

MARCH EDITON

# THE PILLARS

Published by the Office of African American Affairs

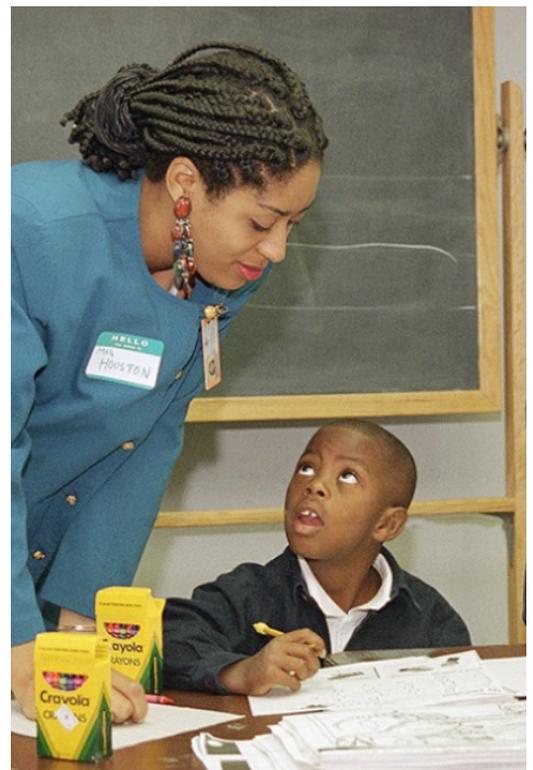


## EDUCATION IN BLACK NEW MEXICO

## THE BLACK EDUCATION ACT: CLOSING THE BLACK-WHITE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Written by: Dr. Jack Taylor- OAAA Education  
Chair Board

New Mexico is the 37th largest school district in the United States, serving 343,044 students across 927 public schools for the 2020-21 school year. Black students comprise 2% or approximately 6,860 of the student population. Since March of 2020, the majority of New Mexico's students have been attending school either remotely or in some hybrid form. Most educational researchers agree that the students will experience four to 12 months of learning loss. Black, Hispanic, English Learners, low-income, and Native students could even experience a greater learning loss if they do not soon resume in-person learning. .





Thus, one can correctly conclude that Black students will experience an increase in their dropout rate coupled with a disproportionate decrease in their graduation rate and proficiency test scores in math, reading, and science compared to white students. With the continuation of virtual classes, the achievement gap will undoubtedly increase.

Susan Ansell, in an article in Education Week, July 7, 2011 writes that “the ‘achievement gap’ in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates, among other success measures. It is most often used to describe the troubling performance gaps between African American and Hispanic students at the lower end of the performance scale. Their non-Hispanic white peers, and the similar academic disparity between students from low-income families and those who are better off.”

**Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today- Malcolm X**

State of Education New Mexico 2018, New Mexico Kids Can Report. Since the 2014–15 school year, New Mexico public schools have administered the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) annual assessments to measure student proficiency in math and English language arts (ELA) in grades three through eleven. Proficiency in both subjects varied widely among student subgroups in the 2016–17 school year, with over 46 percent of Asian students, 44 percent of white students, 24 percent of Hispanic students, 23 percent of black students, and 18 percent of American Indian students achieving proficiency or better in ELA across all grade levels.



For the same year, almost 20 percent of students achieved the same proficiency level in math across grade levels. Thirty-three percent of white students, 38 percent of Asian students, 16 percent of Hispanic students, 13 percent of black students, and 10 percent of American Indian students achieved proficiency or better math assessments. These data indicate that there is an obvious achievement between the different groups of students.

According to the A KIDS COUNT POLICY REPORT, KIDS, FAMILIES AND COVID-19, which was released on December 14, 2020, “The achievement gap is largely due to the denial of equitable educational opportunities due to the legacy of school neighborhood segregation.”

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It is recommended that to reduce the achievement gap, every state, county, and city must aim for equitable outcomes by using data disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Leaders should use disaggregated data and engage community stakeholders to ensure the policymaking process is the diverse perspectives informed me of those hardest hit by the crisis and created in partnership with communities.

This recommendation strongly supports the passing of HB 43, The Black Education Act. The act calls for a BLACK EDUCATION STATEWIDE STATUS REPORT that includes the following information, by the school district, by the charter school and statewide, which may be compiled from data otherwise required to be submitted to the department, and which is disaggregated by ethnicity and highlights Black student data:

- (1) ethnicity by grade by the school;
- (2) number and type of bilingual and multicultural programs in each school district and charter school;
- (3) attendance and truancy for all grades;
- (4) student achievement by ethnicity at all grades measured by a statewide test approved by the department; and
- (5) graduation rates by ethnicity.

Similar data regarding the achievement and graduation rates of Black students and the number of Black faculty and administrative hires by public colleges and universities will also be required.

The Black Education Act, once fully enforced and implemented, will result in (1) a reduction in the number of Black student suspensions; (2) an increase in Black students' reading, mathematics, and science proficiency scores; (3) an increase in the high school graduation rate of Black students; (4) a more culturally relevant curriculum and (5) an increase in the ethnic composition of the teaching, administrative, and support staff; and (6) increase the number of Black high school graduated who succeed in post-secondary professional and vocational education. Moreover, the Black Education Act fulfills the mission set forth by the Public Education Department: To ensure that all students are healthy, secure in their identity, and holistically prepared for college, career, and life.