

# Read to Lead Task Force

## *The Problem We Face*

Since 1994, reading performance by Wisconsin 4<sup>th</sup> graders has remained stagnant, or declined slightly. During that same period of time, many other states have made significant gains in early reading achievement. As a result, Wisconsin has fallen behind. This decline is not limited to any group or range of achievement.

### **Wisconsin's Overall Performance:**

- In 1994, Wisconsin ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 40 jurisdictions. In 2009, Wisconsin ranked 30<sup>th</sup> out of 52 jurisdictions.
- If we equalize major demographic variables between the jurisdictions, Wisconsin's ranking falls to 43<sup>rd</sup>.
- Since 1994, Wisconsin's ranking has fallen every year the NAEP was given.
- In 1994, Wisconsin was statistically superior to 31 of 39 other jurisdictions, and statistically inferior to 1.
- In 2009, Wisconsin was statistically superior to 7 of 51 other jurisdictions, and statistically inferior to 19.
- Wisconsin's performance has declined only slightly since 1994. Most of the change in ranking is explained by improvement in other states and jurisdictions.

### **Wisconsin Subgroup Performance in 2009:**

- Every major Wisconsin subgroup (male, female, eligible for free or reduced lunch, not eligible for a free or reduced lunch, African American, white, Hispanic, Asian/pacific islander, native American) scored below the national average for their subgroup.
- If we cross-tabulate the subgroups, only one cohort (African American girls who did not qualify for a free or reduced lunch) achieved above the average for their cohort.
- White students ranked 30<sup>th</sup>, nationally.
- African American students ranked last, nationally.

### **Higher Achieving Students:**

- In 1994, only 2 states had higher rates of proficient and advanced readers than Wisconsin.
- In 2009, 25 states had higher rates of proficient and advanced readers than Wisconsin.
- From 1994, to 2009, 21 states had statistically significant increases in their rate of proficient and advanced readers. The largest single gain was 13 points in Florida.
- From 1994 to 2009, Wisconsin's rate of proficient and advanced readers fell by approximately 3 points.

### **Students Reading Below the Basic Level:**

- In 1994, only 1 state had a lower rate of below basic readers than Wisconsin.
- In 2009, 29 states had a lower rate of below basic readers than Wisconsin.

All of the above facts are taken from scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. All scores refer to 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading performance. Statistical comparisons are done through the NCES site, using  $p < .05$  as the standard for significance.

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- From 1994 to 2009, 29 states had statistically significant decreases in their rate of below basic readers. The largest decrease was 23 points in Florida.
- From 1994 to 2009, Wisconsin's rate of below basic readers increased by approximately 4 points.

**Please note: the statistics above refer to students who score at the “basic” level of proficiency. This is a low standard and does not represent students who read at a proficient or on grade level. 67% of all Wisconsin students do not read on grade level by the time they reach 4<sup>th</sup> grade. That includes 84% of Hispanic students and 91% of black students (tied for the worst rate in the nation with Michigan and Louisiana). The purpose of our task force is to address these issues.**

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The data can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>