

Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership

February 9, 2012

8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Conference Center B, Room 15
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113

Education Achievement in Minnesota

Members/Designees Present:

Steven Rosenstone-Chair, Brenda Cassellius, Bill Blazar, Paul Cerkvenik, Jennifer Godinez, Jeanne Herrmann, Robert Meeks, Eugene Piccolo, Larry Pogemiller, Peggy Poitra, Representative Jeanne Poppe

Others Present:

Beth Aune, Lois Bollman, Mary Lou Dresbach, Meredith Fergus, Jane Gilles, Angie Johnson, Leslie Mercer, Paul Moe, Diane O'Connor, Mary Parker, Kent Pekel, Gary Westorff, Cliff Wittstruck II

Question: What do we mean by the “achievement gap”?

Disparities in educational outcomes (using data) between identifiable student groups:

- Race
- Income
- Gender
- Language
- Disabilities
- Geographic location
- Transient

After much discussion the group agreed that while there are many disparities, the P-20 partnership should focus on two areas:

- Race/ethnicity (including sub groups)
- Income

Question: Why is addressing the achievement gap important?

- Demographics of Minnesota are shifting
- Economic imperative
 - Georgetown study
 - Skills gap
- Individual as well as community well-being
- Social impact
- Growing wage differential
- Need more than focus on overall achievement
- Urgency – in global market
- Civic/moral imperative

What might be some causes (and possible evidence) of the Achievement Gap ?

Discussion centered on the following:

- Lack of teachers of color
- Poverty
- Pedagogy/ curriculum aligned to different learning styles and interests
- Greater range of education paths for students
- Early childhood experience and environment
- Some literature suggests two biggest “causes are:
 - Early childhood
 - Teacher effectiveness
- High expectations are not set and therefore not met
- For American Indian students institutional racism; education is viewed as assimilation of values and belief

What should our next steps be?

- Develop an “Achievement Gap 101” Primer
- Establish a working group to gather and organize data for the primer
- Invite a speaker to identify causes and or present best practices
- Structure a working session with partners in April or May with an expert in the field.
Dr. Ronald Ferguson, Harvard researcher and author of *Toward Equity with Excellence*, was suggested as one possible resource