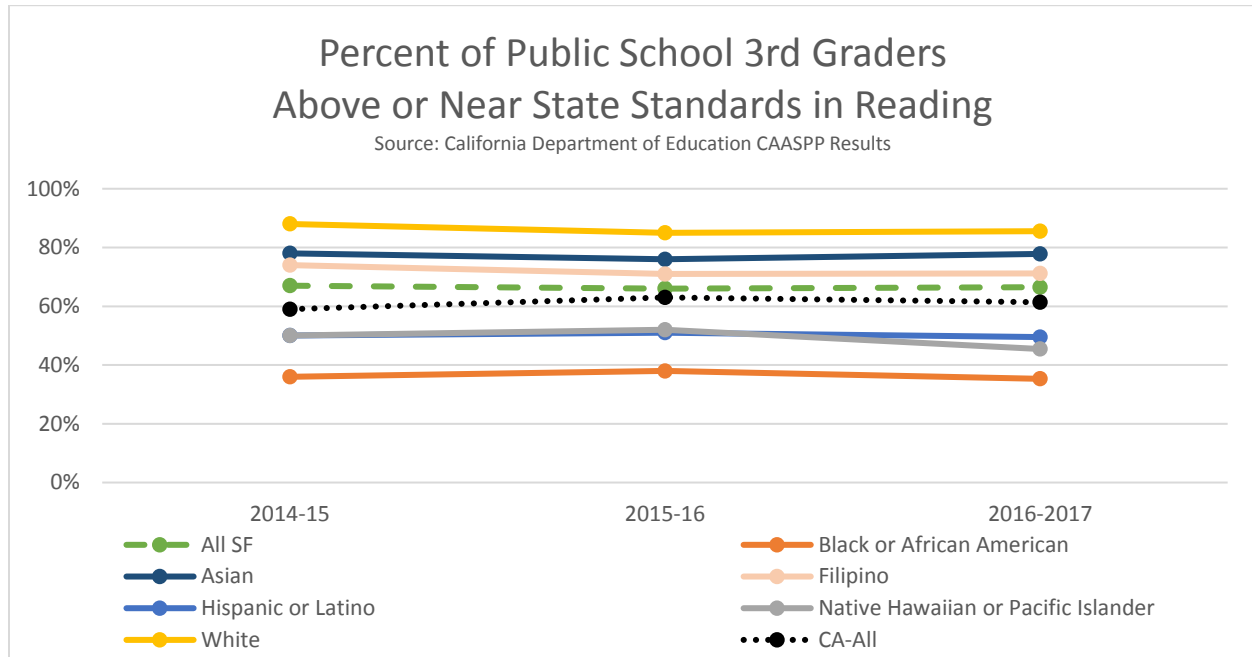


# Increase the percent of Public School 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders near or above State Standards in Reading



The above chart shows the percent of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in San Francisco public schools (all SFUSD, county and charter schools) reading near or above state standards by race/ethnicity between 2015 and 2017.

## Data Definition & the San Francisco Trend line

In the spring of 2015, California implemented a new statewide assessment of student learning, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). The CAASPP is a computer-based assessment that gauges student’s progress in learning relative to new statewide academic standards. The standards align with changes in curriculum and instruction across the state. The CAASPP is intended to help education stakeholders understand student’s mastery of the skills needed for success in college and meaningful careers.

The reading domain of the CAASPP, which is the focus of this scorecard, assesses student’s abilities to understand literary and non-fictional texts. This indicator considers both students who are near state standards, as well as those who are meeting or surpassing standards. The threshold definition for “at or near state standards in reading” is that a student demonstrates some ability to read closely and analytically to understand a range of literary and informational texts of moderate complexity.<sup>i</sup>

In the 2016-17 school year, 67% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in San Francisco public schools were reading near or above state standards; this is within a percentage point of the 2015 and 2016 results. There are marked disparities in results by student race/ethnicity. Well over 80% of White 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students read

near or above state standards, compared to less than 40% of African American students and approximately half of Hispanic/Latino and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students. English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged students were also underrepresented in the students reading at a level near or above state standards, with only 54% and 55% respectively meeting this threshold in the 2016-17 school year.

## Story Behind the Curve

Third grade marks the transition from learning to read to reading to learn. National research shows that children who are not reading proficiently by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are more likely to have ongoing academic difficulties in school, and less likely to graduate from high school on time and succeed later in life.<sup>ii</sup> The following section describes recent efforts by the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and others to ensure students are reading at grade level in San Francisco.

## Policy and Practice Shifts in the State and County

**Curriculum Standards.** In 2010 the Common Core State Standards were adopted in California, which redefined what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. Through Common Core there have been updates to the State's English Language Arts curriculum framework as recently as 2015.<sup>iii</sup>

In response to California's adoption of the Common Core State Standards in Language Arts, SFUSD initiated a new Core Curriculum, which organizes student learning into topics that repeat from year to year, so that students deepen their understanding of Language Arts and reading as they progress through the grades.<sup>iv</sup>

**Focus on Literacy.** Literacy has long been a focus of the San Francisco Unified School District, which administers several initiatives to improve reading instruction, especially for the students most in need of support. In 2012, SFUSD also initiated a new model of literacy instruction called the Comprehensive Approach to Literacy, which draws from a variety of research-based reading practices to support reading and writing development. In 2014, SFUSD developed a new visioning plan, SFUSD Vision 2025: Reimagining Public Education in San Francisco for a New Generation, which stated its intention to address longstanding disparities and inequities and reaffirmed its commitment to a research-based instructional literacy model that emphasizes a workshop approach, fosters explicit strategy instruction and provides opportunities for student practice in whole group, small group and individual settings.<sup>v</sup>

**Assessment.** Beginning in 2011, SFUSD developed new sets of organized student data collected via the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (a formative assessment in early literacy for prekindergarten, kindergarten, and/or first grade students) with which they could use to understand baseline literacy skills. In subsequent years, this data was used to create a kindergarten readiness measure.<sup>vi</sup> In the 2013-14 school year SFUSD also began to systematically implement the Fountas & Pinnell reading assessments for grades TK-2, and grades 3-5 in some schools. Students are assessed two to three times per year, which allows trained teachers to identify specific foundational reading skills that are challenging for individual students and deliver differentiated interventions specific to each child's needs to support them in developing reading skills.<sup>vii</sup>

**Alignment and Partnership.** In the 2011-12 school year SFUSD's Early Education Department (EED) launched the Pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> Initiative, which brought together preschool and early elementary grade

teachers to align curricula, methodology, and assessments.<sup>viii</sup> This same school year, the San Francisco Board of Education President, San Francisco Child Care Providers Associate, SFUSD and partners started the Pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Building Community-Public School Collaboration Project to strengthen and expand SFUSD's Pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade approach to education by aligning licensed childcare providers, EED, and SFUSD early grades.

**Response to Intervention.** SFUSD began implementing the Response to Intervention (RTI) model in 2012 to address inequities in youth outcomes. RTI is a comprehensive early detection and prevention strategy that identifies struggling students and assists them before they fall behind in various subjects such as English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science. Starting from Pre-K, schools must take appropriate steps to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills to implement RTI programs and that the programs are implemented with fidelity. For students at the highest level of need within this model, interventions tailored to the students' needs are provided by a highly trained, knowledgeable, and skilled educator such as a Reading Recovery teacher, Academic RTI Facilitator, or Literacy Specialist.<sup>ix</sup>

### Local Efforts to Impact Reading

**Everybody Reads & Summer for All.** In the summer of 2015, the program "Everybody Reads" sought to prevent summer learning loss through the provision of books and literacy support to youth and their families living in the Western Addition and Bayview neighborhoods of San Francisco. The eight week reading program worked with families to increase time spent reading during the summer and provide caregivers with strategies for reading with children.<sup>x</sup> Mayor Ed Lee also launched the "Summer for All" initiative that same year, pledging to eliminate waitlists for publically funded Summer Learning Programs. As a result, about 900 more youth were served by a 6-9 week program that focused on maintaining and expanding literacy skills.<sup>xi</sup>

**Super Bowl 50.** During this time, San Francisco also hosted Super Bowl 50 which provided a platform for various literacy-themed campaigns and efforts. Through leveraging millions of dollars of philanthropic funds, the Host Committee was able to provide grants for youth organizations and others who then implemented various literacy projects.<sup>xii</sup> In addition, DCYF received a \$50,000 grant to serve 10,000 youth in San Francisco. Through collaborative efforts involving other City departments and CBOs, DCYF coordinated Summer Stride: Read. Create. Explore. With this support from Super Bowl 50 came additional funding for books for Bay Area literacy programs serving children in need.

**San Francisco Public Library Scholar Card.** In 2017, SFUSD and the San Francisco Public Library launched an initiative to provide library cards to all SFUSD students in the city. The initiative includes specially-designed SFUSD library cards, fine amnesty, and coordinated sign-up efforts with principals, teachers, and school librarians.<sup>xiii</sup>

### What Works: A Selection of Best Practices to Increase the percent of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders Reading Proficiently

Many factors impact whether or not a student is proficient in reading by the end of third grade. The following is a brief summary of the factors that the Annie E. Casey Foundation identified as important to this indicator.<sup>xiv</sup>

**School Readiness.** Research continues to show that children from low-income families are less likely to be ready for school at kindergarten entry than higher-income children. A 2012 study found that

nationally less than half (48%) of poor children are ready for school at age five, compared to 75% of children from families with moderate- and high-income. Preschool attendance ranks among the strongest of success factors that influence the school readiness of children from low-income families. Children who attend some form of preschool at age four are nine percentage points more likely to be school-ready than other children.

**Addressing School Attendance.** New studies continue to show that chronic absence from school has a negative effect on student's academic performance and other outcomes. Students who are chronically absent score lower on reading tests than other students, are more likely to have absenteeism and achievement problems in later grades and are more likely to drop out of high school. While not all absenteeism interventions have been effective, there have been some promising models and a growing number of school districts are working to address this issue.

**Summer Learning.** Many low-income children fall behind during the summer by as much as two months of reading achievement, while their middle-income peers make slight gains. The achievement gap produced by summer learning loss compounds over the years. Recent research has further established the link between summer learning loss and limited reading proficiency among low-income students and found evidence that summer programs and providing access to books can counteract the trend, especially for low-income families.

**Family Supports.** Many family stressors can distract children from the task of learning, including hunger, housing insecurity, family mobility, family violence, parental depression, and abuse and neglect. New research on children draws links between the stress of poverty, hormonal changes and impaired learning ability. This research underscores the urgency of reducing family stress in children's lives and providing environments and family supports that enable children's brains to develop in healthy ways, especially during the very early years when brain development is most rapid.

**Learning Environments Outside of School.** High-quality teaching is something that happens not only with teachers at school but with family members at home and with out-of-school time providers. Research underscores the importance of enriched home learning environments and parent engagement in preparing children from low-income families to succeed in school. A five-year study of more than 1,850 children and their mothers from low-income households found that differences in learning environments predicted the children's level of literacy skills. Additionally, there are a growing number of resources for both the community and classroom that are designed to improve children's literacy, including the Common Core State Standard.

**Please see the following selected references for more information on the 'Story Behind the Curve' and highlighted 'Best Practices'**

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<sup>i</sup> California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. Test Results for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. <http://caaspp.cde.ca.gov/sb2016/default>

<sup>ii</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Early Warning Confirmed: A Research Update on Third-Grade Reading. <http://www.aecf.org/resources/early-warning-confirmed/>

<sup>iii</sup> California Department of Education. (2015). ELA/ELD Instructional Materials Adoption Timeline. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/t/l/12-elaeldmaterials.asp>

<sup>iv</sup> SFUSD. Common Core State Standards. <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/curriculum-standards/state-content-standards.html>

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- <sup>v</sup> SFUSD Vision 2025. <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/about-sfusd/vision-2025/about-vision-2025.html>
- <sup>vi</sup> February 2017 Board Presentation. (2017). Early Education: the Gateway to Lifelong Learning. <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/assets/sfusd-staff/about-SFUSD/files/board-presentations/FINAL%20Early%20ED.%20presentation.pdf>
- <sup>vii</sup> SFUSD. Curriculum & Standards: Assessing Student Learning. <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/curriculum-standards/assessing-student-learning.html>
- <sup>viii</sup> SFUSD. (2012). PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report. Year One: 2011-2012. [http://www.sfusd.edu/en/assets/sfusd-staff/programs/files/Early%20Education/PreK-3rd%20Report%20Year%20One\\_7-18-13.pdf](http://www.sfusd.edu/en/assets/sfusd-staff/programs/files/Early%20Education/PreK-3rd%20Report%20Year%20One_7-18-13.pdf)
- <sup>ix</sup> SFUSD Academic Response to Intervention (RTI). <http://www.sfusdhumanities.org/academic-response-to-intervention-rti.html>
- <sup>x</sup> University of San Francisco. (2015). Everybody Reads – Supporting Families to Read Together. <https://www.usfca.edu/news/everybody-reads-supporting-families-read-together>
- <sup>xi</sup> City and County of San Francisco Office of the Mayor. (2015). Mayor Lee Announces Expanded Summer Programs to Eliminate Wait Lists for City’s Children & Youth. <http://sfmayor.org/article/mayor-lee-announces-expanded-summer-programs-eliminate-wait-lists-city%E2%80%99s-children-youth>
- <sup>xii</sup> The Read Zone. (2015). Super Bowl 50 Host Committee Announces Bay Area Early Literacy Initiative to Increase Third Grade Reading Proficiency. <http://www.thereadzone.org/news/2015/6/8/super-bowl-50-host-committee-announces-bay-area-early-literacy-initiative-to-increase-third-grade-reading-proficiency>
- <sup>xiii</sup> SFPL Scholar Library Card. <https://sfpl.org/?pg=2000965001>
- <sup>xiv</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Early Warning Confirmed: A Research Update on Third-Grade Reading. <http://www.aecf.org/resources/early-warning-confirmed/>