

Who Benefits?

Who benefits when Bloomington's children have opportunities for educational success? We all do.

Business has a huge stake in a well-educated future workforce because economic health is built upon knowledge. If educational disparities between race and ethnic groups, and high and low income groups are not reduced, it is likely to have a significant negative impact on Bloomington's future economic strength and competitiveness.

Faith communities are important allies and resources in reducing educational disparities. Research finds a positive relationship between religion and student achievement.

Community offers opportunities that both complement learning in schools and collectively results in better developmental outcomes for children.



To learn more about

We Believe Alliance and become a partner in this complementary learning effort, please write or call:



We Believe
ALLIANCE

2575 West 88th Street • Bloomington, MN 55431
952-681-6105

*Uniting the Bloomington community and
its schools to help close the disparity
and achievement gaps.*



We Believe
ALLIANCE

Bloomington, Minnesota



Learning and Poverty

Minnesota students are traditionally among the nation's top performers on key standardized tests. Students have thrived in school because a strong supportive home life and community have nurtured their development.

Unfortunately, students of poverty and students of color consistently score far below their white classmates. This disparity in academic performance between groups of students is known as the achievement gap.

Achievement gaps are often attributed to income level and home environment. Poor and minority students must overcome a host of disadvantages in their home and family environment, including language development, literacy development, self-confidence, health and housing. When analyzed according to race and ethnicity achievement, disparities negatively impact educational outcomes for poor children and children of color on a consistent basis.



School Strategies

Educators are trying lots of strategies to narrow the gap, from expanded early childhood programs to smaller class sizes, and from more rigorous courses to higher academic standards. These efforts offer some promise.

But research shows schools can't do it alone.

Closing or substantially narrowing achievement gaps requires combining school improvement with reforms that narrow the vast socioeconomic inequalities. Without such a combination, says Richard Rothstein, a researcher at the Economic Policy Institute, "demands that schools fully close achievement gaps not only will remain unfulfilled, but also will cause us to foolishly and unfairly condemn schools and teachers."

We Believe Alliance

We Believe Alliance is a not-for-profit organization with a mission to unite the Bloomington community and its schools to help close the disparity and achievement gaps.

The Alliance of schools, government, businesses, faith and civic organizations, and community agencies is working together to integrate educational, social and economic reforms to create an environment in which the most effective teaching and student learning can occur.

Initiative for Lasting Change

We Believe Alliance has created an Initiative for Lasting Change that will bring together community partners to:

- prepare ALL students for school;
- ensure ALL students are reading by third grade (more than any other intervention, early childhood education has been proven to close the achievement gap); and
- close or eliminate the economic disparity and achievement gaps

This work will include:

- Developing ways for the Bloomington community of partners to support youth development and strengthen students' achievement potential.
- Developing community partnerships that provide tutoring, mentoring, and other help for students specifically focused on improving their academic work.
- Reframing the discussion about reducing the "achievement gap" to focus on overall development of the child as a core process in student achievement, and recognize the importance of communities as a significant part of that development.
- Connecting families with organizations to meet basic needs for students and their families, such as housing, food, clothes, medical care, transportation, and employment opportunities.

