

# Albuquerque kids do better than state average in tests, study shows

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Big-city school districts are proving they can make headway in student achievement and some - including Albuquerque Public Schools - are even closing the gap between racial groups, according to a national study.

Albuquerque is mentioned in the study, released Wednesday, as one of four districts nationwide to report math and reading scores higher than their statewide averages.

"Enough cities are now improving to begin asking why some are not," said the Council of the Great City Schools Executive Director Michael Casserly.

Great City Schools, based in Washington, D.C., is a collaborative of urban districts. The council's study, titled "Beating the Odds II," is the second analysis of its 66 member school districts.

"The data suggests that improvement, however modest, is possible on a relatively large scale - not just school by school," Casserly said.

For the latest study, 57 districts participated, including Albuquerque, which has about 90,000 students.

The study says the biggest achievement gap closure nationally - 78 percent - between white and black students was in fourth-grade reading.

In New Mexico in 2006, both the state and APS reported black children in fourth grade made greater gains in reading than any other group.

But in the council's study, Albuquerque failed to make the distinguished list of districts that narrowed the achievement gap in all grades.

Those districts were Austin, Texas, Charlotte, N.C., Fort Worth and Houston.

APS has called on the council for support and analysis in various areas, including special education, maintenance and operations, technology and legal services. Recently, the district asked the council to review its school police department.