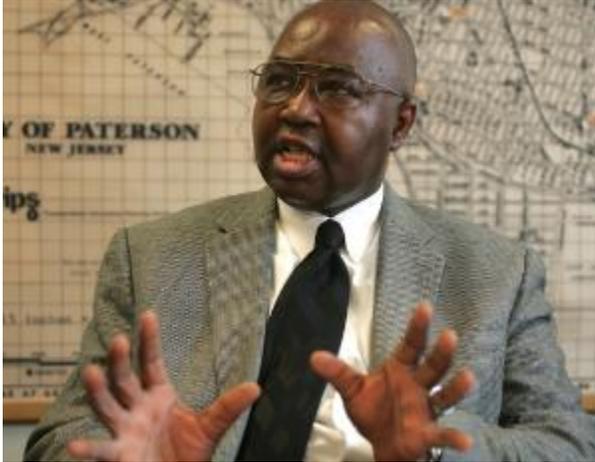


Paterson high school students post best HSPA scores in a decade - NorthJersey.com

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PATERSON – City high school students scored higher on state standardized tests this year than at any other time in the past decade, according to state-appointed superintendent Donnie Evans.



Superintendent Donnie W. Evans

RECORD FILE PHOTO

Superintendent Donnie W. Evans

In a presentation at a community forum at School 18 on Monday night, Evans said preliminary reports showed 71.8 percent of **Paterson** students achieved proficiency in language arts and 49.7 percent in math on the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) this year.

The numbers for the district's general education population – a group that doesn't include students in special education or special English language classes – were higher. Evans said 88.6 percent of the general education students were proficient in language arts and 60.7 percent in math. Last year, 80 percent of **Paterson's** general education students reached proficiency in language arts and 58.1 percent in math.

Evans said this year's results surpassed the numbers for **Paterson** for every other year since the HSPA testing began in 2003. "The work we have done in our high schools has produced tremendous benefits," Evans said.

Moreover, Evans pointed out that the number of students taking the HSPA tests had jumped from 920 in 2012 to 975. Last year, some critics questioned whether the district was cutting corners to inflate its scores after some students at Eastside High School did not have to take HSPA because of the way they were classified.

School board express, but said they were not ready to celebrate – especially not with half the city's students still scoring below proficiency in math.

"It's an indication we're moving in the right direction, but there's still a lot of work that needs to be done," said Board President Christopher Irving.

"We can't get comfortable with this data," said board member Errol Kerr. "The fact is our kids are not doing as well as they should. They're not reading as well as they're supposed to and they're not numerating like they should. We need more rigor. We need to set a high bar."

"As critical as I have been of the district, I certainly want to laude any sign of progress," said board member Jonathan Hodges. "But I also want the district to take a closer look at the significant difference between various demographic groups."

Hodges said he was awaiting data that would show how black and Latino male students performed. In the

past, Hodges pointed out, there has been an “achievement gap” between their scores and those of other students. “I want to see how we’re addressing that,” Hodges said.

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