

Higher Expectations

New College and Career Readiness Benchmarks for the WKCE



Each year in Wisconsin, public school students in grades 3-8 and 10 take the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE) for mathematics and reading. The results of these annual assessments provide vital information for students, parents, and educators.

Starting in the 2012-13 school year, Wisconsin is raising the benchmark scores needed for students to reach the proficient or advanced performance levels. These new college and career readiness proficiency levels are based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Wisconsin is on a rapid trajectory toward higher standards. This includes implementation of the Common Core State Standards, upgraded curriculum standards for students with disabilities and English language learners, and developing next-generation assessments. Raising the WKCE benchmarks is part of a strategic effort to ensure our children are ready for college and careers in today's rapidly changing, global society and economy.

Because of these benchmark score changes, WKCE results will show a significant decline in the number of students considered to be "proficient" or "advanced." This does not reflect a change in the abilities of students, but rather reflects the higher standards and aspirations we have for our students and schools.

The higher college and career readiness benchmarks will be reflected in Wisconsin's new school accountability system. Under this new system, students' performance levels will be balanced with indicators regarding student growth, closing gaps between groups of students, and keeping students on track to graduation and postsecondary readiness.

Adjusting to higher aspirations and expectations will take some time, but this is a necessary change for a worthy purpose: to elevate the achievement of our students and their schools. Together, we can all work to make sure every child graduates ready for college and career.

For more information go to:
dpi.wi.gov/oea/acct/accountability.html

Higher benchmarks have been established as a better measure of student progress toward being ready for college and careers.





Summary Points: **Higher Expectations - New College and Career Readiness Benchmarks for WKCEs**

July 2012

- Public education is strong in Wisconsin, but we want to do even better—also, part of what keeps our schools strong is their ability to respond to the needs of a changing world.
- We are preparing for another school year with a focus on student achievement and learning, and setting high expectations for all of our students.
- Wisconsin is changing the way we describe students' reading and math proficiency based on their state test scores.
- The goal is to better measure students' college and career readiness.
- Students will need to reach higher benchmarks to attain the proficient or advanced levels that demonstrate college and career readiness.
- Adjusting to higher expectations may take some time and effort, but it's a necessary change for a good purpose: to elevate the achievements of our students and their schools.
- The state will provide us with school-level data this fall, but the statewide picture is a good start to begin important work on this change.
- Schools won't be judged on this basis alone. WKCE performance is just one of the multiple measures of school performance that will be taken into account by the new school report cards.

Additional Information and Potential Questions

Background

State Superintendent Tony Evers launched a reform agenda to have every child graduate, college and career ready. We need assessment performance benchmarks that reflect college and career readiness.

Beginning with the 2011-12 school report cards (to be released in fall, 2012), student performance for reading and mathematics will be reported using new, college and career ready performance benchmarks.





These new benchmarks are based on those used by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), an assessment that measures how students across the country are performing.

The change applies to the WKCE only.

Wisconsin's statewide results on NAEP are at or above national averages.

The test itself isn't changing for two more years; what's changing is what it means to be college and career ready.

Similar to when schools and districts change their grading scale (what constitutes an A, or what meets standards, etc.), the state is essentially changing its assessment grading scale—what constitutes advanced, proficient, basic, and minimal. This is a tougher grading scale and effects will be seen statewide: all schools are impacted.

Why adopt new performance benchmarks?

First and most important, it is the right thing to do. We need to make sure students and parents have performance information that accurately reflects college and career readiness.

Wisconsin adopted the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics in 2010. These academic standards represent higher expectations that are internationally benchmarked and aligned with college- and career-readiness expectations.

The performance benchmarks Wisconsin has been using to measure whether students are living up to the new standards are over ten years old and are out-of-date. Just like cell phones, computers, and cars, assessment performance benchmarks need to be regularly updated to meet current needs and expectations.

As part of the waiver Wisconsin received from provisions of No Child Left Behind (the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act), Wisconsin was required to align its performance standards with rigorous measures of college and career readiness.

Wisconsin is not the first state to change performance benchmarks. Other states also have recently done same thing. States want to increase the college and career readiness of their students.

This change is one of many major transitions, including a new school accountability system that is fairer and more nuanced than No Child Left Behind.

This step is also part of the transition to the 2014-15 Smarter Balanced assessment system, which will have more rigorous assessment items and performance standards, replacing the reading, language arts, and mathematics portions of the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE).



What does this change mean for students, parents, schools, and districts?

Students taking the WKCE will need to reach higher benchmarks in English language arts and mathematics to attain the proficient or advanced performance levels that demonstrate college and career readiness.

Because we do not have new science and social studies standards, those assessments do not have the more rigorous cut score.

Schools will have substantially fewer students in the proficient and advanced categories. This is a tougher grading scale and its effects will be seen statewide; all schools are impacted.

Adjusting to higher expectations may take some time and effort, but it's a necessary change for a good purpose: to elevate the achievement of our students and their schools.

The increased rigor of the new benchmarks, and especially the new school accountability system of which they are a part, will provide valuable guidance on how our schools are doing and where to improve.

Proficiency levels from last year and before cannot be compared to proficiency levels from this year and beyond. Numerical scale scores on the WKCE will remain comparable until the WKCE is replaced with the new Smarter Balanced assessments in 2014-15.

When will we know how individual students, our school, and the state perform using the new performance benchmarks?

The DPI is providing state-level data this summer and school-level data this fall. The statewide picture is a good start to begin important work on this change.

Student-level data using NAEP-based performance standards will be part of the individual performance reports that schools and parents receive in March 2013 for the WKCE that is taken in November 2012.

What does this mean for our school right now?

Like State Superintendent Tony Evers, schools around Wisconsin are committed to every child a graduate, college and career ready.

The DPI will provide training and support regarding the new benchmarks as they relate to the new school accountability system, a multiple-measures system that is more nuanced and fair than No Child Left Behind.



Statewide Impact Data using new college & career readiness benchmarks

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is administered to 4th and 8th grade students and reported every two years in a representative sample of schools throughout the state. These data are provided for informational purposes only. They are not used to calculate a school's state accountability score. More NAEP results can be found at (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>).

Reading and Mathematics Performance on NAEP comparing Wisconsin and the Nation in 2010-11

2010-11 WKCE and NAEP Reading Proficiency			
Grade Level	Percent Proficient/Advanced		
	Wisconsin WKCE – College/Career Ready Benchmarks	Wisconsin NAEP Performance	National NAEP Performance
4th Grade	34%	34%	32%
8th Grade	40%	35%	32%

2010-11 WKCE and NAEP Mathematics Proficiency			
Grade Level	Percent Proficient/Advanced		
	Wisconsin WKCE – College/Career Ready Benchmarks	Wisconsin NAEP Performance	National NAEP Performance
4th Grade	48%	47%	40%
8th Grade	44%	41%	34%

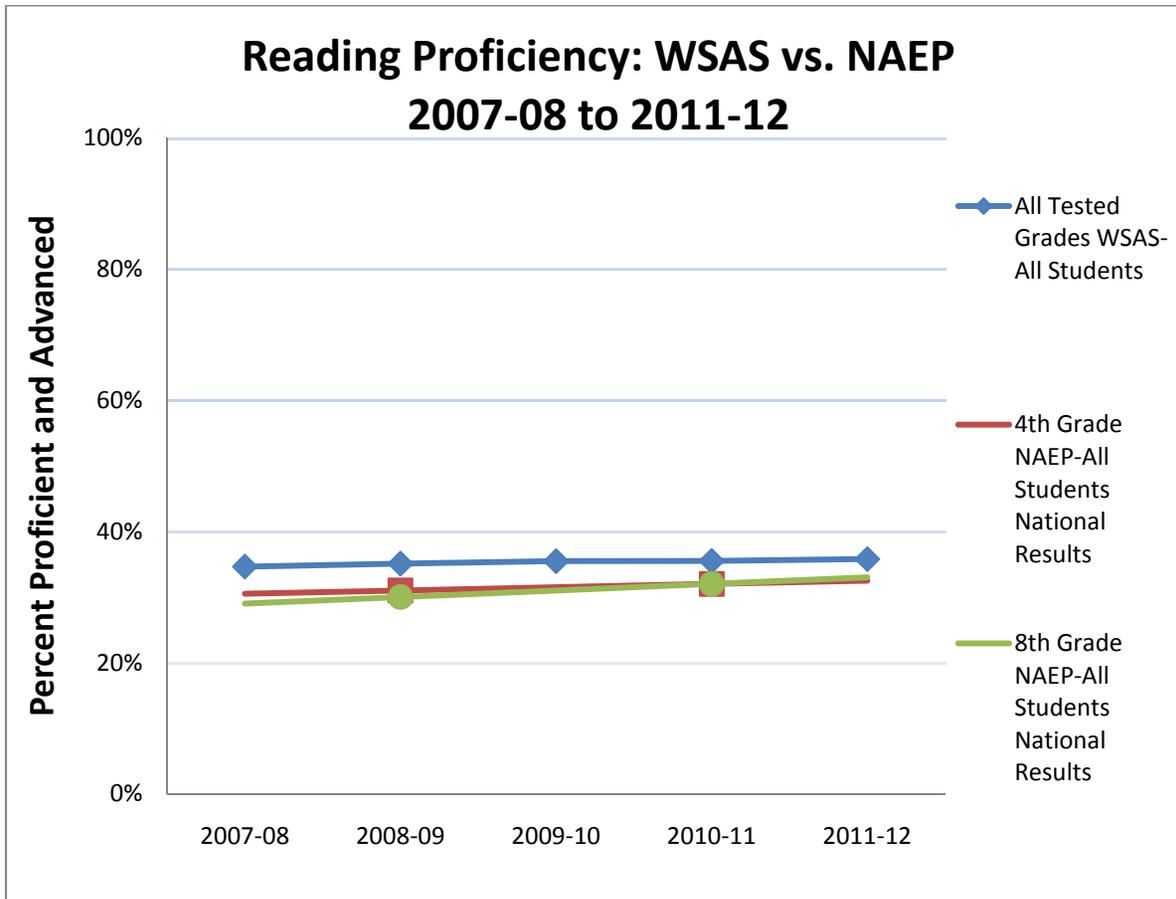


Reading and Mathematics Performance on NAEP comparing Wisconsin and the Nation in 2008-09

2008-09 WKCE and NAEP Reading Proficiency			
Grade Level	Percent Proficient/Advanced		
	Wisconsin WKCE – College/Career Ready Benchmarks	Wisconsin-NAEP	National-NAEP
4th Grade	34%	33%	32%
8th Grade	35%	34%	30%

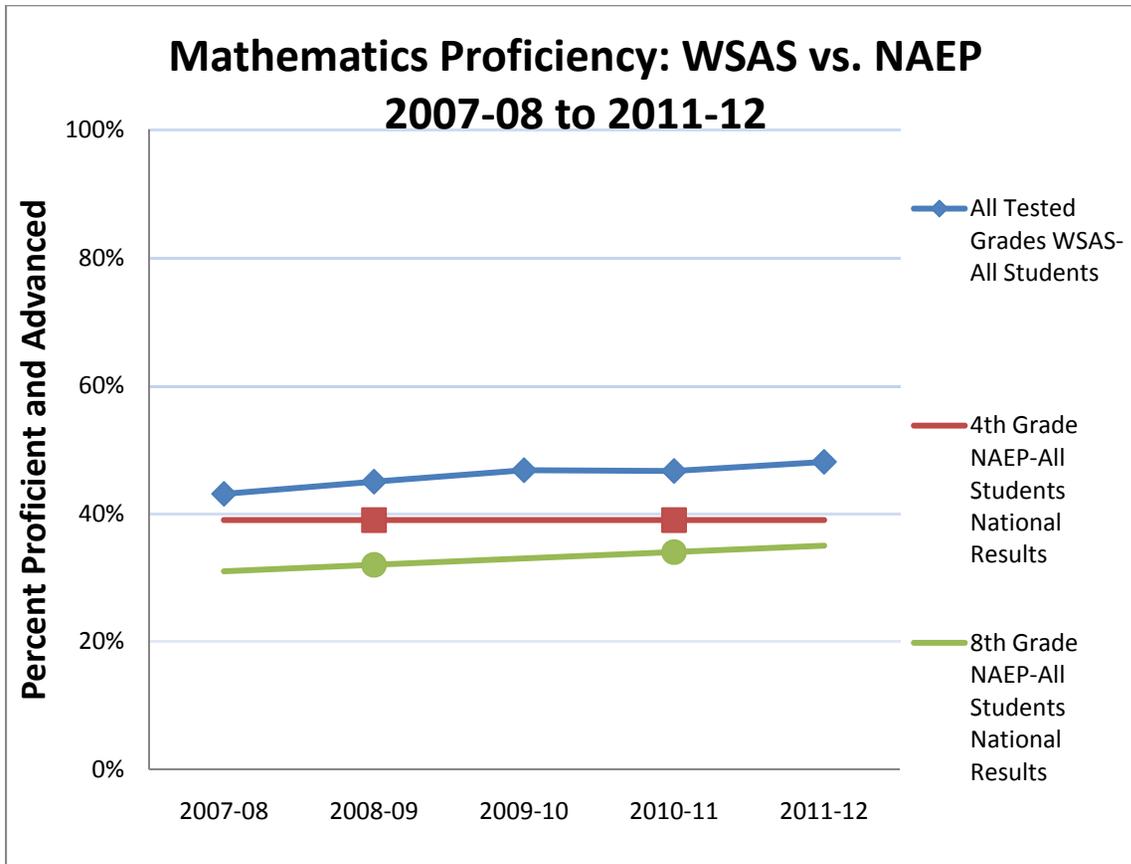
2008-09 WKCE and NAEP Mathematics Proficiency			
Grade Level	Percent Proficient/Advanced		
	Wisconsin WKCE – College/Career Ready Benchmarks	Wisconsin-NAEP	National-NAEP
4th Grade	49%	45%	38%
8th Grade	42%	39%	33%

College & Career Ready Cut Scores comparing Wisconsin (WSAS) and the Nation (NAEP) trend performance



Even after raising expectations, Wisconsin students on average perform better than the nation.

College & Career Ready Cut Scores comparing Wisconsin (WSAS) and the Nation (NAEP) trend performance



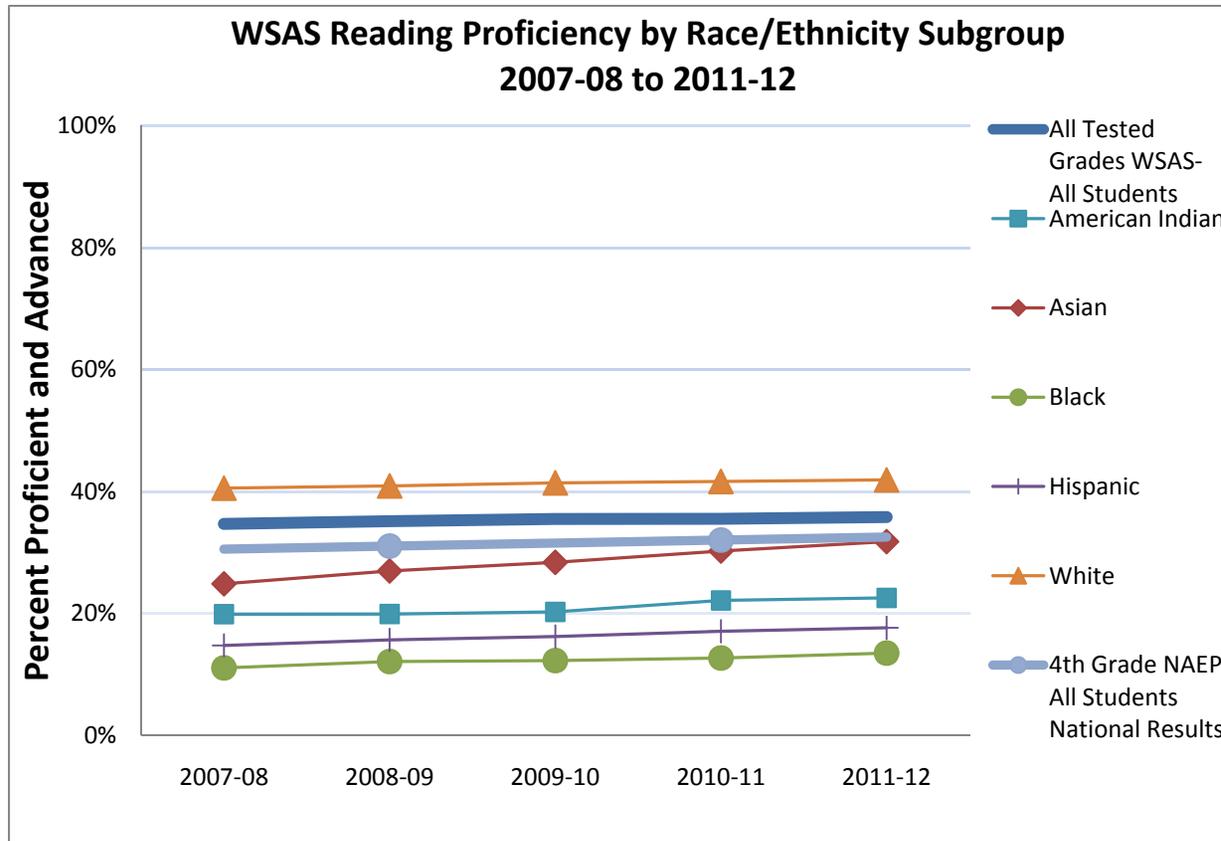
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State-level Reading Performance with the college & career readiness benchmarks

WSAS Reading Percent Proficient and Advanced By Subgroup, All Tested Grades, 2007-08 to 2011-12					
Subgroup	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
All Students	34.6%	35.1%	35.5%	35.5%	35.8%
Asian	24.8%	26.9%	28.3%	30.2%	31.7%
Black	11.0%	12.1%	12.2%	12.6%	13.4%
Hispanic	14.7%	15.6%	16.2%	17.0%	17.6%
American Indian	19.8%	19.9%	20.2%	22.1%	22.5%
White	40.5%	40.9%	41.4%	41.6%	41.9%
English Language Learners	6.4%	6.5%	6.7%	6.0%	6.0%
English Proficient	36.3%	36.9%	37.3%	37.4%	37.7%
Students with Disabilities	13.8%	13.8%	13.6%	13.8%	14.2%
Students without Disabilities	38.0%	38.5%	39.0%	39.0%	39.3%
Economically Disadvantaged	17.0%	18.3%	19.2%	19.8%	20.5%
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	43.3%	44.0%	45.6%	46.2%	46.6%

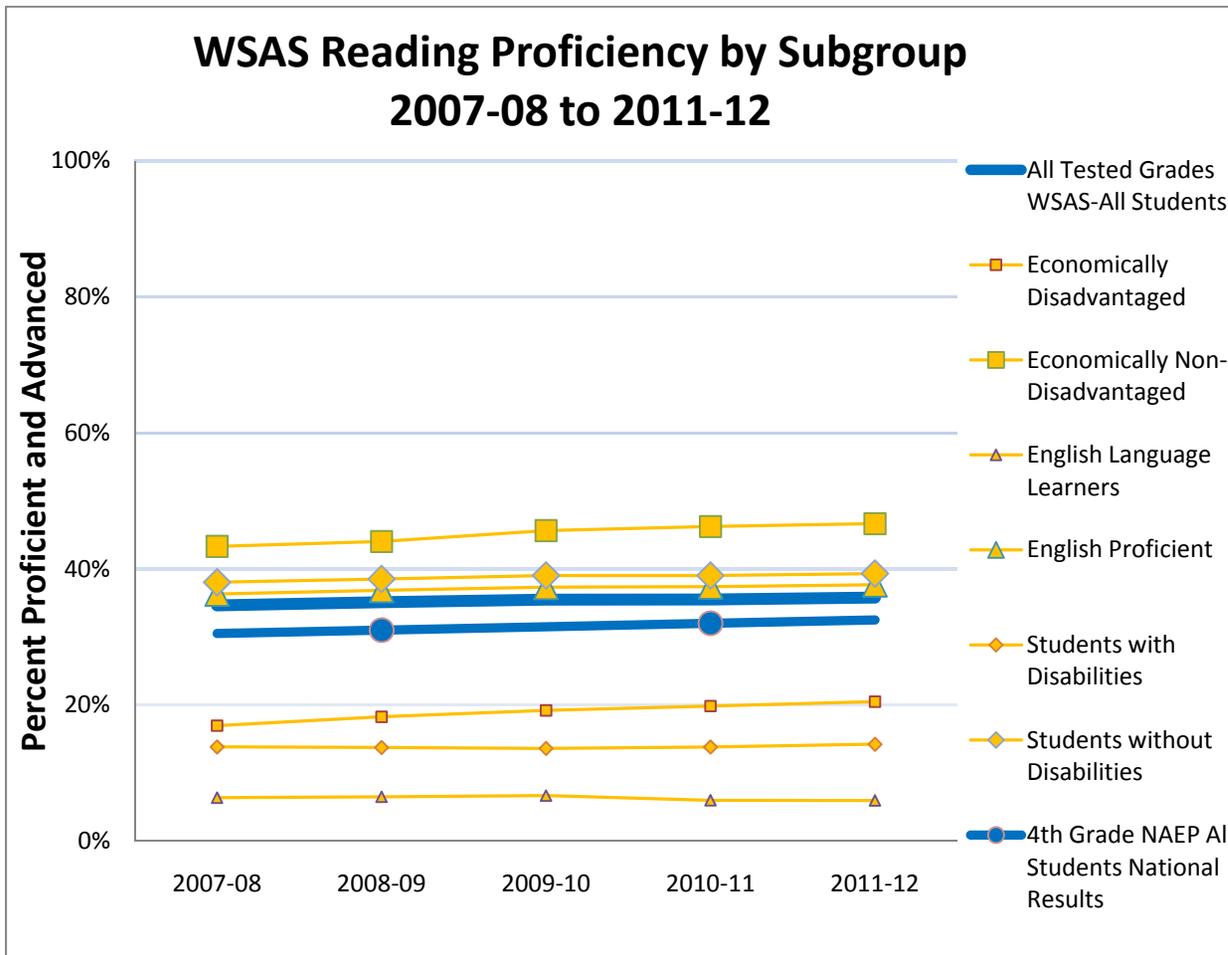
State-level Reading Performance with the college & career readiness benchmarks



Wisconsin students have improved or maintained proficiency rates over the last five years. There were no significant declines in proficiency.

However, while some gaps have gotten smaller over time, significant achievement gaps remain. Wisconsin's new accountability system is designed in part to address the need to close achievement gaps.

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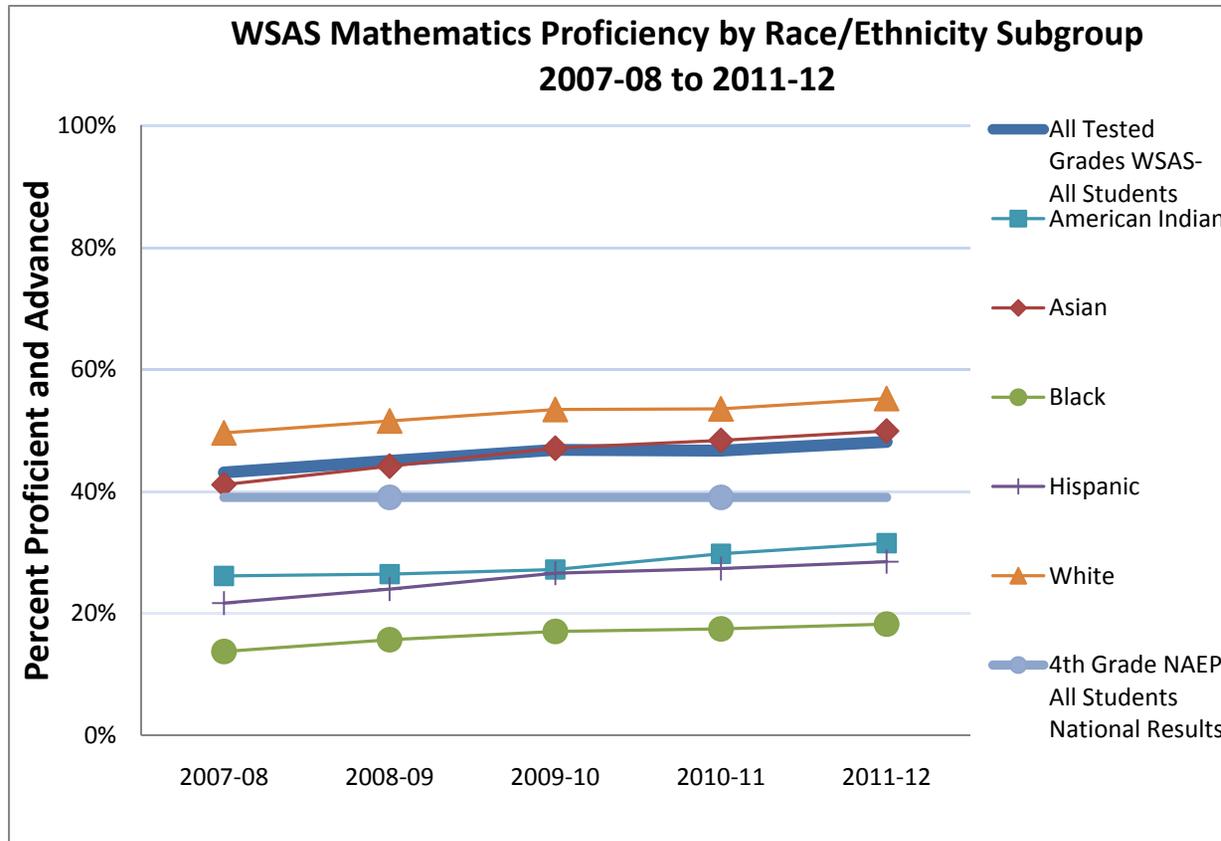
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State-level Mathematics Performance with the college & career readiness benchmarks

WSAS Mathematics Percent Proficient and Advanced By Subgroup, All Tested Grades, 2007-08 to 2011-12					
Subgroup	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
All Students	43.1%	45.0%	46.8%	46.7%	48.1%
Asian	41.1%	44.1%	47.1%	48.4%	49.9%
Black	13.7%	15.6%	17.0%	17.4%	18.2%
Hispanic	21.7%	23.9%	26.6%	27.3%	28.4%
American Indian	26.1%	26.4%	27.2%	29.7%	31.5%
White	49.6%	51.5%	53.4%	53.5%	55.2%
English Language Learners	18.3%	19.4%	21.2%	19.9%	20.5%
English Proficient	44.6%	46.6%	48.4%	48.4%	49.8%
Students with Disabilities	19.0%	19.9%	21.1%	20.8%	22.0%
Students without Disabilities	47.0%	49.0%	51.0%	50.9%	52.4%
Economically Disadvantaged	23.8%	26.2%	28.9%	29.4%	30.9%
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	52.6%	55.0%	58.0%	58.5%	60.3%

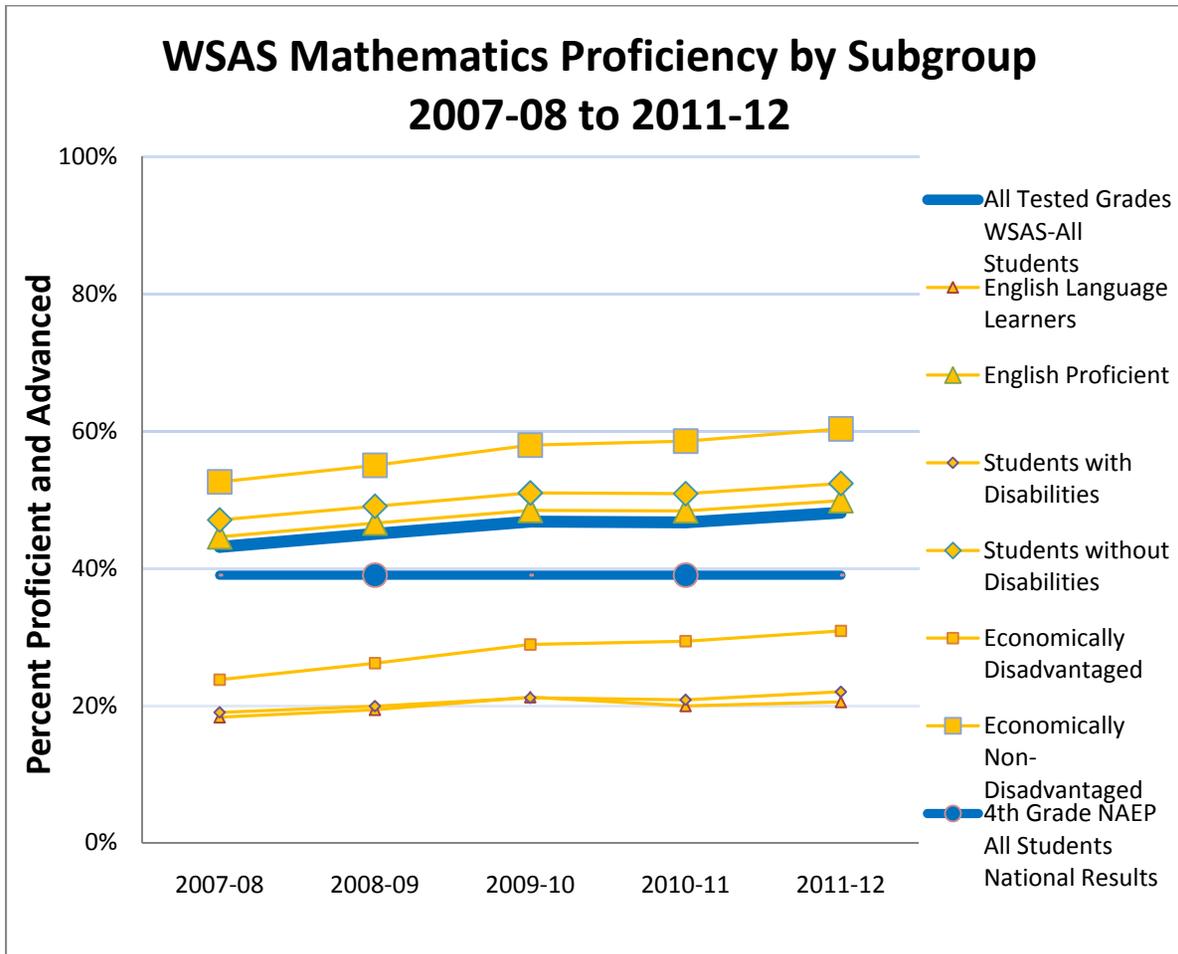
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