

BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
Bellingham, Washington

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
DATE: February 8, 2025
SUBJECT: Ends Monitoring Report 2.1, Part 1

Introduction

I am pleased to submit this Ends monitoring report (End 2.1 - Student Competence, Part 1) to the school district's board of directors. This annual report typically focuses on student testing performance in English language arts (ELA), math and science and compares our students' Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) test performance to comparable and higher-performing districts.

This year's report is our third since the pandemic of 2020-21. As the board will recall from our reports over the past two years, student proficiency rates across the country, in our state and within our district decreased following the pandemic, and much of this decline has been attributed to the pandemic disruption of schools and learning. With a third full year of post-pandemic test data, we again present proficiency and growth rates of Bellingham students compared with other districts we have typically relied upon in prior years' Ends 2.1, Part 1 report.

The remaining Ends reports for this school year will be presented on the following schedule:

- We will present Ends 2.1, Part 2 at the March 13, 2025, school board meeting focused on graduation rates and students' participation in post-secondary education and career preparation in comparison with peer districts.
- The combined reports on Ends 1, 2 and 3 on evaluating the vision, mission and all 17 outcomes in The Bellingham Promise will be presented at the May 15, 2025, school board meeting.

By way of reminder, the revised Ends 2.1 policy language focuses us on comparing progress to districts that are demographically similar to Bellingham, as well as to districts whose students typically outperform our students on the standardized test. The Ends 2.1 policy language follows:

STUDENT COMPETENCE

Ends 2.1: Consistent with the district Vision and Mission, all children of the Bellingham Public Schools community will attain high academic achievement, develop essential skills and attributes necessary for continuous growth in learning and graduate from high school ready for participation in post-secondary education and career opportunities. All students will succeed and grow regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, English language proficiency or disabilities.

- 1. Every student's achievement, skills and attributes will show continuous significant growth, and measures will exceed the Washington state benchmarks and be high performing relative to similar students in demographically comparable districts, as measured by state assessments and other available data, as appropriate.*
- 2. Gaps in achievement, skills and attributes between groups of students will close. For state or federally identified student populations, any gap in achievement will be eliminated, and annual achievement will be greater than that of similar students in demographically comparable districts.*
- 3. Every student will make continuous advancement toward graduation. Measures of on-time and extended graduation attainment will be high performing relative to similar students in demographically comparable districts.*
- 4. After graduation, student participation in post-secondary education and career preparation shall increase and exceed participation in comparison to demographically comparable districts.*

While being held accountable to our demographically comparable districts, we also continue to compare our progress to other district, state and national data that offer a more comprehensive view of student competence.

In this Part 1 report, we focus on numbers one and two above. In our Ends 2.1 Part 2 report presented next month, we focus on indicators three and four.

Bellingham and Comparable District Proficiency Comparisons

We first focus on Bellingham's student assessment results in comparison to the group of 38 most comparable districts in Washington State. We reviewed whether re-evaluating the comparable district criteria for school year 2023-24 would uncover significant changes or additional districts to add to the list of 38 comparable districts. Table 1 displays the parameters for the selection of the districts most comparable to Bellingham.

Table 1. Parameters for Comparable Districts Selection with 2023-24 Demographics

Criteria	Parameters	Low	BPS	High
Enrollment	75% above and below	2,879	11,515	20,151
% Free/Reduced Meal	50% above and below	21.5	43	64.5
% Asian and White	25% above and below	51.8	69	86.3
% Multilingual Learner	75% above and below	2.2	8.9	15.6
% Special Education	25% above and below	13.7	18.2	22.8

For the purpose of comparisons, our comparable group of districts remains at 38. We have included Bellevue along with our own district data and the data representing the overall state levels. For 2024 we added Central Kitsap, which is very similar in size and percentage of students eligible for free/reduced meals and eliminated Bethel which has grown to a point where it is much larger than our district.

Board members will also see some additional data included with this year's Ends 2.1, part 1 report, as the State has begun to publish what they are calling "foundational grade level knowledge" scores. Typically, data we have relied on to report student proficiency levels has included only those scoring at a level three or four, out of a four-point scale, on the state test. These students have been the group deemed to be meeting or exceeding state standards. The publication of additional data on foundational grade level knowledge is the State's attempt to capture those students who are approaching standard, scoring at a level 2 but not yet at a level 3. The board will note that we have included a bit of this new information in this year's report but have separated out this new information from our reporting on students who are meeting or exceeding standard.

A. English Language Arts (ELA) Proficiency Comparisons

We first compare the SBA ELA scores of those 38 comparable districts along with Bellingham and the State, comparing the current year (2024) with scores from 2023. Specifically, Figure 1 shows, on average, 52 percent of Bellingham students in Grades 3-8 and 10 met standard in ELA in 2024, putting our scores slightly above the state average, and just below the middle of the group of 38 comparable districts.

Figure 1. 2024 English Language Arts – Percent Meeting Standards in Grades 3-8 and 10

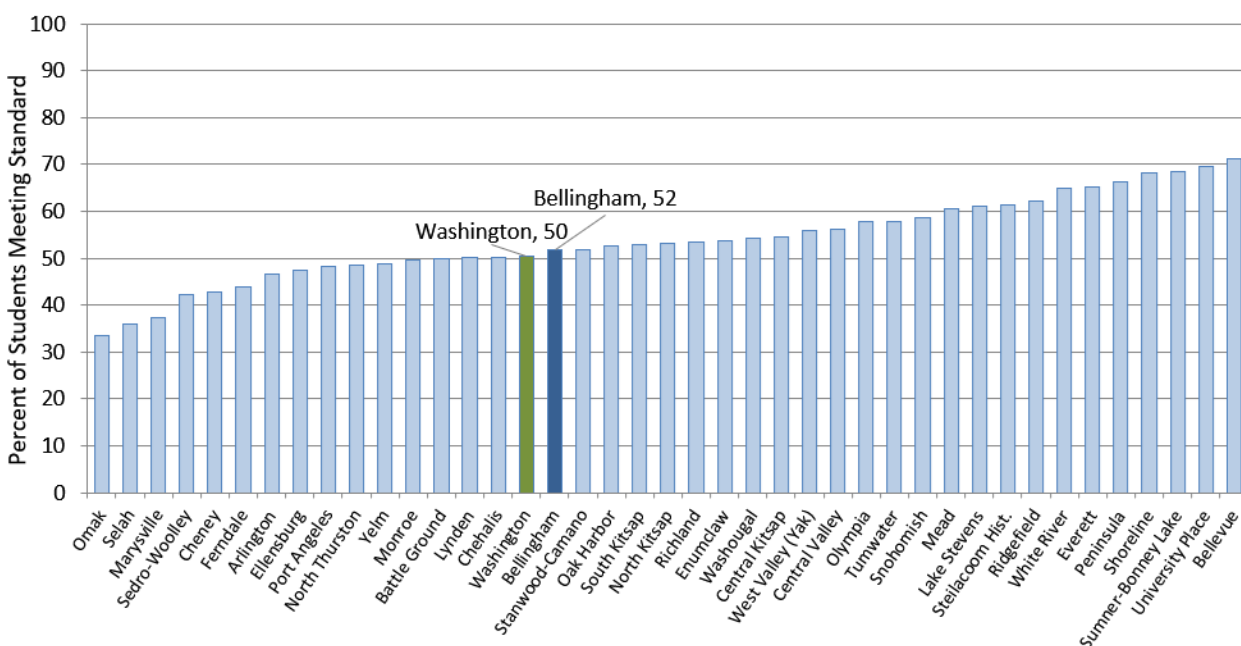
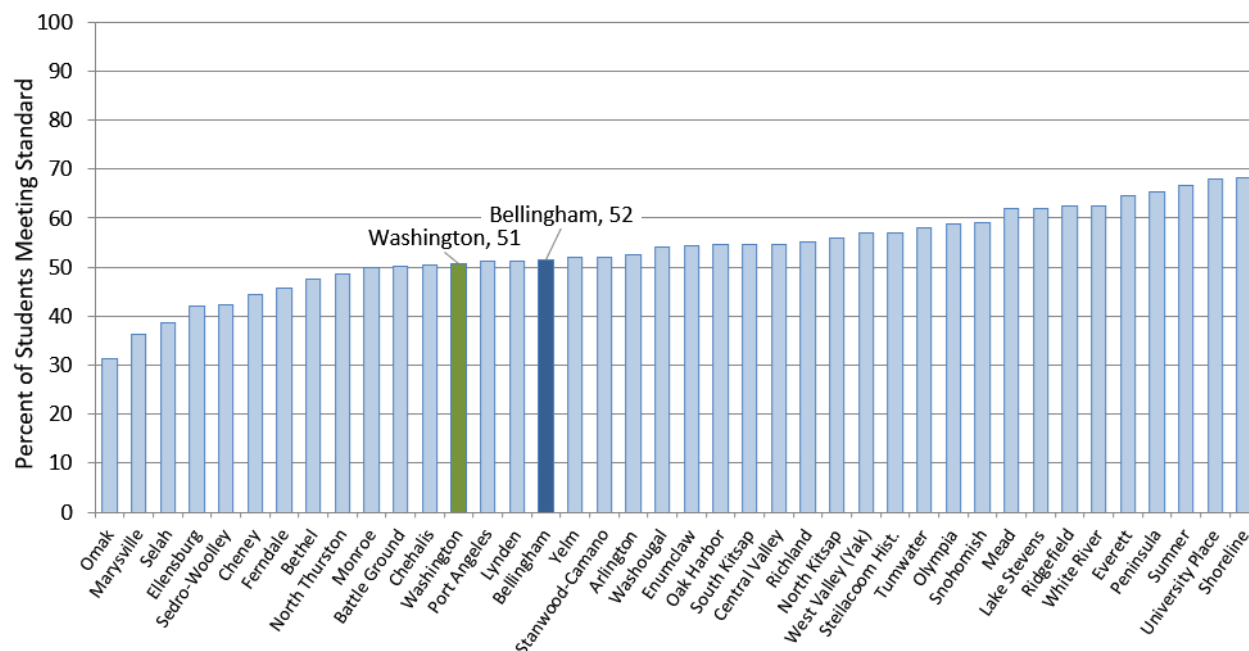


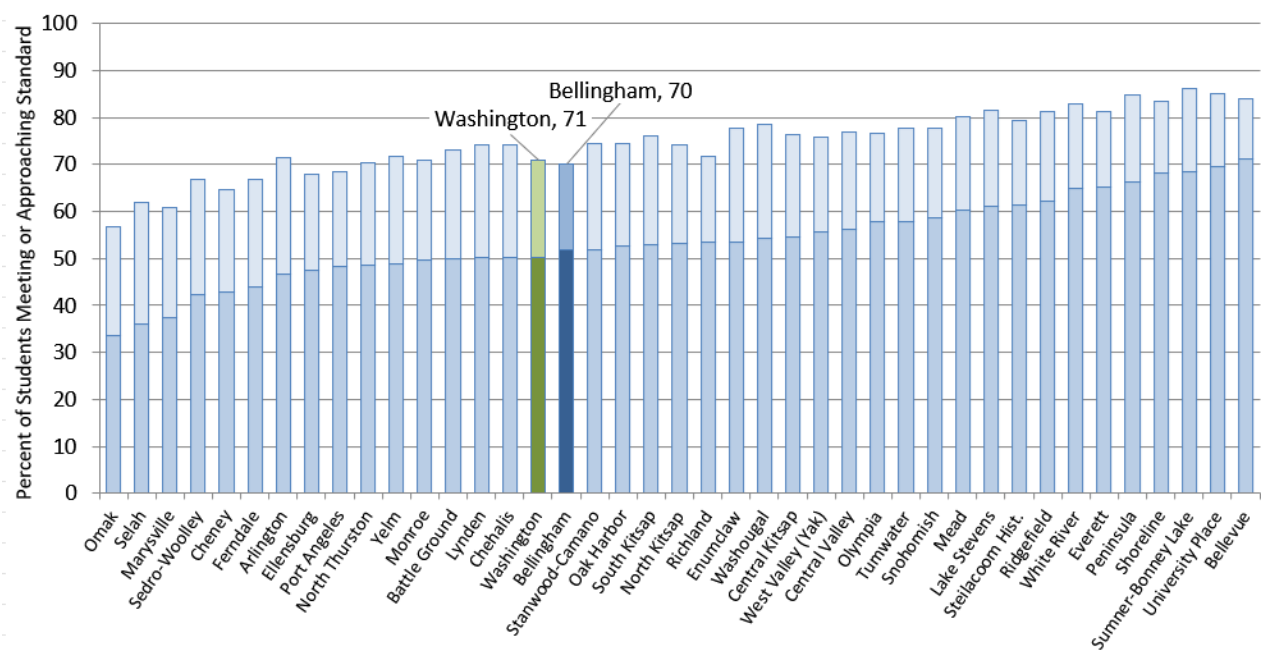
Figure 2 provides the same view of ELA scores for 2023, and as is evident from the graphs, our student scores positioned us in a similar spot relative to the state and comparable districts in year-over-year comparisons.

Figure 2. 2023 English Language Arts – Percent Meeting Standards in Grades 3-8 and 10



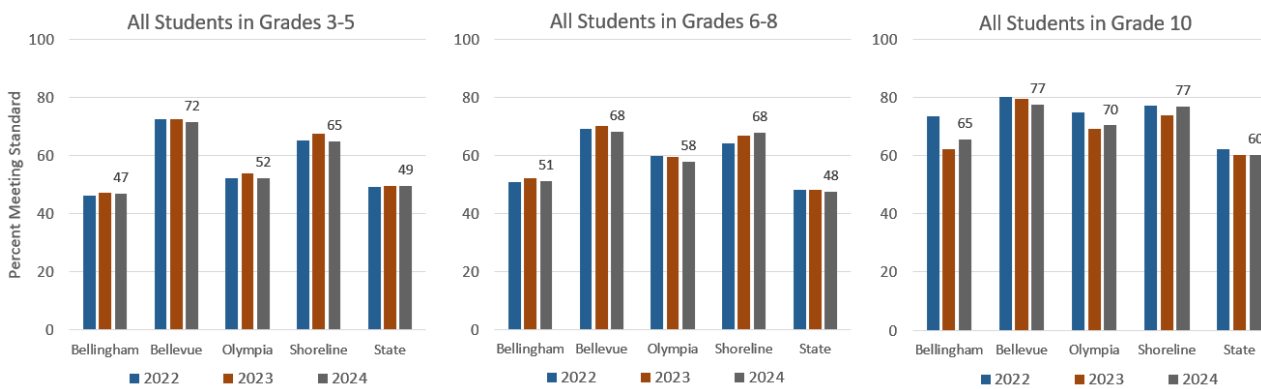
Just for comparison purposes, we are also including the graph comparing our students' scores on foundational grade level knowledge in ELA (as referenced earlier) for 2024. Figure 3 displays a comparison bar chart of the percent of students meeting or "approaching" standards in Grades 3-8 and 10. This chart includes the "approaching standard" portion of students who scored a level 2 on the state assessment; this portion that the state is referring to as possessing "foundational" knowledge is stacked on top of the percentage meeting or exceeding standard for each district included in the chart. As is evident from the graphic, adding the students who scored at level 2 on the SBA increases the overall percentage by about 20 points. We believe the state's purpose for including this information in their reporting to districts is to help districts have a sense of how many students are close to meeting standard. As such we include it here as a part of our report this year.

Figure 3. 2024 English Language Arts - Foundational Grade Level Knowledge and Above in Grades 3-8 and 10



As in prior years, we are also including here trend comparisons with a small group of districts referred to as our “high bar” comparable districts. The districts included in this group are Shoreline, Olympia and Bellevue, they are included specifically because their student scores tend to be higher than those of our students in Bellingham. This serves an aspirational purpose, and when we see trends that move us closer to or further from these high bar comparable districts, which is worth noting. Figure 4 displays ELA data for Bellingham, Washington state and our three “high bar” districts over the years 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Figure 4. English Language Arts – High Bar Comparison Trends in Grades 3-8 and 10



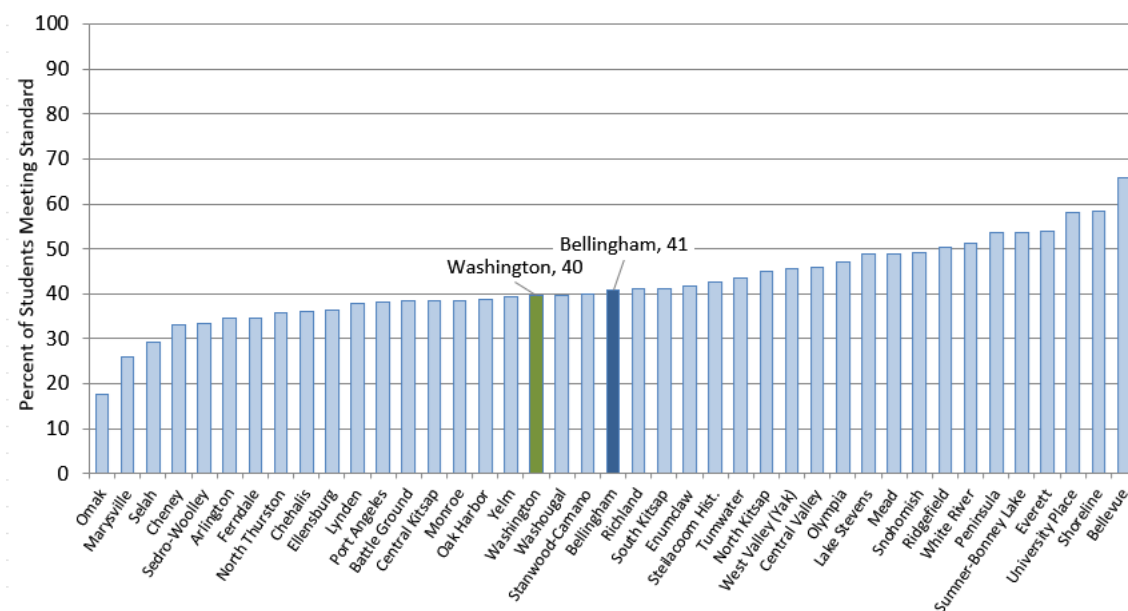
The graphics in Figure 4 display trends in ELA scores for students in Grades 3-5 (left), Grades 6-8 (middle) and Grade 10 (right). Bellingham’s percentage of students meeting standard in Grades 3-5 held steady from 2023 to 2024 at 47 percent meeting standard

overall, while elementary grade band scores for students in Olympia, Bellevue and Shoreline all experienced a small year-over-year drop. The percentage of Bellingham students meeting standard in Grades 6-8 dipped slightly from 52 to 51, as did scores for this grade band in Bellevue and Olympia, with Shoreline's scores increased slightly to 68 percent meeting or exceeding standard in the middle grade years. Grade 10 percent of Bellingham students meeting standard increased to 65 percent in 2024, as did scores in two of the other high bar comparable districts, Olympia and Shoreline, while Bellevue's Grade 10 scores dropped by a small percent.

B. Math Proficiency Comparisons

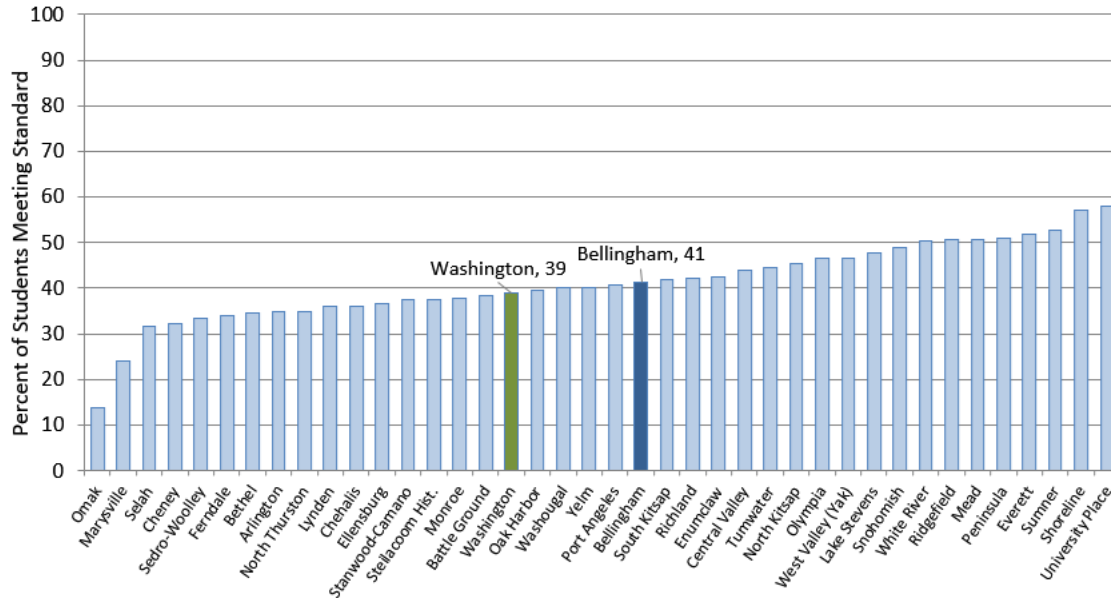
Data from the 2023 state assessment, as the board may recall, revealed that 41 percent of Bellingham students met standard in math, a 2 percent increase overall from 2022. While a relatively modest gain, this was a welcome post-pandemic improvement in math scores. Figure 5 displays the 2024 percent meeting or exceeding standard in math for Bellingham, Washington state and among the 38 comparable districts in our comparison group. Bellingham students' scores held steady in math in year-over-year comparison, slightly above the state average.

Figure 5. 2024 Math – Percent Meeting Standards in Grades 3-8 and 10



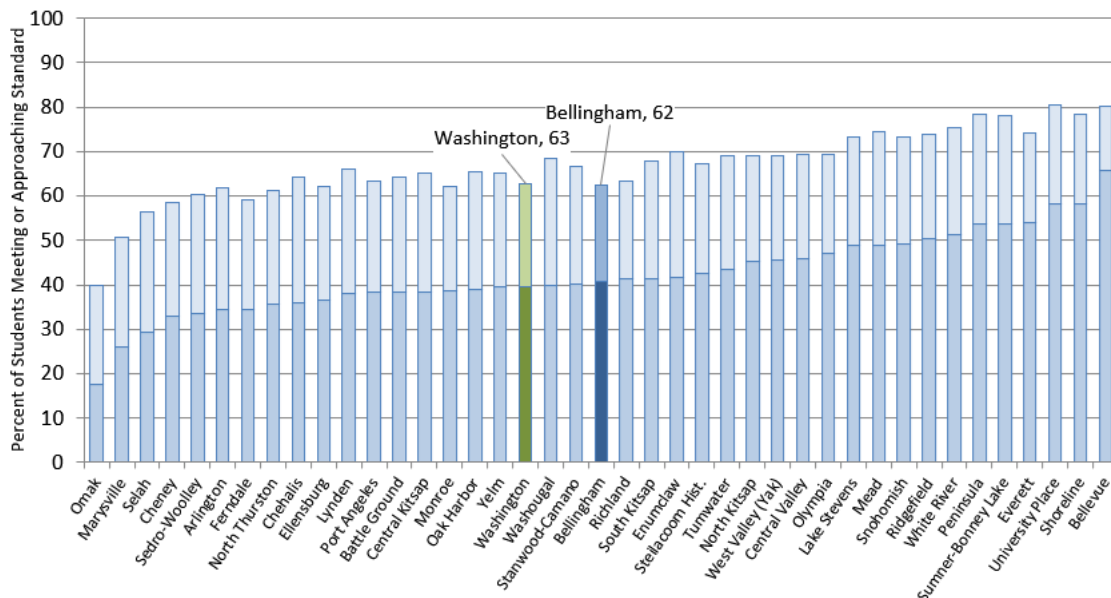
and about in the middle of the group of comparison districts. For reference, Figure 6 displays the 2023 data, and as is apparent, the proficiency scores for Bellingham students overall held steady from 2023 to 2024.

Figure 6. 2023 Math – Percent Meeting Standards in Grades 3-8 and 10



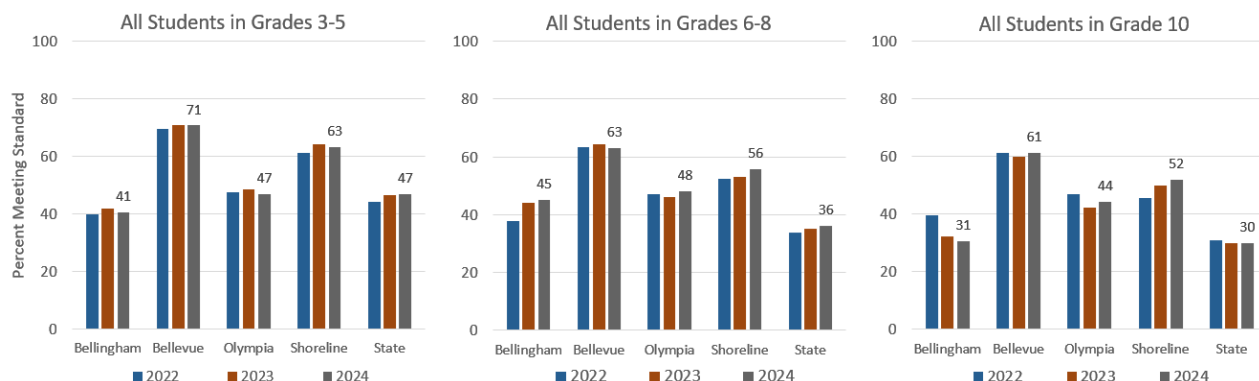
As we did with ELA above, we are also including the graph comparing our students’ scores on “foundational” grade level knowledge for 2024 in math. Figure 7 displays a comparison bar chart of the percent of students meeting or “approaching” math standards in Grades 3-8 and 10. This chart includes the “approaching standard” portion of students who scored a level 2 on the state assessment; this portion is stacked on top of the percentage meeting or exceeding standard for each district included in the chart. When this group is added to those meeting standard, this totals 62 percent of all Bellingham test takers.

Figure 7. 2024 Math - Foundational Grade Level Knowledge and Above in Grades 3-8, 10



The graphics in Figure 8 display trends in math assessment scores for students in Grades 3-5 (far left), Grades 6-8 (middle) and Grade 10 (far right) from Bellingham, Washington state and the three “high bar” comparable districts noted earlier. In Grades 3-5, all districts in this group experienced a slight drop in 2024 scores in year-over-year comparisons with those from 2023.

Figure 8. Math – High Bar Comparison Trends in Grades 3-8 and 10

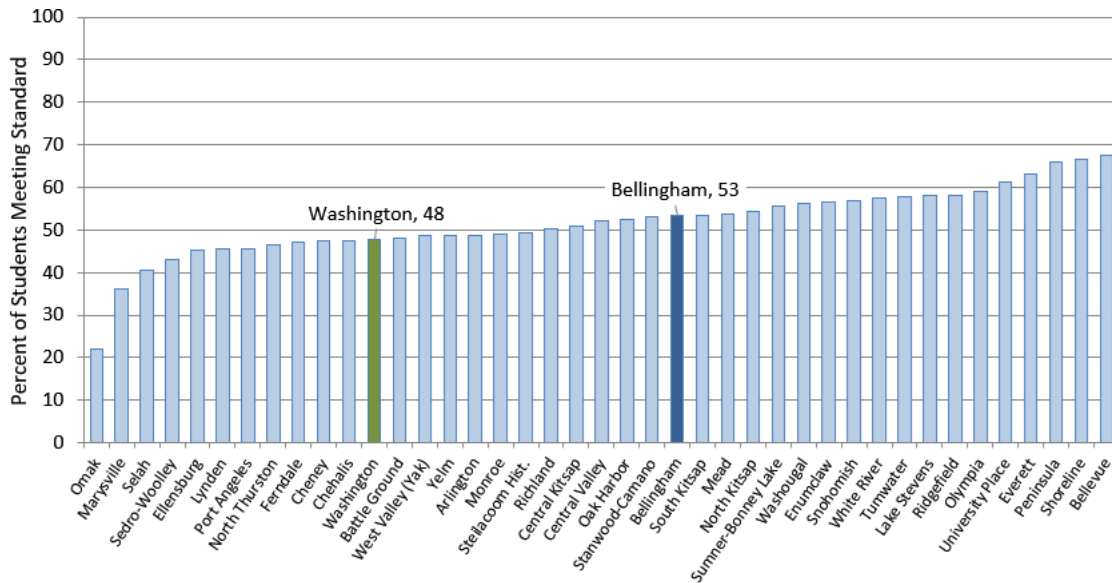


The percentage of Bellingham students meeting standard in math Grades 6-8 improved slightly to 45 percent meeting standard. Scores for this grade band in Olympia and Shoreline also improved slightly, with Bellevue showing a slight decrease to 63 percent meeting standard. Grade 10 percent of Bellingham students meeting standard decreased slightly in 2024, to 31 percent, while scores in Olympia, Bellevue and Shoreline percent meeting standard in math in Grade 10 improved slightly.

C. Science Proficiency Comparisons

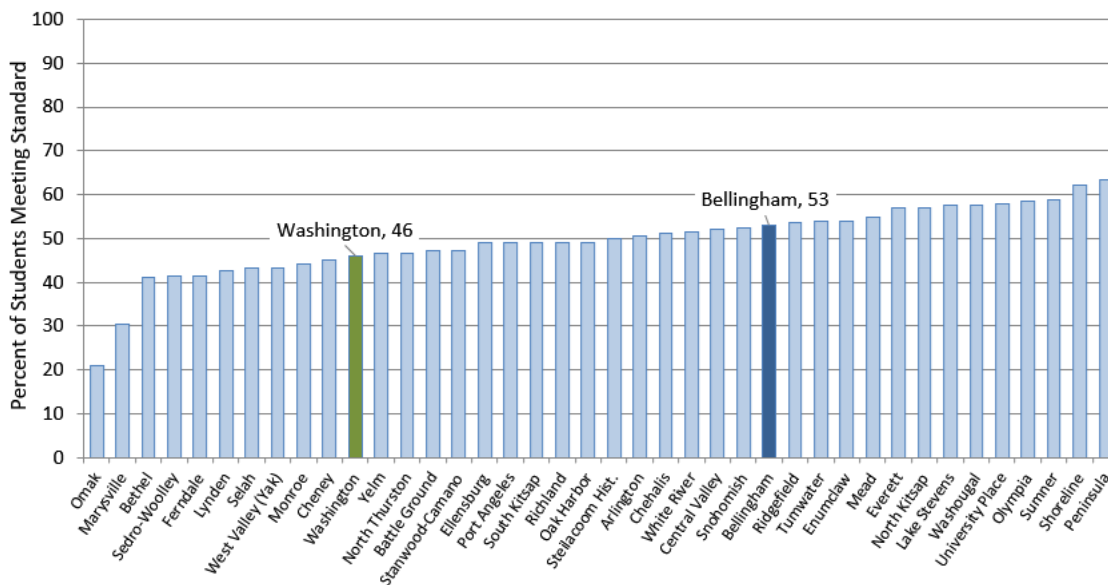
Figure 9 shows the percentage of students meeting standard in science in Grades 5 and 8; 53 percent of Bellingham students in Grades 5 and 8 met or exceeded the science standards in 2024. Bellingham students’ scores were positioned above the state, and about on par with scores from 2023 (Figure 10).

Figure 9. 2024 Science-Percent Meeting Standards in Grades 5 and 8



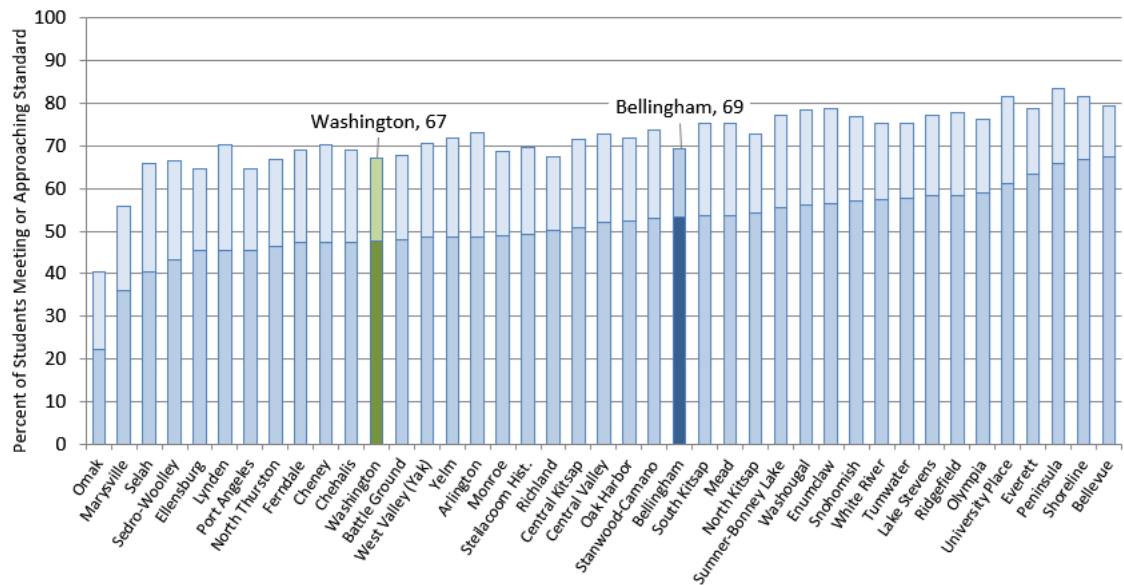
Students' proficiency scores in science continue to position us above the middle of this group of 38 comparable districts.

Figure 10. 2023 Science-Percent Meeting Standards in Grades 5 and 8



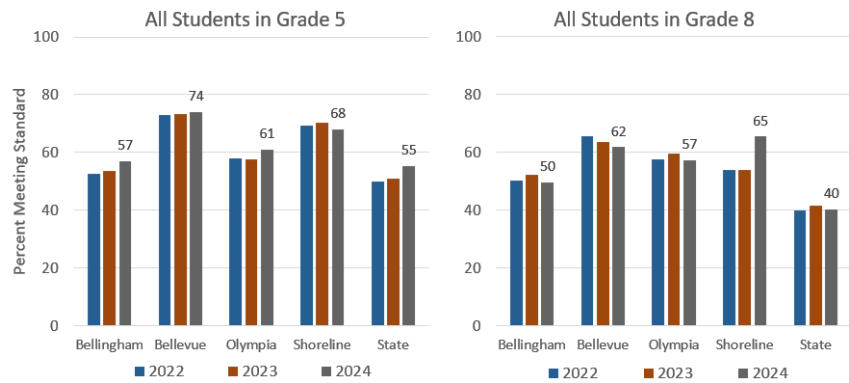
Students' scores in science on "foundational" grade level knowledge (as now being reported by the state) for 2024 in math are included as Figure 11. This chart includes the "approaching standard" portion of students who scored a level 2 on the state assessment; this portion is stacked on top of the percentage meeting or exceeding standard for each district included in the chart. When this group is added to those meeting standard, this totals 69 percent of all Bellingham test takers.

Figure 11. 2024 Science–Foundational Grade Level Knowledge and Above in Grades 5 and 8



High bar district comparison trends (Figure 12) revealed an increase for Bellingham’s fifth grade students in science, while scores in Bellevue and Olympia increased slightly and Shoreline scores decreased slightly. In eighth grade, the percentage of Bellingham students meeting standard in science dropped slightly to 50 percent for 2024; Grade 8 science scores in Olympia and Bellevue also dropped slightly while those in Shoreline increased more significantly.

Figure 12. Science – High Bar Comparison Trends in Grades 5 and 8



In summary, Bellingham student proficiency rates remained relatively steady in year-over-year comparisons to the 2023 data. Bright spots where we saw some growth in proficiency rates included Grade 10 ELA, middle school math and elementary (Grade 5) science. Bellingham students’ proficiency rates in all three subject areas tested positioned us slightly above the state averages. The inclusion of “foundational” knowledge data as reported by the state this year suggests that approximately 20 percent of students in each grade level and subject area are scoring just below the proficiency level.

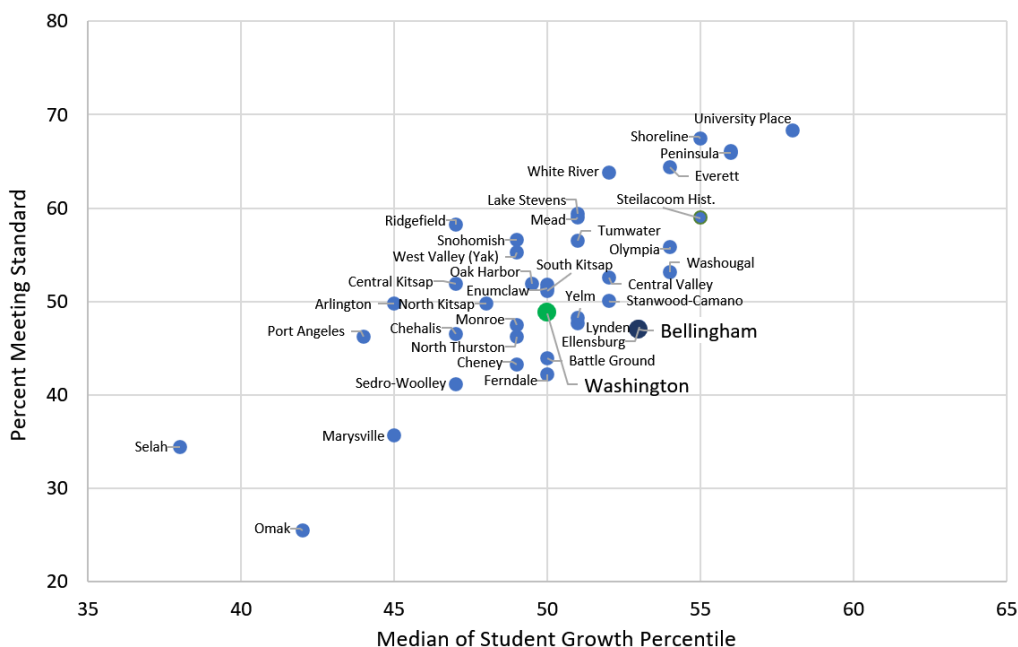
Bellingham and Comparable Districts Student Growth Percentile Comparisons

In addition to reporting on proficiency levels, we report on student growth measures compared to other districts. Student growth measures show how a given population of students grew compared with the expected growth overall from the state. The median state growth score for the entire population of students in the state sits precisely at the 50th percentile; this represents the overall midpoint of growth scores across all districts in Washington. So, when we compare our students' growth, percentile scores above the 50th percentile would suggest our students are doing better growth-wise than the state; scores below the 50th percentile, not as well as the state in growth. In addition, we compare these growth percentile scores to our group of 38 comparable district peers.

A. English Language Arts Growth Percentile Comparisons

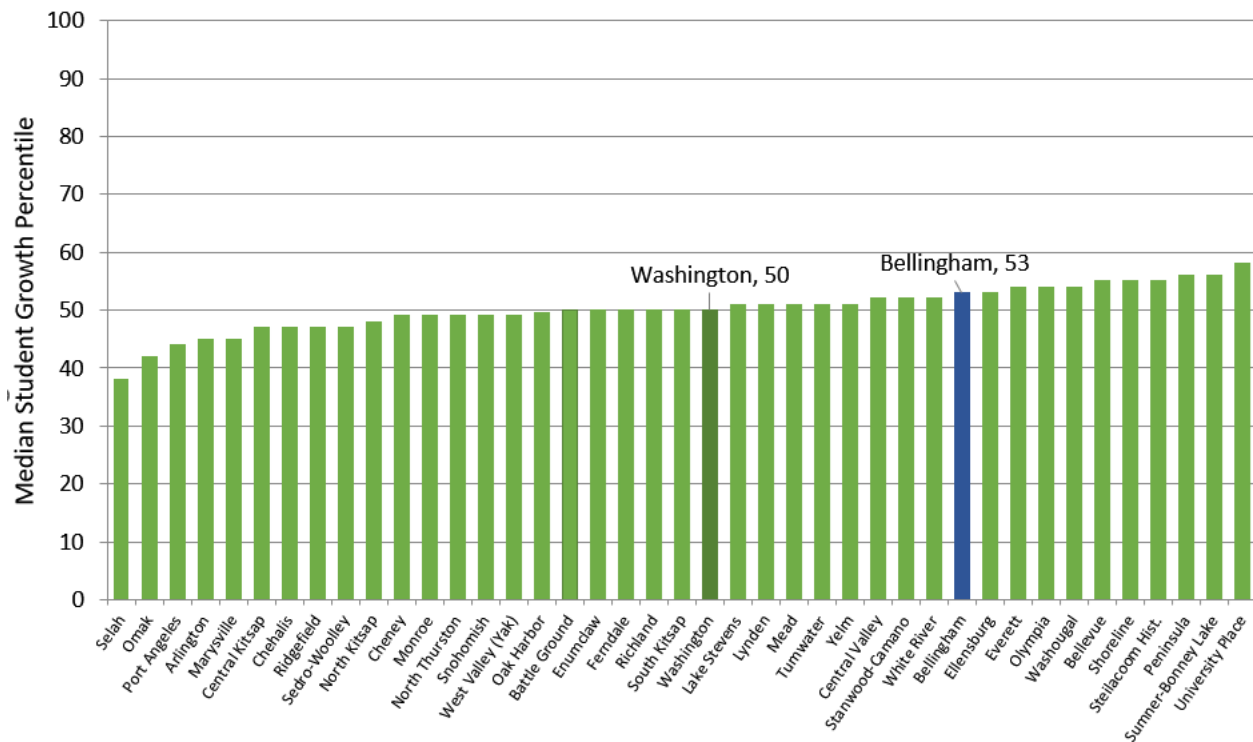
Figure 13 arrays the group of 38 comparable districts on a scatterplot showing growth versus percent meeting standard in ELA. Each district's dot represents its relative placement to the other districts on the 2024 percentage of Grade 4-8 students meeting standard in ELA (vertical axis) and median student growth percentile (horizontal axis).

Figure 13. ELA – 2024 Percent Meeting Standard by Median Growth Percentile, Grades 4-8



Bellingham student growth in Grades 4-8 is above the median, and the percentage meeting standard at approximately 53 percent, which is slightly higher than 2023. Figure 14 shows the districts in the group of 38 arrayed by student growth percentile, which provides a different way to see how our district compares to others in the group.

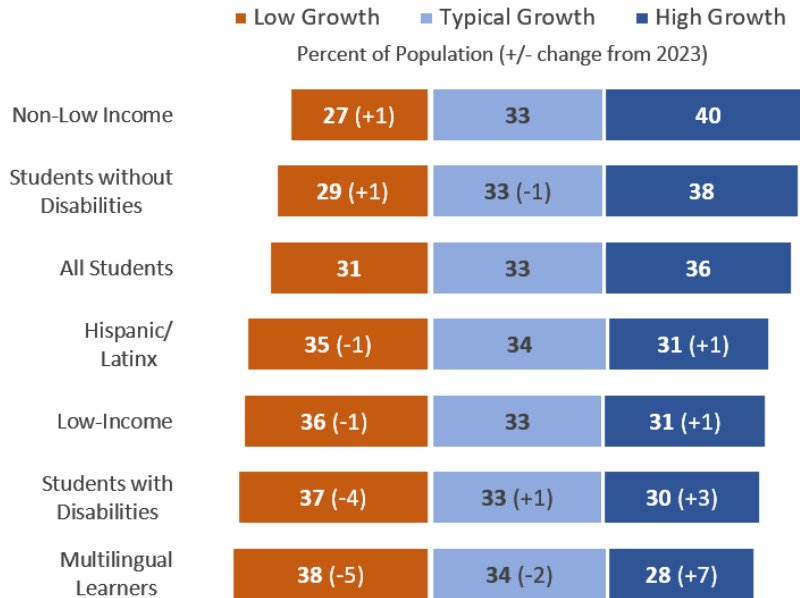
Figure 14. ELA – 2024 Median Student Growth Percentile in Grades 4-8



As is evident from this second chart, Bellingham’s average student growth percentile in ELA positioned our district in the top third of the comparable group of 38.

We also examined 2024 growth in ELA for different student subgroups internal to Bellingham (Figure 15). Student subgroups include non-low income, students without disabilities, all students, Hispanic/Latinx, low income, student with disabilities and multilingual learners. The groups are ranked by percentage into categories of low growth, typical growth and high growth. This allows some internal comparisons and highlights groups where additional support or emphasis may be needed to ensure typical or better growth is occurring. For example, 63 percent of students with identified disabilities experienced typical or high growth, compared with 71 percent of students without identified disabilities. The numbers in parentheses show the change in each category for each group compared with 2023 data. Multilingual learners showed an overall 7 percent increase in the percentage of that population achieving high growth. In fact, we were pleased to see that the percent of Hispanic/Latinx students, students identified as low income, student identified with disabilities, as well as multilingual students experiencing high growth in ELA all increased, and the percent of these populations experiencing low growth decreased in year-over-year comparisons.

Figure 15. Bellingham SD 2024 ELA Growth by Student Group



B. Math Growth Percentile Comparisons

We also examined growth percentiles in math. Figure 16 displays the 38 comparable districts on a scatterplot. As with the ELA scatterplot above, each district's dot represents its relative placement to the other districts in 2024 percentage of Grade 4-8 students meeting standard in math (vertical axis) and median student growth percentile (horizontal axis). We were pleased to see Bellingham student growth in Grades 4-8 was the highest among this group of comparable districts.

Figure 16. Math Scatterplot 2024 Growth by Percent Meeting Standard, Grades 4-8

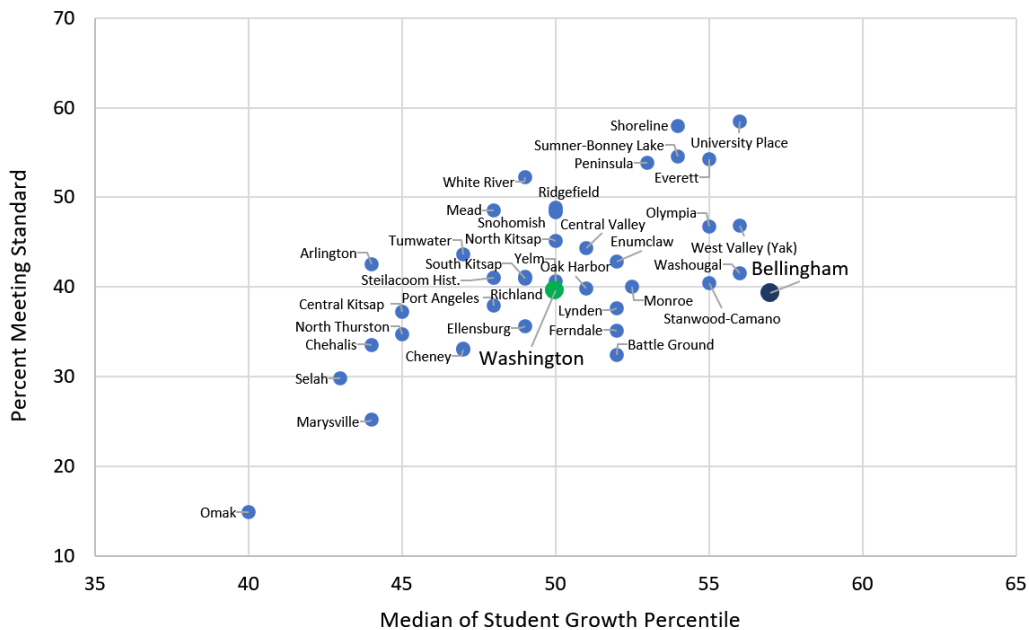
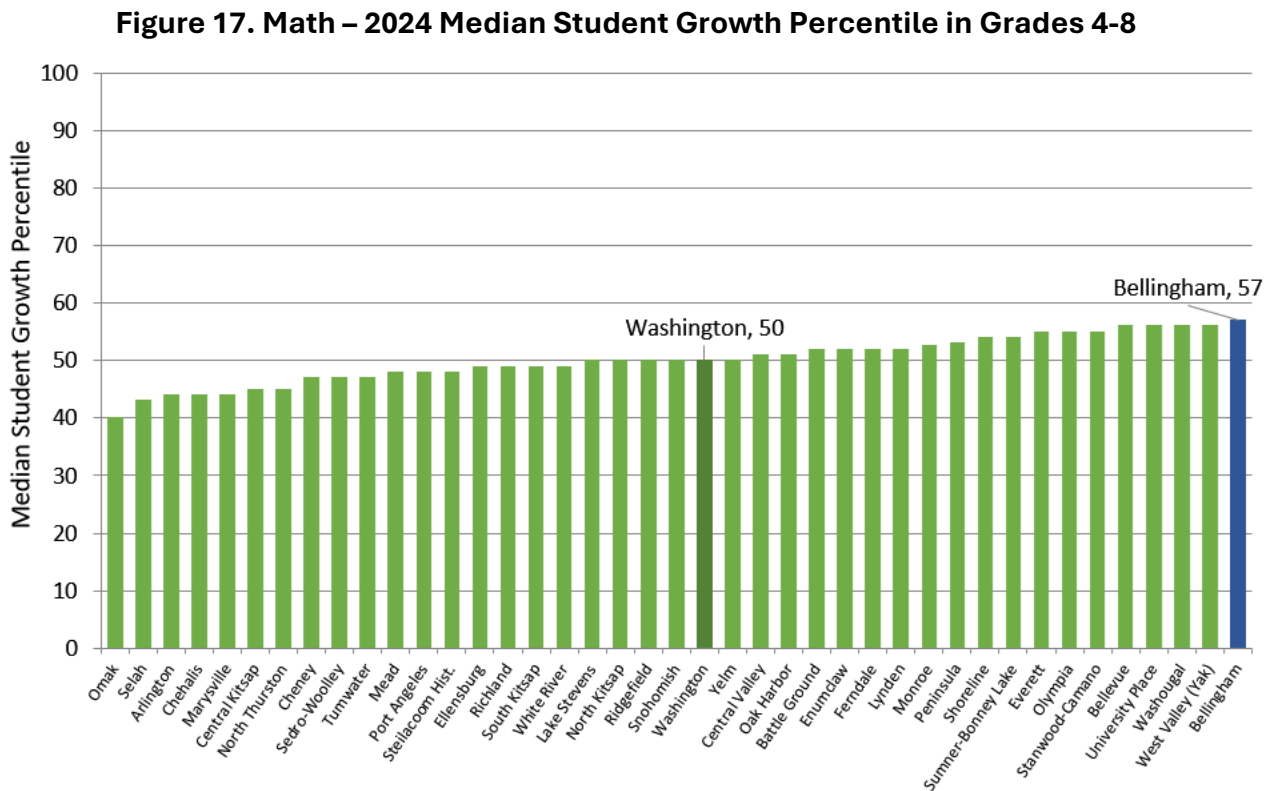
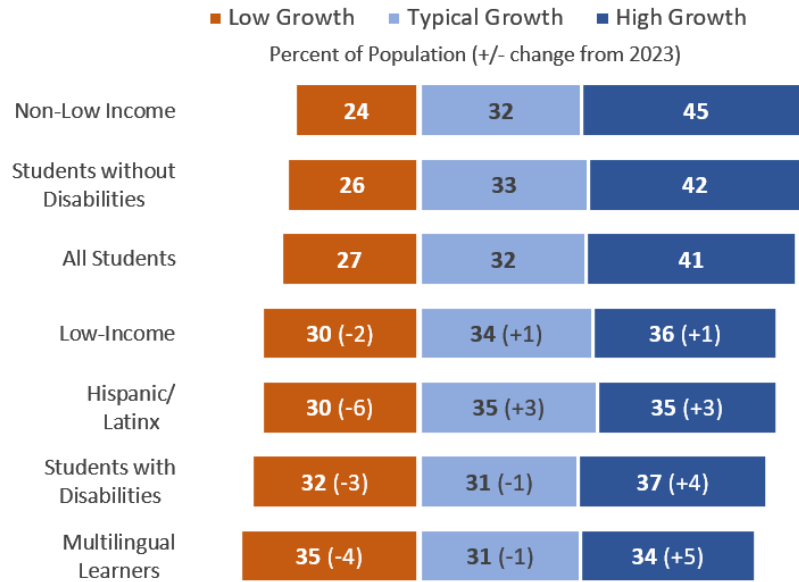


Figure 17 shows the districts in the group of 38 arrayed by student growth percentile, which shows Bellingham students’ growth percentile rank at the high end of this spectrum of 38 comparable districts.



We also examined 2024 growth in math for different student subgroups internal to Bellingham (Figure 18). Sixty-eight percent of students with identified disabilities experienced typical or high growth, which was higher than in 2023, compared with 75 percent of students without identified disabilities who scored in the high growth category. The numbers in parentheses show the change in each category for each group compared with 2023 data. Multilingual learners showed an overall 5 percent increase in the percentage of that population achieving high growth. In fact, the percent of Hispanic/Latinx students, students identified as low income, student identified with disabilities, as well as multilingual students experiencing high growth in math all increased, and the percent of these populations experiencing low growth decreased in year-over-year comparisons. Seeing our students hitting higher growth marks this year provides some evidence to expect that over time our proficiency scores will also rise.

Figure 18. Bellingham SD Math Growth by Student Group



With the strong math growth numbers we observed in the 2024 data, we were curious to dig a little deeper to try to understand what drove the improvements in student group percentiles, particularly in math, to a higher level. Figure 19 shows the school and grade level specific median math growth for 2024.

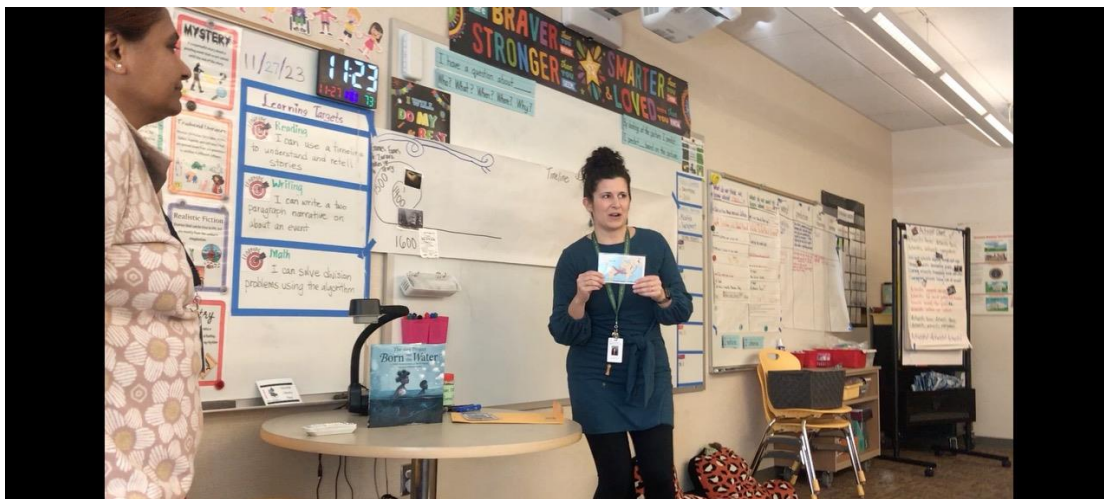
Figure 19. Bellingham SD 2024 Math Growth by School/Grade Level

Median SGP by Grade	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	All Grades
Alderwood	49.5	32				45
Birchwood	34	40.5				39
Carl Cozier	53	35.5				44
Columbia	44	56.5				49
Cordata	46	65				52.5
Geneva	63	46				54.5
Happy Valley	51.5	42				47
Lowell	59.5	73				63
Northern Heights	54.5	36.5				44.5
Parkview	55	62				59
Roosevelt	26	32.5				26
Silver Beach	56.5	31				43
Sunnyland	51	54				52
Wade King	55	65				61
Fairhaven			67.5	76	58.5	68
Kulshan			74	70	61	70
Shuksan			49.5	69	56	58
Whatcom			69	61	46.5	58
District Total	49	47	66	70	54	57

Darker green color in the squares indicates higher growth scores. Any score above the 50th percentile indicates growth above the state expected average. The data suggest that middle school growth numbers are helping to drive the shift in our overall growth data. All but two grade level school groups scored above the 50th percentile in our middle schools in 2024, with some groups scoring in the low-to-mid 70th percentile range. Keep in mind that the 2024 middle schoolers were Grade 2, 3 and 4 in the year 2020, so were arguably some of the most impacted in terms of the learning loss due to the pandemic. That we see growth happening for those students in the middle years seems a very positive thing and likely is a function of the fact that they had some catching up to do.

In the elementary data, we observed higher growth among students in some of our higher income schools – Lowell, Wade King, Geneva, etc. It is not unusual to observe higher growth in higher income schools, as we know income levels and test scores tend to trend together. One group that caught our attention to highlight is the fifth grade group from Cordata Elementary, our demographically lowest income school, and the elementary with our highest multilingual population. The board will recall that in our final Ends report last year, we highlighted the teaching of the Cordata team, including Ruwani Brohier, fifth grade teacher at Cordata, and last year's Teacher of the Year Promise Award recipient. In that report, we wrote:

Cordata's multilingual teachers are also engaged in co-planning and co-teaching with general education teachers so that curriculum, instruction and assessment approaches are responsive to our multilingual learners. Finally, the school has also been strategic about matching multilingual staff with multilingual students. This means that throughout their day students are frequently able to communicate with teachers in their home language as they are learning. Within the classroom strategic partnering with language peers is a common practice which has led to greater inclusivity, belonging, engagement and joy. Below is a photo of multilingual specialist Sarah Ferris and fifth grade teacher, Ruwani Brohier.



Ruwani Brohier... attended the six-day Guided Language Acquisition Instruction (GLAD) training offered in November 2023. Sarah Ferris and instructional coach Michelle Hornof joined Ruwani for side-by-side coaching and co-planning. Through ongoing collaboration integrating and creating GLAD strategies into units of study this year positive effects in classroom culture and student engagement were observed.¹

While it is difficult to prove a causal link, we assert that the Cordata teaching team's influence can be seen in the growth scores for Cordata for 2024, reinforcing how great teaching matters.

In summary, overall student growth in ELA remained steady compared to 2023. Math growth improved overall, to a point where our student growth scores were the highest of all comparable districts we use in this analysis. Middle school improvements in growth were highlighted as important in driving this sharp increase. Finally, a higher percentage of students who are low income, Hispanic/Latinx, multilingual or who are identified as having a disability experienced higher growth this year compared to 2023, and this was true in both ELA and Math.

Closing Achievement Gaps

We now turn to an examination of proficiency gaps comparing various student subgroup trends within our district and with the state. We delve into differences in student performance on the standardized test in comparisons by race, socio-economic status and disability status. Subgroups included in this part of the analysis include a comparison between students who are low income and those who are non-low income, Hispanic/Latinx students, White students and students with disabilities and those without disabilities.

A. Gap Analysis: Low income vs. Non-low income

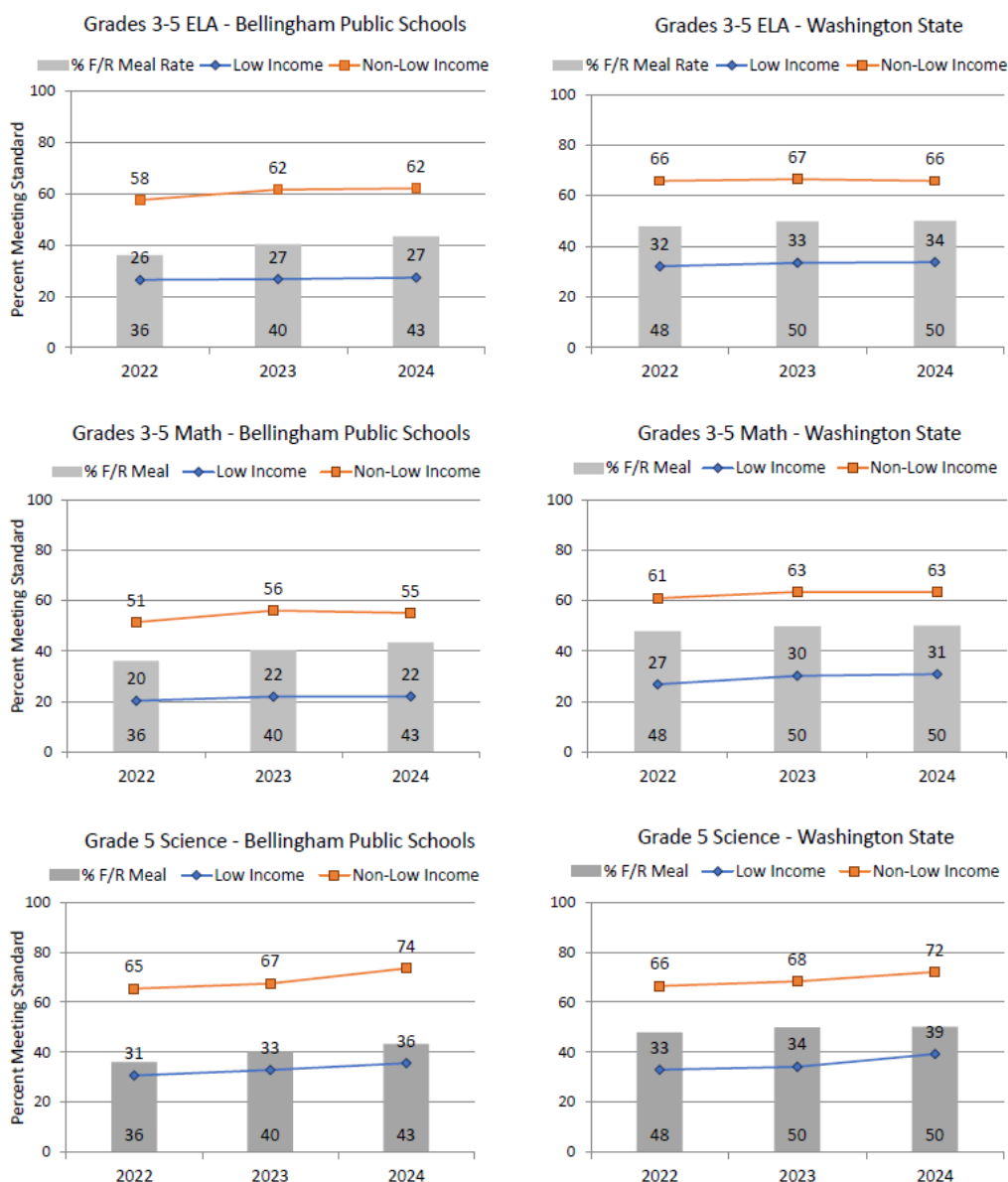
First, we compare trends between students from low income households as compared to their cohorts from non-low income households. Income determinations are made based on free and reduced lunch eligibility. The charts included below show gap trends in ELA and math proficiency between students from non-low income and low income households at Grades 3-5 (Figure 20), Grades 6-8 (Figure 21) and Grade 10 (Figure 22). Included for comparison with each picture is the overall change in the gaps at the state level within those grade bands and content areas.

In ELA for Grades 3-5 (top graphs, Figure 20), the proficiency levels for low income and non-low income groups in Bellingham remained flat compared with 2023; the gap remained constant in year-over-year comparisons. Across the state this gap narrowed very slightly between 2023 and 2024. The percentile gap in Bellingham Grade 3-5 students' math scores between low income and non-low income decreased slightly from 2023 to 2024, mainly due to a decrease of one percent in scores of non-low income students. In

¹ As reported in last spring's Ends 1, 2 & 3 report, dated May 8, 2024, pages 12-13.

science, Grade 5 proficiency increased for both low income and non-low income groups in Grades 3-5, but the gap between groups got larger compared with scores from 2023.

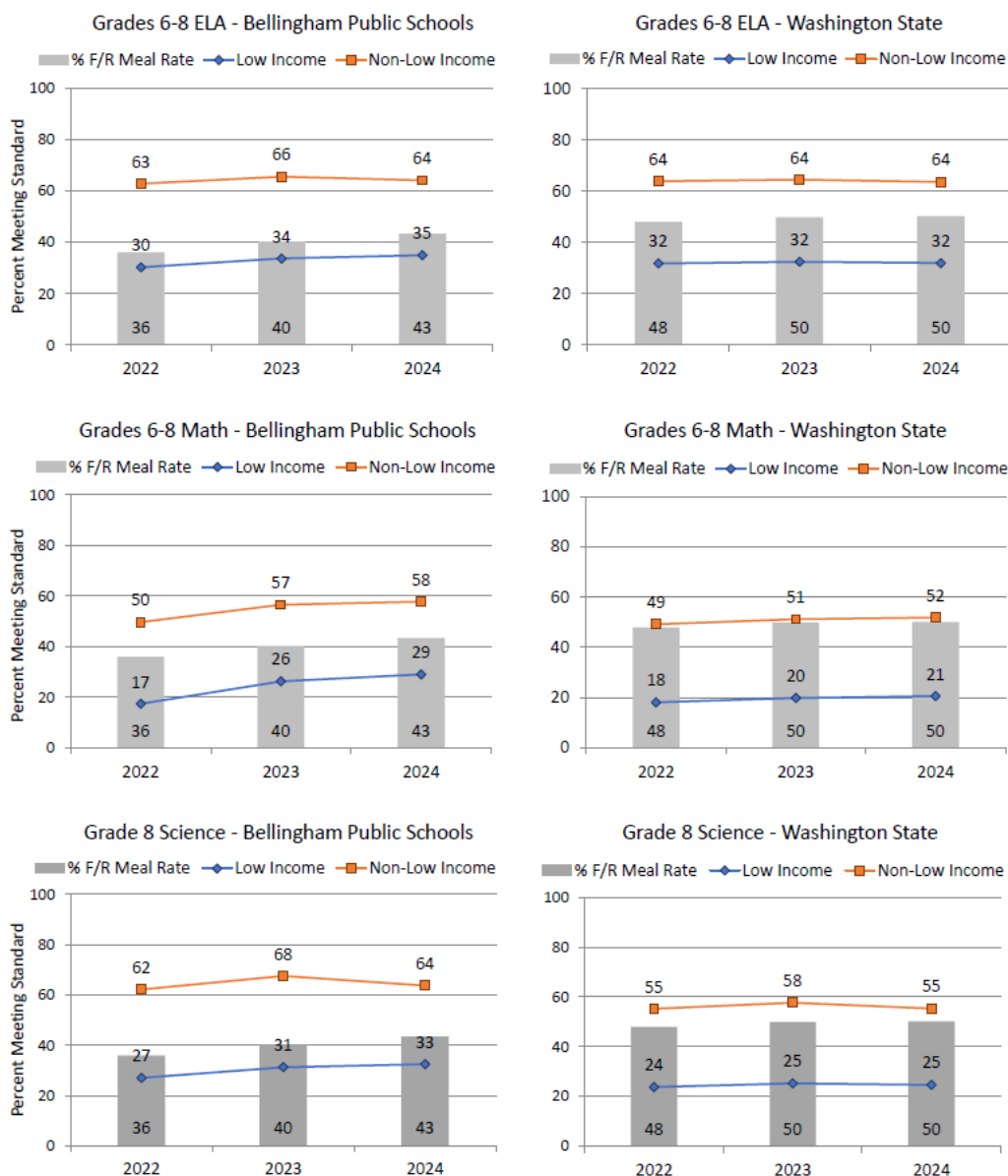
Figure 20. Proficiency Gap Trends—Low vs. Non-low Income, Gr 3-5



In ELA for Grades 6-8 (top graphs, Figure 21), the proficiency levels for low income students improved slightly, while decreasing for non-low income students, narrowing the gap a few points. The percentile gap in Bellingham students' math scores between low income and non-low income narrowed slightly, helped by a 3 percent rise in the scores of middle schoolers identified as from low income households, while both groups improved slightly in their proficiency levels (middle graphs, Figure 21). In science, Grade 8 proficiency improved 2 percentage points for eighth graders identified as from low income households (lower graphs, Figure 21), while their non-low income counterparts' scores

dropped a bit. This narrowed the gap in science scores from 37 points in 2023 to 31 points in 2024.

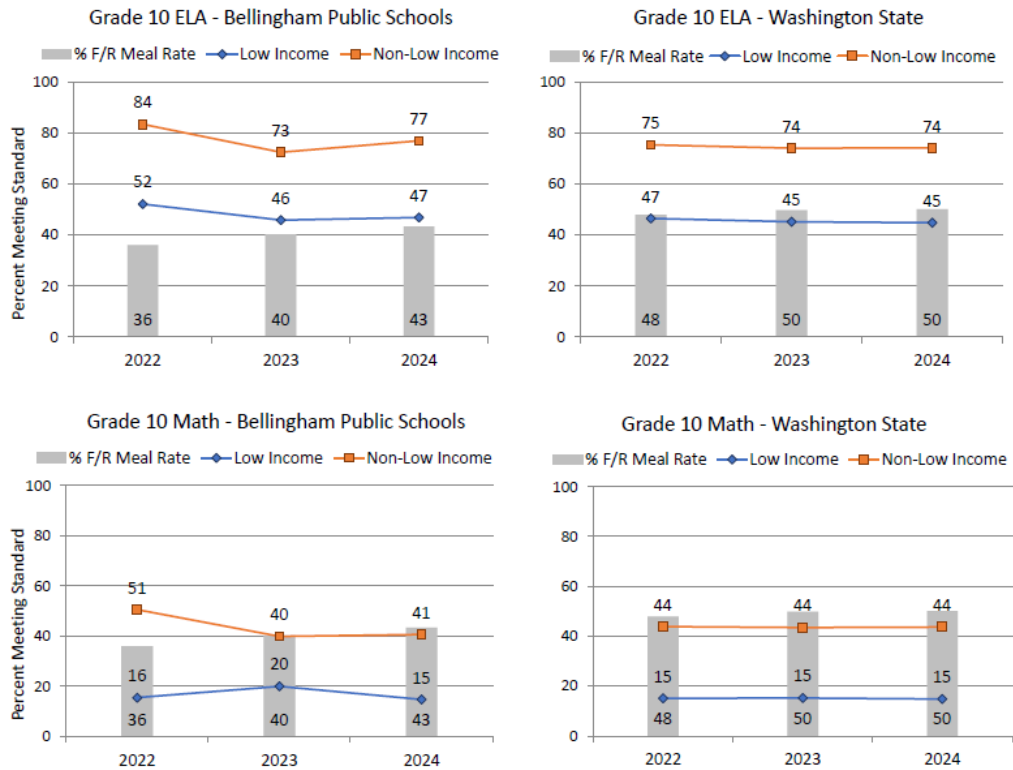
Figure 21. Proficiency Gap Trends—Low vs. Non-low Income, Gr 6-8



In ELA for Grade 10 (top graphs, Figure 22), the proficiency levels for both low income and non-low income groups in Bellingham increased; however, the gap in Bellingham Grade 10 ELA scores between low income and non-low income also increased from 27 points in 2023 (73 vs. 46) to 30 points in 2024 (77 vs. 47). While this gap widened by three points, it occurred while both groups' proficiency rates increased. The gap between these two groups across the state held steady in year-over-year comparisons. In math (bottom graphs, Figure 22) the gap between low income and non-low income groups in Bellingham

increased from 20 points in 2023 (40 vs. 20) to 26 points in 2024 (41 vs. 15). The state gap held steady during this same year-over-year period.

Figure 22. Proficiency Gap Trends—Low vs. Non-low Income, Gr 10



In summary, the proficiency gaps between Bellingham students who are low income and those who are non-low income held relatively steady in ELA and math at Grades 3-5, decreased in ELA and math at Grades 6-8, increased slightly in science in Grade 5, decreased in Grade 8 and increased at Grade 10 from 2023 to 2024. State proficiency gaps remained relatively more constant during this same period.

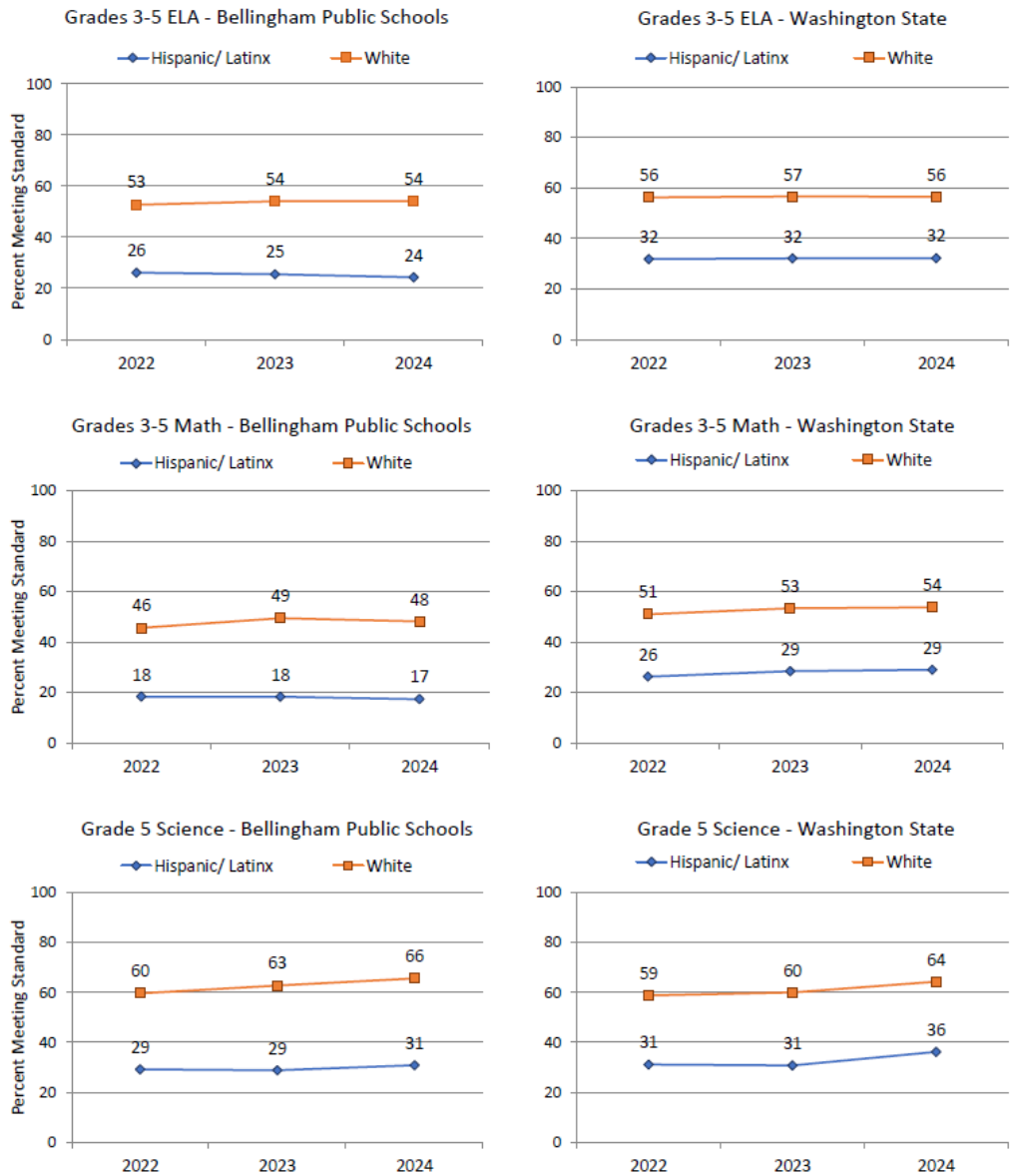
B. Gap Analysis: Hispanic/Latinx vs. White

Next, we compare trends between groups of students who identify as Hispanic or Latinx and their cohorts who identify as White. The charts included below show gap trends in ELA and math proficiency between Hispanic/Latinx students and White students at Grades 3-5 (Figure 23), Grades 6-8 (Figure 24) and Grade 10 (Figure 25). Included for comparison with each picture is the overall change in the gaps at the state level within those Grade bands and content areas.

In ELA for Grades 3-5 (top graphs, Figure 23), the proficiency level for Hispanic/Latinx students in 2024 dropped by 1 percentage point, and held steady for White students, widening the gap between subgroups compared to 2023. Across the state, this gap decreased slightly (1 percentage point) due to a slight drop in the proficiency levels of

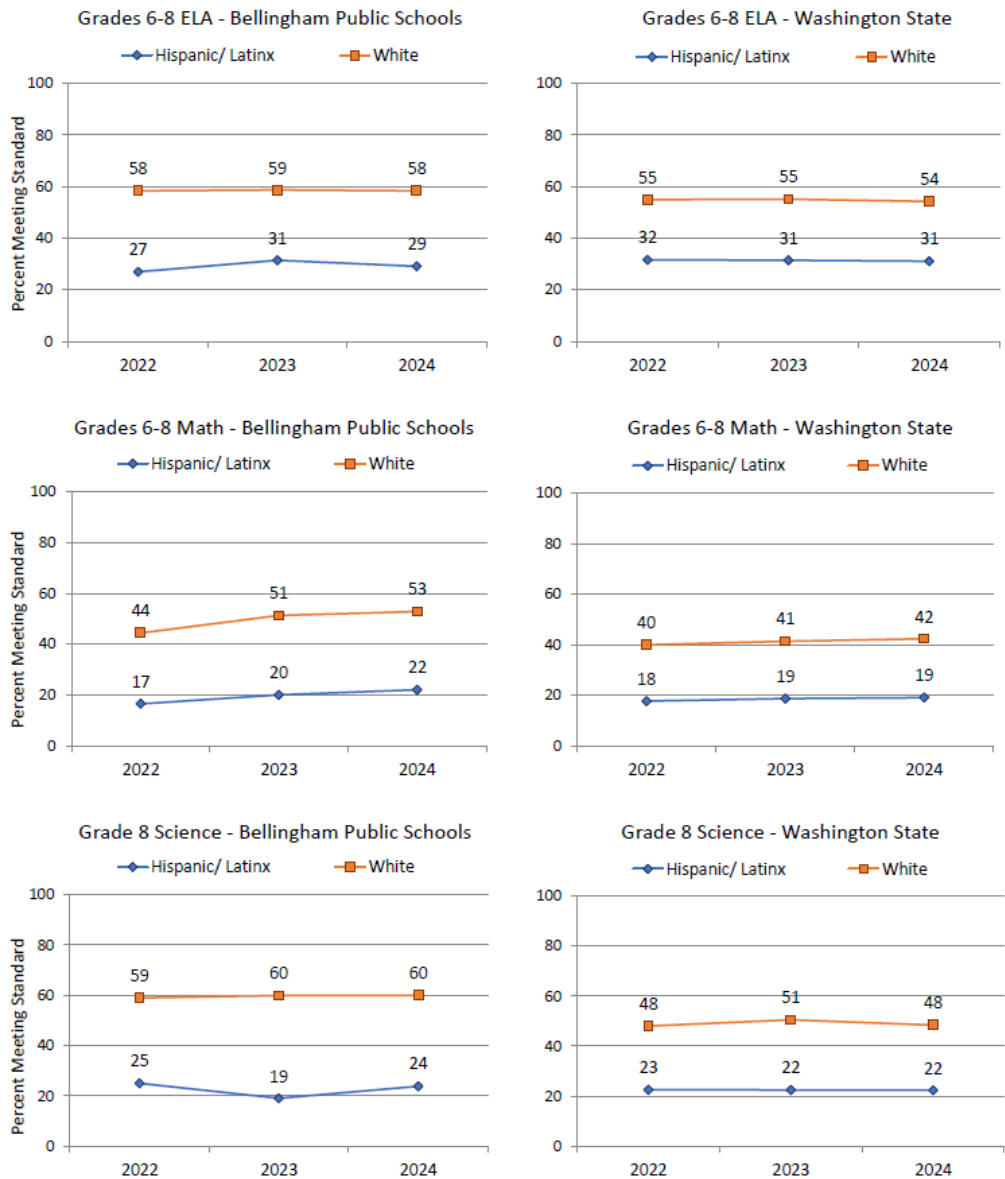
White students in Grades 3-5. The percentile gap between Bellingham’s Hispanic/Latinx and White students in Grades 3-5 math (middle graph, Figure 23) remained constant compared with 2023, with both groups’ scores dropping a point. The proficiency gap in math between these two groups across the state increased by 1 percent in year-over-year comparison during this same period. Science proficiency rate for Hispanic/Latinx and White fifth graders improved in Bellingham and across the state. The gap widened by 1 percent between Bellingham’s White and Hispanic/Latinx fifth graders’ scores, even as both groups’ scores improved overall (bottom graph, Figure 23). Both groups scored higher across the state, while the gap between groups shrunk by 1 percent.

Figure 23. Proficiency Gap Trends – Hispanic/Latinx vs. White, Gr 3-5



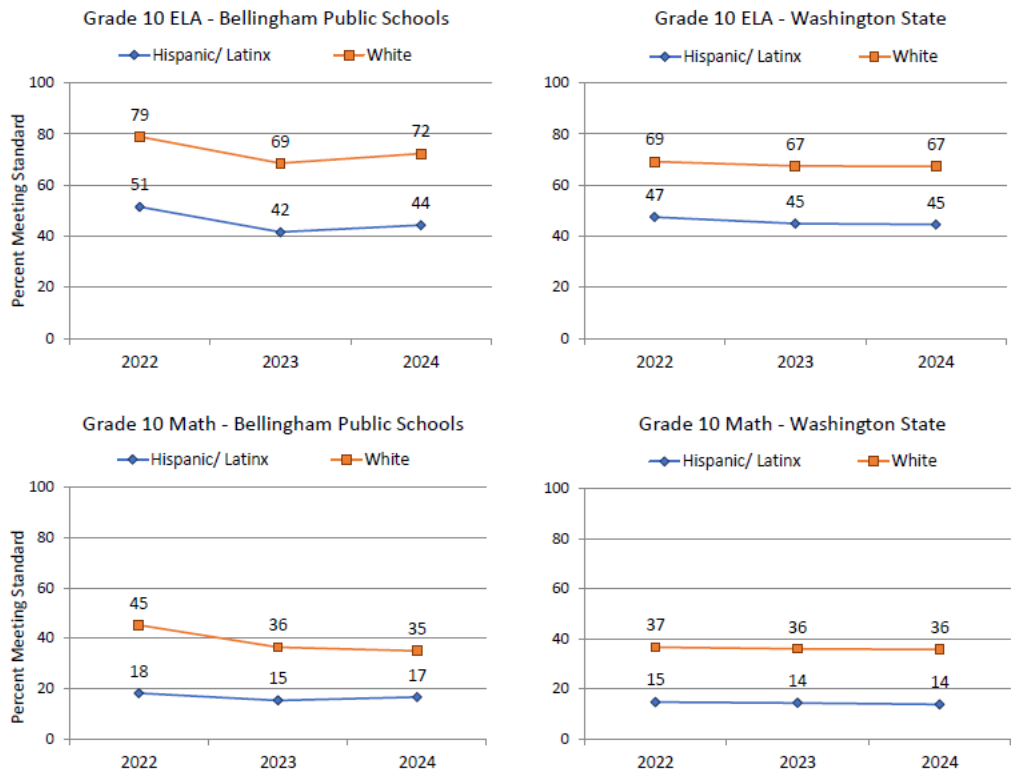
In ELA for Grades 6-8 (top graph, Figure 24), the percentile gap between Hispanic/Latinx and White students’ scores in Bellingham increased by 1 percent, while the state gap decreased slightly. In math (middle graph, Figure 24) the gap between Hispanic/Latinx and White students’ proficiency held steady among Bellingham students tested, while the scores of both groups increased by 2 percentage points in comparison with 2023. The statewide gap between groups increased slightly in year-over-year comparisons. The eighth grade science proficiency gap between these two groups (bottom graph, Figure 24) decreased locally in Bellingham by five points, buoyed by higher scores in science among our local Hispanic/Latinx student population. The statewide gap in science dropped due to a decline in White students’ scores overall.

Figure 24. Proficiency Gap Trends – Hispanic/Latinx vs. White, Gr 6-8



In ELA for Grade 10 (top graph, Figure 25), the percentile gap in Bellingham students’ scores between Hispanic/Latinx and White increased by one point, while proficiency levels for both subgroups also increased. In math (bottom graph, Figure 25), the proficiency gap between Hispanic/Latinx and White Grade 10 scores decreased, spurred in part by the fact that proficiency for Hispanic/Latinx students overall increased two points from 2023 to 2024.

Figure 25. Proficiency Gap Trends – Hispanic/Latinx vs. White, Gr 10



In summary, analysis of gaps between Hispanic/Latinx and White students’ performance showed mixed results in year-over-year comparison. Science proficiency rate for Hispanic/Latinx and White fifth graders improved in Bellingham and across the state. The eighth grade science proficiency gap between these two groups decreased locally in Bellingham by five points, due to higher scores in science among our local Hispanic/Latinx student population. In math, the proficiency gap between Hispanic/Latinx and White Grade 10 scores decreased, spurred in part by the fact that proficiency for Hispanic/Latinx students overall increased two points from 2023 to 2024.

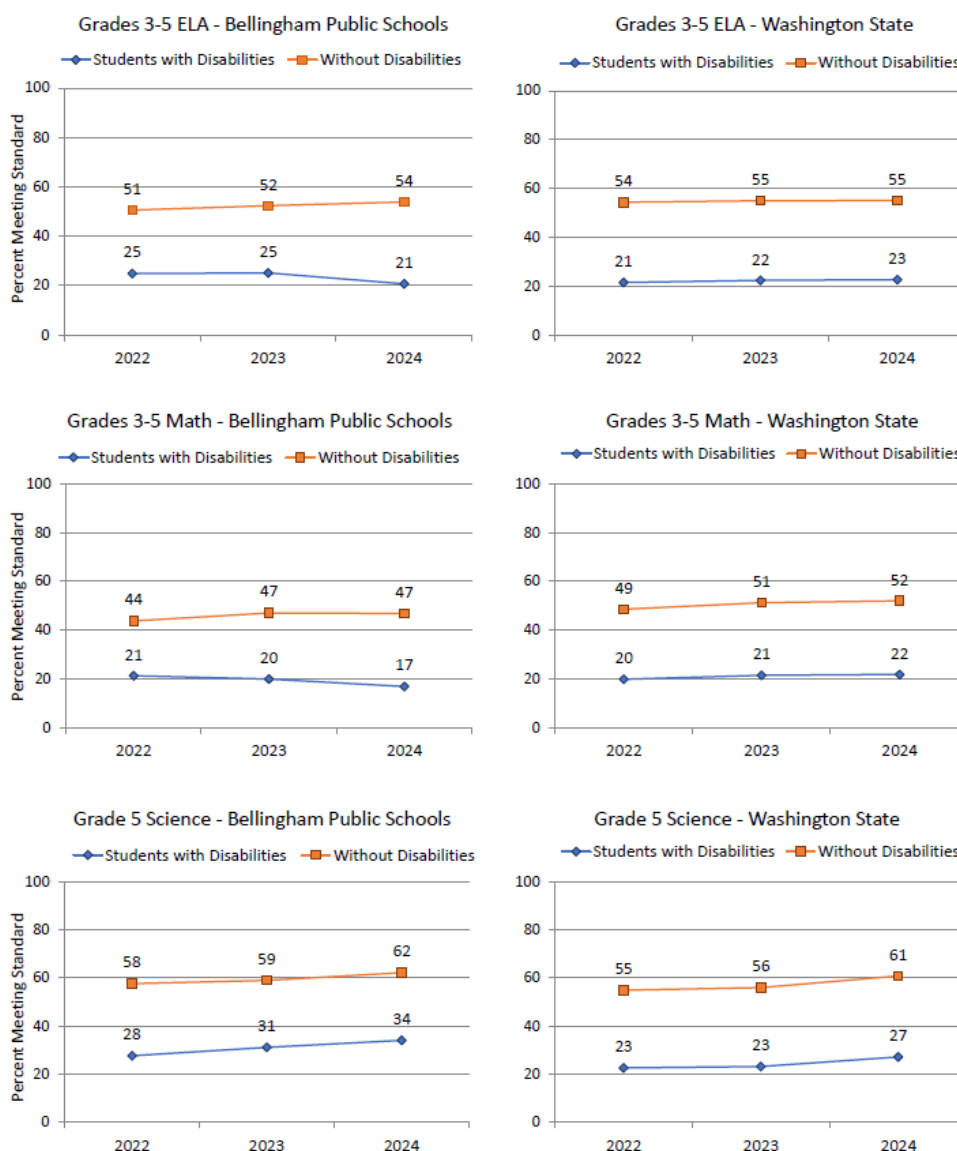
C. Gap Analysis: Students with Disabilities vs. Students Without Disabilities

In this next section, we compare trends between groups of students with identified disabilities with their non-disabled cohort mates. The charts included below show gap trends in each of the content areas at Grades 3-5 (Figure 26), Grades 6-8 (Figure 27) and Grade 10 (Figure 28) comparing students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers.

Included for comparison with each picture is the overall change in the gaps at the state level within those Grade bands and content areas.

In ELA for Grades 3-5 (top graph, Figure 26), the 2024 proficiency level for students with identified disabilities decreased by 4 percent and increased by 2 percent for students without disabilities to 52 percent, widening the gap between subgroups compared to 2023. Across the state, this gap decreased slightly year-over-year to 22 percentage points. The percentile gap between Bellingham's students with and without identified disabilities in Grades 3-5 math (middle graph, Figure 26) increased by 3 percent due to a decrease in proficiency scores among Grade 3-5 students with disabilities. The proficiency gap in math between these two groups across the state held steady in year-over-year comparison during this same period, with both groups gaining 1 percentage point in proficiency rates.

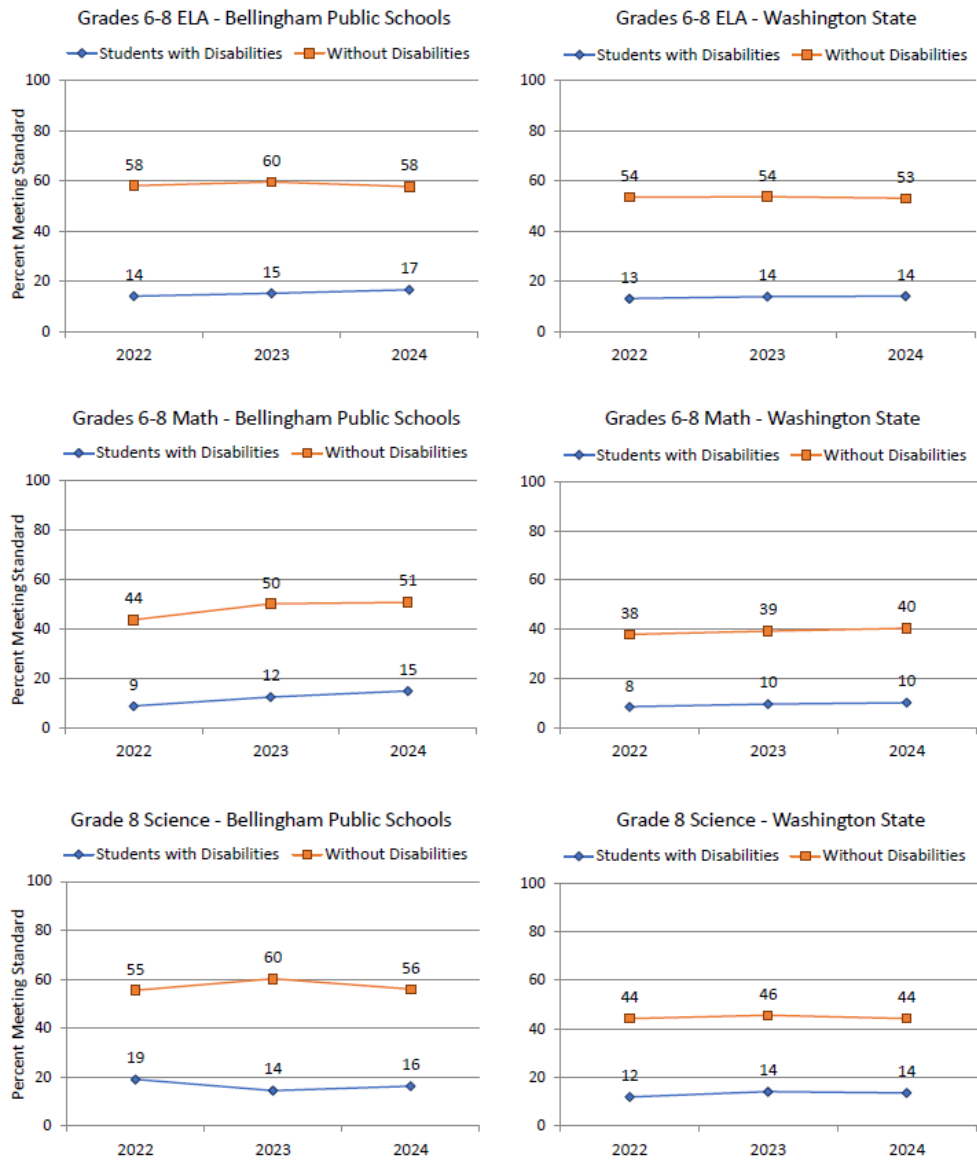
Figure 26. Proficiency Gap – Students with Disabilities vs. Without Disabilities, Gr 3-5



The science proficiency gap between Bellingham fifth graders with and without disabilities held steady, even as both groups showed a three point improvement in scores during this time.

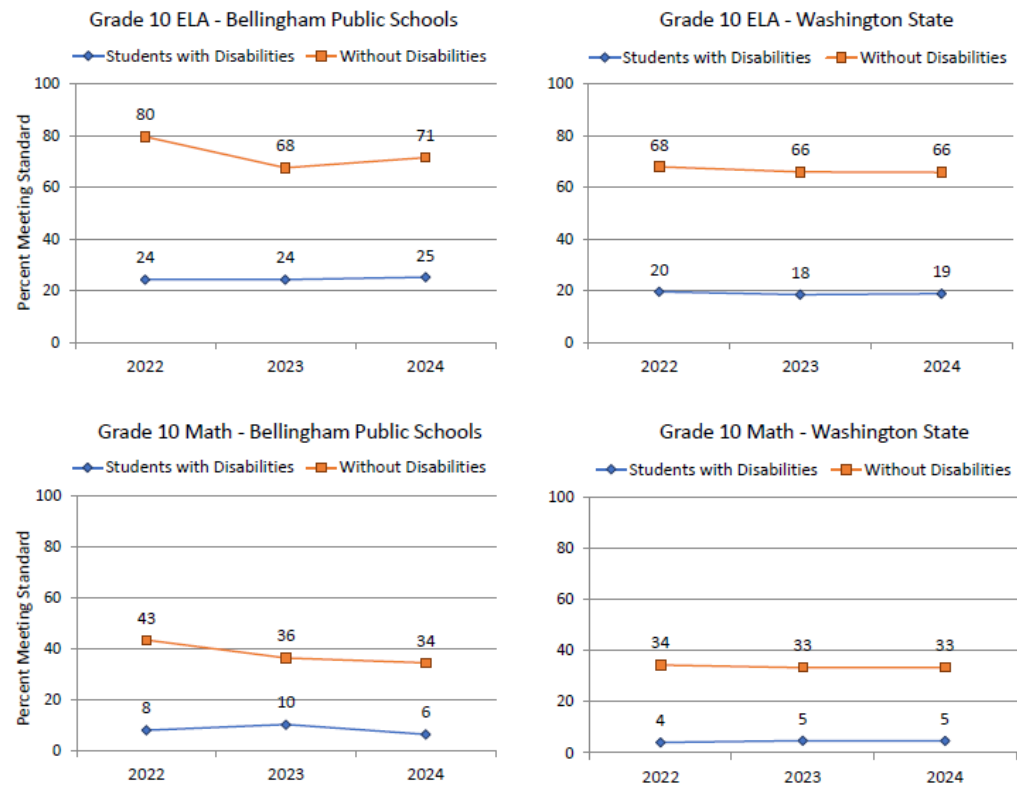
In ELA for Grades 6-8 (top graph, Figure 27), the percentile gap between scores of students with and without disabilities in Bellingham narrowed by 4 percent, with the state gap decreasing slightly. In math (middle graph, Figure 27) the proficiency gap for students with and without disabilities decreased among Bellingham students tested also narrowed by 2 percent, while the statewide gap between groups widened slightly in year-over-year comparisons. The eighth grade science proficiency gap between these two groups (bottom graph, Figure 27) also narrowed by six points in Bellingham and by two points statewide.

Figure 27. Proficiency Gap – Students with Disabilities vs. Without Disabilities, Gr 6-8



In ELA for Grade 10 (top graph, Figure 28), the percentile gap between Bellingham students with and without disabilities increased by 2 percentage points, even as both groups’ proficiency rates improved slightly. In math (bottom graph, Figure 28), the proficiency gap between Bellingham’s Grade 10 with and without disabilities widened by 2 percent overall, with proficiency rates overall decreasing for both groups in year-over-year comparison. State comparisons showed a slight decrease in the gap in ELA and no change in math comparing 2023 and 2024.

Figure 28. Proficiency Gap– Students with Disabilities vs. Without Disabilities, Gr 10



In summary, gaps in proficiency levels largely continue to persist between students with identified disabilities and non-disabled peers. Depending on level and content area, results are mixed. In ELA and math for Grades 3-5 and Grade 10 the gap between subgroups widened compared to 2023. By contrast, the gaps between groups narrowed in ELA and math among our local middle school students in year-over-year comparison. The eighth grade science proficiency gap between these two groups also narrowed by six points in Bellingham and by two points statewide.

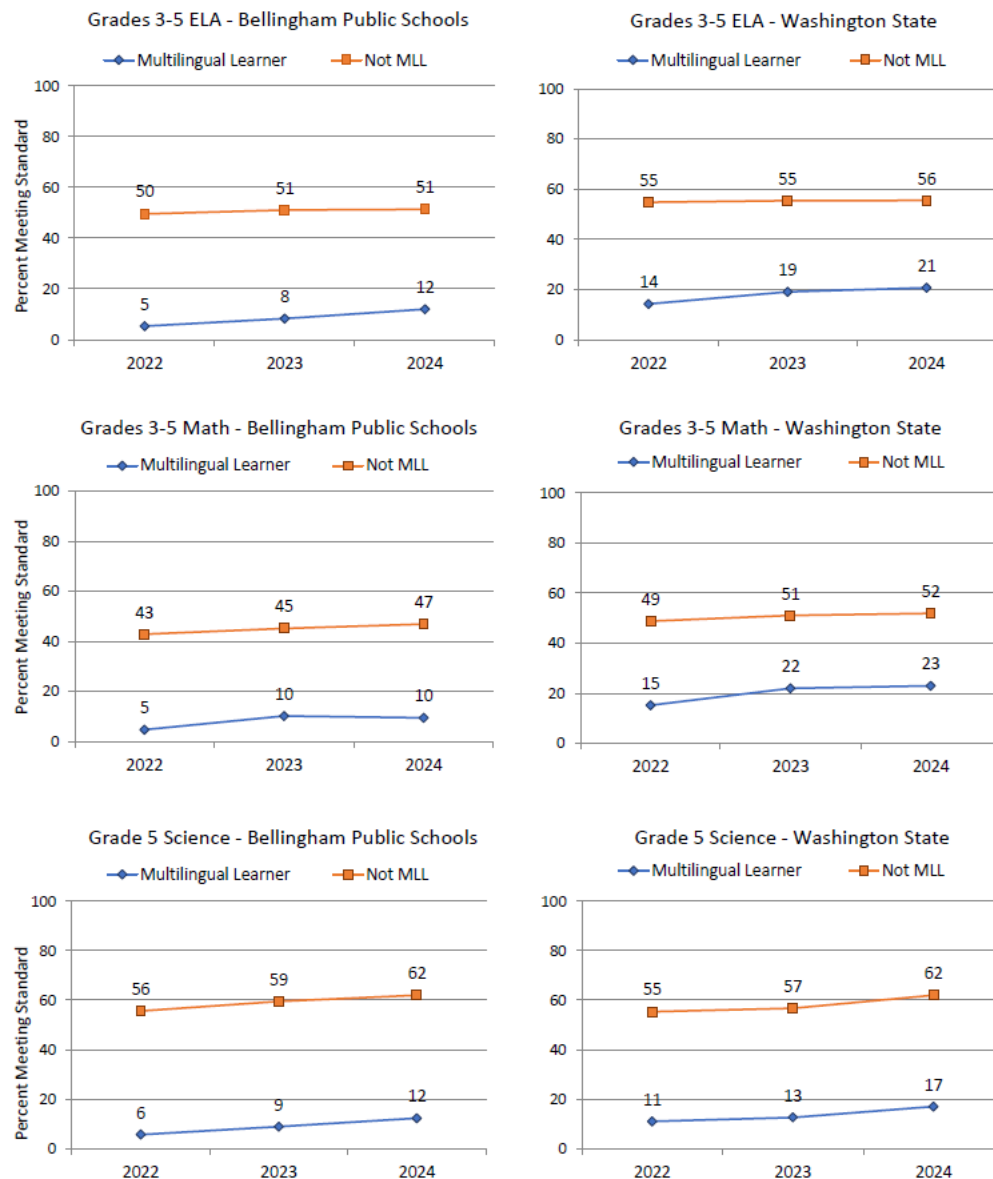
D. Gap Analysis: Multilingual vs. Non-multilingual Students

In this next section, we compare trends between groups of students identified as multilingual learners with cohorts not identified multilingual. The charts included below show gap trends in ELA and math proficiency between multilingual students and non-multilingual students in Grades 3-5 (Figure 29), Grades 6-8 (Figure 30) and Grade 10 (Figure

31). Included for comparison with each picture is the overall change in the gaps at the state level within those grade bands and content areas.

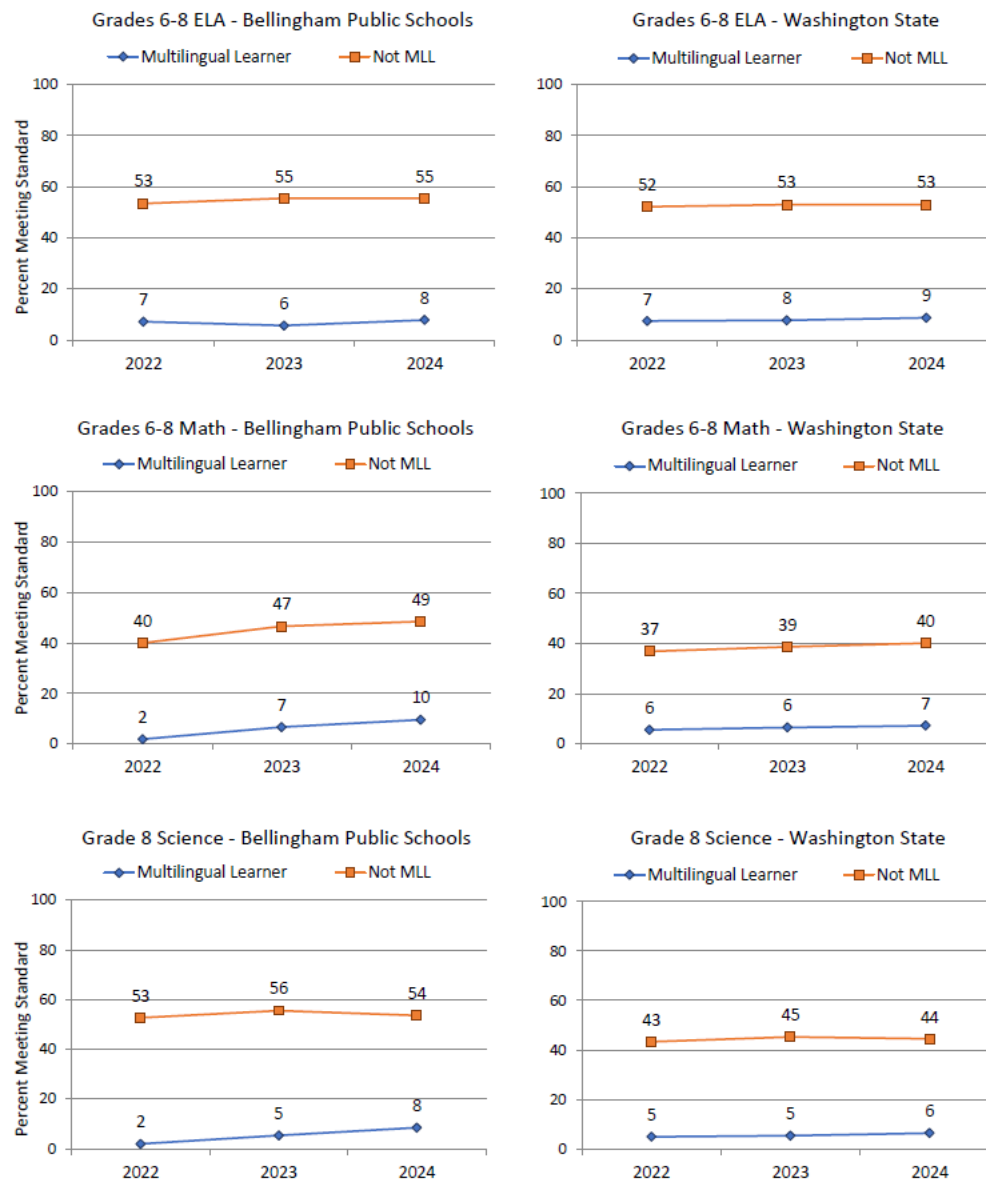
In ELA for Grades 3-5 (top graph, Figure 29), the 2024 proficiency gap for students identified multilingual compared to non-multilingual students narrowed by 4 percent compared to 2023. Across the state, this gap also decreased slightly again. The percentile gap between Bellingham's multilingual students and those who are non-multilingual in Grades 3-5 math (middle graph, Figure 29) by contract widened by 2 percent in year-over-year comparison. The science proficiency gap between Bellingham fifth graders who are multilingual and those who are non-multilingual (bottom graph, Figure 29) held steady during this time, while both group's proficiency scores continued to improve over the past two years.

Figure 29. Proficiency Gap-Multilingual vs. Non-multilingual students, Gr 3-5



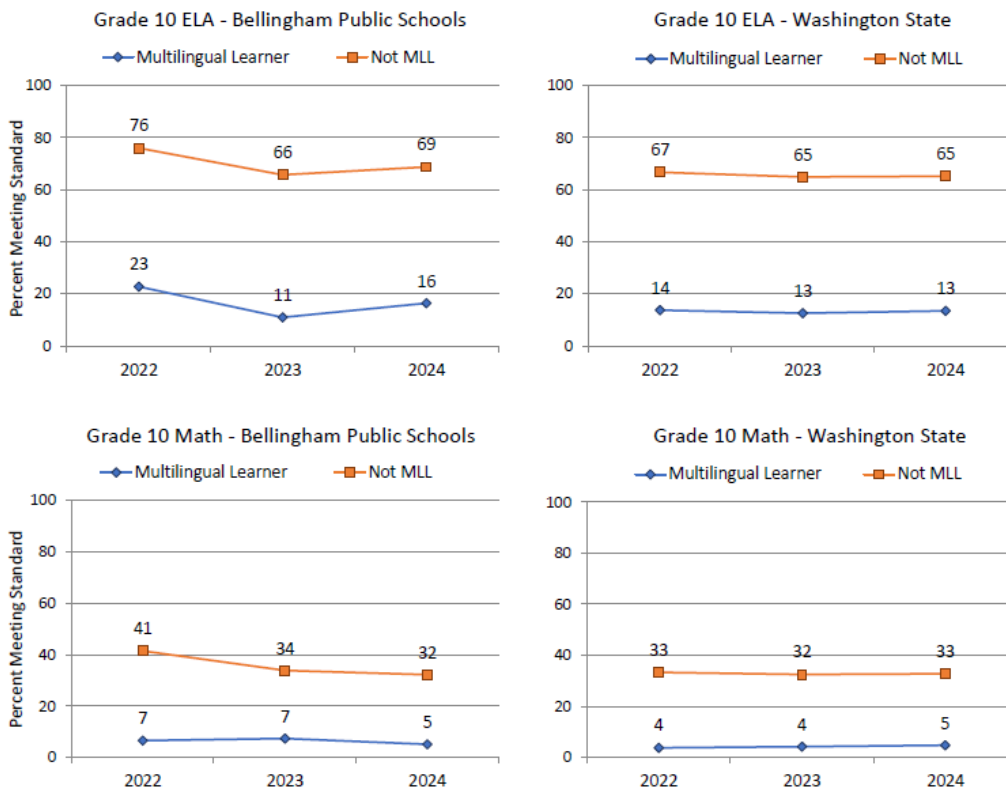
In ELA for Grades 6-8 (top graph, Figure 30), the percentile gap between scores of multilingual students and non-multilingual students in Bellingham narrowed by 2 percent, as the state gap also narrowed slightly. In math (middle graph, Figure 30) the proficiency gap between multilingual and non-multilingual narrowed by 1 percent among Bellingham students tested, with both groups realizing gains in proficiency. The eighth grade science proficiency gap between these two groups (bottom graph, Figure 30) similarly narrowed by 5 percent in Bellingham, and by 3 percent statewide.

Figure 30. Proficiency Gap– Multilingual vs. Non-multilingual students, Gr 6-8



In ELA for Grade 10 (top graph, Figure 31), the percentile gap between Bellingham students with and without disabilities narrowed by 2 percentage points as both multilingual and non-multilingual Bellingham students' proficiency levels increased in year-over-year comparison. In math (bottom graph, Figure 31), the proficiency gap between Bellingham's multilingual and non-multilingual Grade 10 held steady overall from 2023 to 2024, but proficiency rates for each group dropped by 2 percent. State comparisons showed the gaps in ELA and in math held steady in year-over-year comparison.

Figure 31. Proficiency Gap– Multilingual vs. Non-multilingual students, Gr 10



In summary, we observed the proficiency gaps between students identified multilingual compared to non-multilingual students decreasing or holding steady depending on subject area and grade level band. In ELA for Grades 3-5 the gap narrowed by 4 percent compared to 2023; in Grades 3-5 math, by contrast, the gap widened by 2 percent in year-over-year comparison. The fifth grade science gap held steady during this time, while both group's proficiency scores continued to improve over the past two years. Grades 6-8 gaps narrowed between groups in all subject areas, including a decrease of 5 percent eighth grade science. In ELA, the Grade 10 gap between Bellingham multilingual and non-multilingual students narrowed by 2 percentage points as both groups' proficiency levels increased while math held steady in year-over-year comparison.

Concluding Statement

Proficiency rates in SBA scores for Bellingham students mostly held at or near 2023 levels in this year's data. Middle school proficiency rates improved in most content areas. Proficiency gaps are still prevalent in many grade bands and content areas as was noted in various subgroup comparisons. The inclusion of "foundational" knowledge data as reported by the state this year suggests that approximately 20 percent of students in each grade level and subject area are scoring just below the proficiency level and can be understood as on the cusp of meeting standard. Overall student growth in ELA remained steady compared to 2023, while math growth improved overall. A higher percentage of students who are low income, Hispanic/Latinx, multilingual or who are identified as having

a disability experienced higher growth this year compared to 2023, and this was true in both ELA and math. Of all our proficiency and growth indicators reported in this report, this provides perhaps the strongest indicator of progress moving forward for an eventual return to pre-pandemic levels. Below is a summary of some of the trends we saw, starting with some challenges and concluding with some areas of comparative strength.

Noted challenges:

- Proficiency rates remained relatively flat in many year-over-year comparisons.
- Proficiency gaps between Bellingham students who are low income and those who are non-low income held relatively steady in ELA and math at Grades 3-5, increased slightly in science in Grade 5 and in ELA and math in Grade 10 from 2023 to 2024.
- Gaps in proficiency levels largely continue to persist between students with identified disabilities and non-disabled peers. In ELA and math for Grades 3-5 and Grade 10 the gap between subgroups widened compared to 2023.
- In Grades 3-5 math, the gap between students identified multilingual compared to non-multilingual students widened by 2 percent in year-over-year comparison.

Trending positive:

- Bellingham student proficiency rates remained relatively steady in year-over-year comparisons to the 2023 data. Overall student growth in ELA remained steady compared to 2023, while math growth improved in some areas.
- Bright spots where we saw some growth in proficiency rates included Grade 10 ELA, Grade 6-8 math and elementary (Grade 5) science.
- Bellingham students' proficiency rates in all three subject areas tested positioned us slightly above the state averages across the board.
- A higher percentage of students who are low income, Hispanic/Latinx, multilingual or who are identified as having a disability experienced higher growth this year compared to 2023, and this was true in both ELA and math.
- Proficiency gaps between students who are low income and those who are non-low income decreased in Grade 6-8 ELA and math, and also in science at Grade 8.
- Science proficiency rate for Hispanic/Latinx and White fifth graders improved in Bellingham and across the state.
- The eighth grade science proficiency gap between these Hispanic/Latinx and White students decreased locally in Bellingham by five points, buoyed by higher scores in science among our local Hispanic/Latinx student population.
- Proficiency gap between Hispanic/Latinx and White Grade 10 scores in math decreased, spurred in part by the fact that proficiency for Hispanic/Latinx students overall increased two points from 2023 to 2024.
- Gaps between students with disabilities and non-disabled peers narrowed in ELA and math among our local middle school students in year-over-year comparison. The eighth grade science proficiency gap between these two groups also narrowed by six points in our district.

- In ELA proficiency gaps between students identified multilingual compared to non-multilingual students for Grades 3-5 the gap narrowed by 4 percentage points compared to 2023.
- Grades 6-8 gaps between students identified multilingual compared to non-multilingual students narrowed between groups in all subject areas, including a decrease of 5 percent eighth grade science.
- In ELA, the Grade 10 gap between Bellingham multilingual and non-multilingual students narrowed by 2 percentage points as both groups' proficiency levels increased.

We offer this Ends 2.1 Part 1 monitoring report, in combination with the remaining parts of the report that will follow, as evidence of a reasonable interpretation of Ends 2.1 that aligns with our vision, mission and outcomes, and is supported by data that demonstrates progress toward achievement of these Ends. Further, we hope this report serves as a useful tool in support of the board's ability to regularly review our ends to ensure they remain relevant and inspire meaningful work throughout the organization and community.