

Facing the Consequences

An Examination of Racial Discrimination in U.S. Public Schools

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INTRODUCTION

“It’s amazing that we have had so little revolt among students of color. But in spite of all the inequality, the daily stresses of living with the racism of the schools, the young people still have this abiding hope that things will get better.”

— Henry Der, California Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

If racial equity were a required course, most U.S. public school systems would receive a failing grade. Data collected in a dozen school districts around the country confirm what residents of communities of color already know: *the public schools consistently fail to provide the same quality of education for students of color as for white students.*

These gross and obvious inequalities are not confined to any single size of city or region of the country. The research discussed in this report reveals similar results for small towns and big cities, for the North and the South, for schools where students of color are the minority and where they predominate. Throughout the nation, public schools subject African American, Latino, and Native American students to a special kind of “racial profiling”: on the road to a decent education, students who are

brown or Black can expect to be pulled over frequently, while their white counterparts whiz on by.

If the public schools regularly failed to serve students of color in a single aspect of their educations, that would be bad enough. What the research reveals, however, is far more pernicious: the cumulative effect upon students of color of an educational experience that channels them away from academically challenging courses, punishes them more frequently and more harshly, and ultimately pushes them out of school without a diploma—all in much higher proportions than their white counterparts. We must face the consequences of racial discrimination in public education in order to ensure educational equity, opportunity, and excellence for all students.

The public schools consistently fail to provide the same quality of education for students of color as for white students.

ERASE Initiative • (Expose Racism & Advance School Excellence)

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Key Findings

In 1999, community organizations in several U.S. cities undertook a study of their local school districts, to determine how they measured up in terms of racial justice. Using a computerized survey instrument called the “Racial

inequalities and discrimination in U.S. public schools. On every key indicator, from drop-out rates and discipline rates to access to advanced placement courses and entrance into college, students of color are at a serious disadvantage compared to their white counterparts. Though the discrimination may not be intentional, its persistence and pervasiveness, as measured by actual statistical impacts, amounts to a deep pattern of institutional racism in U.S. public schools.

Graphic: Applied Research Center

Racial Justice Report Card	
Anytown Unified School District	
Dropout Rate	Pass
Graduation Rate	Fail
College Entrants	Fail
Student Discipline	Fail
Language	Pass
Advanced Classes	Pass
Teaching staff	Fail
Learning Environment	Fail
Curriculum	Fail
Staff Training	Fail
Based on its scores on these questions, Anytown Unified School District earns a final Racial Justice Grade of	D

Justice Report Card” (sample above), the organizations gathered data from school district offices in 12 cities. The results were devastating. Only one school district—Boston, Massachusetts—received a passing grade, a not very impressive “D.” The rest failed Racial Justice outright.

Key findings include:

- A preponderance of statistical evidence points to glaring racial

- **African American students especially, along with Latinos and Native American students, are suspended or expelled in numbers vastly disproportionate to those of their white peers.** This was true in every school district surveyed. Furthermore, the recent popularity of so-called zero-tolerance policies exacerbates this trend. Such policies tie the hands of teachers and administrators who might otherwise be able to implement more effective and less destructive means of ensuring school discipline.

- **Students of color are more likely to drop out—or be pushed out—of school and less likely to graduate than are white students.** This finding is directly related to the finding on discipline. Numerous studies have demonstrated that students who are suspended from school are at greater risk of dropping out altogether.

- **Students of color have less access to advanced classes or programs for gifted students.** Not surprising-

ly, they are also less likely to enter college after high school graduation.

- **The racial makeup of the teaching corps rarely matches that of the student body.** Nor do most school districts require anti-racist or multicultural education training for teachers and administrators. Students of all races suffer when they are denied the opportunity to learn from teachers of color, and when white teachers have not had a chance to acquire the skills they need to teach children of different races and cultures.

This report examines the results from a dozen cities that are geographically and ethnically representative of the U.S. public schools, including the nation's largest and most diverse district, the Los Angeles Unified School District. The other 11 districts are located in Austin, Texas; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Miami-Dade County, Florida; Denver, Colorado; Durham, North Carolina; Missoula, Montana; Providence, Rhode Island; Richland County School District One of Columbia, South Carolina; Salem, Oregon; and San Francisco, California.

Outcomes and Intentions

It is a common conservative argument that even grossly unequal outcomes such as those detailed in this study are unimportant in and of themselves. Rather, what matters is whether it was anyone's *intention* to discriminate. That is not the point. **What concerns the nation's almost 17 million students of color and their communities is that,**

regardless of anyone's intent, they receive an inferior education. Public policy must address these systematic inequalities in the application of discipline, in dropout, graduation, and college acceptance rates, in access to advanced classes, and to contemporary textbooks and other educational materials.

The conservative argument asserts that any evidence of existing inequality, no matter how severe, is irrelevant without proof of intent. Evidence of inequality may be an interesting statistical artifact, but it holds little implication for public policy. Furthermore, if racial disparities have no implications for public policy—and because exposing disparities breeds racial enmity—then there is no point in continuing to collect data disaggregated by race.

Another justification for not collecting data on racial disparities in education was made by California's Democratic Governor, Gray Davis, when he explained his veto of the California Traffic Stops Statistics Act. The bill, known more informally as the "Driving While Black or Brown" bill, was passed by the state Legislature with bipartisan support. It would have required California law enforcement agencies to collect data regarding the race and ethnicity of motorists who are stopped and searched, to determine whether or not Black and Latino drivers suffer a disproportionate share of these traffic stops. Davis's reason for vetoing the legislation? "There is no evidence that this practice is taking place statewide." This circular logic insists on proof of discrimination before making a commitment to looking for discrimination.

Statistical evidence points to glaring racial inequalities & discrimination in U.S. public schools.

Three-quarters of the districts failed on at least one indicator because they failed to collect or refused to supply the necessary data.

In fact, conservative forces are moving to prevent collection of racial education data in California and nationally. In January 2000, for example, affirmative action opponent and University of California Regent Ward Connerly announced his plans for a state ballot initiative to prohibit the University system from collecting racial demographic data on its students. The conservative argument is that collection of racial data exacerbates tensions among different racial groups. How much more would it increase those tensions for communities of color to know their children are receiving unequal education—but have no access to the data that proves it?

This report's findings are conditioned in part by what could not be found: Many school districts either will not or cannot provide the community with important data on key education issues. Even when partial data are available, they may not be disaggregated by race, or if data is disaggregated, a district may use different sets of racial designations for different indicators. This makes it difficult to compare, for example, the racial composition a district's high school graduates with the makeup of the whole student body.

Of the 12 school districts covered in this report, three-quarters failed on at least one indicator simply because they failed to collect or refused to supply the necessary data. A quarter of the districts did not report the demographics of their most recent graduates. Another quarter had no racial breakdown for advanced placement classes or programs for "gifted" students. And more than half did not know the racial composi-

tion of the graduates who went on to college.

Recommendations

The following chapters outline suggested policy measures in several areas where the data show racial inequalities.

- **This report's first recommendation is that all school districts be required to keep and publish annually key statistics, disaggregated by age, sex, and race—to issue, in effect, an annual Racial Equity Report.** Federal regulations already require certain kinds of demographic reporting, but those guidelines do not extend to such important indicators as suspension and expulsion.

In 1999, the California State Legislature passed Senate Bill 81, which mandated collection and publication of key data for the state's public schools. SB 81 provides an excellent model for similar legislation at the federal or state level. (See appendix for text of SB 81.) Unfortunately, in addition to vetoing the California Traffic Stops Statistics Act, California's Governor Davis also vetoed this legislation. State Senator Tom Hayden is reintroducing a new version of SB 81 for the 2000 legislative session.

Other recommendations include:

- **Design Racial Equity Plans at the school, district, state, and national levels, to be assessed annually against quantifiable goals.** Where data reveal racial divides, the responsible agencies should create, implement, and evaluate annually a comprehensive plan to solve the problem, including numerical goals and timetables.

Such Racial Equity Plans must address the entire school environment, including such issues as teacher recruitment and training, learning facilities and classroom resources, class size, availability of inclusive and challenging curriculum, and clear and even-handed discipline policies.

- **Schools must act immediately to correct the uneven application of the most severe disciplinary actions, including suspension and expulsion.** The Racial Justice Report Card study reveals severe discrepancies in the rates at which students of color, particularly African Americans, are sanctioned this way. Some schools implement suspension as early as kindergarten, all too often initiating a downward spiral that terminates in dropping out or expulsion.
- **End academic tracking and open the way for all students to participate in a challenging curriculum, including advanced classes.** The study shows that African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are underrepresented in

advanced placement classes and other programs for “gifted” students. In fact, the practice of tracking students by perceived “ability” creates racial ghettos within nominally desegregated schools, as students of color are tracked away from college preparatory classes. Because the effects of tracking are cumulative, any successful intervention must begin at the earliest grade levels to ensure that every student has equal access to these “gatekeeper” classes.

Methodology

Who conducted this study? Organizations of parents, students, and other concerned community members, along with staff of the Applied Research Center, collected the data presented in this report, using the Racial Justice Report Card program. The following organizations collected data from the 12 cities featured in the report:

Austin, TX	Austin Latino Alliance
Boston, MA	Boston Parent Organizing Network
Chicago, IL	Generation Y, a project of the Southwest Youth Collaborative
Denver, CO	Action for a Better Community
Durham, NC	Youth for Social Change
Los Angeles, CA	The Equity Network
Miami, FL	Applied Research Center
Columbia, SC	Applied Research Center
San Francisco, CA	Justice Matters Institute
Missoula, MT	Indian People’s Action
Providence, RI	Direct Action for Rights & Equality
Salem, OR	Latinos Unidos Siempre

The Racial Justice Report Card program is a single-record “database” application that can be run on Macintosh or

School districts should be required to keep and publish key statistics, by age, sex, and race.

Sample Report Card

Graphic: Applied Research Center

Get Started	Collect data	Numbers	Other Data	Report Card	Print Forms				
School or District Boston Public Schools									
(To unclick the Refused button, hold down the Shift key as you click.)		African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Isl.	Native American	Other	White	Total	Refused
All students		39,793	16,426	5,607	265		9,635	71,726	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High school seniors		1,686	721	396	11		623	3,437	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dropouts		781	416	76	7		194	1,474	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Graduates		1,551	624	341	10		559	3,085	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Grads entering college		993	362	303			397	2,055	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Suspended or expelled		3,135	852	69	30		401	4,487	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gifted or AP classes		1,403	1,339	485	12		1,974	5,214	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teachers		1,295	436	192	4		2,968	4,894	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Graphic: Applied Research Center

Get Started	Collect data	Numbers	Other Data	Report Card	Print Forms
School or District Boston Public Schools					
1. Language: Do all students who need them have access to bilingual education programs?					<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Refused <input type="radio"/> No
2. Learning Environment: Are the classroom facilities and school buildings with mostly white students better than those with mostly students of color? Do they have better textbooks, library resources, computers and internet access, art and music resources, and sports equipment?					<input type="radio"/> Pass <input checked="" type="radio"/> Fail <input type="radio"/> Refused
3. Curriculum: Do the textbooks and curriculum materials reflect the history and experiences of our diverse society? (For example, if social studies texts make little mention of the experiences and contributions of Native Americans prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus, throughout U.S. history, and in modern times, this would not be a fair or accurate curriculum.)					<input checked="" type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Fail <input type="radio"/> Refused
4. Staff training: Do all teachers and administrative staff receive mandatory multi-cultural or anti-racist training?					<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Refused <input checked="" type="radio"/> No

Windows systems. Community organizations collected data from their local school districts using a combination of methods, including personal visits, internet research, and written requests for public information. Each organization then recorded its data in the Report Card program on screens provided for quantitative and qualitative data. The sample screens opposite show data for the Boston Public Schools.

The Report Card program records information for 10 key indicators of racial justice. These include six quantitative measures (dropout rate, graduation, college acceptance, suspensions and expulsions, access to advanced or gifted classes, and teaching corps demographics) and four qualitative measures (equality of learning resources, linguistic access, culturally appropriate curriculum, and staff and teacher training in multicultural education). For each school district, the Report Card program evaluates the qualitative data, performs statistical tests on the quantitative measures, and produces a Racial Justice Report Card.

The Report Card program uses the chi-square test to determine whether discrepancies revealed in the quantitative data are statistically significant. For example, the Boston Parent Organizing Network found that while Latinos constituted 21% of all high school seniors, they accounted for only 20% of graduates. Is this a significant difference? The chi-square test compares the racial distribution of all high school seniors—African American, Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American, and

white—to the racial distribution of all graduates. In this instance, the difference between the distribution of seniors and graduates was not significant. The Boston Public Schools received a passing grade for racial equity in graduation rates.

On the other hand, while African Americans constituted 55% of the Boston school population, they accounted for 70% of all suspensions and expulsions. When the Report Card computed chi-square for discipline, Boston failed this crucial test of racial equity.

About racial categories: The Racial Justice Report Card uses a variant of the racial categories established by the federal Office of Budget and Management in 1977 to permit “compatible, nonduplicated, exchangeable” data collection. These categories are: Black, Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and White. A sixth category (Other) was added to accommodate the data of Columbia, South Carolina’s Richland County School District One, which categorizes 2% of its students as neither African American nor white. The district describes these 538 students simply as “Other.” As the research organizations discovered, not all school systems follow the OMB’s racial “taxonomy.” The State of California, for example, employs its own system, which for historical reasons separates Filipinos from other Asian groups, among other differences. In such cases, data have been recast into the OMB’s five arbitrary, but consistent, categories.

Community organizations collected data from their local school districts.

SUSPENSIONS, EXPULSIONS, AND ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES

When Martin, a young African American student at Providence’s Mt. Pleasant High School, offered to help his teacher dislodge a stuck diskette from his classroom’s computer, it never occurred to him that his ingenuity would wind up getting him suspended. But that is exactly what happened when he whipped out his keychain knife and bent down to eyeball the recalcitrant disk. He fell afoul of Providence’s “zero-tolerance” rules, which mandate automatic suspension for any student who brings a “weapon” to school.

Would Martin have been suspended if he were white? Quite possibly. On the other hand, a white student in

Danville, Vermont was neither suspended nor expelled when he explained that he’d brought a loaded shotgun to school—because it was hunting season.

In general, the Report Card data show that African American and Latino students are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school than their white counterparts. The table below summarizes suspension and expulsion data for the 12 cities.

The Report Card data show that African American students are suspended or expelled from school in numbers proportionately much greater than those of any other group. In San

Chart: Applied Research Center

Suspension & Expulsion Data by Race							
	African American	Latino	Asian/PI	Native American	Other	White	
Austin, TX	18%	43%	2%	0%	0%	37%	All Students
	36%	45%	0%	0%	0%	18%	Susp./Exp.
Boston, MA	55%	23%	8%	0%	0%	13%	
	70%	19%	2%	1%	0%	9%	
Chicago, IL	53%	33%	3%	0%	0%	10%	
	63%	27%	1%	0%	0%	8%	
Columbia, SC	78%	0%	0%	0%	2%	20%	
	90%	0%	0%	0%	1%	9%	
Denver, CO	21%	50%	3%	1%	0%	24%	
	36%	45%	2%	1%	0%	16%	
Durham, NC	58%	4%	2%	0%	0%	36%	
	79%	2%	0%	0%	0%	18%	
Los Angeles, CA	14%	69%	7%	0%	0%	11%	
	30%	58%	3%	0%	0%	8%	
Miami-Dade County, FL	33%	53%	1%	0%	0%	12%	
	48%	43%	0%	0%	0%	8%	
Missoula, MT	0%	1%	2%	3%	0%	94%	
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Providence, RI	23%	46%	11%	1%	0%	21%	
	39%	45%	3%	0%	0%	13%	
Salem, OR	1%	10%	3%	1%	0%	84%	
	4%	22%	3%	2%	0%	69%	
San Francisco, CA	18%	24%	43%	1%	0%	14%	
	56%	19%	13%	1%	0%	11%	

Francisco, for example, African American students are suspended or expelled at *more than three times* their proportion of the general school population (56% compared to 18%). *In no city studied* were the sanction rates for African Americans equal to or less than their proportion of all students.

The experiences of Latino students were less uniform. In some cities, Latinos experienced expulsion or suspension in proportionate numbers. But in some cities such as Salem, Oregon, Latinos were expelled or suspended in numbers *two times as high* as their proportion of the school population. Further study might reveal what other factors contribute to the varied experience of Latino students, examining for example a community's proportion of recent immigrants. *

Zero-Tolerance Policies—Mandatory Minimums Go to School

Just as many federal and state criminal offenses now carry mandatory minimum sentences, the law now requires public schools receiving any federal funds to institute “zero-tolerance” policies for certain weapons offenses. Many states and school districts have gone beyond the federal requirements to create policies that mandate serious sanctions such as out-of-school suspension or expulsion for a wide range of student behaviors. Mandatory minimum sentencing can tie the hands of the judges who in the past had certain discretion

in deciding sentences. In the same way, zero tolerance school discipline policies can land a school principal in the absurd position of having to suspend a third grader for bringing a paring knife to school in her lunch box.

Most state and local zero-tolerance policies have their genesis in the federal Gun-Free School Act (GFSA) of 1994. The GFSA requires each state receiving federal funds for education (i.e., every state) to have on its books a state law requiring a one-year mandatory expulsion for any public school student bringing a “weapon” to school. The Act defines “weapon” explicitly as a “firearm” as described in 18 U.S.C. § 921—in other words, a gun, bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, or mine. This definition explicitly excludes “any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon.” The GFSA goes on to require schools to refer to the criminal justice system any student who brings a weapon to school.

The GFSA itself is not a zero-tolerance law in regards to expulsion. In fact, it requires state laws to permit local school officials to modify any expulsion order for a student on a case-by-case basis. However, many states and school districts have gone far beyond the provisions of federal law, by enacting policies that countermand the federal case-by-case provision or that expand the scope of covered offenses beyond those covered by federal law.

Many states and school districts have gone far beyond the provisions of the federal zero tolerance law by expanding the scope of offenses.

* Data concerning the experiences of Native Americans and Asians and Pacific Islanders were less conclusive. The 12 cities studied all had too few Native American students to draw any statistically significant conclusion.

The case of Asians and Pacific Islanders is more complex. This category includes many different kinds of students, from third-, fourth-, and fifth- generation Chinese and Japanese Americans to recent Hmong immigrants. Unless these data can be disaggregated further by ethnicity and immigration status, they will shed little light on the way the issue affects those communities.

One of this study’s participant organizations, Direct Action for Rights and Equality, prepared the following table, which provides a good example of how far local zero-tolerance policies may veer from the intent of the federal law.

Clearly, different schools and school districts implement zero-tolerance differently; one school may automatically suspend students involved in a fist-fight, while another sanctions students who bring to school any object that could conceivably be used as a weapon. Evidence suggests that schools are more willing to recognize mitigating circumstances when they perceive the student involved in an incident as having “a real future” that would be destroyed by expulsion. In disproportionate numbers,

it is African American and Latino students whose futures are wrecked by zero-tolerance policies.

A recent study of Michigan’s zero-tolerance policies illustrates this point. (Polakow-Suransky 1999) While expulsion rates are rising in many largely Black Michigan school districts, this is not the case in the 94% white town of Olivet. When two white Olivet students were caught with a gun in their car trunk at the start of hunting season, they got off with a 10-day suspension and 40 hours of community service. The police were not called, and the students ended up with no criminal record. School board minutes indicate that the principal “felt the most pertinent issue in this case was that he

Chart: Direct Action for Rights & Equality. Used by permission.

Federal GFSA (1994)	Rhode Island State Law 16-21-18 (1995)	Providence Zero-Tolerance Policy (May 1996)
<p>Weapons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guns • Explosive devices that expel projectiles • Silencers and mufflers • Bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, and mines 	<p>Weapons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guns • Explosive devices that expel projectiles • Silencers and mufflers • Bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, and mines <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic replicas of firearms 	<p>Weapons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guns • Explosive devices that expel projectiles • Silencers and mufflers • Bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, and mines <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic replicas of firearms <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knives • Razors • Gas repellent • Mace • Martial arts devices • Objects which could inflict bodily harm, such as: blackjacks, chains, clubs, brass knuckles, night sticks, pipes, studded bracelets, etc. • Any object which, by virtue of its shape or design, gives the appearance of any of the above.

believed that there was not intent to harm by either of these students.”

By comparison, in another Michigan county, a Black student was expelled for cleaning his nails with a pocket knife—which he immediately handed to his teacher when asked to do so. The police were called, and the student was expelled from school.

Zero-tolerance policies represent a response to the impression that our schools have become much more dangerous in the last few years. Certainly horrific events like the slaughter at Columbine High School contribute to this sense.

But are the schools actually more dangerous than they were 20 years ago? Not according to the numbers.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics’ 1998 Condition of Education, the frequency of various threats reported by high school seniors changed very little between 1976 and 1996, as the chart right illustrates.

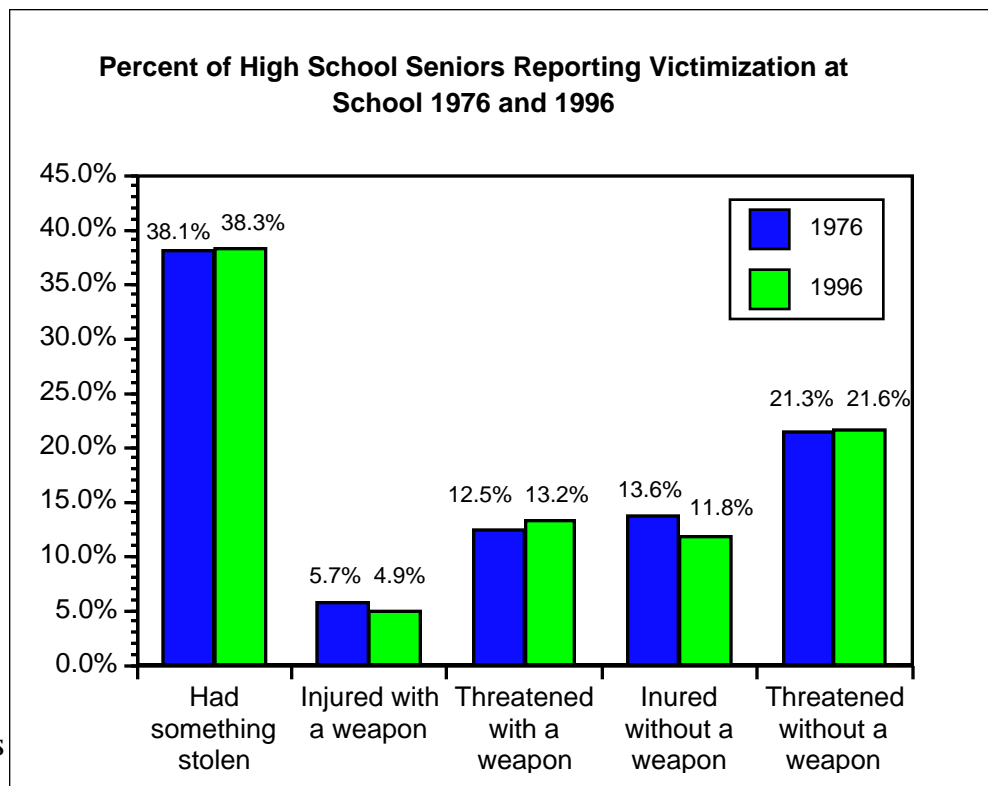
Before schools introduced zero-tolerance policies, did they allow students to bring weapons or drugs to school? Of course not. Did they suspend or expel students who did these things? Of course. But rather than expanding a school’s range of approaches to discipline problems, these mandatory sanction programs actually rob teachers and administrators

of the flexibility they need to deal with such problems, and remove school discipline to the realm of the criminal justice system.

In the early 1990s two criminal statisticians, James Alan Fox of Northeastern University and John DiIulio of Princeton, fueled the demand for zero-tolerance policies. In well-publicized studies, they warned of a coming plague of juvenile crime perpetrated by a new generation of “super-predators”—“jobless, fatherless juveniles,” as DiIulio put it. In fact, the plague never materialized. Public school children are no more dangerous or destructive than they were 20 years ago. But the sanctions they face are much more severe, more likely to be imposed on students of color, and more likely to severely damage their educations.

The effects of Chicago’s zero-tolerance policies provide a good example of the

But are the schools actually more dangerous today? Not according to the numbers.



Thanks to zero tolerance, within three years, the number of expulsions had jumped from 81 to a projected 1,000.

kinds of distortions these programs create. In the Chicago Public Schools FY 2000 Final Budget, in a section ironically titled “Measuring Progress Toward Goals,” appears a chart of the number of student expulsions from 1993 to 2000 (reproduced below).

Chicago’s zero-tolerance policy went into effect in the middle of the 95-96 school year. Within three years, the number of expulsions had jumped from 81 to a projected 1,000. The district’s language about expulsions for the current school year is particularly revealing: rather than working to reduce the number of expulsions, the district’s “proposed” figure for the 99-00 school year is 1,500—50% greater than the year before and 150 times as many expulsions as just six years earlier. Chicago suspends and expels African American students at disproportionate rates, which suggests that Black students will likely make up a disproportionate number of those the school district “propose[s]” to expel this year. This is a clear example of how zero-tol-

erance policies exacerbate existing racial inequities in school discipline.

Subjective Criteria

When discipline codes define punishable behavior in subjective terms, such as “disrespect” or “defiance of authority,” how the code is applied often depends on the how individual teachers and administrators interpret students’ behavior. Too often that interpretation is affected not only by a student’s objective behavior but also by differences of race and ethnicity. Jeremy Lahoud works with Chicago’s Generation Y, a project of the Southwest Youth Collaborative. Lahoud reports that at Hubbard High School on Chicago’s southwest side, two students were suspended for six days when white school officials mistook their break-dancing poses for “gang representation.”

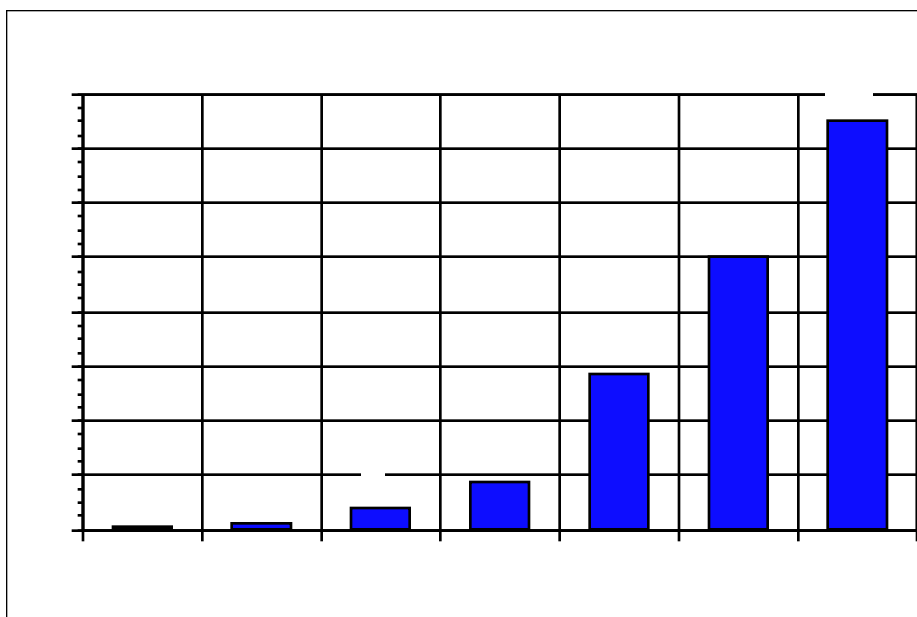
In general, discipline codes with too much room for arbitrary interpretation may allow teachers’ conscious or unconscious beliefs about their students of color to influence their decisions

about how to discipline. When a school permits teachers to suspend students for ill-defined offenses, such as “defiance of authority,” it can open the way for bias and cross-cultural misunderstandings to affect the discipline process.

What Can Happen When a School Takes a Race-Conscious Approach to Discipline?

That is exactly what staff at James Lick Middle School in

Graph: Applied Research Center. Data: Chicago Public Schools.



San Francisco, California decided to find out. Heidi Hess is Focused Effort Coordinator at James Lick. She says that teachers at her school were concerned that African American students, who make up less than a third of the student body, receive almost half the referrals for discipline.

“The first thing we had to do,” to address this disparity, says Hess, “was to really become rigorous about collecting the data. We developed forms for teachers to use which documented when a student was sent out of class (for a disciplinary referral), who sent them out, and why.” Collecting this data yielded some surprising results. “We found that over 75% of the referrals given out last school year were for defiance of authority or disruption of class.” Furthermore, most cases involved conflicts between students and teachers, rather than between students. More serious offenses, such as possession of a weapon, were rare.

Collecting the data was just the first step. “We developed a system to feed the data collected directly back to the teaching staff,” Hess says, “so they can better understand what is going on” and gauge their progress. “We looked at how teachers set the rules in their classrooms, and whether and how teachers involved students in defining classroom rules.” They found that when students participate in forming the rules, they are less likely to perceive them as unfairly applied.

James Lick staff began holding monthly professional development meetings to work out alternative strategies for de-escalating conflict. They sought to emphasize teachers’ roles in these inter-

actions, rather than focusing solely on methods of changing students’ behavior.

Although most of the power resides with the teachers, “it was a paradigm shift for the teaching staff to buy into the idea that it is their responsibility to minimize defiance situations,” Hess continues. “We had to ask, ‘What might be going on in the students minds? What’s going on for the teacher? And what would be alternative practices?’”

“One of the best exercises we did was to role-play the beginning of a defiance scene. For example, a student walks into class and puts a soda on the table, even though no drinks are allowed in the classroom. The teacher asks the student to remove the drink. Just acting out different possible responses to this scene, with the staff taking not only the teacher’s role, but also trying on the student’s role—it was profound.”

James Lick’s revamped approach to discipline is still too new to determine whether these interventions will reduce the racial disparities in suspension referrals. But already teachers are experiencing some success. Hess offers an example: “One teacher reported that she was just about to yell, from across the room, at two African American girls who appeared to be talking and carrying on excessively. But she gave herself a few seconds to think of an alternative strategy for dealing with them. Instead, she walked over to them, and much to her surprise, found that they were talking about their work assignment. Far from yelling at them, she realized she didn’t need to say anything at all.”

“We had to ask, ‘What might be going on in the students minds? What’s going on for the teacher? And what would be alternative practices?’”

Why Is the Discipline Indicator Important?

Suspension and expulsion have serious effects on the life chances of students.

Those who are already performing poorly in school are the most likely to be suspended, although they are the very students who can least afford to miss classes. When public schools increasingly become an entry point for young people of color to swell the ranks of the juvenile justice system, the implications are ominous. By the year 2001, it is estimated that eight times as many African American men will be in the California prison system than in the state's university system. (Connolly, McDermid, Schiraldi, & Macallair 1996.)

Student leaders of Generation Y put it well when they describe the effects of suspension on their education: "You don't learn. You fall behind. You get a negative attitude about school." In fact, numerous studies back up these young people's perceptions, demonstrating that students who are suspended or expelled are more likely than their peers to drop out of school altogether. (See DeRidder 1990; Hahn and Lefkowitz 1987; Wheelock 1986; and Wu, Pink, and Moles 1982.)

Recommendations

- **Provide a challenging, respectful, and culturally appropriate learning environment.** Provide training for teachers and administrators to enable them to work effectively with a multiracial, multicultural

student body. Mutual respect and excitement about teaching and learning are the most effective discipline measures available to any teacher or school.

- **Set and annually review measurable, quantitative goals** to reduce the overall numbers of suspensions and expulsions, and to eliminate racial disparities in those rates.
- **Construct clear, objective discipline policies that allow for flexible application of sanctions.** These policies should clearly define prohibited behaviors in ways that minimize the need for subjective interpretation by individual teachers. Resist the use of suspension and expulsion, except in the most extreme situations.
- **Eliminate zero-tolerance policies** in favor of a more flexible approach to serious discipline problems. Discipline policies must protect school communities from true threats, but must also allow for consideration of mitigating circumstances and for access to due process.
- **No discipline policies should be implemented without taking into consideration their potential for racially disparate application and impact.** This is particularly crucial in the case of policies such as zero-tolerance rules, which can derail a student's education, and/or give him or her a criminal record.

No discipline policies should be implemented without taking into consideration their potential for racially disparate application and impact.

TRACKING AND OTHER CURRICULUM ISSUES

Tracking

The history of academic tracking dates back to the first years of this country when no less a democrat than Thomas Jefferson advocated for a two-track educational system—one that would create separate resources for “the laboring and the learned” classes. When queried about the chances of advancement from the former to the latter, Jefferson replied that the public schools should encourage such improvement by “raking a few geniuses from the rubbish.” Sadly, many of our public schools continue to treat students assigned to lower tracks as “rubbish.”

Tracking is the practice of placing students in different classes based on perceived differences in their abilities. It takes a variety of forms, including remedial and special education programs, as well as programs for gifted and talented students. At the high school level, many school systems distinguish between college preparatory and vocational tracks. In general, African American and Latino students are underrepresented in gifted and college-prep tracks, and overrepresented in remedial and vocational tracks.

The table below summarizes these results.

Advanced Placement & Gifted Programs by Race							
	African American	Latino	Asian/PI	Native American	Other	White	
Austin, TX	18%	43%	2%	0%	0%	37%	All Students
	11%	24%	4%	0%	0%	62%	AP/Gifted
Boston, MA	55%	23%	8%	0%	0%	13%	
	27%	26%	9%	0%	0%	38%	
Chicago, IL	53%	33%	3%	0%	0%	10%	
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Columbia, SC	78%	0%	0%	0%	2%	20%	
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Denver, CO	21%	50%	3%	1%	0%	24%	
	18%	30%	5%	1%	0%	46%	
Durham, NC	58%	4%	2%	0%	0%	36%	
	26%	1%	5%	0%	0%	67%	
Los Angeles, CA	14%	69%	7%	0%	0%	11%	
	8%	44%	25%	0%	0%	23%	
Miami-Dade, FL	33%	53%	1%	0%	0%	12%	
	23%	52%	1%	0%	0%	24%	
Missoula, MT	0%	1%	2%	3%	0%	94%	
	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	99%	
Providence, RI	23%	46%	11%	1%	0%	21%	
	9%	14%	12%	0%	0%	64%	
Salem, OR	1%	10%	3%	1%	0%	84%	
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
San Francisco, CA	18%	24%	43%	1%	0%	14%	
	5%	9%	60%	1%	0%	25%	

Chart: Applied Research Center

*Tracking—
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In every one of the cities for which data were available, either Blacks, Latinos, or both were underrepresented in these gateway classes, and whites were over-represented. Miami-Dade County, Florida came closest to achieving parity, but even there, African Americans made up 33% of all students, but only 23% of students in advanced placement or gifted classes. By contrast, in Providence, Rhode Island, where Blacks formed 23% of the student body, they were only 9% of those taking advanced classes.

Tracking—which can determine the outcome of a student’s entire academic career—can begin as early as second or third grade. Track assignments are usually based on some combination of standardized testing, teacher recommendation, and parental intervention. Standardized assessment tests are problematic because of potential racial and cultural bias, but subjective criteria like teacher recommendations also create potential inequalities. In some cases, students of similar ability end up in different tracks based on little more than a teacher’s impressions. In others, a determined parent’s petition can win a child’s placement in a gifted program. Basing admission to gifted programs on parental intervention can put low-income parents and those of color at a disadvantage over their counterparts who have greater resources and familiarity with “working the system.” This is especially true for students whose parents do not speak much or any English.

Assignment to remedial classes can be equally arbitrary. Such classes often become catch-alls for emotionally trou-

bled students, special needs children, and other students on the margins, regardless of their academic abilities. Bilingual students are often shunted into remedial classes under the assumption that their lack of English implies that they would struggle with the content matter of other subjects like mathematics and science.

In theory, remedial classes are designed to help students fill in particular knowledge gaps. Once remedial work is completed, students are supposed to rejoin the mainstream classes. In practice, remedial classes usually act to permanently deny students access to more advanced subject matter. Studies show that it is very difficult for children assigned to a lower track to move into a higher one. In fact, rather than catching up with the mainstream, students in lower tracks fall further behind their upper-track peers every year they are in school.

Because each level of schooling builds on earlier prerequisites, students assigned to lower tracks in elementary or middle school have little opportunity to take the advanced courses, especially in math and science, required for acceptance by most major universities. For example, whether or not a student takes algebra in the eighth grade determines whether he or she will make it to calculus in senior year.

Why are students of color underrepresented in advanced classes? There are few national studies of this question, although numerous local studies suggest that in some cases, racial bias is part of the answer. For example, Professor Jeannie Oakes of the University of

California at Los Angeles looked at school districts in Rockford, Illinois and San Jose, California. In each case, she found that “African American and Latino students were much less likely than white or Asian students with the same test scores to be placed in accelerated courses.” (Oakes 1995)

Why Is the Tracking Indicator Important?

Advanced placement classes and programs for “gifted” students are the gateways to four-year colleges. Too often, these courses function more like gated communities from which African American and Latino students are excluded. In many cities, among them Oakland, California, high schools serving primarily Black and Latino students may not even offer these gateway classes.

Inclusive, Multicultural Curricula

Indian People’s Action organizer Janet Robideau bristles as she describes the book *Sign of the Beaver*, a required text for fifth-graders in Missoula, Montana’s public schools. “It’s really a negative portrayal of both Native Americans and women. The book recounts a relationship between a Native American boy and a white boy. The Native American talks in what we call Tonto talk—‘me go; me eat; me don’t know.’ It refers to a woman of the tribe as a ‘squaw,’ which is extremely derogatory. The white boy is the Native Americans’ savior, teaching them how to read books, tell time, and do the things that white people do.”

“Kids who read this book still don’t realize it’s derogatory to us,” Robideau continues. “This puts our children in the position of having to defend who they are, and at the mercy of other students who call them ‘prairie niggers’ ‘savages,’ and ‘squaws.’”

Indian People’s Action’s experience in Missoula exemplifies the most overt kind of problem the community organizations found when they examined curricula: school materials that clearly and openly denigrate a particular group of people. More often, the issues they confronted concerned sins of omission. Researchers looked for “missing persons”—the African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans—whose roles in history and contemporary society were rendered invisible in school curricula.

In Chicago, Generation Y found other misrepresentations and racial stereotypes in their curricula, such as the way Arab Americans are depicted in high school world history textbooks. The Middle East is portrayed as a bastion of terrorism and conflict. One standard social studies text, *Triumph of the American Nation*, characterizes Beirut as the center of terrorist kidnapping.

There are many good approaches to culture-conscious education. Some emphasize **content**—the inclusion of information about different groups in curricula. Others focus more on **student orientation**—methods of presenting material that match the particular needs of students, based on their race, ethnicity, and/or gender. Still others focus on **social orientation**—an approach designed to increase and

“African American and Latino students were much less likely than white or Asian students with the same test scores to be placed in accelerated courses.”

Eliminate academic tracking and ensure that advanced classes are open to all students.

improve the contact among students and teachers of different races and ethnic groups. This approach involves a variety of means, including desegregation and de-tracking; anti-bias classes for students and teachers; and/or more conscious critiques of racism and sexism.

Why Is the Curricula Indicator Important?

Many scholars today agree that traditional, white-normative, public school curricula are not adequate for students of color, nor even for white students. This is more than a question of equity or student self-esteem. History and social studies courses that omit the experiences of people of color are also incomplete, and therefore inaccurate. This recognition formed the genesis of what has come to be known as multicultural curriculum.

Recommendations

- **Eliminate academic tracking** and ensure that advanced classes are open to all students.
- **Design curricula from elementary school up**, so that all students have a chance to succeed at “gatekeeper” college preparatory classes like algebra. Too often, by the time a student reaches high school, it is too late to make up for the cumulative effect of missed opportunities.
- **Guarantee that all high schools offer a full range of academic courses**, including advanced placement courses. In many school districts, the schools attended by students of color do not provide these college-preparatory offerings, while schools serving primarily white students do.
- **Create structures to involve communities in the textbook selection process.** It is best to do this at the beginning of the process, so that communities can contribute more than a final “Yeah or Nay.”
- **Build multicultural education methods and content into the core curriculum** at all institutions for teacher preparation.

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS

“We really need more new teachers, and the district says they want to hire them, but sometimes I think they don’t mean it, because they make it so hard. They make it especially hard for teachers of color. It costs so much to go to college, and then there is the CBEST [teacher certification exam] and all those other tests, and then they throw teachers into the classroom with nobody to help them. No wonder a lot of them quit.”

These words from an anonymous California teacher provide an excellent summary of the reality behind the teaching corps data discovered by community researchers, which are presented in the table below.

The teaching corps of Chicago and Miami, the only cities where fewer than half the teachers were white (49% and 37% respectively), came the closest to matching their students’ demographics. It was not unusual, as in Austin, Texas, for the proportion of African American and Latino students to be double the proportion of teachers of the same race. Of all the cities surveyed, Providence, Rhode Island had the biggest mismatch between students and teachers: almost half the students were Latino, compared to only 5% of teachers. Los Angeles had a striking disparity with only 22% of the teacher corps and 69% of the student body being Latino.

Teacher & Student Populations by Race							
	African American	Latino	Asian/PI	Native American	Other	White	
Austin, TX	18%	43%	2%	0%	0%	37%	Students
	9%	20%	1%	0%	0%	70%	Teachers
Boston, MA	55%	23%	8%	0%	0%	13%	
	26%	9%	4%	0%	0%	61%	
Chicago, IL	53%	33%	3%	0%	0%	10%	
	43%	6%	2%	0%	0%	49%	
Miami-Dade, FL	33%	53%	1%	0%	0%	12%	
	28%	32%	2%	0%	0%	37%	
Denver, CO	21%	50%	3%	1%	0%	24%	
	8%	14%	1%	0%	0%	77%	
Durham, NC	58%	4%	2%	0%	0%	36%	
	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	68%	
Los Angeles, CA	14%	69%	7%	0%	0%	11%	
	15%	22%	10%	1%	0%	53%	
Missoula, MT	0%	1%	2%	3%	0%	94%	
	0%	.5%	0%	.5%	0%	99%	
Providence, RI	23%	46%	11%	1%	0%	21%	
	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	83%	
Columbia, SC	78%	0%	0%	0%	2%	20%	
	40%	0%	0%	0%	9%	51%	
Salem, OR	1%	10%	3%	1%	0%	84%	
	1%	2%	3%	2%	0%	93%	
San Francisco, CA	18%	24%	43%	1%	0%	14%	
	11%	11%	20%	1%	0%	57%	

Chart: Applied Research Center

Why Is the Teacher Demographics Indicator Important?

Many years of studies suggest that teachers of color are important—both for students of color and for white students.

Many years of studies suggest that teachers of color are important—both for students of color and for white students. Scholars have identified several key reasons why students of color stay in school longer and achieve more when they have teachers who look like themselves. These include:

The role model effect: Both common sense and considerable research suggest that teachers of color provide students of color with invaluable examples of successful, respected adults. (Villegas 1998; Stewart, Meier, La Follette, and England 1989) More particularly, teachers of color provide models of success in the academic arena, where students of color are often expected to fail. Of course, students of color are not the only ones to benefit from a diverse teaching corps. White students also derive important lessons when their role models include teachers of color.

The power of expectations: Many studies have shown the effects of teachers' expectations on how—and how well—their students learn. This self-fulfilling prophecy effect is well documented (Tauber 1997; Good 1987; Jussim and Eccles 1992), and classically analyzed in Rosenthal and Jacobson's 1968 study, *Pygmalion in the Classroom*.

Cultural relevance: Teachers who share their students' culture and life experiences bring to the classroom an extra knowledge about those students, which they can use to fashion teaching that works. They also serve as cultural mediators among school, parents, and community. Teachers are much more

likely to reach out, and to reach out successfully, to parents with whom they feel “at home” culturally. This mediation function has special salience in communities where many parents do not speak English. A teacher who speaks the parents' language and literally knows the place “where they're coming from,” can help draw them into their children's education. That parental involvement is a crucial component of academic success.

Teacher retention: At least one study shows that teachers of color are more likely than white teachers to continue teaching at hard-to-staff urban schools, where teacher turnover is a major barrier to quality education. (Adams and Dial 1993)

Recommendations

- **Aggressively institute programs to recruit, train, and retain more teachers of color.** Such programs should include: focused recruitment by institutions that prepare teachers; scholarships and low-interest loans; well-funded mentoring programs for new teachers; pay incentives for teachers who stay at hard-to-staff schools.
- **Reexamine barriers experienced by prospective teachers of color.** These include standardized gatekeeper exams, like California's CBEST test, which have no demonstrated connection to actual teaching performance, but which disproportionately eliminate people of color from teaching. See *Adverse Impact!: How CBEST Fails the People of California* (Berlak 1999) for more on this issue.

DROPOUT, GRADUATION, AND COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE RATES

“While you might think that requiring students to read at an eleventh grade level is a good thing, the problem is that many students haven’t been adequately taught, so they’re failing the exit exam,” says April England-Albright of the Coalition of Alabamians Reforming Education (CARE). “They’ve finished their high school requirements and they can’t go back to school to learn more, but they’re being denied their diplomas. We’re saying that you shouldn’t have an exit exam if you don’t teach students the skills they need to pass it.”

For community organizations like CARE, exit exams are just one more barrier erected between students of color and a high school diploma. In fact, the Report Card data show that students of color are more likely to drop out, less likely to graduate and less likely to go on to college than their white peers. The table below right summarizes these results for dropout, graduation, and college acceptance rates. (A failing grade indicates that the district’s data failed the chi-squared test. This statistical test was used to compare the racial distribution of dropouts to that of all students, and the distribution of graduates and students accepted to college with that of all high school seniors. Districts that did not supply the data necessary to perform the test also failed.)

These results reveal disturbing trends. In every city studied except for Providence, Rhode Island, disproportionately more Latinos and African Americans dropped out of school. Among the three districts that were

able to supply data on graduates accepted at colleges, only one, San Francisco, passed the racial equity test.

Perhaps surprisingly, half the districts received a passing grade for graduation. At first glance this appears to be a more positive outcome than those observed for the other indicators. However, because the distribution of graduates was compared to that of all seniors — rather than of all students—it seems most likely that some self-selection is occurring: students who know they have little chance of graduating may well be dropping out before they reach senior year. In half the districts, this weeding process resulted in better graduation rates than dropout rates. Implementation of exit exams will only exacerbate this trend.

It should be noted, however, that even among those districts with passing racial equity grades in graduation, only San Francisco sent its graduates on to college in racially proportionate numbers.

Exit exams are just one more barrier erected between students of color and a high school diploma.

	Dropouts	Graduates	College Acceptance
Austin, TX	Fail (NA)	Fail	Fail (NA)
Boston, MA	Fail	Pass	Fail
Chicago, IL	Fail	Pass	Fail (NA)
Columbis, SC	Fail (NA)	Fail (NA)	Fail
Denver, CO	Fail	Pass	Fial (NA)
Durham,NC	Fail (NA)	Fail (NA)	Fail (NA)
Los Angeles, CA	Fail	Fail	Fail
Miami-Dade, FL	Fail	Pass	Fail (NA)
Missoula, MT	Fail	Fail (NA)	Fail
Providence, RI	Pass	Fail	Fail (NA)
Salem, OR	Fail	Pass	Fail (NA)
San Francisco, CA	Fail	Pass	Pass

Chart: Applied Research Center

Recommendations:

- **Eliminate high school exit exams.**
In states where these have been implemented, e.g., Texas and Florida, students of color have a disproportionately high failure rate. No student who fulfills all other graduation criteria should be denied a diploma—and the earning potential that goes with it.
- **Set measurable goals** to reduce dropout rates and increase graduation and college acceptance for all students, and to bring these indicators into racial parity.

CONCLUSION

“...it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education.”

— *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)

Almost 50 years have passed since the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were “inherently unequal” and therefore unconstitutional. The data collected by these community organizations demonstrate that half a century later. Whether segregated or not, whether by conscious design or through unconscious acceptance, public schools still offer young people of color an unequal, inferior education.

Unequal education is clearly a form of racial discrimination. It jeopardizes the futures of millions of young people of color in the U.S. It is easiest to not acknowledge race as a dynamic, even when disparities fall significantly along racial lines. It is also easiest to point the finger at inequities in the overall society, thereby relieving the school system of any responsibility. But if this embedded pattern of institutional racism is to be remedied, each institution, including our school systems, must take responsibility for doing its part to change things.

What will it take to turn this situation around? Ignoring racial disparities like those detailed in this report will not

make them go away. To the contrary, at all levels policy makers and school officials must replace colorblindness with race consciousness. This entails, at a minimum, the following measures, implemented at every level from individual school site to the federal government:

- **Schools must use quantifiable measurement to assess their level of racial equity.**
- **Where disparities exist, schools must institute Racial Equity Plans, including concrete, measurable goals and timetables, to address those disparities.**
- **Schools must keep the public informed of their progress, through annual Racial Equity Reports.**

When the nation faces the consequences of racial inequality in public education we can finally fulfill the promise of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision: to provide equal educational opportunity to all.

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APPENDIX A: RESULTS FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Chicago Public Schools Chicago, Illinois

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	229,148	144,062	13,593	759	43,523	43,1085		
High School Seniors	8,441	4,852	873	25	1,981	16,172		
Dropouts	10,756	4,723	303	36	1,510	17,328		Fail
Graduates	8,615	4,880	911	22	2,139	16,567		Pass
Grads Entering College							X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled	8,976	3,841	203	36	1,150	14,206		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes							X	Fail
Teachers	2,634	362	127	16	2,998	6,137		Fail

Data collected by Generation Y, a project of the Southwest Youth Collaborative with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

San Francisco Unified School District San Francisco, California

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	9,765	12,927	22,988	414	7,381	5,3475		
High School Seniors	417	521	1,671	14	478	3,101		
Dropouts	416	440	332	16	195	1,399		Fail
Graduates	401	534	1,679	17	474	3,105		Pass
Grads Entering College							X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled	887	310	210	9	179	1595		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	368	649	4,197	43	1,718	6,975		Fail
Teachers	376	366	659	29	1,924	3,354		Fail

Data collected by Justice Matters Institute with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

Durham Public Schools Durham, North Carolina

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	16,249	1,047	609	84	10,221	28,210		
High School Seniors							X	
Dropouts	509	34	6	2	123	674		Fail
Graduates							X	Fail
Grads Entering College							X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled	10,434	321	47	37	2,354	15,233		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	3,165	174	654	45	8,148	12,186		Fail
Teachers	654	0	9	0	1,411	2,074		Fail

Data collected by Youth for Social Change with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

**Denver Public Schools
Denver, Colorado**

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	14,497	34,279	2,360	943	16,814	68,893		
High School Seniors	661	1,069	123	27	1,019	2,899		
Dropouts	441	1,302	51	35	359	2,188		Fail
Graduates	574	889	115	21	901	2,500		Pass
Grads Entering College							X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled	3,889	4,888	165	152	1,768	10,862		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	558	934	159	36	1,446	3,133		Fail
Teachers	324	607	43	14	3,229	4,217		Fail

Data collected by Action for a Better Community with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

**Austin Independent School District
Austin, Texas**

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	13,606	32,885	1,767	223	28,125	76,606		
High School Seniors							X	
Dropouts	327	822	11	9	225	1,394		Fail
Graduates	562	1,005	100	9	1,625	3,301		Fail
Grads Entering College	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled	4,156	5,316	55	28	2,137	11,692		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	591	1321	214	13	3,479	5,618		Fail
Teachers	404	939	34	12	3,226	4,615		Fail

Data collected by Austin Latino Alliance with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

**Boston Public Schools
Boston, Massachusetts**

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	39,793	16,426	5,607	265	9,635	71,726		
High School Seniors	1,686	721	396	11	623	3,437		
Dropouts	781	416	76	7	194	1,474		Fail
Graduates	1,551	624	341	10	559	3,085		Pass
Grads Entering College	993	362	303		397	2,055		Fail
Suspended or Expelled	3,135	852	69	30	401	4,487		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	1,403	1,339	486	12	1,974	5,214		Fail
Teachers	1,294.5	435.5	192	4	2,967.5	4,893.5		Fail

Data collected by Boston Parent Organizing Network with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

**Richland County School District One
Columbia, South Carolina**

	African Am.	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native Am.	Other	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	20,994	NA	NA	NA	538	5,383	26,915		
High School Seniors								X	
Dropouts	212	NA	NA	NA	7	25	244		Fail
Graduates								X	Fail
Grads Entering College	1,215	NA	NA	NA	34	495	1,744		Fail
Suspended or Expelled	4,093	NA	NA	NA	48	428	4,569		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes								X	Fail
Teachers	877	NA	NA	NA	195	1,110	2,182		Fail

Data collected by the Applied Research Center.

**Los Angeles Unified School District
Los Angeles, California**

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	93,867	466,259	44,515	1,850	73,939	680,430		
High School Seniors	3,992	16,934	3,078	82	4,230	28,316		
Dropouts	1,092	5,721	360	21	499	7,693		Fail
Graduates	3,588	14,869	3,118	73	4,176	25,824		Fail
Grads Entering College	1,579	6,091	1,873	27	2,381	11,951		Fail
Suspended or Expelled	21,104	40,616	2,075	257	5,877	69,929		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	1,927	10,693	5,995	68	5,575	24,258		Fail
Teachers	4,605	6,622	2,885	218	15,878	30,208		Fail

Data collected by the Equity Network with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida**

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	116,197	186,238	4,522	284	43,879	351,120		
High School Seniors	5,167	8,216	298	10	2,614	16,305		
Dropouts	3,010	4,164	58	0	789	8,021		Fail
Graduates	4,371	6,791	277	10	2,289	13,738		Pass
Grads Entering College							X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled	32,399	29,295	309		5,659	67,662		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	15,106	33,523	646	21	15,796	65,092		Fail
Teachers	4,235	4,815	306	68	5,610	15,034		Fail

Data collected by the Applied Research Center.

**Missoula County School District
Missoula, Montana**

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	11	54	69	122	3,691	3,947		
High School Seniors	2	12	13	22	845	894		
Dropouts	3	7	3	18	214	245		Fail
Graduates							X	Fail
Grads Entering College							X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled							X	Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	0	1	4	1	274	280		Fail
Teachers	0	3	1	3	544	551		Fail

Data collected by Indian People's Action with the assistance from the Applied Research Center.

**Providence Public Schools
Providence, RI**

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	5,464	11,056	2,562	201	4,994	24,277		
High School Seniors	223	400				623		
Dropouts	98	162	48	2	102	412		Pass
Graduates	214	360	126	4	240	944		Fail
Grads Entering College							X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled	29	34	2	0	10	75		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes	34	50	44	0	231	359		Fail
Teachers	232	124	25	3	1,915	2,299		Fail

Data collected by Direct Action for Rights & Equality with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

**Salem-Keizer School District
Salem, Oregon**

	African American	Latino	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Native American	White	Total	NA/ Refused	
All Students	130	976	309	102	7,886	9,403		
High School Seniors	20	131	57	15	1,405	1,628		
Dropouts	16	183	26	19	597	841		Fail
Graduates	16	99	48	13	1,256	1,432		Pass
Grads Entering College							X	Fail
Suspended or Expelled	69	396	48	39	1,231	1,783		Fail
Gifted or AP Classes							X	Fail
Teachers	3	8	13	8	458	490		Fail

Data collected by Latinos Unidos Siempre with assistance from the Applied Research Center.

APPENDIX B: CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 81

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 81, Hayden. Equal opportunity in education.

Under existing law, various programs are established that are designed to assist disadvantaged pupils, including, among others, the compensatory education programs for disadvantaged children. The bill would require the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Legislature to prioritize and align educational resources and funding to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity for educational success and would require the State Department of Education, in consultation with other appropriate state agencies, to develop guidelines for measuring equal opportunity and to include information pertaining to certain issues within those guidelines. The bill would require the Governor to report annually, based on the information available, to the Legislature and the public, on the status of equal opportunity for success in California's public schools.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares as follows:

(a) The intent of Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 54550) of Part 29 of the Education Code is to complement Senate Bill 1X of the 1999-2000 First Extraordinary Session and Chapters 1, 2, and 4 of the Statutes of

the 1999-2000 First Extraordinary Session by ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to study and succeed academically regardless of socioeconomic background.

(b) The State of California affirms its historic commitment that every public school pupil should have an equal opportunity for educational success.

(c) Recent studies have confirmed that family income is among the leading predictors of pupil achievement in school.

(d) The poverty rate among California public school pupils has more than doubled, reaching 29 percent in the last 30 years.

(e) Pupils from backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage and schools in high-poverty neighborhoods lack equal access to the resources necessary for equal educational opportunity, such as properly credentialed teachers, rigorous courses, new textbooks, computers and multimedia technology, and the availability of after school tutoring.

(f) It is necessary to significantly reduce the impact of poverty on educational performance to avoid a two-tiered system of educational opportunity with adverse and disproportionate impacts on pupils from low-income backgrounds.

(g) The Legislature further finds and declares that low-income pupils can meet the challenge of higher expectations of educational performance and

that no one should face preventable economic or cultural barriers to achieving his or her full creative and educational potential.

It is, therefore, the intent of the Legislature to make gradual, measurable improvements in equalizing opportunities for all pupils to succeed. SEC. 2. Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 54550) is added to Part 29 of the Education Code, to read:

CHAPTER 5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

54550. (a) The office of the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Legislature shall develop a multiyear plan to increasingly align educational resources and funding so that all pupils have more equal opportunities for educational success.

(b) Guidelines for measuring equal opportunity for educational success shall be developed by the State Department of Education in consultation with other appropriate state agencies. These guidelines, which shall encompass a range dependent on utilization and program design, shall, whenever possible, seek to utilize the school as the unit of measurement and shall include, but shall not be limited to, available objective information pertaining to the following:

(1) The percentage of experienced and well-trained teachers assigned to low-performing schools, as demonstrated by consideration of all of the following:

(A) The length of teaching experience.

(B) Possession of a clear teaching credential.

(C) Participation in the National Board Professional Teaching Standards Certification Program.

(D) National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification.

(2) The percentage of teachers with emergency permits and teachers assigned outside their subject area.

(3) The percentage of principals assigned to low-performing schools who have had a Tier II Administrative Credential for at least five years and have completed at least 150 hours of professional growth after receiving the Tier II credential.

(4) The percentage of courses aligned with state standards and test requirements for subject areas in which state standards have been adopted.

(5) The ratio, by grade level, of contemporary textbooks containing curricula consistent with state standards, to pupils.

(6) The ratio, by grade level, of contemporary computers and other multimedia technology, to pupils.

(7) The number of pupils served in after school tutoring and dropout prevention programs.

(8) For high schools:

(A) The number of courses available that meet the A through F requirements for admission to the University of California and the number of advanced placement courses available.

(B) The percentage of pupils, by subgroup, taking the courses that meet the A through F requirements for admission to the University of California.

(C) The percentage of pupils, by subgroup, taking advanced placement.

(D) The percentage of pupils, by subgroup, completing: (i) Algebra I. (ii) Biology. (iii) U.S. or World History.

(9) Information related to the success of existing reading programs, parent involvement programs, and partnership programs between schools and public or private entities. These programs shall be examined in the context of the school and the community to determine effective practices among schools. Operation and quality of these programs shall be a consideration in the determination of a school's ability to provide equal opportunity for success.

(10) The graduation rate at the school and school district level. For purposes of this section, "graduation rate" means the percentage of pupils who graduate from high school within four years from the date they entered ninth grade.

(c) The data relating to a pupil's opportunity to succeed at a low-performing school, shall be analyzed and reported as a comparison to high-performing and average-performing schools.

(d) For the purposes of this chapter, subgroup categories include gender,

race, socioeconomic, and linguistic groups. 54550.1.

For purposes of this chapter, the State Department of Education, where appropriate, shall utilize data and analysis generated by the evaluations required by Sections 52054 and 52058 as added by Chapter 3 of the Statutes of the 1999-2000 First Extraordinary Session. 54551. Beginning no later than January 1, 2001, and continuing each year thereafter, the Governor in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall report, based on the information available, to the Legislature and the public on the status of equal opportunity for success in California's public schools. The report shall be disaggregated by subgroup categories and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) Progress toward achieving equal opportunity for educational success.

(b) Identifying barriers to progress toward achieving equal opportunity for educational success.

(c) Identifying barriers to, and making recommendations for, obtaining information pursuant to Section 54550.

(d) Recommendations for policies that will advance progress toward achievement of equal opportunity for educational success. The office of the Governor, in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide to the Legislature, for its adoption, no later than April 1, 2001, a long-term strategic plan including goals and benchmarks for progressing toward equal opportunity for educational success.

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

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Boston Parent Organizing Network (Boston, MA)
Direct Action for Rights & Equality (Providence, RI)
Latinos Unidos Siempre (Salem, OR)
Generation Y, a project of Southwest Youth Collaborative (Chicago, IL)
Youth for Social Change (Durham, NC)
Action for a Better Community (Denver, CO)
Equity Network (Los Angeles, CA):
Advocates for Valley African American Students, African American Parent/Community Coalition for Educational Equity, Parents for Unity/Padres por Unidad, Community Coalition, Parents & Students Organized for Harmony & Excellence in Our Schools & Communities, Rainbow Community Resource Center

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North Carolina Racial Justice Network (Greensboro, NC)
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