



Bridging the Achievement Gap (BTG) Strategic Plan is designed to identify specific actions believed to positively impact the gap between black and non-black students. The five goals address:

- Graduation Rates
- Grade Level Proficiency
- Participation and Performance in Accelerated Courses/Programs
- *Disciplinary Infractions*
- Eligibility for Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities

The District Initiatives or Actions listed with each goal were gathered through a community think tank as well as input from district- and school-based leaders. *The initiatives are regularly monitored and quantified where possible. These measures are included and updated periodically. If additional initiatives are determined to be a major factor for improvement, it can be added. Likewise, if an action plan is determined to have little or no impact on the targeted outcome measures it may be removed from the list. Please note-the practice might continue but the results must be specific to reducing the gap between black and non-black student achievement.*

**Bridging the Gap Strategic Plan Goal 1:** Eliminate the gap between Pinellas County graduation rates for black students as compared to non-black students.

**Goal Managers:** Rita Vasquez, Executive Director High School Education; Valerie Brimm, Director Strategic Partnerships and Mary Conage, Director Title I

**Highlights: Progress monitoring of the initiatives or action items.**

- ALG 1 EOC Passing Scores Data (NGSSS ALG 1 EOC, not the 9<sup>th</sup> grade FSA ALG 1 EOC): The district ALG 1 pass rate are 49.97% of black 11<sup>th</sup> graders started the 2014-15 school having passed the ALG EOC. Now, at the end of the 2014-15 school year, we have 63% of all black 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 63% of all black 11<sup>th</sup> graders who've already passed the End-of-Course (EOC), so we improved the rate of Black students passing the EOC at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade by 13%. Additionally, the 63% mark matches the pass rate for non-black 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders as well. This means there is no gap between black and non-black students exiting the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades with passing ALG 1 EOC scores.
- Credit Recovery Data: In 2014-15, high schools facilitated the recovery of just under 4837 course credits through in-school credit recovery systems, with black students recovering 1850 of those credits or 38% of the total. Although last year, black v. non-black data was not specifically tracked (gathered for this year) we've quantified the following which is indicative of the success of the in-school credit recovery program for black students:

Effect of In-School Credit Recovery Programs 2014-15			
	Total "n" for black senior students	Total # of non-graduates due to GPA or credit issues	% of Total who did not graduate because of GPA or credit issues
Boca Ciega	165	0	0%
Gibbs	175	0	0%
Lakewood	172	0	0%

- ACT Concordancy Success and Graduation Rates: These two BTG data elements cannot be updated until Fall 2015.

**District Action Items/Initiatives: Primary contributing factors to reduce or eliminate the achievement gap.**

1. Monitor consistent use of PCS' Graduation Cohort Report which contains multiple data points for at-risk black students
2. Assign mentors to black students in grades 9-12 at risk of not graduating (identified and monitored through cohort report data system)
  - a. Assign adult mentors to at-risk black seniors at beginning of school year
  - b. Assign peer and/or adult mentors to at-risk black students in grades 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> at beginning of each school year
3. Increase in-school credit recovery options/opportunities through changes in master schedules and monitor to ensure at-risk black students are targeted and take advantage of these credits recovery options. The various options assist students who must work after school for the economic health of their family.
  - a. 3.1 Ensure at-risk black students remain on grade level with their graduation cohort groups (utilize in-school credit recovery, ELP, and Summer Bridge as interventions to accomplish.)
4. Target and follow-through for black students testing on SAT and ACT to obtain concordant scores for students who have not passed Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) in English and Language Arts (ELA).
  - a. Continue to monitor and support systems schools have in place now to ensure all students who have not passed the state English Language Arts/Reading assessment and who need fee waivers for ACT and SAT exams to obtain those fee waivers.
5. Offer PERT multiple times each semester every school year to assist students in earning a comparative score for the Algebra 1 EOC graduation requirement.
6. Conduct parent data meetings where parents are provided data regarding the progress of their student toward graduation.
7. Utilize a report that was created to address course recovery for middle school students. This report allows schools to track/monitor the progress of students as it relates to being on track for middle school course promotion.
8. A district wide course recovery platform (Grad Point) has been implemented at all middle schools. Schools provide opportunities for students to enroll in course recovery programs during the before and after school programs.
9. Increase the percentage of black students who complete the algebra EOC assessment requirement by the end of the 10th grade year. Monitor the ALG EOC black pass rate after each EOC administration. Monitor PERT pass rates at the end of each semester.
10. Decrease the percentage of black students failing core academic courses. Monitor course failures at the end of each grading period.

**Bridging the Gap Strategic Plan Goal 2:** Eliminate the gap between Pinellas County's proficiency rates on state required assessments for black students as compared to non-black students.

**Goal Manager:** Pam Moore, Associate Superintendent Teaching & Learning

**Highlights: Progress monitoring of the initiatives or action items.**

- There was an increase in the number of black students participating in STEM Club activities: 2013-2014 – 193 black students participated (4.5%); 2014-2015 – 344 black students participated (7.3%).
- Black students gained 2 percentage points on both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science FCAT state assessments.
- Black students participating in Gifted Programs increased from 264 (6%) in 2013-2014 to 307 (7%) in 2014-2015.
- Black/non-black performance rates on the SAT-10 (Stanford Achievement Test) increased by 7 percentage points in first grade reading. However, black first graders showed an increase of 6 percentage points in math as compared to 5 percentage points of non-black students.
- On the second grade SAT-10 (Stanford Achievement Test), both black and non-black students increased by 1 percentage point in reading from last year, but black students gained 8 percentage points in math as compared to 5 percentage points for non-black students.
- When analyzing the progress of black/non-black students using the *Connect For Success/Beyond the Classroom* take-home computer initiative, *Promise Time* (extended learning), and students participating in both of these programs, the participation data from *ST Math* (computer-based math program) showed promising results. The gap between black and non-black student participation in *ST Math* narrows for students participating in *Connect For Success/Beyond the Classroom* take-home computer initiative or *Promise Time* (extended learning), and disappears for students participating in both programs.
- The percentage of high school black students who were raised from the “below proficiency” range to the “approaching proficiency” range in three of the district’s progress monitoring assessments (Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology) was higher than the percentage of non-black students in each of those three district cycle assessments.
- Additionally, the US History district cycle assessment saw students’ percentage in the “below proficiency” range decrease, but it was outpaced by the non-black percentage decrease in this assessment.

- The details of these district assessments are:
  - The “below proficiency” percentage in Algebra I for black students decreased by 2%, while the non-black “below proficiency” percentage increased by 1%.
  - The “below proficiency” percentage in Geometry for black students decreased 13%, while the non-black “below proficiency” percentage decreased only 9%.
  - The “below proficiency” percentage in Biology 1 for black students decreased 11%, while the non-black “below proficiency” percentage decreased only 4%.
  - The “below proficiency” percentage in US History for black students decreased 8%, while the non-black “below proficiency” percentage decreased by 14%.
- In Summer Bridge, black student enrollment increased 15% from 4,923 students (2014) to 5,657 (2015).

**District Action Items/Initiatives: Primary contributing factors to reduce or eliminate the achievement gap.**

1. Provide monthly professional development to all administrators using the Early Warning Reports for elementary, middle, and high schools to create effective monitoring systems for black/non-black students as measured by the record of professional development opportunities.
2. Create an automated report after every grading period to inform course failures disaggregated for black/non-black students and by school to be shared with school and district leadership for intentional monitoring of progress.
3. Continue to provide extended learning programs and monitor participation/progress of black students enrolled in programs such as academic interventions, course/credit recovery programs, STEM Clubs, and Connect For Success/Beyond the Classroom initiatives.
4. Identify and recruit black students not performing on grade level for participation in Summer Bridge, 2016; and track achievement/progress and enrollment during the summer.
5. Increase the representation of black students who are appropriately enrolled in higher level courses such as Algebra I, Geometry, Advanced Math, and English 1 Honors at the middle school level and gifted/talented program placements at the elementary level.
6. Increase the number of family academic engagement opportunities provided by schools and the number of parents/guardians who attended.
7. Embed culturally responsive instructional strategies (such as the use of collaborative structures as well as an emphasis on classroom environments that incorporate social engagement and movement opportunities) into professional development activities for teachers as measured by professional development component records and school visits.
8. Increase student performance and positive behaviors in the five Scale Up elementary schools (Campbell Park, Fairmount Park, Lakewood, Maximo, and Melrose) by continuing to provide additional resources including the following areas of focus: comprehensive mental and social counseling, paraprofessionals in every classroom, enhanced family engagement, and professional development opportunities for both teachers/support staff and administrators as measured by the Evaluation Plan coordinated through the Assessment, Accountability, and Research Department.

**Bridging the Gap Strategic Plan Goal 3:** Eliminate the gap between Pinellas County's accelerated participation and performance rates for black and non-black students as measured by the percent within ethnicity.

**Goal Managers:** Judy Vigue, Director Advanced Studies & Academic Excellence, Andrew Weatherill, Guidance Specialist and Jenny Klimis

**Highlights: Progress monitoring of the initiatives or action items.**

- The June 2014 District Administration feature article was on gifted education. This article highlighted the work PCS is doing with the “twice exceptional” students.
- The black student participation rates, as reported by the College Board, in Advanced Placement courses increased by 13.8% in Pinellas County from 2012-13 to 2013-14 compared to a decrease of 1.3% in Florida and an increase of 8.2% nationally.
- The black student participation rates, as reported by the College Board, in SAT increased by 6.2% in Pinellas County from 2012-13 to 2013-14 compared to a 4.6% increase in Florida and a 1.4% increase nationally.
- The percent of middle school black students enrolled in high school courses nearly doubled from 9% in 2013-14 to 17% in 2014-15.
- The percent of black students choosing AVID continues to be greater than the percent of non-black students choosing AVID due to intentional recruitment of students who are underrepresented in four year colleges and universities.

**District Action Items/Initiatives: Primary contributing factors to reduce or eliminate the achievement gap.**

1. Continue use of automated scheduler at the middle school level to ensure black students are placed based on their demonstrated aptitude into advanced mathematics and science courses and use teacher recommendations to supplement the test data by scheduling students who demonstrate their potential in a different way into advanced courses.

2. Ensure 7<sup>th</sup> grade black students who score proficient or higher on the FSA reading and mathematics assessments are encouraged to sit for the PSAT 8/9 to prepare for the TIP SAT and to include this data to assist with rigorous course selection recommendations for 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
3. Use October 2015 enrollment data to establish a baseline rate of the percentage of black students accessing AP courses in which they demonstrate potential for success according to the PSAT AP Potential report; and increase this rate by at least 10% annually.
4. Annually in January and February, conduct individual and small group conferences with each black student in grades 6-10 who qualify for participation in AVID to inform them of the opportunity to participate in AVID and the expectations of students in AVID; completing an application at the conclusion of the meeting, monitoring the percentage of qualified black students who complete the application process and the percentage who are scheduled to AVID in the following year .
5. Analyze the data for black student performance in courses of rigor to identify the courses in which these students struggle the most and develop specific interventions (i.e. lunch tutoring, schedule modified to include AVID, Culturally Relevant Teaching training for teachers, focus groups to determined needed supports, etc.) related to these courses.
6. Partner with SPC to administer the PERT to at least 80% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade black students who have a cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher for dual enrollment qualification.
7. Utilize monthly Counselor Department meetings for middle and high school to develop action plans and monitor progress toward achieving the goals for which counselors play a critical role in the Bridging the Gap plan and the District Strategic Plan.
8. Implement a new academic and career planner, ensuring that
  - a. 90% of black students have an academic plan for high school and a career plan prior to exiting middle school.
  - b. 90% of black high school students will utilize the academic and career planner annually to monitor and/or update their progress toward graduation, graduation pathway, and continued college/career planning
9. Using the June 2015 survey responses to establish baseline data, increase the number of black students participating in elementary talent development groups.
10. Conduct focus groups with black students enrolled in the Middle School Centers for Gifted Studies at least two times per year to determine needs for support and establish a peer group.



**Bridging the Gap Strategic Plan Goal 4:** Reduce the disparity in the rates of disciplinary infractions between black and non-black students as measured by the percent within ethnicity.

**Goal Managers:** Area Superintendents (Pat Wright, Bob Poth, Ward Kennedy & Barbara Hires)

**Highlights: Progress monitoring of the initiatives or action items.**

- Pinellas County Schools developed and is fully implementing a Collaborative Interagency Agreement regarding student misconduct, student interviews and student arrest by Law Enforcement Officers.
- School-based Resource Officers received summer professional development on alternative strategies to arrest.
- Total arrests are down by 30 percent compared to August-June of 2013.
- Differentiated Accountability (DA) Schools have participated in four days of professional development on the Positive Behavior Support Model.
- 100% of schools developed and implemented a Schoolwide Behavior Plan.
- DA Schools received 15% of additional Student Services support. (Psychologists, Social Workers and Educational Diagnosticians)

**District Action Items/Initiatives: Primary contributing factors to reduce or eliminate the achievement gap.**

1. Each school will implement a positive behavioral interventions and support model as their SWBP.
  - a. Area Superintendents will review implementation status of each school on a monthly basis. The following indicators will be utilized:
    - Out of School suspension data for black/non-black students by infraction top 5 infraction categories.
    - In School suspension data for black/non-black students by top 5 infraction categories.
    - Referral data (number of infractions and number of students) for black/non-black students by top 5 infraction categories.
  - b. MTSS Area Coaches will provide targeted support to assure full implementation is achieved by June 2016.
    - District wide training at area meetings on PBS which will be measured by assigned follow-up action steps to be completed by school leader.

- School-Based leadership training for schools to be measured by revised action steps of the SWBP.
  - Individual school support based on needs.
- c. Each school will utilize a leadership team.
- Monthly minutes will be collected and reviewed by MTSS Coaches with a follow up to the Area Superintendent.
2. Provide district wide training related to reducing the discipline gap. (Utilize our MTSS coaches, Goal 5 BTG Manager, and the PD department)
    - a. Cultural Responsive Instruction: Measured by the record of professional development and assigned actionable items required of training.
    - b. Coaching Classroom Management professional development will be provided to 50 schools identified by the Area Superintendents based on 14-15 discipline data.
  3. Principals will be required to consult and gain approval for their area superintendent prior to suspending any regular education student for more than 10 days within a semester. Measured by the number of individual student suspension days per semester.
  4. Implement the FI. Positive Behavior Support Project MOU with targeted schools that have the greatest over-representation of minority student school disciplinary infractions. School's include Azalea MS, Bay Point MS, John Hopkins MS, Meadowlawn MS, Tyrone MS. Measured by monthly implementation reports submitted by District PBS Coordinator.
  5. Continue to build a positive cultural environment and provide behavior support in partnership with The New Teacher Program (TNTP) in the five lowest academic proficient schools. These schools include Melrose Elementary, Maximo Elementary, Fairmount Park Elementary, Lakewood Elementary, and Campbell Park Elementary. Measured by the TNTP Pilot progress reports.
  6. Support the Accountability Pilot of MTSS-behavior in primary grades in two elementary schools with high black/non-black discipline discrepancies.

**Bridging the Gap Strategic Plan Goal 5:** Reduce the number of black students being found eligible for Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (EBD) by 2 percent by June 2016.

Goal Manager: Lisa Grant, Executive Director Exceptional Student Education

**Highlights: Progress monitoring of the initiatives or action items.**

- Overall number of EBD eligibilities down
- Added gifted screened to EBD eligibility process
- Showed improvement in quality and fidelity of Tier 3 interventions and Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs)
- Goal 5 cross-functional team reviewed and used data regularly to guide progress and actions at monthly goal team meetings
- Began coordination with Goal 4 team

**District Action Items/Initiatives: Primary contributing factors to reduced or eliminate the achievement gap.**

1. Improve use of data to achieve the goal
  - a. The Goal 5 Team will increase use of data monthly, adding the review and analysis of discipline data to be more proactive in monitoring goal progress beginning August 2015 to reduce referrals and suspensions compared to 2015 data
  - b. The Goal 5 Team will monitor the number of students dismissed from eligibility as EBD to increase the number of students dismissed compared to 2015 data
  - c. The Goal 5 Team will meet regularly with the Goal 4 discipline team to coordinate and align strategies and actions to reduce referrals and suspensions compared to 2015

2. Focused Professional Development
  - a. Design and implement professional development regarding culturally responsive instruction focused on elementary Pre-K through second grade teachers and administrators as measured by number of sessions offered and participants attending
3. Improve Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) systems
  - a. Create and implement a MTSS process for Pre-K by May 2016 as measured by the process created, the number of discipline referrals and the number of students with FBAs to decrease the number of Pre-K students found eligible for EBD as compared to 2015 data
  - b. Improve Tier 2 interventions by creating a resource intervention guide and offering differentiated professional development to increase tier 2 intervention implementation and reduce referrals, suspensions and EBD eligibilities beginning by February 2016
  - c. Create an accountability process to monitor the effectiveness and integrity of Tier 2 interventions to be implemented by January 2016 to decrease the number of referrals, suspensions, and EBD eligibilities compared to 2015 data
4. Pilot a Tier 2 early intervention program with a focus on classroom environment and literacy in kindergarten and first grade classrooms in selected schools during the 2015-2016 school year to increase academic achievement on district assessments and reduce the number of discipline incidents of participating students