

STUDENT PERFORMANCE THROUGH THE LENS OF SUBGROUPS

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Abstract

When schools closed in the winter of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they did not immediately go into online mode. The fact that some students continued with online learning and others did not have any form of instruction during the early days of the pandemic created inequalities in access to learning. By the end of the 2019-2020 school year, many government agencies and states put mechanisms in place to ensure that online learning was a means to bridge these educational inequalities. Was this enough for students from different backgrounds? This study seeks to examine the disparities in subgroup performance and highlights the need to use 'the subgroup lens' and not only use 'the all students lens' in examining student performance during and after the pandemic.

Methods

»Data is from 47 schools in Michigan that use Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) fall assessments in grades 3-8

»Pre-pandemic data (2017-18 and 2018-19) performance compared to data during the pandemic (2019-20) - used fall to fall data

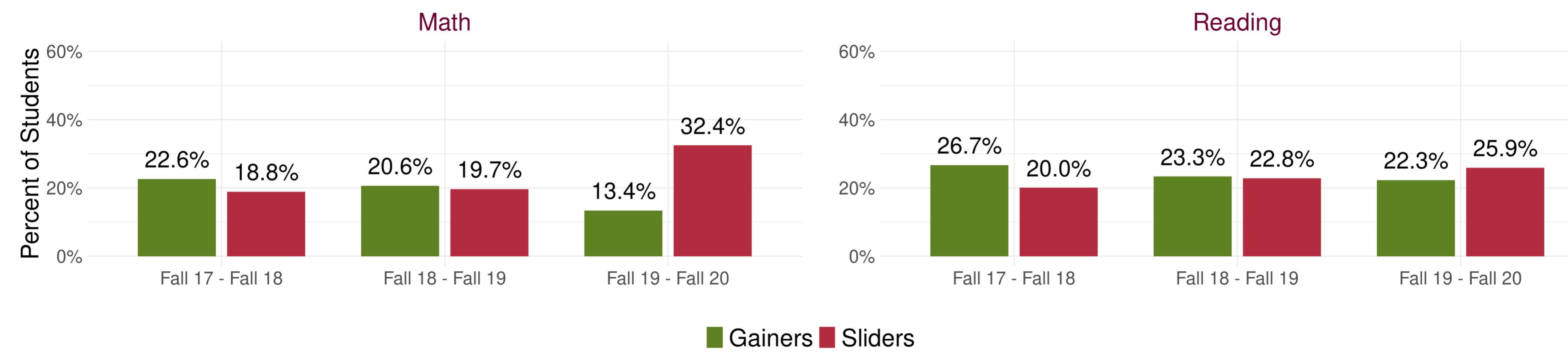
»**Sliders** are students who moved at least one achievement category below where they were during the fall of the prior year, while **Gainers** moved at least one level up between years

Research Questions

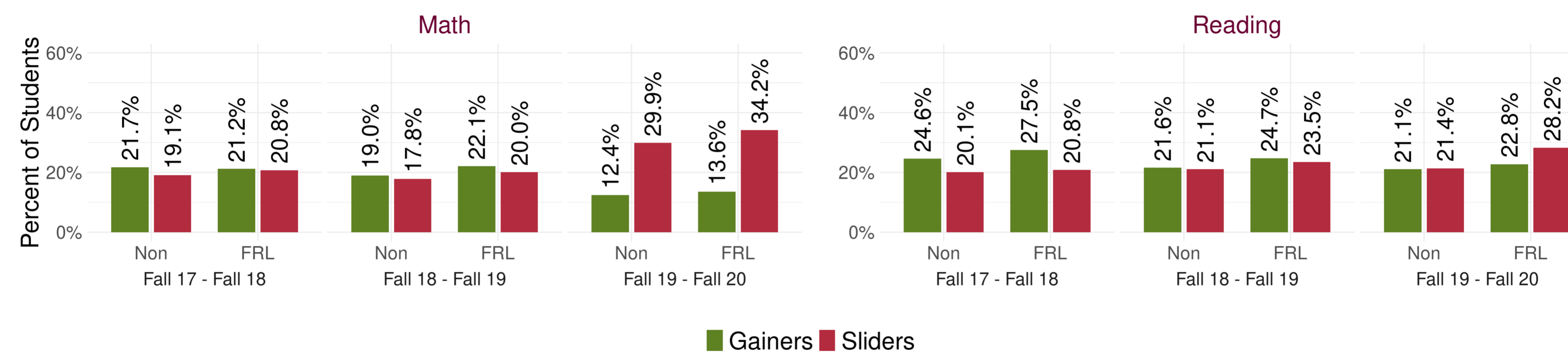
Investigated how student performance was affected for the following groups:

- »2017-18 vs. 2018-19 vs. 2019-20 (Comparisons across school years)
- »Free and Reduced Lunch vs. Non-Free/Reduced Lunch
- »Low-performing students vs. high performing students

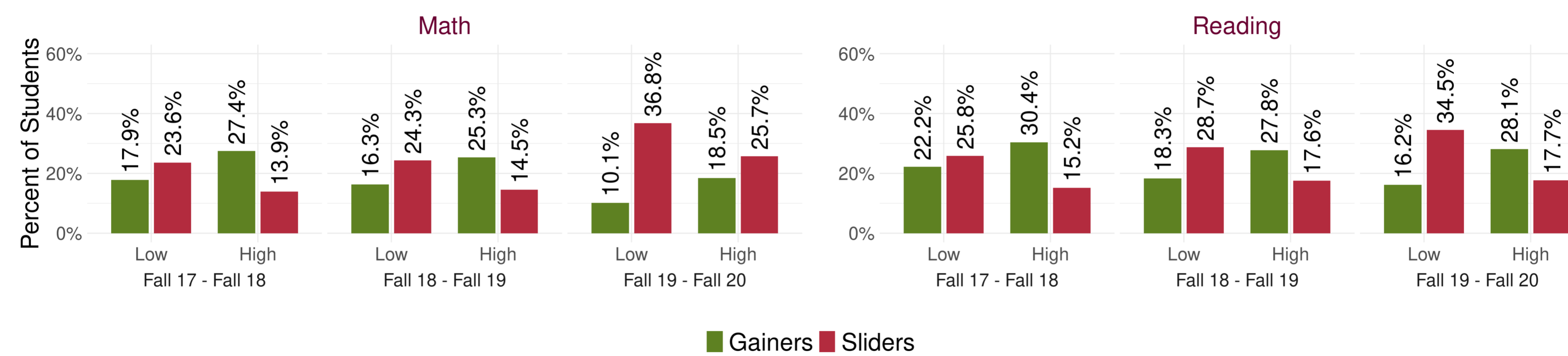
Student Performance Over Three Years



Free/Reduced Lunch Versus Non-Free/Reduced Lunch



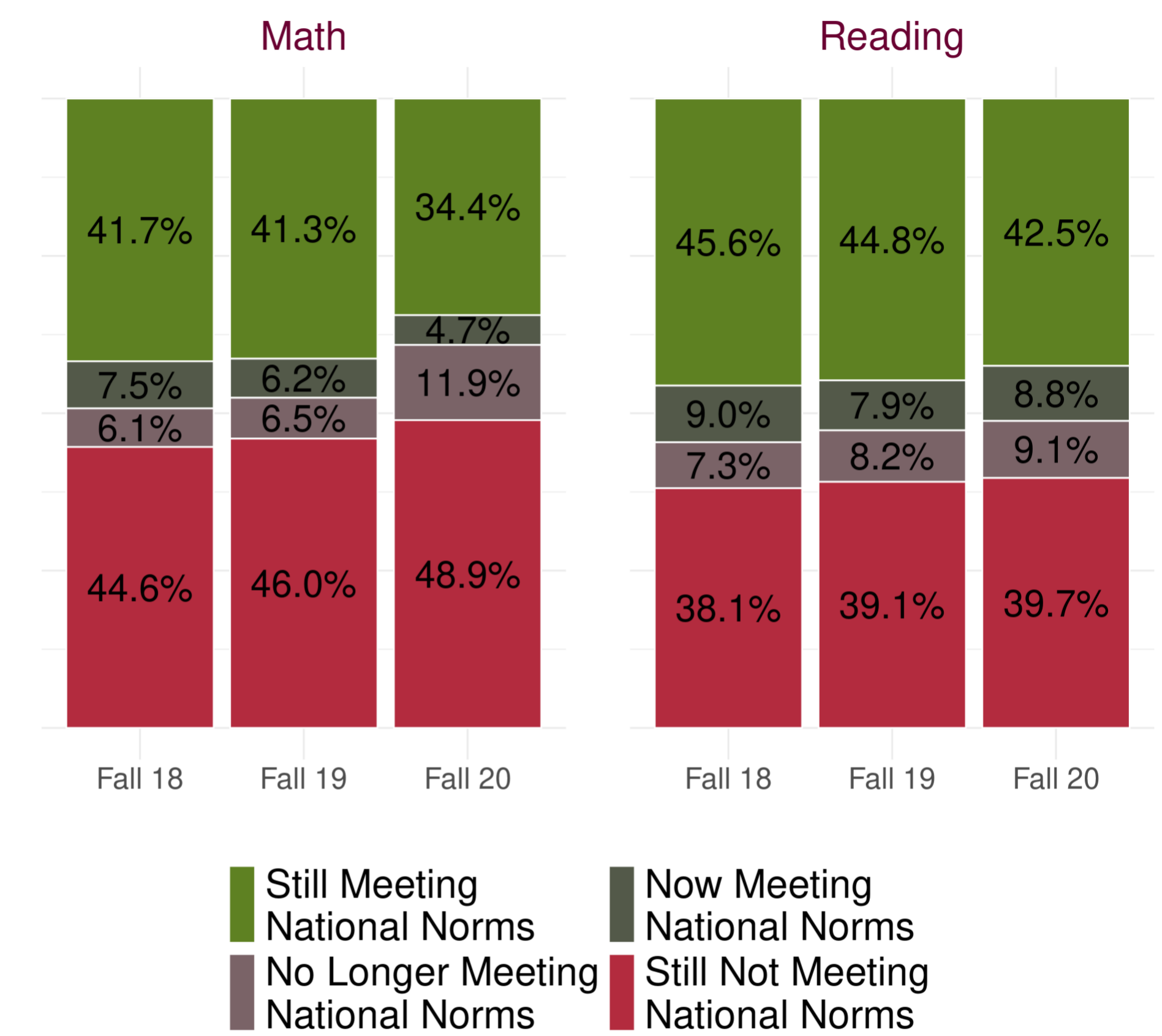
Low Achieving Students Versus High Achieving Students



Observations

- »At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, student performance declined in mathematics and not so much in reading. However, reading declines were observed later
- »There is a concerning growing gap between FRL and Non-FRL students in both mathematics and reading
- »There is a gap between low achieving and high achieving students in both math and reading in all three years. However, the gap got wider for reading during the pandemic

Change in Achievement Status



Conclusions

»It is important to look at the performance of subgroups in order to address the widening gaps between subgroups

»Other demographic groups such as ethnicities, special education students, and English language learners need to be examined in detail

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