

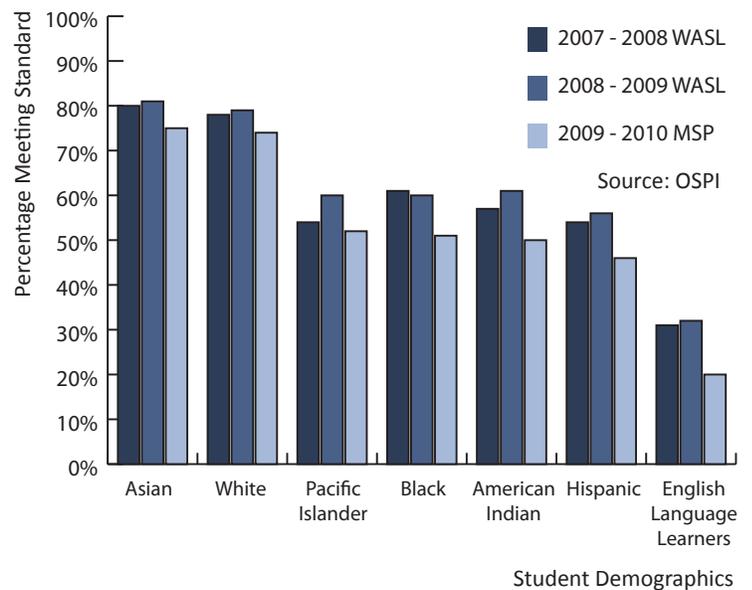


# Closing Opportunity Gaps in Washington's Public Education System

A Report by the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee | January 2011

Since the 1960's, educational researchers have examined the causes of gaps in academic achievement. Educational leaders have focused on test scores and dropout rates as the primary measures of student performance. Socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity are strong predictors of academic performance for students in Washington State, as well as across the nation. Students in affluent communities generally outperform students in poverty. Students designated as "White" and "Asian" generally outperform students from the other ethnic groups. However, many groups of students become invisible because they are lumped together in broad racial and ethnic categories. In order to better understand the data, the broader categories must be broken down to represent the smaller subgroups within each ethnic group.

**4th Grade Reading State Test Scores in Washington**



Disparities in student academic performance, commonly called the achievement gap, are a symptom of much greater issues or opportunity gaps. Students of color and students in poverty have fewer opportunities to access academic programs and supports. A focus on opportunity gaps, both obvious and hidden, allows us to look systemically at the educational opportunities and experiences for young people and not place blame on groups of students, teachers or families.

The Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (AGOAC) addresses more than measurements of academic performance. The Committee is sending a clear message to citizens, educators and policy makers:

**4th Grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)  
Reading Test Scores 2008-2009 in Washington**

	American Indian	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Limited English
<b>Advanced</b>	7%	10%	2%	2%	10%	0%
<b>Proficient</b>	20%	26%	19%	12%	30%	3%
<b>At Basic</b>	33%	32%	32%	31%	36%	16%
<b>Below Basic</b>	40%	33%	46%	55%	24%	80%

Source: OSPI

*The elimination of gaps will require equitable access to opportunities and resources (high quality and culturally relevant childcare, curriculum, educators, programs, extracurricular opportunities, role models) and proportional representation in programs like special education and gifted programming.*

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# About the Committee

## Committee Members

**Bernie Thomas,**  
Representative for tribal  
nations <sup>1</sup>

**Fiasili Savusa,**  
Representative for the  
Pacific Islander community <sup>2</sup>

**Frieda Takamura,**  
Representative for the Asian  
American community <sup>3</sup>

**Dr. Frances Contreras,**  
Representative for the  
Latino community <sup>4</sup>

**Wanda Billingsly,**  
Representative for  
the African American  
community <sup>5</sup>

**Superintendent Randy I.  
Dorn** <sup>6</sup>

**Sen. Claudia Kauffman**

**Sen. Curtis King**

**Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe**

**Rep. Dave Quall**

**Rep. Kevin Parker**

**Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos**

**Adie Simmons,** Office of the  
Education Ombudsman

<sup>1</sup> **Sally Brownfield,**  
*Alternate for Bernie Thomas*

<sup>2</sup> **Sapina Pele,**  
*Alternate for Fiasili Savusa*

<sup>3</sup> **Ben Kodama,**  
*Alternate for Frieda  
Takamura*

<sup>4</sup> **James Smith,**  
*Alternate for Wanda  
Billingsly*

<sup>5</sup> **Lillian Ortiz-Self,**  
*Alternate for Dr. Frances  
Contreras*

<sup>6</sup> **Erin Jones,**  
*Alternate for Supt. Dorn*

## The Committee's Charge

1. Report annually on strategies to address the achievement gap and the state's progress in closing gaps.
2. Synthesize the findings and recommendations from the 2008 achievement gap studies into an implementation plan.
3. Recommend policies and strategies to the State Legislature, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Governor, the Professional Educator Standards Board and the State Board of Education. Such recommendations should include at least the following:
  - Supporting and facilitating parent and community involvement and outreach.
  - Enhancing the cultural competence of current and future educators and the cultural relevance of curriculum and instruction.
  - Expanding pathways and strategies to prepare and recruit diverse teachers and administrators.
  - Recommending current programs and resources that should be redirected to narrow the gap.
  - Identifying data elements and systems needed to monitor progress in closing the gap.
  - Making closing the achievement gap part of the school and school district improvement process.
  - Exploring innovative school models that have shown success in closing the achievement gap.

## Staffing Support for the Committee

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction,  
Center for the Improvement of Student Learning: [www.yourlearningcenter.org](http://www.yourlearningcenter.org)

## The Committee's Governance

### Committee Co-chairs:

Senator Curtis King  
Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos

The Committee agreed that a quorum of seven must be present for voting. Committee members who participate by phone will be accepted as being in attendance. All statutory members may select alternates to represent them when they are unable to attend. Alternates may vote in the place of a member. The Tribal Leaders Congress may choose to send a special representative to address a particular issue.

### Committee Web site

[www.k12.wa.us/AchievementGap](http://www.k12.wa.us/AchievementGap)



# Accomplishments in 2010

The Committee's work has resulted in new data collection across our state. A variety of entities, from early childhood programs to community-based organizations to post-secondary institutions, are collecting new data about the experience of students of color and the adults working with them. The work has also been a catalyst for conversations and the development of new workshops and trainings. In the last calendar year, members of the Committee, representatives from communities of color, and OSPI staff members have made over one hundred presentations related to improving the experiences of students of color in Washington State public schools.

## Representation on Other Committees and Work Groups

Quality Education Council:	Adie Simmons Sally Brownfield (Alternate)
Data Governance Work Group:	Lillian Ortiz-Self
Early Childhood:	Sally Brownfield
Measuring Family-School Partnerships Work Group:	Adie Simmons
Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Work Group:	Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos

Thousands of educators, families, students, community organizations, and legislators have heard presentations about data and strategies related to improving the academic performance of students of color and providing equitable access to opportunities. Below is a list of some of the presentations that have been given in 2009 – 2010 related to the work of the Committee:

- 9 full district presentations
- 15 full-staff trainings in school buildings
- 40 school classroom presentations
- 50 workshops at conferences
- 5 university/college of education presentations to students and faculty

In addition to the formal presentations that were made, summaries of Committee meetings have been given at many of the monthly ethnic commission meetings and other community-based committees and organizations.

## Changing Demographics

In the past 10 years, there has been a significant increase in the number of students of color in Washington State. This demographic shift requires changes in the services and support provided in schools to ensure the success of each and every student.

Measuring student achievement in the broad categories of white, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, and African American no longer paints an accurate picture of the incredible diversity of Washington State. Schools and districts need to be able to see patterns within ethnic subgroups that allow educators to better address the diverse needs of students.

Source: OSPI  
<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us>  
January 21, 2011

	Number of Students in 1999-2000	Number of Students in 2009-2010	Percentage of increase or decrease in population
American Indian/Alaskan Native	27,100	25,874	-4.5%
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander*</b>	<b>72,266</b>	<b>90,670</b>	<b>25.5%</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>52,192</b>	<b>57,952</b>	<b>11.0%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>96,355</b>	<b>166,518</b>	<b>72.8%</b>
White	755,787	660,333	-12.6%
<b>Transitional Bilingual</b>	<b>55,204</b>	<b>84,105</b>	<b>52.4%</b>

*\*Please note that data for Asian and Pacific Islander students was first reported separately in the 2007-2008 school year. This table may not accurately capture the growth rate of Pacific Islanders in the last decade.*

# Formal Recommendations to QEC

## Recommendations to the Quality Education Council (QEC)

The Committee made formal recommendations to the Quality Education Council in two areas: the operating commitments of the state education system and strategies to eliminate gaps. Regarding the Washington Education System Operating Commitments, the Committee recognized that these commitments must have the elimination of the achievement gap as their overarching goal.

The committee would also like the QEC to recognize the importance of:

- A mechanism to be created for families, community members, and educators to collaborate and learn from each other.
- All educators (classified staff, classroom teachers, counselors, building, and district administrators) developing cultural competence skills.
- Ongoing data analysis that is disaggregated by ethnic subgroup to inform QEC practice.
- The components of the Washington Education System Operating Commitments being recognized as integrated and mutually reinforcing; therefore needing to be addressed through comprehensive, integrated and collaborative strategies that support fair and equitable outcomes for all students.
- Intermediate measures in addition to high stakes testing so that timely interventions can be put into place.

Regarding strategies to close achievement gaps, the Committee recommends that our state:

- Recruit, develop, place and retain educators who are culturally competent and possess skills and competencies in language acquisition.
- Invest in support for the engagement and partnerships among students, families and communities to deliver personal and differentiated instruction from early childhood through high school graduation.
- Support districts and schools in implementing comprehensive and culturally responsive intervention systems in all content areas, inclusive of social and emotional development.
- Enable all students from early childhood through high school to stay at grade level and on track to graduate from high school and be college or career ready by investing in early intervention supports.

*“There is no time to waste. Washington State does not have another 5 years or 10 years or 20 years to respond to this crisis.*

*Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet. Each ethnic community has its own unique qualities; it also has its own gaps.*

*There are things we must do as a state to specifically address the common needs of our ethnic communities, which will improve education for all students.”*

Erin Jones

Assistant Superintendent for Student Achievement, OSPI



Mercer Island School District

# Budget Implications

Budget cuts will have a negative impact on our most vulnerable students. Withholding support now will dim prospects for students' academic success, reduce future earnings, and likely result in a lifelong sense of diminished possibilities.

In addition to our ethical obligation to educate each and every child, the state and public face long-term economic consequences if achievement gaps persist. The Alliance for Excellent Education did a study of the economic implications of improving education in Washington State and found the following:

- Nearly 33,900 students did not graduate from Washington's high schools in 2009; the lost lifetime earnings in Washington for that class of dropouts alone totals more than \$8.8 billion.
- Washington would save more than \$436.1 million in health care costs over the course of the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.
- Washington households would have over \$1 billion more in accumulated wealth if all heads of households had graduated from high school.
- More than \$3.1 billion would be added to Washington's economy by 2020 if students of color graduated at the same rate as white students.
- If Washington's high schools graduated all students ready for college, the state would save almost \$125.4 million a year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings.
- Washington's economy would see a combination of savings and revenue of about \$111 million in reduced crime spending and increased earnings each year if the male high school graduation rate increased by just 5 percent.

Source: Potential Economic Impacts of Improved Education on Washington, Alliance for Excellent Education, October 2009



As budgets are cut at the local and state levels, students in the gaps are being hit the hardest. The Committee recommends that the Governor and the State Legislature consider the implications to our most vulnerable students in their efforts to balance the budget.

Priority should be given to programs and services that do the following:

- Prepare students to enter school ready to learn.
- Provide students with academic, physical, emotional, and cultural supports that are critical to their success.
- Prepare educators to address the cultural and linguistic needs of all students.
- Ensure that every student graduates with the skills necessary for college and career success.
- Engage families and community members in authentic, meaningful ways.

# Committee Recommendations

Members of the Committee heard from representatives of a variety of institutions. The Committee's responses to these presentations are reflected below:

## Quality Education Council (QEC)

AGOAC asks the QEC to consider the following as it develops a funding formula:

- Schools need more support staff with experience in social work:
  - \* to support students when the influence of gangs and chemical dependency is prevalent.
  - \* to support students when family members are incarcerated or when students and their families experience some other form of trauma.
- Parent/family voice should be included in discussions about school funding.
- Additional staffing must be allocated to the state Transitional Bilingual Program to provide adequate monitoring of schools, technical assistance and support for implementing effective instructional models for English Language Learners.



## K-12 Data Governance Committee

The Committee expressed concern about the need for accurate, useful data that should be:

- Disaggregated by ethnic subgroups to provide a more accurate picture.
- Organized so that schools can track students and their credits as they transfer from one school to the next.
- Presented so that families and educators can ensure appropriate supports and interventions.
- Listed in ways that can identify damaging patterns in a school or district that will require technical assistance.

## The State Board of Education (SBE)

The Committee would like to see the following changes to the State Board recognition program:

- The Accountability Index must take into account achievement gaps based on race and disaggregate data by ethnic subgroups to expose hidden gaps.
- Schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress but that make significant progress towards meeting the needs of students of color and students from low socioeconomic communities should receive recognition. (Completed by the SBE and OSPI in 2010 through the Washinton Achievement Award program.)

## Model School District Policy and Procedure Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

The Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee recommends that the policy include:

- A requirement for a support/intervention plan for the aggressor that includes community-based organizations. This includes interventions for victims who become bullies and trauma-informed interventions.
- The requirement that trainings be research-based and culturally relevant.
- A method for collecting disaggregated data about harassment and bullying.

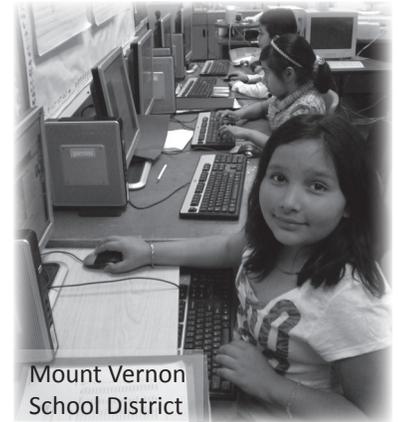
## Washington State Legislature

- The Committee recommends that the 2008 Achievement Gap Studies be updated to ensure that data is current and strategies reflect best practices in communities that may have changed over time.

## Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

The Committee is concerned about the adoption of Common Core Standards for the following reasons:

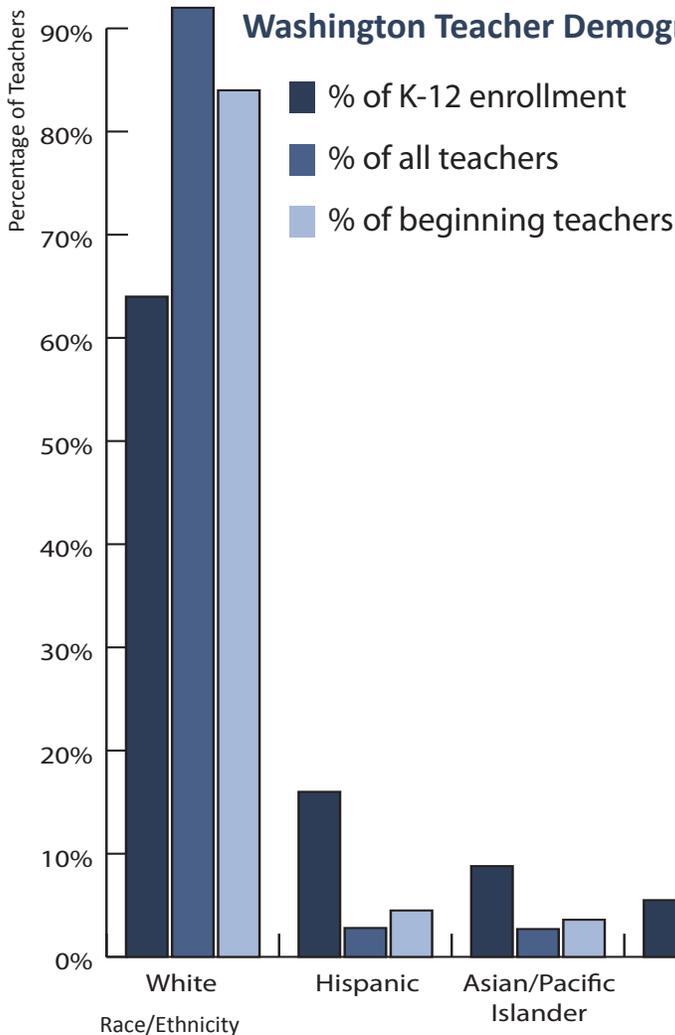
- The standards have not adequately been vetted for cultural competence or relevance and, therefore, should undergo a bias and fairness assessment prior to adoption.
- The standards have not taken into consideration the complexities of language development in acknowledgment of the large English Language Learner population in Washington State.



Mount Vernon School District

## Washington Colleges of Teacher Education

- Programs should increase efforts to attract and retain students of color.
- All educators (incoming and veteran) must be prepared and held accountable to teach every Washington State student, regardless of racial, ethnic, cultural background.



**One of the priorities of the Committee has been to recruit more people of color into the teaching profession.**

Several state-level programs that focus on recruiting people of color into education are:

- Recruiting Washington Teachers  
[www.pesb.wa.gov](http://www.pesb.wa.gov)
- Education and Training, Career and Technical Education  
[www.k12.wa.us/CareerTechEd](http://www.k12.wa.us/CareerTechEd)
- Alternative Routes to Certification  
[pathway.pesb.wa.gov/alternative\\_routes](http://pathway.pesb.wa.gov/alternative_routes)

*Washington State ranks second to last in the nation for a teaching force that is representative of the state's ethnic composition.*

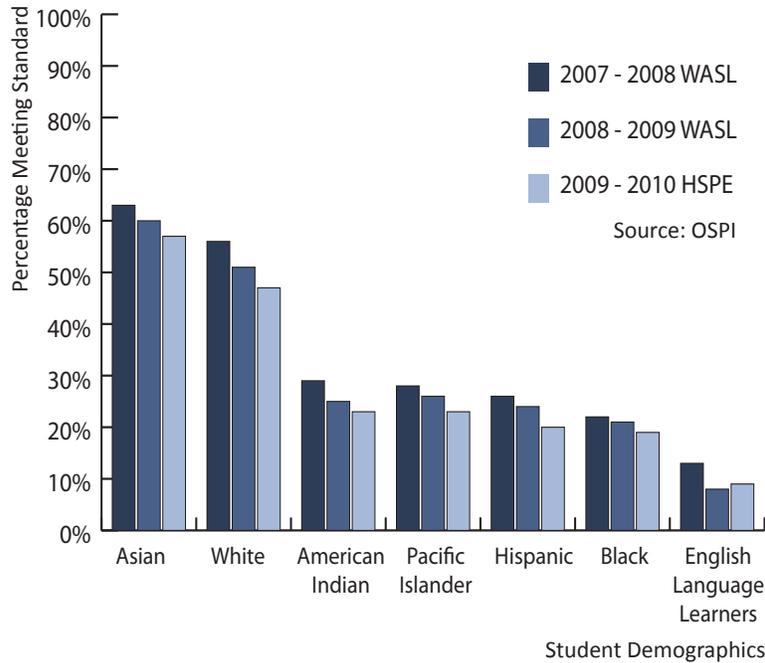
[www.educationnext.org](http://www.educationnext.org); Winter, 2009

# Measuring Gaps

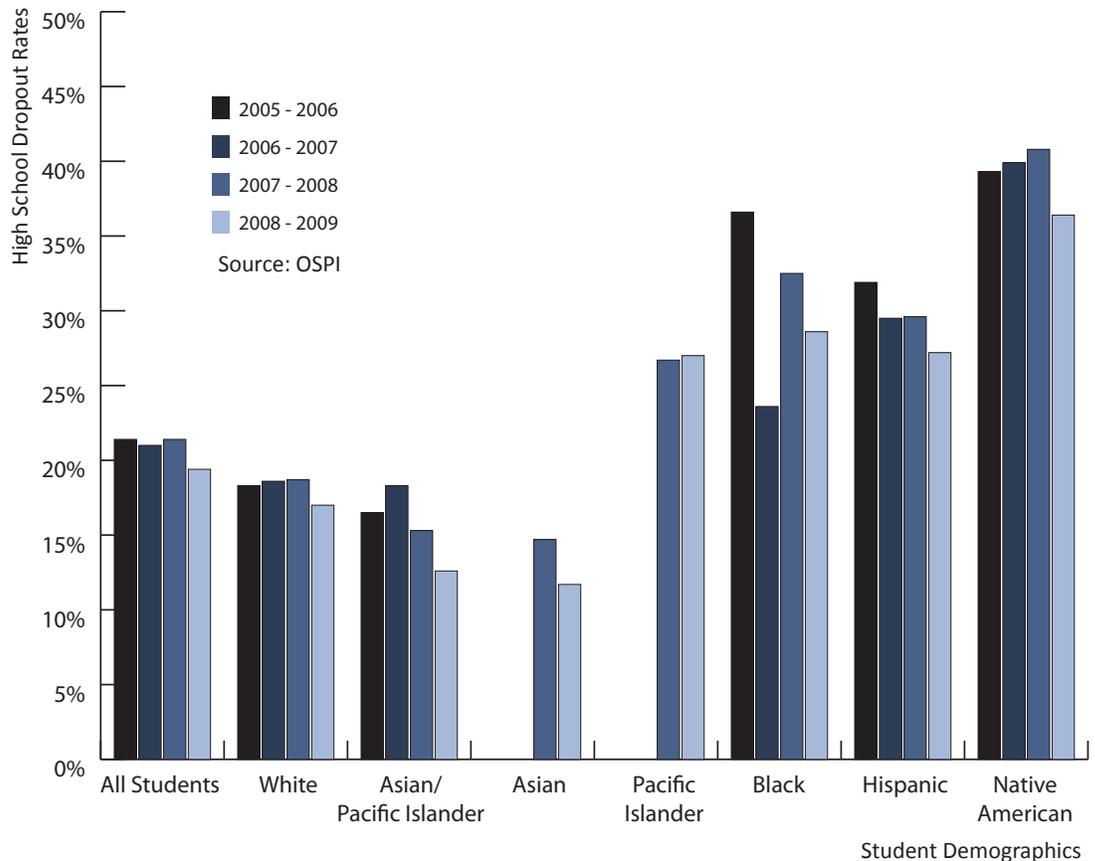
*“Many minority students attend inner-city schools, which are often under-funded. As a result, those students tend to receive poorer-quality instruction, have fewer high-caliber teachers, and have access to fewer resources.”*

The Education Trust, 2002

**10th Grade Math State Test Scores in Washington**

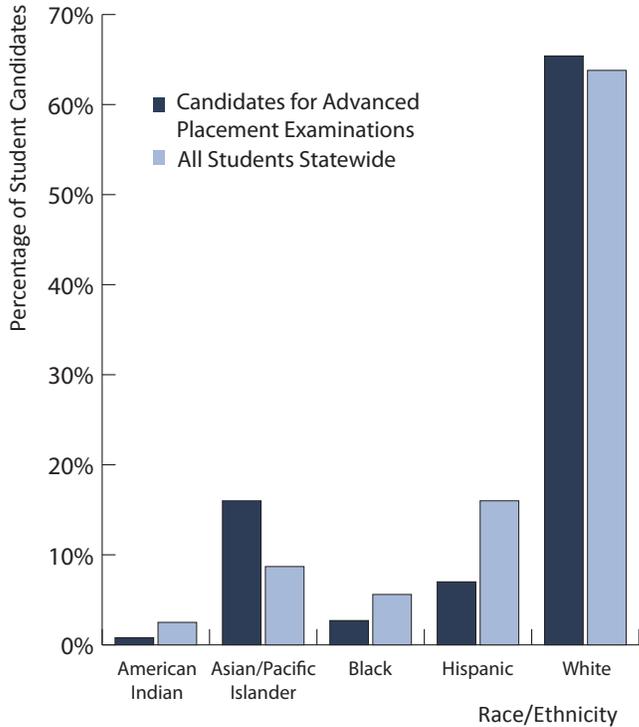


**Estimated Four-Year Cohort Dropout**



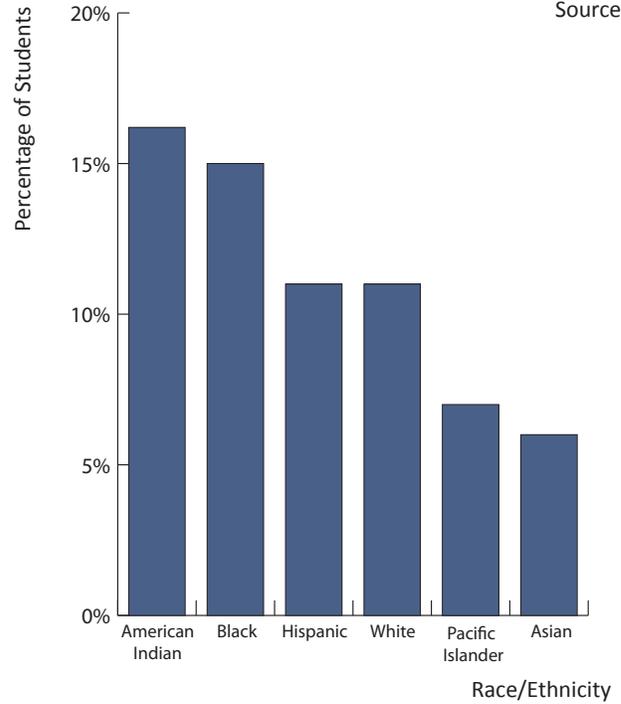
### Candidates for Advanced Placement Examinations by Ethnicity, 2010

Source: OSPI



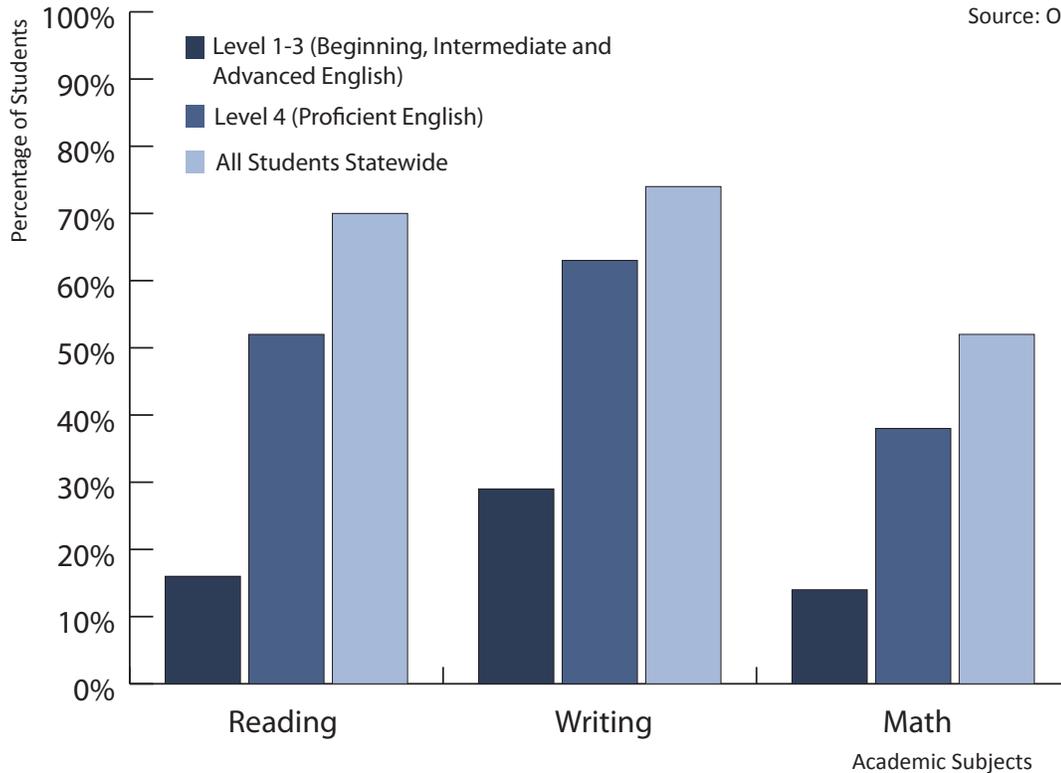
### Percentage of Student Population Receiving Special Education Services, 2009

Source: OSPI



### Percentage of English Language Learners Meeting Standards by English Proficiency

Source: OSPI



*“Culture does not determine a child’s ability or intelligence. But it can produce many different ways of knowing and learning.”*

Leona M. Johnson,  
Author  
“What We Know About Culture and Learning”

# Status of Previous Recommendations

In 2009 the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee made recommendations to the following entities: the Professional Educator Standards Board, the Quality Education Council, the State Board of Education, the State Legislature, and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Below are the Committee recommendations that have already been implemented, followed by those that are in the process of being implemented.

## **Committee recommendations which *were implemented* in 2009-2010**

### **The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (primarily to the Data Governance Work Group)**

- ✓ In collaboration with OSPI and the Tribal Leaders Congress on Education, develop data elements and systems needed to monitor progress in closing achievement gaps.
- ✓ Collaborate with the Tribal Leaders Congress on Education regarding data sharing.
- ✓ Seek a more diverse racial and ethnic membership that is representative of the students served in Washington.
- ✓ Require its contractors to conduct interviews with community members and educational practitioners of color (teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals) in addition to the other stakeholders identified in the Data Governance work plan.
- ✓ Consult with researchers from the achievement gap study groups in order to mitigate the concerns cited in the achievement gap studies regarding data specification and the systems used for monitoring student progress.
- ✓ Periodically report to the QEC and the AGOAC regarding its attention to equity issues.
- ✓ Collect data disaggregated by race/ethnicity on areas of student absenteeism and dropout.
- ✓ Consult with researchers from achievement gap studies to identify racial subgroups.
- ✓ Collect data on percentage of students of color receiving services through Advanced Placement and Highly Capable programs (available on Comprehensive Education Data and Research System, CEDARS, as of July 2010).

### **The Professional Educator Standards Board**

- ✓ Related to the recommendation – “Require all teachers to have basic training on strategies for addressing the needs of English Language Learners”, PESB adopted changes to Standard V on July 21, 2010 that requires all approved teacher preparation programs to ensure that pre-service teachers demonstrate knowledge and skills related to effective instruction of English Language Learners.
- ✓ Related to the recommendation “Write teacher standards in “plain talk” so that educators, families and non-educators can understand them”, PESB adopted new language in Standard IV, (Program Design adopted 1/7/11) and Standard V, ( Knowledge and Skills for teacher candidates adopted 7/21/10) that clearly outlines requirements for incorporating Cultural Competence and language acquisition.
- ✓ Related to the recommendation – “Align and infuse cultural competence standards across academic categories in order to show how they integrate across the teaching continuum”, PESB has developed calibrated standards for effective teaching at all levels, incorporating Cultural Competence. Strengthening the Continuum of Teacher Development, Professional Educator Standards Board, Response to the Charges in ESHB 2261. January 2010)
- ✓ Related to the recommendation – “Enhance monitoring and compliance efforts in the area of cultural competence and the achievement gap”, PESB has adopted program approval protocols ( 1/7/11) that ensure that teacher preparation programs are aligned with the new Standard V which includes Cultural Competence and language acquisition.

## State Board of Education

- ✓ Conduct an analysis of the cost and district capacity required to implement new state graduation requirements. (Completed by OSPI.)
- ✓ An accountability system which ranks schools based on student achievement, with particular focus on the elimination of racial/ethnic achievement gaps.

## The Legislature

- ✓ Give OSPI the legal authority to ensure that school districts comply with state and federal civil rights laws (*completed with passage of Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 3026*).
- ✓ Create school structures that encourage family, school, and community partnerships (*now included in ESSB 6696, section 701*).
- ✓ Increase authority of and funding for the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (*legislation provided additional funding and made, in statute, the presence of AGOAC members quite visible on a number of committees*).

## The Quality Education Council

- ✓ Recruit a more diverse racial and ethnic membership that is representative of the students served in Washington State (*now a member from the AGOAC serves on the council*).
- ✓ Implement the use of instructional materials early (not limited to textbooks). Textbooks should be culturally and linguistically relevant to students in the district (*Substitute House Bill 2776 addressed the phasing-in of needed textbooks/materials through the maintenance, supplies and operating costs (MSOC)*).

## Committee recommendations *in the process of being implemented*

### The Quality Education Council

- Review the funding formula through the lens of “equitable” versus “equal.”
- Adopt a weighted formula used for schools with high achievement gaps that would include increased allocation for: counselors (based on the ASCA model), district equity/diversity coordinators, family and community outreach staff, school nurses or health care providers, and social workers.
- Make funding decisions that ensure all students can meet graduation requirements.
- Revise prototypical school funding model to ensure adequate accountability mechanisms for schools with high achievement gaps.
- Implement funding for English Language Learning (Bilingual Education).
- Coordinate additional program funding with efforts to increase capacity, including building space and qualified staff.
- Allocate funding to districts to implement culturally relevant, research-based academic and social emotional tools so that districts can identify risk factors and employ appropriate intervention strategies for students.

### The State Board of Education

- Revise regulations (WAC 180 – 16 – 220) in order to strengthen existing or develop new statewide requirements for school district improvement plans.

## For More Information:

### Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee Web site:

[www.k12.wa.us/AchievementGap/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/AchievementGap/default.aspx)

### 2008 Achievement Gap Studies:

*A Plan to Close the Achievement Gap for African American Students*

Staffed by the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning

[www.k12.wa.us/cisl/pubdocs/AfrAmer%20AchGap%20Rpt%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/cisl/pubdocs/AfrAmer%20AchGap%20Rpt%20FINAL.pdf)

*From Where the Sun Rises:*

*Addressing the Educational Achievement of Native Americans in Washington State*

Submitted to the Governor's Office on Indian Affairs

[www.goia.wa.gov/Links-Resources/NativeAmericanAchievementReport.pdf](http://www.goia.wa.gov/Links-Resources/NativeAmericanAchievementReport.pdf)

*Asian Americans in Washington State: Closing Their Hidden Achievement Gaps*

Submitted to the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs

[www.capaa.wa.gov/documents/AchievementGapReport.pdf](http://www.capaa.wa.gov/documents/AchievementGapReport.pdf)

*Growing Presence, Emerging Voices:*

*Pacific Islanders and Academic Achievement in Washington*

Submitted to the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs

[www.capaa.wa.gov/documents/PacificIslanderAchievementGapReport.pdf](http://www.capaa.wa.gov/documents/PacificIslanderAchievementGapReport.pdf)

*Understanding Opportunities to Learn for Latino Students in Washington*

Submitted to the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs

[www.cha.wa.gov/?q=files/WALatinoAchievementGapReport.pdf](http://www.cha.wa.gov/?q=files/WALatinoAchievementGapReport.pdf)

### 2010 Committee Report:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Cisl/pubdocs/AgapLegReport2010.pdf>

### Synthesis of the 2008 Achievement Gap Reports

Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee

[www.k12.wa.us/cisl/pubdocs/Synthesis2008Recommendations.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/cisl/pubdocs/Synthesis2008Recommendations.pdf)

### Other Resources:

#### NEA Foundation Closing the Achievement Gaps Initiative

<http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/educators/achievement-gaps-initiative/>

#### Closing the Achievement Gap Resource Center

<http://www.principalspartnership.com/closingthegap.html>

#### Education Trust

<http://www.edtrust.org/>

#### Center for the Improvement of Student Learning

<https://www.k12.wa.us/CISL/EliminatingtheGaps/default.aspx>

#### Closing the Achievement Gap Partnerships Resource Kit

<http://www.closingtheachievementgap.org/cs/ctag/print/htdocs/part.htm>

*“The urgency for reform has never been greater. Today, American students trail many other nations in reading, math, and science, and a quarter do not graduate high school on time. Many college students do not finish, despite the clear national need for more college-educated workers who can successfully compete in the global economy.”*

*Secretary Arne Duncan  
US Department of Education*

