



## OAKS Results in King School 2010/11–2012/13

Evidence from Analyses of Test Scores and  
Interviews with Staff Members

March 2014



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Interviews with Staff Members

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March 2014



## About Education Northwest

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Founded as a nonprofit corporation in 1966, Education Northwest builds capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development. This report is submitted at the request of Portland Public Schools.

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## Executive Summary

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Portland Public Schools (PPS) requested that Education Northwest analyze results on the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) and interview staff members at King School to add to knowledge about the OAKS achievement trend in the school from 2010/11 to 2012/13.

In conducting the study, Education Northwest analyzed a file of test results made available by PPS. The file contained enrollment and demographic information about students who took the OAKS and their test results in reading/literature and mathematics for 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13. In addition, the file contained results for each attempt students made at the assessments. This data structure allowed Education Northwest to compare achievement on first attempts and on re-takes across subjects, schools, and years. More specifically, Education Northwest examined gains in scale scores and achievement levels from first attempt through retests in mathematics and reading/literature for King students and students in other K–8 schools in 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13.

In addition to analyzing OAKS results, Education Northwest reviewed assessment procedures prescribed by the Oregon Department of Education and conducted semi-structured interviews with King staff members. The interviews were designed to gather perceptions concerning conditions in the school from 2010/11 to 2012/13 that could be related to OAKS achievement over that time and to obtain explanations for the increase in scores in 2011/12.

***Key Finding 1: The increase in the percentage of King students who met the state standard for proficiency in mathematics and reading/literature from 2010/11 to 2011/12 was strongly associated with higher rates of meeting the standard on retests after not meeting the standard on first attempts, compared to results from 2010/11 and 2012/13.***

- King School had the lowest percentage of students meeting the standard on their first attempt among all K-8 schools in PPS each year from 2010/11 to 2012/13.
- The proportion of King students meeting the standard on their first attempt at the reading test increased each year from 2010/11 to 2012/13. The proportion of King students meeting the standard in mathematics on their first attempt increased from 2010/11 to 2011/12, but decreased from 2011/12 to 2012/13.
- Each year, and in each subject, the K-8 schools varied considerably in sizes of gains in the percentage of students meeting the standard from first attempts to retests.
- Each year and in each subject, one or more schools stood out from the rest in gains in the percentage of students meeting the standard from first attempts to retests.

- The percentage of students meeting the standard on their first attempt in mathematics decreased in King School from 2011/12 to 2012/13, but increased in other K-8 schools.
- Increases in the percentage of King students meeting the standard after retesting were much larger in both subjects in 2011/12 than in the other years, and the increases were much larger in King School than in other K-8 schools.
- Across all K-8 schools, average gains in the percentage of students meeting the standard from first attempt through retests were generally smaller in 2012/13 than in the other years. Among other reasons, this may have occurred because success rates on first attempts were higher in 2012/13 than in other years and because procedures for retests changed from 2010/11 to 2012/13.

***Key Finding 2: In some K-8 schools, substantial percentages of students who met the standard on their first attempt were retested, particularly in 2010/11 and 2011/12.***

- Schools varied widely in the percentage of students who met the standard on their first attempt who were subsequently retested.
- In 2010/11 and 2011/12, retesting students who met the standard on their first attempt was common. In fact, in a number of schools, more than half of students who met standard on their first attempt were subsequently retested.
- Retesting students who met the standard on their first attempt was far less common in 2012/13, but did occur, and some schools retested students who met the standard more frequently than others.

***Key Finding 3: In 2011/12, King students who did not meet the standard on their first attempt gained, on average, substantially more on retests than their counterparts in other K-8 schools. In the other years, King students showed retest gains that were similar to the gains of students in other K-8 schools.***

- In 2011/12 at each grade level and across all grade levels, King students who did not meet the standard on their first attempt gained substantially more scale score points on retests than did students in other K-8 schools, including schools with demographics similar to King.
- In 2010/11 and 2012/13, King students made scale score gains on retests similar to gains by students in other K-8 schools, including schools with demographics similar to King.
- In 2011/12, King students went from an average achievement level of “low” on their first attempt to “meeting or nearly meeting” the standard on retests. Achievement-level gains for students at King that year were larger than for students in other K-8 schools, including schools with demographics similar to King. In other years, gains in achievement levels from first attempts to retests were relatively similar for King students and students in other K-8 schools.

***Key Finding 4: Interviewees emphasized “drastic” differences in the testing environment between the years, especially between 2011/12 and 2012/13.***

- Differences noted by interviewees included changes to the external scrutiny of the school, the testing climate experienced by staff members and students, supervision of students during testing, accommodations provided to students during testing, training and guidance to school staff members related to test administration, and the number of retests allowed for students.

***Key Finding 5: Despite initial skepticism, King school staff members believed the testing accommodations offered in 2011/12 were valid because they had been sanctioned by an external expert.***

***Key Finding 6: The Oregon Department of Education’s 2012/13 Accommodations Manual did not introduce new information about read aloud accommodations; however, understanding by King staff members of acceptable accommodations shifted between 2011/12 and 2012/13.***

- In 2011/12, school staff members followed an external expert’s interpretation of acceptable accommodations.
- In 2012/13, school staff members followed the district’s interpretation, as communicated via district criteria for testing for that year.

***Key Finding 7: Interviewees noted changes to the teaching environment that may have affected the quality of instruction between the years, especially between 2011/12 and 2012/13.***

- Differences identified by interviewees included turnover among teachers and support staff members, the long-term absence of an experienced teacher, changes in grade-level assignments and re-organizations, changes in the number of leveled classes, and changes in the number of intervention classes.

***Key Finding 8: Evidence from analyses of test results and from interviews with King staff members casts doubt on several explanations that have been advanced for the test score trend in King School from 2010/11 through 2012/13.***

- The demographics of the test-taking population at King School did not change substantially from 2010/11 to 2012/13. Furthermore, while average enrollment days were slightly lower for King compared to other K-8 schools, average absences were relatively similar. As a result, changes in attendance and demographics are unlikely explanations for the increase in OAKS scores at King in 2011/12.
- Results for the population of K–8 students who were tested in each year (“intact” population) were very similar to the overall results, with a large increase in the

percentage of King students meeting the standards from 2010/11 to 2011/12, followed by lower rates of meeting the standards in 2012/13. This is additional evidence that the 2011/12 achievement results for King School probably did not arise mainly from changes in the student population.

- On average, King students who did not meet the standard on their first attempt did not retest substantially more times than students in other K-8 schools who did not meet the standard on their first attempt. Furthermore, the average number of retakes for King students was actually slightly smaller for 2011/12 than in 2010/11. As a result, the increase in the percentage of King students achieving proficiency in 2011/12 compared to 2010/11 cannot be due to more retesting in 2011/12.

***Key Finding 9: Retesting in 2011/12 clearly contributed to higher achievement in King School in that year compared to 2010/11 and 2012/13. However, neither analysis of test scores nor interviews with school staff members gives a clear answer to why achievement on retests increased so dramatically in 2011/12 compared to the other years.***



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## Acknowledgements

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

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## **Background**

Portland Public Schools (PPS) requested Education Northwest to provide additional perspective on Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) achievement trends in King School from 2010/11 to 2012/13. More specifically, PPS requested Education Northwest to analyze student achievement data and interview King staff members to identify conditions associated with the strong performance of King students on OAKS in 2011/12 in contrast to the markedly lower performance in the previous year (2010/11) and the following year (2012/13). In addition, PPS requested Education Northwest to recommend changes in PPS testing practices and steps for future review of testing and test results.

## **Methods**

PPS did not request Education Northwest to repeat earlier PPS studies of the test score trend in King School from 2010/11 to 2012/13, nor were we asked to review the results of those studies or how the studies were carried out. In addition, in conducting the study, Education Northwest did not observe training of test administrators or student testing in King or any other PPS school. The study was limited to descriptive analyses of student-level OAKS data in reading/literature and mathematics for Portland K-8 schools and to gathering perspectives from King staff members concerning conditions in the school and reasons for the changes in achievement. We asked King staff members about accommodations in 2011/12 and 2012/13, but we did not conduct a comprehensive review of instructions given to staff members involved in testing or training of staff members involved in testing. Additional details of the test score analyses and the interviews are provided below.

## **Test Score Analysis**

Education Northwest received a data file from PPS at the end of January 2014. The data were transferred to Education Northwest by secure means. At Education Northwest, the data were stored on a server with access restricted to the researchers and IT staff members assigned to the project.

The file contained enrollment and demographic information about students who took the OAKS and their test results in reading/literature and mathematics for 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13. In addition, the file contained results for each attempt students made at the assessments. This data structure allowed Education Northwest to compare achievement on first attempts and on re-takes across schools and across years. Exploratory analysis suggested a closer look at the frequency and results of retesting. As a result, Education Northwest focused attention on gains in scale scores and achievement levels from first attempt through retests in

mathematics and reading/literature for King students and students in other K-8 schools in 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13.

### **Interviews with King Staff Members**

PPS contacted the school principal and requested that she work with Education Northwest to schedule interviews. Once in communication with the principal, the interviewer asked her to identify current staff members who had been present at the school during 2011/12 and 2012/13, and whose roles made it likely they would have some involvement in, or knowledge of, OAKS testing. The principal identified six individuals; all six subsequently participated in interviews. Two people also participated in follow-up interviews designed to gather additional information about a small number of topics.

Education Northwest used semi-structured interview protocols for both the main interviews and follow-up interviews. The principal received the main interview protocol, including an introduction to the study, and provided it to the six interviewees. Additionally, before the main interview, the interviewer gave an overview of the study that described why the data were being collected, how they would be used, and how they would be reported. The interviewer made clear that interviews were voluntary, could be stopped at any time, and that data gathered would be kept confidential. As is standard with semi-structured protocols, the interviewer began by asking a set of carefully developed questions, but added additional follow-up and clarifying questions as needed throughout the conversation. The research team designed the main interview protocol questions to be open-ended, broad, and free from leading language. Education Northwest designed the follow-up protocol to gather additional information and clarification about topics that emerged during the first round of interviews. More specifically, follow-up interviews addressed accommodations, staff training, and the testing environment. The follow-up protocol also included open-ended questions, but these questions were narrower in focus than the ones in the main interview protocol. Two staff members were approached for follow-up interviews because they had been at the school for the entire duration of the 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13 school years, and thus had more in-depth knowledge about conditions in King over the years. Protocols for the interviews and follow-up interviews appear as appendices.

The interviewer conducted interviews by phone or in person at the school, depending on the availability and preference of each interviewee. The main interviews took place during the first two weeks of March 2014; the follow-up interviews occurred the third week of March. The interviewer took thorough notes during each interview and opted against recording the interviews to ensure free-flowing conversation. After each interview, the interviewer reviewed the notes for accuracy and began categorizing interviewees' responses, where appropriate.

To analyze the interview data, Education Northwest used qualitative data analysis techniques. The interviewer noted themes in the data by coding each interview file using Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software. Next, the interviewer composed analytic memos to further synthesize and refine the themes. While composing analytic memos, the interviewer used Atlas.ti's query tools

to explore the prevalence of different themes and their co-occurrence with other themes. Finally, Education Northwest distilled key findings and related sub-themes.

The interviews included questions about 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13; however, the report includes only findings from the last two school years because some of the interviewees were not in the school in 2010/11 and because the differences between 2011/12 and 2012/13 were more notable than the differences between 2010/11 and 2011/12. In Chapter 3, results are presented for each key finding and associated sub-themes, together with relevant data from 2011/12 and 2012/13. Data are grouped by year to show both coherence within years and highlight contrasts across the two years. When possible, the report includes quotations from interviewees, as captured by the interviewee's notes. To preserve confidentiality, interviewees are not identified in the report by name or by role.

The report ends with recommendations from Education Northwest concerning testing practices and maintaining the integrity of the testing process.





## Chapter 2: Results of Analyses of Test Scores

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### Students Meeting the Standard

*Many students at King met the state standard on retests in 2011/12.*

*The increase in the percentage of King students who met the state standard for proficiency in mathematics and reading/literature from 2010/11 to 2011/12 was strongly associated with higher rates of meeting the standard on retests after not meeting the standard on first attempts, compared to results in 2010/11 and 2012/13.*

- King school had the lowest percentage of students meeting standards on their first attempt among all K-8 schools each year from 2010/11 to 2012/13 (Tables 1 and 2).
- The proportion of King students meeting the standard on their first attempt at the reading/literature test increased each year from 2010/11 to 2012/13 (Table 1). The proportion of King students meeting standard in mathematics on their first attempt increased from 2010/11 to 2011/12 but decreased from 2011/12 to 2012/13 (Table 2).

*Table 1  
Percentage of Students in K-8 Schools Meeting the Standard in Reading/Literature on First Attempt, After All Attempts, and Percentage Point Gain from First Attempt*

School	Percent (Percentage Point Gain)								
	2010/11			2011/12			2012/13		
	First	Total	Gain	First	Total	Gain	First	Total	Gain
Arleta	46	59	(13)	48	61	(12)	59	68	( 9)
Astor	66	79	(13)	67	78	(12)	63	73	(10)
BE-Humboldt	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	43	50	( 8)
Beach	49	58	( 8)	48	62	(14)	57	64	( 7)
Beverly Cleary	84	93	( 9)	81	89	( 9)	87	90	( 3)
Boise-Eliot	43	63	(19)	37	55	(17)	NA	NA	NA
Bridger	38	48	(10)	42	61	(19)	45	51	( 6)
César Chávez	39	46	( 7)	28	39	(10)	33	40	( 7)
Creative Science	67	80	(13)	70	81	(10)	70	81	(11)
Faubion	46	55	( 9)	42	65	(24)	50	59	( 9)
Harrison Park	37	51	(14)	43	63	(20)	41	53	(12)
Hayhurst	75	81	( 7)	76	88	(12)	87	91	( 4)
Humboldt	28	55	(27)	28	63	(35)	NA	NA	NA
Irvington	62	65	( 3)	61	67	( 6)	64	70	( 6)
King	22	31	( 8)	28	77	(49)	34	45	(12)
Laurelhurst	80	88	( 8)	81	91	(10)	84	88	( 5)
Lee	41	53	(12)	47	61	(14)	35	48	(14)
Lent	38	52	(14)	36	51	(14)	41	51	(10)
Marysville	44	53	( 9)	48	64	(16)	53	62	( 9)
Ockley Green	29	44	(14)	31	45	(14)	43	47	( 5)
Peninsula	50	63	(13)	48	62	(14)	56	63	( 7)
Roseway Heights	58	74	(15)	63	74	(10)	71	75	( 5)
Sabin	58	69	(11)	62	80	(18)	74	87	(13)
Scott	37	50	(13)	37	49	(12)	39	44	( 5)
Skyline	77	83	( 6)	74	80	( 6)	78	81	( 3)
Sunnyside Environ	79	83	( 4)	79	88	( 9)	78	82	( 4)
Vernon	34	55	(21)	38	54	(16)	48	56	( 8)
Vestal	40	51	(11)	44	52	( 8)	52	59	( 7)
Winterhaven	94	96	( 2)	92	95	( 3)	91	95	( 4)
Woodlawn	38	50	(12)	27	39	(12)	37	46	( 9)

NA indicates scores not reported because school was reconfigured.

*Note:* Results reported for 2011/12 standards. “First” indicates percent of students meeting standard on their first attempt. “Total” indicates percent of students meeting standard after all attempts. “Gain” is percentage point increase in meeting standard from first attempt through all attempts. All figures are rounded; as a result, Gain may not equal Total – First Results may differ from results from AYP reporting because these results do not include students taking X-level tests. Results are not restricted to students enrolled the whole year.

*Source:* Education Northwest Analysis of PPS data.

Table 2

Percentage of Students in K-8 Schools Meeting the Standard in Mathematics on First Attempt, after all Attempts, and Percentage Point Gain from First Attempt

School	Percent (Percentage Point Gain)								
	2010/11			2011/12			2012/13		
	First	Total	Gain	First	Total	Gain	First	Total	Gain
Arleta	34	56	(21)	35	49	(14)	42	55	(12)
Astor	59	85	(27)	61	78	(17)	59	72	(14)
BE-Humboldt	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	35	44	( 9)
Beach	38	60	(22)	48	63	(15)	56	61	( 6)
Beverly Cleary	59	84	(25)	61	83	(21)	82	88	( 7)
Boise-Eliot	26	58	(31)	23	67	(44)	NA	NA	NA
Bridger	21	51	(30)	24	55	(31)	38	46	( 8)
César Chávez	27	40	(13)	16	28	(12)	24	32	( 8)
Creative Science	41	71	(29)	44	73	(28)	53	73	(21)
Faubion	35	49	(15)	20	48	(27)	35	46	(10)
Harrison Park	29	51	(22)	32	56	(24)	44	54	(10)
Hayhurst	53	74	(21)	59	80	(21)	76	85	( 9)
Humboldt	13	50	(37)	31	73	(41)	NA	NA	NA
Irvington	49	58	( 9)	55	62	( 7)	55	65	( 9)
King	10	38	(28)	17	70	(53)	15	24	( 8)
Laurelhurst	58	84	(26)	57	81	(23)	74	83	( 8)
Lee	27	52	(25)	31	51	(19)	32	42	10)
Lent	28	49	(21)	32	53	(21)	37	46	( 9)
Marysville	24	50	(26)	31	55	(23)	46	58	(12)
Ockley Green	18	31	(13)	16	31	(15)	26	32	( 6)
Peninsula	43	63	(20)	41	63	(22)	55	64	( 9)
Roseway Heights	36	66	(30)	43	61	(19)	59	68	( 9)
Sabin	37	65	(28)	49	82	(33)	68	80	(12)
Scott	20	39	(20)	21	31	(10)	25	30	( 5)
Skyline	65	81	(16)	64	73	( 9)	68	76	( 7)
Sunnyside Environ	53	69	(16)	61	73	(12)	69	75	( 6)
Vernon	17	40	(22)	21	37	(16)	36	50	(14)
Vestal	28	58	(29)	37	48	(11)	45	54	( 9)
Winterhaven	92	96	( 4)	90	96	( 6)	90	94	( 4)
Woodlawn	14	31	(16)	10	30	(20)	22	34	(12)

NA indicates scores not reported because school was reconfigured.

Note: Results reported for 2011/12 standards. "First" indicates percent of students meeting standard on their first attempt. "Total" indicates percent of students meeting standard after all attempts. "Gain" is percentage point increase in meeting standard from first attempt through all attempts. All figures are rounded; as a result, Gain may not equal Total – First. Results may differ from results from AYP reporting because these results do not include students taking X-level tests. Results are not restricted to students enrolled the whole year.

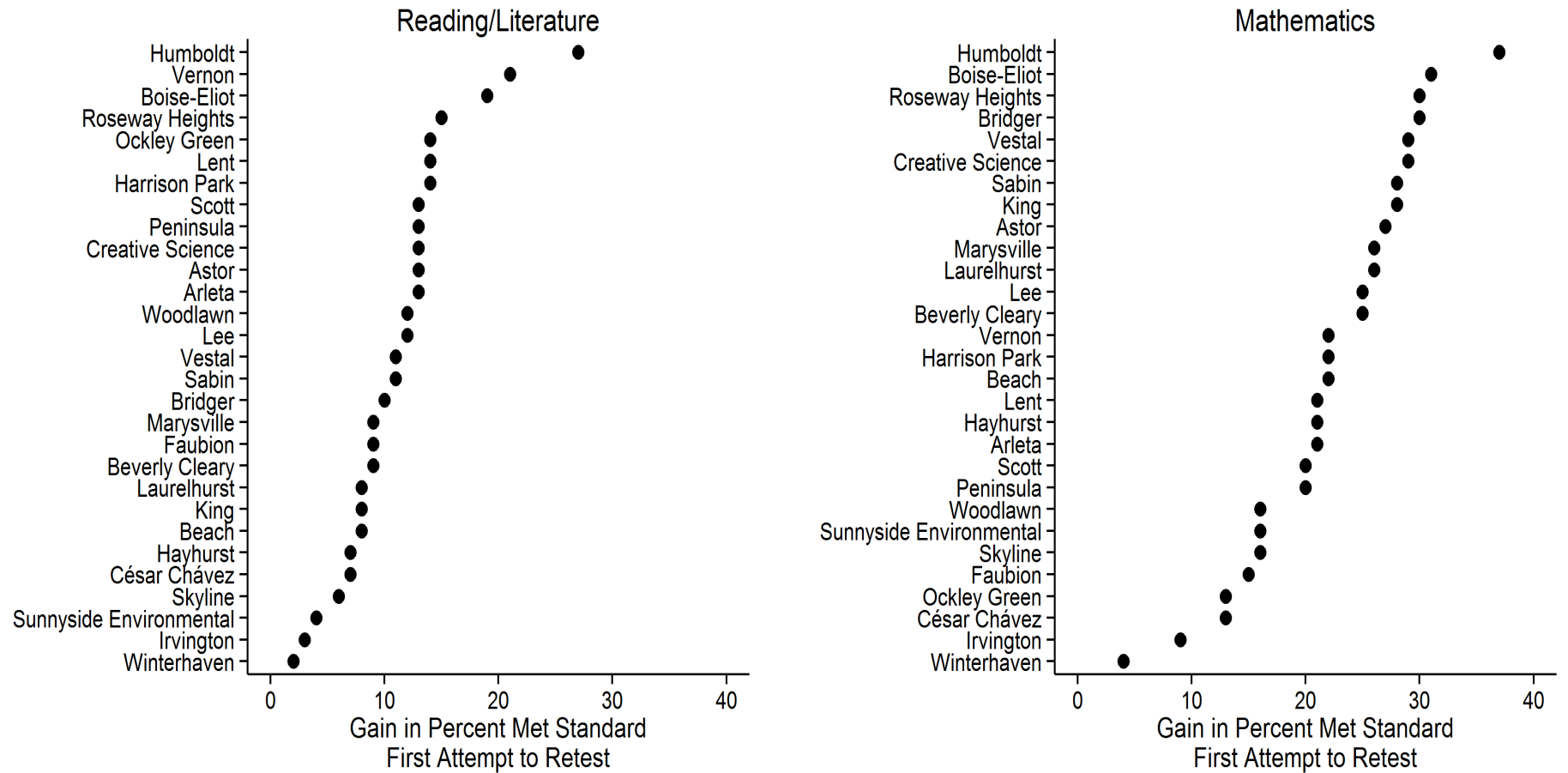
Source: Education Northwest Analysis of PPS data.

- In 2011/12, King experienced the largest percentage point gain of all K-8 schools in the percentage of students meeting standard from first attempt through retests (Tables 1 and 2; Figure 1).
- Each year and in each subject, the K-8 schools varied considerably in sizes of gains in the percentage of students meeting the standard on retests (Figure 1).
- Each year and in each subject, one or more schools stood out from the rest in gains in the percentage of students meeting standard from first attempt through retests (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Gains in Percentage of Students Meeting the Standard in Reading/Literature and Mathematics From First Attempt to Retests

2010/11



(Gains are in percentage points)

Figure 1 (continued)

Gains in Percent of Students Meeting Standard in Reading/Literature and Mathematics From First Attempt to Retests, 2011/12

2011/12

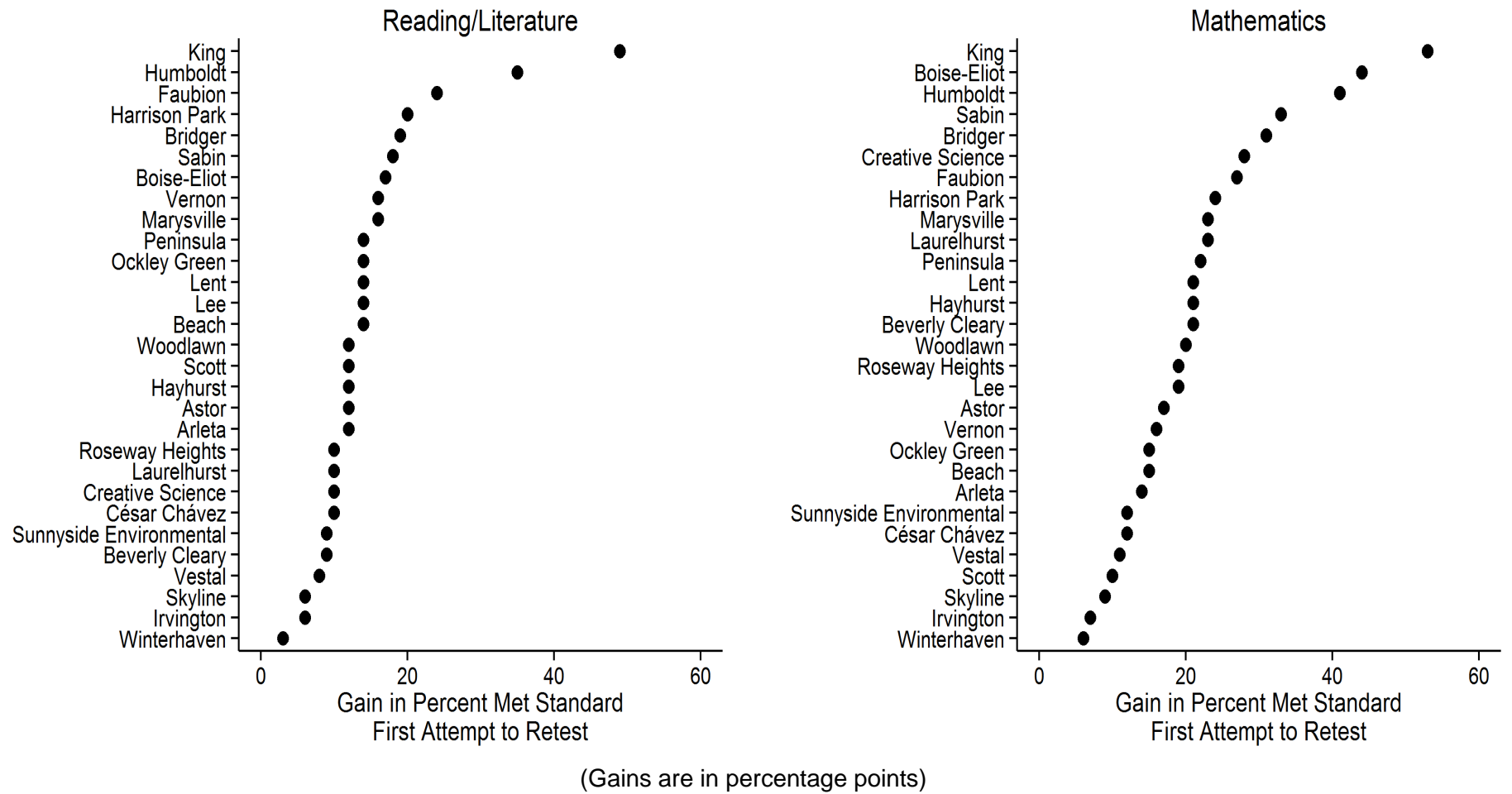
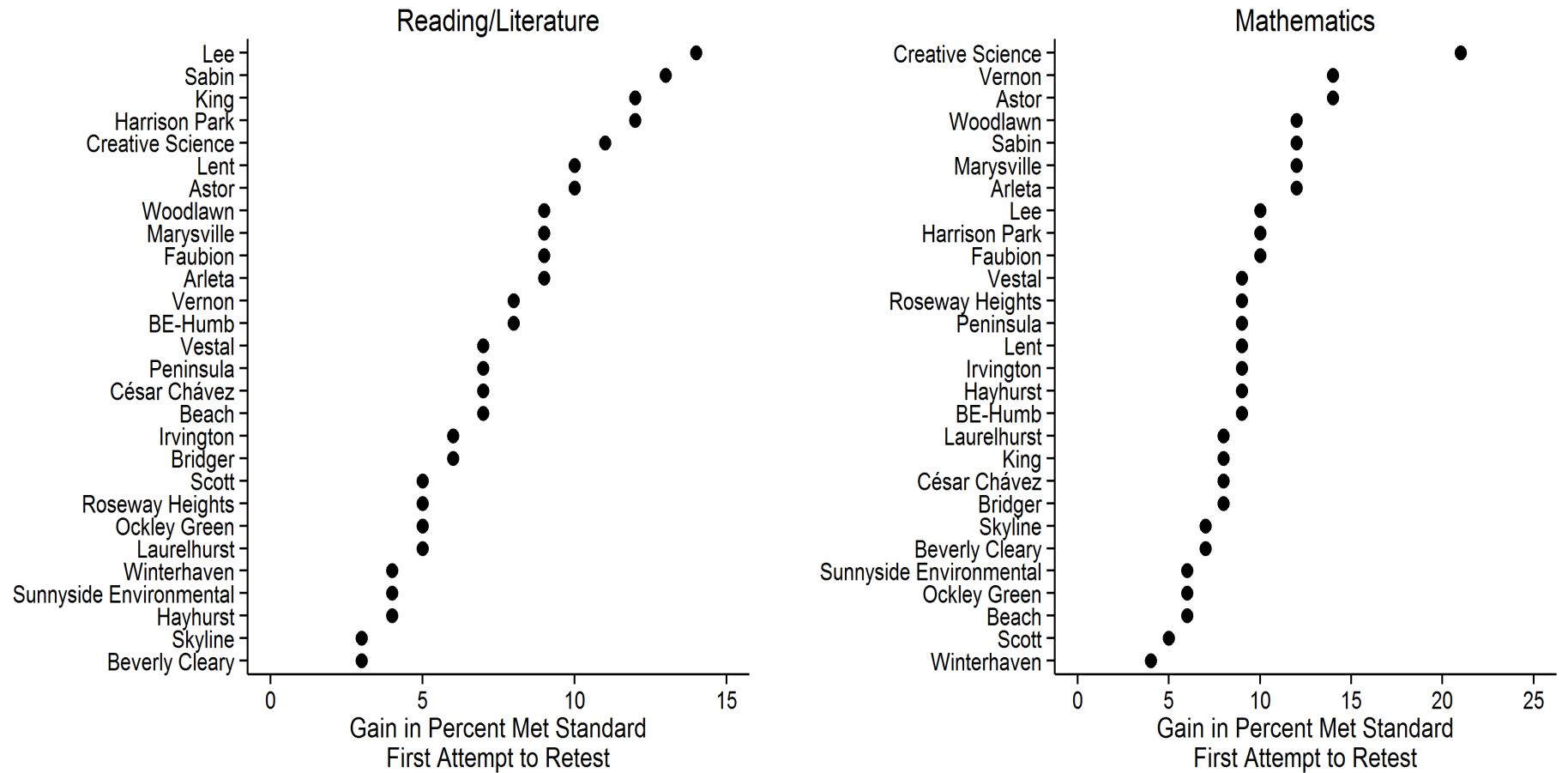


Figure 1 (continued)

Gains in Percent of Students Meeting Standard in Reading/Literature and Mathematics From First Attempt to Retests, 2012/13

2012/13



(Gains are in percentage points)

Achievement trends in King School from 2010/11 to 2012/13 differed from the trends in other K–8 schools in several ways (Table 3; Figures 2 and 3). First, the percentage of students meeting the standard on their first attempt in mathematics decreased in King School from 2011/12 to 2012/13, but increased in other K-8 schools. Second, increases in the percentage of King students meeting the standard after retesting were much larger in 2011/12 in both subjects than in the other years, and the increases were much larger in King school than in the other K-8 schools.

Across all K-8 schools, average gains in the percentage of students meeting standard from first attempt to retesting were generally smaller in 2012/13 than in the other years (Table 3). Among other reasons, this may have occurred because success rates on first attempts were higher in 2012/13 than in other years and because procedures for retests changed from 2010/11 to 2012/13.

*Table 3  
Percentage of Students in K-8 Schools Meeting the Standard on First Attempt, After All Attempts, and Percentage Point Gain from First Attempt*

School	Percent (Percentage Point Gain)								
	2010/11			2011/12			2012/13		
	First	Total	Gain	First	Total	Gain	First	Total	Gain
<u>Reading/Literature</u>									
King	22	31	( 8)	28	77	(49)	34	45	(12)
Similar K-8	38	52	(13)	37	53	(16)	40	49	( 9)
Other K-8	54	65	(11)	55	68	(13)	59	67	( 7)
All K-8	54	64	(10)	54	68	(14)	59	66	( 7)
<u>Mathematics</u>									
King	11	38	(28)	17	70	(53)	15	24	( 9)
Similar K-8	25	45	(21)	24	46	(22)	33	42	( 9)
Other K-8	39	60	(22)	41	60	(19)	52	61	( 9)
All K-8	38	60	(22)	41	61	(20)	51	60	( 9)

*Note:* Results reported for 2011/12 standards. “First” indicates percentage of students meeting standard on their first attempt. “Total” indicates percentage of students meeting standard after all attempts. “Gain” is percentage point increase in meeting standard from first attempt through all attempts. Gains were calculated before First and Total were rounded; as a result, Gain may not equal Total – First. Similar schools include Boise-Elliott-Humboldt, Boise-Elliott, Cesar Chavez, Faubion, Harrison Park, Humboldt, Lee, Lent, Ockley Green, Scott, and Woodlawn. These results may differ from results from AYP reporting because these results do not include students taking X-level tests. Results are not restricted to students enrolled the whole year.

*Source:* Education Northwest Analysis of PPS data.



Figure 2  
 Percentage of Students Meeting the Standard on First Attempt and Retests in King and Other K-8 Schools, 2010–2013

Reading/Literature



Mathematics

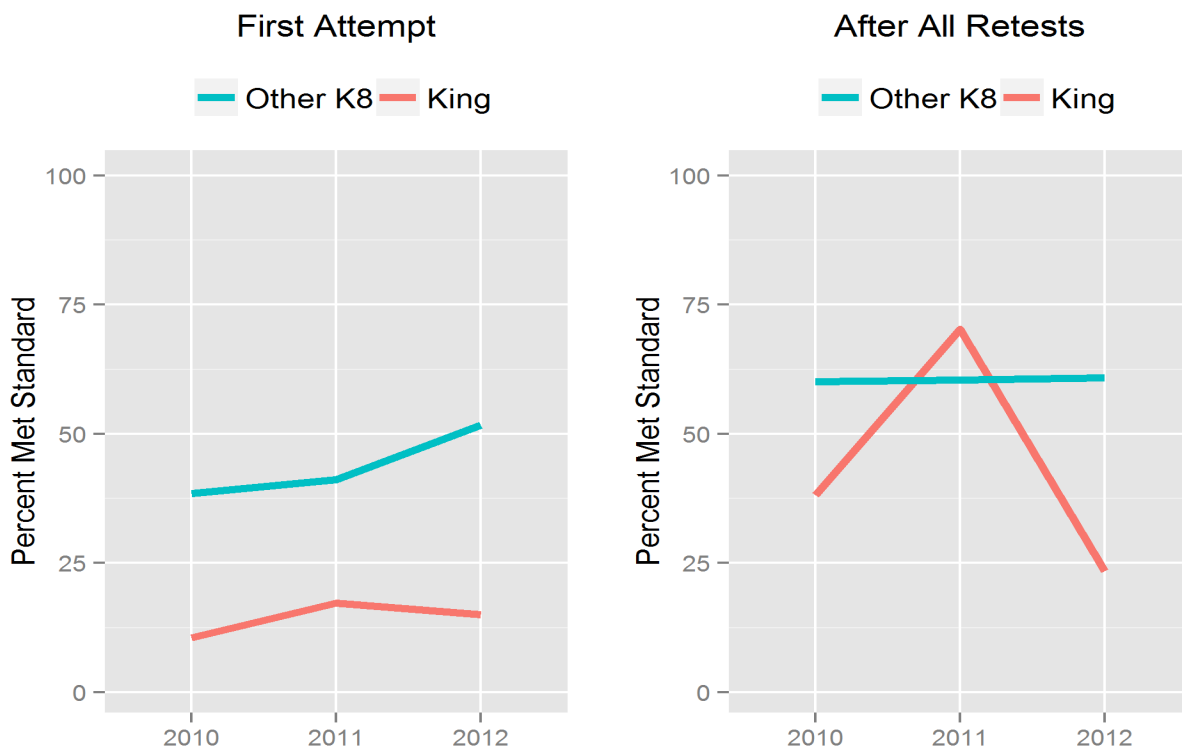
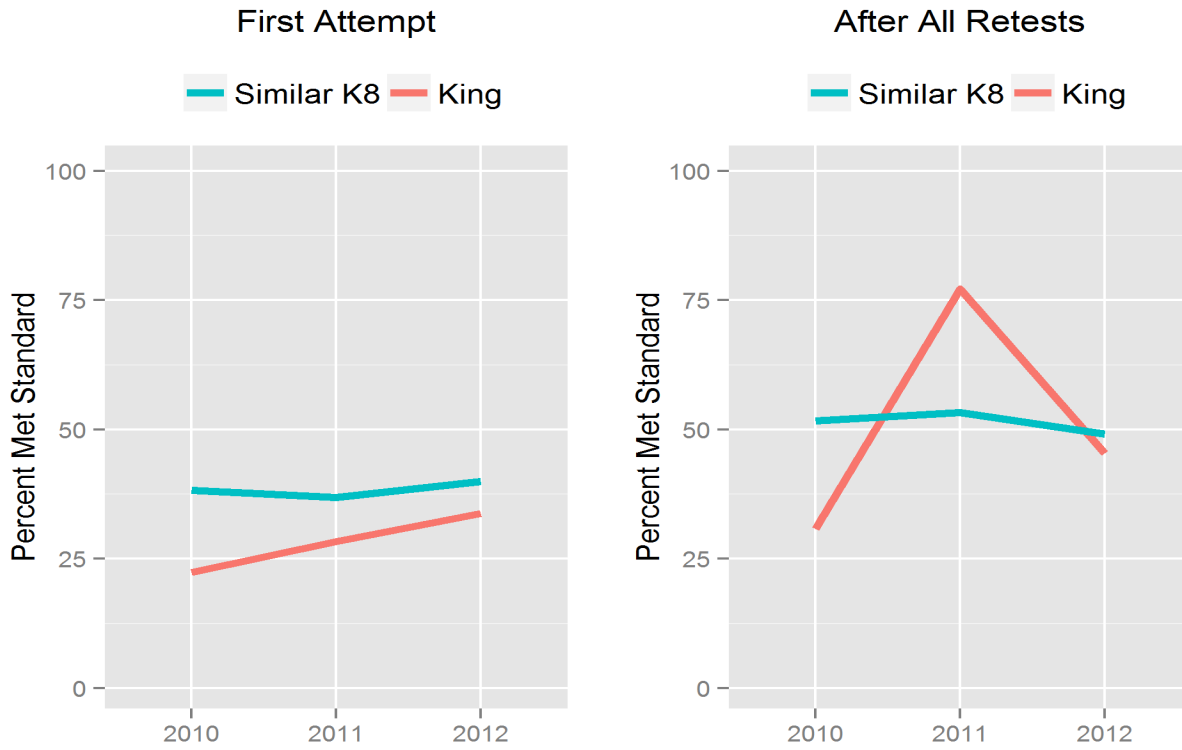
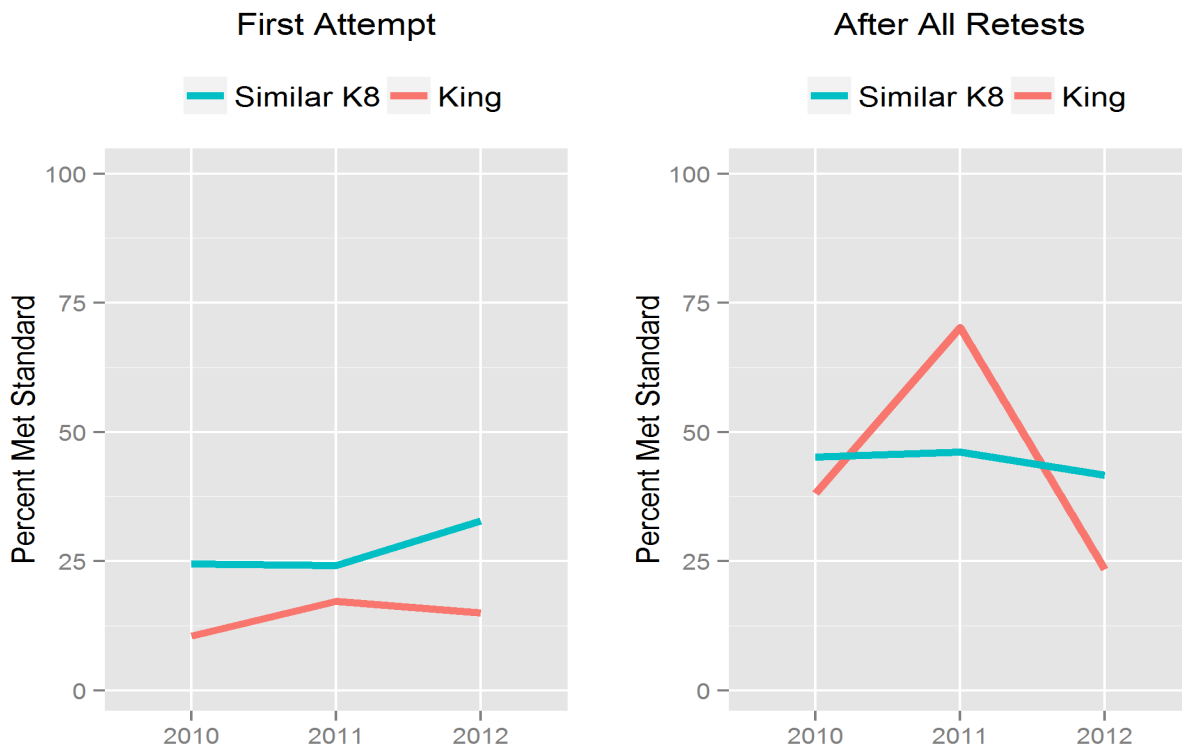


Figure 3  
 Percentage of Students Meeting the Standard on First Attempt and after All Retests in King and Similar K-8 Schools, 2010–2013

Reading/Literature



Mathematics



## Retesting Students Who Met the Standard on First Attempt

*In some K-8 schools, substantial percentages of students who met the standard on their first attempt were retested, particularly in 2010/11 and 2011/12).*

- Schools varied widely in the percentage of students who met the standard on their first attempt that were subsequently retested (Figure 4).
- Retesting students who met the standard on their first attempt was relatively common in 2010/11 and 2011/12. In fact, in a number of schools more than half of students who met the standard on their first attempt were subsequently retested.
- Retesting students who met the standard on their first attempt was far less common in 2012/13, but did occur, and some schools retested students who met the standard more frequently than others.

Figure 4  
 Percentage of Students Meeting the Standards on First Attempt, But Were Retested

2010/11

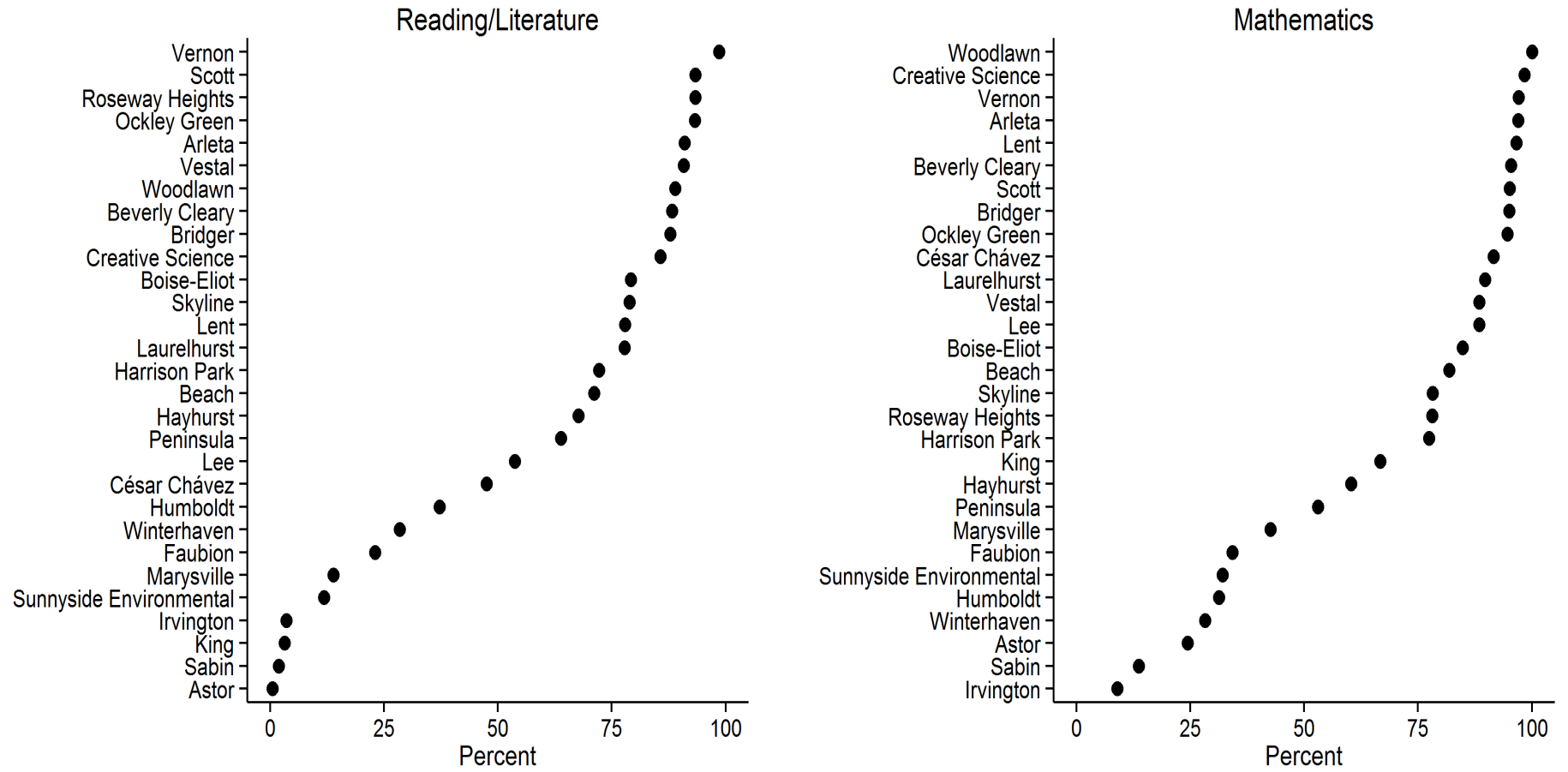


Figure 4 (continued)  
 Percentage of Students Meeting the OAKS Standard on First Attempt But Were Retested

2011/12

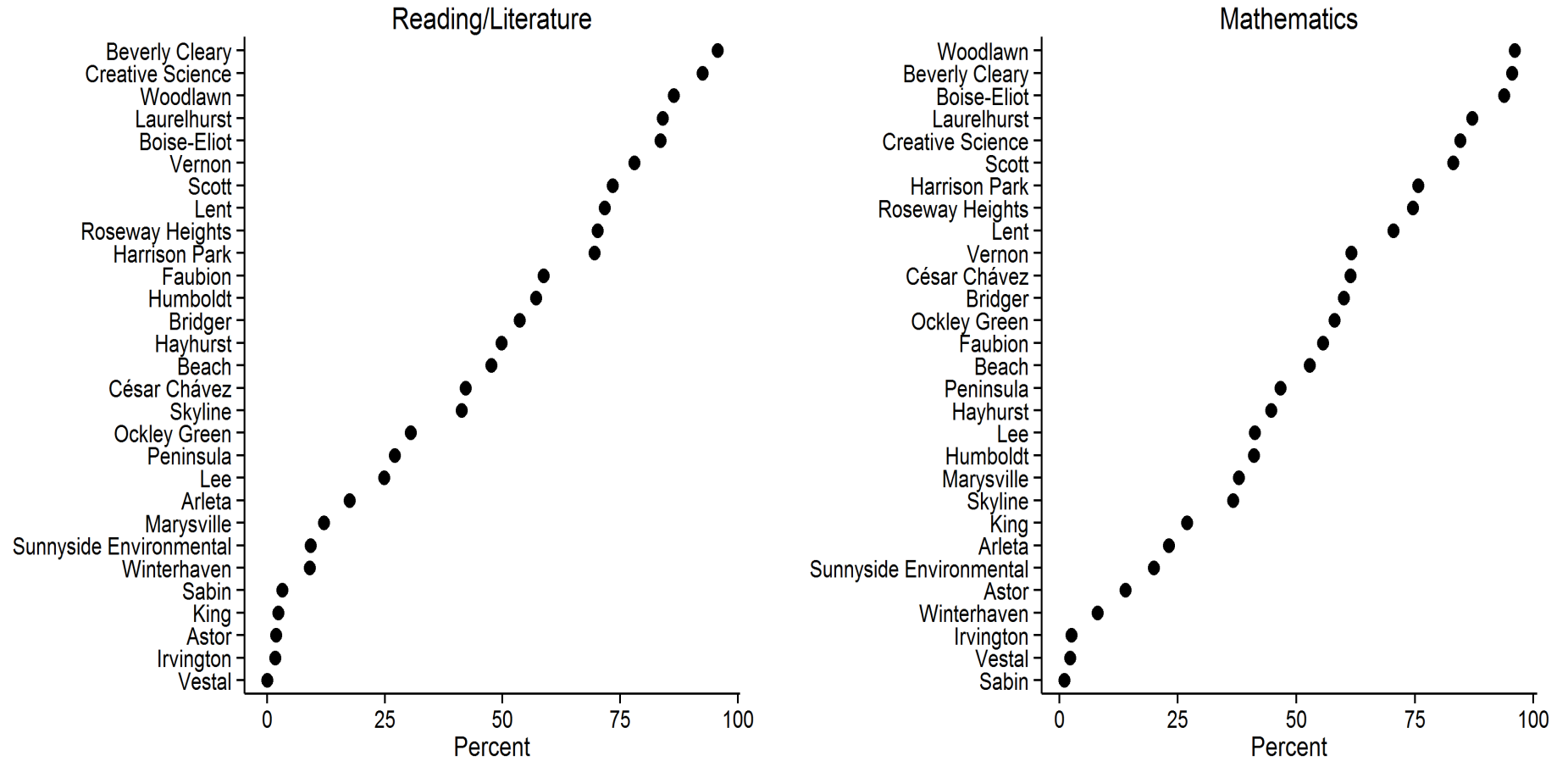
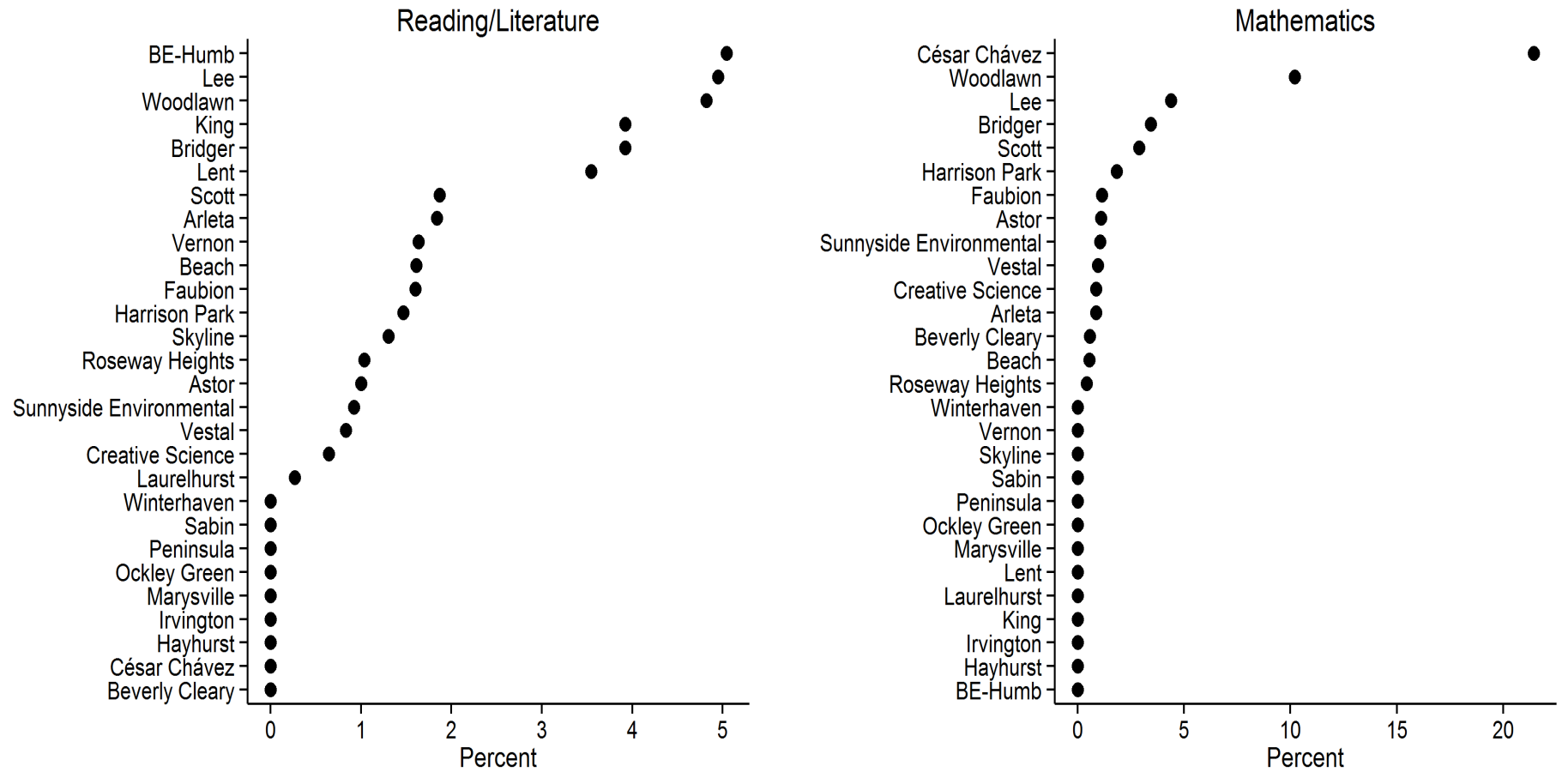


Figure 4 (continued)  
 Percentage of Students Meeting OAKS the on First Attempt But Were Retested

2012/13



## Size of Gains in Achievement on Retests

*In 2011/12, King students who did not meet the standard on their first attempt on average gained substantially more on retests than their counterparts in other K-8 schools. In the other years, King students showed retest gains that were similar to the gains of students in other K-8 schools.*

Across all grade levels, King students who did not meet the standard on their first attempt gained substantially more scale score points on retests than students in other PPS K-8 schools (Table 4).

In 2011/12, at each grade King students who did not meet the standard on their first attempt gained more scale score points on retests than the aggregate of students in all other K-8 schools (Figure 5) and in K-8 schools with demographics similar to King (Figure 6). In 2010/11 and 2012/13, King students made scale score gains on retests similar to gains by students in other K-8 schools (Figure 5) and in K-8 schools with demographics similar to King (Figure 6).

**Table 4**  
**Average Gains in Scale Score Points from First Attempt to Highest Score on Retest**

*(Results are for students who did not meet the standard on first attempt.)*

School	Reading/Literature			Mathematics		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Arleta	5.5	6.1	4.8	6.6	5.9	5.6
Astor	11.2	6.5	6.3	10.8	8.1	9.3
BE-Humboldt	NA	NA	4.5	NA	NA	4.5
Beach	5.4	5.4	5.1	7.4	7.0	4.9
Beverly Cleary	9.0	6.4	4.0	9.2	7.2	5.2
Boise-Eliot	7.9	6.7	NA	9.1	12.2	NA
Bridger	6.5	6.9	4.3	8.8	8.8	4.0
Creative Science	7.8	6.7	7.6	7.0	9.2	8.9
César Chávez	5.1	6.0	5.1	5.2	5.3	4.9
Faubion	6.1	6.7	4.8	6.5	8.6	5.3
Harrison Park	7.8	7.5	6.8	8.2	8.8	6.3
Hayhurst	5.8	7.9	6.9	7.9	8.5	6.1
Humboldt	10.6	3.7	NA	10.0	11.3	NA
Irvington	5.2	5.1	5.2	6.0	4.3	4.3
King	6.7	13.2	4.2	8.4	17.6	4.7
Laurelhurst	7.6	7.1	4.6	8.6	7.9	5.7
Lee	6.9	6.1	5.1	8.0	6.7	5.2
Lent	7.0	5.4	5.1	8.3	7.5	5.7
Marysville	6.3	5.8	6.0	7.6	7.1	6.5
Ockley Green	6.1	6.0	4.0	6.2	6.8	4.5
Peninsula	6.7	6.0	3.7	6.8	6.5	4.3
Roseway Heights	8.7	6.0	4.2	10.1	6.9	6.1
Sabin	7.9	8.0	8.2	8.9	10.8	7.9
Scott	5.7	5.5	4.6	7.5	4.5	4.3
Skyline	7.0	4.3	4.5	6.2	5.5	4.9
Sunnyside Env	6.1	8.4	6.2	7.5	5.5	7.5
Vernon	7.2	5.2	3.5	7.5	6.0	5.3
Vestal	5.7	5.4	4.0	9.6	5.3	6.3
Winterhaven	5.7	8.2	6.4	5.8	8.0	4.5
Woodlawn	5.9	5.8	5.3	7.5	8.4	5.3
All K-8	6.9	6.4	5.2	8.0	7.8	5.6
K-8 except King	6.9	6.2	5.2	8.0	7.5	5.7
Similar to King	6.9	6.1	5.3	7.7	7.9	5.3

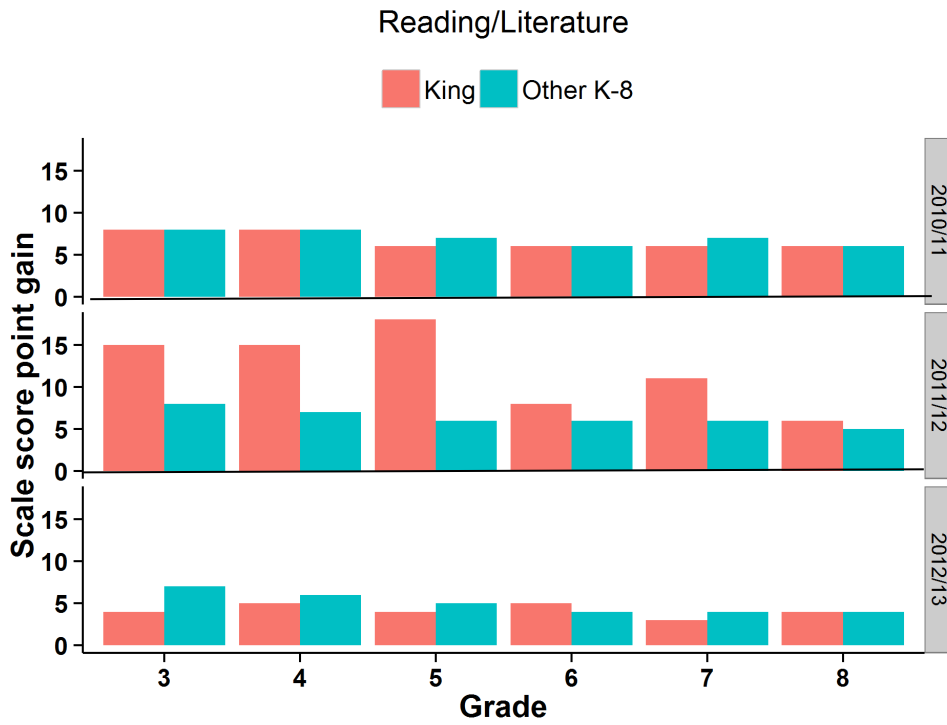
NA indicates scores not reported because school was reconfigured.

Note: Similar schools include Boise-Elliott-Humboldt, Boise-Elliott, Cesar Chavez, Faubion, Harrison Park, Humboldt, Lee, Lent, Ockley Green, Scott, and Woodlawn.

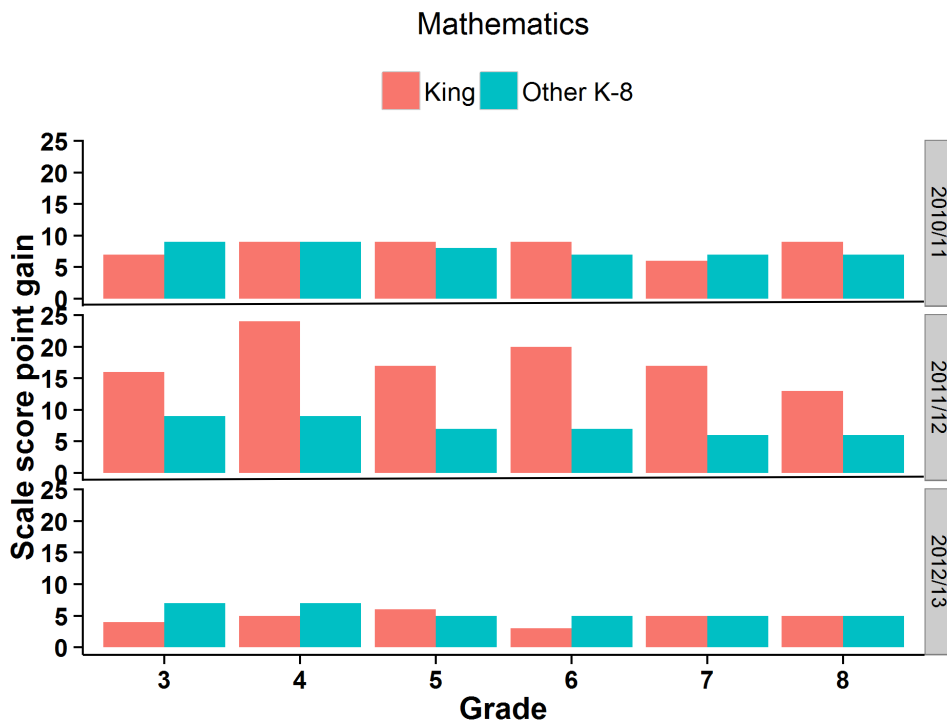
Source: Education Northwest analysis of PPS data



Figure 5  
Average Gains in Scale Score Points from First Attempt to Final Attempt, King and Other K-8 Schools

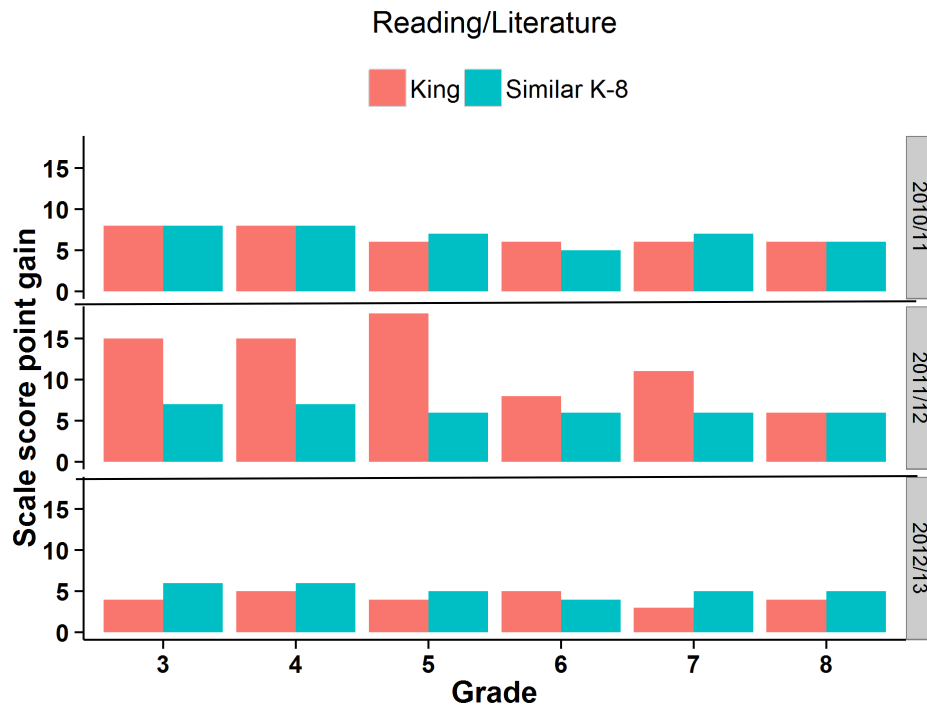


(Results for students not meeting the standard on first attempt)

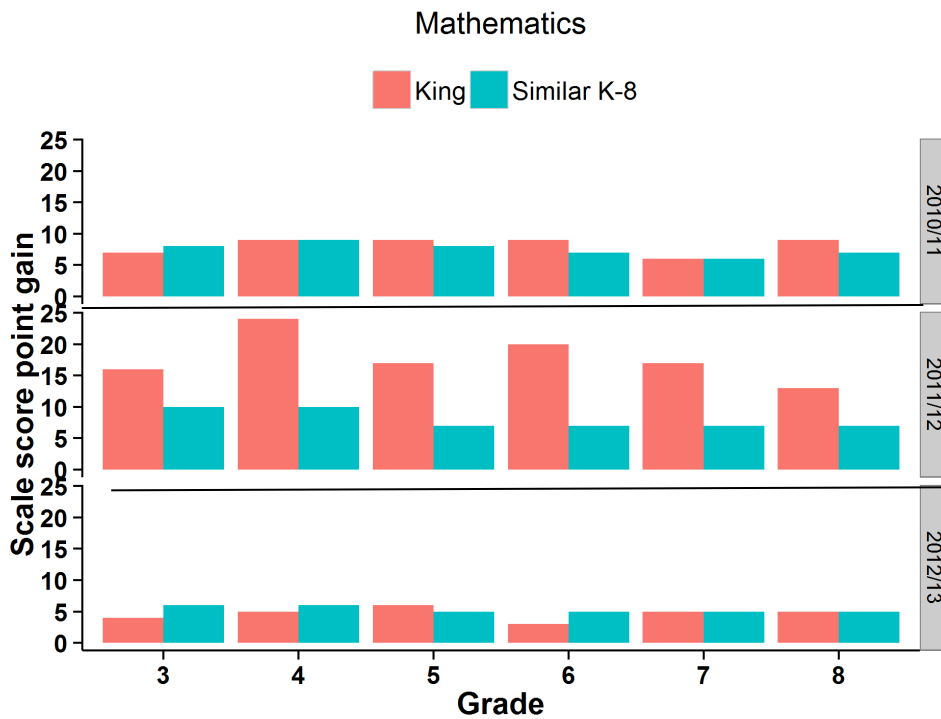


(Results for students not meeting the standard on first attempt)

Figure 6  
Average Gains in Scale Score Points from First Attempt to Final Attempt, King and Schools With Demographics Similar to King



(Results for students not meeting the standard on first attempt)

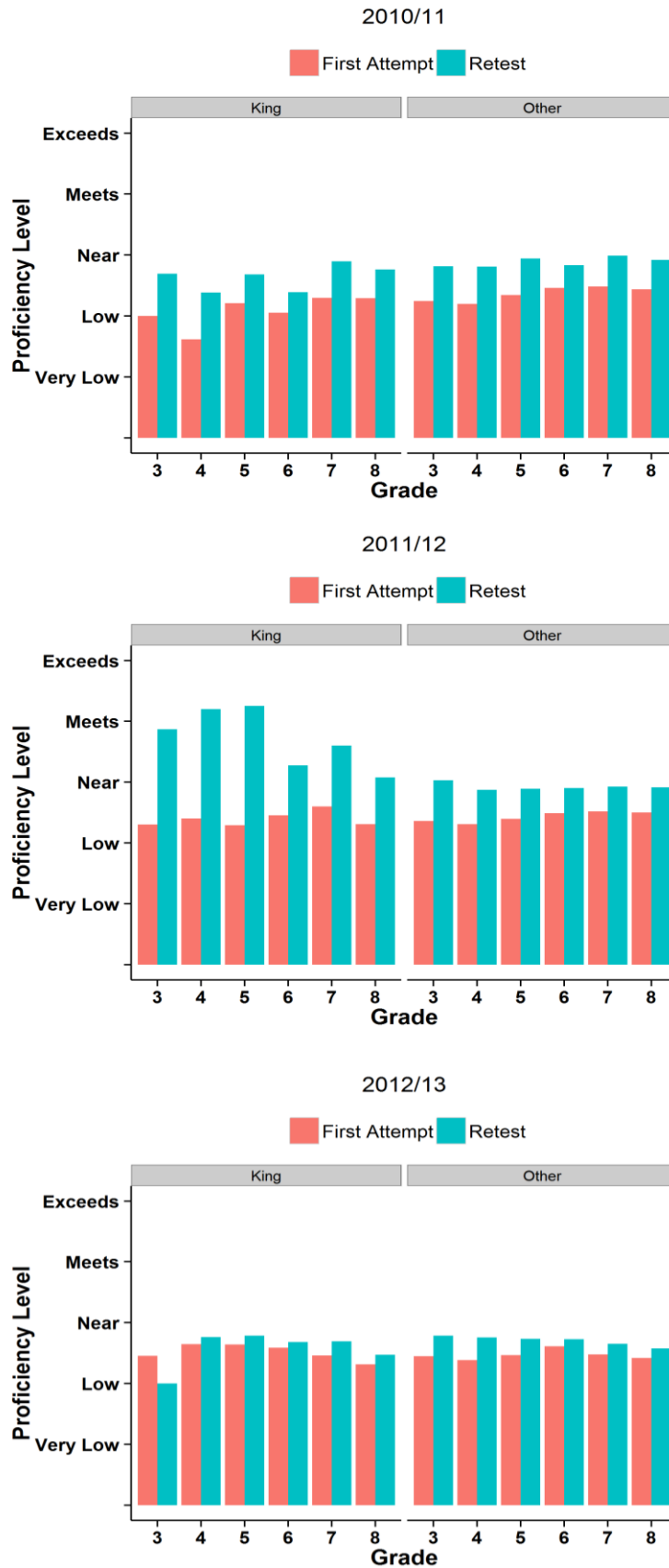


(Results for students not meeting the standard on first attempt)

In 2011/12 King students went from an average achievement level of “low” on their first attempt to “meeting or nearly meeting” the standard on retests. Achievement level gains for students at King that year were larger than for students in all other K-8 schools and for students in K-8 schools with demographics similar to King (Figures 7–10). In other years, gains in achievement levels from first attempts to retests were relatively similar for King students and students in other K-8 schools.

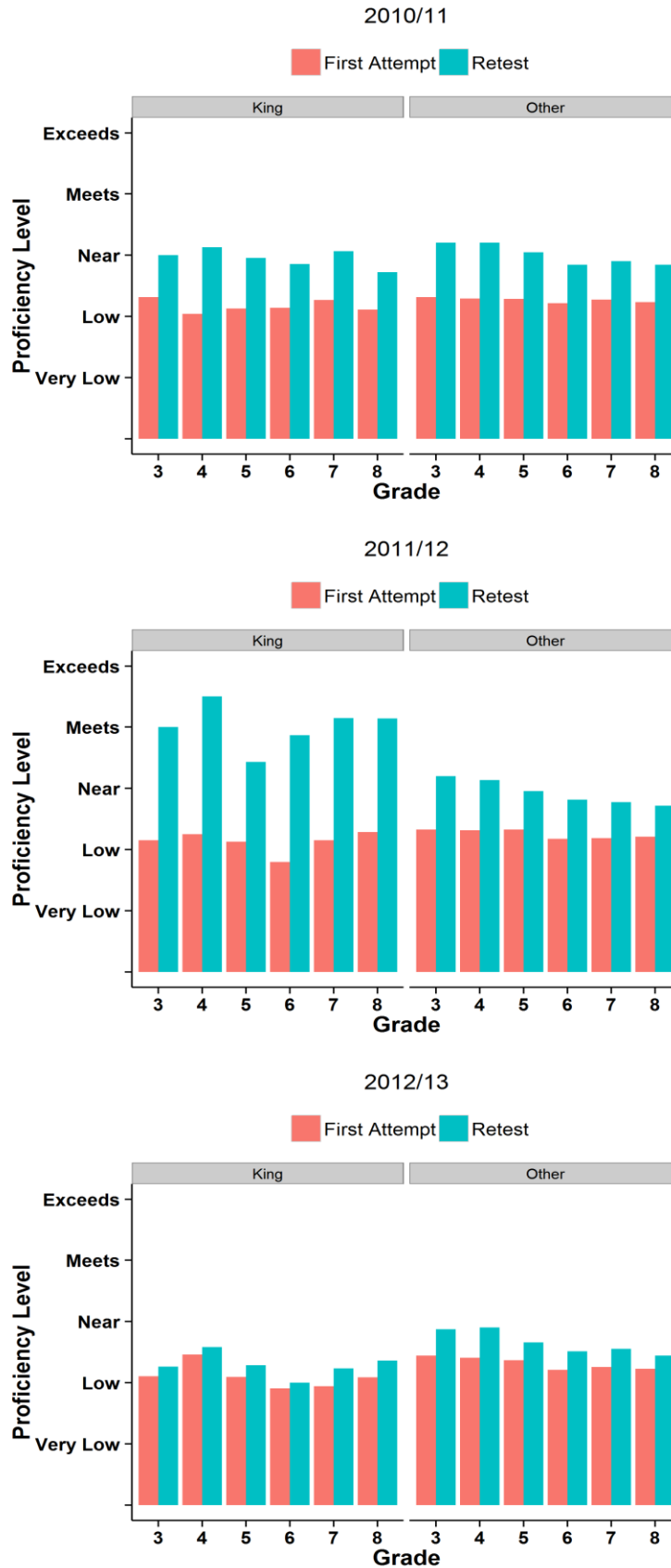
Figure 7

Average Gains in Proficiency Level in Reading/Literature from First Attempt to Retest, King and other K–8 Schools



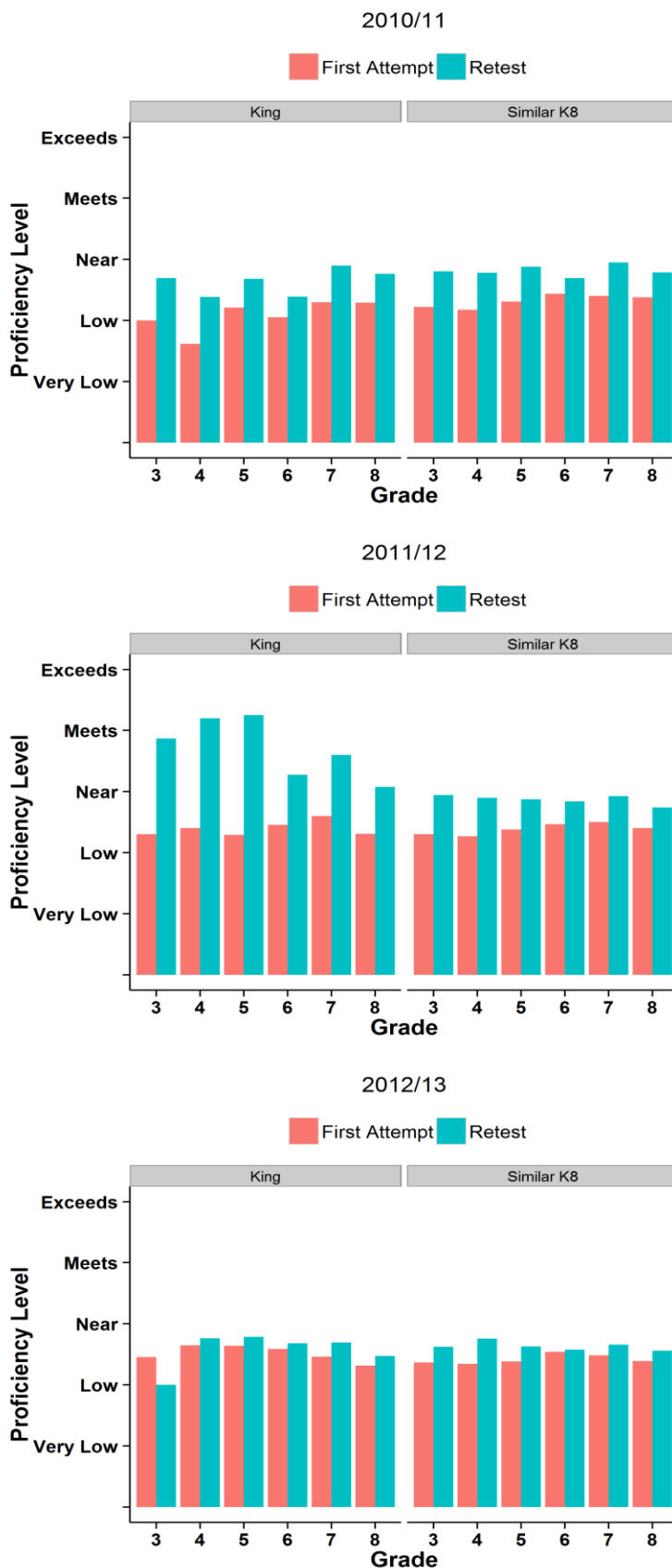
(Results for students not meeting the standard on first attempt)

Figure 8  
Average Gains in Proficiency Level in Mathematics from First Attempt to Retest, King and other K–8 Schools



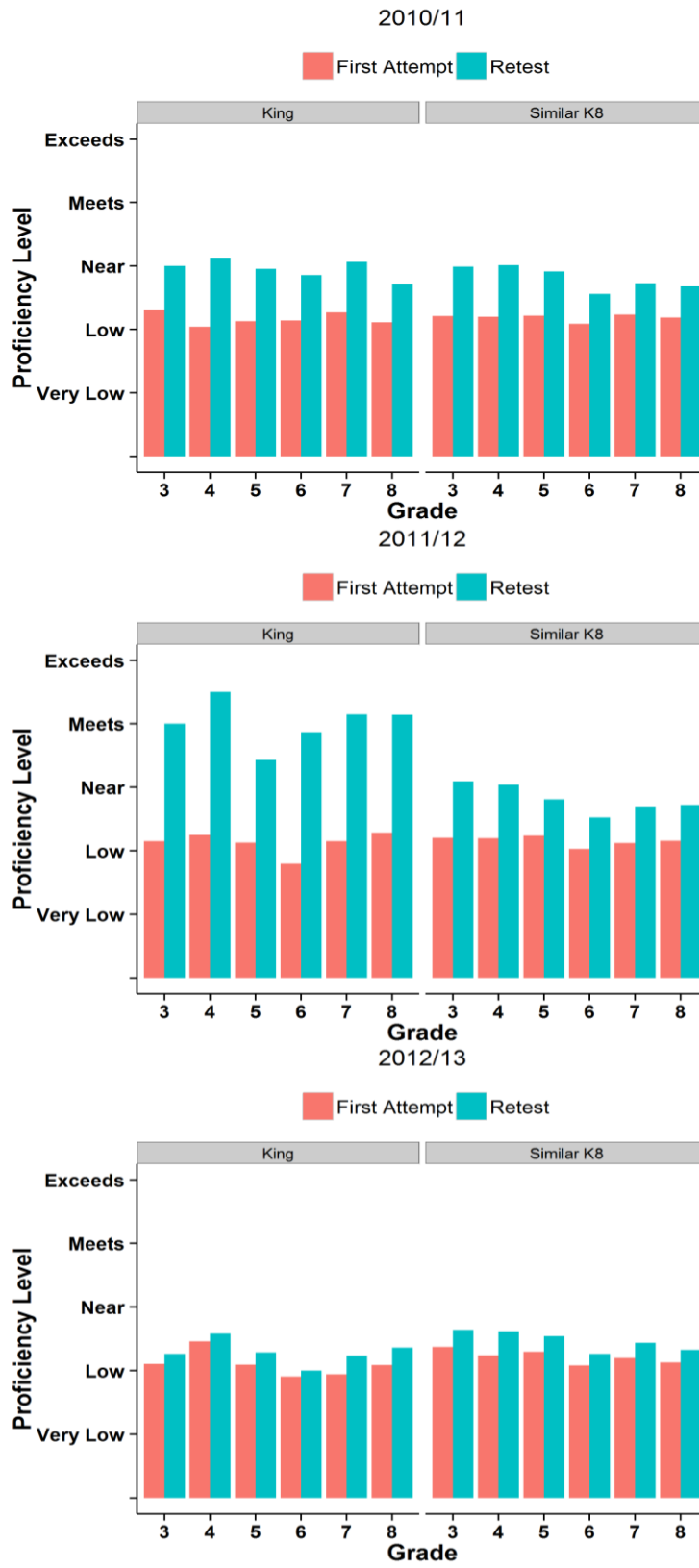
(Results for students not meeting the standard on first attempt)

Figure 9  
 Average Gains in Proficiency Level in Reading/Literature from First Attempt to Retest, King and K–8 Schools With Demographics Similar to King



(Results for students not meeting the standard on first attempt)

Figure 10  
 Average Gains in Proficiency Level in Mathematics from First Attempt to Retest, King and  
 K–8 Schools With Demographics Similar to King



(Results for students not meeting the standard on first attempt)





## Chapter 3: Interview Results

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King staff members offered many ideas about factors that may have contributed to King's OAKS performance from 2010/11 to 2012/13. Their perspectives varied somewhat; however, in general interviewees made similar observations about differences in the school's testing environment (e.g., accommodations offered, number of attempts allowed, and others) and in its teaching environment (staff turnover, teaching assignments, and others). Additionally, interviewees perceived long-term trends affecting the school, though study of these trends would warrant additional time, data, and resources.

In understanding the results of the interviews, it should be kept in mind that results are based on recollections of a relatively small number of individuals and that some staff members who worked at King in 2010/11 and 2011/12 are no longer in the school and thus were not interviewed. The report includes only findings from 2011/12 and 2012/13 because some of the interviewees were not in the school in 2010/11 and because differences between 2011/12 and 2012/13 reported in interviews were more notable than the differences between 2010/11 and 2011/12. Finally, within the time frame of the study, Education Northwest had little opportunity to verify informants' reports of conditions in the school, especially in the earlier years.

### Testing Environment

***Interviewees emphasized “drastic” differences in the testing environment, especially between 2011/12 and 2012/13.***

Of the interviewees, five of them were present during both the 2011/12 and 2012/13 OAKS testing windows. All five interviewees noted changes to the testing environment between the two years. Changes fell into six interrelated categories:

1. External scrutiny
2. Testing climate
3. Supervision
4. Accommodations
5. Training and guidance
6. Retesting

In order to provide a coherent picture of the testing environment in each year, we describe each year separately. Table 5 summarizes differences between testing environments in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

*Table 5  
Testing Environments at King School in 2011/12 and 2012/13*

	External Scrutiny	Testing Climate	Supervision	Accommodations	Training & Guidance	Initial Attempt and Retesting
011/12	Spreadsheet	“Encouraging”	3-7 adults	Snacks  Breaks  Read alouds for all students	Slide deck  Signed affidavit or release  2 presentations from SIG coach	3 attempts  Relatively small groups, especially during retakes  Testing began relatively early, allowing for more attempts  Math coach used test data to inform math instruction and math stations
2012/13	Checklist  District visits  Media coverage	“Sterile”	1-4 adults	Snacks  Read alouds for ESL and SPED students	Online training  Meeting to discuss accommodations	2 attempts  Relatively large groups

Source: Authors’ analysis of interview data.

### **2011/12 Testing Environment**

**External scrutiny.** According to one interviewee, during testing the district provided the school a “little spreadsheet to say, ‘How close are you?’ It would say, ‘You need two more students in SPED’ and ‘You need three more ELLs.’ As you were testing, you would get these updates on the computer, like a document,” which “seemed like it was what you needed to meet AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act] and how close you were or how far away you were.” This interviewee explained that the spreadsheet served as a “guide” that suggested the school should “provide for [those students], maybe the most of whatever they needed, like testing them earlier. It would be the normal testing environment but with extra accommodations.” No interviewee recalled district officials visiting the school during the 2012 OAKS tests.

**Testing climate.** During the 2012 OAKS tests, school staff strove to provide “an encouraging environment” during testing that “made the students comfortable.” As explained by one source, “We made it a point to really make it very positive and supportive.” Another explained that the goal was to create an “environment for the kids to reach their capacity.” Yet another emphasized the breadth of this effort; the mindset within the school was, “Hold everything, we’re going to put all of our focus on testing.”

The school took a few steps to create this “encouraging” environment. Adults in the testing lab set an upbeat, nurturing tone, telling students, “You’re doing a good job” as they worked through the examinations. The testing lab featured signs with similar messages, such as “You can do it!” In the words of one interviewee, “We were encouraging kids, telling them to do their best. Loving them up and letting them know they could do it.” According to this interviewee, the students responded well: “Kids were excited, they were cheering for each other” and there were “kids yelling with excitement when they found out they met [the cut score]. It was a positive thing.” Another interviewee cited a downside to this activity: sometimes there were “too many kids or [it was] too loud” in the testing lab.

**Supervision.** During 2012, interviewees recalled as few as three and as many as seven adults being present in the testing lab. Although only adults who had completed OAKS training could be in the testing lab training (see section *Training and Guidance* below), they functioned as more than proctors and test administrators: they were also agents of the school’s encouraging test climate. For example, the test administrator read instructions aloud to students and carried out logistical aspects of the test (e.g., making sure students were able to log on and to indicate accommodations received by the student). Additional adults were stationed between pairs of students to provide accommodations like “read aloud” (see section *Accommodations* below), offer encouragement, and remind students of “best practices” like “use your resources,” like highlighting text on the screen, and “show your work.” One interviewee also noted adults could ask students, “Is that your final answer?” while another reported that students were told they could check their work before and then after the test. Beyond this explicit work to encourage students to do well, two interviewees felt an adult nearby also helped students to “focus and work hard.” “As soon as they sat down at the test, [the students] were encouraged just by sheer proximity of the teacher there to do their best,” explained one interviewee.

An additional rationale for such adult presence was to allow the students to “co-regulate with an adult to be successful in the testing environment.” In other words, students themselves and the adults around them could attend to students’ physical and emotional states and respond to signs of less than optimal functioning. For example, one interviewee explained an adult could notice when a student was “glazing over” and advise the student to take a break or to get a snack. The adult could also help manage a student’s emotional deregulation, such as when a child “burst into tears, but we gave her a break and a snack and she came back and passed.” Another interviewee described how students “were comfortable enough to tell us they were spent” and needed to take a break from the test.

Perhaps because of the school's focus on co-regulation, two interviewees emphasized the importance of having adults with a relationship to students in the testing lab, such as their homeroom teacher, content area teacher, and/or support teacher (English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teacher, Special Education (SPED) teacher, math coach, etc.). Substitute teachers supervised students who were in the classrooms of teachers who were in the testing lab; one interviewee also reported substitutes assisted with testing. Responsibility for coordinating and administering tests was spread across a few individuals, including the school testing coordinator and math coach; classroom teachers and support teachers (ESL and SPED) also administered the tests. According to one interviewee, classroom teachers were less likely to help with the final round of testing because relatively few students took the tests three times (see section *Retesting* below). Interviewees recalled that students receiving SPED or ESL services were tested by their respective SPED or ESL teachers; other students were usually tested by their homeroom teacher, reading/language arts teacher, and/or math teacher.

**Accommodations.** As mentioned above, in 2012 adults were in the testing lab in part to provide accommodations to students. The State of Oregon's Accommodations Manual 2011-12 defined accommodations as:

*Practices and procedures in presentation, response, setting, and timing or scheduling that, when used in an assessment, provide equitable access to all students.*

*Accommodations do not compromise the learning expectations, construct, grade-level standards, and/or measured outcome of the assessment. Use of approved accommodations during administration of an Oregon Statewide Assessment based on individual student needs will not impact the validity of the assessment results (Office of Student Learning and Partnerships, 2011, p.12, emphasis theirs).*

According to the manual, some accommodations were available only to students with particular needs (e.g., English Learners could listen to audio recordings of tests in English and Spanish), but many accommodations were available to any student taking the OAKS assessments (e.g., frequent breaks). Similarly, some accommodations were intended to use one-on-one with students, while others could be used with small groups or even whole groups of students.

During the 2011/12 OAKS testing, King staff members utilized several accommodations. Any student could take a break in a separate break room (recalled by two interviewees), eat a snack (recalled by one interviewee), or complete a test over the course of multiple test sessions (recalled by one interviewee, who noted some students took four or five days to complete a test). These accommodations were available for either the math or reading OAKS.

Other accommodations were available only for specific tests. For the OAKS reading test, four interviewees remembered that any student was allowed to "read aloud," meaning they could read anything on the test aloud to themselves. Similarly, students could "think aloud" as they pondered their answers to test items. (The Accommodations Manual 2011/12 identified the think aloud strategy as an acceptable accommodation for either the reading or math

assessments; however, two interviewees indicated that the think aloud strategy was used only during the reading assessment.)

For the OAKS math test, the read aloud accommodation was slightly different—an adult “prompter” could read math questions to students. Three interviewees stressed that adults could only read aloud to students during the math test, since the purpose of the math read aloud accommodation was to enable students to complete math problems regardless of their reading ability. One interviewee elaborated on the guidelines adult prompters were expected to follow during math read alouds, such as reading numbers as digits without place value names (e.g., a prompter could read 137 as “one three seven” but not as “one hundred thirty-seven”). Students could also opt for the computer to read math questions aloud to them, but according to one interviewee, that option was “not welcomed” at the school and that “a person, someone with a relationship” to the students should read aloud instead.

**Training and guidance.** As mentioned above, any adult taking part in OAKS testing had to be trained. Five interviewees reported training and guidance related to OAKS administration in 2011/12, including a presentation by the school’s federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) “coach” or “administrator.” Interviewees had varying perceptions of where the SIG coach worked; two noted she had been “brought in” from outside of the school while two identified her as an Oregon Department of Education employee. Interviewees recalled that the presentation included a review of “documents” about accommodations; one interviewee recalled that the SIG coach presented both the state OAKS Manual and the state Accommodations Manual. Most interviewees agreed that some of the accommodations hadn’t previously been used at the school. In one’s words, “a number of us were quite surprised and actually asked her to come back and clarify what she had presented because it was completely new to us that [the accommodations were] allowable. She presented pages of documents in support of it.” A second interviewee noted,

*When we first found out about the accommodations, the staff had questions. This was not how we had been doing it. They called in a [presenter] who came in two different times. It was almost like the teachers questioned her and said, “We don’t think this is right, we’ve never been able to do this.” On both occasions [the presenter] went through the testing manual and interpreted it.*

Interviewees did not identify specific passages in the accommodations manual or any other document that the SIG coach interpreted for them.

According to one interviewee, the school testing coordinator also provided training and distributed a slide deck from the school district or state about OAKS administration to teachers, as well as a link to the OAKS requirements. Anyone administering tests was expected to sign a document (an “affidavit” or a “release”) attesting to their understanding of the requirements. Another interviewee mentioned that in 2012, testing was “all hands on deck” and so “everybody got OAKS trained.”

**Retesting.** During 2012, staff members, such as the testing coordinator and math coach, determined “how kids were grouped, who sat next to them, if someone sat next to them, all of that.” Four interviewees said the number of students in the testing lab at once was relatively small in 2012; two mentioned they sent in groups of 10 or fewer students at a time. In addition, struggling students experienced progressively smaller groups of students each time they re-attempted the test. One interviewee said, “It was a very small testing environment, the groups of students got smaller and smaller and smaller. It was whole class first round, then second round was strategically smaller groups with more space and time allowed for the students” and so on until the third (final) round of retests. Another interviewee observed that students got “nervous” during the testing, but “more times you get to go in there, you get used to it.”

In 2012, OAKS testing began relatively early, in January. This early start allowed students to take the test up to three times, as was allowed by the Oregon Department of Education, if needed. Additionally, according to one interviewee, the math coach worked with teachers to design and teach math activities meant to help “tier two” students (those who didn’t meet proficiency on their first attempt but who were relatively close to meeting it) gain the skills needed to achieve proficiency. The math coaches’ lessons and math stations provided “a lot of opportunities to enrich their math vocabulary and skills” on topics normally not covered until the end of the school year.

***Despite initial skepticism, King staff members believed the testing accommodations offered in 2011/12 were valid because they had been sanctioned by an external expert.***

In sum, interviewees described a testing environment in 2012 that seemed designed to make the testing experience less stressful for students and to encourage better test performance. School staff members accomplished this with several strategies, most notably expanded use of accommodations. According to five of the six interviewees, the changes to the accommodations were inspired by a presentation by the school’s federal SIG coach, who was not a school employee but came to the school frequently to guide and support SIG implementation. Although interviewees didn’t have the same perception of who the SIG coach worked for (e.g., the district, the state, or the “administration”), it was clear they felt she was in a position of authority and expertise.

## **2012/13 Testing Environment**

**External scrutiny.** In 2013, interviewees reported scrutiny from the district before and during OAKS testing, as well as additional scrutiny from local media after testing. Two interviewees were informed before testing began that a former teacher had made allegations of cheating on prior OAKS assessments. One of these interviewees stated the district’s “reaction” to the allegations was to give the school administration a “checklist” of criteria to follow during OAKS tests. Someone from the district “came to pop in on” tests while they were in progress “to make we were following the criteria.” According to the interviewee, the criteria:

- Reduced the number of staff members allowed to be present during tests
- Specified that the testing lab should be quiet
- Required that adults were seated away from students, such as in the corners of the testing lab
- Stipulated that read-aloud accommodations (whether students reading aloud to themselves or adults reading math test items aloud to students) had to be conducted one-on-one in separate rooms from other test-takers
- Required that read-aloud accommodations only occur for entire tests (e.g., a teacher had to read an entire test to a student rather than certain questions on it)

Although this interviewee felt “teachers didn’t know about the complaint” before or during testing, teachers knew “the testing environment changed drastically.” As put by another interviewee, teachers “got scared” and “felt like they had to walk on eggshells.” Still another felt “the hammer came down on us” because of the allegations.

Reflecting on all of the aforementioned changes to the testing environment in 2012/13, one interviewee stated, “I think what is inequitable is that none of the other schools like ours [got] popped in on by the district. Other schools I’ve asked, they had the testing environment like ours in 2011/12. Honestly, I don’t think there is another school that has a testing environment like we had in 2012/13.” Another elaborated,

*I believed and other people believed we were doing the right thing [in 2011/12]. We did nothing wrong and we have nothing to be ashamed of. But a lot of teachers didn’t want anything to do with testing. It wasn’t fair to the kids. [In prior years teachers] had given kids practice tests, practice using the resources, but a lot people got scared and just said, “Go in and take it” and that’s it.*

When school test results were released later in 2013, local media reported on the school’s lower scores on the 2012/13 test relative to 2011/12, and surfaced the allegations of cheating. One interviewee commented that it “was a really hurtful thing” to have a former teacher make the allegations, and then to have them made public.

**Testing climate.** In 2012/13, staff members at King School worked to make the testing lab “completely quiet” with adults “not talking to kids” unless they were students with special-needs being individually tested by the SPED or ESL teachers. Two interviewees used the word “sterile” to describe the testing lab, including one who added that it was “by the book.” Another said it was “businesslike, like a factory. We brought them in and moved them out, no emotion to it.” Another interviewee explained, “We could not talk to the students or encourage them...We couldn’t tell them, ‘Good job!’” A final interviewee observed, “That whole experience in the [testing] lab changed greatly.”

Two interviewees commented on students' responses to this "sterile" testing climate. One reported "it was very confusing for the students. They had just had a very positive experience [during the 2011/12 tests] and then all of a sudden it was not positive." The second stated, "It was a horrible experience for the kids" and "they just bombed."

**Supervision.** Interviewees repeated that in 2012/13, only trained staff members could be present in the lab during OAKS testing. Interviewees reported as few as one and as many as four adults in the testing lab. The school had a testing coordinator; in addition to the coordinator, classroom teachers and support teachers (ESL and SPED) administered the test. One interviewee mentioned substitute teachers came to the school to provide support, such as teaching while homeroom teachers administered the tests, while another interviewee reported no support from substitutes during 2012/13 OAKS tests. In their reflections about supervision during testing, two interviewees mentioned a relative "lack of support" compared to 2011/12. One interviewee emphasized that adults in the testing lab were expected to sit away from students.

**Accommodations.** When describing accommodations available to students during 2012/13, five interviewees noted that fewer students were able to access read-aloud accommodations than in 2011/12. Four of them indicated that students receiving ESL and/or SPED services could receive read-aloud accommodations because of the support provided by the ESL or SPED teachers who were able to test their students one-on-one. Students without ESL or SPED services did not receive read-aloud accommodations because the school "didn't have the manpower" to offer one-on-one testing for all students in grades three to eight. One interviewee noted that students did receive snacks upon completion of a test, but did not have access to a break room. In the words of another interviewee, "All of the accommodations from the previous year went out the door" with the exception of "a handful of kids who were either intervention kids or ESL kids who still had the read aloud."

**Training and guidance.** Three interviewees recalled completing online training on administering the OAKS test during 2012/13. Additionally, two of these interviewees mentioned attending a meeting about allowable accommodations. Both noted the guidance offered during this meeting made clear how different accommodations would be compared to 2011/12; one used the word "stringent" to describe the changes. One interviewee involved in test coordination during 2012/13 "passed this down to the staff. They could not tell [students] to check their work, could not remind them to use the features of the test [like highlighting text on the computer screen], they could not encourage students." In terms of accommodations, the most salient difference to interviewees was the change from offering read alouds in small or whole group settings to offering them one-on-one (one interviewee noted read alouds could be one-on-one or in small groups). Another interviewee recalled that the school invited the SIG coach back to "tell us if we were right or wrong" about the accommodations.

**Retesting.** The 2012/13 school year marked the first time students had only one opportunity to repeat each OAKS test; in prior years, students had two opportunities per test. In terms of the size of student groups during the first round of testing, one interviewee noted that whole



classes went to the testing lab at once while another reported that the school “tried to reduce the number of students, split it up into a smaller group” because “when the lab is full, it’s not the best environment.” In discussing testing attempts, interviewees felt the number of students in the testing lab decreased between the first and second rounds of testing since students who met proficiency didn’t have to be retested.

According to one interviewee, OAKS testing began later in the school year during 2012/13, a change meant to ensure students experienced more of the curriculum before testing. This interviewee couldn’t remember when testing started, but recalled that the late start meant the school “almost ran out of time” to complete both rounds of testing.

### ***Understanding of acceptable accommodations shifted between 2011/12 and 2012/13***

Interviewees did not indicate specific parts of the Accommodations Manual from either 2011/12 or 2012/13 that had been presented and interpreted to them, and only one interviewee recalled that the Accommodations Manual had been used during the SIG coach’s presentations about testing in 2012. Our review of both manuals found no differences in how the manuals describe the read aloud accommodations. However, the interpretation of these descriptions was clearly different at the school between 2011/12 and 2012/13. In 2011/12, the interpretation was given by the SIG coach, while in 2012/13 the district’s criteria seemingly shaped the school’s interpretation.

Referring to math read aloud accommodations, the 2011/12 Accommodations Manual stated, “Read aloud accommodations must be provided individually and typically requires a separate setting,” (Office of Student Learning and Partnerships, 2012, p.35). In 2011/12, teachers sat between pairs of students and read aloud in response to a student’s requests; students were not in a separate setting. In contrast, in 2012/13 students received read aloud accommodations one-on-one with an adult, in a separate setting from other test takers.

Similarly, the 2012/13 manual’s description of the read aloud accommodation for the reading test included stated, “Prompts must be read word-for-word without extra explanations or interpretations that are unavailable to other students. To avoid distracting other students, other accommodations may be required for read aloud to a small group (e.g., separate setting)” (Office of Student Learning and Partnerships, 2012, p. 36). In 2011/12, the school did not believe students needed a separate setting for the reading read aloud, but then required the separate setting in 2012/13. Our review of the manuals did not identify a requirement for the 2012/13 test mentioned by one interviewee, namely that math or reading test read aloud accommodations had to be provided only for entire assessments rather than item by item or upon student request.

## Teaching Environment

### *Interviewees noted changes to the teaching environment, especially between 2011/12 and 2012/13*

Interviewees observed several differences to the teaching environment that could have impacted the quality of instruction between 2011/12 and 2012/13. Differences involved:

- Turnover among teachers and support staff
- Long-term absence of an experienced teacher
- Grade-level assignments and re-organizations
- Leveled classes in elementary grades
- Intervention classes in elementary- and middle-school grades

We address each of these topics in two sections below: one for 2011/12 and one for 2012/13. Table 6 summarizes changes to the teaching environment in 2011/12 and 2012/13. Detailed information about the contents of the table follows the table.

*Table 6  
Teaching Environments at King School in 2011/12 and 2012/13*

	Turnover	Long-term absences	Grade-level assignments & re-organizations	Leveled classes	Intervention classes	Other support
2011/12	<p>New 4th/5th-grade teacher</p> <p>New school improvement specialist</p> <p>Mid-year: 5th-grade teacher</p>	None	Mid-year: two 4th/5th-grade classes become one 4th-grade and two 5th-grade classes	<p>3rd &amp; 4th grade walk-to-read</p> <p>5th-grade walks-to-read until 2/12</p> <p>4th &amp; 5th-grade walk-to-math</p> <p>6th-8th departmentalized</p>	<p>3rd-5th-grade reading interventions with SPED teacher</p> <p>6th-8th-grade reading interventions with school improvement specialist</p> <p>4th math interventions with math coach</p>	3rd-5th-grade push-in math instruction and stations by math coach
2012/13	<p>Math coach vacancy</p> <p>New middle school math teacher</p> <p>New middle school science teacher</p> <p>Mid-year: new middle school language arts teacher</p>	3rd-grade teacher (February-April)	<p>3rd-grade teacher new to grade level, starts new loop</p> <p>4th-grade teacher loops with prior students</p>	<p>3rd &amp; 4th grade walk-to-read</p> <p>6th-8th-grade departmentalized</p>	3rd-8th grade reading interventions with SPED teacher	None

Source: Authors' analysis of interview data.

It is important to note the school maintained a consistent overall structure between 2011/12 and 2012/13 in that elementary-school teachers taught all or most of the curriculum to students in their homerooms, while teachers at the middle-school level were departmentalized and taught a single content area to students (e.g., the middle school math teacher taught separate sixth through eighth-grade math classes). Support teachers such as the ESL teachers or SPED teachers offered their services to students at several grade levels; for instance, one ESL teacher specialized in third through eighth grades.

Also noteworthy is that traditionally, King School has had a relatively small faculty. For example, in the current 2013/14 school year, one interviewee counted one third-grade teacher, two fourth-grade teachers, one fifth-grade teacher, four middle school teachers (one each for social studies, science, math, and language arts), and a few specialists that teach multiple grade levels (dance, SPED, ESL, etc.) in the faculty. In such a small school, the departure or addition of a single teacher could impact an entire elementary grade level or, in the case of specialists and middle-school teachers, multiple grade levels.

### **2011/12 Teaching Environment**

**Turnover among teachers and support staff.** At the beginning of the 2011/12 school year, a school improvement specialist and one new elementary school teacher (teaching a split fourth/fifth-grade class) started at King; one interviewee also mentioned at least one new middle school teacher joined the faculty in the year. In fourth and fifth grades, the school featured two split-grade classrooms, both of them fourth/fifth-grade splits. In February, the school added a fifth-grade teacher, who was hired from within the existing elementary faculty. There were no long-term absences of third- through eighth-grade teachers in 2011/12.

**Grade level assignments and re-organization.** With the addition of a new fifth-grade teacher in February, the school re-organized the fourth/fifth combination classes. One of the fourth/fifth teachers took on all of the fourth graders. The other fourth/fifth teacher kept half of the fifth graders; the newly-promoted fifth-grade teacher took the remaining fifth graders. Many students, then, had to adapt to new homeroom classrooms and teachers mid-way through the school year.

**Leveled classes in elementary grades.** Fourth- and fifth-grade students “walked to math” during 2011/12, meaning they switched to classes composed only of students of similar math ability. The fourth/fifth combination teachers and the school math coach provided these leveled math classes. In the words of one interviewee, the levels were defined as “at or almost at grade level,” and “below or well below” grade level. This interviewee felt the school’s leveled math classes enabled teachers to provide “different levels of differentiated support” to students. Also, the math coach “pushed in” to third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade math classes every week. As described by one interviewee, during the weekly visits the math coach taught a lesson and provided a few “math stations” with small group or individual math activities; both the math coach and math teacher remained in the classroom to help students. Another interviewee mentioned that the math coach’s push-in lessons increased the amount of time students spent

studying math, as well as gave students “a lot of opportunities to enrich their math vocabulary and skills,” especially related to content usually covered later in the school year.

Finally, third, fourth, and fifth-grade students walked to read in 2011/12, which suggests students in all of the OAKS tested grades received reading/language arts instruction in leveled classes. An interviewee noted this structure helped students “who [were] struggling but didn’t have an IEP [Individualized Education Program, typically created for students receiving SPED services].” Students could attend a reading class either above or below their grade level, if needed, although one interviewee noted this was the exception rather than the rule.

**Intervention classes in elementary and middle school grades.** Another strategy for differentiated support employed at King School was intervention instruction in both reading and math. One interviewee mentioned pull-out math intervention sessions with the math coach, which happened “a few times a week for 30 minutes” for elementary school math students who were close to meeting proficiency on the OAKS. Another interviewee said the math coach “was working with all of the students especially in preparation for the OAKS.”

In reading, one interviewee said the SPED teacher pulled out elementary-grade students who were struggling to read for a “strategic intervention group.” At the middle school level, another interviewee identified the school improvement specialist as a reading intervention teacher.

### **2012/13 Teaching Environment**

**Turnover among teachers and support staff.** Interviewees noted several staff changes at the beginning of the 2012/13 school year, including new middle school teachers in math and science, both OAKS-tested subjects. The middle school language arts teacher departed mid-year, as well, and was replaced by a new teacher. In the elementary school, the third-grade teacher took a three-month leave during the 2013 testing window, and was replaced by a long-term substitute teacher during that time. Yet another elementary school-teacher hosted a student teacher, who gradually took on increased teaching responsibilities until she “soloed” in math and then other content areas. Finally, all six interviewees referenced the departure of the math coach, whose position remained unfilled for the entire school year.

In contrast to their descriptions of turnover during 2011/12, interviewees’ perceptions of changes to staff in 2012/13 were relatively negative. One recalled that the “middle school changed drastically, pretty much complete turnover.” Another felt the new middle school staff were “definitely disorganized. There was not a lot of learning going on due to behavioral chaos.” Still another said,

*“We had all new teachers in the middle school by testing time. And there were also all first-year teachers...without any disrespect intended, it’s hard. We’ve got often challenging students and it’s hard your first year.”*

And although the student teacher was “good” and “did a very good job,” one interviewee questioned the “effect [having a student teacher] had, as far as some of the kids who were close, but didn’t meet,” proficiency in math.

**Grade-level assignments and re-organization.** Although no new teachers joined the elementary school faculty, two elementary teachers taught different grade levels than they had in the prior year. Two interviewees indicated both of these teachers were “looping” with students, meaning the teacher kept the same class two years in a row, the first year at one grade level and the second at the next grade level. In third grade, the teacher was a veteran educator, but had never taught that grade level before; the teacher began teaching third grade in order to begin looping with a class of students.

**Leveled classes in elementary grades.** Interviewees indicated fewer elementary teachers taught leveled math or reading classes in 2012/13. In math, the school administration opted for the fourth- and fifth-grade teachers to swap classes for math instruction; one interviewee explained the rationale for this change was that one of the teachers had more experience with the math curriculum and thus was needed to instruct a particular grade level. This swapping structure, though, was not a means of leveling classes: the entire classes swapped, regardless of ability level. The school discontinued the swap when the third-grade teacher went on leave in February. The school had a single fifth-grade teacher and no math coach, and so fifth-graders did not walk to math.

In reading, third- and fourth-graders walked to read. One interviewee indicated that only students receiving SPED services walked to a different class for reading instruction; two other interviewees recalled that only students reading two or more years below grade level walked to read, and they walked to a class by the SPED teacher. Fifth graders did not walk to math.

**Intervention classes in elementary and middle school grades.** Interviewees also reported that fewer intervention classes were available to students in 2012/13. No interviewee indicated that math intervention classes were offered at any grade level. In reading, two interviewees said the SPED teacher offered reading interventions in elementary- and middle-school students eligible for SPED services. One of these interviewees noted that the school improvement specialist no longer offered reading interventions to middle school students that year.

## **Long-term Influences on the School**

### *Interviewees noted long-term influences on the school*

Interviewees identified other factors that could have influenced test scores at the school. These remaining factors were not associated with a specific year, but reflect long-term trends in the school and surrounding neighborhood. In-depth exploration of these factors is beyond the scope of this report, but could be subjects of further study:

- Student poverty
- Student transience
- School identity in a gentrifying neighborhood





## Chapter 4: Evidence Concerning Explanations of Achievement Trend in King School

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A number of explanations have been offered informally and in the media to explain the test score trend in King School from 2010/11 through 2012/13. These include changes in the population of students at King and policy that allowed more retests in 2010/11 and 2012/13. Education Northwest assessed the plausibility of these explanations within the limits of the available data. Evidence from analyses of test results and from interviews with King staff members casts doubt on some explanations that have been advanced for the test score trend in King school from 2010/11 through 2012/13.

Retesting in 2011/12 clearly contributed to higher achievement in King school that year compared to 2010/11 and 2012/13. However, neither analysis of test scores nor interviews with school staff members gives a clear answer to why achievement on retests increased so dramatically in 2011/12 compared to the other years.

### **Demographics**

The demographics of the test-taking population at King School did not change substantially from 2010/11 to 2012/13 (Table 7). Furthermore, while average enrollment days were slightly lower for King compared to other K-8 schools, average absences were relatively similar. As a result, changes in attendance and demographics are unlikely explanations for the increase in OAKS scores at King in 2011/12.

*Table 7  
Demographics of the Test-Taking Population in PPS K-8 Schools 2010/11–2012/13*

Year	School	Female	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiple	Native_Am	Pac_Isl	White	SPED	LEP	Enrolldays	Absences
2010	Arleta	45	17	7	14	2	3	0	55	24	13	164	9
2011	Arleta	44	18	7	16	4	2	0	53	26	12	160	9
2012	Arleta	43	16	9	16	5	2	0	52	28	11	166	10
2010	Astor	52	2	6	19	7	2	2	62	24	4	168	8
2011	Astor	52	2	8	20	9	1	2	58	22	2	169	8
2012	Astor	52	3	7	22	9	1	2	56	22	4	168	9
2010	Boise-Eliot	49	3	67	14	5	1	0	11	15	8	158	11
2011	Boise-Eliot	47	4	62	15	8	0	0	11	19	7	165	10
2012	BE-Humb	46	4	60	18	9	2	0	7	19	10	165	11
2010	Beach	52	5	19	40	7	2	1	26	12	17	160	10
2011	Beach	54	5	19	38	7	1	1	30	12	11	167	8
2012	Beach	51	4	16	36	8	1	1	34	13	12	168	8
2010	Beverly Cleary	52	3	5	5	5	2	0	79	9	1	167	8
2011	Beverly Cleary	51	4	4	3	4	2	0	82	10	1	169	8
2012	Beverly Cleary	50	3	4	4	4	1	0	83	10	1	171	7
2010	Bridger	46	18	13	28	5	2	4	31	20	30	160	10
2011	Bridger	48	12	11	29	6	1	4	37	21	22	162	8
2012	Bridger	56	10	6	33	5	1	3	43	20	22	165	8
2010	Creative Science	40	4	3	5	8	1	1	78	21	1	170	9
2011	Creative Science	43	6	4	5	8	1	1	77	21	2	170	7
2012	Creative Science	40	5	3	3	7	0	0	81	22	2	171	8
2010	César Chávez	53	2	16	63	4	0	4	12	11	41	158	9
2011	César Chávez	54	2	15	64	5	0	3	11	15	40	160	11
2012	César Chávez	54	2	14	66	5	1	2	10	15	37	161	9
2010	Faubion	52	4	39	17	10	0	2	27	17	12	165	8
2011	Faubion	52	4	41	18	10	0	1	25	16	8	164	10
2012	Faubion	55	4	37	23	9	0	1	25	15	13	163	9
2010	Harrison Park	47	28	17	19	4	1	1	29	16	30	159	9
2011	Harrison Park	48	25	20	19	4	1	3	28	21	26	160	8
2012	Harrison Park	47	30	18	18	4	1	2	27	22	22	162	10

Table 7 (continued)

Demographics of the Test-Taking Population in PPS K-8 Schools 2010/11–2012/13

Year	School	Female	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiple	Native_Am	Pac_Isl	White	SPED	LEP	Enrolldays	Absences
2010	Hayhurst	47	1	5	7	7	0	0	79	14	2	166	9
2011	Hayhurst	49	2	1	4	9	0	0	84	8	1	171	7
2012	Hayhurst	47	2	0	5	10	0	0	83	9	1	170	8
2010	Humboldt	47	1	58	23	6	2	0	9	16	12	162	10
2011	Humboldt	46	5	58	25	7	2	0	3	15	9	162	10
2010	Irvington	43	1	27	11	9	1	1	51	17	2	169	9
2011	Irvington	45	2	28	10	10	1	0	49	16	3	167	8
2012	Irvington	48	3	24	15	8	0	0	51	17	4	168	9
2010	King	51	3	56	32	4	1	1	3	14	19	158	8
2011	King	42	3	56	32	3	1	0	7	17	19	152	10
2012	King	44	1	55	33	4	2	0	4	19	18	154	8
2010	Laurelhurst	56	3	2	8	7	1	0	79	14	1	169	7
2011	Laurelhurst	55	3	2	7	9	1	0	78	18	1	171	7
2012	Laurelhurst	53	3	1	7	10	1	0	79	17	2	170	7
2010	Lee	40	28	18	15	11	3	1	25	17	22	157	8
2011	Lee	43	26	18	16	11	1	1	25	21	16	164	8
2012	Lee	45	26	19	17	12	2	1	23	23	15	169	9
2010	Lent	46	15	11	34	4	1	0	34	16	23	158	10
2011	Lent	49	16	12	37	4	1	1	29	17	26	162	10
2012	Lent	46	15	11	41	6	1	1	25	17	26	165	8
2010	Marysville	53	22	9	15	7	2	5	40	18	23	164	9
2011	Marysville	54	24	10	20	7	0	3	36	21	21	162	9
2012	Marysville	50	24	10	20	8	1	3	33	18	19	161	7
2010	Ockley Green	41	5	39	18	3	1	5	29	23	12	157	9
2011	Ockley Green	43	5	43	17	5	2	3	26	33	11	160	12
2012	Ockley Green	53	8	40	17	5	2	4	25	25	9	162	7
2010	Peninsula	43	8	17	43	6	1	2	23	13	21	163	8
2011	Peninsula	47	5	17	47	5	1	2	22	19	18	168	9
2012	Peninsula	43	6	17	45	7	2	1	23	21	12	193	11
2010	Roseway Hts	43	10	10	9	6	3	1	61	17	5	165	9
2011	Roseway Hts	46	11	9	8	6	2	1	64	16	4	168	8
2012	Roseway Hts	46	12	8	9	5	1	0	65	16	5	168	6

Table 7 (continued)  
 Demographics of the Test-Taking Population in PPS K-8 Schools 2010/11–2012/13

Year	School	Female	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiple	Native_Am	Pac_Isl	White	SPED	LEP	Enrolldays	Absences
2010	Sabin	47	2	37	15	8	1	1	36	16	4	168	10
2011	Sabin	49	2	29	10	9	3	0	49	14	3	166	9
2012	Sabin	46	2	26	10	8	1	0	53	12	2	169	8
2010	Scott	45	8	14	48	5	2	1	21	9	31	153	12
2011	Scott	49	9	14	53	5	1	1	16	11	29	164	12
2012	Scott	47	9	12	59	4	1	1	12	15	34	162	11
2010	Skyline	54	4	2	7	4	2	1	81	16	3	167	9
2011	Skyline	54	3	2	8	5	1	1	80	18	2	164	10
2012	Skyline	50	4	1	8	6	2	1	80	17	3	167	7
2010	Sunnyside	51	4	2	6	7	1	0	81	14	2	167	9
2011	Sunnyside	51	2	0	5	7	1	0	85	15	1	169	8
2012	Sunnyside	50	1	1	6	8	0	0	83	13	1	168	9
2010	Vernon	53	2	53	23	9	0	1	11	8	11	160	8
2011	Vernon	54	4	42	30	8	1	0	15	12	10	163	10
2012	Vernon	53	2	44	23	9	0	1	20	12	7	165	10
2010	Vestal	57	24	14	16	7	3	2	34	17	21	160	10
2011	Vestal	53	26	10	16	8	4	2	33	22	16	162	10
2012	Vestal	52	24	16	16	9	2	2	31	20	18	159	8
2010	Winterhaven	38	12	1	5	3	1	1	77	10	0	169	7
2011	Winterhaven	38	9	2	5	5	1	1	78	11	0	170	7
2012	Winterhaven	41	7	2	4	6	0	1	80	12	0	172	7
2010	Woodlawn	45	1	48	28	3	0	3	17	17	15	162	10
2011	Woodlawn	46	2	48	27	6	1	4	13	22	15	162	11
2012	Woodlawn	47	1	52	22	4	1	4	16	22	10	163	9

Note Values for Enrolldays are average number of days enrolled; values for Absences are average number of reported absences. Values for all other variables are percent.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of PPS data.

Results for the population of K-8 students who were tested in each year (“intact” population) were very similar to the overall results, with a large increase in the percentage of King students meeting the standards for proficiency from 2010/11 to 2011/12, followed by lower rates of proficiency in 2012/13 (Table 8). This is additional evidence that the 2011/12 achievement results for King school probably did not arise mainly from changes in the student population.

**Table 8**  
*Percentage of Students in the Intact Population of Students from 2010/11 to 2012/13 Meeting or Exceeding the Standard for Proficiency*

	Percent (Percentage Point change)									
	Reading/Literature					Mathematics				
	2010	2011	2012	2011 to 2012	2012 to 2013	2010	2011	2012	2011 to 2012	2012 to 2013
Arleta	56.1	64.0	69.1	( 7.9)	( 5.0)	51.4	52.9	56.4	( 1.4)	( 3.6)
Astor	76.2	81.1	67.1	( 4.9)	(-14.0)	89.8	77.7	65.6	(-12.1)	(-12.1)
BE-Humb	59.4	59.4	44.5	( 0.0)	(-14.8)	54.7	72.7	42.2	( 18.0)	(-30.5)
Beach	55.8	62.6	66.3	( 6.7)	( 3.7)	61.2	63.0	62.4	( 1.8)	( -0.6)
Bev Cleary	92.7	92.7	93.6	( 0.0)	( 0.9)	82.1	86.7	89.0	( 4.6)	( 2.3)
Bridger	41.4	65.5	44.8	(24.1)	(-20.7)	48.2	63.5	47.1	( 15.3)	(-16.5)
Creative Sci	78.7	78.7	78.7	( 0.0)	( 0.0)	65.9	70.5	72.7	( 4.5)	( 2.3)
C Chávez	43.3	49.2	42.5	( 5.8)	( -6.7)	48.8	35.0	34.1	(-13.8)	( -0.8)
Faubion	54.5	69.6	63.4	( 15.2)	( -6.3)	52.2	54.9	54.0	( 2.7)	( -0.9)
Harris Park	51.4	63.1	54.7	( 11.7)	( -8.4)	55.0	59.1	53.2	( 4.1)	( -5.9)
Hayhurst	87.9	89.9	91.9	( 2.0)	( 2.0)	85.9	83.8	87.9	( -2.0)	( 4.0)
Irvington	62.2	68.5	68.5	( 6.3)	( 0.0)	52.0	62.4	66.4	( 10.4)	( 4.0)
<b>King</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>(47.4)</b>	<b>(-39.5)</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>64.9</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>(26.0)</b>	<b>(-44.2)</b>
Laurelhurst	86.1	92.9	90.1	( 6.7)	( -2.8)	82.5	83.7	83.3	( 1.2)	( -0.4)
Lee	52.8	62.5	48.6	( 9.7)	(-13.9)	52.5	48.9	40.4	( -3.5)	( -8.5)
Lent	48.1	54.4	56.3	( 6.3)	( 1.9)	49.4	58.2	55.1	( 8.9)	( -3.2)
Marysville	49.2	65.8	61.7	( 16.7)	( -4.2)	54.7	59.0	54.7	( 4.3)	( -4.3)
Ock Green	42.7	51.2	43.9	( 8.5)	( -7.3)	32.5	35.0	31.3	( 2.5)	( -3.8)
Peninsula	58.9	65.2	64.3	( 6.3)	( -0.9)	59.3	69.4	75.9	( 10.2)	( 6.5)
Ros Heights	76.6	74.8	74.3	( -1.9)	( -0.5)	70.8	60.4	65.6	(-10.4)	( 5.2)
Sabin	75.3	84.9	80.6	( 9.7)	( -4.3)	76.3	87.1	77.4	( 10.8)	( -9.7)
Scott	42.6	52.9	49.3	( 10.3)	( -3.7)	30.8	30.8	33.8	( 0.0)	( 3.0)
Skyline	85.6	85.6	83.5	( 0.0)	( -2.1)	82.8	82.8	78.8	( 0.0)	( -4.0)
Sunnyside	84.3	89.4	81.8	( 5.1)	( -7.6)	73.1	78.2	75.6	( 5.1)	( --2.6)
Vernon	53.6	50.5	51.5	( -3.1)	( 1.0)	35.1	35.1	42.3	( 0.0)	( 7.2)
Vestal	53.6	61.6	60.7	( 8.0)	( -0.9)	64.9	57.7	58.6	( -7.2)	( 0.9)
Winterhaven	94.9	96.3	95.6	( 1.5)	( -0.7)	96.3	97.8	95.6	( 1.5)	( -2.2)
Woodlawn	51.3	41.6	53.1	( -9.7)	11.5)	26.1	26.1	34.2	( 0.0)	( 8.1)
All K-8	64.9	71.4	67.2	( 6.5)	( -4.2)	62.2	64.5	61.6	( 2.3)	( -2.9)
Similar to King	49.9	56.8	51.2	( 6.9)	( -5.6)	46.2	48.6	43.6	( 2.4)	( -5.0)
K-8 not King	65.6	71.3	67.8	( 5.7)	( -3.5)	62.7	64.5	62.4	( 1.8)	( -2.1)

Note: Results are presented for 3,838 students who tested in reading/literature and 3,819 students who tested in mathematics for three years.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of PPS data.

### **Frequency of Retests**

On average, King students who did not meet the standard on their first attempt did not retest substantially more times than students in other K-8 schools who did not meet the standard on their first attempt (Table 9). Furthermore, the average number of retakes for King students was actually slightly smaller for 2011/12 than in 2010/11 (table 9). As a result, the increase in the percentage of King students achieving proficiency in 2011/12 compared to 2010/11 cannot be due to more retesting in 2011/12.

*Table 9*  
*Average Number of Retests for Students Not Meeting the Standard on First Attempt*

School	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math
Arleta	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.0
Astor	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.0	2.0
BE-Humboldt	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.0	2.0
Beach	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.0	2.0
Beverly Cleary	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.0
Boise-Eliot	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.5	NA	NA
Bridger	2.5	2.8	2.3	2.4	2.0	2.0
César Chávez	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.0
Creative Science	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.0	2.0
Faubion	2.4	2.4	2.7	2.5	2.0	2.0
Harrison Park	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.0
Hayhurst	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.0	2.0
Humboldt	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	NA	NA
Irvington	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
King	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.0	2.0
Laurelhurst	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.0	2.0
Lee	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.0	2.0
Lent	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.0
Marysville	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.0	2.0
Ockley Green	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.0	2.0
Peninsula	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.0
Roseway Heights	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.0
Sabin	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.0
Scott	2.8	2.9	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Skyline	2.4	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.0	2.0
Sunnyside Environ	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0
Vernon	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.0	2.0
Vestal	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Winterhaven	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.0	2.0
Woodlawn	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.0
All K-8	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.0
K-8 except King	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.0
Similar to King	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.0	2.0

NA indicates scores not reported because school was reconfigured.

*Note:* Averages include students who did not meet the standard on first attempt and retook the tests. Students who did not meet the standard on first attempt but did not retake the test were not included. In 2012/13 state policy limited retests to two attempts. Similar schools include Boise-Eliot-Humboldt, Boise-Eliot, Cesar Chavez, Faubion, Harrison Park, Humboldt, Lee, Lent, Ockley Green, Scott, and Woodlawn.

*Source:* Education Northwest Analysis of PPS data.





## Chapter 5

# Current PPS Testing Practices

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This chapter provides an overview of PPS testing practices, with emphasis on training of staff members, monitoring the testing process, and responding to reports of irregularities. Information in this section was obtained from staff members from the district office. The purpose of this description of current PPS testing practices is to provide context for the recommendations in the following chapter. Education Northwest was not asked to conduct a comprehensive review of PPS activities in these areas as part of this project.

### **Training for Staff Members Involved in Testing**

School staff members involved in testing students must read the current test manual published by ODE and undergo annual training required by the state including online training modules. PPS sends a hard copy of the manual to each school and it is available online. The ODE modules outline requirements and the district adds its own requirements to the modules. Training is required for everyone involved with testing—anyone who is in the room during testing is required to participate. The introduction to the modules explains that the training does not replace reading the test manual, which is a state requirement.

Two key documents are embedded within the training module: the district’s data security test and the state’s Test Assurance Form. Staff members are required to answer a specific percentage of items correctly in order to complete training successfully. When that happens, staff members complete the state Test Assurance Form. (Last year the district did its own online verification using the state form. However, because of technical glitches some staff members were unable to access the form.) In signing the Test Assurance Form, examinees assert that they have read the state’s current test manual. Staff members who complete the training successfully receive a certificate.

Schools have leeway in arranging for staff members to complete the training modules. At some schools, staff members participate in group training in the lab at their school. At most schools, staff members complete the modules individually.

District staff members meet face to face with the new test coordinators at the beginning of the year through January or February and provide an hour-long briefing on testing security and responsibilities of test coordinators. 30-40 minutes are devoted to security and the coordinators’ role in maintaining security. In addition, the district conducts meetings with returning test coordinators. Finally, training materials are posted online in the Learning Campus, the district’s main vehicle for training.

In the past, the district employed a train-the-trainer model, but this model was not universally effective, partly because of differences in the strengths of particular trainers. As a result, training was placed online to convey the same information to everyone. According to PPS, this system works better with the testing calendar since some schools don't test until after spring break. Staff members in these schools can go back to Learning Campus to refresh their knowledge. Modules are updated annually and posted to Learning Center in November. This process will change next year with the start of the Smarter Balanced assessment; one expected change is that training will occur later in the year.

Finally, the district provides substantial support to schools concerning testing. First, district staff members respond to questions from principals and test administrators by phone and email and sometimes by in-person visits to schools. In addition to receiving questions from principals and test coordinators, district staff members receive emails from teachers. Communication with schools is not confined to the testing window. Updates about testing are sent by email throughout the year.

### **Monitoring the Testing Process**

ODE has stated that it would audit testing in schools. The district conducts site visits in anticipation of the state audits. These site visits are the primary means by which the district monitors testing in the schools.

District staff members visit schools with the purpose of reviewing test security using a checklist drawn from guidelines in the test administration manual. District staff members have found the checklist to be useful in alerting school staff members to proper testing conditions. For example, before it became a key feature in the state manual that no technology (for example, student cell phones) should be in the test environment, the district included it on the checklist. The checklist is distributed to all test coordinators with the expectation that it will be shared with school staff members at the beginning of the year or at the beginning of testing. District staff members feel that the checklist was very clear about what was allowable or not allowable. In addition, the district maintains a website with information for test coordinators including the checklist, a teacher readiness checklist, and a form for reporting improprieties.

The district includes 80 comprehensive schools and 20 community organizations. There is no overall plan for visiting every school; currently not every school is visited each year. In past years the dates and times of the visits and the names of teachers to be visited were announced before the visits. District staff members email the principal, test coordinator, and teacher, inform them that a visit is upcoming and send the checklist and the manual to remind them what the visit will cover. Visits are not conducted according to a specific protocol, though the members of PPS' research and evaluation department follow agreed-upon steps when making visits. These steps are described on the department's website. When district staff members visit schools, they generally observe one teacher and the teacher's students as they are testing. After visiting

schools, district staff members, they send notes of their visit to the principal, test coordinator, and the teacher as appropriate.

The district is currently discussing making unannounced visits. In previous years the testing window was wider so visits needed to be scheduled when schools were testing. With the existing shorter testing window, a site visit is sure to include testing in at least one classroom.

Despite the security visits by district staff members, schools bear the responsibility of self-reporting testing improprieties. A relatively common irregularity is when a student is supposed to take the SPED assessment and takes the regular one instead. If a number of such mistakes are reported at a school, district staff members will visit the school the following year and conduct a face-to-face meeting with the testing coordinator to discuss ways to limit such mistakes in the future. In general, following a report from a school, district staff members will schedule a visit to the school the following year.

In addition to checks on test security, site visits provide opportunities for identifying best practices. For example, some schools place screens between computers so students can't see the monitor next to them; some schools place a laminated tri fold between computers; some use the computer tower as a visual barrier; some use a round table so students can't see adjacent monitors. District staff members who encounter such innovations photograph them and include them in the training modules. Cell phones are ubiquitous wherever adolescents gather, including during testing. The district does not have a policy regarding students' cell phones during testing, though they are mentioned on the district's checklist. District staff members observed that some schools prohibited them and others allowed students to turn phones off and place them in a sealed manila envelope at the front of the room or in sealed baggies kept under their desks. District staff members shared this information with schools to advance their understanding of what controls they can exert over testing.

System monitoring as described above is unchanged since 2011/12 except that more schools were visited during the last test season.

## **Reporting Irregularities**

PPS follows ODE guidelines concerning testing. ODE has a form for reporting irregularities that PPS teachers can complete on the PPS website. When that happens, the district passes the report on to the state. As described above, schools bear primary responsibility for self-reporting of improprieties in testing. However, school staff members may report irregularities directly to ODE. Other modes of communicating irregularities include the ODE helpdesk for the state assessment and the ESD support desk. When district staff members receive a report of an irregularity in a school they ask the principal to investigate. The investigation form asks, "What is the school action?" and "What is the district action?" If the district identifies cause to invalidate a test result, it asks ODE to invalidate.

## **Investigation**

As described above, identifying irregularities depends primarily on self-reporting by schools of irregularities. However, district staff members review assessment data to identify significant increases or decreases in levels of achievement and may follow up with site visits to schools that display substantial changes.

## **Consequences of Testing Irregularities**

If an irregularity is reported, the student's results are invalidated. Some irregularities are the result of errors by teachers. For example, a teacher may have been unaware of restrictions on explaining words on a test to students. A report of this kind is typically followed by a conversation with the principal, the teacher, and a district staff member that refers to the testing manual. Of course, students themselves are sometimes responsible for irregularities. Examples are cheating using a cell phone or the old-fashioned way of just asking a neighbor for assistance. When identified, these acts result in the perpetrator's test being invalidated.

## Chapter 6: Recommendations

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Administrative procedures for the Oregon state assessment have grown increasingly complex. For example, the ODE Test Administration Manual (TAM) for 2013/14 runs to 165 pages (though it addresses procedures for assessments in addition to OAKS). The complexity of the testing process creates challenges in training staff members to conduct assessments according to specified procedures. It also complicates efforts to monitor assessment practices in the schools.

The importance of preventing, detecting, and responding to irregularities in testing has received renewed emphasis nationally following media reports of large-scale cheating by educators in Atlanta and Philadelphia and reports of localized cheating by educators in Baltimore and other districts. In addition, after conducting a survey of state testing administrators, GAO reported that officials in 33 states confirmed at least one instance of cheating in 2010/11 and 2011/12<sup>1</sup>.

Education Northwest did not examine all the possible explanations for the spike in achievement at King in 2011/12. PPS already covered much of that ground in its earlier investigations. Instead, we focused on the effects of retesting on achievement and on reports by King staff members concerning instructional and testing conditions in the school from 2010/11 to 2012/13.

Education Northwest identified no direct evidence of irregularities in testing King students in 2011/12. At the same time, the achievement trend at King from 2010/11 to 2012/13—specifically the spike in achievement on retests in 2011/12—is very different from the trend observed over that time in other PPS K-8 schools. Furthermore, interviews suggest that staff members may have been perplexed by changes in testing procedures—for example, changes to allowable accommodations. Finally, we are unable to explain the achievement spike at King in the context of changes in the student population, larger numbers of retests that year for King students, or to changes to testing procedures noted by district staff members and by staff members from King school.

In responding to a request from PPS for recommendations concerning its testing procedures, Education Northwest formulated recommendations for district response if irregularities are suspected or reported and recommendations for maintaining the integrity of the testing process by, for example, increased attention to training and prevention. The recommendations were formulated based on review of OAKS results and interviews with King staff members by Education Northwest, and on information provided to Education Northwest by district staff members concerning the testing processes described earlier in the report. The recommendations include suggestions concerning best practices in preventing, detecting, and responding to irregularities in testing from a 2012 symposium hosted by the U.S. Department of

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<sup>1</sup> Government Accountability Office (2013). K-12 Education: States' Test Security Policies and Procedures Varied. Available from <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/654721.pdf>

Education<sup>2</sup>. Within these local and national contexts to the recommendations, it should be kept in mind that PPS is already taking action in a number of areas addressed by the recommendations.

### **Policy, Planning, and Communication**

1. Review district policy to ensure that the expectation of honest testing is explicitly stated and consequences for deliberate irregularities are identified.
2. Each year, district leadership should communicate the importance of administering assessments faithfully, that the assessment process and assessment results will be monitored, violations will be investigated and violators face consequences.
3. Develop a comprehensive plan for maintaining the integrity of the testing process and for responding to reports of irregularities. The plan should give appropriate attention to detecting and responding to testing irregularities. However, preventing irregularities from occurring should be the first priority.
4. Students and parents should be given clear guidelines both for proper conduct by students during testing assessment by students and for proper conduct by school staff members.

### **Training**

5. Review irregularities reported by school staff members to identify needs for additional training or for clarification of specific procedures.
6. Solicit suggestions from staff members concerning training that would help them understand the assessment process better, including maintaining test security.

### **Monitoring**

7. Develop a comprehensive system of checking adherence to requirements in the Test Security chapter of the TAM and success in avoiding the adult-initiated and student-initiated improprieties identified there.
8. Observations of the testing process should include unannounced visits.
9. Include data displays such as those in this report in analyses of test results and as checks of the integrity of the testing process.

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education symposium on testing integrity.  
<http://ies.ed.gov/whatsnew/conferences/?id=966>.

## Reporting Irregularities or Suspected Irregularities

10. In addition to the testing impropriety forms already available, establish additional channels for reporting irregularities or suspected irregularities including reports from parents and students and clearly specify the kinds of irregularities that should be reported.
11. Establish a means for reporting irregularities or suspected irregularities in confidence.

## Investigation

12. Investigate whenever any of the following occur<sup>3</sup>:
  - Significant increases in scores
  - Significant decreases in scores
  - Unusual answer patterns
  - High numbers answers changed from wrong-to-right
  - Report of suspicious conduct
  - Report of cheating
13. Establish a protocol for conducting school-level investigation of irregularities that are limited in scope and duration and a plan for comprehensive investigation with outside investigators when irregularities are suspected to be widespread or ongoing.

We want to emphasize that any irregularity in testing students should be reported to district officials, but also that not every mistake made by school staff members will warrant full-scale investigation by outside agents. Ideally, the culture of trust within the district will be strong enough that staff members who make a mistake in testing students will report it to maintain both the transparency of the system and faith in the results, and to contribute to continuous improvement of the testing process. Finally, some in the district and the community may recoil at formalizing preventative and investigatory processes in regard to testing irregularities. It will require committed leadership to build consensus that ensuring integrity in testing is of paramount importance for students, parents, the district, and the community and that the recommended actions are necessary.

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<sup>3</sup> Current technology and resources available to the district may limit the ability of the district to conduct its own investigation of unusual answer patterns or high numbers of answers changed from wrong to right. Support from ODE may be required to investigate these matters.





# Appendix A:

## Protocol for Interviews with King Staff Members

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### Introduction

Thank you for taking time to speak to me today. I'm a technical advisor and researcher from Education Northwest. Education Northwest is based here in Portland. We're a nonprofit organization that works with teachers and administrators, policymakers, and community members around teaching and learning. We do many kinds of research, program evaluation, and technical assistance for schools and districts throughout the Northwest states.

PPS hired Education Northwest to gather additional perspectives on trends in King Elementary School's OAKS results from 2010/11 to 2012/13. PPS would like us to document ideas from school staff members about possible causes for the increases and decreases in student outcomes here and to learn as much as possible from your experiences with student tests. The district's goal is ultimately to ensure that all schools are following best testing practices. To assist the district, Education Northwest is analyzing the school's OAKS data from 2010 to 2013 and interviewing staff members that worked at King during those years. If you were not employed here from 2010 to 2013, please let me know now – I don't need to take any more of your time today.

I have five questions for you. The questions are about your role here, your role in OAKS testing, and your thoughts about the school's student achievement data since 2010. Accuracy is important, so please take your time to answer – it's challenging to think about things that happened up to three years ago, and I understand you may need to pause and collect your thoughts or think out loud a bit. While we talk, I will be taking notes to capture your responses to these questions. To ensure that I fully understand your responses, I may ask you short follow-up questions or ask you to confirm that my notes are correct. My notes from today are confidential; nothing you say will be attached to your name and we will not be providing notes or any other raw data to PPS. Also, we will make sure that no one outside the research team can connect you to your responses. For example, we will not identify a comment as coming from a teacher in a particular grade level. I will interview as many people as possible to ensure that we have a variety of perspectives from staff members at King.

Once all of the interviews are complete, my colleagues and I will analyze the results and summarize patterns or trends that emerge. We will write a report to PPS that includes our findings and provides any recommendations we think would be helpful to PPS as it plans for testing going forward. We will not provide the report to anyone else, but PPS may distribute it to others. As I said earlier, our report to PPS will not name anyone we interview. In addition, we will not provide any information about your interview to anyone here in the school or anyone outside of the research team.

Please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary. You can take as much time as you'd like to answer the questions, and you may skip any question for any reason. You may also end the interview at any time, for any reason. Before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

## Interview Questions

1. Were you a staff member at King at any time from 2010/11 to 2012/13? If so, when were you there and in what role or roles?
2. What OAKS testing did you conduct each year (subjects, grade levels)?
3. What students did you test (own, mix of own and other classrooms, only other classrooms)?
4. What do you think accounted for the increase in achievement at King school from 2010/11 to 2011/12 and the decline in performance from 2011/12 to 2012/13?

Record comments under the following headings:

Curricular changes

Changes in professional development

Changes in the student population

Changes in school staff

Changes in the testing environment including changes in test preparation, supervision of students during testing, use of practice assessments, or instructions for test administrators

5. What other changes at King or in the district might be associated with the achievement trend from 2010/11 to 2012/13?

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions in the future or would like to talk to me more, please contact me at Education Northwest.

## Appendix B:

# Protocol for Follow-Up Interviews with King Staff Members

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### 2010/11

1. What accommodations were present for students during OAKS testing?
2. Did the school make it a priority for students to have support from adults they have relationships with during testing that year?
3. Did the district provide guidance about “How Close Are You?” during testing?
4. Did staff receive training for OAKS testing?
  - a. Who delivered the training?
  - b. Did everyone receive the same training?
5. What was the testing lab like during OAKS that year (lights out or noisy? Both?)?
6. About how many adults were in the testing lab during OAKS testing?

### 2011/12

1. What role did the math coach have in preparing students for the OAKS math test?
2. Who, if anyone, provided reading interventions during this school year?
3. Did staff receive training for OAKS testing?
  - a. Who delivered the training?
  - b. Did everyone receive the same training?
3. About how many adults were in the testing lab during OAKS testing?
4. Did 3-8 teachers use leveled classes (walk to read and/or walk to math)?

### 2012/13

1. Who, if anyone, provided reading interventions during this school year?
2. Did staff receive training for OAKS testing?
  - a. Who delivered the training?
  - b. Did everyone receive the same training?
3. About how many adults were in the testing lab during OAKS testing?
4. Did 3-8 teachers use leveled classes (walk to read and/or walk to math)?



## References

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