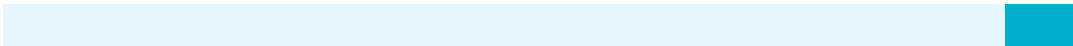


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Benchmarking: Are standards being met?

Benchmarking Grade 5 numeracy performance: Are standards being met?

Table CNT5.1

Grade 5 Student proficiency in numeracy

Level	Distribution	
8		6.49% (1.85)
7		4.60% (0.95)
6		7.22% (1.54)
5		11.06% (1.76)
4		14.67% (1.99)
3		13.76% (1.56)
2		13.64% (1.67)
1		18.15% (2.70)
0		10.41% (3.09)

Distribution of Grade 5 students by proficiency levels, RMI, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Table CNT5.1 shows the distribution of grade five overall numeracy scores in Marshall Islands against the PILNA numeracy proficiency scale. This scale converts a student's overall numeracy score into a level ranking from zero to eight. The expected minimum overall numeracy performance for grade five students is **proficiency level three**. Pacific stakeholders expect these students to reach or exceed this proficiency level.

The average overall numeracy score for grade five students in Marshall Islands in 2021 was 464.31 (SD = 69.86). This corresponds to the middle threshold of proficiency level three in the PILNA numeracy proficiency scale (level three is assigned to scores 450–475) as shown in the common proficiency scale 'meter' of numeracy for grade five in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (Figure CNF5.7). On average, grade five students in Marshall Islands are achieving the minimum expected standard in numeracy.

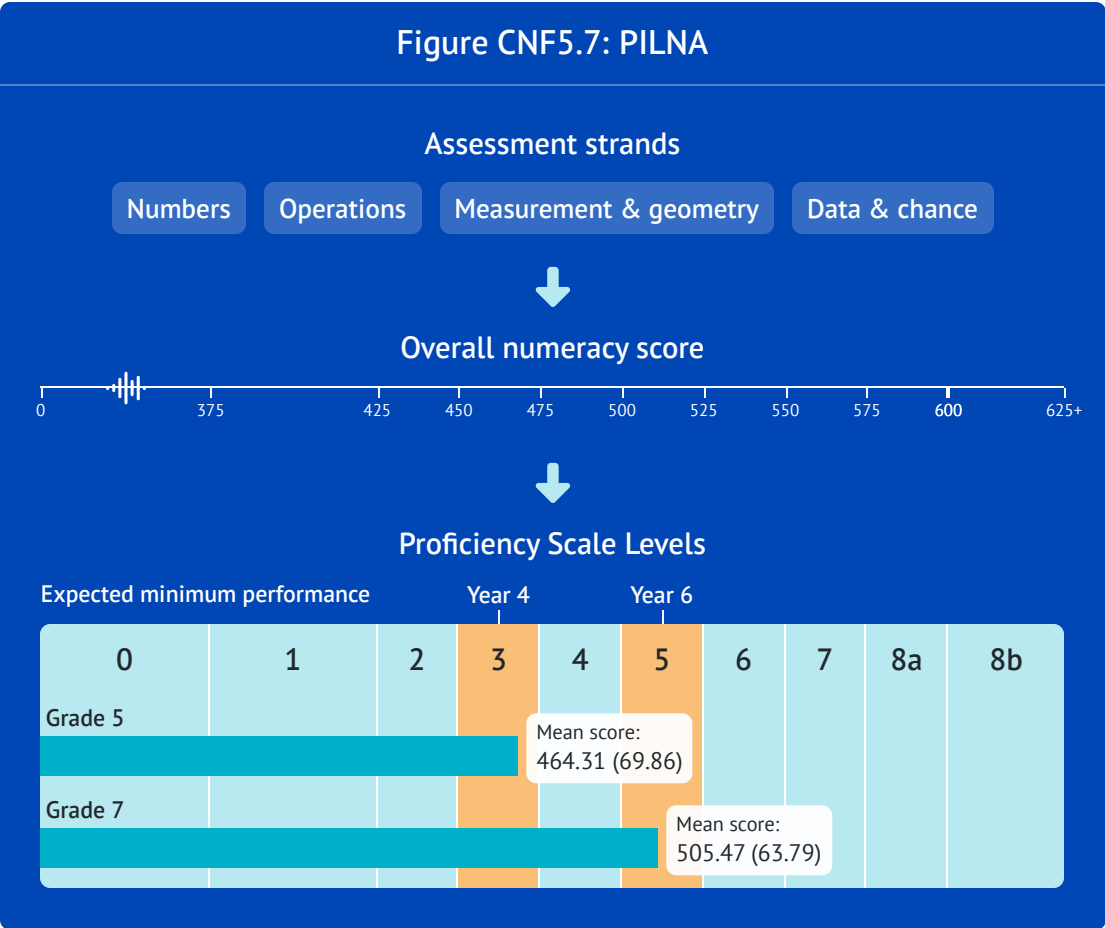


Table CNT5.2

Grade 5 student numeracy proficiency relative to the region

Level	Region	Marshall Islands
8	7.82 % (0.48)	6.49 % (1.85)
7	7.52 % (0.35)	4.60 % (0.95)
6	11.40 % (0.35)	7.22 % (1.54)
5	13.95 % (0.39)	11.06 % (1.76)
4	14.03 % (0.41)	14.67 % (1.99)
3	12.45 % (0.51)	13.64 % (1.67)
2	10.48 % (0.45)	13.64 % (1.67)
1	14.11 % (0.56)	18.15 % (2.70)
0	8.24 % (0.59)	10.41 % (3.09)

Distribution of Grade 5 student numeracy proficiency relative to the region, RMI, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

The average numeracy score does not tell us the whole story. The proportion of students who are meeting the minimum expected standard is also important. Approximately 58% of the grade five students in Marshall Islands, over half, performed at or above this expected level (levels 3–8) in PILNA 2021. Conversely, approximately 42% of the students, four in ten, performed below the expected proficiency level (levels 0–2). In other words, most grade five students are meeting the minimum expected level for numeracy, but there is a significant proportion (42%) who are yet to meet this level.

Table CNT5.2 compares the numeracy performance of grade five students in Marshall Islands with that of students in the Pacific region. While 58% of grade five students in Marshall Islands performed at or above the expected level (levels 3–8), 67% did so in the region.

Table CNT5.3

Grade 5 Numeracy distribution by proficiency scores and gender

Level	Girls	Boys
8	7.58 % (1.92)	5.44 % (2.13)
7	4.31 % (1.05)	4.78 % (1.55)
6	7.28 % (1.93)	6.95 % (1.67)
5	11.90 % (1.92)	10.33 % (2.45)
4	17.11 % (2.41)	12.26 % (2.94)
3	13.71 % (1.92)	13.78 % (2.24)
2	13.61 % (2.58)	13.65 % (2.53)
1	15.44 % (3.11)	20.85 % (3.40)
0	9.06 % (2.84)	11.94 % (3.96)

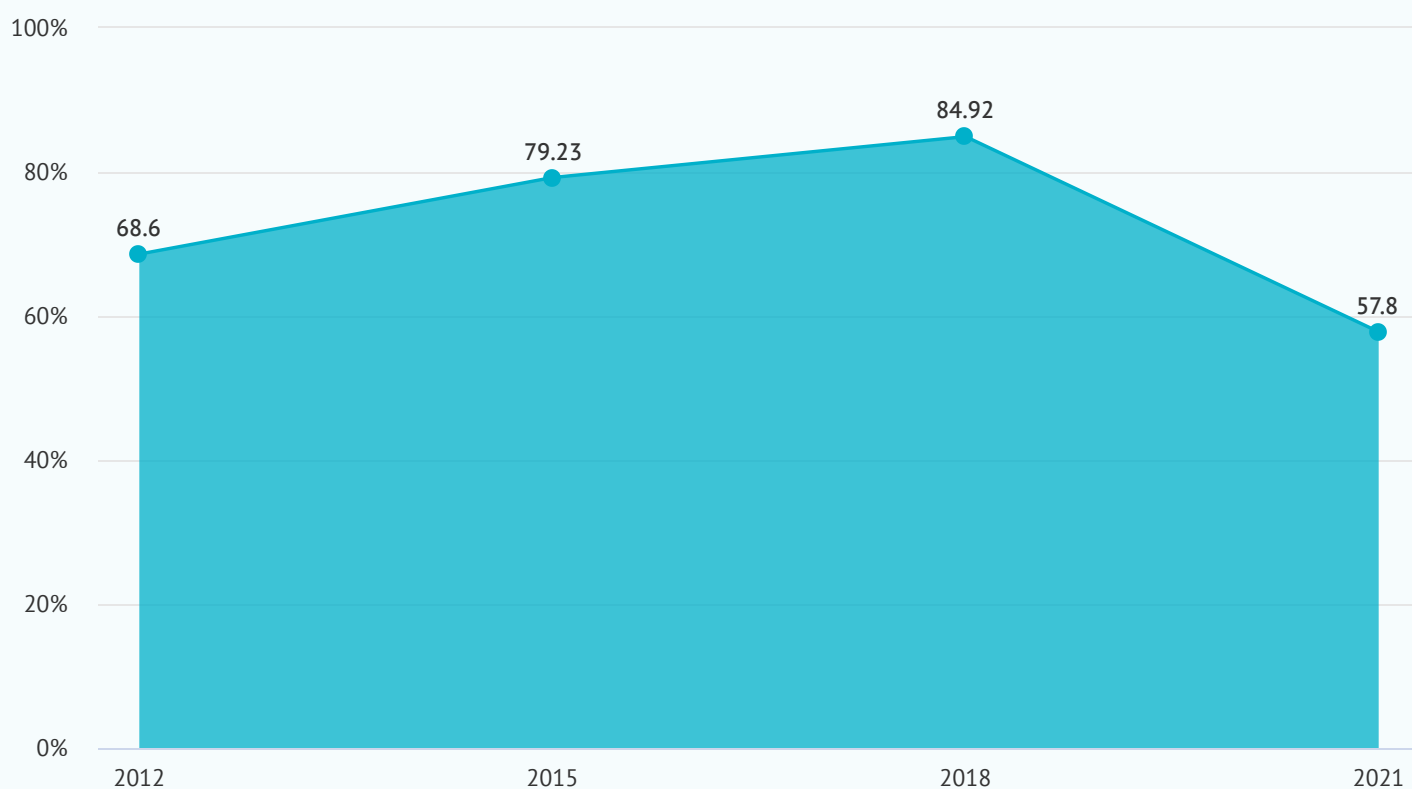
Distribution of Grade 5 students' proficiency in numeracy by gender, RMI, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

When looking at the Marshall Islands distribution of grade five numeracy proficiency scores in 2021 by gender (Table CNT5.3), differences can be seen. Approximately 62% of girls performed at or above the minimum expected proficiency level (levels 3–8) compared to approximately 54% of boys. Additionally, while the distribution at each level by gender was broadly similar, a higher proportion of girls performed at level 4 and a higher proportion of boys performed at level 1 when compared to one another.

Figure CNF5.8

Distribution of grade 5 students proficiency levels



Year	Students at/above minimum
2012	68.6
2015	79.23
2018	84.92
2021	57.8

Distribution of grade 5 students proficiency levels in RMI, PILNA 2012,2015,2018 and 2021

Figure CNF5.8 shows the proportion of Marshall Islands' grade five students meeting the overall numeracy standard over time. A smaller proportion met the minimum expected level of overall numeracy performance in 2021 than in all previous PILNA cycles (2012 = 69%, 2015 = 79%, 2018 = 85%, 2021 = 58%). A large part of this difference can be attributed to an increase in students' performance at the lowest levels of the scale (levels 0–1) (2012 = 19%, 2015 = 8%, 2018 = 8%, 2021 = 29%). This is a critical finding from PILNA 2021: a decrease in the proportion of grade five students achieving the minimum expected level of numeracy.