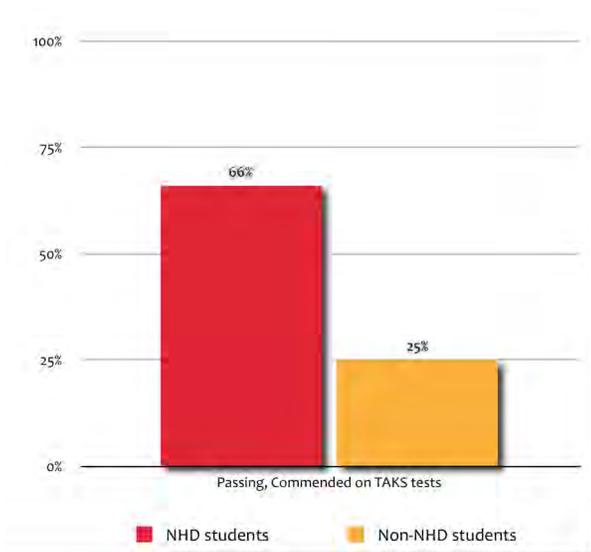


Key Evaluation Findings

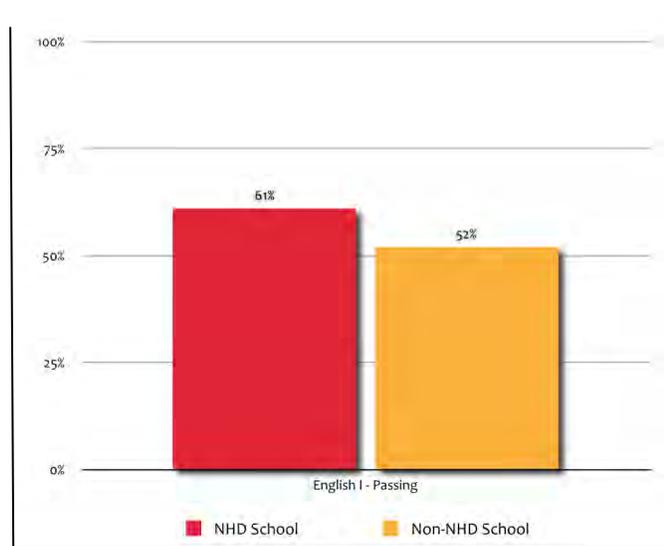


The Chicago Metro History Education Center acts as the local affiliate of the National History Day program. Call it “History Fair” or “History Day,” we are doing the same important work—giving students the opportunity to discover history and draw their own conclusions based on research. While teachers have known for years that this inquiry-based history education model works, only recently did funding become available to conduct an in-depth scientific evaluation proving the program’s impact on student achievement. In 2010, Rockman et al, an educational evaluation firm based in Bloomington, Indiana, finished a multiyear study that analyzed the impact of National History Day on student learning. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach contrasting the achievement of NHD students against a like comparison group based on performance assessments, student and teacher surveys, interviews and focus groups, and achievement and behavioral data.

NHD students outperform their non-NHD peers on standardized tests in all topic areas — including reading, science, and math, as well as social studies.



In Texas, NHD students outperformed their non-NHD peers on TAKS tests. During four years of performance, NHD students scored more than twice as well on TAKS as non-NHD students. Nearly two-thirds of NHD students met the minimum, had commended performance, or passed TAKS the first time, compared to 25% of non-NHD students.



NHD students in South Carolina outperformed their non-NHD peers on English assessments. NHD high school students led their school district with a 61% passing rate in English 1— 9% above a comparison site. The NHD school was also in the top 10 state public high schools on passage of AP exams in 2008-2009. (School demographics: 51% black, 47% white; 57% free and reduced lunch.)

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The study tracked academic performance on standardized tests in four states. Each state test was different, but here are a few additional highlights:

- In South Carolina, NHD students passed the state Constitution test at significantly higher rates than their peers—26% higher than the district rate; 14% higher than comparison students; and 9% above the state rate. In 2009, NHD 8th graders scored significantly higher than their peers on the state social studies test—36% vs. 23% exemplary ratings. After dropping NHD in 2010, scores went down to 30% (from 36% the prior year) and the number of students NOT meeting the proficiency levels went up to 40% (from 18% during the year of NHD participation).
- In Colorado, NHD International Baccalaureate history students scores were among the school's highest: an average of 5.02 on a 7-pt scale (worldwide IB average of 4.73).
- In New Jersey, for two years prior to NHD participation, students' NJ Assessment of Skills & Knowledge Language scores were lower than comparison groups'. After NHD, they were higher.
- More years of participation in NHD appears to be linked to upwards trends in commended performance—particularly in writing and reading.

RESEARCH SKILLS

- Compared to peers, almost twice as many NHD students correctly identified primary sources.
- NHD students see a wider range of sources—experts, museums, lecture notes, diaries, journals, films, first-person accounts, biographies. Non-NHD students list the basics—books, newspapers, textbooks, encyclopedias, magazines.
- NHD students have a better understanding of how to evaluate sources.
- NHD students look for credibility of sources—valid copyright, reputable publisher, .edu vs. .com sources. They confirm authors' credibility by cross-checking references, looking for corroboration across sources. (Peers said they would check date and author.)

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

- Compared to peers, NHD students are better at interpreting information, drawing conclusions, summarizing passages—scoring 10 & 20 percentage points higher than peers. The more time they spend in NHD, the higher their scores.

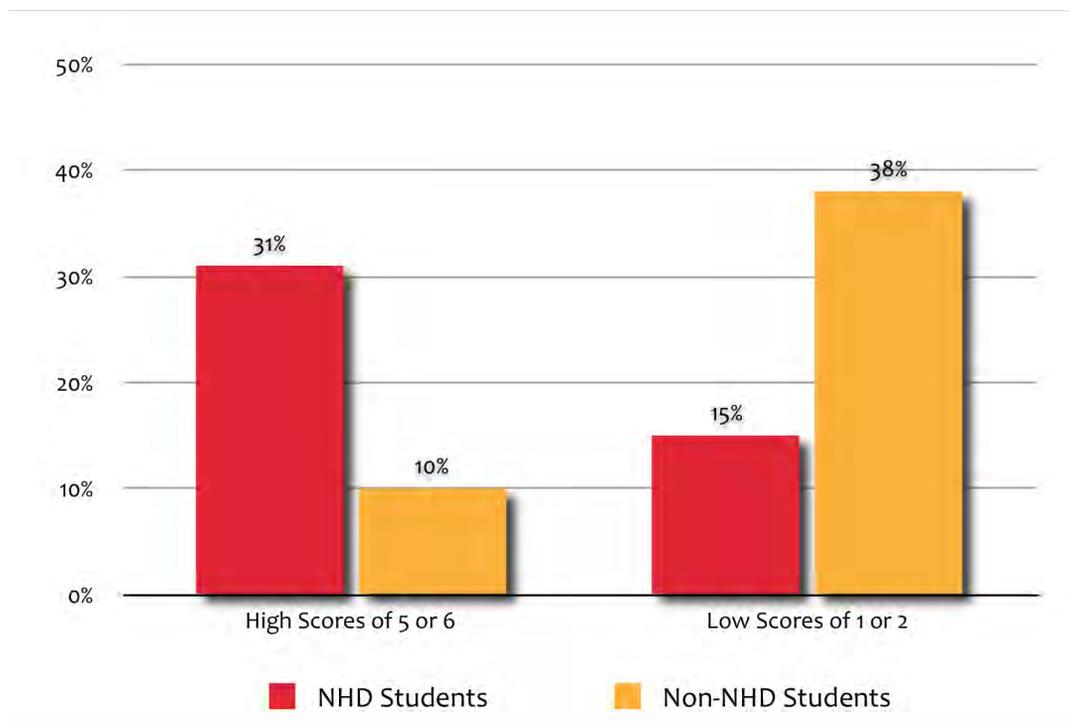
INTEREST IN HISTORY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Compared to peers, NHD students...

- Are more confident in their knowledge of history, events not studied in school, ability to develop a research plan, ability to organize a report, doing internet research, and evaluating what they find.
- Are more interested in current events, issues in different contexts, and parallels between past and present events.
- Agree more strongly that they are well informed, read newspapers to learn about current events, and feel they have a voice in political discussions.
- Are more interested in history class topics and assignments and find history classes more interesting than other academic classes than their non-NHD peers.

NHD students are better writers, who write with a purpose and real voice, and marshal solid evidence to support their point of view.

NHD students had more exemplary writing scores, and fewer low scores.



Overall, NHD students outscored comparison-group students on both pre- and post-writing assessments, receiving more exemplary scores (5's or 6's) on a 6-point scale, and fewer low scores.

NHD has a positive impact among students whose interest in academic subjects may wane in high school.

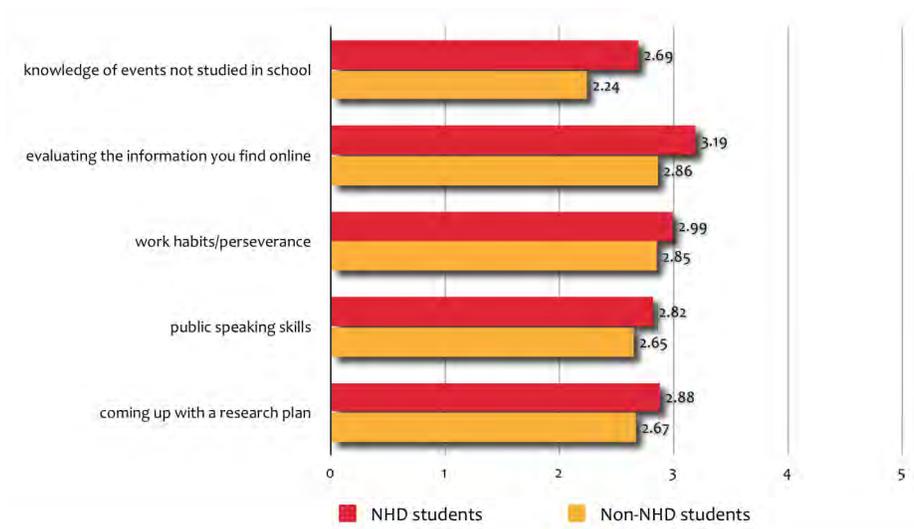
- Among Black and Latino students, NHD students outperform non-NHD students, posting higher performance assessment scores and levels of interest and skills.
- Compared to non-NHD boys and to all girls, boys participating in NHD reported significantly higher levels of interest in history, civic engagement, and confidence in research skills, on both pre- and post-surveys.

SURE...IT WORKS *THERE*, BUT IT'S NOT CHICAGO...

While this study was not conducted in Chicago, three-quarters of the schools examined were large urban districts with diverse student bodies, similar to CPS. The study, conducted at four sites around the country, found that on nearly every measure, NHD students' scores or ratings were higher than their peers who did not participate in the program. These findings extended to non-gifted and minority students.

NHD students learn 21st Century college- and career-ready skills. They learn to collaborate with team members, talk to experts, manage their time, and persevere.

When asked about their confidence in a variety of career- and college-ready skills, NHD students have an edge over their peers.



NHD students consistently express more confidence than students who do not participate in NHD, including research skills, public speaking, the ability to organize a report, knowledge of current events, work habits, evaluating sources, and writing skills. (Reported on a 6-point scale.)

NHD students are critical thinkers who can digest, analyze, and synthesize information.

Performance assessments show that NHD students were 18% better overall than their peers at interpreting historical information -- an average of 79 percent correct vs. 61 percent correct.

The NHD Evaluation only confirms what History Fair teachers already know through their own practice. Share these findings with colleagues, administrators, and parents to grow support for your History Fair program.