



Our Students. Their Moment.

East Ramapo:

Update from the State Monitors

September 16, 2015

Mission of the Monitoring Team

"Our goal is not just to issue a report. Our goal is for *action* to take place long term and short term. We will not accept anything else."

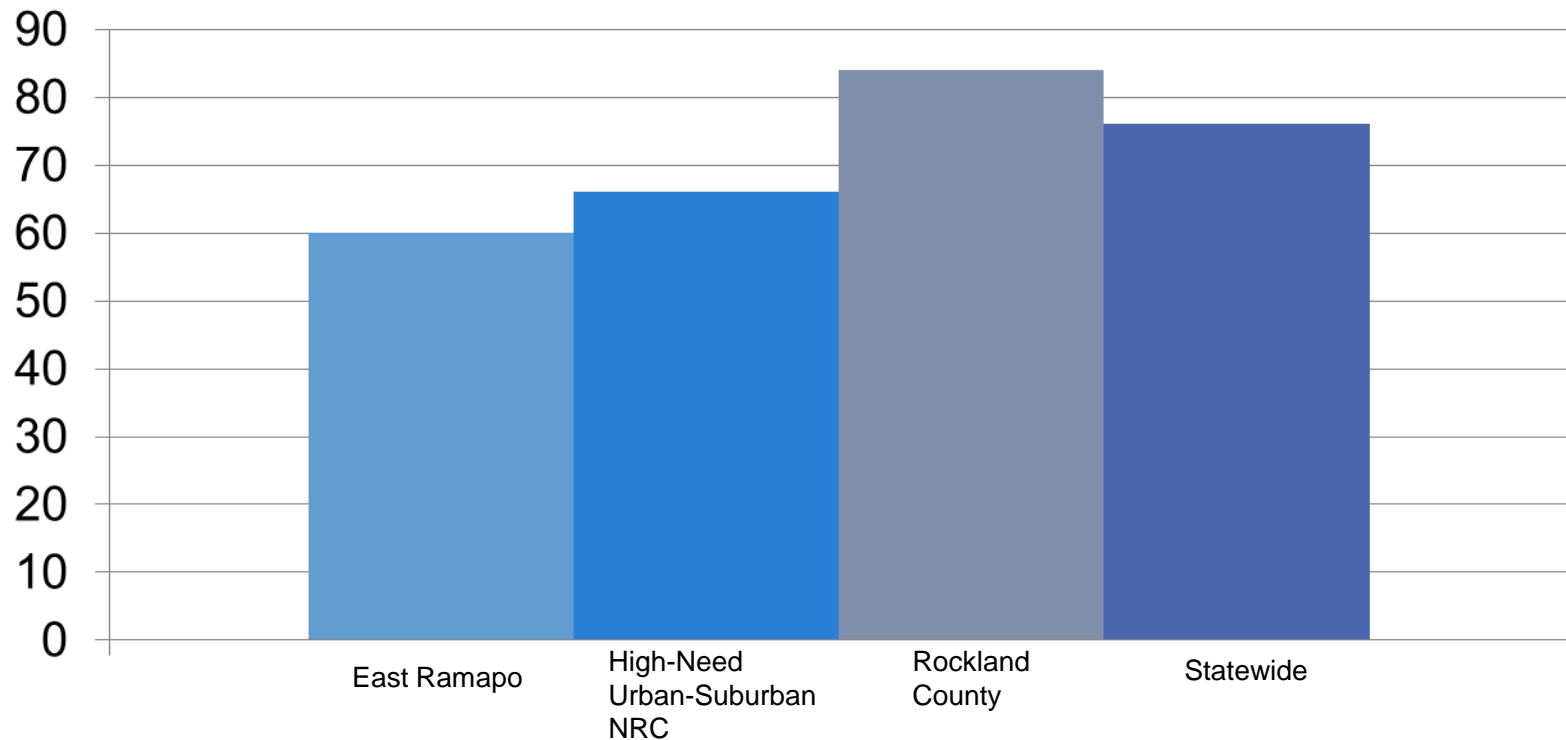
- Dennis Walcott, Lead Monitor

Timeline of SED's Actions in East Ramapo

Date	Action
June 2014	Commissioner King appoints Hank Greenberg as fiscal monitor for the district.
November 2014	Hank Greenberg issues comprehensive report with findings and recommendations.
January – June 2015	SED works with East Ramapo legislative representatives to draft legislation installing a permanent fiscal monitor in the district. The legislation is passed by the Assembly in June but is not allowed to come for a vote in the Senate.
June 2015	After her appointment, but prior to assuming her position, Commissioner Elia announces her intentions to take action in East Ramapo.
August 13, 2015	Commissioner Elia announces the appointment of a Monitoring Team for the East Ramapo School District. The team former New York City schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott includes Monica George-Fields – a school turnaround expert – and John Sipple – a school finance expert.

Statewide Graduation Rates

% of Students Graduating After 4 Years Results through June 2014, All Students



Source: SED Office of Information and Reporting Services

Completion vs. Readiness

East Ramapo's 4-year high school graduation rate is 60% for All Students. However, the percent graduating college and career ready is significantly lower.

June 2014 Graduation Rate

Graduation under Current Requirements

	% Graduating
All Students	60%
Asian/Pacific Islander	86%
Black	63%
Hispanic	50%
White	55%
English Language Learners	10%
Students with Disabilities	45%

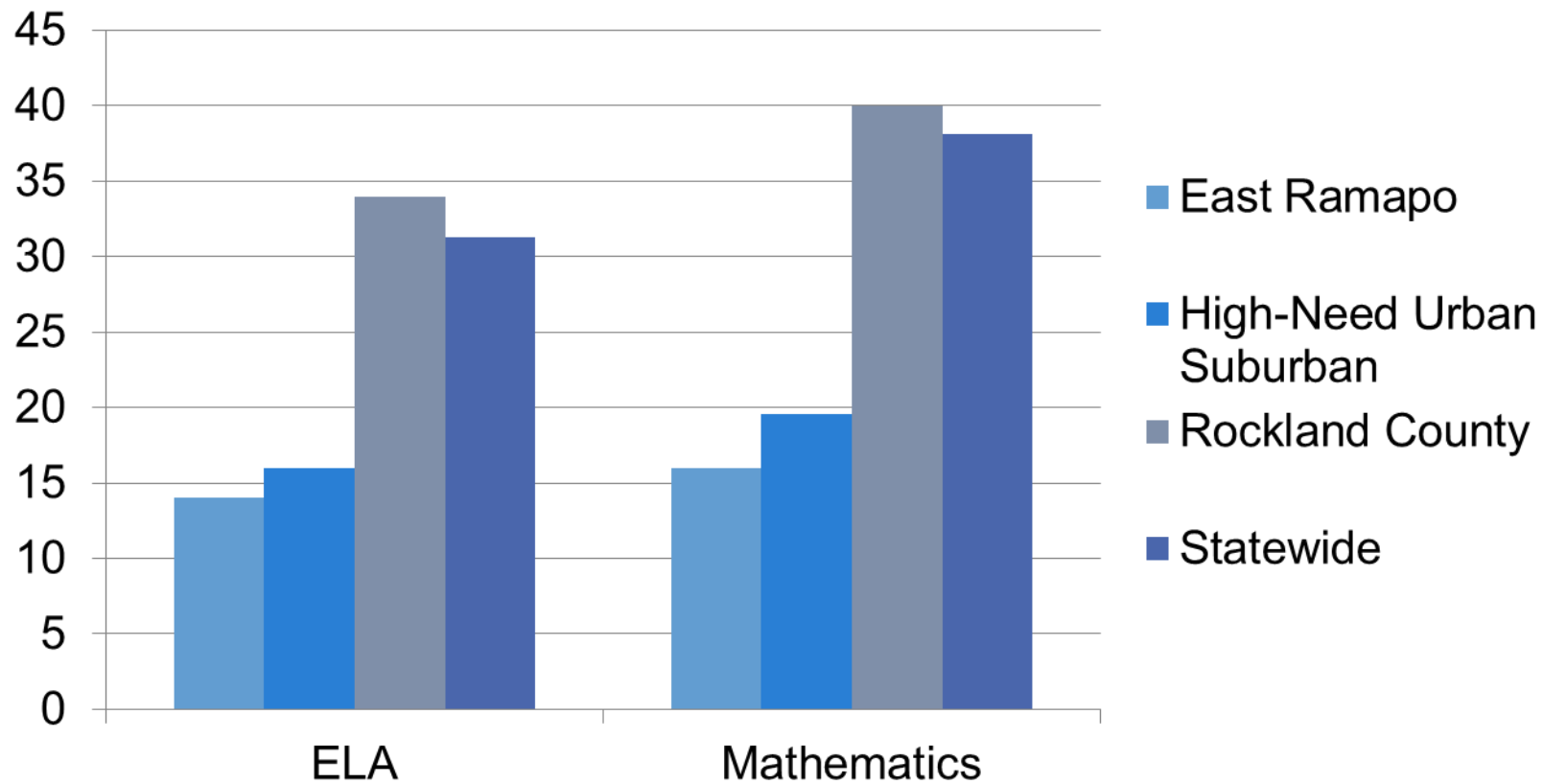
Calculated College and Career Ready*

	% Graduating
All Students	14%
Asian/Pacific Islander	51%
Black	12%
Hispanic	10%
White	13%
English Language Learners	0%
Students with Disabilities	2%

*Students graduating with at least a score of 75 on Regents English and 80 on a Math Regents, which correlates with success in first-year college courses.

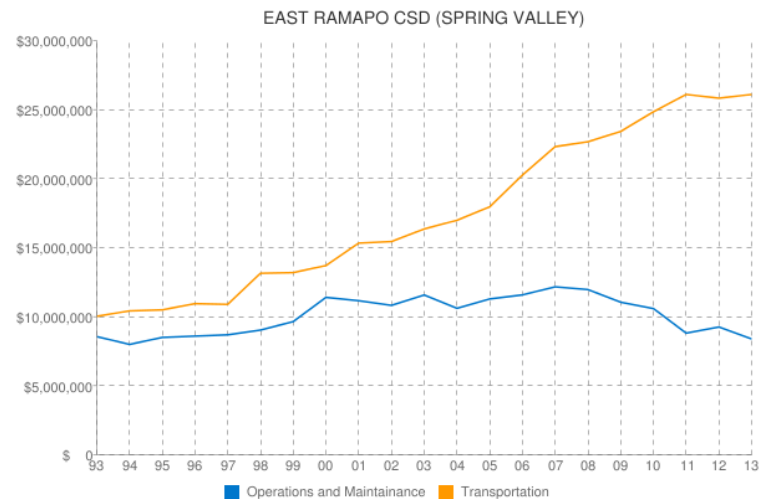
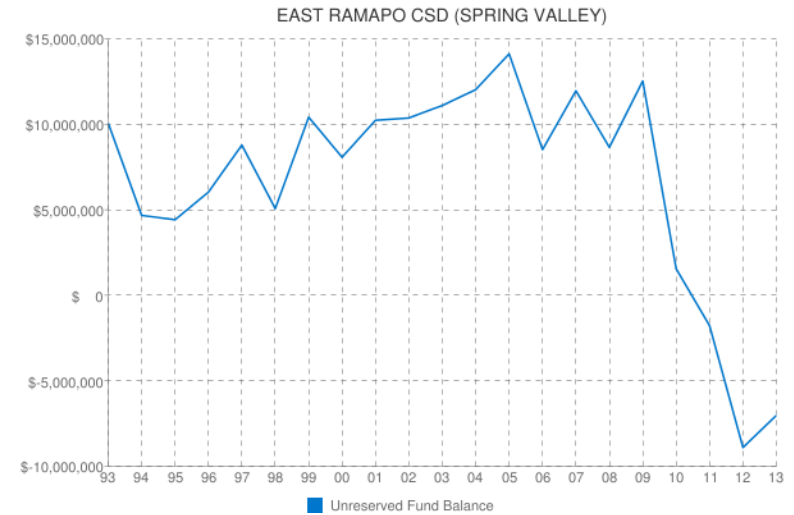
Grades 3-8 Test Results

% of Test Takers in 2015 who scored at Level 3 and Above



Multiple Indicators Point to a District in Distress

- **Enrollment:** The District's private school population continues to grow quickly, while the public school enrollment remains relatively stable but includes high-need student populations.
- **Fund Balance:** The District exhausted a significant fund balance over the course of a few years.
- **Transportation:** The costs to transport students has grown at rates far higher than other statewide trends, and is expected to grow given enrollment trends.



Source: NYSED School District Financial Profiles (http://www.oms.nysed.gov/faru/Profiles/profiles_cover.html)

Commissioner's Charge to the Monitoring Team

Charge	Anticipated Outcome
Maintain a regular presence in the District.	The members the Monitoring Team will identify areas of educational and operational need and provide on-demand technical assistance and best practices recommendations to provide opportunities for more immediate improvements.
Maintain a cooperative and collaborative relationship with the board of education.	By maintaining a functioning working relationship with the board of education, the Monitor Team will be in a better position to assist the district in improving educational and operational outcomes. However, the team will not shy away from keeping the district accountable as indicated by their findings.
Communicate extensively with and be responsive to the community.	Allow for the community to provide real-time information to the Monitoring Team about areas of concern regarding educational or operational practices of the district, and provide the community with credible and reliable updates about activities of the team, the board and the district.
Provide regular updates and reports on findings to the Department, including a final report in December.	The Monitors have been directed to report findings regularly to the Department so that the Commissioner may act as necessary in accordance with the Department's oversight authority.

Maintain a Regular Presence in the District

- Since the Team's appointment in August, they have together and individually spent significant time in the District meeting with representatives of the board, the administration, as well as teachers, principals and members of the community. Highlights include:
 - Announced and unannounced school visits both before and after the first day of school;
 - Open lines of communication with the Board president and Superintendent, as well as other key staff in the District; and
 - Attendance and participation at board meetings held since the appointment of the team.

Maintain a Cooperative and Collaborative Relationship

- Each member of the Monitoring Team has visited the district and met with the key staff in the District office that they will be interacting with during this process. Highlights include:
 - The Board has invited the Monitoring Team to attend executive sessions, except for discussions related to personnel and litigation.
 - The Monitoring Team attended and contributed to staff professional development before the beginning of the school year.
 - The Monitoring Team has met with the Superintendent and the Cabinet, as well as principals and district transportation and fiscal staff.

Communicate Extensively with and Be Responsive to the Community

- The Team has maintained regular and meaningful communication with members of the community, in both formal and informal settings. Highlights include:
 - Impromptu meetings with parents and students in the community at laundromats, parking lots, and barber shops, as well as more formal and organized settings such as church services and with the leader of the local NAACP chapter;
 - Responsive and timely email communications with members of the community; and
 - Meetings with all the state level elected representatives of the district, as well as the District's representative in the US House of Representatives.

Regular Updates and Reports on Findings to the Department

- SED has dedicated staff support to the Monitoring Team, including from the Commissioner's Office, Office of Counsel, and the Office of P-12 Education (including Accountability, Bilingual Education and World Languages, Special Education, Transportation, and Facilities). The Monitors have already identified several action items for these offices, as well as for the local board of education. Highlights include:
 - Identification of timely facility needs to be addressed with legislative capital funds and EXCEL funds;
 - Establishment of a process for timely and accurate responses to public comment by the board of education;
 - Investigation of the use of Title I funding;
 - Review of district capital upgrades and scheduling concerns; and
 - Development of professional development practices for the district senior leadership.

Next Steps for the Monitoring Team

- The Monitors will host a public forum on October 1 at 7pm the Cultural Arts Center to hear directly from members of the community. The event will be open to the public. Details about the event will be announced in the coming week.
- The Monitors will make recommendations regarding the district's use of approximately \$1 million in facilities/capital expenditures.
- A blog will be launched to provide regular updates to the community regarding the activities of the Monitors (available at www.nysed.gov).
- The Monitors will continue to meet with local stakeholders and advocacy groups. Meetings are currently scheduled with Padres Unidos and the Rockland Clergy for Social Justice.
- The Monitors will establish a plan in conjunction with the district for professional development for board members.
- The Monitors will meet with school leaders to discuss educational practice and support of teaching and learning within their buildings.



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Thank You.

Follow the Monitors online at:

www.nysed.gov

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