

The Arizona Republic editorialized as follows:

State Schools Superintendent Tom Horne has called for legislation to allow the state to take over entire districts and school boards for poor student performance.

In Roosevelt's case, such action would be certainly justified...

I want to be sure that the Department of Education does everything humanly possible to help the Roosevelt School District substantially improve its academic performance. If we can do that together, then the question of taking over the Roosevelt School District will never have to come up.

First, let's discuss just how bad the problem is. We selected three comparison districts, each one of which has substantially similar poverty and higher ELL rates than Roosevelt.

In third grade math, 64% and 67% at Phoenix Elementary and Murphy and 78% at Alhambra, are proficient. Roosevelt is far below, at 45%.

In third grade reading, 66% at Phoenix Elementary, 62% at Murphy, and 72% at Alhambra are proficient. Roosevelt's rate is only 34%. The same is true in the other measures: Roosevelt is substantially below each one of the comparison districts at every grade level, in every subject, 27 separate measures.

Furthermore, Roosevelt is in a steep decline in its third grade reading scores: from 58% to 34% in the past three years.

The Department of Education has experience to make recommendations for the Roosevelt School District. 10 of its 21 schools are underperforming or failing, and another five are having difficulty implementing the state's Reading First initiative. That is 15 out of the 21 schools.

I am going to present the Board with one single thing to do. If it does it conscientiously, then within the next three years people all over the state will be talking about how well Roosevelt students are doing academically. Just one thing. Here it is:

Put all the energy you have into finding the very best instructional leader that you can find to be superintendent. Give him or her a three-year contract, with specific academic goals of percentage of students to be proficient at the end of the three years. Hold the superintendent accountable for meeting those goals within three years. Then, get out of his or her way. Here is the most important part: provide in the contract, and publicly pledge, that the superintendent will have full authority to hire and fire, and that neither the board nor any of its members will interfere in any way with any hiring or firing decisions.

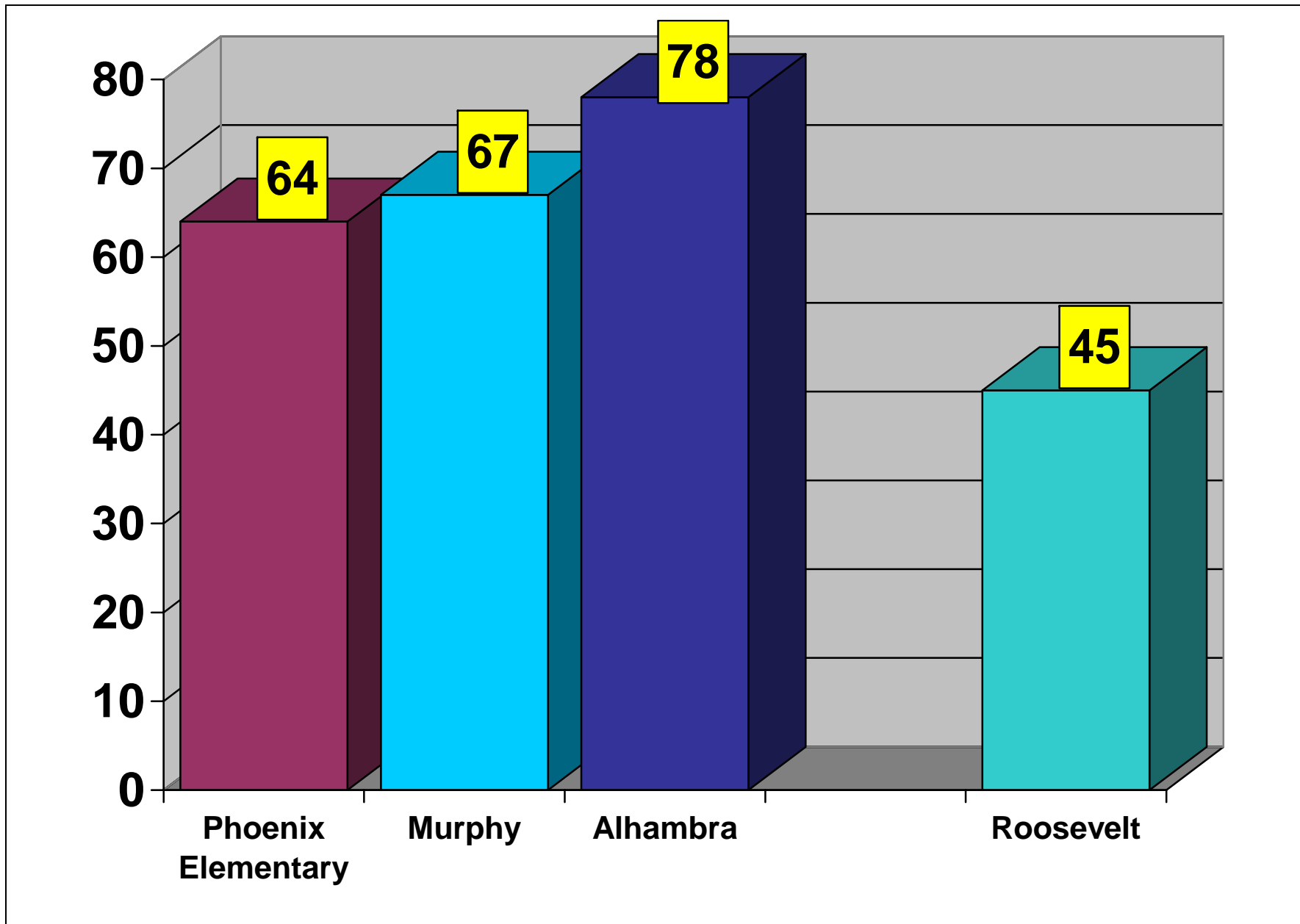
This is not an easy pledge for any board member to make, unless all make it. As the Republic editorial stated, the district has long suffered from "rampant nepotism," and I believe that has been the most serious barrier preventing academic achievement.

If a school has a strong instructional leader as principal, other problems can be solved. If it does not, almost nothing else that you do will make any difference.

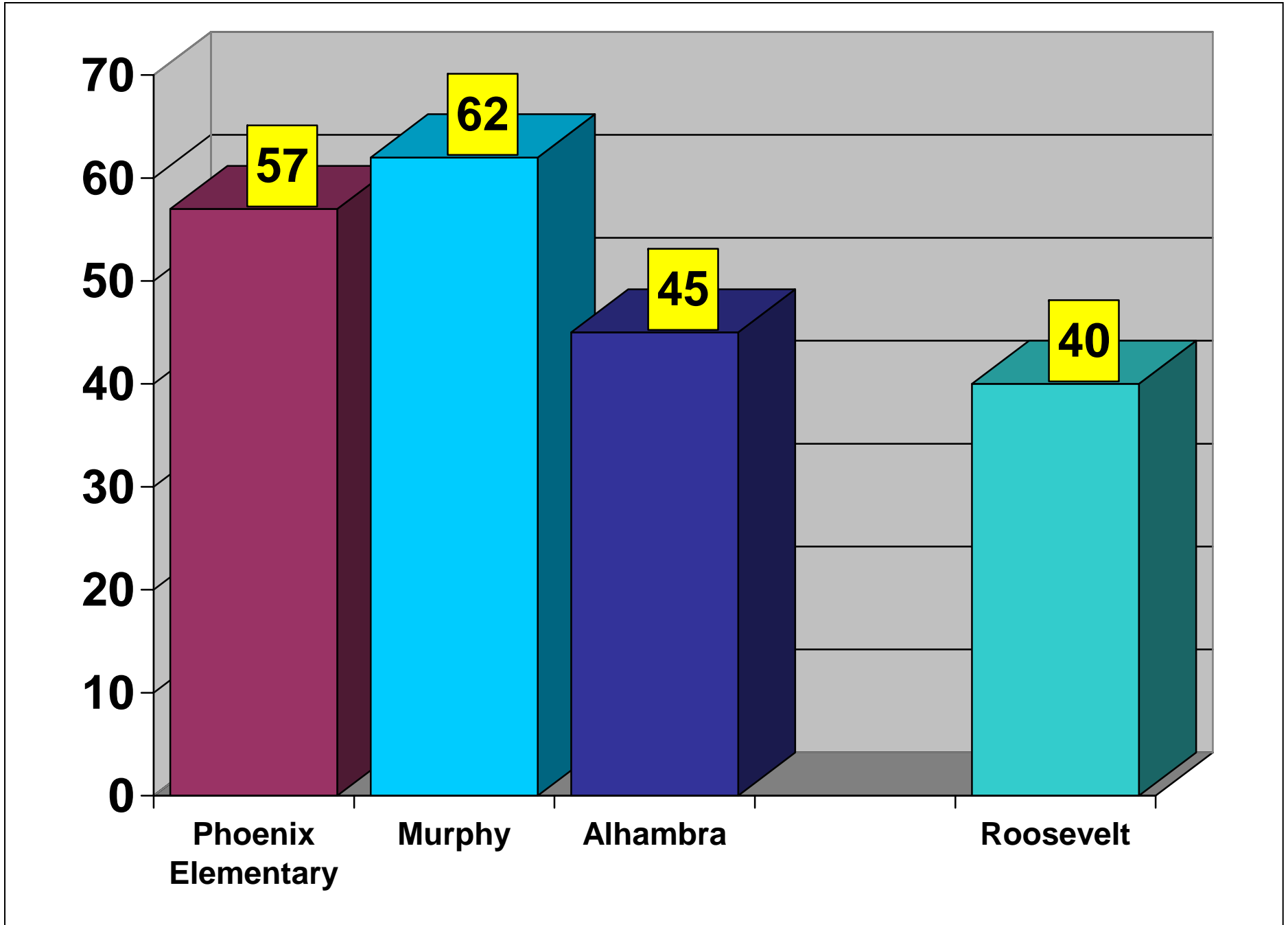
One other point. Everyone familiar with the Roosevelt district talks about power struggles between Latinos and African Americans. It is hard to stomach that such a thing could exist in the United States of America in 2005. The only thing that should matter is the academic achievement of each student, as an individual, and what each staff member can contribute to academic achievement, as an individual. It should be absolutely prohibited to ever refer to someone's ethnicity, when our goal must be the academic achievement of the students.

There you have it. If you will conscientiously do this one thing – select an instructional leader as superintendent, and leave all employment decision to that instructional leader – then the academic scores of your students will soar.

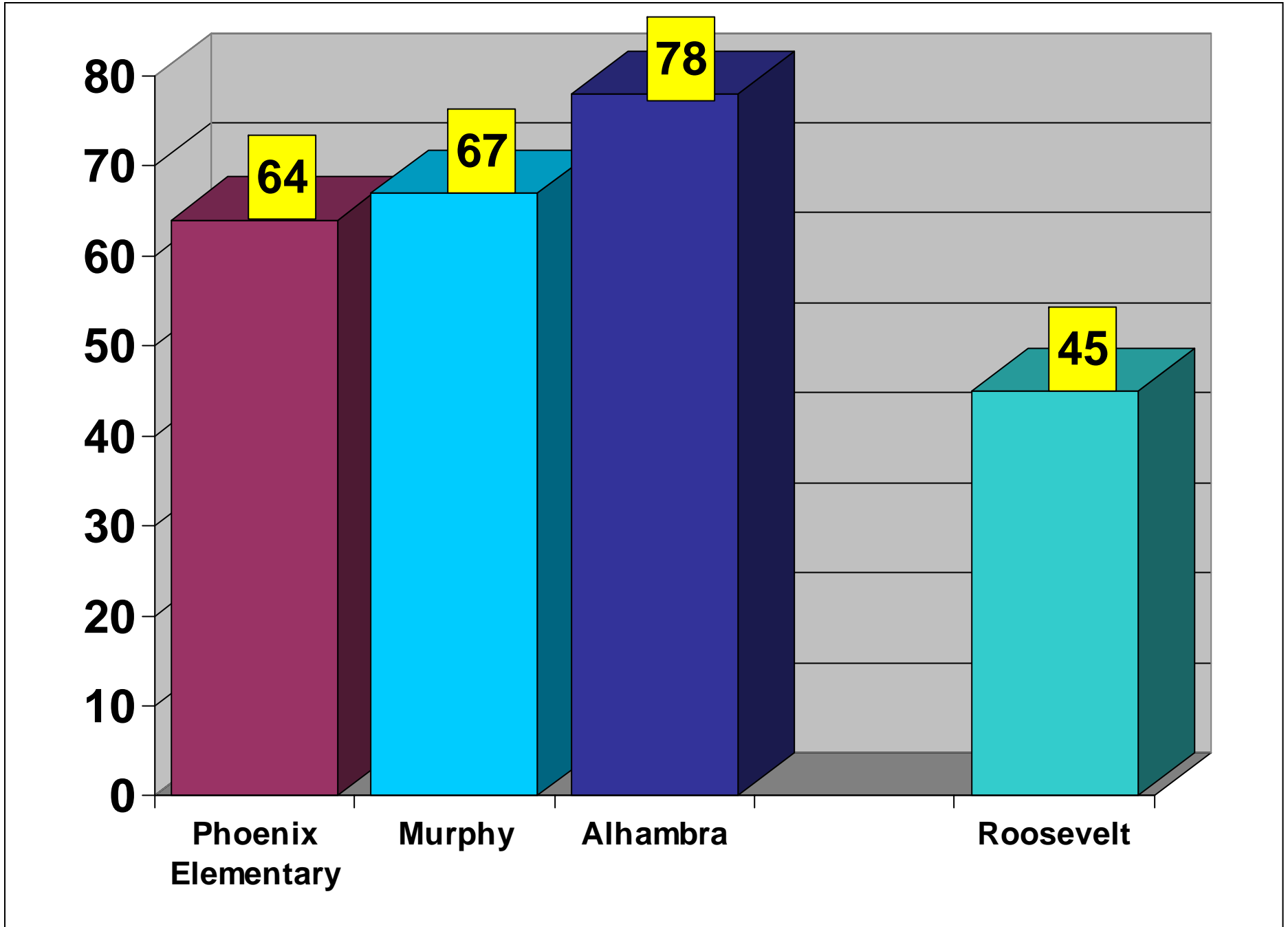
**l) The 3 Comparable Districts Have Substantially Higher Poverty Rates Than Roosevelt
(Measured By Percentage of Free Lunch, A Common Measure of Poverty)**



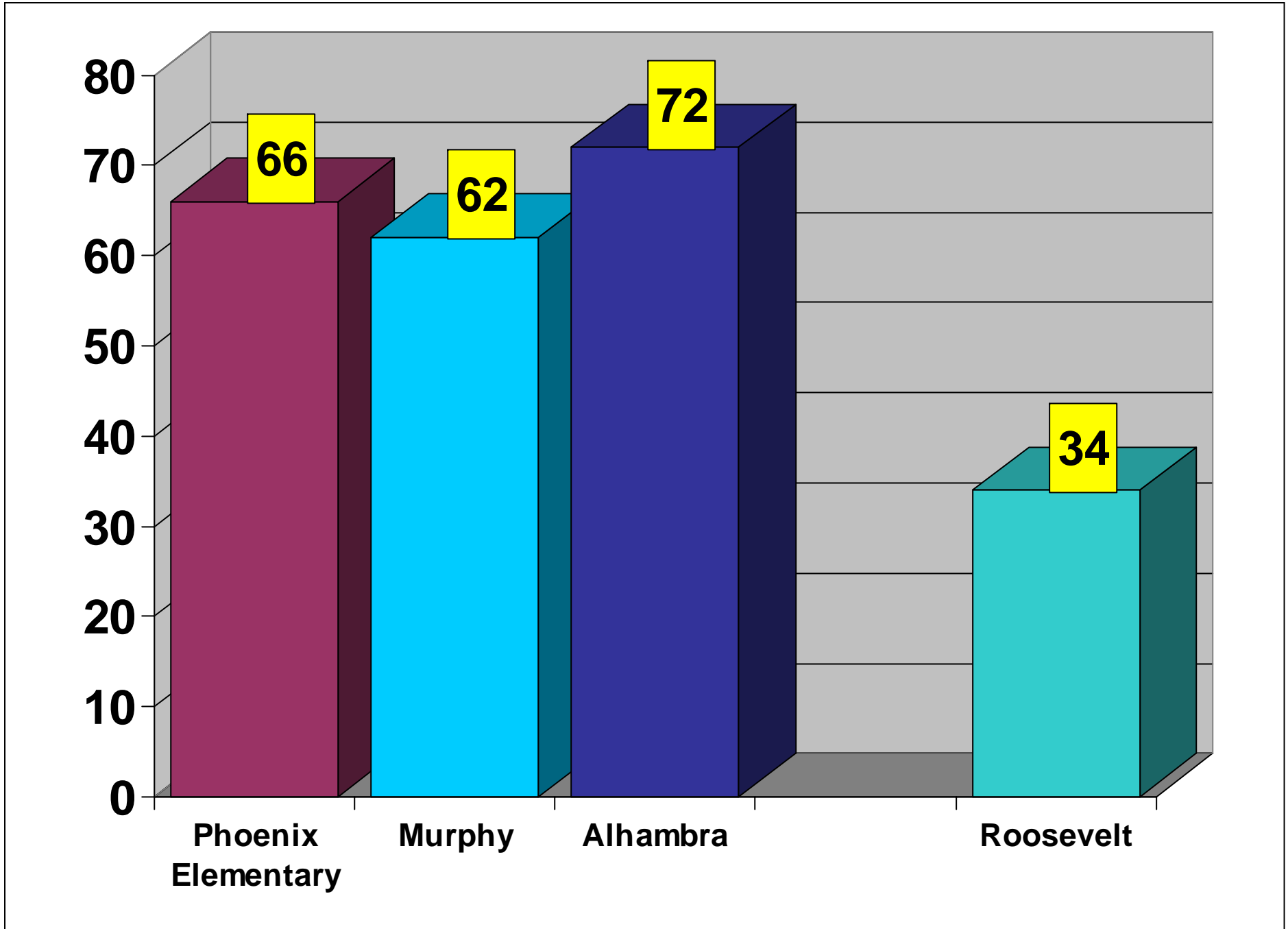
2) The 3 Comparable Districts Have Higher English Language Learner Rates Than Roosevelt



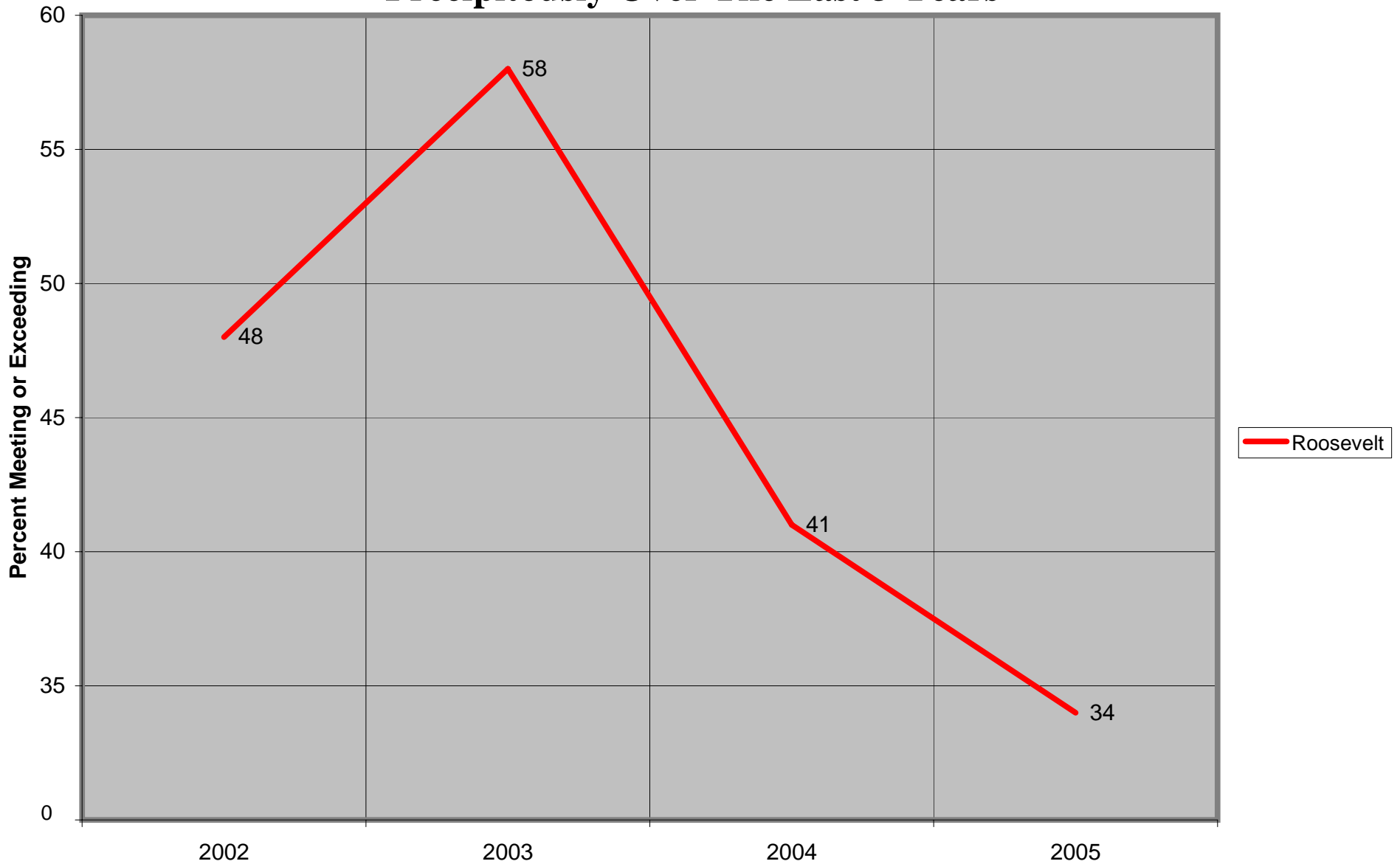
3) Roosevelt Students Fall Far Below Comparable Districts in Math Proficiency



4) Roosevelt Students Fall Far Below Comparable Districts In Reading Proficiency



5) Roosevelt 3rd Grade Reading Scores Have Declined Precipitously Over The Last 3 Years



State Average 2005: 72%

	Phoenix Elementary	Murphy	Alhambra		Roosevelt	State Average
3rd Grade Math %						
2002	36	30	59	0	29	62
2003	55	46	71		37	66
2004	51	41	61		28	64
2005	64	67	78		45	76
<i>African American 2005</i>	58	<i>n/a</i>	67		44	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	61	74	80		45	
3rd Grade Reading %						
2002	45	43	71	0	48	75
2003	68	65	75		58	77
2004	67	50	67		41	72
2005	66	62	72		34	72
<i>African American 2005</i>	57	<i>n/a</i>	59		38	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	64	68	74		30	
3rd Grade Writing %						
2002	57	49	76		51	79
2003	72	64	79		58	77
2004	76	74	76		62	81
2005	79	66	82		55	77
<i>African American 2005</i>	77	<i>n/a</i>	74		56	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	77	75	84		55	
5th Grade Math %						
2002	24	15	36		11	46
2003	28	22	47		14	49
2004	27	18	44		13	47
2005	58	42	63		37	71
<i>African American 2005</i>	66	<i>n/a</i>	57		32	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	54	48	61		39	
5th Grade Reading %						
2002	34	23	49		26	59
2003	34	27	50		27	57
2004	35	21	44		24	52
2005	60	43	58		36	71
<i>African American 2005</i>	66	<i>n/a</i>	55		34	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	57	46	56		35	
5th Grade Writing %						
2002	30	25	52		26	58
2003	33	23	53		24	55
2004	52	49	53		44	68
2005	67	48	62		45	69
<i>African American 2005</i>	66	<i>n/a</i>	54		45	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	65	47	61		46	

	Phoenix Elementary	Murphy	Alhambra	Roosevelt	State Average
8th Grade Math %					
2002	9	0	14	3	23
2003	17	5	17	4	23
2004	20	17	20	4	26
2005	47	56	49	32	63
<i>African American 2005</i>	36	<i>n/a</i>	34	29	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	47	54	45	32	
8th Grade Reading %					
2002	41	29	49	28	56
2003	37	40	44	33	55
2004	48	34	40	21	50
2005	57	57	55	35	67
<i>African American 2005</i>	47	<i>n/a</i>	55	40	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	58	55	51	41	
8th Grade Writing %					
2002	23	14	41	19	43
2003	33	23	42	24	45
2004	51	47	49	37	59
2005	74	71	73	60	82
<i>African American 2005</i>	68	<i>n/a</i>	77	62	
<i>Hispanic 2005</i>	73	70	69	59	
Poverty					
2002-2003	62.56%	63.43%	28.17%	44.59%	
2003-2004	47.11%	51.89%	29.32%	35.06%	
2004-2005	50.69%	55.77%	31.55%	37.70%	
2005-2006	55.90%	61.62%	34.83%	41.69%	
ELL Populations					
2002-2003	56.87%	64.31%	50.49%	35.85%	
2003-2004	56.87%	68.15%	50.14%	40.06%	
2004-2005	56.87%	61.98%	44.62%	40.23%	
Ethnicity %					
Percent White	6	3	13	4	
Percent Hispanic	85	94	74	76	
Percent Black	6	2	8	18	
Percent Other	3	1	5	2	
AZLEARNS					
#of Schools "Excelling"	0	0	1	0	
# of Schools "Highly Performing"	1	0	0	0	
# of Schools "Performing Plus"	4	2	3	0	
# of Schools "Performing"	11	1	11	9	
# of Schools "Underperforming" and "Failing"	0	1	1	11	