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## Memorandum

To: Dr. Evans  
From: Jon Mickelson, Lisa Mehlig  
cc: Sharon Contreras, Catherine Oneppo, Denise Carpenter, Gary Moroch  
Date: 1/28/2008  
Re: Fall 2007 New England Common Assessment Program Results

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### **Background:**

The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests are criterion-reference standardized tests administered to students in Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont as part of each state's statewide assessment program. The NECAP tests are designed to measure student performance on the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) developed and adopted by the three states. Because the tests are administered in the Fall of the school year, the tests are designed to measure the content and skills that students are expected to have as they begin the school year in their current grade (i.e., the GLEs for the previous grade level).

The NECAP was first administered in October 2005 in grades 3 through 8. October 2007 marked the third administration of the NECAP for these grade levels and was the first time that the test was administered to students in grade 11. Scores are provided for Reading and Mathematics (grades 3 through 8 and 11) and Writing (grades 5, 8, and 11) Achievement results are used to inform Rhode Island's accountability system required under No Child Left Behind (NCLB); accountability information based on these NECAP results will become available in the spring.

This report provides results for grades 3 through 8. Because the new grade 11 test requires additional time to complete standard setting, the results are not expected to be released until February 18, 2008.

### Testing Population

Virtually all students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 are tested. Exceptions include students who take the RI Alternate Assessment; students who qualify for state-approved special consideration, typically for medical reasons; and ELL students who are new to the US after October 1, 2006 (exempt from English language arts tests only). It should be noted that percentages in performance levels calculated at the school and district level do not include students who were not tested. However, those students will be counted when participation rates are computed for accountability reports released in the spring.

### NECAP Achievement Level Descriptions

Students receive a separate score on each test taken (Reading, Mathematics, and Writing). Scores reported include Performance Levels and Scaled Scores. Each Performance Level encompasses a wide range of student proficiency. For the purpose of this report, however, results falling into Levels 3 (Proficient) and

4 (Proficient with Distinction) are summed and reported as *Proficient*. Scaled scores provide additional information about the location of student performance within each achievement level and are appropriate for measuring change over time. NECAP scaled scores are reported as three-digit scores in which the first digit represents the grade level. The remaining digits range from 00 to 80. Scores of 40 and higher indicate a level of proficiency at or above the Proficient Level. Scores below 40 indicate performance below the Proficient Level. For example, scores of 340 and 540 indicate Proficient performance at grades 3 and 5 respectively. Table 1 (see attached) provides descriptions of each performance level.

## District Results

### Reading

NECAP results for reading are presented in terms of performance level and scaled scores. As stated previously, the performance level gives a broader sense of group performance, providing the percentage of students whose scores fall within that particular grouping of scores. The scale score results will help to determine where within the box of the performance level, those individual students' scores actually are distributed. Chart 1 represents the percent of students in each performance level from grades 3, 4 and 5. Chart 2 provides similar information for grades 6, 7, and 8. Chart 3 and 4 provide distribution information for scaled scores. Data from these charts suggest the following:

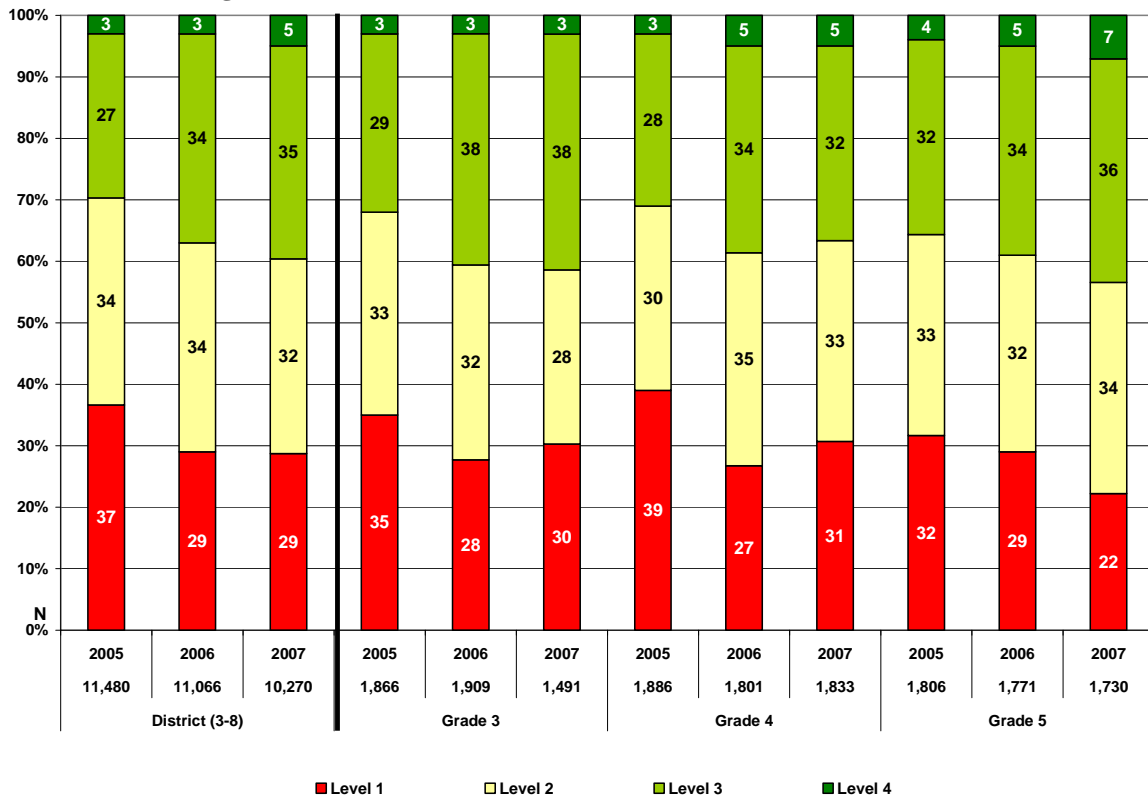
#### Performance Levels

- Percent proficient in 2007 ranged from 36% (gr. 6) to 43% (gr. 5).
- Percent substantially below proficient in 2007 ranged from 22% (gr. 5) to 31% (gr. 4, 8).
- The greatest improvement in percent proficient from 2006 to 2007 was seen in grade 7 (31% to 41%).
- The largest decline in percent proficient from 2006 to 2007 was seen in grade 6 (40% to 36%).
- District-wide, 40% of students scored *proficient or higher* in reading in 2007. This compares with 37% in 2006.
- District-wide, 29% of students scored *substantially below proficient* in reading in 2007. This compares with 29% in 2006.
- District-wide, a trend demonstrating an increase in percent proficient across a three-year period has emerged.
- This trend of an increase in percent proficient across a three-year period is mirrored in grades 5, 7 and 8. In each of these grade levels, it is clear too, that a trend emerges demonstrating fewer students in the *substantially below proficient* level. With the bands at the top growing and the bands at the bottom growing smaller, a positive shift toward overall proficiency is demonstrated.

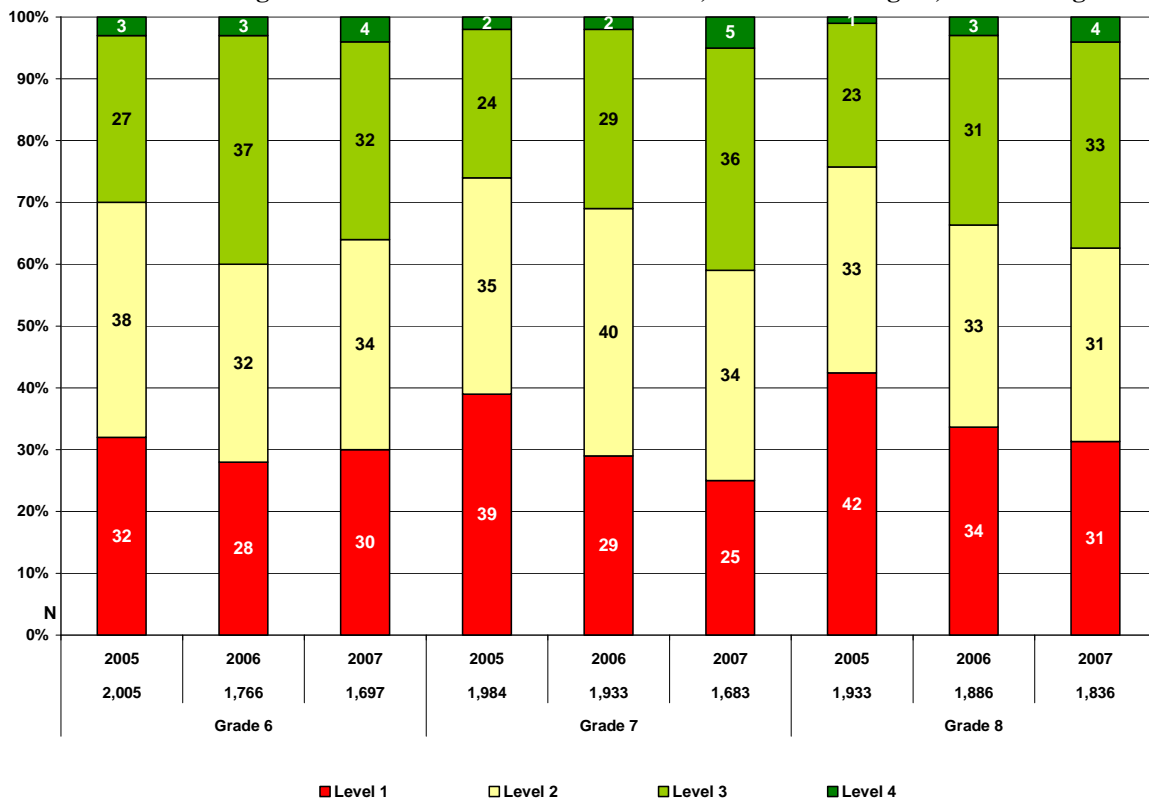
#### Scaled Scores

- Grades 5, 7, and 8 showed continuous gain in mean scaled score from 2005 to 2007 with scaled score gains of three, six, and five points respectively from 2005 to 2007.
- The data for Grades 3, 4, and 6 is inconsistent such that a trend does not emerge across a three-year comparison.
- No grade displays a mean scaled score that attains Proficient (on a scale where 40 has been defined as such).
- Note that at the district level, scaled score changes of one point or more are statistically significant (*Guide to Using the 2007 NECAP Reports, Measured Progress, 2008, p. 20*).

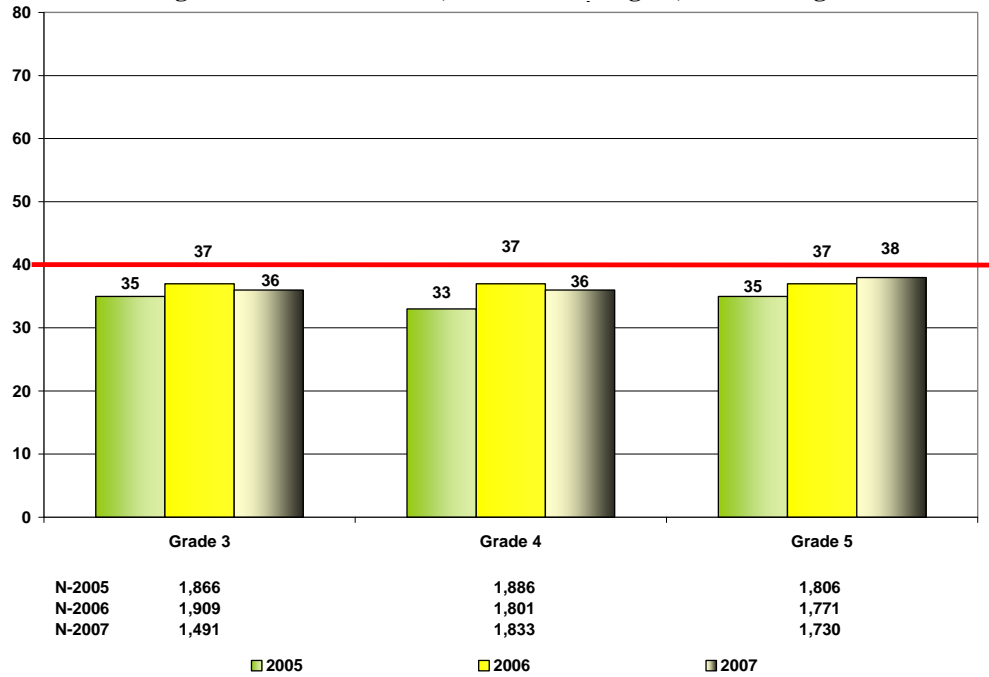
**Chart 1: NECAP Reading – Percent in Each Performance Level, Districtwide and Grades 3 through 5, 2005 through 2007**



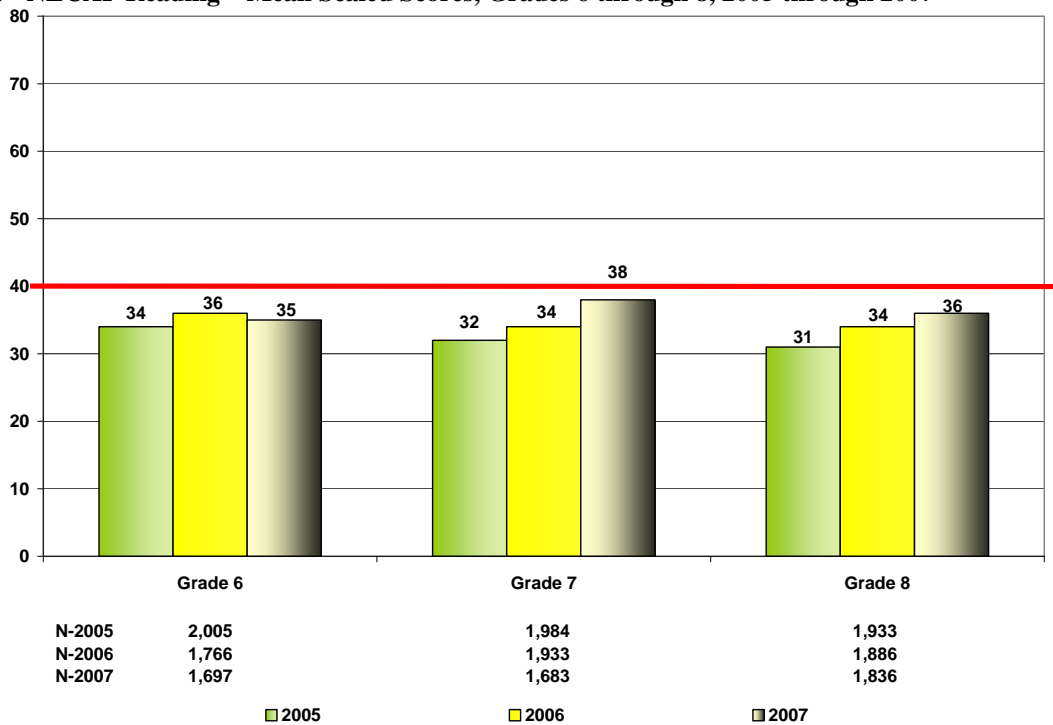
**Chart 2: NECAP Reading – Percent in Each Performance Level, Grades 6 through 8, 2005 through 2007**



**Chart 3: NECAP Reading – Mean Scaled Scores, Grades 3 through 5, 2005 through 2007**



**Chart 4: NECAP Reading – Mean Scaled Scores, Grades 6 through 8, 2005 through 2007**



Writing

NECAP results for writing are presented in terms of performance level and scaled scores. Chart 5 represents the percent of student in each performance level for grades 5 and 8. Chart 6 provides distribution information for scaled scores. Data from these charts suggest the following:

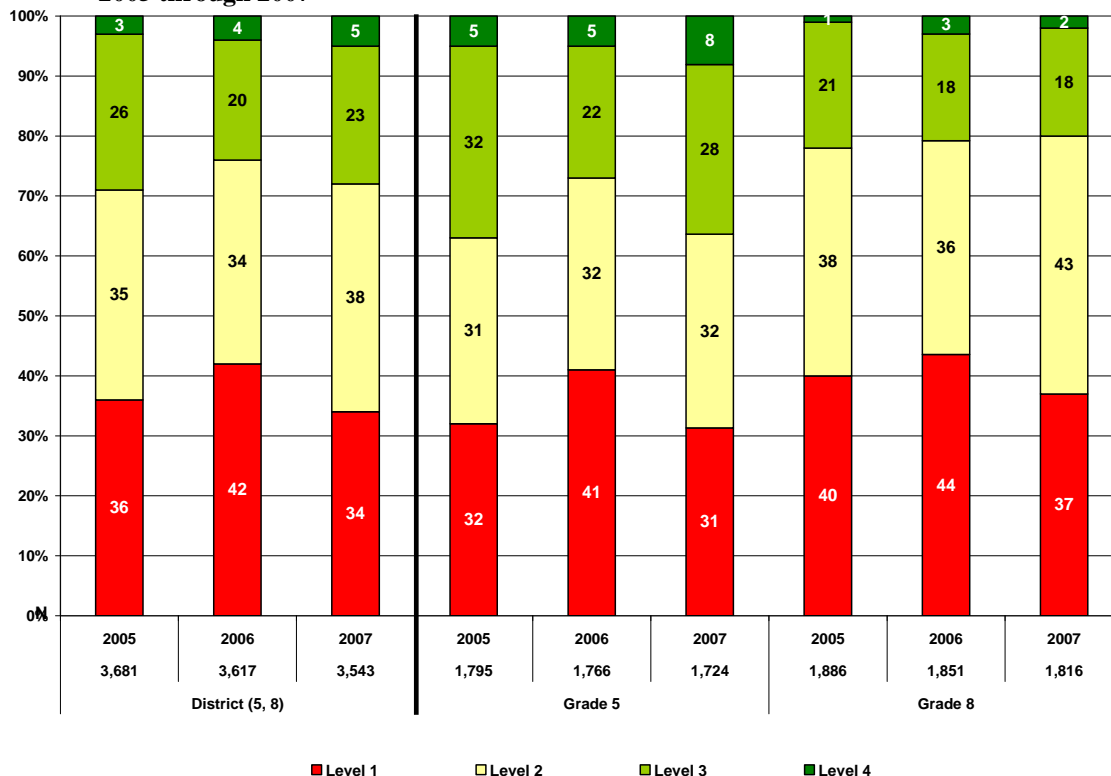
## Performance Levels

- Percent proficient in 2007 ranged from 20% (gr. 8) to 36% (gr. 5).
- Percent substantially below proficient in 2007 ranged from 31% (gr. 5) to 37% (gr. 8).
- The greatest improvement in percent proficient from 2006 to 2007 was seen in grade 5 (27% to 36%).
- A slight decline in percent proficient from 2006 to 2007 was seen in grade 8 (21% to 20%).
- District-wide, 28% of students scored *proficient or higher* in writing in 2007. This compares with 24% in 2006.
- District-wide, 34% of students scored *substantially below proficient* in writing in 2007. This compares with 42% in 2006.
- Data is inconsistent for the district and across grade levels such that trends do not emerge. Additional data will need to be collected to verify trends.

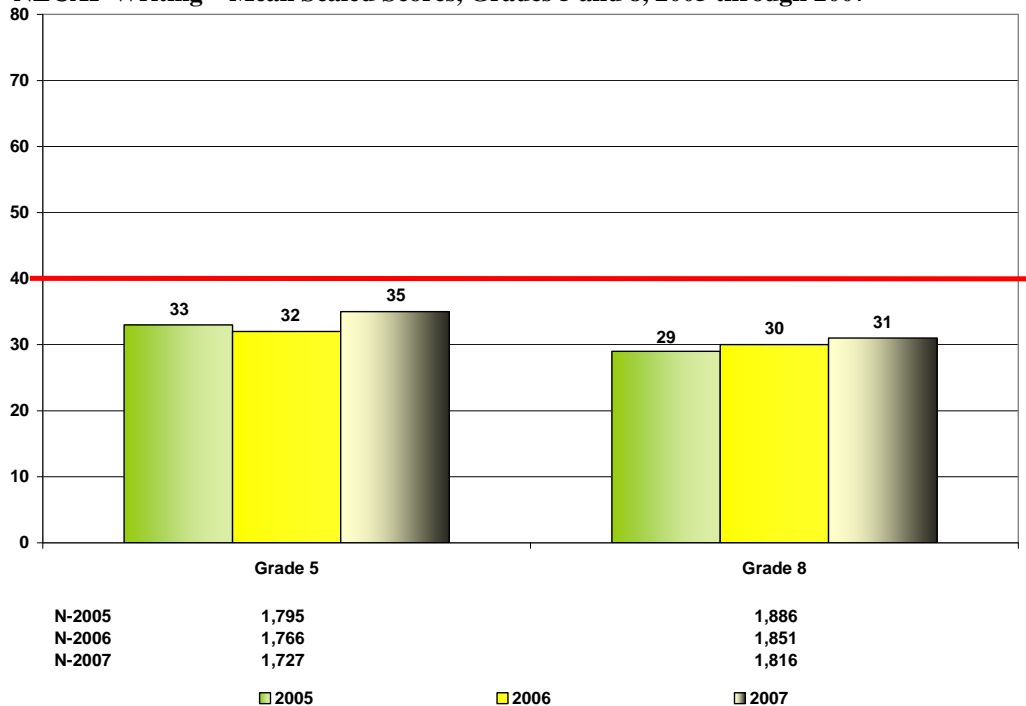
## Scaled Scores

- Grade 8 showed continuous one-point gains in mean scaled score from 2005 to 2007.
- Data for Grade 5 is inconsistent such that a trend does not emerge across the three-years period. However, a three point gain was made between 2006 and 2007 administrations of the test.
- No grade displays a mean scaled score that attains Proficient (on a scale where 40 has been defined as such).

**Chart 5: NECAP Writing – Percent in Each Performance Level, Districtwide and Grades 5 and 8, 2005 through 2007**



**Chart 6: NECAP Writing – Mean Scaled Scores, Grades 5 and 8, 2005 through 2007**



### Mathematics

NECAP results for mathematics are presented in terms of performance level and scaled scores. Chart 7 represents the percent of student in each performance level from grades 3, 4 and 5. Chart 8 provides similar information for grades 6, 7, and 8. Charts 9 and 10 provide distribution information for scaled scores. Data from these charts suggest the following:

#### **Performance Levels**

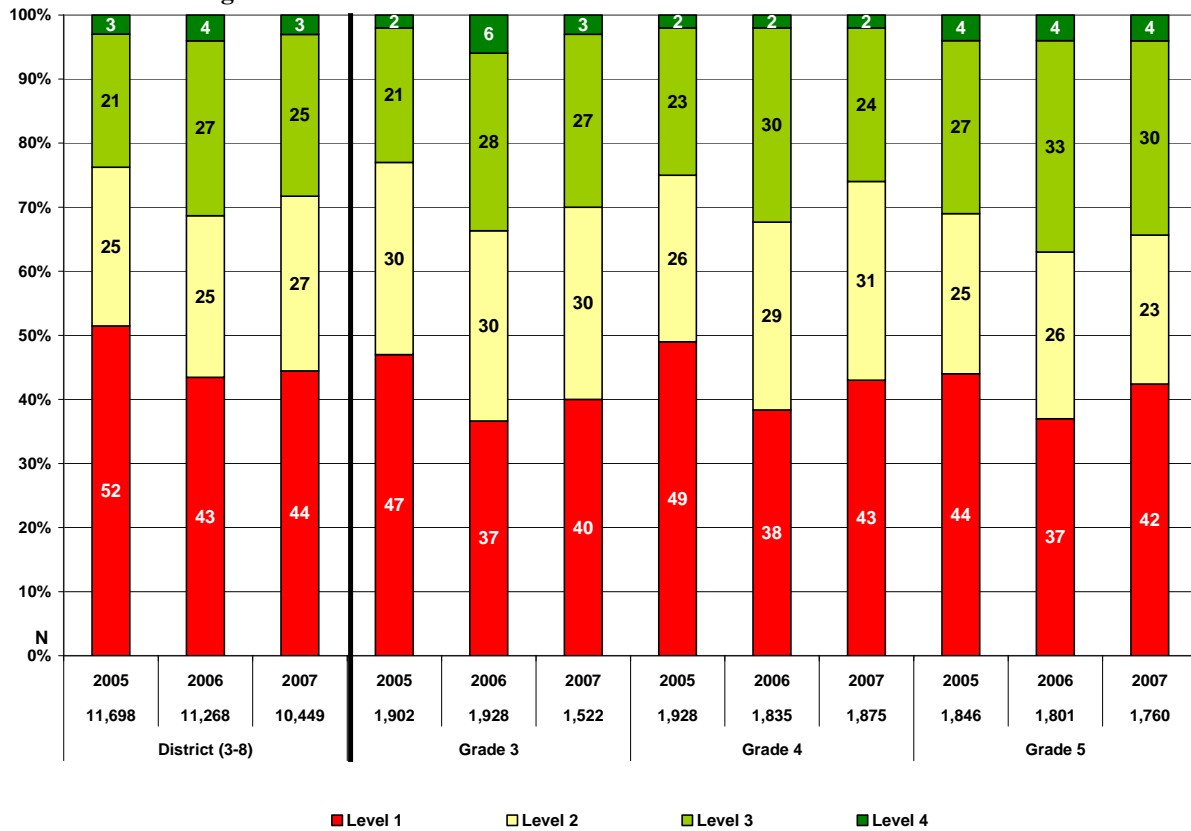
- Percent proficient in 2007 ranged from 25% (gr. 8) to 34% (gr. 5).
- Percent substantially below proficient in 2007 ranged from 40% (gr. 3) to 48% (gr. 8).
- The district and five of the six grade levels showed some degree of decline in percent proficient from 2006 to 2007. Grade 8 remained at 25% proficient.
- The district had two of the six grade levels demonstrate some degree of decline in the percent of students *substantially below proficient* from 2006 to 2007 – grades 7 and 8. Neither grade adequately coupled this show of improvement with the necessary trend of increased percentage of students scoring proficient (grade 8 data, which most closely approximated this desired pattern, increased from 2005 to 2006 but was flat from 2006 to 2007).
- District-wide, 28% of students scored *proficient or higher* in mathematics in 2007. This compares with 31% in 2006.
- District-wide, 44% of students scored *substantially below proficient* in mathematics in 2007. This compares with 43% in 2006.

#### **Scaled Scores**

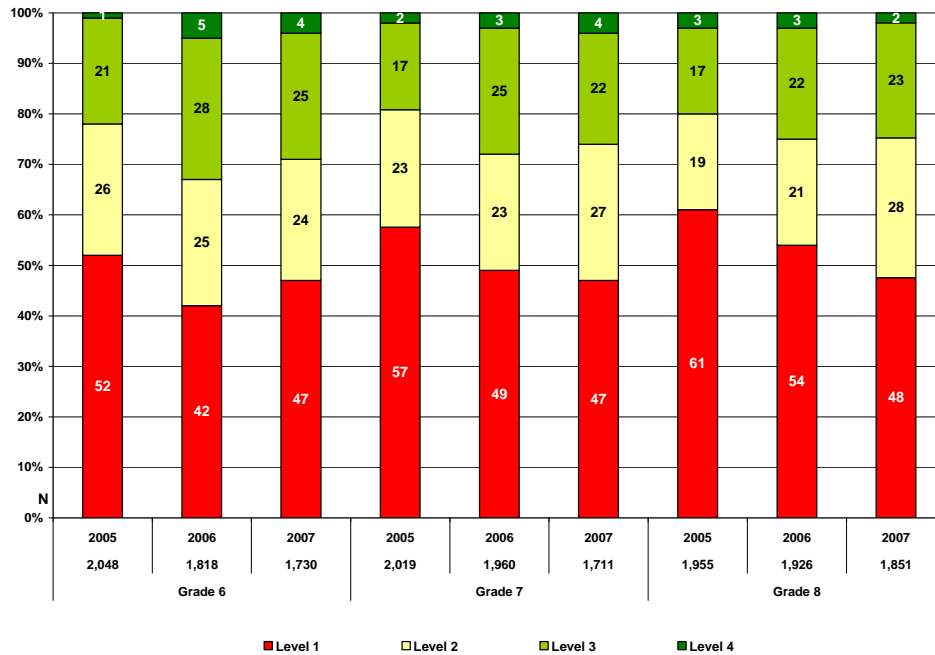
- Grade 8 data reflects a positive trend in mean scaled score from 2005 to 2007 with a scaled score gains of three points.

- Data is inconsistent for Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 such that trends do not emerge across the three-years period.
- In four grade levels (3, 4, 5 and 6) the mean scaled score had declined from 2006 to 2007 (ranging between 1 and 2 points difference).
- In Grade 7, the mean scaled score remained constant from 2006 to 2007, but showed small improvement from 2005 to 2007.
- No grade displays a mean scaled score that attains Proficient (on a scale where 40 has been defined as such).

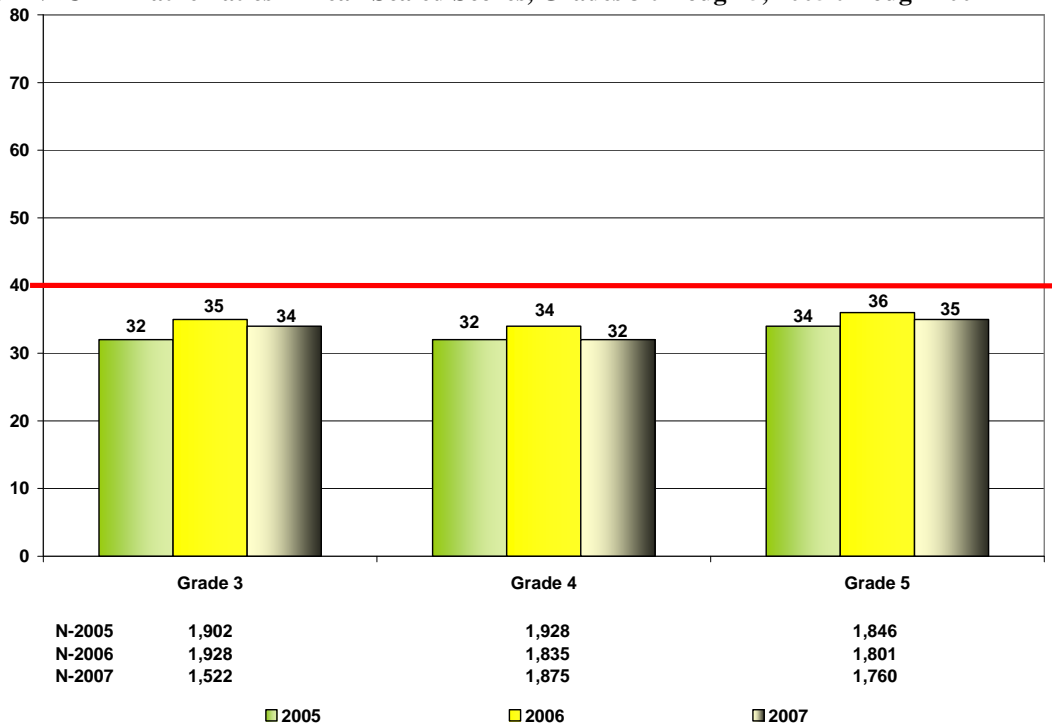
**Chart 7: NECAP Mathematics – Percent in Each Performance Level, Districtwide and Grades 3 through 5, 2005 through 2007**



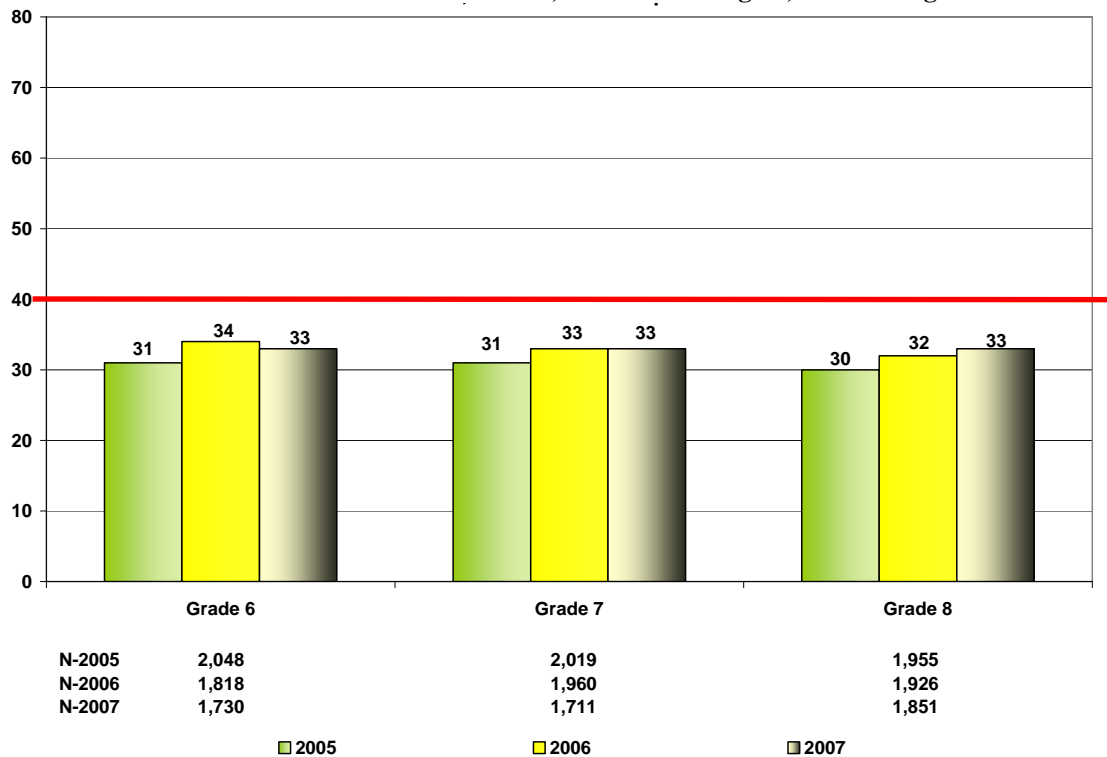
**Chart 8: NECAP Mathematics – Percent in Each Performance Level, Grades 6 through 8, 2005 through 2007**



**Chart 9: NECAP Mathematics – Mean Scaled Scores, Grades 3 through 5, 2005 through 2007**



**Chart 10: NECAP Mathematics – Mean Scaled Scores, Grades 6 through 8, 2005 through 2007**



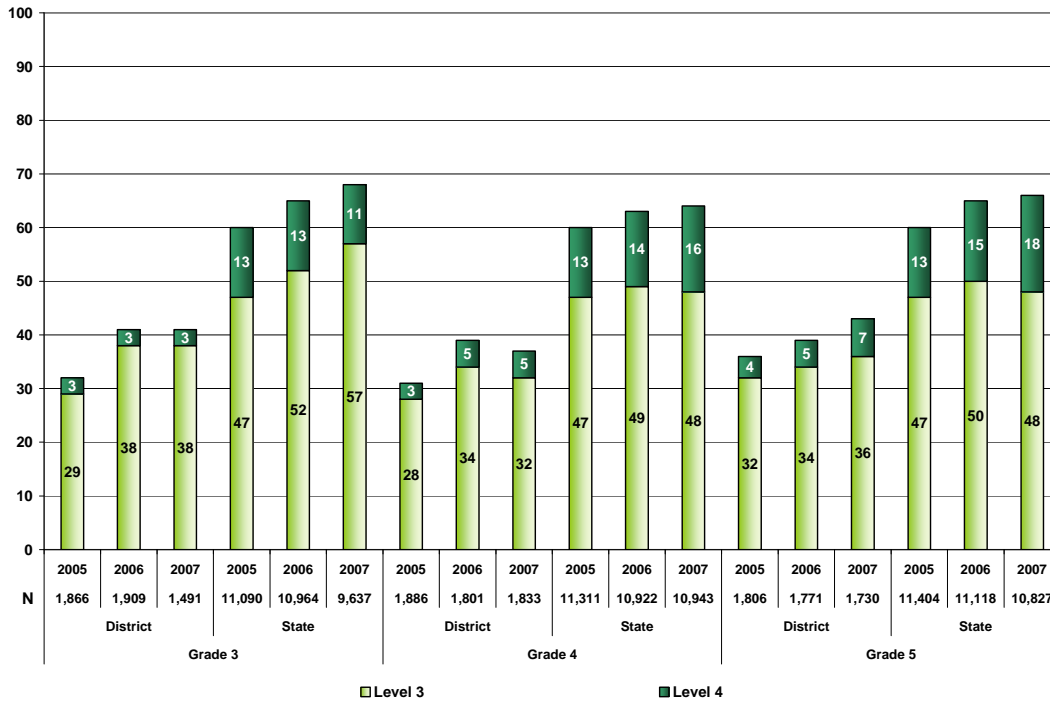
## Comparing District and State Results

### Reading

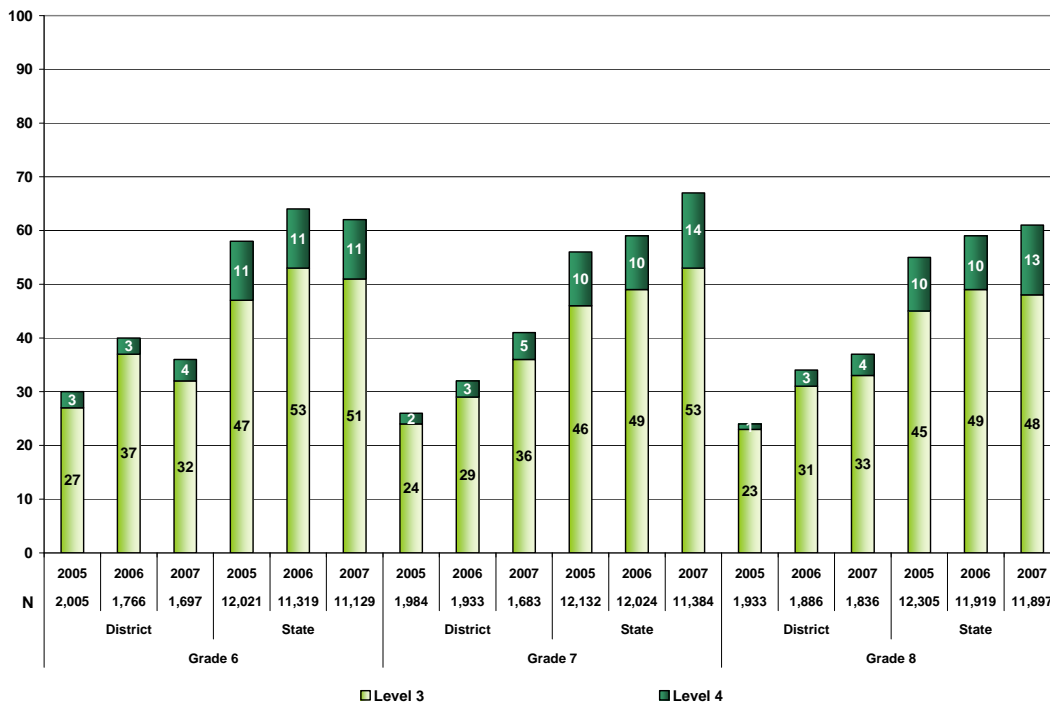
This section compares the percent of students scoring Proficient or higher in the Providence Public Schools on the NECAP reading test with similar performance of students statewide. Results are provided for each grade tested. Chart 11 compares the percent proficient in reading for the district and the state for grades 3, 4 and 5. Chart 12 provides similar information for grades 6, 7, and 8. Results are from the testing year (not teaching year). Data from these charts suggest the following:

- At every grade, the state’s percent proficient exceeds that of the district.
- Three-year trend data identifies clear trend of improvement in percent proficient for the state at grades 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. The same data identifies clear trend of improvement for the district at grades 5, 7 and 8. Wherever the state and district show these positive trends, that of the state is at a greater magnitude (i.e., a greater percentage of students is reported proficient than in the district).
- In each of the positive trends identified at the district level, increases are seen across the three years at both the *proficient* and *proficient with distinction* levels. This is true for the positive increase identified for grade 7 at the state level.
- Overall performance from 2006 to 2007 saw a decline, to some degree, at two grade levels in the district, grade 4 and 6. When looking in comparison to state results, it can be noted that the grade 4 performance across the two years noted a very small growth as compared to that of other grade levels. Also in grade 6 across that two year period a decline in performance is noted similar to that of the district.

**Chart 11: NECAP Reading – Percent Proficient, Grades 3 through 5, Fall 2005 – Fall 2007 Comparing Providence with State**



**Chart 12: NECAP Reading – Percent Proficient, Grades 6 through 8, Fall 2005 – Fall 2007 Comparing Providence with State**

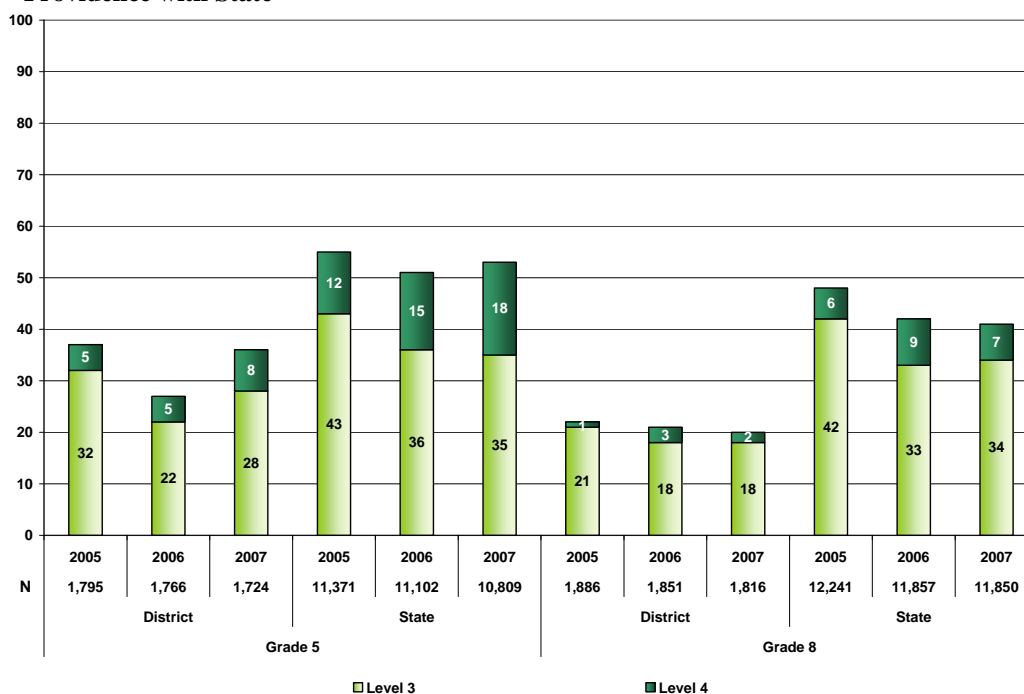


## Writing

This section compares the percent of students scoring Proficient or higher in the Providence Public Schools on the NECAP mathematics test with performance statewide. Results are provided for each grade tested. Chart 13 compares the percent proficient in mathematics for the district and the state for grades 5 and 8. Results are from the testing year (not teaching year). Data from these charts suggest the following:

- Three-year trend data identifies clear negative trend in percent proficient for the state and district at grades 8. However, the state, even though declining in the percent of students proficient, continues to have a greater percentage of students proficient than the district.
- Performance across both grade levels and across multiple years mirrors that of the state, but the state's percent proficient exceeds that of the district throughout.

**Chart 13: NECAP Writing – Percent Proficient, Grades 5 and 8, Fall 2005 – Fall 2007 Comparing Providence with State**



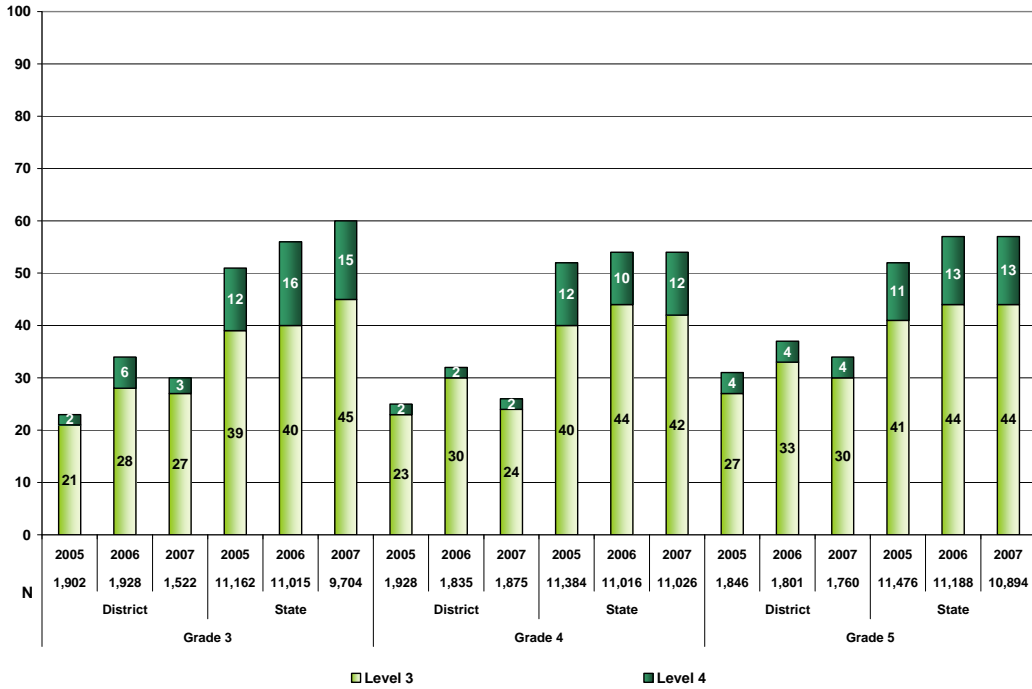
## Mathematics

This section compares the percent of students scoring Proficient or higher in the Providence Public Schools on the NECAP mathematics test with performance statewide. Results are provided for each grade tested. Chart 14 compares the percent proficient in mathematics for the district and the state for grades 3, 4 and 5. Chart 15 provides similar information for grades 6, 7, and 8. Results are from the testing year (not teaching year). Data from these charts suggest the following:

- At every grade, the state's percent proficient exceeds that of the district.
- Grade 3 students in the district declined in performance from 2006 to 2007 (34% to 30%) while the state showed a gain in the percent proficient from 2006 to 2007 (56% to 60%).
- For grades 4, 5, and 6 the percent proficient of district students declined while there was no change at the state level.

- At grades 7 and 8, the pattern of change in the percent proficient was the same for both the district and the state; grade 7 showed similar declines and grade 8 showed no changes from 2006 to 2007.
- Three-year trend data identifies one clear trend of improvement in percent proficient across all grade levels for both the state and the district – grade 3 for the state. Data for all other grade levels and groups is inconsistent to identify emerging trends.

**Chart 14: NECAP Mathematics – Percent Proficient, Grades 3 through 5, Fall 2005 – Fall 2007 Comparing Providence with State**



**Chart 15: NECAP Mathematics – Percent Proficient, Grades 6 through 8, Fall 2005 – Fall 2007 Comparing Providence with State**

