

The Forum for America's Ideas

THE EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITY GAP, ITS ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS AND HOW DATA CAN HELP

PRESENTATION TO THE
NCSL EARLY LEARNING FELLOWS
JUNE 7, 2018



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

Session Objectives and Agenda

- Introduction: What is the early learning opportunity gap?
 - ▣ Definition
 - ▣ Background statistics
 - ▣ ESSA Provisions
 - ▣ Economic imperative
 - ▣ NCSL resources
- Presentation: Using Data to Identify Gaps
 - ▣ Margie Vandeven
 - ▣ Katrina Miller
- Roundtables and Discussion



Opportunity and Achievement Gaps

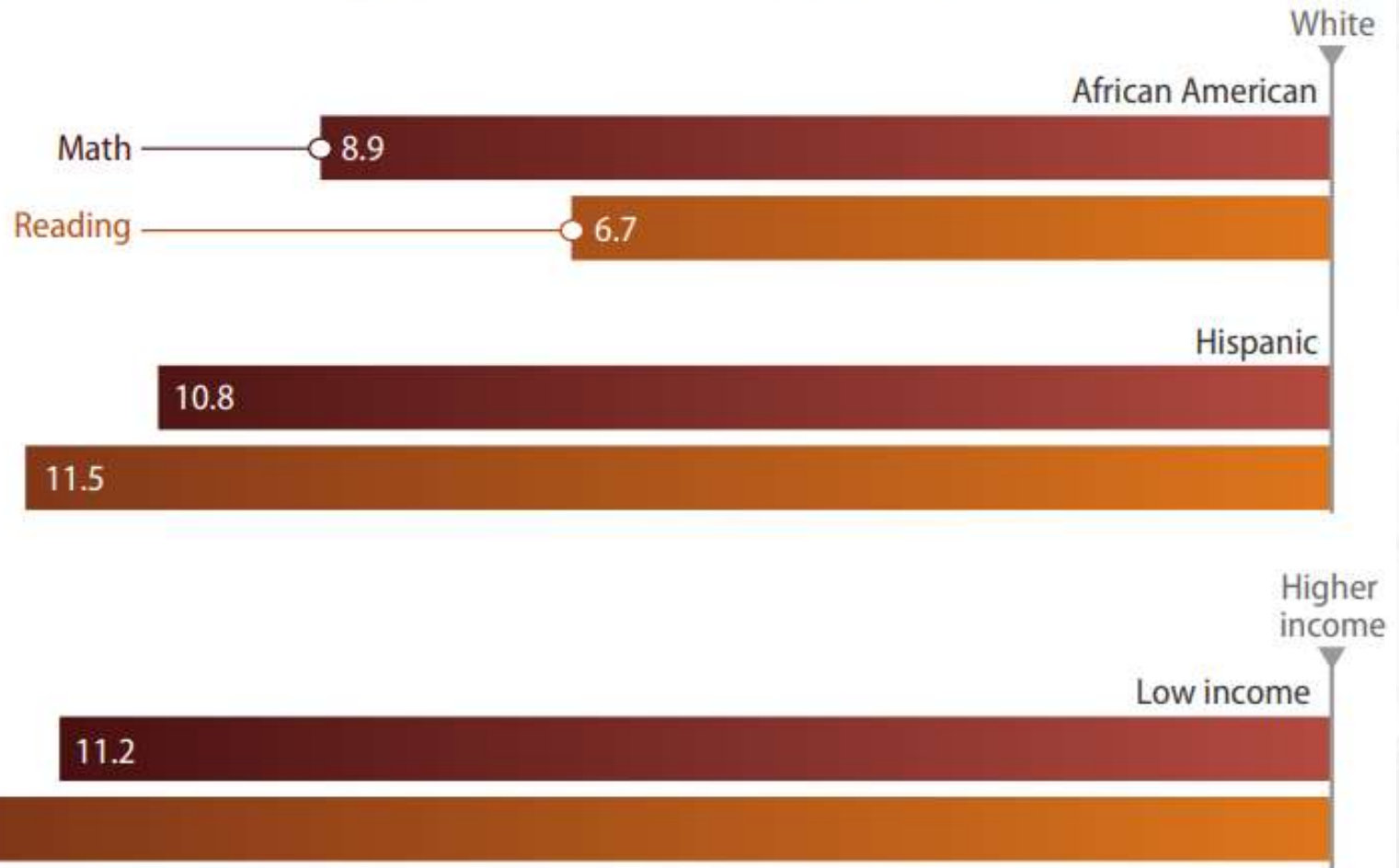
- **Opportunity gaps:** The differences in students' access to highly effective educators, exemplary curriculum and materials and appropriate academic and social support. These opportunities, resources and supports can be thought of as educational inputs.
- **Achievement gaps:** The differences in test scores between racial, ethnic and socioeconomic student groups. These gaps can be thought of as educational outputs, resulting from the educational inputs received.





African American, Hispanic, and low-income children lag behind their white and more affluent peers in math and reading at kindergarten entry

Kindergarten achievement gaps in months of learning by subgroup, 2010



Source: Friedman-Krauss, A., Barnett, W.S., & Nores, M. (2016). How Much can High-Quality Universal Pre-K Reduce Achievement Gaps? Center for American Progress. Retrieved from: <http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/NIEER-AchievementGaps-report.pdf>



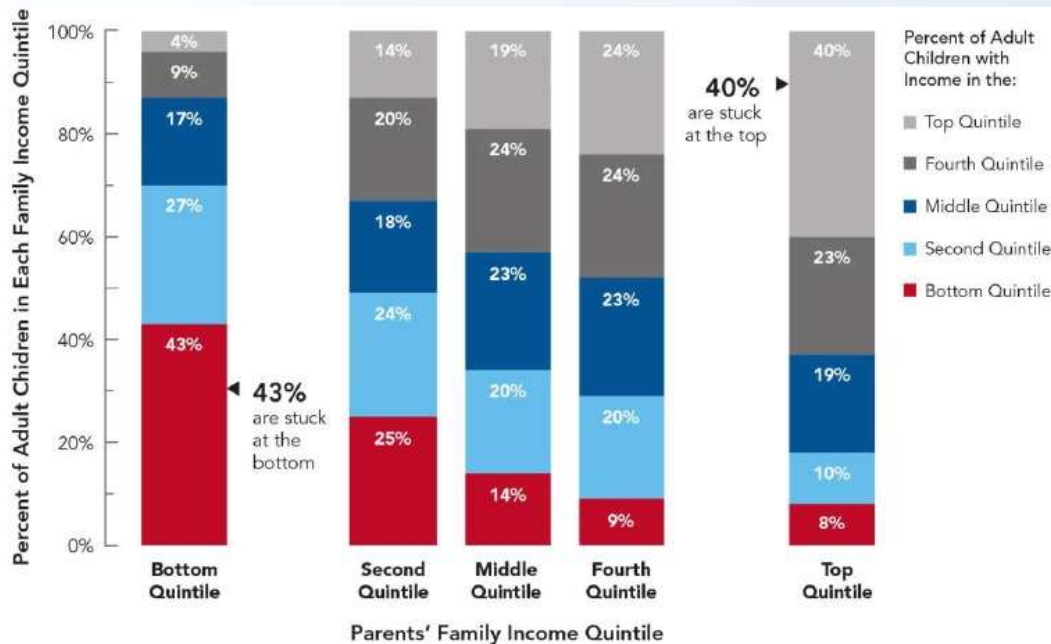
Opportunity Gaps and School Readiness

- Low-income students are more likely to:
 - Trail in social-emotional skills and executive functioning¹⁻³
 - Attend a school that is of lower quality (ineffective and inexperienced teachers, fewer resources, more students living in poverty).⁴
 - Be chronically absent (10% or more).⁵
 - Face hunger, homelessness, housing insecurity and lack of access to quality healthcare.⁶
 - Experience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, neglect, neighborhood violence and more, leading to toxic stress, and negative health and educational outcomes.⁷



Intergenerational poverty

Income Quintile of Children When They Grow Up Relative to Their Parents' Income Quintile



Note: Numbers are adjusted for family size.

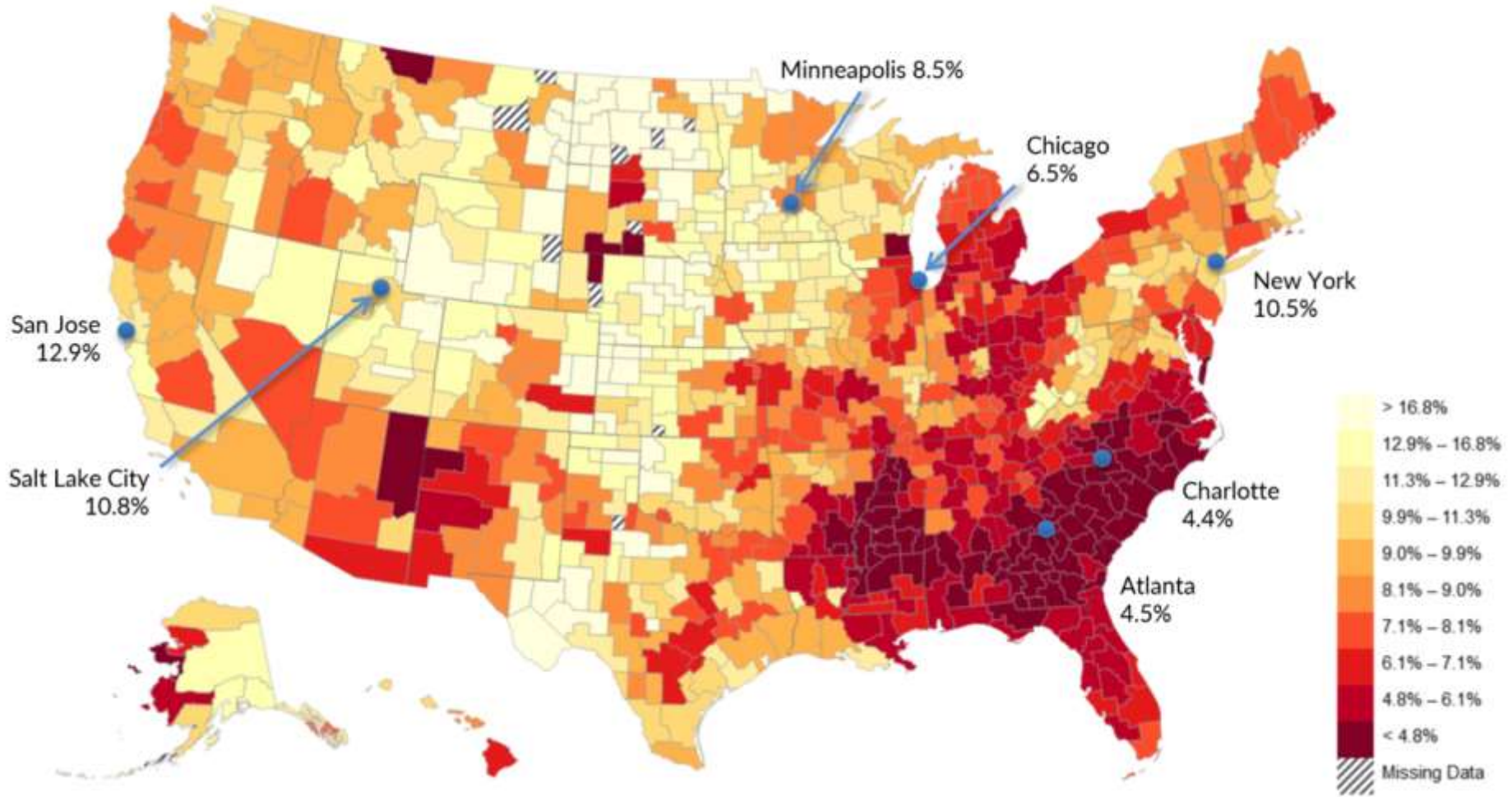
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The Geography of Upward Mobility in America

Children's Chances of Reaching Top 20% of Income Distribution Given Parents in Bottom 20%



Source: Dr. Raj Chetty, The Equality of Opportunity Project. Retrieved from: <http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/>



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Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions

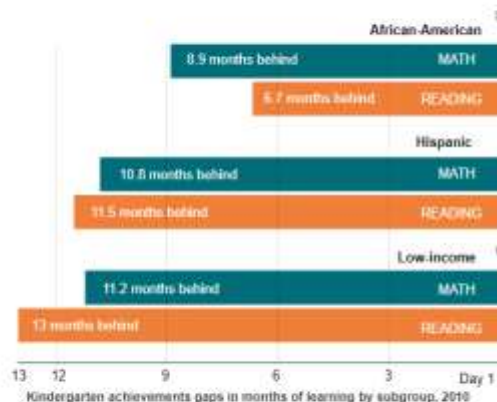
- Strengthen and align early learning systems
- Use accountability and reporting to identify and close gaps
- **Examine students' access to highly**-effective educators and develop capacity of P-3 educators
- Take a comprehensive approach to supporting students
- Support English language learners





Close Opportunity Gaps and Boost Economies with Early Learning

African-American, Hispanic and low-income children, on average, lag behind their white and more-affluent peers in math and reading at kindergarten entry.



On average, from the first day of kindergarten, white students' prior opportunities to prepare puts them months ahead of their peers.



Students of low-income families (at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines) — regardless of race—face a similar opportunity gap, putting them months behind their peers not living in poverty.

As subsequent learning depends on critical brain development that occurs in the first eight years of life, these gaps are difficult to close through intervention in K-12 education.

Investments in early learning align with this brain development research, giving it a high return on investment (ROI).

ROI

Studies have estimated that for every dollar invested in early learning programs, the public can expect a return of \$2 to \$17 depending on the program's scale, and savings accrued in short-term, intermediate and long-term benefits.



Short-term benefits
Improved school readiness rates for young learners, cognitively, socially and emotionally

Intermediate benefits
Improved academic achievement, reduced special education placement and lower grade retention rates in elementary and middle school

Long-term benefits
Improved high school graduation rates, higher labor market earnings, reduced crime and delinquency rates, reduced welfare use and improved health and health-related behaviors.

It's estimated that high-quality pre-k programs aimed at African-American and Latino children could close 12 percent to 40 percent of the education gaps in the U.S. Complete gap closure could result in a \$49 billion gain in GDP.

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the 2015 federal education law, states have policy options for closing opportunity and school readiness gaps by supporting early learning, including:

- Emphasizing equity in accountability and reporting
- Increasing equitable access to high-quality pre-K
- Structuring school turnaround with a pre-K through third grade (P-3) focus
- Improving transitions from pre-K to K
- Supporting high-quality teaching and learning in P-3
- Providing students and families with wraparound services • Supporting English language learners



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08 THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION | OAS EPISODE 29



A Fair Start: Ensuring all Students Are Ready to Learn

Education

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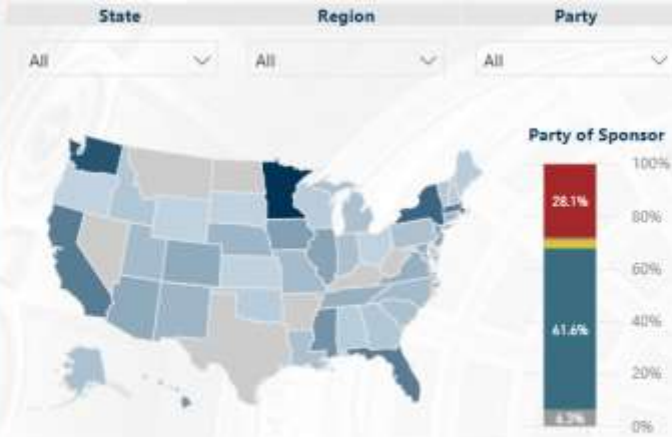


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2018

Preschool-3rd Grade State Legislation

Based on the filters, 302 bill(s) or resolution(s) in 45 state(s) address the following topics: Assessment and Intervention, Dual Language Learners, Educators and Professional Development, Family Engagement, General P-3 Education, Governance, Kindergarten, Literacy and Numeracy, Preschool, School Discipline and Social Emotional Learning, School Readiness and Transitions, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education, Task Forces, Pilot Programs and Committees.



Legislation Category: All

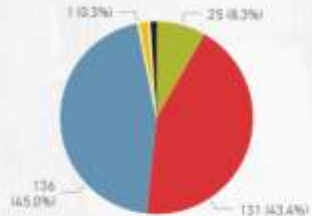
Current Disposition: All | Bill Location (Status): All

Date Introduced*: 12/5/2016 | 4/25/2018 | 1/9/2017 | 5/7/2018

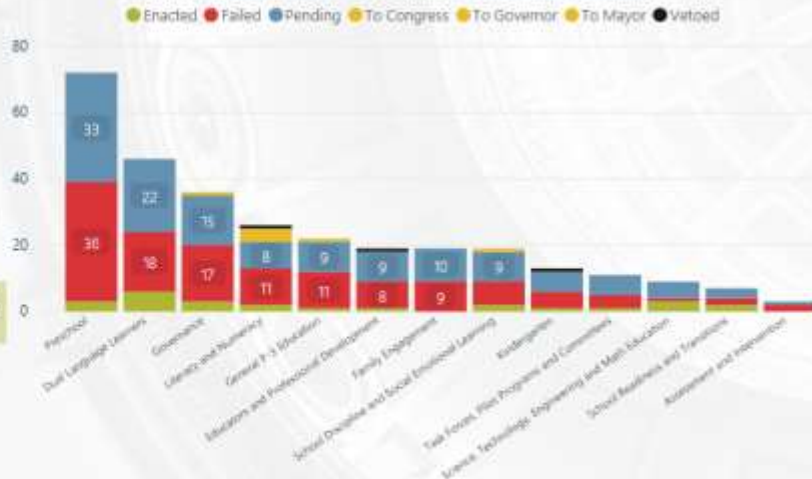
Bill Summary Keyword Search: Search [] Clear filters

*Bills introduced before Jan. 1, 2018 have been carried over into 2018 legislative sessions.

Number of Bills by Current Disposition



Number of Bills by Category and Current Disposition



Totals add up to greater than 100% because bills may address multiple categories.

Select a card below to access detailed bill information

Alaska House Bill 52
Passed 1st Committee

Pre Elementary School Programs and Plans

Alaska House Bill 64
Passed 2nd Chamber

Reading Proficiency Task Force

25 bill(s) have been enacted

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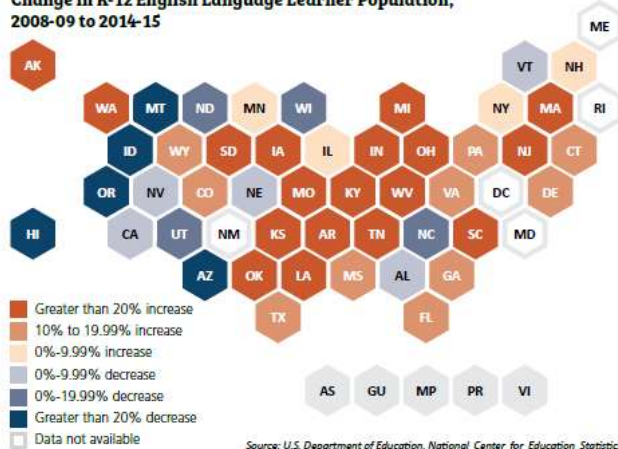
Last updated: May 8, 2018.

More NCSL Resources

- Legislative Advisory Group
- Early Learning Opportunity Gaps Website
- Upcoming: Washington State Case Study (2018 Legislative Summit)



Change in K-12 English Language Learner Population, 2008-09 to 2014-15



Understanding and Assisting English Language Learners in School

BY MATTHEW WEYER

English language learners (ELLs) in educational systems are defined as those between ages 3 and 21, enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school, and whose native language is not English. ELLs may have difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding English. They can struggle to find success in classrooms where English is the language of instruction, potentially preventing them from fully participating in society.

On the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), fourth-grade English language learners trailed their non-ELL counter-

parts in math (14 percent at or above proficient compared to 43 percent of non-ELLs) and in reading (9 percent at or above proficient compared to 40 percent of non-ELLs). These gaps can persist throughout their K-12 education and may lead to the gap in high school graduation rates, with English language learners trailing the national average by 17 percentage points.

English language learners' high school graduation rates vary from state to state. For example, 93 percent of ELLs graduated from high school in West Virginia, while 32 percent graduated in Arizona. In California, the ELL graduation rate has risen from 65 percent in 2014 to 72 percent in 2016. Graduation

Did You Know?

• Of all English language learners in U.S. K-12 schools, 83 percent speak Spanish, around 2 percent each speak Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese, and the remaining students speak various other languages.

• On average, it takes four to seven years for an English learner to effectively acquire academic English proficiency.

• There are five different educational models in schools for learning English.



A Look at Third-Grade Reading Retention Policies

BY MATT WEYER

Research demonstrates that students not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to not finish high school. Third grade marks an important turning point, when the focus shifts from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. During this transition, students spend less time learning new reading skills and are instead learning new content and concepts that the reading conveys.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 37 percent of all U.S. fourth-graders were reading at or above proficiency in 2017, up 1 percent from 2015. However, data from subgroups reveal that, on average, only 20 percent of African-American and American Indian/Alaska native fourth-graders, and 23 percent of Hispanic fourth-graders, scored at or above proficiency. Whites and Asians scored higher at 47 percent and 59 percent proficiency, respectively. On average, 22 percent of students from low-income families are reading at or above proficiency, compared to

52 percent of their peers from middle- and higher-income families. With third-grade reading ability linked to graduation rates, and thus indirectly to subsequent economic outcomes, some lawmakers are introducing bills to improve reading skills and close disparities.

Retaining students—not promoting them to fourth grade without reaching a certain proficiency level—has become a popular strategy for states and districts looking to improve literacy skills and prevent struggling readers from moving on. Studies of grade retention have shown some positive effects in the short term, but negative in the long term, including increased risk for dropping out of high school. A study of Florida's third-grade retention policy, however, has demonstrated success when comparing the outcomes of retained students to those who were promoted.

Researchers opposed to this approach argue that retaining students can be expensive and can also have negative impacts on their social and emotional adjustment. Instead, they argue for earlier identification and intervention.

Did You Know?

• In 1998, California became the first state to require retention for students not reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

• Of the 16 states plus Washington, D.C., that require reading retention, students in three—Connecticut, Florida and Indiana—rank in the top 10 for fourth-grade reading on the 2017 NAEP.

• By age 3, children from low-income families hear roughly 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers. This "word gap" has been linked to deficiencies in third-grade literacy skills.

Presentation

- Margie Vandeven, Director of Educational Partnerships – State and Local Government, SAS
- Katrina Miller, Education Industry Consultant, SAS





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<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/early-learning.aspx>



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