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VILLAGE

**THE INITIATIVE
FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

**Fifth Annual
Equity Report 2022**

**www.villagewjcc.org
villagewjcc@gmail.com**

OUR MISSION

The Village is an organization formed to promote unity and education while building a bridge between local schools and parents, to help them get connected with the tools available to aid each child in reaching their full potential. Our goal is to create the blueprint to build villages wherever they are needed.

OUR VISION

We will work with Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) schools to address the achievement gap and the disproportionate percentages of expulsion and suspension of minority youth which leads to the pipeline to prison. We also seek to educate the community on voting at all levels and promote social justice by inviting everyone to be part of the process.

Fifth Annual Evidence-Based Equity Report

What is equity?

According to the Virginia Department of Education, Education Equity is achieved when we eliminate "the **predictability** of student outcomes based on race, gender, zip code, ability, socioeconomic status or languages spoken at home."

This report marks The Village Initiative's fifth consecutive year producing its Annual Equity Report. The Equity Report takes stock of efforts to achieve equity in the Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) Schools. The Village works with its partners at William & Mary to analyze data from the Virginia Department of Education together with peer-reviewed research and national policy analyses to provide evidence-based analysis and recommendations.

In this year's report, we evaluate WJCC Schools' success in meeting its own goals as outlined in their five-year Strategic Plan, "Elevate Beyond Excellence," and give special attention to new data on Gifted Education made available for the first time since 2018.

Is the WJCC School Division achieving its goals?

To serve as a blueprint for 2018-2023, the WJCC School Division developed a five year strategic plan, titled Elevate: Beyond Excellence. In this year's Equity Report, The Village Initiative evaluates whether the Division has achieved the equity goals it set for itself. The six goals are:

- Goal 1: Academic Achievement/College & Career Readiness
- Goal 2: Educational Equity
- Goal 3: Communication & Engagement
- Goal 4: Safety & Security
- Goal 5: Human Capital & Positive Culture
- Goal 6: Organizational Efficiency & Effectiveness



Look for this symbol throughout the report to learn more about the WJCC School Division's goals and whether their strategies to achieve them have been successful.

Without Teachers and Staff, Our Students Cannot Succeed

“ We are overwhelmed by the task of educating with limited resources... Middle and High school teachers are covering classes during their invaluable planning time and in many cases teaching two classes at once. For myself, I don't have a licensed SPED teacher for my inclusion classroom because my colleague quit. Lafayette doesn't have enough SPED teachers and teachers assistants.
We are at a crisis.”

- WJCC teacher

We are facing a national crisis in the teaching profession. Teachers and school staff are underpaid and undervalued. They have faced unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic.

Amid this crisis , WJCC Schools must take bold steps to recruit and retain its staff.

“ The system is struggling...and the students are picking up the tab... It breaks my heart, not only for the kids, but for the staff that has to pick up the burden.” - WJCC staff

Listen to Our Teachers' Voices



The increased cost of living is outweighing any raise that we have received and I still need to work outside of my day job to help pay bills."

"Increased health costs have kept me with the same scratched, chipped glasses for years! Rent is rising, health care costs are rising, food prices are rising - a salary increase isn't just a reward for good work, but an attempt to make it day to day!"

"Every single person that works in education to include teachers, instructional assistants, custodians, all facets of operations, food services, transportation, and grounds maintenance work tirelessly to create an environment and systems of operation conducive to learning for our students.
We are tired. We are frustrated."

"I do have a second job in order to provide more security for my family. While I work many hours past my contract in order to meet the needs of my students, I also have to take time away from my family and personal life to earn extra income."

The Village Initiative supports the Williamsburg-James City Education Association's call for a 10% raise for all teachers and staff



The WJCC Schools Strategic Plan called for "a five-year total compensation strategy where **WJCC Schools leads the region** in employee salaries and benefits."

Compared to Gloucester, Hampton, New Kent, Newport News, and York, in 2022-23 the WJCC School Division offered:

- the second highest salaries for **entry-level teachers**.
- the **second or third lowest salaries** for teachers with a BA and 5-30 years of experience.
- the **lowest salaries** for teachers with a masters degree and 5-20 years of experience.

Do the right thing: support our teachers and staff

The shortage of teachers in the wake of the pandemic is compounded by a pre-existing crisis in the WJCC schools:

A crisis-level shortage of teachers of color



WJCC Elementary Schools, 2021-22

School	Student of Color Percentage	Staff of Color Percentage
Clara Byrd Baker ES	51.7%	9.5%
D.J. Montague ES	51.1%	2.2%
J. Blaine Blayton ES	40.9%	4.8%
James River ES	77.3%	4.2%
Laurel Lane ES	50.2%	5.1%
Matoaka ES	37%	11.1%
Matthew Whaley ES	47.2%	4.8%
Norge ES	48.7%	5.9%
Stonehouse ES	35.6%	20%

Source: WJCC Teacher Recruitment Outcomes SY 2021-22

James River ES has the largest percentage of students of color at 77.3%, but one of the smallest percentages of staff of color at just 4.2%.

WJCC Middle & High Schools 2021-22

School	Student of Color Percentage	Staff of Color Percentage
Berkeley MS	49.2%	13.5%
Hornsby MS	44.3%	14.1%
James Blair MS	50.3%	24.4%
Toano MS	41.2%	15.7%

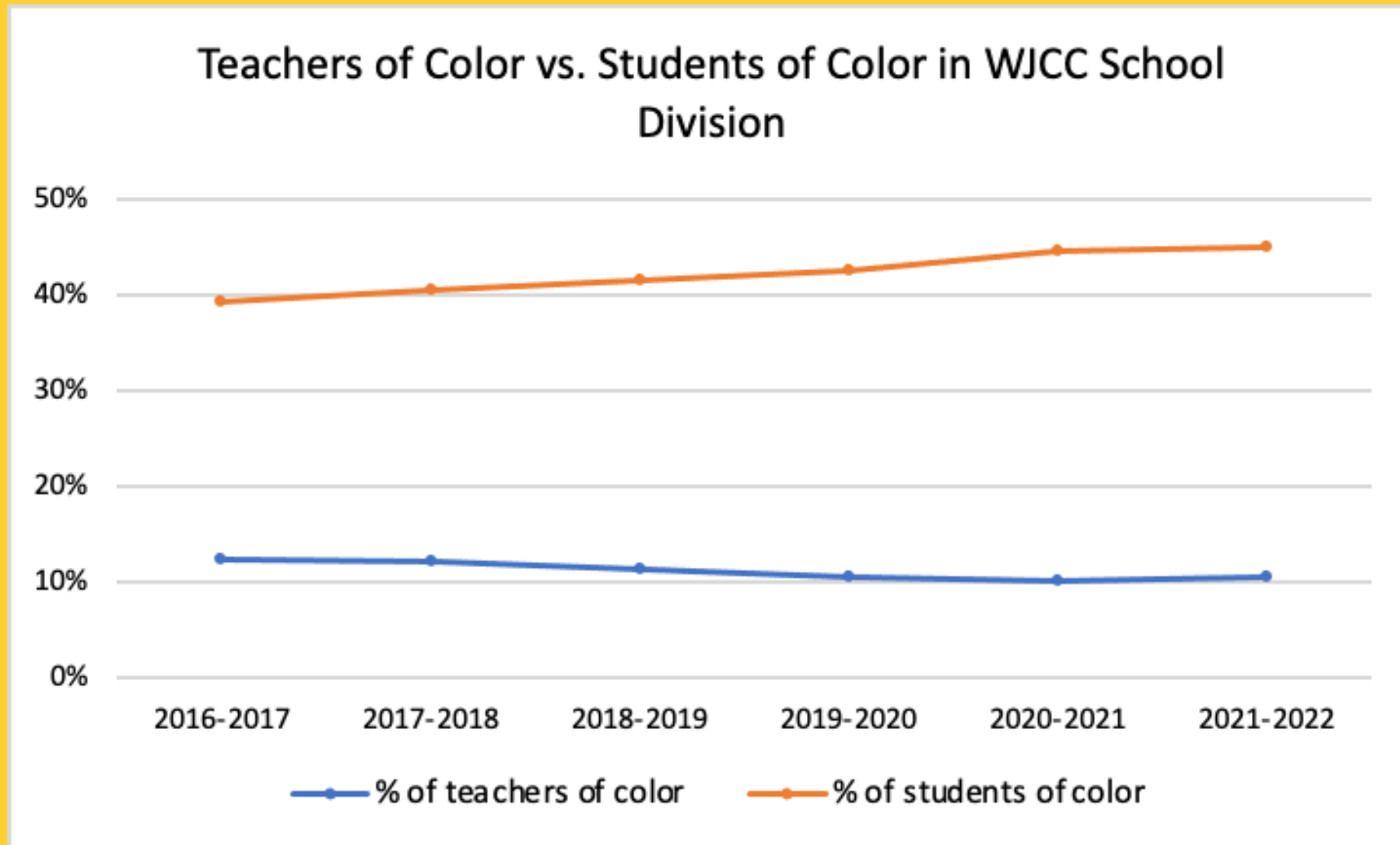
School	Student of Color Percentage	Staff of Color Percentage
Jamestown HS	34.9%	8.5%
Lafayette HS	47.7%	8.3%
Warhill HS	41.6%	19.1%
Bright Beginnings ★	N/A	5.6%

Source: WJCC Teacher Recruitment Outcomes SY 2021-22

★ Early childhood education serving children at risk and children with identified disabilities or delays

OUR TEACHERS DO NOT REPRESENT OUR STUDENTS

The Demographic Mismatch



Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles; WJCC Teacher Recruitment Outcomes SY 2021-2022

The percentage of students of color in WJCC Schools has **increased**, while the percentage of teachers of color has **decreased** since 2016-2017.

What Does the Research Show?

- Black elementary students with Black teachers scored 3-6 points higher on reading and math tests, and gains accumulated with each Black teacher they had.
- Black students who had one Black teacher by 3rd grade were 13% more likely to enroll in college – those with two were 32% more likely.
- Students of color taught by teachers of color are less likely to be suspended by roughly 3%.
- Teachers of color bring diverse experiences and perspectives to students of ALL racial groups.

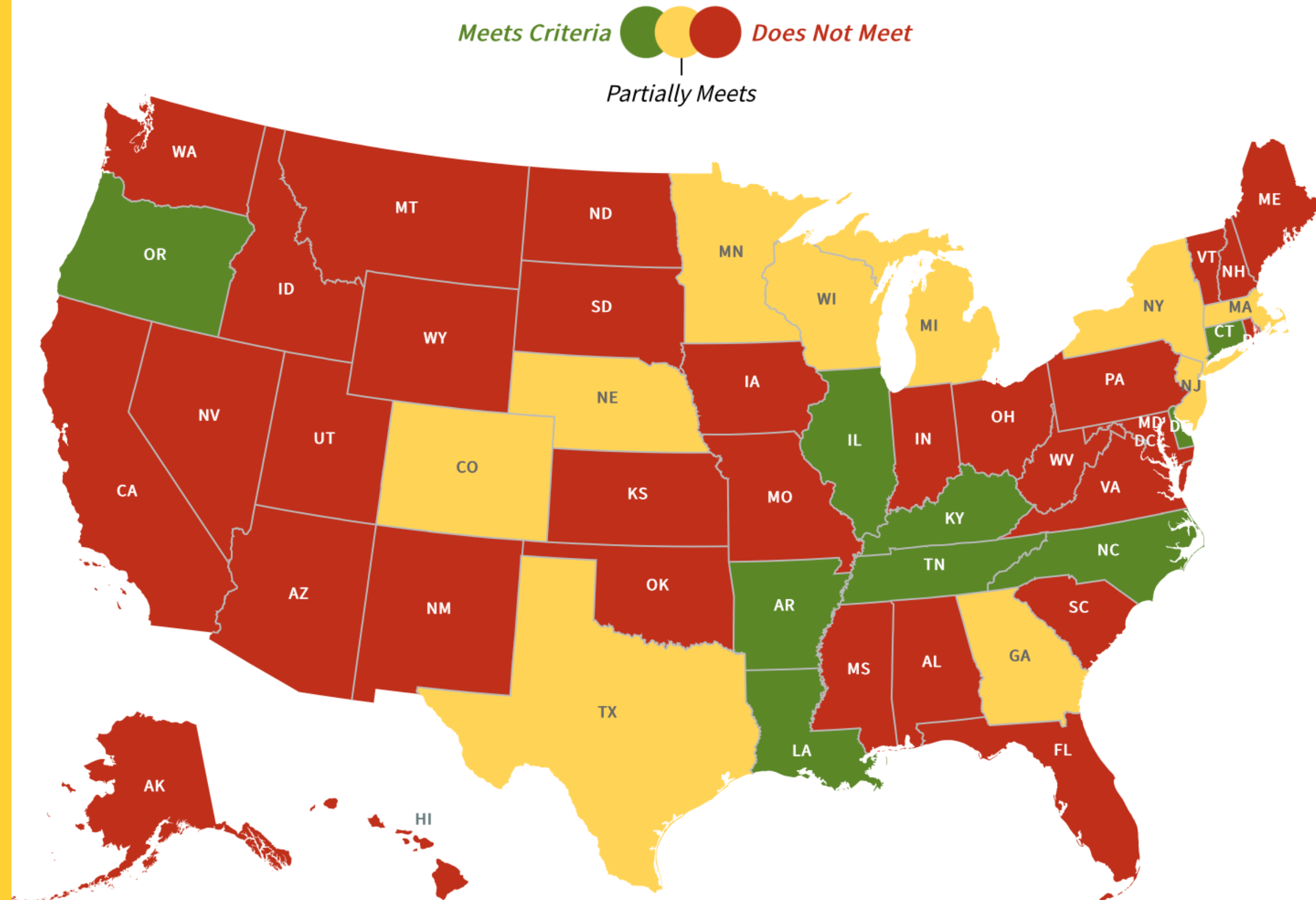
The lack of teacher diversity is a national crisis... but Virginia is falling behind the nation

Virginia is falling behind in meeting national standards for making educator diversity data publicly available.

WJCC can lead the way by posting school-level data on:

- the racial demographics of educators
- retention rates for educators of color

19 states are performing better than Virginia



Source: The Education Trust, edtrust.org



Be Proactive in the Hiring Process



The WJCC Strategic Plan calls for strengthening "recruitment to attract highly-qualified and diverse applicant pools."

But is WJCC implementing these best practices?

1. Hire earlier and use "high touch" recruitment methods

- Pursue in-demand teachers of color early by prioritizing these candidates, building relationships with them, and offering them support

2. Include current teachers of color in the hiring process

- Allow meaningful, substantive engagement by creating diverse hiring committees that shape recruitment and hiring strategies and evaluation rubrics

3. Review evaluation rubrics for hiring

- Include experience teaching and mentoring students of color as a criteria for ranking candidates

Recruitment Solutions

Establish a Teacher Residency Program

- Modeled on medical residencies, these programs are partnerships between districts and universities, such as an HBCU
- Teaching candidates spend a year working with mentor teachers in high need schools while completing university coursework
- Participants receive financial support, such as tuition assistance
- **Participants commit to teaching 3-4 years in the district**

Get Results

- Teacher residency programs are operating in at least 50 divisions in the country
- Nationally, 49% of participants are people of color
- Participants tend to have higher retention rates than non-participants
- Principals report participants to be as well prepared or better prepared than typical new teachers



Residency Programs can help recruit and retain teachers of color



One quarter of all new teachers of color nationally enter teaching through alternative certification pathways, often due to a history of racial bias in licensure exams and high exam costs.

The key to teacher retention is high quality teacher preparation. Residency programs, or other mentoring programs, can provide financial support and one-on-one tutoring to ensure success.

"**Experience** and **qualifications** revolve around a lot more than test scores. While I agree that licensure is certainly important, it's not the only factor that qualifies someone to teach/work with/invest in our children."

-WJCC staff

William & Mary has launched a new Teacher Residency Program in partnership with the New Kent County and Newport News Public Schools, but WJCC Schools hasn't applied for CARES Act funding to participate.

Why is the WJCC School System opting out of this innovative William & Mary program?

WHY DON'T OUR

The Role of Retention

Nationally, teachers of color are more likely to experience burnout and leave the profession at higher rates than their White peers.

- Studies show that turnover of teachers of color was strongly associated with the lack of classroom autonomy and influence, as well as a lack of administrative support.
- Teachers of color report racial discrimination and stereotyping. One study reported that Latinx teachers felt viewed as inferior to other teachers or only beneficial for Latinx students.

TEACHERS STAY?

Promising Practices

- Create avenues for teachers of color to provide collective feedback and recommendations to administrators.
- Build community and ongoing mutual mentoring for teachers of color by creating opportunities for personal and professional growth and connections to the community.
- Build cultural competency in all staff and leadership.
- Strengthen administrative support for teachers of color.



The WJCC Strategic Plan aims to "foster a workplace culture where employees feel valued, well-informed and supported professionally."

Gifted Education: WJCC Not Meeting the Mark

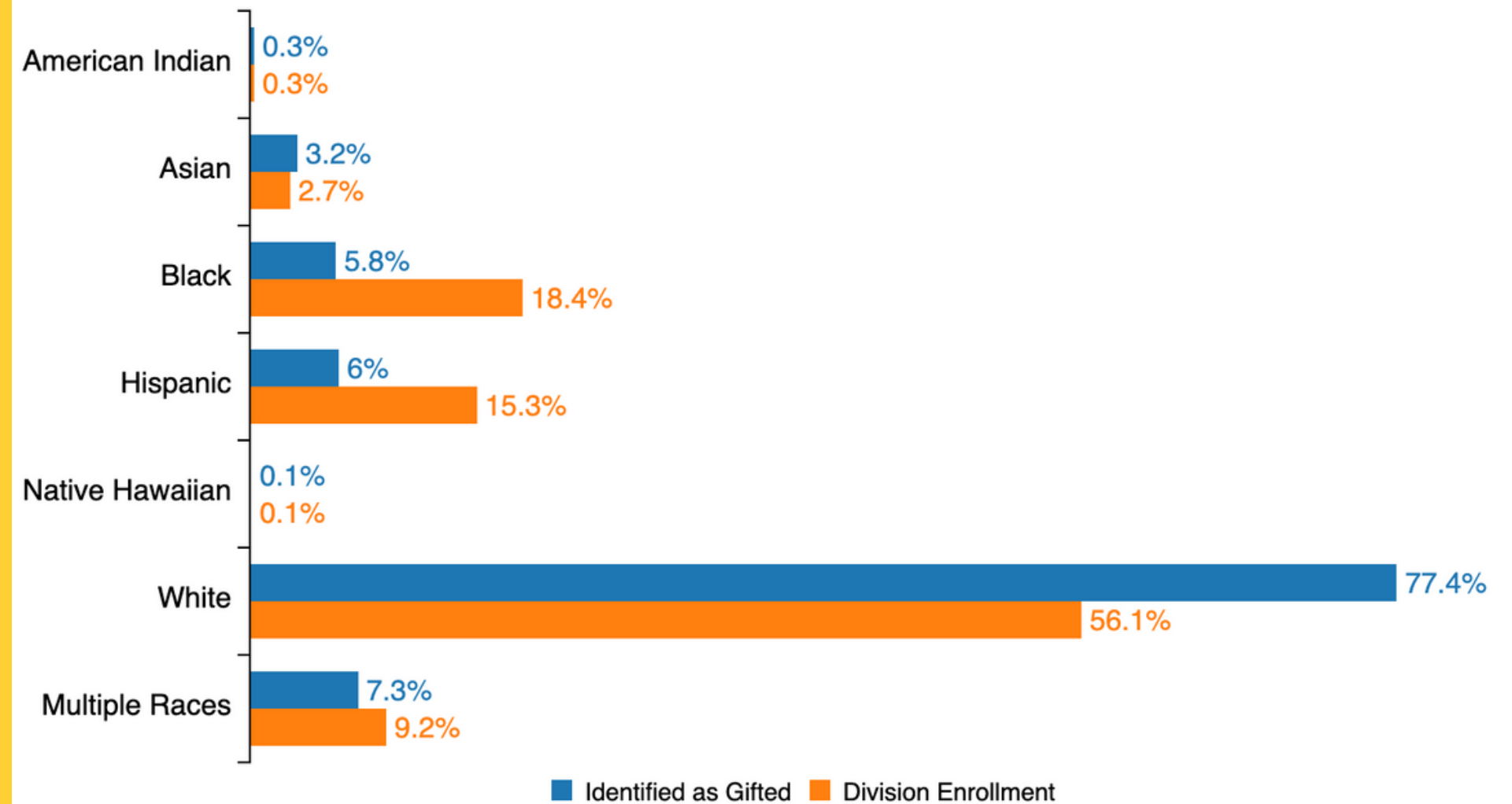


The WJCC Strategic Plan called for "**equitable access** for underrepresented student populations to rigorous academic courses/programming."

And yet in 2021-22:

- **White students were highly overrepresented** among students identified as gifted, accounting for more than three quarters of students accessing this rigorous programming
- **Black students were underrepresented**, making up 18.4% of the student population but only 5.8% of students identified as gifted.
- **Hispanic students were also underrepresented**, comprising 15.3% of the student population but only 6% of the population identified as gifted.

Percentage of Students Identified as Gifted Compared to Percentage of Students in Fall Membership



Source: Virginia Department of Education, School Quality Profiles

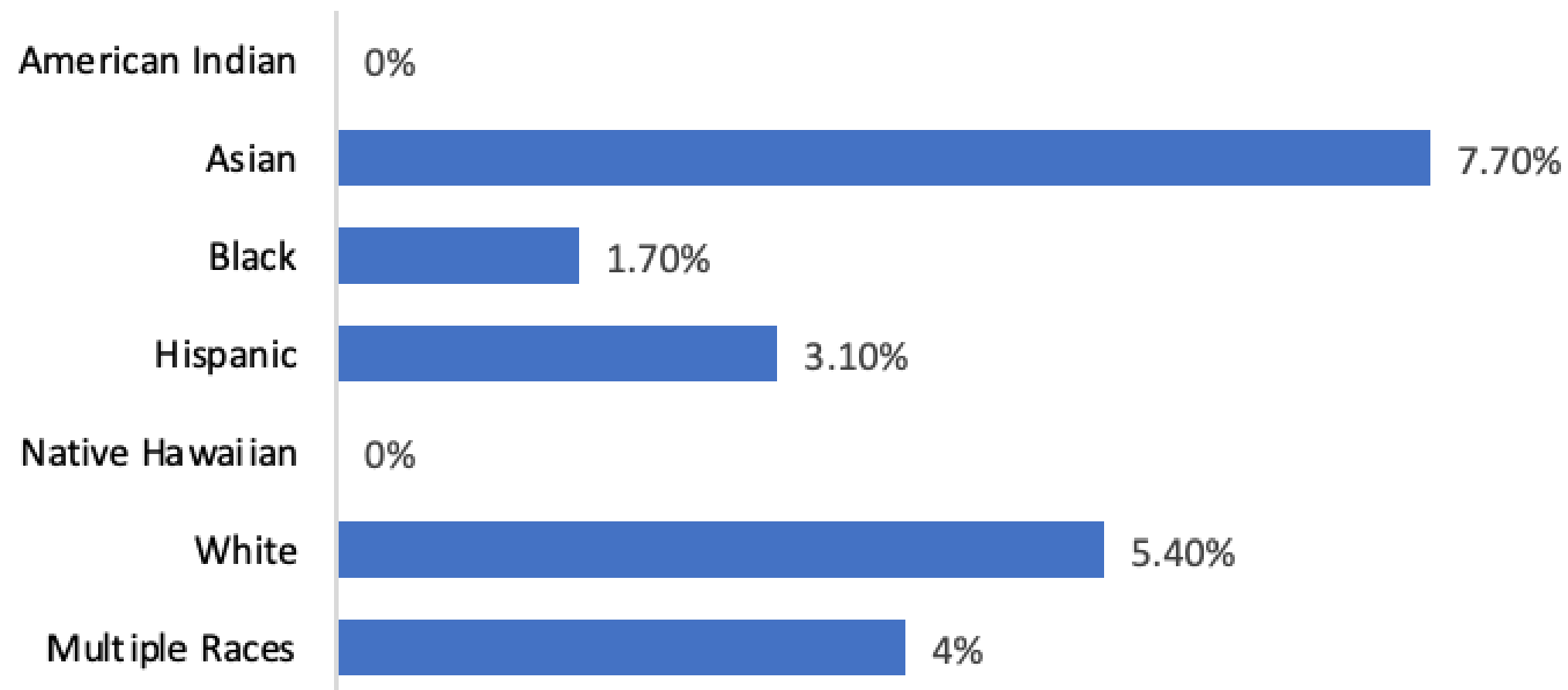
Where is the equity?

How are students selected for gifted services?



Students are screened for gifted services through standardized tests. Following the screening, students are referred for further evaluation and then are identified as gifted or not. Teachers and parents can also refer students directly for evaluation.

Percentage of Students Referred for Gifted Services by Race/Ethnicity (2021-22)



Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

In 2021-22:

- **over 5% of white students and 7% of Asian students were referred but only 1.7% of Black students, 3.1% of Hispanic students, and no American Indian or Hawaiian students.**

Why aren't students of color being referred?



What causes these inequities?

Research provides multiple possible explanations for the inequity in gifted education in the WJCC Schools. The WJCC administration must collect data to build an evidence-based action plan.

Biased Tests?

Research demonstrates that standardized tests underestimate the potential of students of color and English Learners. Evaluations are needed that recognize these students' strengths, including the ability to excel despite greater vulnerabilities and to navigate different cultural environments.

Implicit Bias?

Implicit bias leads teachers and other school officials to assume the inferiority of Black students, as well as other culturally and linguistically diverse students, reducing the likelihood that they are referred and identified for gifted services.

Motivating Mentors?

Studies show that Black students are more likely to be identified as gifted when taught by Black teachers. This may be because Black teachers better recognize the abilities of Black students or more effectively motivate Black students to perform well.

Opportunity Hoarding?

White and more affluent parents are more likely to advocate for their child's identification as gifted, and school officials often feel pressured to appease these parents. This results in an overrepresentation of white students in gifted programs.

The potential of students of color is falling under the radar.



Think Outside the Gifted Box

1. Rethink how we define and measure giftedness to recognize the unique gifts that culturally and linguistically diverse students bring.
2. Guard against undue influence from white, affluent parents.
3. Advocate for more inclusive gender and culturally-specific gifted services.
4. Recruit and retain culturally and linguistically diverse educators of color that aid in identifying and motivating gifted students.
5. Conduct and publicly report an annual audit of racial disparities in gifted programs.
6. Consider expanding the number of gifted seats.
7. Incorporate gifted education in mainstream classrooms to increase access to rigorous content.
8. Evaluate our measure of return on investment in the gifted program.

“Every child has gifts...But we only measure a very few.”
- Dr. Gary Orfield, Co-Director,
UCLA's Civil Rights Project



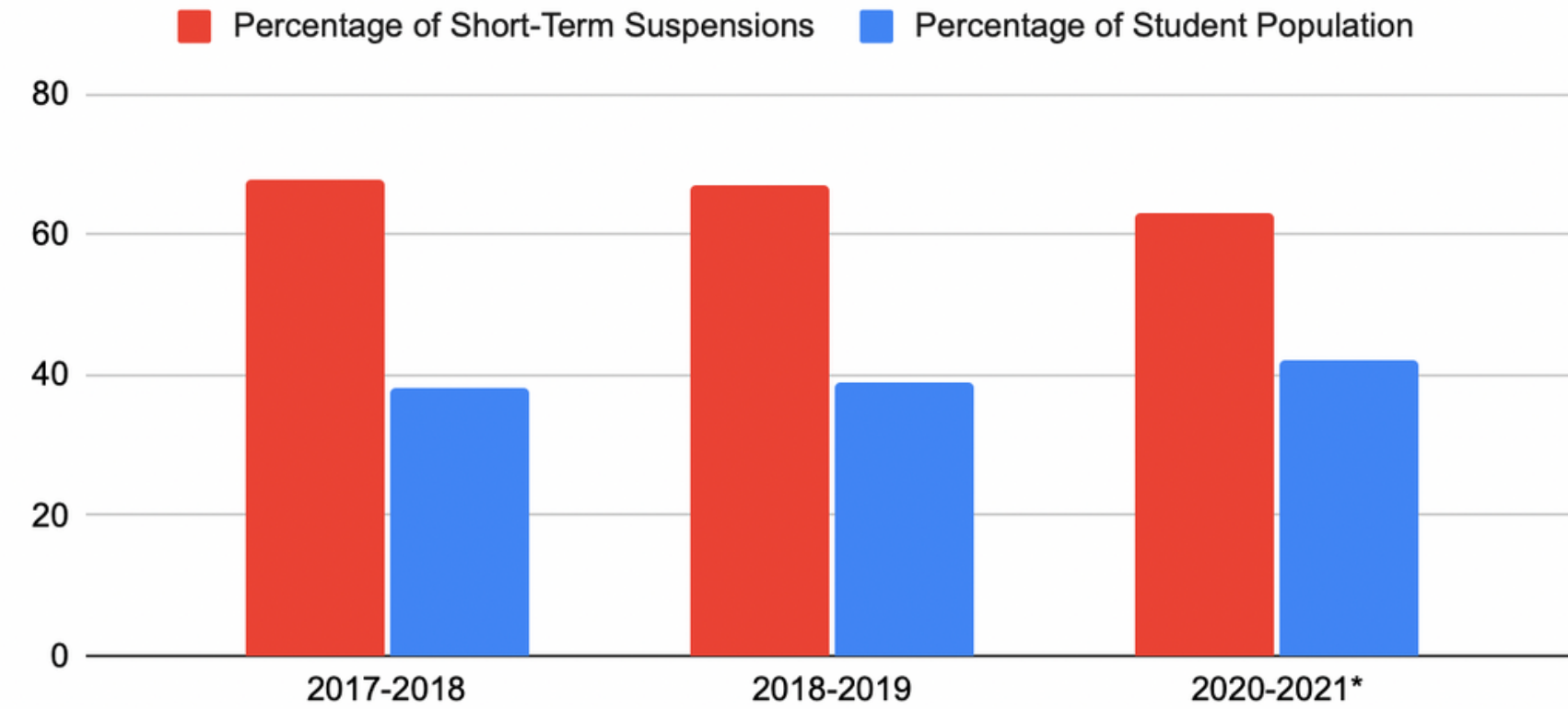
Discrimination in gifted education is “intentional and it’s unintentional” but “if you are aware of reasonable alternatives and don’t use them, then it’s intentional.”
- Dr. Donna Ford, Ohio State University

Data on suspensions and expulsions have not been released for 2021-22. However, 2020-21 data suggest:

WJCC has a severe Racial Discipline Gap

In 2020-21, students identifying as Black, Hispanic or multiple races accounted for 63% of short-term suspensions but only 42% of the student population.

Disciplinary Disproportionality for Students Identifying as Black, Hispanic, or of Two or More Races in WJCC Schools



*No data available for 2019-2020. In 2020-2021, students were learning in virtual and hybrid formats.

Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

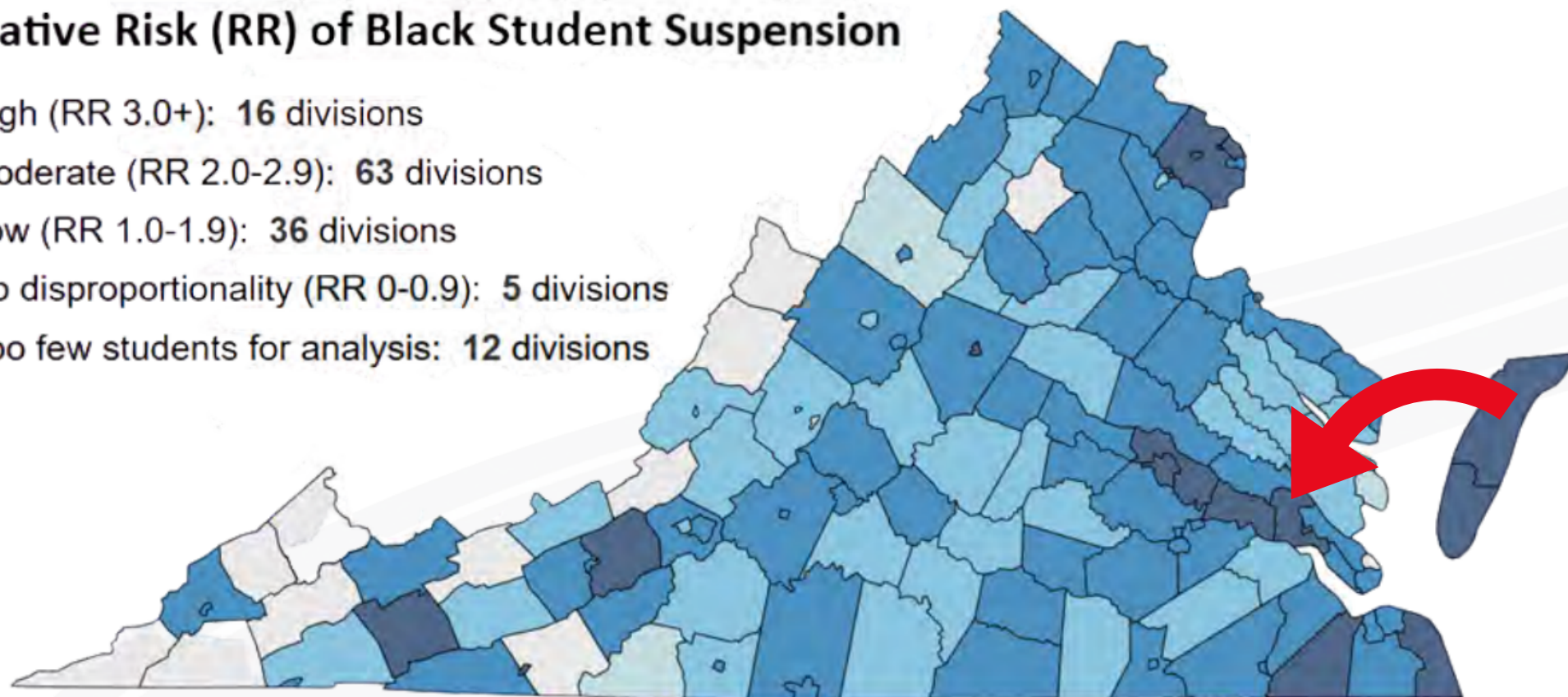
According the Virginia Department of Education, WJCC has one of the *worst* records in the state for disproportionately suspending Black students.

WJCC is reinforcing the school-to-prison pipeline - and is one of the worst offenders in the state.

Disproportionality among Black Student Suspensions Compared to Non-Black Students

Relative Risk (RR) of Black Student Suspension

- High (RR 3.0+): 16 divisions
- Moderate (RR 2.0-2.9): 63 divisions
- Low (RR 1.0-1.9): 36 divisions
- No disproportionality (RR 0-0.9): 5 divisions
- Too few students for analysis: 12 divisions



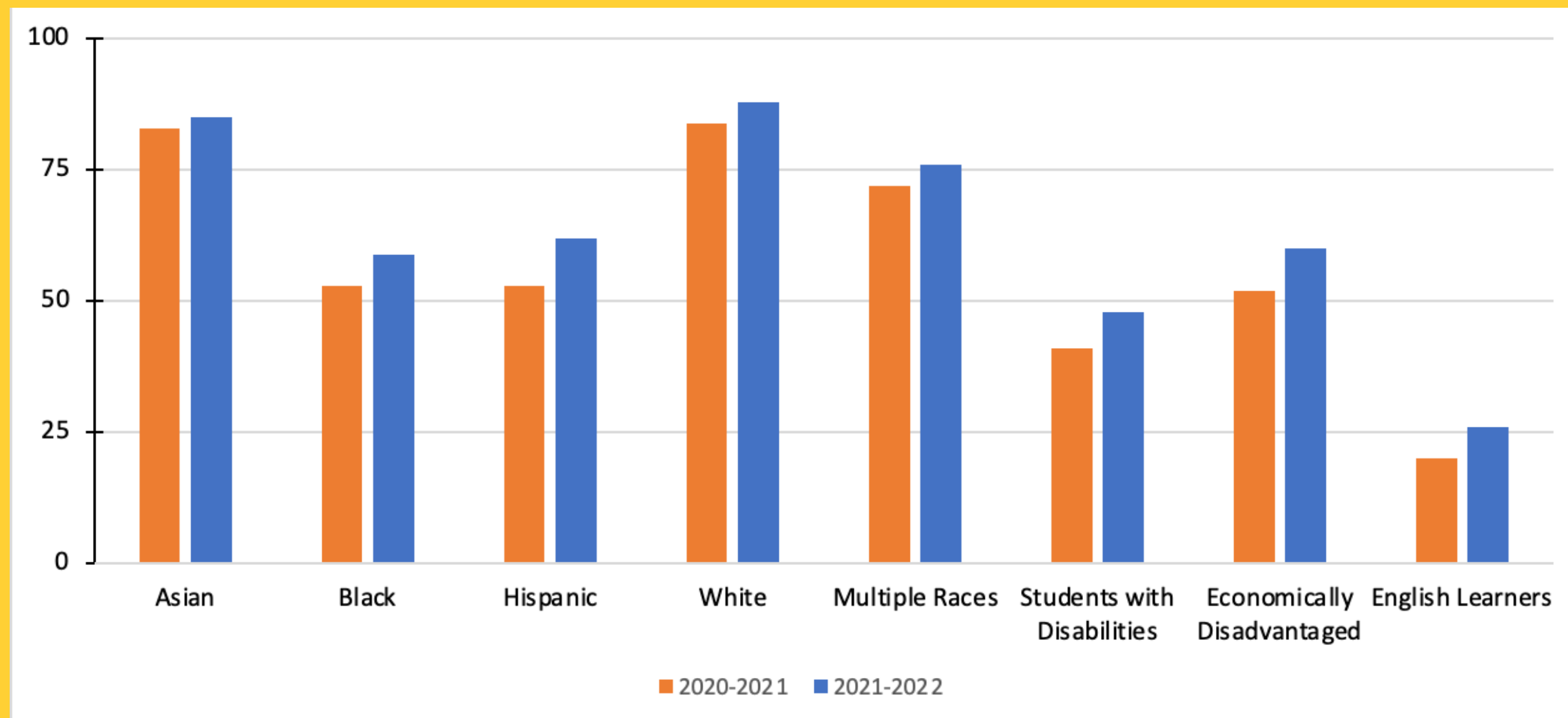
SOL Pass Rates

The percentage of students that pass SOL tests has improved for nearly all sub-groups in Reading, Math, and Science since last year when learning loss from the pandemic significantly affected student success.



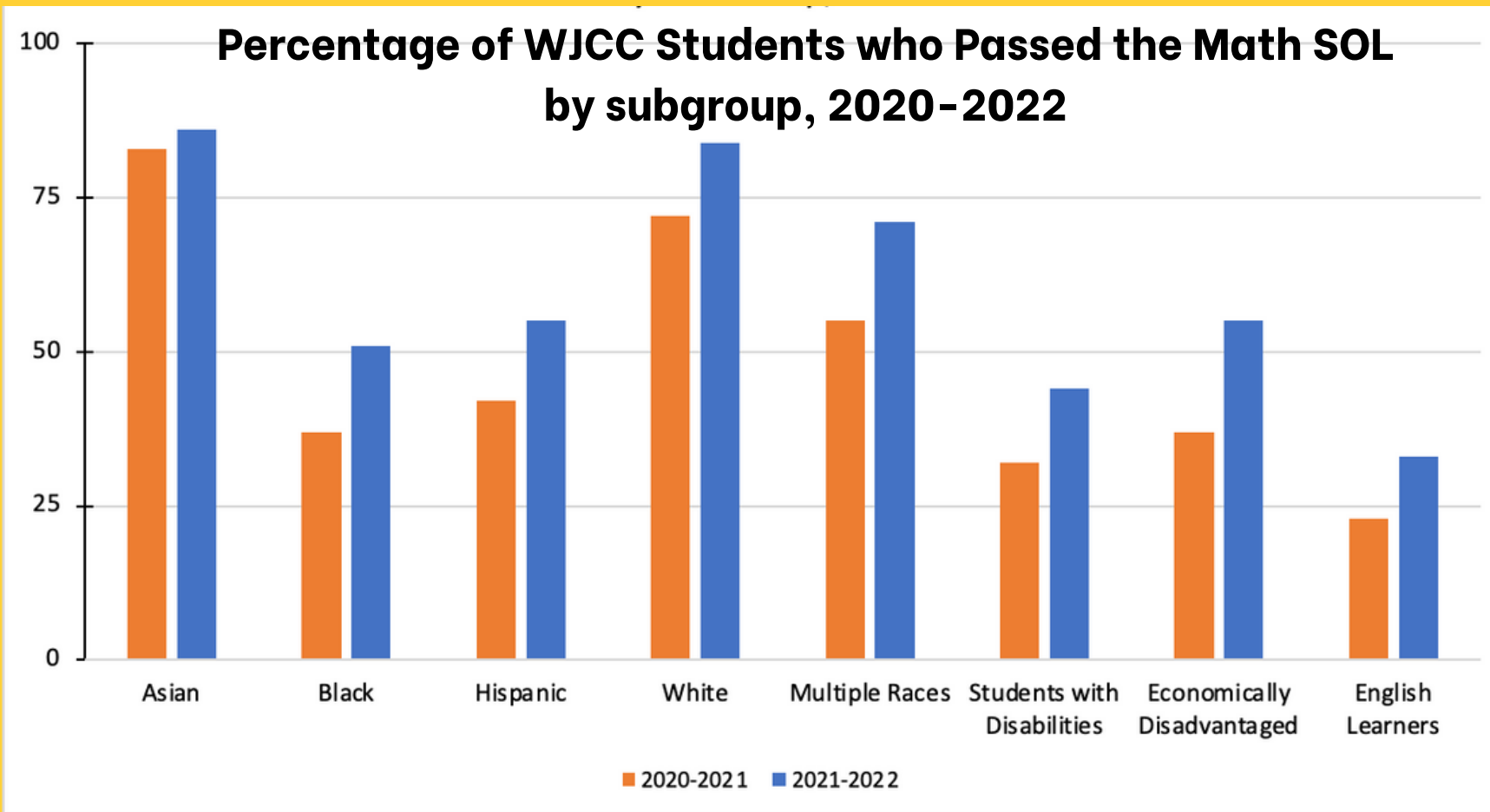
However, longstanding, **double-digit** gaps in pass rates persist among white and Asian students on one hand and Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students, as well as students with disabilities and English Learners on the other.

Percentage of WJCC Students who Passed the Reading SOL by subgroup, 2020-2022



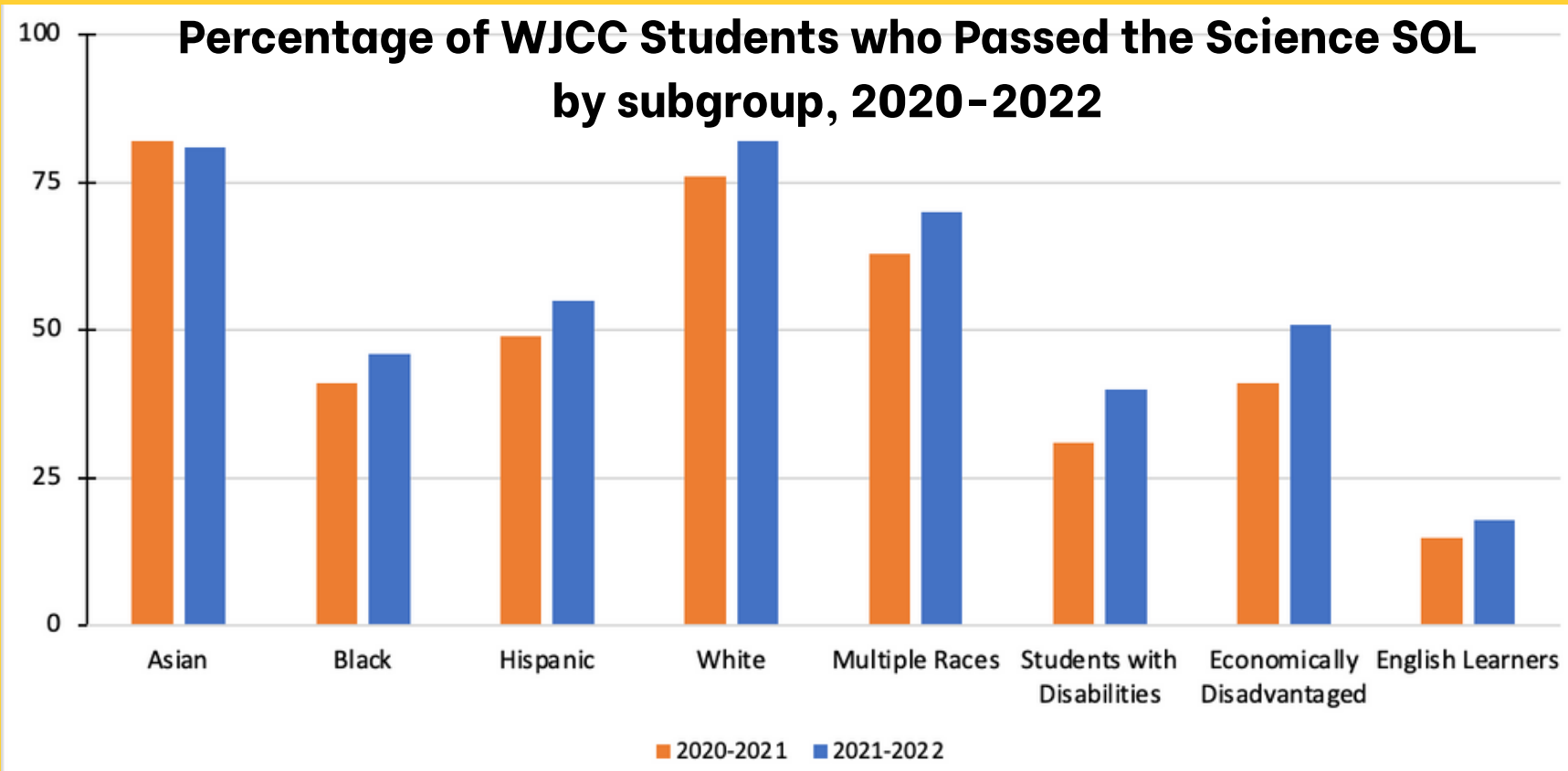
Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

Whose needs are being met?



The WJCC Strategic Plan calls for:

- A range of strategies to facilitate individualized instruction to ensure *all* students' success, including:
 - formative assessments and small-group learning
 - growth assessments, goal-setting, and differentiated instruction
 - a focus on instructional best practices
 - a student-centered learning environment



But were these strategies implemented with an equity lens?

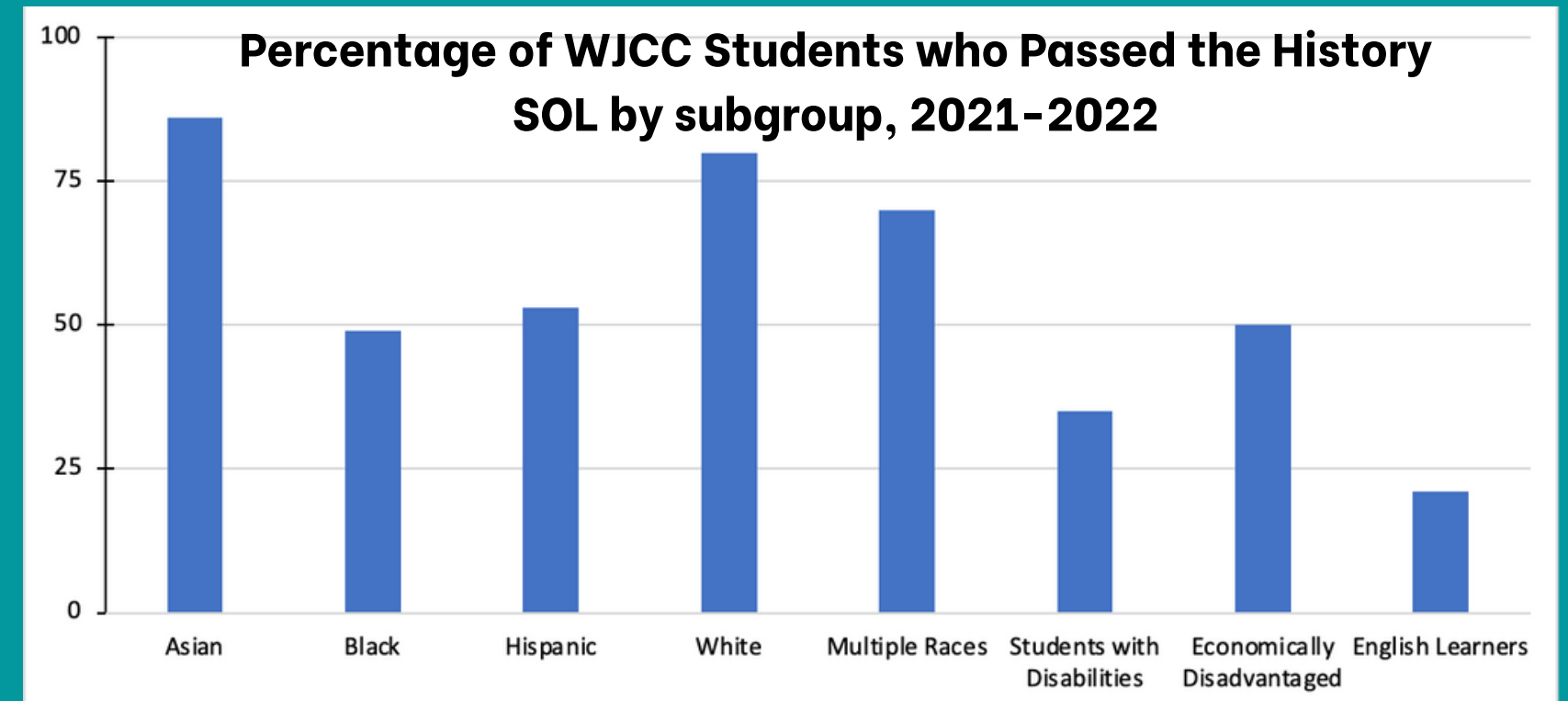
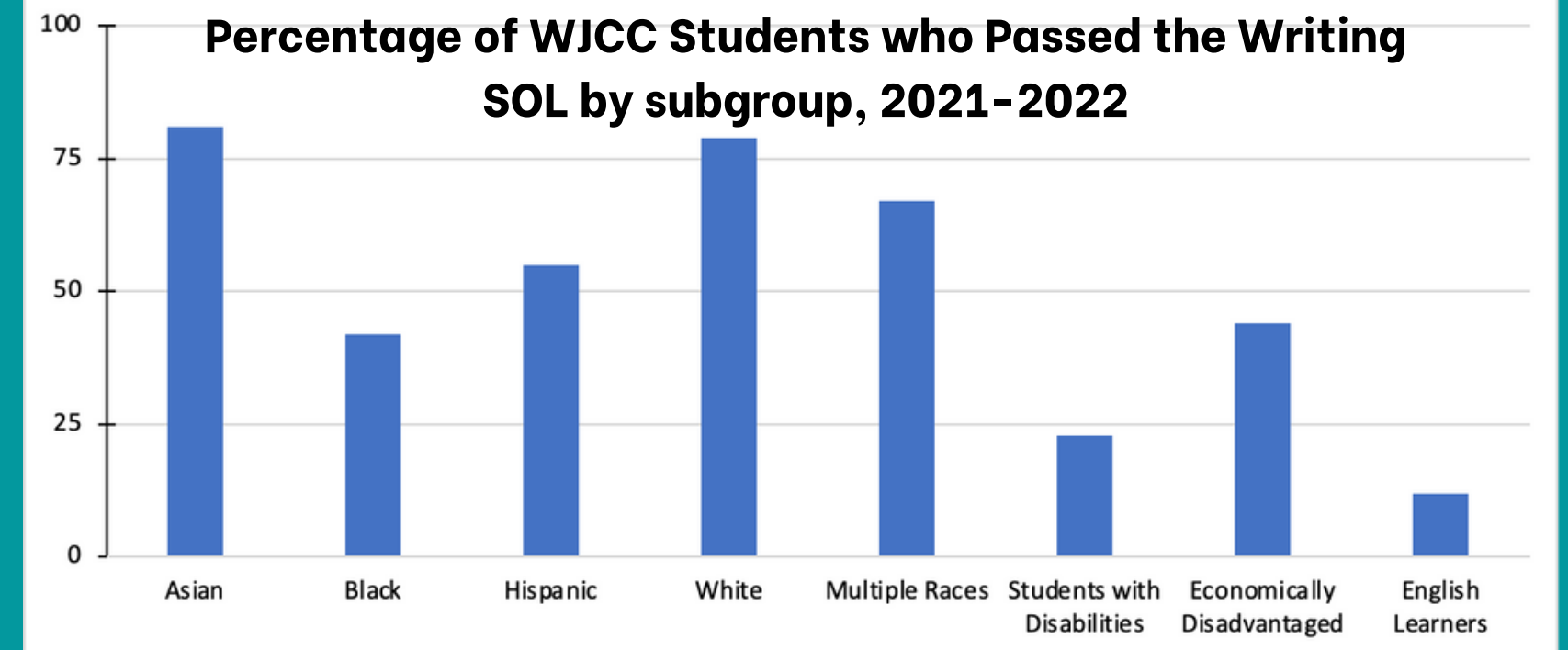
Double-Digit Disparities Persist

Writing SOL

In 2021-22, 79% of white students passed the Writing SOL, but only 42% of Black students and just 12% of English Learners passed.

History SOL

In 2021-22, 80% of white students passed the History SOL, but only 53% of Hispanic students, 35% of students with disabilities and 21% of English Learners passed.



Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

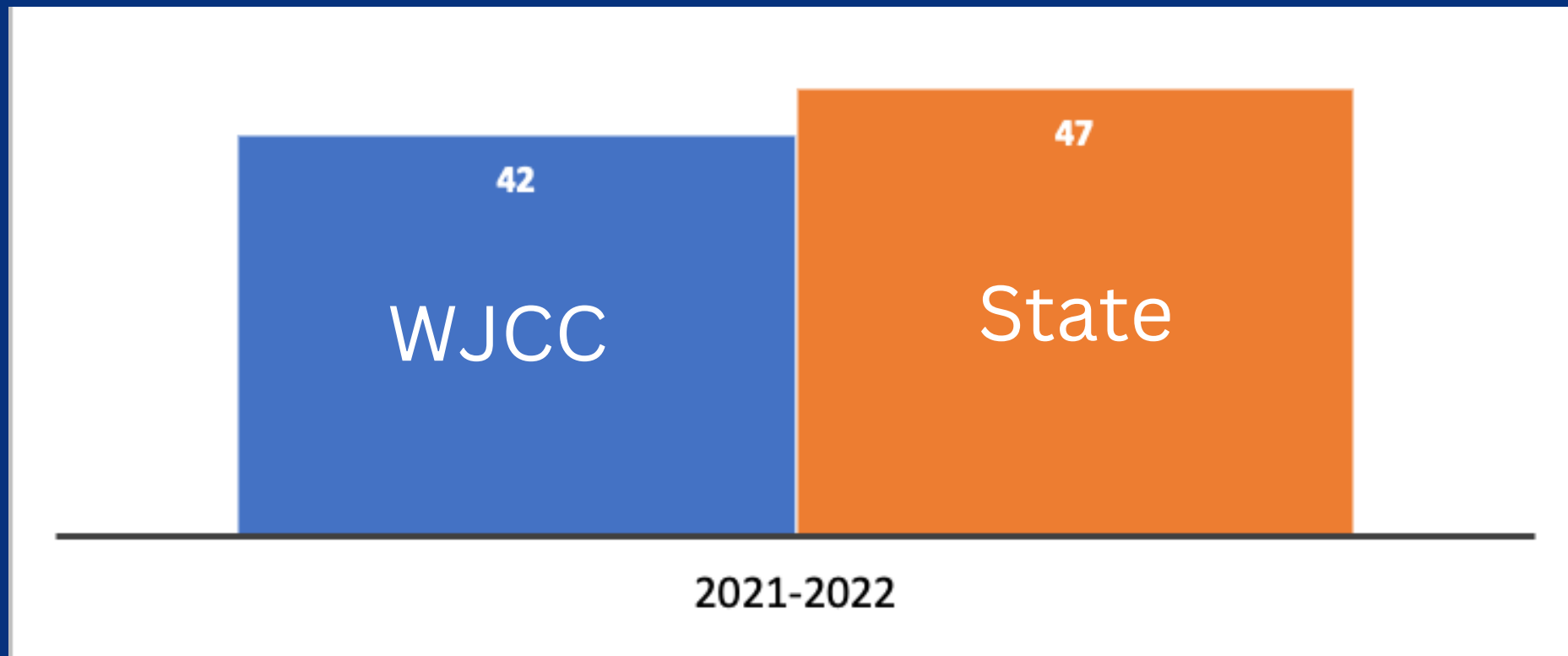




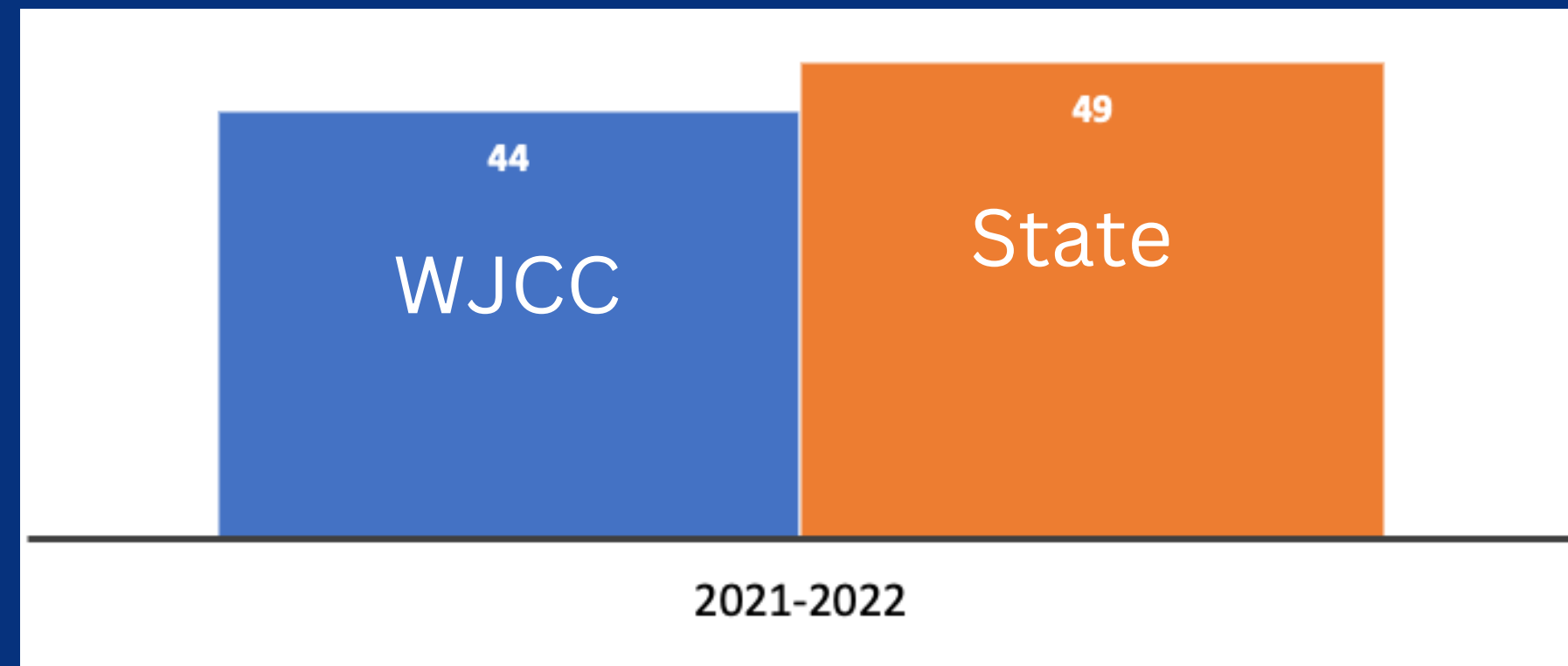
WJCC FALLING BEHIND STATE AVERAGES

Black and economically disadvantaged students in WJCC are performing worse in Writing than their counterparts across the state.

Percentage of Black Students who Passed the Writing SOL, 2021-22



Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students who Passed the Writing SOL, 2021-22

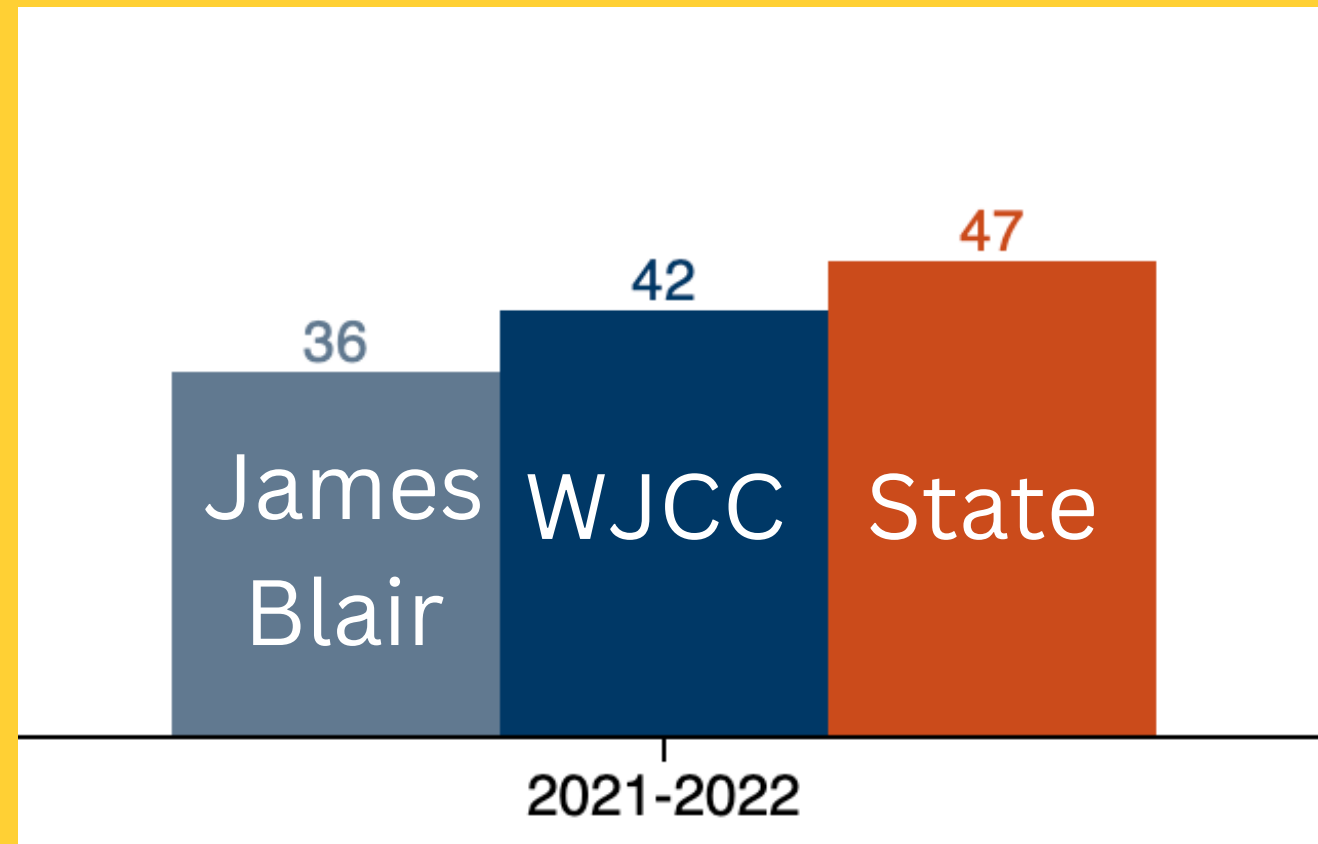


Achievement Gaps Threaten WJCC Accreditation

In 2022-23, James Blair Middle School is "Accredited with conditions" due to its significant Achievement Gaps in English and Math. This means that James Blair Middle is performing below the state standard.

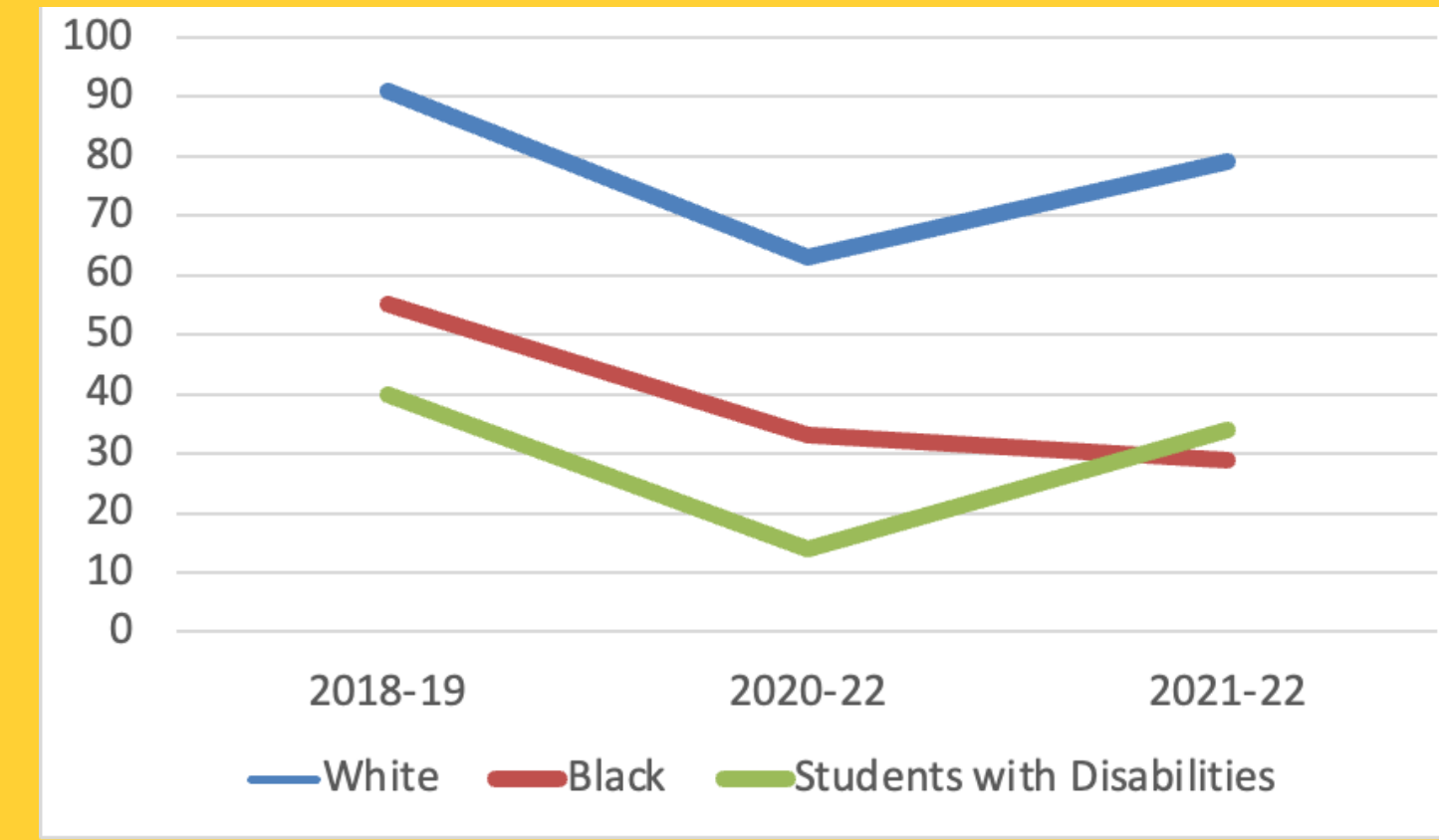
The Virginia Department of Education has **sounded the alarm**

Percentage of Black Students who Passed the Writing SOL, 2021-22



Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

Percentage of James Blair Students who Passed the Math SOL by subgroup, 2018-22



Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

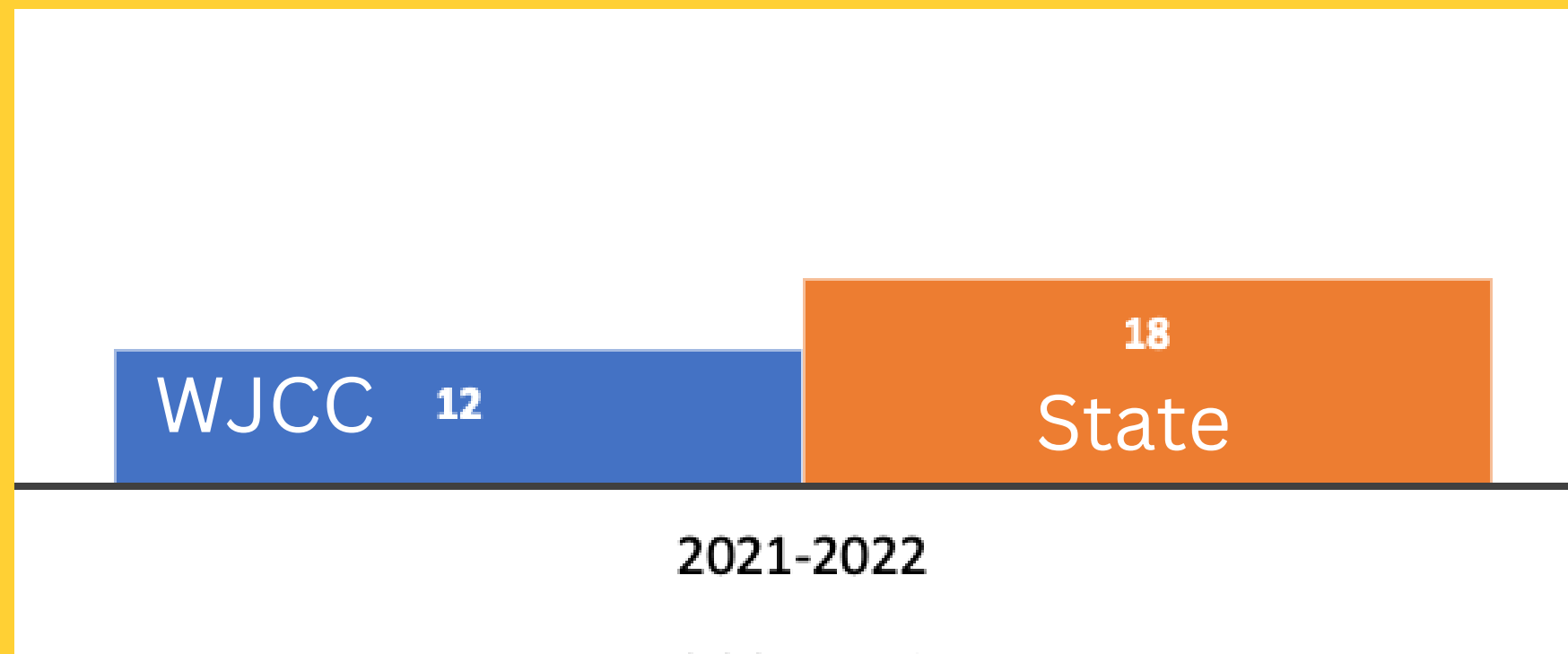
The achievement gaps between white students and Black and economically disadvantaged students in English and the gaps between white students and Black students and those with disabilities in Math are TOO LARGE!

WJCC takes pride in its academic excellence, yet our English Learners are performing

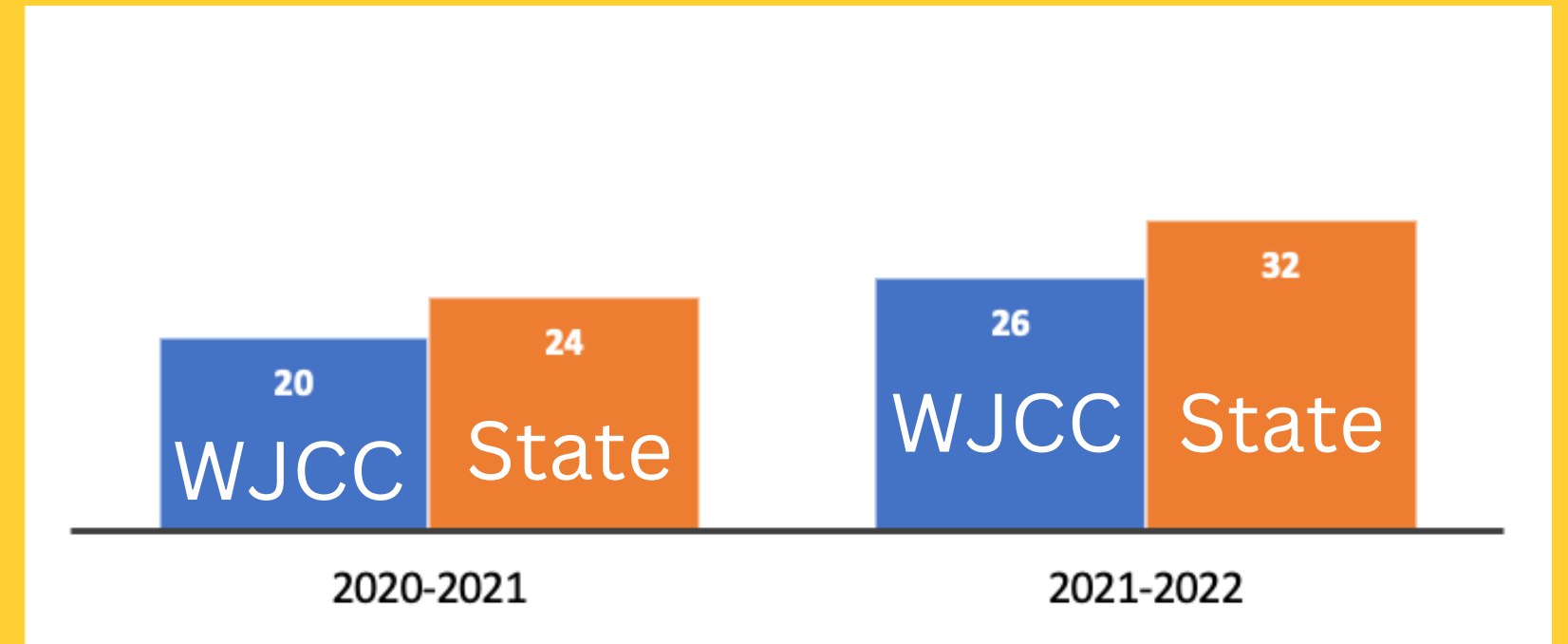
BELOW STATE AVERAGES

in Reading, Writing, and History.

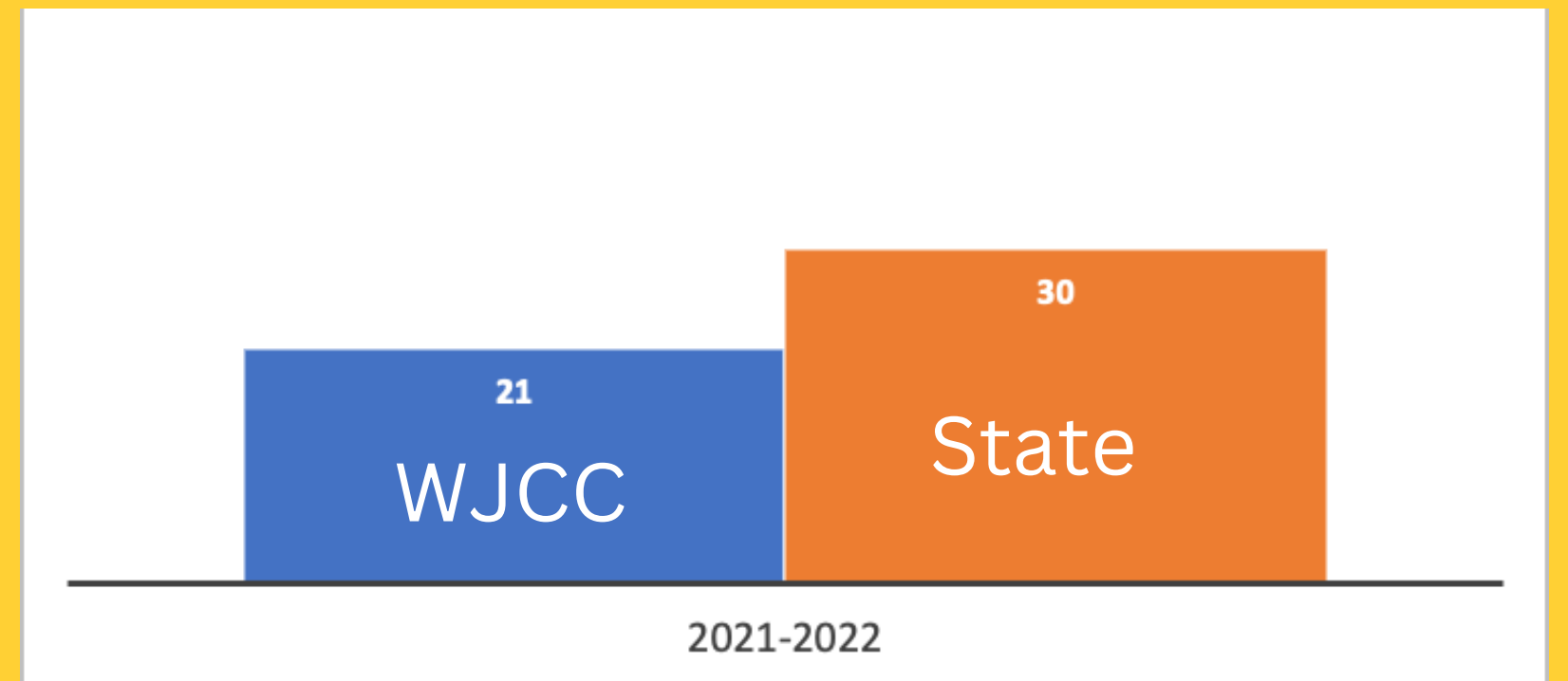
Percentage of English Learners who Passed the Writing SOL, 2021-22



Percentage of English Learners who Passed the Reading SOL, 2020-22



Percentage of English Learners who Passed the History SOL, 2021-22



Our English Learners are
not failing:
WE are failing them




Dual Language Bilingual Education programs are increasingly considered the cutting-edge approach to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students. Such programs promote high levels of academic achievement and bilingualism and build, positive cross-cultural attitudes. In these programs, native English speakers and native Spanish speakers are grouped together to receive 50% of their academic instruction in Spanish and 50% in English.

Newport News and Richmond Public Schools are working with William & Mary expert, Katherine Barko-Alva, and W&M alumni to implement Dual Language Bilingual Education Programs.

Why are WJCC Schools falling behind?

English Learners are clearly ***not*** receiving the support they need

Inclusive School Environment

 The WJCC Strategic Plan calls for "a positive, relationship-focused classroom learning environment where student differences are appreciated and celebrated."

Do ALL students feel celebrated?

"First day back in middle school. My kid had to listen to kids use the n* word on the school bus, and he had to watch another kid draw a confederate flag, along with a swastika and other neo-Nazi symbols during a random class ... It is going to be a long year and I would say these incidents highlight a clear need for a solid social science and history education in public schools." - WJCC parent

The Local Black Histories Project



Samuel Harris' Cheap Store, DOG Street
Source: Media Services, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The Village Initiative has partnered with the William & Mary Social Justice Policy Initiative to create an online archive of oral histories and curated exhibits that illuminate local Black histories in the Williamsburg area. We encourage teachers and administrators to partner with us to bring these resources to our classrooms and create an inclusive learning environment.

Find the online archive here: localblackhistories.gs.wm.edu
Reach out to us to learn more about using this resource, identifying guest speakers, and more!



2022 VILLAGE TEAM

Jacqueline Bridgeforth Williams

Founder & Executive Director

Philip Canady

Board Member,
Secretary/Treasurer

Jennifer Bickham Mendez

Coordinator for Linguistically and Culturally
Diverse Learners

Molly Robinson

Communications and
Outreach Coordinator

Amy Quark

Coordinator for Educational Policy and
The Local Black Histories Project

Lanni Brown

Community Fellow

Nasya Davis

Community Fellow



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