



Achievement Gaps and the Proficiency Trap

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Agenda

- Achievement Gaps and the Proficiency Trap
 - Background Information
 - Purpose of Paper
 - Selected Figures
- Kingsbury Center Museum Pieces
 - Intent
 - Selected Pieces
- Take Home Messages



Background Information

- NCLB was intended to eliminate Achievement Gaps between Groups of Students
- In order to make “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP), schools must demonstrate proficiency for all groups of students within school
- “Accountability Illusion” found proficiency ratings to be misleading



Brief Description of Accountability Illusion

- Examined NCLB accountability rules in 28 states.
 - Differences in proficiency cut scores, minimum subgroup sizes, use of “confidence intervals”, annual measurable objectives
 - Evaluated the state test performance of 36 schools (18 elementary, 18 middle) across differing state systems
 - Compared same school across different states to identify variation in AYP outcomes



Findings and Conclusions from Accountability Illusion

- Findings
 - Huge variation in AYP ratings for our schools
 - Proficiency standards are important, but so are annual measurable objectives (targets)
 - Minimum “subgroup size” critical
- Conclusions
 - NCLB is implemented in a manner that is opaque, chaotic, and arbitrary.
 - NCLB as currently implemented won’t achieve the goal of equity, but has caused great misallocations of resources.



Purpose of Current Paper

- Data collected during the completion of the "Accountability Illusion"
- To illustrate the difficulties with conventional achievement gap measures
- To illustrate and recommend alternatives

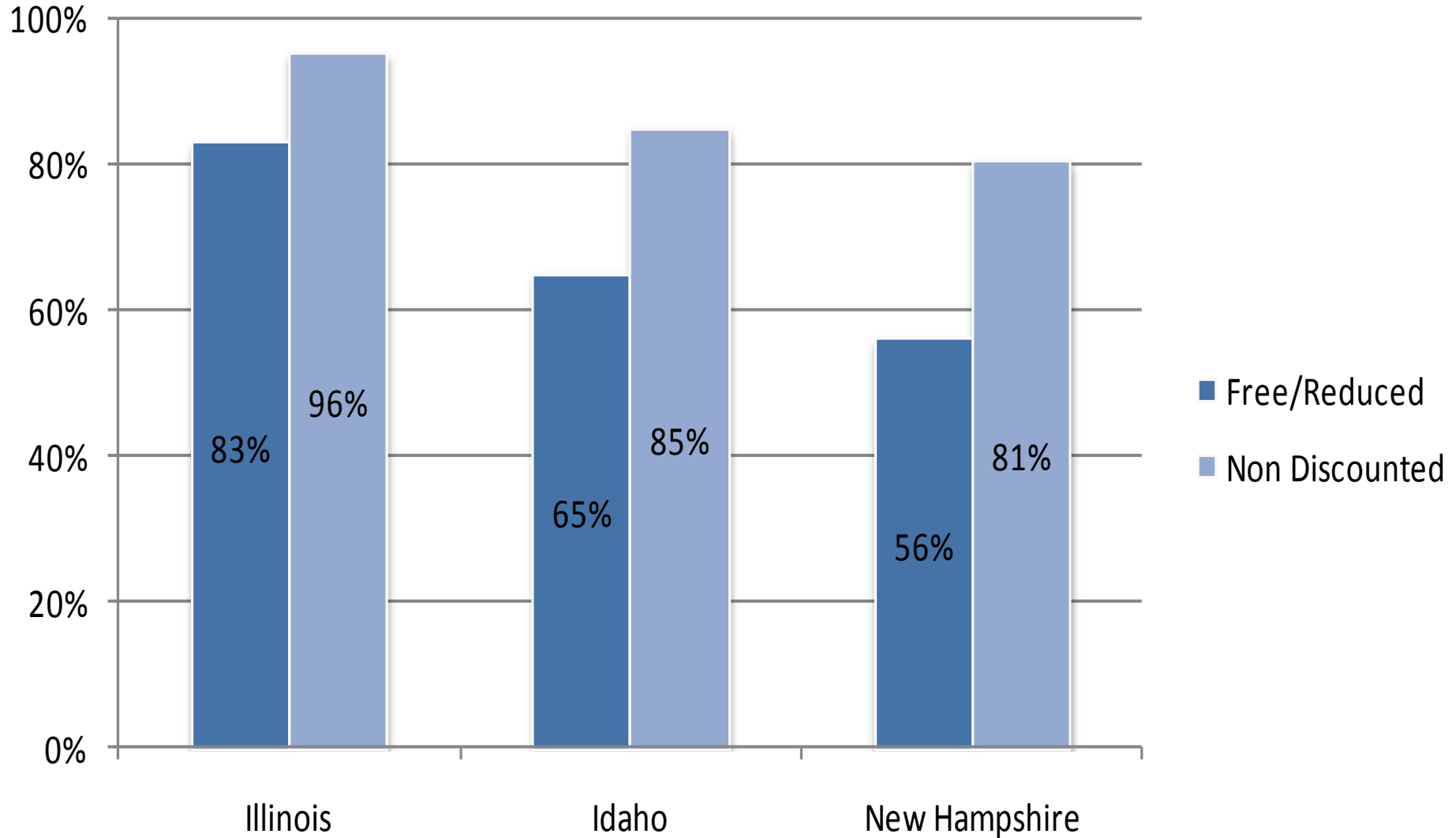


Proficiency Rates

- Metric of choice under NCLB
- Does not consider what it means to be “proficient”
- Extremely low standards show no gap, since everyone passes
- Extremely high standards show no gap, since everyone fails

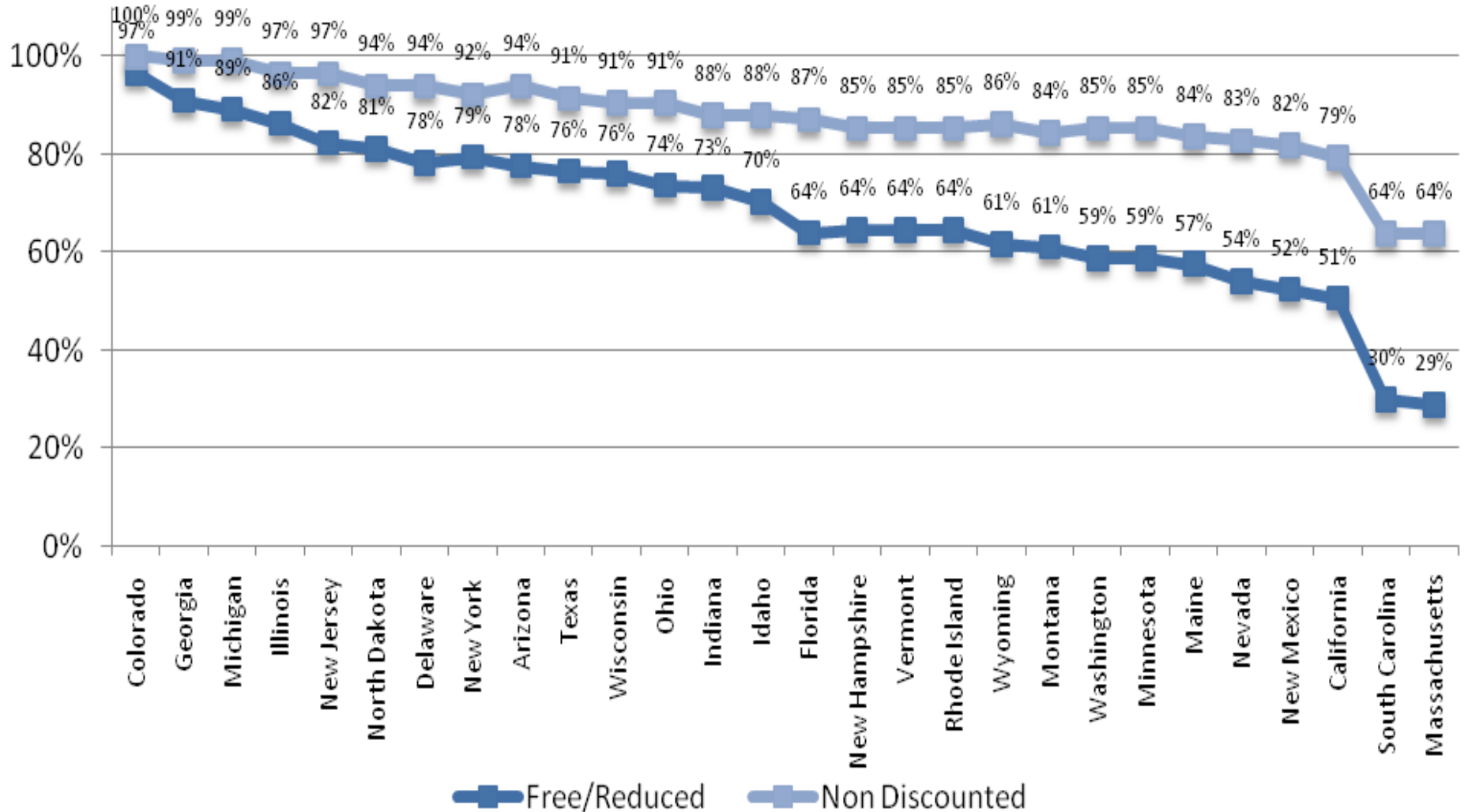


“Chaucer Middle School”: Low Income Proficiency Rates by State





“Mayberry Elementary” Achievement Gap Across 28 States



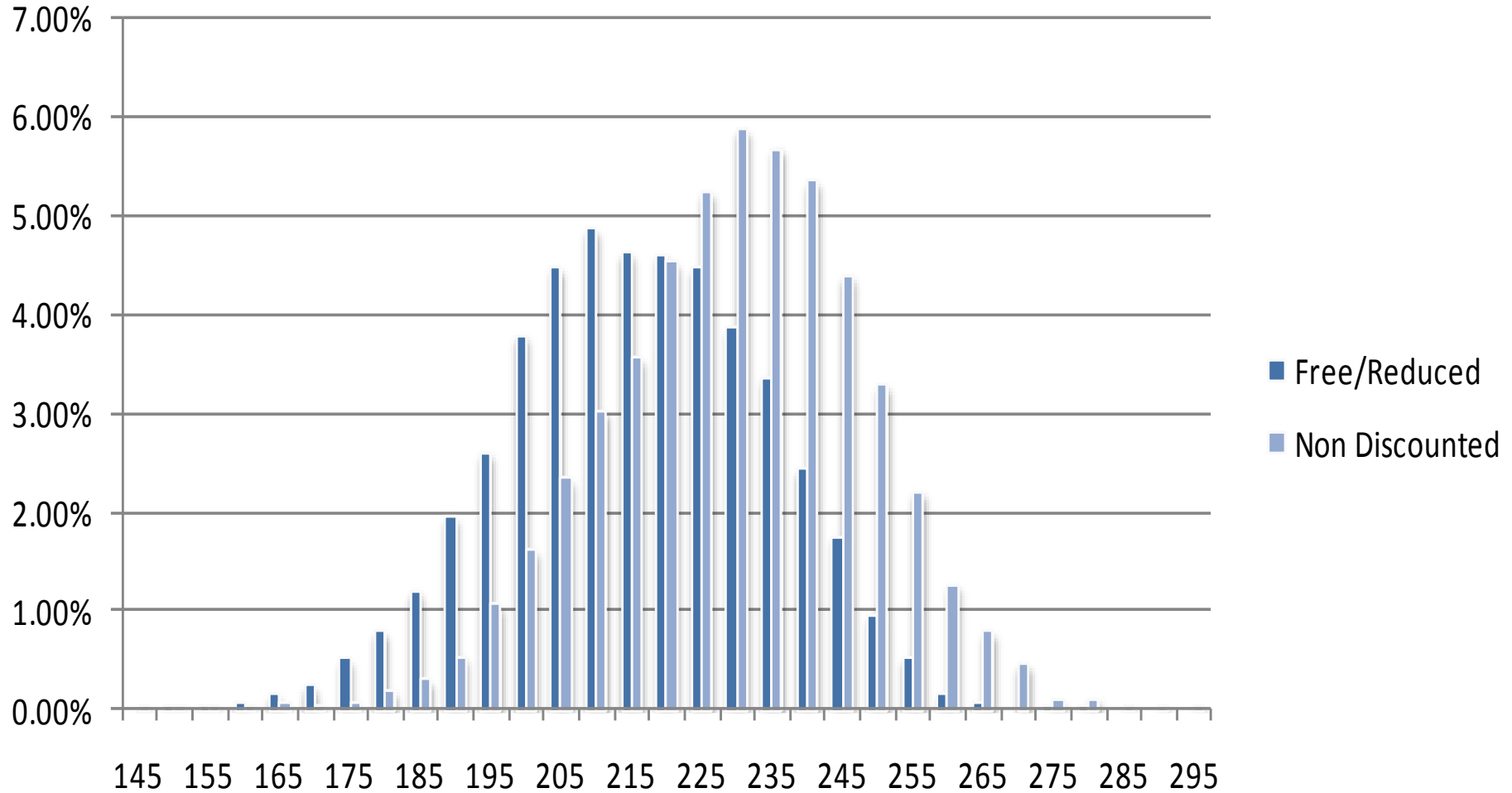


Alternative 1: Entire Distributions

- Showing the Full range (distribution) of group responses
- Advantage:
 - Shows the contribution of all students
- Disadvantage:
 - Harder to summarize



Low Income Distribution



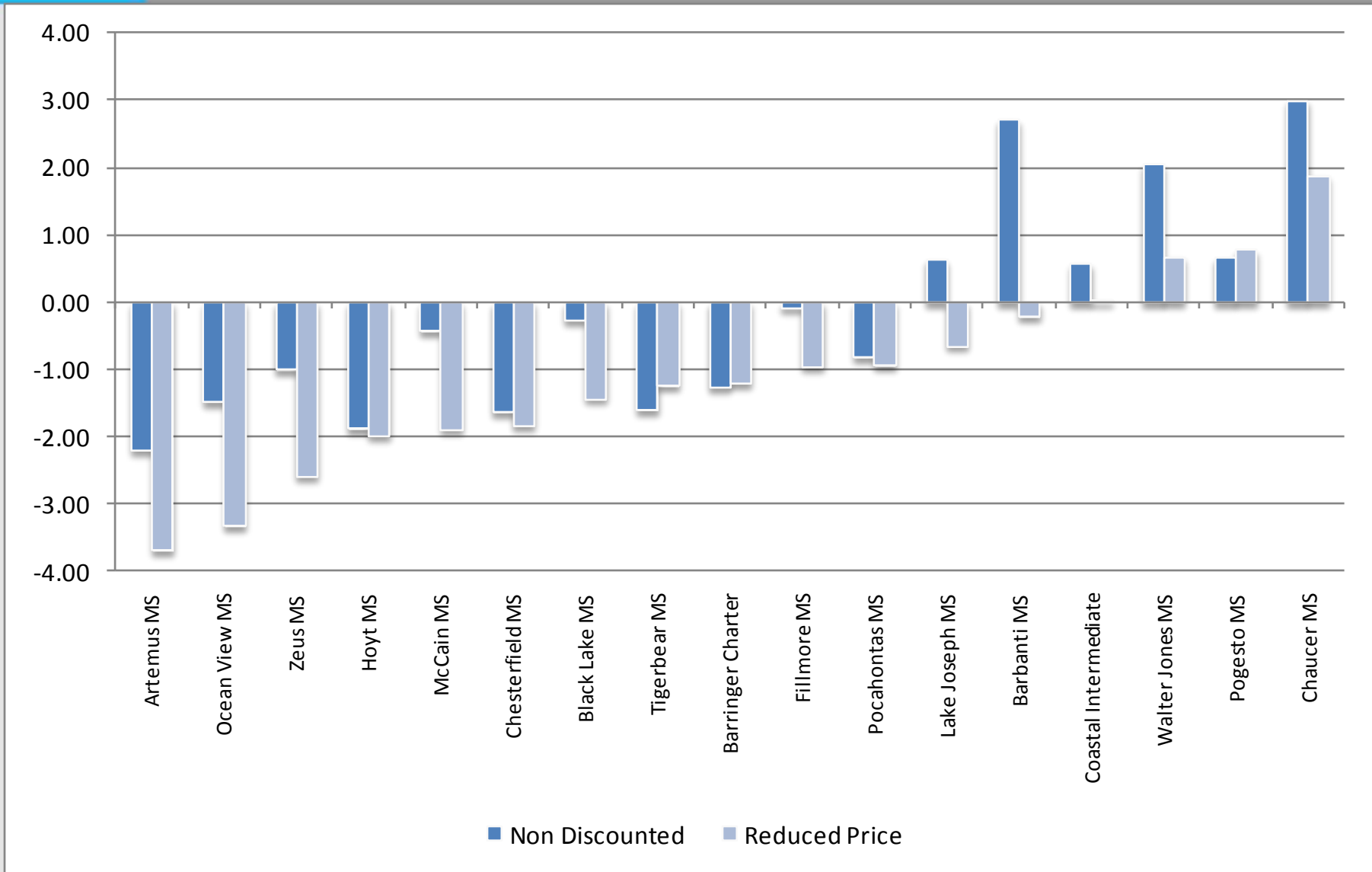


Growth Index Scores

- Shows the rates of growth for Groups
- Advantages
 - Growth is a fairer metric
- Disadvantages
 - Most assessment systems not designed for measuring growth



Average Growth Index





Kingsbury Center Museum Pieces

- Objectives
 - To educate the general public about the shortcomings of traditional achievement gap metrics and to illustrate alternatives
 - To create an interactive experience that permits individuals to ask their own questions
 - To create awareness of the educational policy research conducted by the Kingsbury Center



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- [Gallery 1](#)
- [Gallery 2](#)
- [Gallery 3 - College Readiness](#)
- [Gallery 4 - Distributions of Scores](#)



Take Home Messages

- Current Achievement Gap Measures Are Misleading
- Using a Common Vertical Scale Provides Greater Flexibility for Assessing and Understanding Academic Disparities
- The Kingsbury Center Can Provide Both Traditional Academic Expertise as well as Practical Applications for End-Users

To Learn More About Our Research

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