

# Results Like These Are No Fluke

Early on in this project, in 2004, Dr. Greg Thornton, the chief academic officer of the Philadelphia school system, took me to visit two schools, and M. Hall Stanton was the one that really captured my attention. To get there from the district's office in downtown Philadelphia, we had driven through vast sections of North Philadelphia. To my shame, I hadn't realized how big and how devastated North Philadelphia is. Block

after block, mile after mile of what appeared to be a bombed-out city rolled by the car window. I hadn't seen anything like it since the South Bronx in the 1970s, and I wouldn't see anything worse until New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Stanton posted scores that almost belied belief in 2004. After viewing the school, I believed the scores had been gained legitimately, but I realized that many others would

be doubtful and would likely dismiss its 2004 scores as a fluke. For that reason, I waited a year, crossing my fingers that in 2005 the scores would at least stay the same. They took another jump up. So I headed back to Stanton for a second look. Fifth-grade results are shown below (that's the only grade with longitudinal data); other grades had generally consistent results in 2006.

—K.C

