MAEC
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Achievement Gap

Addressing Critical Equity Issues

Achievement Gap

The achievement gap between Black and Latino students and their White counterparts continues to persist. For example, between 1975 and 2008, Black and Latino students at ages nine and thirteen made gains in reading: in 1975, a little less than 50% of nine year old Black and Latino students scored at the lowest performance levels, while only 2% of nine year old Black students and 3% of nine year old Latino students scored at the highest levels of performance. By 2008, less than 33% of nine year old Black and Latino students scored at the *lowest* performance level, while approximately 10% of Black and Latino students scored at the *highest* performance levels. A similar trend of improvement in reading achievement was evident among Black and Latino thirteen year old students. The NAEP long-term trend assessment in mathematics between 1978 and 2008 revealed even larger gains for both nice year old and thirteen year old Black and Latino students. Notwithstanding such gains in achievement, however, NAEP data on the achievement gap reveal a disconcerting pattern of what Boykin and Noguera refer to as *relative stagnation (2011)*.

For example, based on data cited in the NAEP, 2007, the 4th grade and 8th grade reading achievement gaps between Black and White students as well as Latino and White students were statistically the same as they were in 1998. Similarly, despite slight improvements in mathematics performance among Black students between 1996 and 2007, the Black-White and Latino-White achievement gaps remained statistically the same. Data collected by NAEP over the last three decades reveals widening test score disparities in reading, mathematics and science among Black and Latino nine, thirteen and seventeen year olds. Such long term trend assessments speak to the multidimensional nature and complexities that are inherent to disparities in academic outcomes that tend to correspond to the race and class of the learners.

What will it take to successfully engage our Black and Latino students and eliminate the disparities in achievement? According to James Banks, *the culture of the school and the classroom is often incongruent with the culture of the home and community*. When fundamental relationships between the school and home are lacking, the student's efficacy for high levels of achievement is compromised. According to Chinwe Uwah, *academic efficacy ......is influenced by students' sense of belonging*; i.e. the degree to which they perceive themselves to be welcomed, valued, and respected members of the school community. In *Creating the Opportunity to Learn: Moving from Research to Practice to Close the Achievement Gap,* Boykin and Noguera (2011) refer to a combination of inter-related guiding functions that are needed to maximize opportunities for successful engagement. They include self-efficacy, self-regulated learning and incremental ability beliefs. In order to effectively

cultivate these mindsets for optimal engagement, culturally responsive relationship-building is needed; this in turn requires an understanding of the impact of culture on teaching and learning (Howard, 2011).

PROMISING PRACTICES

Evidence-Based Practices

- [The Achievement Gap Initiative](#) (AGI) is a university-wide effort initiated by the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) that focuses on academic research, public education, and innovative outreach activities toward eliminating achievement gaps: http://www. agi.harvard.edu/mission.php

Programs

- PD 360, the leading on-demand professional learning resource, is a web-based library of research-based professional development programs. The programs are designed to empower teachers to access instant answers and individualized support. The program includes *Using Data to Close the Achievement Gap* and allows teachers and leaders to move through data training at their own pace: www.schoolimprovement.com
- All Means All – "What Is It About Me You Can't Teach?" This program is designed for teachers of diverse learners. Eleanor Renee Rodriguez shows teachers how to reach every student by implementing 5 essential elements for student success. Each strategy discussed in the program is demonstrated by real teachers in real classrooms. This program is available in elementary and secondary editions: www.schoolimprovement.com

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