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Report hits city's dropout rate and cites race divide



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Board reviews report.

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Education Reporter

The New York City Board of Education has one of the worst high-school graduation rates among major cities in the country, a report released yesterday found.

The city ranked 39th out of 50 cities — with only 54 percent of its students graduating on time in 1998 — according to the study by the Manhattan Institute and the Black Alliance for Education Options, two think tanks that support vouchers.

That put the Big Apple's school system behind Los Angeles, Boston, Detroit, Miami-Dade County, Virginia Beach, Philadelphia, the District of Columbia, San Diego, and El Paso, among others.

Author Jay Greene said New York also had one of the biggest disparities in performance between white students and African-American/Hispanic students.

About 80 percent of white students in the city's public schools graduated within the four-year on-time period. That ranked 12th, in the top quarter of the 50 schools.

But 56 percent of the city's African-American students failed to graduate on time, ranking 38th. For Latinos, the figure was 55 percent, ranking 21st.

Board of Education spokeswoman Catie Marshall reserved comment, saying officials there hadn't had a chance to review the report.

"It is clear that there are shortcomings in the education system that are particular to minority students," Greene said of New York and other cities with big racial gaps.

The report rapped nationwide test scores, noting that a quarter of all American students failed to graduate on time in 1998.

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