

MINNESOTA P-20 EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

2014 Report to the Legislature

Submitted by:

Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Minnesota Department of Education
Chair, Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership

Purpose

In 2009, legislation was enacted to formally codify the P-20 Education Partnership (formerly called the P-16 Education Council), to add four legislators to the membership and to require an annual report be submitted to the governor and legislature each January. The report is to “summarize the partnership’s progress in meeting its goals and identify the need for any draft legislation when necessary to further the goals of the partnership to maximize student achievement while promoting efficient use of resources.”

The primary purpose of the 2014 report is:

- To inform the Legislature of the work of the P-20 Partnership in moving the implementation of the World’s Best Workforce legislation forward, assisting the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in the development of a coherent state strategy to move all schools forward, and how the partnership will hold MDE accountable for this work.

2011-12 Partnership Goals

Under the leadership of Commissioner Brenda Cassellius, the 28 members of the partnership agreed to focus on a single issue: close the persistent achievement gap that exists in Minnesota’s education system. A significant step in this direction was the adoption of legislation entitled, “Striving for the World’s Best Workforce” in Minnesota. Members arrived at this decision after listening to presentations by MDE staff on the legislation and efforts in place across the state, extensive committee discussion and a comprehensive review of legislation in the fall of 2013.

It was agreed that, to move the entire state in this direction of closing the achievement gap, the P-20 Partnership will develop a coherent strategy that will produce intentional results all students in the state.

The committee learned about and discussed the components of the “World’s Best Work Force” by reviewing the legislation that was passed during the 2013 Legislature (Statute 120D.11) during its initial fall meeting on October 17, 2013.

The legislation has, as its goals:

- 1) Meet school readiness goals.
- 2) Have all third grade students achieve grade-level literacy.
- 3) Close the academic achievement gap among all racial and ethnic groups of students and between students living in poverty and students not living in poverty.
- 4) Have all students attain career and college readiness before graduation.
- 5) Have all students graduate from high school.

The legislation requires all districts to create a comprehensive district plan for continuous improvement to improve student achievement and measuring student success through multiple performance measures and align standards-based, rigorous curriculum with effective instruction and quality assessments to measure student progress towards the attainment of the five goals listed above.

Evidence that Gaps Persist

Minnesota's achievement gap persists despite recent efforts of the P-20 Partnership to close gaps and improve learning for all students. Improvement is being made but even more intentional efforts need to be undertaken to continue this work.

The gap begins at an early age, long before kindergarten. Early learning and kindergarten readiness are the gateways to Minnesota's current education system. The recently released report on kindergarten readiness entitled "Minnesota School Readiness Study: Developmental Assessment at Kindergarten Entrance" released in fall of 2013 noted that statewide, 78 percent of white children met the readiness for school standard. In contrast, 73 percent of black children and 67 percent of Hispanic and Asian children were deemed ready (MDE, 2012).

This gap persists throughout the vertical spectrum of the P-20 system. For instance;

- 70 percent of white students received proficient scores on the Minnesota math assessment (MCA) in 2013, while just 35 percent of black students, 39 percent of Hispanic students and 37 percent of American Indian students were deemed proficient.
- Based on 2013 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) eighth grade results, the gap between white and black students in reading is the seventh largest in the nation, while the gap between white and black students is fourth largest in math.
- The average 2013 ACT composite score for white students in Minnesota was 23.6; however, black students had an average ACT score of 18, Hispanic students' average score was 20.2, Asian students received an average score of 20.7, and American Indian students' average ACT score was just 19.7.
- While 31.9 percent of white students left high school in 2013 having taken an Advanced Placement (AP) exam, just 9.9 percent of American Indian students, 17.7 percent of black students and 22.6 percent of Hispanic students in the 2013 graduating class took an AP exam during high school.
- In 2013, 85 percent of white students graduated on time, while just 49 percent of American Indian students, 57 percent of black students and 58 percent of Hispanic students graduated within four years.

While the achievement gap between white students and the other recognized student groups continues to exist, thanks to recent legislative, policy and programmatic changes put into place, there has finally been a significant movement in the gap closure evident in Minnesota schools.

Progress in Closing Gaps

- Under the state’s ESEA Flexibility Waiver, Minnesota set a goal to reduce the achievement gap by 50 percent by 2017. Based on the 2013 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment results:
 - 65 percent of districts and charter schools are “on track” in all subgroups or all but one subgroup in math.
 - 39 percent are “on track” in all subgroups in math.
 - 26 percent are only missing just one subgroup in math.
 - 75 percent of districts and charter schools are “on track” in all subgroups or all but one subgroup in reading.
 - 43 percent are “on track” in all subgroups in reading.
 - 32 percent are only missing just one subgroup in reading.
 - 31 percent of districts and charter schools are on track in both math and reading.
- 2013 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) results show that Minnesota fourth graders had the best math 2013 scores in the nation. Fourth graders performed 10th best in the nation in reading, compared to 22nd in 2011.
- Fourth grade black students performed fourth highest in the country in math, compared to 24th in 2011.
- The gap between white and black student performance in fourth grade reading closed by 10 points between 2009 and 2013. The gap between white and Hispanic student performance in fourth grade reading also closed by 10 points between 2009 and 2013.
- In 2003, just 32.8 percent of black students taking an AP exam scored a 3 or higher, while in 2013, 39.6 percent had a score of 3, 4 or 5.
- Minnesota students scored higher on the ACT exam in every subgroup (except Asian students) as compared to other student ACT scores across the country.
- Between 2010 and 2013, the graduation rate gap between white students and ...
 - American Indian students reduced by 2.1 percent
 - Asian students reduced by 5.2 percent
 - Hispanic students reduced by 8.0 percent
 - Black students reduced by 8.1 percent
- And finally: The recently released report on kindergarten readiness entitled “Minnesota School Readiness Study: Developmental Assessment

at Kindergarten Entrance,” developed in the fall of 2012 and released in 2013, noted that statewide, the gaps are closing. While 78 percent of white children met the readiness for school standard, that number is up from 67 percent from the year before. In addition, the 73 percent of black children that were deemed ready in the 2013 report grew from the year before by 3 percentage points.

Our plan of action

The committee began learning about the components of the “World’s Best Work Force” by reviewing the legislation that was passed during the 2013 Legislature (Statute 120B.11) during its October 17, 2013 meeting. The membership reviewed the presentation, “Accountability 2.0 and the World’s Best Workforce” by MDE staff.

The legislation has, as its goals:

- 1) Meet school readiness goals.
- 2) Have all third grade students achieve grade-level literacy.
- 3) Close the academic achievement gap among all racial and ethnic groups of students and between students living in poverty and students not living in poverty.
- 4) Have all students attain career and college readiness before graduation.
- 5) Have all students graduate from high school.

The legislation requires all districts to create a comprehensive district plan for continuous improvement to improve student achievement and measuring student success through multiple performance measures and align standards-based, rigorous curriculum with effective instruction and quality assessments to measure student progress towards the attainment of the five goals listed above.

The result of the legislation will be a state accountability system that is locally owned, developed with parent and community involvement and supported by MDE guidance and technical assistance in continuous school improvement planning.

As the P-20 leadership team discussed its role, we concluded that the P-20 Partnership was uniquely positioned to address the development of a future high quality work force through aligned instructional programming pre-k through 20 because the partnership includes all the levels and sectors of education, public and business interests, and is built on a strong foundation of trust and mutual respect among members. The partnership’s legislative charter further strengthens its role in proposing policy and advocating for educational quality.

From this information gathering and discussion, Commissioner Cassellius led the membership in a conversation around focusing its efforts on the WBWF legislation for the P-20 work. The membership whole-heartedly embrace this as a focal point, stating that there are many partnerships and initiatives in place now across the various entities that can be aligned in order to drive this effort forward.

This effort will also be a means to continue the P-20 achievement gap focus from the past two years which continues as the overarching challenge upon which to build this work. Overall, members expressed a unanimous willingness to commit to this work.

Results to date

The partnership began to focus its work in December 2013 on understanding each of the transition points between education sectors and identifying best practices within or across sectors that will increase student success and prepare all students to be career and college ready upon graduation.

The result of the conversations by the membership was a request of all members to come back at the spring 2014 meeting with action steps that the partnership can take to drive the WBWF goals in legislation.

The achievement gap spans all the levels of education and the transitions from one level to another. The points of transition are critical to student success and the partnership is uniquely positioned to address these transition points. In 2014, the partnership will review evidence-based practices and strategies to impact student achievement in classrooms from early learning settings through postsecondary coursework.

The World's Best Workforce legislation lends itself to the development of a state student achievement dashboard that will outline a district's progress towards the five goals of the legislation, monitor the district's progress towards meeting the benchmarks of preparing all children for kindergarten, all third graders reading on grade level, closing the achievement gap, all students graduating and all students being career and college readiness.

Conclusion

The reduction and elimination of the achievement gap at all levels of education in Minnesota is an ambitious undertaking. It requires sustained attention and focus, but the P-20 Partnership believes it is the single most important education issue facing the state. With that in mind, the partnership will dedicate itself to reducing the gap through support and direction for districts to implement their World's Best Workforce strategic plan to prepare Minnesota's students for the work force of the future. Our future economic competitiveness and civic well-being requires a highly educated population that reflects the diversity of our population. Working in partnership, we can make that happen.

APPENDIX: Reading – Progress Toward 2017 Goal of Closing Achievement Gaps by 50 Percent

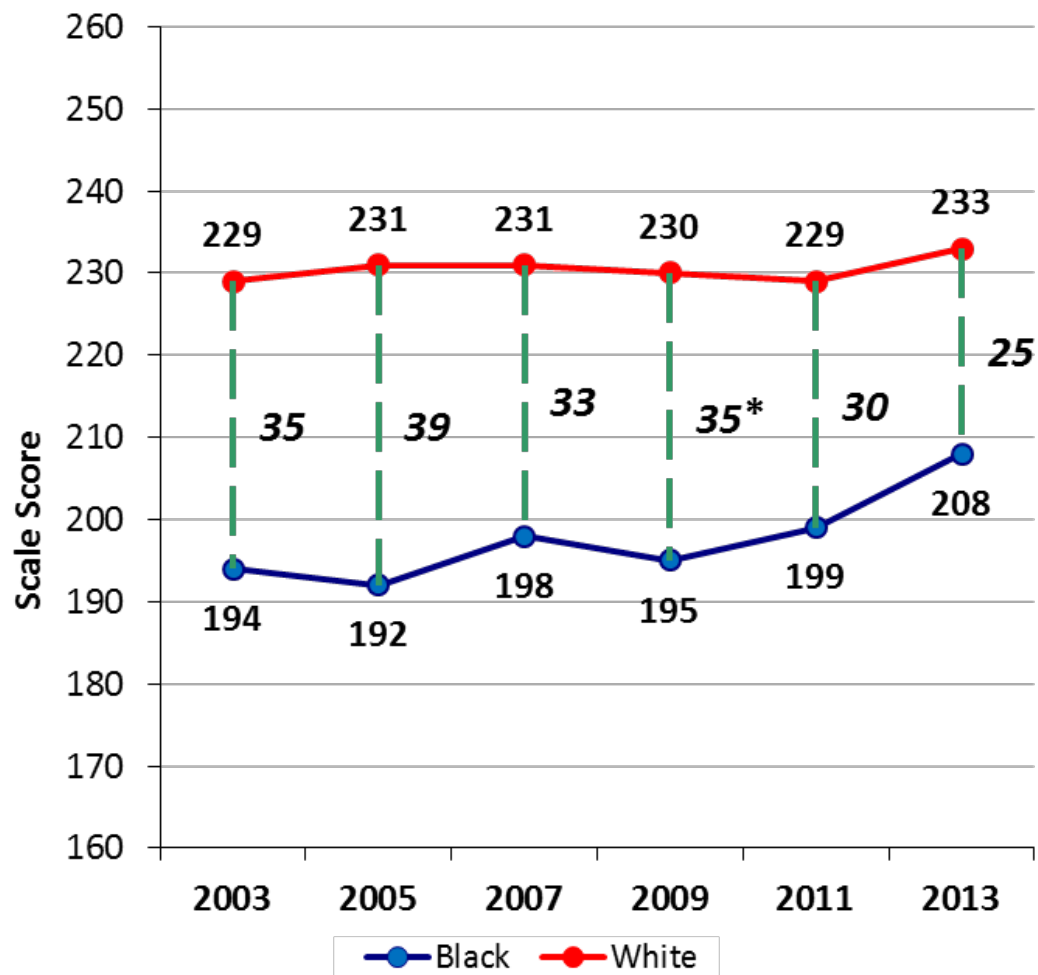
Student Group	Number of Districts On Track	Number of Districts Off Track	Number of Newly Proficient Students Needed for All Districts to Reach 2013 Target
American Indian	66	16	271
Asian	83	21	1711
Black	106	29	1324
Hispanic	137	34	715
White	217	201	4552
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	358	87	5252
English Learners	131	20	128
Special Education	306	89	1163

APPENDIX: Math – Progress Toward 2017 Goal of Closing Achievement Gaps by 50 Percent

Student Group	Number of Districts On Track	Number of Districts Off Track	Number of Newly Proficient Students Needed for All Districts to Reach 2013 Target
American Indian	57	22	429
Asian	86	17	1505
Black	98	36	2308
Hispanic	121	46	1149
White	205	220	5156
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	318	125	8293
English Learners	99	49	1268
Special Education	259	131	2500

APPENDIX: The Nation's Report Card, or National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

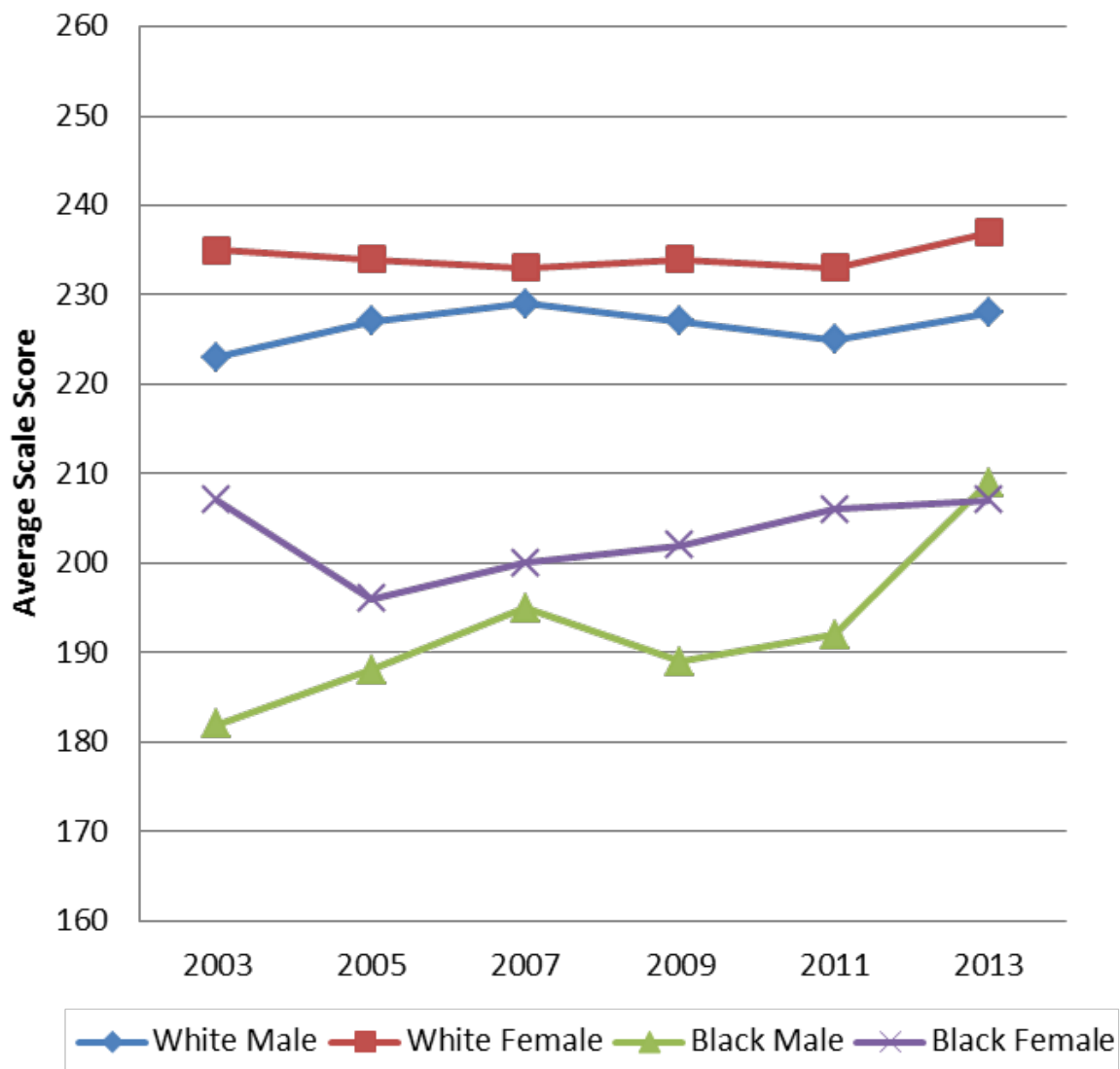
Black-White Student Performance Comparison – Grade Four Reading



NOTE: The NAEP Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Observed differences are not necessarily statistically significant.

APPENDIX: The Nation's Report Card, or National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Black-White Student Performance Comparison – Grade Four Reading



APPENDIX: Reading MCA-III Grades 3-8 and 10

Percent of Students Proficient by Ethnicity

(Note: A new reading test was introduced in 2013 and cannot be compared to previous years.)

