



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Statement by Advocates for Children in Response to the Release of English Language Arts & Math Test Scores

August 22, 2019 (NEW YORK CITY) — In response to the release of the grades 3–8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Math test scores, Kim Sweet, Executive Director, issued the following statement:

We are pleased that test scores for third through eighth graders continue to trend in the right direction. In particular, rising ELA scores for third graders—53.3% of New York City third graders reached proficiency in 2019, compared to 50.6% of third graders in 2018—are a promising sign that the City's investments in early childhood education and the universal literacy initiative are paying off.

However, we note that there continue to be enormous disparities between students with disabilities and their general education peers, with only 16.1% of City students with disabilities reaching proficiency in reading—an achievement gap of 40.1 percentage points. This gap is also slightly larger than last year's 39.4 percentage-point gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Even more worrisome is the fact that only 9.3% of the City's English Language Learners (ELLs) scored proficient in reading—a decline from the already unacceptably low proficiency rate of 9.9% in 2018—while the achievement gap between current ELLs and students who were never ELLs grew, rising from 41 percentage points in 2018 to 42.2 points in 2019. Racial achievement gaps also remain stark, with only 35% of Black students and 36.5% of Hispanic students reaching proficiency on the ELA exam, compared to two-thirds of their White and Asian peers.

Teaching *all* children how to read is the most fundamental responsibility of schools. Now is the time for the City to double down on its efforts to improve literacy instruction and ensure that all students—including those with special education needs and those who are learning English—receive the support and specialized instruction they need to become proficient readers.

About Advocates for Children of New York (AFC)

Since 1971, Advocates for Children of New York has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds who are at greatest risk for failure or discrimination in school because of their poverty, disability, race, ethnicity, immigrant or English Language Learner status, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, or involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. AFC uses four integrated strategies: free advice and legal representation for families of students; free trainings and workshops for parents, communities, and educators and other professionals to equip them to advocate on behalf of students; policy advocacy to effect change in the education system and improve education outcomes; and impact litigation to protect the right to quality education and compel needed reform.