



OpenSky Policy Institute Fall Policy Symposium

School Funding Systems and Poverty:
How States Can Fund Schools to Meet the
Growing Needs of Students

Lincoln, Nebraska
October, 2015

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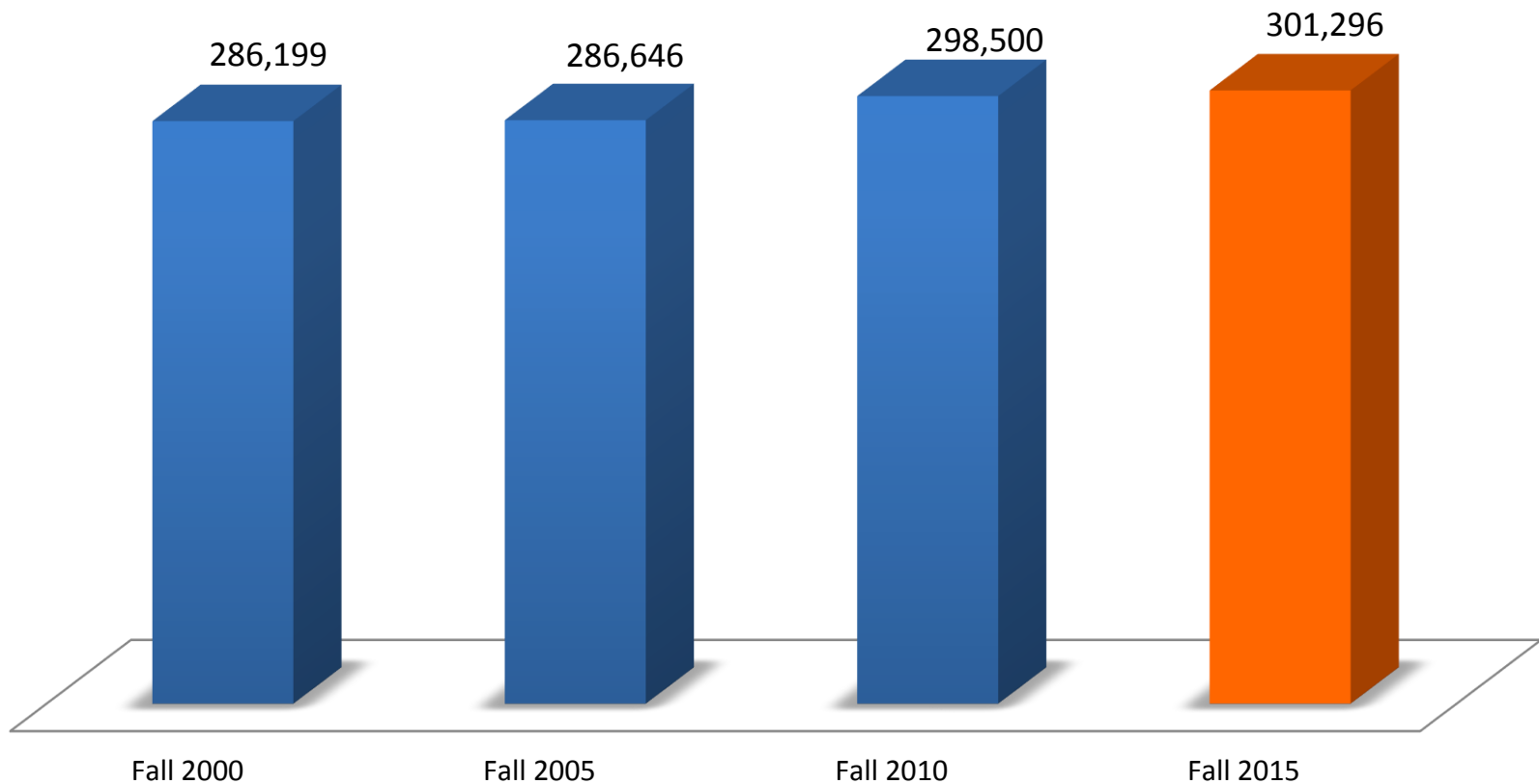
- Created by states, for states, in 1965 to track state policy trends, translate academic research, provide unbiased advice and create opportunities for state leaders to learn from one another.
- 53 member states, territories and the District of Columbia
- Contact: www.ecs.org (303) 299.3600

State School Funding and At-Risk Student Populations

1. Why Focus on At-risk Students?
1. Current State Funding Practices
2. Promising Funding Ideas
3. ELL Funding

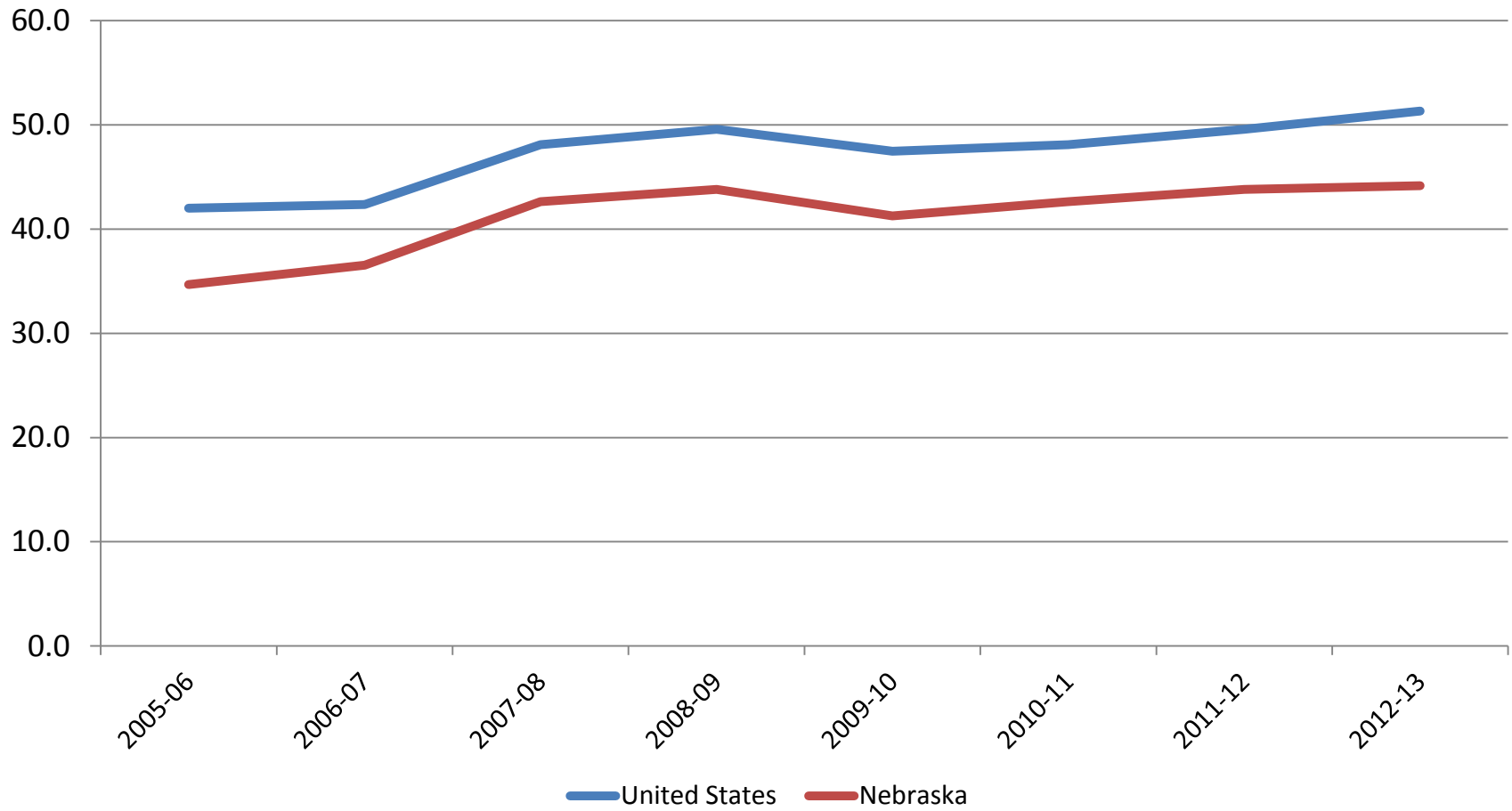
Enrollment in Public Elementary & Secondary Schools

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education



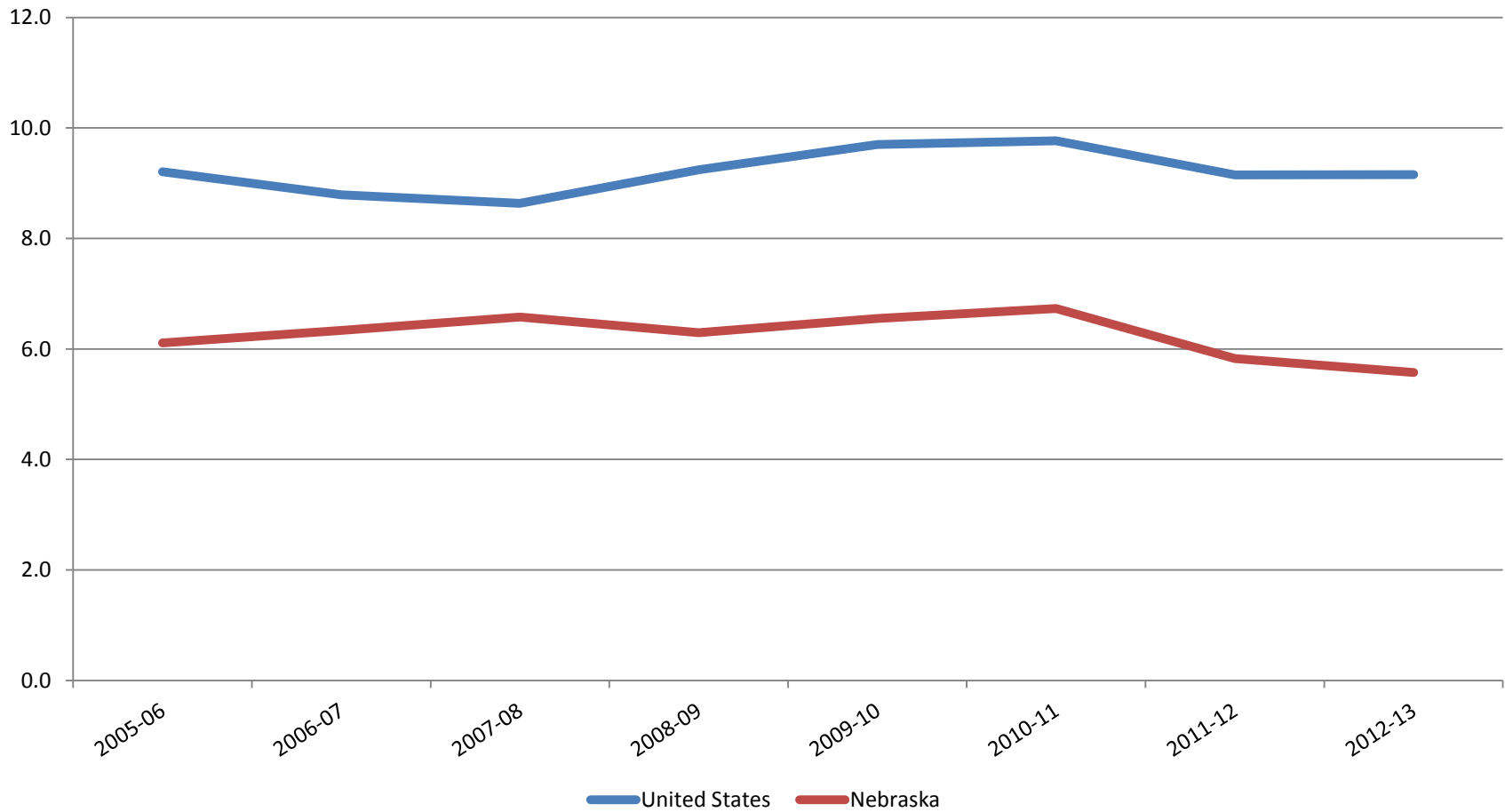
Free/Reduced Price Lunch Population As a Percentage of Total Student Population

National Center for Education Statistics



English Language Learner Population As a Percentage of Total Student Population

National Center for Education Statistics

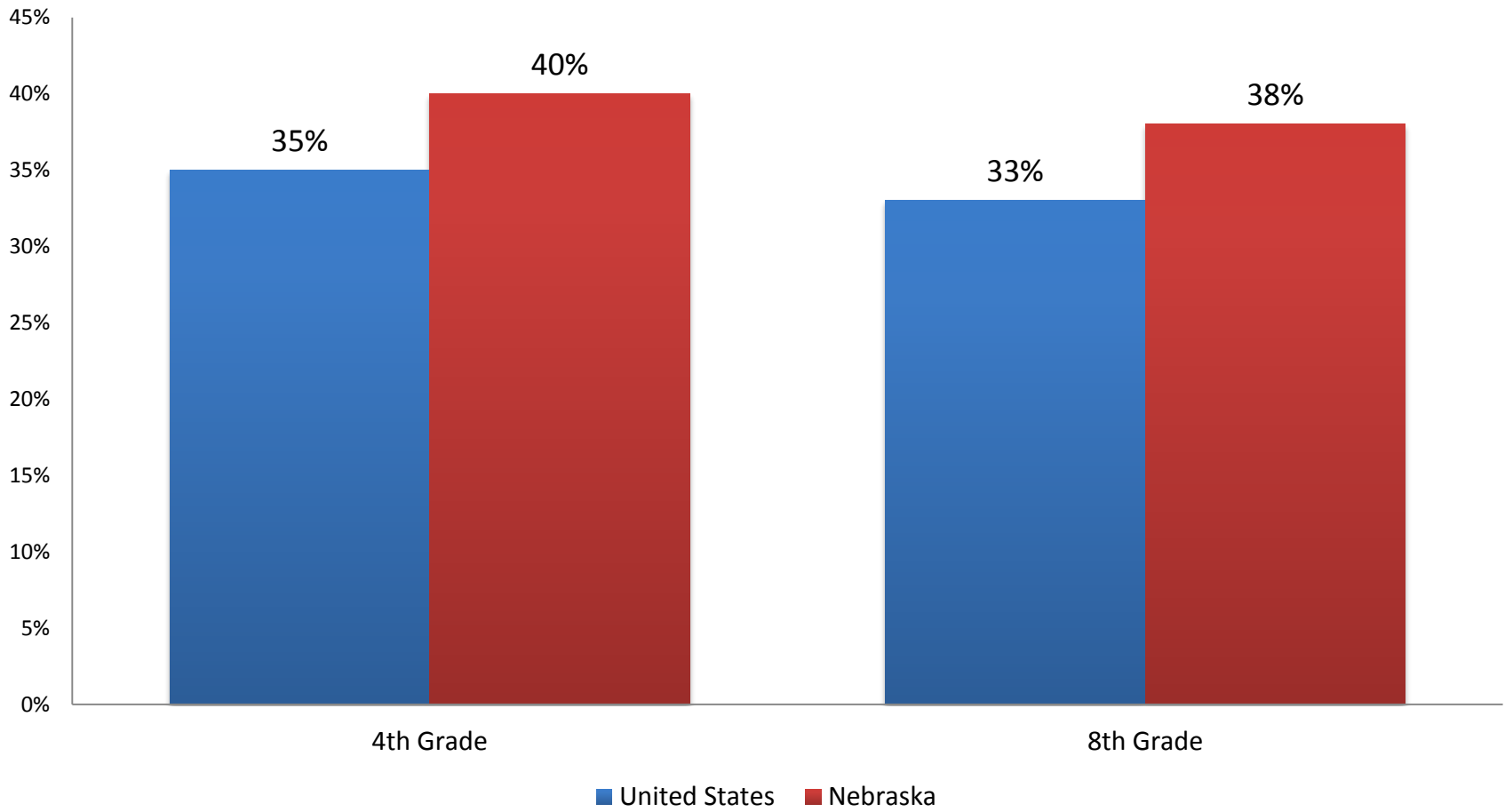


Student Results

- National Assessment of Educational Progress
 - Given every two years
 - 50 state results in math & reading for 4th & 8th grade from 2003
 - Other subjects tested: Arts, Civics, Economics, Geography, U.S. History, Science, Tech & Engineering and Writing
- High School Graduation Rates
 - Number of 9th grade students who graduate within 4 years

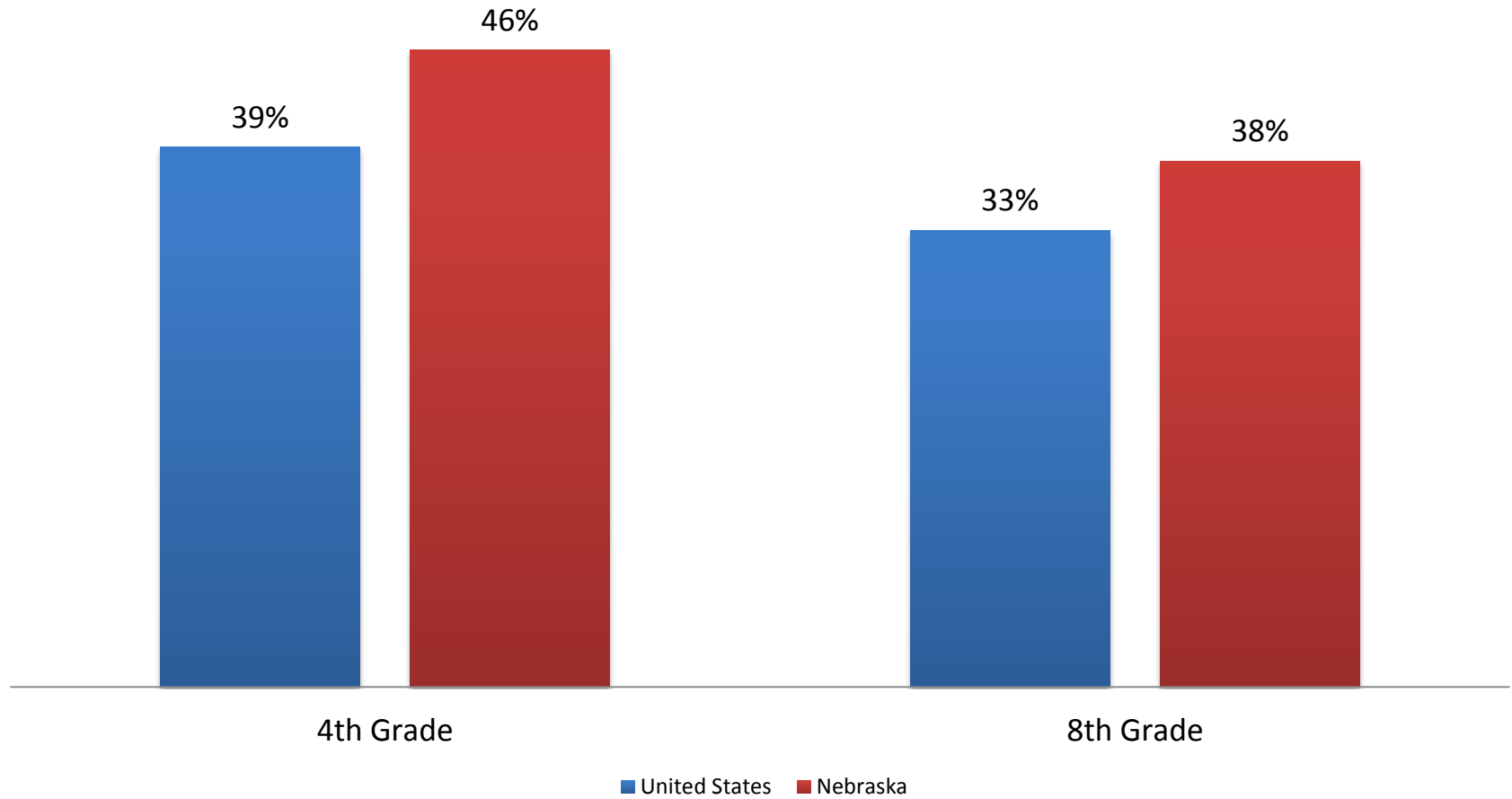
Nebraska 2015 NAEP – Reading

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above



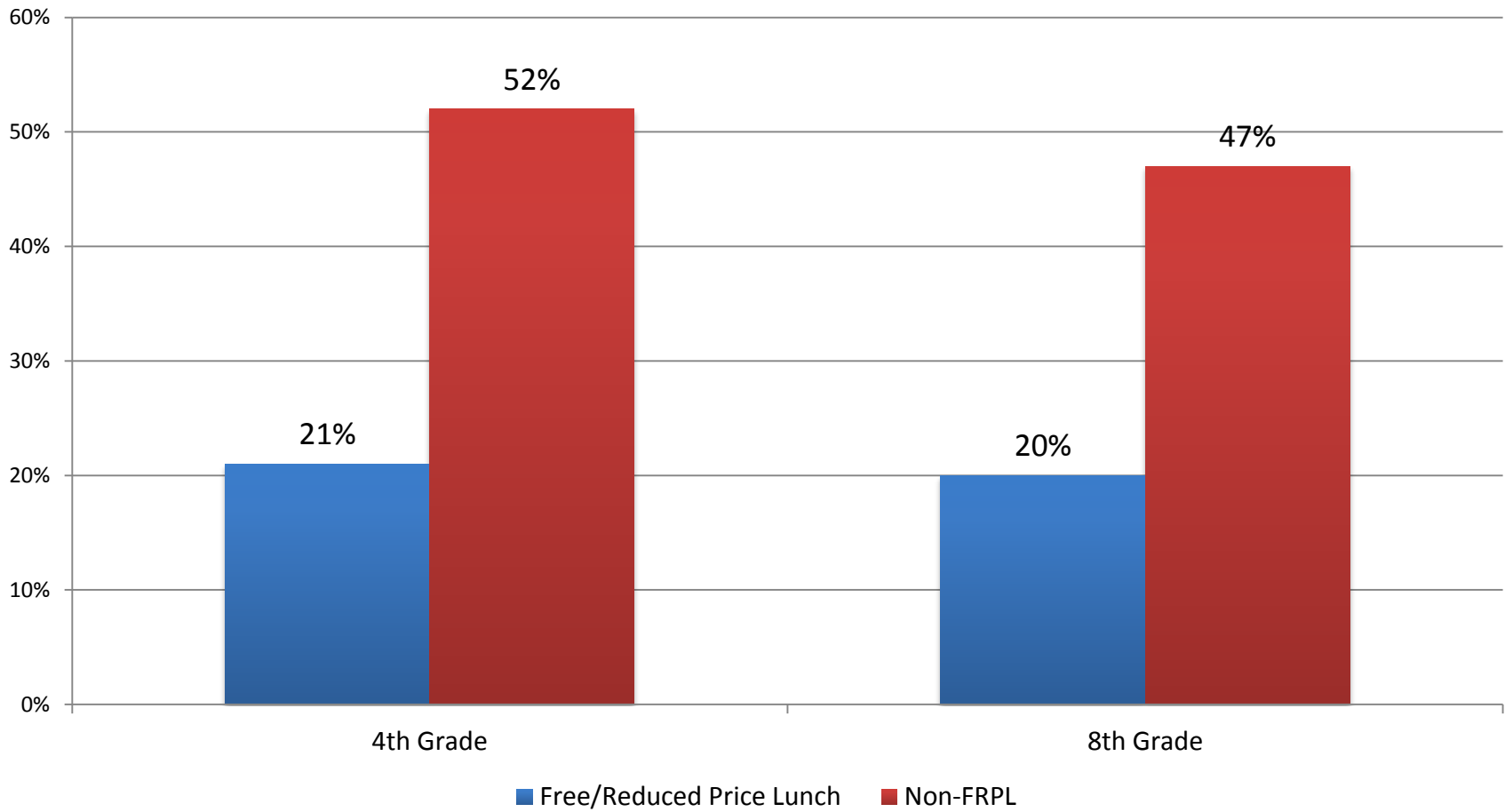
Nebraska 2015 NAEP – Math

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above



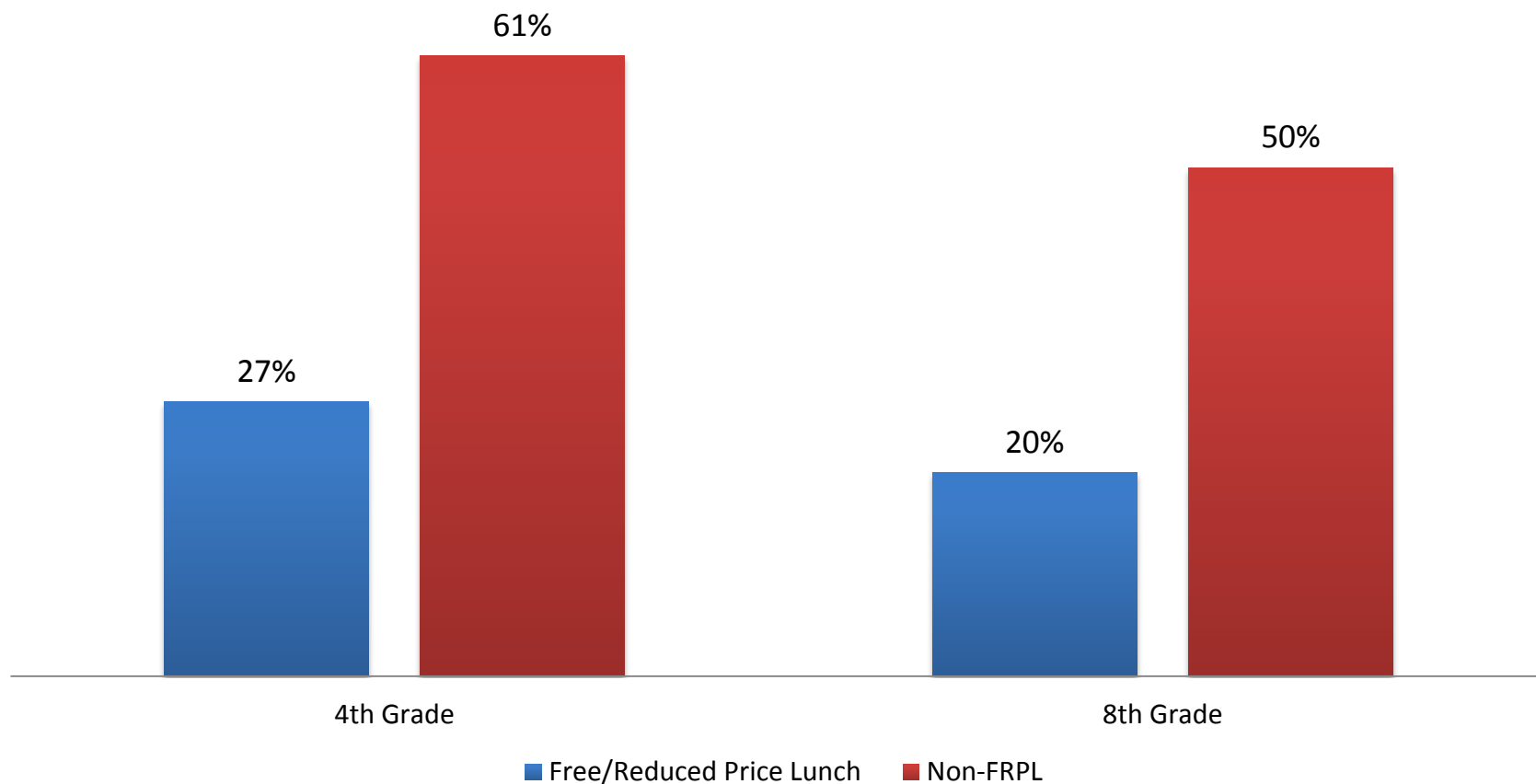
Nebraska 2015 NAEP Reading Results for Free/Reduced Price Lunch Students

Students Scoring At Proficient or Above



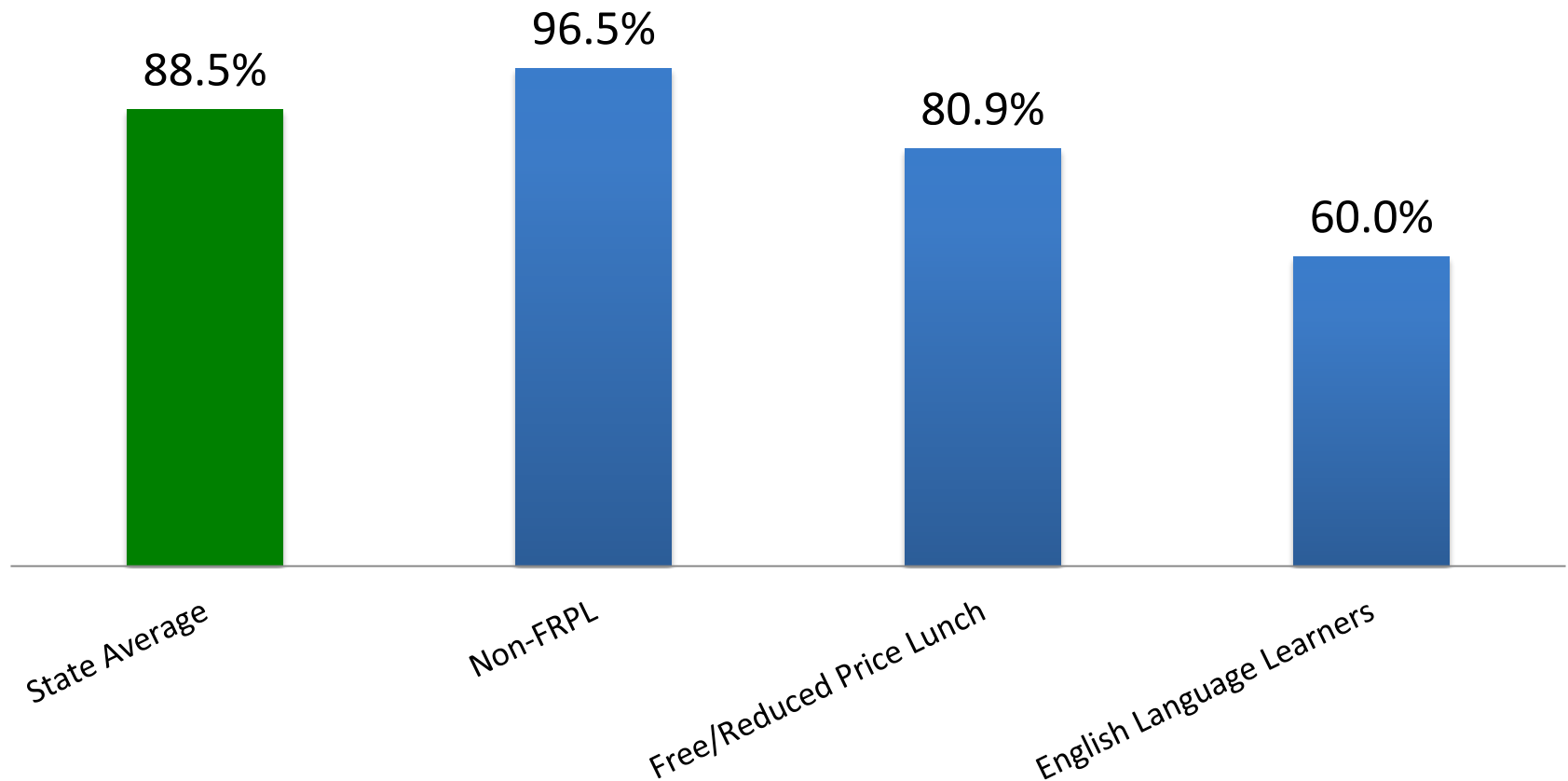
Nebraska 2015 NAEP Math Results for Free/Reduced Price Lunch Students

Students Scoring At Proficient or Above



Nebraska's Four-Year High School Grad Rates 2012-13

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education



State At-Risk Funding Programs

- 38 states provide some form of additional funding for low-income students
- 27 states provide this funding through their primary school funding formula
- 11 provide funding through a grant program outside of the state's primary formula

How States Fund At-Risk Programs

- Of the 27 states that provide funding inside of the state formula 26 provided at-risk students with an additional weight
- Weights varied from 1.6 (*Georgia*) to .05 (*Mississippi*)
- The only state that did not provide a weight was Massachusetts - at-risk funds are provided on a per student basis (\$2,702/*elementary* and \$3,341/*secondary*)

How are At-risk Students Identified

- Of the 37 states that provide at-risk funding – 25 use some form of free/reduced price lunch to identify at-risk students
 - 17 states use free or reduced price (F/R L) lunch as their sole identifier for at-risk funding
 - 3 states use only free lunch as an identifier
 - 5 states use F/R L as one of the measures for identifying at-risk students

Community Eligibility and School Funding

- Districts that qualify for Community Eligibility no longer collect F/R lunch data
- All states that make use of F/R lunch as a measure for at-risk will need to find a new set of measures
- Indiana and Massachusetts have already made the move to funding at-risk based on direct certification and found that school districts with the working poor are negatively impacted

Alternative At-risk Measures

- Some states provide at-risk funding to districts based on total enrollment (*Florida & West Virginia*)
- Some states use student achievement measures as an identifier for at-risk students
 - Low performing students (*Georgia & Utah*)
- Some states make use of other poverty figures instead of F/R lunch
 - Student from low income families –(*North Carolina & Vermont*)
 - Qualification for Title I (*Montana & New Mexico*)

Unique Student Identifiers

- Pregnant students (Texas)
- Children of military families (Texas)
- Students in single-parent families or families with at least one parent without a high school degree (North Carolina)
- Students in foster homes or in facilities for neglected and delinquent children (Oregon)

Funding Based on Student Density

- Research has shown that as a district/schools at-risk population increases the cost of educating each at-risk student increases
- Eight states currently have funding systems that take the density of at-risk student populations into account (*Arkansas, California, Colorado, Indiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, Rhode Island and Virginia*)

Goals for A School Funding Formula

- Connecting funding and state education expectations
 - The funding formula should be aligned to state educational standards (*Massachusetts*)
- Striving for Equitable Funding
 - Relative equity in funding (*Montana, New Mexico and Texas*)
 - Equity in opportunity and offerings for all students (*Rhode Island and Wyoming*)

Goals for A School Funding Formula

- Transparent and Comprehensible
 - Fewer programs outside of the funding formula (*Maryland and New York*)
 - Clarity on how the dollars flow to schools/students (*California and Colorado*)
- Predictability
 - A predictable system allows the state and school districts to do advanced planning

Promising Practices

Moving Funding to the Student's School

- There is a move to have at-risk funding follow at-risk students to their school
- Some states are requiring districts to start accounting at the school level (*California, Colorado and Rhode Island*)
- Minnesota requires at-risk funding to be expended at the school that an at-risk student attends

Promising Practices

Rhode Island

- Rhode Island provides at-risk to districts through a weight in their formula (*0.40*)
- The state also determines a district's ability to pay based on the size of their at-risk population

Promising Practices

Growth in Pre-K

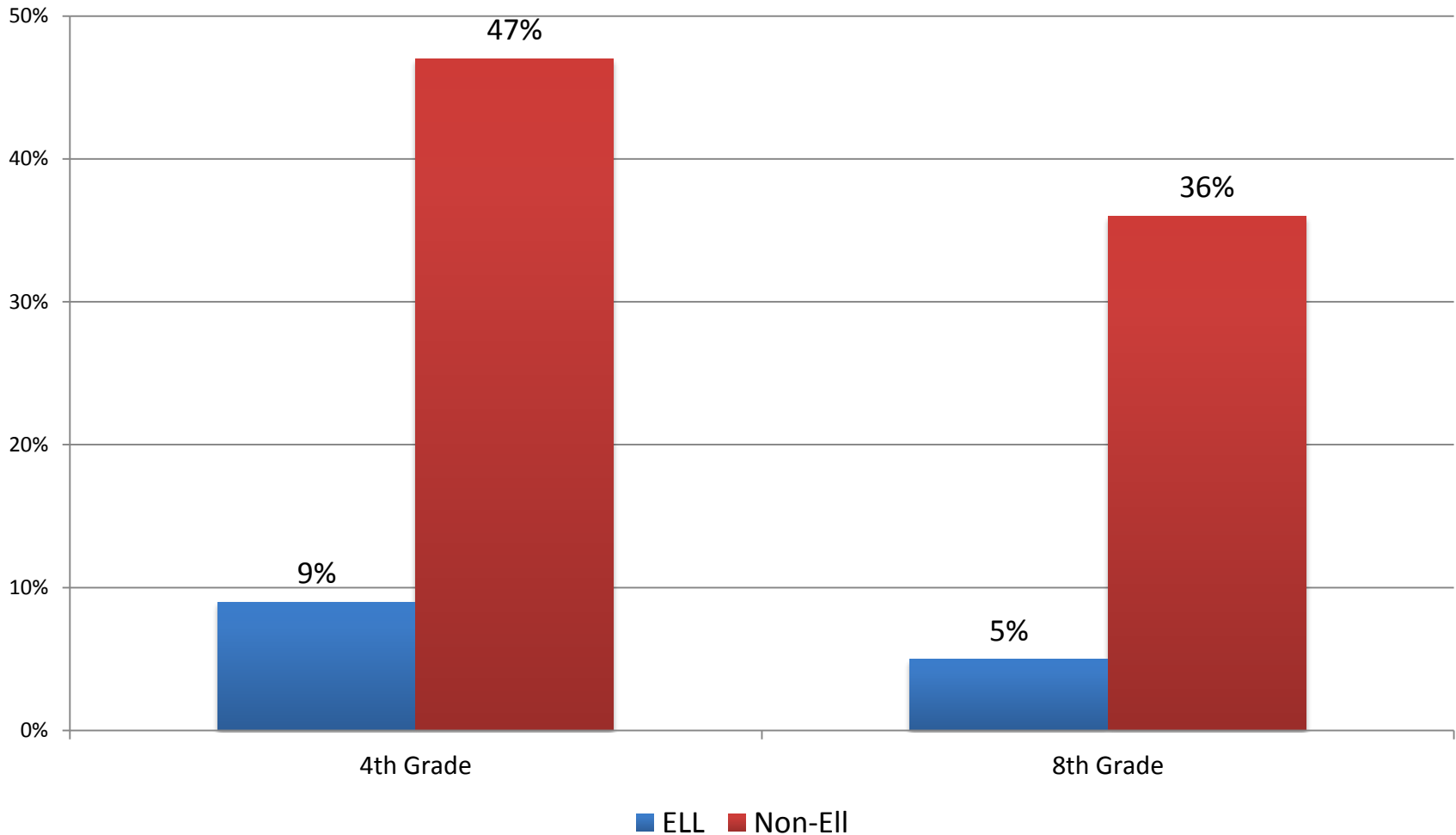
- 44 states now fund Pre-K for 4-year-olds
- Pre-K programs assist at-risk student populations & have decreased the number of students identified for special education
- If a quality Pre-K is not match with a quality K-12 education studies show that gains can be lost by 3rd grade

State ELL Funding Programs

- The services that At-risk and ELL students receive are different – because of this states have moved to funding these student groups separately

Nebraska – NAEP 2013 Math

ELL Students Scoring Proficient or Above



Goals for ELL Students

- The goal of any ELL program should be to move students off of ELL designation as soon as possible
- States are placing time limits on funding (*Arizona*), front loading funding (*Ohio*) or providing financial incentives (*California*) to achieve this goal

English Language Learners

- Currently 46 states provide additional funding for ELL students
- The majority (34) provide it within their formula
- State funding ranges from an additional 9.6% funding (*Kentucky*) to 99% (*Maryland*)

For More Information

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