FINAL REPORT:

The Task Force on Student Achievement

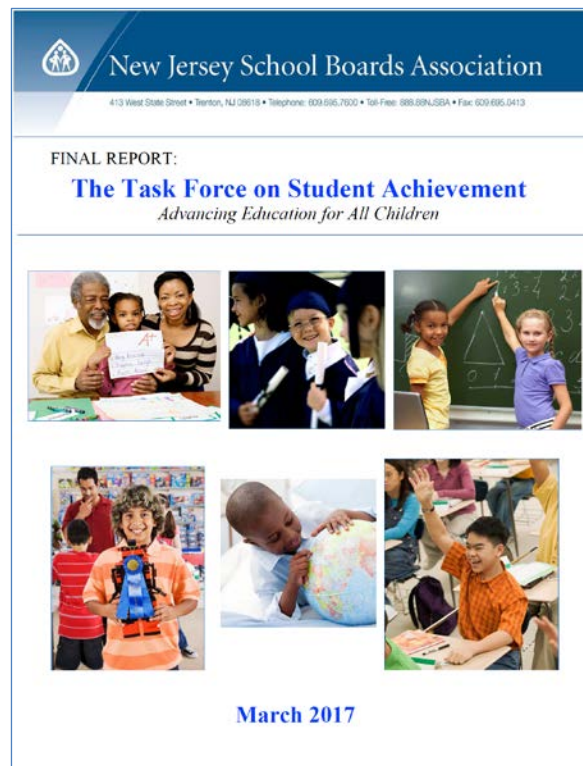*Advancing Education for All Children*

March 2017

FINAL REPORT:

The Task Force on Student Achievement
Advancing Education for All Children

March 2017

New Jersey School Boards Association

www.njsba.org/student-achievement2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEMORANDUM

TO: Donald Webster, Jr., President
             Lawrence S. Feinsod, Ed.D., Executive Director

FROM: Avery Grant, Chairman
             Peter Calvo, Co-Chairman

SUBJECT: Final Report: Task Force on Student Achievement

DATE: March 21, 2017

We are pleased to submit the Final Report of the New Jersey School Boards Association's Task Force on Student Achievement. This document reflects more than two years of intense study, discussion and collaboration by the 20-member group, appointed by then-President John Bulina, followed by many months of research by the NJSBA staff.

The Task Force included local school board members; resource persons representing higher education, the teaching profession, municipal government, the community health sector and the faith-based community; NJSBA staff members, and the Association's Immediate Past President and Vice President for Legislation/Resolutions.

Our report concludes with 83 recommendations for NJSBA, local boards of education, school district administration, local government, and community organizations to enhance student learning and to address the economic and racial academic achievement gap. The Task Force also recommends revisions to NJSBA's *Positions and Policies on Education.*

In reaching its findings and recommendations, the Task Force heard presentations by representatives of the New Jersey Department of Education, Rutgers University, the teaching profession and the public health sector, as well as local school district leaders. It reviewed reports on the causes of the achievement gap, effective strategies, data-based decision-making, and effective school board leadership. In addition, the task force surveyed superintendents on current practices.

The result is a document that not only provides direction for education policy at the state and local levels, but can also serve our members as a resource on best practices and relevant research.

The epilogue to this report is titled "The Work Is Incomplete." It points to the Task Force finding that the over-arching challenge facing every school board is the issue of equity and excellence, including the challenges posed by implicit biases. Therefore, the Task Force on Student Achievement strongly recommends that the Association continue its proactive efforts, including collaboration with education organizations, higher education and the New Jersey Department of Education, to identify and address the factors that affect student learning.

On behalf of the Task Force on Student Achievement, we extend our most sincere appreciation to the New Jersey School Boards Association for the opportunity to participate in this important project. We urge local school board members and all education stakeholders to continue this important discussion and to share their ideas on advancing student achievement with our Association.

Task Force on Student Achievement

Avery W. Grant, Chair, Long Branch Board of Education, Monmouth County

Peter J. Calvo, Co-Chair, Glassboro Board of Education, Gloucester County

Barbara A. Coscarello, Camden City Board of Education

Joyce Albrecht, Magnolia Board of Education, Camden County

Deborah Bridges, Rahway Board of Education, Union County

Marsha Hershman, Lindenwold Board of Education, Camden County

Dr. Jonathan Hodges, Paterson Board of Education, Passaic County

Tafari Anderson, Clifton Board of Education, Passaic County

John Bulina, Immediate Past President, New Jersey School Boards Association (*ex officio*)
Jason A. Jones, Vice President for Legislation/Resolutions, NJSBA (*ex officio*)

Resource Persons

Marie Blistan, Vice President, New Jersey Education Association
Penelope E. Lattimer, Ph.D., Director, New Jersey School Development Council,
    Graduate School of Education – Rutgers, The State University
Leslie A. Morris, Director of Community Relations, New Jersey Primary Care Association, Inc.
Rev. Dr. DeForest B. Soaries, Jr., Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens,
    Somerset
Willa Spicer, Former Assistant Commissioner of Education, New Jersey Department of
    Education
Barbara Wallace, Governor's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee, Juvenile
    Justice Commission; Mayor, Washington Township, Gloucester County

NJSBA Staff

Lawrence S. Feinsod, Ed.D., Executive Director
Frank Belluscio, Deputy Executive Director/Director of Communications
Vincent DeLucia, Director of Training & Professional Development/Educator-in-Residence,
    Liaison to the Task Force

Patty Maillet, Director of Business Development
Gwen Thornton, Field Service Representative
Charlene Zoerb, Field Service Representative
Cindy Harrison, Administrative Assistant, Legal and Labor Relations Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Advancing the achievement of *all* students is at the core of the New Jersey School Boards Association's mission. Toward that goal, then-NJSBA President John Bulina appointed the Task Force on Student Achievement, comprised of local school board members, school district administrators, educators, health care experts and representatives of the faith-based community, to explore the challenges school districts face in attaining this goal.

More than two years of study and healthy discussion, followed by many months of extensive research, culminated in this final report, which includes 83 recommendations, as well as examples of interventions that contribute positively to student achievement. The Task Force offers these strategies for the consideration of New Jersey's local boards of education, the state Department of Education and the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Within the Task Force's purview were the academic achievement gap, students' access to technology, and the impact of high rates of incarceration. The Task Force also studied the impact of state and local education policy on the advancement of student achievement, as well as best practices to advance the performance of economically disadvantaged students.

The Task Force approached its charge from a variety of perspectives: the physical and emotional health of students; the involvement of parents and communities; the impact of poverty; the benefits of early childhood education, and the role of local boards of education and their individual members. The group identified examples of interventions that all school districts should consider and which they should implement if applicable to their communities' students and educational programs. In all, the task force heard from more than a dozen experts in the areas of education, student health and school climate, as well as from members of local school boards that had experience with one or more of the identified interventions.

Through the Lens of Student Achievement
A genuinely thorough and efficient education is the only means for New Jersey's youth to be optimistic about their future and to make healthy decisions. The challenges involved in achieving equity and excellence for all children in our state, regardless of ZIP Code of residence, requires the attention of all New Jerseyans, whether they live or work in urban, rural or suburban communities.

- *As the result of its research and deliberations, the Task Force believes that all school districts should review their adopted policies through the lens of student achievement to ensure that they support, and do not discourage, achievement for all.*

- *Due to the significance of the achievement gap and the evolving nature of school reform, including legislation at the state and national levels, the Task Force believes that NJSBA should continue its focus on student achievement for all regardless of community of residence, economic status, race, gender, or disability.*

Social Conditions that Deter Success

The Task Force finds that the causes of student *under*achievement often emanate far from the schoolhouse door. Major social issues are at the heart of many of the struggles facing our children, and they require complex intervention by a variety of institutions. As this report attests, there are numerous ways to address the social conditions that deter student success and to increase the responsibility of the public school community in this effort.

- *Individuals and organizations within the education sector should support the work of those outside the education community in helping children overcome these social challenges.*

The Benefits of Pre-Kindergarten

A disparity of experiences among children begins at birth. The Task Force cites research, which finds that many children of poverty hear 30 million fewer words than do their peers by the age of 3. This deficit has a negative impact on language development including reading. Therefore, further work is required to comprehensively address preparation for kindergarten, which is most lacking in our rural and urban areas.

The Task Force believes these disadvantages can be overcome by effective early childhood education. The benefits of universal pre-kindergarten include increased academic attainment, less likelihood of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, healthier adult lives, and higher wages.

- *The advantages of pre-kindergarten should be included in NJSBA professional development programs where appropriate.*

The Achievement Gap and the Employment Gap

Across the nation, the academic achievement gap is closely related to the "employment gap." Prior generations had greater opportunities to secure manufacturing jobs. Those whose formal education ended with a high school diploma, and even those without a diploma, could secure "blue collar" jobs that came with middle-income wages. Substantially fewer such jobs exist today.

Clearly, the era of high-paying manufacturing/industrial jobs that enabled those with a high school diploma, or less, to earn wages well above the minimum and to support a family in a "middle class" lifestyle is over. At first, many of these positions were relocated from the "rust belt"—states in the Northeast, the mid-Atlantic region and the Midwest—to the southern states and "sunbelt." In recent years, many of these jobs have been moved to other countries, ranging from Mexico to China. Others have been the victims of technology.

Advancing the academic achievement of all students is critical to addressing this issue, which not only affects the well-being of individuals and families, but also impacts the engine that drives our economy. The ultimate goal of the education system is to provide all children, without exception, a path to heathy, happy, safe and secure lives. This includes the ability to financially support oneself. Children who do not benefit from an education that enables them to be independent become part of the great employment gap that has been growing for decades.

We are in the midst of a technological revolution that creates an exponentially increasing amount of information. Today's employment landscape requires a skill set far different than what was necessary for prior generations.

- *A, if not **the**, primary responsibility of boards of education is to ensure that their educational programs are preparing all students for post-secondary 21st Century educational opportunities and/or careers. If not, the economic stability of our nation is in jeopardy.*

Overcoming Challenges Requires Collaboration

The Task Force identifies numerous factors, or "impacts," all of which affect student achievement, but to varying degrees based upon the individual community's profile. The Task Force believes that this list of "impacts" will continue to grow and evolve.

The list encompasses factors within and outside of schools: community, home and family life; family income level; personal/emotional support and self-image; faith; teachers; facilities; curriculum; school climate; planning for the future; communications, and technology.

- *The wide variation of factors affecting student achievement underscores the critical need for collaboration in any and all improvement efforts.*

- *Collaboration among school districts and academia can contribute to enhancing learning for all students. Membership in the Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement (RIISA), part of the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, and the Rutgers New Jersey School Development Council can provide exemplary instructional strategy and leadership professional development.*

- *Participation in the National Network of Partnership Schools can also prove highly worthwhile. The professional development provided by networking with other schools and education personnel and the related guides and parental involvement materials can contribute to successfully addressing the achievement gap and school climate challenges.*

- *Collaboration with the local governing body, faith-based groups, industry and business, service and community groups and, especially, families is critical to the success of our children.*

NJSBA is spearheading the New Jersey Public Schools Labor-Management Collaborative, a partnership with the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations. The multi-district pilot also involves the NJEA, AFT-NJ, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. Its goal is to validate the impact of positive management-labor relations on teaching and learning in New Jersey's public schools.

- *Boards of education and education leaders should be aware of the benefits and positive impact on student learning and organizational climate provided by formal collaboration between labor and management.*

- *Local school boards, administrators and teachers' representatives should follow the progress of the New Jersey Public Schools Labor-Management Collaborative and discuss with one another its impact on student achievement.*

The School Board's Role in Advancing Student Achievement
Research conducted by the National School Boards Association's Center for Public Education and the Iowa Association of School Boards illustrates how boards of education that embrace professional development, collectively and for their individual members, enhance student achievement.

The study, the "Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry," categorizes boards of education as either "stuck" or "moving." The Task Force submits that boards described as "stuck" are actually conducting business as per the expectations of a generation ago. Just as 21st Century expectations are rapidly changing for teachers, administrators, and especially students, the role of the Board of Education has also evolved.

An essential responsibility of today's board of education is to ensure that the schools serve as learning centers for all students, including those with the greatest needs.

- *Working through their administrators, school boards should make certain that classrooms are engaging places for young people to spend their days and that high expectations characterize all staff interaction with the students.*

- *The Task Force encourages local school boards, in carrying out their responsibilities, to focus on teaching and learning and the achievement of all students.*

- *For a school board, being data savvy and participating in meaningful professional development are as important as ensuring that the district is financially responsible; this attribute contributes to the success of all students.*

If we expect every child to succeed, then the schools will be filled with men and women pouring over information about their students so they can build alternative, often innovative, experiences to bring each child to learning. Administrators will carefully examine children in their classrooms and observe the work of the students carefully to

ensure that each one is being challenged. Teachers will know their children, their subject matter and how to teach that subject matter so that the children learn it. And finally, our schools will be welcoming, spirited and joyful.

This is what school boards are all about. This is what we are accountable for

We might not be able to stop poverty. We are still faced with racism. Every day, we face major budget issues. Sometimes, we must turn our attention to dissatisfied community members. Too often, engaging parents, who are so overworked they have difficulty attending back-to-school night and other functions, becomes a serious challenge.

The Task Force on Student Achievement recognizes the reality of these and other factors, but firmly believes that we can build schools where our children are successful and as prepared as possible for the future. As members of New Jersey's boards of education, we accept this responsibility.

How to Read this Report

The Final Report of the Task Force on Student Achievement recommends actions by local school boards and other members of the education community as they work toward the goal of advancing the achievement of every student.

The report is divided into 12 chapters, each exploring a factor that influences teaching and learning. Chapter 1, "The Challenge Ahead" and Chapter 2, "Closing the Achievement Gap: Obstacles And Strategies," provide an overview of the issues facing local boards of education, school district staff, parents, students and the community at-large in closing achievement gaps.

Local school board members will be especially interested in Chapter 3, "The Local School Board: A Positive Influence on Student Achievement." This section addresses the practices of school boards in high-achieving districts, regardless socio-economic status, and provides guidance on effective governance and policy-setting.

This report is also designed to serve as a resource for school leaders on research related to student achievement and the information, programs and services available to school districts. Throughout the narrative are references, most including web links which can be accessed live when viewing the report online. Rather than using a traditional footnote structure, with citations on the bottom of the page, this report places the references within the body text for readers' ease of access.

Chapter 1
THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

The Mission of the New Jersey School Boards Association

The New Jersey School Boards Association, a federation of boards of education, provides training, advocacy and support to advance public education and promote the achievement of all students through effective governance.

– Adopted November 2012
NJSBA Board of Directors

The Charge to the NJSBA Task Force on Student Achievement

The Task Force will recommend best practices to advance the academic performance of economically challenged students. The Task Force will consider current literature on the subject and consult with the NJSBA Urban Boards Committee, as well as experts in the field. It will consider factors, such as NJQSAC (the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum), the state's monitoring and evaluation system, and its indicators of student success; limited access to technology (the "digital divide"), and the impact of high rates of incarceration on youth.

Research and Activities

The Task Force on Student Achievement was created by the New Jersey School Boards Association to identify strategies and resources that are available to local boards of education and which can enable them advance the academic achievement of all students. The Task Force consisted of current school board members, including representatives of the NJSBA Urban Boards Committee, NJSBA staff members, and resource persons. Avery Grant, a member of the Long Branch Board of Education, served as chairman. Peter Calvo, president of the Glassboro Board of Education, was co-chairman. During its deliberations, the Task Force heard presentations by the following individuals:

- **Peter Calvo**, President, Glassboro Board of Education, "The Role of the Board of Education, including Policy-Setting, in Facilitating Student Achievement" and "The Impact of Student Achievement on Employment, including the Workforce Investment Act";

- **Leslie Morris**, Director of Community Relations, New Jersey Primary Care Association, Inc., "The Educational Challenges for Economically Challenged Students in the 21st Century";

- **Dr. Saul Rubinstein**, Director, Program on Collaborative School Reform, School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University, "The Impact of Collaboration between Boards of Education and Unions on Educational Issues and the Positive Effect on Student Achievement";

- **Nekia Lewis**, Founder, First Steps for Life, and Parent, South Orange-Maplewood, "Student Achievement in Suburban and Rural Districts";

- **Jonathan Hodges**, Member, Paterson Board of Education, and **Tafari Anderson**, Member, Clifton Board of Education, "Parents/Family Impact on Student Achievement";

- **Marie Blistan**, Vice-President, New Jersey Education Association, and **Joyce Albrecht**, Member, Magnolia Board of Education, "Early Childhood Education";

- **Willa Spicer**, former Assistant Commissioner of Education, and **Penelope Lattimer**, Director, New Jersey School Development Council, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education, "The Role of the School Board in Student Achievement and Closing the Achievement Gap";

- **Dr. Bari Erlichson**, Assistant Commissioner and Chief Performance Officer, New Jersey Department of Education, "PARCC Data Reports"; and

- **Dr. Michael Salvatore**, Superintendent, Long Branch Public Schools, "Student Data Assessment Program and Staff Professional Development."

The Task Force reviewed research and interviewed local school district staff members and local school board members. In the process, it affirmed the belief that advancing student achievement is the central purpose of schools and the major responsibility of those who govern, manage, care for, offer guidance and teach in those schools. While schools have successful methods of ensuring achievement by many students, the overall goal—success for all students—still eludes the education establishment.

The local board of education is the watchdog of the system, and it should ensure that the attention of the school community is fully directed to the achievement of the children in its care. This report emphasizes the board of education's role in enabling the schools to meet the goal of achievement for all. It addresses numerous themes and strategies, including the following:

- Major initiatives that impact school readiness and learning such as early childhood programs, data-based decision-making, accountability for all students, and other instructional topics.

- The social and emotional needs of students and why meeting these needs is critical to students' academic success, health and well-being.

- The Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry, which reports a direct correlation between the characteristics of a school board and student achievement.

- School district organization, policies and management practices that emphasize success for all students.

- The value of collaboration that benefits student achievement and school climate, including partnerships with the municipality, families, the faith-based community, and local business, as well as formal collaboration between school district labor and management.

- Action by school boards and individual members to further the goals identified in this report.

Why the Emphasis on Children Who Have Difficulty Achieving?

School board members today find themselves in a "perfect storm." They have an increasing responsibility to produce an entire population of college- and career-ready graduates with continually diminishing resources. Under these circumstances, it is tempting to downgrade the schools' responsibility to struggling students by minimizing expectations. We cannot, however, look away with impunity.

The schools, first and foremost, ensure the continuation of the American dream, providing well-disciplined, thinking citizens who are prepared to contribute to their country. Graduates must have the tools to lead a personally satisfying life, make intelligent decisions about themselves and their families, appreciate and preserve the beauty of their planet, and forward their heritage from the arts.

The school system is, and has always been, the handmaiden of the economic system, charged with providing the workforce needed to ensure economic prosperity. Today, the schools must prepare young people to compete successfully in science and mathematics, who are able to pose and solve problems, and who understand the culture of the nation in which they live. And they must prepare all of our children, regardless of the circumstances of their birth or zip code, to contribute to all aspects of our society, including the economy.

The Correlation between Education and Employment

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show a correlation between education and employment; increased formal education provides some protection from unemployment.

Percentage of Unemployed Persons by Education Levels	
March 2015	
8.0%	Less than a high school diploma
5.4%	High school diploma
5.0%	Some college, no degree
3.8%	Associate's degree
2.8%	Bachelor's degree
2.4%	Master's degree
1.7%	Doctoral degree
1.5%	Professional degree
U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (March 15, 2016). "Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment 2015." Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm.	

Additionally, economic studies affirm that higher math performance at the end of high school translates into a 12% increase in future earnings. The greater the level of skills, the better one's wages, which also leads to a more equitable distributions of income and substantial gains in economic productivity.

UNESCO. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005, *Education for All: The Quality Imperative*, p. 40. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001373/137333e.pdf.

Preparation Lacking

Nationwide surveys of college faculty and employers show dissatisfaction with the academic preparation of students. For example, a recent survey by Achieve, a nonprofit education reform organization, includes the following results:

College Faculty Dissatisfaction with Preparation of High School Students	
Percentage Dissatisfied	*Subject or Skill Area*
77%	Writing
59%	Mathematics
80%	Comprehension of Complicated Materials
82%	Critical Thinking
76%	Problem-solving
53%	Verbal Communication
62% of *employers* reported that public high schools are not adequately preparing student to meet the expectations of the workplace.	
Achieve. (2015). *Rising to the Challenges: Views on High School Graduates' Preparedness for College and Careers.* Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.achieve.org/employers-and-college-faculty-report-gaps-recent-graduates%E2%80%99-preparedness-new-national-survey and http://www.achieve.org/files/AchieveSurveyIIPowerPoint.pdf.	

Studies have shown that the majority of entering freshmen at New Jersey's community colleges require remedial courses in at least one subject area and that a large percentage of students at the state's public college and universities also need additional preparation. For example, a 2015 report by the Governor's Council on Higher Education cites statistics showing that 40% of students at New Jersey's public colleges and universities require remediation, while 70% of entering freshmen at the state's community colleges must take remedial courses. The report describes the impact of this "serious and continuing problem both in New Jersey and the rest of the country."

> After enrolling, many students learn that they must take remedial courses which do not earn college credits. The result is that many students become frustrated with the need for remedial courses and drop out. Additionally, having to pay for those courses, which do not count toward graduation, significantly increases costs and causes many to withdraw.
>
> Governor's Council on Higher Education. (2015). "Strategic Priorities for New Jersey Higher Education." 15. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.nj.gov/highereducation/documents/pdf/2015Report.pdf.

The Economic Benefit of Closing the Achievement Gap

If our nation's public education system does not prepare all students for entry into the workforce or for post-secondary education, our economy will weaken, and the quality of life for many Americans will not be as anticipated or desired.

Not only would closing the achievement gap increase educational and career opportunities, it would also have a significant, positive impact on the United States economy. Studies by groups such as the Washington Center for Educational Growth, a research organization that

addresses economic inequality, have pointed to the economic benefit of raising American student performance to globally competitive levels by closing the achievement gap.

"Shrinking the Education Gap Would Boost the Economy, Study Says," *Time*, February 3, 2015. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://time.com/3693330/education-school-u-s-economy-washington-center-for-equitable-growth/.

"Study Tallies Education Gap's Effect on GDP," *Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 2009. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB124040633530943487.

Thus, for our nation's economy and security, it is imperative that boards of education focus on making student achievement for all—regardless of birth circumstance or zip code—their priority. To fully prepare our students for post-secondary education and the workforce, school boards must approach their responsibilities with passion. Representing both the people of New Jersey and the locality in which they were elected, board members carry an important message about education and its future.

Chapter 2
CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: OBSTACLES AND STRATEGIES

An achievement gap exists between students whose families are economically comfortable and children whose circumstances include poverty, most of whom are members of minority groups. Children from poor families often begin school at a distinct disadvantage, not only due to financial circumstances but also factors related to race and ethnicity, including bias. These disparities exist long before they enter the school arena, posing two questions: Why do the disparities exist in the first place? Where do they begin?

What Is an Achievement Gap?
Achievement gap refers to the observed, persistent disparity of educational measures between the performance of groups of students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity and gender. The achievement gap can be observed through a variety of measures, including standardized test scores, grade point average, dropout rates, plus college enrollment and completion rates.

"International tests show achievement gaps in all countries, with big gains for U.S. disadvantaged students," by Martin Carnoy and Richard Rothstein, January 30, 2013, Economic Policy Institute. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.epi.org/blog/international-tests-achievement-gaps-gains-american-students/.

Research, starting with the federal government's 1966 report, "Equality of Educational Opportunity" and extending to recent studies, indicates that school, home and community factors and, historically, federal, state and local policies contribute to the achievement gap.

"Equality of Educational Opportunity," by James S. Coleman, *et al*. 1966. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED012275.pdf.

Efforts to improve the achievement of minority students have continued over the years. For example, closing the achievement gap was a key element of the 2002 Elementary and Secondary Education Act also known as the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB). A major piece of legislation that received bipartisan support during the administration of President George W. Bush, NCLB held schools accountable for progress among of all students including various "subgroups" representing racial and ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and English language learners.

However, the 2008 administration of the National Assessment of Education Progress suggested that NCLB failed to close the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students in a significant way. Reading and math scores are improving for black students across the country. But because white students are also improving, the disparity between black and white

students has lessened only slightly. On average, the gap narrowed by about 7 points from 1992 to 2007, so that black students scored about 28 points behind white students on a 500-point scale. The divide between minority students, particularly African-American students, and white students is considered one of the most pressing challenges in public education.

"Achievement gap still splits white, black students," by Bill Mayer, *The Plain Dealer*, July 14, 2009. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.cleveland.com/nation/index.ssf/2009/07/achievement_gap_still_splits_w.html.

The results call into question whether NCLB, officially described as "An Act to Close the Achievement Gap," had its intended effect.

"No Child Left Behind Fails to Close the Achievement Gap," by Jesse Hahnel, National Center for Youth Law, April-June 2009. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://youthlaw.org/publication/no-child-left-behind-fails-to-close-the-achievement-gap/.

In December 2015, President Obama signed the reauthorization of the federal elementary and secondary education law. As of this publication date, state plans to implement the new statute, the "Every Student Succeeds Act," are in development. While the new law intends to provide greater local autonomy in school administration, budget development and related district operations, it retains a commitment to closing the achievement gap.

Every Student Succeeds Act (*Public Law No.114-95*)
Preserves federal investment in Title I for disadvantaged students *
Requires state plans to increase achievement of low-income students
Addresses, and authorizes funding for, early childhood program and teacher training *
Requires "ambitious" state-defined long-term goals to measure achievement
* As signed into law, December 2015.

Closing the achievement gap cannot occur solely through school-based reform. Learning is influenced by what happens inside and outside of the school building. School board members administrators, teachers, and professional and support staff cannot be expected to close the achievement gap in isolation. Instead, communities and school districts must identify common goals, which ensure that all children and their families have access to proper nutrition, adequate housing, and proper health care such as mental health and counseling services.

The Task Force believes that it is the responsibility of school districts through their boards of education and staffs to identify the causes of student achievement gaps, including factors beyond the schools' control, and to develop plans to overcome them. Reform must be implemented not only in school, but also *within the context of the child's social and cultural environment*.

Factors Influencing Student Achievement
The cause of the achievement gap is complex; it cannot be attributed to a single factor. Rather, socioeconomic status, cultural environment, family background and individual school environment interact to create achievement gaps among groups of students. Conversely,

proactive strategies in the school, home and community could address the barriers to achievement and help us to provide the means for all students to achieve their potential.

- **Poverty and Psychosocial Stressors**

  Generally, economically disadvantaged children are neither exposed to the various post-secondary opportunities (vocational-technical programs, 2- and 4-year college programs, etc.), nor to ways to access them.

  While poverty is not the sole cause of the achievement gap, it remains a major factor. Poverty rates are highest for families headed by single women, particularly if they are African-American or Hispanic. Unmarried mothers generally have lower incomes, lower education levels, and are more likely to be dependent on welfare assistance compared with married mothers. Child Trends, a non-profit organization that focuses on research related to family and youth issues, reported the following percentages of births outside of marriage for women of various racial/ethnic groups in 2013: African-American, 71% of all births; American Indian/Alaskan Native, 66%; Hispanic, 53%; White, 29%, and Asian or Pacific Islander, 17%.

  Child Trends DATABANK. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=births-to-unmarried-women.

  Children in poor single-parent households are much more likely to be exposed to psychosocial stressors and family dysfunction than other children. They typically live in communities with high unemployment rates, high crime rates, high rates of teenage pregnancy, inadequate resources such as safe parks, libraries and museums, plus limited access to healthy foods choices and primary health care services.

  > *When mothers need to work more than one job to meet financial obligations, not only are they often depressed, but spending quality time with their children is limited. Reading to a child and being warm and responsive to his or her needs all compete for time. This is an issue not only of maternal bonding, but also of academic preparation.*

  Children who live in poverty also have a substantially higher incidence of child health problems that cause learning problems. Newborns in economically disadvantaged households have lower birth weight on average than other children. Low birth weight birth weight can cause cognitive impairment and other learning disabilities. Poverty also creates unstable home environments (e.g., exposure to domestic violence, child physical and sexual abuse, poor housing, and frequent moving), all of which can impact learning.

  Substantial research points to the effects of poverty on maternal bonding. When mothers need to work more than one job to meet financial obligations, not only are they often depressed, but spending quality time with their children is limited. Reading to a child

and being warm and responsive to his or her needs all compete for time. This is an issue not only of maternal bonding, but also of academic preparation.

There is considerable evidence of a relationship between maternal depression and poor child outcomes. Maternal depression and other serious mental illnesses are significant factors in relation to parenting and overall child health. The healthy development of young children can be negatively impacted by the presence of maternal depression; these effects may be more profound and/or pervasive among families already at risk due to outside factors.

Infants and young children of depressed mothers can experience a range of problems including lower activity levels, fussiness, problems with social interactions, and difficulty achieving age-appropriate developmental and cognitive milestones. Additionally, research suggests that children of depressed mothers may experience poor bonding/attachment with their mothers, lower reading and language scores, and a higher incidence of later mental health issues and depression.

> *…a child born into poverty hears 30 million fewer words by age 3 than a child born to more affluent parents, creating a gap in literacy preparation that has implications for a lifetime.*

A Series of Research and Policy Publications of The Schubert Center for Child Studies, College of Arts and Sciences, Case Western Reserve University, Brief 8, January 2008.

Children are born into poverty or into families with life circumstances that result in poor outcomes start school at a distinct disadvantage compared to others. Less than half (48%) of poor children are ready for school at age five, compared to 75% of children from families of moderate and high income—a gap of 27 percentage points.

Isaacs, Julia, "Starting School at a Disadvantage: The School Readiness of Poor Children." Paper, March 19, 2012. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2012/03/19-school-disadvantage-isaacs.

Research clearly shows that the achievement gap already exists when children start school. For example, according to a 1995 by researchers at the University of Kansas, a child born into poverty hears 30 million fewer words by age 3 than a child born to more affluent parents, creating a gap in literacy preparation that has implications for a lifetime.

"The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million word Gap by Age 3," by Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, excerpted in *American Educator*, AFT, Spring 2003. Accessed March 17, 2017 at https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf.

- **Early Childhood Education**
  The value of early childhood education is further discussed in Chapter 6 of this report.

  Research clearly shows that poor children with no preschool experience are at much higher risk for academic failure than children who are poor but have had exposure to

early childhood programming. However, the quality of the preschool experience is critically important. Students who attend preschool programs with well-trained teachers and lower student-to-teacher ratios benefit academically.

"The strongest evidence that preschool programs can produce large educational benefits for economically disadvantaged children comes from studies in which programs had both highly capable teachers and relatively small groups of children," states the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), citing research on preschool program quality for children in poverty.

"Class Size: What's the Best Fit?" by W. Steven Barnett, Karen Schulman and Rima Shore, *Preschool Policy Matters*, NIEER, December 2004. Accessed March 29, 2017 (updated) at http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/9.pdf.

- **The Home Environment**
  In a 2013 report on achievement gaps in the United States and other nations, the Economic Policy Institute, a non-partisan research organization focusing on the needs of low- and middle-income workers, cited the impact of home and community on academic achievement. "Extensive educational research in the United States has demonstrated that students' family and community characteristics powerfully influence their school performance."

  "International tests show achievement gaps in all countries, with big gains for U.S. disadvantaged students," by Martin Carnoy and Richard Rothstein, January 30, 2013, Economic Policy Institute. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.epi.org/blog/international-tests-achievement-gaps-gains-american-students/.

  Carnoy, Martin and Richard Rothstein, "What do international tests really show about U.S. student performance?" (Report), *Economic Policy Institute* (January 28, 2013). Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.epi.org/publication/us-student-performance-testing/.

Healthy social-emotional development provides support for all children to make sound decisions in all aspects of their lives. Students who live in homes where parents do not interact with them in supportive, loving and compassionate ways, where the television is the "babysitter," where parents do not place emphasis on academic achievement, or where parents are emotionally unavailable because of long work hours, maternal depression, and other stressors are unlikely to have the supports they need to do their best in school.

> *An unstable home environment—particularly during adolescent years—creates behaviors that negatively affect school performance.*

Family dysfunction also places children at risk for behavioral problems. Children who are exposed to domestic violence, child sexual abuse, parental substance abuse, and parental incarceration show a greater frequency of anxiety, aggressiveness, depression, delinquency, and sexual acting-out behavior. School performance is often negatively impacted by these behavioral problems.

An unstable home environment creates behaviors in boys and girls—particularly during the adolescent years—that negatively affect school performance. Girls tend to initiate sex early and are at higher risk for teen pregnancy and parenting. Teen pregnancy and parenting is the number one cause of dropping out for adolescent girls. Adolescent boys are sensitive to the way their mothers are treated by the men with whom their mothers are in relationships; they also can be protective, particularly if the boyfriends are physically or verbally abusive. These stress factors not only make it difficult to learn in the classroom but create avenues for other difficulties that can lead to dropping out, encounters with the juvenile justice system, and incarceration.

- **The Quality of Instruction**
  Research has found that many school practices and characteristics impact student achievement. The Task Force is particularly concerned about the quality of instruction.

> *"Children don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."*
> **– Anonymous**

Students with the greatest challenges need the most talented and compassionate teachers. Experts agree that well-trained teachers are essential to good schools. In many districts, teachers with less preparation and experience are more likely to be assigned to work with students in poverty and those in low-performing schools. High-poverty schools with large numbers of minority students have almost twice the percentage of inexperienced teachers as do low-poverty and low-minority schools.

Linda Darling-Hammond and Laura Post; "Inequality in Teaching and Schooling: Supporting High-Quality Teaching and Leadership in Low-Income Schools," *A Notion at Risk: Preserving Public Education as an Engine for Social Mobility*, Richard D. Kahlenberg, Ed., 2000, The Century Foundation/Twentieth Century Fund, Inc.

Teachers who are not effective in the classroom have a significant negative effect on the learning process. *The New York Times*, reported on a study by economists at Harvard and Columbia Universities, which shows the impact of teacher quality on a fourth-grade student's future educational attainment and income.

> Having a good fourth-grade teacher makes a student 1.25 percent more likely to go to college, the research suggests, and 1.25 percent less likely to get pregnant as a teenager. Each of the students will go on as an adult to earn, on average, $25,000 more over a lifetime—or about $700,000 in gains for an average size class…

> Conversely, a very poor teacher has the same effect as a pupil missing 40 percent of the school year.

"The Value of Teachers" by Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*, January 11, 2012. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/12/opinion/kristof-the-value-of-teachers.html.

Studies by the National Research Council and other organizations show that students taught by National Board Certified Teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than those taught by teachers who are not board certified. Poor teaching over the course of several years can cause students to be unprepared for college and other post-secondary educational experiences.

"Exploring the Relationship between National Board Certification and High School Student Achievement," by Geary Don Crofford, Jon E. Pederson, Ph.D., Dr. Greg Garn, *New Horizons for Learning Journal*, Winter 2011. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins School of Education. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/Journals/Winter2011/Crofford.

"The Research behind Certification," *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.* Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.boardcertifiedteachers.org/about-certification/research.

Guide to National Board Certification, Version 1.6. 2016. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://boardcertifiedteachers.org/sites/default/files/Guide_to_NB_Certification.pdf.

In a 2004 paper, researchers found that teacher quality more heavily influenced differences in student performance than did the student's race, class, or school. In addition, disadvantaged students benefited more from good teachers than did advantaged students.

> *…a very poor teacher has the same effect as a pupil missing 40% of the school year.*

Nye, Barbara, Syros Konstantopoulos and Larry V. Hedges, L.V. "How large are teacher effects? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 26, no. 3, (2004), 237-257. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/002/834/127%20-%20Nye%20B%20%20Hedges%20L%20%20V%20%20%20Konstantopoulos%20S%20%20(2004).pdf.

- **Class Size**
  The benefits of smaller class sizes are well-documented and particularly so for students in poverty. The Center for Public Education (CPE) identified 19 studies that addressed reduced class size in the primary grades. Most programs in the past 20 years have targeted kindergarten through third grade, in part because earlier research suggested that these are the optimal years for such programs, and in part because of more recent and comprehensive evidence from Tennessee's influential Project STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio).

  > After four years, it was clear that smaller classes did produce substantial improvement in early learning and cognitive studies and that the effect of small class size on the achievement of minority children was initially about double that observed for majority children, but in later years, it was about the same.

  "The Tennessee Study of Class Size in the Early School Grades," by Frederick Mosteller, Ph.D., *The Future of Children: Critical Issues for Children and Youths*, The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and The Brookings Institution, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer/Fall 1995. Accessed March 17, 2017 at https://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/05_02_08.pdf.

In its research, the CPE identified several important findings about reduced class size:

- Smaller classes in the early grades (K-3) can boost student academic achievement;
- A class size of no more than 18 students per teacher is required to produce the greatest benefits;
- A class-size reduction program spanning grades K-3 will produce more benefits than one that reaches students in only one or two of the primary grades;
- Minority and low-income students show even greater gains when placed in small classes in the primary grades;
- The experience and preparation of teachers is a critical factor in the success or failure of class size reduction programs;
- Reducing class size will have little effect without well-qualified teachers;
- Supports, such as professional development for teachers and a rigorous curriculum, enhance the effect of reduced class size on academic achievement.

"Teacher quality and student achievement: At a glance," Center for Public Education, National School Boards Association. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Staffingstudents/Teacher-quality-and-student-achievement-At-a-glance.

A landmark 1978 study strongly endorsed reduced class size as a reform likely to produce improvements in academic achievement. The researchers reviewed 80 reports on the relationship between class size and achievement, obtaining more than 100 comparisons from "well-documented" studies of smaller and larger class size. They found that benefits begin to emerge as class size falls below 20 students.

Glass, Gene V. and Mary Lee Smith. "Meta-analysis of research on the relationship of class size and achievement." San Francisco: Far West Laboratory of Educational Research and Development (1978). Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED168129.pdf.

- **Discipline**

  Issues surrounding student discipline and the juvenile justice system are also addressed in Chapter 8 of this report.

  > *Students who are forced out of school for disruptive behavior are usually sent back to the origin of their anxieties and unhappiness…*

  Too often, schools have become entry points into the juvenile justice system. According to experts and advocates working on behalf of at-risk teens, disciplinary problems that in prior generations were handled within the school, such as disruptive behavior, foul language and truancy, are often dealt with through suspension, expulsion and arrests. As a result, young people are removed from school as a first response rather than a last resort. And once they are suspended or expelled from school, it is very difficult to get them back on track.

  Statistics reflect that these disciplinary practices disproportionately affect students of color and those with a history of abuse, neglect, poverty or learning disabilities.

Students who are forced out of school for disruptive behavior are usually sent back to the origin of their anxieties and unhappiness—the challenges they and their families encounter at home and in their neighborhoods. Those who are forced out for smaller offenses may become hardened, confused, embittered. Those who are unnecessarily forced out of school become stigmatized and fall behind in their studies; many eventually decide to drop out of school altogether, and many others commit crimes in their communities and are referred to the juvenile justice system. African-American and Latino males are especially at high risk of experiencing these challenges.

In January 2014, the civil rights units of the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education issued a guidance document on the equitable application of discipline in the schools. The 31-page document offers guidance on the non-discriminatory use of disciplinary measures to promote safe and orderly educational environments.

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, and U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, "Dear Colleague Letter: Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline," by Catherine E. Lhamon and Jocelyn Samuels, January 8, 2014. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf.

In its October 2014 final report, the NJSBA School Security Task Force, which consulted with law enforcement, education and school climate experts, considered the federal guidance document. It recommended that school districts and local law enforcement clearly address the intersection of school policy/disciplinary code, Criminal Code and the Juvenile Justice Code. The security task force recommended that school officials ensure that student behavior that is in violation of school codes of conduct be addressed by school officials and not be imposed on police.

What Makes Schools Safe? Final Report, NJSBA School Security Task Force, October 2014. Accessed March 15, 2017 at http://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/news-security-task-force-final-report.pdf.

- **Student Management**
  The Student Achievement Task Force believes it is imperative that districts review their student management procedures and consequences. Student management data should be analyzed to ensure equity in the application of the discipline code. Inconsistencies or evidence of bias, when identified, should be addressed through professional development and staff performance appraisal.

  Teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators need the tools to be proactive as they guide their students to making healthy and appropriate choices. Professional development on building student self-esteem, nurturing effective relationships with students, and respectful yet firm interventions when students make poor choices will contribute to a healthier school climate.

The Latin root for the word of "discipline" is "to teach." Teaching appropriate behaviors is an expanding responsibility for educators and school districts. Whether they use a commercial student management program or one that is district-developed, school boards should ensure that professional and support staffs receive professional development that will assist them in teaching their students appropriate behavior choices in a respectful manner.

- **School Climate**
  Chapter 9, "Social Emotional Learning," discusses school climate in further detail.

  Positive school climates where the adults intentionally create welcoming climates for students, their families, and all stakeholders encourage appropriate behaviors for all.

  For decades, schools have been experiencing an expansion of responsibility, or "mission creep," beyond the traditional "3 Rs." They are expected to help all children learn not just academic subjects, but also the appropriate behaviors, manners, and other skills once taught exclusively by their families. Today, financially supporting a family can be particularly challenging, sometimes requiring a parent to work more than one job. The matter is often compounded for single-parent households.

  In past generations, members of the extended family tended to live in close proximity to one another and in neighborhoods where everyone monitored children. That level of support is not always present today, and many parents rely on educators to teach their children skills once taught at home. Therefore, schools must collaborate with all sectors of the community, including the municipal government, law enforcement, social and health services, the faith community, service groups, senior citizens, and local business and industry. The goal is to develop comprehensive plans to proactively teach and encourage youth to make healthy decisions.

- **Student Health and Wellness**
  Students perform better when they show up for class physically and emotionally healthy and ready to learn. A number of practices and programs foster learning readiness and academic achievement while giving children the resources they need to improve their health and emotional well-being.

  School-Based Health Centers: SBHCs ensure that kindergarteners through high schoolers can get a flu shot, have an annual physical, have their teeth examined and their eyes checked, or speak to a mental health counselor in a safe, nurturing place—without the barriers that families too often face. SBHCs exist at the intersection of education and health and are the caulk that prevents children and adolescents from falling through the cracks. They provide care—primary health, mental health and counseling, family outreach, and chronic illness management—without concern for the student's ability to

pay and in a location that meets students where they are: at school. To date, there are approximately 2,000 school-based health centers across the nation.

School-Linked Health Centers: SLHCs are geographically separate from the school but provide access to services through collaborative and cooperative arrangements. SLHCs can be provided in a trailer or mobile van in close proximity to the school, or through a community–based organization in collaboration with a school district. Services can be provided by dispatching professionals to the school or by arranging for students' access on specific days and at specific times.

> *A number of practices and programs foster learning readiness and academic achievement while giving children the resources they need to improve their health and emotional well-being.*

Mental Health Services: School-based mental health services are provided either in school or through a collaborative arrangement with a community mental health agency. They provide counseling and mental health services to a specific student population.

Coordinated School Health Programs: In its 2015 report, the NJSBA Task Force on the Impact of Health and Wellness on Student Achievement, recommended that all school districts implement Coordinated School Health (CSH) programs, as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

"CSH is a systematic approach to improving the health and well-being of all students so they can fully participate and be successful in school," states the report.

CSH programs focus on strategies in school and in the community. They are "designed to ensure access and/or referral to primary health care services, to foster appropriate use of primary healthcare services, to prevent and control communicable disease and other health problems, to provide emergency care for illness or injury, to promote and provide optimum sanitary conditions for a safe school facility and school environment, and to provide educational and counseling opportunities for promoting and maintaining individual, family and community health. Qualified professionals such as physicians, nurses, dentists, health educators, and other allied health personnel provide these services."

"Task Force on the Impact of Health and Wellness on Student Achievement, Final Report," August 27, 2015, New Jersey School Boards Association. Accessed March 17, 2017 at https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Wellness-Task-Force-Final-Report-revised-april27.pdf.

"Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/index.htm.

"Components of Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/components.htm.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 2 – Closing the Achievement Gap: Obstacles and Strategies

FOR BOARDS OF EDUCATION

1. Be aware of, and change, practices that negatively impact the lives of children.

2. Require high-level curriculum that prepares students for global competiveness.

3. Advocate for school-based counseling and mental health services that address the needs of students and their families.

4. Through collaborative efforts, ensure student access to healthcare through School-Based Health Centers, School-Linked Health Centers, and Coordinated School Health Programs.

5. Review the policies related to equal treatment of students. For example, review research reports, such as "Not Measuring Up: The State of School Discipline in Massachusetts." Examine access to high-level courses, discipline procedures, and grading procedures, as well as other policies and procedures that inadvertently influence what happens to students based on race, ethnicity, and poverty.

   "Not Measuring Up: The State of School Discipline in Massachusetts." 2014. Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, Boston, MA. Accessed March 17, 2017 at http://lawyerscom.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Not-Measuring-up_-The-State-of-School-Discipline-in-Massachusetts.pdf.

6. Advocate not only before constituents, but also before state and federal representatives. Board members should develop professional relationships with elected officials to assist them in their representation of the district, the community, its students and employees.

FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

7. Seek student input in curriculum design, teacher evaluation, and overall school evaluation. Surveys are an effective way to engage students in the school-reform process. The Task Force on Student Achievement believes that such an exercise would encourage students them to take responsibility for educational outcomes.

8. At the end of every school year or semester, give students the opportunity to evaluate their learning experience in every class. Such information should prove useful to school leaders—especially, principals—in identifying professional development and other efforts to improve teacher effectiveness.

9. Ensure that all administrators and instructional staff understand the role of School Improvement Panels (ScIPs) in data analysis and professional development recommendations to achieve school and district goals. The ScIPs were created through the 2012 TEACHNJ Act and are part of the AchieveNJ educator evaluation system.

    "The School Improvement Panel: Strengthening Evaluation at the Building Level," New Jersey Department of Education, updated August 2015. Accessed March 17, 2017 at www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SchoolImprovementPanelandImprovingEvaluation.pdf.

10. Develop and administer a survey at the beginning of each school year to assess the physical and mental health needs of the school population. School nurses and guidance counselors should be involved in developing the surveys, and also in conducting the surveys and making recommendations based on the outcome.

11. When determining the support a child needs to be successful, consider the whole child—not just his or her academic needs but also the social-emotional needs that should be addressed. Educators should know the social, emotional, health, and basic needs of their students and their families. District leaders should identify how the school community and the community at-large can address these needs.

Chapter 3
THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD:
A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
A Research Basis for Effective School Board Governance and Policy-Setting
and the Positive Role of Professional Development

The Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry

The Iowa Association of School Boards, with the support of the National School Boards Association, has conducted ongoing research on effective school boards and their role in advancing student achievement. The studies have identified the characteristics of school boards with higher levels of student achievement and how they lead their districts toward high performance. The conclusion: School board actions are a key part of a "culture of improvement," and school boards can create conditions that promote student learning.

"IASB's Lighthouse Study School Boards and Student Achievement," *Iowa School Board Compass*, Vol. V, No. 2, Fall 2000, © *Iowa Association of School Boards,* Des Moines, Iowa.

The Center of Public Education, the research arm of the National School Boards Association, conducted a meta-analysis of ten studies and reports on school board leadership, including several based on the Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry. The result is eight characteristics of effective school boards.

Effective School Boards…	
1.	Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction, and they define clear goals toward that vision
2.	Share strong beliefs about what is possible for students to achieve and their ability to learn, as well as the capability of the school system to teach all children at high levels.
3.	Are accountability-driven. They spend less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4.	Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
5.	Are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use data to drive continuous improvement.
6.	Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
7.	Lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
8.	Participate in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitment for their improvement efforts.
"Eight characteristics of effective school boards," © Center for Public Education, National School Boards Association, January 28, 2011. Accessed March 18, 2017 at http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Public-education/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards.html.	

Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry:
The Board-Superintendent
Relationship

An ongoing research project shows the link between board leadership and student achievement

In a paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, the Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry research team reported on the behaviors of the school board-superintendent team among districts with extreme differences in student achievement. The research not only provided key findings concerning the characteristics of effective school boards, but also differences in the behaviors of effective and less-effective boards.

"The Lighthouse Inquiry: School Board/Superintendent Team Behaviors in School Districts with Extreme Differences in Student Achievement," Iowa Association of School Boards. A Paper Presented at the American Educational Research Association, April 10-14, 2001.

Attributes Shared by Effective School Boards

- *Peaceable relationship*—In all cases, the board/superintendent teams had fairly amicable relationships. Typically, board members in all studied districts said, "We disagree without making it personal."

- *Board opinion of superintendent*—All boards were fairly well satisfied with their superintendents.

- *Caring about children*—While their specific behaviors and attitudes were remarkably different, in all cases the people interviewed appeared to care deeply about doing the right thing for children.

In identifying differences in attitude and behavior between "effective" and "less-effective" school boards, the researchers considered the Seven Conditions of Productive Change (or Renewal):

Seven Conditions of Productive Change	
1. Emphasis on building a human organizational system	
2. Ability to create and sustain initiatives	**5.** Support for schools through data/information
3. Supportive workplace for staff	**6.** Community involvement
4. Staff development	**7.** Integrated leadership

Key Differences in Attitude and Behavior	
'Effective' Boards	**'Less-Effective' Boards**

	'Effective' Boards	**'Less-Effective' Boards**
1.	*Elevating versus Accepting Belief Systems*	
	In higher-achieving school districts, the board-superintendent team and school personnel consistently expressed an "elevating" view of students. The school's job was seen as releasing each student's potential.	In the low-achieving districts, the board-superintendent team and school personnel accepted limitations in students and the school system.
	The board/superintendent team and school personnel in higher achieving districts viewed the school system critically and were constantly seeking opportunities to improve.	The board-superintendent team focused on managing the school environment, rather than changing or improving it.
	The social or economic conditions of homes and the community were seen as challenges in the quest to help all students succeed.	Students were seen as being limited by characteristics such as family income or home situation.
2.	*Focus on School Renewal*	
	In the high-achieving districts, school board members showed greater understanding and influence in each of the seven conditions for productive change.	In the low-achieving districts, board members were, as a whole, only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives.
	Board members were knowledgeable about topics such as improvement goals, curriculum, instruction, assessment and staff development. They could give specific examples of how administrators and teachers carried out district goals.	Board members were sometimes aware of goals, but were seldom able to describe actions being taken by staff members to improve learning.
	Board members were able to clearly describe the purposes and processes of school improvement initiatives and identify the board's role in supporting those initiatives.	
3.	*Action in Buildings and Classrooms*	
	Generally, in the higher-achieving districts, central office administrators, principals and teachers confirmed that the board's knowledge and beliefs around the seven conditions for productive change were connected to action at the building and classroom levels.	In the low-achieving districts, these connections across the system were not discernible. There was little evidence of a pervasive focus on school renewal at any level when it was not present at the board level.
	Staff members could link building goals to board/district goals for student learning, and they could describe how those goals were having an impact in their classroom and other classrooms in the building.	
	Staff members identified clear goals for improvement, described how staff development supported the goals, and how they were monitoring progress based on data about student learning.	

The Importance of Goal Setting

In a 2006 study, researchers J. Timothy Waters, Ed.D, and Robert J. Marzano, Ph.D., emphasized the importance of setting goals related to student achievement and the need for a board to remain focused on advancing those goals.

> *Goals express the desired end-product for the district. They should be student-centered, aspirational in nature and positive and should include standards of performance.*
> – New Jersey School Boards Association

"The board ensures that these goals remain the top priorities in the district and that no other initiatives detract attention or resources from accomplishing these goals," they wrote.

Waters, J.T., and Marzano, R., *School District Leadership That Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement: Meta-analysis of Influence of District Administrators on Student Achievement.* 2006. Denver, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning. Accessed March 18, 2017 at http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED494270.pdf.

Goals are expressions of the desired end-products for the district, student-centered, aspirational in nature, and positive; they should include qualitative standards of performance, according to materials produced by the NJSBA Field Services Department, which provides onsite consultation to local school board on goal-setting.

The goal-setting process should result in SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easureable, **A**ttainable, **R**ecognizing resources needed for achievement, and **T**ime-related) objectives. And the process should determine a method to evaluate progress and measure attainment.

The Importance of Professional Development

Based on its review of the Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry and other research, the Task Force on Student Achievement believes that training and professional development establish the foundation for board of education teams and individual members to meet their responsibilities. In addition, the Task Force believes that it is the responsibility of the New Jersey School Boards Association to identify areas that need to be addressed through professional development and to develop, facilitate, and implement these training opportunities for its members.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 3 – **The Local School Board:**
A Positive Influence on Student Achievement

FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION:

12. Ensure that every board decision considers the academic, social and health needs of students and that the community is aware of this belief. At all regular meetings, board members/trustees must affirm this priority. Every decision—from the adoption of curriculum to the colors of classroom walls—should be founded on the question: "*What is best for all children?*"

13. Participate in professional development individually and as a board team to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry, the Center for Public Education's research on the *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards*, and the role of the board of education in student achievement.

14. Through training and board practice, ensure that all members understand existing data about student achievement and that all reports to the board regularly use data related to students and their academic progress.

15. Conduct a self-assessment to determine the status of the board's governance practices including the use of data in respect to student achievement.

16. Conduct a thorough policy review that includes the potential impact of each specific policy on contributing towards student achievement for all in a safe, healthy climate. All school boards should review their policies *through the lens of student achievement* to ensure that they support, and do not discourage, achievement for all.

FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

17. Make certain that classrooms are engaging places for young people to spend their days and that high expectations characterize all staff interaction with students.

18. Implement an annual goal-setting process that is student-focused and includes measurable standards of achievement.

19. Keep all stakeholders updated on challenges and successes. The administration should develop a communications plan to inform the community of the challenges the district is facing and to engage citizens in helping meet those challenges.

20. Establish a procedure to be followed when introducing new programs or practices. The procedure should include expectations for struggling students and a process to evaluate

short-term and long-term progress. The evaluation process would help the administration and board determine if the program should continue.

FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

21. Seek leadership and support from those who believe that the board's priority goal should be advancing the achievement of every student.

22. Be prepared to ask questions at every meeting about how policies and procedures influence the success of struggling students.

23. Participate in the Annual NJSBA Workshop, which places the achievement of all students as its highest priority.

FOR THE NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION:

24. Through training and professional development, ensure that board members/trustees understand, and are able to communicate about, measures of student achievement including educational standards, summative and formative assessments, and local school district goal-setting.

25. Provide all boards of education and individual board members with comprehensive professional development on the key findings of the Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry concerning effective governance.

26. Through training and professional development, emphasize that the primary responsibility of board members/trustees is to ensure that the district provides a comprehensive program that prepares students to be ready to enter the workforce or pursue post-secondary education. By their actions, board members/trustees must communicate to their constituents that all board business has a focus on the achievement of all students regardless of zip code or economic circumstances.

27. Build public understanding of the nature and measures of student achievement, while correcting common misconceptions—for example, the idea that some students are incapable of learning difficult subjects.

28. Review all Association policies to assess their potential impact on contributing toward student achievement and safe and healthy school climate. (Recommended revisions and additions to the New Jersey School Boards Association's *Manual of Policies and Positions on Education* are listed in Chapter 11 of this report.)

Chapter 4
USING DATA TO RECOGNIZE SUCCESS, IDENTIFY CHALLENGES, AND DRIVE DECISIONS

For local school board members/trustees, being "data savvy" not only contributes to understanding successes and challenges, but it can also provide the basis for making critical decisions such as the allocation of funds or the continuation of programs. Therefore, ongoing professional development providing individual experience with data is desirable and necessary.

The Benefits of Data Review
The Task Force on Student Achievement found numerous ways that data review enables board members/trustees to meet their responsibilities. For example, the practice—

- Measures district progress toward goals in all areas of student achievement, including academics, character development and citizenship.
- Focuses board policies on student achievement
- Deepens community understanding about the shared responsibility for student achievement
- Evaluates the effectiveness of policies and practices
- Identifies new issues or challenges
- Diagnoses problems and revisits solutions
- Identifies new solutions to problems
- Holds the superintendent, staff, students, and board accountable for results
- Provides opportunities to celebrate successes
- Results in smart, informed decisions

> *Today's schools enroll students with very different learning needs… By looking at data that examine how subgroups of students are performing, you quickly learn who is excelling, who is falling behind and why. Armed with this information, school board members and staff can develop a plan to ensure that no student is left behind.*
>
> – From *Improving School Board Decision Making: The Data Connection, 2001*

Factors that may be considered in data review include graduation rates; assessment scores; achievement of those with special needs including gifted-and-talented, at-risk and learning-disabled students; participation in advanced courses; awards and recognition of students and staff; post-secondary education; and scholarships.

Other indicators that may be of importance to a community include safety-related information; attendance rates; participation in extracurricular activities and community

service; graduate satisfaction (assessed through surveys); parent satisfaction; student management/discipline data; teen pregnancy rates; and the statistics on violence and vandalism reported to the New Jersey Department of Education.

Student Achievement: The Overarching Questions

Board members/trustees can determine the effectiveness of the district's academic program by maintaining a consistent focus on student achievement. The Task Force on Student Achievement suggests the following "overarching" questions:

- *How are all students achieving?*

- *Are students achieving at predicted growth rates?*

- *When compared to similar schools, how are students progressing at each grade level? At each school?*

- *How are those students who have attended our district's schools for all or most of their education progressing?*

  (For students who have attended school in the district for all or most of their education, disaggregate the data according to all students and subgroups, including economically disadvantaged, racial/ethnic, gender, special education/disability, English language learners, high-mobility, and enrollment in Advanced Placement courses and classes such as physics and algebra.)

- *How are students who previously attended school in other districts progressing?*

  (Disaggregate the data for students who transferred from other districts and have been in the district less than two to three years.)

Data Sources

The Task Force on Student Achievement found a variety of sources that provide information to enable local school leaders to track student performance.

Achieve NJ

The AchieveNJ educator evaluation system establishes two indicators of student achievement:

- **Student Growth Percentiles** (SGPs), which measure how much a student improves his or her state test performance from one year to the next as compared to students across the state with a similar test score history.

  "Student Growth Percentiles," N.J. Department of Education. Accessed March 18, 2017 at www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/percentile.shtml;

- **Student Growth Objectives** (SGOs), long-term academic goals in non-tested areas for groups of students, which are set by teachers in consultation with their supervisors.

  "Student Growth Objectives: Overview," N.J. Department of Education. Accessed March 18, 2017 at www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/objectives.shtml.

School Performance Report

The New Jersey Department of Education's School Performance Report provides comprehensive data by school and district on student achievement, student management, and expenditures. This report enables board members/trustees to review data from district schools and "peer group," or similar, schools throughout the state. By enabling comparisons with schools that face similar challenges, it provides board members/trustees with guidance to evaluate the progress of the schools they oversee.

"New Jersey School Performance Report," N.J. Department of Education. Accessed March 18, 2017 at https://homeroom5.doe.state.nj.us/pr/.

Assessment Results

Analysis of summative assessment results, such as those for PARCC, can inform decisions involving individual student needs; curricula, textbooks and related instructional materials; and teacher effectiveness. PARCC reports permit comparison of district data to that of other PARCC states, districts or schools. More important, PARCC provides test item analysis for every question for every student. This information can enable teachers and parents to identify a child's specific academic strengths and challenges and to develop the instructional plans to address those challenges.

"2015-16 Sample PARCC Student Reports," N.J. Department of Education. Accessed March 18, 2017 at http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/parcc/scores/.

State regulation requires chief school administrators to provide boards of education with reports on the results of annual statewide assessments. Boards of education, in turn, must provide parents, students, and citizens with the assessment results, and "provide appropriate instruction to improve skills and knowledge for students performing below the established levels of student proficiency in any content area either on the Statewide or local assessments."

N.J.A.C .6A:8-4.3(a), New Jersey State Board of Education. Accessed March 18, 2017 at http://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap8.pdf.

Formative assessments are intended to evaluate student comprehension, learning needs and academic progress while a course or program is in progress. They can be another valuable data source.

Data Analysis

Improving School Board Decision Making: The Data Connection, a 2001 report by the National School Boards Foundation, is an exemplary resource for board members/trustees. The Task Force used the report as a reference for this chapter. It emphasizes the value of data analysis.

"By looking at data that examine how subgroups of students are performing, you quickly learn who is excelling, who is falling behind and why. Armed with this information, school

board members and staff can develop a plan to ensure that no student is left behind," states the report.

Improving School Board Decision-Making: The Data Connection. 2001. National School Boards Foundation, Alexandria, VA. Accessed March 18, 2017 at
http://www.schoolturnaroundsupport.org/sites/default/files/resources/NSBF_Data_Guide.pdf.

Based on its review of the research and its discussions with consultants, the Task Force on Student Achievement identified questions from members of the school community—including parents, teachers and school administrators and supervisors—that can help guide a school board's analysis of district data.

Questions from the School Community: GUIDING DATA ANALYSIS
1. Parent Inquiries
Did my child make a year's worth of progress in a year?
Is my child growing appropriately toward meeting state standards?
Is my child growing as much in math as in reading?
Did my child grow as much this year as last year?
2. Questions Teachers Should Consider
Did my students make a year's worth of progress in a year?
Did my students grow appropriately toward meeting state standards?
How close are my students to meeting or exceeding state standards?
What were the growth patterns of my students? Are they on track? Are they achieving at a higher rate, and do they need differentiated instruction?
Who are the students whose growth is unusually slow and who need special attention?
3. Factors Administrators and Supervisors Should Consider
Did the students in our district/school make a year's worth of progress in all content areas?
Are our students demonstrating appropriate growth to meet state standards?
Does this school or program show as much growth as school X or program Y?
What impact are specific programs, practices, materials and curricula having on achievement?
Are specific teaching practices having a greater impact than others?
What data are included in our district's violence and vandalism report to the NJDOE?
4. Questions Board Members Should Ask
Are there achievement gaps in reading, math or science among different groups of students? Do achievement gaps exist in other content areas? If so, are these gaps growing larger, shrinking or staying the same?
Are male students performing better than female students in math (or language arts literacy, science, etc.)? How will we increase the performance of female students?
Are female students performing better than male students in math (or language arts literacy, science, etc.)? How will we increase the performance of male students?
Are there more economically challenged or minority students in special education classes than there are in Advanced Placement classes? What are the reasons behind the difference? How will the district address it?
What are student discipline/management trends? Are suspension rates among student subgroups comparable, or are specific subgroups overrepresented?

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 4 – **Using Data to Recognize Success,
Identify Challenges, and Drive Decisions**

FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS:

29. School board members/trustees should participate in professional development to understand the role and meaning of Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) and Student Growth Objectives (SGP), including their use in analyzing student achievement and evaluating the performance of educators.

30. Board member/trustees should participate in professional development regarding data review and analysis. Being data savvy is as important as ensuring that the district is financially responsible.

31. Board member/trustees should be aware of all of the data points available for review, so that they can make informed decisions on educational program recommendations.

FOR THE NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION:

32. NJSBA should establish a professional development track for board members, which includes basic, intermediate and advanced data training.

33. NJSBA should review its mandated training to ensure that an introduction to data is included.

Chapter 5
THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The Task Force on Student Achievement considered the relationship between employment and student achievement from two perspectives: New Jersey academic standards for career readiness, and employment while in school. This chapter also includes information on state and federal employment and job-training programs for in-school and out-of-school youth.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards
In May 2016, the State Board of Education adopted the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, which resulted from a study of the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Common Core State Standards.

New Jersey has subscribed to standards-based education since 1996 when the State Board of Education adopted the initial Core Curriculum Content Standards. The standards are goals that express what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate and at various stages through the elementary and secondary grade levels.

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards establish goals in nine content areas. Standard 9, "21st Century Life and Careers," includes 12 Career Ready Practices and describes the knowledge and skills students need to achieve career success and financial independence.

The New Jersey Learning Standards website describes the following components of the "21st Century Life and Careers" standard:

- **9.1 Personal Financial Literacy:** This standard outlines the important fiscal knowledge, habits, and skills that must be mastered in order for students to make informed decisions about personal finance. Financial literacy is an integral component of a student's college and career readiness, enabling students to achieve fulfilling, financially-secure, and successful careers.
- **9.2 Career Awareness, Exploration, and Preparation:** This standard outlines the importance of being knowledgeable about one's interests and talents, and being well informed about postsecondary and career options, career planning, and career requirements.
- **9.3 Career and Technical Education:** This standard outlines what students should know and be able to do upon completion of a CTE Program of Study.

"For students to be college and career ready they must have opportunities to understand career concepts and financial literacy," states the NJDOE website. "This includes helping

students make informed decisions about their future personal, educational, work, and financial goals. By integrating Standard 9 into instruction, New Jersey students will acquire the necessary academic and life skills to not only achieve individual success but also to contribute to the success of our society."

The 12 Career Ready Practices
According to the NJDOE website, the 12 Career Ready Practices outline the skills that all individuals need to be adaptable, reflective, and proactive in life and careers. They have been linked to increased college, career, and life success.

New Jersey Department of Education, New Jersey Student Learning Standards**,** Standard 9**:** 21st Century Life and Careers, (Trenton, NJ). Accessed December 29, 2016 at http://www.nj.gov/education/aps/cccs/career/**.**

"Career Ready Practices should be taught and reinforced in all career exploration and preparation programs with increasingly higher levels of complexity and expectation as a student advances through a program of study," according to Advance CTE, an organization that advocates policies and practices that sustain high-quality career technical education programs.

Advance CTE, *Common Career Technical Core: The Career Ready Practices,* (Silver Spring, MD). Accessed December 29, 2016 at https://careertech.org/sites/default/files/CareerReadyPractices-FINAL.pdf.

Junior Achievement of New Jersey
Support for financial literacy is available to school districts through Junior Achievement of New Jersey (JANJ). The organization's free JA Finance Park® program is designed to help students meet state standards in Personal Financial Literacy (Standard 9.1), required for graduation.

The JANJ website describes the JA Finance Park® program as a "two-pronged approach to financial literacy education for middle and high school students that begins with several weeks of classroom lessons, centered on money management, wise consumerism and career exploration." Additionally, JANJ offers a virtual Finance Park program that "allows students to participate in an online budgeting simulation, without ever having to leave school."

Junior Achievement of New Jersey, Programs-JA Finance Park®, (Edison, NJ). Accessed March 19, 2017 at http://janj.org/programs/ja_finance_park.

Employment while in School
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that, in October 2014, 22.3% of adolescents attending high school participated in the workforce, with 18.2% of high school students actually holding full- or part-time jobs.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2014 High School Graduates,* (Washington, DC, April 2015), accessed December 29, 2016 at http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/hsgec_04162015.pdf.

Several studies have examined the relationship between employment and academic achievement for both high school and college students.

- A 2009 study, published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, found a "small negative effect of paid work on student achievement."

  U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Time to Work or Time to Play: The Effect of Student Employment on Homework, Housework, Screen Time, and Sleep,* by Charlene Marie Kalenkoski and Sabrina Wulff Pabilonia, Working Paper 423, (Washington, DC, March 2009), accessed December 29, 2016 at http://www.bls.gov/ore/pdf/ec090010.pdf.

- Earlier research showed that, although student employment may have some positive effects on students' future earnings by providing work experience, there was a negative relationship between working while in high school and a student's academic achievement. For example, Ruhm (1995, 1997) and Tyler (2003) found that student employment has a negative effect on both the number of years of schooling that students complete and their 12th grade math achievement.

  Christopher J. Ruhm. "The Extent and Consequences of High School Employment." *Journal of Labor Research* 16, no. 3, (Summer 1995): 293-303, accessed December 29, 2016 at https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/C_Ruhm_Extent_1995.pdf.

  John H. Tyler. "Using State Child Labor Laws to Identify the Effect of School-Year Work on High School Achievement." *Journal of Labor Economics* 21, no. 2 (April 2003): 353-380.

- A 1999 report found that extensive school year employment had a large, statistically significant negative impact on the academic performance of racial minorities.

  Gerald S. Oettinger. "Does high school employment affect high school academic performance?" *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 53, (October 1999): 136-151.

In a 2001 article, John H. Holloway, project director for the Educational Testing Service, cited research on the impact, positive and negative, of students working while enrolled in school. Following are excerpts from the article:

> The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (1998) studied the effects of after-school jobs on adolescents. The researchers first examined the value of the kinds of after-school jobs that most students held. Most jobs, they found, were disconnected from what students learned in school, did not systematically teach the job skills necessary for advancement, and provided little meaningful interaction with adult supervisors.

> The study showed that the number of hours that 10th graders worked increased the number of absences from school, especially among those students who worked more than 30 hours a week. In addition, working more than 30 hours a week during high school was associated with lower levels of future educational attainment.

> The report also found, however, some benefits from after-school work. For instance, students who balanced school and work by limiting their work hours gained valuable time-management skills that permitted them to work when they went to college.

> Kusum Singh (1998) found that part-time work affected both standardized test scores and grades. The number of hours that students worked had a significant negative effect on

their standardized achievement levels: Students were likely to have lower achievement scores than their peers if they worked longer hours during the school year. In other words, the greater the number of hours that students worked, the greater the negative effects on standardized measures of achievement.

John J. Holloway. "Research Link: Part-Time Work and Student Achievement." Educational Leadership, 58, no. 7 (April 2001): 83-84. © 2001 by Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA. Reproduced with permission. Accessed December 29, 2016 at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/apr01/vol58/num07/_Part-Time_Work_and_Student_Achievement.aspx.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, Committee on the Health and Safety Implications of Child Labor. *Protecting youth at work: Health, safety, and development of working children and adolescents in the United States* [Online]. (1998).

Kasum Singh. "Part-time employment in high school and its effect on academic achievement." *Journal of Educational Research,* 91, no. 3 (1998): 131–139.

State and Federal Programs

In considering the impact of employment on student achievement, the Task Force reviewed government youth employment and occupational training programs.

Title 1-B Youth Program

The federally funded Title I-B Youth Program provides employment training services to disadvantaged youth. It focuses on longer-term academic and occupational learning and provides long-term comprehensive service strategies for career advancement and life-long learning.

According to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, in a recent program year, the Title I-B Youth Program met or exceeded its goals for job placement, educational attainment and building participants' literacy and mathematics skills.

Common Measure	Program Year 2013 Goal	Program Year 2013 Actual	% of Goal Achieved	Program Year 2013 Results
Youth Placement	66.8%	66.5%	99.6%	Met
Degree Attainment	75.0%	73.5%	98.0%	Met
Literacy/Numeracy	56.2%	64.3%	114.4%	Exceeded
New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, *New Jersey Workforce Investment Annual Report 2013-2014*, (Trenton, NJ, November 2014). Accessed December 29, 2016 at https://www.doleta.gov/Performance/Results/AnnualReports/PY2013/NJ-PY13_WIA_AnnualReport.pdf.				

The Youth Program's services have been available to in-school and out-of-school youth who fall within one or more of the following categories: (1) deficient in basic literacy skills; (2) school dropout; (3) homeless, runaway or foster child; (4) pregnant or parenting; (5) offender; or (6) individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. Males age 18 and over must be registered with the Selective Service to participate.

The chart below illustrates the youth population served by the program during fiscal years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

Title I-B Youth Program: Participants		
	2013-14	2014-15
Ages 14-18	**3,115**	**3,579**
Ages 19-21	997	1,177
Total Served	4,112	4,756
Exited	2,311	2,100
In-School Youth	**2,493**	**2,724**
Exited	1,461	1,118
Out-of-School Youth	**1,619**	**2,032**
Exited	850	982

Sources:

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, *New Jersey Workforce Investment Annual Report 2013-2014*, (Trenton, NJ, November 2014). Accessed December 29, 2016 at https://www.doleta.gov/Performance/Results/AnnualReports/PY2013/NJ-PY13_WIA_AnnualReport.pdf.

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and State Employment and Training Commission, *Combined State Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2016*, (Trenton, NJ: April 2016). Accessed December 29, 2016 at http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/wioa/documents/resources/njcombinedstateplanforwioa2016.pdf.

The program had been funded under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. With enactment of the successor law, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), in July 2014, its finances were consolidated with those of other job-training programs into a single stream.

The U.S. Department of Labor's website describes the WIOA as "landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers." New regulations to implement the act went into effect in the fall of 2016.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, *The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*. Accessed December 29, 2016 at https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/.

According to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the WIOA "is clearly aligned with the strategic direction New Jersey has taken. WIOA offers an opportunity for [the department] to build upon many of its innovative and successful efforts to date."

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, *New Jersey Workforce Investment Annual Report 2013-2014*, (Trenton, NJ, November 2014). Accessed December 29, 2016 at https://www.doleta.gov/Performance/Results/AnnualReports/PY2013/NJ-PY13_WIA_AnnualReport.pdf.

In response to the new federal law, the State of New Jersey in April 2016 submitted a "Combined State Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act" to the U.S. Department of Labor. The combined plan cites the WIOA's extension of the Youth Program to age 24 from age 21. It also shifts the emphasis from in-school to out-of-school young adults. The State Employment and Training Commission defines "out-of-school youth" as "young people between the ages of 16-24, that do not have a high school diploma or, have a high school diploma and are deficient in basic skills, are not enrolled in school, and are disconnected from work and/or underemployed."

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and State Employment and Training Commission, *Combined State Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2016*, (Trenton, NJ: April 2016). Accessed December 29, 2016 at http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/wioa/documents/resources/njcombinedstateplanforwioa2016.pdf.

Work-Study Programs
The U.S. Department of Labor will authorize a school-supervised, school-administered Work Study Program (WSP). According to the Department of Labor website, such programs are designed to help academically oriented high school students pursue their college diplomas. Participating students must be enrolled in a college preparatory curriculum and be identified by authoritative school personnel as being able to benefit from the WSP.

Students enrolled in an authorized Work Study Program:

- May work no more than 18 hours in any one week when school is in session, a portion of which may be during school hours, in accordance with the following formula that is based upon a continuous four-week cycle;
  - In three of the four weeks, are permitted to work during school hours only one day per week, and for no more than for eight hours on that day.
  - During the remaining week of the four-week cycle, are permitted to work during school hours on no more than two days, and for no more than for eight hours on each of those two days.
  - The employment of such minors would still be subject to the remaining time of day and number of hours standards contained Child Labor Regulation No. 3 (Employment of Minors Between 14 and 16 Years of Age).

U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, *Fact Sheet No. 2A*, (Washington, DC, revised 2010). Accessed December 29, 2016 at https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs2a.htm.

U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, *Child Labor Final Rule No. 3, Nonagricultural Employment 14- and 15-Year Olds*. Accessed December 29, 2016 at https://www.dol.gov/whd/cl/SidebySideReg3FinalRule.htm.

Work Experience and Career Exploration Program (WECEP)
WECEP provides carefully planned work experiences and career exploration for 14- and 15-year-old youths. The program is designed to reorient and motivate youth toward education and to prepare them for the world of work.

State departments of education may operate WECEPs with the approval of the Administrator of the U. S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division for a two-year period. Students enrolled in an authorized WECEP:

- May work during school hours.
- May work up to 3 hours on a school day and as many as 23 hours in a school week.
- May work in some occupations that would otherwise be prohibited when granted a variance issued by the Administrator. However, they may not work in manufacturing, mining or any of the 17 hazardous occupations.

U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, *Fact Sheet No. 2A, Work Experience and Career Exploration Program*, (Washington, DC, revised 2010). Accessed December 29, 2016 at https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs2a.htm.

District Oversight

Members of the NJSBA Task Force also report that school districts, such as East Orange, Long Branch, Passaic County Technical, Clifton, Passaic Valley and Paterson, offer Work Investment Act youth programs, including after-school and summer work experience. For each district, progress target data, required under the former federal education law (No Child Left Behind), was reviewed to determine the effectiveness of these programs in relation to standards for language arts literacy, mathematics and career readiness.

New Jersey Unified Workforce Investment Plan

The New Jersey Unified Workforce Investment Plan, approved by the U.S. Department of Labor in December 2012, outlines the state's vision for ensuring that every youth has the opportunity to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training. The plan encompasses the youth most in need, such as those who are out of school, homeless, or in foster care or aging out of foster care. Other youth in need include offenders, children of incarcerated parents, migrant and seasonal farmworker youth, and those with disabilities, as well as other youth at risk.
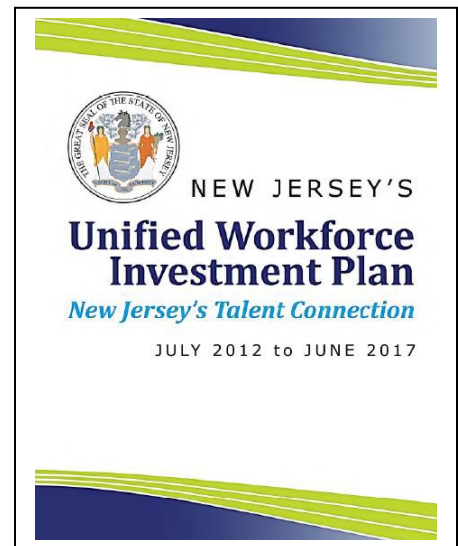
"New Jersey has developed a comprehensive strategy that will connect secondary education, community organizations' workforce development programs and other stakeholders to assist youth to successfully navigate the labor market and to obtain the skills they need for employment," states the plan. "New Jersey's Shared Vision for Youth includes strategies to focus on Career awareness, pilot innovative programs, such as pre-apprenticeship programs that create pathways to employment."

"The state is continuing its long-term commitment of providing a comprehensive and holistic vision of youth in combination with offering customer-focused programs and services for those difficult-to-serve youth. A first priority is to ensure that local Youth Investment Councils (YIC) are designing competitive proposals for funding that incorporate successful performance-based practices to assist youth transition into work activities and employment opportunities. YICs are tasked with connecting the needs of youth in each local area with the proven practices and models that include employment outlooks for specific career areas."

Under the plan, priority programming at the state and local levels focuses on the youth most in need (i.e., those aging out of foster care, those involved in the juvenile justice system, youth with disabilities, or those who are pregnant or parenting). Assisting these populations through streamlined access to services is an important strategy. It is accomplished through memoranda of understanding to integrate programs and services across various state agencies.

"Interdepartmental initiatives and joint funding by two or more state agencies, such as the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) and the Juvenile Justice Commission or the LWD and the Department of Children and Families, enhance the provision of services to youth with special needs," states the plan. "These initiatives have been recognized as effective models in providing services and are shared with potential community partners as a way of increasing successful outcomes by building upon existing programs."

According to the plan, New Jersey has demonstrated its commitment to the federal Employment and Training Administration's strategic vision for youth by taking a proactive role in assembling a team of representatives from state and community-based organizations, the Job Corps and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The goal of the interagency working group, called the "Jersey Fresh Team," is to develop innovative approaches, enhance the quality of services delivered, and improve efficiencies and outcomes for youth.

"It is engaged in long-term strategic planning that will identify gaps in services and barriers for youth and develop strategies to address the issues identified and coordinate efforts," states the plan.

State of New Jersey, State Employment and Training Commission, *New Jersey's Unified Workforce Investment Plan*, (Trenton, NJ, approved by U.S. Department of Labor, December 2012). Accessed December 29, 2016 at http://www.njsetc.net/njsetc/planning/unified/documents/NJ%20Unified%20Workforce%20Investment%20Plan%2020 12-2017.pdf.

U.S. Department of Labor Findings

In 2003, the federal Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General, conducted an audit of DOL grants to the states which, in turn, make sub-grants to communities to implement youth programs. The Inspector General's office found that:

- The Work Investment Act youth programs focused predominantly on in-school, younger youth, ages 14 through 16.
- Younger youth were enrolled equally in employment-related, educational and work-readiness activities, whereas older youth were more frequently enrolled in employment-related activities.
- Almost half the youth exited the program within one year.

Skill attainment was the overwhelming accomplishment (91 percent) for younger youth, while entering employment (57 percent) was the predominant outcome recorded for older youth.

The following table provides the distribution of total time in the program for younger youth from registration to exit.

Work Investment Act Youth Programs						

LENGTH OF TIME YOUNGER YOUTH SPENT IN THE PROGRAM						
Time in Program	**Exited**		**Not Exited**		**Total**	
	#	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
1-30 days	6	1.7			6	1.7
31-90 days	84	23.4			84	23.4
3-6 months	28	7.8			28	7.8
7-12 months	48	13.4			48	13.4
13-24 months	44	12.3	120	33.4	164	45.7
Over 24 months			29	8.1	29	8.1
Totals	210	58.5	149	41.5	359	100.0

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General, *Workforce Investment Act: Evaluation of Youth Program Enrollments, Services, and Recorded Outcomes*, Report No. 06-03-006-03-390, (Washington, DC, September 2003): 12. Accessed March 19, 2017 at http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2003/06-03-006-03-390.pdf.

The data above show that almost half (166 of 359) of the younger youth exited the program within a year:

- 25 percent (90) exited within 90 days,
- 33 percent (118) exited within 6 months, and
- 46 percent (166) exited within 12 months.

"This high exit rate may point to the emphasis on summer employment instead of sustained services year round," states the Office of the Inspector General.

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General, *Workforce Investment Act: Evaluation of Youth Program Enrollments, Services, and Recorded Outcomes*, Report No. 06-03-006-03-390, (Washington, DC, September 2003). Accessed December 29, 2016, http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2003/06-03-006-03-390.pdf.

Competition for Careers

Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau show that "Millennials," those born between 1981 and 1997, are the nation's largest living generation, surpassing members of the post-World War II "Baby Boom." Generation X, consisting of those born between 1965 and 1980 will surpass the Baby Boomers by 2028. An article published by Pew Research Center analyses the data:

Millennials, whom we define as those ages 18-34 in 2015, now number 75.4 million, surpassing the 74.9 million Baby Boomers (ages 51-69). And Generation X (ages 35-50 in 2015) is projected to pass the Boomers in population by 2028.

The Millennial generation continues to grow as young immigrants expand its ranks. Boomers – whose generation was defined by the boom in U.S. births following World

War II – are older and their numbers shrinking as the number of deaths among them exceeds the number of older immigrants arriving in the country.

Richard Fry. "Millennials overtake Baby Boomers as America's largest generation." Pew Research Center. (Washington, DC, April 2016). Accessed December 29, 2016 at http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/.

Births Underlying Each Generation

Number of U.S. births by year and generation
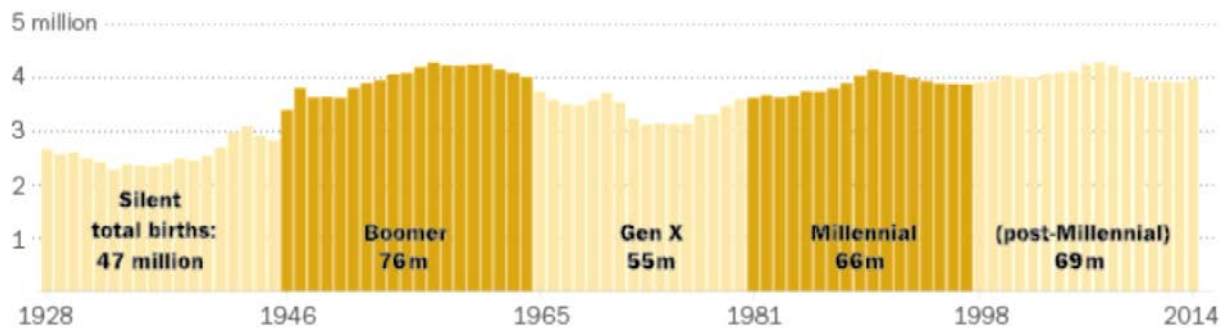
Source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services National Center for Health Statistics

PEW RESEARCH CENTER (From "Millennials overtake Baby Boomers as America's largest generation," April 25, 2016)

This demographic change will impact education, preparation for careers and the job market.

"Like Boomers before them, Millennials have already had an enormous impact on the nation's public schools," states a publication by New Strategist Press, a market research firm. "Now the generation is inflating the entry-level workforce and is about to enter the housing market—perhaps helping to stabilize declining housing values."

- The Millennial generation has diversified the youth market. Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics account for a large share of Millennials—affecting everything from fashion to politics.
- The first generation to be raised on cell phones and the Internet, Millennials are always connected.
- Millennials must compete against their many peers for colleges, jobs, and houses. This competitive crush shapes the attitudes and lifestyles of Millennials and is one of the factors that distinguish them from Generation X.
- [By 2006,] Generation X [became] the best-educated generation, 32 percent of its members having completed college. This compare[d] with a slightly smaller 30 percent of Baby Boomers who are college graduates.

"The Millennial Generation: Another Baby Boom" in *American Generations, Sixth Edition. (*East Patchogue, NY: New Strategist Press, LLC.

The Impact of Employment on Student Achievement: Conclusions

Based on its review of the research and data referenced in this chapter, the Task Force on Student Achievement believes that government employment programs for disadvantaged youth must focus equally on career readiness and educational advancement.

It believes that such programs should avoid creating situations in which disadvantaged youth are being prepared to accept jobs with lower wages than those available to their counterparts who are exploring college opportunities.

Additionally, job growth statistics reported in August 2016 and cited in Chapter 6 of this report underscore the importance of post-secondary education and training. College graduates have benefited the most from job growth during the recovery, while less-educated Americans are being pushed into lower-paying, lower-skilled jobs.

Picchi, Aimee, "5 middle-class careers that are growing, and 5 that are shrinking," *CBS Money Watch*, August 5, 2016. Accessed January 10, 2017 at http://www.cbsnews.com/media/which-middle-class-careers-are-changing-the-most/.

The Task Force is also concerned that pressure to produce income may encourage disadvantaged youth to seek more working hours while in school. This may ultimately distract students from their education, resulting in lower test scores, lower self-esteem, and reduced expectations.

Some researchers have disputed the negative impact of a student's employment while in school on his or her academic achievement.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Time to Work or Time to Play: The Effect of Student Employment on Homework, Housework, Screen Time, and Sleep,* by Charlene Marie Kalenkoski and Sabrina Wulff Pabilonia, Working Paper 423, (Washington, DC, March 2009), accessed December 29, 2016 at http://www.bls.gov/ore/pdf/ec090010.pdf.

Earlier studies conduct from 1995 through 2003, showed that extensive employment while in school had a negative impact on the number of years of school completed, mathematics skills, the academic achievement of racial minorities, and school attendance. There has also been evidence that most after-school employment is disconnected from what students learned in school and does not systematically teach the job skills necessary for advancement.

Ruhm, Christopher J. "The Extent and Consequences of High School Employment." *Journal of Labor Research* 16, no. 3, (Summer 1995): 293-303, accessed December 29, 2016 at https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/C_Ruhm_Extent_1995.pdf.

John H. Tyler. "Using State Child Labor Laws to Identify the Effect of School-Year Work on High School Achievement.*" Journal of Labor Economics* 21, no. 2 (April 2003): 353-380.

Gerald S. Oettinger. "Does high school employment affect high school academic performance?" *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 53, (October 1999): 136-151.

Kasum Singh. "Part-time employment in high school and its effect on academic achievement." *Journal of Educational Research,* 91, no. 3 (1998): 131–139.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, Committee on the Health and Safety Implications of Child Labor. *Protecting youth at work: Health, safety, and development of working children and adolescents in the United States* [Online]. (1998).

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 5 – The Impact of Employment on Student Achievement

FOR JOB TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

34. Make regular school attendance the priority when providing assistance through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to students subject to New Jersey's compulsory attendance laws (_N.J.S.A._ 18A:38-25). Efforts should focus on ensuring both attendance and tardy-to-school challenges.

35. Allocate WIOA funding to support public education's need to meet 21st Century Life and Careers through career exploration, including labor market information, and educational requirements. Such efforts should be provided in lieu of work experience during the school year.

FOR THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

36. Support the development of alternative, evidence-based programs and other activities that enhance the choices available to disadvantaged youth. These programs should encourage disadvantaged youth to reenter and complete secondary education, enroll in post-secondary education and advanced training, progress through career pathways, and enter into unsubsidized employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

37. Enable all youth to participate fully in academic, co-curricular and athletic programs, with the goal of fostering a more robust cohort of students who seek continuous academic achievement that promotes college and career readiness.

FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND FAMILIES

38. Limit leisure-time employment of high school students to no more than two hours per day, 15 hours per week during the school year. At the same time, encourage employment opportunities, during the school year and summer, that enable students to practice skills learned in the classroom.

Chapter 6
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten have evolved from programs focused primarily on social/emotional growth to include an increased focus on academics, especially literacy and math. These new expectations underscore the significance of young children's experiences starting in infancy in relationship to readiness for, and success in, school, as well as the important role that early childhood education can play in narrowing the achievement gap.

The Word Gap
Among poor children, there is a significantly lower exposure to language by being spoken or read to, according to researchers. This language, or word, gap presents a serious challenge to closing the achievement gap, since exposure to oral language contributes to literacy development.

As referenced earlier in this report, by the age of 3, poor children hear 30 million fewer words than do middle income or affluent children.

Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3," *American Educator*, American Federation of Teachers, (Washington, DC, Spring 2003). Accessed December 30, 2016 at https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf.

"Children in welfare families hear, on average, only 600 words per hour; those from highly educated families hear over 2,000 words per hour," states a 2013 article posted by The Brookings Institution.

Darshak Sanghavi. "How to Make Toddlers Smarter: Talk to Them," *Social Mobility Memos*, The Brookings Institution, (Washington, DC, October 2013). Accessed December 30, 2016 at https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2013/10/25/how-to-make-toddlers-smarter-talk-to-them/.

Economically Disadvantaged: A Majority
In 2013, America's public schools passed a threshold when, for the first time, the majority of students came from low-income families. An analysis of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core Data by the Southern Education Foundation determined that 51% of the nation's public school students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch nationwide in 2013. Two years earlier, a similar analysis placed the percentage of the nation's public school students from families living below the poverty line at 48%.

Southern Education Foundation, *A New Majority: Low Income Students Now a Majority in the Nation's Public Schools*, (Atlanta, GA, January 2015). Accessed December 30, 2016 at http://www.southerneducation.org/getattachment/4ac62e27-5260-47a5-9d02-14896ec3a531/A-New-Majority-2015-Update-Low-Income-Students-Now.aspx.

For New Jersey, the percentage of low-income public school students is lower (37% in 2013) than the nationwide total (51%), according to the report. However, from 2011 to 2013, the

growth in the percentage of New Jersey low-income students (12.1%) was more rapid than that of the nation as a whole (6.3%).

Southern Education Foundation, *A New Majority: Low Income Students in the South and Nation*, (Atlanta, GA, October 2013). Accessed December 30, 2016 at http://www.southerneducation.org/getattachment/817a35f1-abb9-4d6a-8c2e-5514d4a6d7d9/Test-Publication-4.aspx.

Economic Trends

These trends, along with the following economic factors contribute to the importance of early childhood education in addressing academic achievement gaps.

1. Growing income inequality

   "In every state, the average income of the top 5 percent of households is at least ten times that of the bottom 20 percent, according to 2015 American Community Survey data," states a 2016 report by two Washington, DC-based foundations. "The ten states with the largest disparities are New York, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Illinois, New Jersey, Florida, Georgia, and Texas."

   McNichol, Elizabeth. *How State Tax Policies Can Stop Increasing Inequality and Start Reducing It*. Washington, DC: The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute, December 15, 2016. Accessed January 10, 2017 at http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/12-15-16sfp.pdf.

   The 2015 American Community Survey data, issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, also show that "[i]ncome inequality increased in eight states (Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada and New Jersey)…"

   U.S. Census Bureau, "New American Community Survey Statistics for Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Available for States and Local Areas," Release Number: CB 16-159. Accessed January 10, 2017 at https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-159.html.

2. Stagnation of upward income mobility

   Research also shows that economic mobility—either by rising to higher income levels or earning a salary greater than one's parents—has dissipated.

   "A child born to parents in the bottom fifth of the income distribution has a 7.5% chance of reaching the topic fifth of the income distribution in the U.S., far lower than peer developed countries," states an introduction to the Equality of Opportunity Project, a multi-year venture led by economists from Stanford University and Harvard University.

   Americans today are also less likely to earn more than their parents.

   > Children's prospects of achieving the 'American Dream' of earning more than their parents have fallen from 90% to 50% over the past half century. This decline has occurred throughout the parental income distribution, for children from both low and high income families…

   > Chetty, Raj and Nathaniel Hendren, "How can we improve economic opportunities for our children?" *The Equality of Opportunity Project*, 2016, Stanford Institute of Economic Policy Research. Accessed January 10, 2017 at http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/.

3. Job loss in certain occupations
   According to CareerBuilder, the online job recruitment service, positions with salaries ranging from $29,000 to $44,000 will grow the least. The data were recently reported by *CBS MoneyWatch*.

   Through 2021, three-fifths of the 173 occupations that are projected to lose jobs are within this category, according to the report. It emphasizes the importance of post-secondary education and training.

   "That impact is already being felt by many Americans, given the labor dynamics of the post-recession years," states the *CBS MoneyWatch* report. "College graduates are benefiting most during the recovery, grabbing the largest share of the nearly 12 million jobs that have been created following the downturn, while less educated Americans are finding themselves pushed into lower-paying, lower-skilled jobs."

   Picchi, Aimee, "5 middle-class careers that are growing, and 5 that are shrinking," *CBS Money Watch*, August 5, 2016. Accessed January 10, 2017 at http://www.cbsnews.com/media/which-middle-class-careers-are-changing-the-most/.

4. Disparity in family support of children's academic success
   Research shows that families with higher incomes are far better able to spend money on, and dedicate time to, child development.

   > In 2013, high-income families were already spending approximately seven times as much on their children's educational development as low-income families. By comparison, in 1972 the ratio was only four times as much.

   > Ashby, Steven K. and Robert Bruno, *A Fight for the Soul of Public Education*, © 2016 by Cornell University. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

   A recent White House report on early childhood education cites research showing the disparity in the ability to spend on enrichment activities for children.

   > An obvious advantage of higher family income is that it provides more resources to buy books, computers, high-quality child care, summer camps, private schooling, and other enrichments. …spending on child-enrichment goods and services jumped for families in the top quintiles to a far greater extent than for those in the bottom income quintiles, as reflected in four large consumer expenditure surveys conducted between the early 1970s and 2005 to 2006.

   > Duncan, Greg J. and Richard J. Murnane, eds., "Introduction: The American Dream: Then and Now," *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances* (New York: Russell Sage and Spencer Foundation, 2011), 11. Accessed January 10, 2017 at https://www.russellsage.org/sites/default/files/Duncan_Murnane_Chap1.pdf.

   The 2015 Obama administration report, *The Economics of Early Childhood* Investments, states that "as income inequality has grown, so has inequality in child-related expenditures."

"The gap is also reflected in the total time spent with children and in the types of activities on which that time is focused."

Executive Office of the President of the United States, "The Economics of Early Childhood Investments," January 2015. Accessed January 10, 2017 at
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/early_childhood_report_update_final_non-embargo.pdf.

Figure 1: High Income Parents Spend More Time on Educational Activities with their Children

SOURCE: American Time Use Survey, 2013. Note: High income refers to top quartile while low income refers to bottom quartile. Includes time spent helping students with homework, attending school meetings, reading to or with children, and other activities associated with children's education.

From: Executive Office of the President of the United States, "The Economics of Early Childhood Investments," January 2015, 11.

Need for High-Quality Preschool and Kindergarten

The Task Force on Student Achievement took note of the impact of these economic and societal forces on test scores, college remediation and completion rates, and students' ability to participate in extra-curricular activities. It believes that there is no question that schools are among the most important contributors to changing our children's destiny.

Therefore, the Task Force finds that the first step is to put needed resources into the creation of high-quality preschool and kindergarten, the levels at which achievement gaps first appear. Preschool and kindergarten are where children begin to develop thinking and social skills. They are where families learn how to provide educational support at home. And they are the points at which children develop the readiness skills that will enable them to succeed throughout their school years.

The Positive Impact of Early Child Education

The Task Force reviewed three studies on high-quality preschool programs:

- The HighScope Perry Preschool Study
- The Abecedarian Project, and
- Chicago Longitudinal Study of the Child-Parent Center Program

The Perry and Abecedarian Studies followed children who were assigned to preschool groups and non-preschool groups over a number of decades. The Chicago study followed a larger number of children enrolled in typical public preschools through the mid-1980s. The Chicago children are now in their mid-30s; the Perry Preschool students are entering their 50s; and the Abecedarian children are in their 40s.

The Perry, Abecedarian and Chicago studies show that children attending high-quality preschool had notably more success in school and in their adult lives than students who did not attend a high-quality preschool.

HighScope Perry

"[The HighScope Perry] study…examines the lives of 123 children born in poverty and at high risk of failing in school," states a description of the study on the HighScope website. "From 1962–1967, at ages 3 and 4, the subjects were randomly divided into a program group that received a high-quality preschool program based on HighScope's participatory learning approach and a comparison group who received no preschool program. In the study's most recent phase, 97%

Figure 1
Major Findings: High/Scope Perry Preschool Study at 40

SOURCE; "HighScope Perry Preschool Study," *High Scope*, HighScope Educational Research Foundation, Accessed March 16, 2017 at https://highscope.org/research/perry/study.

of the study participants still living were interviewed at age 40. Additional data were gathered from the subjects' school, social services, and arrest records."

"Adults at age 40 who had participated in the preschool program had higher earnings, were more likely to hold a job, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did not have preschool.

"Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 (2005)," HighScope Educational Research Foundation. Accessed January 11, 2017 at http://www.highscope.org/content.asp?contentid=219.

The Abecedarian Project

A program of the Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, the Abecedarian Project was initiated in 1972 to provide high-quality preschool to children from birth to age 5 from disadvantaged backgrounds.
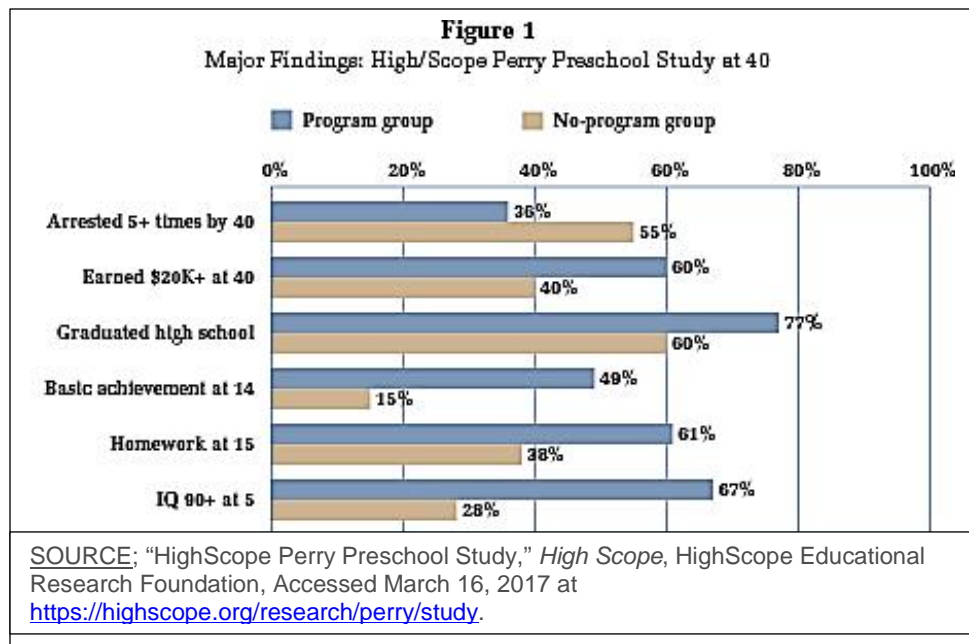
According to various studies, when compared to a control group, children who received Abecedarian services were—

- 42% more likely to have been employed
- 81% less likely to have received welfare
- Almost 4 times more likely to have graduated from college

"Social Programs that Work: Abecedarian Project," *Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy*. Accessed January 11, 2017 at http://evidencebasedprograms.org/1366-2/abecedarian-project.

An August 2015 study showed the benefits of the Abecedarian and Perry Pre-School programs.

"Abecedarian children scored higher on achievement tests in math and reading during their elementary and secondary school years, and they also had lower levels of grade retention and fewer placements in special education classes," reports the FPG Child Development Institute's website.

> At age 21, the treated Abecedarian group maintained statistically significant advantages both in intellectual test performance and in scores on academic tests of reading and mathematics, and the treated group also had attained more years of education. In addition, recipients of the Abecedarian curriculum were more likely to attend a 4-year college or university, more likely either to be in school or to have a skilled job, or both. They also were less likely to be teen parents, less likely to smoke marijuana, and less likely to report depressive symptoms, when compared to people in the control group.
>
> "FPG's Abecedarian Project and the Perry Preschool Project Bring Better Health Decades Later," Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, August 24, 2015, accessed January 11, 2017 at http://fpg.unc.edu/news/fpgs-abecedarian-project-and-perry-preschool-project-bring-better-health-decades-later.
>
> Conti, Gabriella, James J. Heckman, Rodrigo Pinto. *The Effects of Two Influential Early Childhood Interventions on Health and Healthy Behaviors*, Working Paper 21454. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, August 2015. Accessed January 11, 2017 at http://www.nber.org/papers/w21454.pdf.

Chicago Longitudinal Study

The Chicago Child-Parent Center Program (CPC) was established in 1967 through Title I funding. The oldest extended early childhood intervention in the United States, it is implemented at 25 sites and serves families in high-poverty neighborhoods. The program's overall goal is to promote children's academic success and to facilitate parental involvement in children's education.

"Program Overview and History," Department of Early Childhood Education, Chicago Public Schools and Chicago Longitudinal Study, Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota. Accessed January 11, 2017 at http://www.cehd.umn.edu/icd/research/cls/History.html.

A 2001 cost-benefit analysis of the program showed definitive benefits for the children who participated in the program.

> Relative to the comparison group, preschool participants had a 29% higher rate of high school completion, a 33% lower rate of juvenile arrest, a 42% reduction in arrest for a violent offense, a 41% reduction in special education placement, a 40% reduction in the rate of grade retention, and a 51% reduction in child maltreatment. School-age participation and extended program participation for 4 to 6 years were associated with 30 to 40% lower rates of grade retention and special education placement. Compared to children with 1 to 3 years of participation, extended program participants also had higher achievement test scores in adolescence and lower rates of child maltreatment by age 17.

In addition, the analysis estimated the value of public benefits of the preschool program at $2.6 billion (based on 1998 dollars).

> The largest benefit was program participants' increased earnings capacity projected from higher educational attainment.

> The largest categories of public benefits were increased tax revenues associated with higher expected earnings capacity (28%), criminal justice system savings due to lower rates of arrest (28%), savings on tangible costs for crime victims (24%), and savings on school remedial services (18%).

> Reynolds, Arthur J., Judy A. Temple, Dylan L. Robertson, and Emily A. Mann. *Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Program, Executive Summary.* Report presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Prevention Research in Washington, DC on June 1, 2001. Minneapolis, MN: Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota, 2001. Accessed January 11, 2017 at
> http://www.cehd.umn.edu/icd/research/cls/cbaexecsum4.html.

The Task Force on Student Achievement's review of the research on the three preschool programs found reduced special education placement (approximately half the rate of control groups), increased adult earnings, increased income tax and sales tax revenues paid to governments from higher earnings, and savings from social safety programs. Research also indicates that these programs will save approximately 3% on the overall school budget yearly by decreasing grade retention and special education services.

Status of Early Childhood Education

In a recent report on the state of pre-school education, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University found that state-supported pre-Kindergarten programs improved in terms of increased enrollment, quality, and funding.

"Nationally, the 2014-2015 school year showed continued improvement in state funded pre-K as states recovered from the Great Recession," NIEER states in the report, *The 2015 State of Preschool Yearbook*. "Enrollment increased. More states met the benchmarks for minimum quality standards. State funding for pre-K increased: for the third year in a row, spending per child exceeded the previous year."

"However, not all states moved forward… For the nation as a whole, this means that access to a high-quality pre-school program remained highly unequal, and this situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future unless many more states follow the leaders."

States the report, "Nearly 1.4 million children attended state-funded pre-K, nearly 1.2 million at age 4. Almost five percent of 3-year-olds and 29 percent of 4-year-olds were served in state-funding pre-K."

Barnett, W. Steven, Allison H. Friedman-Krauss, Rebecca E. Gomez, Michelle Horowitz, G.G. Weisenfeld, Kirsty Clarke Brown and James H. Squires. *The State of Preschool 2015: State Preschool Yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers Graduate School of Education, © 2016 National Institute for Early Education Research. Accessed January 12, 2017 at http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Yearbook_2015_rev1.pdf.

New Jersey Preschool Programs

New Jersey provides state-funded preschool education for all 3- and 4-year olds in 52 districts. They include the 31 former Abbott districts, four additional "expansion" districts serving low-income populations, and 17 other communities which are sub-grantees sharing in the federal Preschool Development Grant received by the state of New Jersey.

Division of Early Childhood Education, New Jersey Department of Education, accessed March 19, 2017 at http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/psexpansion/.

The Abbott programs also include a Department of Human Services "wrap-around" that provides before-school and after-school care and summer programs.

Barnett, W. Steven, Kwanghee Jung, Min-Jong Youn and Ellen C. Frede. *Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey, March 20, 2013: 3. Accessed March 19, 2017 at http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/APPLES205th20Grade.pdf.

The NIEER *Yearbook* ranks state-supported pre-school programs according to access, resources, and quality standards. Among the District of Columbia and the 42 states that provide pre-school to 4-year-olds, New Jersey ranked 19th in terms of access to programs for children of that age, with 28.6% of 4-year-olds enrolled. Among the District of Columbia and the 27 states that have pre-school programs for 3-year-olds, New Jersey ranked 2nd in terms of access, with 18.6% of 3-year-olds enrolled. The state ranked second in the amount of resources provided to pre-school programming, with $12,149 in state funds spent per pre-Kindergarten student, compared to a nationwide average of $4,521.

In addition, the state scored 8.8 out of 10 on terms of quality standards. New Jersey's programs met quality benchmarks including the following: early learning standards; requirements that teachers hold a bachelor's degrees, have specialized training in pre-Kindergarten education, and receive at least 15 hours of in-service training annually; class sizes of 20 students or smaller, and a staff-child ratio of 1:10. A quality benchmark set by NIEER, but not met by New Jersey's high-quality state preschool program, is a requirement that assistant teachers have a Child Development Associate credential, or equivalent, based on coursework.

In 2013, NIERR published a follow-up study on the academic achievement of fifth graders who had participated in the Abbott Preschool Program, starting at age 3 or age 4.
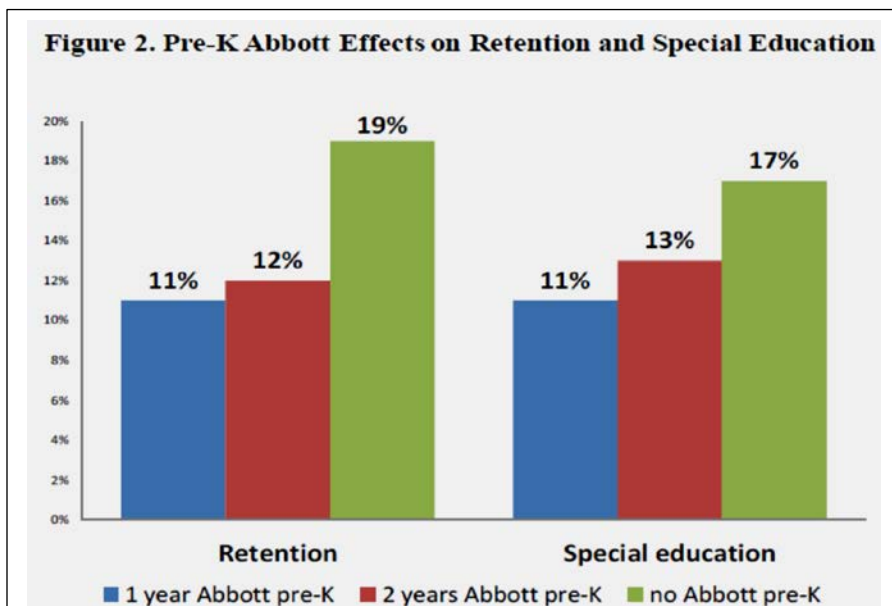
"The overall pattern of results in the APPLES (Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study) 4th and 5th grade follow-up using New Jersey statewide assessment and school placement data provides strong evidence that the Abbott Preschool program has produced persistent, meaningful gains in achievement for children in the state's most disadvantaged communities," states the report.

According to the NIEER report, the program also had significant impact on closing the achievement gap, particularly for children who entered the program at age 3.

> Our estimates indicate that two years of pre-K beginning at age 3 had larger persistent effects on achievement than did one year of pre-K. The magnitude of the test score gains from one year are equivalent to roughly 10 to 20 percent of the achievement gap between minority and white students. The gains from two years are equivalent to 20 to 40 percent of the achievement gap.

Additionally, the program's results compared well with those of the Chicago Child Parent Centers.

"The Abbott Preschool program's effect on achievement and school success are larger than has been found for less well-funded programs with weaker standards," states NIEER. "The gains in achievement from two years of the program are similar in size to those of the Chicago Child Parent Centers, as are the impacts of the Abbott pre-K program overall on grade retention and special education."

Figure 2. Pre-K Abbott Effects on Retention and Special Education

Retention: 1 year Abbott pre-K 11%, 2 years Abbott pre-K 12%, no Abbott pre-K 19%
Special education: 1 year Abbott pre-K 11%, 2 years Abbott pre-K 13%, no Abbott pre-K 17%

Legend: ■ 1 year Abbott pre-K ■ 2 years Abbott pre-K ■ no Abbott pre-K

SOURCE: *Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up.* New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey, March 20, 2013, 2.

At the same time, the NIEER researchers expressed concern about participation rates in the Abbott Preschool Program and called for further state action.

"In some districts it is far below [the 90% level] and the human cost in low achievement and school failure is tragic as is the likely adult consequences of lower productivity and earnings and higher crime rates," they wrote. "Second, as required by the New Jersey School Funding Reform Act of 2008, high-quality pre-K should be expanded to offer a comparable program to all low-income children. In addition, plans should be developed to extend the opportunity for high-quality pre-K to all of the state's children."

Barnett, W. Steven, Kwanghee Jung, Min-Jong Youn and Ellen C. Frede. *Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey, March 20, 2013. Accessed January 19, 2017 at http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/APPLES205th20Grade.pdf.

Head Start
The impact of Head Start programs has been inconsistent, according to research by the federal Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE).

"…the evidence is clear that access to Head Start improved children's preschool outcomes across developmental domains, but had few impacts on children in kindergarten through 3rd grade," states a 2012 OPRE report, *Third Grade Follow-up to the Head Start Impact Study.*

"In summary, there were initial positive impacts from having access to Head Start, but by the end of the 3rd grade there were very few impacts found for either cohort (3-year-old or 4-year-old) in any of the four domains of cognitive, social-emotional, health and parenting practices."

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, *Third Grade Follow-up to the Head Start Impact Study Final Report*, by Mike Puma, Stephen Bell, Ronna Cook, Camilla Heid, Pam Broene, Frank Jenkins, Andrew Mashburn, and Jason Downer, OPRE Report # 2012-45, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (Washington, DC, 2012). Accessed January 20, 2017 at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/head_start_report.pdf.

Full-Day Kindergarten
According to the New Jersey Department of Education, 55 New Jersey public school districts (10.9% of the districts that operate K-6, K-8 or K-12 programs) did not offer full-day Kindergarten in 2015-2016. Of the 91,703 students enrolled in public school Kindergarten that year, 13.1% (11,974) attended half-day programs.

A long-term advocate of early childhood education, the New Jersey School Boards Association believes in the academic benefits of full-day Kindergarten. In 1989, following a study on early childhood education, the NJSBA Delegate Assembly adopted the following policy:

> The NJSBA believes that full-day kindergarten programs benefit students. Technical assistance from the Department of Education and financial incentives including state funds for program planning, staff development, and renovation or construction of

suitable kindergarten classrooms should be made available to districts seeking to convert from a half-day to full-day program.

"Early Childhood Education/Preschool" (File Code 6178), *Positions and Policies on Education*, New Jersey School Boards Association. Accessed March 19, 2017 at https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/resources-policy-ppm-6000-6178.pdf.

Additionally, the Association has sought changes in state school funding policy that would enable more districts to implement full-day programs.

The Benefit of High Quality Early Childhood Education

Through its review of the research, the Task Force on Student Achievement identified numerous benefits of high-quality preschool programs for children, families and school districts.

For Children:
- Academic skills, which will be a foundation throughout their schooling and life
- Social and collaborative skills, which will enable them to get along with other students and promote positive lifetime interaction
- A positive attitude toward learning and school
- Acquiring skills for lifetime success
- Less grade retention
- Fewer special education placements
- Fewer teen-age pregnancies
- Fewer juvenile arrests
- More likelihood of higher education
- Higher earnings
- Better choices as adults

For Families:
- Parental involvement
- Help for families in economic need
- Better parenting, with an emphasis on the importance of schooling and strategies to support learning at home
- Activities to transition preschoolers into kindergarten and elementary grades

For Schools**:**
- For kindergartens, academic and social-skill equity (requiring less time on the part of teachers to help children with these skill deficits)
- The sharing and integration of the best preschool practices into the lower grades (for example, not using methods better suited for older elementary school students when teaching in the early grade levels)
- Less grade retention
- Less need for special services
- Fewer disciplinary actions
- Saving of money which could then be directed to other learning needs

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 6 – **Early Childhood Education**

FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION:

39. Review and analyze district data to determine the early childhood program needs of schools.

40. Explore means to fund early childhood education, as well as before- and after-school programs.

41. Ensure that early childhood education programs are of high-quality and staffed by highly trained, certificated teachers.

42. Consider low-cost before- and after- school programs to give parents security of mind and financial relief, adding to a more supportive view toward their children's education.

FOR THE NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION:

43. Provide professional development for all board members/trustees about the benefits of early childhood education.

44. Continue to support funding for early childhood education for all students through advocacy before the state Legislature and federal government.

Chapter 7
COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The responsibility for the education and healthy development of school-age children must be shared by the entire community, including the board of education and the local governing body.

Obstacles to academic achievement exist not only in schools, but are also evident across the community: poor behavioral choices such as substance abuse, violence, bullying, and gang activity; children unsupervised after school hours (latch key children); limited access to technology (the digital divide); a lack of social/academic support systems including counseling, and a lack of healthy food choices. Regardless of its demographics, a community may face one or more of these challenges.

The Importance of Communication

Board of education communication with stakeholders is essential to keep the community fully informed of the challenges facing schools and their students and to gain support for critical efforts to advance academic achievement. Failure to communicate has negative consequences. Individuals who need academic support or who are displaying unhealthy behaviors have fewer adults to help guide them to increased learning and better behavior choices. Additionally, opposition to funding programs that address challenges can grow when the community is not aware of problems facing its schools and its youth.

The Task Force on Student Achievement considers the following activities essential to a sound relationship among all elements of the community:

- To ensure that school and community services are meeting students' needs, the board of education must establish and maintain trusting relationships throughout the community, with special attention to the municipal governing body. Transparency and consistency in decision-making contribute to trust.

- Since the major portion of the local property tax levy is dedicated to school purposes, the superintendent and board of education should communicate with municipal officials about the school budget and make presentations at governing body meetings. Such efforts build trust by demonstrating fiscal responsibility and transparency.

- The school board and municipality should consider appointing liaisons to attend each other's meetings and serve as ongoing points of communication.

- Beyond the typical six-hour school day and 180-day school year, students spend their time at home and in the community. Therefore, a comprehensive plan to promote student achievement and healthy decision-making must involve the municipal governing body, the faith-based community, service organizations, local industry and small businesses, as well youth-service organizations.

A Communications Plan

The Task Force believes that school districts should develop strategic communications plans, which:

- Maintain relationships with the print and electronic news media;

- Establish a method of one-to-one communication within all sectors of the community;

- Include collaborative efforts with the municipality, other government agencies, and non-profit organization;

- Use available resources such as public access cable television (for example, broadcasting daily announcements highlighting academic, athletic and cultural news to build bridges with the community), and

- Establish a means to alert the community in cases of emergency.

The task force recommends that communications strategies include the development of "talking points"—e.g., a "three-minute elevator speech"—for use by school officials and education advocates to make the community aware of student needs and to elicit support for efforts to advance student achievement.

"A communication plan is a written document that records and directs the objectives, goals and strategies of the district in achieving educational success," states a presentation, "Communicating with Your Community," prepared by NJSBA's Field Services Department.

As outlined in the presentation, a sound communications plan:

- Is developed collaboratively by the school and community.
- Serves to foster student achievement through the establishment of a positive school climate.
- Involves parents and citizens.
- Builds community knowledge.
- Builds community understanding, leading to support for education.
- Creates transparency.
- Builds Trust.

"Communicating with Your Community," Field Services Department, New Jersey School Boards Association.

Key Communicators

To facilitate communications, the Task Force on Student Achievement believes that school districts should consider establishing a "Key Communicator" program.

"A key communicator network allows a school district to get accurate news out to staff and community quickly," states a guidance document developed by NJSBA's Field Services

Department. "It enables school officials to intercept potentially harmful rumors. And it costs very little to set up and maintain."

The network should include residents who speak with large numbers of people in the community, who are trusted by others and whose opinions are respected.

- "Key communicators should represent the many different demographic segments of the community as well as the various segments of the school district staff."

- "Key communicators agree to disseminate accurate information about the school system and correct misinformation. They keep in touch with school officials and immediately report misperceptions and inaccuracies."

- By providing feedback to the school district, the network "[e]nables school officials to establish two-way communication and get a quick pulse of the community."

"You Are the Key," *School District Key Communicators*, Field Services Department, New Jersey School Boards Association, Trenton, NJ.

The value of Key Communicators is not only to share information with the community from the school district, but to also to listen to discussions in their neighborhoods, on athletic fields, and in local stores, the Task Force on Student Achievement finds.

Emergency Alert Systems

The Task Force on Student Achievement also recommends the use of multi-platform emergency alert systems. The recommendation corresponds to the findings of another NJSBA study group.

In its October 2014 report, citing the experience of school districts affected by Superstorm Sandy two years earlier, the NJSBA School Security Task Force made the following recommendation:

> To ensure communication with all members of the school community, law enforcement and emergency responders, school districts should implement multi-platform emergency notification systems that use telephone, email, text messaging, website and other methods of communication.

"Relying on only one form of communication is not a recommended best practice," states the NJSBA report, *What Makes Schools Safe?* "As experienced by many Sandy-impacted school districts, some communication platforms will not operate during an emergency and community members may not have access to a particular system…

"The New Jersey State Police and several local law enforcement agencies use the multi-platform mass notification system. Such products are currently available to school districts."

What Makes Schools Safe? Trenton, NJ: New Jersey School Boards Association, 2014, 58-60. Accessed February 3, 2017, https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/news-security-task-force-final-report.pdf.

School-Municipal Collaboration

In a 2015 survey of school and municipal officials, prepared for presentations at the annual conferences of NJSBA ("Workshop") and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, 87.2% of respondents answered "yes" to the following question: "*Do your school district and municipality share services?*"

In addition, over 80% said there was a financial benefit from sharing services, while a plurality said collaborative efforts improved the quality of services.

The survey listed 13 possible types of shared services and asked respondents to identify those that are currently shared by their school districts and municipalities. A number of the shared services provide support for the academic program, youth services and student safety; many focus on business operations.

The most frequently cited were maintenance and use of recreational fields (63.9%), ensuring the safety of walking routes (44.1%), buildings and grounds maintenance (43.2%), emergency management (38.8%), school security (30%), joint purchasing (17.2%), and technology/broadband (12.8%).

One-third of the state's communities were represented in the survey results.

The survey respondents also listed a wide range of strategies to promote positive relationships and collaboration. They include formal committees or liaisons between the school board and municipal governing body, regularly scheduled meetings between representatives of the two bodies, including the mayor and superintendent; and community partnerships and *ad hoc* efforts on common issues.

Belluscio, Frank, "Town Hall and the School House: New Grounds for Cooperation," *School Leader*, 46, no. 2 (January-February 2016), New Jersey School Boards Association, accessed January 23, 2017, https://www.njsba.org/news-publications/school-leader/januaryfebruary-2016-volume-46-4/town-hall-school-house-new-grounds-cooperation/.

In its deliberations, the Task Force on Student Achievement identified other possible collaborative efforts, including some that directly address student achievement.

- Use of public library space for off-campus tutoring of suspended students;

- Mentoring and career programs that provide guidance and information about work experiences and opportunities through local government, businesses and industries;

- Board of education representation on appropriate municipal boards and commissions such as those overseeing zoning, planning, recreation, the public library, and emergency management;

- Access to school district facilities for special uses such as administration of tests for police recruits, shelters, voting stations, and centers for youth and senior citizen activities;

- Local government-sponsored Veterans Day and Memorial Day essay writing contests;

- Performance by high school groups at community events such as parades, senior citizen gatherings, and memorial services;

- Coordination/communication between the municipality and school district concerning school closures for snow storms, or other emergencies, and

- Invitations to the mayor and municipal officials to graduation ceremonies, homecoming, school plays and concerts, and other events.

A Role for the Entire Community

Through many of its programs, the Search Institute, a 50-year-old organization dedicated to using social science research "to understand the lives, beliefs and values of young people, promotes a "Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth" ® philosophy in which all members of a community contribute to the healthy development of children.

"Search Institute History," *Search Institute: Discovering What Kids Need to Succeed*, accessed February 3, 2017, http://www.search-institute.org/about/history.

A number of communities have implemented programs that reflect "Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth" ®.

The **Hopewell Valley Municipal Alliance**, for example, builds community awareness of the benefits of "developmental assets" in youth. Identified by the Search Institute, the Developmental Assets "are building blocks young people need to become healthy, principled and caring adults," states the Alliance's website. "The more developmental assets in a young person's life, the less likely he or she is to engage in at-risk behaviors." **(See the "40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents" on page 65 of this report.)**

Established in 1996, the alliance is a partnership among "all sectors of the community, including municipal governments, businesses, school, police, clergy, civic organizations, health professionals, recreation organizations, parents and students…" According to its webpage, the alliance administers over 20 programs and activities geared toward drug and alcohol awareness and education, positive youth development and overall public safety in Hopewell Borough, Hopewell Township and Pennington. (Contact: Heidi Kahme at hvma@hopewelltwp.org**.)**

"Municipal Alliance," *Hopewell Valley Regional School District*, accessed February 3, 2017 at http://www.hvrsd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=352372&type=d&pREC_ID=764474.)

The **South Brunswick Board of Education**, in partnership with the South Brunswick Municipal Alliance and other entities, is involved in several community service and education programs to promote student health and safety and academic success. Programs include the following:

- **Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth Assets Initiative** promotes the building of Developmental Assets, as identified by the Search Institute. It receives grant funding from the Governor's Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. (Contact: Christine Mariano at healthyyouthassets@sbtnj.net.)

- **Every Person Influences Children** provides resources for parents, teachers and community members to help children become responsible and capable adults. The program offers small discussion group workshops through the South Brunswick Parent Academy and at district schools. (Contact: Christine Mariano at SBPA@sbparents.org.)

- The **Community Resource Team** is an ongoing partnership of organizations and agencies, committed to maintaining a healthy and safe community. The team works to assure clear, accurate and effective communication during emergencies and helps assess the effectiveness of a response following an event in the community. The school district, township government, police department, health department, social services agencies, township clergy association and other groups are represented on the Resource Team. (Contact: Raphael Morales at raphael.morales@sbschools.org,)

(School-Community Partnerships, *South Brunswick School District*, accessed February 3, 2017 at http://www.sbschools.org/parents_students/partnerships/index_nl.php#crt.)

Collaboration with Higher Education

The Task Force believes that collaboration among school districts and academia can enhance teaching and learning for all students. Membership in the Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement (RIISA), part of the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, and the Rutgers New Jersey School Development Council can provide exemplary instructional strategy and leadership professional development.

"Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement," *Rutgers Graduate School of Education*, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Accessed March 21, 2017 at http://riisa.gse.rutgers.edu/.

"New Jersey School Development Council," *Rutgers Graduate School of Education*, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Accessed March 21, 2017 at http://njsdc.gse.rutgers.edu/

In additional, participation in the National Network of Partnership Schools, located at Johns Hopkins University, can prove worthwhile. The professional development provided by networking with other schools and education personnel and the related guides and parental involvement materials can contribute to successfully addressing the achievement gap and school climate challenges.

"National Network of Partnership Schools," *Center for the Social Organization of* Schools, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University. Accessed March 21, 2017 at http://nnps.jhucsos.com/.

Collaboration with State Government

Collaboration may also involve state agencies. The New Jersey Department of Children and Families for example, operated School-Based Youth Services Programs in 67 high schools, 18 middle schools and 5 elementary schools.

Task Force members provided examples of youth service programs in Passaic County. **(See page 66 of this report.)**

40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents

External Assets:

SUPPORT

1.	**Family Support**	Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2.	**Positive Family Communication**	Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3.	**Other Adult Relationships**	Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4.	**Caring School Climate**	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
5.	**Caring Neighborhood**	Young person experiences caring neighbors.
6.	**Parent Involvement in Schooling**	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

7.	**Community Values Youth**	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8.	**Youth as Resources**	Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9.	**Service to Others**	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10.	**Safety**	Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

11.	**Family Boundaries**	Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12.	**School Boundaries**	School provides clear rules and consequences.
13.	**Neighborhood Boundaries**	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14.	**Adult Role Models**	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15.	**Positive Peer Influence**	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16.	**High Expectations**	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

17.	**Creative Activities**	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18.	**Youth Programs**	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
19.	**Religious Community**	Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
20.	**Time at Home**	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets:

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

21.	**Achievement Motivation**	Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22.	**School Engagement**	Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23.	**Homework**	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24.	**Bonding to School**	Young person cares about her or his school.
25.	**Reading for Pleasure**	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

POSITIVE VALUES

26.	**Caring**	Young Person places high value on helping other people.
27.	**Equality and Social Justice**	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28.	**Integrity**	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29.	**Honesty**	Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30.	**Responsibility**	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31.	**Restraint**	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

32.	**Planning and Decision Making**	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33.	**Interpersonal Competence**	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34.	**Cultural Competence**	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35.	**Resistance Skills**	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36.	**Peaceful Conflict Resolution**	Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

37.	**Personal Power**	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38.	**Self-Esteem**	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39.	**Sense of Purpose**	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40.	**Positive View of Personal Future**	Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

The New Jersey Community Development Corporation teamed up with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families to operate programs at Passaic County Technical Institute, Clifton High School, and Passaic Valley High School, which operate as "Teen Centers."

These programs acknowledge that young people come to school with many different problems, and that students have to overcome challenges they face *outside* the classroom before they can succeed *inside* the classroom. They provide students with year-round academic support services, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, life skills, health education, employment services and recreational activities. Students and families can access a variety of resources in one convenient location: their own school building.

"The comprehensive 'one-stop shopping' design helps break down barriers and bureaucratic roadblocks that too often prevent young people from obtaining services and supports," states the Department of Children and Families website.

The Paterson Youth Council, organized by New Jersey Community Development Corporation, is the premier voice for the young people of Paterson, representing and engaging the city's youth and giving them opportunities to advance themselves and their community. Made up of 30 dynamic young residents of Paterson between the ages of 14 and 18, the youth council serves as a venue to discuss issues that concern them most.

Through service learning and community involvement, participants cultivate confidence, independence, maturity, leadership skills and a voice of their own. Members of the Paterson Youth Council are not only active in the school community, but also regularly attend City Council and Board of Education meetings. Ultimately, the members discuss, produce and present proposals in these venues, offering respected insight into the concerns of Paterson's future leaders.

Recipients of the Paterson Youth Council's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Youth Recognition Awards, with state and local leaders, including Senate President Steve Sweeney and Senator Nellie Pou.

New Jersey Department of Children and Families, *School Based Youth Services*, (Trenton, NJ). Accessed December 29, 2016 at http://www.nj.gov/dcf/families/school/.

Passaic County Technical Institute, *The Teen Center*, (Wayne, NJ). Accessed March 19, 2017 at https://www.pcti.tec.nj.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=592.

Clifton Public Schools, *Clifton High School-Based Youth Services Program*, (Clifton, NJ), accessed March 19, 2017 at www.clifton.k12.nj.us/hs/youthservicesprogram.asp.

Passaic ResourceNet, *School Based Youth Services-Passaic Valley High School*, (Little Falls, NJ, April 2013). Accessed March 19, 2017 at http://www.passaicresourcenet.org/search/school-based-youth-services-passaic-valley-high-school/.

New Jersey Community Development Organization, *Paterson Youth Council*, (Paterson, NJ). Accessed March 19, 2017 at http://www.njcdc.org/~njcdc/what-we-do/page.php?Early-Childhood-Youth-Development-Paterson-Youth-Council-7.

Research on Community Involvement

The definitions of "community" and "community involvement" as they relate to student achievement encompass many elements and stakeholders—for example, the home, school, law enforcement, parents, family, neighbors, teachers, and administrators.

After reviewing scores of articles, a pattern emerges regarding the importance of family and neighborhood involvement and their impact on student achievement. For this chapter, the Task Force focused on studies that involve numerous districts and schools and/or which represent meta-analyses of recent research.

The Impact of Parents

A 2007 report from the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University reviewed the progress of a 5-year, longitudinal study on the impact of community on student achievement in reading, math, and science. Key findings include:

- District leadership can help schools conduct outreach to involve families.
- District leaders play a major role in establishing parent liaison positions, which can improve home-school relations.
- Parental involvement is related to student motivation.
- Students who reported more parental involvement at home also noted higher levels of self-competence.

Epstein, Joyce, Ph.D., Mavis G. Sanders, Ph.D., Steven B. Sheldon, Ph.D. *Family and Community Involvement: Achievement and Effects.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships, 2007. Accessed March 3, 2017 at
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9d78/161baa841df07321378176acfdd2a9d40609.pdf.

The Harvard Family Research Project in 2005 published a paper on parental involvement and student achievement that summarized 77 studies of 300,000 students from elementary and secondary schools. The author conducted this meta-analysis to determine the overall effects of parental involvement on children's academic achievement in kindergarten through 12th grade. Findings include the following:

- Parental involvement is associated with higher achievement outcomes.
- This pattern holds true across ethnic and racial groups.
- Reading and communicating with one's child, along with parental expectations, have a significant impact on educational outcomes, with parental expectations being the strongest.
- Parental involvement programs do work.

The author recommends that schools institute strategies to enhance parental involvement. In addition, teachers, administrators and school counselors should be trained to guide parents on ways to become involved with their children's educational achievement.

Jeynes, William H. *Parental Involvement and Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard Family Research Project, 2005. Accessed March 3, 2017 at
http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/parental-involvement-and-student-achievement-a-meta-analysis.

The Impact of Community

A 2004 article addressed the role of the larger community on school success.

In "*Research Link/How the Community Influences Achievement*" (May 2004), John H. Holloway speaks to the question of how much the larger community affects school success. His article cites a 1999 study of the impacts of various community demographic characteristics on the academic success of elementary school children.

> The 5th graders' academic performance correlated negatively with neighborhood risk even after controlling for demographic indicators of family risk, such as family income and employment status. This negative impact did not extend to the study's 3rd grade subjects, however. The researchers speculated that before students reached 5th grade, they spent more time in the home and had less opportunity to be influenced by the larger community.

Holloway also references a 2000 study, which used Virginia Department of Education data to address the influences of community, school, and family structure on academic achievement of eighth-grade students as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

> Community education level and students' socioeconomic status were the strongest predictors of success on standardized tests. The researchers concluded, however, that all of the factors studied were interrelated and that programs to optimize education opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth must address more than these two factors. They recommended implementing a holistic approach to adequately address the complex variables at work in communities.

Other research referenced by Holloway found that "supportive neighborhoods" can mitigate the harmful effects of economic disadvantage on student achievement.

An increase in student achievement will be limited if reform efforts focus solely on students while they are in the classroom, Holloway concludes. "Instead, policymakers must also look at the broader picture," he writes. "They must consider how to increase the community's capacity to support its children and youth so that students' experiences outside school will enhance the teaching and learning that goes on inside school."

Holloway, John J., "Research Link/How the Community Influences Achievement," *Educational Leadership* 61, no. 8 (2004): 89-90. Accessed March 3, 2017 at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may04/vol61/num08/-How-the-Community-Influences-Achievement.aspx

Shumow, Lee, Deborah Lowe Vandell and Jill Posner. "Risk and Resilience in the Urban Neighborhood: Predictors of Academic Performance Among Low-Income Elementary School Children," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly,* 45, no 8 (1999), Article 8.

Baker, Spencer R., Zina T. McGee, Wanda S. Mitchell, Helen Randolph Stiff, *Structural Effects on Academic Achievement of Adolescents*, ERIC Reproduction Service, ED No. 448 890 (2000). Accessed March 15, 2017 at http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED448890.pdf

The Impact of Neighborhood

In a 2012 article posted by *The Atlantic*, Sarah Garland, the executive editor of the *Hechinger Report*, speaks to the importance of bringing together the poor and affluent to share both classrooms and neighborhoods. Garland says it is not enough to attack poverty, urban blight and failing schools in isolation.

She reports on Atlanta's Charles Drew Charter School, which moved from last to fourth in the city on state achievement tests. Its academic improvement was directly influenced by a housing initiative that combines federally subsidized rentals for poor tenants with market-rate units that attract university students, young professionals, and middle-income families. The diversification of the neighborhood was reflected in the school.

"…a growing research base is suggesting that integrating schools by income might be one of the most effective ways to close the achievement gap," she states.

Garland, Sarah. "Rich Kid, Poor Kid: How Mixed Neighborhoods Could Save America's Schools," *The Atlantic* (July 25, 2012). Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/07/rich-kid-poor-kid-how-mixed-neighborhoods-could-save-americas-schools/260308/.

A 2013 study conducted in England cited previous research supporting the relationship between neighborhood composition and academic achievement. Nonetheless, the study effort was unable to support that conclusion, but it did find that "changes in neighbourhood composition have…some effects on behavioural outcomes…"

Gibbons, Stephen, Olmo Silva and Felix Weinhardt. "Everybody Needs Good Neighbours? Evidence from Students' Outcomes in England," *The Economic Journal*, 123), 831–874 (September 2013) © 2013 The Authors. Accessed March 15, 2017 at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/45248/1/__lse.ac.uk_storage_LIBRARY_Secondary_libfile_shared_repository_Content_Silva,%20O_Everbody%20needs_Silva_Everybody%20needs_2014.pdf.

<div align="center">

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 7 – **Communication, Collaboration, Parental Involvement**

</div>

<u>FOR BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS</u>

<u>Communication</u>

45. Develop a strategic communications plan that encompasses media relations, one-to-one communication, and creation of a common message to build support for efforts to advance student achievement.

46. Establish a key communicators program to ensure effective two-way communication between the school district and community at-large—including dissemination of accurate information from the school district to the community and provision of critical feedback from the community to the school district.

47. Develop discussion points for use by school officials and education advocates to make the community aware of the needs of all students, including those who are struggling, and to elicit support for district efforts to advance student achievement.

48. Secure a reverse-dial emergency notification system with phone, text, and email capabilities to announce emergency school closings, special events, and keep the community informed when there is a significant emergency. Ensure that parents and community members, including senior citizens, are able to select the mode(s) of communication (landline, cell, text, email, etc.) they prefer, based on the topics to be communicated (general information, special announcements, emergency information, etc.).

<u>Collaboration</u>

49. Establish a collaborative relationship with the municipal government through efforts such as regularly scheduled meetings between school and municipal officials and the appointment of liaisons between the school board and governing body. The goal of such collaboration should be to support programs that advance student achievement, healthy decision-making, and a safe and secure school environment.

50. Involve the municipal government, faith-based community, service organizations, local industry and small businesses, as well youth-service organizations, in a comprehensive plan to promote student achievement and healthy decision-making.

51. Work with the municipality to support efforts to diversify neighborhoods and school communities economically and racially/ethnically. Models can be drawn from Hope VI and Urban Homesteading housing programs.

52. Work with higher education to enhance instructional strategy and professional development. Consider membership in the <u>Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement</u> and the <u>New Jersey School Development Council</u>, both located at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education.

Community/Parental Involvement

53. Develop training programs for parents on how to guide the schoolwork of their children. Partner with universities and colleges to assist in family training.

54. Consider membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools (<u>http://nnps.jhucsos.com/</u>), which provides training to schools, networking opportunities, and guidance on parental involvement.

55. Conduct a needs assessment to provide information on the current status of community and neighborhood involvement. Seek the observations and advice of teachers, who are in continuous contact with students.

56. Seek government and private funding to implement initiatives involving parental/community involvement, housing policy, and education program improvements. NJSBA's Grants Support service (<u>https://www.njsba.org/services/grants-support/</u>) provides all New Jersey school districts with on online portal to more than 3,200 funding opportunities available through the federal government, the state, and foundations.

FOR THE NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION:

57. Continue to advocate for legislation and state code that advances student achievement.

58. Continue to model effective collaboration by working with other advocates on all efforts to advance student achievement through effective local school district governance.

Chapter 8
## SCHOOLS AND THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Impact of Disciplinary Policy

A school's approach to discipline has a major impact on students' academic success. Disciplinary problems, such as disruptive behavior, foul language and truancy, should be handled within the school, rather than being addressed inappropriately by the removal of the student through suspension and arrest. The task force believes that students should be removed from school only as a last resort, not as a first response. Students who are suspended often become stigmatized and fall behind in their studies; many decide to drop out of school altogether, and some commit crimes in the community.

Moreover, the schools become entry points to the juvenile justice system, a concern expressed by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education in 2014.

Juveniles who have been placed in state detention or treatment facilities face many hurdles once they are released, including readmission to the public school system. In many cases, school districts place these students in home instruction or alternative schools, settings that are adverse to the structured environment they are leaving. Parents often are unaware of their ability to seek emergent relief or mediation through the Office of Administrative Law, or they are reluctant to do so.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention *Statistical Briefing Book, 2014* reported 50,821 youth held in residential placement facilities in the United States, a 50% drop from the 1997 figure, but still a matter of deep concern.
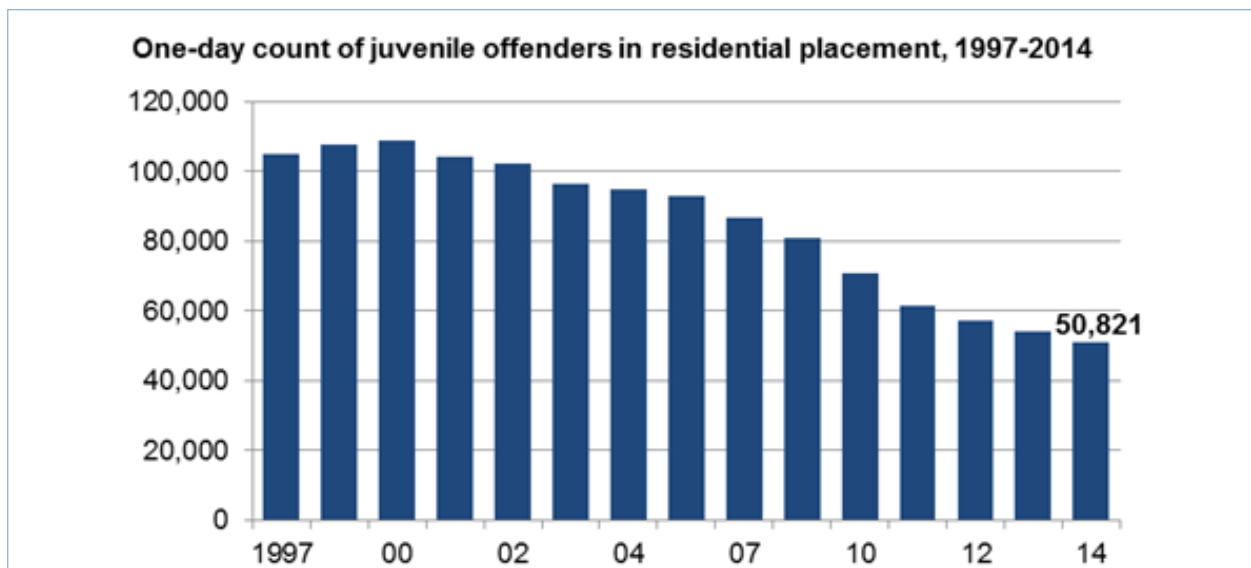
One-day count of juvenile offenders in residential placement, 1997-2014

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Statistical Briefing Book, 2014.* Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/corrections/qa08201.asp?qaDate=2014.

New Jersey's commitment rate is relatively low; in 2013, the rate per 100,000 New Jersey teenagers was less than half of the national rate, and the state had the seventh lowest residential placement rate in the country.

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Statistical Briefing Book, 2014.* Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/corrections/qa08201.asp?qaDate=2014.

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), an effort of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, shows that large numbers of students are losing important instructional time due to exclusionary discipline.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Data Collection of 2013-14: A First Look*; New Release for 2016, Issued June 7, 2016, revised October 28, 2016. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf.

The use of disciplinary sanctions, such as in-school and out-of-school suspensions, expulsions or referrals to law enforcement authorities, creates the potential for significant, negative educational and long-term outcomes, and can contribute to what has been termed the "school to prison pipeline." Studies have suggested a correlation between exclusionary discipline policies/practices and an array of serious educational, economic, and social problems, including school avoidance and diminished educational engagement; decreased academic achievement; increased behavioral problems; increased likelihood of dropping out; substance abuse; and involvement with juvenile justice systems.

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, "Dear Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline," by Catherine E. Lhamon and Jocelyn Samuels., January 8, 2014. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf.

While illiteracy and poor academic performance are not direct causes of delinquency, empirical studies consistently demonstrate a strong link between marginal academic skills and the likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Youth entering custody have a non-enrollment rate more than four times the rate of peers in the general population. Nearly one-half of youth in custody function below the grade level appropriate for their age. Sixty-one percent of youth in custody say they were expelled or suspended during the year before they entered custody and 25% report that they were held back a year in school.

Sedlak, Andrea J. and Karla S. McPherson, "Youth's Needs and Services: Findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement," *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (April 2010): 1-12. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://syrp.org/images/Youth_Needs_and_Services.pdf.

School Resource Officers

A significant number of schools have law enforcement officers or school resource officers (SROs) in place — 24% of elementary schools, 42% of high schools and 51% of high schools with high black and Latino student enrollment. The guidance issued by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, discussed at length below, includes valuable suggestions for school district interaction with these officers.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Data Collection of 2013-14: A First Look*; New Release for 2016, Issued June 7, 2016, revised October 28, 2016. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf.

School Disciplinary Practices and Residential Placements

The U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection of 2013-14 reports the following statistics:

- Overall, 6% of K-12 students received one or more out-of-school suspensions. When broken down by race and gender, the percentage was 18% for black boys; 10% for black girls; 5% for white boys; and 2% for white girls;
- Black K-12 students are 3.8 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as are white students;
- Black girls make up 8% of enrolled students, but represent 13% of students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions;
- Black students are 1.9 times as likely to be expelled from school without educational services as white students;
- Black students are 2.2 times as likely to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest as white students; and
- Black boys and white boys represent 8% and 26% of all students, respectively, but 18% and 43% of students subject to restraint or seclusion.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Data Collection of 2013-14: A First Look*; New Release for 2016, Issued June 7, 2016, revised October 28, 2016. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf.

Residential Placement

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, rates of residential placement also vary widely by race.

Placement in Residential Correctional Facilities, by Race (2013) *Per 100,000 Students*		
	U.S.	**New Jersey**
BLACK	**464** (per 100,000 non-Hispanic black students in U.S.)	**439** (per 100,000 non-Hispanic black students in N.J.)
HISPANIC	**173**/100,000	**87**/100,000
WHITE	**100**/100,000	**17**/100,000
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement: 1997-2013, Age on Census Date by Race/Ethnicity for United States, 2013," *Statistical Briefing Book, 2014.* Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/asp/Age_Race.asp.		
"Age on Census Date by Race/Ethnicity for New Jersey, 2013," Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/asp/Age_Race.asp?state=34&topic=Age_Race&year=2013&percent=rate.		

In 2013, New Jersey ranked third in the proportion of non-white youth in residential placement (90%) among states and jurisdictions. Only Hawaii and the District of Columbia ranked higher, both at 96%.

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, Race/Ethnicity by State: 1997-2013," *Statistical Briefing Book, 2014*. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/asp/State_Race.asp?state=&topic=State_Race&year=2013&percent=row.

School Discipline

In January, 2014, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice issued a "Dear Colleague" letter to guide public elementary and secondary schools in meeting their obligations under federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

The guidance includes the following comments about racial discrimination in the administration of school discipline:

> The Departments recognize that disparities in student discipline rates in a school or district may be caused by a range of factors. However, research suggests that the substantial racial disparities of the kind reflected in the CRDC data are not explained by more frequent or more serious misbehavior by students of color.... Indeed, the Departments' investigations, which consider quantitative data as part of a wide array of evidence, have revealed racial discrimination in the administration of student discipline. For example, in our investigations we have found cases where African-American students were disciplined more harshly and more frequently because of their race than similarly situated white students. In short, racial discrimination in school discipline is a real problem.

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, "Dear Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline," by Catherine E. Lhamon and Jocelyn Samuels., January 8, 2014. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf.

Youth with Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection of 2013-14 also reports the following statistics:

- Students with disabilities served by [the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA] are more than twice as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as students without disabilities; and
- Students with disabilities served by IDEA represent 12% of all students, but 67% of students subject to restraint or seclusion.

Nearly one-third of youth in custody report that they were diagnosed with a learning disability, a rate more than seven times that of the general population. IDEA requires that learning-disabled youth offenders be identified, even in short-term facilities, and given special education and related services when eligible. Youth self-reports suggest that only about half of those with a diagnosed learning disability are attending a special education program while in custody.

Sedlak, Andrea J. and Karla S. McPherson, "Youth's Needs and Services: Findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement," *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (April 2010): 1-12. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://syrp.org/images/Youth_Needs_and_Services.pdf.

Disabling conditions do not *cause* delinquent behavior, but some behaviors associated with disability may also be *associated with* delinquent behavior. Researchers and advocates have advanced various understandings about the link between disability and delinquency. Some suggest that youth with disabilities may be more susceptible to engaging in delinquent behavior than their non-disabled peers. Others maintain that child-serving agencies are more likely to identify youth with disabilities as delinquent and to refer them to the juvenile justice system. Regardless of the specific approach, the overrepresentation of youth with disabilities in correctional facilities has long been linked with school failure, marginal literacy, poorly developed social skills, and inadequate school and community supports.

Rutherford, Robert B., C. Michael. Nelson and Bruce I. Wolford, "Special Education Programming in Juvenile Corrections," *Remedial and Special Education* 7 (1986): 27-33.

Leone, Peter E. and Sheri Meisel, "Improving Education Services for Students in Detention and Confinement Facilities," *Children's Legal Rights Journal* 17 (1997): 1-12. Accessed March 15, 2017 at http://www.edjj.org/Publications/list/leone_meisel-1997.html.

Academic Programs in Juvenile Corrections
The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights maintains that "one of the first steps to successful reentry of youth to the community is ensuring that they have uninterrupted access to high quality education while in confinement." Helping youth acquire educational skills is also one of the most effective approaches to prevention of delinquency and reduction of recidivism. Literacy skills are essential to meet the demands of a complex, high-tech world in school and at work.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Protecting the Civil Rights of Students in the Juvenile Justice Syst*em (2016), 1. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-juvenile-justice.pdf.

While the majority of detained and committed youth have severe to moderate skill deficits and records of truancy, suspension and expulsion, others may perform at or above grade level. As a result, juvenile correctional education programs need to provide a comprehensive range of options, including:

- Literacy and functional skills for students with significant cognitive, behavioral, or learning problems;
- Academic courses associated with Carnegie unit credits for students likely to return to public schools or who may earn a diploma while incarcerated;
- General Educational Development (GED) preparation for students not likely to return to public schools; and
- Pre-vocational and vocational education related to student interests and meaningful employment opportunities in the community.

National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice, "Juvenile Correctional Education Programs." (College Park, MD). Accessed March 15, 2017 at http://www.edjj.org/focus/education/.

Problems implementing quality academic programs within juvenile corrections are associated with characteristics of incarcerated youth and of the facilities themselves. Youth enter correctional settings with skill deficits, behavioral problems, and substance abuse issues that present difficulties in educational programming. At the same time, juvenile correctional institutions often have limited capacity to support appropriate educational interventions for the youth confined to their care and custody. Systemic impediments include overcrowding, insufficient fiscal resources, ineffective governance structures, isolation of correctional schools from education reform practices and from public schools, inadequate transition and aftercare services, and a lack of collaboration between treatment and security components within the juvenile facility.

U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, *Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education in Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings* (Washington, D.C., December 2014). Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/guiding-principles.pdf.

Providing basic access to adequate special education services continues to be problematic in many juvenile correctional facilities. Special education services in juvenile corrections are implemented in the context of general academic and vocational programs. Moreover, juvenile correctional education programs may fail to adequately educate youth with disabilities when they lack effective processes to screen, evaluate, and identify youth for special education; implement instructional strategies to address learning or behavioral problems; involve parents, guardians, or surrogates; implement appropriate instructional strategies to address learning or behavioral problems; and organize transition services for youth released to the community. In addition, accommodations for youth with disabilities are not always implemented in the school. Youth with disabilities who do not receive appropriate special education and related services may be more vulnerable to exclusion from school for alleged disciplinary infractions in the correctional education program and within the larger institution.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Data Collection of 2013-14: A First Look*; New Release for 2016, Issued June 7, 2016, revised October 28, 2016. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, "Dear Colleague Letter on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for Students with Disabilities in Correctional Facilities," by Melody Musgrove, Ed.D. and Michael K. Yudin, December 5, 2014. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/idea-letter.pdf.

The Schools and Law Enforcement
In January 2014, the civil rights units of the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education issued guidelines on the equitable application of discipline in the schools. The document provides specific guidance on non-discriminatory use of disciplinary measures and, in an appendix, a broad array of recommendations for school districts. Topics include the following:

- Safe, inclusive, and positive school climates;
- Training and professional development for all school personnel;

- Appropriate use of law enforcement;
- Non-discriminatory, fair, and age-appropriate discipline policies;
- Communicating with and engaging school communities;
- Emphasizing positive interventions over student removal;
- Monitoring and self-evaluation; and
- Data collection and responsive action.

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, "Dear Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline," by Catherine E. Lhamon and Jocelyn Samuels., January 8, 2014. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf.

In a 2013 letter to the NJSBA School Security Task Force, Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts for the State of New Jersey, reiterated the need for school districts to take a nuanced approach to juvenile justice, based on graduated intervention strategies:

> Research has established that youth who are disconnected from their familiar school environments, whether through suspension, expulsion, arrest, or dropping out, are undeniably at greater risk of following a path to crime and prison.

> Removal can set in motion a set of unintended consequences that ultimately leave the community less safe and the juvenile more likely to become involved with the juvenile justice system and, later, the criminal justice system. The best intervention strategies are those that "prevent juveniles from entering the juvenile justice system in the first place."

According to Grant, the least-intrusive enforcement methodology should also apply to delinquency complaints and "generally provides the most desired outcome for the juvenile, the family, and the community,"

"We urge law enforcement to consider curbside and stationhouse adjustments whenever possible," he wrote.

Glenn A. Grant, letter to the NJSBA School Security Task Force, June 24, 2013.

Stationhouse adjustment, a process that allows for the handling of minor offenses informally and outside of the juvenile justice system, was specified in one of the state's first official guides to SRO implementation.

N.J. Department of Law and Public Safety and New Jersey Department of Education, *The New Jersey Guide to Establishing a Safe Schools Resource Officer Program in Your Community*, by Christine Todd Whitman, Peter Verniero and Leo Klagholz. (Trenton, N.J., 1998), 5. Accessed March 15, 2017 at www.state.nj.us/oag/dcj/pdfs/safeschl.pdf.

In its final report, issued October 22, 2014, the NJSBA School Security Task Force addressed the role of school resource officers and law enforcement in the school environment and the need to distinguish violations of school disciplinary policy from violations of criminal/juvenile justice code. Following are two of the School Security Task Force recommendations on the relationship of law enforcement and the schools:

- The training of school resource officers (SROs) must stress conflict resolution, restorative justice and stationhouse adjustment practices, as well as awareness of gang and drug abuse activities.

- In developing [a Memorandum of Agreement with local law enforcement agencies], school district/charter schools … should clearly address the intersection of school policy/disciplinary code, Criminal Code and the Juvenile Justice Code. They must ensure that student behavior that is in violation of school codes of conduct be addressed by school officials and not be imposed on police. Based on federal and state law and school policy, such guidance should ensure the following: immediate response to crises; protection of the safety and interests of students affected by violent acts; the appropriate avenues of discipline and referral for student offenders; and the recognition of state requirements in areas such as student possession of firearms and weapons on school grounds, and harassment, intimidation and bullying.

What Makes School Safe? Final Report of the New Jersey School Boards Association School Security Task Force, October 22, 2014. Accessed March 15, 2017 at www.njsba.org/schoolsecurity2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 8 – Schools and Juvenile Justice System

For Boards of Education and School Districts

59. Review all consequences of disciplinary infractions in terms of equity and effectiveness, and consider alternatives to teach appropriate behaviors. The goal of assigning a consequence should be to modify behavior. Consequences should be differentiated to ensure effectiveness.

60. Establish a database that tracks student infractions (including consequences and student age, race and gender). Analyze the data to identify patterns, and use the information to develop methods to improve student behavioral choices.

61. Establish a database that tracks alternative school placements (including length of time in program, age, race, gender, success, and recidivism). Analyze the data to identify patterns, and use the information to develop methods to improve student behavioral choices.

62. Establish a database that tracks student involvement with the juvenile justice system (including charges against students, their disposition, and student age, race and gender). Analyze the data to identify patterns and use the information to develop methods to improve student behavioral choices.

For Boards of Education and Local Law Enforcement

63. Clarify the responsibilities of School Resource Officers. Boards of Education should compare their student discipline policies and practices with the Recommendations for School Districts, Administrators, Teachers, and Staff in the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice guidance, issued January 8, 2014.

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, "Dear Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline," by Catherine E. Lhamon and Jocelyn Samuels., January 8, 2014. Accessed March 15, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf.

For the Juvenile Justice System

64. Juvenile correctional education programs should provide a comprehensive range of options:

- Literacy and functional skills programs for students with significant cognitive, behavioral, or learning problems;
- Academic courses associated with Carnegie unit credits for students who are likely to return to public schools or to earn a diploma while incarcerated;
- General Educational Development (GED) preparation for students not likely to return to public schools; and
- Pre-vocational and vocational education related to student interests and meaningful employment opportunities in the community.

Chapter 9
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Impact on Achievement

Research since the 1990s identifies the need to address both academic performance and social-emotional and personal well-being to advance student achievement. In particular, as they transition to adolescence, students in their middle-school years exhibit development needs beyond those related to academics. Researchers have found that students' adjustment to school during this period requires a renegotiation of roles and rules for successful adaptation to the classroom environment.

Eccles, J. S. and R. D. Harold, "Parent-School Involvement during the Early Adolescent Years," *Teachers College Record* 94 (1993): 568-587.

Paikoff, R. L. and J. Brooks-Gunn, "Do Parent–Child Relationships Change during Puberty?" *Psychological Bulletin* 110 (1991): 47–66.

Steinberg, L., "Autonomy, Conflict, and Harmony in the Family Relationship," in *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*, ed. S. Feldman and G. Elliot (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 255–276.

Weissberg, Roger P., Joseph A. Durlak, Celene E. Domitrovich, and Thomas P. Gullotta, "Social and Emotional Learning Past, Present, and Future," in *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice*, ed. Joseph A. Durlak, Celene E. Domitrovich, Roger P. Weissberg, and Thomas P. Gullotta (New York: Guilford Publications, 2015), 3-19. Article accessed March 16, 2017 at https://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Social-and-emotional-learning-Past-present-and-future.pdf.

Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D., professor of psychology and director of the Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Laboratory, is an internationally recognized authority on character education and social-emotional learning (SEL). In a 2006 article, Dr. Elias and the late Joseph E. Zins, a pioneer in SEL, linked the integration of social emotional competence into the school program with students' academic success.

> …genuinely effective schools—those that prepare students not only to pass tests at school but also to pass the tests of life—are finding that social-emotional competence and academic achievement are interwoven and that integrated, coordinated instruction in both areas maximizes students' potential to succeed in school and throughout their lives.

Zins, Joseph E. and Maurice J. Elias, "Social and Emotional Learning: Promoting the Development of All Students," *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 17, no. 2-3 (2006): 233.

A Definition of SEL

In a presentation to a previous NJSBA study group, Dr. Elias explained the components of Social Emotional Learning and Character Development:

> What is Social Emotional Learning/Character Development?
> It's a set of skills and dispositions/essential life habits that can be built developmentally if we do so with intentionality, focus, and continuity. Schools are the place where most

children can be reached systematically because the same set of skills and habits ultimately mediate academic, civic, and workplace success…

Maurice, J. Elias, Ph.D., "Proven and Practical Approaches to Understanding and Improving Your School Climate and Culture for School Safety and Achievement" (presentation to the NJSBA School Security Task Force, Trenton, N.J., July 18, 2013).

A 2016 article by published on *Edutopia*, a website dedicated to effective educational practices, provides additional definition of SEL.

> Ideally…SEL is comprehensive, coordinated, and linked to academics, parents, and community involvement (including after-school programming). In such schools, students understand that they need academic and SEL competencies to accomplish valued goals; to contribute to the greater good, as well as their own good; and to strive to be persons of sound character and health. Correspondingly, the educators in those schools understand that for students to build their SEL skills, it is necessary not only to coordinate what happens within that school, but also to connect with the efforts of other schools in the district and of parents, after-school programs, and community partners.

Elias, Maurice J., Larry Leverett, Joan Cole Duffell, Neil Humphrey, Cesalie Stepney and Joseph Ferrito, "How to Implement Social and Emotional Learning at Your School," *Edutopia* (March 24, 2016). Accessed March 16, 2017 at https://www.edutopia.org/blog/implement-sel-at-your-school-elias-leverett-duffell-humphrey-stepney-ferrito. Adapted from the *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice*, ed. Joseph A. Durlak, Celene E. Domitrovich, Roger P. Weissberg, and Thomas P. Gullotta (New York: Guilford Publications, 2015).

The Effectiveness of SEL

A number of investigations, including large-scale experiments, support the notion that targeted SEL interventions can improve social-emotional attributes of classrooms and facilitate students' social-emotional and academic well-being.

Brackett, Mark A., Susan E. Rivers, Maria R. Reyes and Peter Salovey, "Enhancing Academic Performance and Social and Emotional Competence with the RULER Feeling Words Curriculum," *Learning and Individual Differences* 22 (2012): 218–224.

Brown, Joshua L., Stephanie M. Jones, Maria D. LaRusso and J. Lawrence Aber, "Improving Classroom Quality: Teacher Influences and Experimental Impacts of the 4Rs Program," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 102 (2010): 153-167.

Raver, C. Cybele, Stephanie M. Jones, Christine Li-Grining, Fuhua Zhai, Kristen Bub and Emily Pressler, "CSRP's Impact on Low-Income Preschoolers' Pre-Academic Skills: Self-Regulation as a Mediating Mechanism," *Child Development* 82 (2011): 362–378. Accessed March 16, 2017 at https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/006/448/Raver%20Jones%20Li-Grining%20Zhai%20Bub%20Pressler%202011.pdf.

A meta-analysis of 213 studies evaluating SEL programming efforts demonstrates its benefits to youth from elementary through high school and across urban, suburban, and rural schools in the U.S. Almost half (47%) of the reviewed interventions were tested by randomly assigning students or classrooms to either the SEL program or to a control group. Primary outcomes were increases in students' social and emotional skills, improvements in students' prosocial attitudes and behavior, better mental health, and improved academic

performance, including an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement assessed through report card grades and test scores. SEL programs may have cost benefits as well.

Durlak, Joseph A., Roger P. Weissberg, Allison B. Dymnicki, Rebecca D. Taylor and Krison B. Schellinger, "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Intervention," *Child Development* 82 (2011): 405-432..

Belfield, Clive, Brooks Bowden, Alli Klapp, Henry Levin, Robert Shand and Sabine Zander, *The Economic Value of Social and Emotional Learning*, revised edition (Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2015). Accessed March 16, 2017 at http://cbcse.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/SEL-Revised.pdf.

SEL/Character Development: Resources and Models
The Task Force on Student Achievement found many SEL models and resources. School districts have wide flexibility regarding the extent to which they adopt a model, the amount of resources they need, and the timing of the implementation of various phases.

CASEL: The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
Website: www.casel.org/

This nonprofit organization provides leadership for high quality social-emotional learning programming. CASEL advocates making evidence-based SEL a core part of the K-12 educational experience. The model identifies five core competencies associated with SEL: self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. By infusing these concepts in daily routine, CASEL seeks to help students become more aware of their emotions and their relationship to their everyday lives and channel that awareness into enhanced control and better decision-making.

Research shows that students can learn how to use their emotions to make healthy decisions and to manage behavior effectively.

Durlak, Joseph A., Roger P. Weissberg, Allison B. Dymnicki, Rebecca D. Taylor, and Kriston B. Schellinger, "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Intervention," *Child Development* 82 (2011): 405-432. Accessed March 16, 2017 at http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/sites/default/files/news/Durlak%20et%20al.%20(2011)%20meta%20analysis%20SEL.pdf.

Self-management, which includes controlling impulses, is a critical component of success in school and in life. Children who are better able to self-regulate have greater impulse control and pay more attention in school.

Lane, Katherine L., Melina Pierson and Christine C. Givner, "Teacher Expectations of Student Behavior: Which Skills Do Elementary and Secondary Teachers Deem Necessary for Success in the Classroom?" *Education and Treatment of Children* 26 (2003): 413-430

McClelland, Megan, Claire E. Cameron, Carol M. Connor, Carrie L. Farris, Abigail M. Jewkes and Frederick J. Morrison, "Links Between Behavioral Regulation and Preschoolers' Literacy, Vocabulary, and Math Skills," *Developmental Psychology* 43, (2007): 947–959.

The Center for Supportive Schools
Website: http://supportiveschools.org

Founded in 1979, the Center provides training and programs to engage students in learning and enable them to develop positive social, emotional, and health behaviors. The organization, which is located in Princeton, focuses on social and emotional learning and, according to its website, "has a proven track record, spanning over three decades, of significant academic impact on students, educators, and schools."

Its programs are designed to increase high school graduation rates; improve academic achievement, attendance, and behavior; improve students' social and emotional skills; and help students avoid high-risk behavior.

The Center's website references research on the effectiveness of its programs:

- "Peer Group Connection-High School: Summary of Evaluation Results that Show the Effect of Enlisting Students to Improve Schools" See: http://supportiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Summary-of-PGC-HS-Evidence_REV_2015-09-28.pdf.

- "Peer Group Connection-High School: High School Transition Program Improves Student Graduation Rates (*A Report on Study Findings*) See: http://supportiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PGC_Program_Improves_Student_Grad_Rates-Report_of_Findings_2014-03-14.pdf.

The Center for Supportive Schools has worked with school districts throughout the nation, including Newark, Princeton and Trenton.

New Jersey Alliance for Social Emotional and Character Development
Website: http://njasecd.org/

The alliance assists educators and all other stakeholders in fostering ethical, responsible and caring behavior and teaching social-emotional skills and core ethical values that lead to good character. In addition, the alliance educates its members regarding pertinent research and best practices, facilitates the exchange of resources and ideas, and advocates for the importance of a collaborative and caring organizational climate, and a healthy school culture.

Each year, the organization conducts an annual statewide conference, recognizes New Jersey's Schools of Character, and participates in the National Schools of Character program, conducted by Character.org.

New Jersey Department of Education
Website: www.nj.gov/education/students/safety/sandp/sel/

The Department of Education provides an online resource, "Keeping Our Kids Safe, Health & In School," which offers lesson plans and activities; information and research; and resources for families.

"Students in SEL programs are more likely to attend school and receive better grades, and are less likely to have conduct problems. Successful infusion of SEL can result in positive behaviors, increased academic success, and caring communities," states the website.

PATHS
Website: www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/paths/introducing-paths.html

PATHS is a preschool and elementary school SEL program, offered by the Channing-Bete Company, a Massachusetts-based firm that develops and distributes a variety of educational and training materials to schools, health organizations, community service and public safety organizations, and businesses.

The PATHS program is designed to increase social and emotional competence by improving critical thinking skills and decreasing student aggression. It is based on the affective-behavioral-cognitive dynamic (ABCD) model of development, which theorizes that the effectiveness of the SEL program extends beyond behavior adaptations and influences neurocognitive and personality maturation.

With full implementation of SEL principles, PATHS aims to enhance students' ability to regulate strong emotions, such as anger, anxiety, and sadness, and to build self–awareness, which in turn will have a direct impact on student performance, whether social or academic.

Greenberg, Mark T., Carol A. Kusché and Nathaniel Riggs, "The PATHS Curriculum: Theory and Research on Neuro-Cognitive Development and School Success," in *Building School Success on Social and Emotional Learning,* ed. J. Zins, R. Weissberg, and H. Walber (New York: Teachers College Press 2004), 170-188.

At the elementary level, PATHS has been shown to improve children's feelings, vocabulary, and understanding of their own and others' feelings, increase inhibitory control and verbal fluency, and reduce behavioral problems.

Greenberg, Mark T., Carol A. Kusché, Elizabeth T. Cook and Julie P. Quamma, "Promoting Emotional Competence in School-Aged Children: The Effects of the PATHS Curriculum," *Development and Psychopathology* 7 (1995): 117–36.

Riggs, Nathaniel R., Mark T. Greenberg, Carol A. Kusche, and Mary Ann Pentz, "The Mediational Role of Neurocognition in the Behavioral Outcomes of a Social-Emotional Prevention Program in Elementary School Students: Effects of the PATHS Curriculum," *Prevention Science* 7 (2006): 91-102. Accessed March 16, 2017 at http://www.prevention.psu.edu/projects/documents/Riggsetal._PrevSci_2006.pdf.

The Reading, Writing, Respect and Resolution (4Rs) Program
Website: http://www.morningsidecenter.org/4rs-program

The 4Rs Program is provided through the Morningside Center, a New York City-based non-profit organization. Morningside works with districts, schools and after-school programs to build students' social and emotional skills and create safe, collaborative, and equitable classrooms and schools.

The program trains teachers to use a literacy-based curriculum that includes lessons on conflict resolution, cultural difference, and cooperation.

Jones, Stephanie M., Joshua L. Brown, and J. Lawrence Aber, "Classroom Settings as Targets of Intervention and Research," in *Toward Positive Youth Development: Transforming Schools and Community Programs*, ed. M. Shinn & H. Yoshikawa (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 58-77

4Rs is designed to combine specific instructional, skill-building techniques and to model positive social norms. A randomized control trial of 18 schools with 82 third-grade classrooms showed evidence that 4Rs impacts the social and emotional climate of the classroom. This reflects the extent to which interactions between teachers and students reflect warmth and support, a lack of anger and hostility, consistent response from teachers to the needs of students, and teacher integration of students' ideas and interests into learning activities.

Brown, Joshua L., Stephanie M. Jones, Maria D. LaRusso, and J. Lawrence Aber, "Improving Classroom Quality: Teacher Influences and Experimental Impacts of the 4Rs Program," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102 (2010): 153-167. Accessed March 16, 2017 at http://www.morningsidecenter.org/sites/default/files/documents-pdfs/JournalEdPsych2010.pdf.

The Responsive Classroom Approach
Website: www.responsiveclassroom.org

The Responsive Classroom is based on ten practices designed for optimal learning. It seeks to create a classroom where children feel "safe, challenged, and joyful." Examples of classroom practices include morning meetings, where children and teachers greet each other, share the day's news, and prepare for the day ahead, and teacher-led collaborative problem-solving strategies, such as role-playing and conferencing. At the core of these classroom practices are a balanced integration of children's academic and social learning.

Results from quasi-experimental studies have shown increases in reading and math scores, closer relationships with teachers, more pro-social skills, more assertive behavior, and less fear among children who were exposed to the Responsive Classroom approach for multiple years.

Rimm-Kaufman, Sara E., Xitao Fan, Yu-Jen Chiu, and Wenyi You, "The Contribution of the Responsive Classroom Approach on Children's Academic Achievement: Results from a Three Year Longitudinal Study," *Journal of School Psychology* 45 (2007): 401-421

Rimm-Kaufman, Sara E. and Yu-Jen Chiu, "Promoting Social and Academic Competence in the Classroom: An Intervention Study Examining the Contribution of the Responsive Classroom Approach," *Psychology in the Schools* 44 (2007): 397-413.

Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab
Website: www.secdlab.org/

The SECD Lab is dedicated to conducting action-research in public, private, and religious school settings for the purpose of building children's skills for facing the tests of life, and not a life of tests. Originally called the Rutgers Social Emotional Learning Laboratory, the unit's new name reflects its view that SEL and character development must be integrated for the optimal development of children and youth.

Current SECD Lab projects include the following:

- **The MOSAIC Project** (Mastering Our Skills and Inspiring Character) in six Jersey City Middle Schools. The program includes a three-year curriculum to build students' social-emotional skills and virtues, create opportunities for youth voice in schools, and promote a respectful and caring school climate. The program's principles follow through to all classes, school routines and the community at large. See: www.secdlab.org/mosaic/.

- **Developing Schools of Social-Emotional Competence and Character** in New Brunswick.

- The **Development, Implementation, and Dissemination of Laws of Life** and Related Empowerment-Oriented Interventions around Promoting Youth Competence, Purpose, and Voice, including The Youth Ambassadors Project.

- The Social-Emotional Learning and Character Development **Certificate Program** for classroom teachers, school leaders and other professionals. See: http://psych.rutgers.edu/sel.

Previous NJSBA Reports
In its October 2014 report, the NJSBA School Security Task Force addressed the critical role of school climate in providing a safe environment that fosters learning and personal growth. The School Security Task Force made seven recommendations in the area of school climate, including the following, which address social-emotional learning and character development:

- Local school districts should engage in school climate assessments and develop and implement plans to ensure that students have safe, secure and supportive learning environments that provide meaningful communication and involvement with caring adults on the school staff.

- Not all student groups experience school safety and the school climate in the same manner. To enable students to learn in supportive environments at each grade level, local school boards should adopt policies that recognize the importance of social-emotional learning, character development, restorative practices and community building.

- To build a respectful school climate that enables the advancement of student achievement, local boards of education and school administrators should ensure that the principles of social-emotional learning and character development skill-building are infused into academic instruction in a coordinated manner and that there is a consistent application of discipline.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 9 – Social–Emotional Learning

FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

65. Review current activities that address the social-emotional learning needs of their students and staff and strive to ensure that an optimum climate is being nurtured throughout the district.

66. Ensure that the student performance data are disaggregated.

67. Commit to addressing achievement gaps within the district.

68. Create policies that require monitoring of school climate and encourage higher teacher expectations of students.

69. Provide teachers with professional development in the importance of social climate in schools.

70. Review common social and community problems impacting disadvantaged students in district schools and design solutions that affect significant numbers of them.

71. Commit to finding ways to personalize learning approaches for students.

72. Pay special attention to middle school practices that fall short of supporting students' social and emotional needs.

73. Augment district curriculum to enhance the importance of increased expectations from teachers, teacher-student relationships, school-to-student connectivity, and student-to-student relationships and respect.

74. Review the social emotional learning models available through the organizations listed in the "SEL/Character Development: Resources and Models" section of this chapter to gain insight about various approaches to integrating social-emotional learning into the education program.

Chapter 10
Labor-Management Collaboration

The Benefits to Student Achievement

Studies of school districts in Baltimore, southern California, Chicago, Cincinnati, and elsewhere have found gains in student achievement after teachers and administrators developed strong, collaborative partnerships. The U.S. Department of Education has called labor-management collaboration "the most promising path to transforming American education."

U.S. Department of Education, *Shared Responsibility: A U.S. Department of Education White Paper on Labor-Management Collaboration* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Accessed March 16, 2017 at https://www2.ed.gov/documents/labor-management-collaboration/white-paper-labor-management-collaboration.pdf

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, has said that collaboration is an essential tool to build trust, collective responsibility and public confidence in schools.

> And we see sustainable results in districts that embrace collaboration. It's a vehicle for implementing solutions that help kids succeed, evidenced by what happens when resources are deployed for community schools, early-childhood education, project-based learning, music, art, and multiple pathways for graduation, including career and technical education programs.

"Randi Weingarten's Response to a Critic," *Education Week*, November 6, 2014. Accessed March 16, 2017 at http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/11/06/12weingarten.h34.html.

A recent study found that schools with more extensive collaboration on curriculum, teaching practices, mentorships and student performance data showed greater gains in academic progress. It focused on ABC Unified, a southern California district operating 30 schools and enrolling 21,000 primarily Latino and Asian students. The study found that even in impoverished schools, strong partnerships added as much as 76 points to a school's API ranking, a widely used measure of campus quality.

Rubinstein, Saul A. and John E. McCarthy, "Union–Management Partnerships, Teacher Collaboration, and Student Performance," *ILR Review* 69 (2016): 1114-1132.

Another study, which focused on 400 Chicago schools over a period of 15 years, found that the campuses that improved the most had developed an unusually high degree of "relational trust" among staff.

Bryk, Anthony S. and Barbara Schneider, "Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform," *Educational Leadership* 60 (2003): 40-45. Accessed March 16, 2017 at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar03/vol60/num06/Trust-in-Schools@-A-Core-Resource-for-School-Reform.aspx.

The New Jersey Public Schools Labor-Management Collaborative
In partnership with the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, the New Jersey School Boards Association has taken a leading role in a project to validate the impact of positive management-labor relations on teaching and learning in New Jersey's public schools.

Other partners include the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association.

Now in its second stage, the project has received a grant of approximately $150,000 from the Federal Conciliation and Mediation Board. The grant will fund training for the school districts that comprise Cohort 2 of the project. They include:

- Atlantic County Institute of Technology
- Bergenfield
- Clearview Regional
- East Brunswick
- Evesham
- Hamilton (Mercer)
- Hawthorne
- Lower Cape May County Regional
- Milltown
- New Brunswick
- Pompton Lakes
- Ocean City
- Plainfield
- Secaucus
- South River
- Teaneck Community Charter
- Wanaque

Based on research literature and anecdotal reports from administrators and teachers in districts with extensive experience in formal labor and management collaboration, the NJSBA Task Force on Student Achievement believes that such collaboration can be effective in facilitating student learning for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Chapter 10 – Labor-Management Collaboration

FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION

75. Assess the status of labor-management relations and formal collaboration within the district.

76. Consider the positive impact that adopting formal labor-management collaboration practices could have on student achievement and school climate.

FOR BOARDS OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHING STAFF

77. Follow the progress of the New Jersey Public Schools Labor-Management Collaborative and discuss with one another its impact on student achievement.

Chapter 11
New Jersey School Boards Association Policy

The Task Force on Student Achievement has identified five areas of New Jersey School Boards Association policy that do not adequately address the Association's commitment to advancing student achievement. These policies were adopted by the NJSBA Delegate Assembly, some as long ago as 1982, and have undergone periodic "sunset review."

The Task Force recommends the revisions to the Association's Manual of Positions and Policies on Education described below.

CONCEPTS AND ROLES IN ADMINISTRATION (File Code 2000)
Responsibilities of the Board of Education

Current Policy Language:
A. NJSBA believes that two of the most significant responsibilities of the board are the hiring of a chief school administrator and annually reviewing the performance of the chief school administrator in implementing the district's educational goals, vision and direction.
B. NJSBA believes the board of education should annually review the performance of the board secretary concerning the functions where he/she directly reports to the board. [*Authority: DA 11/03-ER (A), DA 5/01-SR, DA 5/06-SR, DA 5/11-SR, DA 12/16-SR*]

Recommended Language:
A. NJSBA believes that the primary focus of the local school district must be the advancement of academic achievement for all students and that effective governance by a local board of education, working in concert with its chief school administrator, is essential to ensuring educational opportunity and growth.
B. NJSBA believes that two of the local school board's most significant governance functions are hiring the chief school administrator and implementing the district's educational goals, vision, and direction.
C. NJSBA believes the board of education should annually review the performance of the board secretary concerning the functions where he/she directly reports to the board.

RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND PLANNING (File Code 2240)
Effective Schools Research

Current Policy Language:
Effective Schools Research

The NJSBA believes to promote greater student achievement local boards of education should adopt policies, programs, and practices that would address the critical organizational, managerial, and school climate factors identified in effective schools research. [*Authority: DA 12/82-CR Urban Education, BD 11/84-CR Extended School Year, DA 11/95-SR, DA 11/96-SR, DA5/11-SR*]

Recommended Language:
Research on Effective Education
The NJSBA believes that, to promote the achievement of all students, local boards of education should adopt policies that address the curricular, organizational, and managerial factors identified in research on effective teaching and learning, school culture and climate, and other critical areas.

CONCEPTS AND ROLES IN INSTRUCTION (File Code 6000)
Commitment to Quality Education

Current Policy Language:
The NJSBA believes all children should receive the highest quality education.
[*Authority: DA 6/79-32, DA 6/9-SR, DA 11/02-SR, DA 11/07- SR, DA 11/12-SR*]

Recommended Language:
A. The NJSBA believes all children should receive the highest quality education.
B. The NJSBA believes that the federal and state governments and local school boards should provide the resources necessary to advance student academic success and close achievement gaps.
C. The NJSBA believes that local boards of education should adopt policies that promote the success of all students by supporting effective practices in curriculum, school culture, management, and organization.

GOVERNANCE (File Code 9300)

This series does not currently include an overarching statement on the role of the local school board in promoting student achievement.

Recommended Addition:
Effective Governance
A. NJSBA believes effective governance of public education, carried out by well-trained local school boards, can have a direct impact on student achievement.
B. NJSBA believes that local boards of education should adopt policies that enable their professional staffs to implement programs and practices that advance the achievement of all students and result in the efficient functioning of schools.

FORMULATION, ADOPTION, AMENDMENT OF POLICIES (File Code 9311)
School Board Policy

Current Policy Language:
A. The NJSBA believes that sound school board policy is essential to the successful and efficient functioning of the public schools.
B. The NJSBA believes that in order to meet legal requirements and to provide effective direction for the operation of the district and its schools, local district policies should be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Boards should involve stakeholders, including members of the community in the policy development and review process when appropriate. [*Authority: DA 5/76-CR (Policy Advisory), DA 12/82-CR (Urban Education), DA 6/93-SR, DA 11/98-SR*]
C. NJSBA believes that the role of the State Department of Education in approving local district policy should not exceed the requirement of administrative code or encroach on the authority of local boards of education regarding the management and operation of the district. [*Authority: DA 12/87-5, DA 6/93-SR, DA 11/98-SR, DA 5/03-SR, DA 5/08-SR, DA 5/13-SR*]

Recommended Language:
A. NJSBA believes that sound school board policy is essential to the successful and efficient functioning of the public schools and to the advancement of the academic achievement of all students.
B. NJSBA believes that local boards of education should regularly review their policies to ensure that they encourage programs and practices that promote educational opportunity and success for all students, meet legal requirements, and provide effective direction for the operation of the district and its schools. Boards should involve all stakeholders, including parents and other members of the school community, in the policy development and review process when appropriate.
C. NJSBA believes that the role of the State Department of Education in approving local district policy should not exceed the requirements of administrative code or encroach on the authority of local boards of education regarding the management and operation of the district.

Rationale: The recommended policy language is consistent with the New Jersey School Boards Association's current mission statement and the findings and recommendations of the Task Force on Student Achievement.

RECOMMENDATION
Chapter 11 – **New Jersey School Boards Association Policy**

FOR THE NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION:

78. Adopt the revised and additional policy language listed in this chapter, which is consistent with NJSBA's current mission statement and the findings and recommendations of the Task Force on Student Achievement.

Chapter 12 – Conclusion
Our Work Is Incomplete

Over a period of two years, the NJSBA Task Force on Student Achievement researched and discussed the myriad factors affecting the achievement of New Jersey students. The final report includes recommendations to address challenges of preparing all students for 21st century post-secondary education or careers. But there is still much work to be done.

The Impact of Implicit Bias

The list of factors that impact student achievement is long, but an overarching challenge facing every school board member and educator concerns equity and excellence and the need to confront implicit biases. For example, evidence suggests that racial bias plays a role in the over-representation of African-American males in special education programs and disparities in administration of school discipline.

As a first step in learning about implicit biases, the Task Force encourages all those who play a role in educating New Jersey youth to take one or more of the Implicit Association Tests posted on the Project Implicit © section of Harvard University's website at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html.

Project Implicit is a non-profit organization and international collaboration between researchers who are interested in implicit social cognition—that is, thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness and control. The goal of the organization is to educate the public about hidden biases and to provide a "virtual laboratory" for collecting data on the Internet.

"About Us," *Project Implicit*, 2011. Accessed March 16, 2017 at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/aboutus.html.

The project's website provides further information about the concept of implicit bias.

> People don't always say what's on their minds. One reason is that they are unwilling. For example, someone might report smoking a pack of cigarettes per day because they are embarrassed to admit that they smoke two. Another reason is that they are unable. A smoker might truly believe that she smokes a pack a day, or might not keep track at all. The difference between being unwilling and unable is the difference between purposely hiding something from someone and unknowingly hiding something from yourself.

> The Implicit Association Test (IAT) measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report. The IAT may be especially interesting if it shows that you have an implicit attitude that you did not know about. For example, you may believe that women and men should be equally associated with science, but your automatic associations could show that you (like many others) associate men with science more than you associate women with science.

"Overview," Project Implicit, 2011. Accessed March 16, 2017 at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html.

Continue the Work

The Task Force on Student Achievement has fulfilled its charge through extensive study and deliberation and the publication of this Final Report. While the Task Force report is complete, however, the New Jersey School Boards Association's work must continue.

An ongoing focus on all subjects related to student achievement is at the core of NJSBA's mission. Therefore, the Task Force believes that this report should be referred to the NJSBA Standards and Assessment Committee (a standing committee of the Association) for its consideration as it studies factors related to the provision of education to our state's public school students and measurement of academic achievement.

<div align="center">

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Chapter 12 – **Our Work Is Incomplete**

</div>

For Local School Board Members

79. Become familiar with the concept of "implicit bias" and its impact on decisions affecting students' educational opportunities.

For the New Jersey School Boards Association

80. Continue proactive efforts to identify and address the many factors that impact student learning.

81. Adopt new language for the *Manual of Policies and Positions on Education*, as recommended in Chapter 11 of this report, which reflects its mission to advance the achievement of all students.

82. Continue to partner with the New Jersey Department of Education, state-level education organizations and New Jersey colleges and universities to address all of the challenges of student achievement. Special attention should be directed to the obstacles of "equity and excellence" with the goal of providing the best educational opportunities to the children of New Jersey, regardless of family background or place of residence.

83. Refer *The Final Report of the Task Force on Student Achievement* to the Association's standing Standards and Assessment Committee for its consideration as it addresses issues related to educational standards and the measurement of students' academic progress.

The NJSBA Task Force on Student Achievement
Summary of Recommendations

Closing the Achievement Gap: Obstacles and Strategies (Chapter 2)

For Boards of Education:

1. Be aware of, and change, practices that negatively impact the lives of children.

2. Require high-level curriculum that prepares students for global competiveness.

3. Advocate for school-based counseling and mental health services that address the needs of students and their families.

4. Through collaborative efforts, ensure student access to healthcare through School-Based Health Centers, School-Linked Health Centers, and Coordinated School Health Programs.

5. Review the policies related to equal treatment of students. For example, review research reports, such as "Not Measuring Up: The State of School Discipline in Massachusetts." Examine access to high-level courses, discipline procedures, and grading procedures, as well as other policies and procedures that inadvertently influence what happens to students based on race, ethnicity, and poverty.

6. Advocate not only before constituents, but also before state and federal representatives. Board members should develop professional relationships with elected officials to assist them in their representation of the district, the community, its students and employees.

For School Districts

7. Seek student input in curriculum design, teacher evaluation, and overall school evaluation. Surveys are an effective way to engage students in the school-reform process. The Task Force on Student Achievement believes that such an exercise would encourage students them to take responsibility for educational outcomes.

8. At the end of every school year or semester, give students the opportunity to evaluate their learning experience in every class. Such information should prove useful to school leaders—especially, principals—in identifying professional development and other efforts to improve teacher effectiveness.

9. Ensure that all administrators and instructional staff understand the role of School Improvement Panels (ScIPs) in data analysis and professional development recommendations to achieve school and district goals. The ScIPs were created through the 2012 TEACHNJ Act and are part of the AchieveNJ educator evaluation system.

10. Develop and administer a survey at the beginning of each school year to assess the physical and mental health needs of the school population. School nurses and guidance counselors should be involved in developing the surveys, and also in conducting the surveys and making recommendations based on the outcome.

11. When determining the support a child needs to be successful, consider the whole child—not just his or her academic needs but also the social-emotional needs that should be addressed. Educators should know the social, emotional, health, and basic needs of their students and their families. District leaders should identify how the school community and the community at-large can address these needs.

The Local School Board: A Positive Influence on Student Achievement (Chapter 3)

For Local Boards of Education:

12. Ensure that every board decision considers the academic, social and health needs of students and that the community is aware of this belief. At all regular meetings, board members/trustees must affirm this priority. Every decision—from the adoption of curriculum to the colors of classroom walls—should be founded on the question: *"What is best for all children?"*

13. Participate in professional development individually and as a board team to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry, the Center for Public Education's research on the *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards*, and the role of the board of education in student achievement.

14. Through training and board practice, ensure that all members understand existing data about student achievement and that all reports to the board regularly use data related to students and their academic progress.

15. Conduct a self-assessment to determine the status of the board's governance practices including the use of data in respect to student achievement.

16. Conduct a thorough policy review that includes the potential impact of each specific policy on contributing towards student achievement for all in a safe, healthy climate. All school boards should review their policies *through the lens of student achievement* to ensure that they support, and do not discourage, achievement for all.

For School Districts:

17. Make certain that classrooms are engaging places for young people to spend their days and that high expectations characterize all staff interaction with students.

18. Implement an annual goal-setting process that is student-focused and includes measurable standards of achievement.

19. Keep all stakeholders updated on challenges and successes. The administration should develop a communications plan to inform the community of the challenges the district is facing and to engage citizens in helping meet those challenges.

20. Establish a procedure to be followed when introducing new programs or practices. The procedure should include expectations for struggling students and a process to evaluate

short-term and long-term progress. The evaluation process would help the administration and board determine if the program should continue.

For Individual School Board Members:

21. Seek leadership and support from those who believe that the board's priority goal should be advancing the achievement of every student.

22. Be prepared to ask questions at every meeting about how policies and procedures influence the success of struggling students.

23. Participate in the Annual NJSBA Workshop, which places the achievement of all students as its highest priority.

For the New Jersey School Boards Association:

24. Through training and professional development, ensure that board members/trustees understand, and are able to communicate about, measures of student achievement including educational standards, summative and formative assessments, and local school district goal-setting.

25. Provide all boards of education and individual board members with comprehensive professional development on the key findings of the Iowa Lighthouse Inquiry concerning effective governance.

26. Through training and professional development, emphasize that the primary responsibility of board members/trustees is to ensure that the district provides a comprehensive program that prepares students to be ready to enter the workforce or pursue post-secondary education. By their actions, board members/trustees must communicate to their constituents that all board business has a focus on the achievement of all students regardless of zip code or economic circumstances.

27. Build public understanding of the nature and measures of student achievement, while correcting common misconceptions—for example, the idea that some students are incapable of learning difficult subjects.

28. Review all Association policies to assess their potential impact on contributing toward student achievement and safe and healthy school climate. (Recommended revisions and additions to the New Jersey School Boards Association's *Manual of Policies and Positions on Education* are listed in Chapter 11 of this report.)

Using Data to Recognize Success, Identify Challenges, and Drive Decisions (Chapter 4)

For Local Boards of Education and Individual Members:

29. School board members/trustees should participate in professional development to understand the role and meaning of Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) and Student Growth Objectives (SGP), including their use in analyzing student achievement and evaluating the performance of educators.

30. Board member/trustees should participate in professional development regarding data review and analysis. Being data savvy is as important as ensuring that the district is financially responsible.

31. Board member/trustees should be aware of all of the data points available for review, so that they can make informed decisions on educational program recommendations.

For the New Jersey School Boards Association:

32. NJSBA should establish a professional development track for board members, which includes basic, intermediate and advanced data training.

33. NJSBA should review its mandated training to ensure that an introduction to data is included.

The Impact of Employment on Student Achievement (Chapter 5)

For Job Training/Employment Programs:

34. Make regular school attendance the priority when providing assistance through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to students subject to New Jersey's compulsory attendance laws (*N.J.S.A.* 18A:38-25). Efforts should focus on ensuring both attendance and tardy-to-school challenges.

35. Allocate WIOA funding to support public education's need to meet 21st Century Life and Careers through career exploration, including labor market information, and educational requirements. Such efforts should be provided in lieu of work experience during the school year.

For the State and Federal Government:

36. Support the development of alternative, evidence-based programs and other activities that enhance the choices available to disadvantaged youth. These programs should encourage disadvantaged youth to reenter and complete secondary education, enroll in post-secondary education and advanced training, progress through career pathways, and enter into unsubsidized employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

For Local School Districts and Training/Employment Programs

37. Enable all youth to participate fully in academic, co-curricular and athletic programs, with the goal of fostering a more robust cohort of students who seek continuous academic achievement that promotes college and career readiness.

For Local School Districts, Training/Employment Programs and Families

38. Limit leisure-time employment of high school students to no more than two hours per day, 15 hours per week during the school year. At the same time, encourage employment opportunities, during the school year and summer, that enable students to practice skills learned in the classroom.

Early Childhood Education (Chapter 6)

For Boards of Education:

39. Review and analyze district data to determine the early childhood program needs of schools.

40. Explore means to fund early childhood education, as well as before- and after-school programs.

41. Ensure that early childhood education programs are of high-quality and staffed by highly trained, certificated teachers.

42. Consider low-cost before- and after- school programs to give parents security of mind and financial relief, adding to a more supportive view toward their children's education.

For the New Jersey School Boards Association:

43. Provide professional development for all board members/trustees about the benefits of early childhood education.

44. Continue to support funding for early childhood education for all students through advocacy before the state Legislature and federal government.

Communication, Collaboration, Parental Involvement (Chapter 7)

For Boards of Education and School Districts:

Communication
45. Develop a strategic communications plan that encompasses media relations, one-to-one communication, and creation of a common message to build support for efforts to advance student achievement.

46. Establish a key communicators program to ensure effective two-way communication between the school district and community at-large—including dissemination of accurate information from the school district to the community and provision of critical feedback from the community to the school district.

47. Develop discussion points for use by school officials and education advocates to make the community aware of the needs of all students, including those who are struggling, and to elicit support for district efforts to advance student achievement.

48. Secure a reverse-dial emergency notification system with phone, text, and email capabilities to announce emergency school closings, special events, and keep the community informed when there is a significant emergency. Ensure that parents and community members, including senior citizens, are able to select the mode(s) of communication (landline, cell, text, email, etc.) they prefer, based on the topics to be communicated (general information, special announcements, emergency information, etc.).

Collaboration

49. Establish a collaborative relationship with the municipal government through efforts such as regularly scheduled meetings between school and municipal officials and the appointment of liaisons between the school board and governing body. The goal of such collaboration should be to support programs that advance student achievement, healthy decision-making, and a safe and secure school environment.

50. Involve the municipal government, faith-based community, service organizations, local industry and small businesses, as well youth-service organizations, in a comprehensive plan to promote student achievement and healthy decision-making.

51. Work with the municipality to support efforts to diversify neighborhoods and school communities economically and racially/ethnically. Models can be drawn from Hope VI and Urban Homesteading housing programs.

52. Work with higher education to enhance instructional strategy and professional development. Consider membership in the Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement and the New Jersey School Development Council, both located at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education.

Community/Parental Involvement

53. Develop training programs for parents on how to guide the schoolwork of their children. Partner with universities and colleges to assist in family training.

54. Consider membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools (http://nnps.jhucsos.com/), which provides training to schools, networking opportunities, and guidance on parental involvement.

55. Conduct a needs assessment to provide information on the current status of community and neighborhood involvement. Seek the observations and advice of teachers, who are in continuous contact with students.

56. Seek government and private funding to implement initiatives involving parental/community involvement, housing policy, and education program improvements. NJSBA's Grants Support service (https://www.njsba.org/services/grants-support/) provides all New Jersey school districts with on online portal to more than 3,200 funding opportunities available through the federal government, the state, and foundations.

For the New Jersey School Boards Association:

57. Continue to advocate for legislation and state code that advances student achievement.

58. Continue to model effective collaboration by working with other advocates on all efforts to advance student achievement through effective local school district governance.

Schools and Juvenile Justice System (Chapter 8)

For Boards of Education and School Districts:

59. Review all consequences of disciplinary infractions in terms of equity and effectiveness, and consider alternatives to teach appropriate behaviors. The goal of assigning a consequence should be to modify behavior. Consequences should be differentiated to ensure effectiveness.

60. Establish a database that tracks student infractions (including consequences and student age, race and gender). Analyze the data to identify patterns, and use the information to develop methods to improve student behavioral choices.

61. Establish a database that tracks alternative school placements (including length of time in program, age, race, gender, success, and recidivism). Analyze the data to identify patterns, and use the information to develop methods to improve student behavioral choices.

62. Establish a database that tracks student involvement with the juvenile justice system (including charges against students, their disposition, and student age, race and gender). Analyze the data to identify patterns and use the information to develop methods to improve student behavioral choices.

For Boards of Education and Local Law Enforcement:

63. Clarify the responsibilities of School Resource Officers. Boards of Education should compare their student discipline policies and practices with the Recommendations for School Districts, Administrators, Teachers, and Staff in the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice guidance, issued January 8, 2014.

For the Juvenile Justice System:

64. Juvenile correctional education programs should provide a comprehensive range of options:

- Literacy and functional skills programs for students with significant cognitive, behavioral, or learning problems;
- Academic courses associated with Carnegie unit credits for students who are likely to return to public schools or to earn a diploma while incarcerated;
- General Educational Development (GED) preparation for students not likely to return to public schools; and
- Pre-vocational and vocational education related to student interests and meaningful employment opportunities in the community.

Social–Emotional Learning (Chapter 9)

For Local Boards of Education and School Districts:

65. Review current activities that address the social-emotional learning needs of their students and staff and strive to ensure that an optimum climate is being nurtured throughout the district.

66. Ensure that the student performance data are disaggregated.

67. Commit to addressing achievement gaps within the district.

68. Create policies that require monitoring of school climate and encourage higher teacher expectations of students.

69. Provide teachers with professional development in the importance of social climate in schools.

70. Review common social and community problems impacting disadvantaged students in district schools and design solutions that affect significant numbers of them.

71. Commit to finding ways to personalize learning approaches for students.

72. Pay special attention to middle school practices that fall short of supporting students' social and emotional needs.

73. Augment district curriculum to enhance the importance of increased expectations from teachers, teacher-student relationships, school-to-student connectivity, and student-to-student relationships and respect.

74. Review the social emotional learning models available through the organizations listed in the "SEL/Character Development: Resources and Models" section of this chapter to gain insight about various approaches to integrating social-emotional learning into the education program.

Labor-Management Collaboration (Chapter 10)

For Local Boards of Education:
75. Assess the status of labor-management relations and formal collaboration within the district.

76. Consider the positive impact that adopting formal labor-management collaboration practices could have on student achievement and school climate.

For Boards of Education, District Administrators, Teaching Staff:
77. Follow the progress of the New Jersey Public Schools Labor-Management Collaborative and discuss with one another its impact on student achievement.

New Jersey School Boards Association Policy (Chapter 11)

For the New Jersey School Boards Association:
78. Adopt the revised and additional policy language listed on pages 92-94, which is consistent with NJSBA's mission to advancement the achievement of all students and the findings and recommendations of the Task Force on Student Achievement.

Conclusion: Our Work Is Incomplete (Chapter 12)

For Local School Board Members:

79. Become familiar with the concept of "implicit bias" and its impact on decisions affecting students' educational opportunities.

For the New Jersey School Boards Association:

80. Continue proactive efforts to identify and address the many factors that impact student learning.

81. Adopt new language for the *Manual of Policies and Positions on Education*, as recommended in Chapter 11 of this report, which reflects its mission to advance the achievement of all students.

82. Continue to partner with the New Jersey Department of Education, state-level education organizations and New Jersey colleges and universities to address all of the challenges of student achievement. Special attention should be directed to the obstacles of "equity and excellence" with the goal of providing the best educational opportunities to the children of New Jersey, regardless of family background or place of residence.

83. Refer *The Final Report of the Task Force on Student Achievement* to the Association's standing Standards and Assessment Committee for its consideration as it addresses issues related to educational standards and the measurement of students' academic progress.