

Research Brief

Region's schools narrow achievement gap with state

In a direct reversal from last year, the 2007-08 achievement gap between schools in southeast Wisconsin and those in the rest of the state, as measured by Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) standardized test scores, narrowed in all subjects at all grade levels. **Table 1** shows the percentages of those scoring proficient and advanced, as well as the achievement gap between the region and the state for this year and 2006-07 expressed as a percentage point difference.

Last year's scores were the worst in four years in nearly all subject categories at all grade levels, as illustrated in **Chart 1**, which shows 8th grade achievement gaps for the past four years. (In **Chart 1**, short bars indicate a small achievement gap and tall bars indicate a large gap.) The 2007-08 scores at each grade level more closely match the 2004-05 and 2005-06 scores.

While the region lags the state in WKCE test scores and schools making adequate yearly progress, it exceeds the state in ACT scores and AP test scores. The region has worse truancy and dropout rates than the state, matches the state in attendance, and exceeds the state in school spending.

Many categories of analysis throughout this report underscore how districts facing urban poverty issues fare much worse on most measures than suburban and rural districts, though some smaller urban areas also face challenges. Southeast Wisconsin contains some of the most successful schools in the state, as well as some of the most distressed schools.

Chart 1: 8th grade score gap, region vs. state

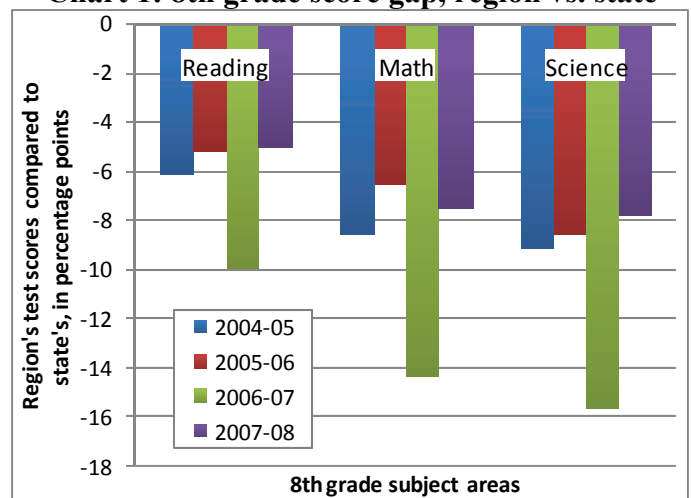


Table 1: WKCE test score gap in percentage proficient/advanced, region vs. state 2007-08

Grade	Reading				Math			Science		
	3rd	4th	8th	10th	4th	8th	10th	4th	8th	10th
SE Wisconsin	76.4%	77.9%	80.3%	70.2%	72.5%	69.4%	63.9%	70.7%	68.4%	66.6%
Rest of State	79.4%	81.5%	85.2%	75.7%	77.2%	76.9%	70.9%	76.1%	76.1%	74.1%
Difference	-3.0	-3.6	-4.9	-5.5	-4.7	-7.5	-7.0	-5.4	-7.7	-7.5
Difference 2006-07	-3.7	-6.8	-9.9	-8.1	-8.4	-14.3	-10.3	-10.2	-15.6	-11.2

Data sources

This report was created using the most current data available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. For WKCE test scores, enrollment, schools identified for improvement, and spending 2007-08 data were available. For attendance, truancy, dropout rates, ACT scores, and AP test scores 2006-07 data were used. Data on rates of free and reduced price lunch usage, a commonly-used measure of student poverty, were not available this year, nor was information on school staffs.

Note that some districts in southeastern Wisconsin serve K-12 grades, while others consist of high school or K-8 grades only. For comparison purposes, high school districts and their K-8 feeder districts have been combined into K-12 union districts. (The K-8 districts that feed into more than one high school district were combined with the primary district.) While this process ensures that all districts subject to comparison consist of K-12 grades, it aggregates data from individual districts into a singular district. The nine union districts created for the purposes of this report, and their number of feeder districts, are: Central/Westosha (4), Wilmot (6), Nicolet (3), Union Grove (4), Waterford (4), Big Foot (4), Lake Geneva-Genoa City (4), Hartford (7), and Arrowhead (7).

Enrollment stable overall, with isolated drops and increases

Of the five largest school districts in Wisconsin, four experienced decreased enrollment in the past year (**Table 2**). The only large district that did not decline was the Kenosha school district, which grew slightly. Overall, enrollment remained stable in both the region and the state, with decreases of less than 1%.

Southeast Wisconsin's small overall decline was driven by large decreases in a few districts in Milwaukee County. The largest school district, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), experienced an enrollment decrease of more than 3%. Other districts experiencing large drops in enrollment were Shorewood (-4.77%) and Cudahy (-4.32%).

In contrast, the counties of Kenosha, Racine, Walworth and Waukesha all saw increases in

enrollment across districts overall. Notable were the Oconomowoc Area district, which increased enrollment by more than 3% for the second year in a row, and Grafton, which doubled last year's growth at more than 4%.

Northern Ozaukee and Williams Bay achieved the greatest one-year growth. The enrollment spike of 11.25% in Northern Ozaukee, however, is mostly the result of the large growth in enrollment in the Wisconsin Virtual Academy, which is based in Northern Ozaukee but enrolls students from across the state. Williams Bay experienced a large increase due to the addition of 4K (four-year-old kindergarten) to that district.

One in five regional districts are at least one-fourth minority

Ten school districts in southeast Wisconsin are now enrolling at least 25% minority students, up from eight last year (**Table 3**, on page 4). Seven of those districts are in Milwaukee County (Brown Deer, Greenfield, Milwaukee, Nicolet Union, St. Francis, Wauwatosa, West Allis), while the others are Kenosha, Racine and Delavan-Darien. Milwaukee and Brown Deer both enroll more minority students than white students.

Minority enrollment in southeast Wisconsin as a whole remained steady, increasing a fraction of a percent to 38.2%. Statewide, minority enrollment increased at a slightly faster pace than it did in the region, up 0.5 percentage points to 23.2%.

Districts seeing the largest increase in minority enrollment this year were Delavan-Darien, West Allis and Brown Deer.

Several districts have relatively large Hispanic student populations, including Delevan-Darien (38.2%), Milwaukee (21.9%) and Racine (20.8%). Ninety-four percent of the minorities in the Milwaukee public school district are Hispanic or African-American.

**Complete district-by-district performance,
enrollment, and finance rankings are
available at: www.publicpolicyforum.org.**

Table 2: School district enrollment

	2006-07 Total		2007-08 Total		% Change
	Rank	Enroll	Rank	Enroll	
Kenosha County		29,707		29,916	
Central/Westosha Union	27	3,361	27	3,317	-1.31%
Kenosha	2	22,482	2	22,669	0.83%
Wilmot Union	23	3,864	22	3,930	1.71%
Milwaukee County		141,753		138,279	
Brown Deer	46	1,822	47	1,768	-2.96%
Cudahy	34	2,777	35	2,657	-4.32%
Franklin Public	20	4,190	20	4,183	-0.17%
Greendale	37	2,536	36	2,598	2.44%
Greenfield	28	3,296	29	3,255	-1.24%
Milwaukee	1	89,912	1	86,819	-3.44%
Nicolet Union	24	3,749	25	3,633	-3.09%
Oak Creek-Franklin	10	5,733	10	5,867	2.34%
Saint Francis	49	1,355	49	1,353	-0.15%
Shorewood	42	2,012	44	1,916	-4.77%
South Milwaukee	26	3,474	26	3,430	-1.27%
Wauwatosa	9	6,743	9	6,780	0.55%
West Allis	5	8,770	5	8,669	-1.15%
Whitefish Bay	32	2,909	32	2,931	0.76%
Whitnall	38	2,475	39	2,420	-2.22%
Ozaukee County		13,344		13,390	
Cedarburg	30	3,106	30	3,076	-0.97%
Grafton	41	2,078	41	2,163	4.09%
Mequon-Thiensville	21	3,926	23	3,808	-3.01%
Northern Ozaukee	48	1,600	46	1,780	11.25%
Port Washington-Saukville	36	2,634	37	2,563	-2.70%
Racine County		30,925		30,924	
Burlington Area	25	3,595	24	3,673	2.17%
Racine	3	21,696	3	21,552	-0.66%
Union Grove Union	39	2,396	38	2,431	1.46%
Waterford Union	29	3,238	28	3,268	0.93%
Walworth County		16,112		16,316	
Big Foot Union	45	1,913	45	1,875	-1.99%
Delavan-Darien	35	2,733	33	2,689	-1.61%
East Troy Community	47	1,695	48	1,741	2.71%
Elkhorn Area	31	2,981	31	3,054	2.45%
Lake Geneva-Genoa City	19	4,319	17	4,398	1.83%
Whitewater	43	1,968	42	2,013	2.29%
Williams Bay	50	503	50	546	8.55%
Washington County		20,347		20,351	
Germantown	22	3,905	21	3,939	0.87%
Hartford Union	13	4,819	13	4,790	0.60%
Kewaskum	44	1,921	43	1,985	3.33%
Slinger	33	2,886	34	2,671	-7.45%
West Bend	8	6,816	8	6,966	2.20%
Waukesha County		62,781		63,029	
Arrowhead Union	7	6,904	7	7,027	1.78%
Elmbrook	6	7,659	6	7,668	0.12%
Hamilton	18	4,351	18	4,396	1.03%
Kettle Moraine	17	4,416	19	4,318	-2.22%
Menomonee Falls	15	4,598	15	4,655	1.24%
Mukwonago	11	5,084	11	5,108	0.47%
Muskego-Norway	12	4,870	12	4,860	-0.21%
New Berlin	14	4,668	14	4,667	-0.02%
Oconomowoc Area	16	4,463	16	4,616	3.43%
Pewaukee	40	2,191	40	2,211	0.91%
Waukesha	4	13,577	4	13,503	-0.55%
Southeast Wisconsin		314,969		312,205	-0.87%
Wisconsin		876,700		874,633	-0.24%

Note: The large increase seen in Williams Bay is the result of the addition of 4K to that district. The large decrease reported by in Slinger is due to a data reporting error.

Table 3: School district minority enrollment

District	Asian		African-American		Hispanic		American Indian		Minority	
	Rank	Enroll	Rank	Enroll	Rank	Enroll	Rank	Enroll	Rank	Enroll
Kenosha County										
Central/Westosha Union	37	1.1%	33	1.6%	23	4.1%	36	0.3%	35	7.1%
Kenosha	25	1.9%	5	16.3%	4	18.9%	27	0.4%	5	37.5%
Wilmot Union	50	0.3%	34	1.6%	28	3.5%	21	0.6%	40	6.0%
Milwaukee County										
Brown Deer	3	8.5%	2	42.6%	21	4.4%	10	0.8%	2	56.4%
Cudahy	23	2.1%	13	5.8%	8	14.7%	2	1.7%	12	24.4%
Franklin Public	1	9.1%	14	5.5%	19	5.3%	15	0.7%	17	20.5%
Greendale	19	4.2%	26	2.4%	18	5.9%	18	0.7%	26	13.1%
Greenfield	5	6.2%	15	5.4%	12	11.5%	1	2.1%	9	25.2%
Milwaukee	14	4.5%	1	57.3%	2	21.9%	12	0.8%	1	84.4%
Nicolet Union	11	5.4%	4	20.2%	30	3.2%	17	0.7%	6	29.5%
Oak Creek-Franklin	6	6.1%	16	5.3%	15	10.1%	6	1.3%	14	22.8%
Saint Francis	10	5.5%	12	6.1%	11	12.2%	5	1.3%	10	25.1%
Shorewood	4	6.4%	7	13.4%	24	3.8%	9	1.0%	11	24.5%
South Milwaukee	27	1.7%	19	3.9%	16	10.0%	4	1.5%	21	17.1%
Wauwatosa	12	5.0%	6	15.7%	26	3.6%	11	0.8%	8	25.2%
West Allis	21	3.1%	10	7.7%	10	13.3%	3	1.5%	7	25.6%
Whitefish Bay	9	5.9%	8	10.7%	34	2.9%	48	0.1%	18	19.7%
Whitnall	16	4.3%	21	3.5%	20	5.1%	14	0.7%	25	13.6%
Ozaukee County										
Cedarburg	26	1.8%	39	1.1%	49	1.0%	40	0.3%	47	4.3%
Grafton	30	1.6%	25	2.5%	43	2.2%	31	0.4%	38	6.6%
Mequon-Thiensville	13	4.8%	11	6.2%	47	1.7%	39	0.3%	27	12.9%
Northern Ozaukee	32	1.5%	24	3.1%	45	2.0%	43	0.2%	37	6.9%
Port Washington-Saukville	40	1.0%	22	3.3%	25	3.7%	19	0.6%	33	8.6%
Racine County										
Burlington Area	43	0.9%	36	1.3%	17	6.9%	46	0.2%	32	9.3%
Racine	31	1.5%	3	26.6%	3	20.8%	35	0.3%	3	49.2%
Union Grove Union	28	1.7%	48	0.7%	22	4.3%	8	1.2%	34	7.9%
Waterford Union	46	0.6%	44	0.9%	37	2.8%	23	0.5%	44	4.8%
Walworth County										
Big Foot Union	49	0.4%	40	1.1%	7	17.0%	49	0.1%	20	18.6%
Delavan-Darien	41	1.0%	28	2.3%	1	38.2%	22	0.5%	4	42.0%
East Troy Community	47	0.5%	42	0.9%	35	2.9%	28	0.4%	45	4.8%
Elkhorn Area	33	1.4%	35	1.4%	14	11.0%	41	0.3%	24	14.1%
Lake Geneva-Genoa City Union	38	1.1%	29	2.1%	6	17.2%	25	0.5%	16	20.9%
Whitewater	22	2.4%	30	1.8%	5	18.7%	42	0.2%	13	23.1%
Williams Bay	24	2.0%	43	0.9%	13	11.2%	45	0.2%	23	14.3%
Washington County										
Germantown	17	4.2%	18	4.0%	42	2.3%	37	0.3%	28	10.8%
Hartford Union	35	1.2%	32	1.7%	29	3.3%	29	0.4%	39	6.6%
Kewaskum	48	0.5%	45	0.9%	46	2.0%	7	1.2%	46	4.5%
Slinger	44	0.9%	49	0.7%	50	0.8%	44	0.2%	50	2.6%
West Bend	45	0.8%	31	1.8%	27	3.6%	13	0.8%	36	6.9%
Waukesha County										
Arrowhead Union	29	1.6%	46	0.8%	48	1.4%	47	0.2%	49	4.0%
Elmbrook	2	9.0%	17	5.0%	41	2.4%	50	0.1%	22	16.5%
Hamilton	15	4.4%	23	3.2%	39	2.6%	38	0.3%	30	10.6%
Kettle Moraine	42	1.0%	47	0.8%	44	2.1%	33	0.3%	48	4.2%
Menomonee Falls	8	5.9%	9	9.9%	38	2.7%	24	0.5%	19	19.0%
Mukwonago	39	1.0%	41	1.1%	40	2.4%	30	0.4%	43	4.9%
Muskego-Norway	34	1.4%	50	0.6%	33	3.0%	16	0.7%	41	5.7%
New Berlin	7	6.0%	38	1.2%	32	3.1%	26	0.4%	29	10.7%
Oconomowoc Area	36	1.2%	37	1.3%	36	2.8%	34	0.3%	42	5.6%
Pewaukee	18	4.2%	27	2.4%	31	3.2%	32	0.4%	31	10.1%
Waukesha	20	3.4%	20	3.8%	9	13.7%	20	0.6%	15	21.6%
Southeast Milwaukee		3.4%		21.6%		12.6%		0.6%		38.2%
State of Wisconsin		3.6%		10.5%		7.6%		1.5%		23.2%

Schools identified for improvement concentrated in this region

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act defines schools in need of improvement as those that have failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for at least two consecutive years. Schools are removed from the list of schools needing improvement when AYP goals have been met for two consecutive years. The AYP criteria measure progress on attendance and test participation as well as reading and math scores.

The number of Milwaukee public schools identified as needing improvement has risen moderately over the past three years, with 34 schools identified in 2005-06, 32 in 2006-07 and 38 in 2007-08 (**Table 4**). These figures are lower than the peak of 55 MPS schools identified for improvement in 2002-03.

Kenosha and Racine's rates remained steady compared with 2006-07, with one school in Kenosha and four in Racine identified for improvement. Racine had no schools identified as needing improvement as recently as 2005-06.

The southeast Wisconsin region accounts for most of Wisconsin's underperforming schools according to NCLB criteria. All but 11 of the 54 schools identified for improvement statewide are located in southeast Wisconsin, and 38 of the 43 southeast Wisconsin schools identified are in MPS.

Note: Schools may appeal their AYP status; successful appeals may result in differing counts as the year goes on.

Table 4: Schools identified for improvement

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
MPS	43	37	34	32	38
Kenosha	3	2	1	1	1
Racine	1	1	0	4	4
SE Wisconsin	47	40	35	37	43
State	51	45	38	45	54

Regional reading proficiency lags state

One of the No Child Left Behind Act's four "pillars" is accountability for results, an element that necessitates student achievement testing. To meet NCLB's testing requirements, Wisconsin uses the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE), administered annually to students in grades 3-8 and grade 10. Students' scores are classified as minimal, basic, proficient or advanced.

Table 5 shows an analysis of reading test score trends by the 2004-05 4th grade cohort group for each school district. The percentages cited indicate those students in the cohort scoring proficient or advanced on the reading portion of the WKCE test.

This information shows some significant differences between districts. In each year, Milwaukee had the lowest scores in the region, with the cohort's scores declining from 4th to 7th grade. A number of other districts also saw their cohort's scores decline over the four years of tests, with the largest decrease in proficient or advanced scores in the Big Foot Union school district.

School districts with high-scoring 4th graders that were able to maintain or improve their scores as 7th graders included Whitefish Bay, Waterford Union and Mukwonago.

In the fourth year of the cohort analysis, southeast Wisconsin's reading achievement lags the rest of the state, with 80.8% of 7th graders proficient or advanced in 2007-08, compared to 85.5% in the rest of the state. In the rest of the state, the 7th grade scores are 3.7 points below last year's 6th grade scores, while southeast Wisconsin 7th graders gained 0.6 points over last year.

As in previous years, southeast Wisconsin's underperformance compared to the rest of the state is largely attributable to performance in the Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha school districts. However, Delavan-Darien in Walworth County is also notable as a low-scoring district (69.5% are proficient or

Table 5: Reading test score trends for district cohorts: Grades 4 to 7

	4th Grade 2004-05	5th Grade 2005-06	6th Grade 2006-07	7th Grade 2007-08	4th to 5th	5th to 6th	6th to 7th
	Percentage of proficient/advanced reading scores				Percentage point difference		
Kenosha County							
Central/Westosha Union	83.1%	85.2%	88.2%	87.7%	2.1	3.0	-0.4
Kenosha	78.8%	79.6%	82.7%	81.3%	0.8	3.2	-1.4
Wilmot Union	77.3%	80.5%	86.7%	87.4%	3.2	6.2	0.7
Milwaukee County							
Brown Deer	78.9%	81.8%	82.1%	84.0%	2.9	0.2	2.0
Cudahy	83.9%	90.0%	90.3%	85.5%	6.1	0.3	-4.7
Franklin	92.1%	92.6%	95.2%	93.0%	0.5	2.5	-2.2
Greendale	87.2%	90.0%	94.0%	95.0%	2.8	4.0	1.1
Greenfield	83.9%	86.1%	88.0%	85.8%	2.2	1.9	-2.1
Milwaukee	60.9%	60.7%	61.8%	59.7%	-0.3	1.1	-2.1
Nicolet Union	91.6%	89.8%	89.2%	89.3%	-1.8	-0.6	0.1
Oak Creek-Franklin	85.9%	90.5%	92.6%	91.5%	4.7	2.0	-1.0
Saint Francis	77.8%	78.8%	82.1%	86.0%	1.0	3.4	3.9
Shorewood	91.7%	94.6%	95.3%	94.0%	2.9	0.7	-1.3
South Milwaukee	86.6%	87.1%	91.2%	91.5%	0.6	4.1	0.4
Wauwatosa	88.9%	91.4%	91.7%	90.0%	2.5	0.3	-1.6
West Allis-West Milwaukee	81.7%	80.9%	86.9%	84.7%	-0.8	6.1	-2.3
Whitefish Bay	94.5%	95.2%	93.8%	95.1%	0.7	-1.4	1.3
Whitnall	90.6%	90.8%	91.3%	90.3%	0.1	0.5	-1.0
Ozaukee County							
Cedarburg	91.3%	94.9%	94.7%	93.6%	3.7	-0.2	-1.1
Grafton	94.9%	96.0%	93.5%	94.0%	1.2	-2.5	0.5
Mequon-Thiensville	96.1%	92.1%	95.5%	94.4%	-4.0	3.4	-1.1
Northern Ozaukee	85.7%	87.6%	92.6%	96.6%	1.9	4.9	4.1
Port Washington-Saukville	84.7%	86.2%	87.7%	90.3%	1.6	1.5	2.6
Racine County							
Burlington Area	83.6%	84.3%	87.4%	89.2%	0.7	3.2	1.7
Racine	73.0%	70.2%	72.3%	71.8%	-2.8	2.1	-0.4
Union Grove Union	88.5%	87.8%	92.0%	88.7%	-0.7	4.2	-3.3
Waterford Union	92.2%	93.8%	95.2%	93.5%	1.6	1.3	-1.7
Walworth County							
Big Foot Union	88.5%	85.9%	89.5%	85.3%	-2.6	3.7	-4.2
Delavan-Darien	72.3%	62.9%	64.3%	69.5%	-9.5	1.5	5.2
East Troy Community	90.1%	91.8%	91.3%	93.3%	1.6	-0.5	2
Elkhorn Area	89.2%	89.0%	92.2%	93.8%	-0.2	3.2	1.6
Lake Geneva-Genoa City Union	79.2%	80.9%	85.4%	84.5%	1.7	4.5	-0.9
Whitewater	84.9%	87.1%	89.0%	90.9%	2.2	1.9	1.9
Williams Bay	77.4%	85.3%	93.9%	94.3%	7.9	8.6	0.3
Washington County							
Germantown	96.6%	97.8%	95.7%	94.6%	1.2	-2.1	-1.1
Hartford Union	89.3%	92.1%	92.7%	92.4%	2.8	0.6	-0.3
Kewaskum	82.1%	87.3%	91.6%	88.4%	5.1	4.3	-3.2
Slinger	91.8%	94.8%	91.2%	94.6%	3.1	-3.7	3.4
West Bend	84.9%	86.7%	86.6%	88.6%	1.8	-0.1	2.0
Waukesha County							
Arrowhead Union	92.5%	93.5%	94.6%	93.1%	1.0	1.1	-1.5
Elmbrook	91.3%	92.7%	93.2%	93.6%	1.3	0.6	0.4
Hamilton	87.3%	92.7%	92.8%	96.0%	5.4	0.1	3.2
Kettle Moraine	87.4%	90.0%	92.7%	94.0%	2.6	2.7	1.4
Menomonee Falls	86.6%	88.1%	90.6%	92.5%	1.4	2.5	2.0
Mukwonago	93.5%	93.7%	95.5%	95.3%	0.2	1.8	-0.2
Muskego-Norway	92.6%	92.8%	93.8%	93.7%	0.2	1.0	0.0
New Berlin	92.9%	93.1%	95.5%	92.8%	0.2	2.4	-2.7
Oconomowoc Area	88.4%	88.0%	91.6%	92.6%	-0.3	3.6	1.0
Pewaukee	87.5%	90.7%	90.5%	93.3%	3.2	-0.2	2.8
Waukesha	87.0%	86.2%	90.6%	89.1%	-0.8	4.4	-1.4
Southeast Wisconsin	77.9%	79.1%	80.2%	80.8%	1.2	1.1	0.6
Rest of State	82.0%	81.7%	89.2%	85.5%	-0.3	7.6	-3.7

advanced in 7th grade reading). As noted last year, the Delavan-Darien school district's minority student population is growing and is now 38% Hispanic students, compared to a statewide average of 8%. This likely impacts reading test results, as some of these students may have limited English proficiency, yet language status is not factored into test scores.

Additionally, a trend highlighted in last year's report continues: school districts with increasing numbers of low-income students face low scores. Delavan-Darien is a good example of that trend, with 49% of students district-wide qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunch.

Though its scores are low, Delavan-Darien's cohort scores increased 5.2 percentage points from 6th to 7th grade, the largest jump among districts.

Milwaukee ranks worst in attendance, truancy, dropouts

Students can only succeed in school if they are present in the classroom. Thus, attendance and truancy rates are valuable indicators. **Table 6** shows that the southeast Wisconsin region's overall attendance rate in 2006-07 was 95.3%, which equals the 2006-07 statewide rate and exceeds the 2005-06 southeast Wisconsin rate of 93.2%. High school attendance, however, was lower in the region than in the state as a whole (91.1% vs. 93.3%). Milwaukee, with an 88.6% attendance rate, was the only district with an attendance rate for all grades below 90%. Milwaukee, Kenosha, Cudahy and Racine's districts had the lowest attendance rates in the region.

A truant, according to the Department of Public Instruction, is defined as a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five or more school days during a semester. Milwaukee's 2006-07 truancy rate of 46.31% is more than twice that of the next-highest district. St. Francis, Kenosha, Union Grove Union and Delevan-Darien also had high truancy rates compared to other districts in the region.

Milwaukee also had the highest 2006-07 dropout rate at 7.76%, followed by Franklin at 7.52% and Racine at 5.33%. It is notable that Cudahy, a district that struggles in many other student performance categories, had the fifth-lowest dropout rate. Grafton had zero dropouts, followed by Mequon-Thiensville with a 0.06% dropout rate, Kewaskum (0.15%) and Waterford Union (0.19%).

Relative performance of school districts in southeast Wisconsin

Table 7 shows each school district's rank for performance on reading and math tests in every tested grade level. Districts were ranked according to the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced. The sum of each district's rankings is then calculated to provide a total ranking.

For the fourth year in a row, Milwaukee received the lowest total rank of all the districts (listed as 49th place this year instead of 50th due to missing data from Hamilton). The other low-ranking districts, in order, were Racine, Delavan-Darien, Kenosha and Cudahy. Germantown achieved the top ranking, up six spots from the prior year. The other highest-ranking districts were, in order, Cedarburg, Arrowhead Union, Mequon-Thiensville and Greendale.

Table 6: Student participation rates, 2006-07

	Attendance Rate		Truancy Rate		High School Dropout Rate	
	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent
Kenosha County						
Central/Westosha Union	34	95.3%	45	11.0%	41	2.1%
Kenosha	49	92.3%	48	19.0%	46	3.1%
Wilmot Union	30	95.4%	33	4.2%	44	2.3%
Milwaukee County						
Brown Deer	5	97.0%	20	1.4%	29	1.1%
Cudahy	48	93.6%	39	5.5%	5	0.2%
Franklin Public	15	96.1%	24	2.3%	49	7.5%
Greendale	10	96.4%	36	4.8%	9	0.3%
Greenfield	37	95.0%	28	3.7%	39	2.0%
Milwaukee	50	88.6%	50	46.3%	50	7.8%
Nicolet Union	7	96.8%	32	3.9%	26	0.8%
Oak Creek-Franklin	4	97.0%	38	4.9%	25	0.8%
Saint Francis	46	93.7%	49	19.0%	31	1.2%
Shorewood	43	94.2%	10	0.9%	22	0.6%
South Milwaukee	45	93.8%	44	9.4%	30	1.2%
Wauwatosa	15	96.1%	34	4.2%	15	0.5%
West Allis	44	93.9%	41	6.3%	35	1.3%
Whitefish Bay	2	97.8%	17	1.3%	16	0.5%
Whitnall	13	96.2%	9	0.8%	19	0.5%
Ozaukee County						
Cedarburg	3	97.3%	2	0.1%	10	0.3%
Grafton	18	96.0%	16	1.3%	1	0.0%
Mequon-Thiensville	34	95.3%	23	2.3%	2	0.1%
Northern Ozaukee	1	98.1%	14	1.0%	43	2.3%
Port Washington-Saukville	24	95.7%	22	1.5%	12	0.5%
Racine County						
Burlington Area	42	94.4%	40	6.1%	45	2.5%
Racine	47	93.6%	43	8.5%	48	5.3%
Union Grove Union	18	96.0%	47	18.8%	40	2.1%
Waterford Union	13	96.2%	12	0.9%	4	0.2%
Walworth County						
Big Foot Union	40	94.7%	31	3.9%	36	1.3%
Delavan-Darien	39	94.9%	46	14.0%	47	3.4%
East Troy Community	41	94.6%	15	1.1%	28	0.9%
Elkhorn Area	30	95.4%	35	4.2%	17	0.5%
Lake Geneva-Genoa City Union	30	95.4%	29	3.7%	37	1.4%
Whitewater	34	95.3%	26	2.9%	42	2.2%
Williams Bay	28	95.5%	6	0.6%	21	0.6%
Washington County						
Germantown	15	96.1%	18	1.4%	27	0.9%
Hartford Union	9	96.5%	37	4.8%	33	1.2%
Kewaskum	22	95.8%	13	0.9%	3	0.1%
Slinger	6	96.9%	3	0.4%	18	0.5%
West Bend	26	95.6%	30	3.7%	34	1.2%
Waukesha County						
Arrowhead Union	7	96.8%	4	0.5%	11	0.4%
Elmbrook	20	95.9%	21	1.4%	13	0.5%
Hamilton	20	95.9%	27	3.3%	32	1.2%
Kettle Moraine	24	95.7%	8	0.7%	24	0.7%
Menomonee Falls	33	95.4%	42	8.3%	14	0.5%
Mukwonago	29	95.4%	5	0.5%	23	0.6%
Muskego-Norway	23	95.7%	19	1.4%	8	0.3%
New Berlin	11	96.3%	7	0.6%	20	0.6%
Oconomowoc Area	11	96.3%	25	2.6%	38	1.5%
Pewaukee	26	95.6%	1	0.0%	7	0.3%
Waukesha	37	95.0%	11	0.9%	6	0.2%
Southeast Wisconsin		95.3%	17.6%		3.2%	
State		95.3%	9.3%		1.6%	

Table 7: Student achievement: Rank by percent students scoring at proficient or advanced level

	3rd Grade Read Math		4th Grade Read Math		5th Grade Read Math		6th Grade Read Math		7th Grade Read Math		8th Grade Read Math		10th Grade Read Math		2007-08 Total	2006-07 Total
Kenosha County																
Central/Westosha	28	36	36	38	38	34	35	29	38	29	40	28	34	35	34	38
Kenosha	45	47	42	41	42	36	45	44	47	44	47	45	45	45	46	47
Wilmot Union	36	34	35	36	35	35	42	43	39	39	44	42	38	40	38	39
Milwaukee County																
Brown Deer	46	40	39	28	41	44	44	36	46	35	32	36	47	48	41	40
Cudahy	38	43	41	46	47	37	29	37	42	47	41	46	44	46	45	44
Franklin Public	13	10	4	11	19	19	6	10	21	18	30	19	24	28	15	14
Greendale	14	8	6	3	2	1	16	9	5	1	13	7	33	13	5	8
Greenfield	23	24	33	39	37	25	31	45	41	46	35	44	42	41	35	37
Milwaukee	50	50	49	49	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	49	50
Nicolet Union	18	26	13	15	29	26	27	17	32	30	38	27	11	20	25	24
Oak Creek-Franklin	39	42	22	33	30	33	36	38	27	28	28	33	43	39	32	32
Saint Francis	47	39	47	44	44	46	38	41	40	38	19	38	48	33	41	43
Shorewood	6	11	7	17	3	5	11	3	11	16	34	12	7	2	9	13
South Milwaukee	41	46	40	40	36	32	40	47	26	42	24	34	41	38	37	36
Wauwatosa	25	21	24	27	14	14	25	22	31	24	17	17	35	32	23	21
West Allis	43	37	34	32	45	39	43	33	44	37	46	47	40	42	41	42
Whitefish Bay	21	22	16	5	8	4	26	13	4	6	7	4	1	7	8	5
Whitnall	24	17	28	30	15	22	34	30	30	20	21	14	26	17	23	26
Ozaukee County																
Cedarburg	2	3	3	6	1	2	10	19	15	12	2	1	4	11	2	2
Grafton	22	12	8	13	4	7	22	25	11	9	27	26	22	15	14	16
Mequon-Thiensville	8	9	11	10	5	9	21	8	8	3	9	5	12	12	4	3
Northern Ozaukee	31	33	25	37	7	31	19	24	1	19	37	39	9	9	21	30
Port Washington-Saukville	5	27	21	12	23	27	18	15	29	36	26	20	6	14	19	23
Racine County																
Burlington Area	30	41	31	25	16	40	39	42	33	43	33	37	30	31	32	35
Racine	49	49	46	48	48	48	49	49	48	49	49	49	49	49	48	49
Union Grove Union	15	20	17	29	18	29	13	39	35	23	31	29	36	44	28	33
Waterford Union	12	29	9	23	24	20	11	23	17	14	29	15	19	29	18	15
Walworth County																
Big Foot Union	44	44	32	18	40	45	47	34	43	41	42	23	31	22	35	34
Delavan-Darien	48	48	48	47	49	49	48	48	49	48	48	48	46	47	47	48
East Troy	34	25	37	19	28	17	3	12	19	27	25	31	16	25	20	20
Elkhorn Area	29	31	29	31	31	41	33	26	13	32	16	35	15	21	29	31
Lake Geneva-Genoa City	42	45	45	45	43	47	30	35	45	45	36	41	39	43	44	46
Whitewater	37	35	44	43	46	42	46	46	28	34	45	43	29	36	40	45
Williams Bay	33	2	5	8	22	38	4	31	9	26	1	21	18	26	17	19
Washington Cty																
Germantown	1	1	1	1	6	3	13	6	6	2	22	11	10	4	1	7
Hartford Union	26	32	30	35	21	30	17	32	25	21	12	16	21	27	26	25
Kewaskum	35	28	43	34	33	11	24	21	37	33	10	30	37	24	30	28
Slinger	3	13	2	2	12	13	8	5	7	22	6	18	14	18	7	12
West Bend	32	30	27	22	27	24	37	27	36	31	20	32	28	30	31	27
Waukesha County																
Arrowhead Union	4	4	10	9	13	8	5	4	20	7	11	3	13	3	3	1
Elmbrook	9	6	18	14	9	12	20	18	16	10	4	10	3	5	10	6
Hamilton	16	14	*	*	10	10	2	1	2	5	5	2	2	6	*	9
Kettle Moraine	17	5	15	7	11	6	23	16	10	11	3	6	5	1	6	11
Menomonee Falls	27	15	23	21	34	28	28	28	24	15	23	22	32	34	27	29
Mukwonago	11	18	20	26	17	15	7	14	3	25	14	24	8	8	13	17
Muskego-Norway	19	19	12	24	25	23	9	11	14	13	18	13	17	16	16	18
New Berlin	10	7	13	4	26	18	15	7	22	8	15	9	20	9	11	4
Oconomowoc Area	20	16	19	20	32	21	32	20	23	17	39	25	23	19	22	22
Pewaukee	7	23	26	16	20	16	1	2	18	4	8	8	25	23	12	10
Waukesha	40	38	38	42	39	43	41	40	34	40	43	40	27	37	39	41

Region behind state in high school graduation but surpasses state in ACT and AP scores

The high school completion (graduation) rate for the region was 86.2% in 2006-07, below the statewide average of 89.6%. Fifty-two percent of regional districts had completion rates that exceeded 95%. Whitefish Bay (99.1%), Mequon-Thiensville (99.1%) and Shorewood (98.9%) had the highest rates. Milwaukee (68.6%), Racine (75.1%) and Delevan-Darien (76.3%) had the lowest rates (**Table 8**).

The ACT exam assesses high school students' ability to complete college-level work in English, math, reading and science, and is required for many college applications. The most current ACT data refers to the 2006-07 academic year. Unlike 2005-06, southeast Wisconsin's average ACT composite score of 22.6 in 2006-07 surpassed the state average of 22.2 (a perfect score is 36). Shorewood (25.8) and Whitefish Bay (25.7) had the highest average ACT scores in the region. Milwaukee (17.7) and South Milwaukee (21.0) had the lowest.

Advanced Placement (AP) classes, in which students earn college credit by passing a year-end exam, are another measure of college preparation. **Table 8** also shows the number of 2006-07 AP exams passed as a percentage of overall high school enrollment. Passage represents ability to perform at a college level. Southeast Wisconsin surpasses the state on this measure, with 10.8% of high school students passing AP exams, compared to 8.4% of the state overall. (It is worth noting that not all high schools offer AP classes and exams.) Milwaukee, St. Francis and Racine have the lowest rankings in this category, and Whitefish Bay, Elmbrook and Mequon-Thiensville have the highest.

School spending above average in southeastern Wisconsin

Tables 9 and **10** on page 12 show the distribution of spending across categories of operations expenditures, by county. Spending priorities were similar across the region, and between the region and the state. Instruction was the highest expenditure category in every school district, amounting to 61.3% of the region's total annual spending.

Southeast Wisconsin spent more per pupil than the statewide average on school district operations, as shown in **Table 10**. The lowest-spending county in the region was Walworth County for the second year in a row, with \$9,845 spent per pupil, followed by Washington County at \$9,934 and Racine County at \$10,483. Milwaukee County spent the most in the region at \$11,822 per pupil. MPS, with spending of \$11,855 per pupil, was in the mid-range of the county's districts.

The Elkhorn Area and Delevan-Darien districts, both in Walworth County, were the two lowest-spending districts in the region, spending \$8,991 and \$9,222 per pupil respectively. Ozaukee County's Northern Ozaukee district and Milwaukee County's Nicolet Union district were the two highest-spending districts in the region, spending \$16,457 and \$15,782 per pupil respectively.

Table 8: College preparation, district rankings

	ACT Composite Score 2006-07		AP Exams passed 06-07 as % of enrollment		Completion Rate 2006-07	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent
Kenosha County						
Central/Westosha Union	37	22.0	14	17.0%	41	89.1%
Kenosha	41	21.4	42	5.5%	43	88.0%
Wilmot Union	48	21.0	39	7.1%	42	88.8%
Milwaukee County						
Brown Deer	46	21.2	24	13.1%	36	93.0%
Cudahy	42	21.4	41	6.2%	13	97.2%
Franklin Public	25	22.7	25	12.9%	44	87.8%
Greendale	8	23.7	10	20.9%	5	98.7%
Greenfield	45	21.3	33	9.9%	28	94.7%
Milwaukee	50	17.7	50	1.6%	50	68.6%
Nicolet Union	5	24.5	6	30.3%	11	97.4%
Oak Creek-Franklin	39	21.6	18	14.5%	17	96.6%
Saint Francis	44	21.4	49	1.9%	35	94.0%
Shorewood	1	25.8	4	34.3%	3	98.9%
South Milwaukee	49	21.0	43	5.3%	19	96.2%
Wauwatosa	11	23.5	21	13.3%	27	95.1%
West Allis	33	22.2	23	13.2%	33	94.2%
Whitefish Bay	2	25.7	1	41.1%	1	99.1%
Whitnall	31	22.2	34	9.4%	7	98.3%
Ozaukee County						
Cedarburg	7	23.9	9	26.2%	9	97.7%
Grafton	20	22.8	7	29.7%	25	95.3%
Mequon-Thiensville	3	25.1	3	35.2%	2	99.1%
Northern Ozaukee	27	22.6	31	10.5%	38	92.4%
Port Washington-Saukville	10	23.5	29	11.2%	10	97.5%
Racine County						
Burlington Area	29	22.4	44	5.0%	45	87.7%
Racine	47	21.1	48	2.3%	49	75.1%
Union Grove Union	35	22.1	13	17.4%	39	91.1%
Waterford Union	24	22.7	32	10.3%	26	95.3%
Walworth County						
Big Foot Union	43	21.4	47	4.1%	37	93.0%
Delavan-Darien	38	21.8	46	4.5%	48	76.3%
East Troy Community	40	21.5	40	6.7%	22	96.0%
Elkhorn Area	34	22.1	19	14.0%	47	86.8%
Lake Geneva-Genoa City Union	36	22.1	20	13.5%	46	87.1%
Whitewater	32	22.2	27	11.5%	40	89.7%
Williams Bay	9	23.5	15	16.8%	24	95.3%
Washington County						
Germantown	14	23.3	12	17.7%	23	95.5%
Hartford Union	23	22.8	36	9.2%	29	94.7%
Kewaskum	28	22.5	38	8.3%	4	98.7%
Slinger	26	22.7	34	9.4%	18	96.4%
West Bend	18	22.9	16	15.6%	21	96.1%
Waukesha County						
Arrowhead Union	6	24.2	5	32.4%	34	94.2%
Elmbrook	4	24.5	2	36.9%	15	97.1%
Hamilton	17	22.9	37	9.0%	20	96.1%
Kettle Moraine	13	23.3	11	17.8%	12	97.3%
Menomonee Falls	16	23.0	45	5.0%	8	98.1%
Mukwonago	15	23.2	17	15.4%	14	97.2%
Muskego-Norway	22	22.8	22	13.3%	6	98.3%
New Berlin	12	23.4	8	29.2%	30	94.5%
Oconomowoc Area	21	22.8	30	10.8%	32	94.2%
Pewaukee	19	22.9	26	11.6%	16	96.9%
Waukesha	30	22.4	28	11.4%	31	94.4%
Southeast Wisconsin		22.6		10.8%		86.2%
State		22.2		8.4%		89.6%

Table 9: Budgeted operations spending distribution, 2007-2008

	Instruction	Pupil Services	Instructional Staff Services	General Admin.	Building Admin.	Transportation
Kenosha County	65.0%	5.5%	5.0%	1.3%	4.8%	3.0%
Milwaukee County	59.9%	5.4%	6.3%	2.2%	5.5%	4.6%
Ozaukee County	59.9%	4.4%	6.2%	1.6%	5.4%	3.9%
Racine County	63.4%	5.3%	5.4%	1.4%	4.8%	4.7%
Walworth County	62.3%	4.1%	4.1%	2.9%	4.8%	4.1%
Washington County	63.2%	4.2%	5.3%	2.0%	4.3%	4.6%
Waukesha County	61.3%	4.2%	4.5%	1.7%	5.0%	4.5%
Southeast Wisconsin	61.3%	5.0%	5.6%	1.9%	5.2%	4.4%
Rest of State	61.8%	4.6%	5.0%	2.0%	5.2%	4.2%
State of Wisconsin	61.6%	4.7%	5.2%	2.0%	5.2%	4.3%

Table 10: Per-pupil budgeted operations spending, 2007-2008

	Instruction	Pupil Services	Instructional Staff Services	General Admin.	Building Admin.	Transportation	Total Operations Spending
Kenosha County	\$6,827	\$579	\$525	\$138	\$508	\$311	\$10,508
Milwaukee County	\$7,079	\$634	\$750	\$256	\$653	\$540	\$11,822
Ozaukee County	\$6,832	\$505	\$710	\$186	\$619	\$447	\$11,401
Racine County	\$6,645	\$555	\$564	\$145	\$503	\$488	\$10,483
Walworth County	\$6,137	\$408	\$404	\$286	\$473	\$407	\$9,845
Washington County	\$6,280	\$412	\$526	\$198	\$431	\$455	\$9,934
Waukesha County	\$6,612	\$456	\$483	\$178	\$540	\$490	\$10,788
Southeast Wisconsin	\$6,805	\$554	\$621	\$213	\$575	\$486	\$11,107
Rest of State	\$6,494	\$481	\$525	\$209	\$543	\$447	\$10,514
State of Wisconsin	\$6,605	\$507	\$559	\$210	\$555	\$461	\$10,724

Note: Complete financial data is available on the website, www.publicpolicyforum.org.

Next in education research:

The results of the Public Policy Forum's annual census of Milwaukee Parental Choice Program schools

Findings from the 11th annual census will be released in early 2009, along with a poster-sized directory of private schools participating in Milwaukee's school choice program.

Stay tuned to the Forum website, www.publicpolicyforum.org, for more details.