
PREFACE

As a private nonprofit corporation, New American Schools (NAS) began in 1991 to fund the development of designs aimed at transforming entire schools at the elementary and secondary levels. Having completed its competition, development, and demonstration phases, NAS currently is scaling-up its designs to form a critical mass of schools within several partnering districts.

The purpose of this report is to describe the baseline characteristics, such as school demographics and performance, of a large number of NAS sites in the early implementation stages of NAS's scale-up phase. During this phase, RAND's research activities include monitoring the progress of a large sample of NAS schools in eight jurisdictions from the 1994–1995 school year through the 1999–2000 school year. This report provides a description of the schools' demographics, climate, and test scores. The next step in the RAND analysis is to report on trends in implementation, school performance, and related factors.

RAND will monitor changes in this sample of schools over the next several years. This report establishes a baseline for tracking the changes. The hope is that all those interested in school improvement—parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers, researchers, community members, etc.—will benefit from the analysis.

Other RAND reports about New American Schools include

- *Lessons from New American Schools' Scale-Up Phase: Prospects for Bringing Designs to Multiple Schools*, Susan J. Bodilly, 1998 (MR-1777-NAS).

- *New American Schools After Six Years*, Thomas K. Glennan, Jr., 1998 (MR-945-NASDC).
- *Lessons from New American Schools Development Corporation's Demonstration Phase*, Susan J. Bodilly, 1996 (MR-729-NASDC).
- *Reforming and Conforming: NASDC Principals Discuss School Accountability Systems*, Karen Mitchell, 1996 (MR-716-NASDC).
- *Designing New American Schools: Baseline Observations on Nine Design Teams*, Susan J. Bodilly, Susanna Purnell, Kimberly Ramsey, and Christina Smith, 1995 (MR-598-NASDC).

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