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New York Launches New System to Support School Improvement

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ALBANY, N.Y. (November 16, 2005) -- New York education and business leaders today unveiled a new Web-based system of tools designed to help schools improve. Just for the Kids-New York (JFTK-NY), an affiliate of the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), offered this new "toolkit" to the people of New York at the University at Albany. The purpose of the toolkit is to help educators use data to raise student achievement.

Supported by the University at Albany, the State University of New York, The Business Council of New York, IBM, State Farm Insurance, the Broad Foundation, and AT&T, JFTK-NY offers accurate, easy-to-understand student assessment data from all elementary and middle schools in the state. In addition, it has completed a study of high-performing elementary schools and provides best practices that these schools have used in raising student achievement. Using publicly available data from the New York State Assessment System, the [Just for the Kids-New York](#) website shows not only how well each school is doing, but it compares each school to others facing equal or greater challenges and let's them see their "opportunity gap" - the gap between their own performance and that of a similar school doing better.



"The students in the elementary and middle schools today will be the college students of tomorrow, and we can think of no better way to ensure their success and a bright future for America than our collaboration in Just for the Kids," said State University of New York Acting Chancellor John R. Ryan.

"Just for the Kids will become the bedrock for building better schools in New York," said University at Albany President Kermit L. Hall. "Its methodology can open doors for meaningful school improvement and enhanced student opportunity, and we are thrilled to support it. I commend Dean Susan Phillips of our School of Education for her vision in bringing Just for the Kids to New York."

The site also provides resources to help schools examine their own practices and learn what the best practices are in the high performing schools. It includes charts that let a school see its progress over three years, compared with "top comparable" schools as well as "best in state."

The tools are available on the Just for the Kids web site, which is free and requires no registration. The case studies of the high-performing elementary schools are also available on the [School of Education](#) website.

"Just For The Kids-New York takes school report cards to a new level of accessibility to parents and the general public. Along with displaying school achievement information in a powerful way it points schools and their communities in the right direction for increasing student achievement," said Edward Reinfurt, vice president of The Business Council of New York.

"We are very excited to bring this research-based program to New York, and believe it will bring about long-term, genuine solutions, rather than short-term responses," said School of Education Dean Susan D. Phillips, chair of JFTK-NY. "By establishing and making widely available the nation's best educational practices, it will become a constant source of valuable information and inspiration for all educators' school-improvement efforts."

Plans are under way to complete a best practices study of a sample of high and average performing middle schools during the 2006-07 academic year, and to complete a high school study.

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