

# State Board of Education's Middle Grades Reform Initiative

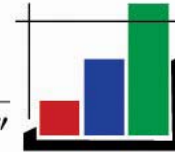
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**Jim Warford**  
**K-12 Chancellor**  
**Senate Education Committee**

**January 7, 2004**

# Florida's Middle Schools

- 477 middle/junior high schools
- 613,029 students
  - 205,095 students in grade 6
  - 206,774 students in grade 7
  - 201,160 students in grade 8
- Approximately 37,517 teachers serving students in grades 6, 7, and 8

# Middle Grades Reform

- Why “reform” our middle schools?
- Why now?

The data indicate that students can achieve more ...and that we must do better.

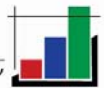
# We have made a difference...



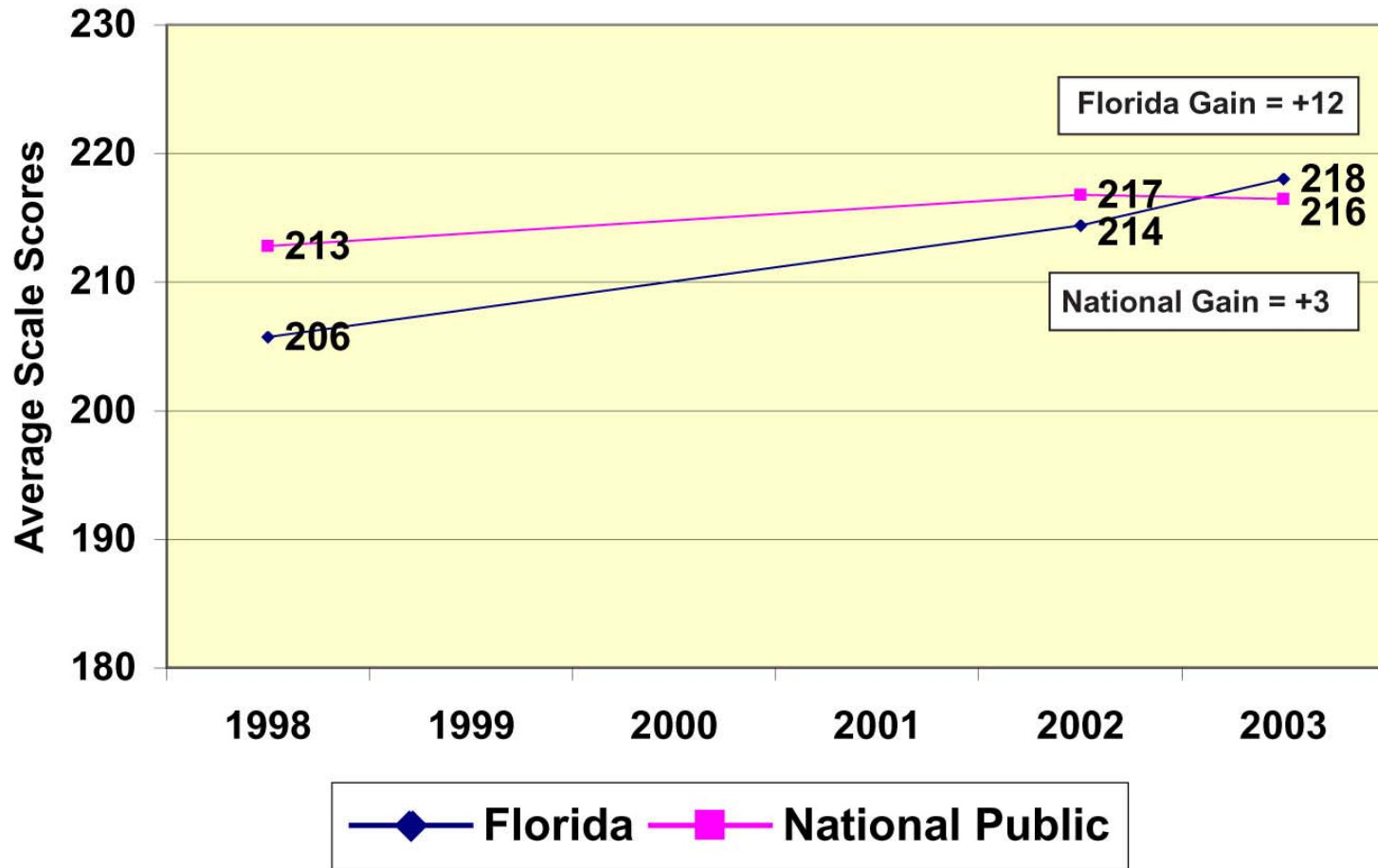
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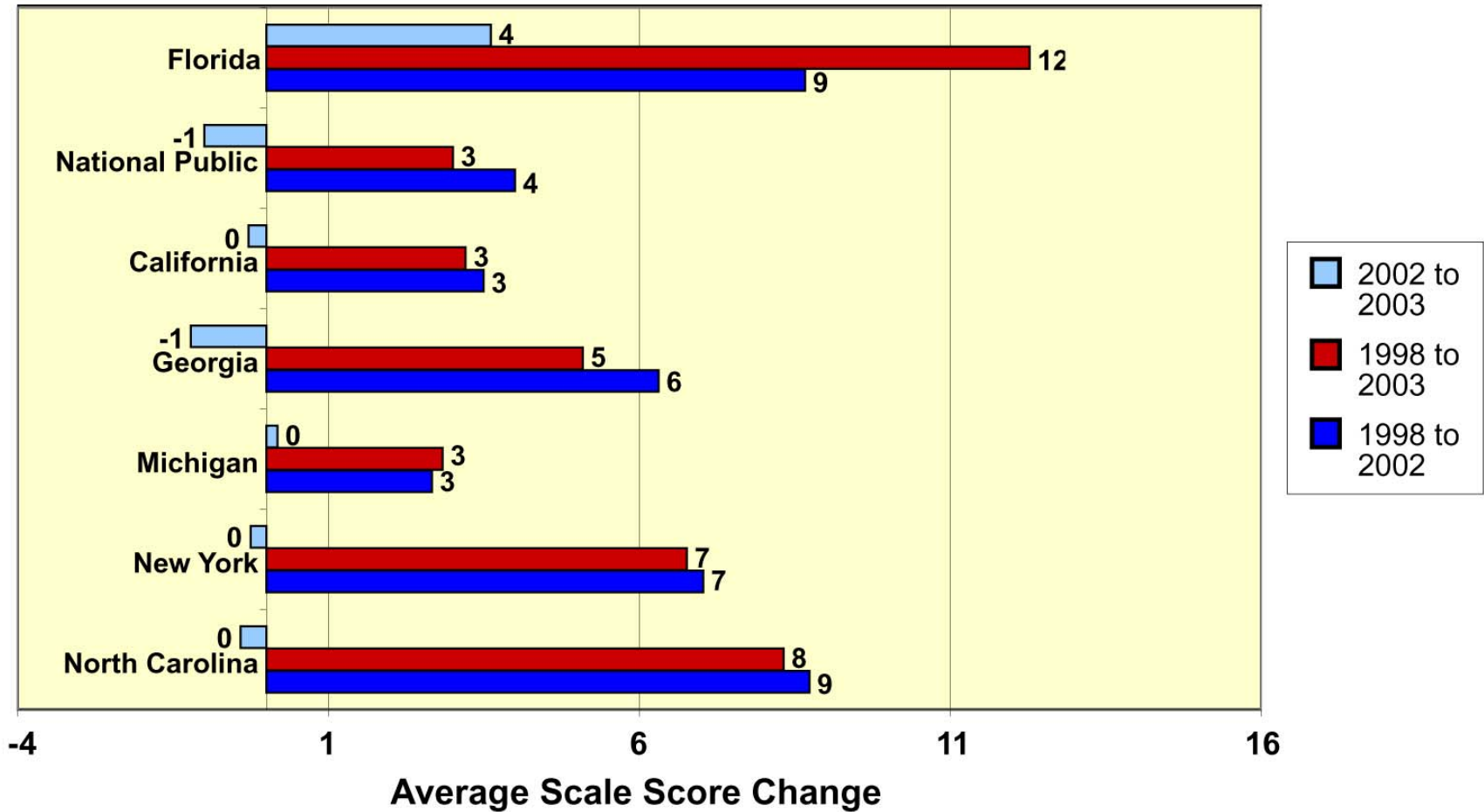
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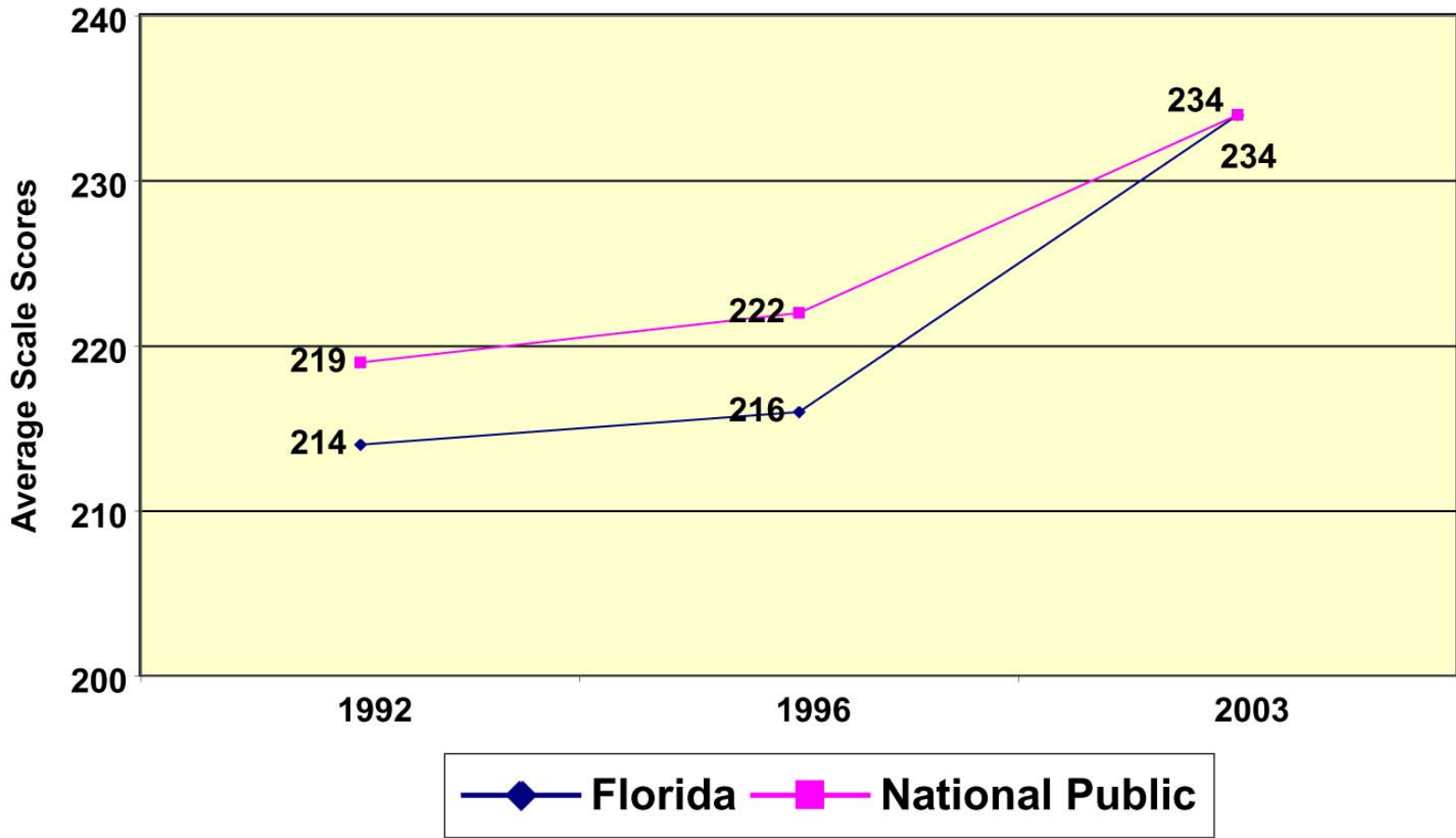
## NAEP Grade 4 Reading Scores - All Students 1998, 2002 and 2003



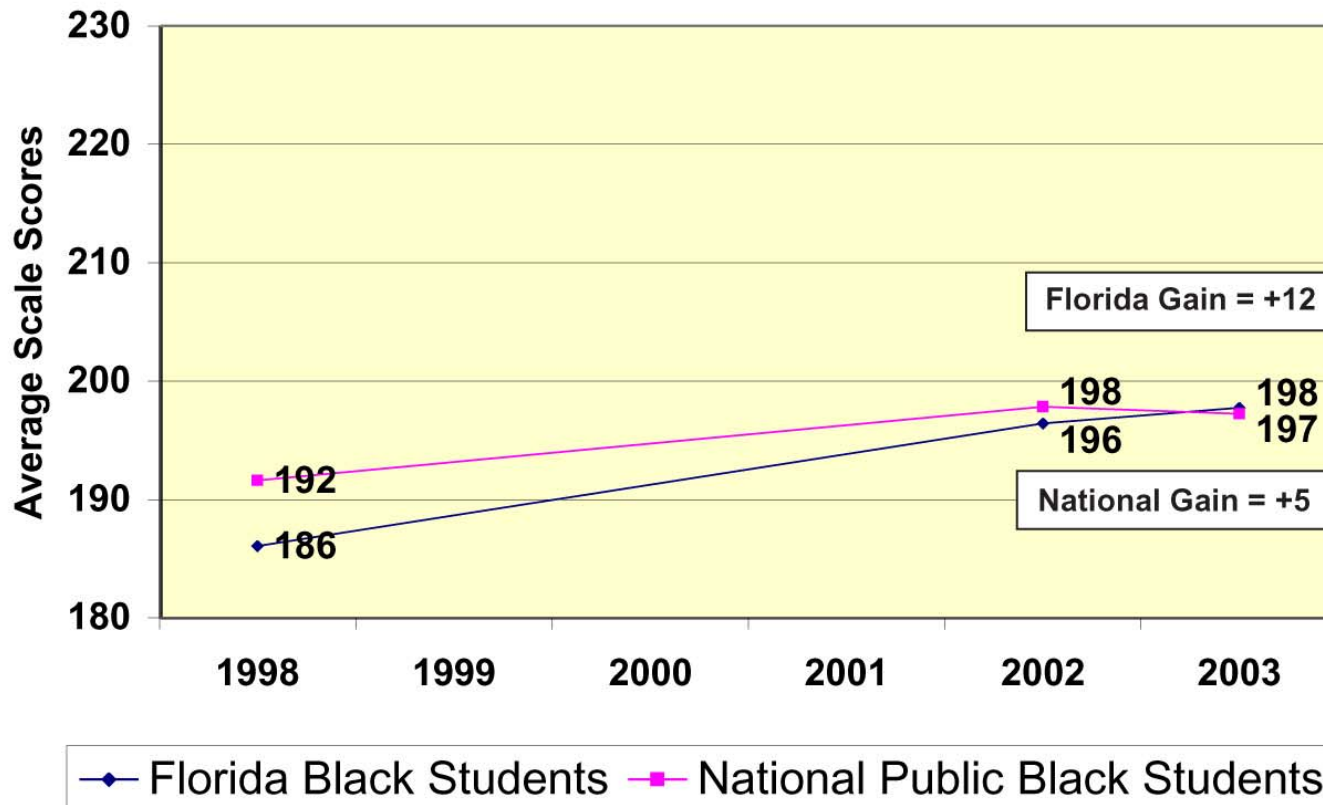
## NAEP Grade 4 Reading Results Score Improvements Since 1998



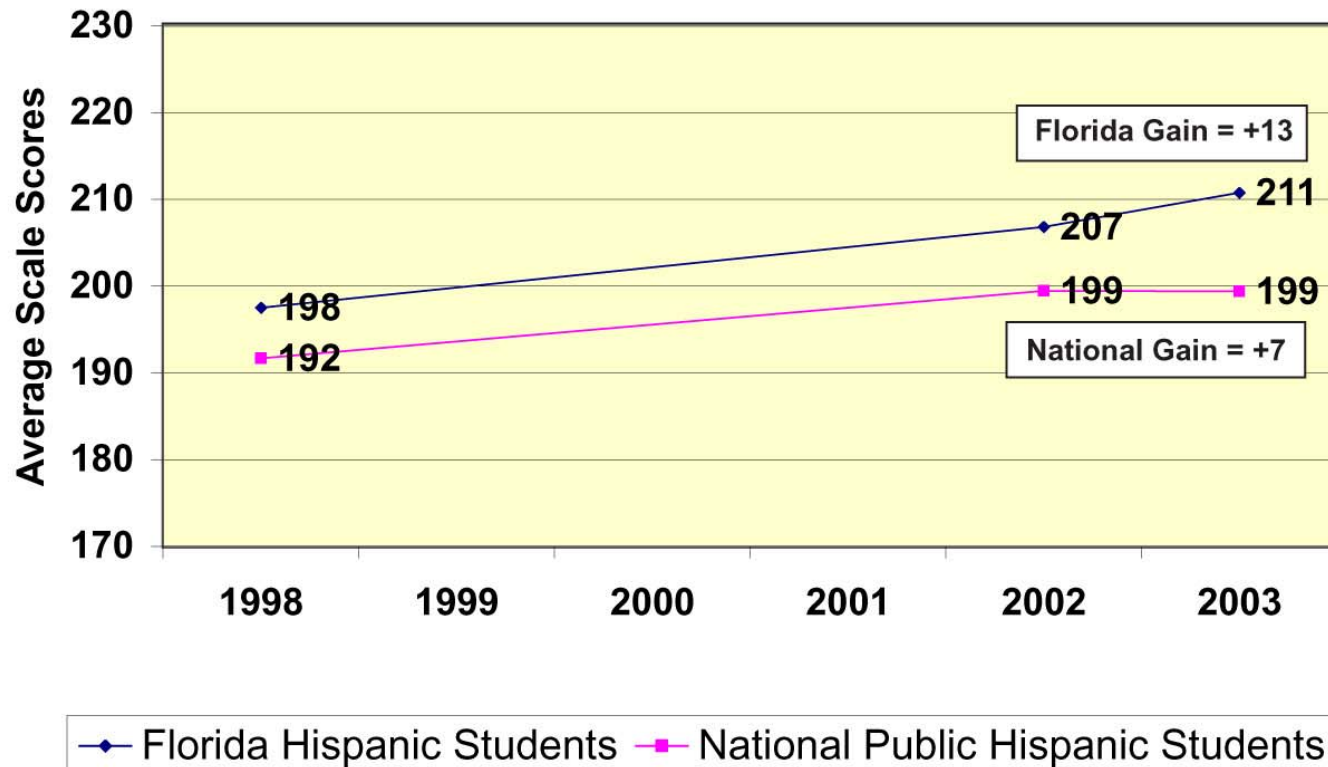
## Florida NAEP Grade 4 Mathematics Scores At National Average for the First Time



## NAEP Grade 4 Reading Scores - Black Students 1998, 2002 and 2003



## NAEP Grade 4 Reading Scores - Hispanic Students 1998, 2002 and 2003



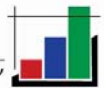
But, we must do better...



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# Academic Performance Data

- In 2003, 585,866 students in grades 6-8 participated in the reading portion of the FCAT

These data indicate:

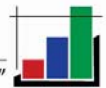
- 46% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders do not read on grade level
- 49% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders do not read on grade level
- 52% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders do not read on grade level



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# Academic Performance Data

- In 2003, 584,951 students in grades 6-8 participated in the math portion of the FCAT

These data indicate:

- **53%** of 6<sup>th</sup> graders scored Level 1 or Level 2
- **52%** of 7<sup>th</sup> graders scored Level 1 or Level 2
- **44%** of 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored Level 1 or Level 2

# Academic Performance Data

- FCAT Developmental Scale
  - Links existing grade-level achievement scales across grades
  - Is used to assess change in achievement between grades
- Increases for middle grades students are less dramatic than for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students
- Students in grades K-3 have benefited from the success of the state's Just Read, Florida! initiatives

# The Middle Grades Reform Act

*The purpose of the “Middle Grades Reform Act” is to provide added focus and rigor to academics in the middle schools. Using reading as the foundation, all middle school students will receive rigorous academic instruction through challenging curricula, delivered by highly qualified teachers, in schools with outstanding leadership, which are supported by engaged and informed parents. Students leaving the 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be ready for success in high school.*

# The Middle Grades Reform Act

- Bring focus and rigor to academics to increase student achievement in all subject areas
- Begin with reading – *Now*
- Identify strategies to increase the academic performance of middle grades students

# The Middle Grades Reform Act

## Four Components

1. Ensure middle grades curriculum and course offerings are based on effective research based programs
2. Implement a Rigorous Reading Requirement for middle grades schools with fewer than 75% of students reading at least on grade level

# The Middle Grades Reform Act

## 3. Develop Personal Middle School Graduation Plans

- For entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade students who scored below level 3 in Reading or Math in 5<sup>th</sup> grade (begin 2004-05 school year)
- In collaboration with student, parent, and teacher
- The plan will include educational goals, strategies to achieve goals, benchmarks for student; will be linked to AIP

# The Middle Grades Reform Act

4. Conduct a Comprehensive Reform Study in consultation with education stakeholders
  - Academic Requirements
  - Attendance Policies and Strategies
  - Teacher Quality
  - School Leadership
  - Parental and Community Involvement

# The Middle Grades Reform Act

## Timelines

- By the 2005-06 school year, phase in implementation of strengthened reading/language arts courses in all middle grades schools
- Beginning with the 2004-05 school year, require each school with fewer than 75% of students reading on grade level to implement a Rigorous Reading Requirement as the primary component of the school improvement plan
- By October 1, 2004, the Commissioner of Education must submit recommendations to increase the academic performance of students in middle schools.



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