

PROFICIENT VS. PREPARED:

DISPARITIES BETWEEN STATE TESTS AND THE 2013 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)



Today's economy demands that all young people develop high-level literacy, quantitative reasoning, problem solving, communication, and collaboration skills, all grounded in a rigorous and content-rich K-12 curriculum. Acquiring these skills ensures that high school graduates are academically prepared to pursue the future of their choosing.

Many state tests, however, continue to mislead the public about whether students are proficient. Parents, students, and teachers deserve transparency and accuracy in public reporting.

State test results and the National Assessment of Educational Progress often tell conflicting stories about students' proficiencies in math and reading.

Frequently, states' testing and reporting processes yield significantly different results than the data collected and reported by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). While NAEP, the Nation's Report Card, scores are the gold standard for measuring student achievement and serve as a yardstick for state comparisons, NAEP results are generally not known by students and their families who rely on their state test results to know how they are performing. While no single test can show everything we need to know about how a student is performing in school, test scores along with information about a student's work in the classroom give families the information they need to know about a student's progress.

Findings

- Over half of states' discrepancies in state vs. 2013 NAEP results are more than 30 percentage points.
- Too many states are saying students are "proficient" when they are not actually well prepared.
- A number of states have been working to address proficiency gaps; this year, even more will do so by administering the college- and career-ready-aligned Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments.

What is proficiency?

NAEP defines proficiency as "solid academic performance" for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills approximate to the subject matter." (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/achievement.aspx>)

Fourth grade reading results and 8th grade math results are highlighted in this report; it is essential to learn to read by 4th grade to be able to read to learn moving forward, and 8th grade math proficiency indicates that a student is prepared for higher-level math in high school.

Fourth Grade Reading

Top Truth-Tellers

The following states reported 2013-14 state proficiency levels closest to their state's 2013 NAEP proficiency levels (differing by 15 percentage points or fewer):

New York
Wisconsin
Utah
Alabama
Massachusetts
Missouri
Minnesota
Tennessee

Biggest Gaps

The following states have the largest gaps (more than 40 percentage points) between their reported 2013-14 state proficiency levels and their state's 2013 NAEP proficiency levels:

Georgia
Louisiana
Alaska
Arkansas
South Carolina
Ohio
Indiana
Arizona
Texas
Hawaii
Nevada
North Dakota
Nebraska
Maryland

What's Next?

2015 NAEP results will be released this fall, presenting new opportunities to understand student proficiency and state reporting.

Eighth Grade Math

Top Truth-Tellers

The following states reported 2013-14 state proficiency levels closest to their state's 2013 NAEP proficiency levels (differing by 15 percentage points or fewer):

New York
Massachusetts
Utah
Michigan
North Carolina
Wisconsin
Nevada
Alabama
Colorado
Minnesota
Wyoming
Washington
Kentucky
West Virginia

Biggest Gaps

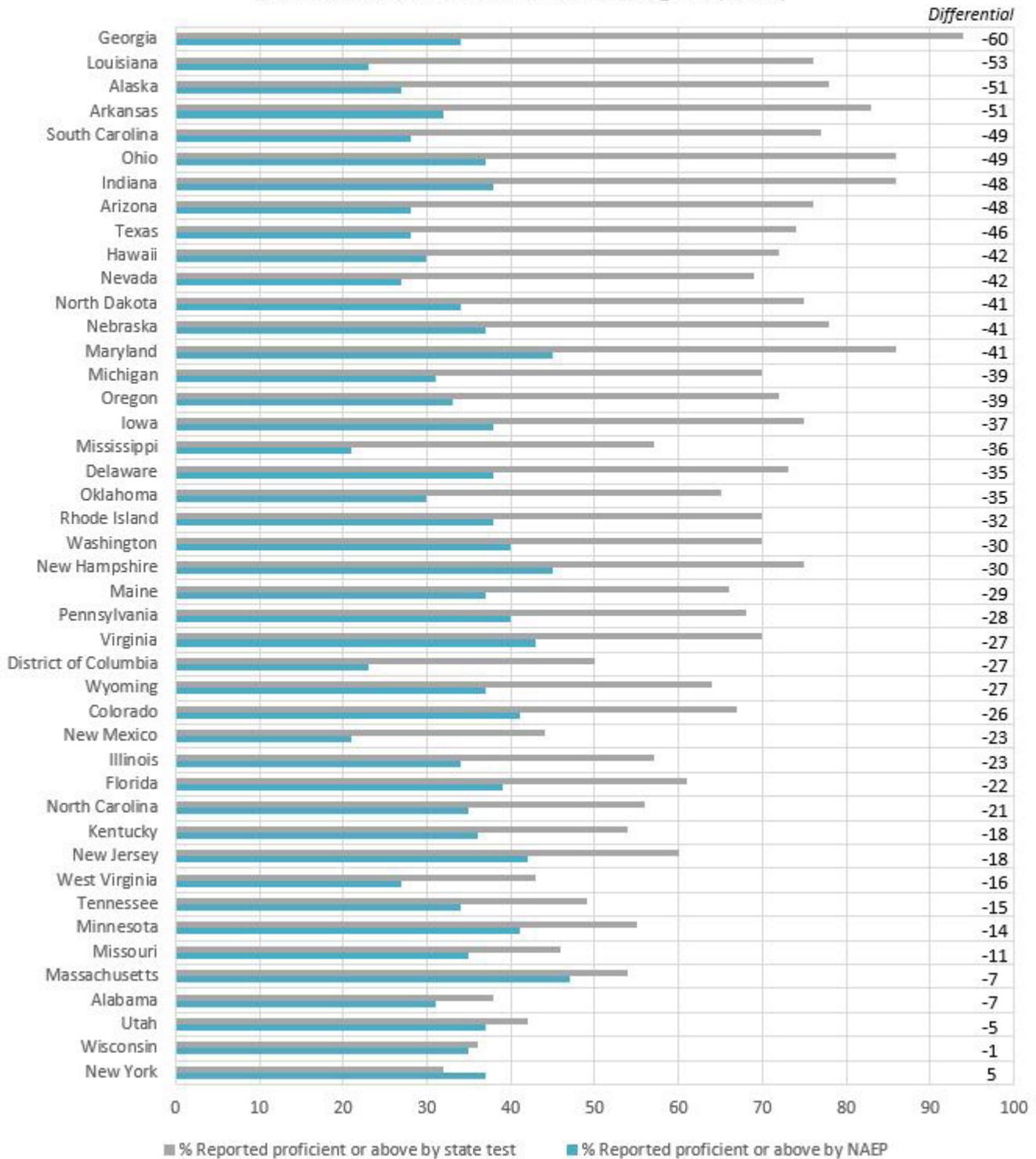
The following states have the largest gaps (35 percentage points or more) between their reported 2013-14 state proficiency levels and their state's 2013 NAEP proficiency levels:

Georgia
Texas
District of Columbia
Mississippi
Louisiana
Indiana
Ohio
Iowa
South Carolina
Arkansas
Delaware
Alaska

Proficient vs. Prepared

4th Grade Reading, 2013-14

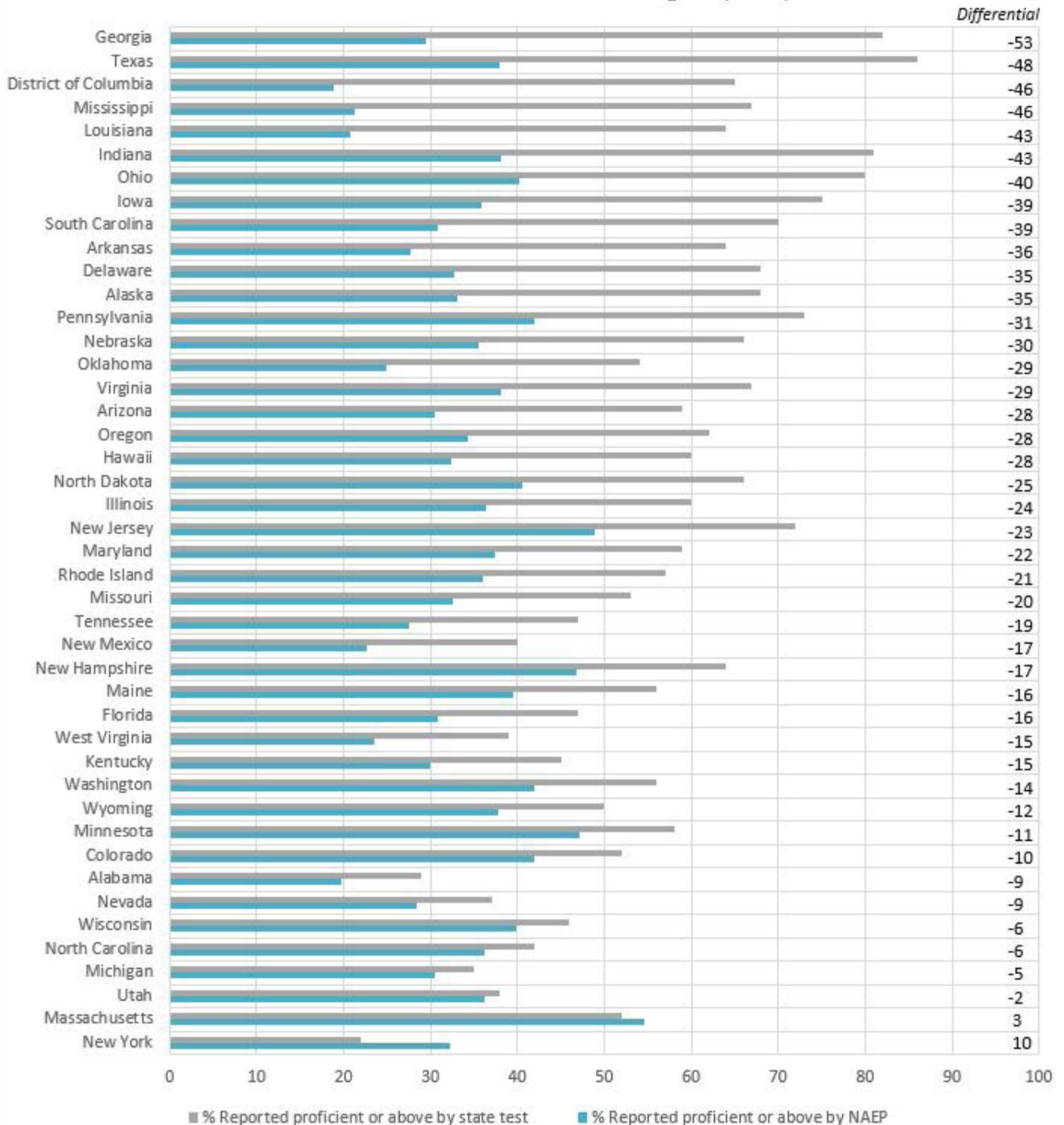
Disparity in data reported by states and the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



Proficient vs. Prepared

8th Grade Math, 2013-14

Disparity in data reported by states and the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

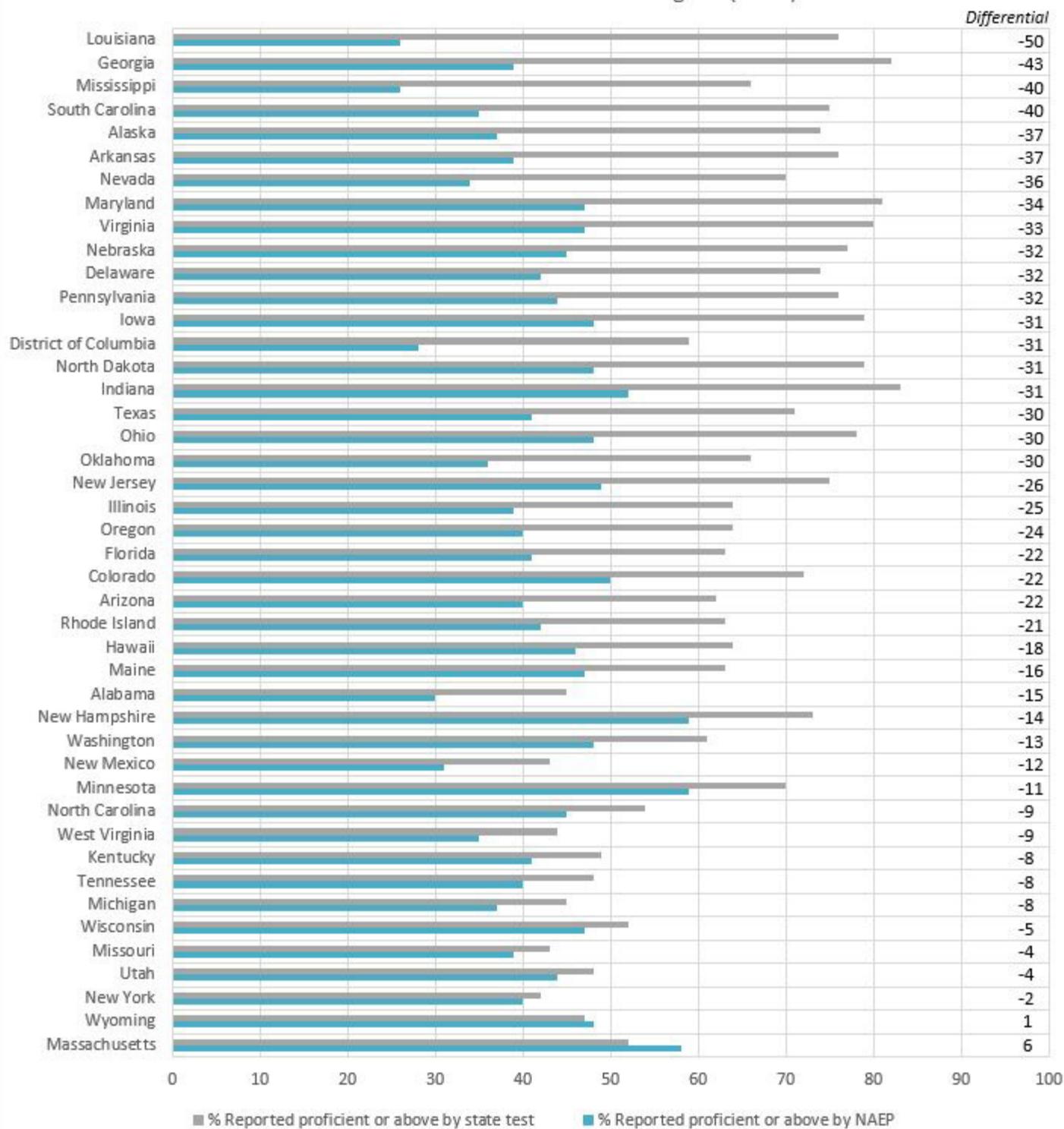


Appendix: Additional 2013-14 Comparison Charts and all 2012-13 State Proficiency Rate Comparison Charts

Proficient vs. Prepared

4th Grade Math, 2013-14

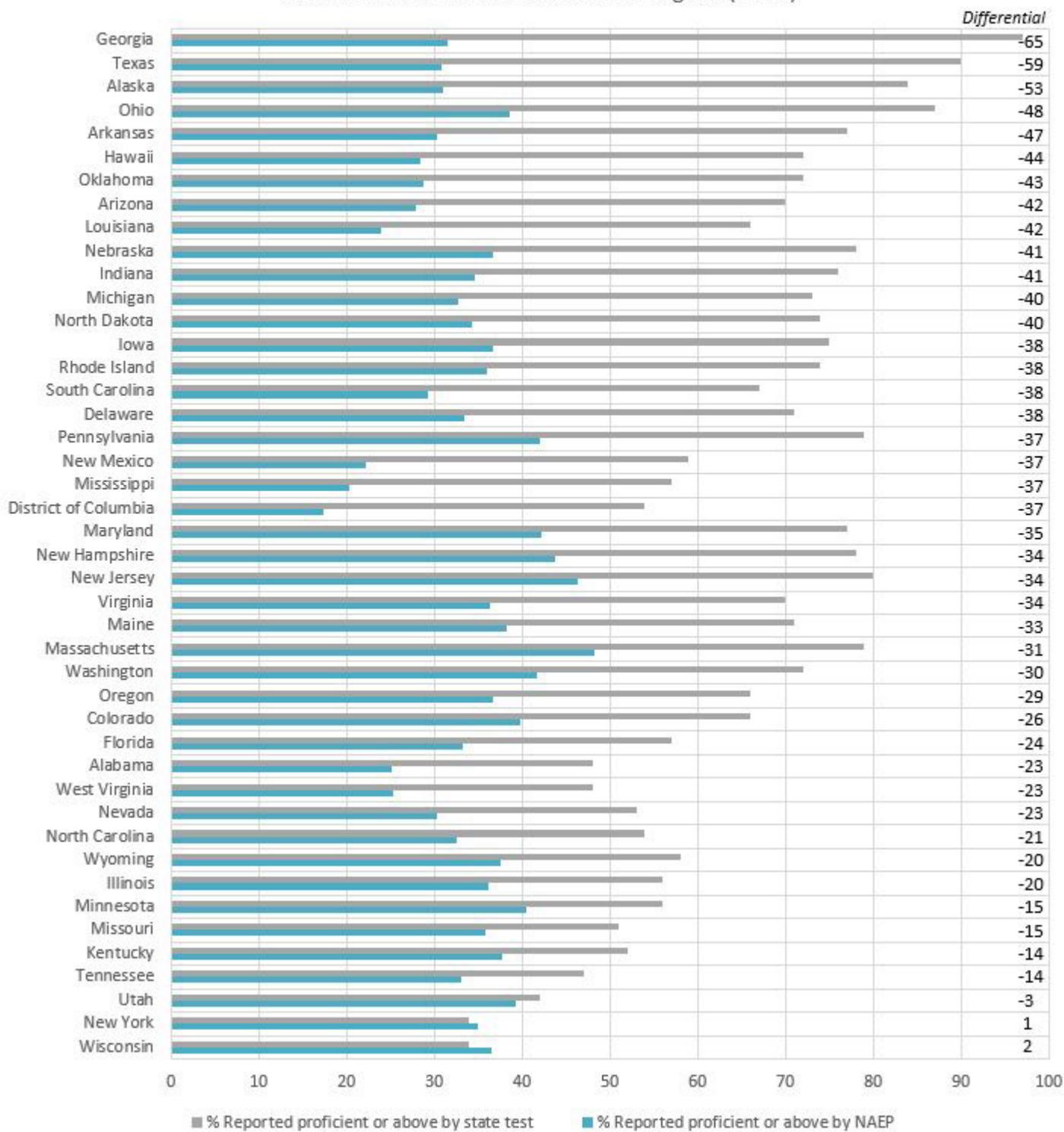
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Proficient vs. Prepared

8th Grade Reading, 2013-14

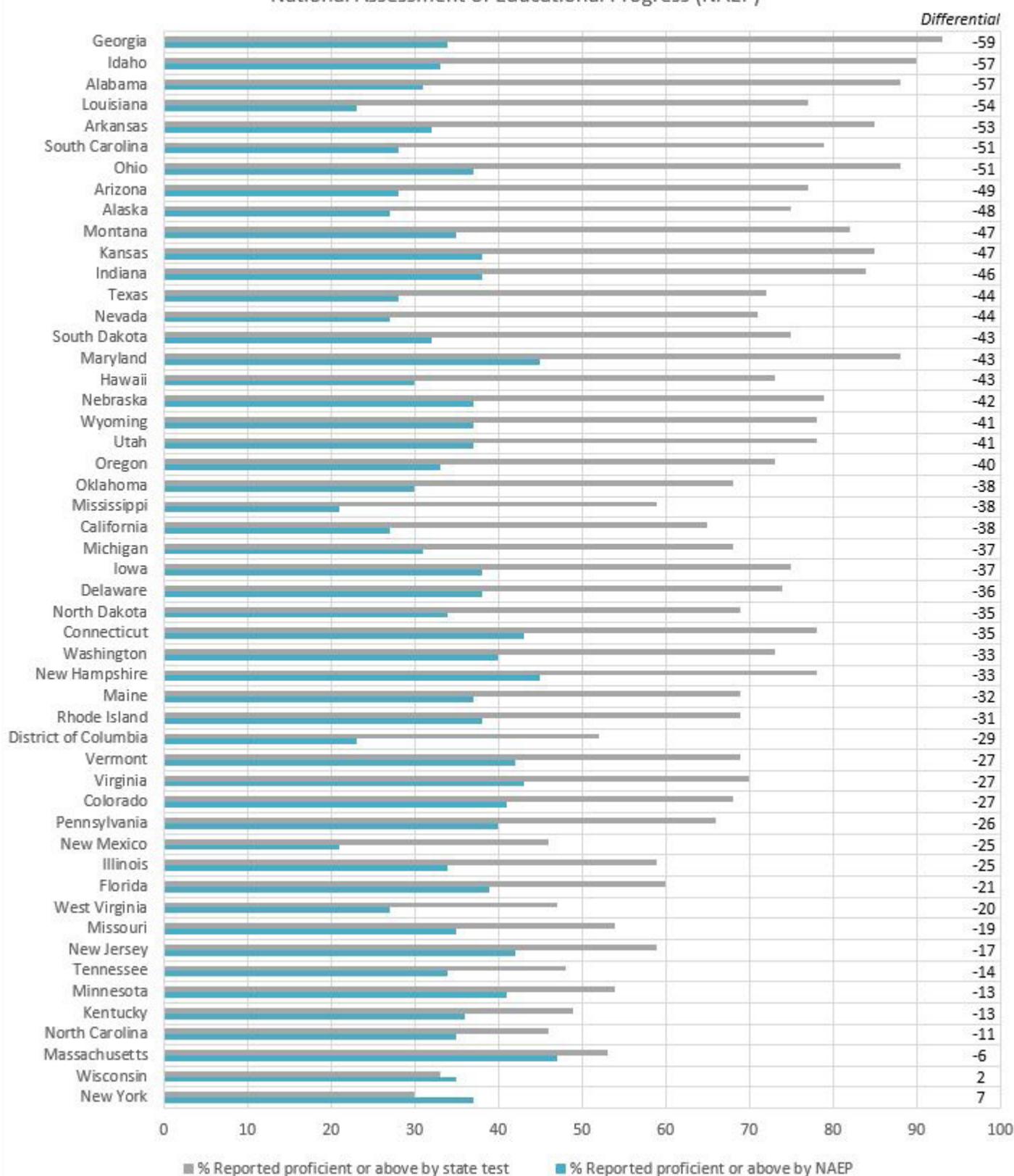
Disparity in data reported by states and the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



Proficient vs. Prepared

4th Grade Reading, 2012-13

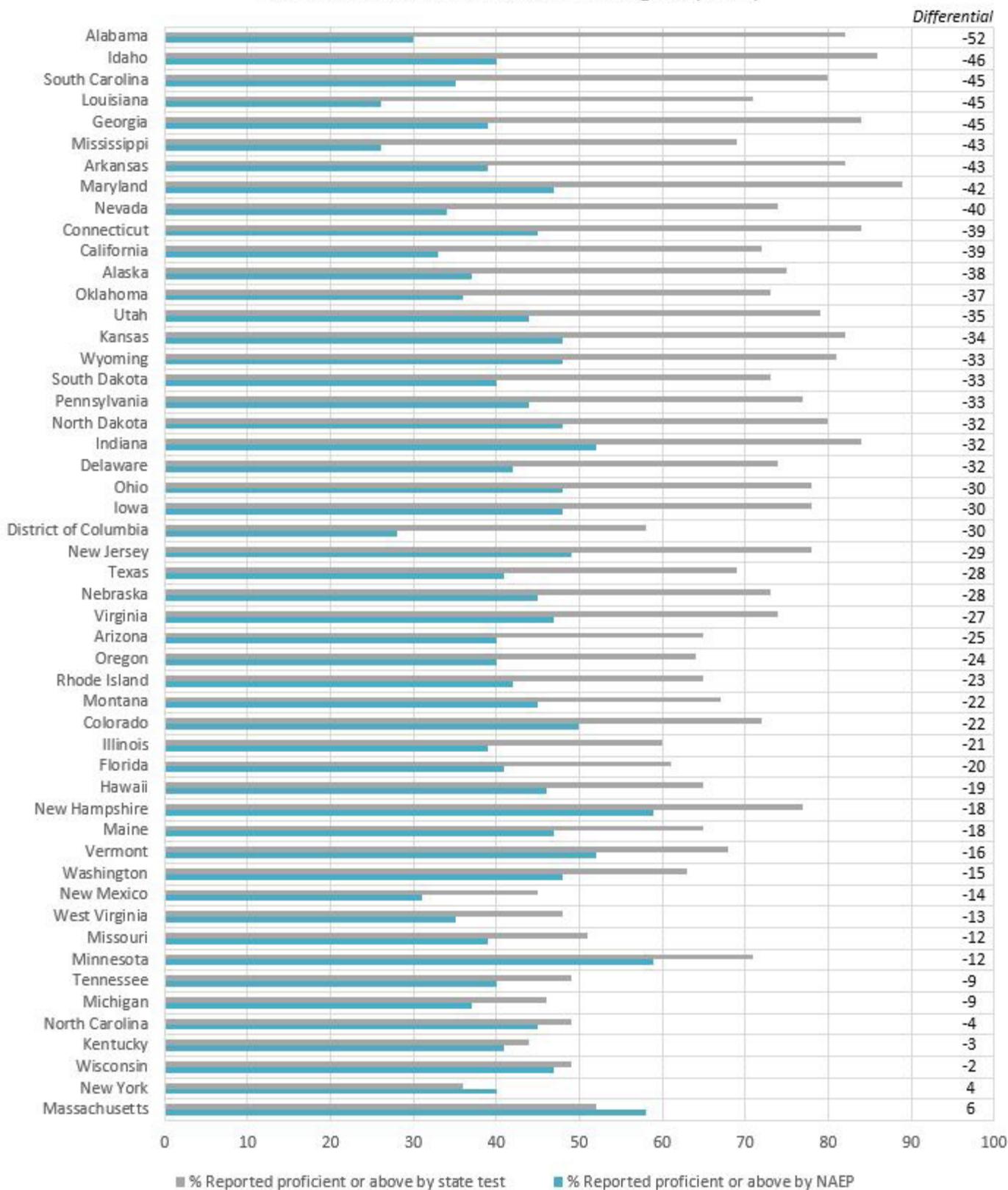
Disparity in data reported by states and the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



Proficient vs. Prepared

4th Grade Math, 2012-13

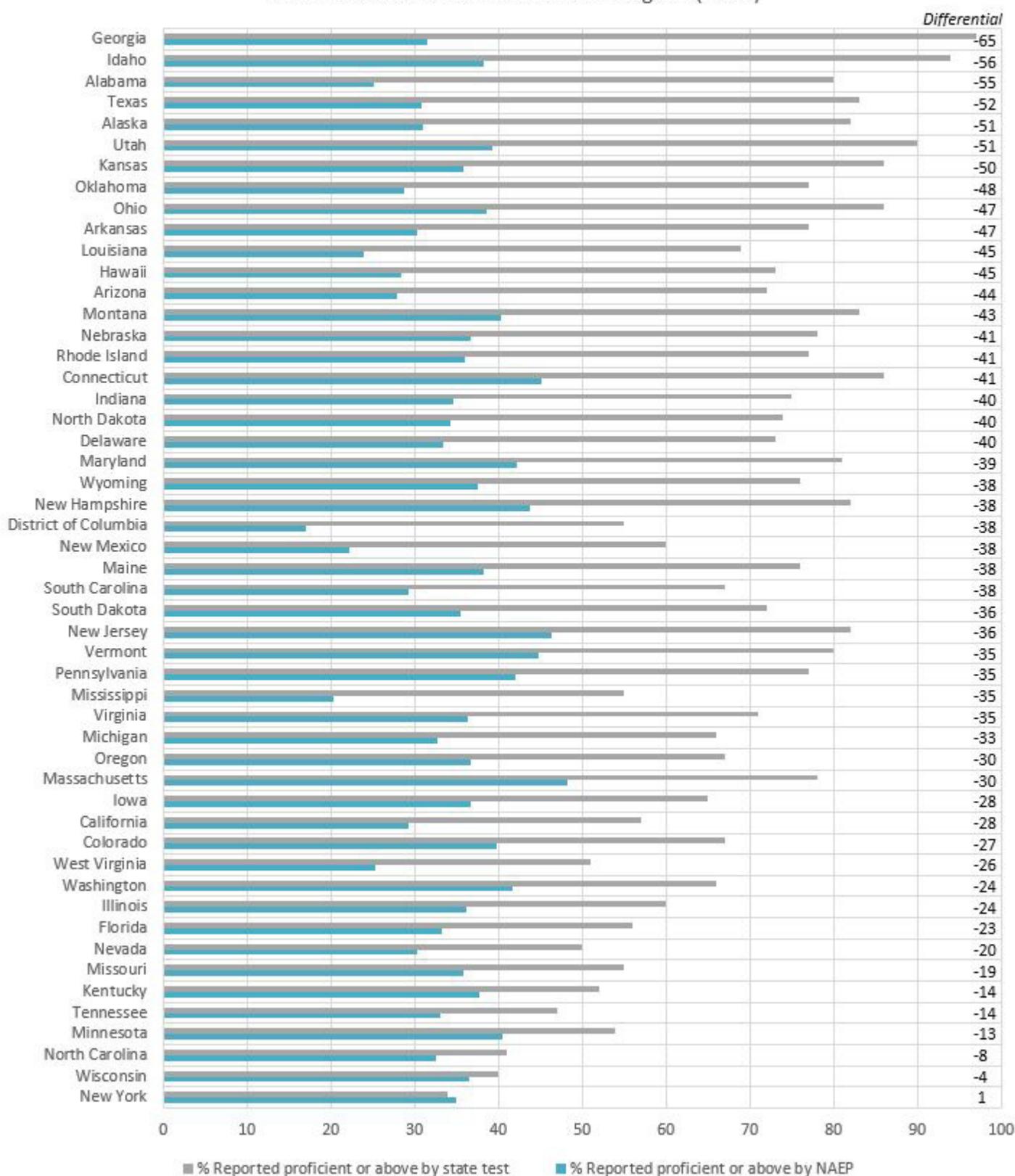
Disparity in data reported by states and the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



Proficient vs. Prepared

8th Grade Reading, 2012-13

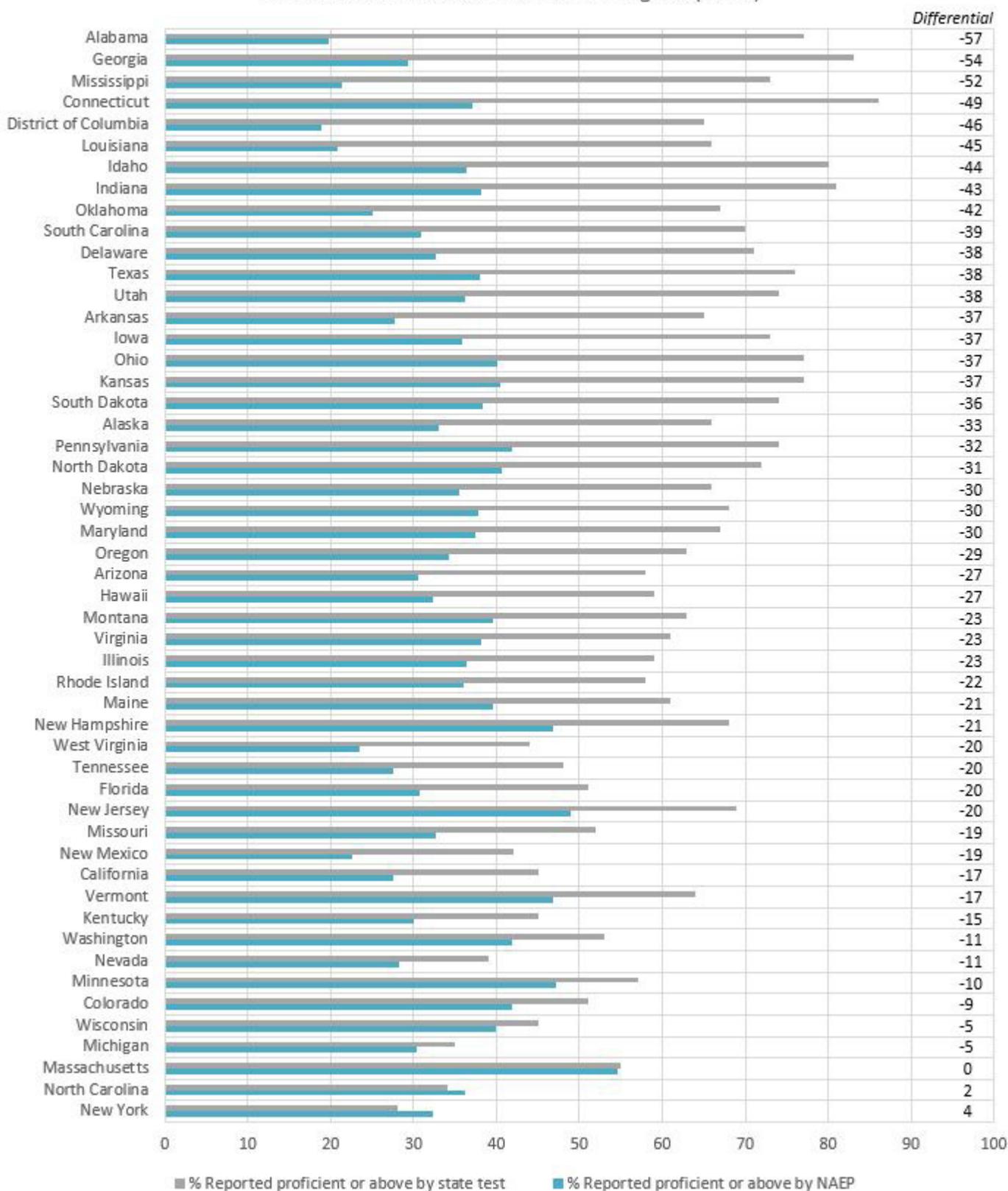
Disparity in data reported by states and the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



Proficient vs. Prepared

8th Grade Math, 2012-13

Disparity in data reported by states and the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



NOTES

California, Connecticut, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, and Vermont were not included in the 2013-14 comparisons because those states piloted the Smarter Balanced assessment and did not report state-level proficiencies that year.

Kansas' state proficiency data for 2013-14 is unavailable because the state's assessment vendor reported that the assessment delivery platform had been the target of a Distributed Denial of Service attack, which attempted to shut down the servers and severely impacted the testing environment for many students. Because impact of this attack resulted in the vendor's inability to verify the validity of the results for all students, the Kansas State Board of Education, with approval from the United States Department of Education, voted to not release any results of the 2014 state assessment.

California reports 8th grade math proficiency by course and not by grade. To reach the figure on the 8th grade math charts, Achieve combined the percentage of 8th graders in California reported proficient by course.

All states that use the New England Common Assessment Program/NECAP (Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island) along with Michigan's MEAP administer their tests in the fall. The scores reflected in the 2012-13 charts for those states are from fall 2012 from 8th grade students in the 2012-13 school year.

The results reported for Texas in the tables are those percentages for 2012-13 and 2013-14 that are used for school accountability and available in the [Texas Academic Performance Reports \(TAPR\)](#) system. However, Texas is currently in the process of phasing in more rigorous cut scores. The "STAAR Statewide Summary Reports 2013-14," available [here](#), provide data against the new cut scores. As of now, the final recommended performance standards will be implemented in the 2021-2022 school year. ([Source](#))