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## WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM K-5 ASSESSMENT RESULTS: 2009-10

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### ABSTRACT

*Moderate to high percentages of Wake County Public School (WCPSS) students demonstrated grade-level performance on K-5 assessments in 2009-10. Results indicate very slight changes from prior years. The percentage of students proficient in reading book level and mathematics strands increased very slightly since 2007-08. Modest declines in proficiency were found in reading strands and expressive literacy assessments. Most students continue to meet unassisted writing sample standards, although the percentages of students mastering writing content or writing conventions were slightly lower than rates in 2007-08. Annual trends show modest increases in student subgroup performance. Reading book level and mathematics achievement gaps still exist yet are slowly narrowing among subgroups.*

### BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Wake County Public School System elementary school teachers use the K-5 assessments to monitor students' achievement of literacy and mathematic objectives and to inform instruction. Students are individually assessed throughout the year and academic interventions are implemented as needed. Teachers document students' progress and provide year-end status information for each student to the Evaluation & Research (E&R) Department. The K-5 assessments include *Receptive and Expressive Literacy* in which students have an opportunity to demonstrate development of both reading and writing skills and *Mathematics*, which documents students' level of performance on five curriculum strands.

In addition to these standard K-5 assessments, nearly all elementary schools (96 out of 102) implemented K-5 universal screening assessments in literacy during the 2009-10 school year. Universal screenings, conducted at the beginning of the year, mid-year, and at the end of the year, facilitate the assessment of basic literacy skills for K-5 students and help to support Intervention Alignment efforts. Students are assessed with grade-level appropriate universal screening measures such as letter naming fluency, phonemic segmentation fluency, nonsense word fluency, and oral reading fluency. These screenings assist teachers in identifying below benchmark achievers, identifying students achieving well above benchmark, and determining

students who need support in developing a skill. Universal screening summary data are not presented in this report. The 2009-10 school year was the first year of universal screening implementation and an analysis of school-level data revealed inconsistent levels of implementation across participating schools. Whereas a few schools did not conduct universal assessments in literacy, other participating schools did not assess all students and some did not conduct all assessments. E&R has posted year-end universal assessment data summaries for school personnel to use for planning purposes in *Quickr*, a WCPSS intranet application that serves as a repository for most of the district's testing and accountability results.

This report summarizes annual K-5 assessment data provided by WCPSS elementary schools. Receptive literacy, expressive literacy, and mathematics assessment district results for 2009-10 are reported and compared to 2008-09 and 2007-08 year-end data. Student subgroup trend results are analyzed. District and school-level summary results for 2009-10 as well as individual student rosters are available in *Quickr*.

### **Receptive Literacy**

Most elementary students continue to score proficient on receptive literacy assessments, despite modest variations in district results over the past three years. Overall reading book level proficiency percentages have increased very slightly since 2007-08 (84.6% to 85.7%). Conversely, proficiency in reading strands has modestly declined since 2007-08, particularly for students in grades 4 and 5.

### **Expressive Literacy**

Expressive literacy results for the district have changed very slightly since 2007-08, although a modest downtrend is apparent. Slightly more than three fourths of students in grades K-1 have met the stage-of-writing standards for their unassisted writing samples. Between 2007-08 and 2009-10, at least 80% of kindergarten students and 68% to 70% of 1<sup>st</sup>-grade students have met grade-level benchmarks. In 2009-10 the percentages of students in grades 3-5 who mastered writing content or writing conventions was slightly lower than rates in 2007-08 (67% compared to 69.2% and 55.4% compared to 56.6%). Students in grade 4 were least likely to score proficient on either assessment.

### **Mathematics**

Mathematic assessment results have remained steady over the years with most students scoring proficient on the various strands. Results for 2009-10 (70.9% proficiency) reveal a slight upward trend in the percentage of K-5 students scoring proficient on all five mathematics strands. The most prominent increases in proficiency rates have occurred among students in grades K-2.

### **Subgroup Trends**

Students in subgroups historically identified as at risk for academic underperformance, free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) students, students with disabilities (SWD), and limited English proficient (LEP) students, have maintained the lowest reading and mathematics proficiency rates,

followed by Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students. Yet annual trends show modest increases in subgroup proficiency on reading book level and mathematics assessments. Some of these subgroups are gaining in proficiency at a slightly higher rate than the highest performing subgroups. Consequently, it appears that academic achievement gaps are slowly narrowing among WCPSS elementary student subgroups, although it will take many years for them to close at the present rate.

## DATA SOURCE

WCPSS elementary school teachers submitted K-5 assessment data at the end of the 2009-10 school year for 65,817 students, as shown in Table 1. Data for slightly fewer kindergarten students were reported in 2009-10 than in prior years. This is likely due to an overall decrease in kindergarten enrollment due to a change in the cut-off date in 2009 from October 15 to August 31. Return rates for the K-5 assessment results have remained stable. Throughout the years, approximately 96% of the elementary student population has been assessed.

**Table 1**  
**Frequency of K-5 Assessment Student Data Submitted, 2007-08 to 2009-10**

	Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Total K-5 Students Assessed	Total K-5 Student Enrollment	Return Rate
2009-10	10,473	11,621	11,433	11,060	10,599	10,631	65,817	68,728	95.8%
2008-09	11,628	11,487	11,474	10,840	10,601	10,320	66,350	68,493	96.9%
2007-08	11,177	11,341	10,883	10,328	10,142	10,185	64,056	66,729	96.0%

Data Source: Annual K-5 Assessment Data and Annual May WCPSS Student Locator Data.

Note: 2009-10 Kindergarten enrollment is lower than prior years because of a one-year impact from the change in the age cut-off for kindergarten enrollment (from October 15 to August 31).

## RECEPTIVE LITERACY

The *Receptive Literacy Summative Profile* documents student growth in receptive literacy, which refers to the receiving of a message by listening, reading, and/or viewing. Data from two receptive literacy assessments—instructional reading book levels and readings strands—are included in this report.

### Instructional Reading Book Level Standards

Running records and oral retellings, a measure of students' ability to accurately read text and understand its meaning, are used to assess students in grades K-2 and students in grades 3-5 whose instructional reading book level is below 24. There are 24 reading book levels through which students advance as they become increasingly proficient readers. Books that emphasize and enhance specific reading objectives are available for each of the 24 book levels.

## Reading Strands

Reading and listening behavioral objectives for grades 2-5 are measured by demonstrated proficiency in three reading strands—reading habits, vocabulary strategies, and text comprehension. The goals and objectives for each strand are listed on students’ receptive literacy profiles. For each of the three strands, teachers mark the level of proficiency (1-4). A student is considered proficient in a strand if his/her performance is at Levels 3 or 4. A student is considered proficient in all strands if he/she is proficient in each strand. If a student is missing scores on one or more strands, his/her proficiency in all strands is considered missing.

## Receptive Literacy Assessment Results

In general, reading literacy results have remained fairly constant over time (Table 2). Reading book level proficiency percentages have increased very slightly whereas proficiency in reading strands has modestly declined since 2007-08. Despite these minor variations, most students have scored proficient on these two receptive literacy assessments.

- In 2009-10 the percentage of students in grades K-2 achieving book-level standards was less than two percentage points higher than district results for 2008-09 and 2007-08. Data for 2009-10 show very slight increases in proficiency percentages at each grade level compared to the 2008-09 results which are down to a small extent from 2007-08.
- Districtwide composite results for 2009-10 show a slight downward trend in reading strand proficiency rates since 2007-08, especially at grades 4 and 5. In 2009-10, proficiency rates for students in grades 2 and 3 rose to 2007-08 levels after very slight declines were reported in 2008-09. Overall, 69.8% of students scored proficient on reading strands in 2009-10.

**Table 2**  
**Receptive Literacy Proficiency Percentages, 2007-08 to 2009-10**

		Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	District Composite
<b>Book Level Standards</b>	2009-10	90.1	82.7	85.0				85.7
	2008-09	88.9*	80.1	83.7				84.1
	2007-08	89.1*	81.0	84.0*				84.6
<b>Reading Strands</b>	2009-10			77.6	67.1	65.3	68.8	69.8
	2008-09			76.8	66.3	66.9	70.1	70.1
	2007-08			77.2	68.1	70.5	73.0	72.3

Data Source: Annual K-5 Assessment Data.

- Note:
1. \* indicates that 5 to 9.9% of the K-2 population had missing scores.
  2. Gray highlights indicates no assessment for that grade level.

## EXPRESSIVE LITERACY

The *Expressive Literacy Summative Profile* provides ongoing documentation of student growth in expressive literacy, which refers to the conveying of a message by speaking, writing, and/or presenting in a multimedia format. Results from unassisted writing samples, writing conventions, and writing content assessments are presented in this report.

### Unassisted Writing Sample

Unassisted writing samples are assessed for students in grades K-2<sup>1</sup>. These writing samples are on self-selected topics and are expected to be completed without any direction from the teacher. The level of proficiency for unassisted writing samples is determined by matching the stage of writing to the grade level and time of year assessed. The writing stages are prewriting and early emergent, emergent, late emergent, early developing, developing, late developing, early independent, mid independent, and late independent.

### Writing Conventions and Writing Rubric

Writing rubrics proficiency is documented based on teacher assessments of students' skills for writing conventions and writing content at grades 3-5. Students receive a score between zero and two on the writing conventions rubric. At each grade level, students must earn a two to be considered proficient in writing conventions. To achieve mastery on the writing content rubric, students must score at least a three out of a possible four.

### Expressive Literacy Assessment Results

Since 2007-08, overall expressive literacy results have changed very slightly, although a modest downward trend is apparent (Table 3). In 2009-10, proficiency percentages for the unassisted writing sample and writing conventions declined only slightly from the prior year, returning to 2007-08 rates. Writing content proficiency rates have also decreased to some extent each year.

- Between 2007-08 and 2009-10, slightly more than three fourths of students in grades K-1 met the stage-of-writing standards for their unassisted writing samples. Whereas each year at least 80% of kindergarten students have met grade-level benchmarks, lower percentages (between 68%-70%) of 1<sup>st</sup>-grade students scored proficient. The highest proficiency levels for each grade were reported in 2008-09, although this year had considerably more missing data than 2009-10 and even 2007-08.
- In 2009-10 the percentage of students in grades 3-5 who mastered writing content was approximately two percentage points lower than district results in 2007-08 (67% compared to 69.2%). Current data show that 4<sup>th</sup>-grade students are still less likely to meet grade-level writing content standards than 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>-grade students. The three-year trend in writing content proficiency rates shows a stable pattern at grade 5, a decline at grade 4, and a slight increase at grade 3.

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<sup>1</sup> E&R collected data for grades K-1 only. These data are presented in Table 3.

- The percentage of students in grades 3-5 scoring proficient on writing conventions in 2009-10 (55.4%) was slightly lower than rates in 2008-09 (58.1%) and 2007-08 (56.5%). Students in grades 4 and 5 also had slightly lower proficiency levels in 2009-10 compared to 2008-09 and 2007-08.

**Table 3**  
**Expressive Literacy Proficiency Percentages, 2007-08 to 2009-10**

		Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	District Composite
<b>Stage of Writing Standard for Unassisted Sample</b>	2009-10	84.4	68.2					75.9
	2008-09	87.1	70.1					78.5
	2007-08	82.4	68.9					75.5
<b>Writing Content Rubric</b>	2009-10				67.6	59.0	74.5	67.0
	2008-09				66.9	62.5	75.1	68.1
	2007-08				64.2	68.8	74.8	69.2
<b>Writing Conventions Rubric</b>	2009-10				54.0	54.9	57.4	55.4
	2008-09				56.4	56.2	61.7	58.1
	2007-08				53.6	56.5	59.9	56.6

Data Source: Annual K-5 Assessment Data.

- Note:
- Grade 2 writing sample data are not reported.
  - E&R collected unassisted writing sample data for grades K-1 only.
  - Gray highlights indicates no assessment for that grade level.

## MATHEMATICS

The *Mathematics Observation Profile* is a data collection tool for quarterly reports of student progress. It is used for grades K-5 to assess levels of student performance by strands: Number and Operations, Measurement, Geometry, Data Analysis and Probability, and Algebra.

The goals and objectives for each strand are listed on students' mathematics profiles. For each of the five strands, teachers mark the level of proficiency (1-4). A student is considered proficient in a mathematics strand if his/her performance is at Levels 3 or 4. A student is considered proficient in all strands if he/she is proficient in each of the five strands. If a student is missing scores on one or more strands, his/her proficiency in all strands is considered missing.

### Mathematics Strands Assessment Results

As shown in Table 4, roughly the same percentage of K-5 students was proficient in all five mathematics strands in 2009-10 as in prior years. The overall proficiency rate, which had been holding constant at 69% for several years, surpassed 70% in 2008-09 (70.2%) and continued to increase in 2009-10 (70.9%). These data indicate a slight upward trend.

- Individual mathematics strand results also show a slight upward trend in each year.
- Since 2007-08, students are performing slightly better on all strands, particularly Algebra.

- The most prominent increases in proficiency rates appear to be occurring among students in grades K-2.

**Table 4**  
**Mathematics Proficiency Percentages, 2007-08 to 2009-10**

		<b>Grade K</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>District Composite</b>
<b>Number &amp; Operations</b>	2009-10	88.9	85.4	80.9	79.6	79.7	83.1	82.9
	2008-09	86.4	84.2	78.6	79.1	78.2	81.3	81.4
	2007-08	86.1	83.7	79.2	77.9	77.5	81.4	81.1
<b>Measurement</b>	2009-10	89.0	85.4	79.9	74.6	77.0	71.6	79.6
	2008-09	86.9	84.1	78.3	74.3	78.0	72.2	79.2
	2007-08	85.9	82.8	78.6	73.5	77.3	72.3	78.6
<b>Geometry</b>	2009-10	90.0	83.1	82.3	79.8	80.0	75.9	81.8
	2008-09	87.5	81.1	81.1	78.2	79.6	75.1	80.6
	2007-08	85.9	80.6	80.4	77.3	78.5	74.9	79.7
<b>Data Analysis &amp; Probability</b>	2009-10	91.3	83.1	77.9	73.1	78.7	81.1	80.8
	2008-09	88.5	81.8	75.5	74.2	77.1	79.9	79.6
	2007-08	87.5	81.0	76.0	73.3	76.4	77.8	78.8
<b>Algebra</b>	2009-10	91.5	83.2	77.5	76.4	72.0	75.9	79.4
	2008-09	88.7	81.8	74.1	73.3	72.4	73.9	77.6
	2007-08	87.8	79.1	73.8	72.7	71.4	73.4	76.5
<b>All Strands</b>	2009-10	83.8	74.8	69.0	65.3	67.2	65.5	70.9
	2008-09	80.8	73.4	66.9	65.3	67.6	66.1	70.2
	2007-08	79.5	71.9	67.0	64.7	66.2	66.2	69.4

Data Source: Annual K-5 Assessment Data.

Note: Students are counted as proficient on all strands if they scored proficient on each of the five strands.

## SUBGROUP TRENDS

Annual trends show modest increases in each subgroup's proficiency level yet gaps between the highest and lowest performing subgroups still exist on reading book level and mathematics strand assessments. In general, subgroups tend to perform better on reading assessments than mathematics assessments. Subgroups historically identified as at risk for academic underperformance include free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) students, students with disabilities (SWD), and limited English proficient (LEP) students.

- FRL, SWD, and LEP student subgroups have maintained the lowest reading and mathematics proficiency rates, followed by Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students.
- Asian students have the highest reading and mathematics proficiency rates, which have risen slightly over the years.
- Proficiency for White students is also high compared to the other subgroups, although the reading and mathematics achievement rates have changed very little since 2007-08 and as far back as 2005-06.

### Reading Proficiency

Subgroup reading proficiency trends are based on the K-2 book level results for 2007-08 to 2009-10 (Table 5). In 2009-10, overall reading book-level standards were achieved by 85.7% of all K-5 students compared to 70.3% FRL students, 64.5% LEP students, and 56.7% SWD students. Reading book-level proficiency rates have increased slightly over the three years for FRL and LEP students. SWD students have the lowest proficiency levels, particularly at grades 1 and 2. The proficiency rate for this subgroup improved slightly in 2009-10 compared to a modest drop in 2008-09.

**Table 5**  
**Reading Proficiency Percentages by At-Risk Subgroups, 2007-08 to 2009-10**

		Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	District Composite
<b>FRL</b>	2009-10	77.0	65.1	70.3	70.3
	2008-09	76.1	60.7	66.7	67.3
	2007-08	75.8	61.0	67.5	67.6
<b>SWD</b>	2009-10	74.2	51.2	52.9	56.7
	2008-09	72.1	49.2	50.6	54.7
	2007-08	75.1	52.5	53.5	58.6
<b>LEP</b>	2009-10	67.9	56.6	69.4	64.5
	2008-09	69.7	59.3	63.1	63.2
	2007-08	71.6	55.2	59.2	61.2

Data Source: K-5 Assessment Data and WCPSS Student Locator Data

- Note:
1. Students may be in more than one subgroup.
  2. At least 10% of Kindergarten students in each subgroup had missing book levels.



Results by racial/ethnic subgroups show disparity as well. As seen in Table 6, whereas approximately 94% of both Asian and White student subgroups achieved book-level proficiency, considerably lower percentages of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students met these same benchmarks (77.2% and 64.8% respectively). Nevertheless, between 2007-08 and 2009-10, the percentage of students meeting grade level standards increased modestly for each subgroup, particularly for Black/African American, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino students. The smallest increase, about one-half of a percentage point, was found for White students.

**Table 6**  
**Reading Proficiency by Racial/Ethnic Subgroups, 2007-08 to 2009-10**

		Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	District Composite
<b>Asian</b>	2009-10	96.3	94.3	92.3	94.3
	2008-09	96.2	90.2	89.9	92.0
	2007-08	95.4	90.5	90.2	92.0
<b>Black/African American</b>	2009-10	83.3	73.5	76.0	77.2
	2008-09	82.4	70.2	72.8	74.8
	2007-08	82.7	70.6	74.5	75.6
<b>American Indian</b>	2009-10	93.3	87.5	96.3	92.6
	2008-09	87.0	81.5	84.8	84.3
	2007-08	95.0	86.5	100.0	92.4
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	2009-10	71.0	57.9	67.3	64.8
	2008-09	69.5	54.5	63.4	61.9
	2007-08	72.0	55.6	62.0	62.5
<b>White</b>	2009-10	96.4	92.2	93.3	93.9
	2008-09	94.9	90.9	93.8	93.2
	2007-08	94.8	91.9	93.2	93.3
<b>Multiracial</b>	2009-10	93.0	86.0	86.4	88.3
	2008-09	91.6	83.5	85.8	86.9
	2007-08	91.0	82.2	86.8	86.6

Data Source: K-5 Assessment Data and Spring WCPSS Student Locator Data

Note: Results for American Indian students may fluctuate annually due to the small sample sizes.

## Mathematics Proficiency

Subgroup mathematics proficiency trends are based on results for all mathematics strands combined (Table 7). Overall, mathematics strands results show extant gaps between some subgroups. In 2009-10, 70.9% of elementary students scored proficient on all mathematics strands, compared to 48.5% FRL students, 46.7% LEP students, and 35.0% SWD students. The most notable positive trends have occurred among kindergarten students for each of the academically at-risk subgroups. In general, students at grades K-2 outperform students at grades 3-5.

- The proficiency rates for FRL students have increased very slightly each year since 2007-08.
- Districtwide, SWD students were approximately two percentage points less likely to be proficient on mathematics strands in 2009-10 compared to 2007-08. Nevertheless, between 2007-08 and 2009-10, the proficiency rate for SWD students slightly increased at grades K and 1 only.
- Overall, a slight increase in mathematics proficiency is apparent for FRL and LEP students between 2007-08 and 2009-10. LEP students did experience a one percentage point decline in proficiency levels between 2008-09 and 2009-10. Noticeable increases in mathematics proficiency occurred between 2007-08 and 2009-10 for students in grades K, 2, and 3.

**Table 7**  
**Mathematics Proficiency Percentages by At-Risk Subgroups,**  
**2007-08 to 2009-10**

		Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	District Composite
<b>FRL</b>	2009-10	66.4	54.2	46.2	40.7	44.1	40.6	48.5
	2008-09	62.1	53.2	42.5	40.6	42.8	41.4	47.5
	2007-08	59.9	49.6	43.4	39.8	40.5	41.5	46.1
<b>SWD</b>	2009-10	56.8	43.1	37.4	31.2	29.5	27.6	35.0
	2008-09	47.9	43.0	33.3	28.4	31.1	29.9	34.6
	2007-08	53.4	42.8	38.6	33.5	33.0	29.1	37.2
<b>LEP</b>	2009-10	56.5	51.5	50.5	42.9	33.6	34.5	46.7
	2008-09	52.9	56.5	47.6	38.8	39.1	36.4	47.7
	2007-08	52.3	51.4	45.5	34.0	34.7	40.6	45.5

Data Source: K-5 Assessment Data and Spring WCPSS Student Locator Data

- Note:
1. Students may be in more than one subgroup.
  2. Results are based on mastery across all five strands.

In 2009-10, Black/African American students (50.1%) and Hispanic/Latino students (50.1%), had considerably lower percentages of students achieving mathematics standards compared to the top performing subgroups, Asian (87.7%) and White (84.1%) students (see Table 8). Nevertheless, between 2007-08 and 2009-10, mathematic proficiency levels increased very slightly for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students. Data for 2009-10 show relatively stable trends yet positive proficiency rates for Asian and White students.

**Table 8**  
**Mathematics Proficiency by Racial/Ethnic Subgroups, 2007-08 to 2009-10**

		<b>Grade K</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>District Composite</b>
<b>Asian</b>	2009-10	92.4	87.1	86.7	85.3	87.0	87.4	87.7
	2008-09	89.8	86.8	84.8	85.7	88.7	85.2	86.9
	2007-08	89.5	87.2	85.1	84.3	86.6	87.4	86.7
<b>Black/African American</b>	2009-10	73.2	57.7	46.8	41.7	44.4	40.8	50.1
	2008-09	70.2	55.3	43.4	40.5	45.5	41.8	49.5
	2007-08	68.5	52.3	44.8	41.9	41.7	41.5	48.3
<b>American Indian</b>	2009-10	83.9	83.3	66.7	56.7	78.9	60.0	70.8
	2008-09	80.0	74.1	60.6	68.4	60.7	60.6	66.7
	2007-08	71.4	78.4	72.7	58.6	65.7	73.9	70.1
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	2009-10	60.9	54.8	48.3	42.9	46.3	46.1	50.1
	2008-09	55.9	52.9	45.0	43.5	46.2	46.6	48.9
	2007-08	53.6	51.4	44.9	41.6	45.4	46.1	47.7
<b>White</b>	2009-10	93.1	86.8	83.1	80.1	81.1	80.6	84.1
	2008-09	91.3	86.4	82.4	80.6	81.7	80.2	84.1
	2007-08	90.8	85.4	81.8	80.3	80.6	80.6	83.3
<b>Multiracial</b>	2009-10	88.5	74.2	71.4	66.9	65.4	65.1	72.1
	2008-09	85.2	75.9	66.9	62.8	66.3	64.6	71.0
	2007-08	84.0	73.4	65.2	63.4	66.5	66.0	70.5

Data Source: K-5 Assessment Data and Spring WCPSS Student Locator Data

- Note:
1. Results are based on mastery across all five strands.
  2. Results for American Indian students may fluctuate annually due to the small sample sizes.

## DISCUSSION

Moderate to high percentages of WCPSS students demonstrated grade-level performance on K-5 assessments in 2009-10. These results indicate very slight changes from prior years. Trends indicate that students have improved some in certain areas and declined slightly in others. For example, very slight increases are apparent in reading book level and mathematics strands proficiency since 2007-08 yet data show a modest downtrend among expressive literacy assessment results.

Despite overall positive trends, reading and mathematics achievement gaps persist between students in some subgroups. Students in subgroups that have been identified as more likely to be academically at-risk— FRL students, LEP students, SWD students, and students in Black/African American or Hispanic/Latino subgroups— still have lower reading book level and mathematics proficiency rates compared to their peers. Some of the gaps are considerable. Students in grades K-2 continue to achieve higher performance rates on these assessments than students in grades 3-5. Nevertheless, WCPSS student data show that achievement gaps are greatest at grades K-2. These gaps persist into grades 3-5 and are evident in End-of-Grade (EOG) proficiency results.

It is important to point out that reading and mathematics proficiency rates have improved for many of the historically underperforming subgroups. More importantly, some of these subgroups are gaining in proficiency at a slightly higher rate than higher performing subgroups, for example, White students. Consequently, it appears that academic achievement gaps are slowly narrowing among WCPSS elementary student subgroups. A critical question that remains is how to close the achievement gap more quickly, as it will take several years for gaps to close at the present rate.

It is also important to understand how LEP students, an underperforming yet growing subgroup, are assessed. LEP students are assessed as appropriate per their LEP plan. Each year a student's LEP plan, which includes accommodations for state mandated testing as well as modifications and interventions used in the classroom, is updated based on the annual spring scores from the language test *Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners* (ACCESS for ELLS). If the LEP team has discussed particular modifications or interventions for the student and has documented them on the signed LEP plan, then these modifications should be utilized during the K-5 assessments. Currently K-5 assessments are solely administered in the English language and remain the standard practice for assessing WCPSS elementary students.

It is unclear at this time if more extensive implementation of the K-5 universal assessments will impact the use of the K-5 assessments. Since 2009-10 marked the first year of implementation of the universal screenings in literacy for most schools, additional annual data are necessary to assess the fidelity of implementation. Additionally, these assessments are not consistently being used across all elementary schools and have not included mathematics. Future inquiries may be needed to review the use of universal assessments and investigate their value compared to current K-5 assessments. Discussions should occur regarding the potential use of universal screenings and K-5 assessments.