

## Looking at Our Community

Read each statement on the Report Card. Think about what is happening in the community. Then, give a grade for each statement.

Category	Section	A	B	C	D	F	Q
<b>Education</b>	In our community, every child receives a quality education.						
<b>Employment</b>	Everyone in our community has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job.						
<b>Criminal Justice</b>	All members of the community are treated fairly by the criminal justice system.						
<b>Leadership</b>	Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, education, law enforcement, etc.) reflect the diversity of our residents.						
<b>Social Services</b>	The social services system in our community (e.g., welfare, job training, etc.) meets everyone's needs.						
<b>Media</b>	Local radio, TV stations, and newspapers offer fair and full coverage about people from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds						
<b>Health Care</b>	Our community's health care system serves the needs of all our residents.						
<b>Public Works</b>	All areas in our community have access to public services (such as water, trash pickup, and sidewalk and road maintenance).						

### Explain the Grading System:

**A-** We're doing great!

**B-** We're doing okay.

**F-** We've taken steps backward.

**C-** We're doing well.

**D-** We've had no success.

**Q-** Not sure.



### **Making Connections for Neighborhoods**

- “Children do well when their families do well, and families do well when they reside in supportive communities.”
- About half of the area’s low-income Black households live in approximately 15 small, compact residential concentrations scattered within the city of Madison and around its perimeter.
- These largely rental developments are each home to anywhere from 100 to 400 families of color, and are typically surrounded by more affluent White homeownership communities.
- Typically these residential enclaves do not include a church, a full service grocery, a public school, social or civic clubs, developed open spaces, a bar or restaurant, or a significant employer.
- These low-income communities of color tend to be disproportionately distant from key city and county offices, from major cultural institutions and from larger employers – a problem exacerbated by the fact that these areas are unevenly served by public transportation.
- Anecdotal and statistical evidence suggests there is a high degree of housing mobility both within these enclaves and from one community to another.
- The small size, high mobility and diverse origins of a good share of the populations that make up many of the county’s Black neighborhoods all help create challenges to building strong social networks, leadership development opportunities , and responsive community-based family support systems.

### **Promoting Employment and Economic Inclusion**

- One quarter of African American adults in Dane County are officially unemployed.
- The median income of African American households in the county was just over \$20,000 in 2011, less than one-third the median income of white households.
- The unemployment rate for Dane County’s African American adults was 25% in 2011, compared to 5% for Whites.
- A significant fraction of Dane County’s low-income black households live in isolated neighborhoods that are at some distance from major employment sites, and are unevenly served by public transit.
- Dane County has a disproportionately low number of black-owned businesses.
- A higher than average share of Dane County’s jobs are oriented to advance-degreeed, heavily networked job-seekers with correspondingly fewer pathways to family supporting jobs for less educated, less networked, less technology experienced workers.
- A disproportionately high percentage of Dane County’s African American male job seekers have records of involvement with the juvenile and adult justice systems.

### **Supporting Parents and Strengthening Families**

- A distressingly high percentage of Dane County’s young African American families live at or below the poverty line.
- A majority of these households are headed by a single parent.
- Many of these families live in small, high poverty neighborhoods that lack adequate child care, youth development, transportation, counseling, or job training resources.

- In addition to poverty, many of the county's low-income African American families are stressed by housing insecurity, exposure to violence, and extreme social isolation.
- African American families in Dane County are 16 times more likely to have their children in foster care than White families.
- Black families in Dane County are 15 times more likely to have a son or daughter spend time in juvenile detention than a White family.
- The county's high African American male incarceration rate clearly contributes to disproportionate father absence in Dane County's Black families

### **Advancing Equity in Educational Opportunity and Achievement**

- African American children and youth make up about 20% of Madison's public school enrollment and about 17% of the county's total public school student population.
- School districts in Dane County do not yet have or publish a measure of school readiness for kindergarteners that is disaggregated by race.
- 86% of the county's Black 3rd graders tested below the proficiency level in reading in 2012.
- In 2011, Dane County Black 8<sup>th</sup> graders were more than 4 ½ times less likely to be proficient in math than their White peers.
- Over 20% of Dane County's African American students were identified as chronically absent from school in 2011, compared to 2.2% of Whites.
- In 2011, suspensions involving Dane County African American students numbered 3,198, compared to 1,130 involving White students.
- In 2011, almost half of Madison's Black high-schoolers failed to graduate on time (compared to 16% of Whites).
- In the 2011-2012 school year, only 30% of Dane County black high school seniors took the ACT exam, compared to 65% of white seniors.

### **Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice and Criminal Justice Systems**

- African American children and youth make up about 10% of the county's total child population (0-18).
- 70% of the Black babies born in 2011 were born to single mothers.
- In 2011, Black children were almost 7 times more likely to be referred to child protective services and 16 times more likely to be in foster care than White children.
- In 2011, suspensions involving Dane County African American students numbered 3,198, compared to 1,130 involving White students.
- In 2011, Dane County Black youth were arrested at a rate of 430 per 1000, an arrest rate more than 6 times greater than the arrest rate of Black youth nationwide.
- In 2011, Dane County African American youth were 25 times more likely to be admitted to the state's secure correctional facility than a white youth.
- Dane County (and Wisconsin as a whole) has some of the highest African American male incarceration rates of any jurisdiction in the country.

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## Why Do Inequities Continue?

People have many ideas about why inequities exist. We may agree with each other on some points, and disagree with each other on other points. Each view stated below is in the voice of a person who thinks it is a very important idea. As you read the views, think about these questions:

1. Which views come closest to your own way of thinking?
2. Which views seem most important?
3. Is there a viewpoint that's missing?
4. Is there anything that you don't agree with?

### VIEWPOINT 1

#### **Pop culture and the media show negative stereotypes of different groups.**

On TV or in the movies, we see Arab Americans as terrorists. We see Latinos as maids, gang members, or drug lords. African American males often play gangsta rappers or thugs. This is damaging. It makes people think these groups are problems. It feeds people's prejudice and makes us feel hopeless.

### VIEWPOINT 2

#### **The effects of our history are still with us today.**

Racism has always been part of American life. When our country began, European settlers kept slaves. They took land that belonged to Native peoples. Our government made laws and policies against people of color. Even after slavery was ended, government favored whites. For example, after WW II, few homes were owned by nonwhites. Government housing loans were not given to people of color. Native peoples and African Americans have suffered most. They live with the effects of hundreds of years of racism.

### VIEWPOINT 3

#### **Policies based on race are the problem.**

We must stop hiring and promoting people based on their race. We need to move to a color-blind society. We need policies based on merit and not on ethnic background. This is what's wrong with affirmative action. Some resent it when people of color get special treatment. People of color wonder if their success is tied to ability or to some hiring goal. This is bad for everyone.

### VIEWPOINT 4

#### **Institutions have racist policies and practices.**

Many public and private institutions still exclude people of color. And privileges associated with "whiteness" are built into the cultures of our institutions. For example, people rarely think about the needs of different ethnic groups when they decide where to locate their businesses. Schools in poor neighborhoods lack resources. Banks make it hard for people of color to get loans. And racial profiling is a big problem in law enforcement. Even though we have new laws, the system really hasn't changed.

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## VIEWPOINT 5

### **People of color lack economic opportunity.**

Without good jobs, people of color can't move up in society. When big business cuts jobs, it affects people of color more than whites. This is mostly true in our cities, where many people of color live. Cities and neighborhoods with more poor people have a smaller tax base. This means less money for schools and other human services. It is hard to succeed without a good education, housing, and other basic services. Without skills and jobs, there is little to support a family.

## VIEWPOINT 6

### **The government often fails to enforce laws against discrimination.**

We have some good laws against discrimination. When they are not enforced, people suffer. For example, it is against the law to refuse to sell or rent a house because of skin color. But many people of color still have trouble when they try to rent, or buy housing. The government should make everyone obey the law.

## VIEWPOINT 7

### **People don't make the most of the chances they have.**

There are many programs that aim to level the playing field for everyone. For example, lots of schools and colleges use special admissions tests. They offer scholarships to students of color. Government and business have goals to recruit a diverse workforce. But they often have a hard time finding people to fill the jobs. Some people don't value these chances to succeed. On top of that, there are some people who think of themselves as "victims." They feel defeated by their race before they even try to succeed. The chances are there. People just don't take advantage of them.

## VIEWPOINT 8

### **White people have privileges just because of the color of their skin.**

White people don't face what people of color face every day. For example, people don't see whites as inferior or dangerous because of the color of their skin. They can shop in stores without being followed by salespeople. And they rarely fear that government might harass them, rather than help them. The culture and policies of many public and private institutions favor European Americans. Our system gives preference to "whiteness" and makes it harder for people of color.

# The Wisdom of Experience

by Tatanka Hunkesi

## Appendix A

### Read aloud

You can ask for one volunteer, or have people take turns.

Today it was warm and I went for a walk. I walked past the place where my father used to live. I thought back to another warm day when I walked this way to visit my father. I was a much younger man, but he was a very wise and old man by then. It was not long after that day before he joined with the Great Spirit. But that morning, I believed he would live forever. He was sitting at his front door, using an old-fashioned stick drill to make holes in small seashells he collected when we went on a trip to the beach. I asked him what he was doing. He said he was making necklaces in the old style as gifts for his granddaughters and great-granddaughters from the shells he collected.

I looked at him with surprise. The drill he used was a homemade drill made from a stick and crossbar of wood, some string, and a nail. It was just like the ones his father and grandfather had used to make holes in shells so many years ago. It was the same exact type of tool our people had used to drill holes in shells and rocks for generations before the white men came to this land. (In the past, they used flint or another sharp rock rather than a nail at the end.)

I watched as his old and bony hands spun the string tightly around the shaft, then pushed the cross bar over and over again. Each time he pushed the crossbar, the string unwound and the drill spun. Then he let the crossbar go, and used his old fingers to spin the stick, rewinding the crossbar up again and then pushing it down. His old hands did this with such ease that the nail spun on the shell back and forth, making a hole in the center. Still, it was slow and hard work, especially for his old, tired hands.

I pulled up a chair next to him and sat down. I looked at the many shells that were waiting to have a hole drilled in them, sitting in a basket by his side. Then I looked at the handful sitting in another basket, with small holes neatly drilled in each. Knowing my father's habits, I knew he had been working on his drilling since the early morning. After a short time, I asked him why he wasn't using a better, more modern drill to make the holes. I suggested he use my modern drill, or even use the old hand-crank drill he had in his toolbox. They would both be faster than the old hand made one he was using. My father did not look up from his work. He kept moving the crossbar on his hand made drill as he worked. "This works as well as I need it to," he said.

"But," I argued with him, "there are many more ways that would be much quicker."

My father stopped his work and looked at me. "What benefit would quickness be?" he asked me.

I didn't understand. I answered him, "You would be done sooner."

My father looked deep in my eyes and said, "This is exactly why I use this old

**The Wisdom of Experience, continued**

drill. Our people have been making this type of drill for hundreds of years. It always works in its own time. I could use a new type of drill and have all these shells drilled and strung by noon. But then what would I do? I am making a gift for my granddaughters and their daughters. I am happy in making these gifts. Making the gifts is as much joy to me as giving the gifts. If I were to rush and make them with the tools you suggest, then I would be denying myself the joy that the effort gives me. If I rush, I will not have the time to become one with the things I make.”

Though I wanted to, I did not understand him. I thought he was foolish, and maybe even a bit senile for taking all day, maybe longer, and putting in such an effort to drill the holes in the shells with an old stick drill. I believed my nieces and grandnieces wouldn’t know the difference anyway.

Not long after that day, my father’s spirit joined with the Great Spirit, but not before he had finished the necklaces and given them to his grandchildren and their daughters.

When it came time to clean his home, I found, in his personal effects, a small package with my name on it. I opened it up and found a handmade sheath of leather. The stitching was less than machine perfect, made by my father’s brittle old hands. On it was beaded a bird of Thunder and a medicine symbol. Inside the sheath was a blade of shining, hand-sharpened and polished metal. The handle was made from a deer horn. My name was carved on the base of the handle. Its rough cut and shaped beauty were amazing to behold.

When I held it, I could feel the spirit and energy of my father in every inch of the knife and sheath. His being and his spirit were in this gift. Inside the sheath, along with the knife, was a note. My father wrote, in his shaky hand, words that translate to: “Now I am dead. An old piece of metal and a deer horn, like shells on the beach and a piece of string, tie this old man’s heart to those he loves.”

I could feel the wisdom of my father surround me. I could feel my own ignorance and shame well up in me. I knew then why my father used the old stick drill to work the shells. I also understood then that the fastest way to do something is not always the best. Even if the end result looks the same, or better, it is the soul of the hands that make something that makes that item of value.

This day, as I walked past the place where my father lived, I was an old man. I stopped and looked at the place where my father sat with the old drill and the shells, and I reached to my side to the sheath and knife my father made, which I wear on my belt every day of my life, and I remembered him and his wisdom.

<http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore134.html>