

What factors are associated with low-income students and English Learners (ELs) who closed achievement gaps in Denver Public Schools?

Compared to their counterparts with similar backgrounds, students who closed achievement gaps were more likely to have the following experiences:

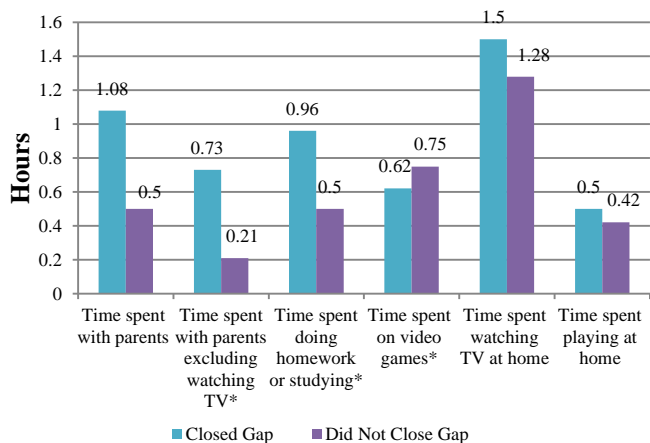
Time Related (see graph below)

1. Their parents spent considerably more time with their children at home.
2. They spent almost twice as much time a day on homework or other educational activities.
3. They were less likely to play video games, and those who did play video games spent less time playing compared to students who did not close the gap.

Other

4. They consistently reported more positive experiences with school and school staff.
5. Their parents had higher expectations for their children.
6. ELs who learn, speak, and hear more in their native language at home were more likely to close the gap.

Time Spent per Day



*Statistically significant at .01 level

Recommendations

1. Encourage parents to spend time with students after school. (e.g., helping with homework) ¹
2. Create and promote a school where students feel cared for, feel treated fairly and feel like school is a safe, conducive learning environment. ²
3. Encourage ELs to use their native language at home and encourage parents of ELs to engage with their students in their native language. ³
4. Reinforce high expectations at school with students and parents. Ask parents what their expectations are for their students and explore what post-secondary options they are considering. Connect them to resources that help achieve this. ⁴

Resources

- ¹ Helping with homework: <http://face.dpsk12.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/HomeworkHabits.pdf>
- ² Tips on school connectedness for parents: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/connectedness_parents.pdf
Tips on school connectedness for teachers: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/connectedness_teachers.pdf
- ³ Resources for Parents and Educator of ELs: <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/why-reading-your-kids-your-home-language-will-help-them-become-better-readers>
- ⁴ Engaging in your children's education: <http://face.dpsk12.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/BeEngaged.pdf>

Background/Methodology

In order to identify factors associated with closing the achievement gap, we examined students who had been able to reach academic proficiency and those who had not. We relied on longitudinal data on student performance in DRA2 and TCAP Reading. Each student's score was rank ordered and grouped into quartiles. A student was considered to have closed the gap if they moved up two quartiles from second grade to fourth grade. All students included in the study received a Free or Reduced priced lunch and 80% of the students were English Language Learners. The research employed three data collection tools. A time diary that reported student time use at home, a student survey, and a parent survey. We collected data from 40 5th graders at 26 different schools, including charters. We received 28 parent surveys, 12 of which were from parents of children who closed the gap. We centered our investigation on the differences between these two groups of students. We explored their time use at home, motivation, parent involvement, perception of school and teachers, and parent perception of important education related factors. Additionally, for ELs, we investigated if speaking, hearing, and reading in their native language at home was associated with closing the achievement gap.