School Segregation Then & Now:
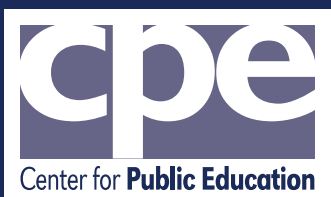
HOW TO MOVE TOWARD A MORE PERFECT UNION

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INTRODUCTION

In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* struck down state laws that required schools to be segregated by race, which then existed in 17 southern states. Yet in 2016, many schools across the country are still segregated along largely racial and socioeconomic lines. There are many reasons schools aren't better integrated. School district boundaries coupled with the legacy of discriminatory housing policies and practices that influence where families live are chief among them. But even though schools can no longer exclude students on the basis of race, many of our public schools still do not reflect the diversity of our nation.

This was not the vision the Supreme Court and civil rights advocates had 50 years ago. Indeed, given the currently divided political climate, it's in our collective interest to foster connectedness across all groups of people, beginning with our schools. Diverse school communities, starting with the youngest children, foster empathy and understanding across cultures, and prepare students for life and work in a diverse society. After all, it's harder to fear someone whose story you know. Additionally, research shows that integrated schools hold greater potential for helping students succeed academically than racially isolated schools, which ultimately bolsters economic growth for society as a whole.

> "Integrated schools hold greater potential for helping students succeed academically."

This report examines the effects racial and economic segregation have on students and communities. We present data that describes what enrollments in American schools look like now and show trends that contribute to *de facto* segregation. We also discuss outcomes in integrated schools, and offer best practices and policies, such as controlled choice, that can bring these benefits to more students. We acknowledge that some policy recommendations may not be applicable to rural schools, whose student enrollments may be set by geography, but we encourage all readers to consider how they may be able to increase diversity for the benefit of the students in their area.

Race and socioeconomic status are complex topics, often charged with ideological viewpoints, deep prejudices, and a history of unfair treatment. It's impossible to delve into the many aspects of school segregation in one report. Additionally, the issue crosses several sectors and levels of government, which limits the actions school districts can do on their own to increase integration.

Even so, school leaders have the potential to better integrate their districts. While purposefully increasing school diversity is controversial, limited by legal boundaries, and often difficult to achieve, it is possible and beneficial to students. Our goal is to shine light on the issue with the hope that readers will find this report a good place to begin when planning how you can improve diversity in your local school, district, and community.

THE COST OF SEGREGATION

The goal of closing achievement gaps between student groups still eludes American educators and policymakers. White and Asian students tend to have higher scores on average than black and Latino students; middle- and high-income students tend to have higher scores on average than poor students. These two gaps are intertwined; black and Latino students are 2.5-3 times as likely to live in poverty than white and Asian students.

Clearly, many factors outside of school can affect an individual's scholastic achievement, including home and community attributes. But schools also play an important role in students' chances of academic and economic success.

The 1966 Coleman Report was the first to highlight the importance of peer effects on students. The researchers found that middle-class and white families can bring advantages to classrooms, such as resources and social capital. Diverse settings can benefit all students through positive competition, learning from one's peers, and positive attitudes about education. Combined, these inputs can boost student achievement, life outcomes, and social cohesion for all students. However, when students of color or low-income students are concentrated in schools that separate them from their more advantaged peers, they are less likely to have such resources available to them to attain success.

While poverty and race are correlated with an individual's outcomes, the concentration of disadvantaged students in particular schools has an even greater impact on achievement (Borman & Dowling, 2010; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). This suggests that high-minority and high-poverty schools are limiting students' progress more than the characteristics of individual students themselves.

Race, poverty, and school achievement

Separating the effects of poverty compared to race in school populations is extremely difficult, as most high-minority schools are also high-poverty. The research base is overwhelmingly clear that poor students have better scholastic outcomes when they attend socioeconomically diverse schools (GAO, 2016; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). For example, low-income 4th grade students who attended more affluent schools scored almost two years ahead of low-income students in high-poverty schools on the 2007 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in math (Kahlenberg, 2009). Twenty-four percent of low-poverty schools (fewer than 50 percent of students on the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program) are considered high-performing, as compared with only one percent of high-poverty schools (Kahlenberg, 2009).

Other studies relate trends in family income to changes in student performance. Sean Reardon, a researcher at Stanford University, has extensively studied achievement gaps between rich and poor students, and attributes a 30-40 percent rise in the income-based achievement gap since the 1970s to the rise in income inequality (2011). This gap has been increasing even as gaps between students of color and white students have shrunk.

In contrast to what's known about the effects of poverty on student achievement, the research shows either positive or minimal effects of integration based solely on race (GAO 2016; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2009; Hoxby, 2000; Orfield, et al., 2014; Crain & Mahard, 1983; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). The confluence of race and poverty within several groups could explain why it's harder to get a clear picture.

Even so, some studies do point to positive effects for students in racially diverse schools. One 2006 study looked at the white-black 12th grade achievement gap in different types of schools and found that schools that were fewer than 10 percent black, Latino, or Native American had greater gaps between black and white students than schools that were 10-54 percent minority. The more segregated schools also had lower achievement overall, when socioeconomic status was held constant (Brown-Jeffy, 2006). A 2009 study found that segregated minority

schools had negative impacts on 1st grade students' reading and math achievement as compared to integrated and majority white schools, even when holding other school-level factors, such as poverty, constant (Condron, 2009). Researchers in Texas found that the achievement gap was worse for high-achieving students in segregated black schools, which they attribute partially to the high proportion of inexperienced teachers in these schools (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2009).

One thing we do know. The composition of the students sitting in your classrooms can be related to systemic differences in school structures, which have also been found to contribute to achievement gaps. For example:

- Less experienced teachers are inequitably distributed to schools with greater proportions of black and Latino and low-income students (Darling-Hammond & Post, 2000; Reardon, 2011; Orfield, et al., 2014; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2010; GAO, 2016). Teacher quality is strongly correlated with experience, so if students have more than their share of less experienced teachers, they are less likely to reach high levels of achievement. High-poverty, high-minority schools have twice as many teachers with less than one year of teaching experience and five times as many teachers who don't meet state certification requirements than low-poverty, low-minority schools (GAO, 2016).
- Low-income schools offer fewer high-level math and science courses, as well as fewer AP and gifted/talented education programs (GAO, 2016).
- Funding is often lower, sometimes significantly so, for high-poverty and/or high-minority schools and districts, providing fewer opportunities for the students who attend them (Mosenki, 2014; GAO, 2016).
- Parents in high-poverty schools may possess less social capital or time, giving them less ability to advocate on behalf of their students (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003).

The nation has actually experienced sustained gap narrowing before. During the period of desegregation in the 1970s and 1980s, NAEP scores saw their most dramatic improvement for Latino and black students. This cannot be attributed solely to desegregation; some researchers also attribute the gains to improved resources and opportunities, such as funding and higher standards for black and Latino students (Harris & Herrington, 2006). But many believe desegregation policies were a significant contributor, too (Berends & Peñaloza, 2010). One group of researchers found increased gains for black students in the south, which experienced the greatest amount of desegregation during the same time period (Grissmer, Flanagan, & Willamson, 1998). Significantly, in the 1990s, when many cities were released from desegregation orders and segregation increased, the achievement gap began to widen again.

Figure 1. Trend in NAEP Reading Average Scores and Score Gaps for White and Black 13-year-old Students
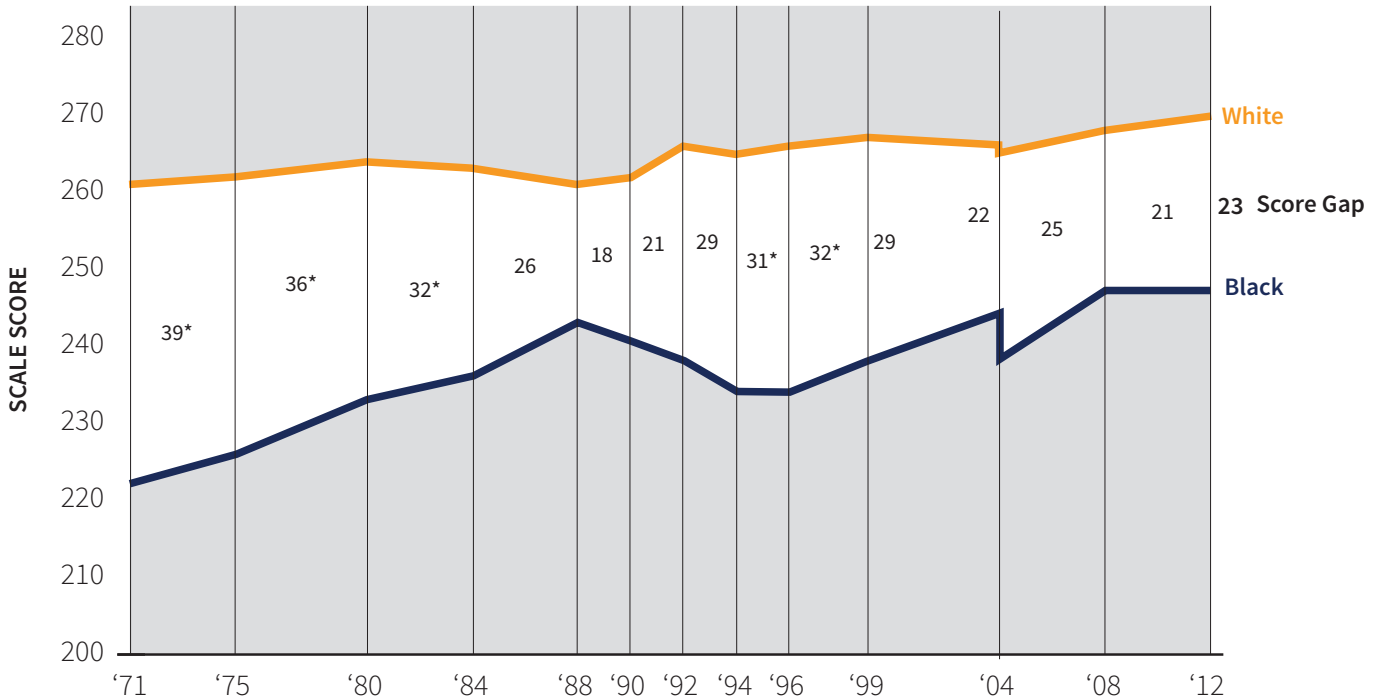
Note: Assessment format was revised in 2004, which caused a slight change in scores for that year.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2013). The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012 (NCES 2013 456). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

Integration as a Turnaround Strategy

Many of the nation's lowest performing schools have struggled to improve under No Child Left Behind requirements to replace the principal and/or teachers, despite increased financial resources. Given that many of these schools have disproportionate numbers of black, Latino, and poor students, an emerging group of scholars has advocated for turnaround strategies that focus on school integration. Their argument is that bringing middle-income and white students into these schools may also attract more experienced, qualified teachers, community support, and greater resources (Kahlenberg, 2009).

One way to attract middle-income parents to under-performing public schools, is to offer new programs, such as dual-language, Montessori, STEM, or the arts. This model is similar to that of magnet schools, which were often part of districts' desegregation plans in the 1980s and 1990s, except that they would accept all students, not just top-performers. Diversifying the school population, in addition to creating enriching programs for all students, may be a promising model for improving chronically under-performing schools.

Racial integration and life outcomes

Racially integrated schools have also been shown to produce greater life outcomes for all students, including higher college enrollment and success, higher lifetime earnings, a more diverse circle of friends and living arrangements in adulthood, and the important career skill of working with people from diverse backgrounds (Philips, et al., 2009; Siegel-Hawley, 2012; Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016). Recent research has claimed that white students can actually benefit as much or even more than students of color from diverse schools. White children, in fact, are the most likely to be in racially isolated schools and communities. In diverse schools, however, they learn how to interact with people different from themselves – opportunities they might not otherwise have (Siegel-Hawley, 2012).

But it is also clear that diverse schools are a plus for students of color. An experiment in Hartford, Connecticut placed low-income black students in predominantly white, suburban schools. The study began in 1966 and followed the students through 1982. Program participants experienced fewer negative outcomes such as incarceration, problems with law enforcement, and unintended pregnancies, as well as higher rates of college success, than their similar peers who remained in highly segregated schools (Crain, 1992). Black males benefited the most.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development led a similar experiment in the 1990s, called Moving to Opportunity, which offered housing vouchers to low-income families to use in middle-income neighborhoods. Researchers have found similar effects on outcomes for children of voucher families, including a 31 percent increase in adult income. However, it is unclear how much of the positive effect is due to a change in school environment or in neighborhood (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2015).

Research indicates that the effects of desegregation benefit more than one generation; they persist to their children and grandchildren, as well. A multi-generational study out of Berkeley, for example, shows that the effect of higher school quality under desegregation led to better educated parents, which produced higher achievement in their children, and to their children in turn (Johnson, 2012). Finally, improved academic achievement may also be correlated with increased opportunities through post-secondary education and increased lifetime earnings (Hanushek, Ruhose, & Woessmann, 2016). Thus, the positive effects of integration on student achievement may also lead to more positive lifetime outcomes for students.

A brief legal history of school segregation

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) is the landmark case that most people believe sparked the desegregation of schools across the country. In reality, it ruled that states could not require by law that public schools be segregated based on race. Most school districts in states that had such laws on the books prior to *Brown* did not start to actually integrate their schools until after the Civil Rights act of 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 were passed.

A slew of court cases throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s encouraged desegregation, with many districts adopting busing as the primary means to accomplish the goal. The south reached its peak of integration in 1988, at which point 43.5 percent of black students attended majority-white schools.

The courts began limiting desegregation starting in the 1974 case of *Milliken v. Bradley*, which found that desegregation plans that crossed school district boundaries could not be imposed on districts that had not engaged in unconstitutional segregative actions. In *Milliken,* the U.S. Supreme Court considered the integration plans of the city of Detroit. Because the city was predominantly African-American with few white students, it would have to work with surrounding school districts if they were to create more diverse schools. However, the U.S. Supreme Court found that since the surrounding school districts did not purposefully create segregation, they did not have to participate in the desegregation of Detroit's schools.

The 1991 *Board v. Dowell* case, based in Oklahoma City, affected many school districts' desegregation plans. In this decision, the Court found that school districts did not have to remain under court-ordered desegregation plans if they had complied long enough to reasonably adjust for prior purposeful segregation.

The Supreme Court limited voluntary school assignment policies that included individual students' races as a factor in the 2007 *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* case. However, there are still allowances for certain kinds of race-conscious policies based on the educational benefits of diversity. Aggregated population demographics can still be used; for example, if one census tract is 80 percent Latino and another census tract is 90 percent white, a policy could be created to assign students to a school based on their census tract, ignoring individual students' races.

MEASURING RACIAL SEGREGATION

Recent reports have drawn attention to school segregation, often claiming that schools are becoming re-segregated (see for example, Brown 2016; Smith 2016). This is not entirely true. Overall, student distribution within metropolitan areas has become more even in the last 10 years, which means that individual schools better reflect the overall make-up of the demographics of their cities and communities (Stroub & Richards, 2013). White students are in classrooms with more students of other races than they used to be. However, black and Latino students are less likely to be in classrooms with white students than they were in the 1970s and 80s.

The Effect of Student Demographics on Segregation

How are both of these trends simultaneously possible? The demographic makeup of the school-age population has changed over the past 50 years, as shown in Figures 2 and 3, which has created natural shifts in how students are exposed to students of other races. The number of white students has decreased steadily, while the number of Latino students has risen drastically. The population of black students has remained steady. Asian, mixed race, and other groups of students were not included in demographic statistics until the 1990s, but their numbers have been increasing slowly. By default, then, students of color have reduced exposure to white students, while white students have greater exposure to students of color.

Elementary & Secondary Public Education Enrollment in the U.S., 1968-2013

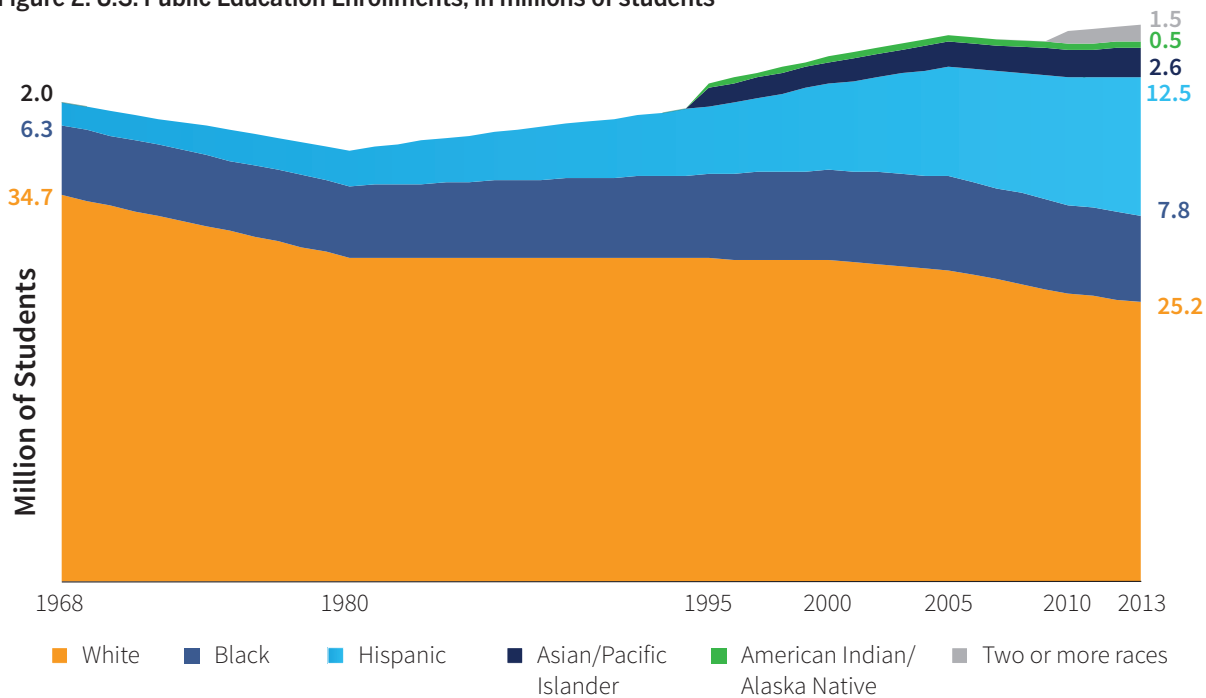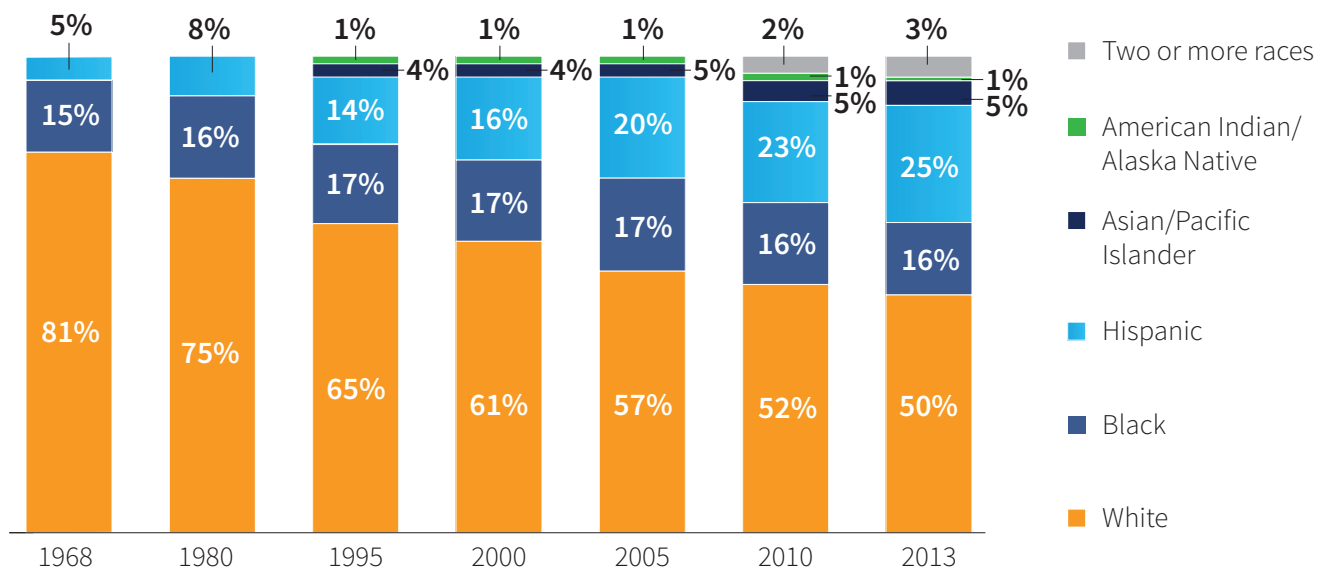**Figure 2. U.S. Public Education Enrollments, in millions of students**

Legend: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Two or more races

Figure 3. U.S. Public Education Enrollments, by percent of students

Legend: Two or more races, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Black, White

Data shown for years between data points were interpolated to show average growth rates.

Most segregation trends and statistics that are reported in the media – typically showing how often a student of one race is exposed to a student of a different race – really point to more general demographic trends across states and cities. One study found that about one-third of segregation is due to demographic differences between states, an additional 16 percent is due to segregation between metropolitan areas, and another one-third is due to segregation between districts within metropolitan areas (Fiel, 2013). Less than 20 percent of overall segregation is explained as being between schools in the same district. However, most policies only address within-district segregation, due to logistical, governance, and legal reasons. While school districts have shown some success in balancing their school-level populations, they can only address the segregation within their own borders.

Concentrations of students of color are more prevalent in the south and west, as well as urban areas, so the map shown in Figure 4 helps us see why much of the segregation we see is based on between-state and between-city demographic differences. Rural and suburban areas, as well as the Midwest, typically have more white families, which means that schools in those areas will have different student demographics than schools in south, west, or urban areas, even if students were evenly distributed within districts.

Population differences between metropolitan areas in the same state also contribute to differences in school populations. For example, the Redding, CA metropolitan area is 82 percent white, whereas the San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont metropolitan area is only 43 percent white. So, even if both of these districts had equal distribution of students by race in each school, there would be differences in how often a Latino or black student in these districts would be sitting next to a white student.

Figure 4. Percentage of U.S. Population that is White (not Hispanic/Latino), by County, 2015
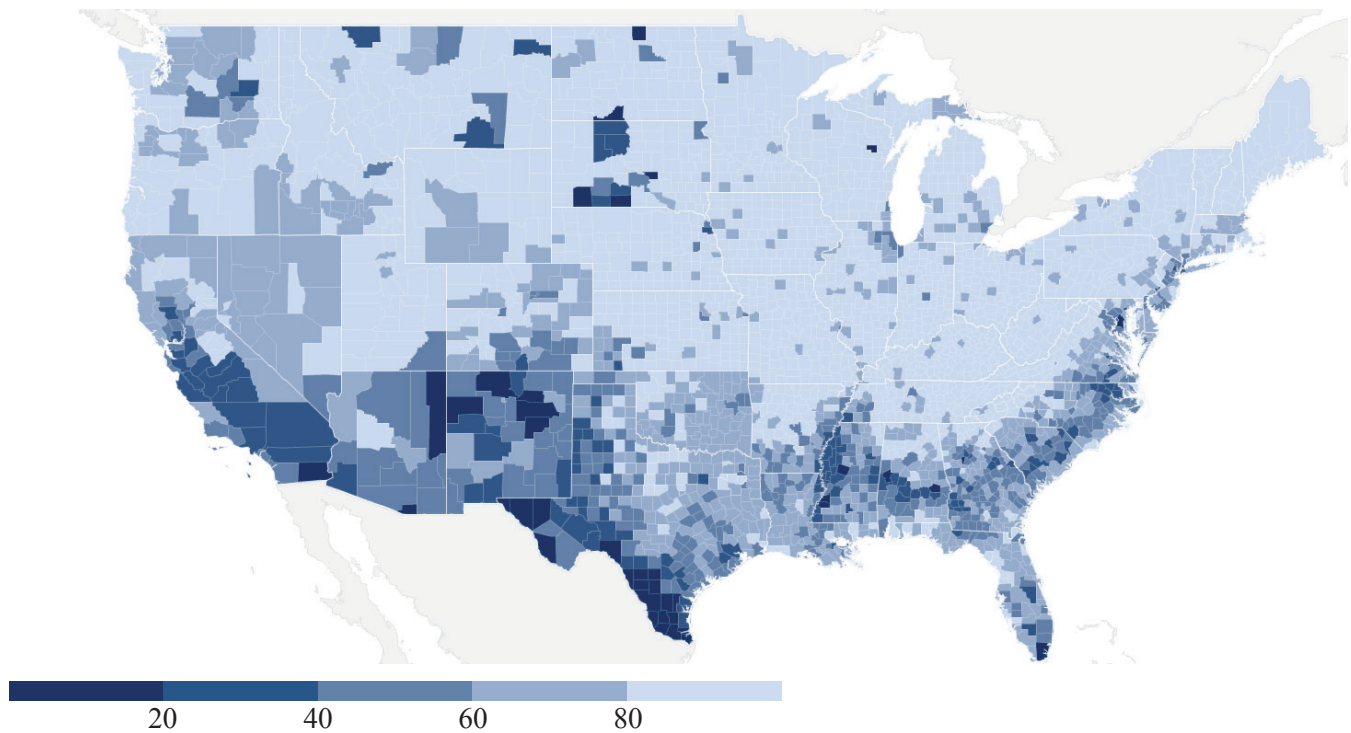
Legend**Total Population: Percentage White (not Hispanic/Latino)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015). 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office, 2015. Retrieved January 2017 from http://www.socialexplorer.com/.

As mentioned, an additional one-third of segregation is attributable to differences between school districts in the same metropolitan area. One example of this is Dallas, where the population within Dallas Independent School District's borders is 27 percent white, compared with 89 percent in Highland Park Independent School District, where the University Park neighborhood is located. Detroit has a similar "carved out" school district, Hamtramck Public Schools, which is 58 percent white, compared to Detroit's population that is 8 percent white. The suburbs around Detroit also stand in stark contrast to the urban school district. Clearly, individual school districts have limited ability to drastically change exposure between student groups without collaboration from neighboring districts.

Figure 5. Percentage of U.S. Population that is White, by School Districts near Dallas and Detroit, 2015
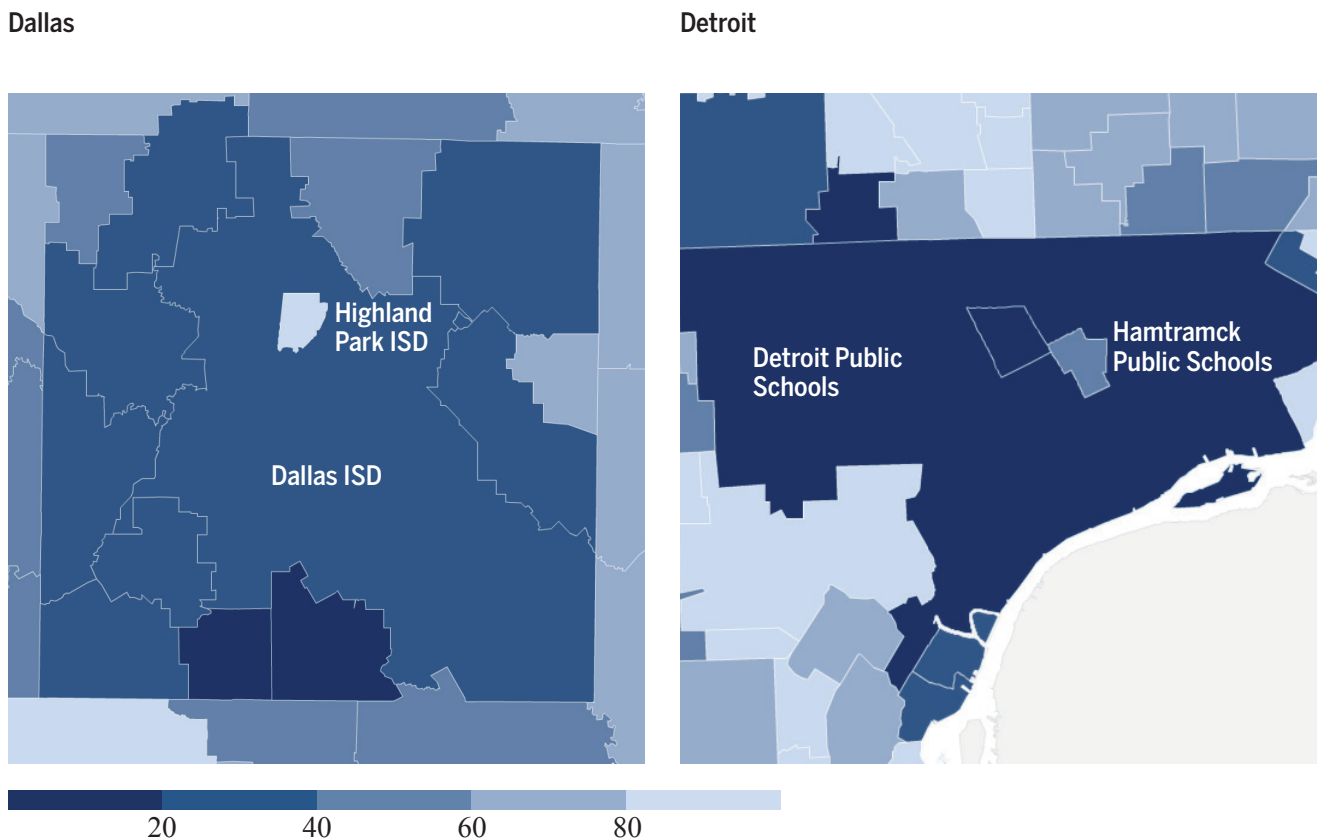
Dallas   **Detroit**

Total Population: Percentage White (not Hispanic/Latino)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015). *2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.* U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office, 2015. Retrieved January 2017 from http://www.socialexplorer.com/.

Defining Segregation

Prior to *Brown*, legal segregation had a clear definition: Students of different races were kept separated by official mandate. But *de facto* segregation as discussed here rarely exists as an absolute separation between student groups. Rather, even the most segregated schools typically have students of other races. This makes it harder to define and quantify. Researchers use four measures:

- **Exposure:** measures the percentage of a students' schoolmates who are of a different race.
- **Isolation:** measures the percentage of a students' schoolmates who are of the same race.
- **Imbalance:** measures the difference between the composition of individual schools and the composition of total student population within a district or metropolitan area. If all schools were perfectly balanced, they would have the exact same percentages of students from each racial group.
- **Concentration:** the proportion of students who attend schools that are over 50 percent of their own race.

Exposure & Isolation

One of the main reasons that segregation seems to be increasing is that black and Latino students are less likely to be in schools with large groups of white students today than they were in the 1980s. While some of the explanation may be school-related policy changes, as we saw earlier, part of the change is also due to fewer white students in the general population along with increasing numbers of black and Latino students concentrated in urban areas.
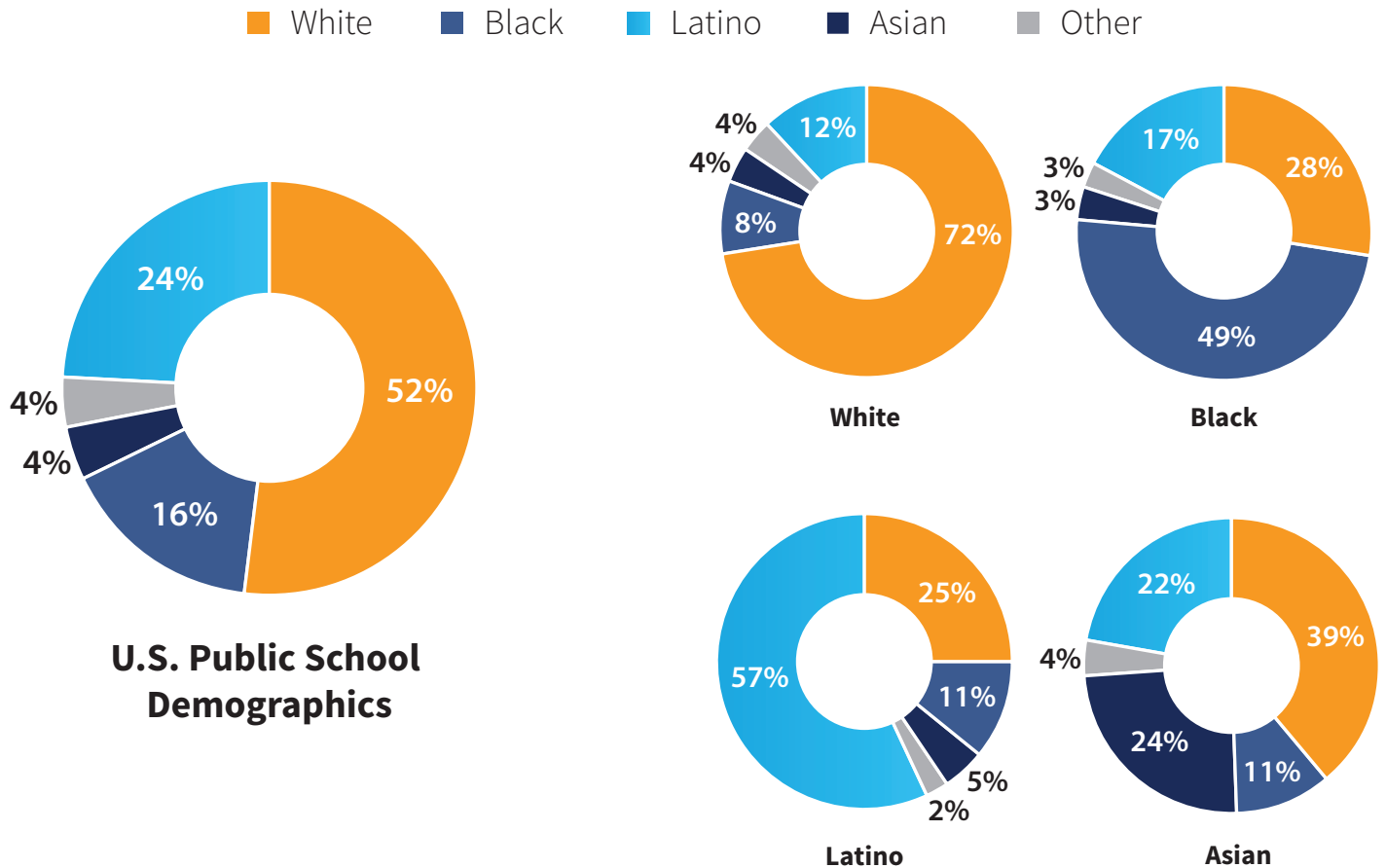
White isolation has decreased from 1990 to 2010 (which signals integration) at the same time that black exposure to whites also decreased (which signals segregation) indicating that demographic trends play a large role in these two measures of segregation (Fiel, 2013). In order for these two trends to occur at the same time, it must be due, at least in part, to a decrease in the overall white population and increase in non-white populations.

Whites were actually the most isolated racial group (with the average white student attending a school that was about 77 percent white in 2010), which we would expect, given that they are still the largest racial group. They also experienced the greatest decline in isolation from 1993 to 2010. Shifting demographics contribute to this trend, as well as more minority students moving to suburbs, which disrupts white isolation.

Figure 6 shows the exposure of an average student from each demographic group to other students. Each group clearly has some level of isolation (greater exposure to students of the same race than of other races). The average Asian student attends a school with six times the percentage of Asian students as the national average. The average black student is in a school with three times the percentage of black students as the national average.

Figure 6. School Demographics of the Average Student, by Racial Group (2012)

How to read this chart: The average white student attended a school with a 72% white population.

■ White ■ Black ■ Latino ■ Asian ■ Other

U.S. Public School Demographics

24% / 52% / 16% / 4% / 4%

White
72% / 12% / 8% / 4% / 4%

Black
28% / 49% / 17% / 3% / 3%

Latino
25% / 57% / 11% / 5% / 2%

Asian
39% / 22% / 24% / 11% / 4%

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

Concentration

The experience of the average student is not the only factor we should consider, though. Thirteen percent of U.S. public schools are 91-100 percent black and Latino, while 33 percent of schools are less than 10 percent black and Latino (Orfield, et al., 2014). Furthermore, ProPublica estimates that about 7 percent of U.S. schools are less than one percent white (Hannah-Jones, 2014), which equates to about 15 percent of black and Latino students attending such schools (Orfield, et al., 2012).

Imbalance

Perhaps the clearest way to discuss segregation is imbalance, because it accounts for the demographics of a particular area. If Miami-Dade County Public Schools were racially or economically balanced at the campus level, they would still look drastically different from a balanced Omaha Public Schools. This is also the measure typically looked at by local school boards who aim to create integrated schools. Obviously, it's not feasible to

create a national plan that would move students around the country to achieve 100,000 school campuses that look like the U.S. population as a whole. However, metropolitan areas and school districts can aim to create schools that mirror the general school population of their area.

Multiple statistical indices measure racial balance across metropolitan areas and tell us more about what most people see as school segregation. Many cities experience housing segregation, and metropolitan areas may have further segregation due to rural pockets within their counties. Unless school districts have policies in place to counteract housing trends, schools typically mirror their communities.

Researchers have found that racial imbalance among public elementary school students in the same metropolitan area increased from 1993 to 1998, as many districts dismantled their court-ordered desegregation plans, but decreased again after 1998 (Stroub & Richards, 2013). Housing trends are a possible explanation, with whites moving back into cities and blacks and Latinos moving to the suburbs. However, from 1998 to 2009, imbalance between all races decreased, resulting in an overall 10.7 percent decrease in overall imbalance from 1993 to 2009. Even though these metrics are showing improvement in integration across all student groups, imbalances remain greater between white and non-white students than between blacks, Latinos, Asian, and other non-white students (Stroub & Richards, 2013).

Figure 7. Changes in Racial Balance

How to read this chart: An increase in racial balance (an up arrow) means that integration improved between specific student groups. A negative number (a down arrow) means that segregation got worse.

	Percent Change in Racial Balance		
Group Comparison	1993-1998	1998-2009	1993-2009
Total Across All Groups	-2.3 ▼	12.6 ▲	10.7 ▲
Whites-Non-Whites	-5.3 ▼	11.9 ▲	7.3 ▲
Asian-White	-4.9 ▼	4.2 ▲	-0.6 ▼
Black-White	-4.0 ▼	8.0 ▲	4.4 ▲
Hispanic-White*	-9.0 ▼	3.9 ▲	-4.8 ▼
Among Non-Whites	5.0 ▲	10.6 ▲	15.1 ▲
	1993-1998	1998-2009	1993-2009
South			
Total Across All Groups	-2.3 ▼	13.0 ▲	10.9 ▲
Total Black-White	-5.8 ▼	4.5 ▲	-1.1 ▼
Rest of U.S.			
Total Across All Groups	-2.3 ▼	11.8 ▲	9.8 ▲
Total Black-White	-3.2 ▼	9.3 ▲	6.4 ▲

*The Hispanic-White trend did not start heading downward until 2003; the statistics for this row are for 1993-2003, 2003-2009, and 1993-2009

Data Source: Stroub, K. J., & Richards, M. P. (2013). From resegregation to reintegration: trends in the racial/ethnic segregation of metropolitan public schools, 1993–2009. *American Educational Research Journal, 50*(3), 497-531. All results reported are statistically significant.

The study's authors also note that southern states followed the same national trend, but saw greater increases in segregation through the 1990s and smaller decreases in segregation after 1998, even though the south is still the least segregated area of the country between black and white students. Metropolitan areas that experienced

more rapid increases in population and diversity also saw greater increases in segregation followed by smaller decreases. Additionally, we have to keep in context that these trends are averages of 350 metropolitan areas. Only 60 percent of these districts experienced improved integration since 1993; the other 40 percent saw increases in segregation (Stroub & Richards, 2013).

School Choice

Multiple studies have found that school choice increases segregation within districts and metropolitan areas (Fiel, 2013; Ladd, Clotfelter, & Holbein, 2015; Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2011; Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010). Fiel examined the contribution of school choice on segregation across all schools; about one-fifth of racial isolation in 2009-2010 was attributable to choice. Most of this was due to parents choosing private schools, but about 2-4 percent was attributable to charters. This does not account for parents' residential choices of particular school zones or districts.

Charter schools have been found to exacerbate the isolation of black students in urban areas. Because many charter schools target disadvantaged students in urban areas, a disproportionate number of black and Latino children end up in schools that isolate them from other student groups, though black students experience the greatest isolation (Miron, et al., 2010; Rotberg, 2014). While about 15 percent of black students nationwide are in schools that are less than one percent white, 43 percent of black charter school students are in similar schools (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010). The average black charter school student is in a school that is nearly three-quarters black, compared to about half for the overall population of black students (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010).

White isolation in charters is less widespread, as proportionately fewer white students attend charter schools than other races. However, in some cities and states, charter schools tend to have extremely high enrollments of white students compared to their neighboring traditional public schools, creating a form of "white flight" (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010; Miron, et al., 2010).

Charter schools also tend to increase income-based segregation, with more schools that serve disproportionate numbers of low-income students and others that serve disproportionate numbers of high-income students than their surrounding traditional public schools (Miron, et al., 2010).

Parents who have choices within their school district, which often includes charter schools, tend to look for schools that are close to home and have a strong representation of their own race or ethnicity, which increases school segregation (Glazerman & Dotter, 2016; Schneider & Buckley, 2002). Residential choices related to schools also show segregating patterns: white parents are more likely to move to specific school districts for predominantly white schools, more so than white non-parents (Owens, forthcoming; Rich, forthcoming).

School choice does not necessarily have to increase segregation. A few charter schools and district management plans achieve more diverse schools by putting controls in place to mitigate the segregating effects of open choice plans (Rotberg, 2014; Wagner, 2017; also see Jefferson County's plan on page 17). Magnet schools, one of the original forms of school choice and tools for desegregation that originated in the 1970s, enroll about 2.5 million students nationwide and provide for more integrated settings for their students (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). While fewer magnet schools today focus on integration as a key priority than in the 1970s, the majority of them still aim for racially and socioeconomically balanced school populations (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012).

SOCIOECONOMIC SEGREGATION

Students of color are more likely than their white peers to be in high-poverty schools. As stated earlier, it's challenging for researchers to dissociate race from poverty, as black and Latino students have poverty rates 2.5-3 times higher than white students (GAO, 2016). However, the concentration of black and Latino students often overlaps with high concentrations of students in poverty. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that 16 percent of all U.S. public schools in 2013-14 are at least 75 percent low-income and at least 75 percent black and Latino, an increase from nine percent in 2000-01 (2016). Thirteen percent of these schools are charter schools, an increase from only five percent in 2000. This could be attributed to the practice in some districts of turning low-performing schools into charter schools and the fact that some charter operators specifically target low-income students of color (GAO, 2016).

Even when accounting for black and Latino students' higher poverty rates compared to white students, they are still disproportionately represented in low-income schools (75-100 percent free/reduced lunch). Put in other terms, a poor white student is less likely to attend a high-poverty school than a poor black or Latino student.

Figure 8. Proportion of students in poverty vs. proportion of students in low-income schools, by race (2014)
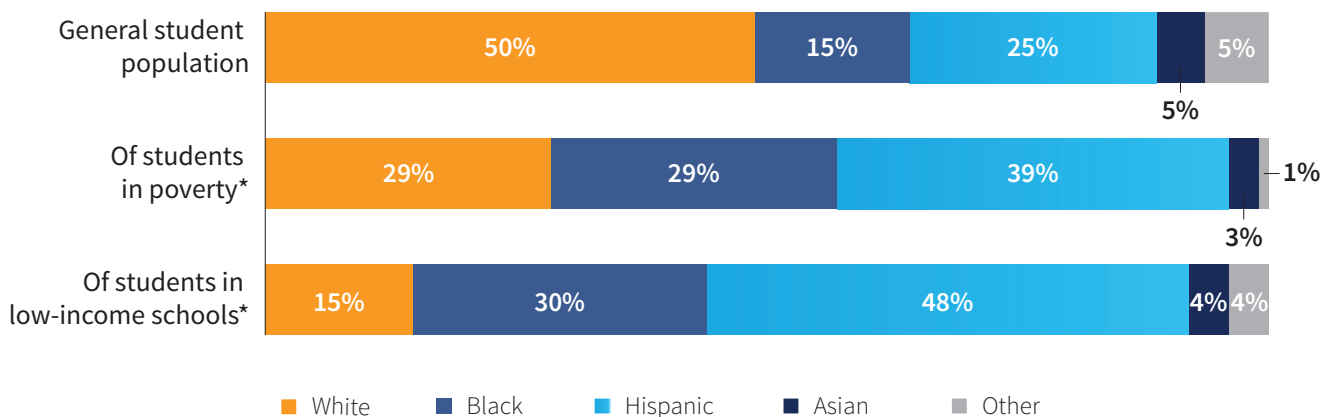
*Students in poverty are those whose families earn less than the federal poverty line.

*Low-income schools are those with 75 percent or more of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Data source: Government Accountability Office. (2016). "K-12 EDUCATION: Better Use of Information Could Help Agencies Identify Disparities and Address Racial Discrimination" (GAO Publication No. 16-345). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.; National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). "Family Characteristics of School Age Children." Accessed October 11, 2016 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cce.asp.; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey", 2013-14 v.1a.

As shown in Figure 9, schools that have more Latino and black students are more likely to also have more students in poverty. The bubbles represent the relationship between black and Latino students and the poverty level of the schools they attend. So, the large bubble at the top right represents that 51 percent of schools that are 90-100 percent Latino and black are also 90-100 percent low-income. The larger the bubble, the greater the percentage of schools that fall into a particular income category. If a school is more than 50 percent Latino and black, it is much more likely to be more than 50 percent low-income, as compared with the lower left side of the graph, which shows that predominantly white schools are less likely to have large groups of low-income students.

Figure 9. School Poverty by Race

How to read this chart: 51% of schools that are 90-100% Latino and black are also 90-100% low-income.

% of School that is Low-Income

% of School that is Black & Hispanic
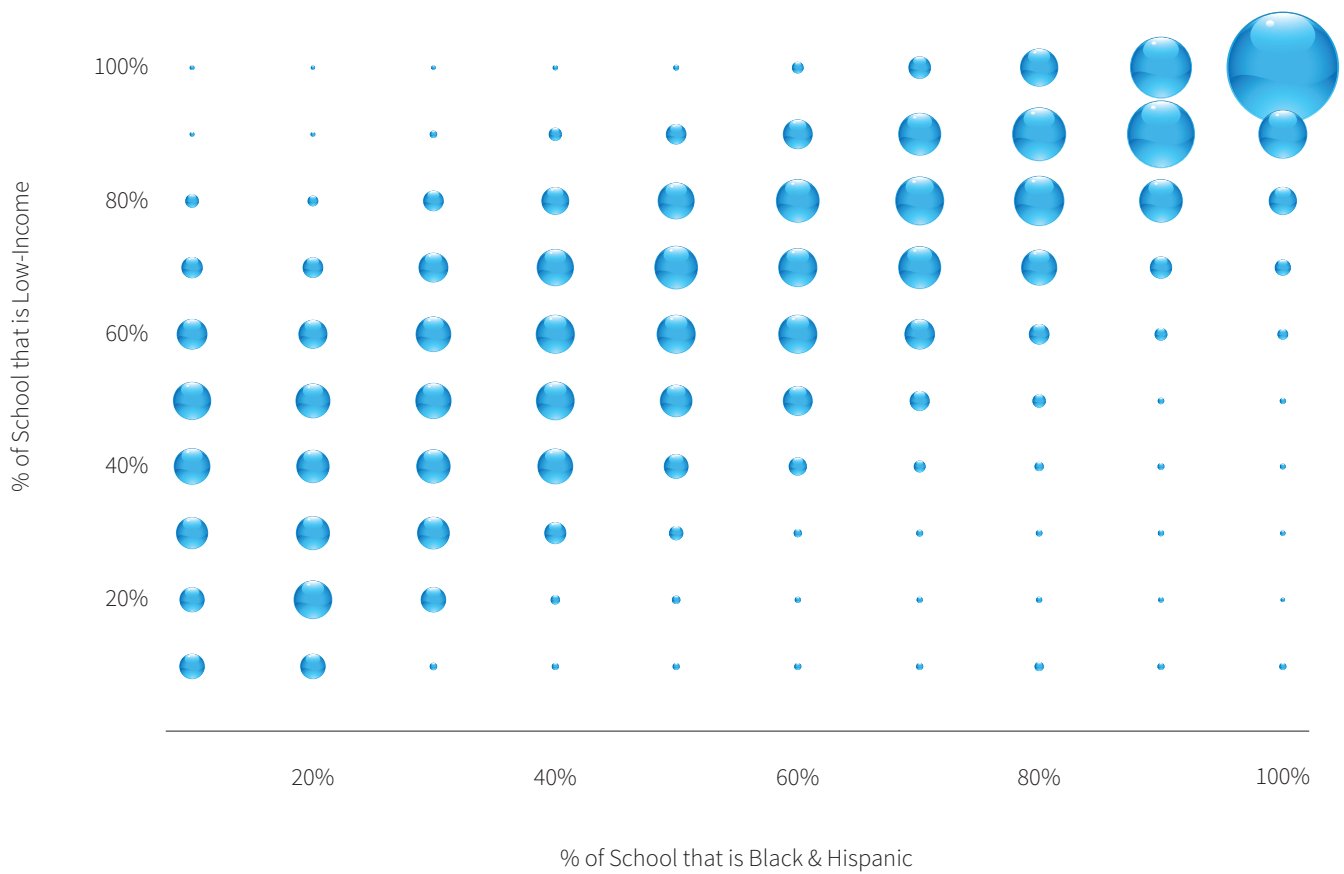
Data source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data, *2011-12.* In Orfield, G., Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., & Kuscera, J. (2014). "Brown at 60: Great progress, a long retreat and an uncertain future." Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles. *Note:* Excluded schools with zero percent FRL (Free and Reduced Lunch) students.

Socioeconomic segregation in schools has risen steadily since the 1970s, fueled by increasing income inequality and a rise in income-based housing segregation, especially among families with school-aged children (Owens, 2016). Segregation of low- and high-income students between districts increased 15 percent from 1990 to 2010 and segregation between schools in large districts increased 40 percent from 1991 to 2012 (Owens, Reardon, & Jencks, 2016). Even so, two-thirds of income-based segregation in the largest 100 school districts is still across school district boundaries, while the other one-third is between schools in the same district (Owens, Reardon, & Jencks, 2016).

Twenty-four percent of all public school students attended a high-poverty school in 2013 (75-100 percent of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch), while 21 percent attended low-poverty schools (less than 25 percent of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch), showing us that students are not evenly distributed across all schools (Kena, et al., 2016).

Poverty rates between adjoining school districts differ by an average of seven percentage points (as a reference, about 20 percent of students are below the federal poverty line). However, in 4,000 non-rural school districts the difference is 14 points or more (EdBuild, 2016). At the extreme, the 50 most segregating borders have a 35-point differential. As an example, the Dayton City School District in Ohio has a poverty rate among school-age children of 47 percent; neighboring Beavercreek City School District a school-age child poverty rate of seven percent. Of the 50 most segregated districts, most are in the rust belt (Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois), while only one of the 13 states that utilize county-wide school systems appears on the list (Alabama) (EdBuild, 2016).

School districts that serve more affluent students also receive more per-pupil spending than low-income districts in about half of the states (EdBuild, 2016; Baker, Sciarra, & Farrie, 2010). Nationwide, low-income districts have five percent, or $500, less to spend on each student than wealthier districts, though in some states the difference is as great as 19 percent (EdBuild, 2016). While each state's funding formula varies, about 45 percent of school funding comes from local sources, typically property taxes. Districts with low-income students also tend to have lower income residents, and thus less of a property base from which to draw taxes, even though poorer districts tend to tax themselves at higher rates than more affluent districts (EdBuild, 2016). In some states, the imbalance in local funding is assuaged to some degree by federal and state funding.

One School's Plan for Diversity

Jefferson County Public Schools, in Louisville, KY, strives to achieve school diversity through its policy of "controlled choice" in which student assignments are determined along multiple metrics. Students receive a classification based on the income, percent white, and educational attainment of the census block in which they live. Families express their preferences on which school their child attends, and this information is combined with student classifications to ensure that all schools have a diversity index that lies within a particular range.

Jefferson County Public Schools Diversity Index

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Income	Less than $42,000	$42,000-$62,000	More than $62,000
Percent Whites	Less than 73%	73-88%	More than 88%
Education Attainment (6 point scale)	Up to an associate's degree (Less than 3.5)	College courses beyond an associate's degree (3.5-3.7)	College courses up to a bachelor's degree and beyond (More than (3.7)

Note: Each Student is classified as a category 1,2, or 3, based on the category of the black group in which the student resides. A School's diversity index is calculated as a weighted average of the number of students who attend from each diversity category. The district's goal is for each school's diversity index to fall whithin the range of 1.4 to 2.5.

Source: Dena Dossett, Chief of Data Management, Planing and Program Evaluation,Jefferson County Public Schools.

Source: Bridges, Kim. (2016). Jefferson County Public Schools: From Legal Enforcement to Ongoing Commitment. The Century Foundation. Accessed October 19, 2016 from https://tcf.org/content/report/jefferson-county-public-schools/.

WHAT SHOULD DISTRICTS DO?

Even if school leaders want to integrate their schools, their policy levers are often limited to their own district boundaries due to demographic patterns and legal precedents. Nonetheless, the positive effects on individual students and society as a whole should not be overlooked, and so the effort is worth it. Additionally, funding may be available through state or federal education agencies for school districts to purposefully increase their schools' diversity.

The Century Foundation recently found that only 91 school districts, serving four million students, utilize socioeconomic status in student assignment (Potter, Quick, & Davies, 2016). These strategies are all forms of public school choice (magnet, charters, or traditional schools) or voluntary transfer policies that consider socioeconomic status, which stands in stark difference with the mandatory busing policies of the racial desegregation era.

When considering strategies for integrating schools within a district, school leaders should keep in mind the following policy solutions and best practices, as well as possible funding streams:

Policy Solutions and Best Practices

- Policies should be made on a local level with community input. Policies that address race and students are often controversial. Researchers have highlighted countless instances of policies that failed due to lack of community buy-in. School busing in the 1970s and 1980s often resulted in white flight, making it more challenging for school districts to create diverse schools. School choice plans that prioritized some students based on race or family income were opposed by some parents, which ultimately led to some plans being terminated through court cases or communities electing different school board members.

- Families should have some level of choice in a new school assignment plan, but choice should also be limited to reduce the possibility of increasing segregation. This model is often called controlled choice. Parents are more likely to support a new integration policy if they can exhibit some choice over the school their child attends. However, given that open choice can exacerbate segregation, school leaders should also work to create balance between schools. Creating unique programs at individual schools may spur parents to choose between schools based on premises besides race and location. Jefferson County Public Schools (Louisville, KY) is one example of this, where parent preferences and school demographics are balanced to create diverse schools.

> "The United States is a complex, racially diverse society. School boards should take positive action to support integration and to avert re-segregation in their districts, individual schools, and programs to promote equality of educational opportunities."
>
> *From the National School Boards Association Beliefs and Resolutions, 2016*

- For districts that are somewhat homogenous in racial make-up, it may be necessary for district leaders to work with other districts in their metropolitan area in order to achieve diversity. While this may not be simple, nor can it be coerced (based on legal precedent), urban and suburban schools both stand to benefit from increased student diversity. One example of this is the Omaha Metropolitan Area, where 11 districts merged their funding sources and provided cross-district transfer opportunities for students in order to increase school diversity.

- Consider race and socioeconomic status in setting diversity goals, not just one or the other. While the two are correlated, they are not the same. The district may also wish to consider including other factors in developing its diversity plan. It is important that school leaders document the educational benefits it is seeking in adopting a student assignment plan. If the plan includes race as a factor, the district must be able to substantiate its consideration of race-neutral alternatives and why those measures are insufficient to achieve the district's goals.

Funding

- In December 2016, the U.S. Department of Education announced a $12 million grant competition that would allow up to 20 school districts to craft plans for increasing socioeconomic diversity (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Schools may also aim for additional forms of diversity, including race-based. Grant recipients would be able to use the funds for data analysis and pilot programs such as lotteries or redesigned attendance zones. Districts that utilize inter-district plans or involve rural districts will receive funding priority.

- The U.S. Department of Education awarded Technical Assistance for Student Assignment Plans grants in 2009 to 11 school districts, totaling $2.25 million. While this was a one-time grant program, it is an example of programs that may become available to schools.

- Multiple states have supported school integration policies. The New York State Education Department awarded Socioeconomic Integration Pilot Program grants in 2015 to low-performing schools. Nebraska supported the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (Omaha area), which integrated funding streams across 11 school districts and increased inter-district choice options, with additional state dollars.

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The Center for Public Education (CPE) is a national resource for credible and practical information about public education and its importance to the well-being of our nation. CPE provides up-to-date research, data, and analysis on current education issues and explores ways to improve student achievement and engage public support for public schools. CPE is an initiative of the National School Boards Association. Learn more at: www.centerforpubliceducation.org

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APPENDIX A – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Socioeconomic-based segregation: http://edbuild.org/

Case studies of schools that have focused on integration: https://tcf.org/topics/education/stories-of-school-integration/

The Benefits of Socioeconomically and Racially Integrated Schools and Classrooms: https://tcf.org/content/facts/the-benefits-of-socioeconomically-and-racially-integrated-schools-and-classrooms/

More details on how to create a school district diversity policy: https://www.nsba.org/educationexcellenceforall

A more detailed analysis of the 2007 *Parents Involved* Supreme Court case and what it means for school districts: https://cdn-files.nsba.org/s3fs-public/reports/NotBlackandWhite.pdf?GjCZ6rGpO5SarzIj6TWIMO.dy_XjQWMP