



Minnesota Covenant for Education Equity with Excellence
with
Students of Color and American Indian Students
November 2008

Our Commitment

We commit to working together to establish and carry out a statewide agenda that ends racial disparities in educational outcomes in Minnesota by dramatically increasing educational attainment of Students of Color and American Indian Students to world leading standards and achieving higher levels of excellence for all students.

Background

Since 2001, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc. (MMEP) has published a report on the “State of Students of Color & American Indian Students” in Minnesota’s K-16 education system. Using standard measurements ranging from K-12 standardized test scores to high school graduation and college-going rates, the four reports published every two years informs a persistent story of our state falling far short in properly educating large numbers of these students with very little forward progress over time.

While mindful that Minnesota’s educators have pushed ahead with new approaches aimed in part to address this failure – ranging from establishing strong state academic standards, complying with the Federal No Child Left Behind measurements to expanding choice in K-12 selections and intensifying college access efforts – it is nonetheless appropriate, given the continuing loss of human academic potential in these communities, to insist that Minnesota move more forcefully, quickly, and effectively forward in designing and implementing an educational system that accelerates large scale success with Students of Color and American Indian Students.

With no interest in affixing blame, we are intentionally focused on creating the climate needed in our state, characterized by creativity and courageous energy, to implement an educational system that best serves Students of Color and American Indian Students while expecting high standards for all students.

Towards that end we, the undersigned, commit ourselves to the Minnesota Education Equity with Excellence mission and call upon our public and private education institutions, the State of Minnesota, the private sector, and all citizens to commit themselves fully to the following goals:

Change Minnesota’s Perceptions

1. Increase public messages statewide by 2010 that strongly state Minnesota’s expectations of high academic and career achievement for all students, inclusive of Students of Color and American Indian Students.

Expand Early Childhood Education

2. Provide early education programming opportunities for all children of color and American Indian children in Minnesota by 2010.

Transform K-12 Education

3. Increase literacy rates of Students of Color and American Indian Students by 2012 so that 95 percent are literate by third grade.
4. Increase parental involvement in K-12 schools so that all parents of color and American Indian parents have structured opportunities to be formally engaged in their children's schools.
5. Increase high school graduation rates for Students of Color and American Indian Students to minimally be at least equal to the rates for White student by the year 2015.
6. Design and implement K-12 schools as centers that integrate social, medical health, mental health and parental development into the delivery of education for all Students of Color and American Indian Students by 2010.
7. Increase learning in out-of-school time settings available for all Students of Color and American Indian Students in Minnesota by 2010.

Expand College Access

8. Increase the numbers of Students of Color and American Indian Students taking the ACT college entrance test so that at least 75 percent of juniors and/or seniors in each community are well prepared to take, and are taking, the ACT exam with a resulting composite score of at least 21 by the year 2012.
9. Increase the participation of K-12 Students of Color and American Indian Students in college prep courses so that at a minimum, 50 percent in each community are pursuing such courses in high school by the year 2012.
10. Increase the course participation rates of Students of Color and American Indian Students in K-16 science, technology, engineering and math fields to minimally be at least equal to the rates for White student participation by 2010.
11. Increase the level of college readiness of Students of Color and American Indian Students so that at a minimum, 50 percent are college ready in Algebra, Biology, English Writing and Social Science as measured by the ACT, by the year 2012.

Improve Post-Secondary

12. Increase the number of Students of Color and American Indian Students who enroll in post-secondary so that 80 percent of all high school graduates from these communities are pursuing higher learning by 2013.

13. Increase the transfer rates from two-year to four-year post-secondary schools of students of color and American Indian Students to minimally be at least equal to the transfer rates of White students by the year 2012.

Transform our Teachers and Faculty

14. Increase the number of teachers of color and from American Indian communities in Minnesota's K-12 schools to comprise at a minimum 30 percent of the state's entire teacher force, and to reflect the diversity within these communities, by the year 2018.
15. Prepare all teachers and teacher candidates in Minnesota to be multi-culturally competent and skilled to instill a classroom environment of high expectations for all students across racial and cultural lines, and establish measures to determine teachers' and teacher candidates' abilities to do so, by 2012.
16. Increase the number of faculty of color and from American Indian communities in Minnesota's institutions of higher learning to match at least the percentage of Students of Color and American Indian Students enrolled in post-secondary schools, and to reflect the diversity within these communities by the year 2018.

Invest in Education

17. Maintain and grow public funding needed to provide a high-quality education system in Minnesota that works equally well for all communities of people in preparing them to meet the economic and social challenges and opportunities of a technologically transformative and multi-culturally empowered democratic society beginning in 2009.

Hold Elected and Appointed Officials Accountable

18. Advocate for legislative action requiring the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to publish public assessments of the attainment of these goals.

We the undersigned, commit to these goals and the establishment of their annual benchmarks by working collaboratively, holding one another accountable, sharing our work in public forums, and requesting that other individuals and institutions join us.