

Jan. 22, 2003 San Francisco
Parents Advocating School Accountability
www.pasasf.org

Edison Schools' new achievement claims exclude most of the company's schools

A recent press release from embattled, for-profit Edison Schools claimed that Edison schools outperform "comparable" public schools – but the company used data from fewer than half its schools in making the claim.

In a Jan. 16 press release, distributed nationwide, Edison Schools boasted that "achievement gains at its schools far exceed ... gains at similar schools in the locales where Edison is working." Yet the press release added that the study had included "some 60 Edison schools." The information in the press release dates from the 2001-'02 school year, when Edison said it operated 136 schools. Sixty Edison schools would comprise only 44.1 percent of the schools Edison ran in that year.

The press release explained that the study had included only Edison schools in districts with other schools that Edison deemed "demographically comparable."

The press release did not include backup data for Edison's claims.

Because Edison did not reveal supporting data, it was not known what methodology was used in the 60-school study. A July 2002 New York Times article discredited the methodology used in past Edison claims of gains in its schools.

New York-based Edison Schools has been plagued with problems in recent months, including discredited claims about student achievement, a plummeting stock price, canceled contracts, a Securities and Exchange Commission challenge to its revenue reporting, and accusations of improprieties in its bid for Philadelphia schools. The 10-year-old company has never made a profit.

Edison Schools press release

Jan. 16, 2003

New 1,000 School Analysis Shows Student Achievement Gains at Edison Schools Far Exceed Gains at Comparable Schools

(note: the reference to "1,000 schools" includes the "comparable" non-Edison schools that Edison claims to have studied)

Preliminary Analysis Reveals Strong Achievement Trend at Edison Schools
Important Indicator for Company's Growth

http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/030116/nyth054_1.html

New York Times

Critical examination of Edison's methodology in studying its schools' achievement

July 16, 2002

Complex calculations on academics

By Jacques Steinberg and Diana Henriques

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/16/education/16EDIS.html>

Post Scriptum:

Correcting figures in Jan. 22 press release

A Jan. 22 press release from Parents Advocating School Accountability (PASA) inadvertently gave inaccurate figures for achievement gains by Philadelphia students in the 2001-02 school year.

However, PASA's contention that Edison Schools was inaccurate in claiming that its students' achievement gains exceeded Philadelphia students' gains is supported by information from Dr. Deidré Farmbry, the Philadelphia schools' former chief academic officer.

Farmbry said that when the same methodology was applied to Edison's schools and to Philadelphia's schools, Edison students' gains did not exceed Philadelphia students' gains.

In recommending itself to manage the Philadelphia school district, Edison applied one methodology to its own schools and a different one to Philadelphia's schools.