Closing the Achievement Gap

State Board of Education Study Session
October 2013
What is the data telling us about how our students are performing and improving over time?

Who is making a difference and what can we learn from them?

How can the state support districts in addressing achievement gaps?
What is the data telling us about how our students are achieving and improvement over time?
Student performance has been steadily improving for all students across multiple grades.
Although not shown, year-to-year performance trends for low income students, English language learners, and minority students were largely similar in middle and high school.

Similar trends hold true for math.

Year-to-Year Change in Percent of Students Proficient and Advanced on CSAP/TCAP Reading by Student Demographics - Elementary

- Non-Minority
- Minority
- ELL
- FRL

Source: CDE, CSAP/TCAP Data, Data Lab

ELL: English language learner
FRL: Free and reduced price lunch
Despite this progress, our overall results appear relatively stagnant compared to results nine year ago.
The same is true when we disaggregate by income and minority status. Gaps are large and persistent, despite modest gains.

Similar achievement gaps exist for Colorado English learners, student with disabilities, and on-time graduation rates for all these sub-groups.

Source: CDE, CSAP/TCAP Data, Data Lab
The racial achievement gap is most pronounced for black and Hispanic students.
Controlling for income, gaps remain for students of color.

Reading Achievement: Ethnicity by Free and Reduce Lunch (FRL)

What's Going on?
- Within group income gap
- Between group race gap

Although not shown, the finding holds true for black, Native American, and, to some degree, Asian students.

Source: Analysis by CDE staff, CSAP/TCAP Reading data
Digging Further into the Data
Instead of growing more, our low income and minority students are falling further behind.

Percent of Students Making Catch Up Growth, Math

Less than 1 in 5 students is making sufficient growth to catch up to PROFICIENCY in math within three years or by grade 10. This is even worse for our low income and minority students where the number hovers at 1 in 10 making catch up growth. These numbers have not changed within the last several years.

While reading results are not shown here, about 70% of minority and low income students are NOT making sufficient growth to catch up to proficiency.

Source: CDE, CSAP/TCAP Data, Data Lab
And fewer minority and low income students are making sufficient growth to maintain proficiency.

While about 65% of non-minority and non-FRL students make sufficient growth to maintain proficiency, the number drops to 50% and below for minority and low income students.

1 in 4 minority and low income students is NOT making sufficient growth to maintain proficiency in reading.
How can this be?

Some answers lie in the data...
Data suggests a tendency to concentrate our novice teachers in our highest minority/highest poverty schools.

Source: CDE HR Data, 2011-12
We have a much higher turnover of principals and teachers in our lowest performing districts; and we know that poor and minority students are 4 times more likely than their counterparts to be served in these districts.

Source: CDE HR Data, 2011-12
Fewer percentages of Hispanic/Latino and black students are identified to engage in gifted education experiences.

**Proportion of Students Identified as Gifted**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CDE Student Oct Count, SY2011-12
These “opportunity to learn” indicators suggest we may not be providing all of our students with access to the same opportunities.

- But...that’s not the case across the system.

- We see some districts and schools where the data is playing out differently.
Who is making a difference and what can we learn from them?
Several districts around the state are closing the minority and/or poverty achievement gaps.

- Del Norte
- Delta County
- Garfield 16
- Harrison
- Cherry Creek
- Fort Morgan
- Holyoke
Nisley showed strong achievement gains for many of its student populations.

80.6% of Nisley students qualify for free and reduced price lunch

42.9% of Nisley students are minority

Source: CDE, CSAP/TCAP Data, Data Lab
Streamlined School Systems
- Quarterlies
- PLC Conversations
- Responsive Interventions

District & State Initiatives
- Curriculum Resource Title Schools
- MTSS/ PBIS/ RtI

Family Ties
- Staff Comradery: Together we are all in this!
- Family Engagement: BEAR Nights, Co. Health Foundation, Muffins for Mom
- Community Support: Back Pack Program, High School Mentors

http://youtu.be/meQsEep6Lzs
Harrison School District has successfully narrowed the minority achievement gap in math and reading over time.

70% of Harrison students qualify for free and reduced price lunch

66% of Harrison students are minority

While results are not shown here, Harrison achieved similar gap closing in reading.

Source: CDE, CSAP/TCAP Data, Data Lab
Lessons from Practitioners

- Curry Newton, Principal, Nisley Elementary School
- Deb Lamb, Assistant Principal, Nisley Elementary School
- Edwin Saunders, Elementary School Leadership Officer, Harrison School District
How can the state support districts in addressing achievement gaps?
The steps to achieve and maintain the gains we see in successful districts/schools have been well documented...

- Findings from 2005 Colorado Commission on Closing the Achievement Gap Final Report:
  - Comprehensive data and assessment system to identify gaps
  - High expectations
  - Rigorous, aligned P-16 curriculum
  - Administrator and teacher cultural competencies
  - Parent/community connections
  - Research-based instructional strategies

...Why then, is it so hard to move the needle at scale?
Implementation Challenges

- Inconsistent or unclear expectations across the system
- Staff turnover at all levels in the system
- Changes with service providers
- Management and flexibility issues with vendors
- Uneven implementation
- Limited use of data and poor target/goal setting

Next Steps

How can we build on the lessons learned from the past and from successful districts to close achievement gaps?

- Provide organization-wide focus through CDE strategic plan (Goal 3)

- Build strong delivery plan for our achievement gap work building on lessons learned and working with Education Trust
  - Theory of action
  - Metrics (that can be translated to district/school level)
  - Strategies & action plan

- Implement delivery plan, including but not limited to:
  - Providing statewide data and helping district use/analyze their data
  - Capturing and sharing what is working
  - Partnering with interested districts to implement targeted strategies and to learn how the state can best support districts in this work