

VT AOE's New SBAC School Data Suppression

Beginning in 2018, the public has been denied access to school/grade performance data required under ESSA and VSBOE's data suppression policy

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Presentation Summary

- Supervisory Unions, also known as LEAs, are legally required to provide school assessment data to the public annually.
- SBAC Grade-wide and gender performance data was available for LSUU's schools in 2017 and prior years (NECAP). It's no longer available for LSUU and other SUs.
- **What changed?** VSBOE Data Suppression Policy has not changed since 2008; VSBOE rule Series 2500 since 2004; and the Accountability Operations Manual (required by Series 2500) since 2011. State & federal law has not changed regarding SBAC annual assessment school reporting to the public.
- Improper school data suppression is a violation of federal and state laws and regulations, as well as a breach of public trust.
- The AOE has a legal duty to ensure that the SU and school data presented on its website complies with the law.

The Every Student Succeeds Act requires that LEA Report Cards include student assessment data for each school served by the LEA

The **LEA report card overview** must include:

- For the LEA as a whole and each school served by the LEA, the same information as described above on the State report card overview;
- For the LEA, how the number and percentage of students at each of three or more levels of achievement on each of the academic assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science under section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA compares to that for students in the State as a whole;
- For each school served by the LEA:
 - How the number and percentage of students at each of three or more levels of achievement on each of the academic assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science under ESEA section 1111(b)(2) compares to that for students in the LEA and State as a whole;
 - The summative determination;
 - Whether the school is identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement;
 - For each school identified for comprehensive support and improvement, the reason that led to such identification;
 - For each school identified for targeted support and improvement, the reason that led to such identification; and
 - Identifying information including, at a minimum, the name, address, phone number, email, student membership count, and status as a participating Title I school.

USDOE *Every Student Succeed Act State and Local Report Cards Non-Regulatory Guidance, January 2017*
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essastatereportcard.pdf>

US DOE: ESSA school data requirement “helps parents determine how well a school is performing”

Accountability

ESSA requires that State and district report cards include:

- A clear and brief description of the **State accountability system**, which helps parents and others understand how the State evaluates school performance
- Results of the State accountability system—for example, how the school is performing on the indicators in the State’s system and what schools are identified for improvement and support—which helps parents determine how well a school is performing
- Under *ESSA*, States choose additional accountability indicators, such as educator engagements or chronic absenteeism

Student Achievement

ESSA requires that State and district report cards include:

- The results of the annual **statewide tests** in reading/language arts, math, and science
- The percentage of all students and each subgroup of students who participate in the State’s math, reading/language arts, and science tests
- The number and percentage of students with significant cognitive disabilities who take an **alternate test**
- Information about how the district’s test results compare with the State as a whole and how each school’s test results compares with the district average and the statewide average
- State results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading and math assessments in grades four and eight

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Some parents find student achievement information is helpful in making the best decision for their student.

The VT AOE Data Reporting Obligation n-size: 11 for reporting student data to the public, 25 for accountability

What is a Minimum N-Size? The lowest statistically defensible subgroup size that can be reported while protecting personally identifiable information (PII).

Student Group N-Size



ESSA requires states to make assessment data for all students and all student groups public. Each state has to decide the minimum number of students needed in a group to report assessment scores and the minimum number of students needed to make accountability determinations about schools. This number of students—or N-size—could be the same or different for reporting and accountability. Vermont is using an N-size of 11 for reporting student data to the public and 25 for accountability determinations. Appropriate school staff will be able to see student data for groups fewer than 11.

Student Privacy and Public Reporting



Privacy of identifiable student information is a both a legal and ethical priority of the state. It is also a priority to share as much data with the public as possible.

To meet both of these obligations the AOE suppresses all aggregate counts of confidential student information that are fewer than 11, the number identified to ensure student protection consistent with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Accountability Determinations

In setting a N-size for accountability determinations, the AOE had to balance competing desires. Our small schools suggest that a low N-size is more feasible. A larger N-size is more statistically reliable and less prone to influence by the achievement of a few outlying students.

In setting our accountability N-size at 25, we sought the insights of stakeholders across the state. Many desired a smaller N to include more data. Many sought a larger N for more statistical reliability. Based on this feedback, we moved our N-size for accountability from 40 to 25 students.

Historically Marginalized Student Group

Due to the small size of many Vermont schools, student group data is often suppressed and communities lack the data to support the achievement of many student groups this law was intended to support (racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, English learners, and students in poverty).

To address the problem, Vermont has added a “Historically Marginalized Student” (HMS) group to student groups measured. HMS is the aggregation of all student groups historically underserved by educational institutions and exists to measure how well schools meet the needs of these students.

<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/essa-state-plan-one-pager-n-size-final-accessible.pdf>

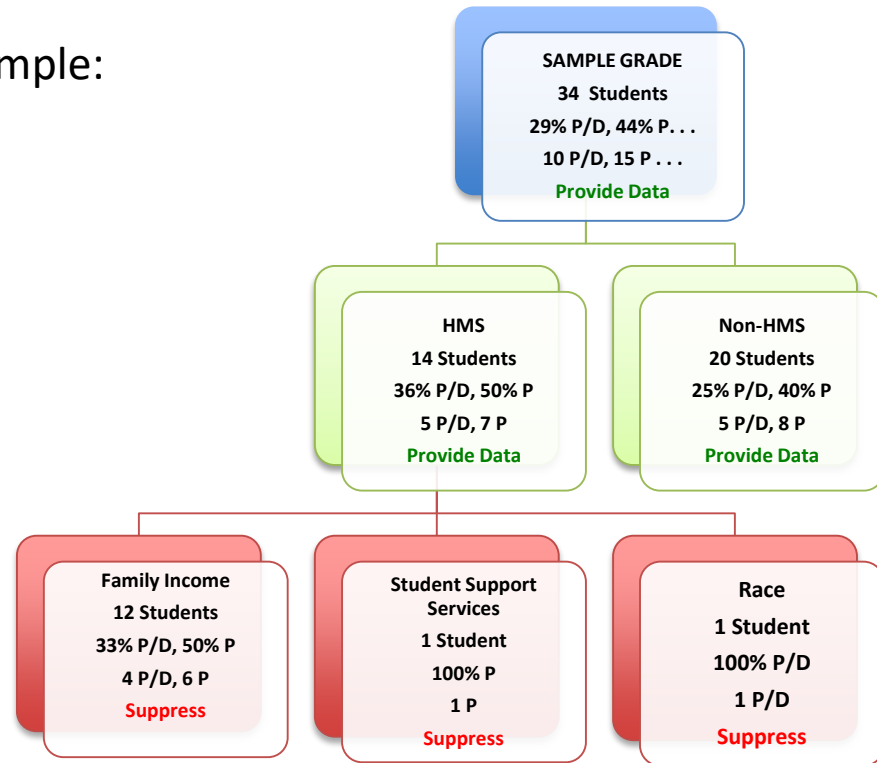
Complementary Suppression

Suppression that occurs if more than one piece of information that has been released to the public would enable others to discern the identity of individual students in a report.

<https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/data-governance>

Complementary Suppression Example:

- No data suppression required for reporting categories of Grade, HMS, and Non-HMS. No PII can be ascertained from these categories.
- Complementary Suppression required for 3 lower level subgroups to protect PII, even though Family Income subgroup exceeds the n-size.



*FERPA standard: whether a “reasonable person in the school community who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances” could identify individual students based on reasonably available information, including other public information released by an agency, such as a report presenting detailed data in tables with small size cells (34 CFR §99.3 and §99.31(b)(1))

Vermont's Current Data Suppression Policy (approved by VSBOE in 2008)

- VT DOE will suppress aggregate student counts of less than 11 under the following circumstances: counts which include sensitive information which is coupled with personally identifiable information.
- VT DOE will also suppress aggregate student counts of confidential information when the number of students in a grouping is 100% of all students, or the number of students in a suppressed cell can be derived from existing [publicly available] information.

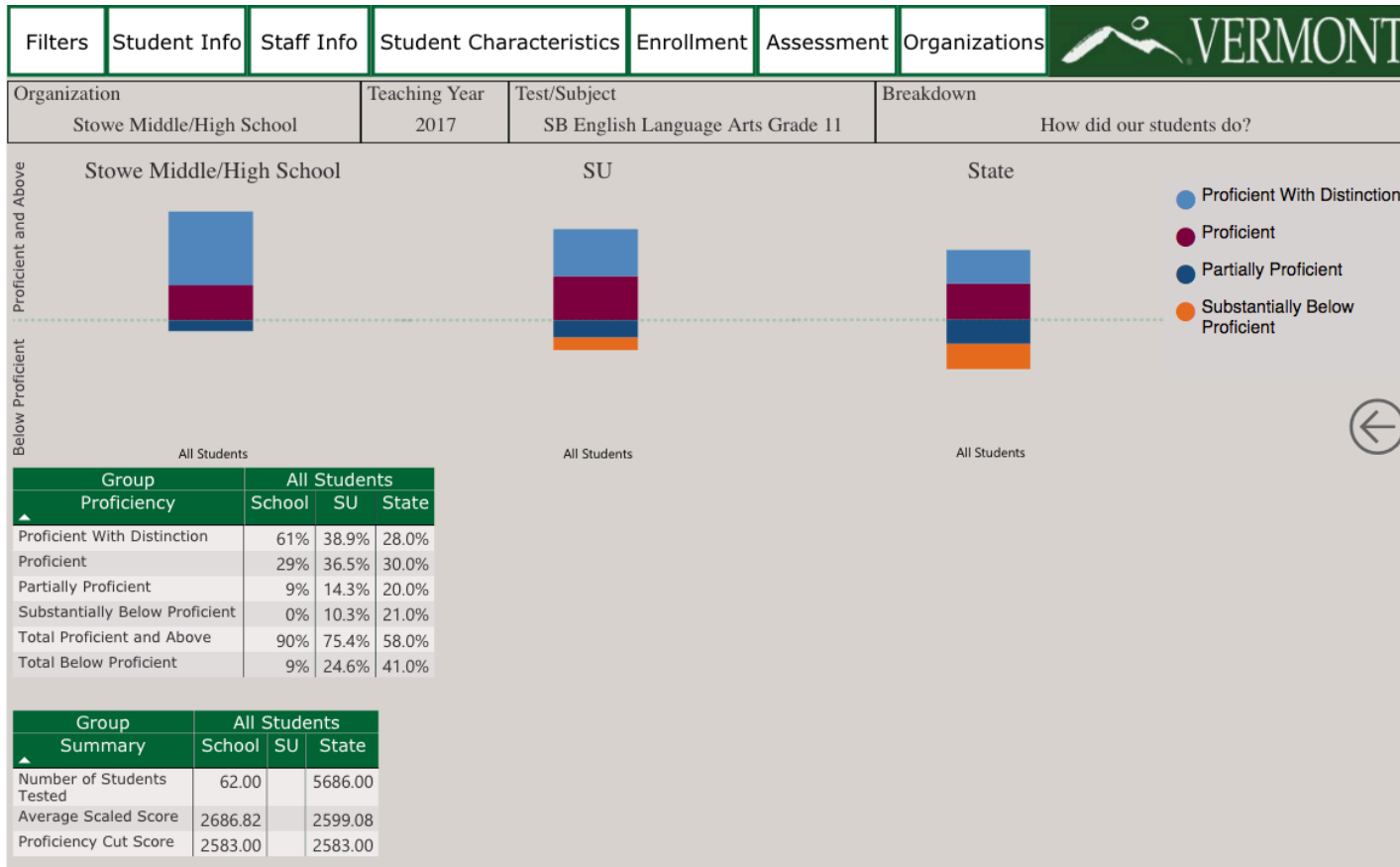
LSUU Data

Example: Grade 9 ELA SBAC Data for LSUU, Stowe & Peoples Academy (PA) High Schools (LSUU and PA Data in the Appendix)

Question: ***What category of Student PII with an N-size of less than 11 is causing the new 2018 & 2019 SBAC data suppression at LSUU's schools?***

2017 Stowe Grade 11* SBAC Data on AOE Dashboard: 62 Students assessed

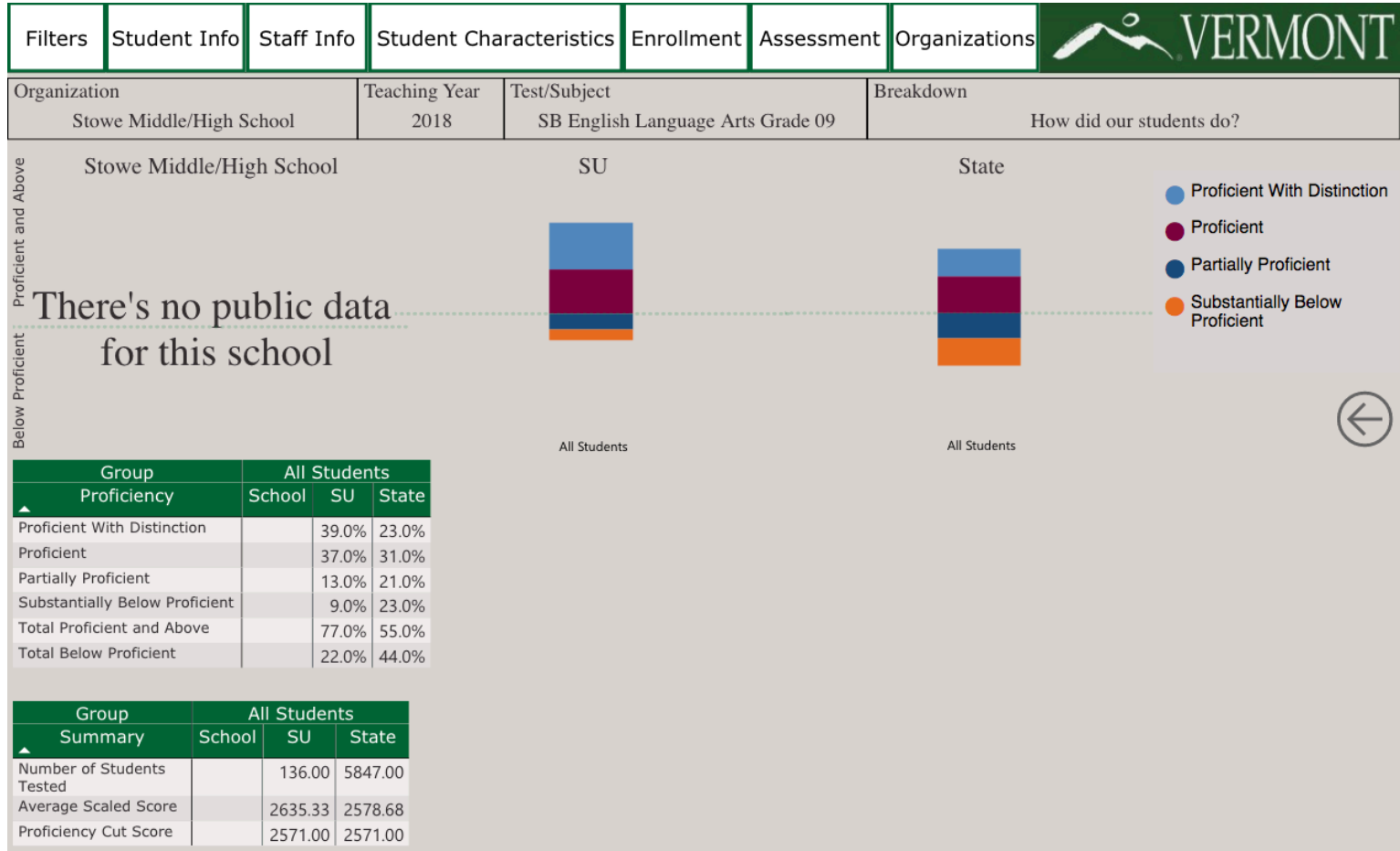
- Grade and Gender data provided
- Race, Student Support Services, Family Income data suppressed



***Beginning in 2018, SBAC administered to students in high school changed from grade 11 to grade 9. In 2017, Historically Marginalized Student category did not exist.**

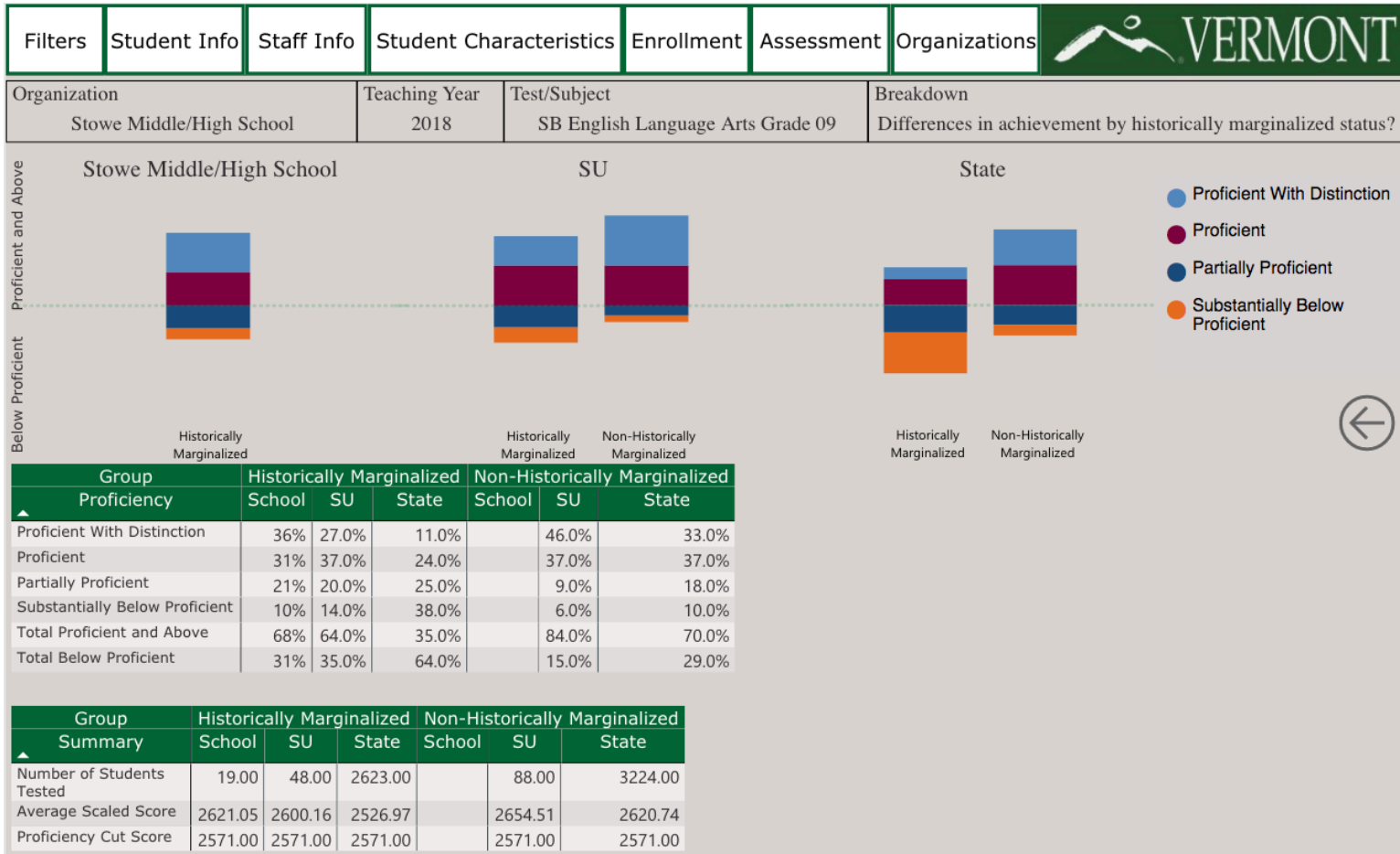
2018 Grade 9 Stowe SBAC Data on AOE Dashboard: 64 students enrolled

All data for the individual school is suppressed, and only SU level data is shown.



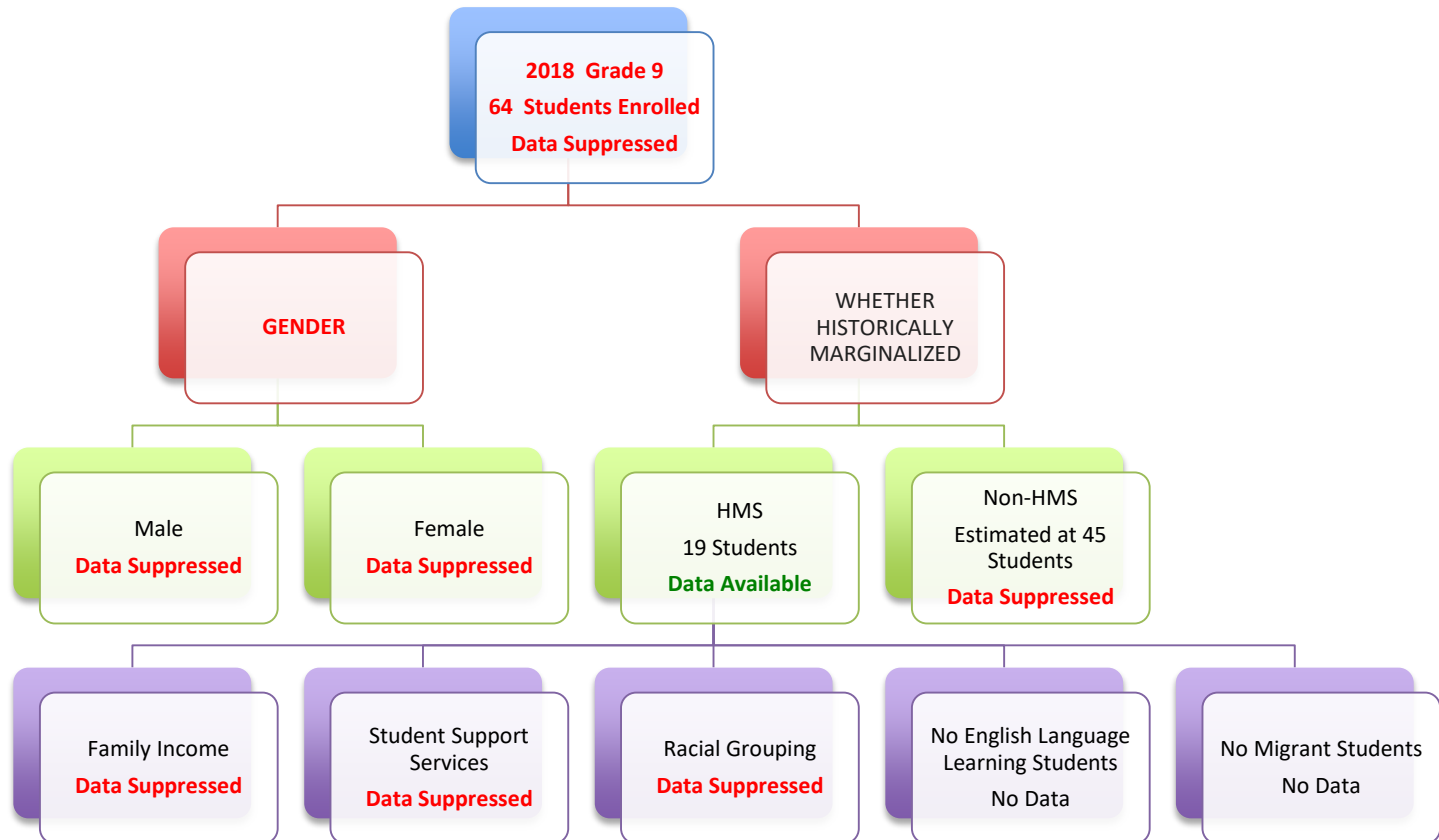
2018 Grade 9 Stowe SBAC HMS Data: 19 Historically Marginalized Students

- Historically Marginalized Student data provided
- General Grade Level, Gender and Non-HMS data suppressed



Data Tree for 2018 Stowe Grade 9 SBAC

- Data available for Historically Marginalized Students, the subgroup complementary suppression is supposed to protect
- Data suppressed for Gender subgroups and over-all Grade group



Stowe Schools: 2018 & 2019 Suppressed vs. Available Data

LSUU's data suppression is a unique application that is not replicated by other school districts.

- The n-size is above 11 for Historically Marginalized Students for all grades.
- New random and arbitrary suppression of Grade-Wide, Gender and Non-HMS Data. This data was provided to the public prior to 2018.

2018 Stowe School Grades	Total Number of Students Enrolled	Number of HMS Students	Grade-Wide Performance Data	HMS Performance Data	NHMS Performance Data
3	58	13	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed
4	59	17	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed
5	63, 60 tested	14	Available	Available	Suppressed
6	48	17	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed
7	62, 62 tested	14	Available	Available	Suppressed
8	55	16	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed
9	65	19	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed

2019 Stowe School Grades	Total Number of Students Enrolled	Number of HMS Students	Grade-Wide Performance Data	HMS Performance Data	NHMS Performance Data
3	66, 65 tested	15	Available	Available	Available
4	59	14	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed
5	66	19	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed
6	64, 62 tested	16	Available	Available	Suppressed
7	58	16	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed
8	64	18	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed
9	67	14	Suppressed	Available	Suppressed

A Statewide Problem:

Other Examples of
Inconsistencies in AOE School
Assessment Data Reporting

2019 Mt. Mansfield UHS Grade 9 SBAC Data: 185 Students Enrolled

Filters	Student Info	Staff Info	Student Characteristics	Enrollment	Assessment	Organizations	
Organization Mt Mansfield Uhs		Teaching Year 2019	Test/Subject SB English Language Arts Grade 09		Breakdown How did our students do?		

Mt Mansfield Uhs

SU

State

- Proficient With Distinction
- Proficient
- Partially Proficient
- Substantially Below Proficient

There's no public data for this school

Proficient and Above
 Below Proficient

Group	All Students		
Proficiency	School	SU	State
Proficient With Distinction			22.9%
Proficient			33.6%
Partially Proficient			20.0%
Substantially Below Proficient			23.3%
Total Proficient and Above			56.6%
Total Below Proficient			43.3%

All Students

Group	All Students		
Summary	School	SU	State
Number of Students Tested			5810.00
Average Scaled Score			2579.50
Proficiency Cut Score			2571.00

High School Name	2018 Grade 9 ELA Performance Data	2019 Grade 9 ELA Performance Data
<i>Arlington Memorial</i>	Suppressed 31 students enrolled 14 HMS, (17 Non-HMS)	Available 31 students tested 17 HMS, 14 Non-HMS
<i>Blue Mountain</i>	Suppressed 26 students enrolled	Available 41 students tested 20 HMS, 21 Non-HMS
<i>Enosburg</i>	Suppressed 84 students enrolled	Available 97 students tested 40 HMS, 57 Non-HMS
<i>Montpelier</i>	Suppressed 85 students enrolled (31 HMS), 54 Non-HMS	Available 78 students tested No data on HMS/Non-HMS
<i>Mt. Anthony</i>	Suppressed 192 students enrolled	Available 193 students tested No data on HMS/Non-HMS
<i>Mt. Mansfield</i>	Available 200 students tested 64 HMS, 136 Non-HMS	Suppressed 185 students enrolled
<i>Northfield</i>	Suppressed 42 students tested 17 HMS, 25 Non-HMS	Available 47 students tested 27 HMS, 20 Non-HMS
<i>Otter Valley</i>	Available 67 students tested 36 HMS, 31 Non-HMS	Suppressed 93 students enrolled
<i>Peoples Academy</i>	Suppressed 73 students enrolled 29 HMS, (44 Non-HMS)	Suppressed 56 students enrolled 30 HMS, (27 Non-HMS)
<i>Richford</i>	Suppressed 24 students enrolled	Available 41 students 26 HMS, 15 Non-HMS
<i>Stowe</i>	Suppressed 64 students enrolled 19 HMS, (45 Non-HMS)	Suppressed 67 students enrolled 14 HMS, (53 Non-HMS)
<i>Twin Valley</i>	Available 24 students tested	Suppressed 19 students enrolled
<i>Twinfield</i>	Available 22 students tested	Suppressed 21 students enrolled

Suppressed indicates that Grade-Wide performance data is suppressed even though grade is larger than the n-size of 11.

AOE has a Legal Duty to Ensure Supervisory Union Data Compliance

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) continues and greatly expands upon the previous requirement that both SEAs (states) and LEAs (local districts) receiving Title I, Part A funds must prepare and widely disseminate ***an annual report card*** ([meeting the requirements of] ESEA section 1111(h)(1) and (h)(2)).

http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/essa-factsheet-report-cards.pdf

*ESEA Section 1111(h)(2)(B): “**Minimum Requirements.** The State educational agency shall ensure that each local educational agency collects appropriate data and includes [such data] in the local educational agency’s annual report...*

(ii) in the case of a school—

(II) information that shows how the school’s students achievement on the statewide academic assessments and other indicators of adequate yearly progress compared to students in the local educational agency and the State as a whole.”

2014 US Ed Title 1 Evaluation: Finding of Noncompliance, 30 Days for AOE to Fix

Indicator 1.4: Annual Report Cards

Finding: The VAOE has not ensured that LEA report cards and school reports include all of the required information.

<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/monitoring/reports13/vtrpt2014.pdf>

Closing Remarks

- State law and the VSBOE's rules, policies, and procedures on data suppression (including n-size) and annual school reporting to the public haven't changed since the NECAP was the state exam.
- Federal annual school reporting requirements for the SBAC have existed since No Child Left Behind (2001).
- The AOE's new data suppression logic applied to annual SBAC school reporting is not public and has never been approved by the VSBOE. Why does the AOE refuse to be transparent about how it is suppressing SBAC data?
- What law, rule, policy or procedure has changed since 2017 SBAC reporting to allow for this new and materially increased suppression of school data?

Appendix

Unanswered Questions

Question: What state or federal law, regulation, policy or procedure changed that is resulting in this material reduction of student performance data to the public since the release of the 2017 SBAC results?

Question: What category of PII student data with an N-Size of less than 11 is being protected by the data suppression at LSUU?

Question: Why is the new data suppression logic being applied to SBAC data on the state's new State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) reporting mechanism not disclosed to the public? Is it consistent with the VSBOE data suppression policy?

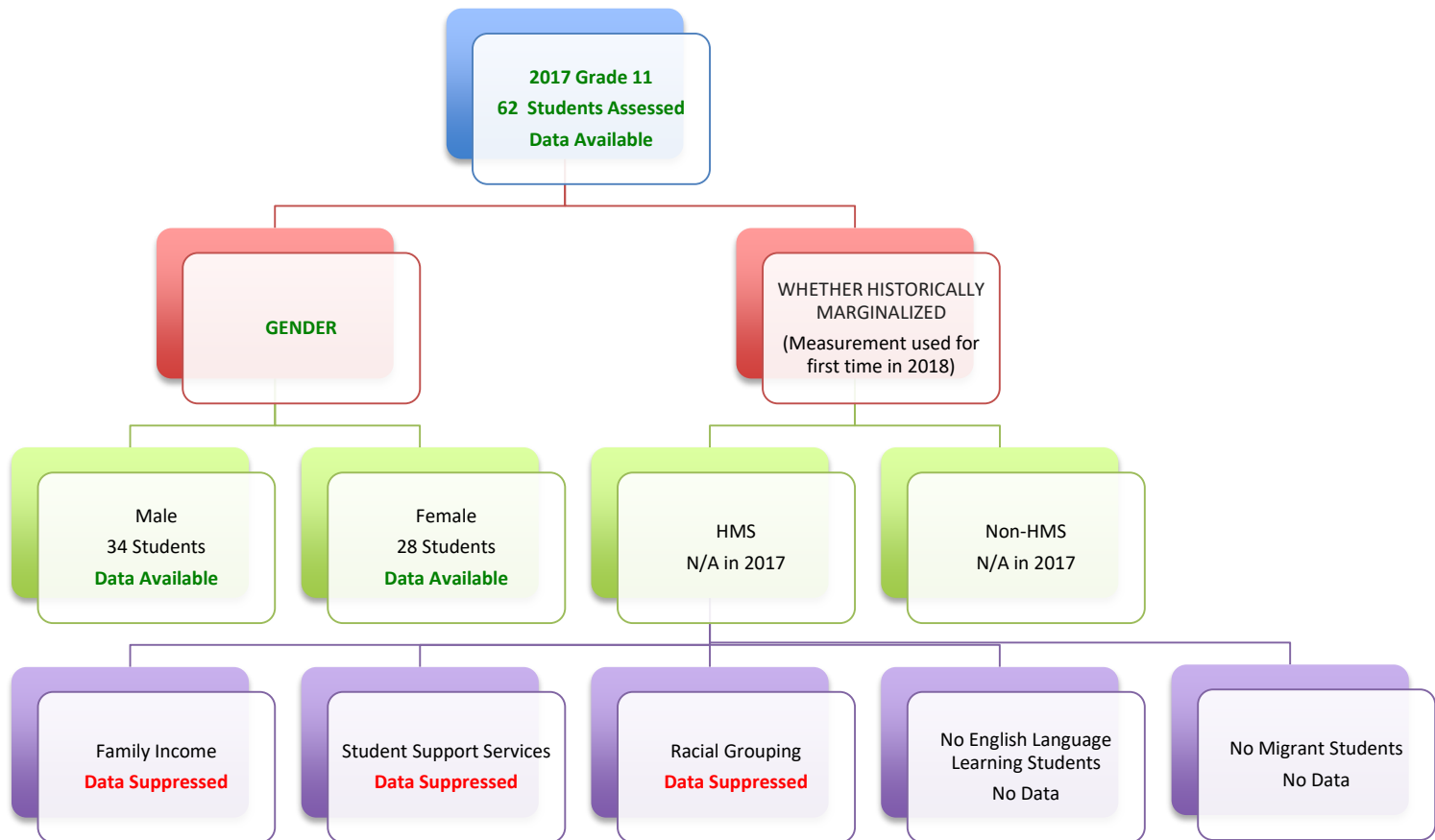
Question: Did the VSBOE ever approve the new data suppression logic being used by the new SLDS system? If so, when did this occur and where is it reflected in the minutes?

Question: Are LSUU's schools' SBAC annual reporting 100% in compliance with the VSBOE's current data suppression policy?

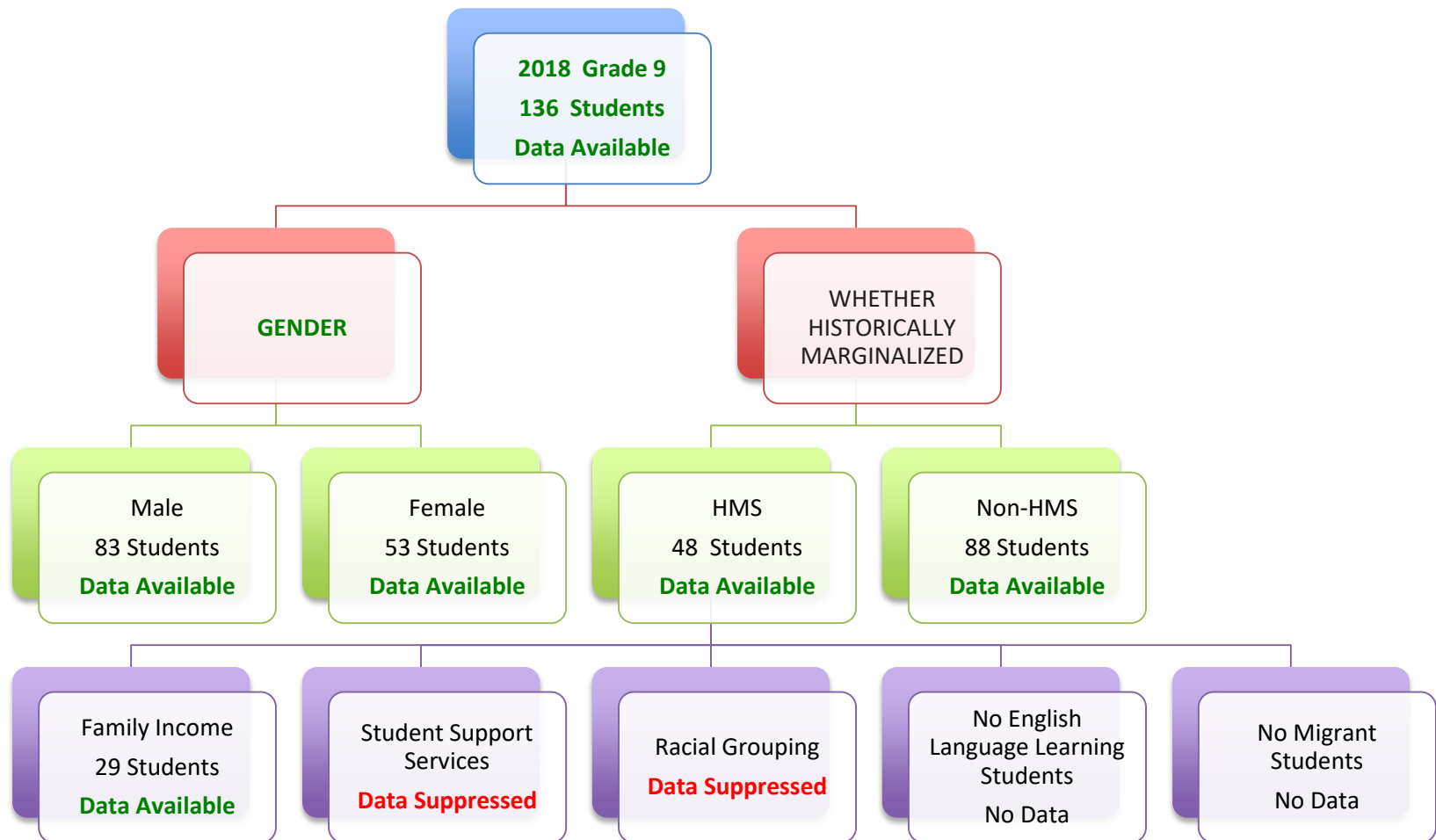
Data suppression policies and logic should be transparent, not opaque. School data should not suddenly disappear without any explanation to the public.

Data Tree for 2017 Stowe Grade 11 SBAC

- Data suppressed in the lower subgroups: privacy issues arise since n-size lower than 11 for at least one of these lower level subgroups (To provide more transparency, in 2018, the ESSA State Plan combined these subgroups into the HMS/Non-HMS categories)
- Data provided for the larger Gender subgroups and over-all Grade category: no privacy issues since n-size larger than 11 for the subgroups and categories



Data Tree for 2018 LSUU Grade 9 SBAC



Data Tree for 2018 Peoples Academy Grade 9 SBAC

- Data available for Historically Marginalized Students, the subgroup complementary suppression is supposed to protect—this has personally identifiable information
- Data suppressed for Gender subgroups and over-all Grade group

