

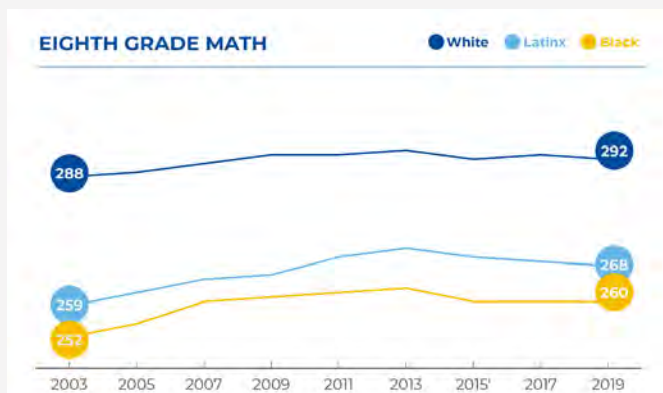
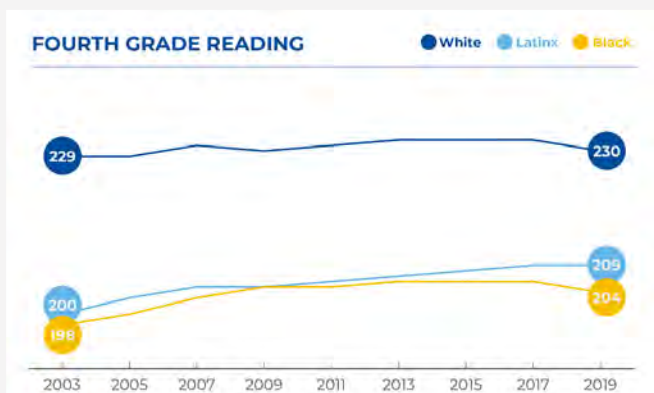
# STANDARDS-BASED REFORM:

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?






To deliver on our nation’s ideals of an equitable, inclusive, and flourishing society that provides pathways toward economic mobility and opportunity for all, we must eliminate the structural barriers that stagnate educational outcomes for Black, Latinx, and low-income students. For the past 30 years, Standards-Based Reform (SBR) has been the dominant approach to do so. SBR has shaped policy debates, educators’ practices, and student outcomes. The table below summarizes key SBR outcomes, including successes and unintended consequences.

SBR SUCCESSES	UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES AND EQUITY CHALLENGES OF SBR
<p><b>Academic expectations</b> SBR improved the rigor and consistency of standards.</p>	<p>Within 5 years of joining, 25 of 45 states left the Common Core State Standards Consortia. Standards in some states still are not sufficiently rigorous, jeopardizing access to robust academic <b>learning for Black and Latinx students and students experiencing poverty.</b></p>
<p><b>Aligned Assessments</b> SBR led to the development of stronger, standards-aligned assessments.</p>	<p>Efforts to circumvent the consequences of accountability led to <b>deceptive and unethical practices</b> of manipulating data, excluding tests, and even cheating.</p>
<p><b>Assessment</b> SBR led to improved student test performance.</p>	<p>Student test performance gains were non-substantial and inconsistent across subject areas, grade levels, and states. There were mixed results on student learning indicators such as student behavior, attendance, and graduation. <b>Importantly, large achievement gaps remain for Black, Latinx, and students experiencing poverty.</b> (see chart below)</p>

## DOCUMENTING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP | 2003-2019



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

SBR SUCCESSES	UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES AND EQUITY CHALLENGES OF SBR
 <p><b>Aligned Curricula</b> SBR led to the development of stronger standards-based, aligned curricula and instructional supports.</p>	 <p>Most teachers continue to use curricula that are not standards-aligned, and <b>Black, Latinx and low-income students continue to have less access to high-quality rigorous curriculum and instruction.</b></p>
 <p><b>Focus on ELA and Math</b> SBR increased time spent on Mathematics and English Language Arts.</p>	 <p>Pressure to meet SBR accountability requirements influenced teachers and schools to, at times, <b>narrow the curriculum</b> to “what’s on the test” and decrease time spent on other subject areas as well as limit exposure to art, music, and physical education.</p>
 <p><b>Data Transparency</b> SBR improved data reliability and transparency.</p>	 <p>Teachers are still <b>less likely to use these disaggregated data</b> to inform their instruction.</p>
 <p><b>Improvement Strategies</b> SBR increased the use of school improvement strategies, especially for low-performing schools.</p>	 <p>Districts and schools, particularly those serving students experiencing poverty and students of color, <b>faced continued sanctions and subsequently, were required to close, restart, turnaround, or transform schools.</b> Too often, these efforts did not work and <b>failed to engage communities of color, leaving them further disenfranchised.</b> Further, they diverted attention and resources from longer-term strategies to invest in teachers and other critical school resources.</p>
 <p><b>Effective Teachers</b> SBR identified the need to improve teacher preparation, training and quality; pushed for teaching standards; defined and required high quality teachers; and incentivized equitable distribution of effective teachers.</p>	 <p>Efforts to circumvent “highly-qualified teacher requirements amidst teacher shortages led many <b>schools serving majority students experiencing poverty and students of color to rely on long-term substitutes and short-term teachers.</b> Meanwhile, accountability pressures hurt teacher morale, satisfaction, and retention, especially in high-need schools. And shortages of teachers, the single most important school resource, persist.</p>

This Fact Sheet is part of a suite of resources on the lessons learned from 30 years of SBR, and the need to explore how best to advance the next generation of education policies to eliminate structural barriers that stagnate educational outcomes for Black, Latinx, and low-income students - either within the SBR framework or through an alternate policy paradigm. This suite of resources includes 3 Fact Sheets and a slide deck covering the following topics related to Standards-Based Reform: What is It, What Have We Learned, and A Path Forward. These resources can be found at [www.edudream.org](http://www.edudream.org).