

# The State of **New Jersey** Public Education, 2014

A JERSEYCAN RESEARCH REPORT



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# Preface

It was two years ago when we published our first ever State of Education report. In fact, it was the very achievement gaps and trends we noted in our original report that prompted us to launch JerseyCAN in the first place.

Later, when we published our Framework for Excellence, we continued to see those severe achievement gaps. That same research showed that fewer than half of New Jersey students were at college and career ready benchmarks set by NAEP. Those findings prompted us to create a dual mission for JerseyCAN: close the achievement gap and raise the bar for every student in New Jersey.

Today, two years of school later, those concerns have not gone away. Some progress has been made, but stark achievement gaps remain between low-income students and their wealthier peers and between white students and students of color. We must continue to raise the bar for all students.

Our numbers as a state may look strong in the aggregate, but those of us living and working here every day see the real inequities across and within districts, especially in those where few high quality schools exist. This report aims to provide some basic data and trend information that demonstrates how pervasive these achievement gaps are across the state.

The report summarizes the current state of many reforms underway, and synthesizes several different types of achievement data, to provide a comprehensive picture of the state of education in New Jersey right now.

It's a complex picture. While we're certainly investing heavily in education, the investment has not translated into high quality options for *all* students. The picture is made even more complex by new reforms underway, including the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the first administration of PARCC tests this year and the start of our new teacher evaluation system. It is precisely because of all of these

major changes and the controversies that surround them, however, that now—more than ever—we should be asking hard questions about how all students across New Jersey are being served.

The time is now to look at these trends and commit to real, sustainable reforms. We can't continue to have this conversation year after year. The students who started kindergarten two years ago already had their shot at kindergarten and are fast-approaching the third grade, a crucial point by which they should be reading on grade level and prepared for future grades.

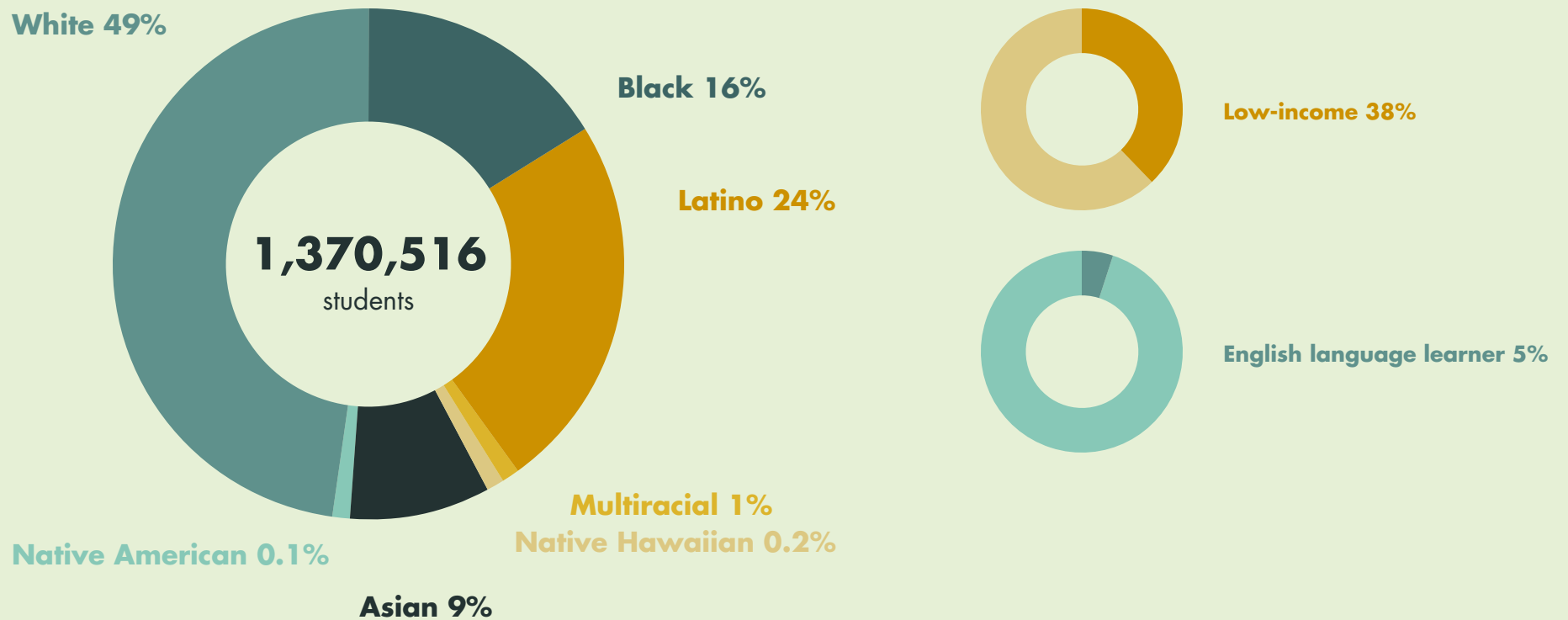
Or consider this; the students who started community college two years ago, with the hopes of completing an associate's degree, are in many cases still taking remedial classes—and racking up debt while doing so.

Time is ticking away for our kids. Let's keep that front and center as we debate politics, policy, and implementation challenges and push to resolve these challenges with the urgency that all of New Jersey's students deserve.

# The students

The first step to understanding our school system is understanding who it serves. Find out more about the students who attend our schools, including their demographic breakdown and the kinds of schools they're enrolled in.

WHO WE'RE EDUCATING—DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN, 2013-2014<sup>1</sup>





# 590 school districts



**87**  
Public charter schools

**2,405**  
Traditional public schools

**29,387**  
Students in public charter schools

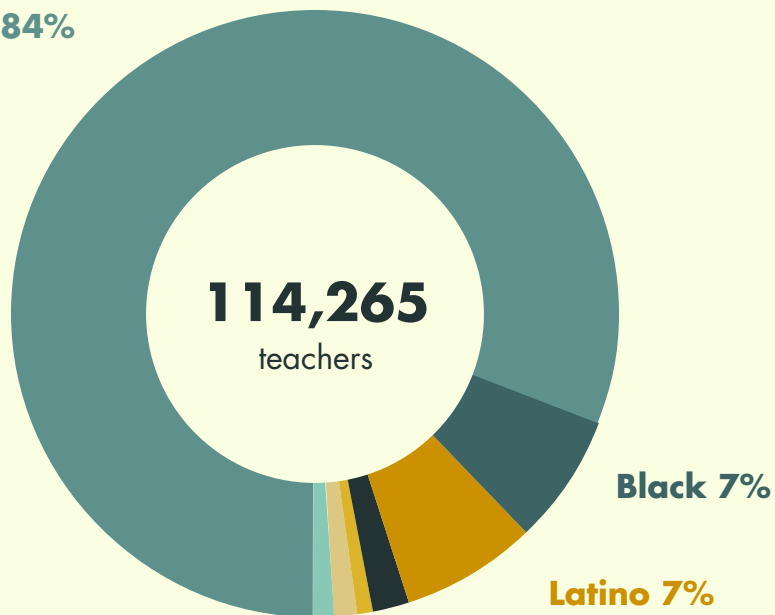
# The system

Take a look at the system we've built for our students: how we prepare them for kindergarten, whom we've hired to fill our classrooms, the laws schools and educators must abide by, and how much we spend on it all.

## WHO'S TEACHING—NEW JERSEY TEACHERS BY THE NUMBERS

Demographic breakdown<sup>4</sup>

**White 84%**



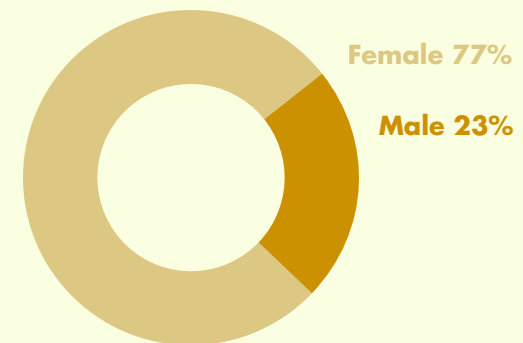
**Native American 0.2%**

**Asian 2%**

**Native Hawaiian 0.1%**

**Multiracial 0.2%**

Gender



**Female 77%**

**Male 23%**

**WHERE WE NEED MORE TEACHERS**

Areas of teacher shortage<sup>5</sup>

**Elementary mathematics (grades 5-8)**

**Elementary science (grades 5-8)**

**Elementary world language/Spanish (grades 5-8)**

**Teacher of supplemental instruction in reading and mathematics (grades K-8)**

**Students with disabilities**

**Blind or visually impaired**

**Deaf or hard of hearing: Oral/aural communication**

**Deaf or hard of hearing: sign language communication**

**English as a second language**

**Bilingual/bicultural education**

**Mathematics**

**Biological science**

**Earth science**

**Physical science**

**Physics**

**Chemistry**

**French**

**German**

**Italian**

**Spanish**

**Chinese**



## Teacher evaluation

In 2012, the New Jersey legislature passed the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act. The Act requires every New Jersey district to implement a teacher evaluation system beginning in the 2013-2014 school year that meets minimum standards set by the State Board of Education. Teachers must be evaluated based on multiple objective measures of student learning and multiple observations of classroom practice, and must receive an annual summative rating of highly effective, effective, partially effective or ineffective.<sup>6</sup>

State standards require that, during the 2014-2015 school year, 10 percent of the total evaluation score for teachers of tested grades and subjects (fourth-through eighth-grade language arts and math) is based on student growth on the state assessment, 20 percent is based on student progress toward learning goals set by teachers in consultation with their principals and 70 percent is based on a minimum of three observations of classroom practice using a state-approved teacher practice instrument. For teachers in all other grades and subjects, 20 percent of the total evaluation score is based on student progress toward learning goals and 80 percent is based on observations of classroom practice.<sup>7</sup> Professional development is linked to evaluation results, and teachers who receive a rating of partially effective or ineffective must participate in a corrective action plan.<sup>8</sup>

Although districts must submit their evaluation models to the Commissioner of Education for approval,<sup>9</sup> they may also request waivers from certain state requirements. To date, more than 70 districts have had waiver requests approved.<sup>10</sup>

## Teacher tenure

The TEACHNJ Act also changed New Jersey's teacher tenure process. Prior to 2012, teachers were eligible to receive tenure after three years, and evidence of effectiveness in the classroom was not required for tenure conferral. Teachers hired after the TEACHNJ Act took effect, by contrast, are eligible to receive tenure after four years and must earn an effective or highly effective evaluation rating in at least two of the final three years to be eligible for tenure conferral. Furthermore, a teacher's tenure may now be revoked, and the teacher dismissed, for consecutive ineffective or partially effective ratings.<sup>11</sup>

However, during reductions in force, New Jersey still requires districts to lay off teachers in inverse order of seniority, with the least senior teachers laid off first. New Jersey is one of eleven states that require some or all districts to use this "last in, first out" (LIFO) layoff policy.<sup>12</sup>

## Teacher compensation

New Jersey law establishes a statewide minimum teacher salary. Beyond the minimum salary, districts establish their own teacher compensation policies and pay scales.<sup>13</sup> There are no statewide policies that support differentiated compensation systems based on teacher effectiveness.<sup>14</sup>

New Jersey ranked 5th nationally among states in average annual public school teacher salary in 2012-2013 (although this figure does not take into consideration cost-of-living differences across states).<sup>15</sup>

In 2012, Newark teachers agreed to a new contract that establishes a district-wide differentiated compensation system. Newark teachers may now earn a \$5,000 bonus for a highly effective rating and a \$10,000 bonus if they are rated highly effective and work in a high-need subject or low-performing school. Furthermore, while the previous pay scale is still in place, teachers must now earn an effective or highly effective rating to move up the pay scale.<sup>16</sup>

And in 2014, Governor Christie negotiated a deal in Paterson that included a new step in the teacher pay system – teachers who receive an “effective” or “highly effective” rating on their annual evaluations will be eligible for a raise. However, teachers rated “ineffective” or “partially effective” will not be given raises. Veteran teachers can opt-in to this new system or continue under the old system.<sup>17</sup>

## Teacher certification

To become certified to teach in New Jersey, candidates must hold a bachelor’s degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA (or 2.75 GPA for candidates graduating before 2016), have appropriate subject matter preparation for their grade level and subject, complete a course of study in professional education and pass the required certification tests for their subject area and grade level.<sup>18</sup> Novice teachers earn provisional teaching certificates and must be recommended for permanent certification.<sup>19</sup> Evaluations of teacher effectiveness are not considered in licensure advancement decisions.<sup>20</sup>

New Jersey allows alternate route teacher training programs. Candidates must first meet each of the requirements listed above except for the course of study in professional education. They earn a provisional certificate of eligibility and teach while completing a state-approved alternate route training program.<sup>21</sup>

## Public charter school cap

There are no caps on charter school growth in New Jersey.

## Authorizers

The state commissioner of education is the only charter school authorizer in New Jersey.

The legislature and governor may review the performance of the authorizer at any time, but there is no formal statutory review process or review timeline.

## Accountability

Charter schools must enter into a written agreement with the state commissioner outlining the school's goals for factors such as student achievement, postsecondary readiness, attendance, financial performance and board stewardship. The initial term of a charter is four years.

The law provides specific charter renewal criteria and a renewal may be denied for failure to satisfy any component of the renewal process. Charters may be renewed for five year terms.

If the commissioner elects to close a charter school, the school must be given written notice, but there is no requirement for the decision to be made in a public meeting.

## Facilities

New Jersey charter schools have access to tax-exempt bonds from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority but there is no specific per pupil funding for charter facilities, no state grant or loan programs for charter school facilities and there is no right of first refusal for charter schools to access unused public school buildings.

## Funding

In New Jersey, charter schools are excluded from state adjustment aid payments, which results in inequitable funding for charter schools.

According to a recent study, when all funding streams are considered, the average charter school in New Jersey receives \$15,043 per pupil, while the average district school receives \$18,648 in per pupil funding (19.3 percent less). These numbers are much worse for Newark and Jersey City: In Newark, the average charter school receives \$16,719 while the average district school receives \$28,321 (41 percent less). In Jersey City, the average charter school receives \$13,138 while the average district school receives \$23,154 (43.3 percent less).<sup>23</sup>

## Comparison of states

More than 40 states have adopted the Common Core State Standards in English and math, and one state—Minnesota—has adopted the English standards only.

## Adoption

June 23, 2010

## Implementation

The standards were fully implemented in the 2013–2014 school year.

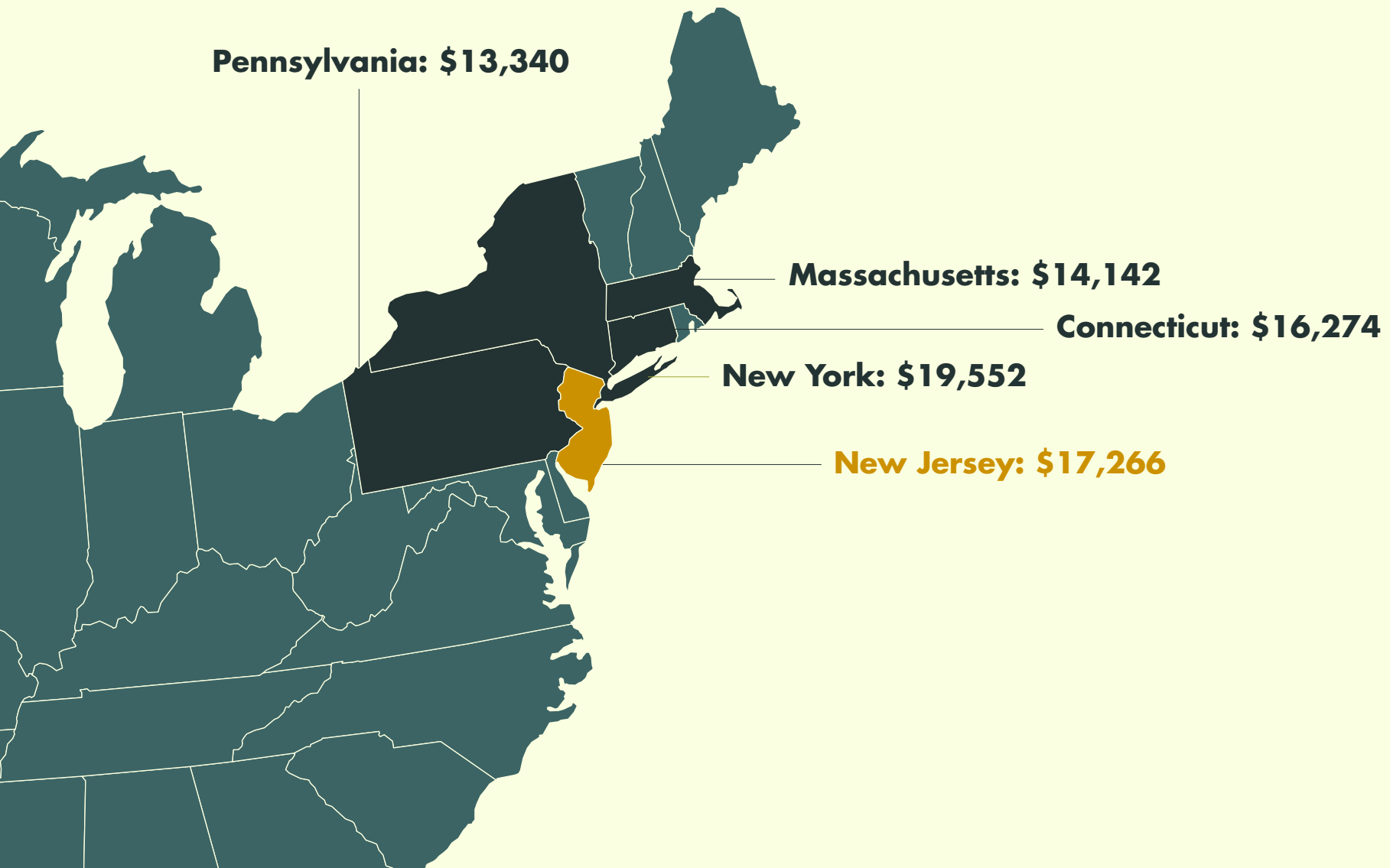
**PRE-K ACCESS—A GLIMPSE AT PRE-K ACCESS IN NEW JERSEY<sup>25</sup>**

National Institute of Early Education Research: The State of Preschool, 2013

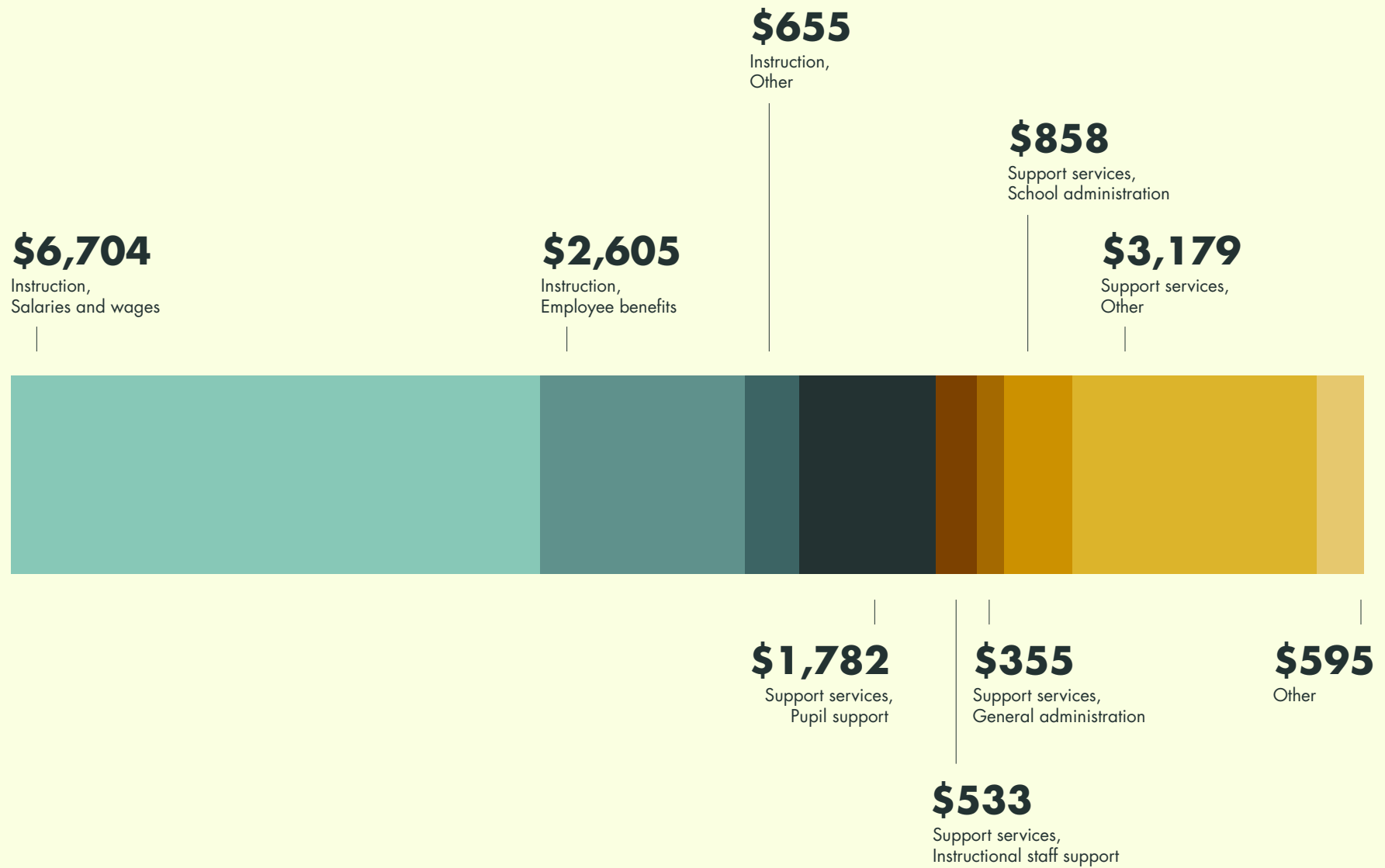
<b>51,726</b> Total state program enrollment	<b>12,701</b> Number of students enrolled in federally funded Head Start programs	<b>0</b> Number of students enrolled in state-funded Head Start programs
<b>20%</b> Percentage of 3-year-olds enrolled in state pre-K programs	<b>6%</b> Percentage of 3-year-olds enrolled in Head Start programs	<b>3/27</b> National Institute for Early Education Research's access ranking for 3-year-olds
<b>28%</b> Percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in state pre-K programs	<b>7%</b> Percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in Head Start programs	<b>41/41<sup>26</sup></b> National Institute for Early Education Research's access ranking for 4-year-olds

**CHARTER SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY—TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CHARTER SCHOOLS, 2012–2013**<sup>27–28</sup>

Asbury Park School District	<b>207</b>	Passaic City Public Schools	<b>356</b>
Atlantic City Board of Education	<b>237</b>	Paterson School District	<b>1,934</b>
Camden City Public Schools	<b>3,644</b>	Perth Amboy City	<b>298</b>
East Brunswick Township	<b>110</b>	Plainfield Board of Education	<b>1,062</b>
Englewood Public School District	<b>180</b>	Princeton Regional Schools	<b>339</b>
Florence Township Board of Education	<b>142</b>	Red Bank Borough Public School District	<b>180</b>
Franklin Township Board of Education	<b>523</b>	Sparta Township Public Schools	<b>225</b>
Galloway Township Public Schools	<b>197</b>	Teaneck Public Schools	<b>305</b>
Gloucester Township School District	<b>149</b>	The East Orange School District	<b>265</b>
Hamilton Township School District	<b>116</b>	Trenton Public School District	<b>1,109</b>
Harrison Public Schools	<b>445</b>	Vineland Public Schools	<b>223</b>
Hoboken Board of Education	<b>573</b>	Willingboro Township School District	<b>78</b>
Irvington Public Schools	<b>323</b>	Winslow Township School District	<b>463</b>
Jersey City Public Schools	<b>3,871</b>		
Mainland Regional	<b>314</b>		
Millville Board of Education	<b>135</b>		
Morris School District	<b>183</b>		
New Brunswick Public Schools	<b>353</b>		
Newark Public Schools	<b>9,293</b>		
Orange City Township School District	<b>502</b>		

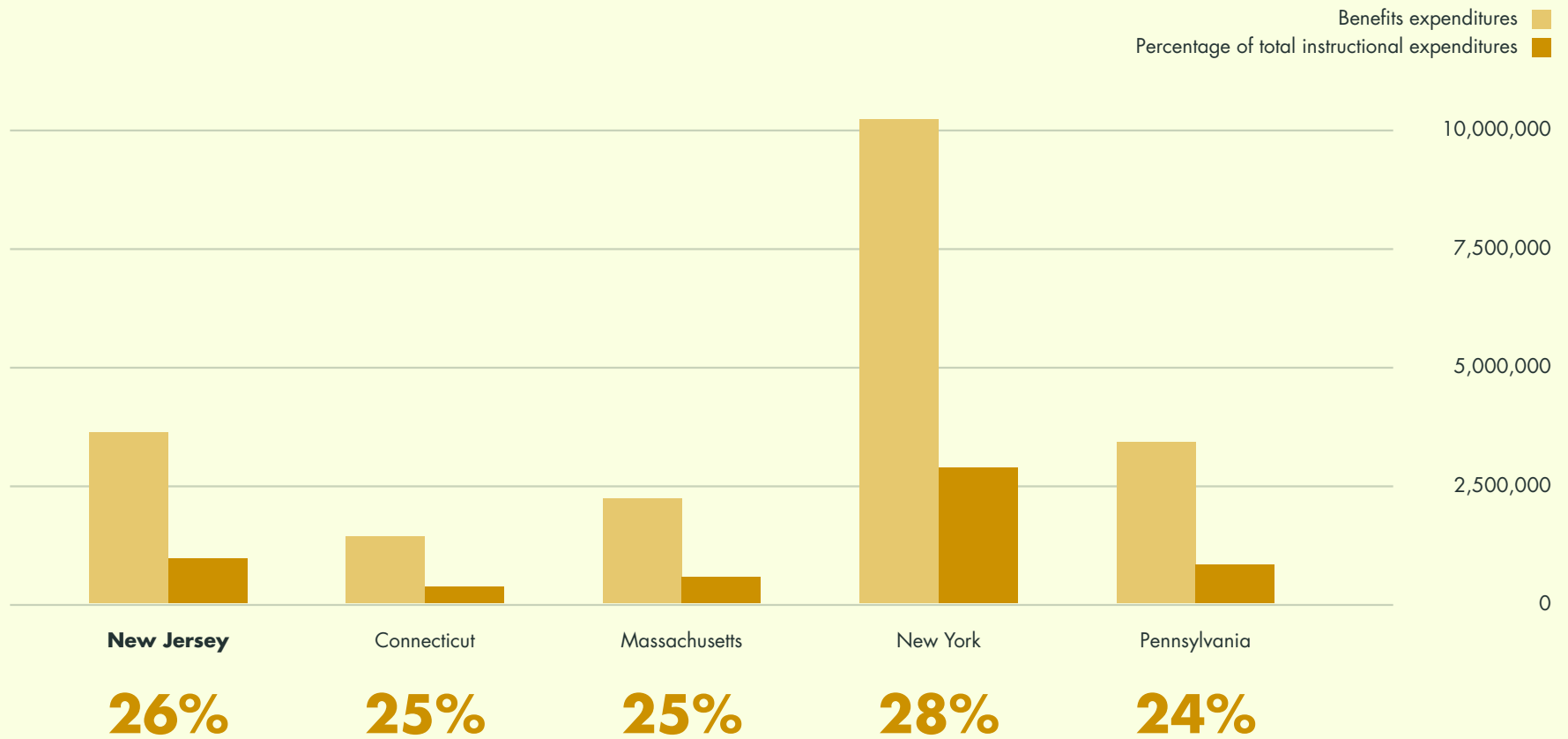


HOW PER PUPIL FUNDING WAS ALLOCATED IN 2012<sup>31</sup>





EMPLOYEE BENEFITS EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL EXPENDITURES, 2010-2011<sup>32</sup>



# How the system is working

We now know who our students are and what kind of school system we've given them. But is that system working? Take a journey through New Jersey's K-12 system and find out how well students are learning each step of the way.

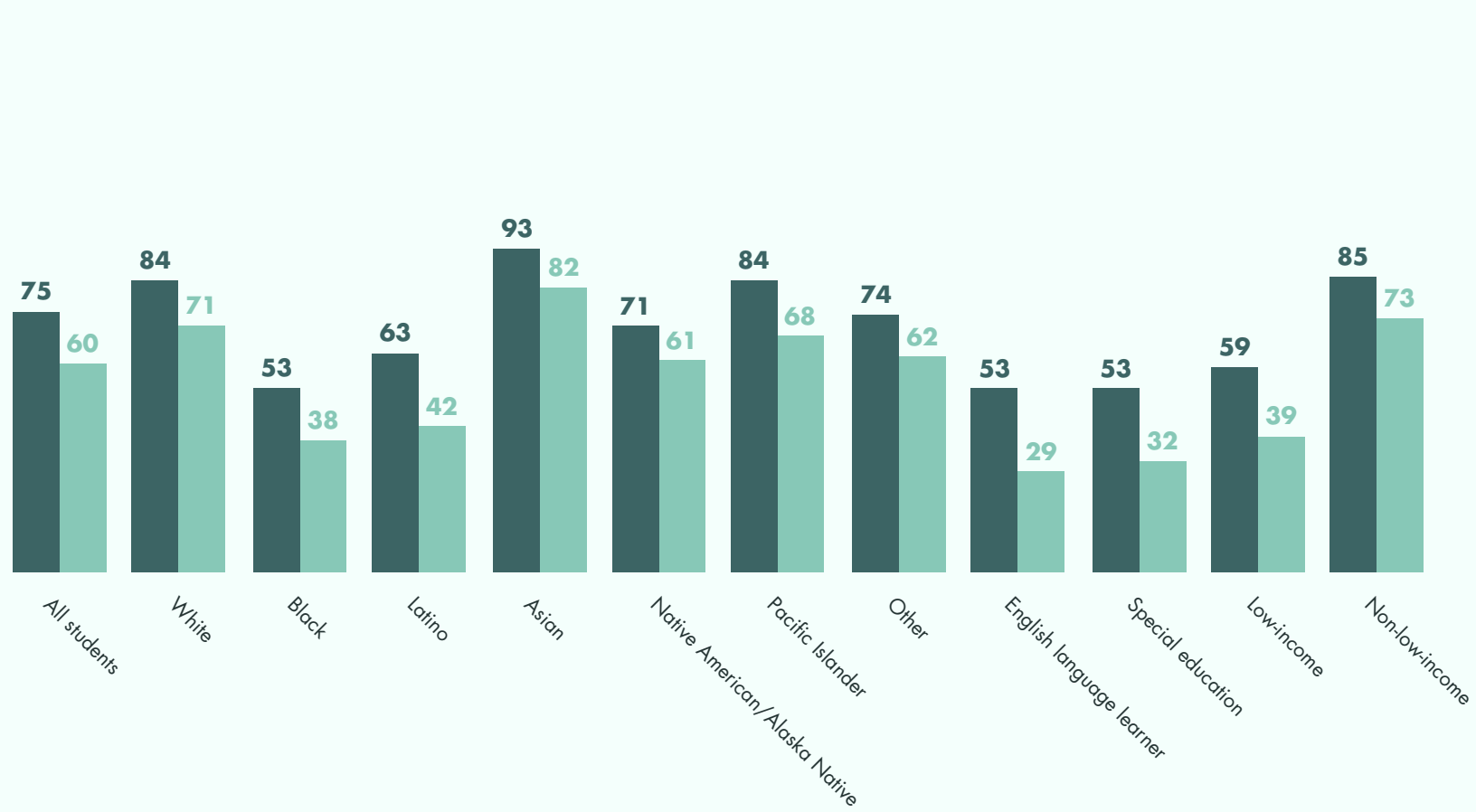
## Elementary school

Beginning in elementary school, low-income students and students of color are already behind their white and wealthier peers. On the NJASK, only 39 percent of low-income students scored proficient or advanced in reading, compared to 73 percent of non-low-income students. In math, we see similar gaps—59 percent of low-income students scored at least proficient, compared to 85 percent of their wealthier peers.

Unfortunately, data from the Nation's Report Card paints a similar picture of student achievement in New Jersey. Over the last decade, student achievement has improved across the board for almost all New Jersey elementary school students on the Nation's Report Card. Since 2003, average student performance across all fourth-graders has increased by 10 percentage points. Reading performance has also improved, albeit a little more stagnated, with a three-percentage point gain since 2003. But when we break down the data by subgroups, the numbers are far worse. Fewer than 25 percent of black fourth-graders in New Jersey scored proficient or above in math or reading on the Nation's Report Card. This means that more than 75 percent of black fourth-graders are already lagging behind before they enter middle school. Similarly, low-income fourth-graders in New Jersey trail their wealthier peers by over 30 percentage points in math and reading, resulting in a wide proficiency gap early on in their lives.

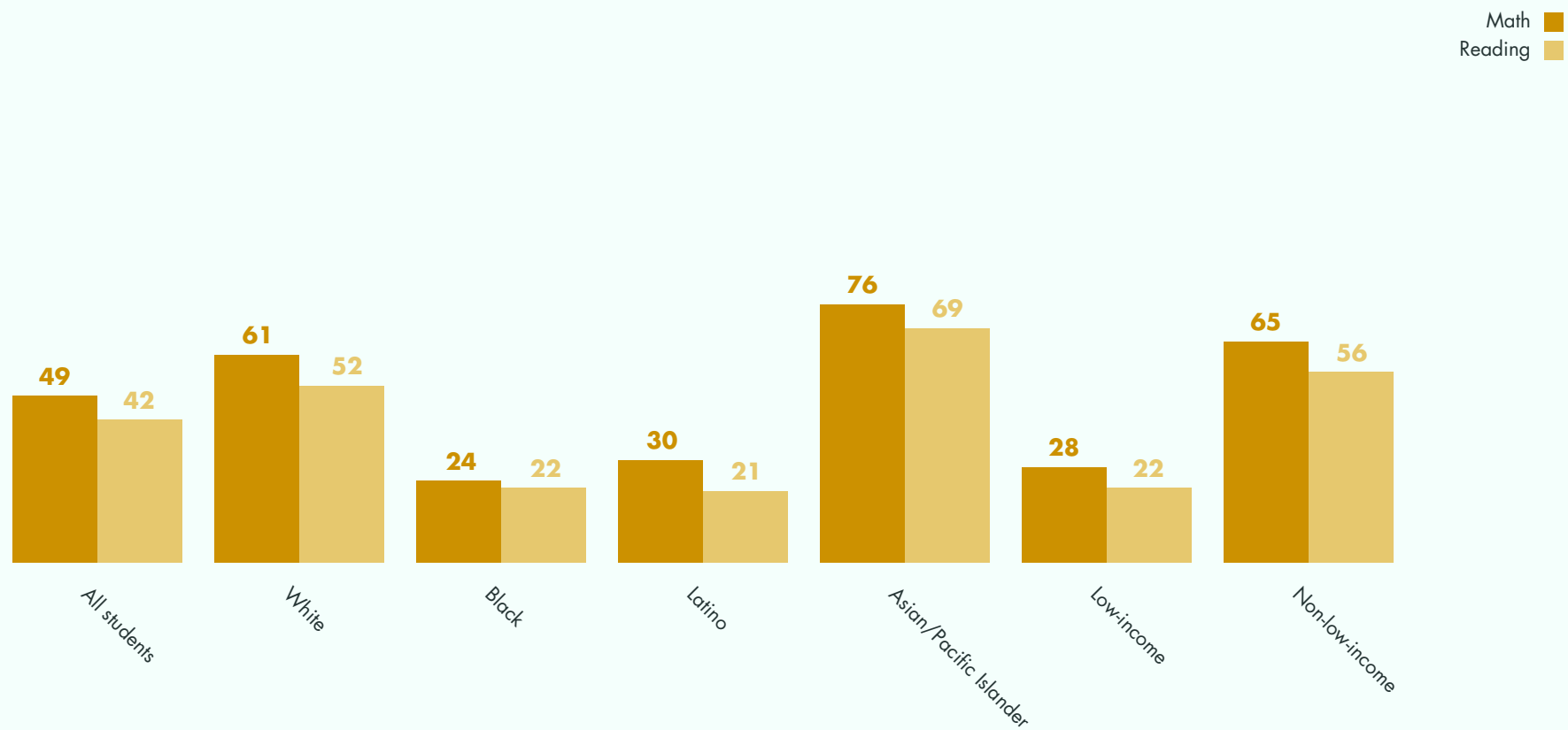
NEW JERSEY ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE PROFICIENCY, 4TH GRADE<sup>33</sup>

Percentage of NJ 4th-graders proficient or advanced in 2014



### NAEP PROFICIENCY, 4TH GRADE<sup>34</sup>

Percentage of NJ 4th-graders proficient or advanced on the Nation's Report Card, 2013

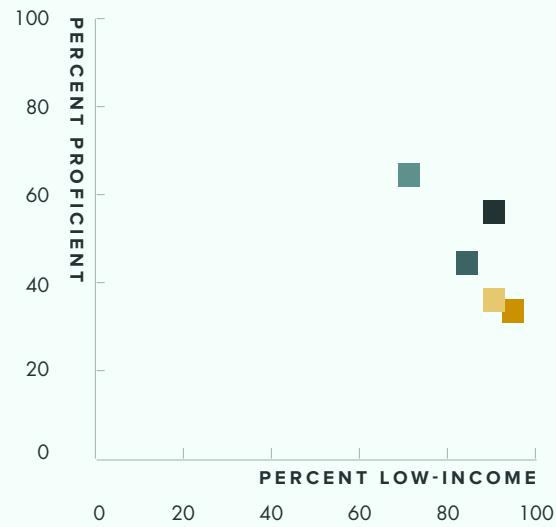


2013-2014 NJASK PROFICIENCY, 4TH GRADE<sup>35,36</sup>

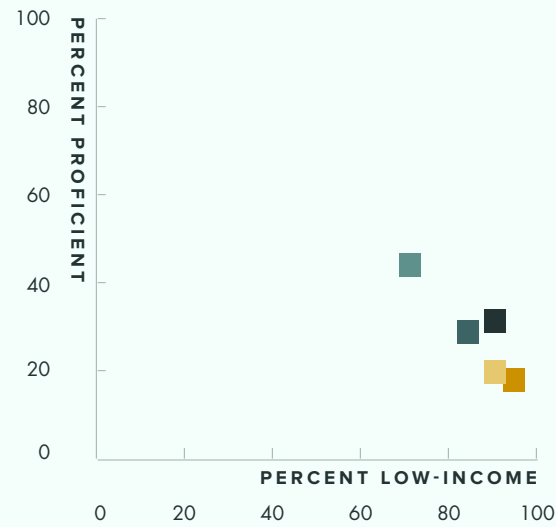
In-state district comparison: Percentage of NJ 4th-graders proficient or advanced, 2014

- Jersey City
- Newark
- Paterson
- Trenton
- Camden

# Math









# Reading



**REGIONAL COMPARISON**<sup>37</sup>

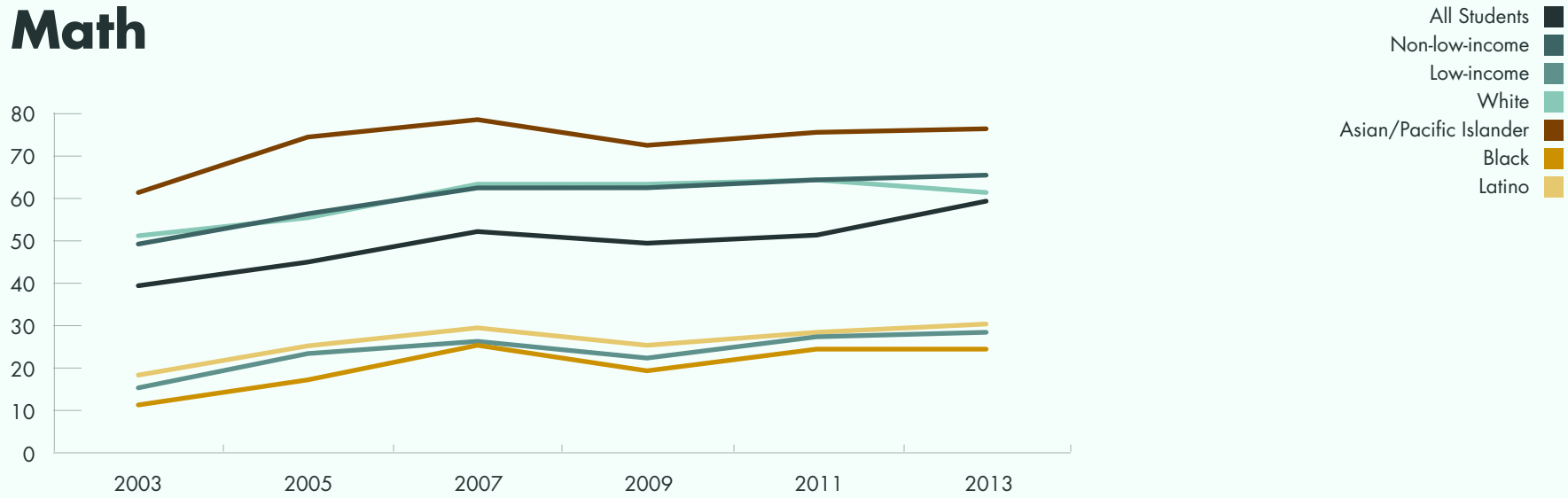
Percentage of 4th-graders proficient or advanced on the Nation's Report Card, 2013

	National	<b>New Jersey</b>	Connecticut	Massachusetts	New York	Pennsylvania
						
<b>Math</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>

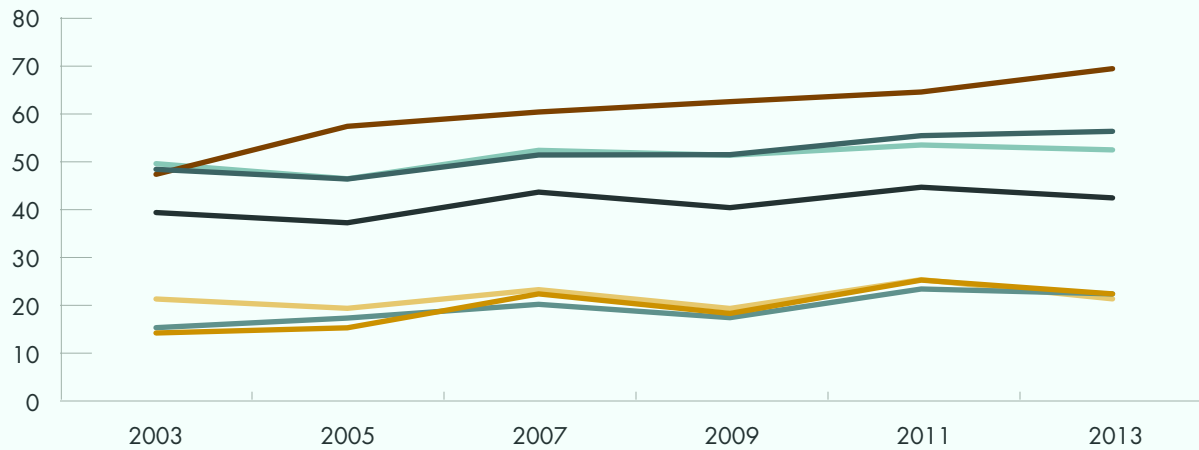
NATION'S REPORT CARD TRENDS<sup>38</sup>

Percentage of NJ 4th-graders proficient or advanced on the Nation's Report Card, 2013

# Math



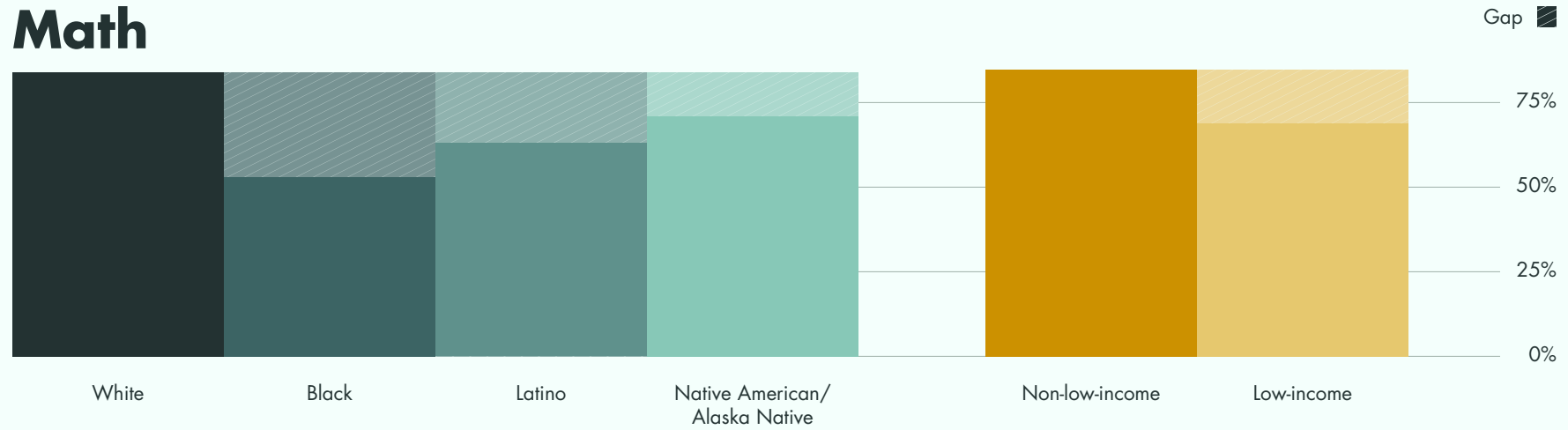
# Reading



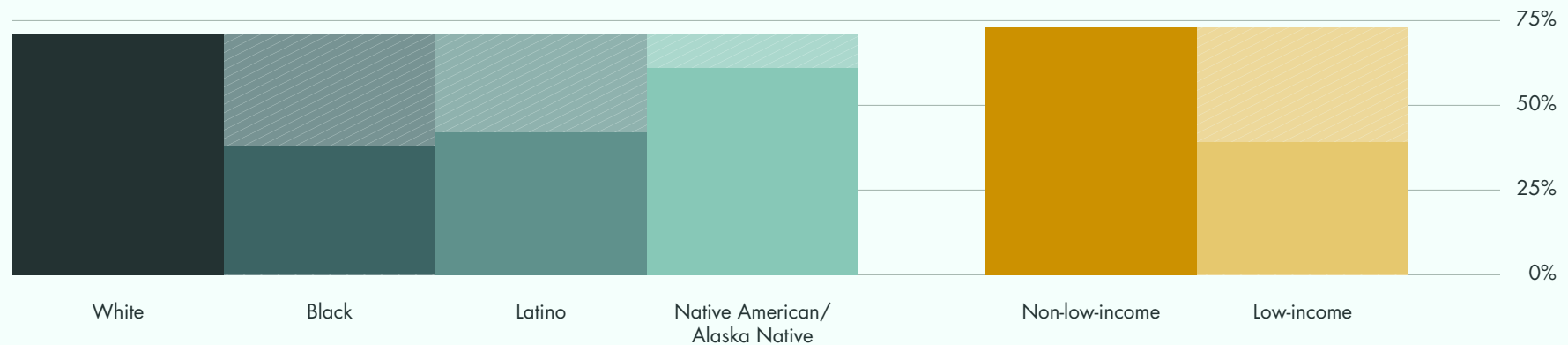
## NJASK PROFICIENCY GAP, 4TH GRADE<sup>39</sup>

The difference in proficiency rates between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students (in percentage points).

### Math



### Reading



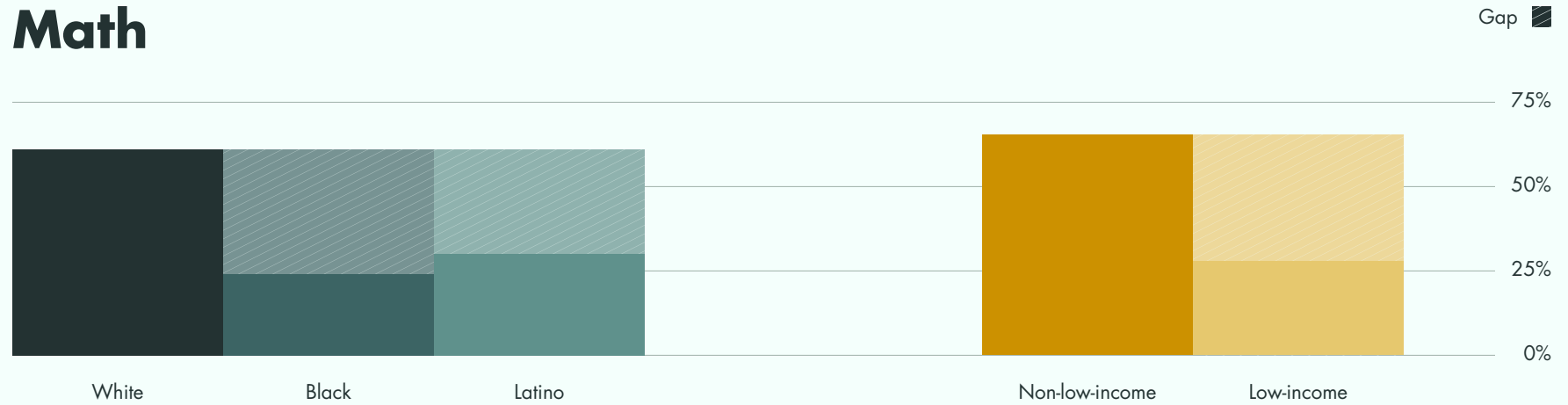
**Proficiency gaps:** A proficiency gap represents the difference in proficiency rates between two groups of students. In New Jersey, for example, a much higher proportion of white students score proficient or advanced on state and national tests compared to their black peers: the proportion of white fourth-graders who score at least proficient in math on the Nation's Report Card exceeds the proportion of black fourth-graders scoring proficient by a whopping 37 percentage points. Similarly, on the NJASK, black fourth-graders trail their white peers in math by 31 percentage points.



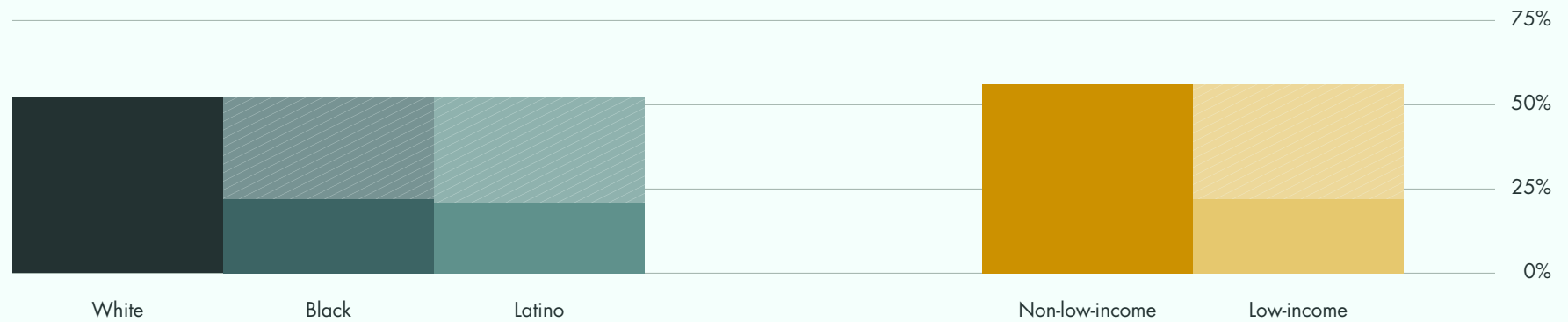
## NATION'S REPORT CARD PROFICIENCY GAP, 4TH GRADE<sup>40</sup>

The difference in proficiency rates between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students (in percentage points).

### Math



### Reading



**NATION'S REPORT CARD ACHIEVEMENT GAP, 4TH GRADE<sup>41</sup>**

The scale score difference in student achievement between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students

	White/Black	White/Latino	Low-income/Non-Low-income
<b>Math</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>24.5</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>29.3</b>

**Achievement gaps:** Achievement gaps show the difference in average student performance on the Nation's Report Card (also known as "scale scores") between different subgroups. In New Jersey, average low-income student performance in fourth-grade reading trails behind that of their wealthier peers by more than 29 points.

## Middle school

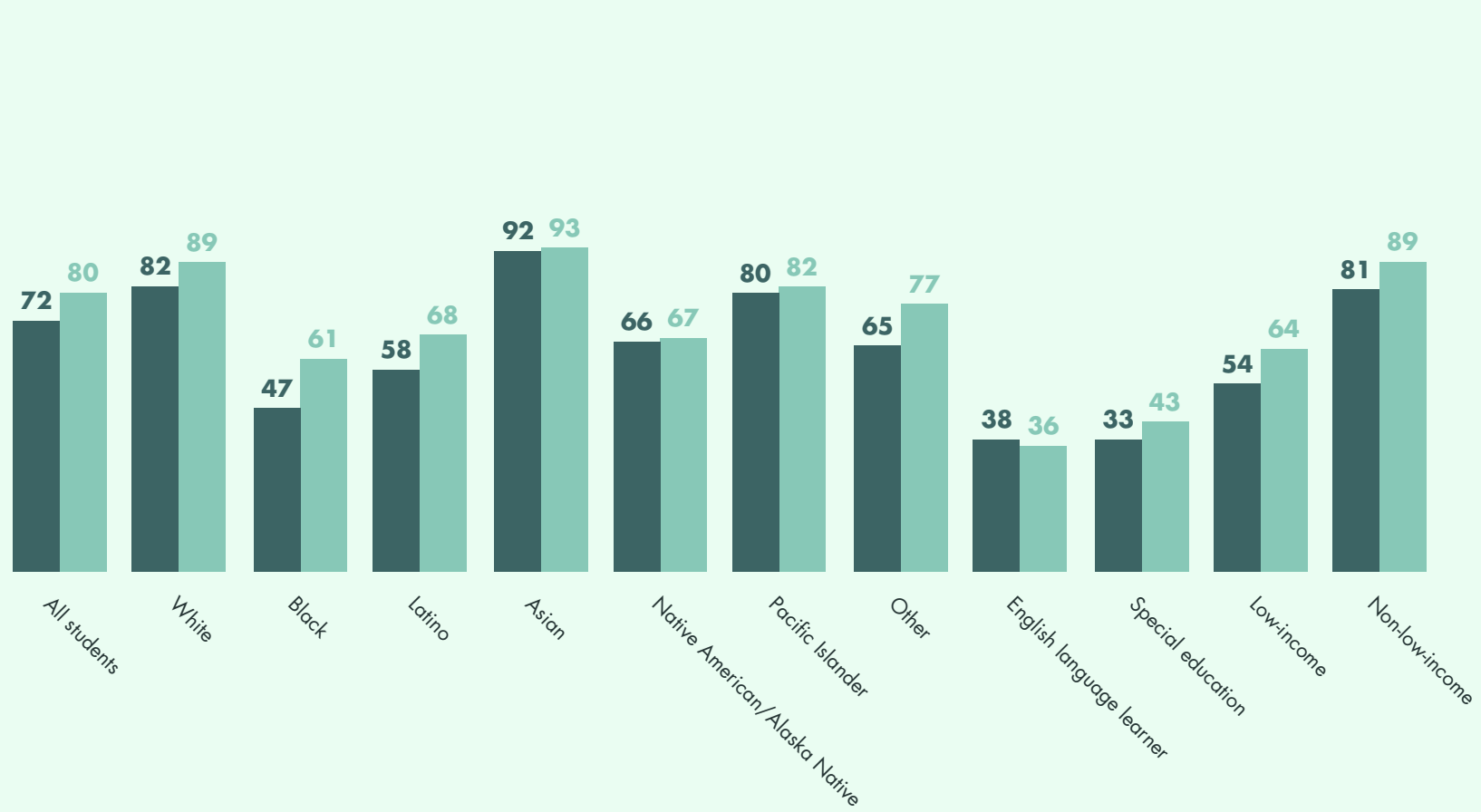
Unfortunately, the achievement trends we see at the elementary school level tend to remain the same as our students progress through middle school. Looking at data on the NJASK and the Nation's Report Card, we can confidently say that there is still much work to be done if we are going to provide a great education for all New Jersey students.

On the NJASK, it is clear that a majority of our most disadvantaged students aren't getting the education they need and deserve. Only 47 percent of black students in New Jersey met the proficiency benchmark in math on the NJASK and 61 percent scored proficient or above in reading. Not only are they significantly trailing their white peers, nearly 40 percent of all black students in New Jersey are not ready for high school math or reading, severely limiting their educational opportunities. District data shows similar trends. Camden for example has one of the highest percentages of low-income students in New Jersey, with 95 percent of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. Only 19 percent of eighth graders in Camden are proficient in math, and only 32 percent are reading on grade level.

The Nation's Report Card data also offers some insight into how our middle schoolers are faring. The good news is New Jersey has seen gains on the Nation's Report Card at the middle school level over the last decade, especially in math. Since 2003, math performance has increased by 16 percentage points overall. However, proficiency gaps remain enduring and alarmingly high for our middle school students. The gaps on the NAEP are just as stark as they are on the NJASK. There is more than a 20-percentage point gap in proficiency between students of color and white students and a 30-percentage point gap between low-income students and their wealthier peers in both reading and math on the Nation's Report Card.

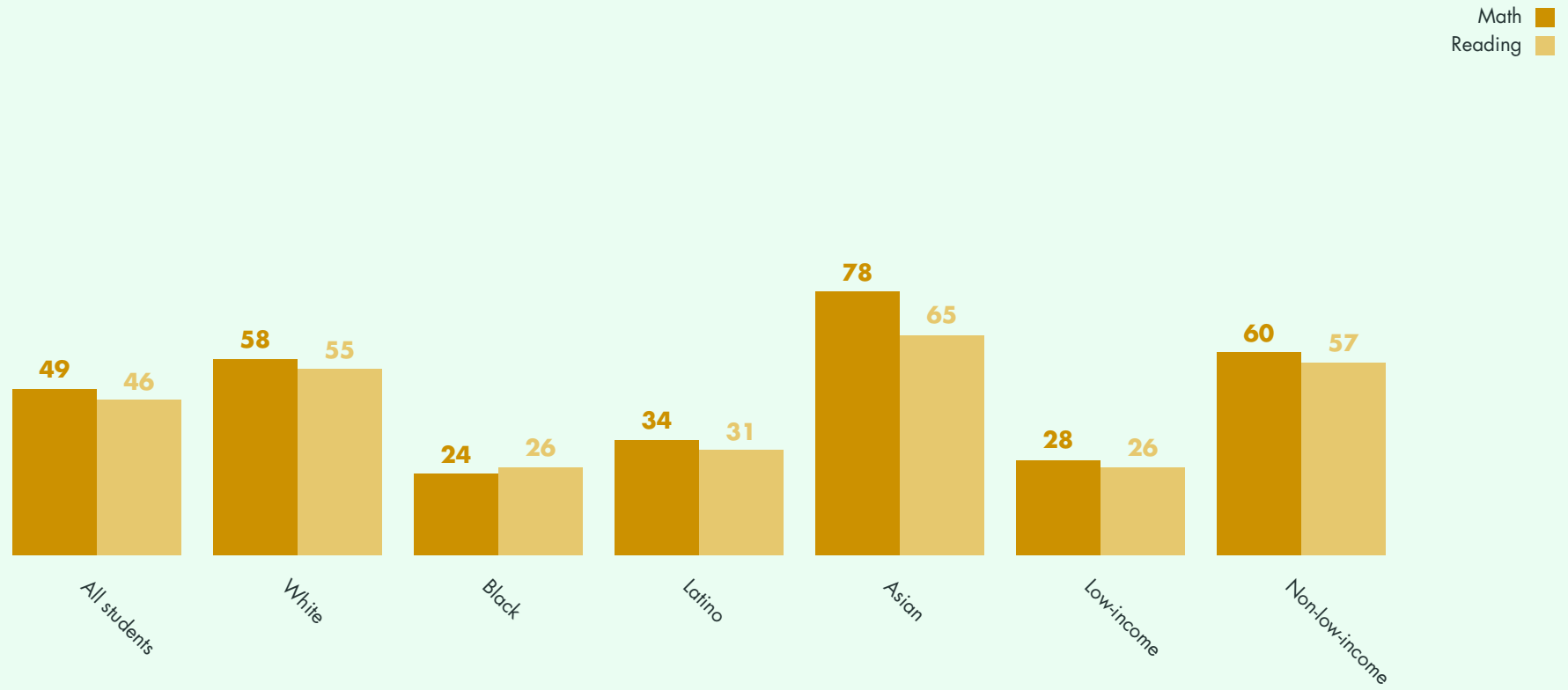
## NJASK PROFICIENCY, 8TH GRADE<sup>42</sup>

Percentage of NJ 8th-graders proficient or advanced, 2014



### NAEP PROFICIENCY, 8TH GRADE<sup>43</sup>

Percentage of NJ 8th-graders proficient or advanced on the Nation's Report Card, 2013

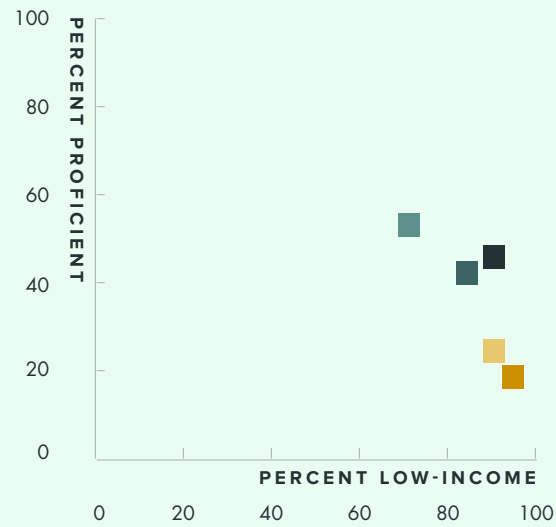


2013-2014 NJASK PROFICIENCY, 8TH GRADE<sup>44,45</sup>

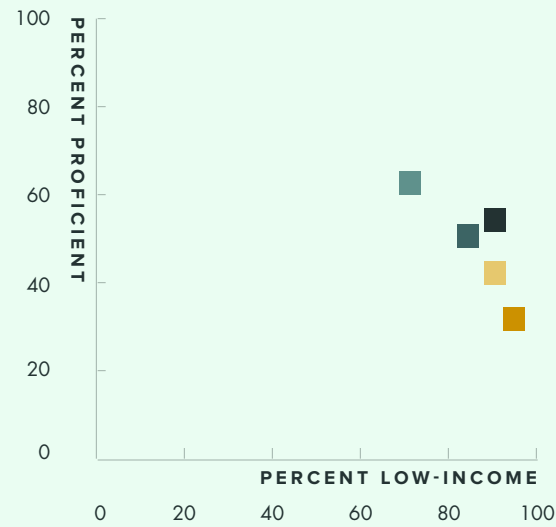
In-state district comparison: Percentage of NJ 8th-graders proficient or advanced, 2014

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## Math









## Reading



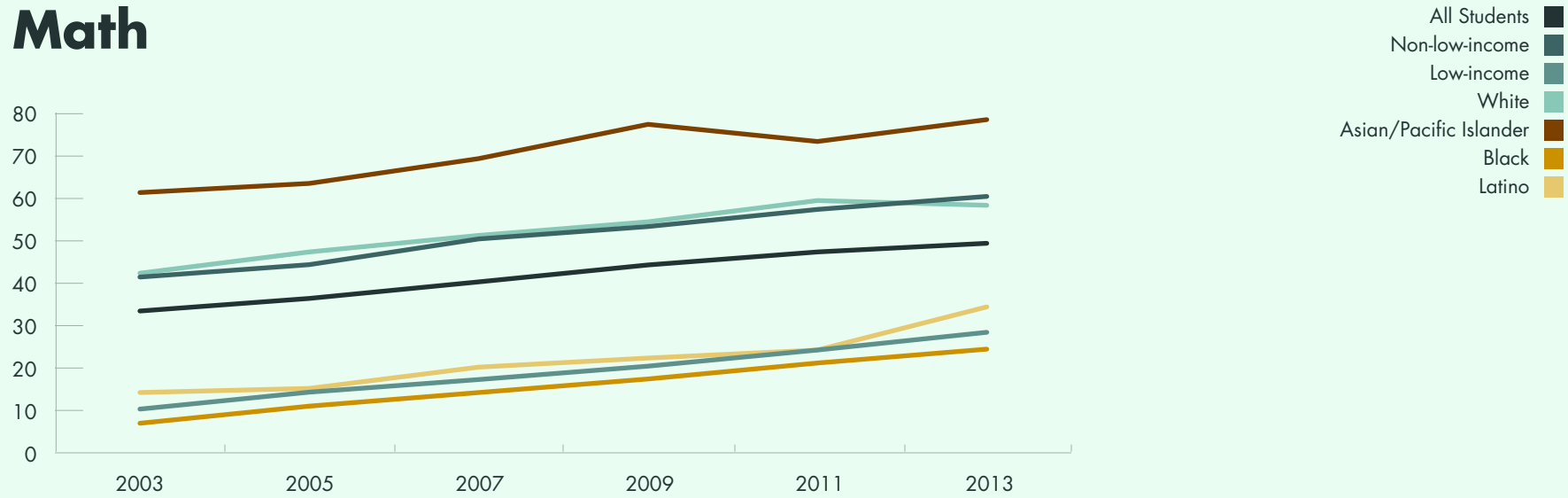
REGIONAL COMPARISON <sup>46</sup>

Percentage of 8th-graders proficient or advanced on the Nation's Report Card, 2013

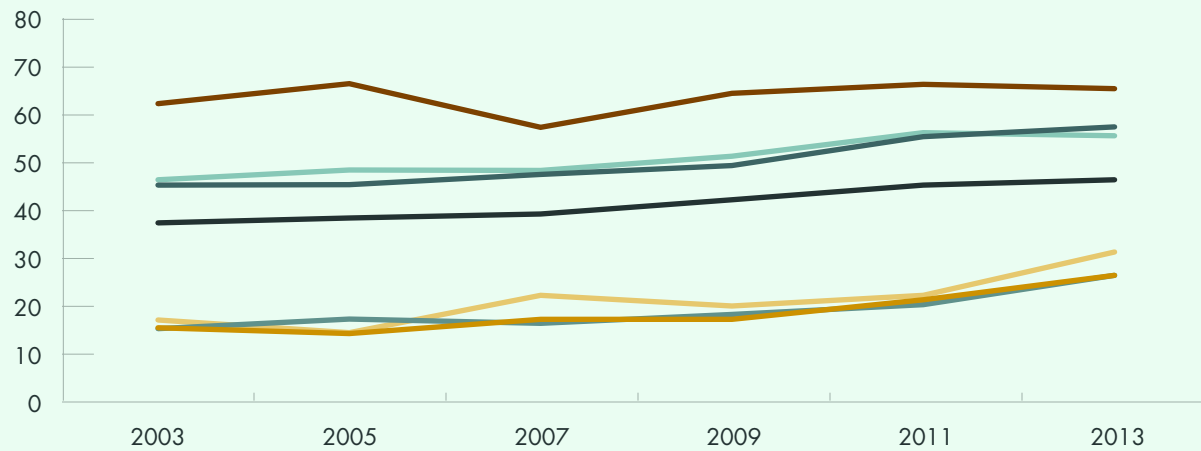
	National	<b>New Jersey</b>	Connecticut	Massachusetts	New York	Pennsylvania
						
<b>Math</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>42</b>

Percentage of NJ 8th-graders proficient or advanced on the Nation's Report Card, 2013

# Math



# Reading

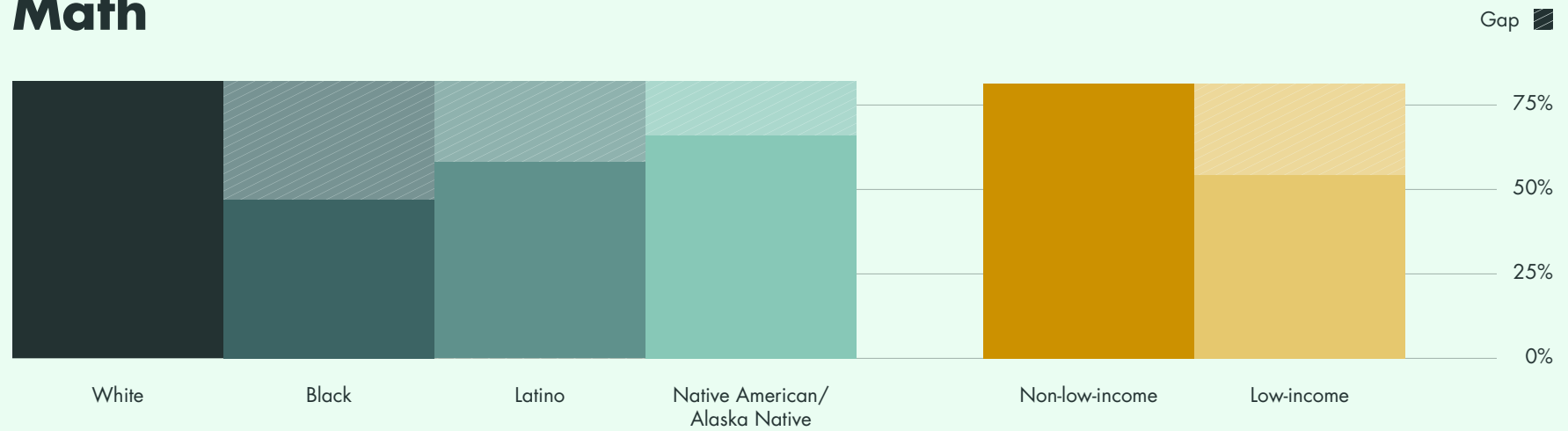




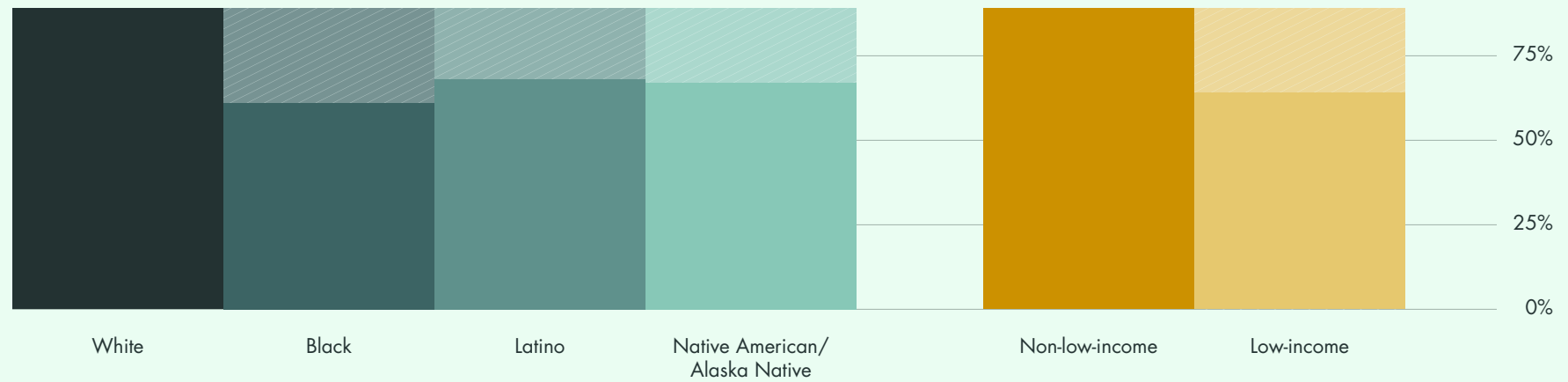
## NJASK PROFICIENCY GAP, 8TH GRADE<sup>49</sup>

The difference in proficiency rates between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students (in percentage points).

### Math



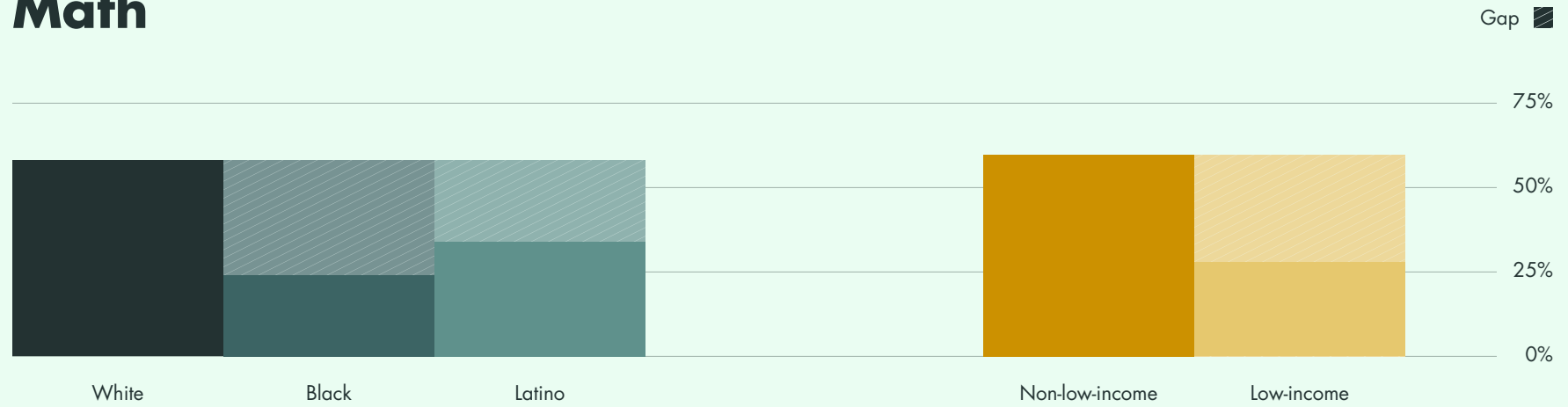
### Reading



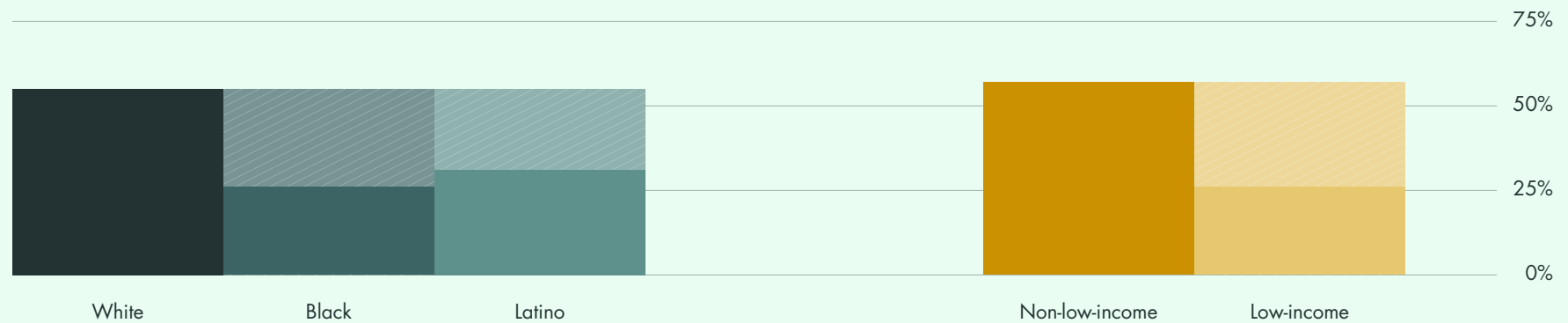
## NATION'S REPORT CARD PROFICIENCY GAP, 8TH GRADE<sup>50</sup>

The difference in proficiency rates between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students (in percentage points).

### Math



### Reading



NATION'S REPORT CARD ACHIEVEMENT GAP, 8TH GRADE<sup>51</sup>

The scale score difference in student achievement between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students

	White/Black	White/Latino	Low-income/Non-Low-income
<b>Math</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>28.5</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>23.7</b>

## High school

As we move into the high school data, we can clearly see that the achievement trends evident in elementary school continue and worsen as our students move through our K-12 schools. These disparities are visible for high school students in the NJASK results, the Nation's Report Card, high school graduation rates and AP exam participation and success.

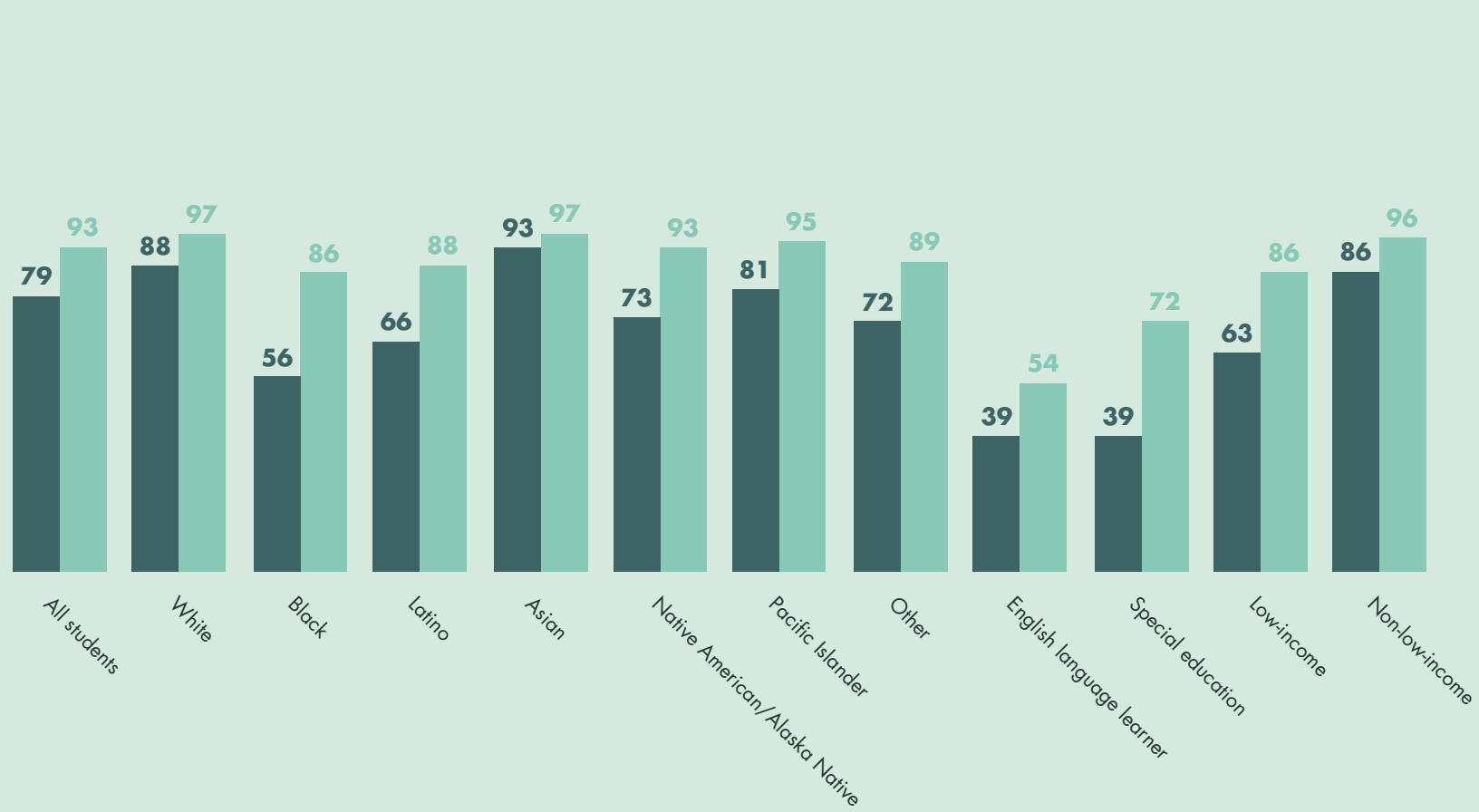
In the class of 2014, 93 percent of white students graduated in four years, compared to a much lower 79 percent of black students and 81 percent of Latino students. And again, when we disaggregate graduation rates by district, our districts with the highest proportion of students receiving free or reduced price lunch have cripplingly low graduation rates. In Trenton, for example, only 53 percent of the class of 2014 graduated from high school. And in Camden, only 62 percent of high school seniors received their diplomas.

Likewise, AP exam participation data for students in New Jersey reveals similar gaps; the proportion of white students taking AP exams outpaces that of students of color. In 2013, only 13 percent of black graduates and 25 percent of Latino graduates took at least one AP exam during high school, compared to 32 percent of white graduates.

The odds are stacked against our most disadvantaged students in New Jersey, beginning early in their formative years and lasting until they attempt to enter the workforce or go to college. Prudent policy change is needed if we are going to ensure that all of New Jersey's students have access to great public schools.

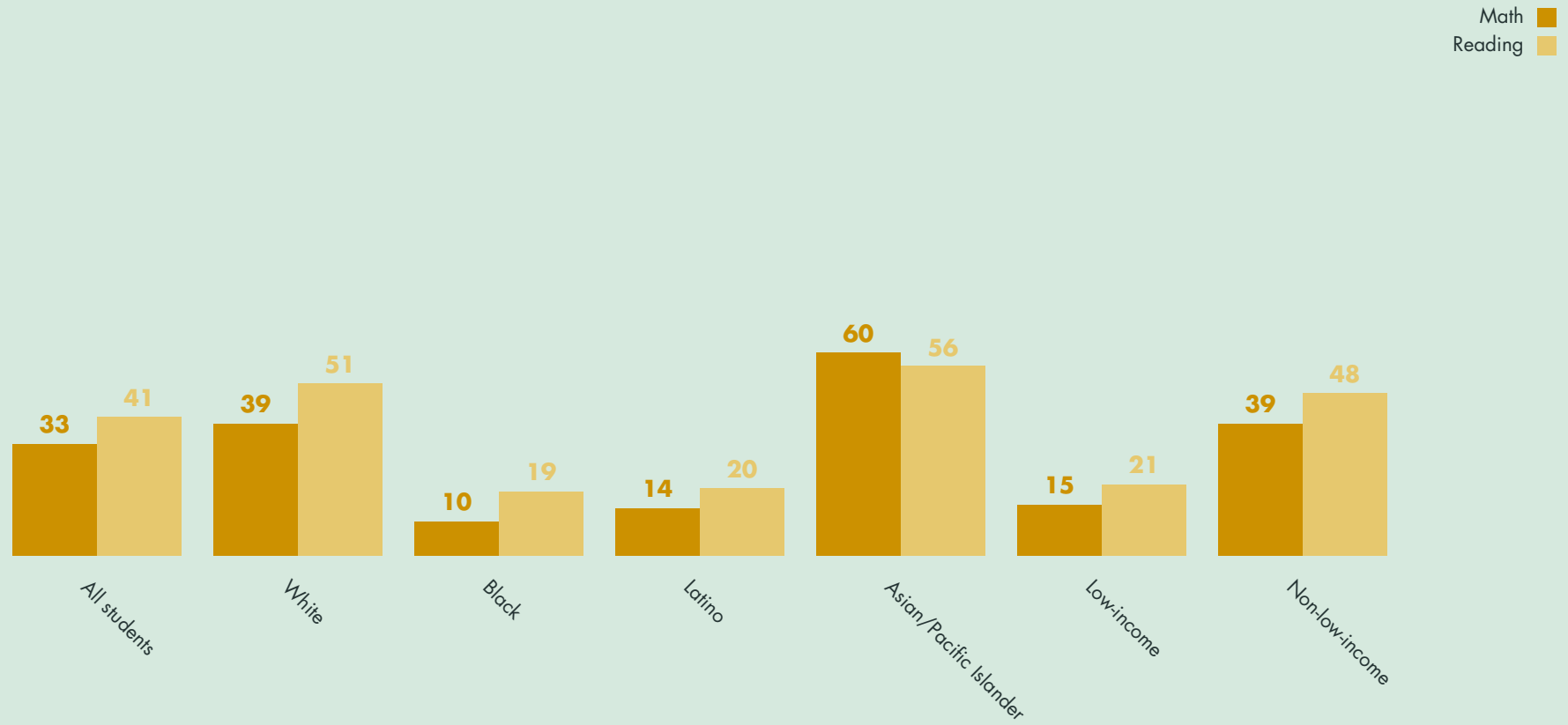
## NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT PROFICIENCY RATES<sup>52</sup>

Percentage of NJ 11th-graders scoring proficient or advanced, 2014



NAEP PROFICIENCY, 12TH GRADE<sup>53</sup>

Percentage of NJ 12th-graders proficient or advanced on the Nation's Report Card, 2013

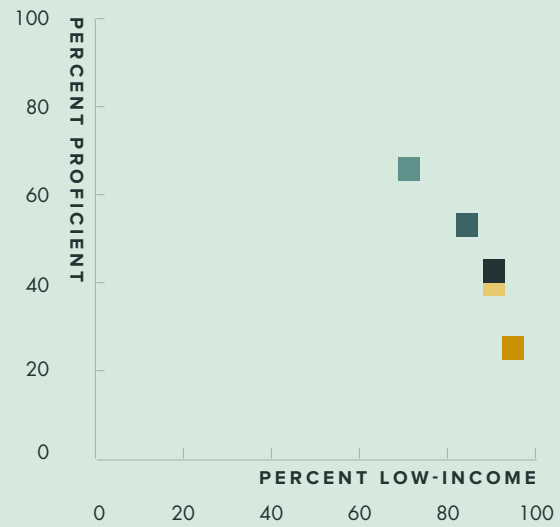


# NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT PROFICIENCY RATES<sup>54,55</sup>

In-state regional comparison: Percentage of NJ 11th-graders scoring proficient or advanced, 2014

- Jersey City
- Newark
- Paterson
- Trenton
- Camden

## Math



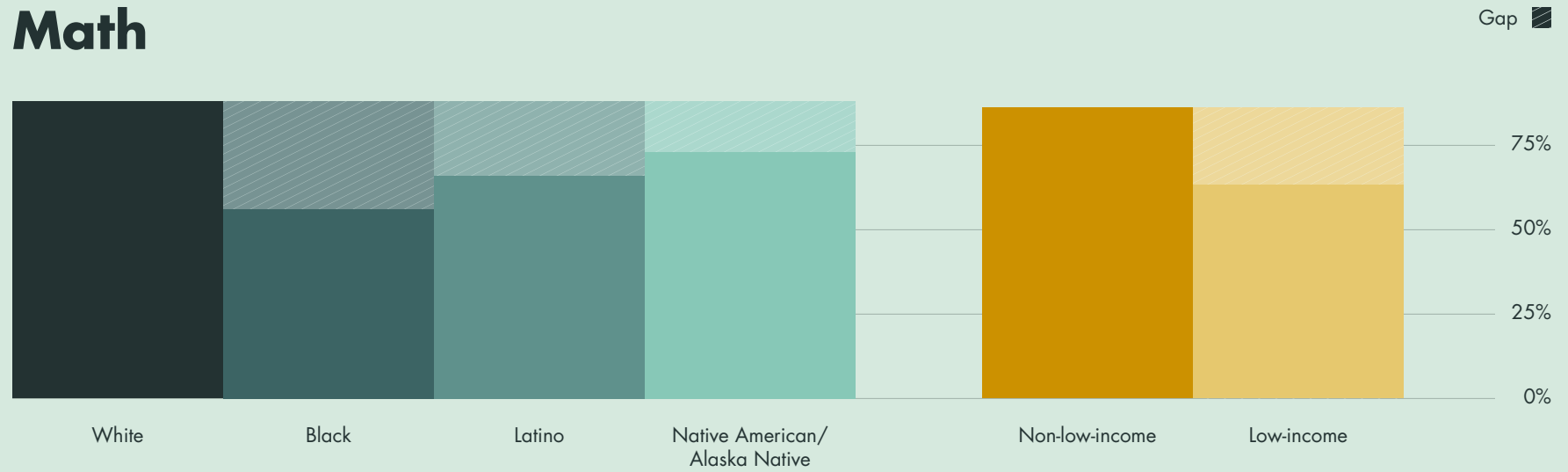
## Reading



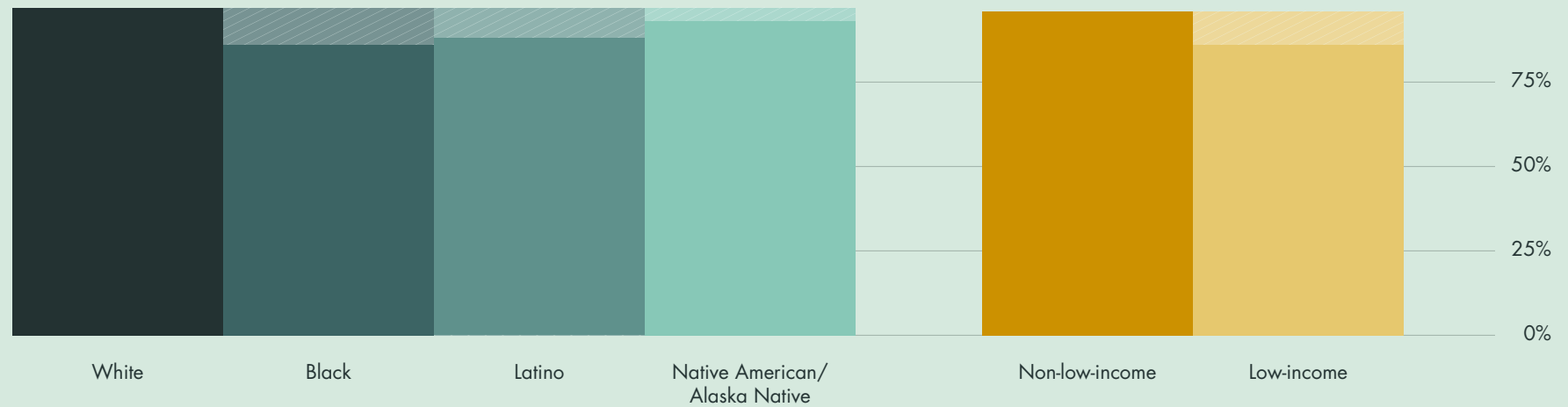
## NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT PROFICIENCY GAP<sup>56</sup>

The difference in proficiency rates between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students (in percentage points).

### Math



### Reading

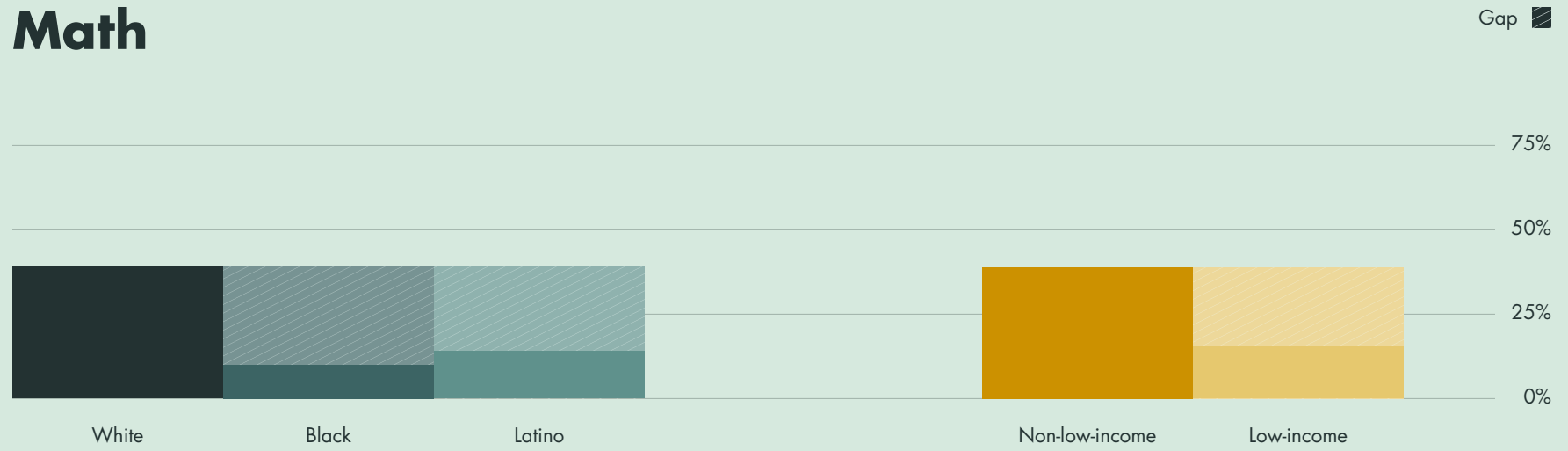




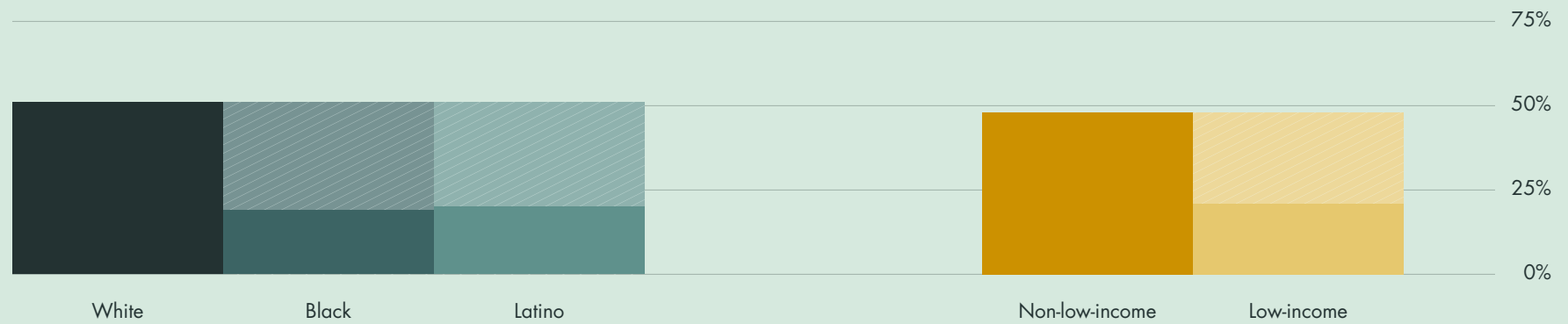
## NATION'S REPORT CARD PROFICIENCY GAP, 12TH GRADE<sup>57</sup>

The difference in proficiency rates between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students (in percentage points).

### Math



### Reading



NATION'S REPORT CARD ACHIEVEMENT GAP, 12TH GRADE<sup>58</sup>

The scale score difference in student achievement between white students and students of color, and low-income students and non-low-income students

	White/Black	White/Latino	Low-income/Non-Low-income
<b>Math</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>22.5</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>24.2</b>

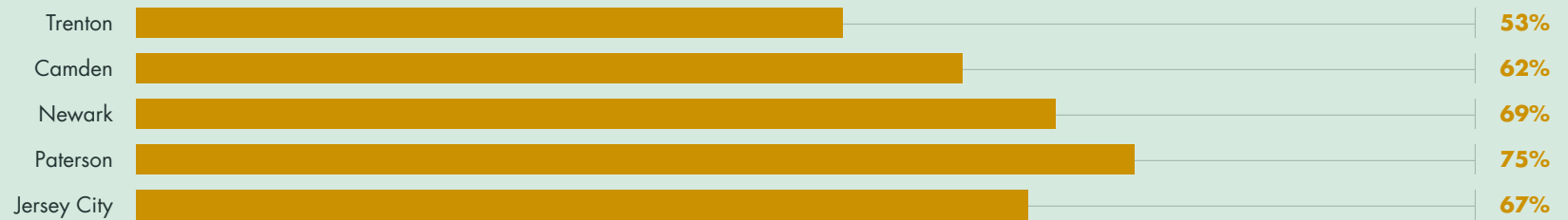
#### 4-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATE, CLASS OF 2014<sup>59</sup>

Percentage of students who graduated on time, by subgroup



#### 4-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATE DISTRICT BREAKDOWN<sup>60</sup>

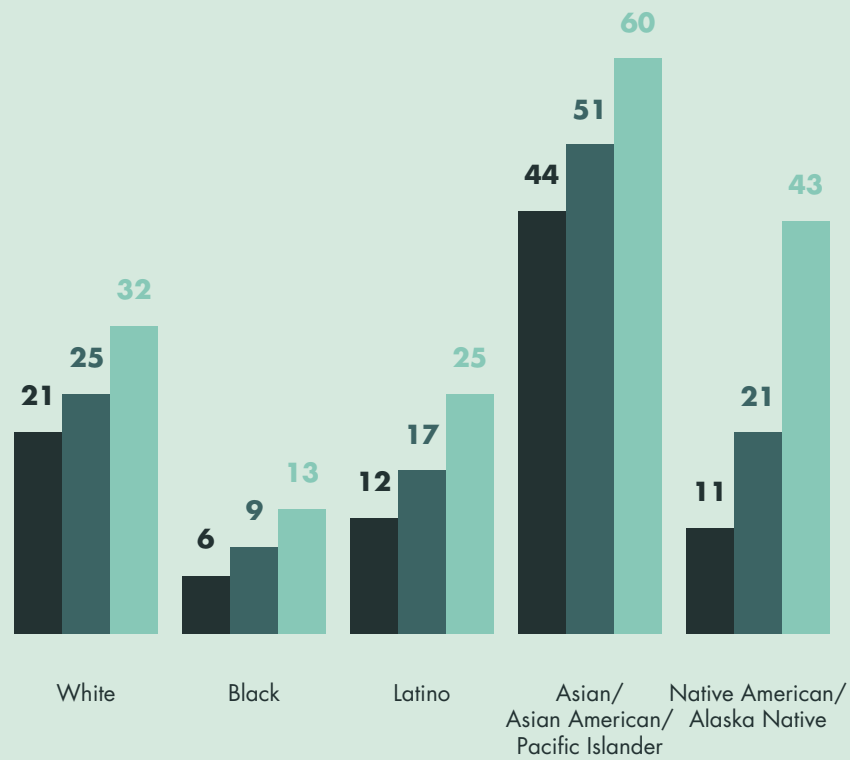
Percentage of students who graduated on time, by district



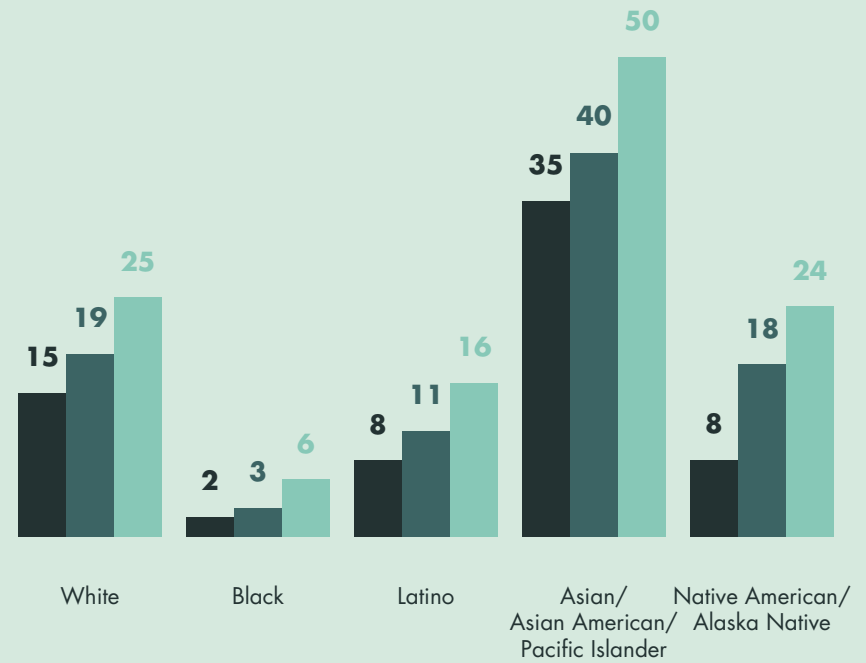
STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS ON ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMS, 2013<sup>61-63</sup>

2003 ■  
2008 ■  
2013 ■

Percentage of graduates leaving high school having taken an AP exam

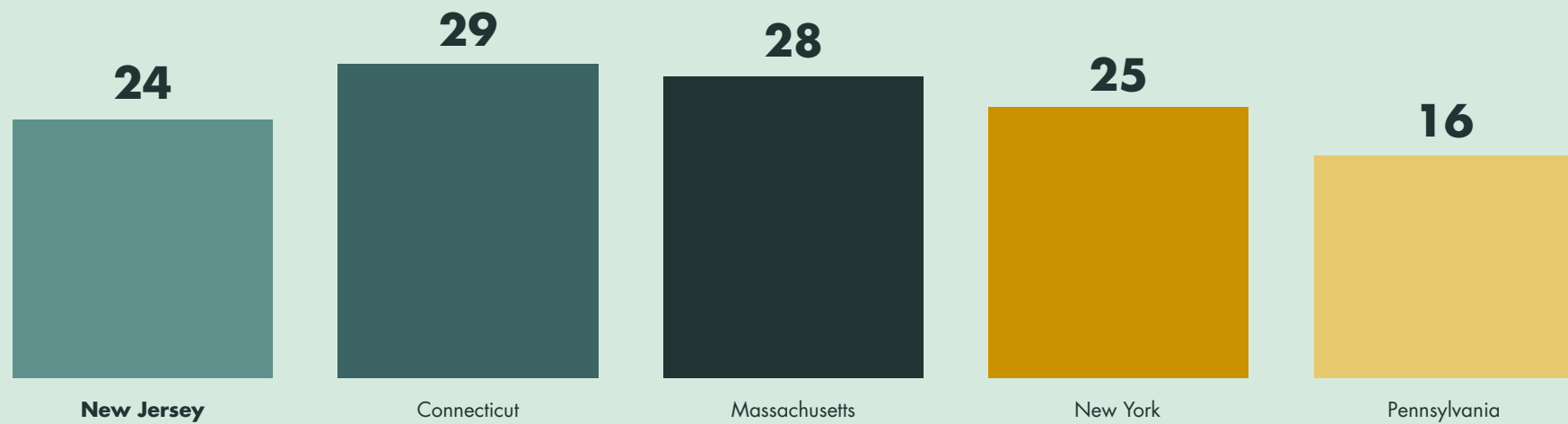


Percentage of graduates scoring 3+ on an AP exam at any point in high school



ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMS, REGIONAL COMPARISON<sup>64-68</sup>

Percentage of the class of 2013 scoring a 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement Exam in high school



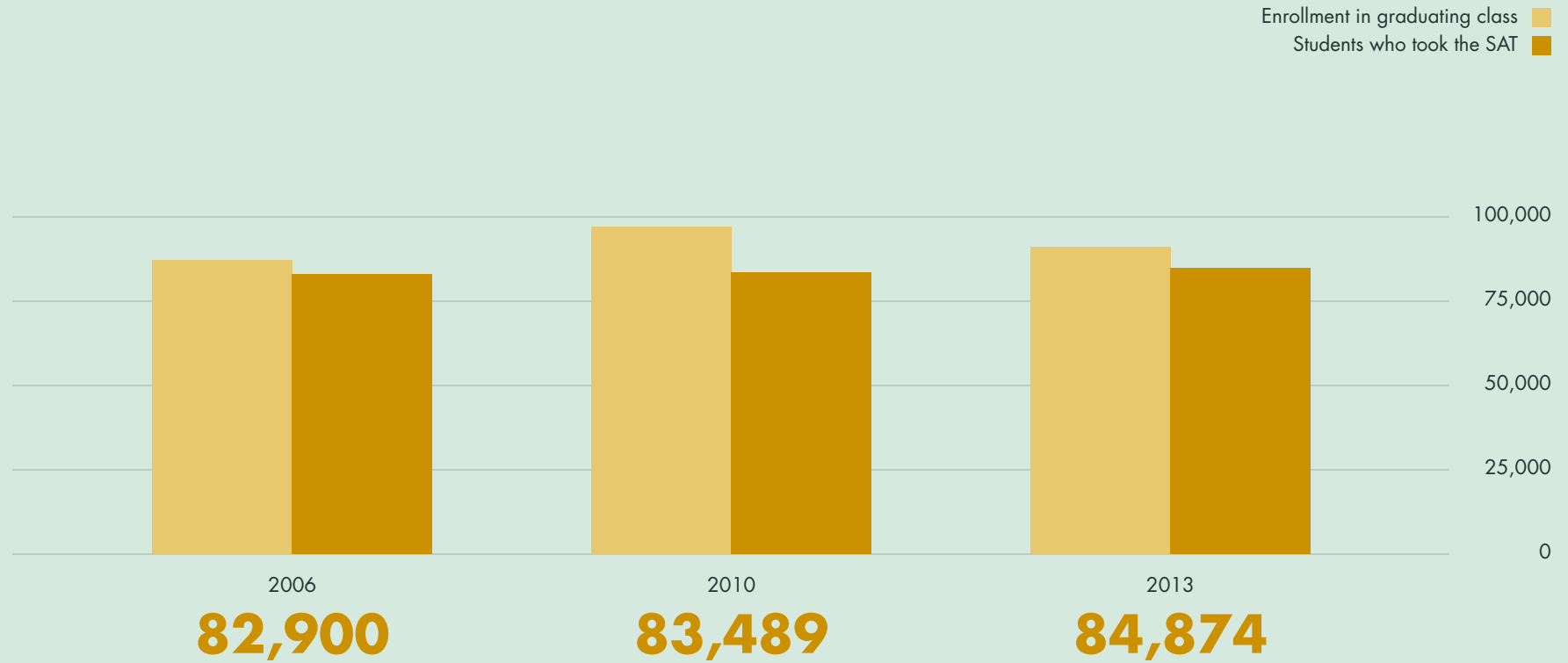
## College entrance exams

Just as there are gaps between the academic performance of white students and students of color, there are also gaps in the likelihood that those students will take—and do well on—college entrance exams. In 2013, the percent of white high school seniors who met the four college readiness benchmarks on the ACT was over *four* times the rate of black students.

But lacking college readiness knowledge is not just a problem that plagues communities of color—it's a problem statewide. A mere 40 percent of all seniors who took the ACT in 2013 met all four college readiness benchmarks. This means that over 60 percent of seniors who hope to go to college are not ready for rigorous college material. Similarly, our average score on the SAT in 2013 was 1521—29 points shy of the 1550 college and career-readiness benchmark set by the College Board.

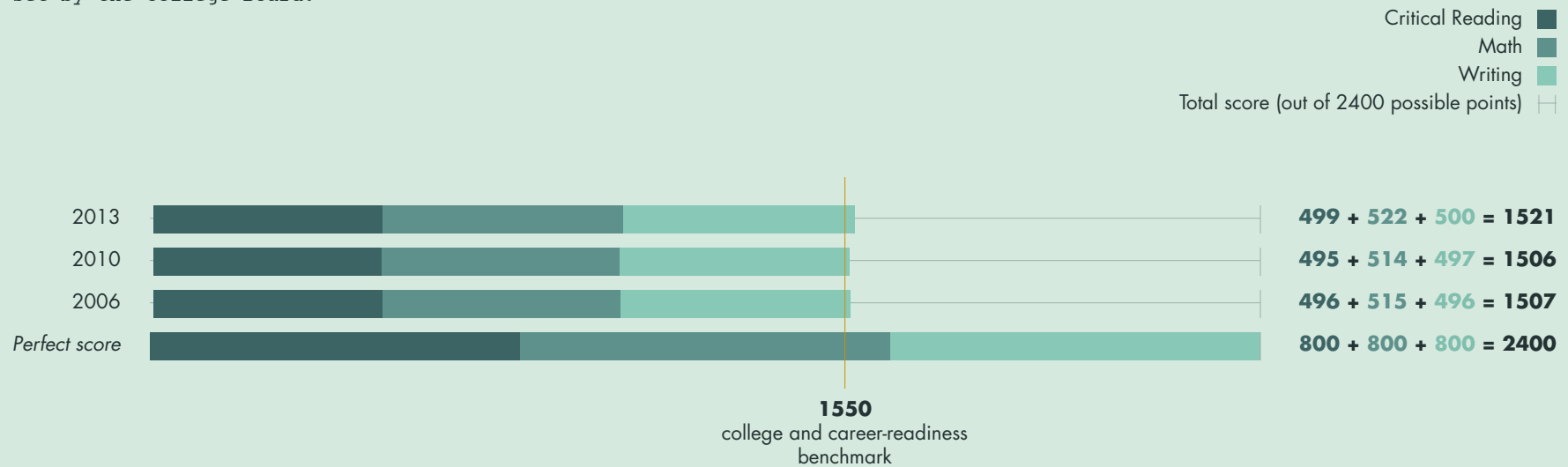
TRENDS IN SAT PARTICIPATION<sup>69-74</sup>

Total number of students in graduating class who took the SAT at any point in high school

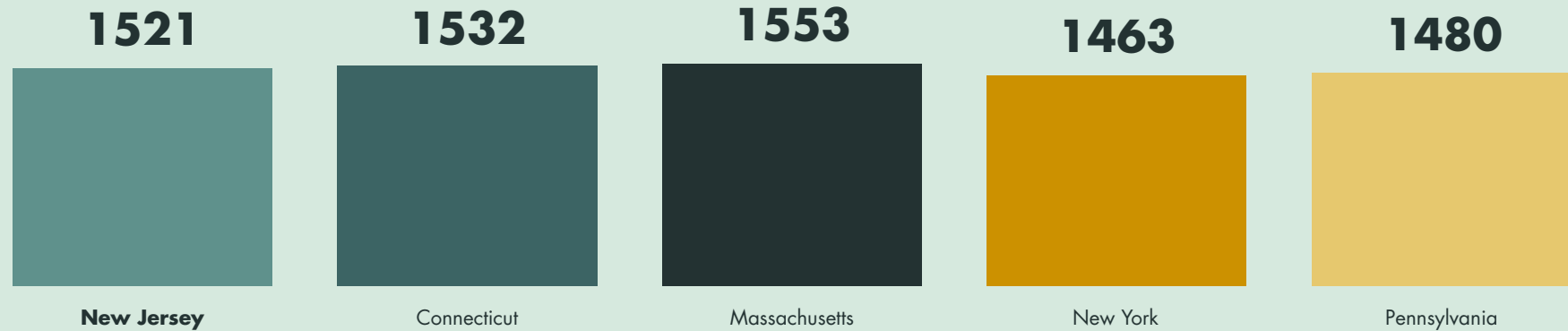


TRENDS IN AVERAGE SAT SCORES<sup>75-77</sup>

A total score of 1550 is the college and career-readiness benchmark set by the College Board.



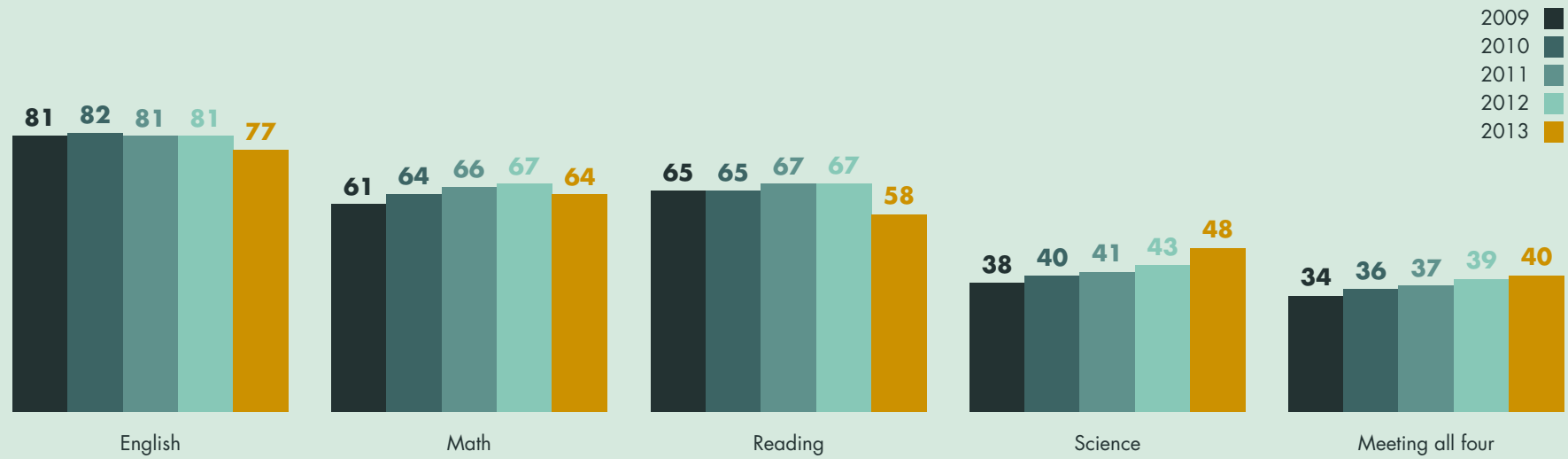
REGIONAL COMPARISON OF SAT PERFORMANCE, 2013<sup>78-82</sup>



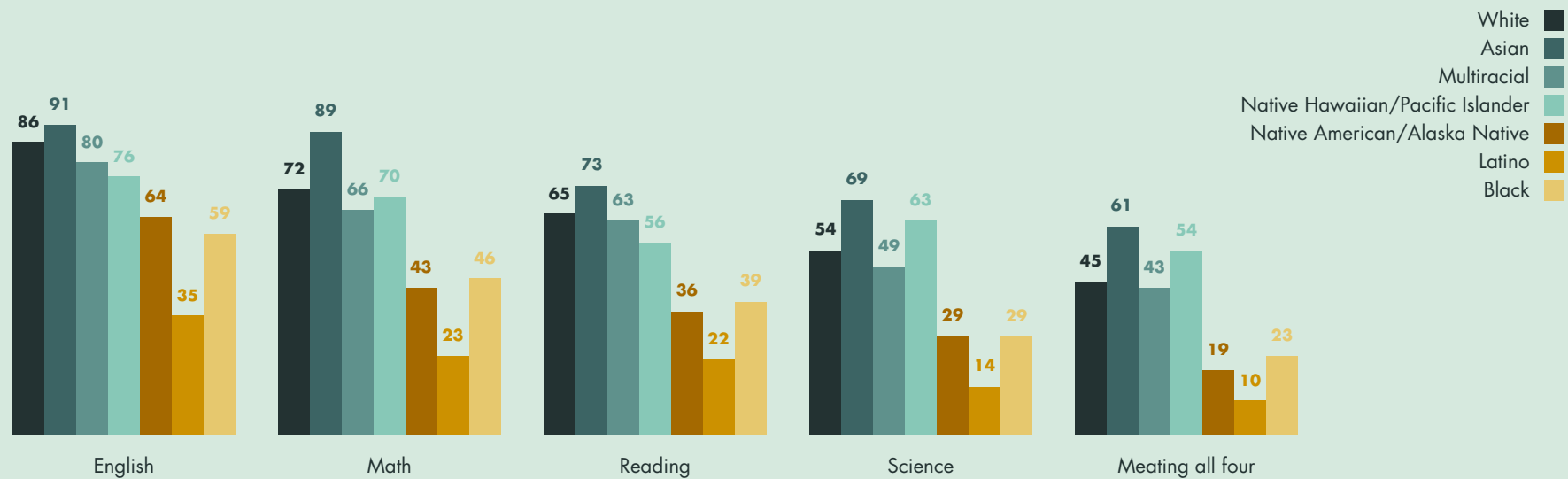


ACT

Percentage of NJ test takers meeting college readiness benchmarks<sup>83</sup>



Percentage of NJ test takers meeting college readiness benchmarks by race, 2013<sup>84</sup>



# After graduation

The ultimate goal of New Jersey's school system is to prepare all of its graduates to thrive in the post-high school world—whether they're going first to college or entering the workforce straightaway. So, are we meeting that goal? To find out, we look at how well New Jersey students do on college entrance exams, the rate at which they graduate from college, and what they can expect to earn in their lifetimes.

## College completion

The proportion of New Jersey students who graduate on time from four-year public universities is higher than many of our neighboring states as well as the national average.<sup>85</sup> However, just as we've seen in all aspects of our education system, black and Latino students are far less likely to graduate from four-year universities on time than their white peers. And across all groups, the graduation rate for two-year public colleges is significantly lower than the graduation rate for four-year public universities.

**GRADUATION RATE**<sup>86-88</sup>

**Graduation rate, two-year public colleges**—Percentage of students who graduated within 3 years, 2010



**Graduation rate, four-year public universities**—Percentage of students who graduated within 4 years, 2010

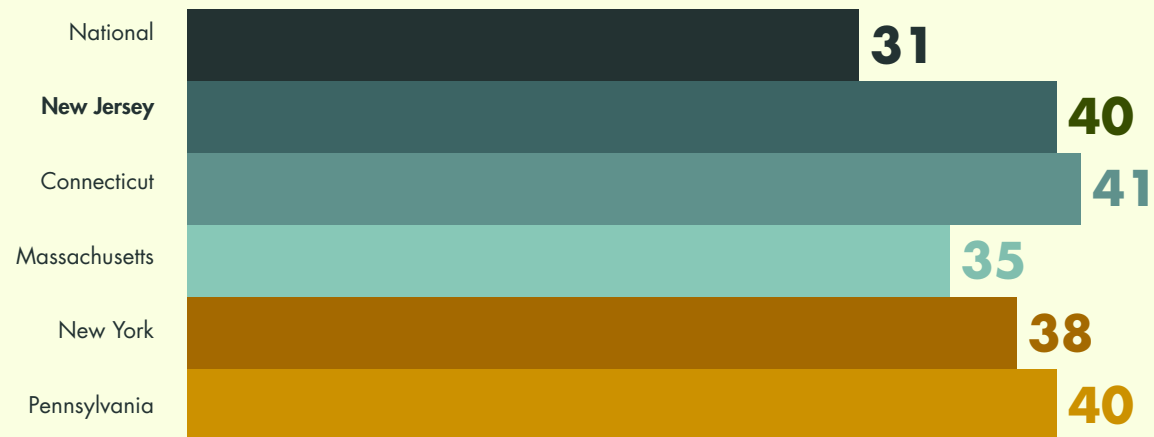


**Graduation rate, four-year public universities**—Percentage of students who graduated within 6 years, 2010



REGIONAL GRADUATION RATE<sup>89</sup>

Graduation rate, four-year public universities—Percentage of students who graduated within 4 years, 2010



## Expected earnings

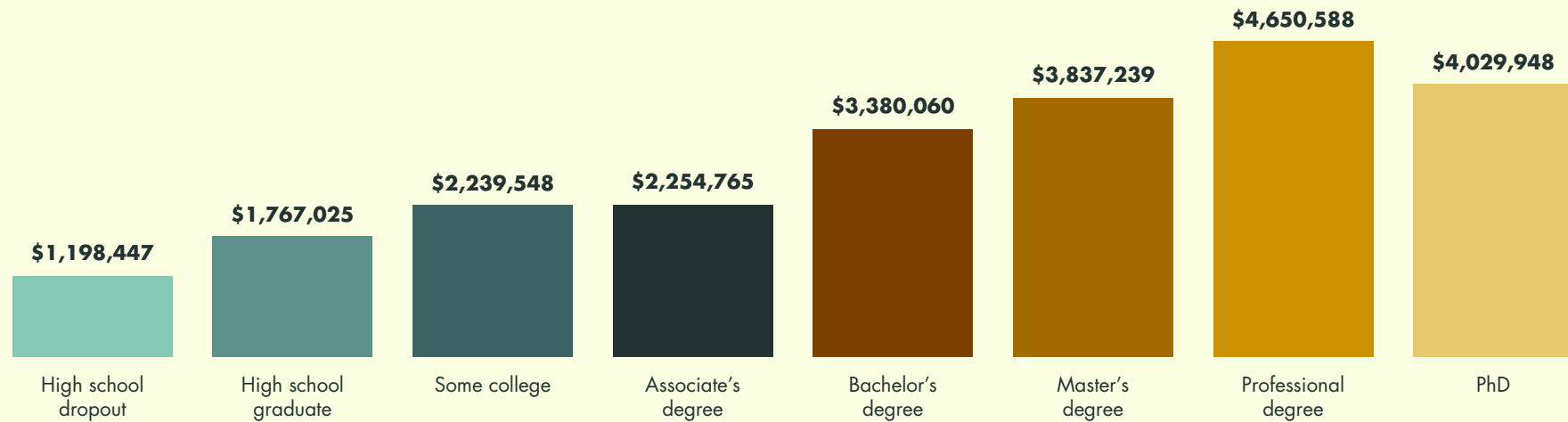
In general, the more education you've had, the more you're likely to make—which is why it is so important to set our students up for success after high school. In New Jersey those with a bachelor's degree take home an annual salary that is, on average, more than double what those who have not gone beyond high school earn.

### AVERAGE YEARLY EARNINGS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN NEW JERSEY<sup>90</sup>

Data from 2011 Census

	High School dropout	High School graduate	Some college	Bachelor's degree and above
<b>\$</b>	<b>9,875</b>	<b>27,192</b>	<b>32,175</b>	<b>70,317</b>

### U.S. AVERAGE LIFETIME EARNINGS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2008<sup>91</sup>

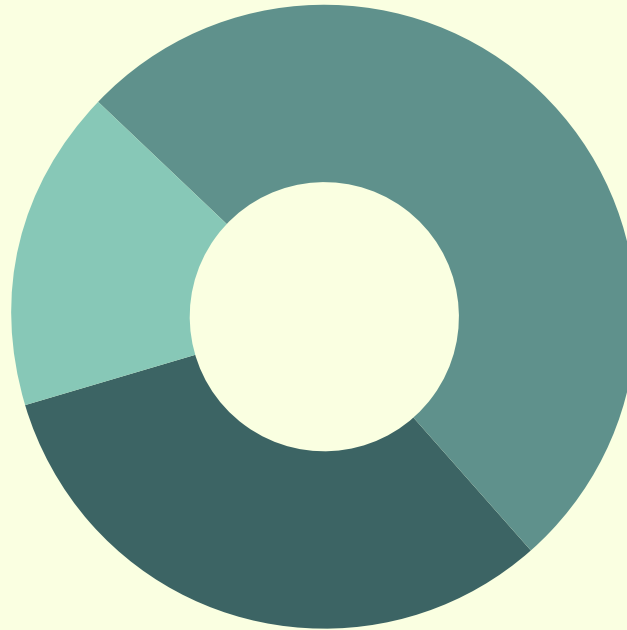


NEW JERSEY JOB OPENINGS<sup>92</sup>

By skill level in 2010–2020

**Low-skill: 17%**

Does not require  
a post-secondary degree



**84%**

of job openings will require  
a middle or high-skill level

**Middle-skill: 52%**

Requires more than a high school degree,  
but not a four-year degree

**High-skill: 32%**

Requires a four-year degree  
or higher

# Conclusion

This report makes one thing clear: we must do more to help all students reach their full potential, in school and beyond. The time for change is now. As a state, we have a long tradition of innovation, excellence and a collective unwavering commitment to our kids. Let's keep that tradition strong and commit to real reforms that grant all of our children access to the education they deserve.

There's just one thing we still need in order to take swift and comprehensive action to improve our schools: you. We need you to explore and share this report, see that meaningful gains are possible and understand that our lingering gaps must be tackled head on. We hope you will join us in our deep belief that all kids can succeed, that great schools can be the agents of change, and that it's within our reach for the kids of today.



## END NOTES

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