RACE in AMERICA

Restructuring Inequality

EDUCATION

The First of Seven Reports on the Race in America Conference

June 3–6, 2010

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
CENTER ON RACE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Editor   Larry E. Davis
Associate Editor   Ralph Bangs

RACE IN AMERICA: RESTRUCTURING INEQUALITY

EDUCATION REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
CENTER ON RACE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Despite significant progress in America's stride toward racial equality, there remains much to be done. Some problems are worse today than they were during the turbulent times of the 1960s. Indeed, racial disparities across a number of areas are blatant—family formation, employment levels, community violence, incarceration rates, educational attainment, and health and mental health outcomes.

As part of an attempt to redress these race-related problems, the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and Center on Race and Social Problems organized the conference Race in America: Restructuring Inequality, which was held at the University of Pittsburgh June 3–6, 2010. The goal of the conference was to promote greater racial equality for all Americans. As our entire society has struggled to recover from a major economic crisis, we believed it was an ideal time to restructure existing systems rather than merely rebuilding them as they once were. Our present crisis afforded us the opportunity to start anew to produce a society that promotes greater equality of life outcomes for all of its citizens.

The conference had two parts: 20 daytime sessions for registered attendees and three free public evening events. The daytime conference sessions had seven foci: economics, education, criminal justice, race relations, health, mental health, and families/youth/elderly. Each session consisted of a 45-minute presentation by two national experts followed by one hour of questions and comments by the audience. The evening events consisted of an opening lecture by Julian Bond, a lecture on economics by Julianne Malveaux, and a panel discussion on postracial America hosted by Alex Castellanos of CNN.

This Education Report of the conference summarizes information provided by those speakers who focused on race and education in their presentations as well as responses to audience questions and comments. The value of this report is that it provides access to the extensive and detailed information disseminated at the conference. This information will be particularly helpful to community and policy leaders interested in gaining a better understanding of racial disparities in education and finding effective strategies for improving these conditions.

Disclaimer:

This post-conference Race in America report includes detailed summaries of the presentations and subsequent discussions that took place. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work or Center on Race and Social Problems.

Table of Contents

Race is Not Neutral: Addressing Disproportionality in School Discipline

Presenter: Russell Skiba, Professor, Counseling and Educational Psychology, and Director, The Equity Project, Indiana University

Moderator: Esther Bush, President and CEO, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

Children of color have disproportionately higher rates of school suspension and expulsion compared to White children. School suspension disproportionality between Black and White students has remained constant or increased for more than 30 years. Many children who are suspended are repeat offenders. In addition, the use of suspension has a high correlation with poor performance on standardized testing, dropping out of school, and juvenile delinquency.

The causes of disproportionate suspension may stem from the large achievement gap between Black and White students (achievement and behavior tend to be correlated) and the lack of culturally competent teachers and administrators. It is believed that most schools are ill-equipped to deal with issues like poverty, discrimination, and negative peer culture, which may extrinsically have a negative effect on children's behavior.

It is proposed that by increasing school accountability for discipline and offering alternative methods of dealing with poor behavior, such as positive behavioral supports, we can decrease school reliance on suspension and expulsion as a primary source of punishment. The importance of teachers being culturally responsive toward the differing needs of diverse student bodies should be recognized. Accordingly, implementing a culturally sensitive intervention is an important step toward reforming school discipline.

The Problem

Black students are disproportionately disciplined in the United States. Black students are six times more likely to be suspended at the elementary school level. Black males are 16 times more likely to be suspended than White females.

The relative Black-to-White suspension ratio has been increasing over the years. For example:

- In 1972, the relative Black-to-White suspension ratio was 1.94.
- In 2000, the relative Black-to-White suspension ratio was 2.59.
- In 2003, the relative Black-to-White suspension ratio was 2.84.

In addition to having higher school suspension rates, Black students are usually treated more severely than White students for similar offenses. Further, Black students receive more school referrals for reasons that are subjective and judgmental.

School suspension persists despite evidence of it being largely ineffective and having negative outcomes, such as the following:

- Thirty to 50 percent of children who are suspended are repeat offenders—suspension seems to function more as a reinforcer than as a punisher.
- Children suspended in sixth grade are six to eight times more likely to have school referrals in the eighth grade.
- States with a high rate of school suspensions tend to have higher rates of juvenile incarceration.
- The use of suspension has a high correlation with dropping out of school.
- The use of suspension is associated with poor school achievement (schools with lower rates of suspension perform better on statewide tests).
- School alienation resulting from suspension increases the risk of delinquency.

Causes

There is no evidence to suggest that Black students behave more poorly than their White counterparts. Rather, disproportionality in suspensions and expulsions occurs along racial lines for some of the following reasons:

- A significant achievement gap exists between White children and children of color—achievement and behavior tend to be correlated.
- There is a lack of culturally competent teachers and school administrators (50 percent of students are minorities, while more than 95 percent of teachers are White).
- Classroom management issues: A majority of school disciplinary referrals are for day-to-day threats to the teacher's authority rather than serious disruptive or safety threat issues.
- Poor school climate
- Negative effects of poverty
- Negative community influences on children
- Negative peer culture
- After-effects of historical discrimination

Solutions

1. Ensure that groups interpreting data on school discipline disparities are diverse and representative of the population in order to consider all hypotheses.
2. Increase available alternatives to suspension and expulsion.
3. Increase available access to more effective practices for classroom management, discipline, and school climate, such as:

   - Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)
   - Character education
   - Second Step (social and emotional learning that teaches kids how to deal with their emotions and interactions)
   - Bullying prevention
   - Conflict resolution

4. Make schools accountable for discipline and behavior in addition to achievement on statewide tests.
5. Incorporate measures of safety and climate as part of the school's annual report card.
6. Set criteria and preventive interventions for persistently unsafe schools.
7. Set criteria and provide technical assistance for states that have schools with disproportional numbers of minority students in special education classes.
8. Improve effective means of discipline and conflict management available to teachers and administrators.
9. Increase coordination and collaborations with other child service agencies.
10. Implement culturally responsive Personal Behavioral Supports (see below).
11. Recognize the socio-economic, religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds of individual teachers as a part of cultural competency training; effective teacher training must be culturally self-reflective.
12. Represent fully all cultures in textbooks to avoid minimizing the lives of the children in the classroom.

Alternatives to Disciplinary Removal

More than 10,000 schools currently are using Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS). This three-tiered model of school violence prevention consists of the following:

*Tier 1: C*reate a climate where children can learn to get along with each other.

- Bully prevention
- Conflict resolution
- Improved conflict management

Tier 2: Identify children with difficulties and intervene early (use school-wide screening approaches to assess which children should move on to this level).

- Check and connect—At-risk children with a certain number of referrals will check in with the guidance counselor or school principal to establish goals for the day. Goals are evaluated at the end of the day.
- Mentoring and anger management—At-risk students are paired with school mentors and take time out for an activity throughout the school week.

Tier 3: Preplan responses to negative behavior.

- Functional assessment—This is a tool that helps in identifying targets for intervention and hypothesizing causal connections. At its most basic level, it gets to the question of why a child is behaving in a certain way so that steps may be taken to change the behavior. Its focus is not on punishing "misbehavior" but on changing the environment to promote appropriate behavior.
- Restorative justice—This is an approach to justice that encourages offenders to take responsibility for their actions by apologizing and often making restitution to

the victim. The focus of this approach is reconciliation instead of punishment and healing instead of retribution.

- In-school alternatives, such as in-school suspension
- Parent suspension—Parents are placed in the school to monitor the children's behavior for a three- to four-day period.
- Probationary expulsion—Children are left in school after expulsion for a probationary period that has been approved by the Board of Education.

References

American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? *American Psychologist,* 63(9), 852–862.

Gregory A., Skiba R.J., and Noguera P.A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 59–68.

Muhammed, K.G. (2010). *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Skiba, R.J., Michael, R.S., Nardo, A.C., and Peterson, R. (2002). The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. *The Urban Review*, 34, 317–342.

Witt, H. (2007). School discipline tougher on African Americans. *The Chicago Tribune, e-Edition*. Retrieved from www.chicagotribune.com/services/newspaper/eedition/chi-070924discipline,0,7975055.story.

Race, Equity, and School Discipline: How to Create Safe and Orderly Schools

Presenter: Pedro Noguera, Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education, Steinhardt School of Culture,
        Education, and Human Development, New York University

Moderator: Esther Bush, President and CEO, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

Staff and faculty in urban schools often lack the cultural competency necessary to effectively manage school behavior without relying on extreme methods such as humiliation, suspension, and expulsion on a regular basis. The newest and most inexperienced teachers tend to be placed with the students who have the most behavioral problems and the most needs. Students in larger schools have less opportunity to create relationships with school faculty and staff. This lack of relationship diminishes the opportunity for cultural competency between teachers and students to occur naturally. The framing of school problems around the achievement gap forces educators to view problems through a deficit lens. It is more appropriate to view school problems through a developmental lens that focuses on the needs of students rather than their insufficiencies.

It is recommended that schools establish connections with community and social service providers, local police departments, nonprofit agencies, and neighboring churches to create innovative ways to resolve disparities in education from a holistic approach. There is a need for more interaction among teachers with regards to training and dealing with discipline issues with students. The most effective teacher development will take place in the classroom and through teacher modeling. Schools have to move away from discipline that relies heavily on ostracism and exclusion toward creating safe environments for students to learn and institutions where character development is central to the school's mission.

The Problem

Violent communities create environments that breed violence in schools.

We disproportionately punish the neediest children:

- Racial minorities
- Special education students
- Homeless children
- Children in foster care

Schools tend to punish the same children repeatedly through:

- Humiliation
- Exclusion

Schools are failing to reach the needs of children; we punish them because of our inability to meet their needs.

Large numbers of children do not come to school because their safety is not assured.

Children in suburban schools tend to feel safer than kids in inner-city schools.

Causes

- A lack of cultural competency on the part of school faculty and staff
- Students who no longer have an interest in learning and are the hardest to discipline
- Students who internalize negative aspects of the culture of their communities (e.g., students associating themselves with the gang culture that takes place outside of school)
- Fewer opportunities for children in larger schools to create personal relationships with faculty and staff
- The best and brightest kids being taught by best teachers and children with the most learning and behavioral problems being taught by the most inexperienced teachers
- An absence of adults with moral authority in the most dangerous schools
- The criminalization of misconduct by minority children in the school system
- The framing of school problems around the achievement gap, which forces educators to view problems through a deficit lens as opposed to a developmental lens that would focus on meeting the needs of students

Solutions

1. Create ways to increase opportunities for children to establish relationships with faculty and staff.
2. Broaden the notion of who is at-risk to learn ways to create safe schools.
3. Increase the capacity of schools to deal with safety, educational, and health issues that may hinder learning.
4. Establish partnerships with community service providers to effectively change disparities in education.
5. Evaluate and improve upon the rules and procedures schools have for maintaining school discipline.
6. Promote interaction and training between teachers who are most able to maintain classroom discipline and those who have deficiency in that area.
7. Involve students in the process of constructing school rules.
8. Move away from reactive approaches to school discipline that rely heavily on ostracism and exclusion toward preventive approaches that focus on clearly articulated and actively enforced values and norms.
9. Move to approaches of discipline that engage parents before there is trouble.
10. Ensure that a clear focus on character development is central to the school's mission.
11. Address underlining behavioral issues for children with discipline problems.
12. Move away from ignoring serious indicators of problems toward responding quickly and early to minor offenses.
13. Help students make concrete plans for the future.

14. Institute the most effective teacher development strategies, including placing teaching coaches inside the classroom and teacher modeling. Training that is disconnected from what is taking place in the classroom does not work.
15. Formulate specific strategies in the schools to counteract negative stereotypes before the students begin to internalize them.
16. Create more school safety net programs that link nonprofit agencies, employment, health and social services, and community organizations to the schools (e.g., the Harlem Children's Zone and Homewood Children's Village).
17. Align academic plans with safety net programs.
18. Ensure cultural competency in the school's curriculum is relevant to the communities in which students live.

References

Bryk, A.S. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago, Ill., and London, England: University of Chicago Press.

Chenoweth, K. (2007). *It's being done: Academic success in unexpected schools*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Press.

Ginwright, S.A. (2004). *Black in school: Afrocentric reform, urban youth, and the promise of hip-hop culture*: New York, N.Y.: Teachers College Press.

Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers: The story of success*. New York, N.Y.: Little, Brown and Co.

Jones, V.F. and Jones, L. (1991). *Comprehensive classroom management: Creating communities of support and solving problems*. Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.

Payne, C.M. (1984). *Getting what we ask for: The ambiguity of success and failure in urban education*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Payne, C.M. (2008). *So much reform, so little change: The persistence of failure in urban schools*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Press.

Perry, T., Steele, C., and Hilliard, A.G. (2003). *Young, gifted, and black: Promoting high achievement among African American students*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.

Sandler, S. (2000). *Turning to each other not on each other: How school communities prevent racial bias in school discipline*. Justice Matters Institute.

Steinberg, L.D. (2008). *Beyond the classroom: Why school reform has failed and what parents need to do*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster.

High-Quality Instruction: What It Is and How It Matters for Racial Equality

Presenter: Ronald Ferguson, Senior Lecturer, Education and Public Policy, Graduate School of Education and John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Moderator: Mark Roosevelt, Outgoing Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools

In America, Black and Latino children trail White and Asian American students in academic achievement, although it must be noted that White and Asian American students rank only 14th in academic achievement internationally. Concentrated poverty is a major barrier to closing the achievement gap.

There has been no improvement in high school dropout rates in 50 years, with the exclusion of general equivalency diplomas (GEDs). Students who obtain GEDs typically have about the same test scores as students who get high school degrees; however, they often lack the soft skills needed to be successful in the labor force (e.g., ability to lead a team). Parenting practices during early adolescence, such as allowing time for independent play and increasing the amount of leisure reading, correlate strongly with higher scores on standardized tests.

There is a need for more and better training to equip teachers with the know-how and resources to more effectively teach students from diverse backgrounds. However, teachers may be apprehensive about new training efforts because they are afraid of losing autonomy in their role, being asked to do too much work, or being asked to do something unfamiliar.

Academic achievement goals should be raised for children from all backgrounds, with a special focus on those groups that are farthest behind. All races should be equally represented in academic achievement, and achievement must be enhanced for all so American students can continue to compete internationally in this expanding global economy. Teacher training is essential to closing the achievement gap. Further, at the school-district level, progress and goals concerning academic achievement gaps should be clear, and progress should be measured against state-level benchmarks.

The Problem

- There is a persistent educational achievement gap between Whites and Blacks in the United States.
- Further, there have been stagnant achievement levels for all older adolescents since the 1990s.
- There has been no improvement in high school dropout rates in 50 years.

- The test scores for students with GEDs are about the same as those for students who possess a high school diploma. However, students with GEDs rate lower than high school graduates in noncognitive "soft skills" necessary to perform well in the job market. Some examples of soft skills are deferred gratification, forms of etiquette, team participation, and team leadership.

Causes

Concentrated poverty is a huge barrier to closing the achievement gap.

While some parenting practices can hinder a child's ability to perform well academically, others can bolster it. For example, when children are allowed to roam more freely around the house at age 2, it helps to predict visual motor integration by age 4 and math skills by age 8. Also, if children are exposed to conversations during bedtime reading that mix hard and easy questions, it predicts cognitive skills growth over the next year. The amount of cognitive skills growth is independent of the starting point.

First graders of all races typically engage in leisure reading at about the same rates. However, by fifth grade, 60–70 percent of Whites and Asians—and only 30–40 percent of Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans—say that they engage in leisure reading.

There is evidence suggesting that Blacks and Hispanics who get the highest grades suffer a popularity penalty. This may have more to do with personality style than with other students' resentment of their high achievement.

Teachers may resist efforts to initiate training. There are six reasons why teachers fear or are apprehensive about new training efforts:

1. Belief that their time is being wasted with repetitive ideas with no real buy-in from administrators
2. Fear of losing autonomy or of being asked to do something they do not want to do
3. Fear of feeling incompetent if asked to do something they do not know how to do
4. Fear that their colleagues might not buy in, and they will become socially isolated
5. Fear of unpleasant surprises that may occur in the duration of the training
6. Fear of being asked to do too much work

Solutions

1. Effectively implement teams of teachers with leaders who understand the principles of good instruction and good practices to attain major improvements in the achievement gap.
2. Create ways to make the interactions children have with parents, peers, and teachers as positive and developmentally oriented as possible.
3. Excellence with equity—Raise academic achievement among all students, with a special focus on those students who are farthest behind.
4. Group proportional equality—Equally represent all races in academic achievements and failures: race and ethnicity should not predict an individual's academic achievement.

5. Judge schools on how much students learn rather than solely on how much students know. When schools are assessed in this way, many of the poor inner-city schools show significant levels of growth during a particular interval of time.
6. Increase aptitude in academically struggling schools in English language arts by having all teachers (including sports coaches) focus on teaching reading. Teachers should receive professional development training to accomplish this during monthly faculty meetings.
7. Stop focusing on the achievement gap in the school district alone, and instead focus on the gap between each group in the district and the statewide average for White students. If students already are excelling beyond the statewide average for Whites, then another higher measure should be considered as a benchmark for achievement. This strategy could be effective in getting White parents to become invested in the push for creating equity in academic achievement.
8. Have books at home in order to strengthen the home intellectual climate.
9. Find ways to increase the implementation at the classroom level of five principles (the Five Cs) that encompass what high teacher quality entails. The Five Cs are:

- Care: in ways that build committed relationships with students
- Control: any tendencies toward out-of-order or off-task student behavior
- Clarify: key concepts and ideas that might confuse students
- Challenge: students to persist and think rigorously
- Captivate: students to hold their attention and stimulate interest

10. Establish regional teacher training centers where school leaders and district personnel are required by policy to be engaged, and where teachers are taught best-practice teaching methods.
11. Change the style of research on schools to focus on effective practices rather than just general headings and principles.

Some Reasons to be Hopeful about Closing the Achievement Gap

The IQ gap between Blacks and Whites shrank by 25 percent between 1972 and 2002. Sixty-three percent of the Black/White reading score gap for 17-year-olds that existed in 1971, which some people believed to be genetic, was gone before 1988.

Reference

Heckman, J. (Under preparation, 2010). *Hard evidence on soft skills: The GED and the problem of soft skills in America.* Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.

The Bankruptcy of Achievement Gap Policy and What to Do About It

Presenter: Gary Orfield, Professor, Education, Law, Political Science, and Urban Planning,
      University of California, Los Angeles

Moderator: Mark Roosevelt, Outgoing Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools

Schools alone do not possess the transformative power to solve the achievement gap on their own. The achievement gap closed substantially when school reforms were accompanied by the War on Poverty and desegregation strategies to create access to better schools, teachers, and peer groups for Black and Latino students. Because reforms have been limited to within-school pressure on tests and standards, there has been no significant progress. There needs to be a major improvement in U.S. education policy and an increase in school safety-net programs (such as the approach in the Harlem Children's Zone) for schools to take positive steps toward education equity. A large part of the disparity in education among Black and Latino students is the result of extrinsic circumstances, such as concentrated poverty, racial separation, and housing issues.

The United States has been operating on outdated policies regarding education that have not produced improvement in graduation rates in almost 30 years. Poor academic achievement of Black and Latino students cannot be blamed solely on teachers and schools, because schools cannot effectively resolve the numerous issues that children living in poverty may present, including health concerns and excessive mobility related to housing problems.

Academic achievement cannot be assessed exclusively on test scores. Achievement measured only on test scores fosters a learning environment in which subjects who are not tested often are ignored and the curriculum is radically limited in impoverished schools. There should be an increased focus on graduation rates as opposed to test scores. Students earning the credential of a high school diploma and beyond are a more important measure of academic achievement than just standardized test scores. There should be a richer understanding of the social and political climates that create these gaps in achievement as well as the policies that promote personal and human development in students at all levels. In order for school achievement to improve, there needs to be a greater focus on creating the mentoring programs and positive social networking programs for students in communities that lack connections to social capital. We need to disregard the false pretense that schools completely on their own have the power to create great change in poor academic achievement. This belief tends to produce counter-productive pressures on teachers in the most troubled communities and drives them to leave these schools even more rapidly.

The Problem

The United States is on the wrong path when it comes to educational equity. It is hard to run a multiracial country that has the most unequal distribution of income of any advanced country. The United States is the only advanced country in the world that has not made improvements to high school graduation rates since the 1970s.

Poor and disadvantaged children usually attend schools with high concentrations of poverty, racial separation, and immigrant and non-English speaking populations.

The achievement gap exists not only between Blacks and Whites, but the Latino-White gap and the gap between Asians and everyone else are tremendous. A vast difference in college completion exists between Whites and Latinos as well as Asians and everyone else. We are approaching the multiracial setting where Whites and Asians will be the dominant population in terms of educational achievement, despite being racial minorities. The United States made progress in increasing graduation rates for 75 years until the 1970s, but currently we are making no improvements in educational achievement at the secondary school level.

We also are not developing a teaching force that reflects the changing population of our schools. White teachers systematically leave disadvantaged and impoverished schools. Existing policies provide big incentives for teachers and administrators to leave the schools where they are needed most, because we systematically sanction schools, mark them as failures, "charterize" them, and threaten to dissolve them under the Race to the Top intiatives.

Causes

- Segregation in schools

    - Races have become increasingly isolated in schools across the country. Intensely segregated minority schools, where no more than 10 percent of the school population is White, are composed of 41 percent Black and 38 percent Latino students.
    - The average Black student attends schools that are 29 percent White.
    - The average Latino student attends schools that are 27 percent White.
    - The average California Latino student was in a school that was 54 percent White in 1970. Currently, Latino students attend schools that are 85 percent non-White.
    - A typical Latino student attends schools where 59 percent of the students live in poverty. One of the biggest programs eliminated from President Ronald Reagan's first budget in the 1980s was the Desegregation Assistance Centers Program, which provided assistance to help schools desegregate. Ninety-six percent of teachers feel that a program like this would be a good idea.
    - The year with the lowest level of the achievement gap, 1988, also was the year of highest integration. Segregation has gotten worse each year since then. We have lost all the progress made in school desegregation since 1967.

- Currently, 72 percent of Black and 53 percent of Latino children are being born into single-parent households.

- Subjects who are not tested are simply ignored, because schools are being evaluated solely on test scores. Education has been reduced to kids learning only what is necessary to pass statewide tests.

- The United States has gone through seven or eight presidential terms with an education policy that has failed to close the achievement gap, particularly at secondary-school levels.

- Implementing school reform initiatives without addressing the issue of poverty and race in schools will not be effective in closing the achievement gap. The roots of the problem with the achievement gap are the enormous amounts of concentrated inequality and segregation in American society and the false pretense that schools alone have the transformative power to create great change.

- Nothing in the Reagan Administration's *A Nation at Risk* report focused on improving graduation rates. This report continues to be the model for school improvement in the United States, which is one of the reasons there has been no progress in high school graduation rates in almost 30 years.

- The easiest way for schools to improve their test scores is to get rid of students with low average test scores. Dropout accountability was written into No Child Left Behind, but it was "interpreted away" by the George W. Bush Administration by not being enforced.

- Families, communities, and peer groups are more important than schools when it comes to the achievement gap.

- The weakest teacher training is in schools that are the most disadvantaged.

- There is systematic inequality in the advanced courses offered between schools of different races that relates to student readiness for these courses, availability of faculty, and scheduling (e.g., lack of AP courses available to schools in poor communities).

- Housing issues

  - Poor children in rental housing move frequently, sometimes several times within the school year.
  - We are spending four times as much money to subsidize homeowners through the tax system as we do for housing poor people.
  - We have the least amount of adequate housing for poor people in comparison with any other advanced country, a main cause for so much instability in student enrollment at the schools with the poorest populations.
  - Many families in the poorest communities are paying more than half of their income for truly inadequate housing.
  - There are high schools in Los Angeles, Calif., where the absolute majority of the students are in foster care.
  - Billions of dollars are being spent to build housing in areas where the schools are failing miserably. No civil right policies are being implemented to use that money in places where the schools are actually viable.
  - Black and Latino middle-class families that move into the suburbs find themselves on the path to resegregation, because there is virtually no effort to initiate policies on housing integration in these areas. During the second Bush administration, less than 20 cases a year were filed on housing segregation in the entire country, despite an estimated 4 million violations.

- Schools with high populations of poor children typically have only one social worker per 1,000 students.

- There is virtually no evidence that charter, private, or smaller schools are more effective at closing the achievement gap.

Solutions

1. Base the achievement gap on graduation rates as well as test scores and other indicators. Focus on the progress students achieve.
2. Recognize that the student's education has to go beyond the math and reading test.
3. Develop a richer understanding of the social and political climates that create these gaps in achievement.
4. Recognize that in countries that outperform us in reading and math, teachers usually have unions and tenure.
5. Establish labor policies that produce less inequality.
6. Establish higher standards for teacher training institutions (e.g., teachers need to be trained through teachers' colleges, not through alternative teaching methods).
7. Reduce subsidies for the affluent and increase subsidies for the disadvantaged and working class.
8. Create housing subsidies that do not concentrate children in communities with poorly performing schools.
9. Create ways to increase parent education.
10. Create policies that implement personal and human development.
11. Create regional magnet schools in our metropolitan areas.
12. Find ways to create mentoring and positive social network programs for students in communities that may lack connections to social capital.

References

Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., and Wang, J. (2010). *Choice without equity: Charter school segregation and the need for civil rights standards*. Los Angeles, Calif.: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, UCLA; www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu.histories.htm.

Orfield, G., and Kornhaber, M. (2001). *Raising standards or raising barriers?: Inequality and high-stakes testing in public education*. New York, N.Y.: Century Foundation Press.

From Harlem to Homewood: Rebuilding the Village to Raise Our Children

Presenter: John Wallace, Philip Hallen Professor of Community Health and Social Justice,
        School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh

Moderator: Alex Johnson, President, Community College of Allegheny County

This session focused on the major steps being taken to improve education in Homewood, one of Pittsburgh's most distressed neighborhoods. The central strategy is to adapt the renowned school safety-net program, the Harlem Children's Zone, in Homewood.

Homewood currently fits the Annie E. Casey Foundation's criteria for a "distressed neighborhood." Its poverty rate exceeds 27 percent, more than 33 percent of the male population is unemployed, and the dropout rate of those aged 16–19 exceeds 23 percent. Multiple quality gaps in regard to teachers and school facilities are some of the causes for Homewood's disparity in education.

To solve this problem in Homewood and communities like it, there needs to be a significant investment in getting those children to—and through—college by initiating programs that increase social support for children; increase interaction between schools and the community; and build a community among residents, institutions, and stakeholders.

The Problem

Homewood currently meets the qualifications of a distressed neighborhood.

- Poverty exceeds 27 percent.
- Female-headed households exceed 73 percent.
- High dropout rates exist among those between the ages of 16–19 (exceeding 23 percent).
- More than one-third of the male population is unemployed.
- Of the 3,300 children who live in Homewood, more than 1,200 receive some type of social services.
- Seventy-two percent of the children living in Homewood and 95 percent of children attending public schools in Homewood are in single-parent households.
- More than 88 percent of the children are on free or reduced lunches.

The school situation in Homewood is troubling.

- Less than 60 percent of students at Westinghouse High School graduate in a four-year period.
- Only one-quarter of the students at Westinghouse are proficient in reading.
- Only 13 percent of the students at Westinghouse are numerate.
- Only 25 percent of the students at Westinghouse are Pittsburgh Promise ready. The Pittsburgh Promise is a college scholarship for graduates of Pittsburgh Public Schools

who have lived in the city of Pittsburgh and have at least a 2.5 GPA and have demonstrated 90 percent attendance in high school.

Out of 4,364 taxable properties in Homewood, there are:

- 2,200 vacant buildings
- 2,492 tax-delinquent buildings
- More than 8 million square feet of property
- More than $5 million in delinquent taxes

The More You Learn, The More You Earn

Education increases earnings over a lifetime. The average lifetime earnings of a White male who drops out of school is only $627,000, which is about the same as a Black male who graduates from high school. Hourly wages increase more quickly for African American males with more education than they do for White males. More than 70 percent of African American students entering college are female.

The total public health cost of an African American male who drops out of school is $82,000 and for an African American female is $107,000. The total lifetime public savings in getting an African American male through high school is $269,000.

Causes

- Nationally, urban education is becoming increasingly diverse:

    - Sixteen percent of the youth population in schools is African American.
    - Twenty-two percent of the youth population in schools is Latino.
    - Fifty-five percent of the youth population in schools is White.

- There are multiple achievement gaps in:

    - Test scores
    - Graduation rates
    - School discipline
    - Dropout rates
    - College attendance

- There are quality gaps for schools in poorer communities in:

    - Teacher quality
    - School facility quality
    - Quality and safety of the environment surrounding the schools

- Only 5 percent of White students are in schools where 70–100 percent of the students are on free or reduced-price lunches (which is used as a measure of poverty). That number of White students decreases to 1 percent at the secondary-school level. More than 50 percent of Black and Latino children are in schools where 70–100 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunches.

Solutions

1. Invest in getting African American males to—and through—college.
2. Raise expectations for students who may be struggling.
3. Increase social supports for students.
4. Improve teacher quality and preparation to work in poor urban schools.
5. Extend the school day and school year to increase the amount of learning time that students receive.
6. Increase interaction between schools and the community.
7. Build ways to connect schools with community and social services.
8. Work to change the negative perception of Homewood and neighborhoods like it.
9. Build a community among residents, institutions, and stakeholders.
10. Rigorously and regularly evaluate teachers and students.
11. Create a culture of success and education excellence within the community.
12. Hold adults accountable for outcomes.

References

Bryk, A.S. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago, Ill., and London, England: University of Chicago Press.

High School Quality and Race Differences in Postsecondary Achievement

Presenter: Marta Tienda, Professor, Sociology and Public Affairs, Princeton University

Moderator: Alex Johnson, President, Community College of Allegheny County

Although it is a well-established fact that school integration is beneficial to students of all backgrounds, America has struggled to find efficient ways of creating racial equality in regards to admission criteria for postsecondary education since public school desegregation was instituted with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954. Affirmative action legislation has been a common tool used to quell some of the racial disparity in admissions at colleges and universities. However, opponents of affirmative action argue that those policies allow students of color the opportunity to attend more selective universities even though they may be less qualified than their White counterparts.

Cases like *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* and *Hopwood v. Texas Law School* are examples of the backlash that has taken place against affirmative action in regard to school admissions since its establishment. Due to increasing animosity toward affirmative action, many states have attempted to create alternative "race-neutral" legislation to create equity in educational institutions. One example of this is the Texas Top 10 Percent Law (Texas House Bill 588), which guarantees that students in the top 10 percent of every high school across the state have the opportunity to be admitted to the Texas state college or university of their choosing, regardless of admission criteria and SAT scores. In the years following the introduction of Texas House Bill 588, the number of college-eligible minority students increased more than 60 percent. However, state schools like the University of Texas at Austin were unable to accommodate the increasing number of new students due to inadequate investment. This initiative was seen by many as a veiled attempt at affirmative action to curtail the effect of the *Hopwood v. Texas* decision, which prohibits the use of race or ethnicity as admission criteria in any educational institution. In 2009, Texas established Senate Bill 175, which allows the University of Texas at Austin to limit the number of incoming students to 75 percent of the 10 percent from across the state who are guaranteed admission.

One solution for creating racial equality in educational institutions is to fuel more debate around the need for class and race-based preferences concurrently in college admissions. Preference based on these two approaches is critical because preference based solely on race could possibly be met with resistance by critics of affirmative action. In addition, class preferences alone in school admissions would broaden educational opportunities for Whites more than minorities, because Blacks and Latinos typically are poorer than Whites on any given economic measure.

Another solution would be to eliminate the use of standardized test scores as part of college admissions. Because minorities typically score lower than Whites, these scores can be seen as an exclusionary tactic aimed at keeping more minorities out of selective institutions. Standardized test scores tend to only predict a student's first-year grades and nothing more. Selective universities continue to rely heavily on standardized test scores.

The Problem

- A lack of diversity in colleges and universities across America
- A minority college paradox: rising levels and growing gaps

    - Completion disparities are widening, especially for Hispanics.
    - Poor youth are less likely to enroll in and complete college.
    - The mismatch hypothesis is unfounded—minorities actually are more likely to graduate from selective than nonselective institutions (Bowen and Bok, 1998; Kane 1998; Alon and Tienda, 2005).

- The extent of the lack of diversity and the significance of having integrated schools has been evident by the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and others that followed. In the *Brown v. Board* decision, the racial segregation of schools was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. The legislation that has occurred since then has shown that it has been a constant struggle to find acceptable methods to integrate schools.

Causes

- The lack of diversity in colleges and universities across America is in part driven by the overwhelming focus on standardized test scores for admissions.

    - Selective colleges and universities rely heavily on standardized test scores as part of their admission criteria.
    - Standardized test scores tend to only predict student grades at the freshman level. Accordingly, they are not good indicators of college completion.
    - High school grades are a better predictor of college admission, grades, and graduation, as well as the work one does after college. Yet, their importance among admissions criteria is minimized.
    - The increasing importance placed on these scores has been fueled by college and university rankings, such as the *U.S. News & World Report* annual ranking of top schools. Schools receive their ranking based on the test scores of the students they admit.
    - The result of the strong emphasis on test scores is that minorities are disproportionately excluded from colleges and universities, given that Black and Latino students in particular traditionally score lower than Whites on standardized tests.

- The lack of diversity in colleges and universities has not effectively been addressed by alternatives to admissions practices that take race into account, such as the following:

    - Ignore race and class—Grades and test scores are class-neutral measures of merit. Grades can be considered a class-neutral measure of merit because even the worst schools have students who perform at the head of their class. However, the top performers at the worst schools may not test well on standardized tests compared to students at better schools.

- Class preferences of any race—This broadens educational opportunity, but more so for Whites than minorities. Because minorities are poorer than Whites on any given stratum, a class-based method of measuring merit would still benefit Whites at each socioeconomic level.
- Percent plans—By establishing a measure of merit and applying it uniformly across all schools, this method would recognize merit in all schools, regardless of whether the school performs poorly or above average. This method is supposedly race neutral; however, it assumes that the social distribution of schools is race neutral.

- Selective colleges and universities have neglected to increase their capacities despite a growing number of students who want to attend these educational institutions.

- In the case of Texas, the lack of diversity persists as efforts aimed at broadening college access by economic class, geography, and ethno-racial group have come under attack.

  - The state of Texas had implemented the Texas Top 10 Percent Law, which guaranteed admission to students in the top 10 percent of each high school, based on criteria set by the administration of the individual schools, into any public school in the state of Texas. Support for this measure is waning due to its being classified as a veiled attempt at affirmative action.
  - Colleges in Texas, including its two flagship institutions, the University of Texas at Austin and Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (Texas A&M), lack the capacity to accommodate the increasing number of new students due to a lack of investment in higher education by the state.

- Researchers have questioned the role of high school quality in explaining the low achievement of minority students within selective schools (e.g., Vars and Bowen, 1998). The Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project sought to broaden our understanding of this issue by exploring the questions "Does high school quality explain racial and ethnic disparities in college achievement?" and "Do performance disparities in high school quality depend on institutional selectivity?" Results from the study suggest the following:

  - Class stratification within the secondary school system reproduces academic disparities in college. High school affluence does not insulate minority students from under-achievement. Furthermore, association between high school quality and college achievement depends on selectivity of institution attended.
  - High school influences on achievement carry through to the college career. There is an erosion of first-semester minority performance advantage, mainly because Whites improve more than minorities. Averages rise for all. There are no graduation disparities among poor school students (lower levels with less dispersion).

Solutions

1. The ongoing debate about class versus race-based preferences suggests the need for both approaches, because minorities at any school might be less advantaged.
2. School effects need further specification:

   - "Average" schools evaluation tends to be very heterogeneous
   - In-depth evaluation of within-strata school characteristics
   - Examination of school size, teacher traits, etc.

References

Alon, S. and Tienda, M. (2005). Assessing the mismatch hypothesis: Differentials in college graduation rates by institutional selectivity. *Sociology of Education*, 78(4), 294–315.

Audrey Light, A. and Strayer, W. (2000). Determinants of college completion: School quality or student ability? *The Journal of Human Resources*, 35(2), 299–332.

Bowen, W.G. and Bok, D.C. (1998). *The shape of the river: Long-term consequences of considering race in college and university admissions*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Kane, T.J. (1998). Misconceptions in the debate over affirmative action in college admissions. In G. Orfield and E. Miller (eds.), *Chilling admissions: The affirmative action crisis and the search for alternatives*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Publishing Group.

Marx, D., Brown, J., and Steele, C.M. (1999). Allport and stereotype threat: On being the target of a negative stereotype. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(3), 491–502.

McDonough, P.M. (1997). *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity.* Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.

Niu, S.X. and Tienda, M. (2010). The impact of the Texas Top 10 Percent Law on college enrollment: A regression discontinuity approach. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 29(1), 84–110.

Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and schools: Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the Black-White achievement gap*. New York, N.Y.: Teachers College, Columbia University; Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute.

Sigal, A. and Tienda, M. (2007). Diversity, opportunity, and the shifting meritocracy in higher education. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 487–511.

Steele, C.M. and Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 797–811.

Steele, C.M. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape the intellectual identities and performance of women and African Americans. *American Psychologist*, 52, 613–629.

Tienda, M. and Niu, S.X. (2006). Capitalizing on segregation, pretending neutrality: College admissions and the Texas Top 10 Percent Law. *American Law Economic Review*, 8(2): 312–346.

The Texas Higher Education Opportunity Project (THEOP): theop.princeton.edu.

Vars, F.E. and Bowen, W.G. (1998). Scholastic aptitude test scores, race, and academic performance in selective colleges and universities. In C. Jencks and M. Phillips (eds.), *The black-white test score gap*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Sponsors

Race in America: Restructuring Inequality was generously supported by the following organizations:

GOLD Sponsors

Richard King Mellon Foundation
The Heinz Endowments
The Pittsburgh Foundation

SILVER Sponsors

BNY Mellon
Staunton Farm Foundation
UPMC

BRONZE Sponsors

The Buhl Foundation
EQT Corporation
Falk Foundation
Ford Foundation, Institute of International Education, Inc.
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
Jewish Healthcare Foundation
PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH Sponsors

College of General Studies
Computing Services and Systems Development
Division of Student Affairs
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
Graduate School of Public Health
Learning Research and Development Center
Office of Institutional Advancement and the Pitt Alumni Association
Office of the Provost
School of Arts and Sciences
School of Dental Medicine
School of Education
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
School of Information Sciences
School of Law
School of Medicine
School of Nursing
School of Pharmacy

Swanson School of Engineering
University Center for International Studies
University Center for Social and Urban Research
University Honors College
University Library System
University of Pittsburgh at Bradford
University of Pittsburgh at Titusville

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY Sponsors

Boston College, Graduate School of Social Work
Bryn Mawr College, Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research
Case Western Reserve University, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences
Fordham University, Graduate School of Social Service
Howard University, School of Social Work
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, School of Social Work
University of Buffalo, School of Social Work
University of Georgia, School of Social Work
University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work
University of Illinois at Chicago, Jane Addams College of Social Work
University of Kentucky, College of Social Work
University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Social Work
University of Michigan, School of Social Work
University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work
University of Washington, School of Social Work
Washington University in St. Louis, George Warren Brown School of Social Work

ADDITIONAL Sponsors

The Anderson-DuBose Company
Three Rivers Community Foundation