

Impact of **Literacy** on College and Career Readiness and STEM Success

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*Adolescent Literacy's Role in Preparing
Students for College and Career
Readiness and STEM Success*

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ACT Research

- **What do we know about middle school students' literacy skills?**
 - **How do these skills affect college/career readiness and success?**
 - **What can we do to improve readiness?**
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Data Sources

- **NAEP**
 - **College Readiness**
 - **EXPLORE—8th Grade**
 - **The ACT—12th Grade**
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Data Sources

- **EXPLORE-ACT based on college readiness standards**
 - **Curriculum based**
 - **Measure what students need to know to be ready for college-entry, credit bearing courses without remediation**
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How Do We Define College and Career Readiness in Reading?

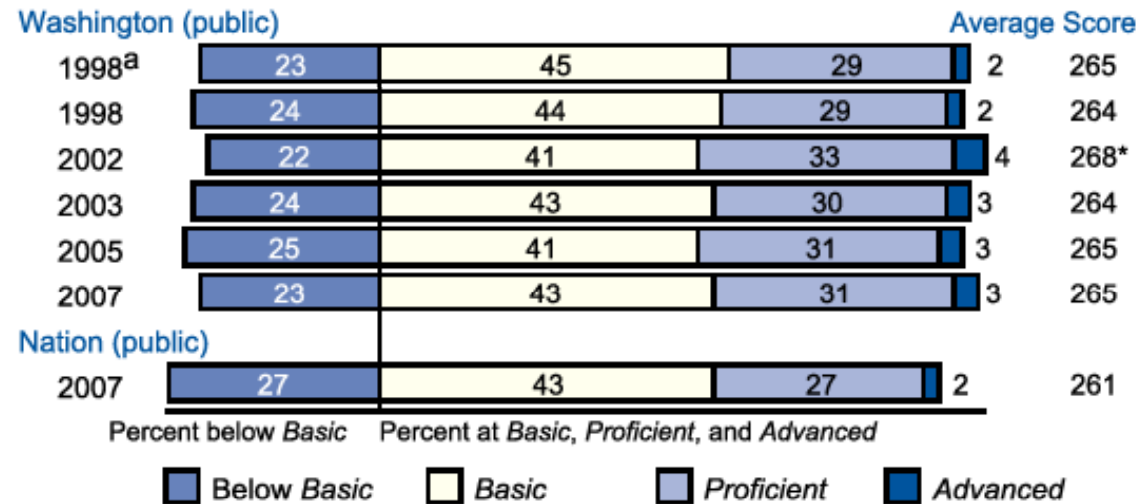
- **Based on actual success students experience in credit-bearing college-entry social science courses**
 - **Does college readiness=career readiness?**
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Research Results

- **Research shows that the skills needed to enter workforce training programs and to enter college are comparable.**
- **Level of expectation for students entering jobs offering a livable wage is the same as that needed for college.**

NAEP Results in Reading: 2007

Percentages at NAEP Achievement Levels and Average Score



^a Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 reading achievement levels correspond to the following scale points: Below *Basic*, 242 or lower; *Basic*, 243–280; *Proficient*, 281–322; *Advanced*, 323 or above.

NAEP Results in Reading: 2007

- **No significant improvement in percentage of students reaching proficient/advanced**
 - **No significant decrease in percentage of students in below basic category**
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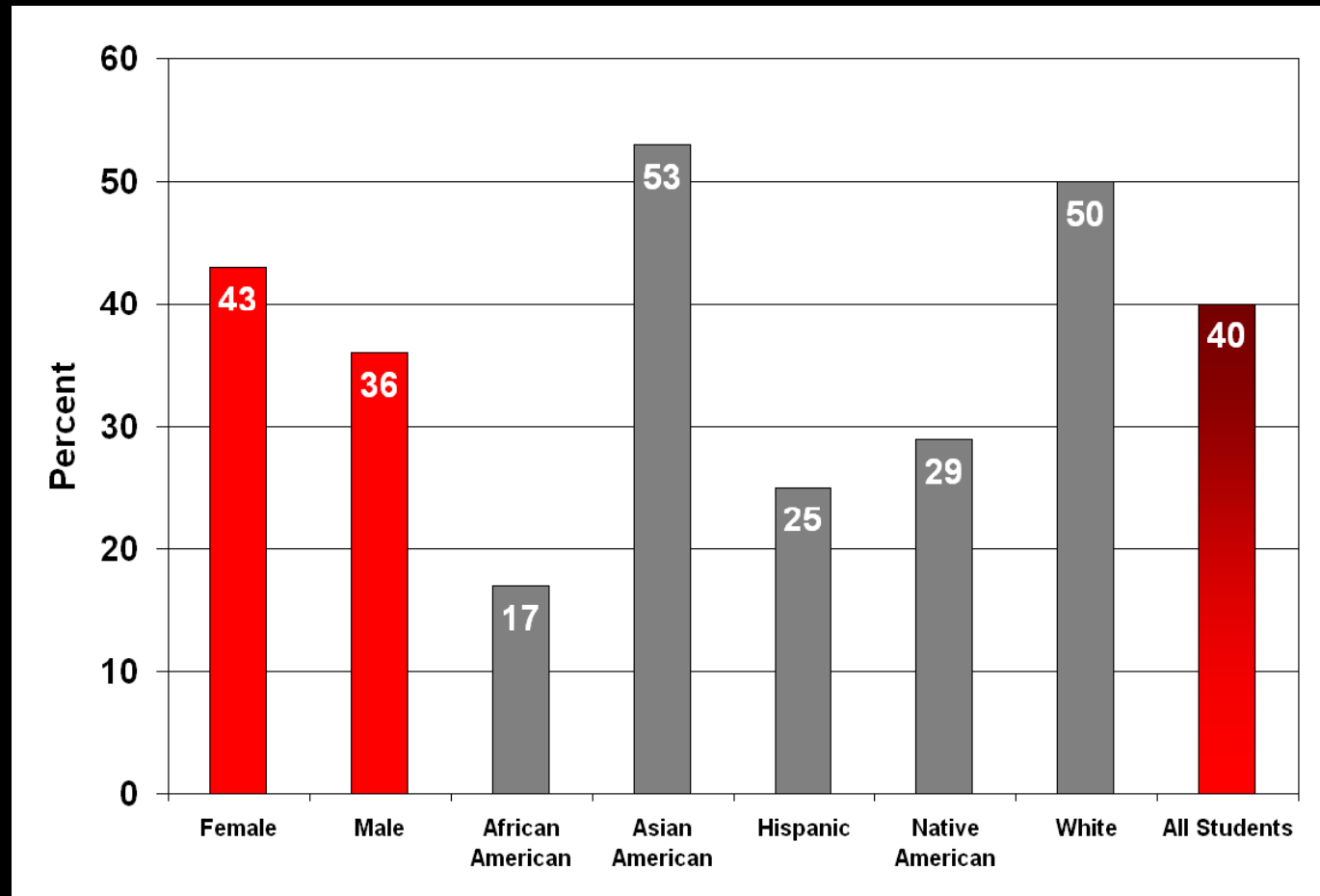
Current State of College Readiness in Literacy: Middle School Students

Not enough middle school students are on target to be college ready in reading when they leave high school.

Only **40 percent** of the nation's 8th-grade EXPLORE-tested students in 2008 are on target to be ready for college-level reading.

Current State of College Readiness in Literacy: Middle School Students

For some groups, substantially fewer students are on target to be ready for college-level reading.



Current State of College Readiness in Literacy: 2008 High School Grads

- Only **53 percent** of the 1.4 million 2008 ACT-tested high school graduates are ready for college-level reading.
 - Only **68 percent** of the 12,000 2008 ACT-tested high school graduates in Washington are ready for college-level reading.
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Current State of College Readiness in Literacy: 2008 High School Grads

College readiness in reading
has been declining during the
past decade:

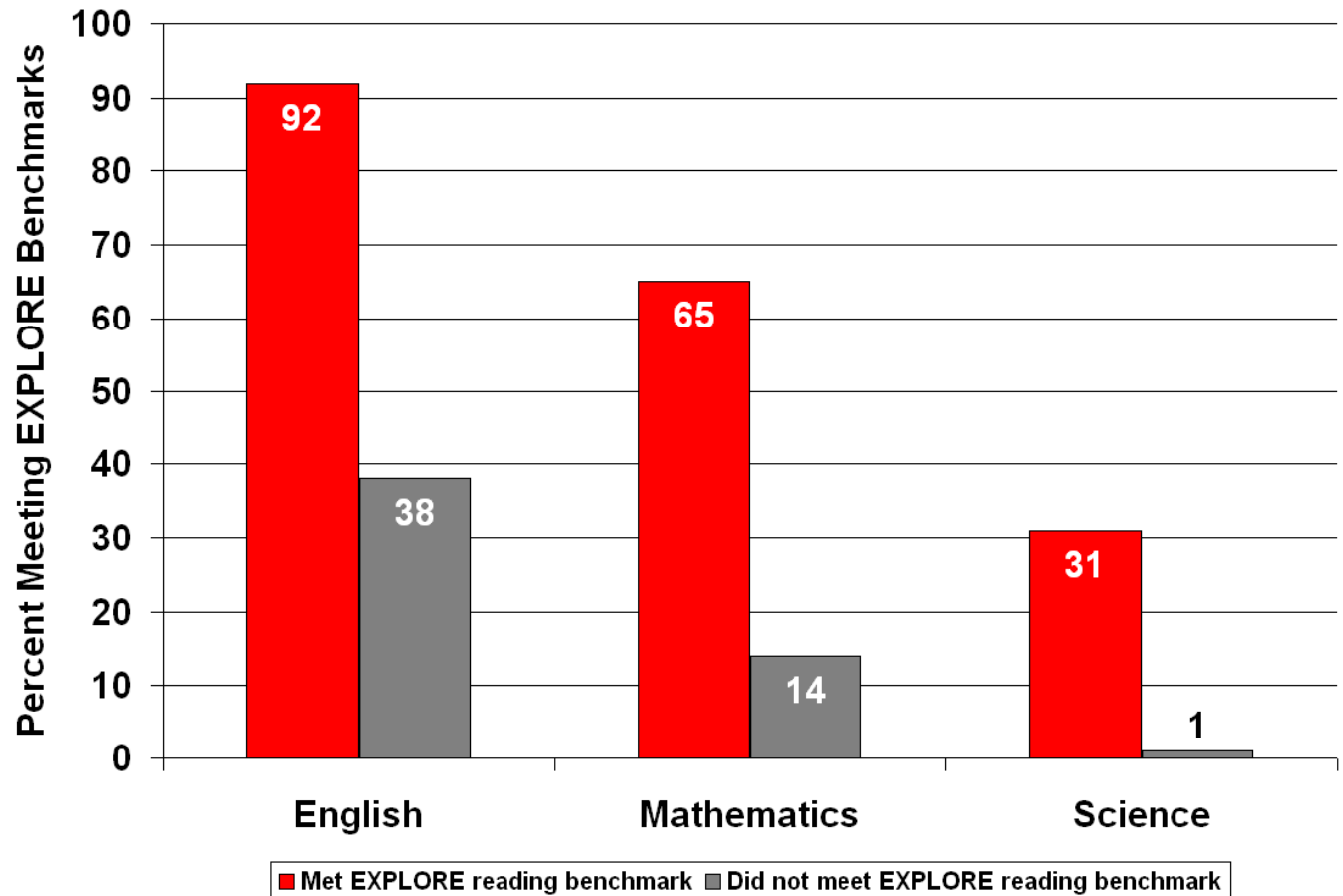
- 1994: **52 percent**
 - 1999: **55 percent** (peak)
 - 2008: **53 percent**
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Literacy: Does it Matter?

Middle school students who are on target in reading are **substantially** more likely to be on target to be ready in other subject matter areas.

Literacy: Does It Matter?

Students who are on target in reading are most likely to be on target in English, math, and science.



Literacy: Does It Matter?

Students who are NOT on target in reading in middle school are significantly more likely NOT to be on target in English, math, and science.

Of those 2008 EXPLORE students who did **NOT** meet the EXPLORE Reading Benchmark:

- Only **38%** are on target in English
 - Only **14%** are on target in Math
 - Only **1%** are on target in Science
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Literacy: Does It Matter?

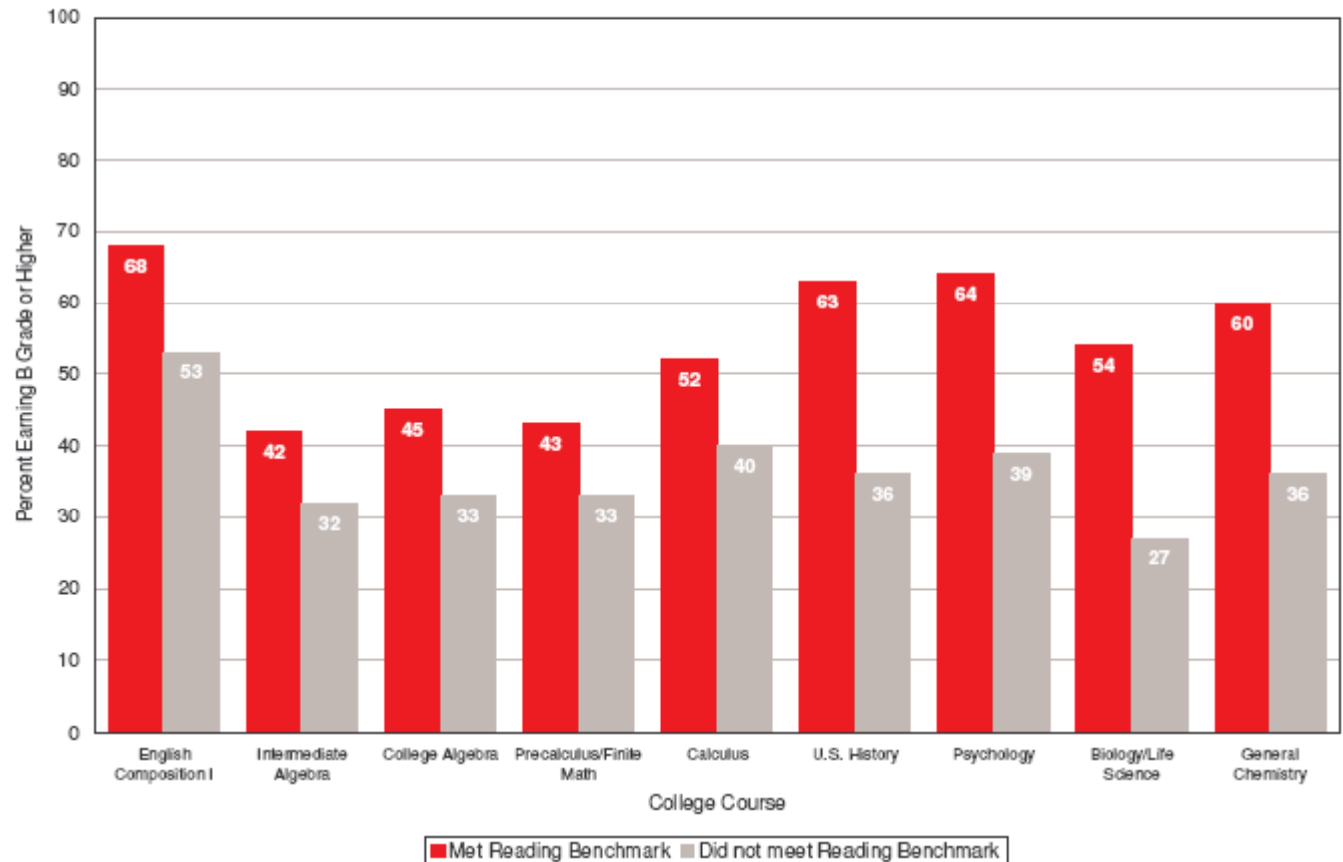
College readiness in literacy has a direct impact on college success.

Students who are college-ready in reading are more likely to :

- **Enroll** in college (74% vs 59%)
- Earn college course **grades of B** or better (63% vs 36%)
- Earn **college GPAs of 3.0** or higher (54% vs 33%)
- **Return** for the second year at the same college (78% vs 67%)

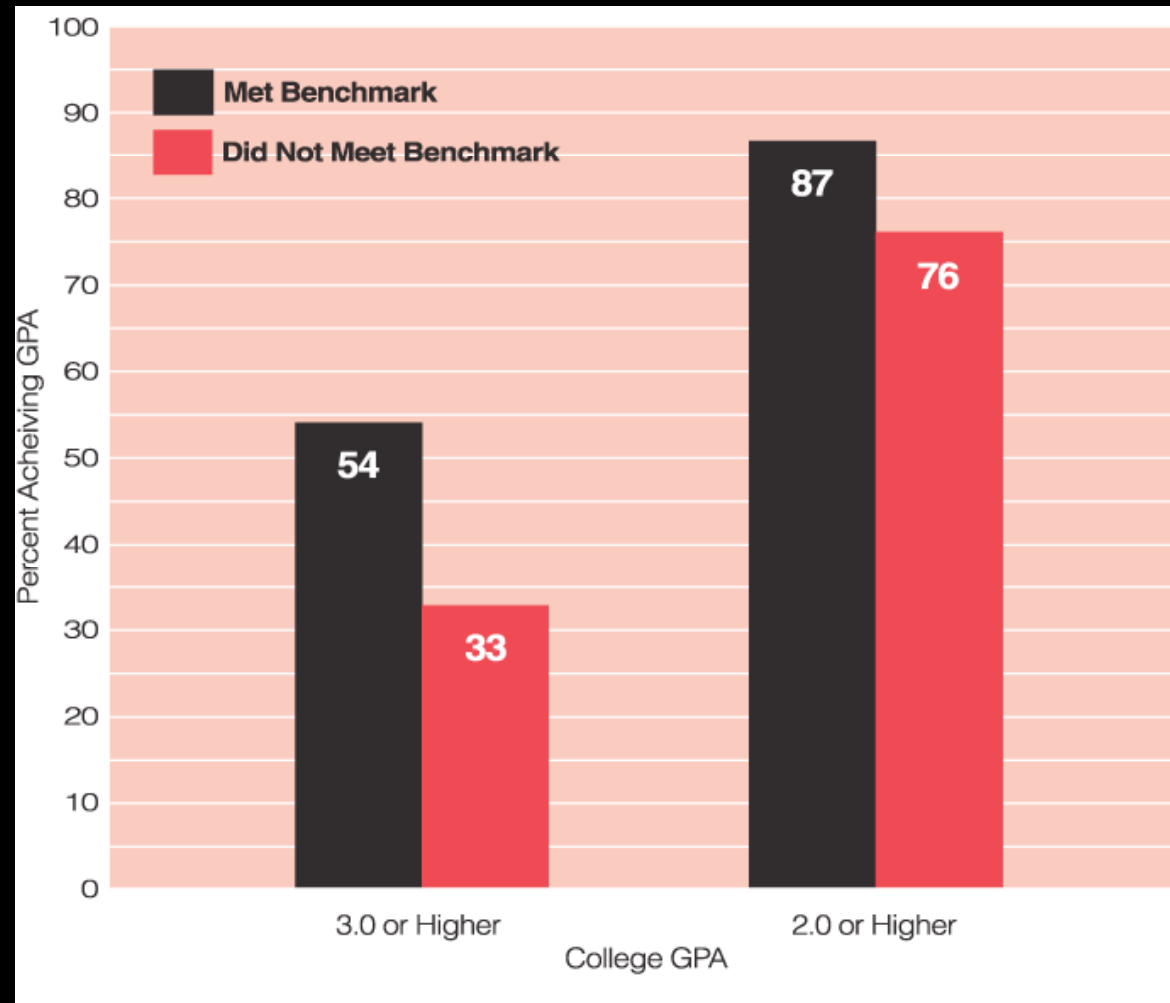
Literacy: Does It Matter?

Better reading skills lead to higher college course grades.



Literacy: Does It Matter?

Better reading skills lead to higher college grade-point averages.

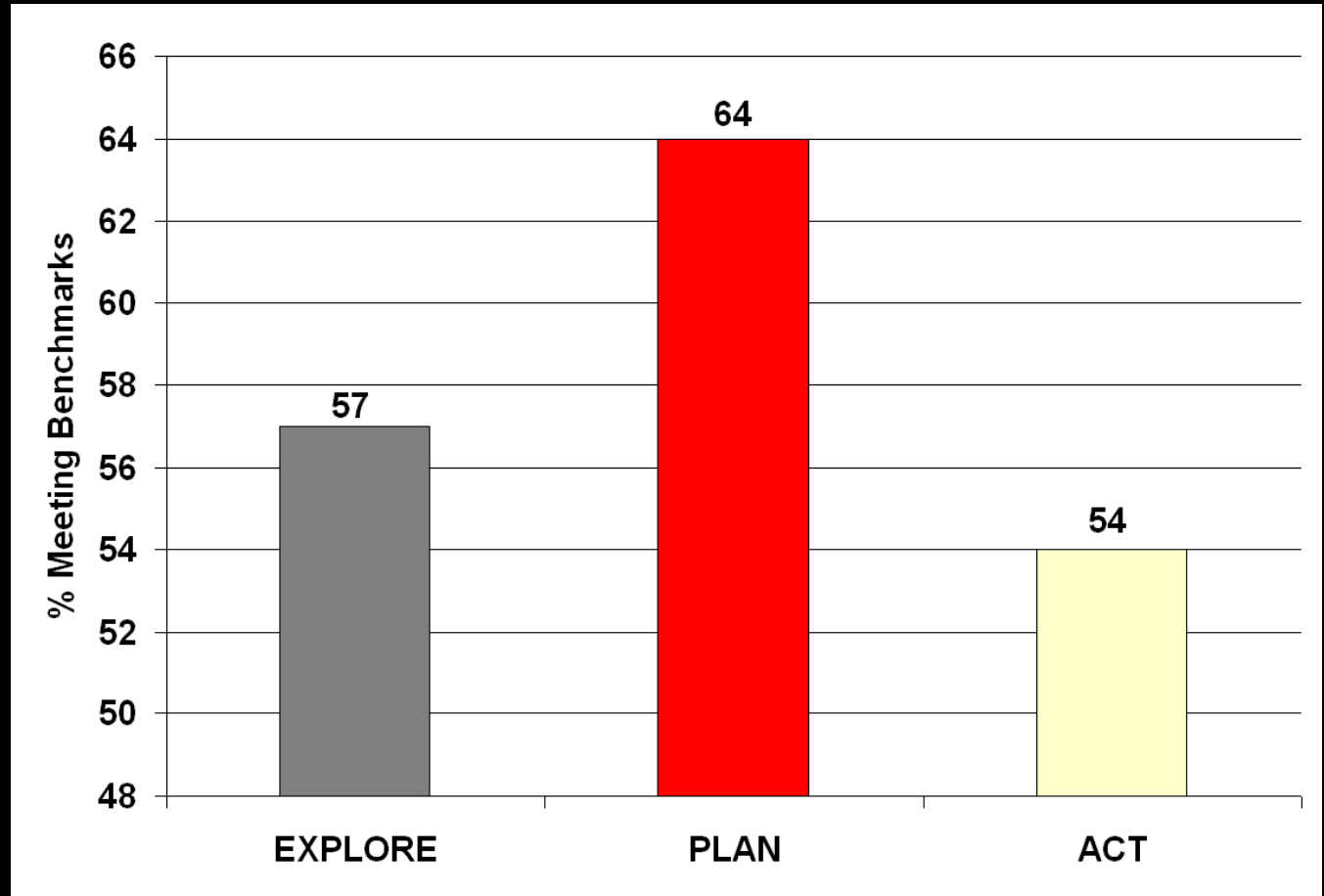


What Happens When We Track Same Students Over Time?

More **eighth-** and **tenth-**grade students nationally are on target to be college ready in reading than are **actually** ready when they graduate from high school.

What Happens When We Track Same Students Over Time?

A decline in the percentage of students who are actually ready for college-level reading occurs between the 10th and 12th grades.



Why are Students Losing Momentum in High School?

- **Students are not being asked to meet rigorous reading standards within the content areas in high school.**
 - **Not enough students are being exposed to complex texts like those they will encounter after high school.**
 - **States are not focusing on essential reading standards.**
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College/Career Readiness Pipeline

- **Being on target by the eighth grade has the most dramatic impact on college/career readiness by the end of high school.**
 - **Helping more students to be on target in reading by end of eighth grade is single most important step we can take to improve college/career readiness.**
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What Is *Complex* Text?

“RSVP”

What Is *Complex Text*?

“RSVP”:

- **Relationships:** Interactions among ideas or characters are subtle or complicated.
 - **Richness:** Information is often communicated by data or literary devices (e.g., allusion, metaphor, personification) in sophisticated ways.
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What Is *Complex Text*?

“RSVP”:

- **Structure:** The text is organized in elaborate and sometimes unusual ways (e.g., out of chronological order).
 - **Style:** The author’s chosen way of writing is often intricate (e.g., made up of many levels of diction or displaying careful attention to detail).
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What Is *Complex Text*?

“RSVP”:

- **Vocabulary:** The words the author uses are frequently difficult and are highly dependent on the use of context clues to communicate their meaning.
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What Is *Complex Text*?

“RSVP”:

- **Purpose:** The author’s intentions are implicit rather than directly stated and may occasionally be difficult to identify.
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So What Can Be Done?

Recommendations:

1. **Revise state standards to specify the essential expectations that all students should attain by the end of eighth grade.**
 - **Make these nonnegotiable for all students.**
 - **Must be aligned with college and career readiness.**
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So What Can Be Done?

Recommendations:

- 2. Incorporate increasingly complex reading materials in middle and high school courses so that students have ample exposure and experience with these types of materials.**
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So What Can Be Done?

Recommendations:

3. Provide middle and high school teachers with guidance and support to incorporate and teach to the kinds of complex texts that are most likely to increase students' readiness for college-level reading.
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So What Can Be Done?

Recommendations:

4. Increase federal and state support for schools to implement intervention programs.
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So What Can Be Done?

Recommendations:

5. Monitor student progress with college/career readiness assessments so timely interventions can be made.
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