



No Matter the Assessment, Indiana Schools Struggle to Close the Achievement Gap

By Educator Barnes – September 5, 2019

Tuesday, September 4, 2019, the embargo was lifted, and ILEARN results were made available to the public. Schools and parents had already received results. As expected, scores plummeted as Indiana students shifted from taking I-STEP to ILEARN. Regardless of the

assessment, one fact rings true: students of color continue to underperform when compared to their white counterparts.

I live in Washington Township. Chalkbeat Indiana shared in a recent ILEARN [article](#), "In Washington Township, for example, 66.6% percent of white students passed the test, 38.5% percent of multiracial students passed, 18.6% percent of Hispanic students passed, and 18.4% percent of black students passed." Only 18.4 percent of black students passed the test versus 66.6 percent of white students. As a parent of two black sons in this district, I am concerned.

Early this school year, I was sharing my concerns about the achievement gap and my frustrations about black students' achievement with some administrators. This school year will be the first year my sons will take state assessments. Since they are in third grade, they will receive a warm welcome to standardized testing with being required to take two tests, IREAD and ILEARN. But what stuck with me in the conversation about the achievement gap was one administrator's comment, "Don't worry; your kids will pass."

What if they do? What about the other black kids in my neighborhood who are in Washington Township schools? What about them? My children passing is not good enough. I can already hear people sighing as they read this piece. The test doesn't matter, but I can't say that. Even if you think the test doesn't matter, you should at least be concerned or question why black children are always on the bottom. It should anger you.

My black sons (children if you ever read this, I mean this in the most respectful way) are not any more gifted than a black kid down the street. Black children aren't defective; they can and will learn when they have the right tools and support. This ILEARN data, at the very least, shows we aren't doing enough to help black children reach academic mastery.

No, I don't want to get into a debate about how the test is meaningless and why we should abolish standardized testing. If you want to talk to me, talk to me about how the black children are doing. It is clear by this data; they aren't doing as well as they should.