

MARY ELLEN HENDERSON
MIDDLE SCHOOL



STATE OF THE SCHOOLS REPORT
OCTOBER 9, 2008

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INTRODUCTION

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

We the stakeholders of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School believe:

- The primary goal of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School is to provide a developmentally appropriate education that meets the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs of every student.
- We believe that each student learns in multiple ways,
- A strong, collaborative partnership among students, parents, staff, and community is essential.
- Diversity enriches our community.
- Open communication among stakeholders of the community is critical to our success.

At Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School:

- We will create a strong academic program with high standards that meet the learning styles and educational needs of each student.
- We will hold equally high expectations for every student.
- We will involve all students in sharing responsibility for their learning.
- We will encourage all members of the community to continually assess and reflect on the learning process.
- We will create a safe environment for learning where students are nurtured and respected.
- We will involve all students in shaping the norms of behavior.
- We will respect our differences.

FCCPS STRATEGIC PLAN

FCCPS has set forth the following Staff Goals for the 2006-2012 academic year.

Goal 1: The Falls Church City Public Schools will attract, retain and develop a highly skilled, experienced and dedicated teaching, administrative and support staff in a culture of continuous growth.

- To recruit, retain and reward an excellent staff.
- To support and evaluate teachers to promote effective instruction and professional growth.
- To support and evaluate administrators to promote strong instructional leadership, effective school management and professional growth.
- To support and evaluate support staff to ensure they meet work responsibilities and facilitate professional growth.

Goal 2: The Falls Church City Public Schools will create and sustain a culture characterized by teamwork, collegiality and collaborative decision making.

- To define and communicate expectations for teamwork, collegiality and collaborative decision making.

- To develop an action plan that includes training and other resources to address these expectations.

Goal 3 :The Falls Church City Public Schools expects administrators to provide effective leadership and management.

- To provide strong, supportive leadership throughout the division.
- To manage carefully the resources provided.
- To provide opportunities for ongoing staff development.
- To provide protected time for teachers to collaborate, plan and deliver instruction.
- To provide employees with clearly articulated job responsibilities and procedures that are communicated division wide.
- To utilize, support and promote the use of data by school staff.

MEHMS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ SCHOOL GOALS

MEHMS has set for the following Professional Development Goals for the 2008-2009 academic year. In line with and supported by the FCCPS Strategic Plan, The National Middle School Association, The IB Middle Years Programme, The American School Counselor Association, and The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Program/Standards, the administration and staff at MEHMS will work toward the following goals throughout the year. Members of the MEHMS faculty will begin exploration of the IB Middle Years Programme and share information throughout our professional learning community.

- MEHMS will continue to foster the professional learning community based on the needs of its teachers and students in order to provide every student with a positive experience both in and out of the classroom. MEHMS will challenge its teachers and students to continually improve, striving for academic and social excellence.
- MEHMS will complete a comprehensive professional development plan that mirrors the elements of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme designed to enhance and improve instruction, promote school culture and vision, and help teachers be more reflective in their practice based on professional learning.
- MEHMS administration and staff will continue to improve community and family outreach and understanding of the middle school program as it applies in Falls Church.

FOCUS AREAS

- Understanding By Design ■ IB Middle Years Programme ■
- Assessment ■ Technology ■

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Technology Integration** – Using technology to enhance instruction. Moving from supporting instruction to enhancing/transforming teaching.
- **Data, Data, Data** – a new approach on learning how to disaggregate different types of data and how to apply to classroom for instruction. Using data to inform assessment practices and meet the needs of students.

- **Scaffolding** – Learning the concept of scaffolding by the teacher. Learning to create activities for cooperative learning and chunking long term projects.
- **Formative and Summative Assessment** – Learning the difference between formative and summative assessment. Using questions as a tool for formative assessment.
- **Project Based Assessment** – Making the move away from paper and pencil tests. Demonstrating skills and process of learning through alternative assessments. Focus on the importance of the learning process.
- **Inquiry Based Instruction** – Understanding how to use inquiry based instruction and its fit with MYP.
- **Authentic Assessment** – Understanding the importance of Authentic Assessment and real work problem solving and application.
- **Cross-Curricular Planning and Instruction** – Learning how to use your specialist. Creating ideas for cross-curricular projects/assignments. Learn how to cross walk the SOL's and curriculums for similarities and thematic overlaps.
- **Grade Level Planning** – grade level teams work together to create curriculum that addresses student needs based on data and educational trends shown through disaggregation of data. Teams will also use data from the VASS study to guide this effort.
- **Goal Setting** – working on writing professional development and student achievement goals in accordance with the new Professional Growth System

ACTION PLAN

CREATING AND SHARING IDEAS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

At MEH we are focusing on instruction and assessment to ensure excellence and equality as well as nurturing the creative spirits of our students and teachers. It is our goal to have all students making gains in every academic area. By making frequent classroom visits, providing timely feedback for teachers, revisiting/rewriting curriculum as needed, creating time for grade/subject matter planning, and fostering a reflective environment, we will attain this goal. As with any organization, our instructional goals are based on data, current research, and best practices.

MEHMS Administration and Teacher Leaders will be integral to the professional development plan this year. Components of the plan will be taught by administration and master teachers to new teachers and departments. Each month of the school year has been designated thematically in order to address all elements. Based on research, the professional development plan is based on the needs of the staff and students, is job embedded, realistic, and measurable. Teachers will complete follow up surveys and additional professional development will be given as needed. The plan is a fluid document that can be revised based on organizational needs in order to promote staff and student learning.

Based on the Middle Level Leadership Series, staff will complete a series of professional development activities on data usage to accelerate student achievement. Written by Carol Stack and endorsed by the National Middle School Association, A Passion for Proof, will provide MEHMS with its continued goal of using data to inform instruction and make decisions.

MEH will continue to use classroom walk-throughs to oversee the instructional program and encourage reflective conversations and thinking. The walk through process is being encouraged at all grade levels by all teachers to share cross curricular ideas and helps us facilitate collaboration. Administration and teachers will do classroom “learning walks” for reflective practice and academic sharing of instructional practices. Using both the “coaching” and “mentoring” models of professional development, MEHMS administration and staff will create a collaborative environment where both teachers and students learn from classroom experiences. School administration will lead this process by conducting walk throughs on a regular basis and providing reflective feedback for staff. Teacher teams will conduct learning walks on a regular basis to evaluate their own teaching and learning and implement new strategies.

Staff at MEH has developed blogs, websites, and shared folders using digital pictures and videos to demonstrate model lessons and creative ideas. Through professional development, staff will learn new ways to enhance instruction and sharing through the use of technology. ANGEL LMS will provide the platform through which technology will be shared. MEHMS teachers will move from supporting instruction with technology to enhancing and transforming instruction through the use of technology. Henry our instructional helper, has expanded his family to five! Henry, Henrietta, Harry, Howie and Happy the puppies are keeping tabs on teachers and have again been set loose in our learning community. These five are shared among teachers and staff that are creating student centered lessons that foster creativity and helping students learn.

MEHMS will continue to work on its community outreach and parent connection to the school. MEHMS and staff will use multiple modes of communication in order to assist this process making parents part of the learning experience and education process. ANGEL log-ins and passwords are created for students only in an effort to encourage parents to sit down and work through assignments with their students. Furthermore, MEHMS administration will be communicating with parents through an electronic forum in an effort to keep parents up to date on school happenings current research about adolescent children. In the same vein, MEHMS will be working collaboratively with the Falls Church Community Center to promote activities to involve students/families with promotion for such activities from both organizations.

MEHMS will continue to evaluate all of its programs and change as necessary. The following services, programs, and assessments enable us to deliver a continuum of quality instruction, support services, and opportunities for students. These metrics help us obtain valuable data to assist students and implement services where needed.

EVALUATION TOOLS

MEHMS STUDENT ACADEMIC EVALUATION TOOLS

- Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) – Reading/Writing (5-7), Math (5-7), S.S. (5, 6, 7) Science (5)
- Stanford Test – Reading, Math, Language, Spelling (6) and Diagnostic Reading (7)
- Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)
- Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)
- Practice Standards of Learning Tests
- IOWA Algebra Aptitude Test
- Math Placement Tests (Fall and Spring)
- Teacher Observation Rating Scale (TORS) for TAAP and Advance Language Arts
- Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP)
- D/F List (Academic Reviews)
- Fitness Gram Test
- Music Educators National Conference (MENC) Adjudicated Event
- Solo and Ensemble Music Showcase
- Kuder Career Planning Program
- Bridges – Choices Explorer and Learning Styles Inventory

MEHMS STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

- Student Assistance Team (SAT)
- Child Study
- Stretch and Challenge
- Math and Reading Skills, TAAP, Basic Skills, ESOL Skills
- Resource and Co-teach classes in all four core subject areas
- Saturday Academy
- Summer School
- Homework Club(s)
- Girls on Track
- Advisory
- Odyssey of the Mind
- Stock Market Game
- Library of Congress
- MEH TV Studio Group
- Primary Access Program
- Math Olympiad Groups
- Science Fair
- National History Day

MEHMS STAFF EVALUATION TOOLS

- Student Achievement Goals
- Teacher Evaluation Process
- Professional Growth Goals/Plans
- Individual teacher Conferences
- Reflective Questioning and Feedback from Walk-Throughs

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

Lastly, MEH will continue to work on transition activities for incoming 4th grade students and outgoing 7th grade students. We will work collaboratively with both TJ Elementary School and George Mason HS to create opportunities for students and parents to be a part of the transition process. It is our goal to make this process as seamless as possible using input from all levels. Some activities that were used last year that will also be used again this year are:

4TH TO 5TH TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

- MEH 5th Grade teachers present at Thomas Jefferson PTA meeting and answer questions.
- MEH Guidance counselors meet with 4th grade classes and explain middle school program and offerings
- Transition meeting with TJ staff and MEH staff to discuss students concerns and placements
- Special Education teachers attend Spring IEP meetings at TJ
- 4th Grade students visited MEH and were greeted by MEH Ambassadors who guided student through a tour and a panel discussion about 5th Grade and answer questions.
- MEH 5th Grade Spring Orientation Parent Night

7TH TO 8TH TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

- GMHS Counseling Department met with 7th Grade students – split by alpha to meet their counselor for the next year
- 7th Grade Teachers complete individual conferences with students to help with course recommendations
- 7th Grade Teachers meet with GMHS 8th Grade Teachers in vertical planning meetings
- 7th Grade students visit GMHS to attend classes and walk through a high school schedule
- MEH will host 3parent information nights in conjunction with members of GMHS to talk about 7th grade progress and point of reference, high school expectations, and HS course offerings.
 - 7th Grade Parent Information Night – January
 - Pre-IB Information Night – February
 - HS Counseling Department, Course Registration, and Parent Info Night – Feb/March – TBD
- 7th Grade Students will work with members from Counseling, CTE, and 7th Grade Teachers to continue building their Career Portfolio (*part of a larger school program*)

SUMMER SCHOOL

Recommendation Process

The recommendation process was revised to include clearly defined criteria. This ensured that only those students that truly needed summer school were recommended. It was helpful to have grade level subject benchmarks defined as well. However, this form should be revised so that instead of simply being a checklist, teachers should use a 0 – 2 rating system. This would match the reports that are used by Central Office and make data collection more reliable.

Regular Summer School

Students in regular summer school attended sessions in English, Math, and Study Skills. English and Math were 90 minutes each. Study Skills was a 30 minute session. Areas of study were determined based on the subject benchmark checklists teachers completed. Therefore, the curriculum for English and Math focused on those areas most in need of additional instruction. Non-fiction texts involving grade level Social Studies and Science topics were used during lessons on non-fiction reading strategies.

Study Skills for All Grades

The Study Skills sessions focused on the following topics:

- Managing Time, Materials, and Space
- Following Directions
- Organization
- Learning Strategies
- Studying for Tests
- Developing Test-Taking Skills

ESOL Summer Enrichment

Students in the ESOL Enrichment program participated in activities developed based on their English level. Students completed a reading program that was leveled to their ability. In addition, they worked on building vocabulary. Reading instruction incorporated content from Social Studies and Science.

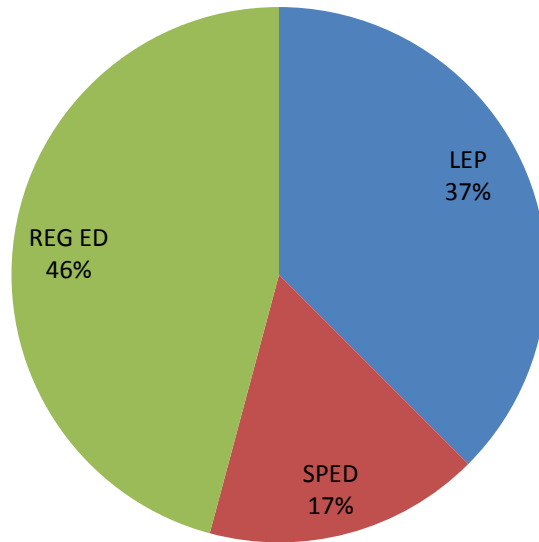
Summer School Demographic Information

Total Students Recommended: 60

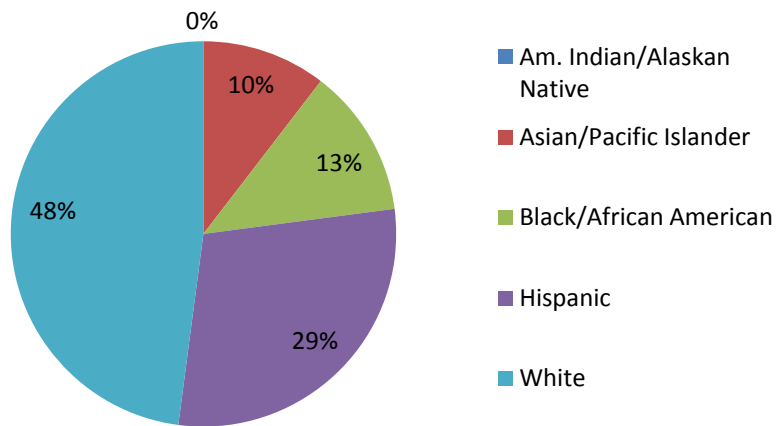
Total Students in Attendance: 48

Gender: Male 25 * Female 23

Demographics Based on Needs



Summer School Ethnic Breakdown



DATA

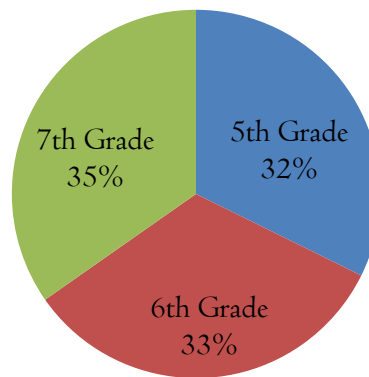
School Demographic Data

Enrollment

Total: **455**

Males: **250** Females **205**

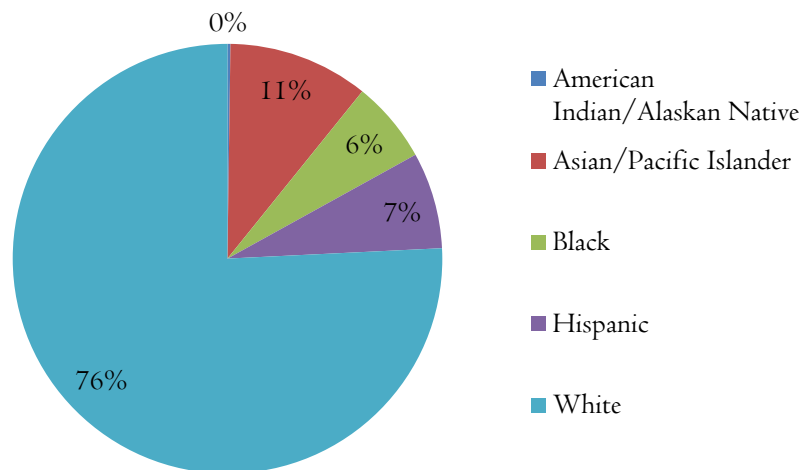
Grade 5: **147** Grade 6: **150** Grade 7: **158**



Ethnicity Distribution

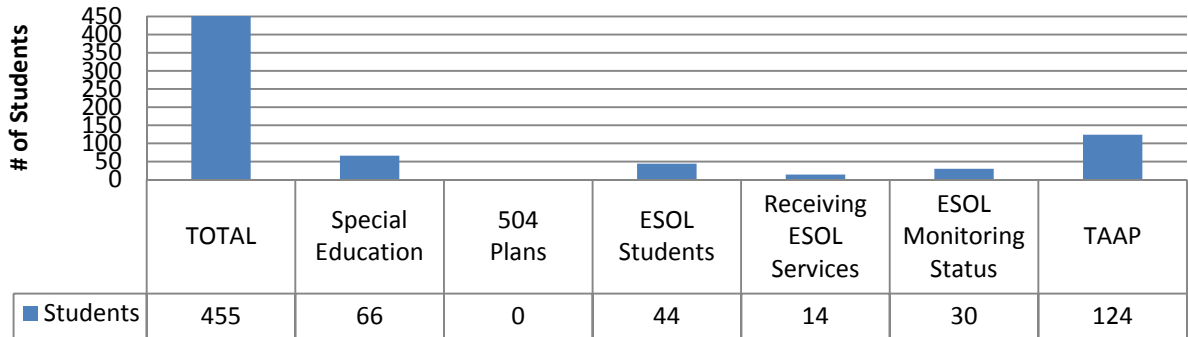
American Indian/Alaskan Native: **1** Asian/Pacific Islander: **48**

Black: **28** Hispanic: **33** White: **344**

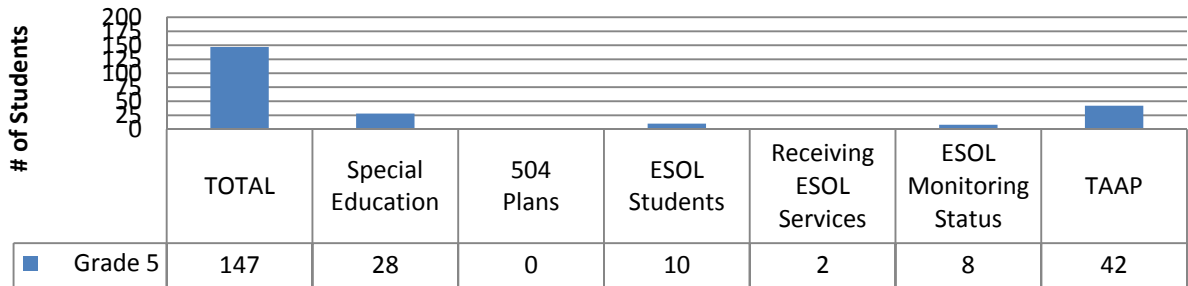


Special Populations

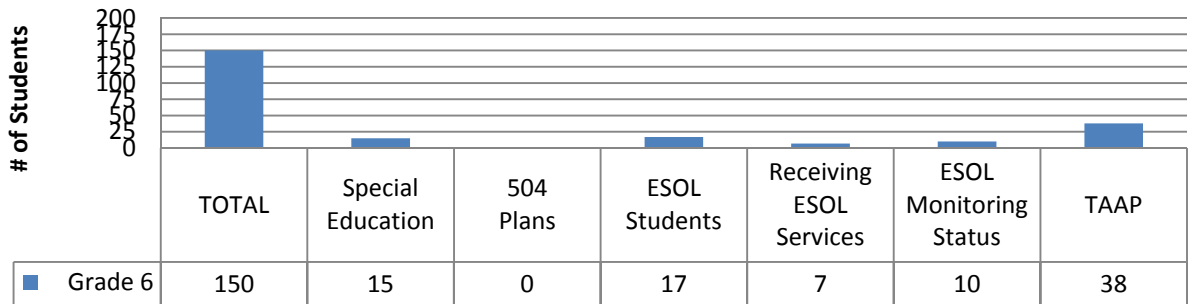
MEHMS Special Populations



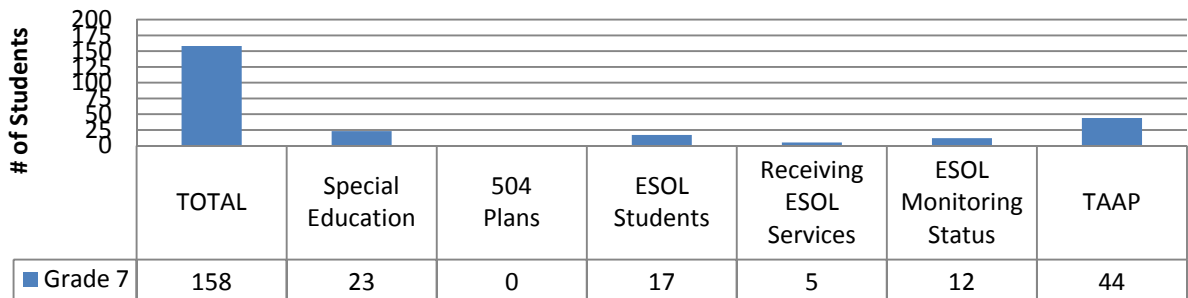
5th Grade Special Populations



6th Grade Special Populations



7th Grade Special Populations



SOL Data

In order to guide instruction, we believe that data analysis is an integral part of everything we do. The following reports and findings are based on SOL data from Spring 2008.

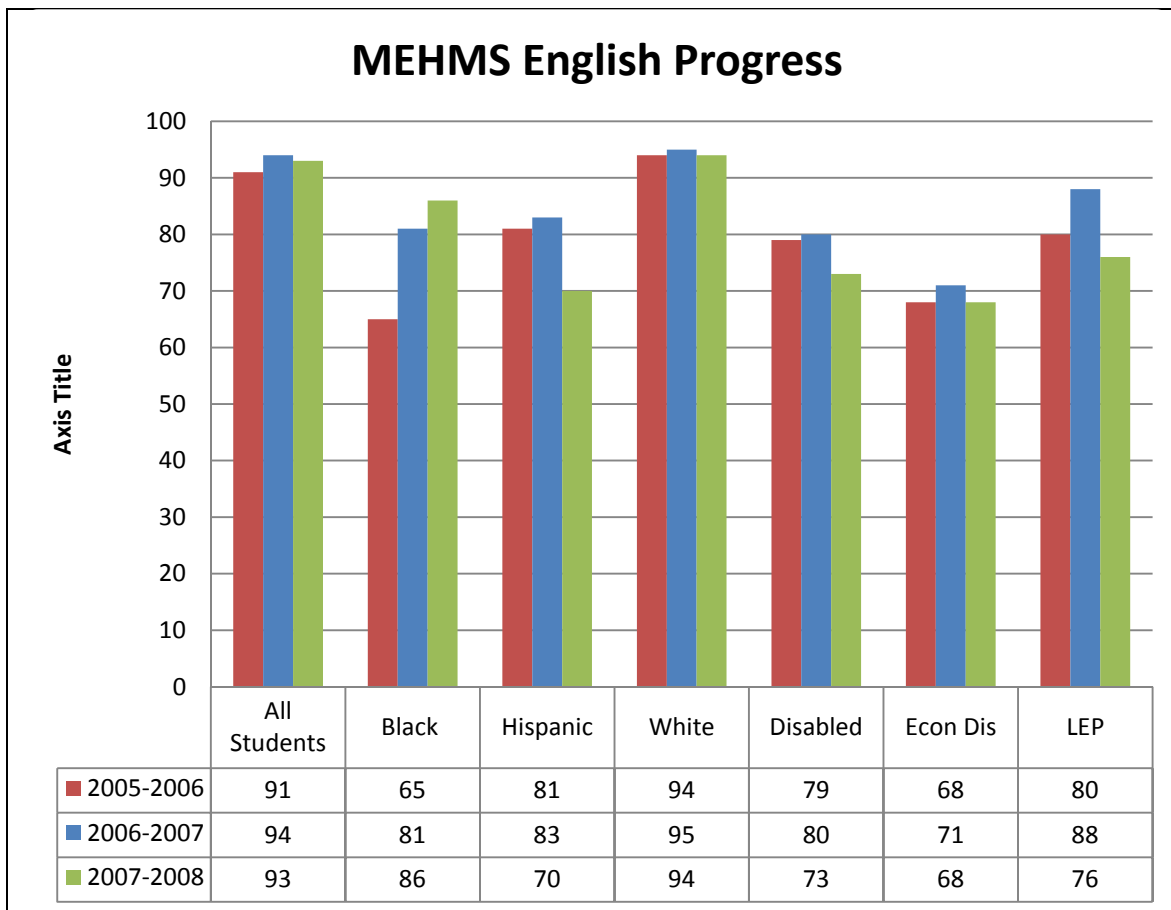
SOL DATA 2007

Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School tested 100% of 446 students. Within the aggregate, subgroup populations were:

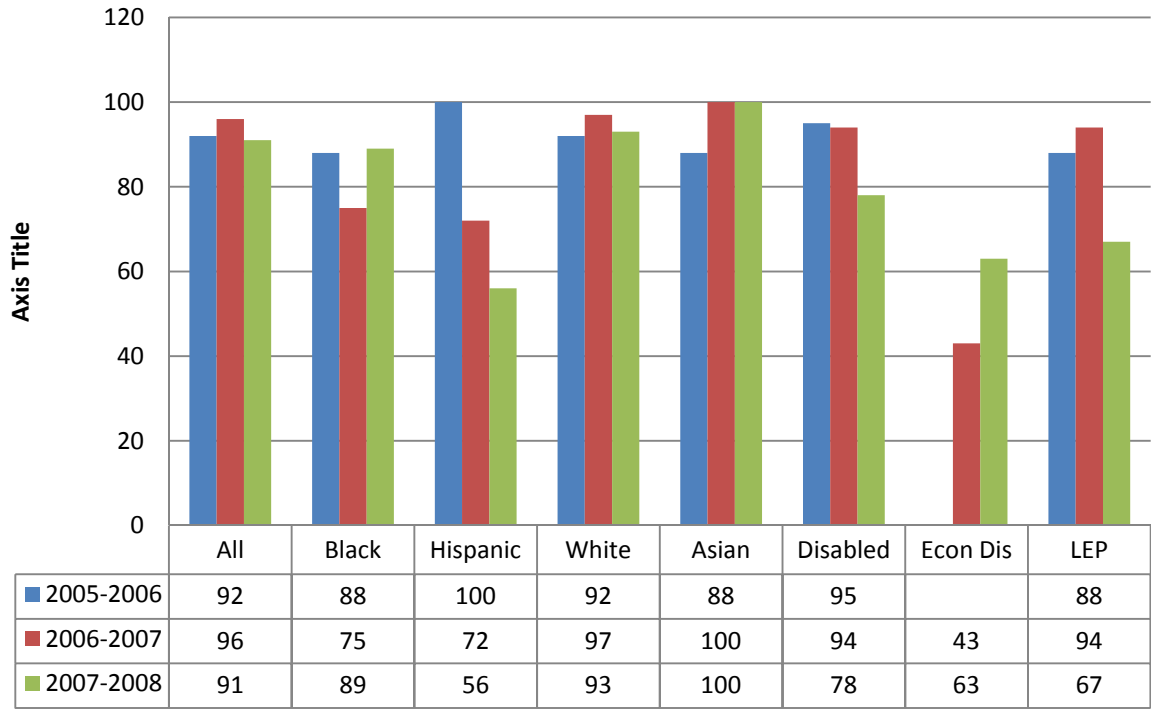
- Black Students: 28
- Hispanic Students:33
- White Students: 339
- Limited English Proficient Students:49
- Students Identified as Economically Disadvantaged:30
- Students with Disabilities:64

English Performance

Virginia set a 75% benchmark for percent passing in all subgroups for this assessment. 90% of students grades 5-7 passed the English Reading portion of the SOL.

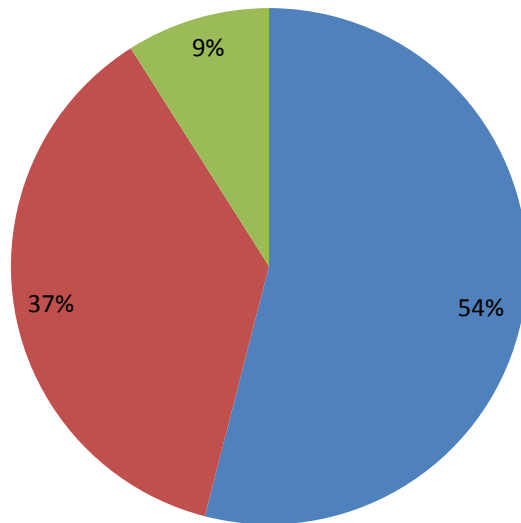


5th Grade Reading Progress

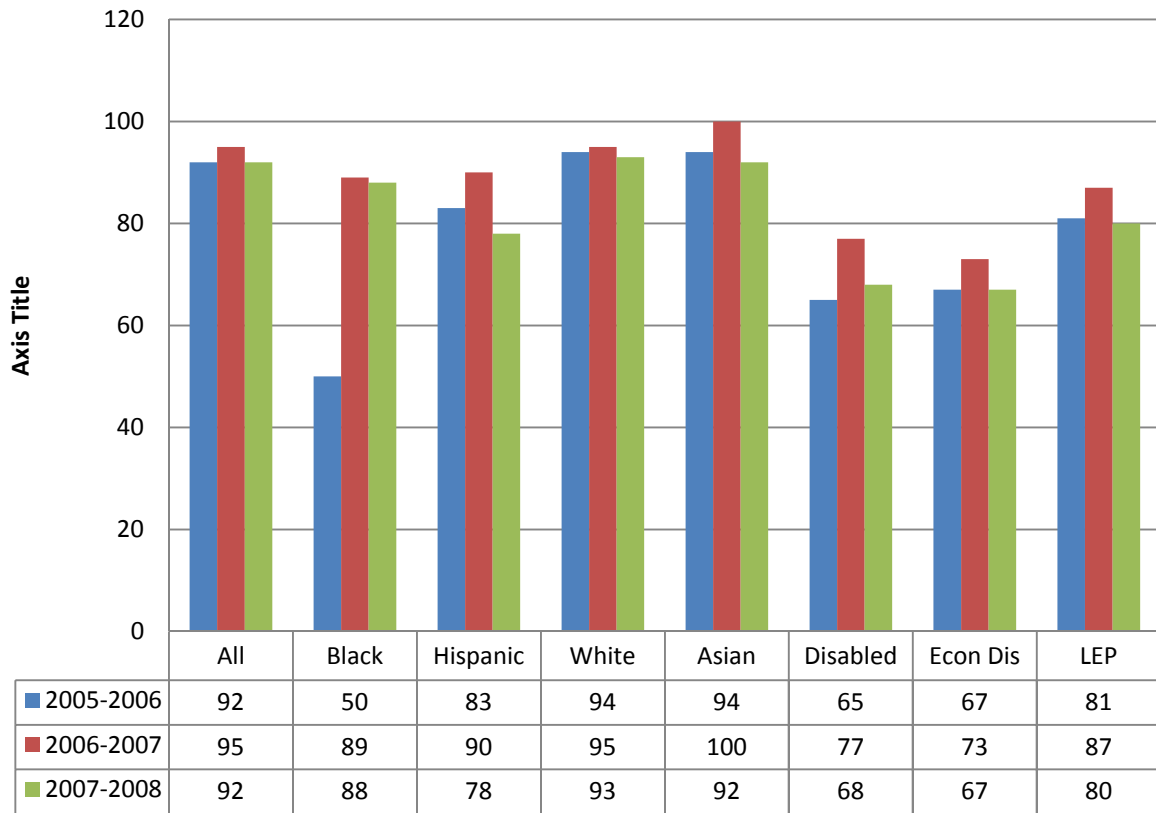


5th Grade Reading Pass Rates

Advanced Proficient Fail

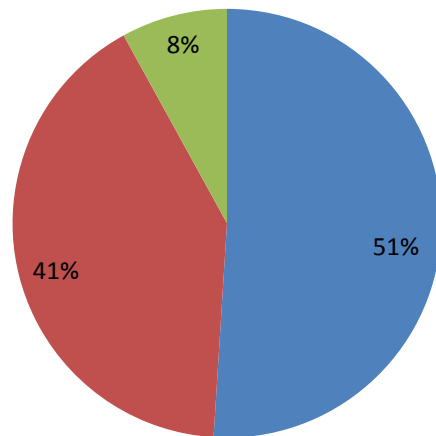


6th Grade Reading Progress

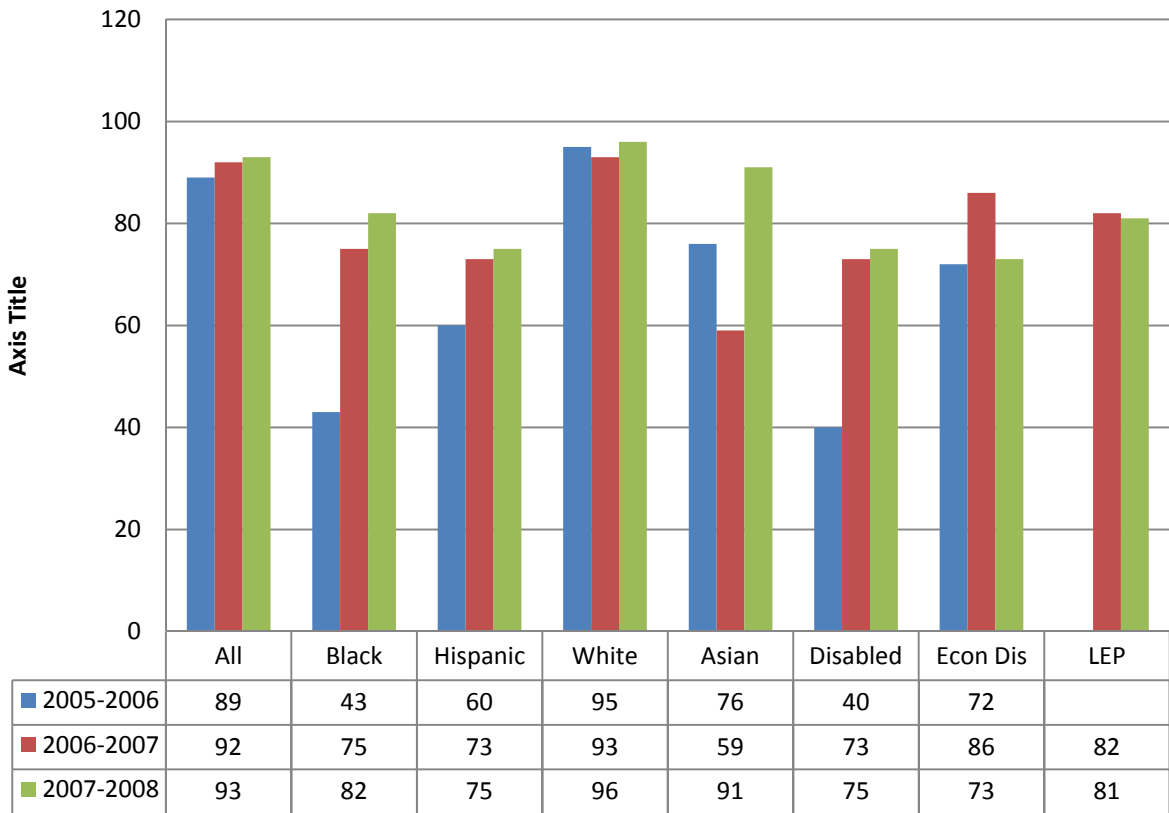


6th Grade Reading Pass Rates

Advanced Proficient Fail

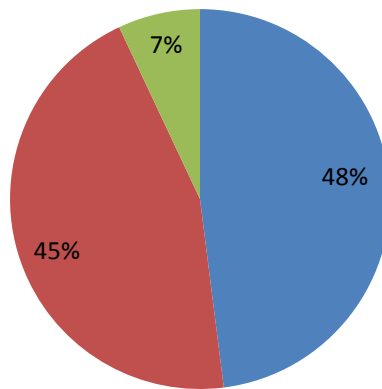


7th Grade Reading Progress

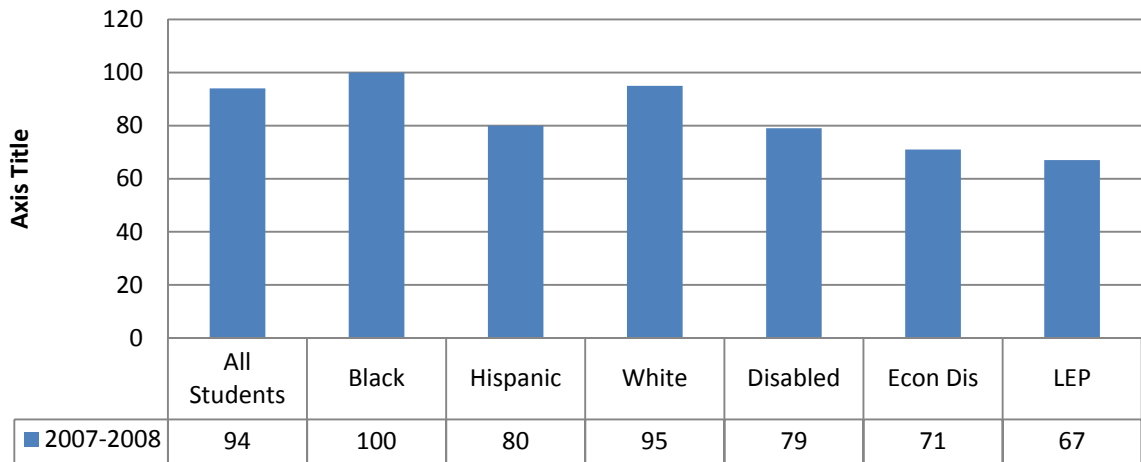


7th Grade Reading Pass Rates

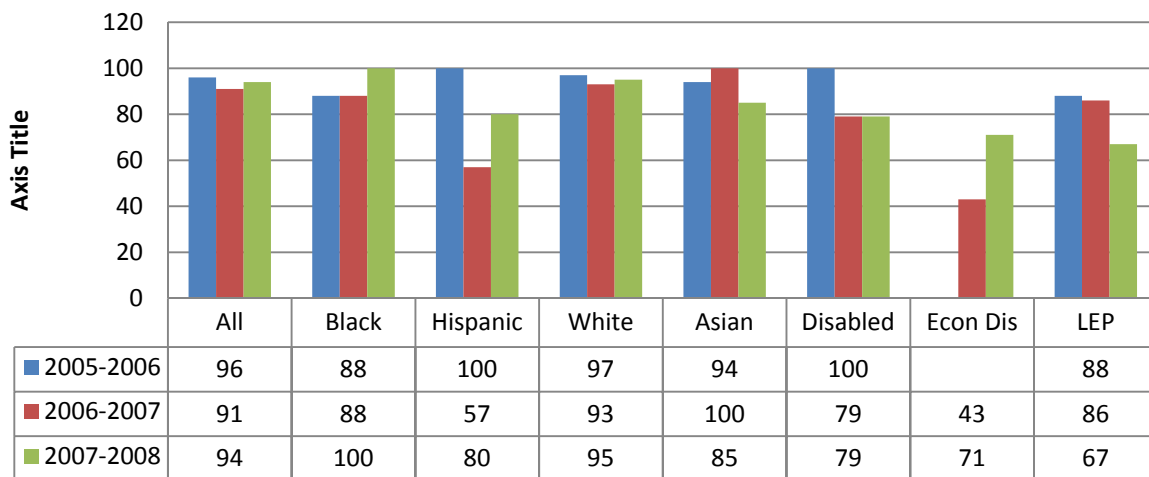
Advanced Proficient Fail



MEHMS Writing Results

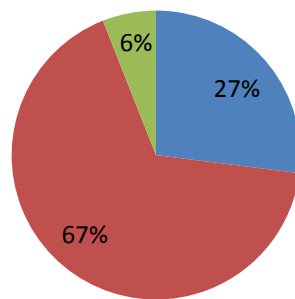


5th Grade Writing Progress



5th Grade Writing Pass Rates

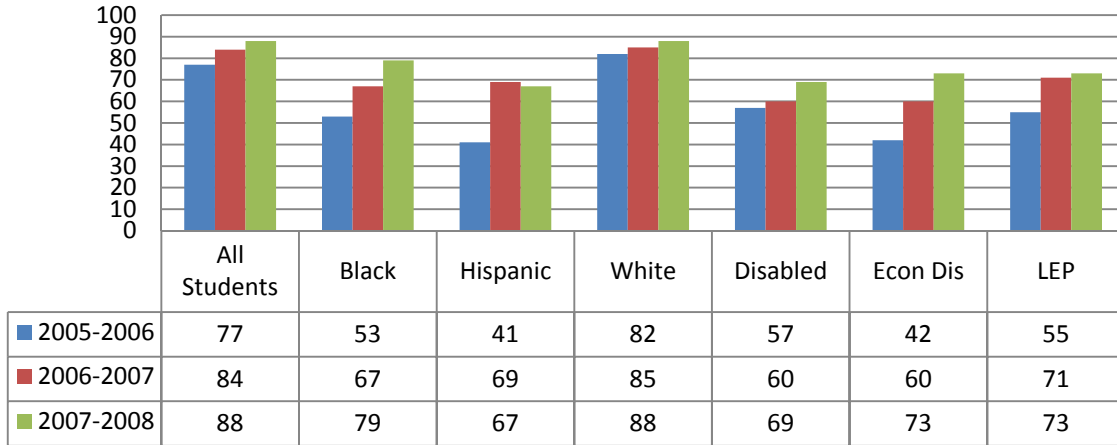
■ Advanced ■ Proficient ■ Fail



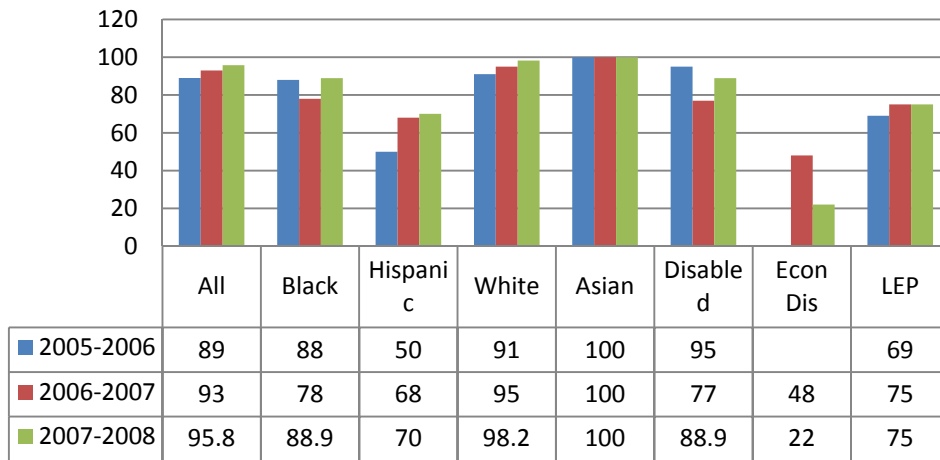
Mathematics Performance

Virginia set a 73% benchmark for percent passing in all subgroups for this assessment. 88% of students passed the Mathematics portion of the SOL. There was an overall increase at all three grade levels for Mathematics performance and improvement in some sub groups as well.

MEHMS Mathematics Progress

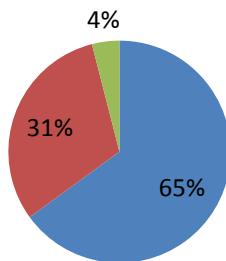


5th Grade Math Progress

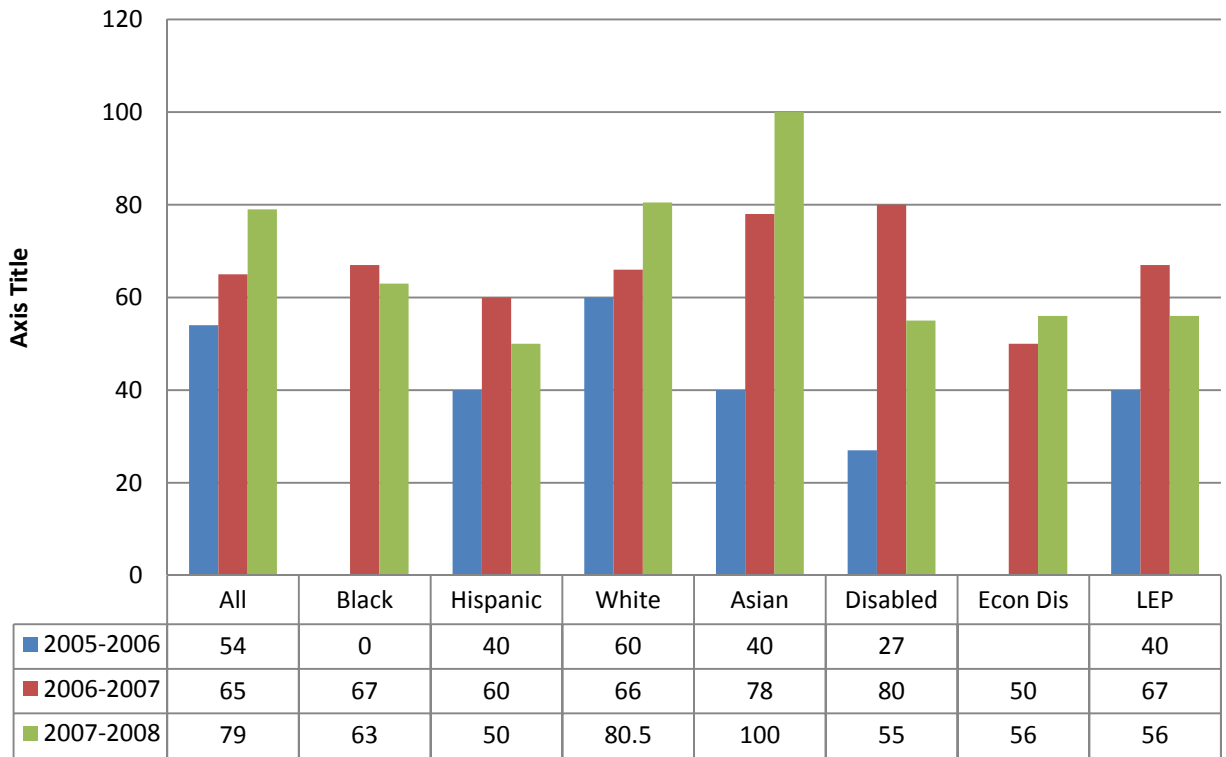


5th Grade Math Pass Rates

Advanced Proficient Fail

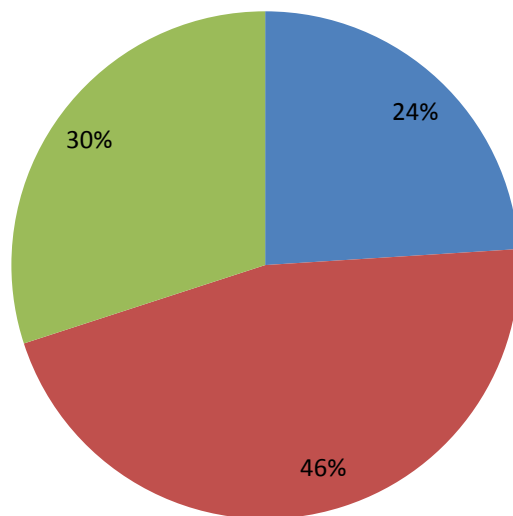


6th Grade Math Progress

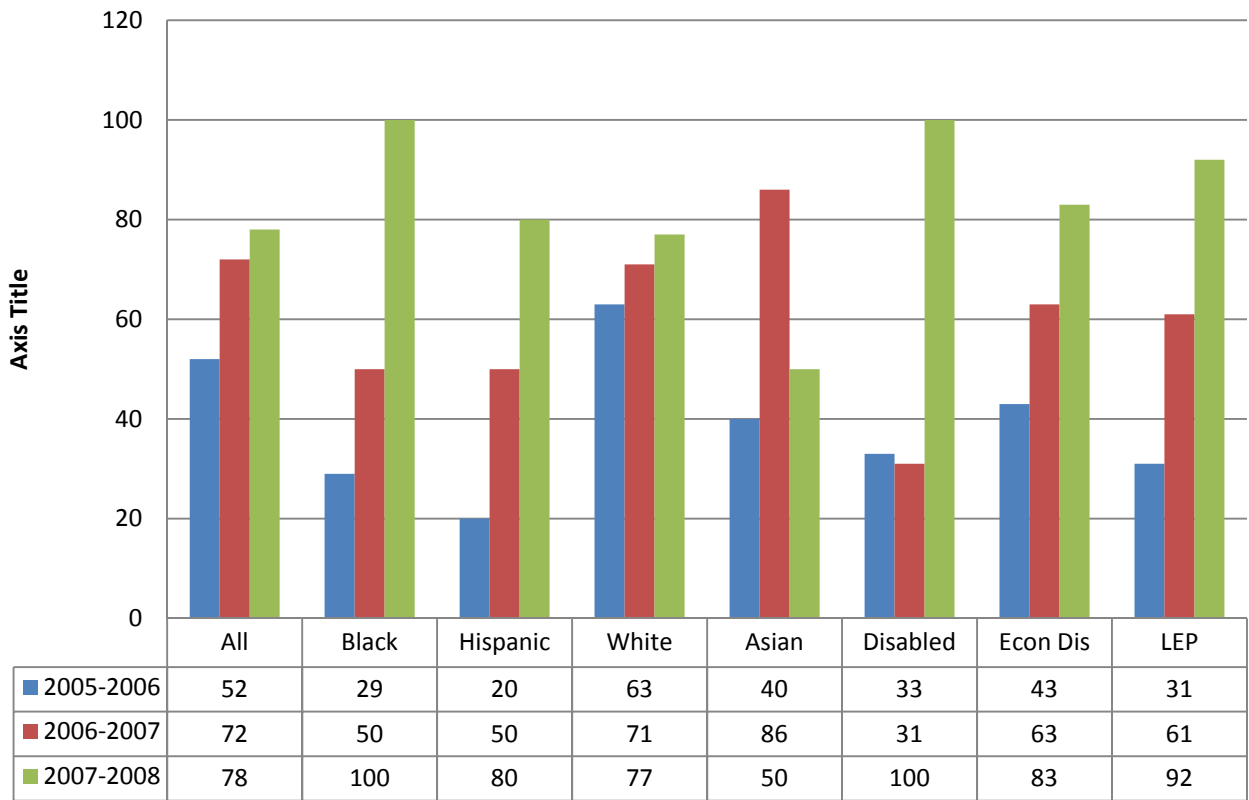


6th Grade Math Pass Rates

■ Advanced ■ Proficient ■ Fail

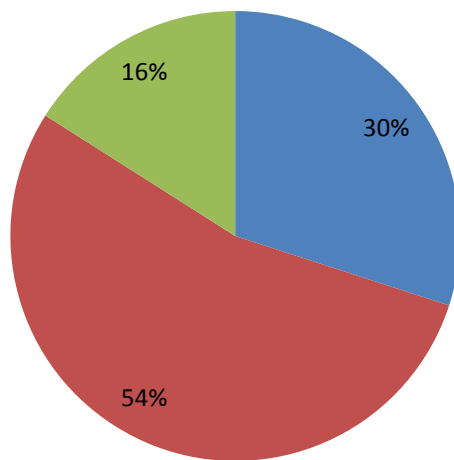


7th Grade Math Progress

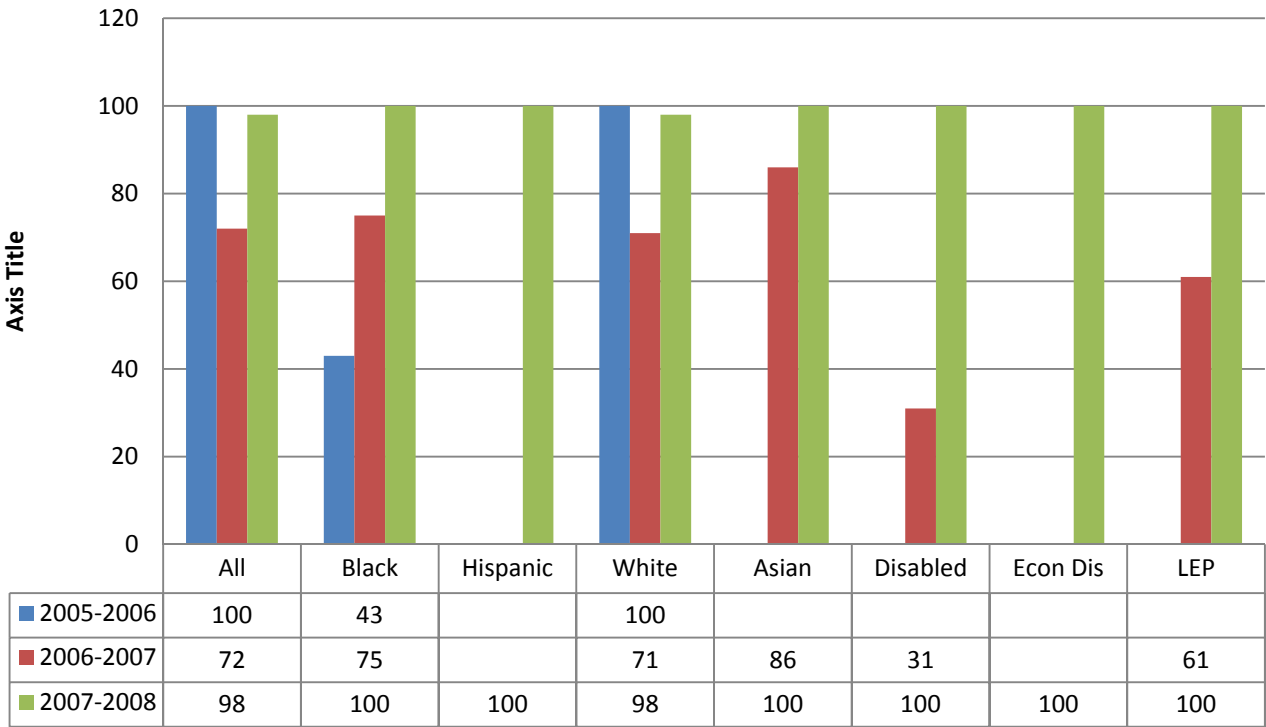


7th Grade Math Pass Rates

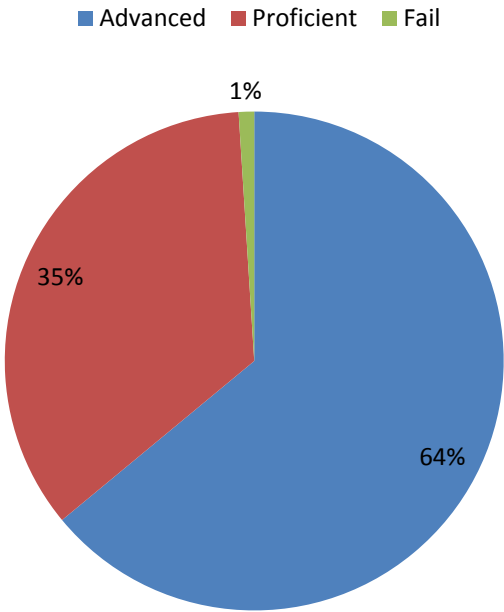
Advanced Proficient Fail



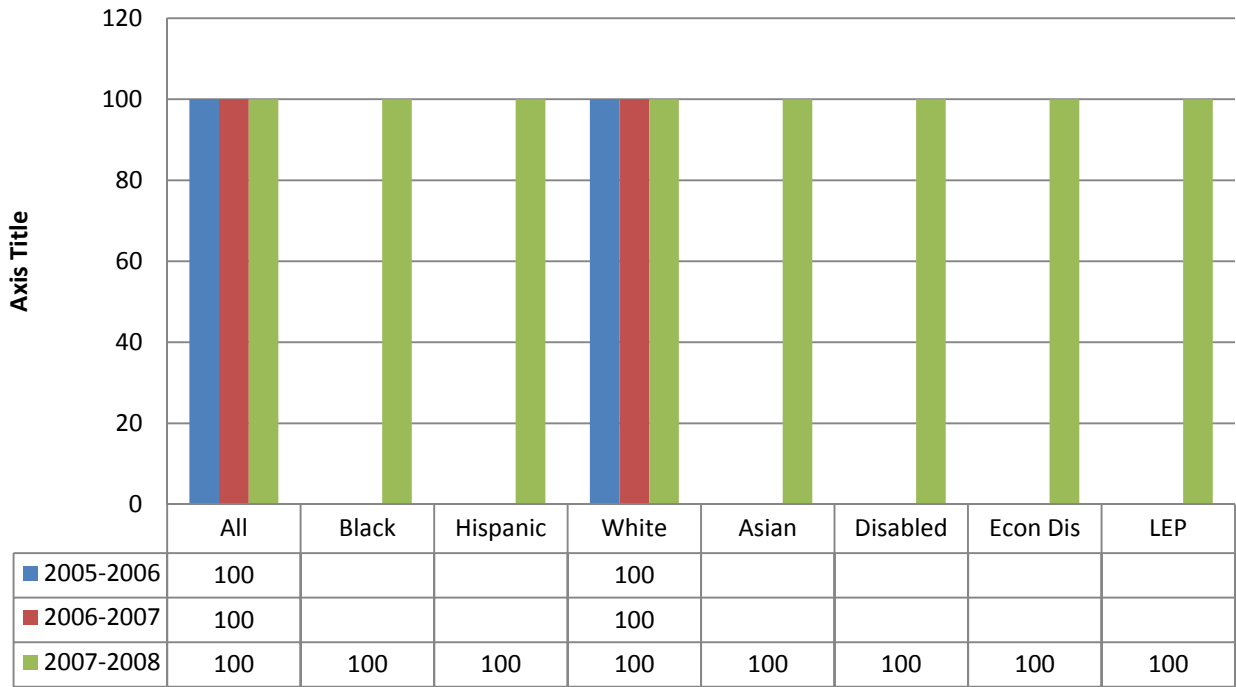
7th Grade Pre-Algebra Progress



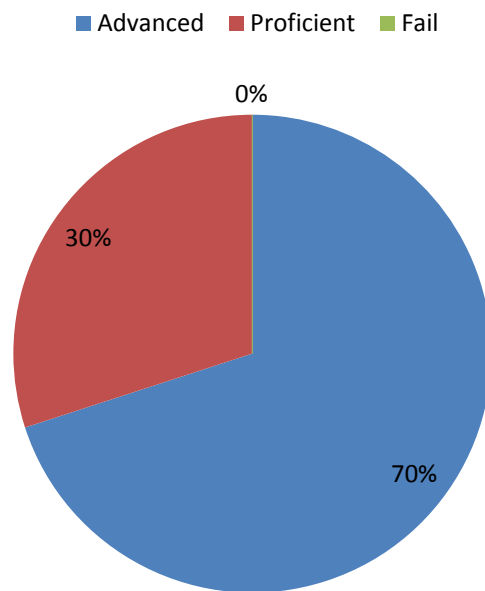
6th and 7th Grade Pre-Algebra Pass Rates



7th Grade Algebra Progress

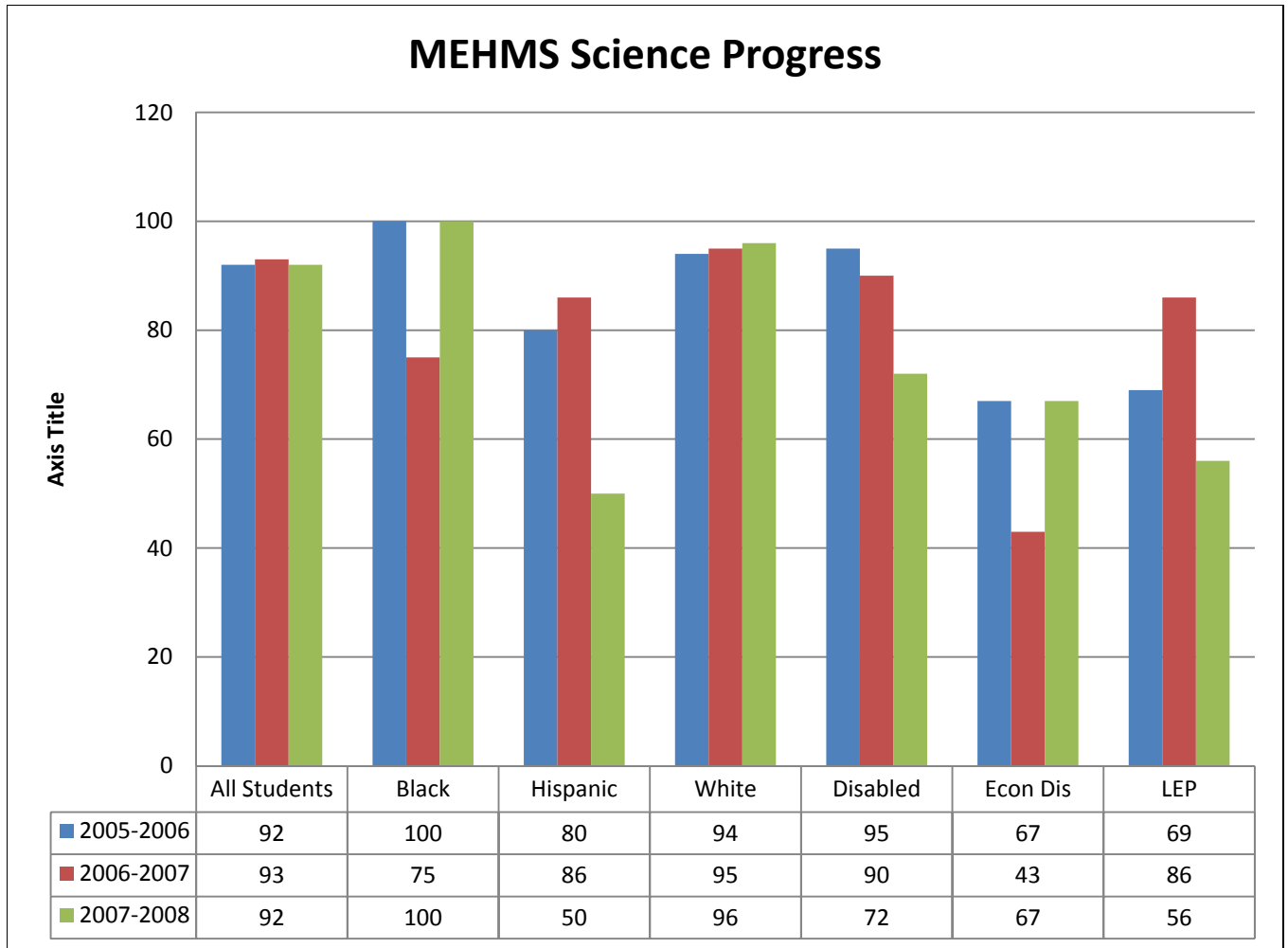


7th Grade Algebra Pass Rates

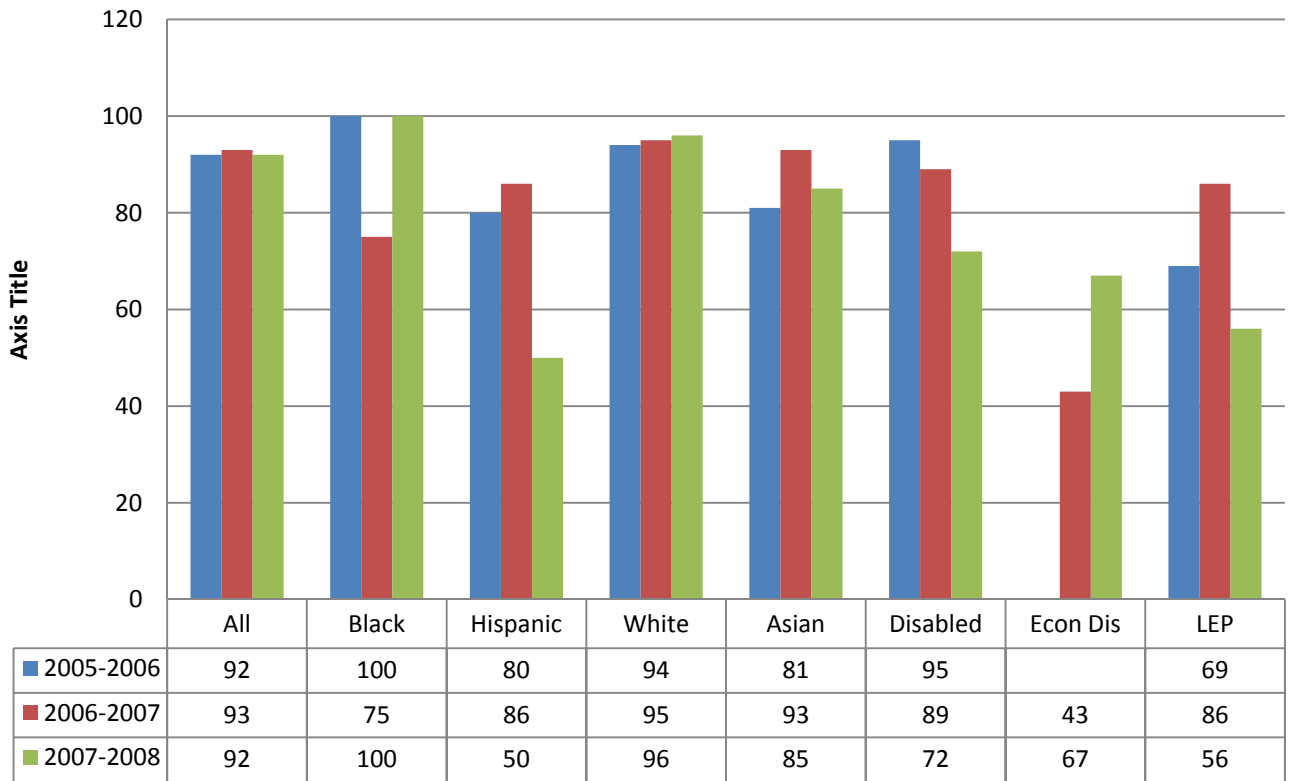


Science Performance

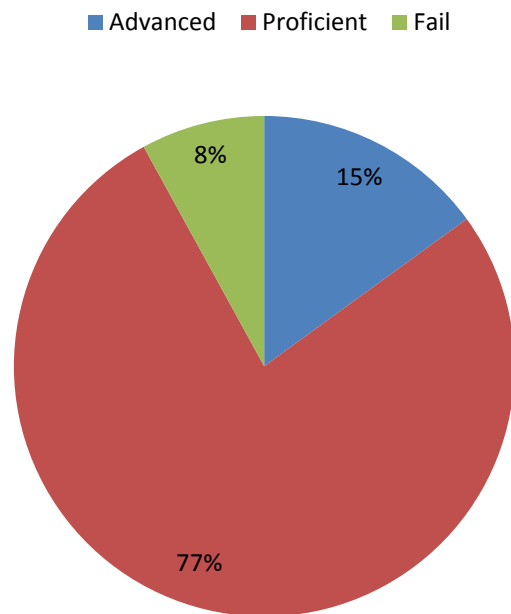
While not assessed as a component of AYP, MEH students completed the Science portion of the Virginia SOL. MEHMS Student pass rate average for Science was 92%.



5th Grade Science Progress

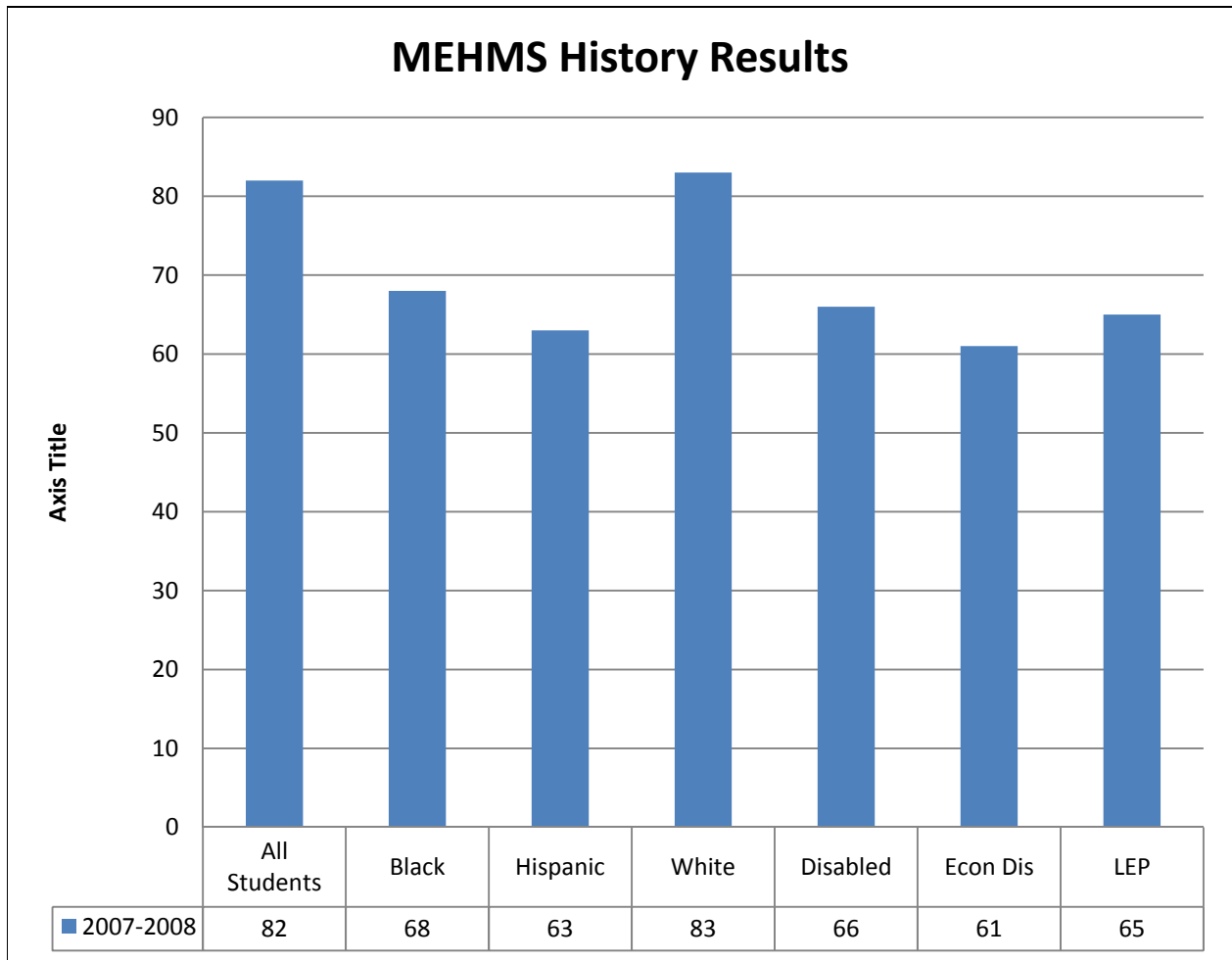


5th Grade Science Pass Rates

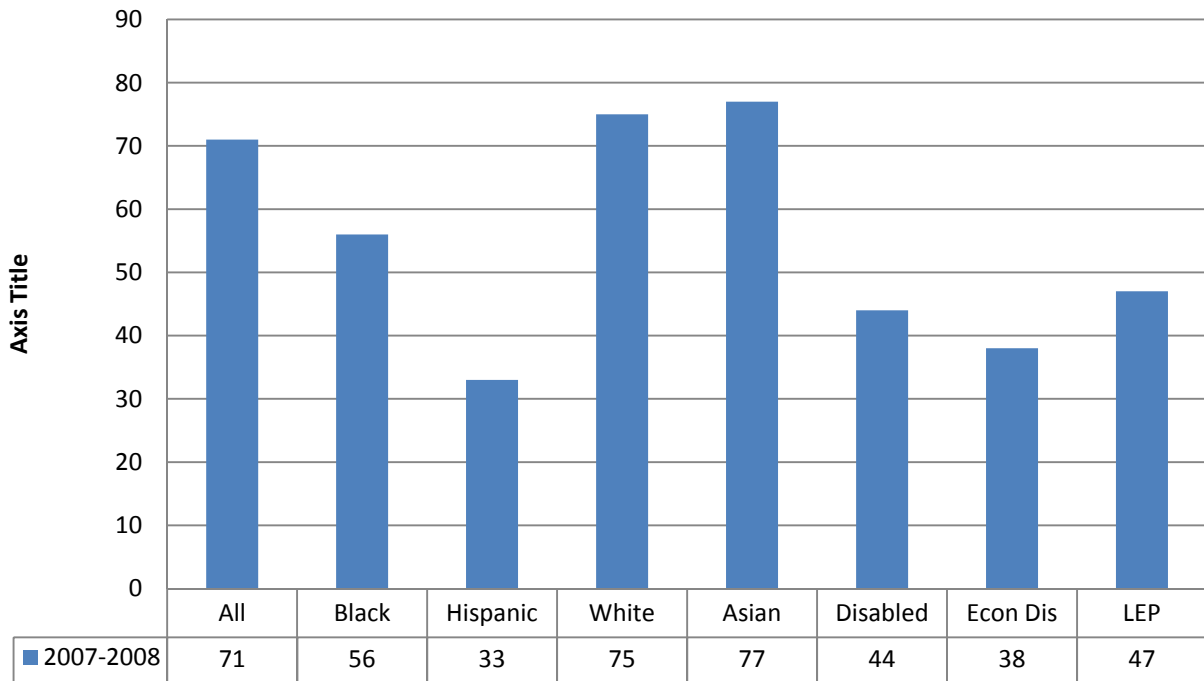


History/Social Studies Performance

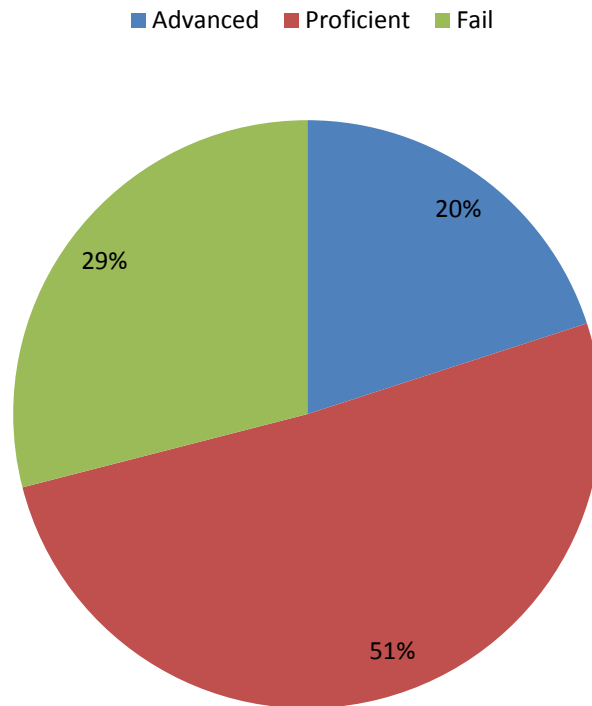
While not assessed as a component of AYP, MEH students completed the History portion of the Virginia SOL. It is important to note that at both the 5th grade and the 6th grade, students participated in a new test and demonstrated the well known phenomena of regression to the mean.



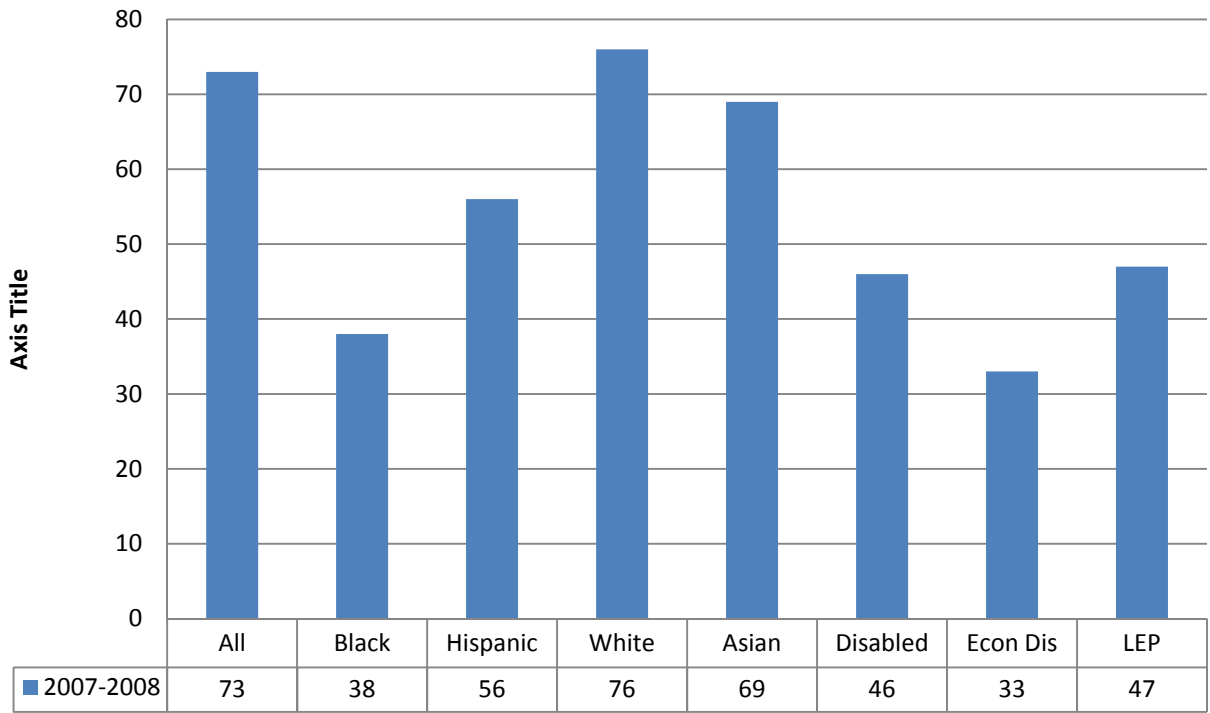
5th Grade History Results



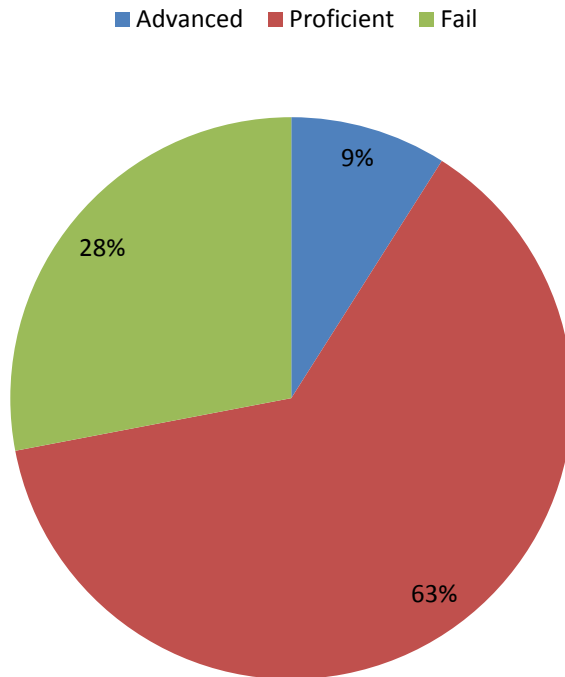
5th Grade History Pass Rates



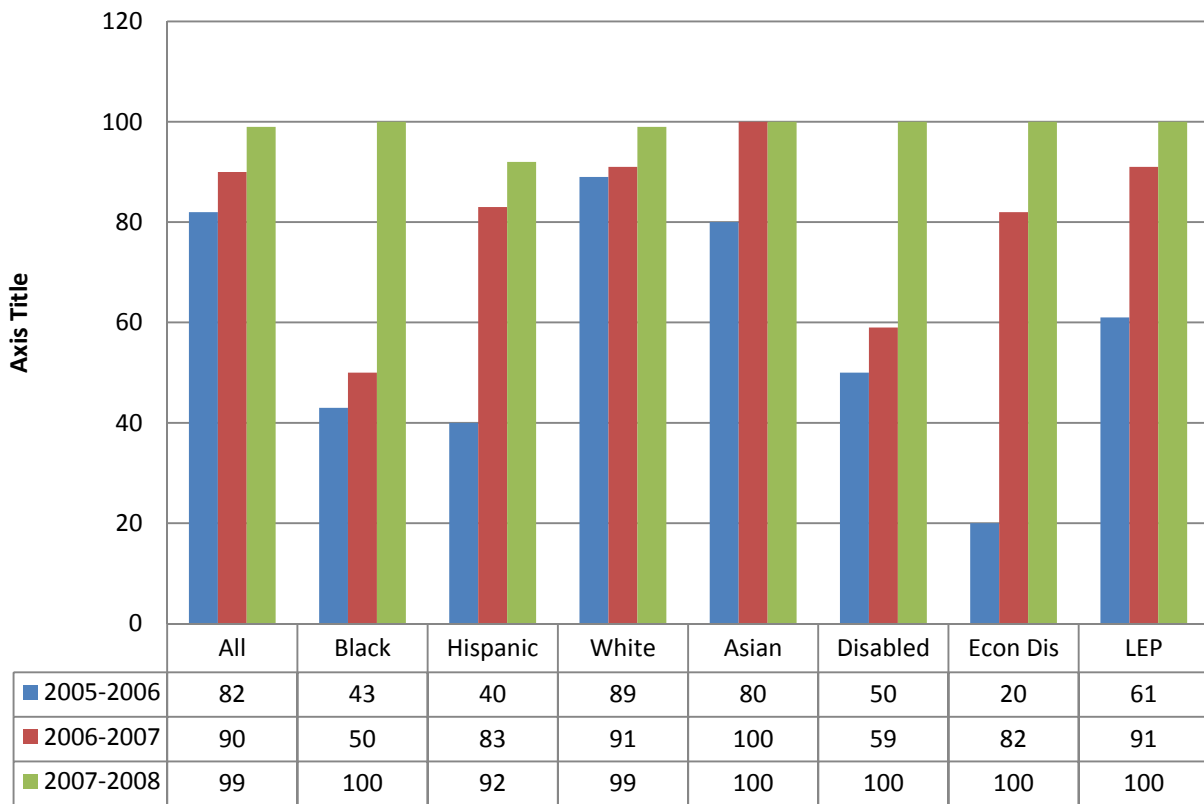
6th Grade History Results



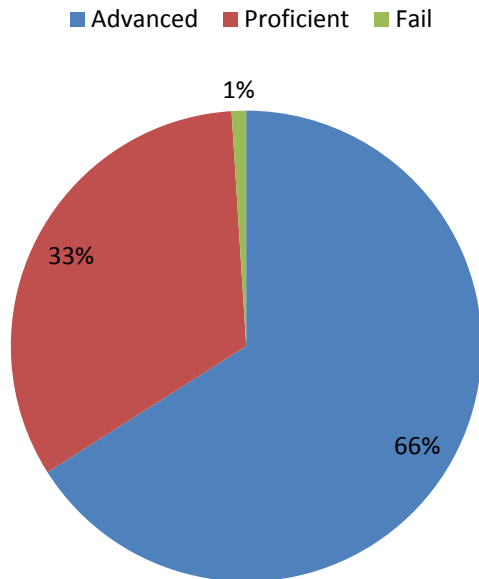
6th Grade History Pass Rates



7th Grade History Progress

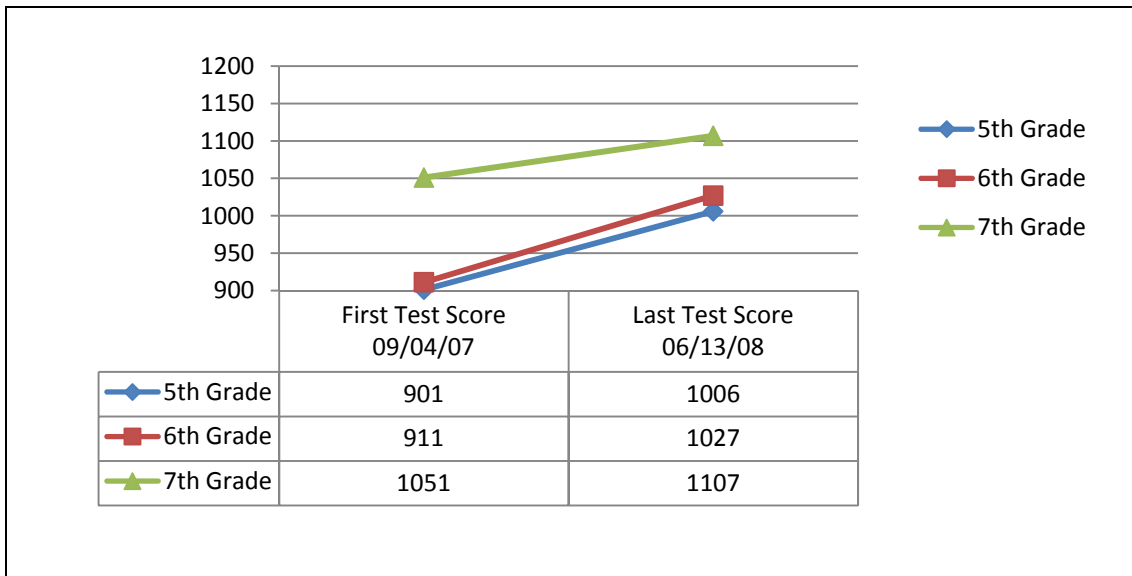


7th Grade History Pass Rates

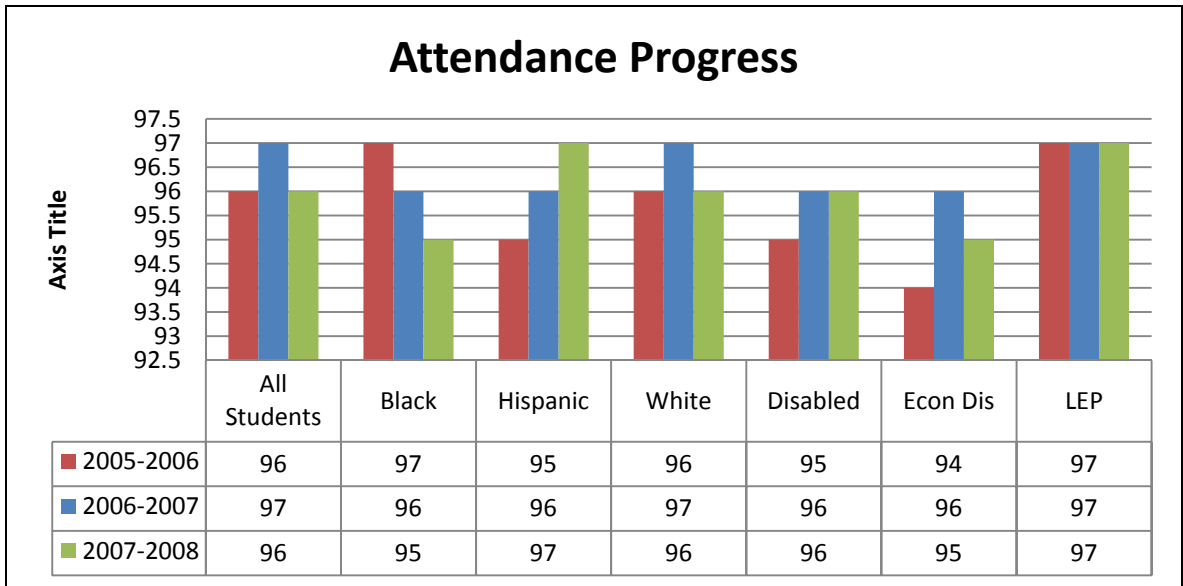


SRI Growth Data

SRI is administered 3 times throughout the year to all students to assist teachers with reading books and instructional materials. This data shows an upward trend for all grade levels increasing 56-116 points at different grade levels. Lexile levels provide a common, developmental scale for matching reader ability and text difficulty. Lexiles enable educators, parents, and students to select targeted materials that can improve reading skills and to monitor reading growth across the curriculum, in the library and at home. The SRI also reports nationally normed data including percentile rank, NCE (normal curve equivalent), and Stanine. This graph shows a whole school and grade average. Teachers and Reading Specialist use more detailed and student specific reports to assist students and guide instruction. Test and book publishers make the following end of year target ranges for students: 5th -700-100 6th 800-1050 7th 850-1100

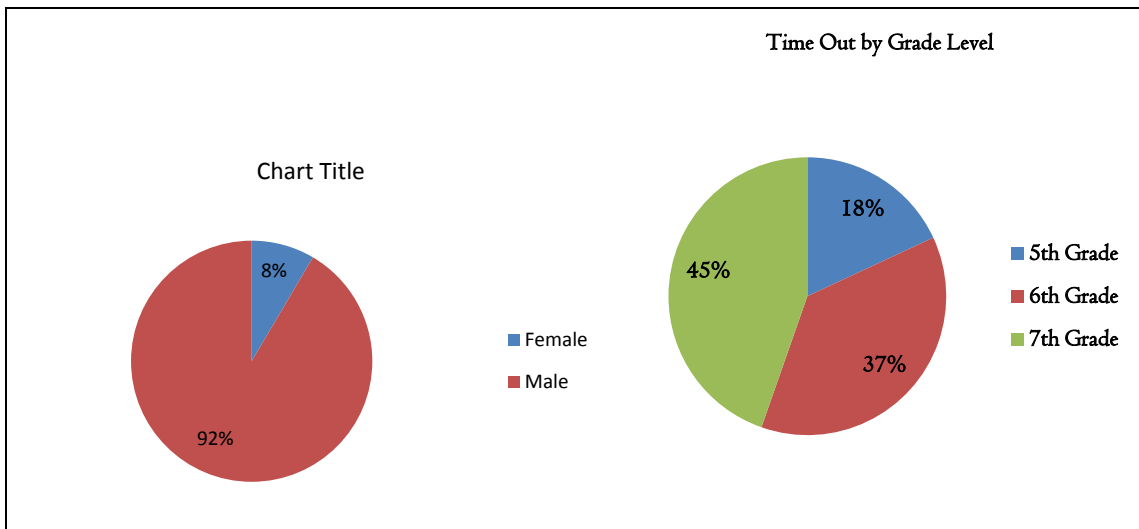


Attendance



Discipline

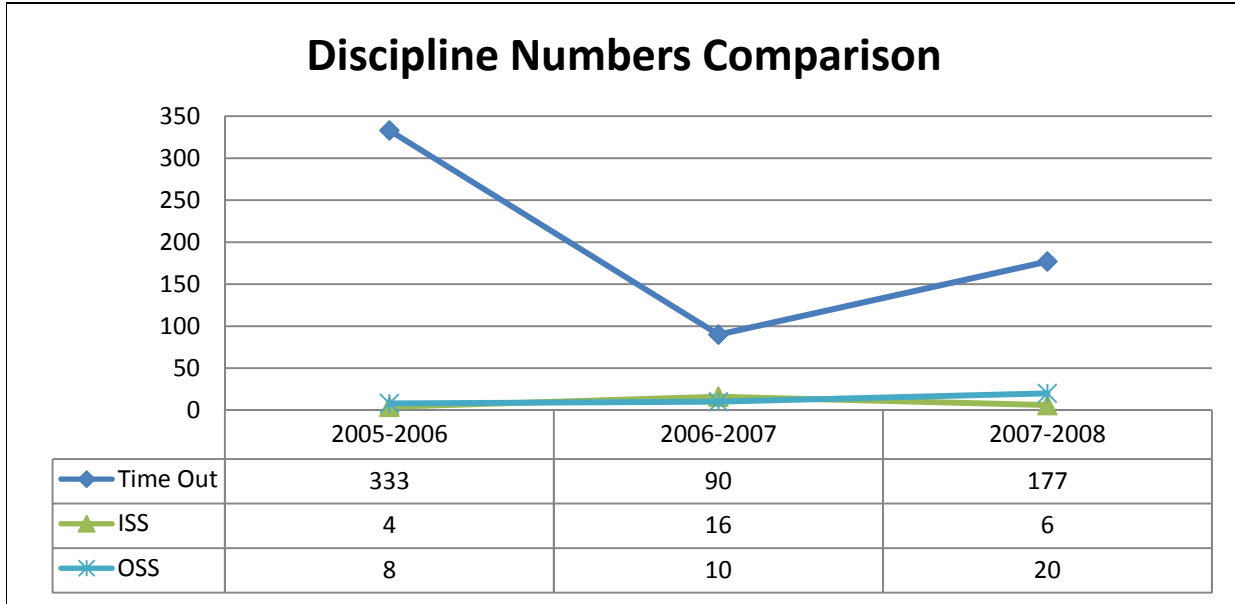
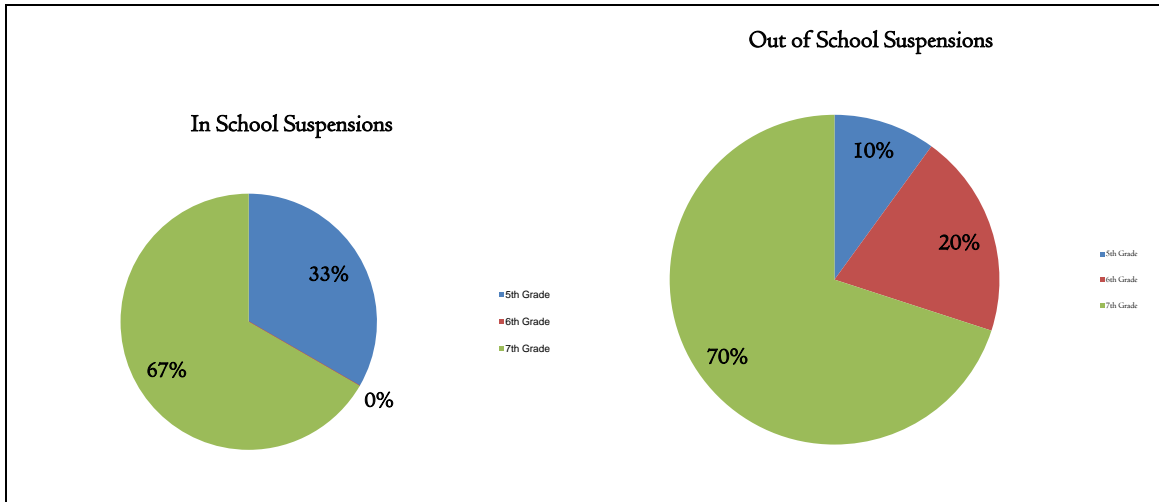
During the 2007-2008 school year 177 time out referral were made. Of these 177, 92% of them were male and 8% were female. Of the 177 separate visit to time out, 32 were 5th grade students, 66 were sixth grade students, and 79 were 7th grade students. 67 students made up the 177 visits with one or more referrals to time out. These are typically referred to as “chronic offenders”.



There were no students expelled from MEHMS in the 2007-2008 school year.

6 students served In School Suspension. Of those six, 2 were 5th grade, 1 was 6th grade, and 3 were 7th grade (3 boys and 3 girls).

17 students served Out of School Suspension. Of those 17, 1 was 5th grade, 3 were 6th grade, and 13 were 7th grade (14 boys and 3 girls).



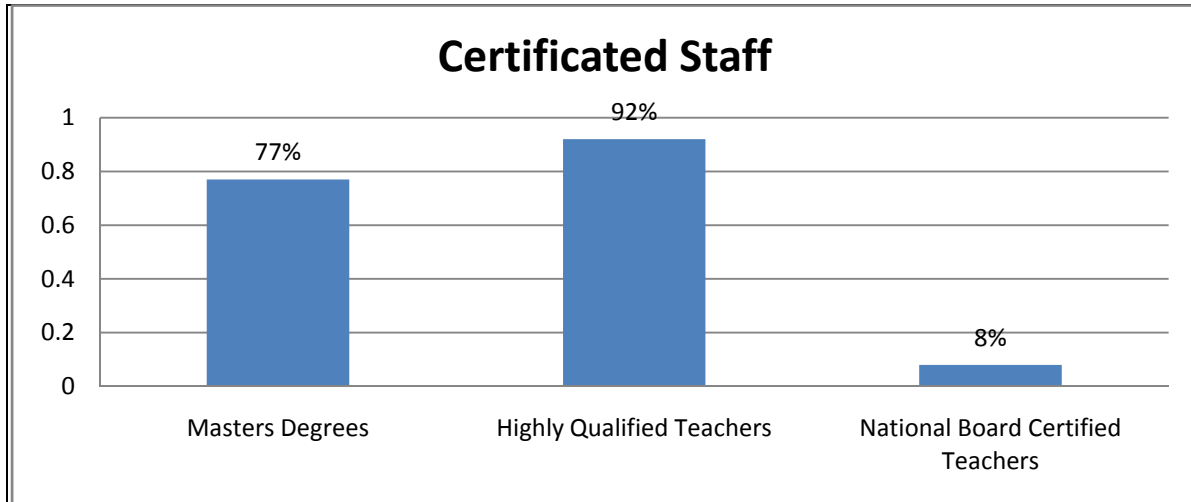
DASHBOARD INDICATORS

Highly Qualified Staff

Number of Certificated Staff: **48**

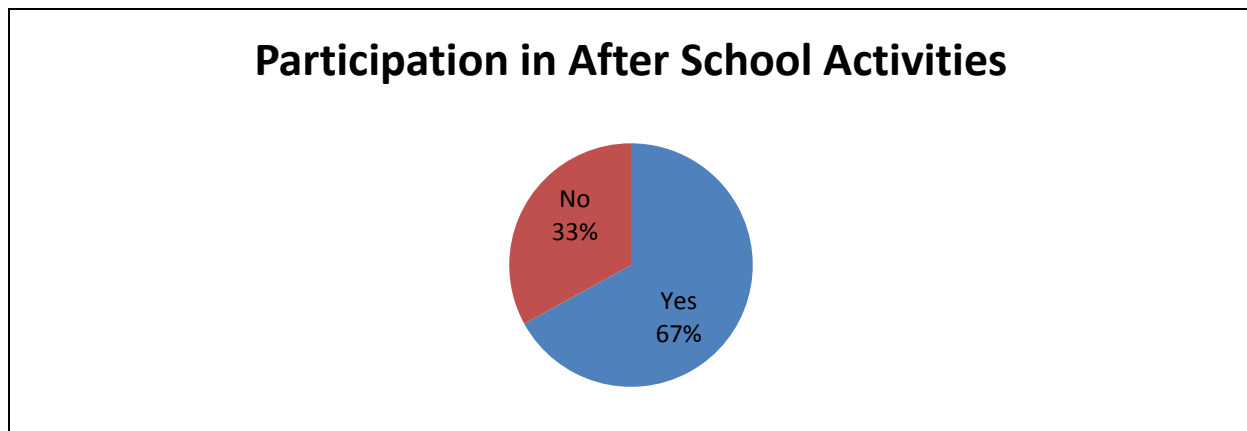
Number with Masters Degree or beyond: **37**

National Board Certification: **4**

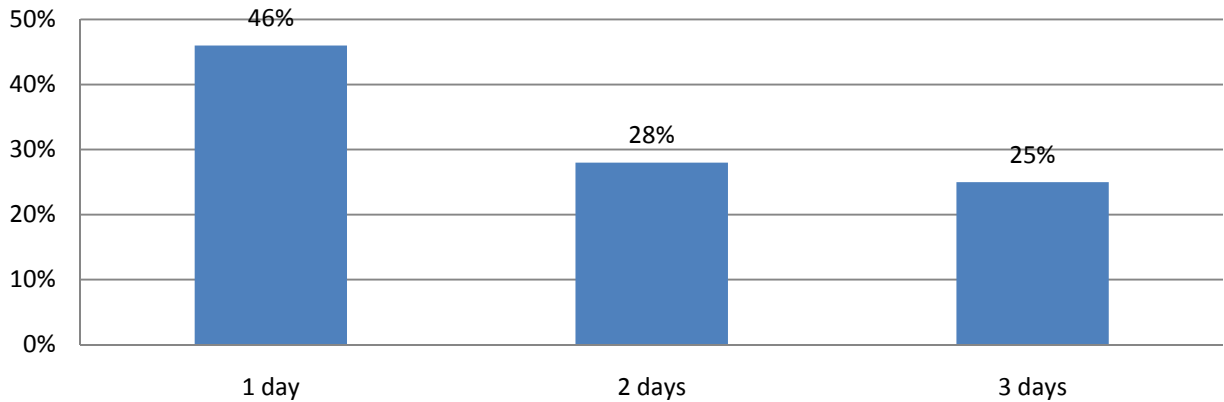


Participation in After School Activities

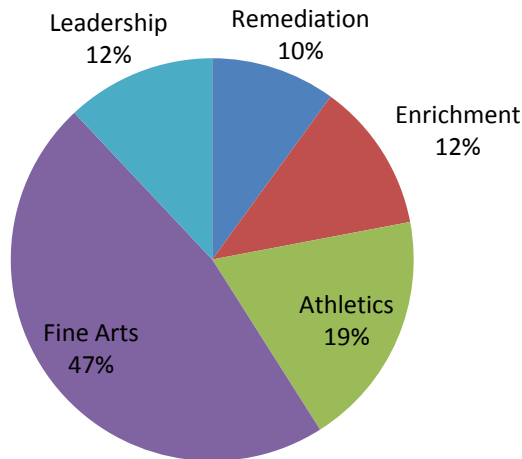
At the end of the year, MEHMS teachers participated in a survey conducted through Angel to get an idea of how many students were participating in after school activities. The results of this survey are based on those that participated and may not be generalizable to the entire student/staff population. However, this is a good starting point for MEHMS as we begin to collect this data through other avenues and systems. On any given week, MEHMS will host between 150-210 students in various activities throughout the week.



Frequency of After School Activities



Category of After School Activities



High School Credits in Middle School

In the 2007-2008 academic year, 15% of 7th grade students left Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School with one high school credit. We are setting a goal of 15% who will achieve 2 high school credits upon completion of 7th grade. We will set a goal of 30% of students to achieve at least 1 high school credit upon completion of 7th grade. These numbers are realistic to us given this is our first year of embarking on more than one high school credit offering at the 7th grade.

Career Planning

MEHMS Career Counseling and Career Portfolio Grades 5-7

Last year, MEHMS piloted the Career Portfolio in grades 5-7 and will expand the project this year. In line with the National Middle School Association, Virginia Standards for School Counseling Programs, and the American School Counselor Association, MEHMS will follow the guidelines provided by these organizations. Recommended standards for Career Development for grades 5-7 are based on this key component: Students will investigate the world of work in order to make informed career decisions. State standards guide this work by the following benchmarks:

- EC7. Recognize the benefits of both individual initiative and teamwork,*
- EC8. Recognize that the changing workplace requires lifelong learning,*
- EC9. Identify hobbies and interests, and*
- EC10. Identify career choices through exploration.*
- MC1. Identify the relationship of course content, educational achievement, and career choices,*
- MC2. Identify personal preferences, skills, and interests that influence career choices and success,*
- MC3. Understand the effect of career choices on quality of life,*
- MC4. Understand that behaviors such as punctuality, courtesy, proper dress and language, and hard work are essential to success in the job market,*
- MC5. Demonstrate understanding of the education and training needed to achieve career goals,*
- MC6. Demonstrate employability skills such as individual initiative, teamwork, problem solving, organization, and communication,*
- MC7. Use research skills to locate, evaluate, and interpret career and educational information, and*
- MC8. Demonstrate awareness of educational, vocational, and technical training opportunities available in high school.*

Given these standards, MEHMS Counseling Department has set for the following plan to continue the development of the Career Portfolio and Goal Setting to be completed by all students, but with some specific activities planned for 7th grade students to assist with transition to high school

- 7th Grade Students will complete Bridges- Choices Explorer and Learning Styles Inventory during the first and second quarters during Stretch and Challenge
- Through CTE Classes, 7th Grade students will also complete the Kuder Career Interest Inventory and explore the careers through the 7th Grade TECH III Class.
- MEHMS Counseling staff will complete classroom guidance sessions for students upon completion of the Bridges/Kuder programs, based on the Virginia and ASCA Standards
- 7th Grade Teachers will be working with students to complete the National Middle School's recommended Goal Setting workbook to assist students with academic and future goals
- A 7th Grade Parent Information Night to be held in January hosted by Counseling and 7th

Grade teachers, to assist parents with the move to high school. The meeting will be geared to assisting students and parents with 7th grade expectations, current status at the midpoint of the 7th grade year, and future expectations as students complete the second half of 7th grade

- In conjunction with the IB Coordinator, MEHMS will host a Pre-IB Parent Information Night in February to answer questions and assist parents with high school course selections
- MEHMS will host Career Fair Week in February during lunch periods. All students will participate in this activity. Local businesses and community outreach will assist MEHMS with obtaining a good representation of careers that will be of interest to students and foster the exploration component as recommended in the standards.
- In conjunction with the GMHS Counseling department, MEHMS will host Counselor visitation from the high school as well as a Transition to HS Parent Information Night.
- All students at MEHMS will be involved in Career Activities through Advisory or CTE Classes. Items from these activities/classes will be added to the Career Portfolio to assist the students with exploration, awareness, and identification of career choices and opportunities.

Professional Growth Goals by Team/Department

MEHMS Counseling Department

MEHMS Counseling Department is guided by the American School Counseling Association and the Virginia Standards for School Counseling Programs in its program delivery, goals, and belief.

The four elements of the ASCA (American School Counseling Association) model form its foundation in:

- ▶ Address and Deliver Virginia Standards of Counseling Domains:
- ▶ Academic
- ▶ Career
- ▶ Personal/Social Development

The MEHMS Counseling Department set for the goal of integrating technology into our child study meetings. We have converted all our child study forms into typing documents that we could use so that we have documents electronically as backup. Another benefit of using technology in the meetings is that it makes it easier and cleaner to read the paperwork. This year, the MEHMS Counseling department will focus on utilizing data from our groups and surveys to tie into our counseling programs.

MEHMS Counseling is also expanding on our advisory program this year. The advisory program at Mary Ellen Henderson Middle school is designed around the six character education pillars (Respect, Caring, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Fairness, and Citizenship). Teachers and school counselors introduce a pillar to the students each month throughout the school to build relationships between the staff and students. Teambuilding is essential for students to develop a rapport and make connections with their peers. The program is designed for students to learn about values and ethical decision making to support the shared school and community environment. The advisory class is intended to open meaningful and challenging discussions through activities that are developmentally appropriate to our unique school.

MEHMS is also supporting the Olweus Bully Prevention program in conjunction with the advisory program by teaching students about bullies, bystanders, and victims. Each advisory class takes a confidential survey and uses the data specifically about their advisory class to tailor lessons to meet the unique needs of their students. In addition, this year we are restarting our Peer Mediation program. Mediation is a process where a 3rd neutral party helps students come up with a resolution to a conflict. Simply put; peer mediators help fellow students think of solutions to a problem they are having with one another. Beginning with 7th grade, students will train once a week during lunch/recess to learn skills and techniques to help resolve peer conflicts. Second semester the program will be opened up to 5th & 6th grade. During the month of October we will be interviewing 7th grade candidates.

FIFTH GRADE

Teachers in the Fifth Grade at Mary Ellen Henderson know and value the importance of the information available in various professional journals. However, as teachers, we also know the difficulty in finding time to keep up-to-date with those journals. Our goal is to share teaching strategies reported in professional journals that we think other teachers at Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School could utilize in the classroom. In addition to teaching strategies we also include new research that has been published that would help teachers keep the content of their lessons exciting and up-to-date. We each summarize one article and publish those summaries as a newsletter that gets distributed to the rest of the MEHMS staff. Our desired outcome is that teachers at MEHMS share strategies and ideas with each other as well as continually try new things in the classroom.

SIXTH GRADE

The sixth grade team goal is to increase use of technology to enhance classroom instruction and learning. Our first year plan was to identify and become familiar with programs and web pages sharing between team members. The second phase of this plan is to master Angel as a communication device. 6th Grade teachers will also be working to increase delivery of information via power point and use virtual manipulatives in math instruction, as well as increasing the identification of valuable reteaching, presentation and practice sites for students: such as decimal squares, NCTM's illumination site; brainpop; discovery channels; united streaming videos and the National Library of Virtual Manipulatives. Teacher will also be working on ways to use presentation software and to increase posting for on line communication with parents and students whenever possible.

SEVENTH GRADE

7th Grade Teachers are completing the BRIM training series. BRIM *Breaking Ranks in the Middle* training aims to build additional leadership capacity in middle level school leaders and their teacher teams taking the challenge of middle school reform. The training offers participants the tools and strategies to address and deal with the unique challenges facing middle level leadership including personalization, advisories, teaming, transition from elementary and

transition to high school, use of data and other critical topics. The training program's design includes an interactive format for small and large group discussions, problem-solving assignments, as well as analysis and reflections necessary for meaningful comprehension and learning. The ultimate goal of this training program is to facilitate reform efforts by school leadership teams for the improvement of student learning and development of successful schools.

ENCORE/TAAP/CTE

Teachers in the Fine Arts, TAAP, and CTE are working collaboratively to support Core Subjects through integrated lessons and common planning. We are working with grade level teams to assist with alternative assessments using integration. Teachers are also working on implementing technology into lessons to enhance instruction.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education teachers have set the goal to learn and begin using new IEP software. In addition, teachers will use technology to enhance instruction and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in normal classroom activities that they otherwise may not have been able to. The Special Education department will also be working with Core and Encore teachers to educate teachers and students about children with disabilities and how to assist them in the classroom. This is in part of a larger education program designed to help the whole school become better at accommodating students with disabilities.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The impact of a well-run school library program on student achievement has been documented in studies done in Colorado, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, as well as other states. (*School Libraries Work*, Scholastic, Inc., 2006) For professional growth, the media specialists in FCCPS meet every other month to discuss current issues/trends that pertain to school libraries, using sources such as professional journals, list serves, blogs, and personal experiences. (We are currently setting up an account on Angel for the purpose of communicating and sharing vital information.) The particular focus during the past year has been on reviewing and discussing database/circulation/catalog software, as we need to replace the systems that we currently have, which are outdated and inconsistent. We have visited schools in other districts to explore the various systems. The goal is to adopt a uniform circulation system for the 2009-2010 school year. We will continue to share news/views/articles and to discuss trends in school libraries as well.

ESOL/READING/SUPPORT

ESOL Specialists will work with helping more students to move from a mostly procedural level subject knowledge to a deeper understanding of content. Improving problem solving abilities is a secondary objective. Through participation in professional development activities, teachers will be able to identify more reasons why ELLs are struggling with some content areas more than others. Teachers will better understand the interaction between math and language in order to

design better lessons that increased math competency on specific tasks as well as skills in other content areas. Teachers will work collaboratively to provide more projects that allow for integration of related mathematical concepts. Writing and expressing concepts orally are integrated parts of these projects.

The Reading Specialist will integrate strategies and materials that address the specific learning needs of English Language Learners who are struggling with reading skills into current teaching practices. As students progress out of ESOL programs, some continue to require extra reading support. The reading program will focus on using strategies and materials that help build background knowledge and connect to the diverse background knowledge that students already possess as well as strategies and materials that emphasize both content and academic vocabulary development. In order to enhance knowledge of these topics teachers will review professional literature, view demonstrations, collaborate with colleagues, and engage in reflective discussions.

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