

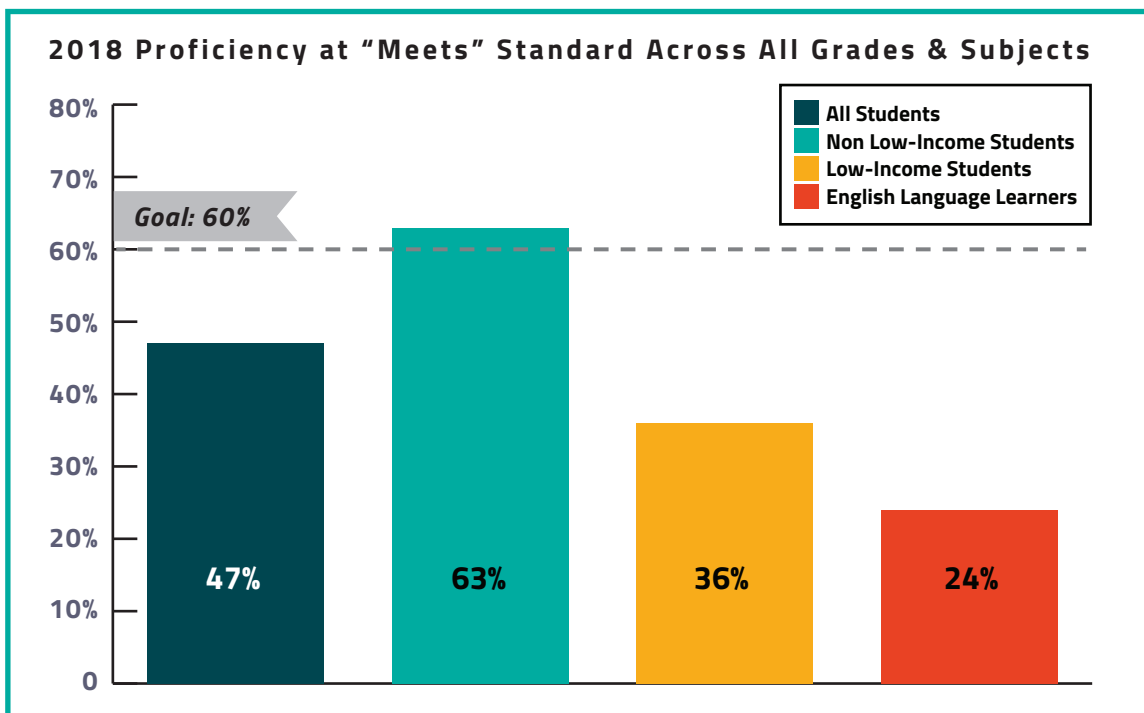
Student Achievement in Texas

Texas public schools enroll almost one out of every 10 students in the country. A growing percentage of Texas students come from low-income backgrounds, or from homes in which English is not the primary language, or both. Those factors often correlate with lower educational attainment. Meanwhile, the job market increasingly requires workers who hold post-secondary certificates or degrees.

To meet future workforce needs and improve young Texans' economic prospects, state officials adopted the "60x30TX" education plan in 2015. Its goal is for 60 percent of Texans ages 24-35 to obtain a post-secondary certificate or degree by 2030.¹

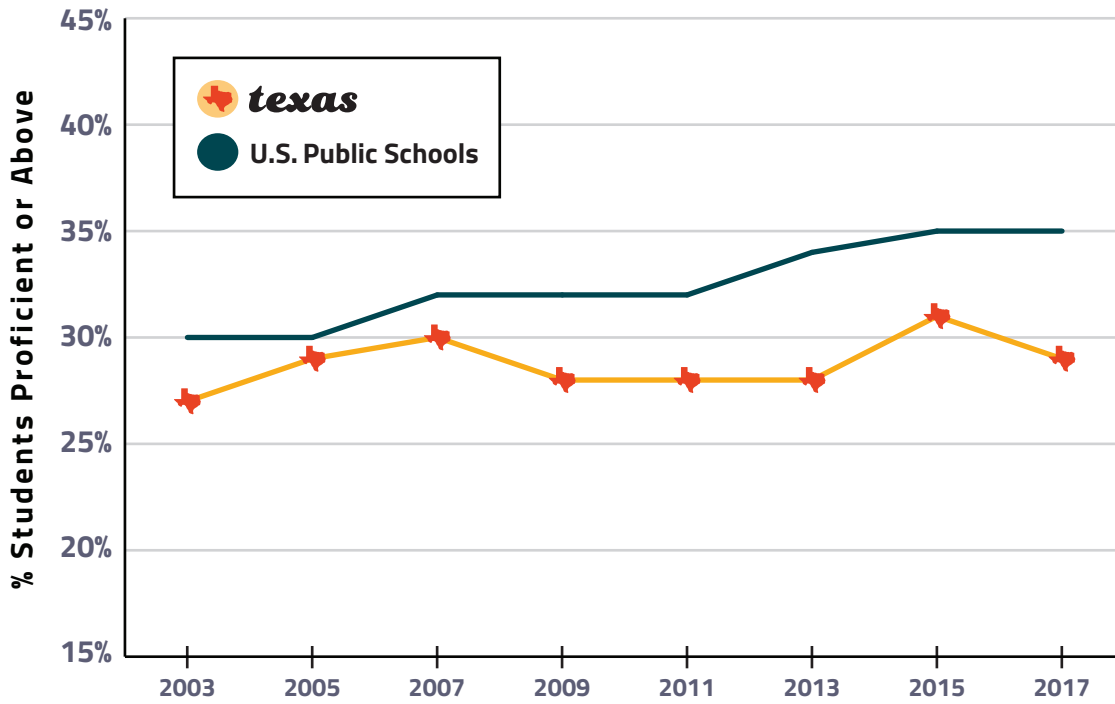
To achieve that goal, many more students will need to succeed in school from an early age. In 2016-17, 47 percent of kindergarteners were assessed as "kindergarten ready" by their teachers.² Kindergarteners who attended public pre-K were significantly more likely to be deemed ready for school (also 47 percent) than children who were eligible but did not attend (32 percent).³

Student performance on statewide STAAR exams has been uneven. Of all students tested in April 2018, fewer than half met grade level expectations (all grades, all subjects).⁴ As shown in the chart below, there were significant gaps between demographic groups: 63 percent of those from non-low-income backgrounds met grade level, compared to only 36 percent of low-income students. Fewer than 1 in 4 of English Language Learners (ELL) met the grade-level standard.⁵ These achievement gaps related to household income, English proficiency, race and ethnicity persist from early grades through high school.

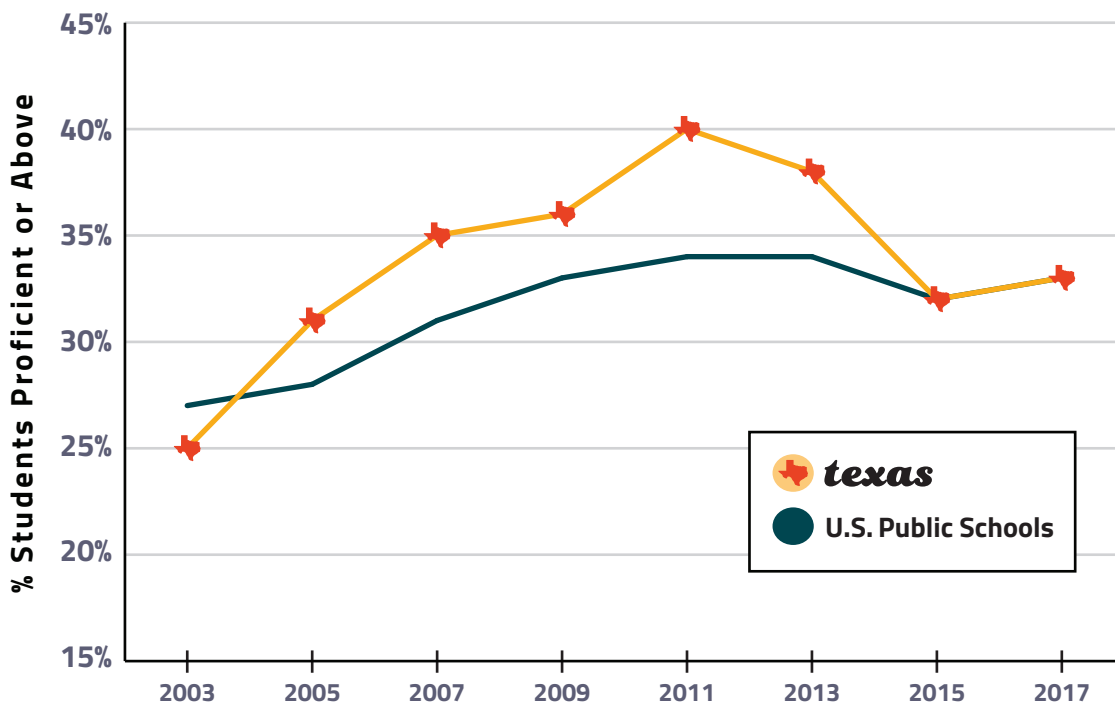


The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), sometimes called the "Nation's Report Card," allows direct comparisons of student achievement in different states. Results are reported as percentages of students performing at or above the Proficient level for academic performance and competency over challenging subject matter. As the graphs below demonstrate, Texas 4th graders have not kept pace with the national average in reading growth. Texas 8th graders made significant gains on the NAEP math test from 2003 to 2011, but scores have been steadily declining since.

Grade 4 Reading NAEP Proficiency Trends (All Students):
Texas & U.S. Public Schools

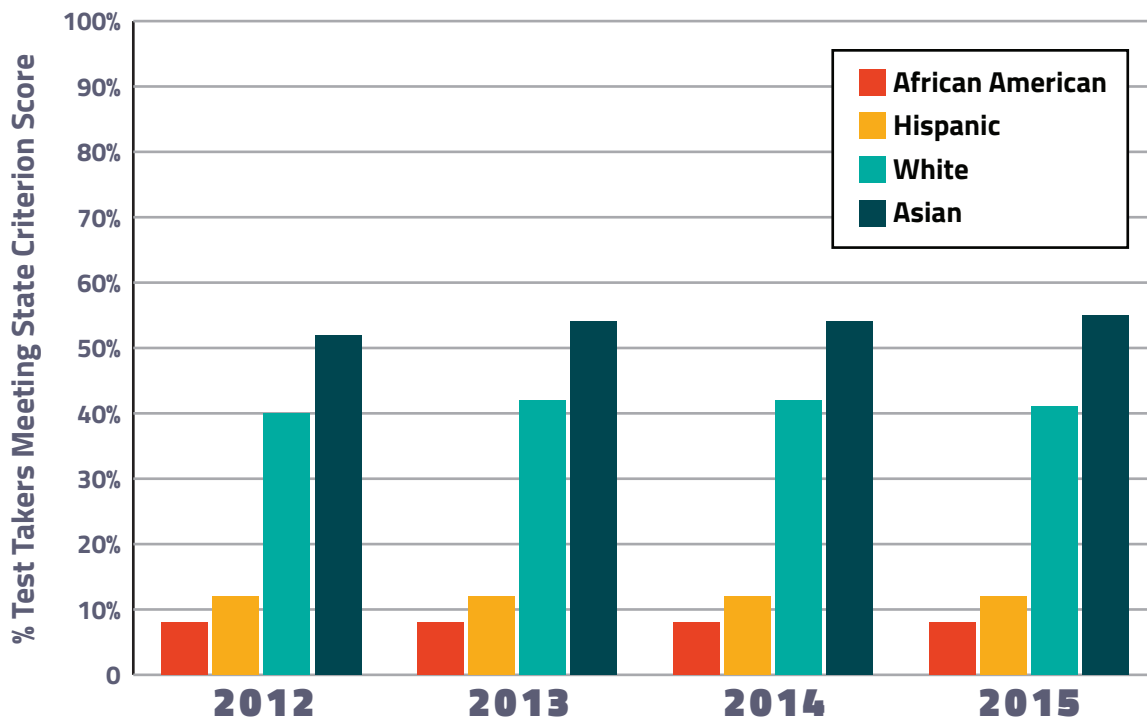


Grade 8 Mathematics NAEP Proficiency Trends (All Students):
Texas & U.S. Public Schools



Based on SAT and ACT results, most Texas high school graduates are not prepared academically for higher education. As the graph shows, of those tested, only 8 percent of African American students and 12 percent of Hispanic students earned scores that are considered college-ready. Fewer than half of white graduates met the college-readiness standard.

Percent of Public School Students Taking College Admissions Tests (ACT or SAT) & Meeting State Criterion Score: BY ETHNICITY



While roughly half of public high school graduates enroll in some form of college, many never obtain a degree. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, only 22 percent of Texas 8th graders go on to earn a postsecondary credential within 6 years of graduating high school; for low-income students, this figure drops to 13 percent.⁶ To meet our state’s future workforce needs, many more students – especially from low-income and ELL backgrounds – need to enroll and graduate from postsecondary institutions. This means, in part, that our public school system needs to better prepare students of all backgrounds for rigorous postsecondary programs.

Notes:

- 1) 60x30TX, <http://60x30tx.com/>
- 2) Texas Public Education Information Resource, Texas Education Reports, <http://www.texaseducationinfo.org/>
- 3) Texas Public Education Information Resource, Texas Education Reports, <http://www.texaseducationinfo.org/>
- 4) Texas Education Agency, June 2018, https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/News_Releases/2018/TEA_releases_statewide_results_for__STAAR_grades_3%E2%80%938_mathematics_and_reading/
- 5) Texas Commission on Public School Finance Final Report, December 31, 2018, p. 63, <http://bettertexasblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Texas-Commission-on-Public-School-Finance-Final-Report-1.pdf>
- 6) Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board “8th Grade Cohort Study” 2007 8th Grade Cohort, <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/10718.PDF?CFID=91465873&CFTOKEN=90207608>