



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.

Title: Equity and Closing the Opportunity Gap – Delving Deeper

- As Related To:**
- Goal One: Develop and support policies to close the achievement and opportunity gaps.
 - Goal Two: Develop comprehensive accountability, recognition, and supports for students, schools, and districts.
 - Goal Three: Ensure that every student has the opportunity to meet career and college ready standards.
 - Goal Four: Provide effective oversight of the K-12 system.
 - Other

- Relevant To Board Roles:**
- Policy Leadership
 - System Oversight
 - Advocacy
 - Communication
 - Convening and Facilitating

Policy Considerations / Key Questions: In what ways does the Board wish and need to delve deeper into issues of equity in order to effectively accomplish its goal of closing the opportunity gaps for all Washington children?

- Possible Board Action:**
- Review
 - Approve
 - Adopt
 - Other

- Materials Included in Packet:**
- Memo
 - Graphs / Graphics
 - Third-Party Materials*
 - PowerPoint

*Synopsis of Yale study included; full study available at http://ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/Preschool%20Implicit%20Bias%20Policy%20Brief_final_9_26_276766_5379.pdf.

Synopsis: One of the Board’s four Strategic Plan goals is to develop and support policies to close the opportunity and achievement gaps.

At its 2016 annual retreat, the Board again demonstrated the eminence of this issue as it prioritized components of the Strategic Plan, both during the “dot activity” and lengthy strategic direction dialogue. The Board Chair proposed the Board delve into topics of equity and social justice over the course of this year, and the Board agreed to do so.

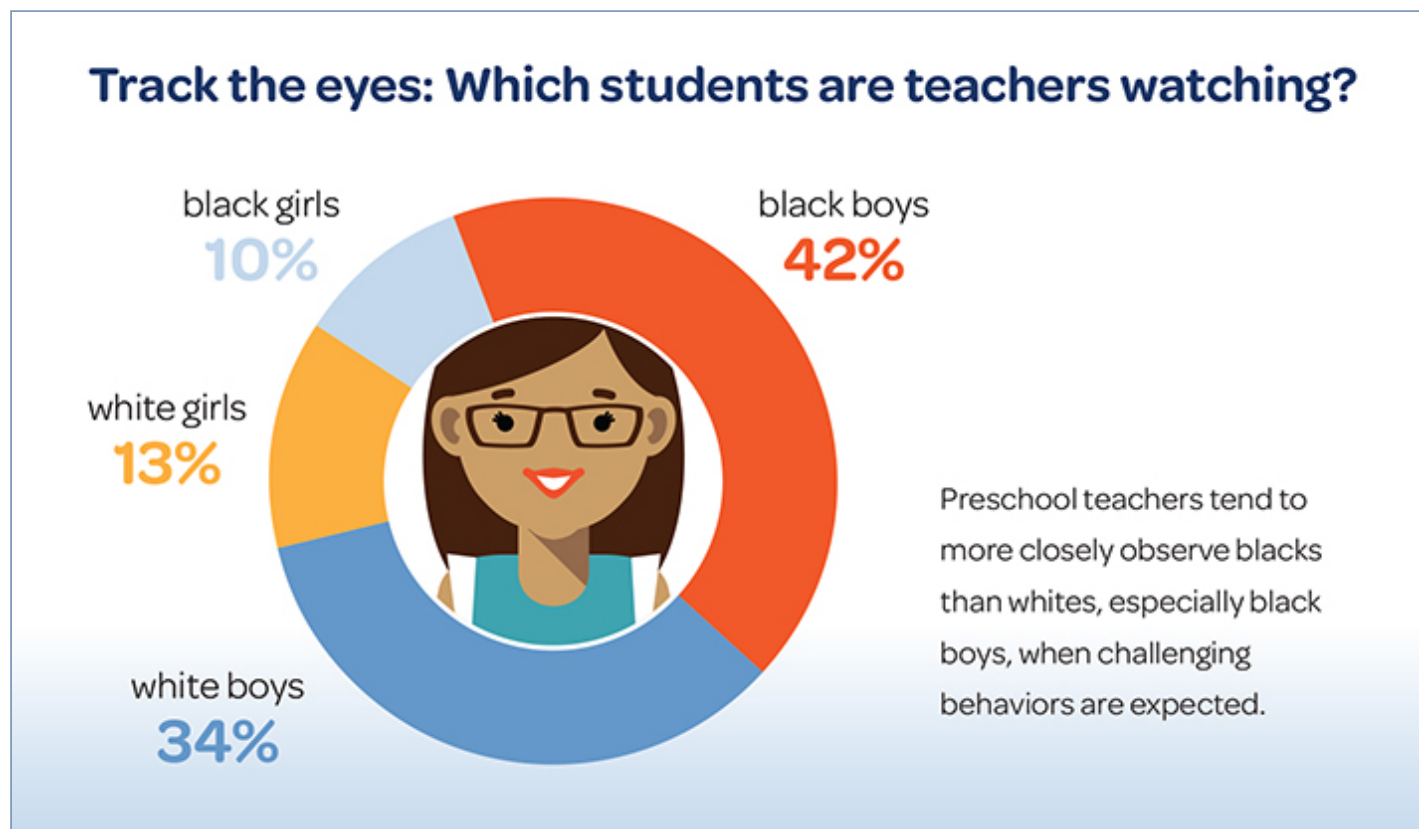
This will be a learning year on this topic. For this meeting the Board will:

- De-brief This American Life’s “Is it Working” Act 1.
- Dialogue about the Board’s renewed commitment to partnering with the EOGOAC
- Brainstorm about desired goals/outcomes for the Board’s equity and social justice work.
- Discuss next steps

Implicit bias may help explain high preschool expulsion rates for black children

By Bill Hathaway

September 27, 2016



Preschool teachers and staff show signs of implicit bias in administering discipline, but the race of the teacher plays a big role in the outcome, according to [research](#) conducted by the Yale Child Study Center. The results help explain why black students tend to be suspended at much higher rates than white students, the authors say.

Release of the findings has been requested by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is scheduled to be presented to federal and state officials on Sept. 28.

Researchers used sophisticated eye-tracking technology and found that preschool teachers “show a tendency to more closely observe black students, and especially boys, when challenging behaviors are expected,” the authors found.

But at the same time, black teachers hold black students to a higher standard of behavior than do their white counterparts, the researchers found. While the study did not explore why this difference in attitude exists, the researchers speculated that black educators may be demonstrating “a belief that black children require harsh assessment and discipline to prepare them for a harsh world.”

White educators, by contrast, may be acting on a stereotype that black preschoolers are more likely to misbehave in the first place, so they judge them against a different, more lenient standard than what they’re applying to white children.

“The tendency to base classroom observation on the gender and race of the child may explain in part why those children are more frequently identified as misbehaving and hence why there is a racial disparity in discipline,” added Walter S. Gilliam, director of The Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy and associate professor of child psychiatry and psychology at the Yale Child Study Center. Gilliam is one of five researchers who conducted what is thought to be the first such study of its type.

Findings suggested that when the preschool teacher and child were of the same race, knowing about family stressors led to increased teacher empathy for the preschooler and decreased how severe the behaviors appeared to the teacher. But, when the teacher and child were of a different race, the same family information seemed to overwhelm the teachers and the behaviors were perceived as being more severe.

“These findings suggest that teachers need support in understanding family struggles, as they may related to child behaviors, especially when the teacher and child are of different races,” Gilliam said.

Primary funding for the research came from the WK Kellogg Foundation.



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RCW 28A.300.136**Educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee—Policy and strategy recommendations.**

(1) An educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee is created to synthesize the findings and recommendations from the 2008 achievement gap studies into an implementation plan, and to recommend policies and strategies to the superintendent of public instruction, the professional educator standards board, and the state board of education to close the achievement gap.

(2) The committee shall recommend specific policies and strategies in at least the following areas:

(a) Supporting and facilitating parent and community involvement and outreach;

(b) Enhancing the cultural competency of current and future educators and the cultural relevance of curriculum and instruction;

(c) Expanding pathways and strategies to prepare and recruit diverse teachers and administrators;

(d) Recommending current programs and resources that should be redirected to narrow the gap;

(e) Identifying data elements and systems needed to monitor progress in closing the gap;

(f) Making closing the achievement gap part of the school and school district improvement process; and

(g) Exploring innovative school models that have shown success in closing the achievement gap.

(3) Taking a multidisciplinary approach, the committee may seek input and advice from other state and local agencies and organizations with expertise in health, social services, gang and violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, and other issues that disproportionately affect student achievement and student success.

(4) The educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee shall be composed of the following members:

(a) The chairs and ranking minority members of the house and senate education committees, or their designees;

(b) One additional member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house and one additional member of the senate appointed by the president of the senate;

(c) A representative of the office of the education ombuds;

(d) A representative of the center for the improvement of student learning in the office of the superintendent of public instruction;

(e) A representative of federally recognized Indian tribes whose traditional lands and territories lie within the borders of Washington state, designated by the federally recognized tribes; and

(f) Four members appointed by the governor in consultation with the state ethnic commissions, who represent the following populations: African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islander Americans.

(5) The governor and the tribes are encouraged to designate members who have experience working in and with schools.

(6) The committee may convene ad hoc working groups to obtain additional input and participation from community members. Members of ad hoc working groups shall serve without compensation and shall not be reimbursed for travel or other expenses.

(7) The chair or cochairs of the committee shall be selected by the members of the committee. Staff support for the committee shall be provided by the center for the improvement of student learning. Members of the committee shall serve without compensation but must be reimbursed as provided in RCW **43.03.050** and **43.03.060**. Legislative members of the committee shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW **44.04.120**.

(8) The superintendent of public instruction, the state board of education, and the professional educator standards board shall work collaboratively with the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee to close the achievement gap.

[**2016 c 162 § 3**; **2013 c 23 § 49**; **2011 1st sp.s. c 21 § 33**; **2010 c 235 § 901**; **2009 c 468 § 2.**]

NOTES:

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 21: See note following RCW [72.23.025](#).

Finding—2010 c 235: See note following RCW [28A.405.245](#).

Findings—Intent—2009 c 468: "(1) The legislature finds compelling evidence from five commissioned studies that additional progress must be made to address the achievement gap. Many students are in demographic groups that are overrepresented in measures such as school disciplinary sanctions; failure to meet state academic standards; failure to graduate; enrollment in special education and underperforming schools; enrollment in advanced placement courses, honors programs, and college preparatory classes; and enrollment in and completion of college. The studies contain specific recommendations that are data-driven and drawn from education research, as well as the personal, professional, and cultural experience of those who contributed to the studies. The legislature finds there is no better opportunity to make a strong commitment to closing the achievement gap and to affirm the state's constitutional obligation to provide opportunities to learn for all students without distinction or preference on account of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender.

(2) The legislature further finds that access to comprehensive and consistent data that is disaggregated in the smallest units allowable by law is important in closing the achievement gap. Policymakers and educators need as much information as possible not only about students' academic progress, but also about other factors across multiple disciplines that affect student performance.

(3) A consistent and powerful theme throughout the achievement gap studies was the need for cultural competency in instruction, curriculum, assessment, and professional development. Cultural competency forms a foundation for efforts to address the achievement gap, and more work is needed to embed it into the public school system.

(4) Therefore, following the priority recommendations from the achievement gap studies, the legislature intends to:

(a) Provide resources to support parent and community involvement and outreach efforts by public schools, including such items as additional notices and communication to parents, translations, translators, parent and community meetings, and school events within the community. The legislature encourages school districts to consult with the office of the education ombudsman [ombuds] in developing plans for parent and community involvement and outreach;

(b) Require that teachers demonstrate cultural competency in the classroom and with students at each level of state teacher certification, and provide additional opportunities for professional development in cultural competency for current teachers;

(c) Create local alternative routes to teacher certification for paraeducators and individuals in the communities surrounding schools and school districts that are struggling to address the achievement gap;

(d) Reexamine the study recommendations regarding data and accountability and identify ways for the education data system to address these needs; and

(e) Sustain efforts to close the achievement gap over the long term by creating a high profile achievement gap oversight and accountability committee that will provide ongoing advice to education agencies and report annually to the legislature and the governor." [[2009 c 468 § 1](#).]