
**Analyzing & Reporting Achievement Gaps:
Guidance for Minnesota Schools**

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Final Thoughts

This document provides guidance on the estimation and reporting of achievement gaps and the complex persistent challenges that schools and communities face in response. As always, educators and professionals in research, evaluation, and assessment roles have an opportunity to improve data and assessment literacy of their constituencies.

In doing so, we accept the responsibility to be informed regarding sound practice to improve data use in schools and communities and abide by professional standards for data analysis and communication. Two important

Data & Assessment Literacy

Data constitute the essential ingredients for evidence-based practice, quality program design, and effective policy development. Because of this, it is important that data are appropriate, meaningful, and useful. Any serious effort to address disparities in education, health, and other important arenas to promote the success of every young person, must adopt a principled approach to data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Research, evaluation, and assessment professionals can proactively enhance the

Data Use

To promote the effective use of data, we must understand its quality and the extent to which it is appropriate, meaningful, and useful. Research, evaluation, and assessment professionals are well positioned to evaluate the quality of data sources; ensure the appropriate, meaningful, and useful presentation of data; and monitor and promote the use and application of data and

sources of these standards include the *Standards for Reporting*⁴⁶ and the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*⁴⁷.

Here we clarify the importance of continuing to improve data and assessment literacy in relevant constituencies, the goal of improving data use, the importance of evaluating all data-based reports for public consumption, and the need for greater understanding of validity as it relates to the evidence supporting test score interpretation and use. These components are also data/assessment literacy and use goals of Generation Next.

understanding of data and data-based reports among all stakeholders, including policy makers, educators, community leaders, families, and youth themselves. In improving data and assessment literacy among all stakeholder communities, we can enhance the communication and understanding of the magnitudes of achievement gaps, the contexts in which they are manifested, and the monitoring of progress. In improving data and assessment literacy, we can improve data use and enhance data-driven decision making.

data-based reports. But to support these efforts, we must simultaneously promote and develop greater data and assessment literacy across stakeholder groups. We are driven by a set of principles and standards regarding data use and fair test use⁴⁸. These principles inform our work and define the bases for evaluating the selection, collection, analysis, reporting, and use of data.

