

THE CITY

4th Grade test scores

ASSOCIATED PRESS

How fourth graders in private schools did on the new state English Language Arts test administered for the first time in January.

Also included is the corresponding data on public school student performance.

Level 1 (serious academic deficiencies)

Level 2 (need extra help to meet the standards)

Level 3 (met the new standards)

Level 4 (exceeded the new standards)

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

New York City — 15,823 students

Level 1 — 9.5 percent

Level 2 — 46.8 percent

Level 3 — 40.7 percent

Level 4 — 3.0 percent

Rest of the state — 13,553 students

Level 1 — 2.9 percent

Level 2 — 32.7 percent

Level 3 — 57.7 percent

Level 4 — 6.7 percent

Total — 29,376 students

Level 1 — 6.5 percent

Level 2 — 40.3 percent

Level 3 — 48.6 percent

Level 4 — 4.7 percent

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New York City — 75,426 students

Level 1 — 21.3 percent

Level 2 — 45.9 percent

Level 3 — 29.6 percent

Level 4 — 3.1 percent

Rest of the state — 134,558 students

Level 1 — 5.8 percent

Level 2 — 37.5 percent

Level 3 — 50.5 percent

Level 4 — 6.1 percent

Total — 209,984 students

Level 1 — 11.4 percent

Level 2 — 40.5 percent

Level 3 — 43.0 percent

Level 4 — 5.1 percent

SOURCE: New York State Education Department.

Schools not far apart on reading

Public schools narrowly outscored private schools, but were edged out by Catholic schools

By MARJORIE HACK and DIANE LORE
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Public school fourth-graders on Staten Island narrowly outscored their private school counterparts on the new state-mandated English language arts test administered in January, according to data released yesterday by the state Department of Education.

But when public school fourth-graders are compared only to their Catholic school peers, the edge goes to the Catholic schools.

The mean test score for public school students in District 31 was 646 out of a possible 800, according to data released last month. The mean score for privately schooled fourth-graders on Staten Island was 645.6, and for the 27 archdiocesan schools on Staten Island, the mean score was 647.3.

Citywide, Catholic school youngsters outscored those in public school by nearly 5 points, with a mean score of 638.1, compared to 633.4.

The data released yesterday are for private schools where five or more students took the exam. Schools like Staten Island Academy are mandated by the state to measure student progress in some fashion, but they are not required to take the English language arts exam per se.

It is the first time in recent memory that a direct comparison of performance levels of students in different school systems on the Island has been possible. In the past, private schools have not been

required to release standardized test score data because their funding is not government-based.

Also, private schools have routinely used different standardized tests to track students, making comparisons difficult. For instance, Catholic schools use something called the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to evaluate students' progress annually in math and reading. The city's Board of Education uses tests published by McGraw-Hill.

Like their public school counterparts, privately schooled students were grouped in one of four categories by the state based on their responses. Students who scored in the "1" range are considered non-proficient and a "2" indicates only basic, grade-level mastery. The state is looking for all students to score at least in the "3" — or proficient — range. A "4" ranking is the highest and considered advanced.

As a group, Staten Island's public schools and its archdiocesan schools earned "3s," or proficient, rankings.

Education officials yesterday downplayed the significance of any differences.

Nora Murphy, associate superintendent of schools for the New York Archdiocese, said she was not surprised that the performance of the Island's Catholic school students mirrored their public school counterparts.

"It's not a big surprise to us. We've always said that the population of our schools, especially the parish schools, reflects the community, and this probably more so on Staten Island. We draw our students from the same neighborhoods as the public schools," she said.

Jerry Cammarata, Staten Island's representative to the Board of Education, said that "there is a commitment to improving the scores of all students in all school systems. All of our children play on the same streets and have dinner over each other's house. We can't afford less than equality," he said.

There are differences, however.

Ms. Murphy said that unlike the public schools, test scores will not be used as a benchmark for performance at schools in the archdiocese.

"It's not likely we're going to see anything similar to what the chancellor is doing," Ms. Murphy said, referring to city schools Chancellor Rudy Crew's shakeup of schools and administrators in poorly performing schools and districts.

She also said that no fourth-grade student would be left back because of a poor test score on the exam. She said remediation programs, if needed, would be left to the individual schools to design.

Public school students in grades three, six and eight who performed below the 15th percentile on standardized reading and math tests this year had to attend summer school and take a re-test or risk being reassigned next year to their current grade level.

New Community School Board member Eugene Prisco said yesterday that neither the Catholic nor public school mean scores were cause for celebration.

"I'm unhappy that over 50 per-

Percentage of students at each school* reading at these levels:

Level 1 = Not proficient, Level 2 = Basic, Level 3 = Proficient, Level 4 = Advanced

Name of school	Mean	Level 1	2	3	4
St. Joseph Hill Academy	665	0	19	68	14
Trinity Lutheran	662	0	20	73	7
St. Charles	659	1	29	64	6
Notre Dame Academy	659	3	21	73	3
Our Lady of Good Counsel	657	4	36	44	16
Blessed Sacrament	654	1	33	60	5
Our Lady Queen of Peace	654	4	29	63	5
Jewish Foundation	653	0	40	57	2
St. Rita	652	2	33	61	4
St. Patrick	651	1	43	51	4
Academy of St. Dorothy	649	3	31	62	3
St. Teresa	649	3	46	47	4
St. John Lutheran	649	0	45	52	3
St. Christopher	647	0	56	41	4
St. John Villa Academy	647	4	42	48	6
St. Margaret Mary	647	0	40	60	0
Our Lady Star of the Sea	647	5	43	51	2
St. Joseph Parochial	646	3	50	47	0
Gateway Academy	646	0	67	27	7
St. Clare	645	4	46	46	4
St. Joseph & Thomas	645	3	39	58	0
Eltingville Lutheran	645	8	29	58	4
Rabbi Jacob Joseph, Girls	644	0	52	48	0
Sacred Heart	643	5	42	51	2
Rabbi Jacob Joseph, Boys	643	0	63	38	0
St. Adalbert	642	9	35	53	3
St. Sylvester	642	0	58	38	4
Holy Rosary	641	6	57	36	1
Our Lady Help of Christians	640	11	44	37	7
St. Paul	638	3	67	27	3
St. Roch	637	0	69	31	0
St. Ann	636	11	43	46	0
St. Mary	634	8	58	35	0
Mt Carmel - St. Benedicta	633	14	52	31	3
St. Peter's	632	5	77	14	5
Immaculate Conception	630	13	58	29	0
Staten Island Montessori	626	30	60	0	10

* Not all private schools are listed since not all were required to take the test.

cent of the youngsters didn't reach nine Conlon, principal of St. Charles School in Oakwood, which had a mean score of 659. A total of 77 students were tested, with 6 percent scoring at the "advanced" level, including one child who achieved a perfect score of 800.

She attributed the school's success to a "perfect combination of hard work by our children and teachers and the support and interest of our parents. We have the nicest kids from the nicest families, and we all work together."

Economically, Sister Jeanine said that most of the fourth-graders tested from St. Charles come from "middle-class, working families, a lot of city workers, police and firefighters. They work hard to support their families, and education is a priority."

The Rev. Joseph S. Mostardi, pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel R.C. Church, felt similarly.

"We are proud of our children and proud of our program at Our Lady of Good Counsel," he said, noting that a combination of small classes, good teachers and a good foundation led to 16 percent of the school's 25 fourth-graders earning an "advanced ranking."

Ms. Murphy cautioned that the test results should be "taken in context."

"To judge a school based solely on a test score is not a complete educational picture of what goes on in that school," she said.

"We're thrilled," said Sister Jeanine.