

Gap Group Briefer

May 2016

Who is in the gap group?

South Dakota's gap group is a "super subgroup" that combines the following historically underperforming subgroups:

- Economically disadvantaged
- Students with disabilities
- English learners
- African American
- Hispanic
- Native American

Who is in the nongap group?

As long as they do not also fit into any of the above (i.e. an Asian student with disabilities would be a member of the gap group), the following subgroups make up the nongap group:

- White/Caucasian
- Two or more races
- Asian/Pacific Islander

How was the gap group determined?

Gap group composition was based on achievement and graduation results from the 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11 school years.

Performance of students in each subgroup was compared to the performance of the "all students" group (see attached chart). Those groups who consistently performed under the "all students" group became part of the gap group. Those who performed above the "all students" group became part of the nongap group.

Does the Department of Education regularly re-examine the gap group composition?

Yes. The composition of the gap group is re-examined every five years, based on the previous three years' performance. The department looked at results after the 2014-15 Report Card was released and determined the gap group composition should remain the same.

How has defining the gap group affected reporting?

The gap group was conceived as a means of improving transparency in public reporting. Defining the gap group has resulted in schools across South Dakota being accountable for an additional 1,052 subgroups. As an example: In 2011, High School XYZ had six Native American students, nine economically disadvantaged students, five SPED students and no students in other subgroups that make up the Gap group who took the state assessment. Without the gap group, High School XYZ was not held accountable for any of those subgroups. By aggregating the numbers, High School XYZ is now held accountable for three additional sub-groups and 11 additional students (unduplicated count). This real-life example was repeated in schools across the state. (See below for more information).

How does defining the gap group improve transparency?

South Dakota maintains an n size of 10. Any group with fewer than 10 members is not published on the public Report Card. (That data does remain available to schools and districts through the private Report Card.)

A school with 100 students might break out like this:

- White/Caucasian: 55
- English learners: 2
- African American: 9
- Hispanic: 9
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 9
- Native American: 9
- Two or more races: 9
- Economically disadvantaged: 9
- Students with disabilities: 5
- All students: 100

In this scenario, the “all students” and “White/Caucasian” groups are the only ones with more than 10 members, and therefore, the only groups whose data would be reported. That means 45 percent of the school’s students would not have their data reported, and their performance would essentially be masked.

Here is what happens when the gap group and nongap groups are considered:

- White/Caucasian: 55
- English learners: 2
- African American: 9
- Hispanic: 9
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 9
- Native American: 9
- Two or more races: 9
- Economically disadvantaged: 9
- Students with disabilities: 5
- All students: 100
- Gap group (unduplicated count): 50
- Nongap group (unduplicated count): 50

Now we can report the “all students,” White/Caucasian, gap and nongap group numbers. Adding the gap group as an unduplicated count (a Native American student who is economically disadvantaged and a student with disabilities only counts once in the gap group) allows the public to compare gap versus nongap group performance, as well as those groups versus the White/Caucasian subgroup and the “all students” group.

We don’t know how individual subgroups within the gap group fared, but creating this “super subgroup” provides more transparency than the previous comparison, which was limited to White/Caucasian versus “all students.”

How is gap group performance currently factored into the School Performance Index?

Student Achievement is the only indicator that takes into account the performance of gap group and nongap group performance and awards points accordingly. Points are weighted based on the percentage of tested students who fall into the gap and nongap groups, respectively. This highlights the performance of the gap group and makes it more difficult for the performance of the “all students” group and the nongap group to mask the performance of students who may be struggling more.

Math and English language arts achievement points are calculated as follows:

- 1) $\text{Points possible for Student Achievement indicator} \div \% \text{ gap students} = \text{Weighted points available for gap students}$
 $\text{Points possible for Student Achievement indicator} \div \% \text{ nongap students} = \text{Weighted points available for nongap students}$
- 2) $\% \text{ Gap students scoring proficient or above} \times \text{Weighted points available for gap students} = \text{Gap group achievement points}$
 $\% \text{ Nongap students scoring proficient or above} \times \text{Weighted points available for nongap students} = \text{Nongap group achievement points}$
- 3) $\text{Gap group achievement points} + \text{Nongap group achievement points} = \text{Total Student Achievement points}$

Statewide Achievement Gaps in Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Graduation Rates by Subgroup

		All Students			Economically Disadvantaged		Students with Disabilities		English Learners		White		African American		Hispanic		Asian/Pacific Islander		Native American	
		% Proficient	% Proficient	Gap	% Proficient	Gap	% Proficient	Gap	% Proficient	Gap	% Proficient	Gap	% Proficient	Gap	% Proficient	Gap	% Proficient	Gap	% Proficient	Gap
READING/ LANGUAGE ARTS	08-09	75	63	-12	42	-33	21	-54	80	+5	61	-14	63	-12	75	0	50	-25		
	09-10	76	63	-13	42	-34	26	-50	80	+4	61	-15	62	-14	73	-3	50	-26		
	10-11	75	62	-13	43	-32	30	-45	80	+5	56	-19	64	-11	64	-11	48	-27		
MATHEMATICS	08-09	75	62	-13	42	-33	22	-53	80	+5	57	-18	59	-16	76	+1	44	-31		
	09-10	76	65	-11	43	-33	29	-47	82	+6	59	-17	63	-13	77	+1	48	-28		
	10-11	77	63	-14	44	-33	30	-47	81	+4	56	-21	63	-14	70	-7	47	-30		
GRADUATION RATE*		% Graduating	% Graduating	Gap	% Graduating	Gap	% Graduating	Gap	% Graduating	Gap	% Graduating	Gap	% Graduating	Gap	% Graduating	Gap	% Graduating	Gap		
	08-09	89.21	80.67	-8.54	82.14	-7.07	60	-29.21	91.98	+2.77	85.71	-3.5	75	-14.21	90.74	+1.53	66.25	-22.96		
	09-10	89.23	81.39	-7.84	85.52	-3.71	61.11	-28.12	92.16	+2.93	83.62	-5.61	78.72	-10.51	92.22	+2.99	64.68	-24.55		
	10-11	83.39	86.14	+2.75	83.77	+3.8	81.82	-1.57	87.90	+4.51	72.91	-10.48	72.51	-10.88	83.87	+4.8	49.36	-34.03		

* Graduation rate data for school year 2010-2011 is based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate calculations.

Note: A gap for a particular year is the difference between the percentage of students proficient in the particular subject or graduating in the “all students” group and the percentage of students proficient in the subject or graduating in the indicated subgroup. A negative gap indicates that the subgroup is performing below the “all students” group; a positive gap indicates that the subgroup is performing above the all students group.