

The African American Communication & Collaboration Council

Madison Metropolitan School District

Budget Listening Session

Sunday, 18 April 2010

School Board Members ...

Thank you for conducting this and other listening sessions to garner information from the community.

My name is Floyd Rose. I am a resident of Madison and President of the African American Communication & Collaboration Council (AACCC). The AACCC is a collective of African American organizations of Greater Madison.

Our Mission is to:

- establish ongoing dialogue concerning common issues of the African American Community,
- provide support to positive efforts on behalf of the African American Community, and
- establish mutually beneficial relationships between African American organizations.

As Dr. Nerad shared at our Quarterly meeting (last Saturday – 10 April), “The State has drastically shifted funding for the MMSD and all public school systems in Wisconsin.” The African American Community clearly understands the unprecedented economic challenges before you today and in the future. Without a doubt, there are no easy financial answers.

At the same time, the African American Community is very concerned about the impact of budget considerations on all low-income students. Recent reports indicate that the prognosis for African American and Latino students is extremely guarded. As you are aware, 25% of all MMSD students are African American, while 23% are Latino. Together, these groups represent the lowest 4th grade reading proficiency scores and comprise nearly half of all MMSD students. And, to add insult to injury, our African American 4th graders are part of a broader contingent of Wisconsin African American 4th grade students who have the lowest reading scores in the Nation.

It is my understanding that the MMSD Strategic Plan has as its top priority the elimination of the racial disparity between the educational achievement of white students and the educational achievement of students of color. I truly hope the budget considerations reflect that commitment. Because as you may be aware, there is another racial disparity that plagues our community, as reported a couple of years ago. Dane County, based on a Federal Report in 2002, had the 3rd highest racial disparity in the United States regarding the incarceration of African American men.

Illiterate children who mature to be illiterate adults usually experience a predictable future.

We recognize that the process of aligning educational policy with budgetary constraints is very complicated and difficult. Each of you has taken on an awesome responsibility of stewardship.

In many ways, the Madison School District represents the last hope that we have for a sane and productive community, today and in the future. And unfortunately, for many, many low income students of color, the MMSD represents the primary, if not the only, opportunity that those children have to acquire positive direction and the skills necessary to survive.

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Last Wednesday, I visited Leopold Elementary School where I was involved in a reading program for first and second graders. That afternoon, I made a presentation to African American students about entrepreneurship at La Follette High School during an investment class. Yesterday, I attended the Black History Challenge Bowl in the auditorium of the Doyle Administrative Center.

The programs that I mentioned were all volunteer projects sponsored by the 100 Black Men of Madison in partnership with the Madison Metropolitan School District. The Madison Metropolitan School District has developed a wonderful, supportive relationship with the African American Community. The welcome to the Challenge Bowl yesterday was provided by Dr. Nerad.

The solutions to the problems of achievement are not solely the School District's responsibility but the entire community's responsibility. The MMSD has some of the finest teachers and administrators in the Nation. And, the Madison African American community has talent, wisdom and a desire to ensure that our children are successful in school and beyond. We stand ready to engage and work with you for the betterment of all.

As you consider what is before you and what is at stake, please do not reduce funding for those programs that involve the direct services to low income students of color and minority staffing.

Sincerely I am,

Floyd Rose, PhD
President

The African American Communication & Collaboration Council

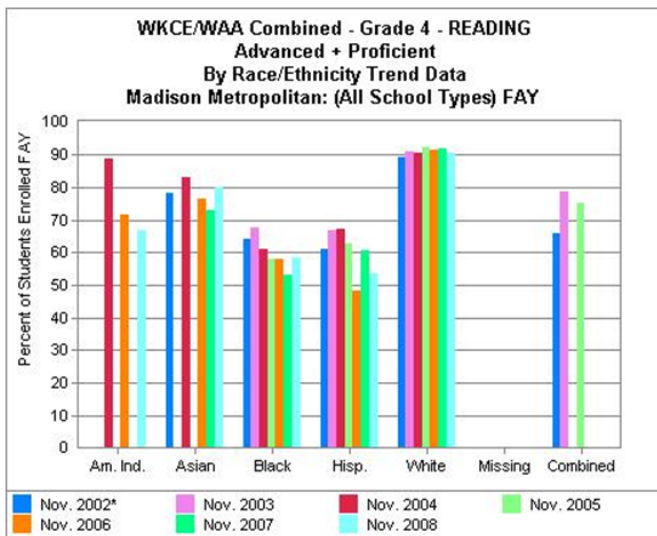
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Concerns for Future Discussion

African American 4th Grade Reading Scores



Over a six-year period between 2002 and 2008, it is clear that African American 4th grade students of the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) struggled with reading proficiency as compared to their counterparts. Their scores are comparable to Hispanic students, many of whom speak and read English as a second language. Of particular concern is that in 2004, 2005 and 2007, African American 4th grade students were reading at a lower proficiency level than Hispanic students.

Predominantly, African American students speak and read English as their primary language. Therefore, it is unclear how such a correlation can exist. As evidenced by the graphs below, this parallel continued to exist in 2009.

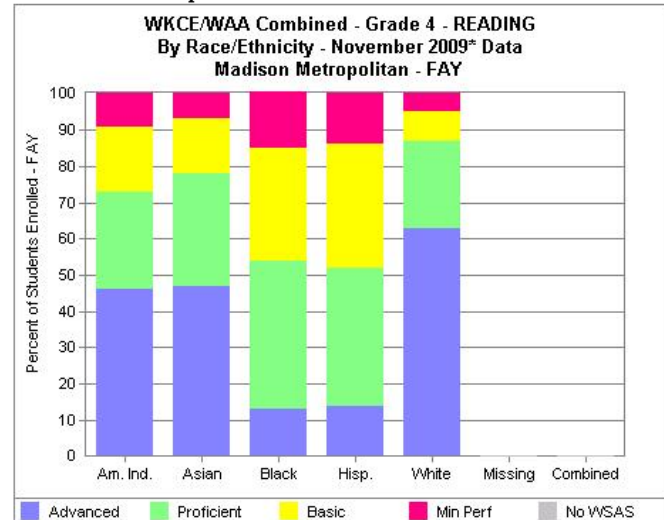
African American Incarceration

Based on the latest Federal Report, *the National Council on Crime and Delinquency*, in 2002 Dane County had the 3rd highest racial disparity in the country regarding the incarceration of African Americans.

Impact of MMSD Budget Cuts on African American Students

- Tier I and II cuts are priorities, yet those cuts will impact 70% of the programs that have a direct effect on children of color.
- 25% of all MMSD students are African American, while 23% are Latino. Together, these groups represent the lowest 4th grade reading proficiency scores and comprise nearly half of all MMSD students.

How did students perform on state tests?



African American Leadership Roles within the MMSD

- What is the percentage of actual MMSD classroom teachers who are African American?
- What is the percentage of school administrators (e.g., principals, assistant principals) who are African American?
- How many African Americans answer directly to the Superintendent?
- How Many African Americans are involved with the direct translation of Board Policy?

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