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ACHIEVEMENT GAP

What is the achievement gap?

The Achievement Gap is:

- The difference between the academic performance of various student groups and the academic standards of excellence set by educational institutions and society.

- The achievement gap is best defined by socio-economic status.

- There is a huge academic disparity between the poor and non-poor.

When does the achievement gap start?

- The gap between different groups of children is present before they even experience any schooling.

- By the time children are three or four there is already a standard deviation between student groups.

The Achievement Gap Today:

- The achievement gap was traditionally thought of as a purely black and white issue.

- The achievement gap is rapidly becoming a disparity between non-English speakers and their English-speaking peers.

The causes of the achievement include:

Lower socioeconomic status, location of school, lack of funding for schools, ethnicity, parents education level, unstable family structure, frequently changing schools, and poor health care.

The effects of the achievement gap on students include:

Teachers who are unfamiliar with subject areas, counselors who consistently underestimate potential, expectations that are set too low, amount of work assigned compared to affluent schools, quality of assignments, low-level curriculum is taught, principal who dismiss claims, extra time is not designated to teach fundamentals.

Overrepresentation of African-American Students

Overrepresentation can cause African American students to:

- Be denied access to General Ed. Curriculum

- Receive services that do not meet their needs

- Be inappropriately labeled thus, possibly resulting in low expectations for student success.

- Be at risk for social & emotional problems that may result in destructive post-school circumstances, (e.g. Crimes, drugs, etc.).

District Policy
- Clearly defined vision articulated to community, staff, and students
- Emphasis on literacy programs and conditions that accommodate learning
- Curriculum support and innovation with an emphasis on project-based instruction
- RTI support
- District initiatives and assistance for community involvement in schools.

School Policy
- RTI implementation
- Special Education teachers fully integrated in collaboration with Math, Science, History, and English departments
- Differentiated instruction with a common curriculum
- High expectations of all students
- Data-driven instruction and program monitoring
- Professional development in differentiated instruction, inclusive practices, and literacy
- Collaborative teaching methods
- Systematic and continuous family involvement and contact
- All staff is positive and welcoming to families and highly visible before and after school
- Newsletters and automated phone calls are translated into students' families first language
- Utilize resources like Healthy Start to incentivize apprehensive parents

Classroom Interventions
- High expectations of students
- Consistent routines and procedures
- Literacy across curriculum
- Manipulatives & project-based learning of concepts
- Visual aids & technology
- SDAIE techniques as framework for all classrooms
- Specific interventions.

Helpful websites:

- ***What Works Clearinghouse***
  www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc

- ***National Research Council Committee on Research in Education (CORE)***
  www7.nationalacademies.org/core/

- ***The Florida Center for Reading Research***
  www.fcrr.org/