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by Scott McCullar



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Educators: Funding would even gaps in students' scores on ACT

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Black and white students could score more evenly in the American College Testing program within a generation if the federal government allocates more funds, two educators said Sunday.

Each year, more than 1 million high school juniors and seniors in 30 states take the ACT, which evaluates proficiency in English, mathematics, social studies and natural sciences.

Dr. George A. Chambers, a professor at the University of Iowa, said that several research projects, in-

cluding an analysis of 1985 ACT scores, have led him to challenge myths about education.

He said whites don't necessarily score better than blacks and that students in private or parochial schools don't tend to score better than students in public schools.

Nationally, whites score 7 percent better than blacks on the ACT, Chambers said.

But the percentage decreased to about 2.9 percent when the scores were matched on six variables:

school attended, gender, grade-point ratio, family income and number of years studied in English and math, he said.

"We're a generation or so away from tending to have these tests become even less," Chambers told a news conference. "Parents who hold higher degrees have higher expectations than those who do not. It's going to take America a while to catch up."

He delivered his findings in a speech to the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Alan Whitworth, curriculum director of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Community School District, also worked on the research. He studied 2,274 matched pairs of black and white students who took the ACT in 1985.

He said teachers need to better motivate students, increase academic coursework and intervene earlier to correct student achievement.

"We want to tend to zero in on one or two things, but this is a complex issue," Whitworth said. "All of these things working in concert make a difference."

Chambers said that the 1985 ACT analysis showed a 1 percent difference between students in public, private or parochial schools.

"Those who claim that teachers, principals and schools do not make a difference are clearly wrong," Chambers said. "Teachers, principals and schools can lay claim to a substantial portion of the 50 to 75 percent difference in achievement scores that is yet to be explained by research."

Plaintiffs of employment bias often lose even if they win

DALLAS (AP) — Even when they win employment civil rights lawsuits, plaintiffs often lose one way or another, attorneys say.

While waiting for their cases to wind through the court system, they often must contend with the pressures of looking for another job and finding the money to pay for household and legal expenses, the attorneys say.

When Vickie Payne took maternity leave in April 1983, her boss told her not to return, saying: "You fired yourself the day you got pregnant."

Payne, 35, of Plano, sued and a federal judge later ruled that the remark suggested that the firm was "discriminatorily motivated" in firing her from her \$45,000-a-year job.

Negotiations are proceeding for a back-pay award, but Payne says it is too late to save the four-bedroom house, the furniture and the cars that her family lost after she was fired.

"Plaintiffs are going to lose emotionally in virtually every single case taken through the legal process," says Kenneth H. Molberg, Payne's attorney and one of the few lawyers in Dallas who accepts discrimination cases.

If they win the case, the compensation provisions of civil rights laws address only lost wages, possible job reinstatement and payment of attorneys' fees, Molberg says.

Despite the drawbacks, records show the number of discrimination cases is increasing.



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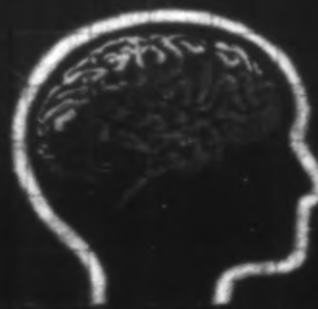
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