

ACHIEVEMENT IN AMERICA: How Are We Doing? What Comes Next?



The Education Trust

Economic Club
Marquette, MI

March, 2010

In communities like this one it is easy to get seduced by the half-truths that we tell each other.

- “We’re performing above other Michigan (not to mention Wisconsin) school districts”;
- “Because our children aren’t as ‘diverse’ as those elsewhere, we don’t have ‘those achievement gap problems;’”
- “Given the university and all that, our future looks pretty bright.”

And those views are reinforced
rather regularly by state-reported
data.

Districts and schools in Marquette and Alger counties routinely produce proficiency rates in the high 80's or 90's and mostly get A's (and occasional B's) on state-issued report cards.

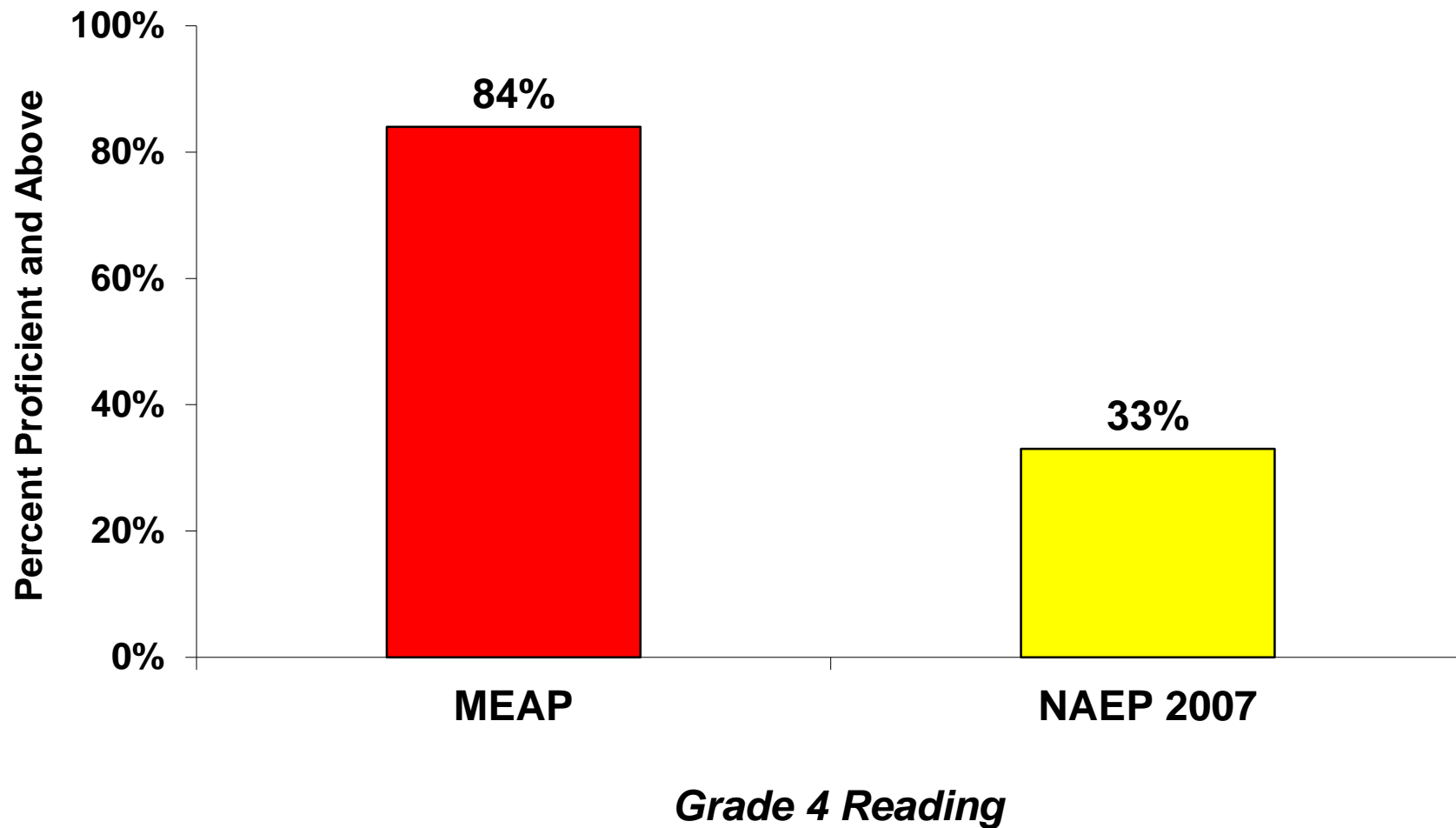
My Message To You This Evening:

1. Just because you are above the state average, doesn't guarantee you a good position nationally.
2. Even if you were doing relatively well compared to other states, America's performance relative to other countries should make you nervous.
3. For both these reasons, you should be strongly supporting district and school leaders who have aggressive improvement strategies.

4th Grade Reading:

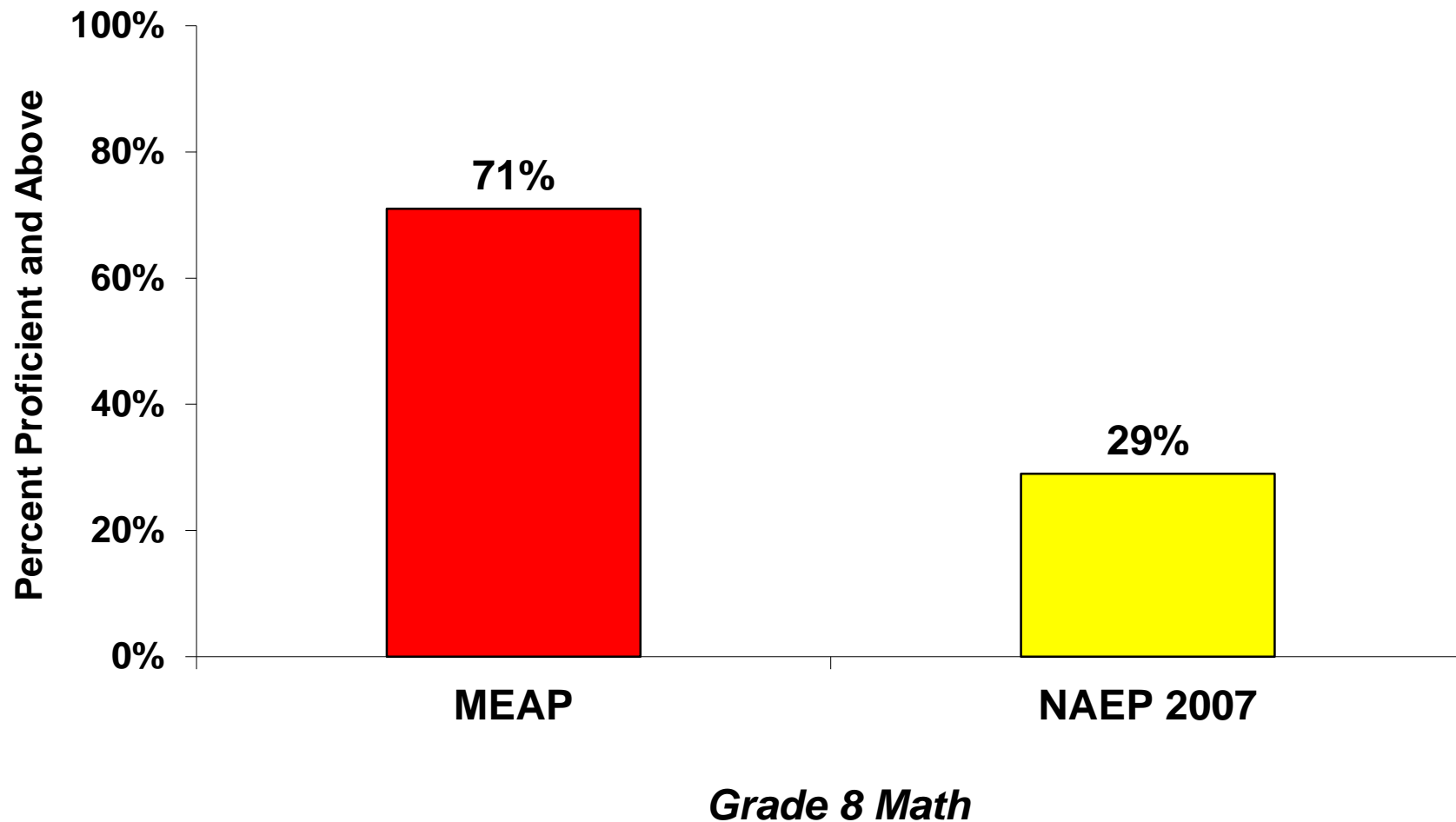
Learning to read well by 3rd or 4th grade is hugely important.

Michigan: Student Performance on State Exams vs. National Assessment: Grade 4 Reading



Similarly, mastery of basic mathematics by 8th grade is terribly important to the pursuit of high school mathematics.

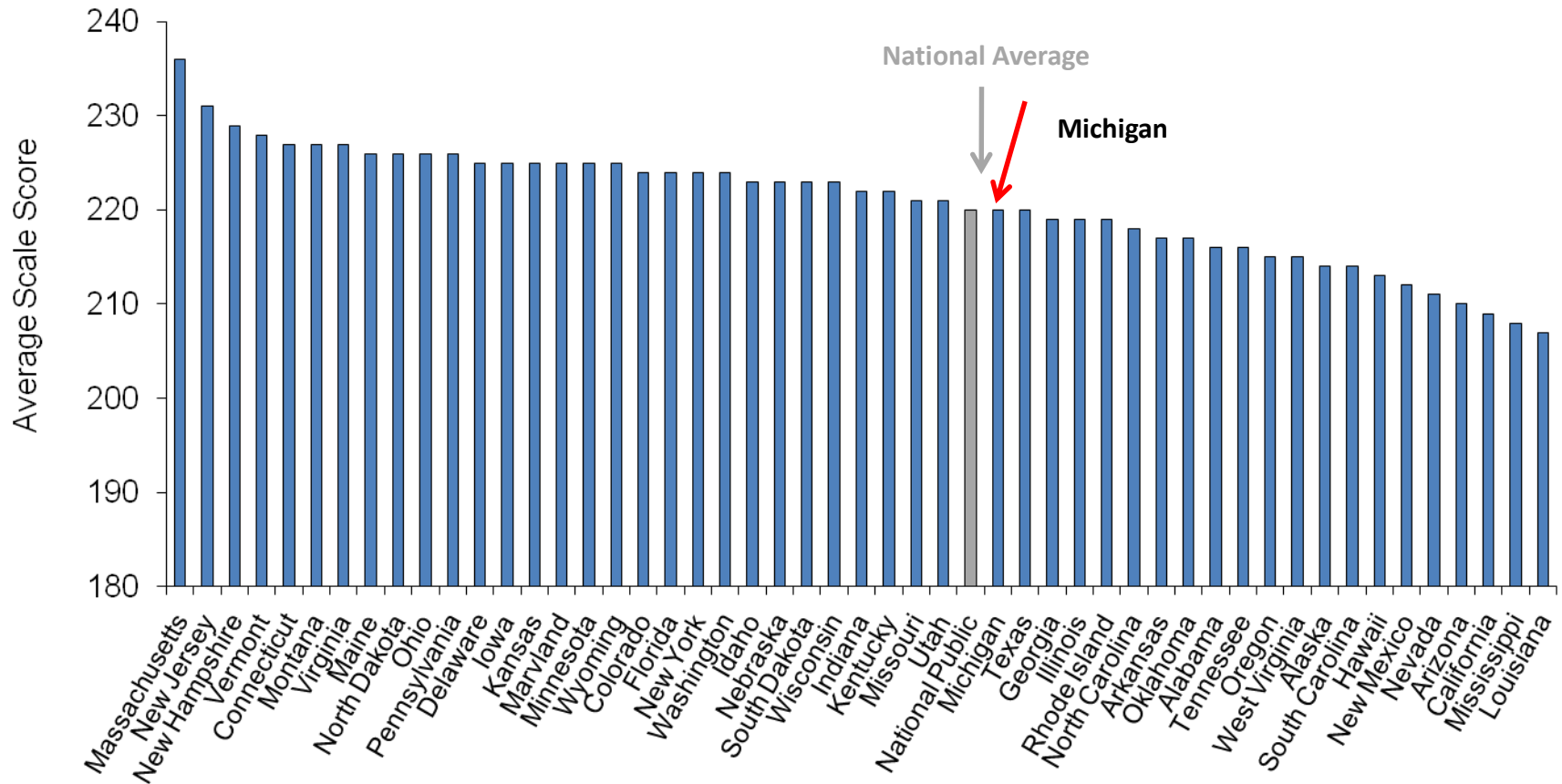
Michigan: Student Performance on State Exams vs. National Assessment: Grade 8 Math



Compared with other states?

2007 NAEP Grade 4 Reading

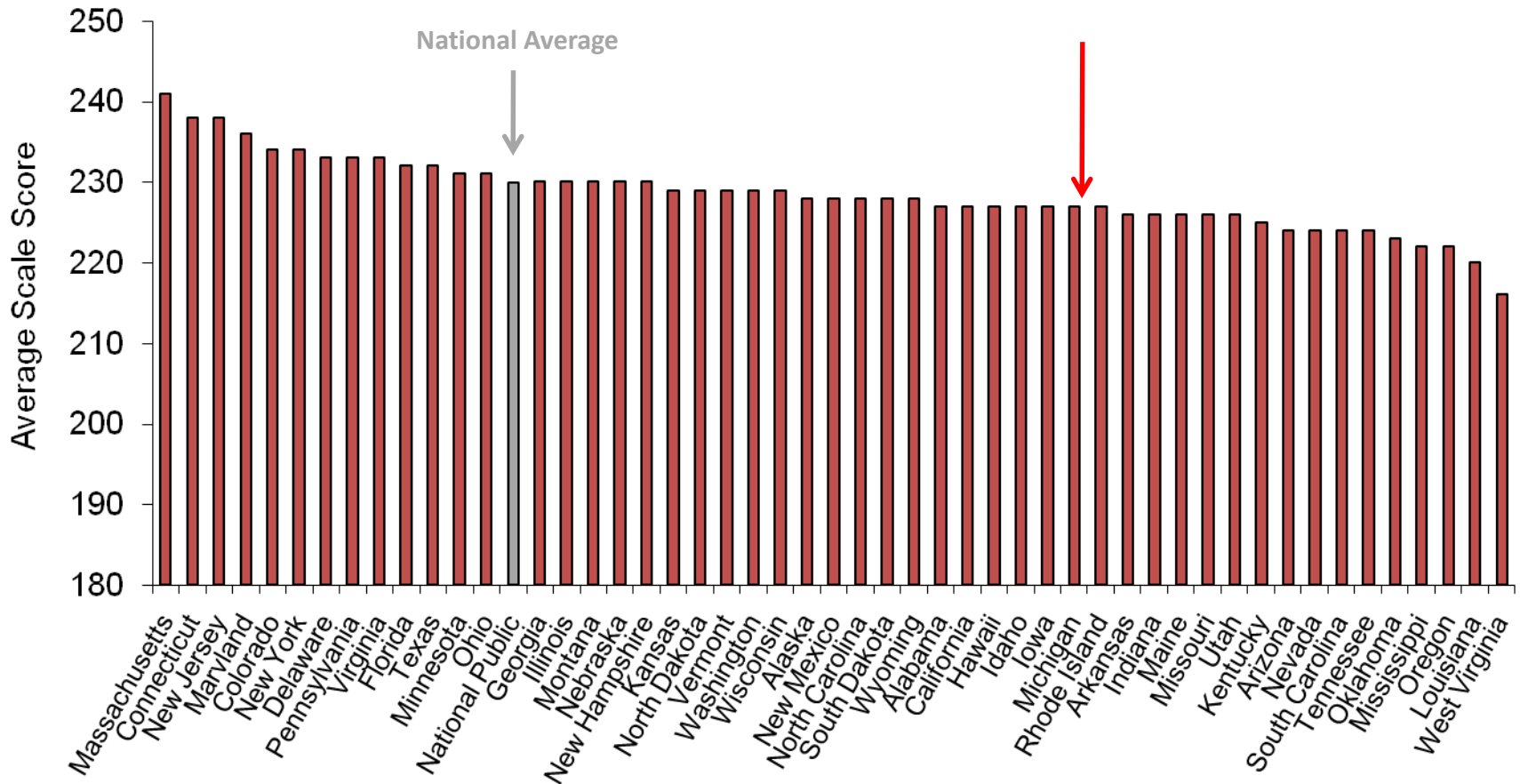
Average Overall Scale Scores by State



Proficient Scale Score: 238

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ndep/> © 2010 THE EDUCATION TRUST

2007 NAEP Grade 4 Reading Average White Scale Scores by State

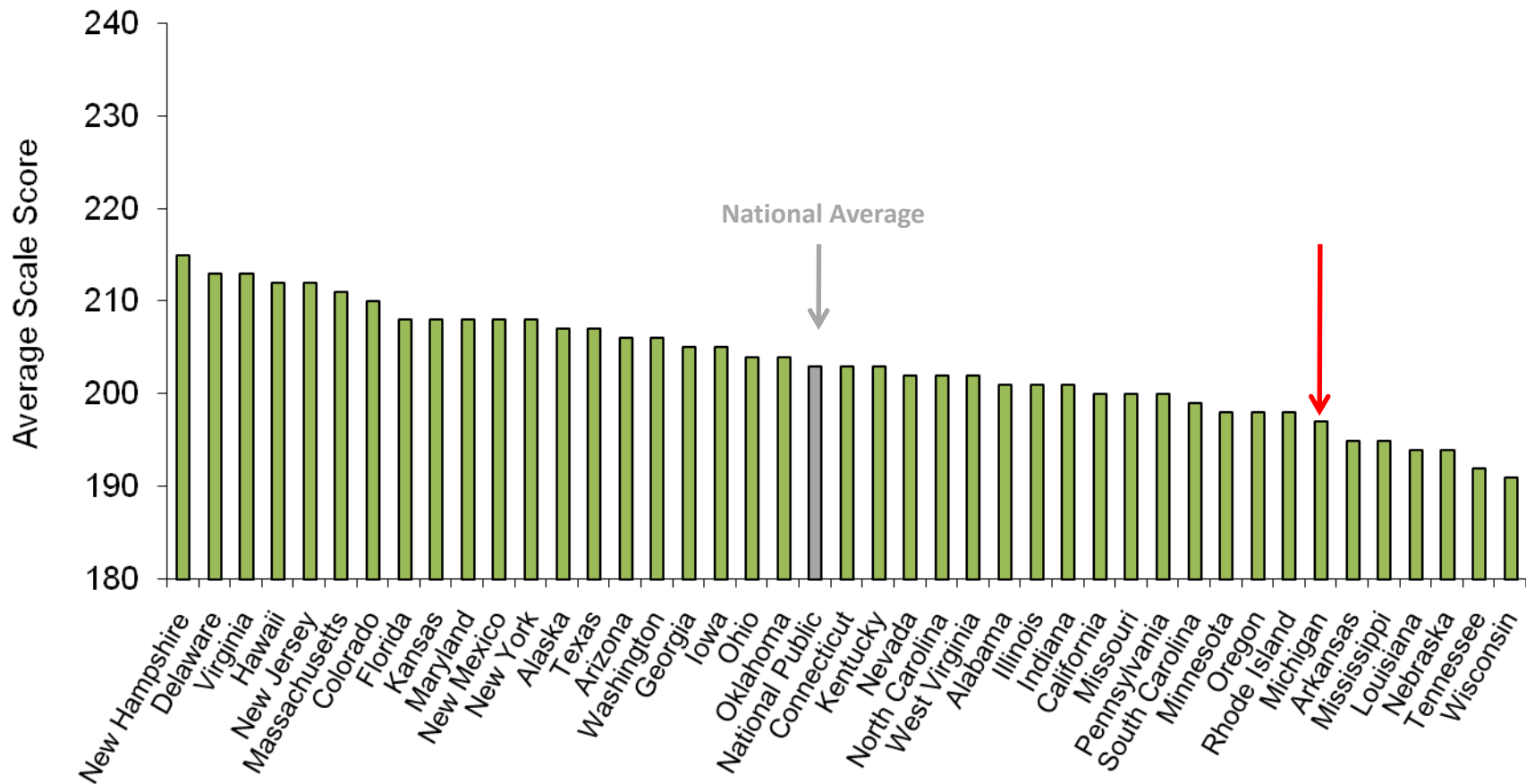


Proficient Scale Score: 238

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ndep/> © 2010 THE EDUCATION TRUST

2007 NAEP Grade 4 Reading

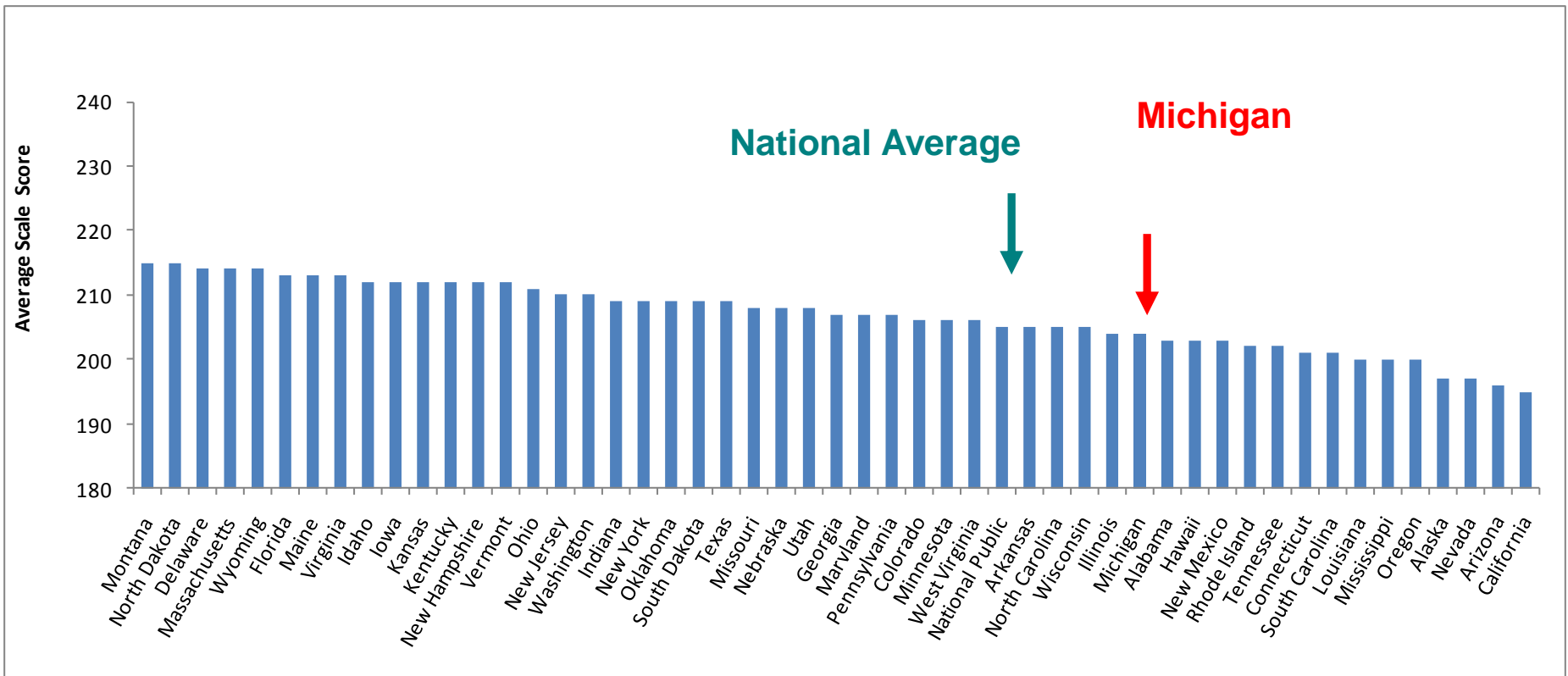
Average African American Scale Scores by State



Proficient Scale Score: 238

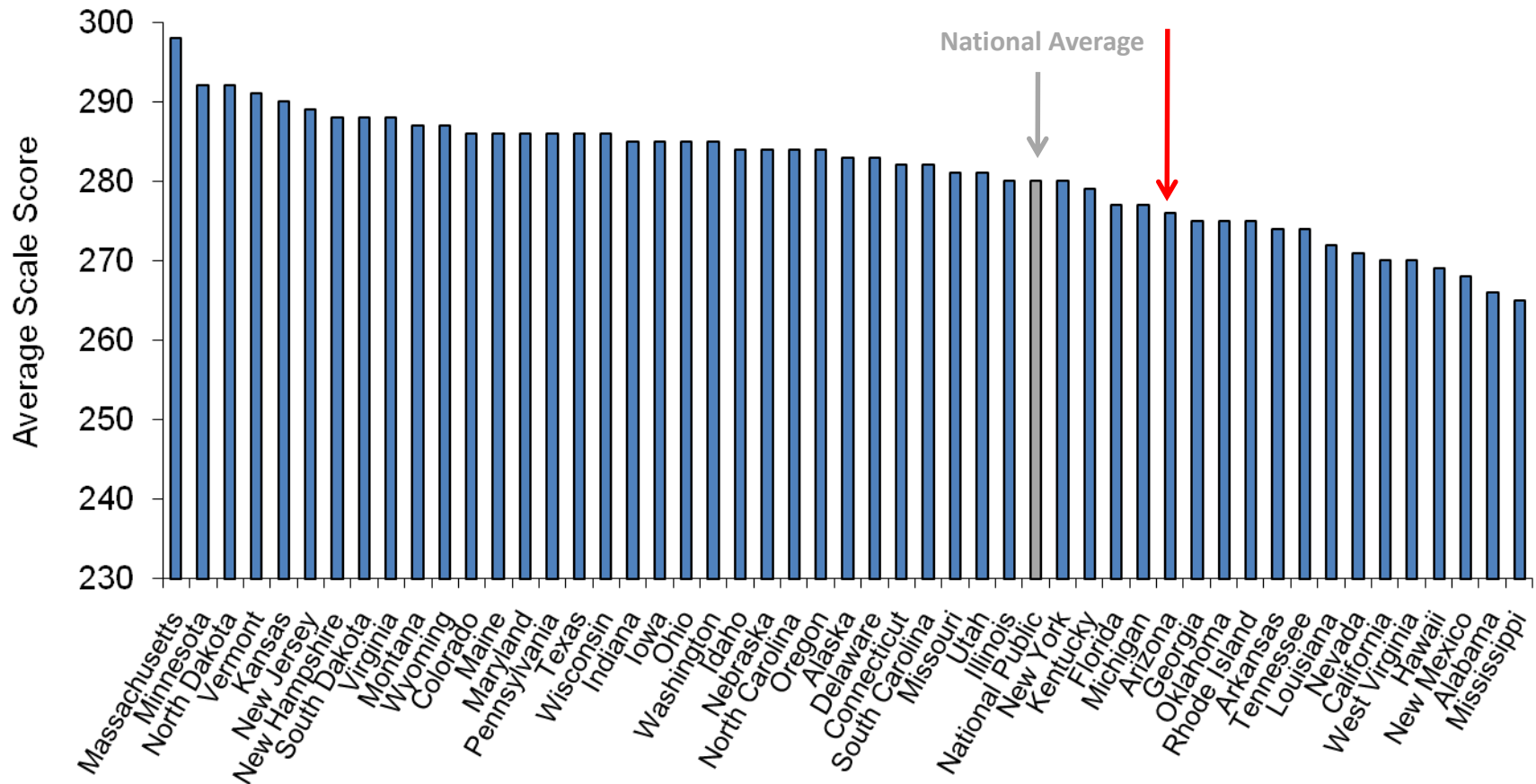
2007 NAEP Grade 4 Reading Average Low Income Scale Scores by State

Proficient Scale Score: 238



2007 NAEP Grade 8 Math

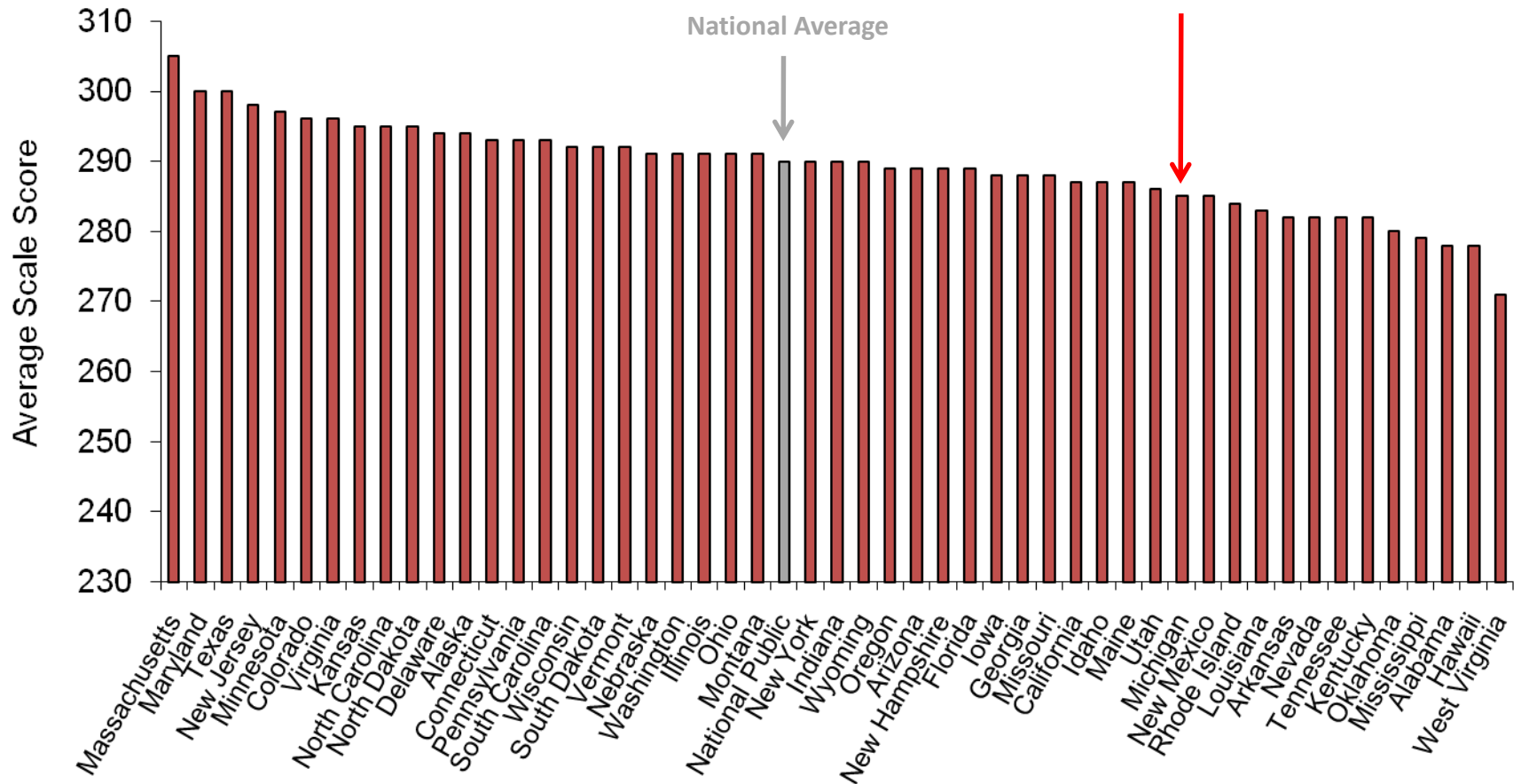
Average Overall Scale Scores by State



Proficient Scale Score: 299

2007 NAEP Grade 8 Math

Average White Scale Scores by State

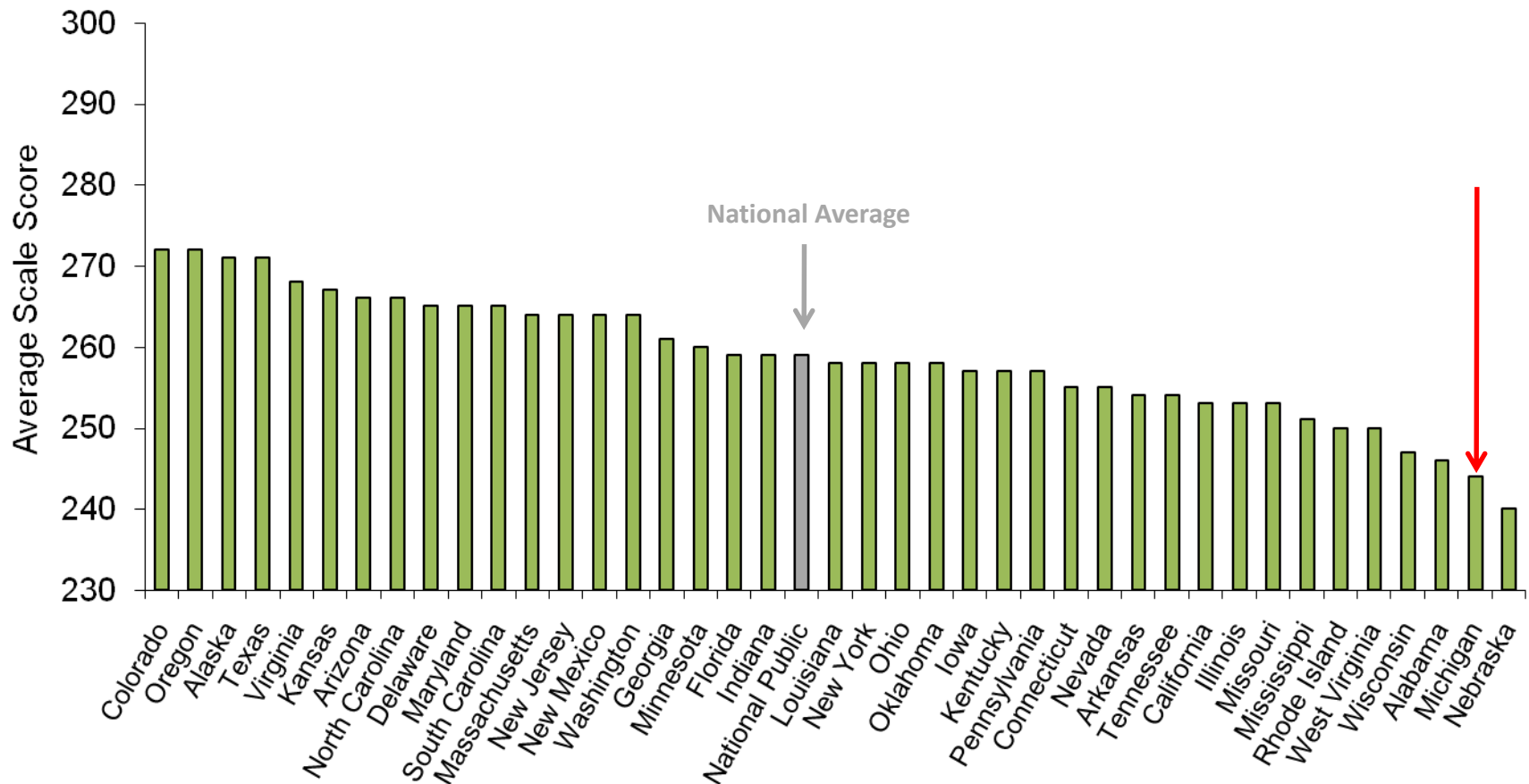


Proficient Scale Score: 299

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ndep/> © 2010 THE EDUCATION TRUST

2007 NAEP Grade 8 Math

Average African American Scale Scores by State



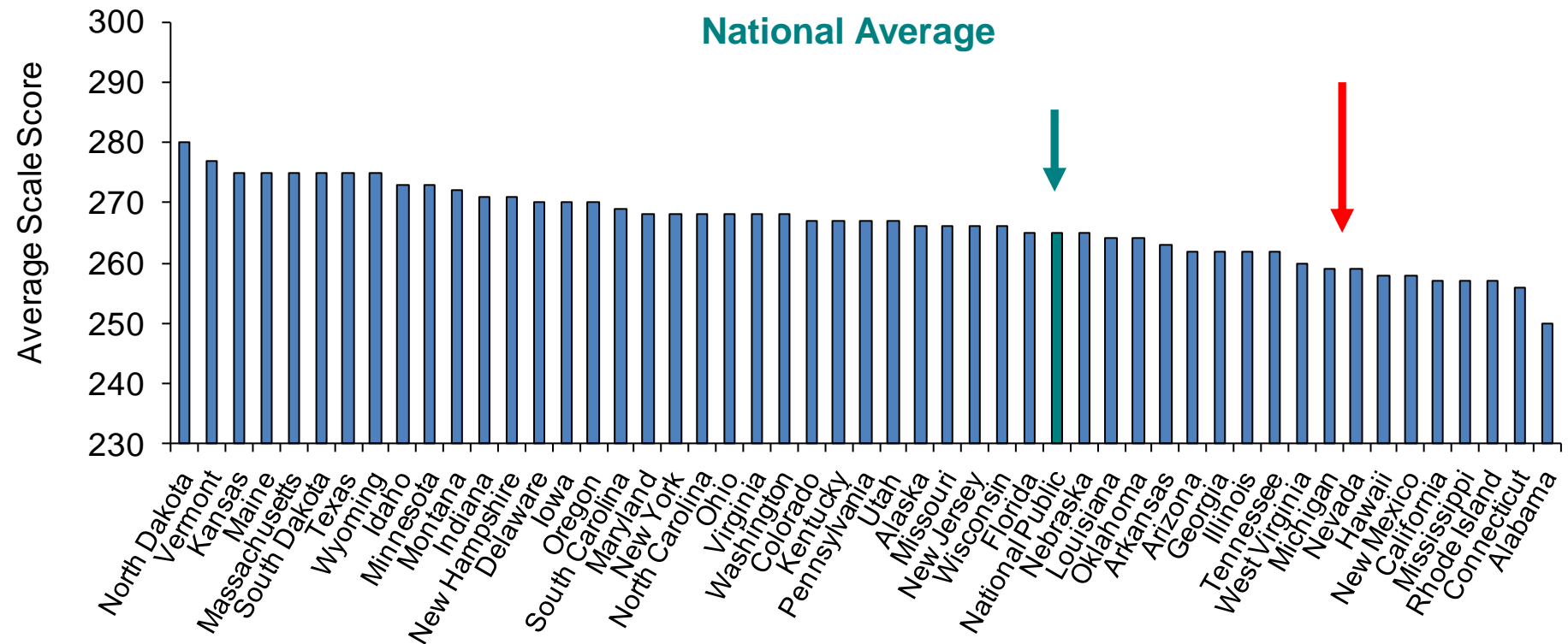
Proficient Scale Score: 299

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/> © 2010 THE EDUCATION TRUST

2007 NAEP Grade 8 Math

Average Low Income Scale Scores by State

Proficient Scale Score: 299

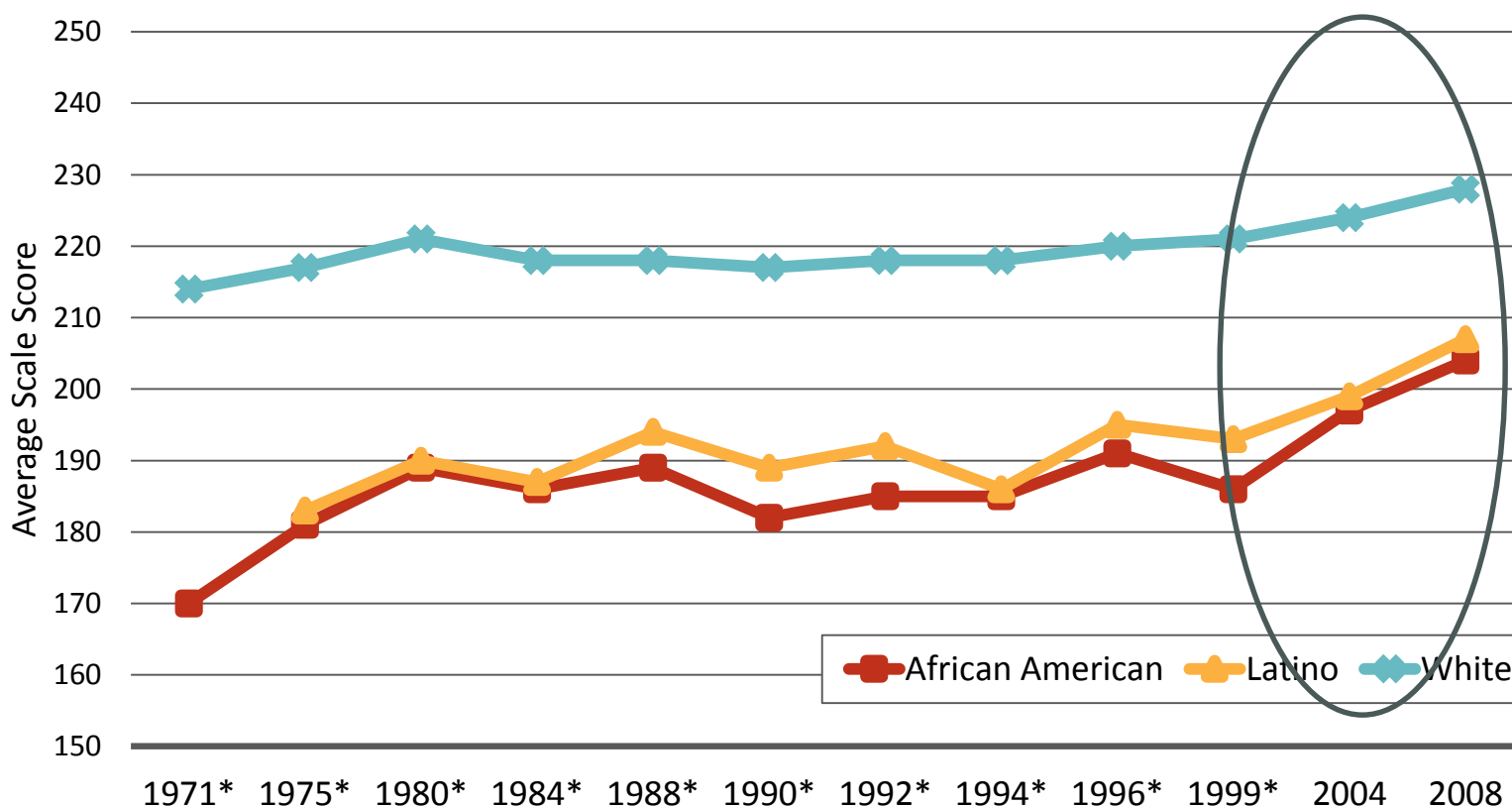


So...you are mostly **above the middle** in
a state that is mostly **below the middle**.

But what does middle mean? How is
our country as a whole doing?

4th Grade Reading: Record Performance with Gap Narrowing

9 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

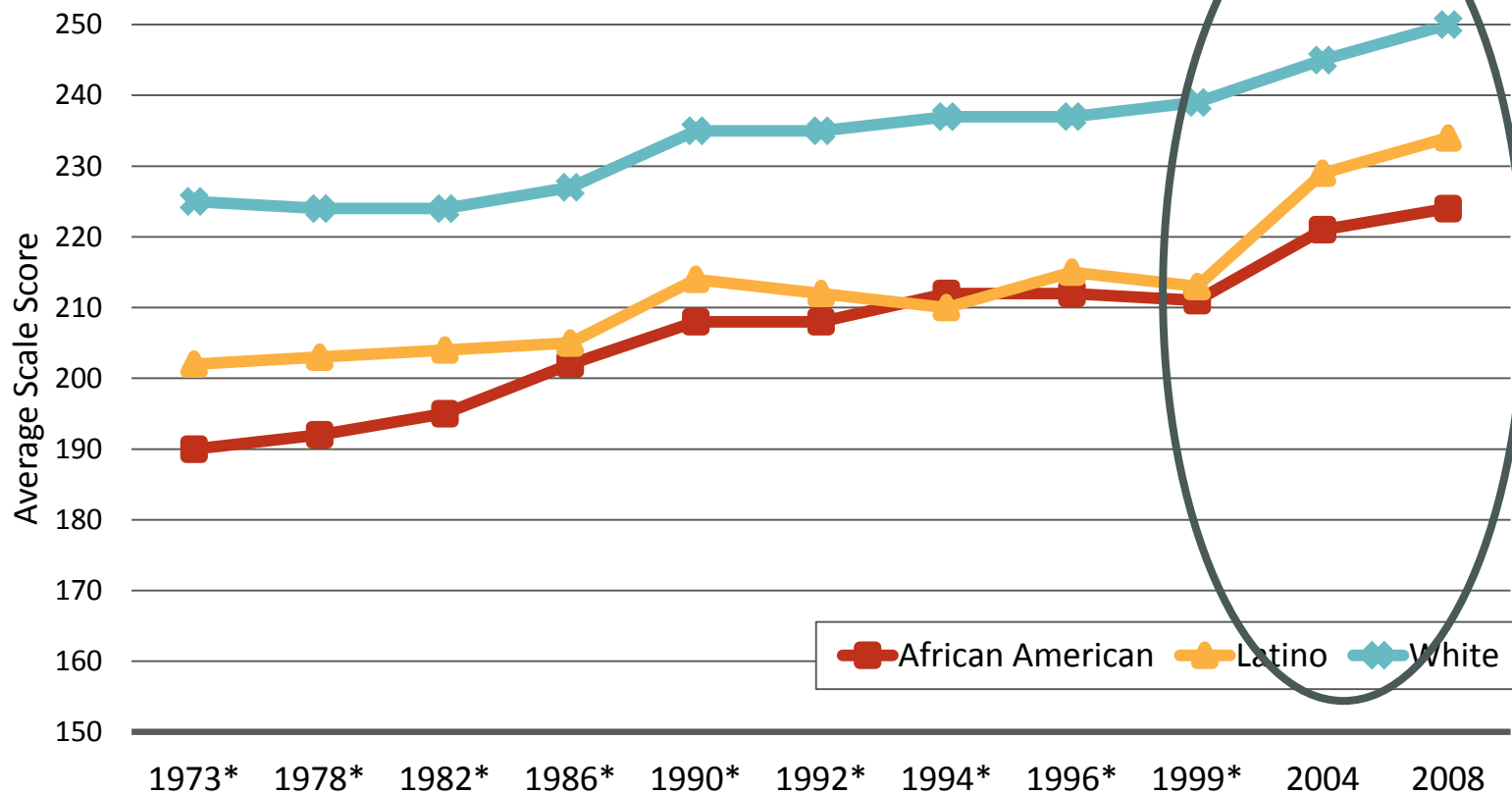


*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES

4th Grade Math: Record Performance with Gap Narrowing

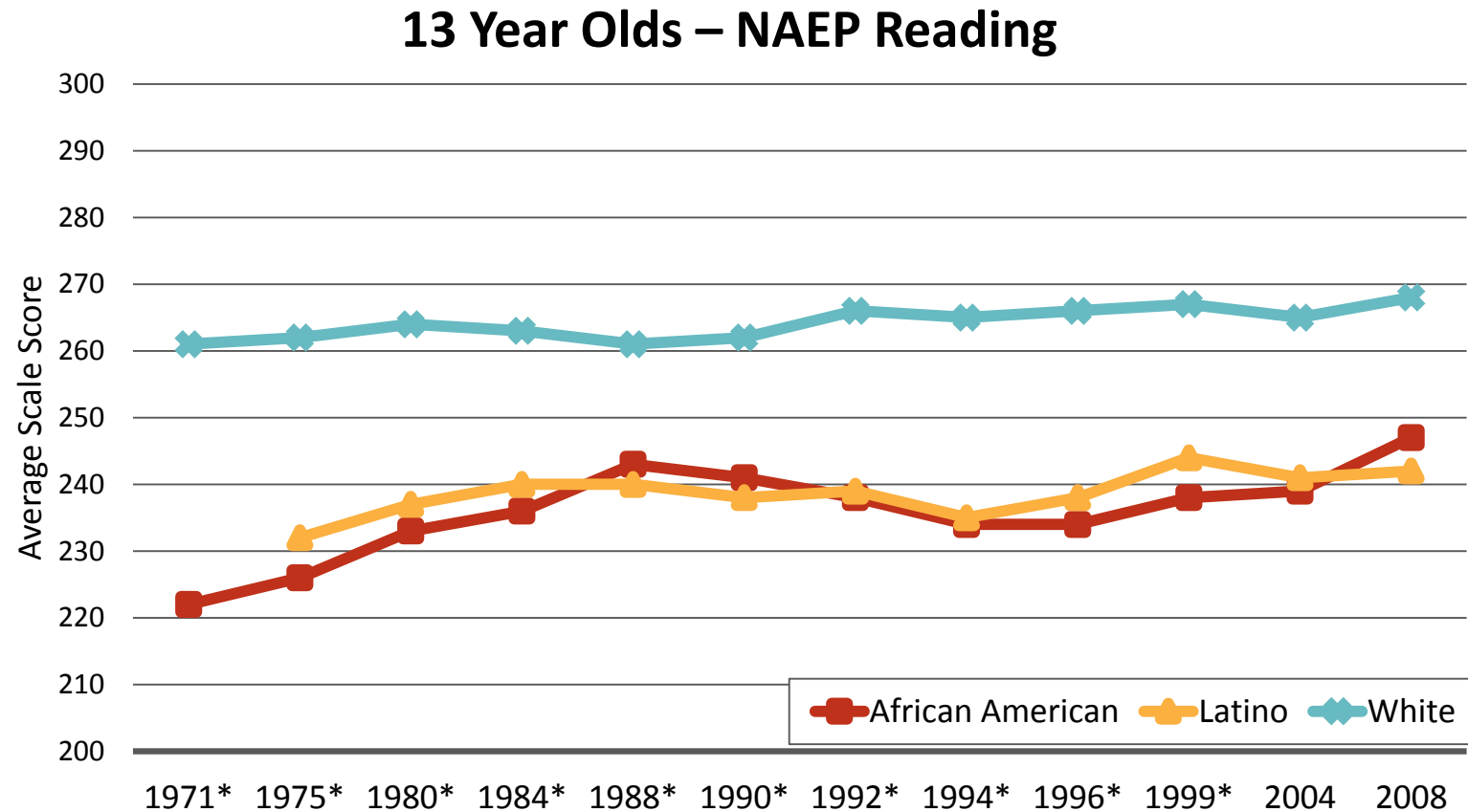
9 Year Olds – NAEP Math



*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES

8th Grade Reading: Some Gap Narrowing

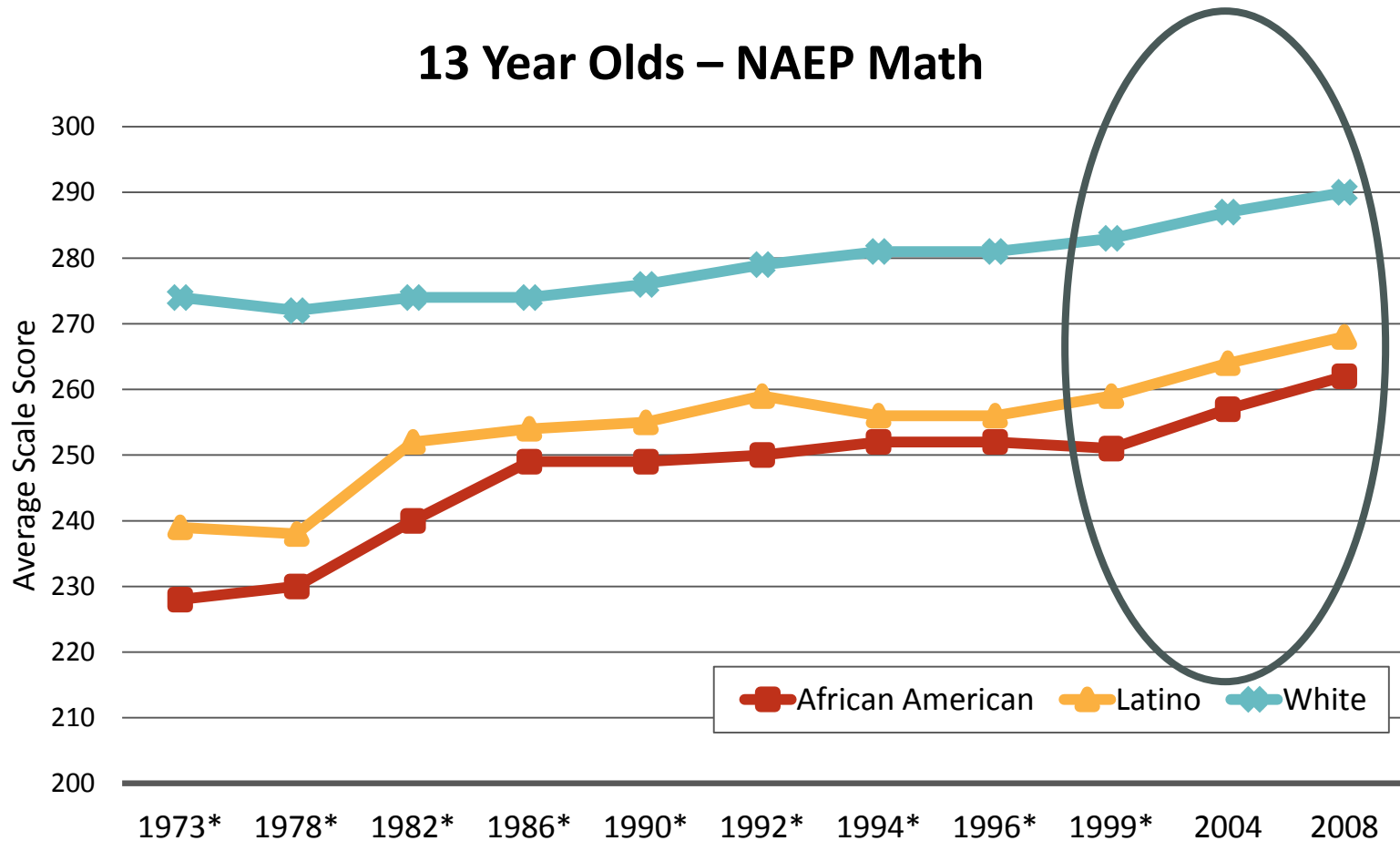


*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES

8th Grade Math: Progress for All Groups, Some Gap Narrowing

13 Year Olds – NAEP Math



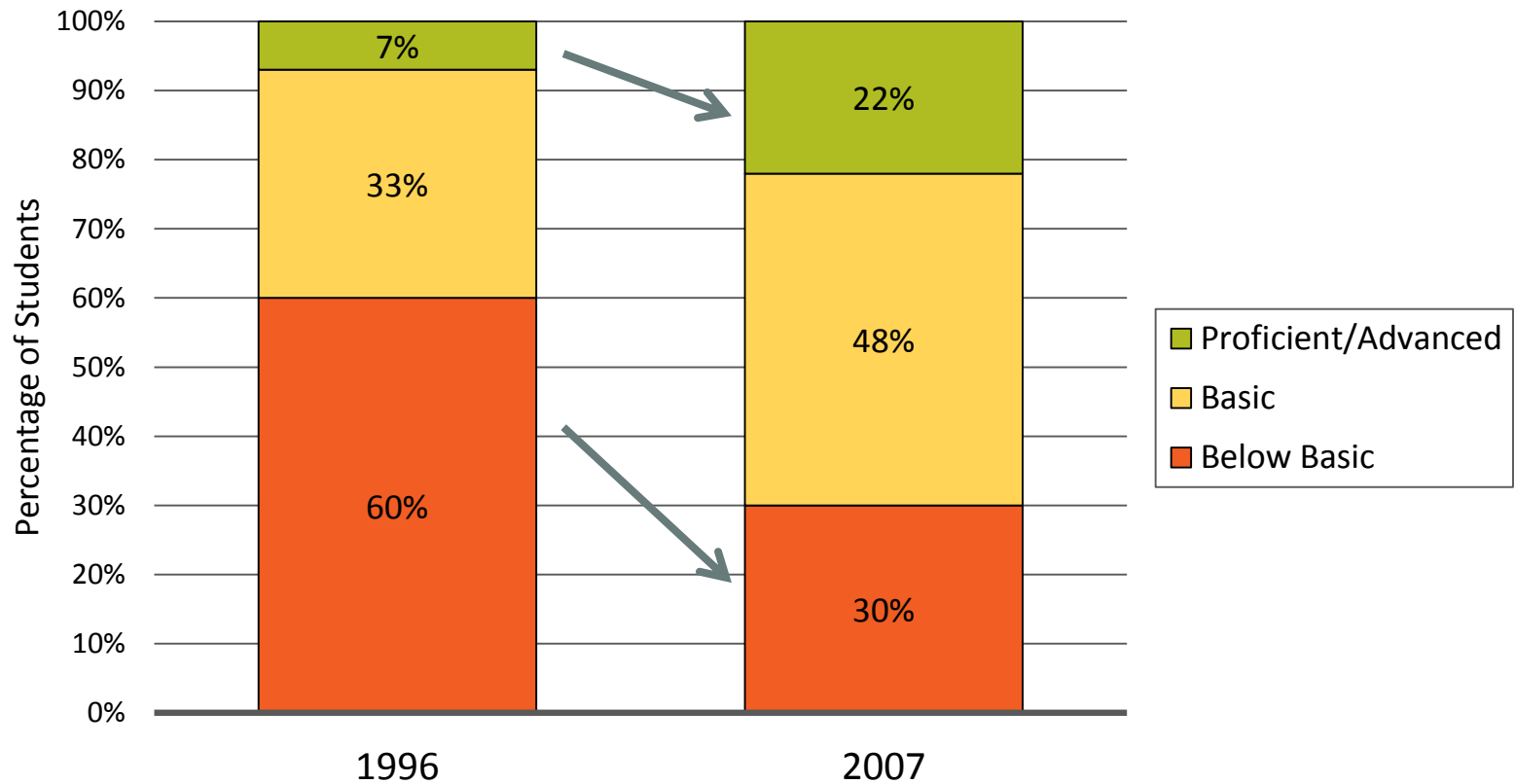
*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES

Progress Even Clearer When Examined Over a Decade on the “Main NAEP” Exam

NAEP Grade 4 Math 1996 Compared to 2007

Low-Income Students – Nation



Bottom Line:

When we really focus on
something, we make
progress!

Clearly, much more remains to be done
in elementary and middle school

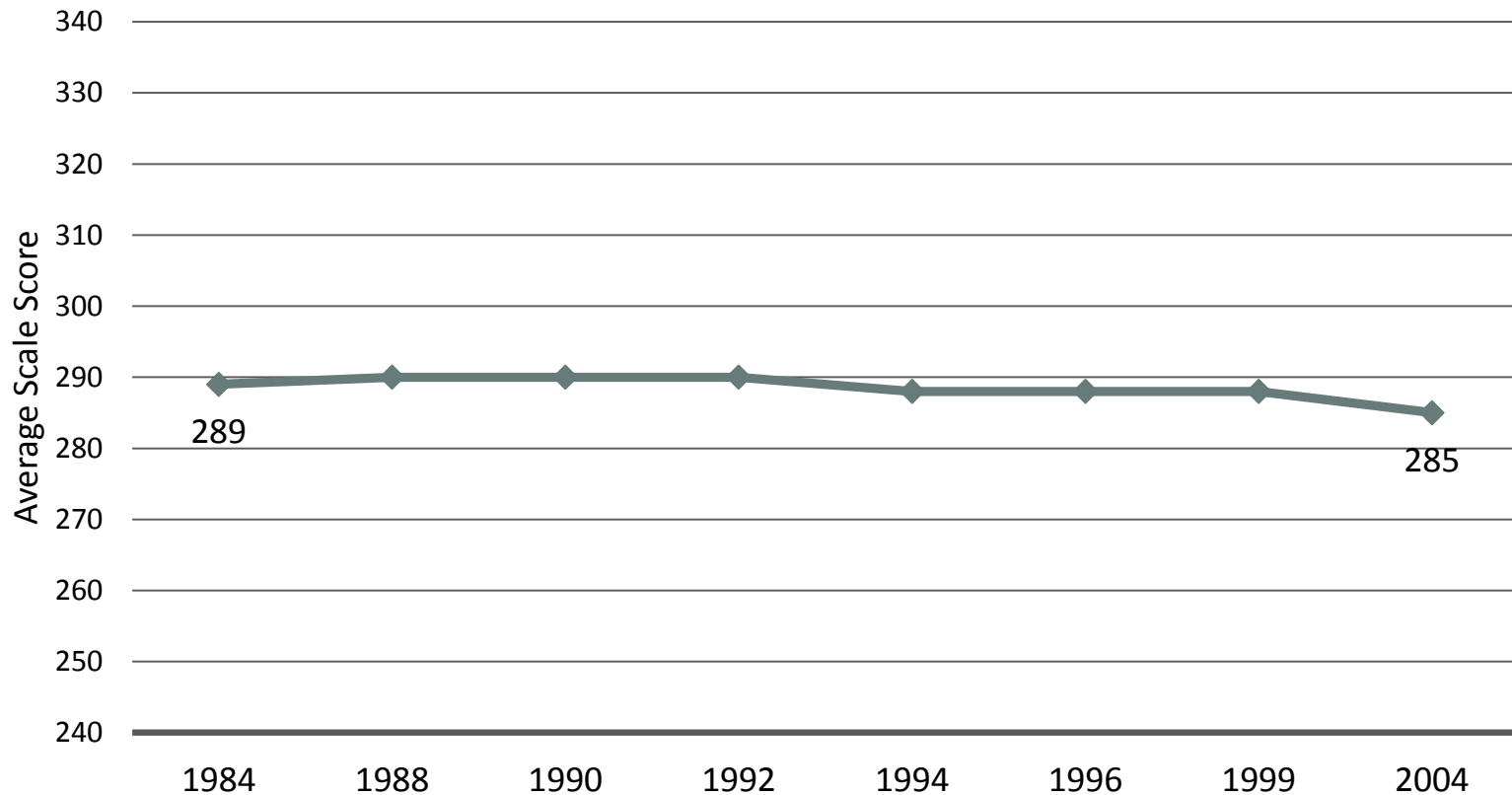
Too many youngsters still enter high
school way behind.

But at least we have some traction on elementary and middle school problems.

The same is NOT true
of our high schools.

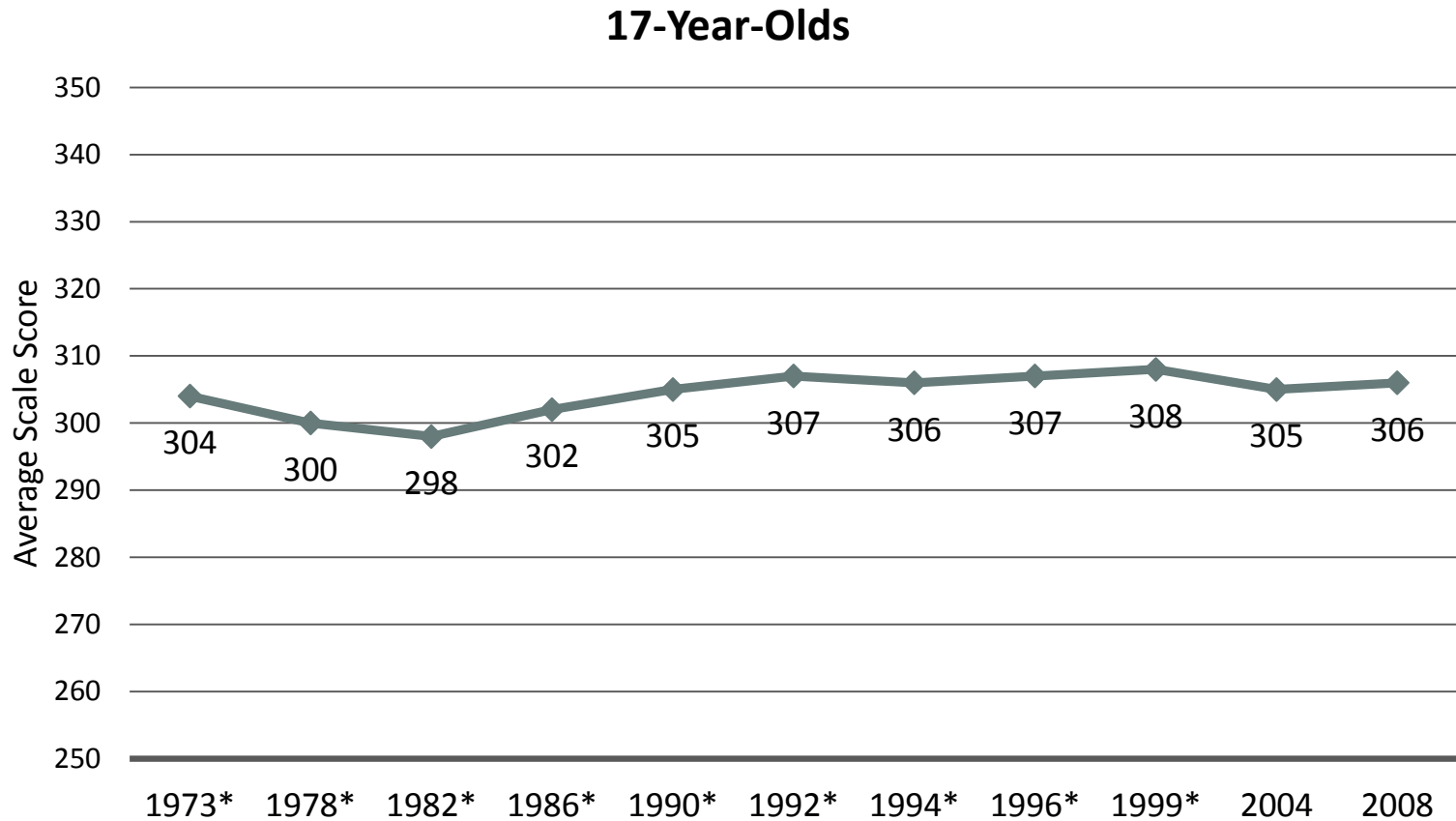
Achievement Flat in Reading

17 Year Olds Overall - NAEP



Source: NAEP Long-Term Trends, NCES (2004)

Math achievement flat over time



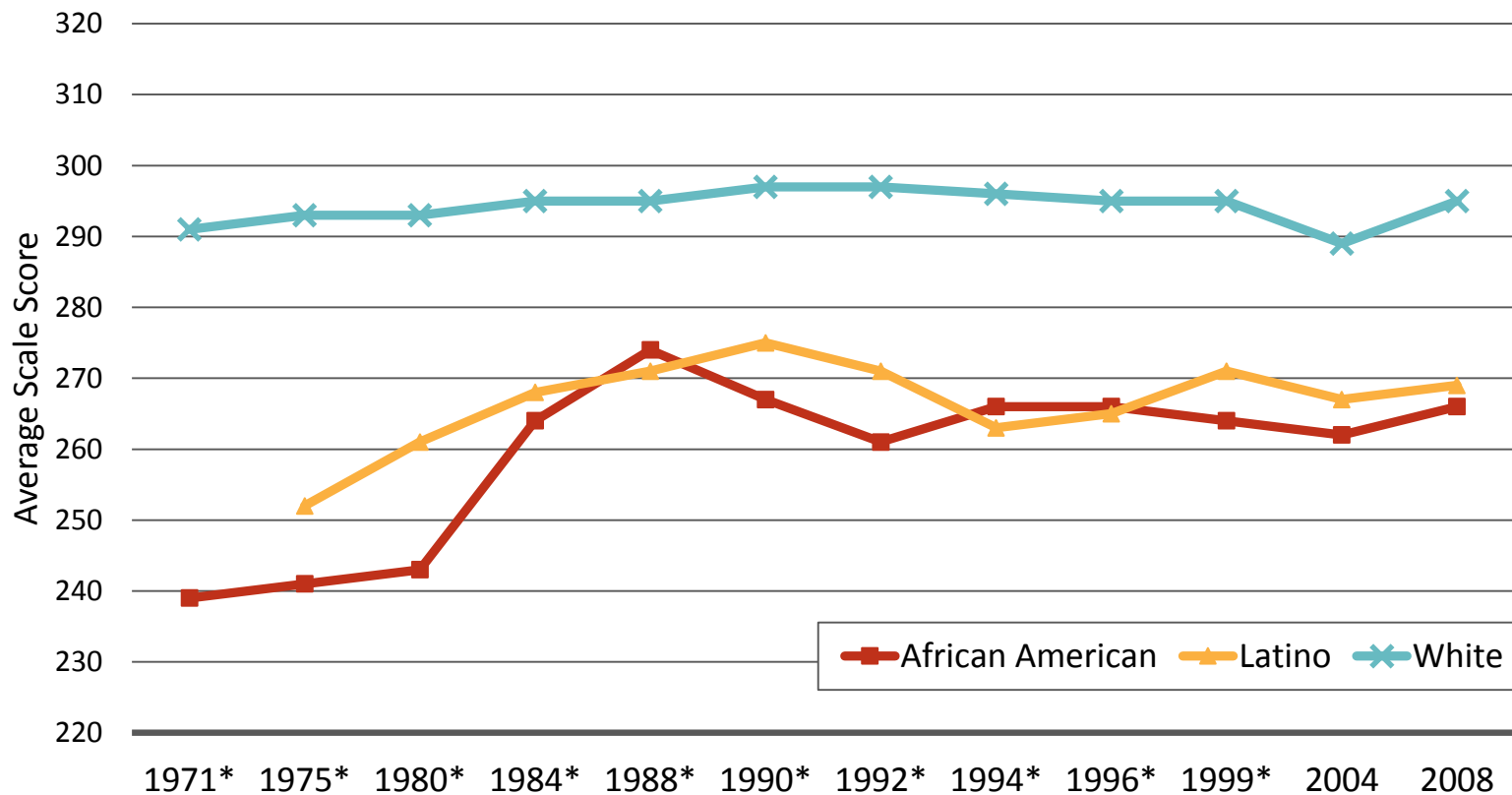
* Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress

And gaps between groups are
mostly **wider** today than in late
eighties, early nineties

12th Grade Reading: No Progress, Gaps Wider than 1988

17 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

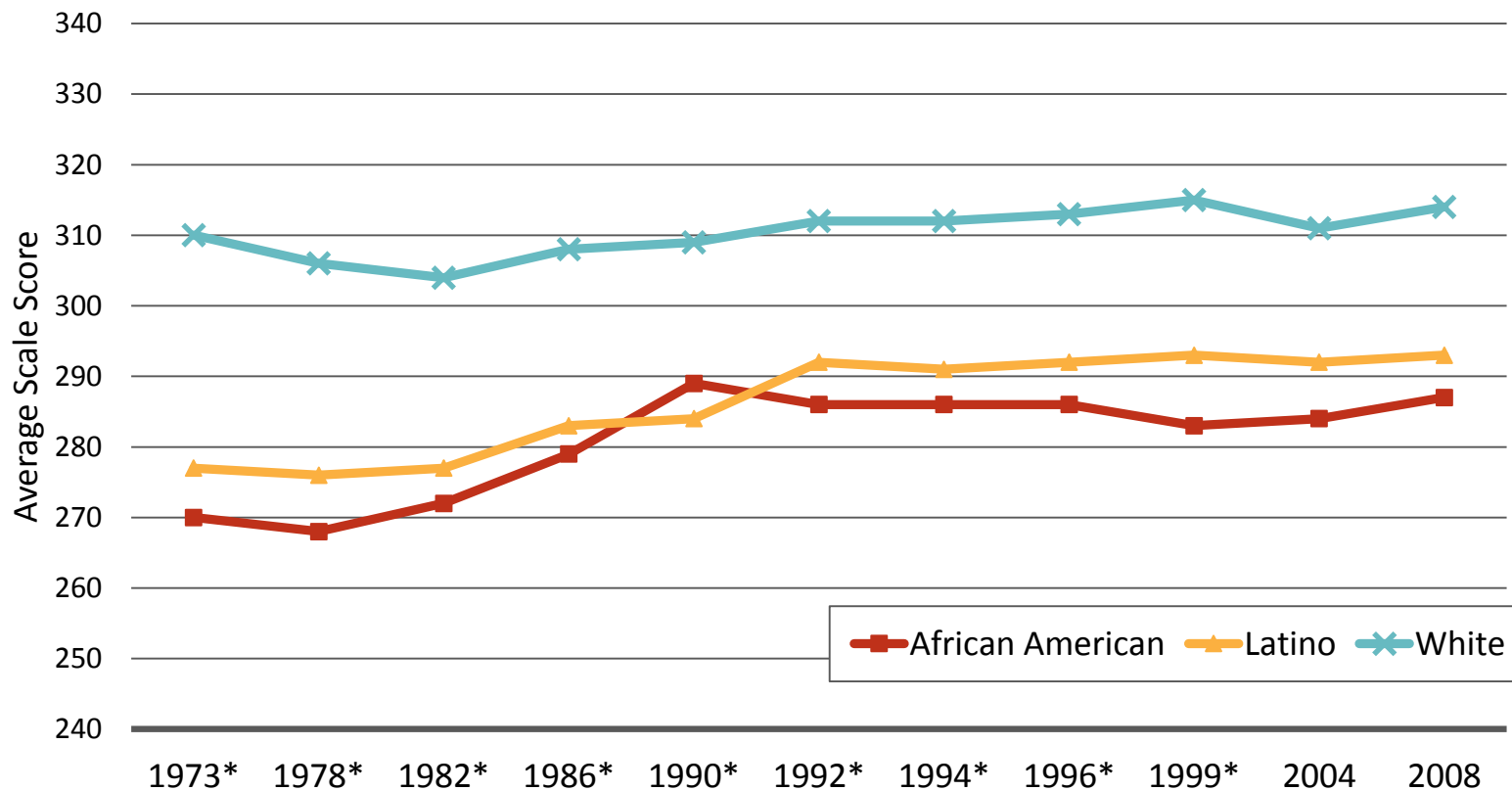


*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES

12 Grade Math: Results Mostly Flat Gaps Same or Widening

17 Year Olds – NAEP Math



*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES

Moreover, no matter how you cut the data, our kids aren't doing very well compared to their peers in other countries.

PISA Performance

U.S.A. Ranks Near Bottom, Has Fallen Since 2000

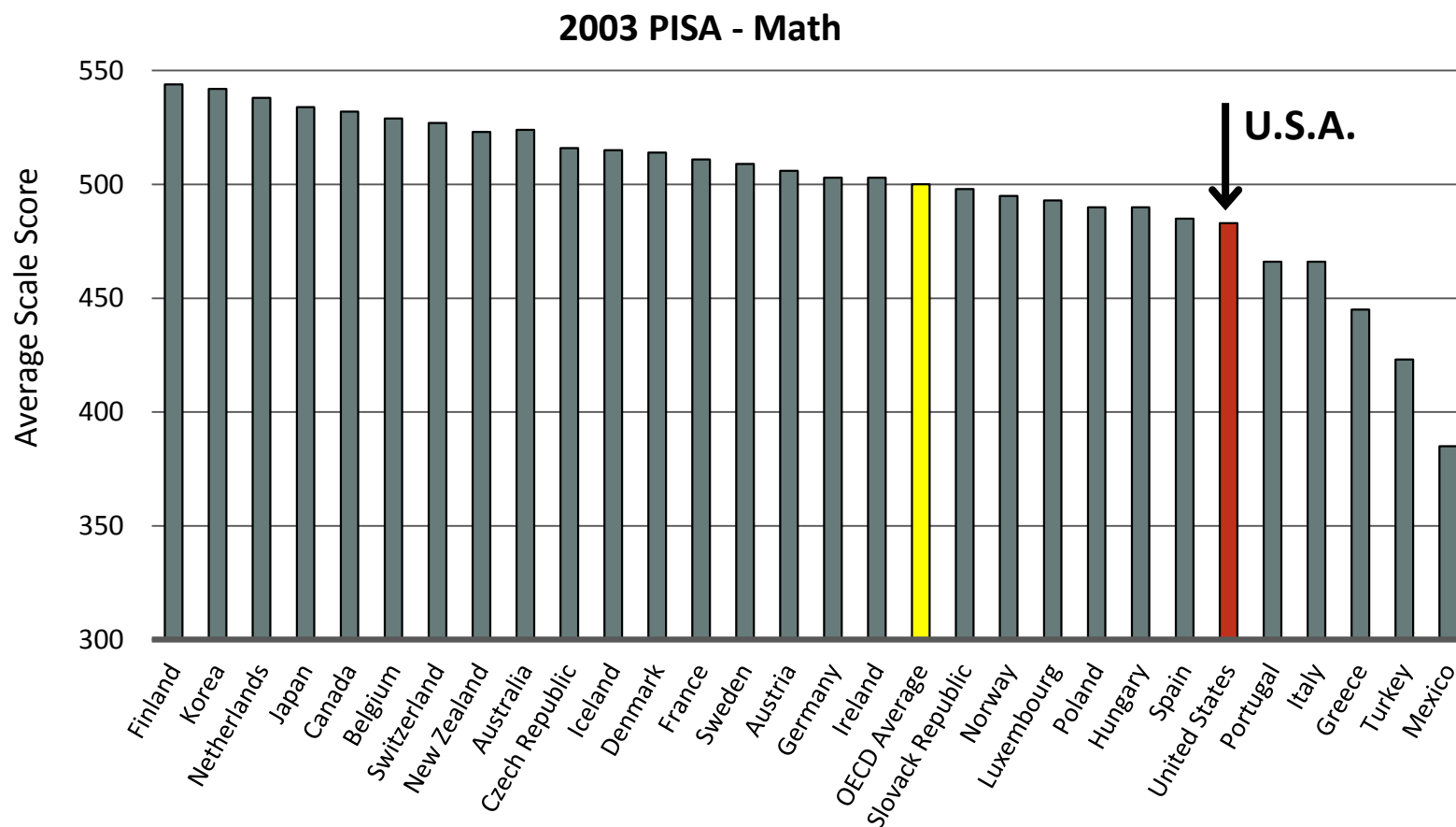
Subject	2000 Rank (out of 26)	2003 Rank (out of 26)	2006 Rank (out of 26)
Mathematics	17 th	22 nd	22 nd
Science	13 th	Tied 17 th	19 th

Note: Rankings are for the 26 OECD countries participating in PISA in 2000, 2003, and 2006.

Source: PISA 2006 Results, OECD

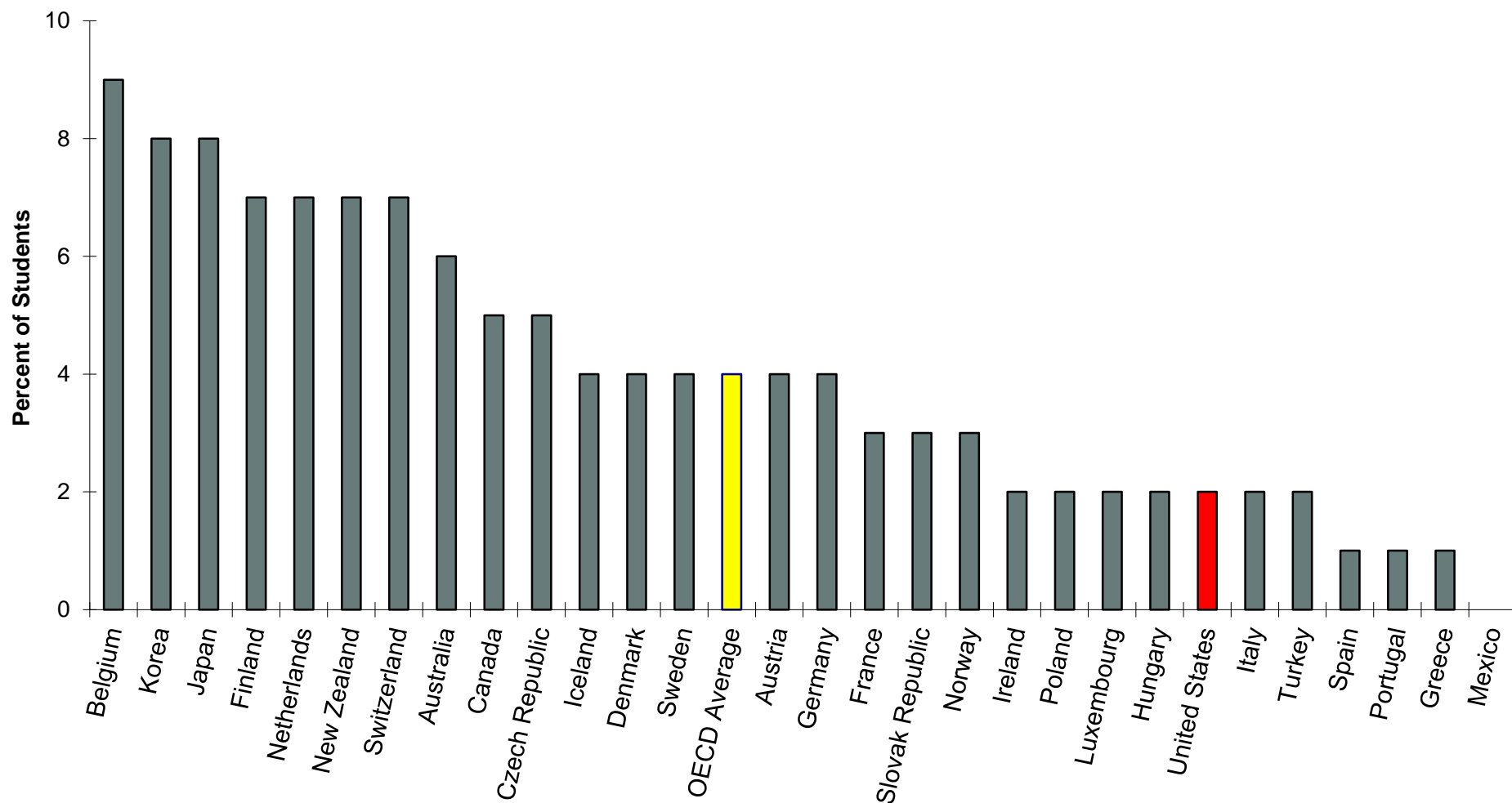
A closer look at math

Of 29 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranked 24th



Problems are not limited to our
high-poverty and high-minority
schools . . .

U.S. Ranks Low in the Percent of Students in the Highest Achievement Level (Level 6) in Math

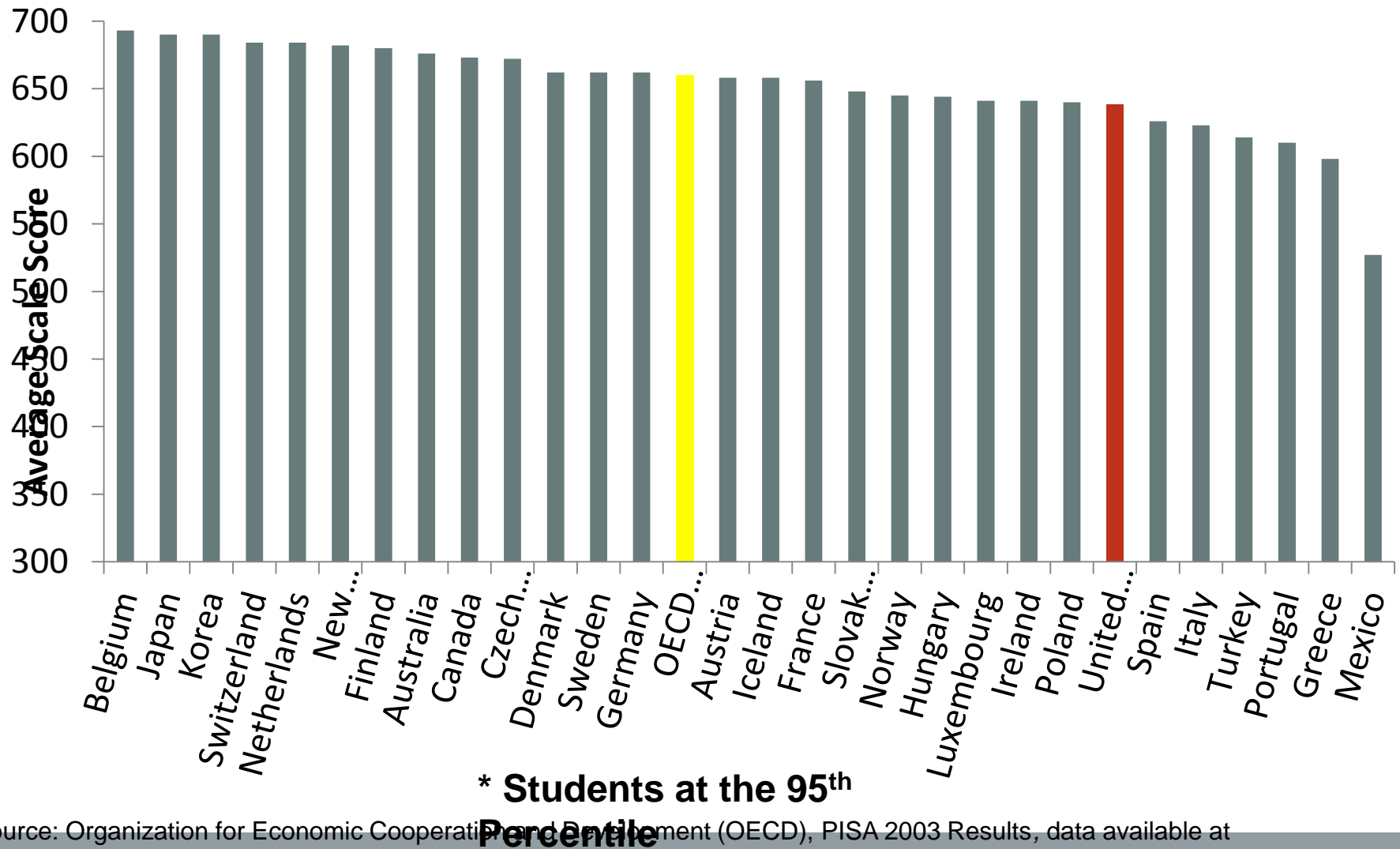


Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2003 Results, data available at

<http://www.oecd.org/>

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U.S. Ranks 23rd out of 29 OECD Countries in the Math Achievement of the Highest-Performing Students*

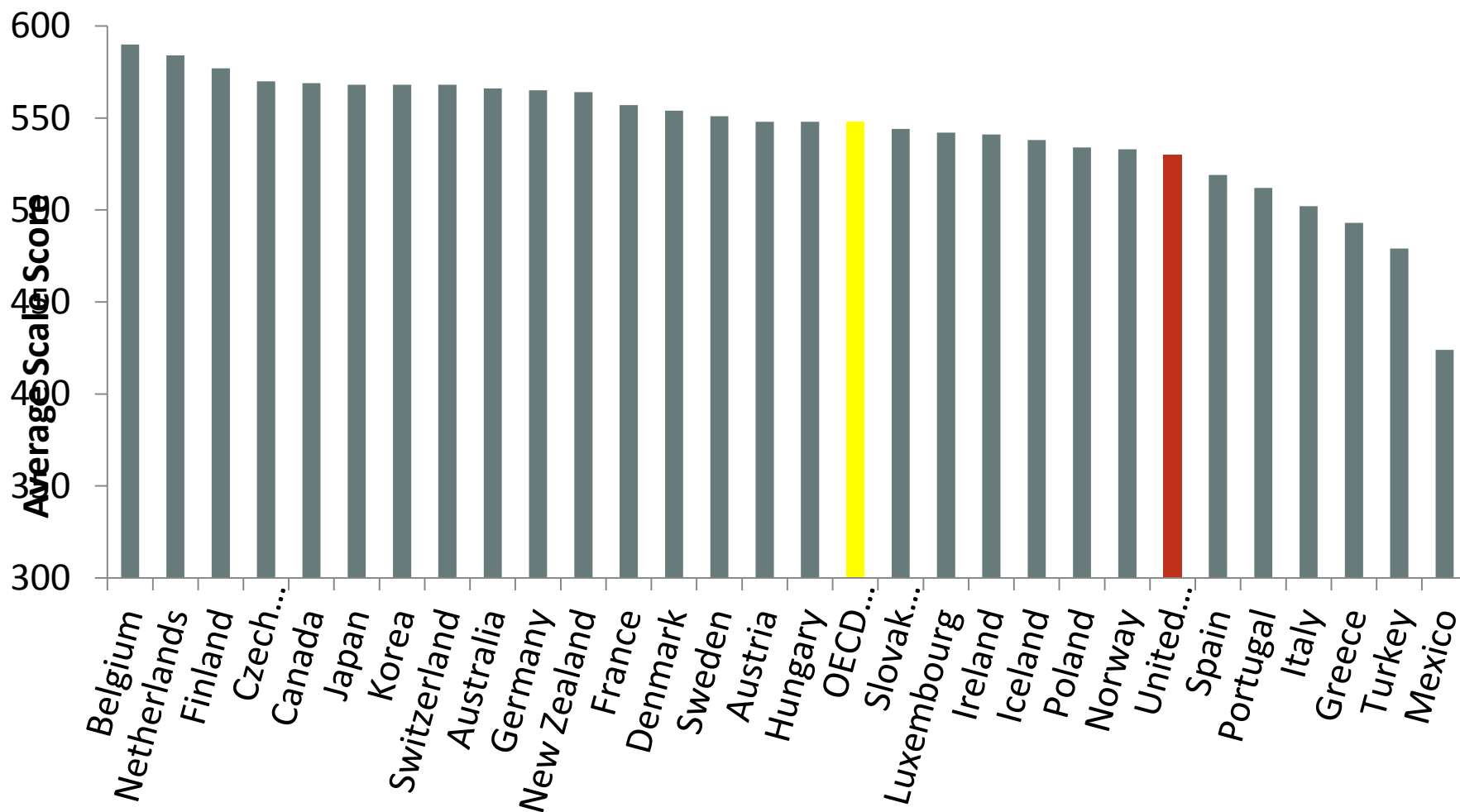


Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2003 Results, data available at

<http://www.oecd.org/>

U.S. Ranks 23rd out of 29

OECD Countries in the Math Achievement of High-SES Students



Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2003 Results, data available at

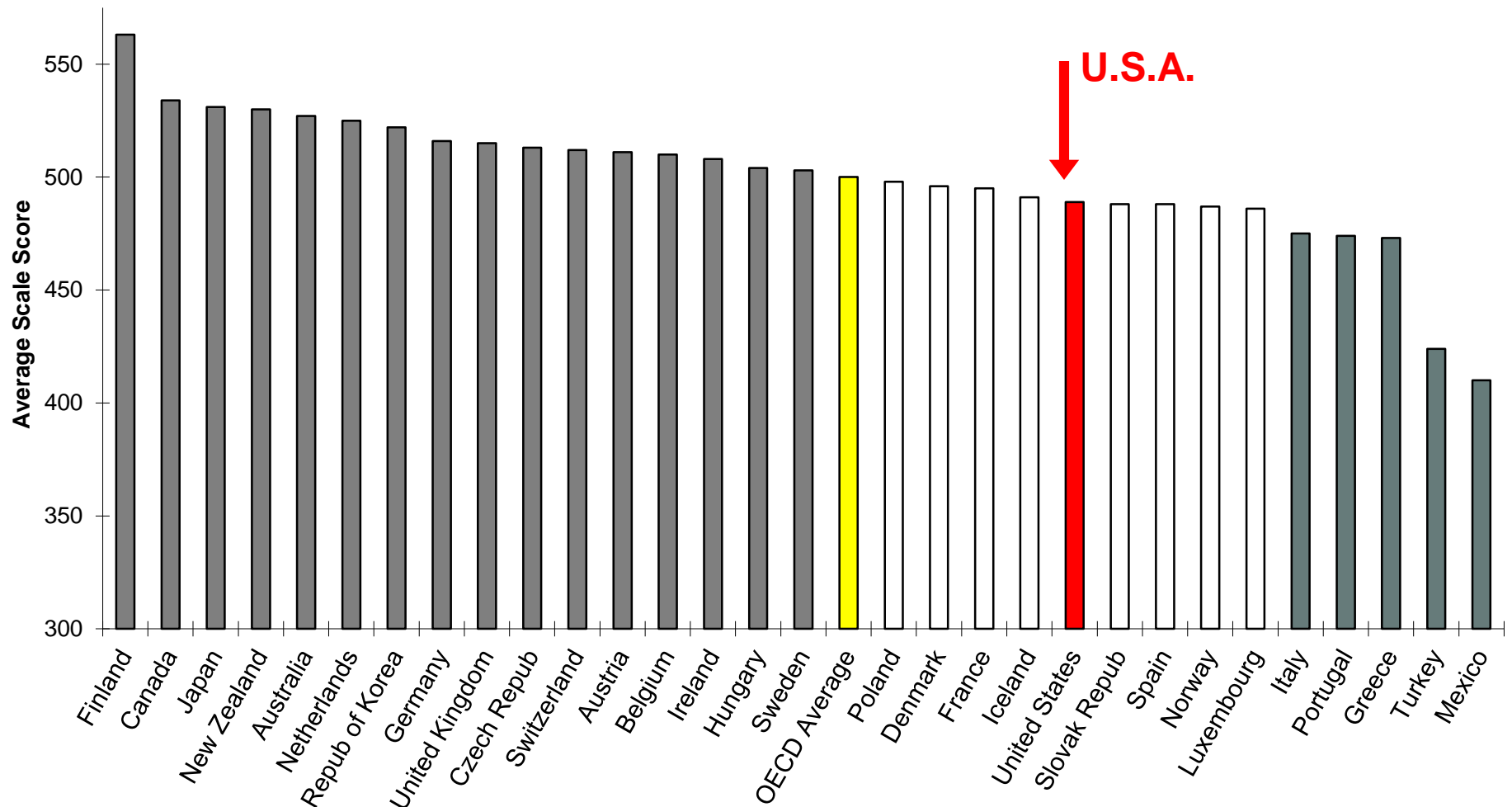
<http://www.oecd.org/>

Problems not limited to math,
either.

Science?

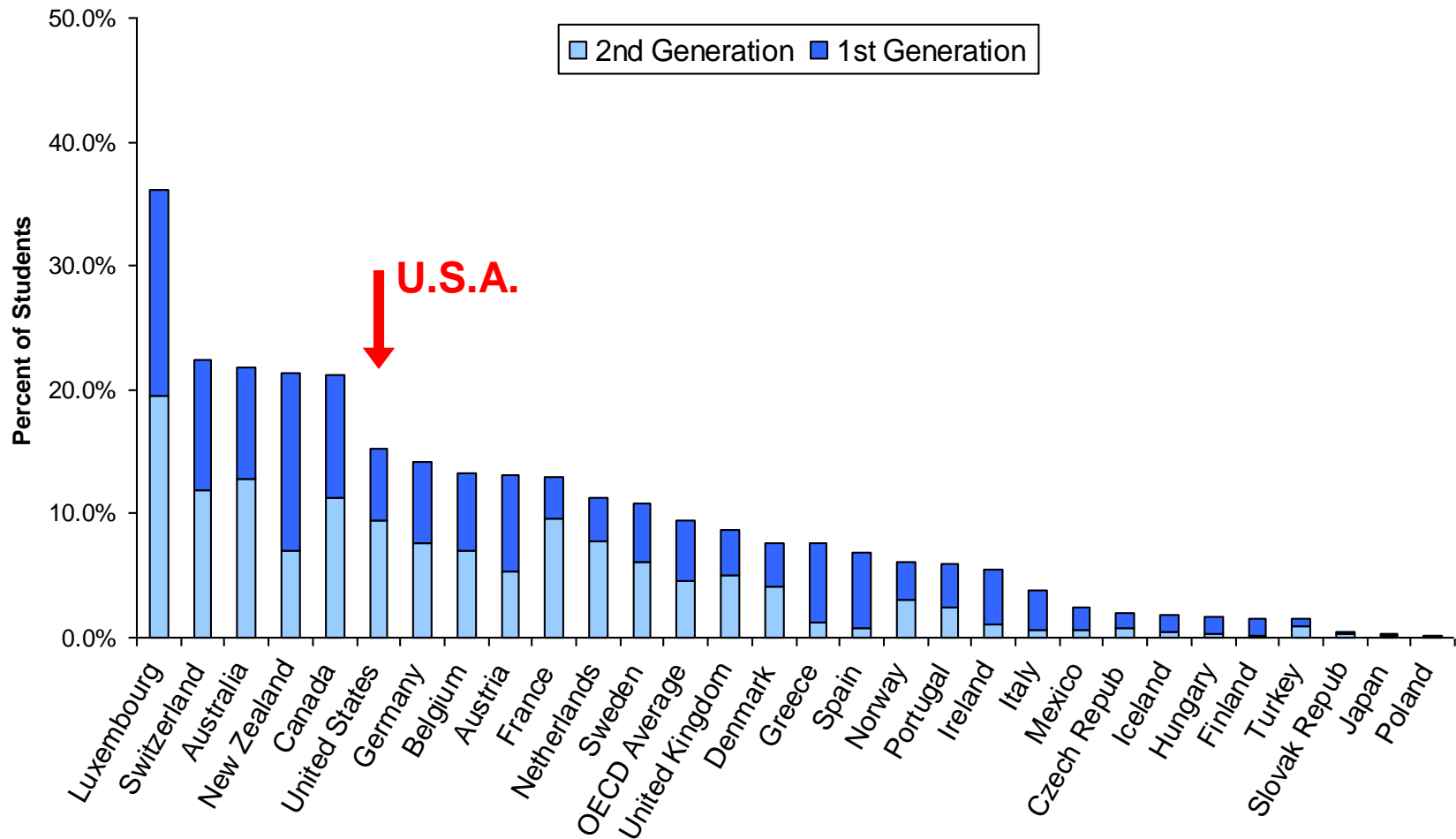
PISA 2006 Science

Of 30 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranked 21st



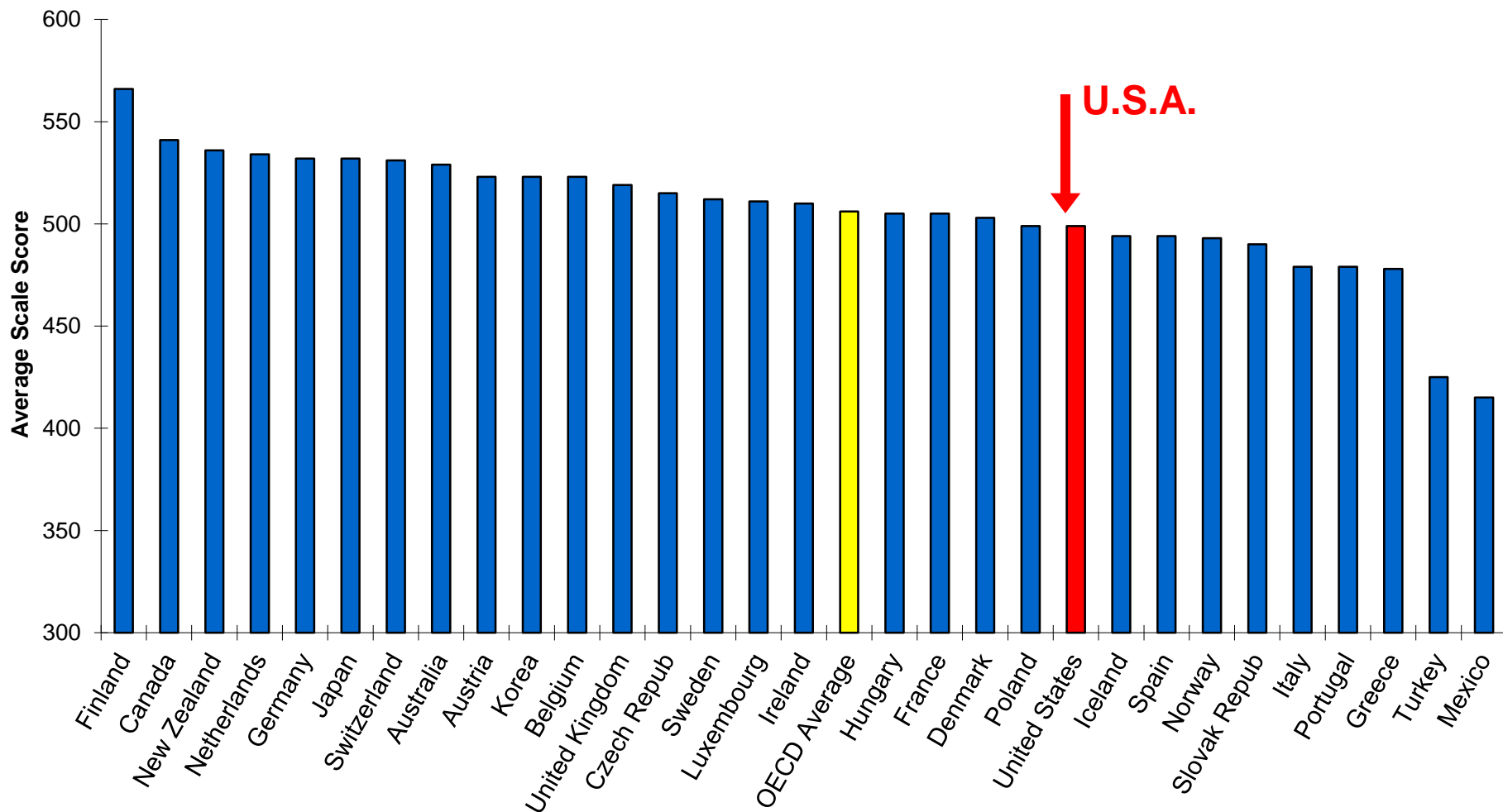
Higher than U.S. average
 Not measurably different from U.S. average
 Lower than U.S. average

Immigrants? The U.S.A. does have a larger percentage of immigrants and children of immigrants than most OECD countries



But ranks 21st out of 30 OECD countries when only
taking into account native student* scores

PISA 2006 Science



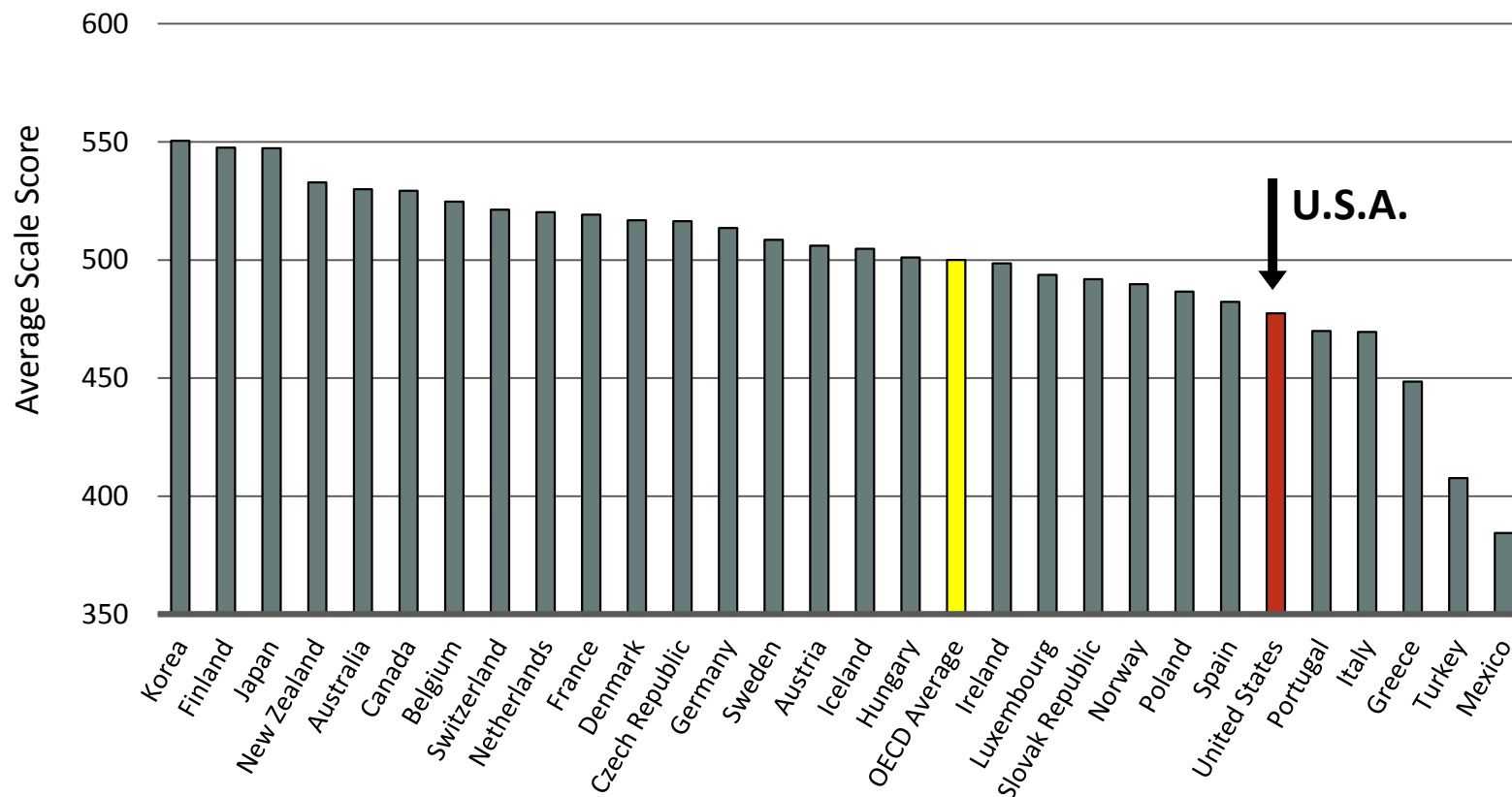
*Students born in the country of assessment with at least one parent born in the same country

Source: OECD, PISA 2006 Results, table 4.2c, <http://www.oecd.org/>

Even in problem-solving, something
we consider an American strength...

U.S.A. Ranks 24th Out of 29 OECD Countries in Problem-Solving

2003 PISA



Only place we rank high?

Inequality.

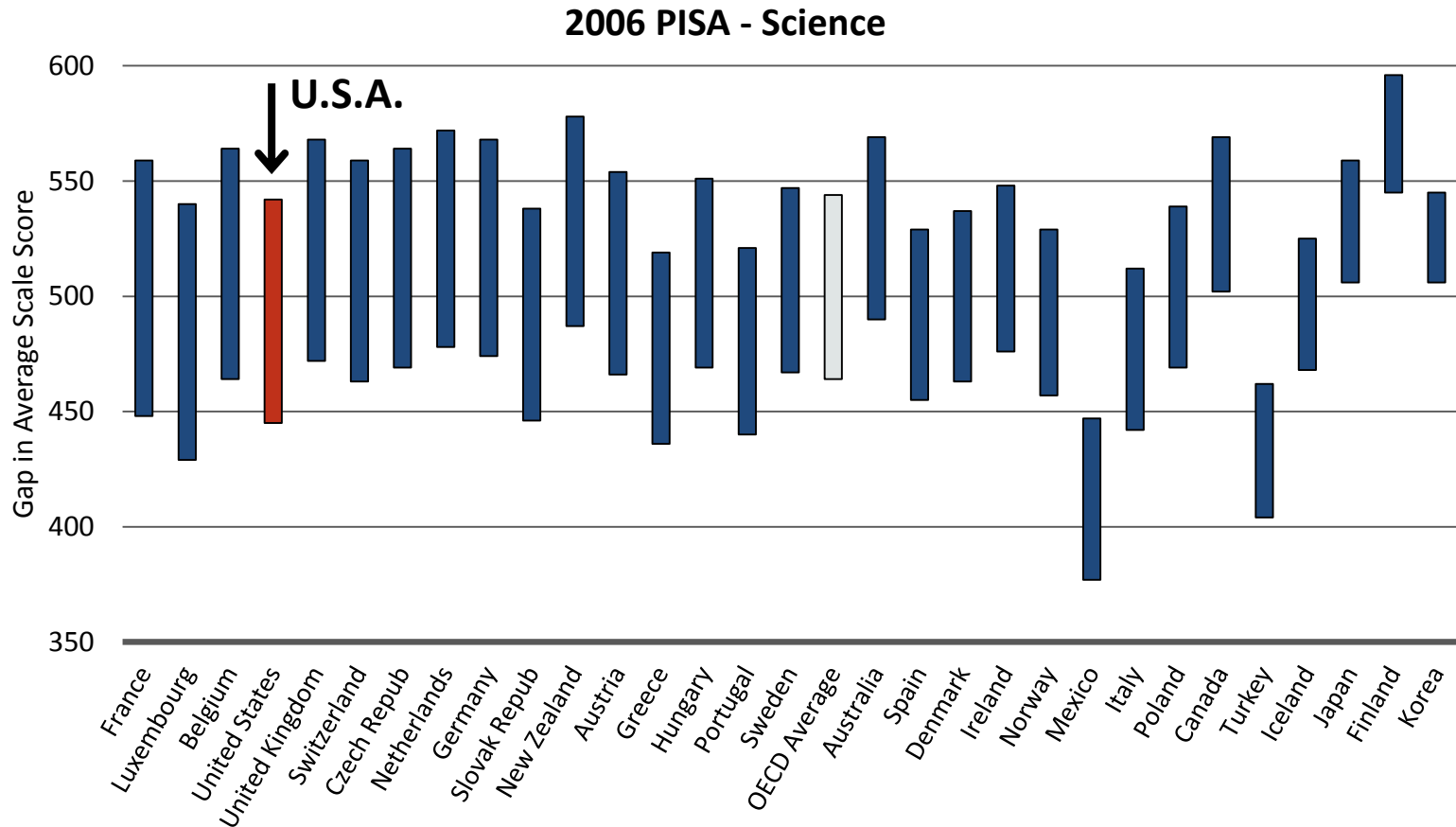
PISA 2003: Gaps in Performance Of U.S.15 Year-Olds Are Among the Largest of OECD Countries

	Rank in Performance Gaps Between Highest and Lowest Achieving Students *
Mathematical Literacy	8th
Problem Solving	6th

***Of 29 OECD countries, based on scores of students at the 5th and 95th percentiles.**

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2003 Results, data available at <http://www.oecd.org/>

Among OECD Countries, U.S.A. has the 4th Largest Gap Between High-SES and Low-SES Students



Source: PISA 2006 Results, OECD, table 4.8b

These gaps begin before children arrive at the schoolhouse door.

But, rather than organizing our educational system to ameliorate this problem, we organize it to exacerbate the problem.

How?

By giving students who arrive with
less, less in school, too.

Some of these “lessees” are a result of choices that policymakers make.

National Inequities in State and Local Revenue Per Student

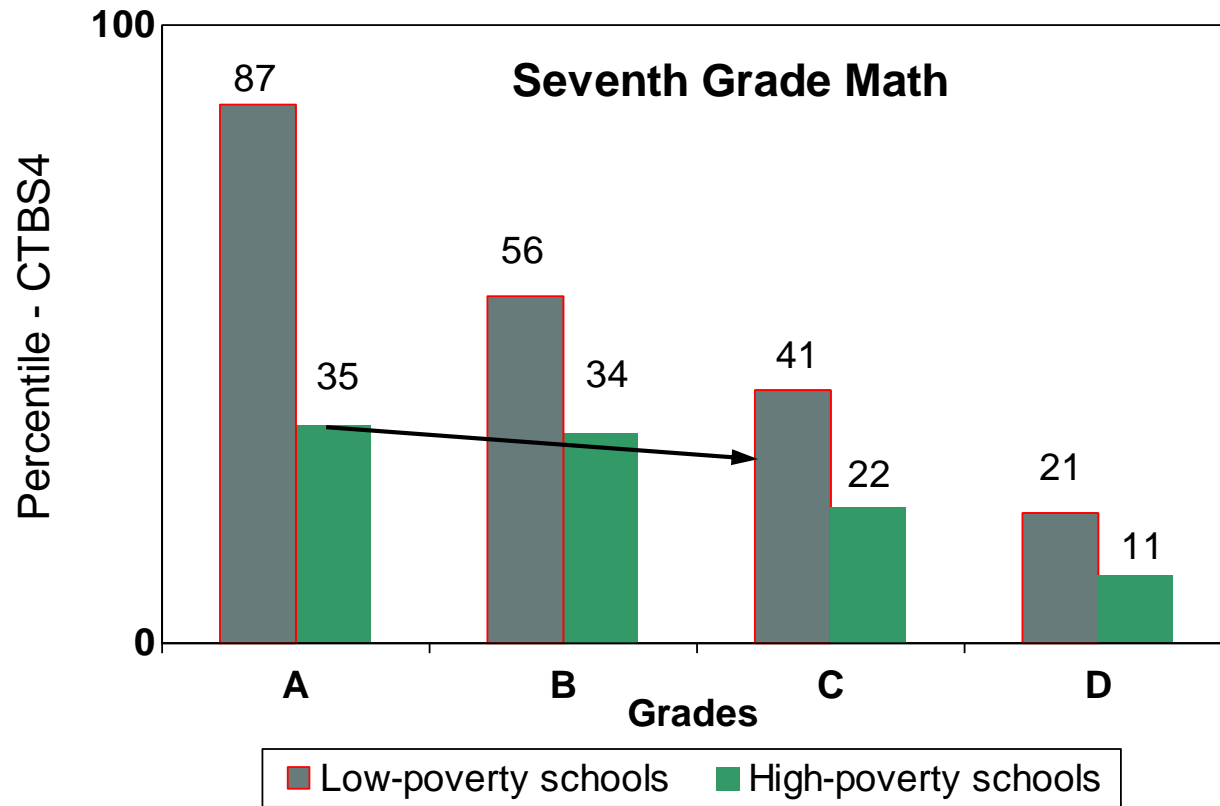
	Gap
High Poverty vs. Low Poverty Districts	-\$773 per student
High Minority vs. Low Minority Districts	-\$1,122 per student

Source: Education Trust analyses based on U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Census Bureau data for the 2005-06 school year.

In truth, though, some of the most devastating “lesses” are a function of choices that we educators make.

Choices we make about what to
expect of whom...

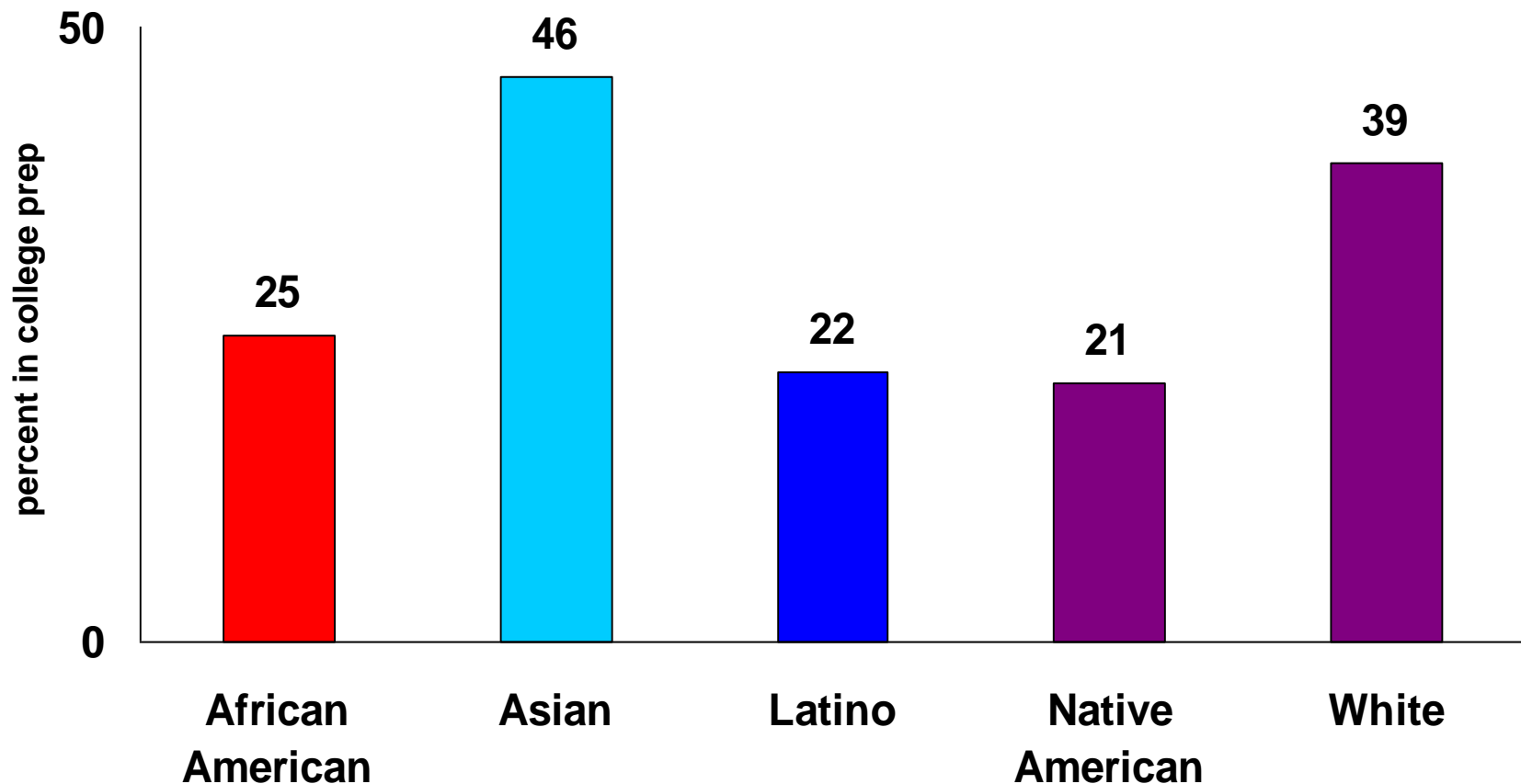
Students in Poor Schools Receive 'A's for Work That Would Earn 'Cs' in Affluent Schools



Source: Prospects (ABT Associates, 1993), in "Prospects: Final Report on Student Outcomes", PES, DOE, 1997.

Choices we make about what to
teach whom...

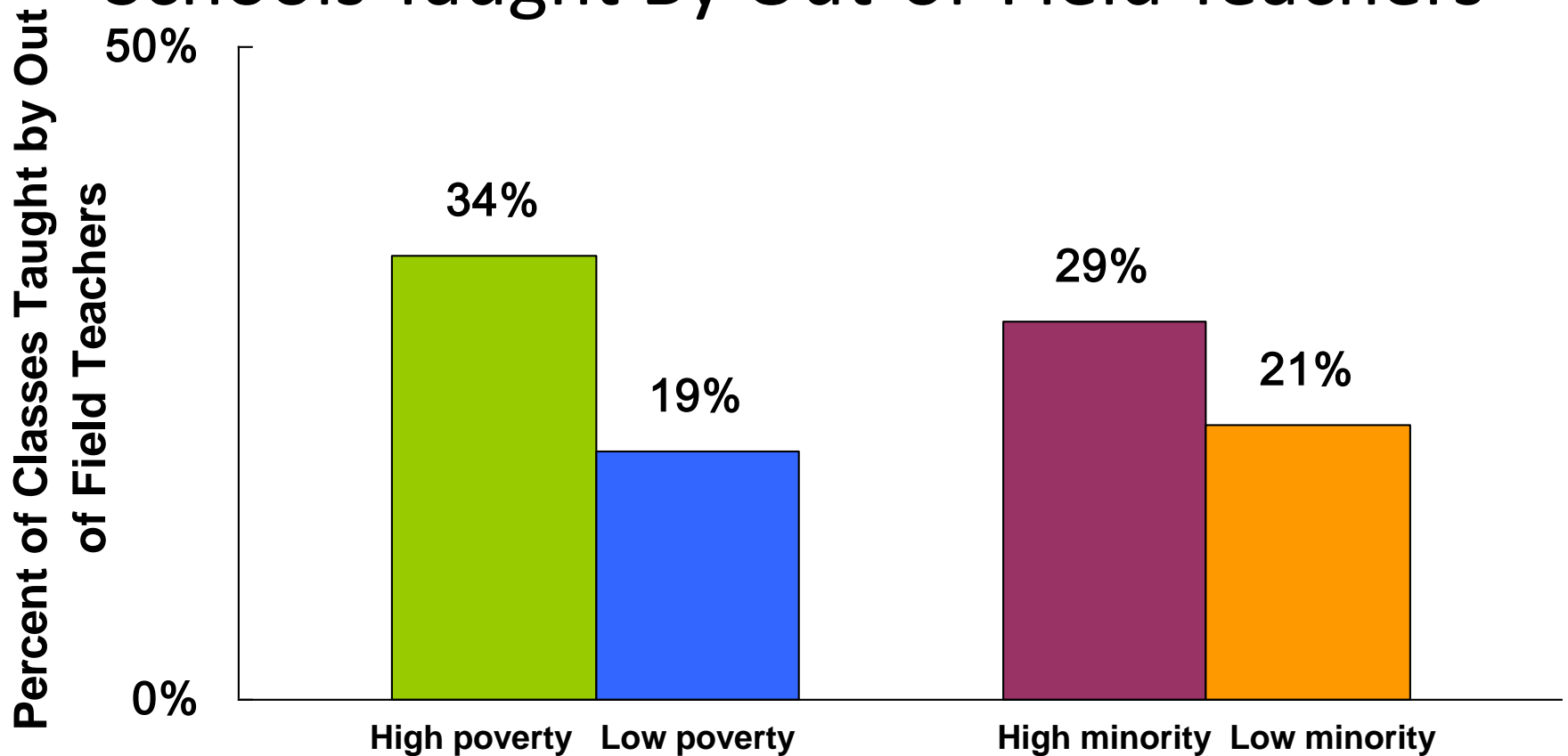
African American, Latino & Native American high school graduates are less likely to have been enrolled in a full college prep track



Full College Prep track is defined as at least: 4 years of English, 3 years of math, 2 years of natural science, 2 years of social science and 2 years of foreign language

And choices we make about
who teaches whom...

More Classes in High-Poverty, High-Minority Schools Taught By Out-of-Field Teachers



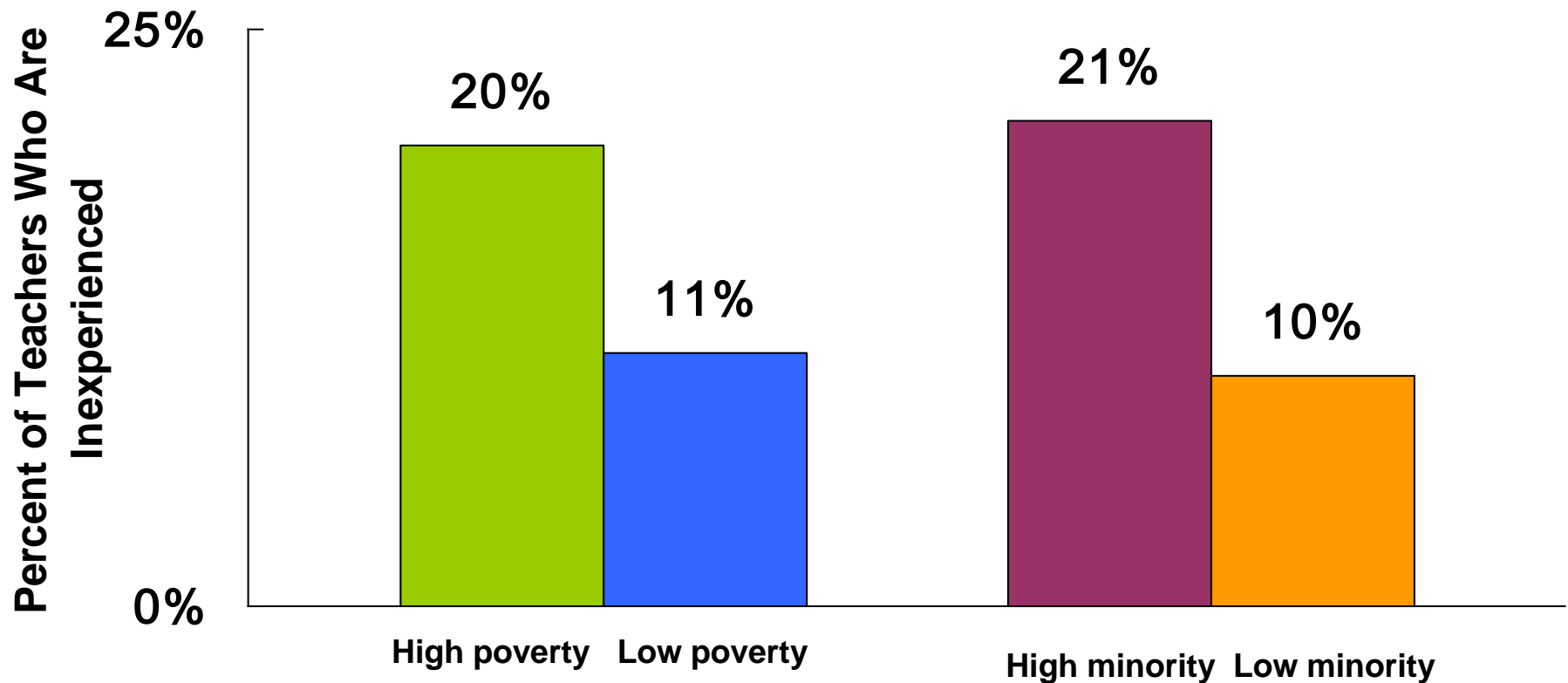
Note: High Poverty school-50% or more of the students are eligible for free/reduced price lunch. Low-poverty school -15% or fewer of the students are eligible for free/reduced price lunch.

High-minority school - 50% or more of the students are nonwhite. Low-minority school- 15% or fewer of the students are nonwhite.

***Teachers lacking a college major or minor in the field. Data for secondary-level core academic classes.**

Source: Richard M. Ingersoll, University of Pennsylvania. Original analysis for the Ed Trust of 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey.

Poor and Minority Students Get More Inexperienced* Teachers



***Teachers with 3 or fewer years of experience.**

Note: High poverty refers to the top quartile of schools with students eligible for free/reduced price lunch. Low poverty-bottom quartile of schools with students eligible for free/reduced price lunch. High minority-top quartile; those schools with the highest concentrations of minority students. Low minority-bottom quartile of schools with the lowest concentrations of minority students

Results are devastating.

Kids who come in a little behind,
leave a **lot** behind.

What Can We Do?

An awful lot of Americans have decided that we can't do much.

What We Hear Many Adults Say:

- They're poor
- Their parents don't care
- They come to schools without breakfast
- Not enough books
- Not enough parents

But if they are right, why are low-income students and students of color performing so much higher in some schools...

Frankford Elementary School



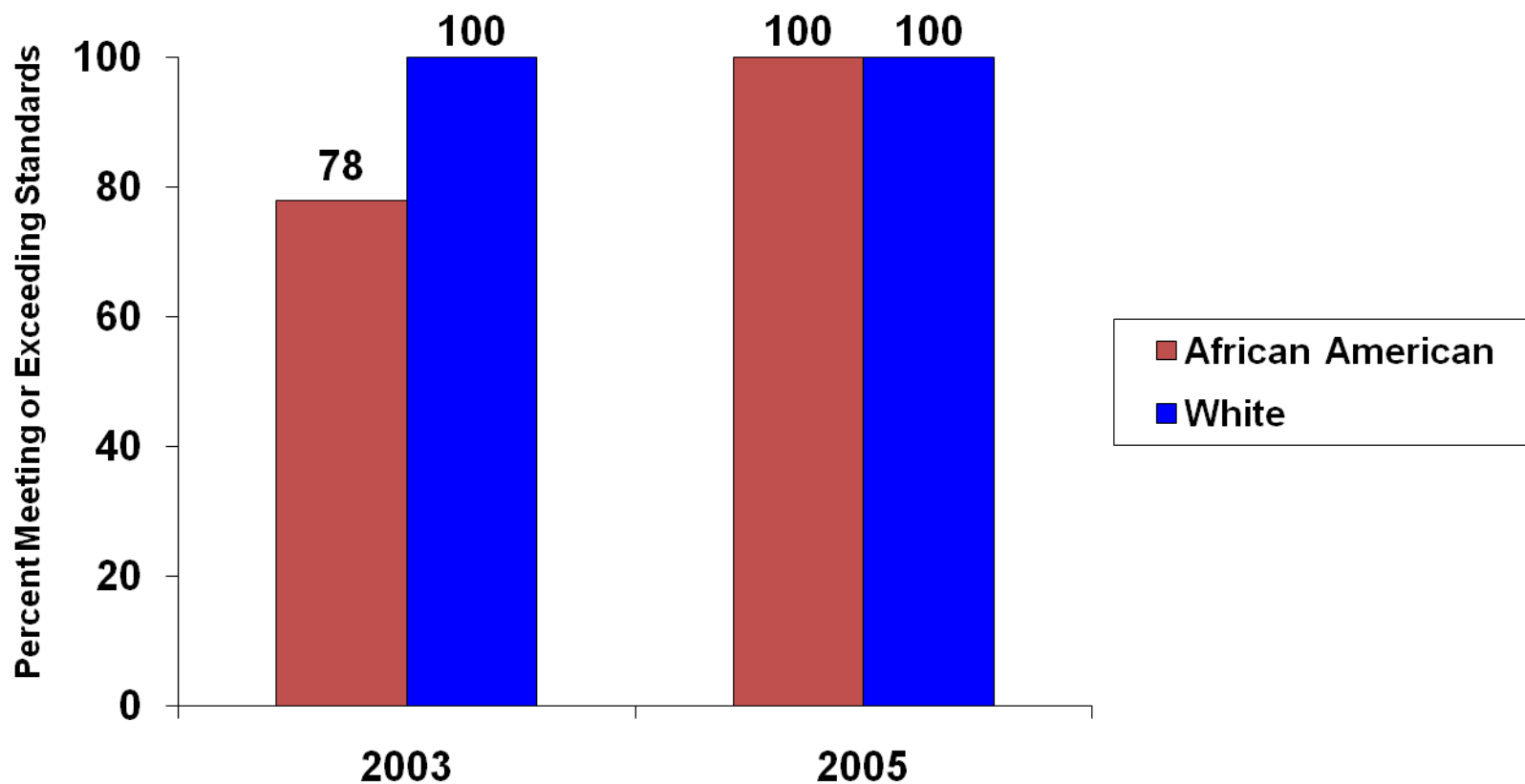
Frankford Elementary

Frankford, Delaware

- 449 Students in Grades PreK-5
- 29% African American
- 34% Latino
- 34% White
- 76% Low-Income

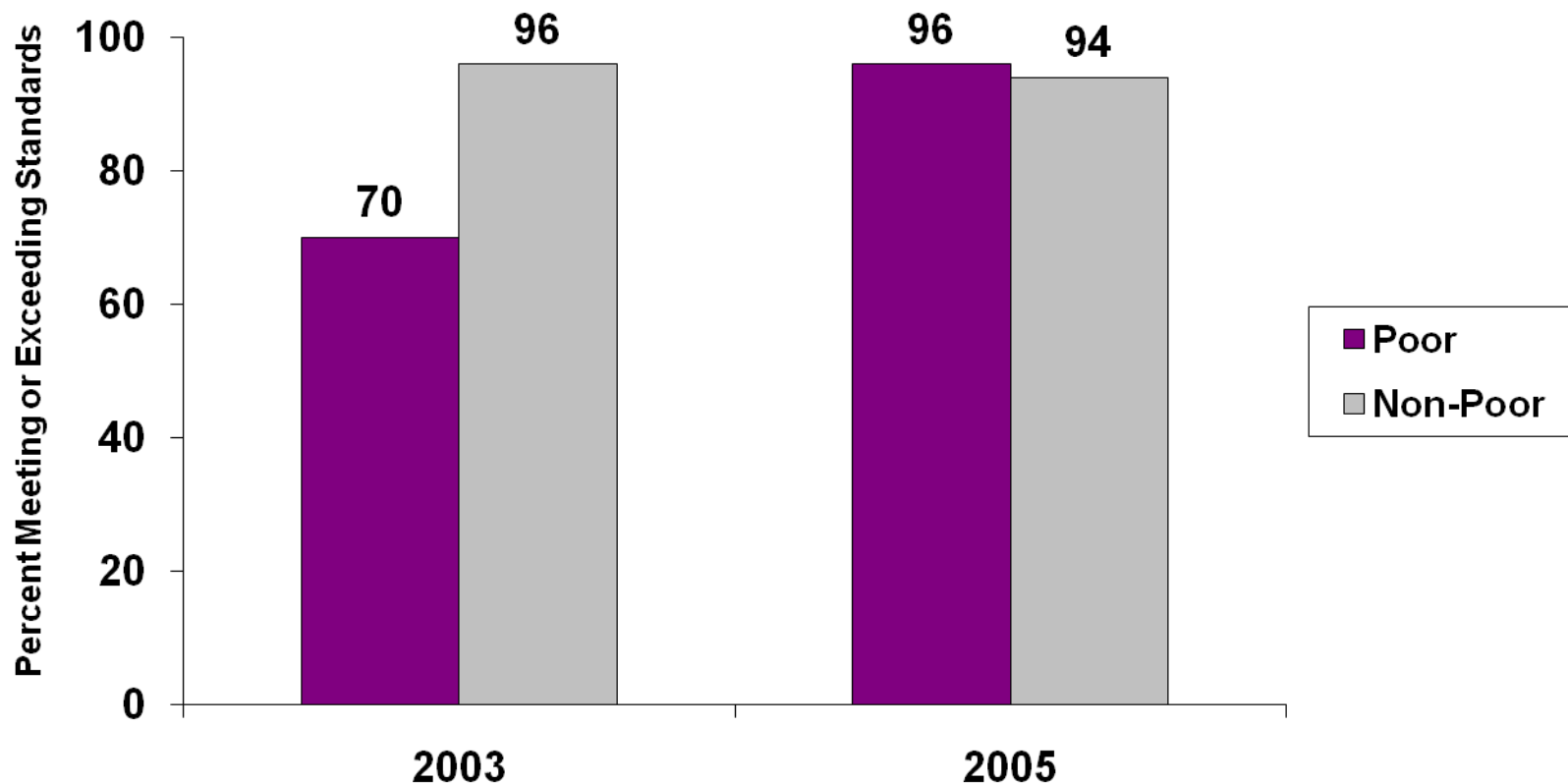
Frankford Elementary

Closing Gaps, Grade 5 Reading



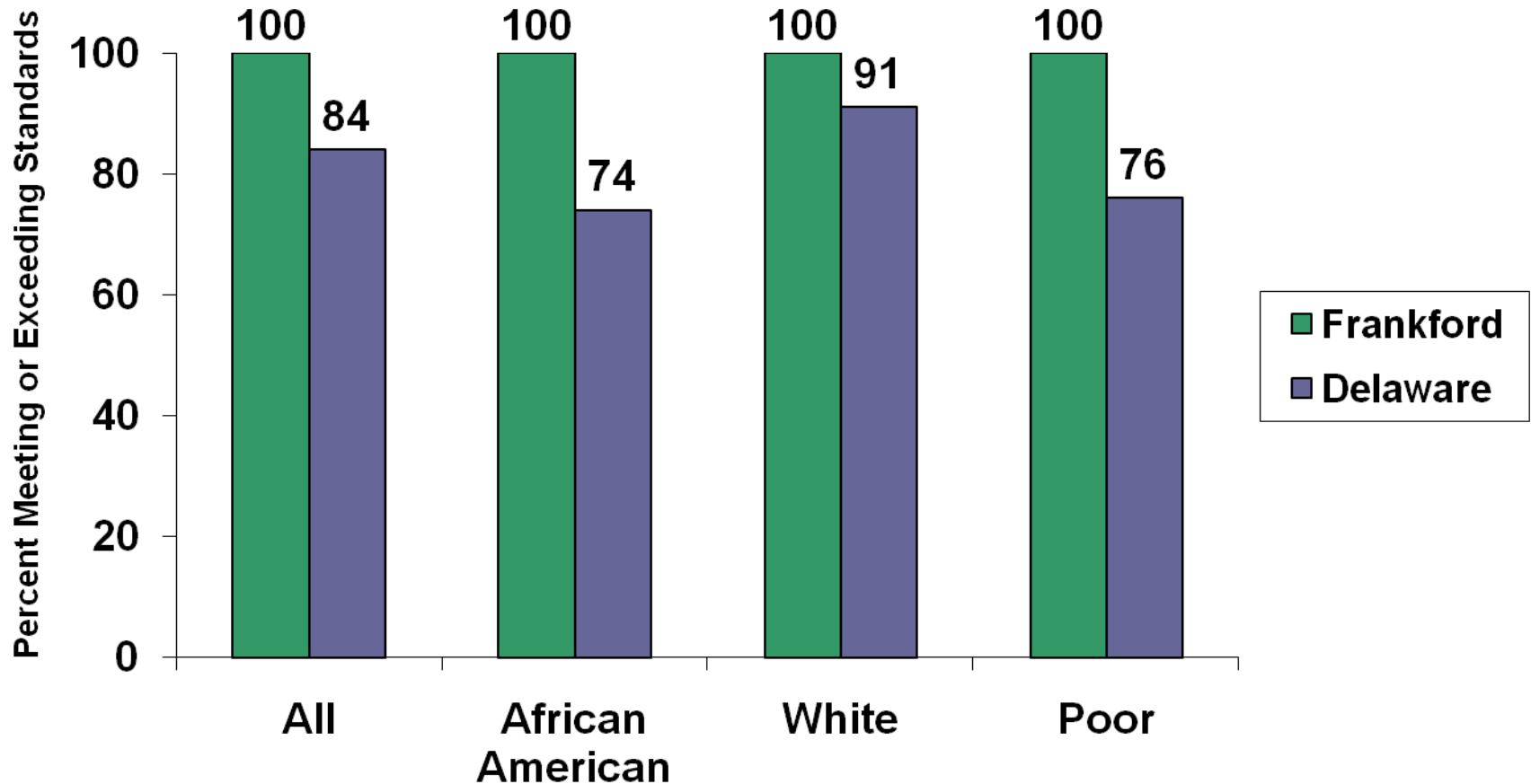
Frankford Elementary

Closing Gaps, Grade 5 Math



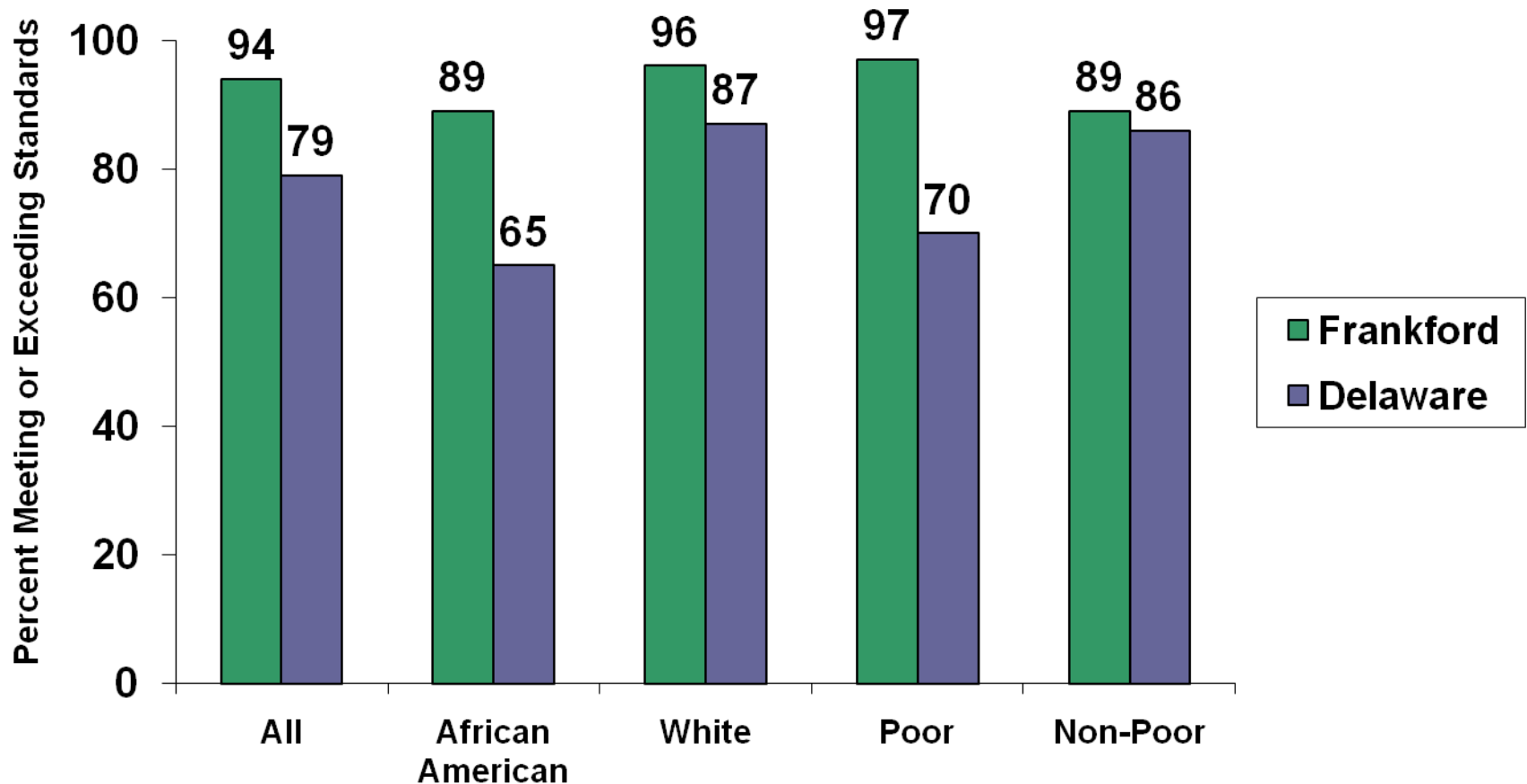
Frankford Elementary

Higher Proficiency Rates than the State, 2005 Grade 3 Reading



Frankford Elementary

Higher Proficiency Rates than the State, 2005 Grade 3 Math



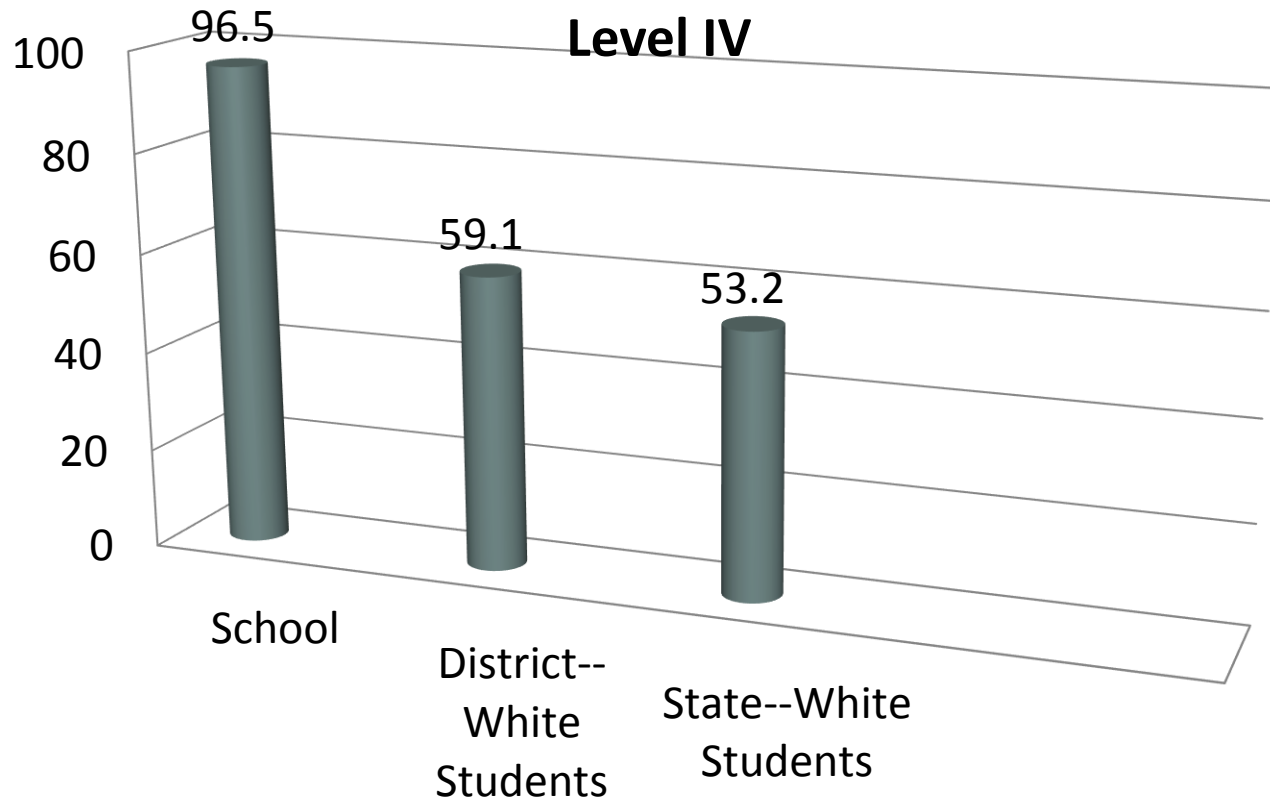
George Hall Elementary School

Mobile, AL

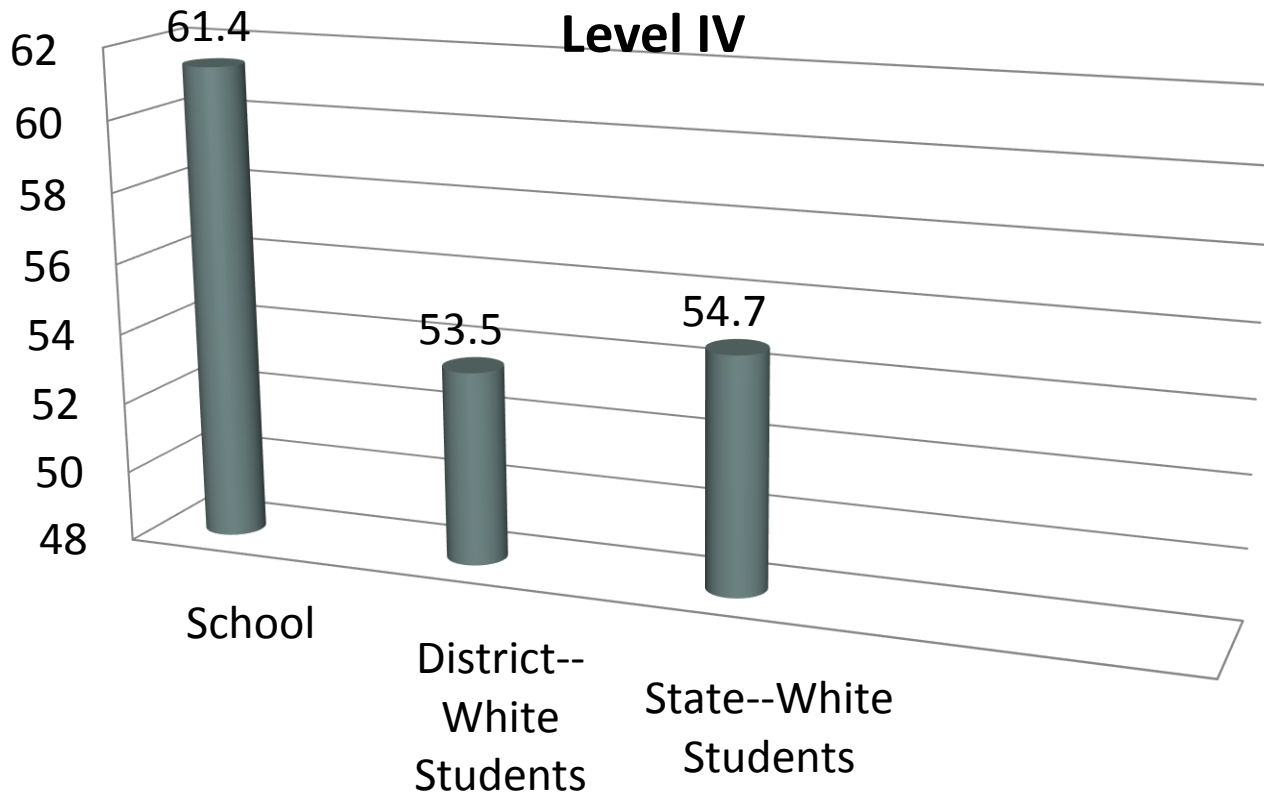
- 530 Students
- 100% African American
- 99% Low-Income

Four years ago, school was lowest performing in the district and among the bottom few in the state. District reconstituted—and restaffed.

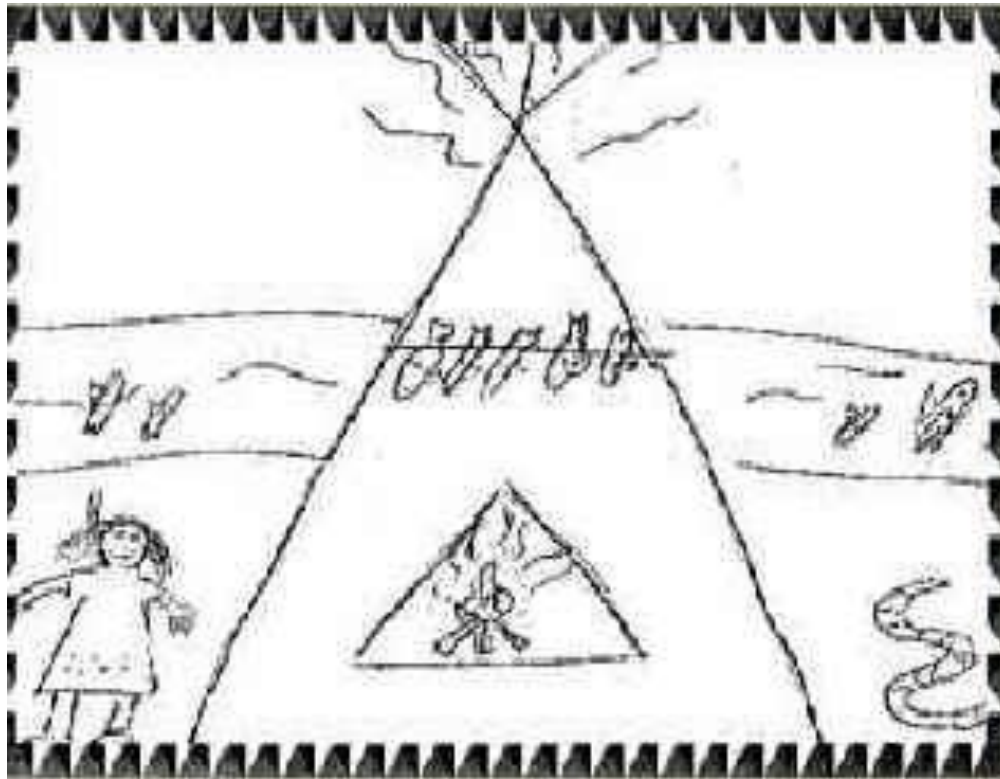
George Hall Elementary, Grade 5 Math 2008



George Hall Elementary, Grade 5 Reading 2008



Lapwai Elementary School

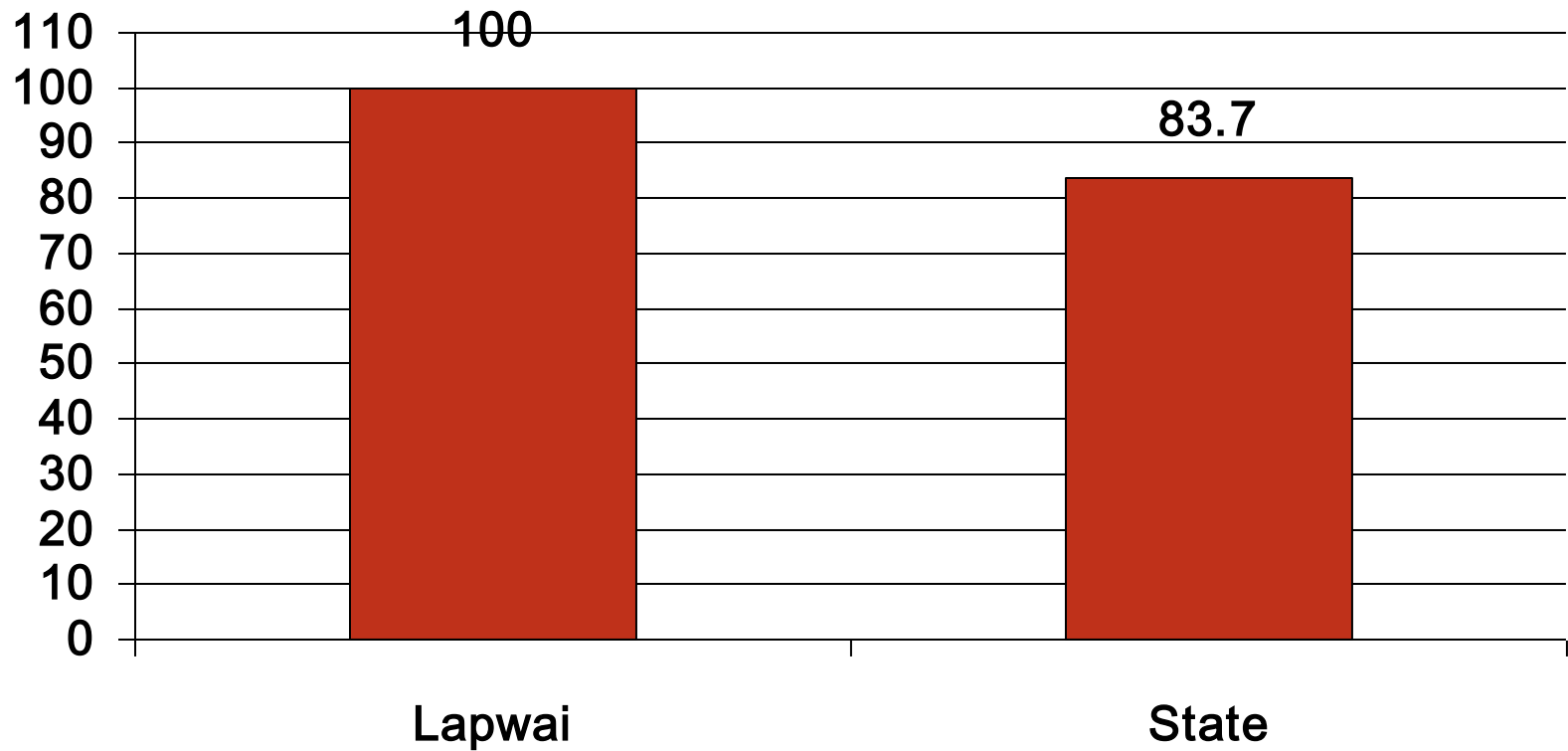


Lapwai Elementary School

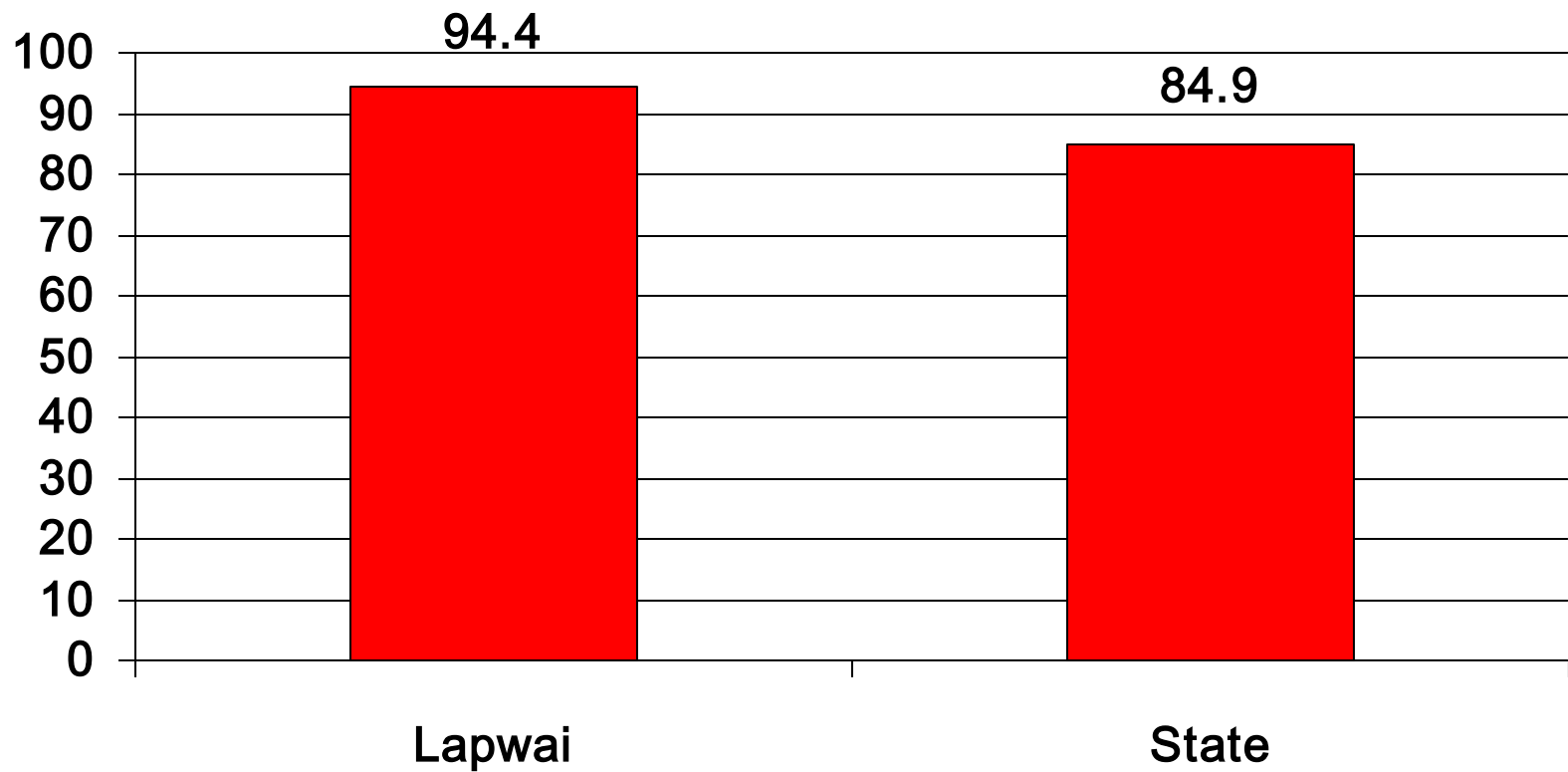
Lapwai, Idaho

- 82.3% Native American
- 17.7% White
- 61% Low-Income

Lapwai Students Exceed State 4th Grade Math



Lapwai Students Exceed State 4th Grade Reading



Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High

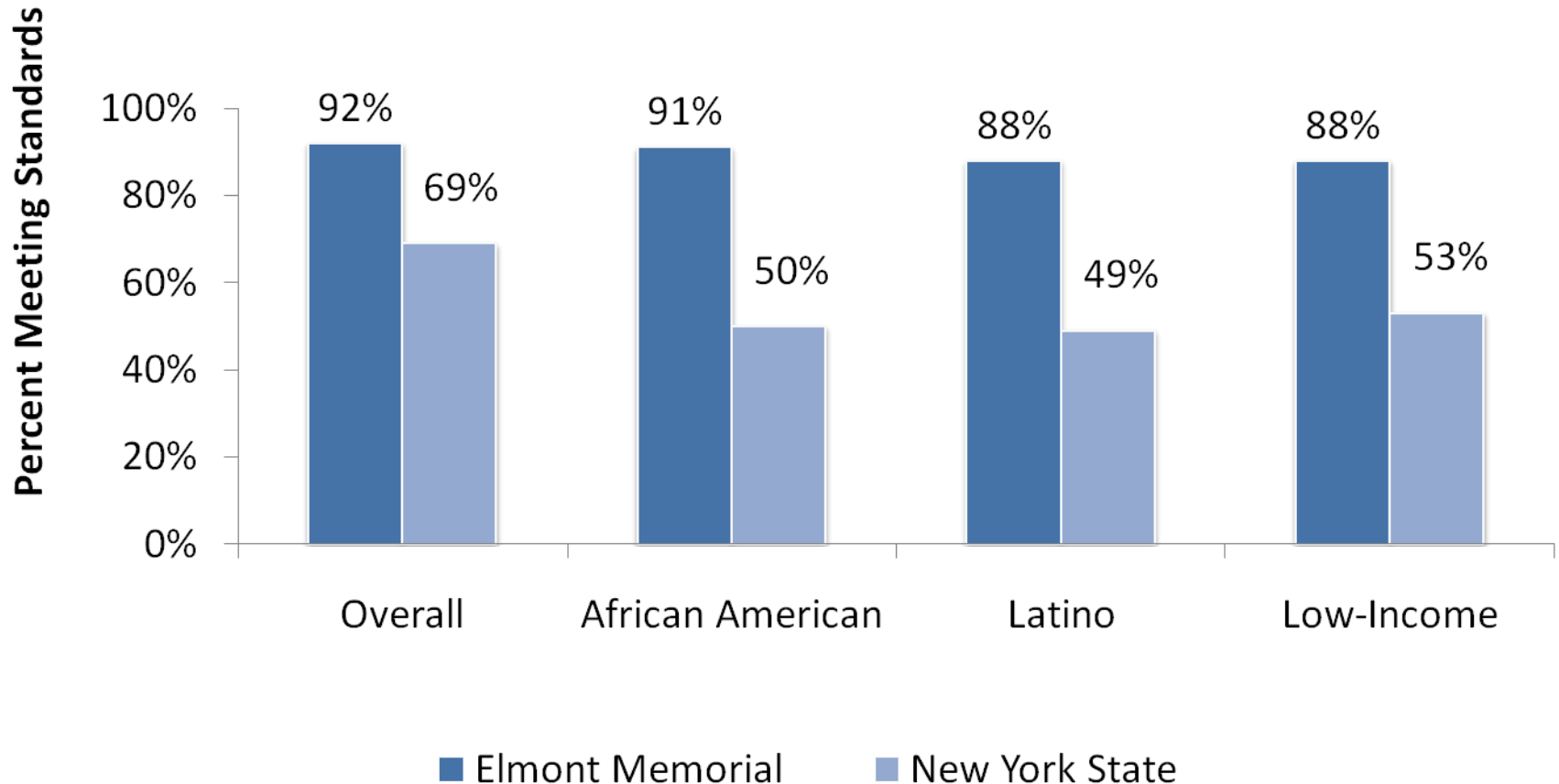
Elmont, New York

- 1,945 students in grades 7-12
 - 77% African American
- 27% Low-Income



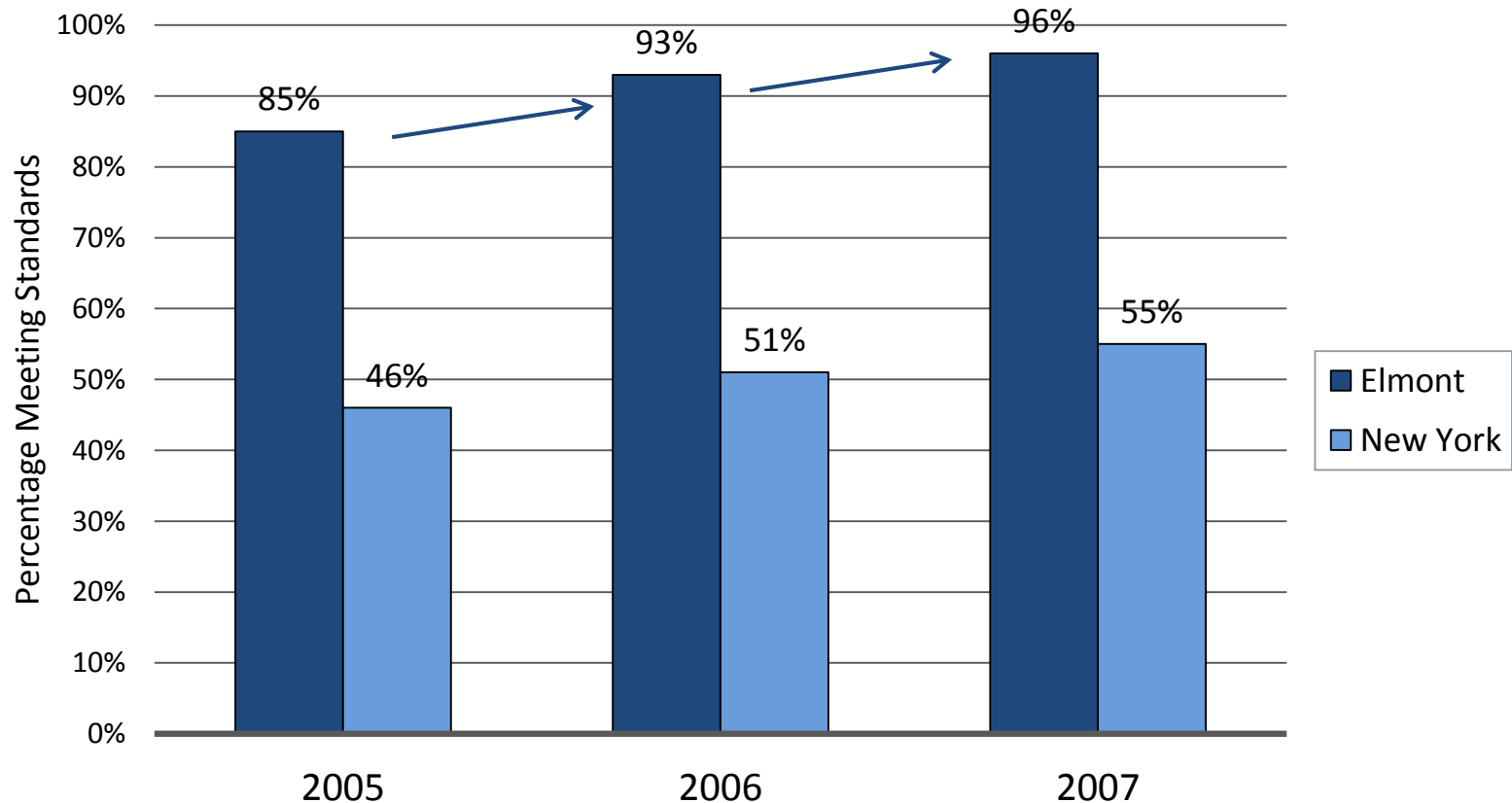
Source: New York Department of Education

Elmont: Out-Performing the State Secondary-Level English (2006)



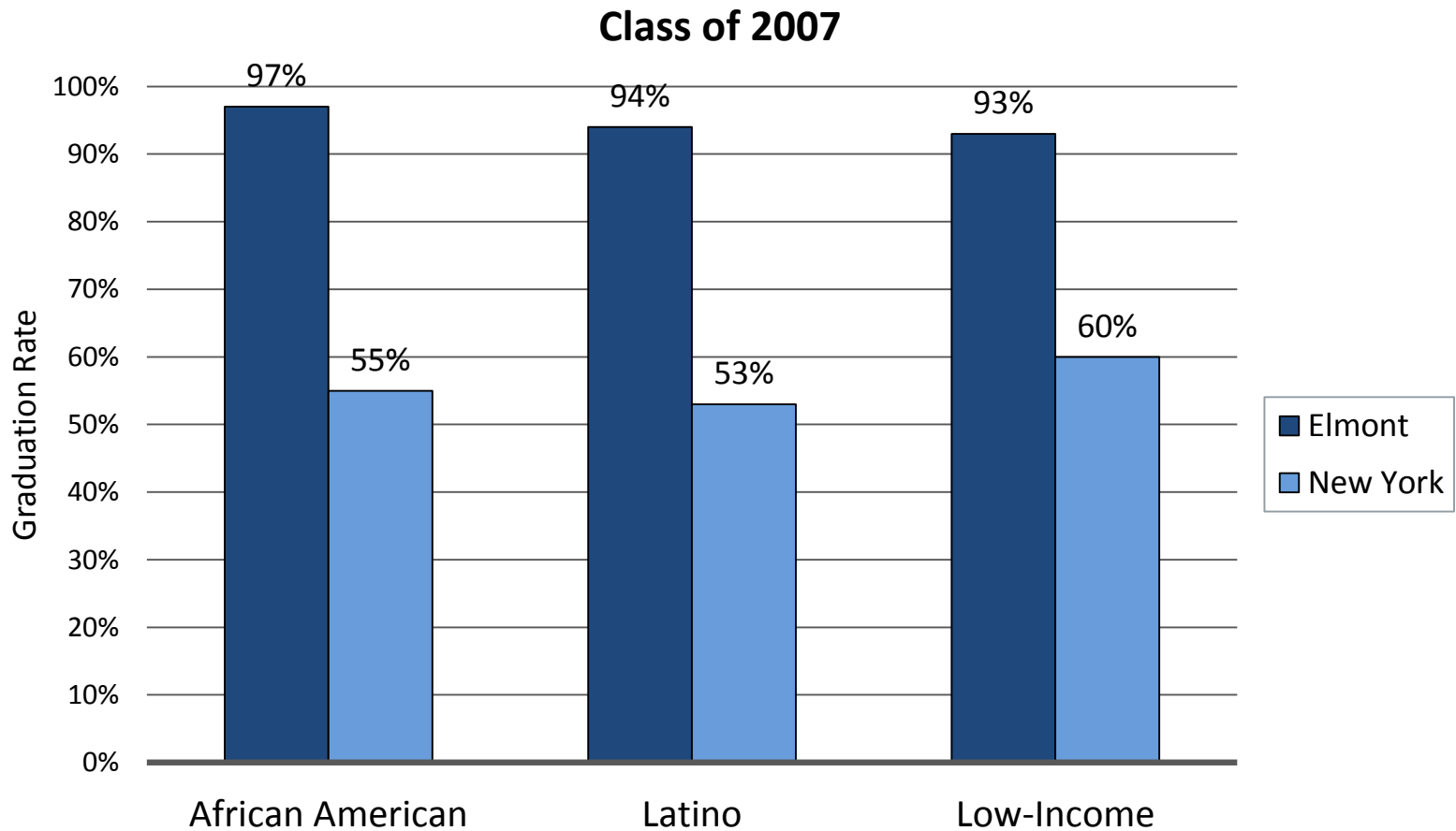
Improvement and High Performance at Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High

African-American Students – Secondary-Level Math



Source: New York Department of Education

More Students Graduate at Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High



Source: New York Department of Education

Big Differences in Whole Districts
and States, Too.

Bottom Line:
What Schools Do Matters A Lot!

Key Lessons from the High Performers

#1. Start Early.

Especially for children from low-income families—more than 40% of YOUR children—the early years are crucial learning opportunities.

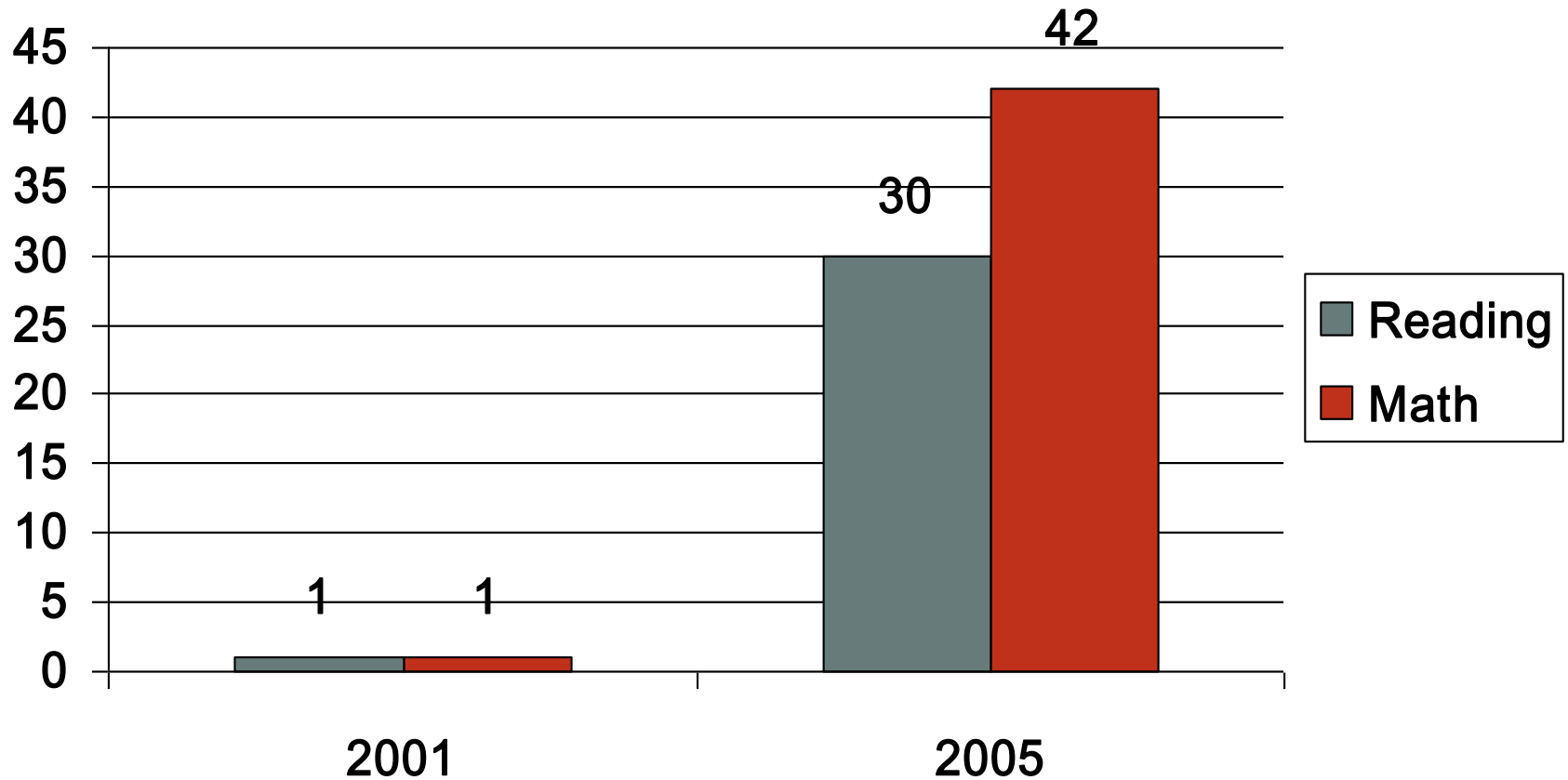
High quality pre-k programs can
help put them on a path to
strong school performance.

#2. Aim High.

Schools that work for all groups of kids set their goals **higher** than those that don't.

Elementary Version...

M. Hall Stanton Elementary: Percent of 5th Graders ADVANCED



High School Version...

Even when they start with high drop out rates, high impact high schools focus on preparing all kids for college and careers

Education Trust 2005 study, “Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground.”

Michigan's current exams set too low a bar for kids and teachers.

Support the adoption of "Common Core Standards" in Michigan.

#3. STICK WITH THE JOB YOU HAVE STARTED:

High performing secondary schools put all kids—not just some—in a demanding high school core curriculum.

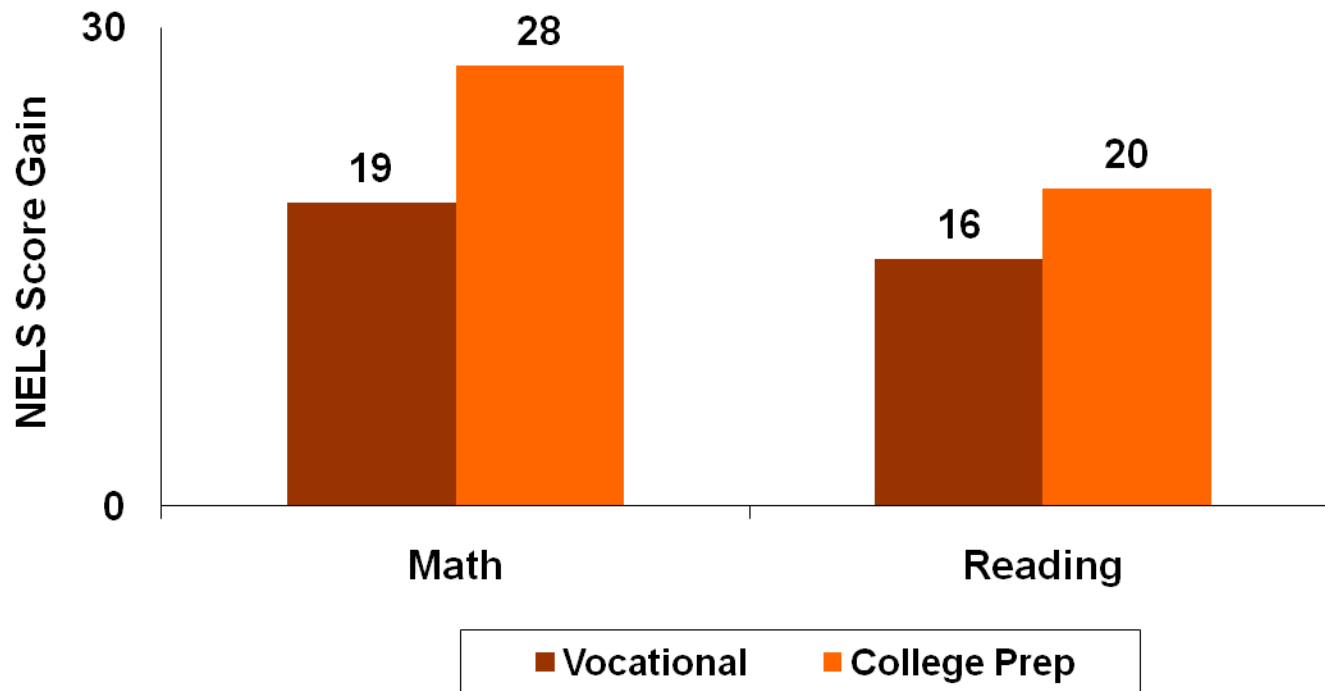
The single biggest predictor post-high school success is the **QUALITY AND INTENSITY** OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Cliff Adelman, *The Toolbox Revisited*, U.S. Department of Education

College prep curriculum ALSO
has benefits far beyond college.

Students of all sorts will learn
more...

Low Quartile Students Gain More From College Prep Courses*



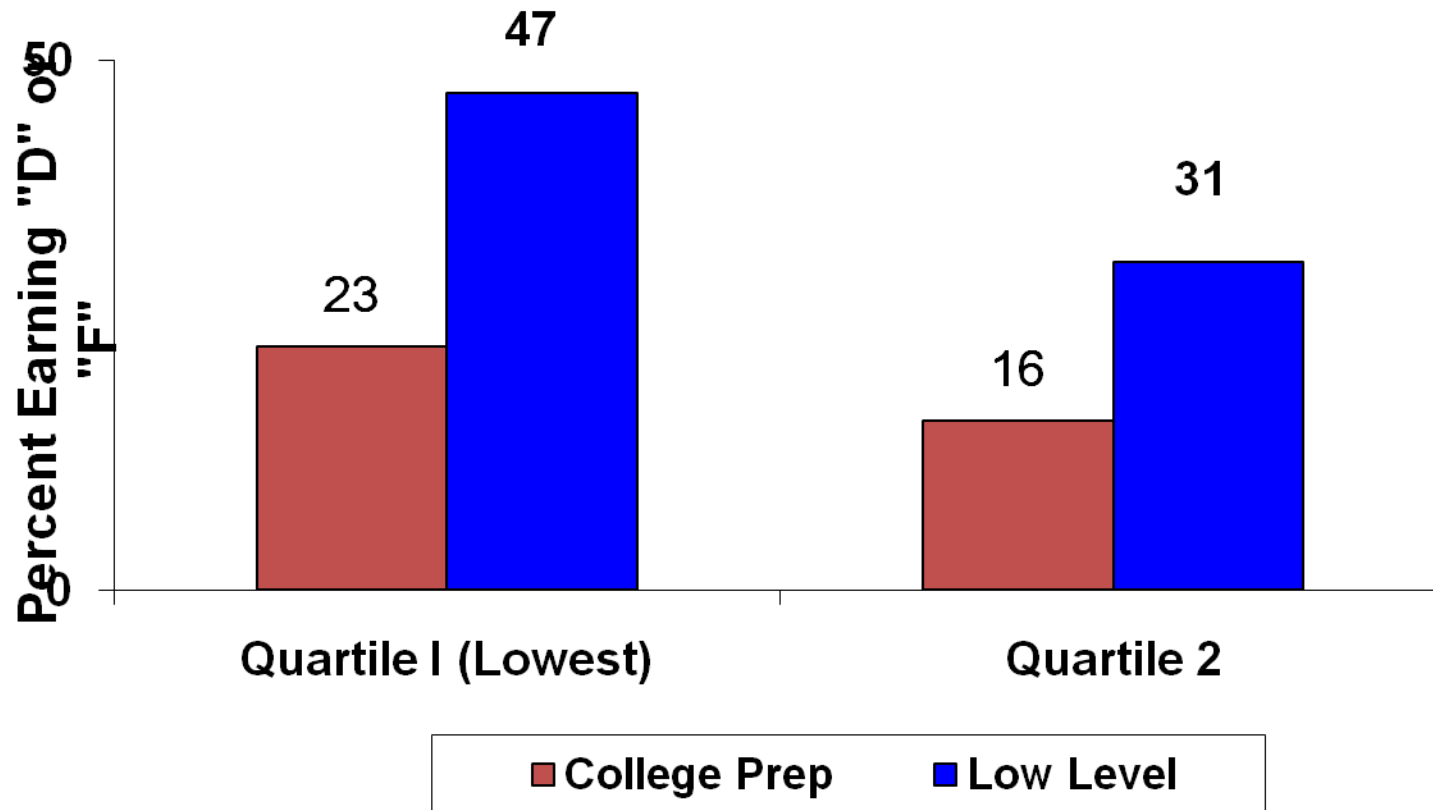
***Grade 8-grade 12 test score gains based on 8th grade achievement.**

Source: USDOE, NCES, *Vocational Education in the United States: Toward the Year 2000, in Issue Brief: Students Who Prepare for College and Vocation*

They will also fail less often...

Challenging Curriculum Results in Lower Failure Rates, Even for Lowest Achievers

Ninth-grade English performance, by high/low level course, and eighth-grade reading achievement quartiles



Source: SREB, "Middle Grades to High School: Mending a Weak Link". Unpublished Draft, 2002.

And they'll be better prepared
for the workplace.

Leading states are making
college prep the default
curriculum.

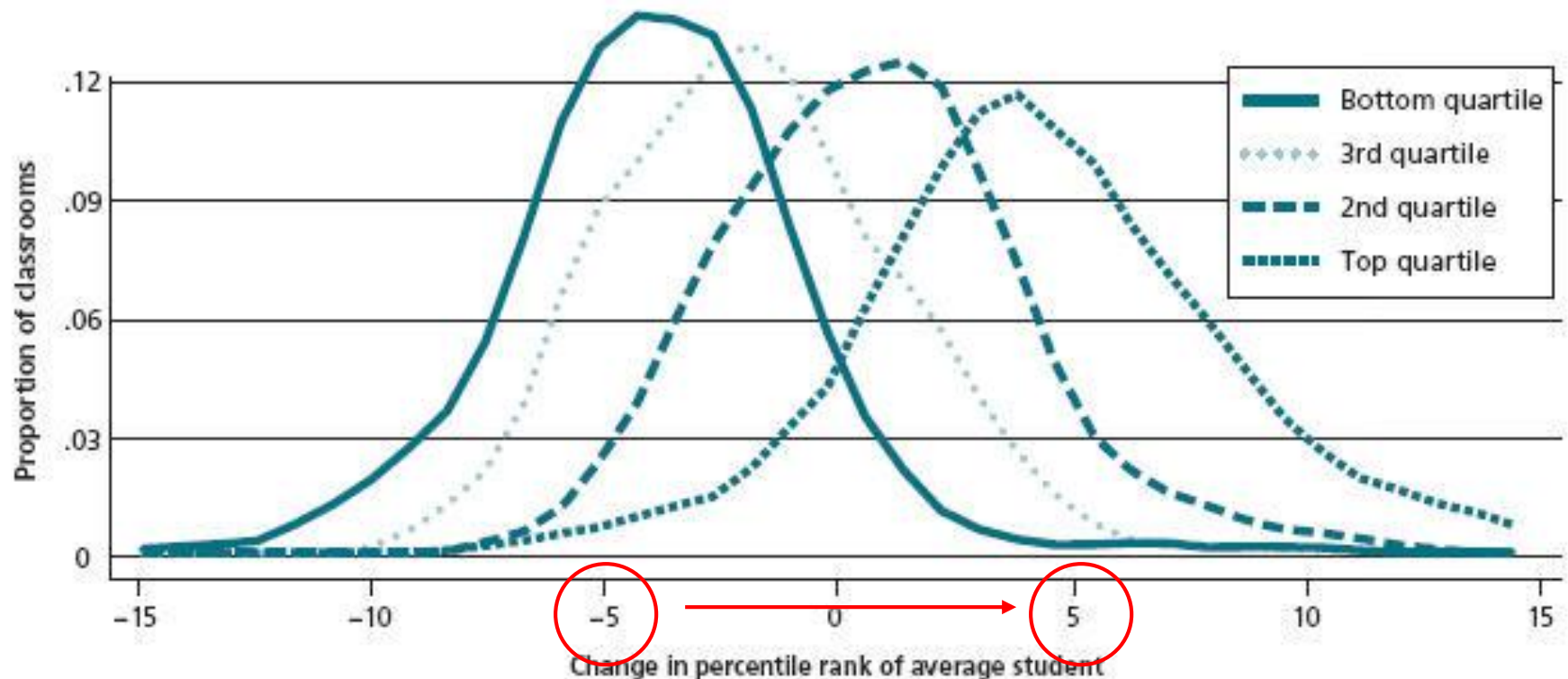
Texas, Indiana, Arkansas,
Michigan, Oklahoma,
South Dakota, New York

#4. Teachers matter a lot.

High performing schools make sure their teachers are evaluated honestly and have the help they need to succeed.

10 Percentile Point Average Difference for Students who have Top and Bottom Quartile Teachers

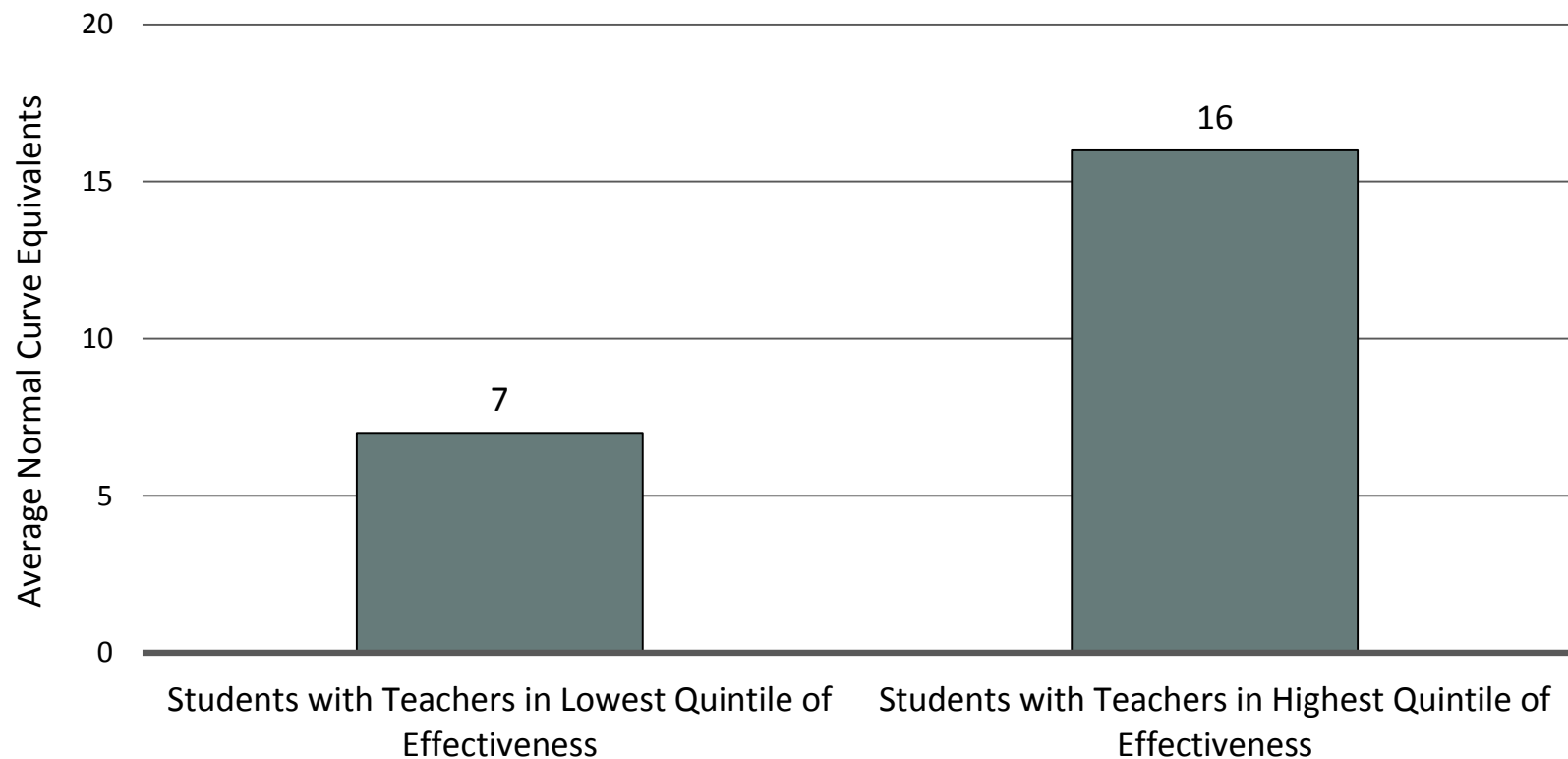
Figure 2. Teacher Impacts on Math Performance in Third Year By Ranking after First Two Years



Note: Classroom-level Impacts on average student performance, controlling for baseline scores, student demographics, and program participation. LAUSD elementary teachers, < 4 years' experience.

Students in Dallas Gain More in Math with Effective Teachers

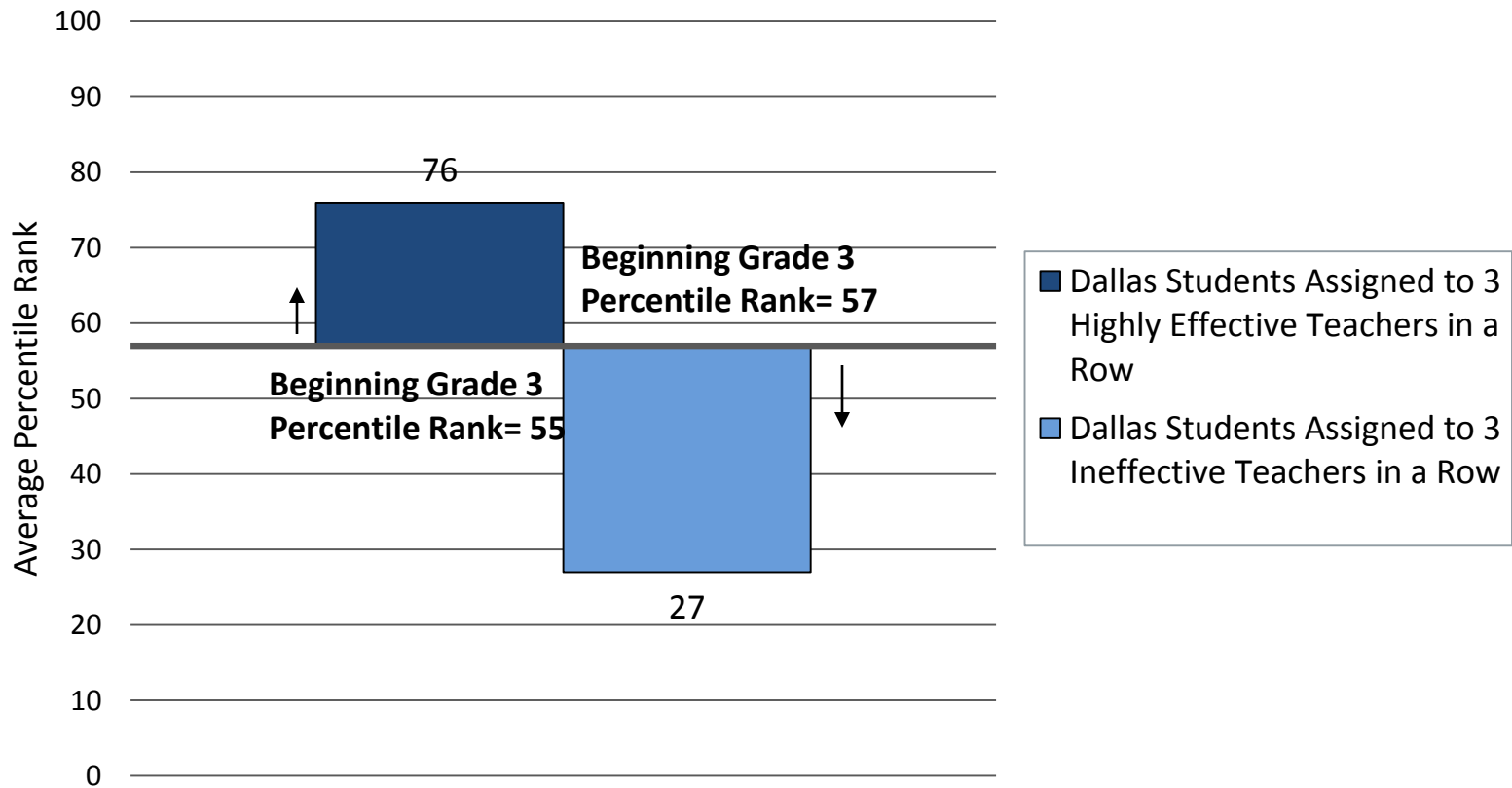
One Year Growth from 3rd to 4th Grade



Source: Heather Jordan, Robert Mendro, and Dash Weerasinghe, *The Effects of Teachers on Longitudinal Student Achievement* (1997)

Cumulative Teacher Effects On Students' Math Scores in Dallas

Grades 3-5



Source: Heather Jordan, Robert Mendro, and Dash Weerasinghe, *The Effects of Teachers on Longitudinal Student Achievement* (1997)

So, there are VERY BIG
differences among our teachers.

BUT...

We pretend that there aren't.

The Widget Effect

“When it comes to measuring instructional performance, **current policies and systems overlook significant differences between teachers. There is little or no differentiation of excellent teaching from good, good from fair, or fair from poor.** This is the **Widget Effect: a tendency to treat all teachers as roughly interchangeable**, even when their teaching is quite variable. Consequently, teachers are **not developed as professionals with individual strengths and capabilities**, and **poor performance is rarely identified or addressed.**”

- *The New Teacher Project, 2009*



In districts that use a two-rating teacher performance evaluation system—most commonly “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory”—the “unsatisfactory” rating is rarely used.

Site	S Number of Satisfactory Evaluation Ratings SY03-04 - SY07-08 ¹	U Number of Unsatisfactory Evaluation Ratings SY03-04 - SY07-08 ²
Denver ³	2,676	22 (0.8%)
Jonesboro ⁴	246	0 (0%)
Pueblo ⁵	1,284	2 (0.2%)
Toledo ⁶	1,768	3 (0.2%)

All data for tenured/non-probationary teachers.

¹ Source: District extant data supplied between April 2008 and March 2009

² Source: District extant data supplied between April 2008 and March 2009

³ Number evaluation ratings assigned between SY 2003-04 to SY 2007-08

⁴ Number of evaluation ratings assigned between SY 2003-04 to SY 2005-06

⁵ Number of evaluation ratings assigned between SY 2005-06 to SY 2007-08

⁶ Number of evaluation ratings assigned between SY 2005-06 to SY 2007-08



Districts that use multiple evaluation ratings—three or more ratings—regularly award teachers the highest evaluation ratings.

Estimated percent of tenured/non-probationary teachers who received one of the top two highest performance evaluation ratings for evaluations conducted in SY 2007-08.

99%

Cincinnati
(Based on a 4-Rating Scale)

98%

Rockford
(Based on a 3-Rating Scale)

Source: District evaluation data supplied by Cincinnati Public Schools and Rockford Public Schools human resources departments from October 2008 to March 2009.

As in any other enterprise, if we are going to get a lot better, this needs to change.

That means:

- Honest evaluation that includes measures of impact on student learning;
- Help for those whose initial efforts aren't very successful;
- Vigorous efforts to assure that our strongest teachers don't just teach the high-end kids;
- Moving out teachers who aren't good enough.

**#5. Make Every Child
Matter.**

In high performing schools, every child matters. When kids are particularly challenging, the schools “huddle” around them.

If they drop out, adults in the school go bring them back. If that doesn't work, adults outside at the school go bring them back. No effort is spared.

Mostly just common sense?

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