

The Educational Performance of Hmong Students in Wisconsin.
Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Report, v10 n8 Dec 1997 (42 pages)
Milwaukee, WI: Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, 1997.

This report compares the educational performance of Asian and Hmong students with that of other students in six urban school districts across Wisconsin. These six districts were chosen because Hmong students are the largest minority group in each of the districts. Data from standardized tests given in grades 3, 4, 8, and 10 in these districts indicate that, despite the prevalence of risk factors, including family poverty, unemployment, welfare dependency, and teen pregnancy, Asian students (approximately 90% of whom are Hmong in these districts) have scores above national norms. In four of the six districts, Asian students perform at levels equal to or above the other students on the third-grade reading comprehension test. Interviews with teachers, counselors, bilingual staff, and administrators indicate that Hmong students have made a better adaptation to the school environment than other students and are graduating at rates comparable to or higher than those of other students. The graduation rate for Asian students in these districts is 95%, higher than that reported for white and other non-Asian high school students. Many will continue on to postsecondary education in the University of Wisconsin system, where they also have a higher graduation rate than other groups. It is likely that Hmong youth will be more successful in their education careers than any other immigrant or refugee group to come to the United States. Some reasons for this educational success are discussed, centering on values that promote educational attainment. Some recommendations are made for improving the education of Hmong students, including additional instruction in science for Hmong and Southeast Asian students in elementary grades, attention to the bilingual and bicultural education programs, and long-term monitoring of the effects of welfare reform on the Hmong population. One appendix discusses Hmong participation in the Wisconsin Student Assessment System, and the other provides a table of undergraduate Southeast Asian enrollment in the state system of higher education. (Contains 1 map, 14 tables, and 34 references.) (SLD)

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