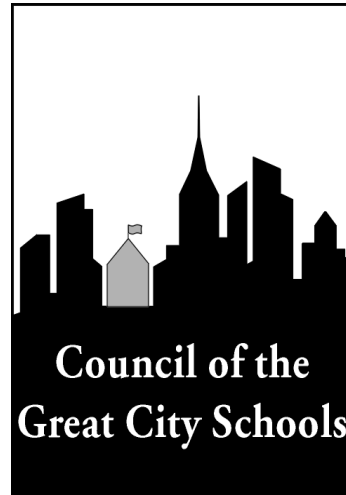


Great City School Boards: Elected, Appointed, or Hybrid



Research Based on--

- ❖ Two major studies by the Council of the Great City Schools
 - Foundations for Success, 2002
 - Pieces of the Puzzle, 2011
- ❖ Extensive Surveying of Great City School Boards
- ❖ Scores of Strategic Support Teams on General Instruction, Special Education, and Bilingual Education
- ❖ Analysis of Trial Urban District Assessment of NAEP
- ❖ Case studies of urban school systems
- ❖ Ongoing analysis of trends in student achievement on state tests
- ❖ Technical assistance provided by the Council to members
- ❖ Decades of Experience with major city school boards

Governance Characteristics of Great City School Boards

Elected School Boards (1)	Elected School Boards (2)	Appointed School Boards	No/Hybrid School Boards
Albuquerque	Los Angeles	Baltimore	Bridgeport
Anchorage	Miami-Dade County	Boston	District of Columbia
Atlanta	Milwaukee	Chicago	New York City
Arlington (TX)	Minneapolis	Cleveland	Norfolk
Austin	Nashville	Hawaii	
Birmingham	New Orleans	Jackson	
Broward County	Newark	Philadelphia	
Buffalo	Oakland	Providence	
Charleston	Oklahoma City	St. Louis	
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	Omaha		
Cincinnati	Orange County (FL)		
Clark County	Palm Beach County		
Columbus	Pinellas County		
Dallas	Pittsburgh		
Dayton	Portland (OR)		
Denver	Richmond		
Des Moines	Rochester		
Detroit	Sacramento		
Duval County	San Antonio		
El Paso	San Diego		
Fort Worth	San Francisco		
Fresno	Santa Ana		
Guilford County	Seattle		
Hillsborough County	Shelby County (TN)		
Houston	St. Paul		
Indianapolis	Toledo		
Jefferson County	Tulsa		
Kansas City (MO)	Wichita		
Long Beach (CA)			

Who Appoints School Board Members

	Mayor	City Council	Governor	Other
Baltimore	X			
Boston	X			
Chicago	X			
Cleveland	X			
Hawaii			X	Input from state senate
Jackson	X			Confirmed by city council
Philadelphia	X		X	
Providence	X			
St. Louis	X		X	X

Types of Hybrid Board

- ❖ School boards that have both elected and appointed members on them. (Examples: Bridgeport and Norfolk)
- ❖ School boards with members who are elected on both citywide and regional basis. (Examples: Atlanta, Austin, Birmingham, Broward County, Buffalo, Hillsborough County, Kansas City (MO), Portland (OR), and Seattle)
- ❖ School boards with members who are appointed by differing people. (Examples: Baltimore, Philadelphia, and St. Louis)
- ❖ No governing school board. (Examples: New York City and the District of Columbia)

Advantages and Disadvantages of Hybrid School Boards

Advantages

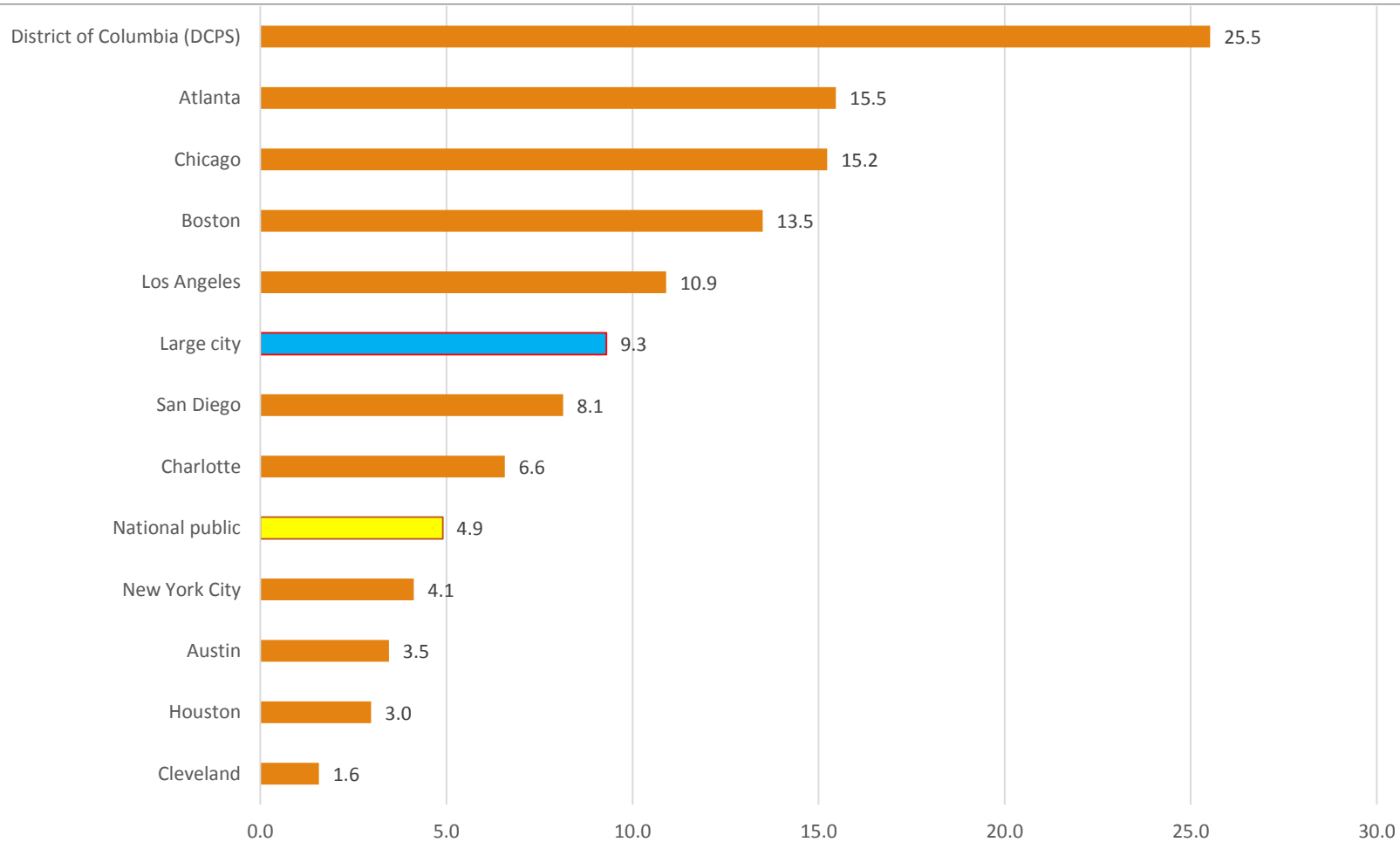
- ❖ Ensures a political diversity of board members
- ❖ Ensures that both city and regional interests are represented
- ❖ Requires differing political interests to come to agreement on appointments
- ❖ Can sometimes act faster when there is no governing board

Disadvantages

- ❖ Risks not being able to reach consensus on plan for reform and improvement
- ❖ Exacerbates divided or fractured interests in school board decision making
- ❖ Has potential to undermine public confidence in board's ability to act
- ❖ Undermines public input—in cases where there is no board

National Assessment of Educational Progress Average Scale Score Changes Over Time

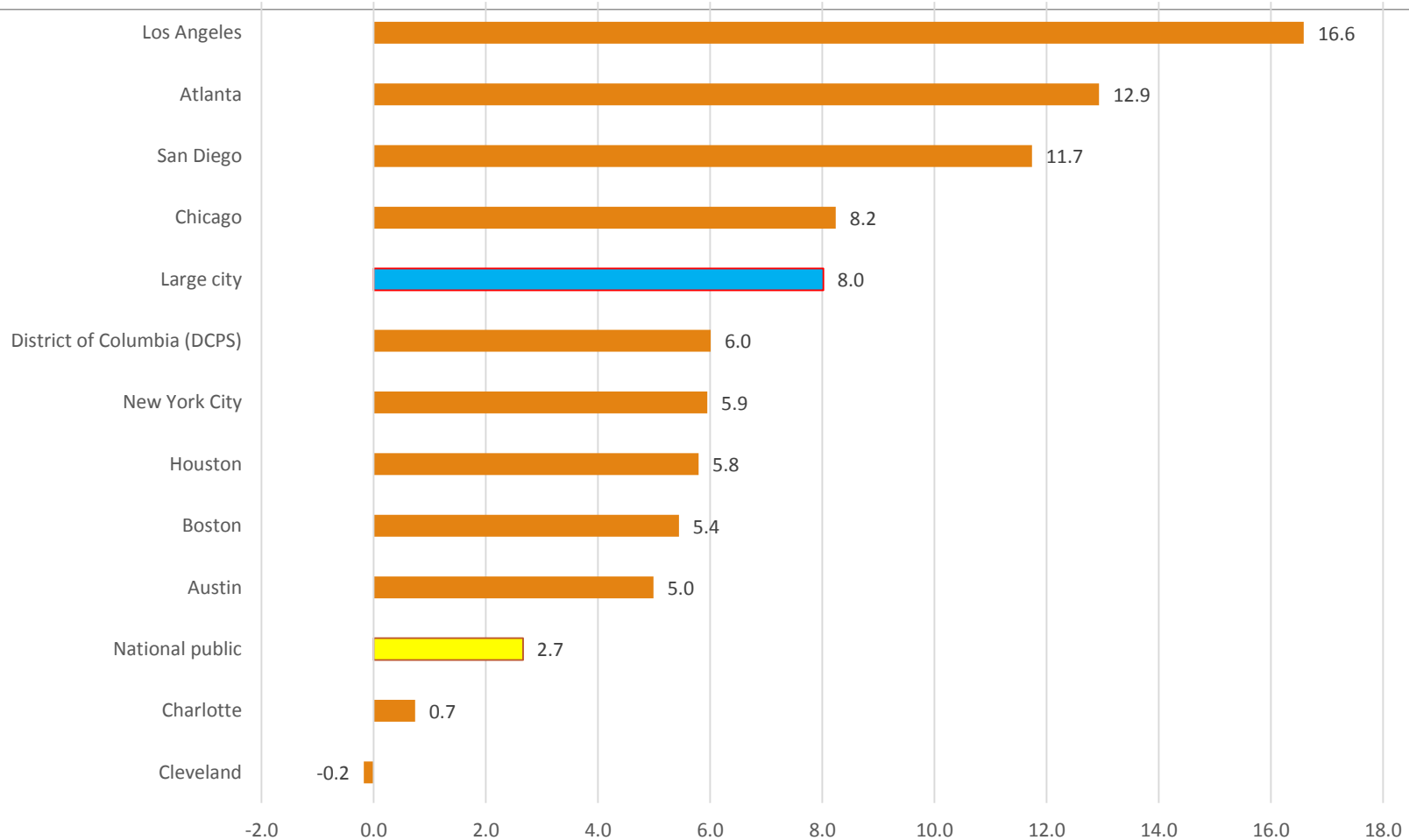
Grade 4 Reading Scale Score Changes, 2003-2015



*Note: The baseline year for Austin is 2005

National Assessment of Educational Progress Average Scale Score Changes Over Time

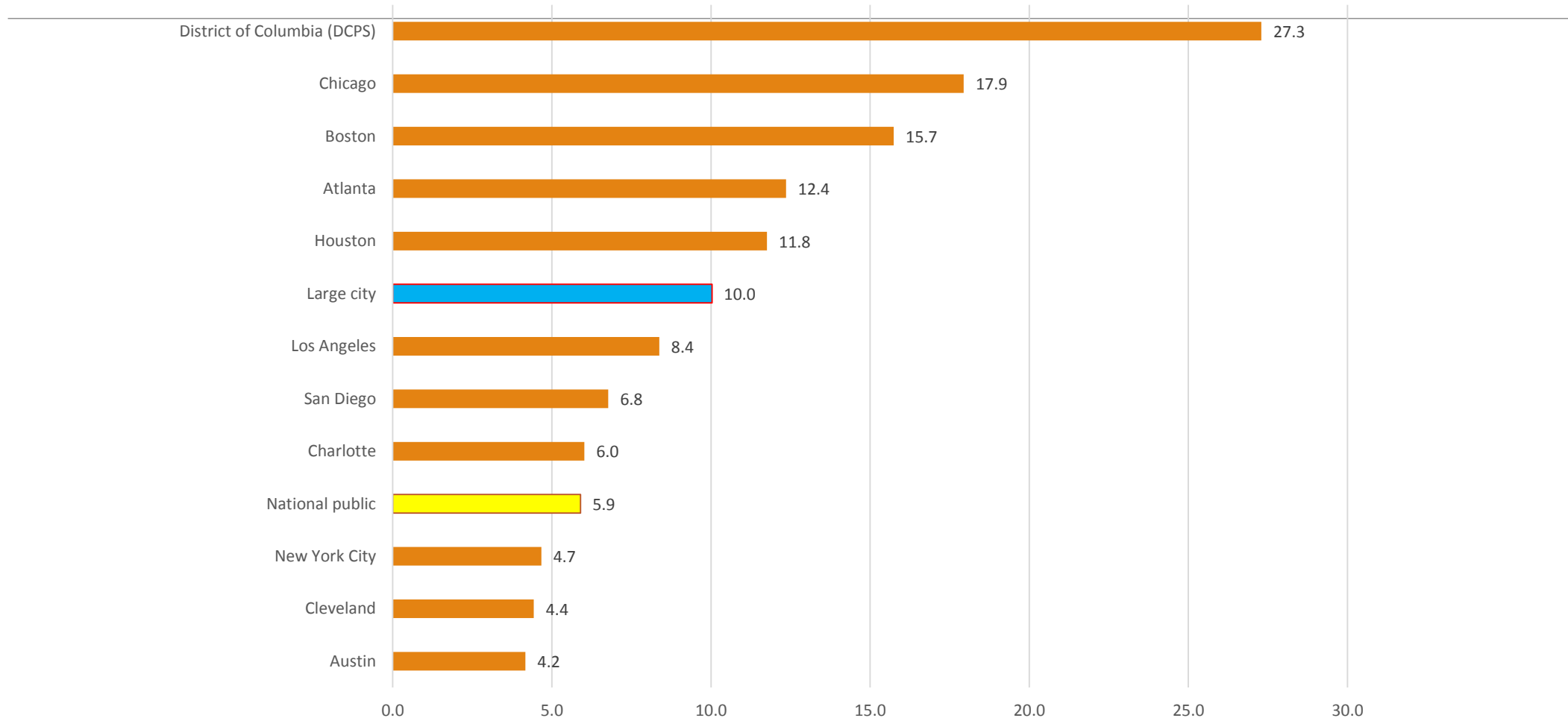
Grade 8 Reading Scale Score Changes, 2003-2015



*Note: The baseline year for Austin is 2005

National Assessment of Educational Progress Average Scale Score Changes Over Time

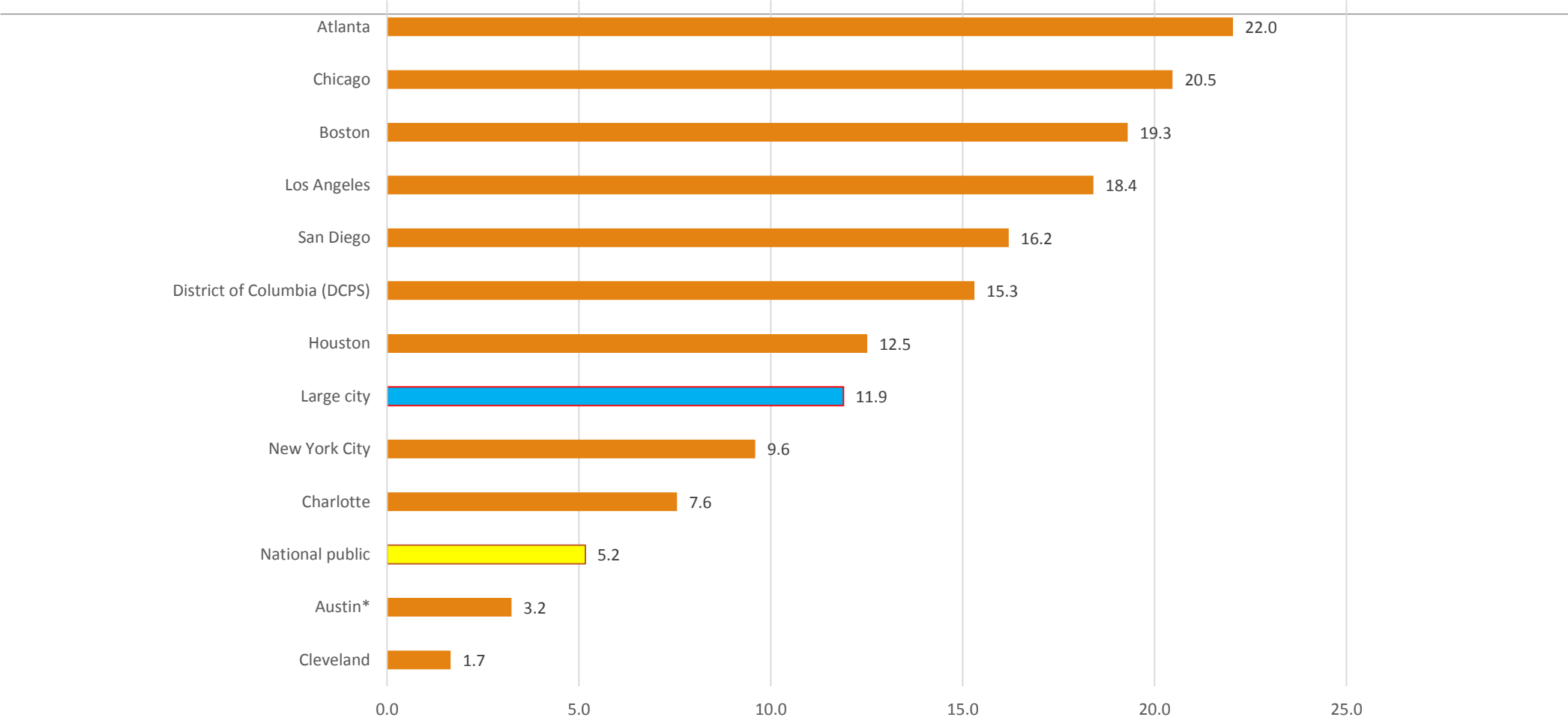
Grade 4 Mathematics Scale Score Changes, 2003-2015



*Note: The baseline year for Austin is 2005

National Assessment of Educational Progress Average Scale Score Changes Over Time

Grade 8 Mathematics Scale Score Changes, 2003-2015



*Note: The baseline year for Austin is 2005

Progress in 4th Grade Reading and Governance Structures

Elected Board of Education

	2015 Scale Score	2003-2015 Gain
Atlanta	212	15.5
Los Angeles	204	10.9
San Diego	216	8.1
Charlotte	226	6.6
Austin	220	3.5
Houston	210	3.0
Average	214.7	7.9

Appointed or No* Board of Education

	2015 Scale Score	2003-2015 Gain
DC*	214	25.5
Chicago	213	15.2
Boston	219	13.5
New York City*	214	4.1
Cleveland	197	1.6
Average	211.4	12.0

Progress in 8th Grade Reading and Governance Structures

Elected Board of Education

	2015 Scale Score	2003-2015 Gain
Atlanta	252	12.9
Los Angeles	251	16.6
San Diego	262	11.7
Charlotte	263	0.7
Austin	261	5.0
Houston	252	5.8
Average	256.8	8.8

Appointed or No* Board of Education

	2015 Scale Score	2003-2015 Gain
DC*	245	6.0
Chicago	257	8.2
Boston	258	5.4
New York City*	258	5.9
Cleveland	240	-0.2
Average	251.6	5.1

Progress in 4th Grade Math and Governance Structures

Elected Board of Education

	2015 Scale Score	2003-2015 Gain
Atlanta	228	12.4
Los Angeles	224	8.4
San Diego	233	6.8
Charlotte	248	6.0
Austin	246	4.2
Houston	239	11.8
Average	236.3	8.3

Appointed or No* Board of Education

	2015 Scale Score	2003-2015 Gain
DC*	232	27.3
Chicago	232	17.9
Boston	236	15.7
New York City*	231	4.7
Cleveland	219	4.4
Average	230.0	14.0

Progress in 8th Grade Math and Governance Structures

Elected Board of Education

	2015 Scale Score	2003-2015 Gain
Atlanta	266	22.0
Los Angeles	263	18.4
San Diego	280	16.2
Charlotte	286	7.6
Austin	284	3.2
Houston	276	12.5
Average	275.8	13.3

Appointed or No* Board of Education

	2015 Scale Score	2003-2015 Gain
DC*	258	15.3
Chicago	275	20.5
Boston	281	19.3
New York City*	275	9.6
Cleveland	254	1.7
Average	268.6	13.3

Why Some Urban School Systems Improve Faster than Others: Distinguishing Characteristics

- ❖ Leadership and Governance
- ❖ Goals
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Tiered Strategy—District, School, and Groups
- ❖ Instructional Program
- ❖ Capacity-building
- ❖ Data

Leadership and Governance

- ❖ Clear vision that is shared by the school board and superintendent of where the district is going and why
- ❖ A coherent theory of action that is built around a clear understanding of the district's capacity and where it is in the improvement process
- ❖ A school board and superintendent who are working together to accomplish the same goals
- ❖ Stable leadership
- ❖ Joint action of school board and superintendent is defined around improving student achievement
- ❖ The work of the board and the superintendent around student achievement is sustained over an extended period of time.

Goals

- ❖ Clearly stated goals that reflect the values and priorities of the community
- ❖ Academic goals that are stated in terms of student outcomes and reflect high expectations
- ❖ Agreement on the evidence (key performance indicators—KPIs) that will be used to determine whether there is progress on the goals
- ❖ Goals and KPIs are regularly monitored by the school board
- ❖ Consistent focus on goals—not distracted
- ❖ Ability to rally internal and external stakeholders around vision for improvement—strong buy-in and clear communications
- ❖ Board is clear on what it doesn't want to happen in pursuit of the goals

Accountability

- ❖ System has an identifiable mechanism—either administratively or culturally--to hold staff responsible for progress on the academic goals that the school board and superintendent have set
- ❖ Accountability that starts with the superintendent and school board, is built around the goals, and forms the basis of the superintendent and board's evaluation
- ❖ Accountability that includes central office staff before defining it at the school or classroom level
- ❖ Accountability for school principals that is defined around and rolls up to the districtwide goals

Tiered Strategy

- ❖ District has a broad strategy for improving student achievement districtwide—reform at scale
- ❖ District has a clear and effective approach for turning around chronically low-achieving schools
- ❖ District has academic programming in place that addresses the needs of student groups that are falling behind, e.g., poor students, ELLs, struggling readers, etc.
- ❖ District is able to gauge its personnel capacity and the achievement level of its students in a way that effectively defines what its theory of action should be.

Instructional Program

- ❖ Coherent and uniform districtwide curriculum that is built around rigorous standards (not programs)
- ❖ Curriculum that is clear about what should be taught and at what level of conceptual understanding
- ❖ Curriculum articulates instructional coherence within and across grades on how concepts are built and how they progress
- ❖ Clear articulation of what high-quality instruction looks like
- ❖ Materials that are aligned to the standards and the curriculum, and supplemented where gaps exist
- ❖ Classroom instruction at grade-level every day
- ❖ Clearly defined interventions for students who are falling behind academically
- ❖ Regular progress-monitoring and feedback mechanisms
- ❖ All students have full access to the curriculum

Capacity-building

- ❖ District has an ongoing process or processes for bolstering the capacity of its people to do the work, e.g., professional development, professional learning communities, etc.
- ❖ Capacity building is defined primarily around the academic goals and priorities of the district
- ❖ Capacity building is differentiated by personnel experience, skills, and student needs
- ❖ Capacity building activities are tracked and evaluated for how well they are implemented and how effective they are in improving student achievement
- ❖ Effective staffing can be identified, effectively deployed, and retained
- ❖ The quality of student work and the instruction that leads to it are part of the capacity-building process

Data

- ❖ Assessments of student learning are explicitly aligned to the standards and the curriculum—in terms of both content and rigor
- ❖ Data systems allow the school board and leadership team to track progress on district goals and priorities
- ❖ Data systems are accessible and provide information by district, school, student groupings, and student
- ❖ Assessments provide data in a way that will help personnel interpret results and inform instruction
- ❖ Data that are specific enough to inform the deployment of professional development and interventions

Everything Starts with the Board

- ❖ The vision and goals that it sets
- ❖ Its ability to accurately reflect the values and priorities of the community
- ❖ The superintendent it hires
- ❖ The culture and expectations it sets
- ❖ The signals it sends to staff and community about what it considers important
- ❖ The focus of its work and how it uses its time
- ❖ The sustainability of its focus
- ❖ And its ability through its monitoring process to keep the administration focused on student results

Conclusions

- ❖ More important than the structure of a school board is what it does to further the district's work to improve student achievement.
- ❖ Generally, an elected school board is preferable in terms of public representation, but they can easily descend into factional politics that are not in the interests of students—no matter what the rhetoric to the contrary.
- ❖ Appointed school boards can often find agreement more easily and accelerate the work of the administration, but sometimes they act like elected boards when members are allowed to represent special interests and not the welfare of the district as a whole and all district students.
- ❖ The track record of hybrid boards is generally poor, particularly when the term is used to mean a board that is composed of both elected and appointed members.
- ❖ It is the board's focus on student achievement, sustained partnership with administrative leadership around that priority, and clarity of roles are key to an effective board—elected, appointed or hybrid.