



## **Wisconsin 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Results on the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

**Main takeaways** from the 2017 NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading exam:

- Wisconsin’s score was 220, below the national average of 222
- Wisconsin score statistically declined from 2015
- Wisconsin scores have been statistically flat since 1992
- Wisconsin ranked 34<sup>th</sup> nationally, compared to 25<sup>th</sup> in 2015
- All Wisconsin racial, economic status, and disability status sub-groups perform below the national average for that sub-group
- Wisconsin African-American students rank 49<sup>th</sup> among black students in the country and Wisconsin white students rank 41<sup>st</sup> (behind Alabama and Mississippi) among white students
- Wisconsin has a gap of 32 points between white and black students, the fifth largest in the country; this gap represents approximately 3 grade levels
- Wisconsin ranks 31<sup>st</sup> in the country for the percentage of students at proficient or advanced
- 35% of Wisconsin 4<sup>th</sup> graders score proficient or advanced, down from 37% in 2015
- 51.7% of Wisconsin 4<sup>th</sup> graders were proficient or advanced on the 2016-17 Wisconsin Forward exam, raising the question of whether Wisconsin is again starting to move away from the NAEP scale in scoring its own state tests
- Milwaukee is 25<sup>th</sup> of 26 national urban districts, with a 30 point white/black gap

### **Proficiency Rates and Performance Gaps**

Overall, 8% of Wisconsin 4<sup>th</sup> graders are advanced, 27% are proficient, 31% are basic, and 34% are below basic. Nationally, 9% of students are advanced, 27% are proficient, 31% are basic, and 32% are below basic.

<b>Below Basic</b> <i>Missing Basic Skills</i>	<b>Basic</b> <i>Incomplete Mastery</i>	<b>Proficient</b> <i>Solid Performance</i>	<b>Advanced</b> <i>Superior Performance</i>
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**National 4th Grade Reading 2017**



**Wisconsin 4th Grade Reading 2017**



As is the case around the country, some student groups in Wisconsin perform better than others, though only English Language Learners outperform their national peer group. Several Wisconsin groups are contrasted below.

White Students



Asian Students



Hispanic Students



Black Students



Low SES students



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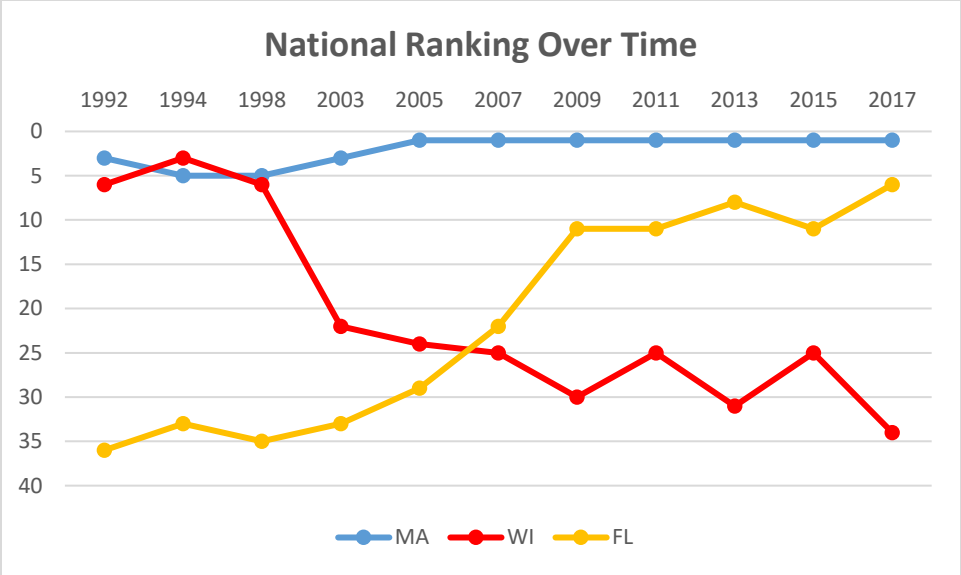


Students w/ Disability



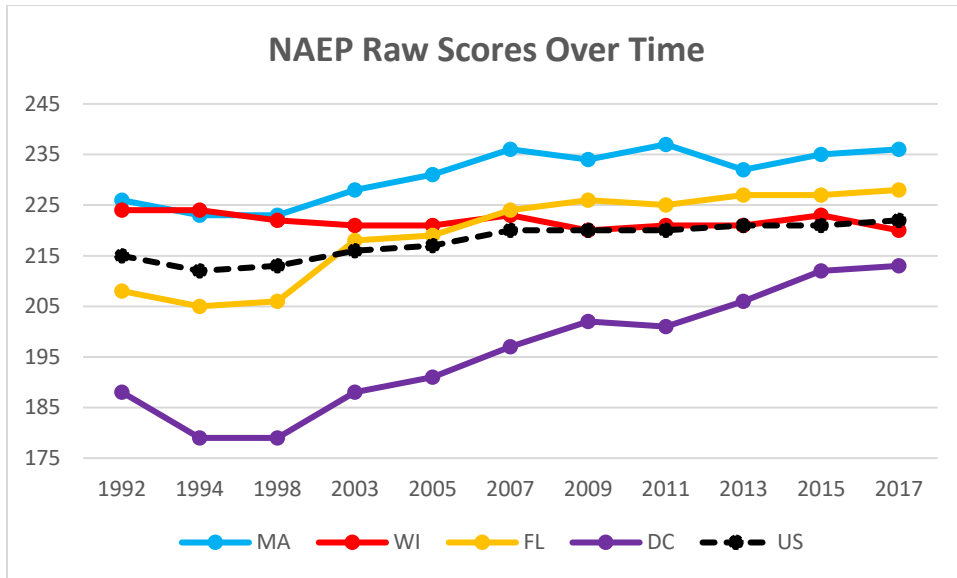
Subgroups can be broken down by race, gender, economic status, and disability status. 41% of white students are proficient or advanced, versus 34% of Asian students, 16% of Hispanic students and 15% of African-American students. 37% of girls are proficient or advanced, compared to 33% of boys. Among students who do not qualify for a free or reduced lunch, 46% are proficient or advanced, while the rate is only 19% for those who qualify. Among students without disabilities, 39% are proficient or advanced, while students with disabilities continue to have the worst scores in Wisconsin. Only 11% of them are proficient or advanced, and a full 76% are below basic, indicating that they do not have the skills necessary to navigate print in school or daily life. It is important to remember that this group does *not* include students with severe cognitive disabilities.

When looking at gaps between sub-groups, keep in mind that a difference of 10 points on the NAEP equals approximately one grade level in performance. Average scores for Wisconsin sub-groups, in descending order, range from 231 (not eligible for free/reduced lunch) to 226 (white students and students without disabilities), 223 (females), 222 (non-English Language Learners), 219 (Asian), 217 (males), 203 (eligible for free/reduced lunch), 201 (Hispanic), 194 (African-American), 191 (English Language Learners), and 177 (students with disabilities). There is a gap of more than three grade levels between white and black 4th graders, and almost five grade levels between 4<sup>th</sup> graders with and without disabilities.



**State Ranking Over Time**

Wisconsin 4<sup>th</sup> graders rank 34<sup>th</sup> out of 52 jurisdictions that took the 2017 NAEP exam. In the past decade, our national ranking has seen some bumps up or down, but the overall trend since 1998 is a decline in Wisconsin’s national ranking (we were 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1994). Our change in national ranking is entirely due to increases in scores in other jurisdictions that are passing us by. As noted on the next page, Wisconsin’s own scores have been flat since 1992.



### Scores Viewed Over Time

The graph above shows NAEP raw scores over time. Wisconsin’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade average score in 2017 is 220, which is statistically lower than 2015 and statistically unchanged from 1992. It is statistically lower than the current national score (222). The national score, as well as scores in Massachusetts, Florida, Washington, D.C., and other jurisdictions, have seen statistically significant increases since 1992, while Wisconsin has remained flat.

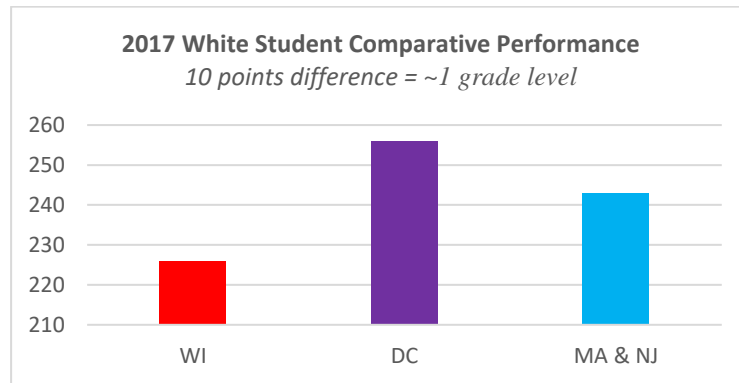
### The Positive Effect of Wisconsin Demographics

Compared to many other jurisdictions, Wisconsin has proportionately fewer students in the lower performing sub-groups (students of color, low-income students, etc.). This demographic reality allows our state to have a higher average score than another state with a greater proportion of students in the lower performing sub-groups, even if all or most of that state’s sub-groups outperform their sub-group peers in Wisconsin. If we readjusted the NAEP scores to balance demographics between jurisdictions, Wisconsin would rank lower than 34<sup>th</sup> in the nation. When we did this demographic equalization analysis in 2009, Wisconsin dropped from 30<sup>th</sup> place to 43<sup>rd</sup> place nationally.

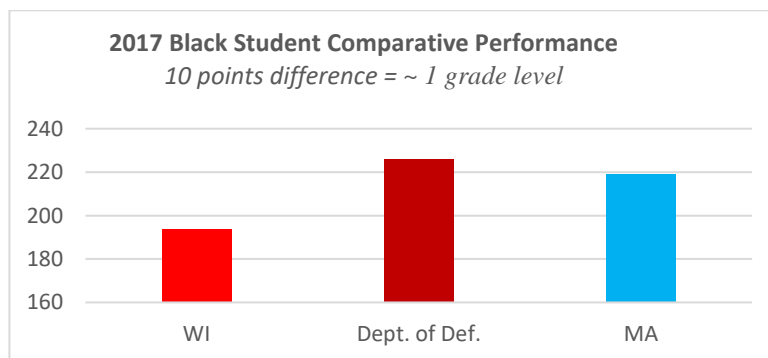
## Wisconsin Sub-Groups Compared to their National Peers

Robust clinical and brain research in reading has provided a roadmap to more effective teacher preparation and student instruction, but Wisconsin has not embraced this pathway with the same conviction and consistency as many other states. Where change has been most completely implemented, such as Massachusetts and Florida, the lowest students benefitted the most, but the higher students also made substantial gains. It is important that we come to grips with the fact that whatever is holding back reading achievement in Wisconsin is holding it back for everyone, not just poor or minority students. Disadvantaged students suffer more, but everyone is suffering, and the more carefully we look at the data, the more obvious that becomes.

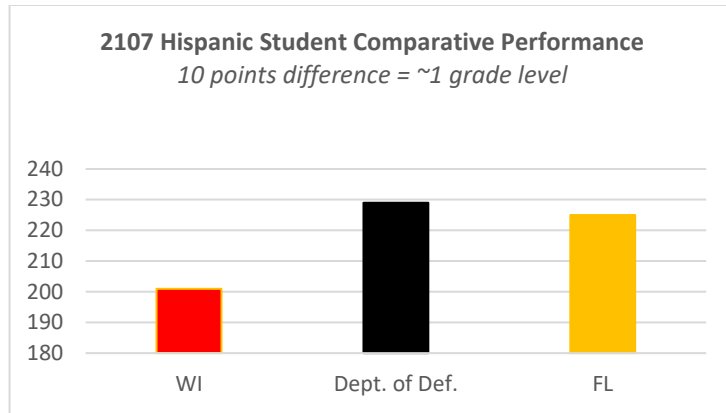
10 points difference on a NAEP score equals approximately one grade level. Comparing Wisconsin sub-groups to their highest performing peers around the country gives us an indication of the potential for better outcomes here.



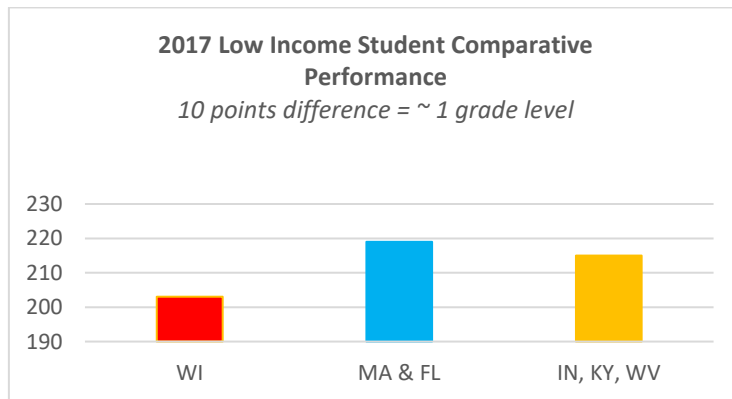
White students in Wisconsin (score 226) are approximately 3 years behind white students in Washington, D.C. (score 256), and 1.7 years behind white students in Massachusetts and New Jersey (score 243).



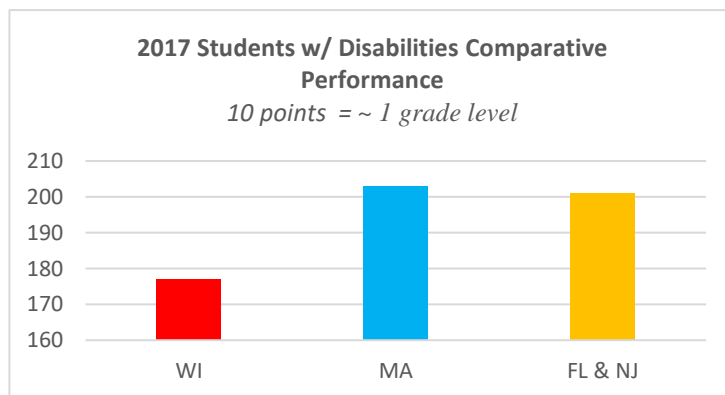
African-American students in Wisconsin (score 194) are more than 3 years behind African-American students in Department of Defense schools (score 226), and approximately 2.5 years behind African-American students in Massachusetts (score 219). They are nearly a year behind their peers in Alabama and Mississippi.



Hispanic students in Wisconsin (201) are almost 3 years behind their peers in Department of Defense schools (229) and about 2.4 years behind their peers in Florida (225).



Wisconsin students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (203) perform approximately 1.6 years behind similar students in Massachusetts and Florida (219) and 1.2 years behind those in Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia (215).



Wisconsin students with disabilities (177) perform approximately 2.6 years behind similar students in Massachusetts (203) and 2.4 years behind those in Florida and New Jersey (201).