

## Outperforming School Districts in Michigan, 2004-05

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### Summary Findings

Standard & Poor's has identified 43 school districts, or 8.4 percent of the 512 districts in Michigan with sufficient data for analysis, that have outperformed demographically similar school districts in reading and math proficiency (RaMP) for two consecutive years (2003-04 and 2004-05). This report represents Standard & Poor's second risk-adjusted performance analysis of Michigan school districts, updating the initial study using data for the 2004-05 school year.

It is particularly noteworthy that 30 of these 43 school districts have outperformed for *three* consecutive years. These districts were among those recognized in Standard & Poor's initial Michigan study, which covered data from the 2002-03 and 2003-04 school years. These "outperforming" school districts are diverse, serving student populations in 2004-05 that range from 2.0 to 89.0 percent economically disadvantaged, while achieving average proficiency rates in reading and math that range from 65.2 to 93.4 percent.

Standard & Poor's believes that highlighting Michigan's 43 outperforming school districts is important because it may help shed light on effective strategies and "best practices" that assist lower-performing "peers" in making needed improvements to positively impact student achievement.

### What does it mean to be an "outperforming school district"?

To identify school districts that consistently outperform demographically similar school districts, or peers, Standard & Poor's has developed the Outperformers Method. The method uses three fundamental criteria to identify outperforming school districts:

1. **School districts must achieve higher levels of student proficiency than peers.** Outperformers must report higher percentages of students that score at or above state standards on reading and math tests than other school districts that serve similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students.
2. **School districts must perform at a level that significantly exceeds statistical expectation.** Outperformers must achieve proficiency levels that fall above the threshold for the expected performance zone, as simply beating peers is not sufficient.
3. **School districts must outperform consistently.** Outperformers must repeat this performance for at least two consecutive years.

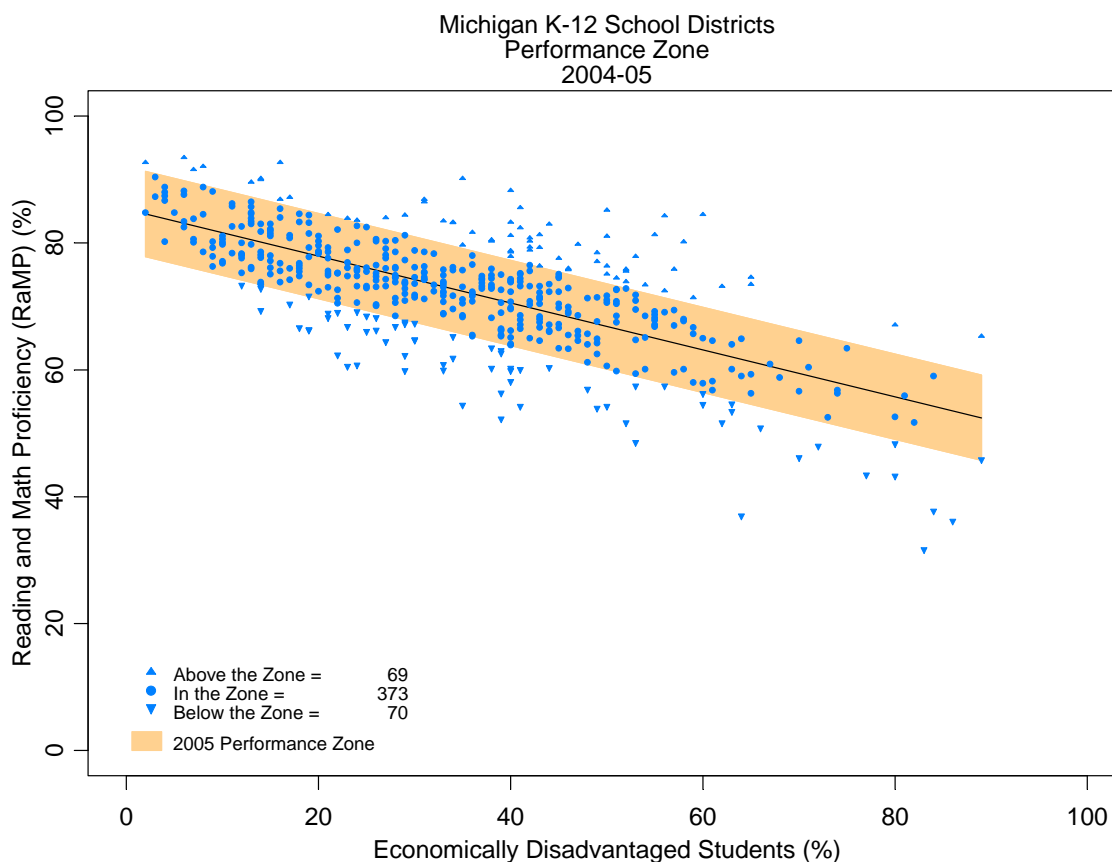
The analysis is limited to K-12 school districts and uses data obtained from the Michigan Department of Education and other state agencies.

It is important to note that school districts may be identified as outperformers and still not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). There are two reasons for this: 1) the criteria used for determining outperformers differ from those used to determine if a school district makes AYP;

and 2) examining school districts, even those not making AYP, may uncover practices that, if replicated, can help lower-performing school districts to improve.

During the last 40 years, the statistical relationship between student poverty and performance has been well documented in education research, and yet the true meaning of the relationship is often lost amidst the debate. Generally, the greater the concentration of economically disadvantaged students who are served, the lower student proficiency levels are, on average (see **Figure 1**).

**Figure 1**



However, this relationship does *not* imply that “poor children” cannot learn; rather, it indicates that for *any given level of student poverty*, there is a fairly wide range of student proficiency. Standard & Poor’s Performance Zone method allows for the identification of the most exceptional school districts across the spectrum of student poverty. The Performance Zone method focuses attention on two goals that are shared by all states (and are codified by NCLB): *flattening the performance zone* by eliminating achievement gaps between economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, and *raising the performance zone to 100 percent* so that all students demonstrate proficiency in reading and math.

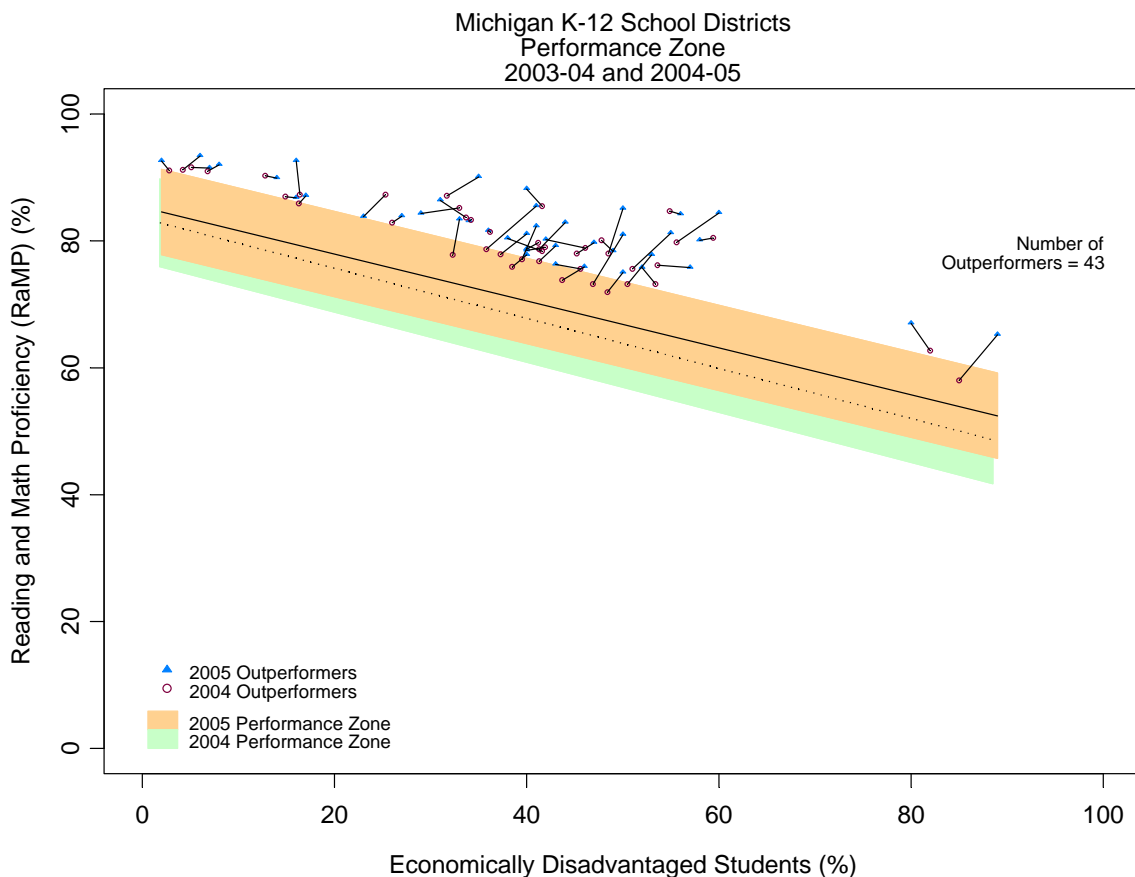
## Looking for More about Outperformers?

A technical paper that explains the analytical method used to identify outperforming school systems can be found at [www.schoolmatters.com](http://www.schoolmatters.com) in the **News & Publications** section.

### Outperforming School Districts in Michigan

**Figure 2** shows the 43 school districts that have consistently outperformed their peers over the past two years (2003-04 and 2004-05). Most of the outperformers improved their student proficiency between the two years. Overall, Michigan's K-12 districts have slightly improved their proficiency rates from 2003-04 to 2004-05.

**Figure 2**



Michigan's 43 outperforming school districts are listed in **Figure 3a-c** in alphabetical order. The 23 school districts that have outperformed for at least *three* consecutive years are highlighted in *gray*.

**Figure 3a: Michigan's Outperforming School Districts, 2004-05**  
*Listed alphabetically (A-H)*

School District	County	Enrollment	Economically Disadvantaged (%)	Reading and Math Proficiency (RaMP) (%)
Adams Township School District*	Houghton	450	50.0	85.1
Bad Axe Public Schools*	Huron	1,324	36.0	81.6
Birmingham City School District*	Oakland	8,058	2.0	92.6
Breitung Township Schools	Dickinson	1,955	27.0	83.9
Brown City Community Schools*	Sanilac	1,139	41.0	85.5
Calumet-Laurium-Keweenaw Public Schools*	Houghton	1,584	55.0	81.2
Carney-Nadeau Public Schools*	Menominee	256	56.0	84.2
Chassell Township School District*	Houghton	314	50.0	81.0
Cheboygan Area Schools	Cheboygan	2,280	46.0	75.9
Covert Public Schools	Van Buren	703	89.0	65.2
Dollar Bay-Tamarack City Area Schools*	Houghton	287	58.0	80.1
Dowagiac Union School District	Cass	2,705	50.0	75.0
East Grand Rapids Public Schools*	Kent	2,903	6.0	93.4
Ellsworth Community Schools*	Antrim	247	31.0	86.4
Ewen-Trout Creek Consolidated School District*	Ontonagon	337	49.0	78.4
Forest Hills Public Schools*	Kent	9,598	7.0	91.5
Forest Park School District	Iron	597	41.0	82.3
Grand Blanc Community Schools*	Genesee	7,635	16.0	86.8
Hancock Public Schools*	Houghton	972	43.0	76.3
Harbor Beach Community Schools*	Huron	734	57.0	75.8

Data displayed are for the 2004-05 school year.

\* Highlighted districts have outperformed for *three* consecutive years (2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05).

**Figure 3b: Michigan's Outperforming School Districts, 2004-05**

Listed alphabetically (H-S)

School District	County	Enrollment	Economically Disadvantaged (%)	Reading and Math Proficiency (RaMP) (%)
Houghton-Portage Township Schools*	Houghton	1,267	23.0	83.8
Inland Lakes Schools	Cheboygan	1,122	40.0	77.8
Ironwood Area Schools*	Gogebic	1,184	53.0	77.8
Ishpeming Public School District*	Marquette	980	40.0	88.2
Johannesburg-Lewiston Area Schools	Otsego	877	40.0	81.1
Lake City Area School District*	Missaukee	1,203	60.0	84.4
Laker Schools*	Huron	1,114	40.0	78.7
Leland Public School District	Leelanau	452	35.0	90.1
Ludington Area School District*	Mason	2,495	34.0	83.1
Marlette Community Schools*	Sanilac	1,402	44.0	82.9
Midland Public Schools*	Midland	9,558	17.0	87.1
Montague Area Public Schools	Muskegon	1,498	40.0	78.5
North Central Area Schools*	Menominee	512	52.0	75.8
North Huron School District	Huron	594	42.0	80.2
North Muskegon Public Schools*	Muskegon	878	14.0	89.9
Okemos Public Schools*	Ingham	4,189	8.0	92.0
Pellston Public Schools	Emmet	758	43.0	79.2
Rapid River Public Schools*	Delta	452	29.0	84.3
Sandusky Community School District*	Sanilac	1,366	47.0	79.7
Spring Lake Public Schools*	Ottawa	2,300	16.0	92.6

Data displayed are for the 2004-05 school year.

\* Highlighted districts have outperformed for **three** consecutive years (2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05).

**Figure 3c: Michigan's Outperforming School Districts, 2004-05**

Listed alphabetically (T-W)

School District	County	Enrollment	Economically Disadvantaged (%)	Reading and Math Proficiency (RaMP) (%)
Tawas Area Schools	Iosco	1,483	33.0	83.4
Ubly Community Schools	Huron	905	38.0	80.4
Walkerville Public Schools*	Oceana	486	80.0	67.0
<b>Outperformers Average (group)</b>			<b>39.0</b>	<b>82.3</b>
<b>State Average</b>			<b>34.7</b>	<b>70.5</b>

Data displayed are for the 2004-05 school year.

\* Highlighted districts have outperformed for **three** consecutive years (2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05).

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