

## Minorities Deserve Answers on Education

Minority families depend on good K-12 schools for the learning that leads to lifelong opportunities. But minority students are far less likely to attend strong schools with high expectations and qualified teachers. Minority voters deserve to hear how candidates will improve K-12 schools so every student has a chance to succeed in college, careers, and life.

### ***Minority families place especially high value on education.***

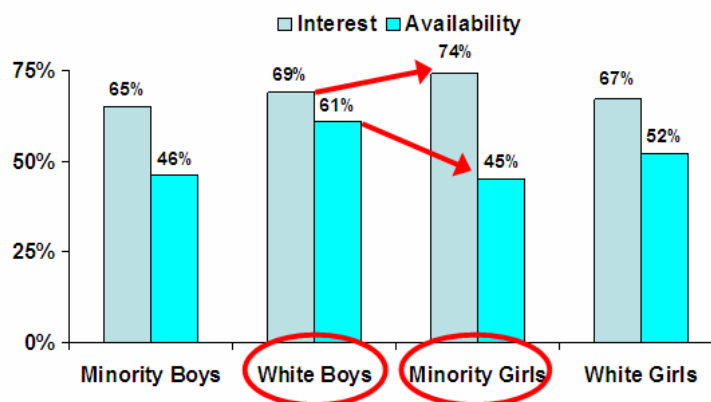
- A national survey of tenth graders by the U.S. Department of Education found that Black students place even *greater* value on education than their White peers. Black students are *more likely* to say that
  - Getting a good education is important (90% vs. 80%);
  - Getting good grades is very important (62% vs. 47%); and
  - Going to school is important for academic reasons rather than extracurricular activities or socializing with friends.
  
- Black students have high educational aspirations. About 77 percent of Black tenth graders say they want to obtain a bachelor's or graduate degree, compared with 81 percent of White students.

### ***However, their plans are thwarted by attending schools with low expectations and unqualified teachers.***

#### ■ Lower Expectations, Fewer Opportunities.

- A national survey of high school students by the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering found that minority girls were the group *most* interested in advanced math courses but *least* likely to have access to them:

Advanced Math Classes: Minority Interest Far Exceeds Availability



Source: Achieve, Inc.

- Students can't reach their full potential when we expect little of them. A study just released by the U.S. Department of Education found that most states have set low standards in math and reading. Almost **5 million** of the nation's Black students attend schools in states that have set proficiency standards so low in fourth grade reading that they fall *below even the most basic level* on a national assessment.<sup>1</sup>

- Fewer Qualified Teachers. Minority students are far less likely to have qualified, experienced, and effective teachers:

- Knowledge and Skills. More than 70 percent of math teachers in America's high-minority middle schools lack even a college minor in math or a math-related field. A recent study by the University of Michigan researchers found that teachers' own math skills have a big impact on student learning even in the earliest elementary school grades. Noting that minority students were less likely to have teachers with good math skills, the researchers wrote, "We find these results shameful."<sup>2</sup>

- Experience. Nationally, teachers in high-minority schools are almost twice as likely to be inexperienced as teachers in low-minority schools. Courses in high-Latino high schools are nearly *twice* as likely to be taught by unqualified teachers as those in high schools with few Latino students.<sup>3</sup>

- Effectiveness. Some states can now measure the impact of classroom teachers on student learning—and there are big inequities in "effectiveness," too. A few months ago Tennessee reported that minority students are 50 percent more likely to have an ineffective teacher and less likely to have an effective teacher.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Poor education leads to low achievement, high dropout rates, and reduced opportunities after high school.***

- Less Learning. Only 13 percent of Black eighth graders read above a proficient level and just over half can even read at the most basic level.<sup>5</sup> By the time they near graduation, Black and Latino teenagers have math and reading skills that are no higher than those of White *middle school* students.<sup>6</sup>

- Too Many Dropouts. *Only about half* of Black and Latino ninth graders graduate from high school with their peers. Black males have the lowest graduation rate—46%.<sup>7</sup>

- Not Ready For College. A recent study by the Manhattan Institute found that Black and Latino students are only about half as likely as White students to graduate from high school prepared for four-year colleges. That means minority students are more likely to fail college placement exams and have to spend money on remedial classes in college. In 2007, the California State University system reported that *two out of three* Black freshmen who enrolled in fall 2006 had to take remedial courses in English or mathematics.<sup>8</sup>

- Low College Completion. At the current college enrollment and completion rates, out of every 100 Black kindergartners, only 10 will obtain a bachelor's degree.<sup>9</sup>

***Solving this problem requires raising standards and giving students good teachers and more time and support for learning.***

■ **Higher Standards:**

- A 2006 study by *Education Week* found that states that had raised academic standards over the past decade were more likely to see gains in math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.<sup>10</sup>
- A national study found that high schools with a more rigorous curriculum have **lower dropout rates** than those that allow students to take many low-level courses. For every two low-level math courses a high school offers, students experience a 30 percent greater probability of dropping out.<sup>11</sup>

■ **Effective Teachers:**

- A study published in 2007 found that having a good teacher boosted math gains for African American ninth graders by 50 percent over what freshmen typically learn during the year.<sup>12</sup>
- Economist Eric Hanushek and colleagues found that assigning disadvantaged students to good teachers rather than average teachers for 4 to 5 years in a row would entirely close the achievement gap.<sup>13</sup>

■ **Time and Support for Learning:**

- Students in KIPP schools get about 60 percent more class time than their peers, and the results are impressive: In Washington, D.C., KIPP fifth graders improved so much in just one year that they rose from the bottom 15 percent to the top 25 percent of students in the nation.<sup>14</sup>
- A national study found that high schools where teachers provide students with high levels of support manage to *cut dropout rates in half*. It found that support is especially important for disadvantaged students who generally drop out at much higher rates.<sup>15</sup>

***Voters deserve to know what the presidential candidates will do to improve K-12 schools so all students are prepared for college, careers, and life.***

---

<sup>1</sup> SAS calculations based on 1) National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). *Mapping 2005 State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. 2) Sable, J., & Garofano, A. (2007). *Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment, High School Completions, and Staff From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2005-2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Washington. Retrieved June 12, 2007 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007352.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Jerald, C. (2002, August). *All Talk and No Action; Putting an end to out of field teaching*. The Education Trust. Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup> *Latino Achievement in America*. (2003). The Education Trust. Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> Peske, H. & Haycok K. (2006, June). *Teaching Inequality. How Poor and Minority Students Are Shortchanged on Teacher Quality*. The Education Trust. Washington, DC.

<sup>5</sup> Data from the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress.

<sup>6</sup> *Latino Achievement in America*. (2003). The Education Trust. Washington, DC.

<sup>7</sup> Greene, J. & Winters, M. (2006, September). *Leaving Boys Behind: Public High School Graduation Rates*. New York: Manhattan Institute.

<sup>8</sup> California State University System, Analytic Studies. (2006). Retrieved June 23, 2007 from [http://www.asd.calstate.edu/proficiency/2006/Prof\\_Sys\\_fall2006.htm](http://www.asd.calstate.edu/proficiency/2006/Prof_Sys_fall2006.htm).

<sup>9</sup> US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. March Current Population Surveys, 1971-2003, in The Condition of Education 2005. <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2005/section3/indicator23.asp#info>

- 
- <sup>10</sup> Education Week (2006, January 5). *Quality Counts 2006: A Decade of Standards-Based Education*.
- <sup>11</sup> Valerie Lee & David Burkam. (2003). *Dropping Out of School: The Role of School Organization and Structure*. *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 353-393.
- <sup>12</sup> Aaronson et al. (2007). *Teachers and Student Achievement in the Chicago Public High Schools*. *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 95-135.
- <sup>13</sup> Hanushek, E. (2006). *Alternative School Policies and the Benefits of General Cognitive Skills*. *Economics of Education Review*, Vol. 25, pp. 447-466.
- <sup>14</sup> Schaffler, S. (2006, December 3). *Three Tips from KIPP*. *Washington Post*.
- <sup>15</sup> Croninger, R. & Lee, V. (2001). *Social capital and dropping out of high school: Benefits to at-risk students of teachers' support and guidance*. *Teachers College Record*, vol. 103, pp. 548–581.