



**Wisconsin's Early Literacy Landscape:  
The Science of Reading as a Catalyst for Change**

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# Why “Read by Three” Matters: A National Look



Students who are not reading proficiently in third grade:

4 x  Are four times more likely to not graduate high school.

6 x  If African American or Hispanic, are six times more likely to drop out or fail to graduate from high school.

8 x  If low-income minority, are eight times more likely to drop out or fail to graduate from high school.



Seven (7) out of every ten (10) inmates cannot read above a fourth-grade level.



The nation could be losing up to \$2.2 trillion annually due to low adult literacy rates.

*The Barbara Bush Family Foundation, 2020*

## Struggling Readers

### Elementary school students have difficulty:

- Reading and understanding assignments
- Reading directions to complete homework
- Reading and solving math problems
- Writing or reading a birthday card

### Adolescents have difficulty:

*Issues that persist from elementary school +*

- Following instructions for a science experiment
- Passing a driver's license test
- Filling out a job application

### Adults have difficulty:

- Reading their child a bedtime story
- Helping with homework
- Reading and completing job and housing applications
- Reading a ballot to vote
- Completing paperwork for doctor's visits and insurance claims

# Why the science of reading?



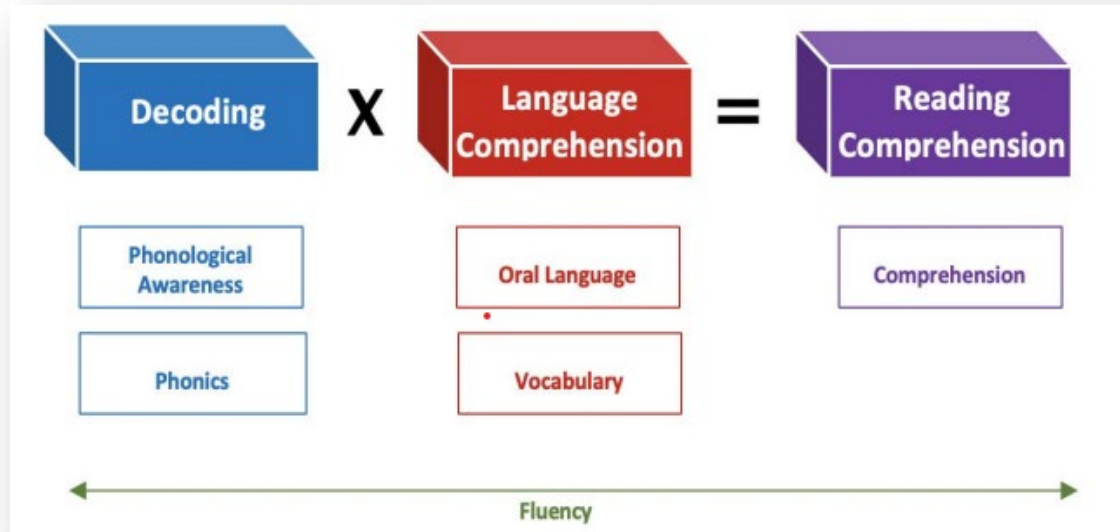
“...The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.”

– The Reading League’s Defining Movement Coalition (2021)



# Comprehension = The Goal of Reading

The Simple View of Reading by Gough & Tunmer, 1986  
a representation of the skills students need to comprehend



- **Word Recognition/Decoding** - Ability to transform print into spoken language (phonics, phonological awareness)
- **Language Comprehension** - Ability to understand spoken language (vocabulary, background knowledge, structure of language)

# A Comprehensive Approach to Improving Literacy Outcomes



## ☐ Science of Reading Resurgence



September 10, 2018

### Hard Words: Why aren't our kids being taught to read?

Scientific research has shown how children learn to read and how they should be taught. But many educators don't know the science and, in some cases, actively resist it. As a result, millions of kids are being set up to fail.

## ☐ NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Data

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### Two Decades of Progress, Nearly Gone: National Math, Reading Scores Hit Historic Lows

By Sarah D. Sparks — October 24, 2022 ⌚ 8 min read

## ☐ Dyslexia-Focused Reform

US POLITICS

### Sen. Cassidy hosts roundtable on new dyslexia bill

by: Savannah Arnold  
Posted: Jul 14, 2022 / 03:49 AM CDT  
Updated: Jul 14, 2022 / 03:49 AM CDT

## ☐ COVID-19 Pandemic

BUSINESS

### Pandemic Learning Loss Is a National Crisis

Analysis by Michael R. Bloomberg | Bloomberg  
September 14, 2022 at 11:55 a.m. EDT



- **Supports for Teachers and Policy**
  - Science of Reading (SOR) training
  - Reading coaches
  - EPP coursework alignment to SOR + assessment for certification
  - Funding
- **Assessment and Parent Notification**
  - Universal and dyslexia screening notification
  - Parent notification of reading deficiency
- **Instruction and Intervention**
  - High-quality instructional materials
  - Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials
  - Individual reading plans
  - Interventions and progress monitoring
  - Summer Reading Camps
  - Parent Resources
- **Retention and Intensive Intervention**



# Educator Training

All levels, including Ed  
Prep Programs

# Coaching for Teachers

Early  
Identification  
Testing with intention

# Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act Strategies

# Parent Communication

Educating about law, the  
why and emphasizing  
notifications and  
communication

**Prevention Over  
Retention**  
Promotion with good cause  
exemption and targeted  
interventions

**Individual  
Reading  
Plans**  
For students per  
amendment

*\*Courtesy MS Department of Education*

# Wisconsin's Early Literacy Landscape

# WISCONSIN

## Adopted Some Fundamental Principles

[View Wisconsin Law](#)[View Wisconsin Literacy Resources](#)[View Wisconsin NAEP Snapshot](#)

### WISCONSIN LITERACY PRINCIPLES ✓ 6 out of 16



#### SUPPORTS FOR TEACHERS & POLICY

- ✓ Science of Reading (SOR) Training
- ▲ Literacy/Reading Coaches
- ▲ Teacher Prep Program Alignment to SOR and/or SOR Assessment
- ✓ Funding for Literacy Efforts

#### ASSESSMENT & PARENT NOTIFICATION

- ✓ Universal Screener
- ▲ Dyslexia Screener for At-Risk Students
- ✓ Notify Parents of Students Identified with Reading Deficiency

#### INSTRUCTION & INTERVENTION

- ▲ District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials
- ▲ Eliminating Three-Cueing Instructional Materials
- ▲ Individual Reading Plans
- ✓ Regularly Monitor Student Progress
- ✓ Evidence-Based Interventions
- ▲ Summer Reading Camps
- ▲ Parent Read-At-Home Plan

#### RETENTION & INTERVENTION

- ▲ Initial Determinant Retention at 3rd Grade Based on State Assessment
- ▲ Multiple Options for Promotion
- ▲ Good Cause Exemptions for Some Students

**“Reading struggles don’t discriminate.”**

*- Peggy Carr, the Associate Commissioner for Assessments at the Education Department’s National Center for Education Statistics*

# Context for state comparisons



*ALL students can learn. No excuses.*

	Wisconsin			Florida			Mississippi			National Public	
Grade 4 Read	Scale Score	Rank	Gap	Scale Score	Rank	Gap	Scale Score	Rank	Gap	Scale Score	Gap
All Students	217	18		225	3		217	21		216	
White	226	24		234	4		230	11		226	
Black	186	39	40	207	3	28	204	5	25	198	28
Hispanic	202	28	24	222	1	12	214	5	16	204	22
FRL	201	29	29	215	1	23	212	2	25	203	28

There are 40 Black and 48 Hispanic jurisdictions.

	Wisconsin	Florida	Mississippi
Student Population	830,066	2,791,707	442,627
Black	9%	22%	48%
Hispanic	13%	35%	4%
White	68%	36%	43%
Free/Reduced Lunch	40%	55%	74%
Per Pupil Expenditure	\$12,690	\$ 9,986	\$ 9,253

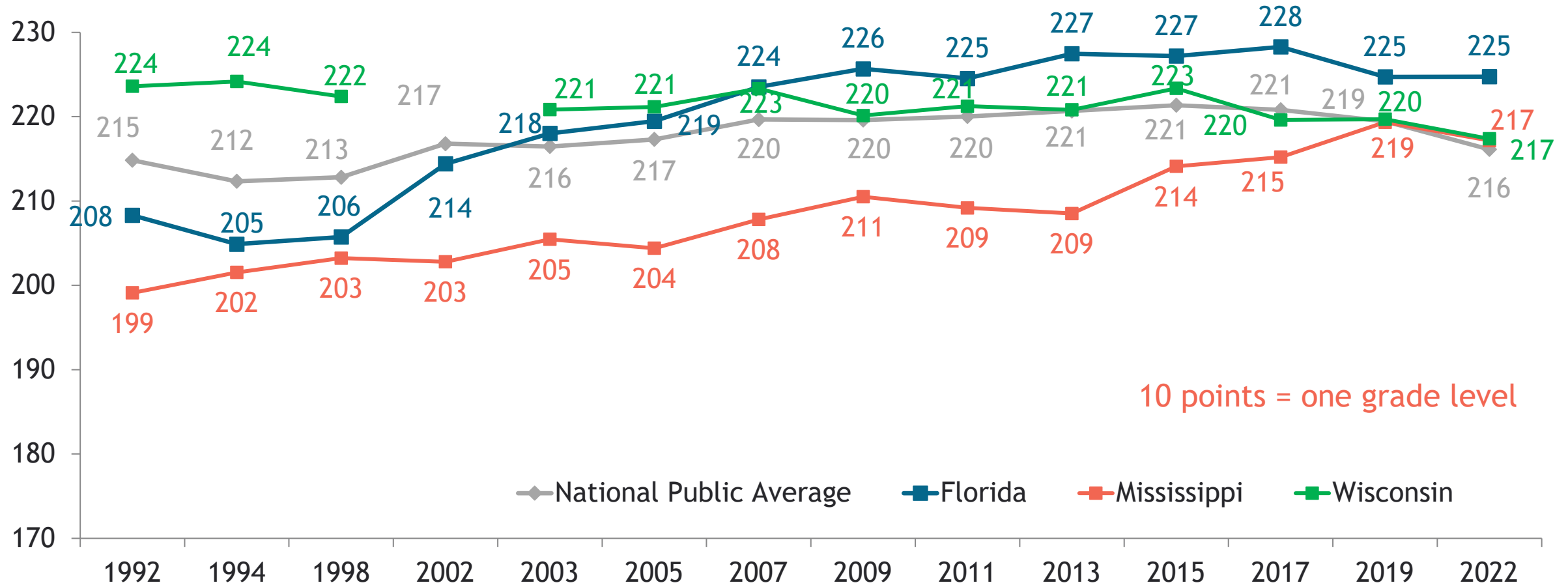
Wisconsin spends 30% more than Florida and 37% more than Mississippi per student.

Yet, Florida and Mississippi students outperform their Wisconsin peers across the board.

# NAEP Average Scale Score Grade 4 Reading: All Students



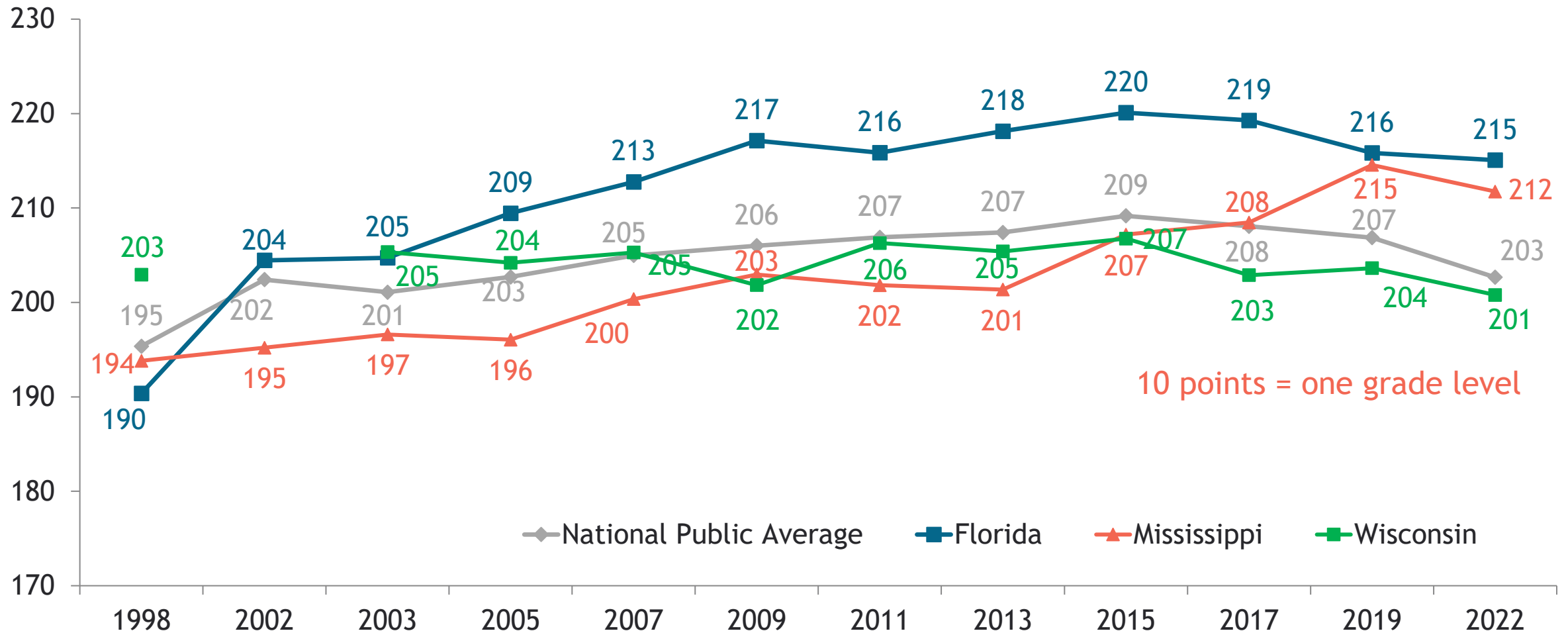
*In 1992, fourth graders in Wisconsin outperformed their peers nationally by nearly a grade level, Florida by more than 1 ½ and Mississippi by 2 ½ grade levels. By 2022, Wisconsin is outperformed by Florida by nearly a grade level, tied with Mississippi and barely besting the national average.*



# NAEP Average Scale Score Grade 4 Reading: Low Income Students



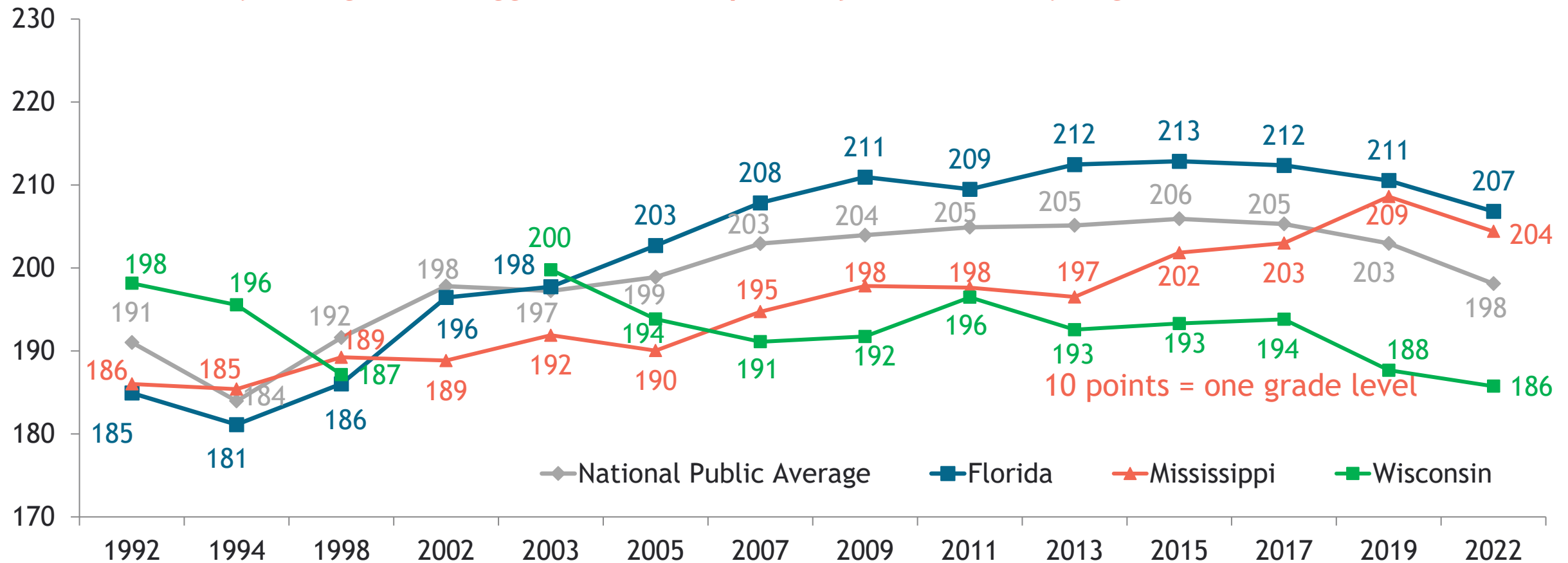
*In 2022, low income fourth graders in Wisconsin are performing worse than their 1998 peers and are now below the national public average and more than a grade level behind Mississippi and Florida.*



# NAEP Average Scale Score Grade 4 Reading: Black Students



*In 1992, Black fourth graders in Wisconsin outperformed their peers nationally by nearly a grade level and in Florida and Mississippi by more than a grade level. By 2022 they were performing nearly a grade level worse than their peers nationally and lagging Florida and Mississippi 2 grade levels. Worse, 2022 Wisconsin black fourth graders lagged their 1992 peers by more than a full grade level!*

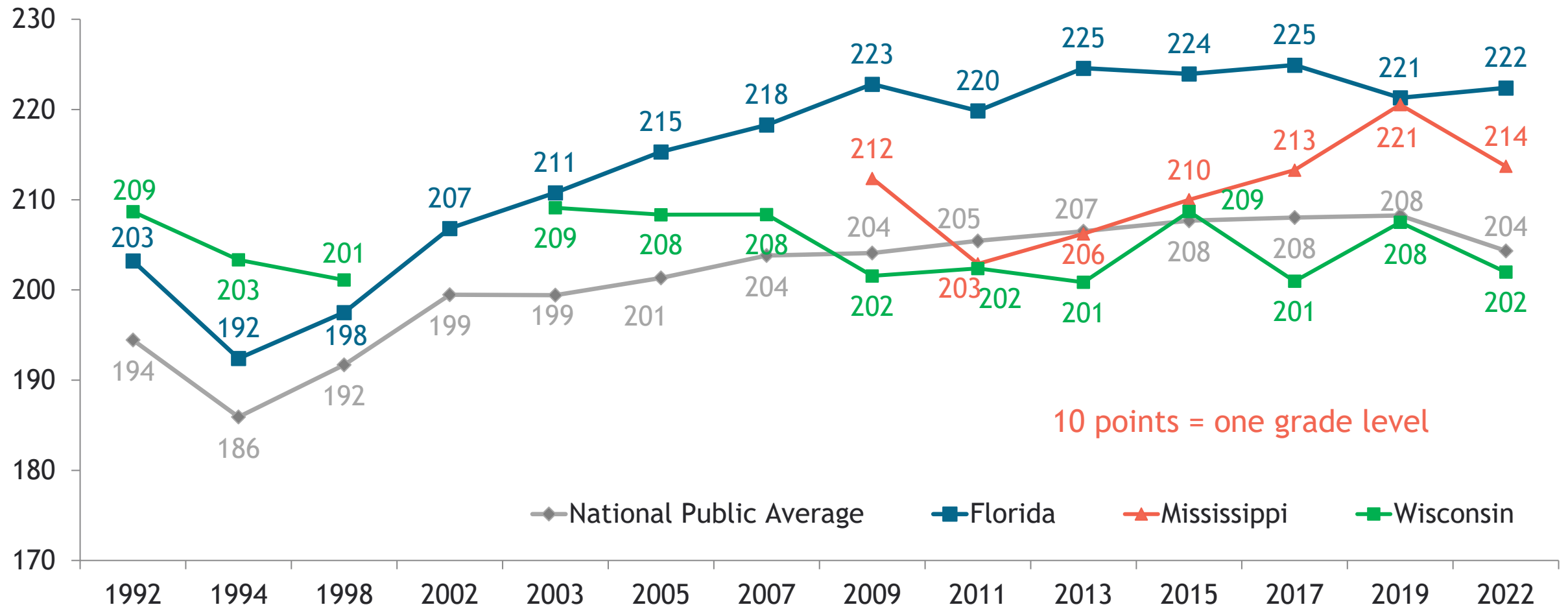




# NAEP Average Scale Score Grade 4 Reading: Hispanic Students



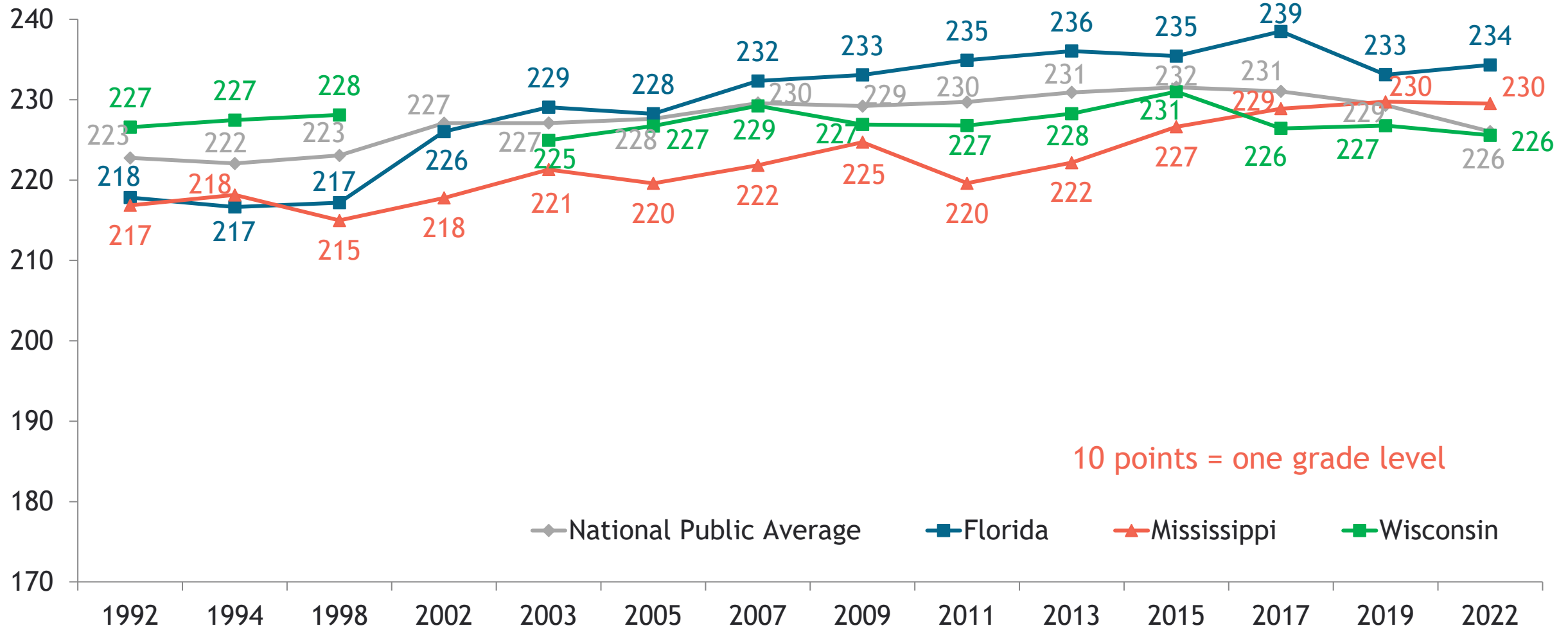
*In 2022, Hispanic fourth graders in Wisconsin scored below the national public average and were performing more than a grade level worse than Mississippi and 2 grade levels worse than Florida.*



# NAEP Average Scale Score Grade 4 Reading: White Students



*In 1992, white fourth graders in Wisconsin outperformed their Mississippi and Florida peers by a grade level but by 2022 Wisconsin is at the national average and bested by Florida and Mississippi.*



# Interconnected System from Policy to Practice

