



Learning during Covid-19: Initial findings on students' reading and math achievement and growth

Dr. Beth Tarasawa, EVP of Research, NWEA

National Research

- + Analyzed fall data from nearly 4.4 million students
- + Explores academic impacts
- + Recommendations and considerations for the road ahead

Learning During COVID-19:
Initial findings on students' reading and
math achievement and growth

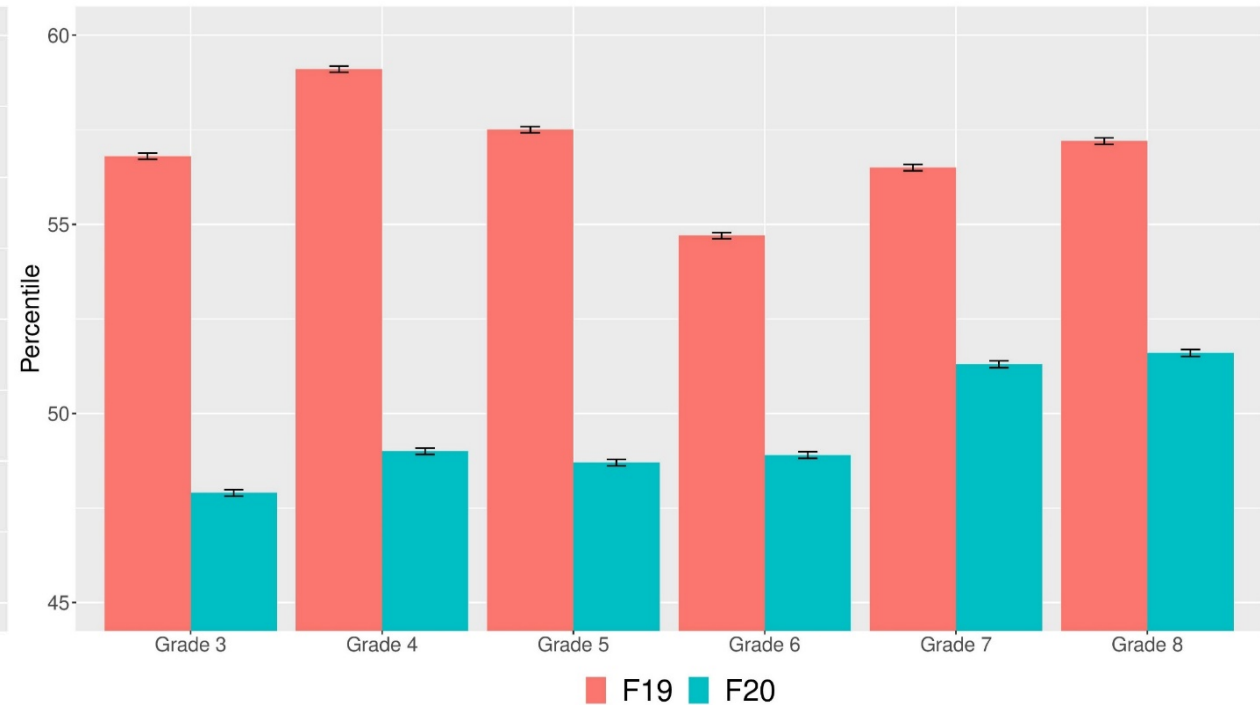
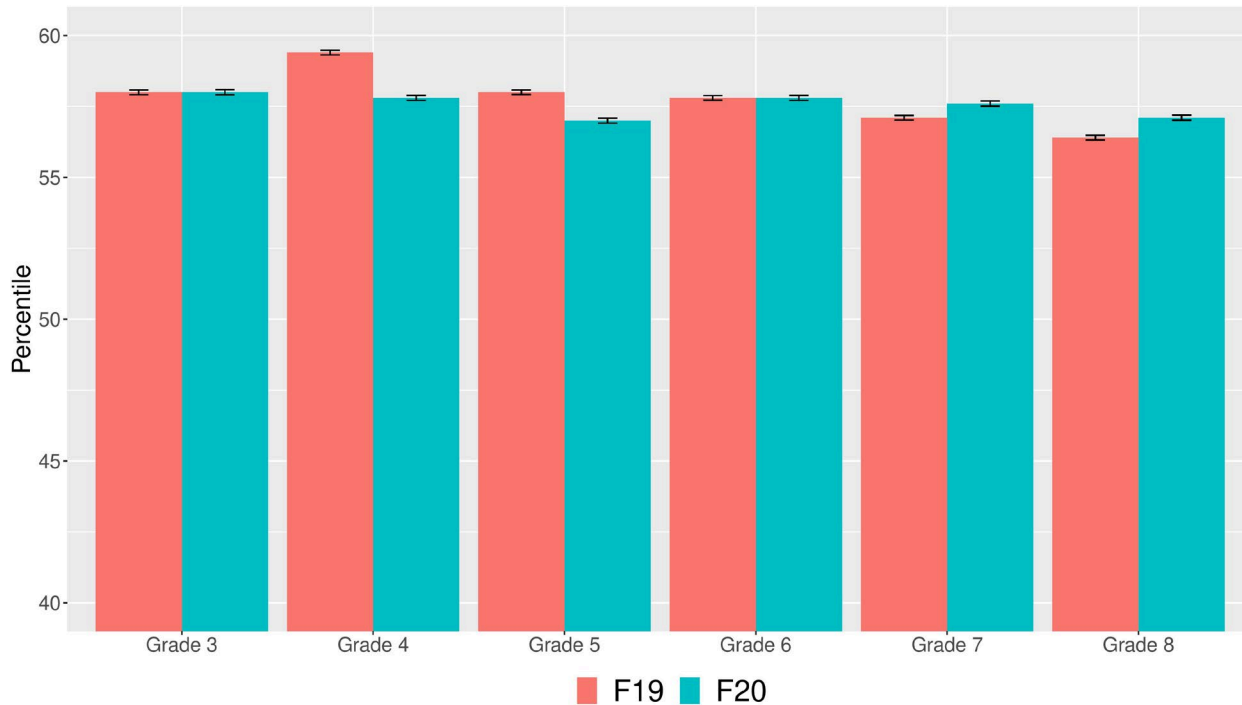
November 2020

Megan Kuhfeld, Beth Tarasawa, Angela Johnson, Erik Ruzek, and Karyn Lewis

**Compared to fall 2019, student achievement this fall was similar in reading...
...but, on average, 5 to 10 percentile points lower in math.**

Reading

Math

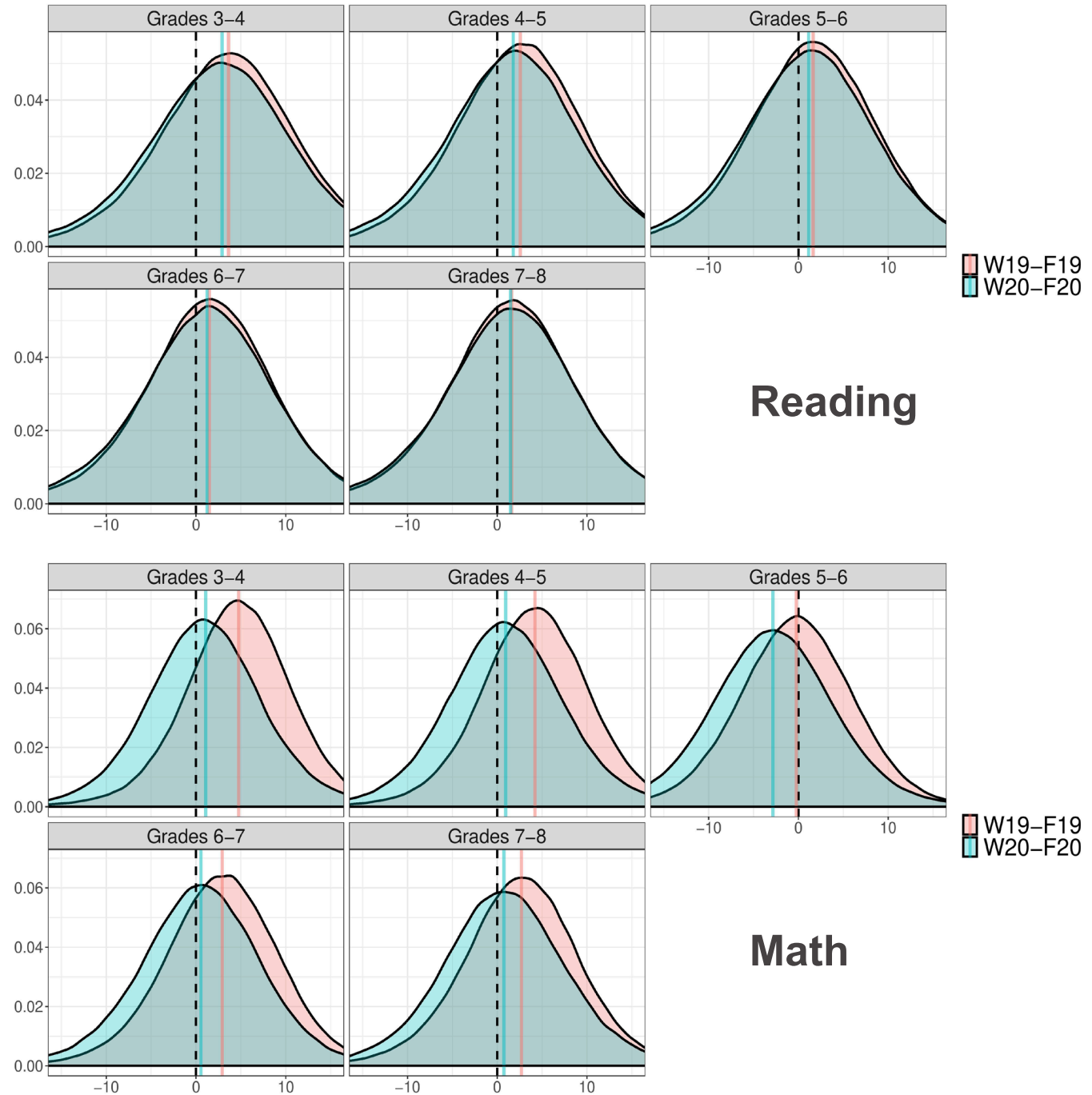


MAP Growth achievement percentiles by grade level in Fall 2019 and Fall 2020

Most students showed gains in both reading and math...

...but growth patterns in math are lower than a typical year.

Distribution of within-student change from Winter 2019-Fall 2019 vs Winter 2020-Fall 2020



National Urban League Report Background

Longstanding systematic educational inequalities have been exacerbated during the pandemic

- Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students were twice as likely to be learning remotely than White students
- Emergent bilingual students experienced additional barriers to learning
- Differential access to technology infrastructure ([Future Ready, 2021](#))
- BIPOC youth particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges (e.g., elevated levels of depression, stress, and anxiety) ([CRPE, 2021](#))

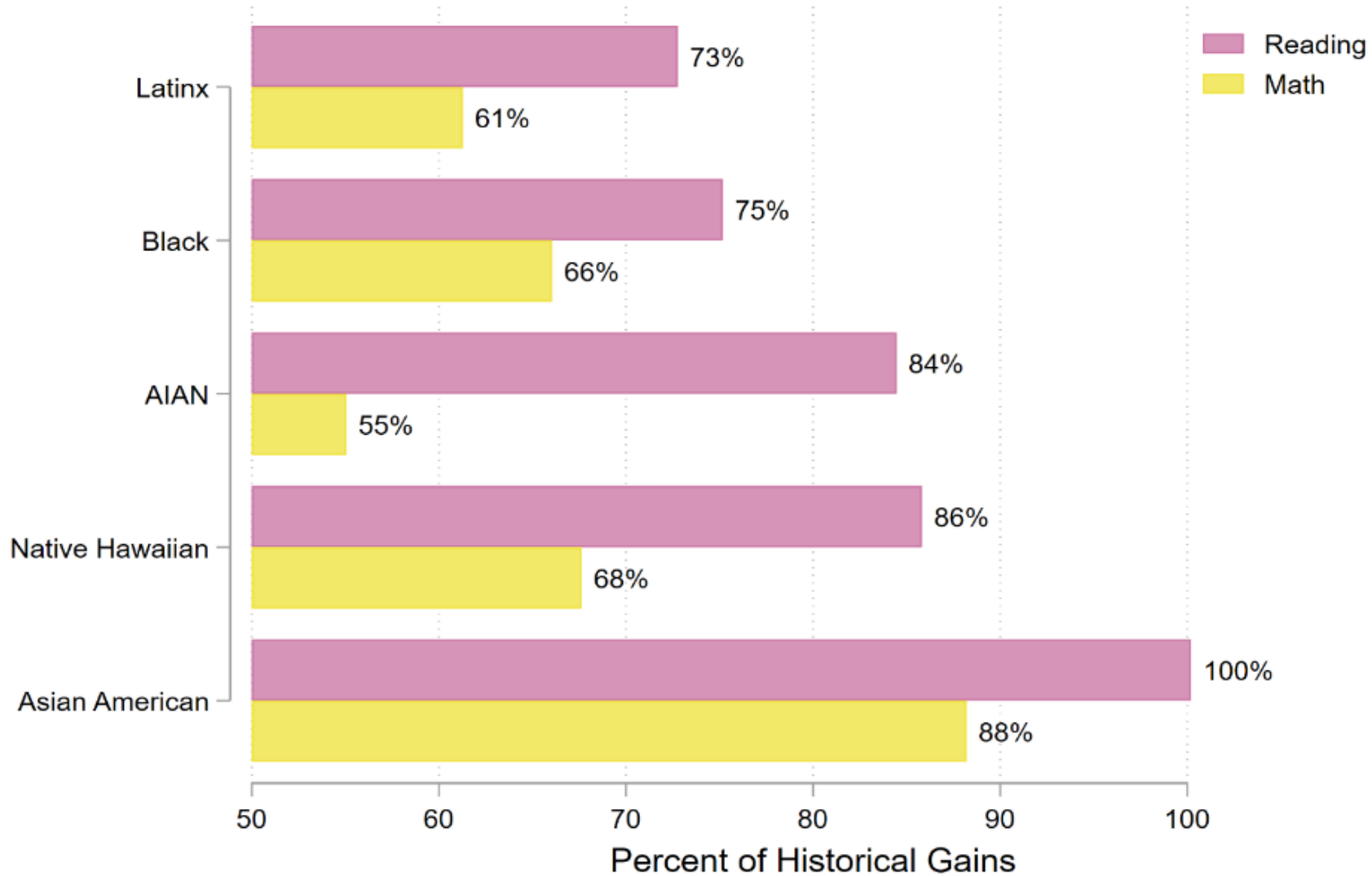


National Urban League Research Questions

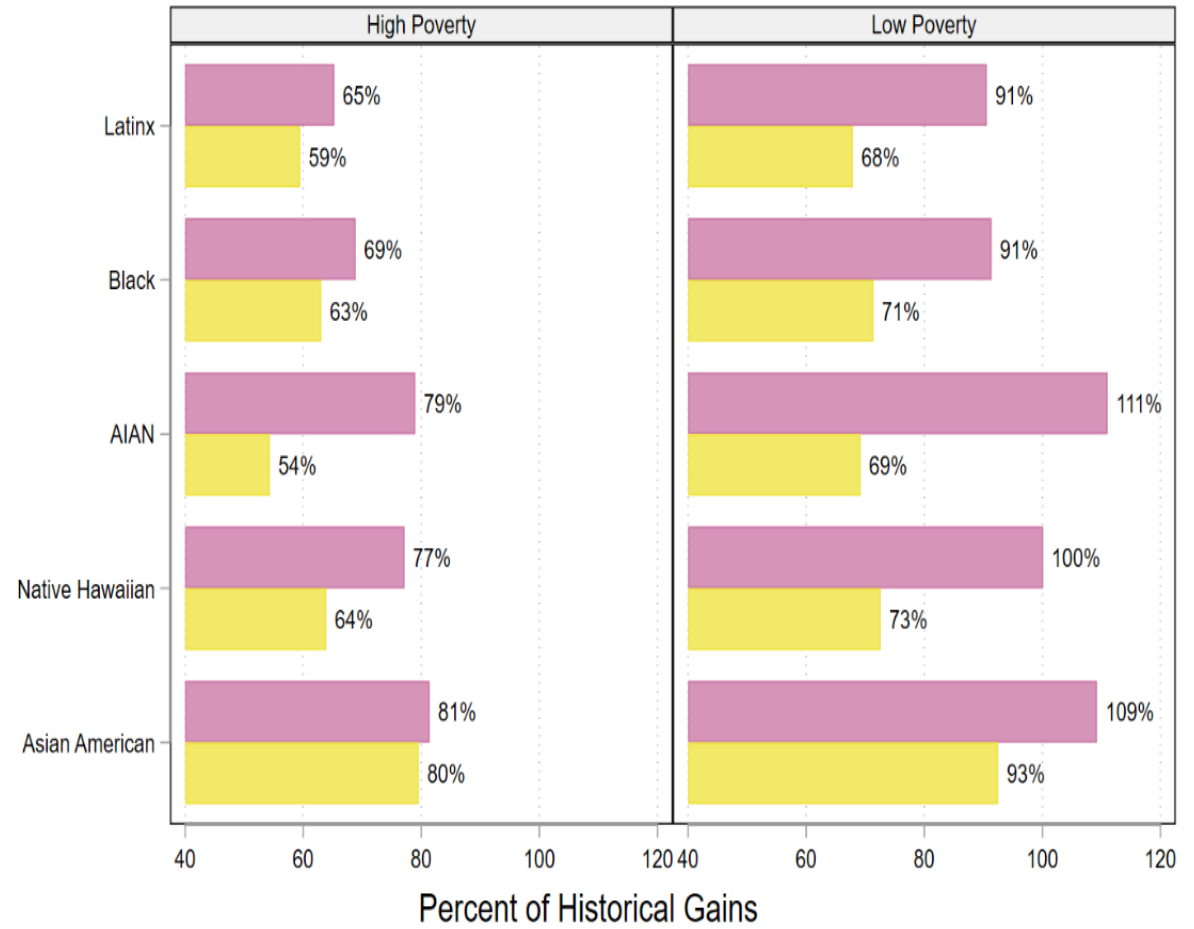
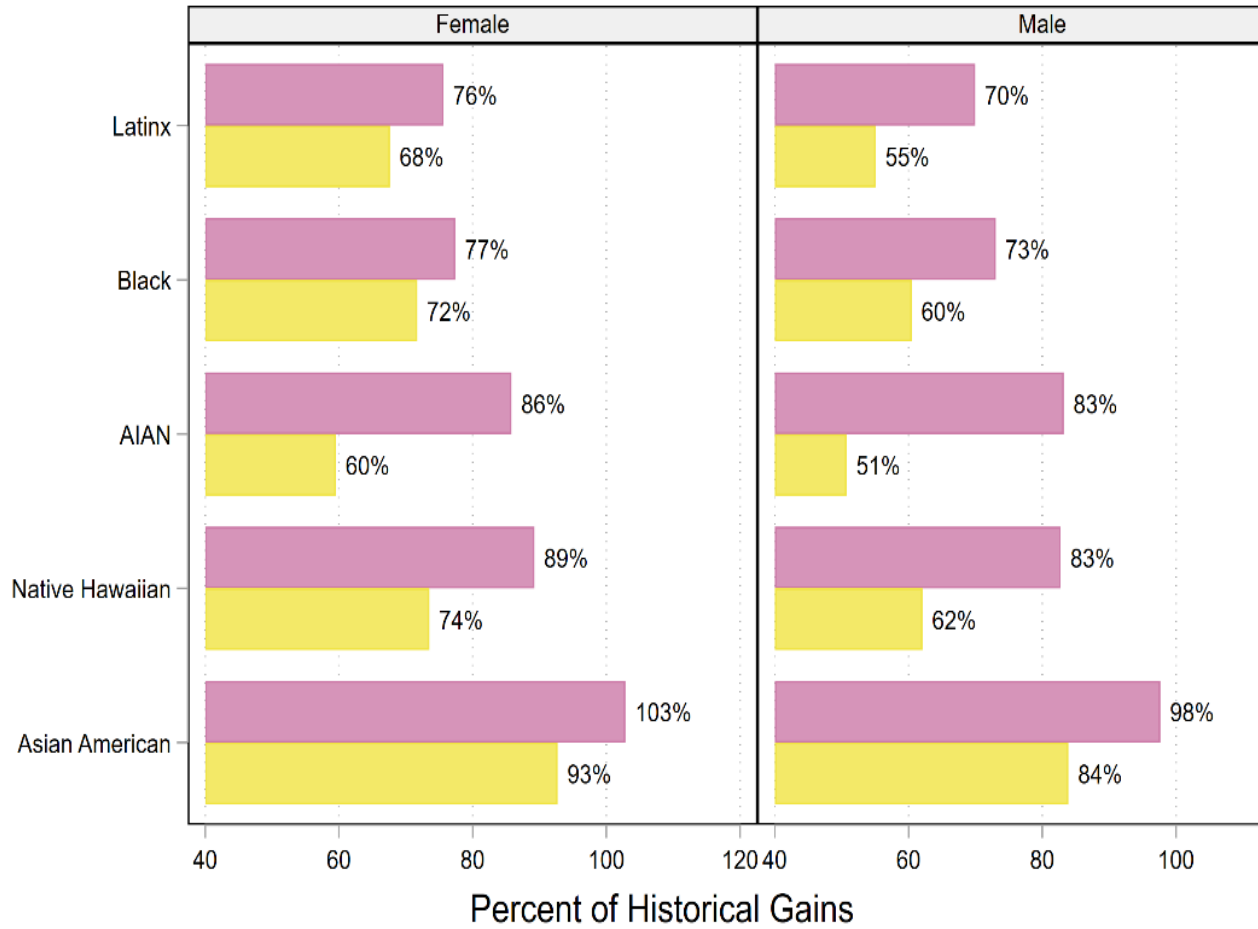
The purpose of this study is to document achievement trends for BIPOC students and provide policymakers with evidence to guide action to address these inequities. We examine the academic trajectories of students of color during the pandemic relative to a typical school year and seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the academic achievement of BIPOC students during the pandemic compare to national pre-pandemic patterns of achievement?
2. How do learning gains of BIPOC students compare to BIPOC student gains in prior years?

Learning gains relative to typical pre-pandemic learning gains



Learning gains relative to typical pre-pandemic learning gains by gender (left) by school poverty level (right)



Reading Math

Reading Math

Takeaways

- + All student groups exhibited average test score gains, indicating that students were learning during the pandemic, however the rate of learning was lower than during the pre-pandemic period
- + Math achievement was significantly impacted in fall 2020 but reading achievement was mostly parallel to prior years
- + Male BIPOC students and BIPOC students attending high-poverty schools were the least likely to achieve typical learning gains during the pandemic

Recommendations to support students

- + Improve remote learning
- + Extend learning time
- + Target federal and state resources to underserved schools (low-income, rural, BIPOC)
- + Address academic, social, and emotional needs



Gloria Ladson-Billings' challenge for

“education research to reconceptualize this notion of the achievement gap and to begin to think about the incredible debt that we as a nation have accumulated. So rather than focusing on telling people to catch up, we have to think about how we, all of us, will begin to pay down this mountain of debt that we have amassed at the expense of entire groups of people and their subsequent generations.”



National research, local action: A critical moment for education

- + How do these national patterns compare and/or contrast to your community/district?
- + How are your educators and leaders celebrating student strengths, successes, and resiliencies?
- + How are your districts targeting resources to support COVID recovery for students most impacted by the pandemic? (e.g., summer school/enrichment opportunities, extended learning time, high-quality tutoring programs, partnering with community-based organizations, etc.)

nwea

**believe in
what's possible**

