A School Study—2 Years Later

By Paul Blankenhorn

When Dorothy Holden first realized the extent of the problem of black students’ achievement in the Madison public schools, she knew the solution was not going to be easy. "I had a small minority of black students in my psychology classes in the early 1970s," Holden said. "I started looking into the problem when I realized that there was a problem." Holden, now the director of research and development at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was concerned about the low achievement scores of black students in the public schools.

She said she was "saddened and dismayed" by the results of her study, which showed that black students were not performing as well as their white counterparts. "I was shocked and disappointed," Holden said. "I thought that the educational system was supposed to be colorblind, but it wasn’t." Holden’s study was based on a random sample of black students in the Madison public schools. She compared their achievement scores with those of white students in the same schools.

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