



BRIDGING GAPS & BREAKING BARRIERS: A MINNESOTA MODEL FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & INTEGRATION



**Report of the House Republican Task Force
Student Achievement & Integration**

November 1995

PROPOSED RULE ON DESEGREGATION/INTEGRATION & ACHIEVEMENT

Mandatory Participation

A Twin Cities regional interdistrict school desegregation effort would be compelled, with voluntary participation by students. However, all Minnesota school districts now meet the current federal statute and caselaw definitions of desegregation.

Racial Quotas

The current rule is a vestige of the period (1973-1983) when Minneapolis schools were under federal court order. No school may have minority enrollment 15 percent higher or lower than the city-wide average of enrolled minority students. The SBE is now considering using more flexible quotas or eliminating them.

Learning Gap Closure

The rule would require "closing the learning gap," in at least reading, writing and math. No school district in the U.S. has successfully closed this gap. The U.S. Supreme Court found in Missouri v. Jenkins (1995) that the primary factors controlling student achievement lie outside the control of the schools.

Paperwork Requirements

All districts in the state would have to:

- establish a Community Integration/Learning Council to develop and each year submit to the Commissioner of Education a Community Integration/Learning Plan that sets targets for closing the achievement gap and reports on any progress that has been made;
- annually collect and submit data on the racial and/or ethnic identification of each enrolled student.

Any district with a certain percentage of minority students enrolled (15 percent is currently proposed) would have to:

- submit a comprehensive school desegregation plan and evaluate it every three years or as often as directed to by the Commissioner of Education.

Penalties for Failure

The board has asked the Legislature to approve penalties for failure to submit a plan, report racial data, close the achievement gap or fully comply with the rule. These would include:

- withholding of state aid;
- reconstitution of a school (dissolving staff regardless of collective bargaining agreements);
- prohibitions on school facility remodeling, expansion or new construction;
- direct takeover of a school or school district by the Minnesota Department of Education.



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November, 7, 1995

Dear Friends,

As we went from hearing to hearing during the months of September and October, we were greatly impressed by what is being done by the superintendents, administrators, teachers, students, parents and concerned members of our area communities to reduce the learning gap and promote respect for people of widely varying backgrounds.

The remarks we heard from all of our witnesses were invariably thoughtful, reasoned and positive. If the complex problems of student achievement and integration could be resolved by depth of commitment alone, these problems would no longer exist.

We believe our recommendations to the State Board of Education—if they are accepted by that body—would result in a rule on desegregation/integration and achievement that would have the broad-based support necessary to successful implementation.

Better academic achievement by students from all backgrounds should be the first and foremost goal of this rule. It should also be a positive rule, one that emphasizes incentives, cooperation, creative approaches to solving problems, and voluntary efforts.

Among the scores of people we heard from, there is a broad consensus about the proposed rule. It was perhaps best expressed by Dr. David Wettergren, superintendent of the Stillwater School District.

He said anything mandated or coerced will likely be met with resistance; that voluntary participation and choice are more likely to be accepted. The focus should be on improving educational environments so that all children will benefit, providing appropriate resources so that all children will have the necessary tools, and engaging the entire community in the education of our children.

We trust this report, Bridging Gaps and Breaking Barriers: A Minnesota Model for Student Achievement and Integration, will be given the consideration it deserves.

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Section I: Overview of the Rulemaking Process

The existing desegregation rule (commonly referred to as the "15 percent rule") has been in effect since 1973 as a consequence of a consent decree that settled a federal lawsuit (Booker v. Special School District No. 1 Minneapolis).

In 1993 the Legislature established a roundtable to recommend changes to the existing rule. The roundtable group held a number of meetings in 1993, and in 1994 issued a report to the Legislature and the State Board of Education (SBE) that serves as the intellectual and philosophical foundation of the proposed draft rule on desegregation/integration and student achievement.

Any group charged with making public policy recommendations has a duty to objectively analyze the costs and consequences of its proposals to determine if they best serve the broad public interest.

Minutes of the roundtable meetings and anecdotal information provided by several roundtable members indicate the presumed objectivity of process was marred from the start.

Key participants were apparently reluctant to seriously consider the high costs, questionable gains in academic achievement, racial tensions (e.g., lawsuits in San Francisco filed by Chinese-American parents whose high-achieving children have been excluded from the city's best academic high school because of quotas), and other unintended negative consequences that mark too many mandatory school integration plans.

For example, the roundtable minutes from an early meeting show that a suggestion to bring in a consultant with a national reputation, Dr. Christine Rossell, a social scientist who supports and has helped to design voluntary desegregation plans, was rejected.

However, two consultants who were invited to participate—Gary Orfield of Harvard University's Project on School Desegregation and David Tatel of the law firm of Hogan & Hartson—are strong supporters of federal court involvement, busing for racial balance, school enrollment quotas, penalties such as state takeover of local schools and "reconstitution," and other measures that have a dubious relationship to student achievement.

Whether key roundtable participants were more interested in social engineering than in education is a question that has been raised. At the April 1995 SBE meeting one key participant in the roundtable

Seventy-five percent of those surveyed believe students are better served by going to their neighborhood school, even if that means some schools' enrollment would become predominantly white or predominantly minority.

—St. Paul PIONEER PRESS/
KARE 11 Poll,
September, 1995

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"The [Minneapolis] school board approved a break with a long-standing, court-ordered policy that equates improved performance of minority students with the racial balance of city schools. Busing minority students to school in white neighborhoods not only tears communities apart and alienates students, but it simply hasn't worked, Superintendent Peter Hutchinson said."

—St. Paul PIONEER PRESS,
June 28, 1995

process stated social outcomes were the primary purpose of the roundtable recommendations, with educational considerations being secondary.

After the roundtable report was presented, the Minnesota Legislature gave the SBE authority to proceed with rulemaking in this matter and established an Office of Desegregation/Integration within what was then the Department of Education.

Since January 1995, the SBE and department have been working—not always in unison according to department personnel—to combine elements of the old rule, the roundtable report and other suggestions into a comprehensive draft rule to be returned to the Legislature for comment in 1996.

Early in 1995, Hogan & Hartson (roundtable consultant David Tatel's former firm) was retained by the Minneapolis school system to advise it on the merits of filing a lawsuit against the state charging inadequate funding of K-12 education. In September 1995 the Minneapolis NAACP did file an action against the state alleging, among a number of other charges, the inadequate funding of the Minneapolis school system.

In appearances before the House Education Committee and in other forums this year, SBE members were generally unable to give substantive answers to questions about how to close the learning gap, the estimated costs of implementing the rule, the possible legal liabilities, proven links between racial balance and student achievement, and other aspects of this complex proposal. Promises by SBE members to send the requested information to legislators at a later date were rarely kept.

The principal response to the many questions asked by legislators about the intellectual and philosophical basis of the proposed rule is a report published in the summer of 1995. Paid for by the Office of Desegregation/Integration, *The Correlation Between Desegregation and Closing the Learning Gap*, is a four-page long, doubled-spaced document. Nine of the specific benefits cited in the report were checked against footnoted sources by task force staff. Of the nine, four were false, four were highly dubious, and one was questionable.

The task force is gravely concerned that the SBE has not spoken with experts who question the benefits of mandatory plans or with attorneys experienced in how similar rules made by boards in other states have been litigated.

Section II: Background on the Task Force

In July 1995 Reps. Barb Sykora and Alice Seagren brought together a small group of suburban superintendents, school board members and legislators to discuss the proposed rule on desegregation/integration and achievement.

One purpose was to learn about ongoing suburban initiatives that dealt with these issues. Another was to find out how much communication there had been between the SBE and the professional educators who would have to implement the rule.

Among the frustrations expressed by some superintendents was that years of interdistrict cooperation dating to the mid-1980s on voluntary efforts, and plans to reduce the learning gap and deal with integration issues, had largely been ignored by the SBE.

The results of this meeting were so positive that Reps. Sykora and Seagren brought together an expanded group for a second meeting in mid-August. This group included members of the State Board of Education, Department of Education staff, as well as additional superintendents, school board members and legislators. A third informal meeting, between the task force chair and co-chair and superintendents Peter Hutchinson of Minneapolis and Curman Gaines of St. Paul, took place in early October.

The positive tone, broad-ranging discussion, sharing of information and talk about ongoing programs that took place at the August meeting was a key factor in the decision of Reps. Sykora and Seagren to establish the House Republican Task Force on Student Achievement & Integration.

During the course of seven formal hearings during September and October of 1995, the members of the task force heard a great deal about the efforts being made by a variety of metro school districts.

The task force heard about voluntary student and teacher exchange programs, innovative efforts to reduce the learning gap, initiatives to secure increased parental involvement in education, attempts to reach students frustrated by language and cultural differences, collaborative partnerships to connect struggling parents with social services, barriers to effective learning inadvertently created by parents, demographic changes altering urban and suburban student profiles, minority teacher recruitment, the uses of compensatory aid money, financial resource problems and other topics.

"With the U.S. Supreme Court decision [Jenkins v. Missouri], it's time to re-examine the money spent on desegregation: Are we spending money in the wisest possible ways? How much effort should be spent improving schools and how much on strengthening families? What should be required of school districts? What will be required of students and families?"

—St. Paul PIONEER PRESS,
column by Joe Nathan,
June 19, 1995

"Lyle Baker, executive director of policy and strategic services for the Minneapolis schools, said the 'unstated assumption' in the Brown v. Board of Education ruling was that equal education opportunity would lead to equal educational outcomes. After 40 years there have been some gains, but there is still a significant gap between kids of color and white kids. Simply being concerned about racial balance is not sufficient and some say not necessary."

—School Desegregation Debate Focuses on Expanded Busing vs. Community Schools, MINNESOTA JOURNAL, March 14, 1995.

The task force also heard a great deal of general comment and specific suggestions about ways to improve the rule on desegregation/integration and achievement being proposed by the SBE.

The topics of mandatory versus voluntary participation, racial enrollment quotas, learning gap closure, reporting requirements and penalties for failure to comply were all addressed. The superintendents emphasized the benefits to all that would result from the implementation of cooperative, workable and cost-effective solutions.

As the task force moved through the process a broad consensus about the proposed rule became evident. It was perhaps best expressed by Dr. David Wettergren, superintendent of the Stillwater School District.

He said anything mandated or coerced will likely be met with resistance, that voluntary participation and choice are more likely to be accepted, that the focus should be on improving educational environments so that all children will benefit, that appropriate resources must be provided, and that the community as a whole must assume responsibility for the education of all children.

The task force's recommendations to the SBE are based upon what was learned at hearings, as well as many months of research that examined the outcomes of desegregation/integration plans and student achievement efforts that have taken place around the nation since the early 1970s. To augment these efforts, there were conversations with prominent social scientists and attorneys who deal with this issues on a regular basis.

This is the most complex educational, social and political problem facing the nation. As such, there is no simple or single solution, and whatever plan or plans are implemented will require years to come to fruition. However, the task force believes the implementation of its suggestions will help bridge the learning gap, break down systemic and personal barriers, and create an effective Minnesota model for student achievement and integration.

Section III: Recommendations to the SBE

Because of the apparent failure of the SBE to thoroughly and objectively investigate the effectiveness and consequences of its proposed rule on the students, parents, citizens and taxpayers of Minnesota, we suggest that it suspend the rulemaking process until it obtains a great deal more information from a broader array of experts than those consulted by the roundtable group.

The SBE should also suspend its rulemaking at this time to consider the fact that changes in the present rule or the promulgation of a new rule will probably be used as evidence against the state in the lawsuit that has been filed by the Minneapolis NAACP.

Al Lindseth is an attorney with the Atlanta-based law firm of Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan. Lindseth, a nationally recognized figure in desegregation cases, has played a major role in defending the cities and school boards of St. Louis, Atlanta, Los Angeles and Hartford, Conn., to name just a few.

He told the task force that if a new rule is promulgated, it will likely be treated as a basis of expanded liability against the state of Minnesota.

In the ongoing litigation Lindseth has been involved with in Connecticut (*Sheff v. O'Neill*), that state board of education's rules have been interpreted by the court as both an extension and concrete manifestation of the general commitment to education contained in the state constitution.

For example, if the rule promulgated here requires all schools to close the learning gap, and even a single school fails to accomplish this, a Minnesota court could conceivably find that the state has failed to meet a legal commitment and might perhaps order the Legislature to substantially increase school funding.

Concern about the proposed rule's requirement to mandate regional participation in a Twin Cities metro area integration plan was expressed by Dr. Christine Rossell, an expert in these issues who teaches at Boston University.

She reminded the task force that years ago the suburbs of Milwaukee were encouraged to accept transfers from the city because it was the right thing to do. Shortly thereafter, the schools became involved in an interdistrict lawsuit filed by the NAACP.

The Minneapolis school board is being properly cautious about deemphasizing a desegregation policy first implemented in 1968. But Superintendent Peter Hutchinson and his staff have made a compelling case for change. Where desegregation and student learning conflict, the district's responsibility to educate students must take precedence."

—Desegregation: Board Must Vote for Student Achievement, editorial, Minneapolis Star Tribune, June 26, 1995

"Today, Minneapolis is blessed with such a rich diversity that no one racial or ethnic group represents a majority. We are literally a school community of minorities. Consequently, the [desegregation] orders and rules are woefully out of date with the realities of the present... We put tremendous energy into achieving racial balance as defined by the orders and rules of past decades. Unfortunately, we are failing to achieve compliance with the educational needs of our students and the expectations of families."

—ELIMINATING THE GAP:
ENSURING THAT ALL
STUDENTS LEARN,
Minneapolis Board of
Education,
June 27, 1995

Ultimately, the court held that the decision of suburban schools to admit a certain number of black students was equivalent to an admission of guilt about enrollment policies.

- **Voluntary Participation by All.** The rule should encourage the voluntary participation of school districts, students and parents in Twin Cities regional integration efforts. The current rule draft mandates participation by school districts only, not by the enrolled students and parents who reside in the district.

A mandatory/voluntary plan would make school districts legally liable for meeting certain student enrollment quotas and racial balance requirements. However, the number of students who might volunteer is unknown, which means many schools could conceivably be labeled as non-compliant and subject to penalties because of something that is out of their control.

Although this logical inconsistency may be rooted in an attempt to compromise differences of opinion by the members of the SBE, it promises to establish a potent legal liability. Given that a poor outcome is virtually guaranteed by this approach, the logical next step after this "failure" would be a lawsuit demanding compulsory involvement by metro students.

In fact, Al Lindseth told task force staff he believes legal action might be taken by a plaintiff within the first year of implementation. Based on his experiences as a litigator, he suggests the NAACP or other group would say the effort hasn't worked and either file a separate complaint or roll it into the existing lawsuit if it is still ongoing.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled consistently since Milliken v. Bradley (1974) that "without an interdistrict violation and interdistrict effect, there is no constitutional wrong calling for an interdistrict remedy."

By mandating regional participation in an integration plan when only one school district—Minneapolis—has ever been found guilty of a constitutional violation, the SBE is attempting to impose a remedy more sweeping than one that could ever be imposed by a federal court.

- **Community/Neighborhood Schools Without Quotas.** The rule should not contain racial percentages, enrollment quotas or other numeric requirements. A mathematical definition of school desegregation/integration is anachronistic. Districts and schools should have

the autonomy to define racial balance and integration in relation to their own community demographics.

Chuck Cooper, a desegregation attorney with the Washington, D.C.-based firm of Shaw, Pittman, Potts and Trowbridge, told the task force he believes last spring's U.S. Supreme Court decisions on school desegregation, affirmative action and congressional redistricting mean the end of race-conscious remedies.

Racial diversity for its own sake may not be a goal able to withstand the strict scrutiny test of clearly demonstrated harm. Cooper said the proposed new rule—and the present 15 percent rule—are both of questionable legality according to his theory.

- **Closing the Learning Gap.** All of the educators the task force heard from are already working hard to reduce the learning gap between those from diverse racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Local districts and schools should be permitted to define their own achievement goals based on the specific needs of their enrolled students.

Linking the closing of the learning gap with racial balance makes no sense because there is no concrete evidence one thing has a causal connection to the other. Perhaps the prime example of this is the four school districts of Wilmington (New Castle County), Delaware. They've maintained virtually statistically perfect racial balance for over 10 years and committed significant educational resources, yet the learning gap has remained largely unchanged.

Many of our metro school districts are already voluntarily working together. They should be given the additional flexibility they need to address these issues at the lowest possible level. This means fewer mandates from the state, less micro-management by state government and greater choice in how to apply the state funds they receive. Local educators ought to be encouraged to try whatever they believe will work in order to achieve the goal of greater learning for all students.

- **Reporting Requirements.** The task force is opposed to the proposed rules statewide mandate to establish community learning and/or integration councils to set learning gap closure and integration goals.

These community councils would bypass the authority of the local school boards that are elected by the people. They could be dominated by appointees—not all of them local according to the latest rule draft—who might place their own agendas over the best interests of all students.

The Kansas City school desegregation plan represents an extreme case of one popular type of desegregation remedy... In contrast to almost all U.S. central cities, Kansas City now has the newest, most elaborate school buildings and the most extraordinary special schools and programs in the state... but the money and choices offered to these students have not produced substantial gains... it is much more difficult to substantially improve education for disadvantaged children than we had hoped."

—MONEY, CHOICE AND
EQUITY IN KANSAS CITY:
MAJOR INVESTMENTS WITH
MODEST RETURNS, Harvard
Project on School
Desegregation,
1992

"The Madison (Wisconsin) School District is free to let its schools become segregated as long as the decisions that lead to that result are made with the childrens' best educational interests in mind, said two attorneys practiced in school desegregation law. 'Madison would be free to assign students on a neighborhood plan unless it could be proven that any racially identifiable assignments were intentionally caused...for a discriminatory purpose,' Atlanta attorney Al Lindseth said."

—Schools Can Become Segregated for Right Reasons, WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL, Aug. 21, 1995

In addition, the question of how these councils may be funded and their precise relation with local units of government has not been clearly addressed by the SBE. Are local taxpayers going to be asked to pay for a council that will duplicate what's already being done by a school board?

The proposed collection and reporting of racial and ethnic data to the state is repugnant, especially considering that teachers may be required to identify the racial or ethnic heritage of their students. Although the state has a legitimate interest in tracking student achievement data, the emphasis on race serves to set children apart rather than bring them together.

The personal pain of having to identify children by race was eloquently expressed by a woman at the task force hearing in Maple Grove on Oct. 30. A mother of biracial children, she believes that having to decide whether to classify them as "white" or "black" unfairly emphasizes one part of their heritage over another.

• **Incentives, Not Penalties.** The penalties proposed by the SBE are excessive and we believe permission to implement them should not be granted by the Legislature. The task force recommends they be removed entirely from the next draft of the rule.

One penalty, reconstitution, is a draconian measure that has never worked. Proposals to withhold state aid, prohibit school construction or remodeling, and permit the Department of Children, Learning and Families to take over a district would harm students and achieve nothing. These harsh penalties are inconsistent with a voluntary, cooperative approach to problem solving.

Section IV: Background on Recommendations

• **Voluntary Participation by All.** The schools in the Twin Cities metro area and the state all currently meet the legal definition of desegregation under the Civil Rights Act, Title 42, ch. 21, subch. IV, sec. 2000:

“‘Desegregation’ means the assignment of students to public schools and within such schools without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin, but ‘desegregation’ shall not mean the assignment of students to public schools in order to overcome racial imbalance.”

The State Board of Education has a rare opportunity to draft a positive rule that encourages achievement and cooperation through the use of incentives. A rule that could be a new national model for local and regional efforts. A rule that does not repeat the disastrous mistakes that have been made in other parts of the nation.

However, a rule that focuses on juggling enrollment numbers at the expense of student achievement, that requires our schools to close the learning gap that has persisted for decades despite determined efforts by educators and the expenditure of billions of tax dollars, is not a rule likely to win the wholehearted support of the majority of our state’s educators, students, parents and citizens.

The importance of broad-based support was strongly emphasized by Dr. Christine Rossell. She told the task force that after decades of work in this field, she believes integration efforts are like all other human relationships; they’re most stable and long-lasting when they’re voluntary and consensual.

As an example of an effective voluntary school plan, she cited Boston’s METCO program that has about 3,000 student participants. This is a voluntary metro interdistrict transfer program that has been in place for a number of years and is highly regarded by educators.

According to Dr. David Armor, in recent years a number of local and national surveys, including some he conducted himself, have asked black and white parents about their attitudes toward racial balance in schools, mandatory school reassignment policies, forced busing, interracial exposure and contact levels, and the perceived educational and social benefits of school desegregation/integration plans. The survey results showed wide differences between these two sets of parents on virtually all questions, with a single exception.

“In an unusual challenge to affirmative action, Chinese-American students have asked a federal court to throw out San Francisco’s 12-year-old desegregation plan because it’s largely based on racial quotas. [The] students say that although the plan may have ended the schools’ segregation, it currently is doing so by illegally discriminating against them. ‘Ensuring diversity isn’t a compelling state interest,’ says Daniel Girard, the attorney for the students.”

—Minority Sues to End Desegregation Plan, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, July 23, 1995.

"Many students learn and thrive beyond reasonable expectations because of their parents' attitudes and values, and, unfortunately, many students, including the very bright, have been handicapped by their parents' attitudes and values, and their academic achievement reflects this handicap... A long parade of 'solutions' have come down the highway purporting to provide the answer for the failure of some students to perform to expectations, but none of them have held students and their parents accountable."

—Letter to the Editor,
L. Rodney Sheffer,
Minneapolis STAR
TRIBUNE,
August 19, 1995

The sole exception is the establishment of voluntary school desegregation/integration programs that include magnet schools and other school choice options. These are widely supported by parents of all races. In fact, about one-third of all the plans in place in the nation today are voluntary efforts, according to Armor. Magnet schools are a key component of voluntary desegregation/integration plans.

In our state, promising interdistrict achievement and integration efforts using magnet schools are currently on the verge of reality in the Twin Cities metro area.

Changing demographics are also now bringing greater diversity to many metro school districts outside of the urban core. These districts are being effectively integrated as minority parents move into communities of their own choosing. In many suburban districts, this natural integration of the schools will continue for many years.

- **Community/Neighborhood Schools Without Quotas.** The continuation of a quota requirement such as the present 15 percent rule would make it impossible for Minneapolis to implement its plans to return as much as possible to community schools and move away from intradistrict busing for racial balance. Minneapolis school board member Len Biernat told the task force demographic projections indicate the Minneapolis school system might be as much as 90 percent black within 10 years.

The matter of high minority enrollment as a factor in educational achievement has recently been addressed in two court cases. One, Sheff v. O'Neill, concerns the Hartford, Conn., school district, which is 92 percent minority. Arguments in this case were heard by the Connecticut Supreme Court in the fall of 1995. In the other, Missouri v. Jenkins (1995), the issue of high minority enrollment was addressed by Justice Clarence Thomas in his concurring opinion for the majority. He writes:

"It never ceases to amaze me that the courts are so willing to assume that anything that is predominantly black must be inferior. Instead of focusing on remedying the harm done to those black schoolchildren injured by segregation, the District Court here sought to convert the Kansas City, Missouri, School District into a 'magnet district' that would reverse the 'white flight' caused by desegregation."

"Two threads in our jurisprudence have produced this unfortunate situation, in which a District Court has taken it upon itself to experiment with the education of black youth. First, the court has

"According to a new study by the Policy Information Center at the Educational Testing Service...most students spend more time each day watching television—at least three hours—than they do learning how to read, write and do math."

—Mathematics Achievement: Improvements Are Modest, DAILY REPORT CARD, June 12, 1995

minority students can attain equally successful educational outcomes while attending segregated schools."

His analysis of National Assessment of Educational Progress data gathered since the early 1970s indicates black students in predominantly black schools tend to do as well or better than black students in predominantly white schools (*Forced Justice*, pps. 92-98).

Also, a summary of core studies by the National Institute of Education show that school desegregation achieved through forced busing has no discernible effects on math achievement and very little on reading achievement (*Forced Justice*, pps. 235-237).

In fact, as noted by the U.S. Supreme Court in its June 1995 decision in *Jenkins*, a substantial body of evidence indicates that the factors influencing student achievement lie outside of the control of any school. In fact, a theoretical argument could be made by educational iconoclasts that student success may only be nominally influenced by the expenditure of vast numbers of education dollars.

Low academic achievement by students from poor families also perpetuates the cycle of poverty, according to Kathy Kersten, author of the Minneapolis-based Center of the American Experiment's seminal 1995 report, *Good Intentions Are Not Enough*.

The specific factors that do influence student achievement are cited in a 1994 RAND Corp. report, *Student Achievement and the Changing American Family*. It states the most accurate predictors of student success are: parental education, family income, family size, and the age of the mother at childbirth.

This study also stated that the evidence that school desegregation/integration plans had any positive effects on student achievement and the closing of the learning gap were inconclusive.

Another authoritative report that was published in 1994, the U.S. Department of Education's *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning*, states:

"Studies of individual families show that what family does is more important to student success than family income or education. This is true whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents finished high school or not, or whether the child is in preschool or the upper grades."

read our [U.S. Supreme Court] cases to support the theory that black students suffer an unspecified psychological harm from segregation that retards their mental and educational development. This approach not only relies upon questionable social science research rather than constitutional principle, but it also rests on an assumption of black inferiority..."

"Given that desegregation has not produced the predicted leaps forward in black educational achievement, there is no reason to think that black students cannot learn as well when surrounded by members of their own race as when they are in an integrated environment. Indeed, it may very well be that what has been true for historically black colleges is true for black middle and high schools. Despite their origins in the 'shameful history of state-enforced segregation,' these institutions can be 'both a source of pride to blacks who have attended them and a source of hope to black families who want the benefits of learning for their children.'"

"Racial isolation itself is not a harm; only state-enforced segregation is. After all, if separation itself is a harm, and if integration therefore is the only way that blacks can receive a proper education, then there must be something inferior about blacks. Under this theory, segregation injures blacks because blacks, when left on their own, cannot achieve."

- **Closing the Learning Gap.** Despite providing no information about how to close the achievement gap—let alone apparently ignoring the ongoing national debate by educators and other experts about whether it can be closed at all—the SBE proposes to punish schools that fail to close the achievement gap between students from different racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Armor, who frequently testifies in school desegregation lawsuits and has helped to draft a number of voluntary school desegregation plans, writes in his 1995 book, *Forced Justice: School Desegregation and the Law*, that:

"The evidence on the educational benefits of school desegregation...is mixed at best; few studies show consistent, across-the-board educational and social benefits for most minority students attending desegregated schools. A number of studies show educational benefits for some minority students (usually not white students), particularly those who volunteer for a desegregation program and who remain with it for a number of years. Even these benefits are not unique to desegregated schools, and many

"Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress support the efforts of families at home. Three factors over which parents can exercise authority—student absenteeism, variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching—account for nearly 90 percent of the difference in the average state-by-state performance of eighth-graders' mathematics test scores among 37 states and the District of Columbia."

—STRONG FAMILIES,
STRONG SCHOOLS, U.S.
Dept. of Education
publication,
1994

Strong Families, Strong Schools, also states:

"Thirty years of research show that greater family involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high-quality education and a safe, disciplined learning environment for every student. Three factors over which parents exercise authority—student absenteeism, variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching—explain nearly 90 percent of the difference in eighth-grade mathematics test scores across 37 states and the District of Columbia on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Thus, controllable home factors account for almost all the differences in average student achievement across states."

The importance of parental involvement in the education process was mentioned again and again by the superintendents and other education professionals who testified before the task force. In fact, this is considered so important to student outcomes that several districts have implemented their own parental involvement programs.

However, according to Superintendent Tom Bollin of Robbinsdale, the schools can only encourage parental involvement, they cannot compel it. The same holds true for students. If a student declines to take advantage of the educational opportunities he or she is being offered, there's not very much that the schools can do.

The need for parental involvement also makes a strong case for a return to community or neighborhood schools in districts that have high numbers of poor parents. Mary Moreira of the Robbinsdale School Board believes the farther away parents are from the schools their children attend, the less likely they are to become involved with the school. This is especially true for parents who are reliant on public transportation.

Compensatory Education Funds. School districts with a certain percentage of poor students now receive additional compensatory education dollars from the Legislature, as much as \$2,000 per pupil. These funds are not always directly targeted at specific students, but may be used for generic purposes such as lowering teacher-to-student ratios.

Disbursing these targeted funds without requiring accountability on the part of the schools means the Legislature has no idea if disadvantaged students are receiving the direct benefit of these dollars. This is an issue that the Legislature should address at an appropriate time.

"Black and Hispanic ninth-graders in Montgomery County (Maryland) significantly increased their scores on a state writing test this year and, for the first time in a decade, passed at rates comparable to white and Asian students. Deputy Superintendent Katheryn Gemberling attributed progress primarily to two factors. Students now begin to work on their writing skills as early as preschool and writing has become an integral part of every academic subject, including math and science."

—Montgomery Test Scores Soar for Black, Latino Students, THE WASHINGTON POST, May 18, 1993

"The top states in terms of academic performance were Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming. But none of these states were on the list of those that spent the most on each student... There is a growing consensus that successful schools have three key qualities in common: a belief that all children can learn, and challenge their students academically; local control; and a high degree of parental involvement."

—Report Card on
American Education,
AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE
EXCHANGE COUNCIL,
1994

Minority Teachers. In the 1980s the San Francisco, Calif., school district undertook a years-long national recruitment campaign for minority teachers. This is of interest in light of an early draft of the SBE rule that would require districts to "retain, recruit and prepare educators of color" or else be subject to unspecified penalties.

In 1982, 66 percent of the certified teachers in San Francisco were white, eight years of minority teacher recruitment efforts later, 62.4 percent of the certified teachers were white. The report by Dr. Gary Orfield's Harvard Project on School Desegregation stated, "the proportion of minority professionals probably exceeds that of the relevant labor market."

The demand for qualified minority teachers will continue to far outstrip the supply, especially in a state with Minnesota's current and projected demographics. However, the state's relatively new teachers of color licensure program was praised by a number of witnesses.

Teacher Training. As the types of students in our schools continue to shift further away from what was considered the "typical" Minnesota student of as recently as 15 years ago, the need for staff development and training intensifies.

Given that we may never have an adequate supply of minority teachers, all teachers must become more aware of how to deal with diversity and multicultural issues. Last year Columbia Heights sent 81 teachers to Minneapolis to work in pairs with minority teachers who often have a different perspective on education. Staff have also taken part in multicultural and inclusive education workshops.

The need for this type of information and assistance is so strong that another cooperative project is the creation of an interdistrict professional development resource center by the West Metro Education Program. Teachers and administrators will be able come together to determine what approaches to achievement and diversity do or do not work inside and outside of the classroom.

Setting Local Goals. Lifting student achievement across the board should be a goal for all schools, but it is also a goal that should realistically represent the difficulties posed by certain categories of students. Each district should be permitted to set its own goal (e.g., if 50 percent of students are below national norms, the first step might be to work to reduce that figure to 25 percent).

Note that accurate measurement of academic outcomes may be a chimera. Standardized tests have no shortage of critics armed with

arguments ranging from cultural bias to the accuracy of such measurement endeavors. There are also very real problems in making sure that students from backgrounds of poverty receive an adequate education.

For example, one problem mentioned at several task force hearings is the number of poor students who are highly mobile because of the transient life-style of their parents. Principal Barb Whiting, Highland Elementary School, Columbia Heights, told the task force that a high percentage of students who were newly enrolled in her school in September were already leaving in early October. This mobility commonly has a negative effect on student achievement.

- **Reporting Requirements.** A clear commitment to lifting the achievement of all students is critical. The use of racial reporting requirements sends a message that the primary emphasis is on students of color, not all students.
- **Incentives, Not Penalties.** The imposition of certain penalties for failure as a goad to force districts and schools comply fully with the many components of the proposed rule was greeted skeptically by the educators who addressed this topic. The general tenor of their comments was, "If we have a lot of unsuccessful students the state will take away our money, thereby guaranteeing an even greater number of unsuccessful students! How does this help anyone?" The penalties represent peculiar logic on the part of the SBE.

Withholding State Aid. This proposed penalty would most harm the very students the rule is purportedly trying to assist.

Reconstitution. A remedy favored by Dr. Gary Orfield, this policy was executed in several predominantly black schools in San Francisco during the 1980s. Despite the replacement of all staff in these schools and the commitment of "very substantial resources," the Orfield report on San Francisco is mute on the subsequent academic achievement of the students in reconstituted schools.

Prohibition on the Construction, Expansion or Remodeling of School Facilities. Again, what is the purpose of this other than to inconvenience and harm the students and staff?

State Takeover of Districts/Schools. If the State Board of Education knows how to close the learning gap and achieve the other goals in the proposed rule on desegregation/integration and achievement, it should tell our schools exactly how to do the job. If it does not have this knowledge, then why does it believe pushing local officials aside will increase achievement?

"The integration argument is losing ground among the very people who supported it most two decades ago. Many disillusioned African American parents say busing never brought the boost in academic performance that many of them expected... Returning children to new and expanded neighborhood schools, they say, would allow schools to focus on what is really important: academic performance. And many of them have come to resent the notion that their children must be with white children to learn."

—Busing Is Hurting
Black Children, Some in
P.G. Say, THE
WASHINGTON POST,
Oct. 30, 1995

"A rule that focuses on juggling enrollment numbers at the expense of student achievement, that requires our schools to close the learning gap that has persisted for decades despite determined efforts by educators and the expenditure of billions of tax dollars, is not a rule likely to win the wholehearted support of the majority of our state's educators, students, parents and citizens."

—BRIDGING GAPS &
BREAKING BARRIERS,
1995

Section V: Initiatives & Models

Following is information about some of the successful achievement, integration and related programs the task force learned about during the hearing process. This is not a comprehensive list, but all of these are current or potential models that could be adapted by districts facing similar problems.

- **Common Ground Program.** This is a concentrated, ongoing, multi-year learning experience designed to encourage academic effort by fourth grade through eighth grade students. The program is funded by a grant from the Wilder Foundation. It is designed to encourage leadership skills, expand person potential and give students from diverse backgrounds an opportunity to work with one another. A joint project of the Stillwater and St. Paul school districts, it invites targeted students to volunteer to attend sessions that are held several times a year, during the week or on weekends.
- **Tridistrict Multicultural Magnet School.** A racially integrated magnet school jointly run by the Roseville, St. Paul and North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale districts is scheduled to open in the fall of 1996. It will operate as an independent "minidistrict" that will have full hiring and firing authority and the authority to develop and implement its own multicultural curriculum. The emphasis will be on high student expectations for achievement.
- **Downtown Minneapolis Magnet School.** This integrated magnet school is scheduled to open in September 1996, assuming a site appropriate to the schools' needs can be identified. It will operate under the auspices of the nine school districts that constitute the West Metro Education Project. Half of the students will come from eight suburban districts and the other half will come from Minneapolis. Many of the suburban students are expected to be the children of commuter parents who work downtown.

The school will take advantage of existing resources as part of the curriculum (e.g., explore technology applications by working with businesses that use them daily). Technology, in fact, will be a major focus.

According to Superintendent Ken Dragseth of Edina, this school springs from a voluntary interdistrict education and integration effort that began six years ago. There are also plans for a northwest regional metro magnet school in Robbinsdale (a site has tentatively been chosen) and a southwest regional metro magnet school to be opened at an unspecified date.

- **Mall of America School.** This 150 student school is run by the Metro Learning Alliance, a five-district consortium. About one-third of the culturally diverse "alternative" student body is from Minneapolis and the rest are from the other participating districts.

Peter Heryla, Director of Career Placement, says word of mouth about the school is so good that applications are coming in from all over the area. In addition to classroom work, students intern at stores in the mall. School staff teaches them how to write resumes and cover letters, interview for a job, and dress appropriately for business.

- **Burnsville-Savage-Eagan Learning Readiness Program.** The Burnsville-Eagan-Savage district used grant money to develop a school-based social services program with three objectives: children will come to school ready to learn; families will be able to access resources in a timely manner; and existing barriers will be removed.

Four hundred district families were served during the 1994-95 school year by Dakota County community action center representatives at a cost of \$180,000. Superintendent James Rickabaugh said it's the best program he's seen in over two decades. He credits the program with increasing student attendance and reducing school-parent relationship problems that have sometimes hampered effective learning. Similar programs are in place in other area school districts.

- **Total Quality Management Project.** The Hubert Olson Elementary School in Bloomington received a \$50,000 performance grant from the Academic Excellence Foundation. Principal Janet Pladsen is spearheading an effort to adapt Total Quality Management (TQM) principles from the workplace to the classroom.

The primary thrust of the effort is to examine the school as an entire system in order to identify and remove systemic barriers to achievement. Pladsen believes an emphasis on quality, work teams and shared decision making will empower individuals at all levels. She said that establishing quality as the dominant theme that cuts across all areas will help to teach students appropriate behaviors.

- **Values First Program.** This is a community involvement program that involves hundreds of adults and young people in the cities of Columbia Heights, Fridley and Hilltop. Its objective in part is to help students learn positive behaviors that will assist them in the classroom and in daily life as they make the transition to adulthood. The seven core values are: integrity, respect, responsibility, citizenship, self-control, nonviolence and caring.

"This is the most complex educational, social and political problem facing the nation. As such, there is no simple or single solution, and whatever plan or plans are implemented will require years to come to fruition.

However, the task force believes the implementation of its suggestions will help bridge the learning gap, break down systemic and personal barriers, and create an effective Minnesota model for student achievement and integration."

—Bridging Gaps & Breaking Barriers,
1995

"Desegregation' means the assignment of students to public schools and within such schools without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin, but 'desegregation' shall not mean the assignment of students to public schools in order to overcome racial imbalance."

—Title 42, Federal Civil Rights Act

Values First plans to promote one value per month during the school year in coordination with participating schools. The effort is supported by nonprofit funding and a grant from the Allina Foundation. The program has been lauded by U.S. Sen. Paul Wellstone, who called it a potential national model program.

• **The Family Connection Program.** This effort by the Hopkins School District has the goal of strengthening the partnership between families and educators in order to foster and enhance the learning and development of all students. It specifically emphasizes access, partnerships, communication, diversity and support. The center makes local and county resources more accessible to families.

Katie Lee, Parent Involvement Coordinator, says her primary task is to get parents involved with their childrens' schools and educations in nontraditional ways. For example, it could be something as simple as providing quiet time for a child to do homework. There is also a training program to teach parents how to serve as advocates for their children. Another program sends teachers and administrators to apartment complexes to seek out parents and encourage them to come to school functions.

Another unique aspect of this program is matching a specific teacher with a family when their first child enters the education system. The teacher will serve as the main contact for that family so long as it has children in school. This provides stability, comfort and access to a reliable source of information.

Appendix A: Hearings & Witnesses

Following is the hearing schedule and witnesses who appeared before the Task Force on Student Achievement & Integration.

Hearing No. 1 (Sept. 13, 1995)

State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota

Jeanne Kling, President
State Board of Education

Tom Lindquist, Member
State Board of Education
Ann Schluter, Acting Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Education

Tim Connors, Superintendent
Bloomington School District

Katherine Kersten, Vice Chair
Center of the American Experiment

Jim Solem, Regional Manager
Metropolitan Council

Len Biernat, Member
Minneapolis School Board

David Dudeyche, Assistant Superintendent
Minneapolis School District

Zib Hinz, Director of District Options
Minneapolis School District

Hearing No. 2 (Sept. 26, 1995)

Washington County Government Center
Stillwater, Minnesota

David Wettergren, Superintendent
Stillwater School District

Burt Nygren, Superintendent
Mounds View School District

"Linking the closing of the learning gap with racial balance makes no sense because there is no concrete evidence one thing has a causal connection to the other.

Perhaps the prime example of this is the four school districts of Wilmington (New Castle County), Delaware. They've maintained virtually statistically perfect racial balance for over 10 years and committed significant educational resources, yet the learning gap has remained largely unchanged."

—BRIDGING GAPS &
BREAKING BARRIERS,
1995

"The specific factors that do influence student achievement are cited in a 1994 RAND Corp. report, Student Achievement and the Changing American Family. It states the most accurate predictors of student success are: parental education, family income, family size, and the age of the mother at childbirth."

—BRIDGING GAPS &
BREAKING BARRIERS,
1995

Wayne Haugen, Superintendent
Hastings School District

Bill Gaslin, Superintendent
North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District

Bob Djupstrom, Chair
White Bear Lake School Board

Bill Urbanski, Member
White Bear Lake School Board

Mary Miller, Member
Mahtomedi City Council

Mike Quinn, Teacher
District 624

Bob Zick, Citizen

Deborah Barnes, Member
Hugo City Council

Kevin Berglin, Citizen

Hearing No. 3 (Sept. 28, 1995)
Eden Prairie City Hall
Eden Prairie, Minnesota

James Rickabaugh, Superintendent
Burnsville-Savage-Eagan School District

Tim Connors, Superintendent
Bloomington School District

Ken Dragseth, Superintendent
Edina School District

Deb Alexander, Member
Bloomington School Board

Dennis Kane, Staff Development
Jefferson High School - Bloomington

Ellen Monk, Staff
Eden Prairie School District

Andrew Hopper, Student
Bloomington High School

David Hammond, Member
Eden Prairie School Board

Janet Pladsen, Principal
Olson Elementary School - Bloomington

Phil Miller, President
Medical Institute of Minnesota

Tom Lindquist, Member
State Board of Education

Hearing No. 4 (Oct. 5, 1995)
Columbia Heights High School
Columbia Heights, Minnesota

Alain Holt, Superintendent
Columbia Heights School District

Dennis Schultz, Director of Human Resources
Columbia Heights School District

Barb Whiting, Principal
Highland Elementary School - Columbia Heights

JoAnn Heryla, Principal
Ramsey Elementary School - Minneapolis

Kelly Swanson, Coordinator
Values First Program

Peter Thurgood, Teacher
Anoka-Hennepin School District

Peter Heryla, Director of Career Placement
Metro Learning Alliance (Mall of America School)

Mary Ann Nelson, Principal
Fridley High School

Bob Zick, Citizen

Steve Henike, Citizen

"The need for parental involvement also makes a strong case for a return to community or neighborhood schools in districts that have high numbers of poor parents. Mary Moreira of the Robbinsdale School Board believes the farther away parents are from the schools their children attend, the less likely they are to become involved with the school. This is especially true for parents who are reliant on public transportation."

—BRIDGING GAPS &
BREAKING BARRIERS,
1995

"Lifting student achievement across the board should be a goal for all schools, but it is also a goal that should realistically represent the difficulties posed by certain categories of students. Each district should be permitted to set its own goal (e.g., if 50 percent of students are below national norms, the first step might be to work to reduce that figure to 25 percent)."

—BRIDGING GAPS &
BREAKING BARRIERS,
1995

Fran Smallfield, Citizen

Kevin Berglin, Citizen

Hearing No. 5 (Oct. 16, 1995)
Eisenhower Community Center
Hopkins, Minnesota

Ron Davis, Chair
Hopkins School Board

Barb Klaas, Member
Hopkins School Board

Tom Bollin, Superintendent
Robbinsdale School District

Mary Moreira, Member
Robbinsdale School Board

Mike Lovett, Assistant Superintendent
Minnetonka School District

Ted Sauer, Director
Hopkins Community Education

Katie Lee, Coordinator of Parental Involvement
Hopkins Family Connection Program

Charlie Thomson, Former Member
Excelsior School Board

Sue Holt, Citizen

Bob Grant, Citizen

Ken Corens, Coordinator of Technology
Hopkins School District

Liz Ogren, Teacher
Hopkins School District

Sandy Falkman, Teacher
Hopkins School District

Joe Reese, Former Member
Hopkins School Board

James Brown, Member
Minnesota Human Rights Commission

Ruth Wollenberg, Former Member
Cultural Diversity Commission

Angela Erhard, Citizen

Karl Bunday, Citizen

Mary Whitney, Citizen

Deb Hagstrom, Citizen

Becky Liestman, Citizen

Hearing No. 6 (Oct. 17, 1995)
District Education Center
Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Henry Terrell, Associate Superintendent
Anoka-Hennepin School District

Judy Birmingham, Associate Superintendent
Anoka-Hennepin School District

Mike Sullivan, Chair
Anoka-Hennepin School Board

Walter Munstermann, President
Anoka-Hennepin Education Association

Kenneth Berg, Principal
Evergreen Park Elementary School - Brooklyn Center

Erling Johnson, Member
State Board of Education

Larry Beckman, Citizen

"If the State Board of Education believes it knows how to close the learning gap and achieve the other goals in the proposed rule on desegregation/integration and achievement, it should tell our schools exactly how to do the job. If it does not have this knowledge, then why does it believe pushing local officials aside will increase achievement?"

—BRIDGING GAPS &
BREAKING BARRIERS,
1995

"One problem mentioned at several task force hearings is the number of poor students who are highly mobile because of the transient life-style of their parents. Principal Barb Whiting, Highland Elementary School, Columbia Heights, told the task force that a high percentage of students who were newly enrolled in her school in September were already leaving in early October. This mobility commonly has a negative effect on student achievement."

—BRIDGING GAPS &
BREAKING BARRIERS,
1995

Hearing No. 7 (Oct. 30, 1995)

District Education Center
Maple Grove, Minnesota

Dr. Marl Ramsey, Superintendent
Osseo School District

Dr. Tom Bollin, Superintendent
Robbinsdale School District

Dean Prekker, Associate Principal
Park Center High School

Penny Thorkildson, Teacher
Willow Lane Elementary School

Lori Long, Citizen

Kirk Hughes, Citizen

Rich Cranbeer, Fomer Member, Osseo School Board

Nancy Miller, Citizen

William Presley, Citizen

Sue Harris, Citizen

Greg Carter, Citizen

Bob Crumpton, Citizen

Mary Hansen, Citizen

Gilbert David, Citizen

Appendix B: Resources & Bibliography

Armor, David: *Forced Justice: School Desegregation and the Law*, 1995, Oxford University Press, New York.

Armor, David: Conversation with task force coordinator Patrick Curren on Oct. 27, 1995. He is a social scientist who teaches at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.

Cooper, Chuck: Conversation with task force coordinator Patrick Curren on Oct. 30, 1995. Mr. Cooper is an attorney specializing in desegregation issues. He is with the Washington, D.C. firm of Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge.

Kersten, Kathy: *Good Intentions Are Not Enough*, 1995, Center of the American Experiment, Minneapolis.

Lindseth, Al: Conversation with task force coordinator Patrick Curren on Oct. 30, 1995. Mr. Lindseth is an attorney specializing in desegregation issues. He is with the Atlanta, Georgia, law firm of Asbill, Sutherland & Brennan.

Orfield, Gary: *Desegregation and Educational Change in San Francisco*, July 1992.

Rossell, Christine: *The Carrot or the Stick for School Desegregation Policy*, 1990, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

Rossell, Christine: *The Convergence of Black and White Attitudes on School Desegregation Issues During the Four Decade Evolution of the Plans*; William & Mary Law Review, January 1995.

Rossell, Christine: Conversation with task force coordinator Patrick Curren on Nov. 1, 1995. She is a social scientist who teaches at Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

"The task force heard about voluntary student and teacher exchange programs, innovative efforts to reduce the learning gap, initiatives to secure increased parental involvement in education, attempts to reach students frustrated by language and cultural differences, collaborative partnerships to connect struggling parents with social services, barriers to effective learning inadvertently created by parents, demographic changes altering urban and suburban student profiles, minority teacher recruitment, the uses of compensatory aid money, financial resource problems and other topics."

—BRIDGING GAPS &
BREAKING BARRIERS,
1995



TASK FORCE ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & INTEGRATION

Chair: REP. BARB SYKORA (296-4315) • Co-Chair: REP. ALICE SEAGREN (296-7803)

248F State Office Building • 100 Constitution Ave. • St. Paul, Minn. 55155 • 612-296-5529

This is a non-scientific survey that many people who attended our task force hearings took the time to fill out and return to us. It is included here because the results are reflective of the comments that we received from those who attended our seven hearings in the Twin Cities area.

1. The State Board of Education (SBE) wants all school districts in the seven-county metro area to take part in a mandatory regional desegregation/integration plan, even though all Minnesota schools are legally desegregated. What plan would you choose?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| (a) mandatory for schools, mandatory for students | 3% |
| (b) mandatory for schools, voluntary for students | 6% |
| (c) voluntary for schools, voluntary for students | 39% |
| (d) no metro desegregation/integration plan | 51% |

2. Please rank the following factors (one being most important, five being least important) that you believe have the greatest influence on student achievement:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| (a) the amount of money spent on each student | #4 |
| (b) parental education and income | \$5 |
| (c) parental expectations and involvement | #1 |
| (d) the level of commitment by teachers | #2 |
| (e) the amount of time students spend in the classroom | #3 |

3. The SBE wants to hold schools accountable for closing the learning gap between students from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. If the gap is not closed, schools could be taken over by the state or lose funding. Do you support this?

Yes: 15% No: 85%

4. A key part of the proposed rule is the imposition of racial enrollment quotas on districts, and the establishment of quotas within each school building and individual classroom. Do you support the use of these quotas in our public schools?

Yes: 3% No: 97%

5. The SBE wants all districts in the state to annually collect and report data on the racial and/or ethnic identification of all students. Do you support this requirement?

Yes: 24% No: 76%

6. The Minneapolis school board is planning to curtail busing students for the purpose of achieving racial balance in order to focus on creating neighborhood schools that place student achievement first. Do you support this change?

Yes: 100% No: 0%

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____