

No More Dreams Deferred

Building an Education System that Works for Black and Hispanic Students in the Philadelphia Suburbs

March 2021

This report was prepared by:

- Tomea Sippio-Smith, Education Policy Director
- David Loeb, Research Associate
- John Schanfelder, PCCY Intern
- The PCCY Education Policy Team
- Donna Cooper, Executive Director
- Steven Fynes, Layout & Design

Every child has dreams.

While some imagine taking flight as superheroes, others see themselves on spaceships, starting companies, being prima ballerinas, writing award winning novels, or serving on the highest court of the land.

Although none grew up to rule Wakanda, Leland Melvin (Astronaut and NFL Player), Alberto 'Betro' Perez (Zumba Fitness Founder), Misty Copeland (Principal Dancer at the American Ballet Theatre), Ta-Nehisi Coates (*#1 New York Times* bestselling author), and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor all have led extraordinary lives.

Each shattered expectations, broke barriers, and redefined society's perception of who we think of when we envision success.

Importantly, each of them was once a Black or Hispanic child that dared to dream big.

6 Executive Summary

8 Introduction

8 School Climate Affects the Quality of a Student's Education

9 Black Students Are Punished More Harshly in School Than Any Other Student Group

Chart 1: Black Students Make Up 3.5x More of the Suspensions Than Would Be Expected Based on Their Enrollment

10 Black and Hispanic Students Are Also Much More Likely to Be Referred to the Police for Disciplinary Incidents in School

Chart 2: Black Students Make Up 2.7x More of the Incidents Involving Law Enforcement Than Would Be Expected Based on Their Enrollment

11 Black and Hispanic Students Are Less Likely to Be in Classes That Rigorously Prepare Them for College or Skilled Positions

Chart 3: Career and Technical Education is Closing the Performance Gap for the Region's Students

13 Income Inequality, Segregation, and Inadequate School Funding are Compounding Factors Impacting Black and Hispanic Student Performance

Chart 4: Eight School Districts in the Southeast Suburbs Have Schools With 30%+ Differences in Black and Hispanic Enrollment

Chart 5: Districts With the Most Black and Hispanic Students Have the Least to Spend on Instruction

15 Black and Hispanic Students Are Also Hardest Hit by the Digital Divide

Chart 6: Thousands of Black and Hispanic Students in Every SEPA County Lack Digital Access

16 Individually Each of These Factors Adversely Affects Black and Hispanic Students; Together the Impact Is Life-Altering for Them

Student Story: Harry C from Delaware County

Chart 7: Achievement Gaps in Reading Are Pervasive Across Bucks County

Chart 8: Achievement Gaps in Reading Loom Large in Chester County

Student Story: Seif G from Delaware County.

Chart 9: Achievement Gaps in Reading Are Significant in Delaware County

Chart 10: Achievement Gaps in Reading Are Common Across Montgomery County

Student Story: Nya J from Montgomery County

20 Students Do Better When Their Schools Are Well-Funded and Can Provide Them With Adequate Resources

Chart 11: Most Students in Top Spending Districts Are Reading and Doing Math on Grade Level

20 When Black and Hispanic Students Have Access to More Resources, They Do Better Too

Chart 12: More Black and Hispanic Students Meet State Standards in Higher-Spending School Districts

21 **The Region’s Black and Hispanic Students Know Their Lives Matter, Want an Education System That Works for Them, and Expect Schools and Policymakers to Act Now**

Building an Education System That Works for Black and Hispanic Students

Flip the Script and Hold Schools Accountable for Equity

Implement Proven and Effective Processes That Improve School Climate to Close Racial Disparity Gaps

Provide High Quality Academic Options for Black and Hispanic Students

Ensure That Schools Serving Black and Hispanic Students Are Adequately Funded and That Funding Follows Student Need

Student Story: Kelly M from Bucks County

26 **Appendix 1: Twice the Share of White Students Are in APs Than Black & Hispanic Students Across the Suburbs**

Chart 13: Bucks County AP Enrollment

Chart 14: Chester County AP Enrollment

Chart 15: Delaware County AP Enrollment

Chart 16: Montgomery County AP Enrollment

28 **Appendix 2: Regional County Achievement Gap Data – 2019 English/Language Arts Score Gaps**

29 **Appendix 3: Regional County Achievement Gap Data – 2019 Math Score Gaps**

30 **Appendix 4: Gaps Exist in Nearly Every School District in Math**

Chart 17: There are Gaps in Every District in Math in Bucks County

Chart 18: Chester County Has Not Closed Achievement Gaps in Math

Chart 19: Achievement Gaps in Math Are Large Across Delaware County

Chart 20: Achievement Gaps in Math Remain Large Across Montgomery County

32 **Appendix 5: Black and Hispanic Enrollment and Actual Instructional Expense per Weighted Average Daily Membership (AIE/WADM) for SEPA SDs, 2019**

34 **Endnotes**

Executive Summary

Across the region, the share of students of color attending suburban public schools is growing. In fact, one of four students attending 61 suburban school districts in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties are Black or Hispanic. Without question, these suburban school districts are becoming more and more diverse, yet the educational paradigms have not kept pace with this change.

Pennsylvania ranks 15th in the nation in providing overall access to educational opportunities for students, AND it ranks at the bottom – 47th in the country – in gaps both between White and Black students and White and Hispanic students because the disparity between opportunities for White and Black and Hispanic students is so large.¹ Thus, it should be no surprise that Southeastern Pennsylvania’s Black and Hispanic students are struggling to achieve outcomes comparable to their White peers.

The racial achievement gap is assumed to be an urban education phenomenon, but this review of the persistence of that gap in suburban Philadelphia makes clear the root of this problem is not urban schools. Black and Hispanic students are being educated in a system that focuses on their performance as an indicator of their ability, rather than in a system that considers how its practices work to impact the performance of Black and Hispanic students.

For example, Black and Hispanic students in the suburban county school districts are far more likely than their White peers to be harshly disciplined at school, while also lacking access to challenging courses. In fact, of all student groups, schools are most likely to suspend or use law enforcement to discipline Black students; they are suspended 3.5 times as often and referred to law enforcement almost 3 times more than would be expected.² Conversely, in 92% of the suburban districts, fewer Black and Hispanic students are enrolled in AP classes than one would expect given the share of students in the district.³ And fewer Black and Hispanic students access career and technical education programs. School climate and depressed access to rigorous programs are just two of many systemic disparities threatening educational equity for Black and Hispanic students.

Additionally, while the intent of *Brown v. Board of Education* was to end racial segregation and increase access to equitable resources in public schools, trends in suburban Philadelphia demonstrate the stubbornness of the problem. Most Black and Hispanic students are likely to live in working and lower income families, reside in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of students of color, and attend economically and racially segregated schools.

Due to Pennsylvania’s broken system of funding schools, many of these students also attend schools that are chronically underfunded. Moreover, there is a persistent sense from parents that resources are not allocated equitably or aligned with student needs even within districts, compounding the problem.

Unfortunately, gaps in the state’s approach to collecting data make it impossible to gauge the impact of intra-district decisions regarding equity. What we do know is that Southeastern Pennsylvania is home to 10 of the most underfunded suburban school districts in the state – the very districts that educate most of the region’s Black and Hispanic students.⁴

Considered separately, each of these policies have significantly impacted Black and Hispanic students. Collectively, the results have been devastating. The achievement gap among the suburban districts in reading is 16 percentage points between White and Hispanic students and 22 points between White and Black students.⁵ In math, the disparities are even larger.⁶ Clearly, a renewed focus on equity is needed to close the opportunity gaps for Black and Hispanic students and intentionally support their success.

To build an education system that works for the region’s Black and Hispanic students, schools, districts, and lawmakers must stop divorcing the issues of poor school climate, lower access to rigorous academic courses, racially and economically segregated classrooms, and consistently inadequate school funding from student performance.

To effectively build an education system that works for Black and Hispanic students, schools, districts, and the state must adopt a system that embraces four key strategies:

- 1) Flip the Script and Hold Schools Accountable For Equity
- 2) Implement Proven and Effective Processes That Improve School Climate to Close Racial Disparity Gaps
- 3) Provide High Quality Academic Options for Black and Hispanic Students
- 4) Ensure That Schools Serving Black and Hispanic Students Are Adequately Funded and That Funding Follows Student Need

Time is of the essence.

The quality of the education Black and Hispanic students receive not only impacts their life outcomes, but their success has long-term implications for the region’s economic strength and stability. Soon, these students will graduate, enter the workforce, become entrepreneurs, join the ranks of companies and small businesses, become leaders in their communities, and raise families of their own.

Black and Hispanic students will be more prepared to meet life’s challenges and excel if their schools can better address their needs and improve how they educate and support them. Education should work for every child; not one more child’s dream should be deferred.

Introduction

Of the 363,500 students attending school in the 61 school districts in the four suburban counties, 23% of students are Black or Hispanic.⁷ Among these districts, the gaping racial achievement gap is startling and pronounced. School discipline policies that criminalize rather than connect students to needed supports, informal and formal school practices that do not ensure that all students have equal access to rigorous academic options, economic and racial segregation, and inadequate education funding are all key contributors to that outcome.

Until the Commonwealth and school leaders acknowledge and address the root issues of the educational disparities facing Black and Hispanic students and overcome the systemic failures mired in a legacy of racism that have resulted in cultural isolation, Black and Hispanic students will continue to struggle to succeed.

The region's suburban districts are at a pivot point and have a unique opportunity to rewrite the educational script for Black and Hispanic students. As they become more diverse, districts can take the steps necessary to show the state and country that they can change and deliver on Pennsylvania's Constitutional obligation to provide every child with a thorough and efficient education. By equally protecting and equitably serving Black and Hispanic students, districts will better educate them and more adequately prepare them for their next steps.

School Climate Affects the Quality of a Student's Education

National studies confirm that school climate – i.e., goals, values, quality of personal relationships, teaching and learning practices, organizational structures, and student and parent perceptions of a student's quality of education – plays a powerful role in student success.⁸ When students feel safe and supported in school, they learn more of the skills they need to succeed, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and other academic subjects, and soft skills such as collaboration with peers, building relationships with adults, and to think critically – skills employers value.⁹

Moreover, students that perceive their school climate as positive feel “valued, respected, listened to, and a part of the community.”¹⁰ They consistently do better in school and have fewer behavioral issues.¹¹

Despite compelling research that it is essential to student success, Black and Hispanic students are far less likely than White students to experience a positive school climate. Moreover, they are less likely to report feeling safe, supported, connected to adults, or having relationships with trusted adults in schools.¹²

In fact, in a study considering the educational opportunity gaps in school, including access to a positive school climate, the Commonwealth ranked among the worst in the country – 47th – because both the gaps between White and Black and White and Hispanic students were so stark.¹³

Black Students Are Punished More Harshly in School Than Any Other Student Group

One of the leading contributing factors to a poor school climate is inequitable and arbitrary application of school discipline practices. Despite exhibiting behavior common among many students, Black students are significantly more likely to be harshly disciplined than all other groups of students. To be sure, there are times that student suspensions are warranted and instances when police should be called.

However, suspensions are a serious disciplinary measure and have dire consequences for Black students. Nationally, Black students lose 103 days of instruction per 100 students enrolled in school – 82 more days than the 21 days their White peers lost due to out-of-school suspensions.¹⁴ In Pennsylvania, the gap between Black and White students is about 80 – Black students lose 95 days of instruction due to suspensions compared to 15 days for their White peers.¹⁵

Although Black students make up about 13% of the students in the four suburban county school districts, about 43% of in- and out-of-school suspensions are of Black students.¹⁶ Overall, Black students are disproportionately suspended 3.5 times as often as White students, given their share of enrollment.¹⁷ When looking at out-of-school suspensions exclusively, Black children fare even worse. Of the 13,347 out-of-school suspensions, about 47% were of Black students.¹⁸

Deeper disparities exist at the county and district levels for overall and out-of-school suspensions. For instance, in Delaware County, 68% of suspensions were of Black students – almost 2.5 times the expected rate given that they comprise only 28% of the student population.¹⁹ In Montgomery County, the rate was 3.1 times higher.²⁰ Similarly, in Bucks, that rate was 4 times as high.²¹

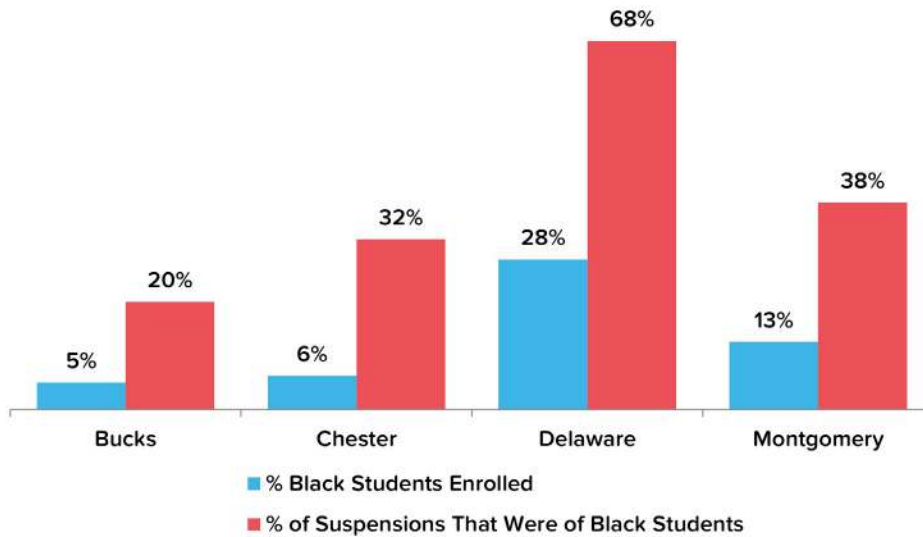
In Chester County, Black students fared significantly worse. Although they made up only 6% of the population, they accounted for 32% of suspensions, more than 5 times the expected rate.²² And between school districts in Chester County, the rates vary significantly. For instance, in one district, Black students are suspended at rates 7.5 times higher than anticipated given their enrollments.²³



**In Pennsylvania,
Black students
lose about
80 days more
compared to White
students due to
suspensions.**



Chart 1: Black Students Make Up 3.5x More of the Suspensions Than Would Be Exepcted Based on Their Enrollment



Even worse, Black students were 2.4 times as likely in Delaware, 3.2 times as likely in Montgomery, 4.1 times as likely in Bucks and 5.3 times as likely in Chester Counties to receive out-of-school suspensions.²⁴ This amounts to a disproportionate share of class time Black students lost compared to their non-Black peers far above what would be expected.

Black and Hispanic Students Are Also Much More Likely to Be Referred to the Police for Disciplinary Incidents in School

It is a little-known fact that Pennsylvania has the 3rd highest student arrest rate in the country for all students.²⁵ And, it ranks 2nd highest in arrests for both Black and Hispanic students.²⁶ According to data from the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s 2018 ESSA report, the region’s suburban school districts had more than 2,400 law enforcement related incidents.²⁷

Across these districts, Hispanic students were referred by law enforcement for in-school incidents at a rate slightly higher than their share of the population. However, among school districts, there is significant variability.²⁸ For instance, in 10 districts, the rate for Hispanic students was at least three times higher than the rate of White students given their relative share of the student population.²⁹

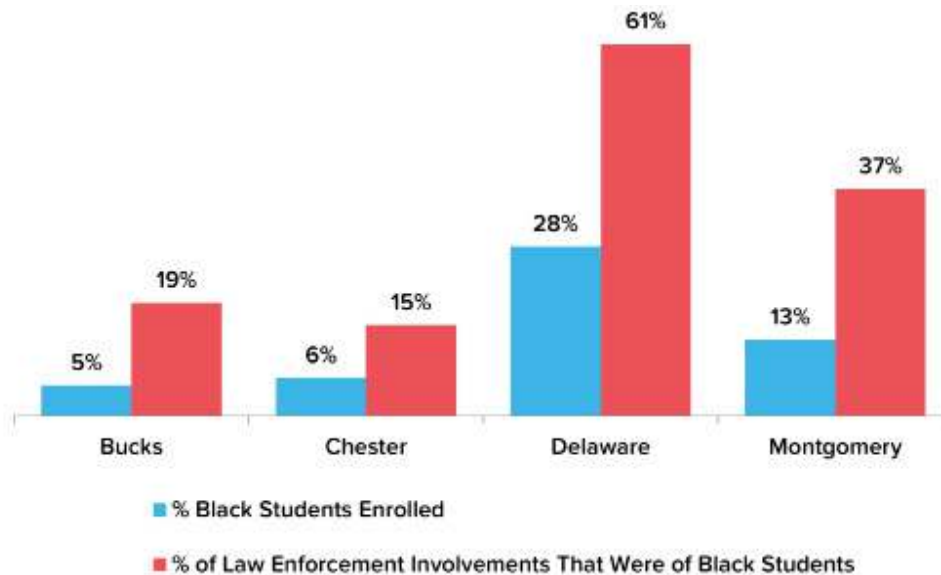
Again, Black students are far more likely than their peers to be disciplined using law enforcement at school. On average the referral rate for Black students was alarmingly high – about 2.7 times higher than what would be expected given their relative share of the population.³⁰ And in 12 school districts, the rates were at least five times as high.³¹



Hispanic students involved in in-school law enforcement incidents is three times higher than White students in 10 school districts. For Black students, the incident rate is five times higher in 12 school districts.



Chart 2: Black Students Make Up 2.7x More of the Incidents Involving Law Enforcement Than Would Be Expected Based on Their Enrollment



This data indicates that students of color are being consistently, disproportionately, and more severely disciplined across the region. And there is little evidence that schools are aligning student supports to reverse these troubling findings.

Black and Hispanic Students Are Less Likely to Be in Classes That Rigorously Prepare Them for College or Skilled Positions

One of the most significant roles schools play is to prepare students to enter the workforce as skilled employees, attend college, or launch their own businesses. To ensure this transition, students must have solid foundational skills prior to graduation.

There is limited data to assess whether Black and Hispanic students are exposed to academically sound or rigorous learning options at rates consistent with their White peers. One available indicator is the relative access to Advanced Placement courses which offer students the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency and earn college credit by taking and passing an end of course exam.

Nationally, 30% of Black high school students and 39.5% of Hispanic students take either an Advanced Placement (AP) course or International Baccalaureate (IB) course compared to about 44% of White students.³² In Pennsylvania, White students are more likely to attend schools that offer rigorous courses, including AP classes, than Black and Hispanic students.³³ Across the region,

in 92% of the suburban districts, Black and Hispanic students are under-enrolled in AP courses (see Appendix 1).³⁴ In other words, Black and Hispanic students are enrolled in smaller shares than would be expected relative to their populations compared to White students that are enrolled.³⁵



Across the region, in 92% of the suburban districts, Black and Hispanic students are under-enrolled in AP courses.



Having access to AP classes is a necessary first step. However, to receive college credits, students must pass the class, take an end-of-year AP exam and obtain a score of 3 or better on it. In 2016, the last year for which AP passage rate data was available by state and school district, at the state level, the passage rate for White students for the total number of AP exams was 70%, while the passage rate was 52% for Hispanic students, and for Black students it was 29%.³⁶ In this region, of the students that passed at least one AP exam, 81% were White, 2.8% were Black, and 1.6% were Hispanic, suggesting that there should be more supports in place for improved student performance.³⁷

Another available indicator is relative access to career and technical education (CTE). Like students across the country, Pennsylvania students in CTE programs develop critical skills by attending classes and engaging in hands-on learning programs in areas such as construction, health sciences, manufacturing, and repair. Students that pass their classes and the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) exam graduate from high school with community college credits and certification to work in their area of study.

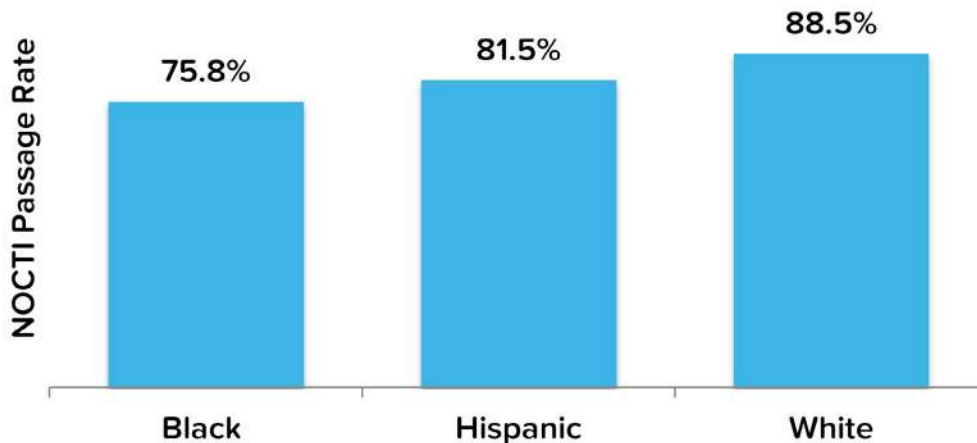
In 2020, more than 68,000 students enrolled in 80 CTE programs statewide.³⁸ Of those students, approximately 70% are White, 12.4% are Hispanic, and a little more than 12% are Black.³⁹ Of the students enrolled in the region’s 12 CTE programs, far fewer Black and Hispanic than White students take CTE classes.⁴⁰ To gain certification students must take and pass the NOCTI exam. In 2019, the most recent year for which data was available, the average NOCTI state passage rate was 83.6%.⁴³ Regionally, more than 75% of Black test-takers and 81% of Hispanic students passed the test and earned certification compared to 88.5% of White students, showing promise in closing the achievement gap.⁴⁴

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Of the region’s Hispanic public high school students, about 15% and nearly 9% of Black students are in CTE classes.⁴¹ The achievement gap on the NOCTI exam between students is only 7.5% for Hispanic students and 13.5% for Black students.⁴²

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Chart 3: Career and Technical Education is Closing the Performance Gap for the Region’s Students



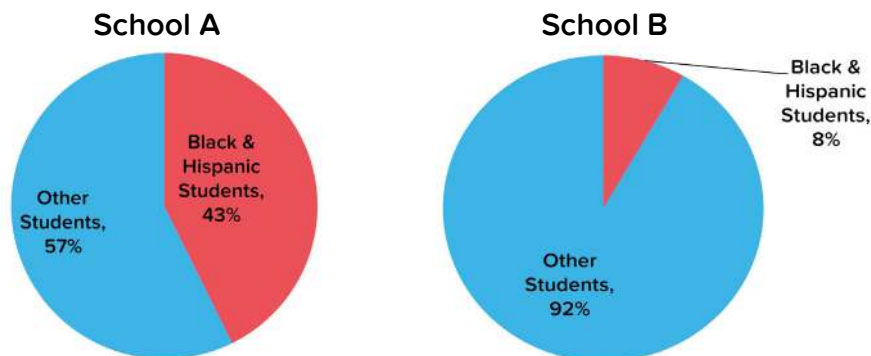
Income Inequality, Segregation and Inadequate School Funding are Compounding Factors Impacting Black and Hispanic Student Performance

There is a significant link between income inequality, racial segregation, and student performance.⁴⁵ Poverty remains a significant barrier to student success, not because students are poor, but because income inequality drives racial and socioeconomic segregation of poor and minority students, making them less likely to have access to achievement-boosting resources like adequately funded schools and high-quality preschool programs.⁴⁶

With income inequality comes racial segregation. Nationally, 40% of all Black students attend schools where 90% or more of the students are students of color.⁴⁷ Most Hispanic students, on average, attend school where about 55% of students are Hispanic.⁴⁸ Following the national trend, Pennsylvania has some of the most racially and economically segregated schools in the country.⁴⁹ Twenty percent of Pennsylvania's school districts serve 65% of the state's Black students, 58% of its Hispanic students, and 58% of students in poverty.⁵⁰

In this region, 43% of Black and Hispanic students attend schools that are majority Black and Hispanic.⁵¹ Moreover, 22% of Black and Hispanic students attend schools with 75% or more Black and Hispanic students.⁵² Segregation remains stubbornly intact even within districts. Within 34 of the region's school districts, there are schools where the share of Black and Hispanic students varies by more than 10 percentage points.⁵³ And remarkably, 8 school districts have a difference of 30 or more percentage points between their schools with the lowest and highest shares of Black and Hispanic students.⁵⁴

Chart 4: Eight School Districts in the Southeast Suburbs Have Schools With 30%+ Differences in Black and Hispanic Enrollment



Generally, the more students of color there are residing in a school district, the less likely it is to be adequately funded. Remarkably, in Pennsylvania, students of color are 466% more likely to attend a high poverty school than White students.⁵⁵



The more students of color residing in a school district, the less likely it is to be adequately funded.

In Pennsylvania, students of color are 466% more likely to attend a high poverty school than White students.



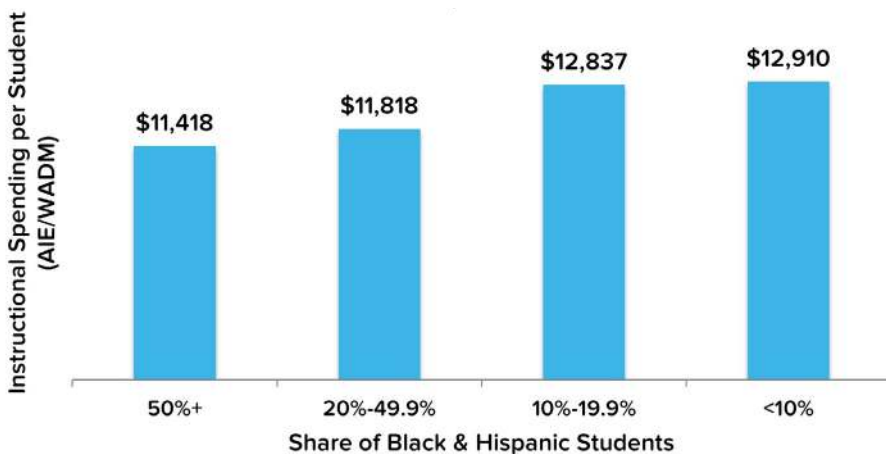
And in Pennsylvania, the same 20% of districts serving the majority of the state’s Black, Hispanic, and lower income students, are the most underfunded school districts in the state.⁵⁶

Although the state has taken measures to level the playing field for poor students and students of color, it has not done enough. In 2016, Pennsylvania adopted an education funding formula that directs new state money to public schools based on student need and community factors including poverty, deep poverty, density, prevalence of English language learners, etc, yet only 11% of the state’s education funding flows to districts via this formula.⁵⁷

While Pennsylvania’s education funding formula may not use race as a factor, race is an output that influences student access to resources and, consequently, performance.

Across the region, suburban school districts where over 50% of the students are Black or Hispanic have the least to spend on instruction.⁵⁸ Conversely, districts with less than 10% of their student population identifying as Black or Hispanic spend the highest amount on instruction.⁵⁹

Chart 5: Districts With the Most Black and Hispanic Students Have the Least to Spend on Instruction



The difference in funding between districts with the highest concentration of students of color and the fewest amounts to \$35,430 per classroom – nearly enough to hire one new teacher or significantly upgrade technology for students.



In 2016, Pennsylvania adopted an education funding formula that directs new state money to public schools based on student need and community factors including poverty, deep poverty, density, prevalence of English language learners, etc. Yet only 11% of the state’s education funding flows to districts via this formula.



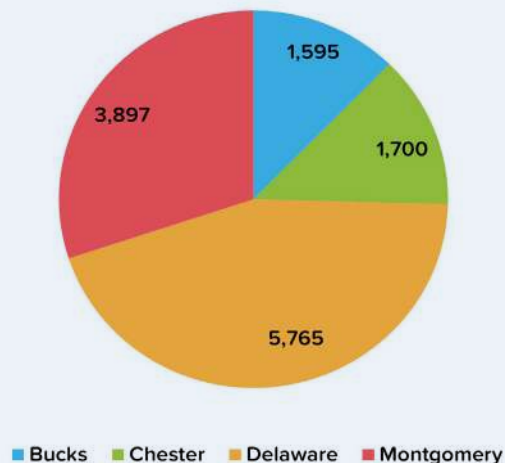
Black and Hispanic Students Are Also Hardest Hit by the Digital Divide

Since schools closed in March 2020 because of the pandemic, the effects of the disconnect between student need and technology access have been glaring, especially for Black and Hispanic students in our region.

Even before the pandemic, the Pew Research Center estimated that nationwide about five million or 15% of households with school-age children lack high-speed internet service in their homes.⁶⁰ In families with incomes below \$30,000 per year with school-age children (ages 6 to 17), about one-third did not have high-speed access.⁶¹ Moreover, Black and Hispanic low-income households made up a disproportionate share of impacted families.^{62,63}

Of the state's approximately 302,000 unconnected students, 38%, or more than 114,000, are Black or Hispanic.⁶⁴ Of those students, more than half live in Southeast Pennsylvania.⁶⁵

Chart 6: Thousands of Black and Hispanic Students in Every SEPA County Lack Digital Access



Students in every suburban county lack adequate access.⁶⁶ Nearly 13,000 of them are Black or Hispanic, live in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties and are perilously navigating the digital divide.⁶⁷

Individually Each of These Factors Adversely Affects Black and Hispanic Students; Together the Impact Is Life-Altering for Them

Although there is no question that Black and Hispanic students have the same academic potential as their White peers, factors including school climate, academic rigor, economic and racial segregation, inadequate education funding, and limited access to technology have been known to reduce the performance of Black and Hispanic students. Collectively and systemically, these factors have had a disastrous impact on their achievement.

Nationally, on average, Black students score nearly two grade levels lower than White students.⁶⁸ And in Pennsylvania, even accounting for family socioeconomic status, unemployment, and parent education level, achievement gaps between White students and Black and Hispanic students are consistently among the worst in the country.⁶⁹ Similarly, across the region, these achievement gaps are unreasonably large.

Although there are many factors to consider when evaluating whether students are achieving, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) administered to the state's 3rd through 8th graders and the Keystone Exams for secondary students are one way to measure whether students are working on grade level and how they are performing compared to their peers.

Test scores reveal sizable achievement gaps in most of the suburban school districts between Black and Hispanic and White students.⁷⁰ In fact, no school district in the region has an equivalent share of either Black or Hispanic students as White students reading at or above grade level.⁷¹

In 2019, the average gap in reading was 22 percentage points between White and Black students.⁷² For Hispanic students, the gap was slightly smaller – 16 percentage points.⁷³

In every suburban county, the gaps are evident.

Harry C., 12th Grade Student, Delaware County

Racial equity and justice are one of my community's weaknesses. Black students make up a sizable segment of my school's student body, but I have had only one nonwhite teacher in high school. When I was an underclassman, one of our assistant principals was a Black man, and the way he was able to connect to Black students at my school showed me just how important it is to have a teaching staff that is representative of the student body. As a White man, other White people often feel comfortable making racist remarks around me. I have heard adults use the "n" word and refer to Black people with coded language like "people from the city," "renters," and, in light of recent events, "rioters." I have watched my peers directly call Black people the "n" word and even shout "Black people are smelly." I have very rarely seen students get punished for racism.

In math, however, the gaps are even larger. On average, the gap between White and Hispanic student performance is 19 percentage points and the difference is an alarming 27 percentage points between Black and White students.⁷⁴ See charts in Appendix 1 on page 26.

This trend is also prevalent across each county. And with the exception of Interboro's closure of the gap between White and Hispanic students, there are no districts without a gap.⁷⁵

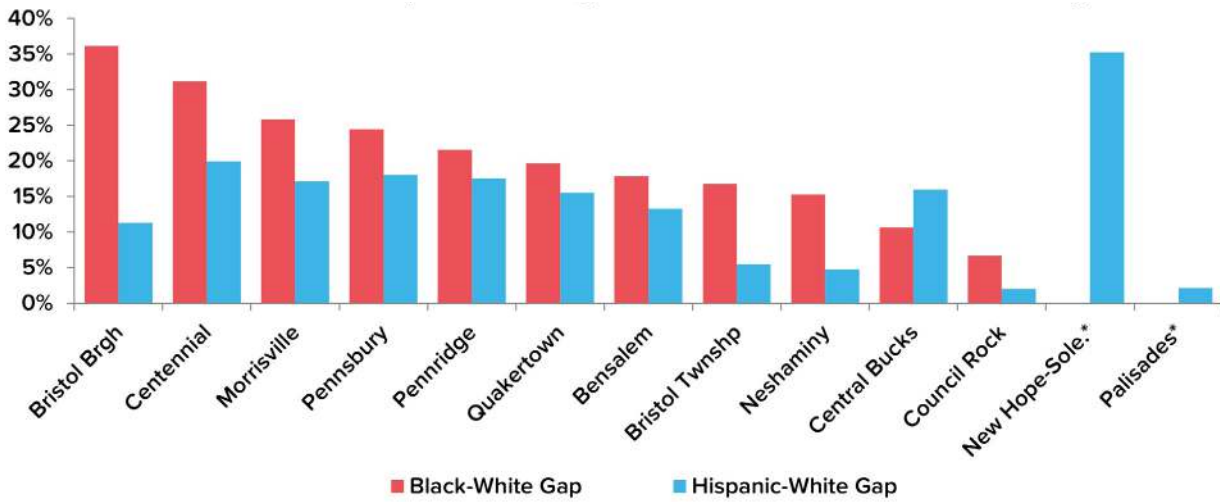
Moreover, when looking at the scores over time, the achievement gap between Black and White students grew by three percentage points and the Hispanic-White gap grew by one percentage point from 2012 to 2016.⁷⁶ Of note, this gap growth occurred when there was no funding formula in place and during the period when school districts were struggling to fill a billion dollar shortfall. After the tests changed, in some districts the gap stopped growing, but it stayed persistently flat.⁷⁷

In the districts with the highest share of students of color, the gap has grown the most.⁷⁸ Moreover, in 38 of the suburban districts, the racial achievement gap in reading widened over the last seven years for Black students and for Hispanic students in 32 of the districts.⁷⁹ The racial achievement gap in math is significantly worse, where the gap widened in 49 districts for Black students and in 50 districts for Hispanic students.⁸⁰

Some school districts are showing promise ensuring more Black and Hispanic students are hitting higher levels of achievement.

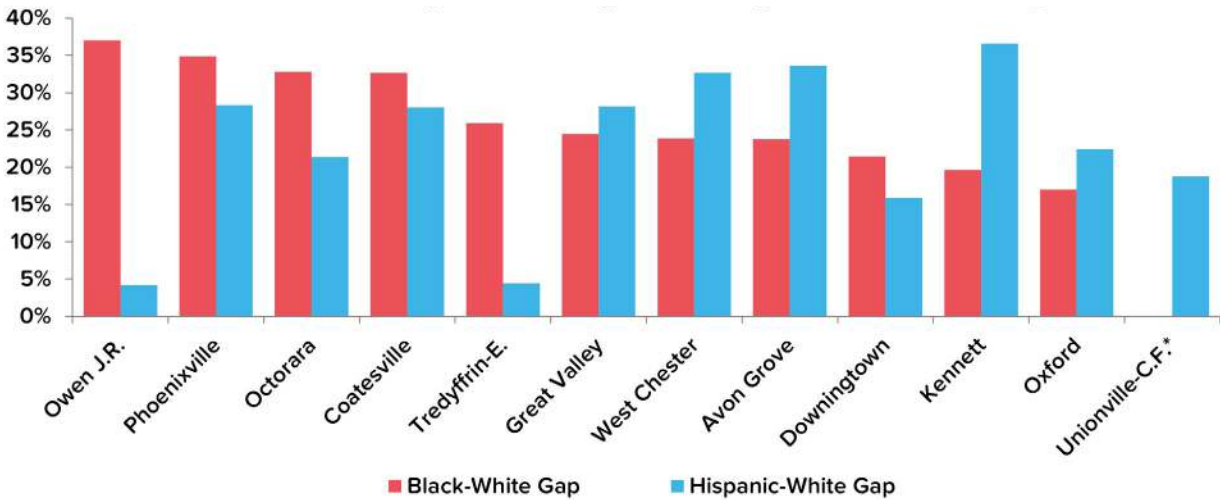
- Cheltenham: Most of the students are Black or Hispanic and they are performing significantly higher than other districts with similar levels of diversity. Fifty percent of them score advanced or proficient in reading and 35% do so in math.⁸¹
- Abington: Where 27% of students are Black or Hispanic, 65% of them are advanced or proficient in English and 43% are in math.⁸²
- Colonial: Fifteen percent of the students identify as Black or Hispanic, 70% of them test at or above grade level in reading and around 54% in math.⁸³

Chart 7: Achievement Gaps in Reading Are Pervasive Across Bucks County



*=data unavailable for Black students

Chart 8: Achievement Gaps in Reading Loom Large in Chester County



*=data unavailable for Black students

Kelly M., 12th Grade Student, Bucks County

My school district is predominantly White, but that doesn't mean there isn't still work that you can do. You can...start having conversations with people close to you and [call out] racism whenever you see it. I've had to speak out against some of my closest friends, and it was very hard. I've had to unfortunately sever some friendships [due to] their inability to listen and learn about why racism is a problem in this country and why their actions are harmful.

Chart 9: Achievement Gaps in Reading Are Significant in Delaware County

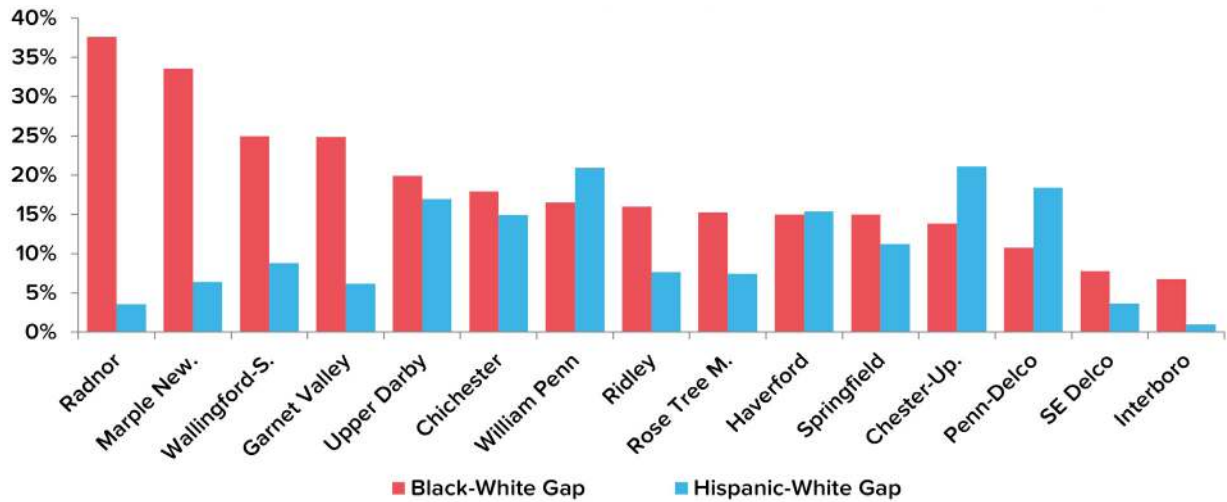
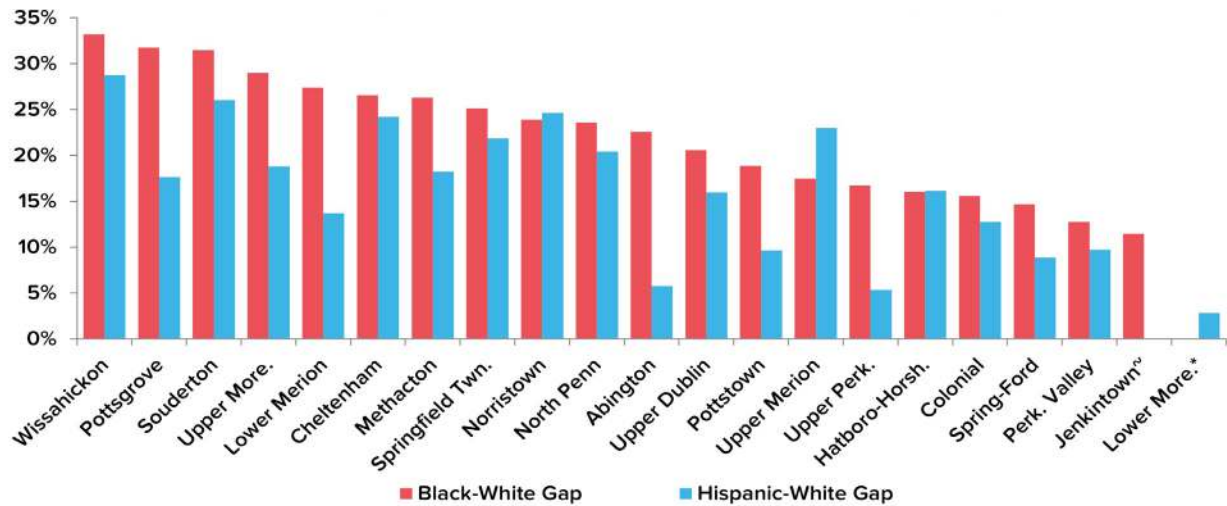


Chart 10: Achievement Gaps in Reading Are Common Across Montgomery County



*=data unavailable for Black students & ~=data unavailable for Hispanic students

Nya J., 12th Grade Student, Montgomery County

Last Sunday we ran a peaceful protest...and we decided to give students of color the chance to finally share their voices and experiences as students at Lower Merion because a lot of times our voices are silenced. We addressed racism and ignorance within our school...Now I'm working with [school officials] to make sure changes are actually made so that my siblings who are future students at Lower Merion can have their voices heard and feel comfortable in the district.

Students Do Better When Their Schools Are Well-Funded and Can Provide Them With Adequate Resources

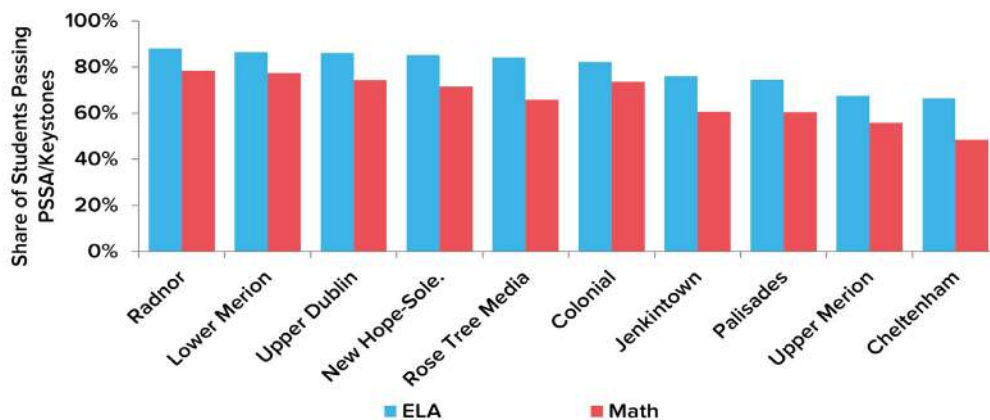
In business, it is well accepted that a solid investment yields tangible results. By contrast, in education, we often provide students in need of the most support with the least resources and expect them to reach their potential. National studies show that when states intentionally direct funding to schools, especially to those where students are struggling, the student's high school graduation rates rise, their earning potentials increase, their family incomes go up, and they are less likely to live in poverty as adults.⁸⁴ Additionally, students attending diverse and well-funded schools outperform students in poorer districts.⁸⁵

This is also the case in suburban Philadelphia. Better resourced districts can provide students with more experienced teachers, enrichment programs, tutors, up-to-date libraries and curriculum, technology, extracurricular activities, and support services that assist students in reaching their full potential.

In 2019, 71% of suburban students scored at or above grade level in reading and 55% in math.⁸⁶ However, students in better-funded districts generally did better than those in districts that did not have as much to spend per student.

In fact, of the 10 highest spending suburban districts, eight had a greater share of their students reading at or above grade level than the regional average in ELA and nine met or bested the average in math.⁸⁷

Chart 11: Most Students in Top Spending Districts Are Reading and Doing Math on Grade Level

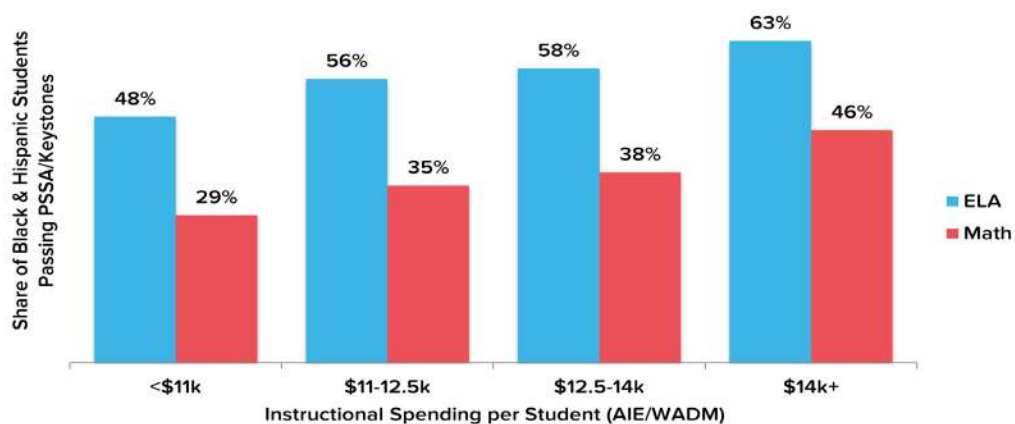


When Black and Hispanic Students Have Access to More Resources, They Do Better Too

While there is some variance across the four suburban counties, in most cases, when Black and Hispanic students attend well-funded schools, their performance is higher than students attending underfunded schools. About 53% of Black students and 59% of Hispanic students test in the proficient or advanced range in reading.⁸⁸ In math, on average about 3 in 10 Black and 4 in 10 Hispanic students are working on grade level.⁸⁹

A significantly greater share of Black and Hispanic students living in the highest spending school districts tested at or above grade level in reading than students in the lowest spending group of districts (63% vs. 48%).⁹⁰ In math, 46% of Black and Hispanic students in the highest spending group scored in the proficient or advanced range compared to 29% of those in the lowest spending group.⁹¹

Chart 12: More Black and Hispanic Students Meet State Standards in Higher-Spending School Districts



The Region's Black and Hispanic Students Know Their Lives Matter, Want an Education System That Works for Them and Expect Schools and Policymakers to Act Now

Equity in education is *not* optional.

For decades, Black and Hispanic parents and students have sounded the alarm that more needs to be done to ensure these students' long-term success. And if 2020 taught us nothing else, it laid bare the long-term effects of racism and how the ignorance of indifference keeps students in school districts like Philadelphia, Pottstown, Upper Darby, William Penn, Norristown, and Morrisville in educational limbo while students in less colorful and wealthier neighboring districts keep learning.

If the region's schools, districts and the Pennsylvania Department of Education want to ensure the success of Black and Hispanic students, schools must acknowledge that there are educational disparities, collect data to assess and determine the magnitude of the problem, build sufficient budgets for effective solutions, and, if they really believe that Black and Hispanic children's lives matter, invest in systems that work to correct deficiencies. In addition to changing attitudes, other policies must be in place and implemented to make sure Black and Hispanic students succeed.

Building an Education System That Works for Black and Hispanic Students

To bolster the success of the region's Black and Hispanic students, schools, educators, and lawmakers must shift their educational paradigm from one that intentionally or unintentionally blames and shames students and their families for

their performance to one that shifts accountability to the school districts for ensuring equitable outcomes. To build an education system that works better for Black and Hispanic students, school districts and the state must adopt a system that embraces four key strategies:

Flip the Script and Hold Schools Accountable For Equity

While it is commendable that many schools and districts have now openly committed to embracing equity, adopted anti-racism statements, policies and resolutions, we still evaluate students on performance rather than evaluate schools on their ability to equitably ensure student success.

According to the American Institutes of Research, to facilitate equity, educational systems must analyze “the right data” and align it with questions that help solve problems to determine ongoing challenges to equity.⁹² In other words, it is imperative that the state, school districts, and schools collect data that focuses not only what schools know about Black and Hispanic students (i.e., civil rights data – referrals to law enforcement, AP referrals and enrollment, etc.) but also the practices and policies within schools that perpetuate inequities.

Pennsylvania state law does not require equity audits. However, equity audits provide schools and districts with the kind of comprehensive review necessary to determine whether internal practices and policies are working for Black and Hispanic students, uncover deficits, and benchmark areas for needed change.^{93,94} Such a review forces districts to examine and to reassess what they are doing to support the success of Black and Hispanic students as a system and whether they have implemented key strategies known to help students of color succeed (e.g., diverse leadership, teachers, and staff) – all information that schools do not routinely record.

Policy Recommendations

- State shall ensure annual equity audits in every school building in each district.
- Require equity grade as part of the state’s Future Ready PA Index.
- Hold districts accountable for complying with recommendations and enforce consequences for schools that fail to make improvements.

Implement Proven and Effective Processes That Improve School Climate to Close Racial Disparity Gaps

Research is clear – students do better when they are engaged, climate policies are clear, and discipline is based on restorative practices. Effective learning encompasses far more than academics; it is dependent upon a student’s ability to form positive relationships, requires a mixture of social and emotional skills, and is bolstered by secure attachments in a school setting.⁹⁵

Additionally, when students attend school in a positive environment and educators use a “whole child” approach, they thrive developmentally – physically, psychologically, cognitively, socially and emotionally.⁹⁶ It is clear that Black and Hispanic students need additional supports to improve access to positive school climates. For example, Pennsylvania does not currently require school counselors in every school, yet school counselors not only work with students to create academic strategies, but also help them manage emotions, and make post-graduation plans.⁹⁷ Pennsylvania averages one counselor for every 369 students, well above the one to 250 ratio recommended by the National Association of School Counselors.⁹⁸ With the addition of school counselors, and other practices known to close gaps, access to a positive school climate for Black and Hispanic students will be much improved.

Policy Recommendations

- Boost state level funding to ensure appropriate levels of staffing for counselors and mental health professionals and require districts to hire these professionals.
- Require school districts that have a racial disparity gap with respect to arrests and suspensions to adopt and implement research-based social and emotional learning programs and restorative practices to address student behavior and discipline (e.g., Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) recommendations, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) etc.)
- Amend school code to require teacher and administrator certification and continuing education programs under Acts 45 and 48 to require implicit bias and racism training.
- Retrain School Resource Officers to default to providing student support (i.e. ensure that infractions don’t automatically trigger police response, but immediate access to support services; prioritize diversion programs over arrest).
- Require schools to examine codes of conduct for racial and ethnic bias, change to align with best practices, and to post suspension and expulsion data on their websites.

Provide High Quality Academic Options for Black and Hispanic Students

There is no silver bullet to close achievement gaps for Black and Hispanic students, but there are many research-based interventions implemented around the country that have a positive impact on student performance. For example, having teachers of color has been shown to boost graduation rates for students of color, increase test scores, and increase the likelihood of attending college.⁹⁹

School equity audits must measure district progress toward ensuring Black and Hispanic students have diverse and experienced faculty throughout their K-12 years, small class sizes, tutoring for those falling behind, access to a diverse and inclusive curriculum, and explicit measures to boost Black and Hispanic enrollment in and successful completion of rigorous academic courses.

Policy Recommendations

- Recruit and increase the share of qualified teachers and/or administrators to mirror the level of diversity of the student population and increase exposure for students of color to role models of color.
- Identify and recruit talented Black and Hispanic students for Honors and Advanced Placement classes to ensure that their representation in rigorous classes aligns with their district share of enrollment.
- Ensure that Black and Hispanic students are aware of and have access to career and technical educational (CTE) options.
- Adopt a culturally rich and competent curriculum that includes and celebrates historical, political, scientific, and economic contributions of Black, Hispanic and other people of color routinely and throughout American and World History.
- Provide dedicated state funding to enable every school district to afford to close the student digital divide.

Ensure That Schools Serving Black and Hispanic Students Are Adequately Funded and That Funding Follows Student Need

The importance of adequately funding schools and directing funds within schools to address systemic and individual student needs cannot be overstated.

Access to resources is a game changer for students from pre-k through graduation. Students who live in well-funded districts have access to libraries, technological supports, counselors, tutoring, and other resources that students in underfunded districts lack. As noted, many of the region's Black and Hispanic students live in underfunded districts and struggle to gain access to these necessary resources.

Additionally, many students of color living in well-funded districts may have unique support needs, but because the funding doesn't travel with students to their classrooms, they may not receive necessary supports to reach their potential. Consequently, districts should direct funding within districts and school buildings to align with student need

Policy Recommendations

- Fund high-quality pre-k and full day K programs in every district and ensure equitable enrollment of Black and Hispanic students.
- Close the \$4.6 billion state funding gap between districts' current levels of funding and levels that are adequate for providing a quality education.
- Direct funding within districts and school buildings to correct systemic deficits and address student need.

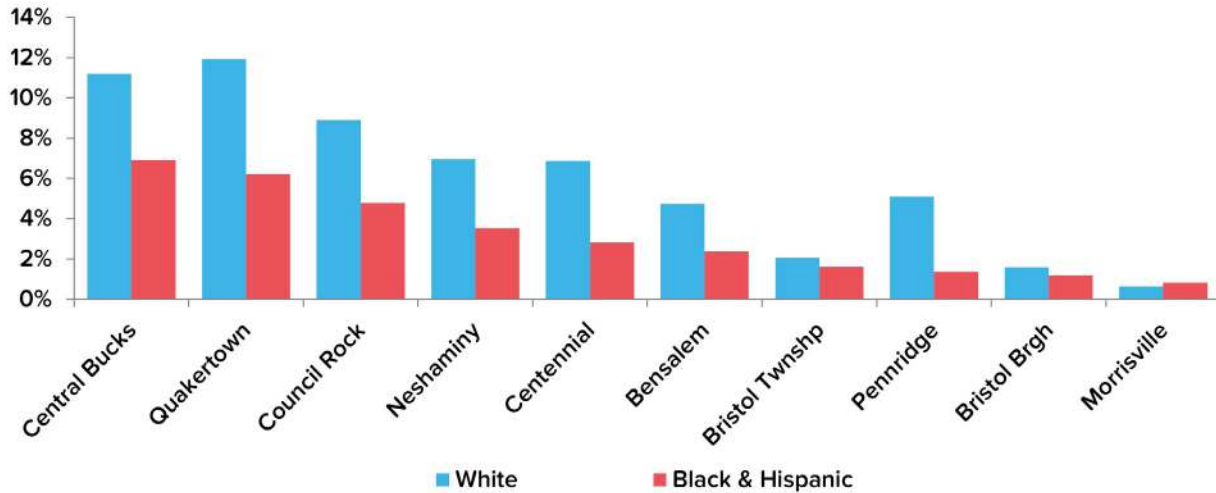
Appendix

Seif G., 11th Grade Student, Delaware County

My math teacher, without ever asking me, assumed I was Indian. She seated me next to the only other Indian girl in class. She repeatedly made jokes about us flirting [and] in front of the entire class [said] that we would be cute together even after seeing that we were visibly uncomfortable. Her singling [us] out as the only brown people in class made me feel very self-conscious about my skin color and acutely aware of how different I was from the rest of my class.

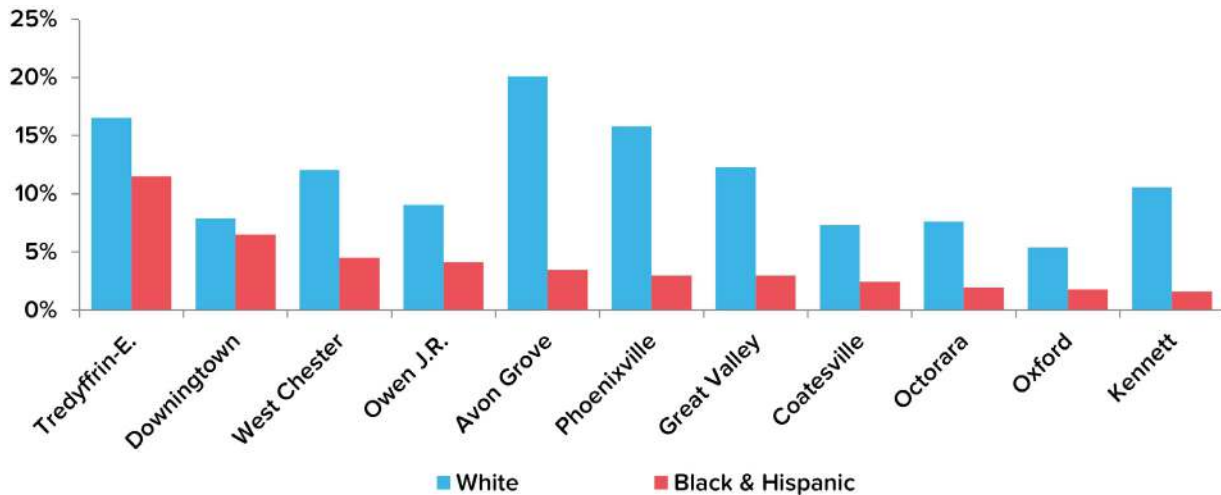
Appendix 1: Twice the Share of White Students Are in APs Than Black & Hispanic Students Across the Suburbs

Chart 13: Bucks County AP Enrollment



Note: New Hope-Solebury, Palisades, and Pennsbury SDs are omitted due to data limitations for Black/Hispanic student AP enrollment

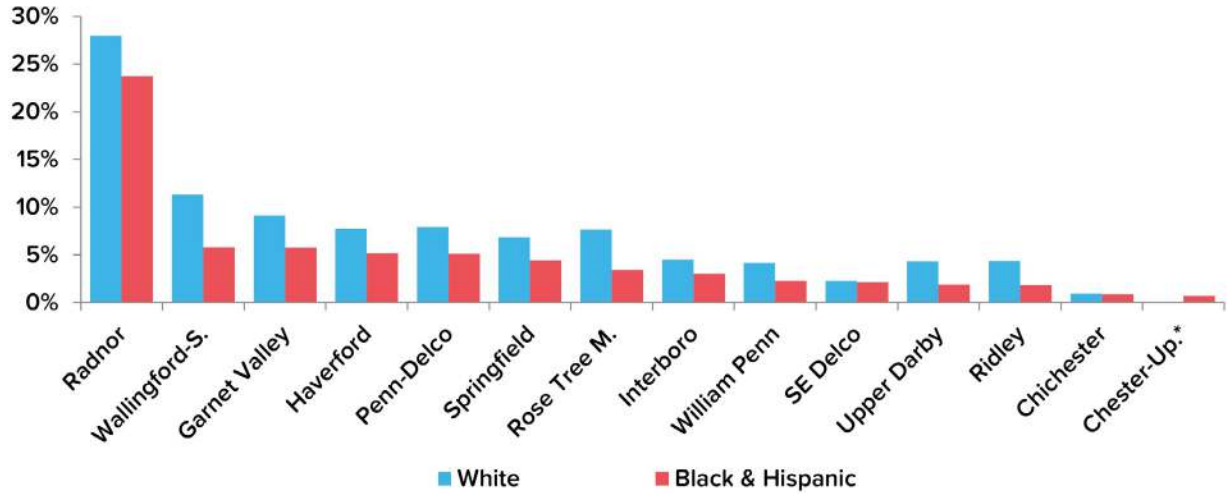
Chart 14: Chester County AP Enrollment



Note: Unionville-Chadds Ford SD is omitted due to data limitations for Black/Hispanic student AP enrollment

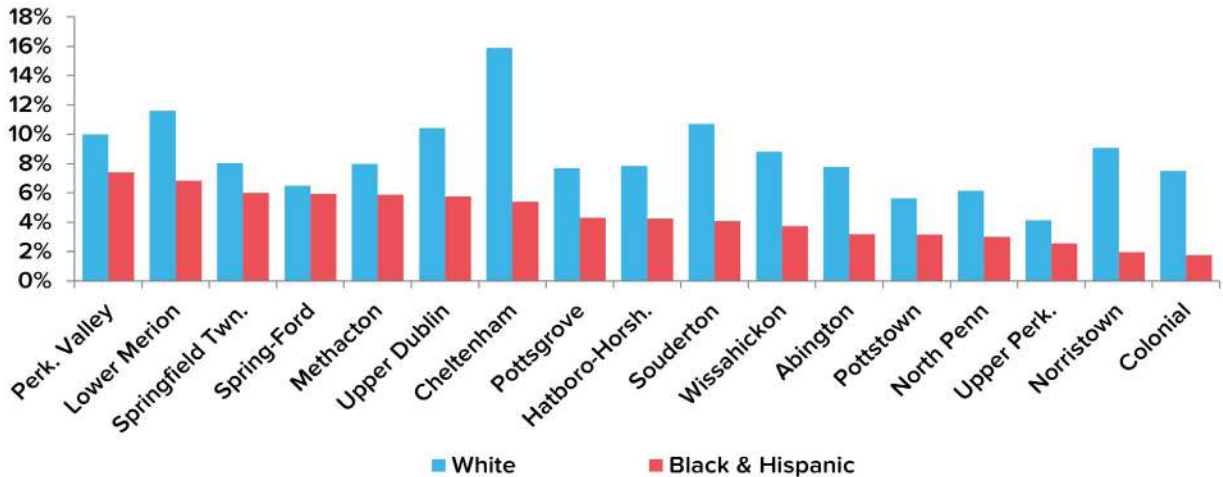
Appendix 1 (continued): Twice the Share of White Students Are in APs Than Black & Hispanic Students Across the Suburbs

Chart 15: Delaware County AP Enrollment



Note: Marple Newtown SD is omitted due to data limitations for Black/Hispanic student AP enrollment. Chester-Upland SD data for White student AP enrollment is unavailable

Chart 16: Montgomery County AP Enrollment



Note: Lower Moreland, Jenkintown, Upper Moreland, and Upper Merion SDs are omitted due to data limitations for Black/Hispanic student AP enrollment

Appendix 2: Regional County Achievement Gap Data – 2019 English/Language Arts Score Gaps

Bucks County	Reading	Reading
School District	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Bristol Borough	36%	11%
Centennial	31%	20%
Morrisville	26%	17%
Pennsbury	24%	18%
Pennridge	22%	18%
Quakertown	20%	16%
Bensalem	18%	13%
Bristol Township	17%	5%
Neshaminy	15%	5%
Central Bucks	11%	16%
Council Rock	7%	2%
New Hope-Solebury	N/A	35%
Palisades	N/A	2%

Chester County	Reading	Reading
School District	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Owen J. Roberts	37%	4%
Phoenixville	35%	28%
Octorara	33%	21%
Coatesville	33%	28%
Tredyffrin-Easttown	26%	4%
Great Valley	25%	28%
West Chester	24%	33%
Avon Grove	24%	34%
Downingtown	21%	16%
Kennett	20%	37%
Oxford	17%	22%
Unionville-Chadds Ford	N/A	19%

Delaware County	Reading	Reading
School District	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Radnor	38%	4%
Marple Newtown	34%	6%
Wallingford-Swarthmore	25%	9%
Garnet Valley	25%	6%
Upper Darby	20%	17%
Chichester	18%	15%
William Penn	16%	21%
Ridley	16%	8%
Rose Tree Media	15%	7%
Haverford	15%	15%
Springfield	15%	11%
Chester-Upland	14%	21%
Penn-Delco	11%	18%
SE Delco	8%	4%
Interboro	7%	1%

Montgomery County	Reading	Reading
School District	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Wissahickon	33%	29%
Pottsgrove	32%	18%
Souderton	31%	26%
Upper Moreland	29%	19%
Lower Merion	27%	14%
Cheltenham	27%	24%
Methacton	26%	18%
Springfield Township	25%	22%
Norristown	24%	25%
North Penn	24%	20%
Abington	23%	6%
Upper Dublin	21%	16%
Pottstown	19%	10%
Upper Merion	17%	23%
Upper Perkiomen	17%	5%
Hatboro-Horsham	16%	16%
Colonial	16%	13%
Spring-Ford	15%	9%
Perkiomen Valley	13%	10%
Jenkintown	11%	N/A
Lower Moreland	N/A	3%

Appendix 3: Regional County Achievement Gap Data – 2019 Math Score Gaps

Bucks County	Math	Math
School District	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Centennial	32%	22%
Bristol Borough	29%	9%
Pennsbury	28%	17%
Council Rock	25%	8%
Pennridge	25%	19%
Central Bucks	24%	19%
Morrisville	23%	20%
Neshaminy	22%	16%
Quakertown	21%	24%
Bensalem	20%	15%
Bristol Township	13%	5%
New Hope-Solebury	N/A	27%
Palisades	N/A	5%

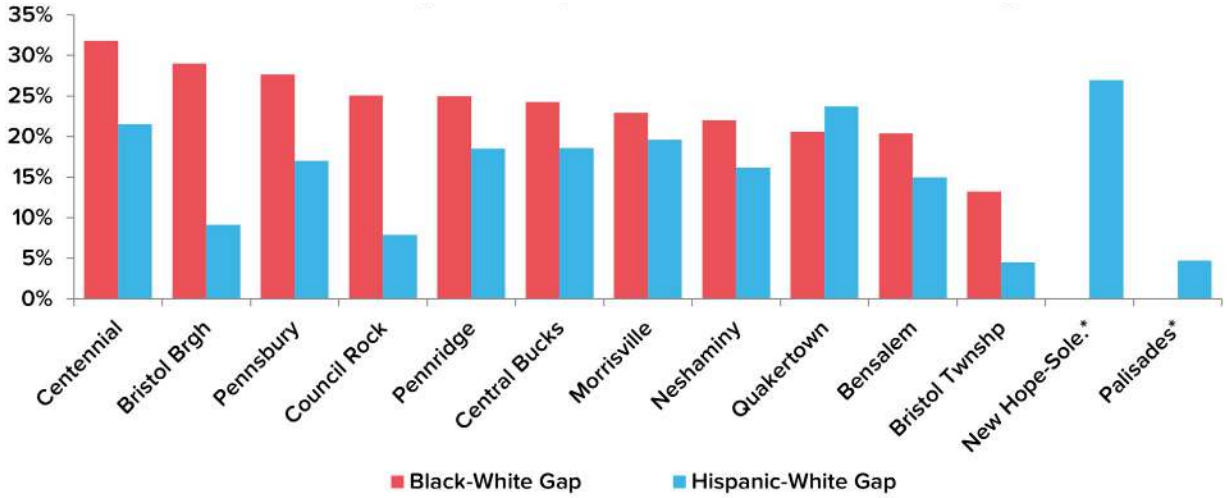
Chester County	Math	Math
School District	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Octorara	42%	24%
Owen J. Roberts	42%	6%
Phoenixville	33%	34%
Kennett	31%	46%
West Chester	30%	31%
Tredyffrin-Easttown	29%	9%
Coatesville	29%	25%
Downingtown	26%	16%
Avon Grove	25%	38%
Oxford	22%	22%
Great Valley	18%	29%
Unionville-Chadds Ford	N/A	20%

Delaware County	Math	Math
School District	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Wallingford-Swarthmore	43%	14%
Radnor	43%	8%
Marple Newtown	29%	17%
Springfield	29%	19%
Haverford	27%	14%
Penn-Delco	25%	18%
Upper Darby	23%	20%
Rose Tree Media	23%	10%
Chichester	22%	13%
Ridley	21%	14%
Interboro	17%	0%
William Penn	15%	15%
Garnet Valley	15%	8%
SE Delco	12%	11%
Chester-Upland	12%	16%

Montgomery County	Math	Math
School District	Black-White Gap	Hispanic-White Gap
Wissahickon	46%	36%
Springfield Township	37%	31%
Lower Merion	36%	16%
Upper Dublin	35%	23%
Souderton	34%	30%
Cheltenham	34%	25%
Upper Moreland	33%	24%
Pottsgrove	32%	26%
Methacton	32%	20%
Abington	30%	12%
Upper Merion	30%	21%
North Penn	27%	27%
Hatboro-Horsham	26%	25%
Norristown	26%	22%
Spring-Ford	24%	15%
Colonial	23%	21%
Upper Perkiomen	21%	11%
Jenkintown	20%	N/A
Pottstown	19%	11%
Perkiomen Valley	17%	13%
Lower Moreland	N/A	3%

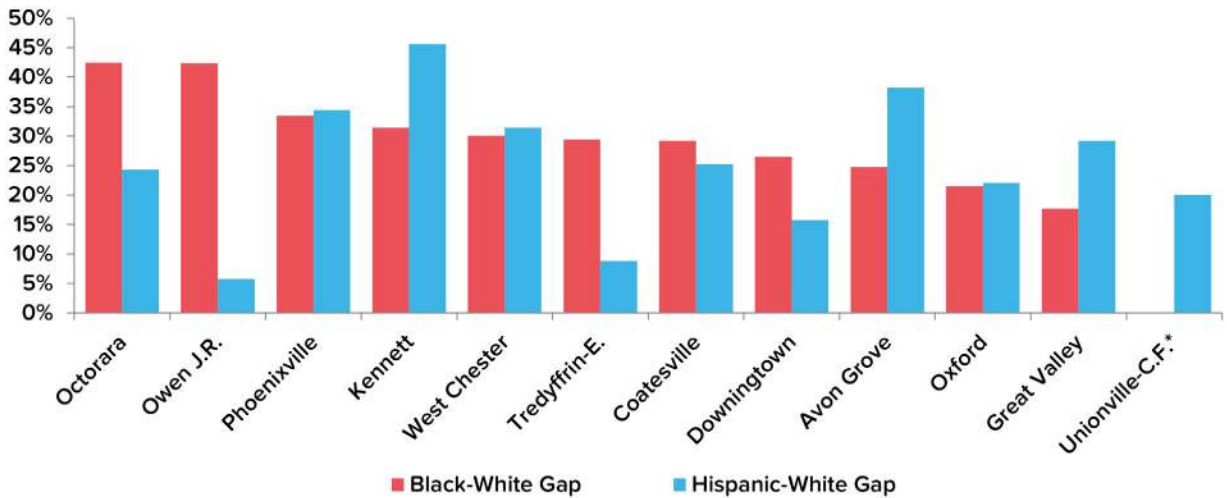
Appendix 4: Gaps Exist in Nearly Every School District in Math

Chart 17: There Are Gaps in Every District in Math in Bucks County



*=data unavailable for Black students

Chart 18: Chester County Has Not Closed Achievement Gaps in Math



*=data unavailable for Black students

Appendix 4 (continued): Gaps Exist in Nearly Every School District in Math

Chart 19: Achievement Gaps in Math Are Large Across Delaware County

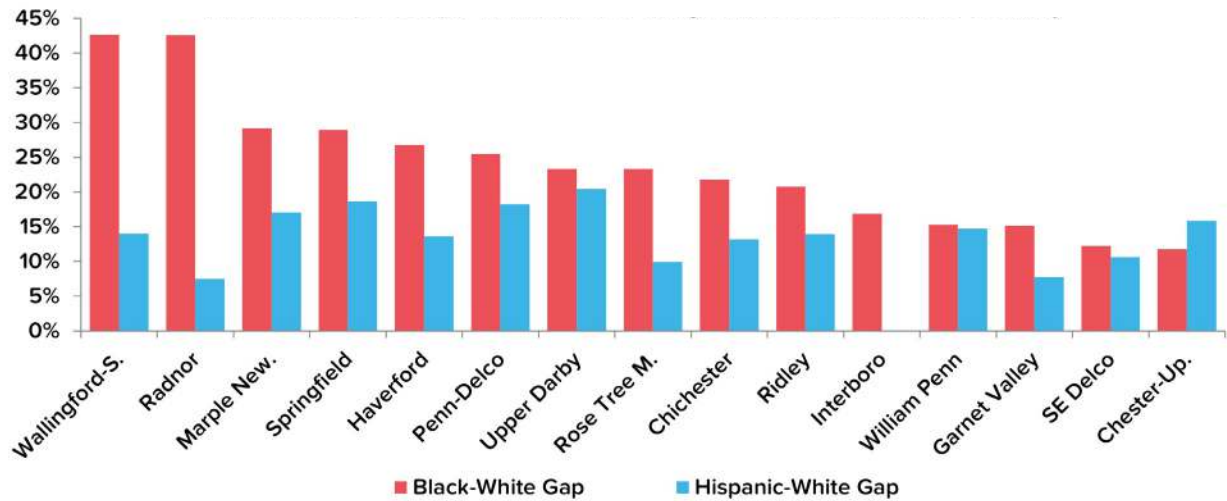
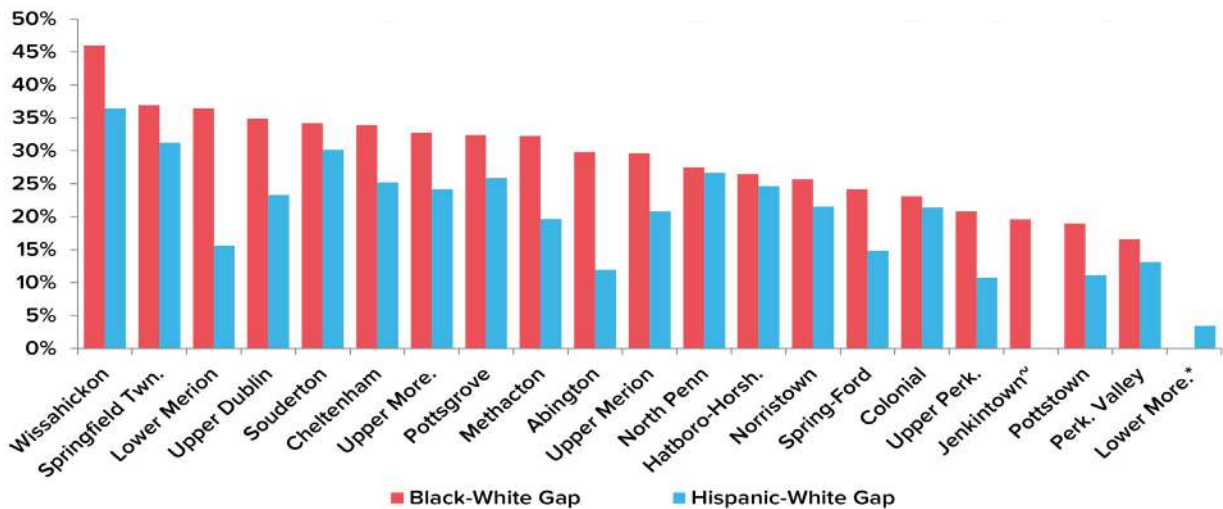


Chart 20: Achievement Gaps in Math Remain Large Across Montgomery County



*=data unavailable for Black students & ~=data unavailable for Hispanic students

Appendix 5: Black and Hispanic Enrollment and Actual Instructional Expense per Weighted Average Daily Membership (AIE/WADM) for SEPA SDs, 2019

School District	County	Black & Hispanic % Enrollment	AIE/WADM
CHESTER-UPLAND SD	Delaware	96%	\$12,195
WILLIAM PENN SD	Delaware	92%	\$10,143
SOUTHEAST DELCO SD	Delaware	77%	\$9,524
NORRISTOWN SD	Montgomery	75%	\$11,572
CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP SD	Montgomery	60%	\$16,041
MORRISVILLE BOROUGH SD	Bucks	58%	\$13,932
UPPER DARBY SD	Delaware	56%	\$8,996
POTTSTOWN SD	Montgomery	53%	\$10,560
COATESVILLE AREA SD	Chester	53%	\$12,596
KENNETT CONSOLIDATED SD	Chester	46%	\$11,825
BRISTOL BOROUGH SD	Bucks	37%	\$10,765
OXFORD AREA SD	Chester	33%	\$9,619
BENSALEM TOWNSHIP SD	Bucks	32%	\$11,482
CHICHESTER SD	Delaware	32%	\$12,841
BRISTOL TOWNSHIP SD	Bucks	30%	\$11,372
ABINGTON SD	Montgomery	26%	\$11,213
AVON GROVE SD	Chester	26%	\$10,129
UPPER MERION AREA SD	Montgomery	23%	\$15,135
POTTSGROVE SD	Montgomery	23%	\$11,732
OCTORARA AREA SD	Chester	22%	\$12,620
CENTENNIAL SD	Bucks	21%	\$13,085
PHOENIXVILLE AREA SD	Chester	20%	\$12,454
UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP SD	Montgomery	18%	\$11,483
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP SD	Montgomery	18%	\$12,509
RIDLEY SD	Delaware	18%	\$12,474
JENKINTOWN SD	Montgomery	17%	\$15,135
INTERBORO SD	Delaware	16%	\$11,394
WISSAHICKON SD	Montgomery	16%	\$13,645
NORTH PENN SD	Montgomery	16%	\$12,472
COLONIAL SD	Montgomery	15%	\$15,069
HATBORO-HORSHAM SD	Montgomery	14%	\$12,631
SOUDERTON AREA SD	Montgomery	14%	\$10,908
LOWER MERION SD	Montgomery	13%	\$17,674
WEST CHESTER AREA SD	Chester	13%	\$11,154
GREAT VALLEY SD	Chester	12%	\$14,113

Appendix 5 (continued): Black and Hispanic Enrollment and Actual Instructional Expense per Weighted Average Daily Membership (AIE/WADM) for SEPA SDs, 2019

School District	County	Black & Hispanic % Enrollment	AIE/WADM
WALLINGFORD-SWARTHMORE SD	Delaware	12%	\$13,464
PENNSBURY SD	Bucks	12%	\$11,892
NESHAMINY SD	Bucks	11%	\$11,238
QUAKERTOWN COMMUNITY SD	Bucks	11%	\$11,797
UPPER DUBLIN SD	Montgomery	10%	\$14,545
PENN-DELCO SD	Delaware	10%	\$10,695
RADNOR TOWNSHIP SD	Delaware	10%	\$15,742
SPRINGFIELD SD	Delaware	9%	\$11,302
PENNRIDGE SD	Bucks	9%	\$11,405
PERKIOMEN VALLEY SD	Montgomery	9%	\$11,517
OWEN J ROBERTS SD	Chester	9%	\$11,615
UPPER PERKIOMEN SD	Montgomery	8%	\$10,433
SPRING-FORD AREA SD	Montgomery	8%	\$11,977
METHACTON SD	Montgomery	8%	\$13,247
DOWNINGTOWN AREA SD	Chester	8%	\$9,811
HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP SD	Delaware	8%	\$11,825
CENTRAL BUCKS SD	Bucks	7%	\$10,699
ROSE TREE MEDIA SD	Delaware	7%	\$14,595
NEW HOPE-SOLEBURY SD	Bucks	6%	\$17,453
TREDYFFRIN-EASTTOWN SD	Chester	6%	\$12,820
GARNET VALLEY SD	Delaware	5%	\$13,891
COUNCIL ROCK SD	Bucks	5%	\$13,473
MARPLE NEWTOWN SD	Delaware	4%	\$14,089
UNIONVILLE-CHADDS FORD SD	Chester	4%	\$13,080
PALISADES SD	Bucks	4%	\$16,306
LOWER MORELAND TOWNSHIP SD	Montgomery	4%	\$12,928

Endnotes

1. Lapp, David and Anna Shaw-Amoah. Unequal Access to Educational Opportunity Among Pennsylvania's High School Students. Jan. 2020. Retrieved from: <https://8rri53pm0cs22jk3vvqna1ub-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CRDC-Penn-Jan2020.pdf>

2. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics were compiled using suspension and referrals to law enforcement data from the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection-CRDC-District 2019 Dashboard. The source of the Dashboard data is from the 2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection. Retrieved from: ESSA_Dashboard_2019 - Pennsylvania Department of Education | Tableau Public

Methodology:

The suspension data referenced in this statistic includes the combined number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions. The number of students suspended of each race/ethnicity was divided by the total number of suspensions to find the share of suspensions made up by students of each race/ethnicity. That percentage was compared to the share of overall enrollment of each race/ethnicity to find if specific racial/ethnic groups were suspended at disproportionately high rates.

The law enforcement involvements data referenced in the report is the combined number of school related arrests and referrals to law enforcement. The same calculation that was done for suspensions was also done for law enforcement to determine if certain racial/ethnic groups were involved in law enforcement incidents at disproportionately high rates.

3. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics were compiled using Advanced Placement enrollment data from the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection-CRDC-District 2019 Dashboard. The source of the Dashboard data is from the 2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection. Retrieved from: ESSA_Dashboard_2019 - Pennsylvania Department of Education | Tableau Public

4. Equity Collaborative. Level-Up Funding Estimate. March 2021. Calculated using Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics compiled using school district funding data -Actual Instructional Expense per Weighted Average Daily Membership from 2005-2006 and 2018-2019. Retrieved from <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/Historical%20Files/Pages/default.aspx>

Methodology:

The collaborative identified the 100 districts (bottom 20%) with the fewest resources relative to their student needs: methodology calculates a "weighted student" count for every school district, using student weights employed in the state's Basic Education Funding formula (BEF) and Special Education Funding formula (SEF) to measure the additional needs of students in each school district and create a weighted student count. Both the BEF and SEF formulas distribute funding to each school district based on multiple factors, including poverty, English language learners, charter school enrollment, and special education population. These "weights" are based on research showing that underserved student populations require greater support, increasing the costs of educating them. The weighted student count is used for each district to calculate a more meaningful measure of spending per pupil: Each school district's current expenditures (e.g. spending on school programs) is divided by the weighted student count, thus measuring "current expenditures per weighted student." The 100 districts with the lowest amount of funding available per weighted student are the districts with the fewest resources available to meet their students' needs.

5. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics compiled using PSSA results for English/Language Arts and Math and Keystone Exam results for Literature and Algebra 1. 2019 data (latest available) retrieved from the ESSA Report Card. Prior years received from PDE via data request. <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/ESSA/ESSAReportCard/Pages/default.aspx>

6. Ibid.

7. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Public Enrollments 2019 -2020 School Year. Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. Bucks (4,618), Chester (6,186), Delaware (24,961), and Montgomery (15,717) enrolled 51,482 total Black students. Bucks (8,003), Chester (10,965), Delaware (4,371), and Montgomery (11,431) enrolled 33,770 total Hispanic students. Retrieved from: <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Data%20and%20Statistics/Enrollment/Public%20School/Enrollment%20Public%20Schools%202019-20.xlsx>

8. What Education Leaders Need to Know about School Policing.” ACLU Pennsylvania, 15 Nov. 2019, www.aclupa.org/en/publications/what-education-leaders-need-know-about-school-policing. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021

9. CEO Council for Growth. Greater Philadelphia Regional Labor Market Survey Results. October 2015. Retrieved from <http://legacy.chamberphl.com/download/public/regionallabormktreport-web.pdf>

10. What Education Leaders Need to Know about School Policing.” ACLU Pennsylvania, 15 Nov. 2019, www.aclupa.org/en/publications/what-education-leaders-need-know-about-school-policing. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021

11. Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Channa Cook-Harvey. Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success. 2018. Retrieved from: https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Educating_Whole_Child_REPORT.pdf

12. Voight, Adam. The Racial School-Climate Gap. 2013. WestEd Health & Human Development Program. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED580366.pdf>

13. Lapp, David and Anna Shaw-Amoah. Unequal Access to Educational Opportunity Among Pennsylvania’s High School Students. Jan. 2020. Retrieved from: <https://8rri53pm0cs22jk3vvqna1ub-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CRDC-Penn-Jan2020.pdf>

14. Losen, Daniel J., and Paul Martinez. Lost Opportunities: How Disparate School Discipline Continues to Drive Differences in the Opportunity to Learn. 2020, www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-discipline/lost-opportunities-how-disparate-school-discipline-continues-to-drive-differences-in-the-opportunity-to-learn/Lost-Opportunities-REPORT-v14.pdf.

15. Ibid.

16. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics were compiled using suspension data from the Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection-CRDC-District 2019 Dashboard. The source of the Dashboard data is from the 2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection. Retrieved from: ESSA_Dashboard_2019 - Pennsylvania Department of Education | Tableau Public

Methodology:

The suspension data referenced in the report is the combined number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions. The number of students suspended of each race/ethnicity was divided by the total number of suspensions to find the share of suspensions made up by students of each race/ethnicity. That percentage was compared to the share of overall enrollment of each race/ethnicity to find if specific racial/ethnic groups were suspended at disproportionately high rates.

(Find school district level data here :) Suspensions Data By School District from 2018 PDE ESSA Report Based on 2015-2016 Civil Rights DataExcel Spreadsheet)

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. “What Education Leaders Need to Know about School Policing.” ACLU Pennsylvania, 15 Nov. 2019, www.aclupa.org/en/publications/what-education-leaders-need-know-about-school-policing. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021

26. Ibid.

27. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics were compiled using referrals to law enforcement data from the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection-CRDC-District 2019 Dashboard. The source of the Dashboard data is from the 2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection. Retrieved from: ESSA_Dashboard_2019 - Pennsylvania Department of Education | Tableau Public

Methodology:

The law enforcement involvements data referenced in the report is the combined number of school related arrests and referrals to law enforcement. The same calculation that was done for suspensions was also done for law enforcement to determine if certain racial/ethnic groups were involved in law enforcement incidents at disproportionately high rates.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. "Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Dual-Enrollment Courses: Availability, Participation, and Related Outcomes for 2009 Ninth-Graders: 2013." U.S. Department of Education, 2019, nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019430.pdf. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

33. Lapp, David and Anna Shaw-Amoah. Unequal Access to Educational Opportunity Among Pennsylvania's High School Students. Jan. 2020. Retrieved from: <https://8rri53pm0cs22jk3vvqna1ub-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CRDC-Penn-Jan2020.pdf>

34. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics were compiled using Advanced Placement enrollment data from the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection-CRDC-District 2019 Dashboard. The source of the Dashboard data is from the 2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection. Retrieved from: ESSA_Dashboard_2019 - Pennsylvania Department of Education | Tableau Public

35. Ibid.

36. "AP Program Participation and Performance Data 2016 – Research – College Board." Retrieved from: <https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap/data/archived/ap-2016> .

In 2015-2016, the last year for which AP passage rate data available was available by state and school district – 105,969 public school students in Pennsylvania took the exam - 73% were White, about 5% were Hispanic and 4.8% were Black.

37. Research for Action. Pennsylvania School Data Project. Statistics were compiled using Advanced Placement enrollment data from the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection from 2015-2016. Retrieved from: Pennsylvania School Data Project - Research for Action

In Southeastern PA, of the 18,592 students taking at least one AP exam, 77% of test takers were White, 2.5% were Hispanic and 4.6% were Black. Of the test takers, 14,396 of those students passed at least one AP exam. 11,715 were white, 235 were Hispanic and 404 were Black.

38. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Public School Enrollments 2019 -2020 School Year. Retrieved from: <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Data%20and%20Statistics/Enrollment/Public%20School/Enrollment%20Public%20Schools%202019-20.xlsx>

39. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Public School Enrollments 2019 -2020 School Year. Retrieved from: <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Data%20and%20Statistics/Enrollment/Public%20School/Enrollment%20Public%20Schools%202019-20.xlsx>

Additional CTE Enrollment statistics provided by the Department of Education, Bureau of Career and Technical Education. Enrollment percentages listed below were calculated based on participation by 9-12th graders in public CTE programs as a subset of all enrolled 9-12th public school students divided by race and ethnicity.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION BUREAU of CAREER and TECHNICAL EDUCATION Career and Technical Education Secondary Student Achievement. Fact Sheet. 2019.

44. 2018-2019 Regional CTE Passage rate statistics were provided by the Department of Education, Bureau of Career and Technical Education.

45. Reardon, S.F., Weathers, E.S., Fahle, E.M., Jang, H., & Kalogrides, D. (2019). Is Separate Still Unequal? New Evidence on School Segregation and Racial Academic Achievement Gaps (CEPA Working Paper No.19-06). Retrieved from Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis: <http://cepa.stanford.edu/wp19-06> ; Accessed 16 Dec. 2020.

46. Jang, Heewon, and Sean F. Reardon. "States as Sites of Educational (In)Equality: State Contexts and the Socioeconomic Achievement Gradient." *AERA Open*, vol. 5, no. 3, July 2019, p. 233285841987245, 10.1177/2332858419872459. Accessed 16 Dec. 2020.

47. Frankenberg, Erica, et al. *Harming Our Common Future: America's Segregated Schools 65 Years after Brown*. 2019.

48. Ibid.

49. FAULT LINES AMERICA'S MOST SEGREGATING SCHOOL DISTRICT BORDERS. 2016. Retrieved from: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/edbuild-public-data/data/fault+lines/EdBuild-Fault-Lines-2016.pdf>

50. Equity Collaborative. Level-Up Funding Estimate. March 2021. Calculated using Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics compiled using school district funding data -Actual Instructional Expense per Weighted Average Daily Membership from 2005-2006 and 2018-2019. Retrieved from <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/Historical%20Files/Pages/default.aspx>

Methodology

The collaborative identified the 100 districts (bottom 20%) with the fewest resources relative to their student needs: methodology calculates a "weighted student" count for every school district, using student weights employed in the state's Basic Education Funding formula (BEF) and Special Education Funding formula (SEF) to measure the additional needs of students in each school district and create a weighted student count. Both the BEF and SEF formulas distribute funding to each school district based on multiple factors, including poverty, English language learners, charter school enrollment, and special education population. These "weights" are based on research showing that underserved student populations require greater support, increasing the costs of educating them. The weighted student count is used for each district to calculate a more meaningful measure of spending per pupil: Each school district's current expenditures (e.g. spending on school programs) is divided by the weighted student count, thus measuring "current expenditures per weighted student." The 100 districts with the lowest amount of funding available per weighted student are the districts with the fewest resources available to meet their students' needs.

51. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Public Enrollments 2019 -2020 School Year. Statistics compiled using this data. Retrieved from: <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Data%20and%20Statistics/Enrollment/Public%20School/Enrollment%20Public%20Schools%202019-20.xlsx>

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. "School Poverty | National Equity Atlas." nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/School_poverty/#/?geo=02000000000042000. Accessed 19 Jan. 2021.

56. Equity Collaborative. Level-Up Funding Estimate. March 2021. Calculated using Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics compiled using school district funding data -Actual Instructional Expense per Weighted Average Daily Membership from 2005-2006 and 2018-2019. Retrieved from <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/Historical%20Files/Pages/default.aspx>

Methodology:

The collaborative identified the 100 districts (bottom 20%) with the fewest resources relative to their student needs: methodology calculates a “weighted student” count for every school district, using student weights employed in the state’s Basic Education Funding formula (BEF) and Special Education Funding formula (SEF) to measure the additional needs of students in each school district and create a weighted student count. Both the BEF and SEF formulas distribute funding to each school district based on multiple factors, including poverty, English language learners, charter school enrollment, and special education population. These “weights” are based on research showing that underserved student populations require greater support, increasing the costs of educating them. The weighted student count is used for each district to calculate a more meaningful measure of spending per pupil: Each school district’s current expenditures (e.g. spending on school programs) is divided by the weighted student count, thus measuring “current expenditures per weighted student.” The 100 districts with the lowest amount of funding available per weighted student are the districts with the fewest resources available to meet their students’ needs.

57. “Gov. Wolf’s Education Plan Makes Historic \$1.3 Billion Investment in Public Schools.” Governor Tom Wolf, 4 Feb. 2021, www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/gov-wolfs-education-plan-makes-historic-1-3-billion-investment-in-public-schools/. Accessed 10 Mar. 2021.

58. See Appendix 6. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics compiled using school district enrollment data and Actual Instructional Expense per Weighted Average Daily Membership (AIE/WADM) from 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PublicSchEnrReports.aspx> and <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/Historical%20Files/Pages/default.aspx>

Methodology:

Suburban SEPA Districts were grouped based on the share of Black & Hispanic students they have. We then considered the AIE/WADM of districts in those groups.

- 50%+ Black & Hispanic students (9 districts)
- 20-49.9% Black & Hispanic students (12 districts)
- 10-19.9% Black & Hispanic students (20 districts)
- <10% Black & Hispanic students (20 districts)

59. Ibid.

60. Anderson, Monica, and Andrew Perrin. “Nearly One-In-Five Teens Can’t Always Finish Their Homework because of the Digital Divide.” Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 26 Oct. 2018, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/26/nearly-one-in-five-teens-cant-always-finish-their-homework-because-of-the-digital-divide/.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. “Interactive Map: America’s Unconnected Students.” Digital Bridge K-12, digitalbridgek12.org/toolkit/assess-need/connectivity-map/.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. “An Analysis of Achievement Gaps in Every School in America Shows That Being Poor Is the Biggest Hurdle.” The Hechinger Report, 23 Sept. 2019, hechingerreport.org/an-analysis-of-achievement-gaps-in-every-school-in-america-shows-that-being-poor-is-the-biggest-hurdle/.

69. Lapp, David and Anna Shaw-Amoah. Unequal Access to Educational Opportunity Among Pennsylvania’s High School Students. Jan. 2020. Retrieved from: <https://8rri53pm0cs22jk3vvqna1ub-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CRDC-Penn-Jan2020.pdf>

70. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics compiled using PSSA results for English/ Language Arts and Math and Keystone Exam results for Literature and Algebra 1. 2019 data (latest available) retrieved from the ESSA Report Card. Prior years received from PDE via data request. <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/ESSA/ESSAReportCard/Pages/default.aspx>

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid. Between 2012 and 2016, standardized tests were aligned with state standards and became more difficult. Black and Hispanic students lost more ground than White students. Gaps tended to grow during this period, especially in math, where it grew almost everywhere (compared to 61% and 55% of SDs in ELA for black and Hispanic respectively). From 16 to 19, Black students saw the overall gaps basically stay the same – they shrank at slightly more than half of SDs in ELA, grew at slightly more than half of SDs in math, and there wasn't much change in the overall average gaps. For Hispanic students there has been progress from 16 to 19 – 62% of SDs saw the gaps shrink, by around 1-2 percentage points overall.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. Jackson, C. Kirabo. "Boosting Educational Attainment and Adult Earnings." Education Next, 28 May 2015, www.educationnext.org/boosting-education-attainment-adult-earnings-school-spending. Accessed 10 Mar. 2021.

85. Johnson, Rucker C, and Alexander Nazaryan. Children of the Dream : Why School Integration Works. New York, Ny, Basic Books, 2019.

86. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics compiled using PSSA results for English/ Language Arts and Math and Keystone Exam results for Literature and Algebra 1. 2019 data (latest available) retrieved from the ESSA Report Card. Prior years received from PDE via data request. <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/ESSA/ESSAReportCard/Pages/default.aspx>

87. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Statistics compiled using PSSA results for English/ Language Arts and Math and Keystone Exam results for Literature and Algebra 1. 2019 data (latest available) retrieved from the ESSA Report Card. Prior years received from PDE via data request. <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/ESSA/ESSAReportCard/Pages/default.aspx>

Actual Instructional Expense per Weighted Average Daily Membership (AIE/WADM) from 2019 was also used to gather the data. Retrieved from: <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PublicSchEnrReports.aspx> and <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/Historical%20Files/Pages/default.aspx>

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid.

92. “Three Strategies to Help States Elevate Educational Equity.” American Institutes for Research, 19 Oct. 2020, www.air.org/resource/three-strategies-help-states-elevate-educational-equity. Accessed 10 Mar. 2021.

93. Olson, Annika. “More Colleges Should Use Equity Audits to Address Inequalities at Their Institutions (Opinion) | Inside Higher Ed.” *Www.insidehighered.com*, 25 Mar. 2020, www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/03/25/more-colleges-should-use-equity-audits-address-inequalities-their-institutions#:~:text=Equity%20audits%20are%20a%20comprehensive%20evaluation%20of%20inequities. Accessed 10 Mar. 2021.

94. Ford, Andrew. “Using Data to Advance Racial Equity.” *Edutopia*, 4 Aug. 2020, www.edutopia.org/article/using-data-advance-racial-equity.

95. Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Channa Cook-Harvey. *Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success.*, 2018.

96. *Ibid.*

97. “State School Counseling Mandates & Legislation - American School

Counselor Association (ASCA).” www.schoolcounselor.org, www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/State-Requirements-Programs/State-School-Counseling-Mandates-Legislation. Accessed 10 Mar. 2021.

98. “Home | American School Counselor Association (ASCA).” Schoolcounselor.org, 2019, schoolcounselor.org.

99. Gershenson, Seth, et al. *The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers.*, 2017. <http://ftp.iza.org/dp10630.pdf>. Accessed in January 2021.

Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) serves as the leading child advocacy organization working to improve the lives and life chances of children in the region.

Through thoughtful and informed advocacy, community education, targeted service projects and budget analysis, PCCY watches out and speaks out for children and families. PCCY undertakes specific and focused projects in areas affecting the healthy growth and development of

children, including child care, public education, child health, juvenile justice and child welfare.

Founded in 1980 as Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth, our name was changed in 2007 to better reflect our expanded work in the counties surrounding Philadelphia. PCCY remains a committed advocate and an independent watchdog for the well-being of all our children.

pccy.org
facebook.com/pccypage

twitter.com/pccyteam
instagram.com/pccyphotos

Public Citizens for Children and Youth
990 Spring Garden Street
Suite 200
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-563-5848