

Arete Update

Arete
(Gk):
top of
mountain,
excellence

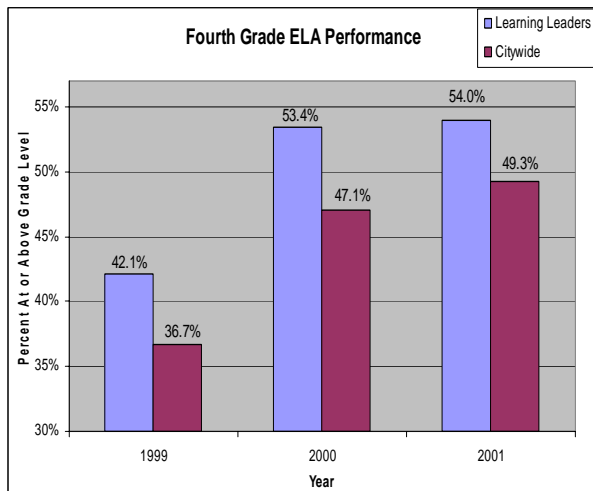
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Major Study on Benefits of Parent Volunteering in NYC Schools:

Arete released our latest report, "Parent Volunteers Make the Difference," the result of two years of research on **Learning Leaders®**. With nearly 12,000 volunteers, **Learning Leaders** is one of the largest parent involvement in education programs in the nation.

Our study presented a far-reaching analysis, and quantified the diverse impacts of Learning Leaders' approach. The findings present a remarkable portrait of linked positive effects when parent involvement in schools is properly structured and supported. We measured changes in parent involvement in their child's school, impacts on the parent volunteers themselves, on the climate of the school, and on the academic performance of the children of the volunteers.

While it is taken for granted that volunteer and parent involvement in a child's education is valuable, there is a dearth of rigorous quantitative analysis of programs that succeed. Arete's report makes a significant contribution to this research. Selected findings:



- **Parent At-Home Behaviors Improve:** After becoming a Learning Leader, parents spend on average 27% more time reading with their children and 22% more time helping with homework than before. They also take their children to the library more often, provide more books and learning materials at home, and take greater control of time spent on TV and video games.

- **Students Perform Better:** Children of Learning Leaders perform better academically than their peers, scoring 10 to 15% higher on the 4th grade New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and 4 to 10% higher on Math tests.

- **Attendance is Higher:** Children of Learning Leaders are absent 20 to 25% less than their peers. The New York State aid formula is driven by attendance; if the attendance rate exhibited by Learning Leaders' children were emulated throughout the school system, NYC would receive \$56 million more annually in state aid.

- **Schools Benefit:** Schools with 20+ Learning Leaders are safer, had 21% to 27% fewer student suspensions than comparison schools for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. In addition, 67% of Learning Leaders parents speak with their child's teacher at least once a week. They are also twice as likely as other parents to join the Parents Association and School Leadership Team.

- **Spanish-Speaking Parents Get Involved:** Whereas language barriers have often deterred parents from getting involved in schools, the opposite is the case with Spanish-speaking Learning Leaders. Hispanics constitute the largest single ethnic group among Learning Leaders volunteers, even greater than the equivalent Hispanic student percentage of the school system (over 42% of the parent volunteers vs. 38% of the students). These volunteers report even larger increases than do English-speaking parent volunteers in time spent reading with their children (an increase of 56% vs. 14% for English speakers) and helping with homework (39% increase vs. 11%).

Gold and Silver:

President Jim Meier's endurance sports have attracted a following among clients, armchair admirers, and fellow competitors who wonder how a New Yorker can train for these events. Again this year, Meier took a silver medal in the 50-km Lake Placid Loppet, followed by his 5th gold medal in the Canadian Ski Marathon (CSM), earning him CSM's highest honor—a permanent number. The CSM, the world's longest cross-country ski race, is a 100-mile, two-day event. Jim competed in the highest category, camping out and carrying a sleeping bag, food, and gear in a backpack the whole distance (see picture on reverse). His final competition was the 30-km Great Ski Race, which goes up over the mountain from Lake Tahoe to Truckee, CA.

