UNDERSTANDING PRINCIPALS’ PERSPECTIVES ON HIRING
HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS IN WASHINGTON STATE:
A CRITICAL RACE PERSPECTIVE

By
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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of FABIAN ANDREW CASTILLEJA find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Dedicated to my wife, Lisa, and children, Milagro, Jose, and Cali for being so patient and understanding. Also, dedicated to my mother, Jovita Castilleja (Hernandez), for being my inspiration to pursue education as a path to enlightenment and opportunities. In loving memory of my father, Luis M. Castilleja, my oldest brother Louis Richard Castilleja, and my sisters Julie Elaine Castilleja and Guadalupe Castilleja, all of whom left this world much too soon.
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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the perception of principals during the process of hiring classroom teachers. Nine secondary principals in five school districts in Washington State were interviewed to gain an understanding of how they select high quality teachers for their schools. Data for this study were gathered through personal interviews with participants in this study using a semi-structured interview process. In these interviews, principals indicated that teacher “fit” was critical for their schools. Principals adhered to state and federal highly qualified mandates, but also added their own subjective criteria. Participating principals promoted what was described as a “colorblind” hiring process that would allow them to remain “ethnically neutral” when hiring teachers. Despite participants’ stated desire to provide their students with same-race role models, their processes resulted in high percentages of non-minority teacher populations at schools with high concentrations of minority students. This left little possibility for a change in the ethnic or racial demographics of the teaching staff in these schools.
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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

This study investigated and interpreted the perspectives of principals involved in the teacher hiring process at nine different secondary schools in five different Washington State school districts. I reviewed literature and included historical background for the integration of minority students into the predominantly white public school system. I wanted to learn more about the process that secondary principals go through in identifying and hiring high quality teachers for their schools and about the difficulties school districts encounter in narrowing the employment gap between Latino and white teachers in predominantly Latino school districts. I provided a review of literature regarding the teacher hiring process, teacher quality, and adult role models and mentors followed by the philosophical and methodological description of hermeneutics, qualitative research, the critical hermeneutic approach, and, finally, critical race theory, followed by a summary of my findings and recommendations for recruitment, hiring, and training of staff for similar school districts.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to interpret and understand the perspectives that influence the hiring practices of secondary school principals in high minority (Latino), low performing schools as they relate to teacher “quality.” I investigated and analyzed the relationship of these hiring practices through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT). I ascertained the specific teacher qualities that principals in these districts looked for during the hiring process, and the factors that influenced their decision-making process, by analyzing texts from semi-structured interviews with white and Latino principals.
Rationale for study:

Principals’ decisions have a significant impact on the composition of the teaching force in Studies I reviewed did not include same race characteristics or culturally proficient background or experience in these scales. public secondary classrooms. Kardos and Liu (2003) determined that 88% of new teachers interviewed with the principal, whose preconceptions of “high quality” determine the types of teachers they hire. These educators’ input, influence, and decision-making in the hiring process determine the “faces” of teachers that students see on a daily basis in their schools.

Nationally, 83% of teachers are white, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011). Demographics of U.S. school populations indicate a trend in student population, with the majority shifting from white students to students of color. The National Center for Education Statistics (2007) reported that “[i]n 2004, minorities made up 42% of public pre-kindergarten through secondary school enrollment” (Section 3 para. 3). The School Library Journal (2009) reported that “they [minority school children] will become the majority [of public school students] by 2023” (p. 1, para. 1).

The website of Washington State’s Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (2007) documented that white teachers comprised nearly 93% of the classroom teaching force, while nearly 35% of the Washington public school student population is “of color.” In districts with high or majority populations of Latino students, white teachers still comprise the high majority of the teaching force. Fifty-five school districts in Washington State reported a Latino student population of at least 30% and 27 school districts reported having Latino student populations of over 50% (OSPI, 2014). Twelve of these districts had a Latino enrollment of 80% or higher. One district had a Latino enrollment of 96.72% (Appendix A).
Washington State’s Latino student dropout rates are not improving, even as the Latino student population increases. In 2012, Latino students showed nearly double the dropout rate of white students in Washington State. Randi Dorn, current Superintendent of Public Instruction, reported in the Graduation and Dropout Statistics Annual Report 2011–12 (2013) that the Washington State 2011-12 dropout rate for Latino students was 19.8% compared to 11.8% dropout rate for white students. African American students had a dropout rate of 19.4% while American Indians had the highest dropout rate of 28.6% (pg. 10). Similarly, this report indicated that graduation rates for these racial groups were much lower than the graduation rates for white and Asian students. Dorn reported the white student, four-year graduation rate at 80.4% while Latino students graduated at a rate of 66.7%, African American students graduated at a rate of 67.1%, and Native American students graduated at a rate of 56.8% during this same time period (pg. 8).

2006 OSPI data indicated that Hispanic students maintained an on-time graduation rate of 57.5%, similar to their graduation rates of past years. By contrast, these same data indicated an on-time graduation rate of 76.5% for white students (OSPI Dropout and Graduation Statistics 2005-06, p. 2, 2006). The Latino graduation rate has improved over the past 6 years, however, the disparity in rates between white students and Latino students remains at 13.7%. Additionally, Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores, National Assessment of Educational Proficiency (NAEP) scores, American College Testing (ACT) scores, and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores indicate that Latino student scores lag significantly behind those of white students (Appendix B).

Washington State’s Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) identified the discrepancy in academic achievement
between whites and students of color as the “achievement gap” (Boeck, 2002). A report for the Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA) defined the “achievement gap” as:

The difference in academic achievement between African American, American Indian and Hispanic students and their white and Asian peers and the difference in academic achievement between students, whose families are of low-income, and their peers from middle and upper income families. This guide does refer, however, to the achievement gap on a national level and therefore extends the definition to include differences in academic performance as measured by other standardized tests (Definition section, para. 1).

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) indicated that, in reading and math, the achievement gap for Hispanic students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scale, had been unchanged since 1990 (NCES, 2011). Latino students have continued to score nearly 20 points – or two whole grade levels – lower than white students.

Latino students and African American students in Washington State have nearly identical graduation rates and dropout rates. These graduation rates are much lower and the dropout rate is much higher for these groups than they are for white students according to a 2013 report by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Graduation and Dropout Statistics Annual Report 2011–12, 2013). Testing data also indicate that Latino and African American students score significantly lower than white students on a number of state and national tests (Appendix B).

The achievement gap that exists between Latino and African American students and white students has persisted over a long period of time. The historical background related to this achievement gap can be traced back to the landmark Supreme Court case of Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka (1954) that attempted to create equality in education through the integration
of minority children into the white public education system. The success of this benchmark case continues to be argued today.

**Historical Background: Integrating Students of Color into the Public School System**

The decision in Brown vs. the Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), determined that “separate” could never be “equal” and required public school districts to integrate their schools in order to give every student an equal opportunity in education. The Supreme Court stated that separating black children from white children in public schools “…generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone…. [S]eparate but equal has no place…. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” (**Section 2, Paragraph 11**). The Court believed that integration of minority children into the white public education system would begin to break down many of the racial barriers that existed in American society at that time, and thus placed the burden of integrating American society squarely on the backs of children of color. After the Brown decision, African American children and other children of color were integrated into white schools. Many of these students were “teased, degraded, harassed, or ignored by their classmates and their teachers” (**Atanda, Holme, & Wells, 2005**).

The Court in Brown failed to address the overriding issues of racism entrenched in housing, employment, and public access that affected the ability of states to implement effective integration of children into their school systems. Tillman (2004) stated that, while the effects of this Supreme Court decision on children of color were extensively investigated, effects on educators of color and their communities were largely ignored. This author explained that the Brown decision was responsible for the “wholesale dismissal” of black educators and created a more segregated teaching force. According to Tillman, prior to the Brown decision, black
educators were an integral part of the black community, serving as leaders, advocates, and activists. Additionally, they developed “educational philosophies… [that] generally reflected the collective ethos of a Black community that believed education was the key to enhancing the life chances of their children” (p. 282).

Delpit (2003) described pre-Civil Rights era Black communities as promoting achievement as a primary goal in their schools, churches, and clubs. Delpit argued that these communities attempted to ensure achievement through “rituals that included uplifting songs, recitations, and performances; high expectations; extensive academic support in and out school; and regular assemblies of students to express the expectations of the adults around them that they must work hard to be free” (p. 19). Arias (2005) described similar community characteristics attributed to Mexican communities in California and that were used by the Federal District Court in Texas to extend the Brown decision to Latino communities.

Delpit stated that post-Civil Rights schools are de-ritualized institutions and rarely create intentional communities that “counter inferiority myths…and…Black students today…are victims of the myths of inferiority and find much less support for countering these myths and embracing academic achievement outside of individual families” (p. 19).

Tillman (2004) argued that “(t)he loss of jobs by African American educators after Brown affected the African American community culturally, socially, economically, and academically” (p. 298). In other words, the Brown decision had broad consequences that imposed long-lasting effects on the black community. Tillman explained that black educators were members of the black middle class and held respected positions in the black community. However, these positions in education, particularly in the South where most black educators...
were employed, were effectively destroyed by the “wholesale dismissal of Black educators” (p. 281) after the Brown decision.

Tillman (2004) synthesized her findings in Table 1 of her research (p. 286), displaying the Brown decision’s impact on black educators and indicating that racism lay at the root of decisions of most school districts under court order to desegregate, to close black schools and move black students to white schools, to fire most black teachers, regardless of their qualifications, and to keep most white teachers, in spite of their lack of qualifications. One primary source cited by Tillman is a 1954 letter to Darla Buchanan from her employer which stated that “…our Board will proceed on the assumption that the majority of people in Topeka will not want to employ [N]egro teachers next year for White students” (p. 280).

Kozol (2005) noted that while large-scale desegregation of public schools took place in the 1960s and 1970s, urban public schools have become nearly as segregated as before desegregation efforts began. Kozol cited the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University to verify his contention:

During the 1990s, the proportion of black students in majority white schools has decreased...to a level lower than in any year since 1968....Almost three fourths of black and Latino students attend schools that are predominantly minority, and more than two million, including more than a quarter of black students in the Northwest and Midwest, attend schools which we call apartheid schools, in which 99 to 100 percent of students are nonwhite. (p. 19)

Arias (2005) stated that there was limited information on the effects of de-segregation on Latino students because “during the most productive period of empirical research on the effects of desegregation on student outcomes…Latino students were not seen as the primary target of
desegregation policy (p. 1978). Arias noted that the 1970 Federal District Court case of Cisneros v. Corpus Christi found Mexican Americans subject to the Brown decision based on the judge’s determination that they were an identifiable ethnic minority due to their “physical characteristics, their Spanish language, their Catholic religion, their distinct culture, and their Spanish surnames” (p. 1979). And while the Supreme Court affirmed that Latino students fell under the umbrella of Brown in the 1973 Keyes case (p. 1980), Arias noted that the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in Vasquez et al v. SJUSD determined that the proper remedy for the Latino students required a return to racially identifiable neighborhood schools, thus, questioning the Supreme Court’s blanket remedy in Brown to focus on the desegregation of public school students as the primary solution inequality in public education.

Arias (2005) examined the effects of school desegregation in the San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) through the 1984 9th Circuit Court of Appeals case of Vasquez et al. v. SJUSD and the transformation of policy intentions (pp. 1975-1976). The federal appeals court found that this school district “failed to comply with state desegregation regarding guidelines, disregarded racial balance in planning sites for new schools, and used racial criteria inappropriately in the assignment of faculty and staff” (p. 1975). This court found in favor of the plaintiffs and remanded the case back to the district court in order to “produce a judicial remedy to eliminate the unconstitutional segregation” (p. 1975).

Arias (2005) recognized the court’s goal of equality in schools through racial balancing and that integrating the school populations was intended as a means to accomplish this goal. However, Arias has clarified that, while this goal and process may have been appropriate for African American students, it was not appropriate for many Latino students due to differences in
culture and language. Thus, Arias has pointed out, the remedy of racial integration ordered by the courts, in fact, proved detrimental to the education of Latino students.

Arias (2005) argued that the desegregation plan dealing with Latino students in this district did not serve to improve the quality of education for these students because the unintended consequences of the policy adversely impacted the Latino community – the very community that was supposed to benefit from this policy. Arias stated that Latino students were bussed more often and farther than white students, lacked access to community schools, and were moved to schools ill-equipped to provide English Language services for those who needed them.

According to Arias (2005), SJUSD used a “controlled choice” plan as a means to desegregate and to protect the district from the flight of the “white and the bright” (p. 1981). SJUSD was one of the few California school districts that did not have to dismantle its bilingual program due to the state’s English Only Law because it was already part of a federal desegregation plan. The author noted that, from a period of 1984 - 2002, the Court in Vasquez et al v. SJUSD required return to the practice of neighborhood schools and allowing schools to become identifiable by race, Latino or white, and that “racial balancing was no longer the goal” (p. 1991).

The remedy of racial integration of African American students into white school systems to address the issue of educational inequality was the goal of Brown. The Court did not address the need to integrate teaching staff in the white school systems and, therefore, most same race teachers for students of color were excluded from the American school system teaching force. Arias (2005) argued that Federal Appeals Courts not only determined that Mexican American students were included for consideration in the Brown decision but also that the blanket remedy
of racial integration provided by Brown was inappropriate for Mexican American students in the SJUSD case. These decisions opened the door for neighborhood schools to become identifiable by race through student demographics and, in theory, through staff demographics.

*Overview of Teacher Hiring Guidelines:*

The Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2001, adopted by most states, including Washington, identified highly qualified teacher (HQT) requirements for secondary school teachers, which focused on teacher knowledge in his/ her assigned subject areas. OSPI/ NCLB Highly Qualified Teacher Requirement Guidelines (2007) and the OSPI Glossary (2007) identified secondary HQT requirements as follows:

[M]iddle and high school teachers must meet HQT requirements in each subject area through one of the following paths: State test: WEST-E Praxis II, Washington endorsement, Academic major, Graduate degree, National Board Certification, Coursework equivalent to a major (45 quarter credits or 30 semester hours), High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE). (p. 6)

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (PBPTS, 2008) established five criteria on which this body certifies teachers. The OSPI webpage, referring to National Board Certified Teachers (2011), reported that teachers who receive NTBPS certification are eligible for $5,090 in additional salary from federal funds. If teachers work in a designated, low-income school district in Washington State, they receive an additional $5000, for a total of $10,090 (Section 1, para 2).

There is no indication that financial incentives improve teacher instruction that impacts student achievement. Wilcox, Dunne and Finn [1999], in Boyd and Reese (2011), stated that “the [NTBTS] cannot demonstrate that its blue-ribbon winners actually produce higher-achieving
students” (Assessing the Effectiveness of the NBPTS section, para. 7). Boyd and Reese, (2011) stated that Stone [2002] “found that none of the 16 board-certified teachers in Tennessee who taught 3-8…met a standard for exceptional teaching set by an incentive program in Chattanooga” (Assessing the Effectiveness of the NBPTS section, para. 8). Also, data indicated that NBPTS certified teachers do not end up teaching where they are needed most. Boyd and Reese (2011) stated that “…studies have found that a disproportionate number of these teachers are in high performing schools serving advantaged students, not where they seem to be needed most…” (Conclusions section, para. 1).

National and state teacher requirements focused on subject area, type of degree, years of experience, and other teacher characteristics in determining the standards for certification of professional teachers. OSPI allows districts to hire individuals with either Emergency or Conditional state certification. The 2007 OSPI Glossary (Appendix C) defines an Emergency Certificate holder as “a teacher candidate who has the appropriate degree and has substantially completed a teacher preparation program, but has yet to be qualified for the Residency Certificate” (Appendix C). A school can hire a teacher candidate “…if a regularly certificated teacher cannot be found.” The Emergency Certificate is valid for one year (Appendix C). In addition, the Glossary defines a Conditional Certificate holder as “a person who has expertise in the area and has been hired by the school or school district because they cannot find a certificated teacher in a specific endorsement area” (Appendix C). The Conditional Certificate holder is required to undergo professional development training and take courses related to teacher competencies, and specific limitations apply to the certificate. The Conditional Certificate is valid for two years. (Appendix C). State and federal guidelines direct school districts to focus on a teacher’s training, academic preparation, and subject area tests. Districts
establish their own criteria beyond these requirements when hiring certified teachers for their schools. These requirements form the basis for hiring public school teachers in Washington State.

School District Hiring/ Affirmative Action Policies

All school districts involved in this study utilized similar board policies in regard to non-discrimination, affirmative action, hiring, and recruitment. Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) website provides templates and procedures for all areas including affirmative action plans for school district policies. The language and format of these policies were similar enough to render them almost interchangeable. All districts participating in this study identified affirmative action goals to increase the number of ethnic minorities in under-represented categories including classroom. However, state law prevented these districts from using racial or ethnic background as a consideration to achieve these goals.

School District 1 Policy 5010 Personnel (1995) provided a sample of this contradiction in district affirmative action policies:

…the setting of goals and the implementation of corrective employment procedures to increase the ratio of aged, qualified individuals with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women and Vietnam veterans who are under-represented in the job classifications in relationship to the availability of such persons having requisite qualifications.

…..Affirmative action plans may not include hiring or employment preferences based on gender or race, including color, ethnicity or national origin. (Section 2, para. 1)

More recently, President Obama designated $4.35 billion dollars in funding for “Race to the Top” grants to school districts that were willing to restructure their schools. The following
reform areas are the focus of “Race to the Top” legislation listed on the grant’s website (2009, para. 3):

- Attracting and keeping great teachers and leaders in America’s classrooms, by expanding effective support to teachers and principals
- Reforming and improving teacher preparation
- Revising teacher evaluation, compensation, and retention policies to encourage and reward effectiveness; and working to ensure that our most talented teachers are placed in the schools and subjects where they are needed the most
- Supporting data systems that inform decisions and improve instruction by fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system, assessing and using data to drive instruction, and making data more accessible to key stakeholders
- Using innovation and effective approaches to turn-around struggling schools by asking states to prioritize and transform persistently low-performing schools

The Brown decision addressed the concerns related to students but did not address the integration of teachers of color into the white educational teaching force. Federal and state teacher guidelines established clearly defined requirements for teachers in Washington State. School districts established additional requirements for teachers in their districts. These requirements have not significantly impacted the academic performance of students of color or the racial demographics of the teacher work force; especially in high minority school districts. What impact does this process of hiring affect student performance in these districts?

In Washington State, Latino students perform much lower academically than their white counter-parts while Latino student dropout rates are much higher than white students’ dropout rates. Federal court cases have determined that students of color were treated unfairly in the
American educational system and that the initial remedy of racial integration of public schools was not necessarily the appropriate remedy for all racial groups.

Research Questions

I developed the following research questions for the purposes of this study to determine how principals select teachers that work in their schools. I was interested in how high minority schools continued to have majority white teaching staff, even in schools that under-perform academically. I posed the following questions to the participants in my study:

1. How do principals determine characteristics that connote a “high quality teacher?”

2. Do principals consider their school’s student population’s racial/ cultural background in their consideration of characteristics of “quality” and/ or “highly qualified teachers” for their schools/ districts?

3. Do Latino and white principals differ in their perspectives on the hiring and training process of teachers for their schools?

4. In what ways are the researcher’s perceptions changed and/ or supported by this study?

The responses to these questions provided me with information regarding principals’ perceptions related to high quality teachers and the characteristics they looked for in teachers they hired for their schools. Ultimately, these perceptions affect the academic performance of students in high, minority, low income schools.
CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature related to current teacher hiring practices, same race adult mentors, Teacher Quality Index (TQI) scales, and their impact on student learning. Data related to current hiring practices indicated that specific qualifications have been established to form the pools for hiring teachers. These specific qualifications are directed by federal and state agencies. Research indicated a positive effect of same-race teachers, same-race mentors, and culturally sensitive trained teachers on the academic performance of students. Teacher quality studies focused on teacher characteristics and, in at least one case, teacher instructional strategies, to build Teacher Quality Index (TQI) scales. These TQI studies revealed differences in how white students and students of color have been exposed to “high quality teachers.” These studies reviewed did not include same race characteristics or culturally proficient background or experience in these scales.

Hiring Practices

Research focusing on hiring practices in education is limited. Kardos and Liu (2003) have stated that hiring practices rely mainly on administrative interviews and documents such as resumes, applications, and letters of reference. These researchers documented that 88% of new teachers interviewed with the principal while less than 1% interviewed with students.

Balter and Duncombe (2005) have stated that the majority of districts in New York State most often considered certification and major in the subject area, as well as references and recommendations as the most important criteria in selecting teacher candidates. Administrators in this study did not consider demographics of teaching staff or students during the hiring processes of teachers for their schools.
The review of literature suggested a noticeable lack of information regarding the perceptions of principals during the hiring process regarding what characteristics define the “high quality” they seek. This is particularly relevant for schools with high populations of students of color and schools in poverty – schools whose characteristics resemble those of schools in my study.

**Significance of Same-Race Adult Role Models**

Qualitative and quantitative research studies reviewed indicated that same-race teachers or mentors of students made a positive impact on student learning. Zirkel (2002) stated that:

> [Y]oung people learn the racial and gendered structuring of the culture in which they live by noting the race and gender of adults in different professional positions. The presence or absence of like others in different social positions implicitly conveys information to young people about the possibilities for their futures. (p. 357)

Zirkel determined that 12-14 year old students achieved better academic performance after a year of being matched with a same-race, same-gender role model. This improvement was not bound by the educational or career level of the role model and demonstrated that the mere exposure on a regular basis to a same-race, same-gender role model carried a significant impact for a given student’s academic performance.

Dee (2004) used data from a randomized field trial in Tennessee indicating that “[b]lack students learn more from black teachers and white students learn more from white teachers, suggesting that the racial dynamics within classrooms may contribute to the persistent racial gap in student performance…” (p. 53). The author argued that, while the relationships between same-race teachers were beneficial to all students; generally, white students were the beneficiaries of these relationships because their exposure to same-race teachers extended for more years. Very
few African American students were exposed to same-race teachers in large percentages or over time.

Monroe and Obidah’s (2004) research indicated that same-race teachers who shared cultural background and experience with their students used “cultural humor” and “emotion and affect” to deal effectively with disciplinary issues (an issue ranked as a top educational concern by teachers) in urban, African American classrooms. They argued that “cultural synchronization” comprises an important aspect of effective teaching in communities of color and that “effective teachers of African American students align their professional practice with their students’ culture” (p. 259). Monroe and Obidah cited indications that “unfavorable school outcomes among students of color support the need to further educators’ understanding of how behaviors may be culturally based (Erickson, 1993/1996; Gay, 2006)” (p. 258).

Research has thus established that students of all racial/ethnic backgrounds benefit from same-race role models. Unfortunately, the students who need this benefit most receive it least. Even in schools where student of color populations far exceeded white student populations, exposure of African American students to same-race teachers was much lower than the equivalent for white students; whether on a single occasion or over time (Dee, 2004).

Impact of Culturally Sensitive Professional Development

Studies have indicated that teachers exposed to culturally sensitive professional development are able to provide a more positive impact on the academic performance of students of color than those who are not. Brown and Medway (2007) gathered data from a school in South Carolina with student demographics of 71% African American, 25% White, and 1% Latino and which was designated as a highly effective school. The authors determined that high expectations of all students by teachers of any race in “mutually supportive educational environments”
provided all students with the opportunity to succeed. Developing close relationships with students’ families to support their success, utilizing hands-on curriculum and cooperative learning opportunities, and successfully advocating for professional development opportunities were found to be components essential to addressing the challenges of teaching in a diverse educational community.

Parsons’ (2005) research addressed the issue of white privilege, described by the author as “culturally sanctioned beliefs and norms, regardless of intention, have defined, buttressed, and defended the advantages of the dominant group” (p. 25). The author argued that white teachers can break out of these social norms by practicing “culturally relevant caring,” which can enable them to interact effectively with all students, not just white students. Parsons argued that teachers can be taught this culturally relevant caring through professional development opportunities that cultivate the characteristic already motivating many such individuals to choose teaching as a profession – caring.

Tellez (2006) discussed the importance of teacher mentors in providing professional development training to student teachers in the area of “equity pedagogy” (multi-cultural education) and quality instructional practices. This study indicated that exposure to mentor teachers who practiced equity pedagogy significantly impacted student teachers’ philosophy of education in culturally diverse settings. The author argued that the ability of teachers to develop characteristics of caring and cultural sensitivity stands as a critical component of developing learning environments that support educational equality for all children.

Superintendents from Central Washington submitted a report entitled “A White Paper on Poverty and English Language Learners in the Yakima Valley” (2007) that supported Tellez’ arguments. These school leaders recommended that legislators pass legislation to require cultural
competence and language acquisition training for all Washington state certified teachers and to allow alternate certification opportunities for teachers certified in other countries in order to fill areas designated as shortage areas, including bilingual proficiency.

Tellez (2006) demonstrated that professional development opportunities cultivating cultural proficiency are critical for all teachers in our culturally diverse society. The crucial nature of this training is underscored by the recommendations of Yakima Valley Superintendents to Washington State legislators and school board members to implement a law that requires cultural competence and language acquisition training for all Washington State teachers.

Importance of Teacher Quality

Literature related to teacher quality has indicated that teachers exert a significant impact on student learning. Schacter and Thum (2004), Darling-Hammond (2004), Cloetfelder, Ladd, and Vigdor (2005), and Gong, Presley, and White (2005) all determined that teacher quality has a significant impact on students learning. In addition, performance measurements of students of color, as conducted by National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), Washington State High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE), Washington State Middle School Proficiency Examination (MSPE), and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) show that, overall, students of color perform at a level much lower than white students (Appendix B).

The educational experience differs for students of color and white students. What contributes to this disparate educational experience? Schacter and Thum (2004) found that teachers with higher levels of teaching quality as measured by TQI promoted much higher levels of learning in their students. The authors rated quality teachers using teacher behavior, teaching models, teaching strategies, and teacher qualification. This was the sole study encountered in this
review of literature to include the teachers’ pedagogy along with characteristics such as level of education, experience, or certification to determine TQI. These authors stated that “…access to an effective teacher is the single most important school related factor responsible for increased learning” and conversely “…the detriments for those [students] assigned to ineffective teachers are equally damaging” (p. 411). Schacter and Thum provided evidence indicating that classrooms with higher numbers of Hispanic, ELL, and poverty level students actually tended to have lower quality teachers as determined by their TQI scale. The students with the highest need for effective teaching had the lowest quality teachers. Schacter and Thum did not include same race or cultural proficiency to establish TQI for this study.

Darling-Hammond (1999) concluded that student demographic characteristics are less influential than teacher quality in relation to state level student learning outcomes. In this quantitative study, this author summarized other studies as having found that:

...differential teacher effectiveness is a strong determinant of differences in student learning, far outweighing the effects of differences in class size and heterogeneity [Sander & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997/ Jordan, Mendro, & Weerasinghe, 1997]. Students who are assigned to several ineffective teachers in a row have significantly lower achievement and gains in achievement than those who are assigned to several highly effective teachers in sequence [Sanders & Rivers, 1996]. Teacher effects appear to be additive and cumulative, and generally not compensatory. (p. 5)

Darling-Hammond’s (1999) findings indicated that whether teachers had full certification and a major in their teaching field (teacher quality) had a greater impact on student learning than the level of that education (masters, doctorate, or additional educational credits) or other
measures of certification status. Darling-Hammond argued that colleges meeting national accreditation standards, school districts implementing the strictest hiring policies focused on well-qualified teachers, and states with educational professional standards boards, similar to law or medical boards, constituted the best predictors of higher teacher quality.

Gong, Presley, and White (2005) demonstrated that schools in Illinois with high Teacher Quality Index (TQI) scores, which focus on teacher characteristics, have higher concentrations of teachers with attributes shown to be positively related to student achievement and lower concentrations of the converse. They also found a correlation between TQI and school performance and, in addition, demonstrated that schools, especially those with high poverty, high minority populations, performed better when teachers had higher TQI scores. However, the authors’ research indicated that schools with characteristics of high poverty and high minority populations were the least likely to employ teachers with high TQI scores.

Cloetfelder, Ladd, and Vigdor (2005) investigated the differences between novice versus experienced teachers teaching white and black students in North Carolina. Cloetfelder et al. argued that teacher experience was a characteristic of teacher quality that greatly impacted student achievement. The data used in this study revealed that white students were exposed to more experienced teachers, while black students had a much higher probability of exposure to novice teachers, and furthermore, that these teacher assignments were based on the race of the students. The data indicated that the distribution of quality teachers was a significant factor in learning and that assignment of novice teachers to black students was most frequent within districts and schools where such staffing decisions were made by local administrators.

To summarize, studies revealed that teachers with same-race characteristics and/or training and experience in cultural proficiency have a positive impact on student learning. Other
studies have confirmed that while TQI, excluding same race or cultural proficiency considerations, imparts a significant impact on student achievement, teachers of lower quality are regularly assigned to schools with high populations of students of color and or children in poverty. Specifically, research has indicated that teachers with less experience, less knowledge in their subject area, and less training are assigned to students of color much more frequently than to white students (Cloetfelder et al, 2005).

Gong, Presley, and White (2005) stated that schools with characteristics of high poverty and high minority populations were the least likely to employ teachers with high TQI scores. According to these studies, assignment of students to low quality teachers leads to poor academic performance by students – a connection that goes a long way toward explaining the “achievement gap” between white students and students of color. Darling-Hammond (2004) stated, “(b)y every measure of qualifications – state certification, content background for teaching, pedagogical training, selectivity of college attended, test scores, or experience – less qualified teachers are found disproportionately in schools serving greater numbers of low-income or minority students [NCES 1997; Lankfor et al., 2002]” (p. 218).

The literature reviewed indicated that principals influence the teacher hiring process and that same race adult role models and mentors and cultural characteristics make an impact on student learning. In addition, studies focusing on TQI revealed that, however constructed, TQI made a significant impact on student academic achievement, however, all scales excluded same race characteristics and cultural proficiency experience or training. Therefore, this study will explore principals’ perspectives on hiring high quality teachers in their schools. This study will be a qualitative study filtered through the lens of critical race theory.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The Essence of Goodness

Arminio and Hultgren (2004) reframed the process of qualitative research in terms of “goodness” in order to differentiate between the “empirical, positivistic frame” of objectivity, validity, and reliability and a more ideological match that focuses on subjectivism, trustworthiness, and constructivism (Called by Questions section, para. 7). These authors defined “goodness” as making meaning of a phenomenon through the process of interaction by the researcher and the subject of the research, both participants being necessary in the “necessary participants in its co-creation” (The Essence of Goodness section, para. 2). Arminio and Hultgren stated that one cannot produce meaning-making in interpretive and critical research by verifying objective facts that one measures and represents by numbers and that, in doing so, a researcher would be using an inappropriate mindset or philosophy to guide their practice, thus utilizing the wrong tools for the job. The authors argued that this process, based on hermeneutical phenomenological theory, offers an “alternative to empirical positivistic criteria (reliability and validity) which more appropriately addresses the epistemological grounding of qualitative research” (Introduction section, para. 9). The authors stated that the goal of “goodness” in human sciences research is:

…serious introspection by the researcher and the desire to improve practice and the world around us. Goodness requires that elements of the meaning making process are illustrated; epistemological and theoretical foundations are linked to the selected methodology; and that the method of data collection and its analysis are clear, offering new understanding that leads to improved practice. (Introduction section, para. 1)
These authors identified the six elements of goodness as epistemology and theory, methodology, method, research and participants as multicultural subjects, interpretation and presentation, and recommendations. They described epistemology and theory as “the foundation” or “…a broad map for the research process… that informs the methodology” (Essence of Goodness section, para. 2). The authors described methodology as “the approach” or “…the specific route to travel upon the broad map. It is the approach, plan of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and use of particular data collection methods” (Essence of Goodness section, para. 2). Method was described as “the collection of data” or “…the techniques or procedures used for gathering data” (Essence of Goodness section, para. 2). Arminio and Hultgren identified researcher and participants as multicultural subjects as “the representation of voice” where “researchers…reflect upon their relationship with their phenomenon under exploration” (Essence of Goodness section, para. 2). They described interpretation and presentation as “the art of meaning making,” where the researcher is “guided by the methodology and obtained by means of the data collection method. It is through the interpretation process and its presentation that new insight is gained” (Essence of Goodness section, para. 2). The recommendations element is represented as “implications for professional practice,” where research is conducted “to improve the lives of others” (Essence of Goodness section, para. 2).

Epistemology/ Theoretical Perspective

Hermeneutics is a Latin term taken from the Greek term “hermeneutice,” with a history dating back to ancient Greece and Hermes, the Greek god of boundaries. It is defined as “the study and practice of understanding and interpretation” (Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research, 2009, section 1, para. 1). According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
(2005), during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, hermeneutics was used to interpret and understand religious and sacred texts and, later, included the study of ancient and classic cultures. Heidegger advanced modern hermeneutics by proposing a view differing from natural scientific process; that of a “fundamental process of man's being in the world” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2005, p. 9). Heidegger and, later, Gadamer maintained that “the focus of hermeneutics is on the event of understanding or interpretation as it occurs in the encounter between reader and text.... Being in the world is the basis for understanding and interpretation, not a separate event. Humans do not first look at the world and then understand it, but they live out their understandings every day” (Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods, 2008, section 2, para. 4).

Heidegger described the hermeneutic circle in terms of “interplay between our self-understanding and understanding the world” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, p. 11) rather than the interplay between “text and tradition.” Gadamer described this process as a “fusion of horizons” in which “[w]e recognize the authority of a text (or work of art) by engaging with it in textual explication and interpretation, by entering into a dialogical relationship with the past” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, p. 13). Gadamer also theorized that “understanding comes from interpretations embedded in our linguistic and cultural traditions, which contribute to our inherent prejudices (prejudgments)” (Byrne, 2001, section 4, para. 3) and that as human beings we are unable to shed past experiences or “bracket out” prejudices but, rather, these experiences contribute to a better understanding.

Willis (2007) explained, “hermeneutics has expanded beyond that original meaning to include understanding human action in context” (p. 104) while Kinsella (2006) cited Gadamer in identifying the purpose of hermeneutics as “not to develop a procedure of understanding, but
rather to clarify the interpretive conditions in which understanding takes place” (Section 2.1, para. 3). Kinsella (2006) described the hermeneutic process as the “art of interpretation” and outlined five characteristics of this process. Hermeneutic inquiry “(a) seeks understanding rather than explanation; (b) acknowledges the situated location of interpretation; (c) recognizes the role of language and historicity in interpretation; (d) views inquiry as conversation; and (e) is comfortable with ambiguity” (Characteristics of a Hermeneutic Approach section, para. 3).

The critical hermeneutic approach, according to the Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research (2009), can be defined as a merging of hermeneutic and poststructuralist concepts and becomes a “dialogic interpretation [that] can in good conscience attempt to achieve an adequate understanding of the subject matters and their contexts and in this process can itself thematize the role of power for interpretation” (Critical Hermeneutics as Articulated Paradigm section, para. 3).. Hermeneutics’ theoretical core “claims that all explicit or conscious acts of interpretation are essentially grounded in an implicit and unthematic background understanding;” the background of which is “…linguistically mediated and culturally and socially situated” (The Methodological Core of Critical Interpretation section, para. 1). Smith, cited in Willis (2007), stated that “the whole point of critical hermeneutic self reflection is to foster practical engagement or emancipation in the light of historical truth [p. 107]” (p. 104). Alternately, Byrne (2001) argued that one purpose of critical hermeneutics was to “expose hidden power imbalances and challenge the status quo” (section 4, para.1). Kinsella (2006) stated that “insights garnered from critical perspectives with respect to power, the potential misuse of language, the recognition of distinct but potentially communicative selves, and an acknowledgment of ‘the fix we are in’ can inform hermeneutic inquiry” (Section 3, para. 2).
Stated differently for purposes of this study, the Critical Hermeneutic Approach merges the researcher's perspectives on power and history with subject matter and social and cultural contexts to gain an understanding of the relationships that create an unjust and unequal situation in the subject being studied. It relies on a dialogic interpretation of competing perspectives and historical truth in order to generate themes related to power relationships that challenge the status quo and promote alternate modes of perceiving the situation.

**Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers the theoretical perspective used to view the data collected in this study. CRT provides the opportunity for researchers to investigate issues related to society, education, and politics through the lens of racism and “focuses on how people of color transcend structural barriers and create successful moments for themselves and others” (Chapman 2007, p. 157). Tate (1999) stated that law and educational research characterized people of color as inferior and therefore questioned the “appropriateness of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in educational research. (Gage, 1989); (Jacob, 1987; Schrag, 1992; Shulman, 1986)” (p. 198). Dixson and Rousseau (2005) argued that delivering the message was important by “any means necessary” and suggested that any research methodology would be appropriate if it addressed the issue of “inequity in education” (p. 22).

According to Tate (1999), CRT falls within the parameters of the definition of Critical Hermeneutics and focused on a lack of significant progress made by the American Civil Rights Movement during the 1970s and the perceived erosion of any progress made since that time. Tate stated that CRT is critical of both neo-conservative and liberal theories of multiculturalism describing a “color blind” society and that both CRT and Critical Legal Studies (CLS) contend that law serves the most powerful groups of our society. Tate (1999) argued that the CRT
movement focuses more specifically on the experiences of people of color, a feature lacking in the CLS movement.

Scholars consider Derrick Bell a founder of CRT. He introduced the principles of constitutional contradiction, interest convergence, and the price of racial remedies (Tate, 1999). Bell described “false consciousness” as the acceptance or adoption of societal norms and mores by people of color, even when these constructs do not truly reflect their experience. Storytelling and the stories disenfranchised people tell differ greatly and are told in ways different from those of enfranchised people, according to CRT thought.

Tate (1999) discussed Kimberlé Crenshaw’s concepts of expansive and restrictive views of equality and their relationship in anti-discrimination law. Taft noted Crenshaw’s argument that a “...belief in color blindness and equal process... is illogical in a society in which specific groups have been treated differently historically and in which the outcomes of this differential treatment continue into the present’” (p. 229). This idea of “color blindness” is often cited as a goal by liberal voices in education when discussing racial issues.

Tate (1999) identified Delgado as a founder of Latino critical thought and cited Delgado’s contributions to CRT by documenting his list of eight points:

(1) an insistence on “naming our own”

(2) the belief that knowledge and ideas are powerful

(3) a readiness to question basic premises of moderate/incremental civil rights law

(4) the borrowing of insights from social science on race and racism

(5) critical examination of the myths and stories powerful groups use to justify racial subordination

(6) a more contextualized treatment of doctrine
(7) criticism of liberal legalisms

(8) an interest in structural determinism – the ways in which legal tools and thought-structures can impede law reform. (p. 95)

Delgado (1991) states that, “Latino/a Critical scholars endeavor not only to understand how and why mainstream civil rights law has proven inadequate, but to frame new approaches that will better address a complex, multiracial society” (p. 164). The use of CRT as a lens for critical analysis is essential to understanding the longstanding educational beliefs that prevent students of color from enjoying the same quality of education as white students.

Methodology: Site Selection

Five school districts in Washington State with student demographics reflecting a majority enrollment of students of color, primarily Latino students, and over 50% free/ reduced lunch were selected for this study. Secondary schools (middle schools and high schools) selected were all identified as being in need of some course of improvement as determined by the OSPI through the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores. Three of the five high schools selected were identified as “dropout factories” by the Alliance for Excellent Education at John Hopkins University (2007). One high school and one middle school are located in a large metropolitan area, while the others are in smaller, rural communities. Middle schools serve approximately 800 students in grades 6 - 8 and feature predominantly Latino enrollments with at least 60% free/ reduced lunch rates. High schools contain populations of at least 70% Latino students and 60% free/ reduced lunch participation. Two of the three high schools represented enrolled over 600 students and one enrolled just over 274 students in grades in 9 – 12, while the metropolitan high school enrolled nearly 3000 students (since this time, a new high school was built which separated this enrollment).
School District Descriptions

District 1, selected for this study, is a large school district in a metropolitan area with a high school enrollment of 3219 students (2010 HSPE data reflects an enrollment of 2041 due to the splitting of the student body for a new high school) and a middle school enrollment of 875. The district has a high poverty rate and high Latino enrollment. According to the principals interviewed, 80% to 90% of the staff population is white, and many certified staff members live outside the district’s boundaries. The OSPI website (2009) reports that both schools are at Level 5, the highest level of needed improvement, as measured by OSPI’s Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The high school was designated as a “dropout factory” in a study conducted by John Hopkins University (2005) as less than 50% of its freshman graduate from that district at the end of their fourth year of high school (Appendix D).

District 2 is set in a small, rural community. OSPI data (2010) revealed that the high school had a student population of 829 and the middle school a student population of 768. District 2 demographics revealed a high poverty rate and high Latino enrollment. The secondary principals reported the certified staff population to be between 85% and 95% white. The high school is at Level 3 for AYP needed improvement and was likewise identified as a “dropout factory” by the John Hopkins University study (2005), while the middle school is at Level 4 for AYP needed improvement (Appendix D).

District 3, also located in a small rural community that features an agricultural based economy, listed a high school student enrollment of 768. The middle school enrollment stood at 687. This school suffers the highest poverty index, with 97.8% of its students qualifying for free/reduced lunch; both schools are at Level 5 for AYP needed improvement. This district’s student population is 78.8% Latino while, according to the high school principal and the
superintendent, 80-90% of the certified staff population is white. District 3’s high school is also listed as a “dropout factory” by John Hopkins University (2005), yet, as reported by their local newspaper, received a Silver Medal of recognition and was listed as a top high school in the nation by U.S. News Media [2008] (Appendix D).

District 4 is similar in size and economic base to Districts 2 and 3, with a high school enrollment of 1042 and a middle school enrollment of 658. It has a Latino student population of 82.5% while the secondary principals reported a certified staff population of 80-90% white. This district also has a high student poverty level and high Latino enrollment (Appendix D).

District 5 is located in a rural community and is the smallest district involved in this study. According to OSPI School Report Card data (2010), the high school population consists of 274 students while the middle school has a population of 231 students. The district reported a free/reduced lunch rate of 65.95% for secondary school students with a high Latino population (78.5% for the high school and 72.7% for the middle school) for the 2010 school year. The district’s secondary principals reported that, by contrast, over 90% of the certified staff population is white, and many of their teachers live outside of the district’s boundaries. The high school principal stated that “…we have, uh, one Hispanic male and fourteen white people.” The middle school principal stated that “…just looking at the middle school population we have two, uh, we have one teacher of Asian descent [out of fourteen to sixteen teachers] and have…two para-educators…of Hispanic descent.” The district office reports that the secondary school’s staff demographics include three minority certified staff members, one Asian and two Latinos. The OSPI website (2009) reported that the high school is on Level 3 for needed improvement and the middle school is on Level 5, the highest level measured by AYP. See Table 1 (Appendix D).
**Participant Selection**

The participants were selected from five school districts that reported high minority enrollment, high poverty status, and are designated to be on some level of improvement by the Washington State OSPI. Participants selected consisted of a mix of white and minority secondary principals. All principals included in this study were male; however, gender was not a consideration in this study. The only female administrator approached for this study claimed a conflict of interest and refused to be interviewed. The following data were collected from participant answers to interview questions and reflected their data at the time of the interview.

**Procedures for Data Collection**

Participants were interviewed in a single session utilizing a semi-structured interview format and an interview guide consisting of six major questions (Appendix E). Follow-up interviews were conducted via e-mail questionnaire. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), semi-structured interviews are appropriate in research situations where “researchers want more specific information” and follow a general pattern whereby “the interviewer introduces the topic, then guides the discussion by asking specific questions” (Rubin & Rubin 1995, p. 5).

**Interview Protocols**

Participants were interviewed using an interview guide in a face-to-face semi-structured interview format. Participants’ school districts are identified by number and described as school districts in Washington State. Verbatim transcripts were sent to each participant to edit or supplement. Participants are identified as secondary principals from Group A, high schools, or Group B, middle schools. Data collected from interviews were stored in a locked cabinet in my office.
Procedures for Data Analysis

Interview data was sorted and charted in a spreadsheet, through which emergent themes were identified. Rubin & Rubin (1995) stated that “theories emerge from the interviews.... The theories reach for broader significance but remain firmly grounded in the experiences and understanding of the interviewees” (1995, p. 63). Themes were color coded and comments from participants matched with appropriate themes and placed in those categories. Other data sources included Washington State assessment data, school district employee and student demographics, as well as district data.

Critical Race Theory is appropriate for this study because it forces the researcher to look beyond accepted societal views of teacher quality and hiring practices of schools imposed by NCLB and state certification requirements in order to consider overriding issues – in this case race – in our society. CRT requires the researcher to consider the motivations of school administrators and their hiring committees who hire white teachers in schools with high percentages of students of color and students in poverty, based solely on the teacher’s academic course of study and/or state certification, evincing little to no consideration of their race or cultural backgrounds, the race and cultural background of their students, and/or experience in communicating and interacting with students and families from the communities in which they will serve. CRT requires an investigator to re-evaluate the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court's Brown decision on communities of color and recognize that this decision may have imposed negative effects on students of color. It is appropriate, then, to focus on Richard Delgado’s points of “(1) an insistence on ‘naming our own’,” “(4) the borrowing of insights from social science on race and racism; and (5) critical examination of the myths and stories powerful groups use to justify racial subordination” (Tate, p. 95) to examine the topics of this study.
Validity Considerations

Glesne (2006) stated that trustworthiness was supported by “the use of multiple data-collection methods.... Although multiple data-collection methods is the most common form of triangulation.... triangulation in order to increase confidence in research findings may also involve the incorporation of multiple kinds of data sources..., multiple investigators, and multiple theoretical perspectives [see Denzin 1989a]” (p. 36). I have attempted to address the issues of validity and triangulation by including data from interviews of nine different secondary administrators from five different sites covering a large geographic area of Washington State, and analysis of school site demographics, test score data, hiring and affirmative action policies, and my own self-reflective data. I provided verbatim copies of text of interviews to each participant and asked them to review them for accuracy and to add additional information if they felt they had not provided sufficient information. One middle school principal refused to be interviewed. I included numeric data from that school but only interview data from the high school principal in that district.

Self as Researcher

I am a 53 year-old Mexican male with 23 years of experience as a teacher, school principal, and college counselor/recruiter, in schools with student populations similar to those enlisted for this study. In my capacity as a school administrator and college counselor/recruiter, I have been involved in the hiring process of teachers and educators for over fifteen years.

I attended schools in a district similar to those involved in this study. Though my family migrated between states before I was born and while I was very young, it stayed in Washington State after I started elementary school; all sixteen children graduated from the same high school. Darling-Hammond (2004) stated that the “education outcomes for students of color are much
more a function of their unequal access to key educational resources, including skilled teachers and quality curriculum, than they are a function of race (of the students)” (p. 214). Such unequal access was evident by my school district in teachers’ treatment of and dealings with students. Students were treated differently depending on their race and socio-economic status. I perceived a hierarchy of students extending from wealthy white children of farmers and ranchers, educators’ children, to poorer white students, to settled out Mexican students, migrant students, immigrant Mexican students, and finally Native American students. Teachers made recommendations and committed their time to students based on categories into which they fell.

As a building principal in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, I was involved in the hiring process of classroom teachers from elementary through secondary schools. I screened applications, set up committees, developed questions, conducted interviews, and made recommendations to the superintendents for hiring new teachers. I was keenly aware of the power I had in this process, but also realized the limitations I faced based on the pool of candidates available. I became involved in actively recruiting teachers in each of my school districts to influence the pool of candidates for teaching jobs. In addition, criteria for hiring teachers was strictly monitored by the district human resources departments of all districts and focused primarily on teacher certification or subject area background rather than on personal characteristics or cultural proficiency. Requirements of bilingual ability or cultural proficiency for teachers in the general classrooms were disallowed in districts where I worked. During my tenure as a college counselor and recruiter, I sat as a committee member on interview teams for district office personnel at the secondary level and also for two college level instructor positions, though the influence I exerted on the hiring process was much less in the latter two cases.
My professional educational experience as a principal recruited to reform failing schools netted different results. During four years as a principal at an elementary school throughout which my superintendent was very supportive, I was able to hire new teachers with help from staff and the community. We made significant academic progress in my first year; however, scores became stagnant during subsequent years. While our students still struggled academically, we were able to assemble a caring and committed staff that interacted positively with students and families. I was able to non-renew, discipline, and hire as needed. Unfortunately, after the longest strike in state history, the superintendent’s contract was bought out and new school board members were elected who completely changed the dynamics and direction of the district.

I was non-renewed from the next district that hired me after one year, having followed the superintendent’s directives to reform this elementary school by holding teachers accountable for their instruction in a high poverty, high minority, rural school. Even with improved reading scores, which was the focus of that school, the district superintendent succumbed to pressure from the teachers’ union and school board to non-renew because I didn’t “match” the community and threatened their “family” environment. I developed a growing understanding of the impact of teacher unions and the school board in maintaining the status quo in the hiring process.

I chose to conduct this study because the academic achievement for Latino students in Washington State continues to lag significantly behind that of white students. I am interested in analyzing the relationship between principal hiring practices, principal perceptions, and societal forces that allow these hiring practices to continue, permitting teacher racial demographics to continue being inversely proportionate to student racial demographics in high minority, low income communities.
CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

I interviewed nine secondary principals through a semi-structured interview process focusing on their perspectives regarding the hiring process of “high quality” teachers for their schools. I asked principals to describe their understanding of characteristics of high quality teachers, describe the hiring process in their schools, and to explain the importance of hiring high quality teachers for their schools. These participants represented five different Washington State school districts and nine secondary public schools. Each participant was identified using a coding system that assigned a number and letter designation. Their district was identified using a number and their building level was identified using a letter. As interview data were sorted, themes emerged from clusters of information taken from principals’ quotes. These themes were then analyzed through the lens of critical race theory.

Principals exert a significant influence on the hiring process of teachers. Kardos and Liu (2003) reported that nearly 88% of teacher candidates interviewed with the school principal and that this process included evaluation of resumes, letters of recommendation, and applications. I identified three major themes from the principal interviews. These included finding a “good fit” for their school and staff, the significance of federal and state “highly qualified” teacher qualifications as the standard for hiring, and the importance of the “characteristic of caring” or “relationship building” between teachers and students. Finding a good fit was the overriding concern for principals and the interviews revealed that these school administrators were able to use federal and state teacher hiring guidelines to ensure that teachers “fit” into their current staff demographics. Principals were also able to use these guidelines to disregard the characteristics of caring that were difficult to quantify and were not included in creating these guidelines.
Participants used the characteristic of “fit” as a filter for their hiring pools. Fit was identified as the defining teacher characteristic for which principals looked when selecting candidates for teaching positions in their schools. Principals wanted candidates to fit their school communities and used state and federal guidelines for highly qualified teachers to help shape their selection process, even above their identified need to provide same race adult role models and mentors for their students.

The theme of fit resonated throughout the interviews and established the idea that the candidate had to be a “team player,” in other words, a “good fit” for the school. The team player was described as the candidate agreeing with school vision and getting along with other faculty:

P4A: And so the team player [is] willing to look at improving instruction – a coachable, a coachable person.

The participants indicated that the term “good fit” showed that a teaching candidate would make a positive contribution to the school by virtue of sharing the interests and values of current staff and community and making connections with students. Principals identified subjective characteristics, ranging from whether the candidate liked rural settings to whether current staff liked the candidate, as criteria for sorting their pool of candidates. Participants commented on the desire to hire staff who wanted to live in rural communities and who would thus want to “stay around for a while.” Participants in this study repeatedly referenced this subjective measurement of teacher quality.

Participants also spoke of their ability to “exclude” candidates that did not “fit” their schools based on the subjective criteria of “not getting along” with other staff or “not fitting in”
with the culture of the school. For example, one participant stated that even a well-qualified candidate may not be a “good fit”:

P4A: Well… there are many qualified people out there and just because you’re qualified doesn’t mean you’re the right fit, and I think it’s… it’s very important to have the right fit at a school. So you can have all of the content knowledge, uh, but if you don’t have the ability to connect socially or have those relationships, then it’s not gonna be somebody that will most likely work in this school, and I think most schools would probably say the same thing.

One middle school participant explained that “fit” was indeed a most important factor and that if he could find a person who suited the school in terms of “fit,” the district would provide training in instructional skills and other areas to make this person successful:

P2B: I feel that if I can get the right personality, uh, the “right fit” with the qualifications, that we do offer enough training and in-service and support through coaching and other programs, that the instruction can come along…. [B]ut what I really want is that right personality to fit and connect with kids.

Participants explained how in order to “fit,” a candidate needed to match the overall plan of the school. Principals had a specific type of person in mind for positions for which they hired and indicated that this candidate should share the same values and perspectives of their current teaching and administrative staff at their schools. A middle school principal said:

P5B: Above and beyond the best candidate is… how can this person fit into the puzzle. Uh, we… have an ongoing school improvement plan… [H]ow is that candidate going to fit into our plan? What does that person bring to make us better?
Participants elaborated that candidates needed to be more than “just” qualified for positions in their school; beyond the criteria of being highly qualified existed an even more important, unwritten quality required of candidates in order to “fit” into their staff culture. A high school principal stated that even “really good teachers” who did not appear to share the same vision or agree with the direction of the school would not comprise a good “fit.” Another principal stated that he included teacher leaders in the hiring of new teachers. This participant believed that their input identified a better “fit” for their school:

P3A: …I make sure that I include our teacher leaders in the process. We have… well respected teachers with backgrounds that are, uh, that understand who, what it takes to mesh into this school and to, uh, work with our population.

Participants in this study revealed that they placed a high value on a candidate’s “fit” with their school and their community. Some principals weighed the value of this characteristic above “highly qualified” requirements or “content knowledge.” Their statements indicated that the definition of a good “fit” focused more on a match to characteristics of current staff and administrators than to the composition of their student bodies.

While most participants did not mention race overtly in the context of achieving a good “fit,” it plays an undeniable role not only as a component of matching current staff, but in its notable omission as a consideration relevant to a given school’s student body. Indeed, this strong focus on matching existing staff appears misguided in Washington State, where only 7% of classroom teachers are racial minorities, compared with approximately 30% of students (OSPI, 2007) and even more so in the areas examined for the purposes of this study, where minority student populations verged on or exceeded 90% (Appendix A).
Such numbers matter because race has been demonstrated to be anything but irrelevant when it comes to student learning. Dee (2004) argued that same race role models in professional teaching positions had a direct impact on the achievement of same race students. Dee’s findings indicated that access to same race teachers over a number of school years made a significant impact on student performance. However, Dee noted that mainly white students had the benefit of this experience in his study due to the high number of white teachers employed in that school district. Seven participants responded that the characteristic of “being role models” was an important aspect of the hiring process. And, while participants spoke about the importance of role models and their hope that their teaching staff reflected the community population, only one participant noted the need to consider student racial/ethnic demographics in teacher hiring. Otherwise, those responding to this issue maintained that they hired only the “best-qualified” candidates based on state and federal highly qualified standards and their own subjective value of “fit.”

Participants did not identify cultural proficiency or racial/ethnic similarities as important characteristics for hiring purposes. The following interaction with one principal is included as an example of principals’ recognition of the need for same race role models and also their desire to patently ignore this need. This dialogue reflects this contradiction:

P1B - …[O]ne of the things that is really important to me is relationships and I’m looking for people that are going to be a good fit for the clientele that we currently serve. Uh…you know, right now, we have approximately 90% Hispanic in my building and I think that it is really important for the kids to see Hispanic role models, etc. And so, I am just kind of looking for, you know, that, as best as we possibly can provide it...
INTERVIEWER - So are there any special student considerations that you look at when you hire folks?

P1B – No. I mean, unless it’s specific to ESL or specific to Special Ed…. We’ve got to make sure that they’re highly qualified and that they fit exactly what we’re looking for, you know, at … [our] Middle School. The population, of course, like I said there’s 90% Hispanic…. But we’re really looking for teachers that have the quality and are highly qualified.

One principal stated that the lack of same race role models could have a negative impact on students (he had only one Latino teacher on his staff and a Latino student population over 90%); however, he did not have a plan to address this issue. Another participant expressed concern for the attitude of some of his staff and their ability to connect with all students. On the one hand he praised them for being a good staff; then, on the other, he complained about their lack of compassion for students:

P3A: We have teachers that are very compassionate and very [sigh]… here for the right reasons…. [T]eachers sometimes forget after a while and that’s unfortunate…. But it, there’s something about being that student and having somebody that looks like you, that understands where you come from, that can identify with your culture, that can… that had some of the same kind of experiences, uh, that allows that person to commit in a different way. You can still be a good teacher, a great teacher, and… not look like the same students, but it would be nice.

Participants discussed the importance of minority students seeing professional role models that looked like them in the positions of teachers and administrators, not just cooks and custodians. Zirkel (2002) pointed out that “The presence or absence of like others in different
social positions implicitly conveys information to young people about the possibilities for their futures" (p. 357). These principals recognized the importance of same race role models; however, they had a difficult time explaining how to improve the numbers of same race teacher role models. I include this dialogue to capture the essence of this difficulty:

INTERVIEWER - So that ethnicity, racial background is a consideration in hiring?

P 3A - Definitely.

I - Do similar characteristics between teachers and students make a difference in student learning?

P3A - I think there’s a lot of research that shows, and a lot of people don’t believe it, but I can show you the research… that if the kids like the teachers, if they can connect with the teachers, those kids are gonna be more successful than those that don’t. So, to answer your question… connection is critical… [S]ome kids are more comfortable with their own. Especially the Native Americans; we find that more so with the Native Americans than any other population.

Another participant described his lack of same race role models and the “cultural gaps” created by the interaction of a majority staff of white teachers and a majority student body of Latino students.

Participants identified the importance of same race role models being reflected in their teaching staff; however, they provided little information about any plans to bring this about. Principals overtly expressed their desire to hire teachers that met highly qualified standards or were a better “fit” with their staff without regard to their cultural proficiency or match to the student or community demographics. Participants did not seem to recognize the dissonance in their statements regarding the need for same race role models in their schools and their insistence
on focusing on state and federal highly qualified requirements as well as their own subjective criteria that seemed to reinforce the status quo of staff demographics.

The participants’ discussion of “fit” revealed an underlying consideration shaping the hiring process. “Fit” was used as an additional filter through which principals could gauge teacher candidates in comparison to their own values and/or culture, as well as the values and culture of their current staff. “Fit” appeared to be synonymous with “sameness.” In other words, principals in power positions appeared likewise “more comfortable with their own,” which affected their ranking of candidates for teaching positions in schools. This subjective filtering has major implications for the racial composition of teaching ranks in Washington state schools.

*Maintaining the Status Quo Through Highly Qualified Mandates*

Principals identified “highly qualified” or “high quality” as a characteristic they used to sort the pools of candidates they considered for teaching positions in their schools. This characteristic was cited the most in this category and revealed the principals’ concern regarding the pressure to meet state and federal requirements in hiring teachers for their school. The participants all expressed their desire to hire a teacher candidate with characteristics of experience, expertise in subject area, ability to be a team member, and the ability to build relationships with staff and students. In addition, participants discussed issues relating to teacher preparation, instructional skill, and professional development. These characteristics, except for relationship building and teaming, were used as characteristics in Teacher Quality Indexes for studies referenced in this research.

After sorting candidates based on “highly qualified” requirements, participants invoked “fit” as the final filter to select candidates for positions in their schools. While principals stated that they were bound by state and federal requirements for hiring teachers, they used additional
subjective criteria to arrive at a final selection. It is important to note that cultural proficiency or same race attributes were not identified as characteristics weighed in these decisions. One participant identified “highly qualified” as the number one consideration in hiring:

P1A: Well…minimally, the first quality is…the proper qualifications in terms of certification, both state and highly qualified.”

Another participant identified their school as a “targeted” school, meaning they were required to hire “highly qualified” teachers. He stated that he had to screen more carefully to ensure that all teachers were highly qualified in their subject areas. He explained that federal funds were tied directly to these requirements.

Participants identified experience and/or preparation as important characteristics of candidates for teaching positions in their schools. Cloetfelder et al (2005) argued that teacher experience was a characteristic of teacher quality that greatly impacted student achievement. Experience was used as a component to build TQI in a number of studies reviewed. One principal said that he weighted a candidate more heavily who came with experience in districts with similar student demographics. Another high school principal commented that he liked to hire teachers who had been trained by other districts. He commented that it was cost effective to hire staff that had undergone similar staff professional development training in nearby districts at their expense.

Preparation was another of the characteristics on which principals placed a high value, likewise identified in TQI research studies. Professional preparation was a requirement for “high quality” status described in state and federal guidelines. Participants stated that some universities prepare teachers better than others. They also examined the types of courses candidates had
taken, the type of professional development training they may have received, and any other educational experience they may have acquired.

Participants made comments regarding instructional skill and willingness to participate in professional development as also being important characteristics for teachers in their schools. Participants identified Robert Marzano instructional strategies, Ruby Payne poverty training, GLAD training, and SIOP training as important professional development for teachers in their schools. One participant noted that:

P4B: [W]e use Robert Marzano’s, uh, high end strategies in the classroom and so the ability that teachers can, uh, demonstrate, uh, the use of high end strategies at a high level I think pretty well determines whether or not a teacher is a good candidate.

Participants identified the challenges faced in hiring “highly qualified” teachers as defined by the state and federal regulations. One middle school participant noted that if he found a certified K-8 teacher he felt was high quality, he could not hire that person unless they had an additional endorsement in the subject area in which they were to teach. A high school principal also identified a difference between state requirements for highly qualified and his own view. This participant stated:

P3A: The basic is that… I believe anybody can be highly qualified. I don’t believe everybody can be high quality. Uh, you can go through the national board certification and if you go through the process enough times you can become a national board certified teacher at our school. Uh, we also have several national board certified teachers that wouldn’t even break the top 10% of what are high quality teachers at this school.
One participant cited the school’s student performance history and designation as a school on Level 5 of school improvement as difficulties that deterred potential teacher candidates from applying for jobs in their school districts.

P1B: Well…we are a Step 5 school…. So, you know, the idea of coming in at 7:30 and leaving at 3:00 is pretty much a myth when it comes to schools that are in Step 5. So we don’t have a lot of people jumping or chomping at the bit about wanting to be a part of (our) Middle School and schools like ours.

Finally, one participant discussed teachers pursuing National Board Certification in their school and the implications for teaching. This principal suggested that National Board Certification did not produce better teachers, but rather produced higher paid teachers who had more incentive to stay in high poverty areas due to a $10,000 stipend ($5000 federal stipend and $5000 state stipend).

When asked about their perspective on considering student demographics as an influence on their hiring process, all but one of the participants said that that was not a consideration and that they looked for the best qualified candidate based on their “fit,” educational background, experience, or highly qualified status. One participant described the pressure to be “ethnically neutral” in hiring. Another participant explained that he didn’t choose people based on their color or the extra languages they spoke but wished that he could. Another said he did not want to be accused of reverse discrimination, despite working in a school with 90% white teachers and 90% Latino students. Participants lamented the lack of Latino candidates in the hiring pools. One high school principal offered this assessment of recruiting former Latino students as teachers:

P4A: Um…yeah, I would like to have a better representation of our community and students reflected among our staff. Unfortunately, I think it… that that statistic probably
reflects better our local community numbers for college-going of our students. So, we have fewer Latino students who finish college with a degree than white students, so we have fewer students who would meet that ethnicity here, that qualify for jobs…

A high school principal of color made this emphatic statement regarding not hiring teachers of color:

INTERVIEWER: Are similar characteristics between teachers and students important or do they make a difference in student learning?

P1A: In, in, in my world, uh, I don’t believe that you have to, to be a minority to, to teach a minority. Uh, I don’t, I don’t believe you have to be bilingual to teach another bilingual kid…. ‘Cause students will see your actions, and even if you’re bilingual, minority, they’ll read into them. They’ll read the trust or not trust. Uh, cause I will take somebody that has a big heart, uh, and has content [rather] than [someone who] is a minority and [has] no heart. Uh, cause, see, I don’t need no minority, bilingual with no heart.

While participants spoke about their desire to hire bilingual candidates, other than listing preference for bilingual ability on the job announcement and attending job fairs, they mentioned no specific ways of recruiting bilingual candidates. One administrator made the point that bilingualism was only a preference not a requirement:

P5B: With our population, we would always prefer, I think, that, that our teachers are bilingual. Uh, it’s not a requirement, but it is a preference.

A middle school principal had a difficult time explaining his recruitment efforts of bilingual staff:
P4B: Uh, we…we always try to look for, uh, you know, people that actually speak Spanish or to some degree. And, I would say, uh, that those people are given, uh, a good deal of consideration, uh, if they’re Hispanic or, uh, if they are fluent in Spanish. Uh, looking at our diversity and ethnicity, uh, that becomes a very, uh, worthwhile, uh, ability for us anyway.

This principal identified the need for bilingual teachers for public relations to “communicate calm” rather than to serve instructional need of the students:

P3A: We do look for language ability...not necessarily for instruction but it’s important for communicating calm within the community [emphasis added]. Um…if we had two candidates who are relatively similar position and one had the ability to speak or write Spanish…because of our population, that’d increase the level of interest for us. Um…so some of those things play into a preferred status but not as job requirements.

One participant maintained that listing “bilingual preferred” in their job postings hindered the school’s ability to attract quality teacher candidates because it discouraged people who were not bilingual from applying. This principal stated:

P1B: Well, people think they need to be bilingual and we almost always put bilingual preferred. But it isn’t required. So, you know, they say, “you know, you’re only going to hire people that speak Spanish”.... [W]e not only hire that, but if the candidates are equal, of course, we’re going to go with the bilingual.

Schacter and Thum (2004) stated that “…access to an effective teacher is the single most important school related factor responsible for increased learning” and conversely “…the detriments for those (students) assigned to ineffective teachers are equally damaging” (p. 411). Determining the effectiveness of teachers for the populations of students involved in this study is
the issue. Participants spoke at length about the need to have bilingual and bi-cultural teachers as instructors and role models for their schools; however, principals were resistant to the application of these characteristics as considerations for hiring teachers. Beyond the driving force of hiring by federal and state “highly qualified” requirements, they indicated, only “fit” could be employed as a selective consideration.

**Relationship Building with Students**

Relationship building was described by most of the participants as an essential ability characteristic of a good teacher; however, in listing hiring considerations, few principals mentioned this characteristic as a requirement. The characteristic of “caring” was noted by Parsons (2005) as one of the primary reasons individuals enter the teaching profession. This characteristic was touched upon in a number of ways by participants in this study. Some participants referred to this characteristic as “loving” students or as “relationship building” with students.

Eight participants responded that building relationships or “caring” was an important characteristic for teachers in their schools. Only one of the participants discussed the significance of race and the difficulty of building relationships with individuals from different cultures. One high school participant described this characteristic as follows:

P5A: Uh, the most important quality is, they have to love children. I can teach them anything else, but I can’t teach them how to love kids.”

A high school principal described relationship building as critical to improving high school graduation rates in their school and said that relationship building was actually a part of their school’s strategic plan to increase high school graduation rates for Latino students. A different high school principal described the relationship building process this way:
P1A: I think the biggest piece is the heart…. They’ve got to care about what they’re coming to do…. [Y]ou gotta have the heart. You gotta know that you’re coming in with, you gotta be able to give….You [’re] working with kids first. And then secondly is your content….And…to create a process to, to take a person from point A to point B…you gotta be willing to connect and… create educational relationships with the kids.

One high school principal extolled the characteristics of three of his “quality” teachers:

P3A: And it’s nothing that’s said… it’s true caring about their students. So… if I say those three [white] teachers and I, I talk about their wonderful attributes and how, you know, how great they are… maybe you understand why I say it would be nice to have somebody that looks closer to what our students look like – but how could I ever dismiss somebody that didn’t look like our students that brings that much to the table?

Participants described the difficulty of building relationships in the communities where they live. A principal commented on the difficulty of finding teachers who wanted to live in a rural community and work with English Language Learner (ELL), Latino students. This participant described the difficulty of recruiting people to work with this student population and help them to pass the state achievement tests as opposed to recruiting them to work at a suburban school. This participant stated that principals needed to look for candidates who want to work in a community with minority students; however, he did not identify the need to hire “minority” teachers to fill that need:

P1A: Uh, cause people that come here have to choose to come. They have to know who our student is. Cause they choose to come here. Uh, and that’s the big piece that, that when you look at staff here, um, especially because this is a minority community, you choose to come… work with this kid. Um, the kid doesn’t choose you, you choose the
kids. So you already know what you’re coming to…. You’ve gotta have the desire to learn because there’s a lot of learning to take place.

Finally, a middle school principal summed up his feelings regarding relationship building in this way:

P5B: Uh, item number one would be relationships…. [R]elationships are obviously key…. [I]f they want to make themselves better they need to understand that, uh, their teaching qualities…[are] not confined to their classroom walls. I want them to think bigger and better. I want them to know that whatever they implement is going to go…into their heart and minds and that seed can grow in a lot of different ways.

Participants regarded “caring” or “relationship building” as a critical characteristic of teacher candidates for positions in their schools. Most principals responded that these characteristics did not require that candidates share the ethnic or racial background of students; however, some participants spoke at length about the difficulty they encountered recruiting candidates who fit this description or who wanted to work in their communities. Monroe and Obidah (2004) argued that “cultural synchronization” is an important aspect of effective teaching in communities of color and that “effective teachers…align their professional practice with their students’ culture” (p. 259). These authors argued that the poor educational performance of students of color underscored the fact that educators needed to understand the ways student behaviors may be culturally based. And, while participants identified this need for their school staff, they did not focus on such issues in defining their hiring practices.

Force Fitting Staff Considerations on Hiring Considerations

Participants identified three major themes during interviews. These themes were “fit,” “highly qualified” mandates, and the “characteristic of caring.” Participants discussed at length
their desire to hire teachers that “fit” their school. “Fit” equated to “sameness” of current staff and did not address issues of student need identified by principals in this study.

Participants did not include the elements of “cultural proficiency,” “cultural synchronization,” or “same race” attributes among the characteristics of “fit.” Participants pointed repeatedly to state and federal “highly qualified” criteria as their primary means of sorting teachers for their pools of candidates. These criteria provided the opportunity for participants to sidestep the very questions of culture and race that they themselves identified as important during these interviews.

Finally, participants spoke often about the “characteristic of caring” or “relationship building” that, in some cases, was described as the most important attribute of teacher candidates. Still, this characteristic did not seem to constitute a driving force in the process of selecting candidates. Principals privileged the “fit” of the candidate to their staff as a more worthy correlate to the “highly qualified” mandate than the “characteristic of caring.” Thus, participants’ rubric for hiring teaching staff for their buildings was geared toward staff considerations rather than student considerations.
CHAPTER FIVE:

RE-FOCUSBING PRINCIPALS’ PERCEPTIONS

Role models or fit? That is the question participants in this study had to answer in determining the types of candidates they would select for teaching positions in their schools. The term “role models” related to student traits and needs while the term “fit” related to staff traits and needs. And in every instance, participants chose the fit of the candidate for their school community over role models for students; despite their claims of focusing on highly qualified requirements, despite their stated desires to create a racially balanced teaching staff that matched their student demographics, and despite their awareness that they needed more same-race role models for their students. Principals in this study revealed their own personal biases in recruiting and hiring teachers for their schools. They looked for teachers who matched their current staff’s traits rather than teachers who matched their students’ traits.

Participants appeared uncomfortable using the “R word” while discussing race or ethnicity in the hiring process. Their discomfort in discussing race translated to an unwillingness to directly consider racial, ethnic, or cultural characteristics in the hiring process. This discomfort also took the form of a negative association between such traits and those traits considered to be beneficial in the teaching profession. This discomfort with the topic of race was reflected in responses made by participants and demonstrated the desire of principals to avoid a clear focus on cultural factors during the hiring process. This principal had difficulty explaining the characteristics of race that made teachers good role models for students:

P1A:  And…we have several bilingual people that are not minority. They’re Anglo but, uh, but they have to have the same characteristics of, about caring, about that the, the content, about the desire to want to teach these kinds of kids, that, this minorities…
Another high school principal used the term “bilingual” as a substitute for race:

P3A: Well, we’re always looking for bilingual people. Um...so they are role models for Hispanic kids – and bilingual meaning Hispanic teachers and Native American teachers.

Participants’ responses reflected dominant societal views and promoted traditional hiring practices focusing on subjectively perceived fit in addition to state and federal guidelines for the qualifications and characteristics that promoted teacher quality in their schools. Principals professed their desire to create a racially balanced teaching staff that reflected their community populations and to bring in role models that resembled their student populations; however, they could not ignore the pressure to create “ethnically neutral” hiring procedures that protected the status quo of a markedly white teaching staff.

Remaining Ethnically Neutral in a Colorblind Society

Participants stated that they looked for teachers who cared about their students. However, they did not consider the cultural or racial background of students as a factor relevant to this characteristic of caring. It was enough for principals to say that teachers cared about their students without addressing their ability to understand and connect with the community they served. Participants spoke at length about their ability to train non-minority teachers to be successful in culturally competent instruction and current instructional pedagogy. Principals did not recognize the irony in the fact that, while they ignored characteristics of culture during the hiring process, they expended a great deal of resources in training their teachers to build these same characteristics after the teachers were hired. Principals pointed to highly qualified requirements as the primary criteria for selection of teachers. Ultimately, however, they relied on how the candidate fit with their school staff. And while they described their criteria for “fit” in general terms, staff demographics – from 80% to 95% white – suggest a different story.
Participants in this study ignored cultural proficiency, cultural synchronization, or same race characteristics during the teacher hiring process. By eliminating race or ethnicity from their considerations, participants were able focus on matching familiar traits of teachers already employed in their schools; however, in so doing, they also eliminated their ability to provide the role models they professed to be seeking for their classrooms. In addition, by devaluing race and ethnicity during this hiring process, the principals were commenting about their beliefs and attitudes regarding students in their schools. Participants did not value these important cultural characteristics for either their staff or for students. One participant named this process of ignoring characteristics of culture in this response:

P4A: ...[T]he pressure is…to be “ethnically neutral.” Uh, you know,…if 90% of the candidates are white, well 9 out of 10 times you’re going to end up, if, if everybody’s qualified…with a white candidate….

Dixson and Rousseau (2005) described a similar race-neutral process utilized by a court in determining the outcome of a university admissions policy. They stated that, “[b]y refusing to allow universities to consider race, the court was attempting to establish a ‘race-neutral’ approach to college admissions (Gotanda, 1991; Crenshaw, 1995)” (p. 21). By eliminating characteristics of ethnicity or culture and becoming ethnically neutral, principals were able to cull their pool of candidates so that the pools matched their current staff populations rather than their student populations.

Dixson and Rousseau (2005) argued against the liberally held view of colorblindness. These authors stated, “CRT scholars have argued that the appeal to colour-blindness is far from racially neutral and in the best interests of persons of colour, but, instead, supports the operation of white privilege [Gotanda, 1991; Crenshaw, 1995]” (p. 21). Participants promoted the view
that characteristics of culture, race, or ethnicity should not be weighed during the hiring process and that ethnically neutral considerations could promote a colorblind educational environment. Participants insisted that candidates of color possess, at least, the same educational and instructional background as white teachers in order to be considered for teaching positions in their schools, while white teachers were not disqualified for lacking characteristics of culture that suited their student bodies. Participants, by being colorblind during the hiring process, devalued the teaching and mentoring advantages inherent in cultural characteristics that certain candidates possessed and framed other candidates, those lacking these student-oriented advantages, as more appealing, thus contributing to the predominance of “white privilege.”

Participants promoted a view of a colorblind educational community that ignored characteristics of color – a beneficial teacher characteristic. Taft (1999) noted Crenshaw’s argument that a “…belief in color blindness and equal process…is illogical in a society in which specific groups have been treated different historically and in which the outcomes of this differential treatment continue into the present” (p. 229).

This participant was emphatic that he was looking for a certain type of educator with “heart,” not recognizing that he was just as emphatically discounting the value of cultural attributes:

P1A: In, in, in my world, uh, I don’t believe that you have to, to be a minority to, to teach a minority. Uh, I don’t, I don’t believe you have to be bilingual to teach another bilingual kid….Uh, cause I will take somebody that has a big heart, uh, and has content [rather] than [someone who] is a minority and [has] no heart. Uh, cause, see, I don’t need no minority, bilingual with no heart.
In schools with high minority enrollments and low test scores, it is irresponsible to ignore characteristics that studies have shown to increase academic achievement for students of color.

Principals involved in this study excluded candidates of color by creating a colorblind hiring process that barred consideration of “characteristics of culture” and focused instead on subjectively gauged characteristics of fit and highly qualified requirements. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) described this process of “exclusion” as inherent in the “property right of whiteness” (p. 8). By excluding characteristics that they were uncomfortable discussing and reluctant to consider as advantageous, principals were able to focus on characteristics of fit and highly qualified characteristics that they labeled as more objective characteristics that could be discussed openly. By eliminating discussion of race and its relationship to cultural competence, these schools stripped their hiring process of key criteria. The result was that racial demographics for teachers in their schools (mostly white) remained the opposite of racial demographics of students in their schools (mostly Latino).

The dissonance in participants’ dialogue between the need for role models for students and the need for fit with staff contributes to the disparity in educational outcomes between white and Latino students – significant differences in outcomes between white and Latino students’ results in state assessments, NAEP assessments, and college entry tests (Appendix B). White students have scored significantly higher on these assessments, while graduation rates and college bound rates for Latino students have lagged far behind their white counterparts (OSPI, 2013). The many schools in this study with majority Latino student enrollments need every advantage available to them, including a hiring policy that enables students to identify with and be mentored by a teachers and staff to whom they feel culturally connected.
“Delgado (1990) suggest[ed] that although there is not one common voice, there is a common experience of racism that structures the stories of people of colour and allows for the use of the term voice” (Dixson, Rousseau, 2005, p. 11). Principals of color involved in this study had difficulty communicating their beliefs in the hiring process. While these participants expressed the need to better address the academic needs of Latino students in their schools, they were unable to balance this desire with the traditional hiring practices that existed in their districts. The voice of Latino principals or principals of color was lost to the dominant society through “false consciousness” that was described by Bell. Taft (1999) cited Bell’s definition of false consciousness as the acceptance, or adoption, of societal norms and mores by people of color, even though they are not a true reflection of these individual’s situations. In the cases of principals of color involved in this study, although they expressed the same recognition as the white administrators of the needs of the students, their responses revealed a more strident tone about ignoring characteristics of color. A high school principal of color was adamant that he would not hire a minority or bilingual candidate that didn’t have heart. Rather than put this in terms of finding bilingual or minority candidates with a heart or excluding white teachers with “no heart,” he chose these words:

P1A: In, in, in my world, uh, I don’t believe that you have to, to be a minority to, to teach a minority….Uh, cause, see, I don’t need no minority, bilingual with no heart.

Another high school principal of color was clear about not using “characteristics of color” in choosing teachers for his school:

P3A: …I can say that we don’t choose people because of their color, or how they, they look, or the extra language that they speak, the additional languages that they speak.
This principal of color stated that despite his high enrollment of Latino students, he made sure that he did not stray from “highly qualified” mandates:

P1B: We’ve got to make sure that they are highly qualified and that they fit exactly what we’re looking for, you know, at [our] Middle School. The population, of course, like I said there’s 90% Hispanic….But we’re really looking for teachers that have the quality and are *highly qualified* [emphasis added].

It is clear that these principals of color wanted to definitely recite the views of the dominant culture in issues related to hiring teachers for their schools. They did not hesitate to distance themselves from issues of characteristics of culture and to clearly articulate the policy of the school district and their schools. It is clear that the racial demographics in their schools will not change and that these administrators of color will not challenge the status quo.

Throughout these interviews, consideration of student voice was non-existent. Not only did participants ignore student characteristics in making determinations of desirable teacher characteristics, but also ignored student input as to what a quality teacher looked like. Kardos and Liu (2003) reported that less than 1% of teacher interviews included student input. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) stated that “one of the central tenets of CRT includes the ‘recognition of experiential knowledge of people of color’ (Matsuda, et al., 1993, p. 6)” (p. 10). These authors use this definition as the foundation for “voice” that “runs throughout CRT legal studies” (p. 10). Student voice was non-existent in the conversations with all participants in this study. The topic of student voice was not evident in the literature and I viewed it as a separate topic that requires further study.
Recommendations: Frameworks for Change in a Culture of Status Quo

Many Latino students from the participating school districts are not achieving their potential. Secondary principals must establish a hiring process for teachers in high poverty, high minority schools that identifies cultural proficiency, cultural synchronization, and same race characteristics as valuable and desirable teacher characteristics (side by side with highly qualified requirements) in order to provide the best learning environment for all students. Principals must revise their perceptions of teacher fit from fitting with staff and school community to fitting with students and their needs.

Principals in this study, whether white or Latino, held very traditional perspectives in regard to teacher hiring. With such a wide gap in achievement between Latino and white students, there is a strong need for a much more culturally proficient teaching staff and a more representative teaching staff in Washington State. Administrators from high poverty, high minority schools must act on concrete plans and programs that establish guidelines for hiring that will ensure that their schools’ teaching staffs demonstrate cultural proficiency and/ or reflect their student populations.

OSPI and superintendents from nine school districts in eastern Washington recognized the need to identify and utilize characteristics of culture as a means to address the needs of schools in high minority and high poverty school districts. These groups expended resources and time to outline plans for school districts to evaluate and address the needs of students in high minority and/ or high poverty areas. Both instruments focused on the needs of students related to characteristics of culture; however, neither group was able to generate enough support to officially adopt or implement these plans. This issue is significant, considering that schools in this study had Latino student enrollments of nearly 90%, while these same schools employed
nearly 80%-90% white teachers. Some of these participating districts were included in this study. In Washington State, nearly 93% of classroom teachers were white (OSPI, 2007).

Washington State Association of Washington State Principals (AWSP) developed a cultural competency rubric (Appendix F) through a state committee that would allow districts to determine whether or not their schools were culturally competent in areas of curriculum, staffing, policies, etc. The rubric was never officially adopted or implemented by the any state office. Cultural proficiency is a critical characteristic for teachers teaching in public schools, particularly in schools where students of color are in the majority. Teachers who lack cultural proficiency are unable to relate to students from racial backgrounds different from their own and can do irreparable harm to the students they teach by not providing the instruction they need or by treating them unfairly. This initiative supports the following recommendations:

1. Culturally proficiency training should be identified and required as a qualification for teacher employment and professional development for all staff in all public schools, but particularly in schools with high minority enrollments. “Culturally relevant caring” described by Parsons (2005) should be part of all teacher professional development training. All school districts should implement this requirement immediately.

2. Districts must develop school cultures that embrace discussions regarding race, culture, and poverty as well as train their new recruits and current staff in how to respectfully and effectively conduct these conversations. School policies and procedures need to promote and protect these cultures in recognition of their benefit to the educational experience of all students.

3. School districts conduct culturally audits of school district policies and procedures and of curriculum material.
Nine superintendents from eastern Washington produced a “white paper” recommending legislation requiring “culturally competent” staff development by all Washington State school districts and allowing for the special certification of out-of-country teachers who had certification in hard to recruit areas including bilingual ability. Only one participant mentioned these recommendations, even though superintendents from some of the schools involved in this study co-authored this very study. This initiate supports the following recommendations:

1. Students from underrepresented groups need to be identified, mentored, and offered scholarships for education degrees and the promise of employment if they return to the area. School districts from high poverty, high minority school communities need to invest in recruitment efforts to bring “homegrown” candidates from communities of color back to their schools.

2. Specific goals for employing teachers from underrepresented groups need to be adopted by all school districts and recruitment plans that support these efforts need to be included in these plans.

3. A support group for the small amount of teachers of color needs to be established and offered as a resource to retain teachers of colors in communities of color.

In addition, the following recommendations would reinforce school efforts to support the need of students of color in their schools and to promote a more balanced and representative teaching staff in public schools:

1. Culturally relevant pedagogy. Principals need to provide professional development training that includes culturally proficiency, cultural synchronization, culturally relevant pedagogy that allows staff to create positive relationships with students of color and promotes academic achievement.
2. Provide same race, same gender role models for students. Principals need to implement mentoring programs for students that are based on same-race and same-gender matching.

3. Include students in the interview process. Schools need to identify desirable characteristics and skills that they would like to develop in their students and use this information to guide the identification of the desirable characteristics and skills that teacher candidates possess. Principals need to consider student voice in their process of hiring that includes, not only the developing of desirable teacher characteristics, but also involvement in the hiring process.

Changes in My Perceptions

My perception that administrators of color of schools in my study would possess more progressive and compassionate attitudes regarding the hiring of teachers who supported Latino students’ academic achievement and matched their school student populations proved inaccurate. Participants emphasized that school districts were unwilling to employ characteristics of culture as a means to determine the needs of schools, particularly in respect to hiring. These principals appeared fearful to suggest that consideration of cultural characteristics in candidates for teaching positions in their schools was relevant. In order for these administrators of color to remain employed with their institutions, they could not make significant changes in the hiring process or teaching demographics. Responses by administrators of color not only indicated that they supported current hiring practices, but did so in terms most strident against using race, ethnicity, and/ or bilingual ability as relevant characteristics for hiring new teachers. In addition, participant responses did not support my perception that the changing student racial/ ethnic demographics showing a huge gain in populations of Latino students at these schools would have
a greater impact on administrators’ perceptions that they should change their current hiring practices to address these changes. It was clear that administrators were aware of their student racial/ethnic populations, but their responses demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to advocate for changes in their district’s hiring process to include consideration of “cultural proficiency,” “cultural synchronization,” and “same race” attributes.

I was not surprised also by how difficult it was for all administrators to discuss issues of race as it related to their staff and students. What was surprising was how blatant their attitude was regarding dismissing characteristics of culture during the hiring process. Their comments to create “ethnically neutral” hiring practices, hire bilingual staff to create a “feeling of calm” in the community,” or they “don’t need no minority with no heart” is right to the point of way teaching staff will remain white in schools with high minority student populations.

Conclusion: Changing Principals’ Perceptions in the Hiring Process

The responses provided by participants involved in this study reinforced my perceptions that principals influenced the hiring process as long as that influence did not challenge the status quo. Minor staffing changes would be accepted; however, major changes in current staffing demographics would not be tolerated. Adherence to district policy, state, and federal guidelines as well as community mores were reflected in participant responses. None of the participants offered any information that indicated that they were willing to take risks to change the racial/ethnic demographics of their school staff.

On the contrary, participants’ responses indicated that they supported the current process of hiring teachers for their school and that their hires represented the types of teachers they thought would provide quality instruction to their students, despite the lack of student assessment
scores to support these assertions. Administrators of color reflected these views even more strongly and exhibited characteristics of false consciousness described by Bell (Taft, 1999).

In addition, participants identified the need to hire teachers who possessed the quality of cultural proficiency; however, none included this characteristic as an important consideration during the hiring process. The principals involved in this study indicated that cultural proficiency, cultural synchronization, and same race attributes were important qualities for teachers. Even so, they neither demonstrated an ability to hire teachers with these qualities nor articulated any plan to do so. Participants indicated that increasing the number of teachers of color at schools with high percentages of students of color and high percentages of white teachers would be beneficial to their students’ academic performance. However, participants used the established state and federal criteria as the basis for rating candidates’ qualifications and quality in hiring for their school and did not offer any options for increasing the number of teachers of color or increasing the number of culturally proficient teachers in their school. Not one participant discussed a different method for rating teachers or articulated a plan to increase teachers of color in their school. Most participants did not recognize that increasing these numbers was even a goal worthy of pursuing.

Data indicated that the remedies offered by federal courts have not solved the issues of educational or societal inequalities in regard to race or ethnicity. The academic performance of subgroups of students of color is significantly lower than that of white students, nationally and locally; and this achievement gap does not appear to be improving among Hispanic students. The ratio of teachers of color to white teachers continues to be greatly disproportionate to populations they serve.
Imagine the response of a predominantly white community with a predominantly white student school population to having their instruction provided by a teaching force of 90% teachers of color. The white community expects that their white students will continue to be taught by white teachers, even in communities where the schools are predominantly minority. Ramifications of the Brown decision promoted a white teaching force in American schools, and current hiring practices work to preserve this status quo while disregarding characteristics of culture and preventing educators of color from reaching employment levels that match the school student population in high minority school systems. Principals in this study are comfortable with the imbalanced teaching demographics in their schools and the hires they have made.

It has long been argued that nothing makes a bigger impact on student achievement than a quality teacher in the classroom. But exactly what defines a quality teacher and who determines these characteristics? Research studies continue to identify different criteria to measure quality and ways various qualities affect student performance. Darling-Hammond and Cloetfelder et al identify what they deem to be objective criteria to establish TQI that would provide principals with the “silver bullet” in hiring quality teachers for their schools.

But what really makes a teacher “good” through the eyes of the principal? Principals in this study determined that staff fit, above all other characteristics, was the characteristic they relied on to select the best qualified teacher for their school. And as long as principals fail to consider demographics of their student populations, the impact of same-race teachers and mentors, the cultural competency of teachers, and student voice in their hiring process, their decisions will contribute to the continued academic struggles of Latino students in high minority, high poverty schools.
REFERENCES


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Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 347 U.S. 483 (Supreme Court of the United States, 1954).


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### APPENDIXES

#### Appendix A

**Washington State Enrollment Rates by Race/ Ethnicity: OSPI, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>District Code</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Hispanic / Latino of any race(s)</th>
<th>% American Indian / Alaskan Native</th>
<th>% Asian</th>
<th>% Black / African American</th>
<th>% Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander</th>
<th>% White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014 WA</td>
<td>39205</td>
<td>Zillah School D</td>
<td>1,312</td>
<td>48.55</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>42.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 WA</td>
<td>04429</td>
<td>Lake Chelan Sc</td>
<td>1,416</td>
<td>53.25</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.73</td>
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<td>29320</td>
<td>Mount Vernon 5</td>
<td>6,480</td>
<td>55.39</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 WA</td>
<td>24122</td>
<td>Patros School 1</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>55.63</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>86.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>03116</td>
<td>Prosser School 1</td>
<td>2,854</td>
<td>59.64</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<td>Manson School</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>67.86</td>
<td>21.51</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>3.42</td>
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<td>68.75</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>39203</td>
<td>Highland Schoc</td>
<td>1,214</td>
<td>68.86</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>41.27</td>
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<td>North Franklin</td>
<td>2,113</td>
<td>69.38</td>
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<td>1.23</td>
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<td>0.13</td>
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<td>Wapato School</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>09102</td>
<td>Palisades Schoc</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>73.91</td>
<td>2.14</td>
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<td>Yakima School</td>
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<td>2.94</td>
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<td>Union Gap Sch</td>
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<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>36402</td>
<td>Prescott School</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>77.03</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>80.69</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>39202</td>
<td>Toppenish Scho</td>
<td>4,012</td>
<td>79.44</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>67.04</td>
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<td>13146</td>
<td>Warden School</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>79.79</td>
<td>1.18</td>
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<td>0.71</td>
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<td>91.75</td>
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<td>2014 WA</td>
<td>13160</td>
<td>Royal School D</td>
<td>1,625</td>
<td>81.91</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>84.21</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 WA</td>
<td>13144</td>
<td>Quincy School</td>
<td>2,787</td>
<td>85.76</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<td>0.30</td>
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<td>62.80</td>
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<td>Othello School</td>
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<td>Bridgeport Sch</td>
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<td>79.13</td>
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<td>Brewerster Scho</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<td>Oromdo School</td>
<td>161</td>
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<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>19.08</td>
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<td>Wahluke Schoo</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>95.60</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>73.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014 WA</td>
<td>39120</td>
<td>Mabton School</td>
<td>915</td>
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<td>0.46</td>
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<td>0.08</td>
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<td><strong>2014 WA</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,060,298</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.51</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.15</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.48</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.96</strong></td>
<td><strong>58.11</strong></td>
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Appendix B

Test Score Comparison

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses reading in three content areas in grade 8: reading for literacy experience, to gain information, and to perform a task. The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500.

**Overall Reading Results for Washington**

- In 2007, the average scale score for eighth-grade students in Washington was 265. This was not significantly different from their average score in 2005 (265) and was not significantly different from their average score in 1998 (264).  
- Washington’s average score (265) in 2007 was higher than that of the nation’s public schools (261).
- Of the 52 states and other jurisdictions that participated in the 2007 eighth-grade assessment, students’ average scale score in Washington was higher than those in 22 jurisdictions, not significantly different from those in 19 jurisdictions, and lower than those in 10 jurisdictions.
- The percentage of students in Washington who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level was 34 percent in 2007. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2005 (34 percent) and was not significantly different from that in 1998 (32 percent).
- The percentage of students in Washington who performed at or above the NAEP Basic level was 77 percent in 2007. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2005 (75 percent) and was not significantly different from that in 1998 (76 percent).

**Performance of NAEP Reporting Groups in Washington: 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting groups</th>
<th>Percent of students</th>
<th>Average score</th>
<th>Percent below Basic</th>
<th>Percent of students at or above Basic</th>
<th>Percent Proficient</th>
<th>Percent Advanced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for National School Lunch Program</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not eligible for National School Lunch Program</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average Score Gaps Between Selected Groups**

- In 2007, male students in Washington had an average score that was lower than that of female students by 11 points. In 1998, the average score for male students was lower than that of female students by 16 points.
- In 2007, Black students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 23 points. In 1998, the average score for Black students was lower than that of White students by 25 points.
- In 2007, Hispanic students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 23 points. In 1998, the average score for Hispanic students was lower than that of White students by 27 points.
- In 2007, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, a proxy for poverty, had an average score that was lower than that of students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch by 21 points. In 1998, the average score for students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch was lower than the score of those not eligible by 24 points.
- In 2007, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 44 points. In 1996, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 43 points.

**Percentages at NAEP Achievement Levels and Average Score**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nation (public)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington (public)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading Scores at Selected Percentiles**

- In 2007, students who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level were at the 75th percentile.
- In 2005, students who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level were at the 75th percentile.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 reading achievement levels correspond to the following scale points: Below Basic, 242 or lower; Basic, 243–290; Proficient, 291–322; Advanced, 323 or above.

**Accommodations**

- Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.

**NOTE:** Scores at selected percentiles on the NAEP reading scale indicate how well students at lower, middle, and higher levels performed.


* Comparisons (higher/lower/narrower/wider/not different) are based on statistical tests. The .05 level was used for testing statistical significance. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Comparisons across jurisdictions and comparisons with the nation or within a jurisdiction across years may be affected by differences in exclusion rates for students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL). The exclusion rates for SD and ELL in Washington were 4 percent and 2 percent in 2007, respectively. For more information on NAEP significance testing see http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/readinginterpret_results.asp#statistical.

**Jurisdictions** refer to states and the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

NOTE: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding and because the "Information not available" category for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free and reduced-price lunches, and the "Unclassified" category for race/ethnicity are not displayed. Visit http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/ for additional results and detailed information.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses writing for three purposes identified in the NAEP framework: narrative, informative, and persuasive. The NAEP writing scale ranges from 0 to 300.

### Overall Writing Results for Washington

- In 2007, the average scale score for eighth-grade students in Washington was 158. This was not significantly different from their average score in 2002 (156) and was higher than their average score in 1998 (148).¹
- Washington’s average score (158) in 2007 was higher than that of the nation’s public schools (154).
- Of the 45 states and one other jurisdiction that participated in the 2007 eighth-grade assessment, students’ average scale score in Washington was higher than those in 21 jurisdictions, not significantly different from those in 19 jurisdictions, and lower than those in 5 jurisdictions.²
- The percentage of students in Washington who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level was 35 percent in 2007. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2002 (34 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (25 percent).
- The percentage of students in Washington who performed at or above the NAEP Basic level was 86 percent in 2007. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2002 (86 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (83 percent).

### Percentages at NAEP Achievement Levels and Average Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Score</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Below Basic</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation (public)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Performance of NAEP Reporting Groups in Washington: 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting groups</th>
<th>Percent of students</th>
<th>Average score</th>
<th>Percent below Basic</th>
<th>Percent of students at or above Basic</th>
<th>Percent of students at or above Proficient</th>
<th>Percent of students at or above Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for National School Lunch Program</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not eligible for National School Lunch Program</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Average Score Gaps Between Selected Groups

- In 2007, male students in Washington had an average score that was lower than that of female students by 24 points. This performance gap was not significantly different from that of 1998 (22 points).
- In 2007, Black students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 12 points. This performance gap was not significantly different from that of 1998 (20 points).
- In 2007, Hispanic students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 23 points. This performance gap was not significantly different from that of 1998 (34 points).
- In 2007, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of poverty, had an average score that was lower than that of students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch by 22 points. This performance gap was not significantly different from that of 1998 (25 points).
- In 2007, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 48 points. This performance gap was the same as that of 1998 (46 points).

### Writing Scores at Selected Percentiles in Washington

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentiles</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50th</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90th</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reporting standards not met

¹ Comparisons (higher/lower/wider/narrower/wider/not different) are based on statistical tests. The 0.05 level with appropriate adjustments for multiple comparisons was used for testing statistical significance. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Comparisons across jurisdictions and comparisons with the nation within a jurisdiction across years may be affected by differences in exclusion rates for students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL). The exclusion rates for SD and ELL in Washington were 3 percent and 1 percent in 2007, respectively. For more information on NAEP significant testing, see http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/writing/interpret-results.asp#statistical.

² Jurisdiction refers to states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 8 writing achievement levels correspond to the following scale points: Below Basic: 113 or lower; Basic: 114–172; Proficient: 173–233; Advanced: 234 or above.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses mathematics in five content areas: number properties and operations; measurement; geometry; data analysis and probability; and algebra. The NAEP mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500.

### Overall Mathematics Results for Washington

- In 2007, the average scale score for eighth-grade students in Washington was 285. This was not significantly different from their average score in 2005 (285) and was higher than their average score in 1996 (276). A
- Washington’s average score (285) in 2007 was higher than that of the nation’s public schools (259).
- Of the 52 states and other jurisdictions that participated in the 2007 eighth-grade assessment, students’ average scale score in Washington was higher than those in 23 jurisdictions, not significantly different from those in 20 jurisdictions, and lower than those in 8 jurisdictions. 4
- The percentage of students in Washington who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level was 36 percent in 2007. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2005 (36 percent) and was greater than that in 1996 (29 percent).
- The percentage of students in Washington who performed at or above the NAEP Basic level was 75 percent in 2007. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2005 (75 percent) and was greater than that in 1996 (27 percent).

### Performance of NAEP Reporting Groups in Washington, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting groups</th>
<th>Percent of students</th>
<th>Average score</th>
<th>Percent below Basic</th>
<th>Percent of students at or above</th>
<th>Percent Proficient</th>
<th>Percent Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Average Score Gaps Between Selected Groups

- In 2007, male students in Washington had an average score that was not significantly different from that of female students. In 1996, there was no significant difference between the average score of male and female students.
- In 2007, Black students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 26 points. In 1996, the average score for Black students was lower than that of White students by 28 points.
- In 2007, Hispanic students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 27 points. In 1996, the average score for Hispanic students was lower than that of White students by 33 points.
- In 2007, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, a proxy for poverty, had an average score that was lower than that of students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch by 26 points. In 1996, the average score for students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch was lower than the score of those not eligible by 24 points.
- In 2007, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 48 points. In 1996, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 47 points.

### Mathematics Scores at Selected Percentiles

- Scores at selected percentiles on the NAEP mathematics scale indicate how well students at lower, middle, and higher levels performed.

---

A Rounding to zero, 3 Reporting standards not met.
4 Comparisons (higher/lower/widener/lessen/not different) are based on statistical tests. The 05 level was used for testing statistical significance. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Comparisons across jurisdictions and comparisons with the nation or within a jurisdiction across years may be affected by differences in exclusion rates for students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL). The exclusion rates for SD and ELL in Washington were 3 percent and 1 percent in 2007, respectively. For more information on NAEP significance testing see http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/mathematics/interpretation/statistical.

7 Jurisdictions refers to states and the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and because the “Information not available” category for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free and reduced-price lunches, and the “Unclassified” category for race/ethnicity are not displayed. Visit http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/mathematics/interpretation statales for additional results and detailed information.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses science in two major dimensions: Fields of Science (Earth, Physical, and Life) and Knowing and Doing Science (Conceptual Understanding, Scientific Investigation, and Practical Reasoning). The NAEP science scale ranges from 0 to 300. Scales are created separately for each grade.

### Overall Science Results for Washington
- In 2005, the average scale score for eighth-grade students in Washington was 154. This was higher than their average score in 1996 (150).\(^1\)
- Washington's average score (154) in 2005 was higher than that of the nation's public schools (147).
- Of the 44 states and one jurisdiction that participated in the 2005 eighth-grade assessment, students' average scale score in Washington was higher than those in 22 jurisdictions, not significantly different from those in 10 jurisdictions, and lower than those in 12 jurisdictions.\(^2\)
- The percentage of students in Washington who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level was 33 percent in 2005. This percentage was greater than that in 1996 (27 percent).
- The percentage of students in Washington who performed at or above the NAEP Basic level was 65 percent in 2005. This percentage was greater than that in 1996 (61 percent).

### Performance of NAEP Reporting Groups in Washington: 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting groups</th>
<th>Percent of students</th>
<th>Average score</th>
<th>Percent below Basic</th>
<th>Percent of students at or above Proficient</th>
<th>Percent Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>1611</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Average Score Gaps Between Selected Groups
- In 2005, male students in Washington had an average score that was not significantly different from that of female students. In 1996, there was no significant difference between the average score of male and female students.
- In 2005, Black students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 23 points. In 1996, the average score for Black students was lower than that of White students by 25 points.
- In 2005, Hispanic students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 32 points. In 1996, the average score for Hispanic students was lower than that of White students by 33 points.
- In 2005, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of poverty, had an average score that was lower than that of students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch by 21 points. In 1996, the average score for students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch was lower than the score of those not eligible by 20 points.
- In 2005, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 42 points. In 1996, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 42 points.

### Science Scale Scores at Selected Percentiles

- **Score**
  - 180
  - 170
  - 160
  - 150
  - 140
  - 130
  - 120
- **Percentiles**
  - 75th
  - 50th
  - 25th
- **Year**
  - 1996
  - 2005

Scores at selected percentiles on the NAEP science scale indicate how well students at lower, middle, and higher levels performed.

---

\(^1\) Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.

\(^2\) Reporting standards not met.

\(^3\) Significantly different from 2005.

\(^4\) Significantly higher than 1996.

\(^5\) Significantly lower than 1996.

\(^6\) Comparisons (higher/lower/not different) are based on statistical tests. The .05 level was used for testing statistical significance. Comparisons across jurisdictions and comparisons with the nation or within a jurisdiction across years may be affected by differences in exclusion rates for students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL). The exclusion rates for SD and ELL in Washington were 2 percent and 1 percent in 2005, respectively. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentiles.

\(^7\) Jurisdiction refers to states and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and because the "Information not available" category for free/reduced-price school lunch and the "Unclassified" category for race/ethnicity are not displayed. Visit http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ for additional results and detailed information.

### Table 2.4. Average ACT Composite Scores by Level of Preparation by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Group</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Students Tested</th>
<th>Percent Taking Core or More</th>
<th>Average ACT Composite Score Core or More</th>
<th>Less Than Core</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>11,951</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African Am./Black</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Am. Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian Am./White</td>
<td>7,464</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Am./Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1,153</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other/No Response</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>1,421,941</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African Am./Black</td>
<td>179,417</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Am. Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>14,380</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian Am./White</td>
<td>895,588</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>114,697</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Am./Pacific Islander</td>
<td>51,366</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other/No Response</td>
<td>167,491</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2.5. Average ACT Scores by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Group</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Composite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African Am./Black</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Am. Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian Am./White</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Am./Pacific Islander</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other/No Response</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African Am./Black</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Am. Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian Am./White</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Am./Pacific Islander</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>22.4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other/No Response</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Demographic Information
SAT Reasoning Test: Mean Scores by Gender Within Ethnicity

#### Table 9: Total Mean Scores by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAT Reasoning Test</th>
<th>Test-Takers</th>
<th>Critical Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>4,606</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>1,481</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican or Mexican American</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>25,085</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,076</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1,501</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>36,306</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>105</td>
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#### Table 10: Male Mean Scores by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAT Reasoning Test</th>
<th>Test-Takers</th>
<th>Critical Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexican or Mexican American</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>111</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>11,603</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16,604</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 11: Female Mean Scores by Ethnicity

<table>
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<th>Test-Takers</th>
<th>Critical Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>270</td>
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<td>490</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
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<td>Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2,984</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican or Mexican American</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
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<td>Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American</td>
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<td>108</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13,445</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>643</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19,882</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>524</td>
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</table>
SAT Reasoning Test Scores, 2007

<table>
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<th>Self-Identified as</th>
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<th>Math</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>473</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>425</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexican or Mexican-American</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>502</strong></td>
<td><strong>515</strong></td>
<td><strong>494</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The SAT Reasoning Test is the test formerly known as the SAT I, the Scholastic Assessment Test, and the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Minimum score 200; maximum score 800. Scores prior to 2000 have been converted to the re-centered scale.
Tenth-Grade WASL in Spring 2006:
Results by Race and Ethnicity—Revised

In 2006, the Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to identify the characteristics of students who did not meet standard on the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). An interim report is due by December 2006 and a final report by December 2007. In the meantime, the Institute is releasing a series of single-topic reports that describe student performance on the 10th-grade WASL.

This report summarizes results of the 10th-grade WASL in spring 2006 by the racial/ethnic characteristics of students.

In this report, we adopt racial/ethnic categories and terminology used by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI):

- **American Indian**: American Indian or Alaska Native;
- **Asian**: Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander;
- **Black**: Black or African American;
- **Hispanic**: Hispanic or Latino/a; and
- **White**: Caucasian or White.

### Racial/Ethnic Composition of Students Who Were Slated to Take the WASL

Exhibit 1 shows that nearly 72 percent of the 78,000 10th-grade students who were slated to take the unmodified WASL in spring 2006 were White. Hispanic students constituted the largest non-White group, followed by Asians, Blacks, American Indians, and students with multiple ethnic identities. Racial/ethnic identities were unknown for 2.3 percent of students.

---

1. OSPI 6918, Chapter 352, Laws of 2006.
Appendix C
OSPI Glossary

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – As required by The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (2001 ESEA Reauthorization), Washington state has developed a single statewide accountability system to ensure that:

1. All K-12 public school students are included in the state assessment system;
2. At least 95% of the students enrolled in the tested grades are assessed;
3. All student groups reach the state’s proficiency level in reading and mathematics by 2013-14;
4. Schools and districts that do not meet the state’s adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements are identified as needing improvement.

The concept of AYP is based on students attaining a target level of achievement in reading and math, and disaggregating student scores into nine subgroups for each school and district. A minimum number of continuously enrolled students per subgroup has been set for reliable AYP determination. (For more information, please see http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/resources.aspx)

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Participation and Other Indicator Detail – The detail page shows the performance of the 9 student groups.

The detail page shows the participation rates and performance of the 9 student groups. NCLB specifies the participation rate in WASL as an indicator for adequate yearly progress. The target for participation rate is 95.0%. Furthermore, NCLB requires each state to use an "other indicator". Other Indicator is the unexcused absence rate at the elementary and middle/jr. high school levels and the "extended" graduation rate at the high school level (this is the "on-time" rate plus the students who get a diploma after their expected year of graduation). When a high school is not authorized to have graduates, the annual dropout rate is used (noted in italics). The unexcused absence rate goal is 1% or less (or less than the previous year); the graduation rate goal is 66% (or 2 percentage points above the previous year). If applicable, the annual dropout rate goal is 7% (or less than the previous year).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Proficiency Detail – The detail page shows the performance of the 9 student groups.

WASL and AYP results will likely be different for the following reasons:

- **Continuously Enrolled** AYP results include only students who have been continuously enrolled from October 1 through the WASL administration; WASL results include all students tested, regardless of when they enrolled.
• **Margin of Error** AYP results are adjusted upward with this confidence interval (a margin of error); WASL results are not adjusted in this way.

• **WAAS Results** AYP results include students assessed by WAAS; WASL results do not include WAAS results, which are reported separately.

• **Reporting Counts** AYP results are generated for any group of students that has a certain number of continuously enrolled students (usually 30); WASL results are generated for groups that have at least 10 students, regardless of how long they have been enrolled.

**Compare My School (My District)** – The tool generates a list of at least ten schools (or districts) with characteristics similar to those of the comparison school (or district). It is important to remember the comparisons made using this tool are based solely on an individual criterion and should not be used to rank schools (or districts). Instead, the intent is to help identify similar schools (or districts) that may be using successful strategies to overcome gaps in achievement and to encourage the sharing of best practices among schools and districts. There are many complex factors that influence student and school (or district) performance, all of which should be considered when analyzing a school’s (or district’s) overall performance.

**Free or Reduced-Price Meal** – This is the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The source of this data is the yearly information aggregated by the OSPI Child and Nutrition Office.

**ITBS/ITED** – The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development are parts of the Washington Assessment Program that measures student performance in basic skill areas. More information can be found online at: [http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/](http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/).

**Limited English** – This is the percent of bilingual or English language learners. The source of this data is the May CSRS data collection.

**Low Income** – This is defined currently as students eligible for free or reduced price meals.

**Migrant** – This is the percent of migrant students. The source of this data is the Washington State Migrant Student Record System (MSRS) end-of-year collection (http://www.wsmsrs.org). The denominator used is the October student count.

**October student count** – This is the unduplicated head count of students. The source of this data is P-105, more information: [http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin](http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin).

**Race/Ethnicity** – These consist of the 5 major racial/ethnic groups: American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic and White. The source of this data is P-105, more information can be found at: [http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin](http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin).

**School Improvement Status**

• Year 1 First year of not making AYP (alert status).
• Year 2/Step 1 Second consecutive year the school did not make AYP; enters Step 1 which requires the development of a school improvement plan and the option for students to attend another school (“public school choice”) within the district that is not in school improvement.
• Step 2 Did not make AYP after being in Step 1. In addition to the public school choice requirement, supplemental services must also be offered.
• Step 3 Did not make AYP after being in Step 2. In addition to offering public school choice and supplemental services, the school must take corrective action.
• Step 4 Did not make AYP after being in Step 3. In addition to offering public school choice and supplemental services and taking corrective action, the school must plan for alternative governance.

(Additional information on school improvement status can be found by reviewing the most recent NCLB presentation materials on the OSPI Web site.)

**Special Education** – This is the percent of special education students. The source of this data is the May CSRS data collection.

**Teacher Information** - This section includes demographic and educational information about Washington state teachers. It includes the total number of certified teachers who instruct elementary and secondary students in classes or courses in a classroom situation for which daily attendance is kept. It also includes teachers who instruct students in ungraded classes, as well as those who teach special education, gifted, disadvantaged, early childhood, home/hospital, and adult education programs. More information about educational staff can be found online at: [http://www.k12.wa.us/safs/PUB/PER/0102/ps.asp](http://www.k12.wa.us/safs/PUB/PER/0102/ps.asp).

**Teaching Staff (classroom teachers)** – These are elementary, secondary teachers that instruct elementary and secondary students in classes or courses in a classroom situation for which daily attendance is kept. It also includes teachers that instruct students in ungraded classes, special education, gifted, disadvantaged, early childhood, home/hospital, and adult education. More information about educational staff can be found online at: [http://www.k12.wa.us/safs/PUB/PER/0102/ps.asp](http://www.k12.wa.us/safs/PUB/PER/0102/ps.asp).

**Core Academic Classes** - English, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language (designated world languages), civics and government, economics, arts (music, dance, theater and visual arts), history and geography

**Highly Qualified Teacher** – This federal definition is a requirement of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and applies to teachers of core academic subjects who must meet three criteria:

1. Hold at least a bachelor’s degree, and
2. Hold full state teacher certification, and have
3. Demonstrated knowledge of subject matter and skill in the area assigned to teach.
**Emergency Certificate** – An Emergency Certificate holder is a teacher candidate who has the appropriate degree and has substantially completed a teacher preparation program, but has not yet qualified for the Residency Certificate. A school can hire a teacher candidate with this certificate if a regularly certificated teacher cannot be found. The Emergency Certificate enables the teacher to be assigned to an endorsed area for up to one year.

**Conditional Certificate** – A Conditional Certificate holder is a person who has expertise in an area and has been hired by the school or school district because they cannot find a certificated teacher in a specific endorsement area. The certificate is subject to specific limitations and the teacher must take professional development coursework to enhance their teaching competencies. It is valid for up to 2 years.

**High Poverty School** – For purposes of this report, a high poverty school in Washington is a school that has a free reduced lunch rate that is in the top quartile of poverty for all schools in Washington.

**Low Poverty School** – For purposes of this report, a low poverty school in Washington is a school that has a free reduced lunch rate that is in the bottom quartile of poverty for all schools in Washington.

**Title I** - Schoolwide All students in the school are served by Title I. The school must have at least 40% of the students from low-income families and an approved reform plan that coordinates and integrates its many programs and services. Targeted Assistance Some students in the school receive supplemental services funded by Title I.

**WAAS** – The Washington Alternate Assessment System is designed for and administered to students with disabilities, whom even with accommodation would not be able to take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. More information can be found online at http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/.

**WASL** – The Washington Assessment of Student Learning is a test designed by Washington teachers and reflects what students know and are able to do based on the state’s Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs). These clear targets in the subject areas of reading, writing, listening and mathematics represent the specific academic skills and knowledge Washington State students are required to meet in the classroom. More information can be found online at: http://www/k12.wa.us/assessment/.

**WASL Strands** – Strands are detailed components of our state’s content standards, called the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS). Student performance on strands is described as either performance similar to, or better than, that of student at the standard or performance below that of students at the standard. For each individual student, performance on a strand is reported as a “+” indicating a strength or as a “-” indicating a weakness. For a school
or district, the percent of students with a “+” on a strand can be viewed as the percent of students who are performing similar to, or better than, students who were at the standard.

Other Information

**Administration Info** – Starting Spring 2004, WASL reading, writing and mathematics are administered at grades 4, 7 and 10 with WASL listening discontinued. WASL science at grades 8 and 10 was voluntary operational in Spring 2003, and is required starting Spring 2004. At grade 5, WASL science is voluntary operational in Spring 2004, and will be required in Spring 2005. In voluntary operational assessments, students tested receive their WASL results and OSPI publish school and district level results if 85% or more students are tested.

**Annual Dropout rate** – This is the total number of students that drop out of school from grades 9 through 12, divided by the total number of students, less the number of students that transferred out of the district/school. More information about graduation and dropout rates in Washington State can be found online at: [http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin](http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin).

**On-Time Graduation Rate (e.g., class of 2004)** – This rate represents only those students with an expected graduation year of 2004. These students would have started grade 9 in the fall of 2000 and were expected to graduate “on-time” (in four years). More information about graduation and dropout rates in Washington State can be found online at: [http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin](http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin).

No information on On-Time Graduation Rate may indicate fewer than 10 in the cohort, the district did not report enough data to compute an accurate rate, or the school does not have the authority to have graduates.

**Extended Graduation Rate** - This rate includes students who graduated after their expected graduation year. Late graduates are added to the total number of on-time graduates in the year they graduate when calculating the extended graduation rate. More information about graduation and dropout rates in Washington State can be found online at: [http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin](http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin). No information may indicate fewer than 10 in the cohort, the district did not report enough data to compute an accurate rate, or the school does not have the authority to have graduates.

**Unexcused Absence Rate** - The percentage of student enrollment days in the school year that students had an unexcused absence. The definition of an unexcused absence is a local decision, so the definition differs among schools and districts. In general, a student who has an unexcused absence has not attended a majority of hours or periods in a school day, or has not complied with a more restrictive district policy, and has not met the conditions for an excused absence (see RCW 28A.225.020).
## Appendix D

### Demographics

*Table 1: School District Demographic Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>% Hispanic</th>
<th>% White</th>
<th>% Free/Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>% Dropout</th>
<th>% On time Grad. Rate</th>
<th>% Highly Qualified Teacher</th>
<th>Self-Report Secondary Cert Staff %</th>
<th>% White District Percentage</th>
<th>Self-Report Secondary Cert Staff %</th>
<th>Hispanic District Percentage</th>
<th>2008 AYP Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>8.1</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>na</td>
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<td>94.8</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>District 3</td>
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<td>97.8</td>
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<td>71.1</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
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<td>93.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>3B</td>
<td>687</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>DNR</td>
<td>DNR</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>79.1</td>
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<td>73.8</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
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*Interview Data from Principal Personal Interviews.  *DNR - Did Not Report Data
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**Interview Data from Personal Interviews:**

*DNR – Did Not Report Data; **RTBI – Refused to be Interviewed*
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Interview Guide

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WASHINGTON STATE ENROLLMENT RATES BY RACE/EThNICITY: OSPI, 2012 ...... 74

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TEST SCORE COMPARISON .........................................................................................75

SAT Reasoning Test Scores, 2007 .............................................................................81
Tenth-Grade WASL in Spring 2006: 
Results by Race and Ethnicity—Revised

In 2006, the Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to identify the characteristics of students who did not meet standard on the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). An interim report is due by December 2006 and a final report by December 2007. In the meantime, the Institute is releasing a series of single-topic reports that describe student performance on the 10th-grade WASL.

This report summarizes results of the 10th-grade WASL in spring 2006 by the racial/ethnic characteristics of students.

In this report, we adopt racial/ethnic categories and terminology used by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI):

- **American Indian**: American Indian or Alaska Native.
- **Asian**: Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.
- **Black**: Black or African American.
- **Hispanic**: Hispanic or Latino/a, and
- **White**: Caucasian or White.

**Racial/Ethnic Composition of Students Who Were Slated to Take the WASL**

Exhibit 1 shows that nearly 72 percent of the 78,020 10th-grade students who were slated to take the unmodified WASL in spring 2006 were White. Hispanic students constituted the largest non-White group, followed by Asians, Blacks, American Indians, and students with multiple ethnic identities. Racial/ethnic identities were unknown for 2.3 percent of students.

---

Summary

This report summarizes results of the 10th-grade WASL in spring 2006 by the racial/ethnic characteristics of students.

The percentage of 10th graders who met standard in all three subject areas of the WASL—reading, writing, and math—is as follows:

- 60.7 percent of Asian students,
- 58.4 percent of White students,
- 34.8 percent of American Indian students,
- 27.7 percent of Hispanic students, and
- 26.1 percent of Black students.

Performance on the WASL overall is driven largely by the percentage of students who met standard in math, which ranges from 27 percent of Black students to 63 percent of Asian students. On average, White students performed near the top of this range while American Indians and Hispanics performed near the bottom.

---

Exhibit 1: Percentage of 10th Graders Slated to Take the WASL in Spring 2006 by Race/Ethnicity

N = 78,020

- **White** (71.9%)
- **Black** (4.8%)
- **Hispanic** (7.5%)
- **Asian** (7.2%)
- **Multi-Ethnic** (6.3%)
- **Unknown** (2.7%)
- **American Indian** (0.7%)
Purpose:

Gain insight into the perspectives of principals’ hiring practices in high poverty, high minority schools.

Gather data regarding principals’ understanding of resources for hiring teachers that reflect the needs of their school populations.

**Background information:**

What is your age?

How do you identify yourself racially/ethnically?

How many years as a principal? In this school? What was your job prior to being a principal?

How many people have you hired in your career as principal? Have you ever been in the process to non-renew a teacher (formal or informal)? How many times?

**Interview questions?**

1. What are the most important qualities that you look for in teachers that work in your school?

2. What is the greatest challenge in finding and retaining quality teachers in your school/district?

3. What drives hiring considerations for our school/district?

4. A. Are there special considerations of your student population that your school or district considers in the hiring process?
   
   B. Do similar characteristics between teachers and students make a difference in student learning?

5. What are the demographics of your school’s student population? Staff population? How many?

6. Is there any significance to these numbers?
Appendix F
AWSPCultural Competency Rubric
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**SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

- Work collaboratively with students of diverse cultural backgrounds
- Use prior knowledge, culture, and family in the teaching process
- Promote acceptance of diverse student cultures

**STAFF**

- Establish personal relationships with students
- Have rich, emotional experiences with all students
- Create a multicultural environment in the room
- Express diverse instructional strategies
- Promote instructional strategies