



BETTER SCHOOLS FOR YOUR CHILDREN: IT'S TIME

Because public schools across the nation have denied African-American, Latino, and Native American students effective teachers and schools, education equality has become the civil rights issue of our time.

Disadvantaged students and students of color are much more likely to have the worst teachers and be in schools that are falling apart. Average African-American and Latino students are nearly three years behind their white and Asian counterparts. Barely half of African-American and Latino students graduate from high school. It's wrong that these inequalities continue, and it's time for them to end.

UNACCEPTABLE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Percentage at or above proficient in 4th grade math, 2007



Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress

When our nation elected the first African-American president, we managed to do what many thought was impossible. Now, we must stop sending students to failing schools, and instead,

do what we know is possible — provide *all* children with the great education they deserve.

Here's what you have a right to expect from your child's school. If you're not getting results, you have lots of options.

1

Demand change.

Children cannot afford to have their parents and guardians sit on the sidelines. Schools that have consistently failed to educate children well are unlikely to change without a mixture of "heat, help, and hope" from the outside.

2

You should be treated with respect.

Parents, guardians, and citizens like you are not educational experts. But you are the owners of the schools. The educators are hired to work for you and your children, not the other way around. You have the right to get straight answers to your questions ... and better results for your kids.

3

You should be told clearly what the learning standards are in each grade.

You and your child have the right to know at the start of the school year what is being taught in English, math, science, social studies, and other subjects ... and how that learning will be tested. *For a good national overview of grade-level standards, go to www.greatschools.net/education-topics. Or try your local or state education department Web site.*

4

You should get an honest picture about how your child's school is doing.

Every year, you should get a parent-friendly report card that shows how your school is doing in areas from attendance to achievement to teaching quality, including how your school compares to other schools. Are you getting this information? Check your local or state education department Web site or www.greatschools.net.

"In the end, no program can substitute for a parent."

— PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

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Take advantage of your options.

Students in low-income public schools that don't meet learning goals for two years in a row can transfer to a better school. If your child's school still needs improvement after three years, you can request free tutoring services. Forty states and Washington, DC, now have public charter schools. More states are offering online learning, and private and parochial schools offer tuition help. You and your child have options, and you should know how to exercise them. *More about transfers and tutoring:* www.ed.gov/nclb/choice. *More about charter options in your state:* www.publiccharters.org/states.

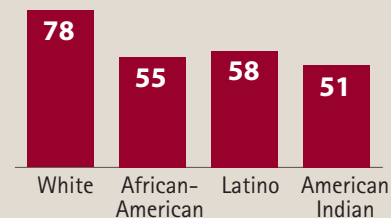
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You should be told what it will take for your child to attend college.

For example, all students should have a chance to take Algebra by 8th grade and have at least four years of math and science in high school. What does your child's school offer? *Learn more about planning and preparing for college at www.college.gov.*

TOO FEW STUDENTS EVEN GRADUATE

Estimated percentage of four-year graduation rates



Source: Alliance for Excellent Education

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Speak out and change the system.

Work with us to get policy changes that will pay the best teachers more and remove bad ones from the classroom, close failing schools and replace them with good ones, strengthen accountability systems, and lift the caps on public charter schools. *Join us at www.edequality.org.*

Parents are powerful. Parents who are demanding excellence are even more powerful ... and are making a difference all over the country.

The Education Equality Project is leading a civil rights movement to eliminate the racial and ethnic achievement gap in public education. Go to our Web site to learn more about the crisis ... get involved ... spread the word ... and share your story. www.edequality.org.