

Schools of Hope Mobilization Plan

Executive Summary



Students of color achieve at the same rate as white students.

Schools of Hope began in 1995 as a civic journalism project of the Wisconsin State Journal and WISC-TV. United Way of Dane County was asked to lead a partnership to reduce the racial achievement gap for third grade reading in the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). Third grade reading ability is a crucial indicator for a child's future academic success.

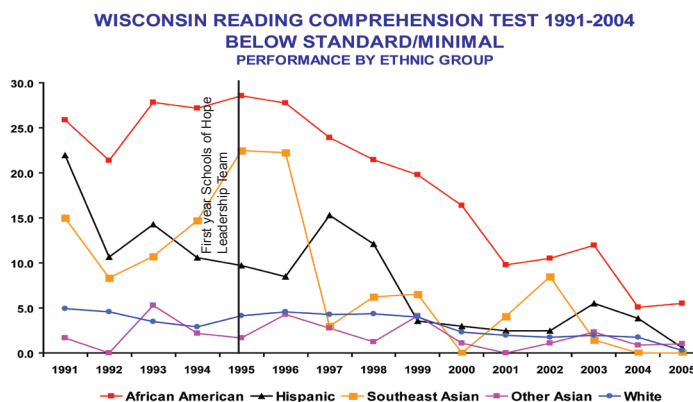
With input from the community, the Schools of Hope Leadership Team developed the following strategies to tackle the racial achievement gap:

- Trained tutors working one-on-one or one-on-two with the same student for eight consecutive weeks.
- Offer tutoring and academic support connected to the teacher's curriculum. Emphasize the important role that homework plays in academic achievement.
- Encourage small class sizes. Research shows that small class sizes contribute to high academic achievement.
- Train teachers in a consistent literacy curriculum and provide in-class assessments in elementary schools.



Hundreds of trained volunteer tutors were deployed throughout MMSD to work in concert with the teacher's curriculum. MMSD also implemented a district-wide reading curriculum, extensive teacher training, and in-class assessments in addition to lowering K-3 class sizes. Within two years of its inception, results for Schools of Hope showed a reduction in the racial achievement gap. In October 2004, the superintendent of MMSD announced that the racial achievement gap in this 3rd grade reading test was eliminated.

Where we have been: Achievement gap eliminated at below standard/minimal on 3rd grade reading test

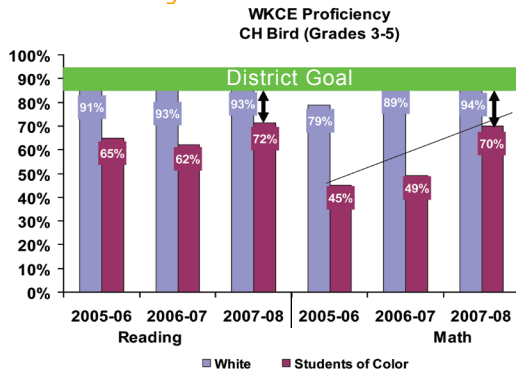


With proven success in the Madison Metropolitan School District, Schools of Hope expanded to elementary schools in the Sun Prairie Area School District in 2005 and the Verona Area School District in 2006 with positive results. After three years in Sun Prairie, Schools of Hope is helping to narrow the racial achievement gap there as well. The program is proving itself in Verona as well, as data indicates that the majority of students who receive tutoring are improving their reading skills.

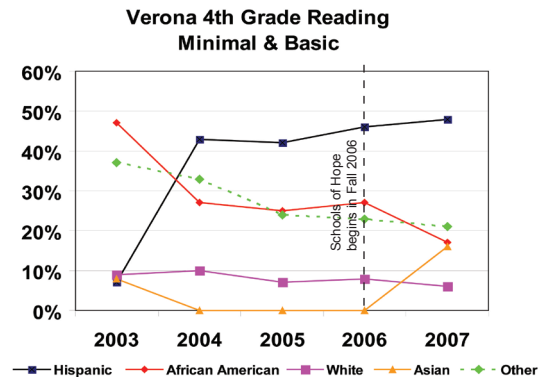
Because of Schools of Hope's success in improving reading skills for elementary students, the program has expanded to include the goal of increasing the number of students who complete algebra by 10th grade. Completion of algebra by 10th grade is a crucial indicator for future academic success, as research shows a child who passes algebra by this time is more likely to continue on to and graduate from college.

Our effort is made possible thanks to a partnership with Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison Teachers Inc., 100 Black Men, RSVP-Dane County, Urban League of Greater Madison, Centro Hispano, Sun Prairie, Verona, and Middleton-Cross Plains School Districts.

After three years with Schools of Hope, Sun Prairie elementary schools see a reduction in the racial achievement gap in math and reading.



Verona schools show positive results in its first year with African-American students.



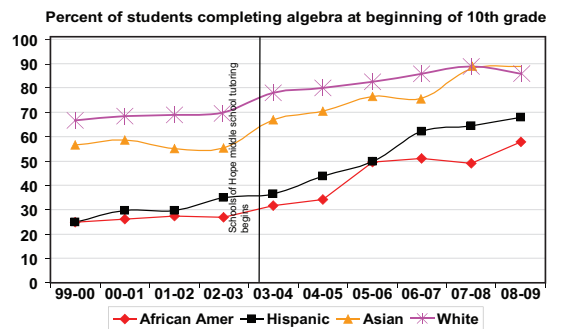
In Madison in 1999 only 25% of African Americans and Latino Students completed algebra, compared to 66% of white students. That gap has narrowed with 65% of Latino students and 58% of African American students now passing algebra, and we will continue to work on this achievement gap.

There is still more to be done to improve the performance of students in Dane County.

For our next five year plan, our goals are as follows:

- I. For Madison:
 - A. Reduce the fourth grade reading gap so fewer than 5% of students from all racial groups are scoring minimal by 2014.
 - B. Increase the percent of students of color passing algebra to 70% by 2014.
- II. For Sun Prairie:
 - A. 90% of students consistently score at levels of proficient or advanced by 2014.
 - B. Reduce the current racial achievement gap so comparative groups of students score within 10% of each other by 2014.

Most groups improving in algebra, slight decline for White students



- III. For Verona:
 - A. Improve reading achievement for children grades K-5.
- IV. For Dane County
 - A. Increase graduation rate in Dane County to 95% by 2012 which would reduce the non-graduation rate by 50%.

Wasik, Barbara, "Using volunteers as reading tutors: Guidelines for successful practices", The Reading Teacher, Vol. 51, No. 7, April 1998.
 Project STAR, Tennessee's K-3 Class Size Study
 Madison Metropolitan School District, Instructional Literacy Framework
 All four strategies were reaffirmed to the Schools of Hope Leadership Team in 2006 by Adam Gamoran, Professor of Sociology and Educational Policy Studies and Director of Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison.