



# OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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2012-R-0281

## **STATUS OF ACHIEVEMENT GAP TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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You asked us to summarize the status of legislative action taken on the recommendations the Achievement Gap Task Force issued in its January 2011 report.

The achievement gap is the gap in academic performance between one student group and another, such as between white students and minority students, or special education students and non-special education students. The academic performance is usually measured by standardized tests.

We provide the status of the recommendations from the January 2011 Achievement Gap Task Force Report in Table 1 below (the report addresses the 10 primary recommendations from the Task Force Report and does not include the numerous secondary recommendations).

**Table 1: Status of 2011 Achievement Gap Task Force Recommendations.**

<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Status</b>
1	Reestablish Achievement Gap Task Force and require it to oversee development of master plan	Done, PA 11-85
2	Develop master plan to eliminate the achievement gap by 2020	Underway by Achievement Gap Task Force (PA 12-1, June 12 Special Session, extended the deadline for the master plan from July 1, 2012 to January 15, 2013).
3	Create an interagency council for ending the achievement gap chaired by the lieutenant governor	Done, PA 11-85
4	Devise and implement a fair and equitable public schools funding formula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underway by ECS Task Force</li> <li>• PA 12-116 increased (a) ECS funding for 136 of 169 towns and (b) annual per-student grants to state charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools outside the Hartford region, and school districts operating regional agriculture science centers.</li> </ul>
5	Require SDE to develop high-quality model curricula in reading and math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PA 11-85 requires SDE, by July 1, 2012, to approve and make available model curricula and frameworks in reading and mathematics for grades prekindergarten to four for use by school districts or individual schools that SDE identifies as having academic achievement gaps. The curricula and frameworks must be culturally relevant, research-based, and aligned with achievement standards adopted by the SDE.</li> <li>• PA 12-116 creates a new intensive kindergarten-to-grade-three reading program to improve literacy and narrow the achievement gap. In each of the next two school years, five low-achieving schools will be selected to participate. The program must include (a) routine student reading assessments, (b) scientifically-based instruction, (c) an intensive reading intervention strategy, and (d) an intensive summer school reading program.</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Status</b>
6	Require districts and schools with the biggest achievement gaps to report on their progress in addressing the gaps	<b>No specific action, although state law and PA 12-116 require low-achieving schools and districts to devise academic improvement plans.</b>
7	Establish a center to develop (a) educational methods that are culturally relevant to ELL students; (b) effective learning strategies to help low-achieving students make up lost ground; and (c) teacher preparation programs that incorporate effective, research-based child development and reading instruction	<b>PA 11-85 requires State Education Resource Center to (a) develop culturally relevant methods for educating students whose primary language is not English, (b) provide a program of teacher professional development that includes research-based child development and reading instruction, and (c) develop strategies for assisting students who are in danger of failing.</b>
8	Provide extended opportunities, such as longer school days and years, to give students more time to learn	<p><b>PA 11-85 permits local or regional boards of education for low-achieving schools under the state accountability law to increase the number of school sessions each year and hours each day in order to improve student performance and remove the school from the list of low-achieving schools.</b></p> <p><b>PA 12-116 requires (a) education commissioner to name up to 25 network schools by July 1, 2014 and (b) all such schools to have turnaround plans that may include items such as extended school days, weeks, or years.</b></p>
9	Expand teacher and school administrator certification reciprocity with other states	<b>PA 12-116 creates a method for a non-certified a superintendent candidate to become a permanent superintendent if he or she first becomes an acting superintendent and then successfully completes his or her probationary period.</b>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status</b>
10 Phase-in a requirement that school districts provide school readiness programs to all eligible children as well as full-day kindergarten for every child. Start by providing needed funding to establish these requirements in all priority districts	<p><b>PA 12-116 creates 1,000 new seats for school readiness programs. Half of the spaces must be in the 10 school districts with the lowest academic performance, while rest are split equally between (a) the priority and former priority districts that not among the 10 lowest and (b) the so-called competitive districts (those not included in either of the other two categories but that are either among the 50 poorest in the state or have one or more low-income schools)</b></p> <p><b>PA 12-116 also requires CHEFA, if up to \$80,000 remains unspent from the 1,000 new spaces, to update its 2008 early childhood education facilities study of the space needed to provide universal pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds</b></p>

PA 11-85 and PA 12-116 contain a number of other provisions that could be considered as addressing the achievement gap but do not stem from a task force recommendation. For a fuller view these laws, and of other education legislation, please see the Acts Affecting Education reports for each of the last two years [2011-R-0303](#) and [2012-R-0198](#).

JM:ro