AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN 25 YEARS: Will We Need It?

Prepared for the FASHP Colloquium
Washington, DC
Education Trust, 2003
What Do We Know About Student Achievement?
12th Grade Achievement in Math and Science is Up Somewhat
High School Achievement: Math and Science

In Reading, 12th Grade Achievement is Headed Downward
What about different groups of students?

During seventies and eighties, much progress.
Gaps Narrow 1970-88
NAEP Reading
17 Year-Olds

Average Reading NAEP Score

Gaps Narrow 1973-86
NAEP Math Scores, 13 Year-Olds

Between 1988-90, that progress came to a halt...and gaps began to widen once again.
Gaps Narrow, Then Hold Steady or Widen: NAEP Math Scores, 17 Year-Olds

After 1988, Gaps Mostly Widen
NAEP Reading, 17 Year-Olds

Some gains in elementary, even middle grades.
But Value Added in High School Declining
Value Added Declining in High School Math

Age 13-17 Growth

Class of '90: 36
Class of '94: 36
Class of '96: 34
Class of '00: 29

Source: NAEP 1999 Trends in Academic Progress
Reading: Students Entering Better Prepared, But Leaving Worse

Source: NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress
Where are we now at the end of high school?
African American and Latino 17 Year Olds Do Math at Same Levels As White 13 Year Olds

Source: NAEP 1999 Long Term Trends Summary Tables (online)
African American and Latino 17 Year Olds Read at Same Levels as White 13 Year Olds

Source: NAEP 1999 Long Term Trends Summary Tables (online)
Not Surprisingly, These Patterns Also Clear in HS Graduation and College Entry Rates
Even so, there is more access than success
College Going vs. Completion of BA or Higher, Whites

College Going vs. Completion of BA or Higher, Blacks

College Going vs. Completion of BA or Higher, Hispanics

College Freshmen Graduating Within Six Years (NCAA Division I)

Source: 1999 NCAA Division I Graduation Rates Report, p.636
ADD IT ALL UP...
Of Every 100 White Kindergartners:

93 Graduate from High School

65 Complete at Least Some College

32 Obtain at Least a Bachelor’s Degree
(24 Year-Olds)

Of Every 100 African American Kindergartners:

87 Graduate from High School

51 Complete at Least Some College

17 Obtain at Least a Bachelor’s Degree

(24 Year-Olds)

Of Every 100 Latino Kindergartners:

63 Graduate from High School

32 Complete at Least Some College

11 Obtain at Least a Bachelor’s Degree

(24 Year-Olds)

## College Graduates by Age 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young People From High Income Families</th>
<th>60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young People From Low Income Families</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Tom Mortenson, Research Seminar on Public Policy Analysis of Opportunity for Post Secondary.
Even these numbers understate the problem, because there are big differences in the skills of college graduates.
Many College Graduates Demonstrate Weak Quantitative Literacy Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2 Year Degree</th>
<th>4 Year Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 5: High</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1: Low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description: Quantitative Literacy Level 2

- **CAN** Calculate postage and fees for certified mail
- **CAN** Determine difference in price between tickets for two shows
- **CAN’T** Calculate difference between regular and sale price from an advertisement using a calculator
- **CAN’T** Plan travel arrangements for meeting using flight schedule

*Source: USDOE, NCES, National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992, in Literacy in the Labor Force: Results from the NALS, September 1999, p. 15.*
**Description:**

Quantitative Literacy Level 3

- **CAN** Determine correct change using information on a menu
- **CAN** Use information stated in news article to calculate amount of money it takes to raise a child
- **CAN’T** Determine shipping and total costs on an order form for items in a catalog
- **CAN’T** Use information in news article to calculate difference in time for completing a race

**Source:** USDOE, NCES, National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992, in Literacy in the Labor Force: Results from the NALS, September 1999, p. 15.
The Gap Widest At Highest Levels of Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Education</th>
<th>White-Black Gap</th>
<th>White-Hispanic Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prose</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Year Degree</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Year Degree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quant.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Year Degree</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Year Degree</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: USDOE, OERI, Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Results of the National Adult
INEVITABLE?
What We Hear Adults Say:

- They’re poor;
- Their parents don’t care;
- They come to schools without breakfast;
- Not enough books
- Not enough parents . . .
But if they’re right, then why are poor and minority children performing so high in...
Some schools...
Mount Royal Elementary/Middle, Baltimore, MD

- 99% African American
- 73% Low-Income
- Highest Performing in State on state’s 5th grade Math test.
- Top 10% of state in 5th grade reading.
Hambrick Middle School, Aldine, TX

- 94% African American and Latino (state = 56%)
- 85% low-income (state = 50%)
- Has performed in the top fifth of all Texas middle schools in both reading and math in both 7th and 8th grades over a 3-year period.
Poverty vs. Achievement in Kentucky Elementary Schools

Source: Education Trust analysis of data from National School-Level State Assessment Score Database (www.schooldata.org).
Poverty vs. Achievement in Kentucky Elementary Schools

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Poverty vs. Achievement in Kentucky Elementary Schools

Source: Education Trust analysis of data from National School-Level State Assessment Score Database (www.schooldata.org).
Some districts...
Aldine, TX: Raising Achievement for All While Narrowing Gaps

Aldine, TX: Raising Achievement for All While Narrowing Gaps

Passing TAAS math test

- African American
- Latino
- White

And some entire states...
4th Grade Math African American Gains Between 1992 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>+25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>+21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: USDOE, NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Summary Data Tables
# 4th Grade Math

Latino Gains Between 1992 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: USDOE, NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Summary Data Tables*
Delaware: Gains in Grade 4 Reading Outpace the Nation, 1998-2002

- African American Gain: 6
- Latino Gain: 8
- White Gain: 4

Change in Average Score:
- Delaware: 15
- United States: 36

Source: USDOE, NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Summary Data Tables
Big Differences Among States in the Performance of the “Same” Group.

Take a look...
Black 4th Graders? NAEP MATH

How do African American scores in Texas compare?

2000 Grade 4 NAEP Math Average Scale Score (African American)
From Highest to Lowest Performing

NOTE: A difference of 10 points, or one horizontal gridline, is roughly equivalent to a year's worth of learning.

For example, "Students scoring 130 are performing about 2 years behind those scoring 150."

The Education Trust
Hispanic 4th Graders? NAEP MATH

How do Latino scores in Texas compare?

2000 Grade 4 NAEP Math Average Scale Score (Latino)
From Highest to Lowest Performing

NOTE: A difference of 10 points, or one horizontal gridline, is roughly equivalent to a year's worth of learning.
Black 8th Graders? NAEP MATH

How do African American scores in Texas compare?

2000 Grade 8 NAEP Math Average Scale Score (African American)
From Highest to Lowest Performing

NOTE: A difference of 10 points, or one horizontal gridline, is roughly equivalent to a year's worth of learning.
For example, "Students scoring 130 are performing about 2 years behind those scoring 150"
Indeed, poor kids and kids of color in SOME states now performing higher than white and middle-class students in OTHER states.
8th Grade Writing: African Americans in Texas Perform as Well or Better Than Whites in 7 States

- Texas: 146
- Lousisiana: 146
- Mississippi: 146
- Missouri: 146
- Utah: 146
- West Virginia: 145
- Arkansas: 143
- Hawaii: 140

Source: NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress
4th Grade Reading (2002): Latinos in Virginia Perform as Well or Better Than Whites in 17 States

Source: NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
Big differences among similar colleges, as well.
Bottom Line:

- What schools do matters;
- What districts do matters;
- What states do matters; and,
- What colleges do matters…
In other words...

1. There is overwhelming evidence suggesting that the achievement gap that gives rise to the need for affirmative action DOES NOT need to be a permanent fixture. It could be gone within less than 25 years.

2. If present trends continue, however, we will need affirmative action MORE in 25 years than we need it today. But that is a choice, not an inevitability.

3. Neither K-12 nor higher education can fix its own outcomes problems without the other’s cooperation. Yet, rather than work together to meet the challenge of closing the achievement gap, leaders in both systems...
So, what can we do?
PLEASE: NO MORE PROGRAMS. WE HAVE TO MOVE ON TO SYSTEMS CHANGE.
Area 1: Making the College Prep Curriculum the Default Curriculum for All Kids
Transcript Study: single biggest predictor of college success is QUALITY AND INTENSITY OF HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

A Strong H.S. Curriculum* Equals Higher College Completion

*Completing at least “Algebra II” plus other courses.

Area 2: Giving high schools a single target to shoot at by agreeing on a common definition (eg. assessment) of “college ready”.
Area 3: Working on the Rigor Part
There remains a troubling gap between course names and grades—and results on assessments.
End of Course Exams Can Help, but teachers need…

- Help in designing powerful lessons, units;
- Help in developing consistent understanding of what quality work looks like;
- Help with more regular assessments (e.g., 9 weeks) of student progress;
- Some new courses that get at critical content (especially in math, science) in different ways.
Area 4: Good Teachers Matter More Than Anything Else
But poor kids and kids of color get less than their fair share of our strongest teachers.
Classes in High Poverty High Schools More Often Taught by Misassigned* Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Less than 20% Free Lunch</th>
<th>Greater than 49% Free Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teachers who lack a major or minor in the field

Math and Science Classes of Mostly Minority Students Are More Often Taught by Misassigned Teachers

Poor and Minority Students Get More Inexperienced* Teachers

*Teachers with 3 or fewer years of experience. “High” and “low” refer to top and bottom quartiles.
High-Poverty Schools Get More Low-Scoring* Teachers

*Teachers scoring in the bottom quartile on SAT/ACT. “High-poverty” schools have 2/3 or more students eligible for reduced-price lunch.

Devastating Impact
If we had the courage and creativity to change these patterns?
“By our estimates from Texas schools, having an above average teacher for five years running can completely close the average gap between low-income students and others.”

John Kain and Eric Hanushek
Area 5: Getting Serious about Results at EVERY LEVEL.
Both high schools and colleges are losing far too many of their students—including those who are NOT in serious academic trouble.
What works?

- Above all else: Better Preparation;
- Getting the data out there...and OWNED;
- Clear goals for what all students should learn;
- Regular monitoring of student progress; and,
- Smaller, more personal environments.
The Education Trust

For More Information . . .

www.edtrust.org

Washington, DC: 202-293-1217

Oakland, CA: 510-465-6444