

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** George A. Coleman, Acting Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** May 4, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Impact of CALI on the Partner Districts

**Introduction**

The State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223e of the Connecticut General Statutes, is required, in conformance with the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110 (NCLB), to direct the Commissioner of Education to prepare a statewide education accountability plan, consistent with federal law and regulation. Such a plan shall identify the schools and districts in need of improvement, require the development and implementation of improvement plans and utilize rewards and consequences.

The Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) is a system of professional development and technical assistance which, when implemented with fidelity over time, is designed to increase student achievement. However, there are significant variables beyond the reach of CALI; Board/administration relations, level of community involvement and fiscal support, and the length of the school day for both students and teachers.

The Bureau of Accountability and Improvement (BAI) is in the process of grouping districts for levels of intervention in accordance with documented growth in student achievement.

**History/Background**

In June 2007, state accountability legislation was enacted that required low-performing districts to participate in instructional and financial assessments conducted by Cambridge Education LLC. Upon completion of the Cambridge assessments, the districts were required to meet with the State Board of Education Ad Hoc Committee on Accountability to review the results of the assessments. The districts were required to revise their previously submitted District Improvement Plans (DIPs) to reflect the findings of the assessments and the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations. The districts developed the revised DIPs with a broad-based district team in collaboration with staff from BAI. The DIPs were presented to the local boards of education for approval. The DIPs were then presented to the State Board of Education for approval.

The districts involved were chosen based on their identified need through NCLB. The districts were in year three or greater and in need of improvement at the whole district level in reading, math or in both subjects. In the 2008-09 school year, 12 districts were involved in the process. The districts were Bridgeport, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Waterbury and Windham. The districts are referred to as the Partner Districts.

In the 2009-10 school year, three additional districts (Ansonia, Danbury and Stamford) were identified to go through this process. In addition to the above requirements, the districts have been required to develop a district system of accountability. Each district has a district-level data team,

school-level data teams and instructional-level data teams. Staff members from the BAI attend the district data team meetings to monitor implementation of the DIPs. Annually, the State Department team submits a formal monitoring report to the Commissioner on the progress related to the district implementation of the DIPs. The State Board of Education received an update on the progress of the districts in December 2010. In an effort to support implementation of the DIPs, the districts receive the following supports:

- staff members from the BAI are assigned to each district;
- an external consultant (retired superintendent) is assigned to each district;
- technical assistance with creating a district system of accountability;
- providing or brokering direct support in K-8 Literacy and Mathematics K-8 model curriculum development and implementation, benchmark assessments in Grades 3-8 reading and mathematics and walkthrough protocols;
- support from the Department for interventions for students with disabilities, English Language Learners or school-family-community partnerships;
- access to district- and school-level training and technical assistance from CALI in Effective Teaching Strategies, Data-Driven Decision-Making, Common Formative Assessments, Making Standards Work, Climate and Culture and the Scientifically Research-Based Interventions;
- establishment of two demonstration schools in each district, which provides additional resources to fund an executive coach and data team facilitator;
- for select districts, external consultants to work with local boards of education or provide training for the local boards of education; and
- participation in an Accountability and School Improvement Advisory Committee.

**Purpose:**

The BAI has preliminary evidence that the extra supports provided to our Partner Districts are having a substantial impact on student achievement. Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) data from the 15 Partner Districts over 4 test administration points (2007 through 2010) were aggregated and compared to the performance of students in the rest of Connecticut public school districts. CMT data for matched cohorts of students who attended school in the Partner Districts over the years 2007 to 2010 were compared to the performance of matched cohorts of students who attended public schools in Connecticut over the same time period in districts other than the Partner Districts. CAPT data for students in Partner Districts were also compared to CAPT data for the rest of Connecticut public school districts over the same 4-year period. Data were disaggregated to examine trends in sub-group performance.

**Overall Findings:**

The following is a bulleted summary of the trends revealed by these data analyses:

- Each cohort, regardless of whether they attended school in the Partner Districts or in other Connecticut public school districts, had an increase in the percent of students scoring at/above proficiency on both math and reading CMT over time and over successive grade levels.
- For each subgroup (white, black and Hispanic students; special education students; free/reduced lunch eligible students; and ELLs) there is an increase in the percent of students in Partner Districts scoring at/above proficiency over time and over successive grade levels.

- The largest four year gain in the percent of students scoring at/above proficiency on CMT reading (from 47 percent to 71 percent) was for the 2007 Grade 3 cohort of students who attended schools in the Partner Districts. (Chart 1)
- The largest four year gain in the percent of students scoring at/above proficiency on CMT math (from 64 percent to 73percent) was for the 2007 Grade 4 cohort of students who attended schools in the Partner Districts. (Chart 2)
- White, black and Hispanic subgroups each had substantial increases in the percent of students scoring at/above proficiency over a four year period in both the Partner Districts and other districts. In most instances, the rate of increase in the percent of students performing at/above proficiency on the CMT was greatest for black and Hispanic students in the Partner Districts.
- Students eligible for free/reduced lunch had substantial increases in the percent of students scoring at/above proficiency over a four year period in both the Partner Districts and other districts.
- Over a four year period, the percent of students scoring at/above proficiency on the math portion of the CAPT has increased by 2 percentage points in both the Partner Districts and the rest of the school districts. (Chart 3)
- Over a four year period, the percent of students scoring at/above proficiency on the reading portion of the CAPT has increased by 6 percentage points in the Partner Districts as compared to an increase of 2 percentage points over four years on CAPT reading in the rest of the state. (Chart 3)
- In general, the magnitude of the increase in percent of students performing at/above proficiency on CAPT within racial/ethnic sub-groups, special education students, free/reduced lunch eligible students, and English language learners was greater in Partner Districts than the increase in percent of students performing at/above proficiency on CAPT among those same sub-groups in the rest of the state.
- For both CMT and CAPT performance in both reading and math, the sub-group that has seen the largest proportional gain in the percent of students performing at/above proficiency has been students receiving special education services.

Connecticut struggles with one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation, where economically disadvantaged students, black and Hispanic students, and students whose first language is not English are have struggled to demonstrate high achievement on standardized assessments. The Partner Districts serve the vast majority of Connecticut's black, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged and English language learner student population. By improving the quality of education, and thus the achievement outcomes for students in these districts, the statewide achievement gap will be closed. The State Board of Education should continue to review and amend the requirements of the state accountability legislation to provide support and guidance to the Partner Districts. In addition, it is the intent of the BAI to target its resources to those districts which are failing to make progress. Districts which are implementing CALI strategies with fidelity will experience greater autonomy while districts failing to make progress will be subjected to increased interventions.

There is a continued need for increased fiscal resources to fully implement the reform efforts necessary to turn around low performing schools and districts especially with those with the most intensive needs. In 2010-11, three Partner Districts have been added: Hamden, West Haven and Windsor. CSDE technical assistance teams have been assigned to each new district and are working with DDTs to review and, where appropriate, revise the DIPs.

**Follow-up Activities:**

In addition to the supports previously identified, staff members from the BAI will participate on a regular basis on the District Data Teams to monitor implementation of the DIPs and offer support and resources. The BAI teams will continue to conduct formal monitoring visits and prepare a report for the Commissioner on progress related to implementation of the DIPs. The monitoring activities planned for May/June 2011 will be focused on how the districts are implementing the Three-tier Accountability system and the impact that system is having on improving instruction. The data analyses referenced in this report will be re-run following the release of the 2011 CMT and CAPT data this summer.

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Chart 1. Percent of Students At/Above Proficiency on Reading CMT: 2007 Grade 3 Matched Cohort.

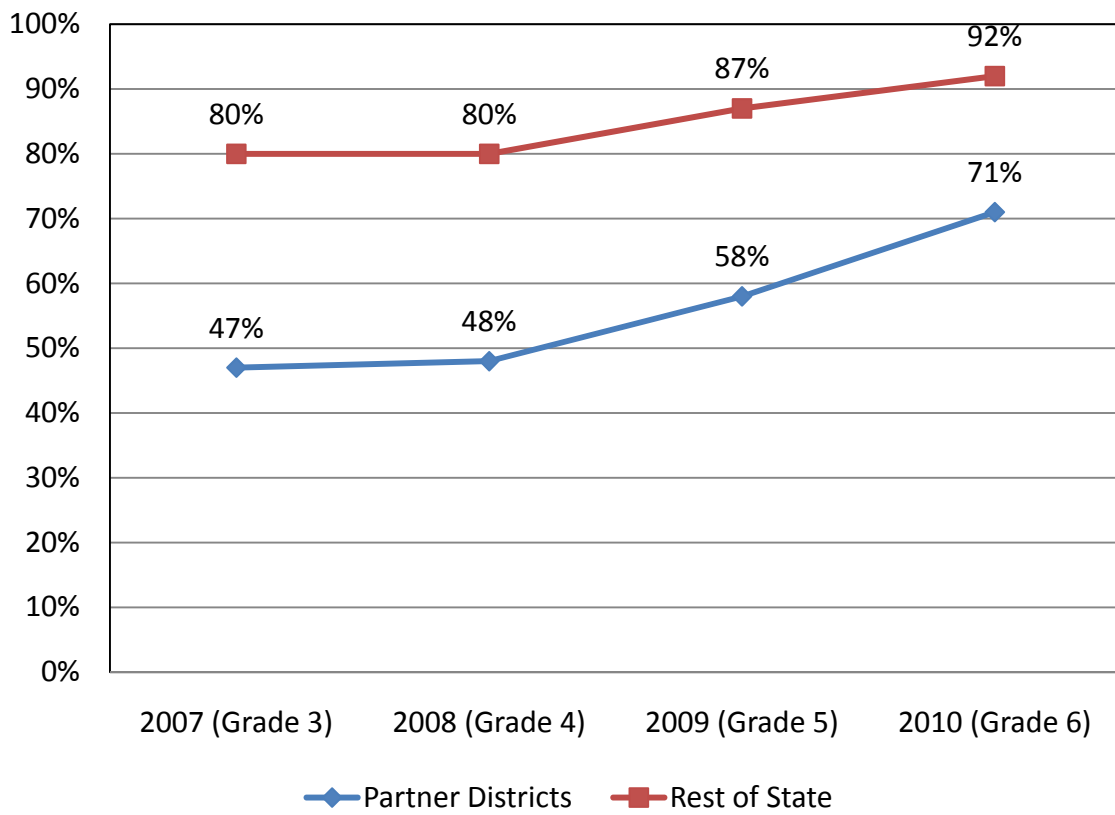


Chart 2. Percent of Students At/Above Proficiency on Math CMT: 2007 Grade 4 Matched Cohort.

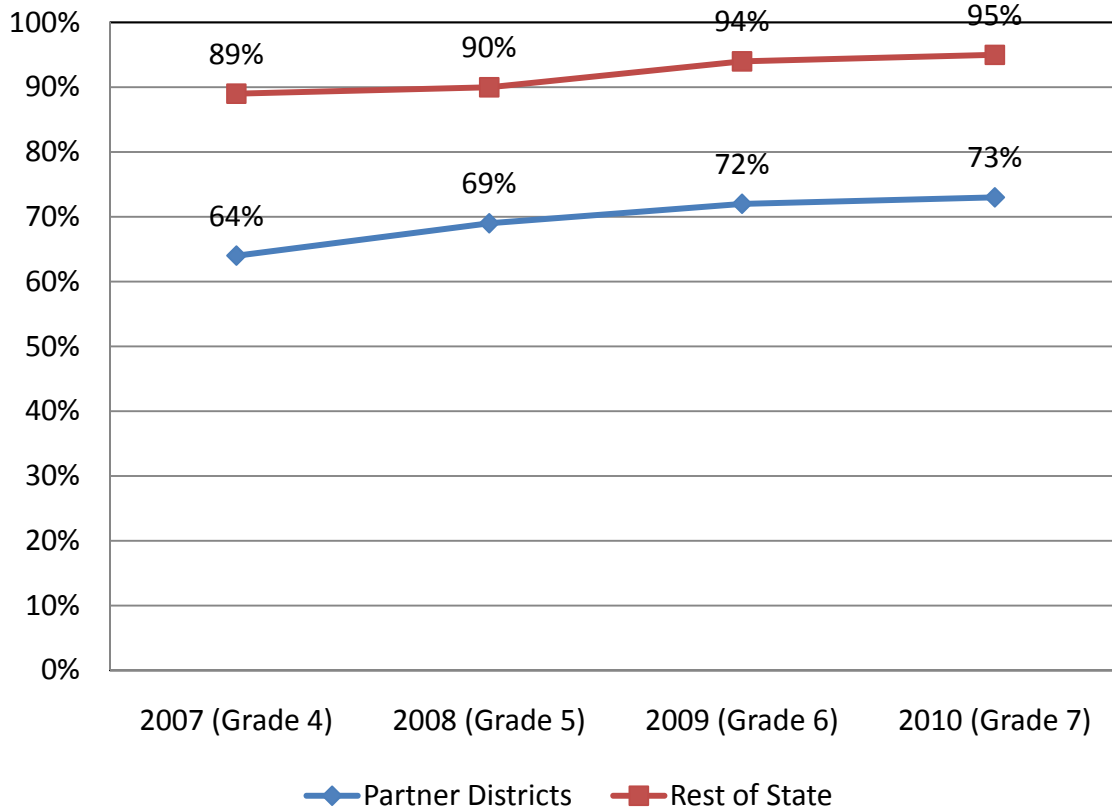
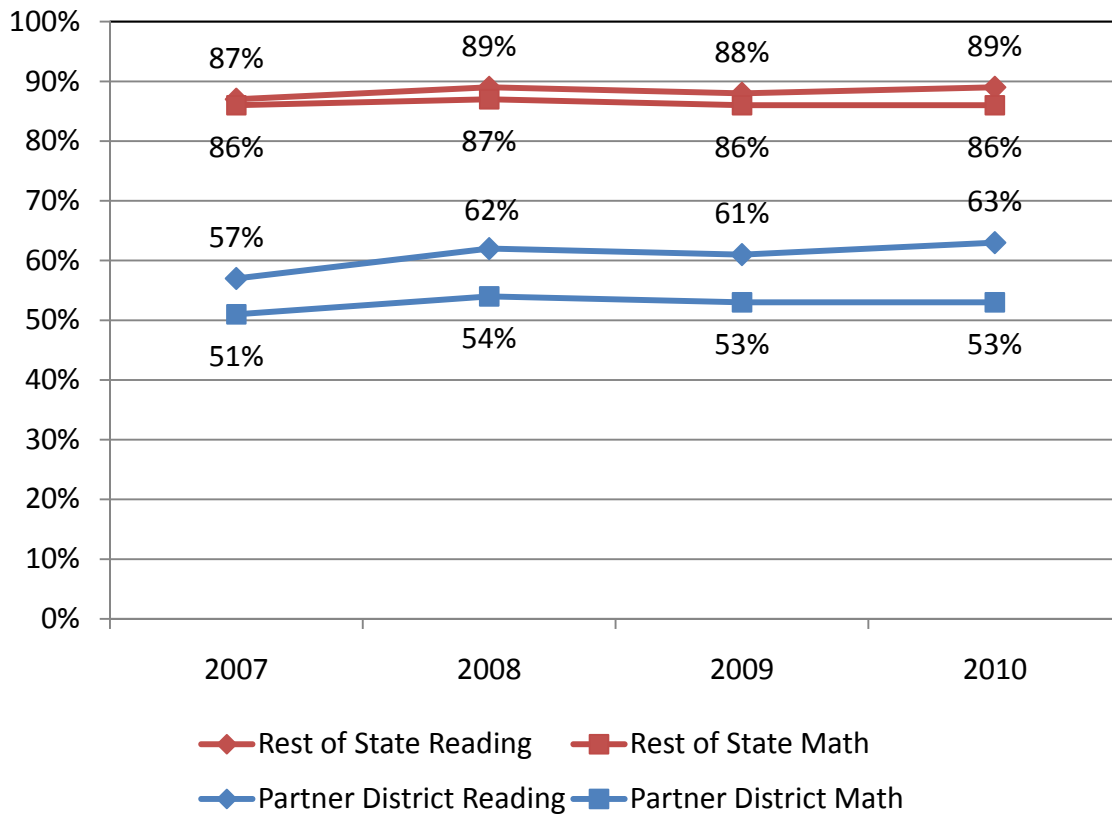
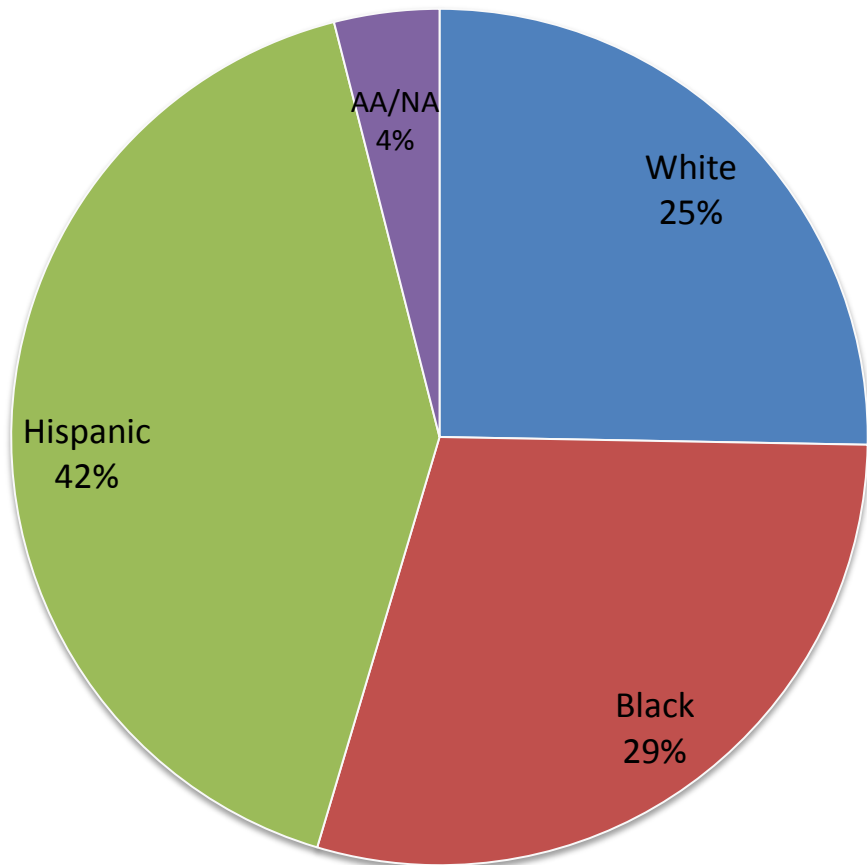


Chart 3. Percent of Students At/Above on Math and Reading CAPT: 2007 through 2010

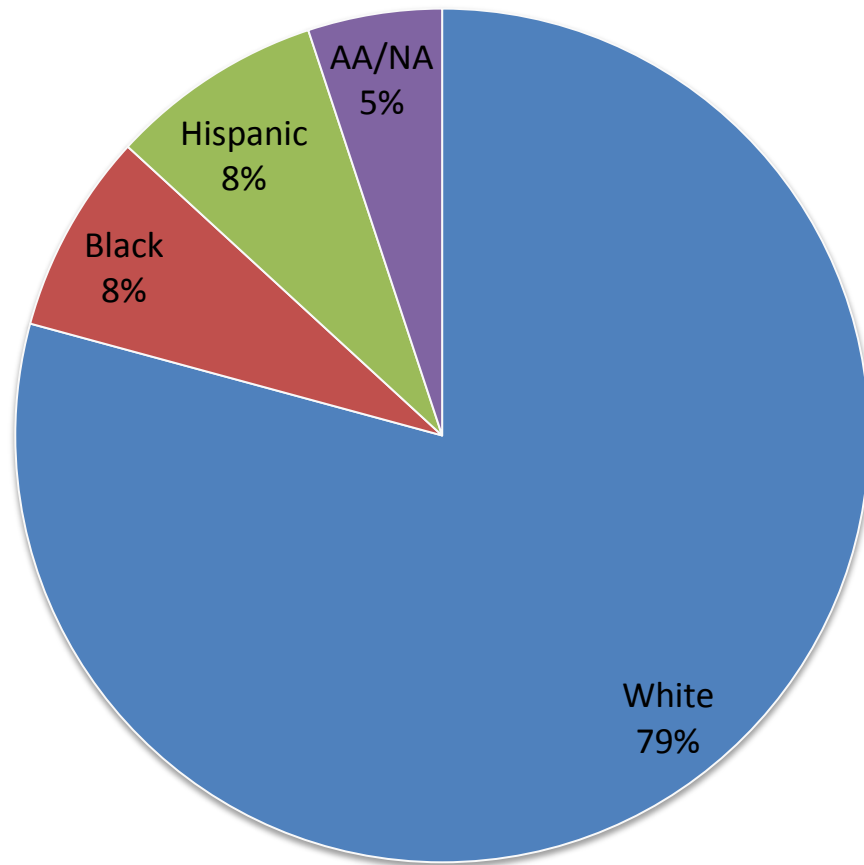


# Demographic composition of 15 Partner Districts as compared to the Rest of the State: (2009-10 School Year)

## 15 Partner Districts



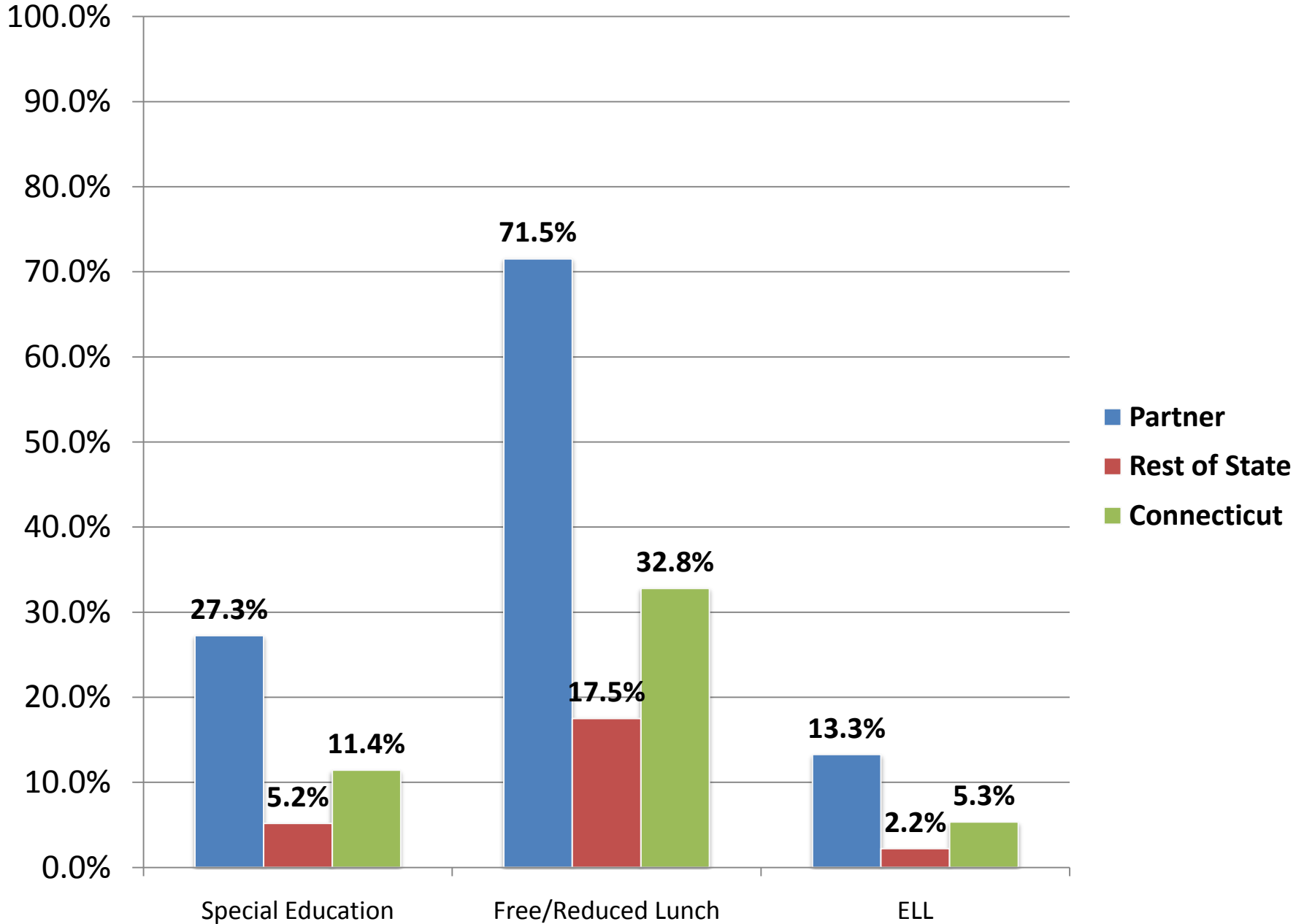
## Rest of State



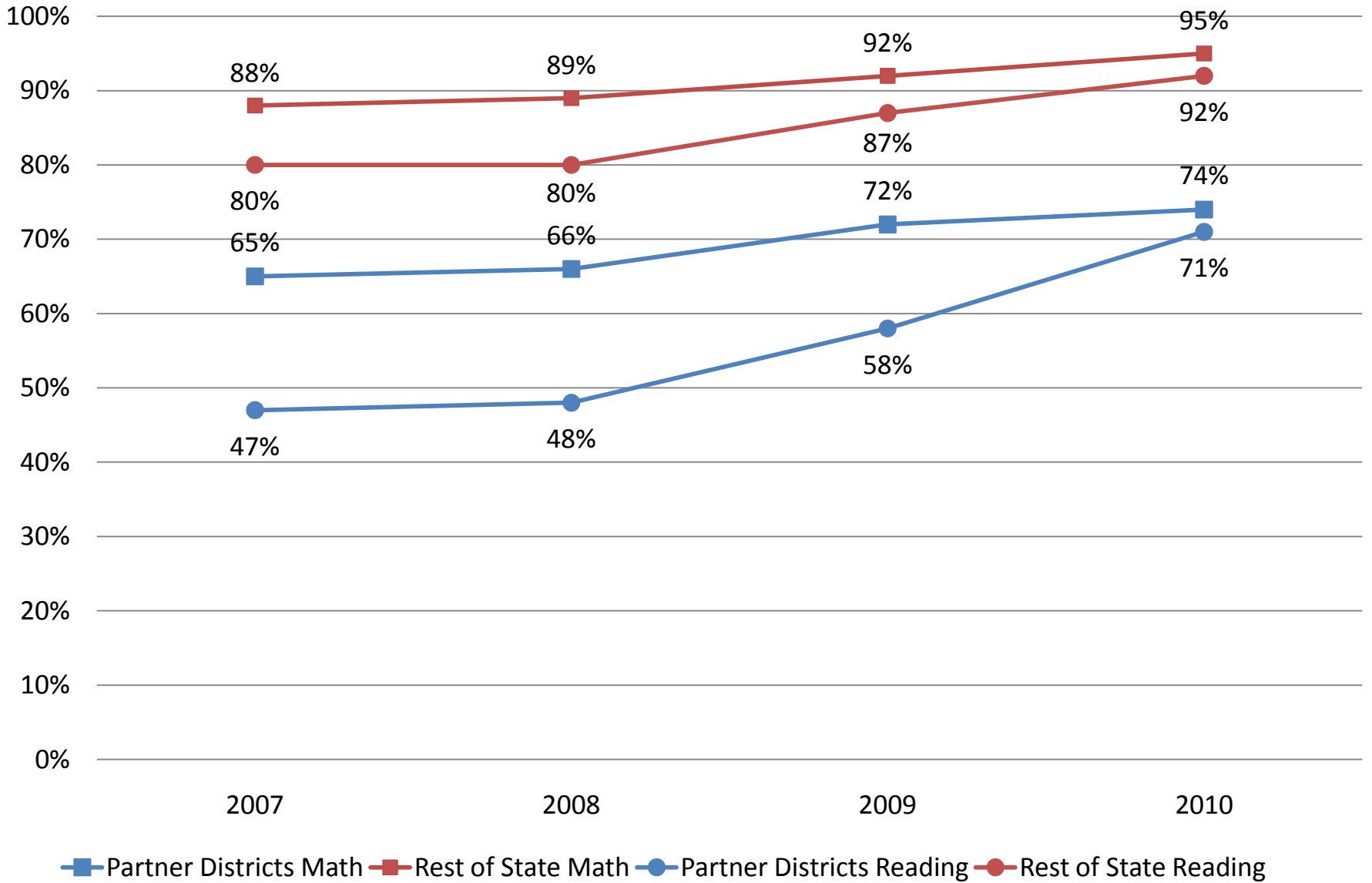
Partner Districts: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Danbury, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Waterbury, Windham

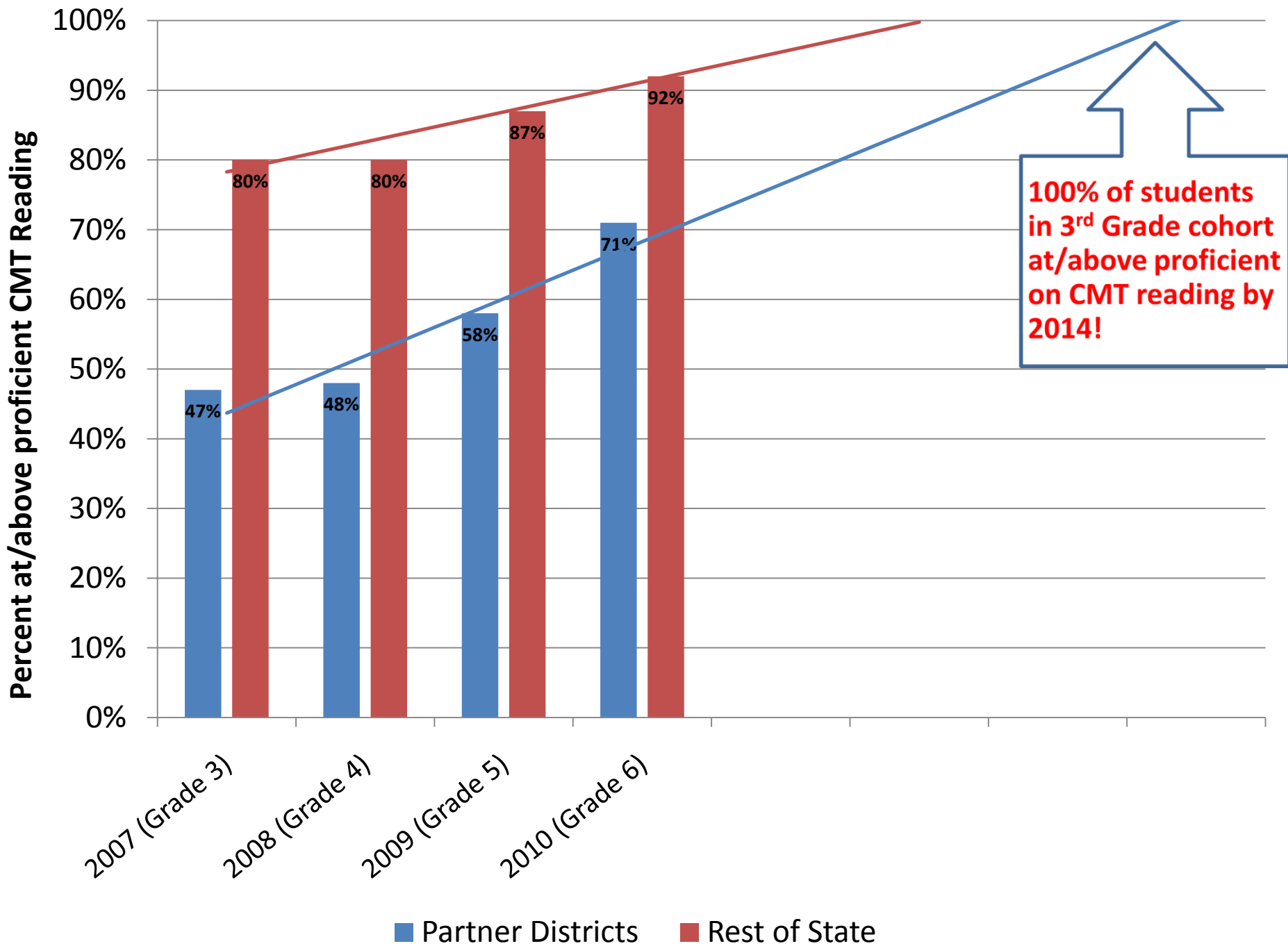


# Distribution of Special Education, Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible and ELL students in 15 Partner Districts as Compared to the Rest of the State (2009-10 School Year)

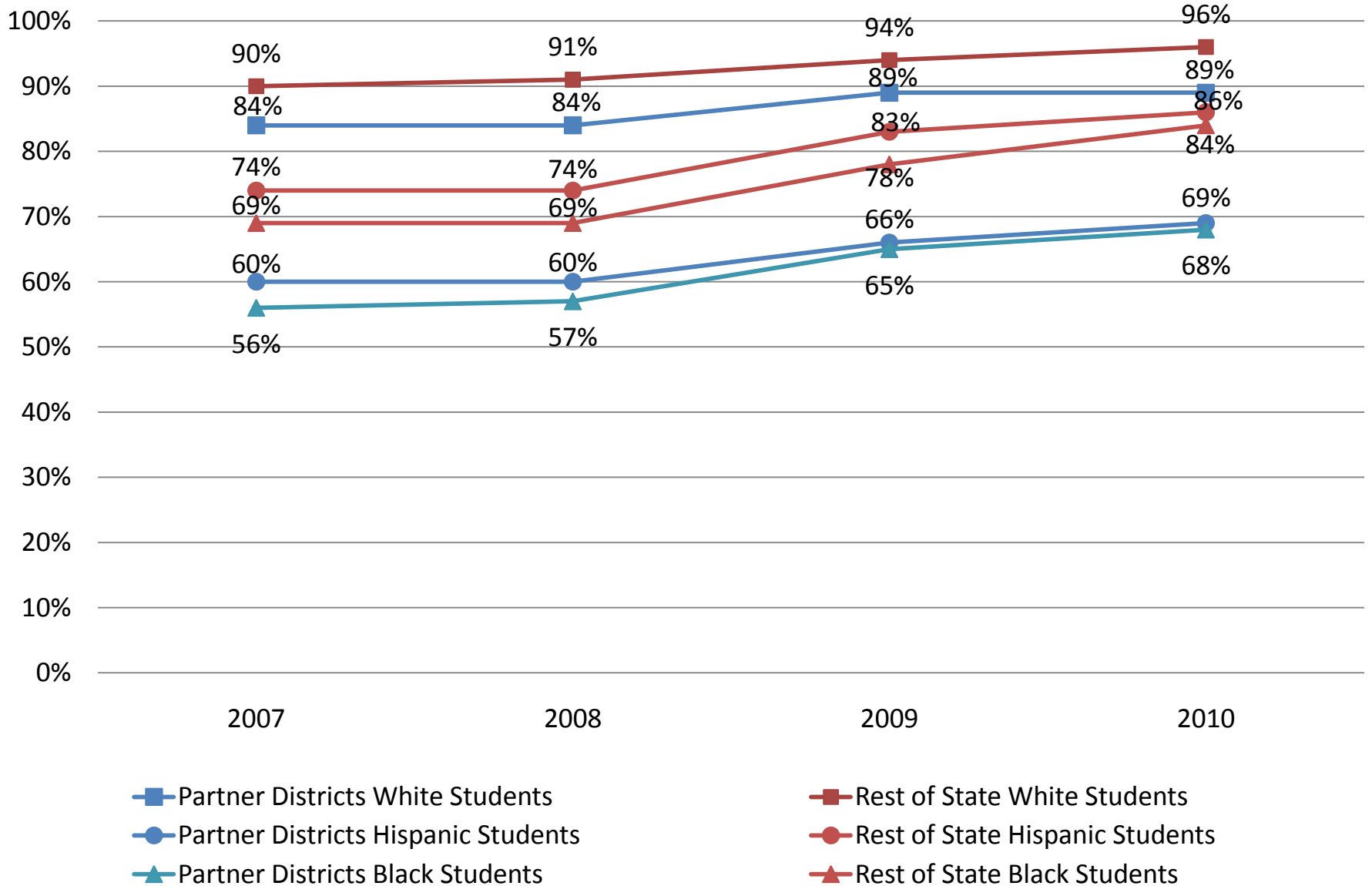


### Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on CMT: 3rd Grade 2007 Matched Cohort

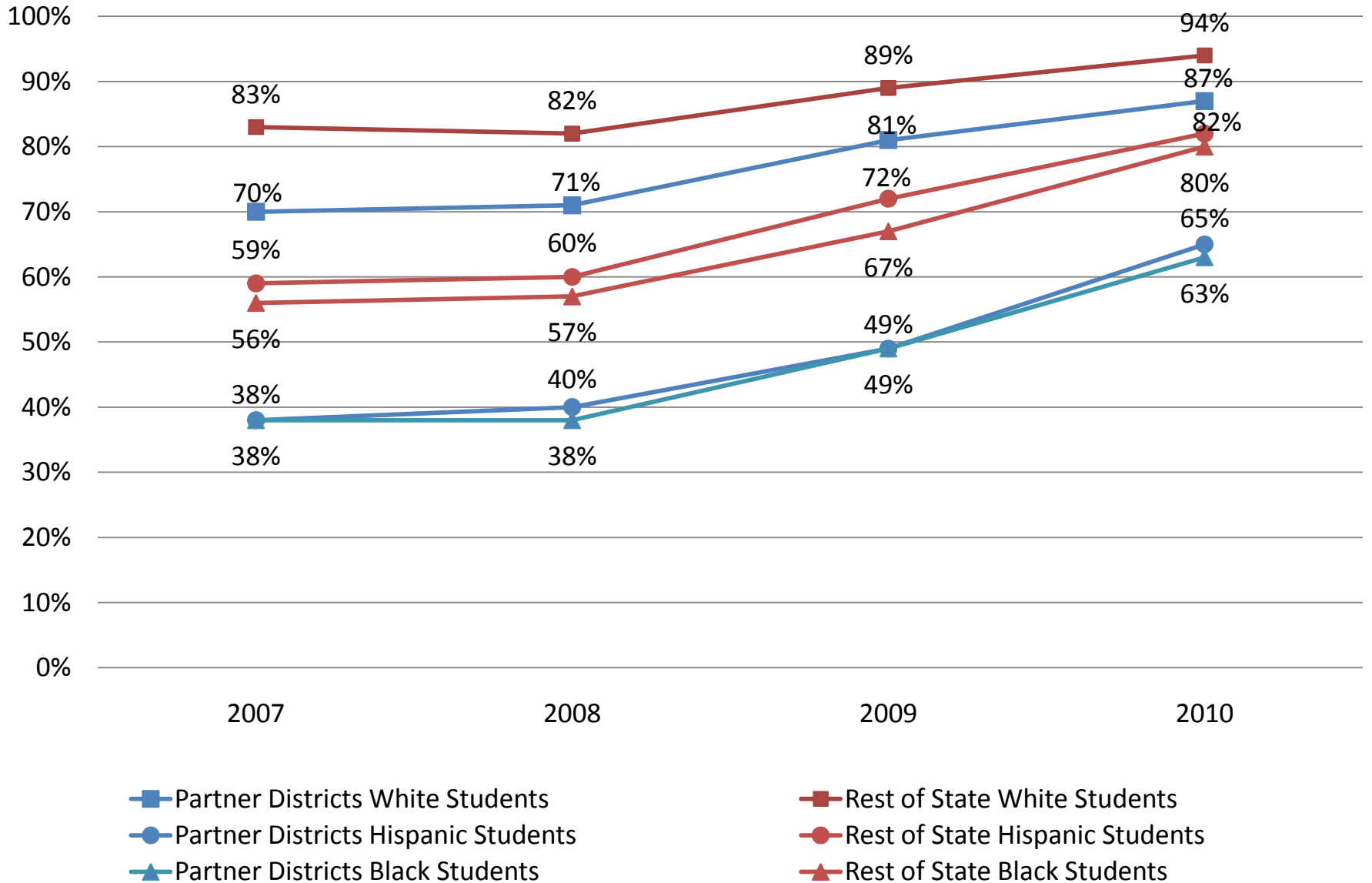




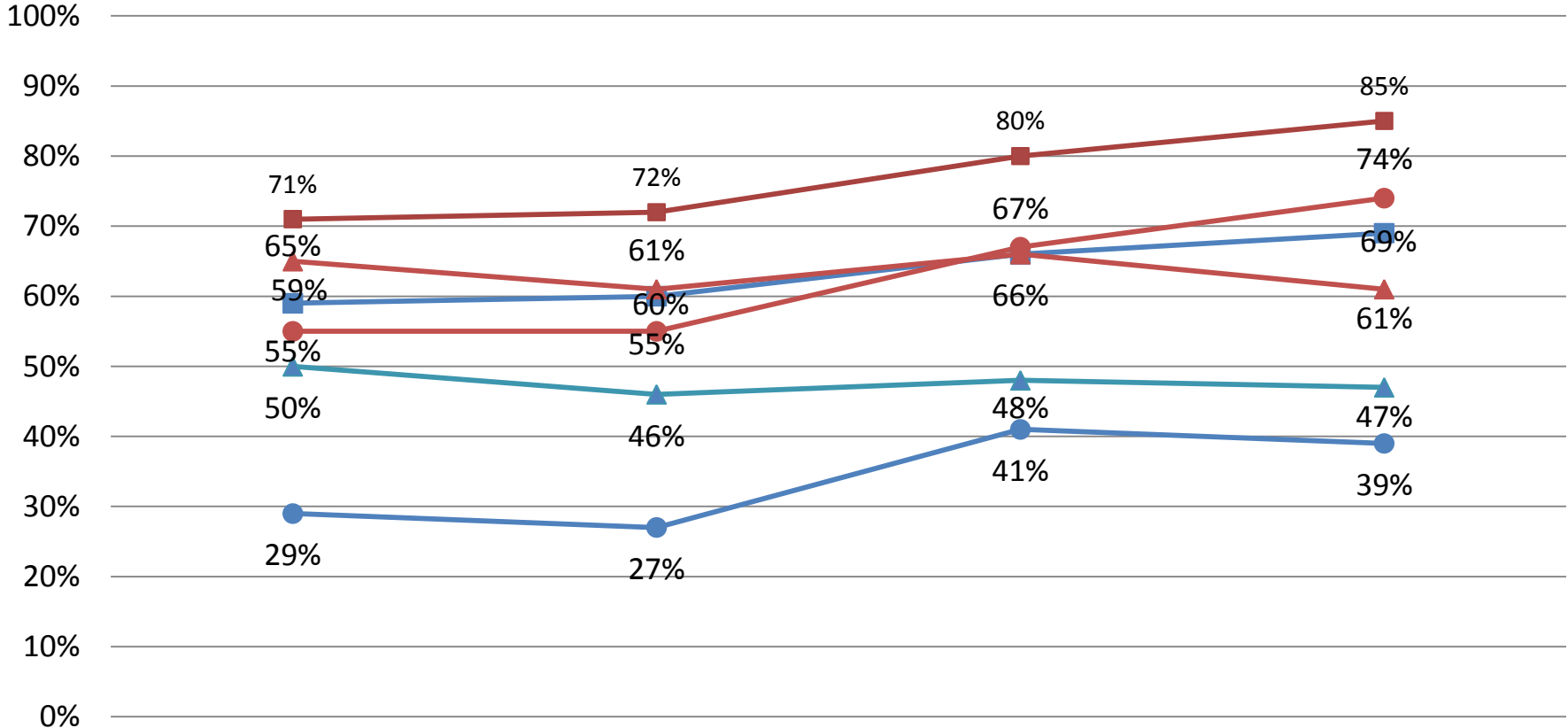
## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on Math CMT by Race: 2007 Grade 3 Matched Cohort



## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on Reading CMT by Race: 2007 Grade 3 Matched Cohort

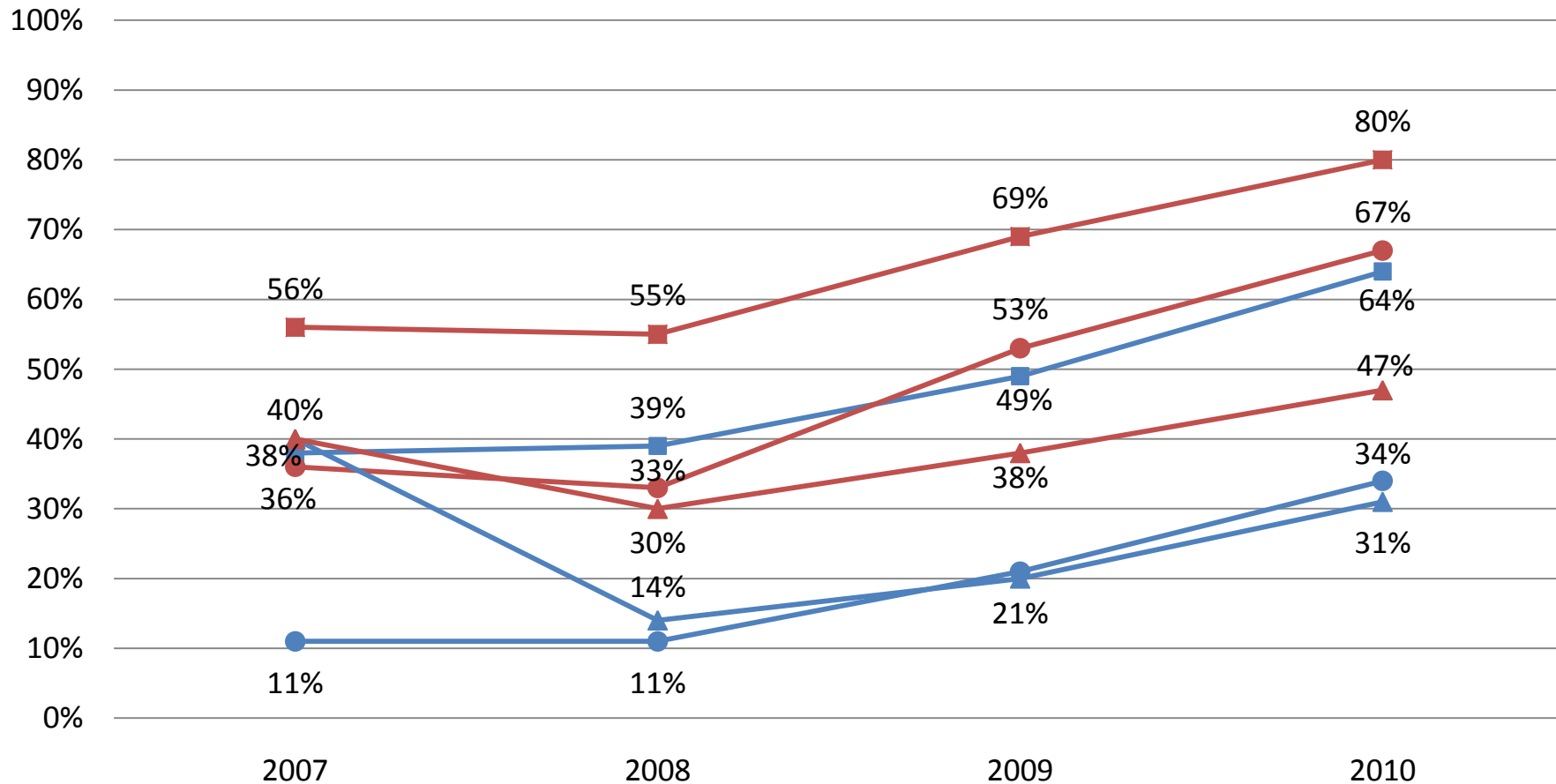


## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on Math CMT by Free/Reduced Lunch, Special Education and English Language Learner Status: 2007 Grade 3 Matched Cohort



- Partner Districts Free/Reduced Lunch
- Partner Districts Special Education
- ▲ Partner District English Language Learner
- Rest of State Free/Reduced Lunch
- Rest of State Special Education
- ▲ Rest of State English Language Learner

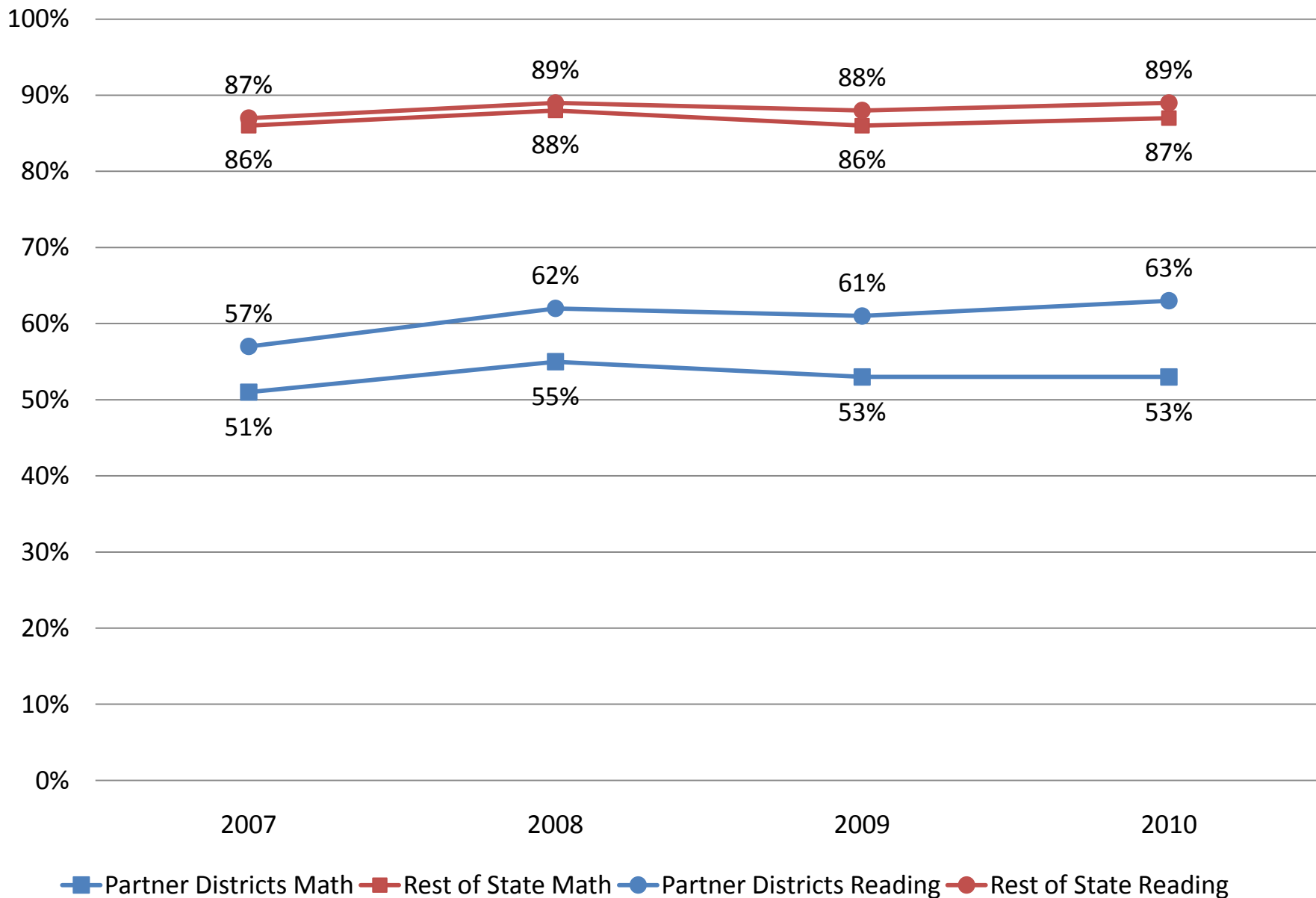
## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on Reading CMT by Free/Reduced Lunch, Special Education and English Language Learner Status: 2007 Grade 3 Matched Cohort



■ Partner Districts Free/Reduced Lunch  
● Partner Districts Special Education  
▲ Partner District English Language Learner

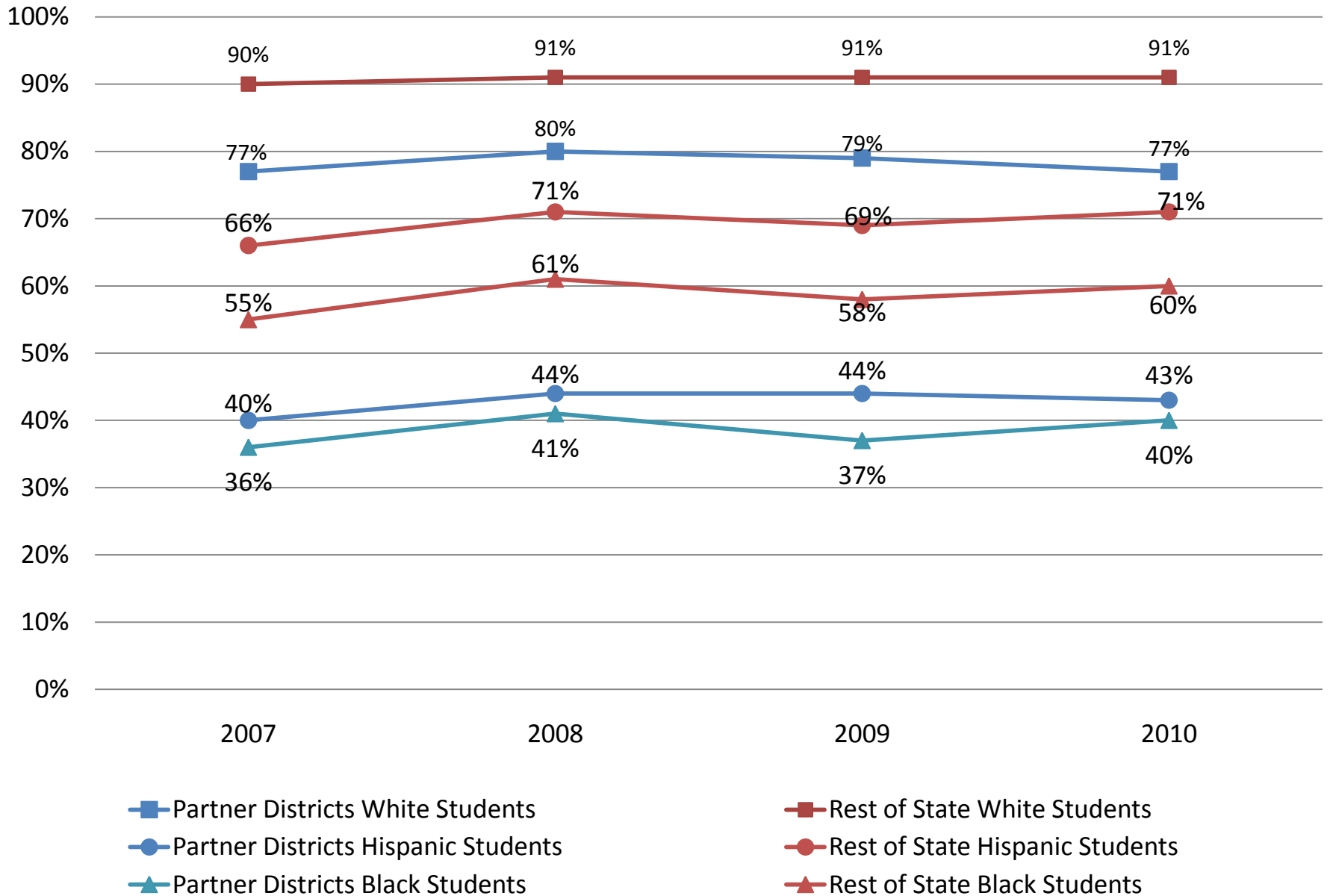
■ Rest of State Free/Reduced Lunch  
● Rest of State Special Education  
▲ Rest of State English Language Learner

## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on CAPT

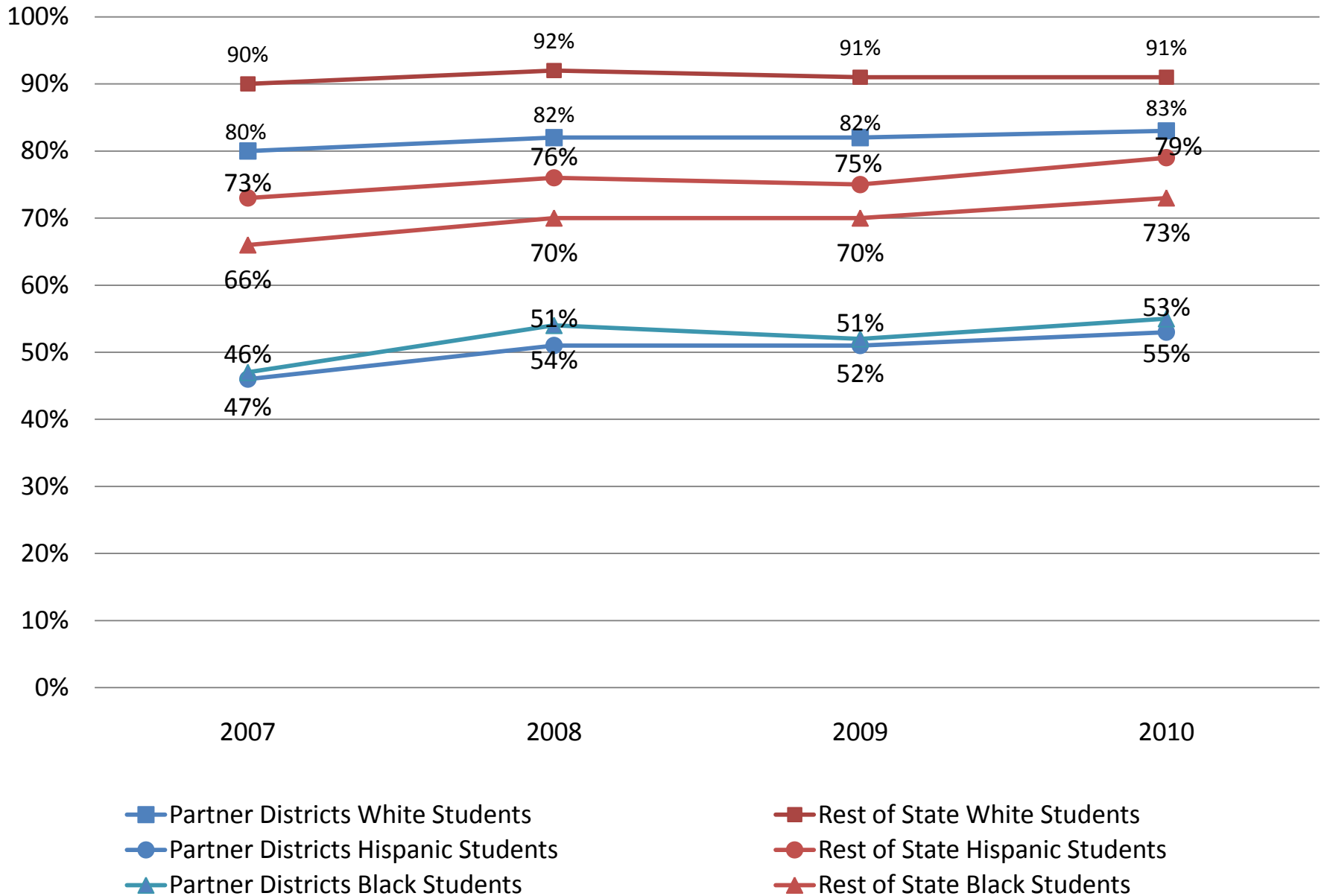




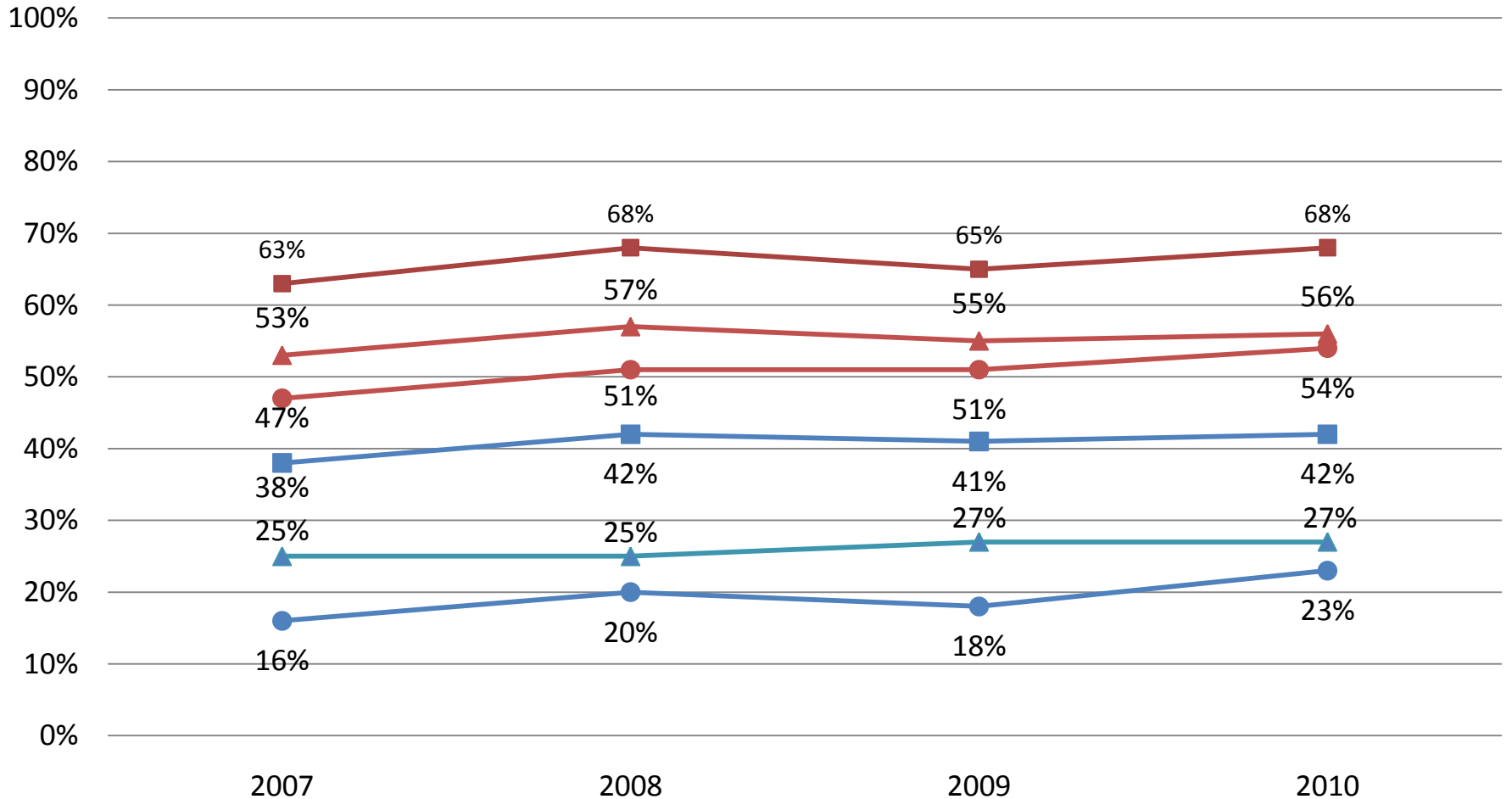
## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on Math CAPT by Race



## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on Reading CAPT by Race



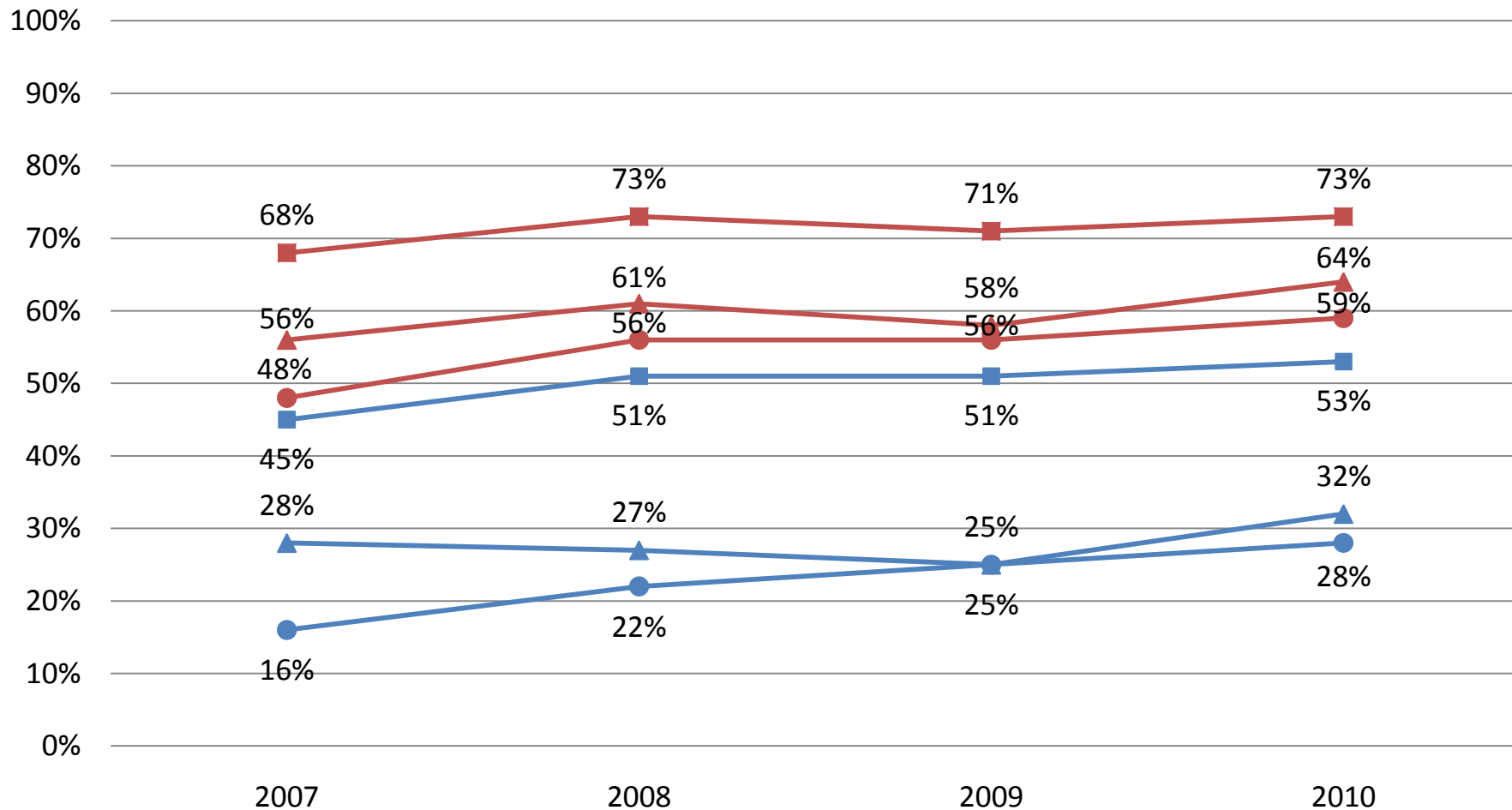
## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on Math CAPT by Free/Reduced Lunch, Special Education and English Language Learner Status



■ Partner Districts Free/Reduced Lunch  
● Partner Districts Special Education  
▲ Partner District English Language Learner

■ Rest of State Free/Reduced Lunch  
● Rest of State Special Education  
▲ Rest of State English Language Learner

## Percent of Students At/Above Proficient on Reading CAPT by Free/Reduced Lunch, Special Education and English Language Learner Status



■ Partner Districts Free/Reduced Lunch  
● Partner Districts Special Education  
▲ Partner District English Language Learner

■ Rest of State Free/Reduced Lunch  
● Rest of State Special Education  
▲ Rest of State English Language Learner