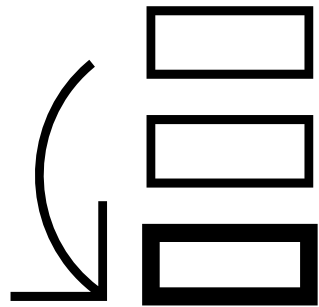


**2025**  
**THE JOURNEY FROM**  
**RECOVERY TO**  
**EXCELLENCE: A**  
**PROGRESS REPORT**



# Decisions Made by Adults, Consequences Felt by Students



## DECISION POINT

### Systematic Dismantling of High Expectations

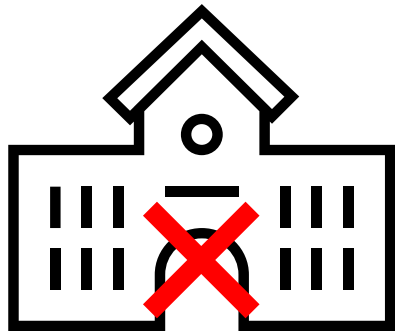
- Lowered cut scores
- Lowest proficiency definitions
- Reliance of averages masked student performance



## IMPACT ON

- Inflated test scores
- Our highest-achieving students also declined
- No clear picture of student performance
- Not a single unaccredited school
- No sense of urgency because of no acknowledgement of a crisis

**VIRGINIA STUDENTS**



## DECISION POINT

**Prolonged School Closure**  
Keeping schools closed longer than  
45 other states



## IMPACT ON

- Missed instructional time
- Increased learning loss
- Increased chronic absenteeism
- Masked learning needs

**VIRGINIA STUDENTS**

# Where We Started: Eight Years of Lowered Expectations & Shuttered Schools Hurt Students

- ✘ **Lowest definition** of proficiency in the nation
- ✘ **Parents pushed-out** of their children's education
- ✘ Some of **the lowest** in-person learning time **in the country**
- ✘ One of **the last states** to reopen schools
- ✘ Honesty Gap **misled** everyone on student performance
- ✘ **No accountability** for results
- ✘ 1 in 5 students **missed at least 18 Days of school**
- ✘ For the first time in 3 decades, Virginia students **were "average"**

# Restoring Excellence to Education

## Set High Expectations & Support Schools

- ✓ Focus on Student Readiness & Mastering Content
- ✓ Stronger Standard of Learning
- ✓ 18% Teacher Pay Increase
- ✓ 50% increase in direct aid for public education
- ✓ Increased in state school construction funding

## ALL IN to Combat Learning Loss

- ✓ \$418 million over 3-years to school divisions
- ✓ High Intensity Tutoring
- ✓ Accelerated Virginia Literacy Act
- ✓ Biggest Drop in Nation in Chronic Absenteeism

## Empower Parents

- ✓ Masks Off
- ✓ Right to Review Explicit Materials
- ✓ New Office of Parent Engagement
- ✓ Parent Data Portals
- ✓ More Child Care Options with Building Blocks for Families
- ✓ Privacy, Dignity and Respect for All Students
- ✓ Support Scholarship Tax Credits for Low-Income Families

## Innovation & Student Pathways

- ✓ 15 New Lab Schools
- ✓ Increase Dual Enrollment for Credentials and College Credit
- ✓ *FastForward* for High School
- ✓ Alternative Transportation
- ✓ Seat-Time Flexibility

## Transparency & Accountability

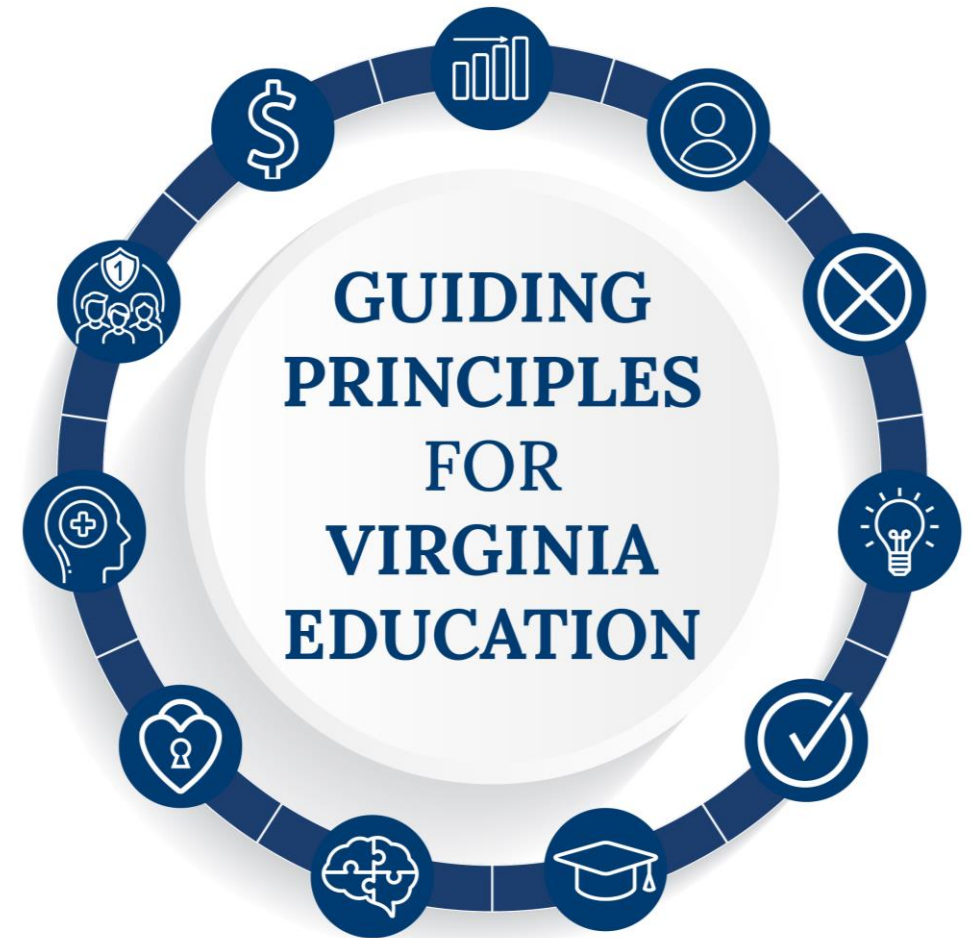
- ✓ Close Honesty Gap by 2025-2026
- ✓ Replace Opaque Accreditation System with a Launch School Performance and Support Framework
- ✓ Provide Easy to Understand Classification of School Performance to Parents, Teachers, Students, and Community Leaders.
- ✓ Student Performance Portal

## Support Student Needs

- ✓ Bell-to-Bell Cell Phone-Free Education
- ✓ Increase Support for Students With Disabilities
- ✓ Expand *Right Help, Right Now* for Behavioral Health Support
- ✓ Invest in SROs, Student Safety and School Hardening
- ✓ Launch New Recovery Schools

# Our Response: Raising Expectations for Every Student in the Commonwealth

- ✓ **New Stronger** Math and English Standards
- ✓ Make Tests **More Rigorous** Students Demonstrate Mastery of Subjects
- ✓ **More Students** Taking Advanced Math
- ✓ **More Students** Taking Dual-Enrollment College Courses
- ✓ **Higher Quality** of Instructional Materials
- ✓ CTE Students Earning **More Industry Recognized Credentials**



# Our Response: ALL IN to Fight Learning Loss

- ✓ **\$418M in direct supports** to school divisions over 3 years
- ✓ **High-intensity tutoring** in math and reading
- ✓ **Accelerate the implementation** of Virginia Literacy Act
- ✓ **All-Out War on Chronic Absenteeism** to get students back in class



# The Results: We Raised Our Expectations and Our Students Responded

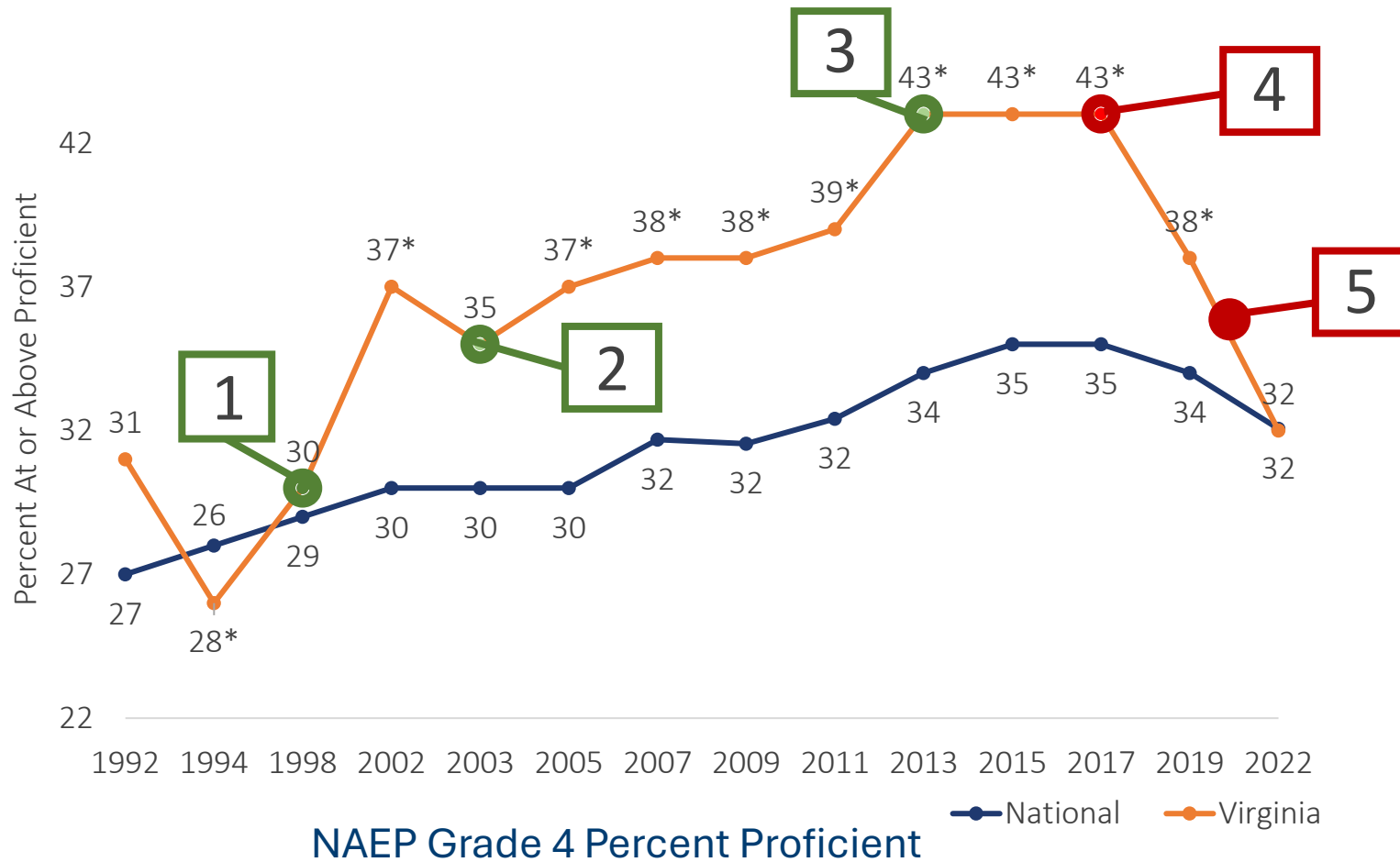
- ↑ Tests on average **30-40% harder\***
- ↑ **Math & Reading Scores Up** This Year
- ↑ **Student Scores Improving** for Different Demographics
- ↑ More Students **Passing** Advanced Math
- ↑ More Students **Taking** College-Level Classes
- ↑ More Students **Earning** Industry Recognized Credentials
- ↑ **Attendance is Up** – Leading the Nation in Reversing Chronic Absenteeism

\*According to VDOE's assessment vendor, this year's tests require know 30-40% more content than last years test in order to pass.

**Secretary of  
Education  
Aimee Guidera**



# Virginia's Story: When We Have High Expectations, Students, Teachers, and Schools Meet Them



1. 1998- SOL Testing Begins
2. 2003- Board of Education raises elementary reading accreditation standard.
3. 2013- VDOE introduces more rigorous online reading tests.
4. 2017- Board revises Standards of Accreditation.
5. 2020- Board lowers cut scores of Reading SOL tests.

# Restoring Excellence to Education Requires a Culture that Values and Uses Data as a Tool of Improvement

## **Quality, timely, accurate and tailored data:**

- **Increases Transparency:** provides stakeholders clear information around student performance
- **Guides Resource Allocation:** ensures funding and support are targeted to where it will have the greatest impact on student outcomes
- **Drives Accountability for Results:** monitors student progress and informs adjustments to improve student achievement.
- **Informs Instruction:** helps teachers tailor their strategies to meet student needs

**Superintendent of  
Public Instruction  
Emily Anne  
Gullickson**



# ALL In VA

## A Historic Commitment to Student Success

**\$418+ Million Investment for Targeted Support from Fall 2023 to Spring 2026**



### **ALL In Tutoring**

Providing Accelerated Support to Students that Need it the Most



### **VA Literacy Act**

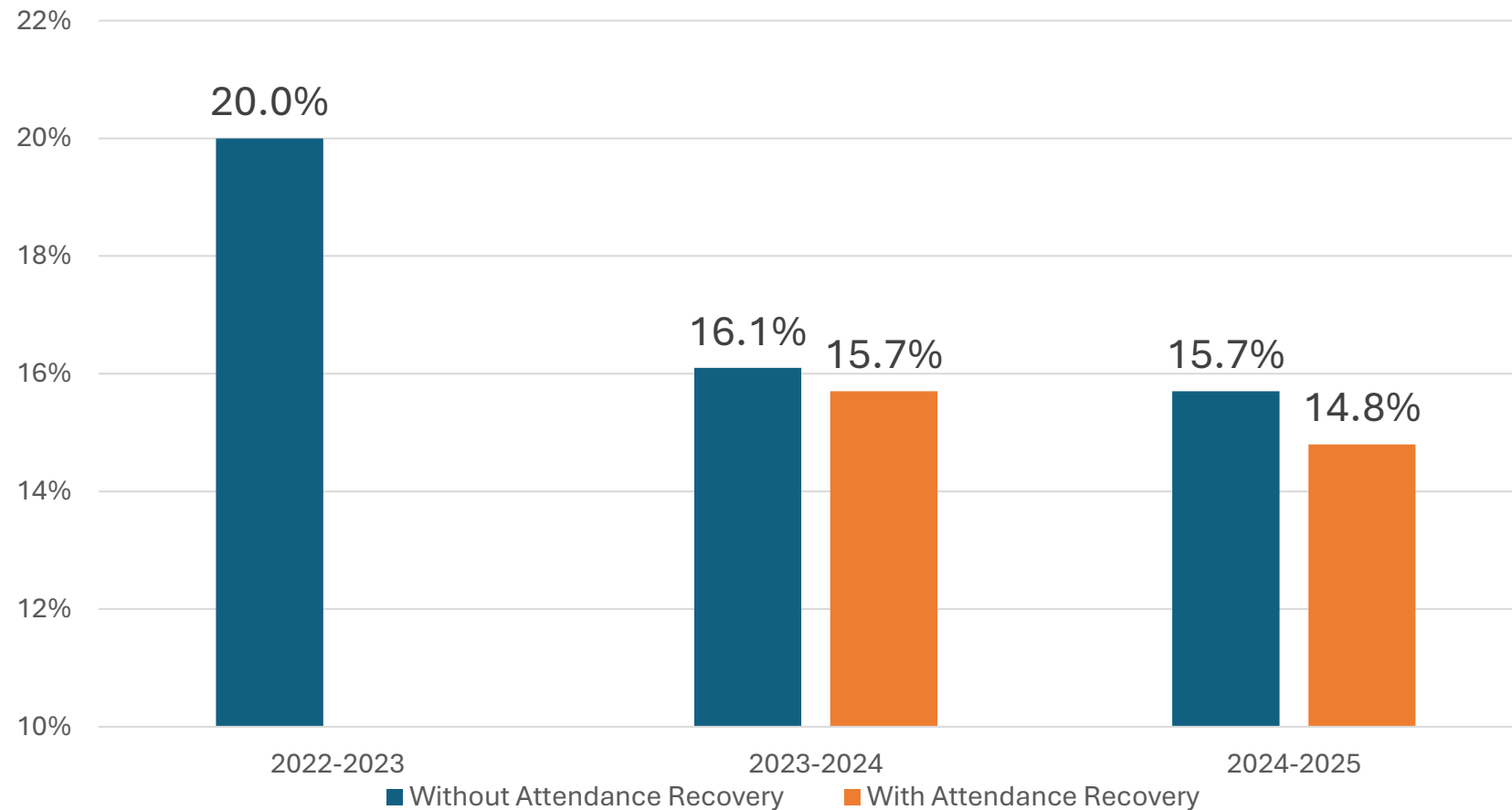
Changing How We Teach Students to Read



### **Attendance Matters**

Improving Daily Attendance in Partnership with Parents and School Divisions

# Chronic absenteeism declined 26% over two years as more students attend school and recover missed days.



# Bright Spots and Bold Solutions



Established a **Second Chance Bus** to pick up students who miss the regular route while also identifying those needing extra support.



Developed an **Attendance Hub** to give staff clear tools and information for improving attendance.



Created collaborative **Attendance Success Plans** with parents and students, including regular progress reviews.

# How Our Tests Changed This Year

# Raising Expectations for VA Students

- Revised math and English Language Arts standards are more rigorous, designed to help students achieve **course and grade-level proficiency** in the content.
- Students must show that they know **30-40% more content** than last year to pass new reading and mathematics SOLs.
  - Tests now include **more complex items**, requiring higher-order thinking skills.
  - Students must **apply knowledge across standards**.

# More Rigorous Standards Set Higher Expectations for What Students Must Know and Do

**Previously:** Students in grade three were required to **apply word-analysis skills** in reading.

**Now:** Students in grade three must **apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills to decode unfamiliar words in grade level texts.**

# A More Rigorous Test *Measures Higher Order Thinking*

**Previously:** Students could show proficiency through memorization and recall.

**Now:** Students must justify their reasoning and demonstrate deeper understanding.

## Example Performance Expectation

### Grade 4 Reading 2020

To demonstrate proficiency, students must **retell plot events in a logical sequence....**

### Grade 4 Reading 2025

To demonstrate proficiency, students must **summarize and/or analyze explicit or implicit ideas and details in texts.....**

# A More Rigorous Test *Integrates Multiple Skills*

**Previously:** Students only needed to demonstrate one skill set at a time (question 1).

**Now:** Students must answer both question 1 and 2 correctly, showing the ability to connect and apply multiple skills.

## Example Questions Grade 5 Math SOL

### Question 1

A group of 6 friends equally shared all the action figures in a bag.

- The number of action figures each friend received is represented by the expression  $n \div 6$ .

What does  $n$  represent?

- A. The number of friends who shared the bag of action figures
- B. The number of action figures each friend received
- C. The total number of action figures in the bag
- D. The cost of the bag of action figures

### Question 2

Select two situations that can be represented using the equation  $1\frac{1}{4} + r = 2\frac{1}{4}$ .

Mason has  $1\frac{1}{4}$  feet of ribbon. Mason and Joseph have  $2\frac{1}{4}$  feet of ribbon altogether. How many feet of ribbon,  $r$ , does Joseph have?

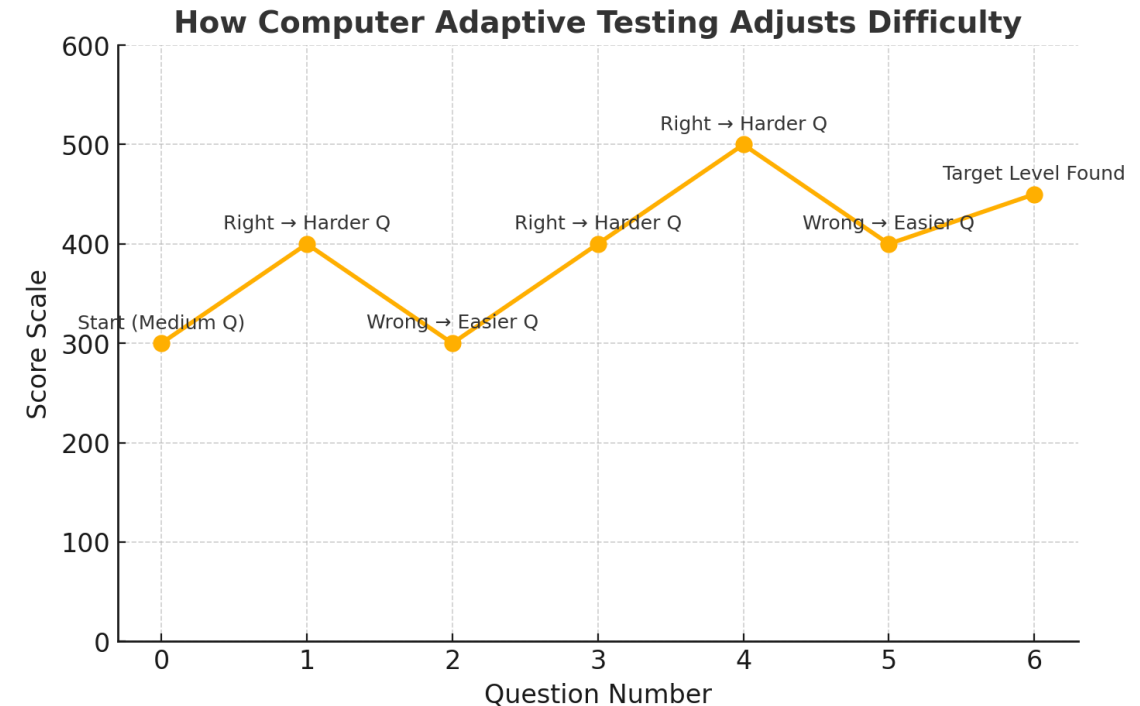
Mason has  $1\frac{1}{4}$  fewer feet of ribbon than Joseph. Mason has  $2\frac{1}{4}$  feet of ribbon. How many feet of ribbon,  $r$ , does Joseph have?

Mason has  $1\frac{1}{4}$  feet of ribbon. Joseph has  $2\frac{1}{4}$  feet of ribbon. How many more feet of ribbon,  $r$ , does Joseph have than Mason?

Mason has  $1\frac{1}{4}$  feet of ribbon. Joseph has  $2\frac{1}{4}$  feet of ribbon. How many feet of ribbon,  $r$ , do Mason and Joseph have altogether?

# Grades 3-8 Math and Reading SOL Test Design Supports Personalization

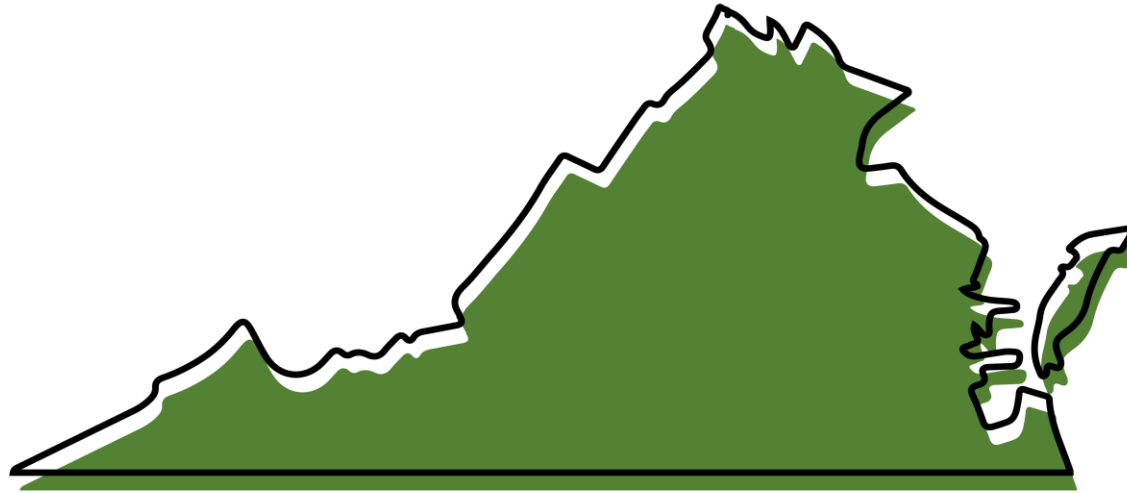
- **SOL tests adapt to the student's learning level**, which improves student engagement and eases frustration.
- **Difficulty level of the test shifts in real time** based on how the student answers.
- This approach is **more accurate, rigorous, and engaging**. It measures what a student really knows and can do, without making them feel overwhelmed or under-challenged.



**Questions get harder if you're right, easier if you're wrong, quickly zeroing in on the student's true skill level**

# The Results

# VA Students Met the Challenge Head On

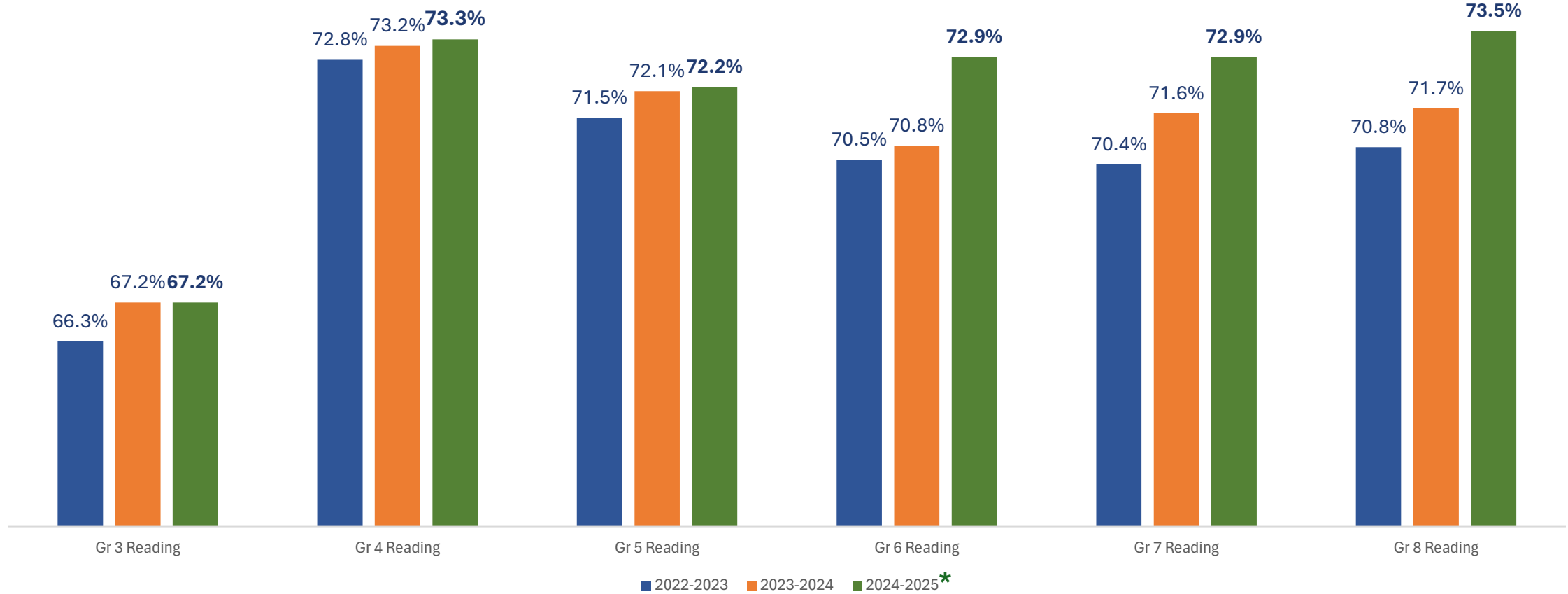


## COMMONWEALTH

- **Reading** pass rates ranged from **66.7% to 73.0%** for grades 3-8.
- **Math** pass rates ranged from **64.2% to 72.4%** for grades 3-8.

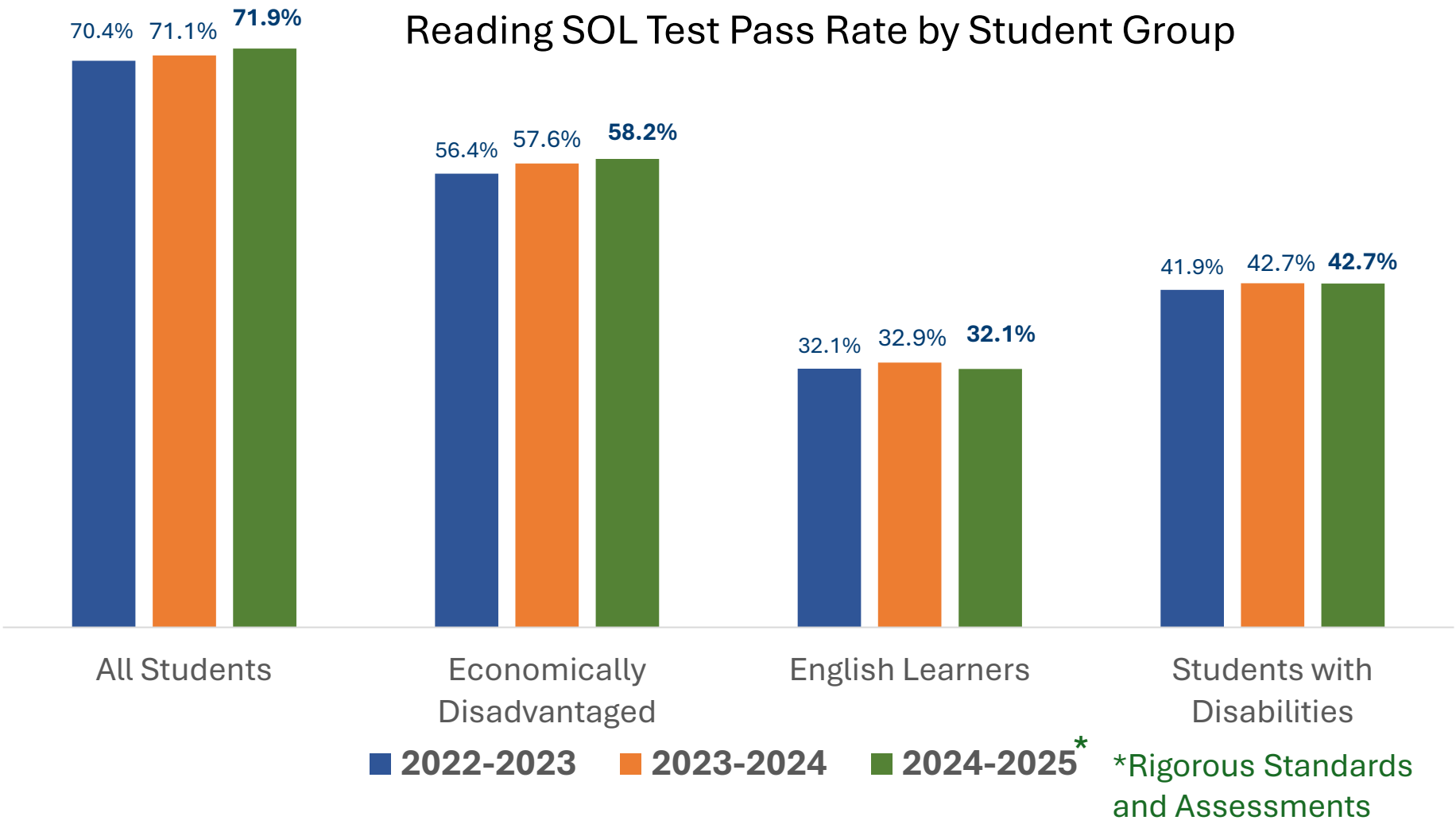
# Student Reading Pass Rates Show Gains for Grades 6-8 and Hold Steady on More Difficult Reading State Test in Grades 3-5

Student Pass Rate by Grade Level Reading SOL Test

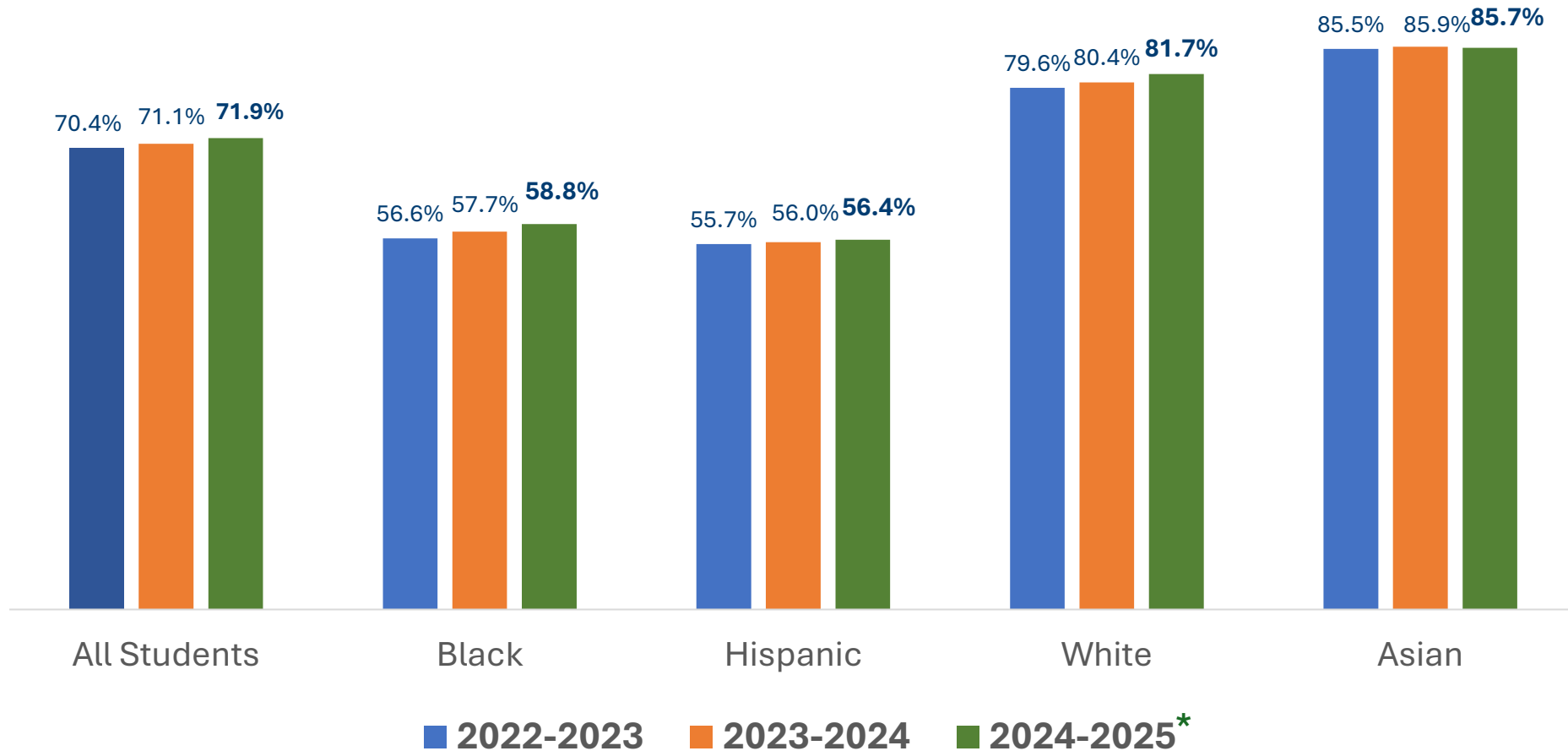


\*Rigorous Standards and Assessments

# Economically Disadvantaged Students Show Gains as Others Hold Steady on More Difficult Reading State Test

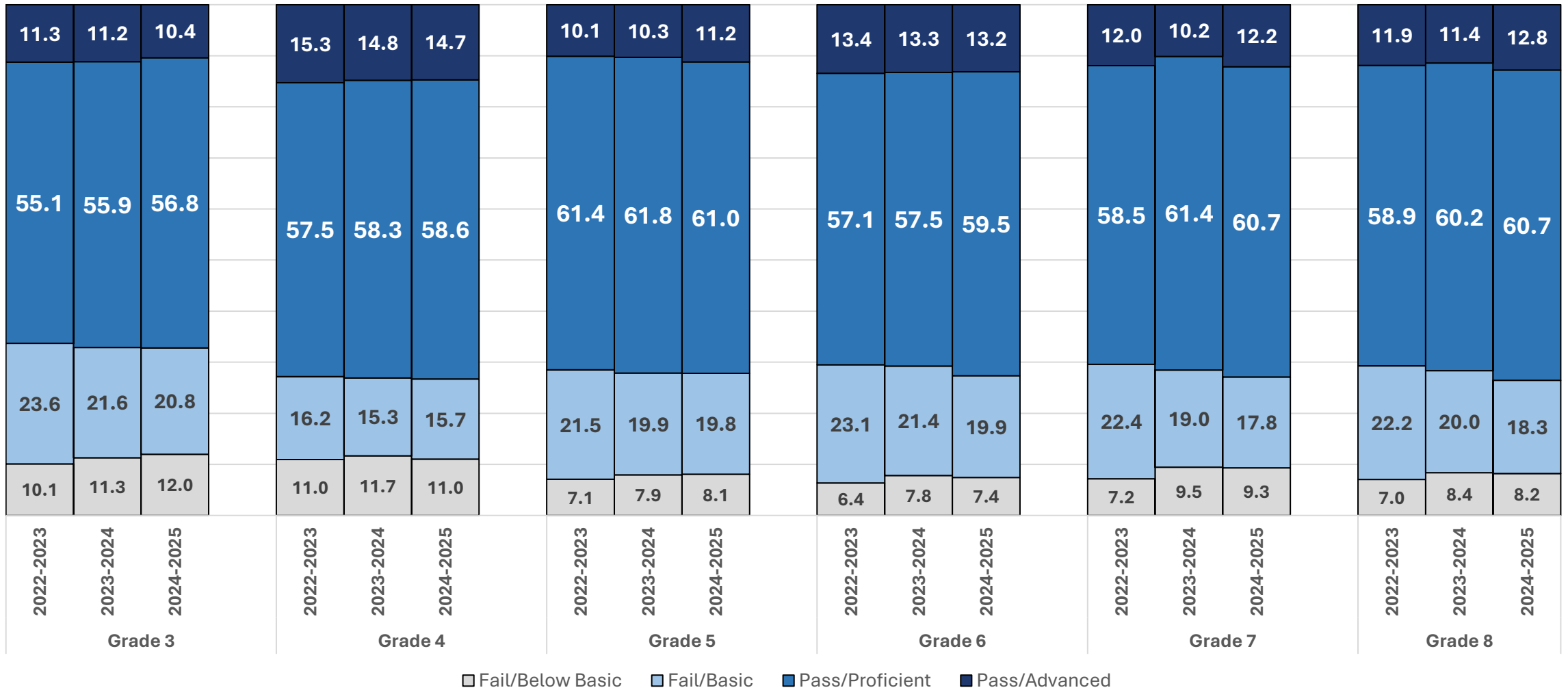


# Student Groups in Grades 3-8 Improving on More Difficult Reading State Test



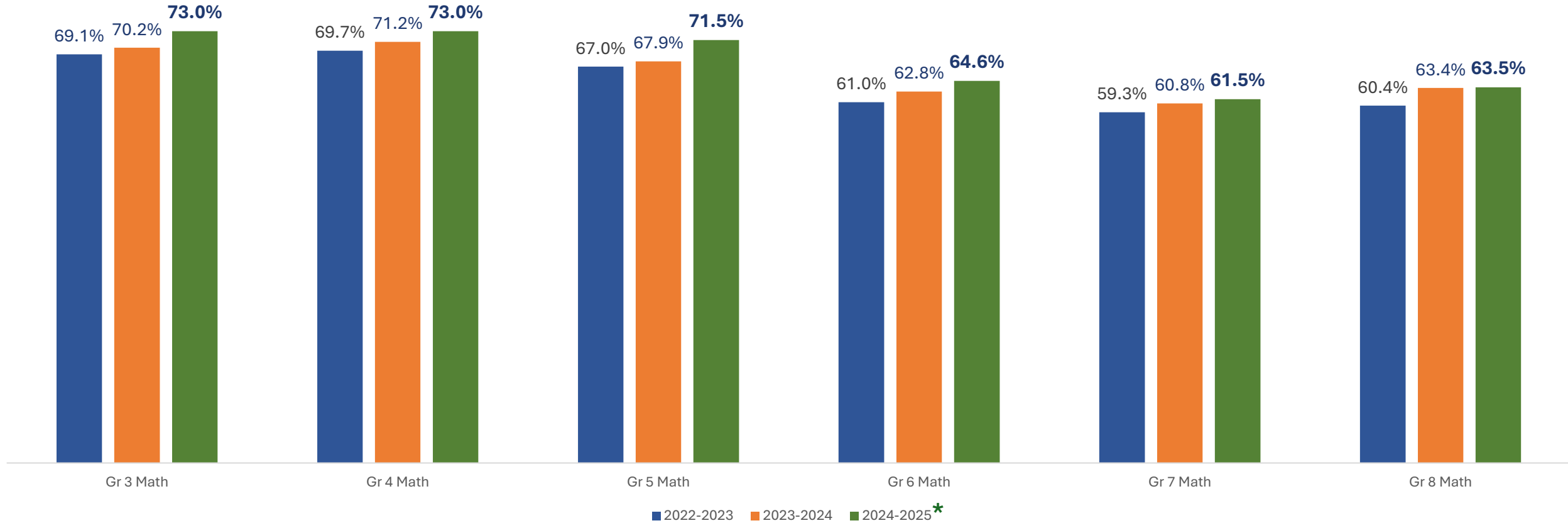
\*Rigorous Standards and Assessments

# Percentage of Students Reaching the Advanced Level Increased Slightly



# Student Pass Rates Improved Across All Grade Levels on More Difficult Math Tests

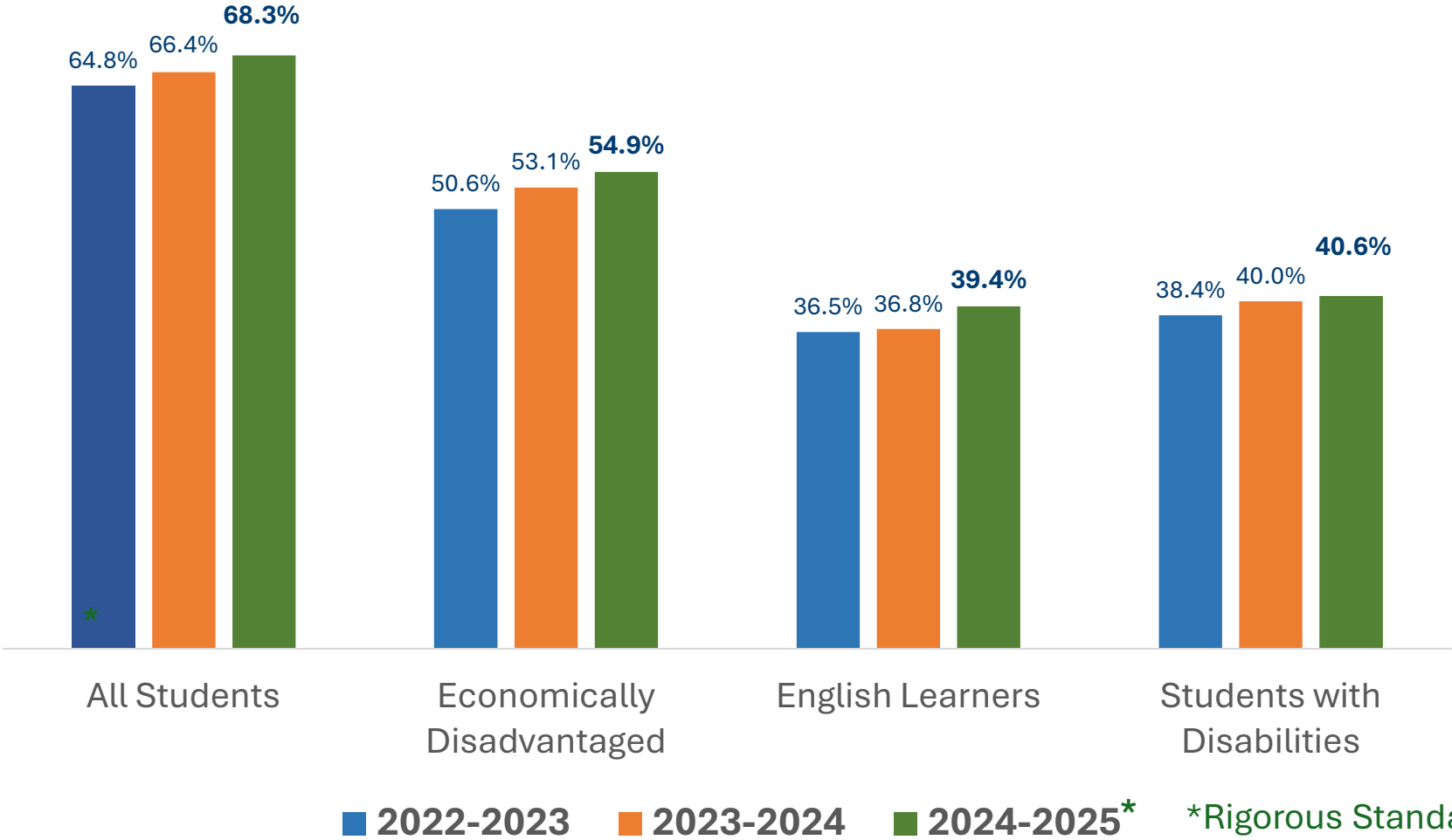
Student Pass Rate by Grade Level Math SOL Test



\*Rigorous Standards and Assessments

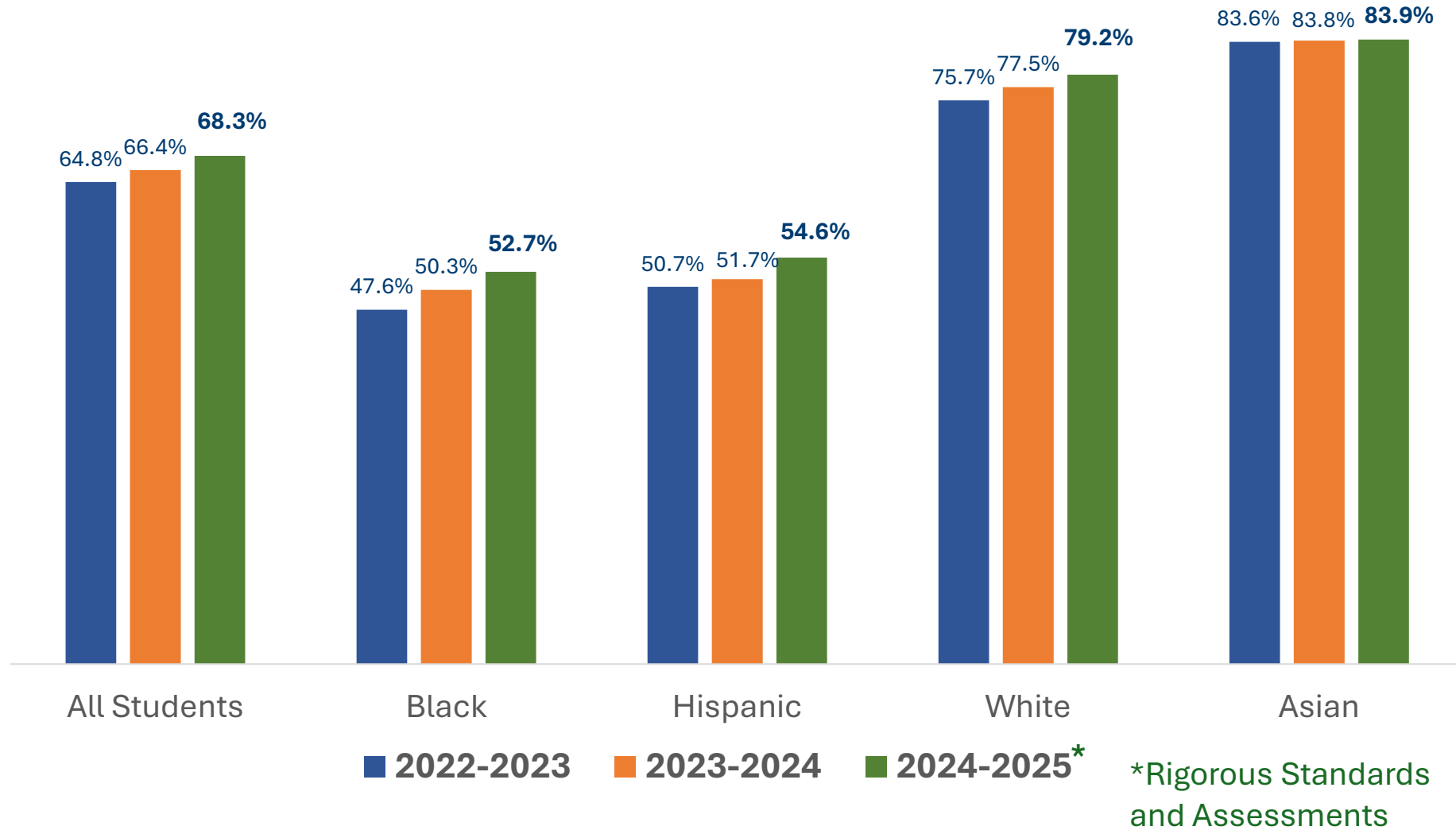
# Strong Math Gains for Economically Disadvantaged and English Learner Students on More Difficult Math Tests

Math SOL test pass rate by student group

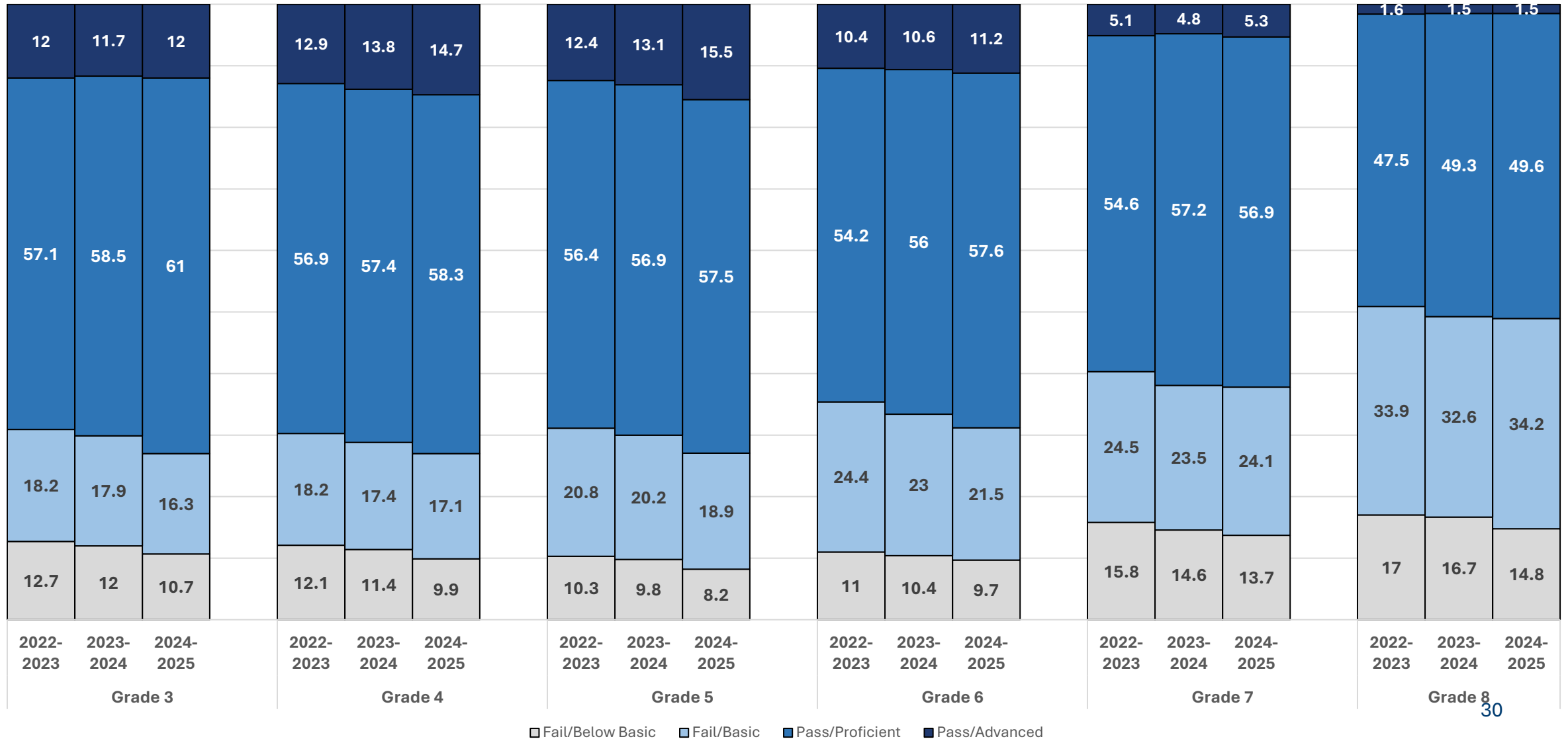


\*Rigorous Standards and Assessments

# Math Pass Rates Increased Across Students Groups on More Difficult Math Tests



# The Percentage of Students Reaching Proficient and Advanced Levels in Math is on the Rise



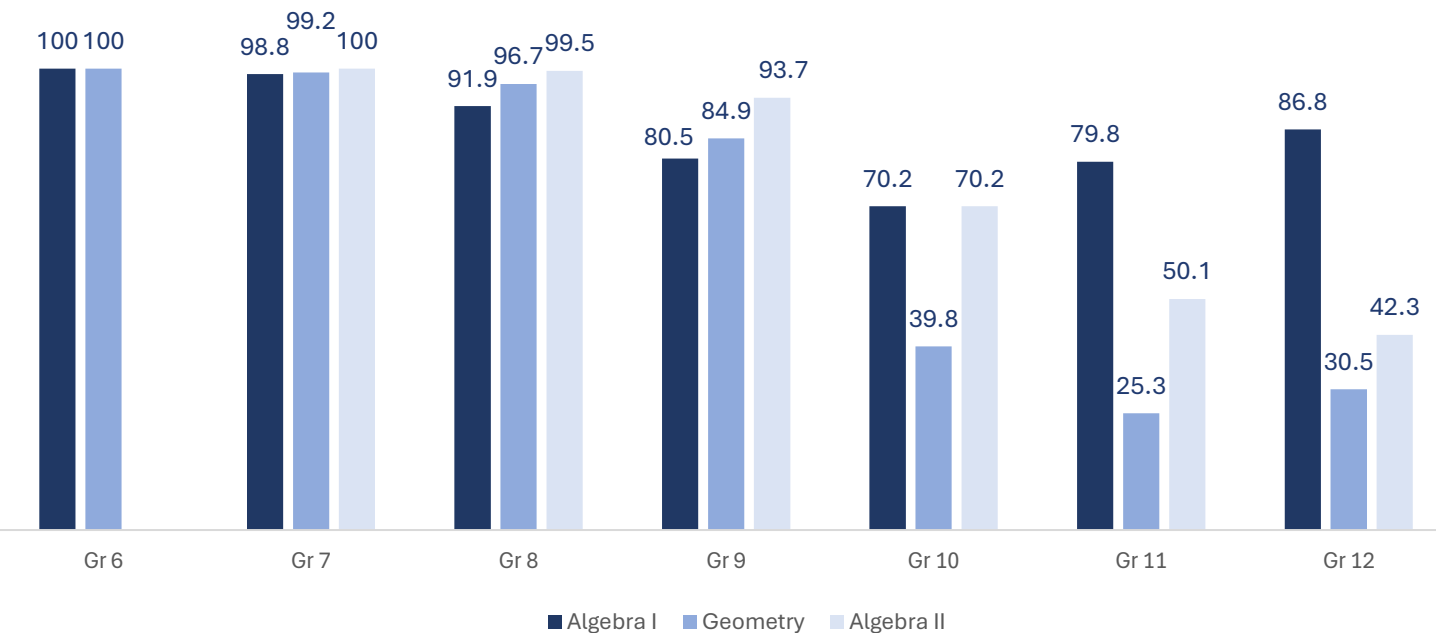
# More Middle School Students are Taking Advanced Math Classes and Passing the Test

- Since 2022, **1,810 more middle school students** are taking advanced math classes.
- Approximately **95% of the middle school students** taking a high school End-of-Course Math test **are demonstrating proficiency**.
- In 2024-2025:
  - **Over 94% of grade 6-8 students** that took the **Algebra I SOL** passed (n=44,543).
  - **96% of grade 6-8 students** that took the **Geometry SOL** passed (n=10,755).
  - **98% of grade 6-8 students** that took the **Algebra II SOL** passed (n=637).

# Middle School Advanced Math Students Excel with Over a 94% Pass Rate on Harder End-of-Course Assessments

In 2024-2025, over **55,000 students in grades 6-8** took an End-of-Course Assessment in Algebra I, Geometry, and/or Algebra II.

End-of-Course Pass Rates by Student Grade



Student Grade	Tested Count Algebra I	Tested Count Geometry	Tested Count Algebra II
Grade 6	143	<	0
Grade 7	12,245	119	11
Grade 8	31,964	10,580	614
Grade 9	51,840	27,103	11,112
Grade 10	9,722	3,740	1,188
Grade 11	4,653	1,208	896
Grade 12	2,871	275	156
<b>Total</b>	<b>113,438</b>	<b>43,025</b>	<b>13,977</b>

# VA Students are Prioritizing Advanced Learning

- **112,139 high school students** participated in advanced learning opportunities by taking at least one **AP, IB, or Cambridge course** during the 2024-2025 school year.
  - Earned college credit information for AP, IB, and Cambridge will be released in September.
  - In the 2021-2022 school year, the number of students participating in at least one AP, IB, or Cambridge course was 101,889.
- **53,107 students** earned college credit through **dual enrollment** in the 2024-2025 school year.
  - In 2021-2022, the number of students earning college credit through dual enrollment was 45,915.

# **Tools for School Divisions and Families to Understand and Communicate Results**

# Join Today's State Board Meeting at 1:00 pm Online or at the Library of Virginia

- Explore a deeper dive on 2024-2025 student test data and how to ensure parents, teachers and school divisions can access and use this data.
- Discuss VDOE tools and resources to support school divisions and parents in their efforts to improve student outcomes.
- Continue conversation to reset the definition of proficiency.