

Every Child, Every Day

Educational Equity through Integration

A Final Report and Recommendations of the Statewide Task Force on School Integration

*Presented by the Minnesota School Integration Council
January 2011*



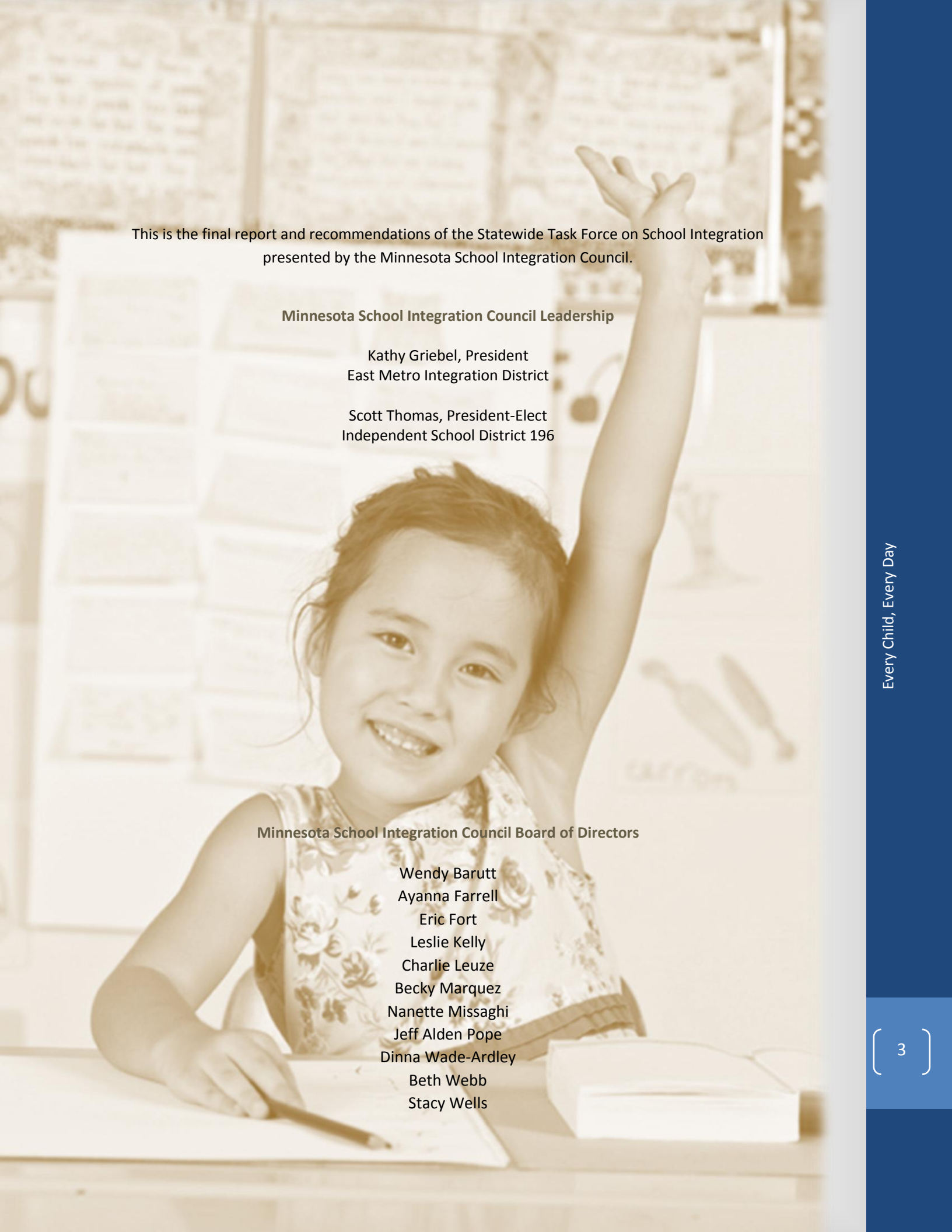
“This Nation has a moral and ethical obligation to fulfill its historic commitment to creating an integrated society that ensures equal opportunity for all of its children. “

Justice Kennedy

*“We are caught in an inescapable
network of mutuality,
tied in a single garment of **destiny**.”*

*Whatever affects one directly,
affects all indirectly.”*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a floral patterned sleeveless top, is sitting at a desk in a classroom. She is smiling and has her right hand raised high in the air. The background shows a bulletin board with various papers and drawings pinned to it. The overall tone of the image is warm and positive.

This is the final report and recommendations of the Statewide Task Force on School Integration presented by the Minnesota School Integration Council.

Minnesota School Integration Council Leadership

Kathy Griebel, President
East Metro Integration District

Scott Thomas, President-Elect
Independent School District 196

Minnesota School Integration Council Board of Directors

Wendy Barutt
Ayanna Farrell
Eric Fort
Leslie Kelly
Charlie Leuze
Becky Marquez
Nanette Missaghi
Jeff Alden Pope
Dinna Wade-Ardley
Beth Webb
Stacy Wells

BACKGROUND

In light of Minnesota’s rapidly changing demographics, an examination of current desegregation policy is long overdue. Critique of the current policies, including the 2005 evaluation report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor, shows a need to clarify outcomes of the integration revenue program and identify measurable indicators of success.¹

Minnesota School Integration Council

The Minnesota School Integration Council is a statewide organization committed to equity and excellence for all. Minnesota School Integration Council (MSIC) exists to *convene* and *advocate* on all matters related to integration and educational equity in the state of Minnesota. With the knowledge and support of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), MSIC convened a statewide task force on school integration. This report reflects the findings and recommendations of the task force.

Statewide Task Force on School Integration

MSIC identified task force members interested in addressing school desegregation and integration policies, integration revenue uses, and the academic achievement gap among groups of students. The task force met four times from October 2010 to January 2011. For further information about the work of the task force, visit the Task Force website:

<http://integrationtaskforce.blogspot.com>

The primary work of the task force was to:

- a. *conduct a comprehensive review* of the current Minnesota Desegregation Rule and Minnesota Statute, section 124D.86, governing the use and allocation of revenue; and
- b. *develop recommendations* for amending Minnesota’s Desegregation Rule and Minnesota Statute section 124D.86.



¹ Office of the Legislative Auditor, “Evaluation Report: School District Integration Revenue” (State of Minnesota: November 2005)

Task Force Process

MSIC utilized a participatory process to provide opportunity for rich dialogue and deep examination of the issues. National and local experts provided data and resources for review and consideration. The process included significant outreach to invested school districts and community partners.

To support the work of the task force, MSIC facilitated five regional listening sessions. These public meetings provided a forum to include a variety of perspectives related to essential questions guiding the work of the task force. Listening sessions were held in Willmar, Rochester, Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul. Over 150 students, parents, and community members provided input and perspective to inform the task force. Task force members heard from school districts, integration collaborative, community organizations, businesses and student groups. Listening sessions focused on the following areas of study:

- a. Purpose of Integration (What are our values?)
- b. Recommended Policies (What outcomes do we want?)
- c. Effective Practices (How do we achieve our desired outcomes?)

In addition to the listening sessions, the task force gathered input through an online feedback survey. Over 200 respondents from across Minnesota completed the survey. Respondents were 70% female and 90% white. A majority of respondents were affiliated with a school or school district - parents, students, teachers, administrators, and school board members. Seventy percent of respondents were from the metropolitan area and 30% from greater Minnesota.



Task force members reviewed demographic data, examined social science research, and studied current practices – local, regional, and national. The recommendations in this report reflect key issues and opportunities that emerged from listening to many voices.

*“There is no
power for
change greater
than community
discovering
what it cares
about.”*

Margaret Wheatley

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The following individuals served on the Statewide Task Force on School Integration:

Margie Aranda
Willmar Area Multicultural Market

Les Heitke
City of Willmar

Roger Banks
Council on Black Minnesotans

Jim Hilbert
Center for Negotiations and Justice

Teri Bonoff
Minnesota Senate

Sharon Johnson
Nobles County Integration Collaborative

Elia Bruggeman
Northwest Suburban Integration School District

Savita Katarya
Rochester Diversity Council

James Burroughs II
Minneapolis Public Schools

Mehmet Konar-Steenberg
William Mitchell College of Law

Armando Camacho
Neighborhood House

Virginia Richardson
PACER

Paul Carlson
New London-Spicer Schools

Regina Seabrook
South Washington County School District

Mary Cecconi
Parents United

Elona Street Stewart
Saint Paul Public Schools

Anthony Galloway
West Metro Education Program

Julie Sweitzer
University of Minnesota

John Garcia
Independent School District 196

Michael Thomas
Osseo Area Schools

Suzanne Griffin-Ziebart
Rochester Public Schools

Jackie Turner
Saint Paul Public Schools

Carole Gupton
University of Minnesota

Carl Wahlstrom
Saint Mary's University

Ron Hagland
Duluth Public Schools

Anika Ward
Science Museum

Jay Haugen
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan School District

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minnesota has a compelling interest in creating an integrated society that ensures equal opportunity for all of its children. Integration is one key strategy that will move our state toward achieving equitable outcomes for all learners. Strong integration policy is a critical component of a larger agenda focused on eliminating disparities and creating educational equity and opportunity for all Minnesotans.

Educational Equity and Excellence are the Goal

Access to equitable, high quality education for all children is a critical obligation of a just, democratic society. A 2004 report by the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota, confirms the impression that “equal opportunity – a cornerstone of the ‘Minnesota Way’ – continues to drive residents of the state. They continue to be committed to making sure that everyone has the same chance at a high quality life and that Minnesota ‘works for everyone.’”²

We have ample evidence that Minnesota’s educational system doesn’t work for all children. In aggregate, Minnesota’s students have higher achievement than students in most other states, as evidenced by high rankings in standardized tests, college entrance exams, and graduation rates.³ However, beneath these successes are well-documented educational disparities among racial and ethnic groups.⁴ These “achievement gaps” demonstrate an uneven distribution of opportunity in the system. Reducing these disparities is essential from social, political, and economic positions. Well-prepared students are a long-term investment in the health and stability of our region. Minnesota’s future success is directly linked to our ability to prepare citizens that can thrive in a diverse, global marketplace.



² Stan Greenburg, Anna Greenburg, and Julie Hookin. “The Changing Shape of Minnesota: Reinvigorating Community and Government in the New Minnesota.” (Minneapolis: Hubert H. Humphrey Institute, 2004, p. 6)

³ The Itasca Project and Minnesota Business Partnership, “Minnesota’s Future: World-class Schools, World-class Jobs” (Minneapolis: 2005)

⁴ Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, “2009 State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Executive Summary” (Minneapolis: MMEP, 2009)

To address educational disparities and disparate outcomes, Minnesota must engage in focused, intentional efforts that prepare all learners for a state, national, and global economy. Equity is defined as *high expectations and access to meaningful and relevant learning for all students so that outcomes are not predictable or disproportionate by protected class status*. Excellence is achieved through high standards that ensure that all students grow to reach their highest levels year after year and are college or career-ready as high school graduates. In order to accomplish this, measurements are needed to monitor system-wide progress in promoting equity and excellence.



Integration is Key Element to Addressing a Complex Issue

Reaching the goal of equity and excellence will require all oars to pull together. School districts need multiple strategies and resources to address educational disparities and create access to opportunity for all learners. The State's general educational formula includes revenue to support the educational needs of various populations: basic skills, extended time, gifted and talented, compensatory, and limited English proficiency. Addressing race equity requires *separate policy* and *targeted funding* to work in concert with other programs. Well-crafted integration policy will provide school districts with necessary tools and resources to reduce racial isolation and prepare all our children to thrive in a diverse world.

Integration serves as a key structure of opportunity and a foundational element for transforming schools, districts, and communities. To achieve the full benefit of integrated learning, schools and districts must

address structures and systems that serve as barriers to opportunity. Teachers and school leaders need preparation and support to meet the unique educational needs of a diverse student population. Policymakers should examine all aspects of the educational experience through a lens of equity, excellence, and opportunity.

Racially Integrated Schools Provide Significant Benefits to Students and Communities

There is a well established body of research identifying the negative effects of racially segregated schools including lower academic performance and lower participation in higher education. Conversely, integrated schools have been shown to raise achievement and reduce achievement gaps between white students and students of color. Benefits of integrated schools and classrooms include both academic and social outcomes. Integrated learning environments more fully prepare all students, including white students, for our increasingly diverse workplace and society.⁵

A racially integrated school provides significant benefits to students and communities. True integration extends far beyond student assignment. It requires much more than bringing students from different backgrounds in proximity to one another. True integration creates a diverse and inclusive environment within the school, the curricula, and the classroom. A significant body of social science research show that students in racially diverse classrooms benefit in several ways: deeper ways of thinking, higher aspirations – both educational and occupational, and positive interactions with students of other races and ethnicities. Beyond physical or proximal integration, our actions must also prepare children to reach a level of cultural competence that will allow them to thrive in a diverse world.

There is no question that many urban and rural areas in Minnesota are racially segregated; and meaningful racial integration is difficult. In these communities, it is as, if not more, important to be mindful of the harms that attend racially isolated schools. Equal educational opportunity demands that children of all backgrounds, no matter where they live, be prepared and able to succeed and participate fully in the civic and democratic life of this nation. That means getting high quality teachers, staff, facilities, and other resources to students in need, no matter where they attend school.



⁵ Myron Orfield, Thomas Luce, Baris Gumas-Dawes, Geneva Finn and Eric Myott, “A Comprehensive Strategy to Integrate Twin Cities Schools and Neighborhoods” (University of Minnesota Law School: Institute on Race and Poverty, October 2009)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following a comprehensive review of the current Minnesota Desegregation Rule and Minnesota Statute, section 124D.86, governing the use and allocation of revenue, the Statewide Task Force on School Integration developed recommendations in five key areas:

Clarify purpose of integration policy

Establish and enforce accountability measures

Identify and support effective practices tied to results

Seek partnerships and support collaboration

Distribute resources to meet outcomes



“Desegregation is negative, removing only prohibitions and a short term goal.

Integration is the positive acceptance of desegregation and a long term goal.

Integration welcomes the positive participation of [nonwhites] into the total range of human activities.

Integration is genuine intergroup, interpersonal doing.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
The Ethical Demands for Integration

CLARIFY PURPOSE OF INTEGRATION POLICY

The purpose of integration policy is to assist school districts in reducing racial isolation and promoting school diversity. Strong integration policy is linked to educational outcomes for all students.

Recommendation #1: Maintain only the components of the current Desegregation Rule prohibiting intentional segregation; repeal the remainder of the current rule and statute.

Recommendation #2: Establish new policy and program (Educational Equity through Integration Program) to address integration as a strategy to achieve equitable educational outcomes. Require all districts to participate in the program. The Educational Equity through Integration Program shall address the following outcomes:

- a. Equitable academic outcomes
- b. Access to opportunities
- c. Intercultural learning
- d. Racial balance
- e. Strong communities

Recommendation #3: Establish the following definitions for the Educational Equity through Integration Program.

Protected students. "Protected students" means:

- a. students who self-identify or are identified in the general racial categories of African/Black Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, Chicano/Latino Americans, and American Indian/Alaskan Native; and
- b. multiracial students who self-identify or are identified as having origins in more than one of the categories described in item A or as having origins in one of the categories described in item A and in the category of Caucasian.





Equity. “Equity” is defined as high expectations and access to meaningful and relevant learning for all students so that outcomes are not predictable or disproportionate by protected class status.

Excellence. “Excellence” is achieved through high standards that ensure that all students grow to reach their highest levels year after year and are college or career-ready as high school graduates. In order to accomplish this, measurements are needed to monitor system progress in promoting equity and excellence.

District. "District" means a public school district serving any of pre-kindergarten through grade 12. District does not mean:

- a. charter schools under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10;
- b. area learning centers under Minnesota Statutes, section 123A.05;
- c. public alternative programs under Minnesota Statutes, section 126C.05, subdivision 15;
- d. contracted alternative programs under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.69;
- e. school sites specifically designed to address limited English proficiency;
- f. school sites specifically designed to address the needs of students with an individual education plan (IEP);
- g. secure and nonsecure treatment facilities licensed by the Department of Human Services or the Department of Correction, section 125A.515; and
- h. Sovereign nation schools located on federally designated American Indian reservations.

“A truly integrated education is not just about putting students together, as important as this might be. It is about building, if not a beloved community, at least a democratic one.”

john powell

ESTABLISH AND ENFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Increased accountability and attention to results is vital to achieving educational equity through integration. All partners – state, district, and school – need clearly identified metrics against which to evaluate progress and measure success.

Recommendation #4: Establish clear and definite state level measures, oversight, and accountability to track district implementation of the Educational Equity through Integration Program.

Recommendation #5: Establish an Office of Educational Equity through Integration at the Minnesota Department of Education. Create a cabinet level position to signal substantial commitment to the issue. Responsibilities of the Office include providing equity oversight, establishing accountability procedures that align with metrics for measuring success, and developing structures for feedback, support and intervention.

Recommendation #6: Utilize the Office of Educational Accountability to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Educational Equity through Integration Program.

Recommendation #7: Require the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to establish criteria against which participating school district submit effective integration plans and budgets that align to program outcomes. Require the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to approve



"We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does."

--quote from the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* U.S. Supreme Court decision

integration plans using a peer review process, monitor results, and provide ongoing support and feedback to districts. Establish timelines and procedures for integration plan and budget submission and approval.

Recommendation #8: Require districts utilizing transportation as part of their integration plan to include an annual transportation plan and projection aligned to program outcomes.



Recommendation #9: Establish metrics for measuring success and progress. Monitor indicators at the school level. Identify statewide and regional benchmarks for elementary, middle school, and high school. Require districts to address a minimum of two outcomes (Equitable Academic Outcomes and at least one other) within the integration plan.

Outcomes	Proposed Metrics
Equitable academic outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increased achievement while eliminating predictability for protected class students b. Increased graduation rates for all with special emphasis on protected class students c. Reduced drop-out rate for all with special emphasis on protected class students
Access to opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Proportional enrollment in college prep classes b. Increased college and career readiness for all with special emphasis on protected class students
Intercultural learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increased interracial collaborative learning opportunities b. Decreased racial prejudice c. Increased intercultural competence for students and faculty d. Increased comfort in racially diverse settings
Racial balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increased diversity of student body b. Increased diversity of faculty
Strong communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increased civic engagement for all with special emphasis on protected class students b. Increased family involvement for all with special emphasis on protected class students

Recommendation #10: Require districts to publish an annual report articulating progress toward measurable metrics. Establish time period for achieving goal and benchmarks. Require the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to provide increased levels of support and oversight for districts that fail to achieve results.

IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT EFFECTIVE PRACTICES TIED TO RESULTS

In order for true integration to emerge, a two-pronged approach is necessary. *Structural shifts* address the arrangement of schools and flow of students in a district or region. *In-school strategies* address the policies and practices that affect students and staff.

Recommendation #11: Require participating districts to develop plans aligned to outcomes.

Employ practices that are results-based and encourage innovation. Require districts to address a minimum of two outcomes (Equitable Academic Outcomes and at least one other) within the integration plan. Integration plans must be approved by the Office of Educational Equity through Integration. Implement a peer review process for integration plan approval. Consider the following evidence-based and innovative approaches:

Structural shifts

- a. Assignment plans
- b. Special programs (e.g. magnet schools)
- c. Intra and inter-district student transfer plans

In-school strategies

- a. Effective professional development to enhance cultural competence and equip school staff with the skills and knowledge to create safe, supportive, and inclusive classrooms and schools
- b. Programming to improve college and career readiness
- c. Integrated curriculum and culturally responsive instructional strategies that engage students from a wide variety of backgrounds and promote critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving
- d. Opportunities that promote social interactions among students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds outside of schools
- e. Diversification of school staff (teachers, administrators, support staff)
- f. Programming to address within-school segregation and tracking
- g. Race-conscious policies



SEEK PARTNERSHIPS AND ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION

Effective integration efforts are not done in isolation. Working to promote racial integration within the limits of a school district’s boundaries can be challenging when the student population in the district is overwhelmingly white or students of color. Successful cross-district collaboration is an important component of statewide integration policy. In addition, integration strategies must address the relationship of school, housing, and fiscal policy. Education is part of a web of inter-institutional agents and arrangements. Finally, it matters who makes decisions. People of color need to be at the table sharing power and responsibility. This includes positions of leadership at the State Department, in school districts, and in classrooms.

Recommendation #12: Create an advisory committee comprised of agencies directly impacting the integration and equitable achievement of Minnesota students. Require the head of the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to serve as ex-officio member of the advisory committee. Ensure that the committee membership is racially and ethnically diverse. Conduct regular public hearings on integration implementation around the state.

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”

Maya Angelou

Recommendation #13: Require the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to develop a repository for innovative and effective practices. Support development of a statewide cadre of equity and integration leaders to provide expertise, feedback, and technical assistance.



Recommendation #14: Encourage and incent cross-district planning and resource sharing. Encourage collaboration between local school districts and other entities (i.e. government agencies, charter schools, institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, and businesses).

Recommendation #15: Maintain community collaborative councils that are representative of district demographics, to assist districts in developing integration plans and evaluating progress toward outcomes.

DISTRIBUTE RESOURCES TO MEET OUTCOMES

Intentional integration efforts require categorical funding tied to educational outcomes. The funding formula must address variability in district need while maintaining appropriate incentives for districts to reduce racial isolation and prepare children to thrive in a diverse world.

Recommendation #16: Maintain a categorical funding source (Educational Equity through Integration Aid) to support integration efforts that meet the identified outcomes.

Recommendation #17: Maintain appropriation for integration transportation grants to provide pupil transportation services to students who participate in student transfer programs (e.g. Choice is Yours, magnet schools) or inter-district student exchange programs (e.g. classroom partnerships, inter-district summer school) that are part of an approved integration plan.

Recommendation #18: Require districts to develop annual integration budgets directly aligned to approved integration plans. The revenue must be used to address a minimum of two outcomes (Equitable Academic Outcomes and at least one other) within the integration plan and may not be used to supplant.

Outcomes include the following:

- a. Equitable academic outcomes
- b. Access to opportunities
- c. Intercultural learning
- d. Racial balance
- e. Strong communities



Recommendation #19: Implement a responsive formula that aligns funding to a district's integration responsibilities. Generate categorical funding on district-wide pupil units. Provide integration funding in a mix of aid and levy. A district's integration revenue equals the lesser of the actual cost of implementing the integration plan during the fiscal year minus the aid received. A district's integration aid equals the difference between the district's integration revenue and its integration levy. Annually calculate integration revenue based on the total of the following categories:

- a. Percent of protected class students district-wide
- b. Percentage of district schools enrolling greater than 30% protected class students
- c. Incentive-based factors (e.g. participation in a regional integration collaborative, progress toward outcome metrics)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Minnesota School Integration Council acknowledges the many students, parents, school staff, and community members who shared their stories and shaped these recommendations. We acknowledge the following organizations and individuals for their input, support, and assistance.

Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)
Duluth Public Schools
East Metro Integration District (EMID)
EMID Youth Executive Board
Independent School District 196
ISAIAH
Minnesota Department of Education
Nobles County Integration Collaborative
Ramsey County Library, Roseville
Rochester Diversity Council
Rochester Public Schools
University of Minnesota: UROC (Urban Research and Outreach Center)
University of Minnesota, Rochester
West Central Minnesota Integration Collaborative
Willmar Public Schools

Kris Amundson
Barbara Bearman
Brenda Cassellius
Stacy Collins
Scott Croonquist
Tom Gillaspay
Jim Grathwol
Lori Grivna

Baris Gumas-Dawes
Heidi Fransen
Cindy Jackson
Glory Kibbel
Heather Lindstrom
Lyn Mitchell
Myron Orfield

Anne Parks
Sharon Peters-Harden
john powell
Caty Royce
Alice Seagren
Marguerite Spencer
Bill Wilson

For further information contact MSIC at MSICInfo@gmail.com.

