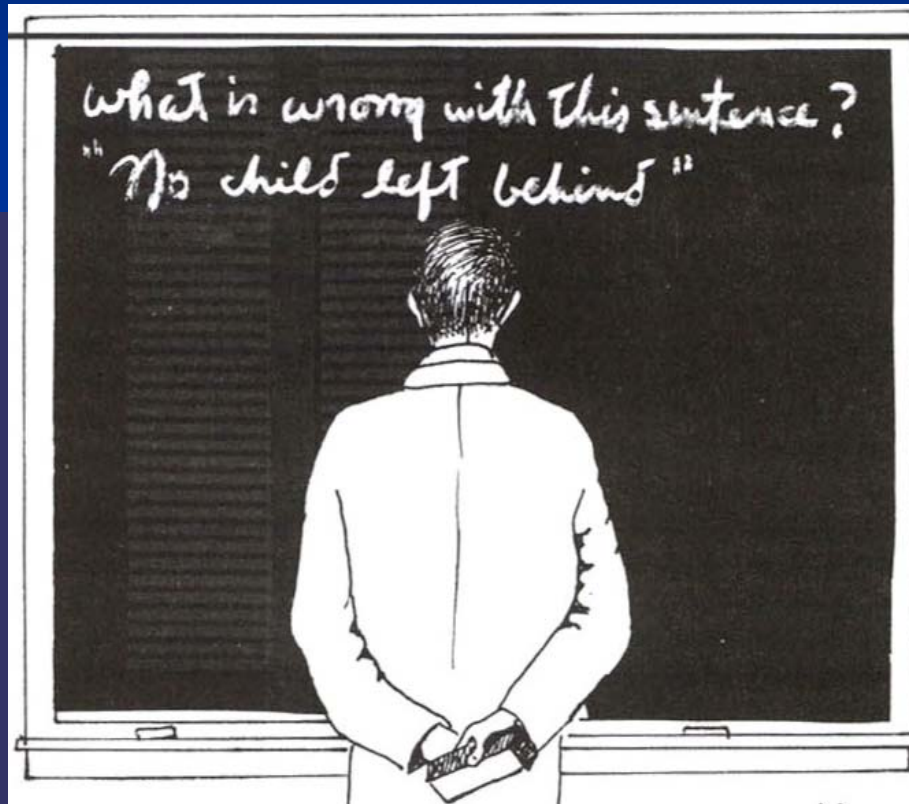


NCLB Testing Hysteria at Full Maturity: Ideological Blindness, Color Blindness, or No Blindness at All?



"This almost reads like our
business plan."

--Peter Jovanovich, chief
executive of Pearson
Education, a multibillion
publisher of tests and
education materials, describing
President Bush's education
policies (*Education Week*,
February 21, 2001).

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u

Research Context

Alpha Elementary

- K-5 urban Title One school of 850 students
- 84% free lunch/reduced lunch
- 95% black students, 55% black teachers
- High mobility among students (200 student transfer in or out during school year)
- Four 4th grade classes in Spring 2000 (30-33 students each)
- Six 4th grade classes in Fall 2000 (29-33 students each)

The Qualitative Report Volume 8 Number 2 June 2003 224-250
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-2/horn.pdf>

LEAP-ing Toward Accountability? Ideology, Practice, and the Voices of Louisiana Educators

Jim Horn

Monmouth University, West Long Branch, New Jersey USA

Louisiana educators at an urban K-5 school participated in a two-year study to share their experiences related to the implementation of a state high-stakes testing program (LEAP 21) that is used to make promotion decisions in grades 4 and 8. Observations, document analysis, and interviews were used to study the development of attitudes, perceptions, and practices related to the use of and consequences emanating from this testing practice. It was found that the state test has far-reaching effects on teaching, curriculum, school climate, students, parents, and school administration. The ideology of testing as a positive reform idea and the practice of testing as a constant and tangible threat, form the two poles of an experiential field that these educators encounter as figure and ground. The avoidance of failure and the threat of failure push these educators toward an ideological commitment to testing. Key words: High Stakes Tests, Accountability, Testing Programs, Academic Achievement, Student Evaluation, and Teacher Attitudes

Research Context

LEAP 21

- Louisiana's LEAP 21 (Louisiana Education Assessment Program for the 21st Century)
- Louisiana first state to use test scores as sole criterion for promotion in elementary grades
- 4th and 8th graders must pass English Language Arts and Math tests to advance to the next grade

Research Data

- 5 years data gathering, document analysis, and test score analysis from Louisiana Department of Education Website
- Observations during March 2000
- Interviews in 3/00 & 9/01 (4th grade teachers, curriculum coordinator, assistant principal)
- Interviews 9/01 (guidance counselor, special ed. teacher)
- Interviews 3/00, 9/01, 3/02, 4/05, 06/06 (principal)
- Test score comparisons based on demographic data

Changes after LEAP

- Holidays and Black History de-emphasized
- Recess traded for DI in reading and math
- Assemblies for motivational speakers
- Field trips after March testing
- Diagnostic testing moved into first and second grades

LEAP and the Curriculum

- Funneling effect—parish curriculum revised to focus on State benchmarks that are tested by LEAP
- “We’re a lot more focused, and we’re teaching to the test.”
- the value of any curricular decision has been reduced to a single criterion--whether or not it will improve test scores
- Assessments focus on multiple-choice format
- Pre-and-post-test curriculum

LEAP and Teaching

- Direct Instruction for Reading (McGraw-Hill's Open Court)—scripted drill and practice reading module, Fall 2000
- DI math module(McGraw-Hill's Open Court) purchased in 2002 with 24k in “award money”
- “. . . the teachers didn't have to do any planning for reading. I told them to swap off—instead of planning, you have to practice so that you don't walk in there cold—you can't just read it to them. It's like a bad actor in a good movie—you're given a script, but it's how you deliver that script is what makes a difference.”

Teaching and Direct Instruction

The acceptance of direct instruction was also accompanied by a sense of loss:

“it's a much more serious attitude here. . . . than what we had before, so you know there's a joy in succeeding somewhat, but there's also that loss of individual[ity] in ways that teachers have when they present materials and information, and you kind of lose some of yourself because you are in this really structured program.”

LEAP and Students

Educator unanimity in the belief that LEAP should not be sole criterion for making promotion decisions:

“I don't like . . . some of the things I see when our students don't pass it, especially when you have children who do really well during the school year and you know the teacher is not just giving students grades. . . and then they don't pass that test and you have to hold them back. That's kind of hard to deal with—it's kind of hard to say to the child that everything you did during the school year doesn't matter, doesn't count.”

Alpha Elementary LEAP Passing Rates

Alpha Passing Rates for Math and ELA:

30% pass in 2000

48% pass in 2001

46% pass in 2002

55% pass in 2003

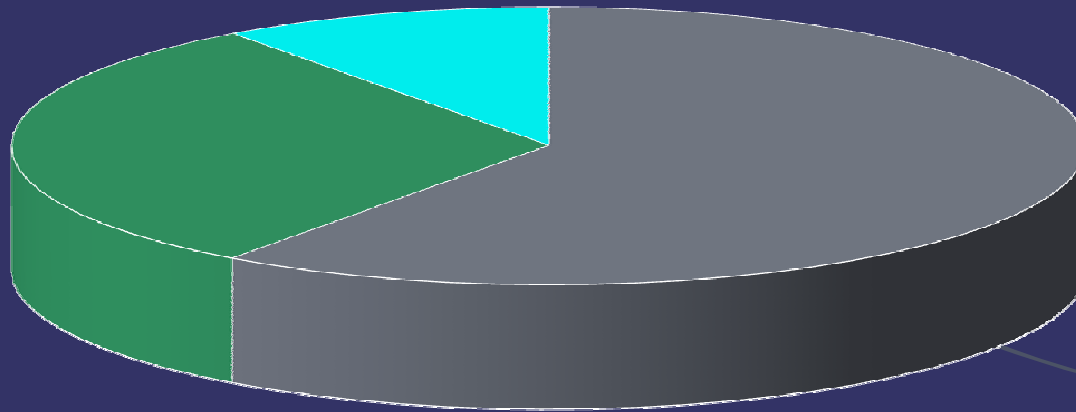
58% pass in 2004

77% pass in 2005

69% pass in 2006

58% pass in 2007

3 Components of Louisiana School Performance Score (SPS)



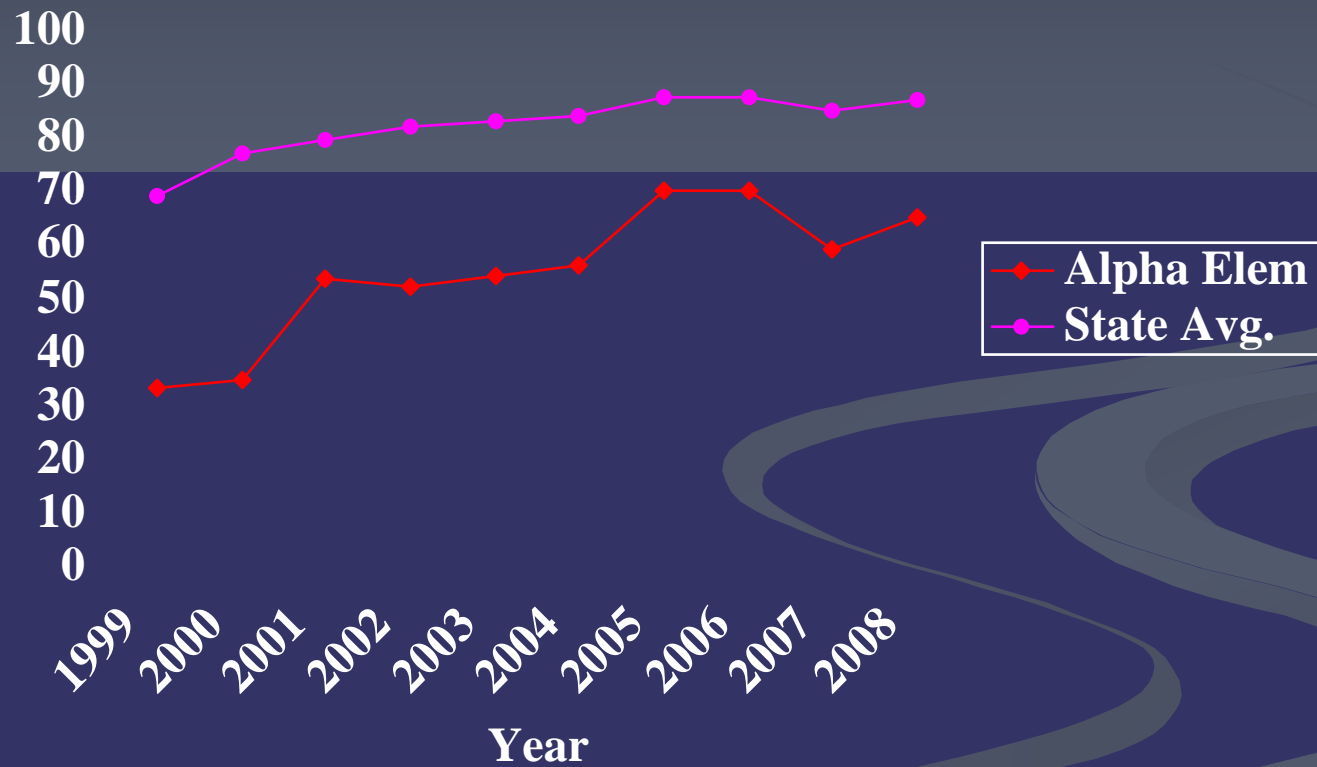
■ LEAP 60%
■ ITBS 30%
■ Attendance 10 %

Louisiana's SPS Star Rating System

- 5 Stars ***** SPS 140 and above
- 4 Stars **** SPS 120.0--139.9
- 3 Stars *** SPS 100.0--119.9
- 2 Stars ** SPS 80.0--99.9
- 1 Star * SPS 60.0--79.9
- Academically Unacceptable Below 60
- Alpha SPS 1999--2008 33.1--65
- State Average SPS 1999--2008 69.4--87.2
- State Target SPS 2014 120

School Performance Scores (SPS): Alpha Compared to State Average

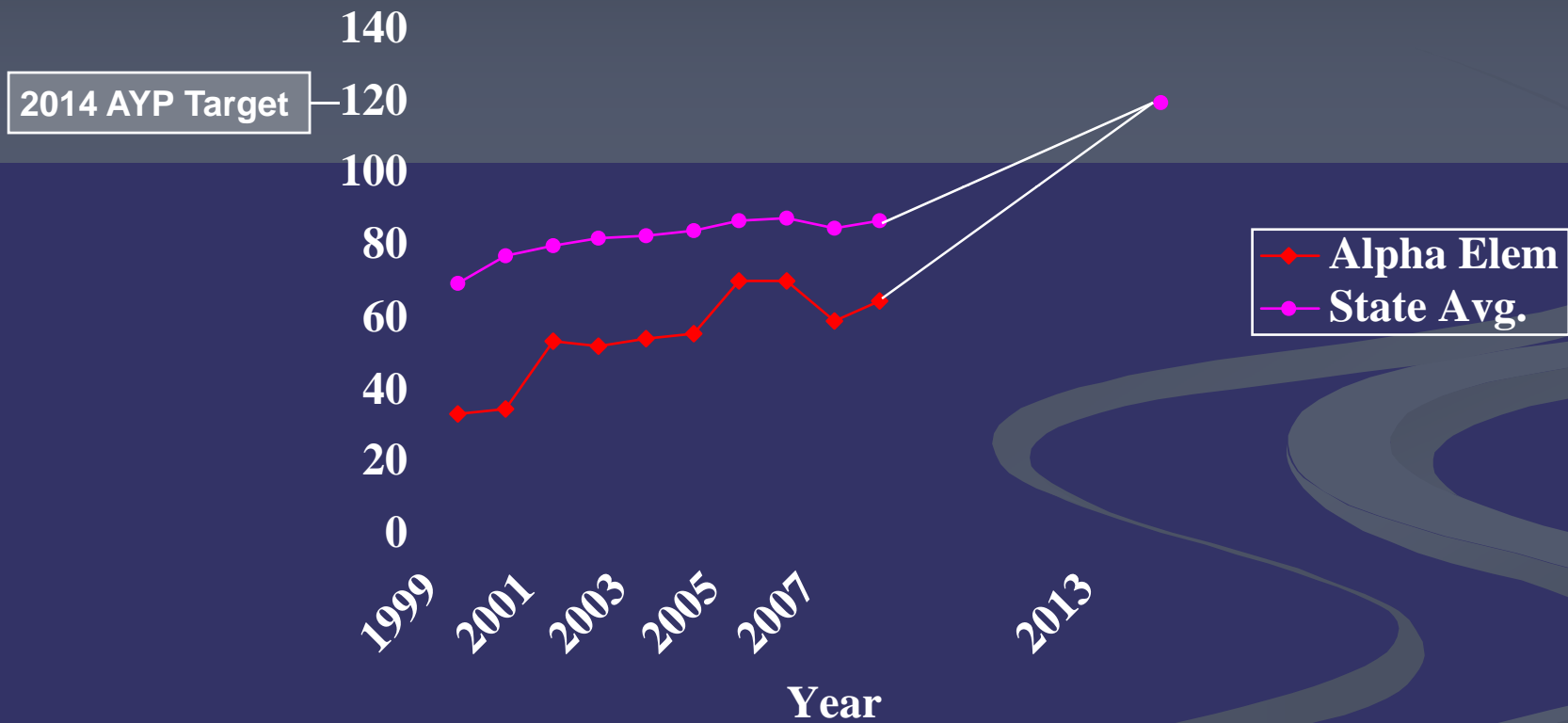
2014 AYP
120



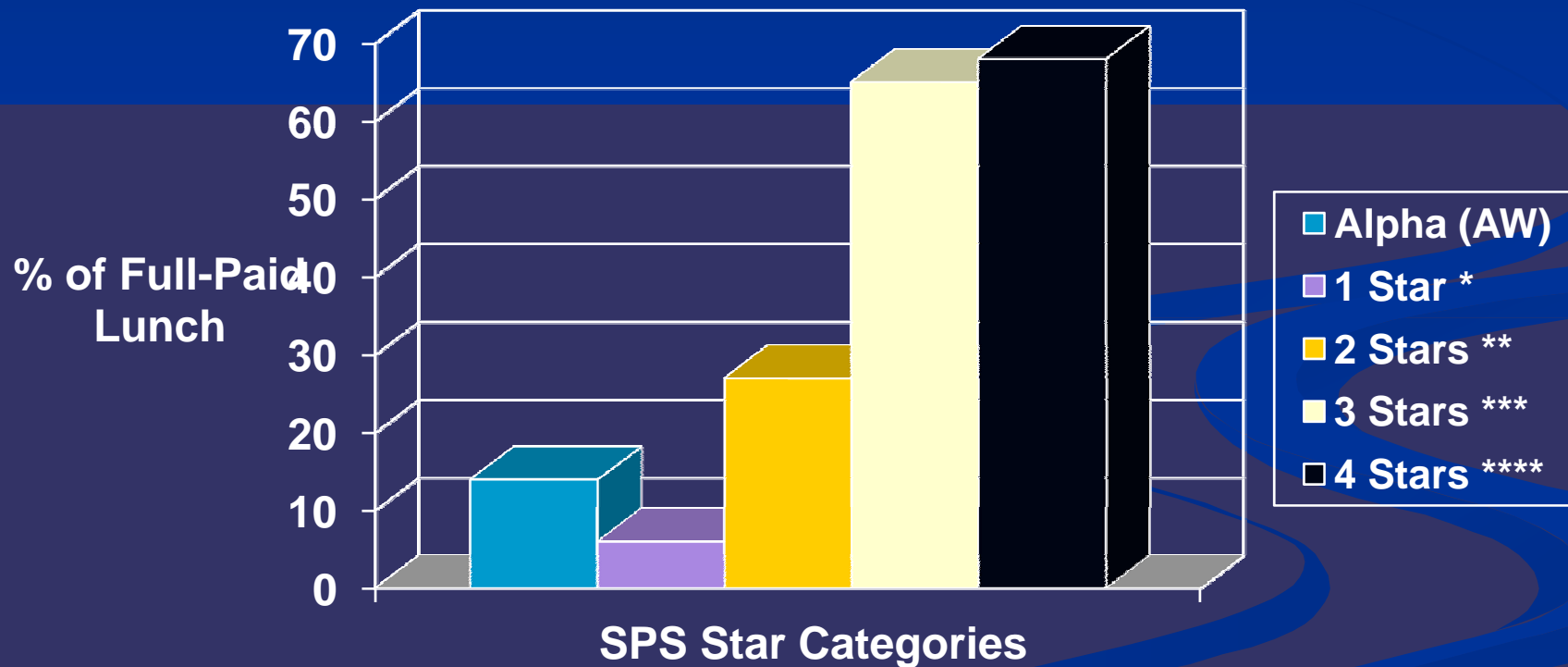
More Funds to Help Alpha Close the Achievement Gap? How Alpha lost \$167,000

The school system is required to offer "School of Choice" if a particular school does not meet their school performance target. A meeting is held with the parents of students attending that school. The parents are given the choice to send their child to another school. The school system is responsible for paying the transportation cost if those students have to be bussed to the new schools. That means more man hours for bus drivers and higher gasoline bills. It also may mean additional staffing at the schools they are choosing to send the children to. They can't simply send teachers from the low performing school to the new school. It is said that those teachers are the cause of the low scores. The school system has to cover the cost of the additional staff. The school that did not meet their target has to be assigned some Central Office staff members who are charged with the task of improving the school. Those additional positions had to be funded. The rest of the schools that have just kept their heads above water, get the overage of teachers from the schools that did not meet their target. I lost one early childhood class and my geography/social studies lab.

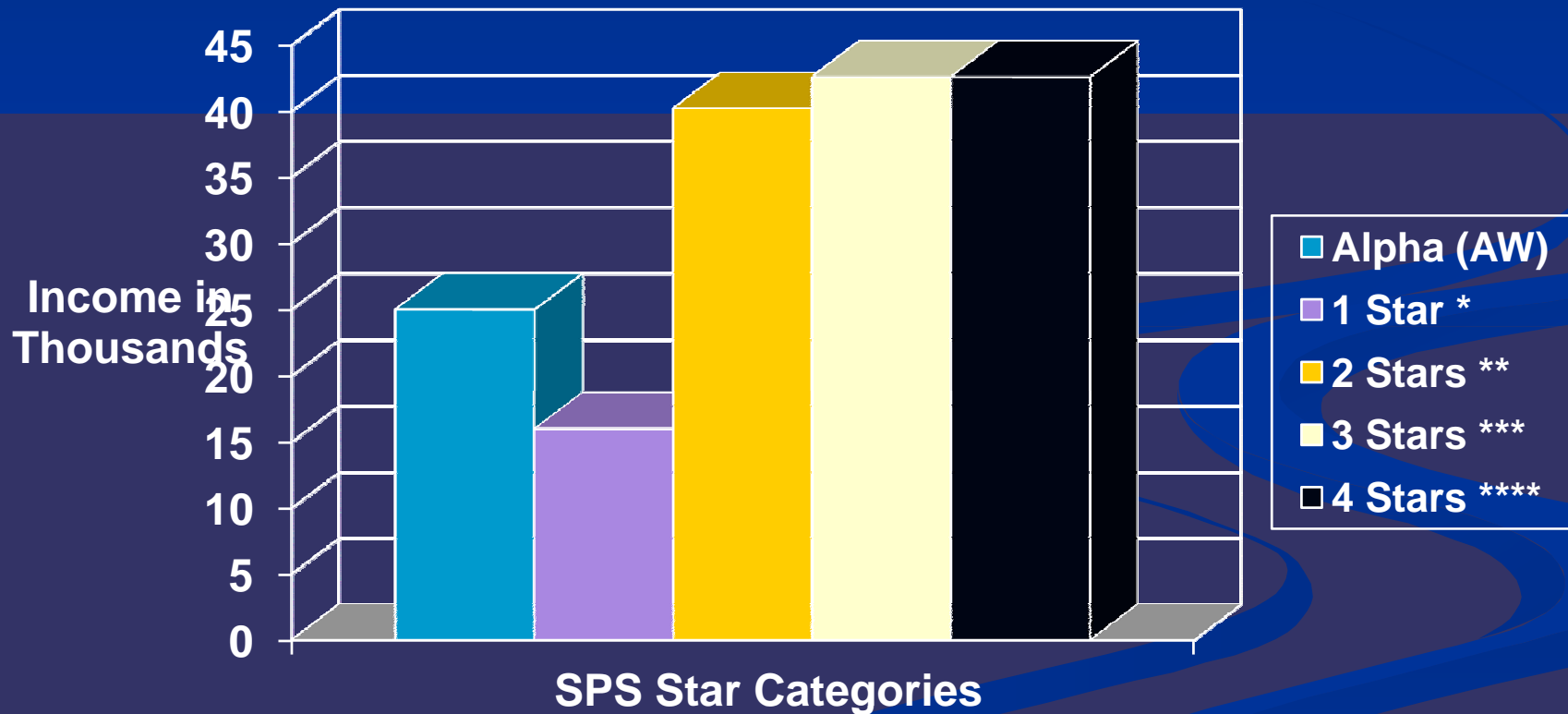
School Performance Scores (SPS): Alpha Compared to State Average and 2014 Goal



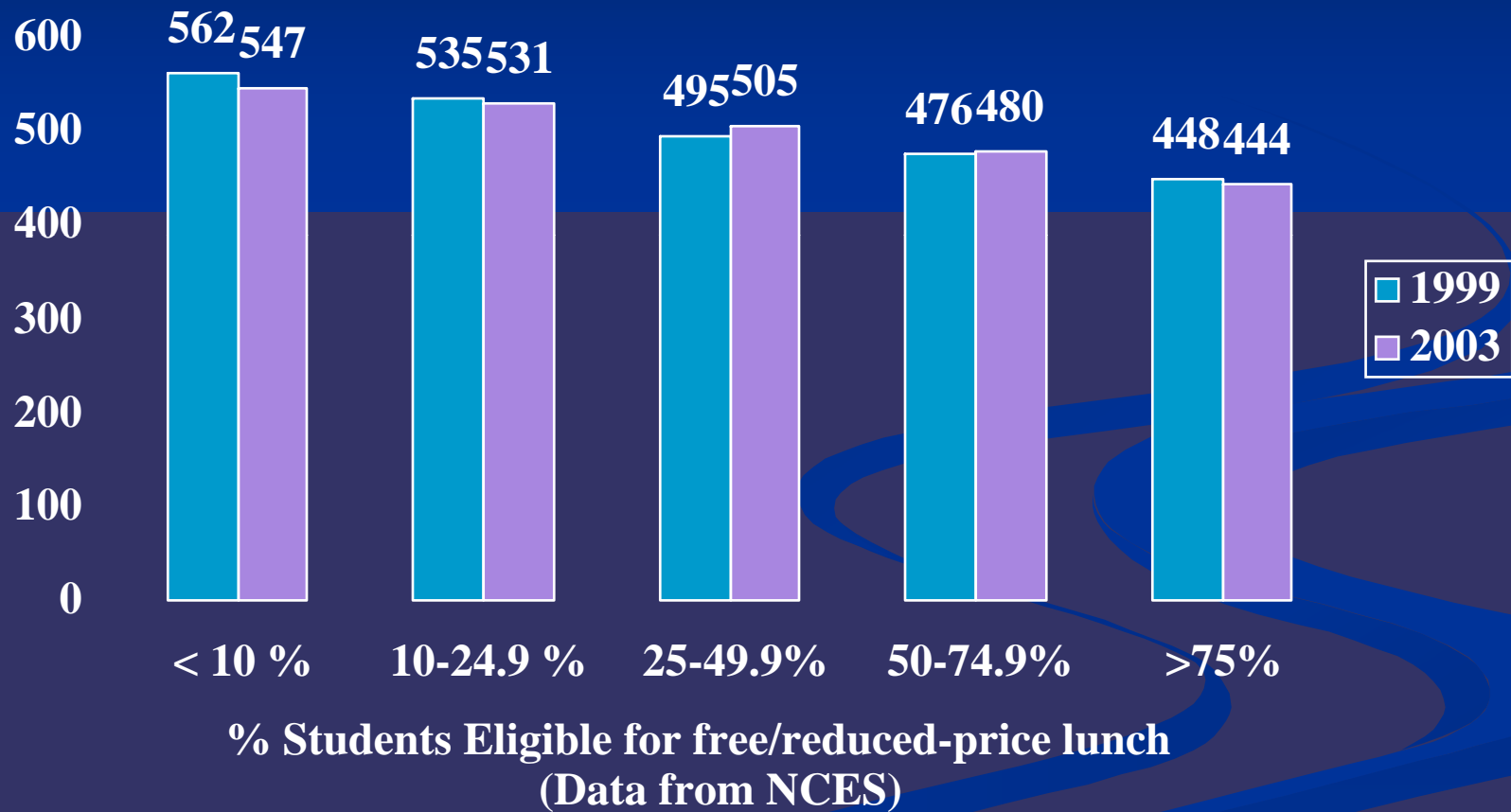
Local Parish School Performance Score Categories Compared to Percentage of Students Paying Full Lunch Price



Local Parish School Performance Score Categories Compared to Average Family Income



TIMSS Average Math Scale Scores by U. S. Poverty Level, 1999 and 2003

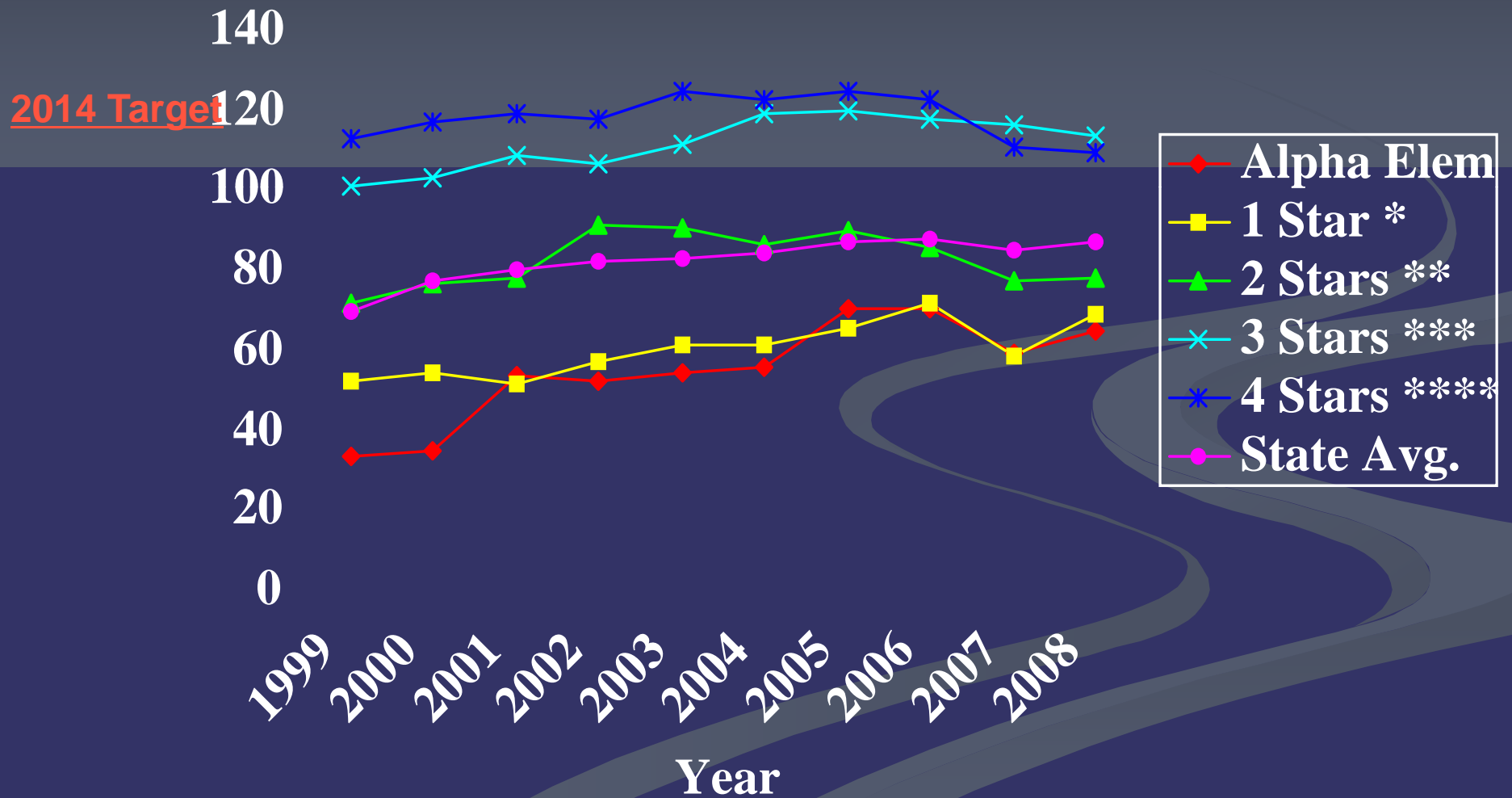


U. S. Family Income and SAT Scores

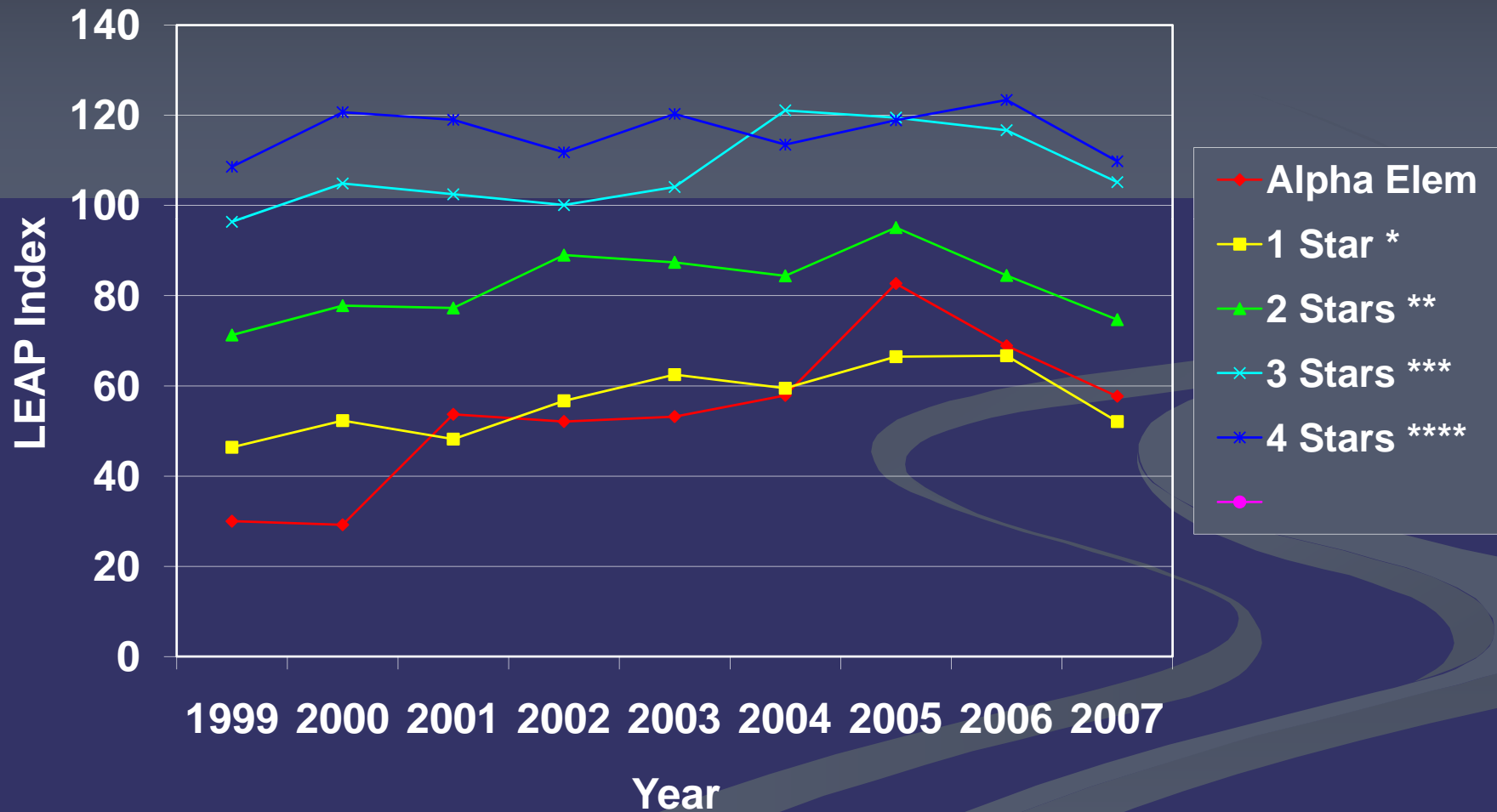
Observed Relationship Between Family Income & SAT Scores: 2003 Cohort

<u>Family Income</u>	<u>SAT Math Score</u>	<u>SAT Verbal Score</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than \$10,000	444	420	34,521	5
\$10,000 to \$20,000	452	437	62,551	8
\$20,000 to \$30,000	467	460	72,131	10
\$30,000 to \$40,000	484	480	83,256	11
\$40,000 to \$50,000	498	495	68,838	9
\$50,000 to \$60,000	508	504	70,653	10
\$60,000 to \$70,000	514	511	62,341	8
\$70,000 to \$80,000	523	518	60,471	8
\$80,000 to \$100,000	536	529	84,870	11
More than \$100,000	568	555	141,885	19
No Response			664,807	

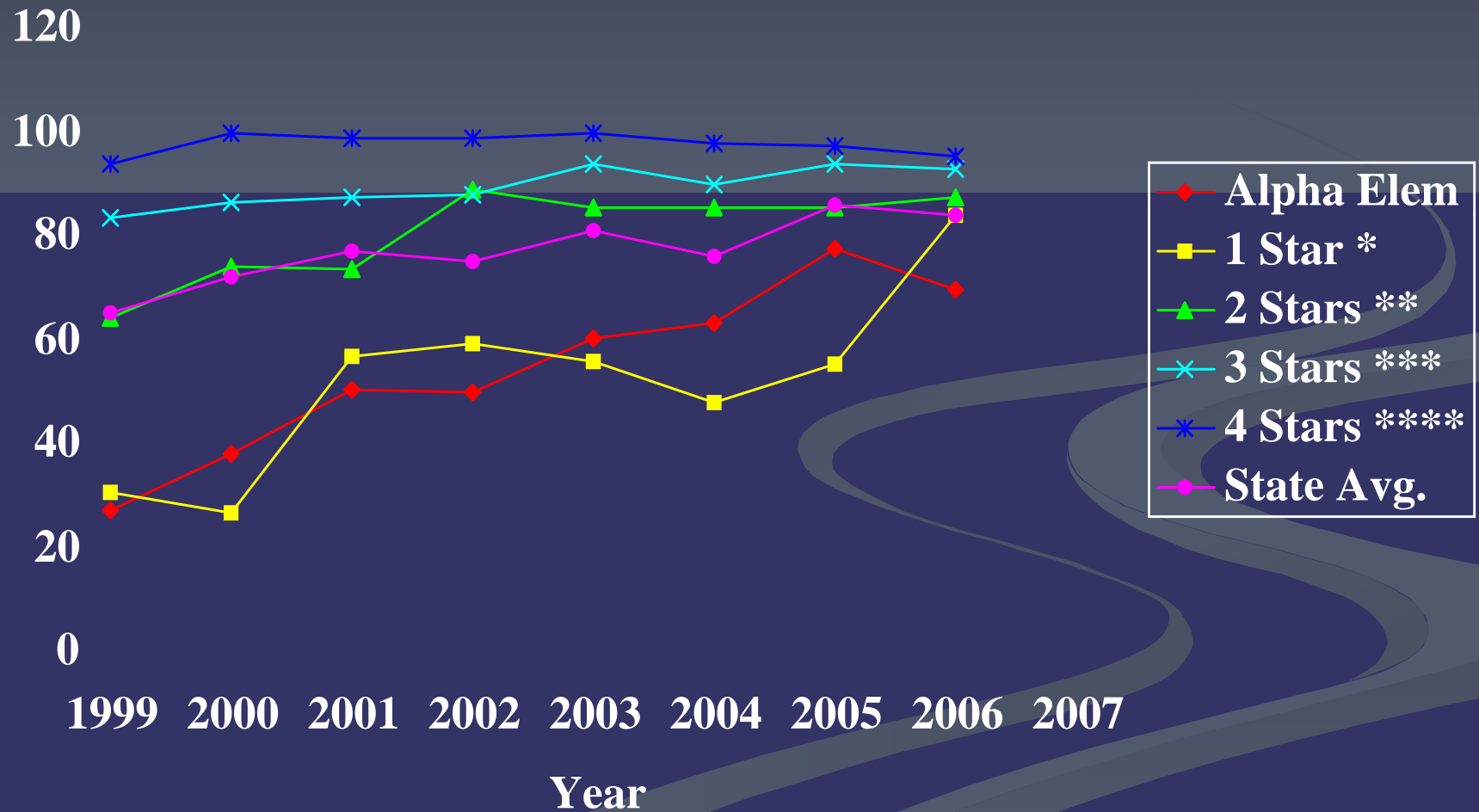
School Performance Scores (SPS): Alpha Compared to other District Elementary Schools and State Average



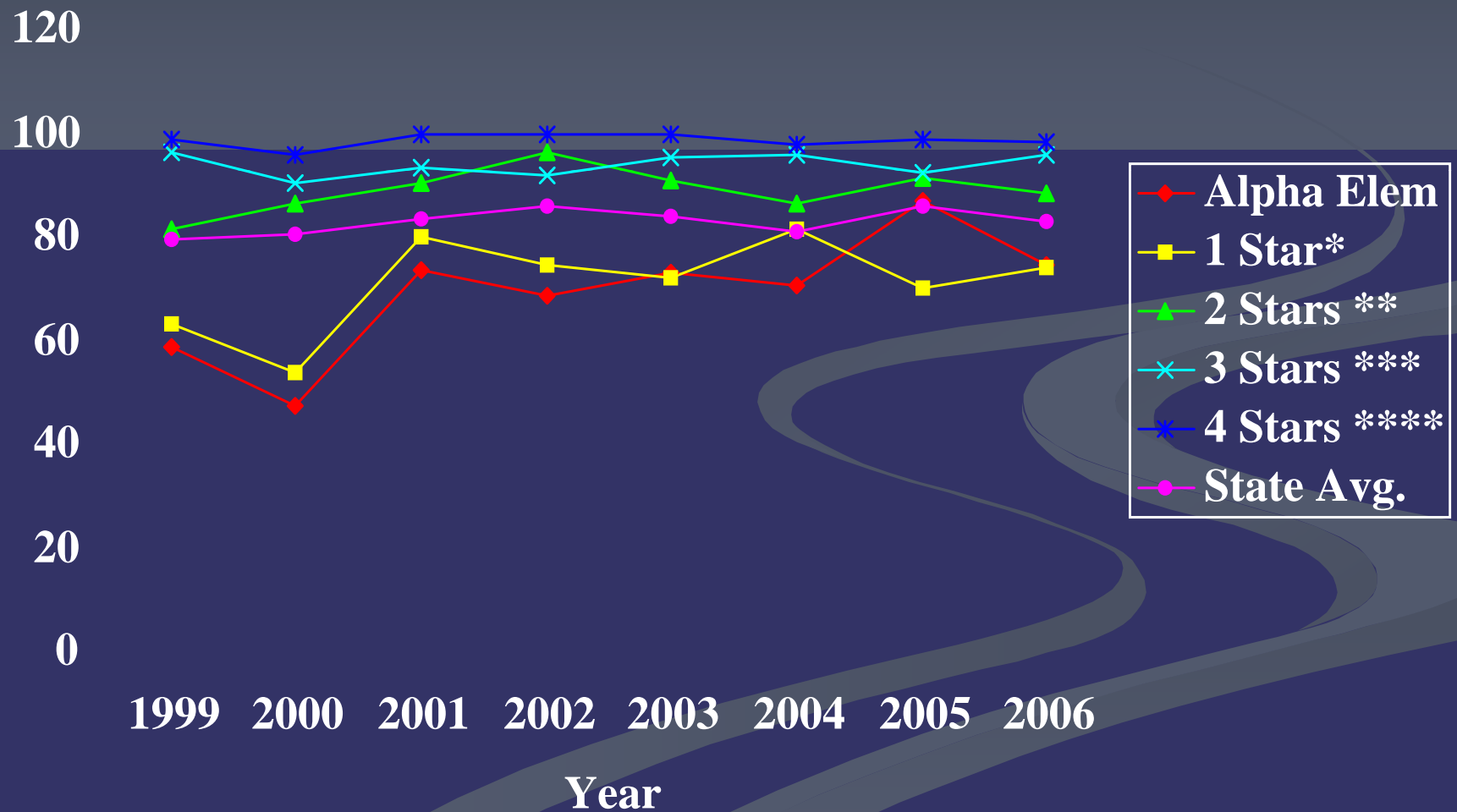
LEAP Index: Alpha Compared to other District Elementary Schools



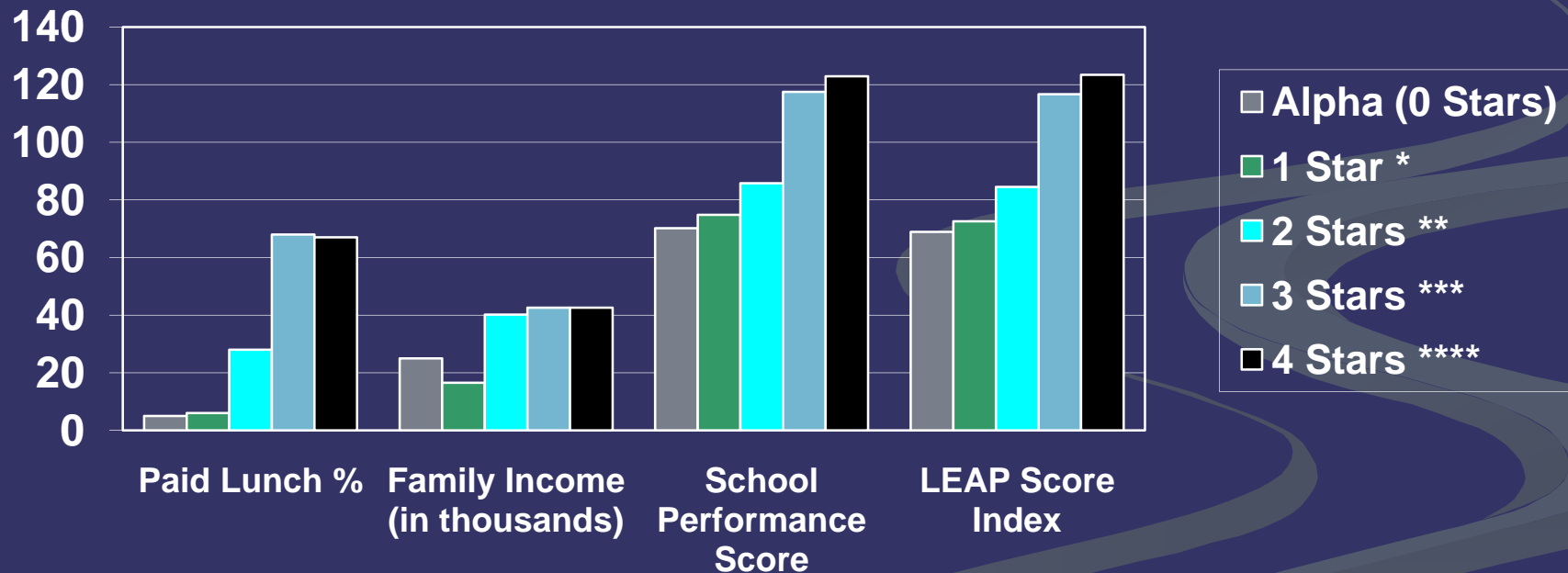
LEAP Math Scores Approaching Basic or Better: Alpha Compared to other Parish Elementary Schools and State Average



LEAP Language Arts Scores Approaching Basic or Better: Alpha Compared to other Parish Elementary Schools and State Average



Scores Correlated to Economic Status, 2005-2006



After nine years of testing at Alpha,

- Achievement gaps remain solidly in place
- Approximately 380 4th graders have been left behind, some for 2 or 3 times
- Alpha's parents continue to earn 40% less than their local counterparts in higher achieving schools
- 95% of Alpha's children still receive free or reduced price lunch
- At the present rate of academic gain, Alpha's will meet 2014 State AYP targets when the current 4th graders are well into retirement.

What's Next for Alpha and other Title 1 schools?

With nine other states joining Louisiana in linking grade promotion in elementary grades to high stakes tests, it seems likely that this trend will continue, particularly, it seems, in those states with large minority populations. For instance, prior to initiating NCLB, Amrein and Berliner (2002) reported that “none of the ten states with the lowest populations of African-Americans have implemented high-stakes tests, whereas all of the ten states with the highest populations of African-Americans have done so” (p. 12).

States with Highest Proportion of African-Americans

Even prior to NCLB requirements, all of the 10 states with the highest populations of African-Americans adopted high stakes testing.

Since NCLB passage, 5* of these states now link test scores to elementary grade promotion.

- Mississippi
- Louisiana*
- South Carolina*
- Georgia*
- Maryland
- Alabama
- North Carolina*
- Virginia
- Delaware*
- Tennessee

States with the Lowest Proportion of African-Americans

Only 1 of the ten states with the lowest population of African-Americans implemented high-stakes tests.

None* of these states links test scores to elementary grade promotion.

- Montana*
- Idaho*
- Maine*
- Vermont*
- North Dakota*
- South Dakota*
- Wyoming*
- Utah*
- New Hampshire*
- Oregon*

Why are high stakes concentrated in high minority states?

- To make someone accountable ? Who in Louisiana is being held accountable? For what? For being poor? For being black or immigrant?
- To close the achievement gap? Is the gap closing at Alpha?
- To make every school a five-star school? Is this happening at Alpha?
- To establish equity in education and economic opportunity? Is that happening in Alpha's community?
- To distinguish between those who are worth keeping and those who are to be "thowed away" into prisons or into America's emerging Third World economy?

DOE and NCLB Agenda

- Weaken support for public education
- Privatize public schools or turn them into corporate welfare charter schools
- Implement an orthodoxy for teaching and research on teaching, particularly in urban areas
- To de-emphasize university teacher education programs
- To encourage alternative teacher certification in ways that weaken the profession of teaching

1. Under NCLB, which of the following measure of inequality must be eliminated by 2014?

- A. Inequality in school funding.
- B. Inequality in child poverty rates.
- C. Inequality in access to health care.
- D. Inequality in family income.
- E. Inequality in standardized test scores.
- F. None of the above

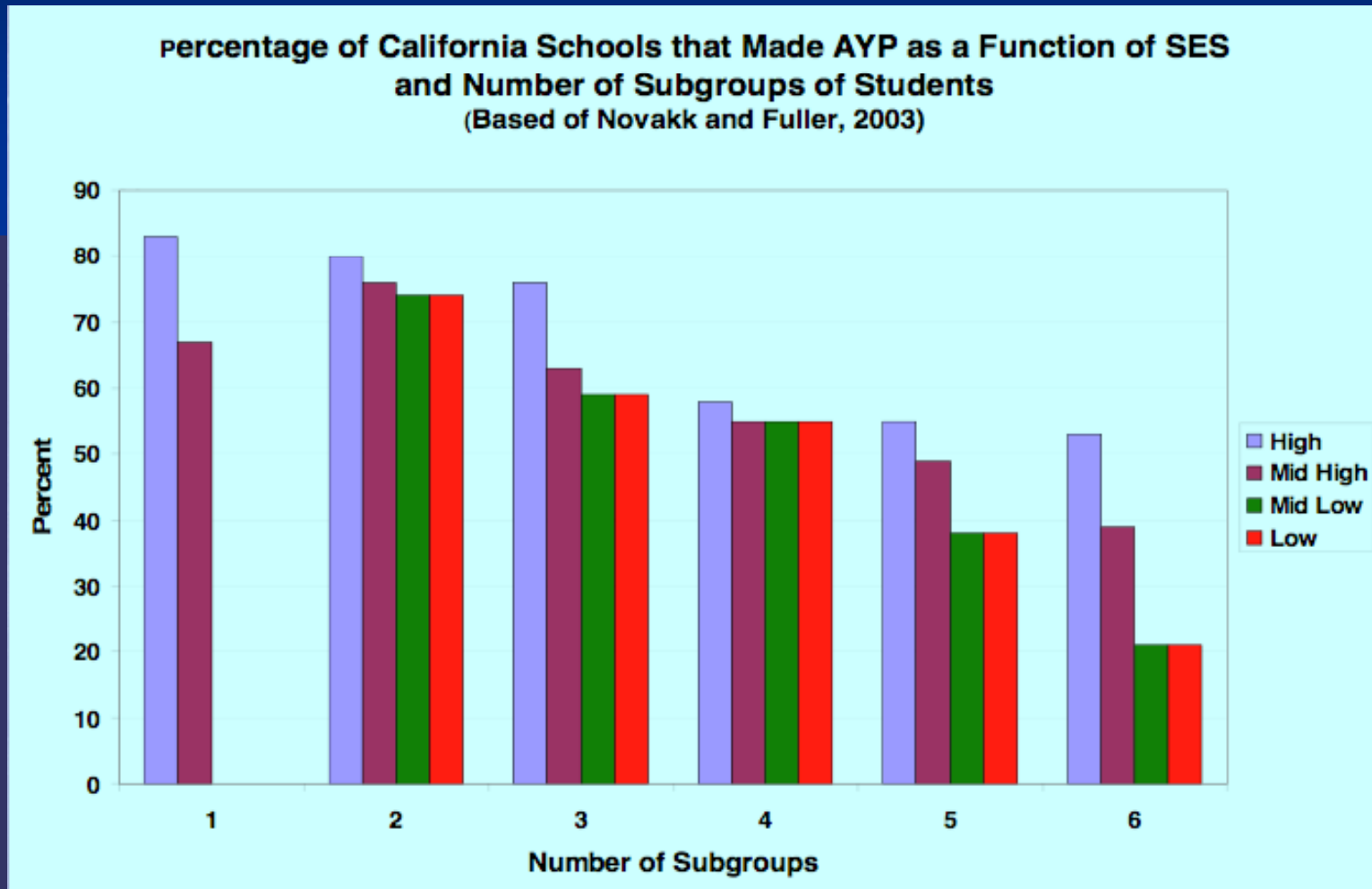
From *Rethinking Schools Online*:

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/19_01/test191.shtml

Answer: F (none of the above)

- **Performance Goal 1: By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better, in reading/language arts and mathematics.**
- Even though there is much rhetoric from the NCLB advocates about ending achievement gaps, the law says that all students will be proficient by 2014. As unrealistic as this demand is, there will still be room for the “honorable” and “distinguished” and the “5-star” designations that have historically separated the privileged from the rest.

If high stakes testing under NCLB is not ending the achievement gap, is it encouraging diversity?



High Diversity Lowers Odds of Meeting AYP Targets

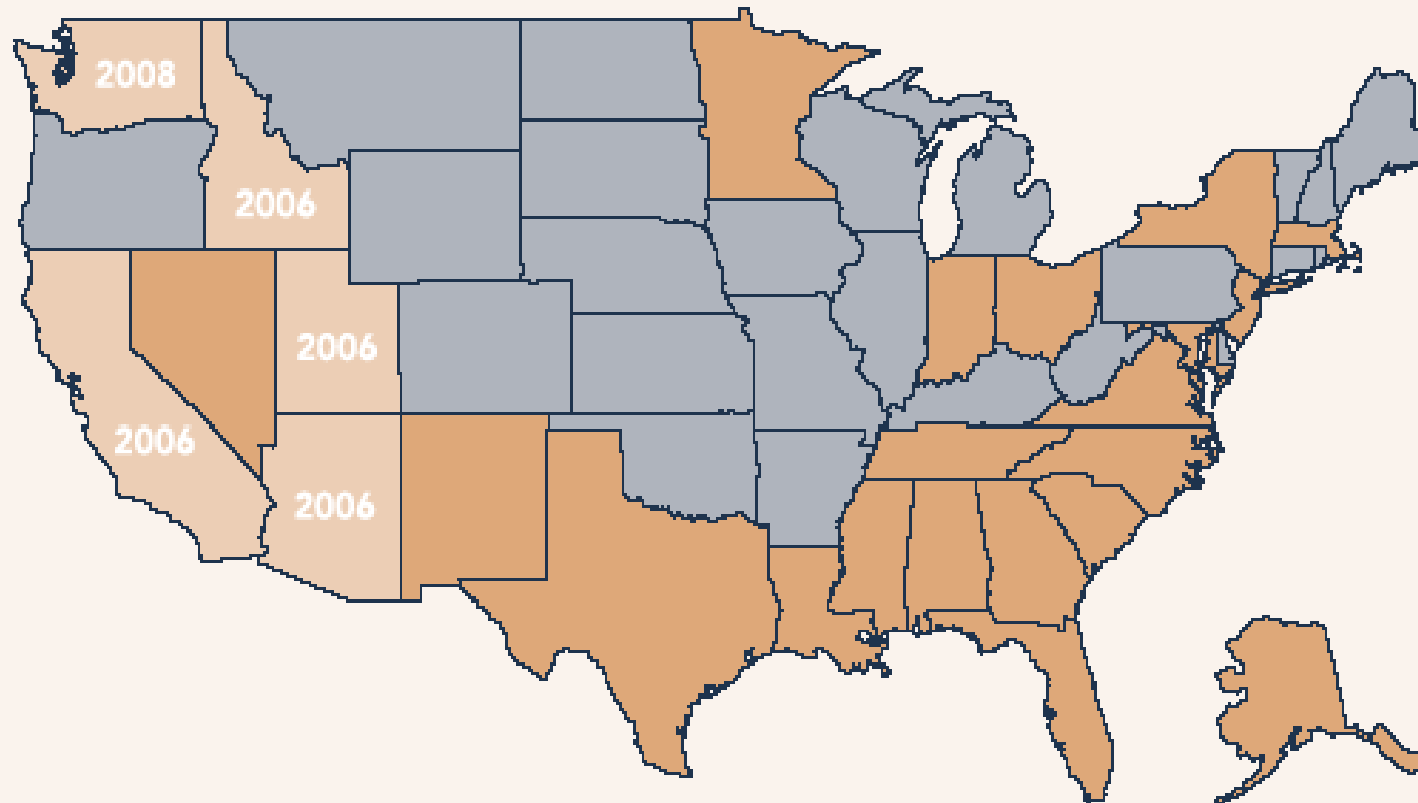
TABLE 3. Odds of Hitting AYP Targets—California Elementary Schools

Families economically disadvantaged	Count of student subgroups	Count of schools	Percentage of schools that met AYP	Average enrollment	Average CAT6 Reading NCE	Average CAT6 Math NCE
Less than 25%	1	449	90%	332	60	67
	2	326	89%	411	59	67
	3	237	89%	454	56	64
	4	111	77%	441	53	61
	5	37	81%	463	52	63
25% - 50%	1	30	87%	131	53	58
	2	195	86%	280	53	58
	3	280	79%	401	48	55
	4	376	72%	419	47	55
	5	164	70%	425	48	56
50% - 75%	2	106	87%	219	46	50
	3	274	71%	389	39	47
	4	573	65%	442	40	49
	5	161	55%	443	40	47
More than 75%	2	61	64%	209	37	41
	3	842	44%	485	33	40
	4	578	43%	506	34	41
	5	137	34%	461	35	42

NCLB: Coming Soon to a public high school near You?

- Recent attacks on public high schools will likely soften resistance to more high stakes testing in secondary grades.
- 15 states are now working toward implementing NCLB testing in high schools.

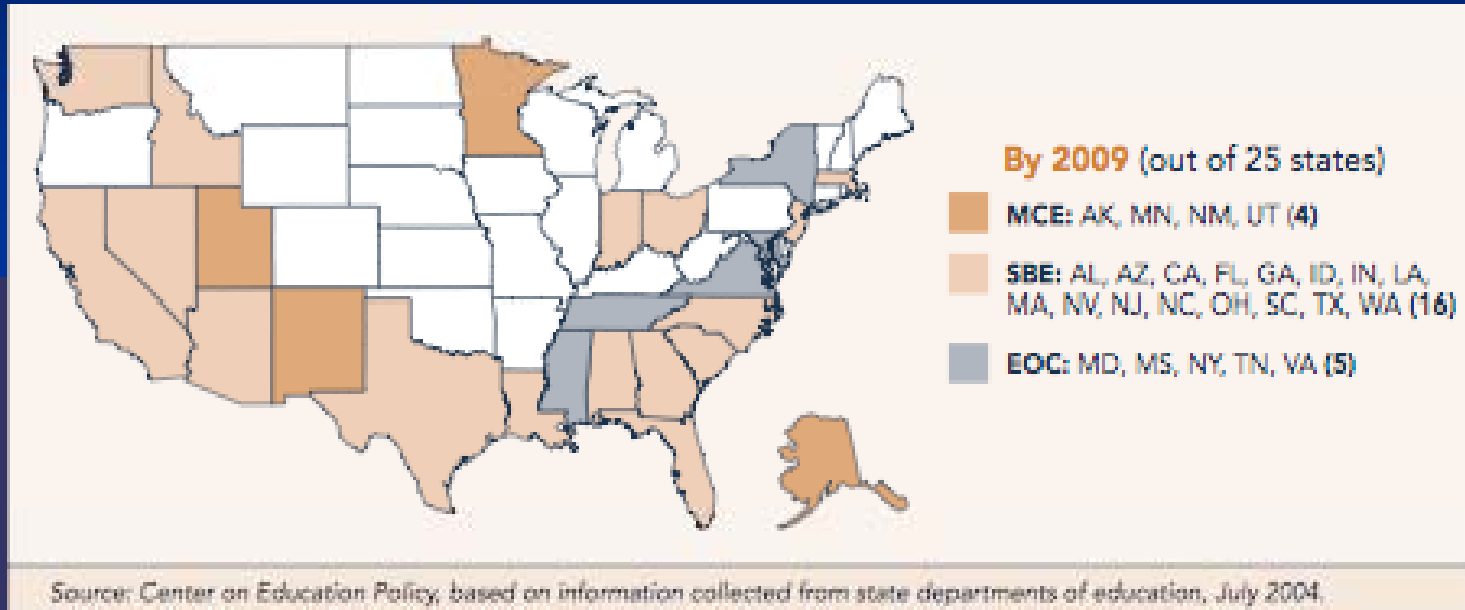
FIGURE 1: STATES WITH MANDATORY EXIT EXAMS



- States with mandatory exit exams in 2004:**
AL, AK, FL, GA, IN, LA, MD, MA, MN, MS, NV, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OH, SC, TN, TX, VA (20)
- States phasing in exit exams by 2009 but not yet withholding diplomas:** AZ, CA, ID, UT, WA (5)
- All other states**

Source: Center on Education Policy, based on information collected from state departments of education, July 2004.

Types of Exit Exams by State



MCE (minimum competency exam)

SBE (standards-based exam)

EOC (end-of-course exams)

State Demographics and High School Exit Exams

Of the 10 states with the highest percentage of African-Americans, 9 have high school exit exams.

* 5 of these states are among the 10 states that use tests to determine promotion in elementary grades.

- Mississippi (1989)
- Louisiana* (1991)
- South Carolina* (1990)
- Georgia* (1994)
- Maryland (1982)
- Alabama (1985)
- North Carolina* (1982)
- Virginia (1986)
- Delaware* (No HS Test)
- Tennessee (1986)

State Demographics and High School Exit Exams

Of the 10 states with the highest percentage of Hispanics or Latinos, **8** have high school exit exams.

* 5 of these states make up the remainder of the 10 states to use tests to determine promotion in other grades.

- New Mexico* (1990)
- California* (2006)
- Texas* (1987)
- Arizona (2006)
- Nevada (1981)
- Colorado (no test)
- Florida* (1979)
- New York* (1980)
- New Jersey (1985)
- Illinois (no test)

State Demographics and High School Exit Exams

Of the 10 states with the highest percentage of white population, 1 has high school exit exams.

None uses high-stakes tests to determine promotion in elementary grades.

- Maine (no HS test)
- Vermont (no HS test)
- New Hampshire (no HS test)
- W. Virginia (no HS test)
- Iowa (no HS test)
- North Dakota (no HS test)
- Montana (no HS test)
- Kentucky (no HS test)
- Wyoming (no HS test)
- Minnesota (2000)

State Demographics and High School Exit Exams

Of the 10 states with the lowest graduation rates, all 10 have high school exit exams. 9 of these states have had exit exams for more than 10 years.

- Georgia (1994)
- Nevada (1981)
- Florida (1979)
- Arizona (2006)
- Tennessee (1986)
- S. Carolina (1990)
- Mississippi (1989)
- Alabama (1985)
- North Carolina (1982)
- New Mexico (1990)

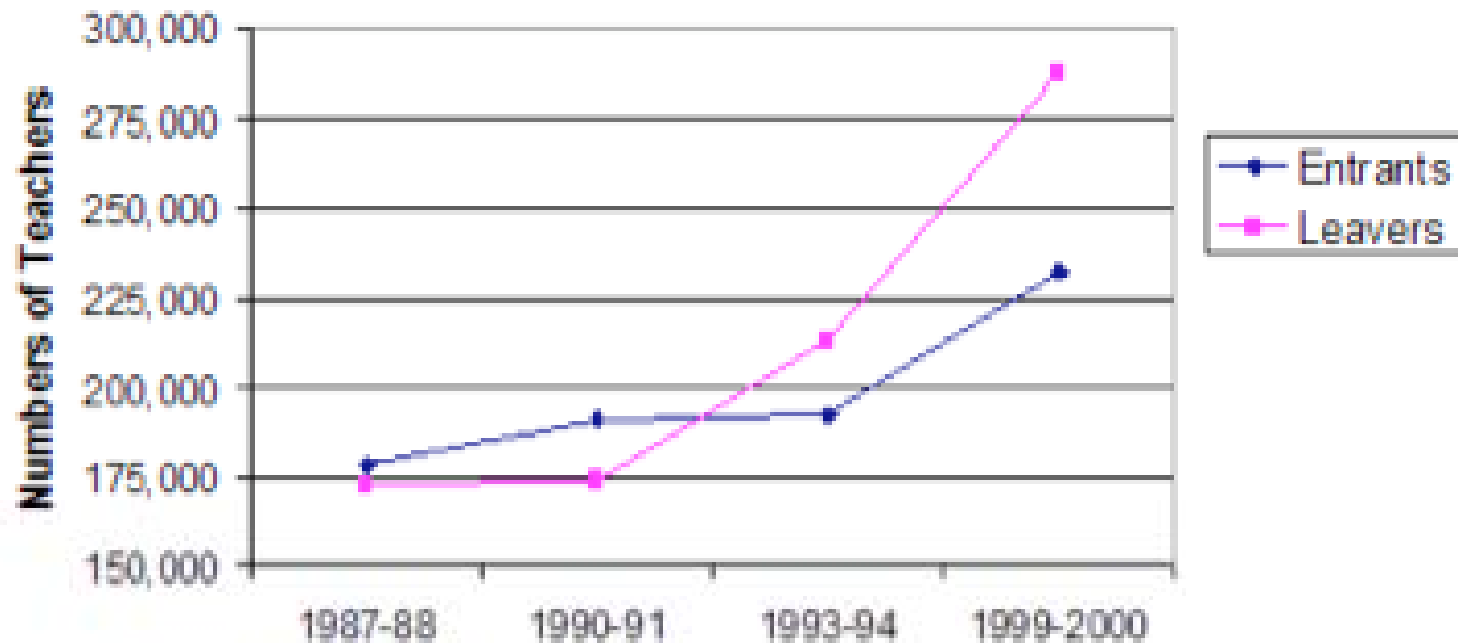
Graduation Rankings from: *High school graduation rates*, Greene, 2002

Students in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to have teachers who--

- Do not have majors or even minors in the subjects they teach
- Are not certified in the subjects they teach
- Have less than three years teaching experience
- Had no prior practice teaching

A Shortage of Teachers, Highly Qualified or Otherwise

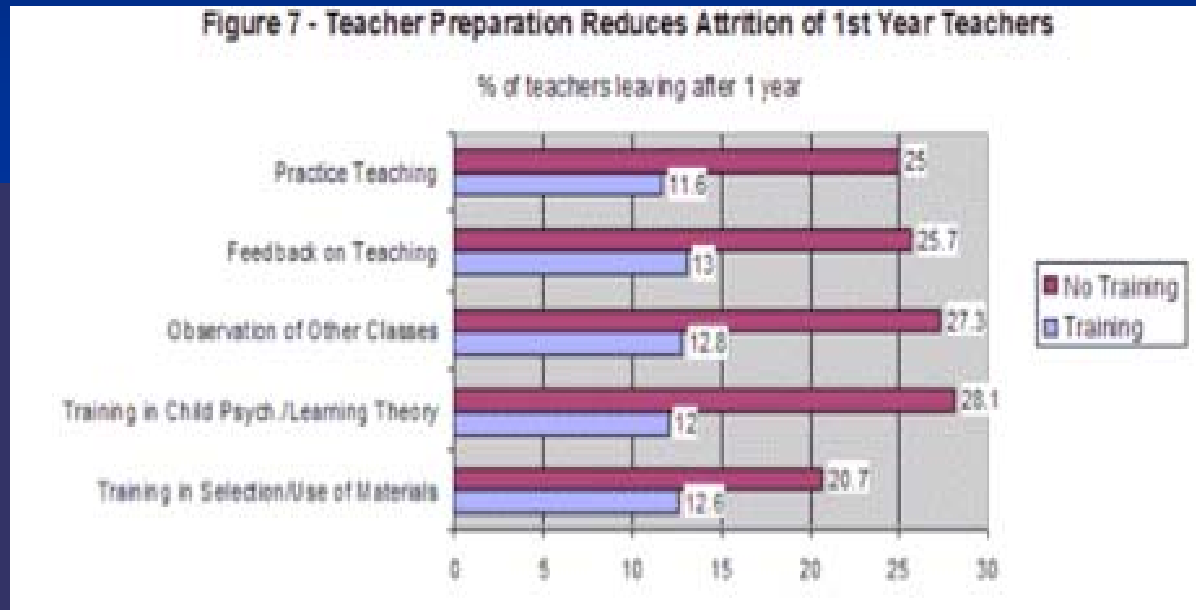
Figure 2 - Trends in Teacher Entry and Attrition, 1987-2000



Source: Adapted from Ingersoll (2001).

Effects of Teacher Preparation on Attrition Rates

Figure 7 - Teacher Preparation Reduces Attrition of 1st Year Teachers



What is ABCTE?

- Founded by Education Leadership Council and charter member, Eugene Hickok, former Commission of Education for Pennsylvania, one of two states to currently accepting ABCTE for full credentialing
- Offers certification via Internet testing (Pearson Education) for beginning and “master” teachers, neither of which require any coursework in education.

Privatization of Teacher Preparation?

- Requires a Bachelors Degree and \$500 for the Internet test can result in certification, now fully recognized in Pennsylvania and Idaho.
- Endorsed in DOE's 2003 *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge: The Secretary's Second Annual Report on Teacher Quality*:
"States could decide that individuals who pass the relevant sections of the American Board assessment would be considered fully certified to teach, regardless of where they learned the important knowledge and skills that were tested." (p. 5)

April 27, 2005
American Board to offer \$100 savings on teacher certification fees in May to celebrate graduations, Teacher Appreciation Week

Pennsylvania Information Sessions: Come to an information session in Pennsylvania: June 13-16.

Research findings from *Unfulfilled Promise: Ensuring High Quality Teachers for our Nation's Schools: A Status Report on NCLB from Southeastern Schools* (Southeast Education Center for Teacher Quality, 2004)

- “‘Highly-Qualified’ Does Not Ensure High Quality: Under NCLB, teachers are considered ‘highly qualified if they meet specific requirements. These requirements, however, focus primarily on what teachers know, not on what they are able to do. We learned from our case studies that successful teachers have both content knowledge and teaching skills, such as knowing how to address different students’ learning needs, especially those whose primary language is not English.”
- “I’ve been in the business for 38 years, and to be honest I have never seen a teacher get into difficulty because they didn’t have the content. It has always been they didn’t have the mastery of teaching strategies.” --Human Resources administrator, rural district

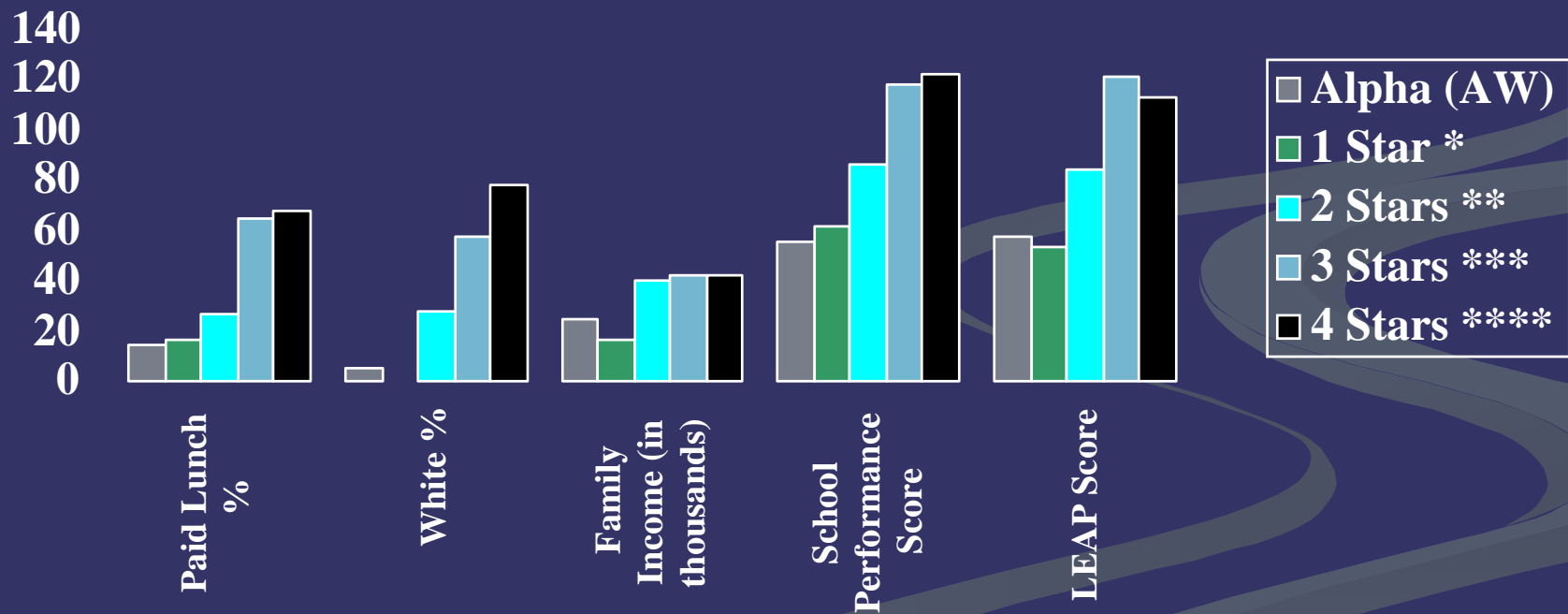
Potential Results of NCLB Requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers

- NCLB certification requirements will intensify teacher shortages, particularly in areas of high poverty
- Resulting shortage will create new routes to certification and lower teaching standards
- Bachelors degrees in subject area and/or passage of paper/pencil or Internet test will become compatible with definitions of high quality
- University training will be less important
- Options such as ABCTE will further privatize and narrow the teacher preparation process
- Teacher candidates will be “protected from the ‘liberal agenda’ of teacher education programs” (Berliner, 2005)

final remarks

... for now ...

Demographic Data Related to Test Scores of Randomly Selected Local Schools Across SPS Rating Levels, 2003-2004



Demographic data from Public School Review
<http://www.publicschoolreview.com>