



Written by [Walter E. Williams](#) on March 30, 2011

Department of Injustice

One of the requirements to become a Dayton, Ohio, police officer is to successfully pass the city's two-part written examination. Applicants must correctly answer 57 of 86 questions on the first part (66 percent) and 73 of 102 (72 percent) on the second part. Dayton's Civil Service Board reported that 490 candidates passed the November 2010 written test, 57 of whom were black. About 231 of the roughly 1,100 test takers were black.



The U.S. Department of Justice, led by Attorney General Eric Holder, rejected the results of Dayton's Civil Service examination because not enough blacks passed. The DOJ has ordered the city to lower the passing score. The lowered passing grade requires candidates to answer 50 of 86 (58 percent) questions correctly on the first part and 64 of 102 (63 percent) of questions on the second. The DOJ-approved scoring policy requires potential police officers to earn the equivalent of an "F" on the first part and a "D" on the second. Based on the DOJ-imposed passing scores, a total of 748 people, 258 more than before, were reported passing the exam. Unreported was just how many of the 258 are black.

Keith Lander, chairman of the Dayton chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Dayton NAACP president Derrick Foward condemned the DOJ actions.

Mr. Lander said, "Lowering the test score is insulting to black people," adding, "The DOJ is creating the perception that black people are dumb by lowering the score. It's not accomplishing anything."

Mr. Foward agreed and said, "The NAACP does not support individuals failing a test and then having the opportunity to be gainfully employed," adding, "If you lower the score for any group of people, you're not getting the best qualified people for the job."

I am pleased by the positions taken by Messrs. Lander and Foward. It is truly insulting to suggest that black people cannot meet the same standards as white people and somehow justice requires lower standards. Black performance on Dayton's Civil Service exam is really a message about fraudulent high school diplomas that many black students receive.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress, sometimes called the Nation's Report Card, tests



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students at the fourth and eighth grades in math, reading, science and writing. The 2009 eighth-grade scores in Ohio were: In math, 54 percent of whites and 14 percent of blacks tested proficient; 54 percent of whites were proficient in reading while 13 percent of blacks were; in science, 43 percent of white and 6 percent of blacks tested proficient; and in writing, 38 percent of whites tested proficient compared with 13 percent for blacks. This black/white education gap remains through high school completion, as seen by huge score differences in college entrance exams taken during the senior year.

There are a number of explanations for poor academic performance among black students, and they include students and parents who are indifferent, alien and hostile to the education process. There's often a poor education environment where thugs are permitted to make education all but impossible. There are often poorly performing teachers and administrators. These problems are masked by fraudulent grades followed by fraudulent diplomas. Grades are meant to convey information to students, parents and the outside world about academic performance. If a student is given A's and B's, when academic performance is really at the D and F levels, the student, his parents and employers are misled. Because black graduates see their grades and diplomas equal to that of white graduates, they and others will understandably see differences in treatment by employers or colleges as racial discrimination.

The most tragic consequence of the DOJ actions is that it brings into question legitimate black achievement and possibly sours race relations. Some Dayton white police officers might see their fellow black police officers as affirmative action hires and have less respect and possibly bear a grudge for assumed differences in treatment.

Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University. To find out more about Walter E. Williams and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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