

FERNDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2007-08 MEAP Report

The purpose of the MEAP Executive Summary report is to inform the Board of Education of modifications to the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) that occurred since the 2006 Executive Summary, report the 2007/2008 results, and provide an analysis of the results.

Each fall students in grades three through nine are required to take the MEAP test and each winter districts and schools receive the results. This year the results were delayed as an unexpected consequence of the October 2007 security breach of grades five and six English Language Arts Writing Assessment. Using a replacement prompt, students in those grades were required to take the writing assessment a second time. This led to confusion across the State, with some districts failing to return the second administration and others returning incomplete tests. As a result, on April 8, 2008 the 2007 MEAP scores were released to the public, a delay which impeded communication as well as the district's ability to fully use the results to promote student growth.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

MEAP scores indicate the percentage of students in Ferndale Public Schools at each grade level and school building scoring above, at, or below state standards. These results are comprised of all tested students, including students enrolled in the district for less than one full school year. The State of Michigan will extract all less than one full school year students prior to calculating Michigan School Report Card grades, and Adequate Yearly Progress. In a case such as Coolidge Intermediate where approximately 70 new students were enrolled this school year the net result could be an increase in the overall standing of the school. However, this change has not taken place and is therefore not reflected in this report.

It is important to remember the MEAP is not scored as a traditional classroom test, which uses percentages. In a classroom, a student correctly answering 85% of the questions would be considered to be passing at an above average rate; a student correctly answering 73% of the questions would be passing at an average rate. The MEAP test is a criterion-referenced test, which means after all of the students have taken the MEAP, the test evaluators look at the results and determine what the passing, or "cut score", will be for each test at each grade level. Students scoring above the cut score are reported to have passed that subtest, or section, of the MEAP, while those scoring below have not passed.

The MEAP is not timed; however students are expected to finish each section during the testing session. Students may not go back to previous sections to finish or review their completed work.

When looking at the results of grade-level assessments, it is important to remember tests are designed to measure mastery of the previous year’s Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs). The third grade test measures second grade curriculum and the fourth grade test measures third grade GLCEs. The chart below graphically represents this concept.

Grade Level	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
English Language Arts – Reading and Writing		←X	←X	←X	←X	←X	←X	
Mathematics	←X	←X	←X	←X	←X	←X	←X	
Science			←X			←X		
Social Studies				←X				←X

MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS

Since releasing the 2006 MEAP Executive Summary, four changes have occurred to the state’s assessment program. The state moved to a student growth model, changed the performance level descriptors, increased proficiency levels, and altered the scoring method used on the English Language Arts Writing Assessment.

Student Growth Model

The State of Michigan sought and received approval from the federal government to implement a growth model for English Language Arts, Reading and Mathematics. The writing assessment did not have a sufficient number of items to statistically support the new model. Simply stated, the growth model was designed to calculate each student’s year-to-year growth as measured by the MEAP. Psychometricians developed a mathematical model to accomplish the task. It accommodates separate scoring scales in each grade, breaks the four levels of achievement, Levels I-IV, into sub-levels small enough to capture progress (Level IV- high, medium and low), and has the ability to compare the sub-range from one year to sub-range in another year.

Student growth is demonstrated using one of the 5 following descriptors:

N =No Change which indicates the student made 1 year of growth.

I =Improvement indicates growth of slightly more than 1 year.

SI = Significant Improvement indicates growth of much more than 1 year.

D = Decline indicates growth of slightly less than 1 year.

SD= Significant Decline indicates growth of much less than 1 year.

Again, the specific descriptor is associated with the degree of improvement or decline.

A Sample of this system is as follows:

	Level IV Not Proficient			Level III Partially Proficient			Level II Proficient			Level I Advanced			
	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	
Fall 2006 Math					X								Middle of the Partially Proficient Level
Fall 2007 Math								X					Lower Range of the Proficient Level

The reported performance level of change in this example is Significantly Improved.

A word of caution is offered at this point, the amount of growth needed to be demonstrated within and between performance levels is not the same. The mathematical formula employed takes into consideration regression toward the mean, which means that sub-ranges are not equal in the number of points required to move up or down the continuum. A student who is at Level 1: Advanced, may not be reported as “Level I SI”, although the student is scoring at the top of the test. Applying the growth model to this student may make it look like the student is trading water, when in fact the student is making one year’s growth with no ability to further exceed the tested standards. Although Michigan educators support using the growth model, most states do not, as the results may be misleading. Time will tell whether or not this is a system that supports student growth.

Performance Level Descriptors

The state revised the names of the descriptors associated with each of the four levels of performance. The amended names and the intended meaning are as follows:

Level 1: Advanced	The student's performance exceeds grade level expectations and indicates substantial understanding and application of key concepts as defined for Michigan students. The student needs support to continue to excel.
Level 2: Proficient	The student's performance indicates understanding and application of key grade level expectations defined for Michigan students. The student needs continued support to maintain and increase proficiency.
Level 3: Partially Proficient	The student needs assistance to improve achievement. The student's performance is not yet proficient, indicating a partial understanding and application of the grade level expectations defined for Michigan students.
Level 4: Not Proficient	The student needs intensive intervention and support to improve achievement. The student's performance is not yet proficient and indicates minimal understanding and application of the grade level expectations as defined for Michigan students.

Michigan's Minimum Proficiency Levels Increased

Michigan's minimum proficiency levels increased this year. Under No Child Left Behind, by 2013-14 every student in the State of Michigan is to demonstrate proficiency on the MEAP. To accomplish this, in 2001 Michigan established annual minimum levels of proficiency, which increase every three years until 2010 at which time the proficiency rates increase by approximately 10% per year.

Content Area	2004-05 2005-06 2006-07	2007-08 2008-09 2009-10
Elementary		
Mathematics	56%	64%
English Language Arts	49%	59%
Middle School		
Mathematics	43%	54%
English Language Arts	43%	54%
High School		
Mathematics	44%	56%
English Language Arts	52%	61%

Scoring Changes

Beginning with the 2007 testing cycle, the Michigan Department of Education began scoring the writing test using a three-parameter item response theory model. It is the same scoring system used to score the Michigan Merit Exam. When calculating a student's score, this system takes into consideration: (1) the response – correct or incorrect and (2) the student's pattern of correct and incorrect responses. Using the pattern of response, a projected ability level is assigned to each student. Another way to express this is that the score is decreased if the pattern looks like the student guessed or is viewed as correctly answering less difficult questions. The system gives greater value to responses that are viewed as requiring greater ability. There is no longer a direct correspondence between raw score, total points, and the proficiency level. Since ability estimates are based on pattern scoring, quantity and quality of correct responses are taken into account when assigning a proficiency level to a student. Some students with the same raw score will have different proficiency levels.

2007-2008 ANNUAL RESULTS

An attached table of district scores is included with the Executive Summary (**See Attachment B**) with areas of improvement highlighted to illustrate the achievement of Ferndale students on the 2007 MEAP tests. One year increase of percent proficient is highlighted in light yellow, while a two out of three years of increase is highlighted in orange to indicate a positive trend. The table is designed to provide a quick overview of the results by grade level or department, school building, and subgroup.

LONGITUDINAL IMPLICATIONS OF ANNUAL RESULTS

The preferred method for analyzing assessment data is to look at three-year trends, rather than year-to-year fluctuations. Often there are reasons for year-to-year fluctuations, 20% of the tested students having attended Ferndale Public Schools for less than one-full-year in the district as was the case at Coolidge this year; the breach in security at grades five and six; changes in scoring methods, etc. Using three or more years of data allows for annual fluctuations; while providing a bigger picture of where we are and where we need to focus our attention.

Areas of Growth from a District Perspective

Elementary and Middle School Reading

Using trends to look at the elementary reading program, test scores for grades 3-7 actually measure instruction for grades K-6. The grade 3 test measures K-2 instruction, while the grade 6 test measures fifth grade instruction and student learning. Of significance is the lack of a gap between All Students, African

Americans, and Economically Disadvantaged students. Looking at the middle school reading program, test scores for grades 7 and 8 actually measure instruction for grades 6 and 7. In evaluating the data, notice the tremendous increase in trend data for all groups on the grade 8 test. In particular, performance of the African American subgroup rose 21 percentage points and our Special Education subgroup rose 28 percentage points.

Middle School Writing

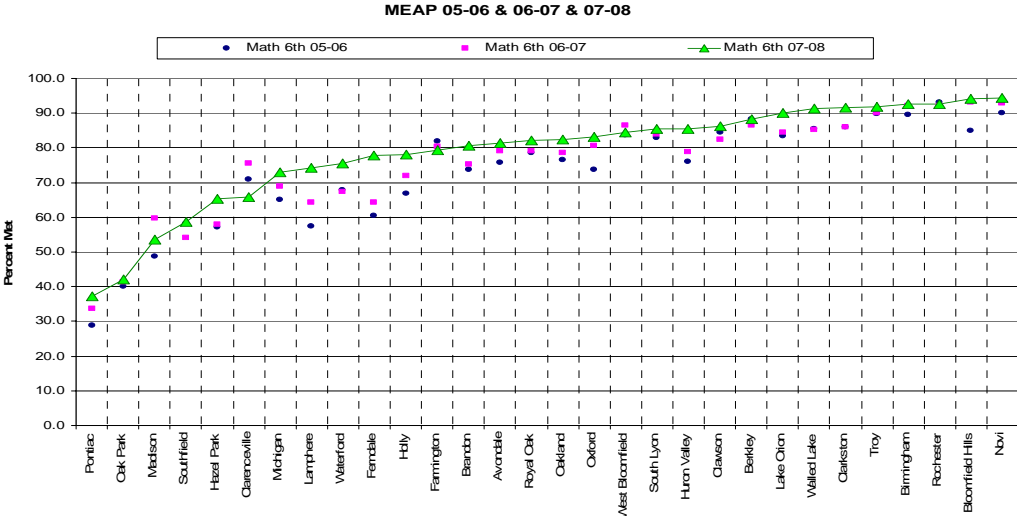
Writing continues to lag behind reading and is negatively impacting Ferndale Public Schools English Language Arts scores at the elementary level. However, looking for areas of growth, the greatest positive change is at the middle school. On both the grade 7 and grade 8 tests the trend data points upward. Of note is the growth shown by Special Education students on the grade 8 test. The grade 7 test data shows marked improvements overall with double digit growth in the trend data of our African American and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups.

Elementary and Middle School English Language Arts

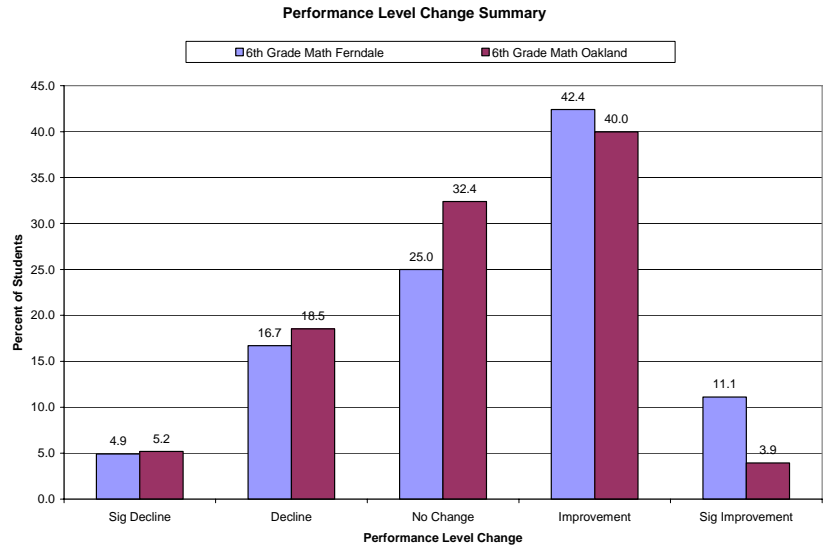
Looking at the data, we observe increased scores in all except one grade level. In most cases this progress resulted from increased reading and writing achievement. Reflecting on three years of data, we see positive overall results.

Elementary Mathematics

Elementary mathematics follows the same pattern of improvement. In addition, third grade is closing the gap between All Students and students in subgroups. A positive three-year trend is evident, with all subgroups demonstrating outstanding growth. The gap is nonexistent for African Americans and Economically Disadvantaged students. Of note is grade 6 mathematics achievement. Not only does the district have a positive three year trend with no distinguishable gap between subgroups, but scores are above the state average as illustrated by the chart below.

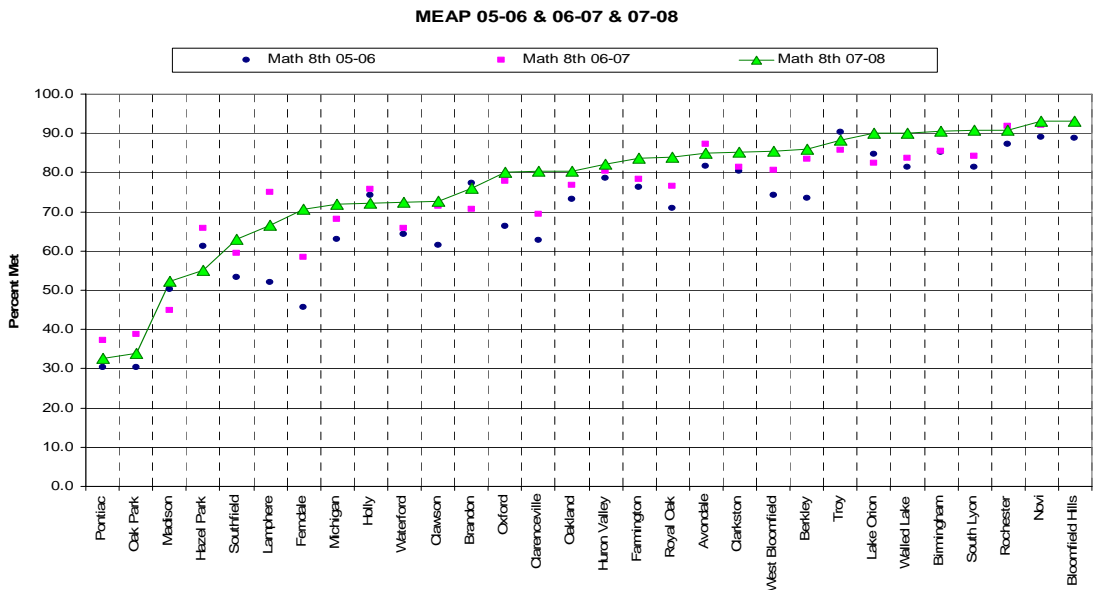


Thinking back to the state’s new growth model, which measures student-to-student progress from one year to the next, below is a graph that compares Ferndale’s grade 6 students who attend Ferndale Schools for at least one year to grade 6 students across the county. Ferndale students demonstrated less Decline, greater Improvement and Significant Improvement than other Oakland County grade 6 students.

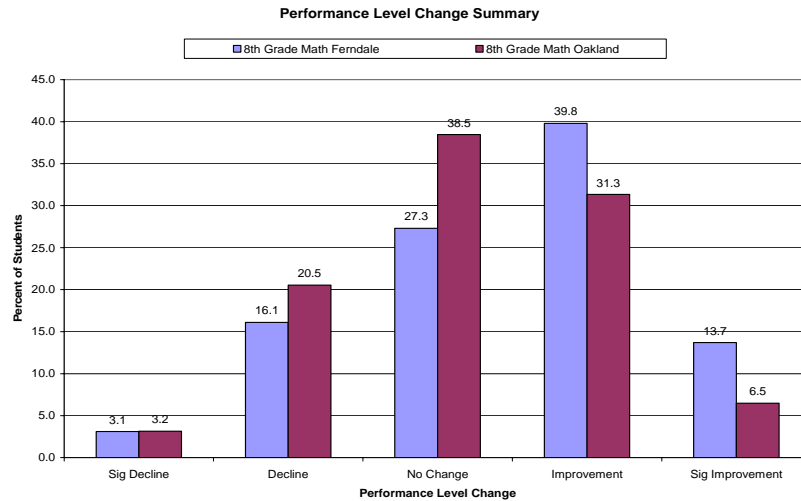


Middle School Mathematics

Over the last three years the middle school has shown exceptional growth in all categories in mathematics on both the grade 7 and grade 8 tests. This upward trend is partly due to the extensive professional development provided to the teachers of mathematics in grades 4 through 8. This training focused on building teachers’ content knowledge and the art of teaching mathematics. It was provided by the MERC (Math Educators Resource Center) Program through Oakland Schools. The graph below indicates the amount of growth demonstrated on the grade 8 test.



Again, using the state’s new growth model, which measures student-to-student progress from one year to the next, below is a graph that compares Ferndale’s grade 8 students who attended the middle school in grade 7 to grade 8 students across the county. Ferndale Middle School students demonstrated less Decline, greater Improvement and Significant Improvement than other non-mobile Oakland County eighth grade students.



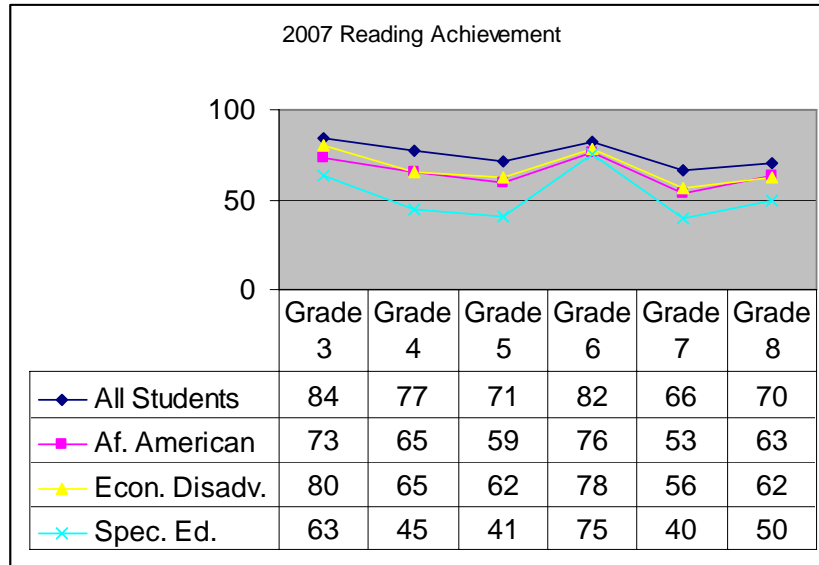
Elementary/Middle School Science

The trend data for Ferndale Middle School showed a tremendous increase in all groups on the fall 2007 test. The African American subgroup increased 21 percent. When comparing the growth from elementary to middle school in Science you will notice a trend upward. The current grade 8 students were tested as grade 5 students on the fall 2005 test. When comparing the 2005 scores to the 2007 scores, with the assumption the same students are being tested, increased performances are visible in all categories.

Areas for Improvement from a District Perspective

Elementary and Middle School Reading

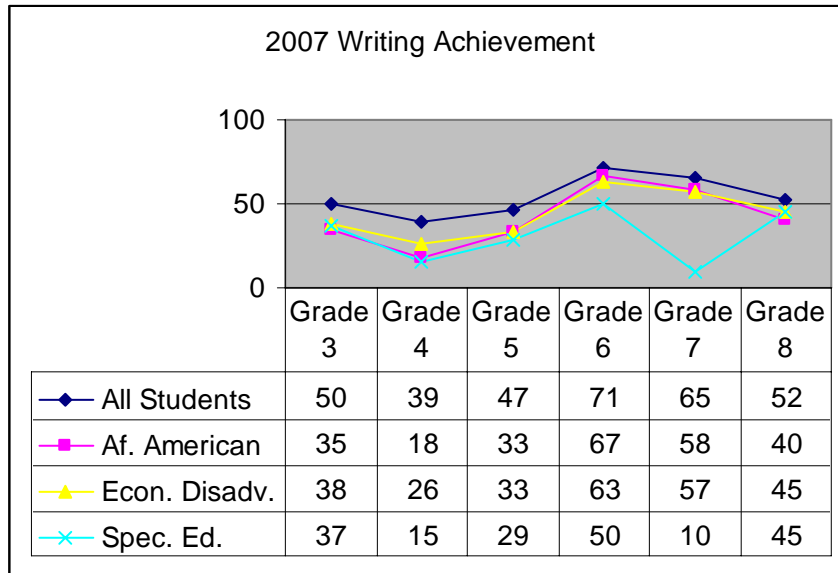
The district would be well served to continue its attention on improving reading achievement in grades 3 through 5, as measured on the MEAP 4-6 tests. One area to focus on is the transitional years. Working collaboratively, teachers of grades 3 and 4, along with teachers of grades 6 and 7 will benefit from vertically aligning curriculum, instructional practices, and standards. Providing smooth transitions will benefit Ferndale students.



Reading scores at Ferndale Middle School continue to be an area of concern. Even though there was substantial improvement by our students in their performance on the grade 8 test, our scores are lagging behind the scores from Oakland County by as much as 15% on the grade 7 test and 14% on the grade 8 test. The middle school is in the process of rewriting their English Language Arts curriculum for both grades 7 and 8 creating a closer alignment with the Grade Level Content Standards (GLCE). In as much as the grade 7 test measures grade 6 curriculum, we know we need to plan for more support in reading to make sure all students are ready for what lies ahead in their secondary schooling.

Elementary and Middle School Writing

Looking at elementary and middle school writing, one will observe there is little increase in overall scores. Using historical data, tested grade 6 spikes; however achievement declines after that point. Presently, we are planning to implement a new K-8 writing curriculum for the 2008/2009 school year that will include a more consistent approach to teaching and assessing skills at the elementary level. Professional development will be a component of the program.



Middle School Math

Although we have made great gains in our performance in Mathematics at both grades 7 and 8, there is still a lot of ground to cover. Attention must be paid to close the gap in performance for our African American and Special Education students.

Elementary and High School Social Studies

Although we have noted growth on the elementary grade 6 Social Studies test, data over time from elementary through middle school is down slightly for both FHS and UHS. This trend is due in part to the change in the cut scores on the Social Studies test. According to information gathered from Oakland Schools this test has also undergone design changes making it difficult for districts to compare results. The Michigan Department of Education rolled out the new content expectations for grades K-12 Social Studies in December of 2007. The Michigan Department of Education anticipates using a new test in the fall of 2010. Next fall we begin the curriculum writing process to revise the current curriculum.

Special Education

Over the past three years the percent of special education students who took the MEAP, with and without accommodations has remained the same, however the percent of students demonstrating proficiency on the MEAP increased. Although proficiency is increasing, this remains an area of concern. The chart below identifies the number of students taking the MEAP and percentage of students passing over a three-year period of time.

Grade/Test	2005		2006		2007	
	# Assessed	% Proficient	# Assessed	% Proficient	# Assessed	% Proficient
Grade 3 ELA	18	39%	15	47%	19	63%
Grade 3 Math	15	47%	15	87%	18	83%
Grade 4 ELA	20	30%	23	17%	20	40%
Grade 4 Math	16	63%	22	36%	20	50%
Grade 5 ELA	15	33%	18	39%	17	35%
Grade 5 Math	15	53%	16	59%	17	41%
Grade 5 Science	17	65%	22	59%	23	52%
Grade 6 ELA	22	36%	11	27%	16	75%
Grade 6 Math	20	30%	11	36%	15	67%
Grade 6 SS	25	44%	13	23%	21	33%
Grade 7 ELA	14	14%	19	26%	10	20%
Grade 7 Math	14	14%	17	12%	10	30%
Grade 8 ELA	18	11%	14	14%	22	41%
Grade 8 Math	11	18%	13	31%	18	44%
Grade 8 Science	18	44%	19	21%	22	64%
Grade 9 SS	40	50%	16	44%	19	21%

Building Level Subgroups

At the elementary level the district has three unique buildings, each providing customized educational services and programming. Because of this structure, using district MEAP summary data provides a district overview but does not drill down to look at each building's subgroups by content area and grade level. Understanding the minimum proficiency rate increased in 2008, it is important each building conduct an in-depth examination of its results for African American, Economically Disadvantaged and Special Education students by grades taught and/or tested at the school. It is important to understand that, although the district continues to close achievement gaps, we must be diligent in our efforts to increase the achievement of all subgroups. Failing to do so will result in the district not making adequate yearly progress.

In summary, from a district perspective overall we continue to close the achievement gaps between All Students, African American, Economically Disadvantaged and Special Education students. This year students in grades six and eight demonstrated the most growth in the district. The area of mathematics was an area of strength for our district, with five out of six grade levels indicating increased student performance. There is work to be done, but overall we see improvement in student achievement.