

NCLB Making a Difference in Minnesota



- Between 2002 and 2004 (latest data available):
 - Fifth-grade mathematics proficiency increased by four percentage points
 - The black-white achievement gap in fifth-grade reading narrowed by five percentage points
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 - The Hispanic-white achievement gap in fifth-grade reading narrowed by three percentage points
 - The poor-not poor achievement gap in fifth-grade mathematics narrowed by three percentage points
(*Education Trust*)
- “Nearly 85 percent of eighth-graders passed a key state reading test this spring, an all-time high. Just under three-quarters passed the math exam. The results released by the Minnesota Department of Education bode well for the Class of 2009.... The passing rate on this year’s writing test, given in 10th grade, held steady at 91 percent. ‘The headline here is Minnesota schools are doing a good job of getting their children ready for basic math and basic reading,’ said Tim Vansickle, the director of statewide testing. ‘They must be focusing their efforts in the right places.’ Even stubborn achievement gaps among whites and ethnic minorities narrowed....” (*Associated Press*, 4/4/05)
- “[Minneapolis Superintendent Thandiwe] Pebbles set an ambitious goal of cutting [achievement] gaps by 10 percentage points this school year. The district met that target in the basic skills reading test for Asian and Hispanic students, who posted impressive gains. It also came close in reading for students from families poor enough to qualify for subsidized lunches. ... [Nellie Stone] Johnson’s eighth-graders boosted their passing rate for reading from 23 percent last school year to 49 percent this year. [Lucy Craft] Laney’s pass rate jumped from 41 percent to 66 percent.” (*Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 4/25/05)
- “Five years ago, Dayton’s Bluff was known as the worst school in St. Paul and one of the worst in Minnesota. Located on the eastern side of the city, surrounded by a neighborhood of wood-frame houses where the occasional crack house is easily spotted and two murders were reported in two weeks, nine out of ten children could not read on grade level.... Today the school is very different. In 2004 more than 8 of 10 students at Dayton’s Bluff met or exceeded the state reading standards and the school is poised to post even higher gains for 2005. Classrooms are calm, students work hard, and last year no teacher left to teach at another St. Paul school. Perhaps most striking is that in math, Dayton’s Bluff’s third graders – who are mostly poor African-American and Hmong children – slightly outperformed White Minnesotan third graders. To understand how significant that is, it is helpful to know that White Minnesotan elementary school students outscore White children in the rest of the nation in math. But African American children in Minnesota lag behind not only White Minnesotans but also behind many African American children in the country.... ‘It is so important to dispel the myth that these children can’t learn to high standards,’ says the principal, Von Sheppard.” (*Achievement Alliance’s Alliance Alert*, 5/9/05)