



LIMITED REVIEW

CONTEXT

We hope this report can be used as a part of the statewide discussion and strategy to help districts continuously improve student growth and achievement.

We caution against too strict interpretation of this analysis, as student achievement is influenced by a wide range of factors. Nevertheless, this information offers a more meaningful starting point for understanding district performance than relying on raw test scores alone. We also intend to use this analysis to inform risk assessment in our LEA performance audits.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS' IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

Student demographics and attributes play the largest role in explaining the differences in student achievement. While district practices have an effect on student performance, it may be smaller than people believe. We contracted with researchers to help determine the size of the effect of those practices. This analysis helps identify which districts have recently produced learning gains and which may need additional support.

After controlling for student demographics and attributes, some districts who have historically had higher average test scores drop in the relative performance rankings found in this report. Similarly, some districts who have historically had lower average test scores rise in relative performance rankings. The figure on page two shows how district performance changes when adjusting for student demographics and attributes.

Average student performance becomes more similar across districts after adjusting for student demographics and attributes

Figure 1.1 displays average student scores by district. Values to the left of zero are below mean district performance, and values to the right of zero are above. After adjusting for student demographics and attributes, the gaps in district performance shrink considerably.

Figure 1.1. Differences in School District Performance

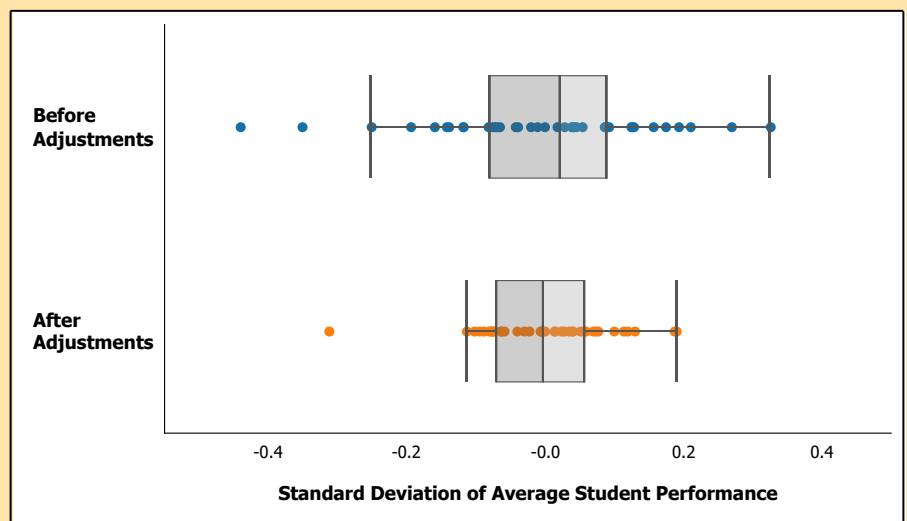
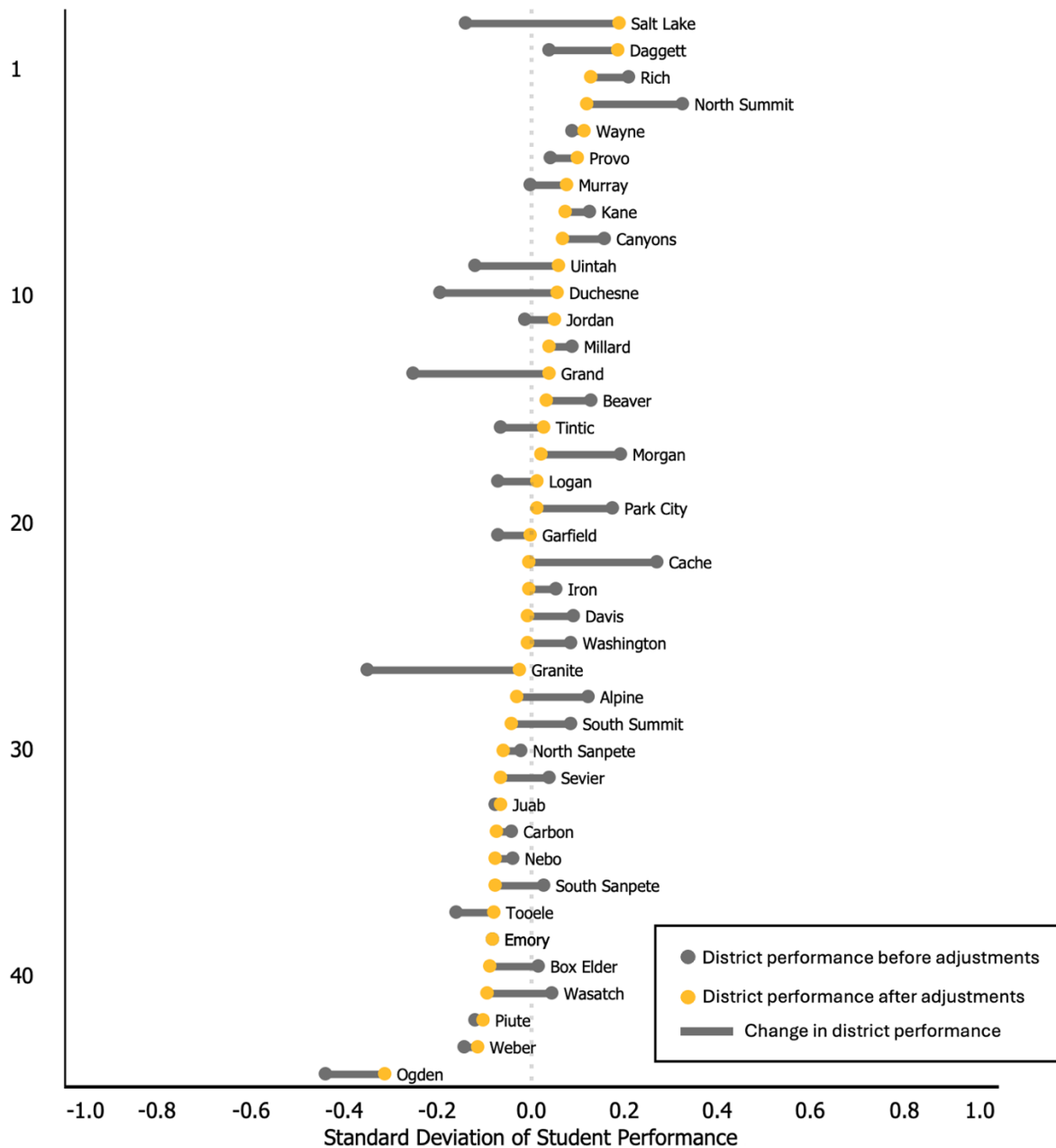


Figure 1.2. Some School Districts Demonstrate Stronger Learning Gains than Others. This analysis used data from Acadience, SAGE, RISE, and Utah Aspire Plus. Subjects included Language Arts, Math, and Science.



Source: Auditor generated from Notalys analysis. Because of data complications, San Juan School District was omitted from the list ranking.

To better understand standard deviations, it is useful to reference actual test results. In 2025, the range of 8th grade Math RISE scores was 279 – 667, and the standard deviation was 83 points. This means that a 0.1 standard deviation change between average district scores would be around 8 points for that test in that year.