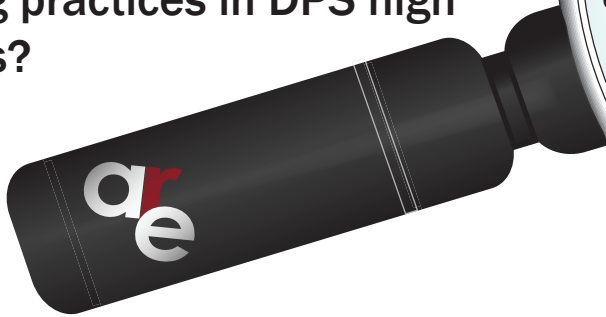




# Question:

What is the status of course grading practices in DPS high schools?



# Answer:

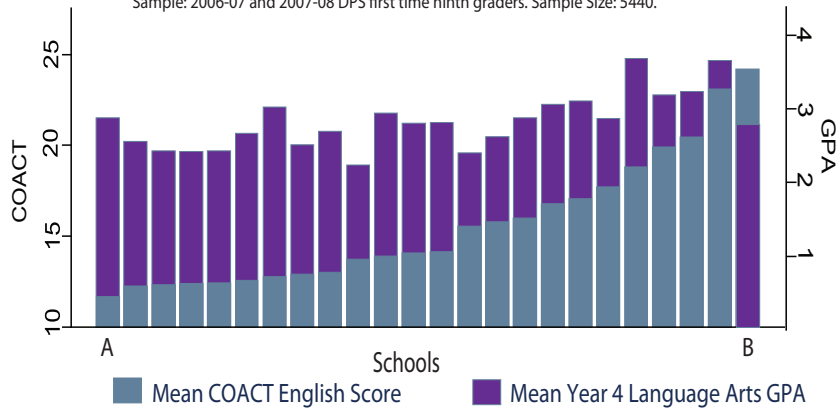
Course grading policies are inconsistent across the district: A letter grade means different things in different schools.

Grades do not align with external measures in a consistent manner. For example, DPS high schools have similar GPAs even though they have very different Colorado ACT average scores (Fig. 1).

Grades are currently comprised of achievement and additional factors (attendance, participation, etc.) which may explain the inconsistencies in GPA among subgroups with similar Colorado ACT scores (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1. Poor alignment with Colorado ACT.

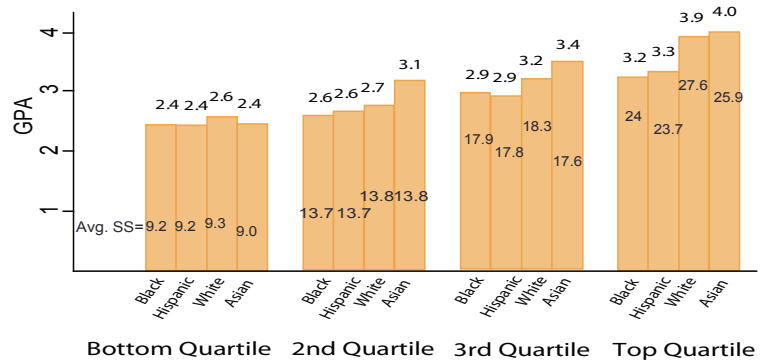
Sample: 2006-07 and 2007-08 DPS first time ninth graders. Sample Size: 5440.



For example, School A had a low average COACT score (about 12). School B had a much higher average COACT score (about 24). The two schools had similar GPAs (about 2.8).

Fig. 2. Average Year 4 Language Arts GPA by Ethnicity & 11th Grade COACT English Score

Sample: 2006-07 and 2007-08 DPS first time ninth graders. Sample Size: 5321.



## Recommendations:

1. The district should work with schools and community groups to set common definitions of letter grades so that a letter grade represents the same academic achievement level across the district. DPS has begun collecting input from stake holders.
2. The district should continue to investigate where differences in grading practices exist and identify best practices in schools where grades align well with external measures such as college remediation.
3. The district and schools can use the implementation of Common Core Standards as an opportunity to examine and align course grading practices.