



# Where Excellence Is Tradition

11/6/12

## High Expectations For All

By David F. Larson, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Glenbard Township High School District #87

There are two compelling facts when we as educators study the predicted achievement level of students. The first research-based fact is that when students are aware of an adult's confidence and belief in them, they tend to, through effort and intrinsic motivation, achieve at high levels.

The second intriguing fact is that a teacher can affect higher levels of growth among students when they personally believe their teaching will make a difference.

Unfortunately, there are numerous examples where we, as adults, fail to have high expectations of our students and ourselves. I could not help but notice a recent controversial incident that occurred when the Virginia State Department of Education initially released new achievement targets showing that the state would require 57 percent of black students to become proficient in math by 2017, compared with 78 percent of white students.

Wow, what an unfortunate and dangerous mindset! How could a group of educators actually think that, in five years, certain racial groups will perform 21 percentage points lower than others? Why is it so easy to assume that certain students will achieve at lower levels or that our interventions and practices will not affect change and result in success?

The department has since resolved this embarrassing situation by revising its goals to ensure all students, from all racial groups, will be proficient in math in five years.

In Glenbard District 87 and our six feeder elementary districts we believe in all of our students' ability to achieve at high levels. We have been intentional and deliberate in holding high expectations for all our students. This commitment is reflected by:

- Glenbard reached the ACT-recommended average growth from the Explore test (8th grade) to the ACT test (11th grade) in all subject areas, including an all-time high growth in science this year.
- All four Glenbard schools set all-time highs in Advanced Placement tests taken, tests that were passed and the number of students participating in the A.P. program.
- We have worked with our feeder districts to align our expectation that all students enter

***INSPIRE ... EMPOWER ... SUCCEED***



# Where Excellence Is Tradition

9th grade in algebra or beyond.

- Each week, community and staff members mentor 75 Glenbard African-American and Latino students.
- Our students participate in DuPage ACT-SO, the Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics. ACT-SO provides career exploration and mentoring in areas encompassed by the sciences, humanities, arts and business.
- We supported the inaugural African American and Latino Parent Summit at the College of DuPage in September.
- The Glenbard Parent Series/Saturday: Navigating Healthy Parenting presented Boosting Academic Achievement and the ACT College Test on Nov. 3. Students and their parents gained insights that help students maximize their ACT potential and the resources that the Glenbard schools offer to help teens succeed academically.

There is truth in the old saying, "you get what you expect." High expectations for all students' achievement will result in a higher percentage of those students meeting those expectations, particularly those individuals and groups of students who typically are predicted to underperform.

***INSPIRE ... EMPOWER ... SUCCEED***