



TO: New York City Leadership Academy  
FROM: Sean P. Corcoran, Amy Ellen Schwartz, and Meryle Weinstein  
DATE: February 1, 2011  
SUBJECT: An Evaluation of the NYC Aspiring Principals Program, Update Through 2008-09

At your request, the Institute for Education and Social Policy at NYU has completed a follow-up study to our 2009 report, *The New York City Aspiring Principals Program: A School-Level Analysis*. This follow-up study applied the same methodology as our initial report, and added a third cohort of APP graduates and an additional year of test results. As we agreed, we focused our analysis on grades 3-8, where data were most complete and the sample sufficiently large. The study sample included 109 schools led by APP principals, and 331 schools led by other new principals hired in the same years. Our analysis found the following:

- APP graduates were placed in schools with significantly different *student* demographics than comparison schools: APP graduates led schools that had greater proportions of students who were (a) eligible for free and reduced lunch, (b) overage for their grade, and (c) African American or Latino. At the time of leadership transition, APP graduate-led *schools* also had lower attendance rates and lower proportions of experienced teachers. **Exhibit 1**
- APP graduates were also placed in schools with significantly lower initial achievement than comparison principals. These schools were initially scoring well below the city-wide average in math and English Language Arts (ELA) and their performance was trending downward. **Exhibit 2**
- In other words, APP graduates were placed in schools in which less experienced teachers were teaching students with the most educational need as well as higher concentrations of minority students.

In addition to comparing their average achievement, our follow-up study compared the trajectories of achievement in these two groups of schools. Our analysis looked at both ELA and math scores, standardized for city-wide test score fluctuations. We examined both unadjusted scores (e.g. Exhibit 2) and regression-adjusted scores that controlled for the differences in student populations and other school characteristics noted in Exhibit 1. This comparison found:

- In both math and ELA, schools run by APP graduates and non-APP graduates trended upward as did the entire city. This is apparent in the sharp increase in the percent proficient in both groups of schools. **Exhibit 3**
- After standardizing for the citywide performance trends and controlling for differences in initial school and student characteristics, schools led by APP graduates had cut the initial ELA performance gap between their schools and comparison schools in half.<sup>1</sup> In math, the

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<sup>1</sup> From 0.052 standard deviation units to 0.025.

performance gap initially widened, but was virtually eliminated in years three and beyond. It is important to note that these gap reductions reflect a comparison to similar schools, not necessarily a closure of the gap between *all* APP-led schools and *all* other schools led by new principals. **Exhibits 4-5**

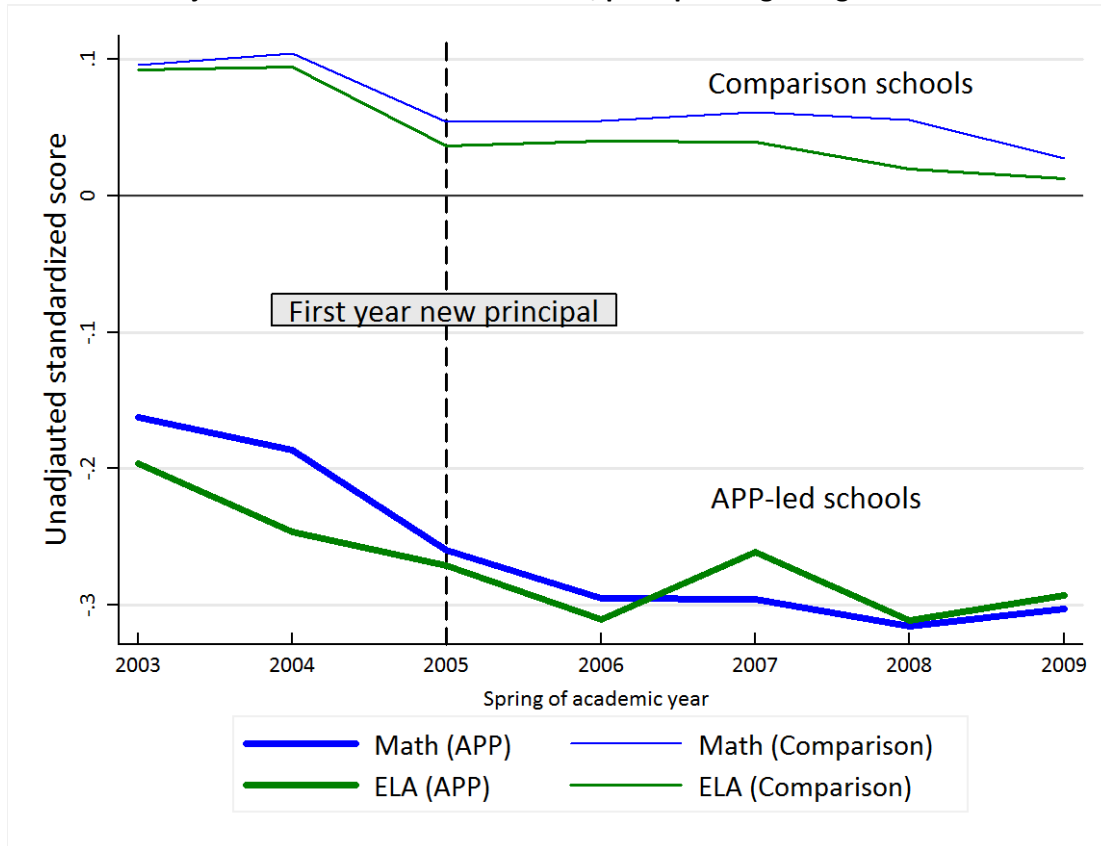
- In other words, APP-led schools continue to show evidence of closing the performance gap in both ELA and math with initially higher-performing schools run by similarly tenured principals after controlling for differences in school and student characteristics and standardizing for citywide performance trends.

**Exhibit 1: Average school characteristics**

	APP graduate- led schools	Comparison schools	
Number of schools	109.0	331.0	
Percent white	6.9	14.4	**
Percent African-American	42.4	32.7	**
Percent Hispanic	43.0	40.4	
Percent free lunch eligible	65.9	58.7	*
Percent over age	4.5	3.1	**
Attendance rate (%)	91.0	92.1	**
Percent of teachers <2 yrs exp.	52.9	45.2	*
Suspensions per 100 students	8.0	5.5	

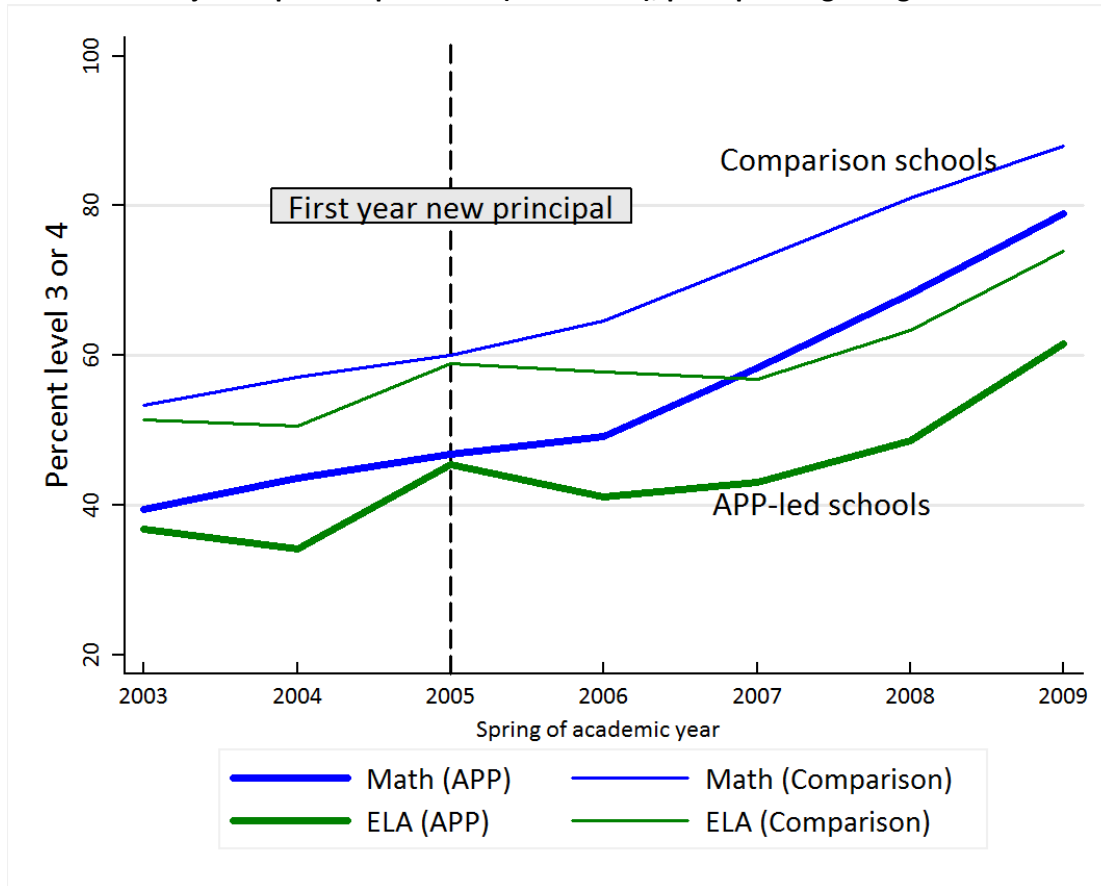
Notes: measured during principal’s initial year at the school. \*\* p<0.01, \* p <0.05

**Exhibit 2: Unadjusted mean standardized scores, principals beginning in 2004-05**



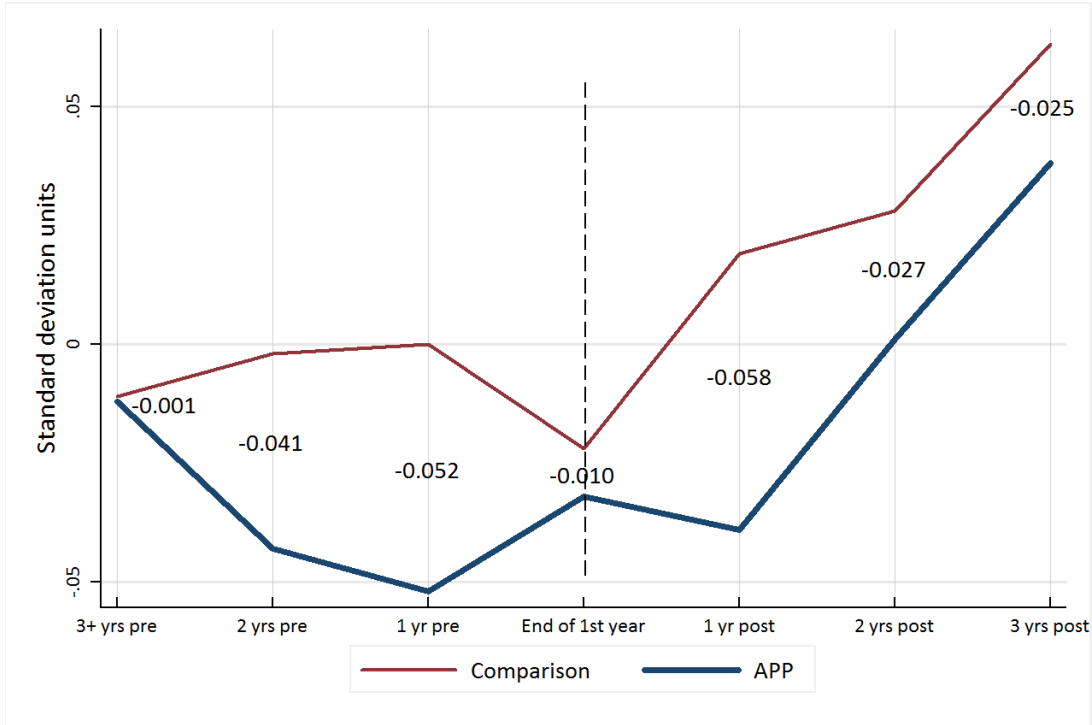
Notes: standardized scores, not adjusted for differences in school characteristics. A mean score of zero represents student scores at the citywide average for their grade and subject. Represents only those principals beginning in 2004-05; trends for those beginning in 2005-06 and 2006-07 are similar.

**Exhibit 3: Unadjusted percent proficient (level 3 or 4), principals beginning in 2004-05**

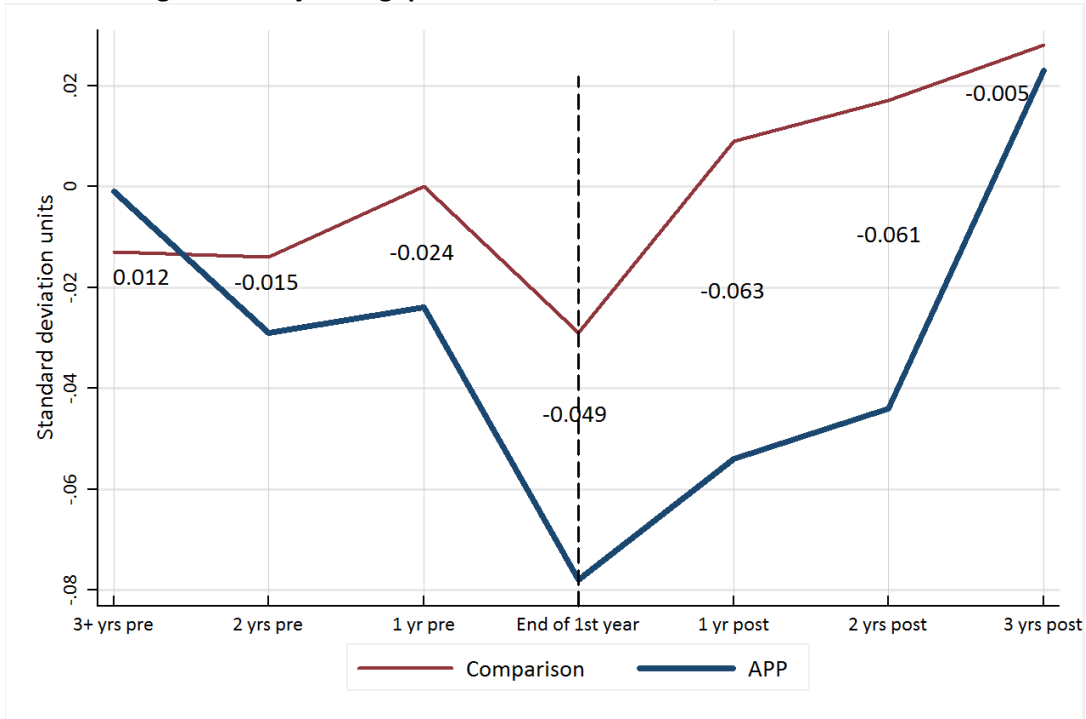


Notes: percentage at level 3 or 4, not adjusted for differences in school characteristics. Represents only those principals beginning in 2004-05; trends for those beginning in 2005-06 and 2006-07 are similar.

**Exhibit 4: Regression-adjusted gaps in school achievement, ELA**



**Exhibit 5: Regression-adjusted gaps in school achievement, Mathematics**



Notes: Exhibits 4 and 5 based on mean standardized scores after regression adjusting for differences in student and school characteristics. For ease of presentation, we have fixed a score of zero to represent that of the comparison group in the “1 year pre” period. Thus, all trend and level comparisons are relative to that point.