

## EDUCATION



email this print this reprint or license this

TEXT SIZE: **A A A**

Posted on Wed, Feb. 11, 2009

### Study shows math advances in Phila. for-profit schools

By Kristen A. Graham  
Inquirer Staff Writer

Students in the city's public schools that are managed by for-profit companies perform better in math than those attending schools run by the Philadelphia School District, according to a study released yesterday by two Harvard University researchers.

In a few months, the district must decide whether to continue using the controversial outside management firms, which operate 28 city public schools with 13,400 children. The report was partially funded by Edison Schools Inc., one of five management firms in Philadelphia.

The providers are paid an annual total of \$6.7 million by the district; their contracts expire in June.

Last year, the School Reform Commission seized six schools from private managers and warned the operators that unless their other schools improved significantly this year, their contracts would not be renewed.

The Harvard study, conducted by Paul Peterson, a professor of government, and researcher Matthew Chingos, stands in contrast to earlier studies on privately managed schools here.

Two 2007 reports - including one by the Accountability Review Council, an independent body monitoring school improvement in Philadelphia - concluded that the academic gains made by the outside managers were not sufficient to warrant continued funding by the district.

Touted as the core of reform in a Republican-led state takeover of the schools, privatization came to the district in 2002. With Philadelphia in the national vanguard, officials at one point considered turning over the entire district to

**READER FEEDBACK**  
 Post a comment

**SAVE AND SHARE**  
 Buzz this story.

Welcome **Guest** | Register | Sign In

**Her education.  
Your responsibility.**

*Click to find a  
Catholic school today.*




ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA  
OFFICE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION  
*Keeping faith in mind*

[Advertise Here](#)

**Today's Most Viewed**

**Most Emailed**

- [Steve and Mia: Lust in translation: Steve & Mia's guide to what guys and gals really mean](#)
- [Cutting costs, judge quashes the morning nosh for jury pool](#)
- [Woman charged with setting fires in Upper Darby](#)
- [Manuel looking for an encore](#)
- [GreenSpace: She wants to say 2 words: No plastics](#)

Edison; ultimately, it put just 45 schools under private managers, some of whom dropped out on their own.

Today, two for-profit companies, Edison and Victory Schools, run 20 schools. Three nonprofits, Foundations Inc., Universal Companies and the University of Pennsylvania, manage eight schools.

The Harvard researchers stated in their study that "students learned substantially more in reading and math if they attended a school under for-profit . . . management."

In each of the last six years, the study said, students in schools operated by for-profit firms learned about 60 percent more in math than if the school had been district-run. The difference in reading was negligible.

The study also compared the for-profit schools to those of the nonprofit operators and found that students in the former learned at least 70 percent more in math in a year, and about two-thirds more in reading.

The study called into question the district's decision last year to return some of the schools to its control.

"If math and reading are given equal weight in evaluating a school, these results provide no support for the district's decision to terminate the for-profit management contracts," the study said.

At the time, district officials said they removed outside managers from schools on the basis of test scores and climate. Most of the schools returned to district control were Edison schools.

Sherrine Wilkins, executive director for school services at the nonprofit Foundations Inc., said that she had not had time to digest the study, but that she was pleased with student progress at the company's four remaining schools.

"Regardless of what the report may say, all we know is that our schools have made substantial and consistent progress over the years," Wilkins said.

Cecilia Cummings, a district spokeswoman, said officials also had not had time to thoroughly review the study and could not comment on specifics. However, she emphasized that the district remained committed to the so-called diverse-provider model of school operations and has performance-based contracts for all outside managers.

"We remain fully engaged," Cummings said, "in replicating those approaches that work."

Contact staff writer Kristen Graham at 215-854-5146 or [kgraham@phillynews.com](mailto:kgraham@phillynews.com).

Buzz this story.

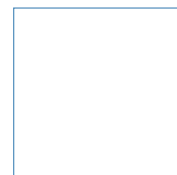
## PEOPLE WHO READ THIS ALSO READ

[Whitman in praise of Lincoln](#)

['Awesome' Susie Thompson dies at 105](#)

[Arrest in 2nd grade heroin case](#)

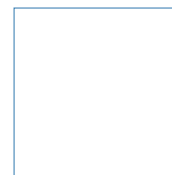
## ...AND BOUGHT:



1000TC  
Herringbone  
Weave Single  
Ply...  
SmartBargains.com



Rival Double  
Burner - Black  
SamsClub.com



Appalachian  
Pickin' Pac®  
Fiddle Out...  
SamsClub.com

### » More Most Viewed

[Killed by police, he was on parole](#)

[We all have to step up](#)

[1 dead in police-involved shooting in Northeast](#)

[Burgess held for trial in Delco slaying](#)

[Medicare Advantage prices rise as overhaul plan nears](#)

### » More Most Emailed

## MOST VIEWED IN THIS SECTION

[Study: Pa. short on special-ed funding](#)

[Cyber charter suit raises free-speech questions](#)

[Study shows math advances in Phila. for-profit schools](#)

[Rowan University participates in the Genographic Project ancestral study](#)

[Rendell: Boost school funding, consolidate](#)

## LATEST STORIES IN THIS SECTION

■ [Study: Pa. short on special-ed funding](#) 2:27am  
By Eleanor Chute

■ [Rowan University participates in the Genographic Project ancestral study](#) 02/09/2009  
By Cynthia Henry

■ [Cyber charter suit raises free-speech questions](#)  
02/09/2009  
By Martha Woodall

■ [Runner's college marathon leads to Virginia](#)  
02/08/2009  
By Susan Snyder

■ [Plan to close state-funded school worries Phila. parents](#) 02/07/2009  
By Kristen A. Graham

Top Jobs

Top Homes

Top Cars

## Comments

[Sign in to post a comment](#)

Posted by **littleonions** 07:59 AM, 02/11/2009

[Sign in to report abuse](#)

In two words: They cheat.

1 comments

### Register to Comment

Why are we asking you to register? We've made some changes to the Philly.com commenting system to increase the quality of the user experience and dialogue, and reduce the number of inappropriate or offensive posts. You're now required to have a registered username and account before adding a comment. This will improve the comments for everyone. We apologize for the inconvenience. [Join the conversation!](#)

[SIGN UP NOW →](#)

### Already Registered? Sign In

Email Address

Password

[Forgot Password?](#)

[SIGN IN →](#)

### Sponsored Links

#### Military Education Online

Flexible Online Degree Programs.  
Military Discount, Credit, Benefits.  
[www.ColumbiaSouthern.edu](http://www.ColumbiaSouthern.edu)

#### Free Education 2009!!!

Step By Step Instructions To Obtaining  
Free Grants And Free Fin. Aid.  
[www.Freeeducationguide.com](http://www.Freeeducationguide.com)

#### Study International Education Abroad

An online resource for study abroad  
information including a comprehensive  
directory of international education  
programs anormation.  
[www.studyabroad.com](http://www.studyabroad.com)

### RDG Inc

Geeks

### SUPER CHINA BUFFET


IN THE MOOD  
FOR CHINESE?  
VISIT THE SUPER  
CHINA BUFFET!

### Len's Auto Body

Len's Auto Body

### Expo

Pet Expo



**Top Jobs**  
Click to Watch Video

VIEW DETAILS

XML Get Top Jobs Feed

**Dental Assistant**  
Confidential

**Dining Services Director**  
Brightview Senior Living


**Electrician**  
West Chester University Of Per

**Engineer,manufacturing**  
B&W Tek

[View All](#)


**SEARCH JOBS**  [find »](#)

**Old City/Society Hill**



\$1,230,000  
210 W Washington Sq  
#6SW


**Roxborough**



\$379,000  
5445 Hermit Ln


**FOR SALE**  [find »](#)

**Ford Mustang 2007**



\$14,990  
Fiore Lincoln-Mercury  
(888) 292-8674

**Mazda Mazda6 i 2005**



\$15,990  
North Penn Imports Vw  
Mazda  
(877) 762-8158

**SEARCH CARS**  [find »](#)

### INQUIRER & DAILY NEWS MERCHANDISE

Buy Inquirer, Daily News & Philly merchandise here including:

- [Books](#)
- [Movies](#)



[Page Reprints](#)  
[Photo Licensing](#)  
[Photos](#)

## TICKET OFFERS

### COMCAST TIX

[Sesame Street Live](#)  
[Flyers Wives Carnival](#)  
[Frank Caliendo](#)  
[Lewis Black](#)

### OTHER OFFERS

[Harlem Globetrotters](#)  
[Jesse McCartney](#)  
[Lady GaGa](#)  
[Denis Leary](#)

**PHILLY.COM:** [News](#) | [What's Happening](#) | [Sports](#) | [Restaurants & Food](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#) | [Living](#) | [Green](#) | [Business](#) | [Video](#) | [Opinion](#)

**SITE SERVICES:** [Advertise on Philly.com](#) | [View print ads and special sections](#) | [Mobile Edition](#) | [The e-Inquirer](#) | [Join Our Team](#) | [News In Education](#)

**THE INQUIRER:** [News](#) | [Front Page](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#) | [Food, Home & Life](#) | [Health & Science](#) | [Education](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Blogs & Columns](#) | [Subscriber Services](#)

**DAILY NEWS:** [City & Local](#) | [Sports](#) | [Yo! Features](#) | [Columnists](#) | [Daily News Opinion](#) | [Photos](#) | [Multimedia](#) | [National News](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Subscriber Services](#)

**CLASSIFIEDS:** [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Rentals](#) | [Marketplace](#) | [Celebrations](#)

**PARTNERS:** [Phrency](#) | [The Trend](#) | [Active Adult Housing](#) | [Beach and Bay Homes](#) | [Homes and Living](#) | [Homes and Living - Ocean County](#) | [Communities Magazine](#) | [Employment Weekly](#) | [Taste of Philadelphia](#) | [Parade Magazine](#)

[About Philly.com](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use & Privacy Statement](#) | [Copyright 2009](#)

[Latest News Feed](#)  [RSS](#)  [MY YAHOO!](#) [All RSS Feeds](#)