

Subgroup Achievement and Gap Trends — Alabama

K-12 enrollment — 739,198

The raw data used to develop these state profiles, including data for additional grade levels and years before 2002, can be found on the CEP Web site at www.cep-dc.org. Click on the link on the left labeled State Testing Data. In the list of results that appears, look for the most recent report on student achievement since 2002. Below the name of the report, click on the link for State Profiles and Worksheets. Scroll down the page until you reach the list of states. Click on the Worksheet link for proficiency data or scale score data for a particular state.

Subgroup Achievement Trends and Gap Trends — Key Findings

Summary. In grade 8 (the only grade in which subgroup trends were analyzed by achievement level), Alabama students showed gains across the board in reading and math - at the basic, proficient, and advanced levels for all racial/ethnic subgroups, low income students, and boys and girls. Progress was made in narrowing achievement gaps between racial/ethnic subgroups, between low income and non-low income students, and between boys and girls (in reading). Comparable data were available from 2005 through 2009.

- **Exception in reading.** The Asian American subgroup showed a slight decline in the percentage of students reaching the basic level in reading at grade 8; however it should be noted that Asians are the highest performing subgroup in reading, and this percentage declined from 100% to 99%.
- **Some gaps widen.** Although achievement gaps narrowed overall, there were some exceptions, especially in high school reading, where gaps widened between African American and white students, between boys and girls (girls tend to outperform boys in reading), and between low income and non-low income students. Gaps between Native American and white students tended to widen across grades and subjects.

Data Limitations

Years of comparable percentage proficient data	2005 through 2009
Years of comparable mean scale score data	2004 through 2009 for grade 4 reading and math and grade 8 reading 2005 through 2009 for grade 8 math No grade 11 mean scale score data available
Disaggregated data for all subgroups and comparison groups	Subgroup proficiency data available for 2005-2009 Subgroup scale score data (means, standard deviations, and numbers of test-takers) not available until 2007 Scale score data and number of test takers not available for grade 11 students, low-income students, and students who are <i>not</i> low-income Scale score data not available for comparison groups of students who are <i>not</i> disabled or are <i>not</i> English language learners (ELLs), so these subgroups are compared with all tested students in the state in mean scale score analyses. Scale score data not available for English language learners in 2009. State grade 11 reports combine percentages of students at achievement levels I and II, so no Basic-and-Above analyses can be conducted for grade 11.

Test Characteristics

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

Test(s) used for NCLB accountability	Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT), grades 3–8 Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE), grade 11 Alabama Alternate Assessment, grades 3–8 and 11
Grades tested for NCLB accountability	3–8, 11
State labels for achievement levels	AL uses four achievement levels: I, II, III, and IV. For our analyses we treated II as Basic, III as Proficient, and IV as Advanced.
High school NCLB test also used as an exit exam?	Yes (AHSGE)
First year test used	2004: First year of use for NCLB for ARMT reading grades 4, 6, and 8; ARMT mathematics grades 4 and 6; AHSGE reading grade 11; and AHSGE mathematics grade 11

	2005: First year of use for NCLB for ARMT reading grades 3, 5, and 7; and ARMT mathematics grades 3, 5, 7, and 8
Time of test administration	Spring
Major changes in testing system (2002–present)	<p>2003–04: ARMT assessments implemented, replacing the Stanford-10 in grades 4, 6, and 8 for reading and in grades 4 and 6 for mathematics. (Stanford 10 scores were not used for NCLB accountability.)</p> <p>2004–05: ARMT assessments implemented, replacing the Stanford-10 in grades 3, 5, and 7 in reading and in grades 3, 5, 7, and 8 in mathematics</p> <p>2005–06: Displaced Hurricane Katrina students disaggregated for this administration only</p>
Comments	<p>The scale score cutpoints associated with some of the achievement levels for some of the grades were changed in 2005. Therefore, the percentages proficient for 2005 and later years cannot be compared with the percentage proficient for 2004. However, since the scale did not change, comparison of scale scores for 2005 and later years can be compared with scale scores for 2004.</p>

Achievement by Subgroup — Trends at the Middle School Level

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

Table AL-7. Percentages of grade 8 students by racial or ethnic subgroup scoring at the advanced, proficient-and-above, and basic-and-above levels in reading

Subgroup	Reporting year					Average yearly percentage point gain ¹			
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006		2007	2008	2009
All tested students									
Advanced				35%	33%	33%	35%	37%	0.5
Proficient-and-above				70%	72%	72%	74%	75%	1.3
Basic-and-above				98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	0.1
White									
Advanced				45%	44%	44%	45%	47%	0.6
Proficient-and-above				79%	80%	80%	82%	83%	1.1
Basic-and-above				99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	0.1
African American									
Advanced				17%	16%	17%	18%	18%	0.3
Proficient-and-above				55%	58%	59%	61%	62%	1.7
Basic-and-above				98%	98%	98%	98%	99%	0.2
Latino									
Advanced				23%	25%	22%	27%	28%	1.1
Proficient-and-above				56%	62%	58%	65%	67%	2.6
Basic-and-above				97%	98%	97%	97%	98%	0.3
Asian									
Advanced				54%	56%	52%	54%	57%	0.6
Proficient-and-above				81%	86%	84%	85%	87%	1.4
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	-0.2
Native American									
Advanced				40%	38%	38%	39%	43%	0.8
Proficient-and-above				77%	77%	80%	80%	79%	0.5
Basic-and-above				99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	0.1

Table reads: The percentage of white 8th graders who scored at the advanced level on the state reading test increased from 45% in 2005 to 47% in 2009. During this period, the average yearly gain in the percentage advanced in reading for white 8th graders was 0.6 percentage points per year.

¹Averages are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

Table AL-8. Percentage of grade 8 students by demographic subgroup scoring at the advanced, proficient-and-above, and basic-and-above levels in reading

Subgroup	Reporting year					Average yearly percentage point gain ¹			
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006				
All tested students									
Advanced				35%	33%	33%	35%	37%	0.5
Proficient-and-above				70%	72%	72%	74%	75%	1.3
Basic-and-above				98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	0.1
Low-income students									
Advanced				20%	19%	19%	20%	22%	0.6
Proficient-and-above				57%	60%	61%	63%	65%	1.9
Basic-and-above				98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	0.2
Students with disabilities³									
Advanced				3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	0.3
Proficient-and-above				19%	23%	22%	24%	25%	0.8
Basic-and-above				90%	93%	91%	90%	93%	0.0
English language learners³									
Advanced				6%	10%	8%	7%	8%	-0.5
Proficient-and-above				34%	41%	38%	41%	38%	-1.0
Basic-and-above				96%	96%	95%	95%	96%	-0.2
Female									
Advanced				40%	38%	38%	40%	41%	0.4
Proficient-and-above				76%	79%	78%	80%	80%	0.9
Basic-and-above				99%	100%	99%	99%	100%	0.0
Male									
Advanced				30%	28%	28%	30%	32%	0.6
Proficient-and-above				63%	65%	66%	68%	70%	1.8
Basic-and-above				98%	98%	98%	98%	99%	0.2

Table reads: The percentage of low-income 8th graders who scored at the advanced level on the state reading test increased from 20% in 2005 to 22% in 2009. During this period, the average yearly gain in the percentage advanced in reading for low-income 8th graders was 0.6 percentage points per year.

¹Averages are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

³Gap trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because state and federal policy changes may have affected the year-to-year comparability of test results for these subgroups. Average yearly percentage point gains are based on 2006-2009 results.

Table AL-9. Percentages of grade 8 students by racial or ethnic subgroup scoring at the advanced, proficient-and-above, and basic-and-above levels in mathematics

Subgroup	Reporting year							Average yearly percentage point gain ¹	
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008		2009
All tested students									
Advanced				15%	19%	21%	23%	26%	2.8
Proficient-and-above				63%	68%	66%	68%	74%	2.7
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
White									
Advanced				21%	25%	28%	30%	35%	3.4
Proficient-and-above				74%	77%	75%	77%	82%	2.0
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
African American									
Advanced				5%	7%	9%	10%	13%	1.9
Proficient-and-above				45%	52%	52%	53%	60%	3.9
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
Latino									
Advanced				10%	10%	12%	16%	18%	1.9
Proficient-and-above				57%	59%	58%	63%	67%	2.4
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
Asian									
Advanced				48%	53%	54%	57%	58%	2.5
Proficient-and-above				86%	89%	88%	91%	92%	1.7
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
Native American									
Advanced				17%	21%	23%	26%	30%	3.1
Proficient-and-above				74%	75%	71%	75%	77%	0.7
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0

Table reads: The percentage of white 8th graders who scored at the advanced level on the state math test increased from 21% in 2005 to 35% in 2009. During this period, the average yearly gain in the percentage advanced in math for white 8th graders was 3.4 percentage points per year.

¹Averages are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

Table AL-10. Percentage of grade 8 students by demographic subgroup scoring at the advanced, proficient-and-above, and basic-and-above levels in mathematics

Subgroup	Reporting year								Average yearly percentage point gain ¹
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
All tested students									
Advanced				15%	19%	21%	23%	26%	2.8
Proficient-and-above				63%	68%	66%	68%	74%	2.7
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
Low-income students									
Advanced				6%	8%	10%	11%	14%	2.1
Proficient-and-above				49%	56%	54%	56%	63%	3.5
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
Students with disabilities³									
Advanced				1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	0.4
Proficient-and-above				18%	23%	23%	24%	27%	1.6
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
English language learners³									
Advanced				6%	9%	9%	9%	10%	0.4
Proficient-and-above				48%	48%	49%	49%	52%	1.2
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
Female									
Advanced				15%	19%	20%	23%	27%	3.0
Proficient-and-above				67%	71%	70%	71%	77%	2.6
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0
Male									
Advanced				15%	18%	21%	22%	26%	2.6
Proficient-and-above				60%	64%	63%	65%	71%	2.8
Basic-and-above				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0

Table reads: The percentage of low-income 8th graders who scored at the advanced level on the state math test increased from 6% in 2005 to 14% in 2009. During this period, the average yearly gain in the percentage advanced in math for low-income 8th graders was 2.1 percentage points per year.

¹Averages are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

³Gap trends for students with disabilities and English language learners should be interpreted with caution because state and federal policy changes may have affected the year-to-year comparability of test results for these subgroups. Average yearly percentage point gains are based on 2006-2009 results.

Achievement by Subgroup — Gap Trends (Percentages Proficient)

Table AL-11. Subgroup achievement trends in reading by percentages proficient

NOTE: L = larger gain than comparison group. S = smaller gain than comparison group. E = equal gain to comparison group.

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

Subgroup	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
	Year span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average annual gain ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comparison group	Year span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average annual gain ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comparison group	Year span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average annual gain ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comparison group
All tested students	05-09	83%	87%	0.8		05-09	70%	75%	1.3		05-09	86%	82%	-1.0	
White	05-09	89%	92%	0.7		05-09	79%	83%	1.1		05-09	91%	88%	-0.8	
African American	05-09	75%	78%	0.9	L	05-09	55%	62%	1.7	L	05-09	76%	71%	-1.3	S
Latino	05-09	73%	79%	1.4	L	05-09	56%	67%	2.6	L	05-09	72%	72%	0.0	L
Asian	05-09	93%	93%	0.0	S	05-09	81%	87%	1.4	L	05-09	89%	88%	-0.4	L
Native American	05-09	88%	91%	0.7 ²	E	05-09	77%	79%	0.5	S	05-09	90%	83%	-1.8	S
Not low-income	05-09	92%	95%	0.6		05-09	83%	87%	1.0		05-09	92%	89%	-0.6	
Low-income	05-09	76%	80%	1.0	L	05-09	57%	65%	1.9	L	05-09	76%	71%	-1.1	S
Not disabled	06-09	90%	91%	0.4		06-09	78%	81%	0.9		06-09	91%	87%	-1.3	
Students with disabilities ³	06-09	42%	47%	1.7	L	06-09	23%	25%	0.8	S	06-09	33%	29%	-1.3	E
Not ELLs	06-09	85%	87%	0.7		06-09	72%	75%	1.1		06-09	86%	82%	-1.3	
English language learners ³	06-09	67%	68%	0.4	S	06-09	41%	38%	-1.0	S	06-09	43%	44%	0.4	L
Female	05-09	88%	90%	0.5		05-09	76%	80%	0.9		05-09	88%	85%	-0.9	
Male	05-09	79%	83%	1.1	L	05-09	63%	70%	1.8	L	05-09	83%	79%	-1.1	S

Table reads: In 2005, 89% of white 4th graders and 75% of African American 4th graders scored at the proficient level on the state reading test. In 2009, 92% of white 4th graders and 78% of African American 4th graders scored at the proficient level in reading. Between 2005 and 2009, the percentage proficient improved at an average rate of 0.7 percentage points per year for white students and 0.9 percentage points per year for African American students, indicating a larger rate of gain and a narrowing of the achievement gap for African American 4th graders.

¹Numbers in these columns are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

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

Table AL-12. Subgroup achievement trends in mathematics by percentages proficient

NOTE: L = larger gain than comparison group. S = smaller gain than comparison group. E = equal gain to comparison group.

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

Subgroup	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
	Year span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average annual gain ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comparison group	Year span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average annual gain ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comparison group	Year span	Starting PP	Ending PP	Average annual gain ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comparison group
All tested students	05-09	74%	79%	1.3		05-09	63%	74%	2.7		05-09	78%	86%	1.8	
White	05-09	81%	85%	1.0		05-09	74%	82%	2.0		05-09	85%	90%	1.3	
African American	05-09	62%	69%	1.7	L	05-09	45%	60%	3.9	L	05-09	66%	77%	2.8	L
Latino	05-09	62%	72%	2.6	L	05-09	57%	67%	2.4	L	05-09	72%	83%	2.7	L
Asian	05-09	91%	92%	0.3	S	05-09	86%	92%	1.7	S	05-09	94%	96%	0.6	S
Native American	05-09	81%	83%	0.6 ²	S	05-09	74%	77%	0.7	S	05-09	84%	89%	1.2	S
Not low-income	05-09	86%	89%	0.8		05-09	78%	86%	2.1		05-09	85%	91%	1.6	
Low-income	05-09	65%	72%	1.7	L	05-09	49%	63%	3.5	L	05-09	66%	78%	2.8	L
Not disabled	06-09	83%	84%	0.3		06-09	73%	79%	2.0		06-09	89%	90%	0.6	
Students with disabilities ³	06-09	38%	39%	0.4	L	06-09	23%	27%	1.6	S	06-09	31%	36%	1.5	L
Not ELLS	06-09	78%	80%	0.4		06-09	68%	74%	2.1		06-09	84%	86%	0.7	
English language learners ³	06-09	65%	63%	-0.6	S	06-09	48%	52%	1.2	S	06-09	74%	70%	-1.3	S
Female	05-09	77%	81%	1.1		05-09	67%	77%	2.6		05-09	81%	87%	1.7	
Male	05-09	72%	77%	1.4	L	05-09	60%	71%	2.8	L	05-09	76%	84%	2.0	L

Table reads: In 2005, 81% of white 4th graders and 62% of African American 4th graders scored at the proficient level on the state math test. In 2009, 85% of white 4th graders and 69% of African American 4th graders scored at the proficient level in math. Between 2005 and 2009, the percentage proficient improved at an average rate of 1.0 percentage points per year for white students and 1.7 percentage points per year for African American students, indicating a larger rate of gain and a narrowing of the achievement gap for African American 4th graders.

¹Numbers in these columns are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

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

Achievement by Subgroup — Gap Trends (Mean Scale Scores)

Table AL-13. Achievement gap trends in reading by mean scale scores

NOTE: L = larger gain than comparison group. S = smaller gain than comparison group. E = equal gain to comparison group. MSS = mean scale score. SD = standard deviation. If the average gain for the subgroup of interest, such as African American students, is larger than the average gain for the comparison group, such as white students, this indicates that the achievement gap has narrowed. If the average gain for the subgroup of interest is smaller, this means the gap has widened.

Subgroup	Statistic	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
		Year span	Start year	End year	Avg. gain MSS ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comp. group	Year span	Start year	End year	Avg. gain MSS ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comp. group	Year span	Start year	End year	Avg. gain MSS ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comp. group
All tested students	Mean SS	07-09	641.3	643.9	1.3		07-09	671.9	674.1	1.1		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-09	38.3	39.5			07-09	33.0	31.4			NA-NA	NA	NA		
White	Mean SS	07-09	650.8	654.0	1.6		07-09	680.2	682.1	1.0		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-09	36.5	38.1			07-09	32.5	30.6			NA-NA	NA	NA		
African American	Mean SS	07-09	625.9	627.5	0.8	S	07-09	659.0	661.0	1.0	E	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	35.5	36.1			07-09	29.2	27.9			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Latino	Mean SS	07-09	625.6	629.0	1.7	L	07-09	660.6	655.9	-2.3	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	38.2	36.1			07-09	33.5	31.7			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Asian	Mean SS	07-09	660.0	663.0	1.5	S	07-09	688.8	688.7	-0.1	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	38.2	40.1			07-09	35.2	33.4			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Native American	Mean SS	07-09	652.3	650.1	-1.1 ²	S	07-09	678.3	678.2	0.0	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	36.8	36.5			07-09	30.9	30.8			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Not Low-income	Mean SS	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	NA-NA	NA	NA			NA-NA	NA	NA			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Low-income	Mean SS	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	NA-NA	NA	NA			NA-NA	NA	NA			NA-NA	NA	NA		
All tested students	Mean SS	07-09	641.3	643.9	1.3		07-09	671.9	674.1	1.1		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-09	38.3	39.5			07-09	33.0	31.4			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Students with disabilities ³	Mean SS	07-09	599.1	599.2	0.1	S	07-09	633.2	635.8	1.3	L	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	36.7	36.6			07-09	26.6	27.4			NA-NA	NA	NA		
All tested students	Mean SS	07-08	641.3	641.9	NA		07-08	671.9	672.9	NA		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-08	38.3	38.2			07-08	33.0	33.1			NA-NA	NA	NA		
English language learners ³	Mean SS	07-08	617.2	618.7	NA	NA	07-08	644.4	648.6	NA	NA	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-08	35.9	34.5			07-08	28.3	30.0			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Female	Mean SS	07-09	647.5	648.8	0.6		07-09	677.3	678.6	0.7		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-09	36.9	38.5			07-09	31.4	30.1			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Male	Mean SS	07-09	635.5	639.2	1.9	L	07-09	666.8	669.9	1.5	L	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	38.6	39.9			07-09	33.7	32.1			NA-NA	NA	NA		

Table reads: In 2007, the mean scale score on the state 4th grade reading test was 650.8 for white students and 625.9 for African American students. In 2009, the mean scale score in 4th grade reading was 654.0 for white students and 627.5 for African American students. Between 2007 and 2009, the mean scale score improved at an average yearly rate of 1.6 points for white students and 0.8 points for African American students, indicating a widening of the achievement gap for African Americans.

Note: The Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) for Grades 3-9 is scored on a scale of 300-900; The Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) for Grade 11 is scored on a scale of 0-999.

¹Numbers in these columns are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

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

Table AL-14. Achievement gap trends in mathematics by mean scale scores

NOTE: L = larger gain than comparison group. S = smaller gain than comparison group. E = equal gain to comparison group. MSS = mean scale score. SD = standard deviation. If the average gain for the subgroup of interest, such as African American students, is larger than the average gain for the comparison group, such as white students, this indicates that the achievement gap has narrowed. If the average gain for the subgroup of interest is smaller, this means the gap has widened.

Subgroup	Statistic	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
		Year span	Start year	End year	Avg. gain MSS ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comp. group	Year span	Start year	End year	Avg. gain MSS ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comp. group	Year span	Start year	End year	Avg. gain MSS ¹	Gain larger or smaller than comp. group
All tested students	Mean SS	07-09	633.4	636.5	1.6		07-09	684.3	691.4	3.6		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-09	37.5	39.6			07-09	34.6	36.4			NA-NA	NA	NA		
White	Mean SS	07-09	641.5	644.7	1.6		07-09	692.2	700.0	3.9		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-09	36.3	38.8			07-09	35.7	37.2			NA-NA	NA	NA		
African American	Mean SS	07-09	619.8	622.6	1.4	S	07-09	671.2	676.7	2.8	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	34.9	36.3			07-09	27.5	28.9			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Latino	Mean SS	07-09	621.3	626.9	2.8	L	07-09	676.3	682.6	3.2	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	36.1	37.4			07-09	29.2	32.2			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Asian	Mean SS	07-09	658.4	665.7	3.6	L	07-09	721.6	726.2	2.3	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	40.4	43.3			07-09	48.7	48.1			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Native American	Mean SS	07-09	643.3	644.1	0.4 ²	S	07-09	688.0	694.6	3.3	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	37.1	38.8			07-09	32.9	34.8			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Not Low-income	Mean SS	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	NA-NA	NA	NA			NA-NA	NA	NA			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Low-income	Mean SS	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	NA-NA	NA	NA			NA-NA	NA	NA			NA-NA	NA	NA		
All tested students	Mean SS	07-09	633.4	636.5	1.6		07-09	684.3	691.4	3.6		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-09	37.5	39.6			07-09	34.6	36.4			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Students with disabilities ³	Mean SS	07-09	597.0	595.8	-0.6	S	07-09	654.3	657.4	1.6	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	37.1	37.8			07-09	20.9	23.2			NA-NA	NA	NA		
All tested students	Mean SS	07-08	633.4	635.6	NA		07-08	684.3	687.0	NA		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-08	37.5	38.7			07-08	34.6	36.8			NA-NA	NA	NA		
English language learners ³	Mean SS	07-08	617.0	621.5	NA	NA	07-08	669.5	673.6	NA	NA	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-08	35.9	37.7			07-08	28.6	31.5			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Female	Mean SS	07-09	634.4	637.9	1.7		07-09	685.5	693.0	3.8		NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	
	SD	07-09	35.7	38.2			07-09	32.9	34.9			NA-NA	NA	NA		
Male	Mean SS	07-09	632.3	635.1	1.4	S	07-09	683.2	689.9	3.4	S	NA-NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	SD	07-09	39.1	40.7			07-09	36.0	37.6			NA-NA	NA	NA		

Table reads: In 2007, the mean scale score on the state 4th grade math test was 641.5 for white students and 619.8 for African American students. In 2009, the mean scale score in 4th grade math was 644.7 for white students and 622.6 for African American students. Between 2007 and 2009, the mean scale score

improved at an average yearly rate of 1.6 points for white students and 1.4 points for African American students, indicating a widening of the achievement gap for African Americans.

Note: The Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) for Grades 3-9 is scored on a scale of 300-900; The Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) for Grade 11 is scored on a scale of 0-999.

¹Numbers in these columns are subject to rounding error.

²The number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data, so changes for this subgroup should be interpreted with caution.

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

Table AL-15. Numbers of test-takers

Subgroup	Subject	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
		Year span	# of test-takers start year	# of test-takers end year	Change in # of test-takers over time	% of test-takers in subgroup in end year	Year span	# of test-takers start year	# of test-takers end year	Change in # of test-takers over time	% of test-takers in subgroup in end year	Year span	# of test-takers start year	# of test-takers end year	Change in # of test-takers over time	% of test-takers in subgroup in end year
All tested students	Reading	07-09	56,083	57,969	3.4%	100.0%	07-09	57,666	56,332	-2.3%	100.0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	56,035	57,958	3.4%	100.0%	07-09	57,654	56,265	-2.4%	100.0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
White	Reading	07-09	33,223	34,192	2.9%	59.0%	07-09	33,785	33,207	-1.7%	58.9%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	33,171	34,153	3.0%	58.9%	07-09	33,762	33,132	-1.9%	58.9%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
African American	Reading	07-09	19,653	20,002	1.8%	34.5%	07-09	21,093	19,956	-5.4%	35.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	19,608	19,979	1.9%	34.5%	07-09	21,040	19,934	-5.3%	35.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Latino	Reading	07-09	1,902	2,403	26.3%	4.1%	07-09	1,514	1,848	22.1%	3.3%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	1,935	2,444	26.3%	4.2%	07-09	1,563	1,877	20.1%	3.3%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asian	Reading	07-09	636	655	3.0%	1.1%	07-09	524	630	20.2%	1.1%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	649	667	2.8%	1.2%	07-09	536	631	17.7%	1.1%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Native American	Reading	07-09	441	448	1.6%	0.8%	07-09	543	558	2.8%	1.0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	441	446	1.1%	0.8%	07-09	546	558	2.2%	1.0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Low-income	Reading	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Students w/ disabilities	Reading	07-09	5,584	5,292	-5.2%	9.1%	07-09	6,371	5,441	-14.6%	9.7%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	5,577	5,283	-5.3%	9.1%	07-09	6,341	5,426	-14.4%	9.6%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
English language learners	Reading	07-08	1,486	1,537	3.4%	NA	07-08	834	985	18.1%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-08	1,538	1,594	3.6%	NA	07-08	903	1,027	13.7%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Female	Reading	07-09	27,279	28,354	3.9%	48.9%	07-09	28,130	27,430	-2.5%	48.7%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	27,253	28,358	4.1%	48.9%	07-09	28,124	27,387	-2.6%	48.7%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Male	Reading	07-09	28,768	29,485	2.5%	50.9%	07-09	29,462	28,877	-2.0%	51.3%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Math	07-09	28,746	29,470	2.5%	50.8%	07-09	29,455	28,853	-2.0%	51.3%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Table reads: In 2007, 33,223 students in the white subgroup took the state 4th grade reading test. By 2009, the number of white test-takers had risen to 34,192 students, an increase of 2.9%. In 2009, the white subgroup made up 59.0% of the 57,969 4th graders taking the reading test that year.

Note: **Bold** type indicates that the number of students tested in this subgroup at this grade level was fewer than 500 in 2009 or the most recent year with available data.

Key Terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cautions and Explanations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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