

Harming our Common Future: America's Segregated Schools 65 Years after *Brown*



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It has been a great pleasure to work with a rising group of scholars who are so deeply concerned about overcoming the divisions in our society, and working towards making the dream of the *Brown* decision and our great civil rights laws a reality in a difficult time. Our country has passively accepted the return and deepening of segregation in unequal schools. It is time for educators of the U.S. to take leadership in assuring that we do not confine our students of color, nor critically limit the education of white students in schools that are obviously inadequate for the preparation of a society in which we all must live and work and govern together.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The publication of this report marks the 65th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case declaring racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. In the immediate years after the *Brown* ruling, the effort to integrate schools faced many difficult challenges and progress was limited. But the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as well as a series of Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s and early 1970s produced momentum towards increased desegregation for black students that lasted until the late 1980s, as districts across much of the country worked to achieve the promise of *Brown*--integrated schools for all children.

As we mark the 65th anniversary of *Brown*, there have been many changes since the ruling, but intense levels of segregation—which had decreased markedly after 1954 for black students—are on the rise once again. In the 1990s, a series of Supreme Court decisions led to the end of hundreds of desegregation orders and plans across the nation. This report shows that the growth of racial and economic segregation that began then has now continued unchecked for nearly three decades, placing the promise of *Brown* at grave risk.

These trends matter for students, and for communities whose futures are determined by how the public schools prepare their students for a diverse future. Research shows that segregation has strong, negative relationships with the achievement, college success, long-term employment and income of students of color. At a time of dramatic demographic transformation, the implications of these trends and research are important for us to address.

White students are now a minority across the country's public school enrollment, and they have been for a while, particularly in the public schools of the nation's two largest regions, the West and the South. Since 1968 the nation's enrollment of white students has declined by 11 million students while the enrollment of Latinos has increased by 11 million. There are now nearly three million Asian students and two million students who identify as multiracial. These changes are a direct reflection of lower birth rates among white households and population growth due to immigration. Latino students were 5% of U.S. enrollment in 1970 and 26% by 2016. At this stage, the vast majority of Latino students are U.S. citizens, but the Supreme Court's *Plyler* decision requires that public schools enroll all students regardless of citizenship status.

White and Latino students are the most segregated groups. White students, on average, attend a school in which 69% of the students are white, while Latino students attend a school in which 55% of the students are Latino. Segregation for black students is rising in all parts of the U.S. Black students, who account for 15% of enrollment, as they did in 1970, are in schools that average 47% black students. Asian students, on average, attend schools with 24% fellow Asians. Black students attend schools with a combined black and Latino enrollment averaging 67%, and Latino students attend schools with a combined black and Latino enrollment averaging 66%. White and Asian students have much lower exposure to combined black and Latino students, at 22% and 34%, respectively.

Suburban schools in our nation's largest metropolitan areas had only 47% white students in 2016, a ten-percentage point decline in a decade. About a seventh of these suburban students were black, and more than a fourth (27%) were Latino. There was considerable segregation within the suburbs, where both African American and Latino students typically attended schools that were about three-fourths nonwhite. White students in these same large suburbs attended schools where two-thirds of the enrollment was white students, on average. Our book, *Resegregation of Suburban Schools*, showed that few of the racially changing suburbs we studied had any desegregation plans. Doing nothing means accepting resegregation.

Even rural schools that were 70% white had stark differences in segregation. The typical white student went to a rural school in which 80% of students were white, while the typical black or Latino student went to a rural school with 57% nonwhite enrollment.

New York remains the most segregated state for African American students with 65% of African American students in intensely segregated minority schools. California is the most segregated for Latinos, where 58% attend intensely segregated schools, and the typical Latino student is in a school with only 15% white classmates. These numbers, especially in California, are related in part to sweeping changes in the total population structure as well as the termination of desegregation efforts, and reflect the changing realities of classroom composition.

The federal government has no programs devoted to fostering voluntary integration of the schools, aside from the small Magnet School Assistance Program. It has been decades since federal agencies funded significant research about effective strategies for school integration. Encouragingly, there are efforts for integration under state law and policies now in process in several states. Additionally, court-ordered and Office for Civil Rights-negotiated desegregation plans remain in a few hundred smaller districts, and there are dozens of local districts and regional desegregation efforts as well. We end with recommendations that research has shown can help achieve the promise of *Brown*, and that sharply reduce the number of segregated schools the Court described as "inherently unequal."

INTRODUCTION

Overview

We are a country that has always been racially diverse with a large majority of white residents for many generations. That majority is rapidly coming to an end and already is over among the school age population. All the trends show that this change will continue. It is already very far advanced in our two largest regions, the South and the West, where the country's growth is concentrated. When the nation last focused seriously on racial segregation of our schools, we were a country largely white with about an eighth black students and were at a historic low point in immigration. As we become a country without a majority population, an absolutely central question for our future is how well are we managing our diversity? The basic statistics show profound and enduring gaps in educational and economic success in a country that is also very deeply polarized in terms of attitudes and political beliefs.

The driving force of our social change since 1970 has been an enormous increase in the Latino population, and this has become a central issue in our current political polarization. We have few tools for bringing people together across racial and ethnic lines—basically the laws and court decisions of the civil rights era—but some of those have been reversed and others are under attack. Those policies were designed for what was basically a two-race society with a substantial white middle class majority, and did not take into account what have become very large Latino populations and rapidly growing Asian numbers. We now have a four-race society and a much higher share of families who are poor enough to be eligible for free school lunches.

A central belief in our democracy is that educational opportunity is the key to fairness in a society that does not support broad social policies, except for the elderly. The U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown* decision, the most important decision of the 20th century, held that segregated education was “inherently unequal” and created irreversible harm to segregated students. The Court was talking then about schools segregated by law in 17 states, but research shows that the impact of segregation is similar whether caused by law or by local policies and practices. This study reports on our progress in creating integrated education 65 years after *Brown*. Sadly, it shows that we are not making significant progress, as racial change affects every part of our society in all of the settings, from our small rural towns to the great metropolises, where the large majority of our children are growing up.

Integrating the white minority. In the West today there are already more Latino than white students in the public schools, and in California only about a fourth of all students are white. In the South, the white minority in the region continues to decline as a share of total enrollment. There are trends in this direction in many parts of the country. Historically there were few whites in schools with a substantial nonwhite majority and large numbers attending schools where more than nine-tenths of the students were white. Today the growing sectors of enrollment are Latino and Asian and mixed race. In the University of California, the nation's leading public higher education system, whites have fallen behind Asians in enrollment in spite of their much higher numbers. A significantly larger share of whites are now minorities in nonwhite schools, and the number of schools that are over 90% white has plummeted. These trends are continuing. They mean that in many places white young people need to learn how to function effectively in

situations where they will be in the minority. Parents say they favor their children learning to deal with people from other groups, but white parents often seek homes far from nonwhite communities and schools. There has been very little focus on how the schools can help create better outcomes amid our historic demographic transformation and policy reversals. There is no choice not to experience racial change. Even among Latino students, well over nine-tenths were born in this country, so this is not caused by recent immigration. The white population has had a low birth rate several decades and is aging. Immigration has been overwhelmingly nonwhite and the nonwhite populations are younger. Denial is the general practice but it is like trying to stop a tide. The only real choice is whether to do this positively or continue the long experiences of failure and resegregation. Although we have good models and research on what works better both for students of color and white students in strengthening education and preparing young people to live and work effectively in extremely multiracial communities, it is controversial to mention the issue and suggest positive solutions. Nevertheless, that is what political and educational leadership looks like in a changing nation. A very wide gap has opened between powerful recent research documenting the lifetime costs of segregated schools and communities and policies that ignore the issue or even make it worse.

Researchers in several disciplines, including massive analysis by economists, are showing us the cost of double segregation by race and poverty, which is now the typical experience of African American and Latino students. At the same time, white students who are now part of a shrinking minority in many parts of the U.S. will be living and working as adults in communities with a continuously shrinking share of whites. Latinos have already surpassed whites as the largest group of students in the West. Are the students in these communities being brought together in a lasting and positive way? Or, are we to have students stratified within diverse schools taught by teachers who were not diverse and not trained in ways to develop to positive possibilities of diversity?

Black segregation. The desegregation of black students in seventeen states with segregation mandated by law was a central objective of the civil rights revolution. After more than a decade of bitter resistance and very limited change, the passage of the most sweeping civil rights law in U.S. history, enforcement by the Johnson Administration, and powerful unanimous decisions by the Supreme Court, there was a huge breakthrough, and the Southern schools became the most integrated region of the country for several decades. Nineteen years after *Brown*, in 1973, the Supreme Court opened the door to desegregation lawsuits outside the South for both black and Latino desegregation but created both far more demanding standards of proof of violations than in the South and, in 1974, protected the suburbs from involvement in desegregation remedies, although many central cities had already lost the great bulk of the white population. By the 1980s there was a full-scale attack on integration plans by the Reagan and Bush Justice Departments and a leading opponent, William Rehnquist, became Chief Justice. Since the early 1970s there have been no expansions of federal desegregation law and no real creation of federal programs or policies to support integration of schools and neighborhoods. Segregation has engulfed central cities, spread far out into sectors of suburbia, and is now serious in our small metros and even our small towns. Most court orders in large districts ended in the 1990s.

The success for black students growing up in integrated schools was substantial as recounted in Prof. Rucker Johnson's 2019 book, *Children of the Dream: Why School Integration Works*,

based on sophisticated long term studies of large numbers of African American students who were either segregated or desegregated. He found higher achievement, college success at more selective colleges, higher income, better jobs, less incarceration, and better long-term health for students in interracial schools.¹ Another major study of huge datasets by researchers at Stanford, Harvard, and the Census Bureau reported especially strong effects for African American boys.² These findings build on a half-century of research showing the benefits of desegregation.³

During the civil rights era and lasting until the court ordered dissolution of desegregation plans in the 1990s, the public schools of the South were substantially less segregated than the residential neighborhoods. Today, with large scale school resegregation, the schools are even more isolated than the neighborhoods. Yet the children need preparation for increasingly interracial colleges, jobs, and neighborhoods of the future. The schools used to be a valuable resource for preparing for the great demographic transformation. Now they are becoming obstacles, raising students in separation and denying the experience needed to acquire the relationship skills (the “soft skills” employers value most) for our future economy and communities. The best opportunities are going to the most privileged children who are attending diverse elite colleges and universities.

The data in this report shows a disconcerting increase of black segregation in all parts of the country. This is true even though African Americans are a slowly declining share of the total student population, and many now live in suburban areas. It shows a very substantial loss from the high point of desegregation in the late 1980s. We also see that in the West where blacks are now only 5% of the total enrollment, most are attending schools that are predominantly Latino. This pattern is evident in many areas including parts of the South, traditionally the heartland of the African American community, where there are now larger numbers of Latinos than blacks. Very little attention has been given to these trends.

Black suburbanization and Latino migration have produced more black contact with Latinos in very high poverty schools and fewer of the virtually all-black schools of the old communities. Too often now black children are isolated from white and middle-class students but are a minority in the school of another minority.

A troubling development has been the enormous growth and intensifying segregation by ethnicity and poverty of the Latino students, who are now by far the largest nonwhite community. They are now more segregated in their own group than are blacks; and often, particularly in the Southwest and the West, African American students are not only isolated from whites and from the middle class but they are, on average, attending schools where they are a minority group within a Latino school. Latino students now are typically in schools with insignificant white and middle-class populations, a particularly dramatic historic change in the West. Sometimes they are also segregated from students whose home language is English.

¹ Johnson, R. (Forthcoming 2019). *Children of the dream: Why school integration works*. Basic Books & the Russell Sage Foundation Press.

² Chetty, R., Hedren, N., Jones, M. R., & Porter, S. R. (March 2018). *Race and economic opportunity in the United States: An intergenerational perspective*. National Bureau of Economic Research.

³ Linn, R., & Welner, K. (Eds.). (2007). *Race-conscious policies for assigning students to schools: Social science research and the Supreme Court cases*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Education.

The segregation of Latino students is now the most severe of any group and typically involves a very high concentration of poverty. Although there were important court decisions in states on the segregation of Latino students even before the *Brown* decision, and even though there had been a long history of exclusion and segregation both among and within individual schools, the Supreme Court did not address the issue until 19 years after the *Brown* decision in the 1973 *Keyes* decision involving the Denver public schools. Though the Court held that Latino students were entitled to desegregation remedies, unlike during the 1960s there was no enforcement of the decision by the federal government. Segregation has continuously intensified as the Latino numbers soared and there has been very little effort to address it.

Schools of choice have played a greatly increased role in public education. There was a huge growth of intentionally integrated magnet schools in the 1970s. Since 1990 most of the desegregation requirements in choice plans have been dropped, and there has been a vast expansion of charter schools, which are schools of choice. Typically they have no integration policies and are even more segregated than regular public schools, though unlike those districts and schools, they often are not tied to particular segregated neighborhoods.

The suburbs are experiencing profound changes. At the time of the civil rights movement the suburbs were white, and significant racial change did not develop until the 1970s. The data in this report shows that the change has been faster and more sweeping than most Americans understand, and there is now a majority of nonwhites in the suburban rings of our largest metros. Many of these suburban communities never had a desegregation plan, and many of their residents came to the suburbs after leaving racially changing city neighborhoods. White suburbs usually have much smaller school systems and not much diversity among teachers and administrators, and there has been little training or planning in communities now facing threat of resegregation. There have been no significant programs or policies to help these communities deal successfully with diversity either in education or housing policy. As a growing list of suburban sectors become predominantly nonwhite areas of concentrated poverty, they are facing challenges city neighborhoods faced a half century ago but with even less help. The suburbs and gentrifying cities are the current frontiers of racial change and are places where policy could make a difference.

Students and communities seeking integration. Many educators, students and community members recognize the cost of segregation and want to do something about it. The emergence of a student protest movement in New York City, in the state that has the highest level of segregation for black students and extremely high levels of Latinos, has helped force the issue onto the city and the school district's agenda. In three states—Connecticut, New Jersey and Minnesota—there is litigation supported by civil rights organizations under way on state policies. In Dallas and San Antonio there are active local policies to create more diverse schools that have scored some early successes. In our experience a great many educators have long known that segregated schools are fundamentally unequal.

A Changing Enrollment—The Multiracial Future of Public Schools

In 2019, 65 years after *Brown*, our nation's public school enrollment no longer has a majority racial group. Although white students still comprise the largest racial group in our nation's schools (23.9 million white students), after nearly a half-century of decline in the percentage of the overall enrollment, it is notable that white students no longer account for the majority of public school students (48.4%) in the United States. This is not because of a significant growth of the share of private schools but an impact of birth rates and immigration changes. The Latino share of enrollment has been growing tremendously such that more than half of the students of color in the United States identify as Latino (13 million students). Black students account for the third largest racial group (7.5 million) followed by Asian students, multiracial students, and American Indian students. This is a multiracial reality quite different from those existing at the time of the *Brown* decision.

Patterns of declining white enrollment and Latino growth are not new to the West, an area where white students have not been the majority for a while; in fact, there are more Latino students than white students in the West. However, the spread of Latino students across the United States is noteworthy. In the South, the region in which de jure segregation legally separated black and white students prior to *Brown*, the student enrollment has been transformed such that white students are no longer the majority and Latino students are the second largest racial group, followed by black students.

Our country's public school enrollment is substantially more diverse than it was in 1954 when it was comprised of two main racial groups—black and white. With a truly multiracial student enrollment, it is essential that we revisit *Brown* to reconceptualize what it means to desegregate our schools so that students from all racial backgrounds can learn together. Since 1980 the basic response to these changes and the evidence of unequal education has been more testing and accountability requirements, not addressing race relations or segregation. As the number of Latino students has increased, the segregation of Latino students has also deepened. As of the last 15 years, an even larger share of Latino students than black students attend intensely segregated schools. This growth came long after the serious desegregation efforts of the 1960s, so their segregation problem was largely ignored.

Within each of these broad racial categories, it is also important to note that there is great variation. For example, the category for Asian students includes students from a wide variety of socioeconomic and historical backgrounds as well as different levels of access to educational opportunities. The same is true for students in the category for multiracial students and each of the other racial groups. We acknowledge that by using these categories, our analysis does not convey the true diversity that exists within racial groups or the widely varying combinations of interracial backgrounds that exist. Due to limitations of existing data sources and research we can only highlight the basic trends and underscore the importance of attending to the even greater racial and ethnic diversity that exists across the nation.⁴ Our schools are complex and

⁴ Within the Asian and Pacific Islander category, the San Francisco Unified school district, for example, recognizes: Asian Indian; Cambodian; Chinese; Filipino; Guamanian; Hawaiian; Japanese; Korean; Laotian; Other Asian; Other Pacific Islanders; Samoan; Tahitian; Vietnamese; Hmong (SFUSD, Racial and Ethnic Reporting FACs).

unequal but our policy framework is locked into the realities of what our society used to look like.

A note on data changes on school poverty. A conflict between information needs and efficiency in administering free lunch programs has produced a serious obstacle in understanding school poverty and its impacts on learning and segregation. It has been apparent for generations that schools with racial segregation and schools with concentrated poverty both produce less academic success for students, and most of the schools that rank high on either measure have both. Researchers have typically had only one measure of school and student poverty, the percent of students on free or reduced school lunch, numbers that are much higher than in the past. This measure was created not to be a poverty measure but for the free lunch program but it was widely used because there was no other available measure of the percent low-income students for all schools. Although not perfect,⁵ it counted students that annually submitted paperwork verifying that their family's income was less than 185% of the poverty line.

This data became widely available in the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core in the early 1990s, and we have consistently looked at the relationship ever since. Racial and poverty segregation have been highly correlated. Now there is a serious data problem on this important issue. In many schools where the great majority of the students were on free lunch it was a large administrative task to keep track of who could or could not get free lunch and some students were embarrassed to participate. The government, after many years, decided that it would be more efficient all around, where there was 40% or more free lunch students, to offer school districts the opportunity to provide all the children breakfast and lunch at no cost, but that meant that the statistics at those schools would no longer accurately represent the percentage of students from low-income households.⁶ So now one-sixth of all schools—including a larger share of students of color—are attending schools at which we can't ascertain from existing data the percentage of low-income students. We saw the linkage of racial and economic segregation as basic reasons for many of the inequalities in educational opportunity of low-income nonwhite schools.⁷ Now, in those schools (community eligibility provision or CEP)⁸ schools reporting 100% free lunch, we simply do not know the actual relationship. In another nearly 15,000 schools, data on participation in National School Lunch Program was either not provided or missing in the most recent year of Common Core Data. On the other hand, in many schools we know the actual percent of poor children and we can still partially explore the relationship. Obviously, we need better ways to measure school level poverty to study fundamental issues.

⁵ Harwell, M., & LeBeau, B. (2010). Student eligibility for a free lunch as an SES measure in education research. *Educational Researcher*, 39(2), 120-131.

⁶ Our exploratory analysis of the data found variation in how CEP schools reported the number of students from low-income households.

⁷ For review of the literature on benefits of racially and economically diverse schools, see Ayscue, J., Frankenberg, E., & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2017). *The complementary benefits of racial and socioeconomic diversity in schools*. Washington, DC: The National Coalition on School Diversity. Research Brief No. 10.

⁸ To be eligible to participate in CEP, the percentage of identified low-income students must be at least 40 percent of enrollment. For more information, see <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision>

Growing Division Affecting Schools

Despite the growing diversity, the larger political climate has complicated educators' efforts to effectively make schools welcoming for the students they enroll who are increasingly multiracial. In understanding this study's results regarding school segregation, it is important to underline how the overall school climate in American public schools has been affected by divisive and aggressive recent political dialogues. Concerns about racially polarized rhetoric and related changes in immigration policy have affected teachers and students over the past years. From the beginning of the 2016 presidential campaign, President Donald Trump has made explicitly negative statements toward immigrants and certain racial and ethnic groups, possibly affecting the American public in different ways.⁹ Grave concerns about the repercussions of his xenophobic statements have become very prominent.¹⁰

Research studies have shown that these conflicts have exacerbated racial and ethnic problems in schools, including noticeable changes in school climate. For example, Huang and Cornell (2019)¹¹ analyzed survey data collected from about 155,000 7th and 8th graders in Virginia in 2013, 2015, and 2017. The study results revealed statistically meaningful differences in spring 2017 in terms of both students' reports of being bullied and their observations of teasing about race and ethnicity. With ethnicity and immigration becoming central political themes, partisan divisions have affected students and teachers, adding new dimensions to segregation and diversity. The researchers reported a statistically significant difference in experiencing such incidents between students living in places supporting the Republican candidate and the Democratic candidate for president. Specifically, students living in localities favoring the Republican candidate were more likely to encounter bullying and to observe their peers teased due to their race/ethnicity in the 2017 (post-election) outcome. In the 2015 (pre-election) result, however, no meaningful difference emerged. The study findings do imply that a potential association between presidential remarks and students' hostile behaviors and racial microaggressions could exist, although further investigation is required. In another study, UCLA Professor John Rogers and his team examined survey data in which more than 1,500 high school educators across the nation participated to explore the overall impact of the political rhetoric on high school students.¹² The study reported that educators in predominantly white schools (80-

⁹ Blake, J. (2018, June 29). One word shows how much we've changed the way we talk about race. *CNN U.S.* Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/29/us/racial-rhetoric/index.html>; Desjardins, L. (2018, August 23). How Trump talks about race. *PBS News Hour*. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/every-moment-donald-trumps-long-complicated-history-race>; Leonhardt, D., & Philbrick, I. P. (2018, January 15). Donald Trump's Racism: The Definitive List. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/01/15/opinion/leonhardt-trump-racist.html?mtrref=www.google.com&assetType=opinion>

¹⁰ Bazelon, E. (2016, November 16). Bullying in the Age of Trump. *The New York Times* Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/16/opinion/bullying-in-the-age-of-trump.html>; Samaha, A., Hayes, M., & Ansari, T. (2017, June 6). Kids Are Quoting Trump to Bully Their Classmates and Teachers Don't Know What to Do about It. *BuzzFeed News*. Retrieved from <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/albertsamaha/kids-are-quoting-trump-to-bully-their-classmates>

¹¹ Huang, F. L., & Cornell, D. G. (2019). School Teasing and Bullying After the Presidential Election. *Educational Researcher*, 48(2), 69-83. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X18820291>

¹² Rogers, J. (2017), *Teaching and Learning in the Age of Trump: Increasing Stress and Hostility in America's High Schools*, UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access, Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved from

100% white enrollment) were more likely to witness students making derogatory remarks about other racial/ ethnic groups and immigrants compared to educators in predominantly students of color schools.

The escalating levels of antipathy and division noticed in school communities across the nation add another dimension to school segregation and to the benefits of interracial contact on diminishing racial stereotypes that seriously threaten national cohesion. As this report demonstrates, American public schools have become increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, which also encompass varying characteristics among different groups, including, language, culture, religion, and immigration status. Despite this increasing diversity in our society, data in this report also show that segregation has been increasing the share of schools in which students do not have sufficient and appropriate opportunities to develop emotional and cognitive competences to embrace and respect other groups different from themselves in various ways. More than six decades have passed after the *Brown* decision. Nevertheless, our nation is facing a critical moment in which we must address the importance of integration that includes not only race and ethnicity but also more comprehensive factors, such as language, religion, and immigration status. We must act now.

Current Barriers to Further Integration

Due to the changing federal judiciary and a series of Court decisions, many districts are being released from court oversight, which is contributing to resegregation in the South for black students.¹³ Further, because states and districts no longer have laws and policies that explicitly assign students to schools on the basis of their race to maintain racial segregation and because the Supreme Court has limited and ended remedies, there are few new federal cases challenging segregation though there are a range of ways in which decisions by policymakers and by families contribute to the segregation in schools that we describe here.

Desegregation struggles have often focused on urban districts that disproportionately enrolled more students of color. In a decision two decades after *Brown*, the U.S. Supreme Court limited the extent to which courts could include suburban districts in desegregation remedies—a decision that was especially constraining outside of the South where metropolitan areas were fragmented into more districts. This mattered because urban districts required to desegregate were often surrounded by many largely white districts untouched by similar desegregation obligations, creating an incentive for white families to settle there.

Now suburban districts are much less racially homogeneous, particularly in our largest metropolitan areas. As our population has suburbanized, suburban schools are enrolling a growing share of the metro enrollment, including students of color and low-income students. These demographic patterns have been layered on top of a maze of school district boundary lines, which are sorting students in the suburbs similar to racial change in cities in the 20th

https://idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/publications/files/teaching-and-learning-in-the-age-of-trump/at_download/file

¹³ E.g., Reardon, S. F., Grewal, E. T., Kalogrides, D., & Greenberg, E. (2012). Brown fades: The end of court-ordered school desegregation and the resegregation of American public schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 31(4), 876-904.

century. Black and Latino suburban students go to school with many fewer white children than white public school students. Differences in student composition and perceived school quality get capitalized into home prices in uneven ways, resulting in vastly different tax bases that school districts can tap to support the public schools. Thus, we're seeing patterns of segregation and inequality spreading on a wider geographic scale, and considerable complexity among suburban districts. These very districts, however, may only recently be diverse and lack policies, programs, or expertise to understand and address barriers to full inclusion and opportunity. Moreover, suburbs are less likely to have the same supports as cities do for low-income students or students of color that can be crucial to ensuring policies like student assignment don't exacerbate existing residential segregation. In a number of suburban districts—as well as countywide districts containing suburban areas—the increasing diversity has engendered contentious debates about student assignment policies, particularly those that would try to reduce segregation.¹⁴

Mindful of the segregation and inequality across district boundary lines, some areas have sought regional approaches to reducing racial isolation, either voluntarily or as a result of court orders. Such plans have dwindled in recent years, but remain popular where implemented and students generally had impressive social and academic gains.¹⁵ Interdistrict desegregation efforts also include magnet schools that intentionally draw from multiple districts and Omaha's innovative Learning Community.¹⁶ Two on-going state court cases in Minnesota and New Jersey are challenging how district boundary lines segregate students; in 1996, Connecticut's Supreme Court also found that the state's district boundaries segregated students.

Despite the segregating effect that school district boundary lines can have, there are also dozens of districts that have seceded from larger districts in recent years although this was earlier blocked by the Supreme Court. This is of particular concern in areas like the South, in which homogeneous communities are seceding from more diverse districts.¹⁷ Because of the tradition of local control, students are rarely assigned across school district boundaries and when new lines such as those in a number of counties in the south are created that separate students by racial and/or economic lines, that can have effects on segregation that deepen over time.¹⁸ The

¹⁴ Parcel, T. L., and A.J. Taylor. 2015. *The end of consensus: Diversity, neighborhoods, and the politics of public school assignments*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press; Frankenberg, E. & Orfield, G. (Eds.) (2012). *The resegregation of suburban schools: A hidden crisis in American education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press; Eaton, S. 2012. *Not your father's suburb: Race and rectitude in a changing Minnesota community*. One Nation Indivisible.

¹⁵ Amy Stuart Wells, Bianca J. Baldridge, Jacquelyn Duran, Courtney Grzesikowski, Richard Lofton, Allison Roda, Miya Warner, and Terenda White, *Boundary crossing for diversity, equity, and achievement*. (Cambridge: Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, 2009); Susan E. Eaton, *The other Boston busing story: What's won and lost across the boundary line*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

¹⁶ Holme, J.J., & Finnegan, K. (2018). *Striving in common: A regional equity framework for urban schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

¹⁷ EdBuild. (2017). *Fractured: The breakdown of America's school districts*. Jersey City, NJ: Author. Retrieved from <https://edbuild.org/content/fractured/fractured-full-report.pdf>; Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., & Diem, S. (2017). Segregation by boundary line: The fragmentation of Memphis area schools. *Educational Researcher* 46(8), 449-463; Frankenberg, E., & Taylor, K. (2017). *School district secessions: How boundary lines stratify school and neighborhood populations in Jefferson County, Alabama, 1968-2014*. University Park, PA: Center for Education and Civil Rights.

¹⁸ Frankenberg, E. (2009). *Splintering school districts: Understanding the link between segregation and fragmentation*. *Law and Social Inquiry*, 34(4): 869-909.

permissiveness of state secession laws varies widely, and if districts are under court order, proposed secessions should be reviewed to ascertain whether they will inhibit the ability to comply with the existing desegregation order.

What we see across the country is double segregation by race and class and a long period with few positive initiatives in spite of accumulating evidence on the educational and social costs of segregation. The statistics in the pages that follow document deeply divided patterns of schooling in our racially polarized country in a heightened period of racial conflict in our public life. When you add the statistics documenting the long-term changes in the composition of the nation's children to those about their separation in schools it is apparent that these are very high stakes trends threatening the future.

CHANGES IN PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Over the last five decades, our nation's public school enrollment has grown larger in size and more diverse by race. A system that enrolled 43 million students in 1968 now enrolls 49.4 million students (Table 1).¹⁹ Shifting from a predominantly two-race public school system of a majority white enrollment and where black students comprised most of the non-white enrollment in the 1960s, the current United States public school enrollment is truly multiracial. The white share of our nation's public school enrollment has been declining, and for the first time in our decades of analyzing desegregation trends, white students now comprise less than half of our nation's public school enrollment.²⁰ In 2016, the public school enrollment across the United States was 48.4% white, 26.3% Latino, 15.2% black, 5.5% Asian, and 1.0% American Indian (Figure 1).

Further, more than half of students of color identify as Latino—representing a dramatic transformation in the nation's public school enrollment in less than a half-century. Alongside the declining white share of enrollment, the Latino share of enrollment has been rapidly increasing such that by 2016, Latino students accounted for more than one-fourth of our nation's public school students. Although it remains relatively small, the Asian share of enrollment has also been increasing. The black share of public school enrollment has remained relatively stable around 15-17% over the last four and a half decades, but has declined by approximately 500,000 students in the last decade.²¹

¹⁹ Ee, J., Orfield, G., & Teitell, J. (2017). *Private schools in American education: A small sector still lagging in diversity*. (Working Paper). Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

²⁰ In 2013, the last year of data in our previous report, the public school enrollment was exactly 50% white. See Orfield, G., Ee, J., Frankenberg, E., & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2016). *Brown at 62: School segregation by race, poverty and state*. Los Angeles, CA: Civil Rights Project/ Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

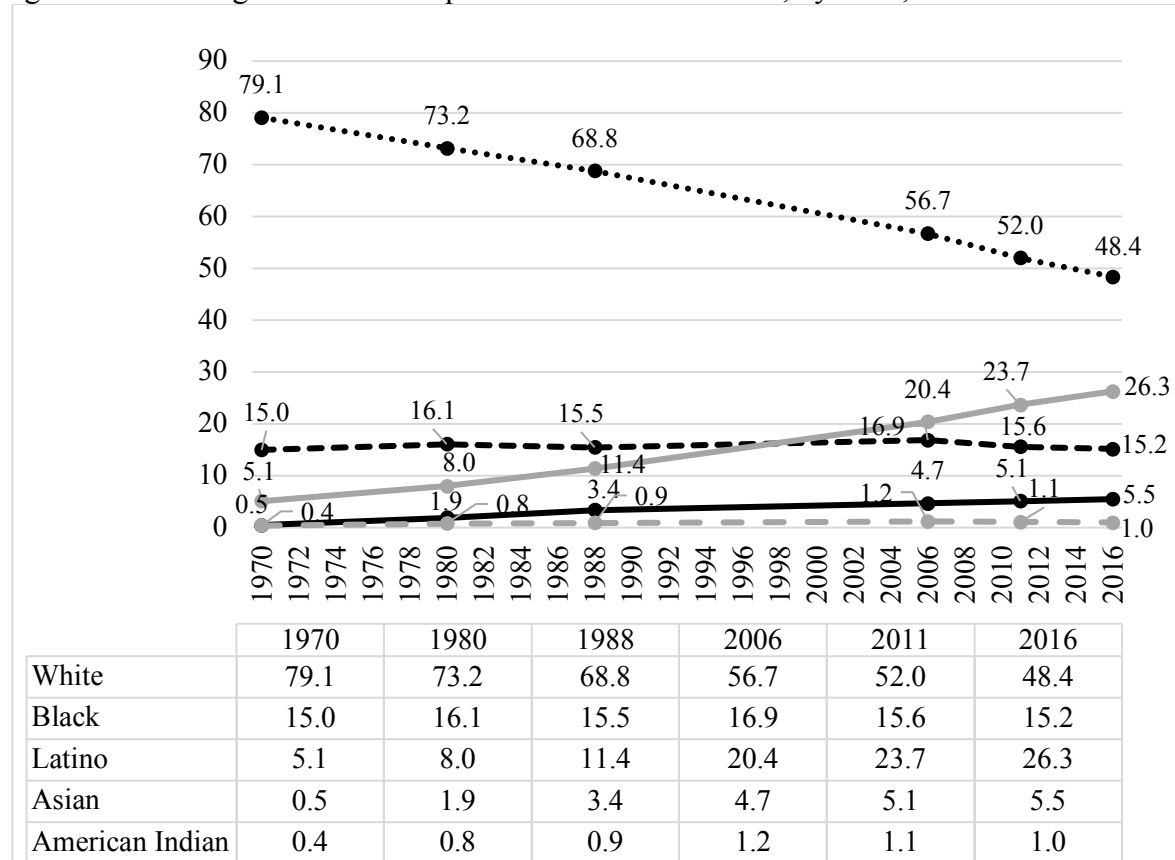
²¹ The racial/ethnic classifications used in federal datasets have shifted over time to reflect changing construction of racial/ethnic identity. Thus, the racial/ethnic classification of student data from 2011 and 2016 included in this report differs from that used in earlier years. See Lee, C., & Orfield, G. (2006). *Data proposals threaten education and civil rights accountability*. Cambridge, MA: Civil Rights Project.

Table 1: Public School Enrollment by Race (in Millions): 1968 to 2016-17

	1968	1988	2006	2011	2016
White	34.7	23.6	26.9	25.1	23.9
Black	6.3	5.3	8.0	7.5	7.5
Latino	2.0	3.9	9.7	11.4	13.0
Asian	-	1.1	2.2	2.5	2.7
American Indian	-	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.5
Multiracial	-	-	-	1.2	1.8

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17, 2011-12, 2006-07, and 1988-89. Data for 1968 were obtained from the analysis of the Office of Civil Rights data in Orfield, G. (1983). *Public School Desegregation in the United States, 1968-1980*. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies.

Figure 1: Percentage of Student Population in Public Schools, by Race, 1970 to 2016-17



Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17, 2011-12, 2006-07, and 1988-89. Data for 1968 were obtained from the analysis of the Office of Civil Rights data in Orfield, G. (1983). *Public School Desegregation in the United States, 1968-1980*. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies.

Public School Enrollment by Region & State

Within these larger national trends, the racial composition of the public school enrollment varies considerably by region. Table 2 shows that the South, which includes 11 states, enrolls the greatest number of public school students (nearly 17 million) and has also grown the most in enrollment during the last decade.

In both of our nation's most populous regions, the South and the West, white students comprise less than 50% of the public school enrollment. Also, in both of these regions, Latino students account for a comparatively large share of enrollment, and are, in fact, the largest share of enrollment in the West and second largest in the South.

In the South, white students comprise the largest share of enrollment (41.3%), but similar to the national pattern, white students are no longer the majority. In 2016-17, the second largest racial group among the public school enrollment was Latino students who accounted for 28.1%, followed by black students who comprised 23.6% of the South's enrollment. This is a shift from a decade earlier when black students (26.3%), rather than Latino students (21.4%), comprised the second largest racial group in the South's public school enrollment. This region of the country has long been home to the largest share of African American students—and, with nearly 4 million black students in the region represents more than half of all black students nationally.

In the West, the other most populous region of the country with almost 12 million students, Latino students make up the largest share of enrollment (42.3%). In this region, white students account for slightly more than one-third of the public school enrollment, followed by Asian students who account for nearly one-tenth of the enrollment and black students who comprise one-twentieth of the West's public school enrollment.

The Midwest is, by far, the region of the country with the highest percentage of white students, with a public school enrollment in which nearly two out of three students are white—yet this still represents a decline from a decade earlier when nearly three in four students were white. As is the case in other regions, a noteworthy trend in the Midwest is the increasing share of Latino students. In 2016-17, the Latino share of enrollment (13.1%) is nearly as large as the black share of enrollment (13.3%). In 2006-07, however, the black percentage of students was higher (14.7%) while Latino students were considerably lower (8.6%).

The Northeast also remains majority white, enrolling 55.1% white students. As is the case in the South and the West, Latino students account for the second largest racial group (20.7%) of the Northeast's public school enrollment. The Asian share of enrollment has increased by nearly 2 percentage points in the past decade, the largest percentage point gain for Asian students in any region.

The Border states are unique in that the public school enrollment is predominantly white (59.7%) followed by a substantially larger black share of enrollment (18.6%) than Latino share of enrollment (11.0%). It is the only region where there is a substantially larger share of black than Latino students, a result of a number of large districts that have a high percentage of black students such as Washington, DC, and Baltimore, Maryland as well as large suburban districts

such as Prince George’s County, Maryland. Nevertheless, given the sharp growth rate of Latino students in the region over the past decade,²² if such trends continue, the Border states are likely to have similar shares of black and Latino students in the next decade or so.

Table 2: Percentage of Public-School Enrollment, by Race and Region: 2006-07 and 2016-17

	US Total		Northeast		South	
Region	2006	2016	2006	2016	2006	2016
Total Enrollment	47,495,472	49,471,656	7,947,143	7,666,386	15,235,194	16,818,278
% White	56.7	48.4	64.5	55.1	49.2	41.3
% Black	16.9	15.2	15.2	14.0	26.3	23.6
% Latino	20.4	26.3	14.6	20.7	21.4	28.1
% Asian	4.7	5.5	5.4	7.2	2.7	3.5
% American Indian	1.2	1.0	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5
% Multiracial		3.6		2.7		3.0
	Border		Midwest		West	
Region	2006	2016	2006	2016	2006	2016
Total Enrollment	3,461,534	3,628,128	9,563,516	9,405,248	11,288,084	11,953,617
% White	67.5	59.7	73.0	64.9	44.4	37.6
% Black	20.5	18.6	14.7	13.3	6.2	4.8
% Latino	5.7	11.0	8.6	13.1	37.6	42.3
% Asian	2.5	3.2	2.8	3.7	9.4	9.2
% American Indian	3.8	2.9	0.9	0.8	2.3	1.7
% Multiracial		4.7		4.1		4.5

Note: Our definition of the regions is as follows: **South:** Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia; **Border:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, and West Virginia; **Northeast:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; **Midwest:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; **West:** Arizona, California, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17 and 2006-07.

In addition to racial composition differing between regions, there are also wide variations by state. The two largest states, California and Texas, have less than 30% white students, and both have a majority of students who are Latino. Washington, D.C., has a majority of students who are black, and black students are also the largest group in the public schools in Mississippi. Hawaii has a majority of Asian students, and two states on opposite coasts—California and New Jersey—have at least one-tenth of students who are Asian. Five additional states have at least one-tenth of students who are American Indian, and Hawaii and Alaska each have more than 10% of students who identify as multiracial. Table 3 shows that there are very different demographic realities in our states, and many have sizeable shares of multiple racial/ethnic groups in the public school enrollment.

²² Orfield, G., & Ee, J. (2017). *Our segregated capital: An increasingly diverse city with racially polarized schools*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

Table 3: Total Enrollment and Racial Composition, by State: 2016-17

	Total Enrollment	% White	% Black	% Latino	% Asian	% Am. Indian	% Multiracial
Alabama	742,647	55.0	32.9	7.4	1.5	0.9	2.2
Alaska	129,350	47.8	3.0	6.7	8.9	22.9	10.7
Arizona	1,106,211	39.0	5.3	45.0	3.2	4.5	2.9
Arkansas	492,607	61.3	20.6	12.7	2.4	0.6	2.4
California	6,052,759	23.7	5.5	54.2	12.1	0.5	4.1
Colorado	884,388	54.0	4.6	33.2	3.4	0.7	4.0
Connecticut	515,233	55.3	12.7	23.6	5.3	0.3	2.9
Delaware	126,047	44.9	30.3	16.9	3.9	0.4	3.6
District of Columbia	83,960	10.8	69.3	16.2	1.7	0.2	1.9
Florida	2,752,409	38.9	21.9	32.6	2.9	0.3	3.4
Georgia	1,760,033	40.3	36.8	15.2	4.0	0.2	3.5
Hawaii	181,434	12.6	1.8	13.2	58.9	0.3	13.2
Idaho	291,026	75.8	1.1	17.9	1.5	1.2	2.5
Illinois	1,997,163	48.5	16.9	25.8	5.0	0.4	3.4
Indiana	1,047,563	68.6	12.5	11.6	2.4	0.2	4.8
Iowa	498,526	76.7	5.8	10.6	2.7	0.4	3.7
Kansas	489,540	64.6	6.9	19.5	3.0	0.9	5.1
Kentucky	674,272	77.8	10.3	6.3	1.8	0.1	3.6
Louisiana	712,783	45.1	44.0	6.4	1.7	0.7	2.3
Maine	175,389	89.8	3.5	2.1	1.6	0.7	2.3
Maryland	868,071	38.5	33.5	16.6	6.6	0.3	4.5
Massachusetts	913,378	61.3	8.9	19.2	7.0	0.2	3.4
Michigan	1,406,404	67.0	17.6	7.7	3.5	0.6	3.7
Minnesota	842,948	67.8	10.5	8.9	6.8	1.6	4.4
Mississippi	483,137	44.4	48.9	3.6	1.1	0.2	1.8
Missouri	909,356	71.8	15.9	6.2	2.2	0.4	3.6
Montana	146,298	79.0	0.9	4.5	1.0	11.2	3.4
Nebraska	319,194	66.9	6.7	18.6	2.8	1.4	3.6
Nevada	470,103	33.2	10.7	42.1	6.9	0.9	6.1
New Hampshire	179,762	86.2	2.0	5.2	3.3	0.3	3.0
New Jersey	1,337,574	45.5	15.4	27.1	10.2	0.1	1.7
New Mexico	329,116	23.4	1.9	61.4	1.3	10.2	1.7
New York	2,624,633	44.5	17.0	26.4	9.3	0.7	2.2
North Carolina	1,541,396	49.0	25.5	16.9	3.3	1.3	4.0
North Dakota	109,550	78.1	4.5	4.7	1.8	8.7	2.2
Ohio	1,702,827	70.7	16.4	5.4	2.3	0.1	5.0
Oklahoma	693,588	49.4	8.8	16.8	2.3	13.9	8.8
Oregon	565,963	63.0	2.3	22.7	4.7	1.4	5.9
Pennsylvania	1,698,060	66.8	14.6	10.9	3.9	0.2	3.6
Rhode Island	138,032	59.2	8.3	24.3	3.4	0.7	4.0
South Carolina	769,220	51.2	33.9	9.0	1.7	0.3	3.8
South Dakota	133,933	74.8	3.1	5.5	1.9	11.1	3.7
Tennessee	997,926	63.5	22.1	9.7	2.0	0.2	2.5
Texas	5,281,581	28.2	12.5	52.3	4.4	0.4	2.2
Utah	648,269	75.0	1.4	16.8	3.3	1.1	2.5
Vermont	84,325	90.5	2.1	1.9	2.1	0.2	3.3
Virginia	1,284,539	49.7	22.6	15.1	7.0	0.3	5.3
Washington	1,054,530	54.8	4.4	23.1	8.7	1.3	7.7
West Virginia	272,834	90.4	4.3	1.6	0.7	0.1	2.8
Wisconsin	857,600	70.6	9.1	11.7	4.0	1.2	3.5
Wyoming	94,170	78.1	1.1	14.0	1.0	3.6	2.3

Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17

Public School Enrollment by Types of Areas

The changing racial composition of the public school enrollment at the national level is reflected in schools in all different types of geographic areas: cities and suburbs of varying sizes, along with towns and rural areas. The racial composition of public school students differs and is changing at a different rate, but one common pattern across all geographic areas is that the percentage of white students has declined from 2006 to 2016 while the percentage of Latino students has increased in each during the same time period (Table 4). For black students, their percentage of the enrollment declined in most geographic areas, except for midsize suburban schools where their percentage of the enrollment increased slightly. The pattern for changes in the percentage of Asian students was mixed.

Table 4: Racial Composition of Public School Enrollment (%), by Types of Areas: 2006-07 & 2016-17

Large Metro	Central City		Suburb	
	2006	2016	2006	2016
White	22.1	20.3	56.9	46.9
Black	30.8	25.2	15.4	14.2
Latino	38.5	42.4	20.8	27.3
Asian	7.7	8.2	6.3	7.4
American Indian	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.4
Multiracial		3.3		3.8
Midsize Metro	Central City		Suburb	
	2006	2016	2006	2016
White	37.4	32.2	68.6	59.0
Black	29.4	24.0	10.2	10.3
Latino	26.6	33.2	16.5	22.0
Asian	5.9	5.7	4.1	3.5
American Indian	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6
Multiracial		4.4		4.7
Small Metro	Central City		Suburb	
	2006	2016	2006	2016
White	52.3	45.3	70.0	62.8
Black	19.1	17.4	10.2	8.3
Latino	21.9	25.0	15.6	20.8
Asian	5.8	6.9	3.5	3.5
American Indian	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6
Multiracial		4.6		3.9
Other	Town		Rural	
	2006	2016	2006	2016
White	70.0	63.1	75.8	70.0
Black	11.3	9.9	10.2	9.3
Latino	14.8	19.8	9.9	13.8
Asian	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.8
American Indian	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.0
Multiracial		3.4		3.0

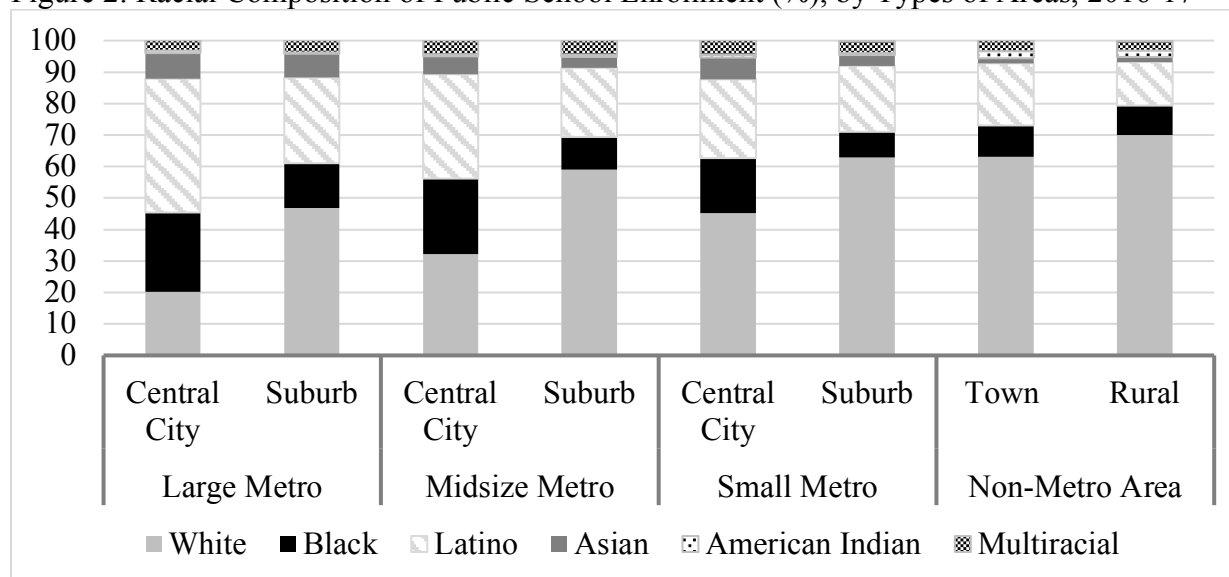
Note: Large, midsize, and small metros refer to areas with populations of 250,000 or more, less than 250,000 but greater than or equal to 100,000, and less than 100,000, respectively. A central city refers to a territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city. A suburb refers to a territory outside a principal city but inside an urbanized area. Towns refer to territories inside an urban cluster. Rural areas refer to territories outside an urban cluster. More details can be found here:

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/docs/EDGE_NCES_LOCALE_2016.pdf

Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2006-07 and 2016-17.

In 2016, central cities continue to have a more diverse public school enrollment than their corresponding suburban areas, particularly in large and midsize metropolitan areas (Figure 2). Suburban areas of large metropolitan areas are closest to reflecting the overall racial composition of public school students and have a lower percentage of white students than suburban schools in smaller metros. In the last decade, suburban schools in large metropolitan areas have experienced the highest decline in the percentage of white students, reflecting suburbanization of families of color. Latino students are the largest group of students in central cities in large and midsize metros (white students are the third largest group behind Latino and black students in large central cities). Non-metropolitan areas have the highest percentage of white students.

Figure 2: Racial Composition of Public School Enrollment (%), by Types of Areas, 2016-17



Note: Large, midsize, and small metros refer to areas with populations of 250,000 or more, less than 250,000 but greater than or equal to 100,000, and less than 100,000, respectively. A central city refers to a territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city. A suburb refers to a territory outside a principal city but inside an urbanized area. Towns refer to territories inside an urban cluster. Rural areas refer to territories outside an urban cluster. More details can be found here:

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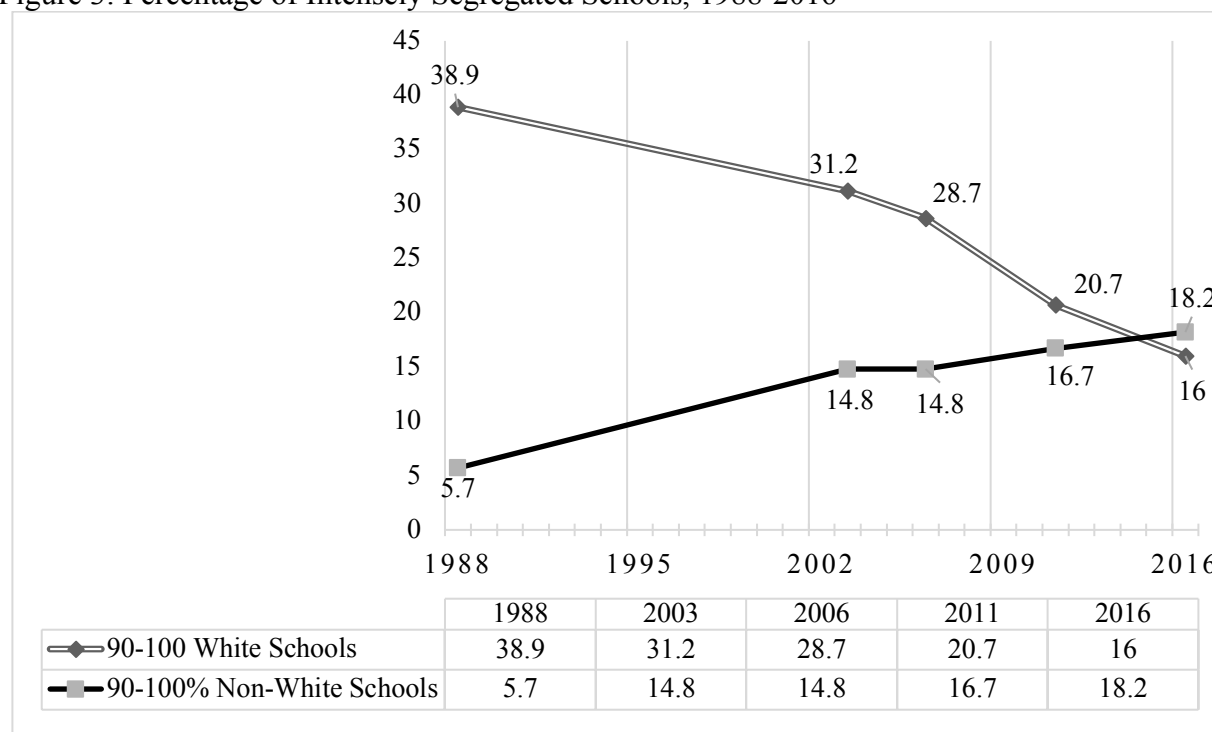
Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17.

TRENDS IN SEGREGATION

Having seen the tremendous changes that continue to take place among the public school enrollment, we now turn to understanding how those students are sorted among public schools. One way to measure segregation is through the concentration of non-white students in schools. Figure 3 shows the percentage of intensely segregated schools, that is schools that enroll 90-100% non-white students or 90-100% white students. Since the peak of desegregation for black students in 1988, the share of intensely segregated minority schools, that is, schools that enroll 90-100% non-white students, has more than tripled from 5.7% in 1988 to 18.2% in 2016. During the same time period, the share of intensely segregated white schools, that is, schools that enroll 90-100% white students, has declined from 38.9% in 1988 to 16% in 2016. The percentage of white students enrolled in intensely segregated white schools has also decreased from 36.1% in 2006 to 26% in 2011 and 19.6% in 2016 according to our analysis of CCD data. Because the

share of intensely segregated white schools and the share of white students attending such schools have decreased, it is possible that white people could perceive an increase in interracial contact even though students of color are increasingly segregated. Also noteworthy in these trends is that the share of intensely segregated minority schools (18.2%) is now greater than the share of intensely segregated white schools (16%).

Figure 3: Percentage of Intensely Segregated Schools, 1988-2016



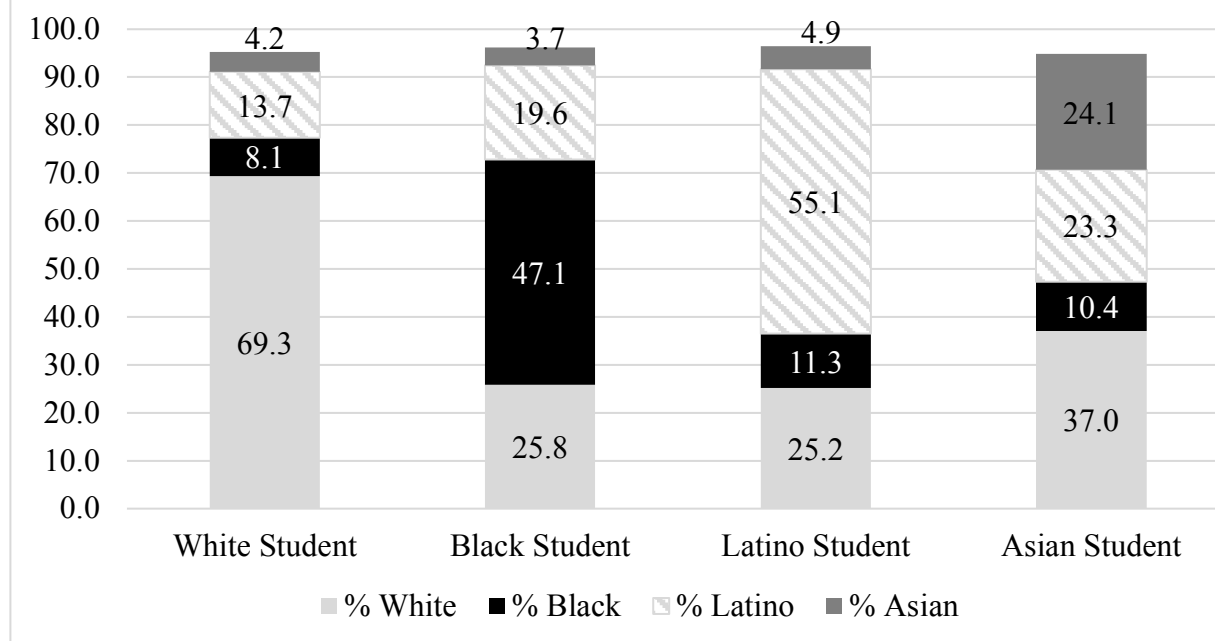
Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data.

Another way to measure segregation is through the exposure that a typical student of each race has to students of other races.²³ Figure 4 shows that the typical student of each race (except for the typical Asian student) attends a school in which the largest share of his/her schoolmates are same-race peers. For example, in 2016, the typical white student attended a school in which more than two-thirds (69.3%) of his or her peers were also white. The typical white student's school was only 13.7% Latino, 8.1% black, and 4.2% Asian. This pattern is in striking contrast to the schools attended by the typical black and the typical Latino students. The typical white student attended a school with more than two-thirds white peers while the typical black student and the typical Latino student attend schools with about one-fourth white peers. The typical black student's school was predominantly (47.1%) black with the remainder of the student body comprised of 25.8% white students, 19.6% Latino students, and 3.7% Asian students. The typical Latino student's school was 55.1% Latino, 25.2% white, 11.3% black, and 4.9% Asian. Although Asian students did not account for the largest share of the typical Asian student's

²³ For more discussion of different measures of segregation, see Orfield, G., Siegel-Hawley, G., & Kucsera, J. (2014). *Sorting out deepening confusion on segregation trends*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

school, they did account for a disproportionately large portion. The typical Asian student's school was 37% white, 24.1% Asian, 23.3% Latino, and 10.4% black.

Figure 4: Racial Composition of Schools Attended by the Typical Student of Each Race: 2016-2017



Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17.

Note: percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to the exclusion of American Indian students.

Double Segregation

Racial segregation and economic segregation frequently overlap in K-12 public schools.²⁴ Black and Latino students, on average attend schools with a far higher share of poverty, measured by eligibility for free/reduced price lunch. Our earlier reports have consistently documented this relationship over the last quarter century. In 2001-02, for example, in our *Brown at 50* report, we found that 88% of schools with 90-100% black and Latino students were schools where a majority of students were from low-income households. Just 15% of 0-10% black and Latino schools had similar levels of low-income students.²⁵ A decade later, in our *Brown at 60* report, the overlap between racial and low-income concentrations was even stronger: half of 90-100% black and Latino schools had 90-100% students from low-income households. Just 1.9% of 0-10% black schools had 90-100% of students from low-income households and two-thirds of 0-10% black and Latino schools had a majority of students not eligible for free/reduced priced lunch. Likewise, new analysis from the Kids Count Data Center shows that 28% of African American children and 19% of Latino children are living in areas of concentrated poverty, compared to 6% of Asian children and just 4% of whites according to American Community

²⁴ See U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2016). *K-12 education: Better use of information could help agencies identify disparities and address racial discrimination*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-345>

²⁵ Orfield, G. & Lee, C. (January 2004). *Brown at 50: Plessy's Nightmare or Brown's Promise?* Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

Survey data from 2013-2017.²⁶ Other research has shown socioeconomic disparities by race, especially when measuring wealth, but these data suggest that part of the concerning inheritance of severe residential segregation is the disproportionate exposure to concentrated poverty, which then is a root cause of school segregation.²⁷

Schools with high concentrations of low-income students meet the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP),²⁸ which permits but does not require districts and schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students who attend the school without collecting individual applications. The CEP not only increases access to free meals for all students, but it also addresses other hurdles to implementation—the administrative burden for schools who had to annually certify students’ eligibility and the stigma/fear of turning in the paperwork that may not have accurately identified all students eligible for subsidized meals.²⁹ Nevertheless, the introduction of the CEP also raised a critical question of whether the free/reduced price lunch data could be used as an accurate measure for school poverty because it can potentially (artificially) increase the overall poverty rate since it reports all students receiving free/reduced price lunch regardless of their individual eligibility.³⁰ Since this has been the basic measure of school poverty in educational research this is a major problem.

Our exploratory analysis of low-income data in the U.S. Education Department’s Common Core of Data found wide variation by CEP status and number of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch. Particularly for CEP schools, we were not sure how accurate the reported counts of low-income students were. We also know from analysis of Common Core Data that there were schools with more than 40% of students who were receiving free/reduced priced lunch that had not chosen to participate in CEP. In other words, non-CEP schools were not necessarily middle-class schools. And, the large number of schools that didn’t report any or missing information also threatened the validity of analyzing double segregation when nearly 20% of schools weren’t included. Obviously, we could not conduct our typical analysis of the correlation of school-level percentage of low-income students and the school percentage of black and Latino students that has historically shown how strongly economic and racial segregation overlap.

However, we report this information to help further this discussion about how to explore an important relationship for students’ educational experiences. Using a threshold of 40 percent or more students eligible for free/reduced price lunch—the same guideline that the National School

²⁶ "Children living in areas of concentrated poverty by race and ethnicity in the United States", 2019. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7753-children-living-in-areas-of-concentrated-poverty-by-race-and-ethnicity#detailed/1/any/false/1691,1607,1572,1485,1376,1201,1074,880/10,11,9,12,1,185,13/14943,14942>

²⁷ This also relates to the vast disparities in funding for schools serving predominantly white enrollments as compared to those that serve predominantly students of color. According to a new report from EdBuild, such districts are also less likely to receive significantly less funding that cumulatively is a \$23 billion funding gap between predominantly white (75-100% white) and predominantly minority (0-25% white) districts. See <https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion>

²⁸ To be eligible to participate in CEP, the percentage of identified low-income students must be at least 40 percent of enrollment.

²⁹ Logan, C. W., Connor, P., Harvill, E. L., Harkness, J., Nisar, H., Checkoway, A., Peck, L. R., Shivji, A., Bein, E., Levin, M., & Enver, A. (2014 February). *Community eligibility provision evaluation*. Project Officer: John R. Endahl. Prepared by Abt Associates for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

³⁰ Snyder, T., & Musu-Gillette, L. (2015). *Free or reduced price lunch: A proxy for poverty?* Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/blogs/nces/post/free-or-reduced-price-lunch-a-proxy-for-poverty>

Lunch Program (NSLP) applied—to identify school poverty status, we tentatively identified four types of schools: (1) non-CEP and non-poverty schools (n=24,252), (2) CEP and non-poverty schools (n=590), (3) non-CEP and poverty schools (n=32,449), and (4) CEP and poverty schools (n=12,991).

The reality in our schools is that segregation by race usually means segregation by concentrated poverty as well. This means that most students of color attend schools which reflect the problems of poverty in many, less qualified teachers, peer groups, parent influence, and many other limitations, richly documented in the research on the sociology of education. The fact that these children come from the families with least wealth, the most risk of hunger, homelessness, untreated health problems and many other forms of inequality means that the schools have less capacity to help the doubly segregated students or to provide the opportunities and connections routinely available in middle class schools. If students were only segregated by skin color or Latino ethnicity, it would still be a serious problem but less devastating if the segregated children came from families and communities with equal resources. They do not. This is why gathering accurate data to assess whether there is an overlap between racial and economic segregation is so critical.

Black Student Segregation

In addition to the measures showing the typical racial composition students of different racial groups, this report also measures the share of students who attend schools with highly concentrated nonwhite enrollments. When examining the share of black students who attended intensely segregated schools, that is, schools that are 90-100% non-white, 1988 was the peak of desegregation for black students (Table 5). Over the last three decades, black students have been increasingly segregated in intensely segregated schools, and by 2016, 40% of all black students were in schools with 90% or more students of color. While the percentage of the student enrollment that are students of color is higher than in previous years, 90-100% of enrollment that is non-white are schools that vary considerably from the racial composition of all students.

This pattern of increasing segregation for black students holds true for all regions of the country, except the Midwest, where the share of black students attending intensely segregated schools has steadily decreased since 2001. With more than half of all black public school students (51.5%) attending intensely segregated schools in 2016, the Northeast is the most segregated region of the country for black students. Our nation's two most populous regions of the country, the South and the West, are the least segregated regions for black students, although both have seen higher increases since 2011 in the percentage of black students in intensely segregated nonwhite schools. In 2016, 36.4% of black students in the South and 37.7% of black students in the West attended intensely segregated schools.

Table 5: Percentage of Black Students in 90-100% Non-White Schools, by Region:1968-2016

	1968	1988	2001	2006	2011	2016	Change between 1988-2016
Northeast	42.7	48.0	51.2	50.8	51.4	51.5	3.5
South	77.8	24.0	31.0	32.9	34.2	36.4	12.4
Border	60.2	34.5	41.6	40.9	40.9	42.2	7.7
Midwest	58.0	41.8	46.8	45.8	43.1	42.0	0.2
West	50.8	28.6	30.0	30.1	34.0	37.7	9.1
National	64.3	32.1	37.4	38.5	38.8	40.1	8.0

Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17, 2011-12, 2006-07, 2001-02 and 1988-89. Data for 1968 were obtained from the analysis of the Office of Civil Rights data in Orfield, G. (1983). Public School Desegregation in the United States, 1968-1980. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies.

In 2016, in the top four most segregated states for black students—New York, California, Illinois, and Maryland—the typical black student attended a school with less than 20% white students (Table 6). In all four of these states, the majority of black students attended an intensely segregated school, that is, a school that enrolled less than 10% white students (Table 7). In all 20 of the most segregated states for black students, the typical black student attended a school with less than 32% white students. In all 20 of these states, at least one in four black students attended an intensely segregated school, and on average about 40% did so.

As was the case in our analysis of students in 2011 (see appendix),³¹ New York remains the most segregated state for black students. In Illinois and New York, two highly segregated states for black students, the overall percentage of black students enrolled in the states' schools is around the national average—16.9% and 17.0% respectively. In these two states, as well Maryland, where black students comprise 33.5% of the state's enrollment, high levels of racial segregation for black students are likely related to extreme segregation between districts as well as the concentration of black students in Chicago, New York City, and Baltimore.³² To alleviate such segregation, more attention to regional or interdistrict schooling may be needed.

Some of these states have low levels of exposure to white students because there are relatively few white students in the state. One example is California, where black students have the second lowest exposure to white students in the country, and has declined slightly since 2011 (see appendix). Since California has a small fraction of African American students and few majority black schools, more integration is possible; but typical black students are attending schools with twice as many Latino students than black fellow students and just over half of black students are

³¹ Orfield, G., Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., & Kucsera, J. (2014). *Brown at 60: Great progress, a long retreat and an uncertain future*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

³² Kucsera, J., & Orfield, G. (2014 March). *New York State's extreme school segregation: Inequality, inaction and a damaged future*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles; Ayscue, J. B., Flaxman, G., Kucsera, J., & Siegel-Hawley, G., (2013 April). *Settle for segregation or strive for diversity? A defining moment for Maryland's public schools*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles. Earlier the Project produced a study of the schools in metro Chicago. See McArdle, N. (2002). *Race, Place and Opportunity: Racial Change and Segregation in the Chicago Metropolitan Area: 1990-2000*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/metro-and-regional-inequalities/race-place-and-opportunity-racial-change-and-segregation-in-the-chicago-metropolitan-area-1990-2000>

in 90-100% non-white schools. California has dissolved its major desegregation plans and the state policies and office that formerly worked on intergroup relations.³³

Nine out of 10 of the states in which black students have the lowest exposure to white students are states in which the majority of students enrolled in the public schools are non-white; Michigan is the lone state with a majority of white students and yet very low exposure to white students for black public school students. However, there are a number of states New York, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, Georgia, or Michigan in which black exposure to white students is much lower than the overall state percentage of white students. None of these states comes close to reflecting the state's white population in the school attended by the typical black student.

There are a number of states, like Michigan, in which there is a fairly high percentage of white students in the state's public schools and yet, despite this, black students have relatively low exposure to white students. Other Rust Belt states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin had similar or higher percentages of white students (at least two thirds of students were white) while black students, on average, attended public schools that had less than 30% white students. The gap between white percentage of students and black exposure is indicative of segregation, due either to segregation across or within boundaries.

Table 6: Lowest Black Student Exposure to White Students by State: 2016-17

	Black Exposure to White Students	State Percentage of White Students	
1	New York	15.2	44.5
2	California	16.2	23.7
3	Illinois	18.2	48.5
4	Maryland	18.2	38.5
5	Texas	20.2	28.2
6	New Jersey	21.6	45.5
7	Nevada	22.1	33.2
8	Georgia	22.7	40.3
9	Mississippi	24.7	44.4
10	Michigan	25.2	67.0
11	Florida	25.3	38.9
12	Louisiana	25.7	45.1
13	Tennessee	26.8	63.5
14	Connecticut	27.1	55.3
15	Pennsylvania	27.3	66.8
16	Wisconsin	27.9	70.6
17	Alabama	28.9	55.0
18	Ohio	29.4	70.7
19	Missouri	30.9	71.8
20	Arizona	31.2	39.0

Note: The calculations for this state table do not include Hawaii, Alaska, or any other state with less than 5% black. District of Columbia was not counted as a state, but the district had the highest segregation rates across all indicators.

Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17.

³³ Orfield, G. & Ee, J. (2014 May). *Segregating California's future: Inequality and its alternative 60 years after Brown v. Board of Education*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

Table 7: Highest Percentages of Black Students in 90-100% Non-white Schools by State: 2016-17

	% Black Students in 90-100% Non-White Schools		State % of Black Students
1	New York	65.2	17.0
2	Illinois	58.4	16.9
3	Maryland	53.8	33.5
4	California	50.8	5.5
5	New Jersey	49.6	15.4
6	Michigan	48.1	17.6
7	Pennsylvania	46.3	14.6
8	Georgia	45.8	36.8
9	Wisconsin	45.4	9.1
10	Mississippi	44.7	48.9
11	Tennessee	44.4	22.1
12	Texas	43.3	12.5
13	Missouri	41.5	15.9
14	Louisiana	41.2	44.0
15	Alabama	40.6	32.9
16	Ohio	38.9	16.4
17	Florida	35.6	21.9
18	Nevada	31.5	10.7
19	Indiana	29.9	12.5
20	Rhode Island	28.6	8.3

Note: The calculations for this state table do not include Hawaii, Alaska, or any other state with less than 5% black. District of Columbia was not counted as a state, but the district had the highest segregation rates across all indicators.

Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17.

Latino Student Segregation

In 2016, an even higher percentage of Latino students than black students were in intensely segregated nonwhite schools, 41.6% nationally, continuing a pattern of rising percentages of Latino students in such schools since 1968. The largest share of Latino students attended intensely segregated schools in the West (46.2%) (Table 8), which is the region that also had the largest portion of Latino student enrollment. Although the overall share of Latino students who attended intensely segregated schools remained high at 43.5% in the Northeast, this region has experienced a slight decline in the percentage of Latino students attending intensely segregated schools since 2001. In 2016, a large share of Latino students (41.9%) attended intensely segregated schools in the South, and this pattern is getting worse. Compared to other regions, smaller shares of Latino students attended intensely segregated schools in the Midwest and Border states. In the Midwest, the portion of Latino students attending intensely segregated schools has remained fairly stable around 25-27% since 1988, but in the Border states, the share of Latino students enrolled in intensely segregated schools has steadily increased since 2001.

Table 8: Percentage of Latino Students in 90-100% Non-White Schools, by Region: 1968-2016

	1968	1988	2001	2006	2011	2016	Change between 1988-2016
Northeast	44.0	44.2	44.8	44.2	44.1	43.5	-0.7
South	33.7	37.9	39.9	40.3	41.5	41.9	4.0
Border	-	-	14.2	17.6	20.0	24.3	-
Midwest	6.8	24.9	24.6	26.7	26.1	24.9	0.0
West	11.7	27.5	37.4	42.2	44.7	46.2	18.7
National	23.1	33.1	37.4	40.0	41.1	41.6	8.5

Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17, 2011-12, 2006-07, 2001-02, and 1988-89. Data for 1968 were obtained from the analysis of the Office of Civil Rights data in Orfield, G. (1983). Public School Desegregation in the United States, 1968-1980. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies.

In 2016, in the top seven states for lowest Latino student exposure to white students, the typical Latino student attended a school in which less than 25% of his or her peers was a white student (Table 9). For all 20 of the most segregated states for Latino students, the typical Latino student attended a school with less than 39% white students. In the top three most segregated states for Latino students in intensely segregated schools—California, New York, and Texas—more than half of Latino students attended intensely segregated schools in 2016 (Table 10); this is one fewer state than for black students where a majority are in 90-100% nonwhite schools. For the top 10 most segregated states for Latino students, more than 1 in 3 Latino students attended an intensely segregated school in 2016. For the top eight, the number was 4, to almost 6 in 10.

In 2011, Louisiana did not rank as one of the top 20 most segregated states for Latino students using either of these two measures of segregation (see appendix);³⁴ however, in 2016, Louisiana ranked 18 for the most segregated state for Latino students in intensely segregated schools and 20 for the typical Latino student's exposure to white students. This may represent Latino students increasingly being in schools with black students who have fairly high segregation.

Encouragingly, although Rhode Island has one of the lower percentages of white students that the typical Latino student is exposed to in 2016—despite a high percentage of white students—the Latino student exposure to white student has actually increased by 0.3 percentage points since 2011 (see appendix). North Carolina, which in 2011 had been ranked 19 for Latino students in intensely segregated schools and 20 for the typical Latino student's exposure to white students, is no longer among the top 20 most segregated states for Latino students. Similarly, Washington, which had been ranked 17 for the share of Latino students in intensely segregated schools in 2011, is no longer among the top 20 most segregated states for Latino students in 2016 (see Appendix).

In 2016, many of the states in which black students had the lowest exposure to white students also had similar patterns for Latino students. Some of these states include California, New York, Texas, New Jersey, Maryland, and Illinois. These patterns are particularly concerning in states like New York, New Jersey, and Illinois where white students account for a substantial share (more than 44%) of the state's student enrollment.

³⁴ Orfield, G., Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., & Kucsera, J. (2014). *Brown at 60: Great progress, a long retreat and an uncertain future*. Los Angeles: Civil Rights Project/ Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

Table 9: Lowest Latino Student Exposure to White Students by State, 2016-17

	Latino Exposure to White Students	State Percentage of White Students
1	California	14.8
2	Texas	17.3
3	New Mexico	19.9
4	New York	20.4
5	Maryland	23.4
6	Nevada	24.0
7	New Jersey	24.4
8	Arizona	25.1
9	Illinois	25.5
10	Florida	26.6
11	Rhode Island	28.3
12	Georgia	31.2
13	Massachusetts	33.0
14	Connecticut	33.3
15	Oklahoma	36.0
16	Virginia	36.4
17	Colorado	36.9
18	Delaware	38.0
19	Pennsylvania	38.0
20	Louisiana	38.3

Note: The calculations for this state table do not include Hawaii, Alaska, or any other state with less than 5% Latino. District of Columbia was not counted as a state, but the district had the highest segregation rates across all indicators.

Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17.

Table 10: Highest Percentages of Latino Students in 90-100% Non-white Schools by State, 2016-17

	% of Latino Students in 90-100% Non-White Schools	State % of Latino Students
1	California	57.7
2	New York	55.4
3	Texas	54.3
4	New Jersey	45.0
5	Illinois	43.7
6	Maryland	43.7
7	Arizona	41.3
8	Rhode Island	40.7
9	New Mexico	35.1
10	Florida	33.5
11	Nevada	32.0
12	Pennsylvania	31.7
13	Georgia	30.8
14	Massachusetts	29.1
15	Colorado	17.2
16	Connecticut	16.3
17	North Carolina	16.3
18	Louisiana	15.5
19	Michigan	15.5
20	Wisconsin	15.5

Note: The calculations for this state table do not include Hawaii, Alaska, or any other state with less than 5% Latino. District of Columbia was not counted as a state, but the district had the highest segregation rates across all indicators. Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17.

White Student Segregation

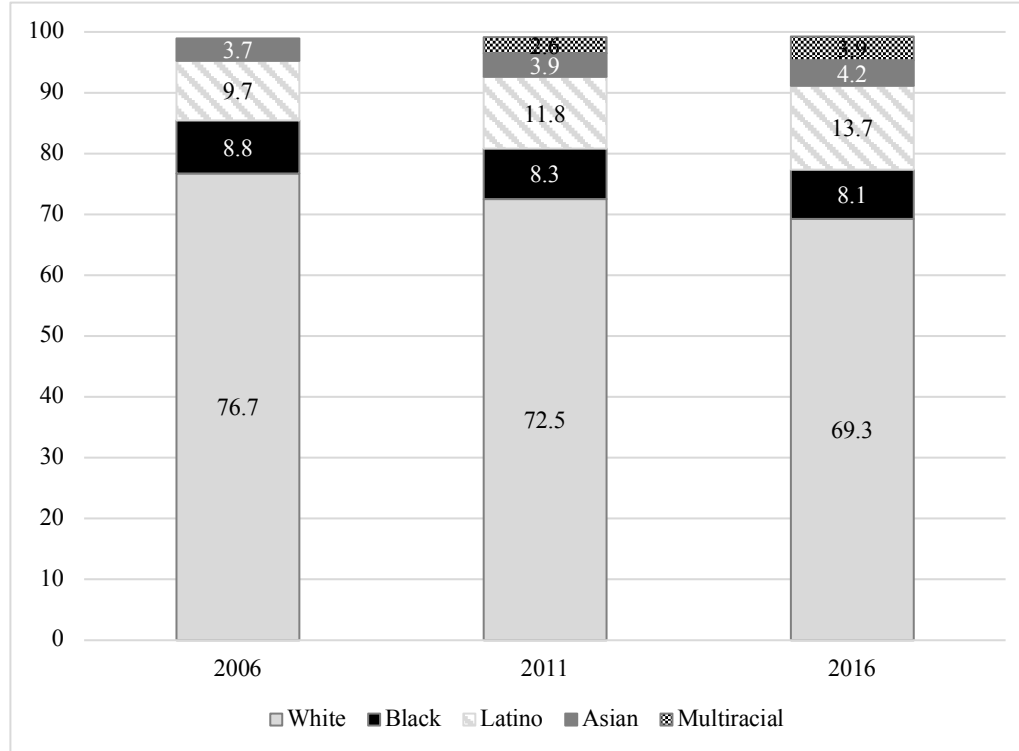
In some of the argument submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court about the harms of segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education*, civil rights lawyers noted that segregation harmed both black students who were segregated—but also white students as well. Subsequent integration efforts, such as those currently being undertaken even voluntarily by districts around the country,³⁵ as well as universities’ diversity efforts are informed by evidence demonstrating the harms to white children who attend segregated schools.

Such integration is especially important in our changed demographic context. For the first time in our analysis of segregation trends, white students no longer account for the majority of students in our nation’s public school enrollment. In 2016, white students comprised 48.4% of our country’s public school students, a decline of eight percentage points from 2006 (Figure 5). As would be expected given this demographic change, their isolation (e.g., exposure to other white students) has also declined during this time period (seven percentage points). While white students are becoming less segregated with same-race peers, they continue to attend schools in which nearly seven out of 10 of their classmates are also white, which represents a much higher percentage than their overall share of the enrollment. Recall, if there was perfect integration, the exposure of the typical white student to other white students would mirror their share of the enrollment.

For the last decade, the second largest percentage of students that white students are exposed to are Latinos, which in 2016 was 13.7% on average. This increased exposure to Latino students of four percentage points, however, is not quite as large as their overall increase in share of the enrollment (approximately six percentage points; see Figure 1). In 2016, the typical white student attended a school in which 8.1% of their peers were black and 4.2% were Asian.

³⁵ Anderson, J. & Frankenberg, E. (2019). Voluntary integration in uncertain times. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100(5), 14-18.

Figure 5: Racial Composition of Schools Attended by the Typical White Student, 2006, 2011, 2016



Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17, 2011-12, and 2006-07.

Note: The shares of white enrollment for 2006, 2011, and 2016 were 56.7%, 52%, and 48.4% respectively. Total percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to the exclusion of American Indian students.

A consistent finding across geography is that white students are isolated to a substantial extent (Table 11). In central cities of large metropolitan areas, the typical white student attends a school that is 45% white, which is much higher than students of any other race/ethnicity in such schools. The typical black and Latino students, for example, are in schools that are 12% white, on average.

In every other type of geographical area, white students attend majority white schools, on average; in suburban areas they are at least two-thirds white and in non-metropolitan areas, greater than three-quarters white. Black and Latino student exposure to whites, by contrast, is not higher than 50% anywhere. Even in rural areas where 70% of students are white—the region with the highest percentage of white students—the typical white student attended an 80% white school while the typical black or Latino student in rural areas attended a school that was 43% white, on average. In suburban areas—particularly in midsize and small metros—black student exposure to white students is considerably higher than Latino-white exposure. Suburban black students have substantially higher exposure to white students than their same-race central city peers in each sized metro, while the gap for Latino students’ exposure to white students is less between city and suburb.

In some areas, such as midsize suburban areas and rural schools, Asian students have exposure to a majority of white students, on average. In all types of schools, Asian students’ exposure to

white students is higher than that of Latino students, and in many but not all, it is also higher than black-white student exposure.

Table 11: Exposure to White Students by the Typical Race of Each Student & Types of Areas: 2016-17

	White Student	By the Typical... Black Student	Latino Student	Asian Student	% White Students Enrolled
Large Metro					
Central City	45	11.7	12.2	21.9	20.3
Suburb	66	27.2	25.6	40.8	46.9
Midsize Metro					
Central City	51.3	19.3	21.4	35.2	32.2
Suburb	70.3	44.4	36.8	51.2	59
Small Metro					
Central City	60.2	30.9	29.5	38	45.3
Suburb	74.2	49.2	36.5	47.9	62.8
Town	76.0	38.6	37.4	49.2	63.1
Rural	80.4	42.8	43.3	55.1	70.0

Source: NCES CCD, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2016-17.

SUMMARY

School integration has been a central issue in civil rights policy and law for two-thirds of a century because the public schools are our most important and universal public institution. Americans and political leaders strongly believe that schools are the keys to opportunity. The *Brown* decision found that the mandatory segregation of schools in seventeen states was a fundamental violation of the United States Constitution and held that there was a constitutional responsibility to provide “equal protection” to groups of students who had been denied since separate schools were “inherently unequal” and did irreversible harm to students who attended them. After decisive breakthroughs in the 1960s and early 1970s as a result of coordinated legal and political action and implemented as a result of challenges by many African-American community leaders and educators in the South, there have been few national initiatives to foster successful integration. By the 1990s the courts were ending desegregation plans and segregation began to creep up year after year after year. Since the early 1980s, few federal funds were available to support voluntary integration and even those voluntary local efforts were undermined by the Supreme Court’s decision in the 2007 *Parents Involved* case.

Looking at this history and seeing segregation spreading into more sectors of suburbia, many concluded that the effort had failed. But the best evidence showed in increasingly more sophisticated and powerful research that segregation has devastating effects that generations of reforms have failed to counter. Research also shows that desegregation has clear benefits for students’ lives and there are ways to structure integrated schools to make those effects stronger. The question for educators, civil rights groups, and policy makers is: what can we do to use current methods—most of which are basically methods of school choice—to achieve more of those benefits? In a nation that is reaching an unprecedented level of diversity and where there are huge racial gaps and dangerously polarized conditions, can we use school integration to bring

young people together across lines of division and prepare all groups better for living and working as adults in a society with no racial/ethnic majority?

There are signs of revived interest. After the midterm elections, the House of Representatives recently heard bipartisan testimony affirming the promise of *Brown* but very different ideas about what achieving *Brown* meant in the 21st century. When Congress acted strongly in the 20th century, passing the 1964 Civil Rights Act and providing substantial money to help interested communities take positive steps, it made a big impact to helping to enforce *Brown*. Civil rights leaders have little hope for leadership on these issues from the U.S. Supreme Court as presently constituted and have turned their attention to the state courts. The federal Constitution says nothing about education but state constitutions do and some directly address segregation issues. Statewide legal struggles now going on in Connecticut, Minnesota, and New Jersey may produce important new initiatives. Some communities are beginning to see gentrification as a possible way to help revive urban school districts if the communities can provide academically challenging schools with strong plans to assure diversity and equity, serving both existing residents and the young professional newcomers. In other areas of metropolitan areas, racially changing suburbs, there are also important opportunities to limit the spread of segregation.

One of the great resources we have for our future is the well-documented and extensively studied experience of desegregation in the civil rights era, much of which involved bringing black and white students together in situations of intense controversy often in formerly all-white schools with all-white faculties. Though desegregation too often placed a heavier burden on black students and came at considerable cost to black communities in many districts, in spite of those conditions, there were usually significant gains for all students, and the attitudes of Southern whites became a good deal more favorable. In some communities, school desegregation coincided with lower housing segregation.³⁶ We have learned about many of the conditions and techniques needed to produce the most favorable outcomes in diverse schools. We have compelling evidence from desegregated schools that white students are not harmed in terms of measured achievement outcomes and gain considerably in terms of their readiness to live and work across racial lines in the setting of the future. From 1972 to 1981 there was a major federal effort to offer resources to communities wishing to work on successful integration, the only period in which there was substantial funding for research on desegregation. The program was widely sought by scores of school districts knowing they needed help. Many desired funds to create magnet schools that managed to voluntarily integrate millions of students when their civil rights policies were followed. Such funding today could be extremely helpful in understanding our new and more complex multiracial schools.

We also see social movements arising in many areas demonstrating a commitment to integration. In dozens of districts around the country, we see educators, community leaders, parents, and/or students leading the way to talk about why segregation is harmful and pressing districts and schools to do more to address segregation and inequality.³⁷ Many educators and community leaders, particularly in more diverse areas of the country, went to desegregated schools

³⁶ Siegel-Hawley, G. (2016). *When the fences come down: Twenty-first century lessons from metropolitan school desegregation*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

³⁷ See for example, student groups like Integrate NYC; and parent groups like Integrated Schools.

themselves as students and can speak to the importance of such schools.³⁸ We need more such educators and community leaders to talk about why segregation is a problem to achieving a range of educational goals and the benefits of diverse schools for all students—and the importance of maintaining political will to address segregation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Experience has shown that segregation left to itself tends to mutate and persist especially if leadership stirs up fears and stereotypes. It is clear that desegregation and lasting diversity seldom happen by accident and that they need plans and support to remain stably diverse among students and faculties. It is also clear that rising residential segregation, which has been going on in our cities for a century and is spreading to the suburbs, feeds off fear and stereotypes. Segregation can only be countered by information and successful plans involving more than the school districts, including housing, transportation, and other local and regional government agencies and private partners. The choice we face now is about what kind of communities and society we want to have.

Our surveys in a number of school districts have shown widespread student support and appreciation of diverse education, which often surprises parent groups and policy makers. School district surveys could show how students value their own interracial schooling experiences and how they could better move plans forward.

We urgently need a way to better measure economic segregation and its connection to racial segregation in our nation's schools based on our earlier findings of the overlapping segregation in public schools and findings that black and Latino residents are more likely to live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. While the Community Eligibility Provision provides a way to help schools ensure students receive food, scholars and governmental officials must collaboratively work together to solve this problem, which has been long related to educational opportunity.

School desegregation involves creating and supporting diverse educational institutions inside polarized communities. The key actors need to understand the consequences of doing nothing, the evidence on the benefits of integration, and the logic of the plans for better outcomes. A first step is better training for school and community staff to understand and respect newcomer groups and to get training in techniques that produce positive outcomes in diverse settings.

School faculties, leaders, and staffs need training in responding to growing racial, economic, and linguistic diversity. School staffs need training in handling three-way diversity. In many communities that historically had one major nonwhite group, there are now two or more, each with their own history and culture. In order to welcome students from diverse backgrounds into integrated schools, universities must play a major role in assisting schools as well as ensuring that teacher and educational leadership preparation programs graduate educators and

³⁸ Examples include former U.S. Secretary of Education John King, NYC Chancellor Richard Carranza, or parents of children like Rep Joe Courtney from Connecticut. Likewise, in defending Jefferson County's voluntary integration plan, district leaders cited their experience overcoming segregation and resistance to desegregation as well as the benefits they have seen for all children and their community as reasons to implement such policies.

school/district leaders who have studied the many dimensions of how schools and districts should be structured. This includes hiring staff and faculty from diverse backgrounds, ideally multilingual, and utilizing curriculum that respects the culture and historical struggles of all racial/ethnic groups. Strong affirmative action plans for faculty, administrative, and staff diversity are keys to successful interracial schools and positive relationships with diverse groups in the community. Once hired, districts need to make sure to retain diverse faculty and staff, and provide them with training to successfully welcome and teach in interracial classrooms and schools. Schools could have cooperative teacher exchanges across districts within metropolitan areas as one part of on-going professional development. Properly done, these approaches can make schools more effective and stable and give faculty tools that actually work.

Racial change and resegregation are not limited to individual neighborhoods and communities. Supporting regional approaches to desegregation is essential and would mirror the provision of other governmental services in metropolitan areas. Such efforts need to include housing but also need to think about how to facilitate student movement across district boundary lines to facilitate integration. These regional approaches are increasingly essential given the findings of incredible diversity and segregation in our suburban schools. Too often addressing segregation has been considered as a central city issue, and we need to provide supports for suburban districts—that themselves vary widely—to adopt plans and policies to effectively respond to growing diversity.³⁹ There should be federal and state funding and university sponsorship for the creation of integrated metropolitan-wide magnet schools that provide distinctive opportunities for regions and even states. States could play an important role in regional educational equity approaches, including incentivizing interdistrict cooperation.⁴⁰ This regionalism would be additive. It would not end local districts but it would expand the options for students in many districts and would help train leaders who could make our extremely diverse future more successful.

While much attention needs to be paid to segregation and inequality across district lines, more can be done within districts as well to address segregation. An analysis of the ending of school desegregation cases in the South found that it contributed to the resegregation for black students in the region.⁴¹ As the vast majority of desegregation cases are those within district, this suggests that new district assignment policies may have contributed to rising segregation. This may also be true in other areas as well where the diverse population leads to different school contexts and perceptions of uneven school quality that makes assignment efforts contentious and can lead away from integration even if that was not the original intent.⁴² Leaders of all schools, regardless

³⁹ See generally Frankenberg, E., & Orfield, G. (2012). *Resegregation of suburban schools: A hidden crisis in American education*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

⁴⁰ Finnigan, K.S. and J.J. Holme. 2015. *Regional educational equity policies: Learning from inter-district integration programs*. The National Coalition on School Diversity.

⁴¹ Reardon, S. F., Grewal, E. T., Kalogrides, D., & Greenberg, E. (2012). Brown fades: The end of court-ordered school desegregation and the resegregation of American public schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 31(4), 876-904.

⁴² Siegel-Hawley, G. 2013. Educational gerrymandering? Race and attendance boundaries in a demographically changing suburb. *Harvard Educational Review* 83:580-662; Siegel-Hawley, G., Diem, S. & Frankenberg, E. (2018). The disintegration of Memphis-Shelby County: School district secession and local control in the 21st century. *American Educational Research Journal*, 55(4), 651-692; Eaton, S. 2012. *Not your father's suburb: Race and rectitude in a changing Minnesota community*. One Nation Indivisible. Currently there is an on-going debate about redrawing school boundaries in Montgomery County, Maryland among other places. See

of whether district, charter, or private, should consider how their schools contribute to patterns of segregation reported here.

School choice plans without equity policies and strategies often end up with the best-educated and connected families getting the best choices, actually increasing inequality. All school choice programs need voluntary goals, policies, and practices that foster diversity and integration.⁴³ Contemporary integration plans, unlike those of fifty years ago, almost always involve some type of school choice. How school choice—that is receiving public funds (charter schools, private schools receiving public funding)—is designed matters as to whether it will help further integration, not exacerbate segregation. Particularly in larger districts or inter-district choice, the provision of transportation is essential for choice to be a reality for many families, not just available to those who can transport their child to their desired school. Good magnet plans need resources and staffing to assure that a genuinely distinctive opportunity has been created. Sharing of knowledge about available options, including looking beyond accountability scores, could help families make more integrative choices. State or federal funding for magnet schools that aim to decouple school composition from housing segregation trends should be expanded, and universities could play a role by sponsoring the creation of metropolitan-wide magnet schools—that could help to prepare their future college students in diverse settings.

The federal government and a number of states have underwritten and actively supported expansion of charter schools without plans or accountability for serving all groups of students and bringing together students in a positive cross-racial context.⁴⁴ Charters should be required to have the same equity measures as other public schools, particularly cognizant of how schools of choice can further segregation without civil rights provisions. Magnet schools should be able to compete for charter funding on an equitable basis.

School integration efforts should include dual language immersion programs, now being actively developed, for instance, in North Carolina or San Antonio, Texas. Such programs are often seen as very desirable by white parents; integration is a natural byproduct when also including native language speakers. Further, by providing equal status for English and other language speakers, the structure of such schools aligns with Gordon Allport's theory about how to best set up intergroup contact.⁴⁵ Ensuring within-school equity in such schools is essential.

<https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/schools/students-countywide-boundary-study-could-change-the-course-of-history/>

⁴³ See generally Orfield, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2013). *Educational delusions? Why choice can deepen inequality and how to make it fair*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

⁴⁴ For more on charter schools, magnet schools, and segregation see: U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2016). *K–12 education: Better use of information could help agencies identify disparities and address racial discrimination*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-345>; Flaxman, G., Kucsera, J., Orfield, G., Ayscue, J., & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2013 October). *A status quo of segregation: Racial and economic imbalance in New Jersey Schools, 1989-2010*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles; Ayscue, J. B., Levy, R., Siegel-Hawley, G., & Woodward, B. (2017 June). *Choices worth making: Creating, sustaining and expanding diverse magnet schools*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles; Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., & Orfield, G. (2008 November). *The forgotten choice? Rethinking magnet schools in a changing landscape*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles; Siegel-Hawley, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2012 February). *Reviving magnet schools: Strengthening a successful choice option*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

⁴⁵ Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

State officials need to firmly oppose breaking up school districts in ways that intensify segregation and create white enclaves. One of the reasons the South had the highest levels of school desegregation was the existence or creation of countywide districts in many parts of the South. Metropolitan areas in other regions of the country with higher district fragmentation (e.g., smaller districts) were more segregated. Because there is little student assignment across district boundary lines, the creation of new districts engrains patterns of school segregation in ways that are very difficult to undo. State secession laws vary widely, and state officials should consider how to provide for a process that considers the effect of a proposed secession on segregation and educational opportunity for all students, both within the community seceding as well as the larger district the community is seeking to leave.⁴⁶ More broadly, state departments of education now play very central roles under the ESSA law and need to create expertise on desegregation and race relations training. Many districts experiencing rapid racial change need their support.

Fair housing policies and urban planning must be metropolitan in scope and locating subsidized housing in decent school areas is critical. Again, there are models of the work being done in some communities that local communities can build on.⁴⁷ Implementing the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule, and partnering housing and school integration efforts are essential.

Private foundations and community groups have funded many educational efforts but almost always within the context of segregation, which often undermines the success of their efforts. It would be invaluable if they offered support to help develop and implement local diversity plans and programs through research, advocacy, and litigation when needed.

⁴⁶ For more discussion and recommendations, see https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/05/02/back-to-the-future-a-new-school-district-secession-movement-is-gaining-steam/?utm_term=.b6126c9d9193

⁴⁷ PRRAC. (2019). *Housing and schools: The importance of engagement for educators and education advocates*. Washington, DC: Author.

APPENDIX: Comparative Tables from *Brown* at 60⁴⁸

Most Segregated States for Black Students, 2011-12

	% Black in Majority White Schools		% Black in 90-100% Minority Schools		Black Exposure to White Students	
1	California	8.0%	New York	64.6%	New York	3.7%
2	Texas	13.1%	Illinois	61.3%	Illinois	16.7%
3	New York	13.3%	Maryland	53.1%	California	17.9%
4	Maryland	14.0%	Michigan	50.4%	Maryland	18.1%
5	Nevada	14.6%	New Jersey	48.5%	Texas	19.5%
6	Illinois	14.8%	Pennsylvania	46.0%	New Jersey	21.8%
7	Connecticut	18.5%	Mississippi	45.3%	Georgia	23.8%
8	Georgia	19.5%	California	45.3%	Mississippi	24.7%
9	New Jersey	20.8%	Tennessee	44.8%	Michigan	25.6%
10	Florida	20.9%	Wisconsin	43.4%	Nevada	26.3%
11	Mississippi	22.9%	Texas	42.7%	Florida	27.1%
12	Michigan	25.1%	Georgia	42.0%	Tennessee	27.7%
13	Tennessee	25.3%	Alabama	41.8%	Connecticut	28.2%
14	North Carolina	26.6%	Missouri	40.8%	Pennsylvania	29.2%
15	Indiana	28.0%	Ohio	37.1%	Wisconsin	29.3%
16	Ohio	28.1%	Florida	34.0%	Alabama	30.1%
17	Pennsylvania	28.1%	Connecticut	29.8%	Ohio	30.3%
18	Wisconsin	28.2%	Louisiana	29.6%	Louisiana	30.6%
19	Louisiana	28.6%	Indiana	27.4%	Missouri	31.2%
20	Virginia	28.9%	Arkansas	26.8%	Indiana	32.8%

Note: The calculations for this state table do not include Hawaii, Alaska, or any other state with less than 5% black. District of Columbia was not counted as a state, but the district had the highest segregation rates across all three indicators.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2011-12.

⁴⁸ The full *Brown* at 60 report is available at: <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/brown-at-60-great-progress-a-long-retreat-and-an-uncertain-future/Brown-at-60-051814.pdf>

Most Integrated States for Black Students, 2011-12

	% Black in Majority White Schools		% Black in 90-100% Minority Schools		Black Exposure to White Students	
1	West Virginia	92.6%	West Virginia	0.0%	West Virginia	76.9%
2	Iowa	67.7%	Kentucky	2.4%	Iowa	59.7%
3	Kentucky	61.1%	Iowa	2.4%	Kentucky	55.5%
4	Minnesota	47.2%	Kansas	7.8%	Kansas	44.4%
5	Kansas	42.7%	Nebraska	11.8%	Minnesota	44.2%
7	Nebraska	36.6%	Delaware	13.4%	Nebraska	42.3%
8	Delaware	35.9%	Oklahoma	14.5%	Delaware	40.1%
9	Missouri	34.4%	Virginia	16.7%	South Carolina	37.3%
10	South Carolina	33.5%	Minnesota	17.2%	Oklahoma	37.2%
11	Arizona	32.3%	South Carolina	18.2%	Massachusetts	35.8%
12	Alabama	31.5%	North Carolina	19.6%	Arizona	35.8%
13	Rhode Island	31.4%	Nevada	19.7%	Rhode Island	35.3%
14	Massachusetts	30.8%	Arizona	20.8%	Virginia	35.2%
15	Oklahoma	30.4%	Rhode Island	24.2%	North Carolina	34.1%
16	Arkansas	29.7%	Massachusetts	25.4%	Arkansas	33.9%
17	Virginia	28.9%	Arkansas	26.8%	Indiana	33.4%
18	Louisiana	28.6%	Indiana	27.4%	Missouri	32.8%
19	Wisconsin	28.2%	Louisiana	29.6%	Louisiana	31.2%
20	Pennsylvania	28.1%	Connecticut	29.8%	Ohio	30.6%

Note: The calculations for this state table do not include Hawaii or Alaska. States with fewer than 5% blacks are omitted.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2011-12.

Most Segregated States for Latino Students, 2011-12

	% Latino in Majority White Schools		% Latino in 90-100% Minority Schools		Latino Exposure to White Students	
1	New Mexico	6.0%	New York	56.7%	California	15.9%
2	California	7.8%	California	55.4%	Texas	18.0%
3	Texas	11.0%	Texas	53.5%	New York	20.5%
4	New York	16.5%	Illinois	45.9%	New Mexico	21.2%
5	Nevada	17.2%	New Jersey	42.8%	Illinois	26.0%
6	Maryland	21.3%	Rhode Island	39.8%	New Jersey	26.4%
7	Arizona	21.4%	Arizona	39.4%	Arizona	26.6%
8	New Jersey	22.3%	Maryland	37.9%	Nevada	26.7%
9	Florida	22.7%	New Mexico	34.5%	Maryland	27.1%
10	Illinois	22.9%	Florida	30.1%	Rhode Island	28.0%
11	Rhode Island	23.6%	Pennsylvania	29.5%	Florida	29.0%
12	Connecticut	25.8%	Massachusetts	29.2%	Georgia	34.6%
13	Massachusetts	30.9%	Georgia	27.7%	Connecticut	35.1%
14	Georgia	31.3%	Nevada	22.7%	Massachusetts	35.1%
15	Delaware	33.7%	Connecticut	21.7%	Colorado	38.2%
16	Virginia	35.3%	Colorado	18.4%	Pennsylvania	39.2%
17	Colorado	36.0%	Washington	14.6%	Oklahoma	39.9%
18	Oklahoma	37.4%	Wisconsin	13.8%	Delaware	40.2%
19	Pennsylvania	39.4%	North Carolina	13.5%	Virginia	40.3%
20	North Carolina	40.7%	Michigan	12.7%	North Carolina	42.6%

Note: The calculations for this state table do not include Hawaii, Alaska, or any other state with less than 5% Latino population.

District of Columbia was not counted as a state, but the district had the highest segregated rates across all three indicators.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2011-12.

Most Integrated States for Latino Students, 2011-12

	% Latino in Majority White Schools		% Latino in 90-100% Minority Schools		Latino Exposure to White Students	
1	Wyoming	97.4%	Idaho	0.1%	Wyoming	74.7%
2	Idaho	84.1%	Wyoming	0.2%	Idaho	66.6%
3	Iowa	66.9%	Utah	0.6%	Iowa	61.5%
4	Utah	65.6%	Oregon	1.3%	Utah	60.4%
5	Minnesota	64.1%	Iowa	2.1%	Minnesota	56.6%
6	Michigan	58.2%	South Carolina	4.6%	Michigan	54.7%
7	Wisconsin	57.0%	Arkansas	5.3%	Oregon	52.5%
8	Indiana	56.2%	Delaware	7.6%	Wisconsin	52.4%
9	Oregon	56.0%	Minnesota	7.8%	Indiana	52.2%
10	Arkansas	55.1%	Virginia	7.9%	Arkansas	51.1%
11	South Carolina	50.4%	Nebraska	8.0%	Tennessee	51.0%
12	Tennessee	50.3%	Oklahoma	8.5%	South Carolina	49.0%
13	Nebraska	45.0%	Kansas	9.2%	Nebraska	46.4%
14	Washington	44.9%	Tennessee	10.4%	Kansas	43.9%
15	Kansas	41.7%	Indiana	11.0%	Washington	43.3%
16	North Carolina	40.7%	Michigan	12.7%	North Carolina	42.6%
17	Pennsylvania	39.4%	North Carolina	13.5%	Virginia	40.3%
18	Oklahoma	37.4%	Wisconsin	13.8%	Delaware	40.2%
19	Colorado	36.0%	Washington	14.6%	Oklahoma	39.9%
20	Virginia	35.3%	Colorado	18.4%	Pennsylvania	39.2%

Note: The calculations for this state table do not include Hawaii or Alaska. States must have at least 5% of students who are Latino to be included.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, 2011-12.

TECHNICAL NOTES

1. This report uses multiple years' Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data of the Common Core of Data (CCD), National Center for Education Statistics. Of all schools in the CCD data, this report focuses on regular schools that are open and are being operated in the survey administration year.⁴⁹ This report's analysis does not include schools in U.S. territories, such as American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
2. This report's definition of the regions is as follows:
 - *South*: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia;
 - *Border*: Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, and West Virginia;
 - *Northeast*: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont;
 - *Midwest*: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin;
 - *West*: Arizona, California, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
3. Segregation Statistics (Exposure Rates) This report uses exposure statistics to measure segregation and to capture student experiences of segregation. Exposure of certain racial groups to one another or to majority groups shows the distribution of racial groups among organizational units and describes the average contact between different groups. It is calculated by employing the percentage of a particular group of students of interest in a small unit (e.g., school) with a certain group of students in a larger geographic or organizational unit (e.g., state or district) to show a weighted average of the composition of a particular racial group. The formula for calculating the exposure rates of a student in racial group A to students in racial group B is:

$$P^* = \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{a_i b_i}{A t_i}$$

where

n is the number of small units (e.g., school) in a larger unit (e.g., state or district)

a_i is the number of students in racial group A in the small unit i (school i)

A is the total number of students in racial group A in the larger unit (state or district)

b_i is the number of students in racial group B in the small unit i (school i)

t_i is the total number of students in all racial groups in the small unit i (school i)

⁴⁹ Schools counts for 2006, 2011, and 2016 datasets examined in this report are 88,273, 88,673, and 89,656, respectively.