

Diversity and Equity

Iowa is becoming more diverse as a state, and children are leading the way. Children of color now represent 15% of all Iowa children, and these numbers continue to rise. At the same time, children of color fare significantly worse on many measures of child well-being – poverty, low birthweight, child abuse and neglect, school dropout, and juvenile delinquency. Educators and service providers themselves generally do not reflect the diversity of the children they serve, which makes developing cultural competent services (as well as a more diverse workforce) important to closing disparities that exist by race, language, and culture.

As Governor, what actions will you take to address current disparities in outcomes for children of color, ensure culturally competent services, and support Iowa's diverse child population?



CULVER: I have made reducing the racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system a priority for my Administration. State agencies, in collaboration with local agencies, and the Casey Foundation have launched pilot projects to reduce disparities in the juvenile justice system in Woodbury, Polk and Black Hawk counties. Similarly, DHS has taken efforts to reduce racial disparities in foster care placement. Through culturally sensitive strategies and community collaboration, DHS has reduced the disparity in out-of-home foster care placement among Native American families in Woodbury County by 28 percent. A similar initiative geared towards African-American children in Polk County has cut the disparity in half. During my second term, I will work to expand these pilot projects statewide and apply the lessons learned to other fields, such as education.



BRANSTAD: Like all children, children of color respond to high education expectations. With clear, articulated state standards, local schools will be encouraged to find strategies that will motivate their students to achieve the goals. With uniform assessments we will closely monitor successful models which can be replicated and promoted statewide. Again, I believe we should reinstate funding to reward our highest achieving teachers.