

Picturing Writing/Image-Making Standardized Test Score Data Exeter, New Hampshire

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The DVD that you just saw was of my school, the Main Street School in Exeter, New Hampshire, a town of 15,000 people located 50 miles north of Boston, Massachusetts. While Exeter appears to be a typical middle class town, it contains the largest number of mobile homes in the state. One-half of the elementary students come from middle income and upper middle income homes. The other half come from lower socioeconomic levels. Twenty percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch.

Historically, Main Street School's scores on nationally normed assessments have been above average. However, after thirty-seven years of teaching in this district, I can tell you that for many years, the students who were at the bottom of their class in first grade, were frequently at the bottom of the class in fifth grade. This was particularly true in writing. Those students who entered with limited language continued to have difficulty with language throughout their elementary careers.

Research shows that this discrepancy is not unusual. One of the most significant findings of the National Reading Panel research was the impact of preschool language experiences on children's school achievement. Hart and Risley (1995) conducted a longitudinal study of children from three groups: professional families, working class families and families on welfare. There were great differences in exposure to words over the course of one year between the groups:

Children in Professional Families	heard an average of 11 million words per year
Children in Working Class Families	6 million words
Children in Welfare Families	3 million words

Results of their study found: Large differences in oral language at Kindergarten entrance, a difference that could amount to 5.2 years between the highest and lowest students. (For example, some children came to school with a 3-year-old's vocabulary, and some came in with an 8-year-old's vocabulary). Reid Lyon 2004

In Exeter, we have some children who arrive in Kindergarten already reading. Many other children, however, are like a little boy that I worked with

during Kindergarten screening. When I showed him the letters of the alphabet and asked if he had ever seen them before, he smiled and replied, “Nope. I ain’t got no numbers.”

This discrepancy is what drove our district to search for a better way to support students who came to school with a limited language background. When looking at ways to improve writing scores, the staff focused on nationally validated writing programs. A group of teachers went to conferences, visited schools, took graduate courses, and piloted programs.

After analyzing the research and observing the results of a pilot program, the Main Street School staff voted unanimously to apply for a Comprehensive School Reform Grant to implement *Picturing Writing: Fostering Literacy Through Art and Image-Making Within The Writing Process*. The school received a C.S.R.D. grant for \$150,000 for a three-year project, from 1999 to 2002, to integrate *Picturing Writing and Image-Making* into the Language Arts and Science curricula. Both taught teachers to back plan integrated science and writing units beginning with the New Hampshire Science and Language Arts standards. Teachers chose literature models and develop daily plans.

Results of implementing *Picturing Writing and Image-Making* were excellent. Over three years of the project, on every district assessment measure, there was a steady increase in scores for all students.

The following are examples of scores from Exeter’s second grade and third grade populations over time. Scores of all students improved, but the most significant growth was with the at-risk population. This growth has particularly strong implications given the mandates of No Child Left Behind.

1. Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension scores for all students improved. More significantly, Title I students demonstrated an overall increase in high scores and a decrease in low scores, even though all of these students had to score below the 45th percentile to qualify for the Title I program in the fall. These findings were a surprise since we didn't expect a writing program to increase reading scores.

Grade Two Gates MacGinitie Spring Scores

Reading Comprehension

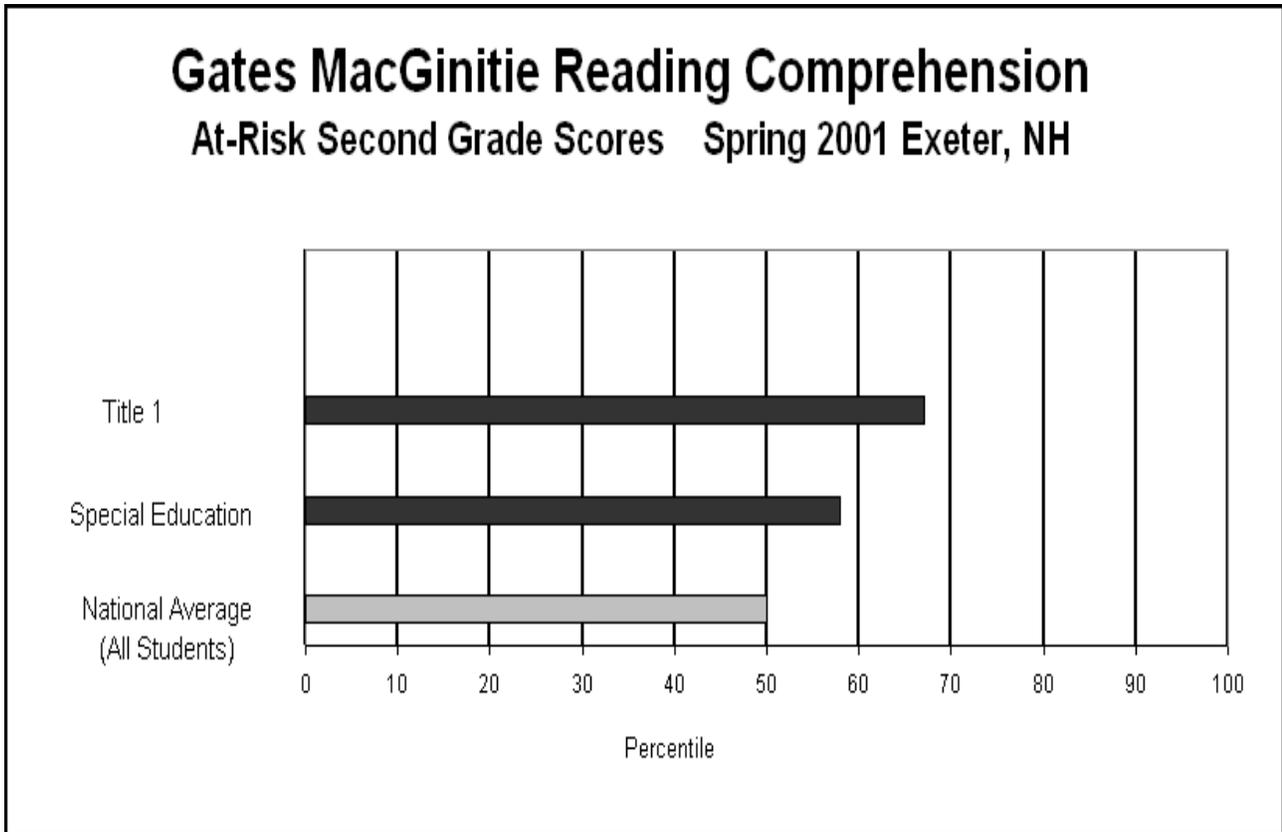
Percentage of students in each NCE range

HIGH	ABOVE AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE
99-65	64-50	49-1

Second Grade

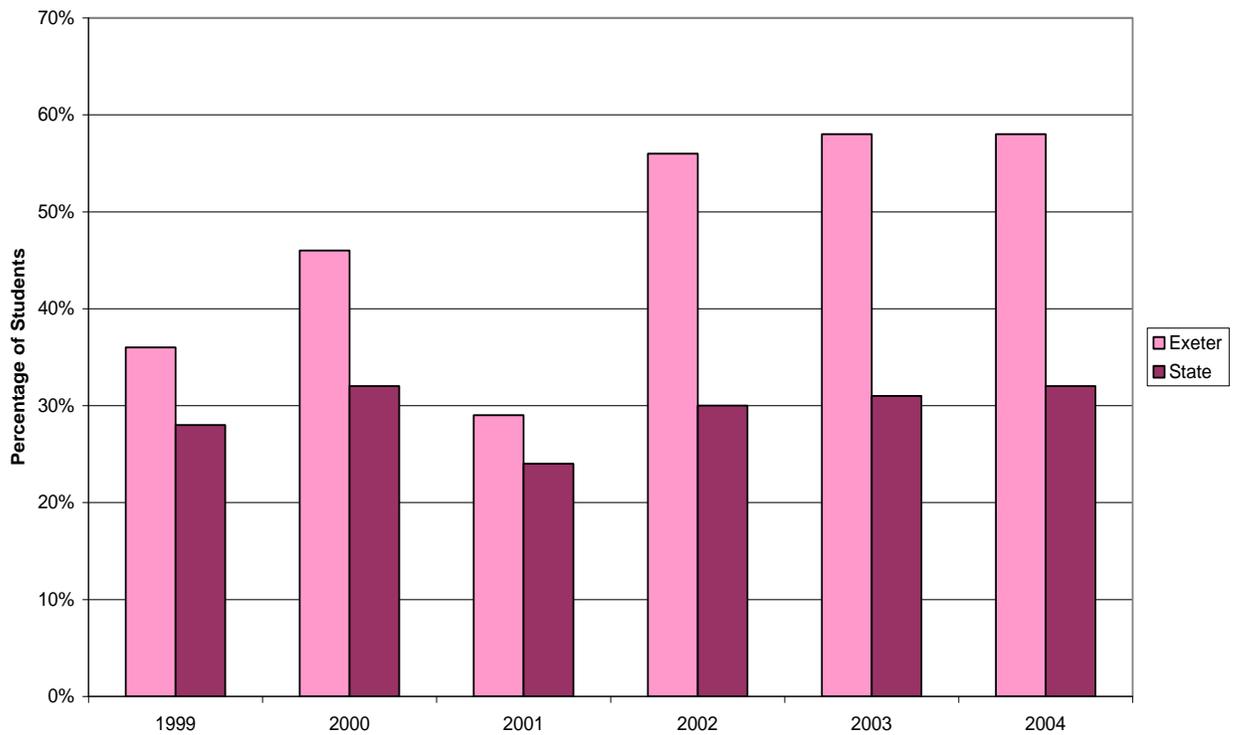
Title I Reading	HIGH	ABOVE AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE
	99-65	64-50	49-1
1999	12%	32%	56%
2002	44%	38%	18%
2003	49%	36%	15%
2004	43%	36%	21%
2005	26%	74%	0%
2006	35%	42%	23%
2007	52%	39%	9%
2008	43%	50%	7%
2009	24%	62%	14%
2010	53%	37%	10%

2. All Title I students take the Gates MacGinitie test. In 2001, the C.S.R.D. Committee requested that all Special Education students take the Gates MacGinitie so that the data could be used as part of the C.S.R.D. Grant evaluation. When the results were analyzed, both Title I and Special Education students scored *above the national average for all students*.



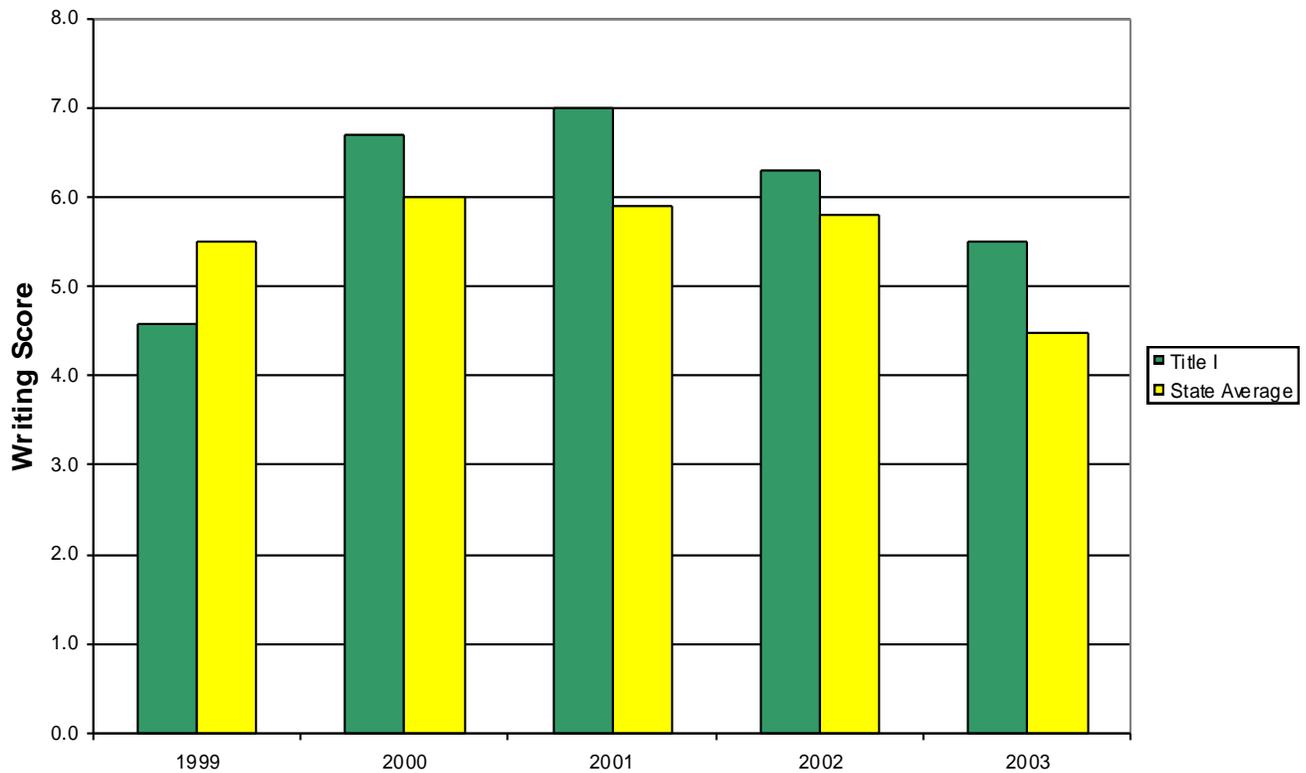
3. In third grade, Exeter's students were required to take the New Hampshire state assessment, the NHEIAP, from 1994 to 2004. In 2004, this test was replaced by a pilot test for the new No Child Left Behind Legislation. Special Education students also showed growth on the NHEIAP when compared to state average for Special Education students. In 2004, 58% of our Special Education population scored Basic and Above when compared to 32% for the state average.

NHEIAP Grade Three Language Arts Scores Special Education Students Scoring Basic and Above Exeter, NH



4. One of the most significant findings on the NHEIAP was that on the Writing Assessment, *Title I students scored above New Hampshire state average for all students from 2000 to 2003, the last year that the Writing subtest was given.*

NHEIAP Grade Three Writing Scores
Title I Exeter Students Compared to State Average for All Students



5. When comparing Exeter's students to students across New Hampshire on the NHEIAP, Exeter's students consistently scored better than state average across all subgroups.

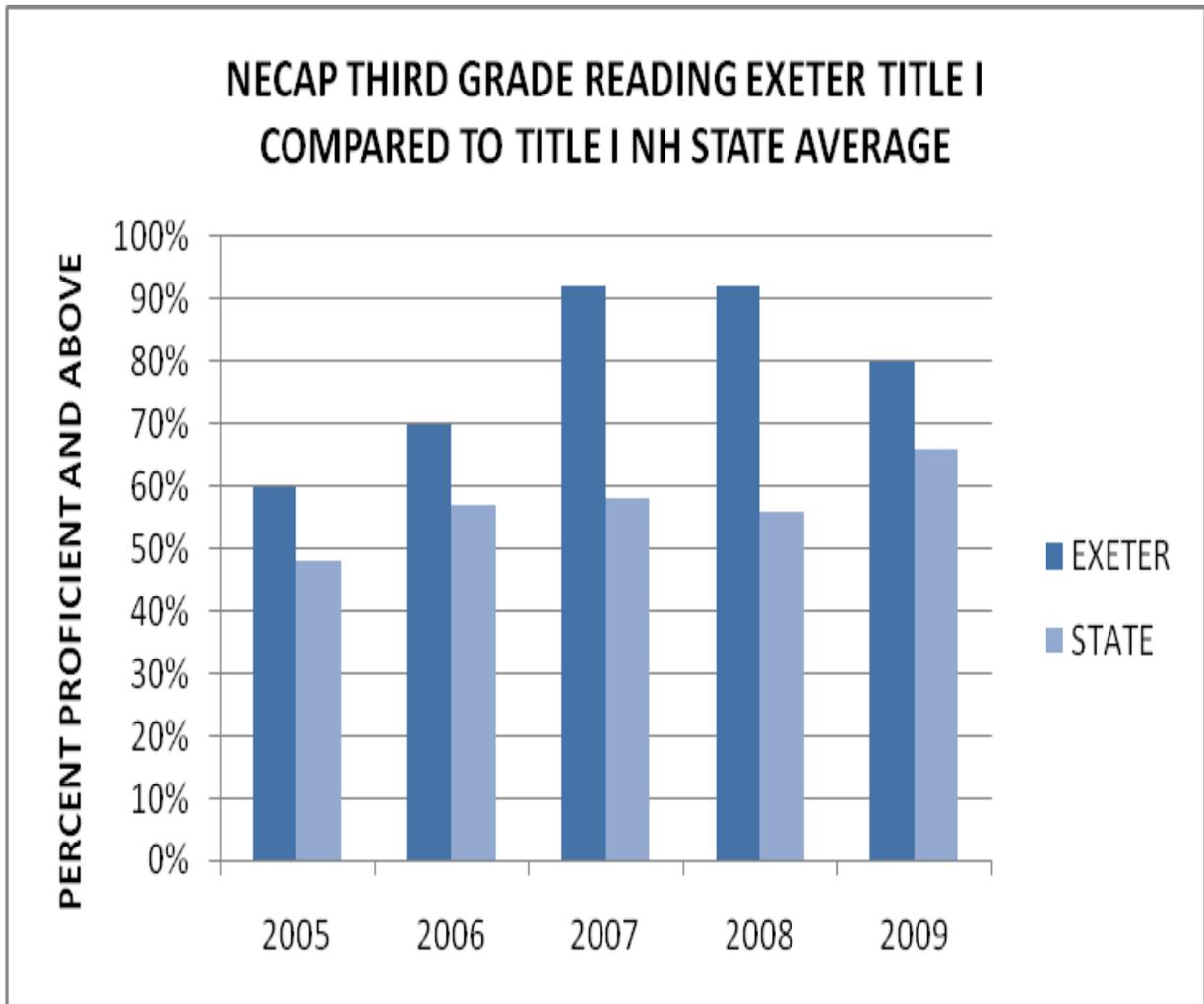
NHEIAP

English Language Arts Grade 3

**Percentage of Students Scoring Basic and Above
(State results are shown in parenthesis.)**

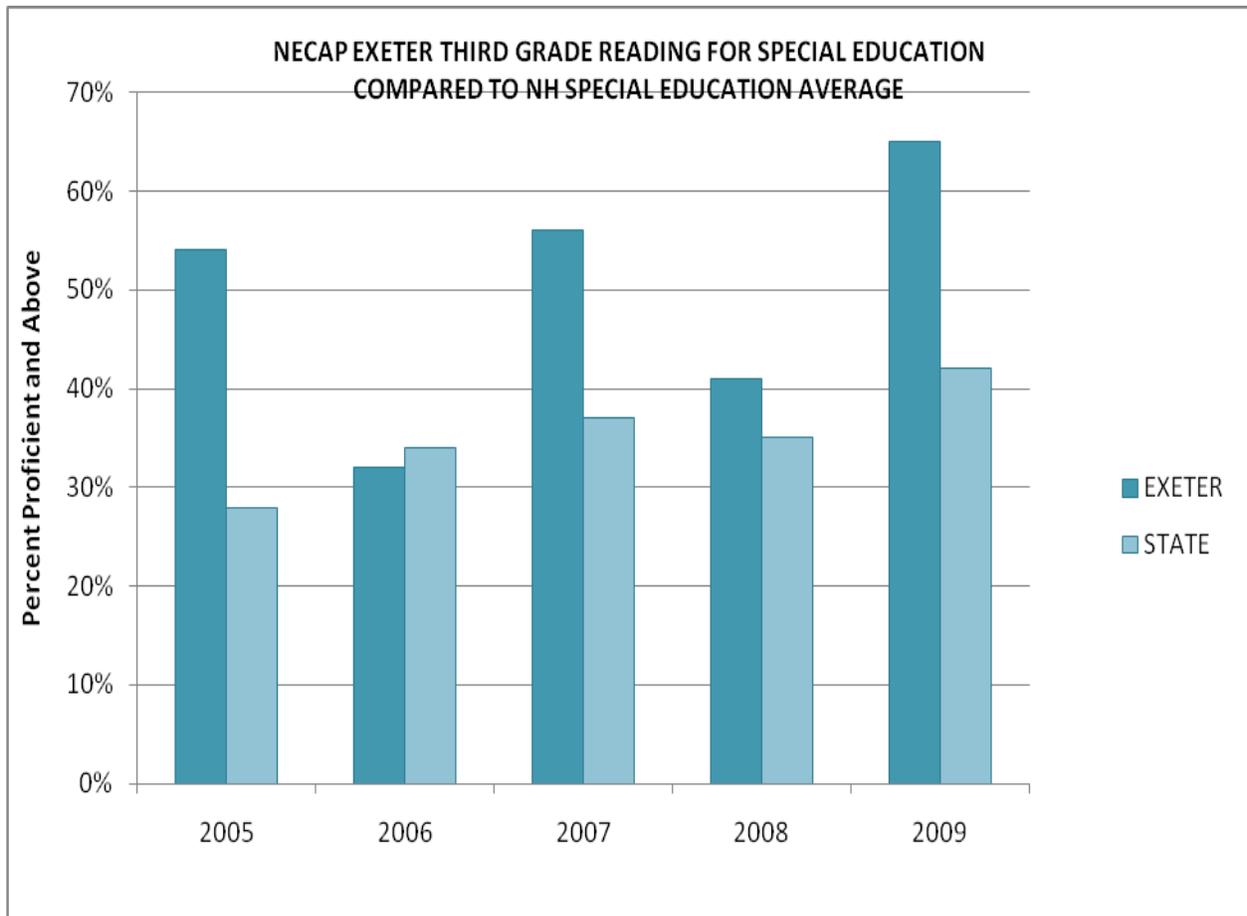
<u>Year</u>	<u>All Students</u>	<u>Educational Disability</u>	<u>Title 1</u>	<u>Socio-economically Disadvantaged</u>
1999	79% (72%)	36% (28%)	45% (47%)	not reported
2000	84% (75%)	46% (32%)	69% (54%)	not reported
2001	85% (72%)	29% (24%)	75% (47%)	not reported
2002	84% (76%)	56% (30%)	65% (55%)	56% (55%)
2003	89% (76%)	58% (31%)	76% (56%)	67% (58%)
2004	88% (73%)	58% (32%)	86% (52%)	86% (54%)

6. In October of 2005, Exeter students took the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) for the first time. Third grade students were assessed in reading and mathematics. The reading score included nine open response items (40% of their Total Reading score). Third Grade Title I students scored above the New Hampshire state average for Title I students for all five years. Moreover, Title I students scored above state average *for all students* in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, Title I students tied with *all New Hampshire students*.



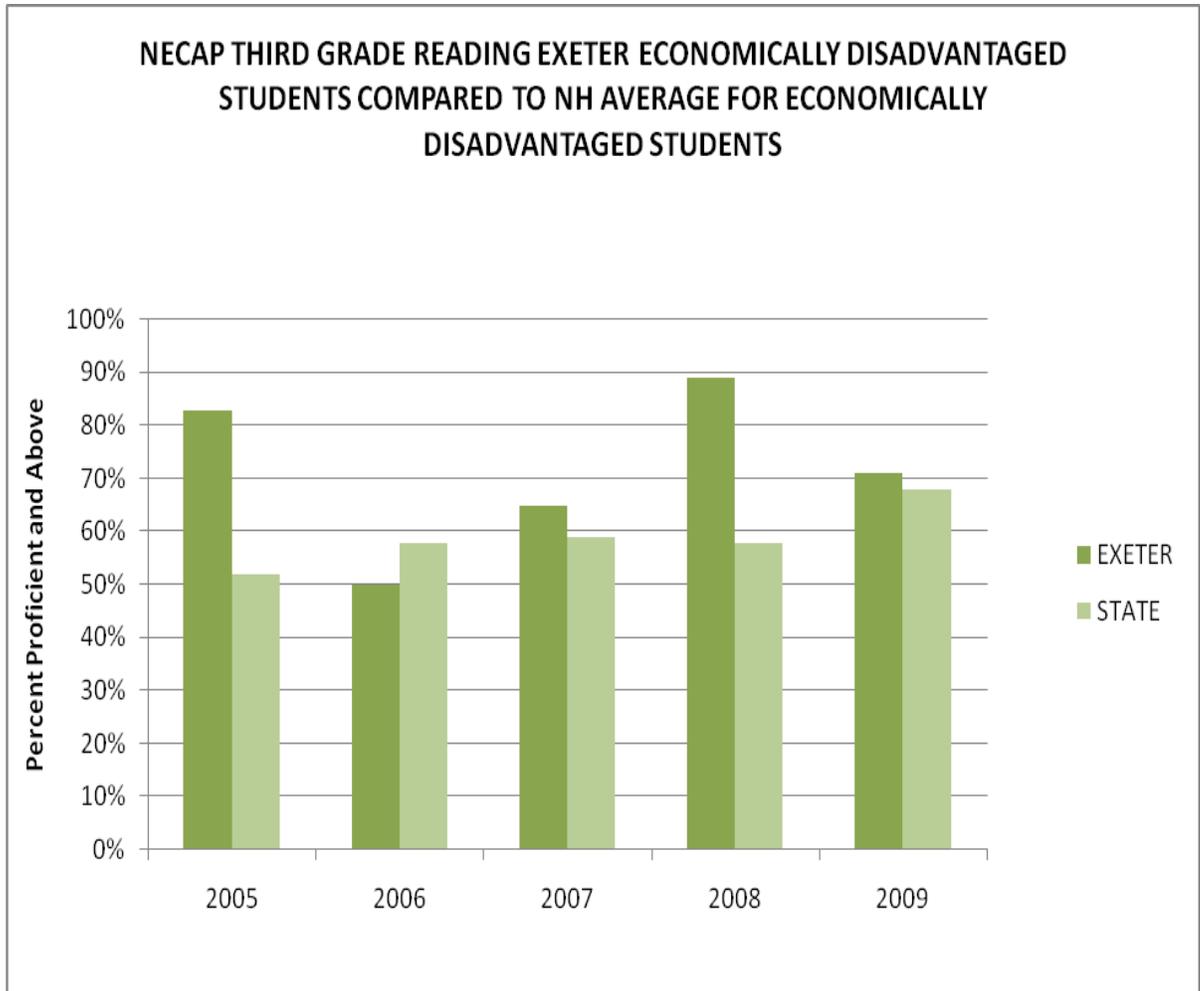
NECAP Scores range from Level 1 – Substantially Below Proficient to Level 4- Proficient with Distinction.

7. In 2005, third grade Special Education students scored above New Hampshire state average for Special Education students. In 2006, for the first time since we began collecting data in 1999, third grade Special Education students scored below New Hampshire state average for Special Education students. Anecdotal comments from teachers indicate that the 2006 class had exceptionally high needs. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, Exeter Special Education students rebounded to score above state average for Special Education students.



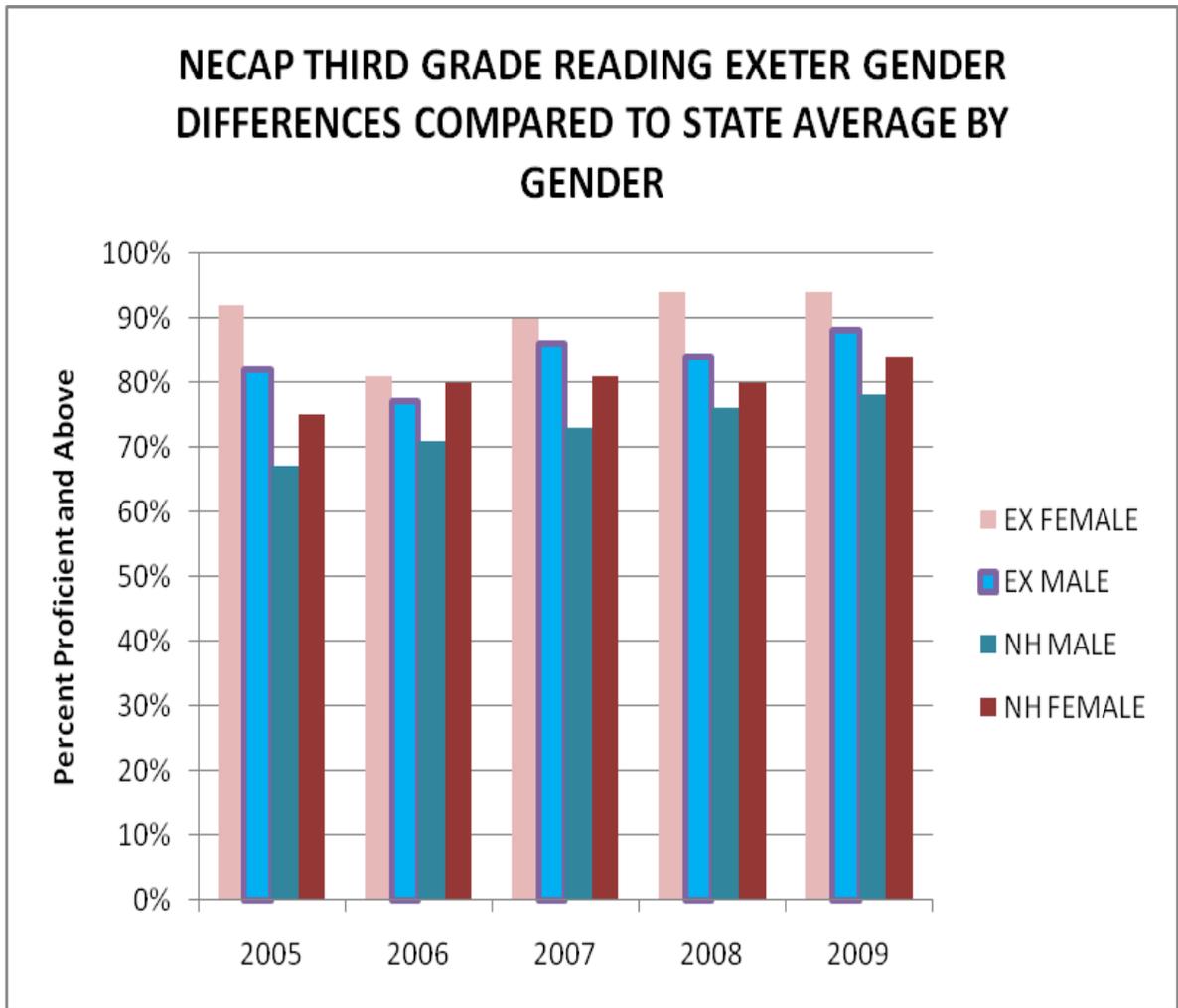
NECAP Scores range from Level 1 – Substantially Below Proficient to Level 4- Proficient with Distinction.

8. Our scores for Economically Disadvantaged students followed a similar pattern. Overall, our economically disadvantaged population scored better than similar students across the state.



NECAP Scores range from Level 1 – Substantially Below Proficient to Level 4- Proficient with Distinction.

9. When looking at gender differences, Exeter third grade girls consistently scored better than boys on the NECAP. Exeter boys scored above NH state average for boys for all five years. More significantly, *Exeter boys score above NH state average for girls every year except 2006.*



NECAP Scores range from Level 1 – Substantially Below Proficient to Level 4- Proficient with Distinction.

You can find more about this test data on the picturingwriting.org website. For administrators who are concerned that utilizing an art based model such as this for writing would lead to lower test scores, we now have eleven years of test data that proves the opposite.

As I reflect on the eleven years since we first adopted Picturing Writing and Image-Making, the biggest change in my school has been the change in classroom culture. We are now a school that values both language and the arts. Children are immersed in rich language and quality illustrations through the picture books that are used as mentor texts for teaching both art and writing throughout the day. All students publish three to four beautifully illustrated books each year. Our at-risk students become just as engaged as their classmates in creating and reading these books, which are added to the classroom library. Children read these books with the ear of a writer and the eyes of an artist.

Teachers are particularly proud of the work their at-risk students produce. The ESOL and Speech therapists have become vocal advocates of the program. Visitors during our Literacy Celebration can no longer tell which books were created by our special education students. A Special Education teacher said, “Before Picturing Writing, I used to dread the Literacy Celebration. My children’s books stood out. Now, my students’ books are beautiful.”

NHEIAP Population Statistics:

- 1999 Third Grade: 197 students enrolled, four Educationally Disabled students excluded from testing. Twenty Title I and seven Educationally Disabled students were included in testing.
- 2000 Third Grade: 163 students enrolled, four students excluded from testing (two Educationally Disabled, 1 Limited English, 1 Other). Twenty-six Title I and eight Educationally Disabled were included in testing.
- 2001 Third Grade: 187 students enrolled, 0 excluded. Twenty-one Title I, fifteen Educationally Disabled, and one Limited English student were included in testing.
- 2002 Third Grade: 163 students enrolled, 0 excluded. Twenty-three Title I, eighteen Educationally Disabled, and two Limited English students were included.
- 2003 Third Grade: 163 students enrolled, 0 excluded. Seventeen Title I, twenty-six Educationally Disabled, and fifteen Economically Disadvantaged students were included.
- 2004 Third Grade: 172 students enrolled, 0 excluded. Fifty-one Title I, twenty-six Educationally Disabled and fifteen Economically Disadvantaged students...

Gates MacGinitie Test Population Statistics

- 1999: 150 students enrolled in second grade; 15 received Special Education support, 3 absent from testing; 33 received Title I services, 0 absent from testing.
- 2000: 176 students enrolled in second grade; 10 received Special Education support, 4 absent from testing; 34 received Title I support, 1 absent from testing.
- 2001: 161 students enrolled in second grade; 23 received Special Education support, 0 absent from testing; 38 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.
- 2002: 170 students enrolled in second grade; 28 received Special Education support, 1 absent from testing; 34 received Title I support, 2 absent from testing.
- 2003: 162 students enrolled in second grade; 28 received Special Education support, 11 absent from testing; 33 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.
- 2004: 162 students enrolled in second grade: 33 received Special Education support, 16 absent from testing; 42 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.
- 2005: 163 students enrolled in second grade: 16 received Special Education support, 5 absent from testing; 19 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.
- 2006: 164 students enrolled in second grade: 29 received Special Education support, 43 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.
- 2007: 145 students enrolled in second grade: 28 received Special Education support, 23 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2008: 163 students enrolled in second grade: 32 received Special Education support, 30 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2009: 160 students enrolled in second grade: 30 received Special Education support, 21 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing

2010: 166 students enrolled in second grade: 24 received Special Education support, 19 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

New England Common Assessment Program Population Statistics:

2005: 157 students enrolled in third grade: 13 received Special Education support, 0 absent from testing, 21 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing, 18 were Economically Disadvantaged students, 0 absent from testing.

2006: 166 students enrolled in third grade: 22 received Special Education support, 33 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2007: 141 students enrolled in third grade: 25 received Special Education support, 24 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2008: 173 students enrolled in third grade: 30 received Special Education support, 30 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2009: 166 students enrolled in third grade: 24 received Special Education support, 19 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

References:

Hart, B., and Risley, T. (1995) Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co.

Lyon, G.R. (2004) Evidence Based Reading Instruction: The Critical Role of Scientific Research in Teaching Children, Empowering Teachers, and Moving Beyond the "Either-Or Box". Reno, NV: International Reading Association National Conference.