

The Persistent Reading Achievement Gap in Connecticut and How We Can Close It



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NAEP Reading Score Gaps for Connecticut Grade 4 Student Groups

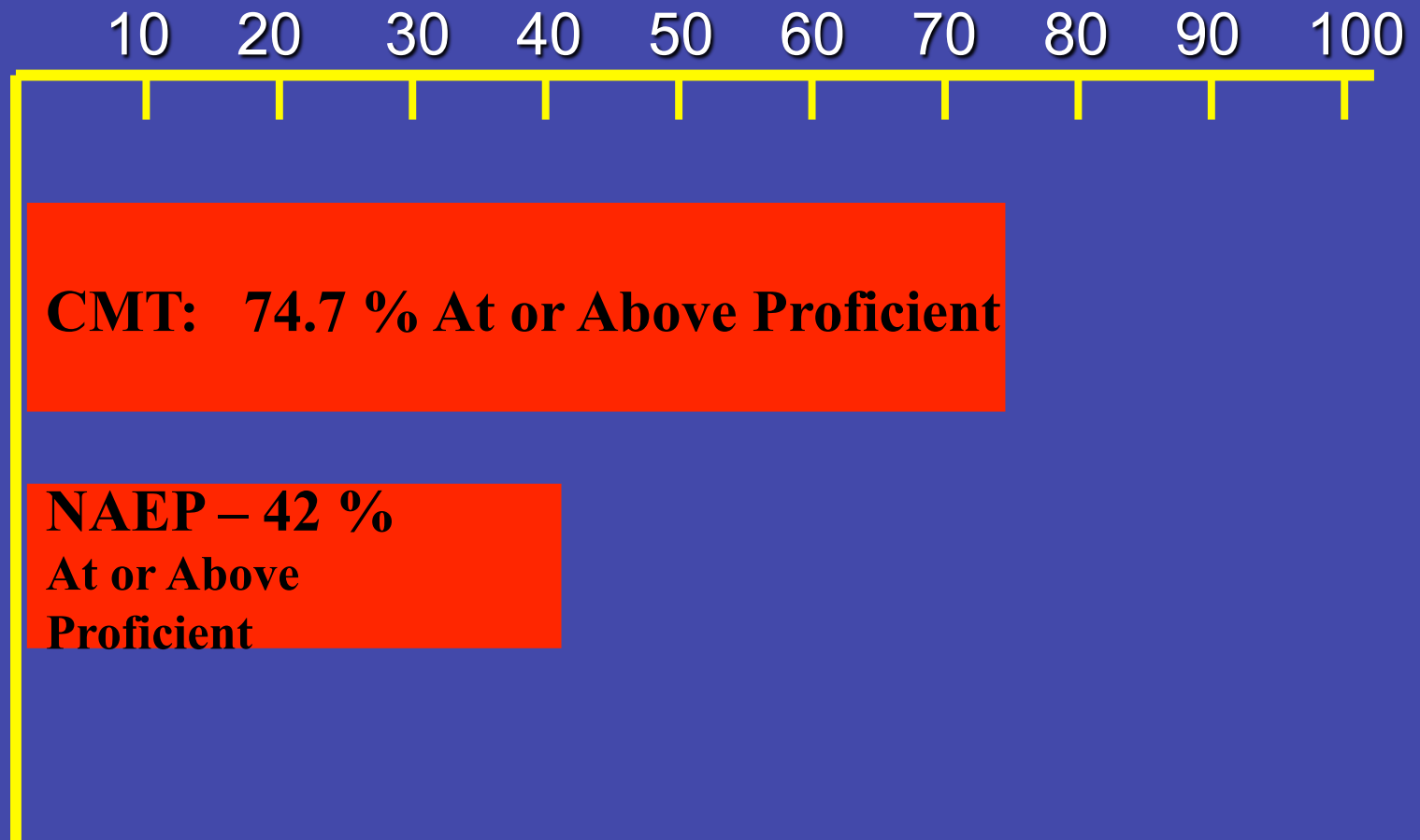
- In 2011, Black students had an average score that was **34 points lower** than White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1992 (34 points).
- In 2011, Hispanic students had an average score that was **35 points lower** than White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1992 (43 points).

NAEP Reading Score Gaps for Connecticut Grade 4 Student Groups (con.)

- In 2011, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of low family income, had an average score that was **35 points lower** than students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch. This performance **gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (35 points)**.



2011 Connecticut 4TH Grade Reading Proficiency as Measured by CMT and NAEP



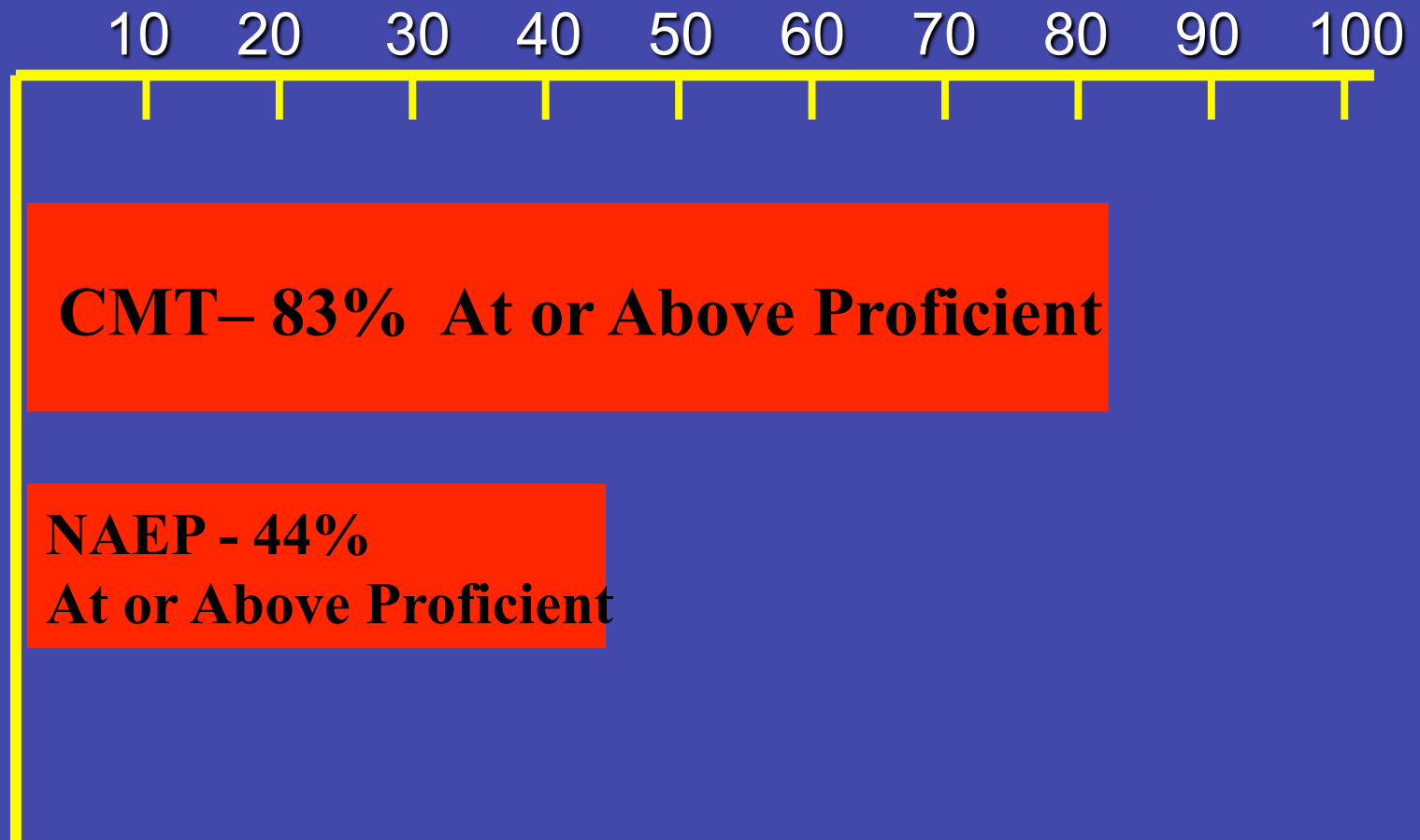
NAEP Reading Score Gaps for Connecticut Grade 8 Student Groups

- In 2011, Black students had an average score that was **28 points lower** than White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (32 points).
- In 2011, Hispanic students had an average score that was **29 points lower** than White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (30 points).

NAEP Reading Score Gaps for Connecticut Grade 8 Student Groups

- In 2011, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of low family income, had an average score that **was 27 points lower** than students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch. This performance **gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (27 points).**

2011 Connecticut 8TH Grade Reading Proficiency as Measured by CMT and NAEP





Is Compensatory Education Effective?

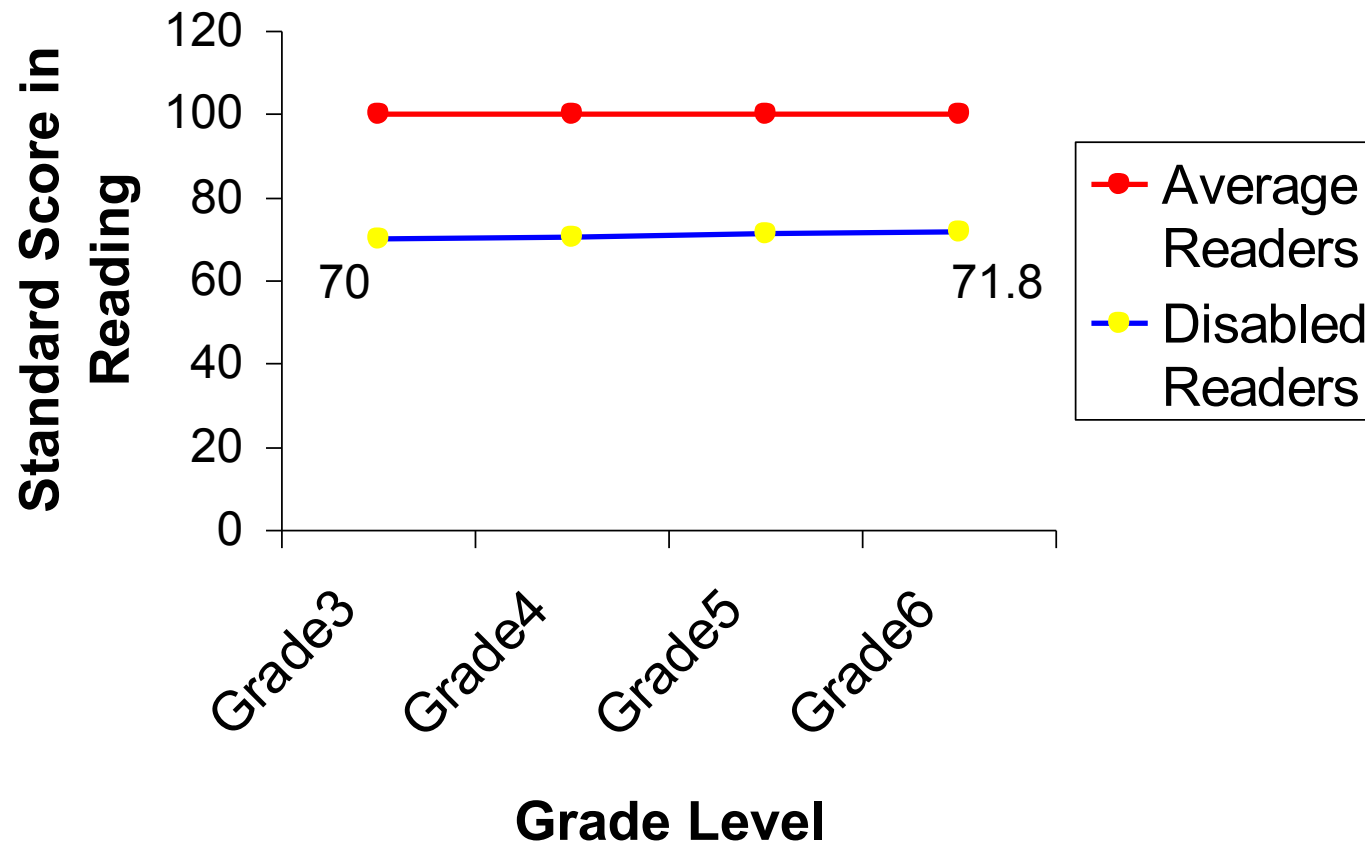
- Insufficient accountability *for results* in Title 1 programs: overall effect size of .11 (very small: Borman & D'Agostino, 2006)
- When effective, limited to school reform models, whole school curriculum reform, and small group tutorials
- NCLB now requires specific forms of accountability for results and introduces Reading First as an effort to prevent reading problems

Special education alone can't fix reading problems

- Number of children identified as LD in special education has increased dramatically since 1975
- Represents about half of the 6.2M children identified for special education- 6% of all children in schools
- 80- 90% identified for reading disabilities (up to 40% of all in special ed)
- Number of students is too large to implement intensive intervention



Change in Reading Skill for Children with Reading Disabilities in Special Ed : .04 Standard Deviations a Year





**IT IS ALARMING THAT THESE
UNACCEPTABLE GAPS EXIST IN READING
PROFICIENCY !**

**It Is More Than Alarming That We Have NOT
Closed the Gap Despite 20 years of Effort!**



SMU



**MAYBE WE NEED TO RETHINK
OUR GAP CLOSING STRATEGIES!**

Another Gap: EDUCATIONAL MALPRACTICE

“The difference between what science has taught us about what works in reading instruction and what we actually do in teaching kids to learn to read”

Lyon (1998) Testimony before the U.S. House and Workforce Committee, Washington DC

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT TWO
IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE
PLAN FOR CLOSING
CONNECTICUT'S ACHIEVEMENT
GAP

IN READING PROPOSED BY THE
BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN CAUCUS



**Improve Teacher's Ability In
Identifying each Student's Reading
Level & Skill Set So they can Intervene
Promptly and Properly!**



The implementation of effective prevention and early intervention reading strategies is difficult if you cannot determine through assessment which youngsters are at risk for reading failure.

Without continuous assessment it is difficult to adjust instruction as needed.



It is next to impossible to improve state reading proficiency unless leaders and teachers know what must be taught, how it must be taught, AND how to Measure Progress.



- When a child has a **fever** – We take their temperature before, during and after treatment
- When a person has **Hypertension** –their blood pressure is checked before, during, and after treatment
- When teaching a child with **reading difficulties**- we must assess proficiency before, during and after instruction



Why Must We Focus on Prevention & Early Identification of Reading Difficulties?

- 88% Of Students Reading Poorly at the End of First Grade Will Read Poorly At the End of The Fourth Grade.
- Unless Effective Reading Instruction Is Provided, Students Reading Poorly at the End of the Fourth Grade Will Have Reading Difficulties For the Rest of Their Lives!
- Effective Prevention Programs Demands Shared Responsibility and a Common Language.

Using Science to Inform the Design and Implementation of Effective Instruction

**Can We Prepare and Support Our Leaders
and Teachers in Their Use of Evidence
Based Practices?**



**ARE WE REALLY READY TO GET
SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT TEACHERS AND
LEADERS NEED TO KNOW AND DO TO
CLOSE THE READING ACHIEVEMENT
GAPS?**

**Here is an example of the knowledge and
work involved:**



Life Experience
Content Knowledge
Activation of Prior Knowledge
Knowledge about Texts

Oral Language Skills
Knowledge of Language Structures
Vocabulary
Written Expression
Cultural Influences

Language

Knowledge

Reading Comprehension And Critical Thinking

Fluency

Motivation
Engagement
Active Reading Strategies
Monitoring Strategies
Fix-Up Strategies

Metacognition

Prosody
Automaticity / Rate
Accuracy
Spelling
Decoding
Phonemic Awareness



SES, Language Development, and Vocabulary

- Children enter school with a listening vocabulary ranging between 2500 to 5000.
- First graders from higher SES groups know twice as many words as lower SES children
(Graves & Slater, 1987)
- Vocabulary differences at grade 2 may last throughout elementary school (Biemiller & Slonim, in press)



How Many Words Should Teachers Teach Per Day To Help Close The Gap?

- ▶ In 1st and 2nd grade, children need to learn **800+ words per year, about 2 per day.**
- ▶ Children need to learn **2,000 to 3,000 new words** each year from 3rd grade onward, **about 6–8 per day.**
- ▶ Research has shown that most typically developing children need to encounter a word about **12 times** before they know it well enough to improve their comprehension.

Reading Comprehension Non-Negotiables

Critical Benchmarks

- ▶ A student must be able to read correctly approximately **90 to 95 percent** of the words in text to comprehend what is read.
- ▶ MOREOVER, to comprehend, a student must know the meanings of **90 to 95** percent of the words being read.

If You Cannot Implement An Effective Program With Fidelity, Don't Waste Your Time

WHY?

“A School can have the most effective reading program and the most experienced teachers, but if you don't put the program in place the way it was designed, the program will fail”

Know and Plan For Predictable Barriers to Implement The Blueprint

- 1. Failure to develop a common instructional and implementation language**
- 2. Taking on too many grade levels and schools the first year**
- 3. Confusing awareness training with implementation training**
- 4. Failure to view the implementation as a systems wide change**



Closing the Reading Achievement Gap in Connecticut

Any effort will be futile unless we are:

- Courageous
- Relentless
- Persistent
- Accountable
- Scientifically Informed
- Transparent
- Focused on Implementation Fidelity



“Leadership is a scary thing. That's why few people want to stand up to the plate.'... 'There are many people who want to be matadors, only to find themselves in the ring with 2,000 pounds of bull bearing down on them, and then discover that what they really wanted was to wear tight pants and hear the crowd roar”

Terry Pearce



Thank you for your commitment to
children!

For more information :

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Or email:

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