

AWARENESS TO ACTION

Recognizing and Addressing the Achievement Gaps in Delaware Schools

Prepared for the Delaware State Board of Education
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Awareness to Action: Recognizing and Addressing the Achievement Gaps in Delaware Schools

Introduction

Across the nation, many states and local districts have answered the call for educational reform by creating performance-based accountability systems. Most of these systems take a standards-based approach where clearly articulated expectations of what students should know and be able to do in specific content areas at specific grade levels have been defined. By administering assessments that address the standards, the hope has been that such systems would provide schools and local policymakers with a means of monitoring and improving student learning and school quality.

Recently the accountability movement has gained momentum with the passage of the **No Child Left Behind** (NCLB) Act of 2001. Initially introduced by the Bush Administration as a blueprint for improving education, the NCLB Act reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and places a priority on improving the academic performance of disadvantaged students. In an effort to ensure that no students are left behind, the NCLB Act of 2001 requires states who seek Federal Title I funds to:

- develop accountability systems based on rigorous standards;
- test students in grades 3 through 8 on an annual basis; and,
- monitor statewide progress annually in order to ensure that **all groups of students**¹ reach proficiency within 12 years.

The challenge facing states and local districts is to address the achievement gaps that currently exist among particular student groups. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that there is a great deal of work to be done in addressing these gaps. Nearly three decades worth of data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)², widely regarded as our nation's report card, indicate that substantial achievement differences exist among different racial groups in several of the areas assessed. While some of the

¹ In order to monitor the progress of all groups of students, the NCLB Act of 2001 requires that assessment results and state objectives be broken out by student characteristics (i.e. race, income status, disability, etc.).

² NAEP assessments have been in place since 1969 and periodically assesses students in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. History, civics, geography, and the arts. The NAEP is composed of national, state, and long term trend assessments. For more information about NAEP see <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/sitemap.asp>

achievement gaps appeared to be getting smaller in the 1970s and 1980s, the 1990s saw gaps stabilize and in some content areas increase over time.³

State level NAEP data available from the most recent administration of the reading assessment revealed that 4th and 8th grade minority students in Delaware (i.e. African Americans and Hispanics) were more than two years worth of learning behind their non-minority peers.⁴ The results of the administration of the math portion of the NAEP given in 1996 revealed that Delaware 4th and 8th grade minority students were more than three years worth of learning behind when compared to their non-minority peers.⁵ In addition, state summary data for Delaware's statewide assessment, available online and published annually by the Delaware Department of Education, also indicate that disparities in achievement exist for minority and low income students when compared to other students in the state.

Documenting the reality of the achievement gaps that currently exist does not mean that these gaps are inevitable. Indeed, across the state of Delaware many groups inside and outside of education are and have become active in the pursuit of strategies for addressing existing disparities. This report represents an attempt to create a common understanding of the challenge facing many of the schools in Delaware with respect to the achievement gap separating minority and low income students from other students. To this end, the following report contains a school-by-school examination of the achievement gaps in the areas of reading and mathematics by examining performance differences between minorities and non-minorities as well as differences between low income and non-low income students.⁶ The hope is that the information provided in this report will promote an active dialogue that translates into the dissemination of concrete strategies for **closing existing gaps and increasing the academic performance of all students** in Delaware schools.

Defining the Achievement Gap

To facilitate a common understanding of the achievement gaps in Delaware, the Delaware State Board of Education convened an Achievement Gap Work Group⁷ beginning in the summer of 2001. The major charge to this group was to examine the issues related to the achievement gaps and to find a mutually agreed upon measure of the achievement gap that would help schools gauge whether or

³ Lee, J. (2002). Racial and Ethnic Achievement Gap Trends: Reversing the Progress Toward Equity? Educational Researcher, 31(1), 3-12.

⁴ Results based on the 1998 NAEP Administration. The full report is available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/naep3/pdf/stt1998/99460de.pdf>

⁵ The full report for Delaware is available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/naep3/pdf/main1996/98481.pdf>

⁶ For the purposes of this report, students identified as eligible for free/reduced lunch are classified as low income students.

⁷ The members of the work group included representatives from : the Delaware State Board of Education, the Delaware Department of Education, the Wilmington Metropolitan Urban League, District Superintendents, the Curriculum Cadre, school level administrators, and teachers.

not they were “closing” the gap. In addition, a definition of the gap was sought that would avoid random fluctuations that occur when looking at a different group of students each year, complement current data collection and analysis, and provide school personnel with a means of examining the gap in their school.

As a starting point for defining the achievement gap, informal email and telephone interviews were conducted with many district administrators whose responsibilities involve the analysis of achievement data for their district. These administrators were asked if their analyses included an examination of achievement gaps and if so, how the gap was defined. Most respondents indicated that achievement gaps were defined based on the percentage of students scoring at each of the performance levels on the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP).⁸

The DSTP is an annual assessment given to students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 that measures performance in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. Based on students’ scaled scores on these measures, their performance is categorized into one of five levels: well below, below, meets, exceeds, or distinguished. For more information on the DSTP see http://www.doe.state.de.us/aab/DSTP_intro.html

Based on the conversations with most of the districts and the Achievement Gap Work Group meetings, it was decided that measures of achievement at the school level would be calculated by:

- Examining the performance of student groups relative to each other using a cross-sectional approach involving two-year measurement cycles⁹;
- Focusing on the DSTP performance levels as opposed to scaled scores or SAT9 national percentile ranks;
- Examining overall performance levels **as well as** the size of the gap¹⁰ in the content areas of reading and mathematics; and,
- Including only those students who had attended the school for at least 91 days.

A Formalized Definition of the Achievement Gap

With these considerations in mind, the following definitions were developed for examining the achievement gaps separating minority and low income students from other students:

- **Overall performance:** the overall performance for a group of students in a school was calculated by adding the number of students in the particular group at or above the standard based on two consecutive years of data and dividing this number by the total number of students in the

⁸ In addition to DSTP results, several districts indicated that achievement gaps on local assessments are also examined.

⁹ A cross-sectional approach was chosen over a longitudinal approach in order to avoid the effects of attrition that occur with such comparisons. Two-year cycles were chosen to reduce the impact of random fluctuations due to measuring different groups of students each year.

¹⁰ Examining the gap in isolation is problematic in that it does not provide the full picture of student performance.

particular group with a DSTP performance level score in those two years. The “at or above the standard” grouping contains students who met, exceeded, or posted distinguished performance in the particular content area on the DSTP. The overall performance index is expressed as the percentage of a particular group of students at or above the standard within the two year measurement cycle.

- **Gap:** The gap measure is calculated by subtracting the overall performance of the “target” group of students (i.e. Hispanics, African Americans, or Low Income Students) from the overall performance of the “reference” group of students (i.e. Caucasians or Non-low Income students). A positive number indicates that the reference group outperformed the target group; a negative number indicates that the target group outperformed the reference group.

Understanding the Data Source

The data that serve as the basis of the school reports on the following pages were provided by the Assessment and Accountability branch of the Delaware Department of Education. These data are the same data used to calculate the school performance ratings that are a part of the School Accountability System in Delaware.

Within this system, two years’ worth of test data constitute a single measurement cycle and student performance on the DSTP is credited to schools from which the student received at least 91 days of instruction. Although students take the DSTP in 3rd, 5th, 8th, and 10th grades, credit for student performance is shared among all K-10 grade levels. For example, the performance of a student taking the DSTP in 3rd grade is credited to the school(s) where the student attended kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd grade for at least 91 days. The performance of a student taking the DSTP in 5th grade is credited to the school(s) where the student attended 4th and 5th grade for 91 days or more, and so on. Tracing student performance back to the schools where students were taught allows all schools to be included in the school accountability system, not just those that contain tested grades, and is also an attempt to address some of the problems associated with student mobility.¹¹

The School Accountability System has an additional performance level that is assigned to students who are eligible to take the test but do not. These students are assigned a performance level of 0 and are included in the calculation of each school’s accountability rating. Therefore for the purposes of school-level accountability, student performance can range from a value of 0 to a value of 5, with a value of 5 representing distinguished performance. Students with a

¹¹ For additional information concerning Delaware’s School Accountability System and the process used to assign credit for student performance to individual schools see: Delaware School Accountability: Establishing Targets and School Performance Ratings. A report and recommendations to the Delaware State Board of Education. Available online at http://www.doe.state.de.us/aab/DSTP_School_Accountability.html

performance level of 0 were included in the calculations that serve as the basis of the school-by-school achievement gap reports presented on the following pages.

Note

The DSTP data made available through the annual State Summary Reports and the online reporting system do not take into consideration where a student received instruction but instead assign credit solely to the school where the student took the test regardless of the number of days the student was enrolled in that school. For this reason, the data provided in the individual school reports that follow, which are based on the School Accountability Data System, are not directly comparable to the state summary data or the DSTP online reports.

Overview of the Achievement Gaps Statewide

To familiarize the reader with the information to be presented in each of the school reports and to provide an overview of the achievement gaps that currently exist in Delaware, the following sections examine the gaps in performance by aggregating across schools. The number of schools included in the aggregate depended on the student groups being compared. For example, when examining the gap in performance between African Americans and Caucasians, only those schools with DSTP data for 15 or more African Americans and 15 or more Caucasians were included in the analyses.¹² Comparisons between Hispanics and Caucasians and between Low Income and Non-low Income students were also examined and are reported below.

African American—Caucasian Reading Comparisons by School Level

The relative performance of African Americans compared to Caucasians in the area of reading is presented in Figure 1. Each bar in the graph represents the size of the gap in performance between these two student groups for each school level (i.e. elementary, middle, high school). The shorter the bar the smaller the gap, the longer the bar the larger the gap. Ideally, each bar should be getting smaller from Time 1 (1998 & 1999 Data Cycle) to Time 2 (2000 & 2001 Data Cycle), and should be moving from the lower left portion of the graph to the upper right portion of the graph, indicating that overall student performance is improving.

¹² Schools identified as ILCs were not included in the aggregate but may have an individual school report if the student groups contained 15 or more students.

Reading Performance

% of Students At or Above the Standard

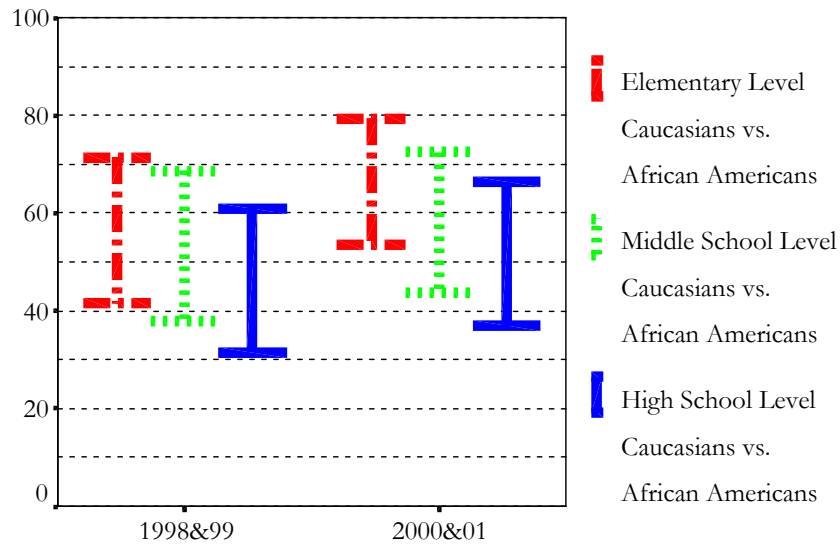



Figure 1


Additional descriptive statistics concerning the variability among schools under consideration are provided in Appendix A.


In addition to presenting the data in graphical form (Figure 1) these same data are produced below in table form (Table 1). The entries within the table represent averages across all elementary, middle, or high schools with DSTP data for 15 or more African American and 15 or more Caucasian students.

By way of illustration, the data indicate that at the elementary level in the 2000 & 2001 measurement cycle, roughly 79% of Caucasian students were at or above the reading standard compared to roughly 54% of African Americans. The gap in performance between African Americans and Caucasians at the elementary level was 25.77, indicating that on average, roughly 26% more of the Caucasian students were at or above the standard when compared to the African American students. The change in the size of the gap at the elementary level (-4.13) indicated that the gap decreased between the 1998/1999 and 2000/2001 measurement cycles.

Table 1

| Elementary Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of African Americans At or Above | Gap |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|--------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 71.32 | 41.42 | 29.90 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 79.37 | 53.60 | 25.77 |
| | | Change in Gap  | -4.13* |

| Middle School Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of African Americans At or Above | Gap |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 68.71 | 38.00 | 30.71 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 72.53 | 43.82 | 28.71 |
| | | Change in Gap  | -2.00 |

| High School Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of African Americans At or Above | Gap |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 60.93 | 31.50 | 29.43 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 66.26 | 36.87 | 29.39 |
| | | Change in Gap  | -0.04 |

***negative** change = gap decreased; **positive** change = gap increased

The data presented in Figure 1 and Table 1 indicates that within the area of **reading**:

- Sizable gaps exist statewide when comparing the performance of African American and Caucasian students;
- The African American—Caucasian gap appeared to be decreasing slightly over time at the elementary and middle school level; but,
- The African American—Caucasian gap was relatively unchanged at the high school level.

African American—Caucasian Reading Gaps and School Ratings

The changes in the size of the African American—Caucasian Reading gap were also examined in light of the school ratings assigned to the schools. Each school was categorized as follows:

- A school was labeled as having an increasing achievement gap if the value of the “change in gap” index was positive.
- A school was labeled as having a decreasing gap with overall improvement if the value of the “change in gap” index was negative and if the performance of both the African American and Caucasian students improved from Time 1 to Time 2.
- A school was labeled as having a “decreasing gap only” if the value of the “change in gap” index was negative but the performance of one of more of the student groups was not higher at the second measurement cycle.

| School Level | School Rating | # of Schools with Increasing Gaps | # of Schools With Decreasing Gaps & Improvement | # of Schools with Decreasing Gaps Only |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Elementary | Superior | 6 | 20 | 1 |
| | Commendable | 11 | 33 | 2 |
| | Under Review | 10 | 7 | 1 |
| Middle | Superior | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | Commendable | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| | Under Review | 9 | 1 | 6 |
| High | Superior | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 9 | 8 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| | TOTAL | 56 | 80 | 16 |

NOTE

The table presented above should be interpreted with caution. The decision as to whether or not the gap was increasing or decreasing was based solely on whether the numerical value of the change in gap was positive or negative, not on how large the change may have been. In aggregating the data, much is lost with respect to knowing **how much** the gap increased or decreased and **how well** students may have been performing overall. For more information on the ranges of performance and the sizes of the gaps within superior, commendable, and schools under review see **Appendix B**.

The data above indicate that many of the schools included in the aggregate for the African American—Caucasian comparison did show decreasing achievement gaps with overall improvement. The data further suggest that schools with superior and commendable ratings may have room for improving the performance of their minority students.

African American—Caucasian Mathematics Comparisons by School Level

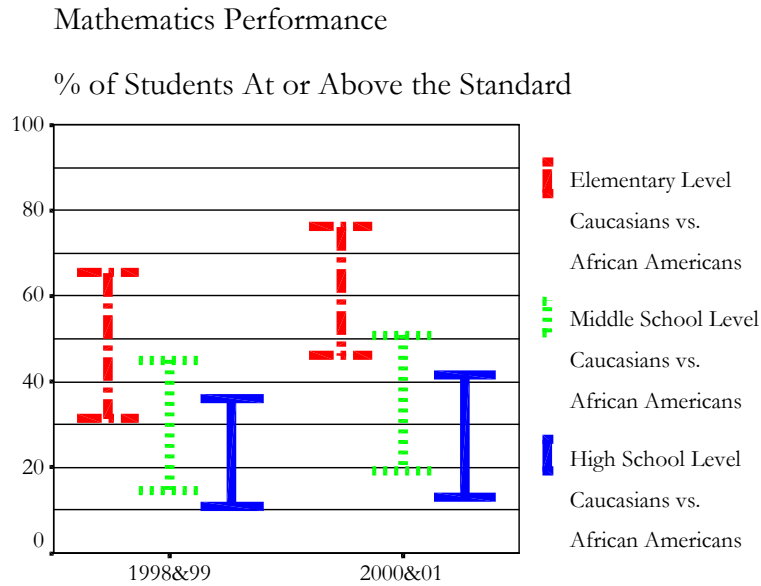


Figure 2

Table 2

| Elementary Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of African Americans At or Above | Gap |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 65.45 | 31.40 | 34.05 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 76.14 | 46.17 | 29.97 |
| | | Change in Gap \longrightarrow | -4.08 |

| Middle School Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of African Americans At or Above | Gap |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 44.95 | 14.72 | 30.23 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 50.84 | 19.22 | 31.62 |
| | | Change in Gap \longrightarrow | 1.39 |

| High School Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of African Americans At or Above | Gap |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 35.91 | 10.94 | 24.97 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 41.69 | 12.92 | 28.77 |
| | | Change in Gap \longrightarrow | 3.80 |

The data presented in Figure 2 and Table 2 indicates that within the area of **mathematics**:

- Sizable gaps in performance exist between African American and Caucasian students;
- The African American—Caucasian gap appeared to be decreasing at the elementary level;

- Middle and high schools evidenced slight increases in the African American—Caucasian gap; and,
- The overall performance of both student groups at the high school level was particularly low with the highest percentage of students at or above the standard being roughly 42% (Caucasian performance during the 2000 & 2001 measurement cycle).

African American—Caucasian Mathematics Gaps and School Ratings

| School Level | School Rating | # of Schools with Increasing Gaps | # of Schools With Decreasing Gaps & Improvement | # of Schools with Decreasing Gaps Only |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Elementary | Superior | 4 | 22 | 1 |
| | Commendable | 19 | 27 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 11 | 7 | 0 |
| Middle | Superior | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 5 | 4 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| High | Superior | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 16 | 1 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| | TOTAL | 76 | 66 | 10 |

(See Note on Page 9)

An examination of the changes in the size of the gap over time revealed that more schools evidenced increasing gaps in the area of mathematics when comparing the performance of Caucasians and African Americans.

Hispanic—Caucasian Reading Comparisons by School Level

Reading Performance

% of Students At or Above the Standard

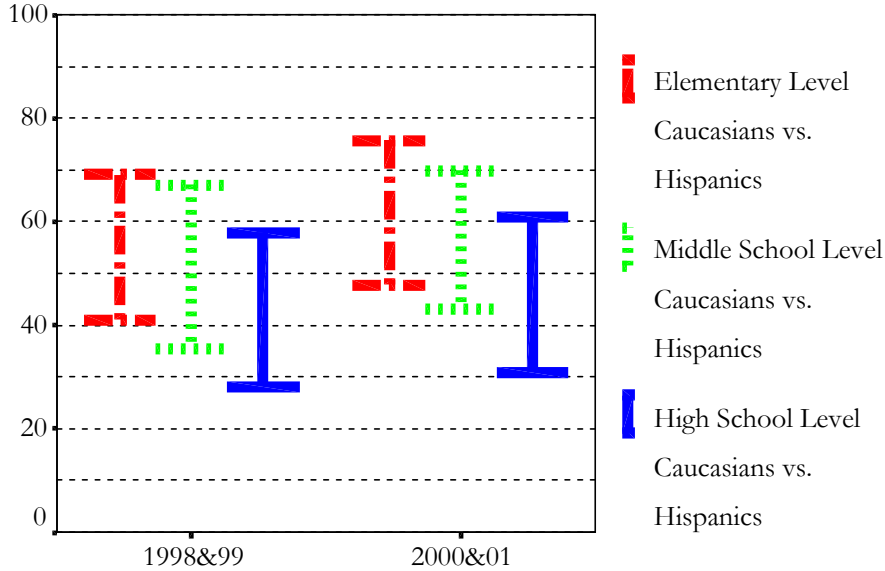


Figure 3

Table 3

| Elementary Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of Hispanics At or Above | Gap |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 69.09 | 40.94 | 28.15 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 75.71 | 47.56 | 28.15 |
| | | Change in Gap → | 0.00 |

| Middle School Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of Hispanics At or Above | Gap |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 67.10 | 35.47 | 31.63 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 69.48 | 43.09 | 26.39 |
| | | Change in Gap → | -5.24 |

| High School Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of Hispanics At or Above | Gap |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 57.91 | 28.10 | 29.81 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 60.75 | 30.83 | 29.92 |
| | | Change in Gap → | 0.11 |

The data presented in Figure 3 and Table 3 indicates that within the area of **reading**:

- Sizable gaps in performance exist between Hispanic and Caucasian students;
- The Hispanic—Caucasian gap was relatively unchanged over time at the elementary and high school level; but,
- The Hispanic—Caucasian gap appeared to be decreasing at the middle school level.

Hispanic—Caucasian Reading Gaps and School Ratings

| School Level | School Rating | # of Schools with Increasing Gaps | # of Schools With Decreasing Gaps & Improvement | # of Schools with Decreasing Gaps Only |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Elementary | Superior | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| Middle | Superior | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Under Review | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| High | Superior | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | TOTAL | 24 | 21 | 9 |

(See Note on Page 9)

An examination of the changes in the size of the gap over time revealed that roughly equal numbers of schools evidenced increasing gaps in reading as evidenced decreasing gaps with overall improvement.

Hispanic—Caucasian Mathematics Comparisons by School Level

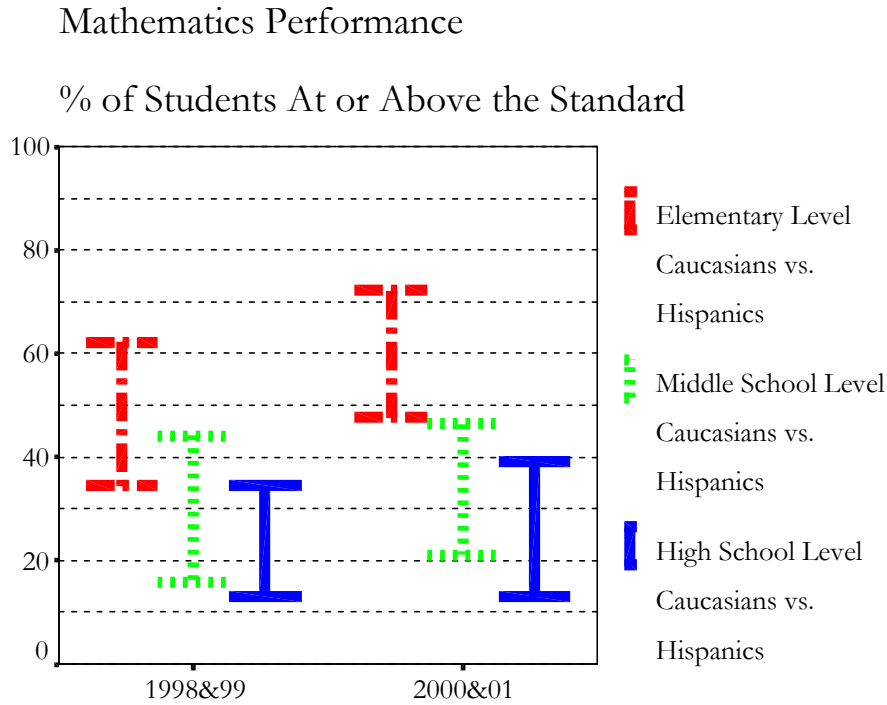


Figure 4

Table 4

| Elementary Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of Hispanics At or Above | Gap |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 62.14 | 34.39 | 27.75 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 72.09 | 47.62 | 24.47 |
| | | Change in Gap → | -3.28 |

| Middle School Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of Hispanics At or Above | Gap |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 44.06 | 15.69 | 28.37 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 46.33 | 21.07 | 25.26 |
| | | Change in Gap → | -3.11 |

| High School Level | % of Caucasians At or Above | % of Hispanics At or Above | Gap |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 34.50 | 13.12 | 21.38 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 39.15 | 12.96 | 26.19 |
| | | Change in Gap → | 4.81 |

The data presented in Figure 4 and Table 4 indicates that within the area of **mathematics**:

- Sizable gaps in performance exist between Hispanic and Caucasian students;

- The Hispanic—Caucasian gap appeared to be decreasing at the elementary and middle school levels;
- The Hispanic—Caucasian gap appeared to be increasing at the high school level; and,
- The overall performance of both student groups was relatively low at the middle and high school levels.

Hispanic—Caucasian Mathematics Gaps and School Ratings

| School Level | School Rating | # of Schools with Increasing Gaps | # of Schools With Decreasing Gaps & Improvement | # of Schools with Decreasing Gaps Only |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Elementary | Superior | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 4 | 8 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| Middle | Superior | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| High | Superior | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| | TOTAL | 25 | 24 | 5 |

(See Note on page 9).

The data also revealed that roughly the same number of schools evidenced increasing gaps as evidenced decreasing gaps with overall improvement in the area of mathematics.

Low Income and Non-Low Income Reading Comparisons by School Level

Reading Performance

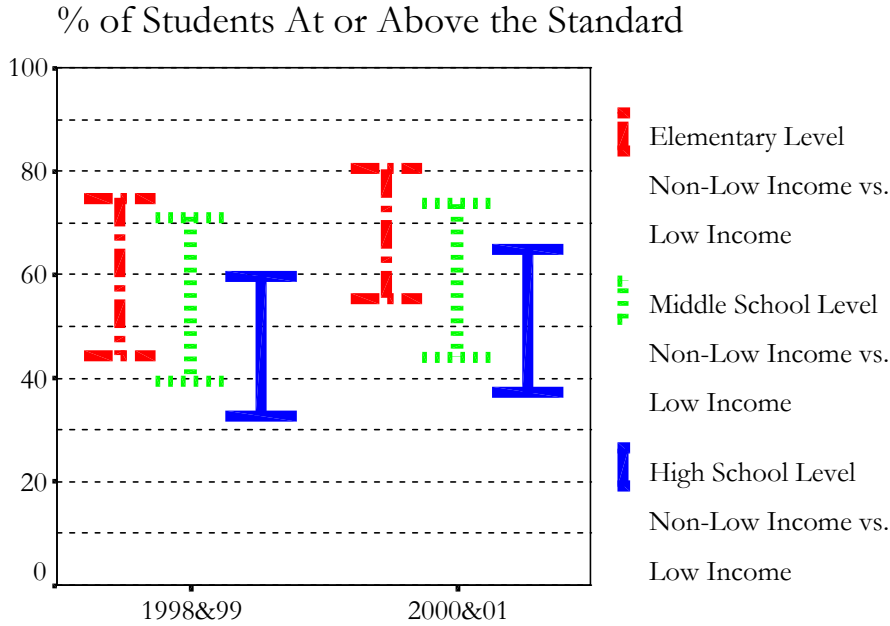


Figure 5

Table 5

| Elementary Level | % of Non-Low Income At or Above | % of Low Income At or Above | Gap |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 74.70 | 44.39 | 30.31 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 80.48 | 55.51 | 24.97 |
| | | Change in Gap ➔ | -5.34 |

| Middle School Level | % of Non-Low Income At or Above | % of Low Income At or Above | Gap |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 71.16 | 39.28 | 31.88 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 73.75 | 44.04 | 29.71 |
| | | Change in Gap ➔ | -2.17 |

| High School Level | % of Non-Low Income At or Above | % of Low Income At or Above | Gap |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 59.71 | 32.69 | 27.02 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 64.91 | 37.16 | 27.75 |
| | | Change in Gap ➔ | 0.73 |

The data presented in Figure 5 and Table 5 indicates that within the area of **reading**:

- Sizable gaps in performance exist between Low Income and Non-low Income students;
- The Low Income—Non-Low Income gap appeared to be decreasing at the elementary and middle school levels; but,
- The Low Income—Non-Low Income gap was relatively unchanged at the high school level.

Low Income—Non Low Income Reading Gaps and School Ratings

| School Level | School Rating | # of Schools with Increasing Gaps | # of Schools With Decreasing Gaps & Improvement | # of Schools with Decreasing Gaps Only |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Elementary | Superior | 3 | 25 | 1 |
| | Commendable | 11 | 32 | 5 |
| | Under Review | 11 | 6 | 1 |
| Middle | Superior | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| High | Superior | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 9 | 8 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 6 | 0 | 4 |
| | TOTAL | 52 | 87 | 17 |

(See note on page 9).

As was the case for the African American—Caucasian comparison in the area of reading, many schools evidenced decreasing gaps and overall improvement when comparing the reading performance of Non-low Income and Low Income students.

Low Income and Non-Low Income Mathematics Comparisons by School Level

Mathematics Performance

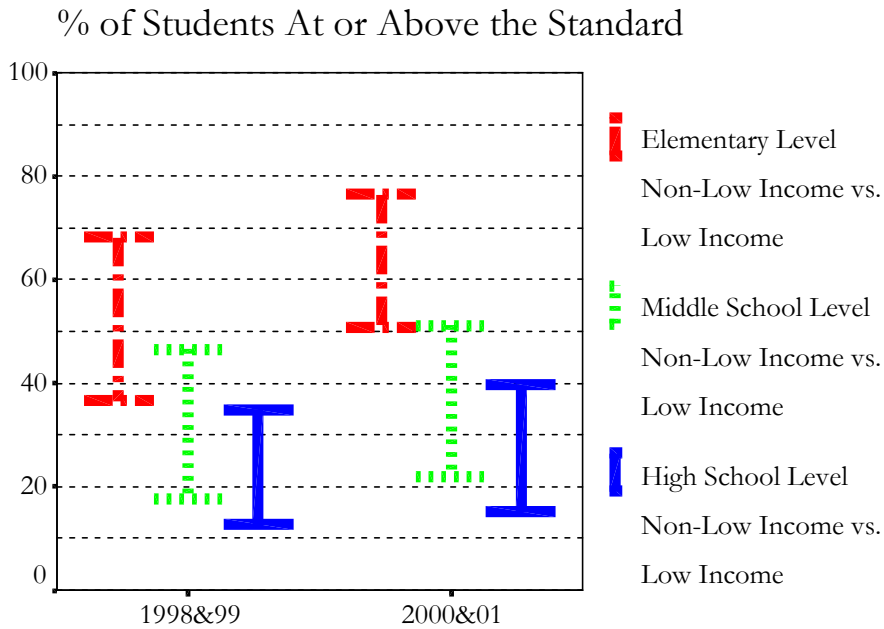


Figure 6

Table 6

| Elementary Level | % of Non-Low Income At or Above | % of Low Income At or Above | Gap |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 68.21 | 36.58 | 31.63 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 76.44 | 50.70 | 25.74 |
| | | Change in Gap → | -5.89 |

| Middle School Level | % of Non-Low Income At or Above | % of Low Income At or Above | Gap |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 46.59 | 17.69 | 28.90 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 51.11 | 21.93 | 29.18 |
| | | Change in Gap → | 0.28 |

| High School Level | % of Non-Low Income At or Above | % of Low Income At or Above | Gap |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1998 & 1999 | 34.90 | 12.58 | 22.32 |
| 2000 & 2001 | 39.71 | 15.13 | 24.58 |
| | | Change in Gap → | 2.26 |

The data presented in Figure 6 and Table 6 indicates that within the area of **mathematics**:

- Sizable gaps in performance exist between Low Income and Non-Low Income students;
- The Low Income—Non-low Income gap appeared to be decreasing over time at the elementary level;

- The Low Income—Non-Low Income gap was relatively unchanged at the middle school level;
- The Low Income—Non-low Income gap appeared to be increasing over time at the high school level; and,
- Overall performance in the area of mathematics was particularly low for both student groups at the high school level.

Low Income—Non-Low Income Mathematics Gaps and School Ratings

| School Level | School Rating | # of Schools with Increasing Gaps | # of Schools With Decreasing Gaps & Improvement | # of Schools with Decreasing Gaps Only |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Elementary | Superior | 3 | 26 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 14 | 32 | 2 |
| | Under Review | 12 | 3 | 3 |
| Middle | Superior | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| High | Superior | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Commendable | 11 | 6 | 0 |
| | Under Review | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| | TOTAL | 62 | 77 | 17 |

(See Note on Page 9)

An examination of the changes to the size of the gap over time revealed that many schools evidenced decreasing gaps with overall improvement in performance but a large number of schools also evidenced increasing gaps in mathematics among Low Income and Non-low Income students.

Summary

The data outlined above clearly indicate that there are currently large achievement gaps separating minority and low income students from other students. While the sizes of the gaps do appear to be reducing in certain areas, other areas have evidenced relatively unchanged or increasing gaps.

However, numbers alone will never tell the full story of what may or may not be occurring within a school or the variety of other factors outside of the school that influence student learning. Therefore the data presented above and reported on the following pages are meant as a starting point for promoting an active dialogue that moves Delaware’s educational community and the community at large from awareness to action.

A Note on How to Read the Individual School Reports

The individual school reports are grouped according to district and contain “fingertip facts” about each of the schools. These fingertip facts represent demographic information about the school from the most recent school profile report available from the Delaware Department of Education. In order to calculate the gap indices the school had to have at least 15 students in each of the groups of interest. For example, some schools did not have 15 Hispanic students in one or more of the testing cycles therefore that school may only have gap indices computed for African American/Caucasian and Low Income/Non-Low Income comparisons.