THE RESULTS OF THE 2007 MARYLAND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT IN BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Results of the 2007 Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for elementary and middle schools were released in June and are summarized in this report. In every elementary grade (3-5), more than 78% of Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) students achieved proficiency or advanced level in reading and mathematics. In all other grades (6-8), more than 66% of students achieved that level in reading and more than 55% achieved that level in mathematics.

In addition, all elementary schools met the target for Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading, and all but two schools met the target for mathematics, with each of these two schools missing the target for only one subgroup. Furthermore, most middle and high schools met the AYP standards established by the state. Most impressive were grades 3 and 4, where more than 71% of students in every subgroup except one, scored at or above proficient in both reading and mathematics. In all other grades, performance on the Alt-MSA was exemplary where all students in all subgroups met the AYP targets in both reading and mathematics.

Future Direction

The success of BCPS students is a direct result of dedicated school and central office staff who are committed to careful planning and maintaining a willingness to find ways to improve. As school and central office staff members analyze the latest test scores, continued planning for improvement will occur so that the system can take the necessary steps toward helping every student meet even higher levels of success. This collective effort not only requires disciplined management of plans and change, but also calls for the careful alignment of work between all departments and schools in the system. This cross-functional teamwork of staff in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Area Offices, and the Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment, and other operational departments are essential for the successful implementation of the school system's strategic plan, *Blueprint for Progress*.

Introduction

The Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) are designed to meet the federal standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The MSA is comprised of a reading test and mathematics test given to students in grades 3 through 8 in the spring of each school year. The test has been given since 2004, and is comprised of both norm referenced items from either the Stanford 10 or Terra Nova assessment and criterion referenced items based on the standards established within the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC). The assessments contain both selected response and constructed response items. In addition, the federal requirement for high school testing is met through the administration of end-of-course assessments, given several times throughout the year, in Algebra/Data Analysis and English II. These are criterion-referenced tests, based upon the standards established within the Maryland Core Learning Goals,

which also include both selected and constructed response items. All of the tests listed have identified score ranges that classify a student's performance as basic, proficient, or advanced for that content area and grade. The expectation set forth by NCLB is that every student (100%) will score in either the proficient or advanced range by the year 2014.

Another NCLB requirement is that all students participate in testing, including special education students working towards a Certificate of Completion instead of a High School Diploma. To meet this requirement, certificate-bound students in grades 3-8 and 10 participate in the Alternative Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA). This alternative assessment requires that students have 10 individualized objectives both in reading and mathematics that they will strive to meet during the school year. To this end, schools are required to submit a portfolio for each student containing artifacts that demonstrate mastery of each objective. This portfolio is then scored to determine if students achieved a basic, proficient, or advanced level of mastery. In order to achieve a proficient level, students must master 60% of all objectives in a subject; 90% will result in an advanced score.

When scores for MSA and Alt-MSA are first released by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), they are first presented according to proficiency level. Each school and school system receives scores indicating the percent of students in each grade and content that were able to score at or above proficient. These percentages are presented for the total student population and for each student group based on race/ethnicity and special services received. These scores become part of the calculation used to determine whether schools and systems meet the standards for AYP, another mandate of NCLB.

In order to comply with the mandated NCLB target of 100% of students scoring proficient or above in both reading and mathematics by the year 2014, each state developed Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) to monitor the progress of each system and school in moving toward that goal. Maryland developed baseline AMOs after the first year's administration of MSA and Alt-MSA in each grade. These targets, which vary by content and grade level, are outlined in Table 1. Each year, the AMOs increase to ensure that schools are on course to meet the 2014 target. In Maryland, the total population and every student group with five or more students must reach the AMOs in a given year in order to achieve AYP. These student groups include African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, White, students classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals System (FARM) services, and students receiving special education services. When calculating the percent proficient for AYP purposes, only the scores of every student who was enrolled in the school continuously from a date on or prior to September 30 through the testing period are included; thus the number of students included in the proficiency reports and the number of students included in AYP calculations are not always the same.

Table 1: Annual Measurable Objectives for the Maryland School Assessment

Level	Reading			Mathematics		
	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Grades 3-5	62.5%	67.2%	71.8%	58.8%	63.9%	69.1%
Grades 6-8	61.5%	66.3%	71.1%	42.9%	50.0%	57.2%
Grades 9-12	45.3%	52.2%	59.0%	29.8%	38.6%	47.3%

In addition to meeting the reading and mathematics AMOs, each system and school is required to meet one academically related target in order to achieve AYP. For elementary and middle schools, this target is based on school attendance; while for high schools, this target is based upon graduation rate. The target for attendance is 94%. For 2007, the target graduation rate was 83.24%.

MSA Reading Proficiency

Elementary Schools

For 2007, the percentage of BCPS elementary students achieving at the proficient or advanced level increased. When looking at the data for all students (Figure 1), 83.6% of BCPS elementary students scored proficient or advanced on the MSA Reading. This exceeded the elementary school AMO of 67.2% by 16.4 percentage points. Elementary students in all ethnic subgroups also exceeded the 2007 AMO (Figure 2). While special education students in the elementary schools did not meet the AMO as a subgroup in 2007, it should be noted that special education students in elementary school had higher proficiency levels than in any other year of the MSA program (Figure 3).

Figure 1: MSA Reading - Percent Proficient or Advanced

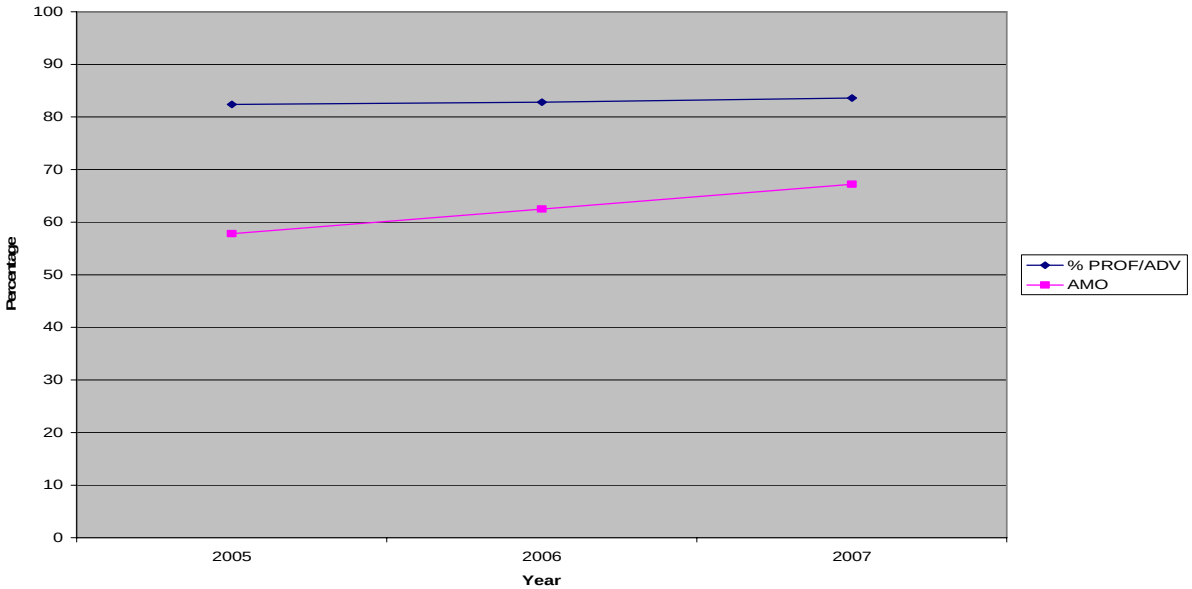


Figure 2: MSA Reading - Percent Proficient or Advanced by Ethnicity

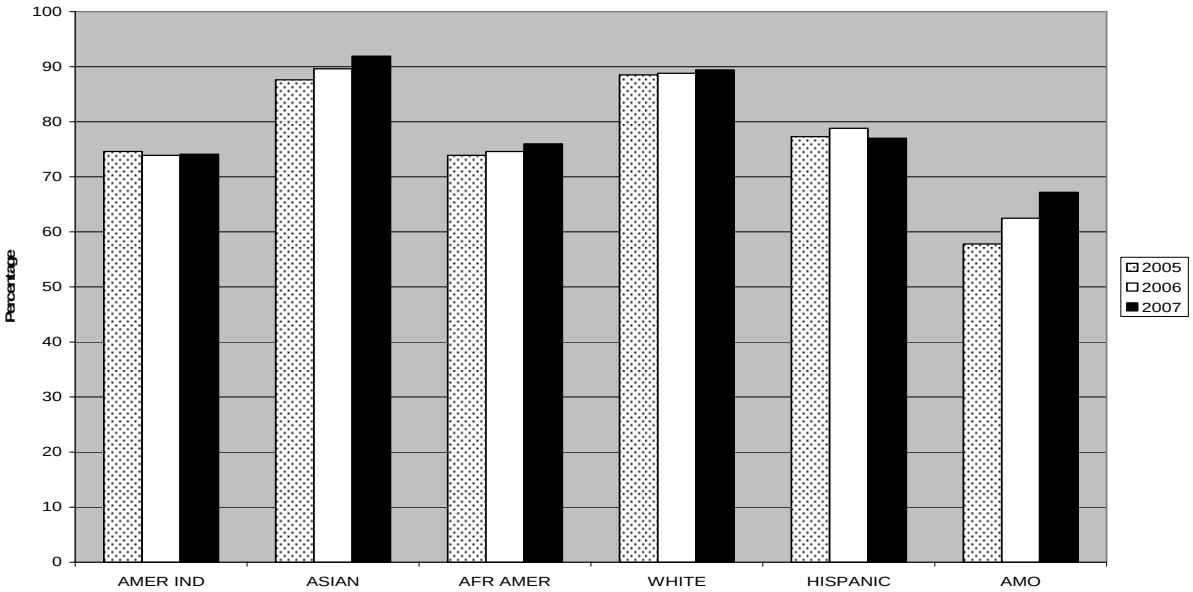
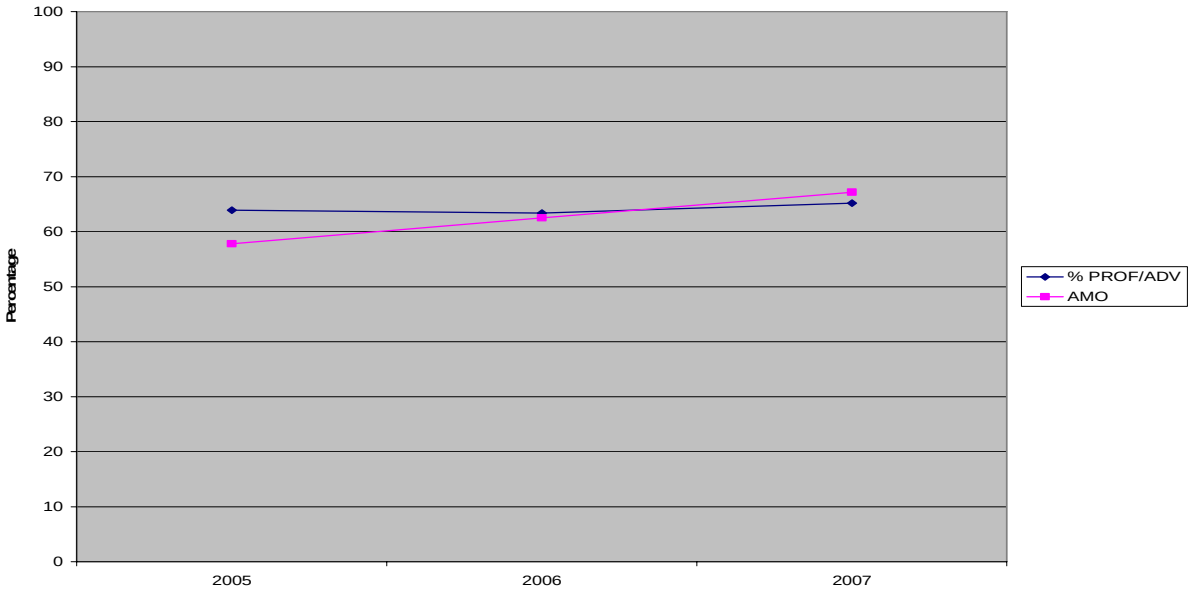


Figure 3: MSA Reading - Percent Proficient or Advanced For Special Education Students



Middle Schools

Figures 4 through 6 illustrate that middle schools in BCPS continued to exceed the academic performance demands set forth by MSDE. Middle school students exceeded the AMO by 4.8 percentage points. In addition, the Asian and White subgroups exceeded the 2007 AMO. While the LEP students did not meet the AMO, it is still important to note that since 2005, the percentage of students scoring proficient or above has increased by more than 11 percentage points.

Figure 4: MSA Reading - Percent Proficient or Advanced

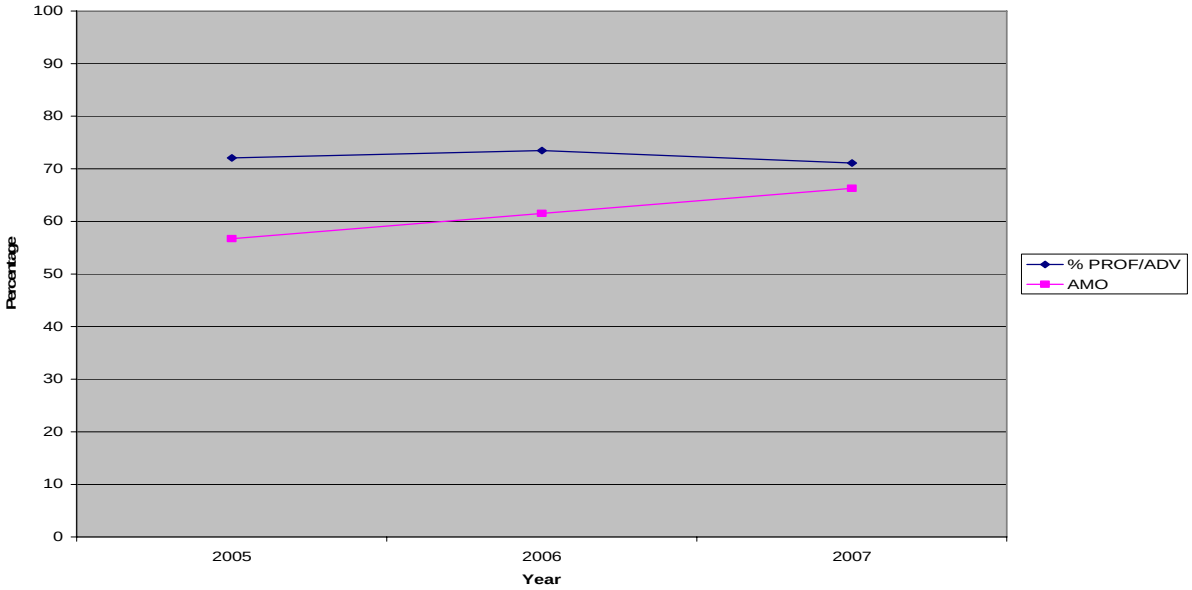


Figure 5: MSA Reading Percent Proficient or Advanced by Ethnicity

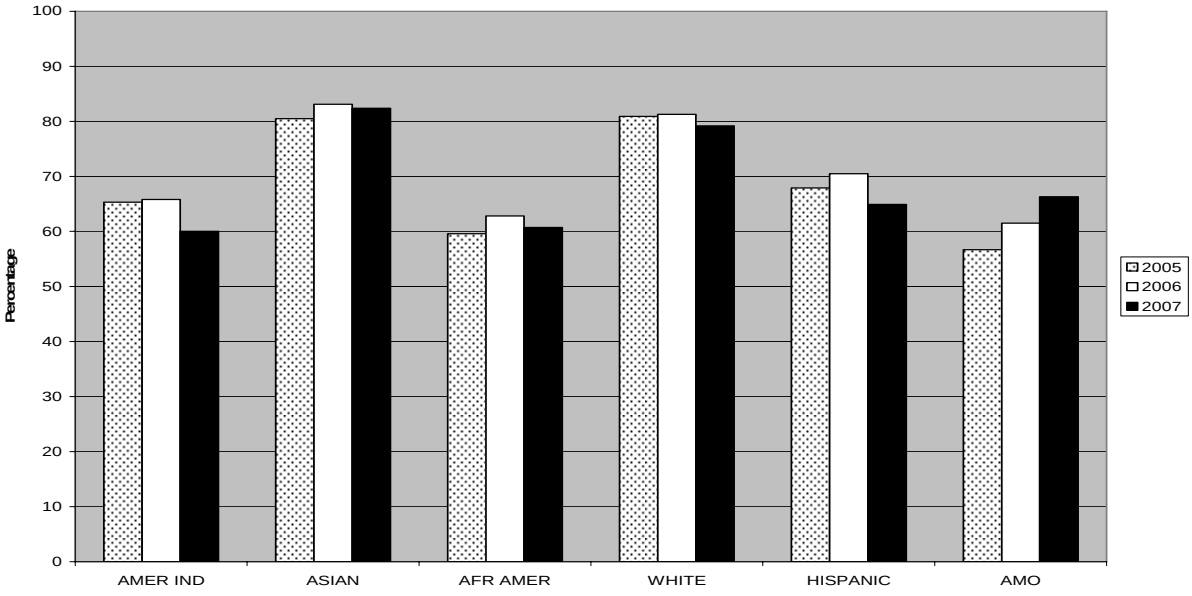
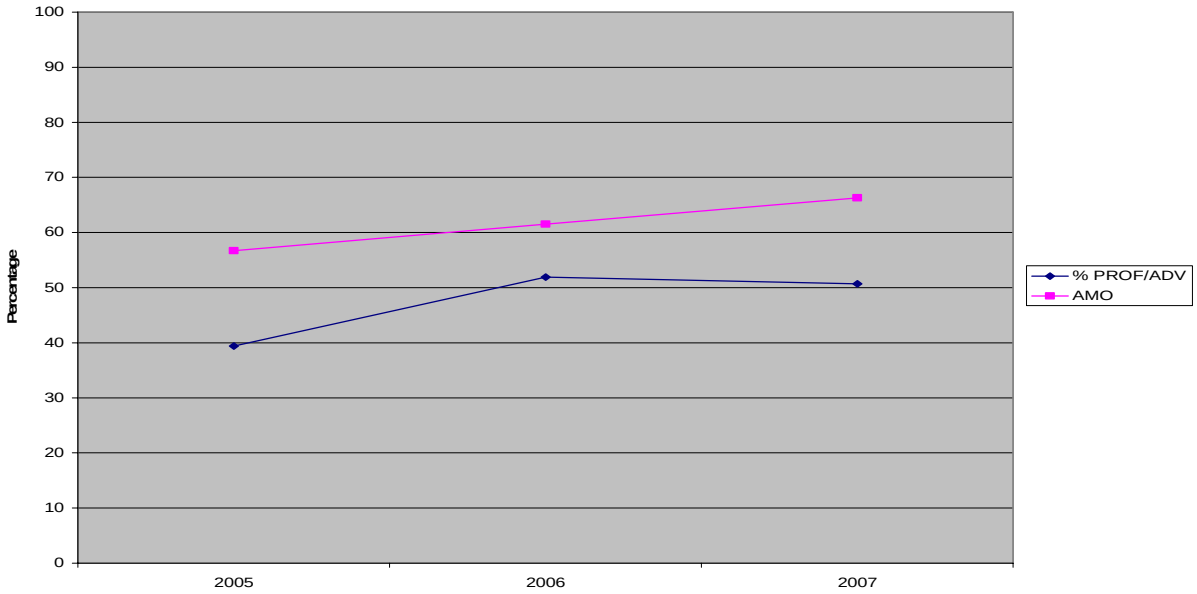


Figure 6: MSA Reading - Percent Proficient or Advanced For LEP Students



High Schools

Figures 7 through 9 show the percentage of students that passed the English HSA by scoring at or above the proficiency level set by MSDE. The total group of students exceeded the AMO by 17.4 percentage points. As in elementary school, students in all ethnic subgroups also exceeded the 2007 AMO (Figure 8). The population receiving FARM services not only exceeded the AMO for the first time, they had a marked increase in proficiency rate, with an increase of 19.0 percentage points since 2005.

Figure 7: HSA English - Percent Proficient or Advanced

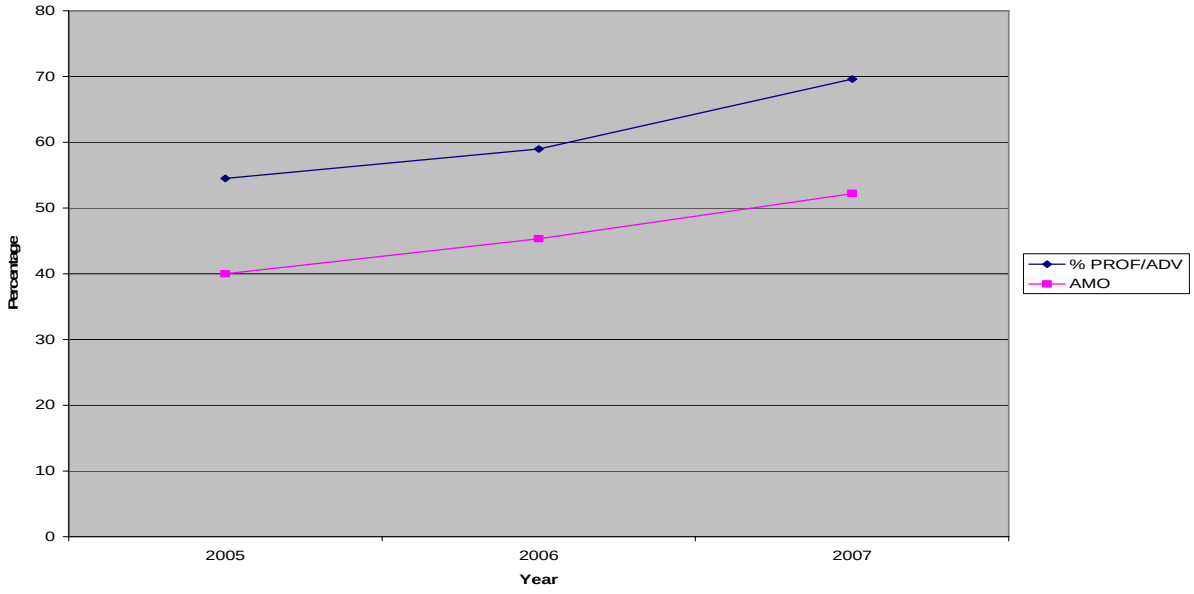


Figure 8: HSA English - Percent Proficient or Advanced by Race/Ethnicity

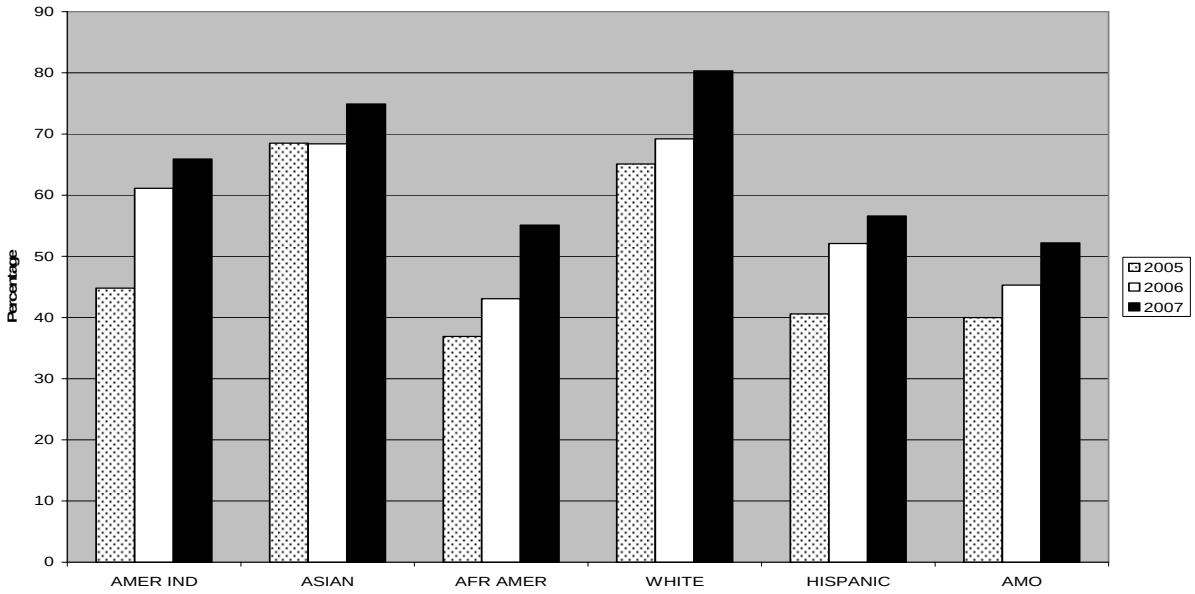
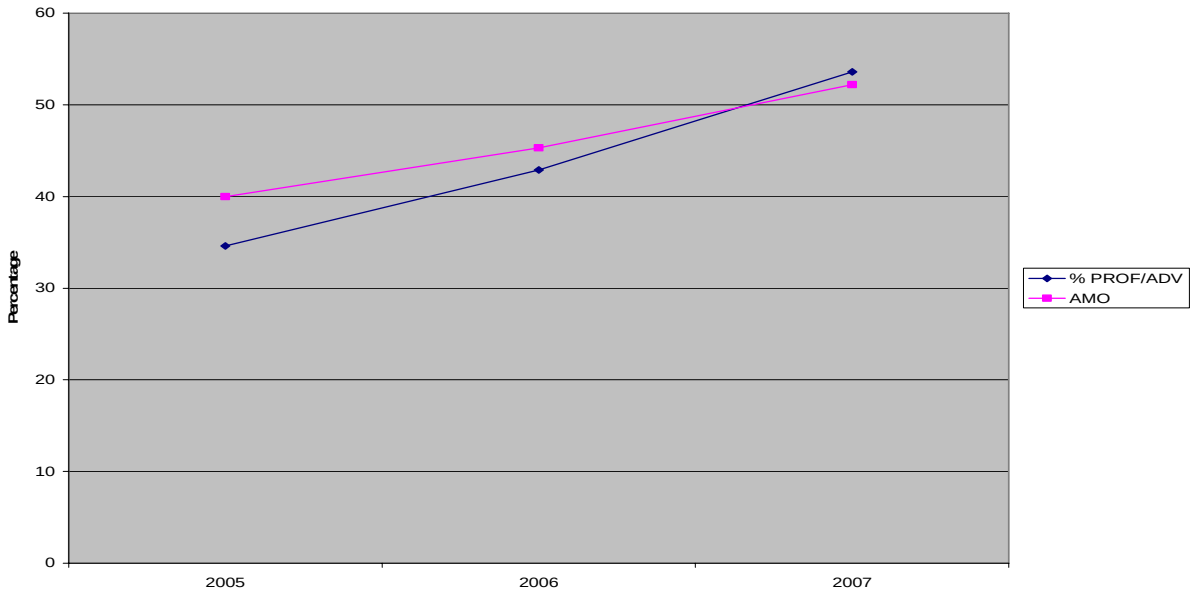


Figure 9: HSA English - Percent Proficient or Advanced For Students Receiving FARM Services



MSA Mathematics Proficiency

Elementary Schools

Figures 10 through 12 present performance by BCPS students on the MSA Mathematics test. The number of students achieving proficiency continues to improve. When looking at the data for all students, BCPS exceeded the elementary school AMO by 19.5 percentage points. In addition, students in all ethnic subgroups exceeded the 2007 AMO. It is also important to note that each of these subgroups, showed an increase in the number of students scoring proficient or above from 2006 to 2007. One area targeted for improvement within BCPS is the Special Education subgroup. This group showed an increase of 8.9 percentage points since 2005.

Figure 10: MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced

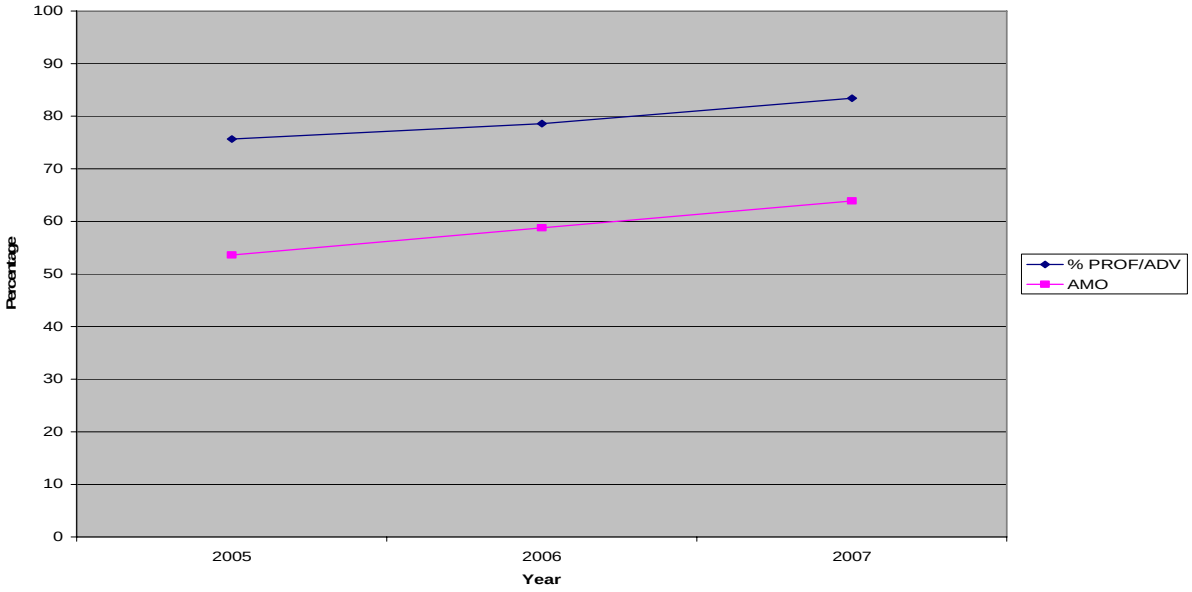


Figure 11: MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced by Race/Ethnicity

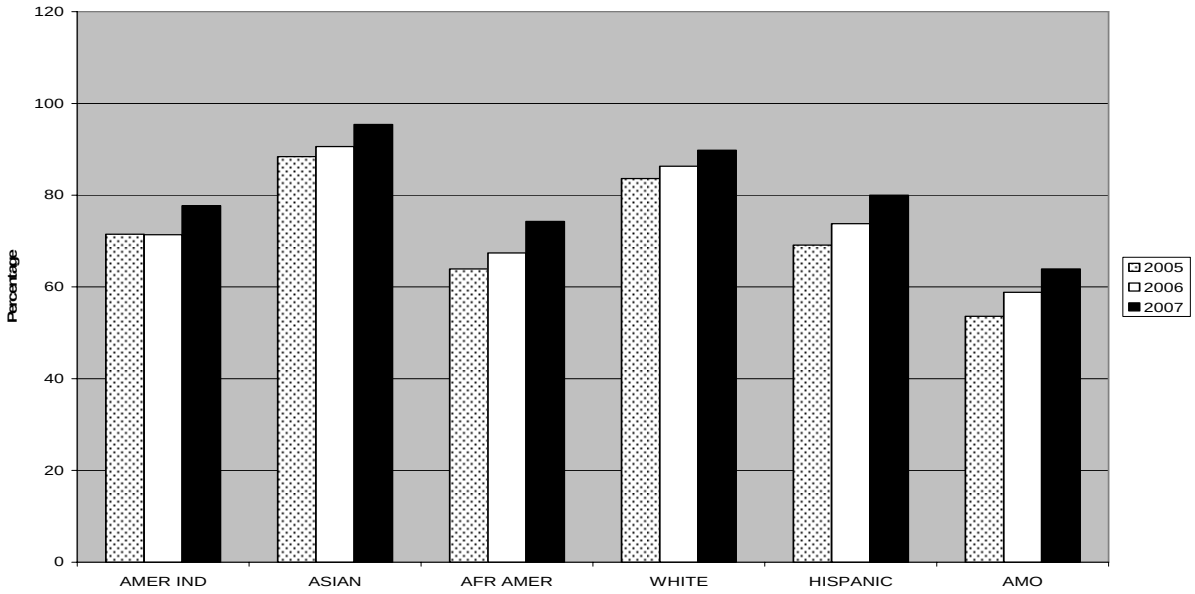
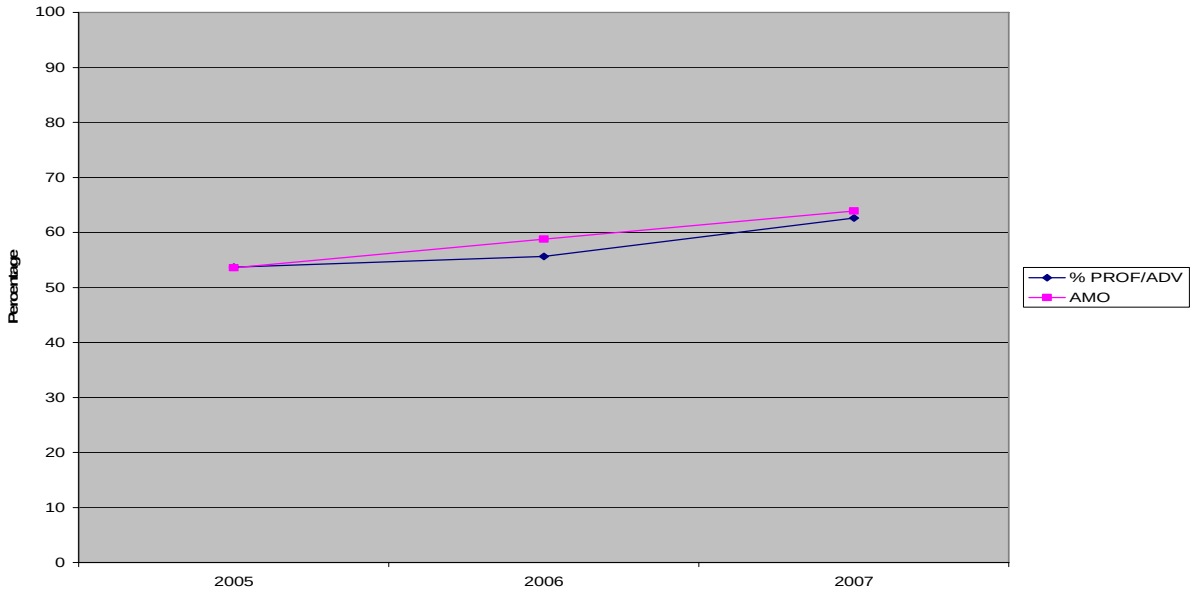


Figure 12: MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced For Special Education Students



Middle Schools

Figures 13 through 16 illustrate the performance of middle school students on the MSA Mathematics test. The percentage of middle school students achieving proficient or advanced scores on the MSA also continues to increase. Overall, the students in BCPS exceeded the AMO by 10 percentage points. In addition, the Asian, Hispanic, and White subgroups exceeded the AMO. While special education students and students receiving FARM services did meet the AMO for 2007, it should be noted that proficiency rates for both of these subgroups increased since 2005.

Figure 13: MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced

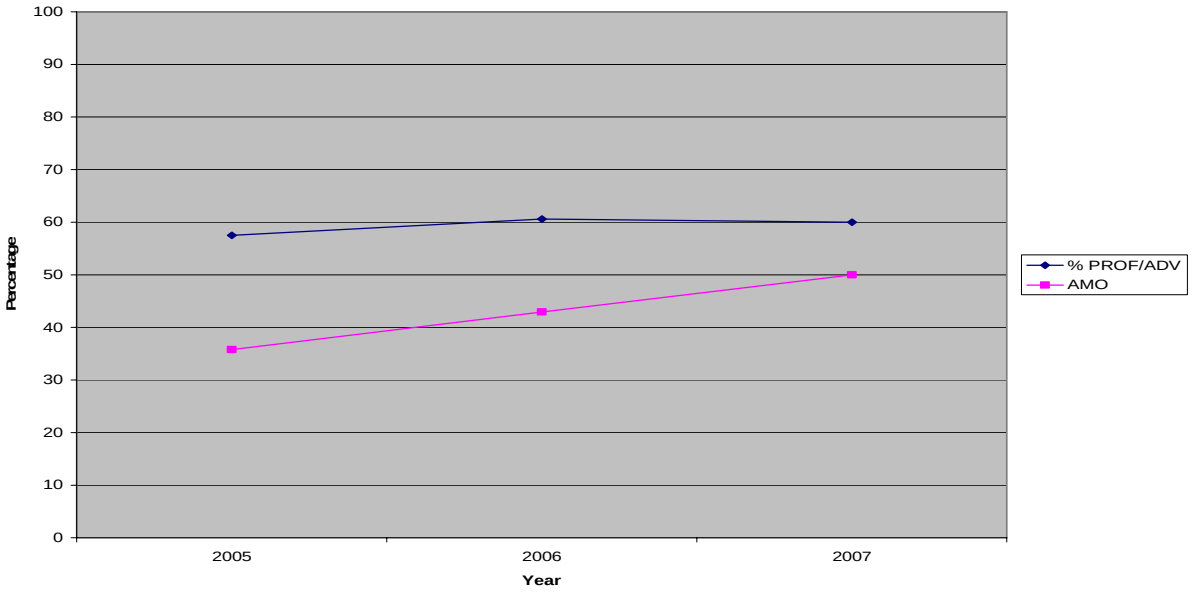


Figure 14: MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced by Race/Ethnicity

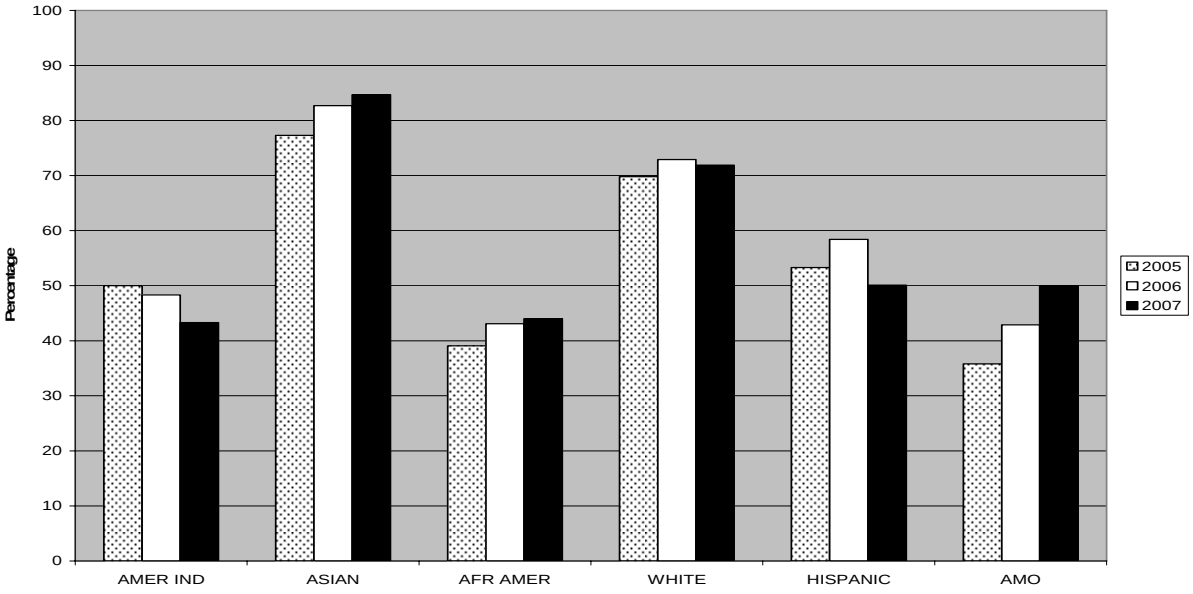


Figure 15: MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced For Special Education Students

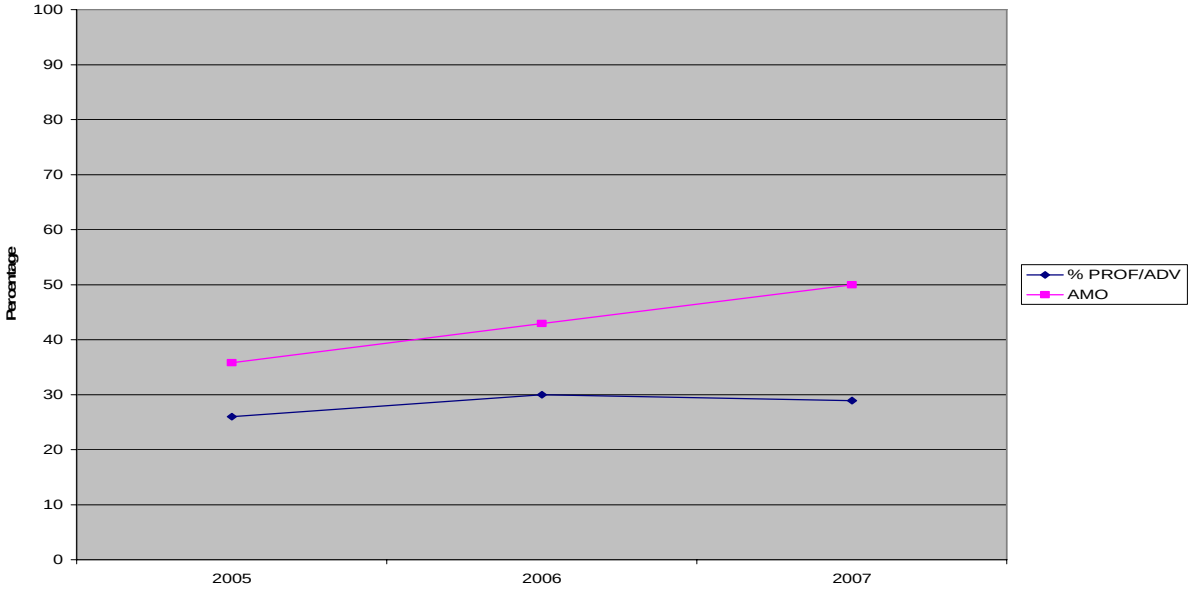
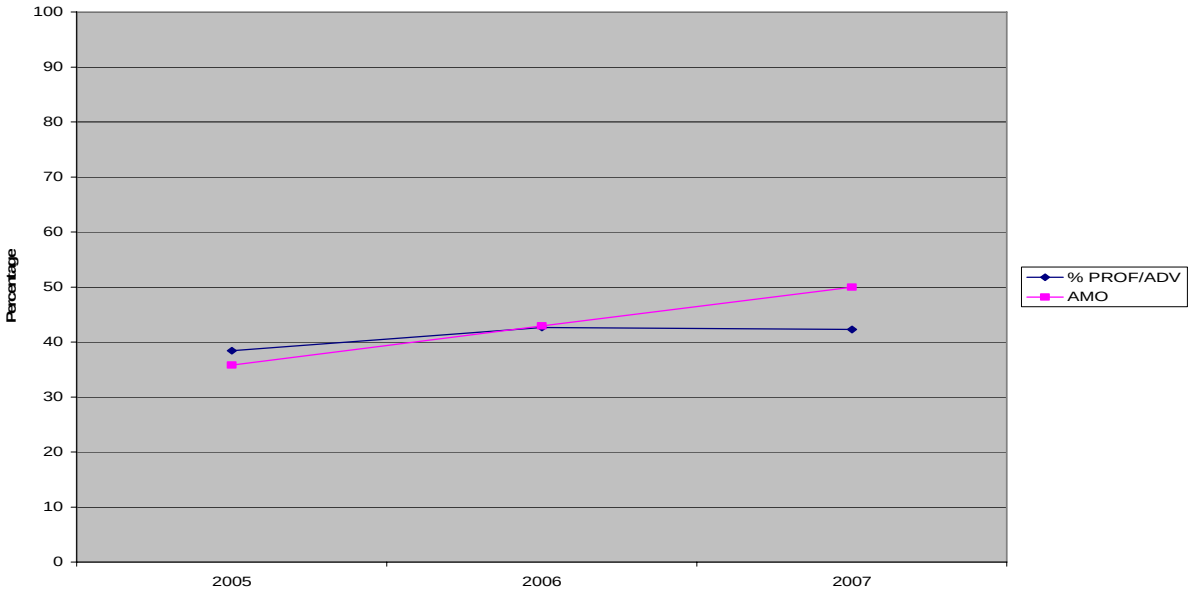


Figure 16: MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced For Students Receiving FARM Services



High Schools

At the high school level, the percentage of all students who scored at or above the proficiency level (passed) the Algebra/Data Analysis test exceeded the AMO by 25.7 percentage points. In 2007, all ethnic subgroups also exceeded the AMO in this subject. Figures 17 and 18 illustrate these data.

Figure 17: HSA Algebra/Data Analysis - Percent Proficient or Advanced

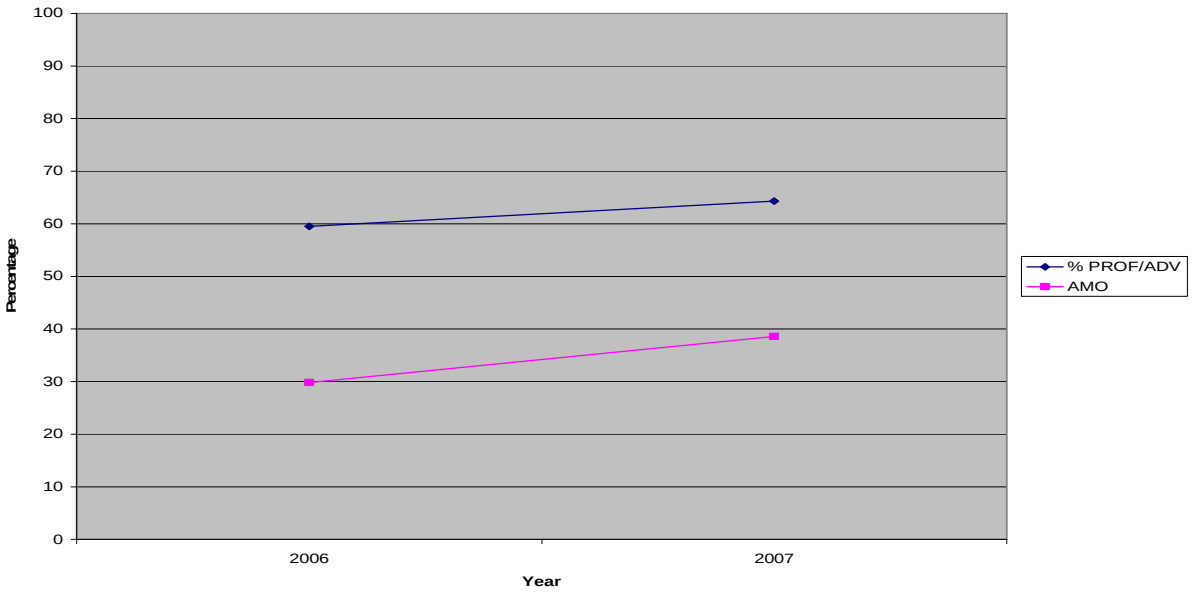
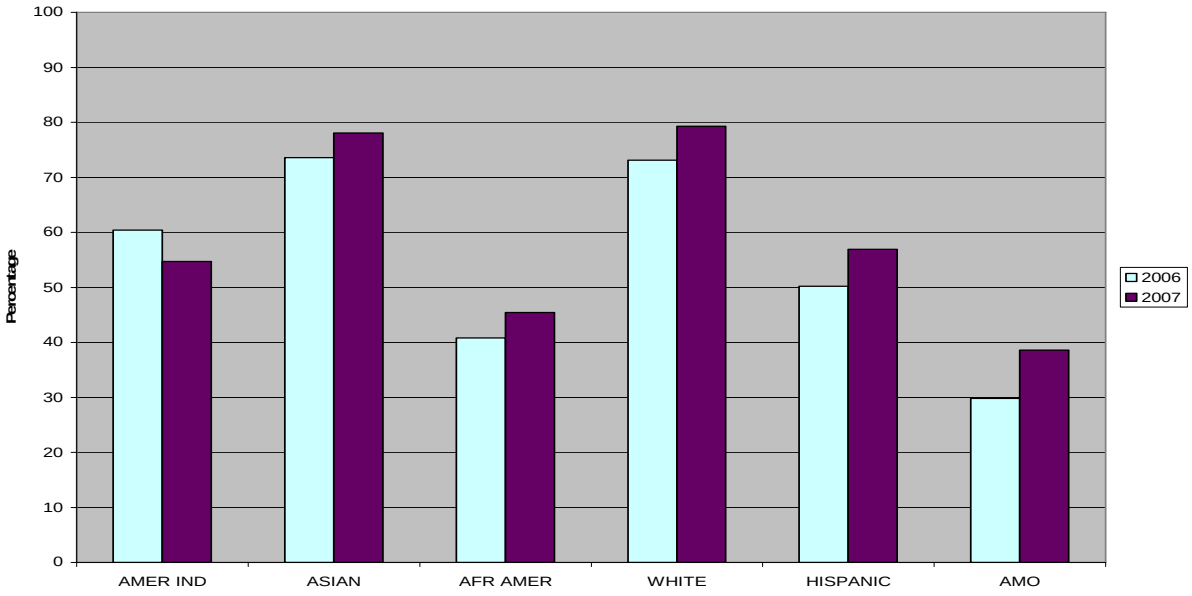


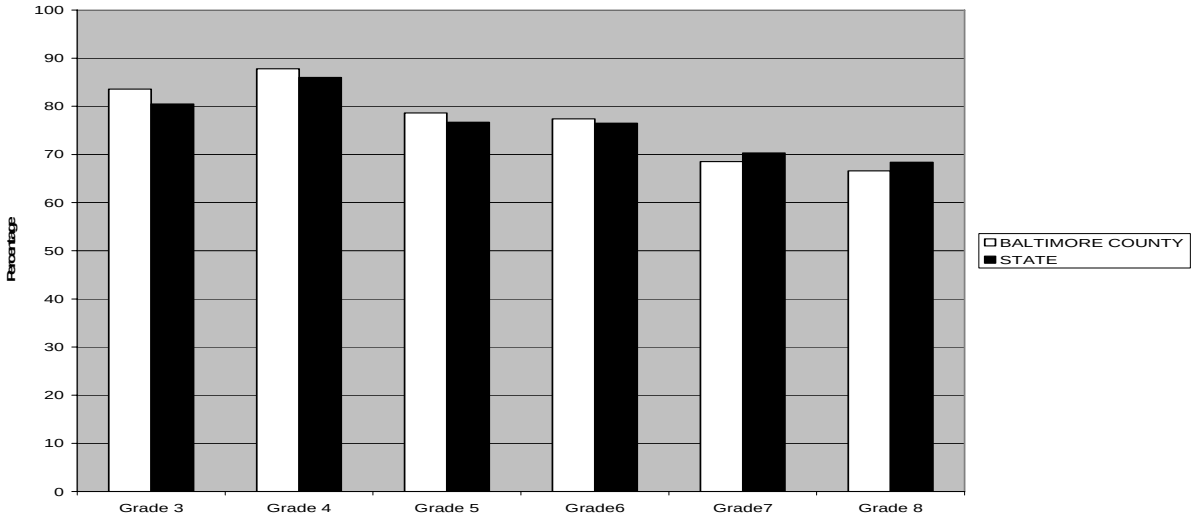
Figure 18: HSA Algebra/Data Analysis - Percent Proficient or Advanced by Race/Ethnicity



BCPS Performance on MSA in Comparison to the State

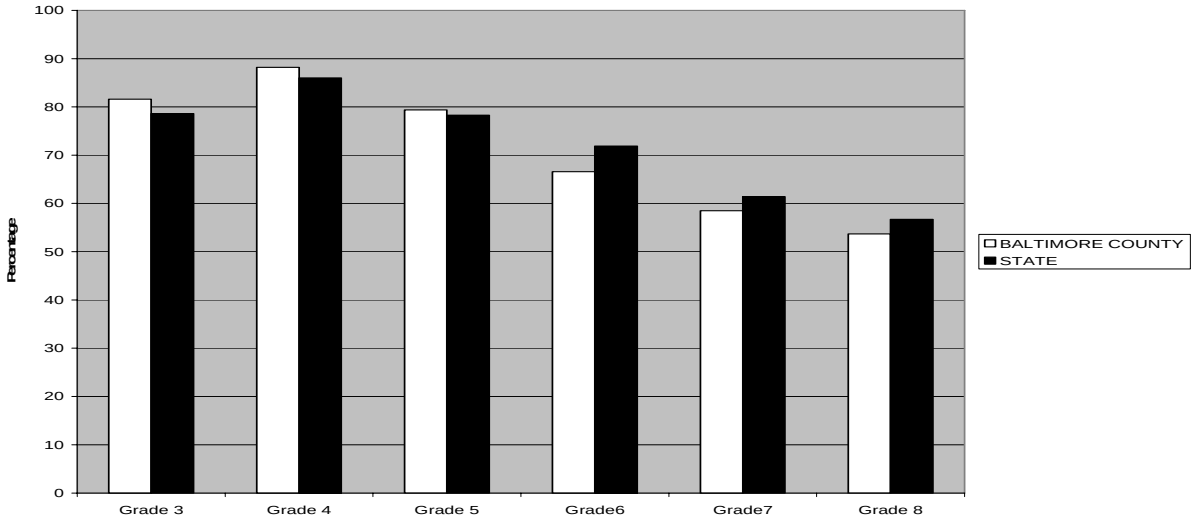
The standards set by the state for MSA are calculated by combining the performance of students who score in the proficient and advanced categories on the tests. When compared to how the state as a whole performed, BCPS students in grades 3 through 6 outperformed the state in reading proficiency (Figure 19). Students in grades 7 and 8 do not outperform the state in reading; however, they differ from the state proficiency percentage by less than 2 percentage points.

Figure 19: MSA Reading - Percent Proficient or Advanced
Baltimore County vs. State



In Mathematics, BCPS students in grades 3, 4, and 5 outperformed the state by as much as 3 percentage points as shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20: MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced
Baltimore County vs. State



Proficiency Results for 2007 Alt-MSA

The Alt-MSA is administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the regular MSA, even when accommodations are provided. The performance of these students is included in the calculation of AYP. The performance of the BCPS students who completed the Alt-MSA in 2007 is presented in Figures 21 and 22. To achieve proficient status on the Alt-MSA, a student must master at least 60% of the appropriate mastery objectives in reading and mathematics. Students who achieve master of 90% or more of these objectives receive a score of advanced. When considering the performance of student groups on Alt-MSA, it is important to remember that all group sizes are small. Despite this fact, reading and mathematics achievement at all grade levels met or exceeded the AMO standards set by the state.

Figure 21: Alt-MSA Reading - Percent Proficient or Advanced
Grades 3 to 10

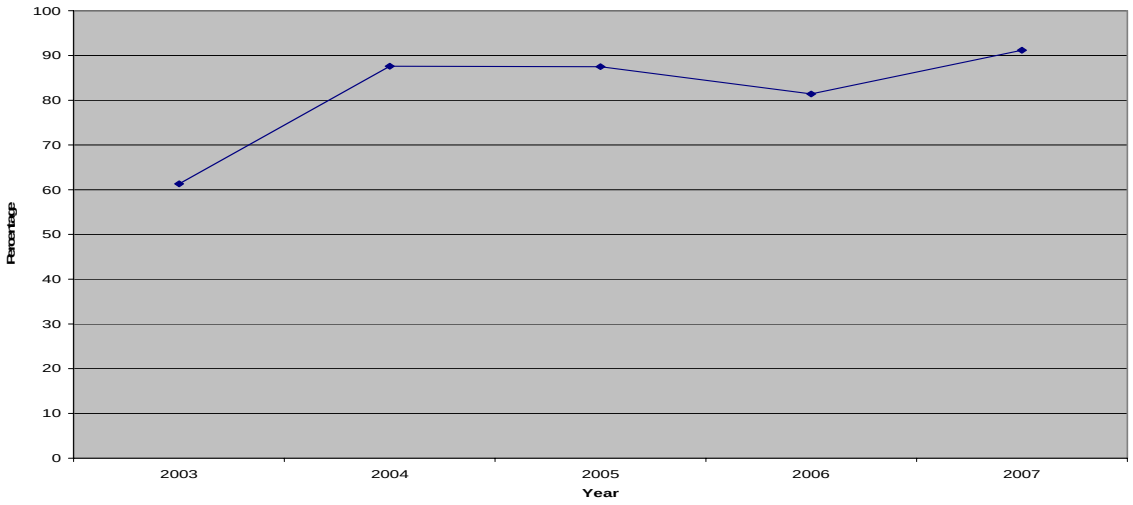
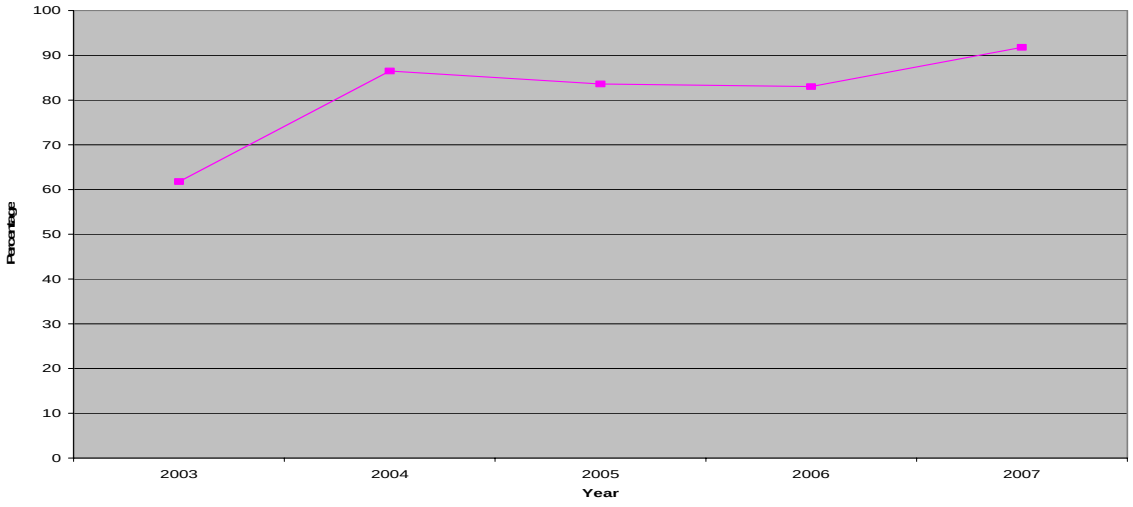


Figure 22: Alt-MSA Mathematics - Percent Proficient or Advanced
Grades 3 to 10



Summary and Next Steps

In Baltimore County the schools and the system as a whole demonstrated impressive performance on the state accountability program for elementary and middle schools in 2007. This performance is a tribute to the efforts of students, parents and staff who worked diligently to realize the vision set forth in NCLB as well as the *BCPS Blueprint for Progress* and *Master Plan*. Overall, BCPS elementary, middle and high schools met or exceeded the AMO target for 2007. In addition, this target was met for the majority of subgroups as well. Furthermore, when looking at the trends in the data, BCPS has evidenced continued commitment to growth and improvement. While these efforts are to be commended, BCPS must continue to strive toward the goal of having all students reach proficient or advanced levels by the year 2014. To do this, continued effort must be made to have each and every school meet the goal of AYP. To review details for each BCPS school, please refer to the "Data Reports: AYP, HSA, and MSA Results Binder for School Year 2006-2007" or the Maryland report card website at http://www.mdreportcard.org/.

As a system, BCPS has already implemented many strategies to support the growth and success of students taking the MSA and Alt-MSA. These strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Providing differentiated instructional support to department chairpersons and classroom teachers based on identified needs by content area,
2. Emphasizing the power of professional development and cross-functional collaboration,
3. Providing easy access to student level data on multiple measures via the Articulated Instructional Model (AIM) and other curricular materials, and
4. Providing multiple opportunities for performance measurement and program evaluation.

BCPS must continue to move forward to foster an environment of continuous growth and improvement for both students and staff. All staff members in various departments within the system are committed to working together with staff in other departments and in the schools to meet the varying needs of the diverse student population of Baltimore County.

Finally, it is important to note that the 2007 MSA results are but one measure used to gauge the performance of this school system. Other data will help to provide a more comprehensive picture. In particular, this fall's update to the *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan* will provide a more thorough examination of the school system's overall performance in the 2006-2007 academic year.