



OVERVIEW AND MISSION

The Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) is a national coalition of multiracial school districts that have come together to understand and eliminate opportunity/achievement gaps that persist in their schools. MSAN districts have student populations between 3,000 and 33,000 and are most often located in well-established first-ring suburbs or small/mid-size cities. Additionally, the districts share a history of high academic achievement and connections to major research universities.

Across MSAN districts, disparities on an array of achievement data demonstrate wide gaps in performance across students from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Since 1999, MSAN has worked fervently to achieve the parallel goals of closing gaps while ensuring all students achieve to high levels. To this end, districts work collaboratively to conduct and publish research, analyze policies, and share promising practices that support the Network's mission: *to understand and change school practices and structures that keep racial opportunity/achievement gaps in place.*

DISTRICT ENGAGEMENT

MSAN has worked to build a community of learners who engage in a common set of core practices across school districts. These include

- Engaging in collaborative research in which practitioners and researchers are equal partners in designing, conducting, and publishing research
- Evaluating programs intended to raise the academic achievement of students of color
- Conducting training and professional development activities for district teachers and administrators relative to the MSAN mission
- Creating opportunities for students to guide the work of the organization
- Disseminating results of Network activities among MSAN districts and the larger educational community.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

MSAN is comprised of two organizing structures: the Governing Board and the Research Practitioner Council (RPC). In addition, the executive director and other researchers provide guidance and support to MSAN projects.

Governing Board

The superintendents of MSAN districts serve as the Governing Board. The Governing Board carries out the business and oversight of the organization and, along with the MSAN executive director and the RPC, sets the network's research and development agenda.

Focus areas of research and development

- conversations about race and achievement
- equity-focused leadership and cultural competence
- student-teacher relationships
- family and community engagement
- discipline disparities
- personnel and staff development equity
- mathematics and literacy
- curriculum and instruction

Research Practitioner Council

The Research Practitioner Council (RPC) is made up of educators from each MSAN district, including assistant superintendents, research or testing staff, equity or diversity staff, principals, and other professionals who influence research and curriculum policy for the district. The RPC carries out the network's research and development agenda. To date, MSAN has generated more than \$2.5 million dollars in foundation, grant, and local district funding to support their work.

RESEARCH

MSAN is part of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) located at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In keeping with the vision that research and practice must be developed in tandem, MSAN has developed collaborative relationships with expert researchers in the areas of student achievement, school reform and policy, racial identity development, and curriculum and instruction. MSAN has research partnerships with organizations such as the Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP) Institute, the Dana Center at the University of Texas-Austin, and the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST). In addition, individual researchers who have collaborated with MSAN over the years include Dr. Ron Ferguson (Harvard University), Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings and Dr. John Diamond (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Dr. Pedro Noguera (UCLA).

CONVENING/NETWORKING

A central feature of the work of MSAN is to build local communities of learners through highly focused professional development opportunities. Representatives from member districts convene to build a continuous stream of work.

Early in its development, MSAN members committed to creating opportunities for students of color to guide MSAN's work in their districts. During the annual MSAN student conference, teams of student delegates from member districts become a community of student leaders who

- Engage in discussions about barriers students of color face in their schools and districts
- Network with students from across the country to craft solutions
- Share their ideas about how to motivate students and staff to meet their potential
- Develop plans of action to implement their ideas.

MSAN DISTRICTS

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| ▪ Alexandria City Public Schools
Alexandria, VA | ▪ East Lansing Public Schools
East Lansing, MI | ▪ Niles Township High School
District 219 - Skokie, IL |
| ▪ Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools
Amherst, MA | ▪ Evanston/Skokie Elementary School
District 65 - Evanston, IL | ▪ Oak Park Elementary School
District 97 - Oak Park, IL |
| ▪ Ann Arbor Public Schools
Ann Arbor, MI | ▪ Evanston Township High School
District 202 - Evanston, IL | ▪ Oak Park and River Forest High
School District 200 - Oak Park, IL |
| ▪ Arlington Public Schools
Arlington, VA | ▪ Farmington Public Schools
Farmington, MI | ▪ Paradise Valley Unified School
District Phoenix, AZ |
| ▪ Birmingham Public Schools
Birmingham, MI | ▪ Harrisonburg City Public Schools
Harrisonburg, VA | ▪ Princeton Public Schools
Princeton, NJ |
| ▪ The Public Schools of Brookline
Brookline, MA | ▪ Isaac Elementary School District
Phoenix, AZ | ▪ Shaker Heights City School District
Shaker Heights, OH |
| ▪ Buckeye Elementary School District
Buckeye, AZ | ▪ La Grange School District 102
La Grange Park, IL | ▪ School District of South Orange &
Maplewood - Maplewood, NJ |
| ▪ Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools
Chapel Hill, NC | ▪ Madison Metropolitan School
District - Madison, WI | ▪ Sun Prairie Area School District
Sun Prairie, WI |
| ▪ Cleveland Heights-University Heights
City School District
University Heights, OH | ▪ Middleton-Cross Plains Area School
District - Middleton, WI | ▪ Verona Area School District
Verona, WI |

For more information about **MSAN**, please visit us at www.msan.wceruw.org or contact Dr. Madeline Hafner, the Executive Director, at the **Wisconsin Center for Education Research**, University of Wisconsin-Madison, at madeline.hafner@wisc.edu or (608) 262-1665.

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