



## **Policy Recommendations from *Where the Girls Are:* *The Facts About Gender Equity in Education***

The findings of *Where the Girls Are* refute the notion of a boys' crisis in schools. Girls' successes do not come at boys' expense. Rather, when girls do better in school, so do boys. While the report finds no evidence of a boys' crisis, it does uncover large disparities in educational achievement by race/ethnicity and family income. The availability of more detailed and standardized data would provide an even clearer picture of educational effectiveness and progress in the United States, as well as prompt more specific pedagogical and policy solutions aimed at closing the achievement gap.

### **Policy Recommendations**

#### **Cross-tabulate Data**

AAUW recommends that data be cross-tabulated for state assessment systems, state reporting requirements, adequate yearly progress (AYP), and graduation rate requirements. Having the most accessible, accurate and detailed information will encourage action specifically tailored to improve outcomes for those falling behind.

- Currently race/ethnicity, disability, and English language learner status are disaggregated for determining AYP. Gender, migratory status, and economically disadvantaged status are disaggregated only for state reporting requirements. While this is helpful, data also need to be cross-tabulated. This would allow for detailed and accurate comparisons between groups.
- With cross-tabulated data, schools would be able to compare various subgroups of children. For example, schools could compare the test scores of African American girls to Hispanic girls to understand how these different groups of students are performing. With cross-tabulated data, schools could then tailor solutions accordingly to improve educational achievement. School districts, educators, and policy makers cannot create the right solutions if they do not have the right data to truly know what segments of the population need assistance.

#### **Standardize High School Graduation Rates**

AAUW recommends an accurate and standard method of calculating graduation rates. Nationwide, standardized graduation rates will provide a more complete picture of the actual number of students graduating from different school districts across the country, and shine a light on the high school dropout problem.

- Currently, there is not a standard way to calculate graduation rates. With states using different graduation rate formulas, it is unclear how many students are truly graduating each year.
- AAUW applauds the House Education and Labor Committee for including a high school graduation rate definition in their No Child Left Behind reauthorization discussion draft, released in August 2007.
- AAUW recommends the uniform calculation of graduation rates that is similar to that proposed by the National Governors Association and the Department of Education's April 2008 proposed regulations.
  - The graduation rate for a given year would be the number of students who graduate having earned a regular high school diploma within four years, divided by the number of students who entered the high school four years earlier. Adjustments would be made for students who transfer in and out during that time.
  - States would be able to propose an alternative to using the standard four-year graduation time frame for certain groups of students who typically take longer than four years to graduate. The Department of Education has proposed that all states would use the new standard definition of graduation rates by the 2012-2013 school year.