

The Early Literacy Support Block Grant  
in Oakland Unified

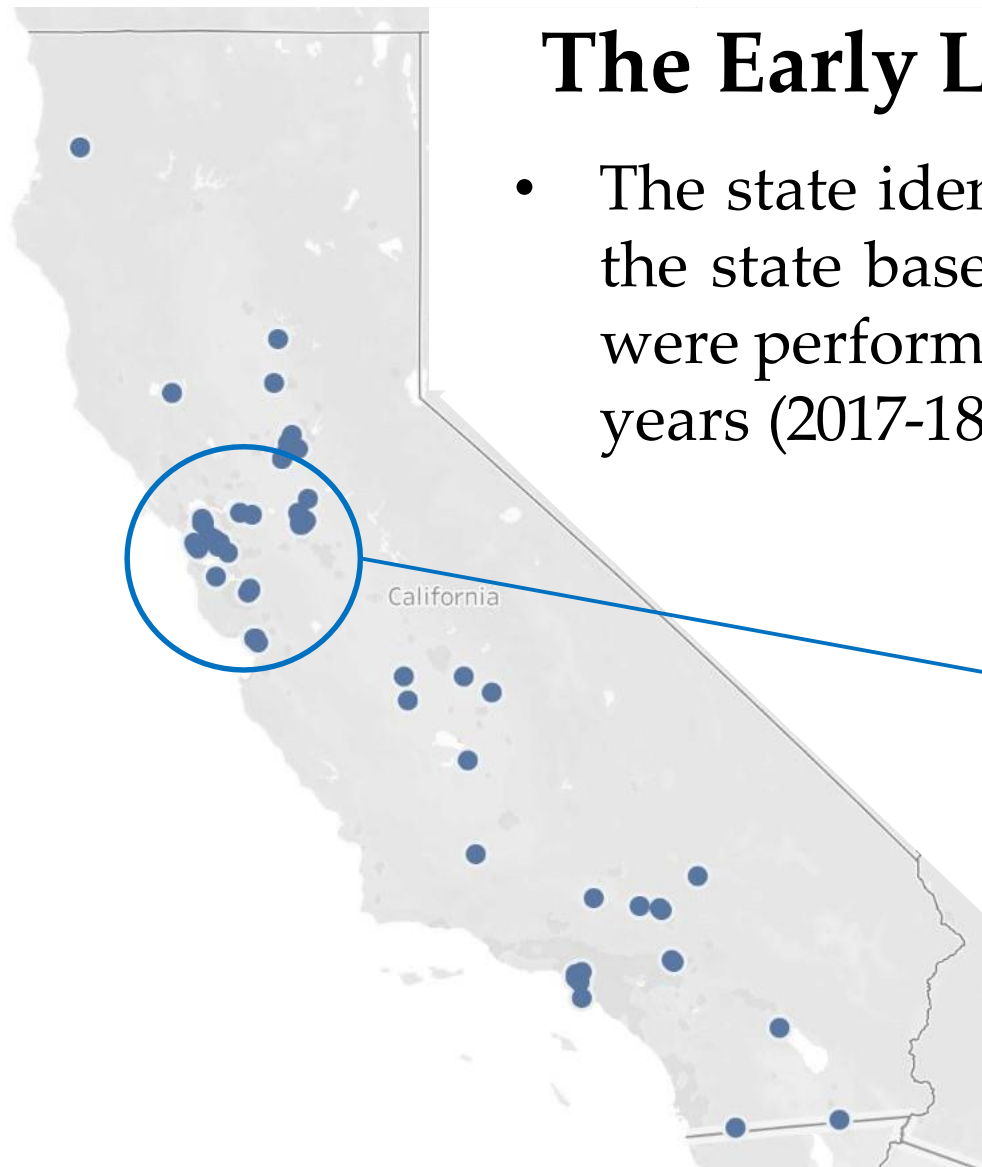
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# The Early Literacy Support Block Grant

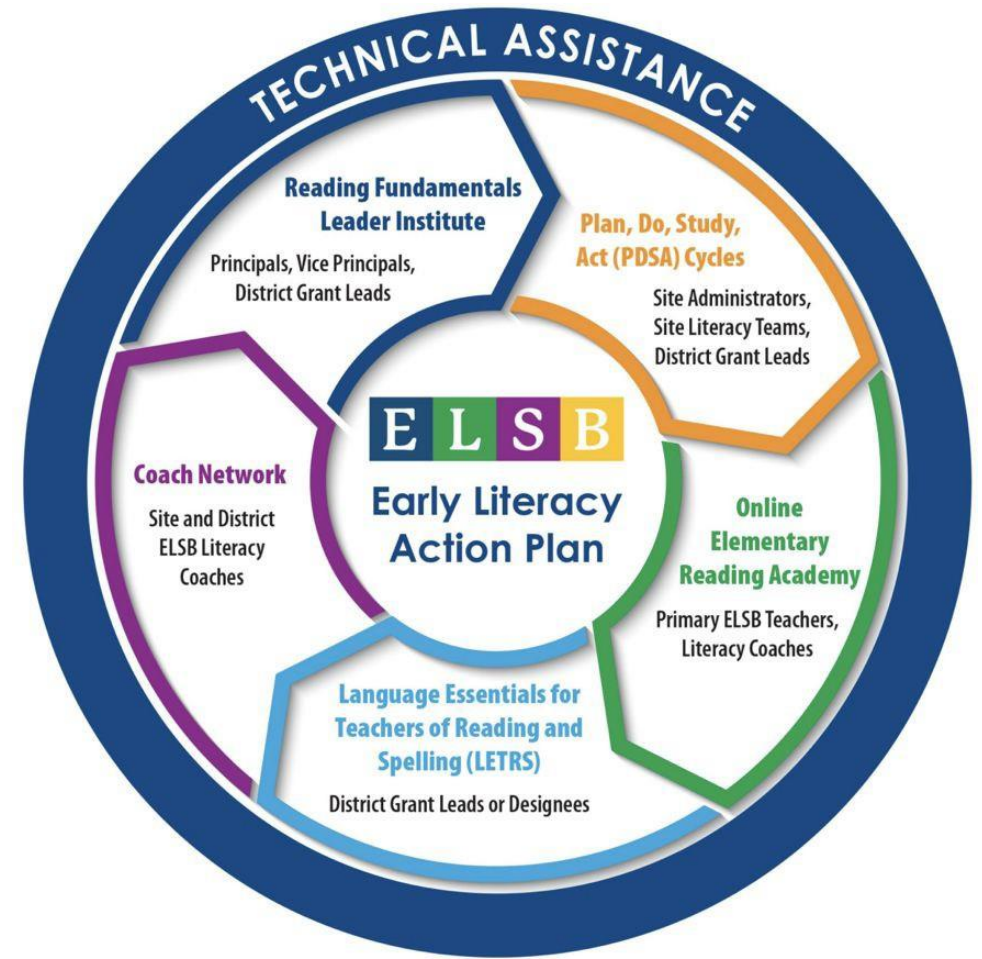
- The state identified the 75-lowest performing schools in the state based on the percentage of their students that were performing at Level 1 (Standard Not Met) over two years (2017-18 and 2018-19).

This included 11 Oakland schools that were offered ELSBG.



# The Early Literacy Support Block Grant

- Identified schools received a series of trainings on the *science of reading* facilitated by the Expert Lead in Literacy. These trainings also covered how to do a needs assessment of a school and how to write a Literacy Action Plan (LAP).
- Schools submitted LAPs and budgets to the California Department of Education.
- ELSBG schools were permitted to spend on TK-3 literacy expenditures, like instructional coaches, aides or curricula.
- Schools also received a web of trainings provided by SCOE and partners as seen at right. These trainings targeted multiple levels of the school, including teachers, coaches, principals, and others.



## **Some vignettes**

- At Calabasas Elementary in Watsonville, schools paid a Curriculum Coach and a Parent Engagement Specialist. This literacy curriculum coach trained staff on phonemic awareness while the Parent Engagement Specialist organized a Family Literacy Night.
- At Franklin McKinley Elementary in San Jose, the school used the grant to hire a part-time literacy coach who met with teachers weekly to “support developing word recognition scope and sequence and instructional guidelines” and led professional development.

## **Some vignettes from Oakland**

- At Prescott Elementary, the school hired and trained Early Literacy Tutors.
- At Hoover Elementary, teachers received new PD with an emphasis on fluency and regular observations and feedback from instructional coaches.

**Statewide, ELSBG schools improved the percentage of their third grade students scoring Standard Nearly Met or Higher on ELA tests by 6 percentage points.**

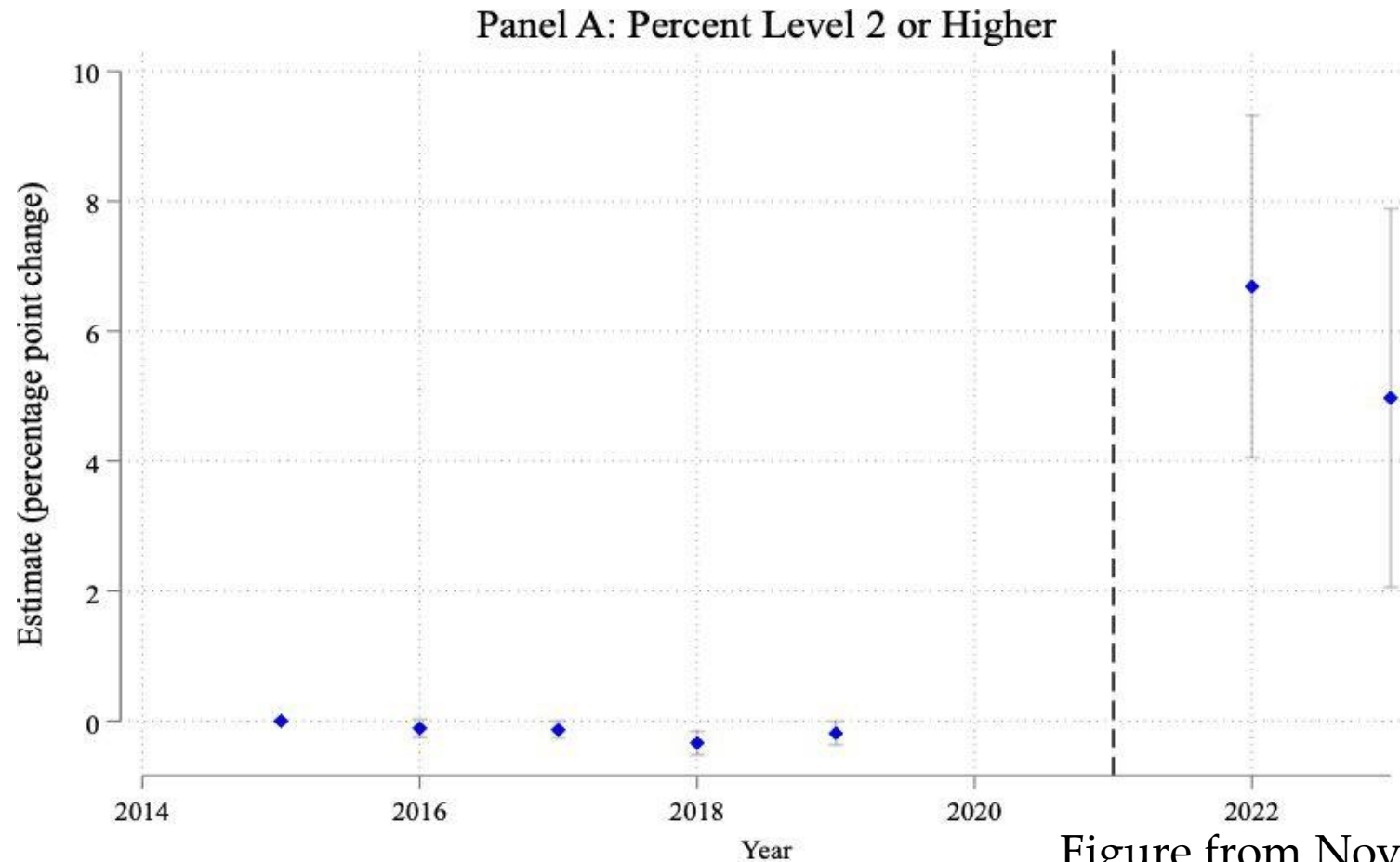


Figure from Novicoff & Dee (2023)

**ELSBG schools improved their third grade mean ELA score by 0.14 standard deviations (about 25% of a year's learning).**

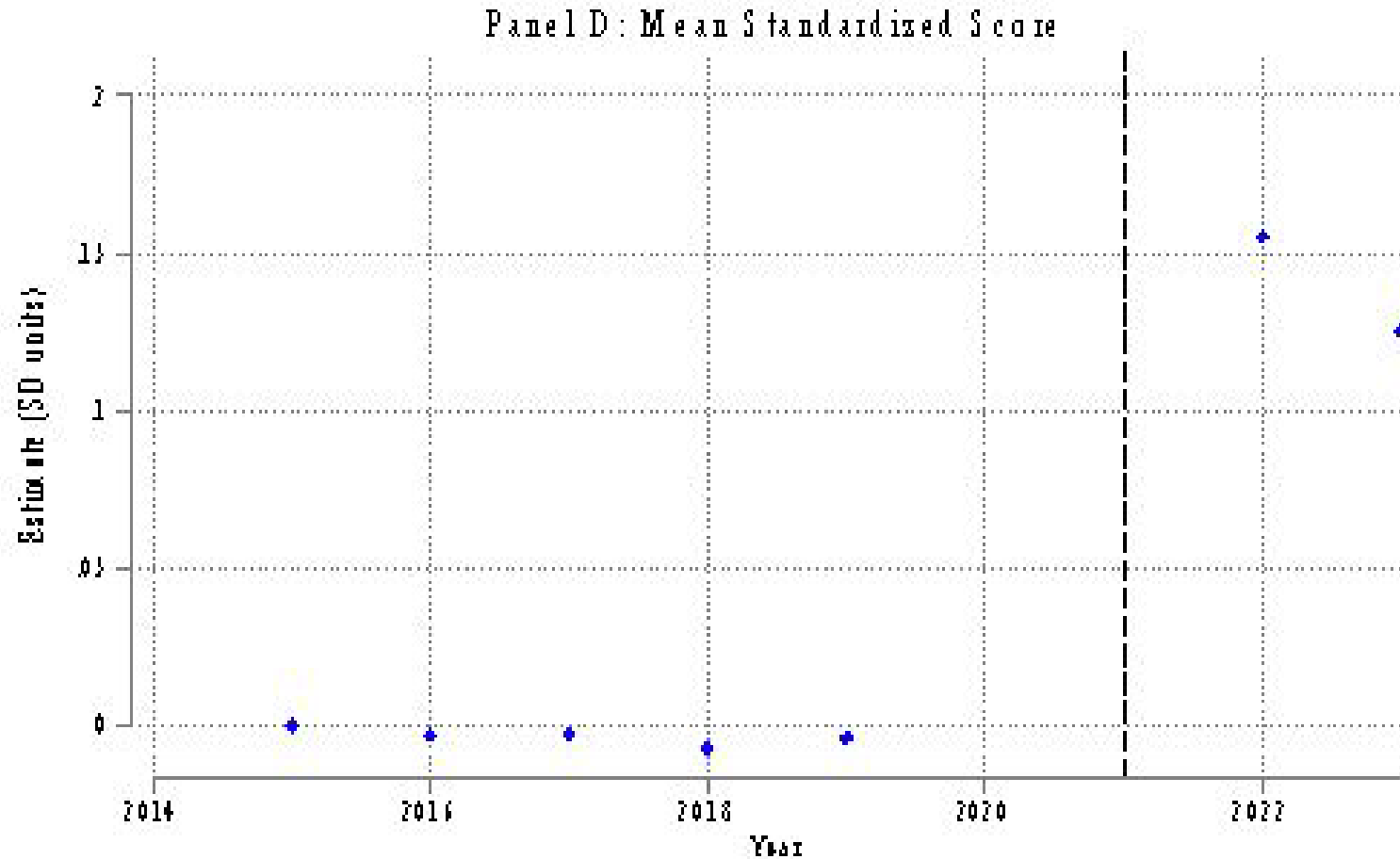
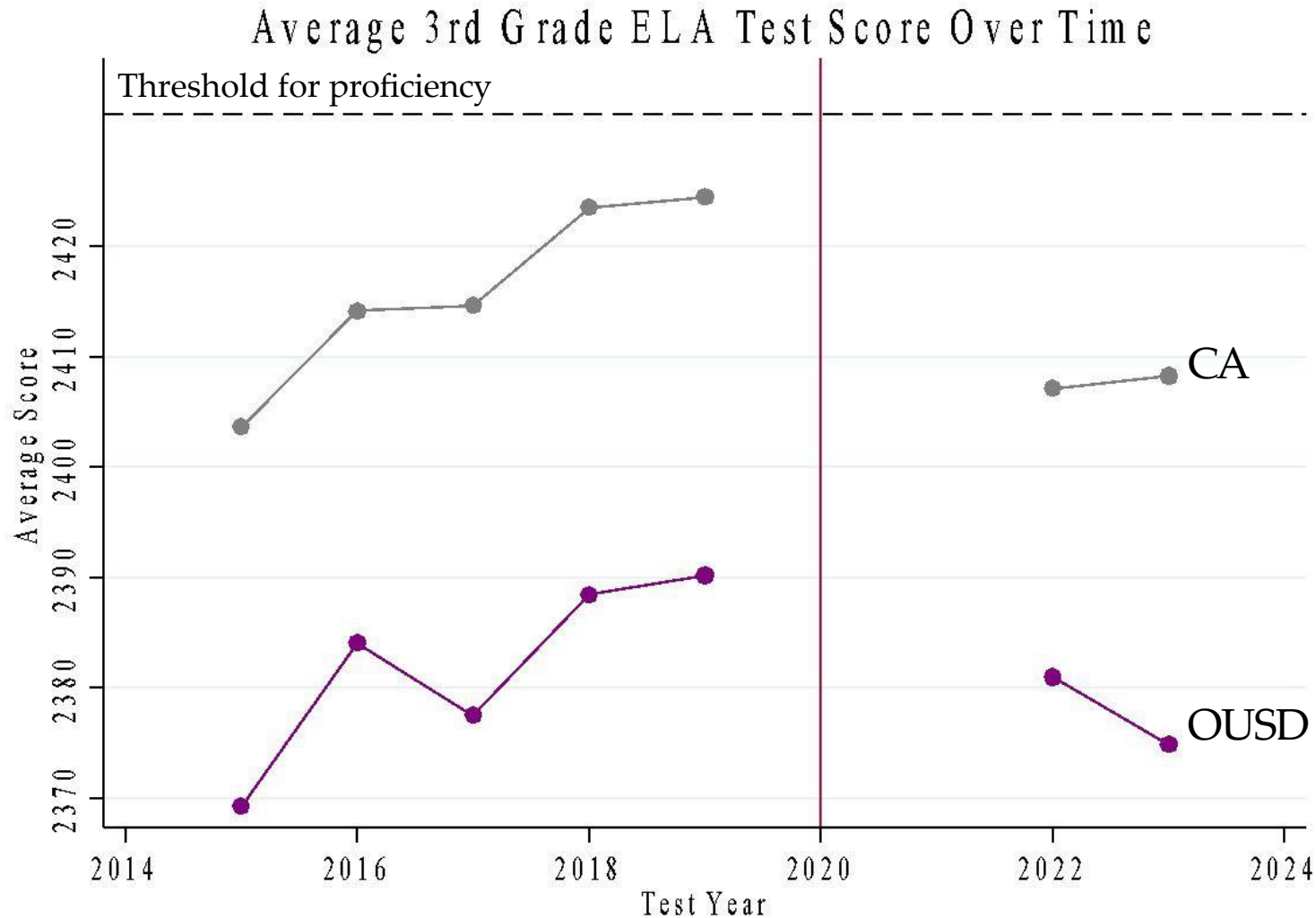


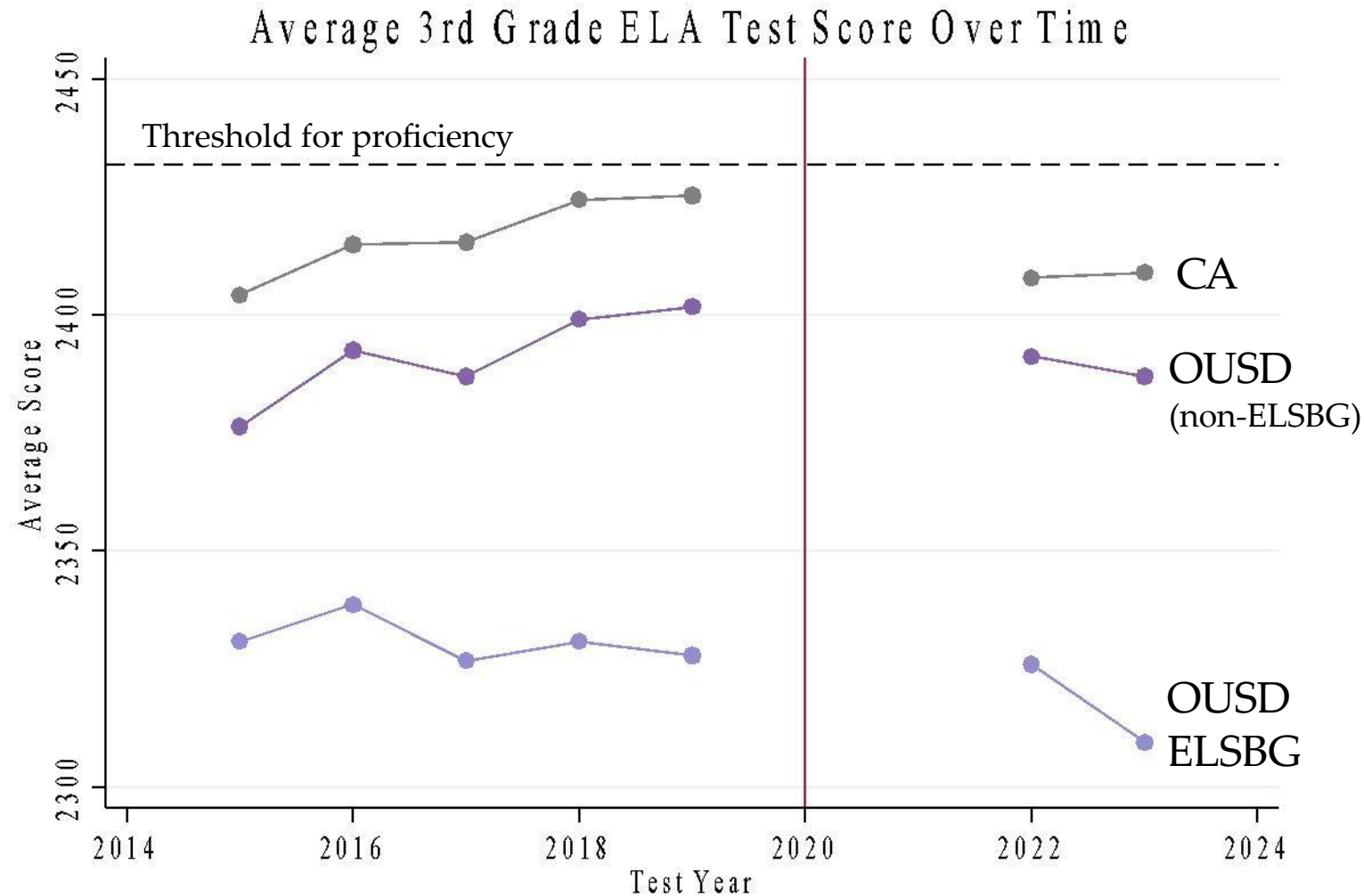
Figure from Novicoff & Dee (2023)

# Let's zoom in on OUSD over this time period.



OUSD test scores declined by 10 points between 2019 to 2022, compared to 20 statewide. However, OUSD's scores fell further in 2023 whereas the state improved between 2022 and 2023.

# We can also think of this as changes in the average score.



OUSD's ELSBG schools *were roughly stable* between 2019 and 2022.

This is worth noting because test scores statewide and in OUSD fell over that time period due to the pandemic, and because these schools were previously on a downward trajectory.

2023 saw a drop though, indicating that these reforms may be challenging to sustain.



# Conclusion

- ELSBG created a supportive policy environment for literacy improvements in California's lowest-performing schools, including 9 OUSD schools.
- This included: "science of reading" training for staff, funding for literacy supports, and oversight.
- Statewide, this led to a 6-percentage point increase in the percent of students scoring Level 2 or Higher in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA and a 0.14 SD increase in mean score.

"If the lowest schools in the state can show gains under the conditions we've had the last two years, it's definitely a win." – Becky Sullivan, SCOE Project Lead