
Selected Conditions of Education
for African Americans and
Other Children of Color
in Washington State

**WASHINGTON STATE COMMISSION
ON AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS**

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INTRODUCTION

It is beyond debate that the future of our country and the future of our children are dependent on one another. It is imperative then that Washington state make quality education for all children its number one priority.

Unfortunately, there are still structured expectations by society that mar the potential of children of color. In many cases, these children face not only poverty and discrimination, but also a society that does not understand that children of color are academically left behind or left out because of their perceived inabilities. This state cannot develop an equitable education system without addressing the needs and perspectives of children of color.

Education expert Ray Marshall of the University of Texas writes in *The Quality of Education for Minorities and the American Future*, "the crises in our economy and in our schools are exacerbated by some demographic developments that should create a sense of urgency about improving the performance of both systems. One of these is the changing racial composition of our work force. White males, the main source of most elite workers in the mass production system, will constitute less than 10 percent of the net growth in the work force between now and the year 2000. Minorities will constitute about 53 percent of the growth and white women just over one-third, which is 34.5 percent. Indeed, by the year 2080, non-Hispanic whites will most likely be a minority of the U.S. population. In other words, with the exception of women, the largest growth in our population and work force will be by people who currently are served very poorly by our schools."

This scenario is echoed in "State Government and the Workforce of the Future," a report published by the Office of Financial Management, "if the rise in non-white participation in the state government PB (Personnel Board) workforce matches their expected growth in the national workforce (as forecast by the Bureau of Labor Statistics), the non-white share of (state) government will be 16 percent in the year 2000. Under this scenario, the Asian Pacific and Hispanic share shows the fastest rise, with Asian Pacific surpassing Blacks as the most prevalent minority in the state government PB work force by the mid-1990's."

There is a definite link between the quality of education that our children receive today and the quality of the work force tomorrow. Technological changes are requiring our work force to have higher order thinking skills. Without the fundamental knowledge and skills acquired with accurate preparation in K-12 education, the work force of the future will be unable to meet the demands of an always changing technological milieu. Besides being improbable, it will be ineffective to attempt to re-train this future labor force when the failure of the educational system becomes this group's failure to integrate themselves into the work force.

This report will provide an overview of selected educational conditions affecting African American and other children of color in Washington state. The report focuses on selected linkages throughout the K-12 public education system: early childhood education, standardized testing, dropout rates, and high school graduation rates.

The achievement performance of African Americans as a group in Washington state is well below that of white students in all categories. When compared to other groups of color, the performance levels of African American students are most similar to that of Native American and Hispanic students.

In the aggregate, Asian Pacific Americans experience greater educational success than other children of color. However, when data is disaggregated for ethnic sub-groups, it is clear that there are varying degrees of success within this population; Filipinos, Samoans and Southeast Asians, on the whole, experience lesser degrees of success.

In early childhood education, actual participation numbers for children of color have increased as the state's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program has expanded. Despite increases in their actual numbers, it appears that Asian Pacific Americans and Hispanics now constitute smaller portions of the program than they did before. However, when examining these changing numbers, it must also be of consideration that race and ethnicity are self declared and that the "other" and "no response" categories are of significant size.

In the area of achievement, standardized test results indicate that children of color are continually performing at levels below their actual grade placement. Results also indicate that children of color are scoring at much lower levels than white students on standardized exams.

We have also discovered that, most children of color, particularly African American children, are two to three times as likely as white students to dropout before completing high school. In spite of small increases, graduation rates for children of color, except Asian Pacific Americans, are lower than their white classmates.

Compiling statistical data for this report was problematic. In many cases, information and statistics had never been disaggregated by race and those that were available were outdated. The most challenging portion of gathering data for this report was discovering inconsistencies in reported data as they relate to actual numbers. In the end it became evident that there were significant discrepancies in the methods by which information is reported.

Although this report does not contain a comparative analysis of children of color in Washington state to children of color on a national level, one fact we find worth mentioning is dropout rates. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, between 1963 and 1987, the national dropout rate for African Americans declined from 9.2 percent to 6.7 percent. In Washington state, the dropout rate for African Americans increased from 13.86 percent in 1987 to 14.55 percent in 1988. Thus, in 1987, Washington state had an annual dropout rate almost twice that of the national dropout rate for African Americans.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Washington State Board of Education's mission statement affirms that the primary purpose of public education is to assure learning experiences to help all children develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes fundamental to achieving individual satisfaction and to becoming responsible, contributing citizens in this rapidly changing society.

However, for children of color, particularly African Americans, public schools have not provided them with the same experiences and benefits that those same schools have provided to whites. Children of color are increasingly experiencing disproportionate rates of success when compared to white students. Equity and equality in most instances have been illusions.

In order for children of color to effectively compete in a new and always changing technological milieu, we must recognize and re-evaluate the barriers in the public education system and take appropriate action immediately. Even beyond this, the state of Washington has a moral duty to responsibly and effectively educate all of its children, regardless of race or ethnicity.

Many children of color, particularly African American children, begin school with developmental skills that are disproportionately behind white children. Studies indicate that low-income children who attend preschool programs have an increased likelihood of success through high school over those who do not attend. Those low-income preschoolers who complete these programs generally have higher learning levels, better developed problem solving skills, better academic preparation for school, are held back in school less often, and have higher graduation rates from high school.

Studies also show that low-income preschool participants go on to generally have lower rates of delinquency and teenage pregnancy, will be more likely to go to college, and will have higher employment rates than those that did not participate in early childhood education programs. These results demonstrate that early childhood education is an essential, necessary and important component of education for all eligible children.

The Washington State Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) provides economically disadvantaged and at-risk children with developmental, social, dental and nutrition services. The program makes it possible for four-year-olds to better learn by removing the barriers of health problems and hunger, as well as by providing positive parenting assistance.

While comparative findings of ECEAP participants and non-participants are unavailable this early in the longitudinal study, preliminary results from this independent tracking study¹ reflect the success and promise of other preschool programs. Year One findings indicate that ECEAP has a positive impact on both the participating children and their families. Children are making progress toward school readiness as indicated by gains on tests of cognitive skills and a decrease in scores suggesting a need for special services. Additionally, study results indicate that participating parents enjoy enhanced financial, personal and parenting resources secured through ECEAP. Similar results appear to be evident in the preliminary findings from Year Two of the longitudinal study with highly significant gains made in cognitive test results and motor skills, as well as in confidence and self-worth.

Footnote 1

In each of the last two academic years, one-third of ECEAP program participants have been identified and placed in a study group; two-thirds of the ECEAP programs were involved in the study's first two years. The study, conducted by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, assesses children with two tests, administered in the fall and again in the spring. Study group participants and their families will be tracked through completion of grade four. Actual comparative assessment will not be conducted until a control group of eligible but non-participating children is identified and integrated into the study in 1990-91 and similarly tracked.

The specific impact of the ECEAP program on children and families of color has not yet been specifically studied due to their insufficient numbers within the sample group. Year One findings anticipated that representation of children and families of color would significantly increase within the sample groups included in the subsequent waves of the longitudinal study, thus providing an opportunity for assessment.

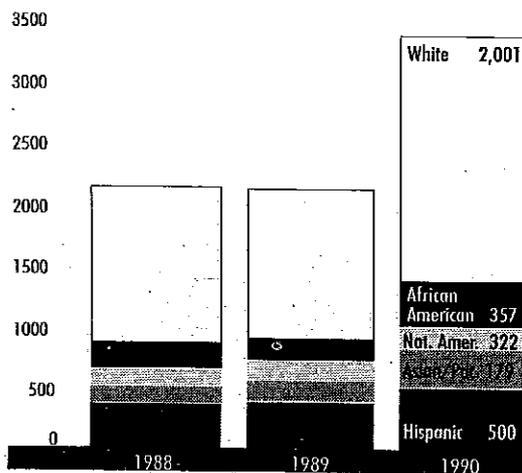
The ECEAP program was initiated in 1986 in a few urban areas with significant populations of people of color. As the program was expanded, new sites were developed and existing sites expanded. The Governor and the Legislature have established a goal of making ECEAP available in every county. From initially serving 1,000 children through 12 contractors, in 1989-90, the program expanded to serve over 4,000 children through a total of 28 contractors.

During the past year, ECEAP targeted new funds to counties that previously had no access to either Head Start or ECEAP. Six contractors were added for program year 1990 to assure service to all Washington counties, bringing the total of children served to over 5,000 and the total of contractors to 34.

In addition to the original urban sites, ECEAP now serves children in rural, remote and suburban areas of the state. Many of these new sites are located in areas of the state with very few people of color.

Expansion of the program dramatically increased participation numbers for all ethnic groups. However, participation for most children of color did not keep pace with the overall participation increase in the ECEAP program. Hispanics and Asian Pacific Americans appear to constitute smaller proportions of the overall programs in 1990 than they did in 1988; Native Americans appear to compose a larger proportion; and African Americans appear to make up the same proportion.

Participation in the
Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program



Notes in 1990. 107 children classified as "Other" and anticipated in ECEAP. These two classifications respectively posted 143.7 percent and 387.4 percent increases in participation 1988-1990.

Participation increases for most children of color did not keep pace, largely due to the mandate to serve all counties in the state which, in turn, resulted in the expansion of ECEAP programs in areas with very few persons of color. Additionally, it is possible that Head Start, which targets the same pool of children of color, may have enlisted many potential ECEAP enrollees. It is difficult, if not impossible, to measure this impact because Head Start does not disaggregate race/ethnicity data on an annual basis.

Over a three-year span, the enrollment in ECEAP has increased, from 2,199 to over 4,000 enrollees; data, however, is only available for 3,573 of these children. The database for all children in the ECEAP programs will be completed by Northwest Regional Education Laboratory in January 1991.

Since 1988, every group has experienced an increase in actual participation numbers in ECEAP. The table shows the available data to detail these increases. It also indicates a total participation increase from 2,199 in 1987-88 to 3,573 in 1989-90, an increase of 62.5 percent.

ECEAP Participation by Race

Group	1988	1989	1990	Percent Increase 1988-1990
White	1,275	1,232	2,001	56.9
African American	220	176	357	62.5
Asian Pacific American	132	154	179	35.4
Native American	132	176	322	143.7
Hispanic	374	396	500	33.8
Other	22	22	107	387.4
No Response	44	44	107	143.7
Children of Color	924	968	1,572	
White	1,275	1,232	2,001	
Total	2,199	2,200	3,573	62.5

Calculations based on the 1980 US Census indicate that, in 1990, there are a total of 14,888 four-year-olds who are income-eligible. Of these children, ECEAP is targeting 5,000 for service by the end of the 1989-91 biennium. Head Start will serve 6,595 of these children. Additionally, Head Start anticipates adding 580 children during program year 1991. A balance of 2,713 eligible four-year-olds will be left unserved by any program. It is not possible to conduct an analysis of the race/ethnicity breakdown of this remaining population because the US Census projection for income eligible four-year-olds is not disaggregated.

STUDENT POPULATION

The student of color population in Washington state has increased markedly during the past decade; this trend is expected to continue and expand. During the 1989-90 school year, children of color made up almost 17 percent of all children enrolled in grades K through 12 in public and private schools of the state. Children of color made up slightly more than 17 percent of students enrolled in the public system; African American children comprised slightly more than 4 percent. The table below details public and private school enrollments by ethnic group for 1989-90.

1989-90 Public and Private School Enrollment by Ethnic Group

	Public %▼	Private%◆	Total%◆
All Children of Color	17.1	14.8	16.9
African American	4.1	3.9	4.1
Asian American	5.3	6.3	5.4
Hispanic American	5.2	2.6	5.0
Native American	2.4	2.1	2.4

▼ Based on October 1 enrollment counts

◆ Percent of all enrolled students in each classification

Public School Population Changes from 1979-80 to 1989-90

	Enrollment 1979-80 ³	Enrollment 1989-90 ³	Enrollment Change 1979-89 ⁴	Percent Change ⁵
African American	24,172 3.2%	32,964 4.1%	8,792 17.8%	36.4%
Asian American	22,220 2.9%	43,325 5.3%	21,105 42.7%	95.0%
Hispanic American	23,372 3.1%	42,142 5.2%	18,770 37.9%	80.3%
Native American	18,972 2.5%	19,771 2.4%	799 1.6%	4.2%
All Children of Color ²	88,736 11.6%	138,202 17.1%	49,466 106.9%	55.7%
White	675,239 88.4%	672,030 82.9%	-3,209 -6.9%	-0.5%
Total	763,975	810,232	46,257	6.1%

¹ Based on October 1 enrollment counts for grades K-12.

² Children of color includes African American, Asian American, Hispanic American and Native American

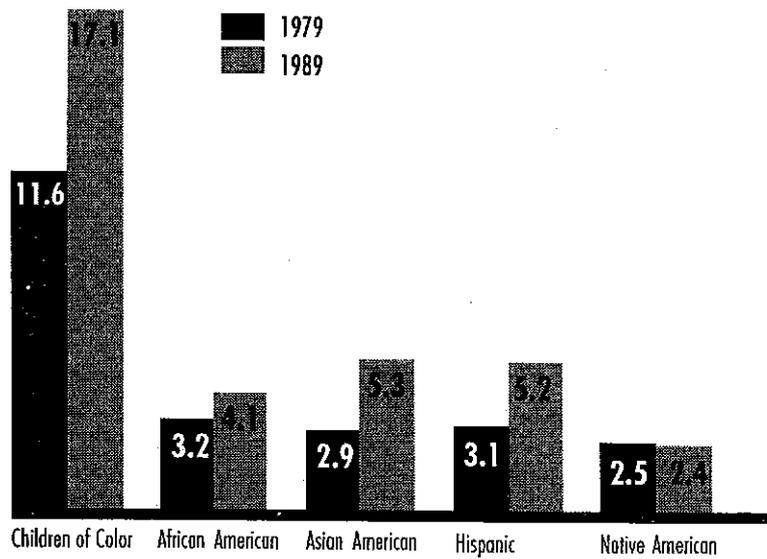
³ Percent of total public school enrollment from respective year

⁴ Percent of total enrollment change (46,257) from 1979-80 to 1989-90

⁵ Percent change for each ethnic/racial subgroup from 1979-80 to 1989-90

The enrollment of children of color in public schools for 1989-90 represents a substantial increase over the numbers from a decade earlier (1979-80). As indicated in the table and graph below, children of color made up about 11.6 percent of the public school population in 1979-80. These percentages represent an increase of nearly 50,000 children of color during that ten-year period. The number of African American children increase by almost one-third, while the numbers of Asian Pacific Americans and Hispanics nearly doubled. There was only a slight increase in the number of Native American children, while the number of white children declined by 0.5 percent.

Ethnic Composition of the Public School Population in 1979-80 and 1989-90



Current trends not only reflect a high growth rate, but also a continuum of students of color not performing at grade level. Data from the Washington State Assessment program generally show achievement scores for children of color to be well below their white classmates.

In the fall of each year, as a part of that assessment program, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction administers basic skills achievement tests to all students in selected grades. Between 1985 and 1989 the Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition (MAT6) were administered to all students in grades 4, 8 and 10 as a part of the Washington State Assessment program. The tests were given in the basic skill areas of reading, mathematics, and language. The reading tests covered reading vocabulary and comprehension; the mathematics tests were in the sub-areas of computation, concepts, and problem solving; and the language tests included sub-tests in spelling, language, and expression.

Over the five years between 1985 and 1989, MAT6 scores for children of color were generally well below their white classmates. The average (median national percentile rank) scores from the 1989 assessment show African American children performing well below their actual grade level in all three test areas.²

The middle or median fourth grade African American student in Washington state in 1989 had a national percentile score in reading of 33, indicating that the lower half of the African American children had percentile rank scores lower than 33, while the upper half had scores equal to or greater than 33. By comparison, the average (median) white student had a score of 60, indicating white students were evenly divided among those with scores above and below 60.

Footnote 2

A percentile rank score indicates a student's relative standing in comparison to other pupils in the same grade in the national norm (reference) group who took the test in the fall of 1984. The percentile rank score expresses the percentage of students in the norm group who scored the same as, or lower than, the student being considered. That is, a student with a percentile rank score of 52 would have scored equal to, or higher than, 52 percent of the students in the national norm group.

The median national percentile rank describes the relative standing of the middle or average student in the particular group of students being described. For example, a median national percentile score as high as, or higher than, 47 percent of the students who were in the national norm group in the fall of 1984. The median or average for the norm group is always a score of 50.

Average National Percentile Rank Scores by Subgroup for Fall 1989 Assessment at Grades 4, 8, and 10

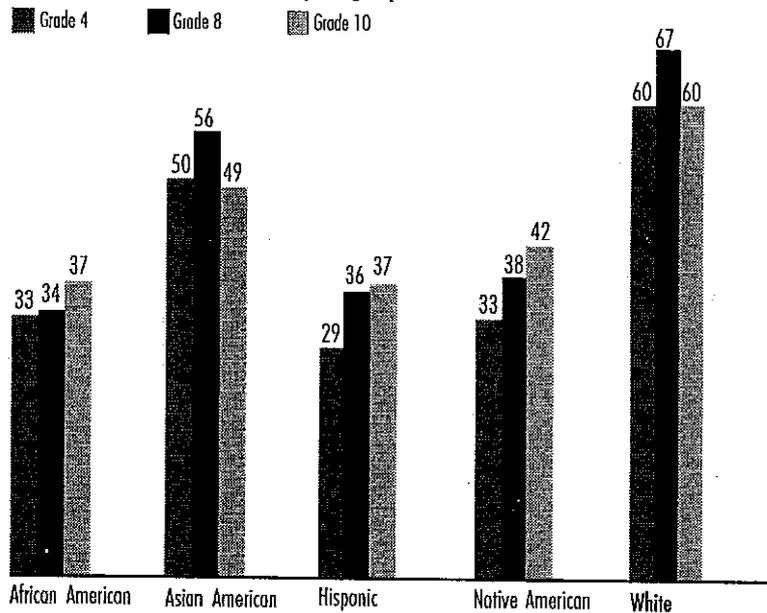
	Reading			Mathematics		
	4	8	10	4	8	10
African American	33	34	37	37	31	34
Asian American	50	56	49	60	66	68
Hispanic American	29	36	37	37	34	40
Native American	33	38	42	41	36	40
White	60	67	60	58	61	61

Averages are the median for students tested in Washington State in the fall of 1989. The conversion to national percentiles are based on the 1984 normative data.

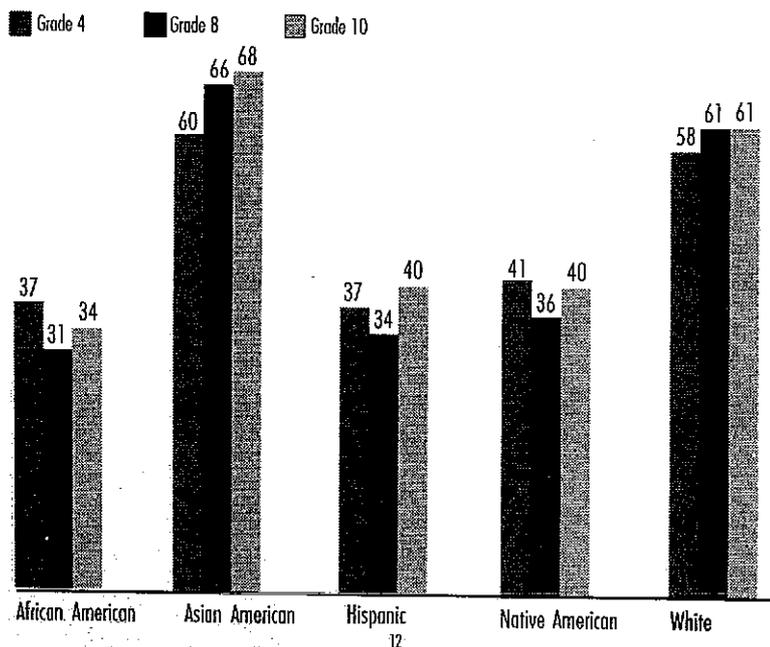
STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The pattern of children of color generally scoring worse than their white counterparts is consistent across the three grade levels (4,8, and 10) tested. The table on the previous page and the two graphs below show the relative performances in reading and mathematics for the Fall 1989 testing. Performances in the prior four years were not different in any meaningful way from the 1989 scores. More detailed descriptions of these achievement indicators can be found in the annual Washington Statewide Assessment Program reports published by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Average Percentile Rank Scores by Subgroup for Fall 1989



Average Percentile Rank Scores by Subgroup for Fall 1989



Another way to look at the performance of children of color is to examine the numbers of these children scoring low on the various achievement tests. Low scores on standardized, norm referenced tests such as those used in the assessment program are often used as part of the criteria for selecting students for inclusion in special remedial or compensatory education programs. Compensatory education programs are targeted at students who are performing below grade level in reading, mathematics, and language skills.

In the state assessment program, students are considered to be "low scoring" if their national percentile rank scores are 23 or lower. The table on the next page shows that there are much higher percentages of children of color in the "low scoring" category than among white children, with the exception of Asian American children in the areas of mathematics and language.

As a part of the assessment program, teachers and other professionals in the school districts were asked to identify students being served in compensatory or remedial education programs supported with federal, state, or district funds (e.g. federal Chapter 1 Regular and Migrant Programs, the state's Learning Assistance Program, other district developed and funded programs). State funding for the Learning Assistance Program is restricted to use in grades K through 9; the federal Chapter 1 program serves children throughout the K-12 system.

The table below details, first, the percentages of students at each grade level (4,8,and 10) who scored low in reading and mathematics and, second, the percentages of those low scoring students identified as being served in a corresponding compensatory education program. Slightly more than 20 percent of all grade 4 students scored low in reading, but only a quarter (25.2 percent) of those low scoring students were identified as being served by a remedial program. Less than 20 percent of grade 4 students scoring low in mathematics were given additional help through compensatory education programs. In grade 8, the percentages of low scoring students receiving additional help in both reading and mathematics fell below 10 percent. Assistance programs for low scoring students in grade 10 appear to be almost non-existent.

Percentages of Low-Scoring Students by Subject and Grade Level and Percentages of Low-Scoring Students Served in Compensatory Education

	4th Grade Reading	4th Grade Math	8th Grade Reading	8th Grade Math	10th Grade Reading	10th Grade Math
Low ¹ Scoring	20.8	15.5	15.9	17.5	15.0	15.4
Comp. ² Programs	25.2	17.7	8.5	8.7	1.6	0.9

¹ The values in this row express the numbers of students in the 1989 State Assessment Program who achieved national percentile rank scores (1984 national norms) of 23 or less in the respective subjects and grade levels as a percentage of all students tested in those grades and subjects.

² The values in this row express the numbers of students who both scored low (23 or less) and were served in the respective federally, state or locally funded compensatory education program as a percent of the low-scoring students in that subject and grade.

COMPENSATORY AND REMEDIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

**Percentages of Students in Various Subgroups Scoring Low¹
in 1989 State Assessment Program at Three Grade Levels**

Scoring Low		African American	Asian American	Hispanic American	Native American	White	Omit ²
Reading		37.0	23.6	42.2	37.7	17.9	20.7
Mathematics	Grade 4	30.7	11.0	29.7	26.5	13.5	15.6
Language		29.9	14.6	35.7	33.0	17.8	20.0
Reading		32.2	20.7	34.2	29.4	12.3	27.9
Mathematics	Grade 8	37.9	13.5	33.6	32.2	14.2	30.7
Language		30.0	14.6	30.2	31.7	14.3	29.4
Reading		30.1	22.5	29.5	29.4	12.0	23.9
Mathematics	Grade 10	32.9	12.2	28.7	29.9	13.1	26.3
Language		29.1	16.7	29.8	34.7	16.4	29.8

¹ Low Scoring students are those achieving national percentile rank scores of 23 or less. In the norm group, 23 percent of the students score low.

² The omit category represents those students for whom no ethnic/racial code was given. At grade 4, classroom teachers were asked to complete this code. At grades 8 and 10, the students were asked to complete the coding. The respective percentages of students in this category in grades 4, 8, and 10 were 22 percent, 4.5 percent, and 3.5 percent.

COMPENSATORY AND REMEDIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Despite the small percentage of low scoring students identified as receiving remedial services, it is important to examine participation rates for children of color. The two sets of tables below report data for grades 4 and 8 only. Grade 10 data was omitted due to extremely small numbers of students served in special programs at that level.

**Numbers of Student With Test Scores in Ethnic/Racial Subgroups
By Three Categories Expressed as Percentages of the Total Numbers of Students In Each of Those Categories**

Reading

		Low ¹ Scoring	Reading ² Comp. Ed.	Base ³
Grade 4	African American	6.8	8.5	3.8
	Asian American	4.8	4.4	4.3
	Hispanic American	8.3	10.6	4.1
	Native American	5.3	3.8	1.8
	White	54.8	66.5	63.8
	Omit	22.0	6.1	22.1
Grade 8	African American	7.1	4.7	3.5
	Asian American	6.9	5.1	5.3
	Hispanic American	9.0	12.9	4.2
	Native American	8.8	7.8	4.7
	White	60.4	64.9	77.9
	Omit	7.8	4.6	4.5

Mathematics

		Low ¹ Scoring	Math ² Comp. Ed.	Base ³
Grade 4	African American	7.7	8.8	3.9
	Asian American	3.1	3.5	4.3
	Hispanic American	7.9	8.2	4.1
	Native American	3.1	3.8	1.8
	White	55.9	69.3	63.9
	Omit	22.2	6.3	22.0
Grade 8	African American	7.7	5.6	3.5
	Asian American	4.1	2.9	5.3
	Hispanic American	8.0	6.4	4.2
	Native American	8.8	7.8	4.7
	White	63.6	71.9	77.9
	Omit	7.8	5.3	4.5

¹ The values in these rows express the numbers of students scoring low in reading and math respectively (national percentile of 23 or less) in each subgroup as a percent of the total number of students scoring low in reading or math.

² The values in these rows express the numbers of students in a federally, state, or locally funded compensatory reading or mathematics program (regardless of test score) in each subgroup as a percent of all students identified as being served in those reading or math programs.

³ The values in these rows express the numbers of students in each subgroup as a percent of all students tested in the area of reading or math in the 1989 State Assessment Program.

In each of the preceding tables (one for reading and one for mathematics), three sets of percentages are given for each of the two grade levels: 1) low scoring students are disaggregated by ethnic/ racial category and the numbers of students in each category expressed as a percentage of the total number; 2) students identified as being served in the relevant compensatory program are disaggregated and their relative frequencies expressed as percentages; and 3) the total number of students participating in the relevant testing component at the particular level is disaggregated and the relative frequencies of the ethnic/ racial groups are expressed as percentages.

When the numbers of low scoring children are compared with the numbers in the general test group, the data indicates that children of color (with the exception of Asian Pacific Americans) are almost twice as likely to be in the "low scoring" group as their numbers in the testing group would predict. For example, African American children make up 6.8 percent of the children "low scoring", but represent only 3.8 percent of those taking the MAT6 reading test.

Children of color in grade 4 participate in the compensatory reading program in about the same proportion as they appear in the low scoring group. African Americans who represent 6.8 percent of the "low scoring" children, constitute 8.5 percent of the children receiving additional assistance. These patterns also generally hold for mathematics at grade 4.

While the pattern is not as strong, the general trend of similar proportions of children in remedial programs and scoring low on the assessment continues in grade 8. However, at this grade level, numbers of African American children participating in compensatory education program declines.

Children of color are pushed out or begin dropping out of school as early 8th or 9th grade. The reasons vary between expulsion, to being left behind academically, to low teacher and peer expectations, to becoming teenage parents, to combinations of these and other factors. Dropout rates vary depending on how they are measured. However, regardless of the method used, the patterns are consistent.

A dropout is defined as a student who leaves school for any reason, except death, before graduation or completion of a program of study and does not transfer to another school. There is some confusion over whether a student who drops out of high school, but later completes his/her GED, is counted as a dropout. Additionally, some dropouts later enroll in alternative schools or programs; these enrollment numbers can also cause minor fluctuations in dropout percentages and their calculations.

In Washington state, dropout rates are calculated in two different ways. One method indicates an annual dropout rate, while the other represents a four year cumulative dropout rate.

Annual Rate

The annual rate measures the proportion of students who drop out in a single year without completing high school. Annual rates are important because they reveal how many students are leaving high school each year and how each year's rates compare with previous ones.

The annual dropout rate is calculated and reported by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Dropout data is reported annually by local districts. OSPI's method of calculation is based on the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{May dropouts}}{\text{October enrollment}} = \text{Annual Dropout Rate}$$

An example using 1989 data for African American Students:

$$\frac{1,208 \text{ May dropouts}}{8,305 \text{ October enrollment}} = 14.5 \text{ percent Annual Dropout Rate}$$

The annual rate is computed by dividing the number of students dropping out as of May of any school year by the number of students enrolled in October of that same school year.

In 1988-89, Native Americans experienced a 13.62 percent annual dropout rate; the rate for Hispanics was 8.5 percent. In that same school year, Asian Pacific Americans had an annual rate of 3.2 percent; the rates for ethnic subgroups within this racial category, particularly Filipinos and Samoans, were significantly higher than the aggregate rate.

RETENTION AND DROPOUT RATES

The table below indicates fluctuating annual dropout rates for children of color. After experiencing a decline, dropout rates increased again for African American students.

Annual Dropout Rates

	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Native American	13.78	13.11	13.62
Asian/Pacific American	2.76	3.44	3.28
Hispanic American	12.21	10.49	10.70
White	5.60	5.85	6.03
African American	15.69	13.86	14.55

Cumulative Rate

A number of states across the nation, Washington among them, use a cumulative rate calculation to express dropout numbers; the four-year, cumulative rate measures the proportion of students who drop out each year within a given period. Cumulative rates are much higher than annual rates because they are intended to represent the cumulative impact of the annual dropout rate over a number of years.

Using this method to calculate dropout rates from data reported annually by all school districts by building, gender, racial category and other relevant characteristics. The calculation is based on the following formula:

4-year dropout rate =

$$[1 - (\text{grade 9 A/B}) \times (\text{grade 10 A/B}) \times (\text{grade 11 A/B}) \times (\text{grade 12 A/B}) \times 100]$$

A is the number of students by grade who did not drop out (May retentions) and
B is the number of students enrolled.

An example using 1989 data for African American students:

Grade	1989 October Enrollees	1989 May Dropouts	1989 May Retentions
9	2,478	329	2,149
10	2,070	292	1,778
11	1,859	287	1,572
12	1,898	300	1,598

$$[1 - (2,149/2,478 \times (1,778/2,070) \times (1,572/1,859) \times (1,598/1,898) \times 100]$$

$$[1 - (0.8672 \times 0.8589 \times 0.8456 \times 0.8419)] \times 100$$

$$[1 - (0.5302)] \times 100$$

0.4698 x 100 = 46.98 percent or a 47 percent four-year cumulative dropout rate for

This formula is designed to convert actual annual dropout rates for grades 9-12 into a projection of dropouts over a four year period. The above calculation represents a projection that, in 1989, an African American 9th grade student had a 53 percent chance of making it to the 12th grade and graduating. Conversely, that same student would have a 47 percent chance of dropping out at some point before graduation.

Caution should be exercised when using or interpreting drop out data reported to OSPI. Dropouts may be over-reported for schools or particular student subgroups when student mobility is high. Students who leave school and cannot be identified as transfer students are counted as drop outs.

Cumulative Dropout Rates for Various Groups Between 1986-87 and 1988-89

Group	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Native American	44.8	43.7	44.3
Asian Pacific American	10.6	13.2	12.6
Hispanic American	40.4	35.7	36.3
African American	49.4	45.6	47.0
White	20.8	21.4	22.1

The dropout rate for children of color, particularly African American students, is much higher than the dropout rate for white students. National statistics indicate that the annual dropout rate has decreased from 9.2 percent in 1963 to 6.7 percent in 1987 from African American students. By contrast, in Washington state, the annual dropout rate for African Americans has increased from 13.7 percent in 1987-88 to 14.5 percent in 1988-89.

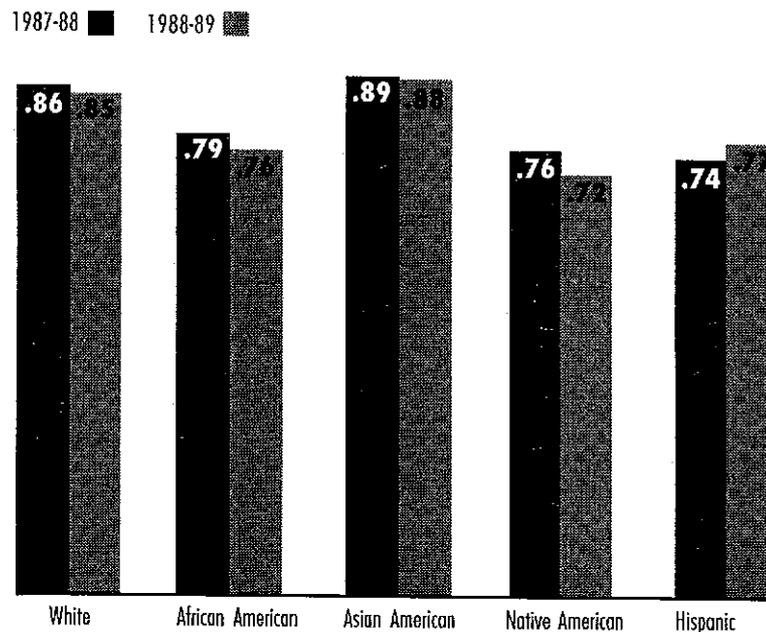
GRADUATION RATES

High school graduation rates for children of color, except for Asian Pacific Americans, lag behind white students. For African American students in particular, females have higher graduation rates than their male counterparts.

Overall, the data suggest that most students progress through school on schedule, but, in reality, a consistently high number of children of color are falling behind their actual grade placement. The outcome results in an increase in the number of students receiving their diplomas, but who are hardly more skilled than those students who dropped out.

Except for Asian Pacific American students, graduation rates for students of color are lower than those for white students. All groups, excluding Hispanics, experienced decreasing rates between 1987-88 and 1988-89. Hispanic students experienced a slight gain.

Graduation Rates for Washington State by Ethnic Group
Public Schools



This report is the first attempt of its kind to compile and examine selected statistical conditions for children of color in Washington's public school system. While this report is a good and necessary start, more in-depth research and analysis are needed to address the complex and critical issues facing the state as we attempt to responsibly educate all of our children.

The report is limited by the amount of data available. However, even with a limited amount of data and analysis, it is clear that children of color, particularly African Americans, have consistently experienced the following:

- 1) lower scores on the MAT reading and math sections;
- 2) continuous performance below their actual grade placement;
- 3) higher dropout rates; and
- 4) very little progress in raising the graduation rate.

Overall efforts toward closing the gap in academic performance have not been successful and, in some instances, have stalled.

Although ECEAP has greatly expanded over the last three years, the majority of children eligible for the program are not currently being served due to current funding parameters. Expansion of the program to serve all eligible three and four year olds should be an educational priority for the state. There appears to be great potential within this program to address, at the "front end", many of the factors that contribute to the achievement gap between white children and children of color.

The Commission recommends that there be a comprehensive study on the educational condition of children of color in the state of Washington.

We must ensure that all children, regardless of color, have the skills to enter higher education and/or the work force. Failure to ameliorate the current condition will have a drastic and negative impact on this state's competitiveness in a rapidly changing technological work place and world market.

The goals we seek to achieve are broad and difficult, but they are also necessary and possible. Commitment and a significant allocation of resources will be necessary to implement the necessary changes. The alternative will be even more expensive.

The Commission recommends:

General Goals

- ◆ Improving the current information system for collecting data on the educational conditions, programs and plans for children of color in Washington state.
- ◆ Convening a task force and conducting a comprehensive study on the status of education for children of color in Washington state; the study should examine areas in multi-cultural education, bilingual education, minority teacher recruitment, and increased participation in and availability of compensatory education

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program

Key Goals

- ◆ Increase funding to ensure participation by all eligible three and four-year-olds. Early study results indicate that ECEAP participants have greater potential for school readiness, an issue of particular concern to African Americans and other children of color who consistently start school with developmental skills significantly behind their white counterparts.
- ◆ Continue to increase participation for African American and other children of color in ECEAP by expanding existing or developing new sites in areas where African American and other children of color reside.
- ◆ Ensure that African American and other children of color maximize their participation/enrollment during program expansions or increases
- ◆ Develop and implement a recruitment and outreach program for children of color, particularly African Americans
- ◆ Ensure that multi-cultural, bilingual, special transportation and extended hours of services be provided
- ◆ Continue to coordinate Head Start and ECEAP with day-care to ensure that eligible children receive full-time service

Student Performance

Key Goals:

- ◆ Ensuring that by grade 3, African American children as well as other minority children are performing at their grade level

- ◆ Creating a diagnostic assessment such as criterion reference testing to be administered at every grade level each semester to assess whether students are attaining student learning objectives (SLO)

- ◆ Increasing funding to the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) and earmarking some of those monies to hire more teacher assistants for children of color who are at risk of dropping out or are in need of remedial help.

- ◆ Identifying barriers affecting participation of children of color in compensatory education programs

- ◆ Ensuring that all students in need of compensatory or remedial education services have access to those services, regardless of grade level

Dropout and Graduation Rates

Key Goals

- ◆ Reducing the number of drop outs

- ◆ Exploring funding to establish dropout prevention pilot programs throughout the state, particularly in areas with significant African American, Native American and Hispanic populations

- ◆ Increasing funding for "Schools for the 21st Century" and targeting schools that have the highest dropout rates and lowest overall MAT scores

- ◆ Developing pay incentives to schools that demonstrate significant academic improvements for students of color as well as economically disadvantaged students

- ◆ Providing state funds to defray summer school expenses for economically disadvantaged children