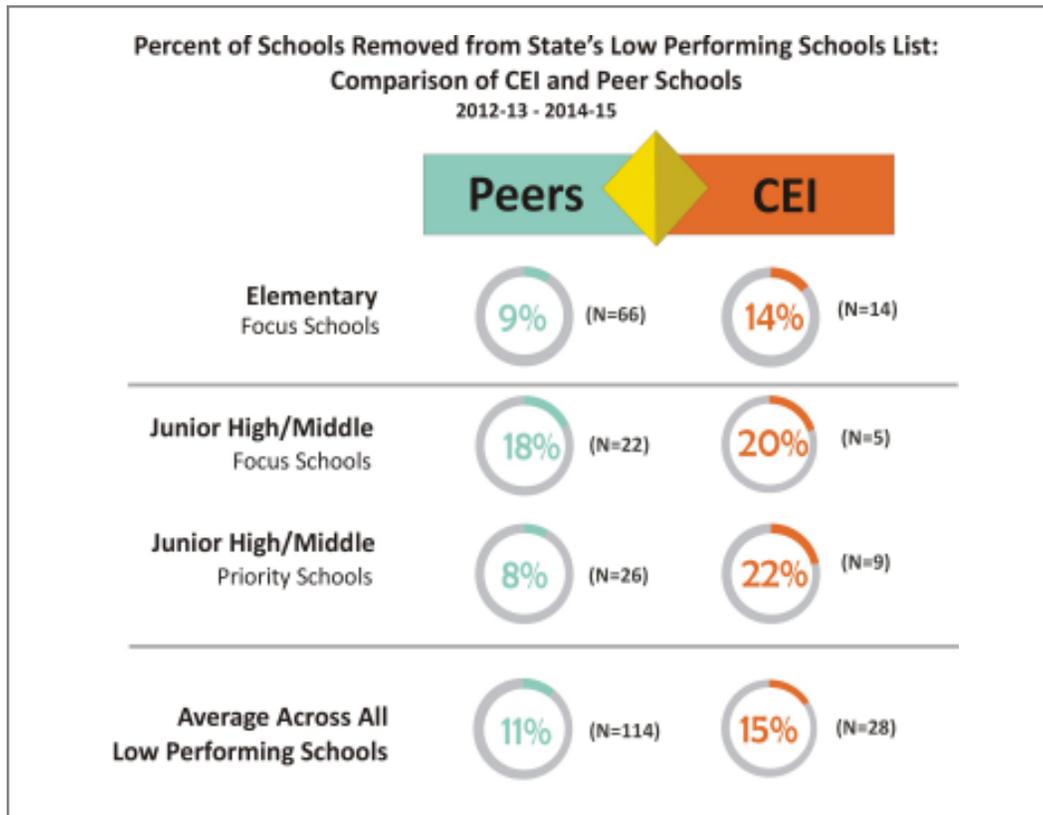
K-8 Schools in Good-Standing receiving CEI support had a greater change in the percentage of students meeting proficiency on the NYS ELA(+2.31) and Math (+3.09) assessments from 2013 to 2015 than peer schools.



| | CEI | Peer | Net Difference |
|-------------|-------|-------|----------------|
| ELA | | | |
| 2013 | 30.91 | 28.97 | |
| 2015 | 36.26 | 32.00 | |
| Change | 5.35 | 3.03 | 2.32 |
| Math | | | |
| 2013 | 33.48 | 30.59 | |
| 2015 | 41.16 | 35.19 | |
| Change | 7.68 | 4.60 | 3.08 |

CEI facilitates schools' removal from the state's low-performing school's list.

An important milestone for a struggling school's journey toward improvement is removal from the state's low-performing schools' list. Many schools use this tangible achievement as a springboard to continue current efforts to reform and improve practice(s) and/or to undertake new ones. Across both school levels (elementary and middle) and school category (Priority and Focus), CEI schools showed a larger percentage of schools progressing off the state's low-performing schools list.



Conclusions

CEI's approach to supporting and empowering low-performing schools has resulted in significant increases in student achievement. Compared to a set of peer schools, achievement is evident in schools that received CEI services and support.

CEI's capacity to bring expert-level, technical assistance specialists to schools is an approach that makes a difference. Amongst a cohort of 137 schools served by CEI, student achievement gains, both in ELA and math, were notably higher than peer schools. The findings provide strong evidence of CEI's positive impact on the school communities.

Measurement Incorporated (MI) is a national assessment, evaluation, and research firm with products and services currently offered in 17 states and 3 Canadian provinces. MI's New York offices assist clients to advance their educational practice through high-quality program evaluation, measurement, and professional development. MI's evaluation division is approved as an evaluation vendor by the *What Works Clearinghouse* of the U.S. Department of Education.