



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 27, 2023

Latest Test: 13 High Schools in Baltimore Produce Zero Students Proficient in Math; Spending Per Pupil: \$31K

If what is past is prologue, then the latest round of test results from Baltimore, Maryland's, high schools is hardly a surprise.

Some 40 percent of the city's high schools did not have a student who passed the state's math proficiency, the city's [Fox 45 News reported](#). Those test results reprise a report from the station in February, when it looked at math proficiency across the school system.

Understandably, critics want the overpaid superintendent fired. The results of the education system versus what taxpayers are spending aren't worth the money for schooling or the superintendent.



FOX Baltimore/X

Project Baltimore found that 13 Baltimore City public high schools had zero students who tested proficient in math this past spring. A Black student advocate says city school officials lack a sense of urgency to address this. <https://t.co/KAE10eteOp>

— FOX Baltimore (@FOXBaltimore) [September 21, 2023](#)

The Report

Titled "Project Baltimore," Fox 45's report found that students at 13 high schools failed a math proficiency test administered at 33 high schools last spring. "Not one student" tested proficient at the baker's dozen, the [station reported](#).

In turn "that means 40% of Baltimore City high schools could not produce a single student doing math at grade level. The list of 13 schools includes some of Baltimore's most well-known high schools, including Patterson High School, Frederick Douglass, and Reginald F. Lewis."

Worse still, the station continued, were the numbers:

In those 13 high schools, 1,736 students took the test, and 1,295 students, or 74.5%, scored a one out of four. One is the lowest level, meaning those students were not even close to proficient.

The city schools' website [reported similar data](#) for 2021-22. Just 5 percent of high school students were proficient in math. Of those, 43 percent were Asian and 26 percent were white. Just 5 percent of black and Hispanics tested proficient.

The system's budget last year was \$2.4 billion, including \$799 million in Covid largesse from the federal



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government.

That means the schools spent about \$31,000 for each of the system's 79,995 students. Tuition at one of the top private schools in the city, Gilman, [runs from](#) \$20,195 for preschool to \$35,790 for high school.

The Fox 45 report has critics fuming:

"This is educational homicide," said Jason Rodriguez, deputy director of People Empowered by the Struggle, a Baltimore-based nonprofit.

In 2021, the group held rallies calling on Baltimore City Schools CEO Dr. Sonja Santelises to resign over low test scores, falling graduation rates, and a lack of transparency. Now, after seeing what Project Baltimore discovered, Rodriguez is renewing those calls.

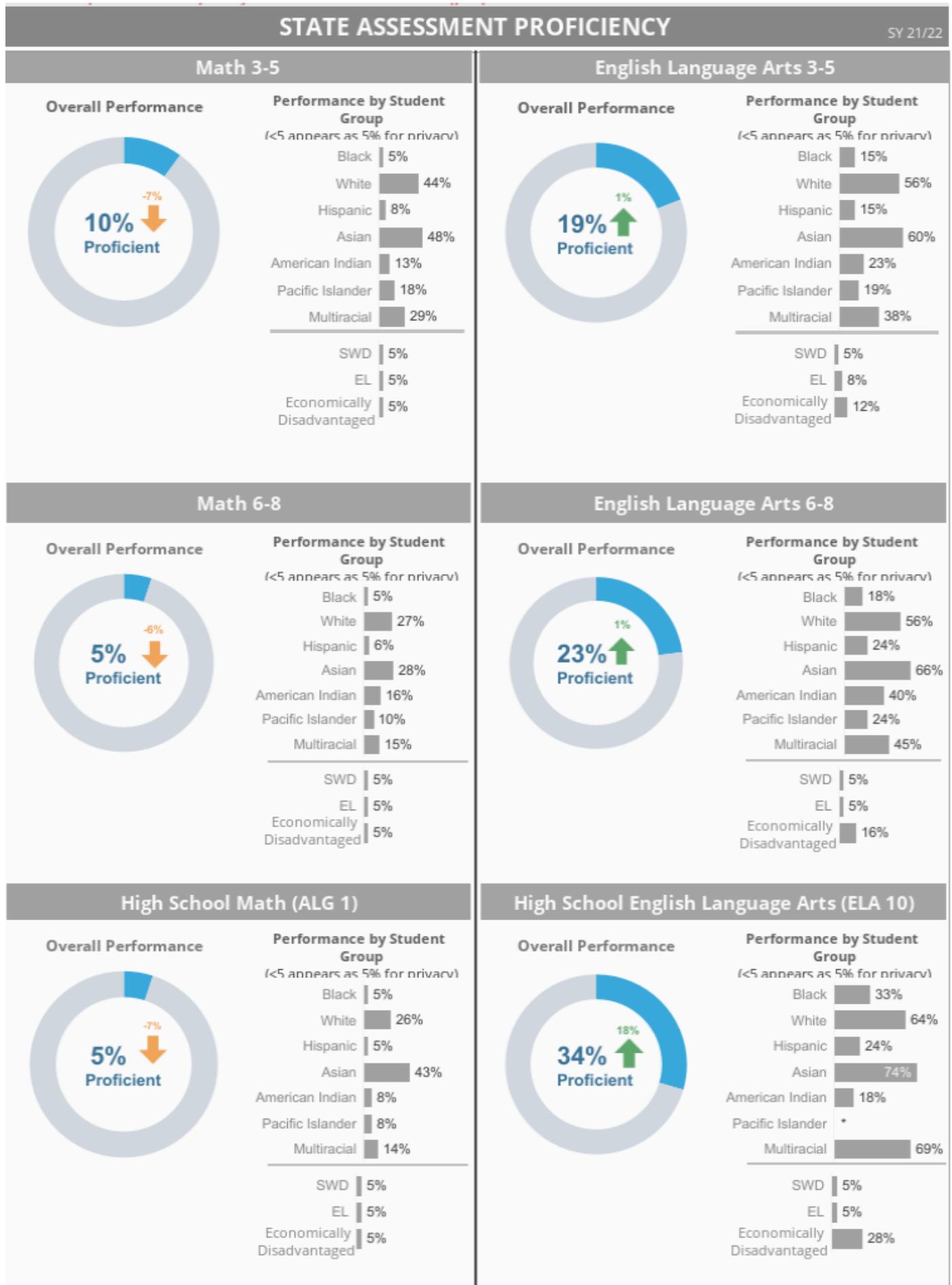
"There is no excuse," he said. "We have a system that's just running rogue, and it starts at the top."

The [schools' website reported](#) grim math results for all other grades, again for 2021-22, and poor but better results in English and language arts.

Just 5 percent of students in grades six through eight were proficient in math. The figure is 10 percent for grades three through five.

For English, 34 percent of high-schoolers were proficient; 23 percent were proficient in grades six through eight, and 19 percent for grades three through five.

Proficiency for blacks and Hispanics students lagged far behind Asians and whites.





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February Test Results

But the city's high schools aren't the only ones educating — or not educating — the city's school kids, [almost 80 percent](#) of whom are black, along with 40 percent of the teachers and the superintendent, Sonja Brookins Santelises.

The middle and elementary schools are failing students, too.

In February, [Fox reported](#) that Baltimore's "math scores were the lowest in the state. Just 7 percent of third through eighth graders tested proficient in math, which means 93 percent could not do math at grade level."

Baltimore City's math scores were the lowest in the state. <https://t.co/nAXu2C43dz>

— FOX Baltimore (@FOXBaltimore) [February 10, 2023](#)

Twenty-three city schools failed to produce a single student who can add and subtract or multiply and divide: 10 were high schools, eight were elementary schools, three were middle/high schools, and two were elementary/middle schools, Fox reported:

Exactly 2,000 students, in total, took the state math test at these schools. Not one could do math at grade level.

As well, the project found zero students proficient in math at three schools, one of which was for "incarcerated students" and the other two for "students with disabilities."

But across the board, the city schools are producing math dunces: at 20 schools, just one to two students could do math, [Fox reported](#).

And again, school critics are furious. Jovani Patterson, who sued the schools last year because of the poorly performing schools, explained what the poor results mean for the students.

"These kids can't do math," he said:

You're not preparing them to buy groceries. You're not preparing them to do accounting, to count their own money. You're not preparing them to read contracts and negotiate salaries.

One individual in the schools did know how to negotiate a salary: Superintendent Santelises. She earned \$450,000 in 2021, including benefits and about \$50,000 from cashing out unused leave.

Or maybe she didn't earn it, given the performance of students that year, when [41 percent notched](#) a GPA of 1.0.



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