



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Bridging the Gap Plan?

- Bridging the Gap is the name given to the Pinellas County School District's plan to narrow and eventually eliminate performance gaps between black and non-black students. The plan is revised annually as new strategies are considered and data are reviewed. The strategies and goals are also written into our District Strategic Plan and are found under Goal 4, which is titled Equity and Excellence for All.

### What are the components of the Bridging the Gap Plan?

- The plan outlines goals and strategies specific to six goal areas: (1) **graduation rate**, (2) **student achievement in reading and math**, (3) **participation and performance in advanced coursework** (such as gifted, honors, dual enrollment, AP, IB and AICE); (4) **discipline disparity** rates for students receiving referrals and suspensions; disparity rates within (5) **ESE identification** (and specifically among designations of Emotional Behavioral Disability – EBD), and (6) **minority hiring**.

### Is the Bridging the Gap Plan specific to the achievement of black students or all minorities?

- The Bridging the Gap Plan is the district's plan for increasing black achievement, though similar goals and strategies are in place in the district to support Hispanic students and other student subgroups where gaps exist (such as English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities). All of the strategies outlined in the Bridging the Gap Plan represent best practices that are good for all learners and minority learners in particular.

### What gaps exist and what are the district's goals?

- There are gaps in each of the goal areas and the plan outlines specific data targets for each area, including short-range process targets and long-range, aspirational targets to measure our progress. The plan is designed around 10-year targets with the stated aspirational goal of eliminating or greatly narrowing the gaps in that time.

### Have the strategies in the plan been implemented yet?

- Yes, the plan's primary components were planned, designed and implemented beginning in 2017-18, though some initiatives were underway even before then. The plan is designed to impact students now, though some of the initiatives may take years to reach full implementation in all schools.

### Did the district get any feedback in developing the plan?

- Yes, the plan was developed over the course of the 2016-17 school year and includes input from teachers, administrators, parents and community members. Five community feedback evenings were held to garner input, with more than 1,200 specific ideas submitted for consideration.

### Will the plan be updated as more feedback is provided?

- Yes, the plan will be revisited each year for improvements based upon an ongoing review of the data, an internal district evaluation of best practices, and feedback from the community.

## District Commitment

- Approved by the Pinellas County School Board in May of 2017.
- Represents a long-term commitment to reducing achievement gaps across the district in all schools.
- Developed with input from teachers, parents and community members to create ambitious data targets and action steps outlined in the plan.
- Developed as a way of expressing the district's beliefs and commitment to diversity throughout the school system through fostering a growth mindset, ensuring culturally relevant lessons and materials, celebrating all learners and families, and hiring a workforce that is representative of the students we serve.

## Aspirational Goal:

- Pinellas County Schools is committed to ensuring equity and excellence for all learners with the ambitious goal of eliminating or greatly narrowing the achievement gap within 10 years between black and non-black learners.

## By the Numbers:

- 80-page plan
  - 116 action steps
  - 6 goal areas
    - **Goal 1:** Graduation Rate
    - **Goal 2:** Student Achievement
    - **Goal 3:** Advanced Coursework
    - **Goal 4:** Student Discipline
    - **Goal 5:** ESE Identification
    - **Goal 6:** Minority Hiring

## What are some of the key strategies included in the plan?

- The training of all teachers and staff in developing lessons that are culturally relevant, with curriculum and materials to support rigorous, engaging instruction in all classrooms.
- The training of all teachers, staff, and leaders in developing an equity mindset, exploring and celebrating diversity, and recognizing bias.
- The training of all teachers, staff, and leaders in restorative practices as a way to build school community, encourage student voice, and grow pro-social skills and relationships.
- A commitment to offering robust, extended learning opportunities before and after school and to extended school year programs (such as Summer Bridge) to meet the needs of every child.
- A personalized learning plan that outlines the individual needs for each student, along with an online resource site that connects students to key skills and standards they need to succeed.
- Universal screening for gifted identification for all students before the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and additional Plan B identification options.
- A district commitment to providing on-campus, open access for all students to college readiness testing (PSAT, SAT, and ACT).
- A district commitment to fair and equitable disciplinary practices for all students and to fidelity implementation of Positive Behavioral Supports and Intervention (PBIS).
- A targeted rollout of parent workshops in schools and community academies that are "linked to student learning" in collaboration with Dr. Karen Mapp / Harvard University.
- A targeted plan to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse teaching staff through focused and innovative strategies, including a program that identifies and supports current minority high school students who want to be teachers in our schools.



- **Goal 1: Graduation Rate:** The district has not yet received its final 2017-18 graduation rate totals from the state, though internal metrics show that the graduation rate for black students will increase again this year. The expected increase in the black graduation rate will outpace the non-black rate for the third consecutive year, leading to a narrowing of the gap from 16.5 percentage points in 2016-17 to an estimated 13.9 percentage points in 2017-18. The district continues to see strong increases in its black graduation rate, which has improved by 12.9 percentage points over the past five years.



- **Goal 2: Academic Achievement:** The district did not see performance improvement for black students in English-Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics on the state's Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) and the gaps remain stable. The gaps in 2017-18 were nearly identical to the prior year, with a 33 percentage point gap remaining among black and non-black students in ELA and math. The scores for black students earning satisfactory scores (Level 3 or above) on the FSA ELA and Math assessments ranged from 24% to 30% depending on the grade level.



- **Goal 3: Advanced Coursework:** The district saw continued narrowing of enrollment gaps in gifted and in advanced and accelerated courses. Black enrollment in gifted reached 5% of the total student enrollment in that program for the first time, decreasing the gap by a full percentage point in 2017-18. The district's black enrollment in advanced and accelerated courses in 2017-18 increased to 13.7%, an improvement of nearly two percentage points.



- **Goal 4: Student Discipline:** The district saw an improvement in 2017-18 in the gap between black and non-black students receiving referrals and out-of-school suspensions. As such, the risk ratio for black students for referrals dropped from 2.64 to 2.43 and the risk ratio for out-of-school suspensions dropped from 4.07 to 3.61. The district has seen a 35.8% decrease in the number of black students suspended over the past five years.



- **Goal 5: ESE Identification:** The district saw a decline in the percentage of black students assigned to the ESE designation of Emotional / Behavioral Disability (EBD) in 2017-18, signifying a drop in the risk ratio for the third consecutive year. The risk ratio for the 2017-18 school year for EBD was 3.84 compared to 3.94 the year before. The overall risk ratio for black students across all ESE designations (1.46) remained nearly identical for the third consecutive year.



- **Goal 6: Minority Hiring:** The district increased its percentage of black teachers to 9.2% in 2017-18, an increase for the third consecutive year and a narrowing of the gap from 2016-17.



## Pinellas County Schools / Bridging the Gap / Summary of Annual Outcome Measures

BTG DATA SUMMARY	BTG Goal Areas		Race	Baseline 2016		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	FINAL 2027	
	Goal 1	Graduation Rate % of students graduating / 4 years	Black	65.5		69.3	TBD*										
			Non Black	83.4		85.8	TBD*										
			GAP	17.9		16.5	TBD*										
	Goal 2	FSA ELA-READING % of students scoring Level 3+	Black	24.2		25.7	24.6										
			Non Black	56.4		57.7	57.4										
			GAP	32.2		32.0	32.8										
		FSA MATH % of students scoring Level 3+	Black	27.9		29.0	29.2										
			Non Black	60.9		62.0	62.2										
			GAP	33.0		33.0	33.0										
	Goal 3	Advanced Coursework % of students enrolled in Gifted	Black	3.8		4.0	5.0										
			GAP	14.2		14.0	13.0										
		Advanced Coursework % of students enrolled in advanced courses	Black	12.1		11.9	13.7										
			GAP	5.9		6.1	4.3										
	Goal 4	Student Discipline / OSS Risk Ratio / Out-of-School Suspensions	Black	4.33		4.07	3.61										
			GAP	3.33		3.07	2.61										
		Student Discipline / Referrals Risk Ratio / Referrals	Black	2.38		2.64	2.43										
GAP			1.38		1.64	1.43											
Goal 5	ESE Identification Risk Ratio / ESE	Black	1.45		1.45	1.46											
		GAP	.45		.45	.46											
	ESE Identification Risk Ratio / EBD	Black	4.20		3.94	3.84											
		GAP	3.20		2.94	2.84											
Goal 6	Minority Hiring % of instructional positions	Black	8.3		8.8	9.2											
		GAP	9.7		9.2	8.8											
Note: Key definitions and data rules for each goal are outlined in detail within the full BTG Plan. *Graduation rates for 2017-18 are not final and have not been released by the state. The district does provide periodic internal estimates for BTG planning purposes. They should be viewed only as close approximations of final totals. Final graduation rates are expected to be released by the state in December 2018.																	