THE EDUCATION TRUST

ACHIEVEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA:

The Role of Standards in the Effort to Close Longstanding Gaps Between Groups

Finding Common Ground Convocation
Monroe Township, New Jersey
September, 2015

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America: Two Powerful Stories

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1. **Land of Opportunity**:

Work hard, and you can become anything you want to be.

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2. **Generational Advancement:**

Through hard work, each generation of parents can assure a better life — and better education — for their children.

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These stories animated hopes and dreams of people here at home

And drew countless immigrants to our shores

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Yes, America was often intolerant…

And they knew the “Dream” was a work in progress.

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We were:

- The first to provide universal high school;
- The first to build public universities;
- The first to build community colleges;
- The first to broaden access to college, through GI Bill, Pell Grants, …

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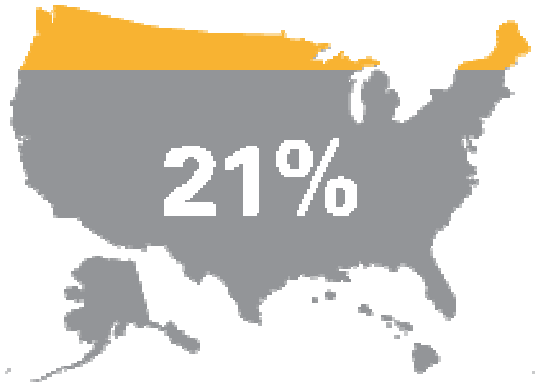
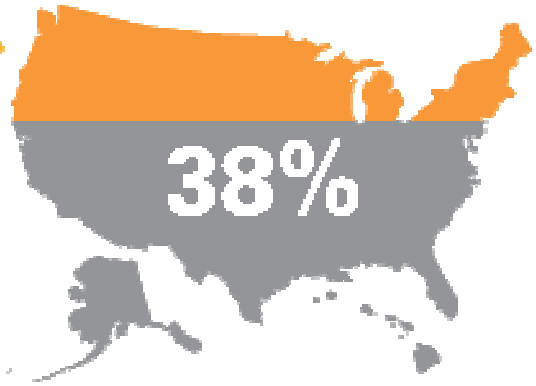
Percent of U.S. adults with a high school diploma

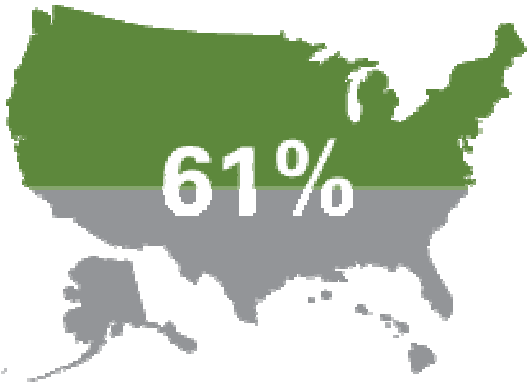
1920



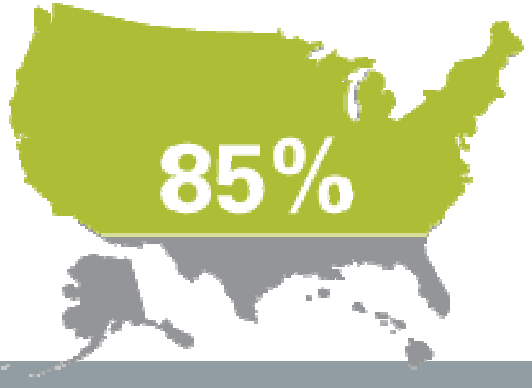
1940



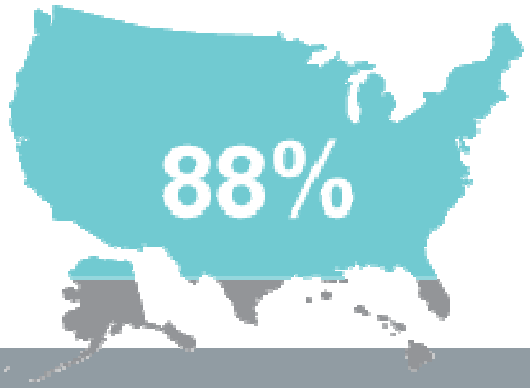
1960



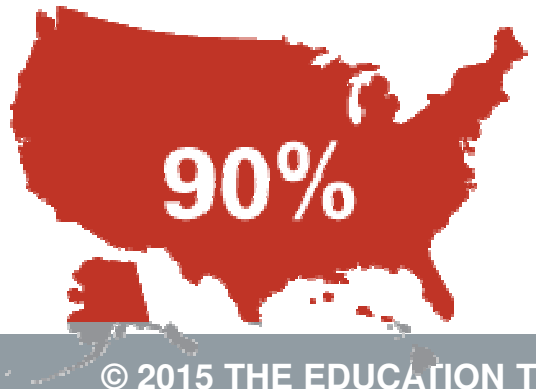
1980



2000



2012



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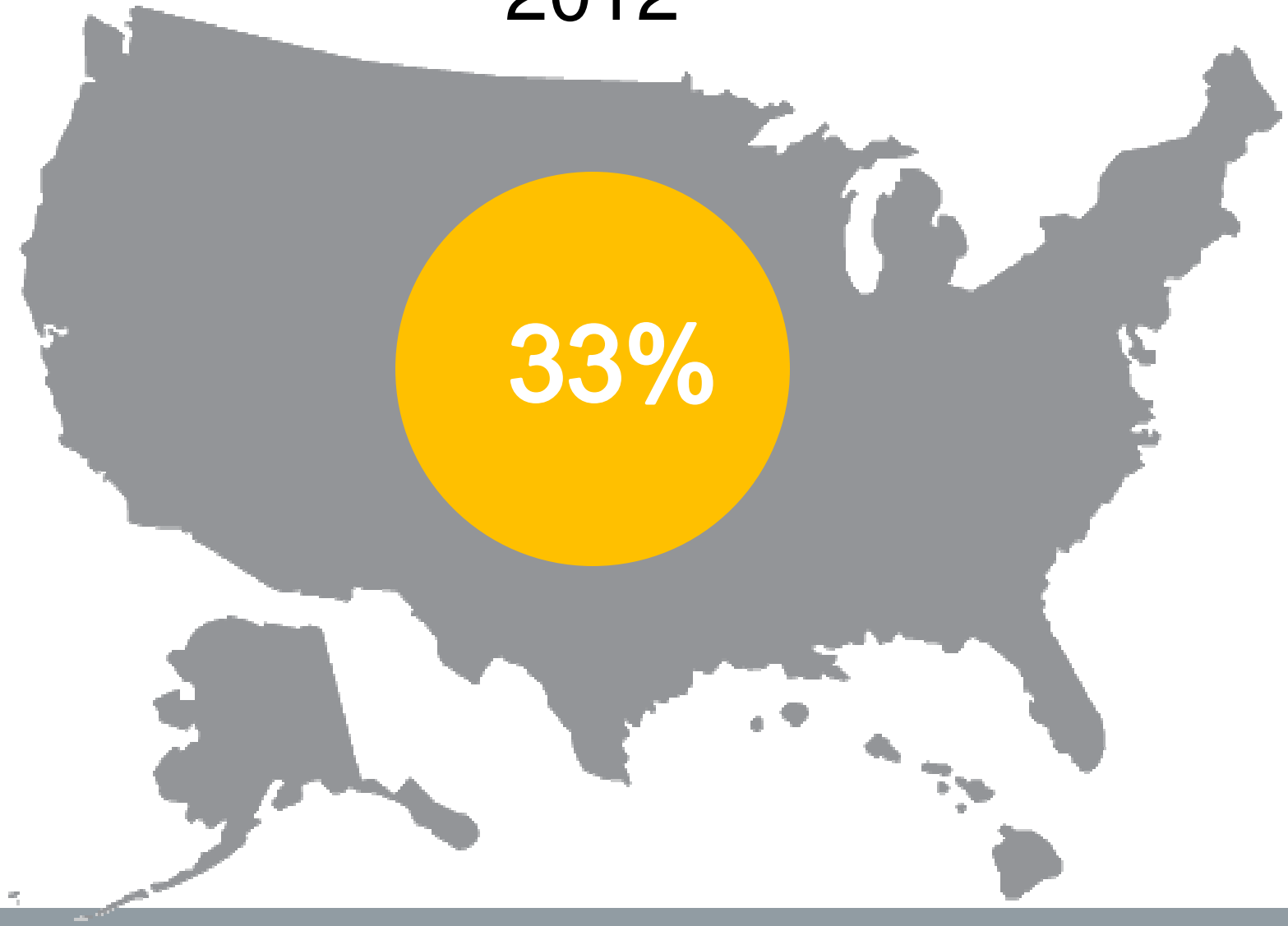
Percent of U.S. adults with a B.A. or more

2012



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Progress was painfully slow, especially for people of color. But year by year, decade by decade…

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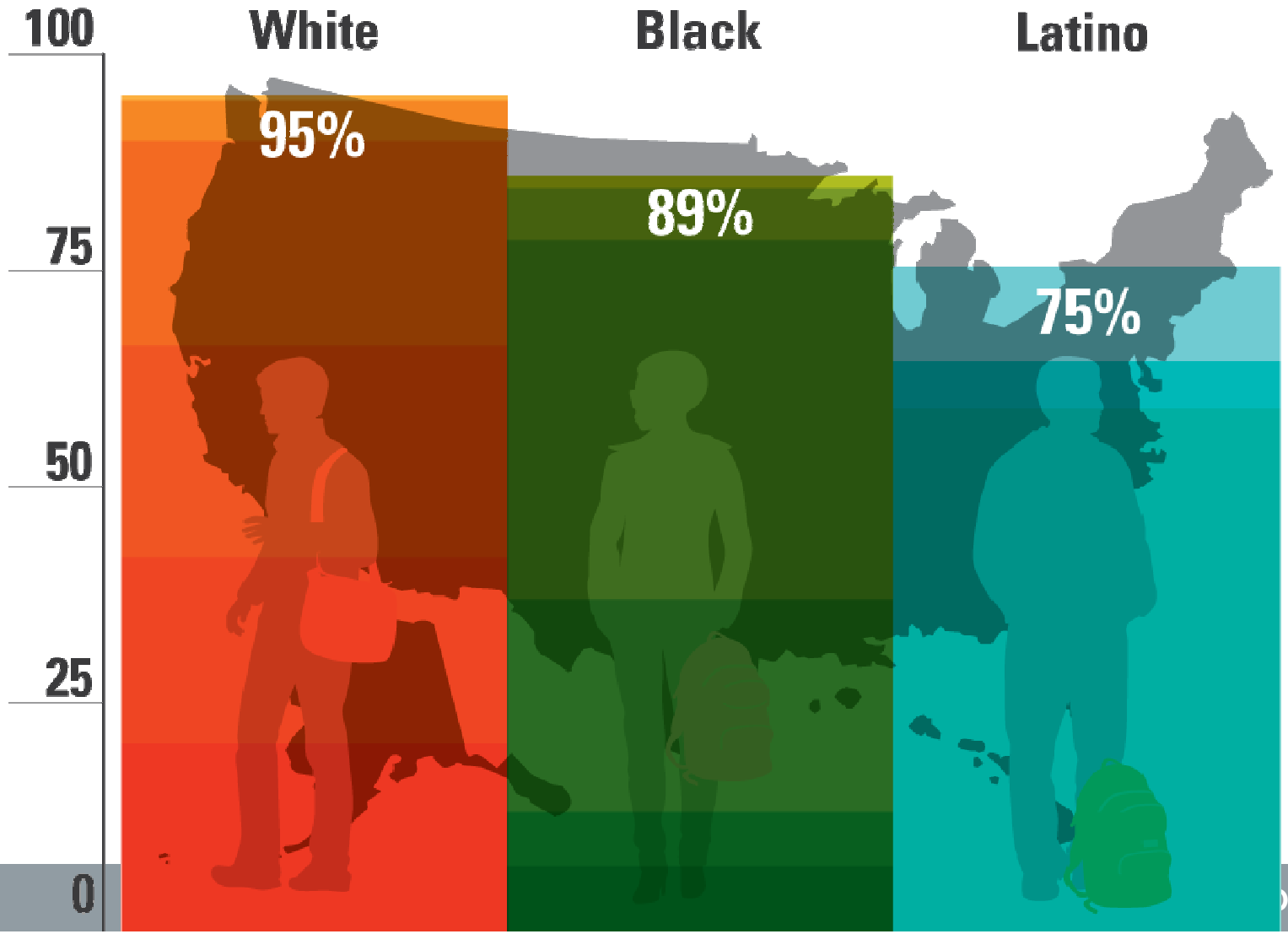
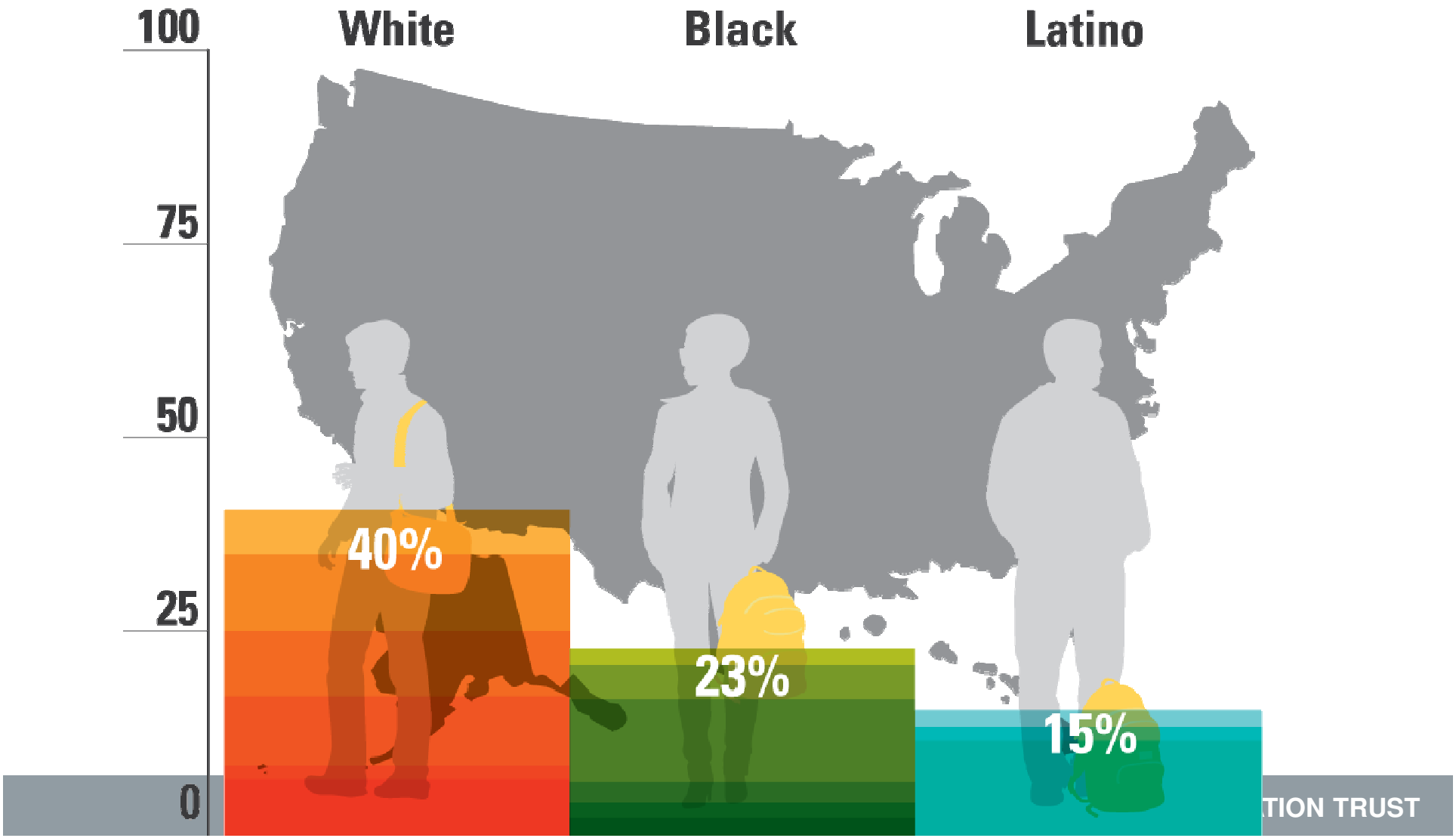
Percent of U.S. adults with a high school diploma, by race

2012



Percent of U.S. adults with a B.A. or more, by race

2012



Then, beginning in the eighties, growing economic inequality started eating away at our progress.

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In recent years, most income gains have gone to those at the top of the ladder, while those at the bottom have fallen backwards.

Source: Stiglitz, “Inequality is a Choice,” *New York Times*, October 13, 2013.

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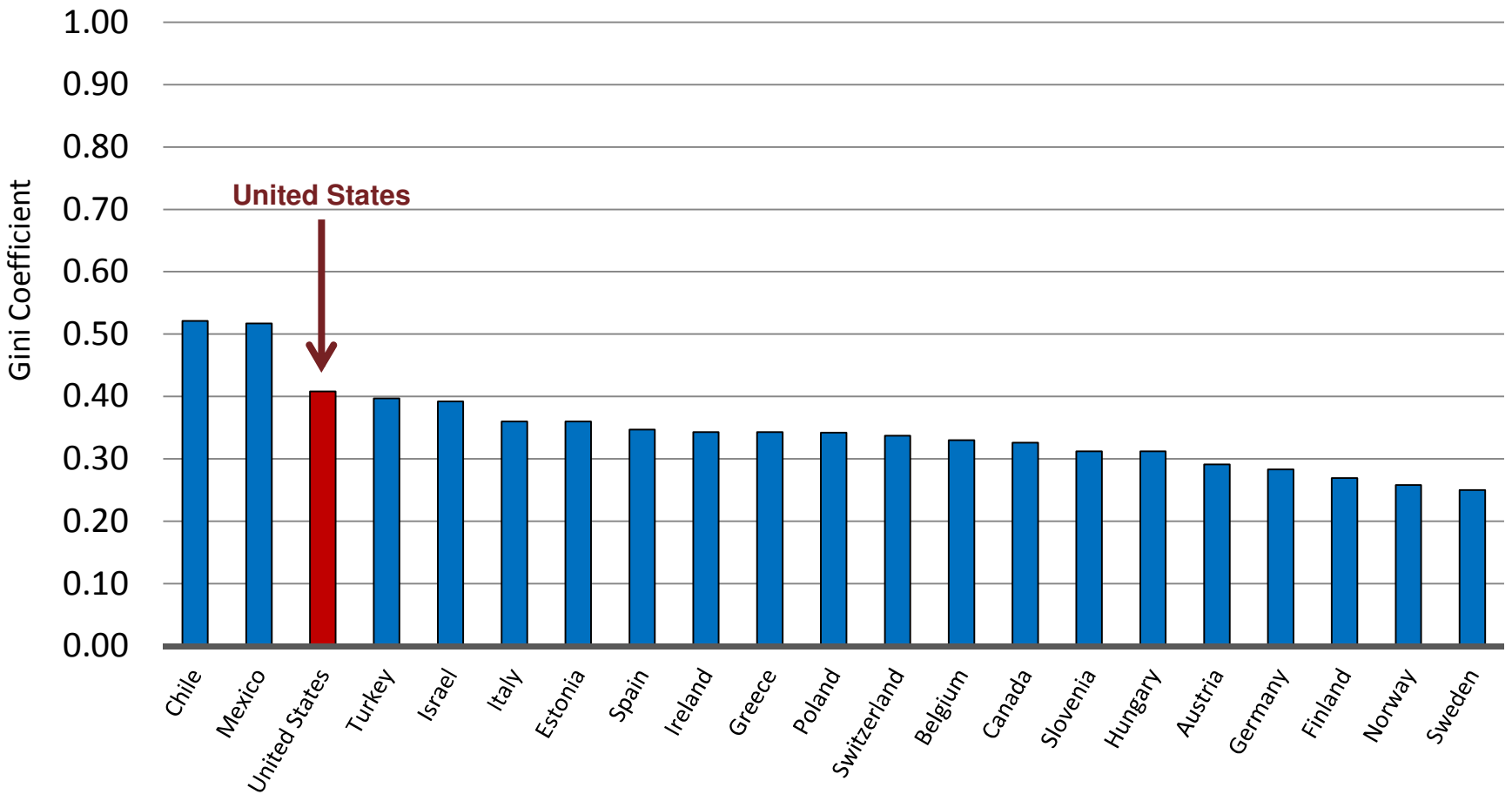
Instead of being the most equal, the U.S. has the third highest income inequality among OECD nations.



Note: Gini coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates total income equality and 1 indicates total income inequality.

Source: United Nations, U.N. data, http://data.un.org/DocumentData.aspx?q=gini&id=271: 2011

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Median Wealth of White Families

20 X that of African Americans

18 X that of Latinos

Source: Rakesh Kochhar, Richard Fry, and Paul Taylor, "Twenty-to-One: Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics," Pew Social & Demographic Trends, 2011.

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Not just wages and wealth, but social mobility as well.

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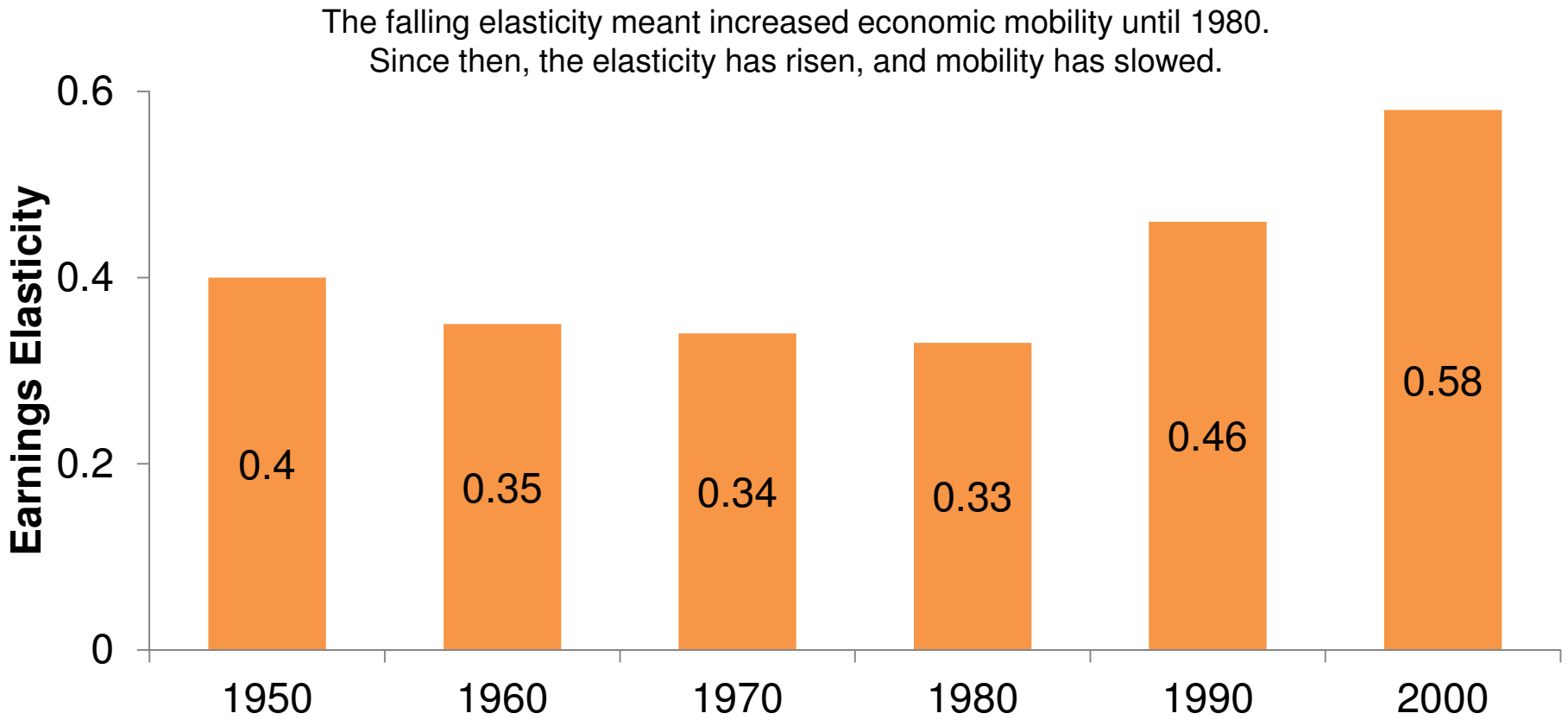
U.S. intergenerational mobility was improving until 1980, but barriers have gotten higher since.



Source: Daniel Aaronson and Bhashkar Mazumder. *Intergenerational Economic Mobility in the U.S.,1940 to 2000.* Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago WP 2005-12: Dec. 2005.

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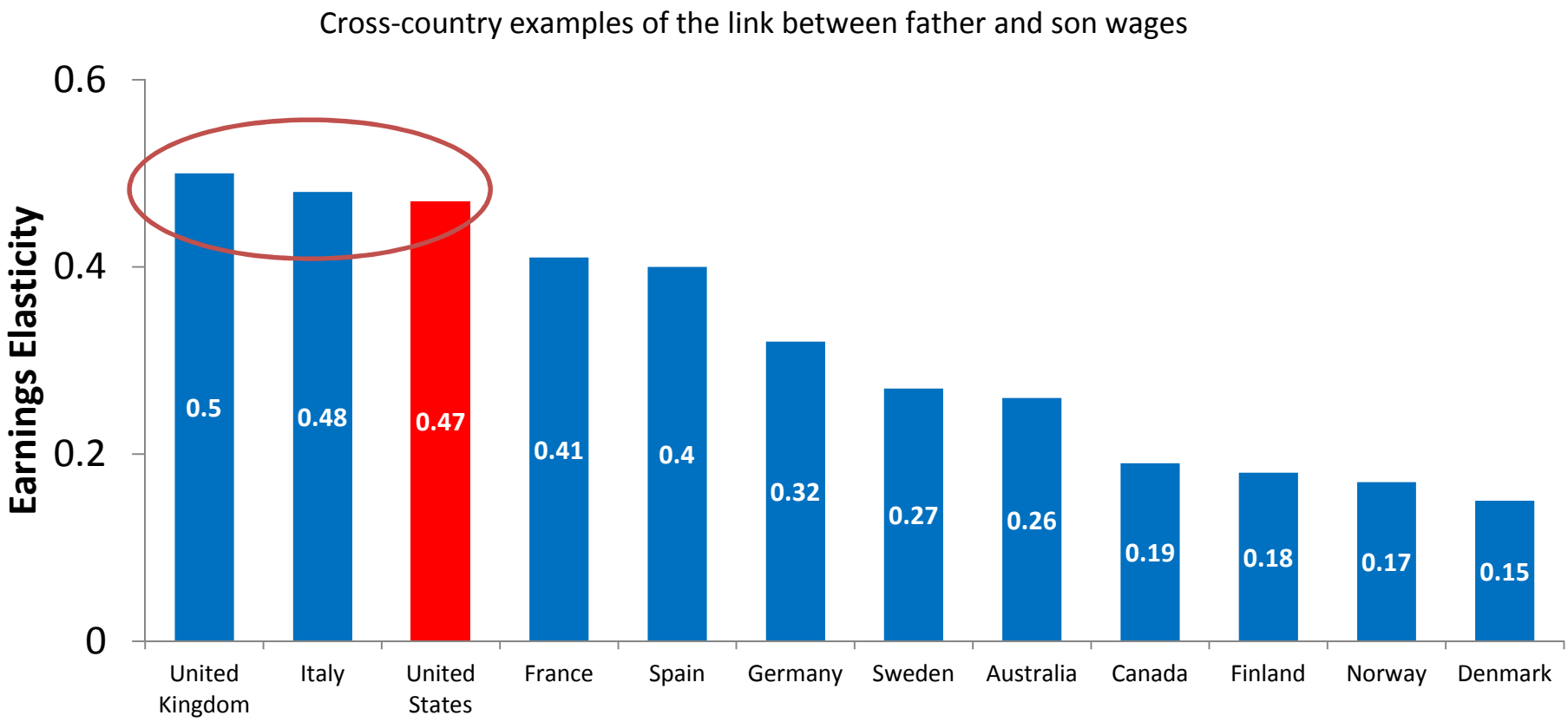
The US now has one of lowest rates of intergenerational mobility



Source: Corak, Miles. *Chasing the Same Dream, Climbing Different Ladders*. Economic Mobility Project; Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010.

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At macro level, better and more equal education is not the only answer.

But at the individual level, it really is.

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There is one road up, and that road runs through us.

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What schools and colleges do, in other words, is hugely important to our **economy**, our **democracy**, and our **society**.

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So, how are we doing?

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First, some good news.

After more than a decade of fairly flat achievement and stagnant or growing gaps in K-12, we appear to be turning the corner with our elementary students.

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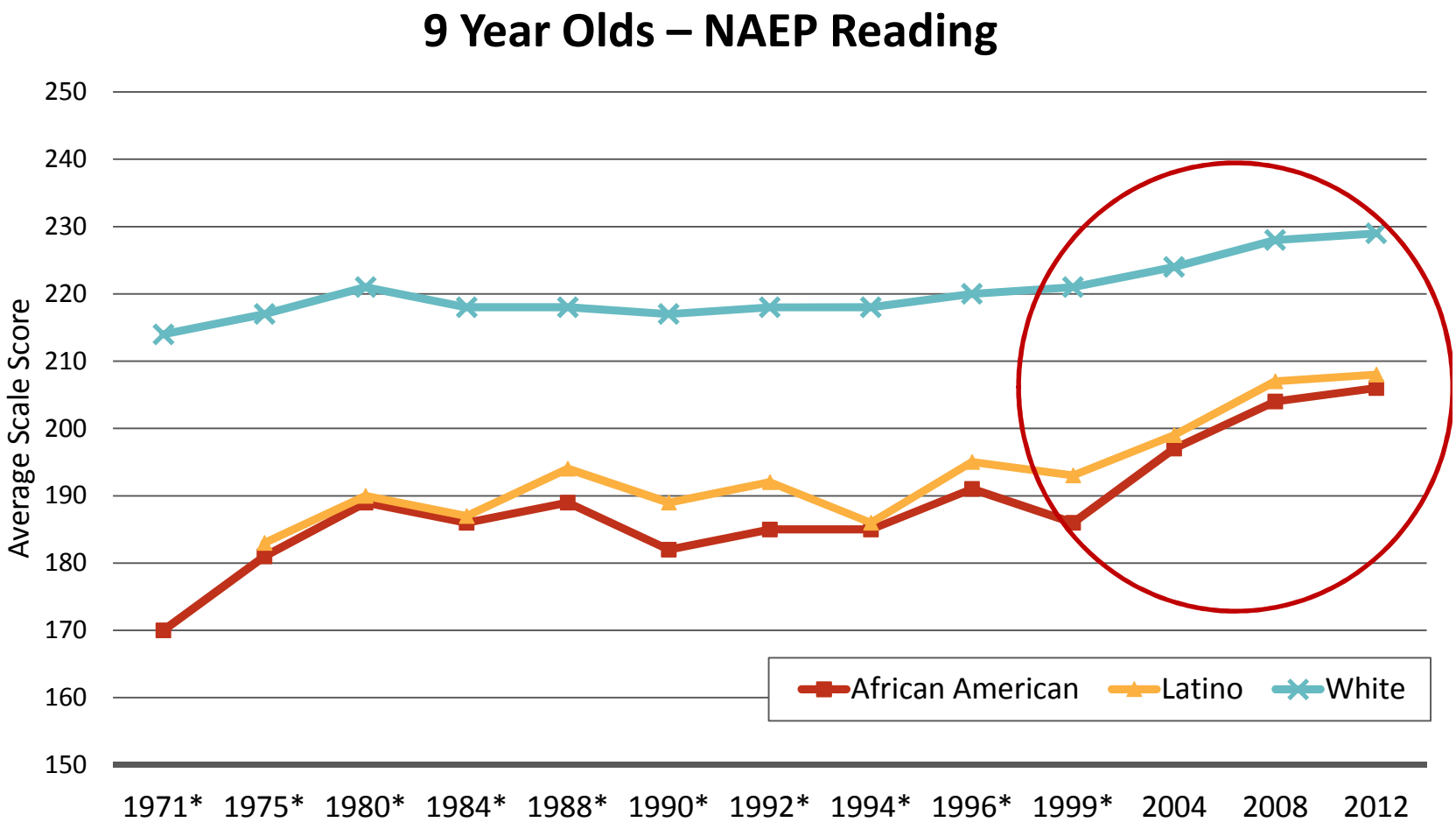
Since 1999, large gains for all groups of students, especially students of color



*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

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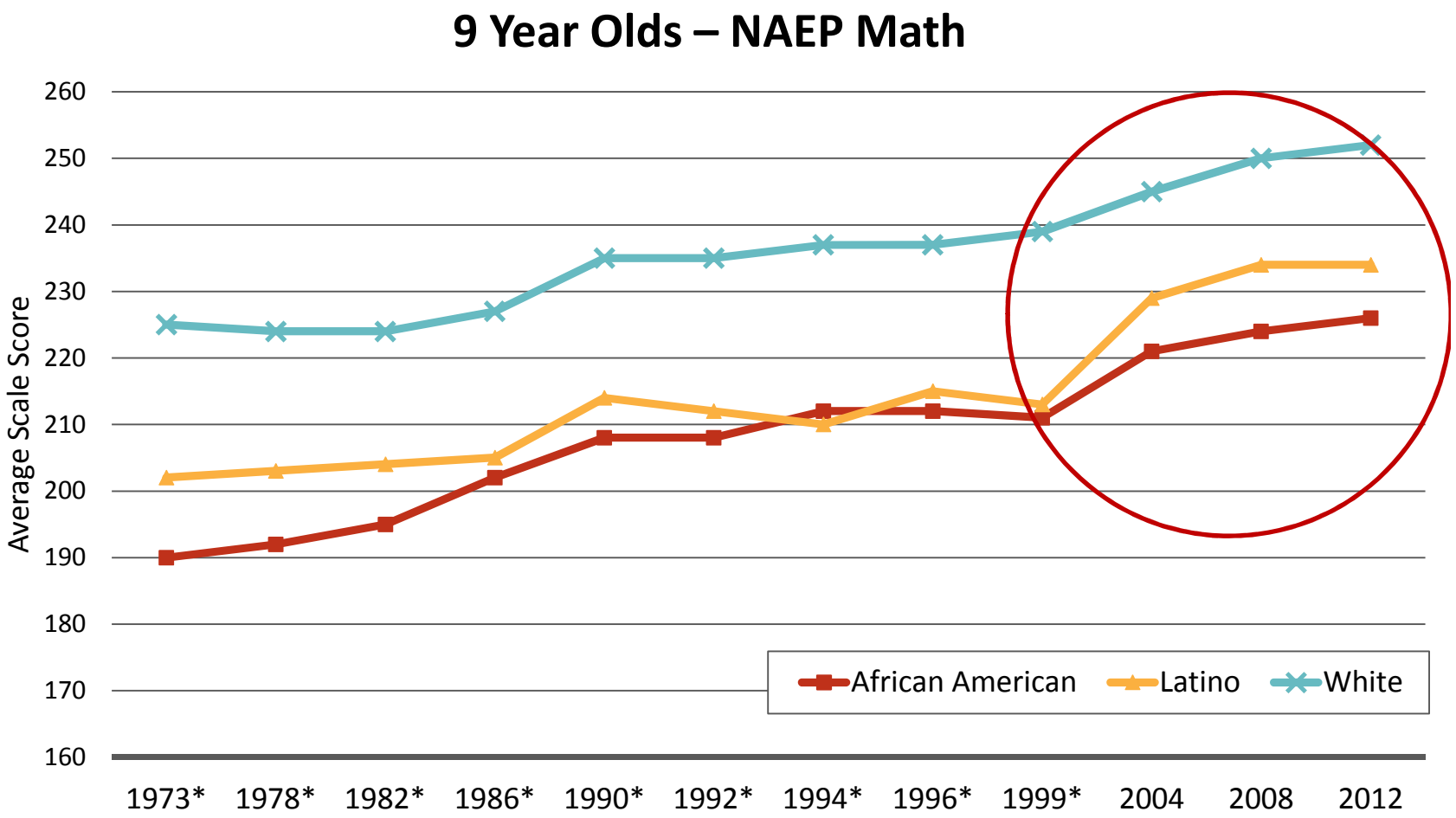
Since 1999, performance rising for all groups of students



*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

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Looked at differently
(and on the “other” NAEP exam)…

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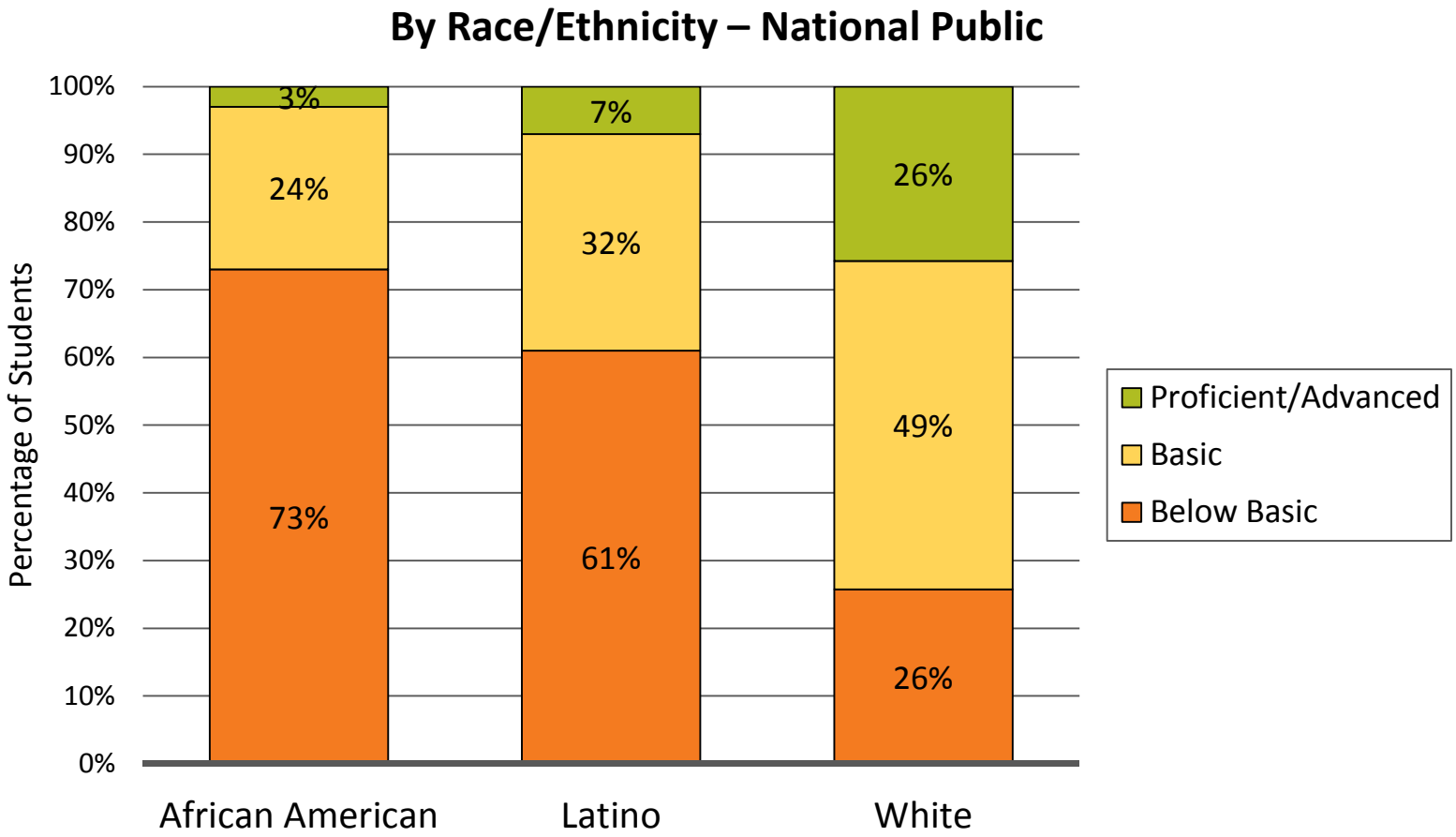
1996 NAEP Grade 4 Math



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/

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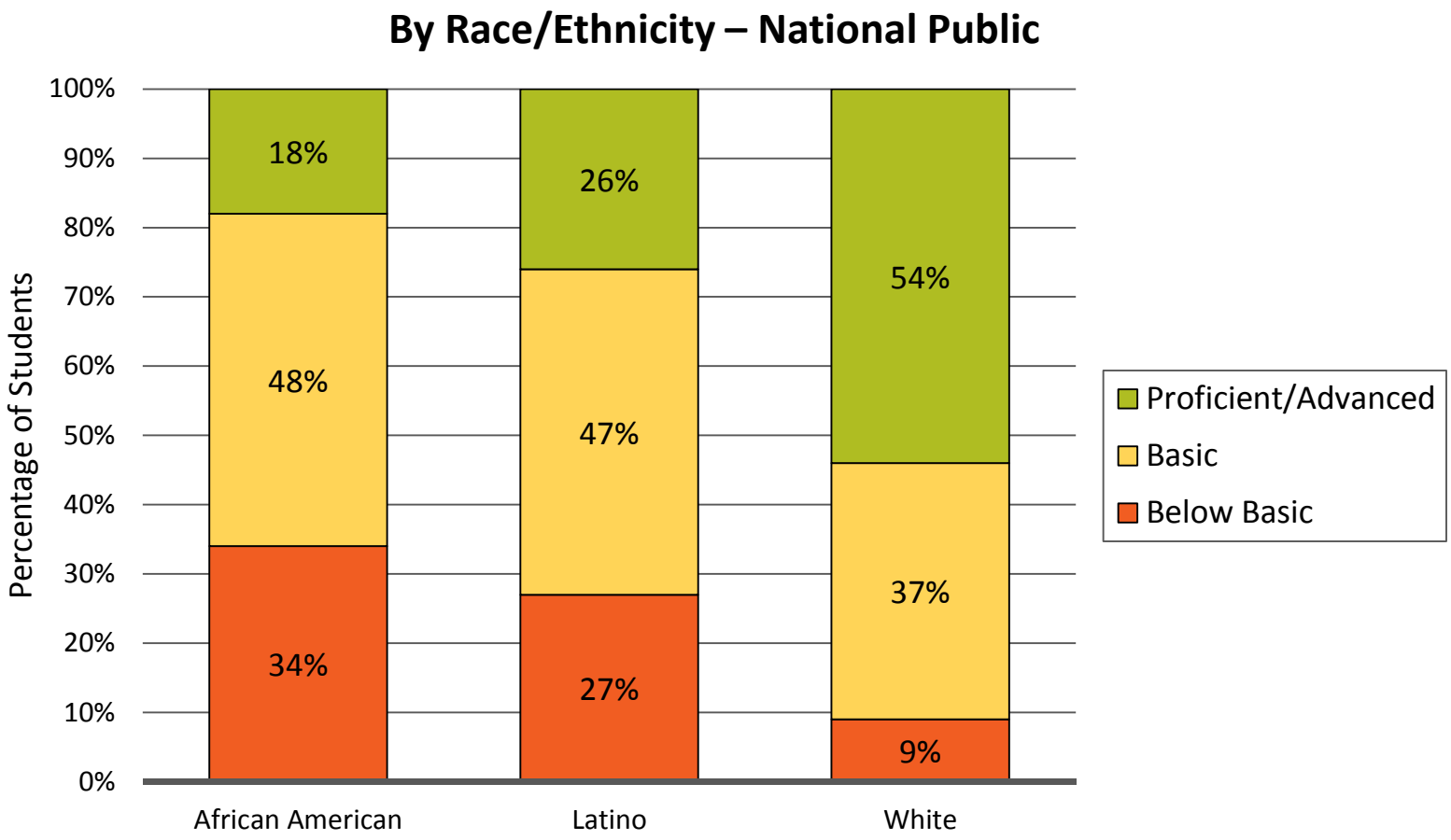
2013 NAEP Grade 4 Math



Sourc National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/

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Middle grades are up, too.

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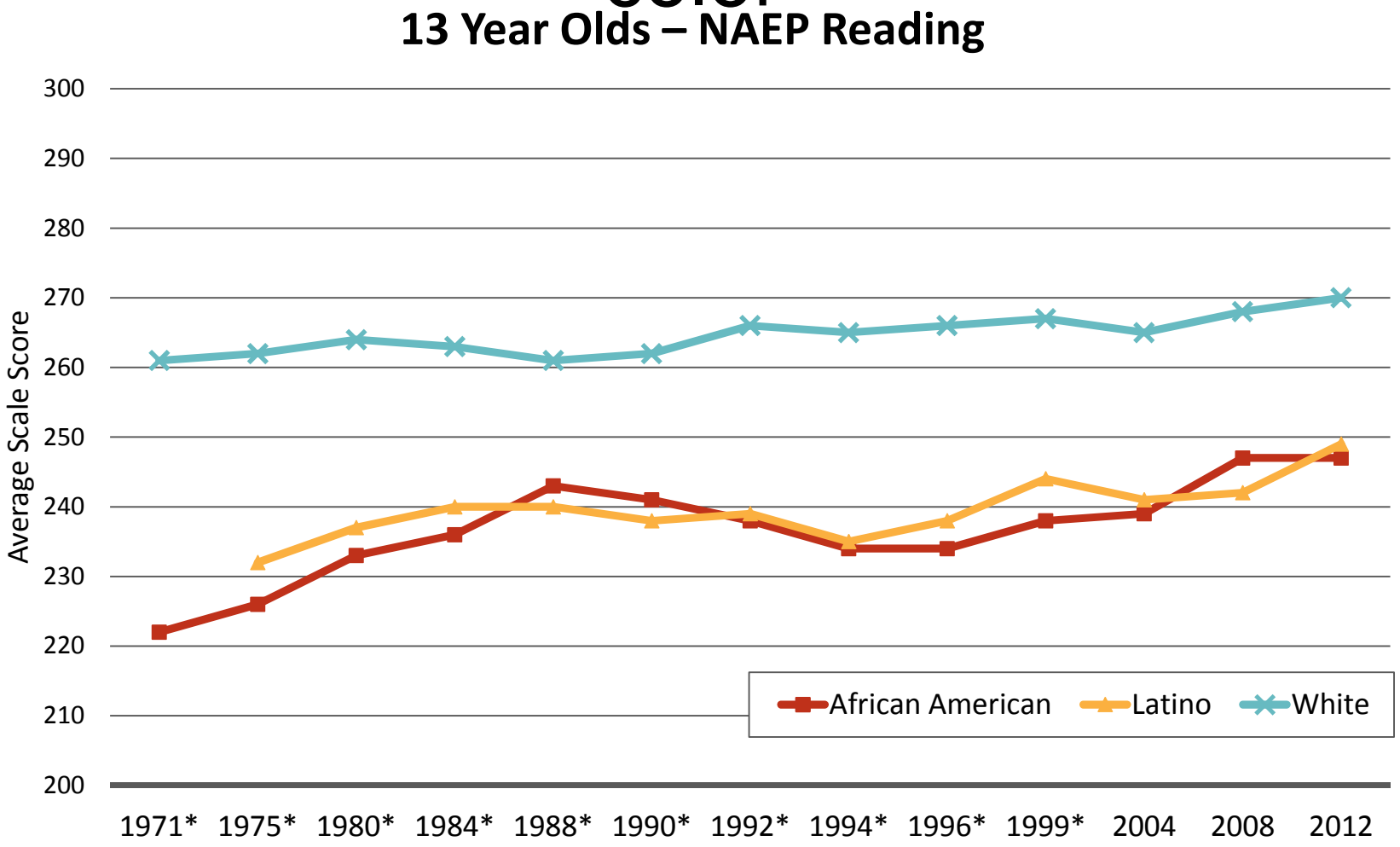
Record performance for students of color



*Denotes previous assessment format

- National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

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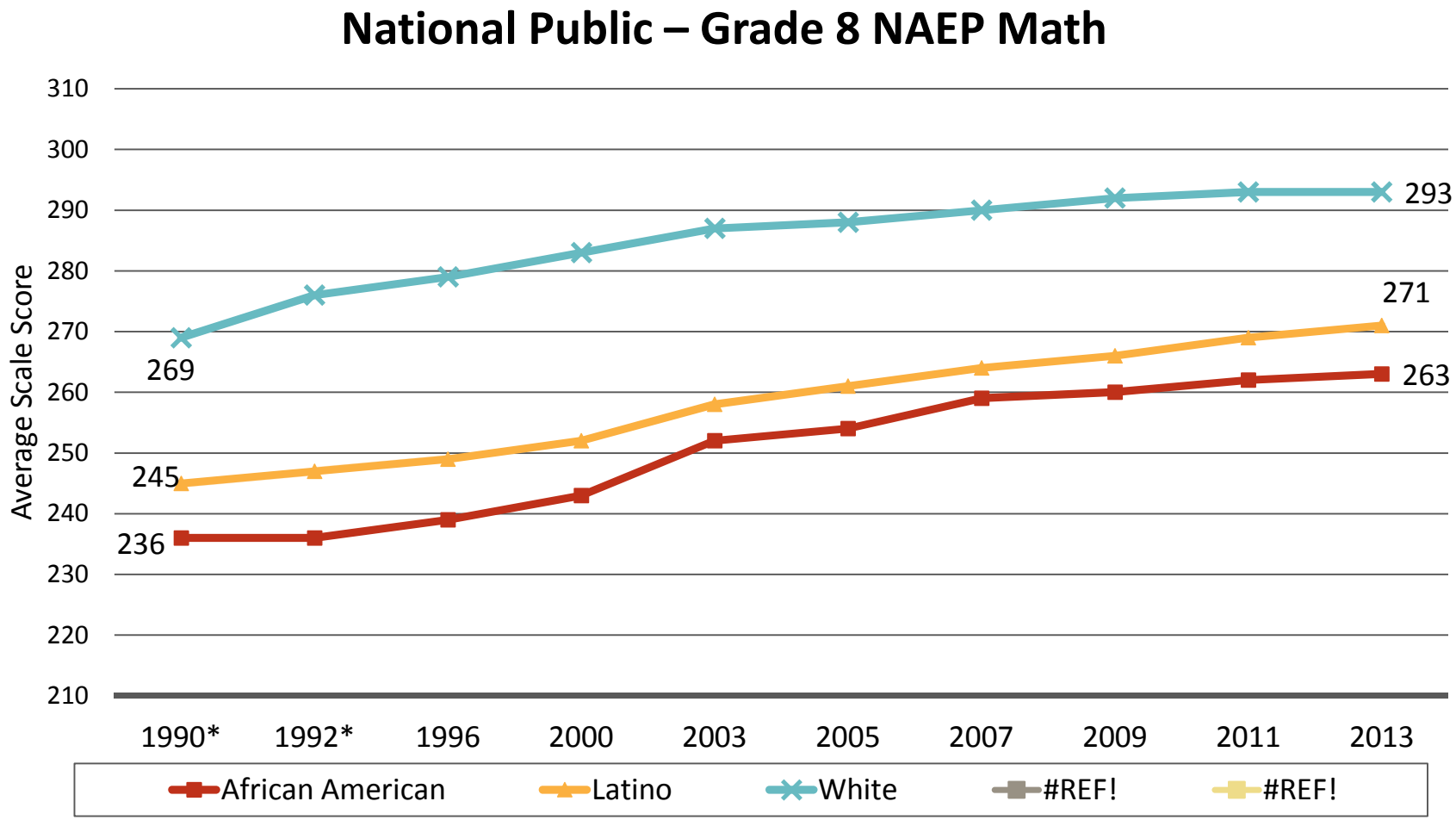
Over the last decade, all groups have steadily improved and gaps have narrowed



*Accommodations not permitted

Sourc NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 299)

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New Jersey no exception.

For 8th graders, some of the top gains in the country in both reading and math.

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NAEP Grade 8 Math – African-American Students

States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2013)

State	Gain
New Jersey	21
Rhode Island	19
Massachusetts	17
Kansas	16
Arkansas	16
Florida	15
Tennessee	15
Pennsylvania	15

Note: On average, mean scale scores in math for American-African eighth-grade students increased by 11 points from 2003 to 2013.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer

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NAEP Grade 8 Math – Latino Students

States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2013)

State	Gain
Arkansas	25
Massachusetts	22
New Jersey	21
Delaware	19
Nevada	18
Rhode Island	18
Maryland	18
Indiana	18

Note: On average, mean scale scores in math for Latino eighth-grade students increased by 13 points from 2003 to 2013.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer

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NAEP Grade 8 Math – Low-Income Students

States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2013)

State	Gain
New Jersey	22
Massachusetts	20
Hawaii	19
Pennsylvania	16

Note: On average, mean scale scores in math for low-income eighth-grade students increased by 12 points from 2003 to 2013.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer

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NAEP Grade 8 Reading – African-American Students

States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2013)

State	Gain
Nevada	15
Florida	15
Maryland	14
Connecticut	12
New Jersey	12
Tennessee	12

Note: On average, mean scale scores in reading for African-American eighth-grade students increased by 6 points from 2003 to 2013.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer

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NAEP Grade 8 Reading – Latino Students

States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2013)

State	Gain
New Jersey	16
California	16
Georgia	16
Alaska	15
Nevada	15
Utah	15
Delaware	15
Maryland	15

Note: On average, mean scale scores in reading for Latino eighth-grade students increased by 11 points from 2003 to 2013.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer

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NAEP Grade 8 Reading – Low-Income Students

States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2013)

State	Gain
Maryland	18
New Jersey	15
California	13
Nevada	12
Florida	12
Georgia	12

Note: On average, mean scale scores in reading for low-income eighth-grade students increased by 8 points from 2003 to 2013.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer

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Bottom Line:

When we really focus on something, we make progress!

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

Too many youngsters still enter high school way behind.

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

The same is NOT true of our high schools.

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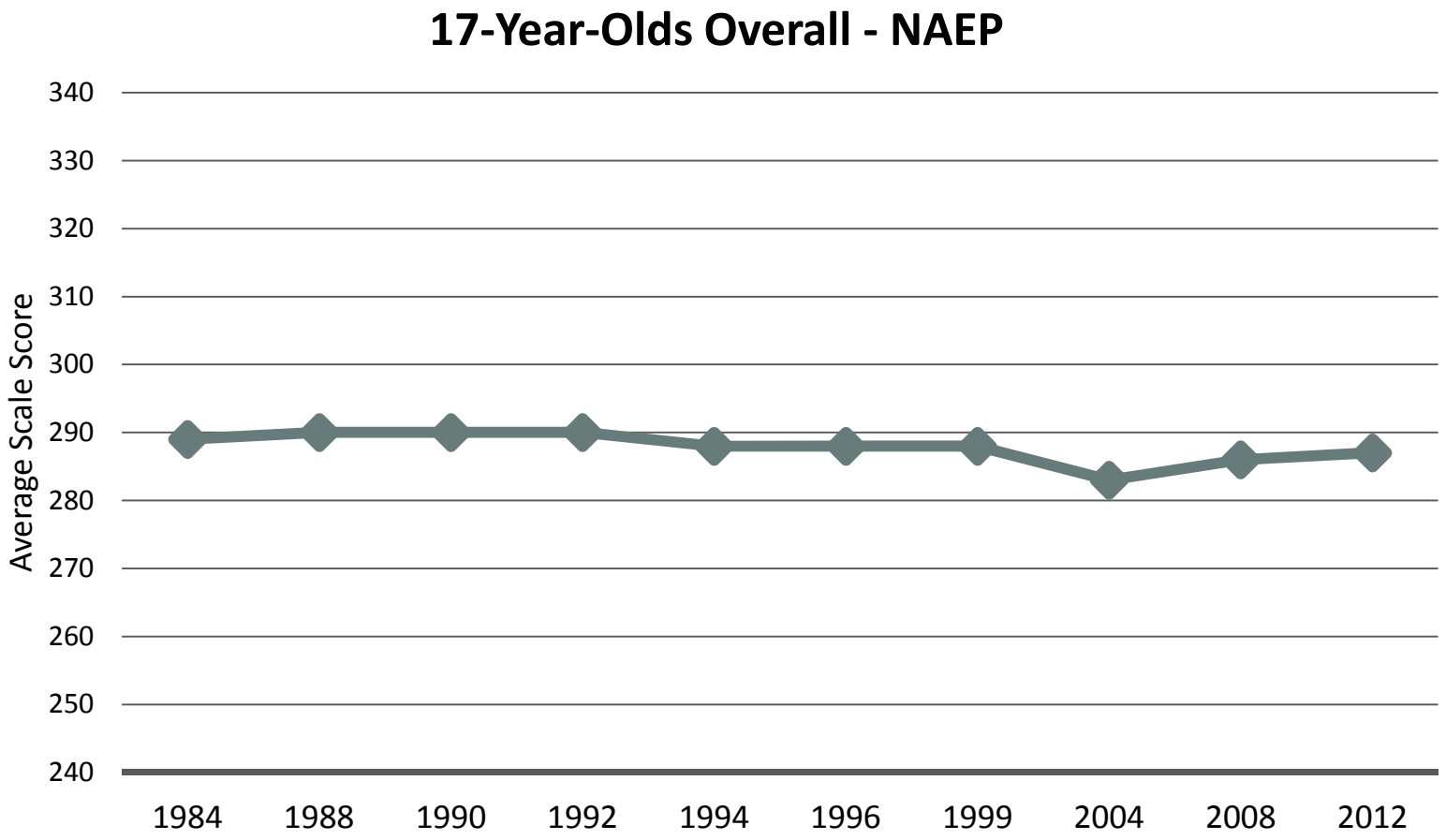
Achievement is flat in reading for students overall.



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

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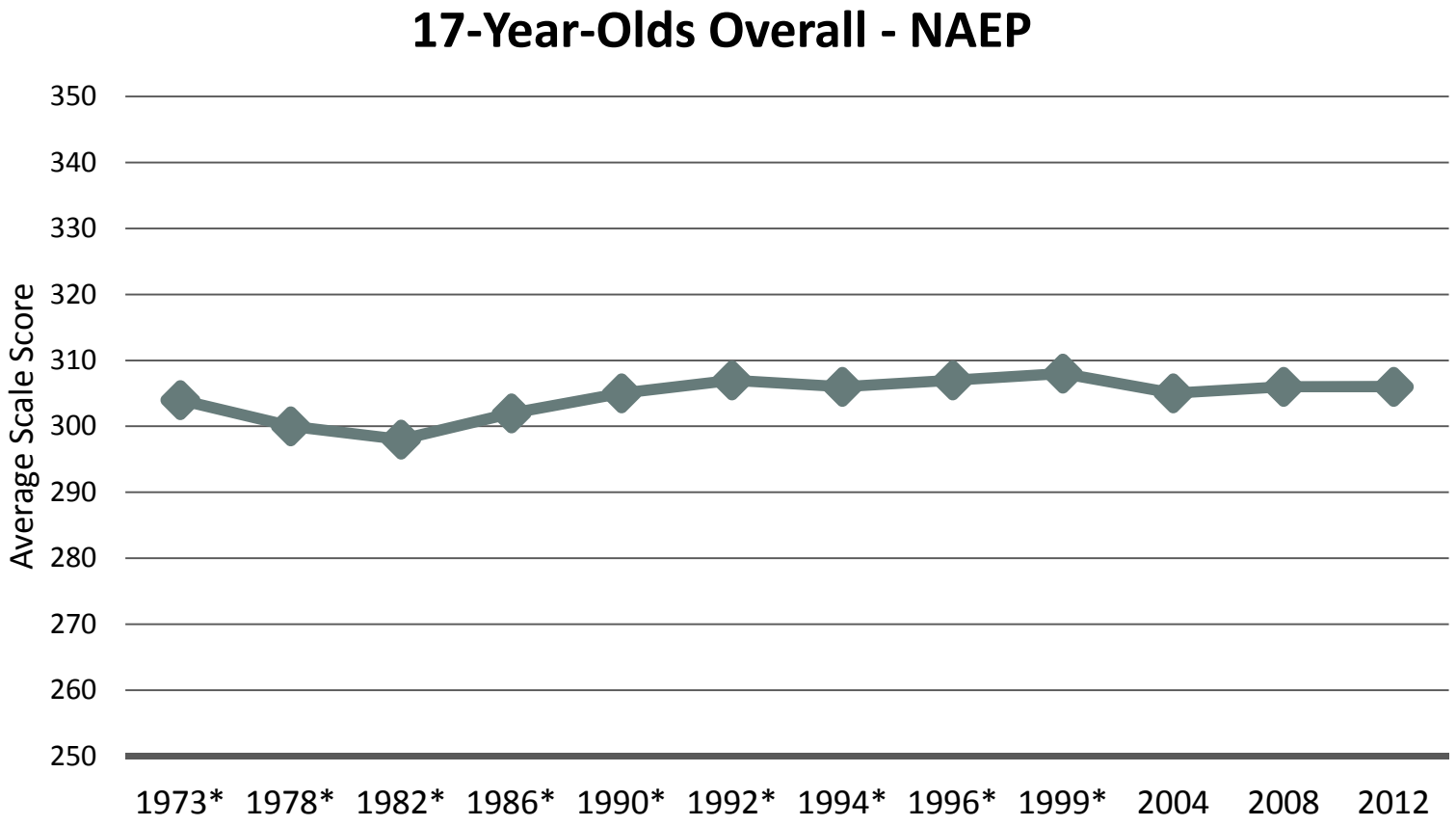
Math achievement for students overall is flat over time.



* Denotes previous assessment format

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

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And despite earlier improvements, gaps between groups haven't narrowed much since the late 80s and early 90s.

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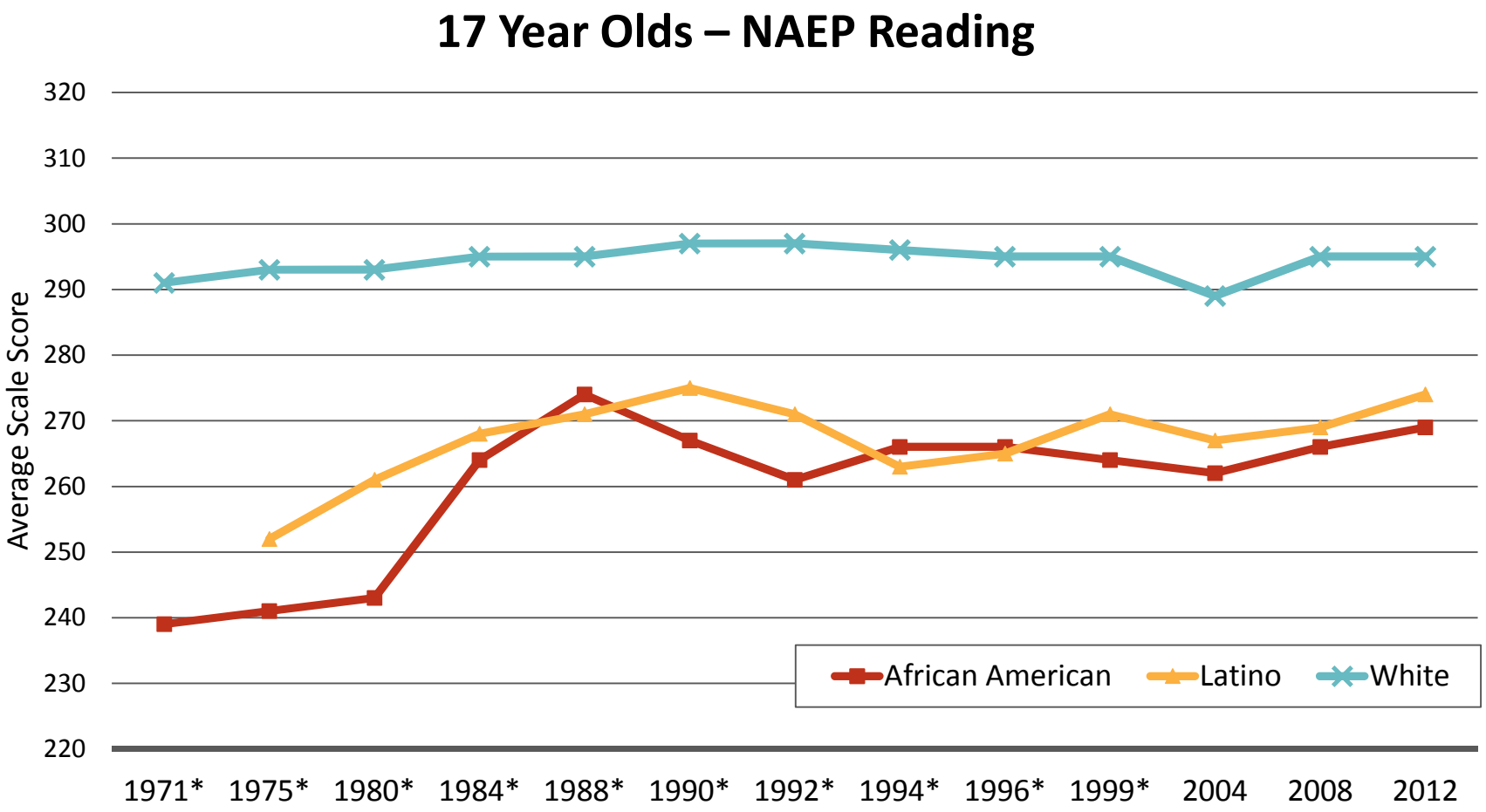
Reading: Not much gap narrowing since 1988.



*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

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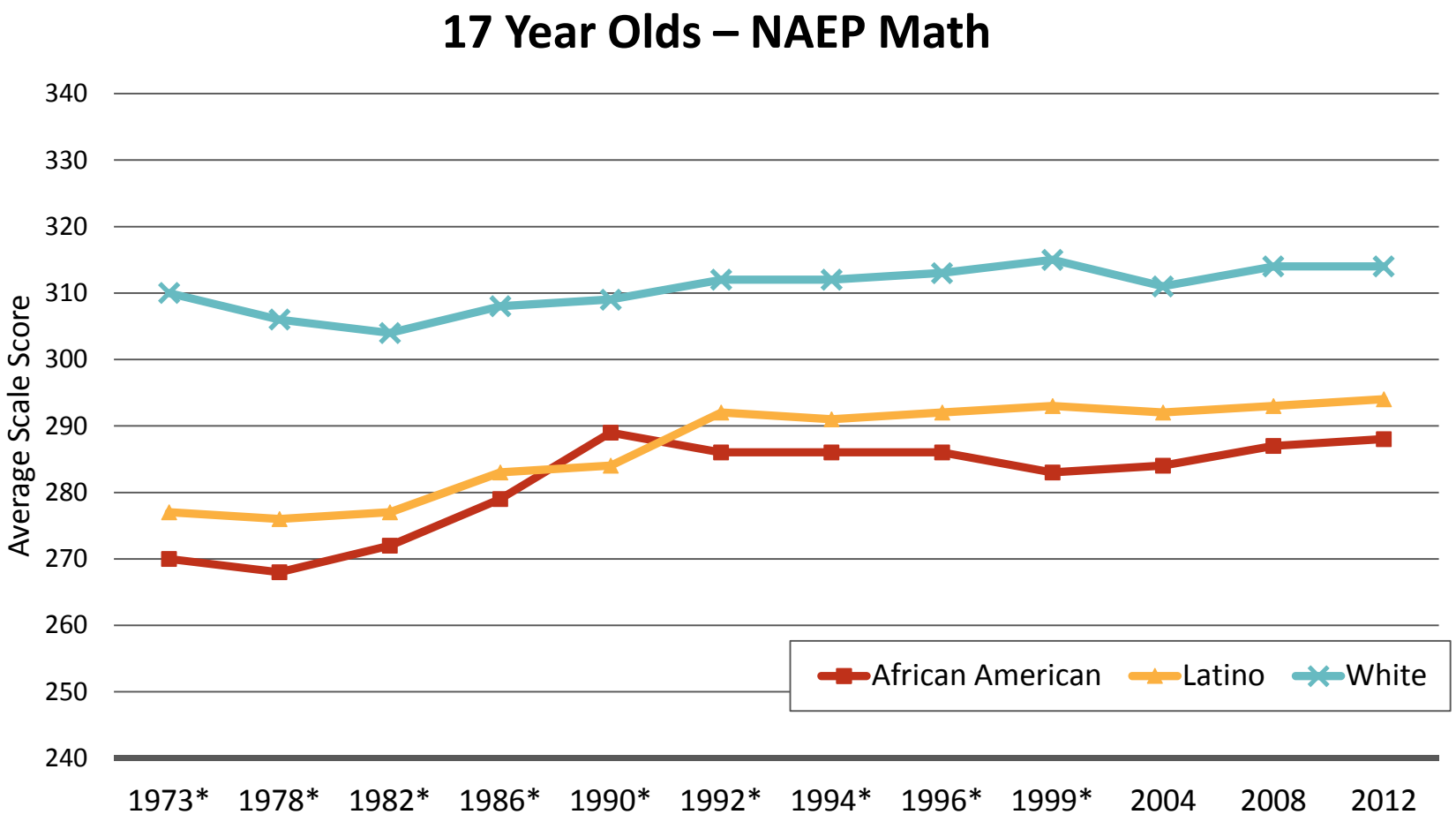
Math: Not much gap closing since 1990.



*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

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

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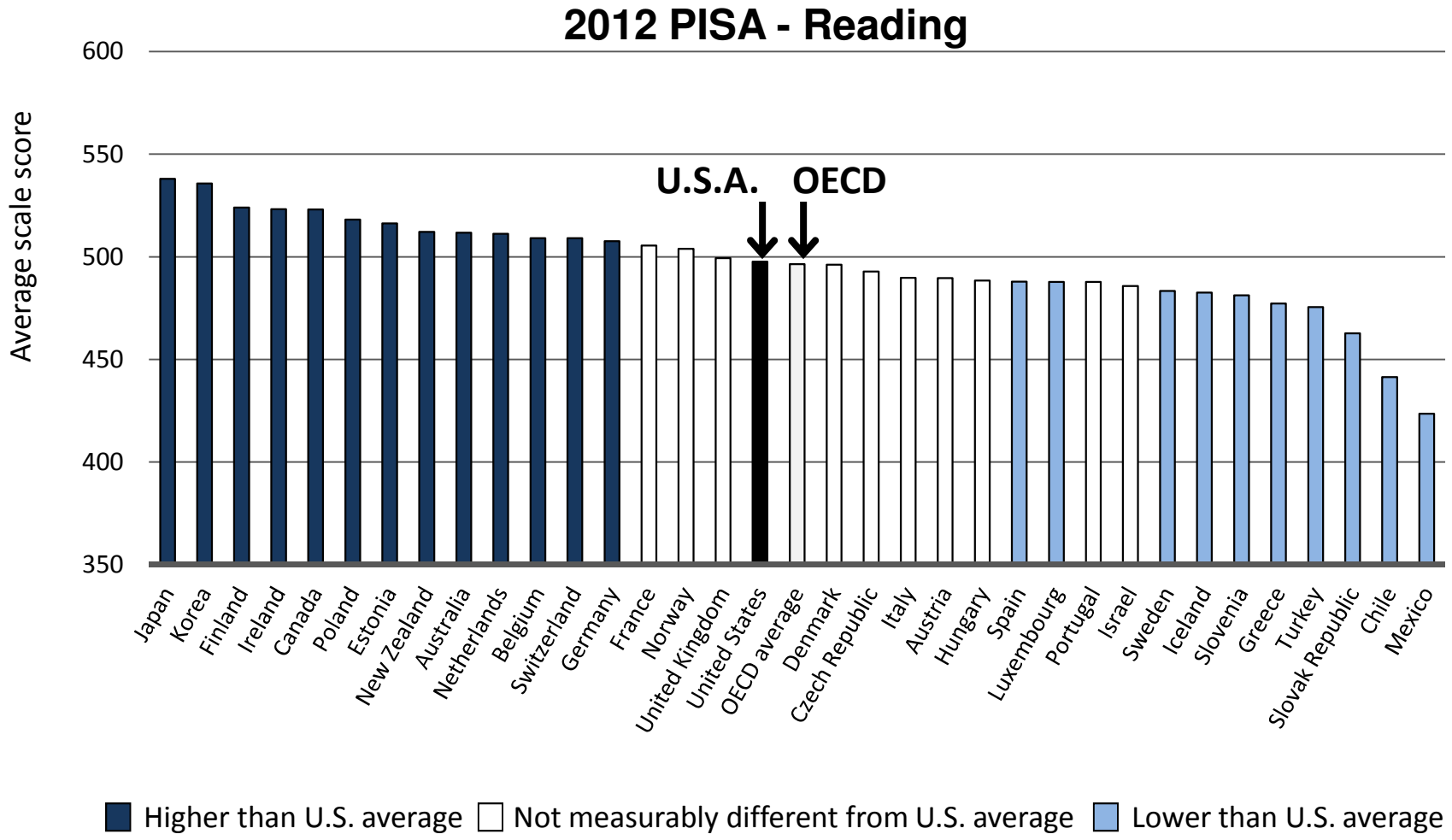
Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 17th in Reading



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/pisa2012/pisa2012highlights_5a.asp.

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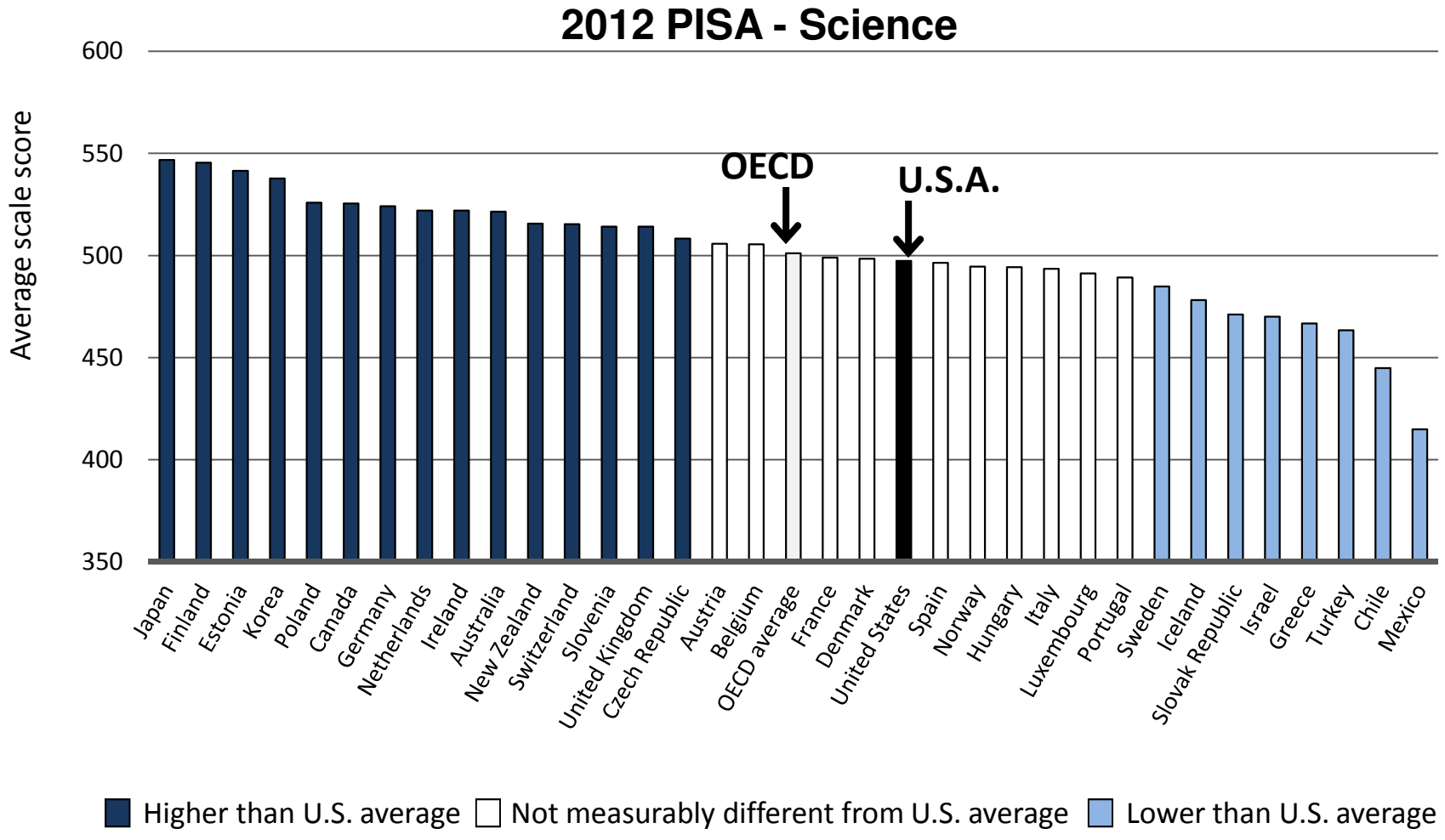
Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 20th in Science



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/pisa2012/pisa2012highlights_4a.asp.

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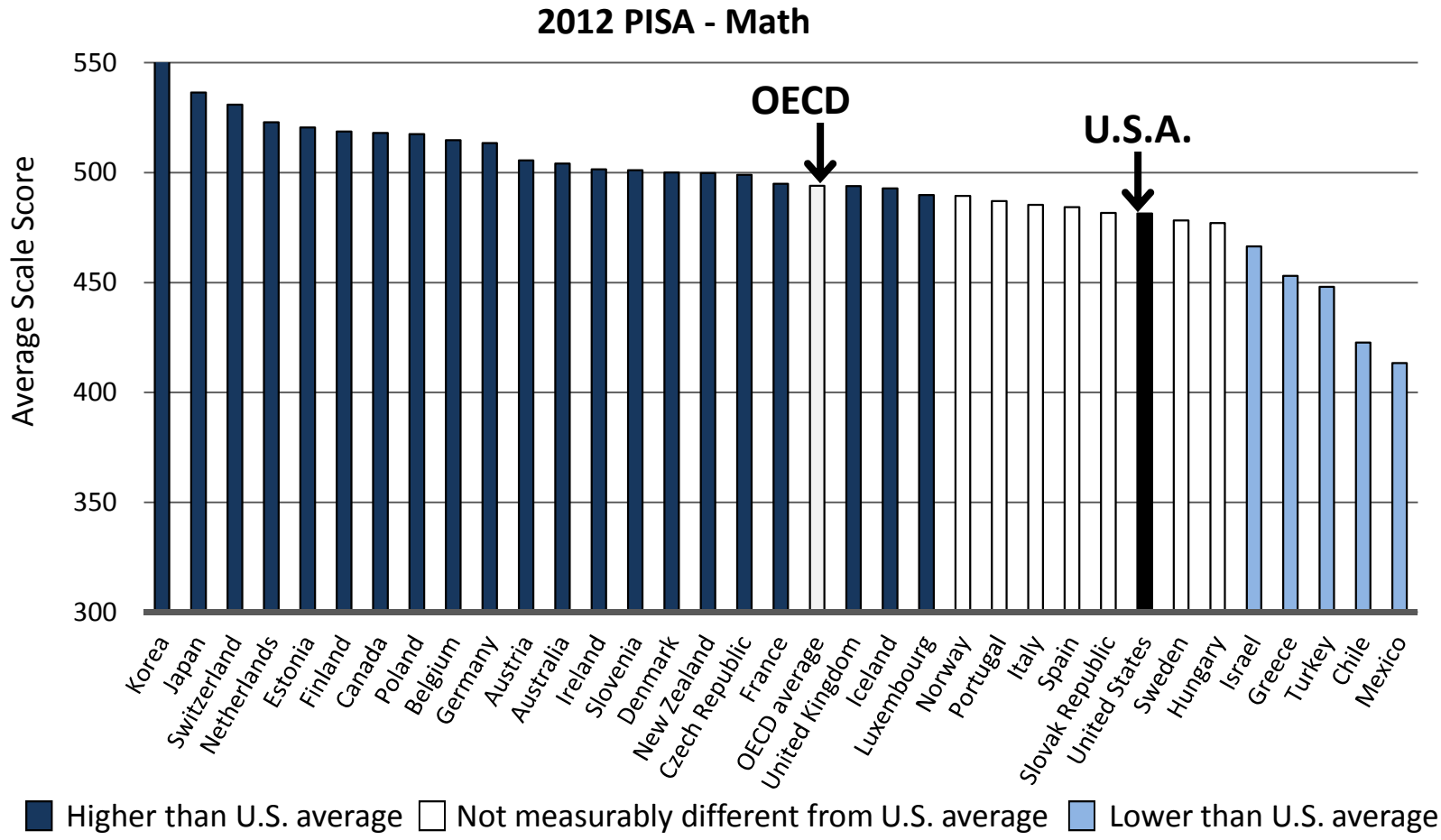
Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 27th in Math Literacy



Sourc National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/pisa2012/pisa2012highlights_3a.asp.
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Only place we rank high?

Inequality.

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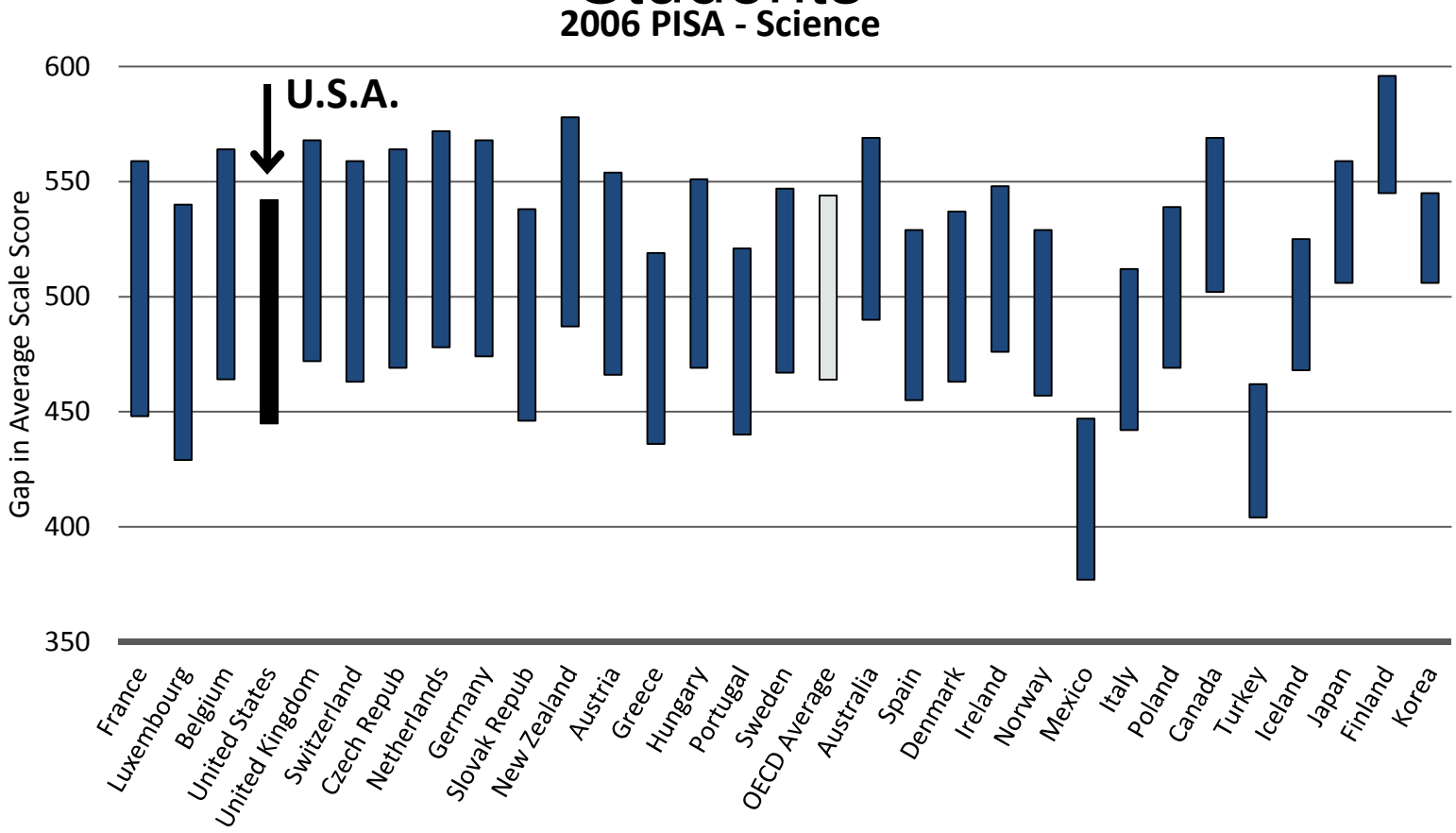
Among OECD Countries, U.S.A. has the 4th Largest Gap Between High-SES and Low-SES Students



Source: PISA 2006 Results, OECD, table 4.8b

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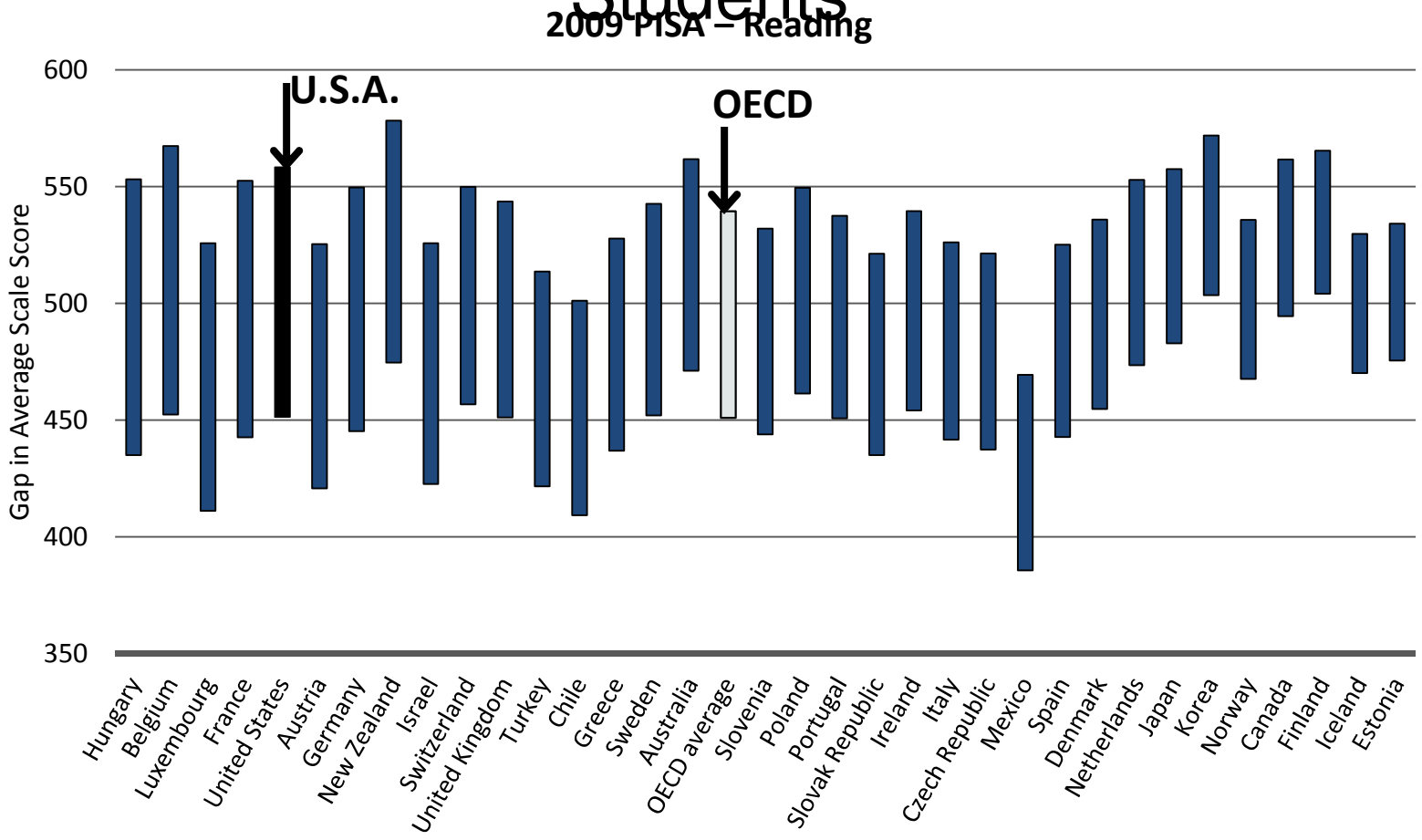
Among OECD Countries, U.S.A. has the 5th Largest Gap Between High-SES and Low-SES Students



Source: PISA 2009 Results, OECD, Table II.3.1

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Gaps in achievement 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.

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How?

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

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

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National Inequities in State and Local Revenue Per Student

	Gap
High Poverty vs. Low Poverty Districts	–$1200 per student
High Minority vs. Low Minority Districts	–$2,000 per student

Source: Education Trust analyses based on U.S. Dept of Education and U.S. Census Bureau data for 2010-12

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

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

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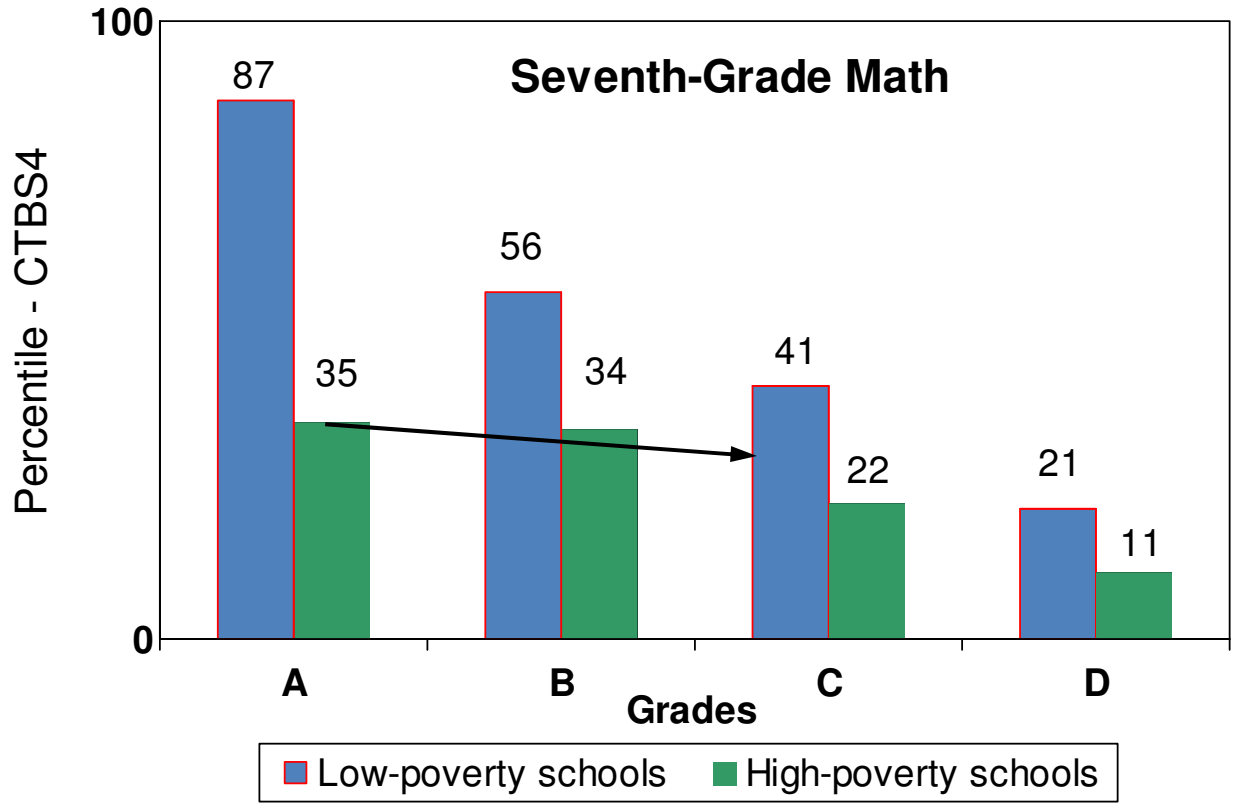
Students in poor schools receive As for work that would earn Cs in affluent schools.



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

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Choices we make about what to teach whom…

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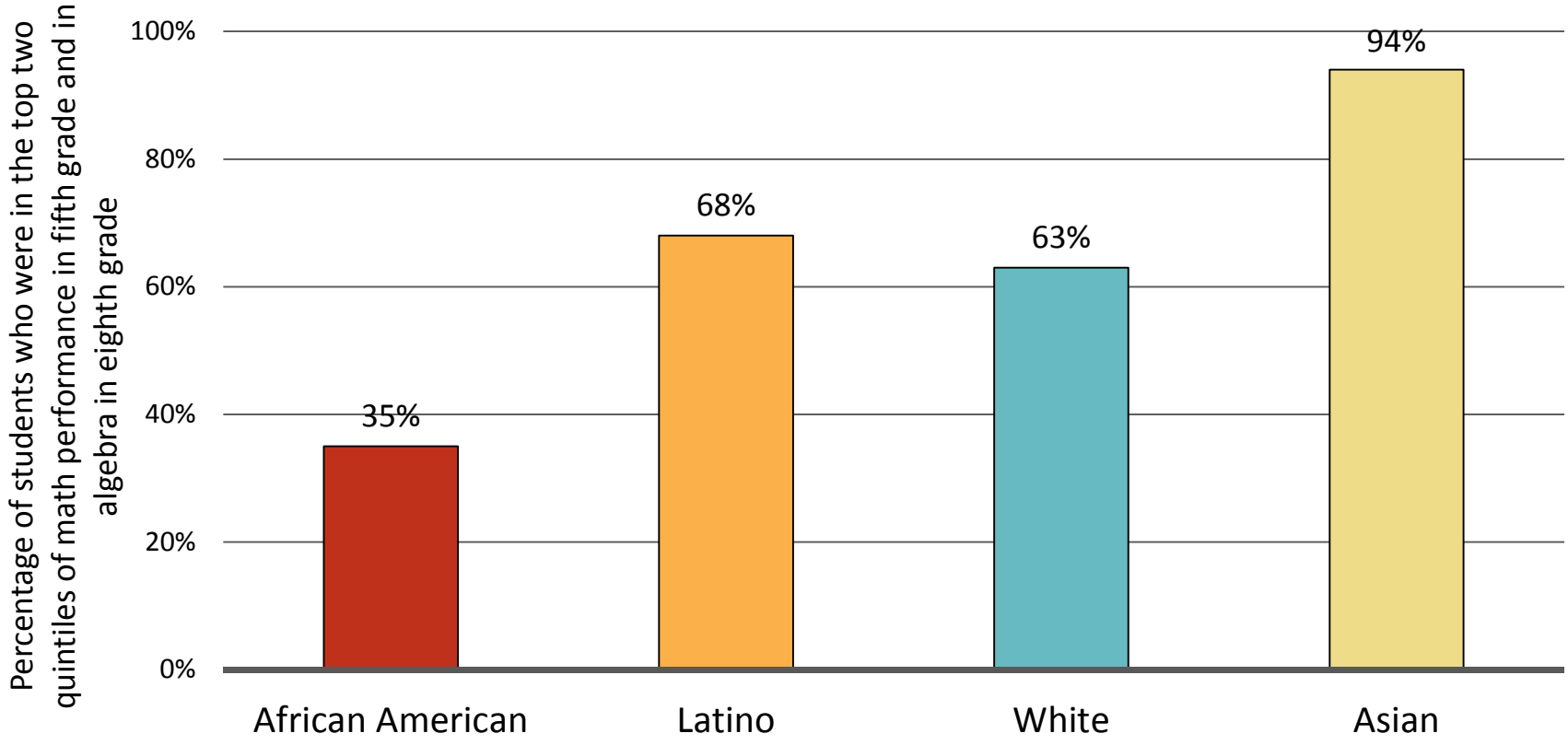
Even African-American students with ***high math performance*** in fifth grade are unlikely to be placed in algebra in eighth grade



Source: NCES, "Eighth-Grade Algebra: Findings from the Eighth-Grade Round of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K)" (2010).

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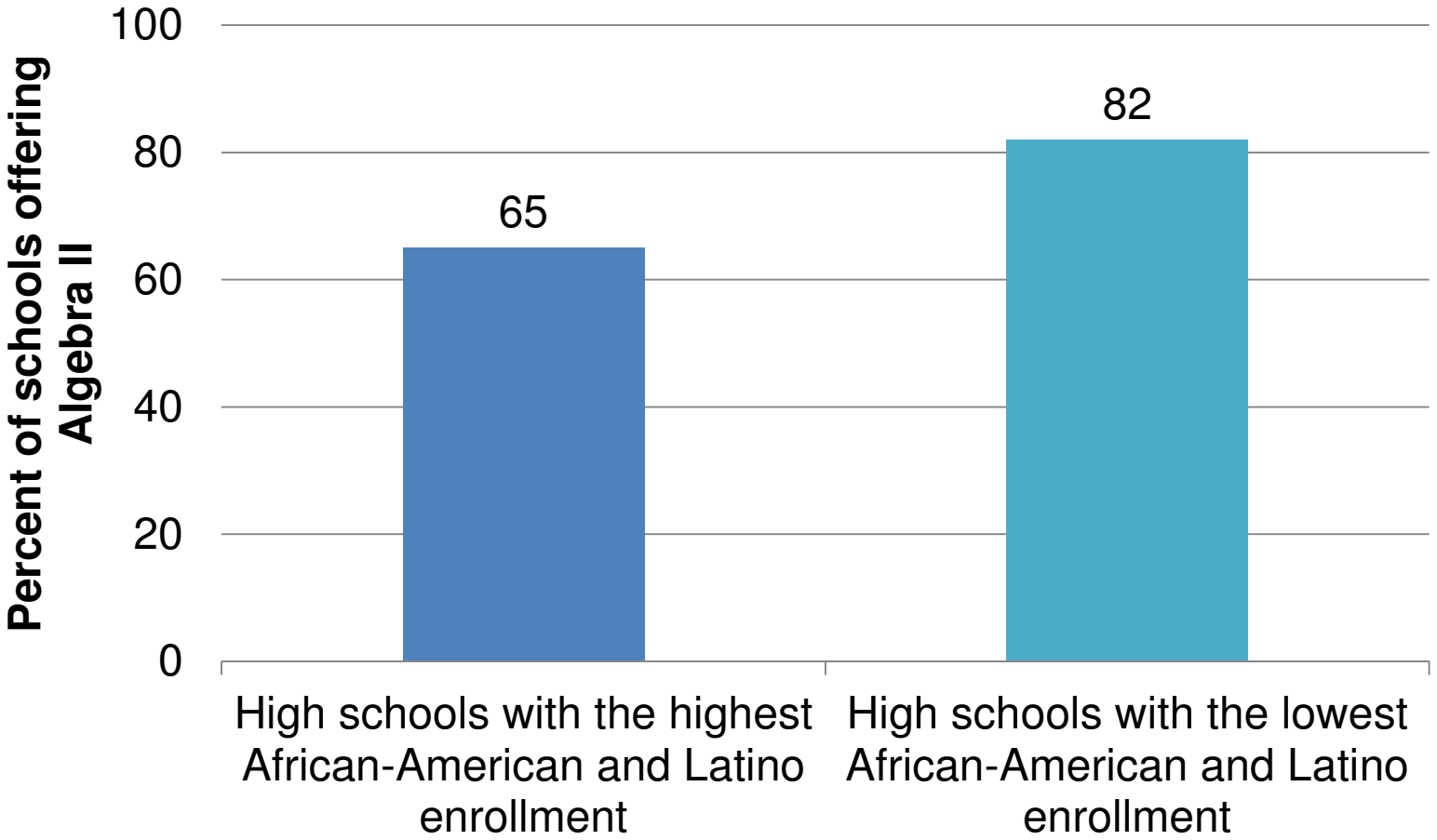
Students of color are less likely to attend high schools that offer Algebra II.



- Source: U.S Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, March 2012

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And choices we make about *who* teaches whom…

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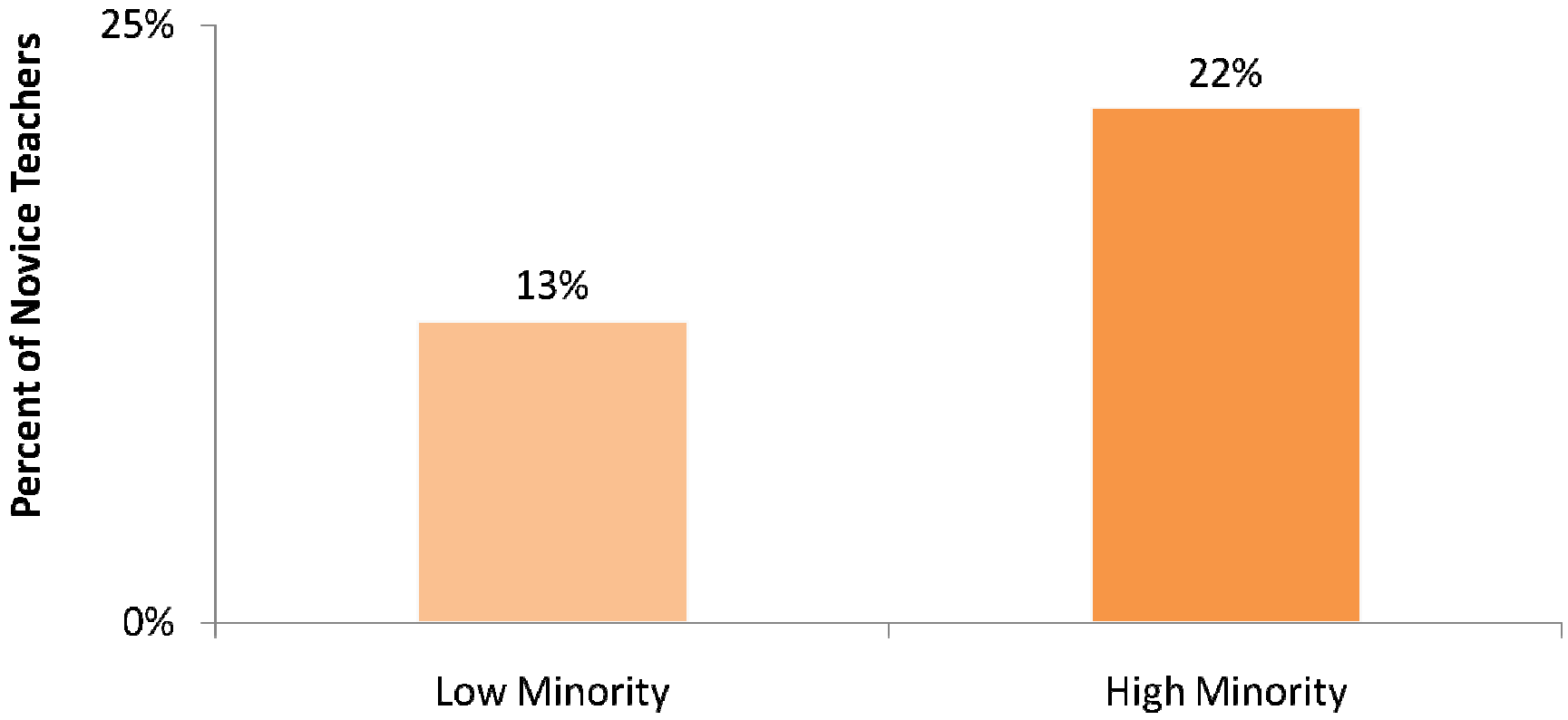
Students at high-minority schools more likely to be taught by novice* teachers.



Note: High minority school: 75% or more of the students are Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander. Low-minority school: 10% or fewer of the students are non-White students. Novice teachers are those with three years or fewer experience.

Source: Analysis of 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey data by Richard Ingersoll, University of Pennsylvania 2007.

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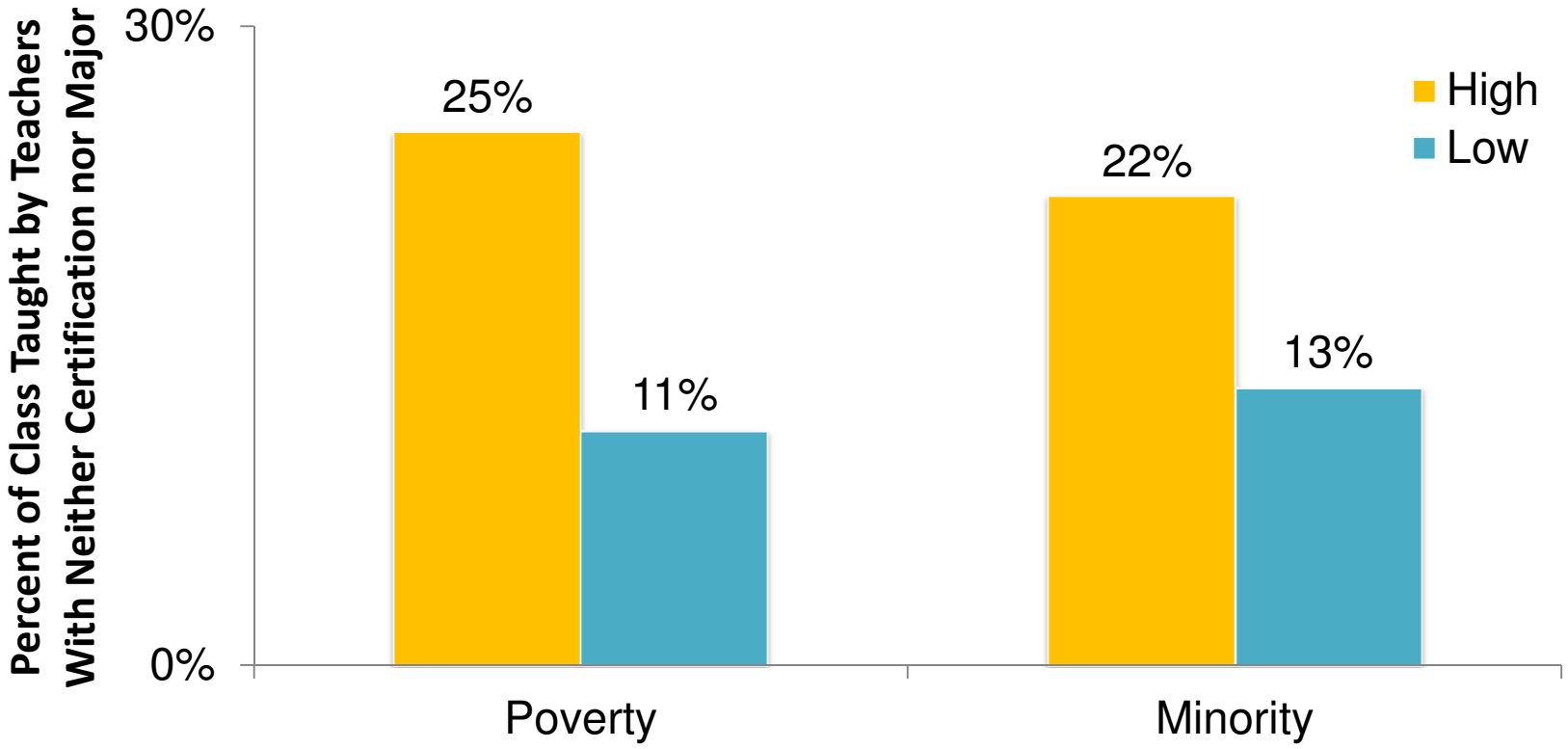
Math classes at high-poverty, high-minority secondary schools are more likely to be taught by out-of-field* teachers.



Note: High-poverty school: 55 percent or more of the students are eligible for free/reduced-price lunch. Low-poverty school :15 percent or fewer of the students are eligible for free/reduced-price lunch. High-minority school: 78 percent or more of the students are black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander. Low-minority school : 12 percent or fewer of the students are non-white students.

*Teachers with neither certification nor major. Data for secondary-level core academic classes (math, science, social studies, English) across the U.S.

Source: Education Trust Analysis of 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey data.

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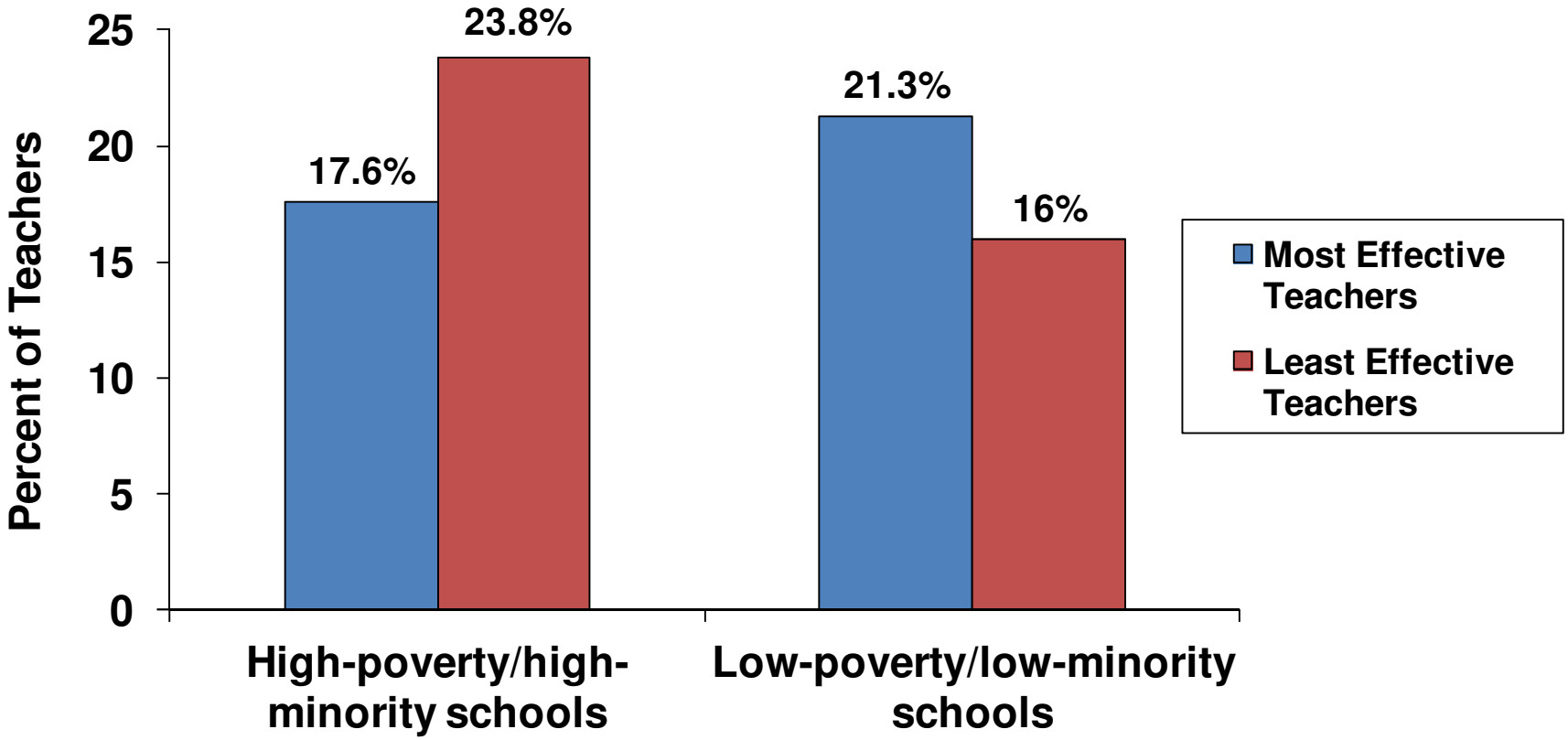
Tennessee: High-poverty/high-minority schools have fewer of the "most effective" teachers and more "least effective" teachers.



Note: High poverty/high minority means at least 75 percent of students qualify for FRPL and at least 75 percent are minority.

Source: Tennessee Department of Education 2007. "Tennessee's Most Effective Teachers: Are they assigned to the schools that need them most?" http://tennessee.gov/education/nclb/doc/TeacherEffectiveness2007_03.pdf.

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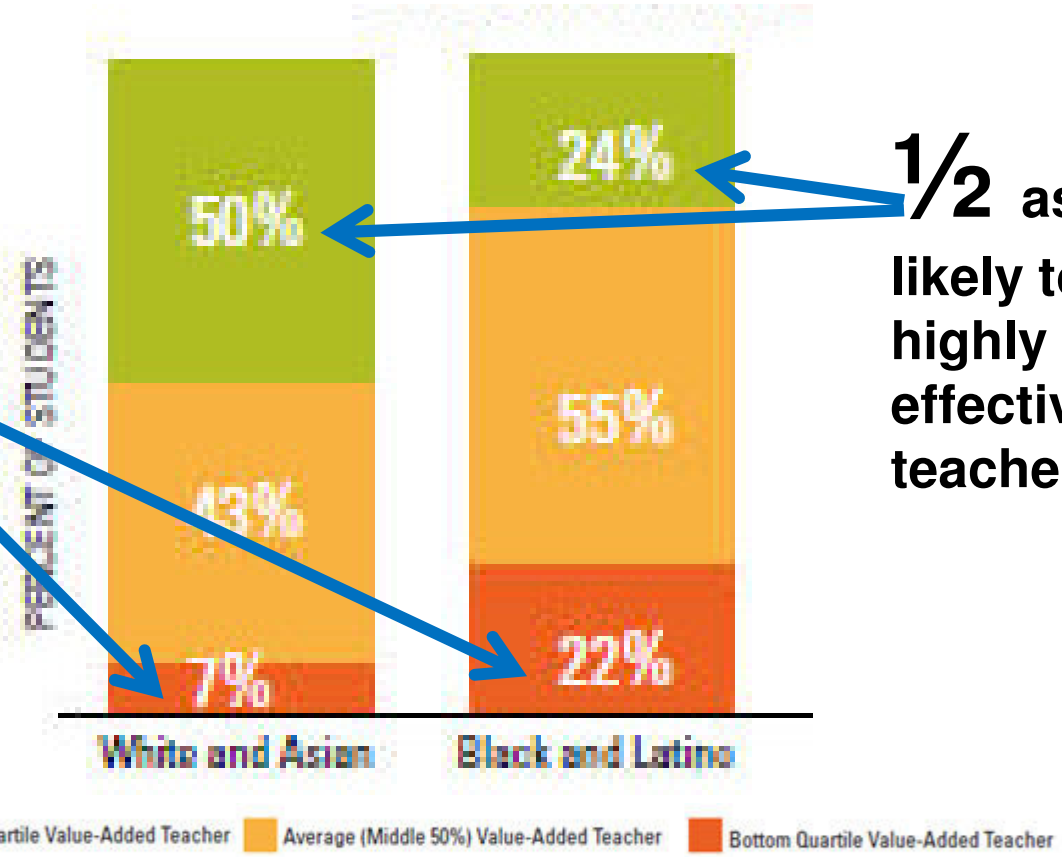
Los Angeles: Black, Latino students have fewer highly effective teachers, more weak ones.

Latino and black students are:

3X as likely to get low-effectiveness teachers

½ as likely to get highly effective teachers



Source: Education Trust—West, *Learning Denied, 2012.*

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The results are devastating.

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

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And these are the students who remain in school through 12th grade.

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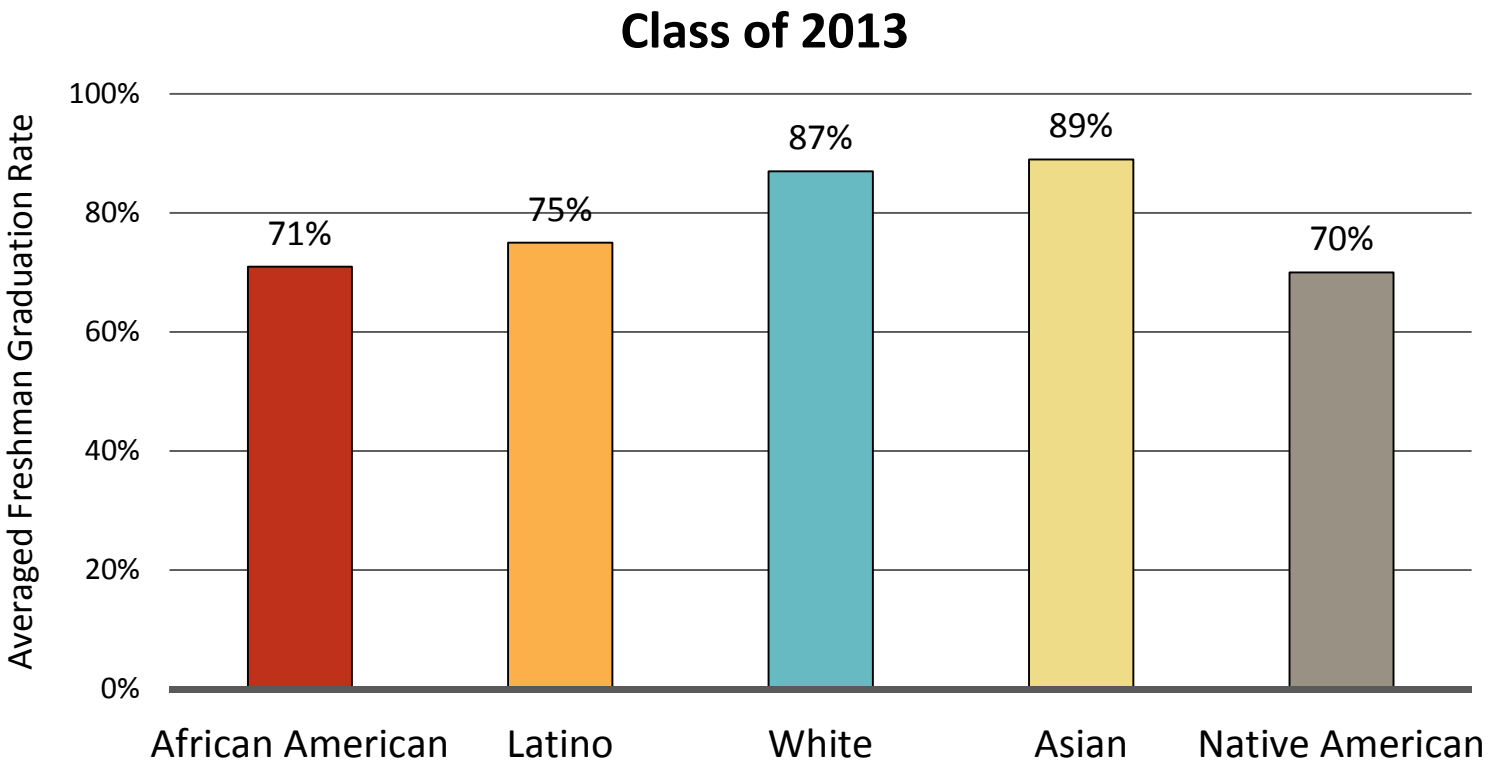
Students of color are less likely to graduate from high school on time.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Public School Graduates and Dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2008-09" (2011).

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Add those numbers up and throw in college entry and graduation, and different groups of young Americans obtain degrees and **very** different rates…

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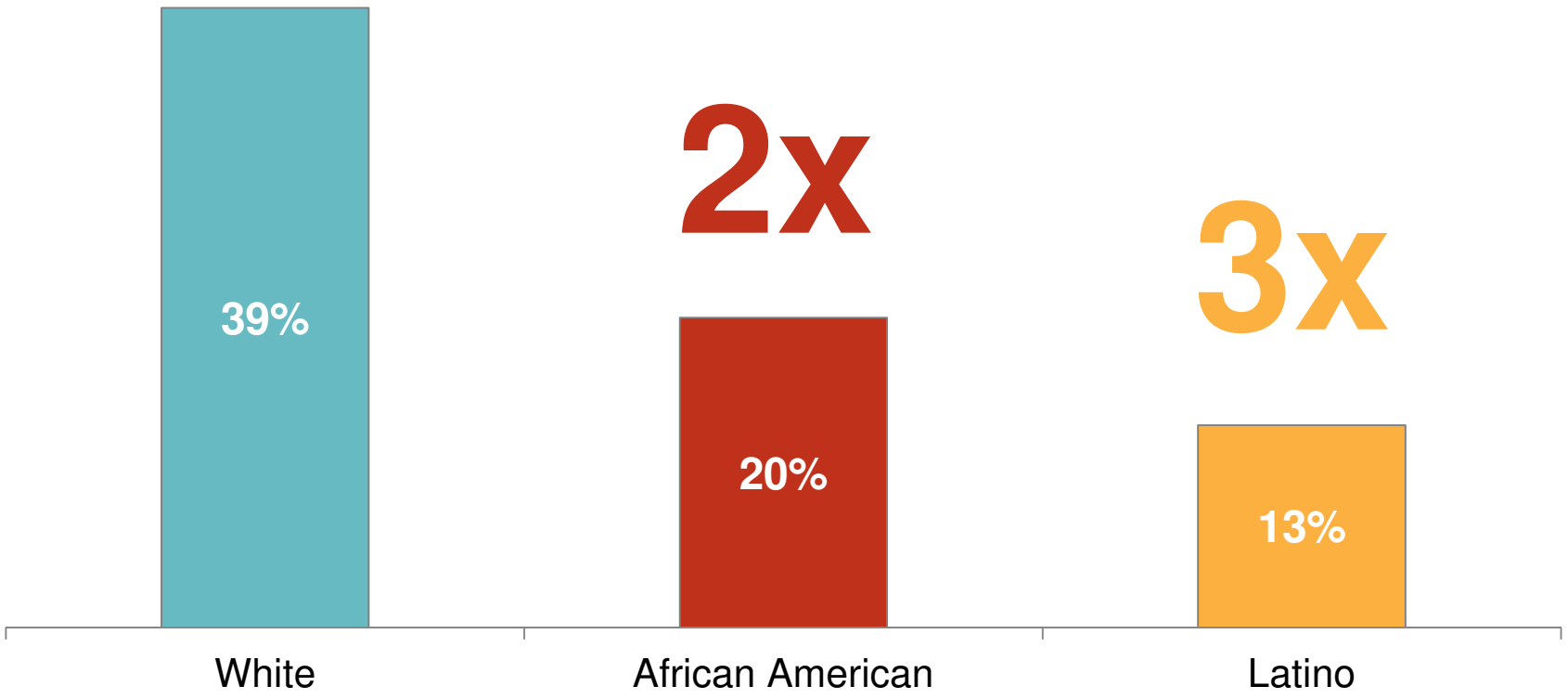
Whites attain bachelor's degrees at twice the rate of blacks and three times the rate of Hispanics.

Bachelor's Degree Attainment of Young Adults (25-29-year-olds), 2011



Source: NCES, *Condition of Education* 2010 and U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment in the United States: 2011.

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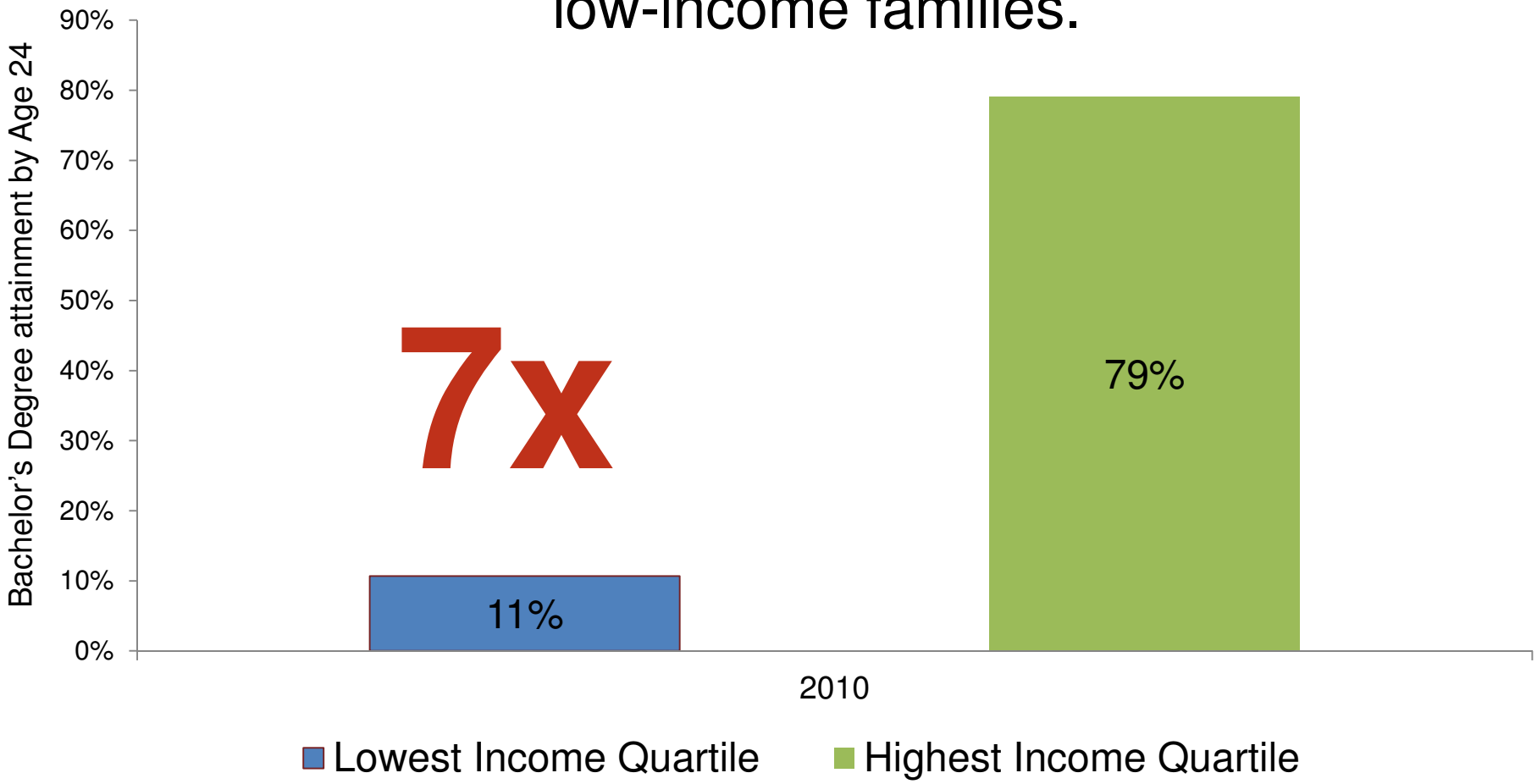
Young people from high-income families earn bachelor's degrees at seven times the rate of those from low-income families.



Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity, "Bachelor's Degree Attainment by Age 24 by Family Income Quartiles, 1970 to 2010."

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Given the fast changing demographics of this country, those numbers are not good news for the future competitiveness of our workforce.

More importantly, they are not good news for the lives of the young people in question.

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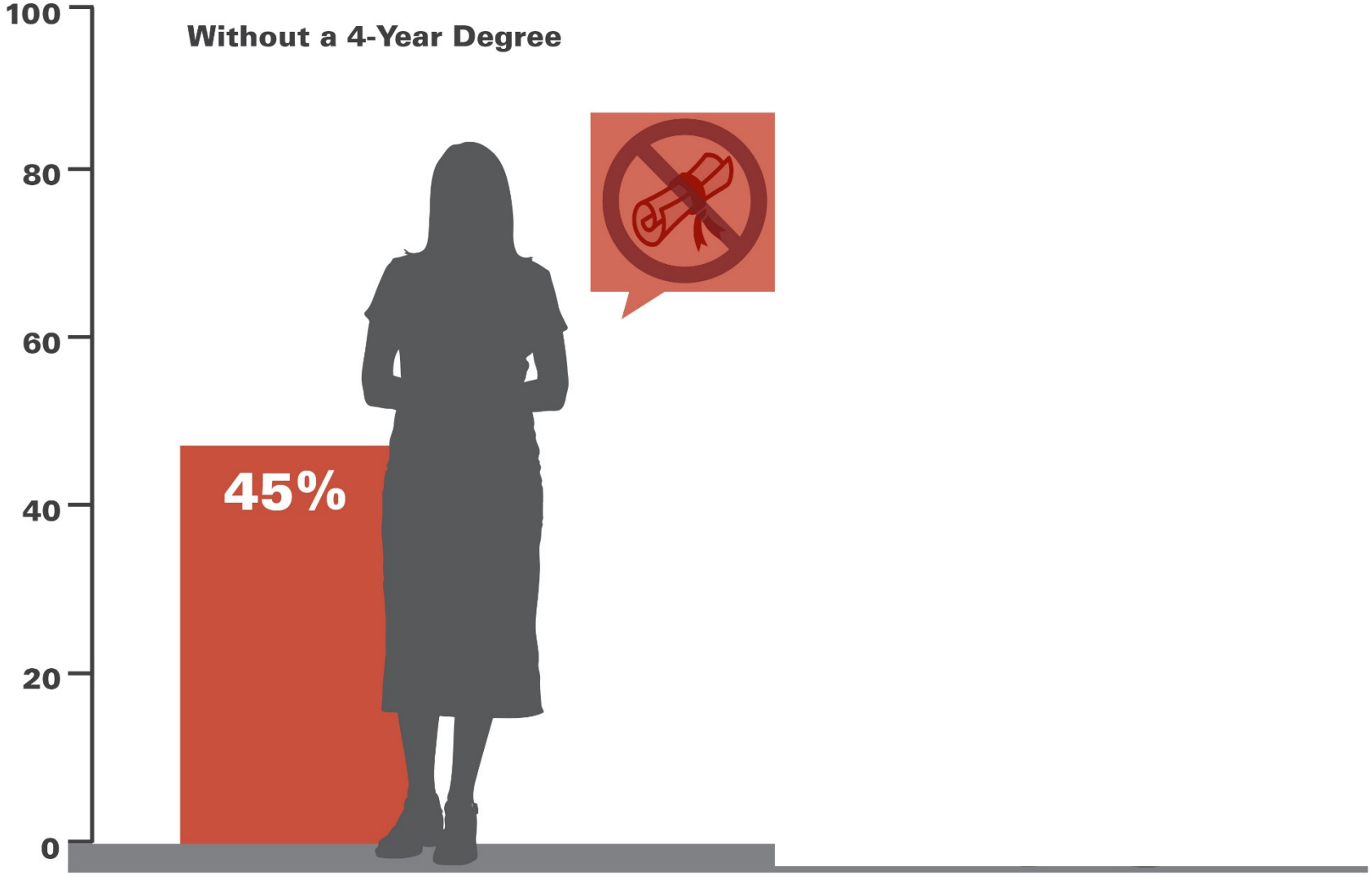
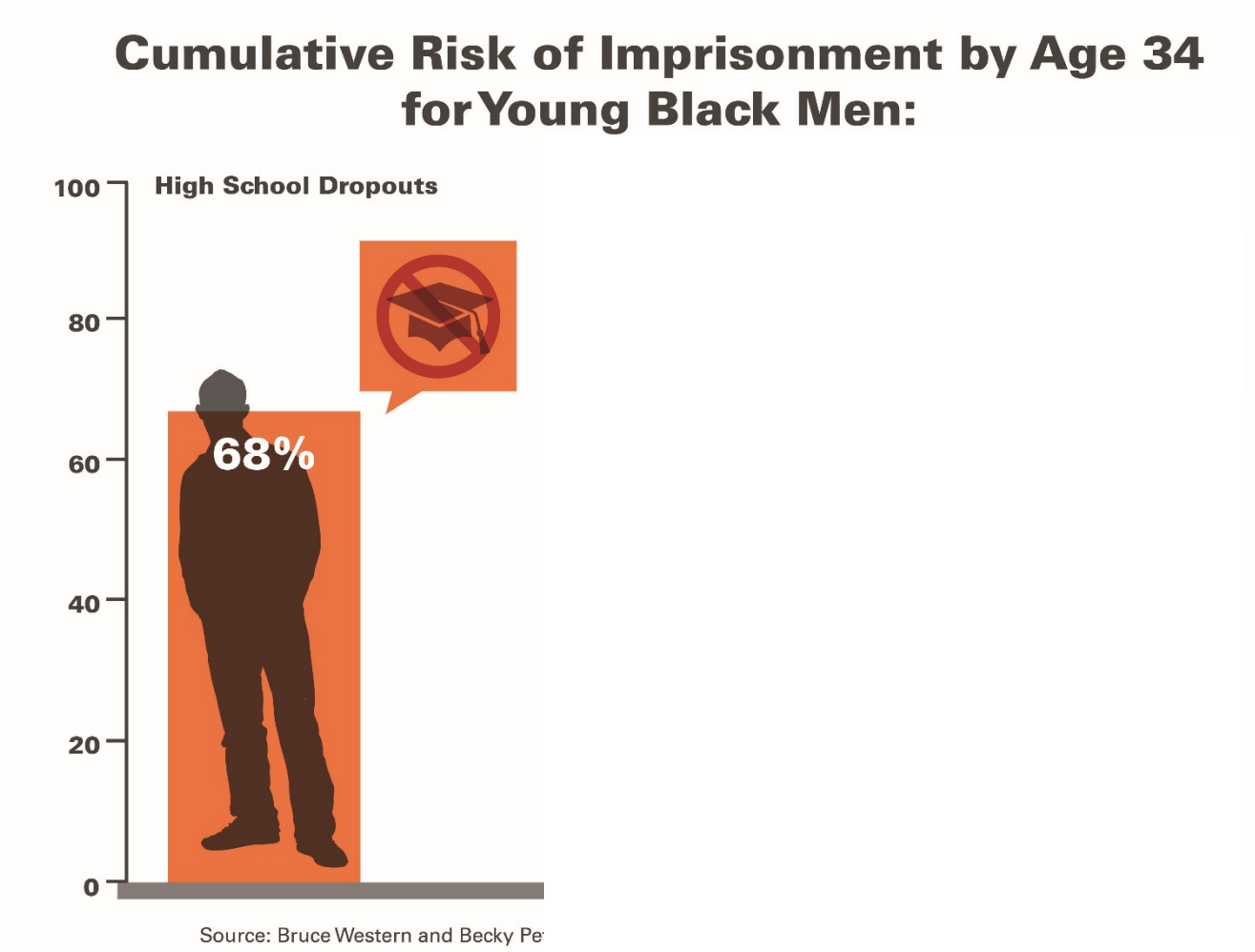
Chances of Staying at the Bottom If You're Born at the Bottom



Source: Haskins, Holzer, and Lerman. Promoting Economic Mobility by Increasing Postsecondary Education. Economic Mobility Project, Pew Charitable Trusts, 2009

Among black men, education makes a huge difference in life outcomes



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What Can We Do?

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

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What We Hear Many Educators Say:

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

Source: N/A

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And let’s be clear, these things do matter.

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Child Poverty in the US, 2013

White	13.4%
Black	36.9%
Hispanic	30.4%
Asian	9.6%
ALL	19.9%

Source: US Census Bureau

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And let's also be clear: tolerating high child poverty rates is a policy choice.

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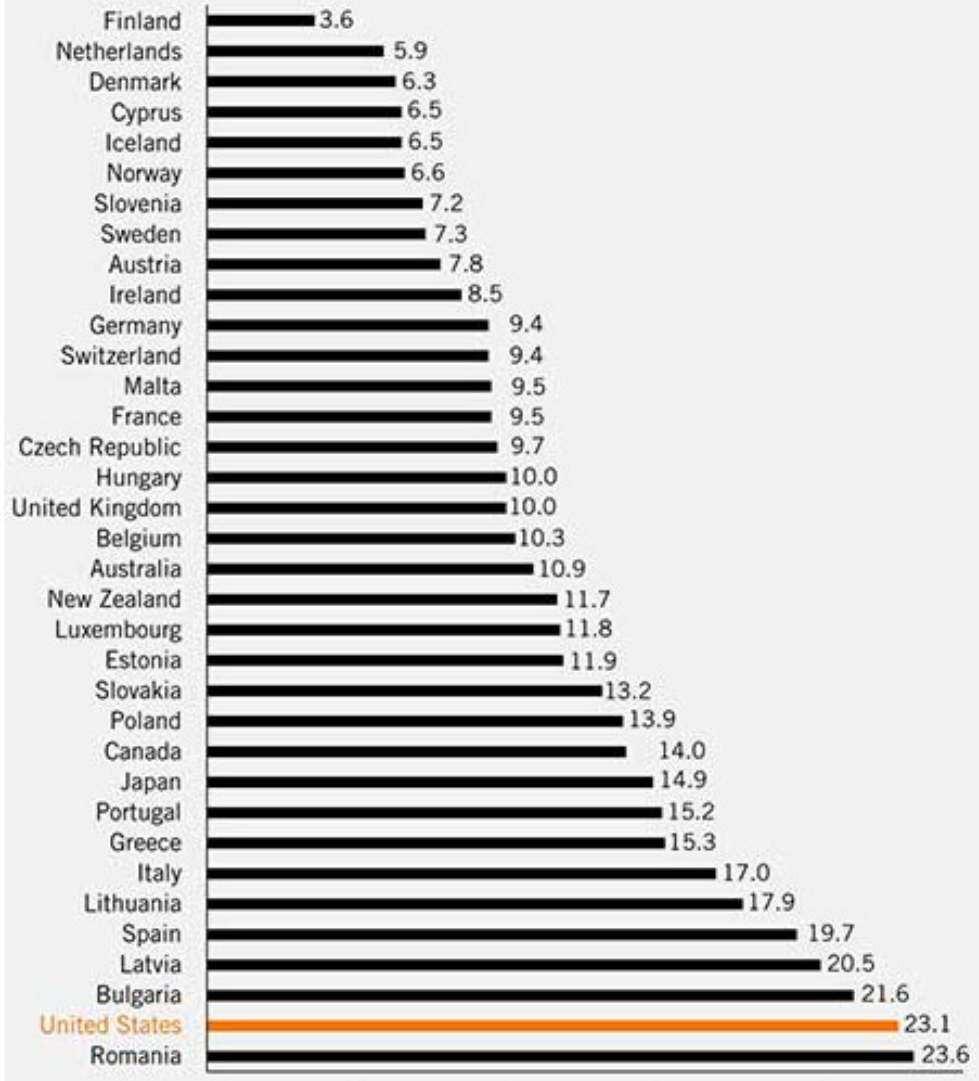
U.S. Ranks Second to Last in Child Poverty



Source: Unicef, 2013

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Not, by the way, because we have the highest rate of single parenting. (We don't.)

Or because we have the highest unemployment rate. (We don't.)

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But because policymakers in America made that choice.

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Yet, how **we** as educators respond to the effects of that choice is a choice, too.

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We can choose to go along with what has become *conventional wisdom* in our profession—that, until we fix poverty, there's not much we educators can do…

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Or we can *choose differently.*

We can choose to disrupt conventional wisdom, joining colleagues in schools all over this country that serve very poor kids but get very good results.

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George Hall Elementary School

Mobile, Alabama

- 545 students in grades PK-5
  - 99% African American
- 98% Low Income

Note: Enrollment data are for 2011-12 school year

Source: Alabama Department of Education

DISPELLING THE MYTH
2009 Award Recipient

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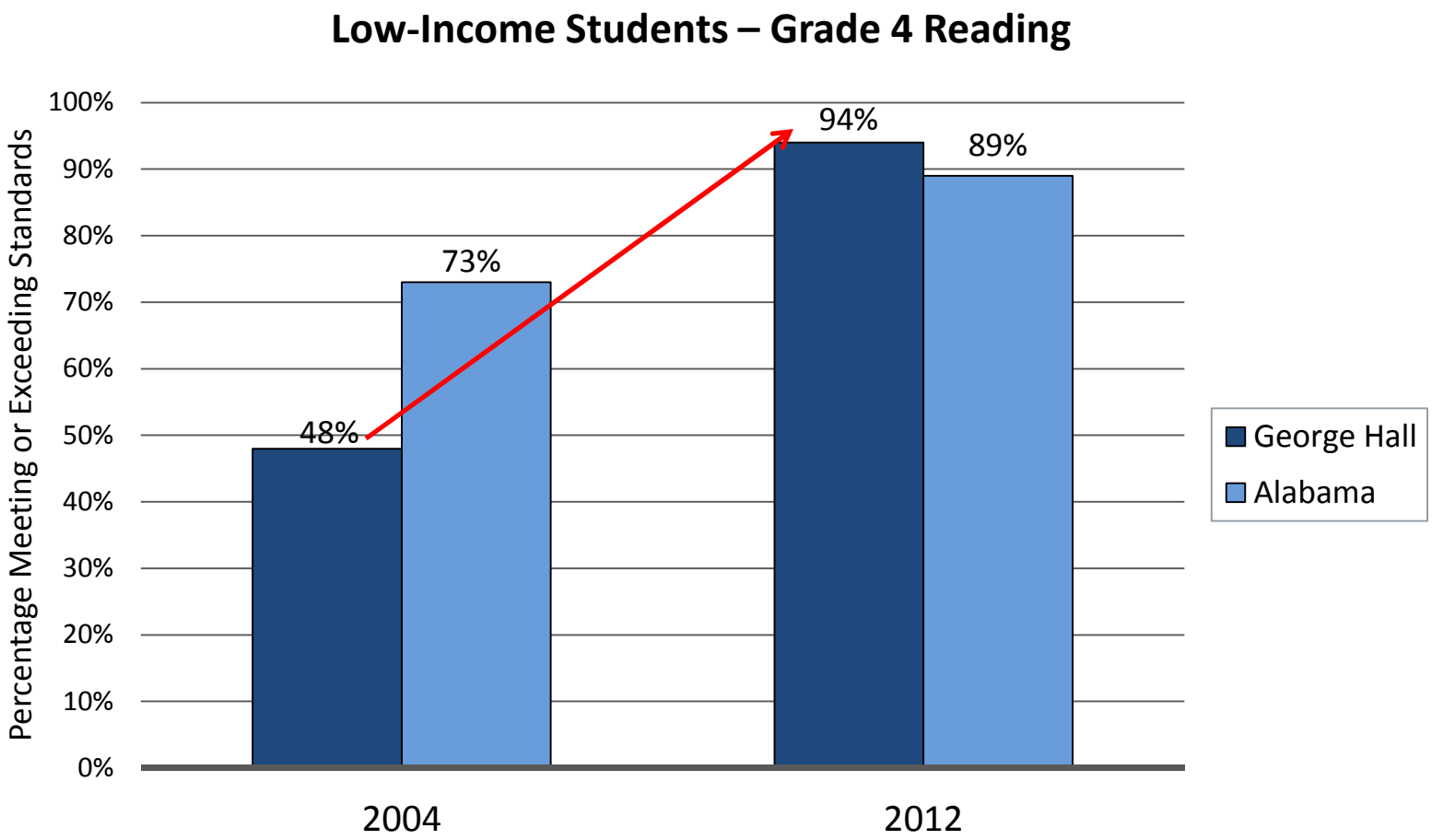
Big Improvement at George Hall Elementary



Source: Alabama Department of Education

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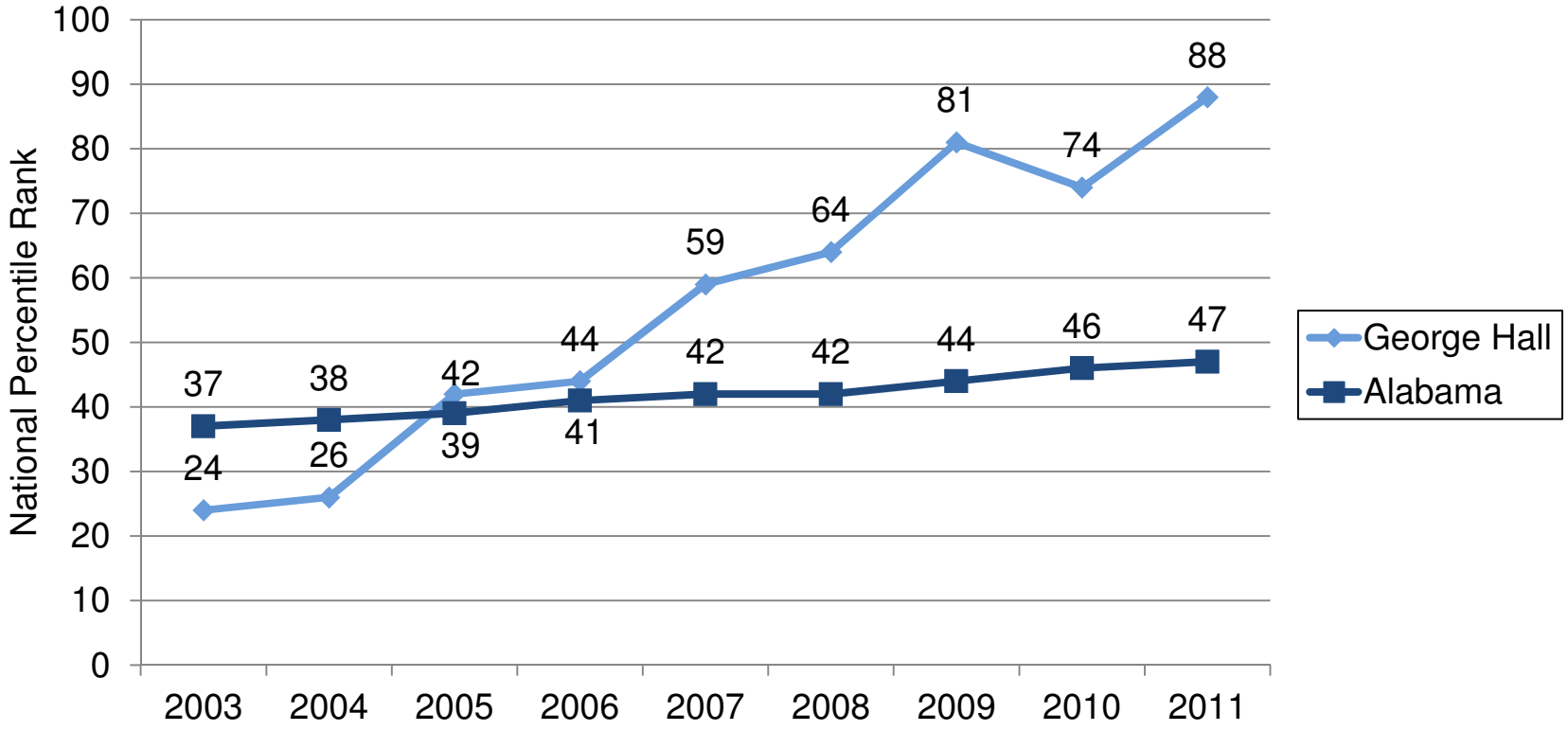
Outperforming the State – and Nation – at George Hall Elementary

African-American Students – Grade 4 Reading (SAT 10)



Source: Alabama Department of Education

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2009 Award Recipient

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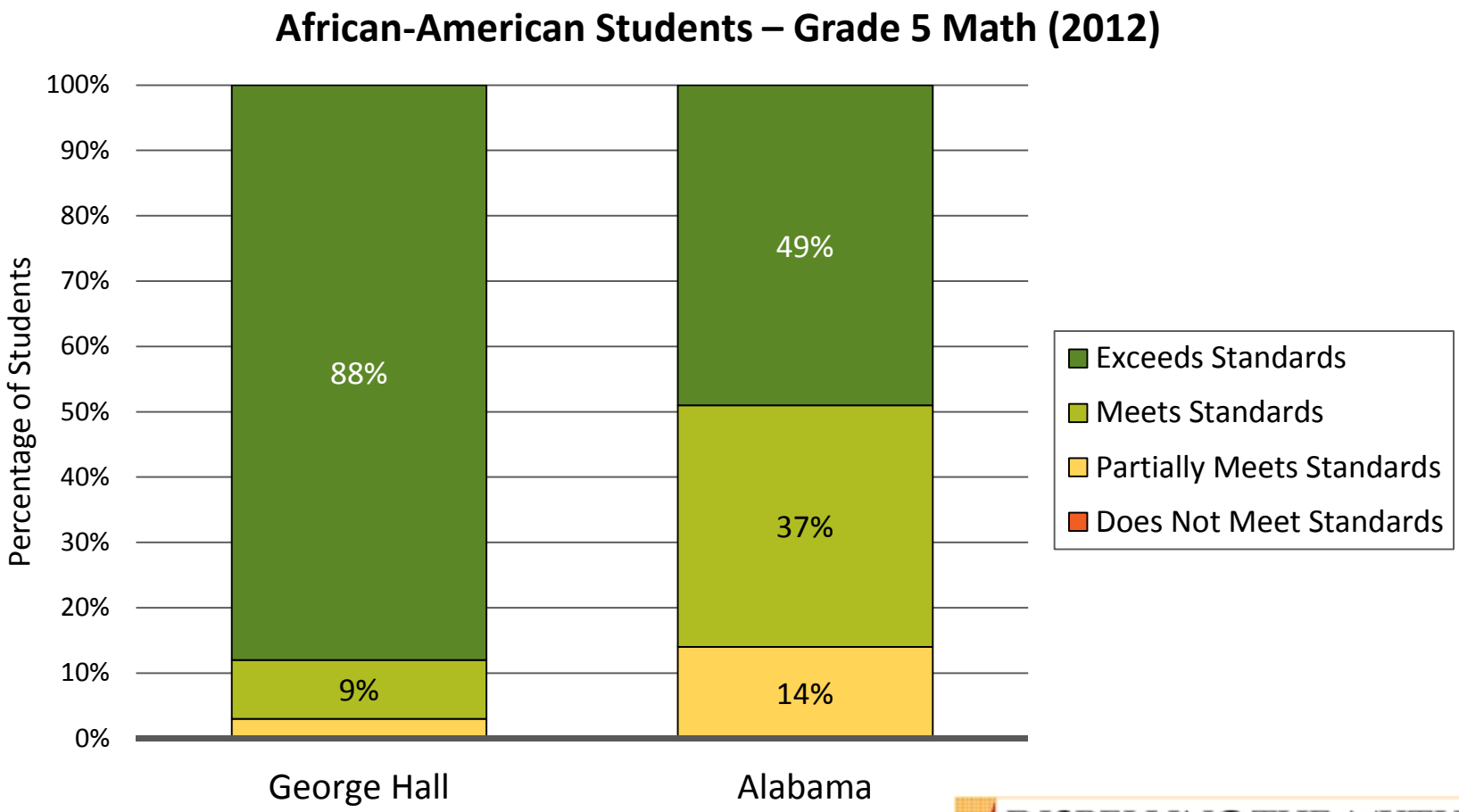
High Rates of Advanced at George Hall



Source: Alabama Department of Education

DISPELLING THE MYTH
2009 Award Recipient

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Halle Hewetson Elementary School
Las Vegas, NV

- 962 students in grades PK – 5
  - 85% Latino
  - 7% African American
- 100% Low Income
- 71% Limited English Proficient

Note: Data are for 2010-2011 school year
Source: Nevada Department of Education

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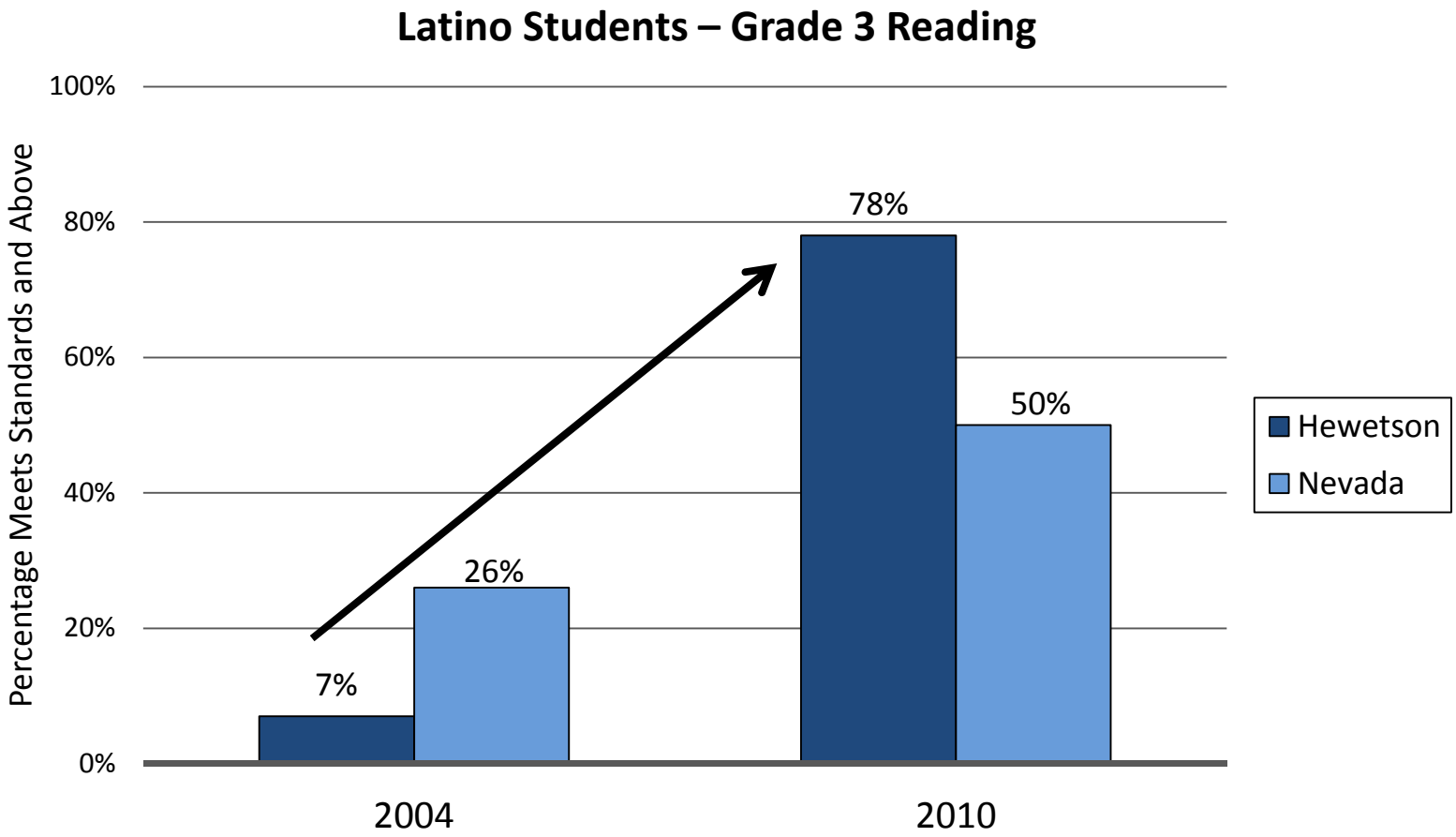
Big Improvement at Halle Hewetson Elementary



Source: Nevada Department of Education

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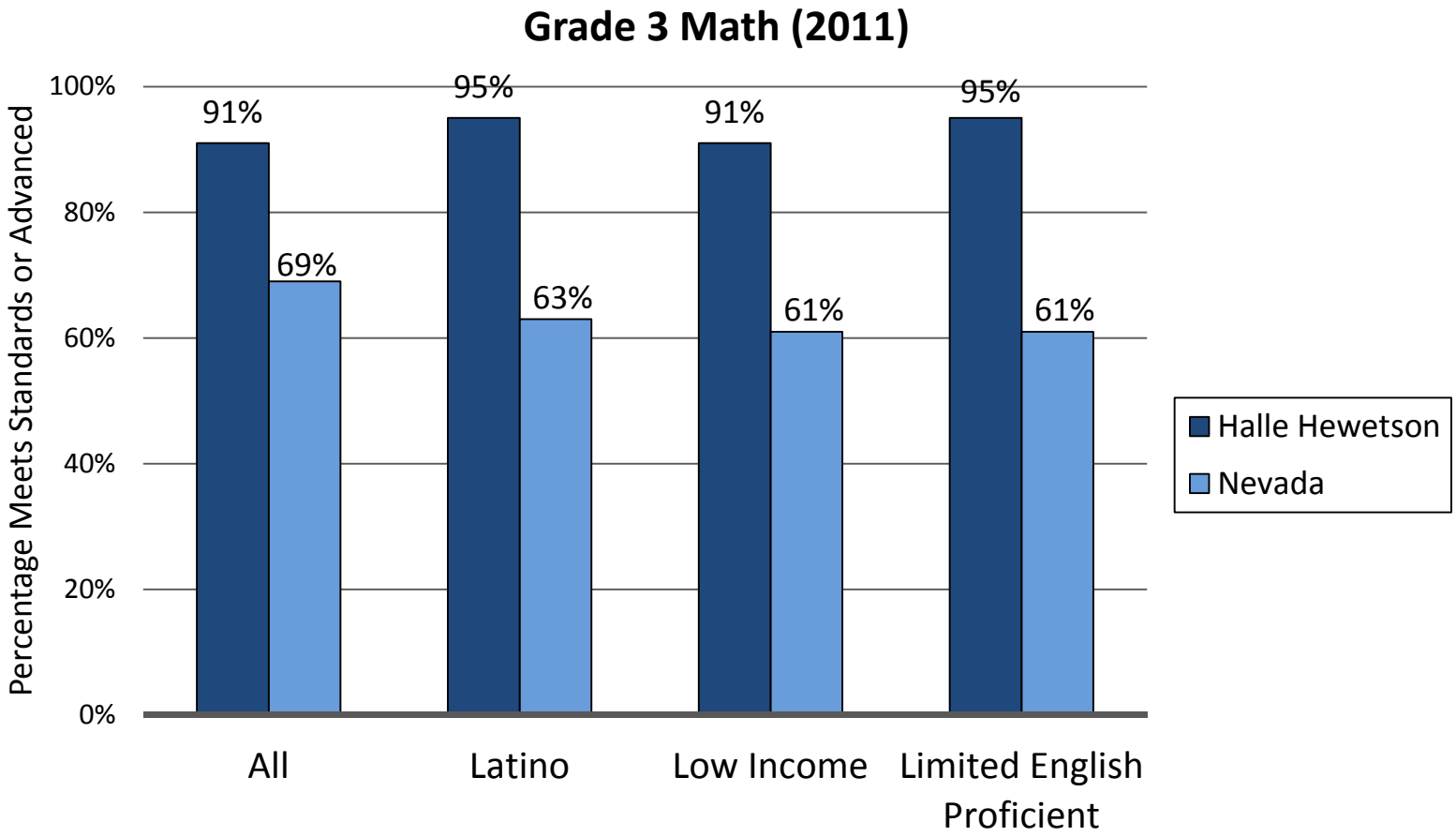
High Performance Across Groups at Halle Hewetson Elementary



Source: Nevada Department of Education

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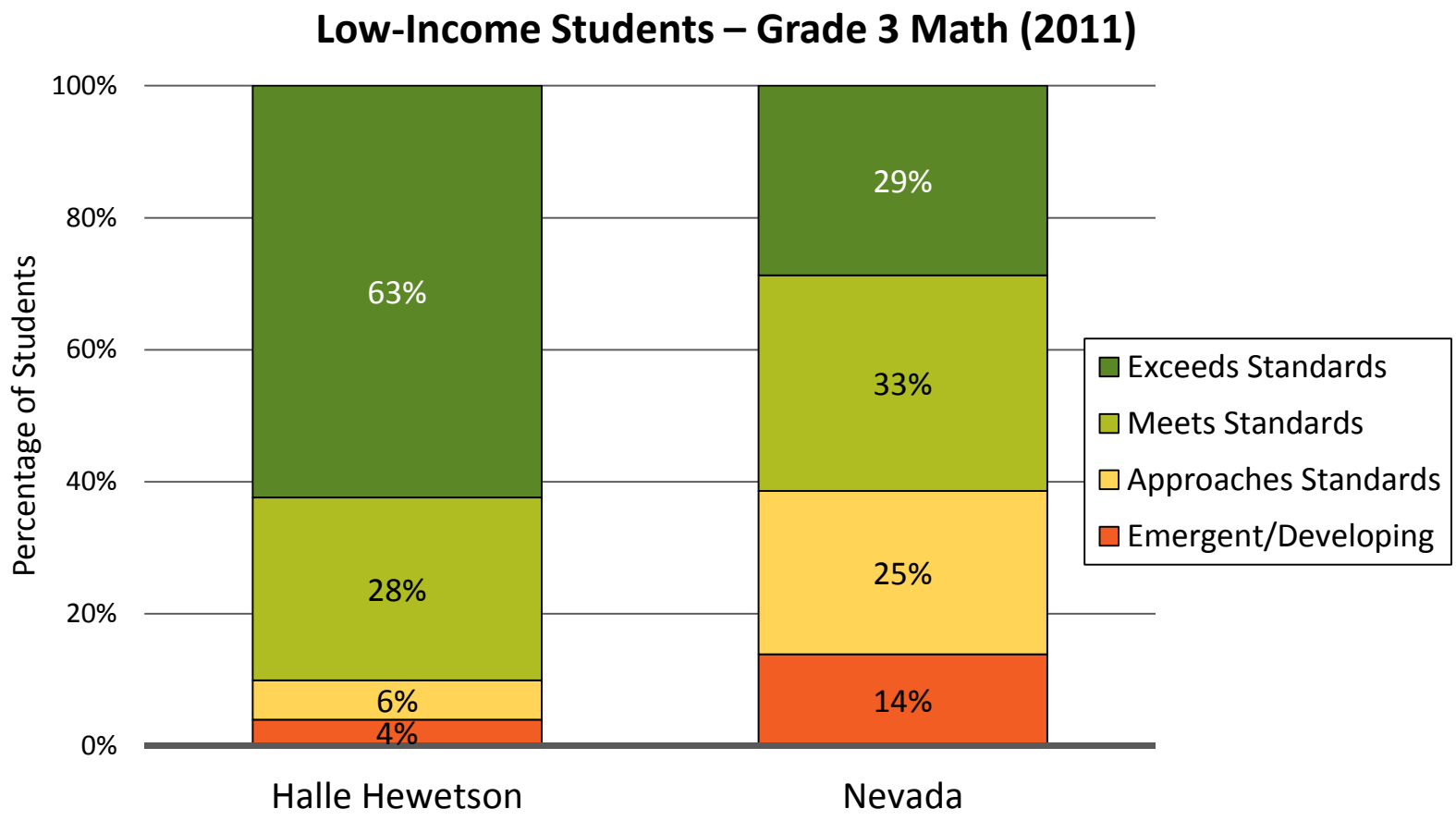
Exceeding Standards at Halle Hewetson Elementary



Source: Nevada Department of Education

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Elmont Memorial High School
Elmont, New York

2011-2012 School Year

- 1,907 students in grades 7-12
  - 78% African American
  - 12% Latino

Source: New York Department of Education

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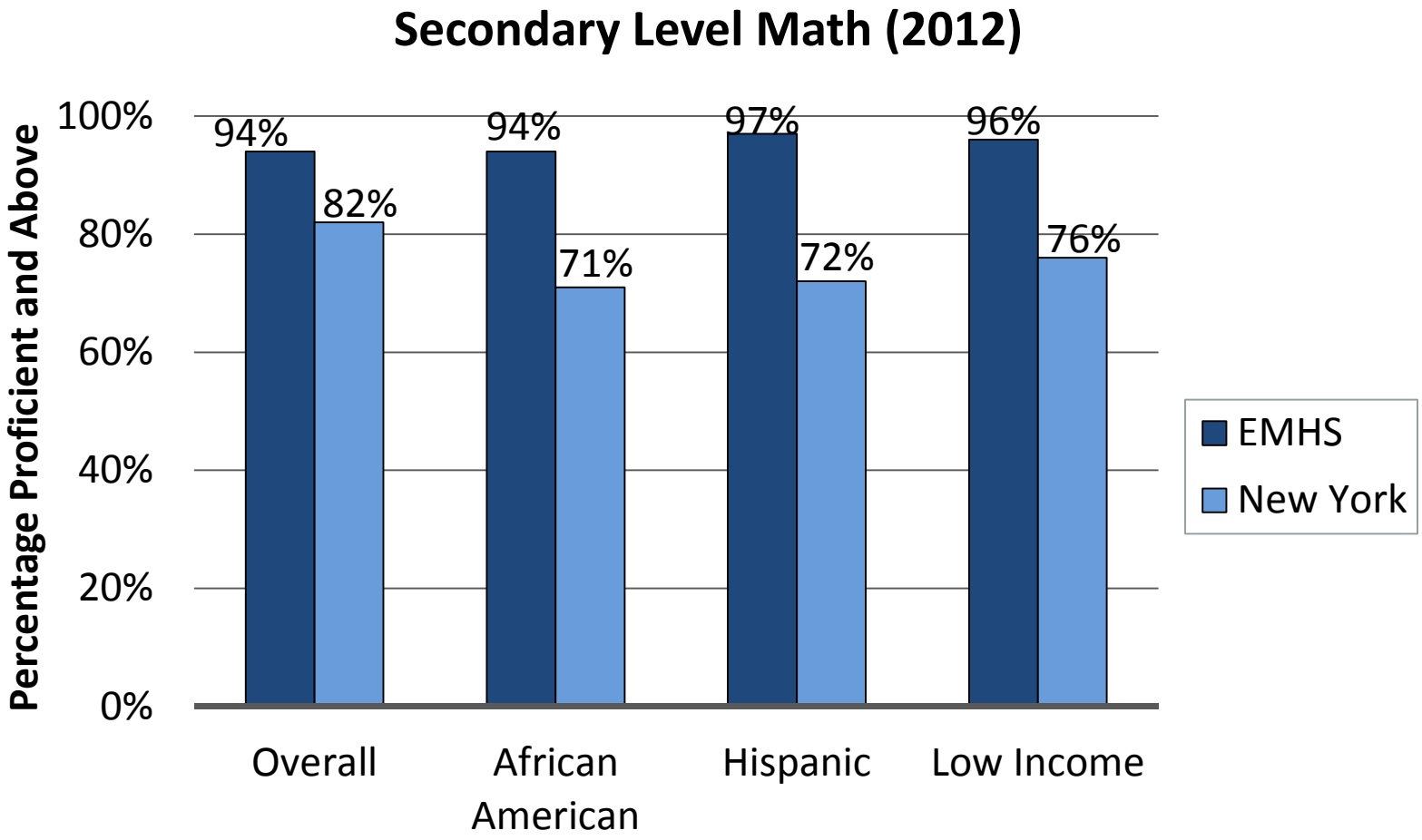
High Performance by ALL Students at Elmont Memorial High School



Source: New York Department of Education https://reportcards.nysed.gov/schools.php?district=800000049235&year=2012

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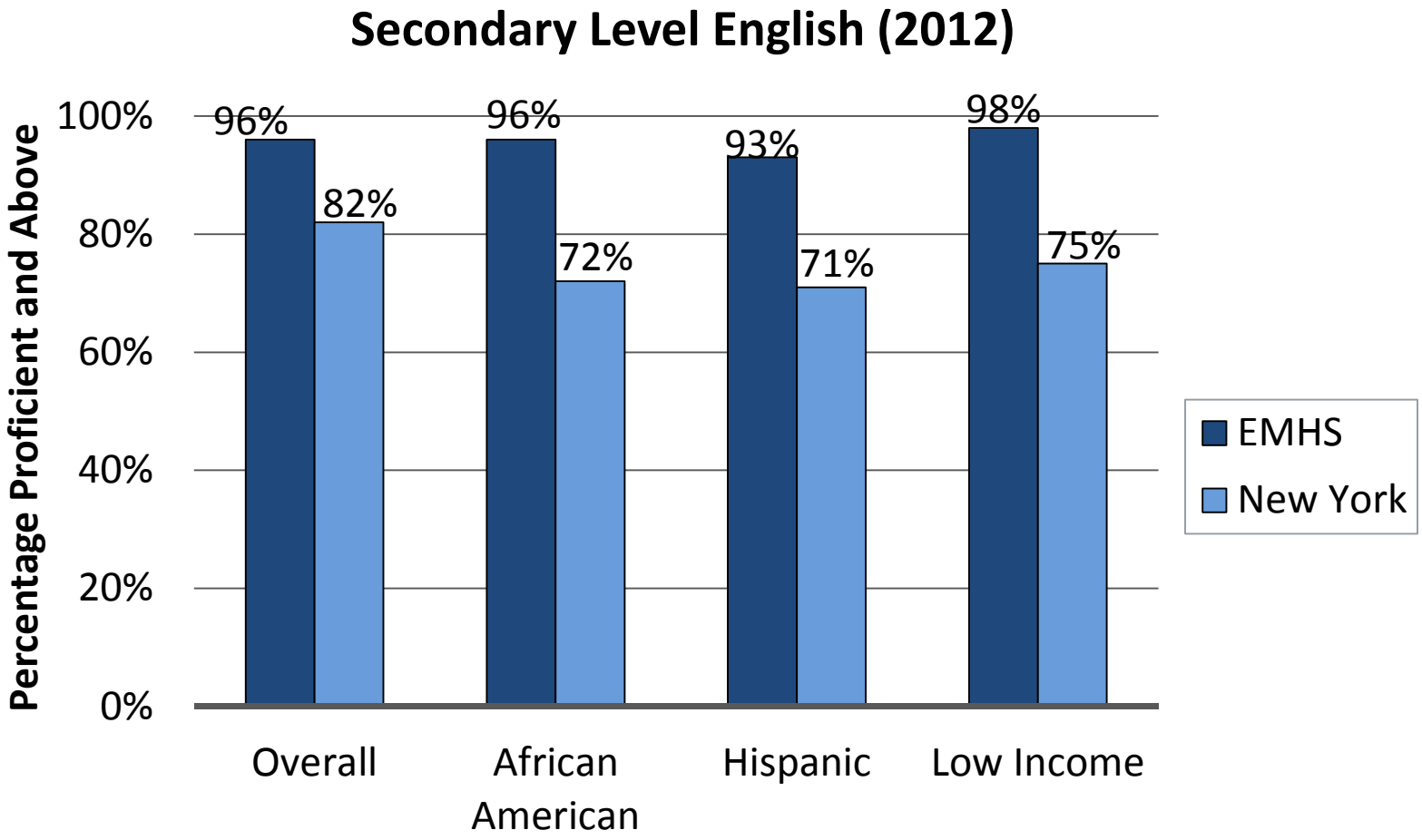
High Performance by ALL Students at Elmont Memorial High School



Source: New York Department of Education https://reportcards.nysed.gov/schools.php?district=800000049235&year=2012

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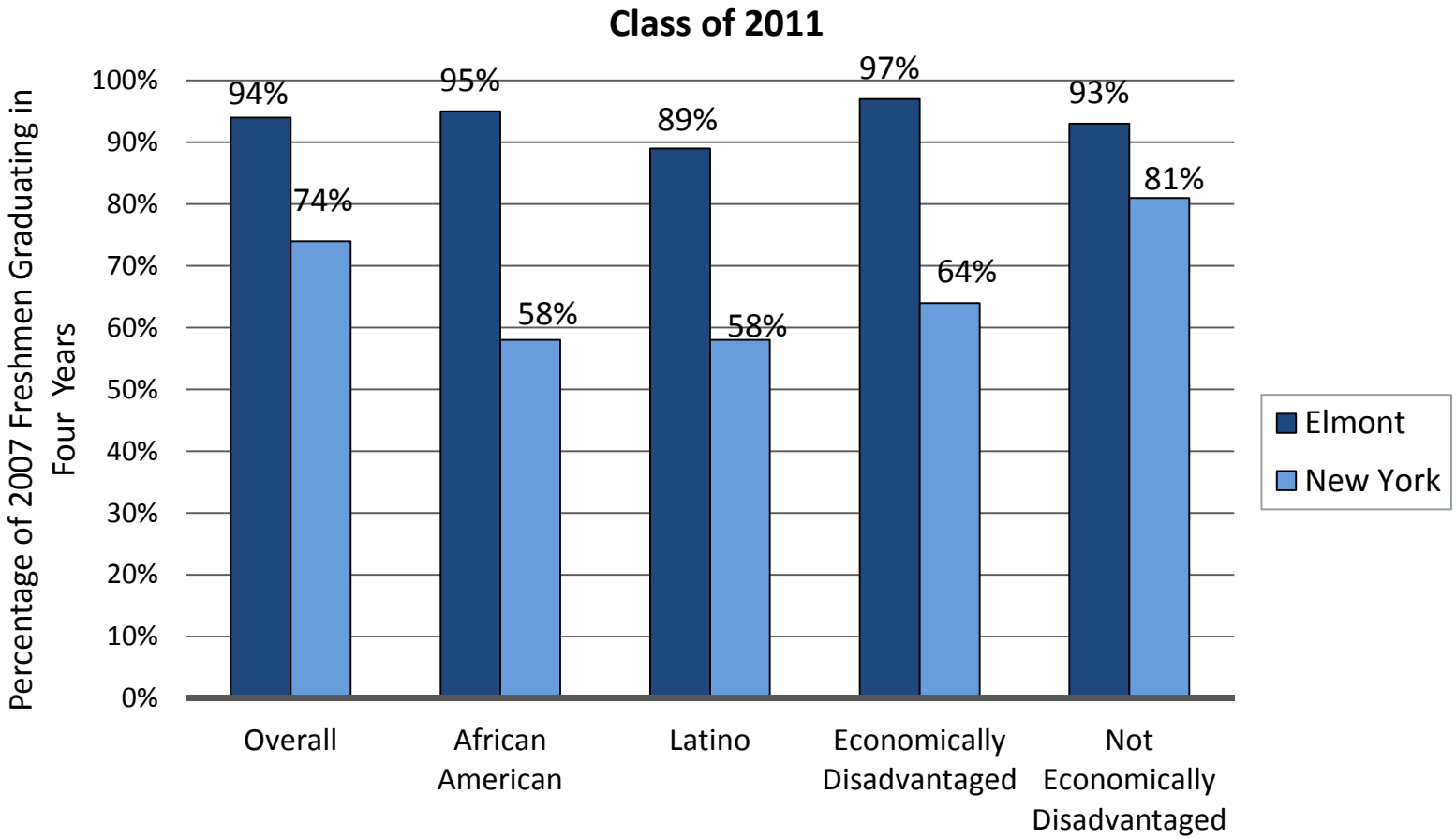
High Graduation Rates at Elmont Memorial High School



Note: Includes students graduating by June 2011.

Source: New York State Department of Education

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This is what happens when teams of educators choose differently.

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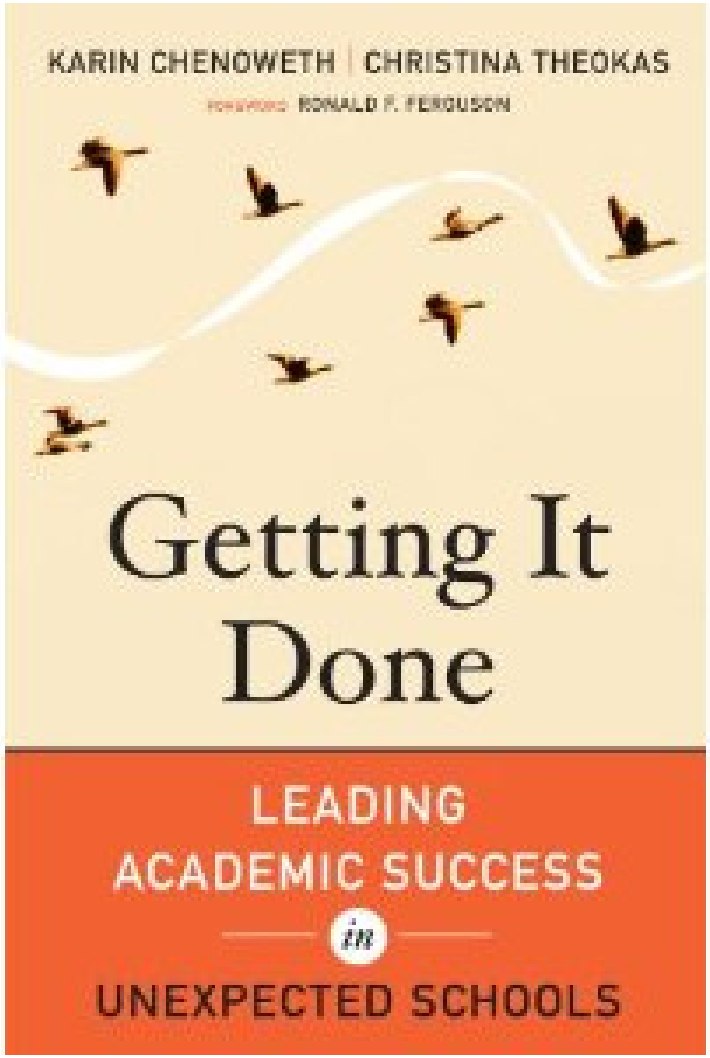
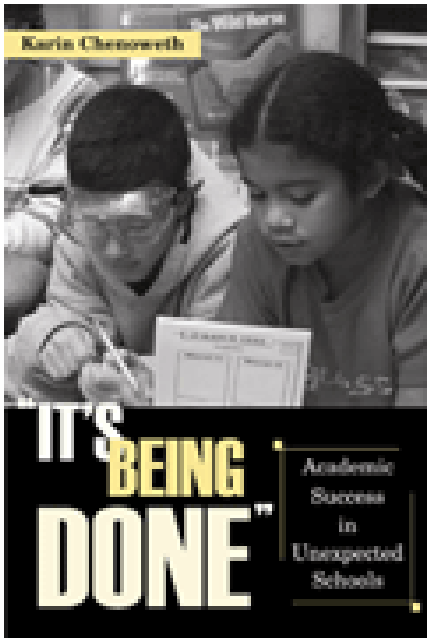
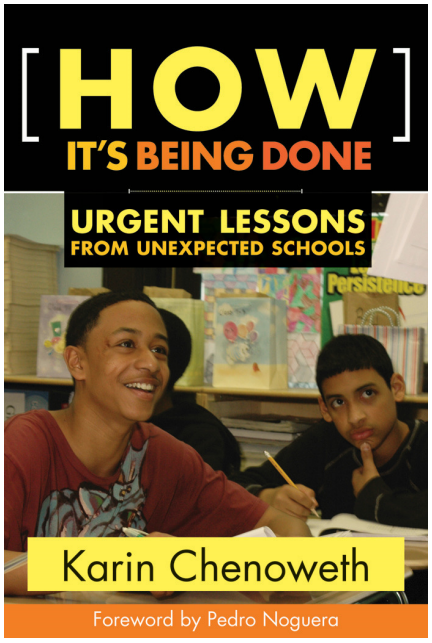


Available from Harvard Education Press and amazon.com





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Just isolated schools here and there?

No. Very big differences at district level, too—even in the progress and performance of the "same" group of students.

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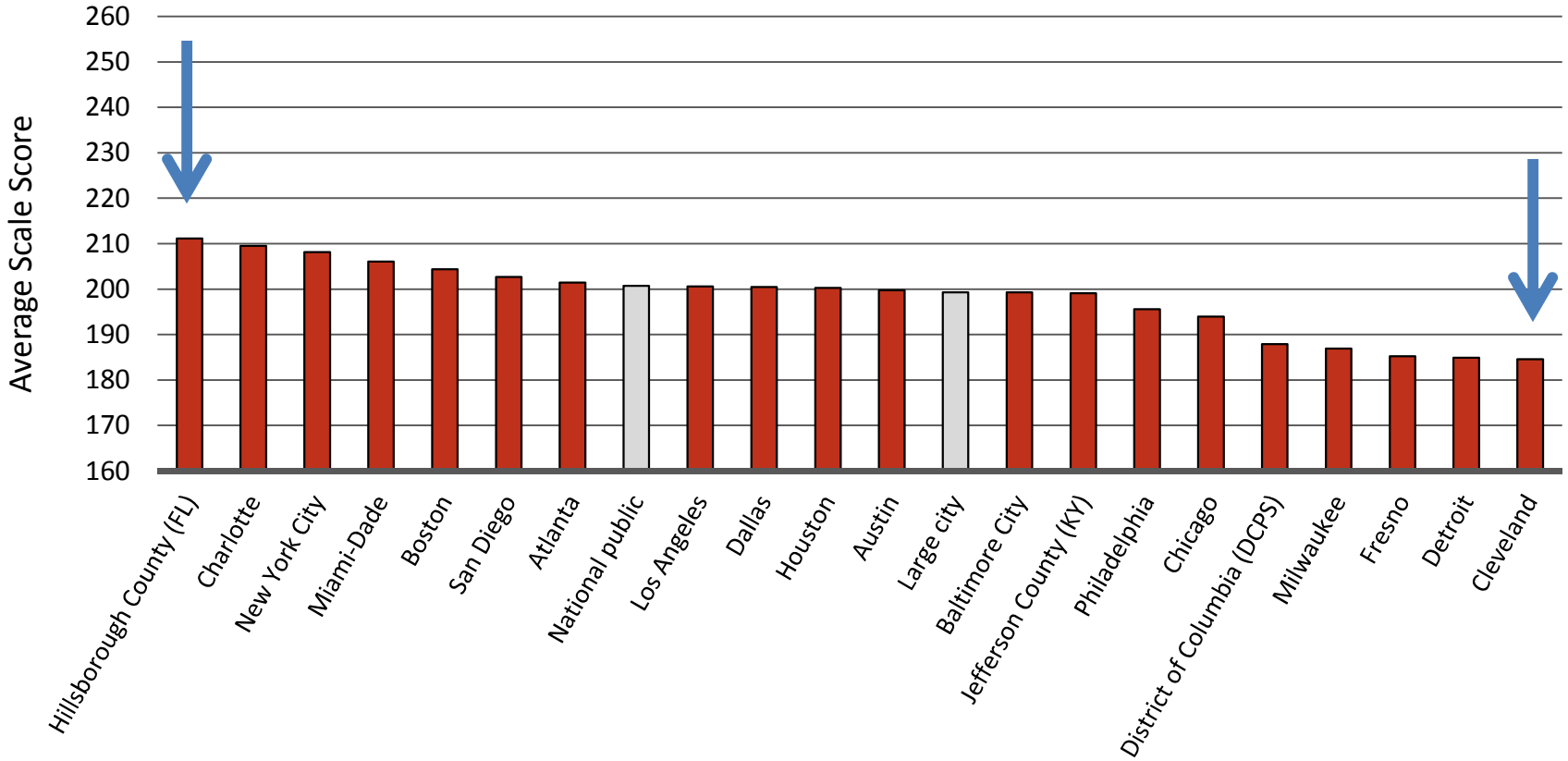
Average Scale Scores, by District
Low-Income African American Students

Grade 4 – NAEP Reading (2013)



Note: Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238

Sourc NAEP Data Explorer, NCES
e:

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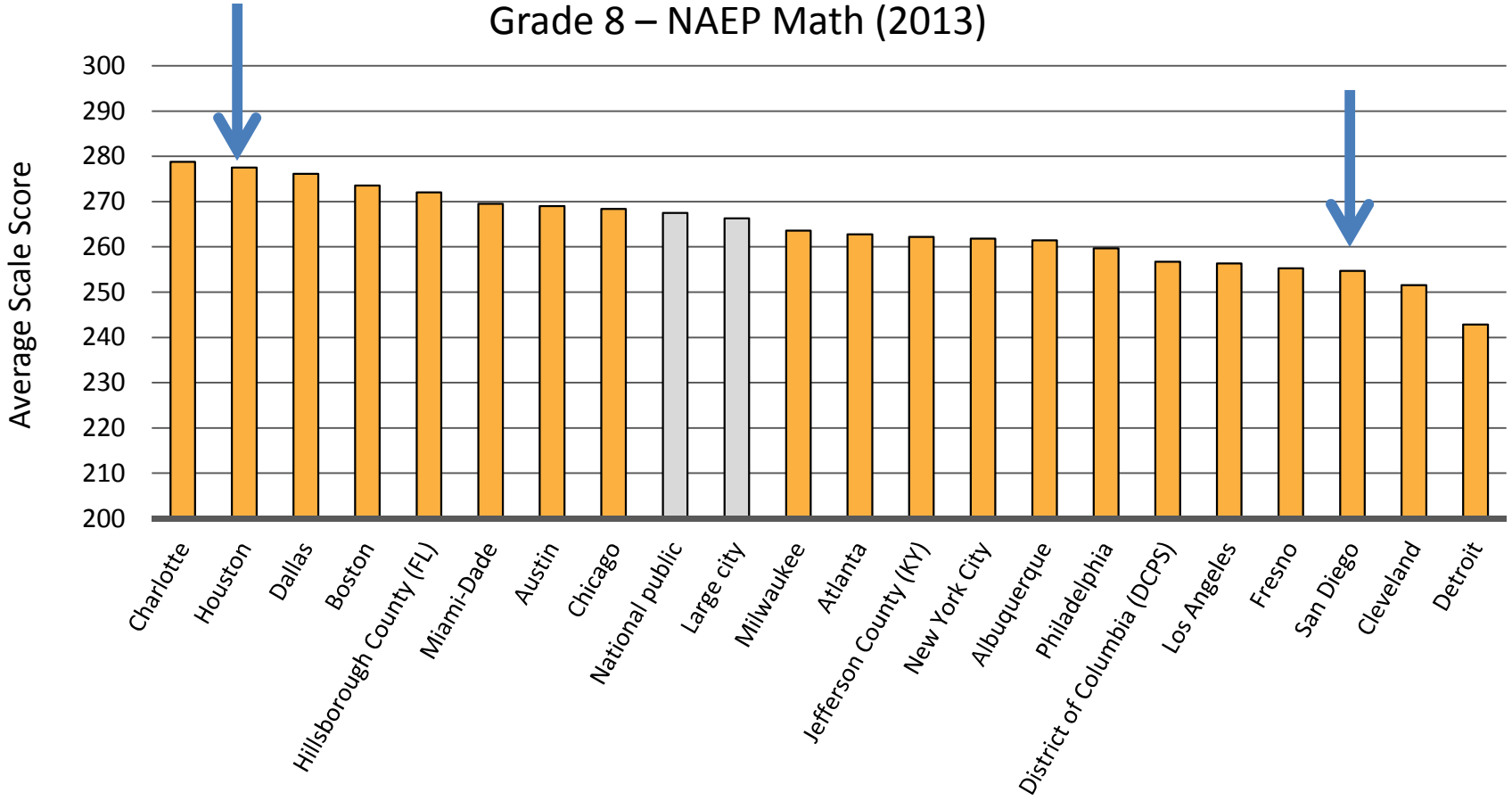
Average Scale Scores, by District Low-Income Latino Students



Note: Basic Scale Score = 262; Proficient Scale Score = 299

Sourc NAEP Data Explorer, NCES
e:

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Big differences in improvement, too.

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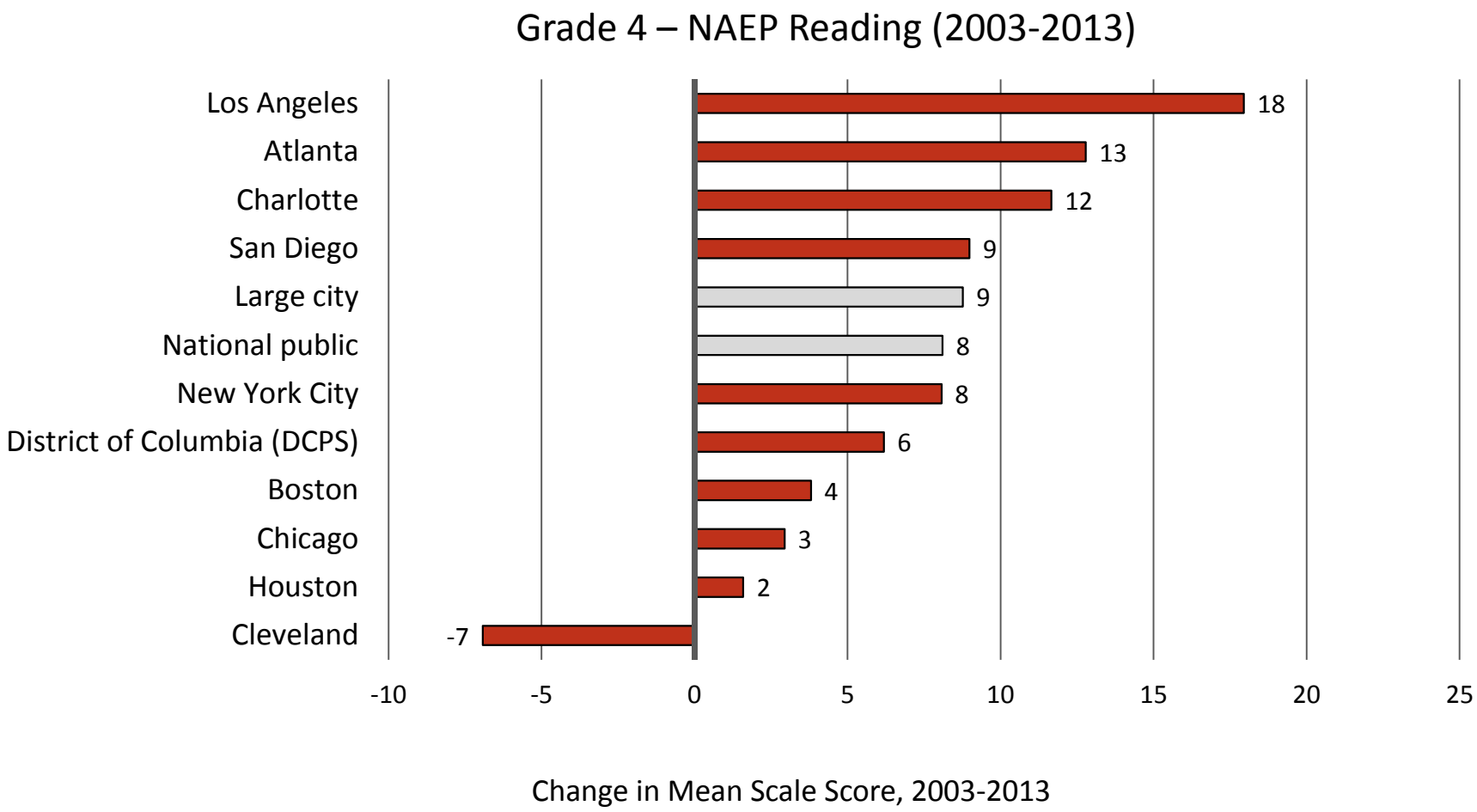
Change in Average Scale Scores, by District Low-Income African American Students



Note: Chart includes only districts that participated, and had members of this specific subgroup, in both the 2003 and 2013 NAEP TUDA administrations.

Source: NCES, NAEP Data Explorer

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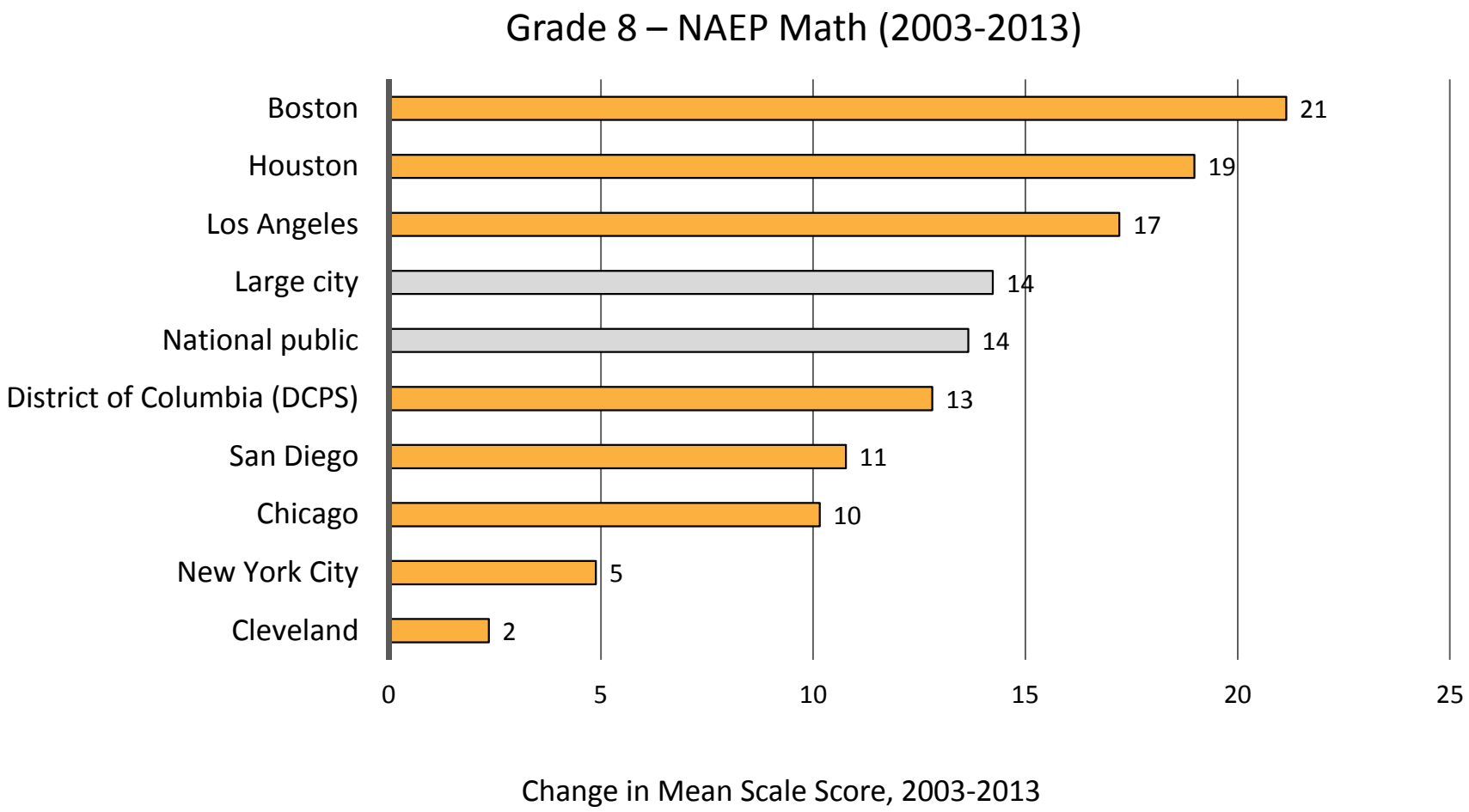
Change in Average Scale Scores, by District Low-Income Latino Students



Note: Chart includes only districts that participated, and had members of this specific subgroup, in both the 2003 and 2013 NAEP TUDA administrations.

Source: NCES, NAEP Data Explorer

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Bottom Line:
What We Do Matters!

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What Is the Role of Standards in the Work Ahead?

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When you look across the high performers and high gainers for common lessons, it is clear that there is no single lever.

In every case, though, raising expectations is one of the most prominent elements.

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Given the importance of earning a postsecondary credential, it is critically important that our standards be aligned with the demands of postsecondary education.

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But, in the end, it's about INSTRUCTION.

Good schools, districts don't leave anything about teaching and learning to chance.

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An awful lot of our teachers—even brand new ones—are left to figure out on their own what to teach and what constitutes “good enough” work.

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What does this do?

Leaves teachers entirely on their own to figure out what to teach, what order to teach it in, HOW to teach it…and to what level.

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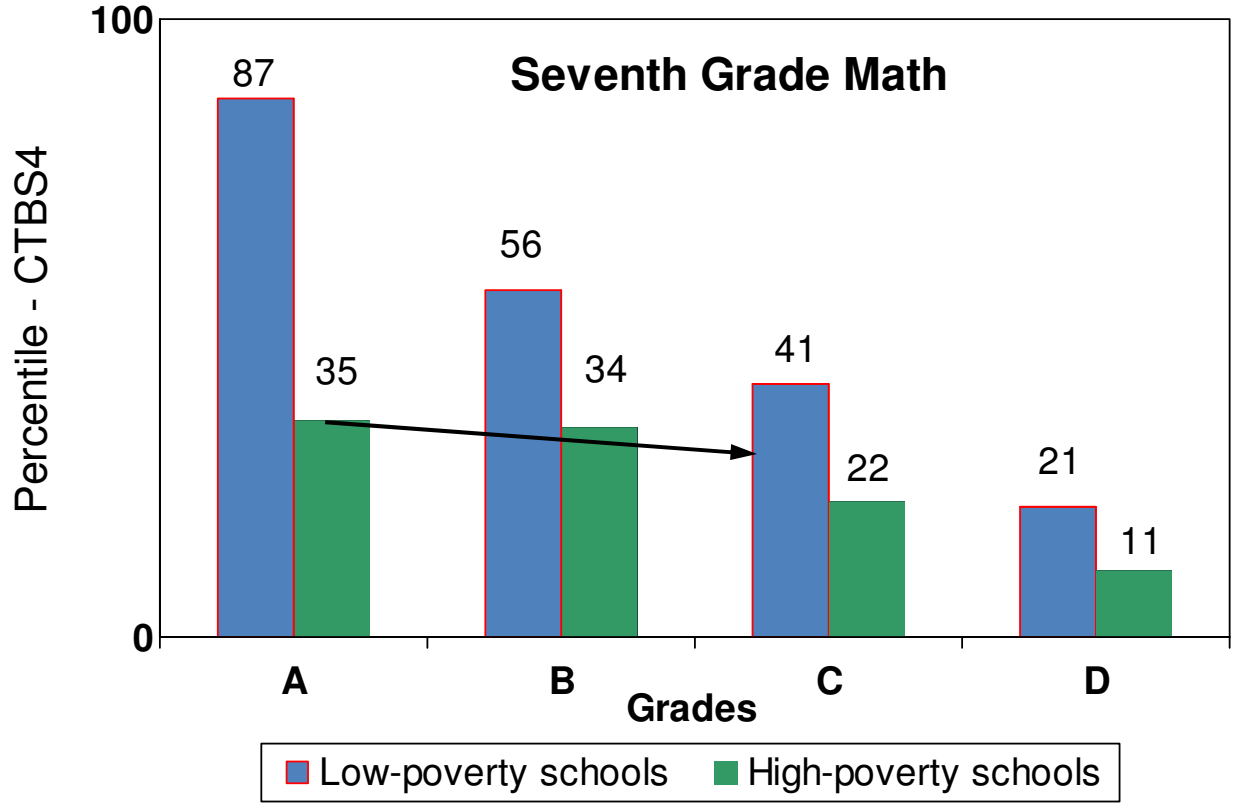
‘A’ Work in Poor Schools Would Earn ‘Cs’ in Affluent Schools



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

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Students can do no better than the assignments they are given...

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Grade 10 Writing Assignment

A frequent theme in literature is the conflict between the individual and society. From literature you have read, select a character who struggled with society. In a well-developed essay, identify the character and explain why this character's conflict with society is important.

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Grade 10 Writing Assignment

Write a composition of at least 4 paragraphs on Martin Luther King's most important contribution to this society. Illustrate your work with a neat cover page. Neatness counts.

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Grade 7 Writing Assignment

Essay on Anne Frank

Your essay will consist of an opening paragraph which introduced the title, author and general background of the novel.

Your thesis will state specifically what Anne's overall personality is, and what general psychological and intellectual changes she exhibits over the course of the book

You might organize your essay by grouping psychological and intellectual changes OR you might choose 3 or 4 characteristics (like friendliness, patience, optimism, self doubt) and show how she changes in this area.

Source: Unnamed school district in California, 2002-03 school

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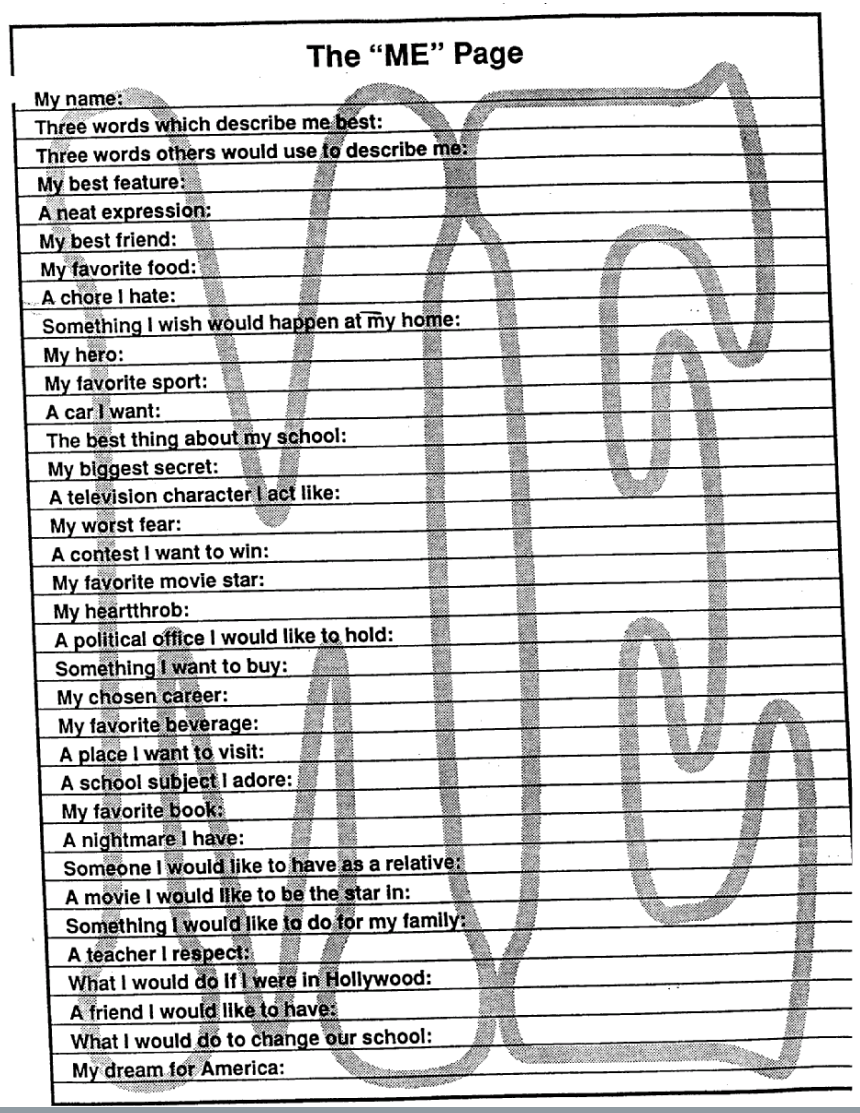
Grade 7 Writing Assignment



The "ME" Page

My name:
Three words which describe me best:
Three words others would use to describe me:
My best feature:
A neat expression:
My best friend:
My favorite food:
A chore I hate:
Something I wish would happen at my home:
My hero:
My favorite sport:
A car I want:
The best thing about my school:
My biggest secret:
A television character I act like:
My worst fear:
A contest I want to win:
My favorite movie star:
My heartthrob:
A political office I would like to hold:
Something I want to buy:
My chosen career:
My favorite beverage:
A place I want to visit:
A school subject I adore:
My favorite book:
A nightmare I have:
Someone I would like to have as a relative:
A movie I would like to be the star in:
Something I would like to do for my family:
A teacher I respect:
What I would do if I were in Hollywood:
A friend I would like to have:
What I would do to change our school:
My dream for America:

- My Best Friend:
- A chore I hate:
- A car I want:
- My heartthrob:

Source: Unnamed school district in California, 2002-03 school

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The Odyssey Ninth Grade

High-level Assignment

Comparison/Contrast Paper Between Homer's Epic Poem, *The Odyssey* and the Movie "0 Brother Where Art Thou"

By nature, humans compare and contrast all elements of their world. Why? Because in the juxtaposition of two different things, one can learn more about each individual thing as well as something about the universal nature of the things being compared.

For this 2-3 page paper you will want to ask yourself the following questions: what larger ideas do you see working in *The Odyssey* and "0 Brother Where Art Thou"? Do both works treat these issues in the same way? What do the similarities and differences between the works reveal about the underlying nature of the larger idea?

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The Odyssey Ninth Grade

Low-level Assignment

Divide class into 3 groups:

<u>Group 1</u> designs a brochure titled "Odyssey Cruises". The students *listen* to the story and write down all the places Odysseus visited in his adventures, and list the cost to travel from place to place.

<u>Group 2</u> draws pictures of each adventure.

<u>Group 3</u> takes the names of the characters in the story and gods and goddesses in the story and designs a crossword puzzle.

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Kindergarten Assignment

Based on our reading, draw a picture of an ocean animal that you would like to be.

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Kindergarten Assignment

Based on our reading, choose an ocean animal you would like to be. Explain what you would look like, what you would eat, and what you would do. Why do you want to be this animal?

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New EdTrust Study

- Fewer than 4 in 10 middle grades assignments are targeted at a grade-appropriate standard;
- In high poverty schools the proportion drops to only about one third, compared to nearly half of assignments in low-poverty schools;
- That said, only about 5% of assignments in both kinds of schools tapped into the higher-level cognitive demands of the CCSS;
- Most efforts at engagement and relevance were superficial, and often condescending.

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So having common standards provides critical leverage.

But ensuring that those standards are actually implemented requires more from us.

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