

# Caucus Council News

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE CAUCUS, BLACK & HISPANIC COUNCILS

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Spring 2015

## Race and Gender Barriers

By Dr. Emma Turner

*Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls: A Call to Action for Educational Equity*, ([www.naacpldf.org/files/publications/Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls\\_0.pdf](http://www.naacpldf.org/files/publications/Unlocking_Opportunity_for_African_American_Girls_0.pdf)) published in September 2014 by the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) and the Legal Defense and Educational, Inc. Fund (LDF) of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), highlights the continued need for greater educational equity, and warns that race and gender disparities in opportunity and academic achievement lead to high dropout rates, limited job opportunities, and increased risk of poverty for African American females. While we have recently focused on education race disparities for African American males, we have neglected to widen our focus to include gender inequity for females.

The NWLC and LDF's report indicates that while most girls are experiencing academic success when compared to their male

counterparts, "African American girls are more likely than any other group of girls to get poor grades and be held back a grade." It is true that African American boys and girls face many roadblocks in acquiring a quality education, but as the report emphasizes, the intersection of gender and race stereotypes has a distinct impact on African American girls. These barriers to success include a lack of access to college and career preparatory curriculum, limited access to extracurricular activities, disproportionate punitive disciplinary practices, and pervasive sexual harassment and violence.

"It is indeed shameful how many African American girls are falling between the cracks of educational systems that ignore their real needs," said NWLC Co-President Marcia D. Greenberger in the article. For example, in the 2011-12 school year, 12 percent of all African American female pre-K-12 students were suspended from school—six times the rate of white girls, and

more than any other group of girls and several groups of boys. Data from 2010 show that a third (34 percent) of African American girls did not graduate from high school on time (within four years), compared with 18 percent of Caucasian female students, and 22 percent of all female students.

The report includes the following important recommendations for policymakers, schools, and community members to help improve the educational and career success of every African American child, male and female.

- Address overly punitive disciplinary practices that disproportionately impact African American girls and push them out of school
- Support programs and alternatives that prevent and reduce African American girls' involvement with the juvenile justice system
- Combat gender-based harassment and violence, and ensure

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of School Board Members**

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that African American girls get the support they need to heal from trauma

- Fund and provide incentives to states to implement programs to support and improve high school completion rates and educational outcomes for pregnant and parenting students
- Improve extracurricular opportunities and participation among African American girls
- Support leadership development among African American girls
- Improve STEM opportunities and achievement for African American girls
- Require the reporting of data that reflect the needs of African American girls
- Invest in the future of African American girls

As school board members entrusted with the important duty of providing all of our students with a quality education, we must ensure our educational policies and practices open the doors of opportunity for all—regardless of race or gender. As Sherrilyn Ifill, president of LDF, said, “Only then will we fulfill the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the ruling that invalidated legal segregation in America 60 years ago.”

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# A Message from NSBA President John Tuttle

If you didn't have a chance to meet me at NSBA's 75th Annual Conference, let me take this opportunity to introduce myself: I'm John Tuttle, and I have both the honor and pleasure of serving as NSBA's president for 2015-16.

Now, none of us can do what we love to do without support and encouragement, and I owe the fact that I can serve in this capacity to my family, friends, and colleagues who have both motivated me and been a great source of support and inspiration. My parents—my father was a farmer and my mother a riveter during World War II—instituted in me the strong belief that with hard work and determination I could do anything. I of course believe that still today, and it's been a big part of what inspires me in my life and my board service.

I also know that hard work and determination are not always enough. To be truly successful requires access to educational tools and opportunities, combined with support and empowerment.

Too many of our youth don't have access to the tools that they need to be successful. Yes, the high school graduation rate has climbed to 81 percent, but what does that mean when there is no equal access to a high quality education and educational opportunities?

When there is still a large achievement gap for our underserved students?

You, our Councils and Caucus members play a vital role in closing that gap by promoting and advancing equitable educational opportunities for every child, and furthering the much-needed national dialogue.

I thank you all for your service and your work as part of the National Black Council of School Board Members, National Caucus of American Indian/Alaska Native, and National Hispanic Council of School Board Members. Each of you are critical partners of NSBA, and I applaud your commitment and dedication to ensuring every child's school experience is filled with rich learning opportunities where every child has the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential.

I look forward to working with each of you over this next year and having an open dialogue dedicated to improving the educational achievement and outcomes of every child. We will address the challenges of meeting the needs of our underserved students so that every student is empowered and has access to the tools they need in order to be successful.

We can do it.

**I look forward to working with each of you over this next year and having an open dialogue dedicated to improving the educational achievement and outcomes of every child.**

# More minority students graduate on time

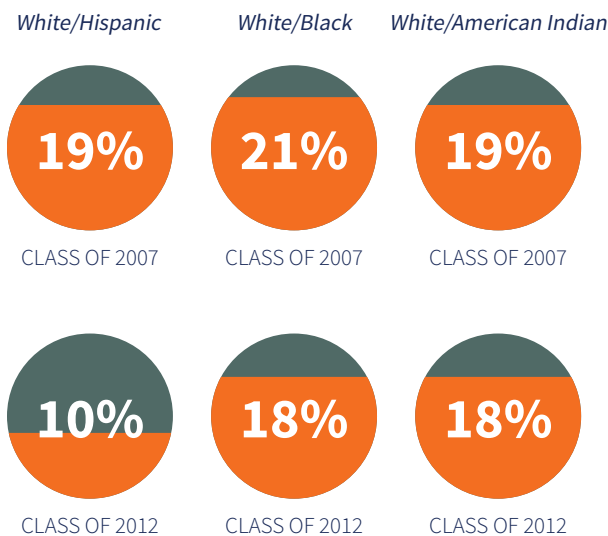
The Class of 2012 was the first class to achieve an overall 80 percent on-time graduation rate. Prior to that, on-time graduation rates had hovered around the 70 percent mark for most of the previous four decades. The main reason – significant gains by Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students in just the last five years.

## Overall On-time Graduation Rates

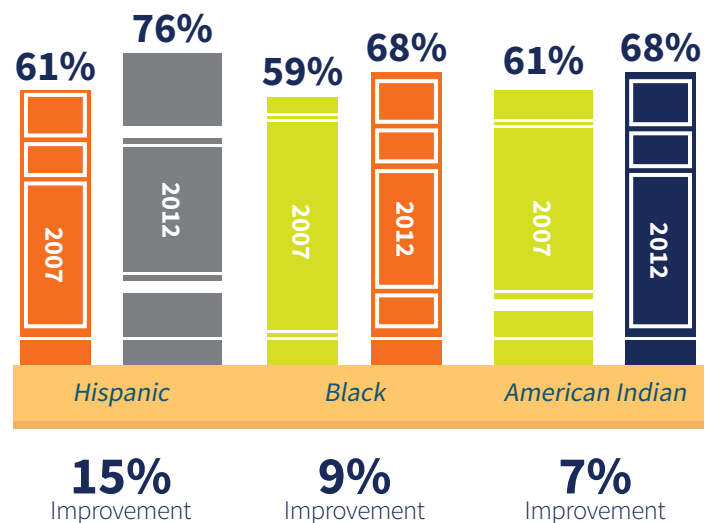


In addition, the graduation gap between minority and white students is narrowing.

## Attainment Gaps



## On-time graduation rates, 2007-2012, by race.



## On-time Graduation Rates by State and Race in 2012

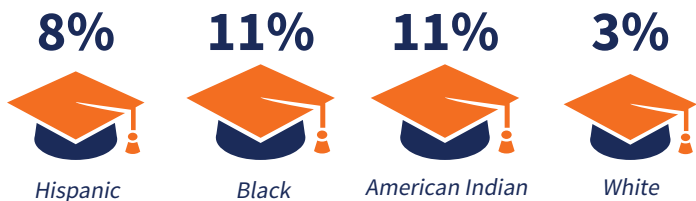


## Graduation rates less than 60%



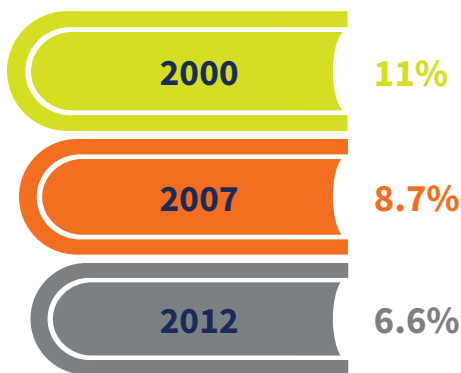
According to NSBA's Center for Public Education, black, Hispanic, and American Indian students are more likely than other groups to take five or six years to earn a standard diploma.

### Students Who Take Longer Than Four Years to Graduate High School



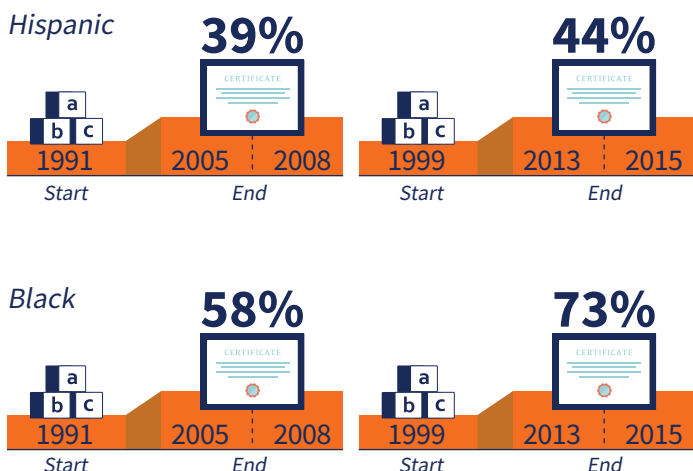
In addition, fewer students are leaving high school without a degree even if it takes them more than four years to graduate or earn some other high school credential such as a GED.

### Percent of 16 to 24 year olds not enrolled in school and had not earned a high school credential



Why such dramatic improvement in such a short period of time? The evidence suggests a number of factors contributed such as the increase in minority children attending preschool and completing more rigorous courses in high school.

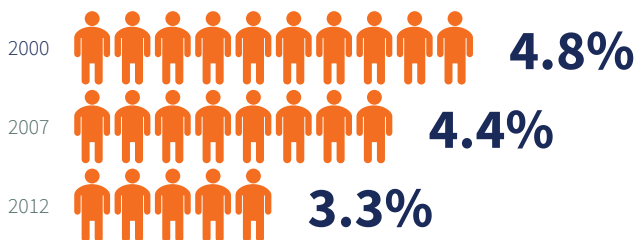
### More minority 3-5 year olds attended preschool



### Fewer minority students are dropping out

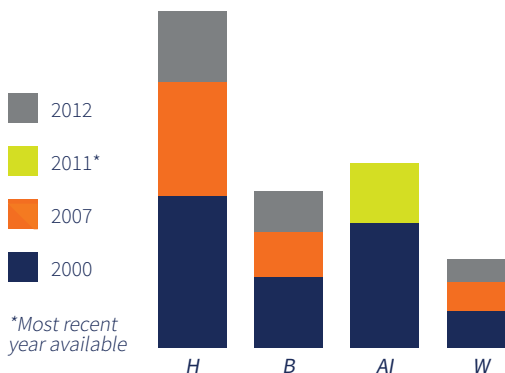
Not only are more students graduating, more students are staying in school. Since the turn of the century dropout rates have declined.

#### Percent of students in grades 9-12 who dropped out within the past year

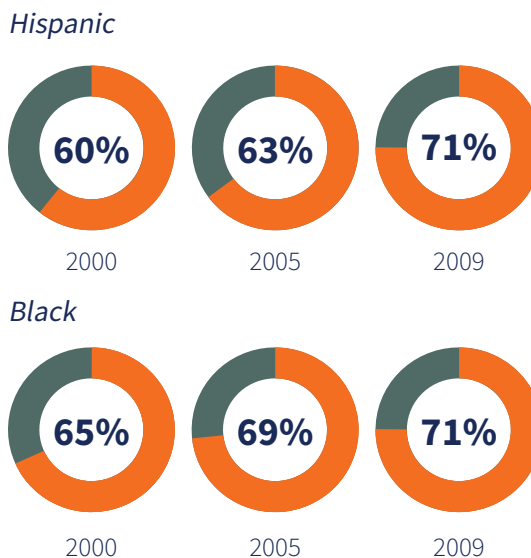


As with graduation rates, minority students are the main cause for the decline in dropout rates and gaps between them and white students is narrowing.

### Percent of 16 to 24 year olds not enrolled in school and had not earned a high school credential by race



### More minority students are completing Algebra II



Public schools have made significant progress graduating students of color. Even so, more improvements need to be made in order to close the gap between minority students and their white peers.

# Greetings from the National Black Council Chair Ellis Alexander

On behalf of The National Black Council of School Board Members (NBC) I wish to extend my greetings! I am Ellis Alexander of Hahnville, Louisiana, the current chairman of this illustrious organization. As you may already know, we are a Council of NSBA serving as advocates on issues of achievement for all students but especially those of color. Our membership is open to all!

The National Black Council held our annual business meeting and elections in Nashville, Tennessee. I would like to introduce you to our new board members: Devin del Palacio (Arizona), Pacific Region Director, and Patricia Anne Bourgeois (Texas) Southern Region Director.

We are excited to have them on the board. They both bring unique experiences and insights that will greatly assist in furthering our mission and objectives.

I would also like to re-introduce our continuing board members: Emma Turner (California) Chair-Elect; Carla Windfont (Texas) Secretary-Treasurer; Paul Chatman (California) Immediate Past Chair; Elizabeth Campbell (Illinois) Central Region Director; John Wyche (New York) Northeast Region Director; and Frank Henderson, Jr. (Kansas) Western Region Director.

Do not hesitate to contact any of us about the NBC.

During NSBA's Annual Conference, we welcomed Roland Martin, the award-winning and multifaceted journalist as our luncheon keynote speaker. Martin delivered a powerful message challenging the attendees to become Radical Education Revolutionaries—individuals who are focused on addressing the academic needs of African American students by creating equitable economic and education opportunities.

Conference attendees also participated in two sessions we hosted. The first one was a collaboration between the Center for Public Education, National Caucus of

American Indian/Alaska Native School Board Members, National Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members, and the Council of Urban Boards of Education, focused on third-grade literacy titled *Early Literacy: The Importance of Every Child Reading on Grade Level by 3rd Grade*. Dr. Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro, Research & Policy Analyst, Latino Policy Forum, presented research on the impact of students not reading on grade level by the third grade and what school board members can do. During this session, we released a white paper on the same topic titled—*Learning to Read, Reading to Learn*.

We also hosted the second half of a two-part series focused on addressing racial disparities in out-of-school suspension. Facilitated by Dwanna Nicole, Senior Policy Advocate, Advancement Project and Matt Haney, School Board Member, San Francisco Unified School District, *Using Restorative Practices to Promote a Positive Culture and Supportive Climate in Schools*, examined the success of restorative justice as an effective alternative to out-of-school suspension. Both sessions were well attended.

As we look forward to the upcoming fiscal year, we have already started planning for NSBA's Annual Conference in Boston. At our retreat this summer, we are planning on finalizing the breakout session topics, joint session programming, and selecting the luncheon keynote speaker. Also we will be looking at coordinating a few webinars and other activities to further our mission in providing support and assistance in improving the academic achievement of all students, especially African American students.

For those who have not yet become members of the council, there's always an opportunity to join! Remember, we welcome all board members whose interest is to serve all students. Check the NSBA website for more information at [www.nsba.org/services/national-black-council-school-board-members](http://www.nsba.org/services/national-black-council-school-board-members).

# Greetings from the National Hispanic Council Chair Lillian Tafoya

On behalf of the NSBA National Hispanic Council of School Board Members, I am honored to bring you greetings and to inform you of our recent activities. Many of you attended the NSBA Conference in Nashville and participated in our very successful Breakfast Meeting, Business Meeting, Breakout session, and our Joint Council/Caucus Session.

During our annual breakfast, we honored Octaviano “Tony” Gonzales by renaming the Abrazo Award after him. Elizabeth Sanchez became the first recipient of the Octaviano “Tony” Gonzales Award. Our speaker, Richard Santana, was very inspirational as he shared his personal story from “Homeboy to Harvard.” The breakout session on Parent Engagement was well attended. We also hosted a joint session with the Center for Public Education, Council of Urban Boards of Education, National Black Council of School Board Members, and the National Caucus of American Indian/Alaska Native School Board Members, where we released a white paper, *Learning to Read, Reading to Learn*. The third grade is a critical point in every child’s education. Research shows that those who not do learn to read proficiently by the end of third grade face daunting challenges in successfully completing school and in life beyond school. The white paper discusses how school boards can provide support to students who are struggling with literacy through best practices focused on investment in pre-Kindergarten, community partnership, extended-day learning opportunities, developing teacher’s capacity, and other strategies.

During our business meeting and elections, we elected the following new officers: Jesus Rubalcava (Ariz.) Chair Elect; Stephanie Parra (Ariz.) Vice Chair; and John Gomez (Ariz.) Pacific Region Director.

Appointments for the positions of Central, Northeast, Southern, and Western Region Directors are still

pending. If you are interested and able to serve, please submit your letter of interest and a bio to Aaron Dorsey, Manager, Caucus Services at [adorsey@nsba.org](mailto:adorsey@nsba.org).

I am also pleased to report that the NHC submitted resolution on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics Education was adopted by NSBA’s Delegate Assembly. As you know, minorities and women are seriously underrepresented in many STEAM fields and the Hispanic community is integral to maintaining our nation’s competitiveness.

We have regularly adhered to our monthly conference calls that enable us to collaborate and to generate a consistent flow of ideas from the regions to advance our work. Each call leaves us with increased knowledge and an action plan to move forward.

We will be holding our Annual Fall Retreat in Alexandria, Virginia, to revisit our Strategic Plan, realign our work, and establish new goals as part of the new NSBA.

We are a “Voice for the Future”! We are an army of advocates who seek to improve the Latino educational achievement at the local, state, and national levels, and strengthen our country’s human capital. The work of the NHC is to serve and provide resources to further the mission of NSBA. This is accomplished by addressing issues that focus on building the capacity and understanding of school boards around the issue of equity and achievement.

Finally, and most importantly, “no one of us is as effective as all of us!” If you are not already a member, we need for you to join. Membership applications can be obtained at [www.nsba.org/services/national-black-council/how-join](http://www.nsba.org/services/national-black-council/how-join).

As a member you will receive quarterly newsletters, access to webinars, Federal Legislative updates, policy guides, white papers, and other resources. Your voice is important! Your membership counts.

# Reports of Note

## What's trending in education

### ***Maximizing Competency Education and Blended Learning: Insights from Experts***

Although good for all students, underserved students can particularly benefit from a personalized learning environment where their unique learning needs are addressed. This report guides districts and schools to help them turn from traditional educational models to “personalized, competency-based systems that take full advantage of blended learning.”  
<http://bit.ly/1CBcK6p>

### ***Quantifying Hope: Philanthropic Support for Black Men and Boys 2015***

This Foundation Center brief presents the philanthropic trends of foundations and their growing support of black men and boys in America. Detailing many of the programs and donations, as well as outcomes and impacts, the brief offers recommendations for directing support in the future.  
<http://bit.ly/1IB5rxt>

### ***How Do School Leaders Respond to Competition? Evidence from New Orleans***

This study commissioned by the Education Research Alliance examines school choice in New Orleans, drawing interesting conclusions on the varied strategies schools embraced in response to the competitive pressure stemming from choice.  
<http://bit.ly/1Eleeq9>

### ***A Matter of Equity: Preschool in America***

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) discusses the importance of—and unequal access to—high-quality early learning opportunities for children. Calling attention to the benefits of quality preschool for both our nation’s children and the economy, ED appeals for expanded investment and opportunities for preschool children in the rewrite of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).  
<http://1.usa.gov/1Pg5XCw>

### ***Preparing Students for Jobs: Ensuring Student Success in the Workforce***

This infographic from the Data Quality Campaign calls for states to utilize a combination of K-12, postsecondary, and workforce data—through the development of a cross-agency governance council and secured linked data systems—to inform decision-making and improve student success in the workplace.  
<http://bit.ly/1A3zB9w>