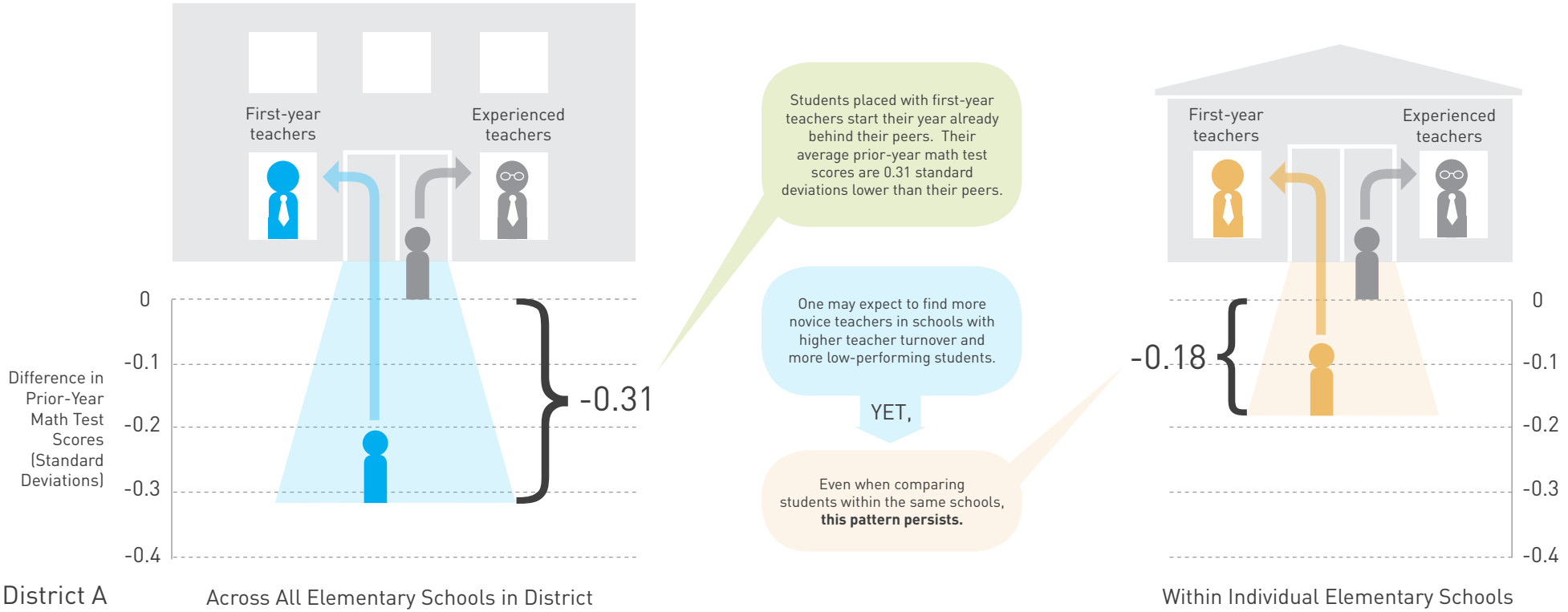
THE NOVICE TEACHER PLACEMENT PATTERN

Do Low-Performing Students Get Placed with Novice Teachers?

Yes, both across the district and within individual schools.

The Strategic Performance Indicator *The Novice Teacher Placement Pattern* examines whether lower-performing students are disproportionately placed in classrooms of first-year teachers. It shows that this placement pattern is evident not only across all schools in a district, but also in the classroom assignments within individual schools. Because first-year teachers, on average, tend to be less effective than teachers with several years of experience, placing students who are already academically behind their peers with novice teachers is likely to exacerbate achievement gaps. This suggests that schools and districts may not be tracking teacher placements in a way that will optimize outcomes for the lowest-performing students.



District A

Across All Elementary Schools in District

Within Individual Elementary Schools

WHAT ARE STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS?

Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs) are measures that reveal policy and management levers that have the potential to improve student outcomes. SPIs are derived from a set of rigorous analyses that the Strategic Data Project (SDP) performs on a common set of issues using existing data from partnering education agencies. Housed at the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University, SDP's mission is to transform the use of data in education to improve student achievement.

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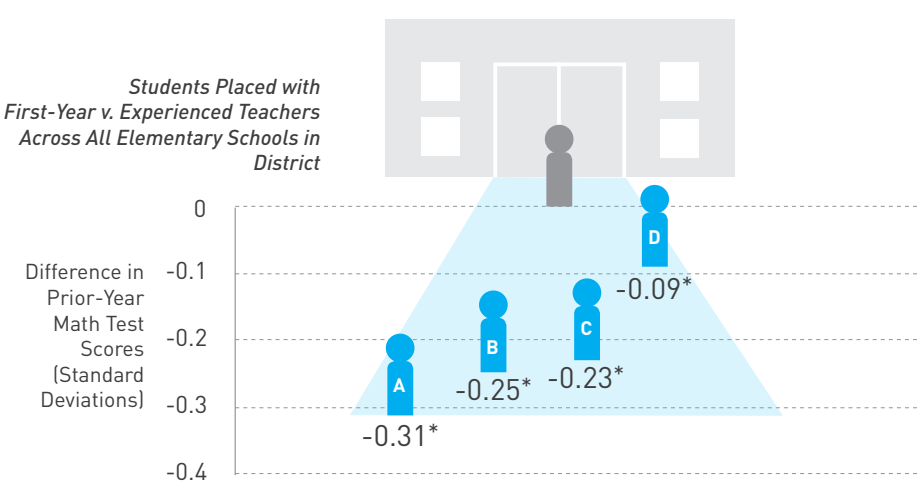
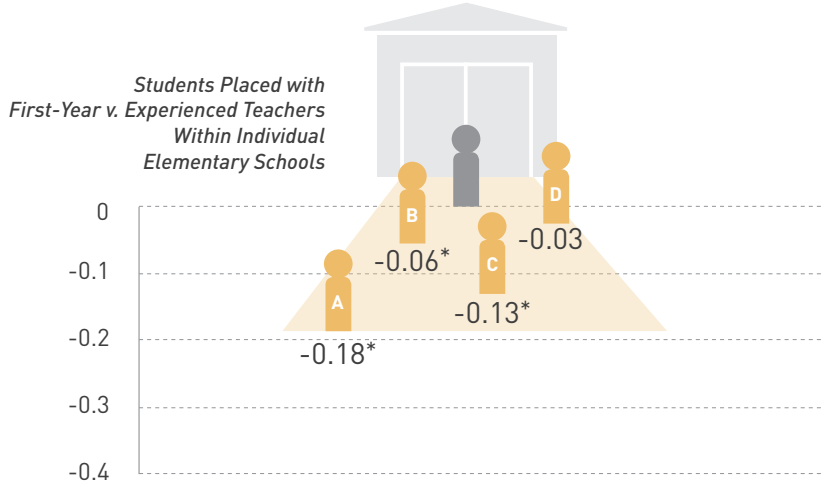
What are the results across SDP partner districts?

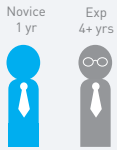
The graphs below present *The Novice Teacher Placement Pattern* results in four SDP partner districts. In each district, students who are placed with first-year teachers start the year academically behind their peers placed with experienced teachers, both across all schools in the district and within individual schools.



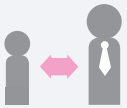


NOTE: * indicates statistical significance at the 5% level. The result within schools for District D is not statistically significant and therefore may not be different than zero.

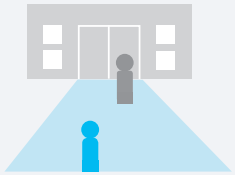
How do we construct this measure?



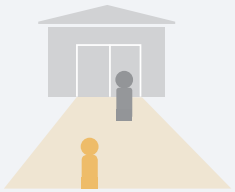
1. First, we identify first-year math teachers ("novices") and separate them from math teachers in the fourth year or more ("experienced").



2. Next, we identify the students placed with each type of teacher using student roster data and examine their prior-year math scores. We convert state-specific test scores into standard-deviation ("SD") units to make the results comparable across districts.



3. We then calculate the difference in average prior-year test scores for students placed with first-year teachers versus students placed with experienced teachers across the entire district.



4. Finally, taking the across-district differences into account, we make the same calculation for the students within each individual school to determine the pattern of placement of low-performing students with first-year and experienced teachers.

Why does this matter?

Lower-performing students are exactly those who need to accelerate their performance if they are to catch up. Systematically placing them with novice teachers could compound their academic difficulties and exacerbate existing achievement gaps.

For more information about how to construct this measure and other analytical factors for use in performance measurement of education systems, please visit the Strategic Data Project's Toolkit for Effective Data Use at http://hvrd.me/sdp-toolkit