

GREAT PLAINS INSTITUTE
OF READING AND WRITING

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA LINCOLN

WINTER 2005-2006 PROGRESS REPORT

NEBRASKA READING FIRST

STATE REPORT

Report prepared by

Guy Trainin Ph.D.

Oren Yagil M.Ed.



The Great Plains Institute
of Reading & Writing
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Winter Progress Report

OVERVIEW

The Winter Progress Report offers an overview of student mid-year achievement. Student achievement will be interpreted through two separate comparisons. In each section we start with a comparison of this year's winter achievement and last year's mid-year achievement; a *between cohorts* comparison. This comparison will show whether the mid-year achievement of Reading First schools is higher than last year as we anticipated. A second comparison focuses on following student achievement from fall to winter of 2005-2006 school year. This *within cohort* comparison shows the sustainability of this year's baseline.

Student population. Student characteristics have remained relatively stable. There were few differences in student demographic characteristics from the 2004-2005 school year. Student population in Reading First is significantly different from state average. Minority and economically disadvantaged students are represented in Reading First at much higher proportion.

Table 1: Student characteristics in **Reading First** schools in Nebraska in winter 2005-2006

	Reading First Schools ¹		State Average ²
	2005-2006	2004-2005	2004-2005
Number of Students⁴	4,119	4,187	--
Free/Reduced Lunch	44.6%	36.4%	34.8%
Special Education	7.4%	6%	15.4% ³
English Language Learners	3.7%	3.4%	5.8%
White Non Hispanic	59.9%	60.6%	78.5%
Hispanic	14.5%	12.9%	10.8%
African American	21.9%	22.9%	7.4%

¹ Numbers represent assessed students in *Reading First* Schools K-3rd grade only.

² Based on the 2004-2005 *State of the Schools Report* K-12th grade (NDE, 2005).

³ The relative low proportion of students identified as needing Special Education services is not meaningful since the Reading First student sample includes only K-3rd grade students.

⁴ Number of students differs from fall 2005-2006. This could be due to student migration and or student present at day of testing.

Kindergarten Achievement.

Kindergarten students in Nebraska Reading First schools (N=1146) have continued improving the results from last year. Students are now at a higher point in achievement compared to last year’s cohort (figure 1; error bars represent confidence intervals). A noteworthy improvement can be seen in the phonological decoding skills (NWF).

In all assessments kindergartners’ average achievement this year was higher than last year. Since kindergarten students were not in Reading First last year the improvement should be attributed to teacher application of research based instruction earlier and better.

Student achievement this winter (figure 2) shows notable climb since fall. This achievement level is encouraging and continues the trend observed last year showing that there is a great impact on students in the lower grades.

Students’ distribution by risk level in the main test for kindergarten (PSF; figure 3) shows that the majority of students are at low risk with an average of 69.5%; 15% are at some risk and more than 15% at risk.

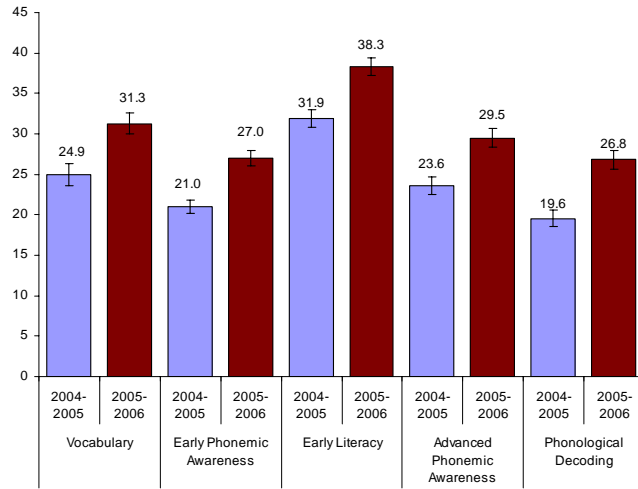


Figure 1: Kindergarten baseline achievement by cohort, winter 2004-2005 to winter 2005-2006.

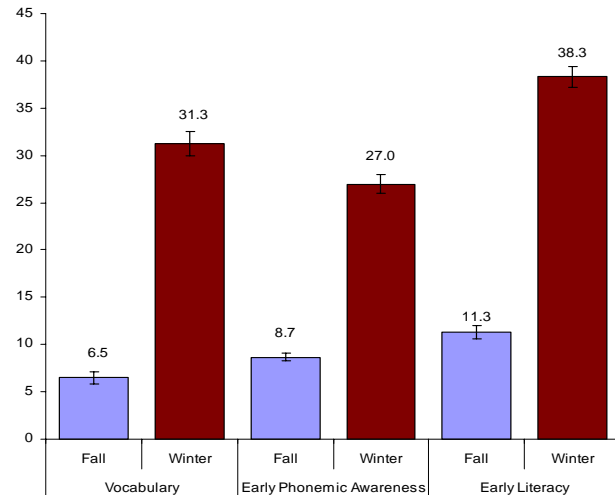


Figure 2: Kindergarten achievement progress from fall to winter.

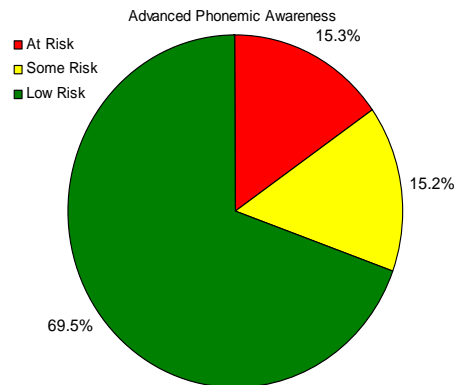


Figure 3: Kindergarten achievement in advanced phonemic awareness.

First-Grade Achievement. First-Grade students (N=958) have continued the progress seen in the fall analysis. Students are now at a higher point in achievement compared to last year's cohort (figure 4). An improvement can be seen in both early literacy (LNF) and reading fluency (ORF). In all assessments except vocabulary first grade students this year have scored higher than last year.

Students' achievement this winter compared to fall of this year (figure 5) shows significant growth over a period of four months. This achievement is encouraging and may demonstrate that there is a great impact on students in the lower grades. Students' distribution by risk level in the main test for first grade (NWF; figure 6) shows that the majority of students are at low risk- almost 58%; more than 32% are at some risk and only 10% are at risk.

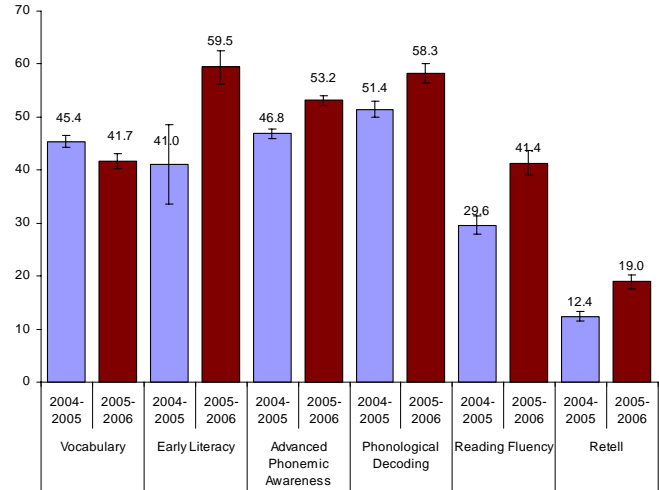


Figure 4: First-Grade baseline achievement by cohort, winter 2004-2005 to winter 2005-2006.

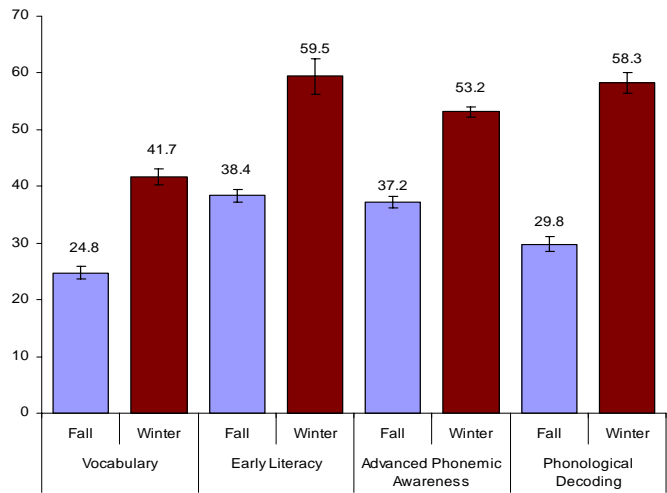


Figure 5: First-Grade achievement progress from fall to winter.

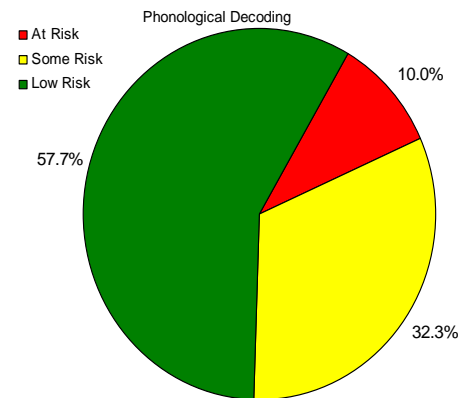


Figure 6: First-Grade achievement in phonological decoding.

Second-Grade Achievement. Second-Grade students (N=988) have sustained the incremental progress seen in the fall semester. Students' achievements this year are somewhat higher compared to last year's cohort (figure 7).

Students' achievement this winter compared to fall of this year (figure 8) shows a notable climb over a period of four months it is important to note that the trajectory maintains expectations but isn't surpassing expected growth, thus there is no indication of students closing the literacy gap. This achievement is encouraging, and may demonstrate the impact on students that the previous year in Reading First may have had.

Students' distribution by risk level in the main test for second grade (ORF; figure 9) shows that the majority of students are at low risk with more than 61%; more than 16% are at some risk and 22.5% are at risk.

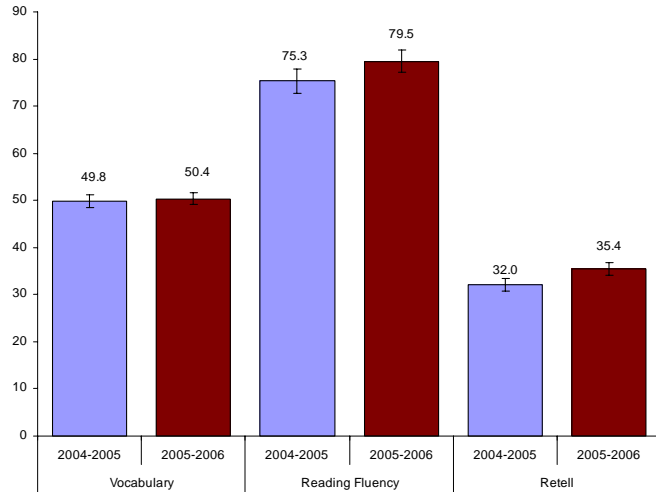


Figure 7: Second-Grade baseline achievement by cohort, winter 2004-2005 to winter 2005-2006.

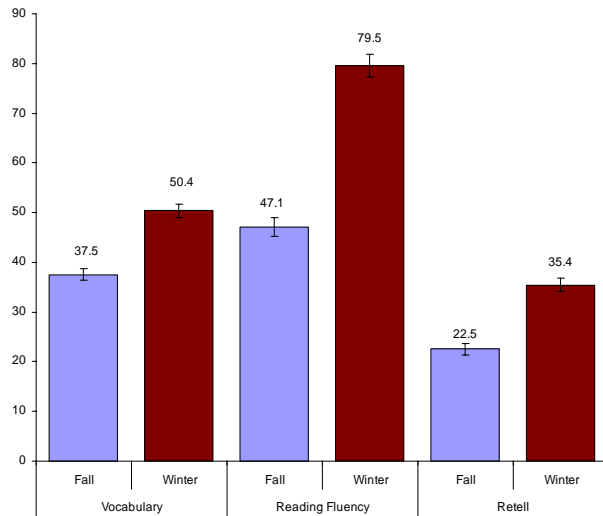


Figure 8: Second-Grade achievement progress from fall to winter.

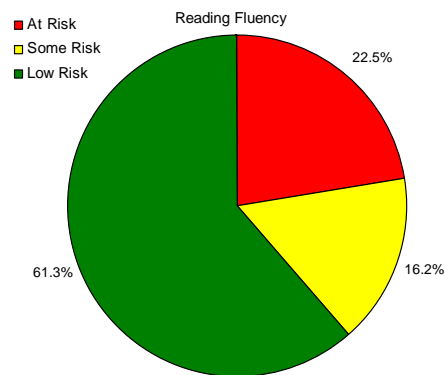


Figure 9: Second-Grade achievement in reading fluency.

Third-Grade Achievement. Third-Grade students (N=925) have also continued the progress seen in the fall analysis. Students have somewhat higher achievement compared to last year’s cohort (figure 10). A small improvement can be seen in all tests for third grade- reading fluency (ORF), Vocabulary (WUF) and comprehension (Retell).

Students’ achievement this winter compared to fall of this year (figure 11) shows a steady climb in Oral Reading Fluency and corresponding Retell. This achievement is on track but does not indicate growth that will help bring second grade students to the success levels of K and first grade students.

Students’ distribution by risk level in the main test for second grade (ORF; figure 12) shows that the majority of students are at low risk with an average of 48%; almost 27% are at some risk and more than 25% are at risk. This figure shows that there is still a lot to be done in this grade.

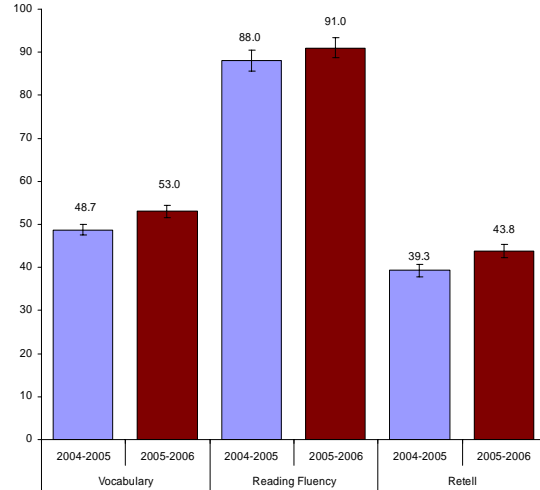


Figure 10: Third-Grade baseline achievement by cohort, winter 2004-2005 to winter 2005-2006.

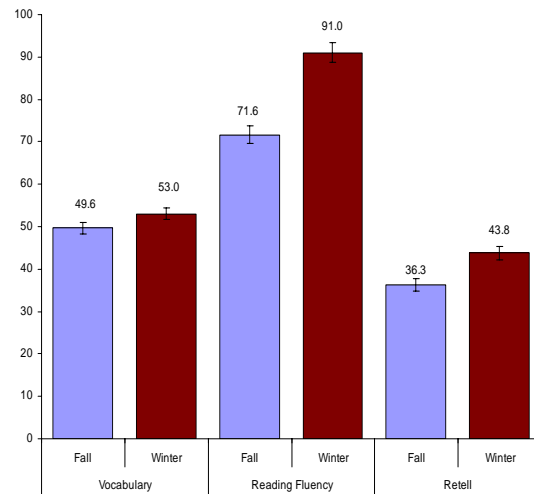


Figure 11: Third-Grade achievement progress from fall to winter.

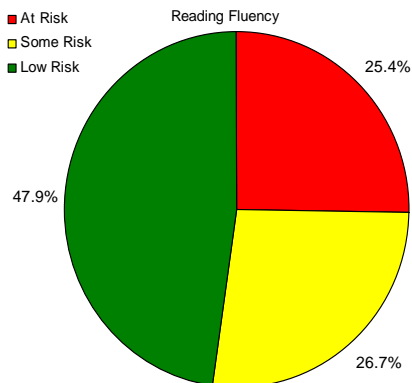


Figure 12: Third-Grade achievement in reading fluency.

Students' Achievement by Group. Data was analyzed by the different categories (ELL, SPED, F/RL, and Ethnicity). The following figures show the gap in mean scores between general education students and demographic groups. Narrowing gaps are presented in blue; widening gaps are presented in red; and non-significant differences, indicating a consistent gap, are indicated in white (absence of color).

SPED. The comparison of Special Education students' achievements from winter 2004-2005 and winter 2005-2006, shows that the gap between general education and special education students has widened in kindergarten and third grade, has narrowed in second grade and has remained relatively the same in first grade (figure 13).

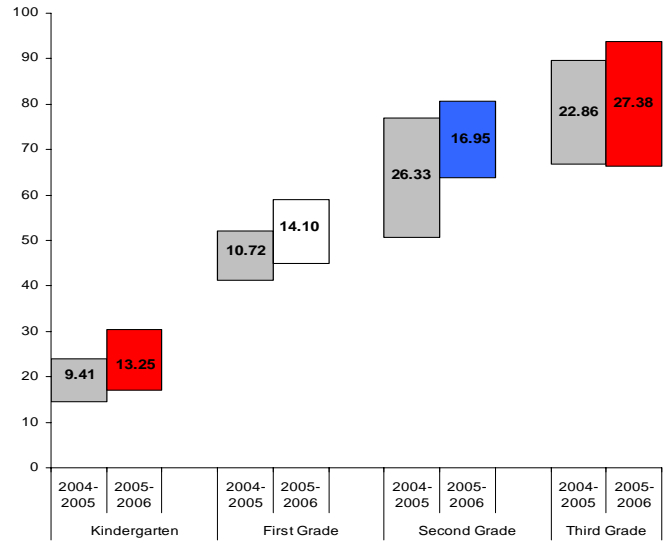


Figure 13: Winter assessment gap between general education and special education students over 2 years.

ELL. The comparison between English Only students and English Learners (figure 14) shows that mean scores for all students at kindergarten and second and third grades have risen. In both kindergarten and third grade there was no significant change in the gaps from last year to this year. In first grade the gap has widened and in second grade the gap has narrowed.

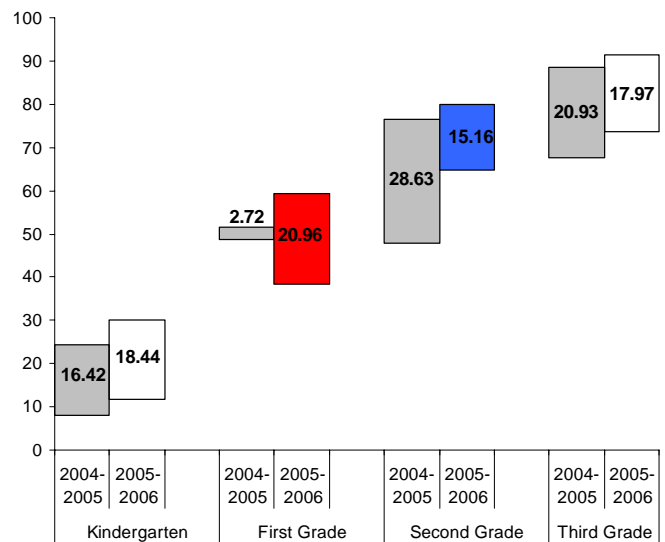


Figure 14: Winter assessment gap between English only students and English learners over 2 years.

FRL. The comparison between non-F/RL students and those participating in the F/RL program (figure 15) shows decreasing gaps in kindergarten and third grade, and growing gap in first and second grade.

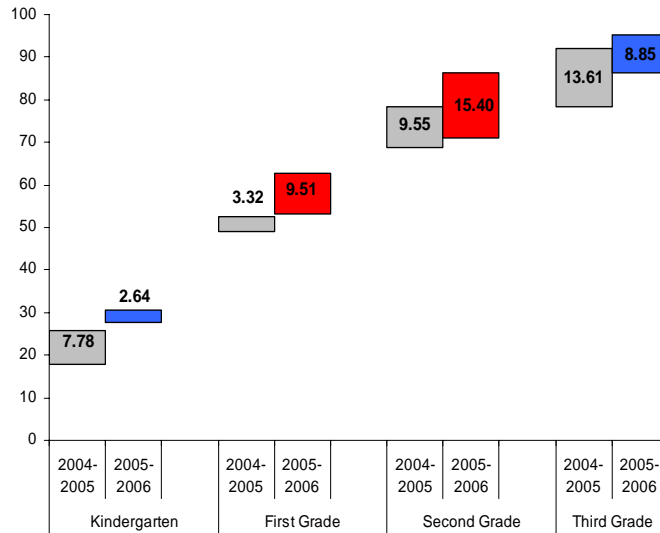


Figure 15: Winter assessment gap between Non-F/RL and F/RL students over 2 years.

Ethnicity. The comparison by student ethnicity (figure 16) was made using mean scores for each ethnicity compared to the mean for the White non-Hispanic group. Analyzing the data shows that in three cases- African American in kindergarten, Native American in first grade and Hispanic in second grade no significant change has occurred but average mean scores has increased. The gap has widened for Native American students in kindergarten, Hispanic and African American students in first grade, African American students in second grade and Native American students in third grade. The gap has narrowed for Hispanic students in kindergarten, Native American students in second grade and Hispanic and African American students in third grade. White Non-Hispanic students in third grade have scored the same in both winter 2004-2005 and winter 2005-2006 (hence the almost straight line in third grade).

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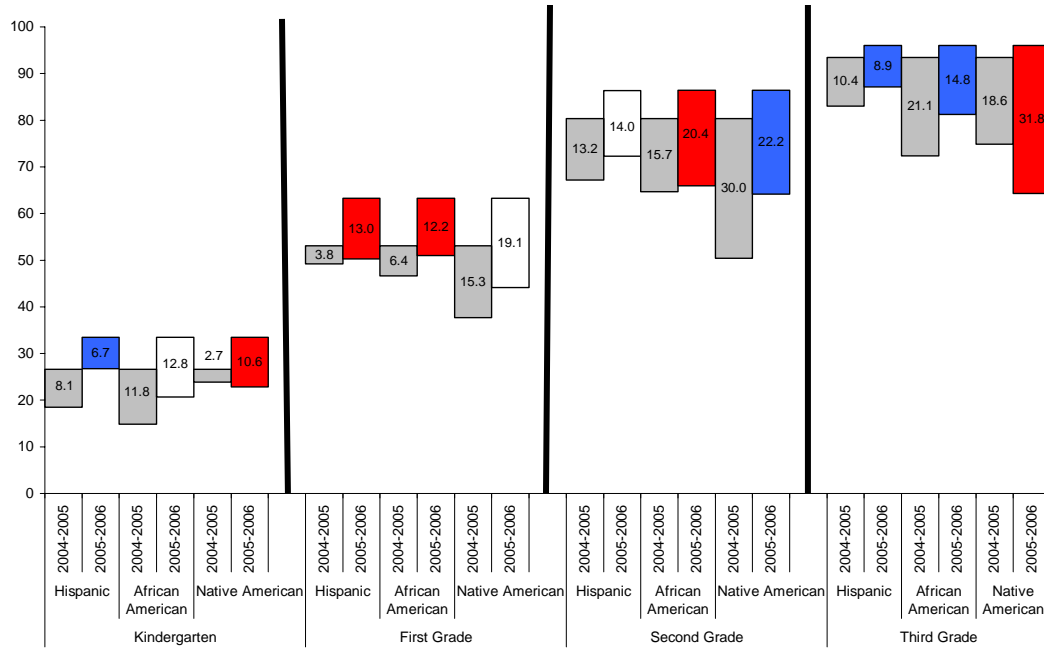


Figure 16: Winter assessment gap between White non-Hispanic students and other ethnicities over 2 years.

Summary. Assessment data shows that the cohort of 2005-06 is performing better than last year’s cohort across all grades and groups. The overall increase does not mean that achievement gaps are narrowing for traditionally weaker populations (ELL, SPED, minority groups). As achievement climbs all students are benefiting and gaps seem to be changed only a little; here the results are mixed with some groups (ELL and F/RL) doing better than others (SPED, minority groups).

Corresponding to last year’s results the progress in second and third grade is much slower despite having more to improve. Taken together, the success of Kindergarten instruction (no impact from last year’s efforts) and the relative slow progress of second and third grades (students that did benefit from RF last year), suggests a pattern. Carry over impact of Reading First is partial and can almost disappear. It also suggests that instruction in second and third grades are qualitatively different and need special attention.

Vocabulary scores seem to stagnate across most groups and grade levels. This may be an artifact of the assessment; however it may also indicate a worrisome pattern, if confirmed, by the results of the spring Gates MacGinitie assessment.

All school districts are eligible for a continuation grant per the criteria set by NE DOE (Table 2).

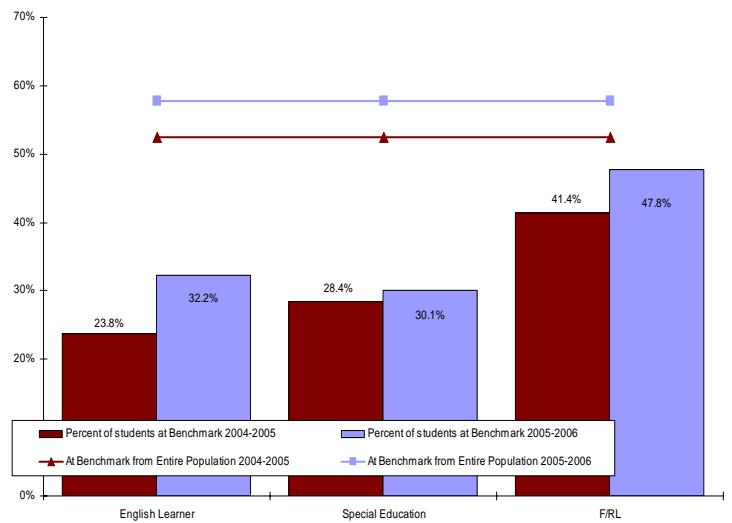


Figure 17: Percentage of students at grade-level (low risk) by group.

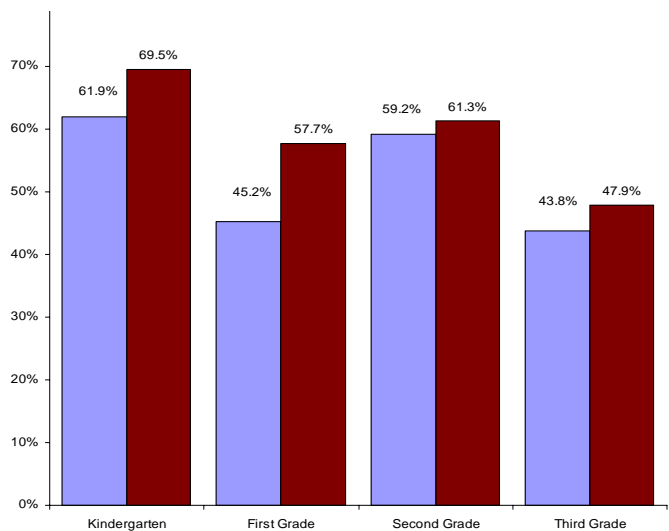


Figure 18: Percentage of students at grade-level (low risk) by grade.

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Table 2: Districts meeting one of two benchmarks set by NE DOE

School District	Kindergarten		First Grade		Second Grade		Third Grade		Eligibility for continuation grant
	Met or not		Met or not		Met or not		Met or not		
	50%	10%	50%	10%	50%	10%	50%	10%	
Ainsworth Community Schools	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	met
Anselmo-Merna/Broken Bow Public Schools	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	met
Bancroft-Rosalie Community School/Allen Consolidated Schools	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	met
Beemer Public School	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	met
Chadron Public Schools	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	met
Elkhorn Valley Schools	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	met
Gering Public Schools	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	met
Lakeview Community Schools	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	met
McCook Public Schools	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	met
North Platte Public Schools	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	met
Omaha Public Schools	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	met
Sidney	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	met