Foundation for
Excellence
in Education

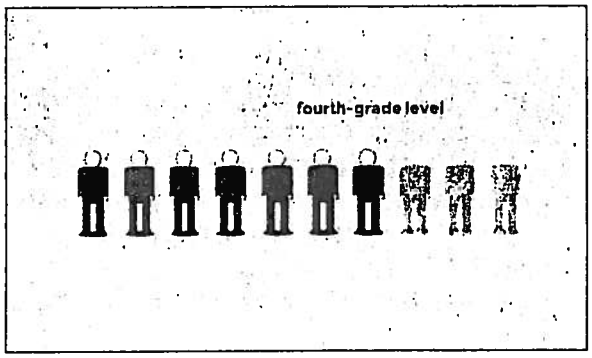
K-3 Reading

THE ABILITY TO READ IS THE GATEWAY TO SUCCESS

The goal of a Comprehensive K-3 Reading Policy is to establish intensive reading intervention for K-3 students who are at risk of reading failure to help ensure they read on grade level by the end of third grade. The policy also requires third grade students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade. Retention can provide struggling readers the additional time they need to catch up with their peers.

Why is a K-3 Reading Policy Necessary?

In 2011, the Annie E. Casey Foundation released a report titled, *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*. The study analyzed the reading scores and graduation rates of nearly 4,000 students over 10 years. They found that:



- Children who are not reading proficiently in third grade are ***four times*** more likely to drop out of high school.
- Poor black and Hispanic students were ***eight times*** more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.

And, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) reports that:

- ***7 out of every 10*** prison inmates can't read above a fourth-grade level.

It is imperative to address the illiteracy problem in our schools early; our students' futures depend on it.

> "The third grade reading guarantee is going to be the very heart of education. If you aren't reading proficiently by the end of third grade, you are going to struggle throughout the rest of your school years."
> ***Senator Peggy Lehner, Ohio***

What is a "Comprehensive K-3 Reading Policy"?

A successful policy includes intensive reading intervention in grades K-3, retention as a last resort and more intensive intervention in the event of retention. Fundamental principles include:

1. ***Early literacy screening*** is administered in K-3 grades within the first 30 days of school to identify students with potential reading difficulties.
2. ***Parent notification*** for any student identified with a reading difficulty in K-3.
3. ***Individual reading plans*** are developed with the parent, prescribing interventions aimed at removing the reading deficit.
4. ***Student progress is monitored*** more frequently for students identified with difficulties.
5. ***Home reading strategies or programs*** are provided to parents to support their child at home.
6. ***Interventions during summer or before/after school*** are provided to students struggling in reading or potentially facing retention.
7. ***Multiple opportunities*** are provided to third grade students to demonstrate reading skills required for promotion to fourth grade, so one test on one day isn't the determining factor.
8. ***Good cause exemptions*** are provided that recognize the specials needs of some students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who were previously retained.
9. ***Retention for students severely below grade level*** and therefore unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade.
10. ***More intensive interventions with a highly effective teacher*** in the event of retention. Such interventions include summer reading camps, more dedicated time for reading intervention, tutoring, a reading mentor, and/or a parent home reading plan.

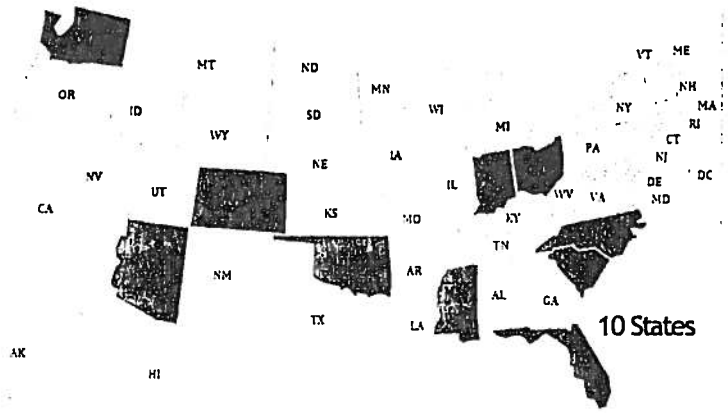
Where is the Evidence?

Since the start of the policy, reading scores for students have soared. The 2013 Nation's Report Card for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found Florida students outperformed the national average in every subgroup for fourth grade reading.

- Florida fourth grade readers outperform the national average by more than half a grade level,
- Florida's African American readers outperform their peers by more than half a grade level,
- Hispanic readers in Florida outperform their peers by almost two full grade levels,
- Low-income readers outperform their peers by a grade level, and
- Students with disabilities perform better than their peers by two full grade levels.

And for retained third grade students:

- Research by Jay Greene and Marcus Winters showed that retained students in Florida made significant progress compared to students that just met the cut score for promotion, and retained students still outperform those students through seventh grade in reading ***and*** math.



States with Comprehensive K-3 Reading Policies

It is imperative to address the illiteracy problem in our schools early; our students' futures depend on it.

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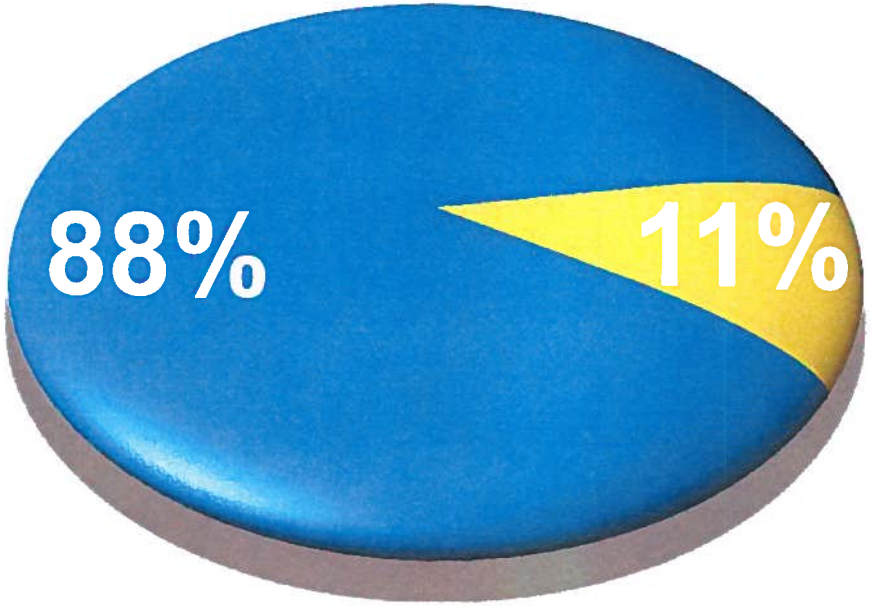
Comprehensive K-3 Reading Policies

March 26, 2015

Predicting Dropout Rates by 3rd Grade Reading Performance

19 Year Old Dropouts by 3rd Grade Reading Scores



- Non Proficient Readers in 3rd grade
- Proficient Readers in 3rd grade

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A few more statistics:

- Children who are not reading proficiently in third grade are 4 times more likely to drop out of high school.

- Poor black and Hispanic students who are struggling readers are about 8 times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.

- High school dropouts make up:
  - 75% of citizens receiving food stamps.
  - 90% of Americans on welfare.

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Catch Them Early

Intensive reading intervention happens K-3

Retention is a last resort

Retention means more intensive intervention

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Fundamental Principles

Assessment/Parent Notification	• *Early literacy screening* • *Parent notification* • *Monitor student progress*

Instruction/ Intervention	• *Individual reading plans, including:*
	  • *Home reading strategies or programs for parents*
	  • *Interventions during school, summer and/or before/after school*

Retention/ Intervention	• *Ensure one test on one day is NOT the sole determining factor* • *Retention for students severely below grade level* • *Good cause exemptions for "some" students* • *Retention means more intensive interventions*

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Implementation Supports

- **Human Resources**
  - Reading coaches are a viable support mechanism for effective implementation of this policy.

- **Funding**
  - *The key*: make better use of existing local, state and federal funds

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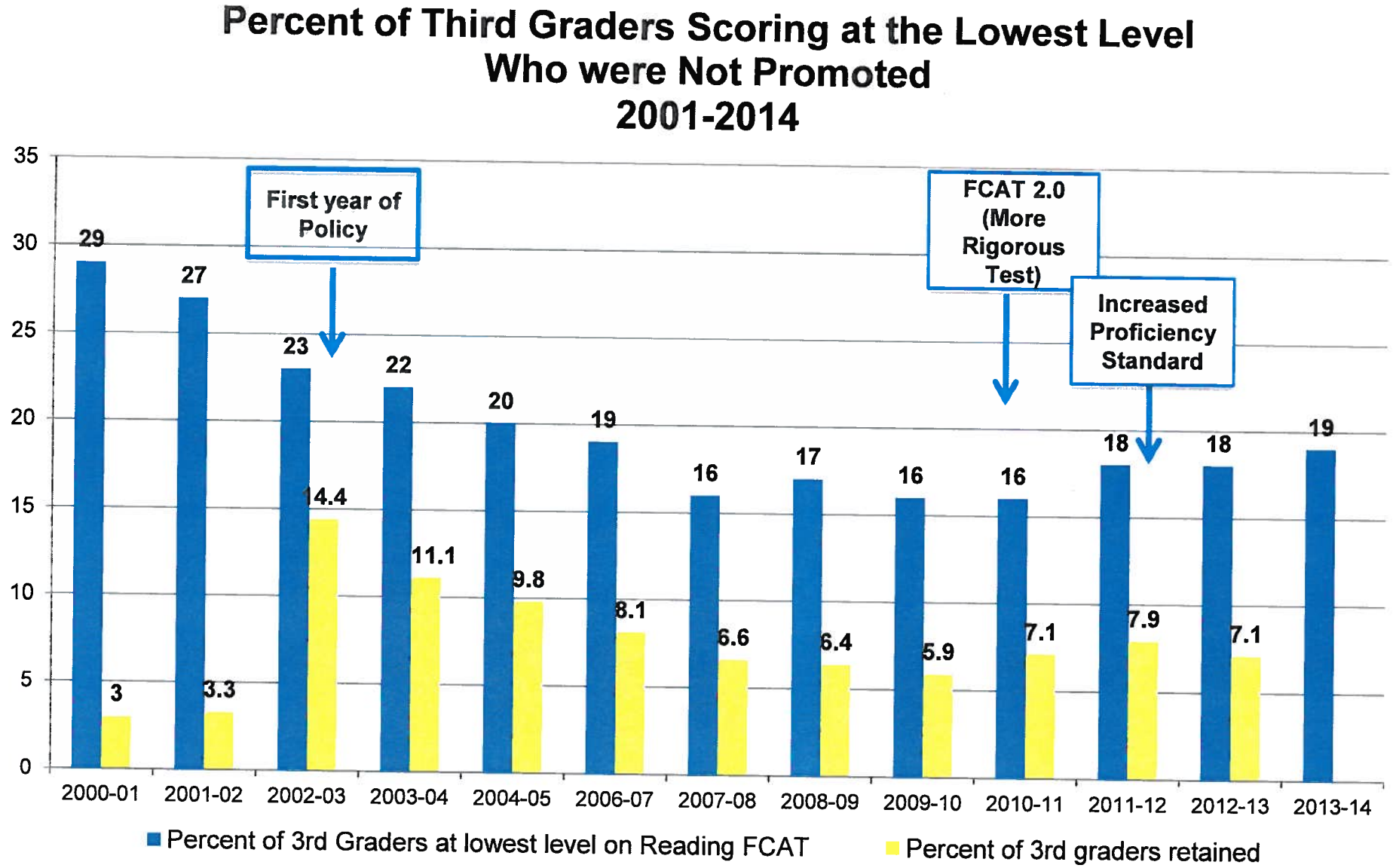
A Command Focus on Reading



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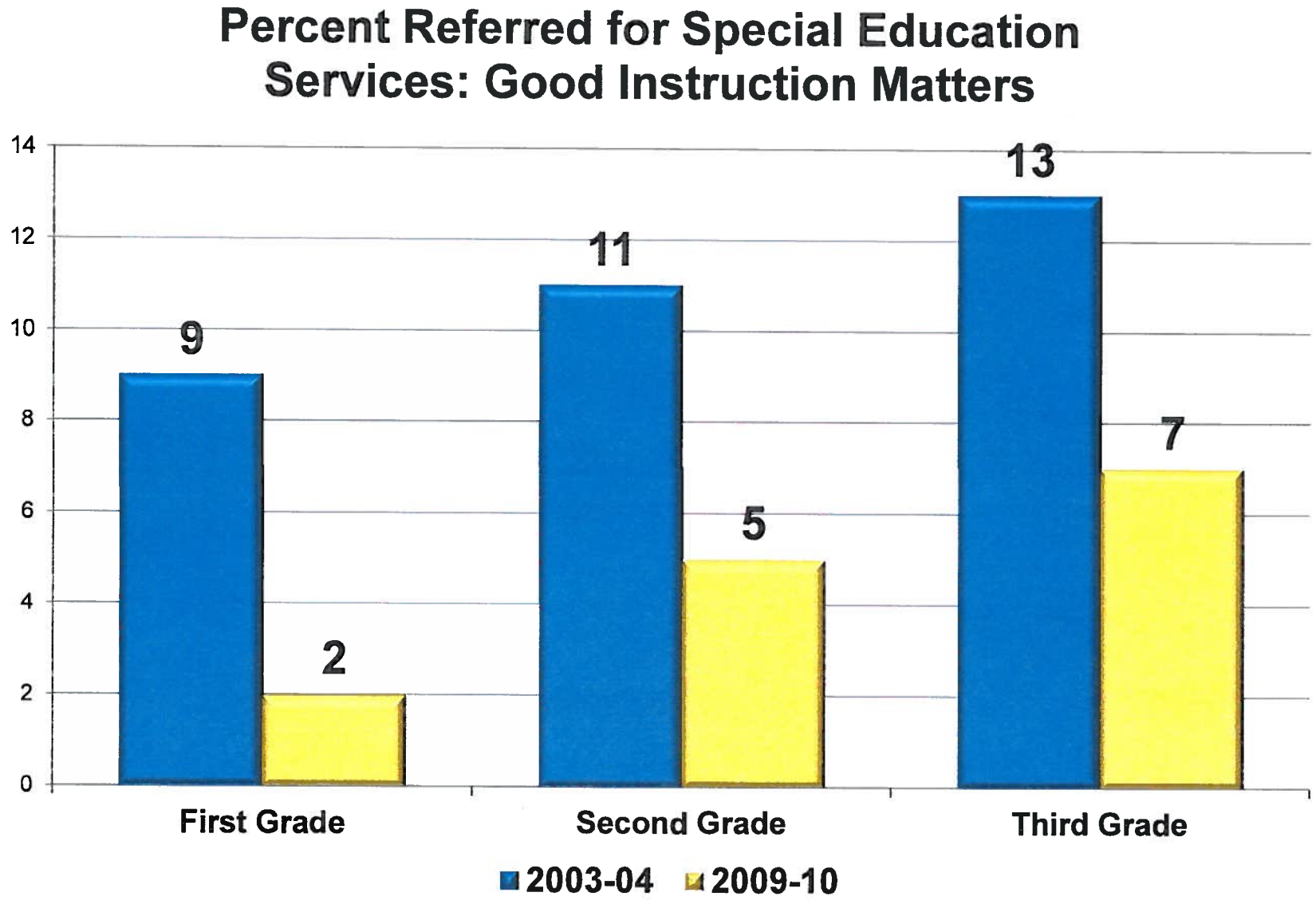
A Command Focus on Reading



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Performance of Students Retained

- **After 2 Years:**
  - Jay Greene and Marcus Winters, *Getting Farther Ahead by Staying Behind;* Manhattan Institute, 2006

Retained kids made significant gains compared to promoted kids

Those gains grew substantially from year one to year two

Retained kids were able to catch up; promoted kids fell behind

The greatest impact in learning was for minority kids

- **By 7th Grade:**
  - Marcus Winters, The Benefits of Florida's Test-Based Promotion System, 2012

Retained kids were still outperforming promoted kids… in reading *and* math

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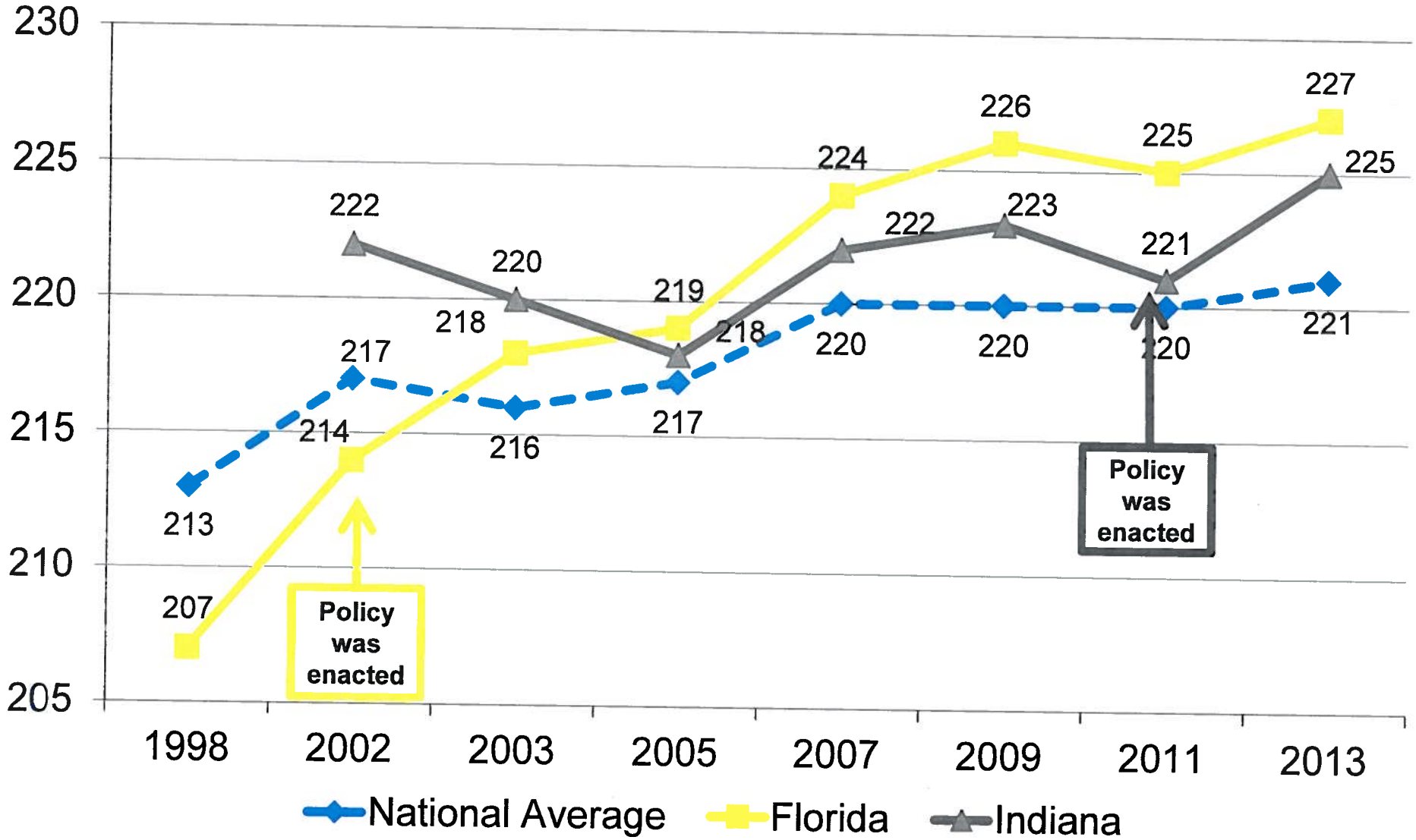
NAEP 4th Grade Reading Average Scale Scores for All Students



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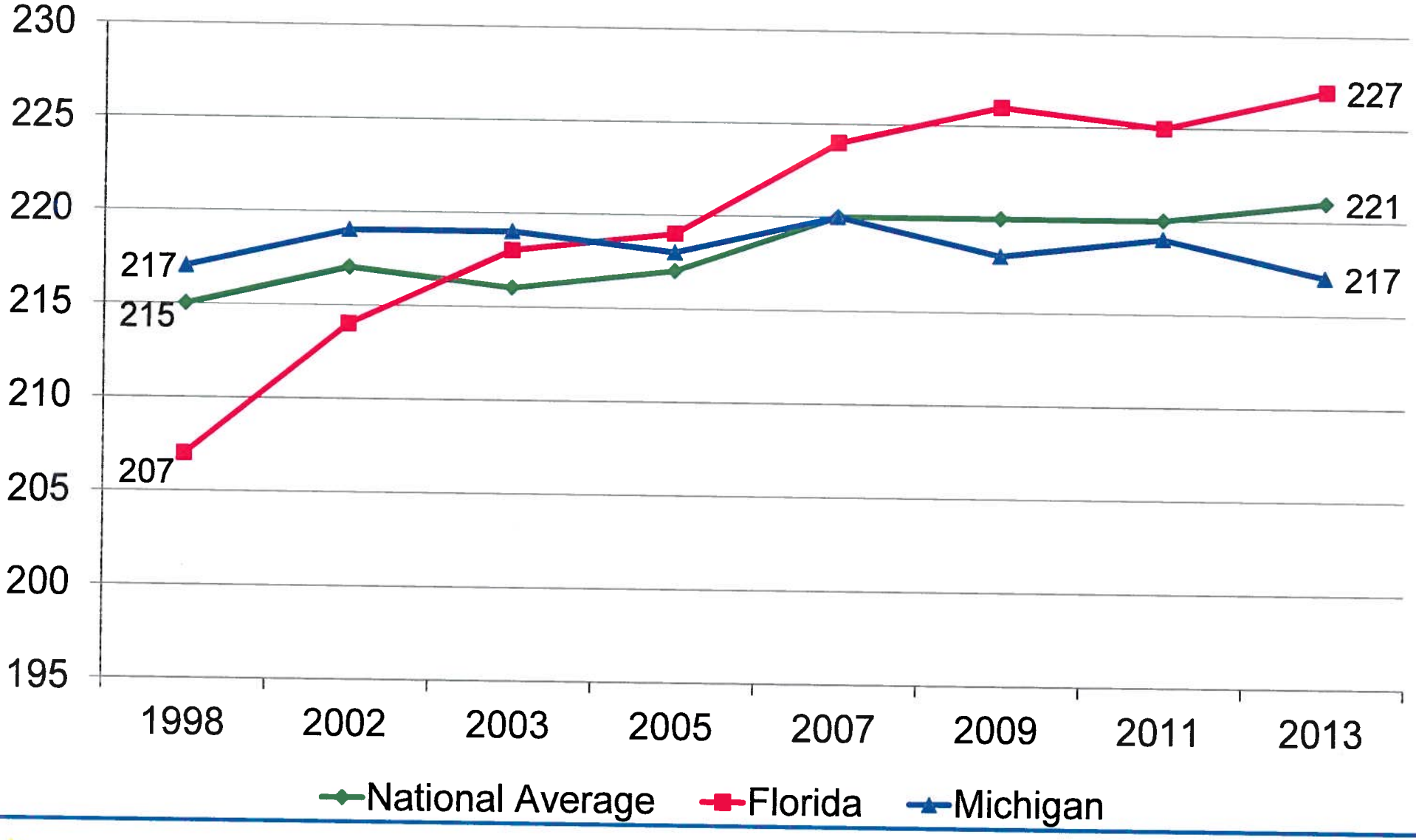
Average NAEP 4th Grade Reading Scores, Florida, Michigan, and National Average 1998-2013



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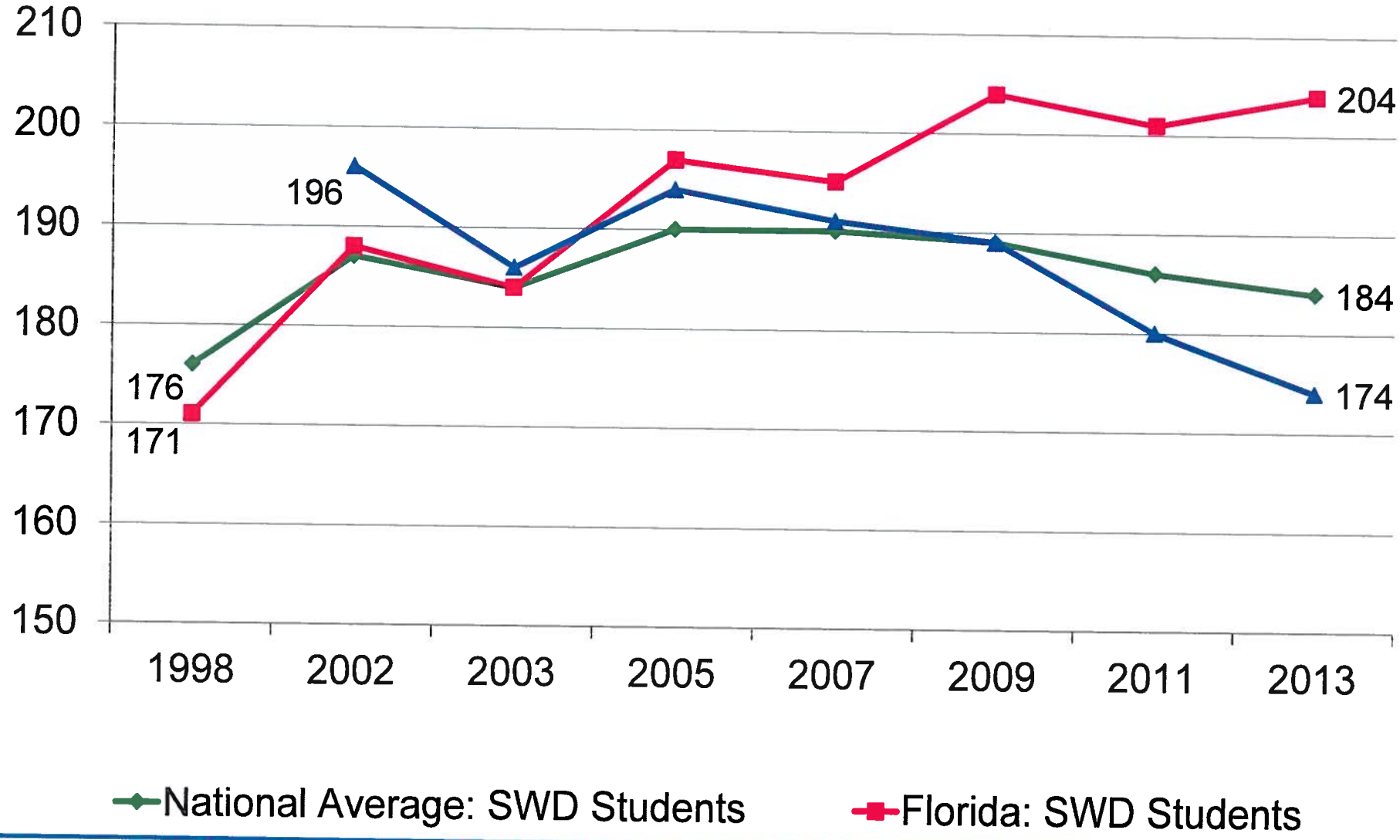
Average NAEP 4th Grade Reading Scores for Students with Disabilities (SWD), Florida, Michigan, and National Average 1998-2013



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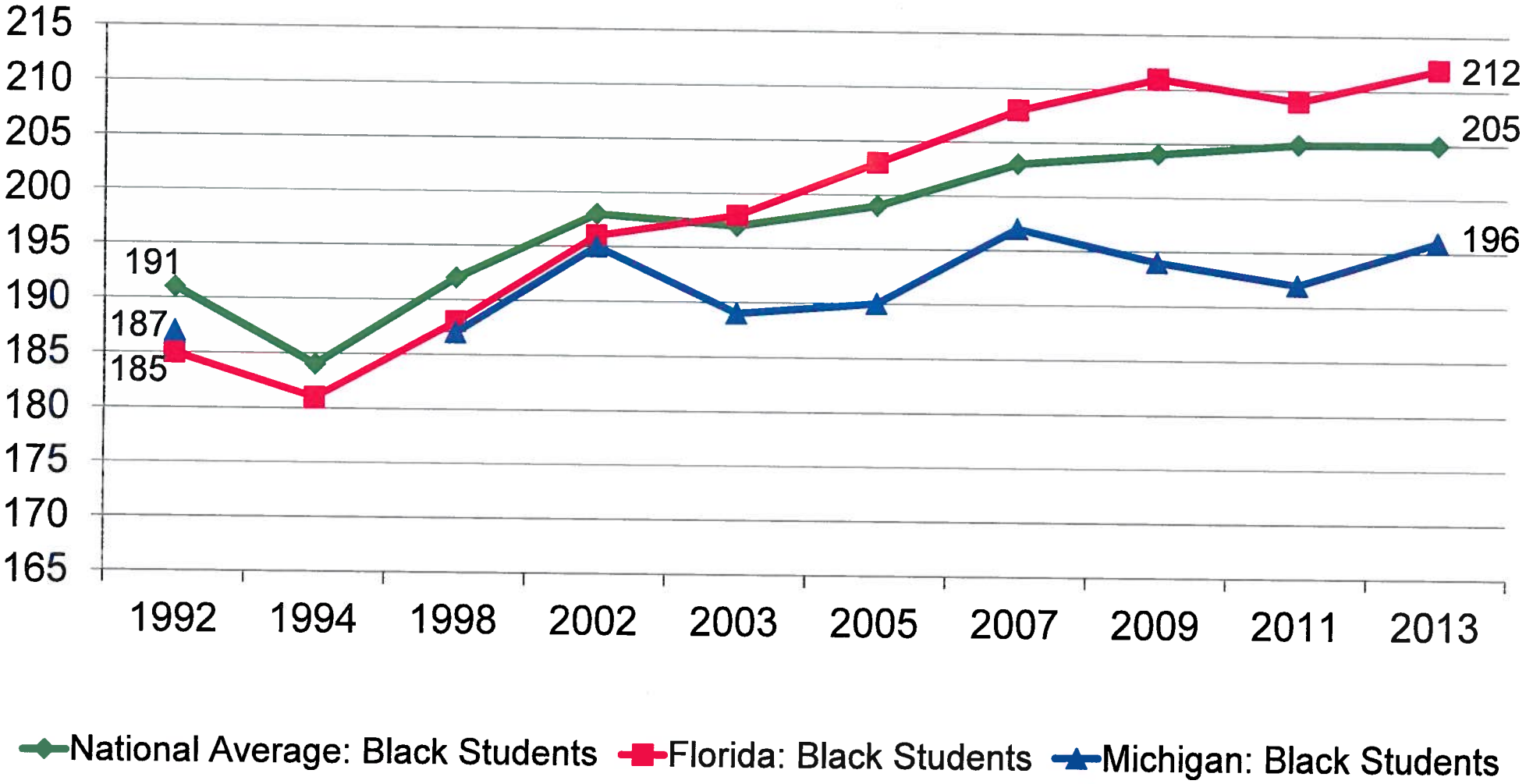
Average NAEP 4th Grade Reading Scores for Black Students
Florida, Michigan, and National Average 1992-2013



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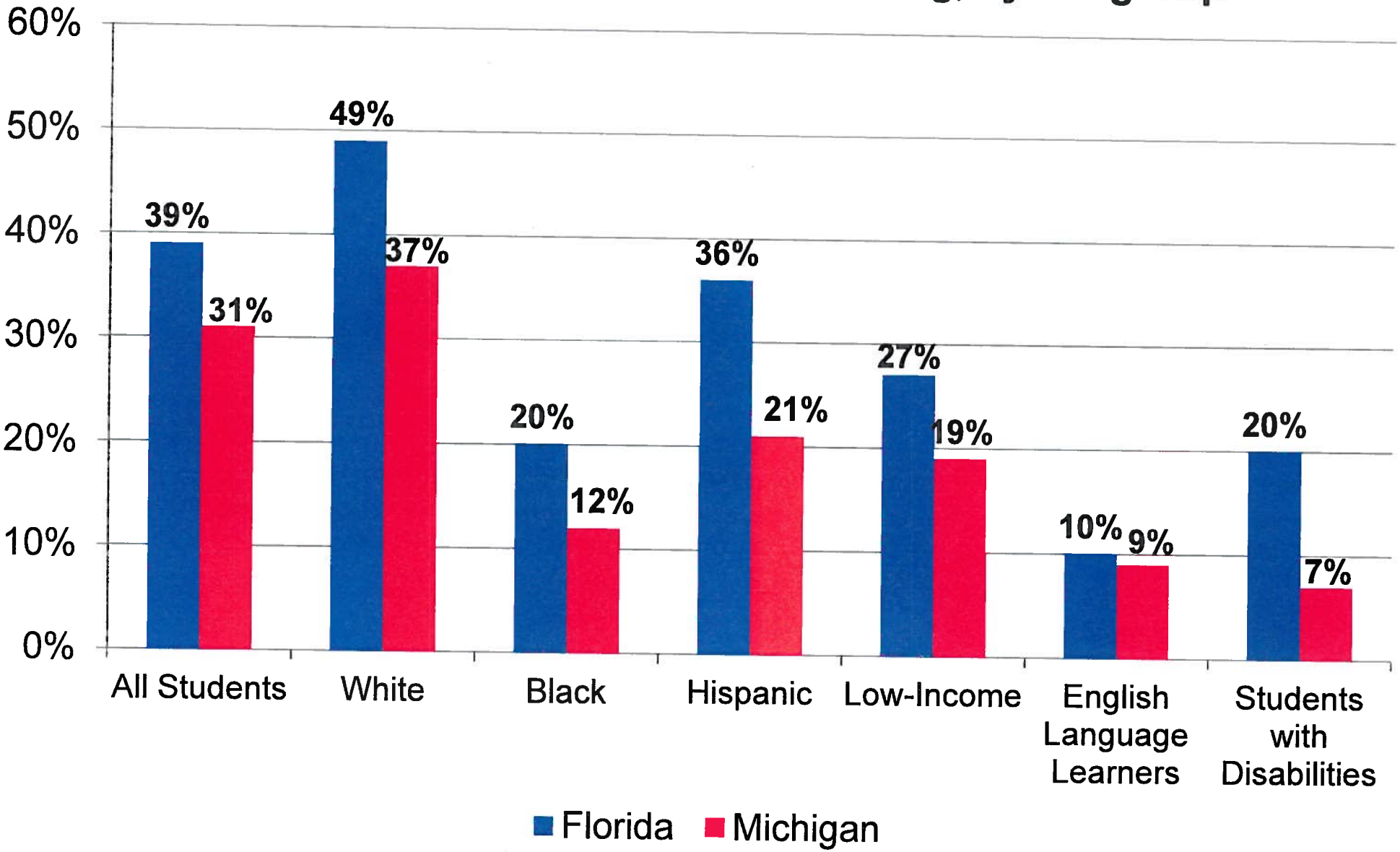
Florida and Michigan Students Scoring "Proficient or Better" on 2013 NAEP Grade 4 Reading, by subgroup



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Since 2002, Florida has made great progress:

- **Increased proficiency by 12 percentage points** (going from 27% to 39%)
- **Decreased the percent of students below basic by 15 percentage points** (going from 40% to 25%)
- **Florida is now one whole grade level above Michigan.**

Since 2002, Michigan has made zero progress:

- **Increased proficiency by 0 percentage points** (30%)
- **Decreased the percent of students below basic by 0 percentage points** (36%)
- **Michigan is one whole grade level behind Florida.**

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Thank You !

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