

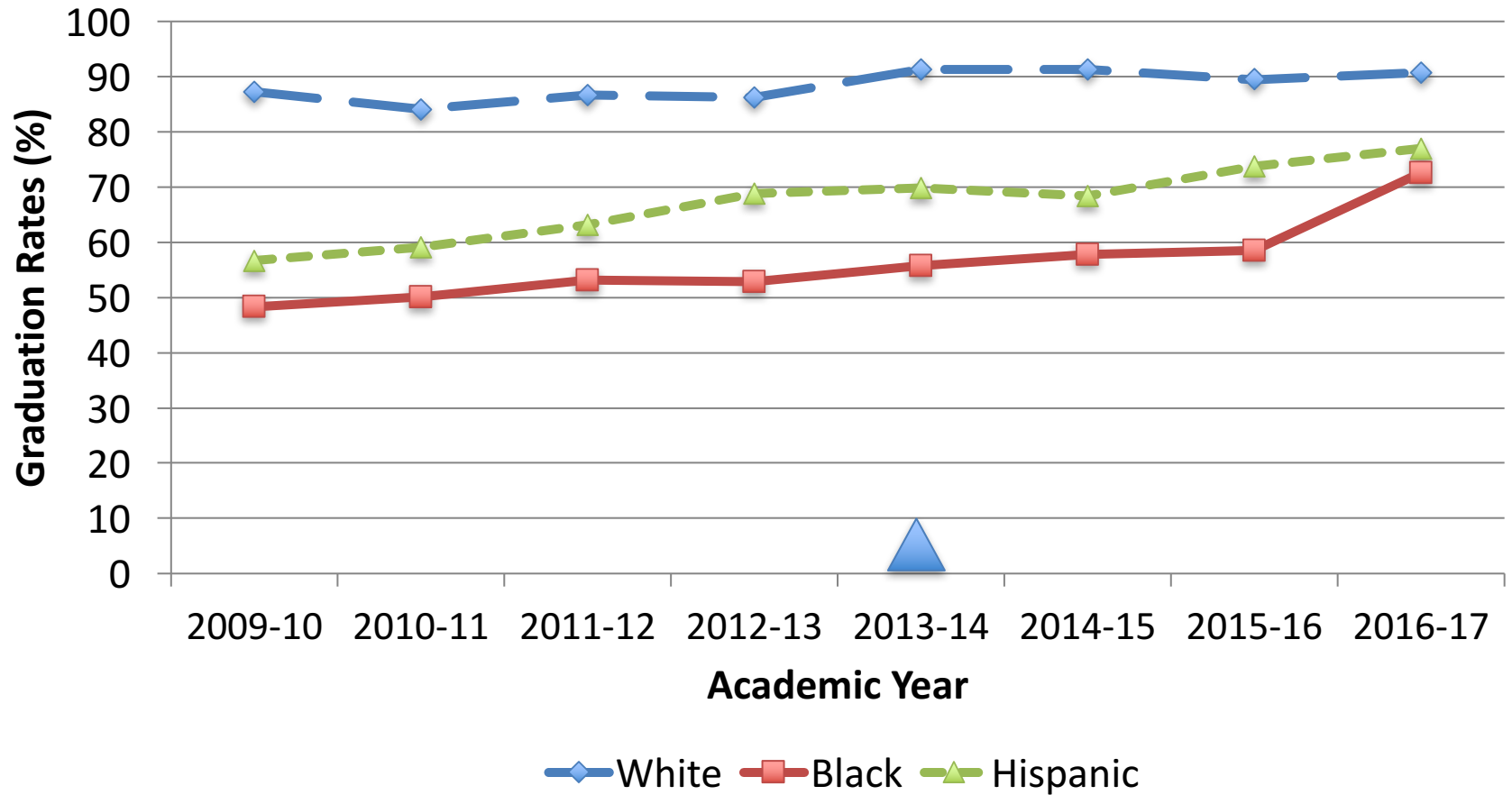
MMSD High School Graduation Rates, College Readiness, and Student Learning

Laurie Frost and Jeff Henriques
Simpson Street Free Press Parents Meeting
November 29, 2018

MMSD Graduation Rates

- Much has been made recently about the significant increase in MMSD high school graduation rates, especially for minority students.

4-Year Graduation Rates



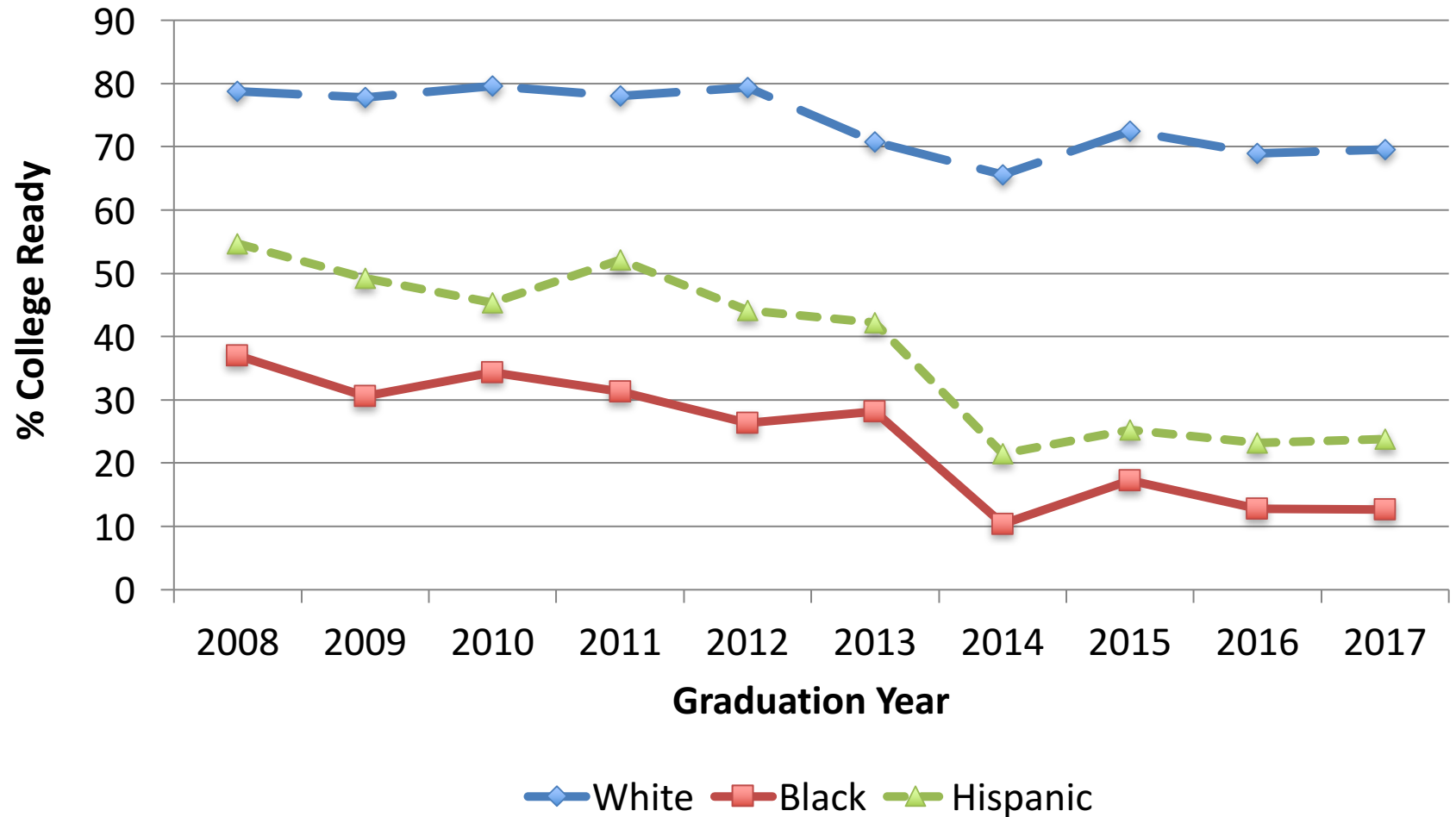
Implementation of MMSD Strategic Framework

- We wanted to know if the increase in minority student graduation rates coincides with an increase in minority student learning and achievement.
- We believe the best measure to use in answering that question is **ACT-based college readiness** – because it is standardized and objective, and because all Wisconsin high school juniors now take the ACT.
- We do not believe GPA is a good indicator of student learning because grades can be very subjective. They are easily influenced – whether consciously or unconsciously – by the adult’s desire for success, both their own and their students’, especially during times of administrative and societal pressure for that success.

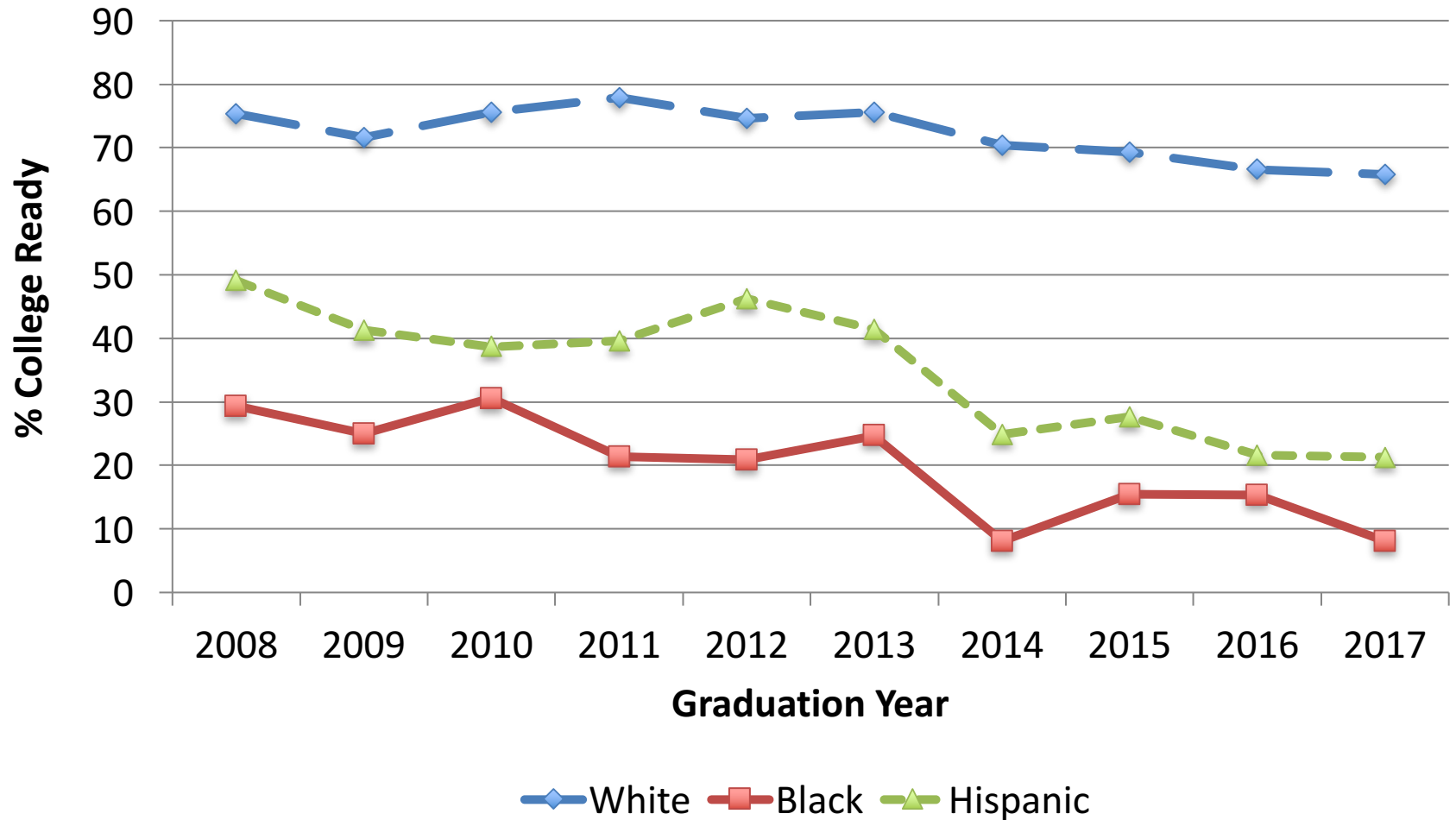
About ACT-Based College Readiness

- All MMSD students take the ACT in February of their junior year in high school.
- Students' scores are aligned to the year they are expected to graduate.
- College readiness indicates that the student has scored high enough to have at least a 75% chance of earning a C or better in an introductory college course in the content area.

ACT College Readiness: Reading



ACT College Readiness: Math



Conclusion

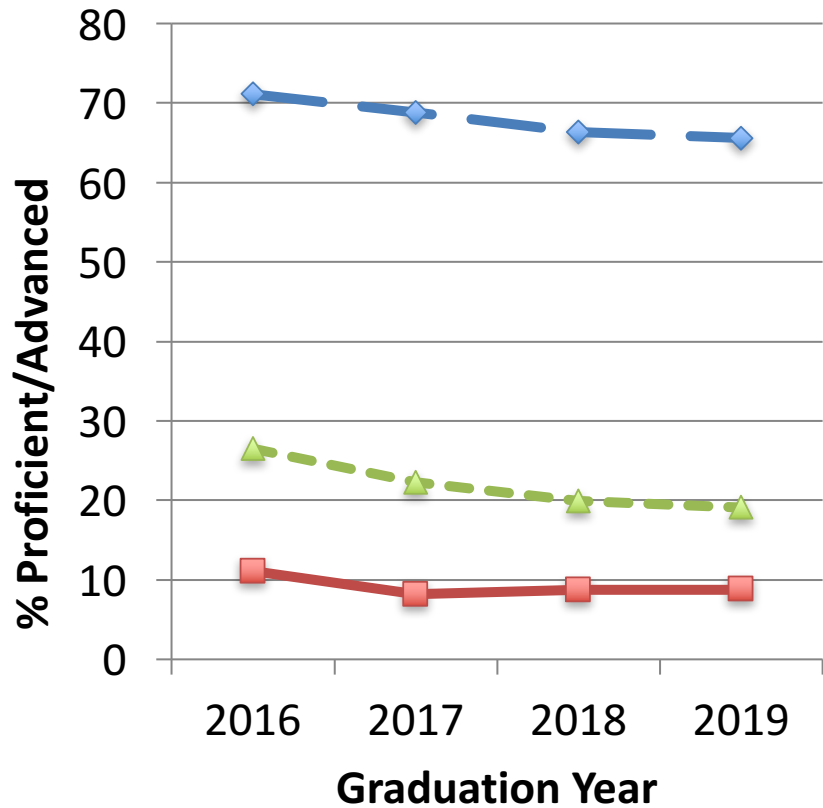
- The increase in minority student graduation rates has not been accompanied by an increase in minority student college readiness.
- On the contrary, the percentage of MMSD minority students who are college ready in reading or math continues to be very low.

Question

- What about academic proficiency?
- Has the increase in minority student graduation rates been accompanied by an increase in the percentage of minority students who are reading and doing math at grade level?

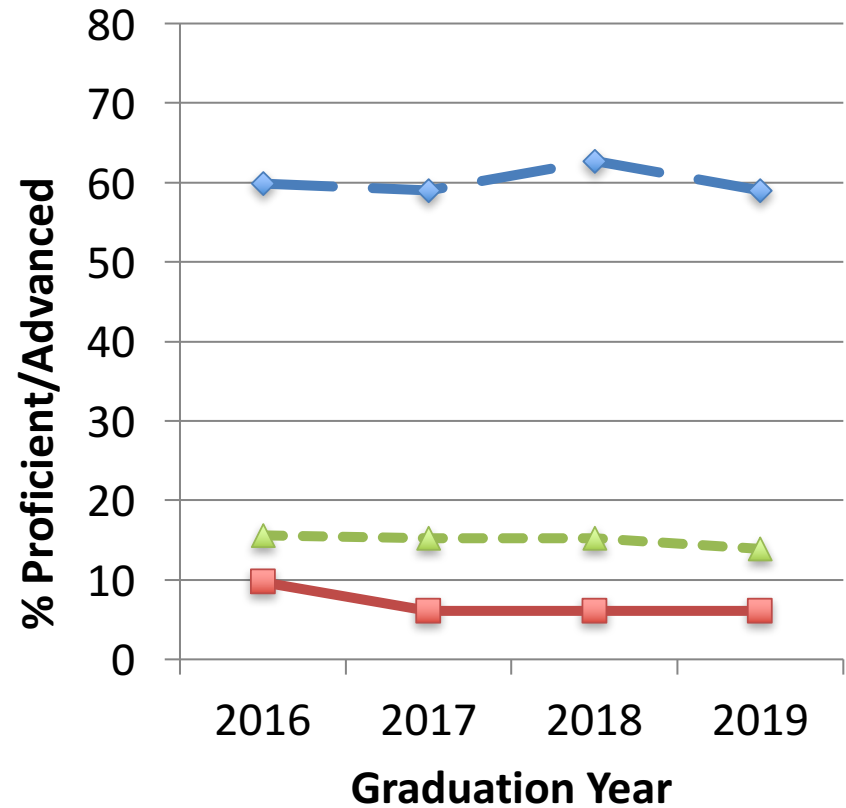
11th Grade Proficiency (ACT)

Reading



White Black Hispanic

Math



White Black Hispanic

Conclusion

- The increase in minority student graduation rates has not been accompanied by an increase in the percentage of minority students who are reading and doing math at grade level.
- On the contrary, the percentage of 11th grade minority students who are reading or doing math at grade level continues to be very low.

Bottom Line

- Despite graduation rates in the 70-80% range, only 10-20% of our Black and Hispanic students are college ready and reading and doing math at grade level.
- That means the vast majority of our Black and Hispanic students are graduating unprepared for college and without basic academic skills.
- But a high school diploma unaccompanied by the ability to read and do math is worth very little.

Bottom Line

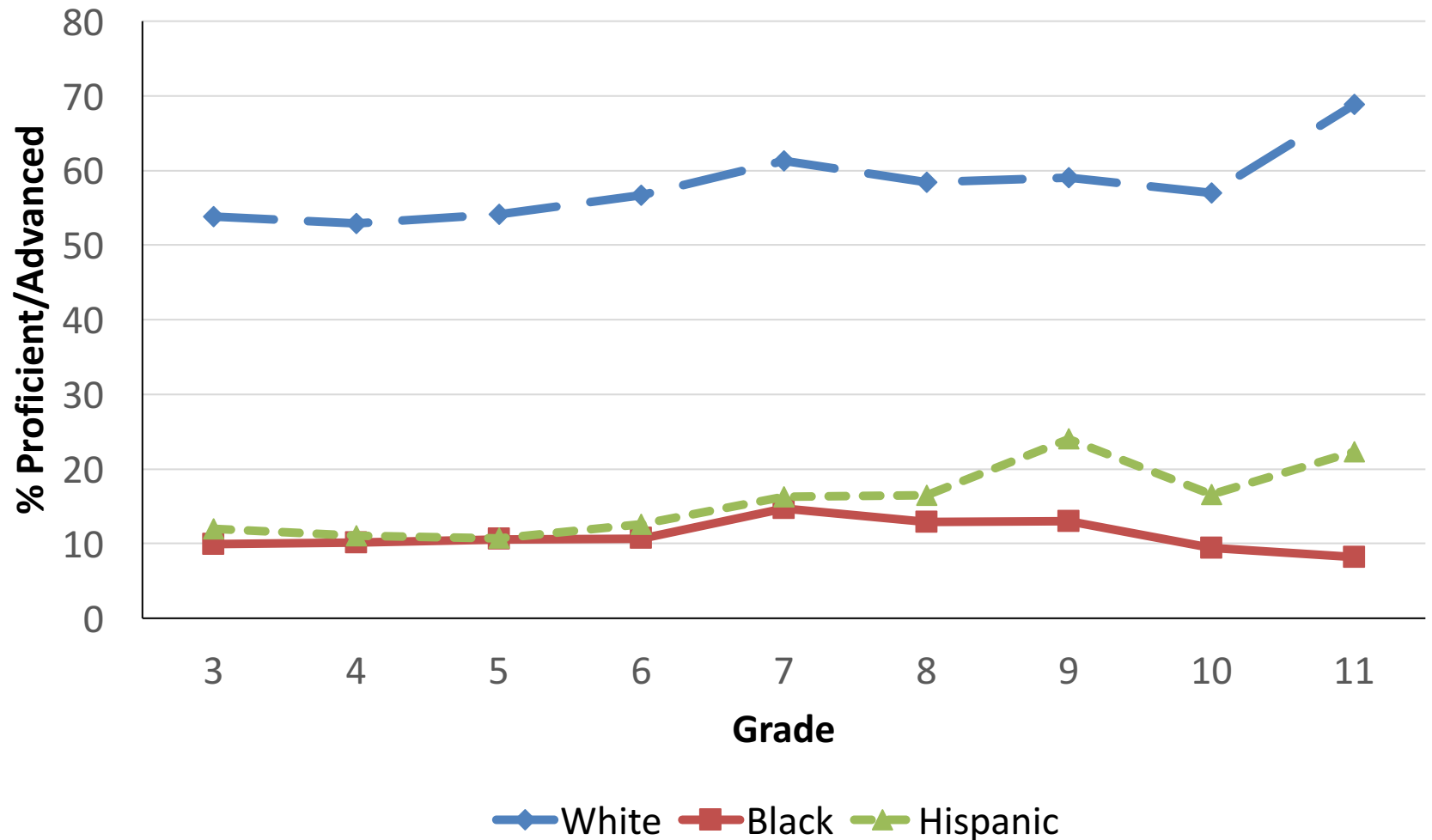
- We are graduating too many students without preparing them to earn a good living, live a good life, and participate effectively in our democracy.

Question

- How did the minority students in the Class of 2017 do over time?
- What did the MMSD accomplish with these students over the course of their many years in the District?

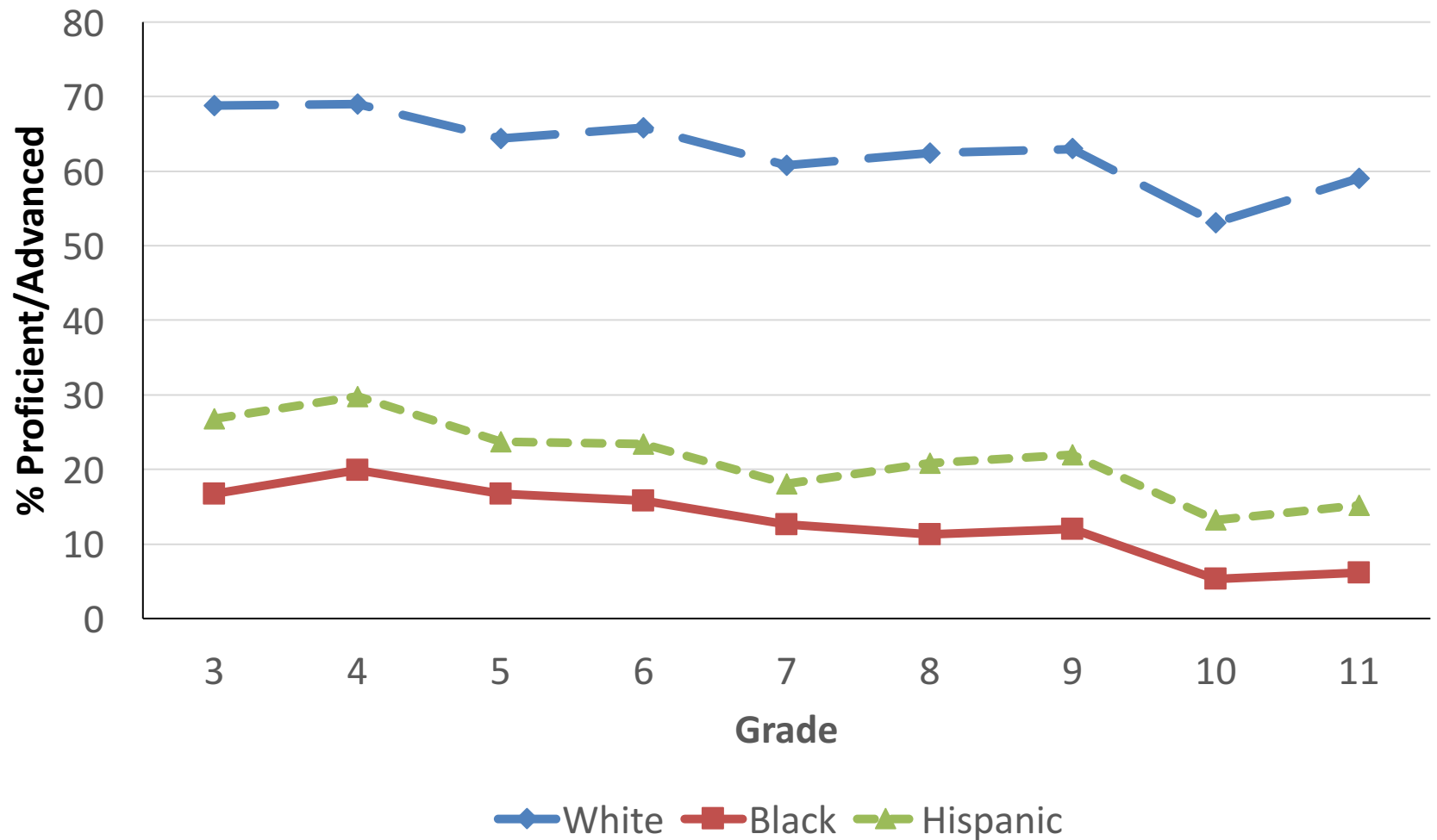
MMSD Class of 2017

Reading Performance (Grades 3 – 11)



MMSD Class of 2017

Math Performance (Grades 3 – 11)



Answer

- The rates of grade-level performance for the minority students in the MMSD Class of 2017 are tragically and unconscionably low.
- The percentage of Black and Hispanic students in the Class of 2017 who were performing at grade level did not improve much, if at all, from the time they were third graders.

But wait. There's more.

The Importance of Reading Proficiently by Fourth Grade

- In fourth grade, “learning to read” becomes “reading to learn.”
- If a student is not reading proficiently in fourth grade, they will begin to have difficulty learning any subject that involves reading (which is almost every subject).
- If a student continues to lack proficiency in reading as they move through school, they will fall farther and farther behind in all other subjects that involve reading (which is almost every subject).

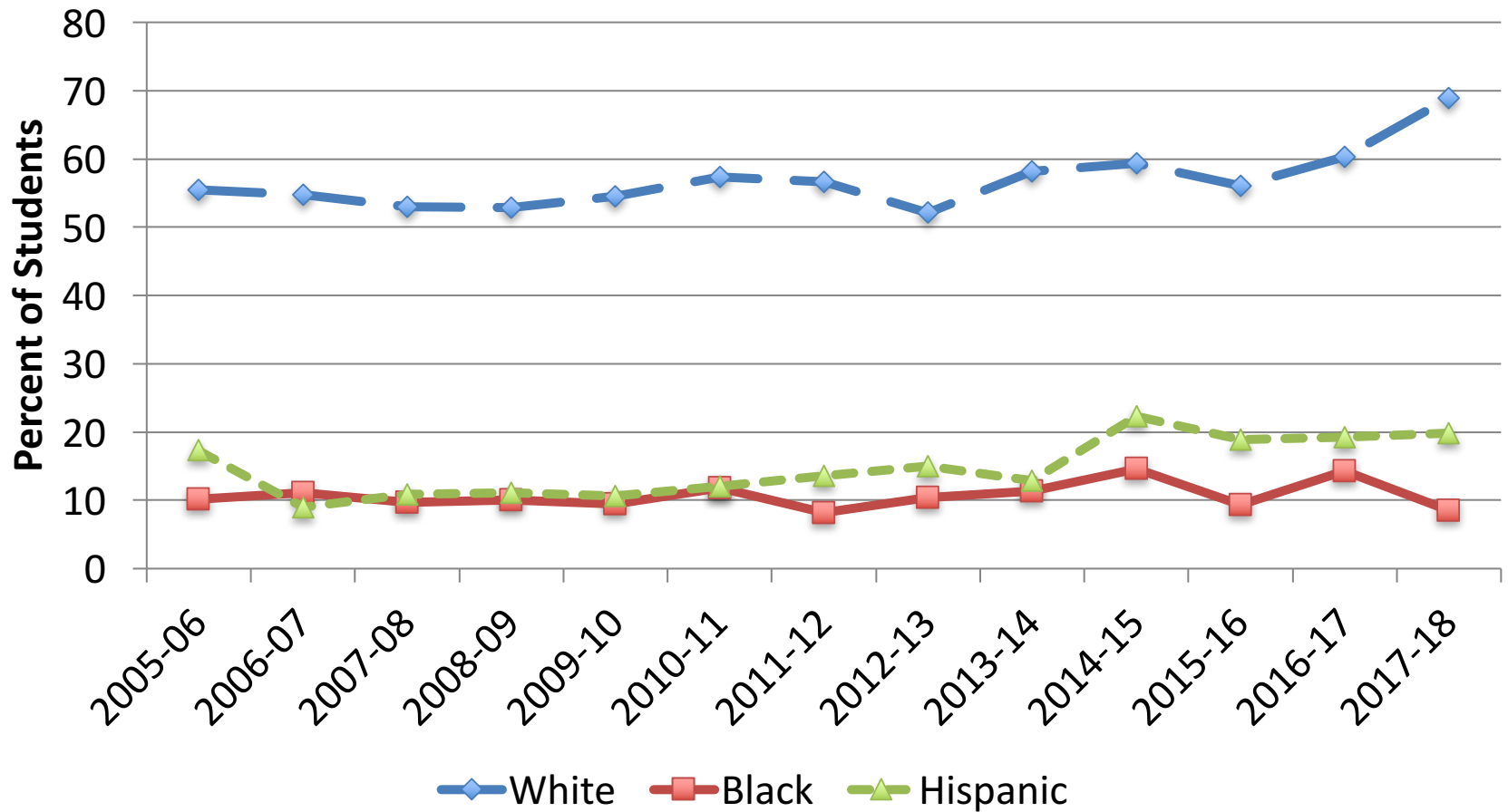
The Importance of Reading Proficiently by Fourth Grade

- Students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school than those who are.
- Two-thirds of students who are not reading proficiently by the end of fourth grade will end up in jail or on welfare.

Question

- Are MMSD students becoming proficient readers by fourth grade, when they must be able to “read in order to learn”?

4th Grade Reading (Proficient/Advanced)



Answer

- Although most of our White students are becoming proficient readers by fourth grade, the vast majority of our minority students are not.
- Only 10% of our Black fourth graders are reading at grade level. That number has not improved since 2005-06.
- Only 20% of our Hispanic fourth graders are reading at grade level. That number has improved only a small amount since 2005-06.
- The future for the students who are not reading at grade level in fourth grade is very bleak.

What Should We Do About the Situation?

- We need to be honest about how dismally our schools are failing our minority students and the lifelong repercussions of that failure. We cannot lose sight of these data. The data don't lie.
- We believe that the District cares and that our teachers are working hard. Unfortunately, what they are doing isn't working.

What Should We Do About the Situation?

- **Increasing the percentage of students who are reading proficiently by fourth grade is where it's at.** This cannot be overstated.
- If more than half of our fourth graders are not reading proficiently, clearly there is a systemic problem that needs to be addressed.
- That means individualized interventions alone are not the answer.

What Should We Do About the Situation?

- We need to devote more time to reading instruction in the early elementary grades.
- We need to beef up our reading curriculum.
- We need **licensed** reading professionals to be in charge of all in-school reading instruction in the District.
- We need out-of-school programs that focus on core academics, like reading, and we need the District, City and community to support them.
- We need more well-trained community volunteers in our schools.
- We need to make sure our children are in school every day, ready to learn.
- We need to read to our children at home.
- We need to hold the reading professionals, our teachers, our principals, the District Administration, the School Board, our families, and ourselves accountable for improving our children's fourth grade reading scores.



- This is our license plate.
- It says RD2KDZ (“Read to Kids”).
- If you ever see us around town – say, at Woodman’s or Target – feel free to approach us with your concerns and ideas.

Thanks for listening.

Laurie and Jeff