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Parents Advocating School Accountability
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Most Edison Schools in Illinois Suffer Drops in Scores

Test scores have dropped at four of the six Illinois schools operated by controversial, for-profit Edison Schools Inc. since Edison took over the schools, new research reveals.

Scores dropped at Chicago International Charter School, Chicago; Feitshans-Edison School, Springfield; and Franklin-Edison and Northmoor-Edison schools, Peoria. Of Edison's other two Illinois schools, Peoria's Loucks-Edison School made a minor gain on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in Edison's first year, but had shown a far greater increase in the two years before Edison took over. In the other case, Peoria's Rolling Hills Junior Academy, Edison took over in the current school year, 2001-'02, so no results are available yet.

The results provide further evidence that Edison Schools makes inaccurate claims about its schools' achievement.

Drops in scores for three of the Illinois schools – Feitshans-Edison, Franklin-Edison School and Northmoor-Edison – also further discredit Edison Schools' claims about the number of its schools that have made "achievement gains," since all three appear on Edison's list of schools showing "positive" results.

Here are ISAT results for Edison's Illinois schools. The percentage refers to students who met or exceeded state standards on the test:

-- Franklin-Edison School, Peoria:
Spring 1999 (before Edison): 48.2 percent
Spring 2000 (Edison's first year): 23.5 percent
Spring 2001: 32 percent

-- Northmoor-Edison School, Peoria:
Spring 1999 (before Edison): 80.1 percent
Spring 2000 (Edison's first year): 60.9 percent
Spring 2001: 71.2 percent

-- Chicago International Charter School, Chicago:
Spring 1999 (before Edison): 45.9 percent
Spring 2000 (Edison's first year): 41.5 percent
Spring 2001: 44.6 percent

-- Feitshans-Edison School, Springfield:
Spring 1999 (before Edison): 48.4 percent

Spring 2000 (before Edison): 42.6 percent
Spring 2001 (Edison's first year): 34.2 percent

-- Loucks-Edison School, Peoria:
Spring 1999 (before Edison): 21.9 percent
Spring 2000 (before Edison): 34.4 percent
Spring 2001 (Edison's first year): 35.9 percent

-- Rolling Hills Junior Academy, Peoria:
Edison's first year at this school was 2001-2002, so no achievement results are available yet.

Edison Schools' 2001 School Performance Report also obscured ISAT test results for one school, Feitshans in Springfield, by instead showing the results of another test, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, without explanation. The ISAT is Illinois' basic achievement gauge.

Edison Schools Inc. has raised questions with its reporting of both student achievement and company finances. The company has widely claimed that 84 percent of its schools made "positive gains" in the 2000-2001 school year. But Edison's School Performance Report lists 62 schools that it claims made "positive gains," for a year when the company says it ran 113 schools. Sixty-two of 113 schools would be 54.8 percent, not 84 percent.

And scrutiny debunks the claim that the 62 "positive gains" schools are successful. At least 10 of the schools on the "positive" list have had contracts with Edison severed – Edison no longer ran several of the schools at the time it released the list touting them as successes. More than 10 of the "positive" schools appear on their states' lists of failing schools.

Edison has also faced questions about the number of schools it claims to run and other figures. Most recently, business news articles questioned the way the company reports its revenues.

Edison Schools, which claims to run 134 schools nationwide, is a nationwide school management firm with stock publicly traded on the NASDAQ, though the 10-year-old company has never made a profit. Edison has attracted ideological support from backers of privatization and school vouchers, and from such powerful conservative bastions as the Wall Street Journal editorial board and the Hoover Institution.

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Illinois Standards Achievement Test scores:
<http://www.pjstar.com/news/Testscores/ISATIZScores.html>

For more information on Edison Schools, go to www.pasasf.org. PASA is an advocacy organization and our press releases reflect our point of view. Our material is reported and written in accordance with professional standards for accuracy. Any problems called to our attention will be corrected or responded to publicly as appropriate.