

CMT Analysis for Class of 2016

Compiled by members of Stamford Residents for Excellence in Education to assess the impact of Middle School Reform on outcomes for the Class of 2016, with a particular focus on math.

All data is taken from www.cmtreports.com, and analyzed according to state guidelines.

Paid for by Stamford Residents for Excellence in Education, Nicole Zussman, Treasurer

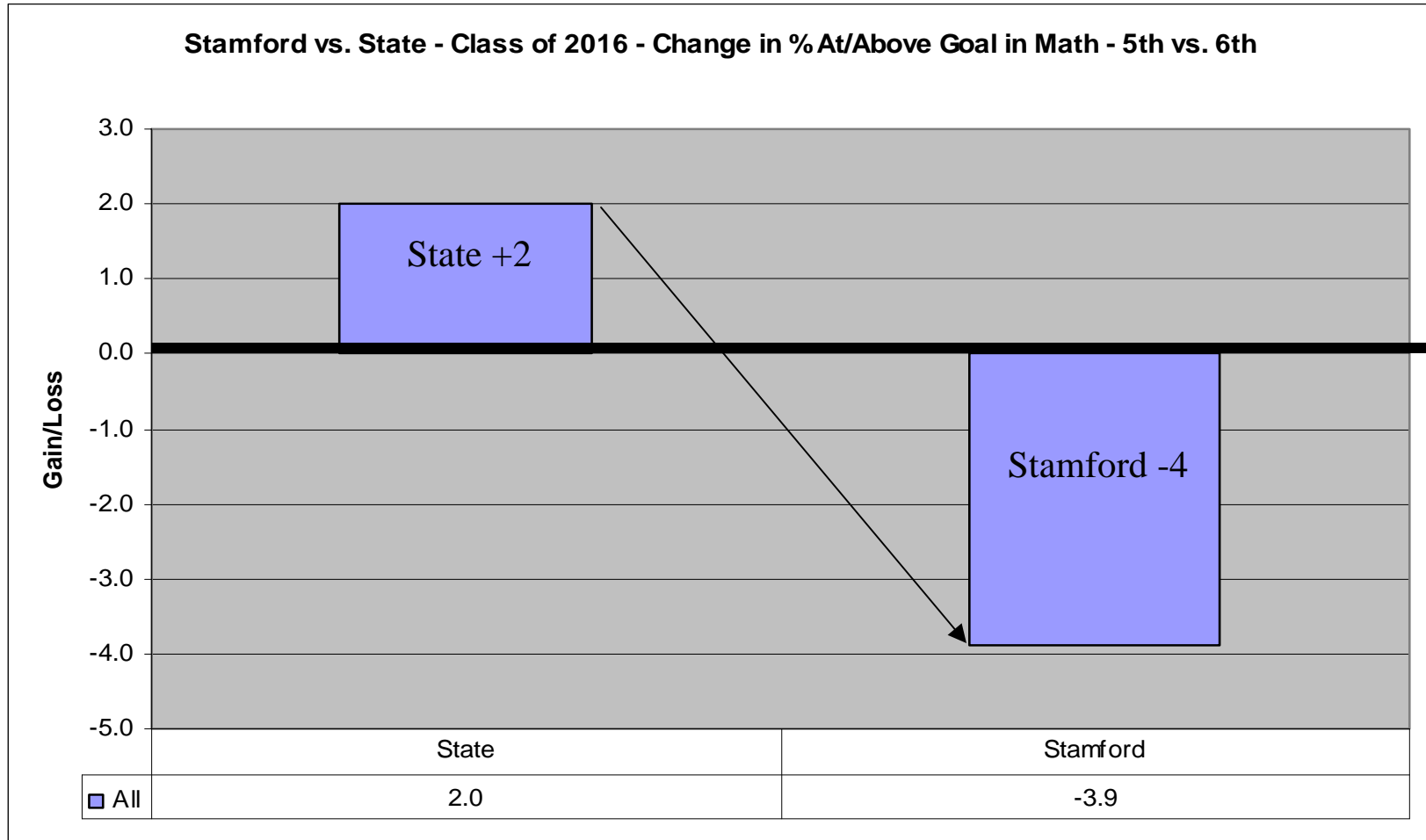
Rev 10/9/10.

Performance Level Data

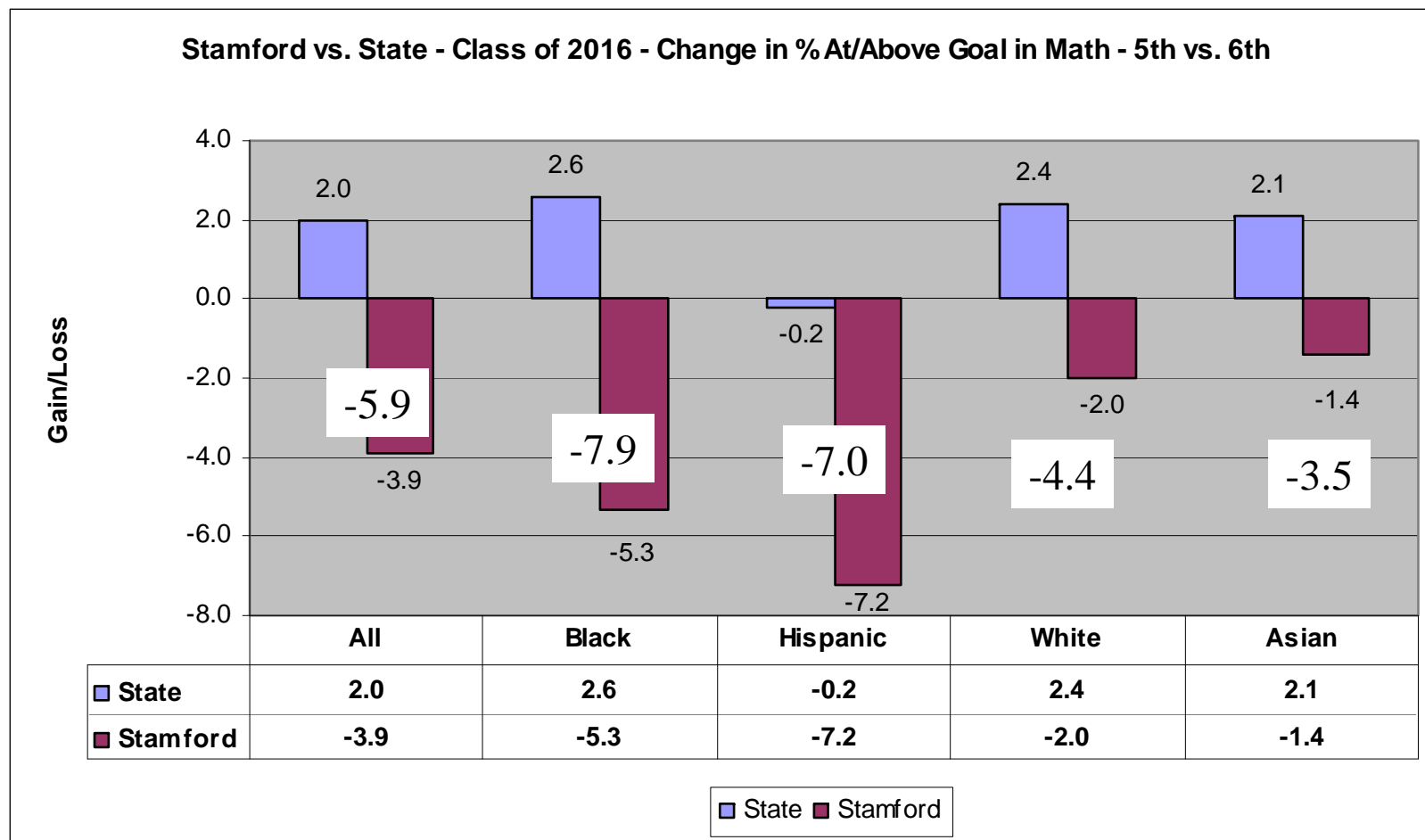
Class of 2016 comparative analysis for 5th vs. 6th grade,
relative to the state (as a control group)
and among various subgroups*

**Per CMT Interpretive Guide 2010, pp 23-24, performance level data for the same class, year over year, can only be interpreted relative to a control group, not on an absolute basis. The state is the largest control group. We do not compare absolute outcomes to the state, but the state allows a baseline to compare annual gains/losses.*

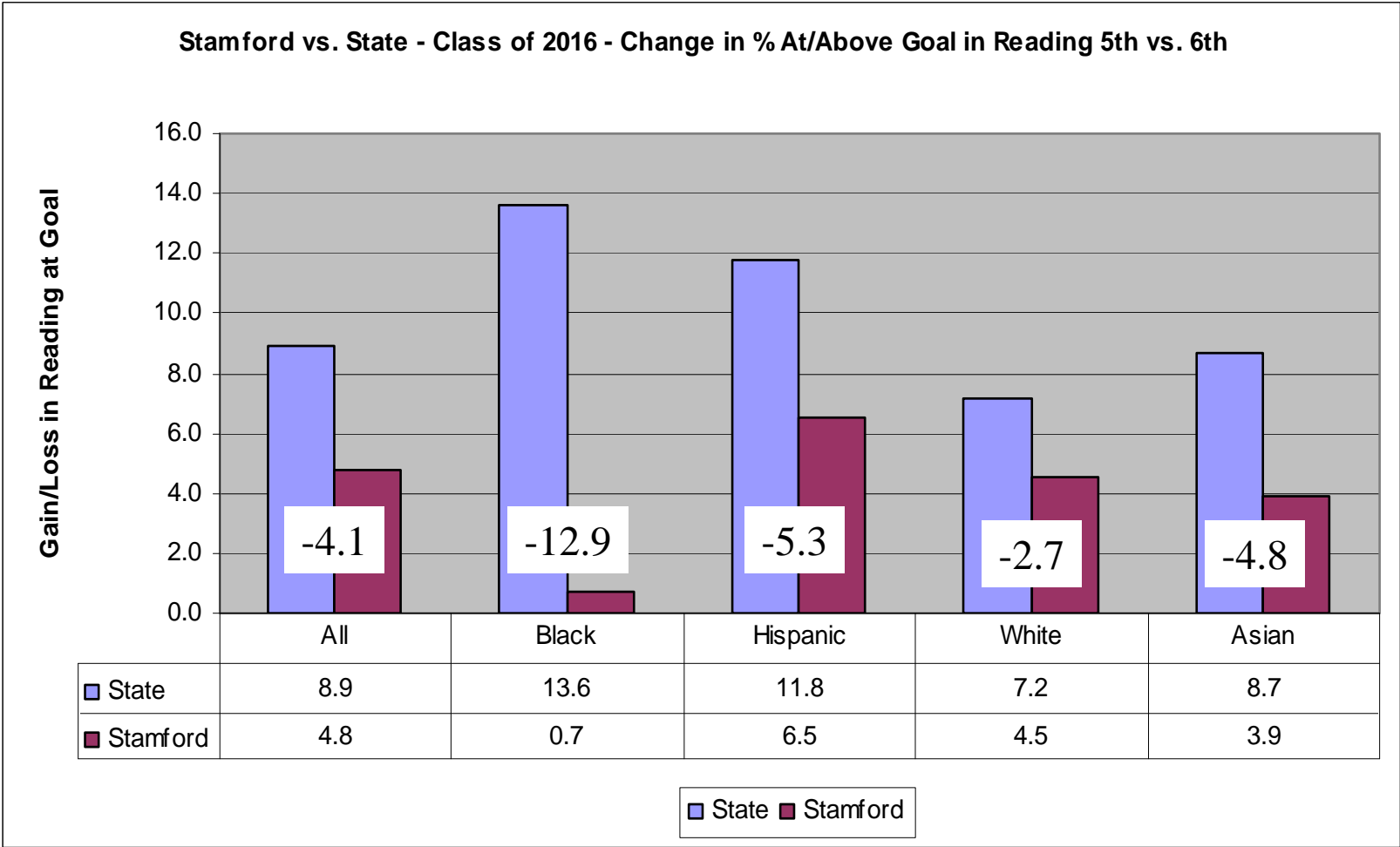
The Class of 2016 in Stamford had a 6-point *drop* relative to the state in students reaching goal in math after the first year of the new MSR approach



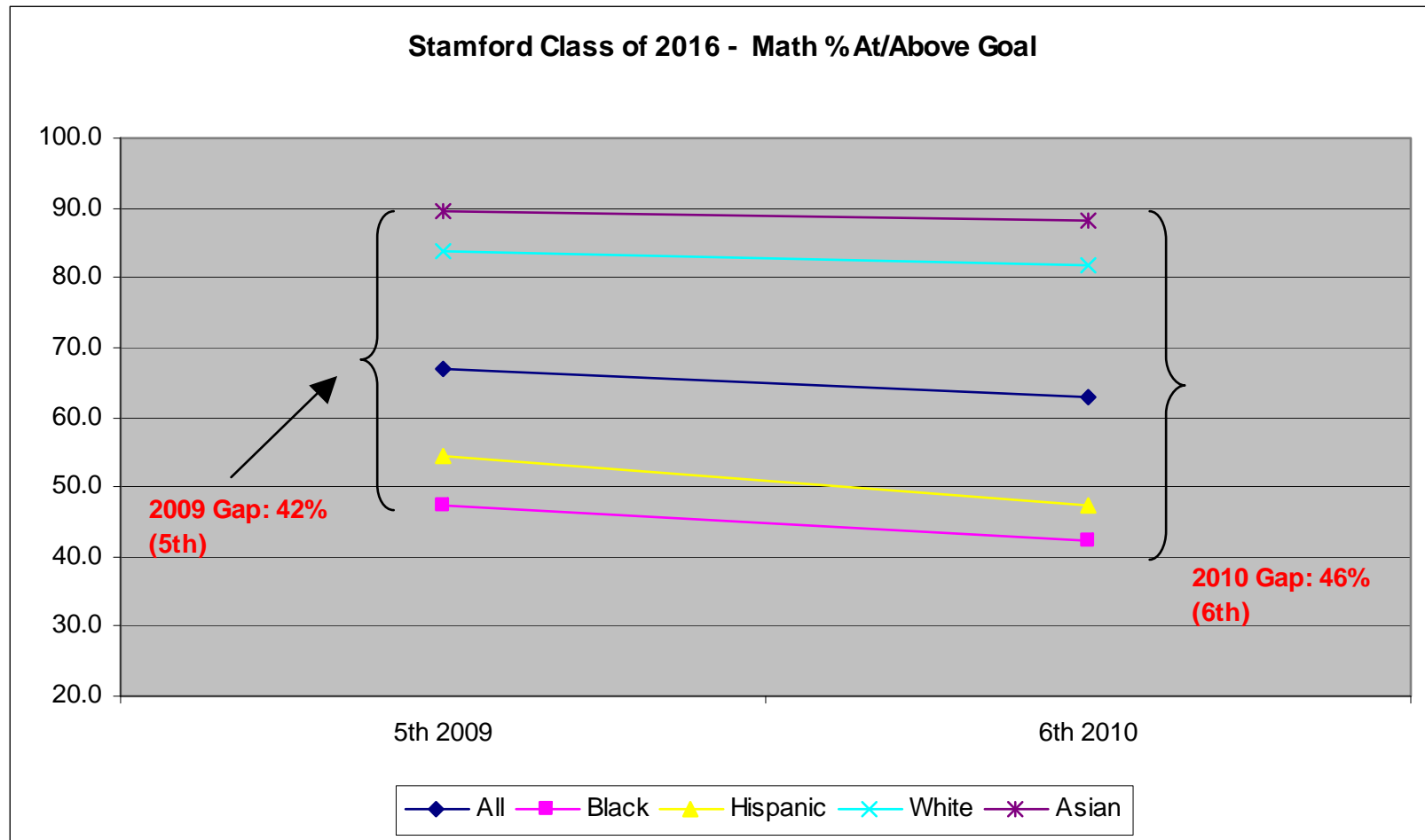
Every subgroup lost ground in math relative to the state, and the biggest losses were among Blacks and Hispanics



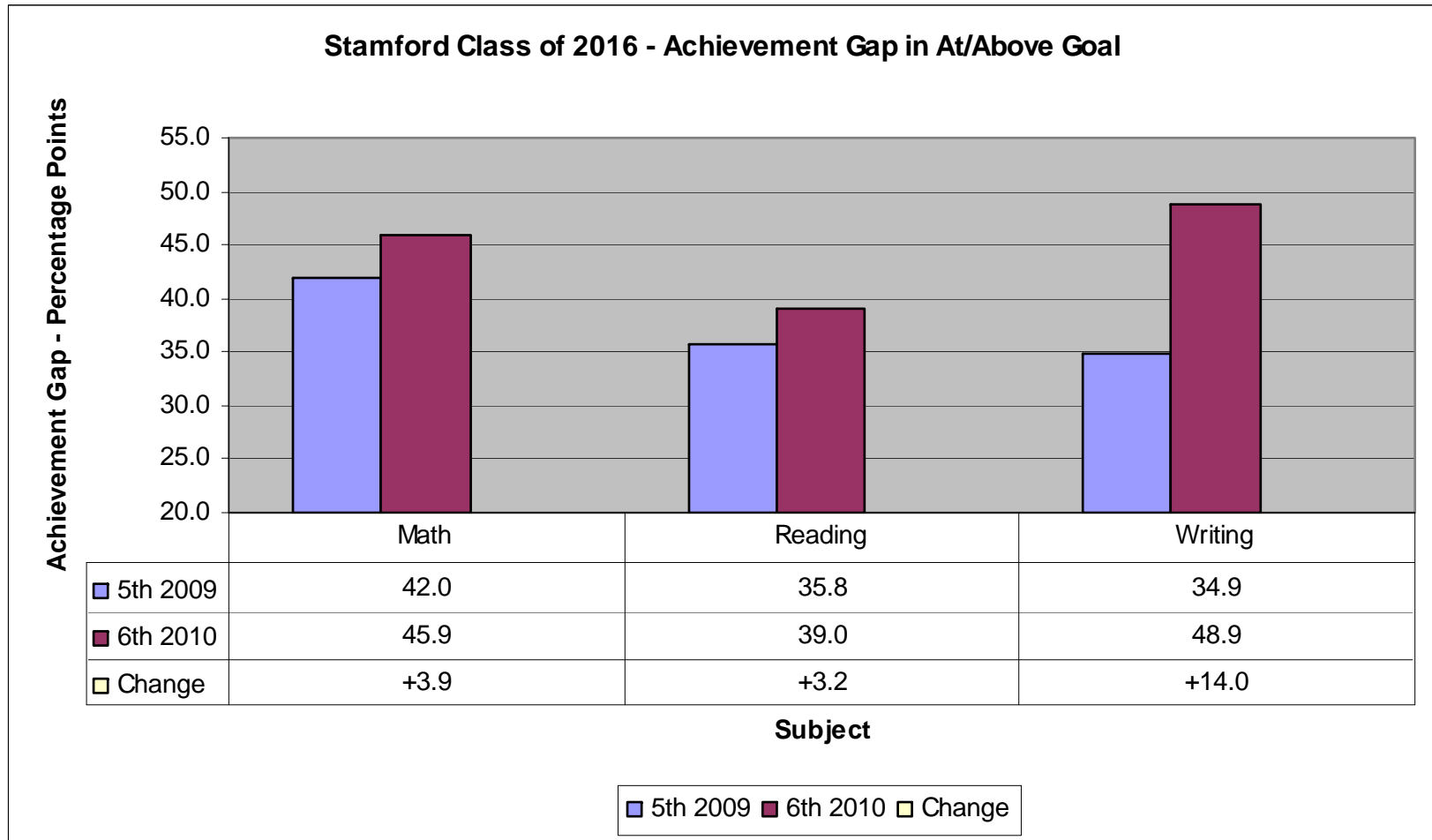
Same for reading



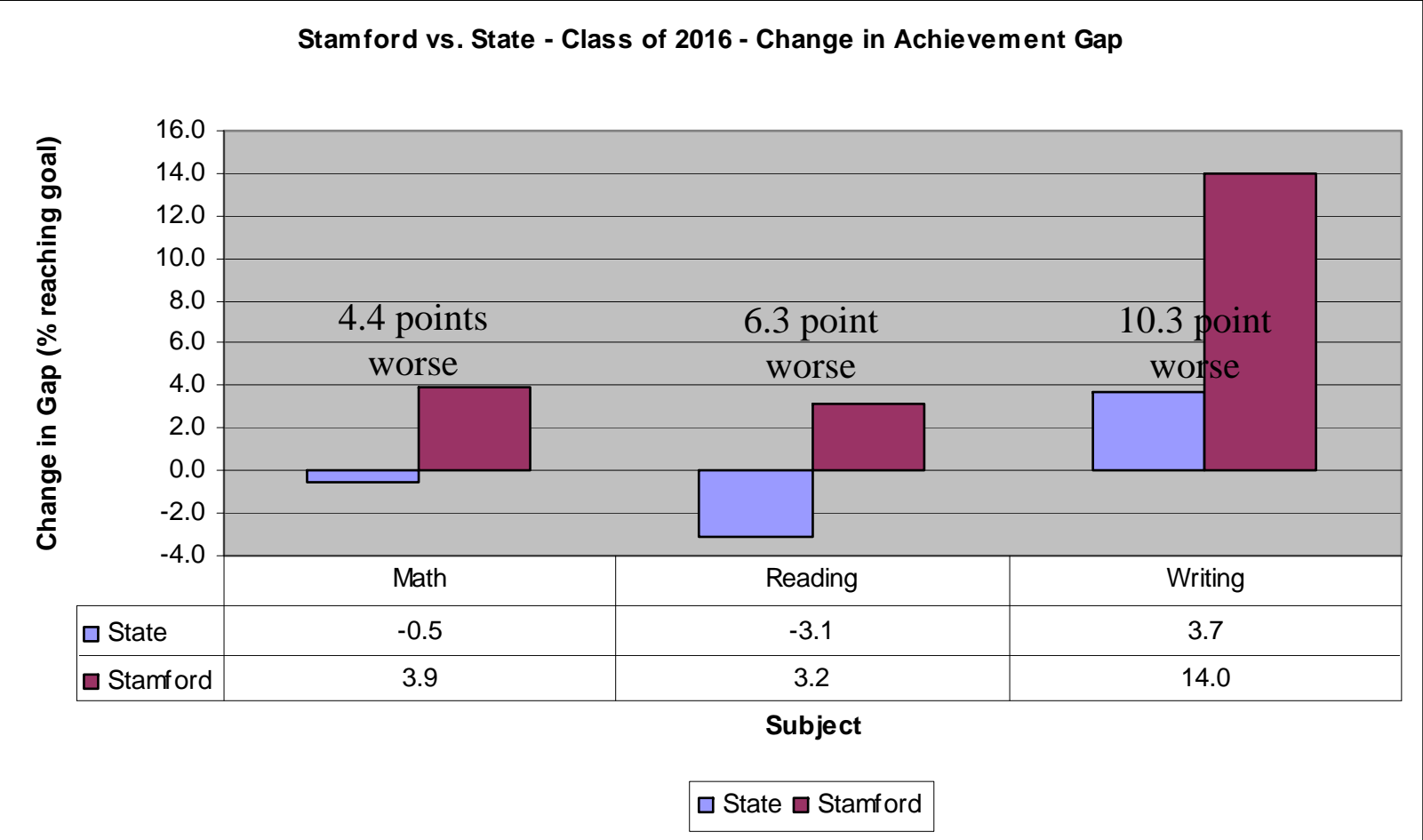
The achievement gap in math *increased* for the Class of 2016 in the first year of middle school reform



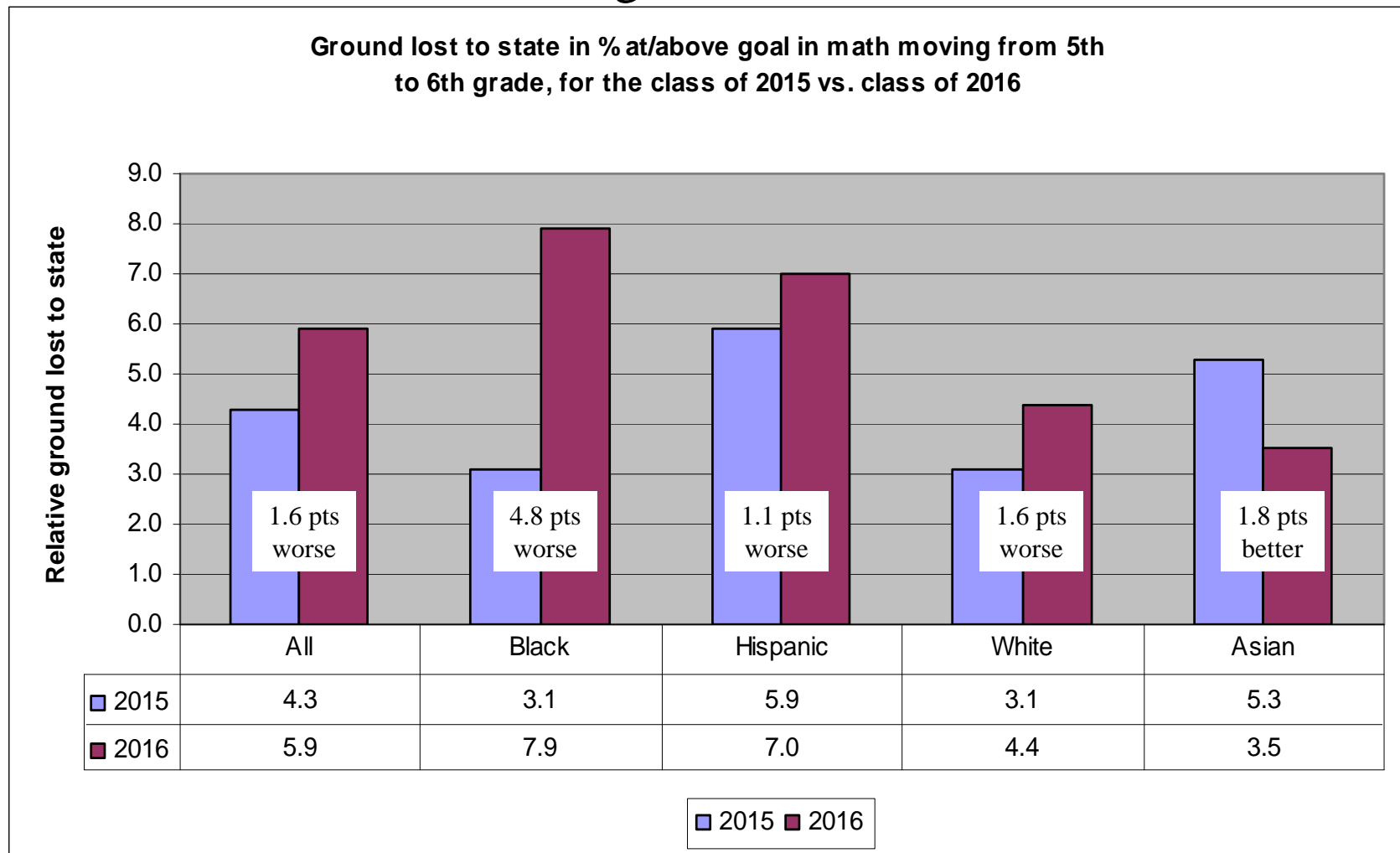
In fact, the achievement gap increased for the Class of 2016 in the first year of the reform in every subject



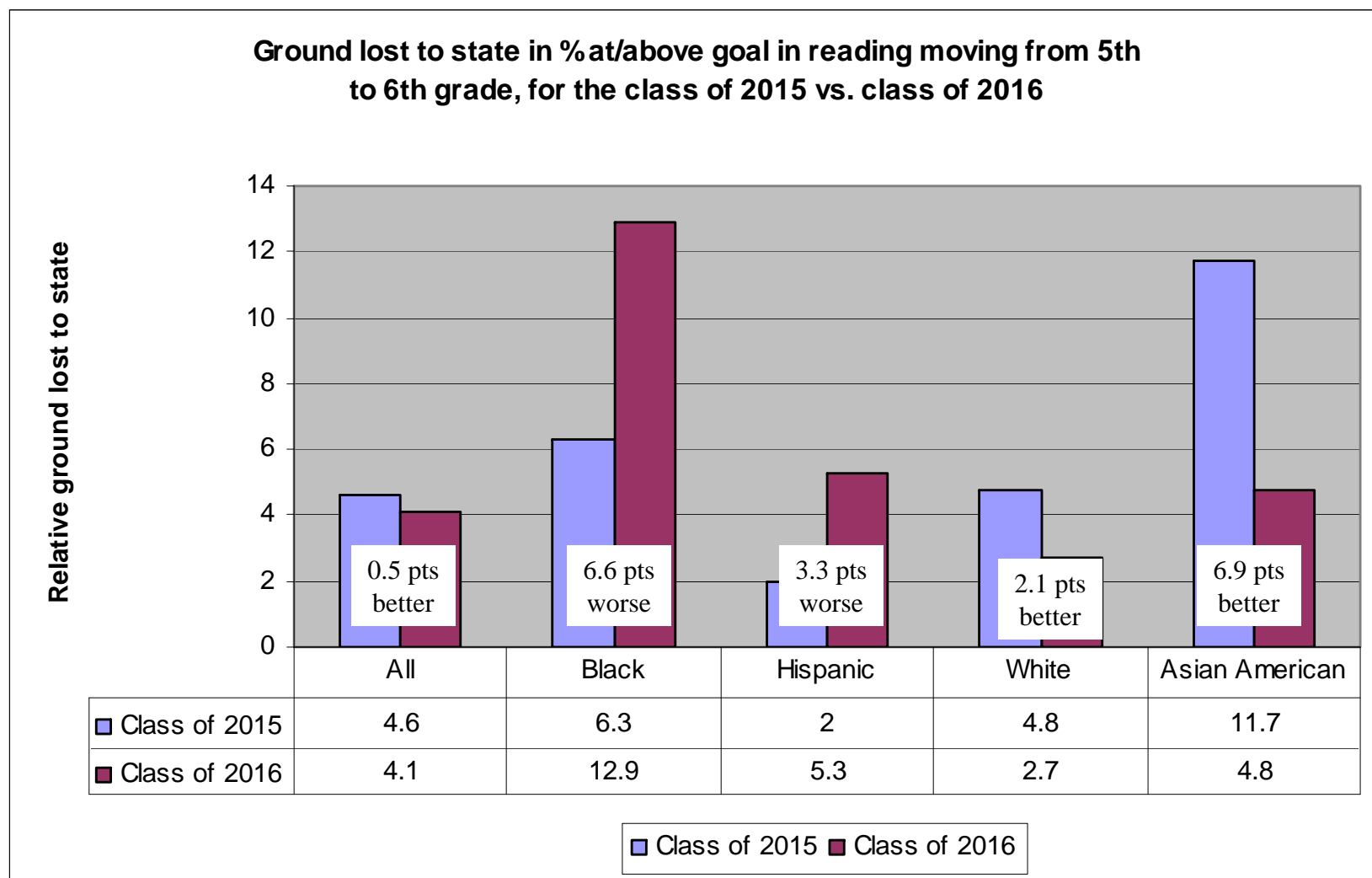
And Stamford under-performed the State in terms of closing the achievement gap for the Class of 2016 in every subject



Stamford 6th graders, including all subgroups other than Asians, lost more ground to their state peers in math in 2010 than 6th graders in 2009



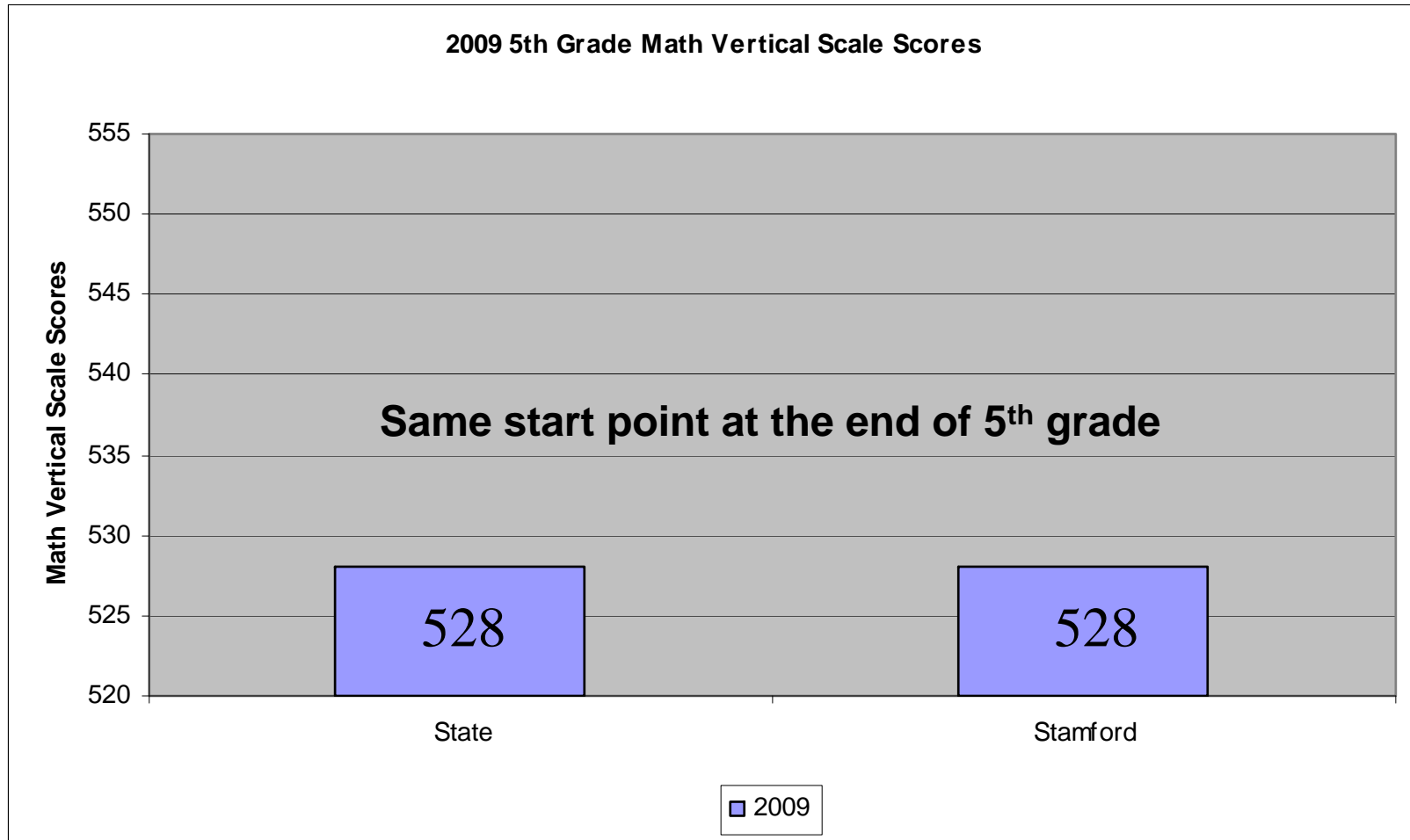
Blacks and Hispanics lost more ground in reading in 2010 than 2009, as well



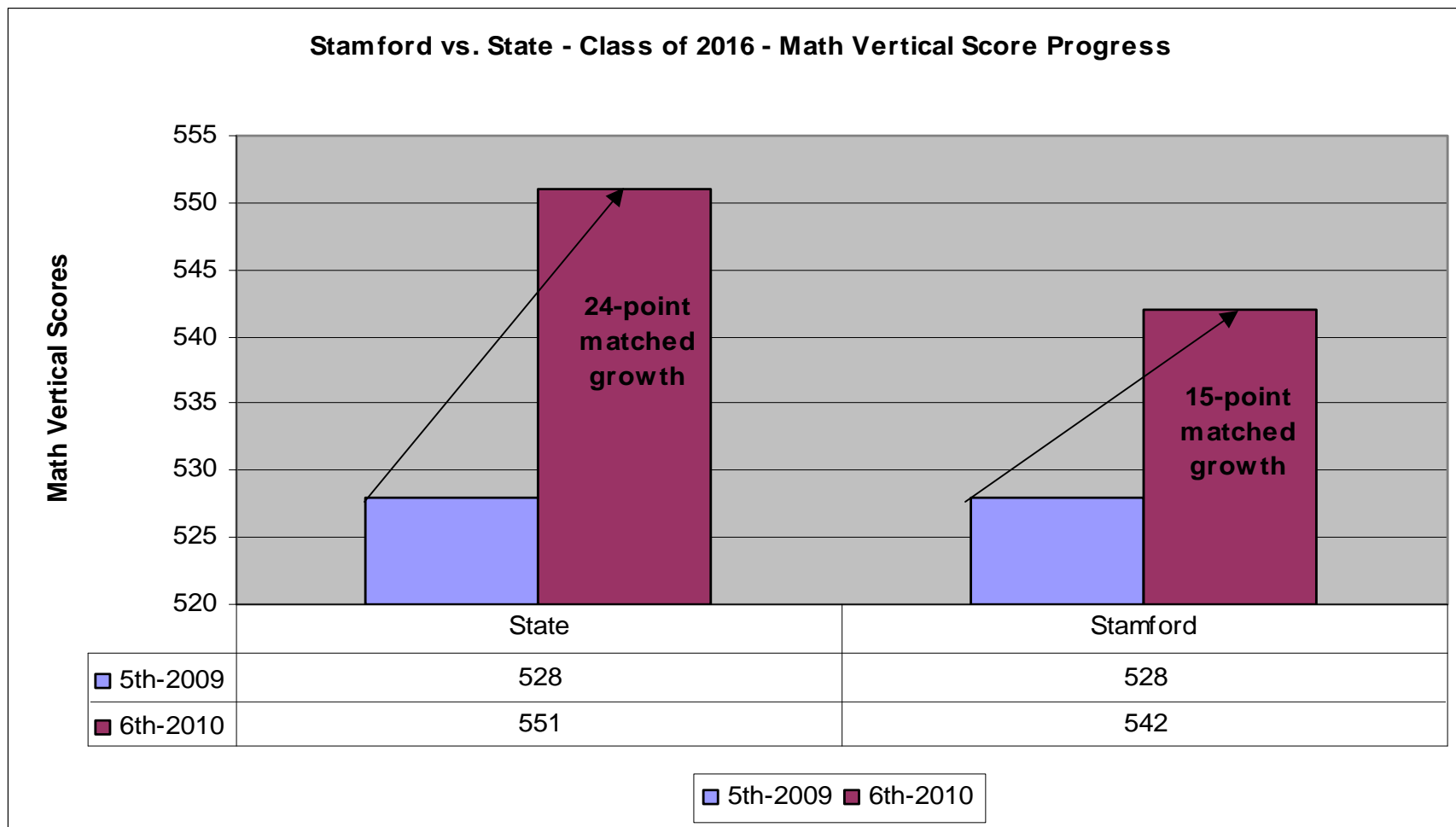
Vertical Scale Score Analysis

“The vertical scales were constructed so that each vertical scale score represents the same theoretical achievement level whether derived from a Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7, or Grade 8 CMT scale score... This vertical scale score allows for valid interpretations of growth across time...” –CT Dept of Ed’n

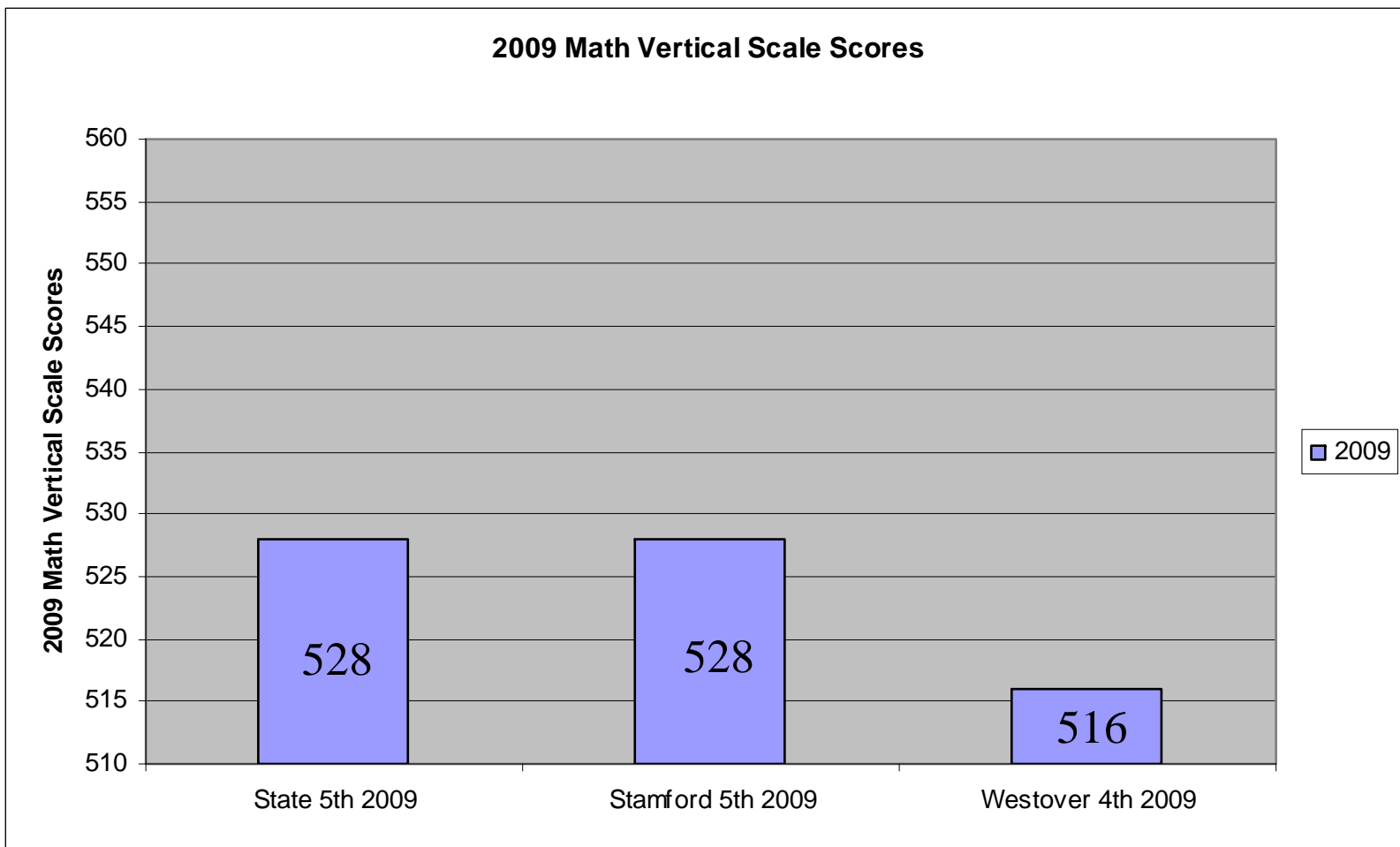
Students in Stamford and Statewide both entered 6th grade this year with the same vertical scale scores in math



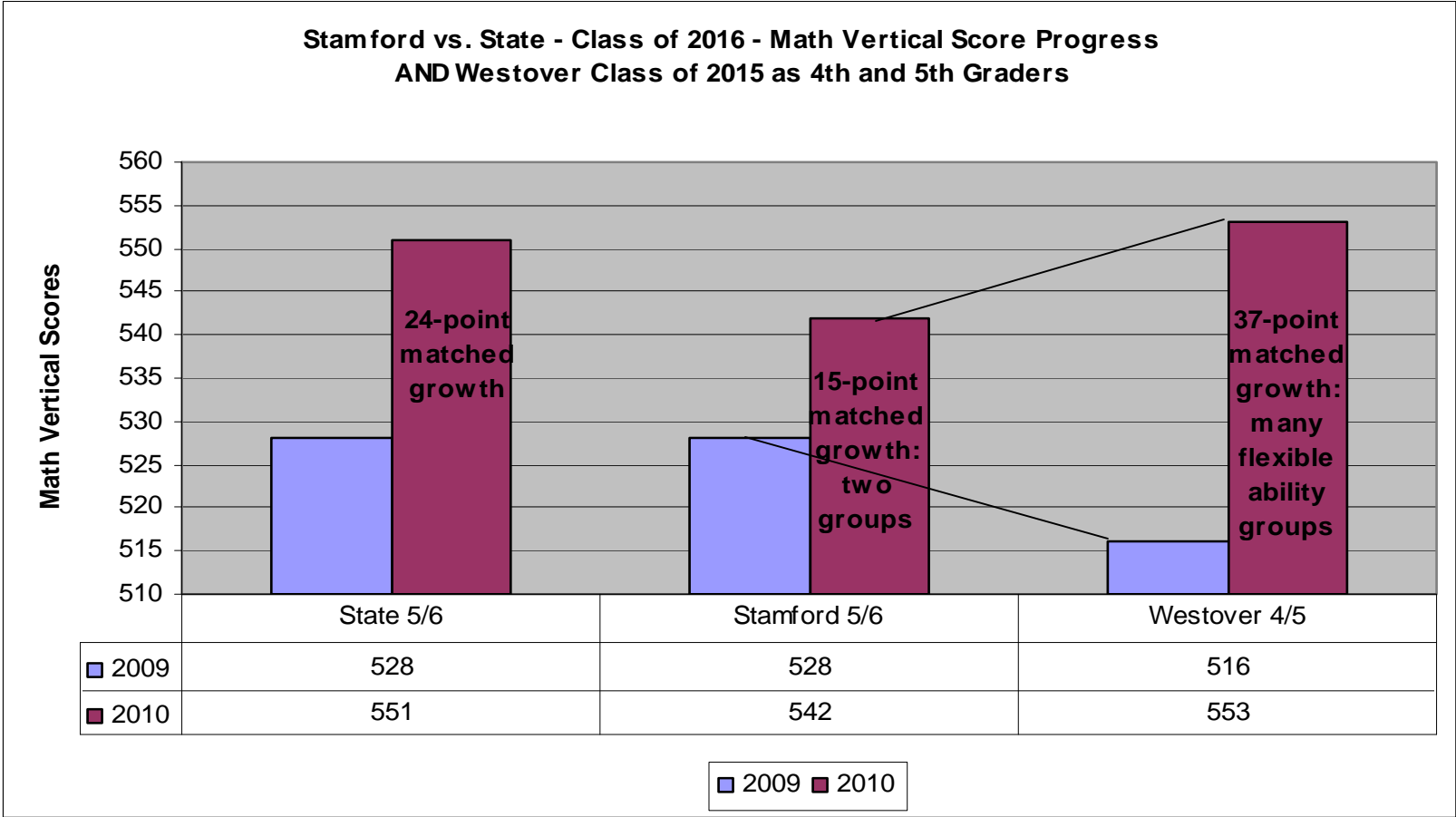
Statewide, students gained 24 points. In Stamford, students only gained 15 points – a relative loss of 9 points.



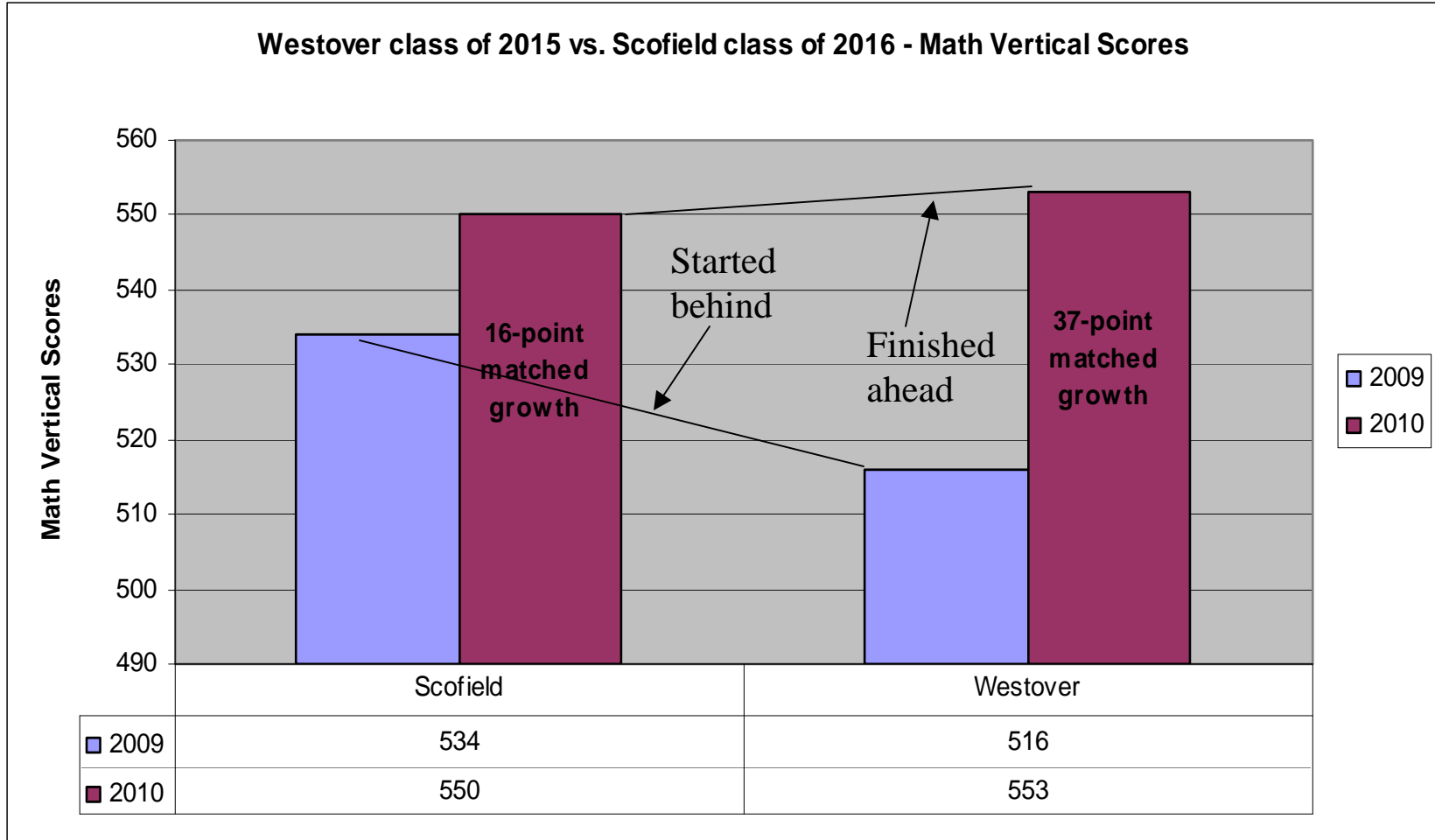
Westover (which uses flexible ability grouping) had *5th graders* start 12 points behind citywide *6th graders* (who used the new two-group system) in math.



By the end of the year Westover's 5th graders *passed* the citywide (and statewide) 6th graders in math.

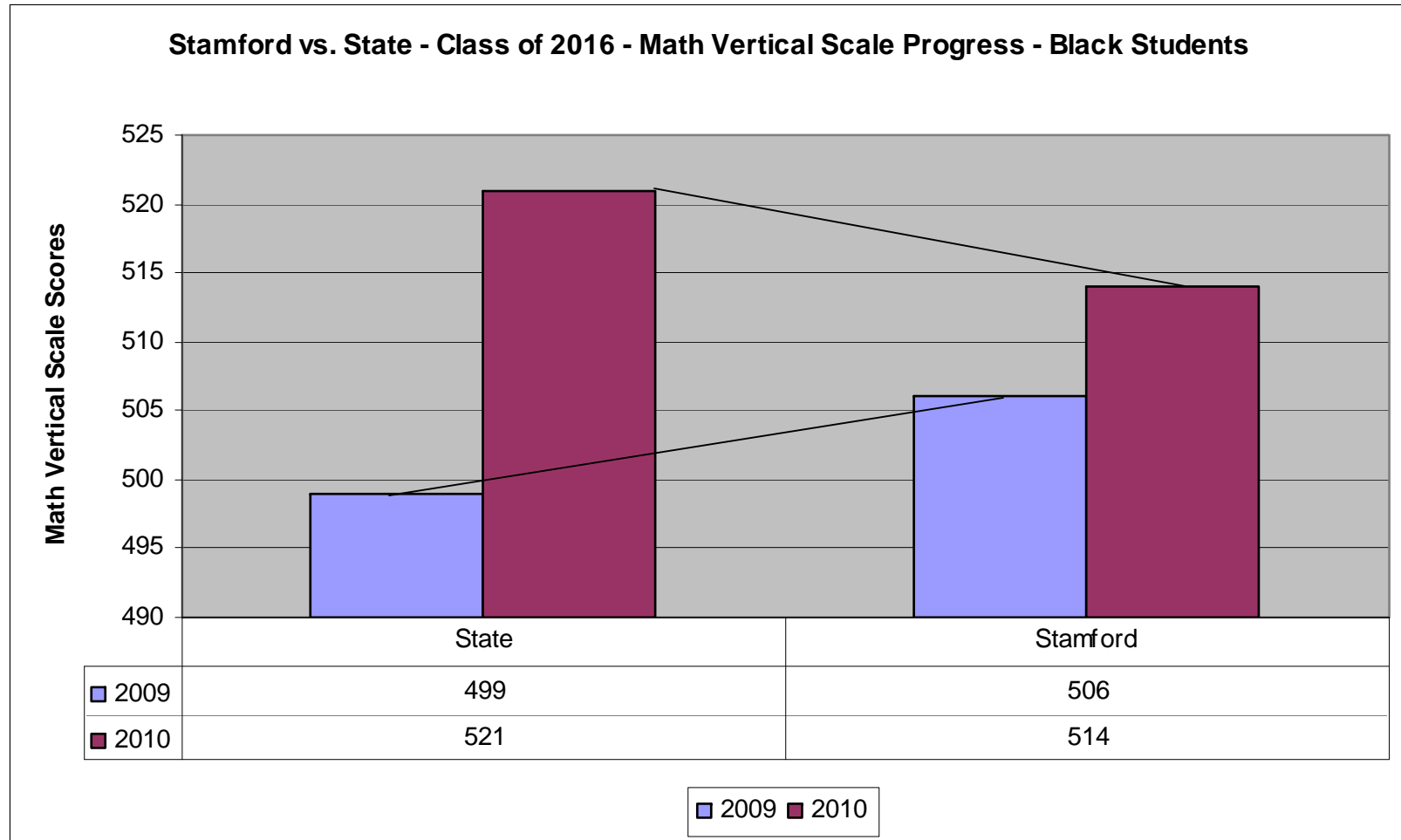


It's not just a magnet/self-selection issue:
 Westover's 5th graders outperformed Scofield's 6th graders in
 math too, starting from behind and finishing ahead.

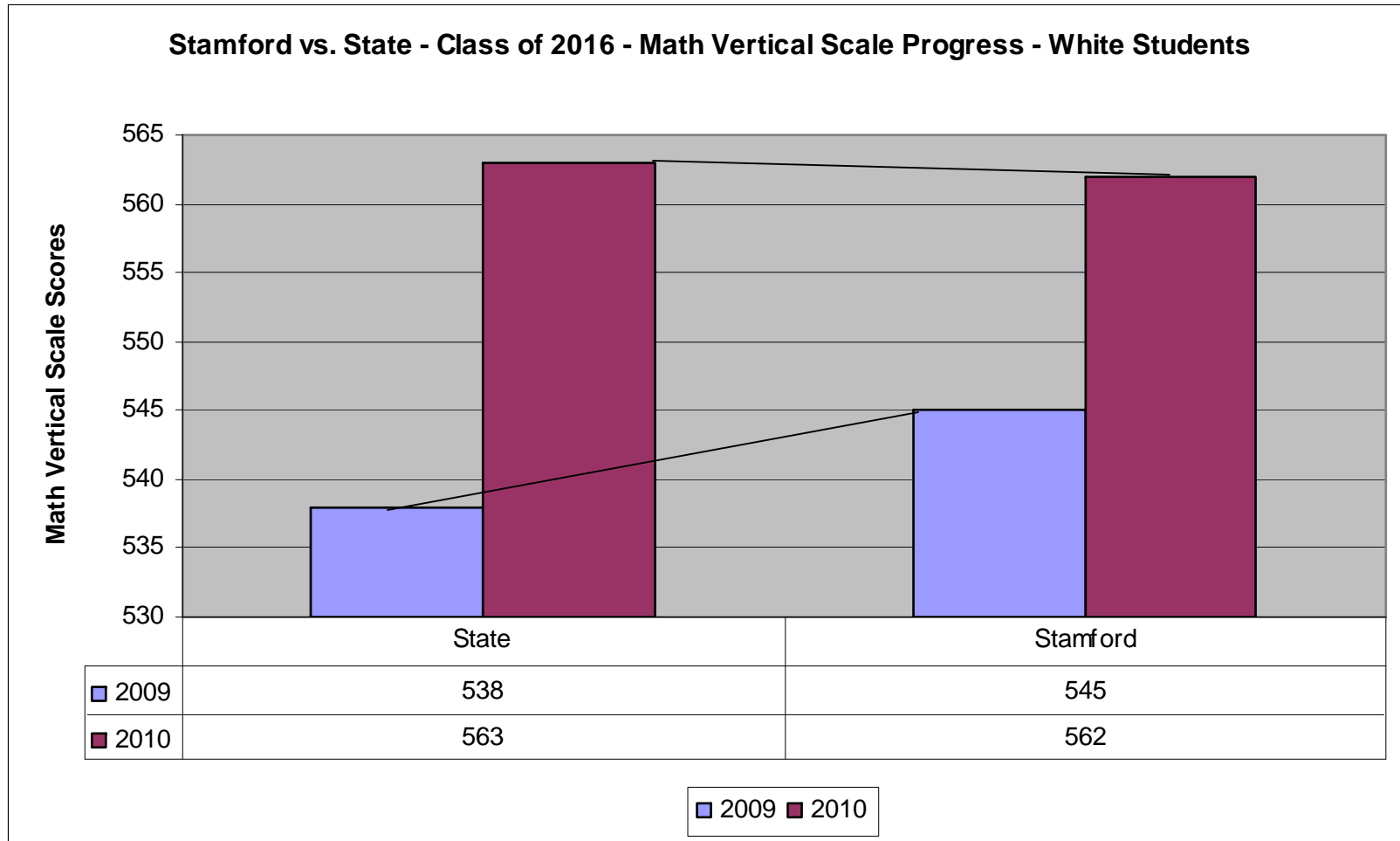


Subgroup Vertical Scale Scores

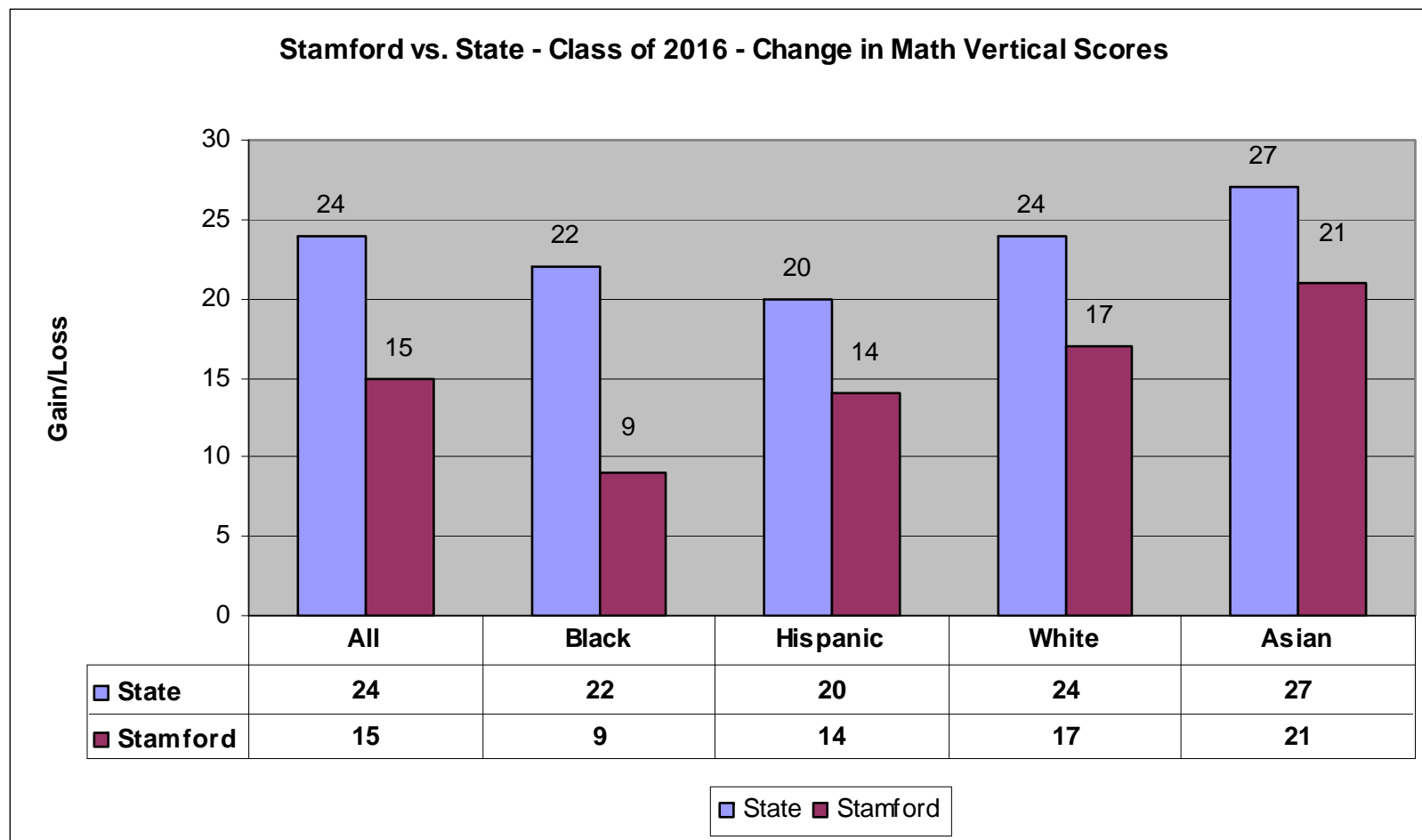
Black students in Stamford started 6th grade ahead of their peers statewide in math, but finished the year behind



Same with Stamford's white students:
started ahead, finished behind



Every subgroup made substantially less progress than their peers throughout the state in 6th grade math last year.*



*Other than Westover's 5th graders

None of this should be a surprise

- ~70-75% of the students were placed into a single level (college prep)
- Ability levels ranged dramatically
- The conditions necessary to make that method succeed, which are present in other “model” systems, are not present in Stamford, including:
 - Small breakout classes for academic support
 - Tightly integrated support/enrichment curriculum
 - Starting the process from grade 1, not grade 6, to avoid massive differences within the “mostly” heterogeneously grouped classroom
- As a result, the 6th grade as a whole made poor progress in math
- Even in honors, the ability range was too wide and with the above conditions missing, students at either end did not benefit to the same degree they would have under flexible ability grouping, with focused attention at their level.

The question is, what now? With a year of outcomes data in hand confirming the previous concerns, there are two choices:

- 1. Keep on going without midcourse correction:** We can *hope* to be able to fix the citywide holes in the 6th grade rollout, which were substantial, while simultaneously rolling out the same set of strategies to 7th grade, imposing a “performance dip” on the Class of 2016 as the guinea pigs for a second year in a row, while throwing the Class of 2017 into that system. Or...
- 2. Make some tactical corrections:** to deal with the reality of the conditions as they are, as opposed to how we may wish them to be based on model systems (with greater resources, different demographics, and years of doing this).

No one is suggesting backtracking on the vast majority of middle school reform

- Much of the reform is positive, uncontested, and needed – staff development, science curriculum, elimination of rigid tracks, varied placement by subject, etc., etc.
- The issue is fairly narrow relative to the scope of the full reform, but very important: specifically adding more flexible groups in one or two subjects, *until* the conditions are put in place (like they are at the model systems) to make fewer groups actually work in math (and possibly language arts). Higher groups should cover more ground. Lower groups should get more support. And to be clear, it shouldn't be tracked, and it should be flexible, and it shouldn't be for all subjects.

For specific recommendations on continuing the MSR strategy, while addressing the tactical weaknesses, to help ensure success for all involved, see:

www.StamfordREE.org

Appendix: Methodology Notes

- All analysis was done in accordance with the state’s posted analysis guidelines, posted on the CSDE website and the cmtreports.com site including:
 - CMT Data Analysis Guide
 - CMT Vertical Scale Interpretive Guide
 - CMT Vertical Scales FAQ
- SREE members also spoke directly with consultants at the CT Department of Education to confirm the methodology used
- Methodology notes:
 - **Performance Level (PL) Scores:** when comparing the Class of 2016 scores from 5th and 6th grades, it is necessary to use a control group as a basis for the comparison, since the standards vary from grade to grade. In the preceding analysis, SREE used the state as the control, because it is the largest available group. It is also valid to compare groups across grades, as SREE did for the subgroup analysis and achievement gap analysis.
 - **Vertical Scale (VS) Score:** each score represents the same level of achievement, so these scores can be readily compared across grades, groups and years without need for a control group.
 - **Matched cohorts:** VS growth is reported with and without matched cohorts, meaning for instance the growth from 5th to 6th grade is reported for all students in the grade, and also for those taking the test both years. This helps account for students moving in and out of the system for instance. SREE used matched cohort data for VS analysis. PL scores are not reported publicly with matched cohorts, only overall (so if the population of students taking the tests in Stamford had changed dramatically from 5th to 6th grade, it could affect the analysis). That said, the matched and unmatched cohort analysis for VS shows virtually no difference in results, and there’s no reason to believe that cohort matching would alter the PL analysis materially (e.g., there is not a material turnover in the student body year over year in Stamford).
- If you have questions on the analysis methods used in this report, email admin@stamfordree.org