



## Component 3: Student Needs and System Responsibilities



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## Introduction

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Just as Wyoming's vast and diverse geography—encompassing mountains, plains, and valleys—requires tailored navigation strategies, the literacy needs of students across the state also demand customized approaches that respect the unique circumstances of each community. Each environment presents distinct challenges; scaling the rugged peaks of the Wind River Range contrasts significantly with navigating the expansive plains of the eastern part of the state. Similarly, the literacy landscape in Wyoming is varied, with different student populations, whether in rural areas, among students with disabilities, multilingual learners (MLLs), or those from high-poverty communities, facing unique barriers. These barriers necessitate targeted solutions tailored to meet all students' diverse needs and promote equitable learning opportunities.

Component 3 is grounded in evidence-based practices, focusing on student needs and system responsibilities. The Wyoming Language and Literacy Plan (WLLP) serves as the guiding document to align Wyoming's literacy ecosystem and drive systems change to enhance literacy outcomes for all students. Central to this approach is the “science of reading,” which encompasses a body of research demonstrating that instruction aligned with its principles improves literacy outcomes for all students, including those who struggle with reading. Effective instruction, especially when initiated early, can prevent or significantly reduce reading difficulties, paving the way for better long-term outcomes.

Additionally, strong reading skills are essential for success in various aspects of life, including school and the workforce, contributing to broader social and economic mobility. The WLLP promotes collaboration among systems, educators, community stakeholders, and families to create a holistic support system. By prioritizing student needs and embracing a collective responsibility approach, the WLLP guides the system in providing the necessary tools and supports to help students thrive academically and beyond.

## Purpose

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While general data provides a broad overview, disaggregated data tells a more nuanced story, uncovering disparities often hidden within overall statistics. This level of analysis allows for a deeper understanding of students' experiences and outcomes. Although Wyoming may boast high ratings in specific educational metrics, this success is not universal. Some students have made commendable progress, yet these achievements are not equitably shared across the entire population. Despite Wyoming's strong standing relative to similar states, significant performance gaps persist, underscoring areas where the education system must improve to meet the needs of all students. High rankings in specific areas should not overshadow the ongoing work required to ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Through a comprehensive analysis of disaggregated data, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) identifies the unique literacy needs of different student populations and implements targeted interventions designed to maximize impact. This data-driven approach ensures that the WLLP advances equitable access, directing resources where they are most needed to drive meaningful change. In collaboration with stakeholders, the WDE promotes shared responsibility for literacy outcomes, ensuring that every student, regardless of circumstances, has access to the tools and resources necessary for success. This collective

effort lays a foundation for sustained achievement across all communities.

The purpose of Component 3 is to comprehensively analyze the literacy-related needs of students, teachers, and preservice teachers within the state. By presenting disaggregated data, this section aims to identify specific target populations such as students with disabilities, MLLs, and students in high-poverty areas who may require focused support to achieve equitable literacy outcomes. A detailed root cause analysis will uncover the factors contributing to disparities in literacy achievement among these groups, guiding the development of priorities and targeted strategies to address their needs effectively.

This section will also review successful literacy initiatives that have positively impacted similar populations and identify evidence-based practices that can be adapted and implemented within Wyoming. These initiatives will serve as models for supporting targeted student groups effectively through proven strategies. By examining outcomes from other contexts, the WLLP can inform the design of relevant and scalable interventions. While the primary focus is on traditionally underserved groups, this component will also consider broader literacy-related needs, including those of general P–12 students, educators, families, and students in transition programs.

As the WLLP examines the unique needs of various student populations and reviews successful literacy initiatives, it is also crucial to consider how these efforts align with broader educational accountability structures. Wyoming's accountability system is essential in ensuring that progress toward literacy and academic achievement is measured and supported across all student groups. The WLLP aims to enhance outcomes and support schools in their continuous improvement efforts by aligning literacy strategies with state and federal accountability frameworks.

## Wyoming Accountability Overview

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The Wyoming accountability system ensures schools and districts are responsible for fostering academic growth and achievement, aligning with both state and federal requirements. Accountability in education involves a structured system of policies and practices that measure performance, enhance outcomes, and ensure transparency. In Wyoming, this is achieved through the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) for state-level accountability and compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for federal accountability. These frameworks collectively define educational goals, establish performance measurement criteria, and outline mechanisms for supporting schools needing improvement.

Building on the foundation set by the Wyoming accountability system, the federal accountability framework provides additional layers of goals and performance measures to ensure that Wyoming's schools meet the long-term academic needs of all students. The federal guidelines, as defined by ESSA, set clear benchmarks for academic success and ensure that progress is tracked over a 15-year timeline. These goals align with the state's overarching objectives while emphasizing areas such as graduation rates and proficiency in math, reading, and English language development.

### Federal Accountability

Wyoming's accountability goals focus on long-term success, with a 15-year timeline to achieve key benchmarks. These include an 88% graduation rate, proficiency targets for grades 3–8 and high school in math and reading, and a 59% progress rate for students learning English. Performance is evaluated using

growth, readiness, achievement, equity, and English language proficiency indicators. Schools are categorized into four performance levels: Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, and Not Meeting Expectations. Schools in the latter two categories must submit improvement plans or participate in targeted interventions to address areas of weakness.

### **Levels of School Ratings Under ESSA**

Under ESSA, schools are classified into three key levels of support based on their performance. Each level highlights the areas needing improvement and the degree of intervention required.

#### **1. Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI):**

CSI schools represent the bottom 5% of Title I schools regarding overall student performance, or have graduation rates at or below 67%. These schools must collaborate with districts and communities to develop evidence-based improvement plans. Support includes resource allocation and technical assistance at state and district levels, with state approval of plans and benchmarks for monitoring progress. Schools failing to meet exit criteria may face escalated interventions.

#### **2. Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI):**

TSI schools are identified for “consistently underperforming” student groups, as defined by state criteria. These schools work with local communities to create and implement improvement plans, addressing specific disparities and inequities. While primarily district-led, the state provides funding, technical resources, and oversight. Failure to meet improvement thresholds may escalate actions at the district level.

#### **3. Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI):**

ATSI schools perform as poorly for specific student groups as the bottom 5% of all schools for overall students. They are required to address resource inequities through detailed plans. ATSI schools that fail to meet improvement criteria within the specified timeline may be reclassified as CSI schools, triggering more intensive state-led support and intervention measures.

Performance classifications are crucial in shaping a systematic approach to recognizing and tackling performance challenges in educational settings. By focusing on equity and implementing evidence-based practices, these classifications ensure that all students receive the support they need to thrive. Furthermore, advocates and stakeholders are essential collaborators, working alongside districts and schools to develop comprehensive improvement plans. Their involvement is vital to guarantee that these plans are effective and inclusive, embracing the diverse needs of the student population.

In addition to the federal accountability levels outlined under ESSA, Wyoming’s state accountability system provides a complementary framework for measuring student performance and guiding support efforts. While ESSA identifies schools requiring specific intervention based on federal criteria, Wyoming’s own assessment tools, such as the Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress (WY-TOPP), offer valuable insights into the progress and achievement of students at the state level. Together, these systems create a comprehensive approach to monitoring and improving educational outcomes across the state.

### **State Accountability**

Student performance is measured annually through the WY-TOPP. This assessment covers reading and math for grades 3-8 and once during grades 10-12. Science is assessed once within three grade spans: 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. These assessments provide valuable data to evaluate achievement and growth, ensuring



progress is tracked consistently across the state. Schools with graduation rates below 67%, performance in the bottom 5% of Title I schools, or specific student groups in the bottom 10% are identified for targeted support and interventions.

Wyoming's accountability system also emphasizes continuous improvement and collaboration. Schools can utilize this framework to compare performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and implement effective growth strategies. Targeted support and state-led interventions are critical components of this process, ensuring that schools receive the resources and guidance they need to enhance student outcomes.

Stakeholders can visit the [WDE Accountability page](#) for additional information, including tools and reports that support accountability efforts. This system reflects Wyoming's commitment to educational excellence by fostering growth, equity, and achievement for all students. The resources on the WDE Accountability page are designed to enhance understanding and engagement with the accountability process. Stakeholders, including educators and community members, can utilize these tools to track progress and advocate for improvements in the educational system.

The WAEA establishes a framework for evaluating educational performance in Wyoming, focusing on specific educational goals. Under this law, traditional schools are assigned one of four overall performance ratings based on various indicators:

- Exceeding Expectations.
- Meeting Expectations.
- Partially Meeting Expectations.
- Not Meeting Expectations.

These ratings are determined by assessing multiple factors, including:

- Student growth.
- Readiness.
- Achievement.
- Equity.
- English language proficiency.
- Postsecondary readiness.
- Graduation rates.
- Credits earned.

Alternative schools are evaluated using criteria that closely resemble those applied to traditional schools. However, they also incorporate extra indicators that focus on Climate and Engagement, recognizing the distinct environment and needs of these educational settings. These indicators provide a broader perspective on the school's performance. As a result, alternative schools are given performance ratings that take into account their unique context, allowing for a more tailored assessment of their effectiveness in fostering student success and community involvement.

- Exceeding Alternative Expectations.
- Meeting Alternative Expectations.
- Partially Meeting Alternative Expectations.
- Not Meeting Alternative Expectations.

In alignment with ESSA, schools facing significant challenges have been identified as needing additional support. The WAEA provides resources aimed at enhancing both student and school performance. This support encompasses statewide professional development, district accreditation, school improvement planning, monitoring, and onsite technical assistance. Furthermore, schools that partially meet or do not meet expectations and those designated federally as Comprehensive School Improvement (CSI) and Targeted School Improvement (TSI) can access additional resources to aid their improvement efforts.

The Traditional School Performance ratings, shown in Table 1, indicate a general improvement in traditional school performance over the three academic years. The percentage of schools in the “Not Meeting” category decreased from 22% in 2021-22 to 16% in 2022-23, though it slightly increased to 18% in 2023-24. The “Partially Meeting” category remained stable, fluctuating only slightly between 29% and 30%. Notably, the “Meeting” category showed consistent growth, increasing from 36% in 2021-22 to 40% in 2022-23 and 41% in 2023-24, suggesting that more schools are reaching expected performance levels. Meanwhile, the “Exceeding” category remained steady, with only a minor variation, maintaining between 12% and 13% across the years. These trends suggest a positive shift, with more schools moving out of the lower performance categories and into the “Meeting” category, reflecting overall progress in schools performance.

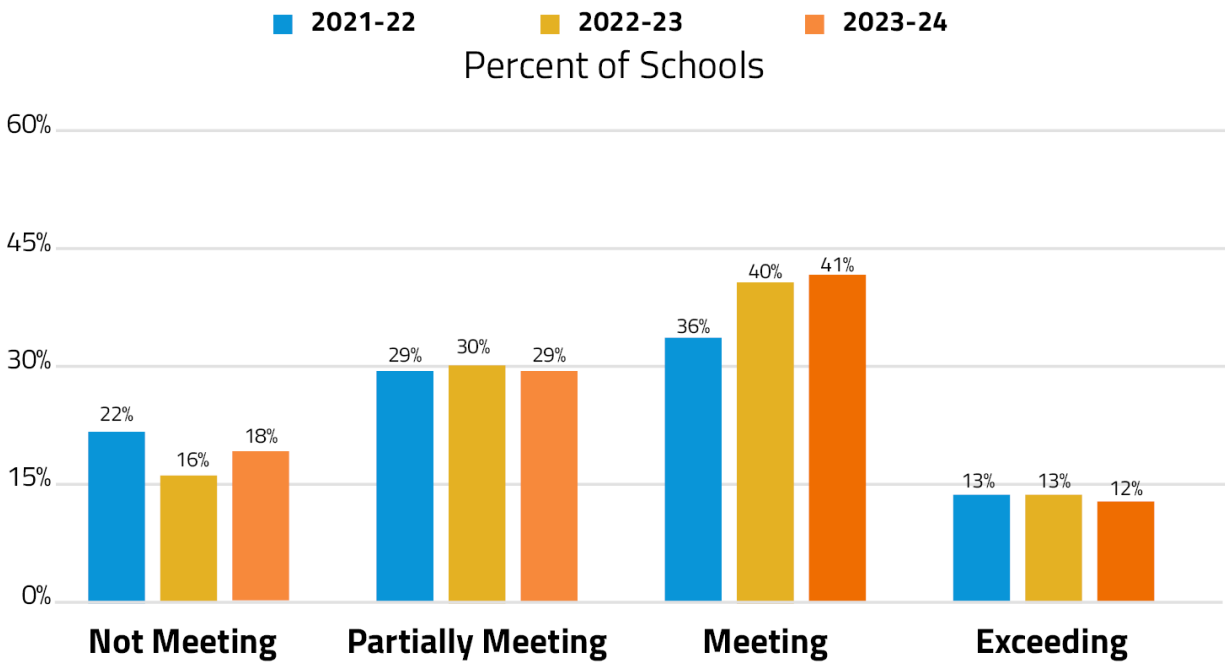


Table 1: Traditional School Performance Ratings  
Note. This table illustrates the school performance ratings for traditional schools in Wyoming, based on data from the WDE.

The performance of alternative schools, as shown in Table 2, has demonstrated significant improvement over the past three academic years. The percentage of schools in the “Not Meeting” category decreased from 12% in 2021-22 to 5% in 2023-24, indicating a reduction in the number of schools falling below expectations. The “Partially Meeting” category experienced a sharp decline from 43% in 2021-22 to just 10% in 2023-24, suggesting that fewer schools are struggling at this level. Meanwhile, the “Meeting” category has steadily

increased from 39% in 2021-22 to 37% in 2023-24, remaining relatively stable. The most significant improvement is observed in the “Exceeding” category, which surged from 21% in 2021-22 to 47% in 2022-23, before slightly decreasing to 42% in 2023-24. These trends indicate a strong upward trajectory in alternative school performance, with more schools reaching higher achievement levels and fewer in the lower category.

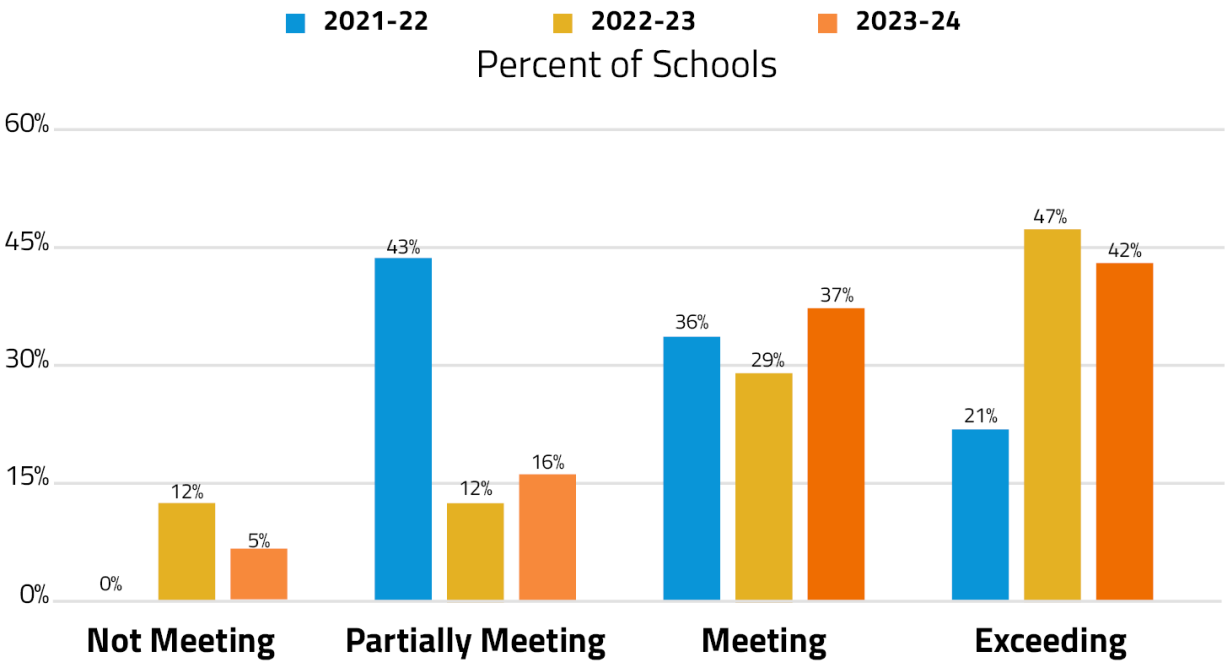


Table 2: Alternative School Performance Ratings  
Note. This table illustrates data from the WDE. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

As Wyoming’s accountability system continues to track student performance through tools like the WY-TOPP, it is essential to examine how these assessments align with school performance ratings under the WAEA. The WAEA provides an actionable framework for evaluating school progress, offering a structured approach to identifying areas for improvement and supporting schools in their growth. Through data presented in the WAEA School Performance Growth and Achievement Report, stakeholders can better understand how performance ratings have evolved, allowing for informed decision-making to guide future educational improvements.

### WAEA School Performance Growth and Achievement Report

The 2023-2024 State Growth and Achievement Report provides a dynamic and interactive representation of school performance, offering valuable insights for educators and stakeholders. This tool is available on the WDE website and allows users to explore data on school achievement and growth trends, supporting informed decision-making and targeted instructional improvements.

#### Key Features of the Report:

- **Interactive Visualization:** Each bubble on the graph represents a school or a subset of a school (e.g., filtered by grade or student group). The bubble size reflects the number of students in the selected group, providing immediate context for group size.
- **Data Accessibility:** Users can hover over a bubble to view detailed information, including the school or



group's name and performance data such as proficiency and growth rates.

- **Customizable Filters:** Multiple filters enable users to examine specific data points, such as reading or math results, disaggregated by student groups, grades, or years (currently, data is available for the 2013-14 school year). Adjusting the filters and clicking "View Report" updates the visualization based on the selected parameters.
- **Legend for Context:** A legend alongside the graph provides a clear reference for interpreting the data.

These key features of the report are available on the [WDE Accountability page](#).

### Practical Applications

This report helps to answer key questions that drive data-informed decisions:

- **Comparative Performance:** How does my school's performance compare to others in the district or state regarding overall proficiency and growth?
- **Strength Identification:** Which subjects, grades, or student groups perform better than others within the state or district?
- **Growth Monitoring:** How well are students scoring below proficient last year progressing, particularly those in the "consolidated subgroup" used for state accountability?
- **Benchmarking Growth:** Are there schools of similar size and proficiency rates that demonstrate higher growth, suggesting strategies for improvement?

### ESSA Subgroup Scores and Category Levels in Reading

Under ESSA, reading indicator scores and category levels are determined for schools overall and specific student subgroups that meet the minimum n-size threshold, requiring at least 10 students with valid scores. The designated subgroups include economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and MLLs. The major racial and ethnic groups considered in the accountability framework are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander NH/PI, Asian, Black, Native American, Two or More Races, Hispanic, and White. The same methodology applied to determine overall school reading performance is used to assess each subgroup, ensuring consistency in measuring student achievement.

Subgroup reading cut-scores were initially established during the 2017-18 baseline accountability year. These cut-scores were determined so that one-third of schools meeting the minimum n-size for a given subgroup were placed into each performance category. To maintain consistency in evaluation over time, these subgroup cut-scores remain in use for subsequent years. This approach allows schools and districts to track progress and determine whether instructional strategies effectively support students' reading development. By maintaining these thresholds, the accountability system provides a stable benchmark for evaluating subgroup performance and identifying areas for targeted support.

### Reading Growth Indicator Category Levels:

- Below 47.7 – Low Growth in Reading.
- Between 47.7 and 58.6 – Moderate Growth in Reading.
- Above 58.6 – High Growth in Reading.

The reading Growth Indicator measures student progress in reading comprehension from year to year, based on state assessments for students in grades four through ten. Growth scores are calculated only for students with a prior-year test score, meaning that reading progress is tracked beginning in fourth grade under Wyoming's WAEA model. This indicator provides critical insights into whether students are making adequate

gains in reading over time, helping schools evaluate instructional effectiveness and adjust support as needed. By analyzing reading growth, educators can determine whether students are on track to meet grade-level expectations and identify those who require additional intervention.

Each student with a prior and current reading test score is assigned a Student Growth Percentile (SGP), which compares their progress to that of their academic peers—students in the same grade across Wyoming with similar prior reading scores. SGPs are generated using quantile regression and range from 1 to 99, with lower scores indicating lower growth and higher scores reflecting more substantial growth relative to similar students. This method ensures that student progress is evaluated in relation to peers with comparable test score histories, allowing for a more precise assessment of reading development. By using SGPs, schools can identify trends in student growth and implement instructional strategies that support continuous literacy improvement.

The quantile regression model incorporates test scores from the 2017–18 through 2022–23 school years. A fourth-grade student, for example, will have one prior score factored into the analysis, while a tenth-grade student may have up to five prior scores included. This long-term approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of student growth over multiple years. Schools and districts can use this information to refine reading instruction, target interventions, and ensure all students receive the support necessary to develop strong literacy skills.

Growth and achievement must be analyzed together to fully assess student reading performance. While achievement scores provide a snapshot of how well students meet grade-level reading expectations, growth scores highlight progress over time, revealing whether students are making sufficient gains to reach proficiency. Growth measures are particularly useful for understanding the effectiveness of instruction, especially for students who may not yet be performing at grade level. Schools and districts benefit from using these combined metrics to inform instructional decisions and resource allocation.

## **Growth and Achievement Reports**

The Growth and Achievement Report below presents a detailed breakdown of student performance, categorizing reading growth and proficiency levels to provide a clearer picture of overall progress. These District reports help identify trends, recognize successes, and pinpoint areas where additional support is needed. The following section details the methodology behind the reading Growth Indicator, explaining how student progress is measured and how this information can drive continuous improvement in literacy outcomes.

The analysis utilizes a two-dimensional graph to visualize student performance across various subgroups based on two key metrics: the x-axis represents Mean Growth Percentile (MGP), which measures academic growth, while the y-axis indicates the Percentage At/Above Proficient, reflecting achievement levels. The graph is divided into four quadrants: the top-right quadrant shows students with higher achievement and higher growth; the top-left quadrant indicates higher achievement but lower growth; the bottom-right quadrant represents lower achievement with higher growth; and the bottom-left quadrant reflects both lower achievement and lower growth.

In examining the data for all subgroups, the largest concentration of data points typically appears near the center, indicating moderate proficiency levels with mixed growth outcomes. Some larger bubbles may be positioned in the upper quadrants, suggesting that certain students have attained higher proficiency levels.

Additionally, a wider range of growth percentiles across the subgroups indicates significant variability in student progress, highlighting that while some students are making substantial gains, others may be experiencing stagnation or slower growth. This analysis provides valuable insights into the academic performance and growth of students across different subgroups that emphasize areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

The patterns observed in the overall data provide important insights into various student subgroups' performance and growth trends. However, to better understand these trends, it is crucial to examine how specific groups are represented in the data. By analyzing these groups individually, we gain a deeper understanding of their unique challenges and successes, further highlighting areas where targeted support and resources are most necessary needed.

**Multilingual Learners and Non-Multilingual Learners**

The following data analysis focuses on the academic performance and growth of MLLs and Non-Multilingual Learners (NMLLs). By delving into unique educational journeys, we aim to gain deeper insight into specific needs and outcomes. The findings from this analysis serve as a solid foundation for identifying both strengths and challenges within this demographic. Furthermore, by highlighting these aspects, we can explore targeted support opportunities to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

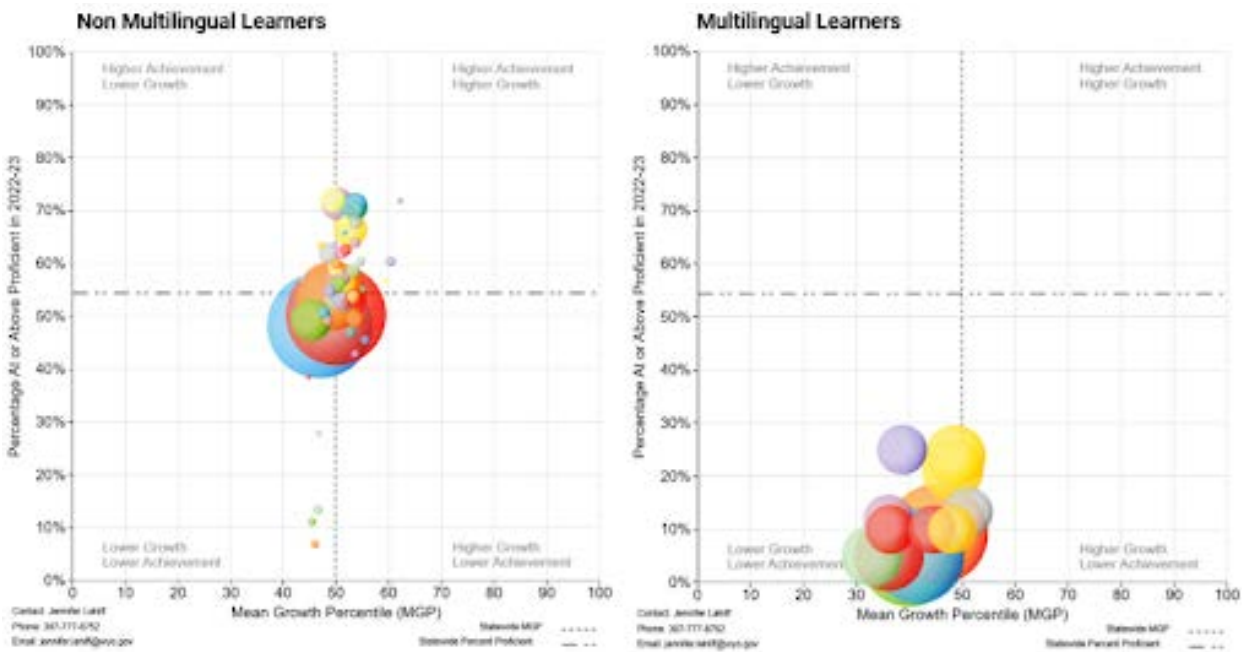


Table 3: Multilingual Learners and Non-Multilingual Learners

Note. The data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

**Distribution Differences Between Groups**

The data reveal distinct differences in the distribution of growth and proficiency between NMLLs and MLLs. NMLLs exhibit a broader range in MGP, with data points dispersed across various proficiency levels, including higher achievement quadrants. In contrast, MLLs have a tighter clustering in the lower half of the chart, indicating lower achievement and slower growth. The largest bubbles in the NMLL chart appear across mid-to-high proficiency levels, whereas MLLs are predominantly concentrated in the lower-left quadrant,

representing both low proficiency and low growth.

**Equity Implications**

The data highlights a significant achievement and growth gap between these two groups, emphasizing disparities in educational outcomes. MLLs may face systemic barriers such as limited access to High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), language acquisition support, or tailored intervention strategies. This distribution pattern suggests the need for targeted, evidence-based instructional strategies that enhance language-rich learning environments and provide scaffolding to accelerate academic growth. Additionally, it underscores the importance of policy interventions and resource allocation to create a more equitable educational landscape for MLLs.

**Key Takeaways**

- NMLLs generally show higher proficiency rates and more variability in growth, while Multilingual Learners consistently score lower in both areas.
- There is a clear need for targeted interventions to support MLLs in improving growth and proficiency.
- These findings can guide resource allocation, instructional strategies, and policy decisions to better support MLLs.
- Addressing these disparities requires language-rich instruction, scaffolding strategies, and culturally responsive teaching to ensure equitable literacy development.

**Free and Reduced Lunch and Non-Free and Reduced Lunch**

The following data analysis focuses on the academic performance and growth of students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch and those not eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. By delving into unique educational journeys, we aim to gain deeper insight into specific needs and outcomes. The findings from this analysis serve as a solid foundation for identifying both strengths and challenges within this demographic. Furthermore, by highlighting these aspects, we can explore targeted support opportunities to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

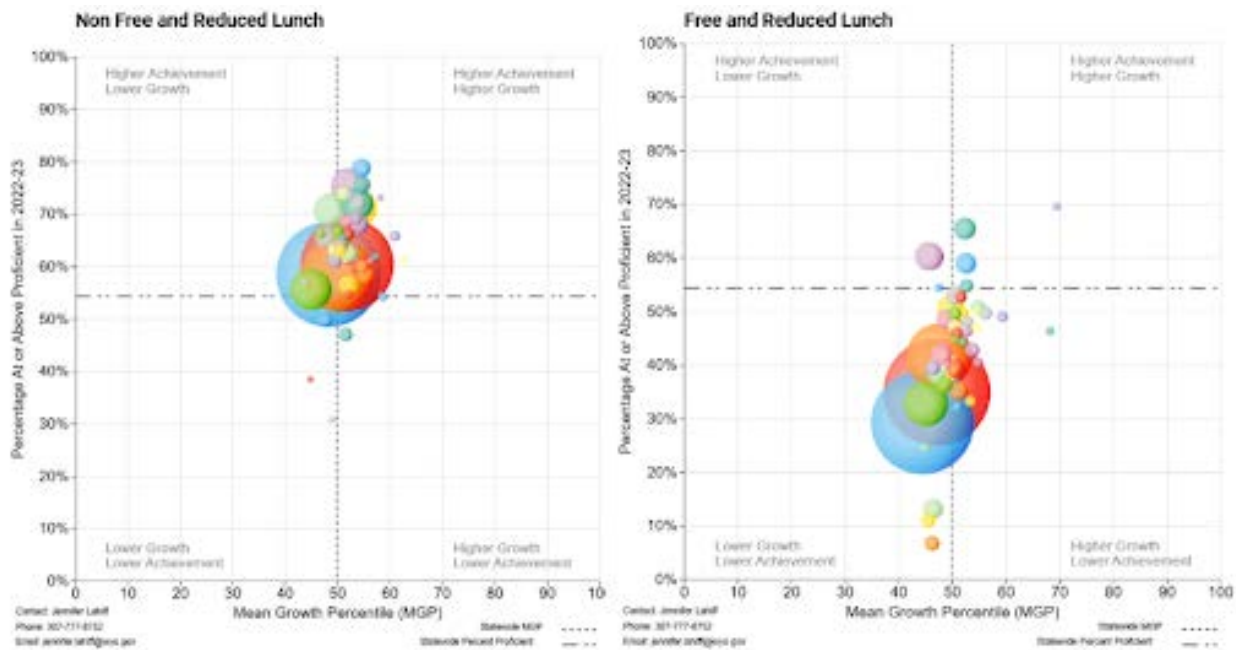


Table 4: Free and Reduced Lunch and Non-Free and Reduced Lunch

Note. The data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### **Distribution Differences Between Groups**

The data highlights clear distinctions between students who do not receive Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) and those who do. Students who do not receive FRL have a broader distribution of growth percentiles, with a significant number of students achieving higher proficiency levels. The largest bubbles in this group are concentrated in the middle to higher proficiency range, indicating better overall performance. In contrast, students who receive FRL show a tighter clustering in the lower half of the chart, with a higher concentration of students in the lower-growth, lower-proficiency quadrant. While some FRL students achieve proficiency, their distribution suggests more limited academic growth and achievement overall.

### **Equity Implications**

The patterns in this data reflect a significant opportunity gap between students based on economic status. The clustering of FRL students in lower achievement and lower growth quadrants suggests potential disparities in access to evidence-based, high-quality educational resources, instruction, and academic support. Socioeconomic status often correlates with systemic challenges, such as reduced access to tutoring, evidence-based HQIM, and out-of-school enrichment opportunities. This data reinforces the need for targeted interventions, including evidence-based high-quality curriculum, increased instructional support, and expanded access to evidence-based literacy programs, to ensure that economically disadvantaged students have equitable opportunities for academic success.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Students who do not qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch show higher proficiency rates and more significant growth variability, while students receiving FRL tend to cluster in lower growth and lower proficiency ranges.
- Economic disparities are linked to academic performance, with students who qualify for Free and Reduced lunch indicating the need for additional support and intervention to improve proficiency and growth.
- These findings highlight the need for resource allocation, evidence-based HQIM, practices, and interventions to support students from lower-income backgrounds.
- Addressing this gap requires systemic solutions, including evidence alignment and more substantial academic support structures, tutoring programs, and language-rich instruction, to promote equity in educational outcomes.

### **Without Disabilities and With Disabilities**

The following data analysis examines the academic performance and growth of students identified as having disabilities and those who do not. This examination aims to provide a deeper understanding of the unique educational needs and outcomes associated with these student groups. By comparing student progress, we can identify distinct strengths, challenges, and opportunities for targeted interventions. Overall, the analysis serves as an essential foundation for educators to tailor support that addresses the unique needs of all

students.

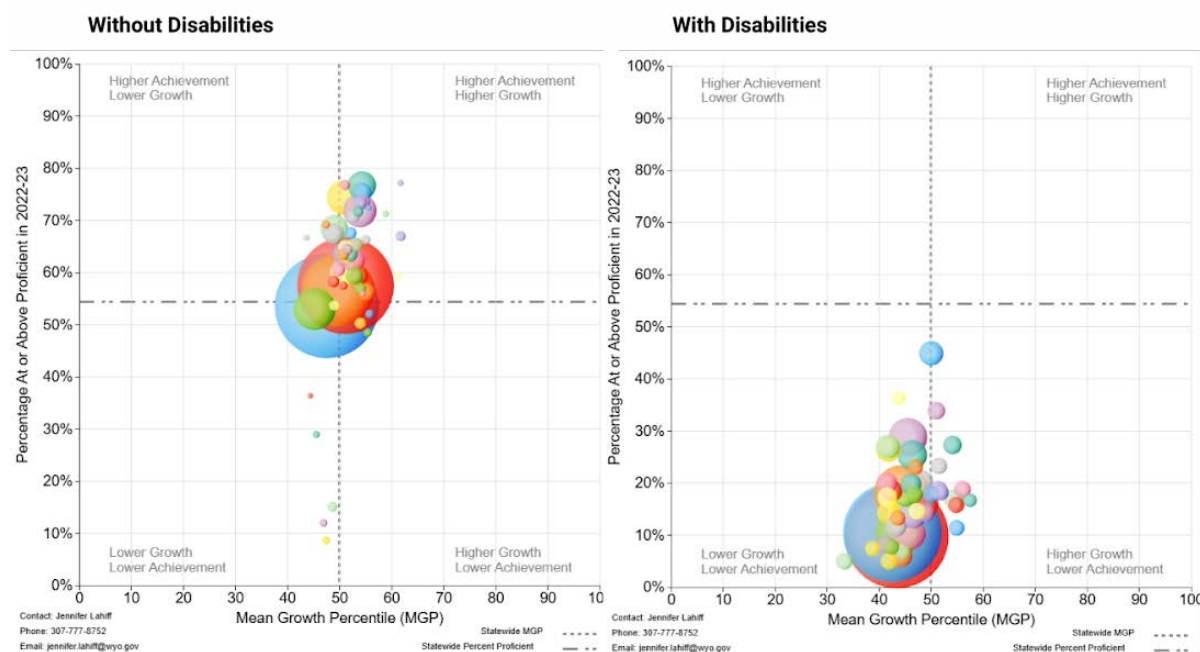


Table 5: Without Disabilities and With Disabilities

Note. The data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### Distribution Differences Between Groups

The data clearly contrasts students identified as having disabilities and those identified without disabilities in terms of academic growth and achievement. Students identified without disabilities exhibit a broader distribution in the MGP, with a significant portion reaching higher proficiency levels. The largest bubbles in this group are concentrated in the middle-to-high proficiency range, indicating stronger overall performance and greater variability in growth. This suggests that many students identified without disabilities are achieving both academic growth and proficiency at levels above the state average.

In contrast, students identified as having disabilities show a tighter clustering in the lower half of the chart, particularly in the lower growth and lower proficiency quadrant. While some schools show growth among students in this group, their overall academic proficiency remains significantly lower than that of their peers. The visual absence of large bubbles in the higher achievement quadrants underscores the magnitude of performance disparities. These patterns suggest that systemic challenges are limiting the ability of students identified as having disabilities to access or benefit from effective instructional strategies.

### Equity Implications

The data reveal significant disparities in academic achievement and growth between students identified without disabilities and students identified as having disabilities. The concentration of students identified as having disabilities in the lower proficiency and lower growth quadrants suggests barriers to accessing evidence-based, HQIM, interventions, and individualized support. These barriers may include limited availability of trained educators, inconsistent implementation of inclusive practices, and inadequate resource allocation across systems. These disparities reflect long-standing issues that require thoughtful, sustained, and equitable solutions.

This distribution indicates a critical need for enhanced instructional supports, targeted interventions, and



equitable access to specialized resources. Effective strategies could include evidence-based, high-quality inclusive instruction, structured literacy interventions, and differentiated supports that align with students' unique needs. Furthermore, these findings highlight the importance of data-informed decision-making and policy-level support. Addressing these disparities requires targeted evidence-aligned instruction and resources and a sustained commitment to removing systemic barriers and fostering inclusive educational environments.

Key Takeaways

- Students identified without disabilities show higher proficiency rates and greater variability in academic growth.
- Students identified as having disabilities tend to cluster in the lower growth and lower proficiency ranges.
- Systemic barriers may limit students identified as having disabilities from accessing HQIM and interventions.
- Targeted strategies—such as structured literacy, explicit instruction, and individualized support—are essential for improving outcomes for students identified as having disabilities.
- Long-term improvement will require systemic solutions, including expanded access to evidence-based practices, equitable resource distribution, and inclusive education policies.

Gender Data

The following data analysis examines trends in academic performance and growth between female and male students, aiming to provide a deeper understanding of their distinct educational needs and outcomes. By comparing the performance of these two groups, we can identify the differences in educational achievement. Additionally, this analysis lays the groundwork for recognizing the strengths and challenges faced by each group. Ultimately, the findings will highlight opportunities for targeted interventions that can better support both female and male students in their educational journeys.

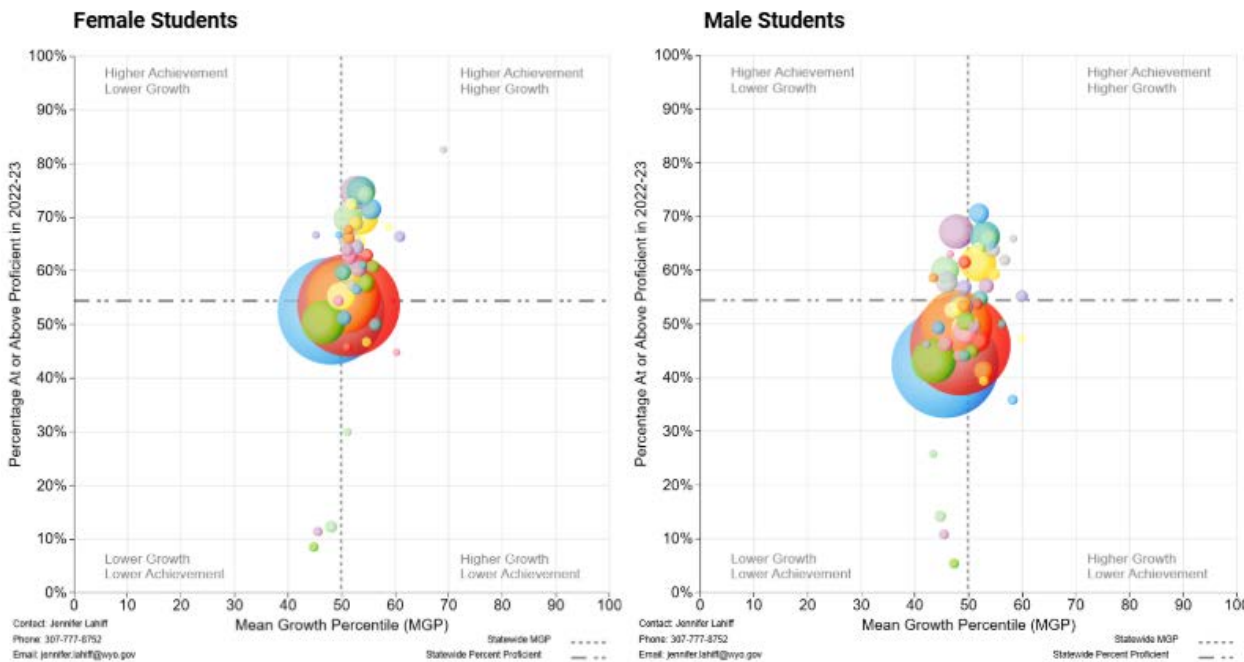


Table 6: Gender Data

Note. The data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### **Distribution Differences Between Groups**

The data presents a comparison between female and male students in terms of MGP and the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. Both groups share a similar distribution structure, with a large concentration of schools in the middle-to-lower ranges of proficiency and growth. However, female students display a slightly broader spread of data points, with more schools extending into the higher achievement quadrants. A more significant number of female students score above the statewide proficiency line, and the central cluster for female students trends higher in both growth and proficiency compared to male students.

Male students also exhibit a central clustering pattern, though their largest bubbles are positioned slightly lower in both growth and proficiency. The data shows fewer male students exceeding the proficiency benchmark, and more schools fall below the statewide MGP and proficiency averages. This pattern suggests that while the overall structure is consistent across both groups, female students demonstrate a marginal advantage in academic performance. These differences are not large, but they reflect subtle variations in achievement that are important to consider when analyzing student outcomes.

### **Equity Implications**

While the differences may not appear as stark as those seen in other student groups, the data does indicate a notable disparity in both proficiency and growth between female and male students. Female students demonstrate higher concentrations above the statewide proficiency benchmark, while male students are more frequently clustered below it. These modest yet consistent differences suggest potential variations in learning experiences, instructional approaches, or student engagement that may impact outcomes. Research has suggested that earlier language development in female students may contribute to these patterns, though such trends must be interpreted with nuance. Rather than reinforcing assumptions, these findings should inform the need for differentiated, evidence-based instruction that effectively supports all learners.

Ensuring that both female and male students have equitable access to evidence-based HQIM and literacy interventions is essential for continued academic success. Educators should remain attentive to potential differences in learning preferences, motivation, and classroom engagement across genders. Instructional flexibility and professional learning focused on differentiated support will help ensure that all students receive instruction aligned to their strengths and needs. These strategies are critical to building inclusive learning environments that promote equity and achievement for all learners.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Female students display a slightly broader distribution into the higher achievement quadrants and a greater concentration above the statewide proficiency benchmark.
- Male students are more heavily clustered below the proficiency line, with fewer schools reaching into the higher growth and achievement areas.
- The overall structure is similar between groups, but the central performance of female students trends slightly higher.
- Instructional strategies should consider possible variations in engagement and learning preferences to support both groups effectively.
- Access to evidence-based, high-quality literacy instruction remains critical for ensuring equitable learning experiences and strong academic outcomes for all students.

### **Asian Students**

The following data analysis focuses specifically on the academic performance and growth of Asian students.

By delving into unique educational journeys, we aim to gain deeper insight into specific needs and outcomes. The findings from this analysis serve as a solid foundation for identifying both strengths and challenges within this demographic. Furthermore, by highlighting these aspects, we can explore targeted support opportunities to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

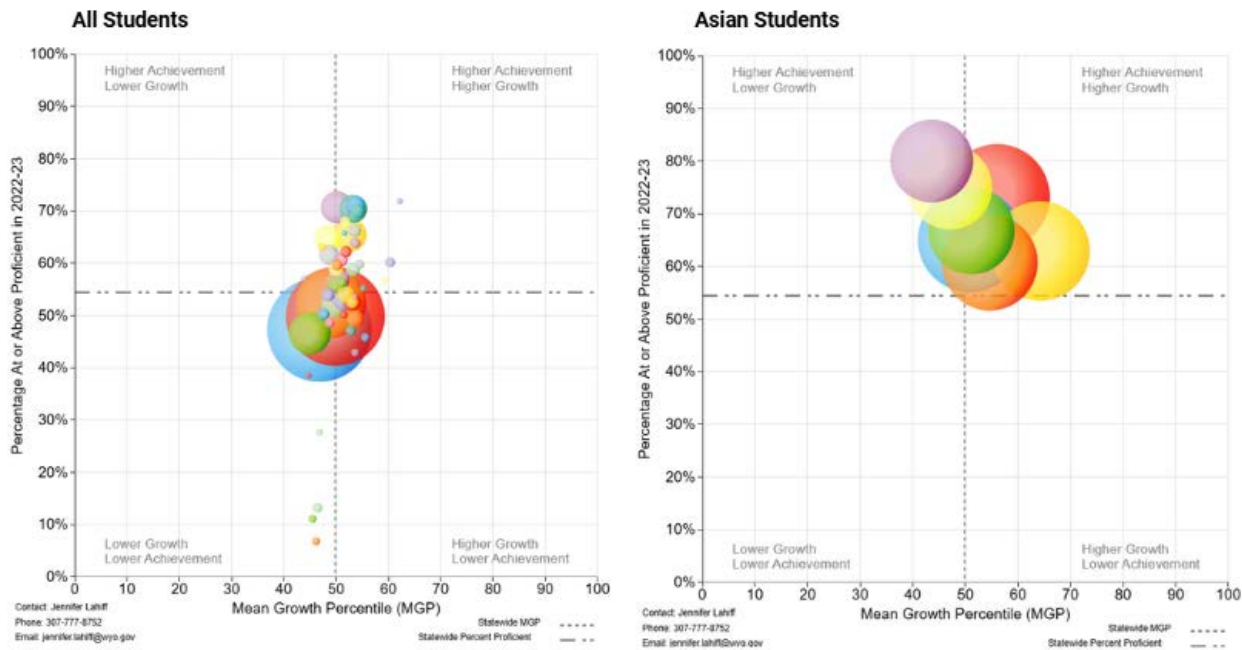


Table 7: Asian Students  
Note. The data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

**Distribution Differences Between Groups**

The data presents a clear comparison between all students and Asian students in terms of MGP and the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. For the overall student population, most data points cluster around the statewide average in terms of both growth and achievement, with a central concentration near 50 percent proficiency and an MGP range of 45 to 55. This pattern reflects a system in which many schools are performing close to proficiency and growth benchmarks, though some fall significantly above or below these thresholds. The distribution also reveals varying levels of support and instructional effectiveness across districts, underscoring opportunities for targeted improvement.

In contrast, Asian students show a distinctly higher performance profile, both in achievement and growth. All data points for this group are positioned above the statewide proficiency and growth benchmarks, indicating consistent academic success across settings. The majority fall within the higher achievement and higher growth quadrant, with proficiency rates ranging from approximately 60 to 90 percent and growth percentiles between 55 and 80. These results suggest that Asian students are not only meeting academic expectations but are also making accelerated progress over time. This sustained performance may reflect a combination of factors, including access to rigorous coursework, culturally responsive instruction, and strong academic supports, which could serve as a model for practices that benefit all students.

**Equity Implications**

The consistently high performance of Asian students compared to the general student population reveals a significant, though often underexplored, disparity in both academic achievement and growth. While this data

reflects positive outcomes for Asian students, it also surfaces critical questions about the conditions that make such performance possible and why those conditions may not be equitably distributed across all student groups. These results underscore the importance of investigating not just gaps in performance, but also models of success that can inform systemwide improvements. By understanding what works well for high-performing student groups, educators and leaders can identify strategies that may be adapted or scaled to support broader student success.

At the same time, the exceptional outcomes for Asian students should not lead to overgeneralizations or assumptions that overlook the diversity within this group or ignore students who may still need targeted support. Instead, this data should be used to reflect on how instructional practices, family engagement, access to enrichment, and culturally affirming environments may contribute to academic growth. Such factors must be examined with nuance to ensure that high performance is not viewed as the result of inherent traits, but rather as evidence of the impact of equitable opportunities and sustained academic supports. Using a strengths-based lens, education systems can move toward closing gaps not only by addressing underperformance, but also by ensuring that more students benefit from the conditions that enable success.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Asian students consistently outperform the general student population in both academic achievement and growth, with all data points positioned above statewide benchmarks. This highlights a pattern of sustained academic success across districts.
- The overall student population shows greater variability, with performance clustered around average levels in both growth and proficiency. This suggests uneven access to high-quality instruction and supports across the system.
- The success of Asian students offers important instructional and systemic insights that can inform practices for other student groups. These may include factors such as rigorous instruction, culturally responsive practices, and strong academic supports.
- It is essential to avoid overgeneralizations, recognizing the diversity within the Asian student group and ensuring that high achievement does not mask the individual needs of students who may still require targeted support.
- Education systems can use a strengths-based approach to study and scale conditions that support high performance, helping to close equity gaps by expanding access to opportunities and supports that enable student success.

### **American Indian/Alaska Native Students**

The following data analysis focuses specifically on the academic performance and growth of American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) students. By delving into unique educational journeys, we aim to gain deeper insight into specific needs and outcomes. The findings from this analysis serve as a solid foundation for identifying both strengths and challenges within this demographic. Furthermore, by highlighting these aspects, we can explore targeted support opportunities to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

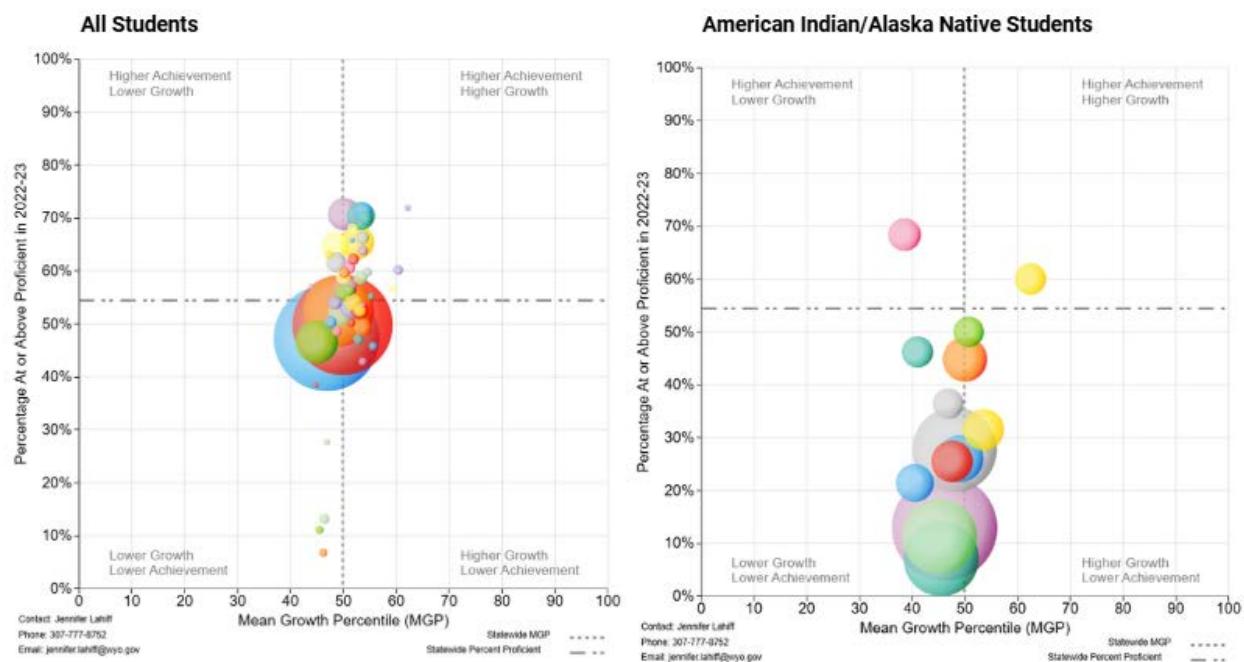


Table 8 : American Indian/Alaska Native Students  
Note. The data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### Distribution Differences Between Groups

The following data presents a marked contrast between the overall student population and students identified as AI or AN in terms of MGP and the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. For all students, most data points are concentrated near statewide averages, with schools generally clustering around 50 percent proficiency and an MGP between 45 and 55. This central distribution suggests that a large proportion of schools are performing near expected levels in terms of academic growth and proficiency.

In comparison, the data for AI/AN students reveals a significantly different and more concerning pattern. The majority of data points fall below the statewide proficiency benchmark, with many schools also falling below the growth benchmark. The largest bubbles in this group are situated in the lower left quadrant, indicating a concentration of students experiencing both low academic achievement and limited growth. While there are a few positive outliers, they are sparse and represent a small portion of the population. The overall distribution illustrates persistent disparities in educational outcomes for students identified as AI/AN.

### Equity Implications

The data reflect systemic disparities in academic outcomes for students identified as AI or AN. The clustering of this group in the lowest growth and proficiency quadrants signals longstanding inequities that extend beyond individual student performance. Barriers to success may include limited access to evidence-based, HQIM, ineffective implementation of structured literacy practices, and a lack of culturally relevant content and approaches in classrooms. These barriers are often compounded by broader issues such as historical disinvestment, underrepresentation in leadership and curriculum, and geographic isolation for schools serving tribal communities.

Addressing these disparities requires more than isolated instructional interventions—it demands a

systemwide commitment to equity and inclusion. This includes professional learning that equips educators with culturally responsive practices, increased access to high-quality literacy resources that reflect students' identities and experiences, and active collaboration with families and tribal communities. Policies and practices must be intentionally designed to elevate the voices and needs of AI/AN students and ensure that every school environment is a place of belonging, representation, and rigorous learning. Without these targeted efforts, the achievement gap for AI/AN students will likely persist.

### Key Takeaways

- Students identified as AI or AN demonstrate significantly lower proficiency and growth compared to the general student population.
- The majority of data points for AI/AN students fall below statewide benchmarks, with heavy clustering in the lower achievement and lower growth quadrant.
- Systemic barriers—such as limited access to culturally responsive instruction, high-quality materials, and sustained academic supports—contribute to these disparities.
- Efforts to close the achievement gap must prioritize community-informed strategies, professional learning, and resource equity for schools serving AI/AN populations.
- Long-term, equity-focused investments are essential to support academic success and ensure every AI/AN student has the opportunity to thrive.

### Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Students

The following data analysis focuses specifically on the academic performance and growth of NH/PI students. By delving into unique educational journeys, we aim to gain deeper insight into specific needs and outcomes. The findings from this analysis serve as a solid foundation for identifying both strengths and challenges within this demographic. Furthermore, by highlighting these aspects, we can explore targeted support opportunities to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

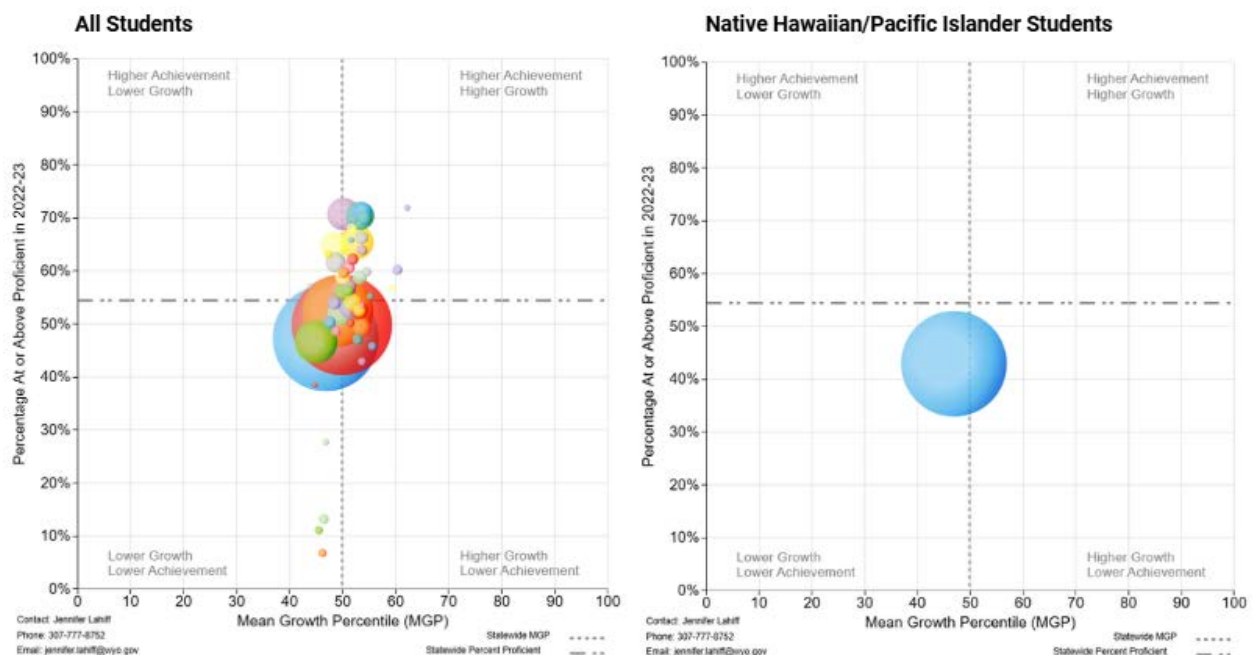


Table 9: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Students



Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### **Distribution Differences Between Groups**

The data presents a comparison between the overall student population and students identified as NH/PI in terms of MGP and the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. For all students, the distribution is concentrated around the statewide averages, with most schools demonstrating moderate achievement and growth. This central clustering reflects a relatively consistent pattern across districts, where performance tends to hover around expected benchmarks. The presence of a widespread above and below the benchmarks indicates variability in outcomes that likely reflects differences in local instructional conditions and supports.

In contrast, the data for NH/PI students displays a single large data point, indicating that this is a small student population with results aggregated at one district or school. This point falls just below the statewide benchmark for proficiency and slightly above the statewide average for growth. The position suggests that while this group is making academic progress in terms of growth, their achievement has not yet met proficiency expectations. The limited number of data points makes it difficult to generalize trends, but it also underscores the importance of not overlooking smaller populations in data analyses and resource planning.

### **Equity Implications**

The data highlights an important equity consideration for students identified as NH/PI. Although the group demonstrates academic growth that aligns with or slightly exceeds the statewide average, their proficiency remains below benchmark levels. This pattern points to the need for sustained instructional support to accelerate achievement and ensure students are not only growing but also reaching grade-level expectations. The small population size can lead to these students being statistically underrepresented in broader data narratives, which increases the risk that their needs may go unaddressed.

Ensuring equity for NH/PI students requires systems to actively include them in strategic planning and instructional improvement cycles. Educators and leaders must examine subgroup data, no matter the size, to ensure all students are served effectively. Targeted supports such as culturally responsive teaching, differentiated instruction, and inclusive classroom practices can help address gaps in proficiency. By elevating the visibility of NH/PI students in decision-making and continuously monitoring their progress, schools can create more inclusive environments where every student has the opportunity to thrive.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Students identified as NH/PI demonstrate average or slightly above-average growth but continue to perform below the statewide proficiency benchmark.
- The presence of a single data point reflects a small population size, underscoring the need for caution in interpreting trends and for prioritizing visibility in decision-making.
- Despite being a small group, NH/PI students deserve targeted attention in resource allocation, instructional design, and continuous improvement planning.
- Their demonstrated academic growth is a positive sign, indicating potential for accelerated achievement with the right instructional conditions and support.
- Culturally responsive practices, data-informed interventions, and inclusive systems are critical for promoting academic success and equity for NH/PI students.

### **African American Student Data**

The following data analysis examines the academic performance and growth of African American students.

By delving into their unique educational journeys, we aim to gain deeper insight into their specific needs and outcomes. The findings from this analysis serve as a solid foundation for identifying both strengths and challenges within this demographic. Furthermore, by highlighting these aspects, we can explore targeted support opportunities to enhance their educational experiences and outcomes.

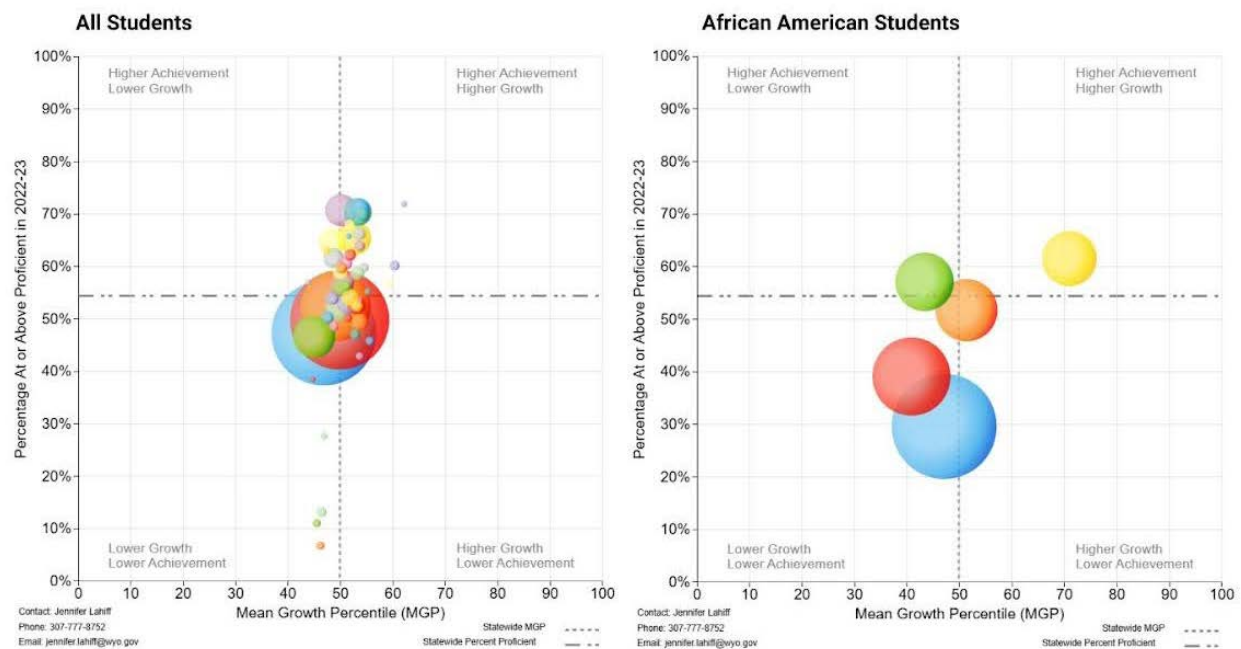


Table 10: African American Student Data  
Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### Distribution Differences Between Groups

The data compares the academic outcomes of the overall student population and students identified as African American in terms of MGP and the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. As with previous charts, the data for all students reflects a broad and balanced distribution centered around statewide averages, with most schools clustered near 50 percent proficiency and an MGP between 45 and 55. This suggests a general level of consistency across districts in terms of moderate academic growth and proficiency outcomes.

In contrast, the data for African American students reveal more variability in achievement and a clear concentration of performance below statewide proficiency benchmarks. While growth for this group appears to align closely with the state average, most schools fall below 50 percent proficiency, with the largest data points reflecting the lowest performance. A few schools exceed the benchmark in both growth and achievement, but they are outliers rather than representative of the overall trend. This pattern indicates that although students identified as African American are growing academically, they are not yet reaching proficiency at the same rate as their peers.

### Equity Implications

The performance data for students identified as African American points to a critical equity concern—namely, that growth without corresponding achievement may suggest missed opportunities for deeper learning, access to high-quality materials, or rigorous instruction. When the majority of students in a subgroup are

making progress but remain below proficiency benchmarks, it becomes essential to examine the structural factors that may be limiting their access to effective teaching, supports, and learning conditions. These factors can include inconsistencies in the implementation of evidence-based practices, lack of culturally relevant content, or disparities in educator preparation and expectations.

To close the achievement gap, systems must prioritize instructional alignment that moves beyond growth and toward proficiency. This requires expanding access to high-quality, standards-aligned core materials and providing professional learning focused on explicit, systematic instruction. Additionally, schools must foster learning environments that affirm the identities and experiences of African American students. Sustained improvement depends on ensuring that every student is not only growing but also achieving meaningful, grade-level success. Equity must be defined not only by effort and progress but by outcomes that reflect true opportunity.

### Key Takeaways

- Students identified as African American demonstrate growth near statewide averages but consistently lower proficiency levels.
- The largest performance clusters fall below the 50 percent proficiency benchmark, even when growth is present.
- This pattern suggests that access to high-quality instruction and learning conditions may not be translating into academic proficiency.
- To close this gap, schools must ensure that growth is accompanied by rigorous, evidence-based instruction and aligned materials.
- Educational equity for African American students requires both academic opportunity and achievement, supported by culturally affirming, High-Quality Instructional Practices (HQIP).

### Hispanic Students

The following data analysis focuses specifically on the academic performance and growth of Hispanic students. By delving into unique educational journeys, we aim to gain deeper insight into specific needs and outcomes. The findings from this analysis serve as a solid foundation for identifying both strengths and challenges within this demographic. Furthermore, by highlighting these aspects, we can explore targeted support opportunities to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

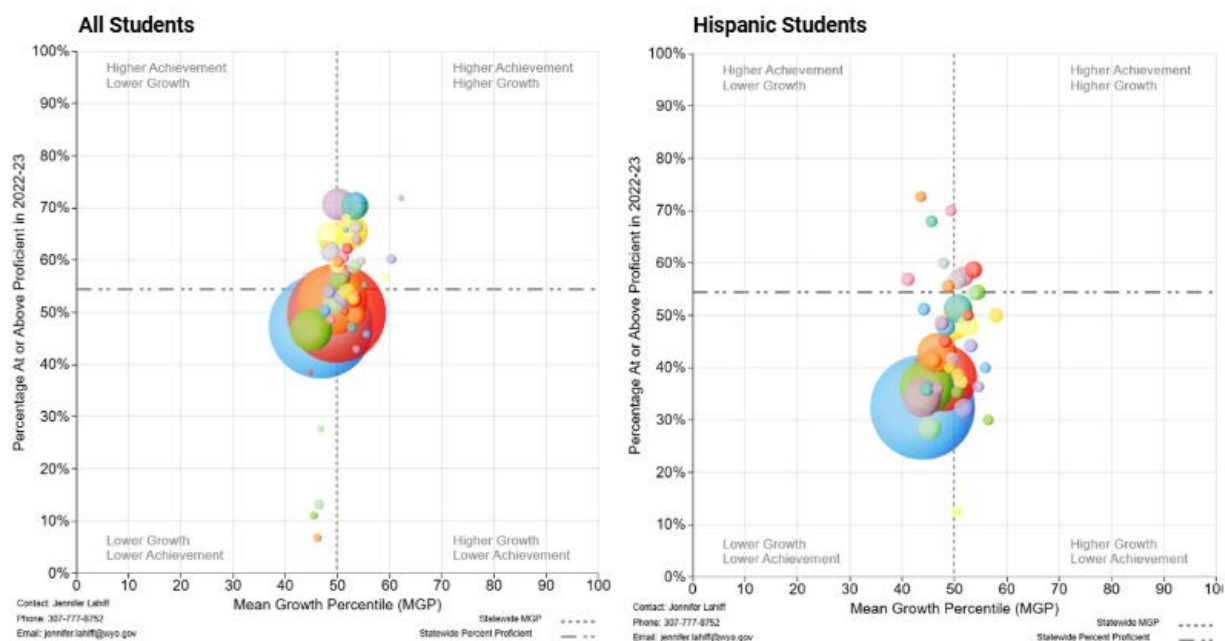


Table 11: Hispanic Students

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### **Distribution Differences Between Groups**

The data presents a district-level comparison between students identified as Hispanic and the overall student population, using MGP and the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. For all students, the majority of districts cluster around the statewide benchmarks, with proficiency percentages near 50 percent and MGPs in the 45 to 55 range. This distribution reflects a baseline of moderate growth and achievement for many districts, with variation on both ends of the spectrum.

In contrast, the distribution for Hispanic students is skewed lower in terms of both achievement and growth measures. Most districts serving Hispanic students fall below the statewide proficiency benchmark, with a substantial number clustered between 30 and 45 percent proficient. Their growth outcomes also trend slightly below the statewide MGP benchmark, with few districts demonstrating high academic growth. While some districts show modest gains, these instances are exceptions. The overall pattern reveals that Hispanic students, within the same districts where other students may be achieving at higher levels, are experiencing lower academic growth and achievement rates.

### **Equity Implications**

The data reveal a clear and persistent equity gap for students identified as Hispanic. When the majority of districts show that Hispanic students are growing less and achieving less than the overall student population within the same school systems, it indicates a systemic problem that cannot be attributed to student ability. The discrepancy between growth and achievement among students identified as Hispanic points to an urgent opportunity to build upon momentum and address systemic gaps.

Strong growth trends indicate that students are capable of learning and making progress, yet persistent proficiency gaps raise concerns about instructional alignment, expectations, and access to grade-level content. These patterns may reflect structural barriers such as inconsistent access to evidence-based instructional materials, limited differentiation in core instruction, or challenges related to language development and instructional scaffolding. Without targeted intervention and aligned instructional systems, these growth gains may stall before students achieve the outcomes needed for long-term success.

Equity-driven improvement must ensure that students identified as Hispanic receive instruction that not only supports growth, but also accelerates achievement. This includes expanded use of structured literacy, integration of culturally and linguistically responsive practices, and stronger alignment to grade-level standards within core instruction. Educators and school leaders should also study high-performing schools that are demonstrating success with Hispanic students to identify effective practices that can be scaled across districts. Achieving equitable outcomes requires a sustained focus on eliminating access barriers, strengthening instructional quality, and engaging families and communities as partners in the learning process.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Students identified as Hispanic consistently perform below the statewide average in both academic achievement and growth across most districts.
- Compared to the overall student population, Hispanic students are underperforming within the same school systems, reflecting systemic inequities.

- These disparities cannot be attributed to individual student characteristics and instead point to gaps in access to effective instruction, materials, and support.
- Schools and districts must adopt equity-driven practices that align instruction to grade-level standards, strengthen core teaching, and build inclusive school cultures.
- A commitment to equity means holding systems accountable for ensuring that all student groups within each district, including Hispanic students, are positioned for success.

## Two or More Races

The following data analysis focuses specifically on the academic performance and growth of students of Two or More Races. By delving into unique educational journeys, we aim to gain deeper insight into specific needs and outcomes. The findings from this analysis serve as a solid foundation for identifying both strengths and challenges within this demographic. Furthermore, by highlighting these aspects, we can explore targeted support opportunities to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

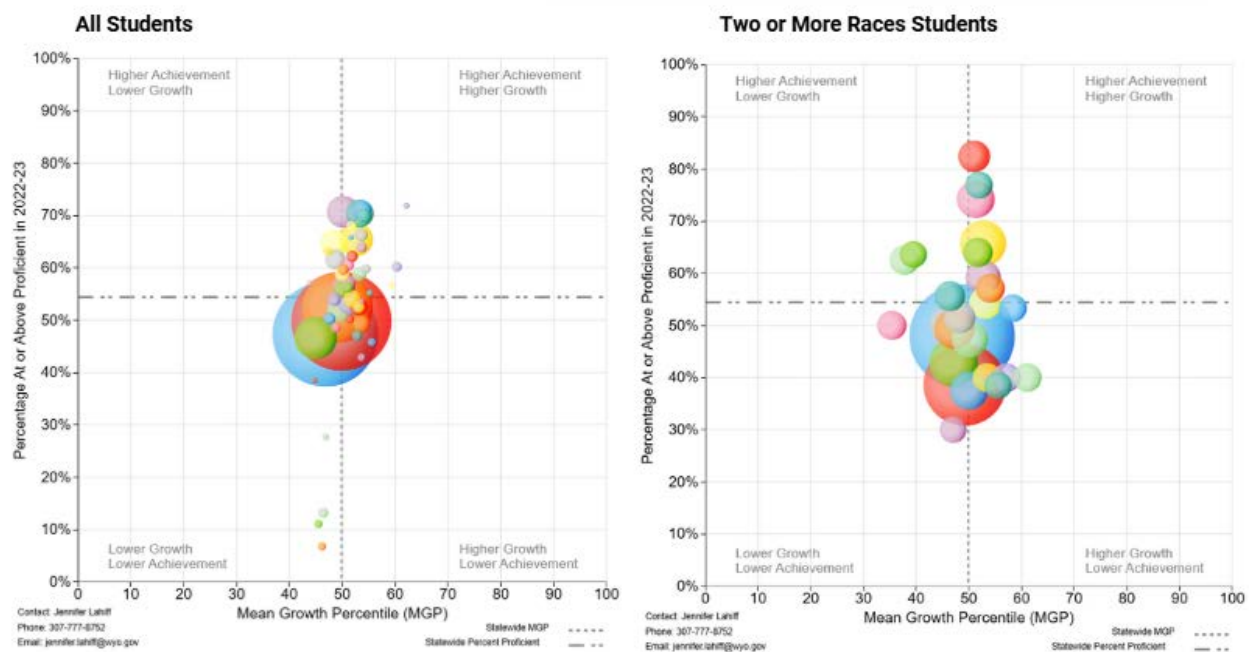


Table 12: Two or More Races

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

## Distribution Differences Between Groups

The data presents a district-level comparison between students identified as Two or More Races and the overall student population, using MGP and the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient. For all students, most districts cluster around the statewide benchmarks, with proficiency levels near 50 percent and MGPs between 45 and 55. This distribution reflects moderate academic growth and achievement for the general student population, with variation across the performance spectrum.

For students identified as Two or More Races, the distribution is somewhat more dispersed, with notable performance variability across districts. A substantial number of districts are clustered near or slightly above the statewide average for growth and proficiency, with MGPs often between 50 and 60 and proficiency levels ranging from 40 to over 70 percent. A few districts demonstrate significantly higher proficiency and growth,

with some reaching beyond 70 percent proficient and MGPs in the 60s and 70s. While not all districts reflect this pattern, the overall trend suggests that students in this group are performing at or above statewide averages in many settings, though consistency remains a challenge.

### **Equity Implications**

The data indicate encouraging trends for students identified as Two or More Races, particularly when compared to other student groups across the state. In many districts, students demonstrate proficiency rates and growth outcomes that align with or exceed statewide benchmarks. This suggests that when instructional systems are responsive and well-resourced, students in this group are capable of high levels of academic achievement. However, the range in performance across districts also signals the need for sustained attention to ensure that success is not dependent on geography or local capacity alone.

Equity-focused improvement efforts should build on these strengths while addressing areas of inconsistency. Districts should examine their own subgroup data to understand what practices are contributing to strong outcomes and where gaps may still exist. Continued investment in grade-level-aligned instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and inclusive environments will be critical to maintaining and expanding these gains. Additionally, ensuring that these students have equitable access to enrichment, intervention, and engagement opportunities is essential for supporting their ongoing academic success.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Students identified as Two or More Races show performance patterns that are frequently at or above statewide averages in both growth and proficiency.
- Several districts demonstrate strong academic outcomes for this group, but there is variation, suggesting that equitable success is not yet universal.
- These trends highlight the potential of effective instructional systems to support strong academic achievement for students from diverse backgrounds.
- Districts should analyze local practices that are leading to success and ensure consistency in implementation across schools.
- Sustained equity efforts should focus on maintaining strong outcomes while addressing any emerging or persistent gaps within the subgroup.

### **Transition: From Disaggregated Insights to Statewide Action**

The detailed analysis of student growth and proficiency data across district-level subgroups reveals both persistent inequities and areas of emerging progress. By examining how different student groups perform within districts—rather than in isolation—clear patterns have emerged that highlight systemic strengths and areas requiring urgent attention. Subgroups such as students identified as having disabilities, multilingual learners, and students from certain racial and ethnic backgrounds are consistently underperforming in both achievement and growth when compared to their peers. Meanwhile, groups such as students identified without disabilities and NMLLs show more favorable patterns, often clustering near or above statewide benchmarks.

These findings underscore that disparities are not evenly distributed across Wyoming but are deeply embedded within district-level systems and instructional practices. The variation in subgroup performance within the same school systems indicates that student outcomes are not solely driven by individual capacity but are heavily influenced by the effectiveness, equity, and responsiveness of local educational practices. Encouragingly, some districts demonstrate notable growth for historically underserved groups, suggesting that when evidence-based supports and high-quality instruction are implemented with fidelity, real gains are possible.

These district-level insights set the stage for understanding broader state trends and the systemic responses needed to address inequities at scale. The following section brings these patterns into sharper focus, outlining



the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and connecting them to Wyoming's statewide commitment to advancing equitable literacy outcomes for all students.

### **Statewide Patterns and the Role of the WLLP**

The student growth score reports across various demographic groups reveal clear disparities in proficiency and growth, underscoring both challenges and opportunities in improving educational outcomes. While students without disabilities and NMLLs tend to cluster around higher proficiency and growth levels, other groups, including students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and certain racial/ethnic subgroups, consistently score lower in both areas. However, emerging growth trends among some lower-performing groups suggest that targeted interventions, instructional supports, and district-level strategies can effectively accelerate student progress.

To ensure sustained, equitable progress, state and district leaders must prioritize policies and resources that support sustainable, evidence-based practices. These efforts must guarantee that every student, regardless of background, has access to high-quality education, evidence-based literacy instruction, and opportunities for academic success. The WLLP serves as a critical framework for addressing the disparities identified in student growth reports. By establishing clear guidance and unifying statewide efforts, the WLLP empowers local systems to take targeted action aligned to student needs.

Through evidence-based language and literacy instruction, aligned interventions, and system-wide professional development, the WLLP ensures that students in historically underserved groups receive the supports necessary to accelerate their learning. These strategies are designed to close opportunity gaps, promote equitable access, and elevate student outcomes. By bridging instructional divides, fostering cross-system collaboration, and reinforcing systems of support, the WLLP plays a pivotal role in advancing literacy. Ultimately, it strengthens Wyoming's educational ecosystem by ensuring that all students are given the tools to succeed.

Building on the efforts outlined in the WLLP to support equitable progress, the WY-TOPP assessment plays a crucial role in measuring and monitoring student achievement across key academic areas. As an integral tool in Wyoming's accountability system, WY-TOPP provides valuable data that informs decisions on how to best allocate resources and refine strategies to address achievement gaps. The following section explores the WY-TOPP assessment in greater detail, highlighting its alignment with state standards and its role in tracking academic growth and proficiency.

## **WY-TOPP: Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress**

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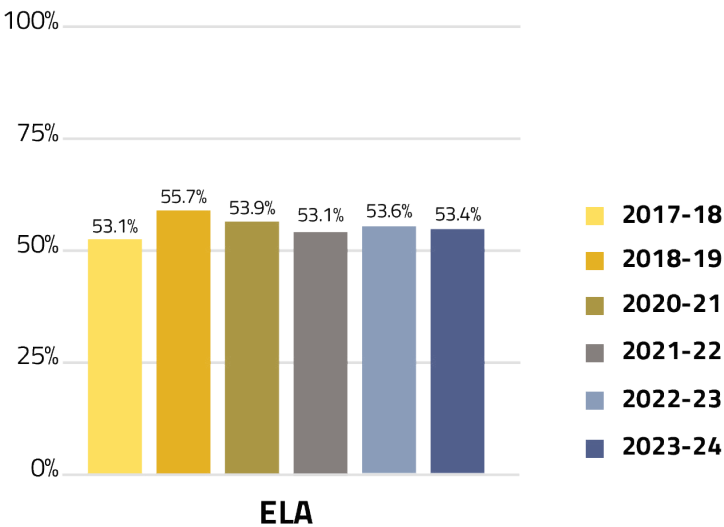
WY-TOPP is Wyoming's statewide assessment system designed to measure student achievement in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. Administered online as a computer-adaptive test, WY-TOPP aligns with the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. It provides accurate assessments for grades 3 through 10 in ELA and mathematics and grades 4, 8, and 10 in science. Additionally, writing assessments are conducted in grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 as part of the ELA component (Wyoming Department of Education, n.d.).

WY-TOPP includes both summative assessments at the end of the year and optional interim assessments in fall, winter, and spring. These interim assessments help track student progress throughout the year and inform instructional adjustments. The ELA portion of WY-TOPP evaluates reading comprehension, vocabulary, language use, and writing skills. This comprehensive approach ensures that educators receive detailed information on various aspects of students' language and literacy development (Wyoming Department of Education, n.d.).

Student performance in WY-TOPP is categorized into four levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Each level is defined by specific cut scores that vary by grade. For instance, a Grade 3 ELA Proficient score ranges from 592 to 627, while a Grade 4 ELA Proficient score ranges from 613 to 648 (Wyoming Department of Education, 2020). These performance levels help educators and stakeholders understand where students stand in their literacy development.

Recent data on ELA proficiency reveals a mixed landscape across various grades. Increases in proficiency were observed in grades 3, 4, and 7, while decreases were noted in grades 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10. Notably, with the exception of Grade 4, ELA scores across the other grades remain between 1.0% and 3.8% below pre-pandemic levels. However, Grade 4 stands out as it has exceeded its pre-pandemic high for the first time, achieving a 0.6% increase. Grades 3 and 4 demonstrated the most significant gains, with a remarkable 4.2% increase in proficiency compared to Spring 2023. It is also important to note that writing is assessed in grades 3, 5, 7, and 9, contributing to the overall ELA scores and reflecting the comprehensive nature of literacy assessment.

Table 13: Wyoming’s 2023-24 WY-TOPP/WY-ALT Assessment Results



Note. This data is available on the [WDE Website](#).

WY-TOPP supports literacy attainment by identifying strengths and weaknesses in students’ reading abilities, allowing educators to use a data-driven approach to tailor instruction to individual needs. This comprehensive assessment helps schools implement targeted interventions to address specific learning gaps and track literacy progress over time. Through its ELA component, WY-TOPP provides valuable insights into students’ reading and writing abilities, offering a clear picture of areas for improvement. Educators can use this data to refine instructional strategies, ensure all students receive the necessary support, and make informed decisions about resource allocation (Wyoming Department of Education, 2025).

While not exclusively a reading test, the ELA portion of WY-TOPP plays a critical role in identifying data trends related to literacy outcomes in Wyoming by offering detailed insights into students’ reading comprehension, writing skills, and language proficiency. This comprehensive analysis helps educators detect patterns in student performance, pinpoint areas of need, and recognize strengths across different grade levels. By examining these trends, schools can refine instructional practices, allocate resources effectively, and design targeted interventions to support literacy growth. Ultimately, the ELA component serves as a valuable tool for

identifying opportunities to drive continuous improvement in literacy attainment across the state. As WY-TOPP plays a vital role in identifying literacy strengths and weaknesses, it is essential to examine specific data trends that reflect student progress. The following analysis focuses on the aggregated reading scores for grade four, offering a detailed look at student performance within this key grade level. By closely reviewing this data, educators and stakeholders can gain insights into the literacy needs of fourth-grade students and identify targeted strategies for improvement.

### Grade Four: Aggregated WY-TOPP and WY-ALT

Aggregated data provides a valuable overview of student performance, offering insights into overall trends and patterns across all learners. By examining the combined results of all students, educators, and stakeholders can identify broad areas of strength and potential challenges within the entire cohort. This high-level analysis helps to inform decisions about resource allocation, curriculum adjustments, and general instructional strategies, ensuring that efforts are aligned with the overall needs of the student population. Additionally, aggregated data serves as a foundation for more detailed, disaggregated analyses, enabling a deeper understanding of performance across specific subgroups.

The table provides aggregated WY-TOPP and WY-ALT assessment data for Grade 4 ELA over four academic years (2020–21 to 2023–24). Participation rates remained consistently high, ranging from 98.1% in 2020–21 to 98.6% in 2023–24, ensuring reliable data representation. The data highlights the percentage of students in each performance category: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced, as well as the combined percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency standards (Proficient + Advanced).

Table 14: WY-TOPP and WY-ALT ELA Results Grade 4 State Level - Aggregated

SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENT BELOW BASIC	PERCENT BASIC	PERCENT PROFICIENT	PERCENT ADVANCED	PERCENT BASIC BELOW	PERCENT PROFICIENT ADVANCED
2017-18	23.36%	27.44%	30.46%	18.74%	50.80%	49.20%
2018-19	23.87%	27.01%	30.54%	18.58%	50.88%	49.12%
2020-21	24.90%	26.43%	31.88%	16.79%	51.33%	48.67%
2021-22	25.27%	27.31%	29.82%	17.60%	52.58%	47.42%
2022-23	26.73%	27.79%	29.28%	16.20%	54.52%	45.48%
2023-24	25.19%	25.14%	30.45%	19.21%	50.33%	49.67%

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

#### Aggregated: Below Basic and Basic

The largest percentage of Wyoming's Grade 4 students consistently score in the Below Basic and Basic categories, representing more than half of the student population each year. In 2023–24, 50.33% of students scored at Basic or Below Basic, indicating that a significant number of students are struggling to meet grade-level expectations in literacy. Over the years, the percentage of students in these lower categories has fluctuated, with the highest percentage occurring in 2022–23 (54.52%) before showing a slight improvement in 2023–24. Although this recent decrease is a positive sign, the data still reflect a pressing need to support a substantial number of students who are not yet reaching proficiency.

This data suggests that a large portion of students are not mastering essential literacy skills by fourth grade, which can have long-term implications for academic success across content areas. Students who do not develop strong literacy skills by this stage may face challenges in reading comprehension, writing, and

vocabulary development in later grades. To change this trajectory, schools must implement targeted interventions that provide explicit, systematic instruction aligned to the science of reading. These efforts must also be supported through increased access to evidence-based, HQIM, professional development for educators, and structured literacy practices that meet the diverse needs of learners.

### **Aggregated: Proficiency as the Goal**

The ultimate goal is for students to achieve Proficient or Advanced levels, demonstrating mastery of grade-level literacy skills. However, the percentage of students reaching proficiency in ELA has remained relatively stable over time. Across multiple years, proficiency rates have fluctuated between 29% and 31%, indicating minimal year-to-year change. In 2023–24, 30.45% of students scored at the Proficient level, reflecting a modest improvement but still falling short of Wyoming’s statewide literacy goals. This trend suggests that while small gains are being made, more comprehensive efforts are required to shift a greater percentage of students into the Proficient and Advanced performance bands.

To increase proficiency rates, Wyoming must prioritize systematic, evidence-based literacy instruction across all grade levels. Students benefit most from explicit and cumulative instruction that builds foundational skills and promotes deep comprehension. Educators need ongoing, high-quality professional learning to deliver effective literacy instruction and to interpret and respond to student data with precision. In addition, consistent access to HQIM aligned with the science of reading is essential to support students’ learning. Together, these supports can create the conditions necessary to accelerate student progress and close longstanding proficiency gaps.

### **Aggregated: Students Scoring Advanced**

A smaller percentage of students consistently perform at the Advanced level, demonstrating high achievement in literacy. In 2023–24, 19.21% of students scored Advanced, representing an increase from previous years and signaling upward momentum in this performance category. This improvement is encouraging, as it indicates that more students are exceeding grade-level expectations and demonstrating mastery beyond proficiency. However, despite this positive trend, Advanced-level performance remains limited to a relatively small subset of the student population, and continued progress will require intentional effort across systems.

To move more students into the Advanced category, schools must provide instruction that not only supports grade-level mastery but also cultivates advanced literacy skills such as critical analysis, academic writing, and metacognitive reading strategies. Identifying students with the potential to perform at advanced levels—especially those who may be underrepresented in gifted programs—should be a priority. Gifted education supports, including early identification, tiered instruction, and access to challenging, inquiry-based learning experiences, are essential tools for accelerating capable students into higher achievement levels. Embedding these supports within core instruction and aligning them with the WLLP ensures that excellence is nurtured systemically, equitably, and sustainably.

Through the WLLP, districts are encouraged to not only close proficiency gaps but also elevate students across the entire performance spectrum. This includes expanding opportunities for advanced learners to engage in rigorous content, participate in cross-disciplinary literacy tasks, and build the complex skills necessary for postsecondary success. Cultivating a culture of high expectations, differentiation, and enrichment within Tier I instruction ensures that more students, regardless of background, have the opportunity to reach Advanced levels. As Wyoming continues to track and celebrate gains in this area, it must also remain focused on sustaining and scaling access to gifted education pathways that support long-term excellence.

### **Aggregated: Key Takeaways**

- The majority of students remain in the Below Basic and Basic categories, with 50.33% scoring in these levels in 2023–24.
- Proficiency remains the goal, with 30.45% of students reaching proficiency in 2023–24, showing little movement over the years.
- Advanced scores represent a smaller portion of students (19.21% in 2023–24), and efforts should include maintaining enrichment opportunities for these high achievers.
- Targeted intervention, structured literacy, and evidence-based instruction are necessary to increase proficiency and move more students out of the Below Basic and Basic categories.

While aggregated data provides a helpful overview of Grade Four student performance across Wyoming, it cannot capture the full picture of how different groups of students are progressing. Beneath the surface of overall trends lie meaningful differences in achievement and growth among subgroups, many of which remain masked when only examining statewide averages. To ensure that every student is supported effectively, it is essential to explore disaggregated data that highlights how specific populations are performing relative to their peers. This deeper level of analysis allows for the identification of gaps, trends, and opportunities that might otherwise go unnoticed.

### **Grade Four: Disaggregated WY-TOPP and WY-ALT Student Performance**

This section focuses on disaggregated WY-TOPP and WY-ALT data for Grade Four students, examining performance patterns across key subgroups. These include students identified by disability status, English learner status, gender, socioeconomic background, and race and ethnicity. Each analysis is organized by performance bands—Below Basic and Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—to provide a consistent and clear view of how students are distributed across achievement levels. This targeted examination helps inform tailored interventions, more equitable allocation of resources, and responsive instructional practices that meet the diverse needs of Wyoming’s fourth-grade learners.

#### **Race and Ethnicity Subgroup Analysis**

Race and ethnicity are critical lenses through which to examine educational equity and student achievement. Wyoming’s student population includes learners from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, each bringing valuable experiences, perspectives, and strengths to the classroom. However, the data reveal that not all racial and ethnic groups are experiencing equitable access to high-quality instruction or demonstrating similar levels of academic growth and proficiency. These disparities often reflect deeper systemic barriers, including historical inequities, cultural disconnects in instruction, and inconsistent access to rigorous, evidence-based literacy practices.

This section explores disaggregated student performance data across racial and ethnic groups, focusing on AI or AN, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Two or More Races, and Caucasian students. By analyzing achievement patterns in the categories of Below Basic and Basic, Proficient, and Advanced, the following analysis highlights areas where progress is being made and where additional attention is urgently needed. Understanding these patterns is essential for designing responsive supports, ensuring culturally affirming instruction, and advancing Wyoming’s commitment to equity in literacy outcomes for all students.



Table 15: Race and Ethnicity Subgroup Comparisons

School Year	Subgroup	Percent Below Basic	Percent Basic	Percent Proficient	Percent Advanced	Percent Basic & Below	Percent Proficient & Advanced
2021-22	American Indian/Alaskan Native	54.44%	27.82%	14.11%	3.63%	82.26%	17.74%
2022-23	American Indian/Alaskan Native	59.92%	25.10%	12.15%	2.83%	85.02%	14.98%
2023-24	American Indian/Alaskan Native	61.26%	19.82%	14.86%	4.05%	81.08%	18.92%
2021-22	Asian	21.62%	21.62%	37.84%	18.92%	43.24%	56.76%
2022-23	Asian	12.00%	28.00%	30.00%	30.00%	40.00%	60.00%
2023-24	Asian	21.62%	32.43%	18.92%	27.03%	54.05%	45.95%
2021-22	Black	45.00%	30.00%	13.33%	11.67%	75.00%	25.00%
2022-23	Black	36.92%	26.15%	21.54%	15.38%	63.08%	36.92%
2023-24	Black	36.17%	25.53%	25.53%	12.77%	61.70%	38.30%
2021-22	Hispanic	35.95%	32.08%	23.30%	8.67%	68.03%	31.97%
2022-23	Hispanic	35.43%	30.12%	24.32%	10.12%	65.56%	34.44%
2023-24	Hispanic	36.24%	26.67%	26.46%	10.63%	62.91%	37.09%
2022-23	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	25.00%	37.50%	12.50%	25.00%	62.50%	37.50%
2021-22	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	14.29%	28.57%	21.43%	35.71%	42.86%	57.14%
2023-24	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	45.45%	27.27%	18.18%	9.09%	72.73%	27.27%
2021-22	Two or More Races	26.21%	30.00%	26.55%	17.24%	56.21%	43.79%
2022-23	Two or More Races	29.87%	28.18%	26.85%	15.10%	58.05%	41.95%
2023-24	Two or More Races	27.21%	24.73%	28.27%	19.79%	51.94%	48.06%
2021-22	White	21.72%	26.27%	32.09%	19.92%	47.99%	52.01%
2022-23	White	23.76%	27.54%	31.05%	17.65%	51.30%	48.70%
2023-24	White	21.46%	25.06%	32.10%	21.39%	46.52%	53.48%

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### Disaggregated: Below Basic and Basic Scores

Over the past three years, the percentage of students scoring in the Below Basic and Basic categories has remained consistently high across nearly all racial and ethnic groups. Among AI/AN students, rates increased from 70.55% in 2021–22 to a high of 81.13% in 2022–23, before slightly improving to 68.42% in 2023–24. African American students showed a similarly high and steady trend, with 71.43% in 2021–22, 77.27% in 2022–23, and 72.73% in 2023–24 remaining in the lower performance bands.

Hispanic students experienced modest improvement, decreasing from 66.29% in 2022–23 to 64.86% in 2023–24, following a three-year trend around this threshold. Students identified as NH/PI dropped from 66.67% in 2022–23 to 56.25% in 2023–24, though fluctuations should be interpreted cautiously due to small population size. Two or More Races showed gradual improvement from 57.95% in 2022–23 to 52.94% in 2023–24. Asian students remained relatively consistent, hovering around 50% over the three-year period. Caucasian students showed a steady decline in these categories, from 50.22% in 2022–23 to 46.25% in 2023–24, reflecting positive, albeit modest, progress.

These data trends suggest that, while some groups are showing slight reductions in the number of students scoring Below Basic and Basic, the majority of student subgroups still have more than half of their populations not yet meeting grade-level expectations. The persistently high percentages for AI/AN and African American students highlight structural inequities in access to effective instruction and resources. To address this, districts must intensify efforts to implement structured literacy, provide data-informed instruction, and ensure that supports are equitably distributed to students who need them most.



### **Disaggregated: Proficiency as the Goal**

Trends in the Proficient category over the past three years show limited growth across subgroups, reinforcing the urgency of strengthening core instruction. Caucasian students have consistently remained the highest-performing group in terms of proficiency, with a slight increase from 30.97% in 2022–23 to 32.10% in 2023–24. Two or More Races followed closely, with 26.14% in 2022–23 and an increase to 28.57% in 2023–24. Hispanic students experienced a small increase from 22.24% in 2022–23 to 24.32% in 2023–24, while African American students remained stagnant, holding at 18.18% over the past two years. AI/AN students also remained largely flat, improving slightly from 13.51% in 2022–23 to 14.11% in 2023–24. Asian students saw a decline from 20.69% in 2021–22 to 15.00% in 2023–24, and NH/PI students fell from 33.33% in 2022–23 to 18.75% in 2023–24.

These stagnant or declining proficiency rates suggest that many students are not receiving the consistent, high-quality instruction necessary to reach grade-level literacy outcomes. Closing these gaps will require statewide coherence in literacy practices, increased educator capacity, and improved instructional alignment with grade-level standards. Districts must act with urgency to ensure that all students—especially those in groups with little movement—have access to the supports needed to reach proficiency.

### **Disaggregated: Students Scoring Advanced**

Three-year trends in Advanced-level performance reveal persistent gaps and limited upward movement for most subgroups. Caucasian students showed steady growth, rising from 18.81% in 2022–23 to 21.39% in 2023–24, marking a positive trend. Two or More Races also increased, moving from 15.91% in 2022–23 to 18.49% in 2023–24. Hispanic students remained stable, with 10.94% in 2022–23 and 10.81% in 2023–24, while African American students rose slightly from 4.55% in 2022–23 to 9.09% in 2023–24. AI/AN students made minimal progress, increasing from 2.70% in 2022–23 to 2.63% in 2023–24. Asian students, though showing variability due to small sample size, had 10.00% in 2023–24. NH/PI students declined from 0.00% in 2022–23 to 6.25% in 2023–24.

These trends demonstrate that while a few subgroups are improving, the Advanced category remains largely inaccessible for many students from historically marginalized backgrounds. Promoting excellence across all student groups requires schools to rethink access to enrichment and advanced learning opportunities. Expanding gifted education supports, using culturally responsive identification processes, and embedding challenge within core instruction are critical steps for ensuring all students have opportunities to achieve at the highest levels.

### **Disaggregated: Key Takeaways**

- Three-year trends show persistently high percentages of students scoring Below Basic and Basic across all subgroups, with limited movement in most cases.
- Proficiency rates have remained flat or slightly increased in some subgroups, with Caucasian and Two or More Races students leading all others in 2023–24.
- Advanced performance has grown modestly for Caucasian and Two or More Races students but remains below 11% for most other groups.
- These trends emphasize the need for equity-driven, tiered systems of support that address foundational skill gaps while advancing opportunities for higher achievement.
- The WLLP must continue to guide strategic action to address disparities, increase proficiency, and expand access to excellence for all learners.

### **Subgroup Comparisons: Disability Status, Language Background, and Gender**

While disability status, language background, and gender are critical dimensions of equity, they do not exist in isolation. These factors intersect with others, shaping students' educational experiences in unique and complex ways. A student's identity may span multiple dimensions, influencing how they engage with

instruction and how they are supported within the system. Understanding these intersections is essential for identifying barriers and ensuring that instructional systems are responsive to the full range of student needs.

This section highlights student performance trends across several key subgroups, including students with and without disabilities, English learners and non-English learners, and female and male students. These comparisons illustrate persistent disparities in literacy achievement and reveal which groups are overrepresented in the lowest performance bands and underrepresented in the highest. Each category (Below Basic and Basic, Proficiency, and Advanced) offers insight into systemic strengths and weaknesses. These patterns must be addressed to ensure that every Wyoming student has access to high-quality, evidence-based instruction that promotes growth, mastery, and excellence.

Table 16: Wyoming Disaggregated ELA Grade 4 Data

School Year	Subgroup	Percent Below Basic	Percent Basic	Percent Proficient	Percent Advanced	Percent Basic & Below	Percent Proficient & Advanced
2021-22	Disability Status: Students with Disabilities	50.27%	28.32%	14.34%	7.08%	78.58%	21.42%
2022-23	Disability Status: Students with Disabilities	51.38%	27.84%	15.03%	5.75%	79.22%	20.78%
2023-24	Disability Status: Students with Disabilities	52.47%	23.96%	16.84%	6.73%	76.43%	23.57%
2021-22	Disability Status: Students without Disabilities	20.40%	27.11%	32.83%	19.65%	47.52%	52.48%
2022-23	Disability Status: Students without Disabilities	20.98%	27.78%	32.61%	18.64%	48.76%	51.24%
2023-24	Disability Status: Students without Disabilities	18.88%	25.42%	33.61%	22.10%	44.29%	55.71%
2021-22	English Learner Status: English Learner	58.05%	28.84%	8.99%	4.12%	86.89%	13.11%
2022-23	English Learner Status: English Learner	51.50%	33.05%	12.45%	3.00%	84.55%	15.45%
2023-24	English Learner Status: English Learner	64.02%	25.52%	8.37%	2.09%	89.54%	10.46%
2021-22	English Learner Status: Non-English Learner	23.94%	27.25%	30.67%	18.15%	51.18%	48.82%
2022-23	English Learner Status: Non-English Learner	25.86%	27.60%	29.87%	16.66%	53.47%	46.53%
2023-24	English Learner Status: Non-English Learner	23.77%	25.13%	31.26%	19.84%	48.90%	51.10%
2021-22	Gender: Female	24.63%	27.19%	29.96%	18.22%	51.82%	48.18%
2022-23	Gender: Female	24.86%	27.89%	29.49%	17.76%	52.75%	47.25%
2023-24	Gender: Female	23.01%	24.93%	31.57%	20.49%	47.94%	52.06%
2021-22	Gender: Male	25.84%	27.42%	29.69%	17.05%	53.26%	46.74%
2022-23	Gender: Male	28.48%	27.69%	29.09%	14.74%	56.17%	43.83%
2023-24	Gender: Male	27.28%	25.35%	29.38%	17.99%	52.62%	47.38%

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### Disaggregated: Below Basic and Basic

The largest equity gaps continue to appear within the Below Basic and Basic performance bands. In 2023–24, students with disabilities and English learners were significantly overrepresented in these categories. Specifically, 76.43% of students with disabilities and 88.58% of English learners scored Below Basic or Basic, compared to 44.52% of students without disabilities and 49.90% of non-English learners. These disparities exceed 30 percentage points and highlight longstanding inequities in access to effective, high-quality, and inclusive literacy instruction. While students without disabilities improved steadily over three years, the data for students with disabilities fluctuated, ending with a higher percentage in the lowest bands than in 2021–22. English learners also saw increases in the percentage scoring Below Basic or Basic across the three years, with only a modest decline in 2023–24 that did not bring performance below 2021–22 levels. In contrast, non-English learners demonstrated a more stable and favorable trend.

Gender-based differences also remain consistent. In 2023–24, 52.64% of male students scored Below Basic or Basic compared to 47.92% of female students. Although both groups made slight improvements in recent years, the performance gap between males and females has persisted over time. This variation may reflect differences in early language development, instructional engagement, or classroom strategies that are not effectively addressing the specific needs of male learners. Together, these patterns reveal that instructional systems continue to fall short for key subgroups, particularly students with disabilities, English learners, and male students, who require differentiated instruction and scaffolded access to rigorous grade-level content.

### **Disaggregated: Proficiency as the Goal**

Proficiency remains the central benchmark for student literacy achievement, and significant variation exists among subgroups in reaching this level. In 2023–24, 33.61% of students without disabilities achieved proficiency compared to just 16.84% of students with disabilities, a gap that has persisted across the past three years. Similarly, non-English learners significantly outperformed English learners, with 31.26% reaching proficiency compared to only 8.37% of their multilingual peers. Although small improvements were observed among students with disabilities and non-English learners over time, English learners have shown stagnation and, at times, regression in their proficiency rates. This consistent underperformance suggests that current instructional strategies are not sufficiently aligned with the unique needs of these students.

When examining gender, a similar trend emerges. In 2023–24, 31.57% of female students achieved proficiency compared to 29.38% of male students. While the difference is smaller than that observed in other subgroups, it has remained stable over time, with female students demonstrating a slow but steady upward trajectory in proficiency. Male students, on the other hand, experienced a decline between 2021–22 and 2022–23 and only a modest recovery in 2023–24, signaling the need for deeper investigation into the factors contributing to this lag in progress.

These data indicate the need for increased attention to engagement, motivation, and instructional strategies that support the varied learning needs of students. Persistent gender-based disparities, even when narrow, should not be overlooked, particularly when one group shows limited progress over time. If the goal is for all students to meet or exceed grade-level expectations, then consistent, high-quality instruction and effective use of assessments must guide literacy efforts. This is especially important for male students, as well as for students with disabilities and multilingual learners, who may require more focused instructional support to ensure continued growth and success.

### **Students Scoring Advanced**

Scoring at the Advanced level signifies a deeper mastery of literacy skills and access to enriched learning environments, and performance in this category varies widely across subgroups. In 2023–24, just 6.73 percent of students with disabilities reached Advanced compared to 22.10 percent of students without disabilities, a gap of over 15 percentage points. English learners fared even worse, with only 2.09 percent scoring Advanced compared to 19.84 percent of non-English learners.

These disparities not only point to inequities in access to high-level instruction but also reflect missed opportunities to identify and cultivate advanced academic potential among historically underserved students. While students without disabilities and non-English learners saw gains in the Advanced category over three years, students with disabilities and English learners experienced declines or inconsistent performance. These results underscore the need for stronger enrichment systems and inclusive instructional design.

Gender differences in Advanced scores are less pronounced but still present. In 2023–24, 20.49 percent of female students scored at the Advanced level, compared to 17.99 percent of male students. While both groups experienced overall improvement across the three years, female students consistently maintained a slight lead in this performance category. These results suggest that female students may be better supported in accessing deeper literacy tasks or are more frequently recognized for their academic potential. Additional research may help clarify whether these differences reflect instructional practices, engagement strategies, or assessment patterns.

While disability status, language background, and gender are critical dimensions of equity, they do not exist in isolation. Socioeconomic status plays an equally powerful role in shaping students' access to learning opportunities, instructional resources, and academic outcomes. The following section explores disaggregated performance data for students identified as economically disadvantaged compared to their non-

disadvantaged peers. This analysis brings to light how poverty intersects with other factors to influence reading achievement and provides further context for targeted improvement strategies across Wyoming's schools.

#### Grade 4: Socioeconomic Opportunity Gaps

While race, language background, disability status, and gender provide important insight into student achievement, socioeconomic status remains one of the most powerful and persistent influences on educational opportunity. Students identified as low-income, homeless, or migrant often face compounded barriers that affect consistent access to high-quality instruction, stable learning environments, and academic support systems. These conditions can have a direct impact on literacy development, school attendance, and long-term academic outcomes.

This section examines student performance trends across socioeconomic indicators, with a focus on comparing students identified as economically disadvantaged, including those experiencing homelessness and mobility due to migrant status, to their peers. The analysis explores achievement within each category—Below Basic and Basic, Proficiency, and Advanced—to illuminate how poverty and instability contribute to performance gaps. These insights are critical for identifying areas where additional support, wraparound services, and equitable instructional practices are necessary to ensure that all Wyoming students, regardless of their living or economic circumstances, have the opportunity to thrive.

Table 17: Socioeconomic Status Grade 4 Data

School Year	Subgroup	Percent Below Basic	Percent Basic	Percent Proficient	Percent Advanced	Percent Basic & Below	Percent Proficient & Advanced
2021-22	Homeless Status: Homeless	51.06%	25.53%	17.02%	6.38%	76.60%	23.40%
2022-23	Homeless Status: Homeless	48.41%	25.40%	20.63%	5.56%	73.81%	26.19%
2023-24	Homeless Status: Homeless	54.29%	22.14%	18.57%	5.00%	76.43%	23.57%
2021-22	Homeless Status: Non-Homeless	24.91%	27.33%	30.00%	17.76%	52.24%	47.76%
2022-23	Homeless Status: Non-Homeless	26.33%	27.83%	29.44%	16.40%	54.16%	45.84%
2023-24	Homeless Status: Non-Homeless	24.58%	25.21%	30.70%	19.51%	49.78%	50.22%
2021-22	Income Status: Low Income	38.49%	30.65%	21.95%	8.90%	69.15%	30.85%
2022-23	Income Status: Low Income	38.48%	29.39%	23.55%	8.58%	67.87%	32.13%
2023-24	Income Status: Low Income	35.92%	26.73%	26.37%	10.98%	62.65%	37.35%
2021-22	Income Status: Non-Low Income	19.90%	25.95%	33.01%	21.13%	45.86%	54.14%
2022-23	Income Status: Non-Low Income	19.68%	26.83%	32.72%	20.77%	46.51%	53.49%
2023-24	Income Status: Non-Low Income	17.64%	24.03%	33.32%	25.01%	41.67%	58.33%
2021-22	Migrant Status: Migrant	42.86%	14.29%	14.29%	28.57%	57.14%	42.86%
2022-23	Migrant Status: Migrant	45.45%	27.27%	18.18%	9.09%	72.73%	27.27%
2023-24	Migrant Status: Migrant	57.14%	14.29%	0.00%	28.57%	71.43%	28.57%
2021-22	Migrant Status: Non-Migrant	25.25%	27.32%	29.84%	17.59%	52.57%	47.43%
2022-23	Migrant Status: Non-Migrant	26.70%	27.79%	29.30%	16.21%	54.49%	45.51%
2023-24	Migrant Status: Non-Migrant	25.15%	25.15%	30.49%	19.20%	50.31%	49.69%

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

#### Students Scoring Below Basic and Basic

Across socioeconomic subgroups, students identified as homeless, low-income, and migrant consistently score in the Below Basic and Basic performance bands at significantly higher rates than their non-homeless, non-low-income, and non-migrant peers. In 2023–24, homeless students had the highest combined rate in these two categories at 78.68%, up from 76.06% in 2021–22, reflecting persistent challenges related to housing instability and educational disruption. Similarly, low-income students showed limited improvement, with 73.54% scoring in the lowest bands in 2023–24 compared to 75.92% in 2021–22. Migrant students



remain highly vulnerable, with 76.12% scoring Below Basic or Basic in 2023–24, slightly improved from 77.05% in 2022–23, but still substantially higher than their peers. These patterns reinforce the urgent need for targeted, system-wide supports that address the complex barriers facing students experiencing poverty, homelessness, or mobility.

In contrast, non-homeless, non-low-income, and non-migrant students demonstrate significantly stronger performance. For instance, non-low-income students showed the most consistent progress, reducing their combined Below Basic and Basic percentage from 54.21% in 2021–22 to 50.49% in 2023–24. Similarly, non-migrant students improved from 58.85% to 57.32% in the same timeframe, and non-homeless students saw a slight improvement from 58.91% to 57.48%. However, even among these subgroups, over 50% of students still do not meet proficiency benchmarks. This underscores that while disparities are more pronounced among vulnerable populations, the need for improved foundational literacy instruction is widespread across the state.

### **Proficiency as the Goal**

The percentage of students achieving proficiency varies greatly between subgroups and highlights a persistent opportunity gap tied to socioeconomic status. In 2023–24, just 15.20% of homeless students and 20.31% of migrant students reached the Proficient level, reflecting very limited movement from previous years and signaling a need for urgent, sustained intervention. Low-income students achieved a slightly higher proficiency rate at 21.69%, a modest gain from 18.65% in 2021–22. These proficiency rates remain far below state targets, indicating that systemic barriers continue to hinder these students' academic success. Without comprehensive supports tailored to these populations, achieving parity in literacy outcomes will remain out of reach.

In comparison, non-homeless, non-low-income, and non-migrant students reached significantly higher proficiency levels in 2023–24. Non-low-income students reached 33.40% proficiency, non-homeless students reached 32.10%, and non-migrant students reached 30.89%. These rates are more than double those of their economically disadvantaged peers, reflecting the impact of access to stable housing, consistent schooling, and academic supports. These trends reinforce the correlation between economic security and literacy achievement. They also highlight the urgent need to address opportunity gaps through expanded access to structured literacy, HQIM, and family engagement strategies.

### **Students Scoring Advanced**

The disparities across subgroups become even more apparent at the Advanced level of performance. In 2023–24, only 6.01% of homeless students, 5.77% of migrant students, and 4.77% of low-income students scored at the Advanced level, reflecting minimal growth and continued underrepresentation in the highest achievement band. These figures suggest that students in these subgroups are less likely to meet proficiency benchmarks and are disproportionately excluded from opportunities to excel. Addressing this gap requires intentional efforts to provide access to rigorous content and differentiated supports.

By contrast, non-low-income and non-homeless students had the strongest representation at the Advanced level. Non-low-income students reached 20.24%, and non-homeless students followed closely at 21.39% in 2023–24. Non-migrant students also fared better, with 18.55% reaching Advanced, a rate nearly triple that of migrant students. These findings show that systemic inequities continue to limit access to high-level enrichment and advanced instruction for students experiencing economic hardship, housing instability, or migratory status. Ensuring all students have access to excellence requires expanded gifted education services, culturally responsive instruction, and inclusive approaches to academic acceleration.

## Key Takeaways

- Homeless, low-income, and migrant students are consistently overrepresented in the Below Basic and Basic categories, with more than 73% of students in each group falling into these performance bands in 2023–24.
- Non-homeless, non-low-income, and non-migrant students perform significantly better, yet more than 50% of students in these groups are still not reaching proficiency, showing the need for broader statewide improvement.
- Proficiency gaps remain stark between subgroups, with non-low-income students achieving proficiency at rates nearly double those of low-income students.
- The Advanced category reflects the widest gaps, with non-homeless and non-low-income students far outpacing their peers in terms of high achievement.
- Addressing these disparities requires a system-wide commitment to evidence-based equity-focused instruction, including targeted support for students experiencing poverty, mobility, or housing instability.
- Ensure all students have equitable opportunities for academic success.

Following the examination of grade four reading scores, it is important to also consider the performance trends of older students. The following analysis focuses on the aggregated student data for grade eight, providing valuable insights into the literacy progress and challenges faced by students at this critical stage. By reviewing this data, educators can identify patterns and tailor interventions to further support literacy growth across grade levels.

## Beneath the Surface: Grade 4 - Disaggregated Literacy Performance

While aggregated Grade Four WY-TOPP data offers a broad snapshot of student performance, it masks significant disparities among student groups that only become visible through disaggregated analysis. Aggregated data show that just over half of Wyoming's fourth-grade students (50.33% in 2023–24) are scoring in the Below Basic and Basic performance bands. On its own, this suggests a need for overall instructional improvement—but it does not reveal which students are most at risk or where inequities are most deeply entrenched.

Disaggregated data, by contrast, brings these inequities into focus. When student performance is examined by subgroup, such as disability status, language background, gender, socioeconomic level, and race or ethnicity, a much more urgent and uneven landscape emerges. For example, students with disabilities and English learners are overrepresented in the lowest performance bands, with 76.43% and 88.58%, respectively, scoring Below Basic or Basic in 2023–24, compared to 44.52% and 49.90% of their peers. Similarly, homeless and migrant students also face significant barriers, with more than 75% in these groups scoring at the lowest achievement levels, far exceeding the statewide average.

Moreover, while the aggregated proficiency rate has hovered between 29% and 31% over several years, disaggregated data show wide variation in which groups are reaching that goal. In 2023–24, non-low-income students achieved a proficiency rate of 33.40%, while low-income students remained at just 21.69%. The gap is even wider among English learners, where only 8.37% reached proficiency, compared to 31.26% of non-English learners. Aggregated data cannot capture the scale of these differences or the instructional implications they present.

Perhaps most strikingly, the aggregated data shows 19.21% of students scoring Advanced in 2023–24, which might suggest growing excellence across the system. However, disaggregated data reveal that students from



marginalized groups—including English learners, students with disabilities, and those experiencing poverty—are largely excluded from this category. For instance, only 2.09% of English learners and 6.73% of students with disabilities scored Advanced, compared to 22.10% of students without disabilities and 20.24% of non-low-income students.

In short, the aggregated data paints a picture of generalized need, while disaggregated data exposes the systemic inequities that perpetuate opportunity gaps for Wyoming’s most vulnerable learners. It enables a more targeted and responsive approach by revealing which students are falling behind, why, and how support systems must be improved. This deeper understanding is essential for crafting effective, equity-centered solutions that move beyond surface-level gains and address the root causes of literacy underperformance.

The Grade Four analysis offers a comprehensive view of literacy performance through a disaggregated lens, examining patterns across race and ethnicity, disability status, language background, gender, and socioeconomic subgroups. These insights move beyond aggregated trends to reveal deep and persistent disparities among students identified as multilingual learners, students with disabilities, male students, and those experiencing poverty, homelessness, or migratory status.

Similarly, significant gaps are visible between racial and ethnic groups, particularly for students identified as AI or AN, Black or African American, and Hispanic, who remain overrepresented in the lowest performance bands and underrepresented in the highest. In contrast, students without disabilities, non-English learners, female students, and non-economically disadvantaged peers tend to perform better, but still face challenges in reaching proficiency. These data make clear that foundational reading gaps are systemic, not isolated, and that closing these gaps requires sustained investment in evidence-based instruction, equitable access to high-quality materials, and strategic, student-centered supports.

As students move from elementary into secondary grades, it becomes increasingly important to understand how early gaps either narrow or widen over time. The following section examines Grade Eight student performance—aggregated and disaggregated—to explore whether the disparities identified in Grade Four persist, diminish, or intensify as students advance through Wyoming’s education system. This analysis provides essential context for shaping interventions that not only address current challenges but also anticipate future academic needs.

### **Grade Eight: Aggregated WY-TOPP and WY-ALT**

As students progress through Wyoming’s education system, the demands of literacy grow increasingly complex. By Grade Eight, students are expected to apply foundational reading skills to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize a variety of increasingly rigorous texts across academic content areas. Aggregated statewide data for Grade Eight provides a valuable snapshot of how well Wyoming students are meeting these expectations. This data reveals overall trends in performance across the categories of Below Basic and Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—highlighting both areas of strength and persistent gaps.

While the Grade Four data underscored the need for foundational literacy improvement, the Grade Eight data offer insight into whether early interventions have been successful and whether students are prepared for the academic demands of high school and beyond. The following analysis examines patterns in student achievement at the statewide level, offering a baseline for comparison with disaggregated subgroup data. This approach ensures that Wyoming’s literacy goals remain anchored in both academic rigor and educational equity.

The table below provides aggregated WY-TOPP and WY-ALT assessment data for Grade 8 ELA over four academic years (2018–19 to 2023–24). Participation rates remained consistently high, ranging from 99.0% in 2018–19 to 99.1% in 2023–24. This consistency ensures that the data accurately represents the performance of Grade 8 students across the state.

Table 18: Wyoming Grade 8 ELA Aggregated Student Data

SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENT BELOW BASIC	PERCENT BASIC	PERCENT PROFICIENT	PERCENT ADVANCED	PERCENT BASIC BELOW	PERCENT PROFICIENT ADVANCED
2017-18	23.11%	18.85%	40.05%	17.99%	41.96%	58.04%
2018-19	21.69%	17.59%	40.23%	20.49%	39.28%	60.72%
2020-21	22.25%	17.10%	40.56%	20.09%	39.35%	60.65%
2021-22	22.80%	18.85%	39.76%	18.59%	41.65%	58.35%
2022-23	23.38%	16.87%	40.93%	18.82%	40.25%	59.75%
2023-24	25.22%	17.92%	37.90%	18.95%	43.14%	56.86%

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

#### Aggregated: Students Scoring Below Basic and Basic

The percentage of Grade 8 students scoring in the Below Basic and Basic categories has remained persistently high over the past seven school years. In 2023–24, 43.14% of students fell into these two categories, marking the highest combined percentage since 2017–18. This is an increase from 39.74% in 2022–23 and 39.38% in 2021–22, indicating that more students are not meeting grade-level expectations in literacy by the time they reach middle school. The Below Basic category alone rose from 23.11% in 2017–18 to 25.22% in 2023–24, while the Basic category has fluctuated between 17.10% and 18.95%.

These increases suggest that a growing proportion of students are entering high school without mastering foundational reading and writing skills. Without meaningful intervention, these students may struggle to engage with content across subjects and may be at risk of academic disengagement or dropout. These trends reinforce the need for intensified support in Grades 6–8, including evidence-based literacy instruction, ongoing assessment, and early intervention strategies. Schools and districts must prioritize strategic investment in middle-grade instruction to help students exit the lowest performance levels.

#### Aggregated: Proficiency as the Goal

Grade-level proficiency remains the target outcome for student literacy achievement, but current data show that too few students are reaching this benchmark by Grade 8. In 2023–24, only 37.90% of students scored at the Proficient level in English Language Arts, down from 40.93% in 2022–23 and 40.99% in 2021–22. This is the lowest proficiency rate recorded since 2017–18, which was 40.05%, suggesting a downward trajectory in middle school literacy outcomes. These trends raise concern about the ability of students to develop the comprehension, analysis, and academic vocabulary skills necessary for high school success.

Despite temporary gains in previous years, the recent decline in proficiency highlights the fragility of progress and the importance of sustained instructional improvement. Students in middle school need access to curriculum materials and instruction that emphasize both foundational reading strategies and advanced comprehension skills. Educators must be equipped with professional learning and data tools that support differentiated instruction aligned to grade-level standards. Without strong, system-wide efforts to boost proficiency, the state risks leaving a large segment of students unprepared for future academic demands.

### **Aggregated: Students Scoring Advanced**

The percentage of Grade 8 students scoring at the Advanced level has remained relatively consistent over time but has not experienced notable growth. In 2023–24, 18.95% of students reached the Advanced level, which is a slight increase from 18.82% in 2022–23, but still below the high of 20.99% observed in 2021–22. Since 2017–18, the Advanced performance band has fluctuated within a narrow range between 17.99% and 20.99%, indicating a stable but limited segment of high-achieving students. This pattern shows that while a core group of students is excelling, the state is not expanding the number of students reaching the highest levels of performance.

The lack of consistent upward movement in this category suggests that more students are not being effectively identified or supported to advance into deeper literacy skill development. Enrichment opportunities, rigorous instruction, and gifted education services must be embedded into Tier I instruction to support excellence at scale. Furthermore, equity gaps in access to advanced coursework or enrichment experiences must be addressed to ensure all capable students are challenged and supported. Moving more students into the Advanced range is essential for developing future-ready learners who can thrive in high school and beyond.

### **Aggregated Key Takeaways**

- In 2023–24, 43.14% of Grade 8 students scored Below Basic or Basic—the highest percentage recorded in the last seven years—demonstrating an urgent need for foundational literacy interventions.
- The percentage of students reaching Proficient dropped to 37.90%, the lowest since 2017–18, highlighting a concerning trend in middle school reading outcomes.
- The Advanced category remained relatively stable at 18.95%, but without significant growth, showing limited movement into the highest levels of achievement.
- Overall, the data signal that stronger, evidence-based literacy instruction and targeted academic supports are needed to reverse declining trends and ensure students are prepared for success in high school and beyond.

While the aggregated data provides an overall view of Grade 8 student performance, it does not fully capture the variation in outcomes experienced by different student groups. Beneath the surface of state-level trends lie persistent disparities in achievement and growth that impact students differently based on race, ethnicity, disability status, language background, gender, and socioeconomic conditions. These differences are essential to understand if Wyoming is to provide equitable literacy outcomes for all learners. A deeper analysis of disaggregated data allows educators and policymakers to identify which groups are most at risk, monitor the effectiveness of current interventions, and ensure that resources are allocated where they are needed most.

The following section disaggregates Grade 8 performance data across key subgroups, including multilingual learners, students with disabilities, students from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds, and those experiencing economic hardship. Each analysis is organized by performance bands—Below Basic and Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—to provide a clear and consistent understanding of subgroup outcomes. By examining these patterns, Wyoming can better address achievement gaps and ensure that instructional practices, intervention strategies, and professional learning systems are responsive to the diverse needs of students in the secondary grades.

## Grade Eight: Disaggregated WY-TOPP and WY-ALT Student Performance

This section focuses on disaggregated WY-TOPP and WY-ALT data for Grade Eight students, examining performance patterns across key subgroups. These include students identified by disability status, English learner status, gender, socioeconomic background, and race and ethnicity. Each analysis is organized by performance bands—Below Basic and Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—to provide a consistent and clear view of how students are distributed across achievement levels. This focused examination supports data-informed decision-making, equitable resource distribution, and instructional practices tailored to the evolving needs of Wyoming’s middle-grade learners.

### Race and Ethnicity Subgroup

Race and ethnicity remain vital lenses for understanding student achievement and educational equity, particularly in the later grades when academic expectations increase and disparities may deepen. Wyoming’s middle-grade learners represent a range of racial and ethnic identities, each contributing unique perspectives and experiences to their classrooms. However, the Grade Eight data show that students do not experience equal outcomes, with substantial variation in literacy achievement and access to academic excellence across racial and ethnic subgroups. These gaps often reflect underlying systemic barriers, including uneven access to effective instruction, limited cultural responsiveness in curricula, and inconsistent opportunities for academic acceleration.

This section analyzes student achievement data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, focusing on students identified as AI or AN, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, NH/PI, Two or More Races, and Caucasian. The analysis follows the established structure of evaluating outcomes across the performance bands—Below Basic and Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. By surfacing these patterns, this review identifies areas of progress and concern, guiding targeted actions that advance equity and strengthen outcomes for all of Wyoming’s eighth-grade students.

Table 19: Wyoming ELA Disaggregated Student Data Over Time

School Year	Subgroup	Percent Below Basic	Percent Basic	Percent Proficient	Percent Advanced	Percent Basic & Below	Percent Proficient & Advanced
2021-22	American Indian or Alaskan Native	49.80%	21.12%	24.70%	4.38%	70.92%	29.08%
2022-23	American Indian or Alaskan Native	50.00%	23.85%	22.02%	4.13%	73.85%	26.15%
2023-24	American Indian or Alaskan Native	51.80%	22.52%	20.27%	5.41%	74.32%	25.68%
2021-22	Asian	11.90%	11.90%	40.48%	35.71%	23.81%	76.19%
2022-23	Asian	18.92%	5.41%	48.65%	27.03%	24.32%	75.68%
2023-24	Asian	8.51%	19.15%	46.81%	25.53%	27.66%	72.34%
2021-22	Black	36.51%	15.87%	36.51%	11.11%	52.38%	47.62%
2022-23	Black	32.73%	21.82%	29.09%	16.36%	54.55%	45.45%
2023-24	Black	35.00%	11.67%	36.67%	16.67%	46.67%	53.33%
2021-22	Hispanic	32.19%	22.46%	35.18%	10.18%	54.65%	45.35%
2022-23	Hispanic	32.74%	21.65%	35.36%	10.25%	54.39%	45.61%
2023-24	Hispanic	37.40%	21.72%	31.81%	9.07%	59.12%	40.88%
2021-22	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	10.00%	30.00%	30.00%	30.00%	40.00%	60.00%
2022-23	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	33.33%	16.67%	41.67%	8.33%	50.00%	50.00%
2023-24	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	.	.	.	.	.	.
2021-22	Two or More Races	25.20%	19.92%	39.02%	15.85%	45.12%	54.88%
2022-23	Two or More Races	23.23%	20.47%	38.98%	17.32%	43.70%	56.30%
2023-24	Two or More Races	28.57%	17.22%	35.90%	18.32%	45.79%	54.21%
2021-22	White	19.55%	18.04%	41.43%	20.98%	37.59%	62.41%
2022-23	White	20.68%	15.65%	42.76%	20.91%	36.33%	63.67%
2023-24	White	21.46%	17.04%	39.92%	21.58%	38.50%	61.50%

Note. This table illustrates ELA Grade 4 Disaggregated Data. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### **Disaggregated: Below Basic and Basic**

A significant portion of students across racial and ethnic subgroups continue to score in the Below Basic and Basic categories, highlighting persistent literacy challenges. While some subgroups have shown slight improvements, others remain stagnant or have declined in performance, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions.

AI/AN students consistently have the highest percentage of students scoring in these lower categories, with 74.13% in 2023-24, a slight increase from 73.73% in 2022-23 and 70.20% in 2021-22. This indicates that nearly three out of four students in this group are not meeting grade-level literacy expectations. Similarly, Black students remain one of the most impacted subgroups, with 72.44% scoring Below Basic or Basic in 2023-24, increasing from 70.73% in 2022-23. The consistent trend of over 70% of Black students struggling in literacy underscores systemic challenges that require additional support.

Hispanic students have shown little movement in these lower categories, with 64.91% in 2023-24, nearly identical to 64.63% in 2022-23 and 64.74% in 2021-22. This suggests that while proficiency levels have not worsened, there has been no substantial improvement over time. Additionally, NH/PI students experienced a sharp increase in the Below Basic and Basic categories, rising to 76.32% in 2023-24, a dramatic increase from 61.11% in 2022-23. This sudden decline in literacy performance raises concerns about access to effective instructional resources and support for this group.

On the other hand, Asian and White students consistently have the lowest percentage of students scoring Below Basic or Basic, with 38.60% and 38.56% in 2023-24, respectively. While these subgroups perform better than others, nearly 40% of students in these groups still struggle with literacy, showing that even the highest-performing racial subgroups need continued literacy interventions.

### **Disaggregated: Proficiency as the Goal**

Proficiency rates have remained relatively stagnant across most racial subgroups, with some groups seeing slight improvements while others have declined. Asian students continue to have the highest percentage of students reaching proficiency, with 40.78% in 2023-24, an increase from 38.49% in 2022-23 and 38.71% in 2021-22. This steady improvement suggests gradual literacy gains among Asian students, though growth remains slow. Similarly, White students follow closely behind, with 39.32% proficiency in 2023-24, though this marks a slight decrease from 40.67% in 2022-23, indicating that some students may be regressing in literacy performance.

Hispanic students saw minimal movement in proficiency, increasing slightly from 25.84% in 2022-23 to 26.36% in 2023-24. Black students showed a similar trend, rising from 24.50% in 2022-23 to 25.15% in 2023-24, reflecting small but insufficient progress in addressing literacy challenges within these subgroups.

The most concerning trends appeared among AI/AN students and NH/PI students, both of whom saw proficiency rates decline to 19.12% and 18.42% in 2023-24, respectively. These decreases suggest that students in these subgroups are facing increasing barriers to literacy achievement, further widening the achievement gap. The lack of substantial growth in proficiency rates suggests that current literacy support efforts may not be effectively meeting the needs of struggling students, necessitating more targeted, evidence-based instructional approaches to drive improvement.

### **Disaggregated: Students Scoring Advanced**

The percentage of students scoring Advanced remains relatively low, with some subgroups showing slight improvements while others declined. Asian students continue to have the highest percentage of students scoring Advanced, with 20.82% in 2023–24, an increase from 18.18% in 2022–23. This positive trend suggests that more students in this subgroup are excelling in literacy, though the gains remain modest. White students also maintain relatively strong performance in this category, with 21.58% in 2023–24, showing stability over time. For other subgroups, progress in the Advanced category remains limited.

Black, Hispanic, and Two or More Races subgroups have remained stagnant in the Advanced category, with all averaging between 10–12% over the past three years. The lack of growth among high-achieving students suggests a need for increased access to enrichment programs and advanced literacy coursework. A particularly concerning trend is the sharp decline in Advanced scores for NH/PI students, dropping from 11.11% in 2022–23 to 5.26% in 2023–24. This drastic drop indicates a loss of high-achieving students within this subgroup, potentially reflecting a lack of access to advanced learning resources or effective literacy support for top-performing students.

### **Disaggregated: Key Takeaways**

- More than half of students in most racial subgroups score in the Below Basic and Basic categories, with AI/AN, Black, Hispanic, and NH/PI students being the most impacted.
- Proficiency rates have remained stagnant, with only slight improvements in some subgroups and significant declines among NH/PI and AI/AN students.
- Asian and White students consistently perform the best, but around 40% of students in these groups still score Below Basic or Basic, highlighting the need for continued literacy support.
- NH/PI students saw the most significant drop in both proficiency and Advanced scores, signaling a need for immediate intervention and targeted academic support.
- To address these disparities, targeted instructional supports, structured literacy interventions, and equitable access to HQIM must be prioritized to ensure more students reach proficiency and excel in literacy.

### **Subgroup Comparisons: Disability Status, Language Background, and Gender**

While race and ethnicity provide an important lens for understanding disparities in literacy achievement, they represent only one dimension of Wyoming's diverse student population. To gain a more comprehensive view of student outcomes in Grade Eight, it is essential to examine how other demographic factors—such as disability status, language background, and gender—affect literacy performance. These intersecting identities shape students' access to rigorous instruction, opportunities for enrichment, and the supports they receive across school systems. By analyzing these additional subgroups, this section sheds light on the persistent equity gaps that remain and identifies areas where targeted instructional practices and systemic interventions are most urgently needed.

As with prior analyses, this section is organized by performance bands—Below Basic and Basic, Proficient, and Advanced to provide a consistent framework for comparison. The following data highlights patterns among students identified as having disabilities, those without, multilingual learners and NMLLs, and male and female students. These subgroup comparisons help ensure that Wyoming's commitment to literacy excellence is inclusive of all learners, especially those most often underserved by traditional instructional models.



Table 20: Wyoming ELA Grade 8 Disaggregated Data

School Year	Subgroup	Percent Below Basic	Percent Basic	Percent Proficient	Percent Advanced	Percent Basic & Below	Percent Proficient & Advanced
2021-22	Students with Disabilities	60.60%	19.16%	15.63%	4.60%	79.76%	20.24%
2022-23	Students with Disabilities	60.94%	17.60%	16.58%	4.88%	78.54%	21.46%
2023-24	Students with Disabilities	63.85%	16.04%	15.51%	4.60%	79.89%	20.11%
2021-22	Students without Disabilities	17.33%	18.81%	43.24%	20.62%	36.14%	63.86%
2022-23	Students without Disabilities	17.40%	16.75%	44.81%	21.04%	34.15%	65.85%
2023-24	Students without Disabilities	19.25%	18.21%	41.37%	21.17%	37.46%	62.54%
2021-22	English Learner	69.85%	22.06%	8.09%	0.00%	91.91%	8.09%
2022-23	English Learner	69.23%	19.58%	11.19%	0.00%	88.81%	11.19%
2023-24	English Learner	70.55%	19.02%	10.43%	0.00%	89.57%	10.43%
2021-22	Non-English Learner	21.92%	18.79%	40.35%	18.94%	40.71%	59.29%
2022-23	Non-English Learner	22.44%	16.81%	41.54%	19.21%	39.26%	60.74%
2023-24	Non-English Learner	24.14%	17.90%	38.56%	19.40%	42.03%	57.97%
2021-22	Female	18.37%	18.92%	42.05%	20.66%	37.29%	62.71%
2022-23	Female	18.87%	16.39%	44.11%	20.62%	35.27%	64.73%
2023-24	Female	20.85%	17.94%	40.26%	20.94%	38.80%	61.20%
2021-22	Male	27.03%	18.78%	37.57%	16.62%	45.81%	54.19%
2022-23	Male	27.52%	17.30%	38.01%	17.17%	44.82%	55.18%
2023-24	Male	29.54%	17.90%	35.57%	16.99%	47.44%	52.56%

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### Disaggregated: Below Basic and Basic

Significant disparities are evident across student subgroups in the Below Basic and Basic performance bands. In 2023–24, students with disabilities had the highest rate in these combined categories at 84.72%, marking a slight decrease from 87.87% in 2022–23, yet still alarmingly high. This indicates that the vast majority of students in this subgroup are not meeting grade-level expectations. Conversely, students without disabilities have shown stronger outcomes, though 41.52% remained in the lowest bands in 2023–24—a considerable gap of over 40 percentage points compared to their peers with disabilities. This pattern highlights the continued need for differentiated supports, including access to evidence-based interventions and inclusive instructional practices.

English learners demonstrated similarly concerning results, with 89.61% scoring Below Basic or Basic in 2023–24, a slight improvement from 91.89% in the previous year. Despite this small gain, fewer than 11% of English learners are reaching proficiency benchmarks. In contrast, non-English learners had a combined rate of 48.13% in the lowest bands, which, while still significant, is nearly half the rate observed for English learners. These differences point to the need for more robust language and literacy integration across content areas to ensure multilingual learners can access grade-level text and instruction effectively.

In terms of gender, male students continue to underperform compared to female students in these lower performance bands. In 2023–24, 57.36% of male students scored Below Basic or Basic compared to 43.68% of female students. This 13-point gap has remained steady over time and highlights the ongoing need for gender-responsive instructional strategies, especially to increase engagement and comprehension for adolescent male readers.

### Proficiency as the Goal

Reaching proficiency remains a challenge across all subgroups, but the degree of progress varies widely. Among students with disabilities, just 9.96% scored Proficient in 2023–24, a slight increase from 8.55% in the prior year but still far below state expectations. Meanwhile, students without disabilities had 39.49% achieving

Proficient, further illustrating the persistent achievement gap between these two groups. This data reinforces the urgency of ensuring all students, especially those with disabilities, receive the scaffolding and explicit instruction needed to build literacy competence.

English learners continue to lag behind their peers in achieving proficiency, with only 9.64% reaching this benchmark in 2023–24, which represents little change from 10.43% in 2022–23. In comparison, non-English learners showed a slight decline but still maintained a much higher rate at 37.68%. These discrepancies demonstrate that while statewide efforts may be helping some students move toward proficiency, English learners remain excluded from these gains. Greater integration of language development within core literacy instruction is necessary to close this gap.

Gender trends show that female students outpace male students in proficiency rates. In 2023–24, 39.27% of female students scored Proficient, whereas only 35.57% of male students reached this level. Although both groups showed slight declines from the previous year, the persistent gap underscores the importance of fostering more inclusive classroom environments that support the learning preferences and academic needs of all genders.

### **Students Scoring Advanced**

Advanced-level performance shows further disparities in access to enrichment and academic extension. In 2023–24, only 5.32% of students with disabilities scored at the Advanced level, compared to 19.99% of students without disabilities. While the gap narrowed slightly from previous years, this difference reflects inequitable access to high-quality, challenging instruction and the under-identification of giftedness in students with disabilities. Schools must strengthen their focus on inclusive enrichment practices to ensure all students have the opportunity to excel.

English learners continue to be severely underrepresented in the Advanced category. In 2023–24, just 0.75% of English learners reached this level, compared to 14.19% of non-English learners. This gap has persisted across all years of data and highlights systemic inequities in access to gifted education and rigorous academic opportunities. Expanded supports such as differentiated instruction, talent development programs, and culturally responsive pedagogy are essential for improving these outcomes.

Gender differences persist in Advanced scores, though they are less pronounced. In 2023–24, 17.05% of female students scored Advanced, compared to 16.96% of male students. While this parity is promising, the overall stagnation in growth at this level for both groups suggests a need for greater investment in rigorous coursework and opportunities for advanced literacy engagement in middle school classrooms.

### **Key Takeaways**

- Students with disabilities and English learners are the most disproportionately represented in the Below Basic and Basic categories, with over 84% and 89%, respectively, in 2023–24.
- Proficiency rates remain low among English learners and students with disabilities. Fewer than 10% of students in each group reach Proficient levels, compared to nearly 40% of their peers.
- Gender gaps continue, with female students outperforming male students in both the Proficient and Advanced categories across all years reviewed.
- Access to the Advanced category remains limited for students with disabilities and English learners. Persistent underrepresentation reflects deeper issues in access to rigorous and inclusive instructional opportunities.

- These disparities point to the need for sustained and differentiated investment in evidence-based literacy supports, particularly for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and male students during the critical middle school years.

To fully understand the literacy landscape in Grade Eight, it is important to examine how race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status continue to influence student performance. These factors do not exist in isolation but often intersect with disability status, language background, and other indicators of educational access. Building on the prior analysis of student subgroup performance, the following section disaggregates data by racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups to uncover where disparities remain most pronounced. This level of examination provides valuable insight into how historical inequities and economic barriers shape literacy outcomes in the middle grades and where Wyoming must focus targeted efforts to ensure every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Table 21: Disaggregated Wyoming ELA Grade 8 SES

School Year	Subgroup	Percent Below Basic	Percent Basic	Percent Proficient	Percent Advanced	Percent Basic & Below	Percent Proficient & Advanced
2021-22	Homeless	48.15%	14.81%	33.33%	3.70%	62.96%	37.04%
2022-23	Homeless	42.86%	17.35%	32.65%	7.14%	60.20%	39.80%
2023-24	Homeless	46.96%	24.35%	20.87%	7.83%	71.30%	28.70%
2021-22	Non-Homeless	22.52%	18.90%	39.83%	18.76%	41.41%	58.59%
2022-23	Non-Homeless	23.11%	16.86%	41.05%	18.99%	39.97%	60.03%
2023-24	Non-Homeless	24.86%	17.81%	38.19%	19.14%	42.67%	57.33%
2021-22	Low Income	34.65%	21.04%	33.69%	10.62%	55.69%	44.31%
2022-23	Low Income	35.24%	19.22%	34.34%	11.21%	54.45%	45.55%
2023-24	Low Income	37.44%	19.79%	31.55%	11.22%	57.24%	42.76%
2021-22	Non-Low Income	18.78%	18.11%	41.81%	21.30%	36.89%	63.11%
2022-23	Non-Low Income	17.59%	15.72%	44.15%	22.54%	33.31%	66.69%
2023-24	Non-Low Income	17.92%	16.80%	41.70%	23.57%	34.73%	65.27%
2021-22	Migrant	18.18%	36.36%	45.45%	0.00%	54.55%	45.45%
2022-23	Migrant	14.29%	14.29%	57.14%	14.29%	28.57%	71.43%
2023-24	Migrant					>= 80%	<= 20%
2021-22	Non-Migrant	22.81%	18.82%	39.75%	18.62%	41.63%	58.37%
2022-23	Non-Migrant	23.39%	16.87%	40.91%	18.83%	40.26%	59.74%
2023-24	Non-Migrant	25.18%	17.90%	37.94%	18.98%	43.08%	56.92%

Note. This data is available on the [WDE data portal](#).

### Students Scoring Below Basic and Basic

Across socioeconomic subgroups, Grade Eight students identified as homeless, low-income, and migrant continue to be overrepresented in the Below Basic and Basic categories. In 2023–24, homeless students had a combined 62.75% scoring below Basic and Basic, an increase from 50.21% in 2022–23. Low-income students similarly saw elevated risk, with 57.57% scoring Below Basic and Basic in 2023–24, the highest of the three-year period. Migrant students also displayed a troubling pattern, with 53.85% in the lowest categories in 2023–24, maintaining a pattern of over 50% for three consecutive years. These figures illustrate the compounded literacy challenges for students facing economic hardship, unstable housing, or school mobility.

In contrast, non-homeless, non-low-income, and non-migrant students perform better overall, though concerns remain. In 2023–24, 43.00% of non-homeless students and 37.12% of non-low-income students scored Below Basic and Basic, with both showing slight increases over the prior year. Non-migrant students scored similarly at 43.00%, reflecting persistent challenges in reducing the proportion of students in the lowest performance bands. Despite better outcomes than their disadvantaged peers, over a third of these students are still not meeting grade-level expectations, reinforcing the need for universal improvements in literacy instruction alongside targeted supports for vulnerable populations.

## Proficiency as the Goal

A stark disparity remains in the proportion of students achieving proficiency across socioeconomic groups. In 2023–24, only 27.45% of homeless students and 30.63% of low-income students reached the Proficient level, continuing a three-year pattern of low achievement. Migrant students fared slightly better, with 42.31% reaching proficiency, though the trend over time shows little movement. These findings emphasize that students facing economic instability are less likely to attain grade-level mastery, a trend that has not significantly improved despite ongoing efforts.

Comparatively, non-homeless, non-low-income, and non-migrant students achieved proficiency at much higher rates. In 2023–24, 37.94% of non-homeless and non-migrant students reached the Proficient level, while 39.34% of non-low-income students met this benchmark. Although still short of statewide targets, these groups consistently outperform their peers, reflecting a clear connection between economic security and literacy success. The persistent proficiency gap between economically disadvantaged students and their peers suggests a need for differentiated instructional strategies, extended learning opportunities, and increased access to high-quality materials tailored to the needs of students with fewer resources.

## Students Scoring Advanced

Advanced performance further illustrates opportunity gaps among socioeconomic subgroups. In 2023–24, only 9.80% of homeless students, 11.80% of low-income students, and 3.85% of migrant students reached the Advanced category. These numbers reflect minimal growth over time and persistent underrepresentation in the highest achievement band. This persistent trend underscores the systemic nature of the challenge and reinforces the urgency of addressing it through targeted, equity-focused strategies. This lack of access to advanced literacy opportunities among disadvantaged students highlights the need for more equitable pathways to academic enrichment and challenge.

In contrast, non-homeless and non-low-income students had the strongest representation in the Advanced band, with 19.06% and 23.53% respectively in 2023–24. Non-migrant students also reached 19.06%, demonstrating that students with stable housing, consistent school environments, and greater access to educational resources are more likely to achieve at the highest levels. These patterns affirm that gifted services, academic enrichment, and acceleration strategies must be extended more intentionally to students who face barriers outside the classroom, ensuring that excellence is accessible to all.

## Key Takeaways

- Homeless, low-income, and migrant students remain significantly overrepresented in the Below Basic and Basic categories, with more than half of students in these groups scoring in the lowest performance bands in 2023–24.
- Non-homeless, non-low-income, and non-migrant students demonstrate stronger outcomes, yet more than a third of students in these groups still do not meet grade-level expectations, indicating the need for system-wide instructional improvement.
- Proficiency rates among disadvantaged subgroups remain low, with gaps of over 10 percentage points separating them from more advantaged peers.
- Advanced achievement is highly concentrated among non-low-income and non-homeless students, underscoring inequities in access to advanced instruction and academic acceleration.
- A robust, equity-driven approach that combines foundational skill development with high-challenge learning environments is essential for closing both achievement and opportunity gaps in middle school literacy.



## Beneath the Surface: Grade 8 - Disaggregated Literacy Performance

While the aggregated Grade Eight WY-TOPP data provides a general overview of student achievement, it does not fully capture the complexity and variability in performance among different groups of students. The 2023–24 aggregate data show that 43.14% of Grade Eight students scored in the Below Basic and Basic categories, and 37.90% achieved Proficient, while 18.95% scored at the Advanced level. These results point to a system where nearly half of students are not yet meeting grade-level expectations, but they do not reveal which students are most at risk or how deeply these challenges are rooted in systemic disparities.

Disaggregated data reveals a much more nuanced and urgent picture. Students identified as homeless, low-income, or migrant continue to face the most significant challenges. In 2023–24, 73.38% of homeless students, 72.44% of low-income students, and 74.45% of migrant students scored in the Below Basic and Basic categories—substantially above the statewide average. These students are also underrepresented in the Proficient and Advanced categories. Only 26.60% of homeless students, 27.56% of low-income students, and 25.55% of migrant students reached Proficient or Advanced in 2023–24, compared to 56.22% of non-migrant students and 56.26% of non-low-income students. These gaps are not marginal—they reflect a deeply stratified system of opportunity that continues to disadvantage students based on their socioeconomic background.

The disparities persist when disaggregating by disability, language, and gender. In 2023–24, 79.68% of students with disabilities scored Below Basic or Basic, compared to 38.94% of their non-disabled peers. Similarly, 89.11% of English learners fell into the lowest bands, while only 42.36% of non-English learners did. Male students also continue to be overrepresented in the lower performance categories (47.44% Below Basic and Basic in 2023–24), while only 40.64% of female students fell into these bands. These data show that inequities evident in Grade Four do not resolve over time—they continue, and in many cases, worsen by middle school.

While the aggregated data may suggest relative stability in Grade Eight performance, the disaggregated data exposes deep, persistent gaps that disproportionately affect historically marginalized groups. These findings underscore the need for tailored interventions that go beyond generalized improvements and directly address the needs of students most at risk. Without such targeted action, Wyoming's middle school students—particularly those from vulnerable subgroups—will continue to face barriers that prevent them from achieving literacy success. Addressing these disparities with evidence-based practices, equitable resource allocation, and inclusive instructional models is not optional; it is essential for ensuring all students have the opportunity to thrive.

## From Early Warning to Lasting Impact: Examining Literacy Outcomes Across

While aggregated data from Grades 4 and 8 offer a high-level view of literacy performance trends across Wyoming, they fail to capture the nuances and inequities experienced by specific student populations. Aggregated results can give the impression of uniform progress—or lack thereof—when in reality, different student groups are experiencing widely divergent outcomes. For instance, in 2023–24, the aggregated data show 50.33% of Grade 4 students and 43.14% of Grade 8 students scoring Below Basic or Basic. These figures suggest broad instructional challenges across the system, but they do not identify which students are most in need of targeted support. To understand the true state of literacy development, a disaggregated lens is essential.

At both Grade 4 and Grade 8, disaggregated data expose persistent gaps based on race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language background, gender, and disability status. In Grade 4, students identified as AI or AN, Black or African American, and Hispanic were significantly more likely to score in the lowest performance bands, with over 70% of students in these groups not meeting proficiency. This trend continues in Grade 8, where students in the same racial and ethnic groups continue to face disproportionate challenges. For example, 74.13% of AI or AN students and 72.44% of Black students scored Below Basic or Basic in Grade 8 in 2023–24, showing little progress across grade levels and underscoring the entrenched nature of these opportunity gaps.

Socioeconomic disparities also persist across grades. In Grade 4, 73.54% of low-income students and 76.12% of migrant students were in the Below Basic and Basic categories. These trends do not improve by Grade 8. In 2023–24, 74.46% of low-income students and 74.26% of migrant students continued to score at the lowest levels, indicating a consistent lack of access to high-quality instruction and support. Homeless students in Grade 8 showed some fluctuation across years, but 72.04% still remained below proficiency in 2023–24, mirroring the challenges seen in elementary years. Non-economically disadvantaged peers, while performing better, still saw over 40% scoring below proficiency, which highlights that instructional issues extend across the economic spectrum.

Language status and disability remain strong predictors of underperformance in both grades. In Grade 4, 88.58% of English learners and 76.43% of students with disabilities scored in the Below Basic or Basic categories. By Grade 8, these figures shift only slightly—91.38% of English learners and 83.65% of students with disabilities continued to struggle, revealing that without sustained and tailored interventions, early disparities persist into adolescence. In contrast, non-English learners and students without disabilities consistently perform better, though sizable percentages in these groups still fall short of grade-level expectations. Gender-based differences are present but less dramatic, with female students outperforming males in both grades, particularly in the Proficient and Advanced categories.

Perhaps most concerning is the exclusion of historically marginalized groups from the Advanced performance band. In Grade 4, only 2.09% of English learners and 6.73% of students with disabilities reached the Advanced level. This pattern continues in Grade 8, where just 0.00% of English learners and 4.80% of students with disabilities were identified as Advanced in 2023–24. Meanwhile, non-low-income students and Caucasian students were overrepresented in this top tier, further emphasizing inequitable access to enrichment and rigorous academic opportunities.

Together, these findings reveal a troubling consistency: the same students who struggle in Grade 4 are still struggling by Grade 8. Early gaps are not closing; instead, they are calcifying into long-term barriers to academic success. Addressing these persistent inequities requires systemwide action that goes beyond one-time interventions or surface-level improvements. Wyoming must ensure that its statewide literacy strategy provides differentiated, evidence-based instruction, equitable access to high-quality materials, and robust support systems tailored to the needs of its most vulnerable students. Only through sustained, equity-centered efforts can we expect to see meaningful progress from early learning through secondary school and beyond.

While local data provides a detailed understanding of student performance and highlights specific areas of concern, it is equally important to examine national trends to gain a broader perspective. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the Nation's Report Card, offers a



comprehensive view of student achievement across the United States and serves as a valuable tool for evaluating educational equity and effectiveness. By comparing Wyoming's performance to national averages, we can determine how the state's instructional systems and policies measure up and identify persistent challenges that reflect broader national patterns. Analyzing NAEP data alongside local WY-TOPP and WY-ALT results allows for a more complete assessment of student achievement, revealing not only where Wyoming is making progress but also where gaps continue to widen. This national lens is essential for contextualizing Wyoming's outcomes and for reinforcing the need for coordinated, evidence-based reforms that address both local needs and systemic challenges facing learners across the country.

## NAEP: National

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NAEP is the largest and most comprehensive ongoing assessment of student knowledge and skills across the United States. Administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), NAEP evaluates the academic performance of elementary and secondary students in core subjects such as reading, mathematics, science, and writing. The results are reported at the national, state, and selected district levels, offering a wide lens into student achievement. This comprehensive snapshot plays a pivotal role in monitoring progress and shaping strategies to improve educational outcomes.

Since its inception in 1969, NAEP has functioned as a consistent, objective benchmark for assessing student achievement across states. Unlike state-level assessments, which often vary in standards, design, and rigor, NAEP provides a uniform measure, enabling comparisons over time and across jurisdictions. This standardization allows educators and policymakers to track long-term academic trends and pinpoint disparities in performance between demographic groups. As such, NAEP is widely recognized as a reliable indicator of how well students perform nationally and across subpopulations.

Rather than assessing individual students or evaluating specific schools, NAEP presents a broad view of educational outcomes at scale. Student performance is categorized into achievement levels: Basic, Proficient, and Advanced, offering a common language to interpret academic proficiency. These benchmarks help stakeholders understand where students stand relative to national expectations and highlight areas where targeted interventions are necessary. By identifying both strengths and persistent challenges, NAEP supports informed decision-making and continuous improvement across all levels of the education system.

Participation in NAEP is crucial for developing data-informed policies that reflect the realities of student learning. The findings not only guide resource allocation but also empower educators to adapt instructional practices based on national trends and peer comparisons. Furthermore, NAEP data fosters transparency and accountability, helping to drive a shared commitment to equity and excellence. In combination with local assessments like WY-TOPP and WY-ALT, NAEP strengthens Wyoming's ability to understand how its students are progressing relative to national peers and where strategic adjustments are most needed.

To interpret the results, the National Assessment Governing Board has defined four achievement levels for each grade. NAEP Below Basic indicates that students have not demonstrated even partial mastery of fundamental skills. NAEP Basic represents partial mastery; students at this level are beginning to grasp essential material but do not yet demonstrate full proficiency. NAEP Proficient reflects solid academic performance and readiness for future educational challenges. This level is the desired target for all students, as it signifies that they are on track for success in future academic and career pursuits. However, it is important to note that "Proficient" on NAEP does not always correspond directly with grade-level proficiency as defined by state standards. NAEP Advanced represents superior performance, achieved by only a small

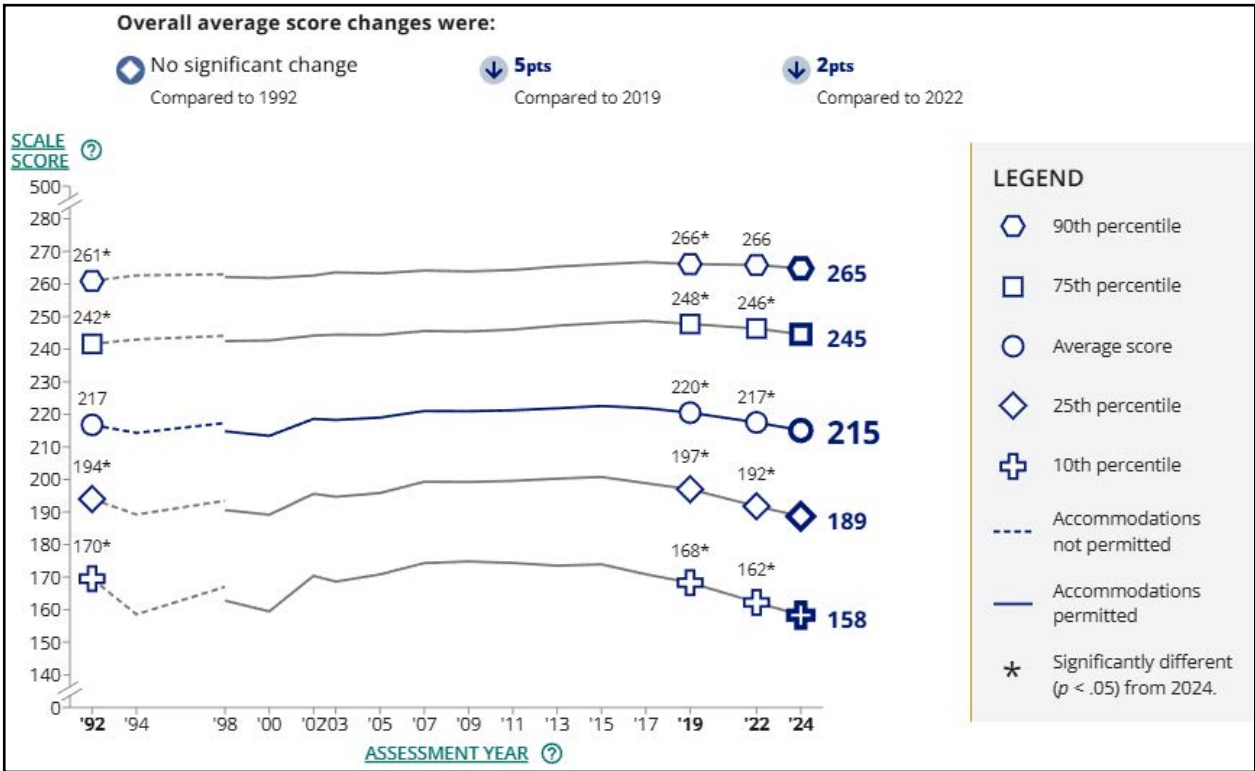
percentage of students who exceed grade-level expectations in a significant way. These achievement levels provide a structured framework for understanding how well students are mastering academic material. They serve as a guide for educators and policymakers to assess progress and pinpoint areas in need of improvement. While reaching NAEP Basic demonstrates foundational understanding, the ultimate goal is for all students to reach NAEP Proficient or higher. Achieving this goal requires intentional planning, sustained instructional support.

Grade Four: Aggregated Student Data

Reading proficiency is a critical component of both educational success and lifelong learning. NAEP, known as the Nation’s Report Card, provides a valuable perspective on the reading skills of students throughout the United States. By assessing fourth-grade students, NAEP offers an important snapshot of foundational literacy, which significantly influences performance across all other academic subjects. These results help stakeholders better understand national trends, identify persistent gaps in achievement, and inform literacy policy and instructional practices.

The table below presents aggregated data from the NAEP Reading Assessment, tracking national performance trends for fourth-grade students from 1992 to 2024. It illustrates both the average reading scores and selected percentile scores, offering a comprehensive view of student performance across achievement levels. These data help reveal patterns in reading achievement, showing where gains have been made and where performance has declined or stagnated. By examining this data over time, educators and policymakers can better evaluate the impact of literacy initiatives and determine where adjustments may be needed to support student success.

Table 22: NAEP National Grade 4 Aggregated Student Data



Note. This Table illustrates the trend in fourth-grade NAEP reading average and selected percentile scores from 1992 to 2024. For more information, visit [The Nation's Report Card](#).

The Grade Four NAEP Reading Scale Score table from 1992 to 2024 illustrates key national trends in reading achievement. The vertical axis displays scale scores ranging from 0 to 500, with higher scores reflecting stronger reading proficiency. The horizontal axis lists the assessment years, which include 1992, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2019, 2022, and 2024. This layout allows for the tracking of student reading performance over time, making it possible to identify both long-term trends and year-to-year changes.

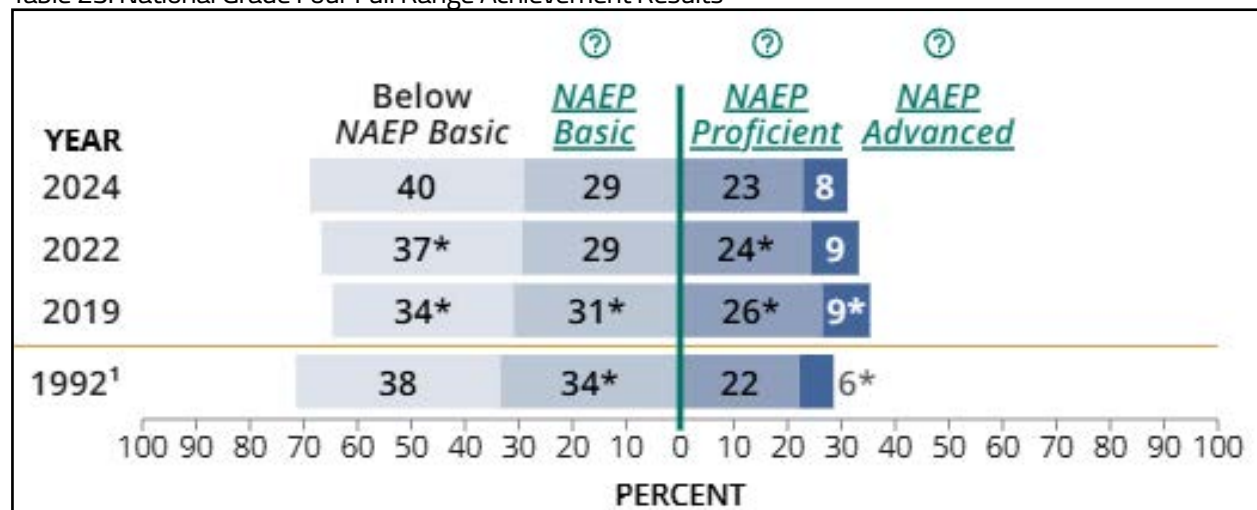
Percentile lines within the chart show how students across the achievement spectrum perform. In 2024, students at the 90th percentile scored 266, representing the highest-performing readers. Students at the 75th percentile scored 245, indicating strong but not top-tier performance. The national average score for fourth-grade students was 215, while students in the 25th and 10th percentiles scored 189 and 158, respectively. These data points reveal how performance differs between student groups and provide insight into the distribution of reading achievement.

The most troubling patterns emerge at the lower end of the performance scale. Between 2019 and 2024, the score for students at the 10th percentile dropped from 168 to 158. This ten-point decline is significant and suggests that lower-performing students are falling further behind. Meanwhile, students at the higher percentiles have largely maintained their performance, creating a growing gap between the lowest- and highest-achieving students.

Although average scores have remained relatively stable since 1992, the lack of progress among lower-performing students is concerning. The widening achievement gap points to a need for more intentional and focused literacy interventions. Without systemic supports for students who are most in need, national reading outcomes are unlikely to improve. These data underscore the urgency of ensuring that evidence-based reading instruction reaches all students, particularly those at risk of falling behind in foundational literacy skills.

The table below, titled "Trend in Fourth-Grade NAEP Reading Achievement-Level Results," illustrates the performance of fourth-grade students in reading. The y-axis represents the percentage of students, ranging from 0% to 100%, and categorizes students into four achievement levels: Below NAEP Basic, NAEP Basic, NAEP Proficient, and NAEP Advanced. This data spans several years, allowing for an analysis of trends in reading proficiency and highlighting shifts in student performance across these achievement levels.

Table 23: National Grade Four Full Range Achievement Results



Note. Data sourced from the NAEP reading achievement results for fourth-grade students. For more detailed information, visit [The Nation's Report Card](#).

The "Below NAEP Basic" category indicates students who have not demonstrated even partial mastery of fundamental skills, while "NAEP Basic" represents those with partial mastery. The "NAEP Proficient" level reflects solid academic performance and readiness for future educational challenges, and "NAEP Advanced" indicates superior performance, achieved by a small percentage of students. The chart includes data from four years: 1992, 2019, 2022, and 2024, with each year represented by a horizontal bar divided into segments corresponding to the achievement levels. The percentages for each category are displayed within the bars, allowing for easy comparison across years.

Understanding reading proficiency is essential for fourth-grade students as they transition from learning to read to reading to learn. NAEP establishes clear benchmarks that outline what students should know and be able to do at different levels of reading achievement. These benchmarks—NAEP Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—provide a framework for educators and parents to assess students' reading skills and comprehension abilities.

The NAEP reading achievement-level descriptions establish clear expectations for student performance across various text types and levels of difficulty. These descriptions are crafted to assess how students respond to a range of assessment questions designed to engage different cognitive processes and reading behaviors that are vital for effective comprehension of texts. (Institute of Education Sciences, 2025). The specific cognitive processes and reading behaviors outlined in these descriptions are deemed essential for students to successfully understand what they read. As students advance through grades and performance levels, the cognitive demands increase, requiring them to tackle more complex texts and challenging questions. While some reading behaviors may appear across different performance levels, it is crucial to understand that these skills are assessed in relation to texts and questions of varying difficulty. (Institute of Education Sciences, 2025).

The descriptions detail what students in grade 4 should know and be able to do at the NAEP Basic, Proficient, and Advanced levels. These achievement levels are cumulative; thus, performance at the NAEP Proficient level includes the competencies associated with the NAEP Basic level, while the NAEP Advanced level

encompasses the skills and knowledge from both the Basic and Proficient levels. Each achievement level is defined by a cut score, indicating the minimum score required to achieve that level (Institute of Education Sciences, 2022).

- **NAEP Basic (208):** Fourth-grade students performing at the NAEP Basic level should demonstrate an understanding of the overall meaning of what they read. When reading text appropriate for fourth graders, they should be able to make relatively obvious connections between the text and their own experiences and extend the ideas in the text by making simple inferences (IES 2022).
- **NAEP Proficient (238):** Fourth-grade students performing at the NAEP Proficient level should be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of the text, providing inferential as well as literal information. When reading text appropriate to fourth grade, they should be able to extend the ideas in the text by making inferences, drawing conclusions, and making connections to their own experiences. The connection between the text and what the student infers should be clear (IES 2022).
- **NAEP Advanced (268):** Fourth-grade students performing at the NAEP Advanced level should be able to generalize about topics in the reading selection and demonstrate an awareness of how authors compose and use literary devices. When reading text appropriate for fourth grade, they should be able to judge text critically and provide thorough answers that indicate careful thought (IES 2022).

The NAEP reading achievement levels—Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—utilize verbs to demonstrate a clear progression in cognitive complexity and reading skills. At the Basic level, students are expected to demonstrate understanding, make connections, and extend ideas through simple inferences, indicating a foundational grasp of reading. In contrast, the Proficient level requires students to provide both inferential and literal information, draw conclusions, and engage with texts more critically, reflecting a deeper level of comprehension. At the Advanced level, expectations escalate further, with students needing to generalize about topics, judge texts critically, and provide thorough, thoughtful responses. This level emphasizes advanced cognitive skills necessary for deep comprehension and critical analysis.

Notably, only 31% of fourth-grade students nationally score at or above the NAEP Proficient level, implying that a significant majority—69%—score at the Basic or Below Basic levels. Students at the Below Basic level lack these foundational skills, struggling to demonstrate understanding or engage in critical thinking. They cannot make connections or extend ideas, which are essential at the Basic level. This gap highlights the need for targeted educational strategies to help these students develop the competencies required for effective reading comprehension. Overall, the verbs associated with each proficiency level illustrate a shift from basic understanding to complex reasoning, underscoring the importance of supporting students in their reading development.

To further explore the implications of these proficiency levels, it is essential to examine the disaggregated data for grade four students. By breaking down the performance of different student subgroups, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of where gaps in reading comprehension exist and identify targeted strategies to address these disparities. The following analysis of grade four disaggregated student data will provide insights into the specific needs of various student groups and guide efforts to improve literacy outcomes for all.

### Grade Four: Disaggregated Student Data

According to the NCES (2024), fourth-grade reading scores in 2024 were lower for various student groups compared to 2022. Specifically, average reading scores declined for Asian, Asian/Pacific Islander, students of

Two or More Races, and White students, as well as for both male and female students. Additionally, students who were not identified as economically disadvantaged, those attending public schools, and students in city, suburban, and rural locations experienced lower scores. This trend was also observed across different regions, including the Midwest, South, and West. Furthermore, students who were not identified as having disabilities and those identified as English learners, regardless of their status, also saw declines in their reading scores.

For five of these groups, the decrease in average scores affected both lower-performing students at the 25th percentile and higher-performing students at the 75th percentile compared to 2022. These groups included male students, those attending suburban schools, students without disabilities, and both English learners and non-English learners. Moreover, six student groups experienced an overall decline in reading scores, particularly among lower-performing students at the 25th percentile. This included White students, students of Two or More Races, those attending public schools, students in rural areas, students in the South, and students who were not identified as economically disadvantaged (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024).

The trends over time reveal some concerning patterns. The percentage of students scoring below NAEP Basic has increased from 38% in 1992 to 40% in 2024, indicating a decline in foundational reading skills. Similarly, the percentage of students at the NAEP Basic level has fluctuated slightly, decreasing from 34% in 1992 to 29% in 2024. The percentage of students achieving NAEP Proficient has also seen minimal improvement, moving from 22% in 1992 to 23% in 2024. In contrast, the percentage of students reaching the NAEP Advanced level has increased slightly from 6% in 1992 to 8% in 2024.

Overall, the data suggests a concerning trend in reading proficiency among fourth graders, with an increasing percentage of students falling below the NAEP Basic level. While a modest increase is observed in the percentage of students achieving at the Advanced level, the stagnant or declining trends in the Basic and Below Basic categories indicate a broader systemic challenge in foundational literacy development. This figure highlights the challenges facing fourth-grade reading proficiency in the U.S., emphasizing the need for targeted educational strategies to improve outcomes and support students in achieving higher levels of reading mastery.

Building on the analysis of grade four reading proficiency, it is equally important to examine the performance of older students, particularly eighth graders. The challenges identified in fourth-grade reading proficiency often continue as students advance through their education. The following analysis of eighth-grade reading proficiency, as measured by NAEP, offers critical insights into the progression of reading skills and highlights the need for continued focus on literacy development. By examining these trends, we can better understand how to address the persistent challenges in reading proficiency and ensure that students are equipped with the skills necessary for academic success.

### **Grade Eight NAEP: National**

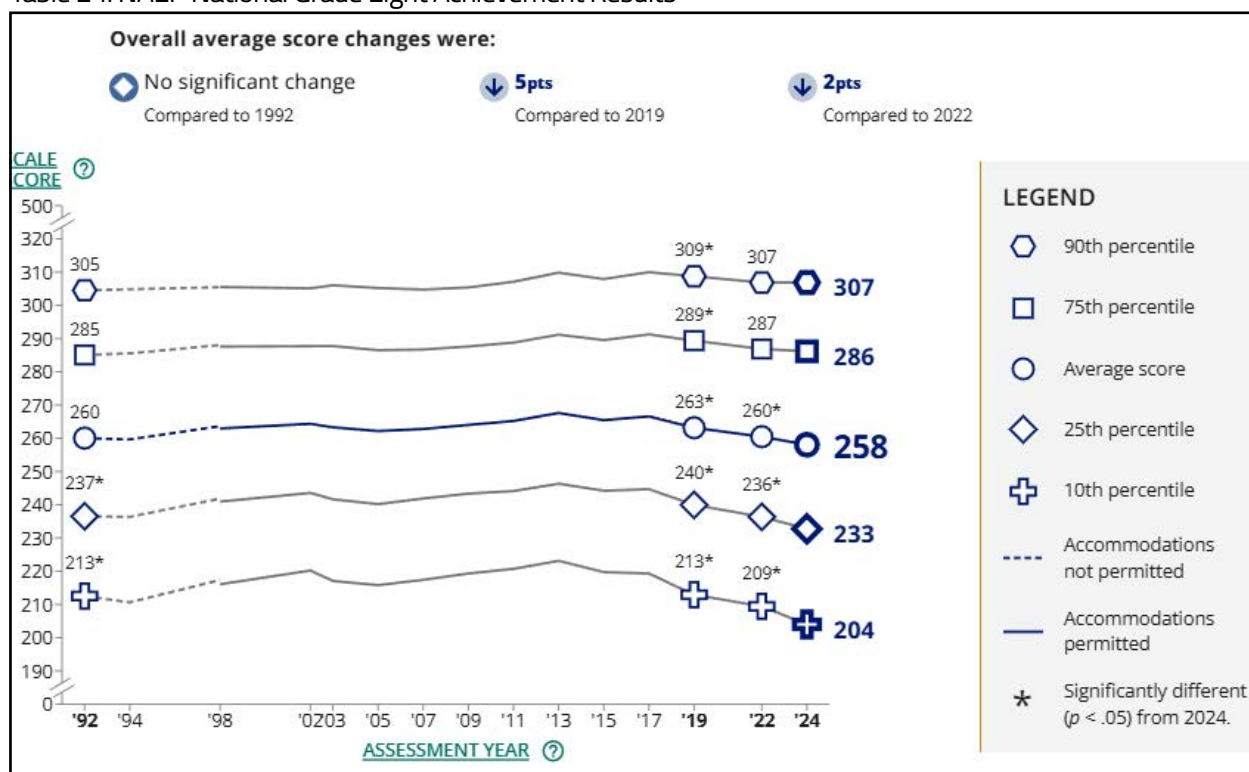
Reading proficiency is a critical component of educational success and lifelong learning. NAEP provides valuable insights into the reading abilities of students across the United States. By assessing eighth graders, NAEP offers a snapshot of early literacy skills, which are foundational for academic achievement in all subjects. Understanding these scores helps educators, policymakers, and stakeholders identify trends, challenges, and areas for improvement in reading education.



## Grade Eight: Aggregated Student Data

The figure depicting Grade Four NAEP Reading Scale Scores from 1992 to 2024 provides valuable insights into national reading performance trends. The vertical axis displays scale scores ranging from 0 to 500, which reflect students' reading abilities across a standardized measurement system. Higher scores indicate stronger literacy skills and comprehension. Along the horizontal axis, the chart shows the assessment years, including 1992, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2019, 2022, and 2024. This layout allows for the identification of long-term patterns and changes in student achievement over more than three decades, offering a consistent basis for evaluating progress and challenges in reading outcomes.

Table 24: NAEP National Grade Eight Achievement Results



Note: This figure shows the trend in eighth-grade NAEP National reading average scores and selected percentiles from 1992 to 2024. For more details, visit the [The Nation's Report Card](#).

The chart titled Trend in Eighth-Grade NAEP Reading Average and Selected Percentile Scores presents national reading performance trends for Grade Eight students from 1992 to 2024. The vertical axis represents scale scores ranging from 0 to 500, and the horizontal axis displays selected assessment years, including 1992, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2019, 2022, and 2024. Percentile lines illustrate how students across the achievement spectrum perform, offering insight into the distribution of reading scores across student groups. This structure allows for a comprehensive understanding of changes in reading achievement over time, particularly among high- and low-performing students.

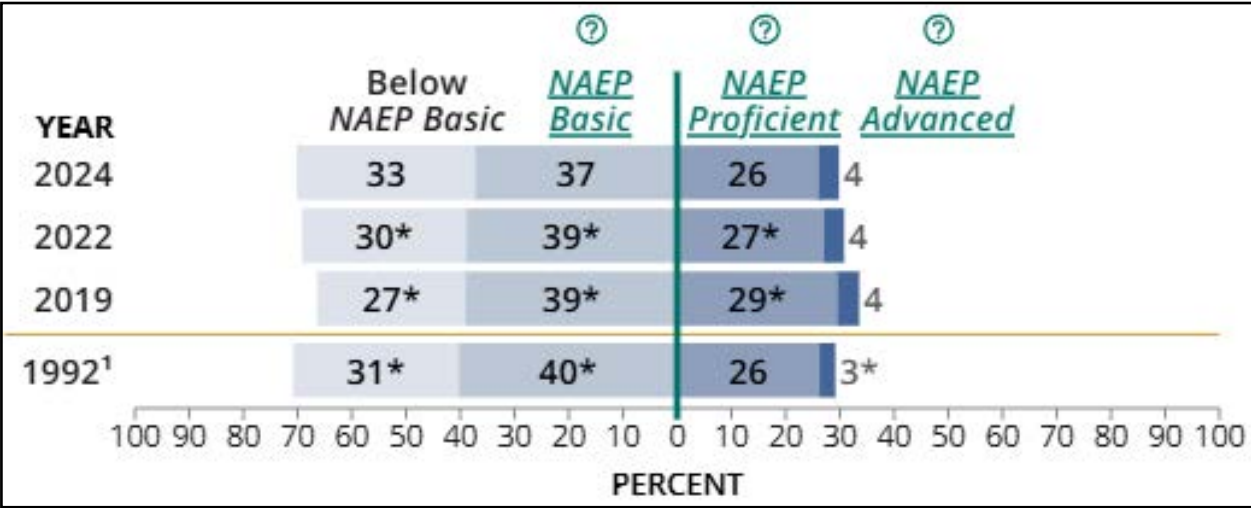
In 2024, students at the 90th percentile scored 307, representing the highest-performing readers in the nation. Students at the 75th percentile achieved a score of 286, while the national average score was 258. Students at the 25th and 10th percentiles scored 233 and 204, respectively. Of particular concern is the decline among lower-performing students, especially at the 10th percentile, where scores fell from 213 in 2019 to 204 in 2024. This nine-point decrease reflects a troubling trend of declining performance among students who were already at risk.

Although the national average score has remained relatively stable since 1992, the lack of progress among lower-performing students signals an increasing achievement gap. Students at the 90th and 75th percentiles have maintained their performance levels, showing that higher-achieving students are not experiencing the same setbacks. However, the widening disparity between top and bottom performers reveals systemic inequities in literacy instruction and access to learning supports. These findings indicate that efforts to improve literacy have not been sufficient to meet the needs of the students who struggle most.

The overall trend underscores the urgent need for intentional, equity-focused action to address declining outcomes among lower-performing students. While high-achieving students continue to benefit from available supports and instructional structures, struggling readers are falling further behind. These data reinforce the importance of implementing evidence-based literacy practices that are tailored to support all learners, particularly those who need intensive interventions. Without a comprehensive and inclusive approach, the nation risks leaving behind a significant portion of its student population.

The figure titled “Trend in Eighth-Grade NAEP Reading Achievement-Level Results” illustrates the performance of eighth-grade students in reading. The y-axis represents the percentage of students, ranging from 0% to 100%, and categorizes students into four achievement levels: Below NAEP Basic, NAEP Basic, NAEP Proficient, and NAEP Advanced. This data spans several years, allowing for an analysis of trends in reading proficiency and highlighting shifts in student performance across these achievement levels.

Table 25: National Grade Eight Full Range Achievement Results



Note: Data sourced from the NAEP reading achievement results for eighth-grade students. For more detailed information, visit [The Nation’s Report Card](#).

The figure provides a comprehensive overview of eighth-grade NAEP reading achievement levels across four categories: Below NAEP Basic, NAEP Basic, NAEP Proficient, and NAEP Advanced. These data are shown for the years 1992, 2019, 2022, and 2024. The percentage of students scoring Below NAEP Basic increased from 31 percent in 1992 to 33 percent in 2024, with a notable dip to 27 percent in 2019 and a slight increase to 30 percent in 2022. In contrast, the percentage of students at the NAEP Basic level remained relatively stable, from 40 percent in 1992 to 37 percent in 2024, reflecting only slight variation across the decades.

The percentage of students reaching the NAEP Proficient level declined from a high of 29 percent in 2019 to just 26 percent in 2024, which is the same level observed in 1992. This drop indicates a reversal in earlier gains and suggests that fewer students are demonstrating solid academic performance in reading. The percentage of students achieving at the NAEP Advanced level has remained flat, moving from 3 percent in

1992 to 4 percent in each of the three most recent assessment years. Asterisks in the chart indicate statistically significant differences in performance compared to 2024, most notably within the Below Basic and Proficient levels.

The NAEP reading achievement-level descriptions establish clear expectations for what eighth-grade students should be able to do at each level of performance. These descriptors are designed to assess how well students comprehend literary and informational texts, use context to determine word meanings, evaluate text structures, and synthesize ideas. As students move from Basic to Proficient and then to Advanced levels, the expectations for reading comprehension increase in both complexity and depth. This progression highlights how performance at each level builds upon the previous one and reflects increasingly sophisticated cognitive and analytical skills.

At the NAEP Basic level (score: 243), students should be able to make simple inferences, understand basic literary elements, and form opinions supported by limited evidence. In informational texts, they can locate explicit details and identify the main idea or purpose, but their understanding remains general and may lack depth. At the NAEP Proficient level (score: 281), students are expected to demonstrate deeper understanding through both literal and inferential reasoning, connect ideas within texts, and begin to evaluate structure and purpose. Those reaching the NAEP Advanced level (score: 323) are able to interpret figurative language, critically evaluate an author's argument, and synthesize information across multiple texts with clarity and precision.

The distribution of students across achievement levels in 2024 is concerning. Only 4 percent of eighth-grade students scored at the Advanced level, while 26 percent reached Proficient. This means that 70 percent of students nationally scored below the Proficient level, with 33 percent scoring Below Basic. These students often struggle to demonstrate foundational reading comprehension, making it difficult to engage in more complex literacy tasks. This data highlights the urgent need for high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction that is both equitable and targeted toward those who need the most support.

To further explore the implications of these findings, it is important to examine disaggregated Grade Eight NAEP data. Understanding how different student groups perform in relation to national benchmarks allows educators and policymakers to develop targeted interventions. The next section provides a closer look at subgroup performance, offering insight into the persistent disparities in literacy outcomes and the strategies needed to close these gaps.

### **Grade Eight: Disaggregated Student Data**

According to the NCES (2024), eighth-grade reading scores in 2024 were lower for many student groups compared to 2022, with most of these groups also experiencing declines at the 25th percentile. Specifically, average reading scores decreased for Hispanic and White students, male and female students, students identified as economically disadvantaged and those who were not, students with parents across all education levels, and students attending public and non-charter schools.

Additionally, students in city, suburban, and town locations, as well as those in the South and West regions, saw declines in reading performance. This trend was also evident among students who were and were not identified as having disabilities, as well as among English learners and non-English learners. For all of these groups—except students whose parents had not graduated from high school—lower-performing students at the 25th percentile also experienced score declines compared to 2022.

While the overall average score for students attending schools in the Northeast region did not decline in 2024, the score for lower-performing students at the 25th percentile did decrease compared to 2022. This suggests

that even in regions where average scores appear stable, gaps are widening among the lowest-performing students. Furthermore, reading scores for higher-performing eighth-grade students at the 75th percentile declined only among Hispanic students. This group experienced decreases in average scores as well as among both higher- and lower-performing students, indicating a broad-based decline in reading achievement.

Over time, the NAEP reading achievement levels for eighth graders have exhibited concerning trends that reflect both challenges and areas for urgent improvement. Currently, 33 percent of students score Below Basic, indicating that a significant portion of the population struggles with foundational reading skills. Additionally, 37 percent of students score at the Basic level, which suggests limited reading ability that does not yet meet Proficient expectations. Only 26 percent of eighth graders meet the Proficient level, and just 4 percent reach the Advanced level. These figures reveal that approximately 70 percent of eighth-grade students are not reaching the desired benchmark for reading proficiency.

These patterns indicate a growing need for improved instructional practices and sustained supports, particularly for lower-performing students. The increase in students scoring Below Basic and the stagnant or declining performance at the Proficient and Advanced levels raise concerns about the effectiveness of current literacy initiatives. Moreover, persistent achievement gaps linked to socioeconomic status and other demographic factors remain a critical challenge. Together, these data underscore the urgent need for targeted, evidence-based interventions that strengthen reading instruction and ensure all eighth-grade students are equipped with the skills they need for future academic success.

The national findings from the NAEP reading assessments underscore persistent challenges in literacy achievement across the United States, particularly for students performing at the lowest levels. Despite decades of reform efforts, average scores have remained largely stagnant, and the widening gaps between student groups signal a growing need for more effective, targeted support. These national patterns highlight the urgency of refining instructional practices, ensuring equitable access to high-quality materials, and implementing evidence-based interventions. They also call attention to the importance of systems-level coherence and sustained investment in educator capacity to address long-standing disparities.

To better understand how these trends manifest within individual states, it is essential to examine state-specific data. The following section focuses on Wyoming's NAEP reading performance, offering insight into how students in the state are faring in comparison to their national peers. Analyzing Wyoming's disaggregated results provides a clearer picture of which student groups are making progress and which continue to face persistent barriers. This data-driven approach can inform targeted improvement efforts and support the development of responsive literacy systems that meet the needs of all learners.

## NAEP: Wyoming

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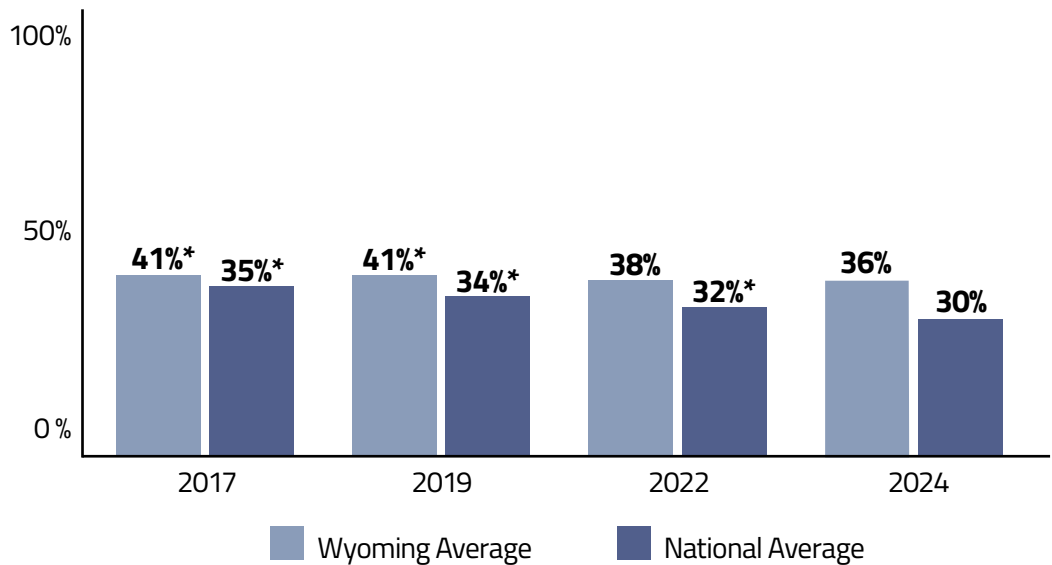
To further understand how national literacy trends affect students at the state level, it is important to examine the performance of students in Wyoming. While national data offers a broad overview of reading achievement, state-level data provides a more focused lens through which to assess the progress, challenges, and opportunities unique to Wyoming's education system. Analyzing Wyoming-specific NAEP results allows for a direct comparison with national trends and offers valuable insights into how effectively the state supports reading development among elementary students. This information is critical for informing state policies, guiding instructional decisions, and ensuring equitable access to high-quality literacy education across Wyoming.

Grade Four: Wyoming Performance in Context

The following section highlights Wyoming’s performance on the 2024 NAEP fourth-grade reading assessment, with a focus on students achieving at or above the Proficient level. The accompanying data table compares Wyoming’s average with the national average from 2017 to 2024, providing a multi-year perspective on reading proficiency trends. Historically, Wyoming students have outperformed the national average in reading, reflecting the strength of the state’s early literacy initiatives. However, recent data show a slight decline, signaling the need for continued support and innovation in literacy instruction.

By evaluating how Wyoming students have performed over time, educators and policymakers can identify key areas of success and recognize emerging challenges that require targeted responses. This comparison to national data also helps determine whether Wyoming’s educational strategies are producing consistent outcomes or whether adjustments may be needed to maintain progress. The next section will explore Wyoming’s NAEP Grade Four reading data in greater detail, offering a clearer understanding of where the state stands and what steps can be taken to ensure all students are meeting reading proficiency benchmarks.

Table 26: Wyoming NAEP Grade Four Reading Scores  
At or Above NAEP Proficient: 2024

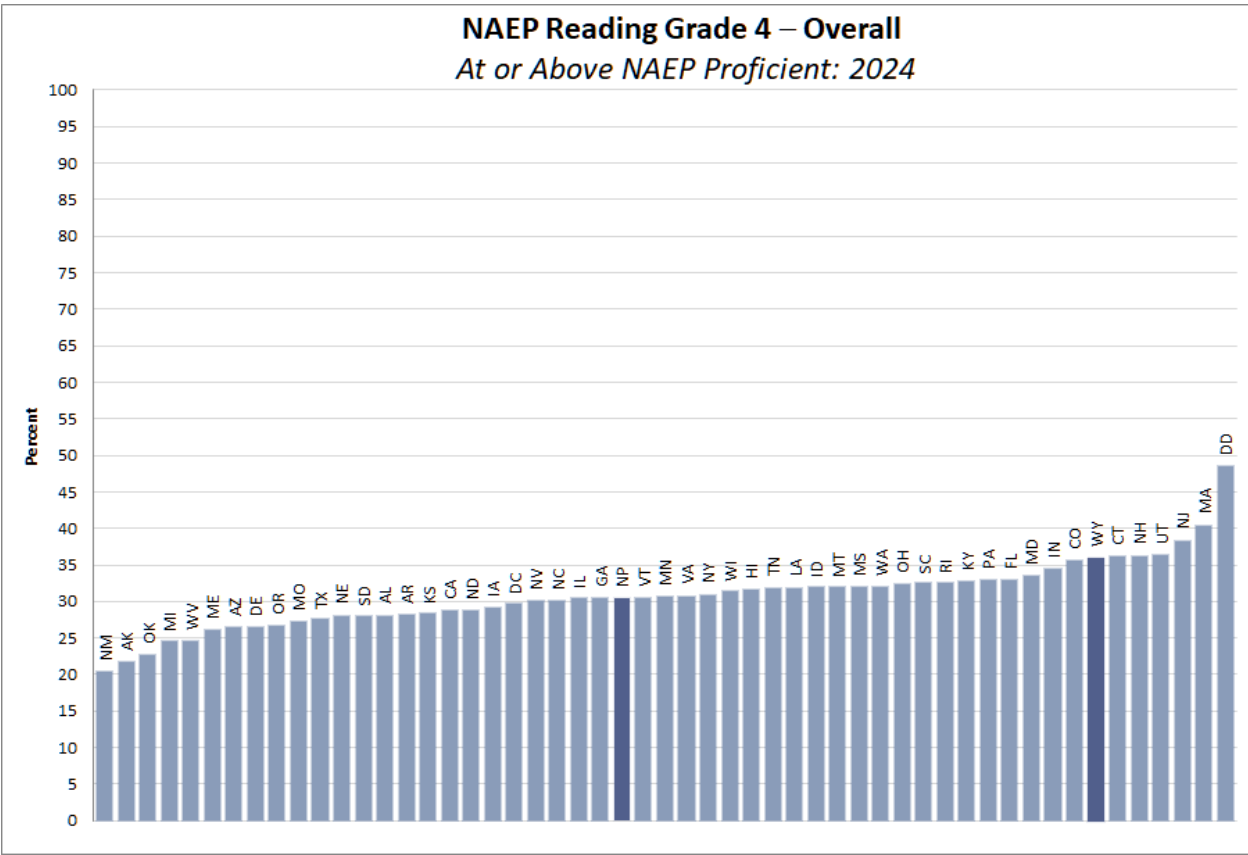


Note: This table displays the 2024 NAEP reading scores for 4th graders across the states. For detailed information, visit the [WDE website](#).

The data table illustrates a downward trend in reading proficiency among 4th graders in both Wyoming and nationally from 2017 to 2024. The Wyoming average remained stable at 41% in both 2017 and 2019 but declined from 41% in 2019 to 38% in 2022, and then to 36% in 2024, reflecting a gradual decrease. In contrast, the national average started at 35% in 2017, slightly decreasing to 34% in 2019, and then experiencing a more significant decline to 32% in 2022 and 30% in 2024. Throughout the observed years, Wyoming consistently outperformed the national average; however, the gap between the two narrowed by 2024, indicating a potential area of concern for educational stakeholders in Wyoming.



Table 27: Wyoming NAEP Grade Four At or Above Proficient Scores



Note: This table displays the 2024 NAEP reading scores for 4th graders across the states. For detailed information, visit the [WDE website](#).

Wyoming ranks 7th among the states, with 36% of its fourth graders achieving proficiency or above in reading, positioning it as one of the stronger performers nationally. While this percentage reflects a commendable achievement, the inverse reveals that 64% of students remain below the proficient level. This statistic highlights the significant portion of students who may require additional support to strengthen their reading skills and reach proficiency.

Notably, even the highest-performing Department of Defense Schools fall just below the 50 percent mark, while New Mexico ranks at the lower end, with only 20 percent of students scoring proficient or above. However, it is essential to emphasize that the goal has never been merely to reach or surpass the 50 percent mark. Settling for half of the student population reaching proficiency falls short of what our education system should strive to achieve. These statistics serve as a reminder that even top-ranking systems have significant room for improvement.

The true objective is to ensure that every student, regardless of background, geographic location, or socioeconomic status, has equitable access to high-quality instruction and the support necessary to reach their full potential in reading. Achieving anything less than full proficiency for all students means leaving too many learners behind. It limits their future opportunities and undermines the broader goals of educational equity and excellence. A commitment to the goal of 100 percent proficiency reflects a belief in the capacity of all students to succeed when given the evidence based tools and instructional conditions they need to thrive.

Wyoming’s commitment must go beyond comparisons with other states or national benchmarks. Instead, the focus should remain on closing gaps, addressing disparities, and fostering a comprehensive literacy system where all students can thrive. By aiming higher than the national average, Wyoming can lead by example, demonstrating that true success lies not in surpassing a statistical threshold but in ensuring that every child has the opportunity to achieve literacy proficiency.

As we shift our focus to a more detailed perspective, examining disaggregated student data will offer deeper insights into the state’s reading proficiency landscape. This closer analysis will help identify specific trends and patterns, revealing disparities among student groups and providing a clearer understanding of literacy outcomes across Wyoming. By pinpointing areas of need, we can develop targeted strategies to support all students on their path to reading proficiency.

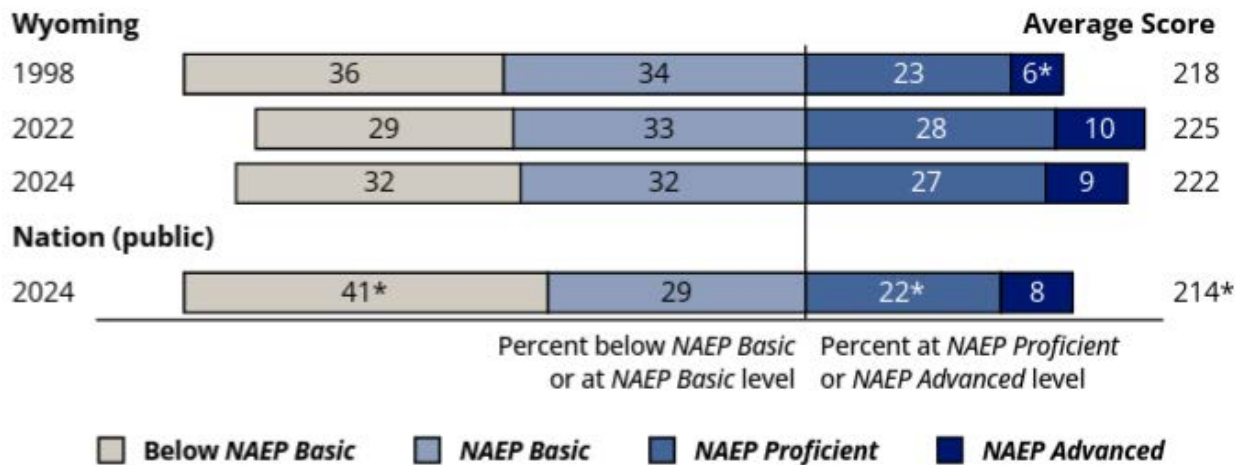
While comparisons with national benchmarks are valuable, Wyoming’s true commitment lies in addressing the specific needs of its students, closing achievement gaps, and creating a literacy system that supports every learner. By aiming to exceed national averages, Wyoming can set a precedent for other states, showing that real success is measured not just by statistical achievement, but by ensuring that every student has the opportunity to master reading proficiency.

To gain a deeper understanding of how this commitment plays out in practice, the next step is to examine Wyoming’s aggregated student data. This analysis will offer insights into statewide reading proficiency, providing a clearer picture of performance across all student groups. By identifying specific trends, we can better pinpoint areas of need and develop targeted strategies to improve literacy outcomes for all Wyoming students.

Grade Four: Aggregated Student Data

The Wyoming NAEP one-pager 2024 Reading State Snapshot Report illustrates overall results, achievement-level percentages and average score results, average score comparison of other states, state performances, results for student groups in 2024, and score gaps for student groups.

Table 28: NAEP Grade 4 Achievement-Level Percentages And Average Score Results



Note. Data retrieved from [2024 Reading State Snapshot Report: Wyoming](#) by the National Center for Education Statistics, 2024.

The 2024 Reading State Snapshot Report from the Nation's Report Card provides valuable insights into Wyoming's fourth-grade reading performance. In 2024, the average reading score for fourth-grade students in Wyoming was 222, which was higher than the national average of 214. However, this score was not significantly different from Wyoming's average scores in 2022 (225) and 1998 (218), indicating relative stability in reading performance over time.

In terms of proficiency levels, 36% of Wyoming's fourth-grade students performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level in 2024. This percentage was not significantly different from 2022 (38%), but it marked an improvement compared to 1998 (29%). Similarly, 68% of students performed at or above the NAEP Basic level in 2024, which was comparable to 2022 (71%) and slightly higher than 1998 (64%).

While the aggregated data provides a useful overview of Wyoming's fourth-grade students' reading proficiency, a deeper analysis of disaggregated data is essential to fully understand the nuances of performance across different student groups. The following analysis of grade four disaggregated student data offers a closer look at how various groups are performing, revealing persistent achievement gaps that require targeted interventions. By examining the specific performance of groups such as Hispanic and male students, we can identify key areas for improvement and develop strategies that address these disparities to ensure equitable literacy outcomes for all students in Wyoming.

### **Grade Four: Disaggregated Student Data**

Data paints a picture, but disaggregated data tells the story. When examining performance across disaggregated student groups, notable score gaps persist. In 2024, Hispanic students in Wyoming had an average score that was 16 points lower than that of White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from the gap in 1998 (15 points). Additionally, male students scored 8 points lower on average than female students in 2024. Students identified as economically disadvantaged had an average score that was 20 points lower than their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. This gap was also consistent with the gap in 1998 (18 points). However, data for Black students in 2024 were not reported because reporting standards were not met.

AI/AN students had an average score of 191, which is significantly lower than the scores of other racial/ethnic groups, such as White students (226) and Hispanic students (209). Only 33% of these students are performing at or above the NAEP Basic level, the lowest percentage among all reported groups, indicating that two-thirds are struggling to demonstrate even partial mastery of the material. Furthermore, just 8% of AI/AN students are performing at the NAEP Proficient level, far below the percentages for White students (39%) and Hispanic students (25%), reflecting significant challenges in achieving solid academic performance. At the highest level, only 1% of these students are performing at NAEP Advanced, showing that very few are reaching superior academic achievement.

Table 29: NAEP Grade 4 Results For Student Groups In 2024

REPORTING GROUPS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS	AVG. SCORE	PERCENTAGE AT OR ABOVE NAEP		PERCENTAGE AT NAEP ADVANCED
			BASIC	PROFICIENT	
Race/ethnicity					
American Indian/Alaska Native	4	191	33	8	1
Asian	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Black	1	‡	‡	‡	‡
Hispanic	13	209	53	25	5
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Two or More Races	4	215	60	28	7
White	79	226	72	39	10
Gender					
Male	51	218	64	32	8
Female	49	226	72	40	10
Economically disadvantaged status					
Economically disadvantaged	38	210	55	23	4
Not economically disadvantaged	62	229	76	44	12

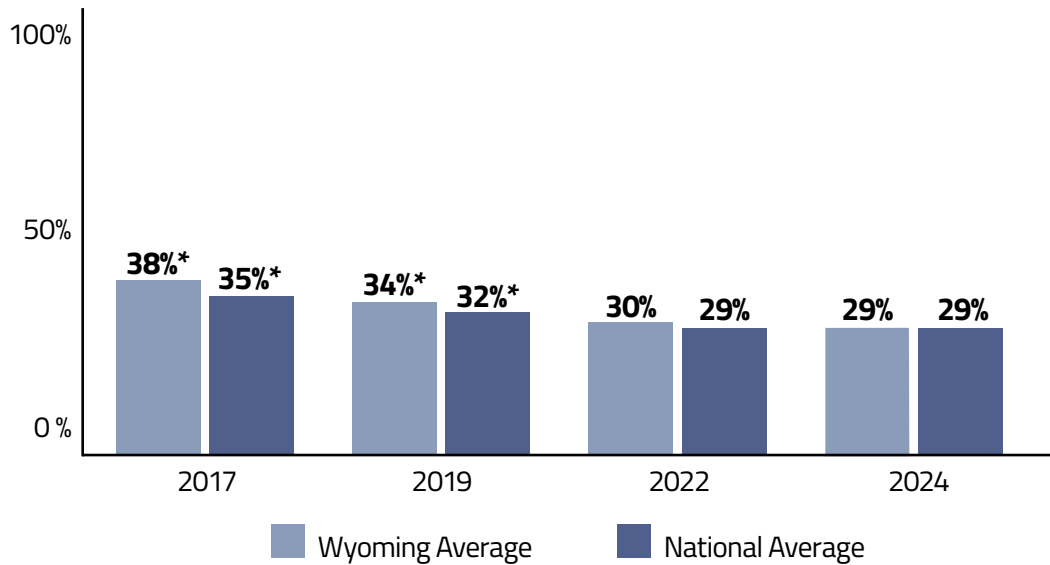
Note. Data retrieved from [2024 Reading State Snapshot Report: Wyoming](#) by the National Center for Education Statistics, 2024.

These results suggest that while Wyoming continues to outperform the national average in fourth-grade reading, disparities among student groups remain a significant challenge. Addressing these gaps will require targeted interventions and resources to ensure that all students, regardless of background, have access to equitable literacy opportunities. As we shift our focus to grade eight, it is essential to examine similar trends and performance gaps at this level, where early literacy skills must be built upon to ensure continued academic success. The following section will delve into the grade eight reading proficiency data for Wyoming, offering insights into the progress of older students and identifying areas for further improvement.

**Grade Eight NAEP: Wyoming**

The table below presents the 2024 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Scores for Wyoming and the national average, highlighting the percentage of students performing at or above the proficient level over several years. It compares the Wyoming average with the national average from 2017 to 2024, illustrating trends in reading proficiency among 8th graders. The data reveals fluctuations in performance, with Wyoming initially outperforming the national average but experiencing a consistent decline in recent years. This analysis provides insight into the evolving landscape of educational achievement in reading for middle school students in Wyoming compared to their peers across the country.

Table 30: Wyoming NAEP Grade 8 Achievement  
At or Above NAEP Proficient: 2024

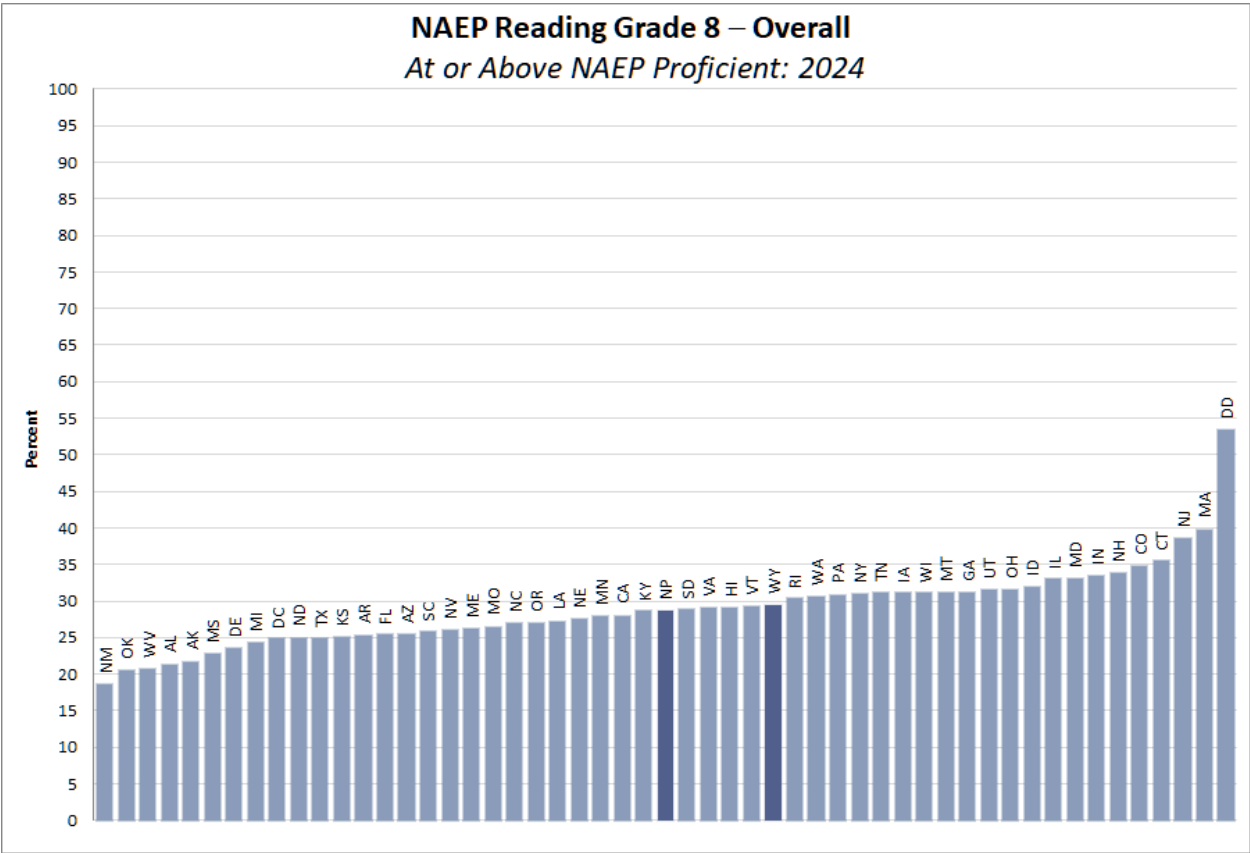


Note: This table shows the 2024 NAEP 8th Grade Reading Scores for Wyoming and the national average, indicating the percentage of students at or above the proficient level from 2017 to 2024. For more information, visit the [WDE website](#).

The data table illustrates a concerning trend in 8th-grade reading proficiency in Wyoming and nationally from 2017 to 2024. Wyoming’s proficiency declined consistently, starting at 38% in 2017 and dropping to 34% in 2019, then further decreasing to 30% in 2022 and 29% in 2024. In contrast, the national average began at 35% in 2017, fell to 32% in 2019, and remained stable at 29% in both 2022 and 2024. While Wyoming initially had a higher proficiency rate than the national average, by 2024, both figures aligned at 29%. Throughout the observed years, Wyoming consistently experienced a decline in reading proficiency, highlighting the urgency for effective educational strategies to address this issue.



Table 31: Wyoming NAEP Reading Grade 8 At or Above Proficiency



Note. This table displays the 2024 NAEP reading scores for 8th graders across the states. For detailed information, visit the [WDE website](#).

Wyoming ranks 22nd among the states, with 29% of its 8th graders achieving proficiency in reading, positioning it as one of the stronger performers. However, while this percentage reflects a commendable achievement, the inverse reveals that 71% of students are below the proficient level. This indicates that a significant portion of students in Wyoming may require additional support to enhance their reading skills and reach proficiency. Notably, Wyoming 4th graders scores earned a 7th place rating in the nation where as by grade 8 scores dropped to a 22nd place standing.

As we shift our focus to a more granular perspective, examining aggregated student data for grade eight will provide deeper insights into the overall reading proficiency landscape. This closer analysis will help us identify general trends and patterns, allowing us to better understand the broader context of literacy outcomes across Wyoming. The following section will explore Wyoming’s eighth-grade aggregated student data, shedding light on achievement levels and performance gaps, while also offering a comparison with other states. This comprehensive view will provide a clearer picture of where the state stands in terms of grade eight reading proficiency and highlight areas for improvement.

Grade Eight: Aggregated Student Data

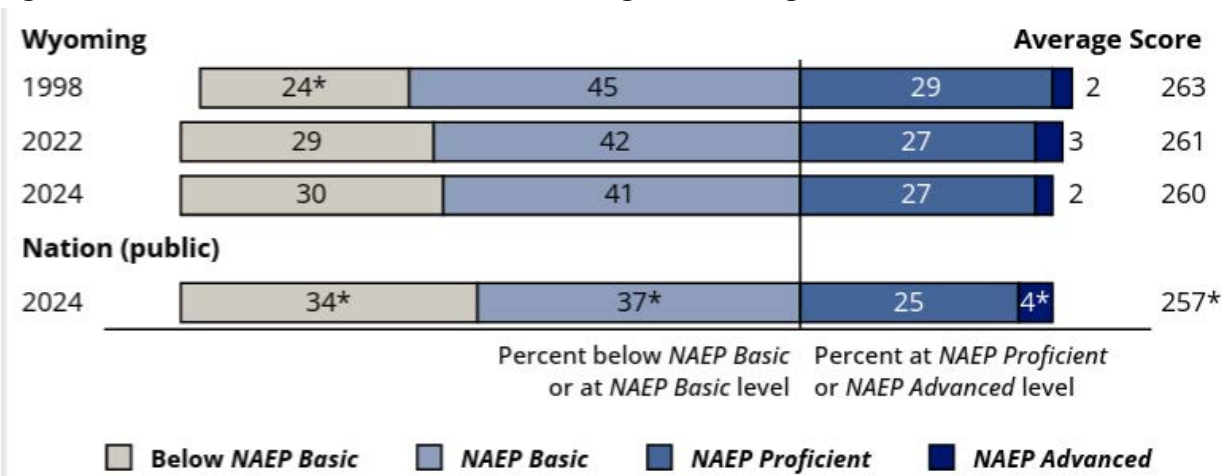
The Wyoming NAEP one-pager [2024 Reading State Snapshot Report](#) provides a comprehensive overview of student reading performance in the state. This one-pager includes Wyoming’s overall reading results, achievement-level percentages, average scale scores, and state-level comparisons to national performance. It also presents results by student subgroups and highlights performance gaps based on demographics, offering insights into equity and access in literacy education. This snapshot helps educators and policymakers understand where Wyoming stands and identify areas where additional support may be needed.

The Snapshot Report highlights the performance of Wyoming’s eighth-grade students on the NAEP. In 2024, the average reading score for eighth-grade students in Wyoming was 260, which was slightly higher than the national average of 257. This performance places Wyoming above the national mean, suggesting relative strength in statewide instruction. However, this score was not significantly different from Wyoming’s average scores in 2022 (261) or in 1998 (263), indicating a relatively stable trend over time without notable long-term improvement.

In terms of proficiency levels, 29 percent of Wyoming’s eighth-grade students performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level in 2024. This percentage was not significantly different from the 30 percent recorded in 2022 or the 31 percent recorded in 1998, suggesting that the proportion of students reaching proficiency has remained relatively flat. This lack of progress over decades signals a need for more effective instructional strategies and enhanced access to high-quality literacy materials. Incremental growth has not been sufficient to close the gap for students who are not yet meeting grade-level expectations.

Additionally, 70 percent of Wyoming students performed at or above the NAEP Basic level in 2024. This figure is similar to 71 percent in 2022 but reflects a decline from 76 percent in 1998. The reduction in the percentage of students reaching even the Basic benchmark is concerning, as it suggests more students may be struggling with fundamental reading comprehension. This trend reinforces the importance of prioritizing early interventions and sustained support to prevent students from falling further behind.

Figure 32: NAEP Grade 8 Achievement-Level Percentages And Average Score Results



Note. Data retrieved from [2024 Reading State Snapshot Report: Wyoming](#) by the National Center for Education Statistics, 2024.

These results suggest that while Wyoming’s eighth-grade students continue to perform slightly above the national average, there has been little significant progress in improving proficiency levels. In addition, the percentage of students performing at or above the Basic level has not returned to the higher rates observed in earlier years. This stagnation signals a need to reexamine instructional strategies and expand support systems to accelerate literacy growth in middle school. Without targeted efforts, Wyoming risks falling behind as student needs become increasingly complex.

The continued underperformance in literacy outcomes highlights the urgency for educational stakeholders to act. While the state’s overall performance remains modestly above the national average, this advantage has not translated into meaningful gains in reading proficiency. Persistent gaps in achievement point to deeper systemic issues that require intentional, data-informed responses. Enhancing access to evidence-based instruction and aligning efforts across schools will be critical in moving proficiency levels forward.

Shifting focus to disaggregated student data provides a more detailed understanding of how various groups are performing within the state. The 2024 Reading State Snapshot Report reveals significant score gaps among different student subgroups, underscoring ongoing disparities in literacy outcomes. Notably, the performance gap between Hispanic eighth-grade students and their White peers has remained unchanged since 1998, reflecting a consistent 15-point difference. This enduring disparity demonstrates the need for more culturally responsive teaching practices, targeted interventions, and deeper investments in supporting historically underserved student populations.

Grade Eight: Disaggregated Student Data

The 2024 Reading State Snapshot Report, shown below, provides valuable insights into score gaps among disaggregated student groups for eighth-grade students in Wyoming. Data for Black students were not reported in 2024 because reporting standards were not met. However, performance gaps for other student groups reveal persistent and troubling disparities. In 2024, Hispanic eighth-grade students in Wyoming had an average reading score that was 15 points lower than that of White students. This gap is identical to the performance gap observed in 1998, indicating no measurable progress over time in narrowing disparities between these groups.

Table 33: Wyoming 2024 ELA Results For Student Subgroups Groups

REPORTING GROUPS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS	AVG. SCORE	PERCENTAGE AT OR ABOVE NAEP BASIC	PERCENTAGE AT NAEP PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE AT NAEP ADVANCED
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
American Indian/Alaska Native	3	235	47	7	#
Asian	1	‡	‡	‡	‡
Black	1	‡	‡	‡	‡
Hispanic	15	248	58	17	1
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Two or More Races	4	267	74	39	5
White	76	263	74	32	3
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	50	253	63	23	2
Female	50	267	77	35	3
<b>Economically disadvantaged status</b>					
Economically disadvantaged	32	250	60	21	1
Not economically disadvantaged	67	265	75	34	3

Note. Data retrieved from [2024 Reading State Snapshot Report: Wyoming](#) by the National Center for Education Statistics, 2024.

AI and AN students had an average reading score of 235 in 2024, which is significantly lower than the scores for other racial and ethnic groups. For comparison, White students averaged 263 and Hispanic students 248. Only 47% of AI and AN students performed at or above the NAEP Basic level, compared to 76% of White students and 58% of Hispanic students. Even more concerning, just 7% of these students reached the Proficient level, far below their White (32%) and Hispanic (18%) peers. The percentage of students in this subgroup performing at the Advanced level was not reported, likely due to a sample size too small to meet reporting standards.

Gender-based disparities were also evident among eighth-grade students. In 2024, male students scored an average of 13 points lower than female students, continuing a trend seen in previous assessment years. Additionally, economically disadvantaged eighth-grade students scored 15 points lower on average than their non-economically disadvantaged peers. This 15-point gap mirrors the performance disparity recorded in 1998, underscoring the persistent challenges faced by students from low-income backgrounds and the systemic nature of these inequities.

These findings emphasize the critical need for targeted interventions to close long-standing score gaps among eighth-grade student groups. While Wyoming continues to perform above the national average in overall reading achievement, these persistent disparities suggest that not all students are equally benefiting from current literacy initiatives. To achieve meaningful and lasting improvement, equity-focused strategies must be prioritized to ensure all students receive the support and resources they need to succeed.

### Disaggregated Achievement Patterns

In 2024, Wyoming's Grade 4 students achieved an average reading score of 222, which was higher than the national average of 214. Grade 8 students in Wyoming also performed above the national average, scoring 260 compared to the national score of 257. While these results suggest that Wyoming students are performing slightly better than their peers nationally, a closer look at score trends over time reveals little significant improvement. For instance, the Grade 4 score of 222 in 2024 was not significantly different from 225 in 2022 or 218 in 1998. Similarly, Grade 8 scores remained stable, with 260 in 2024 compared to 261 in 2022 and 263 in 1998. These patterns suggest that overall reading performance in both grades has plateaued over the years, underscoring the need for renewed focus on literacy improvement.

Proficiency levels show a similar pattern of stagnation. In 2024, 36% of Grade 4 students performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level, while only 29% of Grade 8 students reached proficiency. These figures represent little change over time. Grade 4 proficiency was not significantly different from 38% in 2022 or 29% in 1998, and Grade 8 proficiency remained nearly identical to 30% in 2022 and 31% in 1998. At the NAEP Basic level, 68% of Grade 4 students and 70% of Grade 8 students performed at or above this benchmark in 2024. While these numbers suggest that many students possess partial mastery of reading skills, the overall trend shows no significant growth. Grade 4 performance remained consistent with 71% in 2022 and 64% in 1998, and Grade 8 performance declined from 76% in 1998 to 70% in 2024.

A deeper look into subgroup performance reveals persistent and troubling gaps. Hispanic students in both grades continue to perform below their White peers. In 2024, Hispanic Grade 4 students scored 16 points lower than White students, while the gap in Grade 8 was 15 points. These gaps have remained consistent

since 1998, showing no significant progress in narrowing the disparities. The data underscores the need for more focused, culturally responsive supports that meet the literacy needs of Hispanic learners.

AI and AN students face even more pronounced challenges. Their average score in Grade 4 was 191, rising to 235 by Grade 8, showing a 44-point gain between the two grade levels. However, these scores still fall far below those of White students (226 in Grade 4 and 263 in Grade 8) and Hispanic students (209 in Grade 4 and 248 in Grade 8). At the NAEP Basic level, 33% of AI/AN Grade 4 students and 47% of Grade 8 students performed at or above this benchmark in 2024. Although this represents some progress, it remains significantly behind their peers. Even more concerning is the low percentage of these students reaching the NAEP Proficient level: only 8% in Grade 4 and 7% in Grade 8. In contrast, 39% of White students and 25% of Hispanic students reached proficiency in Grade 4, with 32% and 18%, respectively achieving the same in Grade 8. The percentage of AI/AN students performing at the NAEP Advanced level was negligible in both grades, reinforcing the need for targeted interventions to support these learners.

Gender-based disparities are also apparent across both grade levels. In 2024, Grade 4 male students scored 8 points lower on average than their female peers, and this gap widened to 13 points in Grade 8. This pattern suggests that gender-based gaps in literacy not only persist but deepen as students advance through school. These findings highlight the importance of developing instructional practices that engage all learners, particularly boys, in meaningful reading experiences.

Economic disadvantage continues to have a measurable impact on student achievement. In Grade 4, economically disadvantaged students scored 20 points lower than their non-disadvantaged peers, and in Grade 8, the gap was 15 points. These differences have remained relatively unchanged since 1998, when the gaps were 18 points and 15 points, respectively. The consistency of these disparities over time suggests that existing supports have not been sufficient to overcome the challenges faced by students experiencing poverty. To close these gaps, schools must adopt comprehensive literacy strategies that address both instructional quality and broader barriers to learning.

Together, these findings reveal that while Wyoming performs slightly above national averages in reading, significant inequities remain across student subgroups. Addressing these disparities requires intentional, data-informed action that ensures all students—regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic background—receive the support necessary to succeed in reading. By continuing to monitor performance trends and refine instructional practices, Wyoming can make meaningful progress toward literacy equity and excellence for all learners.

## System Growth Opportunities

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Component 3 identifies students' needs as the foundation upon which the literacy ecosystem must pivot to respond effectively. This component actively engages literacy leaders, educators, families, caregivers, and community stakeholders. It underscores the importance of robust collaboration among these groups to address systemic issues and close gaps in literacy education. The WLLP seeks to harness the strengths of each stakeholder in a unified effort to enhance literacy outcomes for all students. By fostering strong partnerships and a shared commitment, this approach creates a cohesive and effective framework for advancing literacy education across the state.



To ensure comprehensive coverage and inclusivity, the WYLNA was conducted in two versions: one tailored for educators, faculty, and staff, and the other designed for families, caregivers, and community stakeholders. This approach allowed for targeted feedback collection, ensuring diverse perspectives were represented. The WYLNA was designed to gather confidential feedback from stakeholders throughout Wyoming to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improving literacy outcomes. This survey informed the development of the WLLP focusing on improving language and literacy skills for children from birth to grade twelve, with special emphasis on underserved students, those living in poverty, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities.

## Wyoming Literacy Needs Assessment

Wyoming's robust literacy infrastructure and targeted statewide initiatives serve as the foundation for advancing language and literacy proficiency across the state. While these efforts have established a strong framework, ensuring their effectiveness requires a clear understanding of the needs and challenges within Wyoming's literacy landscape. To achieve this, a comprehensive Wyoming Literacy Needs Assessment (WYLNA) was conducted to evaluate the extent to which current literacy programs, instructional practices, and support systems meet the needs of students, educators, and families. This assessment provided critical insights into the system's strengths, challenges, and gaps, guiding the development of targeted strategies that further enhance literacy outcomes statewide.

A state literacy needs assessment is a comprehensive evaluation process designed to identify the strengths, gaps, and opportunities within a state's literacy programs and initiatives. It involves collecting and analyzing data on literacy rates, educational resources, instructional practices, and community support systems to understand better the needs of students, educators, and families. This assessment is critical for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to develop targeted strategies and allocate resources effectively to improve literacy outcomes. By identifying areas of need, a state literacy needs assessment helps create a roadmap for fostering equitable access to high-quality literacy education and ensuring that all individuals have the skills necessary to succeed academically, professionally, and personally.

Wyoming launched the 2024 WYLNA, to engage literacy leaders, educators, families, caregivers, and community stakeholders. This initiative underscored the importance of robust collaboration among these various stakeholders to address systemic issues and close gaps in literacy education effectively. The WLLP sought to harness the strengths of each group in a unified effort to enhance literacy outcomes for all students, fostering strong partnerships and shared commitment to create a cohesive and effective approach to literacy education.

To ensure comprehensive coverage and inclusivity, the WYLNA was designed to gather insights from a variety of key groups:

- **District Leader Survey:** This survey, targeted at Literacy Leaders, Curriculum Directors, and Early Learning Administrators who oversee literacy programming, aimed to capture insights from those directly responsible for planning and implementing literacy initiatives.
- **Educator/Family/Stakeholder Survey:** This survey, designed to include educators, tutors, families, caregivers, and community stakeholders, gathered diverse perspectives on literacy programming. Its goal was to ensure a well-rounded understanding of needs and challenges from multiple viewpoints.

To ensure the validity and relevance of the WYLNA, the assessment was firmly grounded in research and aligned with recognized literacy education frameworks. By adhering to established best practices, the WYLNA

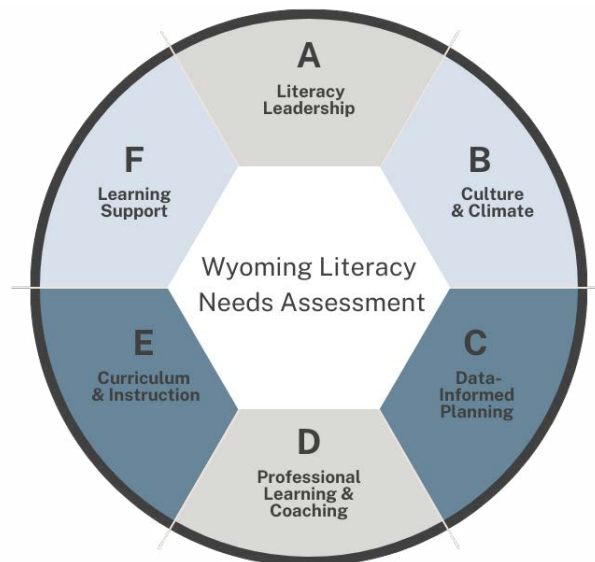
provided a structured and evidence-based approach for evaluating Wyoming's literacy programs and identifying areas for improvement. The following section outlines the research base that underpins the assessment, demonstrating its alignment with national standards and the latest literacy education guidelines.

### Purpose and Research Base

The WYLNA was firmly grounded in research and aligned with several established frameworks to ensure it reflected current best practices in literacy education and adhered to national standards. These frameworks included the Administrator Literacy Standards (2023), the International Literacy Association's Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals (2017), and the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards (2018). By aligning with these standards, the WYLNA provided a robust and evidence-based foundation for evaluating and improving literacy programs across Wyoming.

The assessment was also structured around six High-Impact Domains, which closely align with the School Improvement Plan utilized in the WDE Statewide System of Support. These domains were viewed through a literacy lens to systematically examine each indicator to capture a comprehensive picture of Wyoming's literacy ecosystem and define actionable insights for systematic and targeted improvements.

Figure 1:



Note. This figure shows the High Impact Domains of improvement used in the School Improvement planning process within the Statewide System of School Support.

#### Domain A: Literacy Leadership

This domain emphasizes the importance of the Local Education Agency's (LEA) or program's knowledge of evidence-based foundations of language and literacy, including reading, writing, speaking, listening, and the science of reading. It assesses the implementation of schoolwide, scientifically-based reading instructional programming designed to improve student language and literacy achievement. By focusing on evidence-based practices, this domain ensures that literacy leadership is grounded in proven methodologies that drive student success.

### **Domain B: Culture and Climate**

Culture and climate focus on the LEA's or program's ability to lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of literacy curriculum and instructional practices. This domain also emphasizes the importance of engaging families and communities in literacy initiatives, fostering collaboration to promote equitable literacy instruction. By creating a supportive and inclusive environment, this domain ensures that language and literacy efforts are accessible and impactful for all stakeholders.

### **Domain C: Data-Informed Planning**

This domain examines the development and evaluation of a districtwide comprehensive assessment system to inform instruction and interventions. It highlights the importance of analyzing data patterns, facilitating improvement initiatives, and effectively communicating assessment results to stakeholders. By leveraging data to guide decision-making, this domain ensures that language and literacy programs are responsive to student needs and continuously improving.

### **Domain D: Professional Development**

Professional development focuses on the ability of literacy professionals to lead curriculum revision, design effective professional learning experiences, and coordinate sustainable school and district improvement efforts. This domain emphasizes reflective practices and the capacity to address the specific needs of local communities. By prioritizing professional growth, this domain ensures that educators are equipped to deliver high-quality literacy instruction.

### **Domain E: Instruction**

This domain evaluates the coordination of ongoing language and literacy improvement efforts, curriculum revision, and professional learning experiences. It focuses on advocating for innovative and sustainable instructional practices tailored to the unique needs of local communities. By promoting instructional excellence, this domain ensures that literacy programs remain relevant, effective, and adaptable.

### **Domain F: Learning Support**

Learning support highlights the role of language and literacy professionals as reflective practitioners who act as agents of continuous improvement. This domain promotes equitable access to evidence-based instruction and educational opportunities to ensure students' academic success and well-being. By addressing barriers to learning and fostering equity, this domain ensures that all students have the support they need to thrive academically.

### **Developmental Scale**

The WYLNA employed a developmental scale to assess the effectiveness of literacy programs across the six domains. Respondents evaluated their progress using the following levels:

- Not yet emerging.
- Emerging (Establishing Consensus).
- Developing (Building Infrastructure).
- Operationalizing (Gaining Consistency).
- Optimizing (Innovating and Sustaining).

Using the developmental scale, literacy leaders and stakeholders engaged in a reflective process to identify strengths and uncover opportunities for growth within the literacy ecosystem. This approach encouraged both groups to critically evaluate their roles and contributions, fostering a deeper understanding of how their

efforts aligned with the broader goals of literacy development. Rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all solution, the scale empowered stakeholders to address the unique needs of their districts or programs, enabling the creation of tailored strategies for meaningful improvement. This process highlighted areas requiring immediate action and cultivated a continuous improvement mindset. Leaders and stakeholders worked collaboratively to set realistic goals, monitor progress, and refine practices over time. By promoting this reflective practice, the scale supported the growth of a more cohesive and dynamic literacy ecosystem, where shared insights and targeted efforts drove sustainable advancements in literacy education.

The developmental scale was cross-referenced with survey results to enhance this reflective process, providing a more comprehensive assessment by comparing leaders' perceptions of their literacy programs with stakeholders' perspectives. This approach was crucial for achieving clarity and balance, as it identified potential gaps or misalignments between leadership views and stakeholder experiences. By counterbalancing these viewpoints, the WYLNA provided a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the current state of literacy programs. This validated the findings and revealed areas where communication, alignment, or implementation could be improved, fostering a more collaborative, transparent, and effective approach to literacy development.

This process of cross-referencing survey results with the developmental scale laid the groundwork for exploring key questions that further assess the effectiveness of literacy practices and systems. The following section outlines these critical questions, which delve into various domains of literacy education to provide a deeper understanding of the current landscape.

### **Key Questions Explored in the WYLNA**

The survey includes targeted questions to assess literacy practices and systems within each domain. Domain questions focus on these areas, while subquestions aim to gain deeper insight into these domains.

**Domain A:** The LEA and/or Community-based Early Learning Program demonstrates knowledge of the evidence-based foundations of language and literacy (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), instructional practice, and the major theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based foundations of the science of reading to implement schoolwide scientifically and evidence-based reading instructional programming to improve literacy achievement for all students?

1. To what degree does the LEA/Program understand the reading brain, the continuum of reading difficulties, the distinguishing characteristics of these difficulties, and how they impact curricular and instructional programming decisions?
2. To what degree does the LEA/Program utilize scientific and evidence-based foundations of literacy and language knowledge as a base for implementing and evaluating literacy programs, preschool through grade twelve?
3. To what degree does the LEA/Program collaborate with school and district personnel to develop a vision and goals for a literacy program that reflects evidence-based curricula, effective technology integration, and standards alignment?
4. To what degree does the LEA/Program critique research about school reform models and apply it within the implementation and evaluation of comprehensive schoolwide literacy programs?
5. To what degree does the LEA/Program incorporate essential reading skills (e.g., oral language development, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension, both oral and written) into literacy initiatives?

**Domain B:** The LEA and/or Community-based Early Learning Program leads the development, implementation, and evaluation of school- and districtwide literacy curriculum and instructional practices and advocates for and leads efforts to engage families and communities.

1. To what degree does the LEA/Program lead change in educational practices and institutional structures to promote equitable literacy instruction for all students?
2. To what degree does the LEA/Program support teachers in collaborating and sharing responsibility to support and advance literacy for all learners, with special emphasis on disadvantaged children, including students living in poverty, English learners, and students with disabilities?
3. To what degree does the LEA/Program regularly communicate assessment results with and seek input from diverse stakeholders (e.g., teachers, administrators, families, community leaders, policymakers, and advocates) regarding effective literacy practices and programs?
4. To what degree does the LEA/Program ensure family and community engagement in literacy-related activities?
5. To what degree does the LEA/Program coordinate innovative and sustainable school and district improvement efforts that address the context-specific literacy needs of the local community?
6. To what degree does the LEA/Program establish and sustain positive and effective relationships with early education providers within their communities?
7. To what degree does the LEA/Program establish and sustain positive and meaningful relationships with community organizations that provide students with supplemental educational opportunities related to literacy?

**Domain C:** The LEA and/or Community-based Early Learning Program provide leadership for developing and evaluating a districtwide comprehensive assessment system to inform and evaluate districtwide instruction, including interventions; facilitate discussions to interpret and analyze data patterns; design and facilitate district improvement initiatives with appropriate professional learning experiences; communicate districtwide assessment results and advocate for appropriate literacy practices.

1. To what degree does the LEA/Program ensure that literacy assessments and evaluations are scientifically and evidence-based, valid, and reliable?
2. To what degree does the LEA/Program lead, monitor, and evaluate the school's comprehensive literacy assessment systems, monitor gaps across assessments, and adjust the assessment system to foster literacy improvement for all students?
3. To what degree does the LEA/Program support using universal literacy screening measures for entering and current students to ensure appropriate placement and intervention supports are provided as needed?
4. To what degree does the LEA/Program analyze and guide literacy instruction through data analysis, observation, and coaching conversations?
5. To what degree has the LEA/Program established a "data culture" that includes a system to support the use of literacy assessment data in schools and to develop follow-up plans to adjust instruction as needed at the school, grade, and student levels?
6. To what degree does the LEA/Program lead and facilitate discussions with administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders to interpret and analyze data patterns at the district level to develop recommendations for improving student learning district/program-wide?



**Domain D:** The LEA and/or Community-based Early Learning Program are reflective literacy professionals who demonstrate the ability to coordinate ongoing school and district literacy improvement efforts; lead curriculum revision and change efforts; design, facilitate, and coordinate effective professional learning experiences; advocate for and coordinate innovative and sustainable school and district improvement efforts that address the context-specific needs of the local community.

1. To what extent do the LEA/Program leaders engage in ongoing professional learning throughout the year to become effective instructional leaders and improve literacy?
2. To what degree does the LEA/Program establish, align, and ensure the implementation of the science of reading through job-embedded professional learning based on school-wide assessment data?
3. To what degree does the LEA/Program create district improvement initiatives that include targeted analysis of assessment data, goal-setting, and the development of professional learning experiences?
4. To what degree does the LEA/Program embed school-wide assessment data into professional learning and coaching structures to ensure the successful implementation of literacy instruction?
5. To what degree does the LEA/Program participate in literacy team meetings at the school level to assist with systems-level problem solving and identify possible professional development needs and LEA supports?

**Domain E:** The LEA and/or Community-based Early Learning Program are reflective literacy professionals who demonstrate the ability to coordinate ongoing school and district literacy improvement efforts; lead curriculum revision and change efforts; design, facilitate, and coordinate effective professional learning experiences; advocate for and coordinate innovative and sustainable school and district improvement efforts that address the context-specific needs of the local community.

1. To what degree does the LEA/Program establish an instructional model that addresses the components of the science of reading through standards-aligned, scientific and evidence-based core, supplemental, and intervention curricular resources for all **preschool and prekindergarten students**?
2. To what degree does the LEA/Program use coaching protocols and regularly scheduled instructional walk-throughs to ensure that effective instruction is provided to all students and that programs are being implemented with fidelity across all classrooms and learning domains in **preschool and prekindergarten classrooms**?
3. To what degree does the LEA/Program establish an instructional model that addresses the components of the science of reading through standards-aligned, scientific, and evidence-based core, supplemental, and intervention curricular resources for all **kindergarten through grade five students**?
4. To what degree does the LEA/Program use coaching protocols and regularly scheduled instructional walk-throughs to ensure that effective instruction is being provided to all students and that programs are being implemented with fidelity across all classrooms and academic disciplines in **kindergarten through grade five**?
5. To what degree does the LEA/Program establish an instructional model that addresses the components of the science of reading through standards-aligned, scientific, and evidence-based core, supplemental, and intervention curricular resources for all grades **six through eight** students?
6. To what degree does the LEA/Program use coaching protocols and regularly scheduled instructional walk-throughs to ensure that effective instruction is being provided to all students and that programs are being implemented with fidelity across all classrooms and academic disciplines in **grades six through eight**?
7. To what degree does the LEA/Program establish an instructional model that addresses the components of the science of reading through standards-aligned, scientific, and evidence-based core, supplemental, and intervention curricular resources for all **grade nine through twelve students**?

8. To what degree does the LEA/Program use coaching protocols and regularly scheduled instructional walk-throughs to ensure that effective instruction is being provided to all students and that programs are being implemented with fidelity across all classrooms and academic disciplines in **grades nine through twelve**?

**Domain F:** The LEA and/or community-based early learning program comprise of professionals who specialize in reflective literacy practices. They demonstrate the ability to act as agents of continuous improvement, striving towards equity in educational opportunities to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

1. To what degree does the LEA/Program lead literacy curriculum efforts, analyze needs assessments, and create an action plan for horizontal and vertical alignment with state standards/early learning standards?
2. To what degree does the LEA/Program provide literacy and language supports and interventions to ensure all students have access to grade-level, evidence-based, comprehensive core curricula, programming, services, and supports?
3. To what degree does the LEA/Program implement evidence-based literacy and/or biliteracy instruction that allows all students to apply academic language across content areas?
4. To what extent does the LEA/Program assist in implementing evidence-aligned standards-based core curricula that integrate literacy across all content areas/early childhood domains?
5. To what extent does the LEA/Program exhibit a dedication to improving the abilities of their staff and encouraging teacher leadership in promoting evidence-based literacy instruction?

The insights gathered through the WYLNA informed the development of the WLLP and guided the implementation of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant. The WYLNA responses provided a clear framework for identifying opportunities to enhance literacy outcomes throughout Wyoming by addressing the six High-Impact Domains and leveraging the developmental scale. These findings highlighted specific areas for growth and improvement, ensuring that literacy initiatives align with the most pressing needs. As a result, Wyoming is positioned to implement targeted, evidence-based strategies that strengthen literacy instruction statewide.

The WYLNA's commitment to inclusivity, collaboration, and evidence-based practices ensures that Wyoming's literacy initiatives meet the needs of all students, particularly those most at risk. By integrating stakeholder input and aligning efforts with scientific research on reading, the WYLNA fosters a comprehensive and equitable approach to literacy education. This approach establishes a strong foundation for sustainable improvements in literacy instruction and intervention, ensuring long-term benefits for students. Ultimately, these efforts promote academic, professional, and personal success for learners across Wyoming.

Building on the WYLNA's commitment to inclusivity, collaboration, and evidence-based practices, the next step in evaluating Wyoming's literacy initiatives involves a detailed assessment of the effectiveness of literacy programs across key domains. This is achieved through a SWOT analysis, which identifies both strengths and areas for improvement, providing a clearer understanding of where efforts should be focused to ensure sustained success. The following section explores the findings from this analysis and how they inform the development of targeted interventions.

### **WYLNA High-Impact Domain SWOT Analysis**

The WYLNA employed a developmental scale to assess the effectiveness of literacy programs across the six domains. Respondents evaluated their progress using the following levels: Not yet emerging, Emerging (Establishing Consensus), Developing (Building Infrastructure), Operationalizing (Gaining Consistency), Optimizing (Innovating and Sustaining).

To build upon the insights derived from the WYLNA and SWOT analysis, the WDE employed a root cause analysis to systematically identify the underlying factors contributing to literacy challenges across the state. This analysis, structured through a fishbone diagram, categorized key contributing factors into six high-impact domains identified in the WYLNA assessment. By transitioning from broad thematic trends observed in the SWOT analysis to a more targeted examination of root causes, WDE aimed to uncover the systemic barriers that continue to hinder language and literacy achievement. This approach enables a clearer understanding of where strategic interventions are most needed and ensures that future efforts are grounded in evidence-informed, needs-based decision-making that supports long-term improvement.

### **Fishbone Diagram: Root Causes of Literacy Challenges in Wyoming**

To drive systematic and sustainable improvements in literacy achievement across the state, WDE synthesized findings from the WYLNA and SWOT analysis into a structured root cause analysis. The [fishbone diagram](#) organized key contributing factors into six high-impact domains aligned with the Statewide System of Support, School Improvement Planning, Wyoming Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and the WLLP. This structure ensured coherence across systems while creating a framework to deepen the understanding of barriers that must be addressed to move the needle on student outcomes. By structuring the analysis this way, WDE positioned itself to act with precision and impact, using aligned data to guide each step of the improvement process.

While the SWOT analysis provided important insights into systemic trends, persistent challenges, and areas for growth, WDE recognized that more detailed analysis was essential to drive meaningful change. A surface-level understanding of barriers would not be sufficient to inform actionable strategies or produce measurable results. Therefore, the next logical step was to conduct a root cause analysis that would reveal the specific, underlying factors contributing to literacy barriers. This process enabled a more targeted and customized approach to addressing the needs of Wyoming's students, ensuring that efforts were purposeful and aligned to the realities experienced in the field.

A critical tool in this process was the fishbone diagram, a structured method for visually identifying and organizing the various elements contributing to a specific issue. This diagram provided a comprehensive view of the factors influencing literacy challenges across Wyoming, making it easier to identify areas with the greatest potential for improvement. Before testing or implementing new strategies, the Improvement Team defined the core issue, examined all potential contributing factors, and assessed where targeted changes could create the greatest positive impact. The fishbone diagram supported this process by providing structure, focus, and transparency in decision-making.

The development of the fishbone diagram was intentionally collaborative, drawing on the expertise and perspectives of national, state, and regional stakeholders. This diverse input was essential to capturing the complexity of Wyoming's literacy landscape and ensuring that no contributing factor was overlooked. The collaborative nature of the process added both credibility and relevance to the findings, as stakeholder insights reflected on-the-ground experiences and systemic patterns. By fostering inclusive dialogue and shared ownership of the process, WDE laid the groundwork for sustainable, well-informed interventions that respond to the real needs of students and educators across the state.

### **Understanding the Structure of the Fishbone Diagram**

The fishbone diagram consists of three key components that guide teams in identifying and addressing the root causes of a specific issue. First, the Problem Statement provides a clear, specific, and measurable

description of the issue to be addressed. Second, Factors represent the broad categories contributing to the problem; for example, if students are struggling with reading comprehension, the contributing factors may include instructional practices, student engagement, and access to HQIM. Finally, Root Causes delve into the deeper reasons behind each factor—for instance, if inconsistent instructional practices are identified, root causes might include limited access to high-quality professional development, lack of instructional coaching, or misaligned curricula. This three-part structure allows teams to move from general observations to precise, actionable insights.

By integrating the insights gained from the WYLNA and SWOT analysis into a structured root cause analysis, WDE and LEAs are better equipped to engage in data-informed decision-making. This approach ensures that the language and literacy initiatives outlined in the WLLP are strategic, evidence-based, and focused on long-term sustainability. It empowers educators and leaders to pinpoint where interventions are most needed and to align resources with clearly defined needs. Through this process, stakeholders can prioritize actions that yield the greatest impact, avoiding generic solutions in favor of targeted, system-level change.

Moreover, the use of the fishbone diagram supports a continuous improvement mindset by providing a clear framework for evaluating progress and adjusting strategies over time. It encourages regular reflection and allows teams to revisit contributing causes as new data emerges or as circumstances evolve. By making the connections between root causes and outcomes more transparent, the diagram enhances collaboration and accountability at all levels of the system. Ultimately, this ensures that the literacy initiatives developed are not only aligned with Wyoming's unique needs but also positioned to drive lasting, positive outcomes for students across the state.

## Identifying the Central Literacy Challenge

To create a strong literacy ecosystem aligned with the science of reading research base, each domain can be improved through targeted strategies that incorporate evidence-based practices. These strategies are designed to address identified gaps and ensure consistency in the implementation of best practices across all levels of the education system. Focusing on evidence-based practices provides a clear path for addressing literacy challenges and improving outcomes for students. By strategically implementing these practices, Wyoming can ensure that all students, regardless of background, have access to high-quality literacy instruction. These targeted approaches will also help close achievement gaps, particularly for underserved populations, by focusing resources where they are most needed.

**Problem Statement: Problem Statement:** Despite ongoing efforts to improve literacy outcomes, Wyoming students continue to face gaps in reading proficiency, particularly among historically underserved populations. Root causes include inconsistent leadership capacity, variability in instructional materials and practices, gaps in Tier 1 core instruction, limited early language and literacy support, insufficient adolescent literacy interventions, and disparities in literacy achievement in Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools. These challenges impact not only student outcomes but also the capacity of systems to implement cohesive and aligned literacy strategies. Without addressing these systemic factors, existing inequities are likely to persist.

Addressing these issues requires a systematic, evidence-based approach that ensures all students have access to high-quality literacy instruction and support. By focusing on the identified root causes, Wyoming can ensure the educational system is equipped to support all students, especially those at risk of falling behind. A targeted, evidence-based approach is essential for creating lasting, systemic improvements in literacy outcomes across the state. This level of strategic alignment enables long-term progress and builds a foundation for sustained literacy success.

To tackle the literacy challenges that Wyoming's students face, it is essential to investigate the underlying causes through a district-centered perspective. This root cause analysis identifies six key focus areas where district systems need to enhance their support for educators and students. By addressing these aspects with evidence-based strategies, districts statewide can improve instructional quality, close achievement gaps, and ensure that all students are on a path to literacy success. The following findings highlight opportunities for district leaders to foster sustainable, systems-level improvement.

### **Focus Area 1: Strengthening District Leadership in Literacy**

#### **Domain A: Literacy Leadership**

There is an opportunity to expand district leadership capacity by deepening the understanding of the science of reading and fostering a unified vision for literacy throughout all levels of the system. Many district leaders are eager to enhance their knowledge of how the reading brain functions and how this understanding can inform decision-making. Through shared learning and collaboration, districts can promote consistency in the application of evidence-based leadership practices. This includes aligning comprehensive literacy planning and implementation among district offices, school administrators, and educators to ensure cohesive action and shared ownership of literacy outcomes.

### **Focus Area 2: Expanding Access to Evidence-Based Materials and Instructional Practices**

#### **Domain E: Instruction & High-Quality Materials**

Districts have the opportunity to review and refine their selection and implementation of high-quality, evidence-based instructional materials. Strengthening access to aligned resources across grade levels can ensure that students experience consistent, systematic literacy instruction. Additionally, there is an opportunity to deepen support for structured literacy practices by expanding professional learning opportunities for educators. When districts create clear expectations for fidelity of implementation and provide coaching aligned with curriculum resources, student outcomes improve. Standardizing high-quality materials and ensuring that educators are confident in their use promotes equitable instruction across classrooms.

### **Focus Area 3: Enhancing the Consistency of Tier 1 Core Instruction**

#### **Domain B: Culture & Climate**

Districts can strengthen Tier 1 core instruction by investing in systems that support teachers in delivering high-quality, evidence-aligned literacy practices. Opportunities include expanding collaborative planning time, providing job-embedded coaching, and ensuring professional learning is responsive to educator needs. Establishing a clear, shared framework for Tier 1 instruction helps ensure alignment across classrooms and grade levels. Through targeted supports and increased instructional coherence, districts can ensure all students receive the foundational instruction necessary for literacy success.

### **Focus Area 4: Advancing Early Childhood Language and Literacy Systems**

#### **Domain F: Learning Support**

There is a significant opportunity to strengthen Wyoming's early childhood ecosystem by expanding access to evidence-based programs that support oral language and pre-literacy development. Districts can deepen collaboration with early learning providers to ensure smooth transitions into Kindergarten and greater alignment between early learning and K–12 systems. By building early literacy capacity among educators and expanding supports for Kindergarten readiness, districts set the stage for substantial long-term literacy achievement.

## **Focus Area 5: Elevating Adolescent Literacy Supports**

### **Domain D: Professional Development & Coaching**

Districts have a unique opportunity to enhance adolescent literacy instruction by expanding professional learning for secondary educators. Providing targeted reading and writing instruction training for older students ensures that middle and high school teachers are equipped with the strategies needed to accelerate student learning. Expanding intervention systems and increasing access to data-based decision-making tools can strengthen support for students reading below grade level. By investing in secondary literacy, districts ensure that all learners continue to build academic language and comprehension skills throughout their education.

## **Focus Area 6: Expanding Data-Informed Literacy Planning in CSI and TSI Districts**

### **Domain C: Data-Informed Planning**

Districts supporting schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) have a valuable opportunity to strengthen how data is used to inform literacy planning and instructional decisions. Expanding the use of comprehensive assessment systems—such as universal screeners and progress monitoring tools—can guide more precise and timely interventions. There is growing interest in improving data literacy across district teams to better analyze trends, monitor implementation, and support school improvement efforts. Aligning district-led improvement planning with literacy initiatives will ensure that schools receiving additional supports are grounded in evidence-based strategies that close gaps and improve student outcomes.

## **Conclusion and Transition to Component 4**


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Just as Wyoming's vast and varied geography—its mountains, plains, and valleys—requires different approaches to navigate, so too do the literacy needs of our students. Currently, only 36% of our fourth graders and 29% of our eighth graders have reached proficiency, leaving 64% and 71%, respectively, below the mark. While data provides a broad overview of these trends, it is the disaggregated data that reveals a deeper story. This level of analysis uncovers systemic gaps affecting student racial and ethnic subgroups, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students.

Disaggregated data highlights the nuances and disparities often obscured by overall statistics, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of all students' experiences and outcomes. Although Wyoming enjoys commendable ratings in certain educational metrics, this success does not extend uniformly across the student population. While some students have made significant progress, others face barriers that hinder their achievement. A closer examination of the data reveals where targeted interventions and resources are most needed.

Despite Wyoming's strong standing compared to other states, substantial performance gaps persist, indicating that our education system is not yet meeting the needs of every student. High rankings in specific areas should not overshadow the work required to ensure equitable opportunities for all learners. It is crucial to address these disparities systematically, ensuring that all students—regardless of background—receive the support necessary to thrive. Only by committing to this comprehensive approach can we build an educational landscape that serves every learner effectively.





Component 3 has comprehensively analyzed the diverse literacy needs across the state, identifying disparities in student achievement, particularly among multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged populations. Through disaggregated data analysis, Wyoming has pinpointed critical gaps that persist despite ongoing interventions. These findings underscore the necessity of targeted, evidence-based approaches to ensure equitable literacy support for all students.

We have analyzed our students' needs and examined our system responsibilities, recognizing both the challenges and opportunities before us. Wyoming's children are 100% ours, and they deserve the gift of becoming 100% proficient readers. While our state scores may be commendable, our goal must extend beyond achieving laudable results—we must ensure every child has the opportunity to reach or exceed proficiency. Wyoming's kids are not just numbers on a chart Component 4; they are future ranchers, educators, community leaders, and innovators. They embody the resilience and spirit of the West, and they deserve every opportunity to succeed. Wyoming kids are our kids—That's WY!

As we transition into , the focus shifts toward leveraging statewide literacy initiatives to address the gaps identified in earlier analyses. By conducting an inventory of active literacy programs, Wyoming can evaluate existing efforts and determine areas of alignment with the WLLP. This step will help maximize resources, streamline efforts, and create synergy between the WLLP and other statewide literacy programs, including those supporting multilingual learners, equity-driven literacy interventions, and whole-child approaches.

To ensure sustainability and meaningful impact, collaboration with key literacy stakeholders across the state will be essential. Establishing data-sharing partnerships, identifying common goals, and strategically integrating effective practices will strengthen Wyoming's literacy ecosystem. By aligning the WLLP with broader state initiatives, Wyoming can create a cohesive, scalable framework that advances literacy achievement and ensures long-term, systemic improvements in student outcomes.