

MINNESOTA Journal

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Building assets for African-American men

by Mark Stenglein and Gary L. Cunningham

"If we keep on doing what we are doing, we will keep getting what we are getting."

—African-American Men Project steering committee member.

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In 1999, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners directed staff to conduct an analysis of African-American males between the ages of 18-30. The goals of the project are 1) to develop a baseline of socioeconomic data about this group, and 2) to determine to what the degree the County's current policies are positioned to address the issues this group faces.

In November 2000, a preliminary report was issued by a volunteer 29-member steering committee, composed of representatives from a wide range of constituencies in Hennepin County. The report focuses on a number of systems and interrelated domains of well-being that impact African-American men, including employment, education, health, community/civic engagement and county program involvement.

The findings of the Preliminary Report show that many African-American men in our community are working, going to school, taking care of their children and participating in the social/economic life of Hennepin County. A look across the broad spectrum of indicators in the Twin Cities metropolitan area suggests that African-American men have benefited from the robust economy. However, many remain at the bottom of the economic well.

Key Findings:

▲ No single initiative, cause, or outcome will have the systemic impact needed to change the socioeconomic circumstances for African-American men. The social and economic situation of many African-American men results from a multitude of interrelated causes.

▲ The report shows that focusing on employment alone will not address the social and economic issues faced by African-American men in our community.

▲ A paradigm shift is needed: from a model of providing social services and incarceration, to one of building community and individual assets for self-reliance. As one Steering Committee member stated, "The County cannot "social service" African-American men out of their present situation."

Population, Demographics and Neighborhood Indicators

▲ Estimates put the population of 18-30 year old African-American men in Hennepin County between 9,572 and 19,248. The 2000 census will provide a more precise estimate.

▲ African-Americans are concentrated in fifteen Minneapolis neighborhoods with the lowest property values, a disproportionate share of low-income rental housing and higher crime rates.

Employment

In 1995, there was no significant difference between the labor force participation for African-Americans and whites in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. However, African-American unemployment was three times that of whites. African-American male private and public employment increased in all occupational categories in Hennepin County from 1990-1997. While there was a higher percentage of African-American men in the labor force, they tend to be concentrated in low skill occupations.

Education

▲ In 1998-1999, schools in Hennepin County enrolled 111,255 male students, of which 15,039 were African-American. Within Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools had the largest male student population (25,084), as well

as the largest African-American male student enrollment (10,830).

▲ During the 1998-99 school year, 667, or 31% of the male students who dropped out of public schools in Hennepin County were African-American males. A large

rate is 154 per 10,000, roughly three times the rate for all men of that age group.

Hennepin County Programs

Of the Hennepin County African-American male population (18-30) in

- ▲ 4,000 received economic assistance
- ▲ 3,880 received medical assistance
- ▲ 2,350 received food stamps
- ▲ 1,030 were on MFIP
- ▲ Men ages 18-30, regardless of race, make up a small percentage of clients

served by City of Minneapolis/Hennepin County employment and training programs.

Given the overlap of service use and the geographic concentration of African-American men, service integration and community-based strategies are very important approaches that may improve outcomes for this population.

Community Engagement

Interviews, focus groups and community forums were held to capture the real stories of African-American men. Results of the outreach effort were:

- ▲ Critical to the success of African-American

men is their involvement and connection to their community.

- ▲ African-American men want to be

majority (560) of the African-American male students who dropped out attended Minneapolis Public Schools.

▲ The percentage of African-American male dropouts has declined by about 4% per year from 1996-1999 throughout both the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. This represents about 110 fewer African-American male dropouts each year.

▲ In the 1998-1999 school year, 4,530, or 42%, of African-American male students were suspended from the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Health

▲ Over 4,000 African-American men 18-30 used the Hennepin County Emergency Room in 1999. The most common diagnosis was asthma.

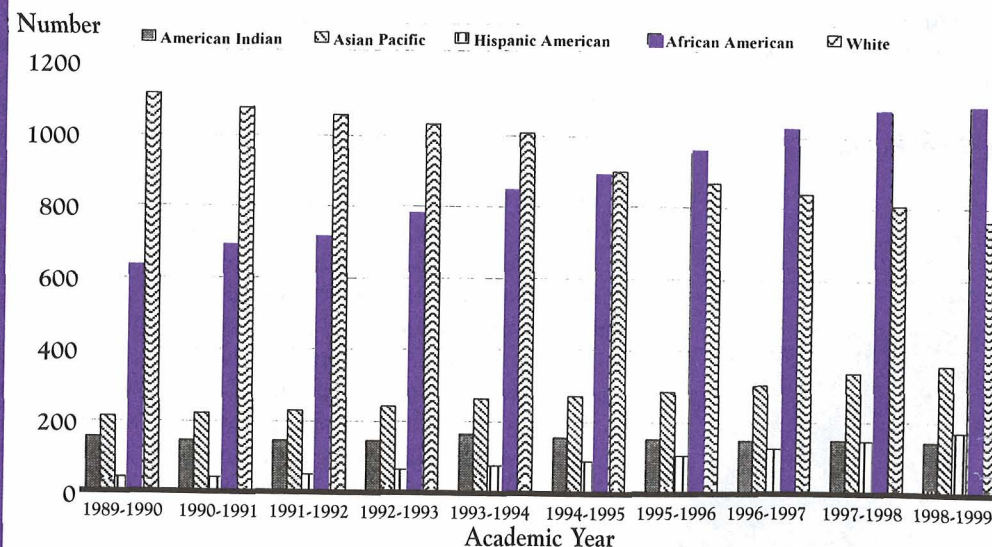
▲ Twenty-seven percent of all 18-30 year old men who died in Hennepin County from 1994-1998 were African-American. The mortality

1998, approximately:

- ▲ 3,000 were in the adult probation system
- ▲ 5,960 were booked in the Hennepin County Adult Correction Center

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Minneapolis public high school male enrollment



Source: Minneapolis Department of Children, Families and Learning

Viewpoint

From the Executive Director

Leaving fewer people behind in Minnesota

by Lyle Wray

The article in this issue on Hennepin County's African-American Men Project presents a snap shot of the circumstances facing 18-30 year old men of color in this community. Authors Mark Stenglein and Gary Cunningham caution that there is no single "silver bullet" and quote a steering committee member that "the county cannot 'social service' African-American men out of their present situation."

A decade ago, in his milestone work *The Truly Disadvantaged*, Harvard Professor William Julius Wilson wrestled with the needs of those in our core cities and suggested an agenda of general, rather than targeted, educational and job-training programs to help economically disadvantaged core city residents. His rationale was partly political – generally supported programs with a large political bases (such as mortgage interest deductibility) have fared far better than programs targeted to low-income residents.

His advice may be even more relevant today, when despite an unusually robust economy, there is increasing income inequality. While the details of this trend have been debated endlessly, there is a demonstrably large and widening gap in income between those with minimal and

those with advanced skills.

As we move forward in Minnesota, where K-12 and post-secondary education spending amounts to more than \$2500 for every man, woman and child in the state, the question remains: What is the ideal mix of general and targeted programs if we want to leave fewer people behind economically – and socially?

▲ Provide early support for children and families. A variety of efforts to support young families at risk have been successfully demonstrated across the country. In her book, *Within Our Reach*, Lisbeth School describes many of these programs and suggests strategies for building community support. While exactly what form this early support for families should take remains at issue, the literature on the importance of healthy brain development and early nurturing is quite compelling. This really is a case of "pay now or pay later."

▲ Increase school completion rates.

Although school completion rates for each major ethnic group are increasing, current levels remain inadequate for a high skills economy. In Minnesota, only about half of the ninth graders in our largest school district successfully complete high school in four years. The League is currently studying ways to dramatically improve these numbers.

▲ Create a seamless K-14 system. It is becoming increasingly well recognized that to earn a wage capable of supporting a family, high school graduation is not enough. States such as Oregon have begun to think in terms of "K-14" education and to look for ways to smooth the transition from high school to post-secondary and from one post-secondary program to another. In Minnesota, we have a ways to go in order to align high school graduation requirements with post-secondary entrance requirements and resolve credit transfer issues.

▲ Increase overall access to post-secondary educational opportunity. Both Georgia and California have acted aggressively in recent years to boost low-income students' participation in post-secondary education. In the Georgia program lottery proceeds are used to pay for two years of education for students who earn at least a B average in high school. While Minnesota has a generous student aid program, we should consider taking additional steps in order to reverse the recent decline in post-secondary participation.

▲ Target skills training at underemployed workers. A 1999 study by ETS showed that a large proportion of people working in entry-level jobs could acquire skills that would enable them to secure a family living wage job in less than 16 weeks. An additional state investment to help those in entry-level jobs advance would likely show very positive returns in additional state revenues and reduced public subsidies for housing and child care.

Overall, if we are to leave fewer people behind, we will need to invest in these areas and insist on results from those investments. Hollow promises of "give me the money and I will do my best" need to be replaced with well designed, adequately supported programs that deliver for the community as a whole and an employment community that is increasingly struggling to attract and retain skilled workers. MJ

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The Minnesota Journal

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connected with their families and their community.

▲ Many African-American men believe their success depends on their ability to obtain high-skilled employment.

▲ Male role models and mentors are very important in their personal growth and development.

▲ A significant aspect of the community engagement process was the involvement of African-American men in a Public Achievement citizen project. This included a "Young Dads' Group" focused on developing a more respectful working relationship between these young men and the criminal justice and social service systems. A second group worked closely with On Fire Ministries to develop a message of personal and civic empowerment.

Next Steps

The Steering Committee developed a set of preliminary recommendations that are still under discussion. It is anticipated that these preliminary recommendations will be further refined as a part of the final report to be completed in July.

Some of the recommendations include:

▲ Moving beyond programmatic fixes to solutions that build community and individual assets for self-reliance. This includes wealth creation, community ownership, and infrastructure investments in resource-starved neighborhoods.

▲ Build on existing programs that provide young men, particularly those ages 18-24, with coaching in "soft skills" (e.g., listening, conversing, trust building, teambuilding, etc.) that are crucial in getting and

maintaining employment.

▲ Provide additional resources for training and employment opportunities for African-American men.

▲ Build the capacity of mentoring programs that help young men strengthen their living skills, self-worth, and work ethic.

▲ Provide post-secondary scholarships to students who pass the basic skills tests and have a C grade point average or higher.

▲ Simplify Minnesota's expungement law so that an automatic or semi-automatic expungement process is available for people who have committed low-level, non-violent crimes.

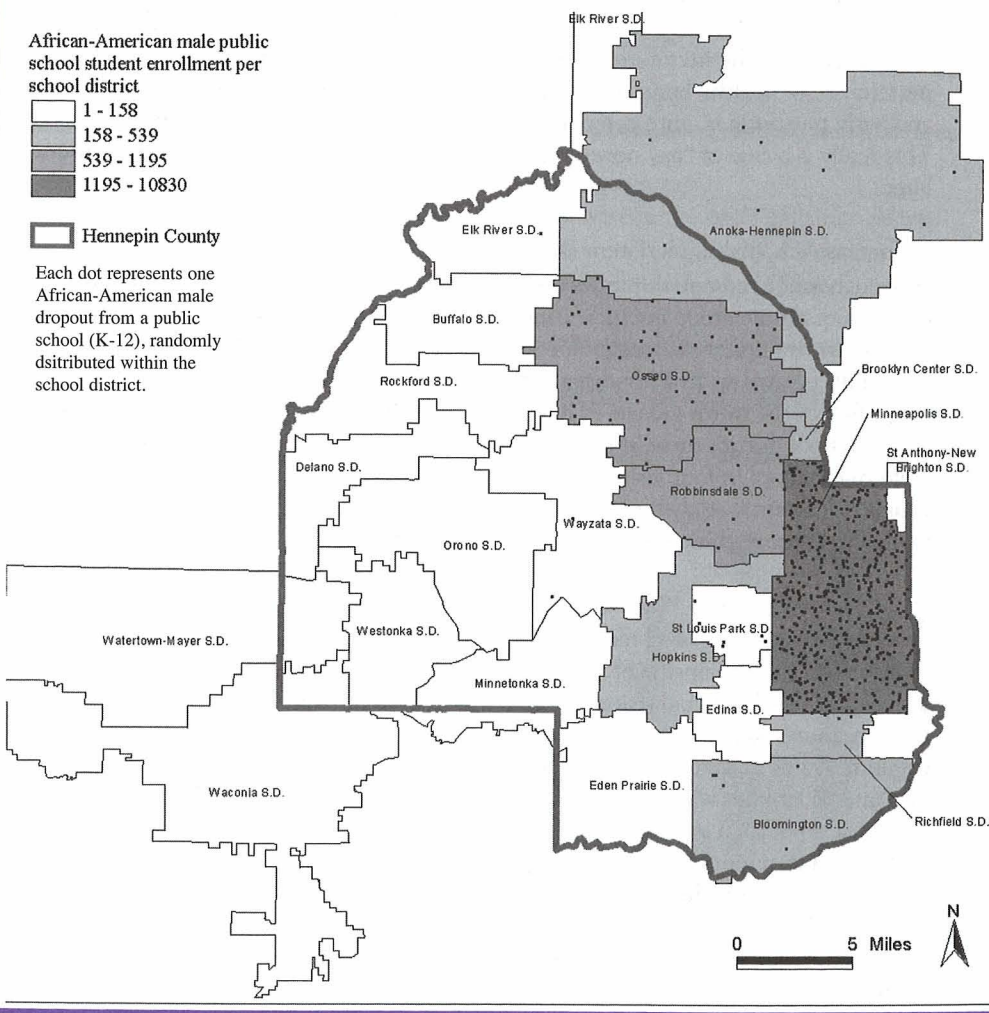
▲ Expand services of culturally-focused drug treatment programs

A framework must be forged between the public, private, philanthropic, non-profit and faith communities to coordinate a sustained response to the conditions of African-American men. The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners has earmarked \$500,000 in its 2001 contingency fund to implement the final recommendations designed to improve outcomes for African-American men. However, this effort will take more than just additional resources or efforts by Hennepin County.

All citizens share in the social and economic costs of high incarceration, arrests and unemployment rates, low-level educational achievement, inadequate health care and housing among African-American men. The long-term successes of public policy initiatives aimed at promoting self-reliance are undermined by the situation of many African-American men. At the same time, the untapped resources of African-American men would help to address the severe labor and skill shortage we now face. **MJ**

Mark Stenglein is Hennepin County Commissioner and Gary L. Cunningham is Director, Hennepin County Office of Planning and Development.

African-American male public school enrollment (K-12) and African-American male public school dropouts by school district, Hennepin County, 1998-1999



OnBalance

Views From Around the State

Governor's tax reform plan spurs discussion and controversy, but general consensus is that reform is overdue and Governor needs to lead.

The **St. Paul Pioneer Press** (Jan. 5) comments that while "Gov. Jesse Ventura is rarely given to understatement...his plan to overhaul Minnesota's property tax and school finance system does, indeed, represent 'bold, necessary and responsible reform.'" "The plan outlined by the Governor in his State of the State address shows considerable promise."

We should "welcome Gov. Jesse Ventura's gutsy proposal on restructuring the states tax system." (**Red Wing Republican Eagle**, Jan. 8) "Ventura should be commended for laying out his initiatives in detail. He now must guide his program through the legislative hallways. Having made clear in his speech that he means business, Ventura has gone a good distance toward forming a new relationship with the Legislature. He needs now to draw on his charm, which is considerable, and suppress his feistiness."

The **Bemidji Pioneer** (Jan. 7) is concerned about "getting it all done." "His sweeping call for change ought to be heeded, as an outsider to traditional politics. His proposals for tax reform should especially be considered, as they are the most sweeping since the early 1970's saw the creation of the so-called 'Minnesota Miracle.'" "...if the governor is serious about what he asks, he'll be hovering about the Capitol the next five months, willing to meet with any legislator, any time..."

The **Rochester Post Bulletin** (Jan. 6) says they're "not ready to endorse Ventura's 2001 legislative agenda." But they do "commend Ventura for proposing a broad and intriguing agenda for lawmakers that can serve as a good starting point for discussions. It shows that he apparently intends to take more of an activist and leadership role during this legislative session." "And we urge the governor and lawmakers to get their work done without the name calling, acrimony and deadline chaos that has been so typical of the last couple of legislative sessions."

The **Star Tribune** (Jan. 4) said, "Many of his ideas are sound. They would both simplify and modernize the government financing system. But there is more to being an effective governor than tossing out ideas. They must be shepherded through the Legislature. That requires a governor's personal salesmanship." "If (he) can pull it off, his political opponents will have to find a shard of Kryptonite to stop him."

The **Mankato Free Press** (Jan. 5) says, "Ventura knows some of his proposals will be controversial. He also acknowledged that his agenda is ambitious. But he asked lawmakers to give his reforms a fair hearing. If that's to happen.... lawmakers need to hear from the people they are elected to represent. If they don't, the lobbyists and the special interest groups will once again get their ears. The governor has proposed some bold reforms and they merit serious consideration."

Money, Money, Money ...

The **Star Tribune** (Jan. 3) notes that the legislature has "nothing less than Minnesota's ability to compete in the 21st century at stake in the decisions it will make...Minnesota has been living with considerable restraint in public sector spending for the past decade...helping produce 17 straight budget surpluses."

However, notes the Strib, "it has also dimmed Minnesota's reputation for quality higher education, allowed transportation systems to deteriorate, blocked needed improvements in services for the state's youngest and oldest citizens. Legislators (and their constituents) must face that reality, and ask themselves whether they will be proud of the Minnesota that those trends, over time, will create...Minnesota is a high-spending state because it is also a high-aspiration state. Its public investments have paid off in prosperity, longevity and an enviable quality of life."

The **St. Cloud Times** (Dec. 12) urges lawmakers to "remember one word as they begin to bargain the state's next two-year budget

cycle: equality. Schools, income levels and property values, technology, government aid. These are but a few of the areas where lawmakers must make sure tax cuts do not create even more disparity for urban, suburban and rural."

Noting, "Another rebate is guaranteed," the **Mesabi Daily News** (Dec. 12) says the rebate system that results in checks for individual taxpayers, "just plain makes sense. It is not a heavily bureaucratic one, nor is it a complicated one of tax credits. It is a simple, direct payment to be cashed in and spent as individual taxpayers determine on their own. And that's how it should be."

The **Worthington Daily Globe** (Dec. 7) agrees, saying the "surplus belongs to state taxpayers...The only way most people will directly benefit from a surplus is to receive a bit back from the state as in past years."

The **Red Wing Republican Eagle** (Dec. 4) "reject(s) any notion that a large portion of the money should be kept in reserve for a potential economic downturn. Recurring surpluses underscore that Minnesotans are being overtaxed. Therefore, taxes should be reduced."

Taking a slightly more blunt stance, the **Brainerd Daily Dispatch** (Dec. 22) said, "If ever there were a trial balloon that deserved to be shot down it was the one floated earlier this month by Sen. Roger Moe, DFL-Erskine, calling for the use of a presumed \$924 million state rebate to be used as an endowment for one-time needs. Minnesota already has a rainy day fund to deal with emergencies. Even if the projects Moe would spend the rebate money on are good ones, his idea reinforces the truism that politicians will dream up as many initiatives as needed to spend whatever money is available to them. The Legislature should waste no time in sending the rebate money back to the citizens who earned it in the first place." **MJ**

Four A's for students of color: achievement, awareness, aspirations, access

by Carlos Mariani Rosa

As we embark on this new decade, what is the state of students of color in Minnesota?

The indicators say much about the current state of students of color. It is important that we look at this information not as a way to put-down students of color and their abilities, for plenty of examples exist of high academic achievement among students of color locally and across the country. Rather, the information should be seen as a challenge to ourselves, the managers of our education systems, to use the practices we know are effective with students of color.

Current Educational Trends

Several years ago John McGee, then with the Minnesota's Private Colleges Council, conducted a research project on high school graduation trends called Foundations for the Future. As a result of the project, Mr. McGee and the Council challenged Minnesota policymakers to prepare for a society increasingly dependent on the academic achievement of students of color. Subsequent studies by the Higher Education Services Office, House Research, the Department of Children, Families and Learning and the TRIO community affirmed Mr. McGee's work and his call to action.

They found:

The total number of high school graduates is projected to level off in the next 10 years but students of color will make up a larger percentage of those potential graduates.

Graph A: Completion Study for the Class of 1999
Four-year graduation and dropout rates for Minnesota high school students divided by ethnicity

	Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White
Continued Enrollment	22.8%	15.9%	20.6%	25.0%	9.0%
Graduated	42.5	68.8	48.2	38.6	82.9
Dropped Out	34.7	15.3	31.2	36.4	8.2
Total Number of Students	1.8	3.6	1.7	4.7	88.1

Students of color drop out of high school at extraordinary rates when compared to white students. (See Graph A.)

Student of color enrollment in higher education dropped to a low of 33.5 percent in 1998.

Student of color graduation from college lags behind white students. (See Graph B.)

Additionally, a recent report by the Department of Children, Families and Learning conducted a cohort analysis and found that the cumulative dropout rate for freshman students of color was extremely high.

These four statistics show a sobering reality. That an ever-increasing percentage of our state's population — students of color — are gradually slipping out of our education system at rates much higher than the state average.

Vision for the future

Ten years from now someone will once again present information about students of color in Minnesota. What do we envision that information will be? Or, better stated, what do we want that information to be? Here's what they should include:

- ▲ Higher K-12 completion rates for students of color.
- ▲ More total numbers of students of color completing K-12
- ▲ Higher post-secondary matriculation rates for students of color.
- ▲ More total numbers of students of color entering Post-Secondary.

What it will take to get there

Much has been made about the quality of our education system through our focus on achievement. The Profiles of Learning and the state's Basic Skills Tests have given us a controversial, yet finite definition of student achievement in Minnesota. I would argue that, while important, "student achievement" does not tell the whole story when it comes to measuring our success with students, particularly when the goal is for students to graduate from high school, matriculate into higher education, earn a degree and eventually participate as workers in our state economy.

I propose that we expand our definition of a quality education to include three additional A's: Awareness, Aspirations, and Access.

Students should be afforded the following:

Awareness of higher education and career options, which courses students should take to prepare for college, how to save for college and how to apply for financial aid are important pieces of information that all students, particularly students whose families have not participated in higher education, should learn.

Aspirations and goals for what a student can achieve academically and professionally should also be emphasized. If we don't inspire students, they will not aspire to attend college and find a career.

Access to college through progressive financial aid programs and other programs that support student admission into higher education must be expanded if we are going to enroll the growing numbers of students of color who would be the first generation in their families to pursue higher education.

The "four A's" of achievement, awareness, aspiration, and access offer a more complete vision for our commitment to education in the state of Minnesota. One excellent example of supporting this vision is increasing our investment in early intervention, pre-college programs. Two years ago the Minnesota Legislature approved a modest investment in programs that prepare young, low-income students to plan for higher education called the

Students of color, continued from page 6

Intervention for College Attendance Program. By creating its own appropriations for pre-college programs, Minnesota became the first state to complement the federal resources provided for the pre-college intervention programs known as TRIO. Minnesota should be proud of its achievement in this area, but should also expand its financial. In addition, the state

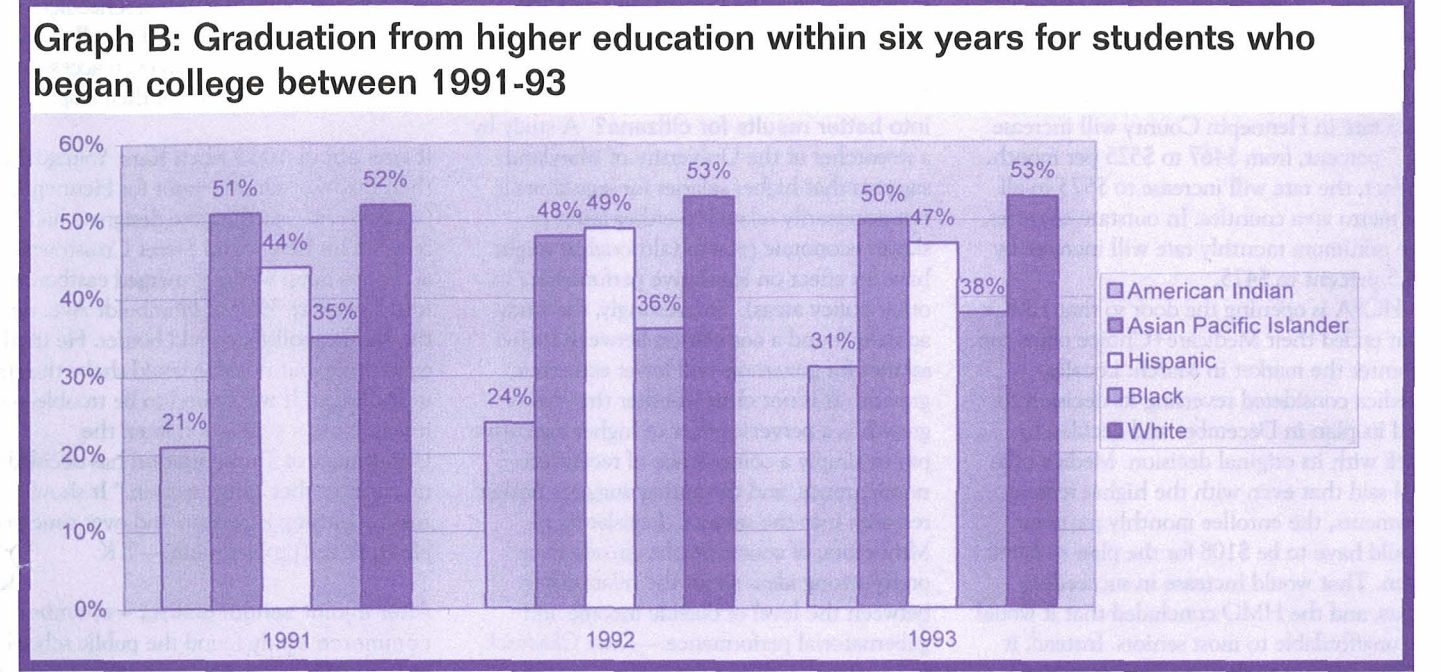
ing adult is now and we already have an 85% able adult work participation rate, the highest in the country. Similarly the need of each community of color to enhance its economic state is now, as the Twin Cities has the most isolated low-income minority communities in urban America and as growing numbers of people of color settle in to small rural towns

another according to our best principles and according to our self-interest.

Better educational outcomes for all is the place to start.

Call To Focus

We are indeed called to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. It is an ancient calling, which requires that we



should expand the Minnesota State Grant Program so that more students will be able to afford higher education and be able to pursue more options for their higher education.

What if we don't work for increased success among students of color?

First of all, there are good things happening in our state in regards to students of color. Though tempered greatly by negative rates of success, most communities of color are seeing greater numbers of students achieve academically.

The real issue, though, is that whatever we are doing, as promising as it may seem, is simply not enough. Neither the state as a whole, nor each community of color individually, can afford these current rates of success. The state's need for high skilled workers is now. The state's need for entrepreneurial growth, particularly that which actually creates jobs and not just paper wealth in the stock market, is now. The aging and the leveling off of our state's population is happening right now. The pressure to get the most out of every work-

across the state.

The future of our communities of color and of the whole state are more interdependent now than ever. As Latino immigrants go in Clara City so goes Clara City. As the Hmong community goes in St. Paul so goes St. Paul. As African Americans go in Minneapolis so goes Minneapolis. American Indians have already shown us that economic progress on reservation lands can lift the state of Whites in surrounding communities. The days of all-white suburbs prospering while isolated minority communities suffer high rates of unemployment will soon, thank goodness, come to an end.

The question that remains is not whether those prosperous suburbs will collapse due to people of color being kept out of economic prosperity, for surely they will. It isn't whether Clara City or Moorhead can survive without people of color sharing in the leadership of the community, for surely they cannot. The question is whether we will become a more enlightened people and accept, and embrace, one

make our nation whole and our people at peace with one another. We can be confident that through equal, quality educational opportunities we can accomplish what we are called to do. It is our generation's role to continue building the institutions through which our young will bridge the racial and ethnic gap that divides our people.

Let us work together today to embolden ourselves for the task to come. We need intentional strategies aimed at impacting education policy and practices. We need to strengthen our base and broaden it with people committed to educational practices that result in true achievement for students of color. We need to stay focused on our students first, while promoting our democratic institutions. We need to frame our work as one that is critical to the survival of our nation and our state.

Rep. Carlos Mariani-Rosa (DFL - St. Paul) is the executive director of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership. He can be reached at mmep@mmep.net.

TakeNote

Policy Tidbits

Bright policy bits for dark winter morns.

Medicare payment rates to Minnesota HMOs will increase sharply on March 1, but it may not make any difference in the shrinking availability of Medicare HMO plans here. Based on Congressional action in December, the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) has announced new rates effective in March. For example, the base rate in Hennepin County will increase 12.5 percent, from \$467 to \$525 per month. In fact, the rate will increase to \$525 in all 11 metro area counties. In outstate counties, the minimum monthly rate will increase by 14.5 percent to \$475.

HCFA is opening the door so that HMOs that ended their Medicare+Choice plans can re-enter the market in March. Locally, Medica considered reversing its decision to end its plan in December and decided to stick with its original decision. Medica official said that even with the higher federal payments, the enrollee monthly payment would have to be \$108 for the plan to break even. That would increase in succeeding years, and the HMO concluded that it would be unaffordable to most seniors. Instead, it will continue to sell other Medicare plans where the HMO does not assume risk.

What happened to the seniors who were in Medica's plan last year? According to the company, 4,000 converted to other Medica senior plans, 5,500 converted to competitors' senior plans and 3,500 had not decided at the end of December. Some of them went to UCare Minnesota, which gained 2,600 members at the end of December up to 21,000. — *Allan Baumgarten.*

The continuing fight over "graduation standards" is really a fight about the definition of "education" at the high school level. To those who've been beating up on Minnesota for its Profile of Learning—ACHIEVE and the Council for Basic Education and now *Education Week* in its "Quality Counts" survey—education is "mastering a body of knowledge." Which probably is the traditional view.

Others are not so sure. How much do most of us remember today from the "body of knowledge" we "mastered" going through high school? Maybe knowledge is changing too fast now for whatever kids can "master" to be useful through their lifetimes. Maybe what we learn that's most valuable is how to learn—recognizing that this does require

learning reading and writing and something about numbers.

Maybe it's Minnesota that's on the right track with its notion of competencies rather than knowledge, and others that need to rethink.—*Ted Kolderie.*

Does higher pay for lawmakers translate into better results for citizens? A study by a researcher at the University of Maryland suggests that higher salaries for legislators is not necessarily related to either faster or slower economic growth (although it might have an effect on legislative performance in other policy areas). Interestingly, the study actually found a correlation between higher salaries for governors and lower economic growth. It is not clear whether this slower growth is a perverse effect of higher executive pay or simply a coincidence of recent economic trends, and the author suggests further research into the subject. Legislators in Minnesota, of course, might already have pretty strong ideas about the relationship between the level of outside income and gubernatorial performance.—*Dave Chadwick.*

Winter can be especially tough on bus riders, who have to endure chilly, unsheltered stops and the delays that inevitably result from icy roads. Knowing exactly when buses will arrive—rather than just when they are scheduled to arrive—can be crucial to surviving winter bus travel. One promising approach is offered by a pilot project at the University of Washington which provides access to real time information on the location of about 1,000 buses in the Seattle metropolitan area. By going to www.mybus.org, bus riders can find out how far their bus is from their stop and when they can expect it to arrive. The *Seattle*

Times reports that about one in six of the hits to the site comes from the campus of the Microsoft Corporation, which is located in an area where traffic is notorious for delaying buses and disrupting published schedules. The service was recently expanded to cell phone users so that individuals can even access bus information while waiting at their stop.—*D.C.*

It was about 1963 when Kent Youngdahl, then highway administrator for Hennepin County, saw that the state designers had reduced his new "62nd Street Crosstown" to an access ramp where it merged eastbound into Interstate 35W at Humboldt Ave. on the Minneapolis/Richfield border. He tried everything, but nothing could shake the state in its design. It was bound to be trouble—and it was. Now, a generation later, the Department of Transportation has decided to reconstruct that "joint section." It shows again: Nothing is perfect, and over time people work the problems out.—*T.K.*

After a joint school district—chamber of commerce study found the public schools in Kent, Washington, were not preparing students well for the world of work, the school district has begun grading every high school student on their "employability." This includes attitudes and behaviors determined to be essential for success at work, such as punctuality, cooperation and commitment to quality. (Source: *EDUCATION DAILY* and the National Education Goals Panel.) — *Kris Lyndon Wilson*

"Take Note" contributors include Minnesota Journal and Citizens League staff members and independent healthcare consultant Allan Baumgarten.

The Minnesota Journal
Citizens League
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PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID
AT MINNEAPOLIS
MINNESOTA

Welcome**New and returning members**

Amy Brandl and John Klassen
 Janis Clay and Elam Baer
 John F. Finn Foundation
 Norman Glewwe
 James Klein
 Gene and Marilyn Scapanski
 Karen Lowery Wagner

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From in-line to on-line: e-government in Minnesota

St. Paul Mayor Coleman leads off special Mind-Opener luncheons

The explosion of information technology that has reshaped our economy also holds great potential to improve how citizens interact with government. Many governments are already using the Internet to inform citizens, provide access to services, and conduct some financial transactions. Grassroots organizations are devising new ways to use technology to organize and advocate for political change. Political campaigns are increasingly relying on the Internet to directly reach voters and attract support for candidates.

How can we expect technology and government to interact in the years ahead? What steps should governments take to maximize the opportunity that technology holds to improve government services and citizen participation? How should we address issues of the "digital divide" to ensure that all citizens can take advantage of improved government services?

The next series of Mind Opener meetings will hear from three respected leaders in the burgeoning field of e-government. On Thursday, February 22, Saint Paul Mayor **Norm Coleman** will describe his administration's efforts to use technology to meet the needs of local citizens. On Thursday, March 1, online strategist **Steven Clift** will discuss how the Internet can improve democracy and

citizen participation. Finally, on Thursday, March 8, Commissioner of Administration **David Fisher** will offer his perspective on trends in e-government and initiatives at the state level.

All meetings in this series are lunches from 12:00 – 1:30p.m. at the University Club, 420 Summit Avenue, St. Paul. Watch your mail for additional information on this series.

From in-line to on-line e-government in Minnesota

12 noon—1:30 p.m.

University Club of St. Paul
 Cost: \$15 for members

Thursday, February 22
Norm Coleman, Mayor, St. Paul

Thursday, March 1
Steve Clift, internet consultant

Thursday, March 8
David Fisher, Commissioner, Dept. of Administration

League priorities for Legislative session

The League Board adopted the organizational priorities for the upcoming session at its January meeting. This session the League will concentrate on a couple of issues, especially relating to "new economy" initiatives, that have a likelihood of success. The chief among those is the Northstar Research Coalition which is designed as a public-private venture to foster front-end investment in research and development. The Coalition has received a great deal of support, especially in the Senate.

The League is also pushing for cabinet level coordinator for workforce development in the state. The League will also keep pressure on for more workforce reforms, especially on the labor shortage.

The League's current school completion study will be done sometime during the session, but probably won't have much impact on this session. The League will keep a careful eye of various other discussions including affordable housing, transportation, mental health and tax reform.

CITIZENS LEAGUE

NETWORK

African-American Men Project

Featuring

Mark Stenglein

Hennepin County Commissioner

Gary Cunningham

Director, Hennepin County Office
of Planning and Development

Thursday, February 15, 2001

4:30 — 6:30 p.m.

Program begins at 5:15

Cowles Auditorium
Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota

This month's *Minnesota Journal* features an article on Hennepin County's African-American Men Project. At the League's next quarterly Network, Hennepin County Commissioner Mark Stenglein and Planning Director Gary Cunningham will outline the results of the preliminary report.

There is no charge for this event,
but reservations are encouraged.

**Thanks to Hennepin County and
the Humphrey Institute**

for helping underwrite the
costs of this Network event.

Executive Committee posts filled

Cummins, Sporlein, Kershaw added to the leadership

The League Board of Directors added several members to the Executive Committee at its January 18 Board meeting. **Buzz Cummins** was chosen to serve as this year's League Treasurer. Cummins served as League president in 1991-92. He was reelected to the Board this year after an absence of several years. In the meantime, he has co-chaired two study committees and this year he is co-chairing the League's Legislative Affairs Committee. **Sean Kershaw** and **Barb Sporlein** were appointed to the two at-large positions on the Executive Committee. Kershaw has served several appointed terms on the League Board of Directors and Sporlein was elected to a three-year term last summer. Both have been very involved in the Active Citizenship School and bring a unique perspective to the League's leadership group.

Legislative Affairs Committee appointed

The Board also approved a legislative agenda for the current session (see front page) and created a committee to leverage volunteer resources to advance the League's agenda. The new committee, co-chaired by **Buzz Cummins** and **Pam Neary**, will combine tactical, strategic and social networking elements.

The committee began on January 19 and will continue to meet every other Friday morning at 8:00 at the Louisiana Cafe. The group will occasionally invite legislators and executive branch officials for their take on issues. And they will help implement the strategic goals as identified by the Board of Directors (see article on the other side.)

Our apologies

The League's invitation to members to attend a special Mind-Opener breakfast featuring Mary Jane England arrived very late; indeed, in some cases, several days after the event. Please accept our apologies. We were the victims of a series of unexpected circumstances and delays, some of our own making; others beyond our control. In any event it was inexcusable.

A full transcript of Dr. England's presentation is on the League's web site at www.citizensleague.net.

Despite the late notice, about 50 people attended the event. Dr. England, the President of the Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH), a national health policy and research organization whose membership includes the nation's major employers, spoke about the direct and indirect costs of mental illness in the workplace and the results achieved by several large employers who have implemented the WBGH/NIMH National Worksite Program for improving behavioral health care, while managing costs.

Please check out our web site to read her interesting and informative presentation.