

**Board of Trustees
Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting**

October 14, 2026 – 12:00 PM

This meeting will occur at the Lincoln Center (1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601) and via Microsoft Teams

To participate remotely, please use this link on Microsoft Teams:

<https://teams.microsoft.com>

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

This is the time for comment on public matters that are not on the agenda. Public matters do not include any pending legal matters, private personnel issues, or private student issues. Please do not attempt to address such issues at this time or you will be ruled out of order. The Board cannot enter into a discussion during General Public Comment.

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Review of 9/9/26 Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting Minutes

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

- A. Instructional Updates
- B. 2026 Fall Data Review
- C. 26-27 Student Achievement Goals and Action Plan

VI. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

VII. ADJOURNMENT



Board of Trustees
Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 9, 2026
12:00 p.m.
Lincoln Center and via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Trustees: *Others:*

Jenny Murnane Butcher, Committee Chair	Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
Keith Meyer, Trustee	Taylor Lassiter, Communications Specialist
Kay Satre, Trustee	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent 6-12
	Dr. Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent PreK-5
	Dr. Kaitlyn Hess, Data and Federal Programs Director
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Erin Hunt, Data and Assessment Director
	Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
	Jenny Jarvis, Director of Student Health Services & Special Education

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Jenny Murnane Butcher.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee reviewed and accepted the minutes from the June 16, 2026, Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. Assessment Update

District administration provided an update on the 2026–2027 assessment schedule and fall benchmarking activities. KinderSprouts students are participating in early literacy and numeracy assessments, while kindergarten students are assessed through Acadience Reading. The District is also piloting Acadience Math in ten kindergarten classrooms across five schools to monitor early numeracy development. Students in grades 1–8 participate in i-Ready Math, students in grades 2–8 participate in i-Ready Reading, and high school students participate in math assessments. The i-Ready assessment, now referred to as i-Ready Form, has been shortened to reduce testing time while maintaining comparability with previous years' results. Preliminary benchmarking results appear consistent with prior years. The District will continue administering the Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) assessment for grades 3–8. Discussion included assessment schedules, the timing and availability of student results, communication with families, and ongoing efforts to reduce testing burdens while maintaining meaningful instructional data.

B. Assessment Task Force for MAST

District administration reported that the Montana Board of Public Education voted in June 2026 to continue the MAST assessment program with recommendations for improvement. The Office of Public Instruction is establishing a statewide task force, which will include Erin Hunt, the District's Assessment Administrator. The task force is expected to meet biweekly from September through early November. Its focus will include improving the instructional usefulness of assessment data, strengthening reporting processes, reducing testing burdens, expanding professional development, and building educator confidence in assessment results. The Committee also received information regarding the District's participation in an Assessment Coherence Project through Education First. This initiative will review K–12 assessment practices, particularly in grades K–8, to evaluate assessment effectiveness, alignment, and opportunities to reduce unnecessary testing.

C. 2026–2027 Curriculum Work

District administration provided an overview of curriculum initiatives and instructional priorities for the 2026–2027 school year across all grade levels.

Early Learning and Grades Pre-K–5: Updates included continued development of the KinderSprouts program, early literacy and numeracy instruction, and partnerships with community organizations, including Florence Crittenton and Zero to Five, to strengthen kindergarten readiness. Additional priorities include implementation of the District's writing framework using Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), a pilot of Word Origins to strengthen literacy skills, continued refinement of standards-based grading practices, and transitioning elementary report cards into PowerSchool. The District is also implementing

CharacterStrong social-emotional learning curriculum and providing ongoing instructional support and professional development.

Grades 6–8: Curriculum work includes updated TCI Geography Alive resources, English Language Arts standards alignment, and continued implementation of the writing framework. The District is piloting Carnegie Learning mathematics resources in Pre-Algebra and Algebra I, supported by professional development and instructional coaching. Additional priorities include expanding collaborative teaching practices, strengthening targeted student interventions, and enhancing advanced learning opportunities through partnerships between middle school and high school educators.

Grades 9–12: Updates included revised Advanced Placement course materials, continued English Language Arts standards alignment, and participation in the Carnegie Learning mathematics pilot. Collaborative teaching practices and partnerships supporting advanced learning opportunities will continue at both high schools.

Districtwide discussion emphasized research-based instructional practices, curriculum alignment, consistent instructional expectations, and ongoing professional development. Administration also reviewed implementation of revised Montana mathematics standards and preparations for the upcoming implementation of revised English Language Arts standards.

D. Summer Professional Development Recap

District administration provided a recap of professional development opportunities offered during the summer of 2026. Training included Universal Design for Learning (UDL), writing instruction, curriculum implementation, mathematics instruction, behavioral support strategies, assessment practices, and collaborative teaching. Additional opportunities included Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training, Section 504 review, physical education professional development, STEM resources, and participation in the Office of Public Instruction Summer Institute. Universal Design for Learning training, facilitated by Novak Consulting, focused on providing multiple ways for students to access instruction, engage in learning, and demonstrate understanding. Additional training led by Dr. Mahoney addressed student behavior, motivation, and strategies for supporting diverse learning needs. Administration emphasized the importance of high-quality professional development aligned with District instructional priorities. The Committee also discussed revised state standards and expressed interest in future discussions regarding grading practices, standards-based grading, and high school academic recognition, including valedictorian and salutatorian designations.

VI. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

There were no further comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m. by Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher.

FALL DATA 2026



OUR VISION

Helena Public Schools foster dynamic educational experiences that prepare all students for life.

OUR MISSION

Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner. This mission will be supported through the wise use of resources to meet students' needs, regardless of interests and talents.

Students, families, educators and the community are committed to sharing the responsibility for creating a student-centered educational community that acknowledges learning as a life-long process.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

01.

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

02.

Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

03.

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

04.

Each student has access to personalized learning and to qualified, caring adults.

05.

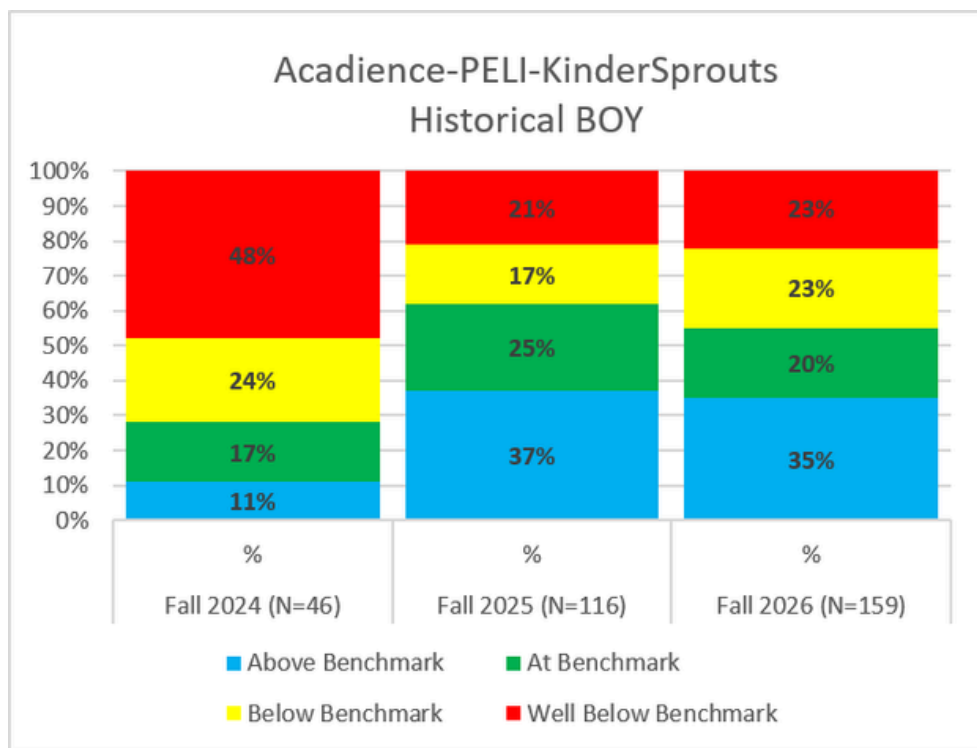
Each graduate is prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

HPS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

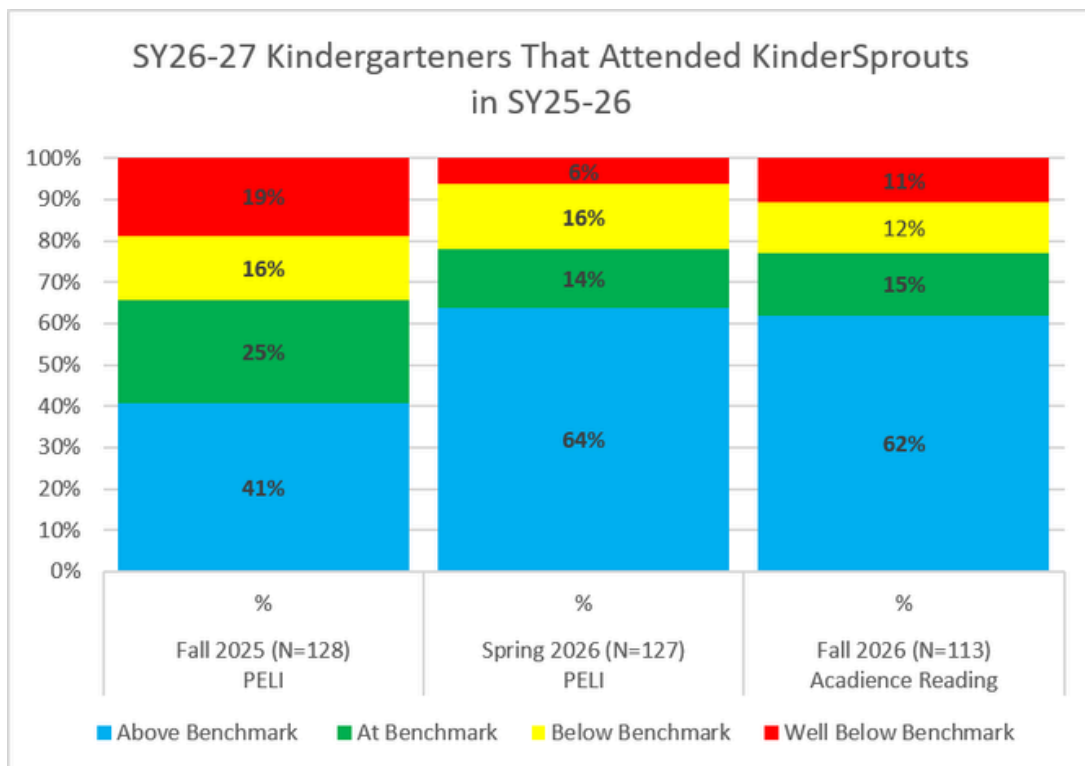
The Helena Public Schools Comprehensive Assessment System is designed to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education that meets rigorous academic standards. Our mission is to provide accurate, meaningful assessments that support student learning, inform instructional practices, and guide decision-making at every level of our school district.

DISTRICT BENCHMARKS

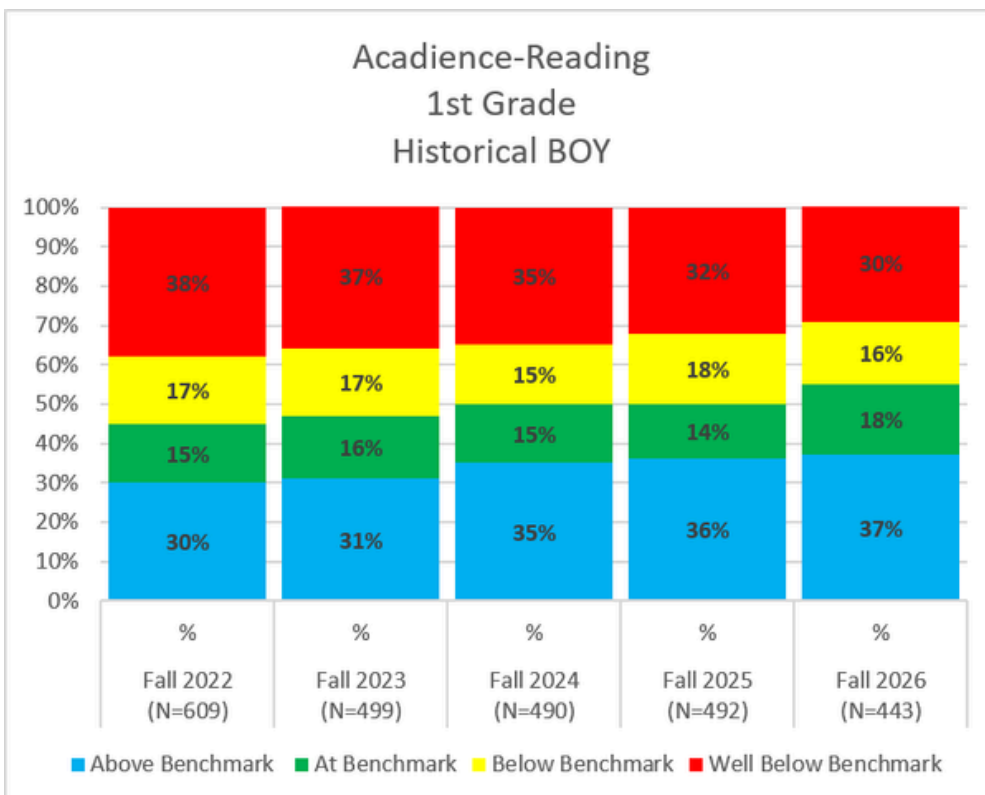
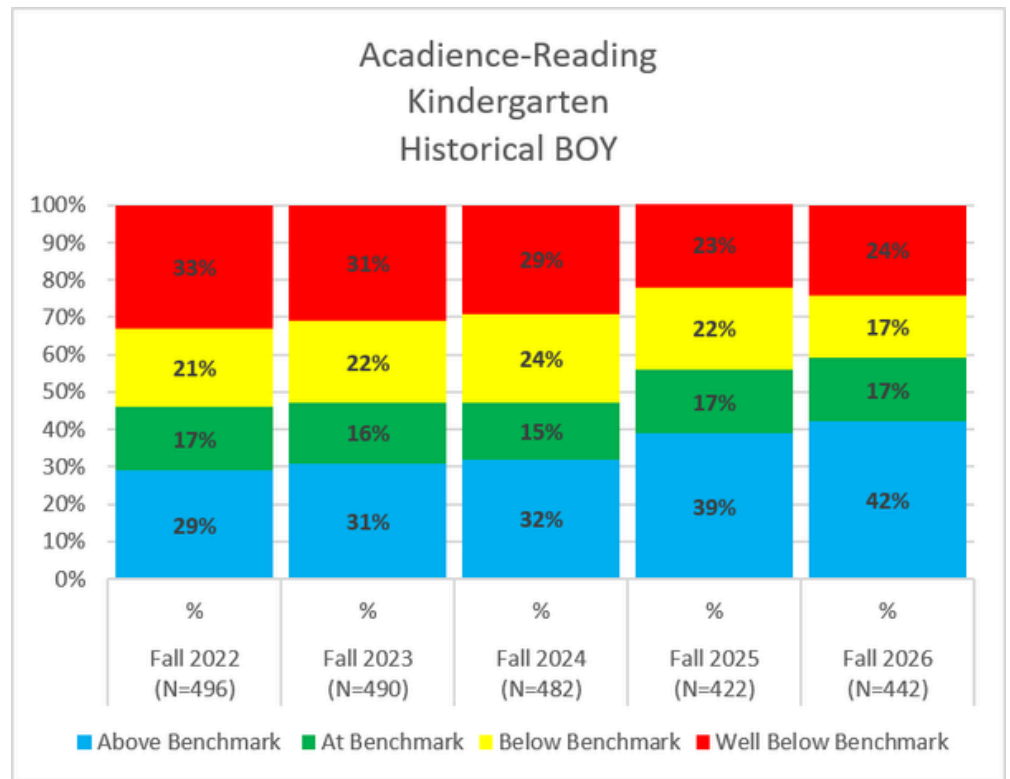
Assessment	Content Area	Grade Levels
Acadience-PELI	Early Literacy	preK
myIGDIs	Early Numeracy	preK
Acadience-Reading	Early Literacy	K & 1st
Acadience-Math	Early Numeracy	K (pilot)
i-Ready	Math	1st-8th
	Reading	2nd-8th
NWEA MAP	Math & Reading	9th & 10th

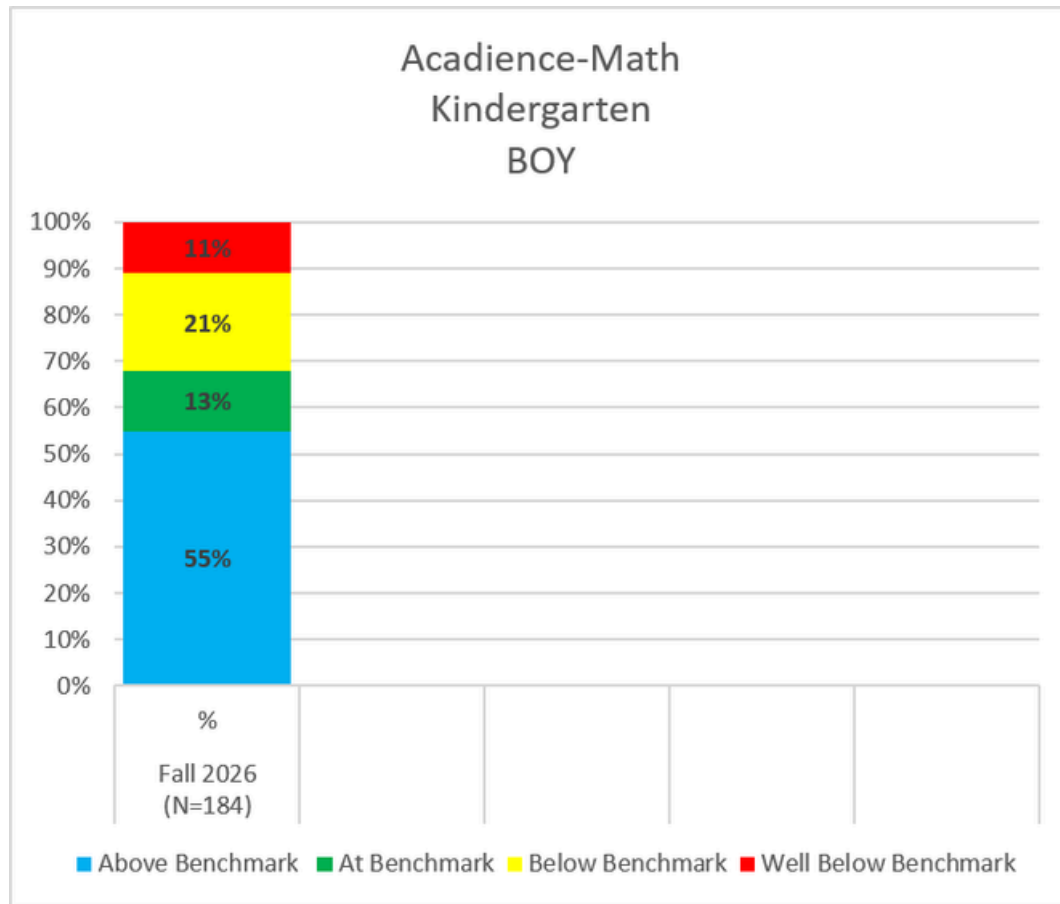


- Cut scores for Kindersprouts were different for SY24-25.
- There are 9 classrooms in 7 schools this year.



- The Acadience Reading sub-tests that are administered change throughout the year.

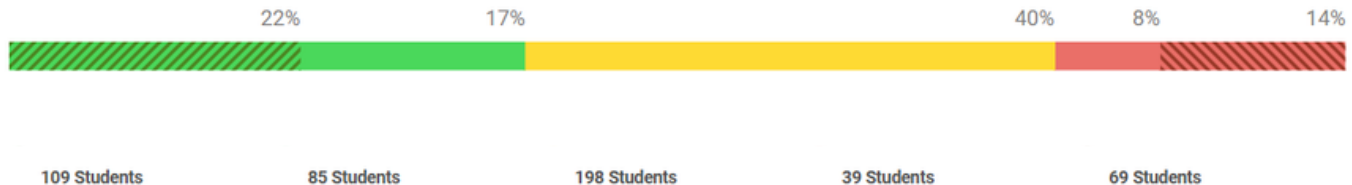




- New in SY26-27
- 5 schools; 10 classrooms
- 3 subtests for early numeracy (remain the same in each window)
 - Benchmark cut score increases each window

Students in the “Yellow”

Students Assessed/Total: 500/513



*Reading--All HPS 4th Gr Students

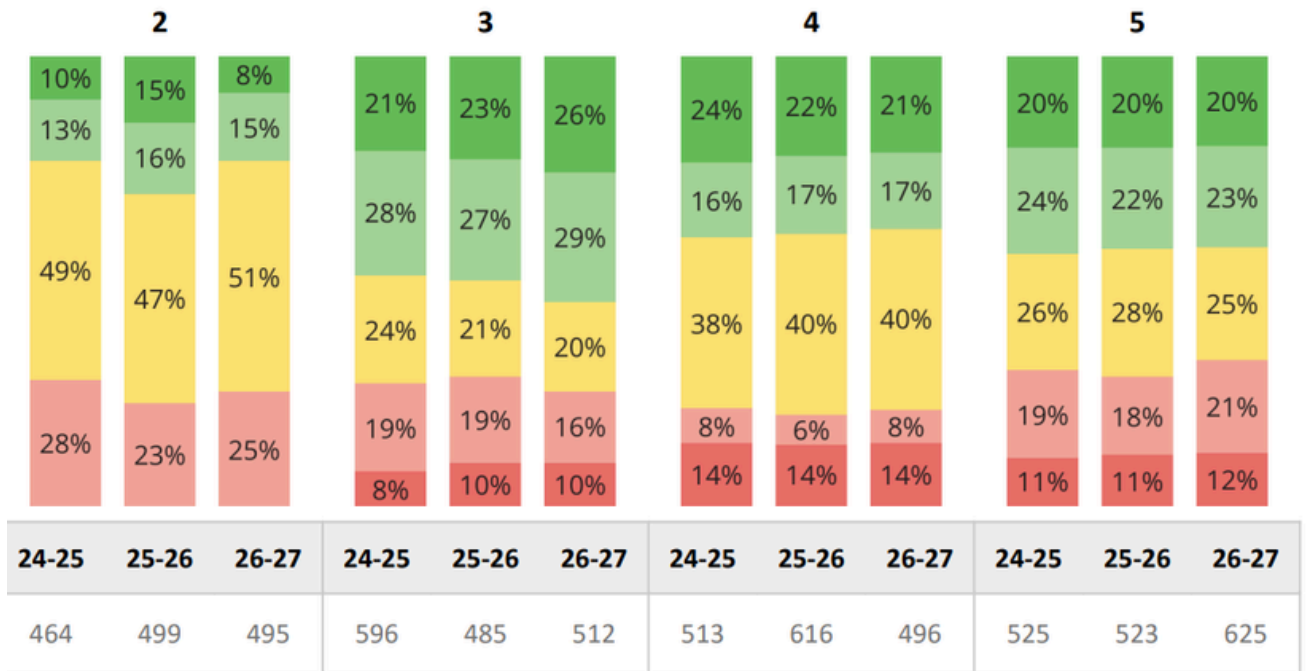
4th Grade i-Ready Reading (Fall)										
SS Range	≤473		474-495		496-556		557-578		≥579	
Percentile Range	≤18th		19th-27th		28th-69th		70th-82nd		≥83rd	
Annual Typical Growth	ATG: 28		ATG: 23		ATG: 20		ATG: 17		ATG: 12	
Annual Stretch Growth	ASG: 62		ASG: 50		ASG: 36		ASG: 27		ASG: 20	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%

4th Grade i-Ready Reading (Spring)										
SS Range	≤473		474-495		496-556		557-578		≥579	
Percentile Range	≤11th		11th-17th		17th-50th		50th-66th		≥67th	
Annual Typical Growth	ATG: 28		ATG: 23		ATG: 20		ATG: 17		ATG: 12	
Annual Stretch Growth	ASG: 62		ASG: 50		ASG: 36		ASG: 27		ASG: 20	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%

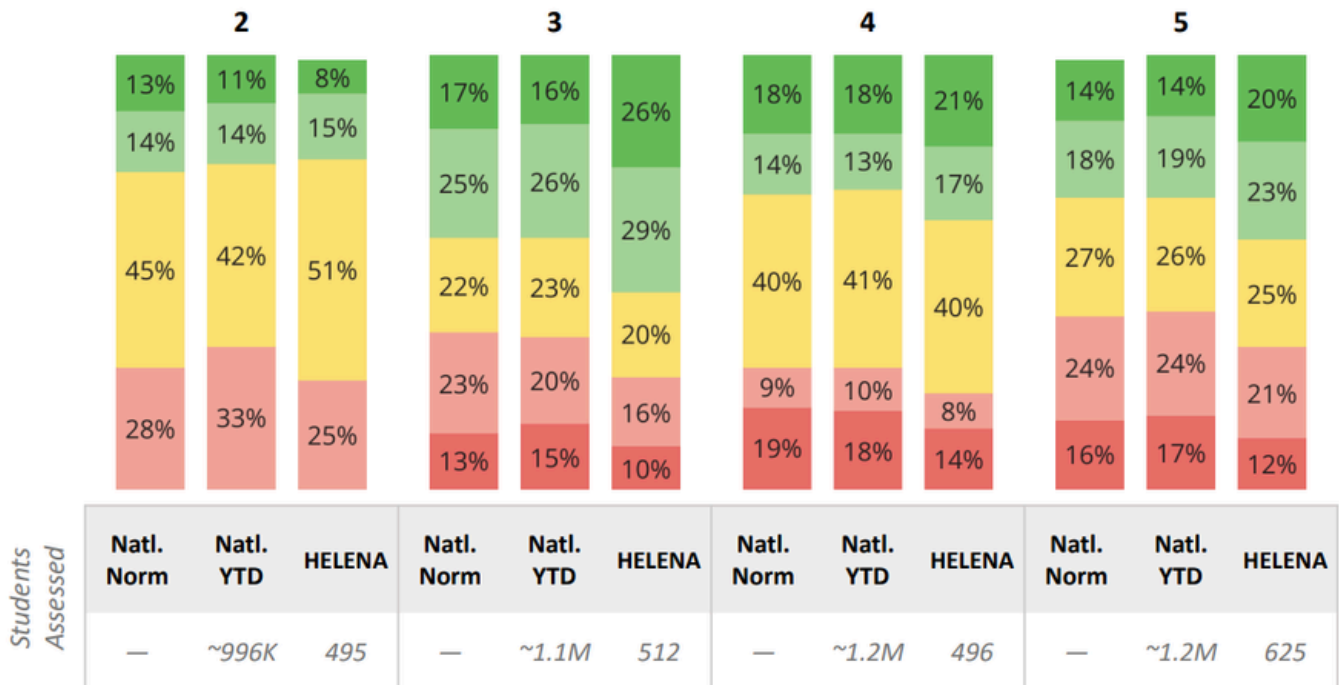
- i-Ready assesses students at grade level, so BOY is very different from EOY.
- Students in the yellow vary a lot and can have very different needs.
 - Getting to proficiency takes time and strategic action
 - Nationally, an average of 50% of students meet Typical Growth and an average of 25-35% meet Stretch Growth.
 - Typical Growth and Stretch Growth SS measures decrease significantly over time (8th Gr Reading for At/Above GL is 4 points).

Note: The i-Ready Inform is shorter and significantly reduced testing times across all grade levels. For example, 5th grade reading was 30 minutes shorter and 5th grade math was 25 minutes shorter.

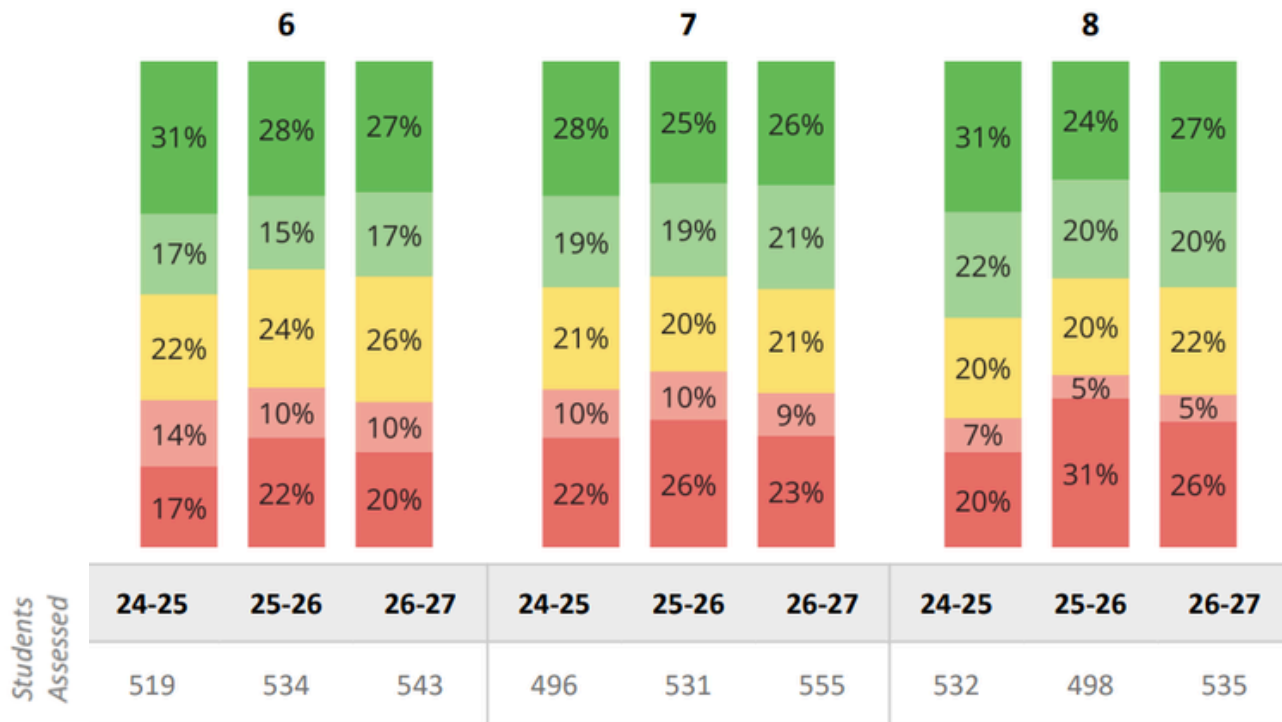
HPS Baseline Placement Over Time



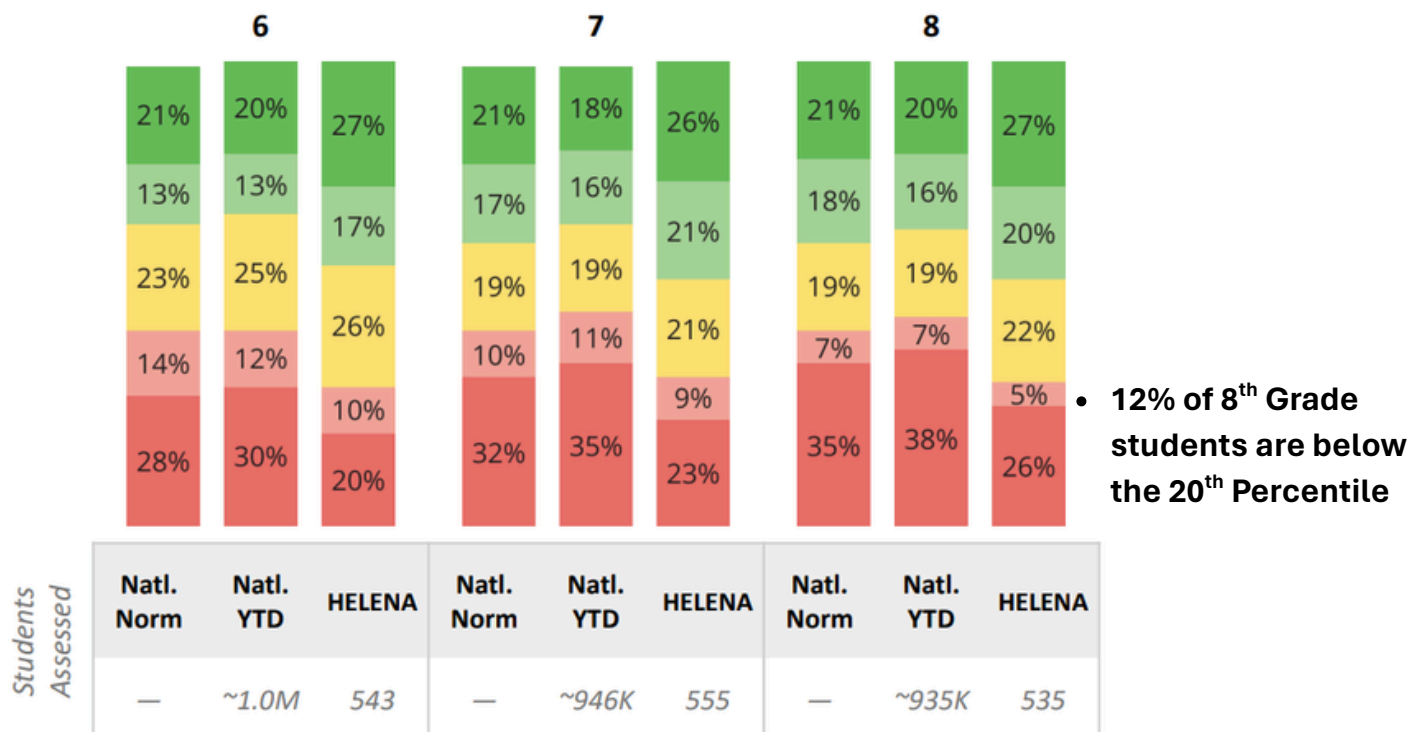
Comparison to National Norms



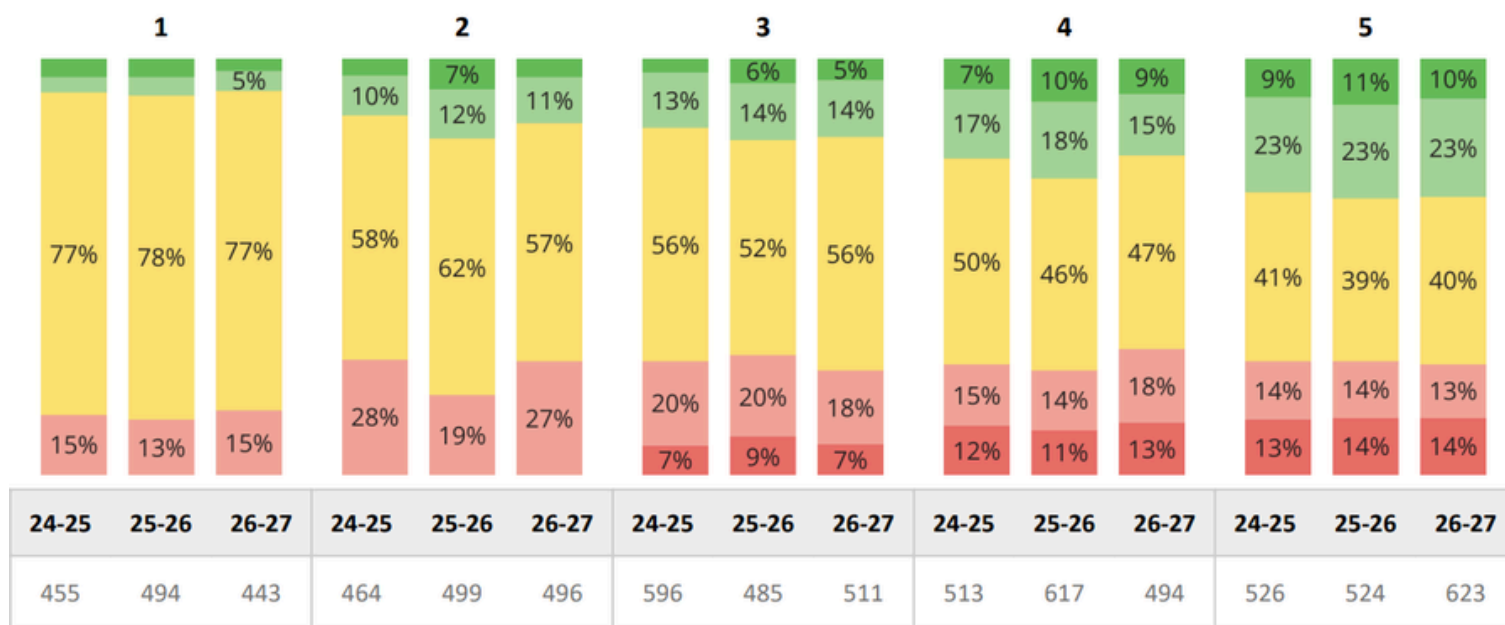
HPS Baseline Placement Over Time



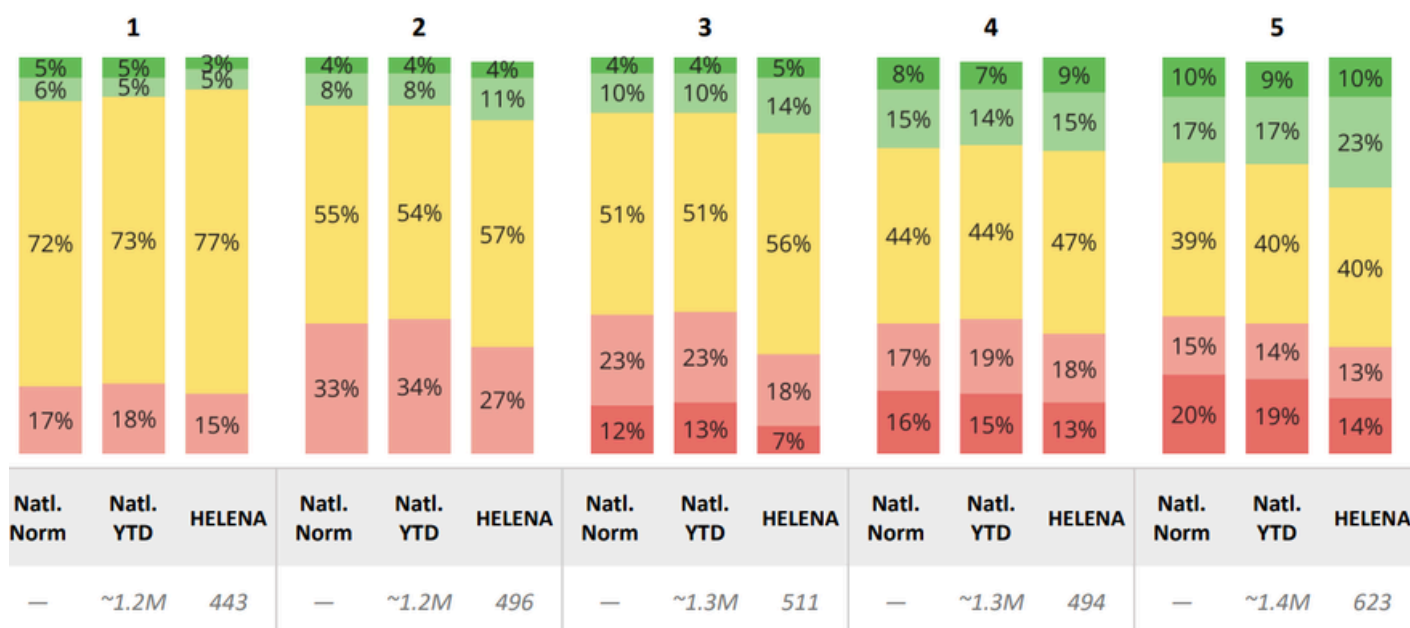
Comparison to National Norms



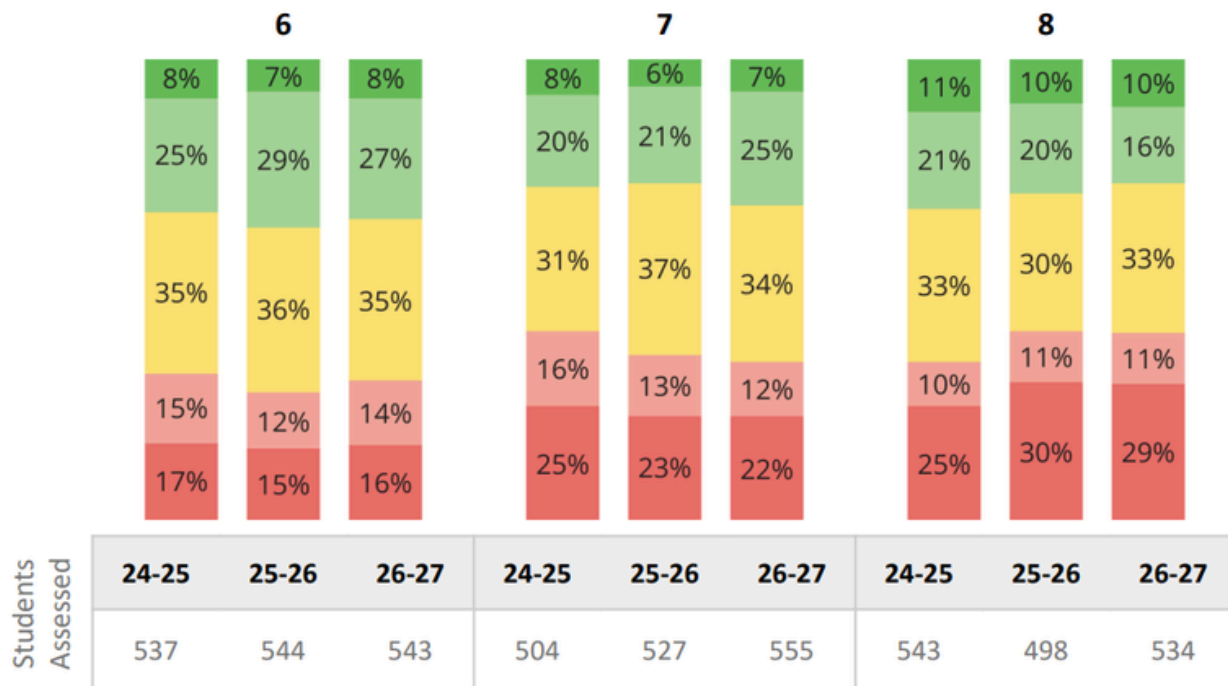
HPS Baseline Placement Over Time



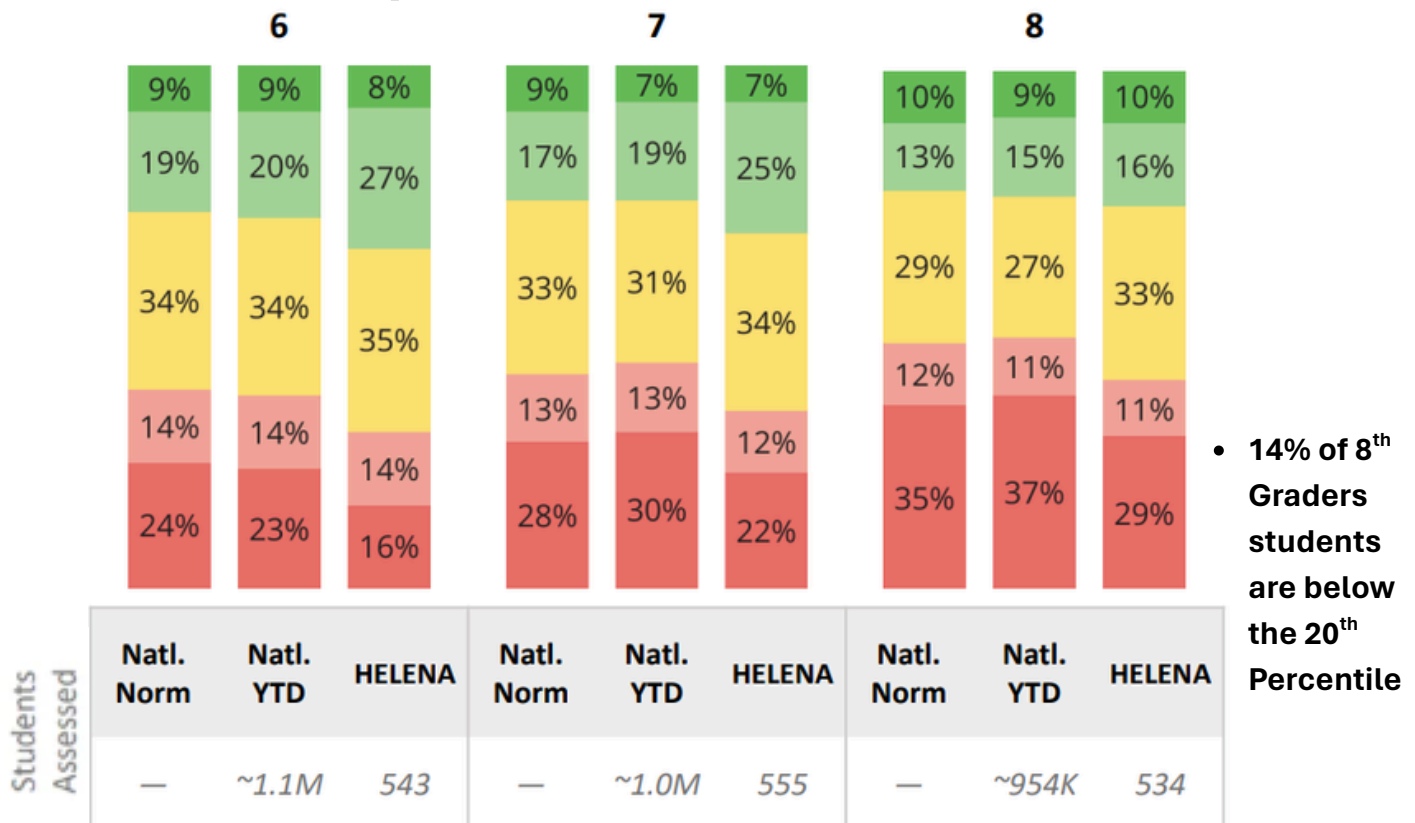
Comparison to National Norms



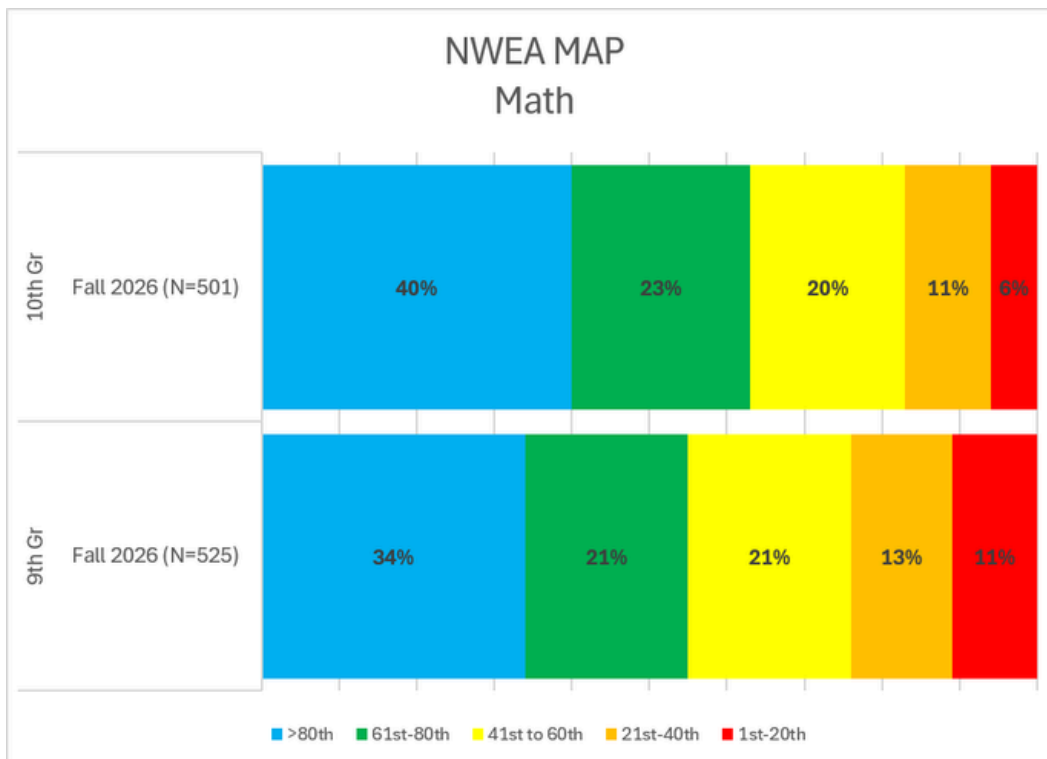
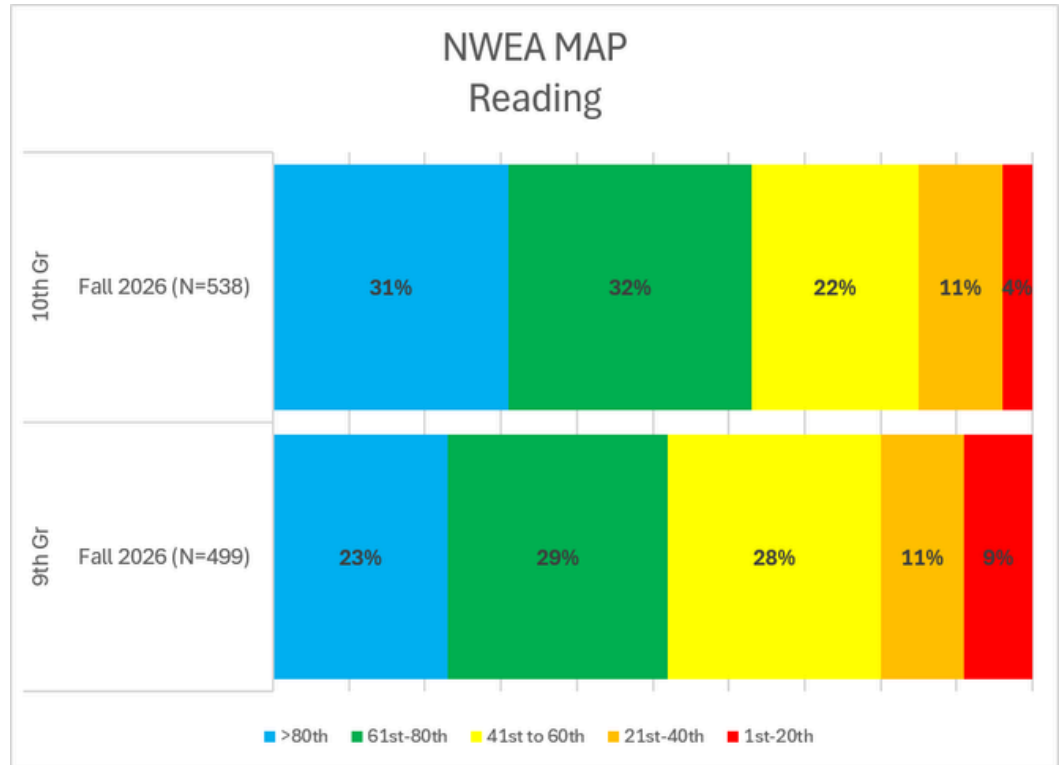
HPS Baseline Placement Over Time



Comparison to National Norms



- Norms describe “what is” and benchmarks describe “what should be”.
- MAP does not describe student proficiency-- rather it describes where students currently are in comparison to their peers.



Reading Median Percentiles:

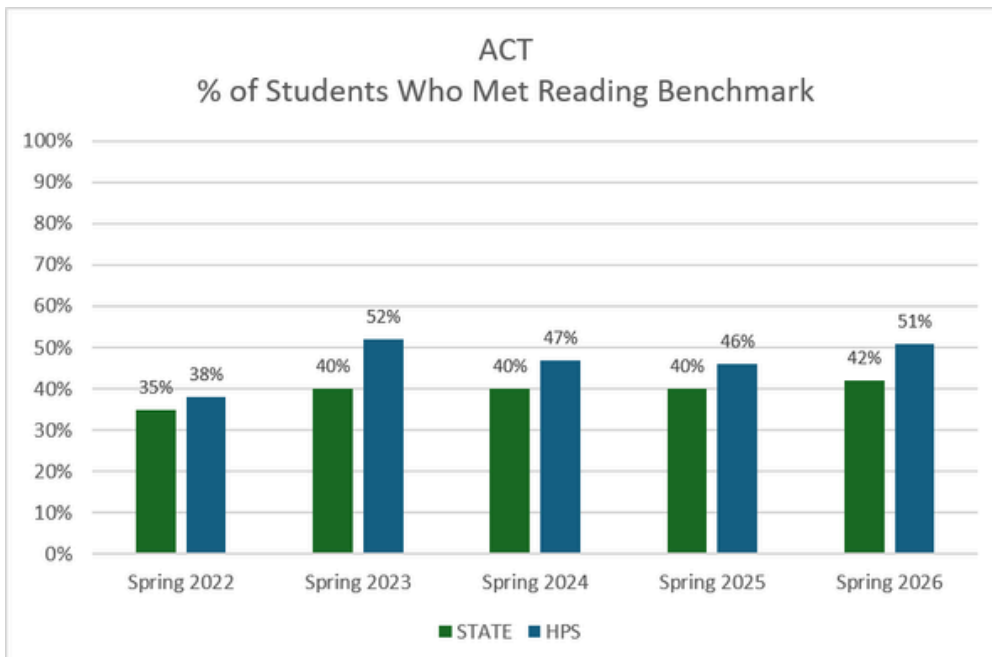
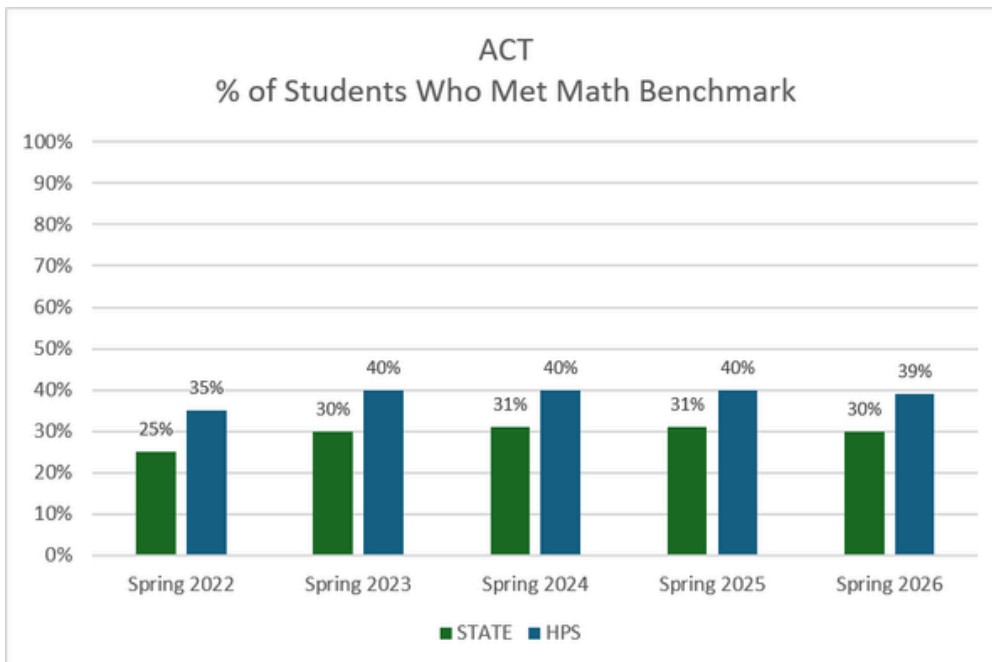
- 9th Gr-63rd
- 10th Gr-68th

Math Median Percentiles:

- 9th Gr-64th
- 10th Gr-72nd

Students Projected to meet ACT Math/Reading Benchmark (Score $\geq$ 22)				
	Math		Reading	
	#	%	#	%
9th Gr (Class of 2030)	138	26%	140	28%
10th Gr (Class of 2029)	190	38%	250	46%

- 9th and 10th Gr students predicted to meet ACT benchmark for math scored in the 85th percentile and above.
- 9th grade students predicted to meet the ACT benchmark for reading scored in the 79th percentile and above.
- 10th grade students predicted to meet the ACT benchmark for reading scored in the 73rd percentile and above.



- Note: All grade levels are different cohorts of students
 - 9th Gr-Class of 2030
 - 10th Gr-Class of 2029
 - 11th Gr-Class of 2027

Helena Public Schools

ACTION PLAN



Student Achievement Goals

2026-2027
updated 10.6.265

Helena Public Schools is committed to the success of every student. These action plan goals are based on critical benchmarks at each stage of a student's education, tracking progress and growth to ensure students are on a trajectory for success.

Focus on: MTSS: Building understanding and continuing implementation of evidence-based instruction across all tiers, in all settings, K-12.

How? What?	Who?
☐ Host ongoing Principal PLCs to deeply understanding the LEARN Framework expectations.	Asst. Supt./Curriculum Building Principals
☐ Principals lead SLTs in analyzing practices in Tier 1 that can contribute to student growth; set building Action Plan goals and collect data.	Teachers Building Principals
☐ Training on Instructional Rounds/Learning Walks; build a common instructional round tool.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Curriculum/Assessment
☐ Elementary principals visit all elementary buildings to get a feel for each building's culture and operations.	Asst. Supt./Curriculum Building Principals
☐ Provide more UDL training; initial implementation of practices across all levels and tiers of instruction expected.	

Goal 2: By spring 2027, 60% of Helena Public Schools' first-grade students will score At or Above Benchmark (Reading Composite Score), as measured by the Acadience Benchmark assessment.

Subgoal 2a: By spring 2027, decrease number of Well Below students to <28% (8 students), as measured by the Acadience Benchmark assessment.

Subgoal 2b: Current KinderSprouts students, who continue to attend HPS, will be proficient spring of 2029.

How? What?	Who?
☐ More teams of K-1 teachers are engaging in Continuous Improvement Cycles using the Pathways of Progress.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Curriculum/Assessment
☐ Develop training that can be added to Canvas to support On-Demand training for educators (both new and refreshers).	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Curriculum/Assessment
☐ Continue training and support for the use of UFLI Foundations during core instruction across all tiers; training with SPED teams being developed.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Curriculum/SPED

Goal 3: By spring 2027, an average of 64% of Helena Public Schools fourth-grade students will score on or above grade level in reading, as evidenced by the i-Ready Reading Inform benchmark assessment.

Subgoal 3a: By spring 2027, maintain the number of students proficient in the cohort last spring (May 2026) to this spring (May 2027).

Subgoal 3b: By spring 2027, an average of 60% of HPS students (grades 2-8) will have improved placement according to i-Ready Inform Growth metrics.

How? What?	Who?
☐ More teams of 2-4 teachers are engaging in Continuous Improvement Cycles using the Assessment Decision Tree (helps refine intervention needs).	Teachers Building Principals
☐ Ongoing professional development regarding complex text and reading scaffolds for students.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists
☐ Pilot Word Origins in grades 3-5; track progress of student performance through classroom data and progress monitoring.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Title Instruction Specialists Building Principals
☐ Writing data tracking (K-5); provide ongoing professional development for implementation support.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists

Goal 4: By spring **2027**, an average of 62% of Helena Public Schools' fourth-grade students will score on or above grade level in math, as evidenced by the i-Ready Math Inform assessment.

Subgoal 4a: By spring **2026**, maintain the number of students proficient in the cohort last spring (May 2026) to this spring (May 2027).

Subgoal 4b: By spring **2027**, an average of 65% of HPS students (grades 1-8) will have improved placement according to i-Ready Inform Growth metrics.

How? What?	Who?
☐ Conduct building walkthroughs with Dr. Douglass; provide feedback to building principals on observations and next steps.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Curriculum/Consultant Building Principals
☐ Ongoing Professional Development on Mathematical Discourse and manipulative use for all levels.	Curriculum/Consultant
☐ Continue developing understandings around the use of Catalyst for skill supports.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Curriculum/Consultant

Goal 5: By spring **2027**, an average of 55% of Helena Public Schools seventh-grade students will score on or above grade level in Reading as evidenced by the i-Ready Reading Inform assessment.

Subgoal: 60% of students meet Annual Typical Growth and 30% meet Annual Stretch Growth.

How? What?	Who?
☐ More teams of 5-12 teachers are engaging in Continuous Improvement Cycles using the Assessment Decision Tree.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Title Instruction Specialists Curriculum/Consultant
☐ Continued standards work with STRIVE and Liz Tuss to build out a progression of skills tied to the revised ELA standards.	STRIVE Inst. Systems Support Specialists Title Instruction Specialists Curriculum/Consultant
☐ Support implementation of the UDL-aligned co-teaching model; provide PD and support collaboration time.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Title Instruction Specialists Curriculum/Consultant

Goal 6: By spring **2027**, an average of 53% of Helena Public Schools seventh-grade students will score on or above grade level in Math as evidenced by the i-Ready Reading Inform assessment.

Subgoal: 60% of students meet Annual Typical Growth and 30% meet Annual Stretch Growth.

How? What?	Who?
☐ 6-8 pilot Carnegie's Clear Math to experience shift in instructional practices.	Carnegie/Dr. Douglass Title Instruction Specialists Curriculum
☐ High school teams Pre-Alg. and Alg 1 pilot Carnegie's Clear Math to experience shift in instructional practices.	Carnegie/Dr. Douglass Title Instruction Specialists Curriculum
☐ Middle and High School Task Force will continue work on aligning standards to ACT and incorporating Building Thinking Classrooms strategies.	Dr. Douglass Curriculum
☐ Support implementation of the UDL-aligned co-teaching model; provide PD and support collaboration time.	Inst. Systems Support Specialists Title Instruction Specialists Curriculum/Consultant

Goal 7: By spring **2027**, 36% of Helena Public Schools' 11th graders will meet three or four ACT benchmarks.

How? What?	Who?
☐ Continue curricular alignment work with ELA and Math to crosswalk ACT standards with State Standards.	Building SLTs/Principals Task Forces Curriculum/Assessment

Index of Acronyms Used

Title	Acronym	Definition
School Leadership Team	SLT	The SLT is comprised of building-level staff. Members consist of different grade levels, departments, and/or specialist areas. Teams meet monthly to review their building-level action plan, evaluate progress of their action plan goals and determine next steps.
What I Need	WIN	WIN groups are Tier 1 and Tier 2 intervention groups. Teachers build flexible groups based on data and then target instructional strategies to build skills students need to meet the criteria of standards, such as remediation, repetition, or extension.
System Support Specialist	TOSA	These positions support professional development for teachers and staff on high-priority projects for the district that directly impact student achievement. SPED and Curriculum have TOSAs.
Title Instruction Specialist	TIS	Formerly, Title Coach, these positions are funded with Title dollars and are positions within the HPS Title schools. They are a blend of interventionists and teacher support (coach), focused on improving student outcomes through sustainable modalities and growing teaching understanding and practice.
Professional Learning Community	PLC	PLCs are groups of teachers that meet weekly to review student data and make instructional decisions based on that data.
University of Florida Literacy Institute	UFLI	Refers to the Foundations curricular resources UFLI Foundations and UFLI Word Origins.