

Test scores tell if black students achieve more in diverse classrooms or not

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several factors are involved with testing statistics
Photo by Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images

Much debate has been fought over rather transferring students from failing schools such as Normandy and Riverview will even help African American students. Although schools such as Parkway and Clayton are out performing failing schools as a whole, the disparity between black and white students within these districts highlights a new question: Which schools are academically better for African Americans?

The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) assesses Missouri students once a year and the data can be found on [The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's \(dese\) website](#). There are four categories labeling the students achievement: below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. Currently there is legislation in the Missouri House of Representatives, [HB365](#), proposing a law that requires all student to be proficient by the eighth grade before receiving a high school diploma in Missouri.

All data is 3rd grade language arts scores because many things occur as students ages increases, such as: retention, suspensions increase, students drop out and are expelled, students labeled as special education and given test accommodations and modifications and students transfer to other schools which change testing statistics.

The following are the proficient and advanced combined scores of 3rd grade African American students in 2013: Northside Community School (only 13 pupils per class) - 57%, Clayton - 46%, Francis Howell - 46%, Parkway - 38%, Ferg/Flor - 30, Kirkwood - 29%, Mehlville - 27%, Univeristy City -26%, Normandy 23%, St. Louis City - 19%, Confluence - 19%, and Riverview - 10%.

In 2013 Clayton, Kirkwood and Northside Community Charter had no black students scoring in below basic on the language arts MAP assessment. Less than 10% of African American students in Parkway and Mehlville scored below basic on the assessment. Jennings, although in the news lately for nearly regaining their accreditation, had only 11% of their students performing below basic.

Of the schools examined, the following had more than 10% of their students performing below basic in 2013: Normandy - 18%, University City - 13%, Ferg/Flor - 15%, Stl city - 30%, Confluence - 21%, Riverview - 30% and Francis Howell - 13%.

With the exception of one school, districts with more African American students have the most amount of African American students scoring below basic on the state standardized assessment in the 3rd grade. In other words, they have the largest amount of African American students failing.

Without a doubt, Northside Community Charter school has raised the bar, but much more must be considered while determining why this school outperformed all other black schools and many more diverse schools. A teacher from Northside Community school has confirmed that the school had an average of 13 students per class in 2013, whereas other charter schools publicize small numbers but the actual numbers are aligned with traditional classroom sizes of 20-25 students. Although the rates of below students remained 0, unfortunately, the proficient/advanced score dropped from 57% to 21% when the number of students in classrooms increased from 13 to 18.

Currently two unaccredited school districts, Riverview and Normandy, have been mandated by the Missouri courts to allow their students to transfer to accredited schools in adjoining counties. These transfers have complicated the data, therefore I have attached a chart showing data before and after the transfers. Unfortunately, the transfers have hurt the performance overall for schools who receive students.

Below are ratios of below basic, proficient and advanced; in that order. Also, data is represented as 2013 vs 2014 language art tests for 3rd grade students. School District Below Basic % in 2013 (x) compared to Below Basic % in 2014 (n): x/n Basic % in 2013 (x) compared to Basic % in 2014 (n): x/n Proficient and Advanced % in 2013 (x) compared to Proficient and Advanced % in 2014 (n): x/n

below basic 2013/2014 basic 2013/2014 proficient/advanced 2013/2014

Clayton 0/13 54/57 46/30
 Normandy 18/21 57/61 23/18
 Riverview 30/34 56/57 10/7
 Parkway 7/17 55/61 38/22
 Jennings 11/18 54/59 35/23
 University City 13/15 61/60 26/25
 Ferg/Florissant 15/22 55/57 30/21
 STL City 30/34 51/52 19/11
 Confluence 21/24 60/64 19/11
 Northside Community 0/0 40/79 57/21
 Francis Howell 13/13 41/52 46/35
 Kirkwood 0/13 70/51 29/36
 Mehlville 9/29 65/57 26/11

It will be interesting to know how these schools perform once given time to educate the transferred students. One parent, Latasha Buchanon stated that she will leave her children at Parkway because, "I came about mines". She complained that her kindergardner was suspended 51 times at Normandy but is now prospering at Parkway. Both her children are finally on level although starting at Parkway years behind. To read more about Ms. Buchanon's story click here: <http://www.ceamteam.org/take-action/parent-academy/testimonials/>

The deadline to transfer your child has been extended until April 1, 2015 after a court ruling in Feb.

For additional data, click here:

<http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/guidedinquiry/Achievement%20Level%20%204%20Levels/Achievement%20Level%204%20Report%20-%20Public.aspx?rp:DistrictCode=048914>



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