



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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Good News and Bad: CT Does Well Overall, But, Achievement Gap Persists

By Robert Rader, Executive Director, CABE

A report just out from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) reports that while Connecticut's children overall fare better than children in most other states, not all children in Connecticut benefit equally, especially children of color.

Anyone who has followed our achievement gap is probably not surprised by these findings. However, the persistence of the gap is frustrating, since it has been the focus of lawsuits, public policy discussions and studies over many decades.

2017 Race for Results: Building a Path to Opportunity for All Children shows that while Connecticut's children of color surpass national averages in most measurements of health, economic well-being, education, and family and community, stark disparities remain between Hispanic and African-American children, and their non-Hispanic White counterparts, especially in the areas of education and poverty.

Connecticut is third in the country for non-Hispanic White and Asian children's overall well-being. This is extremely positive for our State.

However, we are *12th in the country for African-American children and 22nd overall for Hispanic Children* on the same measures.

Some children of color in Connecticut fall behind their counterparts nationally. For example, Hispanic students fare slightly worse in Connecticut than nationally in 8th grade math proficiency and high school graduation, and African-American 4th graders have higher rates of reading proficiency nationally than in Connecticut.

On the good news side, children of immigrants appear to benefit greatly from Connecticut's investment in children and their families, and their outcomes exceed those of their counterparts in other states. According to the *2017 Race for Results* report, 71% of children of immigrants are enrolled in preschool or kindergarten in Connecticut, compared to 59% nationally.

These results show the correlation between early childhood development and later success. The outcomes appear to affirm Connecticut’s policies and services for early childhood education and family economic security.

Despite Connecticut’s investments in health and education, racial disparities persist:

Fewer African-American children than non-Hispanic White children are born at normal birthweight (87% vs 92%). African-American and Hispanic students trail non-Hispanic White children dramatically in 4th grade reading proficiency (15% for African-American and 22% for Hispanic, versus 56% for non-Hispanic White students) and 8th grade math proficiency (12% and 14%, respectively, for African-American and Hispanic students, compared to 46% for non-Hispanic White students).

“While we need to do better for children of color, especially in education, the *Race for Results* report informs policymakers that much of what Connecticut does for children generally, and for children in immigrant families, is working,” said CAHS CEO Jim Horan. “Despite the state’s fiscal problems, we need to keep investing in our children, our future.”

CAHS Policy Analyst Emmanuel Adero notes that as Connecticut remains the only state without a budget this fiscal year, funding for some of the state’s key investments in young children—including the early childcare subsidy Care4Kids, and Husky—is still uncertain, and the gains achieved through these programs are potentially in jeopardy.

The Casey Foundation and CAHS called on policymakers to “support and maintain legislation that will strengthen families, increase economic opportunity for parents, and help children meet critical development milestones.

The full report is available at www.aecf.org/raceforresults/. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org/.