

St. Louis Black Leadership Roundtable

2005 Regional Report Card: Eliminating the African American Academic Achievement Gap

The *2005 Regional Report Card* is another milestone in the St. Louis Black Leadership Roundtable's efforts to move the initiative to eliminate the African American academic achievement gap forward in the St. Louis region. It is an easy to read resource for parents wanting to know more about the efforts and achievement of students in their district; for educators in sharing and developing new strategies to increase achievement to eradicate the gap; and for the community in seeking new opportunities to get involved in supporting this important endeavor.

To view the *2005 Report Card* in summary or by district, please click on the appropriate link to the right of the selections below:

- Summary {LARGE} <http://blackleadershiproundtable.org/Edu/2005ReportCardSummary.pdf>
- Affton <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Affton.pdf>
- Bayless <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Bayless.pdf>
- Brentwood <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Brentwood.pdf>
- Clayton <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Clayton.pdf>
- Ferguson-Florissant <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Ferg-Flor.pdf>
- Hancock Place <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/HancockPlace.pdf>
- Hazelwood <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Hazelwood.pdf>
- Jennings <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Jennings.pdf>
- Kirkwood <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Kirkwood.pdf>
- Ladue <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Ladue.pdf>
- Lindbergh <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Lindbergh.pdf>
- Maplewood-Richmond Heights <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Maplewood-RH.pdf>
- Mehlville <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Mehlville.pdf>
- Normandy <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Normandy.pdf>
- Parkway <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Parkway.pdf>
- Pattonville <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Pattonville.pdf>
- Ritenour <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Ritenour.pdf>
- Riverview Gardens <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/RiverviewGardens.pdf>
- Rockwood <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Rockwood.pdf>
- St. Louis Public Schools <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/SLPS.pdf>
- Special Schools <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Special.pdf>
- University City <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/UCity.pdf>
- Valley Park <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/ValleyPark.pdf>
- Webster Groves <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/WebsterGroves.pdf>
- Wellston <http://BlackLeadershipRoundtable.org/Edu/ReportCards/Wellston.pdf>
- What Parents Need to Know <http://peec-stl.org/NeedToKnow-Parents.pdf>
- Parent's "Need to Know" Terms <http://peec-stl.org/NeedToKnowTerms.pdf>

In October, 2005, the St. Louis Black Leadership Roundtable created the first comprehensive study of the region's efforts to reduce the academic achievement gap. Alongside key indicators, measures and other important data submitted by the districts, quantitative measures were extracted from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) annual reports. The culmination was the

BLR's 2005 *Regional Report Card: Eliminating the African American Academic Achievement Gap*, a five year review of the "gap" in academic achievement between African American and White students by district and across the region.

The BLR unveiled the 102-page *Regional Report Card* on October 30, 2005. When comparing the collective results of all districts in the St. Louis metropolitan region that reported disaggregated data from the MAP (Missouri's standardized assessment test) scores in the areas of communication arts and mathematics over the past five years, the BLR demonstrated that the gap in achievement between black and white students in the St. Louis area not only fluctuated but actually decreased between year one (2000-2001 school year) and year five (2004-2005 school year) at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

So why isn't the BLR celebrating? When examining the source of the decrease, an alarming fact came forth: the decrease in the gap was not due to acceleration in the achievement of African American students, but instead, resulted largely from *a decrease in achievement by both black and white students*. The only exceptions were in the area of mathematics at both the elementary and middle school levels, where both black and white students increased in achievement, with black students increasing at a higher rate than their white peers thus narrowing the gap.

"This was never designed to lower academic achievement of any child," said Dr. Madye Henson, chairwoman of the BLR's Education Committee. "In addition to focusing on eliminating the gap, we also have to focus on overall academic achievement".

Another important revelation brought forth from the report was that school districts with the highest levels of achievement for African American students also often had the greatest achievement gap between black and white students. Less often did a district demonstrate both high achievement levels for black students along with a smaller gap and when this did occur, it was usually at the elementary level.

"Prior to this point, no one looked at those two things together," Henson said of the achievement gap and academic levels. "That's where we can dig in and really make a difference."