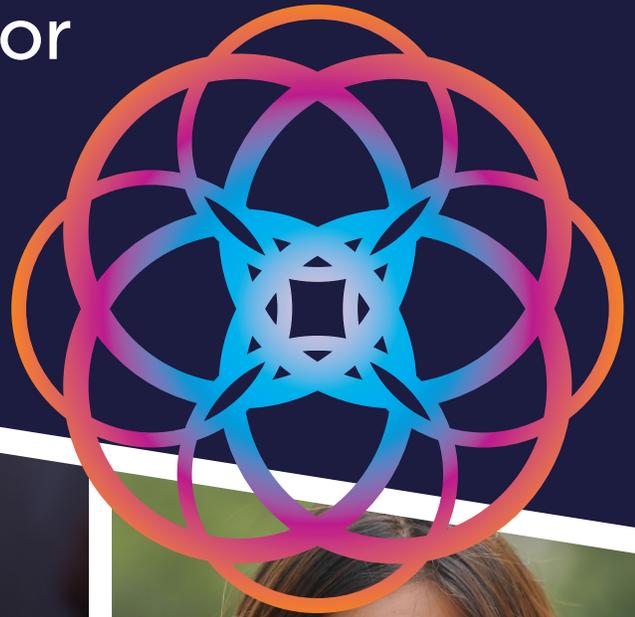


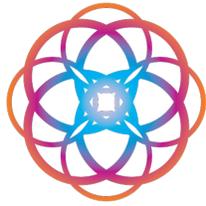
Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP)

# State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report | 2023



MINNESOTA'S WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE REVIEW 2023





Minnesota  
**Education Equity**  
Partnership

Advancing **Race Equity** & Excellence

Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP)

**Minnesota's World's Best Workforce Review 2023**

Opportunities & Needs for Advancing Racial Equity in Minnesota's  
Student Achievement Goals

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# Goals and Process for Examining Minnesota's World's Best Workforce

In producing a racial equity and academic excellence report on Students of Color and American Indians in Minnesota, it is appropriate to consider some of the quantitative data conventionally used to measure student educational outcomes. MnEEP Research Collaborative Table members reviewed the quantitative Local Educational Agencies (LEA) data statutorily required to be reported by the World's Best Workforce (WBWF) accountability legislation. We found significant systemic opportunities for advancing racial equity in the law's implementation, measurement, and accountability to advance the five WBWF goals and improve student outcomes for students who are People of Color and Indigenous (POCI).

Much of the data offered in this section comes directly from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). In addition, information was collected through interviews with education professionals who support the work across the state in various institutions and who have asked to be left anonymous.

## What is Minnesota's World's Best Workforce?

Minnesota's World's Best Workforce (WBWF) was created in Minnesota statutes (Section 120B.11), passed in 2013. According to MDE, the WBWF is meant to "ensure that school districts and charter schools in Minnesota enhance student achievement." The state legislature initiated a significant policy to respond to persistent racial inequities in K-12 academic outcomes directly. [By then, MnEEP had issued five reports dating back to 2001 capturing the persistence of our state education system's failure to achieve academic success equally for all students across racial demographics.] The authors of the legislation sought a way to systemically hold public schools accountable for eliminating those disparities through a transparent process of goal setting tied to portions of the state's per-pupil funding.

Based upon the statute's requirements, school districts, charter schools, and Local Educational Agencies (LEA) across the state must build comprehensive strategic plans that address five main areas to ensure improvements in teaching and learning.

It is important to note that school districts are based on geographic regions established by state education agencies. That said, school districts make up most of LEAs. However, charter schools and other area education agencies are counted as LEAs.

The five universal goals that must be included in every education institution's long-term plan are:

- All children are ready for school.
- All third graders can read at grade level.
- All students are prepared for career and college.
- All students graduate from high school.
- All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.

## Examining the Standards, Accountability, and Outcomes

All meaningful strategic plans require some form of measurement, and the WBWF is no different. The WBWF explicitly provides language around the expectation of size: "a process for assessing and evaluating each student's progress toward meeting state and local academic standards and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in pursuit of student and school success and curriculum affecting students' progress and growth toward career and college readiness and leading to the World's Best Workforce," Minnesota statutes (Section 120B.15).

At first glance, this seems reasonable; however, as the research will show, the requirement of effective measurement for some goals is fraught with either inconsistencies or a lack of clarity. In addition, the study will go further to establish that:

- Some of the state-mandated goals have no statewide accountability measurement, and,
- LEAs are left to themselves to interpret the content of an assessment.

MDE acknowledges that "Since each district or charter school can set its own goals, including the choice of measurements and timelines, goals and progress toward them cannot be meaningfully compared between individual districts or charter schools (MDE, 2023)."

**The inconsistency or lack of measurement for the WBWF has left the state with no way to universally report on progress towards all the goals in the WBWF, rendering the statutes more of a concept than an enforceable piece of state legislation.**

MDE offers some limited direction for measurement at the local level and suggests the following data sources to help address this requirement:

The Kindergarten Entry Profile or other measures of school readiness

- State or local assessments
- Graduation rates
- College entrance exams
- Postsecondary outcomes, including employment

As we continue to investigate the five goals of WBWF, this report will attempt to analyze how we as a state are doing on each goal and expose some of the areas where we have yet to develop assessments that will allow that state to measure the effectiveness and implementation of the various goals listed (MDE, 2023).

# WBWF Goal # 1: All Children Are Ready for School

According to Minnesota statute, a child is ready for kindergarten when they:

- Are at least five years of age by September 1st of the child's enrollment year (Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.20)
- Has received early childhood screening (Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.17)
- Has received medically acceptable immunizations (Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.15)

It is essential to understand how Minnesota interprets what it means for a child to be "school ready". Minnesota's statutory School Readiness definition investigates what this means by framing the conversation with language and standards connected to "Expectations for Children as They Enter Kindergarten" (MDE, 2023).

Understanding that school readiness is the culmination of these three requirements for this study, we chose to investigate the academic component of early childhood screening.

## Limitations of Minnesota Kindergarten Entry Profile and The Early Indicators of Childhood Progress

A critical piece of defining children's readiness for school is measuring their knowledge and skills. Through *Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge*, MDE is revising the decade-long *School Readiness Study*. This work helped produce what is known as the **Minnesota Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP)**, (MDE, 2023).

**KEP assessments produce data that can be used to:**

- Provide teachers and other educators with a holistic view of a child's strengths and areas of growth based on their own unique identities, experiences, and development
- Inform practice and programming (e.g., instruction, lesson plans, curriculum, resources, and supports)
- Build coherence in prekindergarten through grade three (P3) teaching and learning (e.g., strengthening transitions to kindergarten and professional development)

Guide efforts to close the achievement gap or prevent one from opening (i.e., reporting on a district/charter school's World's Best Workforce Goal #1, "All children are ready for school")

### Participating in the KEP and using a KEP-approved assessment does not:

- Produce data that indicates whether a child is “ready or not ready” for kindergarten
- Produce data that should be used to make high-stakes decisions about children, teachers, or programs
- Require changes in curricula
- Require teachers to alter their instruction to assess their students (i.e., pulling students aside and asking them to perform specific tasks) (MDE, 2017)

A framework of accountability is offered through the **Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs)** to support quality improvement initiatives. The ECIPs are designed to inform curriculum design and assessment selection.

While not an assessment tool, the ECIPs serve as the foundation for authentic assessment processes. They reflect the child development knowledge that defines the foundational skills necessary to build toward the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.

Ultimately the ECIPs offer research-based information about expectations for children’s capabilities at different ages and across varying domains of development. They provide a progression of learning so that teachers and providers in Minnesota have a common framework and vocabulary by which they can plan a curriculum that is:

- Developmentally appropriate for children of different ages
- Attentive to the individual needs of children
- Culturally relevant for children’s varying life experiences

The ECIPs are not an all-inclusive resource about children’s development. The ECIPs focus on the following areas of development:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Language, Literacy, and Communications
- Creativity and the Arts
- Cognitive Development: Mathematics, Science and Social Systems
- Physical and Movement Development

Five age ranges are identified, one for each year of a child's life from birth to kindergarten entry. The standards reflect a selection of critical developmental expectations that highlight the learning and skills children need to be prepared for kindergarten and to continue as lifelong learners.

It is essential to recognize and celebrate the work of MDE and those early childhood education experts throughout the state that committed themselves to this critical work. That said, we must acknowledge that the ECIPs, in the words of MDE, **were not designed as a tool to assess kindergarten readiness.**

In no uncertain terms, the ECIPS "is not intended to be used as a curriculum or an assessment tool". MDE clearly states that the ECIPs "are not to be used to determine children's eligibility for various programs or services or to deny children access to programs or services."

With this understanding of what the state-offered resources are and what they are intended to be used as a backdrop to address the goal of ensuring "All children are ready for school," we now know that **there is no formally approved assessment tool or process that standardizes measurements across the state to help us understand how we as a state are doing in school readiness and reference to the WBWF legislation.**

Research efforts were made to understand how what is being offered through MDE has been utilized at the local level as a mechanism to respond to the goal of the WBWF.

Through inquiry with early childhood experts across the field, information was provided that indicates that the comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) and the use of ECIP is optional and that only a small percentage of LEAs across the state participate in the process.

One interviewee (who has chosen to remain anonymous) indicated that the share of LEAs across the state who used the products offered by MDE was only about 5%. During our first response to COVID-19, the number literally fell to zero.

## **Minnesota Must Build Actionable Legislation that Supports Educational Equity and Excellence**

As we conclude our findings on the responses to the WBWF goal that "All children are ready for school," we believe the state has much work to do to ensure we are both measuring and meeting this legislated requirement.

This is not to suggest that many district and charter schools still need to do meaningful work supporting families and students as they prepare for school.

Though many LEAs prefer local autonomy for determining school readiness, there should be a standardized approach by which Minnesota can unvaryingly ensure that its duty to all students is equitably met. Though the ECIPs provide direction on what is considered foundational, they are not intended to be an assessment to determine Kindergarten readiness. In other words, **Minnesota has no universal, uniform way to measure this goal across the state.** Without this, it is difficult, at best to move this WBWF goal beyond an inspirational objective and towards an actionable state law supporting educational race equity and excellence.

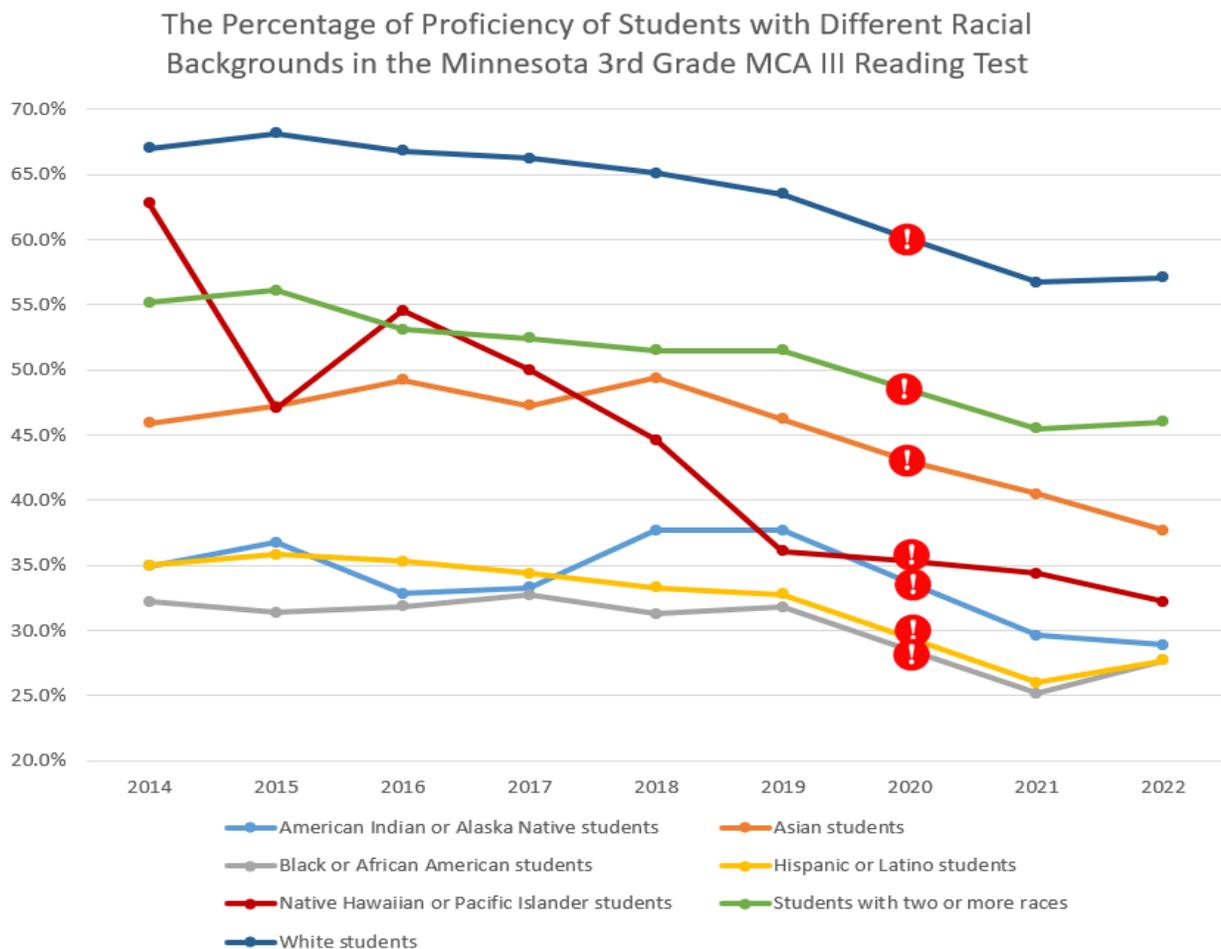
Moving forward, we must remember that school readiness, as defined in statute is not based on how much information or perceived knowledge a child holds. MnEEP is concerned that such an approach potentially invites cultural and racial biases to enter what knowledge may be deemed relevant for such an assessment.

One possible solution to a lack of culturally validating assessment metrics would be to continuously engage various community members across racial and ethnic groups with policymakers to interact with the standards offered to develop and require a practical assessment that can support the goal and unite efforts to fully implement the Minnesota Early Indicators of Progress and support each child's growing, developing, and learning while reaching their full potential.

## WBWF Goal # 2: All Third Graders Can Read at Grade Level

When attempting to measure the WBWF goal of “All third graders can read at grade level,” we need to look no further than the state's MCA scores for third graders to provide a data set for analysis.

Below is a compiled set of data that allows for one measure of literacy uniformly across the entire state. This uniformity does not suggest that the MCA itself is not biased or limited. For example, it is essential to note that the MCA measures English literacy only and does not address students' literacy in languages other than English. With this established, MCA data can be useful because it provides a universal data set that translates standards-based academic proficiency in various content areas across the state. Thus, the data set has been chosen to help measure the specific WBWF goal of “All third-graders can read at grade level.”



The data shows the trend of MCA III reading proficiency level of Minnesota third graders from 2014 to 2022 for each of the seven federal race and ethnicity categories. The data used in this analysis from 2018 to 2022 is from the 2014 to 2017 Minnesota Department of Education Report Card.

It is important to note that in 2020, no summarized data was available due to testing interruptions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, data from 2013 is not included in the analysis because of significant changes made to the test after 2013.

**The Percentage of Proficiency of Students with Different Racial Backgrounds in the Minnesota 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MCA III Reading Test**

|             | American Indian or Alaska Native Students | Asian Students | Black or African American Students | Hispanic or Latino Students | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Students | Students with Two or more Races | White Students |
|-------------|---|----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>2014</b> | 34.9%                                     | 45.9%          | 32.3%                              | 35.0%                       | 62.7%  | 55.2%                           | 67.0%          |
| <b>2015</b> | 36.7%                                     | 47.2%          | 31.4%                              | 35.8%                       | 47.1%  | 56.1%                           | 68.1%          |
| <b>2016</b> | 32.8%                                     | 49.2%          | 31.9%                              | 35.3%                       | 54.5%  | 53.1%                           | 66.8%          |
| <b>2017</b> | 33.3%                                     | 47.2%          | 32.7%                              | 34.4%                       | 50.0%  | 52.4%                           | 66.2%          |
| <b>2018</b> | n/a                                       | 49.4%          | 33.3%                              | 33.3%                       | 44.6%  | 51.5%                           | 65.1%          |
| <b>2019</b> | 37.7%                                     | 46.2%          | 31.8%                              | 32.8%                       | 36.1%  | 51.5%                           | 63.5%          |
| <b>2020</b> | n/a                                       | n/a            | n/a                                | n/a                         | n/a  | n/a                             | n/a            |
| <b>2021</b> | 29.6%                                     | 40.5%          | 25.2%                              | 26.0%                       | 34.4%  | 45.5%                           | 56.7%          |
| <b>2022</b> | 28.9%                                     | 37.7%          | 27.7%                              | 27.7%                       | 32.2%  | 40.6%                           | 57.1%          |

Minnesota Department of Education Report Card (MDE, 2023)

Overall, the MCA III reading proficiency level of Minnesota third graders between 2014 in 2022 went down in every racial category. The lowest baseline performing group measured in this data set was Black/African American students. This group went from 32.2% in 2014 to 27.7% in 2022. The Black/African American demographic experienced a five-percentage point drop which equates to a -14.0% relative rate of change or reduction.

This data set indicated that the highest initial performing racial category was White students. The 2014 data shows 67% of White students were proficient in the MCA III reading test, but that declined to 57.1% in 2022, a 10-percentage point drop that reflected a -14.8% relative rate of change.

Similar trends also appear for the Hispanic/Latino group which experienced a seven percentage-point drop. That equaled a relative rate of change or reduction of -20.9%.

The American Indian/Alaska Native group experienced a six-percentage point drop equaling a relative rate of change of -17.2%.

The Asian student group experienced an eight-percentage point drop, reflecting a -17.9% relative rate of change.

The Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander group had the greatest change, with a 30.5 percentage point drop for a relative rate of change of - 48.6%.

**Based upon the data analysis, it is safe to conclude that the WBWF goal of, “All third-graders can read at grade level” has not been met, and in fact, we have lost significant ground and are further from the goal than we were in 2014.**

## WBWF Goal # 3: All Students Are Ready for Career and College

### Why Career and College Readiness Matters

The current and coming demographic shifts in Minnesota make investing in students to earn these qualifications an urgent matter. In 2023 the number of Minnesotans, ages 65 and over is expected to surpass 1 million, up from less than 800,000 in 2013, and that number will surpass 1.2 million by 2028. The resulting rapid rate of retirements means that younger generations will need to pick up the pace in obtaining the education necessary to replace these retirees. Failure to do so will result in huge challenges to our society's ability to support a dramatically large aging population removed from the workforce.

And, while Minnesota will have an increasing share of residents 65 and older, a greater share of Minnesota's population will be People of Color and American Indian. By 2026, People of Color and American Indians are projected to be the majority of Minnesota's population, ages 14 to 29. This is the age group currently found among high school and college students and in Minnesota's youngest employees in the workforce (Dayton and Lee, 2020). According to the MN State Demographer, "Virtually all of the net population growth in the coming decades will be from populations of color" (Dayton and Lee, 2020, page 19).

In the next ten years, Minnesota is projected to have over 900,000 job openings in occupations classified as "in demand" that require a post-secondary degree or certificate. These jobs need to be filled to meet the needs of Minnesota's communities and economy. This includes registered nurses, nursing assistants, teachers, software developers, accountants, electricians, social workers, industrial mechanics, construction managers, and public safety officers (Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, 2022).

## Projected Job Openings and Typical Earnings for Occupations-in-Demand in Minnesota 2022 – 2032

| Level of Education                           | Projected Job Openings | Typical Earnings* |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|
| Graduate or Professional Degree              | 64,196                 | \$100,182         |
| Bachelor Degree                              | 541,215                | \$85,922          |
| Associate Degree                             | 118,197                | \$72,198          |
| Post-secondary certificate/nondegree program | 179,824                | \$56,743          |

Source: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Occupations in Demand, 2022

\*Weighted average median of the wages paid for high-demand occupations.

### K -12 Role

When attempting to address the goal that all students are ready for career or college it is important to note that there is no agreed-upon standard assessment that measures both career and/or college readiness.

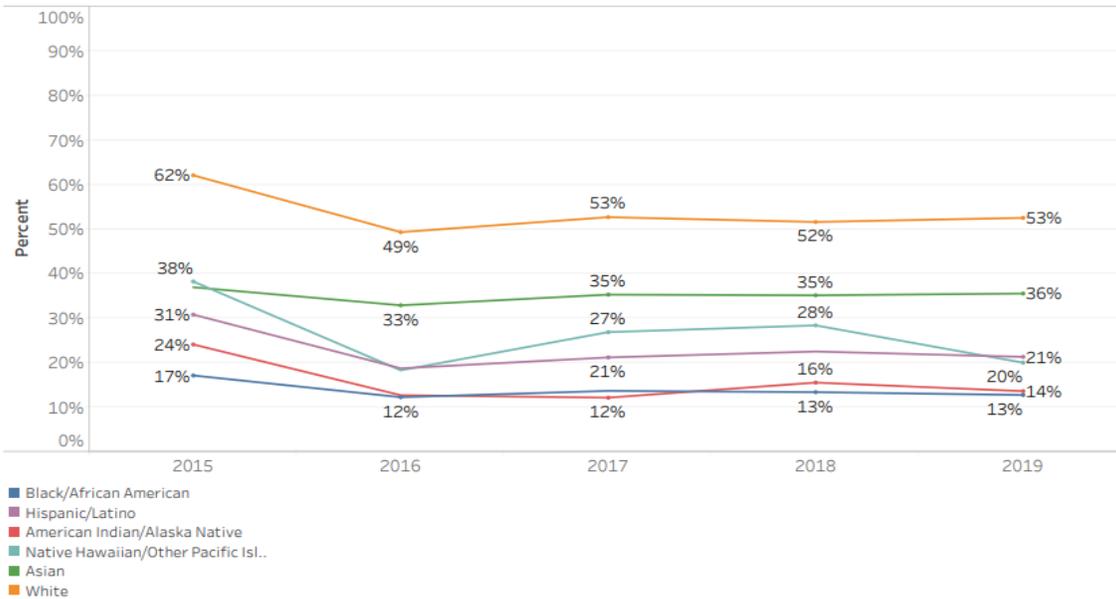
### ACT Test Indicators

The ACT has historically been used as one measure connected to college readiness. Since there is no singular agreed-upon measure, and historical data is available on ACT by race and ethnicity, for this report, a decision was rendered to use the ACT, specifically those who met three or more benchmarks included within the ACT, as a proxy to discuss what it means to be college and or career ready. The ACT measures what is perceived to be the minimal level of knowledge needed to be successful in first-year college courses in four academic areas. The areas include English, Reading, Math, and Science.

To address this issue, trend data was selected from the ACT report for the years 2015 through 2019. This data set represents the most comprehensive data available as it includes the highest available N size of participants that reflects academic experiences for multiple racial groups that were tested before the COVID-19 pandemic interruption, during which many colleges suspended the requirement to submit standardized test scores leading to a large drop in the number of students taking the ACT.

## MINNESOTA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015-2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



|             | Black or African American Students | Hispanic or Latino Students | American Indian or Alaska Native Students | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Students | Asian Students | White Students |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|----------------|----------------|
| <b>2015</b> | 17%                                | 31%                         | 24%                                       | 38%  | 37%            | 62%            |
| <b>2016</b> | 12%                                | 19%                         | 13%                                       | 18%  | 33%            | 49%            |
| <b>2017</b> | 14%                                | 21%                         | 12%                                       | 27%  | 35%            | 53%            |
| <b>2018</b> | 13%                                | 23%                         | 16%                                       | 28%  | 35%            | 52%            |
| <b>2019</b> | 13%                                | 21%                         | 14%                                       | 20%  | 36%            | 53%            |

(ACT, 2019)

The data shows racially predictable disparities, with White students consistently scoring higher in every category than other racial groups. In addition, it is also notable that the share of ACT test-takers who met three or more benchmarks declined in every racial category between 2015 and 2019.

The lowest baseline performing group measured in this data set was Black/African American students. This group went from 17% in 2015 to 13% in 2019. The Black/African American demographic group experienced a four-percentage point drop, equating to a -23.5% relative rate of change.

The highest-performing racial category indicated by this data set was White students. The data shows in 2015 that 62% of Whites met three or more of the benchmarks, but that declined to 53% in 2019, which reflected a 9-percentage point drop, indicating a -14.5% relative rate of change.

Similar trends also appear for the Hispanic/Latino student group, which experienced a twelve-percentage point drop that equaled a relative rate of change of -32.2%.

The American Indian/Alaska Native group experienced a ten-percentage point drop and a relative rate of change of -41%.

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander groups experienced a seventeen-percentage point drop or a relative rate of change of -44.7%.

Those identified as Asian showed more stable outcomes over time as this group experienced only a 1-percentage point drop over the five years, which reflected a -3% relative rate of change.

## Postsecondary Indicators – College Enrollment and Completion

While not part of the WBWF goals frame, and in addition to using the ACT as a proxy to understand career readiness, it is essential to understand the role that postsecondary education plays in helping establish Minnesota with the “World's Best Workforce” and what that, in turn, presumes for K-12 education’s role in paving the way for students to be successful in accessing and completing post-secondary.

### Enrollment

In looking at recent data on student enrollment, unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated trends of declining or flat higher education enrollment of Minnesotan's high school graduates, especially Students of Color and American Indian students between 2011 and 2020.

## Post-Secondary Enrollment for Minnesota High School Graduates the Fall Following Graduation

|  | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Pct Pt<br>Change<br>2011 to<br>2021 | %<br>Change<br>2011 to<br>2021 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>American Indian<br/>&amp; Alaska Native</b>         | 48%  | 50%  | 52%  | 43%  | 43%  | 43%  | 43%  | 38%  | 38%  | 33%  | 34%  | -14                                 | -29%                           |
| <b>Asian</b>   | 69%  | 69%  | 70%  | 70%  | 71%  | 71%  | 71%  | 69%  | 71%  | 67%  | 67%  | -2                                  | -3%                            |
| <b>Black or African<br/>American</b>                   | 58%  | 61%  | 61%  | 61%  | 60%  | 61%  | 60%  | 58%  | 58%  | 54%  | 54%  | -4                                  | -7%                            |
| <b>Hispanic/Latino</b>                                 | 69%  | 70%  | 71%  | 70%  | 69%  | 69%  | 68%  | 67%  | 66%  | 62%  | 62%  | -7                                  | -10%                           |
| <b>Native Hawaiian<br/>or Other Pacific<br/>Island</b> | 55%  | 59%  | 61%  | 43%  | 52%  | 61%  | 55%  | 32%  | 54%  | 53%  | 63%  | 8                                   | 15%                            |
| <b>White</b>   | 72%  | 73%  | 73%  | 73%  | 72%  | 72%  | 71%  | 70%  | 69%  | 66%  | 65%  | -7                                  | -10%                           |
| <b>Multiracial</b>                                     | 56%  | 59%  | 61%  | 56%  |      | 56%  | 58%  | 56%  | 55%  | 51%  | 54%  | -2                                  | -4%                            |

Source: Minnesota State Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), year of high school graduation

Based on the data provided every racial group had a decline in post-secondary enrollment from 2011 to 2021 except for the Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander group. The Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Island group saw an increase in post-secondary enrollment of 8 percentage points which is a relative rate of change of + 15%.

American Indian and Alaskan Native students saw a fourteen-percentage point reduction during this period which equaled a - 29% relative rate of change. This relative rate of change was the largest drop and post-secondary enrollment during this period.

Black/African American students experienced a negative two percentage point change which equaled a - 3% relative rate of change.

Hispanic/Latino students also experienced a drop and postsecondary enrollment. This group of students experienced a - 7 percentage point drop which equaled a - 10% relative rate of change.

White students were not exempt from a drop in post-secondary enrollment as they like our Hispanic/Latino students also dropped seven percentage points for a relative rate of change of - 10%.

When considering the category of multiracial it is difficult to know who's included within this group except for the indicator that there is more than one racial category the student identifies with or has been categorized by. However, this group also experience a reduction in post-secondary enrollment of - 2 percentage points which equaled the relative rate of change of - 4%.

### Completion – Associate Degrees

To meet the needs of Minnesota’s economic and civic workforce needs, we must invest in Students of Color and American Indian students in such a way as to increase college completion. This is important not only for our state’s economy but also for the communities for which these students emerge as those disproportionately subsist on low wages and asset accumulations. A way to escape that economically depressed reality lies through post-secondary credentialing.

#### 150% Graduation Rates Associate Degrees

|  | 2015<br>(fall 2012<br>first-year cohort) | 2021<br>(fall 2017<br>first-year cohort) | Pct Pt Change | % Change |
|--|--|--|---------------|----------|
| American Indian & Alaska Native          | 10%                                      | 11%                                      | 1             | 12%      |
| Asian                                    | 12%                                      | 18%                                      | 6             | 50%      |
| Black or African American                | 6%                                       | 8%                                       | 2             | 33%      |
| Hispanic/Latino                          | 13%                                      | 15%                                      | 2             | 15%      |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island* | 20%                                      | 11%                                      | -9            | -45%     |
| White                                    | 26%                                      | 29%                                      | 3             | 12%      |
| Multiracial                              | 11%                                      | 17%                                      | 6             | 55%      |

Source: Associate degree 150% Graduation Rates. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Compares the first-time, full-time cohort that entered in fall 2012 and fall 2015 and the share that graduated within three years by race and ethnicity.

While analyzing the data connected to 150% graduation rates for Associate degrees one can see significant variations within racial categories both positive and negative are present in this data set. For example, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Island groups experienced the

largest and only decrease between 2015 and 2021. This group saw a 9-percentage point drop which equaled a - 45% relative rate of change.

The most significant increase is found within the group identified as multiracial. This group experienced a positive six percentage point increase that represented a +55% increase in the relative rate of change.

All the other racial groups indicated some level of growth in the category of 150% graduation rates associate degrees.

American Indian and Alaskan Natives saw a one percentage point positive change with the relative rate of change of +12%.

Those identified as Asian witnessed a six-percentage point increase which equaled a +50% relative rate of change.

White students also saw growth represented in the fact that they increased by three percentage points for a relative rate of change of +12%.

While most racial groups saw an increase in their data (except for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Island groups) it is important to note that racial disparities are persistent within the data. This fact is identifiable by looking at the baseline of the fall 2012 first year cohort. The data indicates that White student's baseline for 150% graduation rate of associate degrees started out at 26% while all other groups baseline data range from 6 percentage points less as indicated for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Island groups which were the closest baseline, to Black/African groups whose baseline was only 6% and actual 20 percentage points lower than White student and represented the lowest racial category for 150% graduation rate for Associate degrees.

## Completion – Four Year Degrees

### Four Year College Graduation Rates in Minnesota by Race/Ethnicity

|  | 2015<br>(fall 2012<br>first-year cohort) | 2021<br>(fall 2017<br>first-year cohort) | Pct Pt Change | % Change |
|--|--|--|---------------|----------|
| American Indian & Alaska Native          | 33%                                      | 33%                                      | 0             | 0%       |
| Asian                                    | 43%                                      | 51%                                      | 8             | 19%      |
| Black or African American                | 25%                                      | 32%                                      | 7             | 28%      |
| Hispanic/Latino                          | 41%                                      | 45%                                      | 4             | 10%      |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island* | 38%                                      | 47%                                      | 9             | 24%      |
| White                                    | 48%                                      | 56%                                      | 8             | 17%      |
| Multiracial                              | 31%                                      | 45%                                      | 14            | 45%      |

Source: Graduation Rate Data. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Compares the first-time, full-time cohorts that entered in fall 2012 and fall 2017 and the share of each cohort that graduated on-time within four years by race and ethnicity.

When analyzing four-year college graduation rates the data indicates positive rates of change for nearly every racial category except for American Indians and Alaska Natives. This group experienced no change in four-year college graduation rates between 2015 and 2021.

All other racial groups experienced not only a positive percentage points increase but every group experienced at least double-digit increases in their relative rate of change. The most significant change occurred for the group identified as multiracial. This group experienced a fourteen percentage point gain which equaled a relative rate of change of +45%.

Those identified as Asian experience an increase of eight- percentage points for a positive relative rate of change of 19%.

Students who have been categorized as Black/African American saw an increase of seven percentage points for a positive relative rate of change of 28%.

Positive increases in four-year college graduation rates are also indicated for our Hispanic/Latino population as their percentage points went up by four percentage points which equaled a relative rate of change of +10%.

As we attempt to make sense of the data connected to our White students, we can see an increase of eight percentage points which equals a positive relative rate of change of 17%. It is important to again understand the baseline data as it indicates that White students in 2015 had a four-year college graduation rate of 48%. This is higher than any other racial category in the state. The next closest group was our Asian population at 43%. The group who had the lowest baseline was our Black/African American group whose baseline was 25% in 2015. The data clearly indicates growth in many categories while indicating measurable and persistent racial disparities in four-year college graduation rates.

## Conclusion

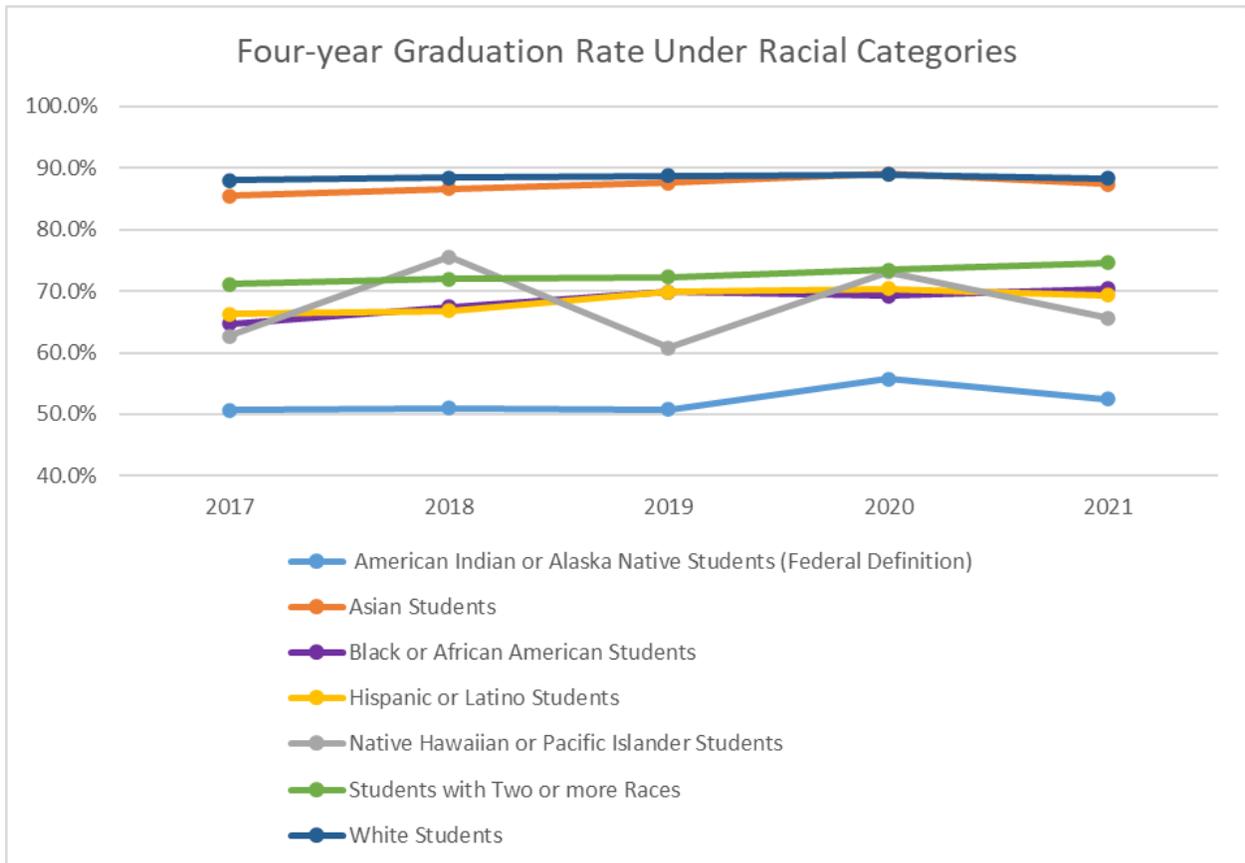
There are disparities in college completion rates by race and ethnicity at both the associate degree and bachelor's degree levels (unfortunately data is not available for certificate programs). Although Students of Color and American Indian students are making significant strides in increasing post-secondary graduation and transfer-out rates, this is happening within a system that continues to show racially disparate overall outcomes. We see this in the overall graduation rates.

For most Students of Color and American Indian students' overall college and career readiness has gone down, and all Students of Color or American Indian students continue not to be effectively served by our educational institutions in comparison to their White counterparts which is indicated in the graduation rates data sets provided. Simply put, the current system is consistently producing higher college and career readiness indicators for White students than for Students of Color or American Indian students.

## WBWF Goal # 4: All Students Graduate from High School

To understand the state's progress on the WBWF goal of, "All students graduate from high school," we need to look no further than MDE's data on graduation rates located on their website. For this section of the report, we will be using both the four-year and seven-year graduation rate data disaggregated by racial categories accessed from the Report Card released by the Minnesota Department of Education.

### Four-Year High School Graduation Rates



## Four-year Graduation Rate Under Racial Categories

|             | American Indian or Alaska Native Students* | Asian Students | Black or African American Students | Hispanic or Latino Students | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Students | Students with Two or More Races | White Students |
|-------------|--|----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>2017</b> | 50.7%                                      | 85.5%          | 64.7%                              | 66.3%                       | 62.7%  | 71.1%                           | 88.0%          |
| <b>2018</b> | 51.0%                                      | 86.6%          | 67.4%                              | 66.8%                       | 75.6%  | 72.0%                           | 88.4%          |
| <b>2019</b> | 50.8%                                      | 87.6%          | 69.9%                              | 69.9%                       | 60.8%  | 72.3%                           | 88.7%          |
| <b>2020</b> | 55.7%                                      | 89.1%          | 69.2%                              | 70.4%                       | 73.1%  | 73.5%                           | 89.0%          |
| <b>2021</b> | 52.5%                                      | 87.4%          | 70.4%                              | 69.3%                       | 65.6%  | 74.6%                           | 88.3%          |

\*Federal Definition

Minnesota Department of Education Report Card (MDE, 2023)

Utilizing the four-year graduation rate, the data indicates that the highest-performing racial group is White students, with an 88.3% graduation rate which reflected a 0.3 percentage-point increase over the past 5 years.

Similar trends also appear for the Asian student group which has an 87.4% graduation rate and experienced an almost two-percentage-point increase that equaled a relative rate of change of 2.2%.

The Hispanic/Latino student group had a three-percentage point increase which equals a 4.5% relative rate of change.

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students experienced an almost three- percentage point increase which reflected a positive 4.6% relative rate of change.

Students of two more races experienced a 3.5 percentage point increase with a positive 4.9% relative rate of change.

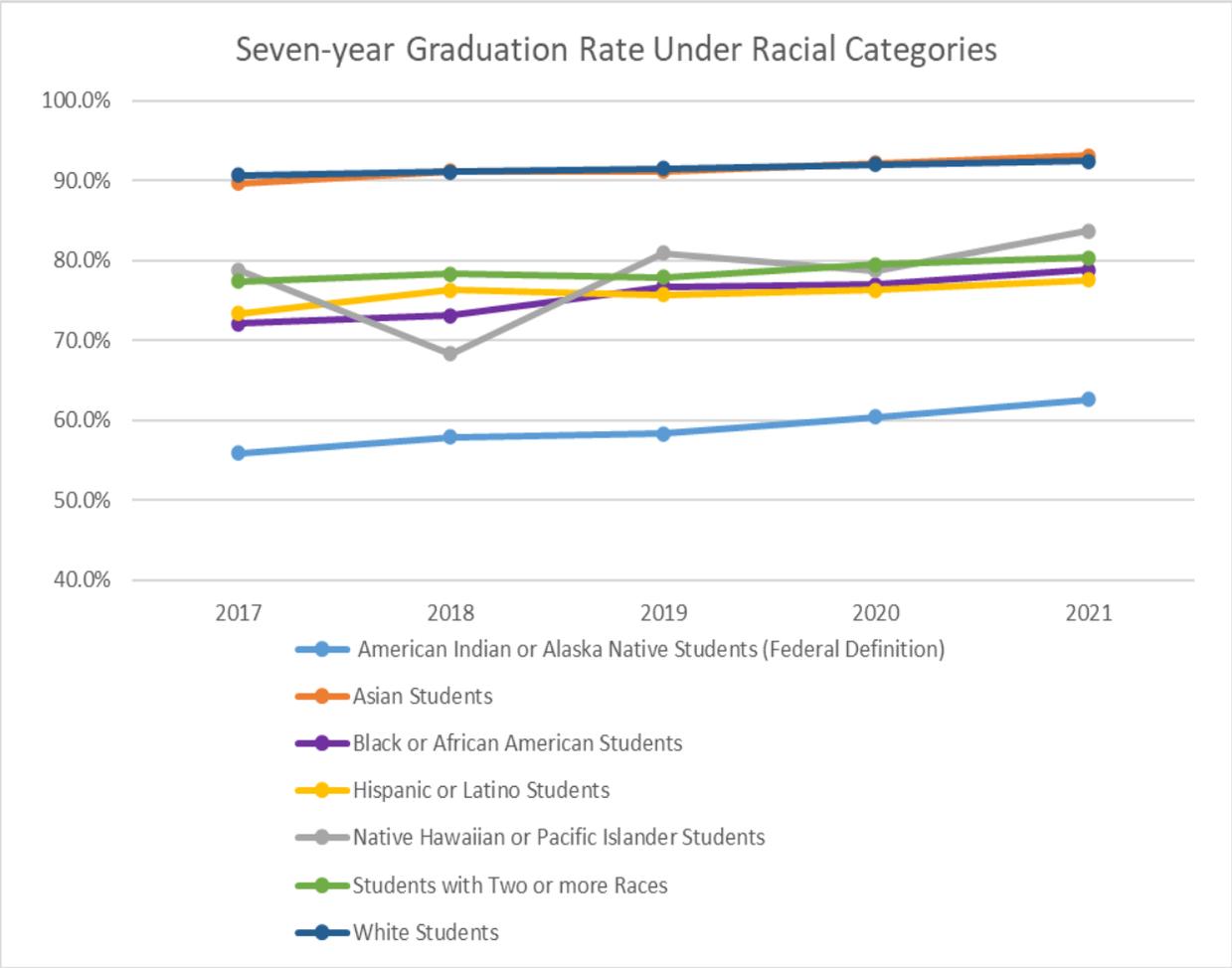
As the graduation rates for several racial categories experienced minimal change, Black/African American students experienced the largest increase, a 5.7 percentage point change and a relative rate of change of +8.8%.

American Indian students experienced a 1.8 percentage point increase which reflected an increase in the relative rate of change of 3.6% over the 5 years.

### Conclusion – Four Year Graduation Rate

As there are some positive signs connected to growth and an increase in four-year graduation rates racially disparate and predictable outcomes remain persistent. One needs to look no further than the baseline data to understand this reality. White students were graduating in 2021 at the rate of 88.3% while American Indian or Alaska Native students were graduating at the rate of 52.5%. There is literally a 35.8 percentage point difference between the two groups. This data point alone points to the systemic failure in our educational system.

### Seven-Year High School Graduation Rates



## Seven-year Graduation Rate Under Racial Categories

|             | American Indian or Alaska Native Students* | Asian Students | Black or African American Students | Hispanic or Latino Students | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Students | Students with Two or More Races | White Students |
|-------------|--|----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>2017</b> | 55.9%                                      | 89.7%          | 72.1%                              | 73.4%                       | 78.8%  | 77.4%                           | 90.7%          |
| <b>2018</b> | 57.9%                                      | 91.2%          | 73.1%                              | 76.3%                       | 68.3%  | 78.3%                           | 91.1%          |
| <b>2019</b> | 58.3%                                      | 91.2%          | 76.7%                              | 75.7%                       | 80.9%  | 77.9%                           | 91.5%          |
| <b>2020</b> | 60.4%                                      | 92.2%          | 77.0%                              | 76.3%                       | 78.7%  | 79.5%                           | 92.0%          |
| <b>2021</b> | 62.6%                                      | 93.1%          | 78.8%                              | 77.6%                       | 83.7%  | 80.3%                           | 92.4%          |

\*Federal Definition

Minnesota Department of Education Report Card (MDE, 2023)

In the seven-year graduation rate, White students continued with a high graduation rate, 92.4%, and experienced a 1.7 percentage point increase that produced a +1.8% relative rate of change.

However, the Asian student group has the highest graduation rate of 93.1%, reflecting a 3.4 percentage point increase and a relative rate of change of +3.8%.

The Hispanic/Latino student group experienced a 4.2 percentage point increase which reflected a relative rate of change equal to +5.7%.

Similarly, the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander student group experienced a 4.9 percentage point increase and a positive relative rate of change of 6.2%

The two or more races group experienced a 2.9 percentage point increase over the five years which reflected a +3.7% relative rate of change.

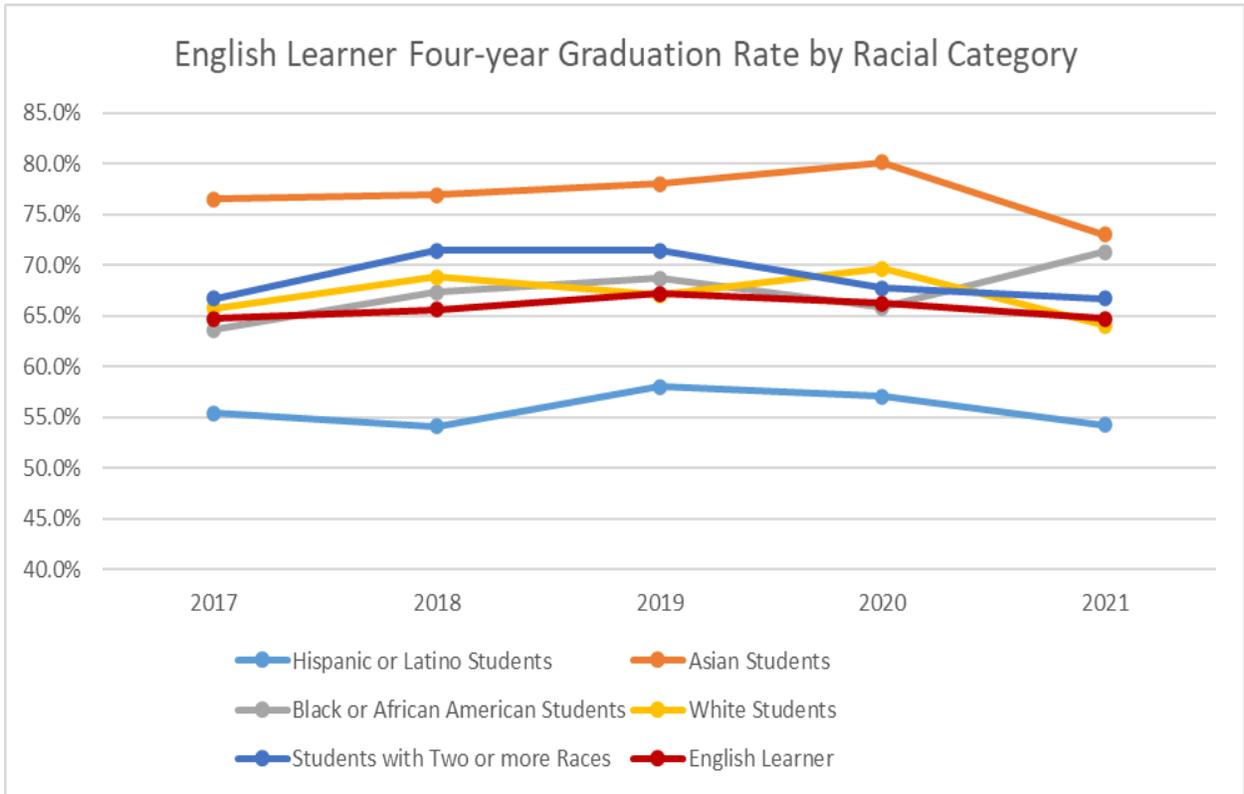
Lower graduation rates among Black/African Americans and American Indians persist. These two student groups both experienced a 6.7 percentage point increase. However, the American Indian group experienced the largest growth with a relative rate of change equal to 12.0% while the Black/African American group experienced a relative rate of change equal to 9.3%. It is noteworthy that the American Indian student group still has the lowest graduation rate of 62.6%, consistent with the four-year graduation rate.

### Conclusion – Seven Year Graduation Rate

The overall gap between the White group and the other racial categories has narrowed if we compare the seven-year graduation rate to the four-year graduation rate. Racial groups with lower four-year graduation rates have a higher rate of change than in seven-year graduation rates compared with groups like White students, Asian students, and students with two or more races. The graduation rate of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students fluctuated significantly over the course of seven years and may be volatile due to its small sample size.

### English Learners Graduation Rates

In addition to basic trend data of graduation rates in both four-year and seven-year, it is valuable to consider how different racial groups performed relative to English Learners.



## English Learner Four-year Graduation Rate by Racial Category

|      | Hispanic or Latino Students | Asian Students | Black or African American Students | White Students | Students with Two or more Races | All English Learners |
|------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 2017 | 55.4%                       | 76.5%          | 63.6%                              | 65.7%          | 66.7%                           | 64.7%                |
| 2018 | 54.1%                       | 76.9%          | 67.3%                              | 68.8%          | 71.4%                           | 65.6%                |
| 2019 | 58.0%                       | 78.0%          | 68.7%                              | 67.0%          | 71.4%                           | 67.2%                |
| 2020 | 57.0%                       | 80.1%          | 65.8%                              | 69.6%          | 67.7%                           | 66.2%                |
| 2021 | 54.2%                       | 73.0%          | 71.3%                              | 64.0%          | 66.7%                           | 65.7%                |

Minnesota Department of Education Report Card (MDE, 2023)

In the chart of English Learners' four-year graduation rate by racial categories, the total graduation rate for all EL students increased by only 1 percentage point for a minimal relative rate of change of 1.5% over the 5-year period.

There was no sustained change in the graduation rate of English Learners of two or more races.

The graduation rate of White English Learners had gone down 1.7 percentage points with a -2.6% relative rate of change but is significantly above the average rates of all groups.

The Hispanic/Latino student group experienced a 1.2 percentage-point drop and a -2.2% relative rate significantly below the average throughout the five years.

The Asian student group also decreased by 3.5 percentage points for a -4.6% relative rate of change.

The only group with an increase is the Black/African American student group, with a 7.7 percentage point increase from 63.6% to 71.3%, reflecting a relative rate of change equal to +12.1%. They are outperforming all racial categories within EL.

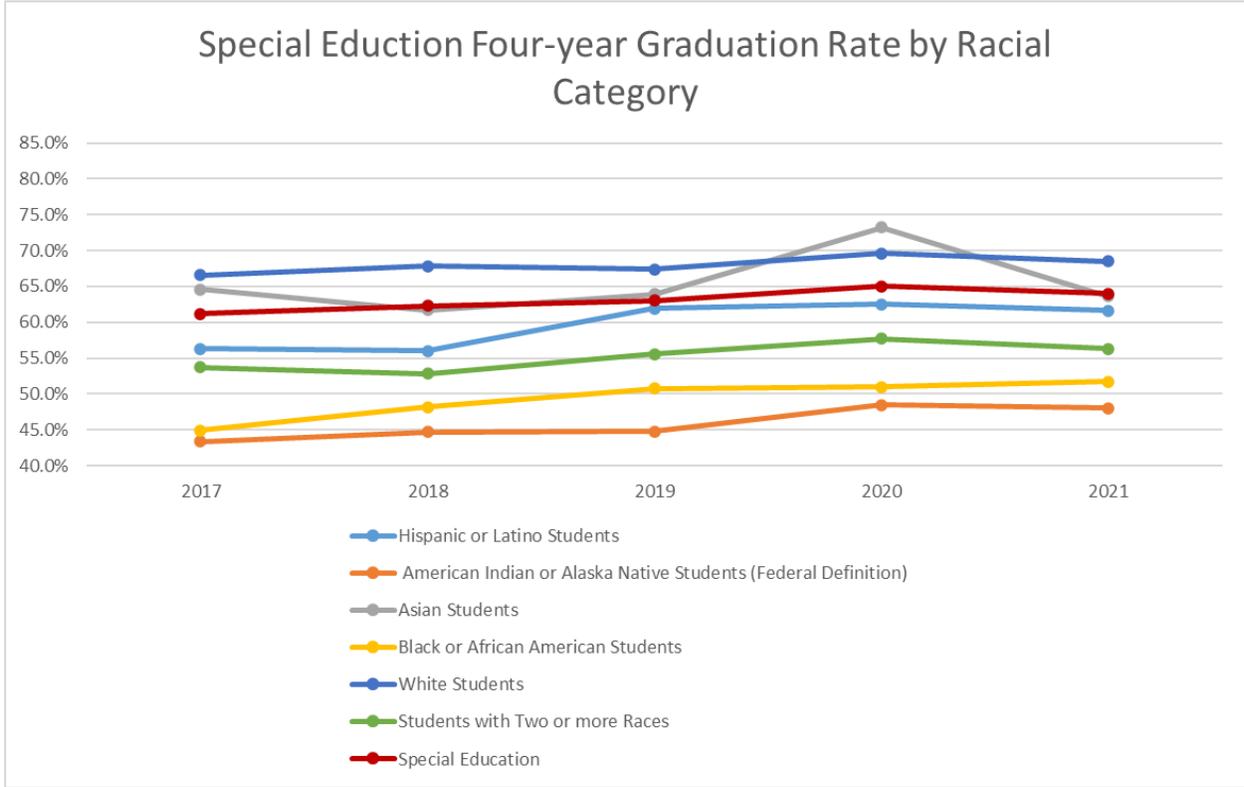
No data was available from MDE for the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander group and the American Indian group due to sample sizes.

### Conclusion – EL Graduation

EL students comprise the fastest-growing student demographic group in the state and arguably will continue to grow, given the constantly changing global migration patterns. Minnesota must build more robust policies that center on the needs of English Learners.

### Special Education High School Graduation Rates

In addition to looking at traditional graduation rates and graduation rates for those identified as English Language Learners, it is essential to consider graduation for students identified as students with disabilities or Special Education. The following is a snapshot that briefly looks into Four-year graduation rates when the intersectionality of race and ability are used in conjunction.



## Special Education Four-year Graduation Rate by Racial Category

|             | Hispanic or Latino Students | American Indian or Alaska Native Students* | Asian Students | Black or African American Students | White Students | Students with Two or more Races | All Special Education |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>2017</b> | 56.3%                       | 43.4%                                      | 64.6%          | 44.9%                              | 66.6%          | 53.7%                           | 61.2%                 |
| <b>2018</b> | 56.0%                       | 44.7%                                      | 61.7%          | 48.2%                              | 67.8%          | 52.8%                           | 62.3%                 |
| <b>2019</b> | 61.9%                       | 44.8%                                      | 63.9%          | 50.8%                              | 67.4%          | 55.6%                           | 63.0%                 |
| <b>2020</b> | 62.5%                       | 48.5%                                      | 73.2%          | 51.0%                              | 69.6%          | 57.7%                           | 65.0%                 |
| <b>2021</b> | 61.6%                       | 48.0%                                      | 63.6%          | 51.7%                              | 68.5%          | 56.3%                           | 64.0%                 |

\*Federal Definition

Minnesota Department of Education Report Card (MDE, 2023)

On average, the graduation of students in Special Education has gone up 2.8 percentage points with a +4.6% relative rate of change.

Every racial category has seen an increase except for Asian students, which experienced a one-percentage drop and a relative rate of change equal to -1.5%.

The White student group is still at the height of outcomes with a graduation rate of 68.5% with a 1.9 percentage point increase over the five years, which reflected a +2.9% relative rate of change.

The greatest systemic failure is reflected within the American Indian students' graduation rate of 48%, which is almost 1/3 below the highest-performing White group. On a positive note, in the past five years, American Indian students experienced an increase of 4.6 percentage points, reflecting a +10.6% relative rate of change.

Other encouraging data is the graduation rates of Black/African Americans in Special Education, which experienced the largest increase from 44.9% to 51.7% in the past few years. This equals a 6.8 percentage point increase and a positive relative rate of change of 15%.

The Hispanic/Latino student group experienced a 5.3 percentage point increase which is a +9.4% relative rate of change.

The two or more races' student groups increased by 2.6 percentage points and a +4.8% relative rate of change.

No data was available for the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander group.

### **Conclusion-Special Education Graduation**

Several positive indicators related to Special Education graduation rates can be celebrated. These include a positive relative rate of change of 9.4% for our Hispanic/Latino population to a double-digit increase in the relative rate of change for our Black/African American Special Education students (15%).

While the data indicates some positive movement, it is essential to note that racial disparities and predictable outcomes are still present within our Special Education graduation rates. One must look no further than the graduation gap between White Special Education students at 68.5%, compared to American Indian or Alaska Native Special Education students at 48%. The 20-plus point gap is all the evidence one needs to see the systemic failure in our delivery of Special Education in Minnesota.

## **Overall Conclusion – High School Graduation Rates**

Throughout the modern era of education, graduation rates have been deemed a critical data set to measure school districts and local education agencies' success. Often these data sets are perceived to suggest that students who graduate are well-equipped or prepared to enter the workforce or post-secondary program of their choice. It is essential not to conflate graduation with college and or career readiness. Graduation rates are simply a single data point. In this case, we reviewed four different data points to help us better understand the performance of our educational institutions and their ability to graduate Minnesota students.

As is accurate with most quantitative academic indicators measuring Minnesota's World's Best Workforce, we see the persistence of racial disparities. Utilizing three of the four graduation rate data sets, including Four-year graduation rates, Seven-year graduation rates, and Special Education graduation rates, we see alarming disparities between the highest performing White racial group and others, with our American Indian students experiencing the widest gap between themselves and White students. The disparities range from 20.5 percentage points in Special Education graduation rates to 35.8 percentage points in 4-year graduation rates.

When considering English Learners' graduation rates, it's important to note that no American Indian data was included due to the sample size. However, racially identifiable outcomes were present within that data set as Black/African American students were identified with the highest graduation rate of 71.3%, while Hispanic /Latino English Learners were graduating only at the rate of 54.2%.

## **WBWF Goal # 5: All Racial and Economic Achievement Gaps Between Students are Closed**

Developed in 2013, Minnesota's World's Best Work Force was created after extensive state legislative hearings exploring what was then called "the academic achievement gap" persistently present between White students and students of Color and Indigenous students. The entire purpose of the resulting legislation was to "close those gaps" and tie such efforts to producing Minnesota's modern workforce needs. Addressing the racial disparities was elevated in state policy to a high level of purpose and outcomes for our K-12 public education system.

For this report, we intentionally focused on racial disparities and have not addressed how social economics often has been used as a passive language to avoid direct conversation that isolates race as the primary indicator. We do acknowledge that income is also a determinant of inequitable education outcomes. However, for this report, we need to look no further than the realities connected to the four other goals included in the World's Best Workforce to see the unrealized expectations of goal number 5:

1. All children are ready for school
2. All third graders can read at grade level
3. All students are ready for career and college
4. All students graduate from high school

## Minnesota's World's Best Workforce – Conclusion

This report's findings indicate that Minnesota systemically continues to have racially disparate and predictable educational outcomes ten years after the passage of Minnesota's World Best Workforce.

The multiple data sets utilized to explore the performance of the five WBWF goals indicate that Minnesota has not successfully met them. It is essential to understand the reality of systemic racism represented by this combination of quantitative information that exists for some goals with the lack of uniformity and clarity for measuring the other goals.

As important as the data is, however, MnEEP believes it does not portray the whole story of the harsh realities that Students of Color and American Indian students experience within our state's educational system. From there, we, as MnEEP, enter the conversation with an entirely new approach to research that utilizes a mixed methodology approach rooted in the CLEAR Solutions Framework (Hillstrom, 2009).

As you continue engaging with the various elements and case studies in MnEEP's 2023 State of Students of Color and American Indian Report, you will see that our new research approach is solutions-based. The different case studies included in this report will provide specific examples of how through utilizing best practices connected to Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020), pragmatically modeled through the CLEAR Solutions Framework, we cannot only have a positive impact on Students of Color and American Indian students but our entire educational system.

Undoubtedly a pedagogical shift is needed that is based on CVP/L. Pedagogy involves addressing the environment, instruction, and curriculum however, when adjusting, we must ensure that CVP/L is foundational to that process. Adopting new content or changes in any of these three areas of pedagogy without applying the principles of CVP/L will only ensure that any of the pedagogical changes made will inevitably reinforce a standard of White culture that isolates and marginalizes learners whose cultural identity has been historically denied.

**If we continue to apply the current dominant cultural norms of our education systems as the exclusive guide for the educational process, we will produce pedagogical changes from the same lens that created the original education system. This ultimately will lead to more of the same, or possibly worse, attacks on Students of Color and American Indian students.**

**Pedagogical changes must create educational systems that engage students' racial, ethnic, social, and linguistic identities in learning as a contributing factor to what it means to be educated.**

Ultimately, through utilizing Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L), we can interrupt systemic racism within our educational institutions leading to racial equity and educational excellence.

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