

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY
MEETING AGENDA ITEM**

TITLE:	Report on the Results of the 2008 Administration of the Maryland School Assessment in Reading and Mathematics	DATE:	August 14, 2008
PRESENTER(S):	Terry Alban, Chief Operating Officer	Cher Jones, Principal, Dunloggin Middle School	
	Lori Willoughby, Assistant Principal, Dunloggin Middle School	Janice Petrovich, Reading Team Leader, Dunloggin Middle School	

OVERVIEW:

Results of the 2008 Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in reading and mathematics for elementary and middle schools were released in July and are summarized in this report. In every grade, more than 80 percent of HCPSS students were scoring at proficient or advanced in reading and mathematics. In addition to exceeding the proficiency standards established by the state of Maryland, every elementary and middle school met or exceeded the rigorous local standard of having 70 percent of students scoring at or above proficient in reading. Every elementary school and most middle schools met the local standard in mathematics, an area where much progress was made and scores increased significantly. The impressive growth in performance on the MSA over four years was largest for Hispanic, African American and special services student groups. Students in Grades 4 and 5 demonstrated exemplary performance as EVERY student group met the local target of 70 percent at proficient or advanced in reading, a repeat performance for Grade 4 students. Those same Grade 4 students met the local target for the first time in mathematics in EVERY student group. Performance on the Alt-MSA showed continued improvement in most student groups, and HCPSS students in all grades are performing at proficient or advanced at higher percentages than students around the state in both reading and mathematics.

RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:

The achievement of so many HCPSS students is a cause for celebration and demonstrates the effectiveness of the instruction provided by our teachers. Maintaining these high levels of performance for all student groups will continue to be the emphasis for our schools, as will the need to move all students to proficiency in reading and mathematics. School-based staff members are becoming more focused on analyzing data at the individual student level to support growth and improvement. These efforts will intensify as HCPSS works to fulfill the vision of *No Child Left Behind*.

Submitted by:

Sandra J. Erickson
Deputy Superintendent

Theresa R. Alban
Chief Operating Officer

**Approval/
Concurrence:**

Sydney L. Cousin
Superintendent

Introduction

The Maryland School Assessments (MSA) are tests in reading and mathematics that are given to students in Grades 3 through 8 and as an end-of-course exam in Algebra and English 10 measuring student performance to comply with the federal mandates of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). Students in Grades 3 through 8 complete the reading and mathematics tests, which include both selected response and constructed response items, in early March. Algebra and English 10, which meet the federal requirement for testing at the high school level, are end-of-course exams that are given in late May and also feature selected response as well as constructed response items. Each of these tests has identified score ranges that identify if a student is basic, proficient, or advanced for that content area and grade. The expectation of NCLB is that every student (100 percent) will be able to score at proficient or advanced by 2014.

Another requirement of NCLB is that all students participate in testing, including special education students who are not working toward a regular high school diploma. These students take an alternate assessment known as the Alt-MSA in Grades 3 through 8 and Grade 10. The Alt-MSA requires that each student have ten individualized objectives for performance in mathematics and reading. The student's ability to master these objectives is assessed by reviewing a portfolio that is developed throughout the year and scoring a video documenting the student's actual performance on a selected objective. Students must be able to show 60 percent mastery on these objectives to be identified as proficient.

When scores for the MSA and Alt-MSA are released by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), they are first presented according to proficiency level. Every school and school system receives scores indicating what percent of students in each grade and content area were able to score at or above proficient. These percentages are presented for the total student population and for each student group based on race/ethnicity and special services received. These scores become part of the calculation used to determine if schools met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), another mandate of NCLB.

Given the mandated NCLB target of 100 percent of students being proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014, each state was asked to develop annual measurable objectives (AMO) to monitor each school's progress in moving toward the goal. Maryland developed baseline AMOs after the first year of administering the MSA; these targets vary by level and content area and are outlined in Table 1. Each year the AMO increases to assure that by meeting these targets, schools are on course to achieving the ultimate goal of 100 percent proficiency. In order to achieve AYP, the total population and every identified student group with five or more students must reach the AMO. These student groups include African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, White, English Language Learners (ELL), students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals System services (FARMS), and students receiving special education services. When calculating the percent proficient for AYP purposes, the scores of every student who was enrolled in the school throughout the year and who participated in the MSA or Alt-MSA are included. Therefore, the number of students included in the proficiency reports and the number of students included in AYP calculations are not always the same.

Table 1: Annual Measurable Objectives for the Maryland School Assessment

Level	Reading				Mathematics			
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2006	2007	2008	2009
Grades 3-5	62.5%	67.2%	71.8%	76.5%	58.8%	63.9%	69.1%	74.2%
Grades 3-8	62.0%	66.7%	71.5%	76.2%	50.8%	57.0%	63.1%	69.3%
Grades 6-8	61.5%	66.3%	71.1%	75.9%	42.9%	50.0%	57.2%	64.3%
Grades 9-12	45.3%	52.2%	59.0%	65.8%	29.8%	38.6%	47.3%	56.1%
School System	59.6%	64.7%	69.7%	74.8%	47.8%	54.3%	60.9%	67.4%

In addition to meeting the reading and mathematics AMOs, schools are also required to meet one academically related target to achieve AYP. For elementary and middle schools, the target is based on school attendance; while

for high schools, the target is based on graduation rate. The target for attendance is 94 percent. The target for graduation rate is 85.5 percent for 2008. School systems are held accountable for both of these categories as well.

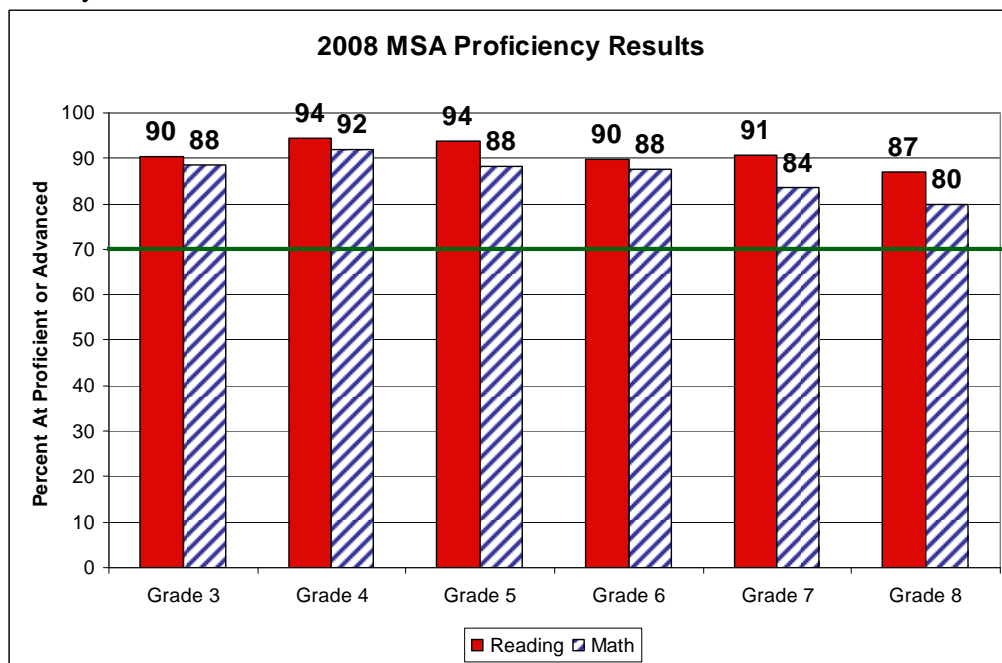
The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) recognized that many schools were already achieving the AMOs established by MSDE and decided to establish more rigorous local targets for performance on the MSA for the system and schools. The target for 2008 was that every school would meet AYP and have 70 percent of its students and every student group performing at or above proficient. These targets are part of the HCPSS *Bridge to Excellence* plan.

The results presented in this report include only elementary and middle schools' performance because the MSDE has not yet released information for the high schools. Performance by high schools and AYP decisions will be released later this summer, at which time an update will be provided.

Proficiency Results for the 2008 MSA

The performance of students throughout the HCPSS on the 2008 MSA exceeded both the state and local targets at every grade and in both content areas. Figure 1 presents the percent of students achieving at proficient or advanced for Grades 3 to 8 in reading and mathematics. Combining the scores of these students, 91 percent of them were proficient or advanced in reading and 86.4 percent of them were proficient or advanced in mathematics. The 2008 performance of HCPSS students on the MSA continued to be among the highest in the state across the grades and content areas. The performance of students in Grades 4 and 5 were particularly noteworthy this year. Overall 94 percent of our Grade 4 and 5 students scored proficient or advanced in reading and 92 percent of our Grade 4 students scored proficient or advanced in mathematics. Even more impressive is the fact that for the second year in a row, EVERY student group met the local target of 70 percent at proficient or advanced in Grade 4 reading. Another noteworthy accomplishment is the increased scores of our Grade 7 students. Overall Grade 7 students scored 91 percent proficient or advanced in reading, an increase of six percent from 2007, and 84 percent in mathematics, an increase of more than four percent from 2007.

Figure 1: Proficiency Results for 2008 MSA



Maintaining this high level of performance is challenging, yet HCPSS continues to have schools with more than 90 percent of students scoring at proficient or advanced. In 2008, there were 19 elementary schools with 95 percent or more of their students proficient or advanced in reading and 14 elementary schools at that level for mathematics. Additionally, there were 10 elementary schools with 90 to 94 percent of students at proficient or advanced in reading and eight elementary schools at that level for mathematics. Worthington Elementary reached a peak performance in 2008 with 100 percent of their students scoring proficient or advanced in reading! Middle schools also demonstrated high levels of performance with 10 middle schools having 90 percent or more of their students scoring proficient or advanced in reading, while 8 middle schools reached that level in mathematics.

Advanced Performance on MSA

The standards for MSA set by the state are calculated by combining the performance of students who score in the proficient and advanced categories on the test. In addition to maintaining high levels of performance relative to the state standards, it is important to note HCPSS students consistently reach the highest level of performance by scoring in the advanced category on MSA. Since 2004, nearly one-third or more of HCPSS students have scored at the advanced level for both reading and mathematics across Grades 3 to 8. This achievement is markedly greater than the percent of students statewide who are able to reach advanced levels on the MSA as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 that follow.

Figure 2: Advanced Performance in Reading for HCPSS and Maryland

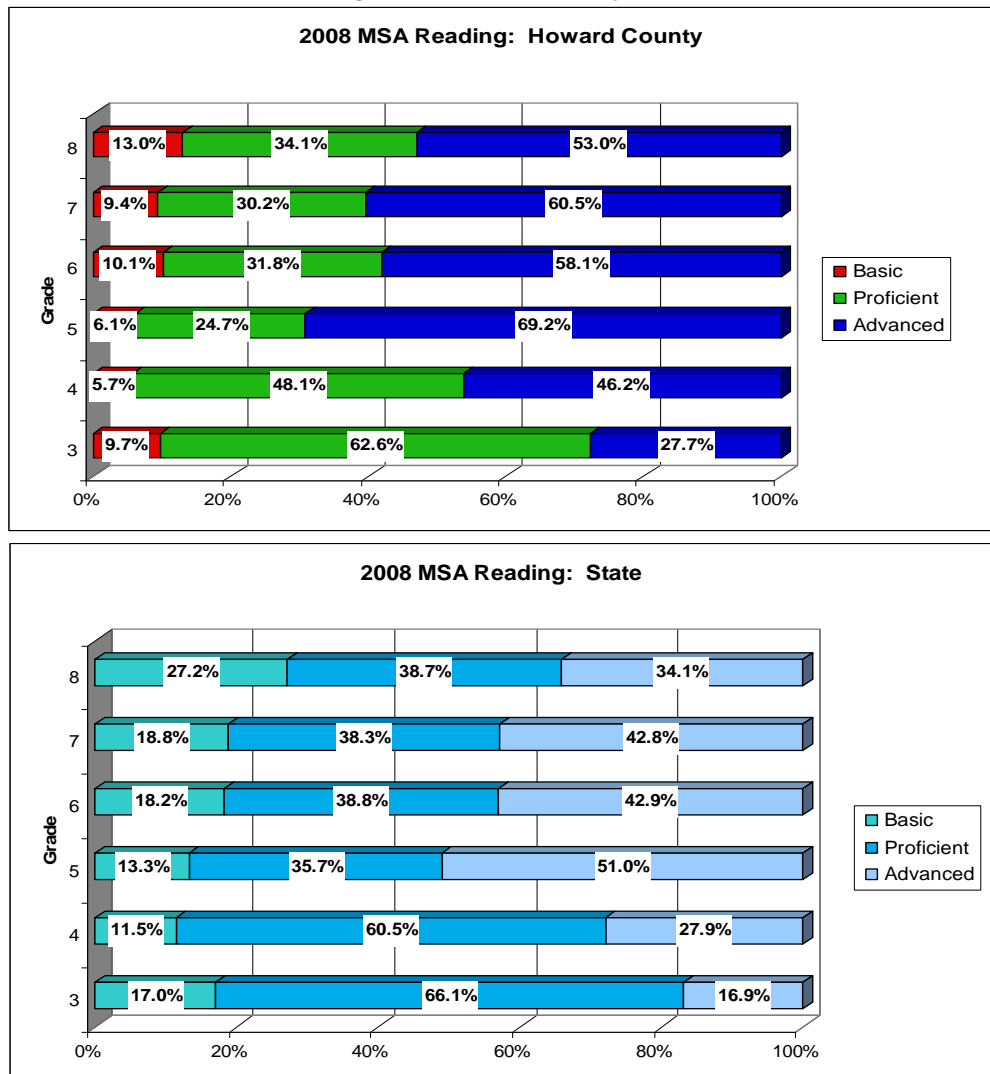
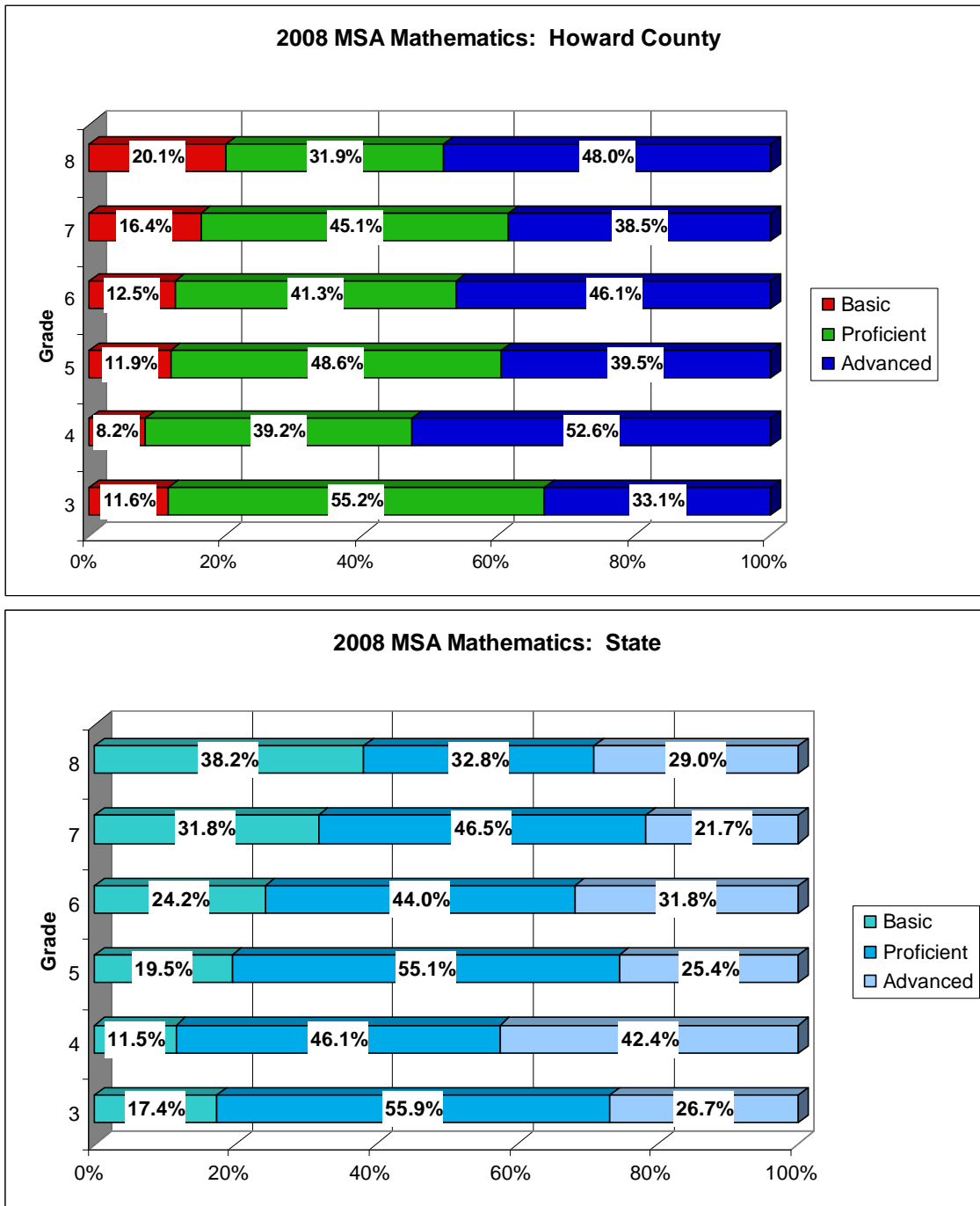


Figure 3: Advanced Performance in Mathematics for HCPSS and Maryland



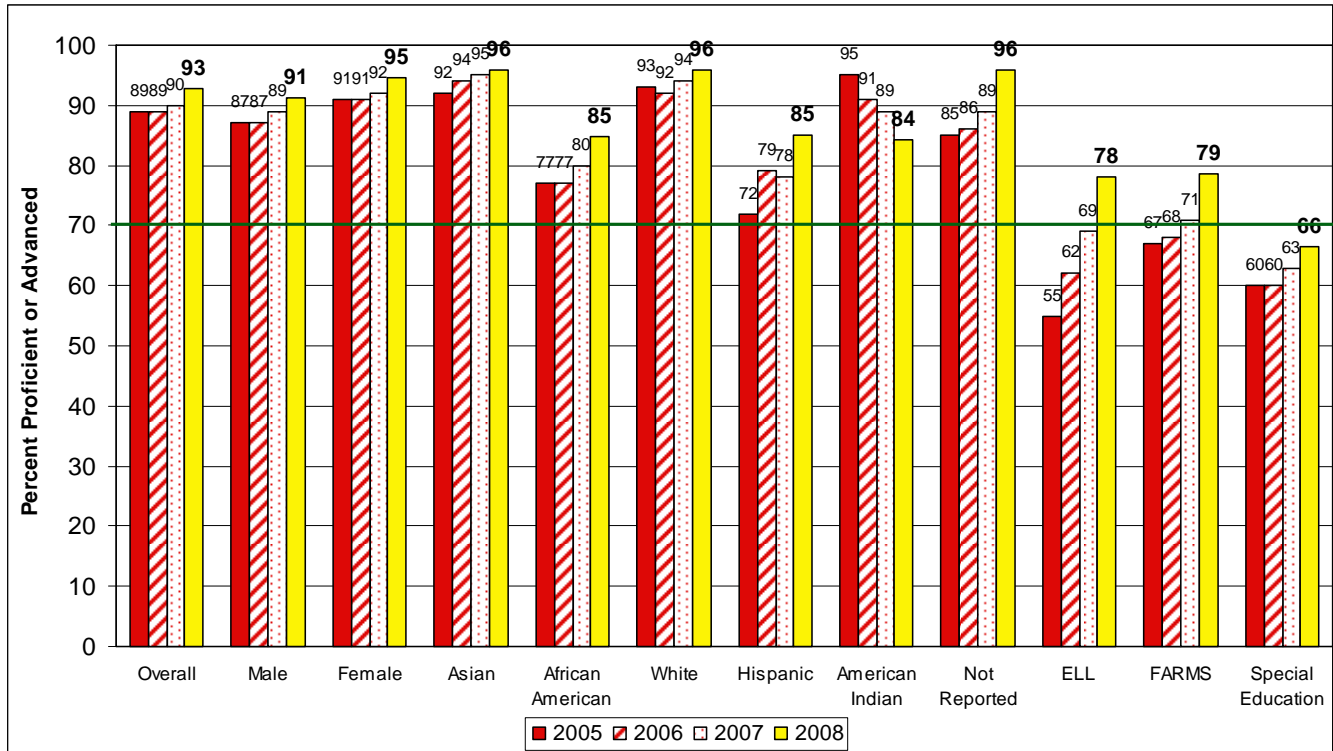
Trend Performance on MSA

While the performance on the 2008 MSA by HCPSS students was impressive, it is important to monitor progress over time to determine if systemic initiatives are achieving the desired results. Generally, it is best to examine trends using three or more years of data. The trend performance in reading for all student groups is depicted in Figures 4 and 5. The student group identified as “Not Reported” is used for those students who choose not to provide a single race/ethnicity code in their records. When examining performance for the American Indian

students, it is important to note that fewer than 50 students are represented; therefore changes in percentages may appear more significant due to the small number of students and should be interpreted with caution.

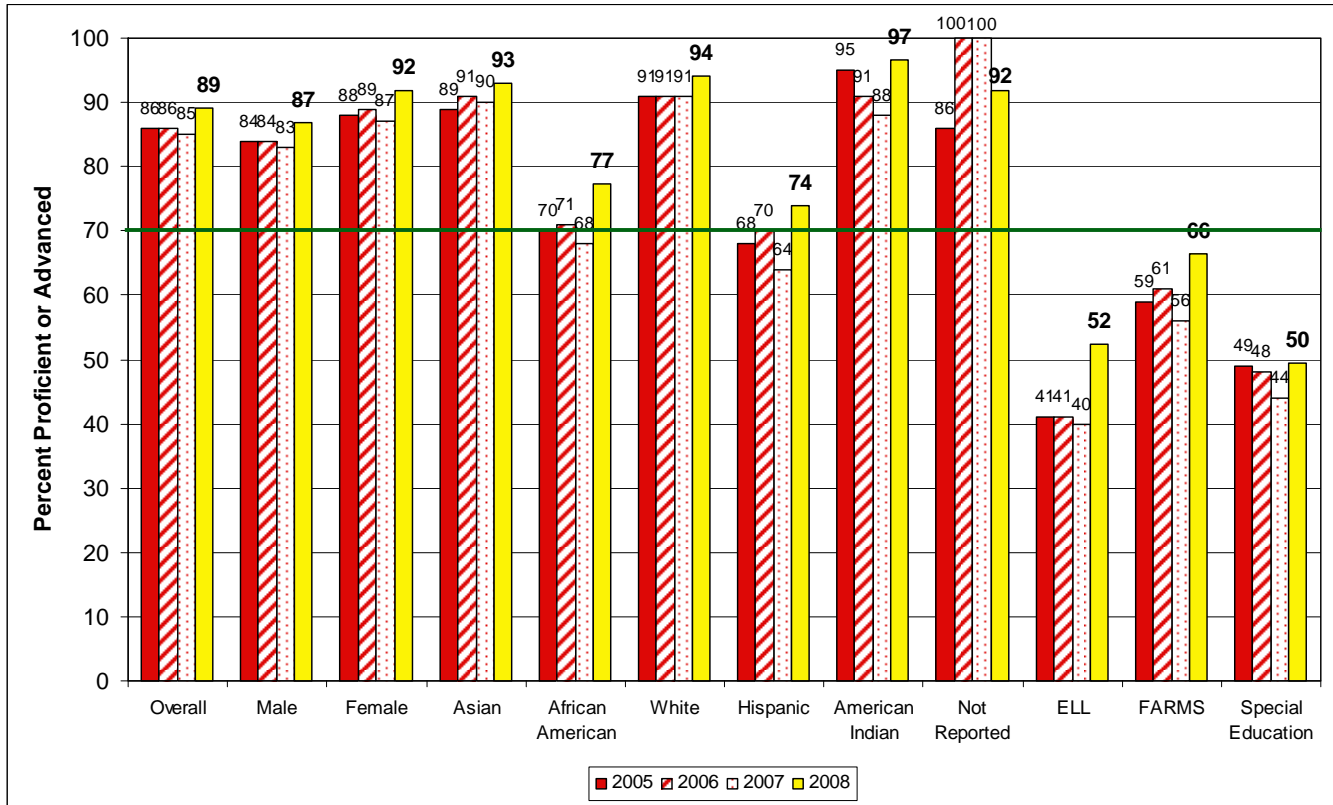
As illustrated in Figure 4, all racial/ethnic student groups have been able to maintain performance above the local standard of 70 percent at proficient or advanced for the last four years. Students receiving special services have improved performance over time with students receiving FARMS services exceeding the local target for the second time in two years and ELL students exceeding the target for the first time in 2008. With an increase of three percent from 2007, the special education student group is within four percentage points of reaching the local target of 70 percent.

Figure 4: Trend Performance in Elementary Reading Grades 3 to 5



The trend performance for middle school reading is shown in Figure 5. As illustrated, all racial/ethnic student groups exceeded the local standard of 70 percent at proficient or advanced. Hispanic students achieved an increase of 10 percent from 2007 and African American students achieved an increase of nine percent from 2007. All student groups receiving special services showed an increase in scores with ELL students achieving the greatest increase of 12 percent over 2007 scores.

Figure 5: Trend Performance in Middle School Reading Grades 6 to 8



The trend performance in mathematics is presented in Figures 6 and 7. At the elementary level, the performance of every student group either improved or was maintained with the exception of those students in the Not Reported group. All racial/ethnic groups exceeded the local target for the third year in a row and ELL students exceeded the local target for the first time. Students receiving FARMS services had an increase of three percent from 2007, moving within two points of the target, while special education students maintained their performance.

The performance of middle school students in mathematics continues to be an area for needed growth in both HCPSS and systems across the state; however performance has been steadily increasing. All but two racial/ethnic student groups exceeded the target in 2008 and those not meeting the target achieved increases of seven percent for Hispanic students and six percent for African American students. While the American Indian student group exceeded the target, a decrease from 2007 was noted. Again it is important to note that fewer than 50 students are represented in the American Indian student group; therefore changes in percentages may appear more significant due to the small number of students and should be interpreted with caution.

The growth since 2005 in mathematics is encouraging for many students groups. Performance for African American students has increased 13 percentage points, for Hispanic students 12 percentage points, for ELL students 9 percentage points, for special education students 7 percentage points, and for students receiving FARMS 14 percentage points. Yet, there is still much work to be done to ensure that these student groups reach the local target of 70 percent scoring at proficient or advanced. Efforts are already underway to evaluate mathematics intervention programs to determine which programs are most effective for middle school students.

Figure 6: Trend Performance in Elementary Mathematics Grades 3 to 5

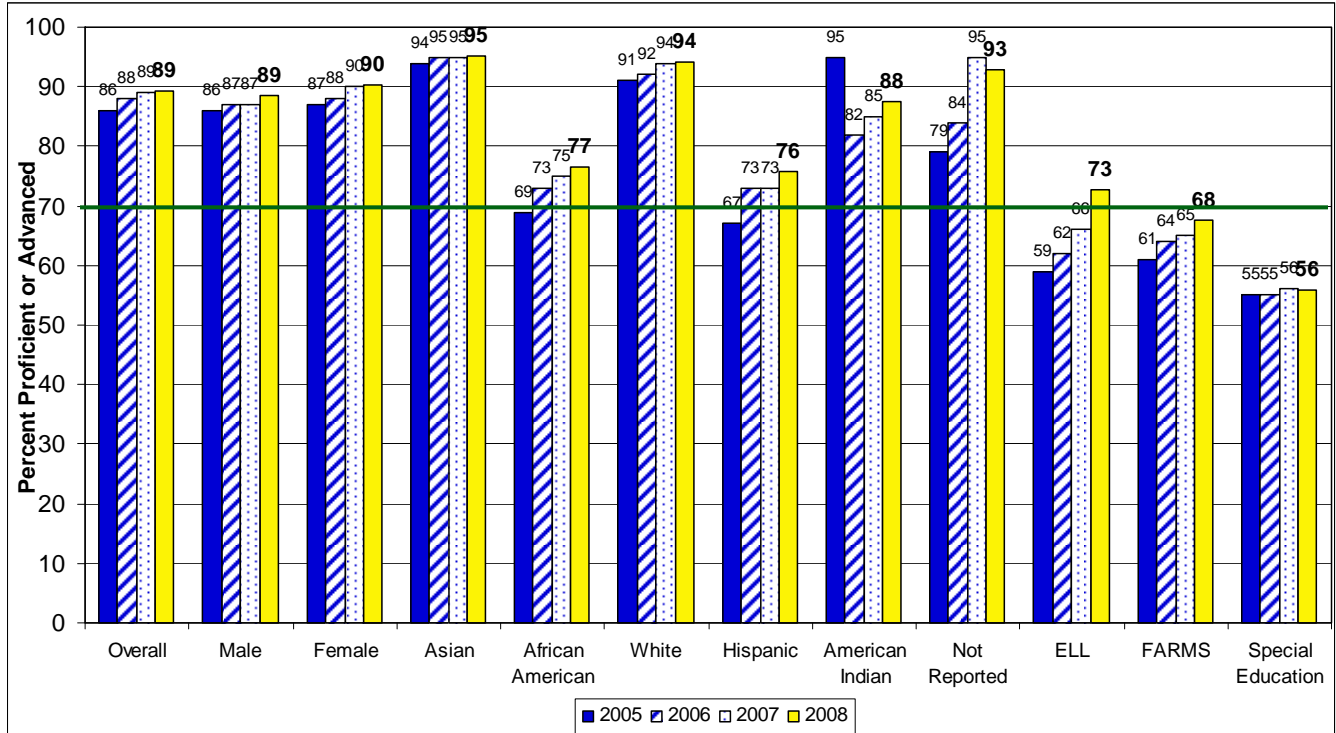
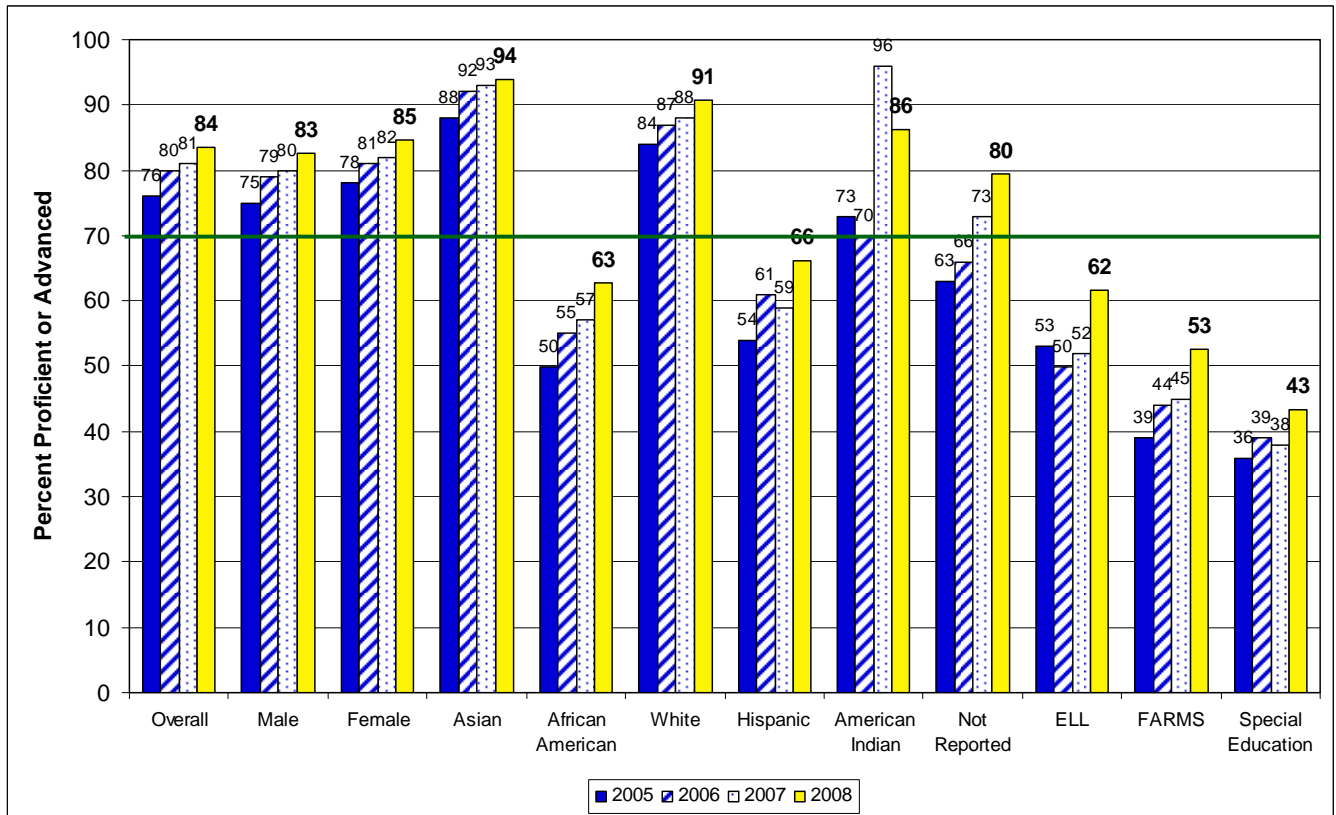


Figure 7: Trend Performance in Middle School Mathematics Grades 6 to 8



Proficiency Results for 2008 Alt-MSA

The performance of students in Grades 3 through 8 and 10 who completed the Alt-MSA is presented for reading and mathematics in Figures 8 and 9. To achieve proficient status on the Alt-MSA, a student must master at least 60 percent of the individualized objectives in reading and mathematics. The proficiency results for Alt-MSA are included in AYP calculations. When considering the performance of student groups on the Alt-MSA, it is important to remember that many group sizes are small.

The Department of Special Education continued their diligent work with schools this year to improve the processes for monitoring the performance of students on the Alt-MSA. Growth is evident by the overall increase of four percent in reading and seven percent in mathematics and continued improvement is expected.

Figure 8: Trend Performance in Reading for the Alt-MSA

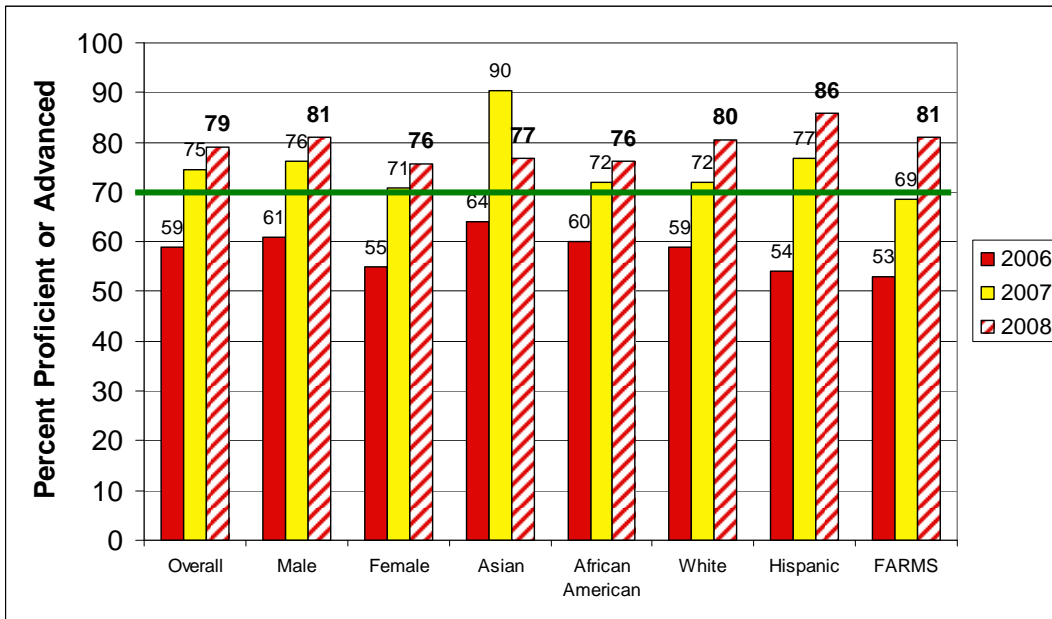
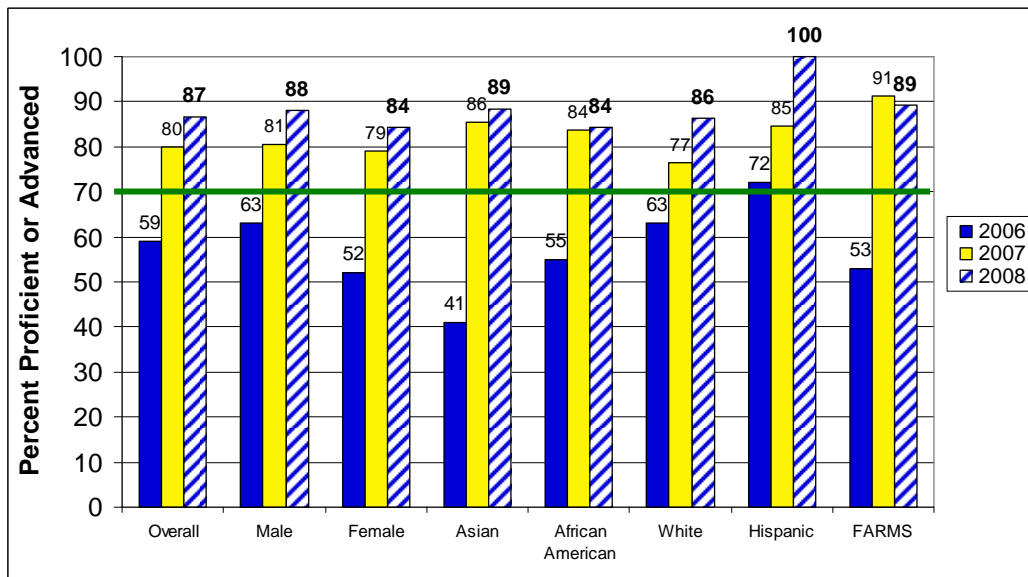


Figure 9: Trend Performance in Mathematics for the Alt-MSA



SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The HCPSS and its schools demonstrated impressive performance in the 2008 state accountability program for elementary and middle schools. This performance is a tribute to the efforts of students, parents, and school system staff who worked diligently to realize the vision of NCLB. The HCPSS set local targets that challenged schools to reach beyond state expectations in 2008, and the schools rose to that challenge. Every HCPSS elementary and middle school and the PreK-8 school were at or above the local target of having 70 percent of its overall student population at or above proficient in reading. Every elementary school also met or exceeded the local target of having 70 percent of its overall student population at or above proficient in mathematics. All but three middle schools and the PreK-8 school achieved the local target for mathematics, three of these schools demonstrated growth as they achieved between 55 and 69 percent of their students reaching proficient or advanced in mathematics.

The target of having 70 percent of every student group at or above proficient continues to be the focus for all HCPSS schools and it is a rigorous expectation. For the first time, HCPSS was able to reach this target with EVERY student group in Grade 5 reading and Grade 4 mathematics. EVERY student group in Grade 4 reading reached this target for the second year in a row. As the AMOs approach or exceed the local target, schools are placing intensive efforts in examining the performance of individual students in order to strategically support efforts.

The HCPSS has already done many things to support the growth and success of students on the MSA. These strategies include but are not limited to the following: 1) providing differentiated support, such as Math, Reading, and Special Education Instructional Support Teachers to schools based on identified areas of need; 2) emphasizing the power of professional learning communities; 3) providing easy access to student level data on the multiple measures used to monitor student progress; 4) emphasizing the connection between safe and nurturing environments (HCPSS Goal 2) and student achievement; 5) intensifying community outreach through the work of the Hispanic liaisons and BSAP mentors; 6) expanding the use of the co-teaching model to middle school; and 7) implementing high leverage strategies as part of the school improvement process. These efforts have led to improved performance by all student groups, but particularly for African American, Hispanic, and students receiving special services. The HCPSS will continue to implement these successful strategies.

Moving forward, the HCPSS brought together school improvement planning teams to begin the process of continuous improvement at the Summer Institute and will continue these conversations and training opportunities throughout the school year at administrator meetings. The Department of Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation will work with staff from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to continue to evaluate and monitor the impact of intervention programs. The connection between Goal 2 and academic achievement will be examined as the local standards and indicators for safe and nurturing schools are monitored by schools in a more strategic manner.

Finally, it is important to note that the 2008 MSA results are merely one measure used to gauge the performance of the HCPSS. In the fall, the multiple measures used to monitor performance will be presented in the update to the *Bridge to Excellence* plan and will provide a more comprehensive examination of what the HCPSS has achieved.