2021 EQUITY COMMITTEE TOPIC BRIEFING

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP
5/5/2021

Overview

Alignment with 2018 Joint Plan Section - VI: African American Student Achievement/Resource Allocation
Alignment with 2020-2021 African American Achievement Plan - Goal 1: Improve Academic Achievement of African American Students

Achievement gaps are observed when one subgroup of students (e.g., race/ethnicity, students with disabilities, gender) outperforms another group of students, and there is a statistically significant difference between overall average scores. This briefing focuses on the achievement gap between African American students and White, non-Hispanic students in the School District of Indian River County (SDIRC).

To provide a historical context, information related to two major district indicators of the achievement gap, performance on the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) in English Language Arts and Combined Mathematics, are included below. Over time, an achievement gap between African American students and White, Non-Hispanic students in the SDIRC has been observed. A slight narrowing of the District's African American-White, Non-Hispanic achievement gap, as measured by the FSA in English Language Arts and Mathematics, has been observed since 2015-2016, with significant opportunities for improvement remaining. Currently, African American-White, Non-Hispanic achievement gaps in the SDIRC are slightly higher than state achievement gaps, as measured by the FSA in English Language Arts (District Gap = 30 percentage points, State Gap = 29 percentage points) and Mathematics (District Gap = 32 percentage points, State Gap = 29 percentage points).

NOTE: All data displays included in this briefing are rounded to the nearest whole number. However, calculations use "floating" decimal places. As a result, some gaps may appear incorrect due to this. For example, if Group A shows 30.6% and Group B shows 30.4%, the true "gap" between the two will be 0.2%. However, due to rounding, this will show as Group A at 31%, Group B at 30%, and the gap at 0%.

Performance on the FSA – English Language Arts (Grades 3-10)
District % (Count) of Students Performing at Level 3 and Above
Retrieved 05/05/21; Source: FLDOE EdStats, African American Achievement Plan Monthly Progress Monitoring

Race	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
African American	27% (475/1781)	29% (512/1775)	31% (525/1703)	35% (602/1738)	The FLDOE canceled all state assessments due to COVID-19.
White, Non-Hispanic	61% (3574/5819)	62% (3520/5672)	62% (3515/5713)	64% (3663/5702)	
District Gap (% pts)	35	33	31	30	
State Gap (% pts)	29	30	29	29	

Performance on the FSA – Combined Math (Grades 3-10)
District % (Count) of Students Performing at Level 3 and Above
Retrieved 05/05/21; Source: FLDOE EdStats, African American Achievement Plan Monthly Progress Monitoring

Race	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
African American	26% (477/1722)	29% (509/1779)	34% (548/1627)	35% (595/1724)	The FLDOE canceled all state assessments due to COVID-19.
White, Non-Hispanic	60% (3426/5691)	62% (3495/5617)	65% (3490/5339)	66% (3529/5345)	
District Gap (% pts)	34	34	32	32	
State Gap (% pts)	30	29	30	29	

Graduation is the culminating experience of a student's academic career and graduation rates are often analyzed when examining the achievement gap. Since 2016, the gap in graduation rates for African American and White, Non-Hispanic students has narrowed. In particular, in 2015-2016 the African American graduation rate was 17 percentage points lower than the White, Non-Hispanic graduation rate, while in 2019-2020 the African American graduation rate was 5 percentage points lower as compared to the rate of their White, Non-Hispanic peers. With regard to the count of graduates, in 2015-2016 there were 135 African American SDIRC graduates as compared with 199 in 2019-2020.

Percentage of Student Cohort by Race Graduating with a High School Diploma
Districtwide, Charter & Non-Charters
Retrieved 04/29/21; Source: FLDOE EdStats

Race	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
African American	74% (135/182)	80% (149/187)	82% (167/204)	81% (162/201)	90% (199/221)
White, Non-Hispanic	91% (733/808)	90% (683/760)	96% (723/755)	92% (698/761)	95% (655/689)
District Gap (% pts)	17	10	14	11	5
State Gap (% pts)	13	11	8	8	5

An additional layer of discussion regarding the African American-White, Non-Hispanic achievement gap emerged along with the arrival of COVID-19. Beyond the disruptions in learning due to COVID-19, within the School District of Indian River County, significant differences in student enrollment in varying instructional models (i.e., face-to-face, virtual, transitional) by race were observed as schools reopened in 2020-2021. Specifically, higher percentages of African American students were enrolled in remote learning options as compared to White, Non-Hispanic students (please see table below). The full impact of enrollment in remote learning models amidst COVID-19 is yet to be determined but continues to be closely monitored by the District.

Percentage of Students by Race Enrolled in the Brick & Mortar Setting During the 2020-2021 Academic Year
Districtwide, PK-12 Non-Charter Schools
Retrieved 07/31/20, 01/18/21, 04/29/21; Source: Focus Student Software

Race	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
African American	56%	71%	80%	83%
White, Non-Hispanic	75%	83%	86%	86%

While actions implemented to address the achievement gap are most aligned with the goal of "Improve Academic Achievement of African American Students" in the SDIRC African American Achievement Plan, all goals incorporated into the plan are instrumental in supporting the closing of identified achievement gaps. This briefing highlights some of the key actions taken during the 2020-2021 academic year in an effort to eliminate the achievement gap. For further information on the full scope work of the District associated with the achievement gap between African American and White, Non-Hispanic students, including monthly progress monitoring, please click here.

 Key Actions Taken During the 2020 – 2021 Academic Year

- Developed and implemented instructional feedback cycles to support School Improvement Plan implementation and address needs related to the achievement gap.
- Implemented Project A2: Acclimate and Accelerate to address disruptions in learning due to COVID-19.
- Established African American Student Councils at all secondary schools.
- Developed five modules for United in Equity microcredentialing and initiated professional development for administrators and district staff.
- Designed and implemented the use of Power BI data dashboards to increase accessibility and efficiency of data monitoring and data disaggregation by subgroup.
- Conducted Cabinet Level Data Reviews to monitor effectiveness of supports in addressing the achievement gap.
- Conducted district facilitated DataCom reviews with principals to monitor and make recommendations for the improvement of subgroup performance.
- Conducted school-based problem-solving meetings to support continuous instructional improvements and identify and provide students with needed additional supports.
- Provided additional district problem solving and technical support to schools, as identified as needed through district data reviews, related to identified achievement and discipline disparities.
- Required that all out-of-school suspensions be approved by the principal's supervisor prior to assigning an out-of-school suspension to a student to reduce disparities in classroom removals and minimize loss of instructional time.

Progress Monitoring of the Achievement Gap

The District monitors multiple measures related to the achievement gap in various content areas on a monthly basis. For the purposes of this briefing, examples of progress monitoring measures in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics are provided. As indicated previously, additional information on monthly progress monitoring related to the achievement gap can be accessed here. It should be noted that the monthly progress monitoring provides information on performance levels of students at non-charter schools, as charter schools within the District do not enter assessment results on District-supported platforms. Additionally, due to varying instructional models during the current academic year, weighted averages for district-administered unit assessments included in the tables below vary in the number of unit assessments included in the calculated weighted average for each student depending on which instructional model a student was enrolled in each quarter. As a result, the reliability and predictive power of the weighted average for unit assessments varies widely depending on individual student circumstances. As a result, the following data should be interpreted with caution.

The tables below provide information on the number and percentage of African American and White, Non-Hispanic students at the elementary, middle school, and high school level that have a weighted unit assessment average of 55% or above. The threshold of 55% or above is utilized as it has been found to correlate to a Level 3 or above on the Florida Standards Assessments. In the area of English Language Arts, modest gains in the percentage of African American students scoring 55% or above on unit assessments are observed. However, these gains currently are not translating to a consistent closing of the achievement gap across the various levels of schooling due to similar increases in the percentage of White,

Non-Hispanic students scoring 55% or above on unit assessments. In the area of mathematics, a similar trend is observed at the elementary school and middle school levels. However, at the high school level a narrowing of the achievement gap is noted in mathematics, primarily due to a decreasing percentage of White students scoring 55% or above over time.

English Language Arts Unit Assessments – Grades 3-5, Non-Charter Schools
District % (Count) of Students Performing 55% and Above by Race
Retrieved 05/05/21; Source: Unify, African American Achievement Plan Monthly Progress Monitoring

Race	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021
African American	41% (287/694)	45% (311/697)	46% (321/699)	46% (318/698)
White, Non-Hispanic	68% (1080/1588)	72% (1142/1587)	73% (1153/1590)	72% (1146/1591)
District Elementary School Gap (% points)	27	27	27	26

English Language Arts Unit Assessments – Grades 6-8, Non-Charter Schools
District % (Count) of Students Performing 55% and Above by Race
Retrieved 05/05/21; Source: Unify, African American Achievement Plan Monthly Progress Monitoring

Race	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021
African American	24% (163/691)	26% (179/687)	28% (195/685)	29% (198/692)
White, Non-Hispanic	50% (836/1665)	53% (888/1669)	59% (976/1659)	59% (971/1651)
District Middle School Gap (% points)	27	27	30	30

English Language Arts Unit Assessments – Grades 9-12, Non-Charter Schools
District % (Count) of Students Performing 55% and Above by Race
Retrieved 05/05/21; Source: Unify, African American Achievement Plan Monthly Progress Monitoring

Race	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021
African American	13% (60/469)	18% (86/469)	17% (77/465)	16% (76/465)
White, Non-Hispanic	38% (505/1339)	43% (569/1328)	43% (572/1315)	44% (578/1309)
District High School Gap (% points)	25	25	27	28

Mathematics Unit Assessments – Grades 3-5, Non-Charter Schools
District % (Count) of Students Performing 55% and Above by Race
Retrieved 05/05/21; Source: Unify, African American Achievement Plan Monthly Progress Monitoring

Race	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021
African American	50% (347/694)	53% (366/697)	54% (380/699)	54% (379/698)
White, Non-Hispanic	73% (1158/1588)	75% (1185/1587)	76% (1209/1590)	77% (1228/1591)
District Elementary School Gap (% points)	23	22	22	23

Mathematics Unit Assessments – Grades 6-8, Non-Charter Schools
District % (Count) of Students Performing 55% and Above by Race
Retrieved 05/05/21; Source: Unify, African American Achievement Plan Monthly Progress Monitoring

Race	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021
African American	27% (184/691)	36% (244/687)	35% (242/685)	34% (234/692)
White, Non-Hispanic	49% (822/1665)	52% (873/1669)	53% (884/1659)	53% (875/1651)
District Middle School Gap (% points)	23	17	18	19

Mathematics Unit Assessments – Grades 9-12, Non-Charter Schools
District % (Count) of Students Performing 55% and Above by Race
Retrieved 05/05/21; Source: Unify, African American Achievement Plan Monthly Progress Monitoring

Race	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021
African American	7% (34/469)	6% (30/469)	8% (37/465)	7% (33/465)
White, Non-Hispanic	18% (238/1339)	15% (197/1328)	15% (197/1315)	13% (170/1309)
District High School Gap (% points)	11	8	7	6

Planned Next Steps

- Continue implementing planned action steps and monitoring of the African American Achievement Plan.
- Continue to require that all out-of-school suspensions be approved by the principal's supervisor prior to assigning an out-of-school suspension to a student.
- Conduct Cabinet Level reviews of academic and discipline data, including racial/ethnic disparities in achievement and discipline.
- Provide additional district problem solving and technical support to schools, as identified as needed through district data reviews, related to identified achievement and discipline disparities.

- Hold African American Student Council meetings at secondary schools to provide tailored leadership experiences and continue to gather feedback related to their perceptions of their school experiences.
- Review disaggregated results of state assessments and make needed adjustments to District Strategic Plan targets, African American Achievement Plan targets and action steps, and district supports provided to schools.