

Minnesota P-20 Partnership

December 15, 2011

8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Conference Center A, Room 14

Minnesota Department of Education

1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, MN 55113

MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of the October 17 meeting minutes
3. Proposal to add the Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Tribal Nations Education Council as members of the P-20 Partnership
4. 2012-2013 Partnership Priority: Reducing the Achievement Gap
 - Review the proposed framework
 - Discuss next steps
 - Agree on a plan of action
5. Final reports of the 2009-11 Work Groups: Review and Next Steps

Question: *How do the recommendations of each work group help advance our priority, Reducing the Achievement Gap?*

 - College and Career Readiness Communications Campaign (John Manning, Chair)
 - Rigorous Course Taking Strategic Plan (Laura Bloomberg and Sally Wherry, Co-chairs)
 - STEM Achievement Gap Strategic Plan (Mike Lindstrom and John Olson, Co-chairs)
6. Update on the work of the SLEDS committees on implementing the longitudinal data system (Leslie Mercer, Chair SLEDS Governance Committee)
7. Development of 2012 Report to the Legislature
8. Other Items

Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership
December 2011

**The Achievement Gap: “We all do better when we all do better”
The Role of the P-20 Partnership in Addressing It**

I. The Urgent Case for Action

The demographic and economic imperatives:

- A study published by Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*, indicates that Minnesota will have the second-highest need among all states for a well-educated workforce —70% of all adults in Minnesota will need a post-secondary credential to secure jobs that will provide a living wage and contribute to the economic vitality of our state.
- Minnesota’s current work force is aging and the greatest population growth is within communities of color. The population of the seven-county metro region grew by about 200,000 between 2000 and 2009; 82% of the growth was in populations of color. (State Demographer 2010)
- In 2009 one in four elementary and secondary students statewide was a student of color. The growth in students of color is not limited to Minneapolis and St Paul. Suburban school districts like Brooklyn Center, and Richfield and districts in Greater MN including Madelia, Pelican Rapids, Willmar, Worthington and Rochester have seen double digit increases in ELL students. (MDE)

II. The Persistent and Growing Achievement Gap: Cause for Alarm

Study after study and report after report confirm that not all of Minnesota’s children are setting the national standards for achievement. What is more alarming is that the achievement gap between white children and children of color begins at a very early age; it persists and in many cases widens as children progress through the P-20 pipeline. The state that prided itself on leading the nation in educational attainment and achievement is no longer in the top ten, twenty or even “above average” for its students in poverty, Indian and students of color. **Minnesota has one of the worst achievement gaps in the nation.** Some examples:

- The gap begins at an early age long before kindergarten. Numerous national and program studies have shown that “at risk children” (who in Minnesota are disproportionately children of color) are more likely to be retained in the first grade,

much more likely to need special education, less likely to be literate by the third grade, to complete high school, get a good job, and more likely to commit a crime.

- School readiness gaps are tell-tale predictors of later educational achievement gaps. The Minnesota Department of Education's *Developmental Assessment at Kindergarten Entrance* has proven that an achievement gap exists long before our youngest citizens enter kindergarten. *Moving the needle on school readiness is one of our most important tools in closing the achievement gap. (MELF)*
- Kindergarten is the gateway to Minnesota's current education system; a recent report on kindergarten readiness noted that statewide, 63% of white children met the readiness for school standard. In contrast 57% of Black children and 41% of Hispanic and Asian children were deemed ready. (Human Capital Research/MDE 2011)
- In a survey of Minneapolis students, 94% of white kindergarteners were considered "ready" while only 67% of Black children tested ready. (Minneapolis Foundation, Wilder Foundation, 2011)
- The gap continues in elementary and middle school.
- On the national Assessment of Educational Progress 4th grade assessment in math, Minnesota's white 4th graders ranked 5th nationally, while the state ranked 16th of 50 states in achievement of Hispanic students and 48th of 50 states for African American students. (NAEP)
- 75% of white seventh graders scored proficient on the 2008 Minnesota reading test (MCA) compared to 48% of African American students. (MDE 2008)
- Of those high school students who took the ACT in Minnesota, 67% of white juniors scored at a proficient level in math; 23% of their African American peers did so.
- The 4yr high school graduation rate in 2011 for white students was 82.8%, African American 46.9%, Hispanic 49.2% and American Indian 45.3%. (MDE data center, 2011)
- Students of color are less likely to attend a four year college than their white peers. 60% of white students attended a Minnesota four-year college or university, compared to 39% of African American students. (MMEP, 2011)
- Of those that do attend a four year institution, 63% of white students graduate in 6 years; 37% of students of color graduate in that same time. (Measuring Up, 2008)

- Some argue that it is not race but socio-economic status that is the driver of these inequities. The reality in Minnesota is that persons of color are far more likely to live in poverty.
- Today 15 – 20% of all Minnesota babies are born into poverty, 60% of Indian babies, 42% of African American, 33% Hispanic, 10% Asian and 8% White.
- One in five white students in 2007 was eligible for free and reduced lunch, in contrast three of four Black students were eligible. (MMEP, 2010)
- A new Child Trends report — released November 29 — calls attention to the pervasive effects of poverty on parents and their children. In *Two Generations in Poverty: Status and Trends among Parents and Children in the United States*, Child Trends reports on the disproportionate impact of poverty on parents and children, particularly those in single-mother families. [Ascend: The Family Economic Security Program , Aspen Institute, Nov 2011]
- One recent report finds that children who have lived in poverty and are not reading proficiently in 3rd grade are three times more likely to dropout or fail to graduate from high school than those who have never been poor. (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011)
- Gaps continue into the workplace with white workers' salaries more than double those of workers of color. (MN Compass, Wilder Research, 2010)

These alarming facts are but a few of the examples of why action is needed to reduce and then eliminate the achievement gap — NOW!

III. Why the P-20 Partnership is uniquely positioned to work on this urgent challenge

- The Partners lead the organizations that span early childhood through employment.
- The achievement gap spans all the levels of education and the transitions from one to another.
- The P-20 Partnership has built a strong foundation of trust and mutual respect and understanding among its members.
- The members have strongly endorsed the following approach in setting its priorities and the achievement gap meets all these criteria:

- It is a major issue that is and will continue to have a significant impact on each of the partner organizations.
 - It begs for a results-oriented approach.
 - It transcends the sectors within the Partnership.
 - There is value added by the Partnership's involvement.
- The Partnership's legislative charter further strengthened its role in proposing policy and advocating for educational quality.

IV. What can the P-20 Partnership do to reduce and then eliminate the achievement gap to move Minnesota from the bottom ten states to the top ten states? How do we match our new NCLB Accountability Waiver goal (if approved) to close the achievement gap by 50% by 2018.

Possible Next Steps

1. Use the bully pulpit by speaking in a powerful united voice
 - This is a tragedy
 - It is not just an urban issue — it is found all over Minnesota (examples: suburbs and rural areas)
 - It affects ALL Minnesotans and threatens our economic future
 - We can fix it and we are committed to fixing it
2. Share best practices and research findings
3. Make policy recommendations
 - Identify best practices in other states and here in MN (need to do more research on this)
 - Develop and use of common language, measures, and accountability that support continuous improvement (i.e., the STRIVE initiative)
 - Propose legislation to accelerate the agenda (if that is the answer)
 - Seek categorical state funding directed to correcting educational disparity
 - Seek new grant opportunities and / or other public/private partnerships
4. Partner members can individually:
 - Lead their respective organizations to make this a priority in the work and policy agendas of each partner group
 - Make this a funding /resource priority
 - Be a strong voice within the various stakeholders
 - Set institutional goals and drive those goals
 - Report back annually on individual progress
 - Hold each other responsible

5. A possible collective step

**The kindergarteners of color starting school in the Fall of 2018
will perform as well as their white peers
on the School Readiness Survey**

**By the Fall of 2018 the achievement gap
between students of color and white students will be
reduced by 50% (or eliminated?)**

Since the gap begins before kindergarten and is well entrenched by Grade 3, what if the Partnership agreed to focus on early childhood as the place for joint effort? The list below includes examples of the actions that could be undertaken. What if the Partnership:

- Reviewed the literature and studies on importance of early intervention. For example: longitudinal studies on early childhood programs, as well as related studies, that strongly suggest there is a very high public return [ROI].
- Agreed to a support request to the legislature for funds and policies to target this issue
- Identified and agreed to propose policies that would overcome current barriers to reducing the gap
- P-12 agreed to focus more resources on this age cohort
- Higher education agreed to provide a cadre of tutors and others to work one on one with young kids as well as developing credit and non credit courses for parents and other care givers
- The business and community partners provided human and fiscal resources for parents and other caregivers- jobs, time off for parenting events, workplace parenting classes, subsidized and /or onsite quality daycare.
- Other ideas as suggested by the Partners.
- Implement universal pre-school for all children who qualify for free or reduced priced lunch

- Fund all day kindergarten
- Ensure all students are reading well by 3rd grade through ongoing early assessment, intervention and accountability
- Invest in the preparation, recruitment, support and evaluation of highly effective teachers
- Ensure every child has a caring and competent teacher who believes they can learn and is relentless in that pursuit
- Ensure every school has a highly effective school leader
- Ensure we are adequately and equitably funding Minnesota schools
- Continue to embrace fair and accurate assessment and accountability measures to ensure schools are held to rigorous student performance outcomes for all students
- Define what is a high quality school and reward it- learn from it and replicate it
- Create networks that connect Minnesota teachers and promote best practice sharing
- Incentivize excellence and innovation- unleash the high performers

The achievement gap in Minnesota is pervasive and persistent but it can be solved. The members of the P-20 Partnership can and should take up the challenge.