



Public Education Leadership Project at Harvard University

A JOINT INITIATIVE OF
THE HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
AND HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

PEL-080
MARCH 22, 2017

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Uncommon Schools (B): Seeking Excellence at Scale through Standardized Practice

Three years ago in 2013, Brett Peiser, CEO of New York-headquartered charter management organization (CMO) Uncommon Schools (Uncommon), had been driven to reassess the non-profit's strategy. Uncommon had previously pursued a decentralized "network of networks" strategy that encouraged regional autonomy and innovation to provide low-income students with a high-quality education. But 2013 standardized test results based on the new, more rigorous Common Core State Standards (Common Core) revealed that this strategy yielded too many variations in student scores.

In response, Peiser and Uncommon's executive team introduced changes to standardize practices across the organization. In 2015, he replaced the six highly independent regional managing directors with two chief schools officers (CSOs). (See **Exhibit 1**.) Former Managing Director Julie Jackson became CSO of elementary and middle schools, managing six associate managing directors (AMDs), 42 schools, and more than 1,000 instructors in six cities. Former Managing Director Paul Bambrick-Santoyo became CSO of high schools and professional development, responsible for one AMD, seven schools, and hundreds of instructors in four cities. To begin aligning the regions, they rolled out common lesson plans and interim assessments. Additionally, Peiser named former COO Josh Phillips chief of innovation and school operations, a new centralized position.

Also in 2015, Uncommon launched a five-year strategic plan with three goals. (See **Exhibit 2**.) The first was to "achieve": ensure that 100% of schools closed the economic and racial achievement gap with state-wide averages. The second was to "expand": add 20-30 schools by 2020. The third was to "impact": share best practices internally and externally. By 2016, efforts to give teachers and leaders the same tools and systems to manage their schools had led to progress towards these goals. However, there were also signs of concern. For instance, while elementary schools had aligned quickly, some middle schools were slower to standardize because they had developed in a more decentralized way.

Uncommon had expanded during this strategic shift and by 2016 had 49 schools in six regions with 2,100 staff. In July 2016, Peiser now considered if continued alignment of best practices would help Uncommon both achieve and expand further by 2020. While consistency was important, Peiser wanted to retain Uncommon's ability to innovate. He explained, "To us, innovation is ensuring that what works in one school is considered in all schools, and that we stay ahead of new things that can make our schools better." Could Uncommon both innovate and standardize to achieve quality at scale?

Senior Lecturer John J-H Kim and Case Researcher Sarah McAra (HBS Case Research & Writing Group) prepared this case. PELP cases are developed solely as the basis for class discussion. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of effective or ineffective management.

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Uncommon's History: A Network of Networks

After starting in 1997 as one school, Uncommon re-launched as a multi-state CMO in 2005 with five schools serving 600 students in Newark, New Jersey and New York City. Its founders, including Peiser, had united behind the belief that students in low-income urban areas needed a different educational solution to achieve the same academic results as their more privileged peers. They built a network of schools based on shared ideas about structure, data, and teacher training with a goal of preparing economically disadvantaged students for college. They established a dual-leadership model for each school: a principal focused on academics and a director of operations focused on other critical aspects of school management. The schools were grouped into networks based on regions, and each region was led by a highly independent managing director. The managing directors, who oversaw academics and instruction, worked closely with regional COOs. They made up a decentralized system that allowed regional leaders to experiment and learn from each other. A central home office supported the networks with marketing, teacher recruitment, fundraising, and more.

Uncommon had scaled this structure, and by 2016 had added schools in Rochester and Troy, New York; Boston, Massachusetts; and Camden, New Jersey. Uncommon's 49 schools now had 14,000 students. (See **Exhibit 3**.) Around 80% of Uncommon's students came from low-income families, and 94% were African American or Hispanic. By the early 2010s, Uncommon had closed the achievement gap (based on standardized test scores) between minorities and white students at four times the rate of other CMOs, on average.¹ Yet test results in 2013 revealed a wide discrepancy in achievement at the school level. This was disheartening to everyone across Uncommon for they all believed that every student could achieve at the highest levels regardless of zip code or background.

Uncommon in 2016: A System of Schools

The 2013 results made Peiser question Uncommon's strategy of autonomy and decentralization. Simultaneously, he confronted another challenge when two long-standing regional leaders left in 2013 to pursue other opportunities. He saw no obvious replacements for the managing director and COO.

To address these challenges, he started to consider the move towards centralization as two new practices unfolded. The first was cross-regional management. Since 2012, Jackson had been the managing director of all Uncommon elementary schools in both Newark and New York City, Uncommon's first move to cross-regional leadership. She had aligned the regions' different curricula, schedules, and operations, and dramatically improved students' results. "This pushed us to the idea that we should make sure the right people are in the right seats for the sake of *all* of our schools," said Chief of Staff Laura Lee McGovern (MBA 2007). The second was the development of "working groups." Spearheaded by Bambrick-Santoyo, working groups connected Uncommon's top teachers and leaders from across the regions by content area. They watched recordings of each other's classes, broke down effective teaching techniques into component parts, then codified the techniques for professional development trainings in that content area. "This brought our instructors together in a way that wasn't happening before and was a natural alignment mechanism," said Lee McGovern.

After considering the varied test results, the loss of key senior leaders, and the impact of the cross-regional programs, Peiser decided that Uncommon should replace its decentralized structure with a more unified system. In 2015, he created the CSO positions to oversee all schools and tasked Jackson and Bambrick-Santoyo with rolling out organization-wide systems, primarily focusing on academics and instruction.

Peiser retained the three regional COOs from the previous model, but noted that the new structure altered the relationship between them and the academic-focused leaders. Previously, the COOs and managing directors worked together closely and frequently. Now, the COOs reported to Phillips at the home office in New York City and met with the CSOs every other week. There was an open question about whether a centralized COO role that mirrored that of the CSO would be necessary, but there were significant hurdles to standardizing operations. For instance, the COOs played an essential role in non-core operations, such as external/community relations and regional facilities management. The central office supported some of these activities, but it was difficult to do so in the cities distant from headquarters. “We needed our COOs on the ground to build relationships with the communities,” Phillips said.

Aligning Academics

With this new organizational structure in place, Uncommon’s leaders set out to create a cohesive system of schools. Yet alignment would be no simple task. Lee McGovern explained, “We knew that immediately trying to align everyone around everything would not be the right path to take.” Moreover, given their history, they did not want to solely create a top-down system of replica schools.

They decided to standardize the aspects they deemed essential to student success: curricula, professional development for teachers, and data. Jackson explained, “No parent wants their child to have a teacher who is still figuring out how to teach. That doesn’t mean we can only hire teachers with several years of experience; we just need to give them the right tools.” Other aspects would remain under the purview of school leaders. For example, the CSOs thought that all students in the same grade should have the same number of instructional minutes per subject, but they did not dictate in what order or at what time of day. Similarly, schools could retain the unique programs they had developed over the years, such as music or fitness classes.

Ensuring that all students experienced consistent, rigorous, and joyful lesson plans was one of the first major changes. Previously, Uncommon’s schools used different curricula to correspond with their respective state exams. But once Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York adopted the Common Core, all three states planned to use the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam, making one aligned curriculum possible. In 2015, the prospect was curtailed when New York decided to use a different assessment tool, but Uncommon adapted: the schools all used the same curriculum for the first half of the school year, then implemented customized curricula beginning in January to fit their respective states’ exams.

To write the lesson plans, the home office convened a team of 60 teachers and deans who had excelled at creating their own academic content in specific subjects. A few became full-time lesson planners, while others remained in the classroom and participated on a part-time basis. The team developed common lesson plans and sent them to teachers two weeks in advance. By 2016, Uncommon had developed and trained instructors on standardized lesson plans for K-8 math and reading. Science and history were being prepared in 2016, as was a standardized high school curriculum. Peiser believed that these lesson plans would ensure a certain level of rigor in every classroom while also encouraging teacher collaboration. “It works because it’s not coming from the top, it’s peer to peer,” he said. “A seventh grade math lesson may be coming from your neighbor across the hall.” Moreover, every lesson plan was created by content-area experts and thus compensated for an instructor’s potential knowledge gaps. The lesson plans also freed up time for instructors to focus on effective delivery and to respond to student needs.

The CSOs introduced additional resources to help teachers analyze, internalize, and execute the new lesson plans as effectively as possible. Bambrick-Santoyo led a content development team that codified professional development and trained instructors in techniques for lesson plan delivery across core subjects. In the summer of 2015, he launched Uncommon's first cross-regional professional development program for instructional leaders, principals, and principals-in-training. Jackson oversaw the curriculum and assessment team (CAT) that helped evaluate and align instruction for grades K-8. CAT members had specialized subject knowledge and could help schools improve in content areas as needed. Jackson explained, "A principal might call up the team and say, 'Something's off with fourth grade math, but I can't put my finger on it. Can you help?'" The team would then do a content walk-through to assess instruction and to provide recommendations for improvement. (See **Exhibit 4**.) At first Jackson was not sure if the schools would be receptive to this kind of feedback from the central office, "but now we can't keep up with demand," she said. Yet the CSOs still anticipated – and hoped – that the classrooms would not become homogenous. "Two teachers can execute the same lesson plan, and the classrooms will look completely different because of the teachers' styles and personalities," said Lee McGovern.

Standardization had dramatically changed the life of many teachers, and there were mixed reactions among instructors. Peiser recalled hearing from some who said, "I respect what you're doing, but it's not for me." Some missed making their own lesson plans and felt that they were losing autonomy and the ability to be creative. "We're not sure all of the teachers and principals hear our message that we still want them to do unique things," Jackson commented. Other instructors were grateful for the standardized lesson plans because they no longer had to spend several hours every night creating their own. There were also some instructors who did not feel strongly either way.

Peiser hoped that these efforts would reduce teachers' workloads and lower turnover. He and his team did not have a target turnover rate in mind, but felt that even historical rates comparable to the national urban average were too high. (By some estimates, high-poverty public schools had an annual teacher attrition rate of 20%.²) "Losing a teacher causes stress on the whole organization because there's no immediate bench of replacements. You have to find and train the replacement directly," Lee McGovern observed, adding that they interviewed six candidates for each teacher hired. From the 2014-2015 school year to the 2015-2016 school year, Uncommon saw a 2% to 3% rise in turnover. However, it was difficult to determine if alignment had played a role in that increase; both the highest and lowest performing schools had higher attrition rates than in years past.

Monitoring School Performance

The CSOs also began collecting consistent data across the network to better monitor student progress and achievement. In 2015, they created standardized interim assessments (IAs) for English language arts (ELA) and math to replace the regional IAs that had developed under the network of networks structure. Students took the exams every eight to ten weeks, and the CSOs analyzed results to determine if schools needed tailored support in certain areas or to identify what kind of professional development was needed across the entire network. They also tracked other important indicators such as attendance, school culture, and teacher satisfaction. (See sample IA data in **Exhibit 5**.)

The uniform data helped keep the school leaders aligned. In weekly emails, the CSOs shared an IA dashboard with their teams of AMDs and COOs, along with information about meetings, upcoming decisions and actions to be completed, and inspirational stories from the schools. The CSOs relied on the AMDs to help monitor their portfolios; AMDs managed schools daily and provided support to principals, while principals managed their teachers. The COOs managed associate COOs, who in turn managed the directors of operations at the schools. The new structure had somewhat blurred the lines

among the roles of the CSOs, AMDs, and COOs in areas that crossed instruction and operations, making it unclear who was responsible for what. However, in the summer of 2016 they set out a process to determine who owned which issue, who did what research, and who made final decisions.

Additionally, CSOs monitored their portfolios through school visits. Every other week, a CSO and an AMD visited a school for two hours, spending 45 minutes in classrooms, to assess the school against a set rubric. They identified positive trends and gaps in instruction, then developed plans for improvement for the principal. Jackson noted that each school visit was an opportunity to stay connected to the students and teachers. She knew about 10 students by name at every school and kept tabs on how they were doing, for instance by asking about the book they were reading during the last visit. She also tried to follow up with several teachers and the principal after a visit.

Improvement through Innovation

The Uncommon team considered standardization an important step towards increasing innovation. “Once we have consistent baselines, it will be easier to see where and how we need to innovate,” said Phillips. He and the CSOs each led work to identify which tools and practices should be disseminated throughout the organization. The working groups then helped codify best practices and create professional development sessions to train their colleagues on implementation, such as how to “chart the error”: how to write down the elements of a discussion on a whiteboard to enhance comprehension. Phillips also stayed abreast of innovations outside of Uncommon. For example, to bring greater efficiency to the teacher development process, he launched in 2015 a pilot of the video platform Kaltura to store and share classroom videos.³ He summarized Uncommon’s approach to innovation: “We don’t want to spend too much time learning and implementing big innovations like personalized learning before standardizing our known best practices. So many of our schools are working really well. We’re confident all will start doing just as well once they’re aligned to the core best practices.”

The Uncommon team tried more outside-the-box innovations to address non-academic challenges. One was a two-week summer camp that Uncommon launched in 2016 for over 100 of its middle school students to help with social-emotional, non-cognitive learning. “It was the first time we did something like this. The kids flourished, the staff was rejuvenated, and everyone felt reconnected to the mission,” said Phillips. The success was backed up by data, including pre- and post-camp surveys from parents and staff, which Phillips planned to use to inform future program decisions.

Uncommon 2020: Achieve, Expand, Impact

The organizational restructuring coincided with the 2015 launch of a new strategic five-year plan, developed in partnership with the consulting firm Bain (refer to **Exhibit 2**). The previous five-year plan had focused on scaling, and in reaching 42 schools Uncommon had surpassed its 2015 target by 10 schools. The 2015 plan coupled expansion with an ambitious academic goal—close the economic and racial achievement gap at every school—to ensure that a college degree was within reach for every child. They had previously measured student achievement based on regional averages, but this meant that top performing schools could counterbalance the low performing ones. They hoped that this new goal, which they believed was more rigorous than many of their CMO peers’, would help bring consistency across the network. Moreover, the new achievement goal had helped with alignment. “We had never told our schools what exactly we were aiming for in terms of achievement, so every leader was shooting for different goals and creating their own performance indicators,” said Lee McGovern.

However, Lee McGovern pointed out, achievement could be in tension with their goal of adding 20-30 more schools by straining teacher availability and management time. To reach their expansion goal, Uncommon would have to hire around 2,000 teachers, 850 of whom would likely be brand new to teaching.⁴ Added Phillips, “We have always thought that if we hire people who are mission-aligned, gritty, and have a basic skillset, then we can train them to be great teachers. Someday there may be a limit to that strategy, but we’re certainly not there yet.” Expansion would also strain the pipeline of leaders needed to fill the growing number of principal and AMD roles, since most were selected from among Uncommon’s top instructors. However, Uncommon’s high bar for leadership led to some teachers leaving for other charter schools where they could rise faster to leadership positions.

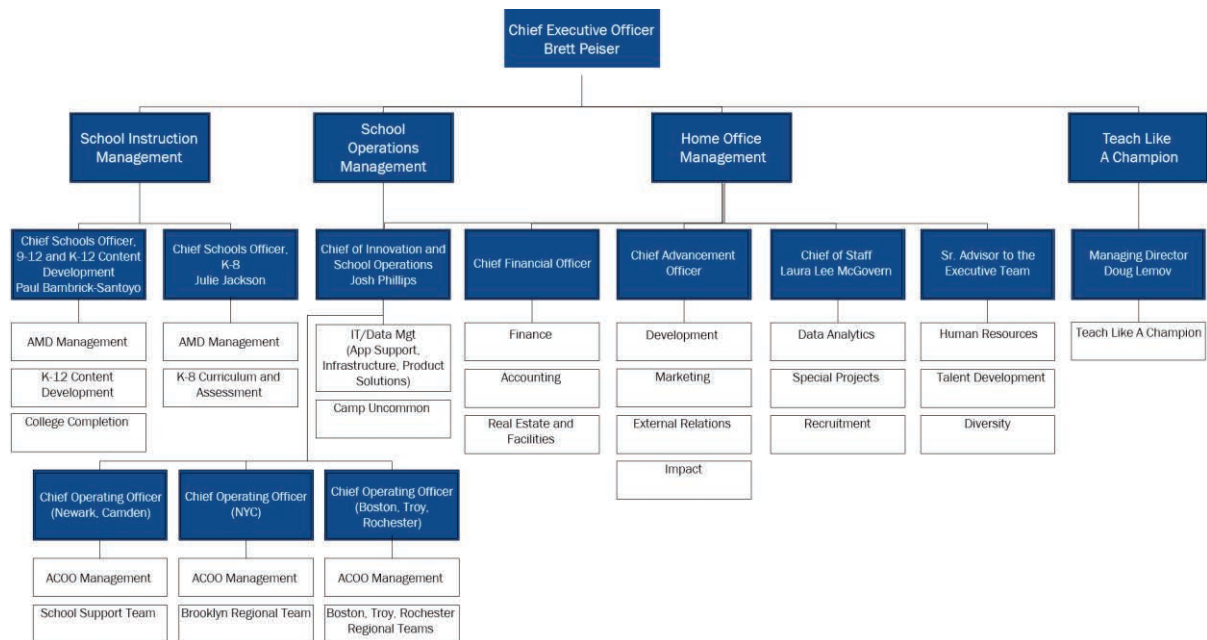
Peiser and his team believed that the impact goal complemented both the achievement and expansion efforts. For example, as Uncommon hired brand new teachers, a working group codified best techniques for training them, which Bambrick-Santoyo published in the 2016 book *Get Better Faster: A 90-Day Plan for Coaching New Teachers*.⁵ This benefited internal and external teachers alike. Uncommon also developed successful partnerships with public school districts in New York City, Newark, and Rochester to share best practices. They believed that their external impact efforts might encourage more top teachers to apply to Uncommon.

Quality at Scale

In the summer of 2016, Uncommon was beginning the second year of what Peiser thought would be a three-year transition to the new model. So far, he felt that the senior leaders were enthusiastic about the new strategy to meet their five-year goals, but he worried that buy-in at the school level remained insufficient. But as the 2015-2016 school year results came in, Peiser was optimistic about the transition. (See **Exhibits 6** and **7**.) Uncommon’s results in almost every school had increased over the previous year at nearly twice the rate of state averages. For instance, Rochester had stronger performance than ever before, with its elementary and middle schools earning proficiency scores in ELA and math at six times the rate of district schools. Troy, meanwhile, outperformed district schools at two times the rate in ELA and 2.5 times the rate in math. Camden had shown great improvements since joining the network in 2014. While the region still lagged behind Uncommon’s established cities given its lower starting point, from the 2014-2015 school year to 2015-2016 school year, it had six times the growth in ELA and nine times the growth in math.

In high schools, 2016 marked the third straight year where 100% of Uncommon’s students were accepted into college, compared to 68% of nationwide white students and 82% of students from the top-income quartile.⁶ For the first time, Uncommon’s elementary and middle schools began to move collectively into the same quadrant of high performance among students receiving free and reduced-price lunch (i.e., economically disadvantaged). (See **Exhibit 8**.) “Our schools are now more consistently rigorous and our overall performance is stronger than ever before. Beyond our hard-working teachers, I think that’s all because of Julie and Paul, and their AMDs who are laser-focused on managing principals for success,” said Peiser.

Now the question was whether Uncommon could continue to add schools to the network without compromising achievement. While Peiser believed that alignment would help improve performance, he was concerned that it might constrain innovation and continuous improvement. “In order to create a system of highly effective schools, we’ve identified what we believe are a set of instructional and leadership practices that work well,” said Peiser. “Are there are others? Absolutely. But are there others that can work for a system of 49 schools and 14,000 students? I’m not sure. Scale is the issue. Will we hit a ceiling with this strategy?”

Exhibit 1 Uncommon School Organizational Chart, 2016

Source: Company documents.

Exhibit 2 Uncommon's Five-Year Plan, 2015

Source: Company documents.

Exhibit 3 Uncommon's Expansion Timeline, 1997-2016

Year	School	Location
1997	North Star Academy - Downtown Middle School	Newark, NJ
1999	Roxbury Prep - Mission Hill Campus	Boston, MA
2000	North Star Academy - Washington Park High School	Newark, NJ
2004	Excellence Boys Charter School Elementary Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2005	North Star Academy - Clinton Hill Middle School	Newark, NJ
2005	Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School	Brooklyn, NY
2006	Leadership Prep Bedford Stuyvesant Elementary Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2006	Rochester Prep Middle School – Brooks Campus	Rochester, NY
2007	North Star Academy - Vailsburg Elementary School	Newark, NJ
2007	Kings Collegiate Charter School	Brooklyn, NY
2008	Excellence Boys Charter School Middle Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2008	Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School	Brooklyn, NY
2009	Excellence Girls Charter School Elementary Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2009	Leadership Prep Brownsville Elementary Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2009	Brownsville Collegiate Charter School	Brooklyn, NY
2009	Uncommon Charter High School	Brooklyn, NY
2009	Troy Prep Middle School	Troy, NY
2010	North Star Academy - West Side Park Elementary School	Newark, NJ
2010	North Star Academy - Vailsburg Middle School	Newark, NJ
2010	Leadership Prep Ocean Hill Elementary Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2010	Leadership Prep Bedford Stuyvesant Middle Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2010	Ocean Hill Collegiate Charter School	Brooklyn, NY
2010	Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School	Brooklyn, NY
2010	Rochester Prep Elementary School	Rochester, NY
2011	North Star Academy - Fairmount Elementary School	Newark, NJ
2011	Rochester Prep Middle School – West Campus	Rochester, NY
2011	Roxbury Prep - Lucy Stone Campus	Boston, MA
2011	Troy Prep Elementary School	Troy, NY
2012	North Star Academy - Liberty Elementary School	Newark, NJ
2012	North Star Academy - West Side Park Middle School	Newark, NJ
2012	Uncommon Collegiate Charter High School	Brooklyn, NY
2012	Roxbury Prep Charter School - Dorchester Campus	Boston, MA
2013	Rochester Prep Elementary School – West Campus	Rochester, NY
2013	Leadership Prep Canarsie Elementary Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2013	Leadership Prep Canarsie Middle Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2013	Leadership Prep Ocean Hill Middle Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2013	Excellence Girls Charter School Middle Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2013	Leadership Prep Brownsville Middle Academy	Brooklyn, NY
2014	North Star Academy – Alexander Street Elementary	Newark, NJ
2014	Uncommon Schools Camden Prep Elementary School	Camden, NJ
2014	Rochester Prep High School	Rochester, NY
2014	Uncommon Preparatory Charter High School	Brooklyn, NY
2015	Roxbury Prep High School	Boston, MA
2015	North Star Academy – Central Avenue Middle School	Newark, NJ
2016	Rochester Prep - Elementary School #3	Rochester, NY
2016	North Star Academy - Elementary School #6	Newark, NJ
2016	North Star Academy – Lincoln Park High School	Newark, NJ
2016	Uncommon Schools Camden Prep Middle School	Camden, NJ
2016	Kings Elementary School	Brooklyn, NY

Source: Company documents.

Exhibit 4 Sample Content Walk-through: Math

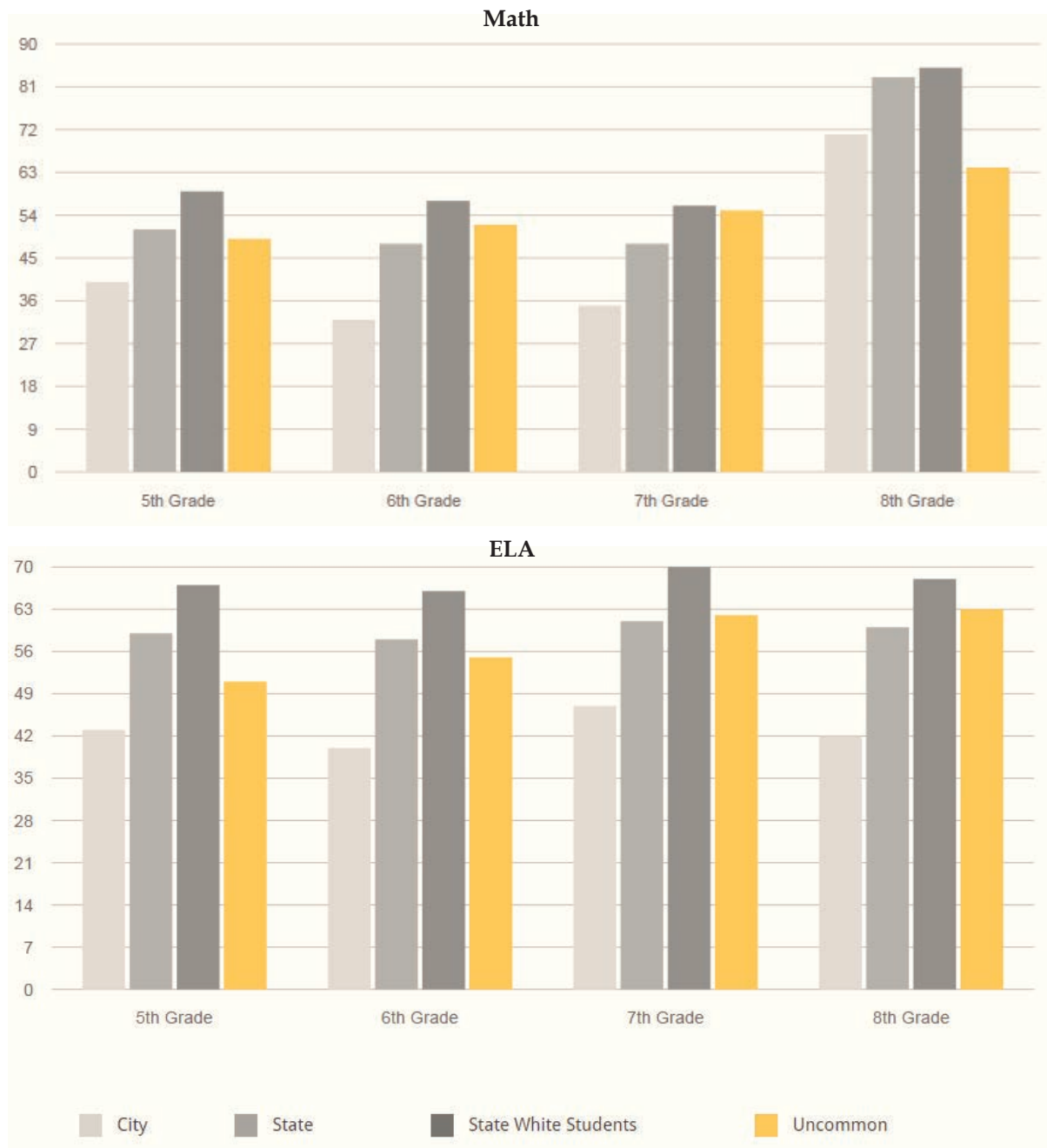
Overall Positive Trends	• Large amount of student work time is being included in all classrooms. • All teachers are showing fidelity to the lesson plan. • Teachers are strategically emphasizing remediation skills through opening procedures. • Teacher model of what work should look like is high-quality based on organization, annotation, and thorough mathematical thinking being shown. • Has a strong instructional coach and model of teaching who gives real time feedback that aligns to the framework and made a first year teacher's classroom look anything but that. • Instructional coaches have heavy emphasis on math annotation that is transferred to their teachers and students.
Overall Trends of Growth	• Drop feedback on every student paper and collect data on clipboard to identify error trends: Teachers are not dropping feedback on every student's paper, even though they may have prompted them. For clearer student feedback, ensure the teacher drops feedback on every student paper and records errors on their clipboard. This is the precursor step to teachers consistently and accurately identifying the error trend to be debriefed to the whole class. • Chart the Error/Show Call with Key Takeaways Charted on Paper: Although teachers are addressing error in a variety of ways (show call, chart the error, verbal feedback, student modeling, etc.) there is not a logging of key takeaways to be referred back to throughout the day's lesson and upcoming lessons. Instead, teachers must chart their key takeaways to be used as a resource for students during pen to paper tasks. For example, in 6th grade two key takeaways were identified in two different error discussions. Below is a checklist that should be developed with these takeaways. - o When dividing by a decimal: 1. Dividend (total) in the house, divisor outside the house 2. If decimal is moved in divisor, it must be moved in the dividend Then when aggressively monitoring, the teacher can say, "check point #1" to connect them back to their discussion. • Draw a connection between charting the error and aggressive monitoring by naming a lap that closes the gap: After whole group moments a lap is not being named that clearly aligns to students closing the gap. Instead, draw a connection between charting the error and aggressive monitoring by naming a lap that closes the gap. For example, "I am coming around to see that you move the decimal in the dividend if you already moved it in the divisor," after closing the gap on decimal placement in division problems. • Utilize challenge and celebration of student work to build greater intellectual engagement: Currently there are strong best practices happening in classrooms around math instruction, but approximately 25% of students are not actively engaged in the content. In order to increase investment, provide challenges such as, "If you achieve 100% on your GP (#2 and #3) you will earn a dollar on your paycheck" or provide a stamp/sticker/star/high five to validate student work and build greater investment. Quick Hits • Teacher model should be teacher owned. • Word wall for that day's instruction (words may come from that lesson or previous lessons). • Reconsider seat assignments for the back row of students in each classroom. • Oral drill—students stand for rolling numbers, sit for questions so teacher can break the plane.
Positive Outliers	• Urgent aggressive monitoring. • Charting the error. • Strategic debrief of do now questions based on error trends from earlier 6th grade classes.
Outliers of Concern	• During the Explore task, students provided an incorrect stamp, but the teacher did not address through prompting. Instead, she simply charted her stamp and moved on. • Student work time started off strong then students quickly became off task without redirects.
Next Steps	• Practicing aggressive monitoring during data meetings. • Creating a scope and sequence of goals for Meg and Moni to use with their teachers.

Source: Adapted from company documents.

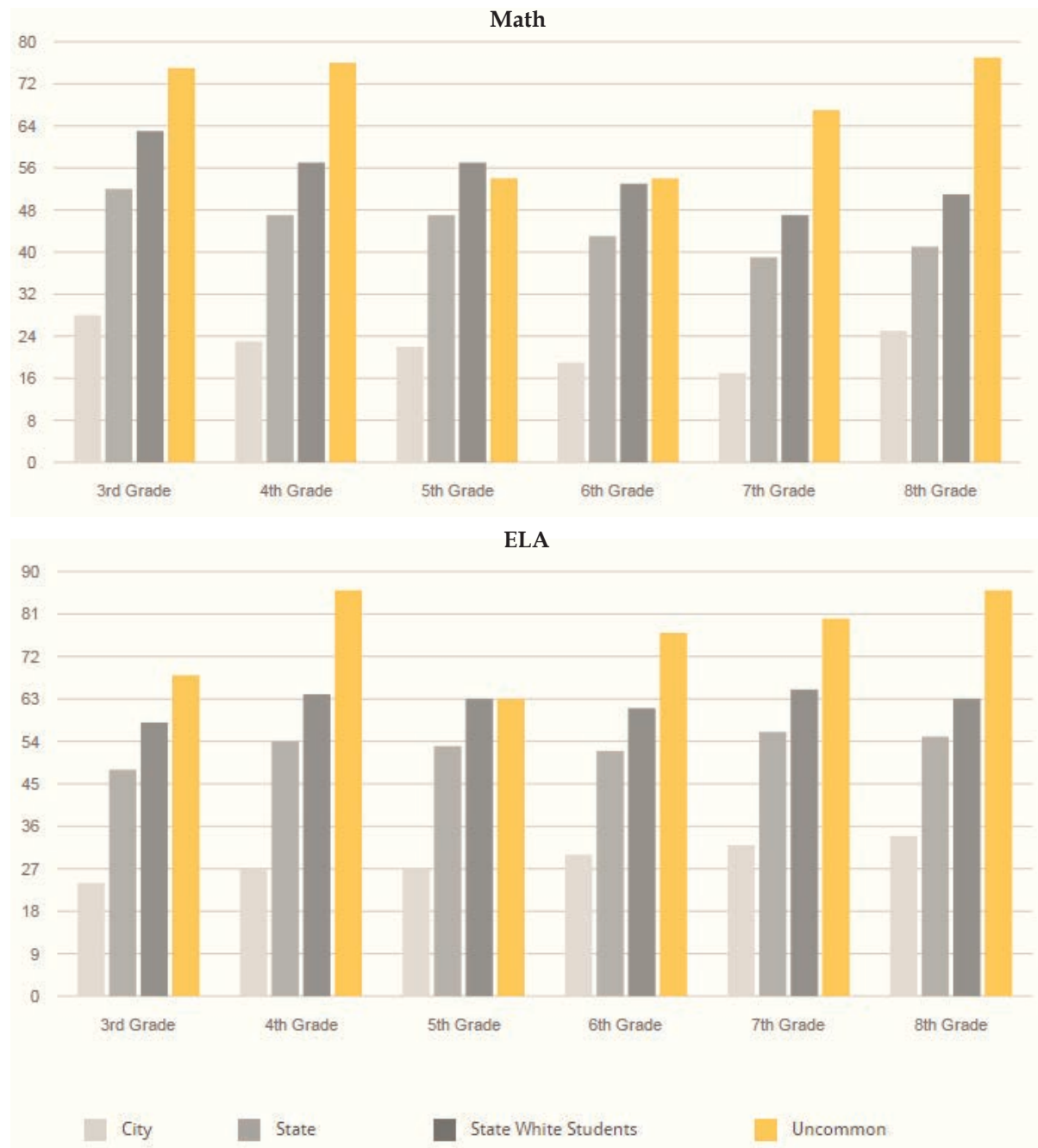
Exhibit 5 Sample CSO Dashboard, Middle School Results, Select Schools, 2016

Metric	Target	Region 1												Region 2												Region 3												Region 4			
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X																
Performance (based on state targets)	ELA State Tests Gr 5-8: % scoring proficient or better	42%	37%	24%	34%	53%	32%	40%	38%	49%	57%	36%	38%	75%	74%	85%	75%	N/A	N/A	31%	28%	24%	64%	56%	53%																
	Math State Tests Gr 5-7: % scoring proficient or better	45%	36%	25%	52%	65%	43%	42%	48%	66%	57%	52%	50%	63%	66%	69%	57%	N/A	N/A	42%	34%	34%	54%	50%	60%																
	Gr 5 % scoring proficient or better	44%	26%	17%	35%	48%	42%	31%	33%	58%	54%	43%	32%	50%	62%	68%	57%	N/A	N/A	38%	18%	34%	44%	49%	53%																
	Gr 6 % scoring proficient or better	47%	39%	25%	56%	69%	37%	31%	47%	60%	57%	57%	55%	50%	60%	65%	42%	N/A	N/A	36%	39%	35%	52%	58%	46%																
	Gr 7 % scoring proficient or better	44%	43%	35%	63%	82%	49%	68%	65%	81%	59%	56%	65%	68%	75%	68%	59%	N/A	N/A	52%	46%	32%	48%	48%	69%																
	Gr 8 % scoring proficient or better	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	86%	70%	77%	73%	N/A	N/A			72%	45%	74%																
Perf on quart. benchmark for below-bar schools																																									
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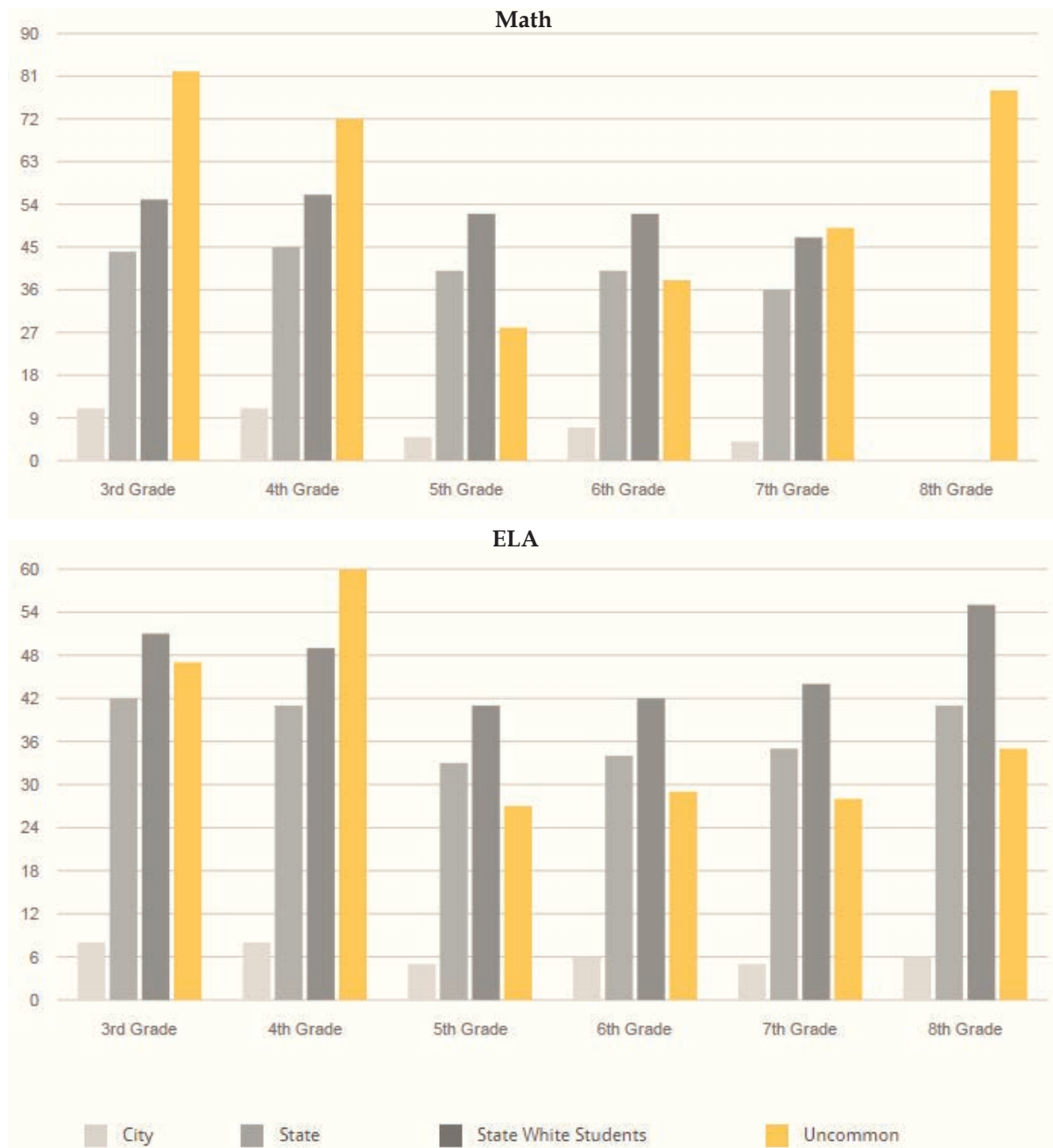
Source: Adapted from company documents.

Exhibit 6a Boston: % Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced by Grade, 2016

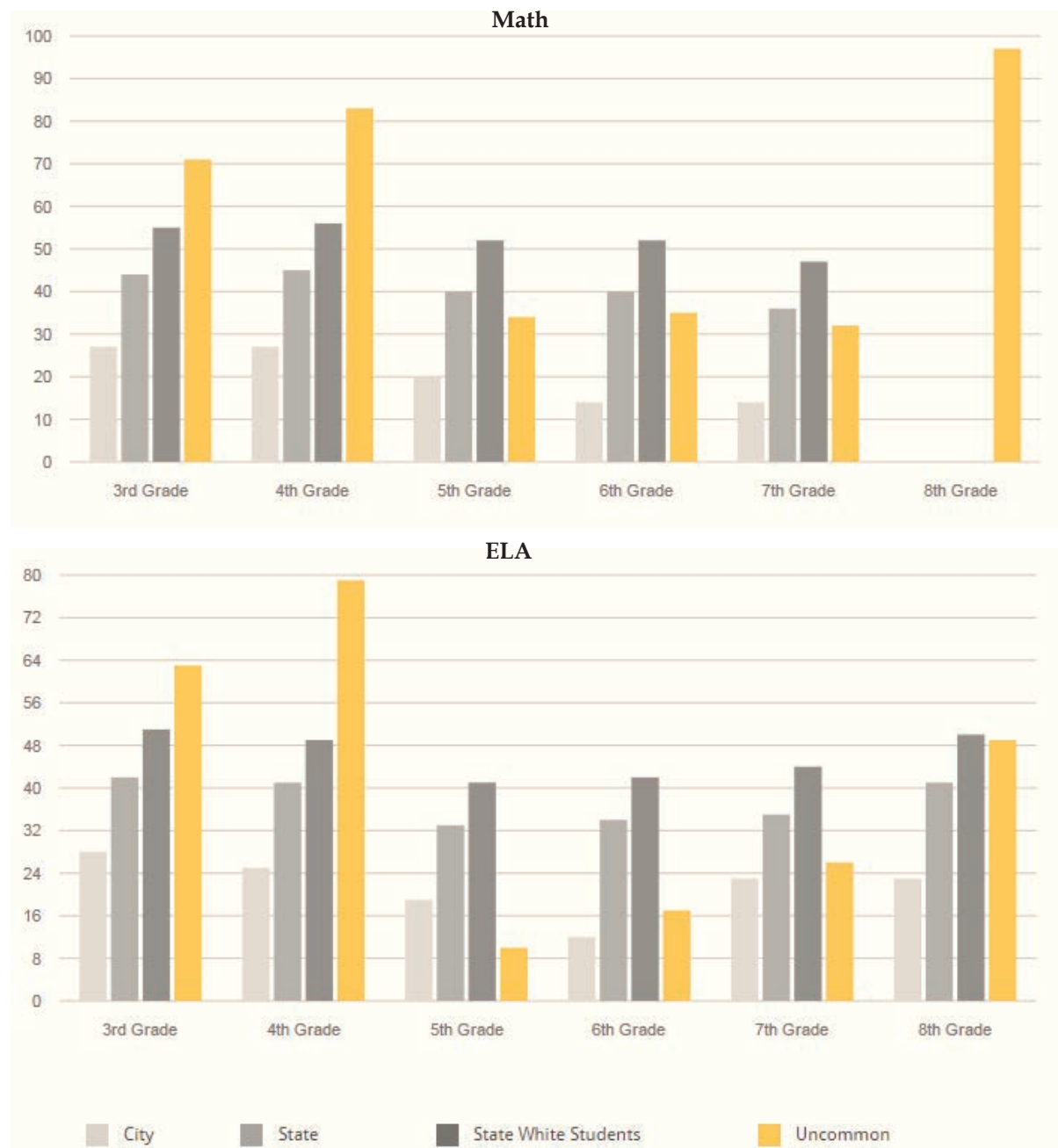
Source: Company documents.

Exhibit 6b Newark: % Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced by Grade, 2016

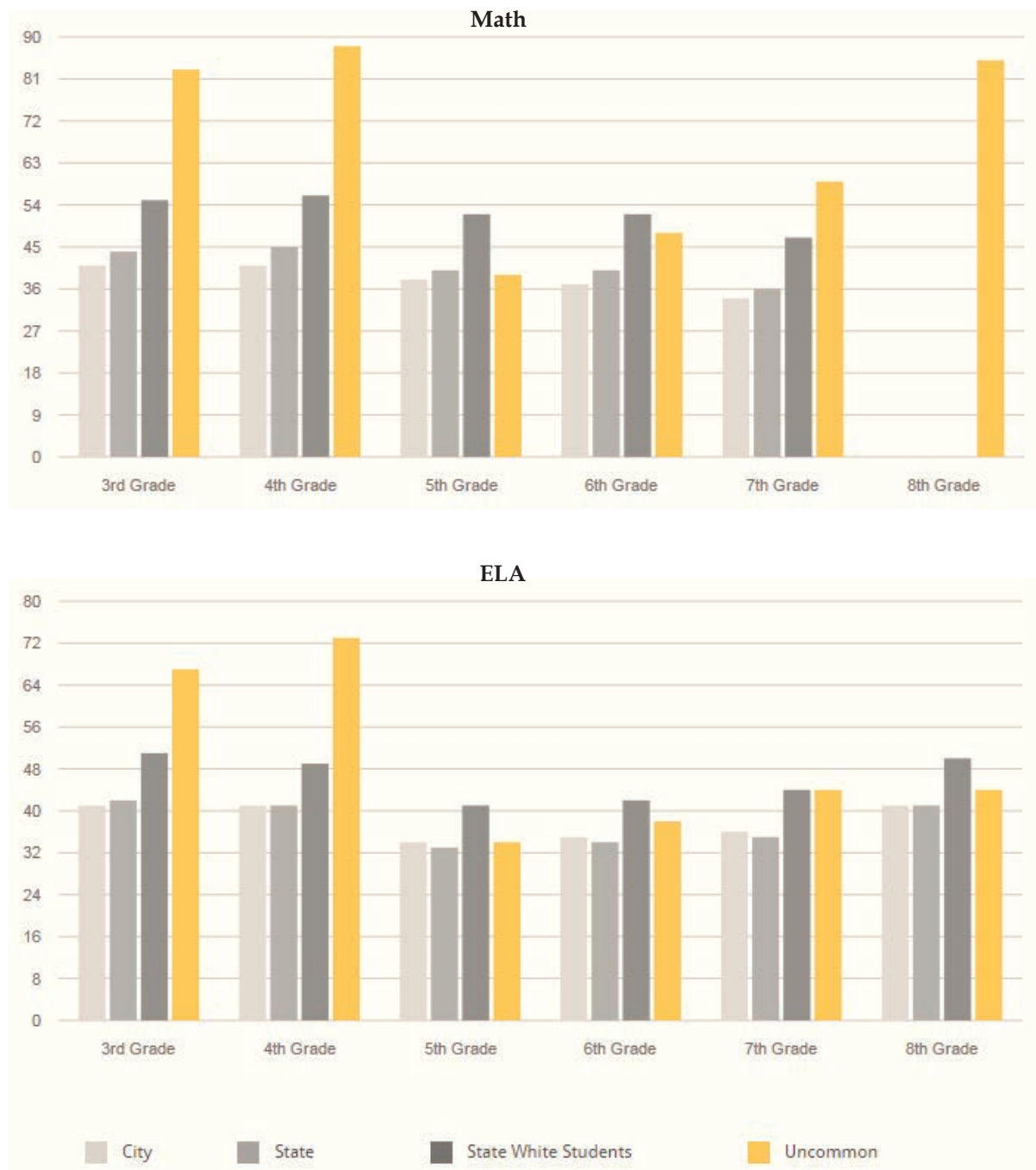
Source: Company documents.

Exhibit 6c Rochester: % Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced by Grade, 2016

Source: Company documents.

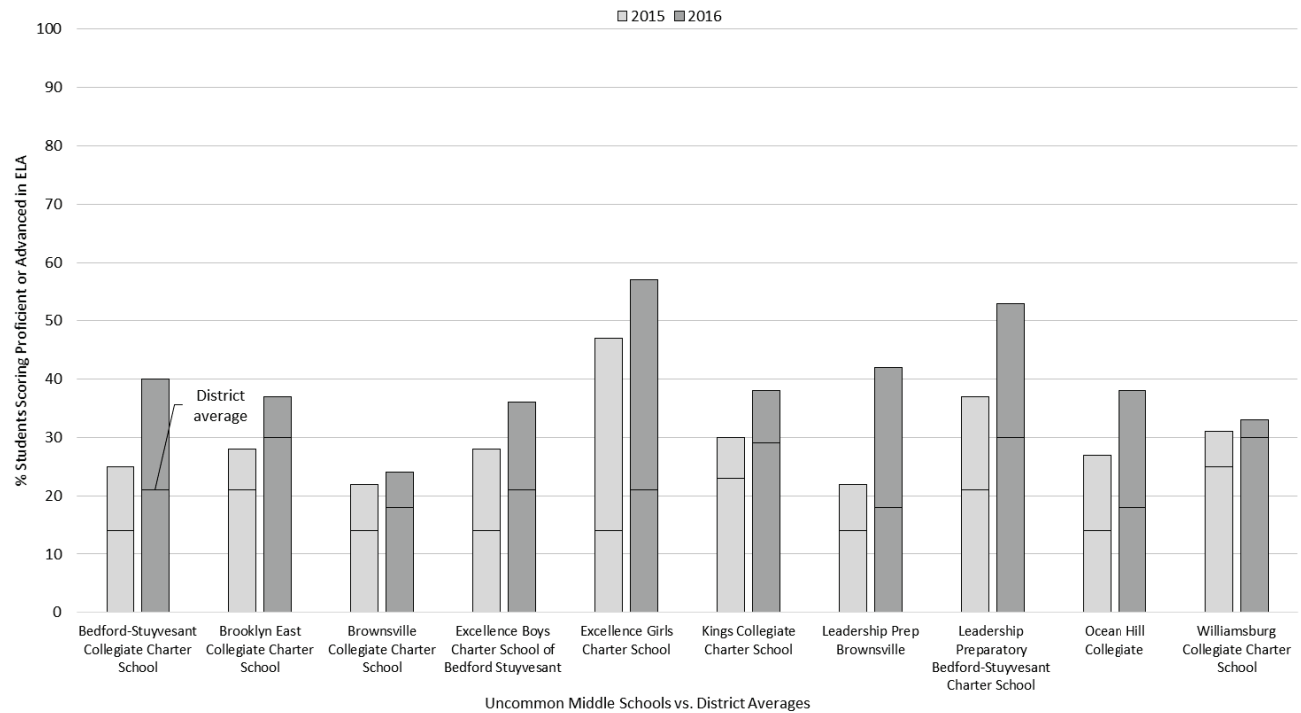
Exhibit 6d Troy: % Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced by Grade, 2016

Source: Company documents.

Exhibit 6e New York City: % Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced by Grade, 2016

Source: Company documents.

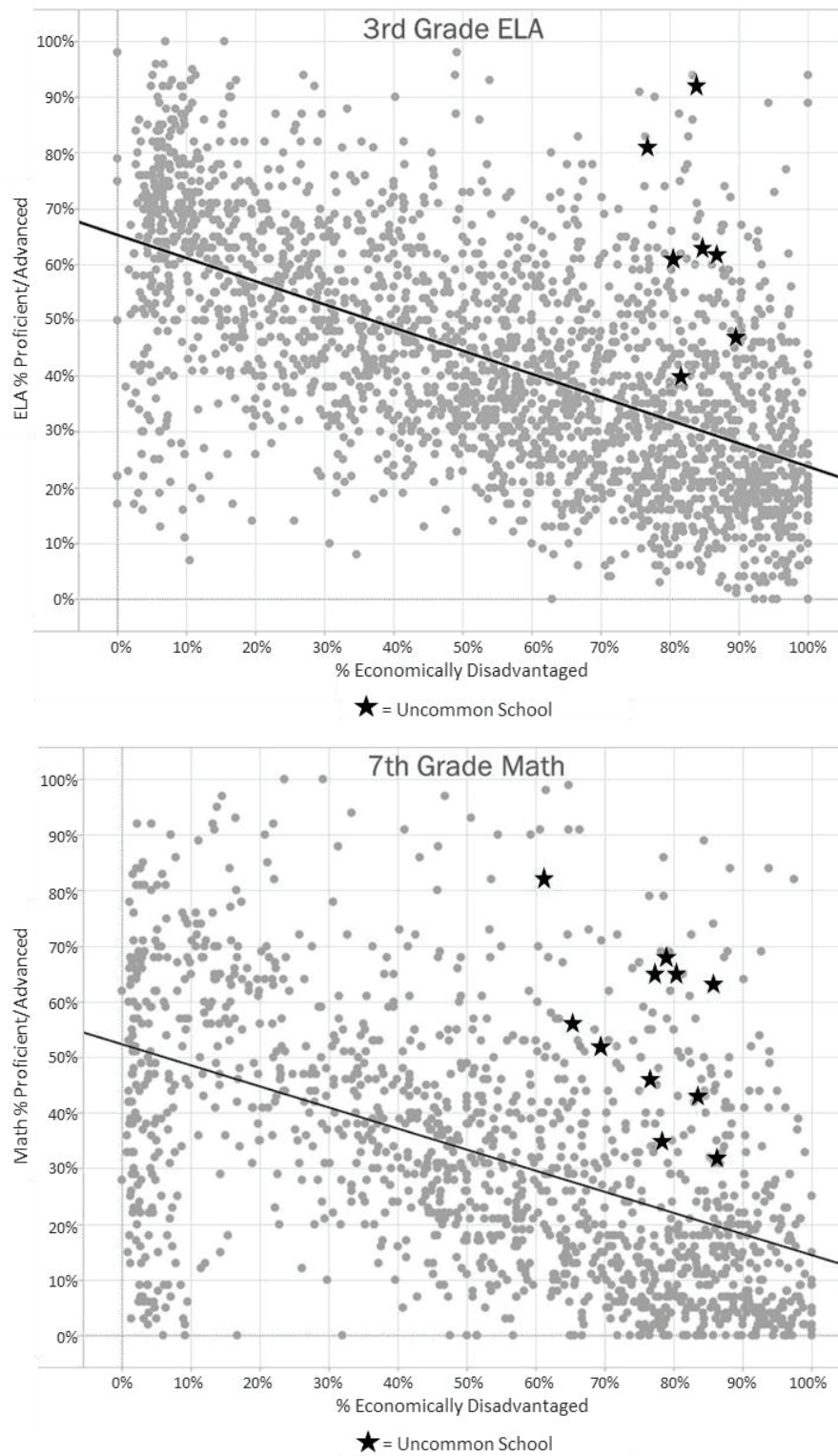
Exhibit 7 New York City: Uncommon vs. District Middle Schools (grades 5-8), % Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced, 2015-2016



Source: Casewriter, compiled from The New York State Education Department, <https://data.nysed.gov/>, 2016, accessed March 2017.

Note: Horizontal bars represent the results for the school's district. For example, in 2015, 25% of students at Bedford-Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School earned proficient or above in ELA, compared to 14% of students in the district.

In the 2015-2016 school year, Uncommon's New York schools moved to taking the more rigorous Algebra I Regents exam for 8th grade math instead of the state exam, therefore overall math results cannot be calculated in this manner for grades 5-8.

Exhibit 8 New York: Student Scores by % Economically Disadvantaged, ELA and Math, 2016

Source: Company documents.

¹ “Uncommon Schools Wins 2013 Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools,” Broad Foundation press release, July 2, 2013, available at *PRNewswire*, July 2, 2013, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/uncommon-schools-wins-2013-broad-prize-for-public-charter-schools-213985791.html>, accessed March 2017.

² Paul Barnwell, “The Ongoing Struggle of Teacher Retention,” *The Atlantic*, May 27, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/05/the-ongoing-struggle-of-teacher-retention/394211/>, accessed March 2017.

³ Uncommon Schools, “Uncommon | 2021 Project Narrative,” 2016, p. 21, <http://innovation.ed.gov/files/2016/10/uncommonschsPN.pdf>, accessed November 2016.

⁴ “Uncommon Schools,” The Broad Foundation, March 2014, p. 7, <http://broadfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/1864-uncommonschooswhitepaper.pdf>, accessed November 2016.

⁵ Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, *Get Better Faster: A 90-Day Plan for Coaching New Teachers* (Jossey-Bass, 2016).

⁶ “Uncommon | 2021 Project Narrative,” 2016, p. 14.