

Dear Principal,

In 2012 under the state's No Child Left Behind Flexibility Waiver, Minnesota established a goal to reduce achievement gaps by 50 percent by 2017. Schools and districts have received annual data showing progress toward the goal, and many have set local goals under the World's Best Workforce in alignment with the state goal. It is now 2017, and I am reaching out to share that your school has met Minnesota's goal of reducing the achievement gap by 50 percent in both math and reading.

You, your staff, your students, and your community are congratulated for this incredible accomplishment and commended for all the hard work you did to make it happen. Achievement gaps do not close without hard work and commitment.

2017 goals were established in reading and math for every student group, including American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Black, White, Free or Reduced Price Lunch, Special Education, and English learners. A school or district must have at least 20 students within a student group for that group to be included in the data. A school or district was considered to have met the goal if the proficiency index rates for all applicable student groups exceeded the 2017 target. You can find data for all schools attached. This data has been posted to the [MDE Data Reports and Analytics page](#).

As a state, our results are promising but also show there is more work to do. Minnesota is establishing new goals under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that will be aligned to the goals for the state World's Best Workforce (WBWF) system. The state is working towards building one coherent accountability system for schools and districts that focuses on closing gaps and increasing student achievement. The new statewide achievement gap goal is to reach a math and reading achievement rate of 90, with no student group below 85, by the year 2025.

Under ESSA and the WBWF, Minnesota will double down efforts to support schools and districts in reducing disparities in student outcomes. The new accountability system, beginning in the 2018-19 school year, focuses on equity for all students and targeting support to schools and districts that need it the most. The Department will submit the ESSA State Plan to the U.S. Department of Education on September 18, 2017. For more information on the state's proposed system under ESSA, [visit the MDE ESSA webpage](#).

I again want to extend my congratulations on your accomplishment. I encourage you to share this celebration with your staff, students, and community. With the continued hard work and dedication from leaders like you, we will continue to make strides in ensuring all students are on paths to post-secondary success.

If you have any questions on your school's data, please contact [mde.analytics@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.analytics@state.mn.us). If you have questions related to the state's ESSA accountability system, contact [mde.essa@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.essa@state.mn.us). World's Best Workforce questions can be directed to [mde.worldsbestworkfore@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.worldsbestworkfore@state.mn.us).

Thank you again for your leadership and the hard work you do every day to ensure all Minnesota children receive an excellent education.

In the interest of children,

Dr. Brenda Cassellius

Attachment: [2017 School Achievement Gap Data File](#)