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Public Policy & Economic Development

Luzerne  
County School  
Assessment  
Report

2010

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The School Assessment Report (SAR) provides educators, administrators, parents, business and industry, and civic leaders with information regarding student proficiencies.

Writing

**MAY 2010**

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## **Executive Summary**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2006-2008 population estimate, Luzerne County has a population of approximately 311,752. Moreover, the county's median age is 42.1 years, its median annual per capita income is \$23,028 and its median household income is \$41,388. Both income levels rank below the national averages. The county includes eleven school districts, which, in 2008-2009, reported an 86-99% graduation rate.

There is often a link between educational attainment and poverty; poverty rates steadily decrease with higher educational attainment levels. Luzerne County reported a 24.2% poverty rate associated with individuals who did not graduate high school, compared with an 11.4% poverty rate among their high school graduate (or equivalent) peers.

It is important to remember that a student's performance reflects the collective effort of schools and their communities. Research has shown that the education levels and contributions of parents are critical factors that impact a child's academic performance. To help all students reach their full potential, it is necessary that they, along with their teachers, families, and communities collectively engage in efforts to improve student performance.

State test proficiency by subject provides an overall summary of school, school district, or state performance in a particular subject and includes students at all grade levels tested. Proficient is the minimum level of academic performance that all students are expected to attain under the No Child Left Behind Act; however, each state may administer its own exam and set its own proficiency standards.

*It should be noted that student performance data displayed may differ slightly from state reported data due to rounding differences.*

This SAR's group (fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders) consisted of more than 9,354 Luzerne County students, including 1,178 students with disabilities who completed PSSA testing during the 2007-2008 school year. During 2008-2009 school year, 9,405 Luzerne County students took the PSSA, including 1,302 students with disabilities. Since 2007-2008, Luzerne County experienced an increase of 51 students and 124 students with disabilities.

## **Report Methodology**

This document is designed to summarize the performance and monitor the progress of Luzerne County public schools since 2005, when the writing proficiencies were enacted. Other Institute reports date back to when NCLB was enacted in 2002. In doing so, this SAR aims to identify Luzerne County's strengths as well as areas that require timely improvement. It should be noted that the goal of this particular study is to evaluate the performance of students in fifth,

eighth, and eleventh grades only. As such, statistics and comparisons reported herein are reflective of those grades only and not necessarily the entire population being tested.

PSSA scores, which serve as the foundation of the report, are found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website at <http://www.pde.state.pa.us>. PSSA results are organized by county and divided into the following proficiency ratings: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic.

The total number of proficient scores is calculated by combining the number of PSSA test takers who scored advanced or proficient on the test's mathematics or reading sections. (Note: There are a few inconsistencies in data arrangement for earlier years in which PSSA scores were recorded. For example, student population figures were not recorded, and some state averages were missing. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has since organized recent PSSA data in a more consistent manner.)

For clarification, those students requiring an Individualized Educational Program are classified as "IEP" students. This category includes any student with a disability who requires a service or accommodation in addition to the standard educational approach used for non-IEP students. Usually, the term IEP involves at least one of the following disabilities: autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, learning disability, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health-impairment, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury or visual impairment including blindness.

Economically disadvantaged students comprise another subcategory. This group includes those who are eligible for free or reduced fee lunch. Data on this subcategory is not available for each year since 2002, which introduces uncertainty in the subcategory's trend predictions.

Similarly, data for both African American and Hispanic students is sparse at best, with data lacking for most school districts. For schools with fewer than ten students in the subgroup, data is not reported.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of the School Assessment Report (SAR) is to provide educators, administrators, parents, business and industry, and civic leaders with information regarding student proficiencies in our public K-12 school system – the same system that trains our future workforce. Since local and regional economies are dependent upon the strength of the workforce, K-12 education is a strong economic development tool. To guarantee an adequate future workforce, within the next several years (through 2014), the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must ensure that each child is proficient in reading and mathematics – a goal that coincides with the Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) provisions. Moreover, parents, guardians and educators can mutually assist in student proficiency improvements if they take

the necessary actions to help students learn and advance their basic reading, mathematics, and writing skills.

The SAR measures and analyzes Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) statistics from 2002 to 2009, and reports on the efficiency and progress of Luzerne County's public education system. Fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade student proficiencies are evaluated across Luzerne County and are compared with state and county averages. While the PSSA is broken down into four sections of proficiency – reading, writing, mathematics and science, this SAR examines writing proficiency only.

## Education Reform Since 2000

The Federal government enacted NCLB in 2002. NCLB aims to ensure that American students are equipped with the necessary tools for future success.

NCLB attempts to:

- Gear school curriculum toward PSSA tests and essential skills needed to succeed in school and out.
- Use the latest technology to improve PSSA scores.
- Narrow proficiency gaps between students with disadvantages and those without.
- Strengthen standards for incoming teachers to improve education quality.
- Create competition among schools in their drive to succeed.

## Adequate Yearly Progression

NCLB requires student proficiency in mathematics and reading by 2014. To meet the goal of achieving 100% proficiency, the Federal government has developed for each state Adequate Yearly Progression (AYP) goals.

AYP goals are measured by three indicators:

- **School Attendance (for schools without a high school graduating class):** Target of 90% or any improvement from previous year.
- **Achieving Proficiency (Performance):**  
To meet the performance target required for AYP, schools and every measurable subgroup in each school must have at least 56% tested students achieve a score of proficient or higher on the mathematics assessment and 63% of tested students achieve a score of proficient score or higher on the reading assessment.

- **Taking the Test (Participation):**

At least 95% of students overall and within each measurable subgroup must take the PSSA.

AYP goals are intended to move schools toward full proficiency and make them more accountable to students, parents, teachers and the community. AYP measurements can positively affect schools that consistently miss their targets. The results allow schools and districts to evaluate their students' progress to make full proficiency a reality. It is difficult to believe that today's seventh graders will be 11th graders by the year 2014 when full proficiency will be reached.

Pennsylvania's 2008 AYP goals were for 56% of students scoring proficient or higher in mathematics, and 63% of students scoring proficient or higher in reading. For 2009, the mathematics AYP goal increases to 61%, while the reading AYP goal rises to 75%. Targets increase annually until 2014, when schools are required to reach 100% proficiency in both subjects.

If a school meets its AYP goals in all areas, it will not be identified as needing improvement. The school must apply strategic interventions to its special education program and providers. Such interventions include investments in curriculum and instruction. If a school fails to achieve its AYP goals within two years, NCLB sanctions will be implemented.

For a school to meet AYP, all AYP targets must be met. However, the total number of targets used for AYP can vary. This occurs mainly because the targets associated with subgroups that have fewer than 40 students in the school do not apply. Therefore, schools with fewer than 40 students are still accountable and are evaluated when the scores have been completed and processed.

School district targets are assessed at three grade levels: fifth, eighth, and eleventh. To meet AYP goals in academic performance or test participation, the district must achieve all targets for both subjects in one grade span only. All school districts must meet both targets in school attendance and graduation in order to be considered.

NCLB legislation was to be re-authorized by the Federal government in 2008; however, the legislation was tabled for a number of reasons. The emergence of a Democratic administration suggests that NCLB may be repealed or re-written. A number of NCLB components must be revisited in order for the act to be truly effective.

Following are some specific NCLB criticisms/concerns:

- Students with disabilities who require Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are mandated by law to take the same standardized test as regular education students, and their scores are equally factored into a school's overall proficiency score. The fact that students with disabilities are required to take the same standardized test as regular

education students contradicts earlier Federal mandates requiring students with IEPs to receive individualized educational instruction and assessment. In addition, their scores may unfairly skew a school's overall proficiency score.

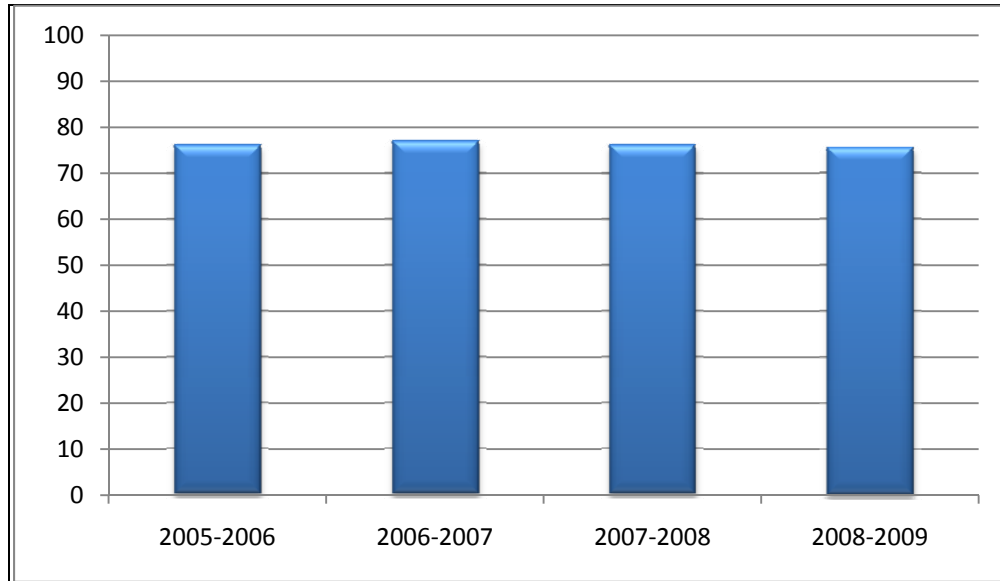
- Students who are new to the English language (ELLs—English Language Learners, or LEP—Limited English Proficiency) are largely subject to the same standardized test as regular education students. The test is written and must be completed in English. These scores are also equally factored into a school's overall proficiency score. An exception to this involves students who are in their first year in the school district and have had limited or no exposure to the English language. In such instances, these students may be permitted to take a Spanish language version of the standardized mathematics test and their scores are not included in the district's overall AYP. The test's reading and writing portions are optional. While the reading and writing tests are in English, students are permitted to use word-to-word dictionaries that translate native language to English or English to native language. It should be noted, however, that certain restrictions apply on types of dictionaries allowed and their use. In addition, interpreters may also be used. Students may take Spanish test versions for the first three years of their enrollment in the U.S. school system.
- Schools in urban areas typically include higher percentages of IEP, ELL, or LEP, and economically disadvantaged students. Based on the overall proficiency scores for these schools, one may assume that these districts are not scoring as well as their suburban or rural counterparts (as suburban and rural schools' AYPs are not greatly or negatively impacted by such factors).
- Subjectively, many professional educators believe that through NCLB's mandates, the science of teaching and learning has usurped the art of teaching and learning. Much of the creativity that a teacher might use in the classroom is overtaken by his or her need to conduct repeated practice exercises in order to train students to perform well on the standardized test. Essentially, teaching to the test stifles teachers' abilities to implement project-based learning, creative hands-on experiences, and critical thinking exercises. Is this federal or district mandated. Many argue that if teachers just teach the curriculum well, that the student learns and therefore does well on the test.

### **Proficiency Trends 2006-2009**

In Luzerne County, and statewide, since 2006 over 76% of students on average have exhibited proficiencies in the writing section. Since 2006, Luzerne County's writing proficiencies have been higher than statewide averages. Luzerne County's IEP students demonstrated variability in their proficiency scores at each grade level from 2006 to 2009. The county's economically disadvantaged students also had fluctuations in proficiency rates from 2006 to 2009. Hispanic and African- American students portrayed similar inconsistencies, with subgroup scores varying each year.

In the 2005-2006 school year, Luzerne County students averaged a 76.1% writing proficiency score, compared with 68.6% statewide. By the 2008-2009 school year, Luzerne County students achieved a 75.5% writing proficiency score, compared with 58.1% statewide.

**Figure 1: Luzerne County Writing Proficiency Results 2006-2009**



## Proficiency Results by School District for 2008-2009

### Number of Students Tested

The number of students tested in writing varied from each grade. The table below denotes the number of students tested in 2009 for writing in each school district.

**Table 1: Students Tested in Writing: 2008-2009**

School District	5th Grade	8th Grade	11th Grade
CRESTWOOD SD	234	243	263
DALLAS SD	220	220	200
GREATER NANTICOKE AREA SD	157	181	169
HANOVER AREA SD	146	145	149
HAZLETON AREA SD	757	800	742
LAKE-LEHMAN SD	138	162	186
NORTHWEST AREA SD	104	119	121
PITTSTON AREA SD	236	211	279
WILKES-BARRE AREA SD	480	464	496
WYOMING AREA SD	189	185	203
WYOMING VALLEY WEST SD	365	419	387
<b>Total by Grade</b>	<b>3026</b>	<b>3149</b>	<b>3195</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>9370</b>		

## Proficiency Changes 2008-2009

Between the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years, changes in the level of writing proficiency have occurred in Luzerne County. From 2008 to 2009, eleventh grade students exhibited the largest decrease in proficiency percentage from 88.4% in 2008 to 84.3% in 2009 – a 4.1% change. Fifth and eighth grade students had an increase in proficiency percentage since 2008. Fifth grade proficiency increased by 2.3%, while eighth grade saw its proficiency scores rise by 0.3% from the previous year. The largest proficiency increase occurred in the Greater Nanticoke SD fifth grade class, where writing proficiency increased from 28.4% in 2008 to 52.9% in 2009 – an increase of 24.5 percentage points. Crestwood SD had the largest increase in writing proficiency for eighth grade at 12.3%.

**Table 2: Luzerne County Writing Proficiency 2008-2009**

School District	2007-2008	2008-2009	Change	2007-2008	2008-2009	Change	2007-2008	2008-2009	Change
	Grade 5			Grade 8			Grade 11		
CRESTWOOD SD	59.5	69.3	9.8	73.7	86.0	12.3	87.1	85.5	-1.6
DALLAS SD	85	80.9	-4.1	86.6	90.9	4.3	96.3	89.5	-6.8
GREATER NANTICOKE AREA SD	28.4	52.9	24.5	60.3	58.0	-2.3	85.7	72.8	-12.9
HANOVER AREA SD	51	47.3	-3.7	80.2	84.1	3.9	91.3	88.6	-2.7
HAZLETON AREA SD	56.2	64.4	8.2	59.2	58.2	-1	86.3	79.0	-7.3
LAKE-LEHMAN SD	81.6	73.2	-8.4	67.6	67.9	0.3	85.4	82.2	-3.2
NORTHWEST AREA SD	75.5	74.0	-1.5	88.3	78.9	-9.4	72.4	76.9	4.5
PITTSSTON AREA SD	58.4	64.0	5.6	68.7	75.8	7.1	94.3	93.1	-1.2
WILKES-BARRE AREA SD	67.6	66.0	-1.6	70.5	70.7	0.2	93.3	91.7	-1.6
WYOMING AREA SD	89.1	78.8	-10.3	86.8	81.1	-5.7	98.6	93.6	-5
WYOMING VALLEY WEST SD	63.8	70.1	6.3	79.5	73.1	-6.4	81.5	73.9	-7.6
<b>County Average</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>88.4</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>-4.1</b>

## Progression of Proficiency Results by School District for 2008-2009

Progression of proficiency results was measured by comparing writing scores of the 2006 fifth grade to the 2009 eighth grade class. Similarly, comparisons between the 2006 eighth grade class and the 2009 eleventh grade class were made to measure writing proficiency progress. 2009 eighth graders demonstrated an increase of 12.5 percentage points from three years prior, as 73.1% reached a level of proficiency. Eleventh graders in 2009 also showed improvement from the previous time they had been tested with 84.3% of students attaining a

level of proficiency – up 9.2 percentage points from 2006. Northwest Area SD eighth grade class exhibited the largest increase in proficiency with a 32.9% increase from 2006. In eleventh grade, Crestwood SD had an increase of 24.9 percentage points in proficiency while Pittston Area SD followed with a 21.1% jump from three years prior.

**Table 3: Progression of PSSA Writing Performance 2006-2009**

School District	2005-2006	2008-2009	Change 5th-8th	2005-2006	2008-2009	Change 8th-11th
	Grade 5	Grade 8		Grade 8	Grade 11	
CRESTWOOD SD	69.7	86	16.3	60.6	85.5	24.9
DALLAS SD	76.5	90.9	14.4	84.8	89.5	4.7
GREATER NANTICOKE AREA SD	34.3	58	23.7	56.9	72.8	15.9
HANOVER AREA SD	65	84.1	19.1	78.8	88.6	9.8
HAZLETON AREA SD	56.9	58.2	1.3	69.6	79	9.4
LAKE-LEHMAN SD	68.3	67.9	-0.4	79.2	82.2	3.0
NORTHWEST AREA SD	46	78.9	32.9	82.2	76.9	-5.3
PITTSTON AREA SD	53.9	75.8	21.9	72.0	93.1	21.1
WILKES-BARRE AREA SD	70.1	70.7	0.6	81.7	91.7	10.0
WYOMING AREA SD	81.5	81.1	-0.4	89.6	93.6	4.0
WYOMING VALLEY WEST SD	65.2	73.1	7.9	70.9	73.9	3.0
<b>County Average</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>9.2</b>

## Proficiency in Subgroups

The tables below show the number of students in each subgroup tested in 2009.

**Table 4: Number of Students Tested in Writing by Subgroup**

	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11
IEP	435	474	388
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	1431	1387	1026
<b>African American</b>	127	129	98
<b>Hispanic</b>	295	303	229

## Students with Disabilities

For the purposes of this report, a student with a disability is defined as any student that requires the use of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet his/her educational goals. In Luzerne County, over 1297 fifth, eighth and eleventh grade students with disabilities were tested on the writing section of the PSSA during the 2008-2009 school year. Students with disabilities had proficiencies of 28.5% for fifth grade, 24.0% for eighth grade, and 44.7% for eleventh grade. It should be noted that although the scores of students with disabilities are often reported separately from the aggregated data, their scores are factored equally into each school district's proficiency total and AYP goals.

When compared with their peers in Luzerne County, students with disabilities perform at a lower level at all grade levels in writing. Obviously there are times when students with disabilities have a harder time fulfilling their educational purposes. However, several changes can occur:

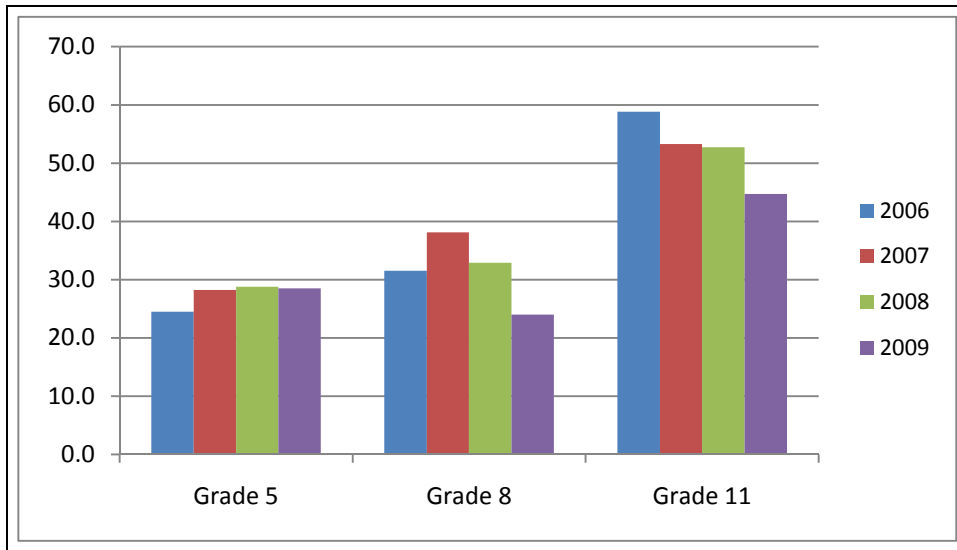
- Modifications to the content of the program
- Lowered success criteria for academic success
- Increased emphasis on daily living skills and decrease on educational assignments
- Alternative state assessments, such as off-grade level assessments

## Specially Designed Instruction

Specially designed instruction affects the instructional content, method of instructional delivery, and the performance methods and criteria that are necessary to assist the student make meaningful educational progress. This instruction is designed by or with an appropriately credentialed special education teacher or related service provider. For some students, teachers may need to present information through the use of manipulatives. For other students, teachers may need to select and teach only important key concepts and then alter evaluation activities and criteria to match this content change.

IEP students scored lower than all students as a whole from 2006-2009. However, the trends indicate progression in writing proficiency scores for students with disabilities, specifically from eighth grade to eleventh grade.

**Figure 2: IEP Student Writing Proficiency: 2006-2009**



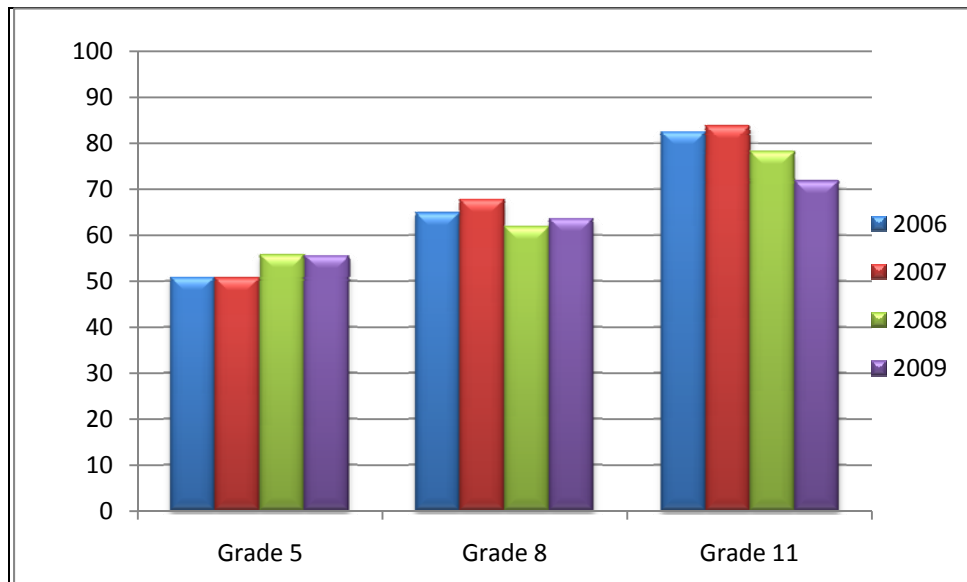
### **Economically Disadvantaged**

Economically disadvantaged students constitute another subgroup whose performance is monitored and analyzed via PSSA testing. The Pennsylvania Department of Education categorizes a student as “economically disadvantaged” based on his or her participation in the public school system’s free or reduced fee lunch program. Traditionally, students who are raised in low-income environments tend to perform at a significantly lower level than peers from a higher socioeconomic background.

In Luzerne County, 3,844 fifth, eighth and eleventh grade students classified as economically disadvantaged took the writing portion of the PSSA during the 2008 -2009 school year. The state average for this subgroup is 53.1%. Economically disadvantaged students in Luzerne County exceeded this state average with a proficiency rating of 63.4%.

Students who are classified under the economically disadvantaged population exhibited similar trends to the general population. During the course of four years, fifth grade scores appeared to improve, while eighth grade scores fluctuated and eleventh grade had a decline in proficiency scores.

**Figure 3: Economically Disadvantaged Student Writing Proficiency: 2006-2009**



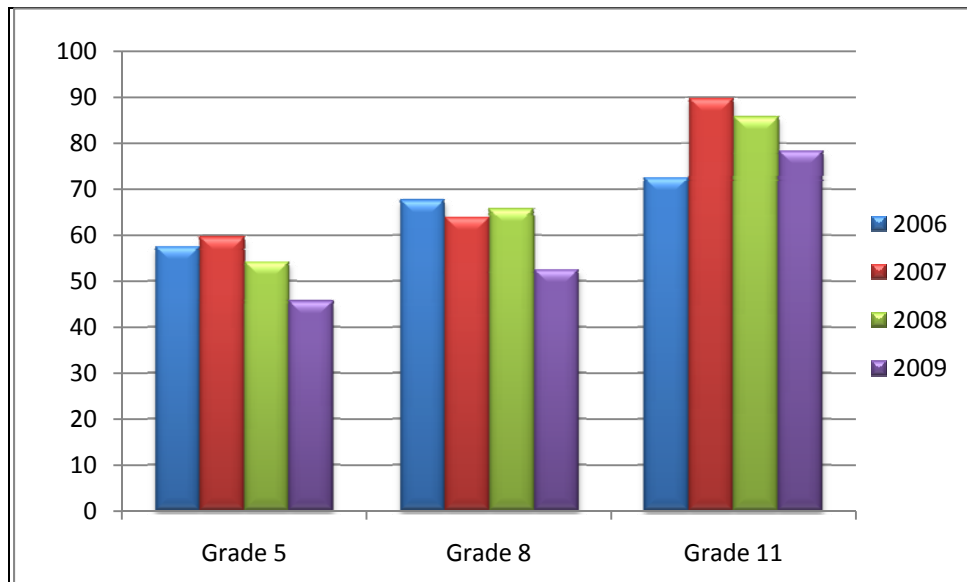
### African-American Students

African-American students comprise another subgroup also monitored by PSSA testing, as dictated by NCLB. During the 2008-2009 school year, 354 African-American students in Luzerne County were tested in the writing section of the PSSA. Of the school districts in Luzerne County, only four had African-American populations large enough to be scored and independently reported (population greater than 10) -- Greater Nanticoke Area, Hazleton Area, Wilkes-Barre Area, and Wyoming Valley West. The generalizations and analysis that follow should be tempered with caution given the little data available both in this testing year and in prior years.

African-American students earned proficiency ratings of 49.8% statewide. In Luzerne County, African-American students reached an average proficiency rating of 58.8%, nine percentage points higher than that of the state average. This level of proficiency was, however, lower than the Luzerne County proficiency rating of 75.5%.

African-Americans scored lower than the student population as a whole for each grade level in 2009. Fifth graders in this subgroup have demonstrated a decline in writing proficiency scores since 2007, while eighth grade African-Americans have varied in their levels of proficiency. African-Americans in the eleventh grade demonstrated an increase in writing proficiency from 72.5% in 2006 to 89.8% in 2007. However, proficiency levels have declined for eleventh graders in this subgroup during the past two years.

**Figure 4: African American Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



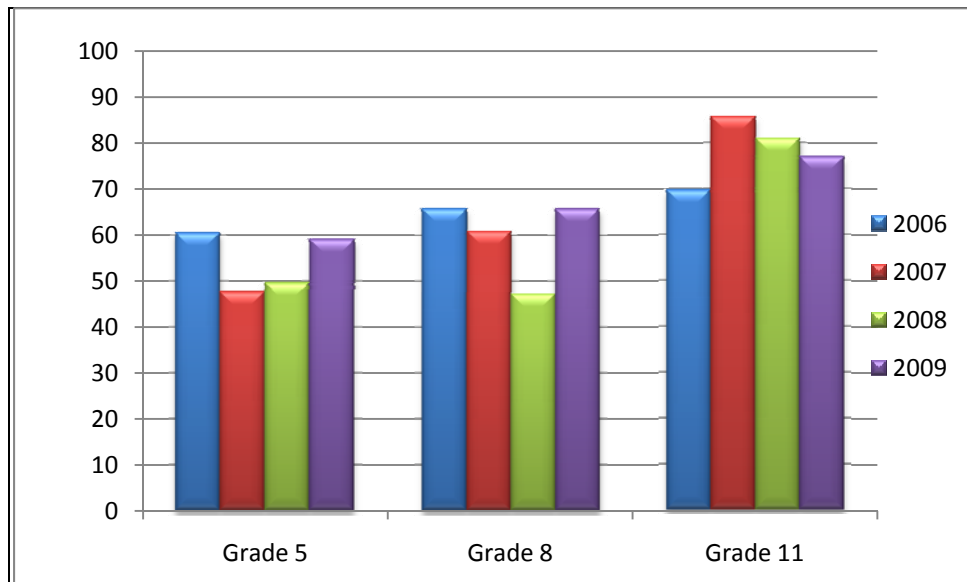
## Hispanic Students

In Luzerne County, 827 Hispanic students took the writing portion of the PSSA during the 2008-2009 school year. This subgroup earned an average writing proficiency score of 67.2% in 2009. Not all students at all grade levels in each district are included in PSSA results, as grades with fewer than ten students in a particular subgroup are not measured. Similar to the African-American subgroup population, there were only three school districts which included Hispanic populations large enough to be scored and independently reported. Again, the generalizations and analysis that follow should be tempered with caution given the little data available both in this testing year and in prior years.

Hispanic students scored below the county average for writing proficiency in fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades. Although the proficiency differential between Hispanic students and the entire population only ranged between seven and eight percentage points for each grade. Hispanic students in Luzerne County scored higher than Hispanic students statewide, earning a proficiency rating of 67.2% as opposed to 49.9%.

Hispanic students experienced an increase in writing proficiency scores in fifth grade from 2008 to 2009, rising from 49.6% to 59.0%. Eighth graders in this subgroup experienced an even greater increase from 2008, going up from 47.2% in 2008 to 65.7% in 2009. As was the case with African-American students, eleventh grade Hispanic students endured a drop-off in writing proficiency scores each year since 2007.

**Figure 5: Hispanic Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Conclusion

Overall, students in Luzerne County have exhibited improvement in their writing proficiency scores as they progress through their education. In the transition from fifth to eighth grade (2006 to 2009), students experienced a 12.5% increase in writing scores. Between the same two time periods, students transitioning from eighth to eleventh grade increased their writing proficiency scores by 9.2%. However, one point of concern is the decline in eleventh grade proficiency scores from 2008 to 2009. Northwest Area was the only school district to have experienced an increase in writing proficiency from 2008 to 2009. No school districts in Luzerne County earned a 100% proficiency rating at any grade level in writing from 2006 to 2009. This is due to a large variation of students' academic proficiency levels and subgroups. There are many reasons for a decline in performance, which must be considered in order to make improvements. Such issues may require adjusting the current curriculum, remediating students and tracking their progress. More teachers, classroom aides, and tutors could be considered to guide students toward academic success. Smaller class sizes, homogeneous class structures, and other teaching methods could also be employed depending on a school's specific issues.

Achieving or exceeding state targets should be the primary goal for Luzerne County school districts. The average writing proficiency rating for students in Luzerne County during the 2008-2009 school year was 75.5%, exceeding Pennsylvania's average proficiency rating of 70.9%. While goal percentages increase annually to reach NCLB's end proficiency goal of 100% by

2014, school districts must continually aim to exceed state targets and show consistent improvements each year. Moreover, if school districts fail to meet target levels, they are subject to penalties and sanctions, or may be mandated to develop improvement plans, provide tutoring, or be taken over by the state.

Proficiency examinations in other subjects have recently been added (science and social studies) and may continue to be added over time. Therefore, schools that have reduced instruction time in those subjects to focus on mathematics, reading, and writing PSSAs may be doing themselves a disservice to meet current demands. It is critical for school districts to determine best practices to ensure proficiencies in all subjects are met. Teaching specifically to the PSSA should be avoided.

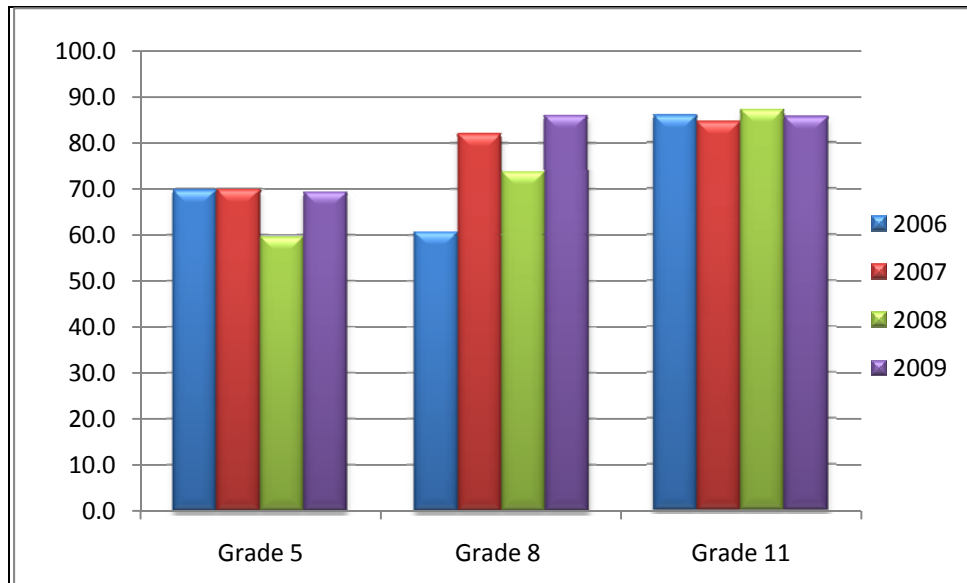
The education triad (administrators, teachers, and parents) must form a more effective collaborative effort to ensure that real learning is taking place. It is especially critical for parents and families to stress to their children the importance of education. Studies show that students with encouraging parents/families have a higher chance of succeeding in their academic progress than those from families who do not support their educational advancement. For Pennsylvania, emphasis on improving higher education attainment and other continuing education is critical. The economic development success of any region is dependent upon the quality of its workforce. That quality training begins in elementary school. Specifically, the best economic development strategy is one that maximizes the potential of Pre-K – 12 educations.

## Appendix: Luzerne County School Proficiency Scores

### Crestwood School District

Crestwood School District sustained consistent writing proficiency scores in fifth grade from 2006 to 2009, reaching near the 70% proficiency mark every year except for 2008. Eighth grade students varied in their scores for much of the time period, although they experienced a significant proficiency increase from 60.6% in 2006 to 86.0% in 2009. Eleventh grade students in the Crestwood School District were fairly consistent with their proficiency scores, averaging 85.7% over the four years.

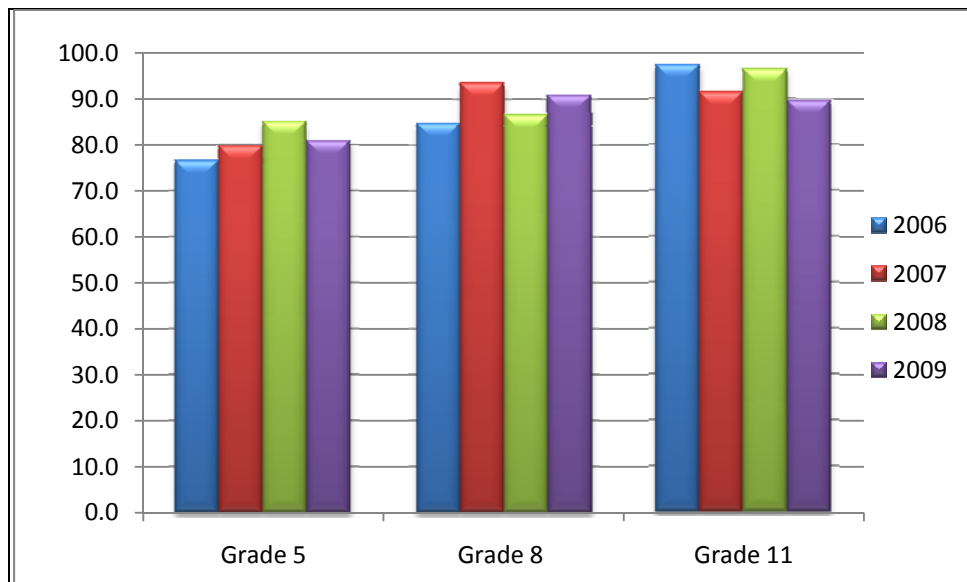
Figure 6: Crestwood SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009



## Dallas School District

Dallas School District has scored relatively high in terms of writing proficiency since 2006. Fifth grade students improved their scores from 2006 to 2007 and 2007 to 2008, earning a slightly lower rating in 2009. Both eighth and eleventh grade students had fluctuations in their proficiency ratings each year, with eighth grade averaging 89.0% and eleventh grade having a 93.6% proficiency level. Since 2006, Dallas has earned the highest eighth grade writing proficiency average among all school districts.

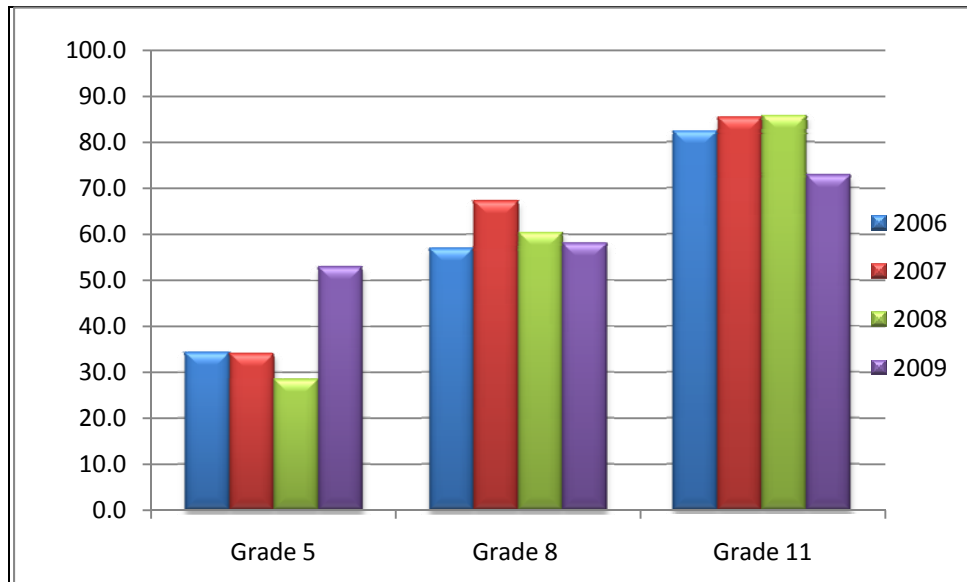
**Figure 72: Dallas SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Greater Nanticoke Area School District

Greater Nanticoke Area School District fifth graders experienced a noticeable improvement in writing proficiency with an increase from 28.4% in 2008 to 52.9% in 2009. Eighth graders earned a slightly lower average in 2009 than they had in 2008. After having proficiency ratings that exceeded 85% in 2007 and 2008, eleventh grade had proficiency scores that dropped to 72.8% in 2009.

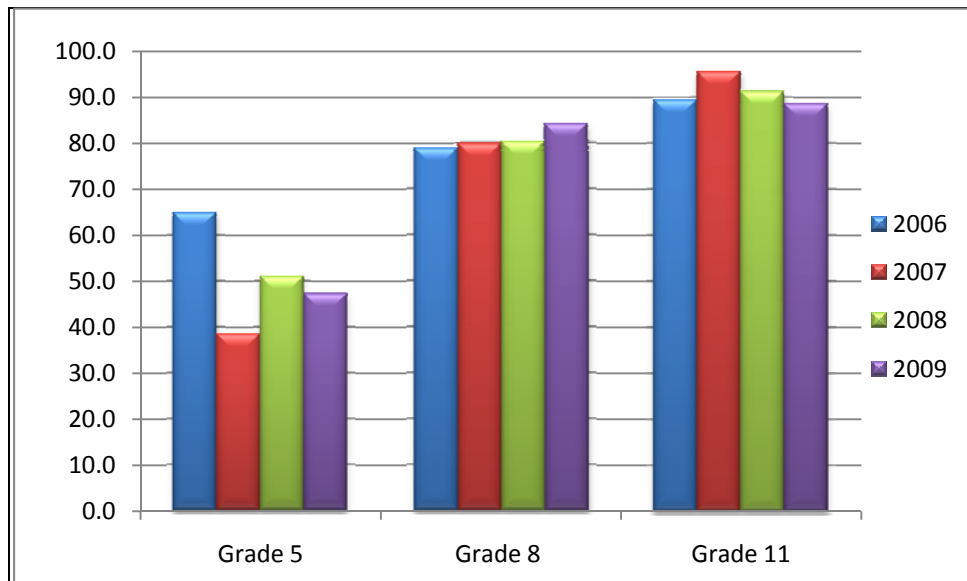
**Figure 8: Greater Nanticoke Area SD: Math Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Hanover Area School District

Between 2008 and 2009, eighth grade students in the Hanover Area School District improved their writing proficiency scores, increasing their proficiency rating to 84.1% from 80.2% in 2008. Fifth grade writing proficiency scores varied each year since 2006, most recently declining by 3.7% from 51.0% in 2008. Eleventh graders in the Hanover School District have averaged proficiency ratings of 91.2% since 2006, although scores have slightly declined the past two years.

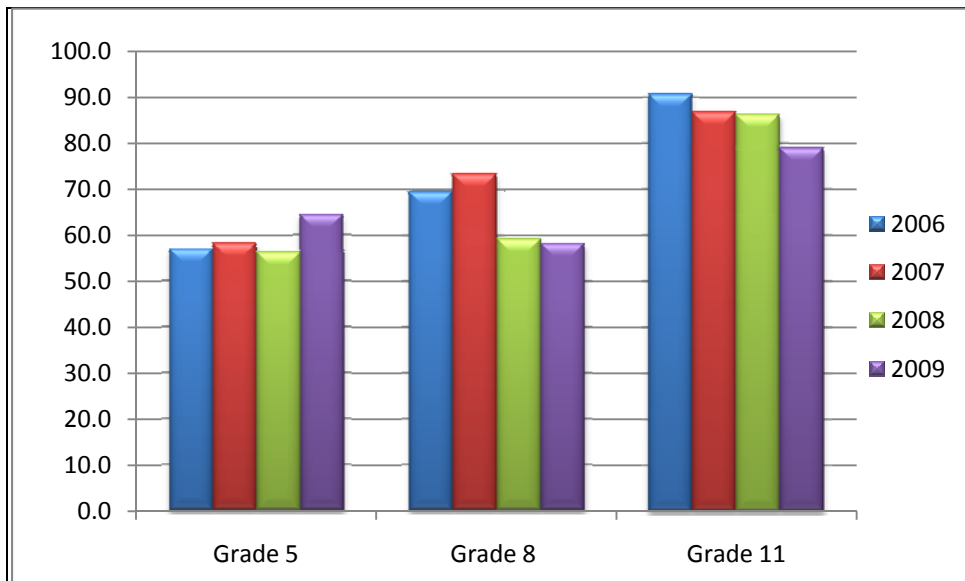
**Figure 9: Hanover Area SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Hazleton Area School District

In the Hazleton Area School District, fifth grade proficiency scores improved in 2009, increasing from 56.2% in 2008 to 64.4% in 2009. Eighth grade earned a proficiency score of 73.4% in 2007, but has experienced a decline in proficiency to slightly below 60% the past two years. On average, eleventh grade students have had writing proficiency scores of 85.7% since 2006, although their scores have declined each year.

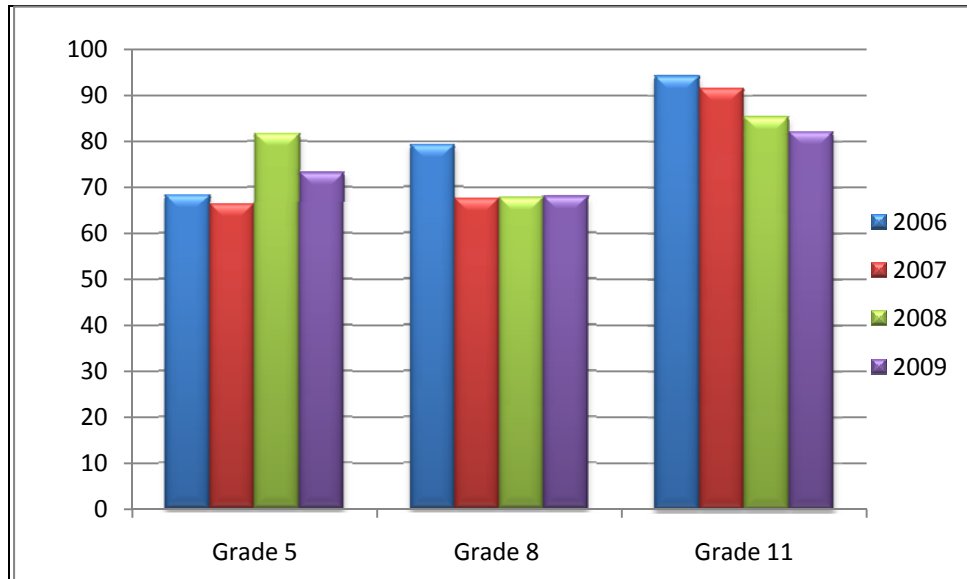
**Figure 3: Hazleton Area SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Lake Lehman School District

Proficiency scores for fifth grade students in the Lake Lehman School District have fluctuated from year to year. Most recently, fifth grade experienced a decline in writing proficiency, dropping from 81.6% in 2008 to 73.2% in 2009. In 2006, eighth grade earned a proficiency score of 79.2%, but it has averaged only 67.6% since 2007. Writing proficiency scores for eleventh grade have dropped each year since 2006, the most recent being reported at 82.2%.

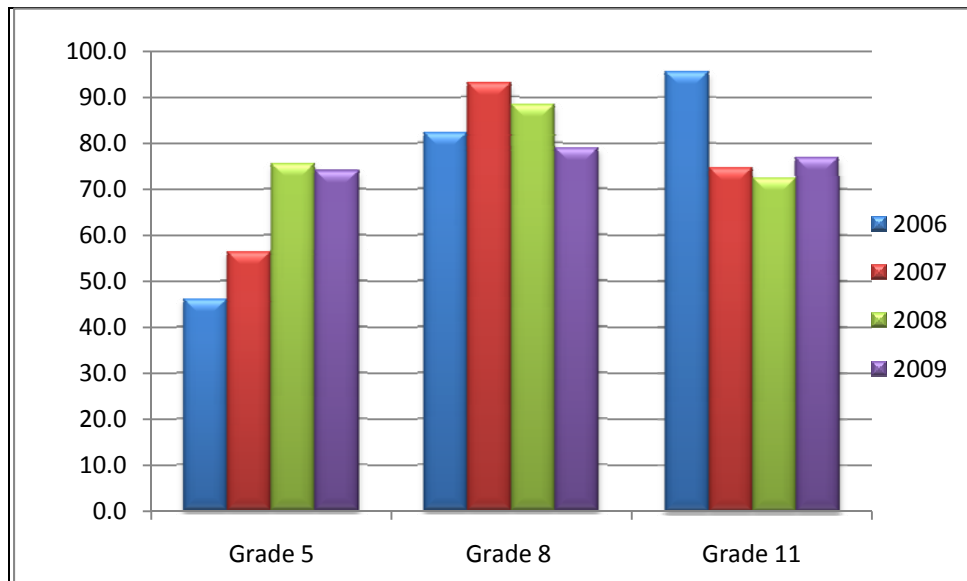
**Figure 11: Lake Lehman SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Northwest Area School District

In the Northwest Area School District, eighth grade had the highest proficiency score of the three grade levels with a 78.9% rating. Fifth grade has shown progression in writing scores since 2006. Proficiency scores in fifth grade only dropped slightly from 75.5% in 2008 to 74.0% in 2009. Eleventh grade's writing proficiency has declined the past several years after earning a 95.6% proficiency score in 2006. However, eleventh grade writing proficiency improved by 4.5%, rising to 76.9% in 2009.

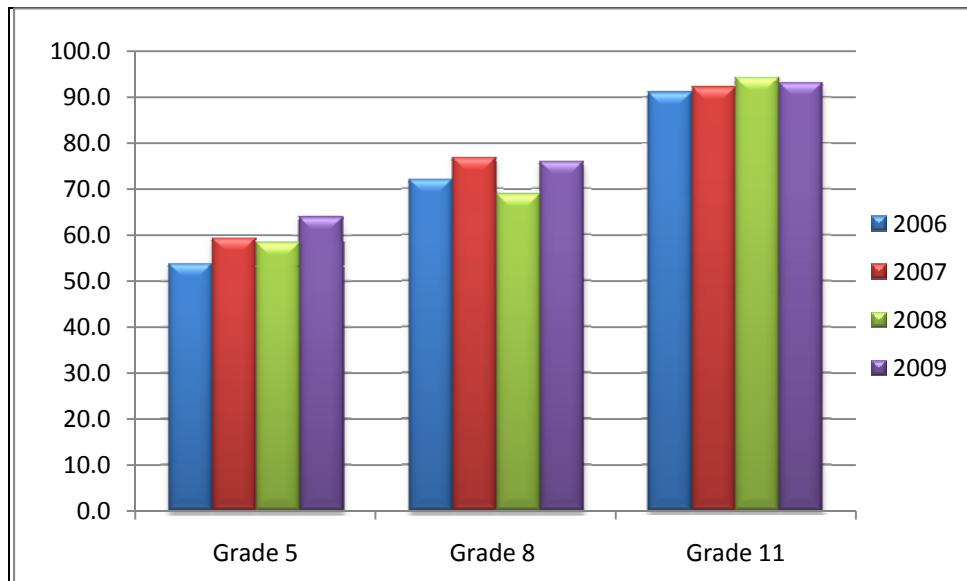
**Figure 12: Northwest Area SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Pittston Area School District

Both fifth and eighth grades in the Pittston Area School District showed improvement in their writing proficiency scores from 2008 to 2009. Fifth and eighth grades have also shown variation in writing proficiency, alternating each year since 2006. Eleventh grade students in the Pittston Area School District have demonstrated consistency in their writing proficiency ratings, scoring between 91.1% and 94.3% each of the past four years.

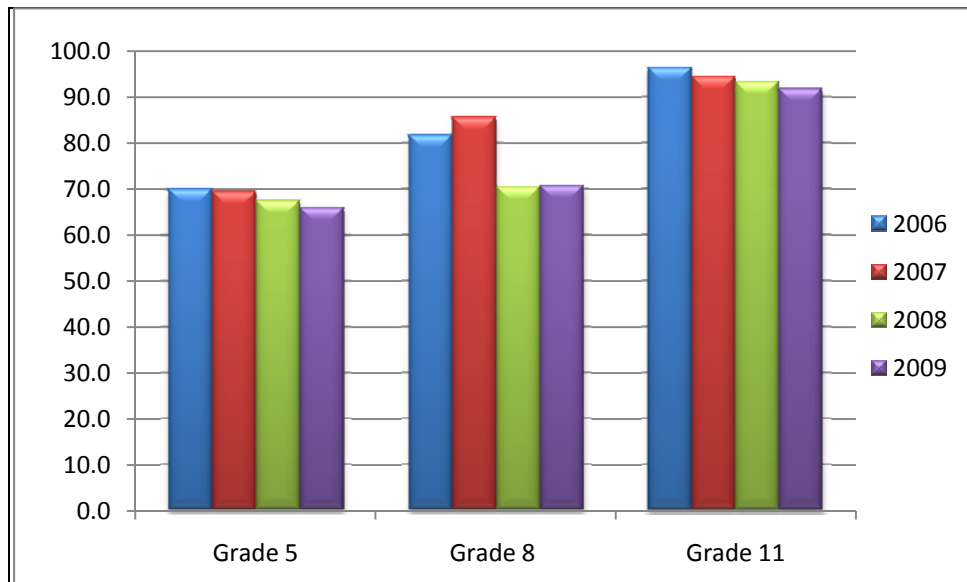
**Figure 13: Pittston Area SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Wilkes-Barre Area School District

Proficiency scores for fifth graders in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District have declined by small margins each of the past four years, the most recent proficiency rating being 66.0% in 2009. After earning a writing proficiency score of 85.6% in 2007, eighth grade has experienced a decline in proficiency the past two years, scoring 70.5% in 2008 and 70.7% in 2009. Although eleventh grade has averaged a 94.0% proficiency score since 2006, it has also experienced slight drops in proficiency each year.

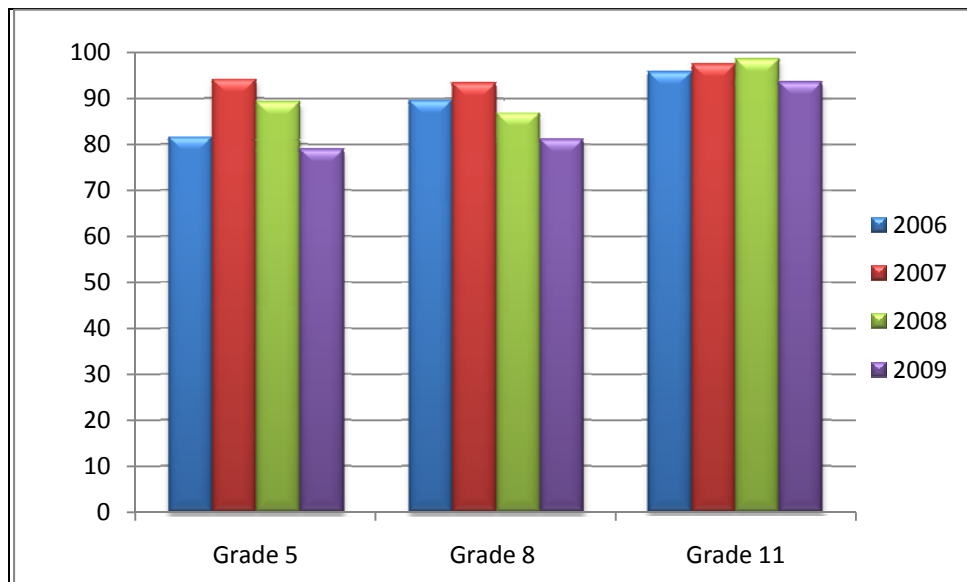
**Figure 14: Wilkes-Barre Area SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Wyoming Area School District

Since 2006, Wyoming Area School District has maintained the highest writing proficiency average among all school districts for both fifth and eleventh grades. Students at all grade levels experienced a decline in their writing proficiency scores from 2008 to 2009, with fifth grade having the largest drop off from 89.1% to 78.8%. After attaining 93.3% proficiency in 2007, eighth grade proficiency dropped each of the past two years. Eleventh grade experienced its first decline in writing proficiency since 2006 with a rating of 93.6% in 2009.

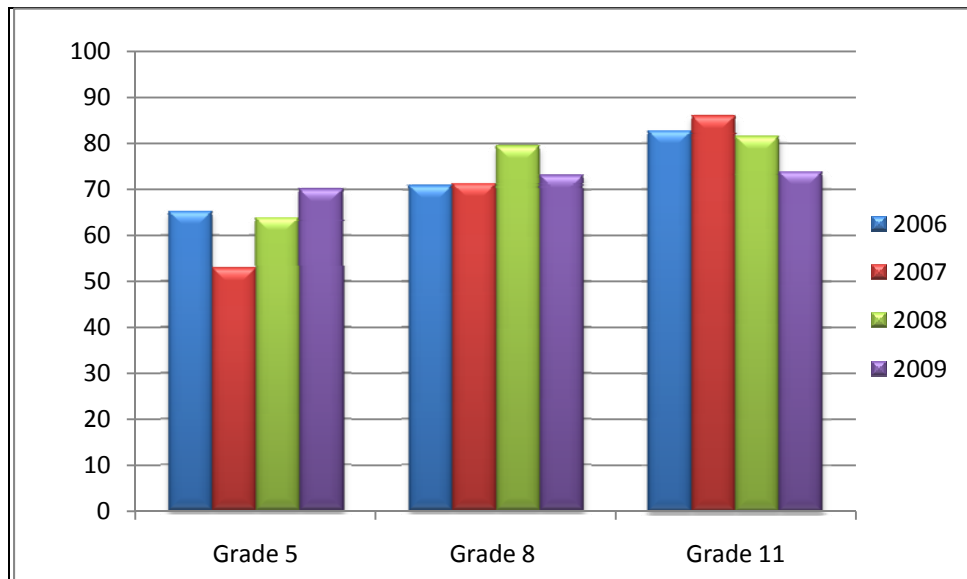
**Figure 15: Wyoming Area SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



## Wyoming Valley West School District

In the Wyoming Valley West School District, each grade scored within the 70%-74% range in writing proficiency during the 2009 school year. After declining in proficiency during the 2007 school year, fifth grade has earned higher writing proficiency scores the past two years, reaching a level of 70.1% in 2009. Eleventh grade, on the other hand, has experienced a drop off in its proficiency rating since 2007, most recently scoring 73.9%.

**Figure 16: Wyoming Valley West SD: Writing Proficiency 2006-2009**



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