**Py City Schools Analysis**

Standardized test scores are frequently used to categorize schools as “good” or “bad” across the nation. Throughout history, the government has also implemented many incentive programs for schools to increase their test scores and overall passing rates to varying degrees of arguable success. As a result, schools and communities have analyzed success results and rationalized performance, whether above or below average, based on several markers such as school type, size, and district budget. Throughout this analysis, these factors are considered when comparing the results in math and reading testing between various schools in the Py City School District and to consider what decisions should be made regarding future funding for this district.

Py City School District offers multiple schooling experiences with 7 public and 8 charter high schools available within the district. When comparing the data from testing between the two types of schools, we start to see a clear difference in testing success. The overall district average math score is a 78.98 with a 74.98% passing rate. Charter schools return an 83.47 average score with a 93.62% passing rate while public schools return a 76.95 average score with a 66.54% passing rate. Comparing these, we can see that there is a dramatic difference in the testing success rates at the charter schools within the district compared to the public schools in math results with charter schools not only scoring higher but also scoring high enough to provide a higher passing percentage for students. We see these same higher results echoed in the reading scores, too. The district average score is 81.87 with a passing percentage of 85.80%. Charter schools return an 83.89 average score with a 96.58% passing rate while public schools return an 80.96 average score with an 80.79% passing rate. While the charter schools again have a higher average and passing score, the data here indicates that reading is a success marker for the Py City School District with passing percentages being higher than that of math tests. Finally, we consider overall passing percentages. The district average is 65.17% while charter schools return a 90.43% and public schools return a 53.67%. There are two considerations to be made about these results. The first is that overall passing percentages are lower than individual test passing rates, especially for the public schools. This suggests that many students are passing either math or reading, but there are substantially fewer passing both exams. The second consideration is that there is clearly a dramatic difference in the overall passing rates between charter schools and public schools and this is an area where the district should be attempting to make the gap in results smaller.

The next category that is used to rationalized test results is school size, typically that larger student bodies may indicate lower test scores as teachers are unable to provide the same amount of specialized attention, there may be a strain on resources, and several other factors. Analysis of test scores for Py City School District indicates some validity to this claim. Results show that there are some negligible differences between schools with a small (<1000) student body and medium (1000-2000) student body. However, the data shows a dramatic decrease in both average score and passing percentages between small and medium school sizes versus schools with a large (2000-5000) student body. The average score of math tests decreases by around 6 points and the passing percentage by about 24%. The average score of reading tests decreases by around 2 points and the passing percentage by about 14%. Finally, the overall passing percentage decreases by a whopping 32% between small and medium schools versus a large school. These results suggest that there is some work to be done to create an equitable experience for students regardless of school size when it comes to success on math and reading tests.

Finally, we consider school budget as a key factor for the difference in test results and as a consideration for how to properly allocate future funding. The most obvious line of thinking would be that more funding would result in more resources being able to be used to support student learning and, therefore, higher success rates for students on tests. However, results for this analysis would suggest that there exists an inverse relationship between amount of funding and school success. Our results show that, in each category, the more funding per capita, the lower the average test scores and passing percentages. Interestingly, we also see that the 4 schools that comprise the lowest spending category of <$585 per student are charter schools, two of which are in the top 5 highest performing schools. We also see that the 3 schools that comprise our highest spending category of $645-$680 per student are public schools and all 3 are in the lowest performing schools in the district. This would suggest that throwing money at the lowest performing schools without a real plan of action would not be an “easy fix” for the data discrepancies.

Final conclusions from this analysis offer some suggestions on how to improve test results for students within the Py City School District. The first suggestion would be to utilize funding to lower class sizes or even school sizes. Data indicates a dramatic improvement in small – medium sized schools so creating more of these environments would benefit students. The second consideration would be to closely analyze how math and reading curriculum is being developed, delivered, and supported at the district’s charter schools. While a charter school environment may not benefit every learner, it’s clear that the district’s charter schools are outperforming the public schools in these areas to a large degree. Finally, the last suggestion would be to consider **how** money and budgets are being used to support students. As the data suggests, more money does not equal better results. Rather, considerations should be made on how to increase the efficacy of the budgets to support student learning.