

### Dear Neighbor:

Test scores are going down, enrollment is declining, veteran principals are leaving, and taxes are continuing to rise. There's an uncomfortable truth that more people in our town need to know: **all is not well in Evanston's public schools.**

We are a diverse group of Evanstonians—parents, teachers, longtime residents, and proud D65 & ETHS alumni—who are deeply concerned about the state of our public schools.

We've created this newsletter, which aggregates data about D65 & D202 and summarizes reporting on schools from our local papers, to help more Evanstonians get a picture of what is happening.

**This issue highlights a very worrying seven-year decline in test scores, exacerbated by COVID, which has affected District 65 students across racial and ethnic groups, and which shows an apparent lack of progress in closing the "achievement gap."**

## D65 Test Scores Show Steady 7-year Decline— Across Racial and Ethnic Groups

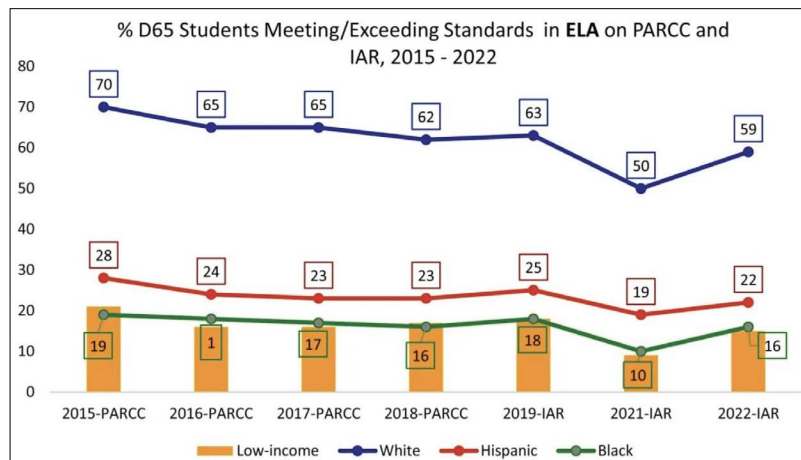
Standardized test scores for District 65 students show a steady, seven-year decline—across racial and ethnic groups—with learning losses exacerbated by the pandemic.

The graph below, which came to our notice in an article last November published in the *Evanston RoundTable*, makes clear the downward trend in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards in English Language Arts (ELA), as measured by scores on the state-mandated PARCC and IAR tests from 2015 to 2022.

While the pandemic obviously had a big impact, significantly exacerbating learning loss for all groups, it seems evident that the longer-term decline started years before COVID. Moreover, the data strongly suggest a lack of progress over this period in closing the decades-long "achievement gap" between groups.

Against this backdrop, we see a need for urgent action. As school leaders across the country grapple with strategies to recover from learning loss, we urge our school leaders to prioritize evidence-based programs, such as one-on-one literacy instruction and intensive math programs, that have proven effective in helping our most vulnerable and at-risk youth.

It would also make sense, as we see it, to keep in place existing resources that we know make a difference. This is not the time, for example, to cut the positions of reading specialists, as D65 did in 2021, according to the *Evanston RoundTable* ("[District 65 Replaces 22 Reading Specialists with 18 Interventionists," March 16, 2021](#)).



You may be interested to learn about the following three challengers running for the District 65 Board: [Ndona Muboyayi](#), [Omar Salem](#), and [John Martin](#). Read about their backgrounds and goals and support them if their message resonates with you.

Thank you to the many people who have already signed up online to receive this newsletter.

If you haven't yet signed up, please go to [www.evanston-schools-update.org](http://www.evanston-schools-update.org). And feel free to share this issue or the previous ones.

Scan Code  
to access online  
Schools Update

