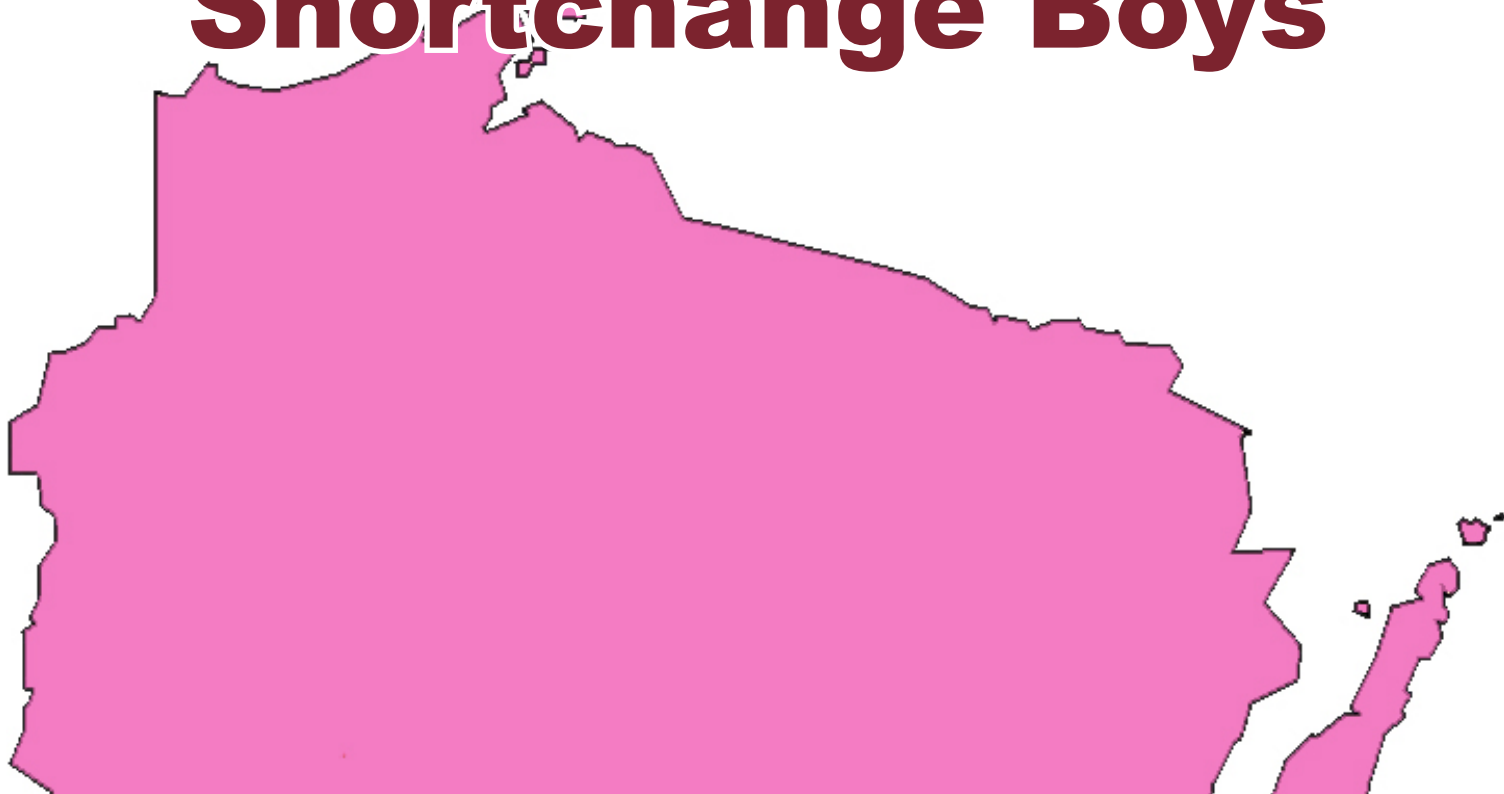


# How Wisconsin Schools Shortchange Boys



**New Study with Data Not Released Before**

# How Wisconsin Schools Shortchange Boys

## Our Story

You are now well aware of the Boys Crisis. We are pleased to report the boys are fine. Our children are not to blame. New research has shown a simple no-cost solution that will benefit all Wisconsin children, parents, taxpayers, and businesses.

This happened once before, 100 years ago. Back then, boys were also labeled really bad. Prof. Harold Hill in *The Music Man* had a bogus solution to the boys' crisis: a boys' band. Instead, the solution was no-cost. Schools were told to give students universal high school and stop hitting boys. This gave employers educated workers, and made Wisconsin an industrial leader in the Industrial Age.

We face the same crisis, with the opportunity for another no-cost solution. We are excited to present our findings, and the benefits it will bring to Wisconsin.

## About Us

*Julie Coates* is Senior Vice President of LERN. She was a civil rights leader in the 1960s and has contributed to women's equality in the workplace, including pioneering software to reduce the gender gap in the workplace. She teaches in the graduate program in education at the University of South Dakota.

*William A. Draves*, President of LERN, served on Gov. Warren Knowles' Committee for Children and Youth in high school. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He also teaches courses for K-12 teachers with graduate credit from Framingham State University.



Together, they have mentored 18 young people, including black boys, gay, trans, and cis girls. They have been interviewed by the national media, co-authored books, and spoken internationally

and throughout the U.S. and Wisconsin. They work and reside in Wisconsin.

The responsibility for this study rests with the authors. The Board of Directors of the Learning Resources Network (LERN), the largest continuing education association in North America, endorses the solution.



**Willie**

Willie received such bad grades in the River Falls schools he became sick. The local doctors could not find out what made him sick. When his parents took him to the Children's Hospital in St. Paul, the doctor examined Willie and came out and asked his parents, "Have you considered another school?" Soon after, Willie got into an elite private high school in St. Paul, where he graduated. He is now in university.

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"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

- Title IX

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## Putting the Solution to Work

The no-cost solution, to require schools and teachers to grade solely based on learning and knowledge, is an economic, educational bi-partisan solution that we all can support.

As an individual, and as an organization, you can urge community, business, and education leaders to act.

## Executive Summary

1. Boys in Wisconsin high schools are equally intelligent as girls.
2. Boys test overall at the same level as girls.
3. But boys are given significantly worse grades than girls.

This prevents smart boys from gaining access to the college or university they deserve. Some 40,000 smart Wisconsin boys are denied college entirely every year.

This new study, the first in the nation, finally gives Wisconsin citizens the data from our public school districts at the local level, arguably the biggest economic and social issue in society.

The myths and disinformation schools use to excuse gender discrimination against boys are debunked in this report.

**Consequences.** Citizen and business taxes wasted. Shortage of STEM workers. Lost wages of \$1 million per smart male. Lower wages for those not inclined to go to college. Wisconsin brain drain. Higher social costs. Lower state tax revenue, higher governmental expenses. Decline in marriage. 'Death by Despair' (CDC term) for 1,000 young Wisconsin males a year.

**Why boys get worse grades.** The reason boys are given unfair grades is that students are graded, in large part, on behavior. That behavior is irrelevant to learning and knowledge. This behavior does not exist when they enter the workplace. The behavior is female gender based and biological in origin. Title IX specifically states schools have to treat both sexes the same.

**The Solution.** The no-cost solution is for Wisconsin schools to grade solely based on learning and knowledge. This will send our smartest males, and our smartest females, to college. As Wisconsin colleges and universities need more, not fewer students, it will not deny college to deserving females. Wisconsin's economic prosperity will surge as a result. Studies show that high school graduates not inclined to go to college will also benefit from higher wages. Everyone wins.

**The Evidence.** The newly obtained data from Wisconsin superintendents of schools was gained through the intervention of a Wisconsin attorney under the Wisconsin Open Records law.

**This issue is apolitical.** This is an economic and educational issue. It is not a political issue. There is no difference in political parties on this issue. It can be a bi-partisan solution.

**Young women benefit.** This is not about having fewer women in college. Every girl who wants to go to college should go to college. But so should every smart boy. We need more college graduates, almost double, for Wisconsin. As with discrimination against females, no one benefits from discrimination against boys in education.



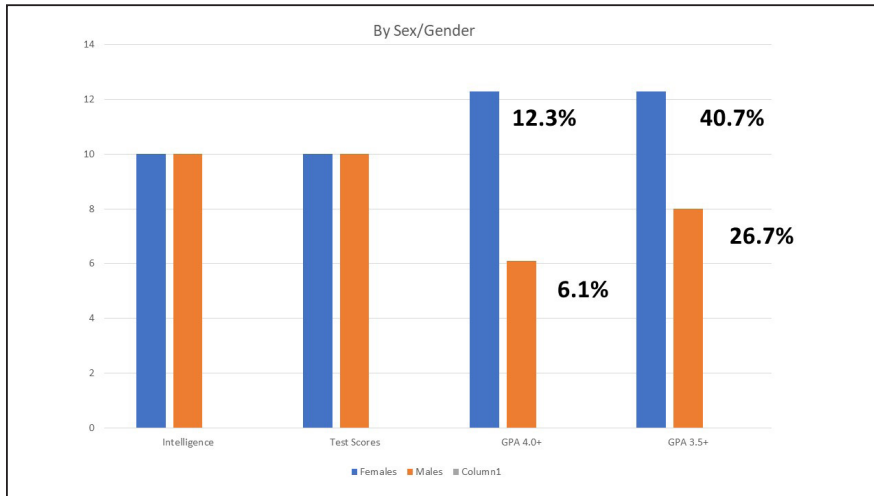
### Kriket

Kriket received bad grades in River Falls schools. He also was suspended because he did not feel safe there. Kriket became homeless at age 14. He rode freight trains, became addicted to meth, was an alcoholic. Some 15 years later, so many of his friends were dying of suicide, he decided to live. A mentor helped him get into community college, where he got straight A's and was admitted to the national honor society. He is now at a university studying to become a computer scientist. He is the exception, unfortunately.

## The Findings

Grade Point Average (GPA) is now clearly the primary measurement colleges and universities use in accepting students. Even test scores are no longer required at a number of institutions of higher education.

As a result, Wisconsin's smart boys are denied access to good higher education institutions and a good education.



*Wisconsin high school students. Female= blue; Male= orange. The percentage of Wisconsin high school students who receive 4.0+ and 3.5+ GPAs, by sex. Data provided by Wisconsin school district superintendents.*

### Summary of Findings

Just half as many boys as girls are given a GPA of 4.0+. This is the GPA needed for entrance to our best colleges and universities.

Girls are one and half times more likely to be given a GPA of 3.5 or better, even though girls do not learn more or test more highly than boys. A GPA of 3.5+ is recommended to apply the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for example.

Fewer than half of Wisconsin boys (46%) qualify for any college or university given the standard recommended GPA of 3.0 or better. While almost two-thirds of Wisconsin girls (61.1%) are given a GPA of 3.0 or better.

There are roughly 40,000 smart Wisconsin boys - - boys who test at or higher than students who are admitted to college - - who are given such low GPAs that they are excluded from college at all.

*Statistical Significance.* The data was subjected to a statistical significance measurement by a professor knowledgeable about this issue. The data for just one school district, the La Crosse School District. The data was judged highly significant, with only 1 in 11,000 due to chance.

No school district grades equally. No Wisconsin school district has reported parity in grading between its male and female students. In every Wisconsin school district, the numbers and percentages of course vary slightly but insignificantly from the overall numbers reported here.

Equally Intelligent. Males and females, young women and young men, girls and boys, are equally intelligent.

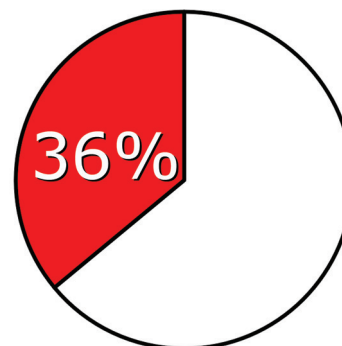
There is no credible study or research which demonstrates otherwise. There are hundreds of studies which conclude males and females are equally intelligent. This fact is taught in our schools, colleges, and universities, as it should be.

There is also no overall difference in performance and productivity in the workplace between females and males. There are no known instances of companies legally allowed to hire or even evaluate male workers because they lack intelligence compared to female workers.

Test Equally Overall. Wisconsin young women and young men, girls and boys, test equally overall at all educational levels, from elementary school through high school and beyond.

There are differences by sex in specific areas. But overall, with only slight differences by year or test, test scores are equal. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) measures this annually, and this data is publicly available.

### The Problem



*This is where the problem is. Some 36% of Wisconsin high school boys are given significantly worse grades than their learning, knowledge, and test scores indicate. Data source: Nancy S. Cole, President of the Educational Testing Service, in Gender and Fair Assessment, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.*

## The Damage Done

### To Wisconsin Young Men

- Hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost wages per young man.
- For 40,000 smart Wisconsin young men every year, \$1.0 million lifetime earnings lost.
- Skyrocketing suicide since 2000.
- Unable to support a family and a middle class lifestyle.
- Shut out of access to STEM jobs, the most needed occupations today.

### To Wisconsin Young Women

- Shortage of college educated men to marry.
- Decline in marriage, increase in single mothers.
- Below average economic prosperity.

### To Wisconsin Taxpayers

- Wasted tax dollars for education.
- Shortage of skilled workers for business.
- Higher taxes for government services.

### To the state of Wisconsin

- Lower economic prosperity.
- Lower quality of life.
- Rural counties suffer most.
- Insufficient wages for high school graduates.
- Fewer entrepreneurs and businesses started.

### To Wisconsin Universities

- 70% of the decline in students in higher education are male.



Death by Despair. Some 1,000 Wisconsin young men die every year from what the CDC calls “Death by Despair,” by which they mean the inability to get a good education and thus a good job.

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“So we send our ‘C’ students to college  
and our ‘A’ students to McDonald’s.”

- Wisconsin CESA 11 teacher

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### Tristan

Tristan was given such bad grades, he graduated in the bottom 1% of his class in River Falls High School. Ineligible for college, he joined the military and served in Afghanistan. The military paid for him to go to technical college. Tristan then transferred to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls where he graduated with dual majors in French and Engineering.

## Why Schools Grade Behavior

### The Myth That High School GPA is a Predictor of College GPA

Schools falsely argue that high school GPA is a predictor of college GPA.

*#1 This contention is false.*

If the University of Wisconsin at Madison accepts 100 boys with a 4.0 GPA, and 100 girls with a 4.0 GPA, as it does every year, by the end of their first freshman semester at UW the boys will be given a lower GPA than the girls.

*#2 GPA doesn't matter in college.*

For the majority of young men in college, graduation counts, but GPA does not. Some 85% of employers don't trust a job applicant's GPA. Google doesn't even consider GPA.

### The Two Reasons Schools Give

Educators almost always give two reasons for penalizing boys for behavior, such as late work. Both of these beliefs are not grounded in fact. Here is the evidence.

*“We're teaching responsibility here.”*

There is no evidence to support this claim.

Values and habits are formed early in life.

When high school teachers claim to be teaching responsibility, as they do, we need to understand that values and habits such as responsibility are learned much earlier in life, by age 10, 11 or as early as age 8.

The GPA gap never closes.

If teachers were indeed teaching responsibility, then the GPA gender gap between boys and girls would close over a period of time. But the gender GPA gap never closes. That is, the so-called “responsibility” is never taught.

There is a gender GPA gap starting as early as elementary school, and the gender GPA gap never closes.

So penalizing students (80% of whom are boys) for late work never has the supposed result of teaching them “responsibility.”

*“We're preparing students for the workplace.”*

There is no evidence to support this claim either. While workers do have to turn work in on time in the workplace, there is no gender problem in the workplace with regard to showing up on time and turning work in on time.

Boys who submit late work at school show up on time at their job.

There is no evidence that students who turn in school work late show up late at work or turn in their work-work late. In fact, the evidence is just the opposite. The Bureau of Labor Statistics annually reports that teenage boys show up more on time to their jobs, not less, than teenage girls.

The evidence shows late homework has no relationship to submitting work in on time in the workplace.

There is no male gender problem at work with responsibility.

There are no studies that young men perform more poorly than young women in the workplace. We have interviewed human resource professionals, and they indicate there is no problem. There is no perceived problem of boys in the workforce on the part of employers, workers or even educators. There are no citations or references on the web as to males performing less well at work.

For STEM jobs, “responsibility” does not appear to be an issue in hiring.

The problem is not that there are no responsible engineers or responsible computer scientists. The problem is that there are not enough skilled (college-educated) engineers and computer scientists. There is no evidence that we have a surplus of irresponsible engineers or computer scientists or chemists.

Successful men received worse grades. Richard Arum of

Columbia University surveyed equally successful men and women in the workplace and found the men were given worse grades than the women in school.

# References

Here are references for the study and recent research connecting grading with Death by Despair. For other general references for statements cited here, see “Smart Boys, Bad Grades: Gender Inequity and STEM in Education,” no cost pdf available at [www.lern.org/grading](http://www.lern.org/grading).

## Executive Summary References

**Boys are equally intelligent as girls.** Numerous sources report this, including Oxford Academic, Wikipedia, and Cambridge University Press. But while the mean average of males and females is the same, the data actually shows that there are more males at both the lower and higher ends of the bell curve. The Independent reports “There are twice as many men with an IQ of 120-plus as there are women, and there are 30 times the number of men with an IQ of 170-plus as there are women.”

The reason scientists give for males being more predominant on both ends of the bell curve is that males have only one X chromosome, making them more susceptible to mutations in that chromosome. Females, on the other hand, have two X chromosomes, so that if one changes, it is balanced out by the other X, thus keeping females closer to the average mean.

**Boys overall test equally with girls.** Boys overall test equally with girls on ACT, SAT, and other tests. The most comprehensive analysis of test scores and gender was done by Nancy S. Cole when she was President of the Educational Testing Service. That study, published as the book *Gender and Fair Assessment*, involved millions of students taking thousands of tests.

Now there are two fundamental difference in boys and girls test scores, which reflect the male and female difference in the neurological and hormonal structures in the brain. Some 80% of females constantly show higher language ability. Some 80% of males constantly show higher spatial ability. These differences are evident on test scores.

**Wisconsin boys test equally with girls.** The ACT scores are available on a Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website, by Wisconsin school district. There are minor ups and downs for both girls’ scores and boys’ scores each year. Our research suggests ACT added another test category that is language-based, and thus weighted towards females, in recent years.

**Boys are given significantly worse grades than girls.** The U.S. Department of Education has a publication documenting this. The Educational Testing Service documents this. No Wisconsin school district has reported gender equity in grading. The OECD has a study not only documenting this, but reporting that the U.S. is one of the worst offenders in gender equity in education against boys. The American Association of University Women report in 1992 “How Schools Shortchange Girls” has been widely discredited, with alleged “gender bias” against girls clearly false.

**40,000 Wisconsin boys denied college every year.** There are 2 million smart boys denied college every year nationally, resulting in more than two million fewer males in college every year. This has been going on since 1979. Wisconsin’s population is around 2% of the U.S. From every statistical study done in education, Wisconsin does not differ significantly from the national average. No one has ever provided a reason why boys are underrepresented in higher education. The only reason is GPA.

**School Suspensions and Expulsions.** Boys outnumber girls by 2:1 on Wisconsin schools suspend twice as many boys as girls, and expel almost 2 boys for every 1 girl. This is for behavior unrelated to learning and knowledge. No data shows a gender relationship to future performance in the workplace. Wisconsin 2021-2022 DPI. *Out of School Suspensions:* F= 25,834; M= 50,349. *Expulsion:* F= 339; M = 501.

## The Findings References

**Never Before Released.** Prior to this study, Wisconsin school superintendents have declined to provide GPA by sex, responding to our requests by saying they don’t make that data public. When we discovered the Wisconsin Open Records Law, it became apparent that school districts were required by law to provide the data. Nevertheless, we had to seek assistance in our requests from open records attorney Tom Kamenick of Port Washington, Wisconsin.

**Highly statistically significant.** The data for just one school district (La Crosse) was subjected to a calculation used to determine if the difference between overall GPA for boys and girls is indeed statistically significant.

The results showed the difference is likely not minor, and likely not just by chance. In fact, the likelihood the difference is by chance is only 1 in 10,000, thus 99.9% likely to be significant. Using the difference in means is highly statistically significant. The key result is the Significance

Level, which is  $P < 0.0001$ , means that the difference in mean GPAs is significant at the highest (standard) level of significance,  $P < 0.01$ . The  $P < 0.0001$  means that the probability of finding that difference in means (0.257) purely by chance is less than 1-in-10,000, so there’s a 99.99% chance that the difference in means is because of a true and valid difference and not due to chance. Reporting that the difference in mean GPAs by gender is highly statistically significant strongly supports our findings.

## GPA of 3.5 or higher

Many sources report students should have a GPA of 3.5 or higher to get into a good college or university. From the data submitted by five of the school district superintendents, we find:

Females GPA 3.5+ 40.7%  
Males GPA 3.5+ 26.7%

Even though males test overall equally with females, only slightly more than a quarter of our boys have a sufficient GPA for a good college or university.

## GPA of 4.0 and higher

And when we look at the GPA needed to get into some of the best colleges and universities, 50% of Wisconsin’s smart boys are denied the GPA they deserve. A sample of five school districts found that 606 females, 12.3% of females, received a 4.0+ GPA. Only 307 males, just 6.1% of males, received a 4.0+ GPA, just half the number.

*A few illustrations.* La Crosse School District, F 114, 13.2% of females; M 55, 5.9% of males. Stevens Point School District, F 23, 2.9%; M 13, 1.7%. Cedarburg School District, F 132, 34%; M 58, 14%.

## GPA of 3.5 or higher

Needed, for example, to get into the University of Wisconsin Madison, a selective university. A sample of five school districts found that 2,008 females, 40.7% of females, received a 3.5+ GPA. Only 1,348 males, just 26.7% of males, received a 3.5+ GPA.

A few illustrations. Waukesha School District, F 898, 39.1% of females; M 597, 26.8% of males. Hartford School District, F 215, 35.3%; M 125, 18.2%.

## GPA of 3.0 or higher

Needed, for example, to get into the University of Wisconsin Platteville, a less selective university. A sample found that 3,015 females, 61.1% of females, received 3.0+ GPA. Only 2,327 males, 46% of males, received a 3.0+ GPA.

## Cumulative GPA by Sex/Gender

In every school district responding to our request, the cumulative GPA given to high school girls is significantly higher than the cumulative GPA given to boys.

HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. The difference was subjected to a significance test in the case of the La Crosse School District. The result is that the difference is highly significant. There is only a 1 in 10,000 chance the difference is random. The chance of all school districts showing a random or insignificant difference would be even smaller than 1 in 10,000.

Appleton, F 2.9; M 2.57  
Ashland, F 2.86; M 2.41  
Beaver Dam, F 2.65; M 2.21  
Eau Claire, F 2.96; M 2.63  
Cedarburg, F 3.62; M 3.26  
Germantown, F 3.31; M 2.88  
Hartford, F 2.97; M 2.55  
Hurley, F 3.3; M 3.14  
Janesville, F 2.73; M 2.4  
Kenosha, F 3.13; M 2.73  
Neenah, F 3.09; M 2.77  
Oconomowoc, F 3.39; M 2.98  
Racine, F 2.36; M 2.06  
River Falls, F 3.4; M 3.09  
La Crosse, F 2.88; M 2.62  
Stevens Point, F 3.07; M 2.78  
Waukesha, F 2.98; M 2.74  
Capital High, F 1.78; M 1.89  
East High, F 2.94; M 2.7  
La Follette High, F 2.99; M 2.71  
Memorial High, F 3.11; M 2.84  
Shabazz High, F 2.52; M 1.9  
West High, F 3.3; M 2.99

## The Damage References

### Boys Are Denied the Earnings They (and Society) Deserve

To further illustrate the damage done to boys’ careers and society’s economic prosperity and well being, we can look at the GPA required by an elite private liberal arts college attended by students in Wisconsin; the flagship University of Wisconsin-Madison, a top ranked university; and two less selective state universities, the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point.

As we see, the disparities in GPAs between male and female students are significant, even though males and females in these school districts are equally intelligent; and the difference in earnings post college are significant.

### Carleton College (GPA of 3.9 needed) vs. University of La Crosse Wisconsin (GPA of 3.49 needed)

From the La Crosse School District, 94 males (10%) and 165 females (19%) qualify with a 3.9 GPA for Carleton. Some 19% of boys do qualify for the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. But graduates of UW-La Crosse make an average of 24% less in wages than graduates of Carleton.

Continuing, some 247 males from the La Crosse High School District (26%) qualify for the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, but 322 females (37%) qualify. So the inequality continues. The wages lost continues.

### University of Wisconsin-Madison (GPA of 3.5 needed) vs. University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point (GPA of 2.25 needed)

From the Stevens Point School District only 68 males (8.6%) qualify for Carleton, while 94 females (12%) qualify.

From the Stevens Point School District, 198 males (25%) and 315 females (40%) qualify with a 3.5 GPA for UW-Madison. Some 25% of boys do qualify for the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. But graduates of UW-Point make an average of 30% less in wages than graduates of UW-Madison.

Continuing, some 575 males from the Stevens Point High School District (73%) qualify for UW-Point, but 650 females (83%) qualify. So the inequality continues. The wages lost continues.

### University of Wisconsin Platteville

The University of Wisconsin Platteville is an interesting example because it is the only university in Wisconsin where there are more male students (63%) than female students (37%).

But even at UW Platteville, fewer males have the needed 3.0 GPA. While 61.1% of females qualify for UW Platteville, only 46% of males qualify.

### GPA Needed and Wages Upon Graduation

Carleton College 3.9 GPA \$67,132  
University of Wisconsin – Madison 3.5 GPA \$65,213  
University of Wisconsin Stevens Point 2.25 GPA \$45,855  
University of Wisconsin Platteville 3.0 GPA \$52,813  
University of Wisconsin La Crosse 3.49 GPA \$54,139

## Grading and the connection to Death by Despair

### Hypocrisy in HB1 Visas

HB1 visas import college educated boys to replace American boys in STEM employment. Some 80% of the HB1 visa holders are male. The biggest country where these males are from is India. Yet 50% of college graduates in India are female, so the U.S. is exhibiting gender hypocrisy in actively recruiting foreign boys, while not allowing American boys to compete for these same jobs.

### Wisconsin Misinformation

The Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health claims the mental health of teenage girls has declined twice as much as boys of the same age. “Girls are having some particularly troubling times right now,” said Linda Hall, director of the state office. This misinformation comes from what Wisconsin teenagers say, as compared to what they do. Teen girls are clearly talking more about depression and anxiety, while boys internalize their depression. But let’s look at the facts. Teen boys are committing suicide at three times the rate as teen girls. While every child is precious, the focus on girls is clearly misplaced.

**Jobs Likely to Overdose.** Jobs where people are more likely to overdose on drugs overwhelmingly require a high school degree only, and many are male dominated. Occupations with lesser overdose rates are those that require a college degree. Washington Post, Oct. 6, 2023.

**Education and Death by Despair.** There are an increasing number of scholars connecting a lack of a college degree with Death by Despair. The CDC reports two-thirds of deaths by despair come from persons with only a high school education. Christine Simba, writing for the Washington Post July 10, 2023, in an article on the boys’ crisis, reported the connection between no college degree and death by despair.

**Single-Parent Families and Education.** The rise in single parent families, which is bad for kids, is another outcome from denying boys a college education. The college educated are raising kids in two parent families, while children of the high school educated experience the bulk of the ill effects, writes university professor Melissa S. Kearney in The New York Times, Sept. 20, 2023.



### **Kentaro**

Kentaro scored 1280 on the SATs. The average SAT score is 1050. He helped teach math with his instructor. He spoke two languages. But he was given a 2.0 GPA from River Falls High School. Kentaro could not get into any good university with that GPA. So he moved to England and immediately got into the University of London, where he graduated. He now works and creates jobs there, a loss for the Wisconsin economy.



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## **New study with data not previously released**

From Education's Leading Futurists

Their work has been featured by the BBC, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and other national media.

