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For Immediate Release

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## **School Report Cards: Utah Students Show Signs of Academic Recovery** *First Report Since Pandemic to Show Both Proficiency and Growth Released Today*

SALT LAKE CITY – Utah student academic performance in English language arts, mathematics, and science is showing signs of recovery, but also shows evidence that additional time and effort will be necessary to return to pre-pandemic achievement levels, according to school report card data released today by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE).

“The pandemic took an awful toll on all of our lives and on many of our institutions,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson. “It negatively impacted our students, teachers, and families. This report gives us a clear-eyed picture of what happened – while the academic impact was not as bad as many feared – it shows us that students and teachers are on the road to academic recovery while not yet reaching the guidepost of excellence.”

[State, district, and individual school report cards for the 2021-22 school year](#) are now available on the USBE website. Grades are reported based on assessment and other data (e.g., high school graduation rates) as outlined in [state statute](#), which was updated in 2018. Tools are available at the report card website to let individuals drill deeper into aspects of the report in subject matter (e.g., language arts, mathematics, science), student proficiency and student growth as well as individual school and state demographics associated with the data.

Those interested primarily in statewide data are also encouraged to visit [USBE’s Data Gateway](#) where they may focus on individual assessments, data for grade levels, graduation rates, and other data.

Parents with additional questions will find an [FAQ on school report cards](#) on the report card website. A report outlining assessment results from 2019, 2021, and 2022 is also included in this release. Statewide assessments were suspended in March of 2020 due to the pandemic.

[www.schools.utah.gov](http://www.schools.utah.gov)

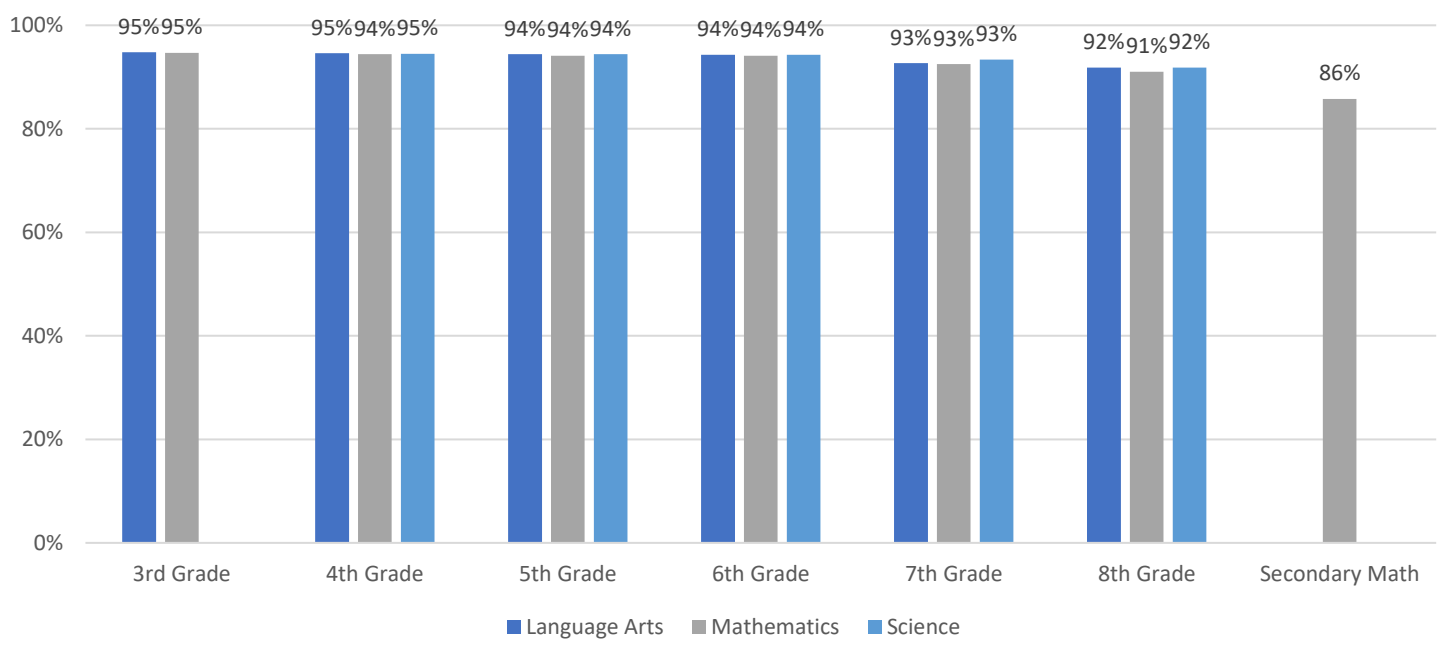
# 2021-2022 Student Participation and Achievement Results

This report contains a high-level overview of the student participation and achievement results obtained from a variety of state assessments during the 2021-2022 school year. State assessments provide the public, the legislature, the state board, school districts, public schools, and educators with valuable information for planning, measuring, and evaluating the effectiveness of programs in public schools. Educators understand that good decisions are informed and validated by quality data. This year, we are particularly interested in understanding the effects of the efforts to assert an “academic tailwind”, accelerating learning for our students, and we adhere to the maxim: Description before inference; inference before evaluation.” As included in the call to action of the [Exploring the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Student Achievement in Utah](#) the observed academic impacts of school disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning are significant and will require support and resources to sustain necessary interventions for some time. The 2021-2022 state assessment results contain some encouraging evidence of “recovery” or gains in student achievement, however there is also evidence that additional effort and time is necessary to return to and exceed pre-pandemic achievement levels.

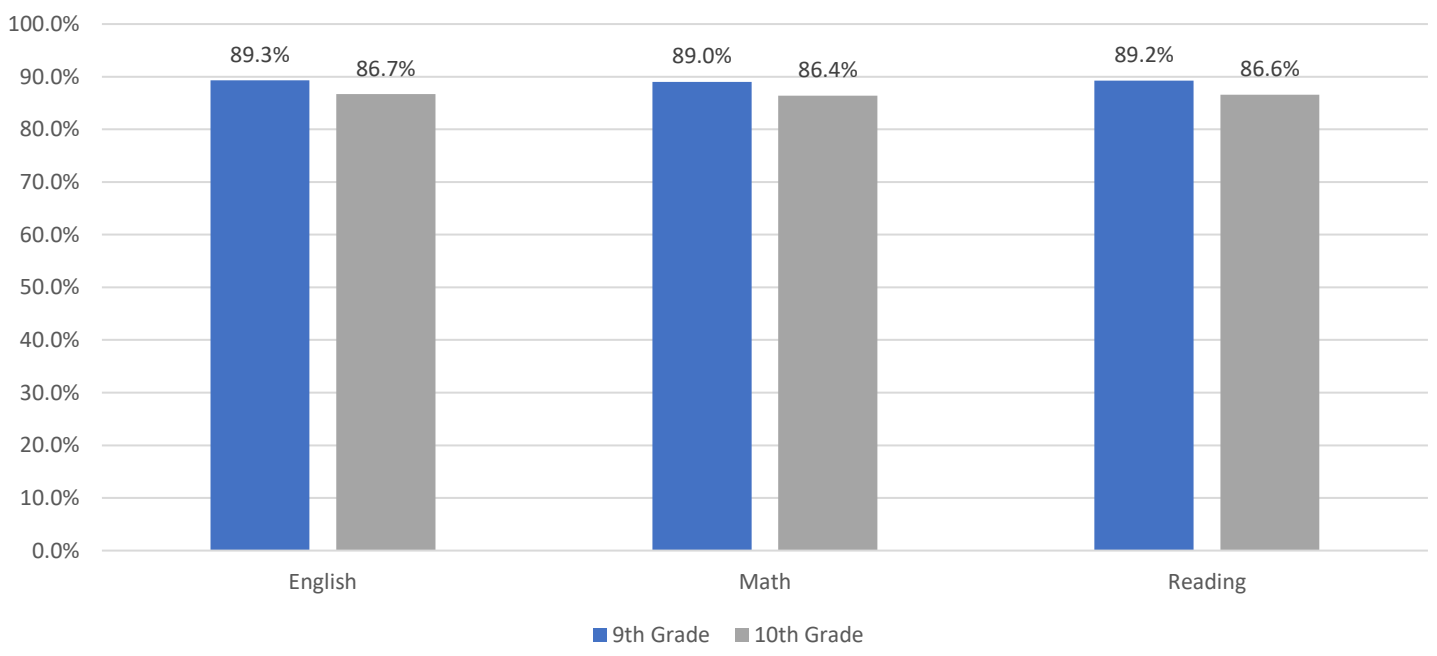
## Participation Rates

Student participation in state assessments rebounded significantly from 2020-2021 for the RISE assessments however the Utah Aspire Plus assessments continue to see participation rates that are at least 6% and as high as 10% below the 2018-2019 rates. This reduced participation and changes in the tested population limit the usability of the high school assessment data, especially in making longitudinal comparisons.

### RISE Participation Rate By Grade 2021-2022

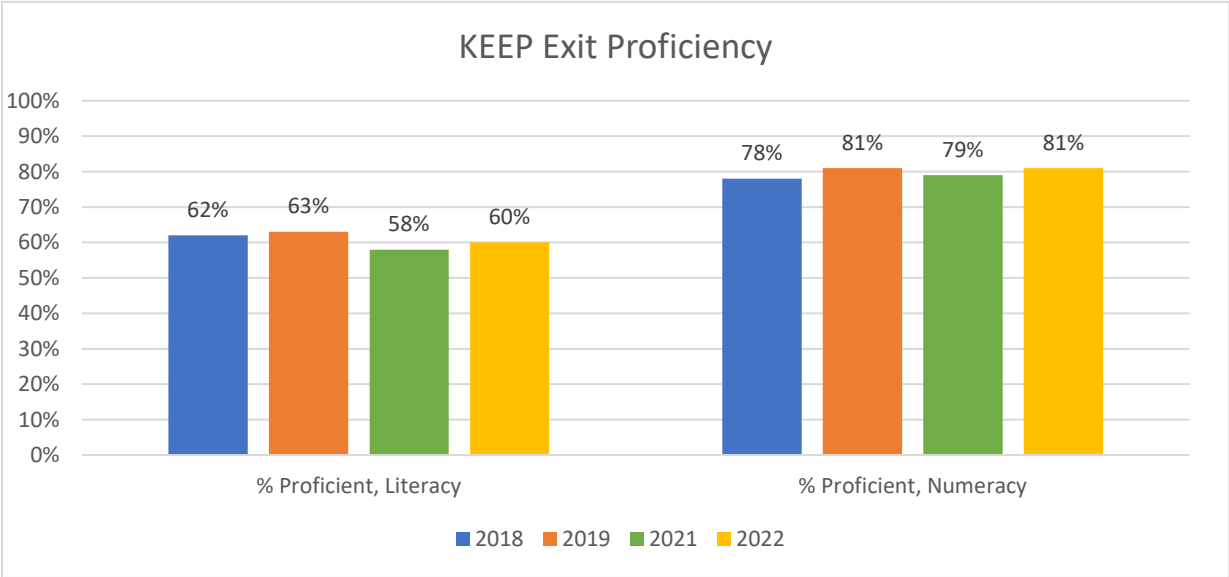


### Utah Aspire Plus Participation Rate 2021-2022



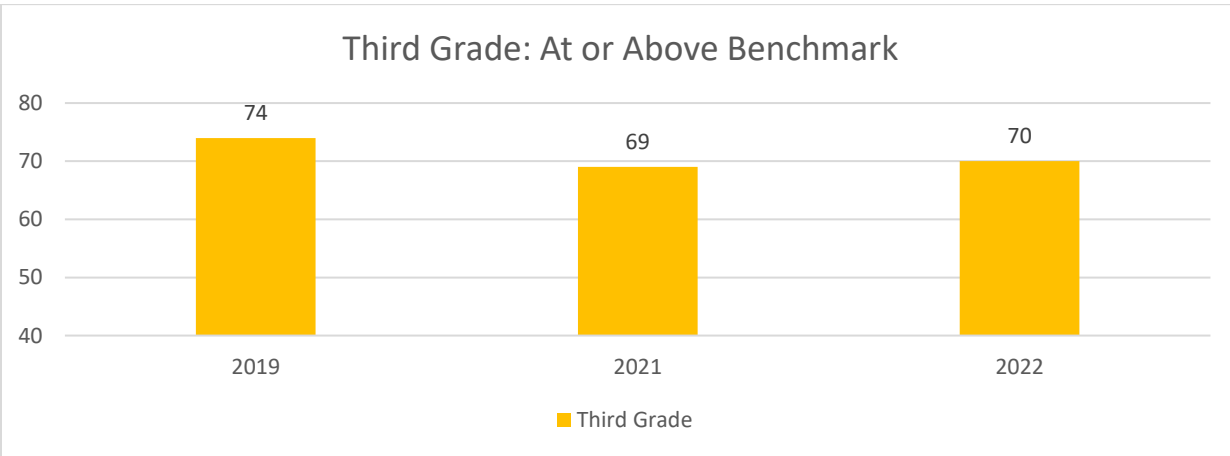
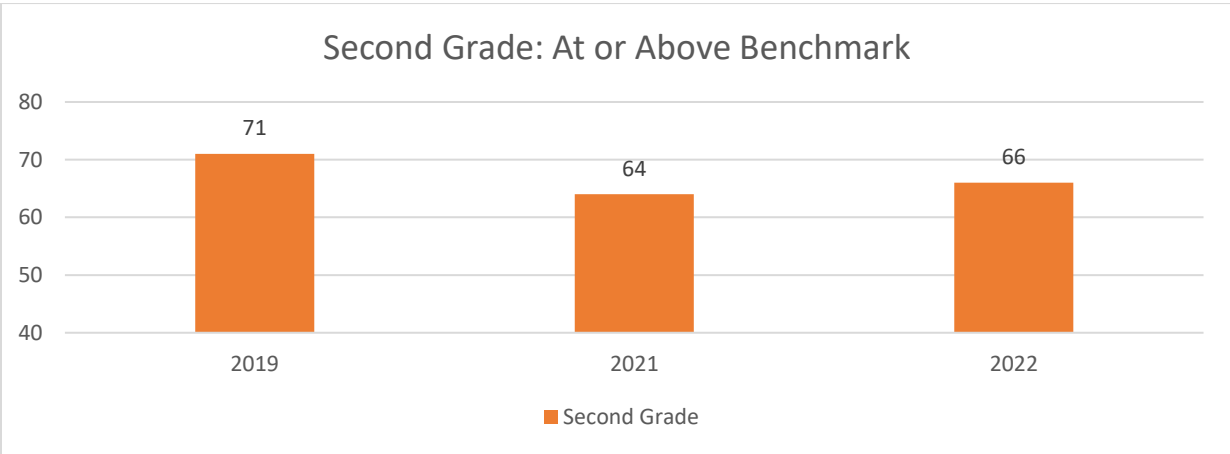
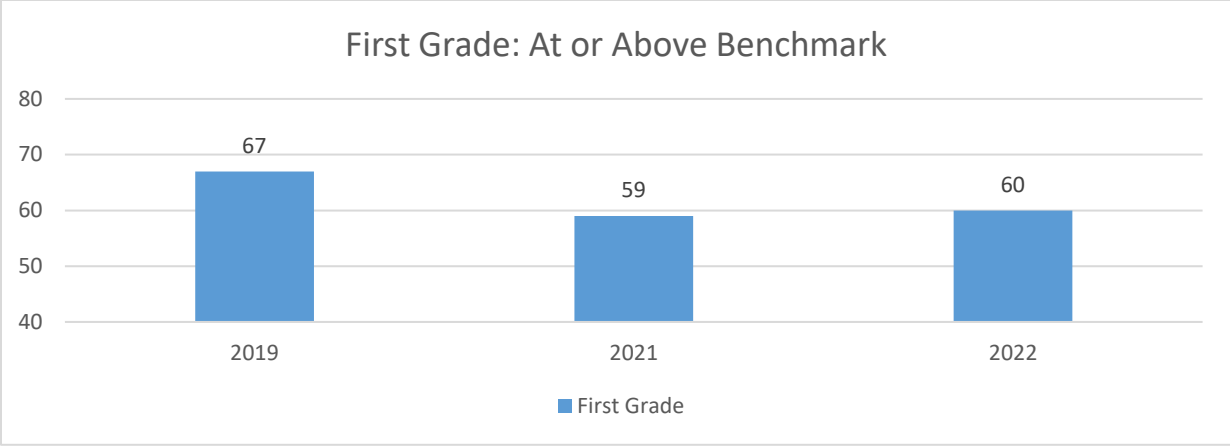
# Kindergarten Entry and Exit Profile (KEEP)

The KEEP assessment is designed to measure key literacy, numeracy, and other school readiness skills essential for academic success in school. The KEEP exit assessment is administered at the conclusion of the kindergarten year. The percentage of exiting kindergarten students who are proficient in the literacy and numeracy expectations showed increases over 2021 with numeracy returning to pre-pandemic levels.



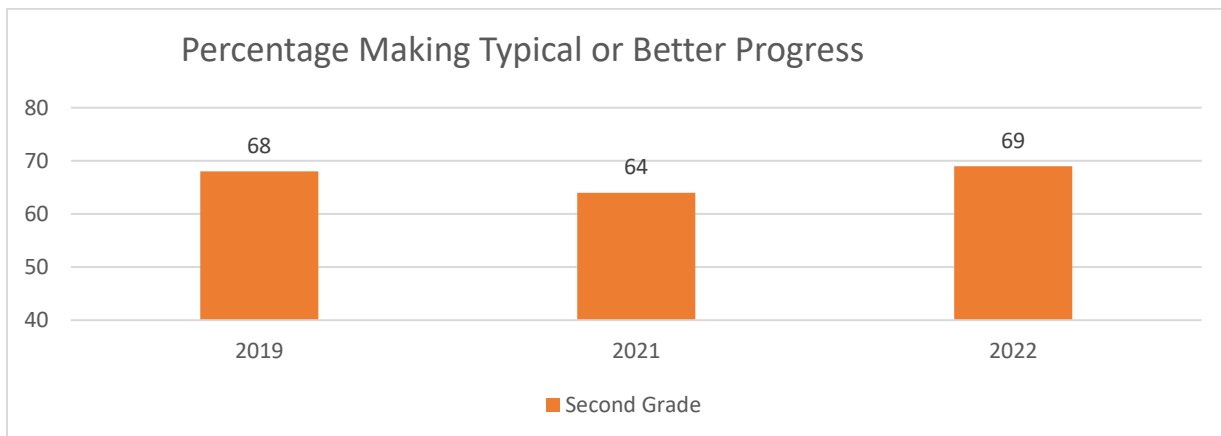
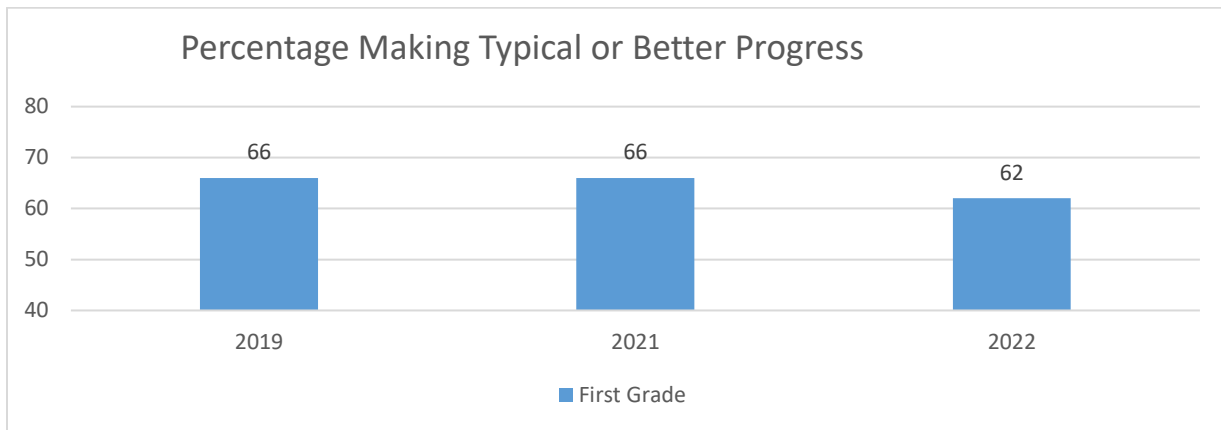
# Acadience Reading

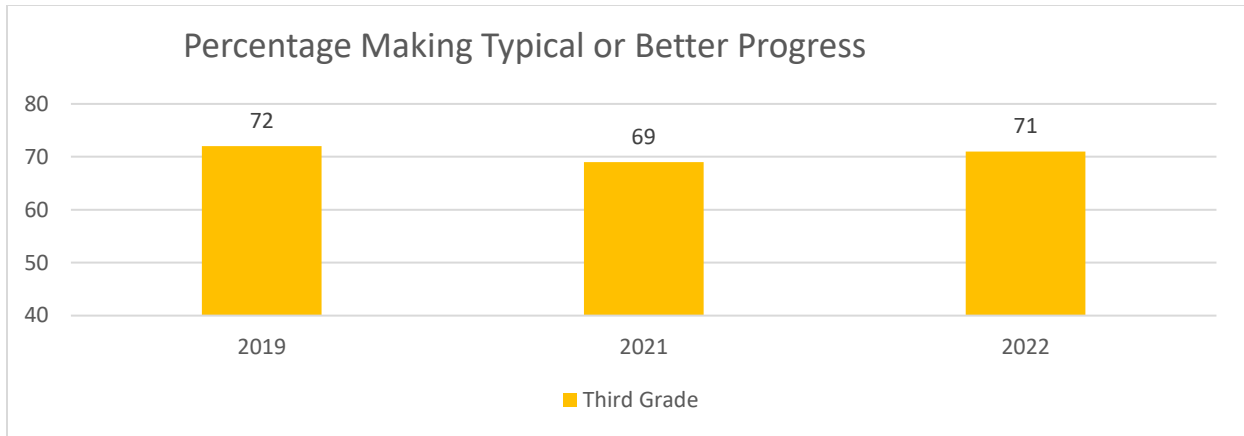
The Acadience Reading assessment provides three benchmark status levels that describe the students' reading performance. These levels are At or Above Benchmark, Below Benchmark, and Well Below Benchmark, which are based on the likelihood of achieving future reading goals and provide information about whether students need targeted instructional support. At or Above Benchmark is reported here. For the SY 2022, the percentage of students who are at or above benchmark is: 60% of first graders, 66% of second graders, and 70% of third grade students. These results demonstrate modest gains over SY 2021 but lag the pre-pandemic results.



## Making Typical or Better Progress

In addition to providing a reading status, the Acadience Reading assessments also provide evidence of student growth from beginning of to the end of year with the following five classifications: well below typical, below typical, typical, above typical, and well above typical growth. In SY 2022 62% of first graders, 69% of second graders, and 71% of third grade students made typical or better progress. While second and third grade rates demonstrate recovery from 2021, with second grade exceeding 2019 rates, our first-grade student results for this measure do not demonstrate recovery.

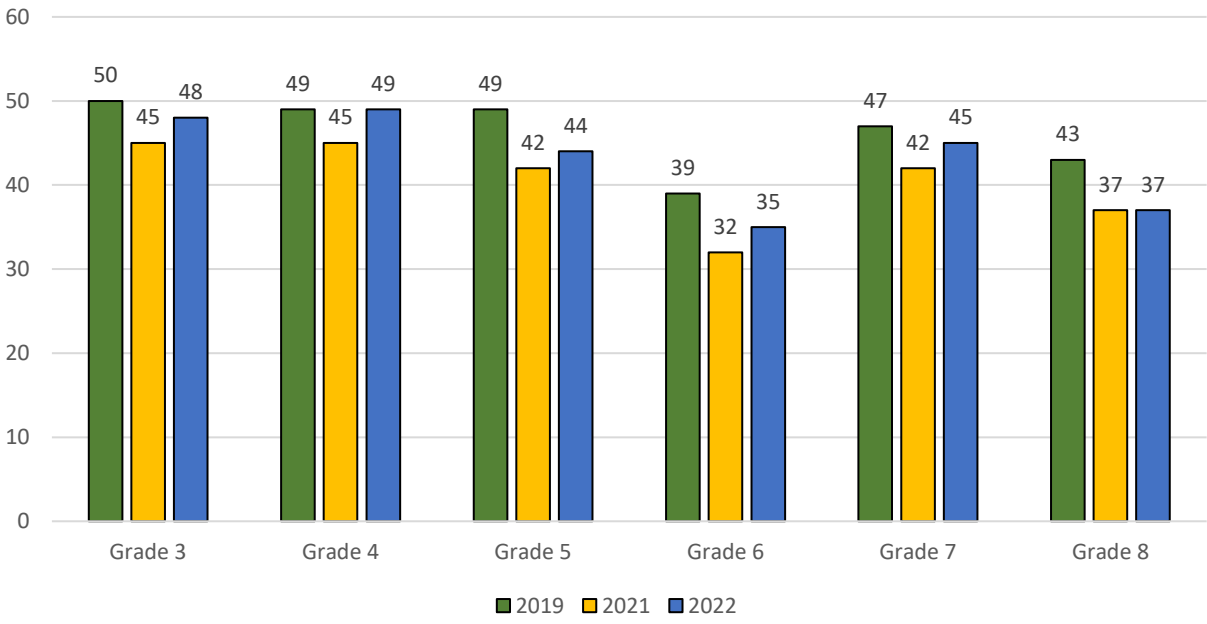




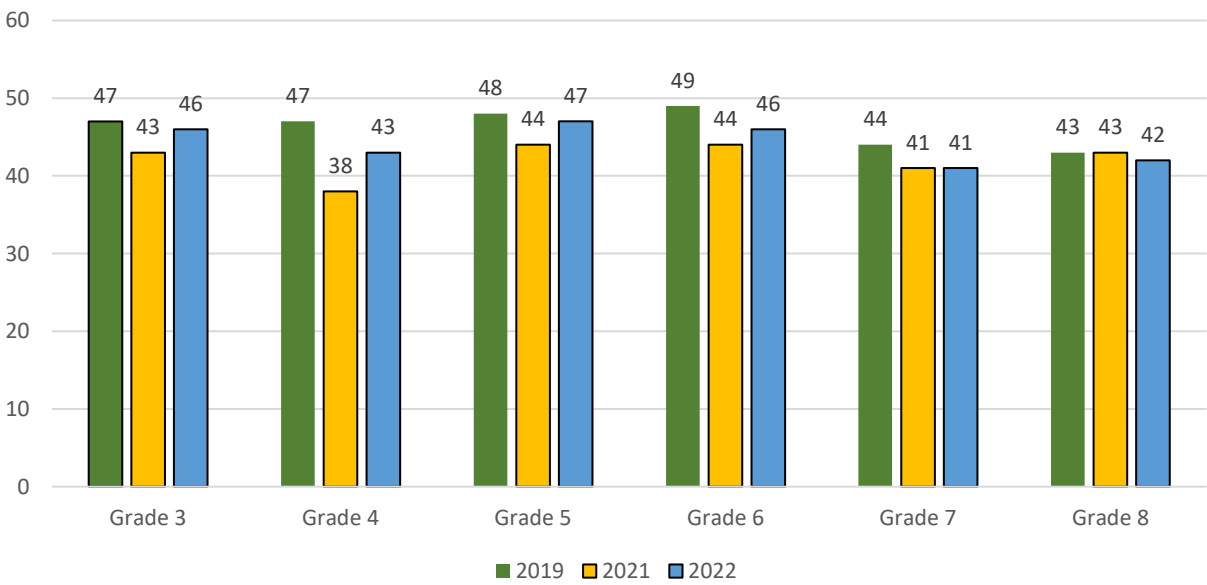
## **Achievement Results - RISE**

Remember that because participation rates were suppressed in 2021, comparisons of the 2020-2021 aggregate achievement scores should only be done with caution. However, it is encouraging to see increases in proficiency rates across all grades (except grade 8 ELA) over 2021 results and in some cases the 2022 result are very similar to those of 2019 (grade 3, 5, & 8 ELA, also grade 4 mathematics). While not displayed here, this is also true for all student groups, except students of American Indian or Alaskan heritage. When discussing post-pandemic student achievement, we should remember the conclusions from the Board's *Exploring the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Student Achievement* which include the assertion that while the pandemic effects on student achievement were significant, they likely underestimated the impact and will require sustained effort to fully recover.

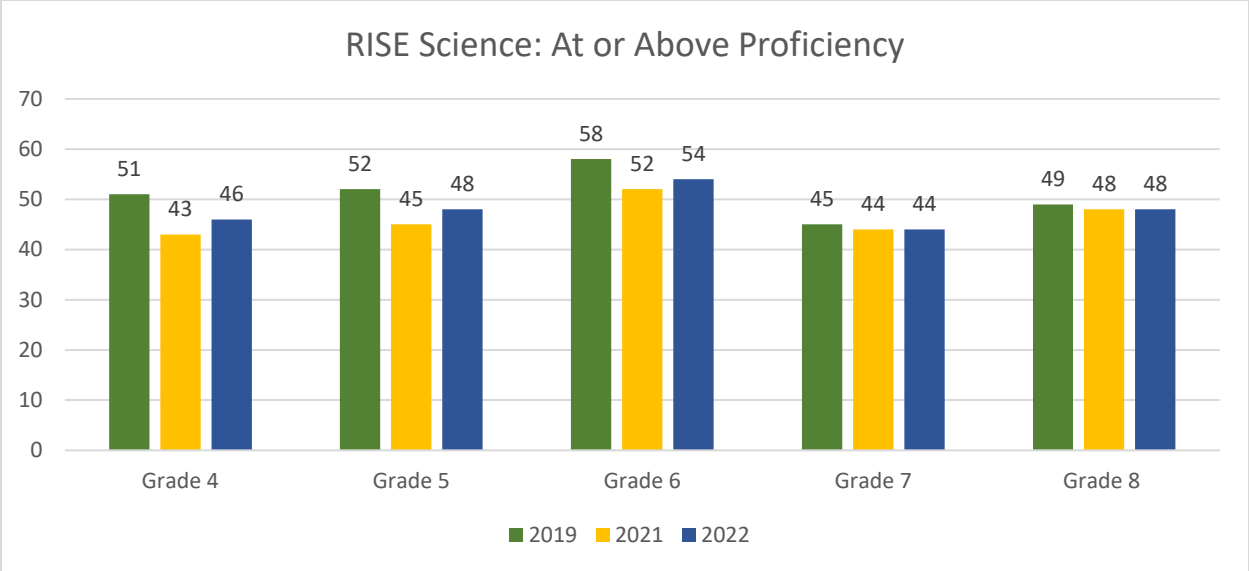
### RISE Mathematics: % At or Above Proficiency



### RISE ELA: % At or Above Proficiency

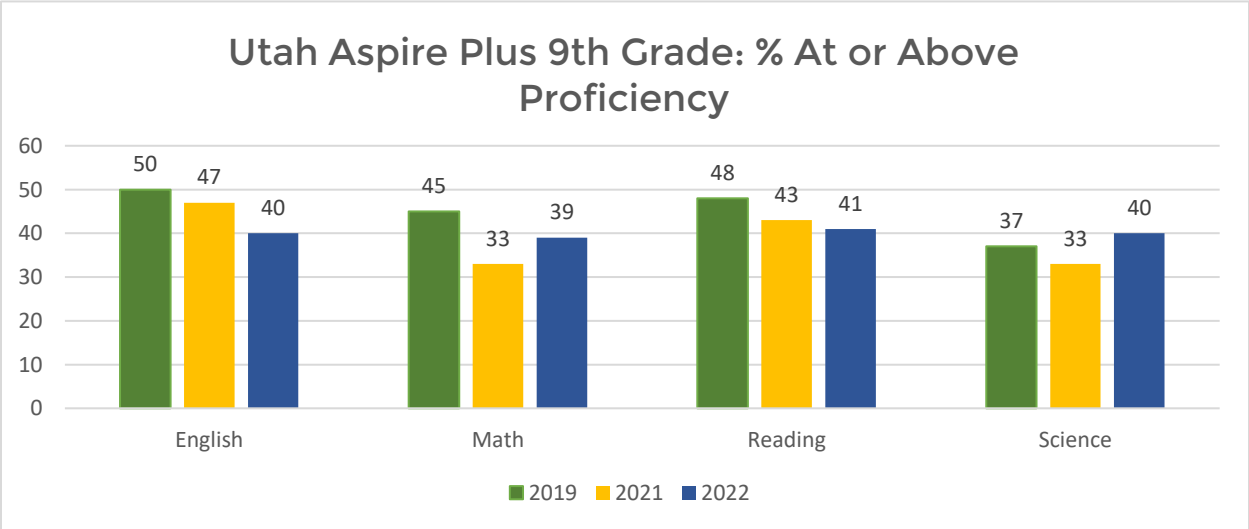


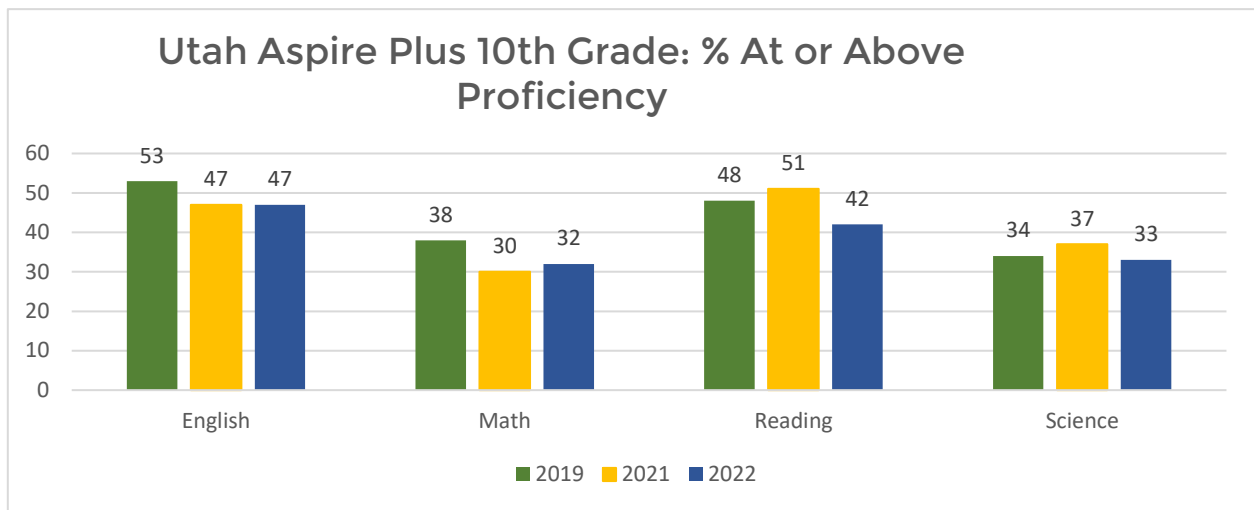




## Achievement Results – Utah Aspire Plus

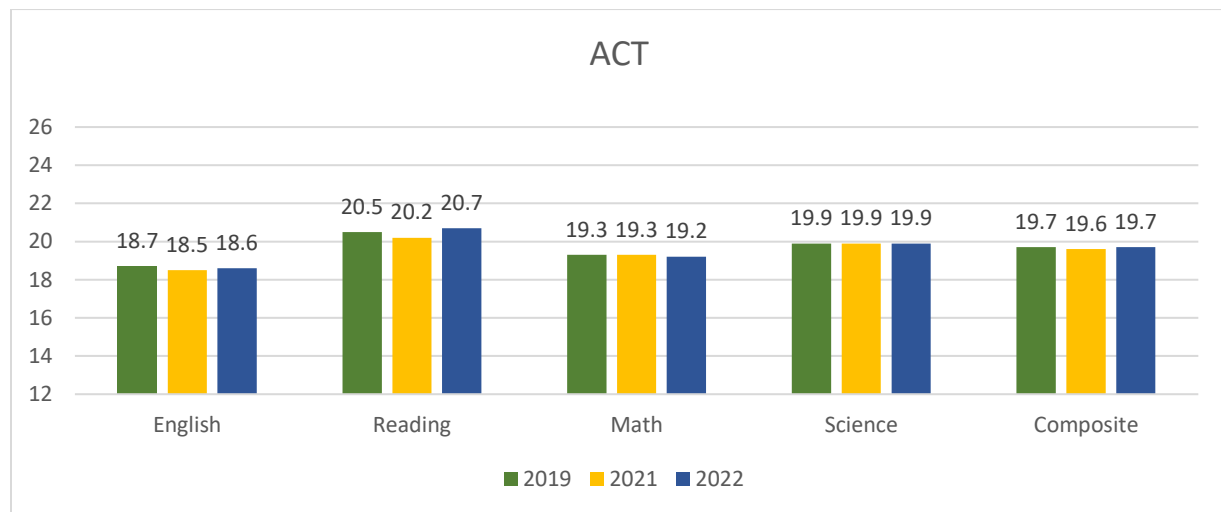
Noting the significant reduction in student participation from pre-pandemic numbers, added caution should be taken in drawing comparisons and conclusions with this 2021-2022 data. As encouraging as the RISE results may be, the Utah Aspire Plus aggregate results lead to additional questions and demonstrate a need to examine other data in an effort to understand if these results accurately reflect declines in student achievement (except grades 9 & 10 mathematics), are a reflection of a change to the tested population from 2019, or are being influenced by some other variable change. It's likely the answer includes a combination of all of these possibilities.





## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade ACT

The ACT is administered to all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and included in Utah’s school accountability system as a post-secondary readiness indicator. This assessment includes four subtests, which are compiled to provide a composite score. The average composite score for Utah’s students returned to the pre-pandemic level and the reading subtest exceeds the pre-pandemic level.



Additional and more detailed 2021-2022 student achievement results are available now through the [Data Gateway](#). The 2022 [School Report Card](#) is scheduled to be published on October 11<sup>th</sup>. These tools are designed for providing the public and educators aggregate level information for the purpose of illustrating how schools, districts, and the State are performing on important indicators. Parents should work directly with their children’s teachers and school leaders to understand the academic achievement and growth levels of their individual children.