ASHEVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL CALLED SESSION

Administrative Offices

Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at 12:00 PM

BE IT REMEMBERED: The Asheville City Board of Education met in a special called session on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at 12:00 PM at the Administrative Offices at 85 Mountain Street, Asheville, North Carolina, where and when the following business was transacted.

1. MEETING OPENING

The meeting opened with a moment of silence for

the loss of Lisa Bishop.

The meeting will not be live-streamed.

1.1 CALL TO ORDER - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

12:05 PM

Equity Statement:*In Asheville City Schools we are committed to equity and anti-racist policies for all students and staff to learn and thrive. We recognize that our positions come with power, responsibility, and public service for the entire ACS community. We will model our commitment to equity through our practices and decisions. During this meeting, we invite a pause if harm has taken place, a moment to name the harm, and space to practice repair.*

1.2 QUORUM DETERMINATION - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Sarah THornburg

Rebecca Strimer

Pepi Acebo

Liza Kelly - arrived at 12:09

George Sieburg - arrived at 12:09

Jesse Warren

Amy Ray - Absent

Attendees:

Dr. Maggie Fehrman, Superintendent; Kimberly Jones, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Tanya Presha, Special Assistant to the Superintendent; Dr. Kim Dechant,

Chief of Staff; Heidi Kerns, Chief Finance Officer; Kim Robinson, Executive Director of Student Services; Dr. Mark Dickerson, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources; Dr. Jeremy Gibbs, Chief of Operations; Shannon Baggett, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction; Carrie Buchanan, Executive Director of Policies and Development; Marilee Woodard, Public Information Officer; April Collins, Director of Recruitment and Induction; Matt Whitesides, Director of Instructional Technology and Media Services; Ian Nelson, Director of Testing and Accountability; Dana Keupp Data Analyst/Academic Coach/MTSS Coach; Tiffany Delhagan, Director of Secondary; Molly Pepples, Early Literacy Specialist

1.3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Motion to Approve the Agenda

Moved by: Rebecca Strimer; seconded by: Jesse Warren

The motion passed

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS 5

September 2026 Board Retreat.pdf

2.1 Strategic Plan 1st Quarter Updates - Dr. Maggie Fehrman, Superintendent

- Each pillar presented on: Tactics, KPI Measurements, and Successful Implementation
- Quarterly updates structured around: Research and Design, Invest and Deliver, and Monitor
- Board asks clarifying questions after each pillar; deeper feedback written on forms for Q2 planning
- Tanya Presha and Dr. Kim Dechant presented Culture and Climate; Kim Robinson, presented Student Outcomes; Shannon Baggett, presented Mastery of Knowledge and Skills and High Quality of Work; Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development: Mark Dickerson; Finance, Heidi Kerns; Dr. Jeremy Gibbs, Operations

2.2 Review of 25-26 Student Outcome Data - Dr. Maggie Fehrman, Superintendent

Data Review: Ladder of Inference Protocol

- Groups used the Ladder of Inference framework (Harvard professor Chris Argyris) to analyze student data and develop board-level action steps
- Two groups of three board members each; staff available to clarify data

Group 1: Middle School Discipline and Achievement Data

Group 2: 3rd Grade Reading EOG Data (slide 65)

2.3 Goal Setting - Dr. Maggie Fehrman, Superintendent

5-Year Priority Student Outcome Goals

Dr. Fehrman shared goals as examples for board reflection; the board was invited to add their own at a future work session.

- By the end of this school year: ACS will no longer have the largest achievement gap in the state
- 5-year goal: ACS will have one of the 5 smallest achievement gaps in the state

- High-quality work: by the end of this year, all students will know the 5 Portrait of a Scholar traits
- Character: decrease discipline risk factors for Black students by X points this year

2.4 Next Steps

- Complete the feedback survey on today's retreat format and Q1 strategic plan update.
- Submit board-level 5-year student outcome goals to Dr. Maggie.
- Share the K–12 College and Career Readiness plan with interested board members.
- Board to review high-level budget assembly in October.
- Evaluations at noon on Saturday, October 26th

3. FUTURE MEETINGS/ANNOUNCEMENTS -

Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Special Called Closed Session Meeting

Monday, September 28, 2026

Administrative Offices - Training Room

Work Session Meeting

Monday, October 5, 2026

Administrative Offices - Board Room

Regular Meeting

Monday, October 12, 2026

Administrative Offices - Board Room

Work Session Meeting

Monday, November 2, 2026

Administrative Offices - Board Room

NCSBA Association Annual Conference

November 9-11, 2026

Greensboro, NC

Regular Meeting

Monday, November 16, 2026

Administrative Offices - Board Room

2026-2027 ACS Board of Education Meeting Schedule

4. ADJOURNMENT - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

4:33 PM

4.1 Adjourn Meeting

Dr. Maggie Fehrman

Dr. Maggie Fehrman,
Superintendent

Sarah Thornburg

Board Chair, or Designee

Asheville City Schools SPECIAL CALLED OPEN MEETING , 22 Sep 2026

Asheville City Schools

September 2026 Board Retreat



Greeting

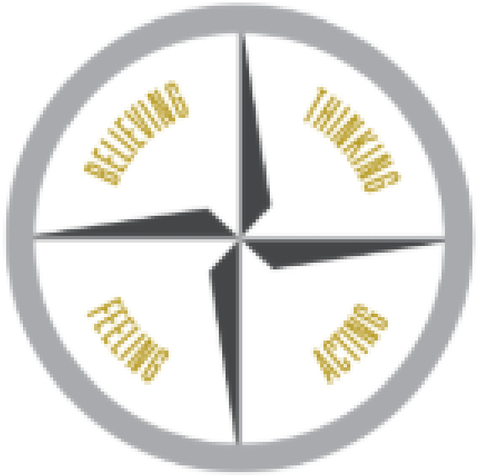
What is your favorite thing about fall?

Reading

“The foundation you lay today, builds the house you will live in tomorrow.”
-Unknown

CCAR Protocol

THE COMPASS



FOUR AGREEMENTS

Stay engaged
Experience discomfort
Speak your truth
Expect / accept non-closure

SIX CONDITIONS

- Focus on the personal, local and immediate
- Isolate race
- Normalize social construction and multiple perspectives
- Monitor agreements and conditions; establish parameters
- Use a "working" definition of race
- Examine the presence and role of whiteness

Learning Targets

- I can describe what it looks like and sounds like when a school board plays a pivotal role in improving student achievement.
- I can summarize what was accomplished during the 1st quarter of our strategic plan.
- I can reflect on our student outcomes from 25-26 to identify areas of celebration and growth and generate action steps the Board can take to impact student outcomes.
- I can collaborate with other members of the school board to set prioritized student outcome goals to achieve in the next five years.



I can describe what it looks like and sounds like when a school board plays a pivotal role in improving student achievement.

1. Read the first two columns of the article, “The Governance-Achievement Link”
    a. Is the ignored role of school boards an earned one?
    b. Can school board policy play a meaningful and valuable role in improving student achievement?

Think-pair-share: Do you agree with what the article says? Talk about why or why not.

Small Group Discussion and Share out

- Group 1: A belief and commitment to student achievement
- Group 2: Genuine Accountability & A Learning Organization
- Group 3: Effective Governance

1. Read your group’s assigned section, and then complete the notecatcher.
2. When you are done, add your info to a poster.
3. Pick one person to share out for your group

Agreement? Is something missing?

I can summarize what was accomplished during the 1st quarter of our strategic plan.

- We will give an overview of what has been accomplished during Q1 of the strategic plan.
- Take notes for each critical initiative. Hold questions until the end.
- After each critical initiative, there will be time for Board members to reflect.
- Between each pillar, there will be time for questions for that pillar.

Break and Reflection

Board members will add their reflections to poster paper.



Journey to Become a High Quality Organization



Stable Leadership

Identify your core business or unity of purpose. What are we here to do?

- *Vision and Mission Statements*
- *Three Promises*
- *Portrait of a Scholar*
- *Strategic Plan*

Establish high-quality practices and strategies and actively implement them

- *Strategic Plan*
- *School and District Work Plans*

Culture that is committed to continuous improvement

- *Theory of Action*
- *Strategic Plan*
- *School and District Work Plans*

Establish key indicators of performance that can be monitored regularly in every area of the organization

- *Department KPIs*
- *Strategic Planning Goals*

Uphold a quality philosophy

Believe we can always do better

- *Goal Setting and Work Plans*

Make better use of our resources

- *Evaluate return on investment*

Involve all members of the organization in the work

- *EAC, MCC, Representatives from all levels on working groups, and leadership teams*

Become a learning organization

- *Professional Learning Goals*
- *Professional Learning Communities*



Strategic Plan Updates

Vision Statement

Our vision is to build a joyful, innovative district that supports individual success and strengthens our entire community. Our Cougar Pride is evident in the effective collaboration between students, interactive curriculum, and enriching environment that sets us up for success in school and the future.Through creativity, cultural uplift, and student leadership, we will create effective learning experiences for every student and faculty member in our district and beyond. Employing accessible policies, resources, and learning environments will provide clear pathways toward lifelong growth and success for all.



Mission Statement

Asheville City Schools is unified in our mission to ensure that every student feels they belong, engages in meaningful, challenging, and relevant learning experiences, and graduates on time with the skills, knowledge, and characteristics to pursue their passions and create positive change.



ACS Strategy Map



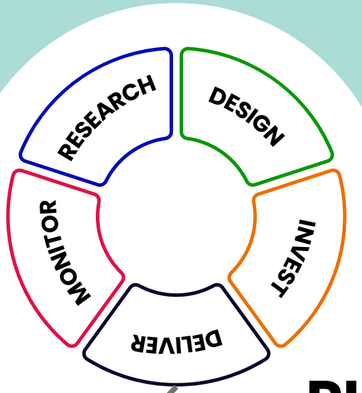
	1	2	3	4
FOCUS	**Climate and Culture**	**Student Outcomes**	**Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development**	**Operations and Finance**
THEME	**Stronger Relationships, Stronger Public Schools, Stronger Community**	**Equitable Student Outcomes**	**Premier District For Exceptional Talent**	**Sustainable Stewardship for Student Success**
OBJECTIVE	Asheville City Schools will foster a culture of belonging through clear professional communication, consistent expectations, and authentic trust based relationships that engage and support students, staff, families, and community partners in strengthening student learning and well-being.	Every ACS scholar will demonstrate academic achievement through critical thinking, problem-solving, & clear communication as we eliminate performance disparities & close the achievement gap by implementing data-driven, differentiated instruction & individualized interventions to ensure every student meets or exceeds grade-level proficiency.	Asheville City Schools is committed to building and sustaining a diverse, high-caliber workforce. We attract, hire, and retain exceptional educators while fostering a culture where every employee can grow, lead, and advance within the district.	Build a sustainable, standardized, and resilient district operating model, supported by strong infrastructure, shared training and documentation, data-driven accountability, and strategic partnerships, to ensure consistent, reliable services for staff and students beyond reliance on individual roles.
CRITICAL INITIATIVES	1. **Trusting Relationships:** ACS will cultivate a culture of belonging by fostering authentic, trust-based relationships among students and staff, ensuring every individual feels valued, heard, and supported in a safe and inclusive learning environments. 2. **Communication:** We will establish and maintain consistent expectations with professional communication systems that promote alignment, trust, and engagement among students, staff, and the broader community.	1. **Character:** Every ACS scholar will develop habits, mindsets, and skills necessary for lifelong success. 2. **Mastery of Knowledge and Skills:** Every ACS scholar will demonstrate achievement through critical thinking, problem solving, and clear communication. 3. **High-Quality Work:** Every ACS scholar will produce high-quality work that reflects perseverance, critical thinking, and pride in their learning.	1. **Attract:** ACS will develop a robust compensation package for all employees and enhance our recruitment strategies. 2. **Advance:** ACS will build a comprehensive system that develops, supports, and sustains high-quality staff by creating clear pathways for professional opportunities, leadership, and long-term career success. 3. **Achieve**: We will create a high-impact, cohesive professional learning system that strengthens instructional practice, supports all staff, and positions ACS as a model district for professional learning.	1. **Strategic Resource Alignment**: We will implement a clear decision-making and reflection process to align funding and resources to district priorities, student essentials, and measurable impact on equitable student outcomes. 2. **Safety Infrastructure and Security Upgrades:** ACS will strengthen safety systems, security measures, and facility protections to support equitable, safe, and secure learning environments across the district. 3. **Facilities Needs Assessment Implementation:** We will use the outcomes of the Facility Needs Assessment to guide future facility and operational improvements based on need, sustainability, and equitable access.

Alignment to North Carolina DPI Strategic Plan



2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update Overview

Asheville City Schools



PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION

RESEARCH
All strategic plan work begins with research to identify best practices and options for how to move the work forward.

DESIGN
After researching possible solutions and options, we use what we have learned to identify solutions that align with our mission, theory of action, and create a plan for implementation

INVEST
Projects identified as being in the "invest" phase are in the process of receiving allocated funding, being assigned a team lead, and being assigned other staff to support the implementation.

DELIVERED
Once a project is implemented in the district, we identify its status as "delivered". Implementation may start with a pilot before moving to district-wide implementation

MONITOR
We will collect data and analyze results of all projects to assess implementation fidelity, impact results, and sustainability.

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

Critical Initiatives are the key projects that will be implemented to meet our strategic objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Each quarter, we will share highlights from our most current work and explain the impact we are having on students, families, schools, and our community.

FOCUS

THEME

OBJECTIVE

Climate and Culture

Stronger Relationships, Stronger Public Schools, Stronger Community

Asheville City Schools will foster a culture of belonging through clear professional communication, consistent expectations, and authentic trust based relationships that engage and support students, staff, families, and community partners in strengthening student learning and well-being.



CRITICAL INITIATIVES



1: Trusting Relationships

Asheville City Schools will cultivate a culture of belonging by fostering authentic, trust-based relationships among students and staff, ensuring every individual feels valued, heard, and supported in a safe and inclusive learning environments.

2: Communication

Asheville City Schools will establish and maintain consistent expectations with professional communication systems that promote alignment, trust, and engagement among students, staff, and the broader community.

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

1 Trusting Relationships

Asheville City Schools will build a culture of belonging by fostering authentic, trust-based relationships among students and staff, ensuring every individual feels valued, heard, and supported in a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Tactics:

- Host community town halls
- Create community engagement framework
- Design professional learning on communication and engagement strategies
- Build sustained and visible relationships with community partners
- Host a quarterly review with Culture and Climate CREW and meet biannually with stakeholder group

KPI Measurements:

- Gather qualitative stakeholder data through surveys with an emphasis on engaging our community; specifically Black families who have historically not been included
- Track positive staff and teacher school-to-home communication in Infinite Campus for each school.
- Collect quantitative data from stakeholder groups

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Stipends for staff to facilitate professional learning
- Data dashboard to track implementation of the strategic planning initiatives
- Protected time for professional learning for staff.
- School implementation of student centered events to promote course offerings and club offerings K-12
- Implementation of celebrations of learning at the school level to showcase ALL students and their work
- Consistent presence in the community, especially from school and district leadership

CLIMATE AND CULTURE

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Climate and Culture

Trusting Relationships

Asheville City Schools will cultivate a culture of belonging by fostering authentic, trust-based relationships among students and staff, ensuring every individual feels valued, heard, and supported in a safe and inclusive learning environment.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Listening sessions with stakeholder group in April, May and June
- May/June parent & staff survey data centered on communication
- Anecdotal data collection w. Black & multi-racial families (teachers, parents, students, community members and ACS alumni).
- Community survey data
- Hold an Achievement Gap Town Hall for families.

INVEST AND DELIVER

- Created Cross Function Accoutability Team(CFAT)
- Develop professional development for trusting relationships
- Created positive/celebration option within Infinite campus for staff to build trusting relationships with families.

MONITOR

- Monitor pre and post feedback from CFAT
- Monitor the usage of positive/celebration of Infinite Campus
- Monitor positive/celebration option within Infinite campus for staff to build trusting relationships with families.

QUARTER 1
SEPTEMBER
2026

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

2 Communication

Asheville City Schools will establish and maintain consistent expectations with professional communication systems that promote alignment, trust, and engagement among students, staff, and the broader community.

Tactics:

- Develop a written Communication & Engagement Framework
- Communication aligns to ACS Framework (i.e. Mission and Vision, 3 Promises, Portrait of a Scholar, Theory of Action)
- Establish regular communication schedules for classroom, school, and district
- Provide annual professional learning for all staff

KPI Measurements:

- Evidence of frequent and positive communication from school to families from each school
- Articulated communication expectations for each level: teacher-to-home, principal-to-staff, and district-to-community
- Track and review key communication data
- Use of home-language translation
- Analyze survey results related to communication
- Refine communication practices based on findings

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Financial Investments
  - Communication systems and data dashboard
  - Professional learning for staff on effective, consistent communication practices that are culturally responsive
- Support the creation and implementation of the communication and engagement framework, to include a communications flow-chart
- Reinforce communication as a core component of professional practice, not an add-on
- The Board and district leadership model effective communication and engagement practices; following the chain of command is essential to effective communication from stakeholders and staff

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Climate and Culture

Communication

Asheville City Schools will establish and maintain consistent expectations with professional communication systems that promote alignment, trust, and engagement among students, staff, and the broader community.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Listening sessions with stakeholder group in April and June
- May/June parent & staff survey data centered on communication
- Anecdotal data collection w. Black & multi-racial families

INVEST AND DELIVER

- Presentation to the Board on the parent/staff communication survey
- Creation of a District Communication Guide

MONITOR

- Monitoring school to home communication via Infinite Campus data
- Social media engagement via KPIs

QUARTER 1
SEPTEMBER

FOCUS

THEME

OBJECTIVE

Student Outcomes

Equitable Student Outcomes

Every ACS scholar is supported to grow as a whole child by mastering important knowledge and skills, producing high-quality work they can be proud of, and contributing to a better world.



CRITICAL INITIATIVES



1: Character:

Every ACS scholar will develop habits, mindsets, and skills necessary for lifelong success.

2: Mastery of Knowledge and Skills:

Every ACS scholar will demonstrate academic achievement through critical thinking, problem-solving, and clear communication as we eliminate performance disparities and close the achievement gap by implementing data-driven, differentiated instruction and individualized interventions to ensure every student meets or exceeds grade-level proficiency standards.

3: High-Quality Work:

Every ACS scholar will produce high-quality work that reflects perseverance, critical thinking, and pride in their learning.

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

1 Character

Every ACS scholar will develop habits, mindsets, and skills necessary for lifelong success.

Tactics:

IMPLEMENT:

- A shared ACS Character Framework aligned to Portrait of a Scholar
- Common language and expectations across all schools
- Clear progress monitoring using key student indicators

CHANGE:

- Shift from reactive discipline to proactive, skill-building approaches
- Increase consistency in how character is taught and reinforced across schools
- Embed character development into daily classroom instruction

ENHANCE:

- Build staff capacity to model, teach, and reinforce character skills
- Strengthen alignment of existing supports (counseling, social work, MTSS, restorative practices)
- Expand student voice, leadership, and real world application opportunities

KPI Measurements:

- School climate and belonging data
- Discipline disparity reductions
- Growth in habits on school-based rubrics
- Attendance

Long Term Outcomes:

- Becoming effective learners
- Becoming ethical people
- Contributing to a better world

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Financial investments in professional learning for all staff around the dimension of character
- District-wide staff and student crew framework anchored in the Portrait of a Scholar
- Mental health supports
- Relational and restorative practices are unilaterally implemented across district
- Preventative systems (i.e. “early warning”)
- Student facilitated Support and Accountability Board

STUDENT OUTCOMES

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Student Outcomes

Character

Every ACS scholar will grow as a whole child by mastering essential knowledge and skills, producing quality work, and contributing positively to their community and world.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Professional learning on effective classroom management, highly effective teaching and assesment practices
- Attendance Works
- Attendance & Behavior Success Plans of Support
- Tiered attendance framework aligned with MTSS

INVEST AND DELIVER

- Professional learning and coaching for staff around habits of character
- Student Crew structures
- Attendance Matters Campaign

MONITOR

- District-wide Student and Staff Crew
- Daily Attendance Rates
- Tier 2 or 3 Attendance Support Plans
- CPI training completion
- Recidivism Discipline Data

Q1 QUARTER SEPTEMBER 2026

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

2 Mastery of Knowledge & Skills

Every ACS scholar will demonstrate academic achievement through critical thinking, problem-solving, and clear communication as we eliminate performance disparities and close the achievement gap by implementing data-driven, differentiated instruction and individualized interventions to ensure every student meets or exceeds grade-level proficiency standards.

Tactics:

IMPLEMENT:

- A Pre-K-12 instructional framework that is challenging, engaging, and promotes student agency
- Intentional focus on math core instruction
- A K-12 College & Career Readiness Plan that includes 6 Signature Pathways
- Professional Learning for all staff

KPI Measurements:

- Growth and achievement data
- College & Career Development Plans
- Walkthrough data (i.e. evidence of high cognitive engagement rather than just compliance)

Long Term Outcomes:

- Equitable academic outcomes
- Students as leaders of their own learning
- Engagement and rigor in all classrooms

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Financial investment in structured and ongoing professional learning
- Prioritized time for professional learning
- Principals as the instructional leaders of their school communities
- Data-driven math core and intervention instructional support

STUDENT OUTCOMES

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Student Outcomes

Mastery of Knowlege and Skills

Every ACS scholar will demonstrate academic achievement through critical thinking, problem-solving, and clear communication as we eliminate performance disparities and close the achievement gap by implementing data-driven, differentiated instruction and individualized interventions to ensure every student meets or exceeds grade-level proficiency standards.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Professional learning sessions to cultivate a collective vision for best instructional and leadership practices
- *ACS Instructional* Framework
- Comprehensive historical and BOY student data
- K-12 College & Career Readiness Plan
- Abre Data Platform

INVEST AND DELIVER

- 6th grade College & Career Exploration Course
- Math screener for K-8
- Math screener for Foundations/ Math I and Math II
- Oct. 5th Curriculum Crew Day Professional Learning
- School Data Dashboards

MONITOR

- 8th and 10th College & Career Development Plans
- Instructional walkthroughs
- Math screener data
- BOY assessment data

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

3 High Quality Work

Every ACS scholar produces high-quality work that reflects perseverance, critical thinking, and pride in their learning.

Tactics:

IMPLEMENT:

- Public exhibitions of learning
- Portfolios of growth
- Expeditions
- Signature pathways (Agricultural Biotechnology, Advanced Manufacturing, Aviation, Early Childhood Education, Health Care, and Hospitality and Tourism)

CHANGE:

- From “one and done” to “draft and craft”
- Grading practices continue to shift to be more reflective of student’s actual level of understanding
- Student work aligned with 3 attributes of High Quality Work
- Professional Learning for all staff

ENHANCE:

- Professional learning communities that center looking at student work protocols
- Expand career development exploration to K-12
- Community engagement in the process of producing high quality work

KPI Measurements:

- Use of high quality work protocol to drive instruction
- Tracking participation in student-led conferences
- Equitable enrollment in secondary honors classes

Long Term Outcomes:

- Every student has a post-graduation plan
- Equitable, standards-based grading practices
- Culture of revision
- Celebrations of learning

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Financial investment in professional Learning for staff
- District-wide, equitable grading practices
- Career development plans
- Signature CTE pathways
- Common assessment rubrics
- Project-based and experiential learning
- Students as designers of their school experiences

STUDENT OUTCOMES

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Student Outcomes

High-Quality Work

Every ACS scholar produces high-quality work that reflects perseverance, critical thinking, and pride in their learning.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- C&I Professional Learning around 3 attributes of High-Quality Work to cascade to Leadership Crew
- Expedition Professional Learning
- Student-Led Conferences

INVEST AND DELIVER

- Digital Learning Initiative Grant
- Grading Practices Reflection Oct. 5th

MONITOR

- Learning Walkthroughs
- Participation in Professional Learning
- Student Grades

QUARTER 1
SEPTEMBER

FOCUS

THEME

OBJECTIVE

Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development

Premier District For Exceptional Talent

Asheville City Schools is committed to building and sustaining a diverse, high-caliber workforce. We attract, hire, and retain exceptional educators while fostering a culture where every employee can grow, lead, and advance within the district.



CRITICAL INITIATIVES



1: Attract:
ACS will develop a robust compensation package for all employees and enhance our recruitment strategies.

2: Advance:
ACS will build a comprehensive system that develops, supports, and sustains high-quality staff by creating clear pathways for professional opportunities, leadership, and long-term career success.

3: Achieve:
We will create a high-impact, cohesive professional learning system that strengthens instructional practice, supports all staff, and positions ACS as a model district for professional learning.

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

1 Attract

Asheville City Schools will develop a robust compensation package for all employees and enhance our recruitment strategies.

Tactics:

ENHANCED AND DIFFERENTIATED COMPENSATION

- Position based stipends for staff taking on more than the standard teaching assignment, i.e. co-teaching sections, gifted sections, ML sections
- Stipends for Beginning Teachers years 1 - 3
- Pay incentives for hard to fill positions

INNOVATIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

- Redefine the “why” work for ACS
- In State and Out of state retirees
- Teach for America

TEACHER PATHWAYS AND LICENSURE

- Grow our own
- Residency programs
- Alternative licensure

KPI Measurements:

- Fill rates for expanded roles and hard-to-staff positions, along with vacancy rates
- Retention rates (1–3 years) for beginning teachers, stipend-supported roles, and pathway program participants
- Student performance growth in specialized areas (ML, EC, AIG) tied to differentiated staffing
- Applicant volume and quality, and effectiveness of targeted recruitment strategies (i.e. Teach for America, retirees)
- Professional longevity success metrics including licensure completion, placement, 3-year retention, and increases in staff diversity

Successful Implementation Requires:

Financial Investment

- Recruitment events
- Salaries and Benefits
- Grow our own program
- Branding and marketing

Recruitment Partnership

- Teach for America
- Historically Black Colleges & Universities
- ABTech/UNC Asheville/Western Carolina/App State

Community partnerships

- Rental discounts for public school employees
- Affordable Living agreements with County and City
- Be our own best advertisement

Alternative and Innovative pathway

- High school to hired

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools



Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development

ATTRACT

Asheville City Schools will develop a robust compensation package for all employees and enhance our recruitment strategies.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Recruitment strategy campaign
- Establish October - June calendar
- Clarify HR/Communications roles

INVEST AND DELIVER

- University Collaboration Meetings
- #ChooseACS recruitment strategy
- Identify employee ambassadors and new employees' stories

MONITOR

- Project Completion Indicators
- Number of applicants

Q1 QUARTER SEPTEMBER 2026

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

2 Advance

Invest in Growth and Learning: Build a comprehensive system that develops, supports, and sustains high-quality staff by creating clear pathways for professional opportunities, leadership, and long-term career success.

Tactics:

- Career advancement pathways
- Stipended Teacher leadership roles
  - School Level
    - Grade Chair
    - Department chair
  - District Level (Literacy Leads, Math Leads, and other Lead positions)
- Universal Shared decision making structures
  - Clearly defined structures at the school and district level to ensure classroom staff are involved in the decision making process

KPI Measurements:

- Percentage of staff participating in career advancement pathways and teacher leadership roles at school and district levels
- Retention rates of teachers engaged in leadership roles compared to non-participants
- Staff satisfaction and perception of growth opportunities and shared decision-making (survey data)
- Number and diversity of staff serving in leadership roles across schools and departments
- Evidence of impact on instructional quality and student outcomes linked to teacher leadership and collaborative decision-making structures

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Financial Investment
  - Professional Learning funds
  - Teacher Leaders stipends
- Leadership Development Pathway
- Teacher leader roles
  - Define
  - Recruit

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development

ADVANCE
Invest in Growth and Learning: Build a comprehensive system that develops, supports, and sustains high-quality staff by creating clear pathways for professional opportunities, leadership, and long-term career success.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN
- Survey to Cohort II participants
- Teacher leadership roles, responsibilities, and compensation

INVEST AND DELIVER
- CALL Cohort III

MONITOR
- CALL Cohort II Evaluation

QUARTER 1
SEPTEMBER

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

3 Achieve

Elevate Professional Learning and Instructional Excellence: Create a high-impact, cohesive professional learning system that strengthens instructional practice, supports all staff, and positions Asheville City Schools as a model district for professional learning.

Tactics:

- Unified Professional Learning Framework
- Improve working conditions
- Create a new ACS Teacher / Staff Evaluation Tool and process
- Recognition and Celebration of Teachers

KPI Measurements:

- Participation and completion rates in differentiated professional learning, along with staff satisfaction
- Improvements in instructional practice as measured by observation data and the new staff evaluation tool
- Teacher retention rates and working conditions survey data (i.e. workload, support, morale)
- Frequency and impact of teacher recognition efforts, including staff perception of value and appreciation
- Student achievement and growth trends linked to strengthened instructional practices and professional learning systems

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Financial Investment
  - Professional Learning funds
  - Substitute coverage
- Protect time for Professional Learning
  - Review school calendar and school day
- Teachers in leadership roles
- Effective Instructional Leadership at the school and district level

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development

ACHIEVE
Elevate Professional Learning and Instructional Excellence: Create a high-impact, cohesive professional learning system that strengthens instructional practice, supports all staff, and positions Asheville City Schools as a model district for professional learning.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN
- NCEES Program Evaluation
- Mentor stipends
- NCEES Evaluator Post-Observation Protocol

INVEST AND DELIVER
- Frontline Central Implementation

MONITOR
- Walkthroughs
- NCEES

FOCUS

THEME

OBJECTIVE

Operations and Finance

Sustainable Stewardship for Student Success

Build a sustainable, standardized, and resilient district operating model, supported by strong infrastructure, shared training and documentation, data-driven accountability, and strategic partnerships, to ensure consistent, reliable services for staff and students beyond reliance on individual roles.



CRITICAL INITIATIVES



1: Strategic Resource Alignment: We will implement a clear decision-making and reflection process to align funding and resources to district priorities, student essentials, and measurable impact on equitable student outcomes.

2: Safety Infrastructure and Security Upgrades: ACS will strengthen safety systems, security measures, and facility protections to support equitable, safe, and secure learning environments across the district.

3: Facilities Needs Assessment Implementation: We will use the outcomes of the Facility Needs Assessment to guide future facility and operational improvements based on need, sustainability, and equitable access.

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

1 Strategic Resource Alignment

Implement a clear decision-making and reflection process to align funding and resources to district priorities, student essentials, and measurable impact on equitable student outcomes.

Tactics:

- Align budget codes to strategic plan focus areas
- Develop, train, and implement a budget enhancement request process
- Create clear budgeting and reflection protocols to support transparent, data-driven decision-making
- Develop a budget reporting dashboard to monitor spending, priorities, and financial health
- Use return on investment and program evaluation to assess the impact of financial investments on student outcomes
- Regularly review financial and student-centered data to make adjustments as needed

KPI Measurements:

- Budget vs expenditure reports
- Student-to-teacher ratio
- Allotment policy alignment
- Days of cash on hand (fund balance)
- School Nutrition Participation and program profitability
- Other measures of system and process efficiency

Successful Implementation Requires:

- A transparent budgeting process
- A balanced budget aligned to strategic priorities
- Data-driven funding decisions
- Equitable distribution of resources
- Strategic use of fund balance
- Transparent and timely reporting
- A budget reporting dashboard
- Regular monitoring of key performance indicators
- Ongoing monitoring and adjustment
- Sustainable long-term investments
- Strong partnerships and cost avoidance
- Accountability for impact and financial health

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Operations & Finance

Strategic Resource Alignment:

Implement a clear decision-making and reflection process to align funding and resources to district priorities, student essentials, and measurable impact on equitable student outcomes.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Best practices for resource alignment with strategic plan priorities
- FY 27 Budget

INVEST AND DELIVER

- Salary schedules
- FY 26 Budget Close Out

MONITOR

- CO Salary Schedule

Q1 QUARTER
SEPTEMBER

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

2 Safety Infastructure and Security Upgrades

Strengthen safety systems, security measures, and facility protections to support equitable, safe, and secure learning environments across the district.

Tactics:

- Complete and regularly update a comprehensive safety and security audit, including assessment of staff knowledge and understanding of protocols
- Update the District Comprehensive Safety and Security Plan
- Establish and communicate clear districtwide safety and security protocols
- Strengthen district and school safety teams through defined roles, training, and accountability
- Prioritize and implement safety and security upgrades across all campuses
- Monitor compliance data, system reliability, and incident trends to guide decisions and improvements
- Strengthen collaboration and partnership with School Resource Officers

KPI Measurements:

- Safety and security expenditures per student
- Safety and security staff per student
- Training hours per safety/security personnel
- School safety team meeting logs
- Health and safety violations per site
- Intrusion/burglary alarm incidents per site
- Unsafe School Incident reports per site

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Financial resources allocated to complete audits, training, and security upgrades
- Clear safety and security communication protocols
- Committed staff serving on district and school safety teams
- Accountability measures that are developed, implemented, and monitored
- Completion of district wide safety and security upgrades
- Reliable safety systems and infrastructure
- Compliance with training, drill, and safety benchmarks
- Timely response to identified safety needs
- Data-informed safety planning and investment
- Equitable access to safe learning environments across all campuses
- Strong School Resource Officer partnerships

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Operations & Finance

Safety Infastructure and Security Upgrades

Strengthen safety systems, security measures, and facility protections to support equitable, safe, and secure learning environments across the district.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Comprehensive Safety and Security Plan.
- Campus emergency response procedures and school bus evacuation protocols.
- District Safety Council schedule, agenda, and operational framework.
- Protocols and preparation for the comprehensive districtwide safety assessment launching in October.

INVEST AND DELIVER

- FY26 financial closeout and operational startup for FY27.
- Mandatory beginning-of-year safety training for all building staff, bus drivers, and transportation personnel.
- Communicated updated districtwide safety protocols to all internal and external stakeholders.
- RFQ has been issued for security perimeter strengthening (SCFC-County)

MONITOR

- Documented baseline safety, driver, and transit protocols to enable continuous compliance tracking.
- Locked in safety team schedules to track school-based drills, meeting logs, an incident trends.

CRITICAL INITIATIVES

3 Facilities Needs Assessment Implementation

Use the outcomes of the Facility Needs Assessment to guide future facility and operational improvements based on need, sustainability, and equitable access.

Tactics:

- Evaluate findings from the Facility Needs Assessment and feasibility study
- Prioritize facility and operational investments based on identified needs
- Align improvement plans to long-term sustainability and reliability goals
- Use data to guide facility planning and decision-making
- Ensure equitable access to quality learning environments across all schools

KPI Measurements:

- Alignment of investments to identified needs
- Progress on long-term facility improvement plans
- Equitable access to quality learning environments
- Facility condition and infrastructure reliability
- Data-informed facility planning and prioritization

Successful Implementation Requires:

- Facility and operational decisions consistently guided by the Facility Needs Assessment
- Facility projects and operational improvements clearly tied to assessed needs
- Capital and operational investments aligned to district priorities and documented findings
- Long-term improvement plans that are underway and showing measurable progress
- School facilities that are becoming more reliable, functional, and sustainable
- More equitable access to quality learning environments for students and staff across all schools
- Regular use of data to prioritize, sequence, and adjust facility decisions

2026-2031 Strategic Plan
Quarterly Update

Asheville City Schools

Operations & Finance

Facilities Needs Assessment Implementation

Use the outcomes of the Facility Needs Assessment to guide future facility and operational improvements based on need, sustainability, and equitable access.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

- Re-evaluated the Facility Needs Assessment (FNA) timeline and synthesized stakeholder input received to date.
- Researched approaches to a baseline assessment of deferred Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E) needs for capital outlay budget planning.
- Explored the framework and communication strategy for public listening sessions launching in Q2.

INVEST AND DELIVER

- Completed the full schedule of summer maintenance and facility repair projects across district sites.
- Finalized and launched optimized student transportation routing and fleet operational structures for the school year.
- Completed initial review of facility condition inputs and utilization data across all sites.

MONITOR

- Established tracking protocols to align deferred FF&E requests with long-term capital improvement goals.
- Maximized use of FMX software to monitor work orders, facility modifications, planned maintenance, and facility use

QUARTER 1
SEPTEMBER


Reflection

2025-2026 Data Review

I can reflect on our student outcomes from 25-26 to identify areas of celebration and growth and generate action steps the Board can take to impact student outcomes.

Ladder of Inference

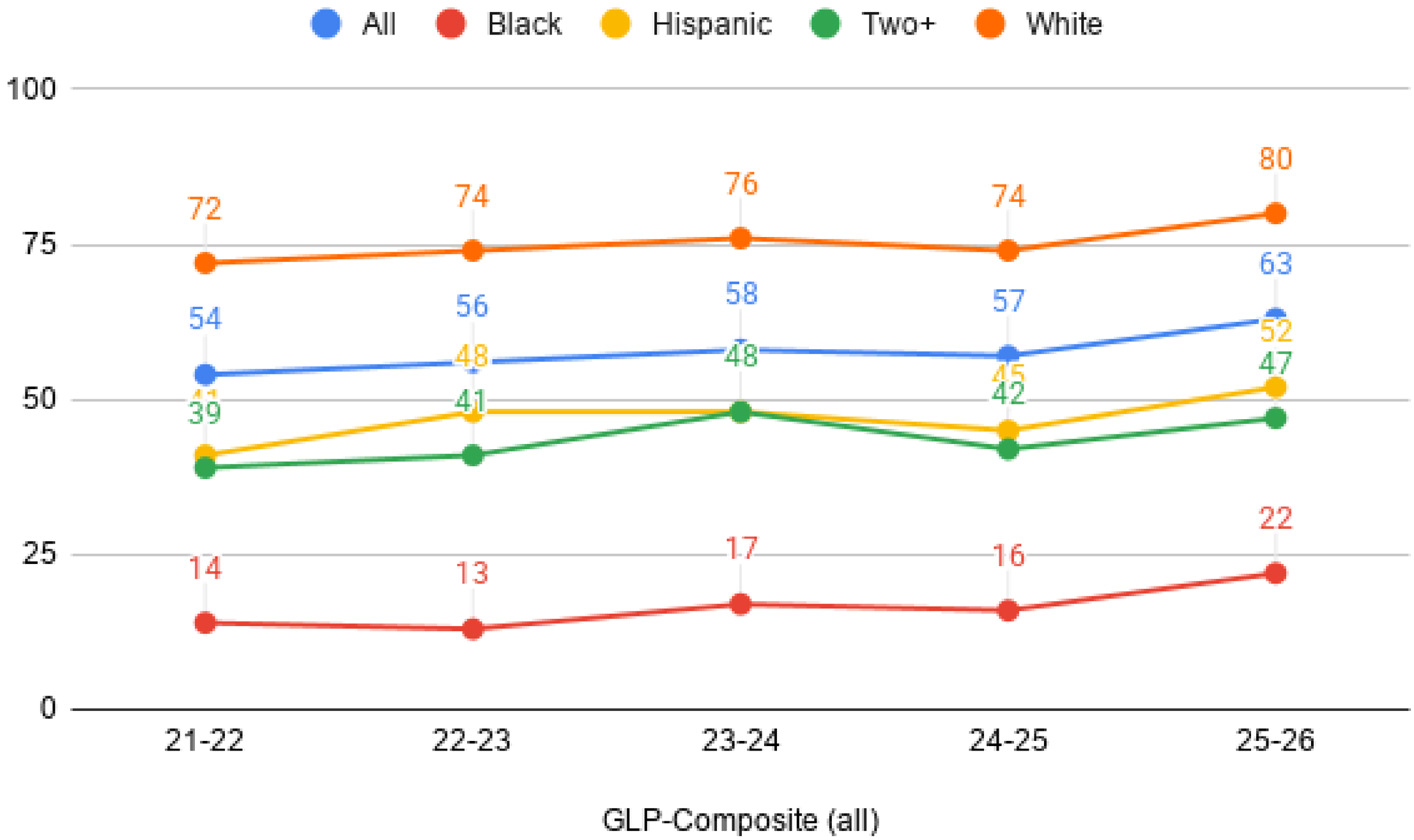
Group 1: Slides 47-62; 64-66; 95-97
Group 2: Slides 68-85 & 87-93

In your group, review the data assigned to your group. Then work up the ladder to create action steps the Board can take.





State Assessment Proficiency Levels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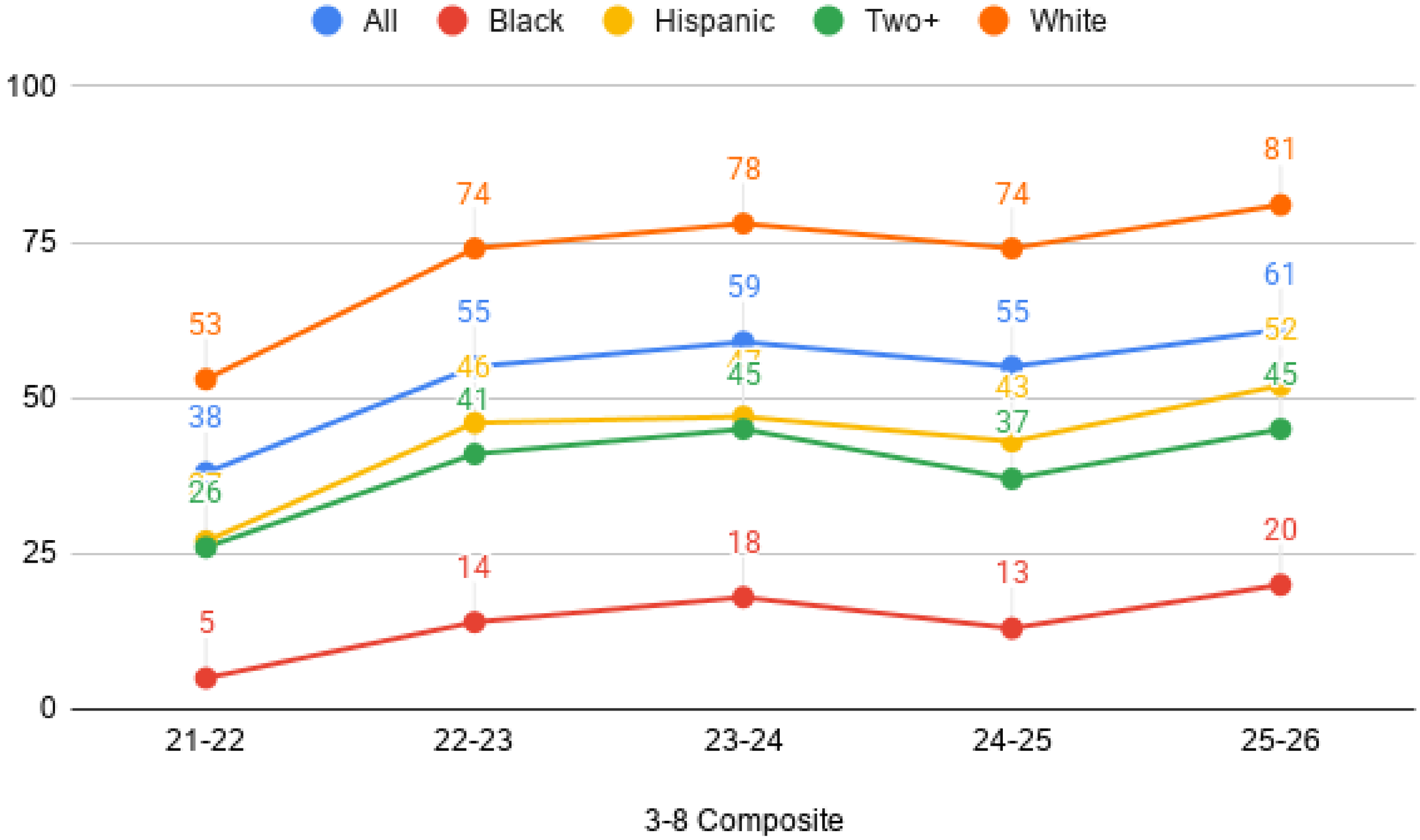
GLP-Composite (all)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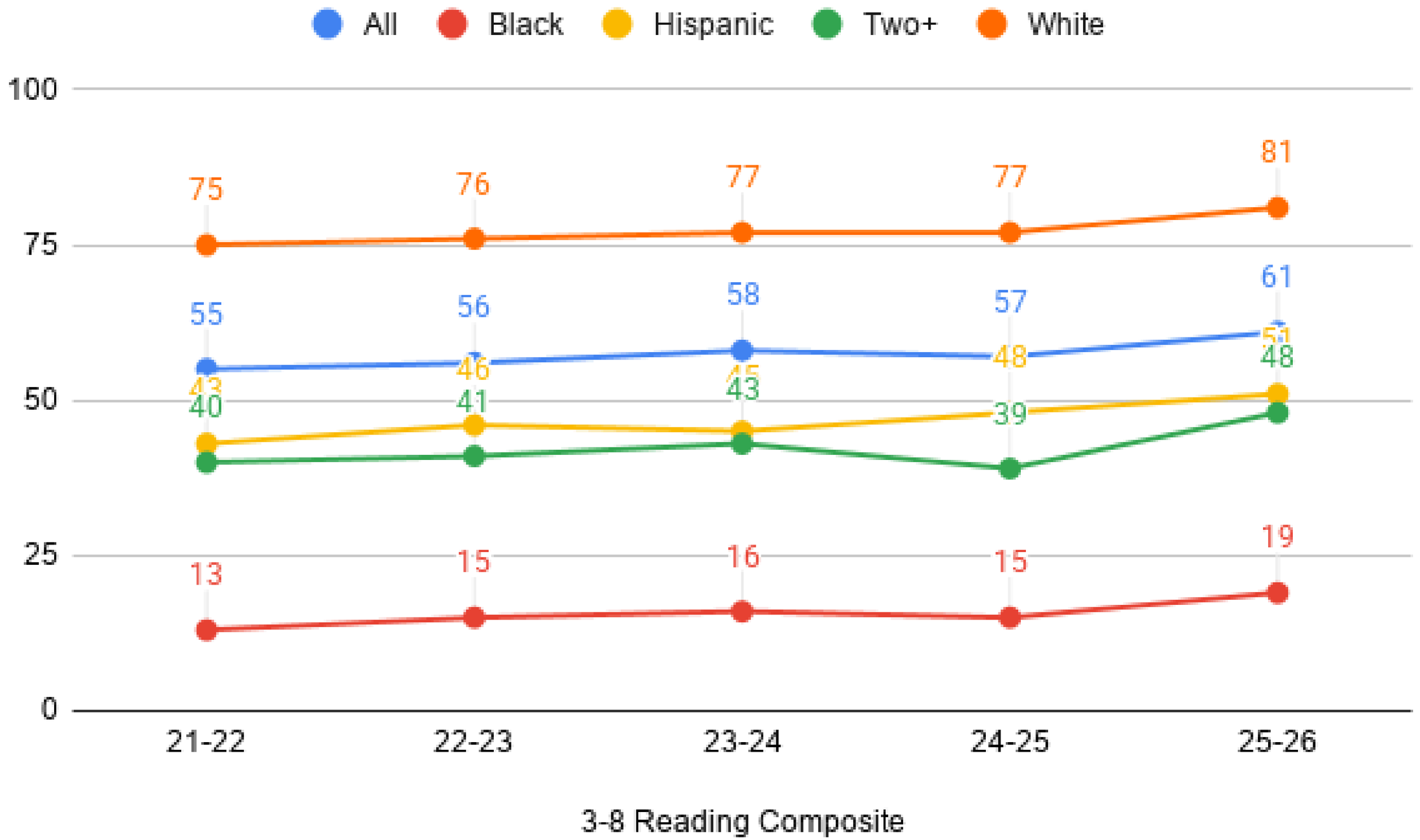
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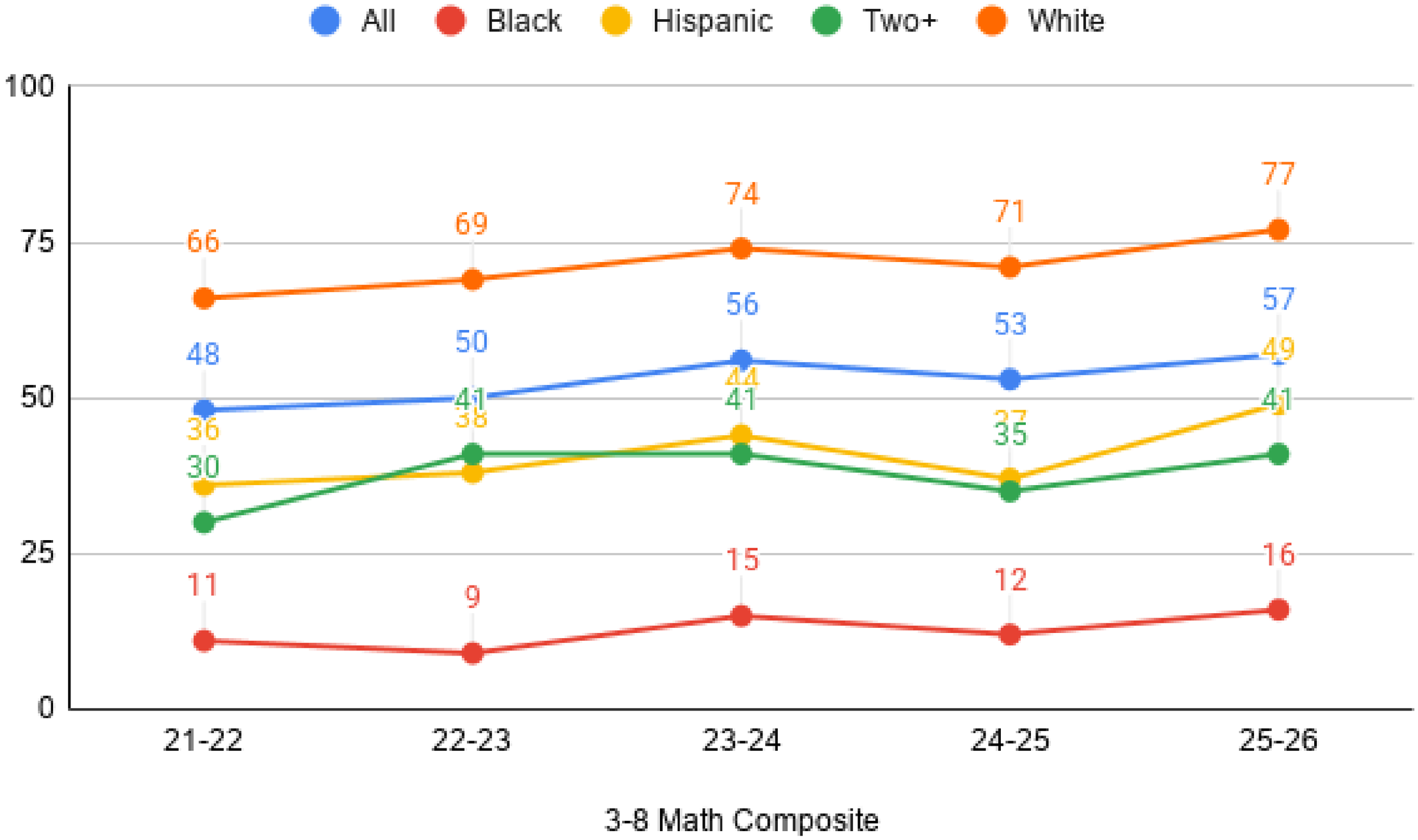
3-8 Reading Composite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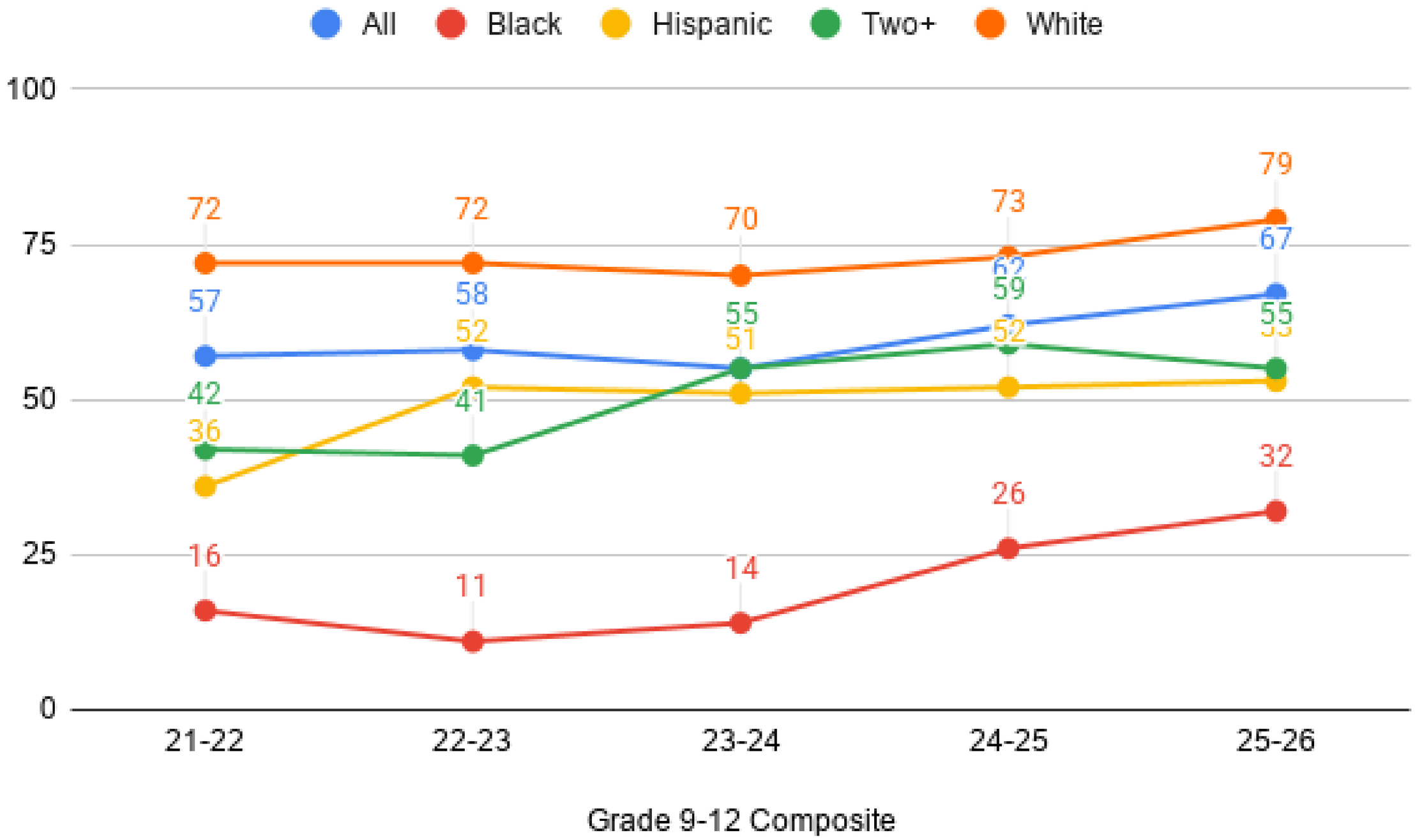
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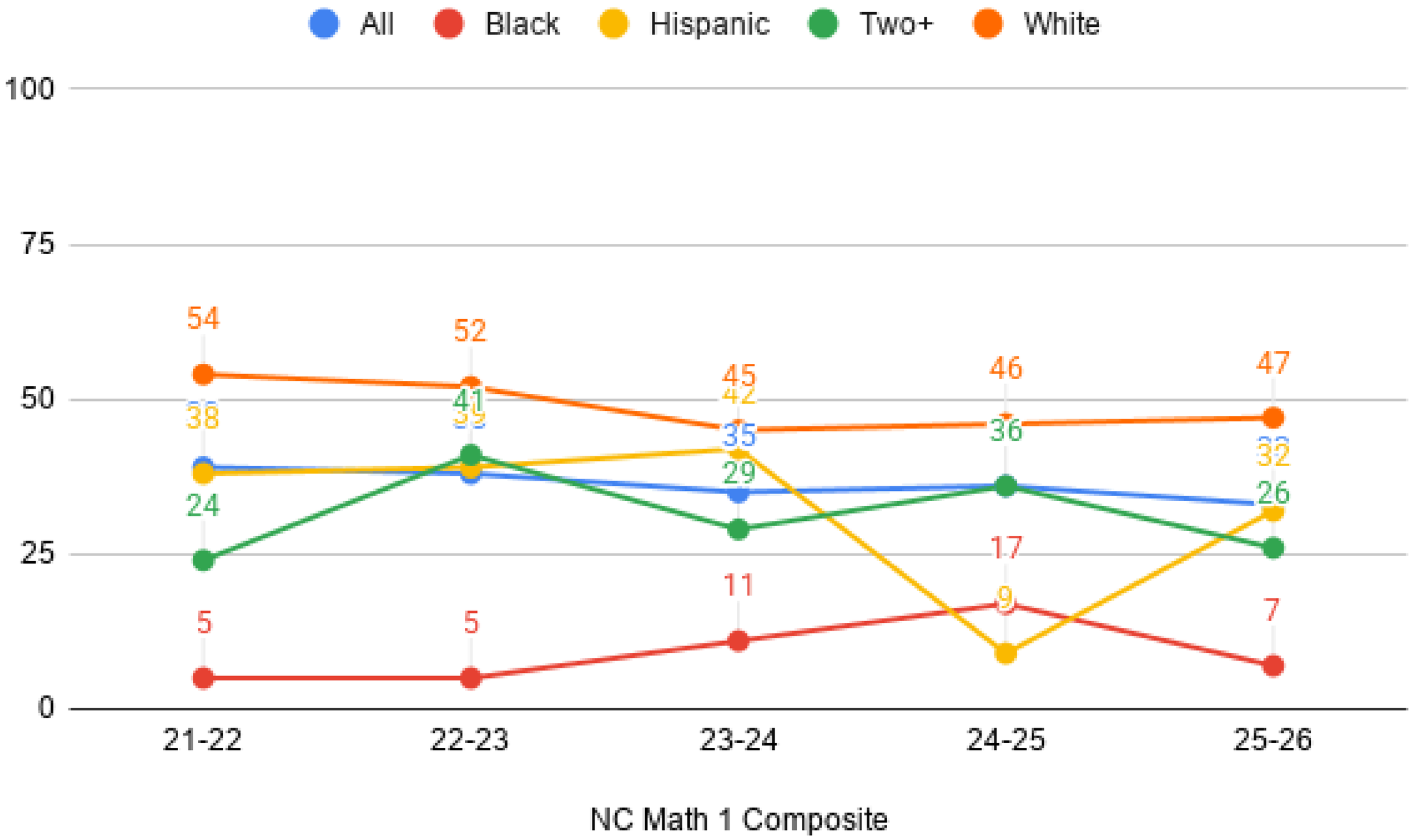
Grade 9-12 Composite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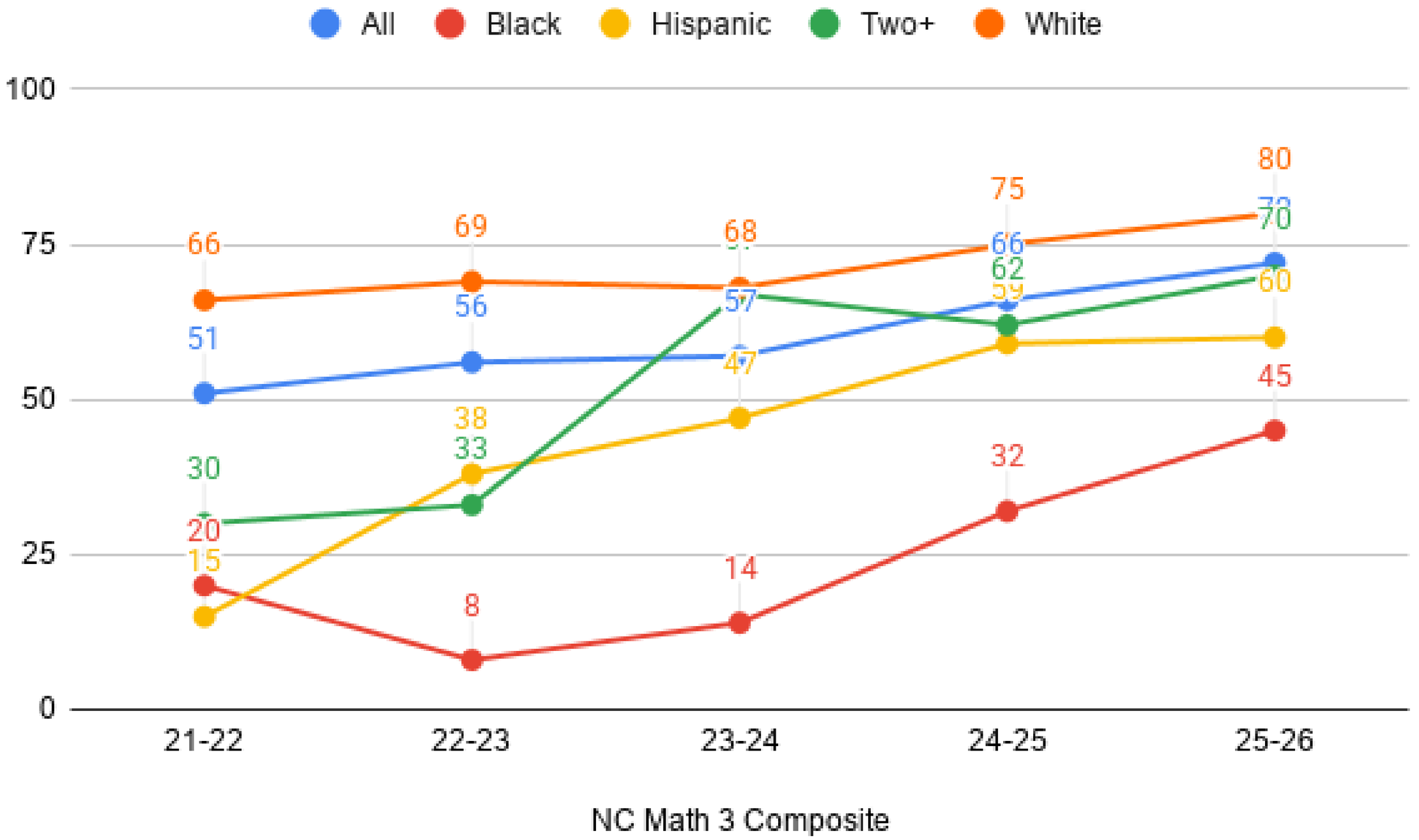
NC Math 1 Composite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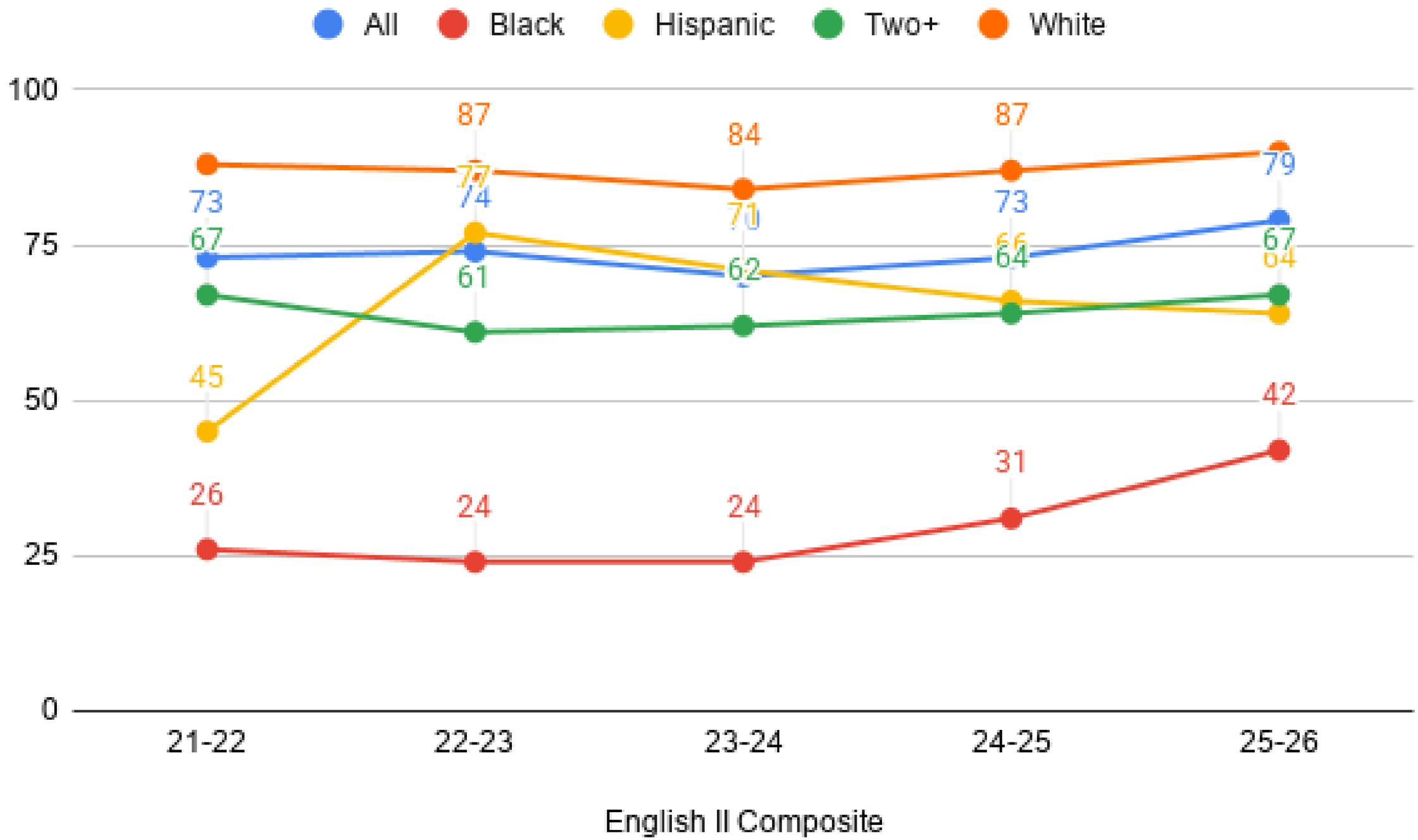
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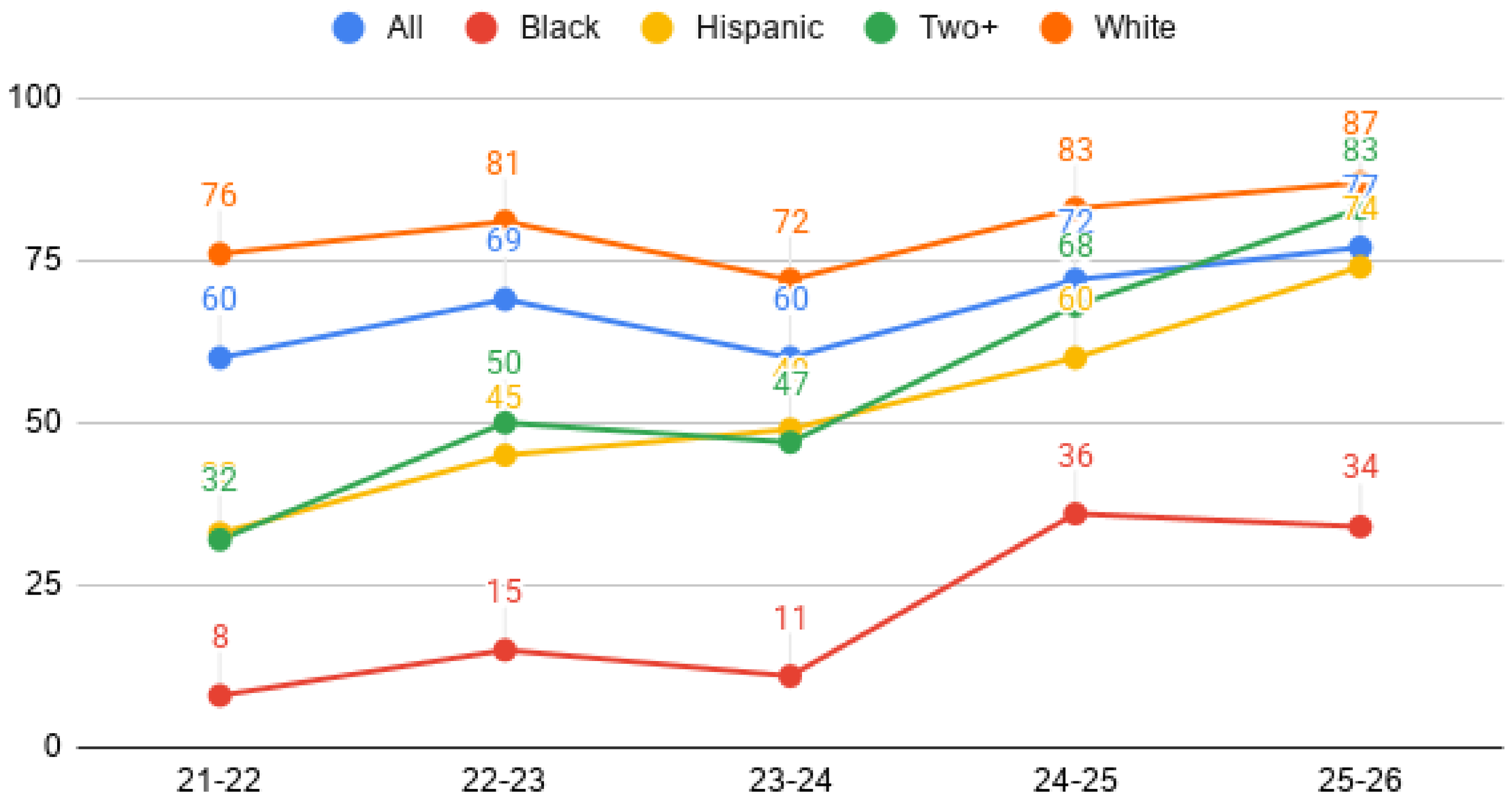
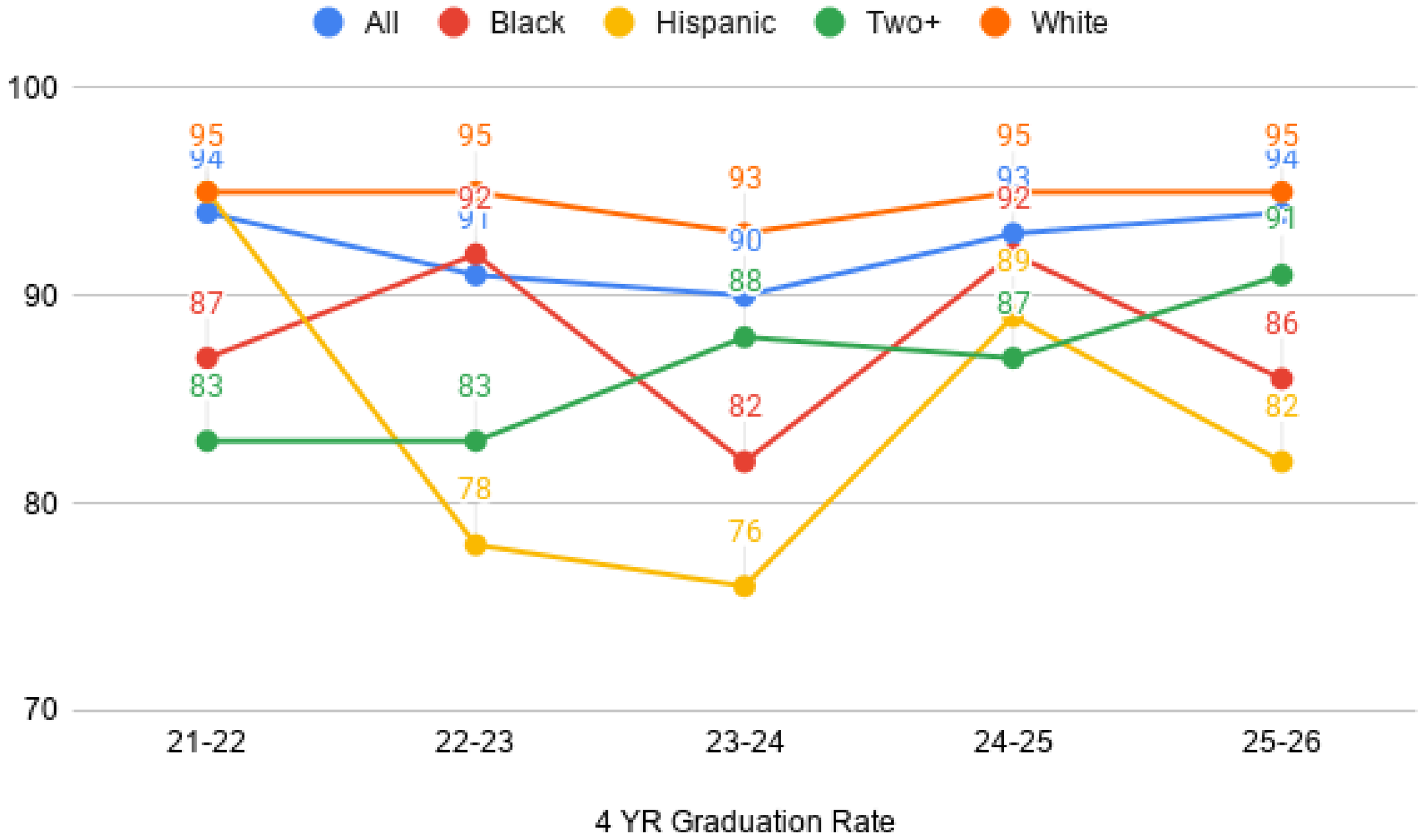
English II Composite

ACT % @ or Above Benchmark (19 Composite or above)

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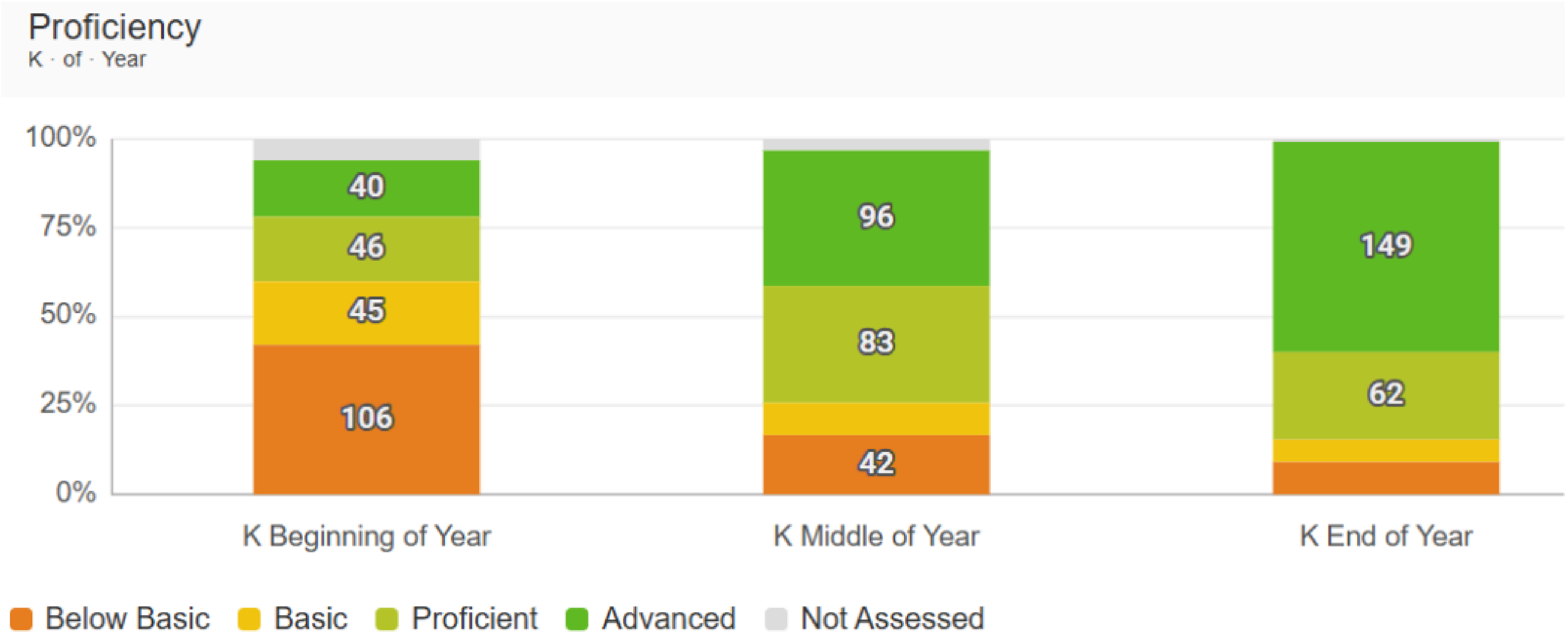
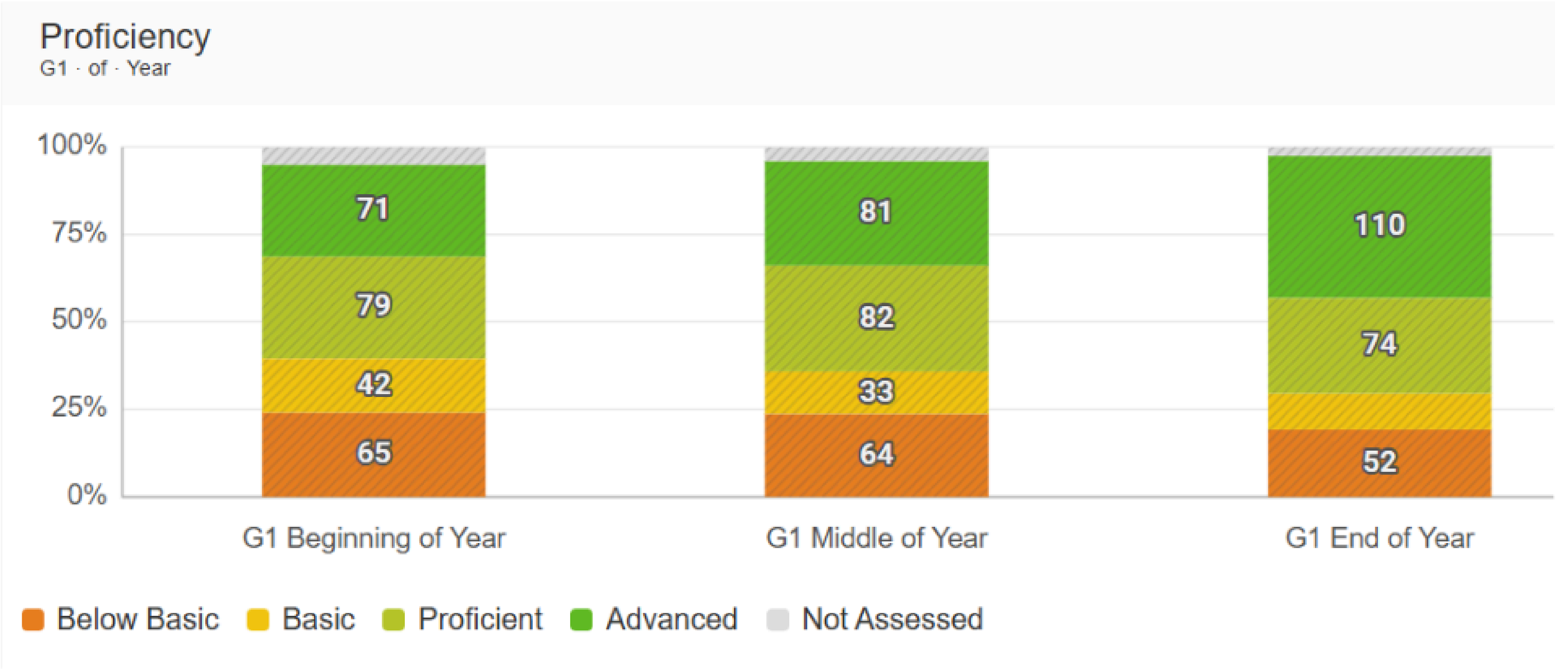
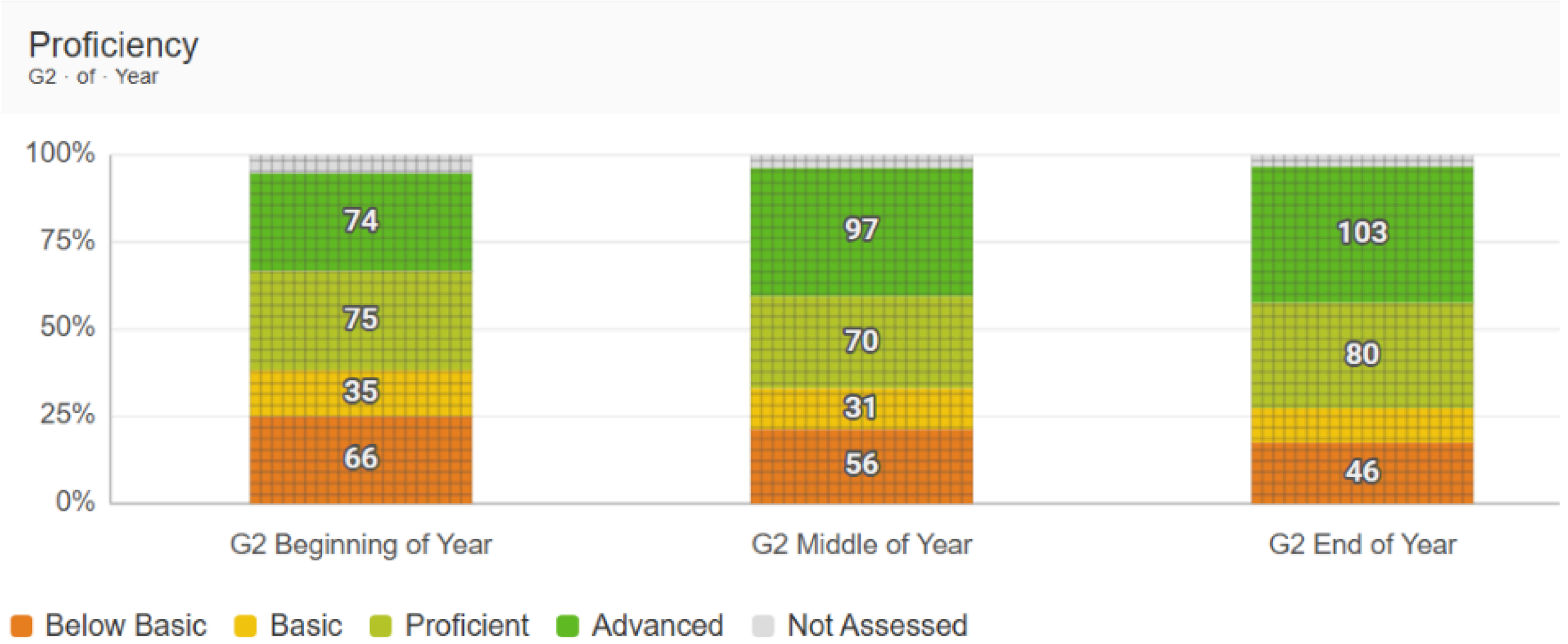
4 YR Graduation Rate



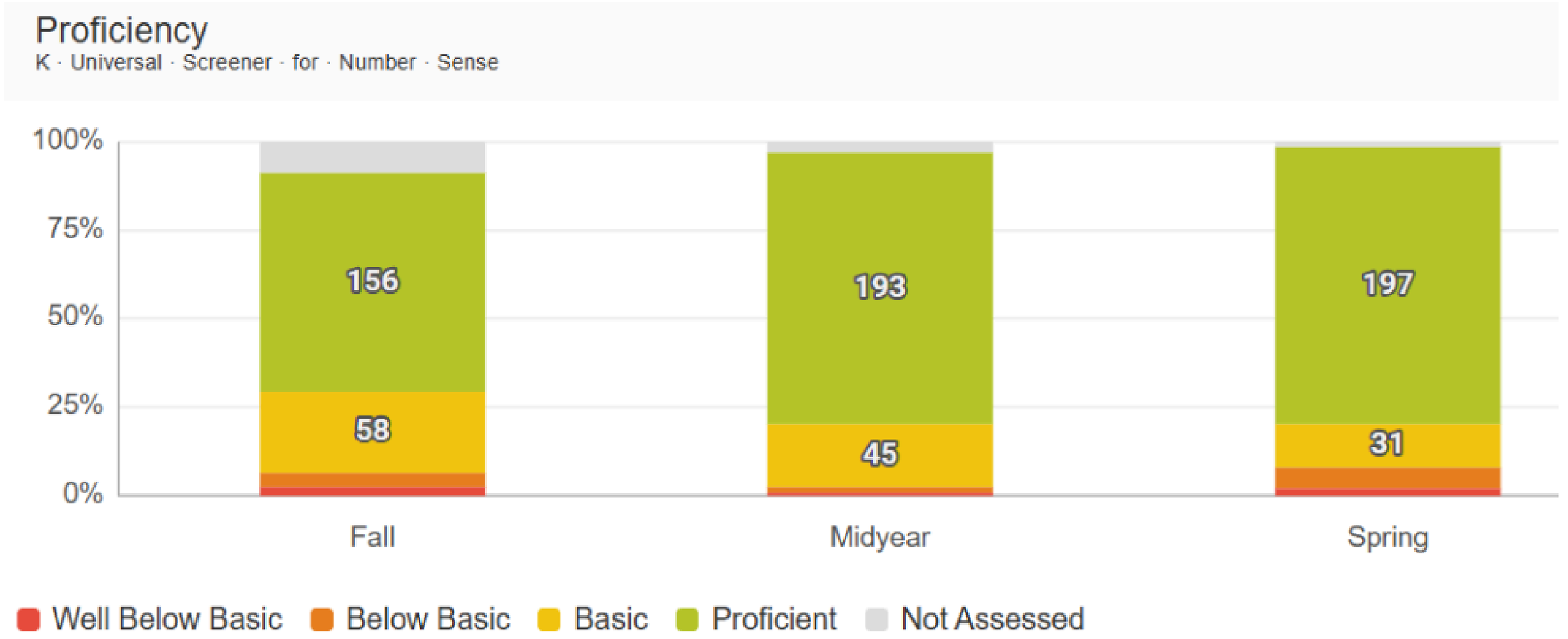
BOY- EOY Kindergarten DIBELS



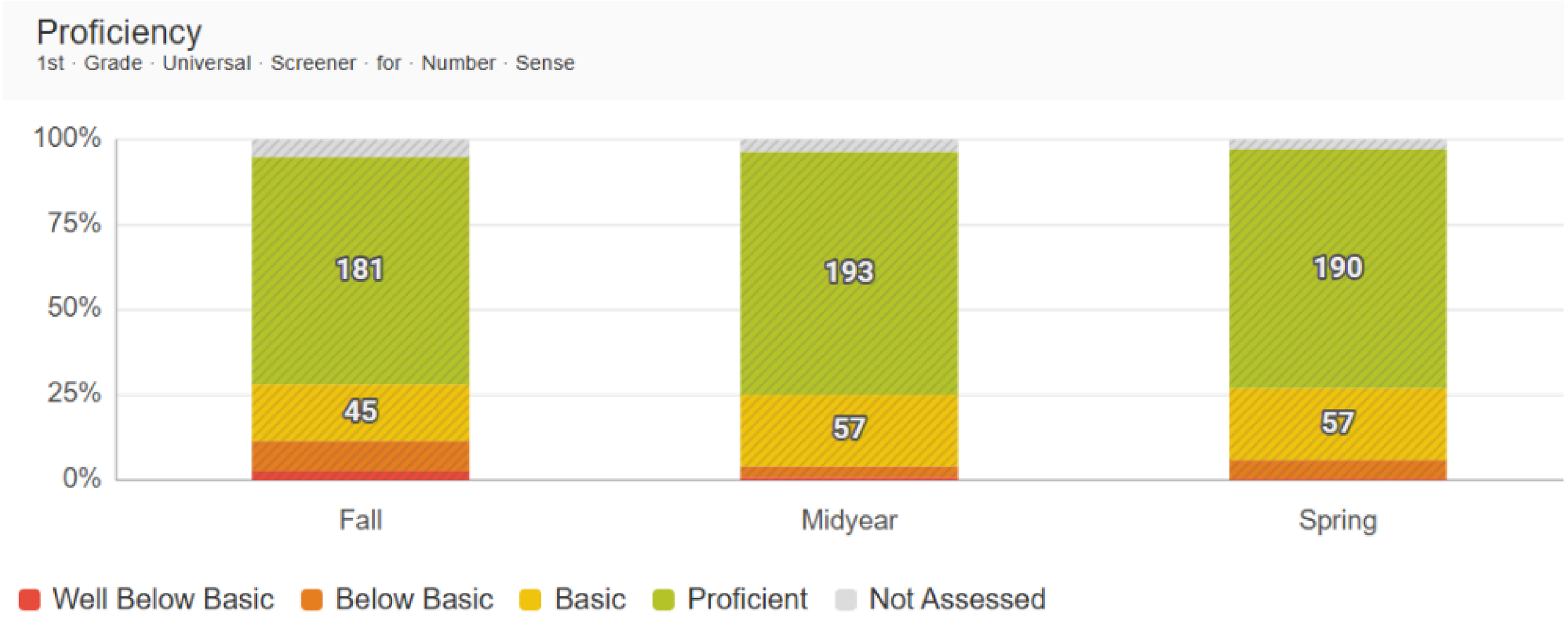
BOY- EOY First Grade DIBELS



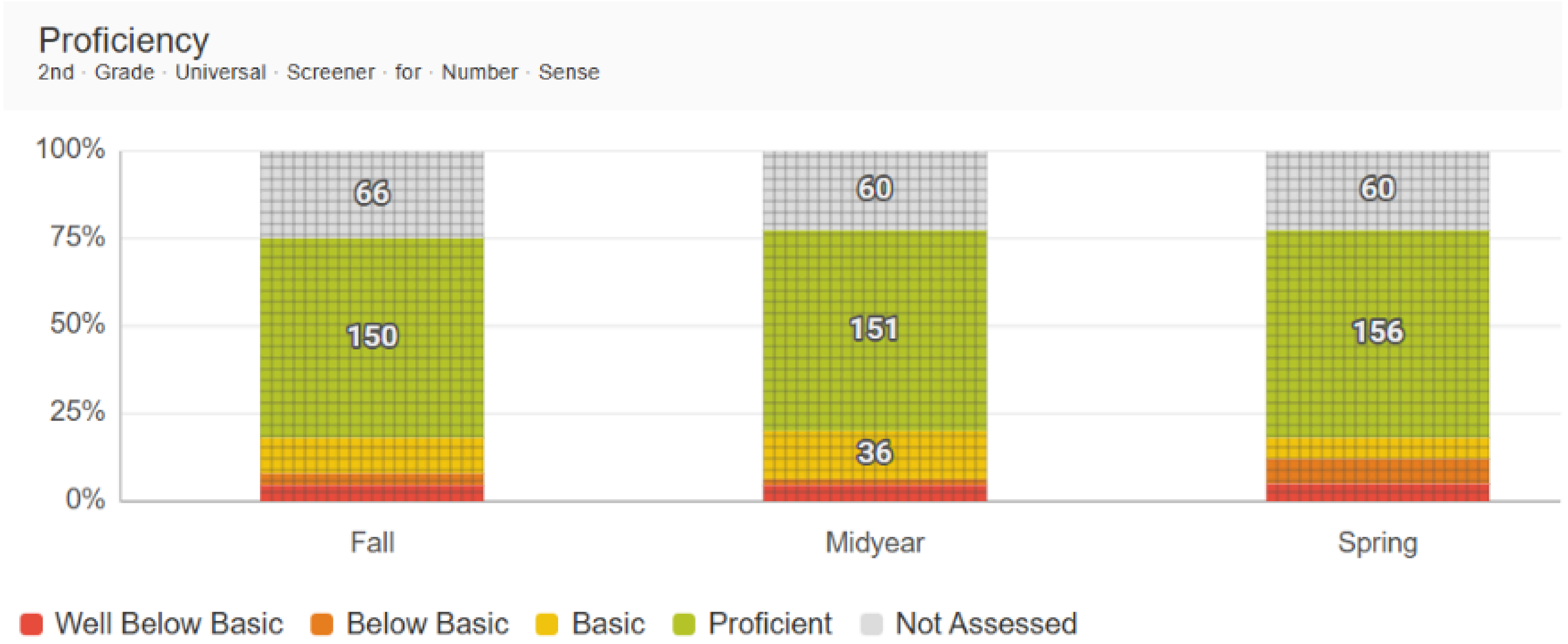
BOY- EOY Second Grade DIBELS



BOY- EOY Kindergarten USNS



BOY- EOY First Grade USNS



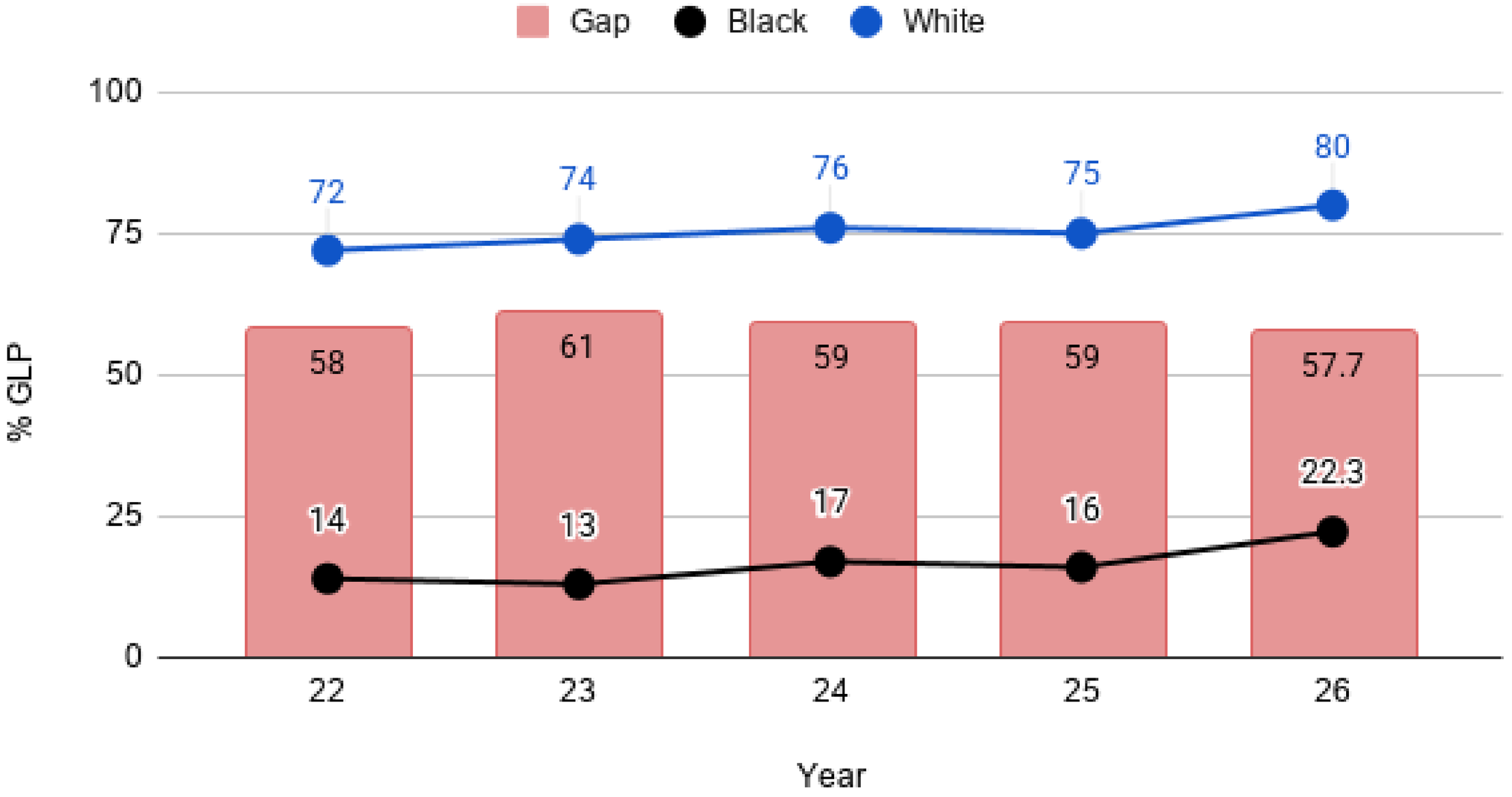
BOY- EOY Second Grade USNS

(Note: Jones Elementary did not take the USNS, this school chose to do the IXL screener instead for 2nd grade)

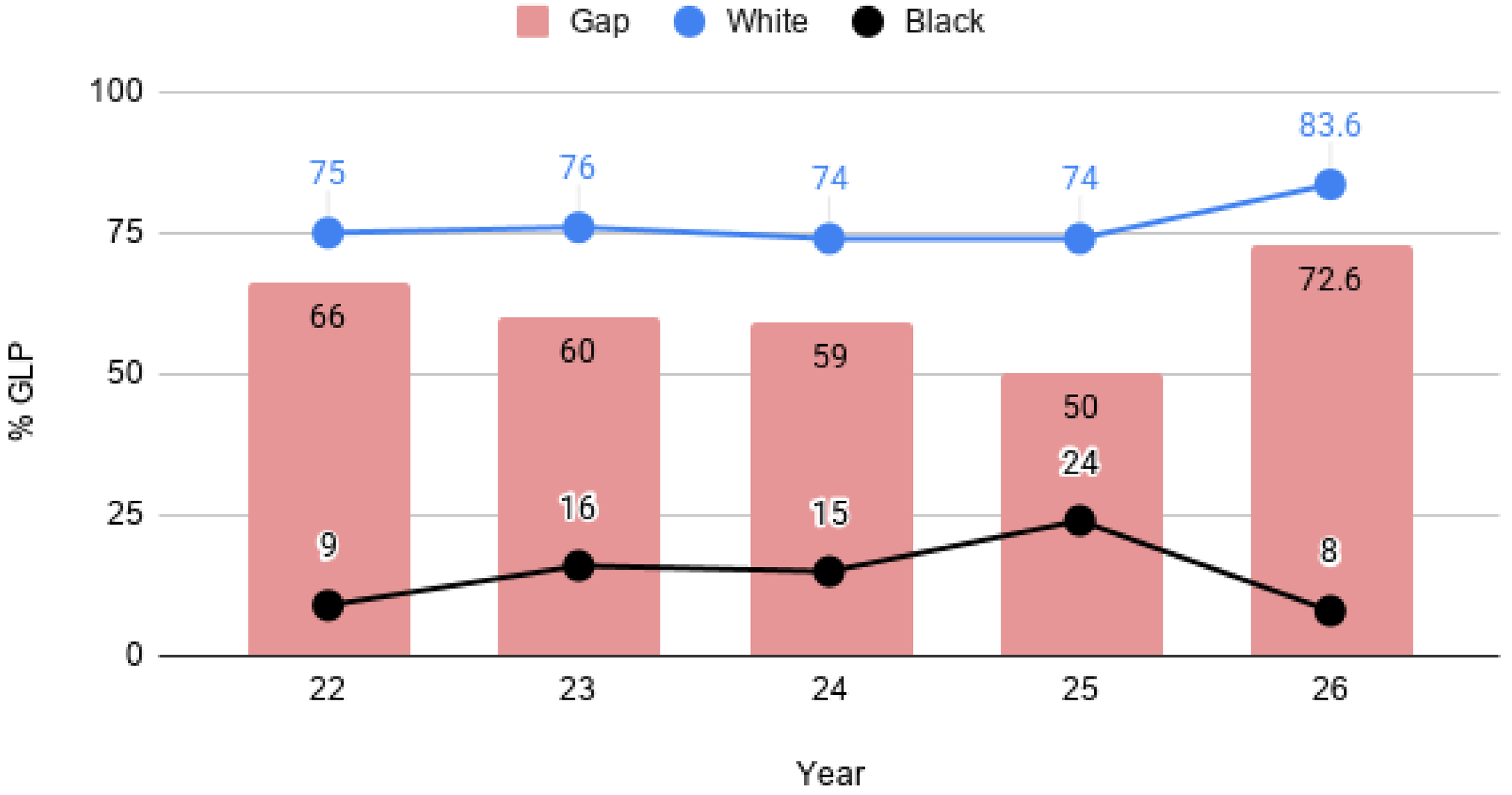


Achievement Gap

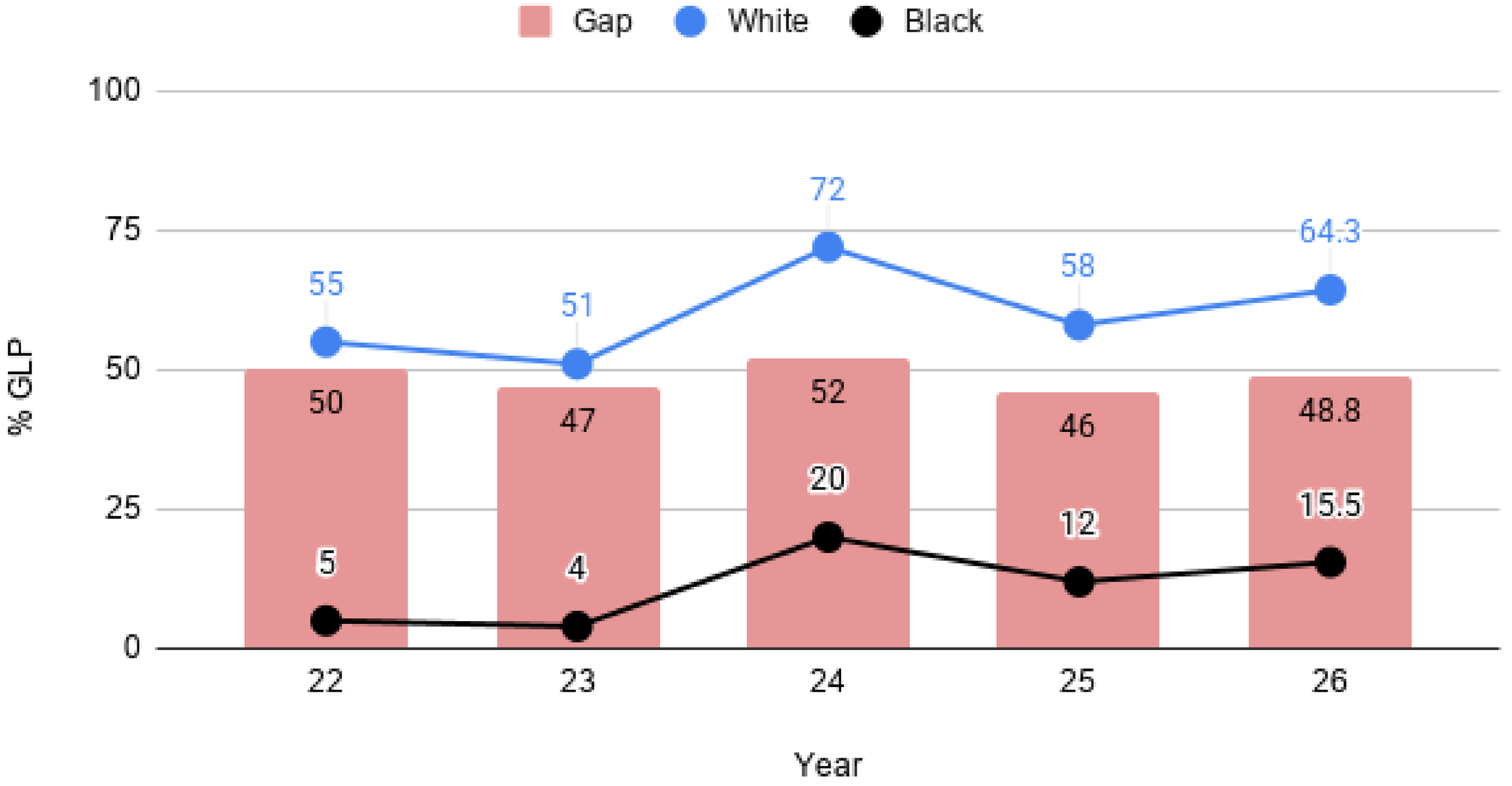
Overall Composite EOG/EOC



Grade 3 Reading



Grade 8 Math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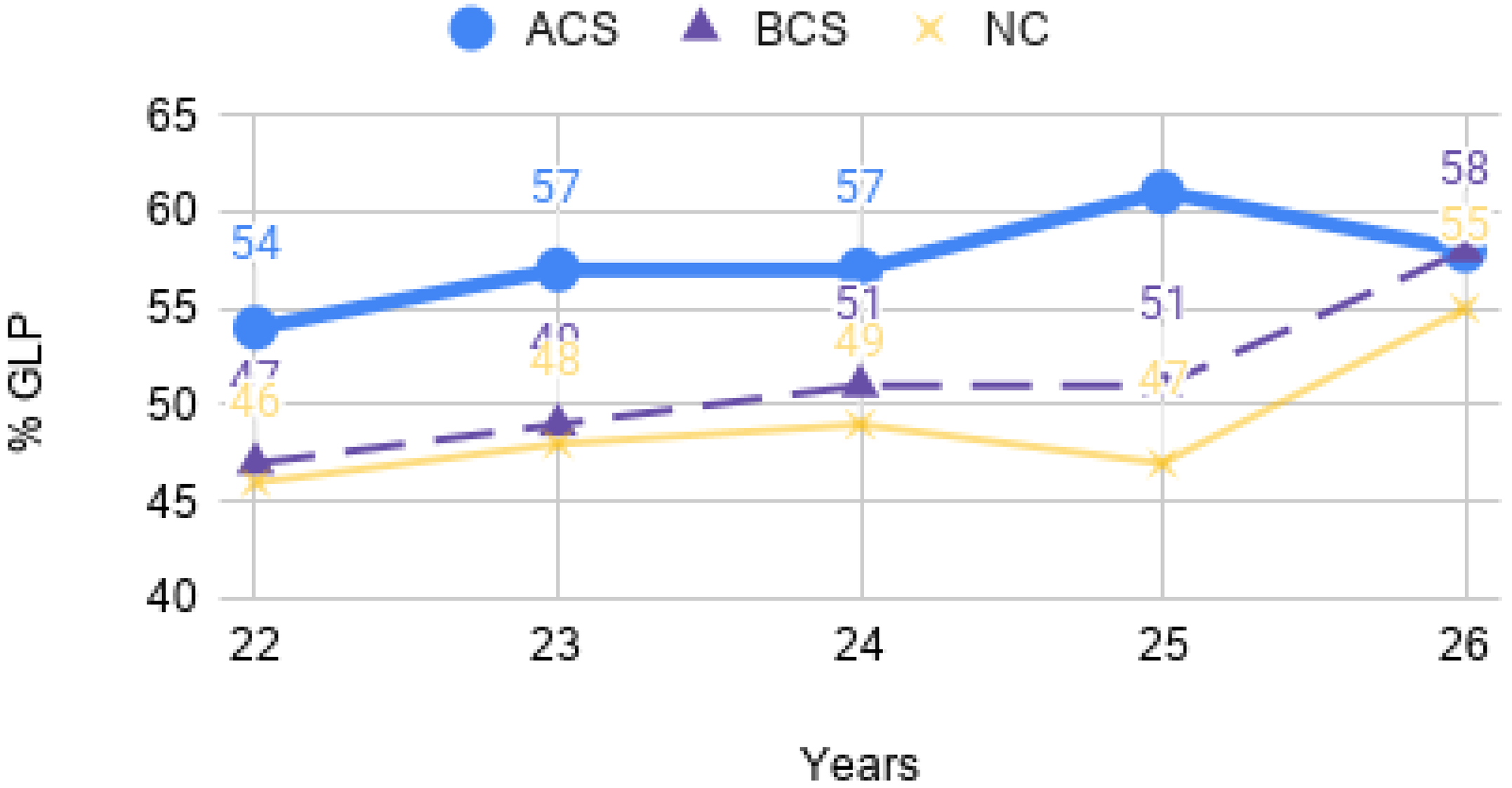
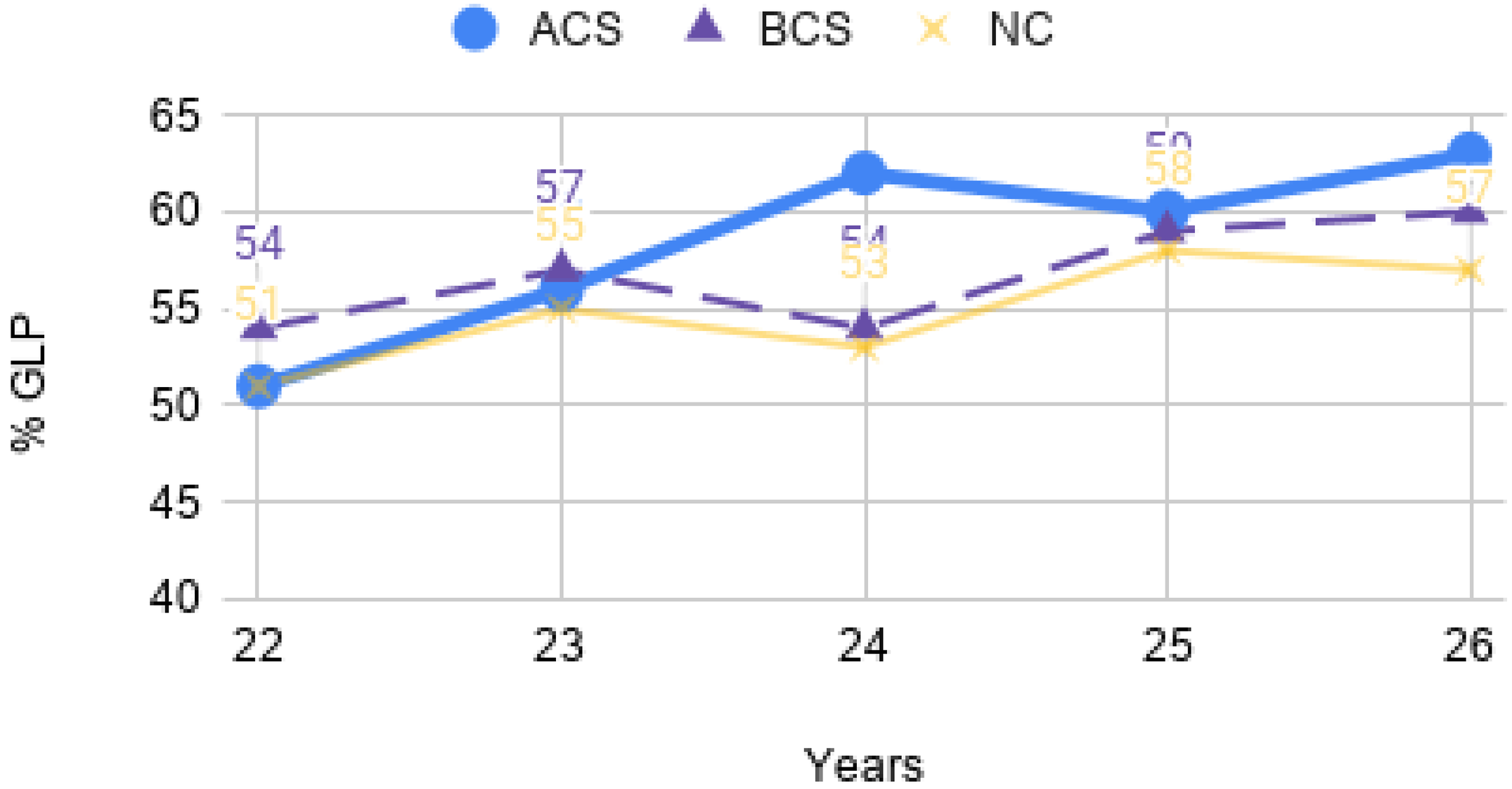
ACS, BCS, NC Comparision



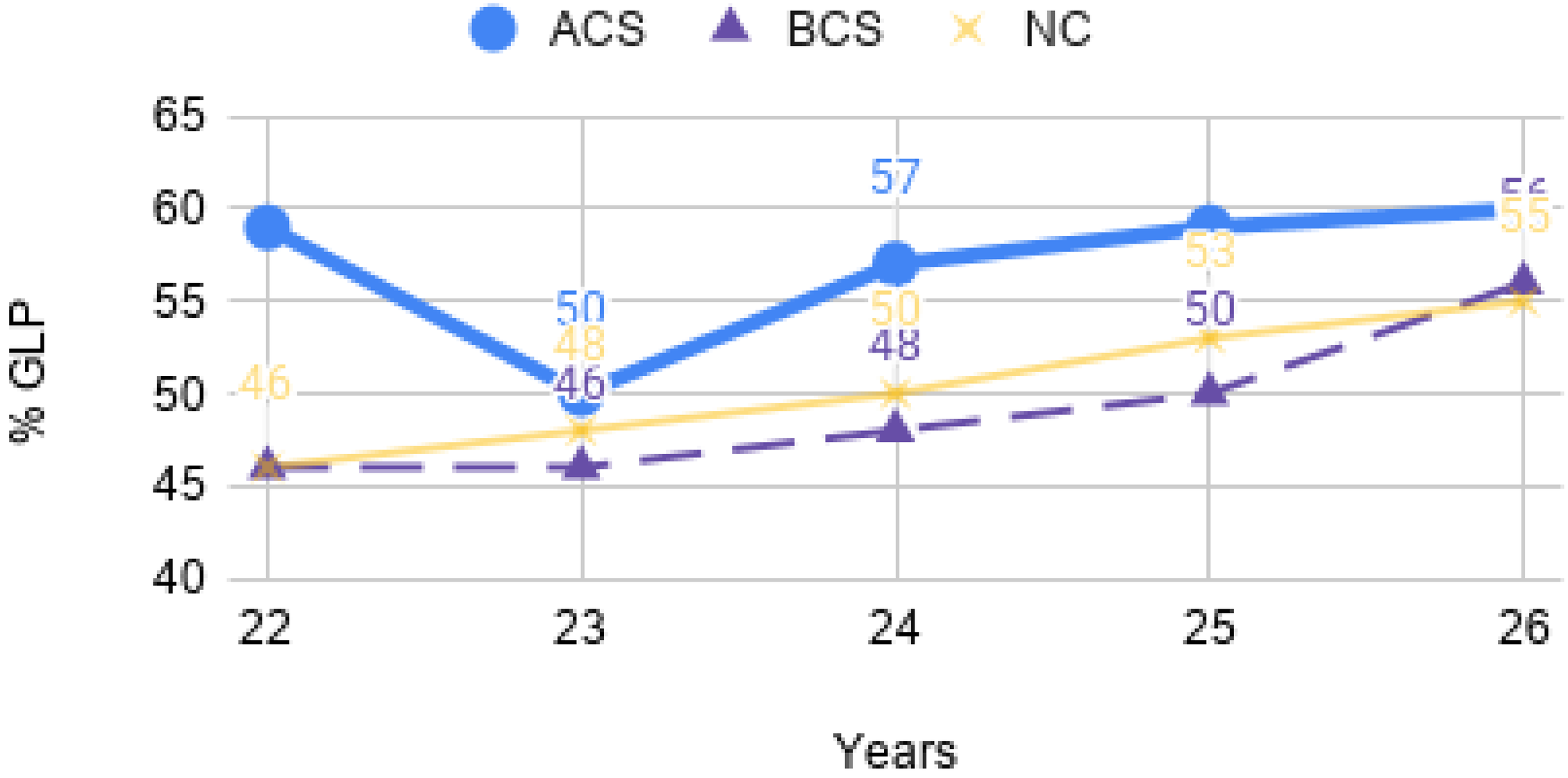
3rd Grade Reading



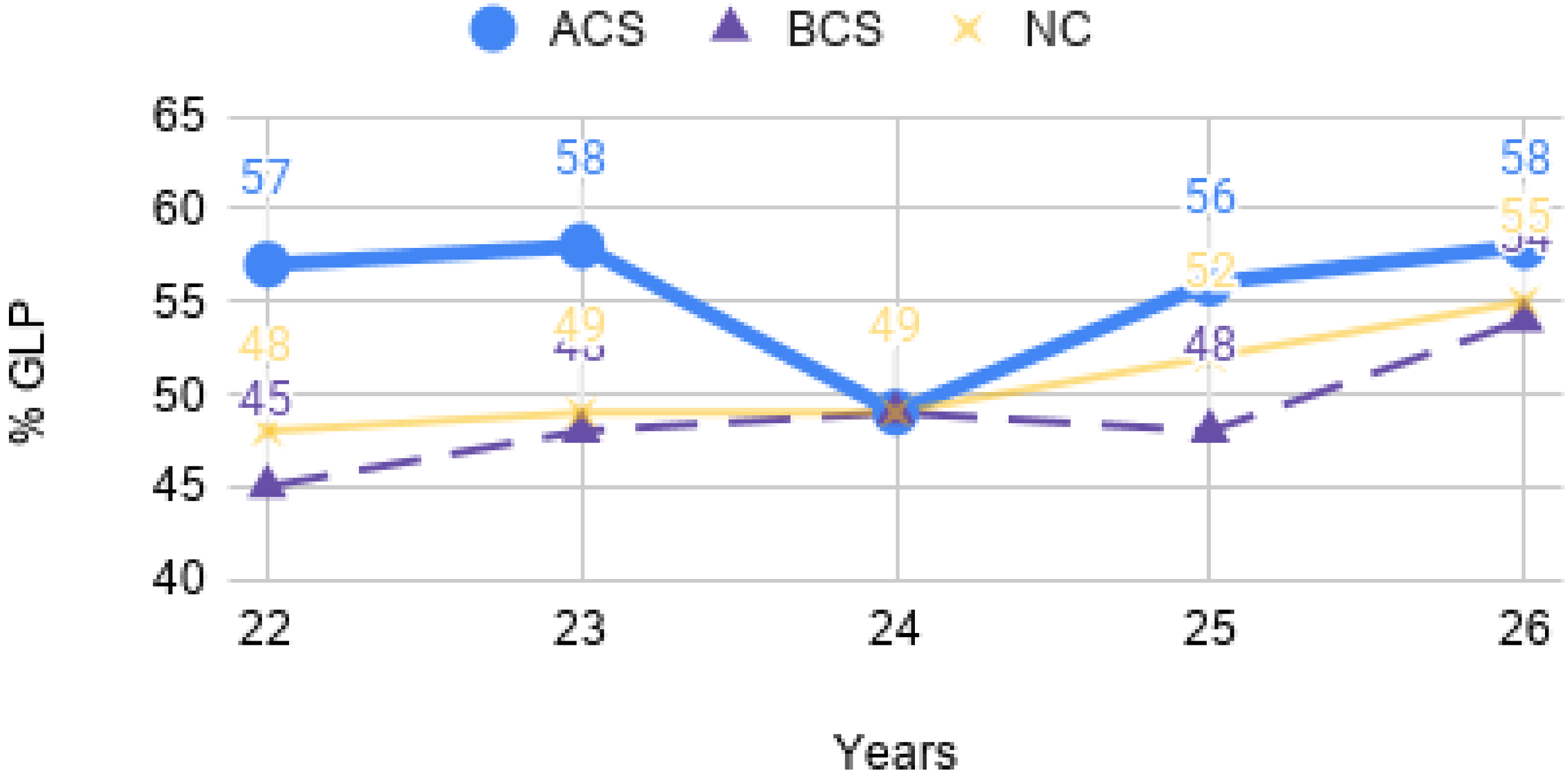
4th Grade Reading



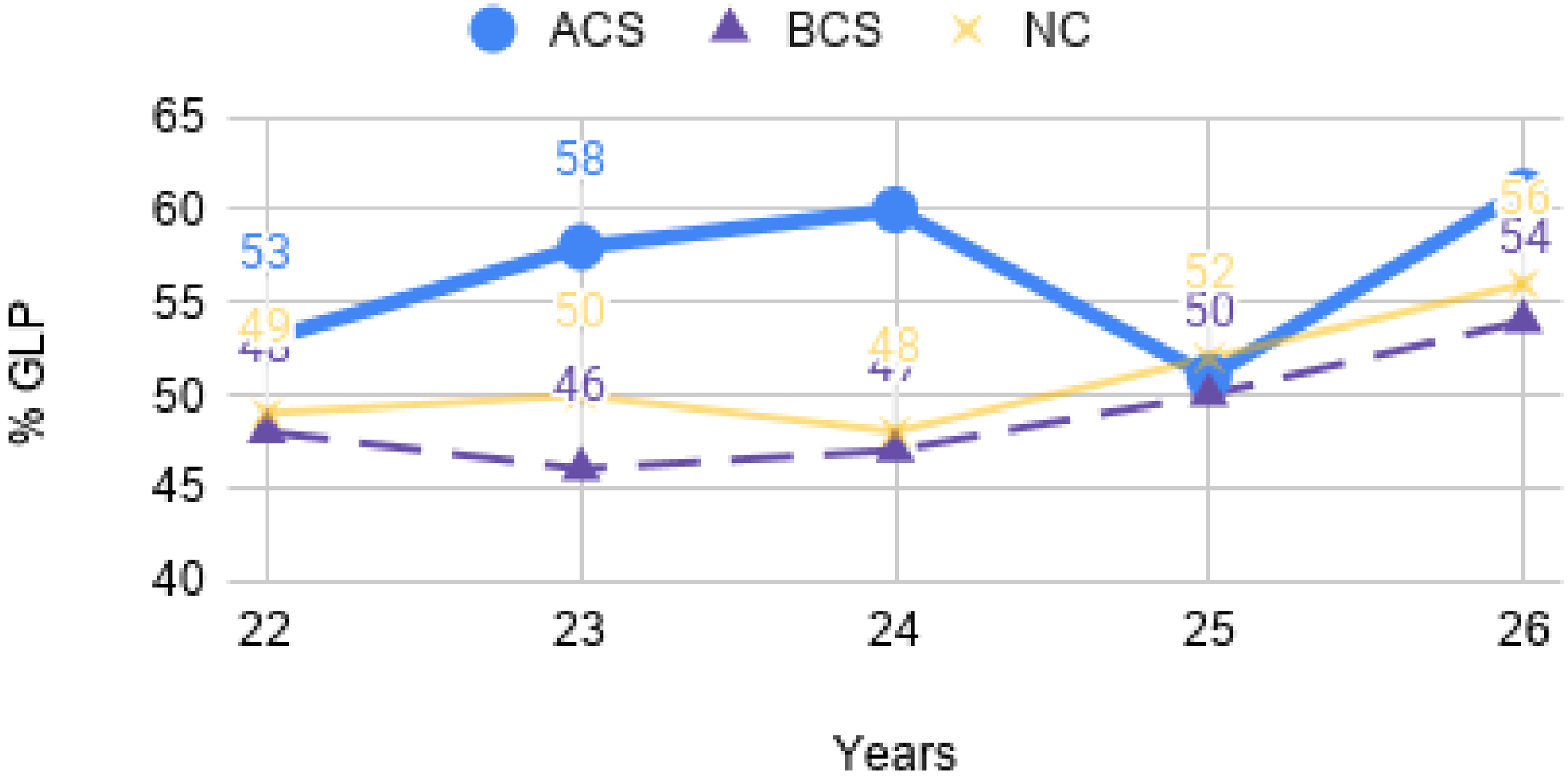
5th Grade Reading



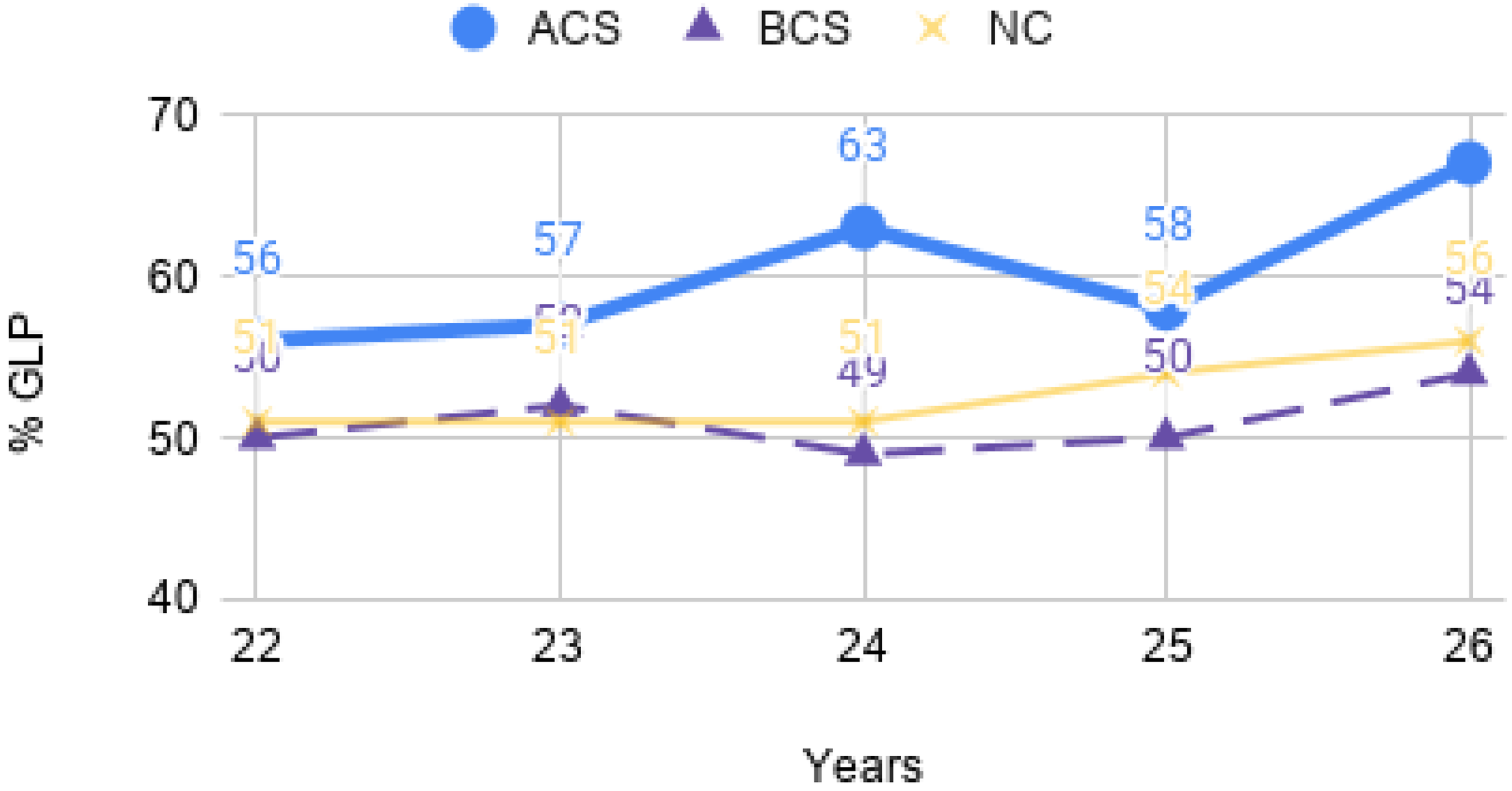
6th Grade Reading



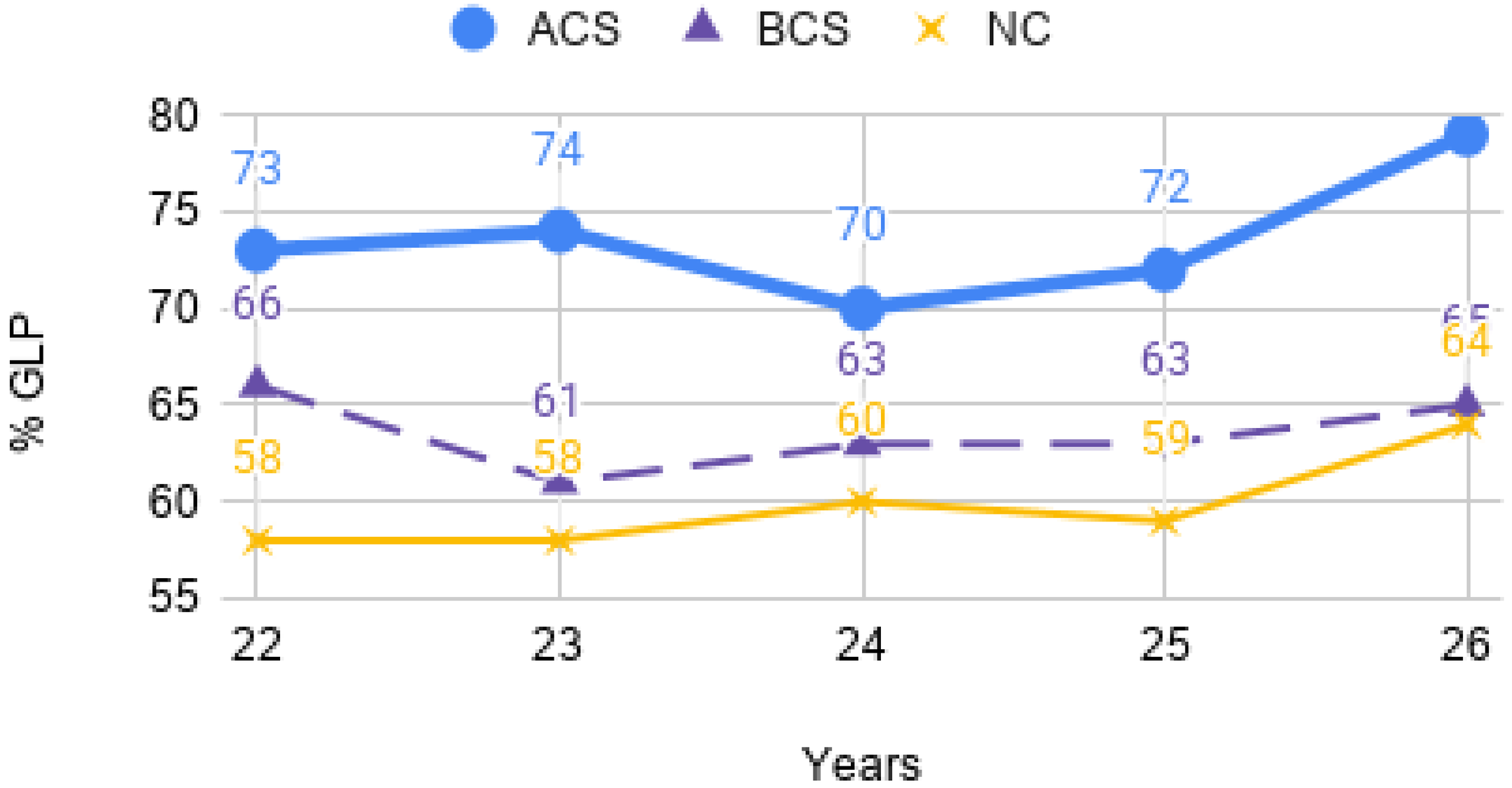
7th Grade Reading



8th Grade Reading



ENG II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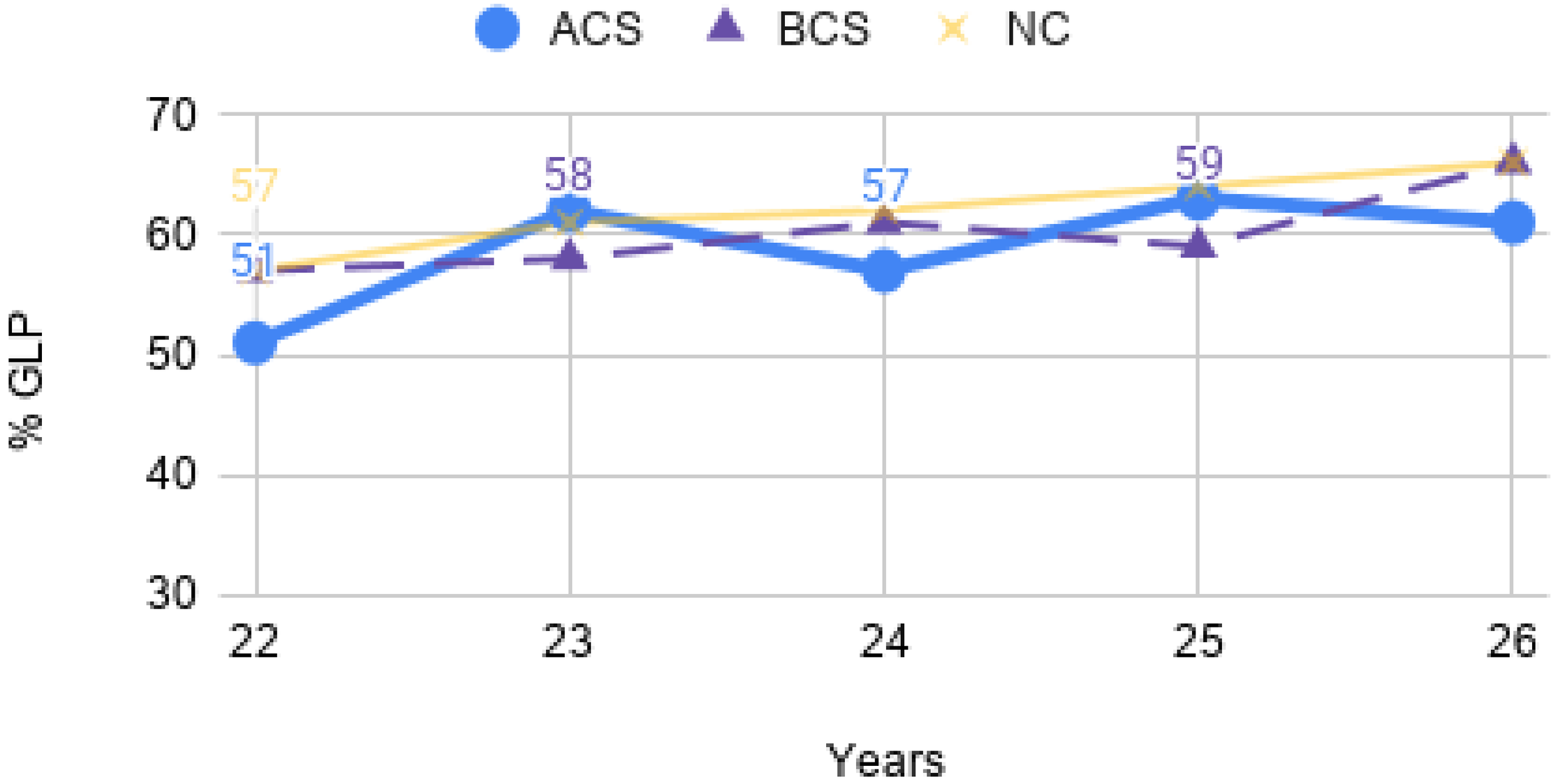
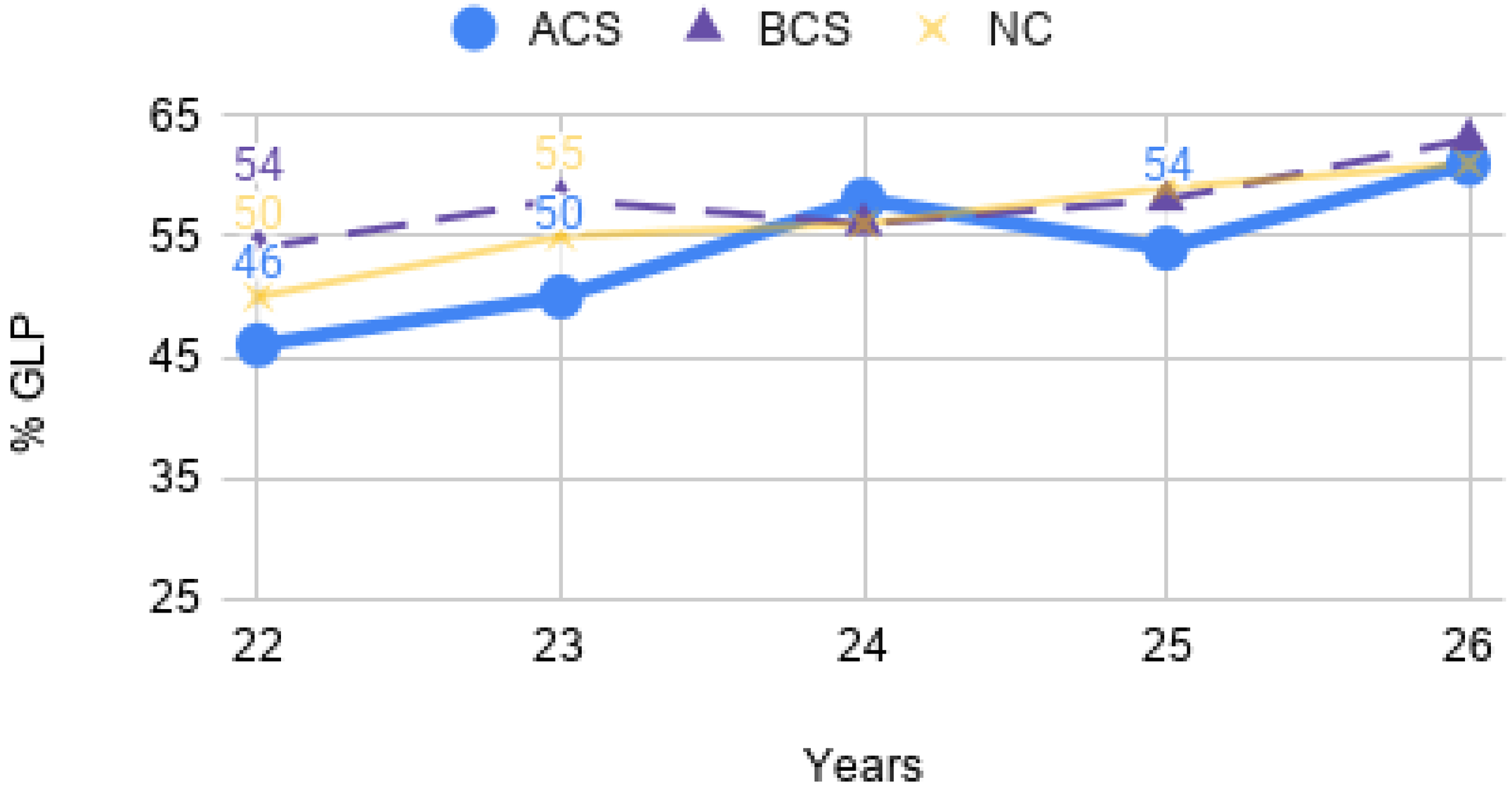
3rd Grade Math



4th Grade Math



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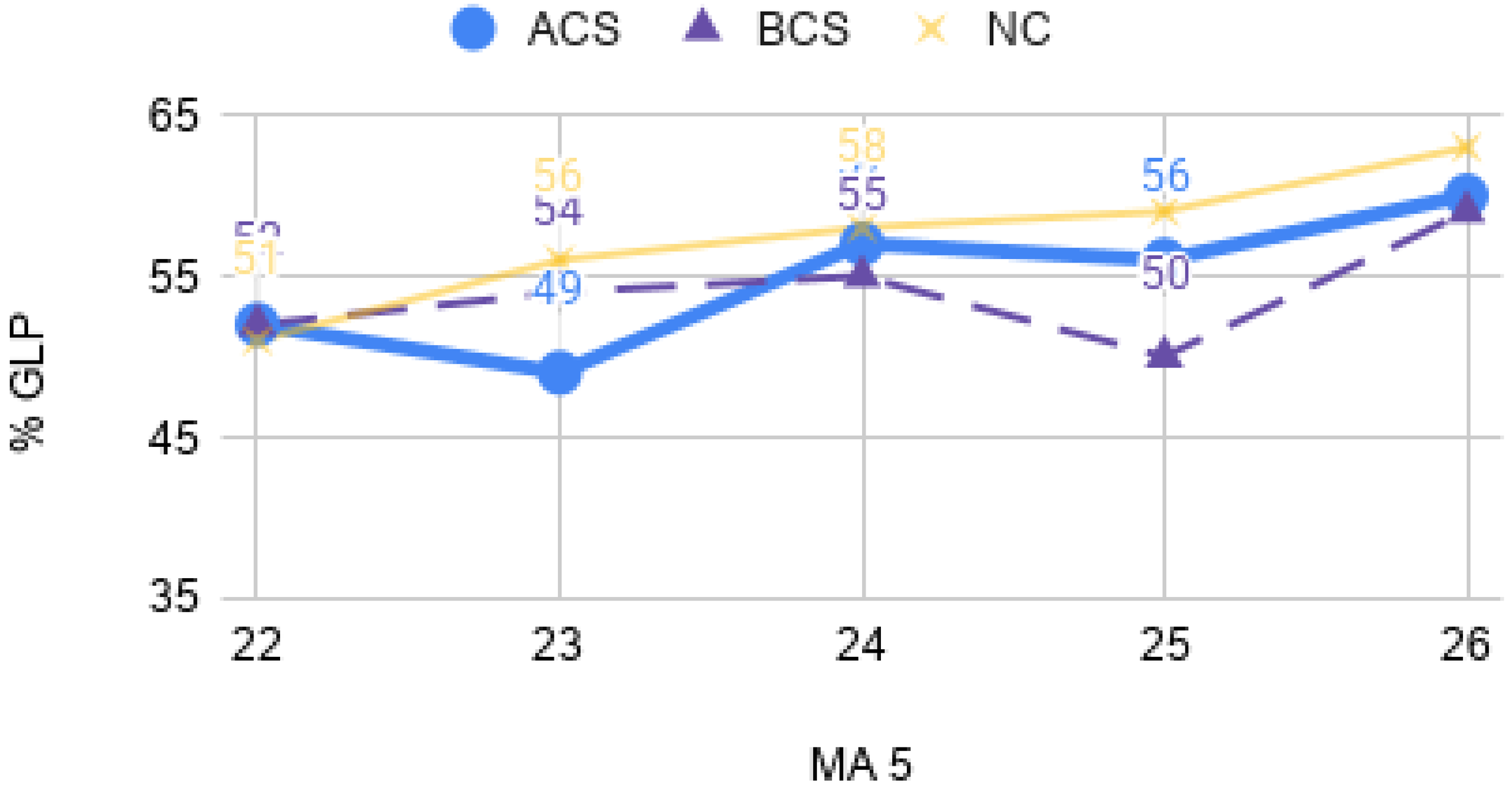

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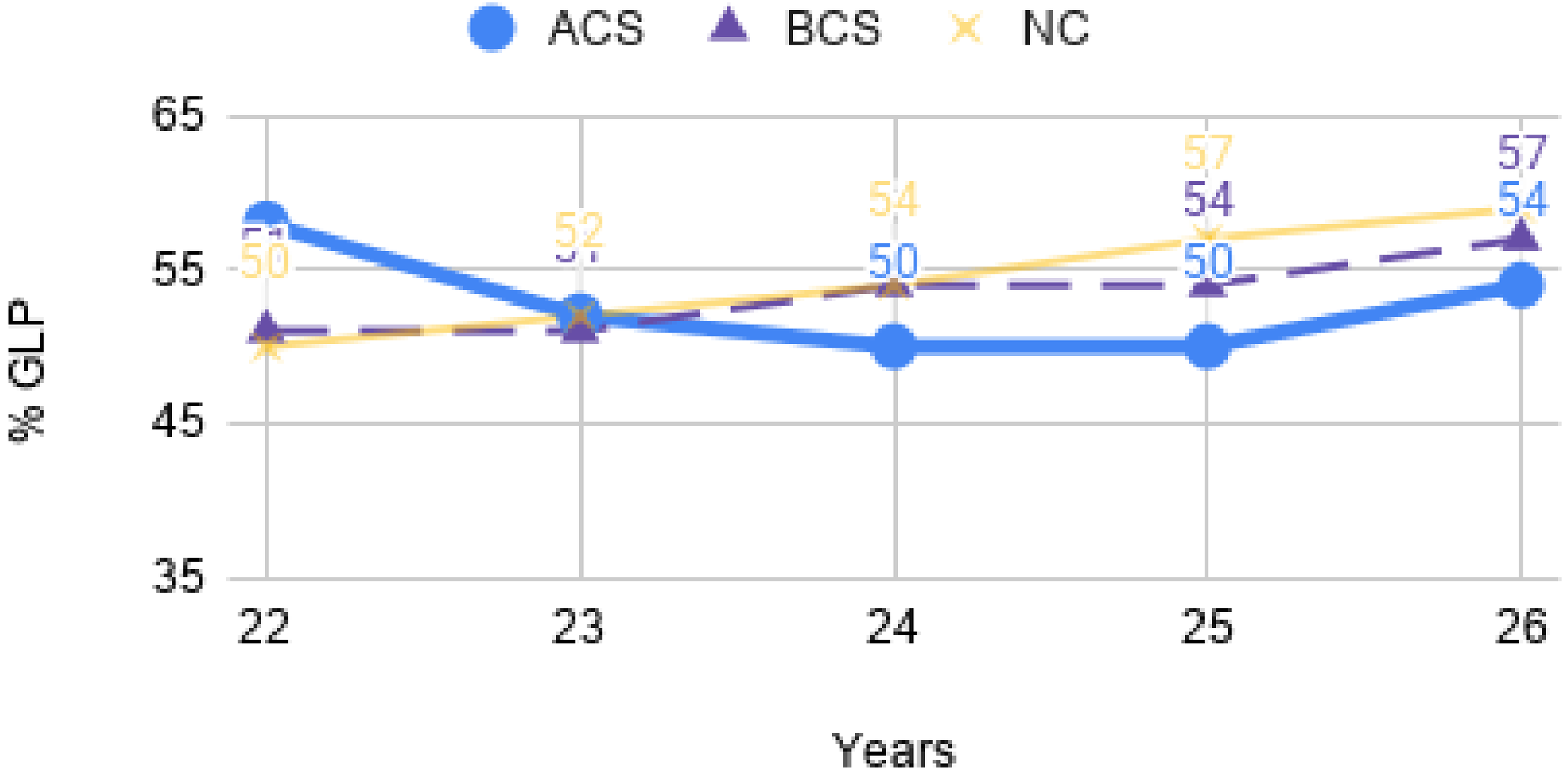
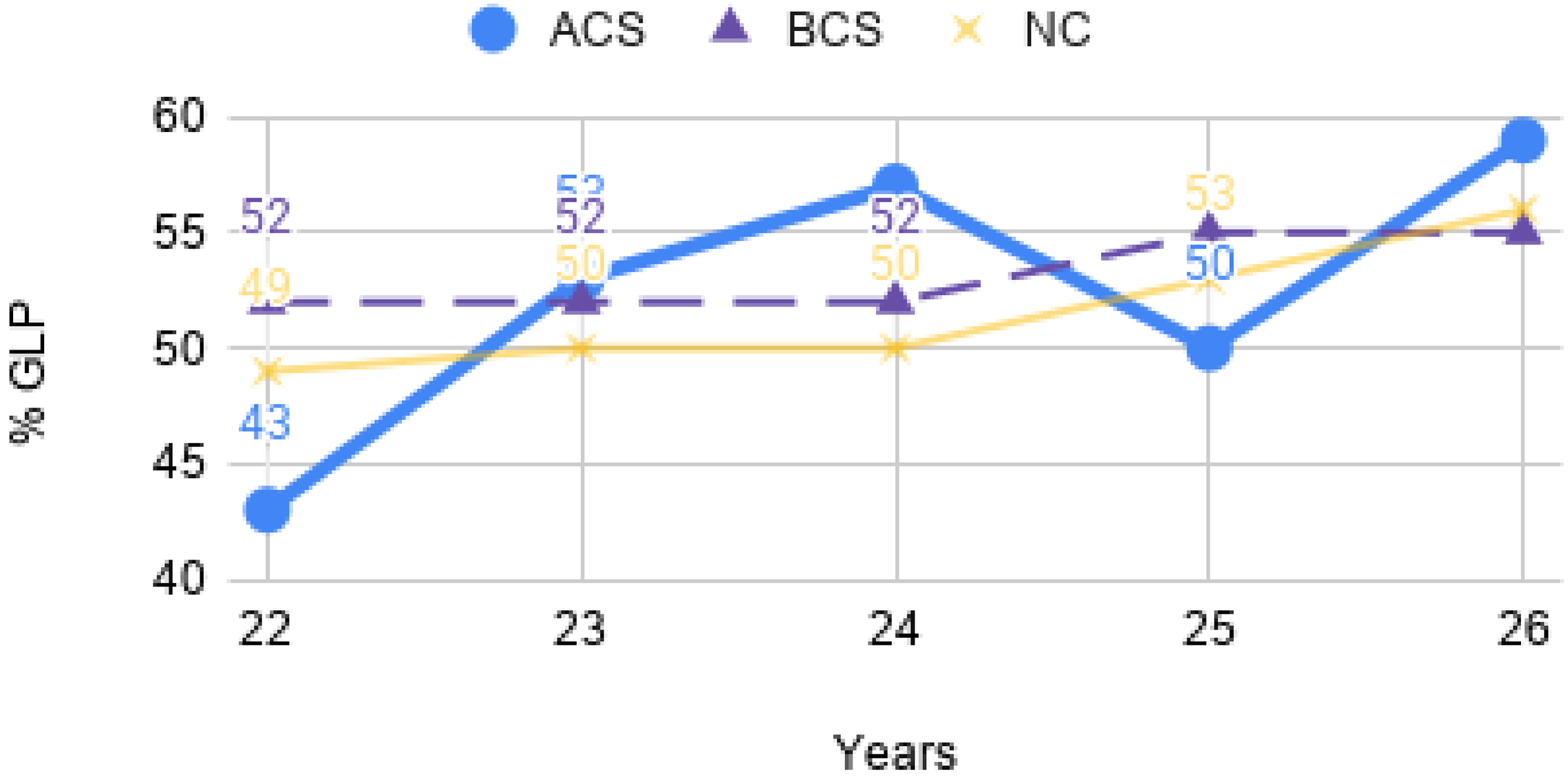
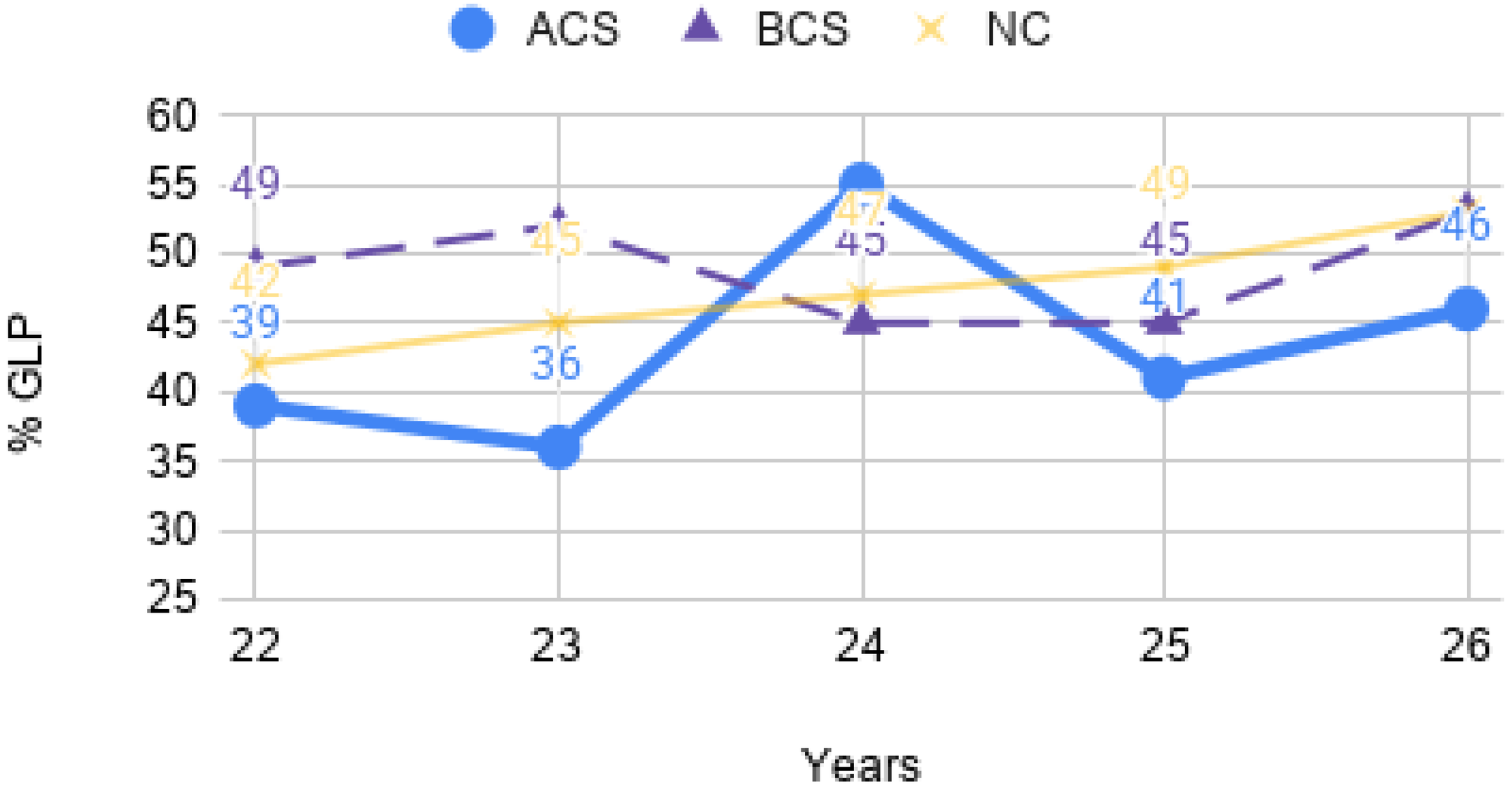


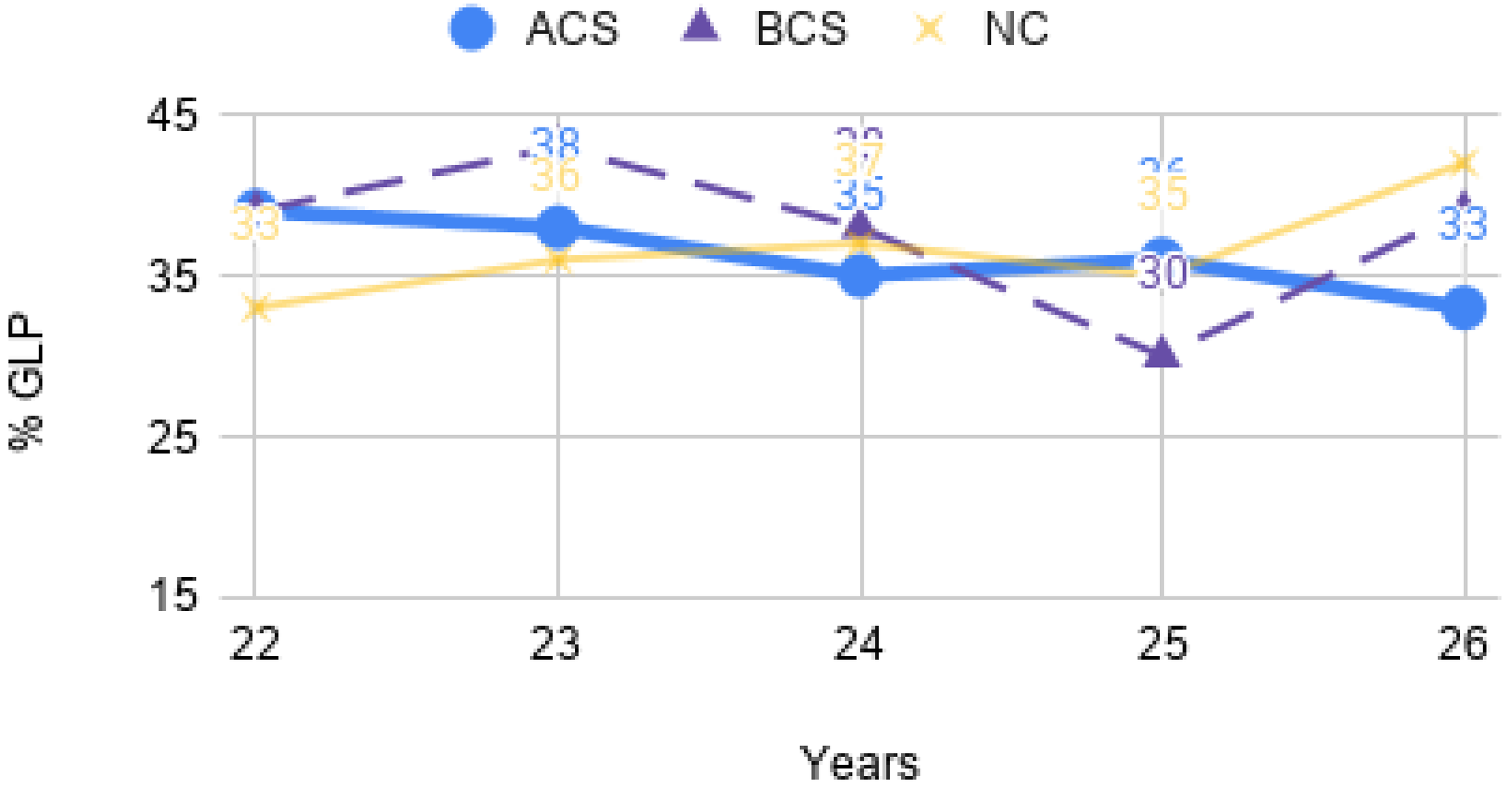
7th Grade Math



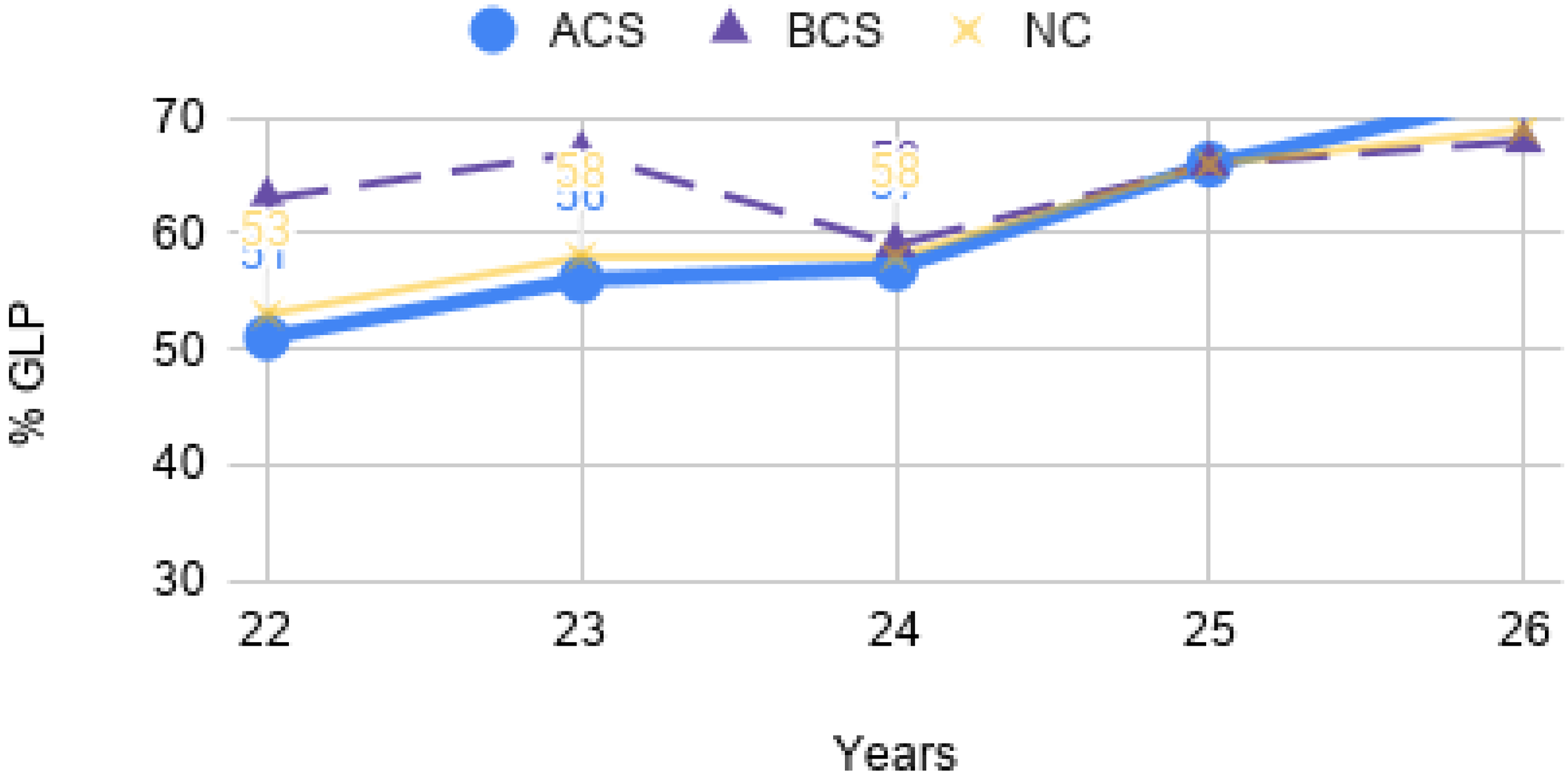
8th Grade Math



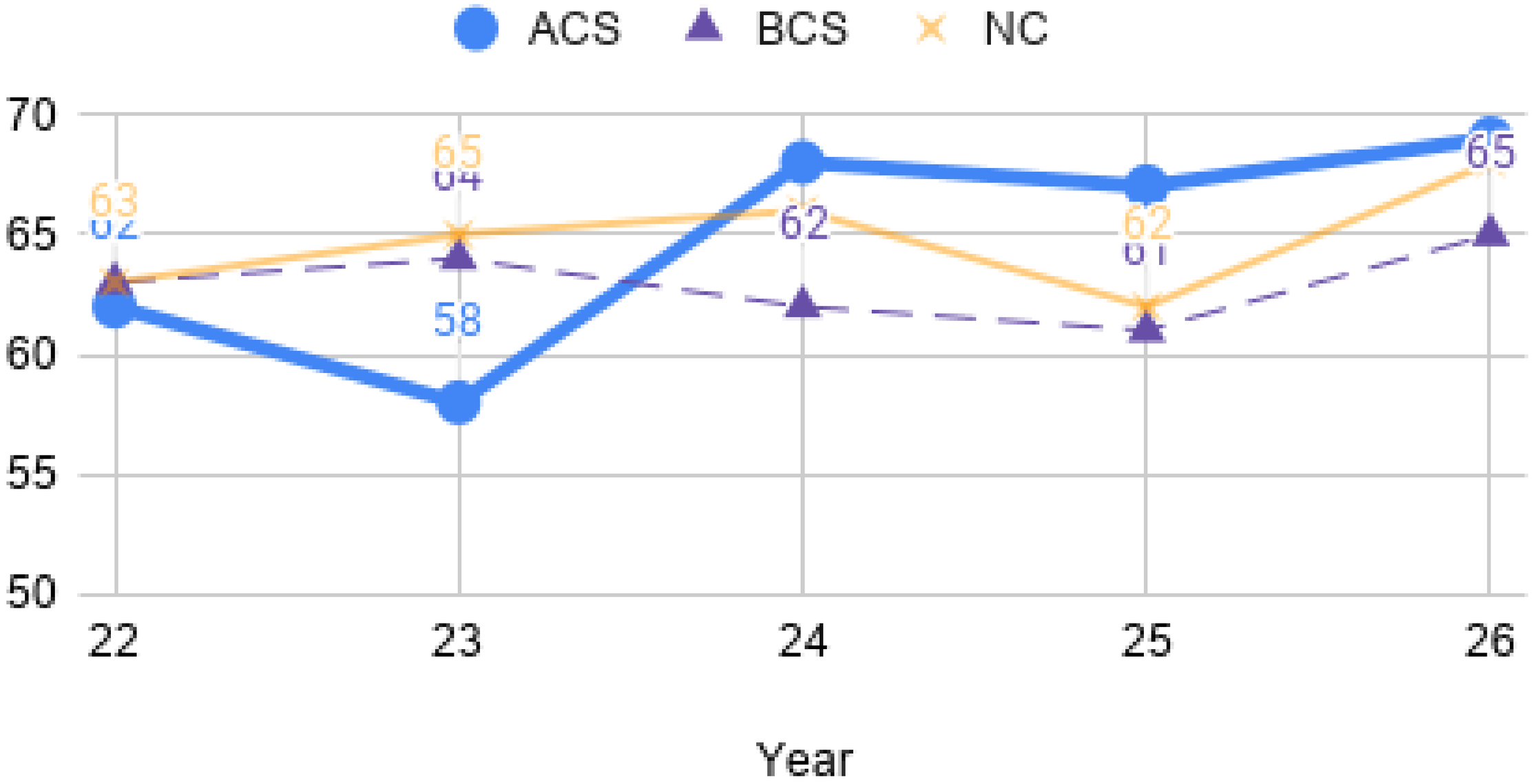
NC 1 - Math



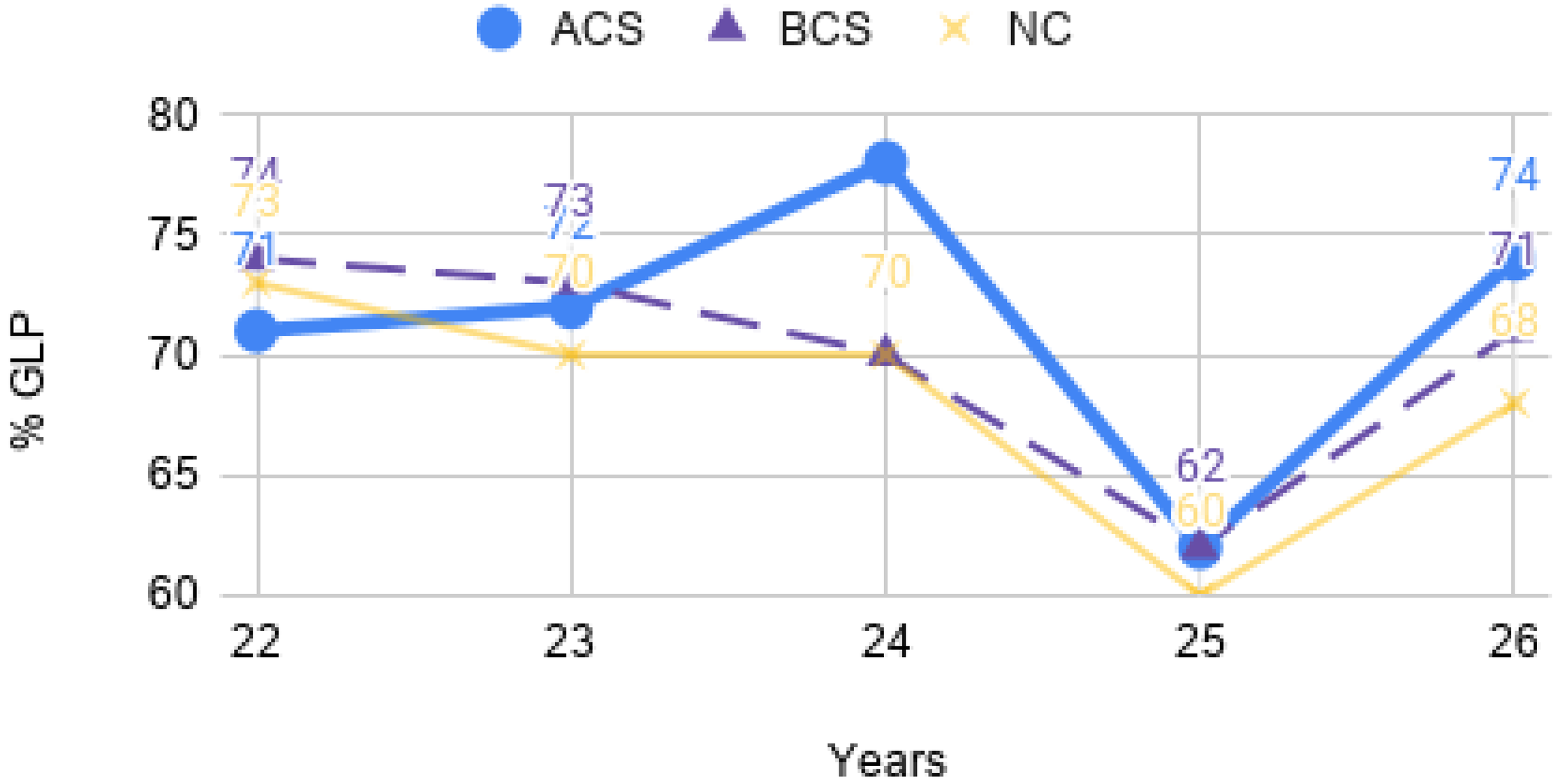
NC 3 Math



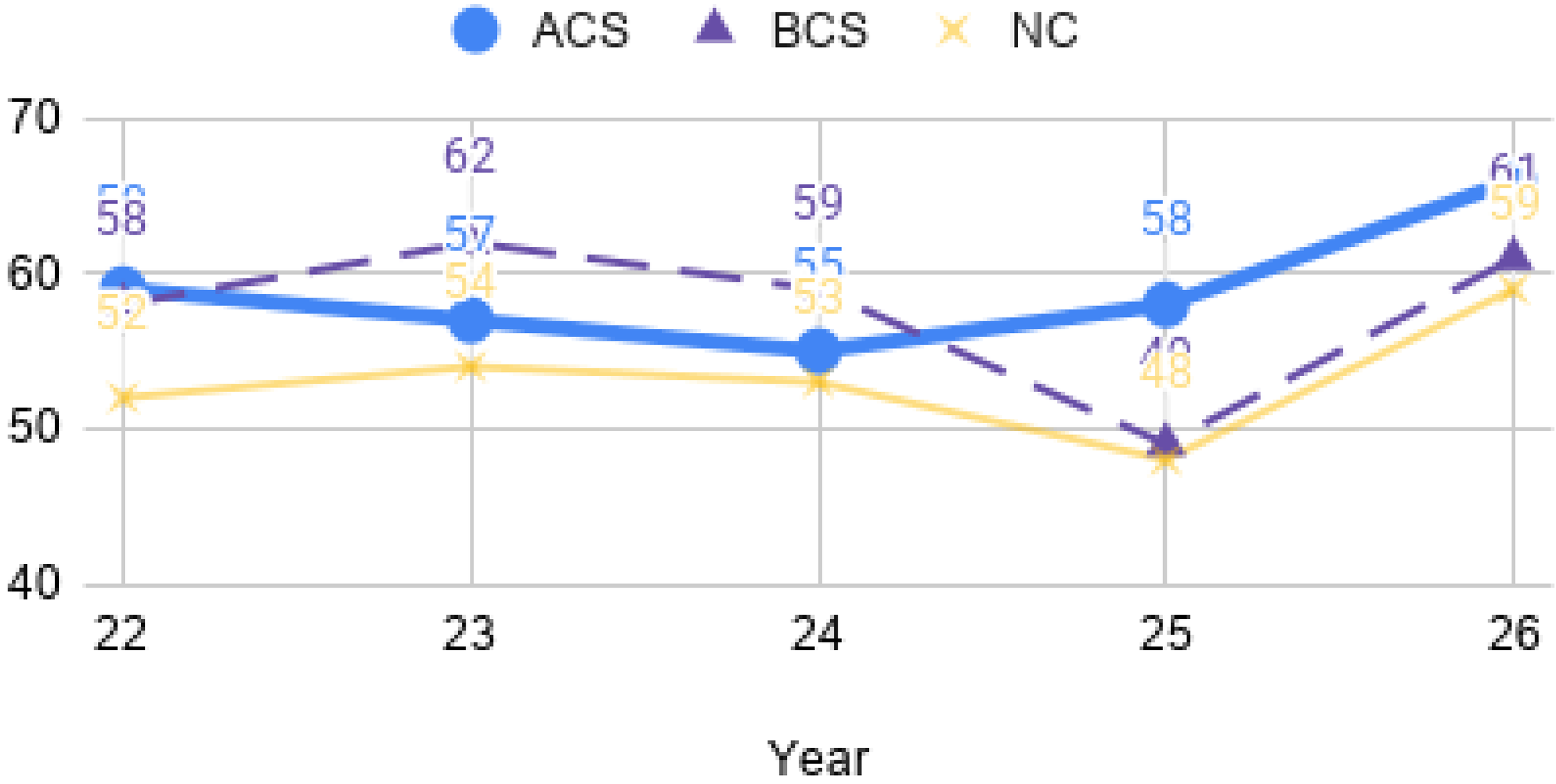
Science 5th Grade



8th Grade Science



Biology EOC


ACS
BCS
NC
70
60
50
40
22
23
24
25
26
Year
58
62
59
58
61
52
54
53
48
59

Discipline Data



Infinite Campus Referral Overview

A

Overall Referrals

3,901
Office Referrals

921
Unique Students Involved

Unacceptable Behaviors

3,396
Categorized Incidents:

1,710 defiance
1,177 excessive tardies/skipping
185 events involving technology
40 repeat offenders
36 referrals for substance use
12 interpersonal behaviors
11 referrals for inappropriate items

Reportable

509
Reportable Behaviors

233 fighting

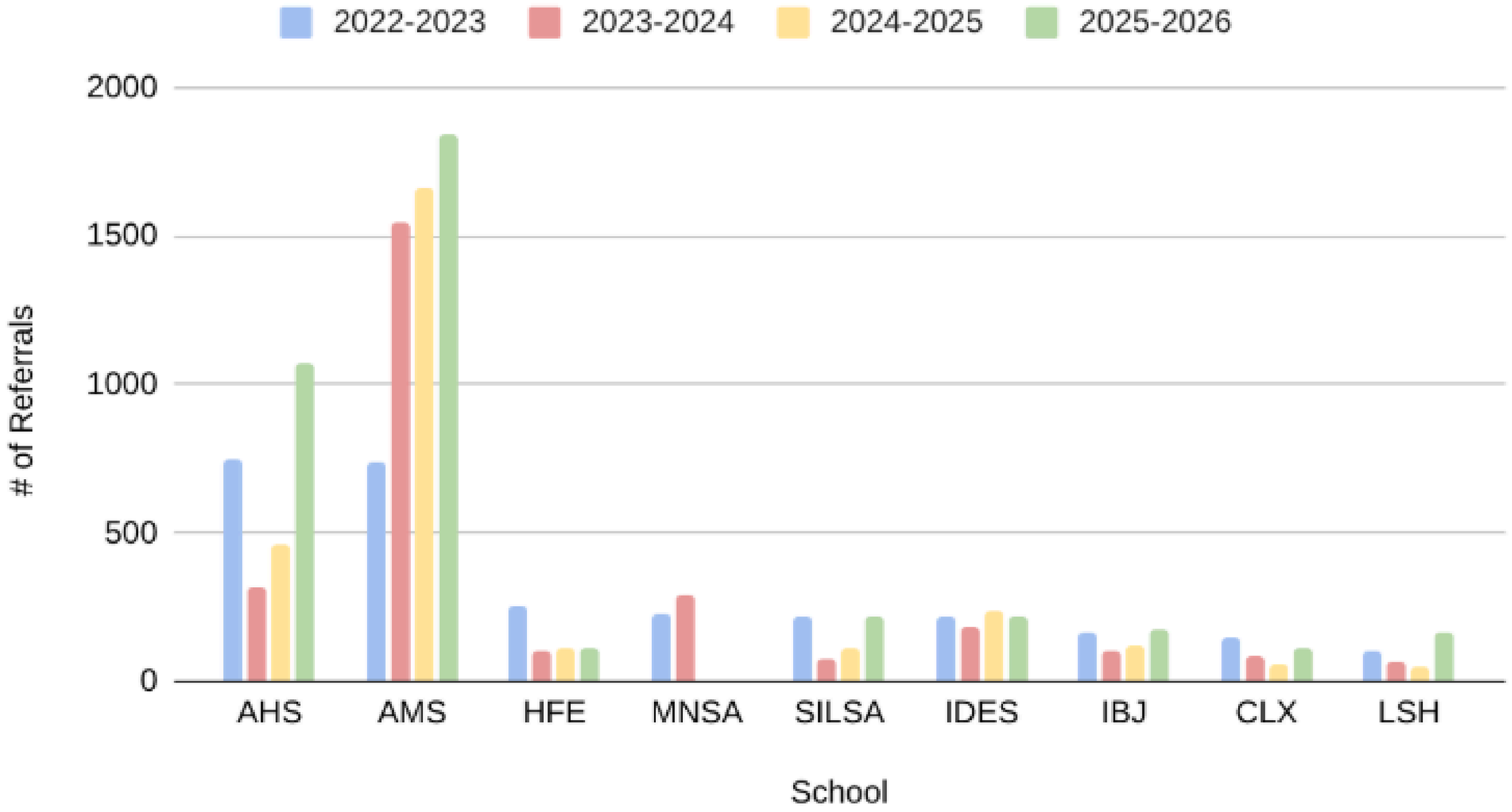
122 threat communications

43 Reportable Offenses

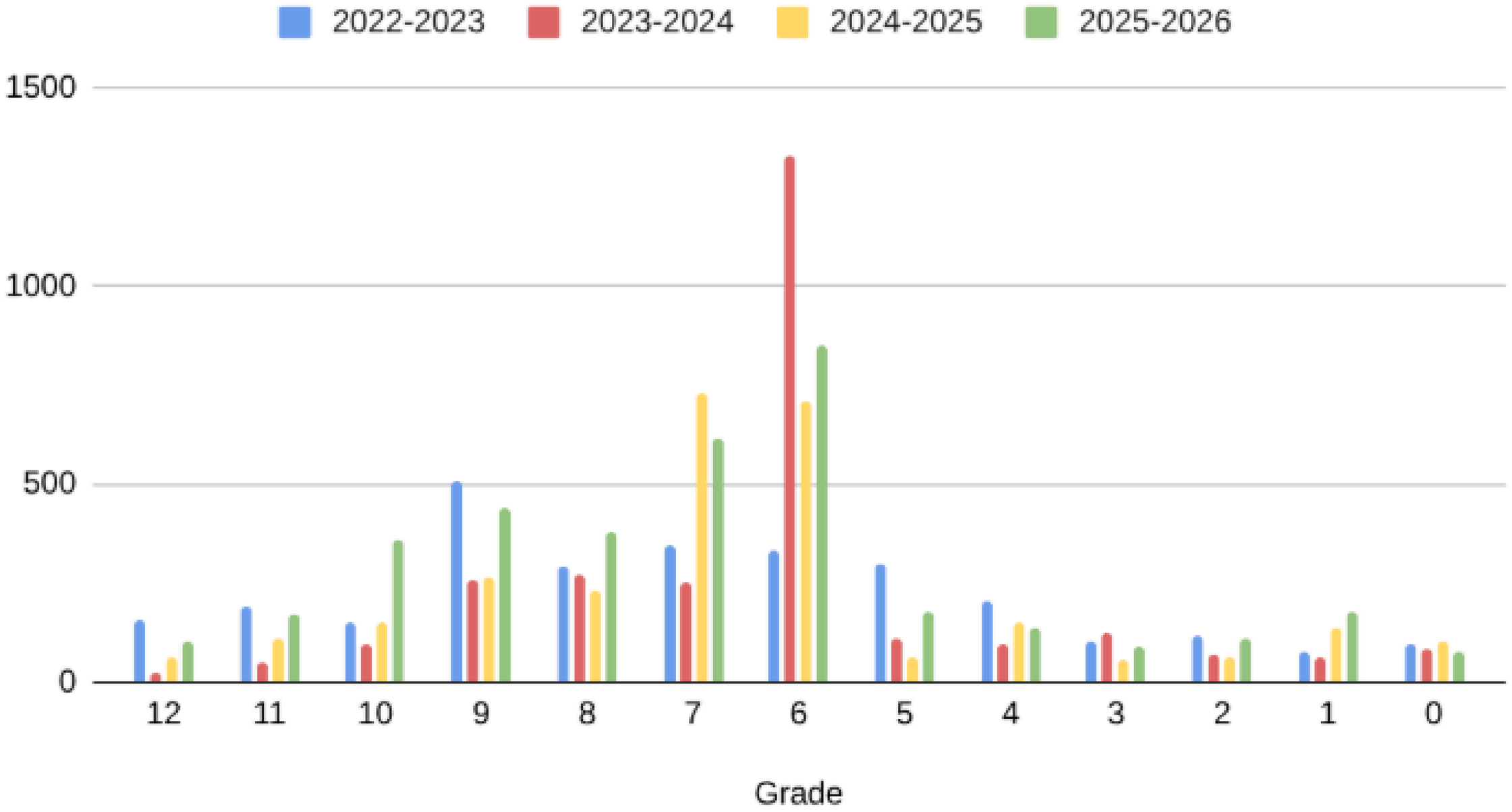
Crime Rate: 11.612

Zero incidents of assault using a weapon

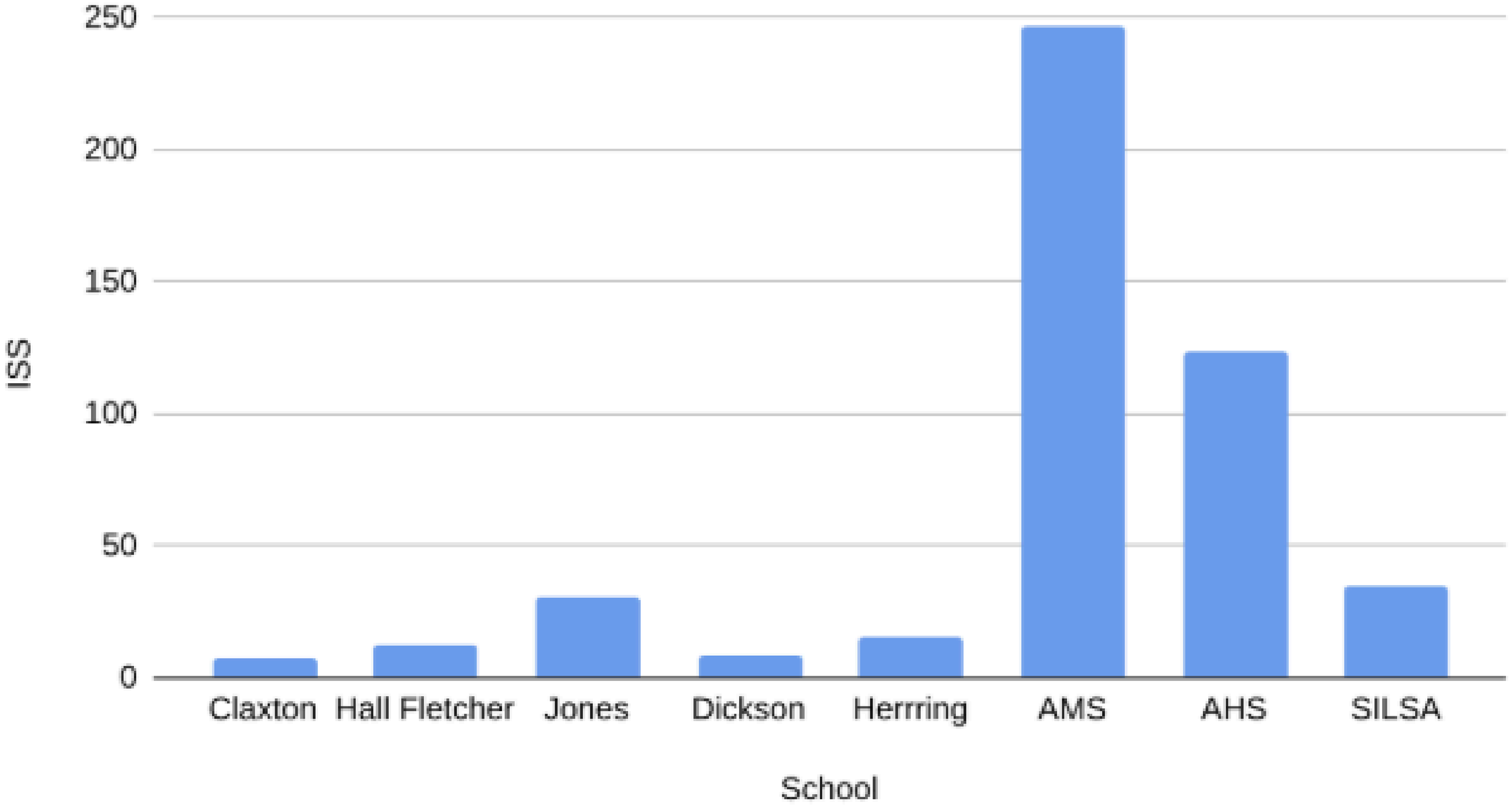
3 Year Comparison of # Referrals By School



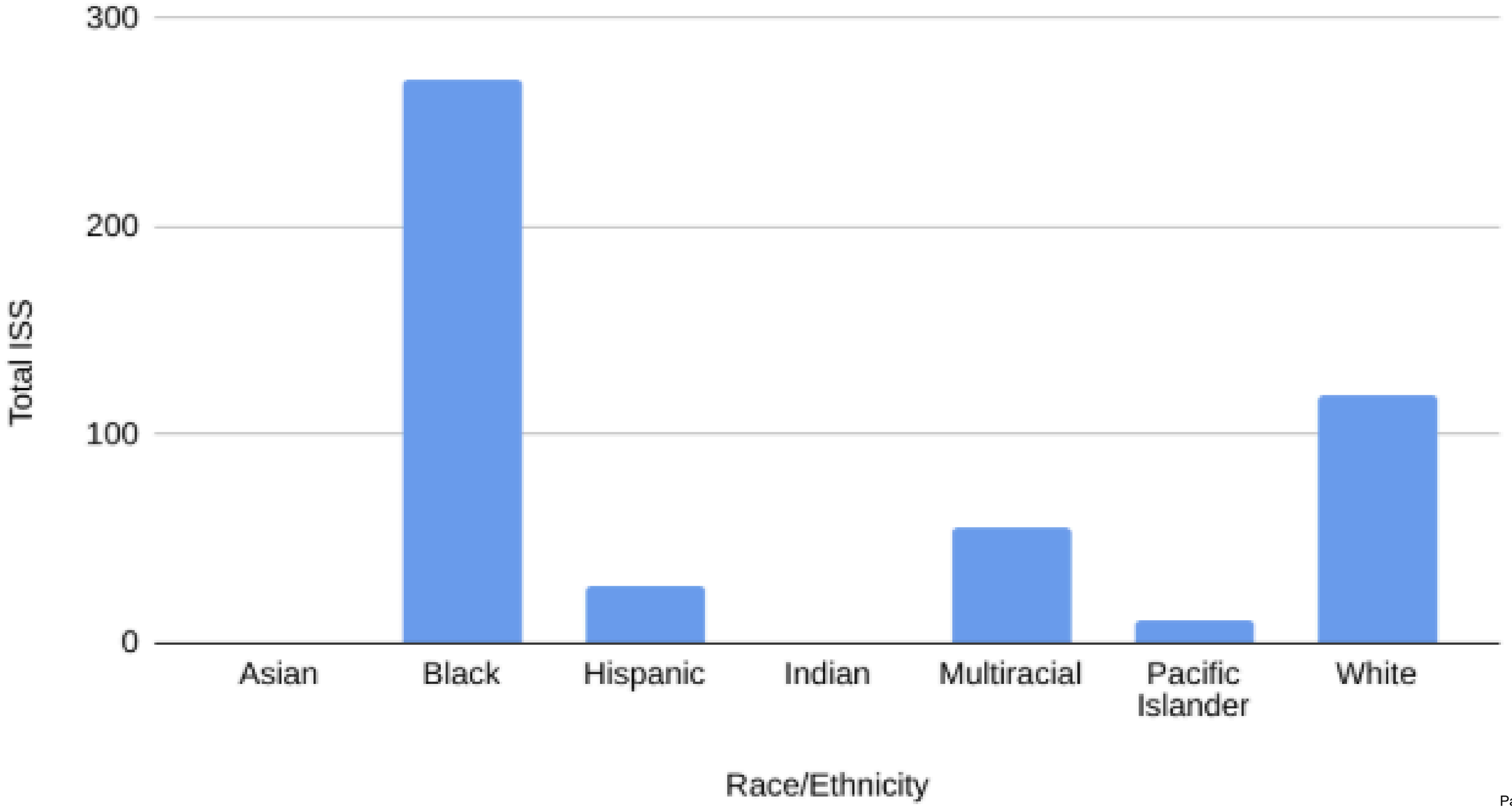
Referral Yearly Comparison By Grade

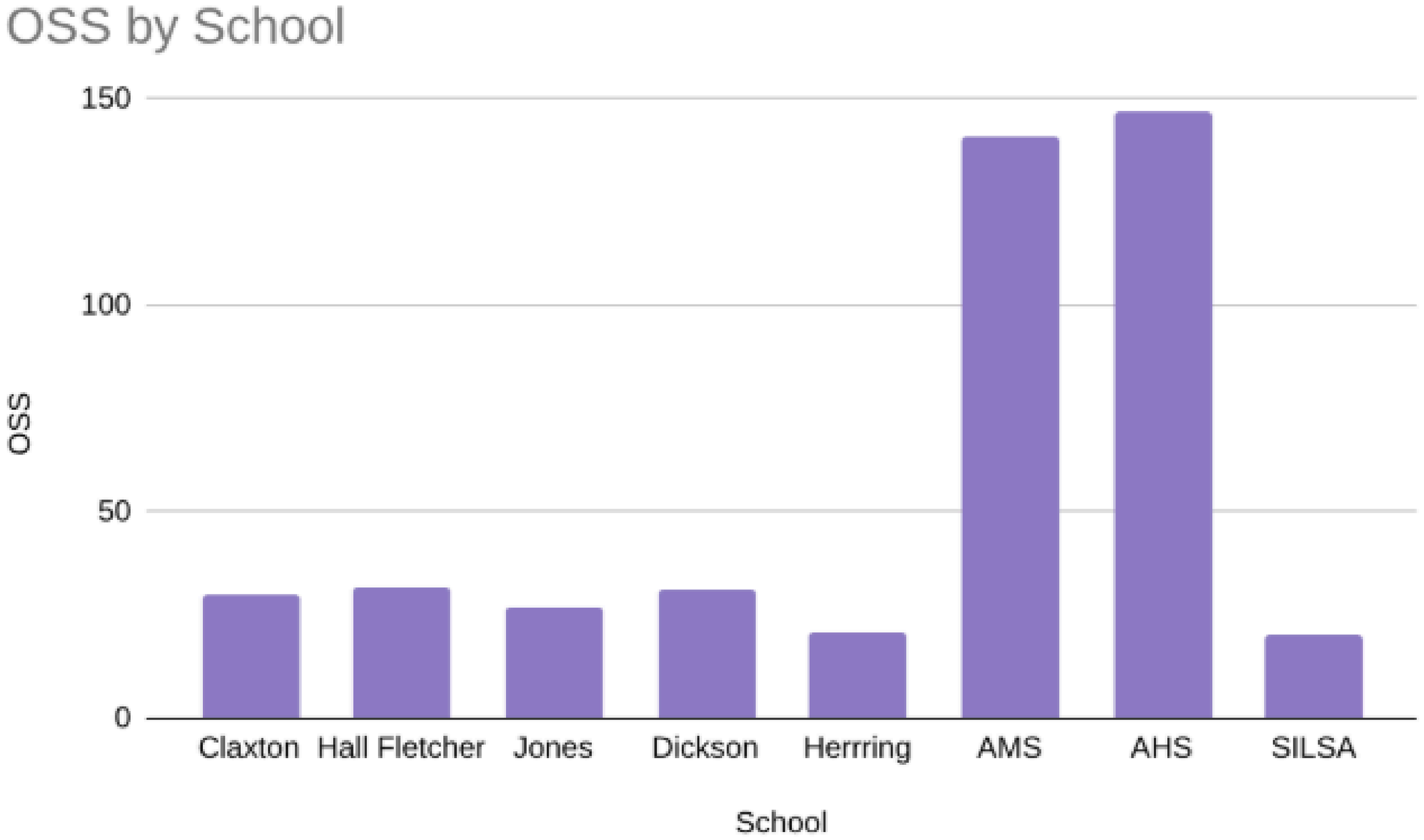


ISS by School

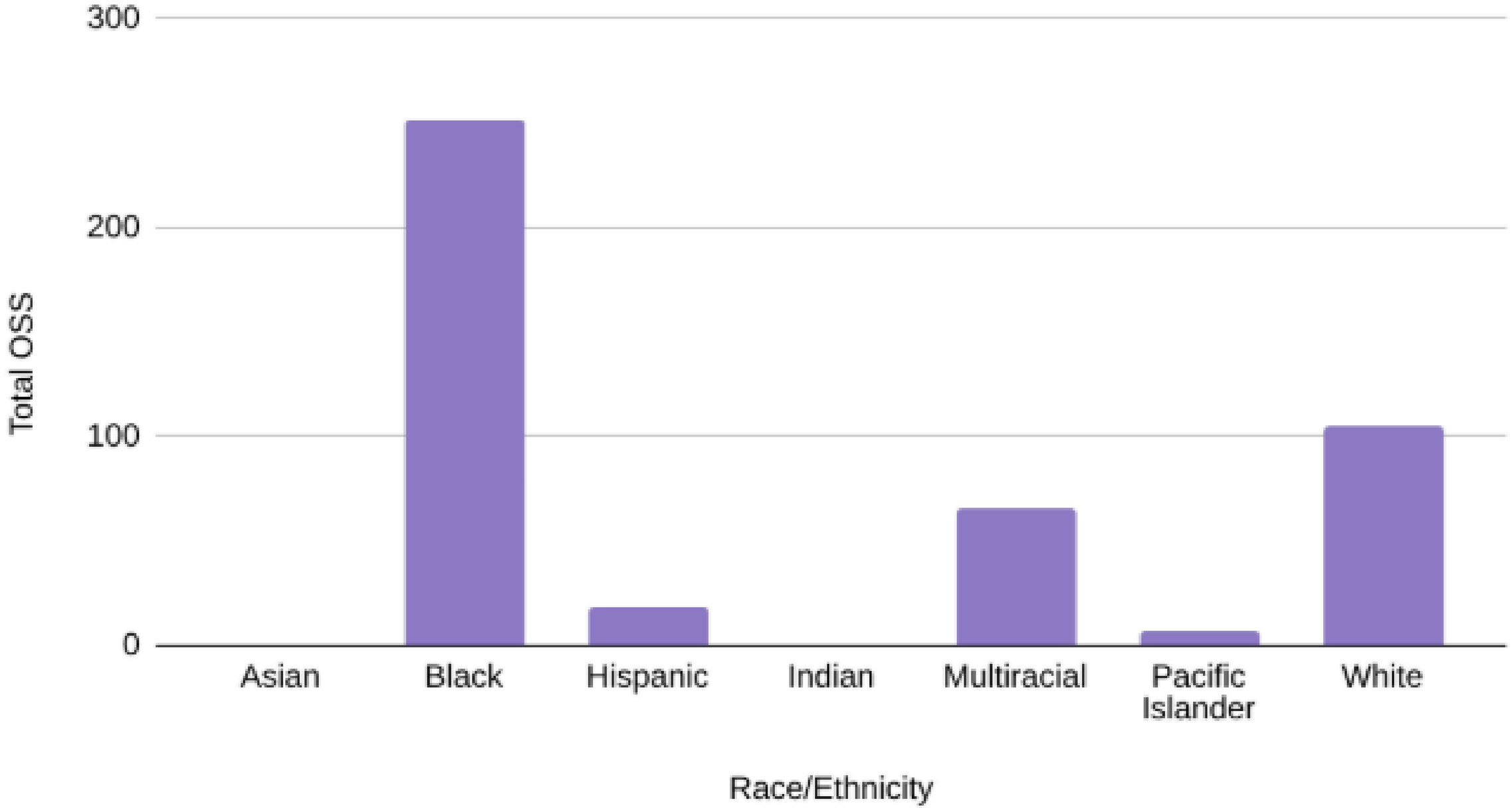


ISS by Race/Ethnicity




OSS by School
150
100
50
0
OSS
Claxton
Hall
Fletcher
Jones
Dickson
Herrring
AMS
AHS
SILSA
School

OSS by Race/Ethnicity

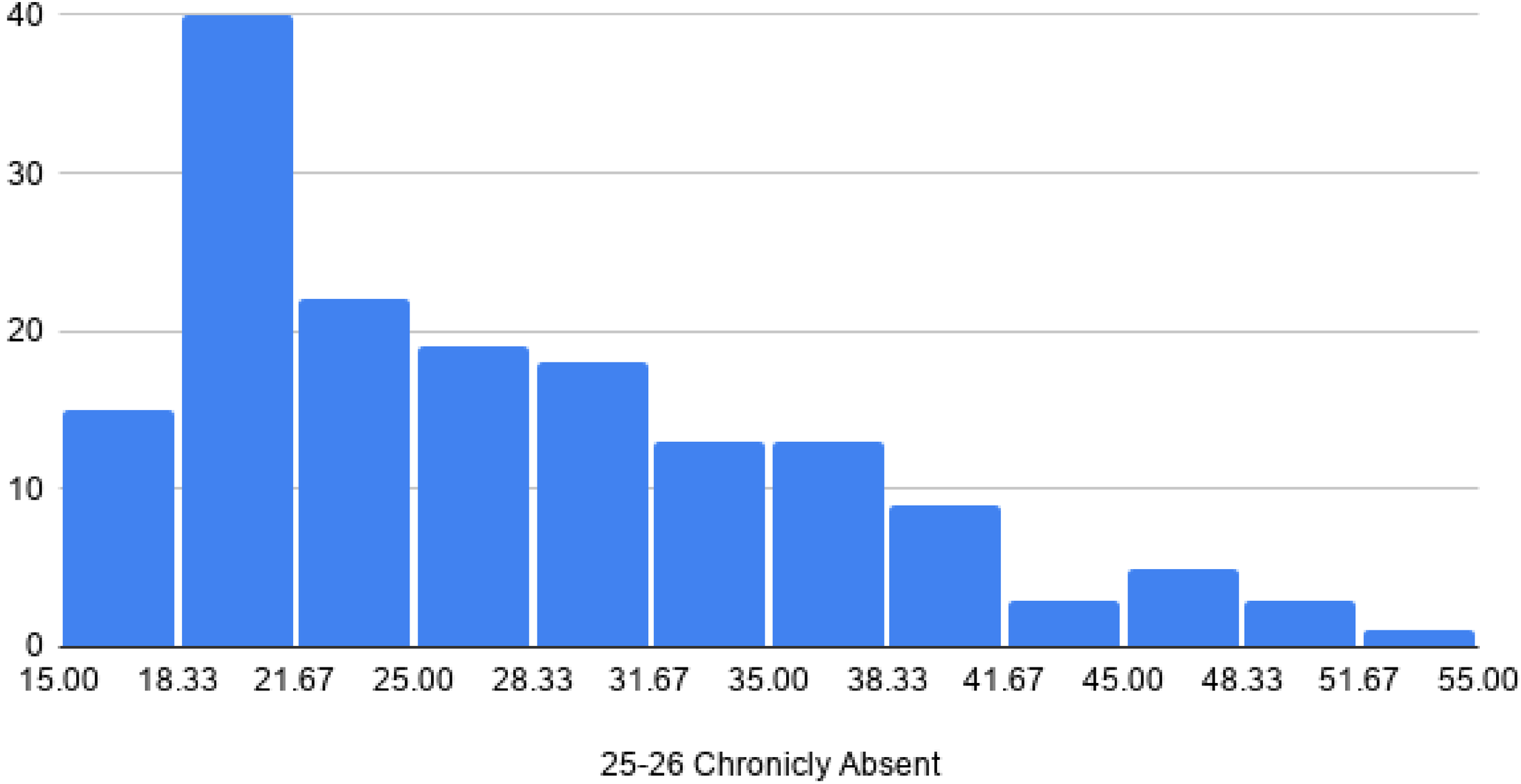


Attendance Data



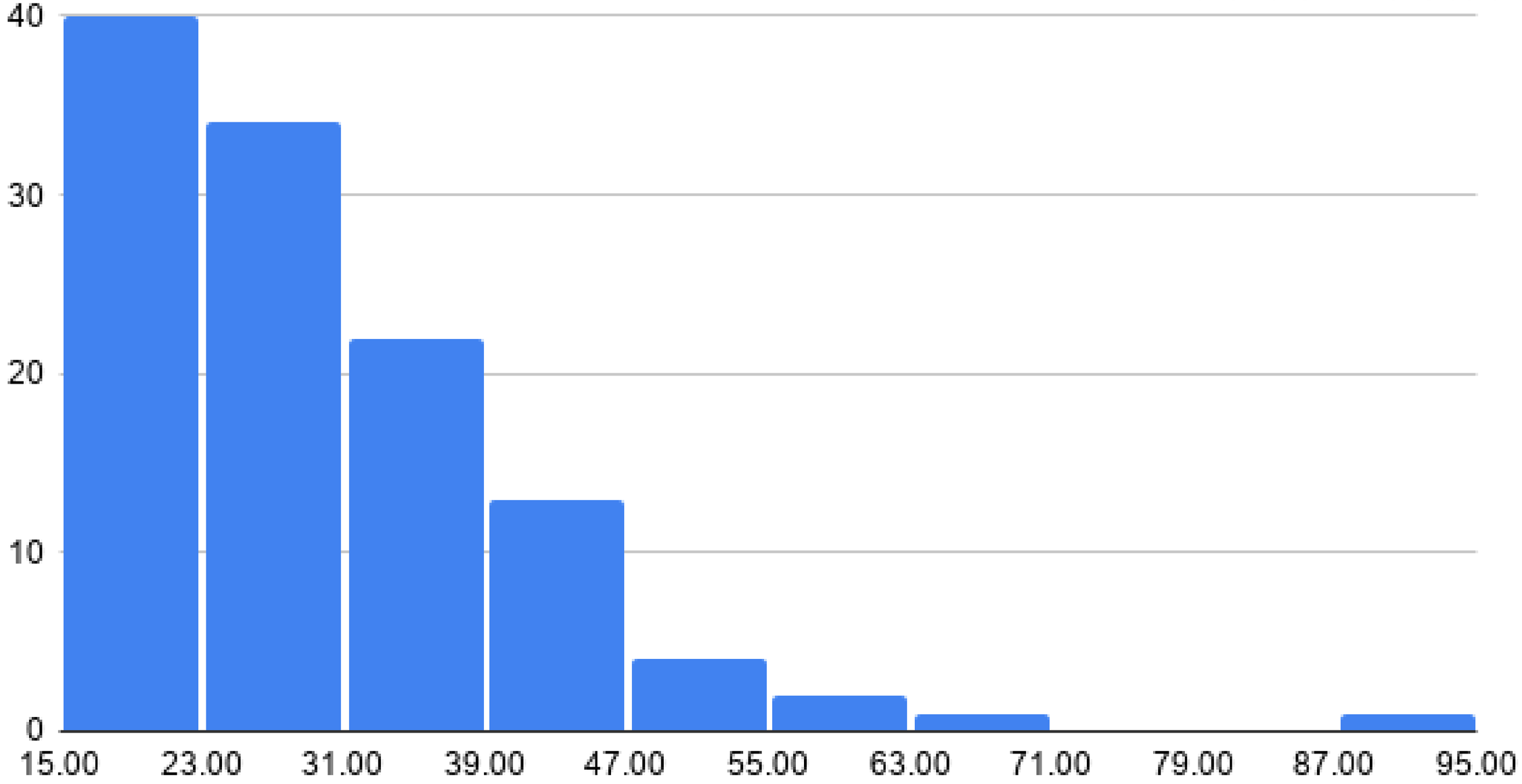
ES Histogram of 25-26 Chronic Absenteeism

Total Days 4,430
10.1% of ES Students



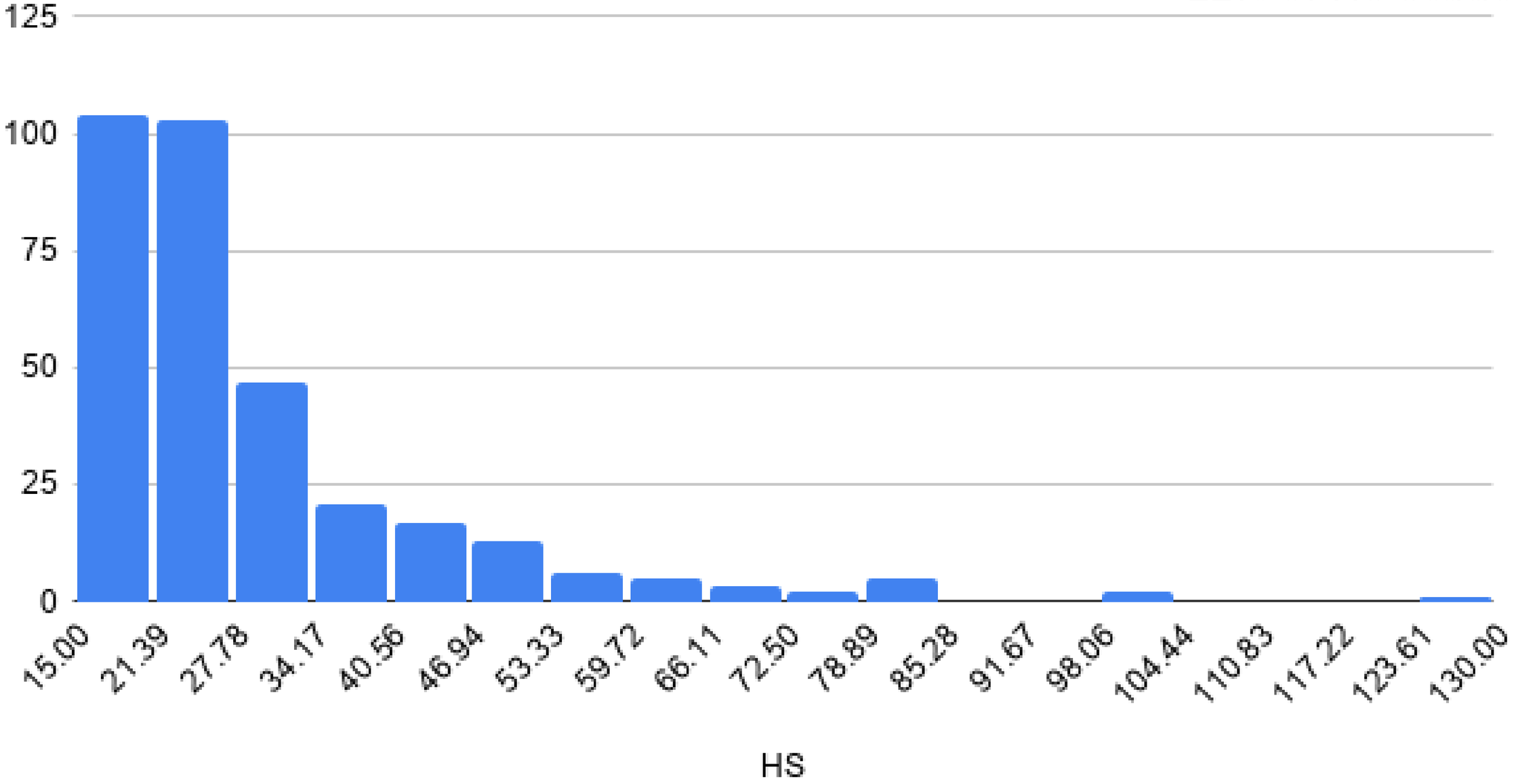
MS Histogram of 25-26 Chronic Absenteeism

Total Days - 3,488
16.9% of MS Students



HS Histogram of Chronicly Absent Students

Total Days - 9,863
22% of HS Students



Priority Student Outcomes

I can collaborate with other members of the school board to set prioritized student outcome goals to achieve in the next five years.



Priority Student Outcomes

Asheville City Schools

To advance the district's ambitious student outcome objective, we must hold ourselves accountable for advancing opportunities, access, and outcomes for every student by meeting these prioritized student outcomes.

MASTERY OF KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

- By the end of the 2026-2027 School Year, ACS will no longer have the largest achievement gap in the state
- By the end of the 2030-2031 school year, ACS will have one of the smallest achievement gaps in the state (one of the 5 smallest)

HIGH-QUALITY WORK

- By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, every student will know the 5 traits in the ACS Portriat of a Scholar.
- By the end of the 2030-2031 school year, every 5th, 8th, and 12th grader will complete a passage presentation with portfolio.

CHARACTER

- By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, the discipline risk factor for Black students will decrease by ___ points.
- By the end of the 2030-2031 school year, the discipline risk factor for Black students will be equal to the discipline risk factor for white students.