

Subgroup Achievement and Gap Trends — Illinois

K-12 enrollment — 2,034,792

The raw data used to develop these state profiles, including data for additional grade levels and years before 2002, can be found on the CEP Web site at www.cep-dc.org. Click on the link on the left for State Testing Data. Below the name of the report, click on the link for View State Profiles and Worksheets. Scroll down the page, and click on the Worksheet links for any state.

Subgroup Achievement Trends and Gap Trends — Key Findings

Summary

This year the Center on Education Policy analyzed data on the achievement of different groups of students in two distinct ways. First, we looked at grade 4 test results to determine whether the performance of various groups improved at three achievement levels—basic and above, proficient and above, and advanced. Second, we looked at gaps between these groups at the proficient level across three grades (grade 4, grade 8 in most cases, and a high school grade). These two types of analyses show whether elementary school achievement has generally gone up for different groups of students and whether achievement gaps at different grade levels have narrowed, widened, or stayed the same.

Overall, Illinois had a mixed picture on subgroup and achievement gap trends.

Subgroup trends by achievement level at grade 4

- **Main trend:** There were mixed results for subgroups in reading and math trends in the percentage of students scoring at levels of basic-and-above, proficient-and-above, and advanced. In general, the white and African American subgroups tended to post gains at all three achievement levels in both subjects, while the Latino and Asian subgroups showed mostly declines or flat trend lines. Low-income students showed better results at the basic and advanced achievement levels in math than in reading.

Gap trends at three grade levels

- **Main trend:** Overall, there was a mixed picture with regard to the closing of gaps in the percentages of students scoring at the proficient level between the African American and Latino subgroups and the white subgroup, and between low-income and non-low-income students, at grades 4, 8 and the high school grade analyzed. Roughly half of trend lines showed achievement gaps narrowing, with the remainder showing gaps getting wider or remaining the same. This was largely due to the high school level, where achievement gaps tended to widen.

Data notes

- **Limited data:** Trends are limited to 2006 to 2008.

- Subgroups analyzed: Trends were analyzed for white, African American, Latino, Asian American and low-income students. The Native American subgroup is too small in Illinois to yield reliable trend data. Trends for students with disabilities, English language learners, and male and female students have not been summarized because they will be discussed in separate reports.
- Grades analyzed: Analyses of subgroup trends by three achievement levels are limited to one elementary grade because of the massive amounts of data involved and because this is the pilot year of a process that CEP hopes to extend to the middle and high school levels in future years. Analyses of achievement gap trends cover three grade levels: grade 4, grade 8, and the high school grade tested for NCLB.

Data Limitations

Years of comparable percentage proficient data	2006 through 2008
Years of comparable mean scale score data	2006 through 2008
Disaggregated data for all subgroups and comparison groups	2006 through 2008 Percentage proficient data not available for comparison group of students who are <i>not</i> English language learners (ELLs), so the ELL subgroup is compared with all tested students in the state in proficiency analyses

Test Characteristics

The characteristics highlighted below are for the state reading and mathematics tests used for accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

Test(s) used for NCLB accountability	Illinois Standards Achievement Test (grades 3–8) Prairie State Achievement Examination (grade 11) Illinois Alternate Assessment
Grades tested for NCLB accountability	3-8, 11
State labels for achievement levels	IL uses four achievement levels: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4. For our analyses we treated Level 2 as Basic, Level 3 as Proficient, and Level 4 as Advanced.
High school NCLB test also used as an exit exam?	No
First year test used	2006

Time of test administration

Spring

Major changes in testing system (2002–present)

2005–06: Changed test vendors

2005–06: Switched to a vertical scale for scoring the test; cut scores were changed accordingly (grade 8 math scores in particular were changed after a bridge study found that cut scores were too high)

2006: All students in grades 3–8 tested in reading and mathematics and included in AYP calculations

2006–07: Added another vendor

2008: Scoring of the PSAE was modified such that all items contribute equally to the overall score. A process was used to equate 2007 results from the old methodology to the new methodology.

Achievement by Subgroup — Trends at the Elementary Level

Note: The tables in this profile of subgroup achievement and gap trends begin with table 7. Tables 1 through 6 can be found in the companion state profile of general achievement trends.

Table IL-7. Percentages of Grade 4 Students by Racial or Ethnic Subgroup Scoring at the Advanced, Proficient and Above, and Basic and Above Levels in Reading

Subgroup	Reporting Year				Average Yearly Percentage Point Gain ¹		
	2002	2003	2004	2005			
All tested students							
Advanced				26%	25%	27%	0.2
Proficient and Above				73%	74%	73%	0.1
Basic and Above				98%	99%	98%	-0.1
White							
Advanced				34%	33%	37%	1.2
Proficient and Above				82%	83%	84%	1.0
Basic and Above				99%	100%	99%	0.0
African American							
Advanced				9%	8%	11%	0.9
Proficient and Above				50%	50%	56%	3.1
Basic and Above				96%	97%	97%	0.1
Latino							
Advanced				17%	15%	13%	-2.0
Proficient and Above				68%	69%	59%	-4.4
Basic and Above				99%	99%	97%	-0.7
Asian							
Advanced				43%	42%	44%	0.8
Proficient and Above				89%	91%	88%	-0.6
Basic and Above				100%	100%	100%	-0.1
Native American ²							
Advanced				30%	24%	24%	-2.8
Proficient and Above				80%	71%	74%	-3.0
Basic and Above				99%	98%	97%	-0.8

Table reads: The percentage of white 4th graders who scored at the advanced level on the state reading test increased from 34% in 2006 to 37% in 2008. During this period, the average yearly gain in the percentage advanced in reading for white 4th graders was 1.2 percentage points per year.

¹Averages are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

Table IL-8. Percentage of Grade 4 Students by Demographic Subgroup Scoring at the Advanced, Proficient and Above, and Basic and Above Levels in Reading

Subgroup	Reporting Year							Average Yearly Percentage Point Gain ¹
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
All tested students								
Advanced					26%	25%	27%	0.2
Proficient and Above					73%	74%	73%	0.1
Basic and Above					98%	99%	98%	-0.1
Low-income students								
Advanced					12%	11%	12%	-0.2
Proficient and Above					58%	58%	59%	0.4
Basic and Above					97%	98%	97%	-0.2
Students with disabilities ³								
Advanced					9%	9%	10%	0.3
Proficient and Above					40%	41%	41%	0.8
Basic and Above					93%	95%	92%	-0.1
English language learners ³								
Advanced					13%	18%	4%	-4.7
Proficient and Above					64%	78%	38%	-12.8
Basic and Above					98%	99%	95%	-1.5
Female								
Advanced					31%	27%	29%	-0.8
Proficient and Above					78%	77%	77%	-0.4
Basic and Above					99%	99%	99%	-0.1
Male								
Advanced					22%	24%	24%	0.9
Proficient and Above					68%	71%	70%	0.6
Basic and Above					98%	99%	98%	-0.2

Table reads: The percentage of low-income 4th graders who scored at the advanced level on the state reading test was 12% in 2006 and in 2008. During this period, the average yearly loss in the percentage advanced in reading for low-income 4th graders was 0.2 percentage points per year.

¹Averages are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

³Gap trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because state and federal policy changes may have affected the year-to-year comparability of test results for these subgroups. Average yearly percentage point gains are based on 2006-2008 results.

Table IL-9. Percentages of Grade 4 Students by Racial or Ethnic Subgroup Scoring at the Advanced, Proficient and Above, and Basic and Above Levels in Mathematics

Subgroup	Reporting Year							Average Yearly Percentage Point Gain ¹
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
All tested students								
Advanced					26%	30%	26%	0.1
Proficient and Above					85%	86%	85%	-0.1
Basic and Above					98%	99%	99%	0.3
White								
Advanced					34%	38%	37%	1.4
Proficient and Above					92%	93%	93%	0.2
Basic and Above					99%	100%	100%	0.2
African American								
Advanced					8%	10%	9%	0.4
Proficient and Above					64%	68%	69%	2.4
Basic and Above					96%	97%	98%	1.1
Latino								
Advanced					16%	19%	13%	-1.9
Proficient and Above					84%	86%	77%	-3.4
Basic and Above					99%	99%	99%	0.1
Asian								
Advanced					51%	56%	50%	-0.4
Proficient and Above					96%	97%	95%	-0.6
Basic and Above					100%	100%	100%	-0.1
Native American ²								
Advanced					29%	27%	22%	-3.8
Proficient and Above					90%	85%	84%	-2.7
Basic and Above					99%	99%	99%	-0.2

Table reads: The percentage of white 4th graders who scored at the advanced level on the state math test increased from 34% in 2006 to 37% in 2008. During this period, the average yearly gain in the percentage advanced in math for white 4th graders was 1.4 percentage points per year.

¹Averages are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

Table IL-10. Percentage of Grade 4 Students by Demographic Subgroup Scoring at the Advanced, Proficient and Above, and Basic and Above Levels in Mathematics

Subgroup	Reporting Year							Average Yearly Percentage Point Gain ¹
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
All tested students								
Advanced					26%	30%	26%	0.1
Proficient and Above					85%	86%	85%	-0.1
Basic and Above					98%	99%	99%	0.3
Low-income students								
Advanced					12%	14%	12%	0.0
Proficient and Above					74%	76%	75%	0.5
Basic and Above					97%	98%	98%	0.6
Students with disabilities ³								
Advanced					10%	12%	12%	0.9
Proficient and Above					62%	65%	64%	0.9
Basic and Above					93%	95%	96%	1.6
English language learners ³								
Advanced					16%	26%	6%	-4.9
Proficient and Above					81%	90%	65%	-7.9
Basic and Above					98%	99%	98%	0.0
Female								
Advanced					25%	29%	25%	-0.2
Proficient and Above					86%	87%	85%	-0.1
Basic and Above					99%	99%	99%	0.2
Male								
Advanced					27%	30%	28%	0.4
Proficient and Above					84%	85%	84%	0.0
Basic and Above					98%	99%	99%	0.5

Table reads: The percentage of low-income 4th graders who scored at the advanced level on the state math test was 12% in 2006 and in 2008. During this period, the average yearly gain in the percentage advanced in reading for white 4th graders was 0.0 percentage points per year.

¹Averages are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

³Gap trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because state and federal policy changes may have affected the year-to-year comparability of test results for these subgroups. Average yearly percentage point gains are based on 2006-2008 results.

Achievement by Subgroup — Gap Trends (Percentages Proficient)**Table IL-11. Subgroup Achievement Trends in Reading by Percentages Proficient**

NOTE: L = Larger gain than comparison group. S = Smaller gain than comparison group. E = Equal gain to comparison group.

If the average annual gain for the subgroup of interest, such as African American students, is larger than the average annual gain for the comparison group, such as white students, this indicates that the achievement gap has narrowed. If the average gain for the subgroup of interest is smaller, this means the gap has widened.

Subgroup	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
	Year Span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average Annual Gain ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller Than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average Annual Gain ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller Than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average Annual Gain ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller Than Comparison Group
All tested students	06-08	73%	73%	0.1		06-08	79%	81%	1.1		06-08	58%	53%	-2.6	
White	06-08	82%	84%	1.0		06-08	86%	88%	0.9		06-08	67%	65%	-1.2	
African American	06-08	50%	56%	3.1	L	06-08	64%	69%	2.6	L	06-08	33%	25%	-4.2	S
Latino	06-08	68%	59%	-4.4	S	06-08	71%	74%	1.2	L	06-08	39%	31%	-3.8	S
Asian	06-08	89%	88%	-0.6	S	06-08	92%	93%	0.3	S	06-08	73%	64%	-4.5	S
Native American	06-08	80%	74%	-3.0 ²	S	06-08	81%	82%	0.5 ²	S	06-08	54%	50%	-2.0 ²	S
Not low-income	06-08	84%	85%	0.8		06-08	87%	89%	1.1		06-08	67%	63%	-1.7	
Low-income	06-08	58%	59%	0.4	S	06-08	67%	70%	1.8	L	06-08	35%	29%	-3.3	S
Not disabled	06-08	79%	78%	-0.1		06-08	86%	87%	0.6		06-08	64%	58%	-3.0	
Students with disabilities ³	06-08	40%	41%	0.8	L	06-08	38%	42%	2.4	L	06-08	18%	19%	0.7	L
All tested students	06-08	73%	73%	0.1		06-08	79%	81%	1.1		06-08	58%	53%	-2.6	
English language learners ³	06-08	64%	38%	-12.8	S	06-08	39%	40%	0.8	S	06-08	20%	8%	-6.3	S
Female	06-08	78%	77%	-0.4		06-08	82%	86%	1.6		06-08	61%	55%	-2.9	
Male	06-08	68%	70%	0.6	L	06-08	76%	78%	0.7	S	06-08	56%	51%	-2.3	L

Table reads: In 2006, 82% of white 4th graders and 50% of African American 4th graders scored at the proficient level on the state reading test. In 2008, 84% of white 4th graders and 56% of African American 4th graders scored at the proficient level in reading. Between 2006 and 2008, the percentage proficient improved at

an average rate of 1.0 percentage point per year for white students and 3.1 percentage points per year for African American students, indicating a larger rate of gain and a narrowing of the achievement gap for African American 4th graders.

¹Numbers in these columns are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

³Trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because state and federal policy changes may have affected the year-to-year comparability of test results for these subgroups.

Table IL-12. Subgroup Achievement Trends in Mathematics by Percentages Proficient

NOTE: L = Larger gain than comparison group. S = Smaller gain than comparison group. E = Equal gain to comparison group.

If the average annual gain for the subgroup of interest, such as African American students, is larger than the average annual gain for the comparison group, such as white students, this indicates that the achievement gap has narrowed. If the average gain for the subgroup of interest is smaller, this means the gap has widened.

Subgroup	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
	Year Span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average Annual Gain ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller Than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average Annual Gain ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller Than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average Annual Gain ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller Than Comparison Group
All tested students	06-08	85%	85%	-0.1		06-08	78%	80%	1.1		06-08	54%	53%	-0.3	
White	06-08	92%	93%	0.2		06-08	87%	89%	1.0		06-08	64%	64%	0.2	
African American	06-08	64%	69%	2.4	L	06-08	56%	61%	2.5	L	06-08	21%	21%	-0.1	S
Latino	06-08	84%	77%	-3.4	S	06-08	72%	75%	1.2	L	06-08	34%	33%	-0.4	S
Asian	06-08	96%	95%	-0.6	S	06-08	95%	94%	-0.4	S	06-08	77%	78%	0.4	L
Native American	06-08	90%	84%	-2.7 ²	S	06-08	81%	82%	0.7 ²	S	06-08	49%	48%	-0.5 ²	S
Not low-income	06-08	93%	93%	0.0		06-08	87%	89%	0.8		06-08	63%	63%	0.3	
Low-income	06-08	74%	75%	0.5	L	06-08	64%	68%	2.1	L	06-08	28%	27%	-0.1	S
Not disabled	06-08	89%	88%	-0.4		06-08	85%	86%	0.5		06-08	59%	58%	-0.3	
Students with disabilities ³	06-08	62%	64%	0.9	L	06-08	38%	43%	2.8	L	06-08	13%	13%	0.1	L
All tested students	06-08	85%	85%	-0.1		06-08	78%	80%	1.1		06-08	54%	53%	-0.3	
English language learners ³	06-08	81%	65%	-7.9	S	06-08	49%	53%	2.1	L	06-08	30%	20%	-5.1	S
Female	06-08	86%	85%	-0.1		06-08	80%	82%	1.0		06-08	51%	51%	-0.4	
Male	06-08	84%	84%	0.0	L	06-08	77%	79%	1.2	L	06-08	56%	56%	-0.3	L

Table reads: In 2006, 92% of white 4th graders and 64% of African American 4th graders scored at the proficient level on the state math test. In 2008, 93% of white 4th graders and 69% of African American 4th graders scored at the proficient level in math. Between 2006 and 2008, the percentage proficient improved at an average rate of 0.2 percentage point per year for white students and 2.4 percentage points per year for African American students, indicating a larger rate of gain and a narrowing of the achievement gap for African American 4th graders.

¹Numbers in these columns are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

³Trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because state and federal policy changes may have affected the year-to-year comparability of test results for these subgroups.

Achievement by Subgroup — Gap Trends (Mean Scale Scores)

Table IL-13. Achievement Gap Trends in Reading by Mean Scale Scores

NOTE: L = Larger gain than comparison group. S = Smaller gain than comparison group. E = Equal gain to comparison group.

If the average gain for the subgroup of interest, such as African American students, is larger than the average gain for the comparison group, such as white students, this indicates that the achievement gap has narrowed. If the average gain for the subgroup of interest is smaller, this means the gap has widened.

Subgroup	Statistic	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
		Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group
All tested students	Mean SS	06-08	217.9	217.3	-0.3		06-08	248.9	248.2	-0.4		06-08	158.3	156.2	-1.1	
	SD	06-08	27.7	28.2			06-08	23.9	22.2			06-08	16.7	16.1		
White	Mean SS	06-08	224.6	225.7	0.6		06-08	254.7	253.8	-0.5		06-08	161.5	160.2	-0.7	
	SD	06-08	26.1	26.3			06-08	22.9	21.1			06-08	16.2	15.4		
African American	Mean SS	06-08	201.6	203.9	1.2	L	06-08	236.6	237.8	0.6	L	06-08	148.8	146.1	-1.3	S
	SD	06-08	25.8	26.0			06-08	22.0	20.3			06-08	14.2	13.1		
Latino	Mean SS	06-08	212.4	206.0	-3.2	S	06-08	241.7	241.1	-0.3	L	06-08	150.7	148.1	-1.3	S
	SD	06-08	24.6	26.1			06-08	21.7	20.5			06-08	14.8	13.9		
Asian	Mean SS	06-08	231.5	231.1	-0.2	S	06-08	260.0	260.3	0.2	L	06-08	164.7	160.6	-2.1	S
	SD	06-08	26.1	26.7			06-08	22.9	22.5			06-08	16.3	16.0		
Native American	Mean SS	06-08	221.4	216.1	-2.6 ²	S	06-08	250.2	247.5	-1.3 ²	S	06-08	156.7	155.1	-0.8 ²	S
	SD	06-08	26.1	27.5			06-08	22.4	22.3			06-08	16.2	15.6		
Not Low-income	Mean SS	06-08	226.2	227.1	0.5		06-08	255.4	254.7	-0.4		06-08	161.5	159.8	-0.8	
	SD	06-08	25.8	26.1			06-08	22.6	20.8			06-08	16.1	15.5		
Low-income	Mean SS	06-08	206.3	205.5	-0.4	S	06-08	238.9	239.2	0.1	L	06-08	149.5	147.3	-1.1	S
	SD	06-08	25.9	26.0			06-08	22.2	20.8			06-08	14.8	13.7		
Not disabled	Mean SS	06-08	221.8	220.8	-0.5		06-08	253.2	251.7	-0.8		06-08	160.6	158.0	-1.3	
	SD	06-08	25.6	26.5			06-08	21.2	20.0			06-08	15.5	15.3		
Students with disabilities ³	Mean SS	06-08	195.3	195.4	0.1	L	06-08	223.4	225.4	1.0	L	06-08	140.8	141.7	0.4	L
	SD	06-08	28.8	28.8			06-08	22.7	22.1			06-08	15.0	14.5		
Not ELLs	Mean SS	06-08	218.0	219.7	0.8		06-08	249.2	249.1	-0.1		06-08	158.4	156.6	-0.9	
	SD	06-08	27.7	27.6			06-08	23.8	21.7			06-08	16.6	15.9		
English language learners ³	Mean SS	06-08	208.6	193.5	-7.6	S	06-08	225.3	224.3	-0.5	S	06-08	142.9	136.5	-3.2	S
	SD	06-08	25.4	23.3			06-08	22.0	20.3			06-08	14.8	11.3		
Female	Mean SS	06-08	221.9	220.2	-0.9		06-08	251.2	250.4	-0.4		06-08	159.4	157.1	-1.2	
	SD	06-08	27.2	27.5			06-08	23.0	20.9			06-08	15.8	15.5		

Subgroup	Statistic	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
		Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group
Male	Mean SS	06-08	214.1	214.6	0.3	L	06-08	246.7	246.1	-0.3	L	06-08	157.2	155.3	-1.0	L
	SD	06-08	27.6	28.6			06-08	24.5	23.1			06-08	17.5	16.6		

Table reads: In 2006, the mean scale score on the state 4th grade reading test was 224.6 for white students and 201.6 for African American students. In 2008, the mean scale score in 4th grade reading was 225.7 for white students and 203.9 for African American students. Between 2006 and 2008, the mean scale score improved at an average yearly rate of 0.6 points for white students and 1.2 points for African American students, indicating a narrowing of the achievement gap for African Americans.

Note: The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (grades 3-8) is scored on a scale of 120-400+. The Prairie State Achievement Examination (grade 11) is scored on a scale of 120-200.

¹Numbers in these columns are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

³Gap trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because state and federal policy changes may have affected the year-to-year comparability of test results for these subgroups.

Subgroup	Statistic	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
		Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group	Year Span	Starting Year	Ending Year	Average Gain (Mean Scale Score) ¹	Gain Larger or Smaller than Comparison Group
	SD	06-08	26.7	27.6			06-08	28.8	27.3			06-08	15.2	16.5		
Male	Mean SS	06-08	229.3	229.0	-0.1	L	06-08	270.2	270.6	0.2	L	06-08	157.7	157.9	0.1	L
	SD	06-08	28.3	29.5			06-08	31.2	29.4			06-08	16.4	17.8		

Table reads: In 2006, the mean scale score on the state 4th grade math test was 236.3 for white students and 210.7 for African American students. In 2008, the mean scale score in 4th grade math was 237.5 for white students and 212.3 for African American students. Between 2006 and 2008, the mean scale score improved at an average yearly rate of 0.6 points for white students and 0.8 points for African American students, indicating a narrowing of the achievement gap for African Americans.

Note: The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (grades 3-8) is scored on a scale of 120-400+. The Prairie State Achievement Examination (grade 11) is scored on a scale of 120-200.

¹Numbers in these columns are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

³Gap trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because state and federal policy changes may have affected the year-to-year comparability of test results for these subgroups.

Table IL-15. Numbers of Test-Takers

Subgroup	Subject	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
		Year Span	# of Test-Takers Start Year	# of Test-Takers End Year	Change in # of Test-Takers Over Time	% of Test-Takers in Subgroup in End Year	Year Span	# of Test-Takers Start Year	# of Test-Takers End Year	Change in # of Test-Takers Over Time	% of Test-Takers in Subgroup in End Year	Year Span	# of Test-Takers Start Year	# of Test-Takers End Year	Change in # of Test-Takers Over Time	% of Test-Takers in Subgroup in End Year
All tested students	Reading	06-08	139,619	150,312	7.7%	100.0%	06-08	154,855	157,721	1.9%	100.0%	06-08	126,350	133,047	5.3%	100.0%
	Math	06-08	139,542	150,732	8.0%	100.0%	06-08	154,727	158,101	2.2%	100.0%	06-08	126,410	133,114	5.3%	100.0%
White	Reading	06-08	80,552	78,690	-2.3%	52.4%	06-08	89,839	85,645	-4.7%	54.3%	06-08	84,577	84,685	0.1%	63.7%
	Math	06-08	80,529	78,709	-2.3%	52.2%	06-08	89,804	85,713	-4.6%	54.2%	06-08	84,602	84,719	0.1%	63.6%
African American	Reading	06-08	30,161	28,595	-5.2%	19.0%	06-08	31,876	32,915	3.3%	20.9%	06-08	19,375	20,859	7.7%	15.7%
	Math	06-08	30,121	28,596	-5.1%	19.0%	06-08	31,801	32,866	3.3%	20.8%	06-08	19,398	20,883	7.7%	15.7%
Latino	Reading	06-08	19,789	31,755	60.5%	21.1%	06-08	24,656	29,441	19.4%	18.7%	06-08	15,203	19,265	26.7%	14.5%
	Math	06-08	19,782	32,028	61.9%	21.2%	06-08	24,647	29,696	20.5%	18.8%	06-08	15,208	19,272	26.7%	14.5%
Asian	Reading	06-08	5,144	6,002	16.7%	4.0%	06-08	5,243	5,787	10.4%	3.7%	06-08	5,331	5,722	7.3%	4.3%
	Math	06-08	5,141	6,132	19.3%	4.1%	06-08	5,241	5,888	12.3%	3.7%	06-08	5,334	5,724	7.3%	4.3%
Native American	Reading	06-08	319	231	-27.6%	0.2%	06-08	348	241	-30.7%	0.2%	06-08	238	257	8.0%	0.2%
	Math	06-08	316	229	-27.5%	0.2%	06-08	347	242	-30.3%	0.2%	06-08	238	257	8.0%	0.2%
Low-income	Reading	06-08	57,977	67,803	16.9%	45.1%	06-08	61,019	66,083	8.3%	41.9%	06-08	32,748	38,506	17.6%	28.9%
	Math	06-08	57,918	68,151	17.7%	45.2%	06-08	60,919	66,353	8.9%	42.0%	06-08	32,768	38,533	17.6%	28.9%
Students w/ disabilities	Reading	06-08	20,212	20,650	2.2%	13.7%	06-08	22,405	21,150	-5.6%	13.4%	06-08	14,314	14,596	2.0%	11.0%
	Math	06-08	20,180	20,628	2.2%	13.7%	06-08	22,365	21,127	-5.5%	13.4%	06-08	14,350	14,633	2.0%	11.0%
English language learners	Reading	06-08	1,071	13,294	1141.3%	8.8%	06-08	1,694	5,602	230.7%	3.6%	06-08	655	2,754	320.5%	2.1%
	Math	06-08	1,071	13,799	1188.4%	9.2%	06-08	1,697	6,046	256.3%	3.8%	06-08	655	2,759	321.2%	2.1%
Female	Reading	06-08	68,524	73,698	7.6%	49.0%	06-08	75,712	77,016	1.7%	48.8%	06-08	64,404	67,658	5.1%	50.9%
	Math	06-08	68,467	73,894	7.9%	49.0%	06-08	75,655	77,192	2.0%	48.8%	06-08	64,418	67,680	5.1%	50.8%
Male	Reading	06-08	71,052	76,604	7.8%	51.0%	06-08	79,112	80,691	2.0%	51.2%	06-08	61,939	65,389	5.6%	49.1%
	Math	06-08	71,032	76,829	8.2%	51.0%	06-08	79,041	80,895	2.3%	51.2%	06-08	61,985	65,434	5.6%	49.2%

Table reads: In 2006, 80,552 students in the white subgroup took the state 4th grade reading test. By 2008, the number of white test-takers had fallen to 78,690 students, a decrease of 2.3%. In 2008, the white subgroup made up 52.4% of the 150,312 4th graders taking the reading test that year.

Note: **Bold** type indicates that the number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2008 or the most recent year with available data.

Key Terms

Percentage proficient (and above) — The percentage of students in a group who score at and above the cut score for “proficient” performance on the state test used to determine progress under NCLB. The Act requires states to report student test performance in terms of at least three achievement levels: basic, proficient, and advanced. Adequate yearly progress determinations are based on the percentage of students scoring at the proficient level and above.

Percentage basic (and above) — The percentage of students in a group who score at and above the cut score for “basic” performance on the state test used to determine progress under NCLB.

Percentage advanced — The percentage of students in a group who reach or exceed the cut score for “advanced” performance on the state test used to determine progress under NCLB.

Moderate-to-large gain — For the percentage basic, proficient, or advanced, an average gain of 1 or more percentage points per year. For effect size, an average gain of 0.02 or greater per year.

Slight gain — For the percentage basic, proficient, or advanced, an average gain of less than 1 percentage point per year. For effect size, an average gain of less than 0.02 per year.

Moderate-to-large decline — For the percentage basic, proficient, or advanced, an average decline of 1 or more percentage points per year. For effect size, an average decline of 0.02 or greater per year.

Slight decline — For the percentage basic, proficient, or advanced, an average decline of less than 1 percentage points per year. For effect size, an average decline of less than 0.02 per year.

Effect size — A statistical tool that conveys the amount of difference between test results using a common unit of measurement which does not depend on the scoring scale for a particular test.

Accumulated annual effect size — The cumulative gain in effect size over a range of years.

Mean scale score — The arithmetical average of a group of test scores, expressed on a common scale for a particular state’s test. The mean is calculated by adding the scores and dividing the sum by the number of scores.

Standard deviation — A measure of how much test scores tend to deviate from the mean—in other words, how spread out or bunched together test scores are. If students’ scores are bunched together, with many scores close to the mean, then the standard deviation will be small. If scores are spread out, with many students scoring at the high or low ends of the scale, then the standard deviation will be large.

Cautions and Explanations

Different labels for achievement levels — For consistency, all of the state profiles developed for this report use a common set of labels (basic, proficient, and advanced) for the main achievement levels required by NCLB. In practice, however, some states may use different labels, such as “meets standard” instead of proficient, and some states have established additional achievement levels beyond those required by NCLB.

Different names for subgroups — For the sake of consistency and ease of data tabulation, all of the state profiles developed for this report use a common set of names for the major student subgroups. In practice, however, states use various names for subgroups that may differ from those used here (such as using “Hispanic” instead of “Latino,” or “special education students” instead of “students with disabilities”). Moreover, a few states separately track the performance of subgroups not included in the analyses for this report.

Special caution for students with disabilities and English language learners — Trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because changes in federal guidance and state accountability plans may have altered which students in these subgroups are tested for accountability purposes, how they are tested, and when their test scores are counted as proficient under NCLB. These factors could affect the year-to-year comparability of test results.

Inclusion of former English language learners — In many states, the subgroup of English language learners (also known as limited English proficient students) includes students who were formerly English language learners but who have achieved English language proficiency or fluency in the last two years. Federal NCLB regulations permit states to include these formerly ELL students (sometimes referred to as “redesignated fluent English proficient” students) in the ELL subgroup for up to two years for purposes of NCLB accountability.

Limitations of percentage proficient measure — The percentage proficient, the main gauge of student performance under NCLB, can be easily understood and gives a snapshot of how many students have met their state’s performance expectations. But it also has several limitations as a measure of student achievement. Users of percentage proficient data should keep in mind these limitations, particularly the following:

- * “Proficient” means different things across different states. States vary widely in curriculum, learning expectations, and tests, and state tests differ considerably in their difficulty and cut scores for proficient performance.
- * Although this study has taken steps to avoid comparing test data where there have been “breaks” in comparability resulting from new tests, changes in content standards, revised cut scores, or other major changes in testing programs, the year-to-year comparability of test results in the same state may still be affected by less obvious policy and demographic changes.
- * Changes in student performance may occur that are not reflected in percentage proficient data, such as an increase in the number of students reaching performance levels below and above proficient (such as the basic or advanced levels).
- * The size of the achievement gaps between various subgroups depends in part on where a state sets its cut score for proficiency. For example, if a proficiency cut score is set so high that almost nobody reaches it or so low that almost everyone reaches it, there will be little apparent achievement gap. By contrast, if the cut score is closer to the mean test score, the gaps between subgroups will be more apparent.

Difficulty of attributing causes — Although the tables above show trends in test scores since the enactment of NCLB, one cannot assume that these trends have occurred *because* of NCLB. It is always difficult to determine a cause-and-effect relationship between test score trends and any specific education policy or program due to the many federal, state, and local reforms undertaken in recent years and due to the lack of an appropriate “control” group of students not affected by NCLB.