



Dr. William Tate, professor of education at Washington University, says school systems should collaborate with universities to develop student-assessment databases.

Class of 2004 SAT Takers by Race/Ethnicity

American Indian	1%
Asian American	10%
African American	12%
Mexican American	5%
Puerto Rican	1%
Other Hispanic	4%
White	63%
Other	4%

SOURCE: COLLEGE BOARD;
HTTP://WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM/ABOUT/NEWS_INFO/CBSENIOR/YR2004/LINKS.HTML

country needs to be spending more money on the education of children. There's no doubt about that, but that's only part of the answer."

INTERVENTIONS

Dr. John H. Jackson, the education director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, disputes the idea that the 96-year-old civil rights organization has relegated itself to the sidelines of NCLB's implementation. He says that in 2001, prior to the law's enactment, the NAACP launched a

Call for Action in Education, which "challenged Democrat and Republican governors to develop a five-year plan to reduce racial disparities in their state's education system by 50 percent."

With participation promised by 48 states, the organization has established a database that will serve as a repository for the plans covering state progress from 2005 to 2009. In addition to the Call For Action initiative, the NAACP has also formed the *Brown v. Board* Equity Commission, which is made up of representatives from more than 50 national non-profit organizations and 12 state departments of education.

"The NAACP Call for Action initiative is an effort to partner with states to reduce the racial disparities in education and assist states in meeting the benchmark in the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The federal government has to play more of an active role assisting states in resources and policy to address these disparities," he says.

Without funding to help states reach benchmarks set by NCLB, Jackson believes that students in struggling schools will make little to no progress on the standardized tests used to assess educational progress. Despite

used to assess educational progress. Despite news reports that some states have shown progress in reducing disparities, Jackson argues that states such as North Carolina and Delaware had taken steps to improve minority student learning prior to NCLB's enactment.

"It's too early to tell whether No Child Left Behind is making an impact," Jackson says.

Dr. Garrett Duncan, an assistant professor of education at Washington University in St. Louis, cites some progress made by Black Missouri schoolchildren on test scores, but he attributes the gains partly to community organizing that propelled families in St. Louis and Kansas City to increase their focus on their children's academic performance.

Given that Blacks in Missouri are concentrated in St. Louis and Kansas City, Duncan

believes local Black community organizations have focused a high level of energy on the issue.

Duncan, like many of his fellow scholars in the education field, has serious reservations about the strong reliance on standardized tests as measures. He points out that while disparities do exist, the focus on test scores forces many schools to concentrate on teaching to the test rather than offering a broad range of teaching approaches and curriculums. Standardized test scores reveal limited information about actual performance standards, according to Duncan.

"I think standardized tests should be one means of that assessment. Over-reliance on standardized tests is not the answer," echoes UCLA's Howard.

Dr. William Tate, a professor of education

at Washington University, says that given a variety of assessment tools and data, school systems should seek collaborations with universities to develop databases to develop a more sophisticated use of assessment data than currently exists under NCLB.

A specialist in math and science education, Tate, who also serves as a senior researcher at the St. Louis Center for Inquiry in Science, Teaching and Learning, says he's interested in developing a database in St. Louis similar to one Chicago universities have developed for Chicago city schools, that tracks a wide variety of student performance data so that teaching and curriculum can better meet student needs.

"Every city should have local universities gathering important data and trends. It has to be a community effort," Tate says. ■