

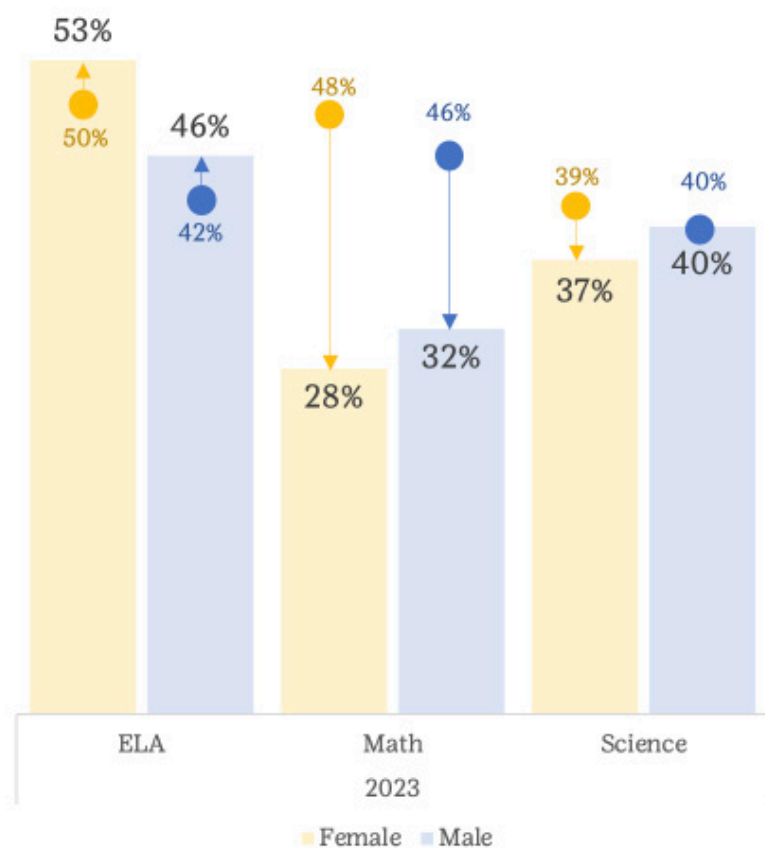


# Academic Performance

Commissioned by the Girl Scout Councils Serving Alabama

Girls are falling behind in math and science. Only 28% of girls are proficient in math, **a decline of 20% in 5 years.**

Academic Proficiency: 2023 vs 2018



According to the Alabama State Department of Education, only 28% of girls achieved math proficiency in 2023, a decrease of 20% in 5 years. While boys also saw a decline in the same time period, boys test slightly ahead of girls, with 32% achieving proficiency in 2023.

Outdated research previously assumed that girls test lower in math and science due to developmental differences; however, more recent research suggests that social pressures are a large contributor of girls under-performance.

- Girls are more critical of their math performance even when scoring higher than boys. Zander (2020) found that “girls feel less worthy after taking a math test.”
- Fewer girls enter STEM fields in college. Most female students graduating with STEM degrees are in healthcare fields - very few in math and engineering.

Source: Alabama State Department of Education, 2018 and 2023.

## Academic Success Outside the Classroom

Scholars agree that influences outside of the classroom play a role in academic success. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience fosters opportunities for girls to practice problem solving and challenge seeking - skills that support success in the classroom. In fact, in 2017, the Girl Scout Research Institute found that Girl Scouts are more likely than non-Girl Scouts to earn excellent grades and were nearly 2x as likely to choose a STEM career in college.

**20%**  
of engineering  
degrees were  
awarded to  
female students  
in '21-22.