
Teacher Diversity

in

Long Island's Public Schools



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Even as the number of non-White students and residents on Long Island has surged over the past decade, the hiring of Black, Latinx and Asian teachers has failed to keep pace, leaving minority and White students alike with few, if any, diverse role models that an increasing body of research has identified as important for their success. For example, 61 percent of Long Island’s 642 public school buildings do not have a single Black teacher and 43 percent have no Latinx.

Research by *The National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University* (NCSS) has found that 179, or about 28 percent of Long Island’s public school buildings, do not have one non-White teacher. That means some 80,000 students will never see a Black, Latinx or Asian teacher in any of their classrooms. The study has identified 378 buildings, about 60 percent of Long Island’s total, that have fewer than 5 percent minority teachers. The situation is even more extreme when considering only Black or Latinx educators: Two-hundred-twenty-three (35%) Long Island schools do not have a single teacher of either heritage. Forty-nine percent of all students on Long Island – 212,000 children – attend schools where they never see a Black teacher; similarly, 30% – 129,000 students – attend schools without a single teacher of Latinx origin.

Put another way, the ratio of White students to White teachers is 7 to 1, compared to an average for all students of 12 to 1. The ratio for Latinxs is 75 to 1, for Asians 67 to 1, and for Blacks 48 to 1. Even in the 10 percent of schools that are virtually all students of color, two thirds of the teachers are White.

As of 2017, non-Whites accounted for nearly 45 percent of Long Island’s public school students and 36 percent of the general population,¹ but only 8 percent of its teachers; this is about half the state and national percentages—figures that speak to a lack of career opportunity for minorities as well as diverse role models for all students. Twenty six percent of students are Latinx, up from 14 percent in 2006, compared to 4 percent of teachers. Similar disparities exist for Blacks and Asians. Only Latinxs have seen a gain in the percentage of their overall teacher corps, but it was slight—and supplemental interviews with educators suggest that a substantial number of the new Latinx teachers were hired only to serve non-English speakers in mandated programs.

In addition to ground-breaking building-by-building data, the NCSS report presents an extensive review of scholarly literature that shows the myriad of benefits that can come to students when they are exposed to a group of diverse teachers. While all students profit from this diversity, there are important gains specifically for students of color that will do much to improve opportunity and give all students the foundation they need to be upwardly mobile and successful. Particularly noteworthy is a study by Gershenson et al (2017), who show that when a Black male student has even a single Black teacher in third, fourth, or fifth grade, the student’s odds of dropping out of high school are substantially reduced. Another study by Fraga et al (1986) found that as the aggregate percentage of Latinx teachers in a

¹ General population figures from the US Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/nassaucountynewyork> and <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/suffolkcountynewyork/HCN010212>

district increased, so did the aggregate rate of high school completion and college attendance among Latinx students.

The laudable moral goals of integration and equality of opportunity may be chief among the reasons to encourage a diverse teacher corps, but moral imperative is hardly the only reason. Broad ranging academic studies have found that diversity is a tangible resource that can benefit all children, just as businesses have found that having a diverse workforce can improve company performance. “Interacting with diverse students, teachers and school leaders on a daily basis can help reduce student prejudice towards people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds,” said a recent report by *The Education Trust—New York*, basing its conclusions as did NCSS on a number of authoritative studies. “Providing students with exposure to teachers and school leaders of color serves the important function of demonstrating... that people of color can and should hold positions of authority in our society. Improving diversity also promotes more – and more representative – voices at the table when important decisions are made about curriculum and instruction...”²

Writing for the *Center for American Progress*, researcher Ulrich Boser observed that “it is important for all students to interact with people who look and act differently than they do in order to build social trust and create a wider sense of community. In other words, the benefits of diversity are not just for students of color. They are also important for White students.”³

The subject of teacher diversity has been studied on Long Island, most recently as part of *The Education Trust—New York’s* (2017) report focusing on New York State. The NCSS study goes beyond that work and offers the most comprehensive building-by-building analysis and community interaction to date. District-wide data alone can mask significant developments in individual schools, especially in districts that have rising numbers of non-White teachers and students.

For instance, some districts with a growing number of non-White teachers are showing statistical and anecdotal signs of what more than one teacher of color in our focus groups called “minority ghettos”—buildings where the percentages of primarily Latinx teachers exceed those in other buildings. More research is required to confirm and fully understand this phenomenon, as well as other aspects of minority teacher employment identified in the NCSS study, which is continuing.

“The findings demand a search for solutions that will create a more diverse teaching workforce on Long Island,” said Dafny J. Irizarry, president of the Long Island Latinx Teachers Association, which, along with the Long Island Black Educators Association, assisted NCSS with outreach to minority teachers and administrators. “This is a complex problem that requires comprehensive remedies. If we don’t do anything, and we don’t start now, the diversity gap will increase.”

² Education Trust (2017, p.4)

³ Boser (2014, p.3)

"This study substantiates the degree of segregation and systemic racism in Long Island schools," said Brenda Joyce Scott, President of the Long Island Black Educators Association. "The question is how you address these issues. It is clear that the responsibility starts with State to put resources behind the Regents' diversity initiatives, and to require school boards to do everything possible not just to hire more African-Americans, Latinxs and Asians but to create a culturally inclusive school environment."

To better understand the data, NCCS interviewed dozens of minority teachers and administrators in confidence to encourage them to speak freely. Many said they did not feel welcomed or accepted in their buildings, lacking mentors and social support networks more easily accessed by their majority White counterparts. Several used the word "isolated" to describe their situation and felt they were subjected to a different standard than non-minority colleagues. "Whites are considered competent until they prove over and over again that they are not," said one Black teacher. "Minorities have to prove they are competent every day for their entire career."

One commonly heard concern, which mirrors what studies around the country have found, was the lack of effective efforts to recruit and retain minority teachers. Most of the minority educators dispute the contention of many school district officials that they are being aggressive and creative but that the pool of qualified minority applicants is too small. The minority focus group members cited the need to "educate the educators," such as superintendents, principals and school board members, about how to increase the number of minorities in their districts, and to create a "pipeline," starting as early as middle school, to encourage more minorities to pursue careers in education.

Educators also expressed concern about the impact of a lack of minority teachers on their students, especially the dearth of Spanish speakers and Black men. Academic research and anecdotal evidence suggests that male students in particular perform better academically and endure fewer suspensions and expulsions when taught by Black men. "Increasing diversity in the teacher workforce is more than an issue of inclusion; it also is an issue of equity for students," wrote former New York State Schools Chancellor David Steiner, in a policy brief for the *Johns Hopkins Institute for Education*.⁴

Long Island has a history of racial inequities, such as the racial covenants of Levittown, "welfare dumping" in Hempstead Village, inequitable tax assessments in Nassau, attacks on Latinxs in Farmingville and Patchogue, and "red-lining" and "block busting" throughout the bi-county region. Today, we are still living with the legacy of these practices and the attitudes that drove them: Long Island remains among the most segregated areas in the country. And nowhere but in education is the separation of races and ethnicities more apparent.

Nearly half of Black and Latinx students attend a relative handful of heavily minority schools, most of which are among the region's poorest in terms of funding and achievement. Minority teacher hiring reflects these patterns: The vast majority of non-White teachers head classrooms in schools where minorities are a majority of the students. But even in these schools, every one of which is located in a

⁴ Steiner (2018, p.9)

majority minority community, it is rare for a building to have more non-White teachers than White. In fact, only 14 of 642 buildings, or about two percent, have majority minority teaching corps.

Statistical trends, as well as academic research and interviews with Long Island educators, suggest that the racial disparities could even widen if the state and local districts do not make the hiring of minority teachers a priority and devote resources into developing effective methods for recruiting and retaining them. The “good news” is that more and more school districts, encouraged by the regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, appear to have identified this as a problem and are beginning to craft strategies and solutions. More research is required to confirm this to a greater degree of certainty. We hope the statistics in this study spur more districts, as well as state and regional leadership, to take corrective action.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the United States, the student body is becoming increasingly diverse. Nationally, 2014 was the first year that students in K-12 education are “majority-minority,” meaning that children of color are now more than 50% of the student population.⁵ As of 2014, White students are 49.5% of the K-12 student population; Latinx students, 25.4%; Black, 15.5%; Asian and Pacific Islander, 5.3%; Native American, 1%; and multiracial students, 3.2 %.

While students come from a broad array of origins, the same cannot be said for their teachers. Nationally, less than 20% of teachers are people of color, and from 1987 to 2012, the percentage of non-White teachers grew by only 5 points, from 12% to 17%.⁶ The uptick in the percent of non-White teachers has been driven by a growing number of Latinx teachers, but at the same time, there has been a modest decline in the number of Black teachers, leaving White teachers as the overwhelming majority. As our demographic portrait below will show, Long Island’s Nassau and Suffolk counties have followed the trend of an increasingly diverse student body—45% of Long Island’s students are people of color. However, our teaching force has remained even more monoracial than the nation at large: only 8% of Long Island’s teachers are of non-White racial-ethnic heritage. Long Island also lags behind New York State at large. Statewide, 16% of all teachers are Latinx or Black.⁷

The lack of diversity among Long Island’s teachers is the main focus of this report. After a review of scholarly literature, we present a demographic portrait of teachers and students in Long Island’s schools (Nassau and Suffolk counties). While we report data on all ethnicities, our emphasis is on Black and Latinx educators and students. Asian and Native American students and teachers face important and unique circumstances; however, given Long Island’s history and growing Latinx population, we decided that a more narrowly focused report was appropriate.

The statistical profile is followed by an especially moving collection of qualitative data: the words and impressions of approximately 35 Black and Latinx educators from Long Island districts who took part in our focus groups on the topic. These comments are powerful and underscore that real people are behind the numbers we present.

The statistical portion of the study uses school-level information from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to chart trends in teacher and student representation for a total of 12 years, from 2006 to 2017. In addition to meticulously checking the NYSED data for accuracy, the study disaggregates the evidence in unique ways. For example, not only does the report consider student-to-teacher ratios by race and ethnicity; but it takes the concept farther by looking at the representation of specific teachers in specific buildings, and how that affects exposure of children to Long Island’s rich cultural tapestry. Here we find alarming figures. Two-hundred-twenty-three (35%) Long Island schools do not

⁵ Snyder et al (2019)

⁶ Ingersoll & Merrill (2017); Goldring et al (2013)

⁷ Education Trust (2017)

have a single Black or Latinx teacher. More precisely, 49% of all students on Long Island – 212,000 children – attend schools where they never see a Black teacher; similarly, about 30% – 129,000 students – attend schools without a single teacher of Latinx origin. We will show that there are sizable benefits that could come from a more diverse teaching corps.

ENUMERATING THE REASONS FOR DIVERSITY AMONG TEACHERS

This section of the report lays the rationale for the concerns about a diverse teaching corps. We present an extensive review of scholarly literature that shows the myriad of benefits that come to students when they are exposed to a group of diverse teachers. While all students can profit from this diversity, there are important gains specifically for students of color that will do much to improve opportunity and give all students the foundation they need to be upwardly mobile and successful.

Diversity is a Tangible Resource

There are many reasons why a diverse teaching corps is essential. The laudable moral goals of integration and equality of opportunity may be chief among them, but moral imperative is surely not the only reason. It turns out that diversity is a tangible resource that is beneficial to all – majority and minority alike – and K-12 education needs to act on this knowledge as the corporate world and higher education already have.

Exposure to diversity makes people smarter. This is not just hyperbole. People who participate in cross-group interactions are more creative, and they get more “good” ideas.⁸ Because diversity brings different viewpoints, understandings and cultural frames, people who are exposed to diversity blend these various ideas, and in the process innovation flourishes; indeed this is why great cities like New York are sites of prodigious creativity, the finest art, and home to corporate and cultural innovation. The interacting ideas blossom into more than the sum of their parts.

Universities have known this for years. This is what university officials mean when they say they are admitting a “class” of students and not just the individuals that comprise the class.⁹ Diversity on college campuses, again, is more than mere representativeness; having a student body and professorate that hails from many different backgrounds creates intellectual synergies that compound with increased exposure.¹⁰

In the business world, people who bridge cultural groups reap real rewards. Because they are more creative and ripe with good ideas, they get promoted faster, have higher salaries, and have better access

⁸ Phillips (2014); Pachucki & Breiger (2010); Page (2008); Burt (2004)

⁹ Bowen & Bok (1998)

¹⁰ Chang et al (2006)

to jobs and other important information.¹¹ In the aggregate, because diversity fosters a more productive workforce, it becomes an important driver of economic growth and profit as innovation and knowledge of specific subpopulations allows a firm to capture a greater share of a given consumer market, or even gain access to previously untapped markets.¹² A way to think about it is that diversity fosters the opposite of “groupthink.” Monolithic groups of people come to see the world in a limited and often inaccurate way; groupthink forestalls creativity and novel approaches to solving problems.¹³ Diversity is groupthink’s antithesis. Additional corporate benefits of diversity include drawing workers from a broader pool of candidates, which leads to a more qualified workforce, as competition spurs upgrading of skills. Finally, people exposed to diversity have better conflict resolution skills which are invaluable with the increasingly collaborative expectations of work, and in all walks of life.¹⁴

It is time for K-12 education policy to embrace these known benefits and make a diverse teaching force part of its explicit goals, as business and higher education have done. As eminent Teacher’s College Professor of Education, Amy Stuart Wells, summarizes, “diverse classrooms, in which students learn cooperatively alongside those whose perspectives and backgrounds are different from their own, are beneficial to all students, including middle-class White students, because they promote creativity, motivation, deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.... These skills that students gain from diverse learning environments are in line with what policy-makers say should be among the primary focuses of K-12 education. They are also skills that are highly desired by employers.”¹⁵

Efficacious service delivery, prejudice reduction, and democracy

The goal of a diverse teaching force is not new. Beginning at least with the famed *Carnegie Report*,¹⁶ calls have been made to have teachers be a closer demographic match to the students they are teaching. These calls for diversity center on what is now called the theory of “representative bureaucracy”—that public service organizations, like schools, better serve their clients when the demographics of personnel match those of clients.¹⁷ This is because the demographically similar service-providers have “inside” knowledge of their clients, allowing, first, better articulation of the clients’ needs, and in turn, more efficacious interventions to be devised. We will show many of these specific mechanisms below, when we discuss gains for students of color.

Much of the research on bureaucratic representation makes explicit connections between delivery services and improved civil discourse, reduced prejudice, and in turn benefits for democracy at large.¹⁸

¹¹ Lagace (2004); Burt (1992); Granovetter (1995)

¹² Blanding (2018); Kerby & Burns (2012); Thomas (2004)

¹³ Schrank & Whitford (2011); Troyer & Youngreen (2009); Street (1997)

¹⁴ Jehn et al. (1999)

¹⁵ Wells et al (2016, p.14)

¹⁶ Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986)

¹⁷ Grissom et al (2015); Pitts (2007); Meier (1993)

¹⁸ Meier & Melton (2014)

These benefits hinge on what is called the *contact hypothesis*,¹⁹ where positive interactions with people different from oneself yield tolerance, empathy, and a sense of shared identity and fate.

Applied to schools, bureaucratic representation has important implications. Schools certainly teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, and as we will show, large gains are to be made here; but schools also model and transmit society's values in less obvious ways, including implied messages regarding who can and should do what. In schools, it is important for both White students and students of color to see non-Whites in positions of professional expertise in order to break down stereotypes and dispel myths.

If people of color are not adequately represented among the teaching force, Whites and non-Whites alike will gain the mistaken impression that people of color are not appropriate for such roles. Conversely, per the contact hypothesis, with people of color in professional positions such as teachers, students (and adults) see competency and expertise; implicit racial bias and prejudice can be reduced and stereotypes can then be replaced with more accurate social perceptions and respect.²⁰ These will contribute to a better functioning civil society with enhanced dialog, tolerance, and mutual understanding.

Scholarly research on these aspects of the contact hypothesis has been overwhelmingly supportive.²¹ In a landmark article, psychologists Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp performed a meta-analysis on hundreds of previous studies and found that the "meta-analytic results clearly indicate that intergroup contact typically reduces intergroup prejudice. Synthesizing effects from 696 samples, the meta-analysis reveals that greater intergroup contact is generally associated with lower levels of prejudice."²² Another study even found changes in brain activity among people who, as children, were exposed to diversity. Those who were exposed to diversity early in life had reduced fight-or-flight brain reactions as adults when faced with racially dissimilar people.²³ The authors conclude that there is strong support that interracial contact before age 12 attenuates prejudice in adults. Faced with this data, it becomes clear how diversity and representative bureaucracy transform individuals and contribute to a more healthy and robust democracy.

With the vast evidence on the benefits of diversity to all students and to society at large, renewed calls for diversification of the teaching corps have come to the fore, and these are emanating from across the political spectrum. For example, *Chiefs for Change* is a bipartisan but right leaning organization of administrative-level school leaders (e.g., superintendents and state commissioners) founded by former Florida Governor, Republican Jeb Bush.²⁴ In the wake of the overwhelming evidence, they released a 2016 report that recommends the diversification of teachers at all levels. The report states, "the under-representation of people of color as teachers, principals, and system-level leaders across the education

¹⁹ Allport (1954)

²⁰ Devine et al (2012); Waters (1989); Irvine (1988); Graham (1987)

²¹ Paluck & Green (2009); Pettigrew & Tropp (2011; 2006)

²² Pettigrew & Tropp (2006, p.766)

²³ Cloutier et al (2014)

²⁴ In 2015, *Chiefs for Change* separated from Bush's *Foundation for Excellence in Education*. See Layton (2015).

sector undermines the significant benefits a diverse society offers to all citizens. ...This is especially troubling as research consistently illustrates the significant benefits of having a diverse teacher and leader workforce, and in particular individuals who share a similar race or ethnicity with the students and communities they serve.”²⁵ From a different political corner, the *Albert Shanker Institute*, which is housed and partly funded by the American Federation of Teachers, said in its 2015 report “Teacher diversity is an educational civil right for students. Existing research in the fields of education, social psychology and sociology make a compelling case for the benefits of a diverse teacher force... While there is reason to believe that Black, Hispanic and American Indian students would be the greatest beneficiaries of a diverse teaching force, there is evidence that all students – and our democracy at large – would benefit from a teaching force that reflects the full diversity of the U.S. population.”²⁶

Bureaucratic representation and educational outcomes

Thus far, we have outlined the tangible advantages that a diverse teaching force can bring: smarter students and workers, enhanced creativity and innovation, higher productivity and a more skilled workforce. And there are benefits to society at large such as a reduction in prejudice, increased tolerance, and all that these can bring to enhance a representative democracy. We have shown that these benefits are available to all students, regardless of demographic traits. We now move to the vast literature that looks at “matching” of race/ethnicity between students and teachers and the tremendous academic boon that it brings to students of color. Much of this research shows these improvements come to Black and Latinx students without disadvantage to White students, although there is some debate on this matter.²⁷ Indeed, Cheng and Halpin (2016) found that all students – White and non-White – rate teachers of color more favorably than they rate White teachers, even after controlling for numerous attributes of the students, teachers, and schools that house them. It seems teachers of color can translate the travails of being a racial/ethnic minority into rapport with students and empathize with their challenges. Many studies have shown that, when students rate their teachers highly, students have higher motivation, and in turn grades and learning improve.²⁸ Conversely, when students perceive their teachers as non-caring, academic performance declines.

We have known for years that teachers are arguably the most important school-based resource for a student’s educational success.²⁹ Supporting the concept of representative bureaucracy – that outcomes are enhanced when human service providers are demographically similar to their clients – scores of peer reviewed studies show that when Latinx or Black students have teachers that are of the same race or

²⁵ Chiefs for Change (2016, p.2)

²⁶ Albert Shanker Institute (2015, p.1, emphasis removed from quotation)

²⁷ Some studies find that “race matching” among students and teachers works to advantage all types of students; that is, Black students do best with Black teachers, Latinx with Latinx, and White students with White teachers (Egalite et al 2015; Pitts 2007). Dee (2005, p.164) notes that to ameliorate these potential disadvantages that can come from cross-race instruction, “policies that improve the effectiveness of all teachers may be a relatively attractive way to close achievement gaps.”

²⁸ Wentzel (2002); Teven & McCroskey (1997); Midgley et al (1989)

²⁹ Kim & Seo (2018); Jennings & DiPrete (2010); Rowan et al (2002)

ethnicity, there are profound academic benefits. Importantly, many of these achievements are especially pronounced among low income students;³⁰ and as we discuss below, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (SES) are very entangled, especially on Long Island. The evidence goes beyond specific students having specific teachers; much of the advantage comes from the student's exposure to a diverse teaching force at large (i.e., at the school and district levels)—seeing people like them in professional positions of authority and expertise.

- *Improved learning and test scores*

For students of color, having same-race/ethnicity teachers is associated with improved learning and test scores and more rigorous course-taking, compared to when these same students have White teachers.³¹ The benefit holds for both Latinx and Black students and applies to mathematics, reading, and vocabulary.³² And, the lower the student's previous academic performance and, separately, the lower the economic status of the student, the more a same-race teacher improves their scores.³³ In a review of these effects, Goldhaber et al (2015) discuss their impressive magnitudes, noting that having a same-race teacher is as important to learning as having a highly skilled teacher: “[A]ssigning a Black student to a Black teacher is associated with higher learning gains than assigning the same student to a teacher [who has] one standard deviation higher credential test scores or a teacher who is National Board certified. Moreover, the largest estimates ... are surprisingly comparable to the [test score improvements] associated with the first 5 years of teaching experience and a one-standard deviation change in teacher quality.”³⁴

- *Increased high school completion and college attendance*

It is not just test scores that are enhanced when students of color are taught by same race/ethnicity teachers, although what follows is certainly related to improved learning and better test scores. When there is a racial/ethnic match among teachers and students, those students are less likely to be retained in a grade and more likely to complete high school and matriculate to college.³⁵ And again, these findings are especially applicable to low income students. Particularly noteworthy is a study by Gershenson et al (2017), who show that when a Black male student has even a single Black teacher in third, fourth, or fifth grade, the student's odds of dropping out of high school are substantially reduced. Another study found that as the aggregate percentage of Latinx teachers in a district increased, so did the aggregate rate of high school completion and college attendance among Latinx students.³⁶ In

³⁰ Gershenson et al (2017); Dee (2005)

³¹ Pitts (2007); Oates (2003)

³² Egalite et al (2015); Klopfenstein (2005); Dee (2004); Meire (1993)

³³ Egalite et al (2015)

³⁴ Goldhaber et al (2015, p.5)

³⁵ Gershenson et al (2017); Pitts (2007); Hess & Leal (1997); Meire (1993)

³⁶ Fraga et al (1986)

addition, several studies find reduced rates of absenteeism and fewer special education referrals among students of color who have racially or ethnically similar teachers.³⁷

WHY SAME RACE/ETHNICITY TEACHERS BENEFIT STUDENTS OF COLOR

Role modeling

The mechanisms that bring these benefits to students of color are far-ranging and multifaceted.³⁸ One notable aspect is role modeling. When students see people who look similar to them in professional positions of authority and power, their self-worth and esteem are raised. The students become motivated and believe their own skills and efforts will be rewarded and that ascension to high status positions is possible.³⁹ In turn, teachers embrace the role of model. They view themselves as personally invested in those students and nurture and mentor them, feeling personally obligated to show their students what is possible.⁴⁰ Indeed, teachers of color often view themselves as these students' "other mothers," feeling kinship and responsibility for their success because of a shared heritage and experience and the travails that come with them.⁴¹ Thus, among same race/ethnicity students and teachers, a synergy commences, where students feel more at ease with teachers, rate those teachers more positively, and academic performance rises.⁴²

Cultural synergies

Another mechanism that causes improved academic outcomes among racially matched students and teachers relates to this shared heritage and experience. Teachers of color are more likely to use culturally relevant pedagogy—they use examples and language and codes that are familiar to students who are demographically similar to them, thereby making the curriculum more accessible.⁴³ Similarly, same-race/ethnic teachers are less likely to misinterpret students' use of language, gestures, and other cultural cues like walking-gait or eye contact.⁴⁴ Importantly, these cultural congruencies extend to interactions with families. Parents of non-White students are considerably more involved with their child's education when their teachers are same-race/ethnicity.⁴⁵ Finally, as theories of representative bureaucracy predict, teachers of color serve as institutional advocates and cultural brokers for their students, bringing to bear all of these mechanisms as they facilitate their students' success in the educational system.

³⁷ Holt & Gershenson (2015); Meire (1993).

³⁸ see Villegas & Irvine (2010) for an excellent review.

³⁹ Auerbach (2007); Guarino et al (2006); Quijoch & Rios (2000); Waters (1989); Graham (1987); Cole (1986)

⁴⁰ Smith (2008); Ochoa (2007); Klopfenstein (2005); Guiffrida (2005)

⁴¹ Louie (2012); Shipp (1999)

⁴² Auerbach (2007); Guiffrida (2005); Klopfenstein (2005); Quijoch & Rios (2000)

⁴³ Cherg & Halpin (2016); Ware (2006); Irvine (2002); Beauboeuf-Lafont (1999)

⁴⁴ Warikoo (2004); Neal et al (2003); Ladson-Billings (1994)

⁴⁵ Mundt et al (2015); Shah (2009); Lareau & Horvat (1999)

Reduced influence of stereotypes

Certainly related, many studies find that Black and Latinx teachers' evaluations of students are much less influenced by societal stereotypes—that is, teachers of color view all children similarly, regardless of race or ethnicity. White teachers, on the other hand, are more likely to judge students based on stereotypes; White teachers, on average, evaluate Black and Latinx students as less academically capable, more disruptive, and more often mete disciplinary action than they do for White students.⁴⁶ These phenomena begin as early as kindergarten and maintain through high school. In all of these studies, White teachers' misjudgments of non-White students persisted even when objective measures demonstrated that students were behaviorally and academically similar to their White counterparts. Some studies even followed individual students who had both Black and White teachers in different grades.⁴⁷ Black teachers tended to have a much higher estimation of Black students' academic abilities than non-Black teachers. In a meta-analysis of some 50 previous studies, the authors concluded that “teachers held more positive expectations, made more positive referrals and fewer negative referrals, and provided more positive and neutral speech for European American children than for African American and Latinx/a children.”⁴⁸ Teachers' estimations of student aptitude are shown to have strong influence over students' beliefs about their own abilities. If teachers have low expectations of some students, those students are likely to develop low expectations of themselves, and poor educational performance becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁴⁹

Breaking the school-to-prison pipeline

While assumptions about intellectual ability have direct effects on academic performance, misjudgments about behavior are profoundly serious and contribute to what is called the “school to prison pipeline.”⁵⁰ White teachers tend to rate Black and Latinx students as more disruptive and as poorer “citizens” than comparable White students.⁵¹ Again it is crucially important to realize that these subjective misperceptions hold even when the behavior is shown to be objectively the same as White students' actions—the difference is in the *perception* of behavior and teachers' *reactions* to them, not the behavior itself. These misjudgments by White teachers lead to Black and Latinx students being more likely than similarly behaved White students to be harshly sanctioned with detention, suspension, and expulsion from school, which sets into motion the vicious cycle.⁵² Such draconian actions at school are shown to be the beginning of the “pipeline” that leads to future delinquency, entanglement with law

⁴⁶ Lindsay & Hart (2017); Wright (2015); Ouazad (2014); McGrady & Reynolds (2013); Borman & Dowling (2010); Downey & Pribesh (2004); Ehrenberg et al (1994)

⁴⁷ Gershenson et al (2016)

⁴⁸ Tenenbaum & Ruck (2007, pp. 266-267)

⁴⁹ Ferguson (2003); McKown & Weinstein (2002); Steele & Aronson (1995); Irvine (1988)

⁵⁰ Drinan (2018); Mitterman (2018); Mallet (2016); Nicholson-Crotty et al (2009)

⁵¹ Bates & Glick (2013); Downey & Pribesh (2004)

⁵² Lindsay & Hart (2017); Holt & Gershenson (2015); Skiba et al (2002); Meire (1993)

enforcement, and entrance into the criminal justice system, not to mention the obvious decrease in academic performance that all these bring.⁵³ When Black and Latinx students have same-race/ethnic teachers, their rates of disciplinary referral are vastly decreased. Drawing conclusions from one study, the authors write, “We find consistent evidence that exposure to same-race teachers is associated with reduced rates of exclusionary discipline for Black students. This relationship holds for elementary, middle, and high school grade ranges for male and female students, and for students who do and do not use free and reduced-price lunch.” And again importantly, “Non-Black students saw null effects...from being matched to Black teachers...which suggests that improvements in the disciplinary climate for Black students will not result in off-setting negative effects for non-Black students.”⁵⁴

The evidence in favor of pursuing a diversified teaching corps is compelling. It can bring benefits to all students in terms of critical thinking and creativity, and these are the skills sought by today’s corporations because they yield more productive workers and economic growth. Add the societal payoffs like reduced prejudice and direct educational improvements, and it becomes clear that the path forward should be a concerted effort to recruit and retain high quality teachers consistent with the plethora of backgrounds from which our students come.

SEGREGATION

Before moving to the demographic portrait of Long Island’s teachers, there is one more issue to address: school segregation. As we will describe, segregation by race/ethnicity and economic status has far-reaching consequences and is a pervasive cause of low academic performance—Long Island is at this dubious forefront. But segregation is also relevant to teacher diversity. Our statistical profile will show extreme racial-ethnic segregation of students, and the few places where some headway has been made in diversifying the teaching corps is in the majority-minority schools. This means that *teachers are segregated by race and ethnicity, just as are the students they serve.*⁵⁵

Many people think racial animus is part of a bygone and backward historical era, that we now live in a post-racial America. While vast improvements have been made, anyone who has been raised in Long Island knows in what towns the ripples of that past still exist today. Indeed, 65 years after the United States Supreme Court declared segregated schools unconstitutional and inherently unequal, schools today in Long Island’s Nassau and Suffolk counties are nearly as segregated as those in the pre-civil rights South. As the foremost expert on school segregation, Gary Orfield, writes, “New York has the most segregated schools in the country: in 2009, Black and Latinx students in the state had the highest concentration in intensely-segregated public schools, the lowest exposure to White students, and the most uneven distribution with White students across schools.”⁵⁶ Segregated schools, as documented by countless academic studies and journalistic accounts, are counterproductive for many reasons that all

⁵³ Gregory et al (2010); Arcia (2006)

⁵⁴ Lindsay & Hart (2017, pp. 485 and 507)

⁵⁵ Frankenberg (2009)

⁵⁶ Kucsera & Orfield (2014, p.vi)

come down to one issue: *equality of opportunity*. In our society, schools are the foundation and launching pad for self-sufficiency and economic success. The distribution of educational opportunity on Long Island remains structured by race.

Schools with a student body that is integrated by race and ethnicity manifest many of the benefits outlined above that are associated with diversity more generally. As researchers have known for decades, all students learn better with an integrated student body, and importantly, students of color especially benefit with no disadvantage to White students.⁵⁷ Again quoting Amy Stuart Wells, “Attending racially diverse schools is beneficial to all students and is associated with smaller test score gaps between students of different racial backgrounds, not because White student achievement declined, but rather that Black and/or Hispanic student achievement increased.”⁵⁸ Given the overwhelming evidence of integration’s win-win status, Gary Orfield concludes “60 years of research [shows] that school integration is still a goal worth pursuing. From the benefits of greater academic achievement, future earnings, and even better health outcomes for minority students, and the social benefits resulting from intergroup contact for all students – like the possible reduction in prejudice and greater interracial communication skills – we found that ‘real integration’ is indeed an invaluable goal worth undertaking in growing multiracial societies.”⁵⁹

*Why does segregation matter and where did it come from?*⁶⁰

- *Suburbanization, legal discrimination, white flight*

Long Island was at the center of the first waves of suburbanization that followed World War II. During this period residential and occupational segregation by race – discrimination – was fully legal and widely practiced.⁶¹ For example Levittown, the very first post-war mass-produced suburb, used restrictive covenants in its deeds, contractually requiring that the homes be sold only to White people. While Black Americans took part in the urban-to-suburban migration, that process followed color lines, and the result was the establishment of the monoracial neighborhoods that we still see today.⁶² Even when racial residential segregation was finally declared illegal by the Fair Housing Act of 1968, covert avoidance behaviors of Whites to the presence of non-Whites meant that even as diversity in the region increased, neighborhoods and their schools did not integrate; instead they transitioned over time from all or mostly White to all or mostly Black. Because housing segregation was, and is, accompanied by occupational segregation – where certain ethnicities/races are systematically excluded from certain career paths – white flight combined the deindustrialization of the 1970s and 80s left minority communities with decreasing resources, increasing poverty, and less stable tax bases to support

⁵⁷ Benner & Crosnoe (2011); Borman & Dowling (2010); Mickelson (2008); Hallinan (1988); Coleman et al (1966)

⁵⁸ Wells et al (2016, p.12)

⁵⁹ Kucsera & Orfield (2014, pp. vi-vii)

⁶⁰ This section adapted from Mangino et al (2015) and Mangino & Silver (2011)

⁶¹ Massey & Denton (1993)

⁶² Pattillo (2013); Phelan & Schneider (1996); Wiese (1995); Lake (1981)

economic and social infrastructure, including educational institutions. The recent flows of Latinx migration have followed in line with this earlier pattern, with new immigrants tending to move into neighborhoods that were at first officially (*de jure*), then later unofficially (*de facto*), designated as “Black neighborhoods,” which now might be described as “non-White.” Thus, in the first decades of the 21st century, there has been a tremendous increase in aggregate racial and ethnic diversity; but the ongoing racialized housing patterns mean that Long Island’s neighborhoods and schools are as segregated as they have ever been. Additionally, like at the start of the 20th century with southern and eastern European immigrants, the influx of non-English speakers adds considerably to the learning challenges that schools must address.

- *Concentration effects*

These long-standing patterns of segregation in housing and employment have operated to *concentrate* poverty in non-White communities and schools. Economic status is the single most significant factor in determining how a child will perform in school, and segregation exponentially increases poverty’s deleterious effects.⁶³ In fact, a community’s average economic status rivals the influence of a student’s own family SES in terms of academic achievement.⁶⁴

Household-level poverty experienced by individual children has negative impacts ranging from poor nutrition, lack of adult supervision, less family-based support and help for schoolwork, and greater incidences of health problems, all of which reduce academic performance.⁶⁵ However, moving to higher levels of social organization, being “poor” while being integrated into a larger, stable middle class community is very different from being poor and living among others who are mostly poor. In middle class and affluent communities, even individually poor people and families can draw on the “collective goods.” Neighborhoods where commercial and residential property values are high, and where business and personal incomes are solid, are economically and socially more “sound” than communities with lower property values and incomes. Since education is funded largely by local property taxes, well-off communities can more easily provide ample revenues for their schools with less of a burden on individual taxpayers. It is not surprising that affluent districts have high-quality teachers in smaller classes and schools, with the latest educational innovations and technologies.⁶⁶ While tangible economic capital is vital in producing such hard goods, living in an affluent community means more than simply attending a resource-rich school. It also means being in contact with neighbors and parents of other children who themselves are well-educated, financially secure, and socially well-connected. Such forms of “social capital” are important in motivating and enforcing norms of high aspirations and achievement.⁶⁷ These network based advantages extend beyond education to getting jobs, promotions,

⁶³ Fasang et al (2014); Quinlan (2012); Massey & Denton (1993)

⁶⁴ Morrissey & Vinopal (2018); Ainsworth (2002); Caldas & Bankston (1997); Battistich et al (1995)

⁶⁵ Wilson (2009); Svedberg (2000); Sampson et al (2002); Schneider & Coleman (1993)

⁶⁶ Baker (2017); Adamson & Darling-Hammond (2012); Condrón & Roscigno (2003)

⁶⁷ Kao & Rutherford (2007); Dika & Singh (2002); Portes (1998); Coleman (1988)

and opportunity more generally.⁶⁸ Even less tangible but still important are the cultural practices and amenities that exist in affluent communities. Things such as the use of language and access to the extracurriculum, the arts, and cosmopolitan activities enhance educational performance and cultivate well-rounded, upwardly mobile people more generally.⁶⁹ If there were socioeconomic integration, individual lower SES children would still share in this collective vitality.

Just as “public goods” are more than the sum of their parts, so are “public bads.” When ‘too many’ economically poor families are concentrated in an area, it precipitates a cycle of withdrawal of mainstream economic and institutional infrastructure. Such phenomena and their outcomes have been studied under numerous monikers, including the production of “oppositional culture”, the “downside” of social capital, and “negative” capitals, among others.⁷⁰ Here, norms and networks can work against education. With the withdrawal of mainstream networks and opportunities, alternative economies and capitals come to organize social life. The social mechanisms in depressed communities are the same as those in advantaged communities, but the composition and resources in these networks, the skills and demeanors that are needed, are not those that are valued in education. These are why segregation is so deleterious—it serves as a *multiplier* of negative effects, and Long Island is a leader in this negativity.

While the primary focus of this report is on the need to diversify the teaching corps in Long Island schools, the segregation of students in these schools is of profound importance and must be included in every consideration of education on Long Island. We are, after all, among the most racially and ethnically diverse regions in the nation; while paradoxically, we have the most segregated school systems in the country, and as we will now show, this influences who teaches where.

⁶⁸ Portes (1998); Granovetter (1995); Burt (1992)

⁶⁹ Lareau (2003); Broh (2002); Lamont & Lareau (1988)

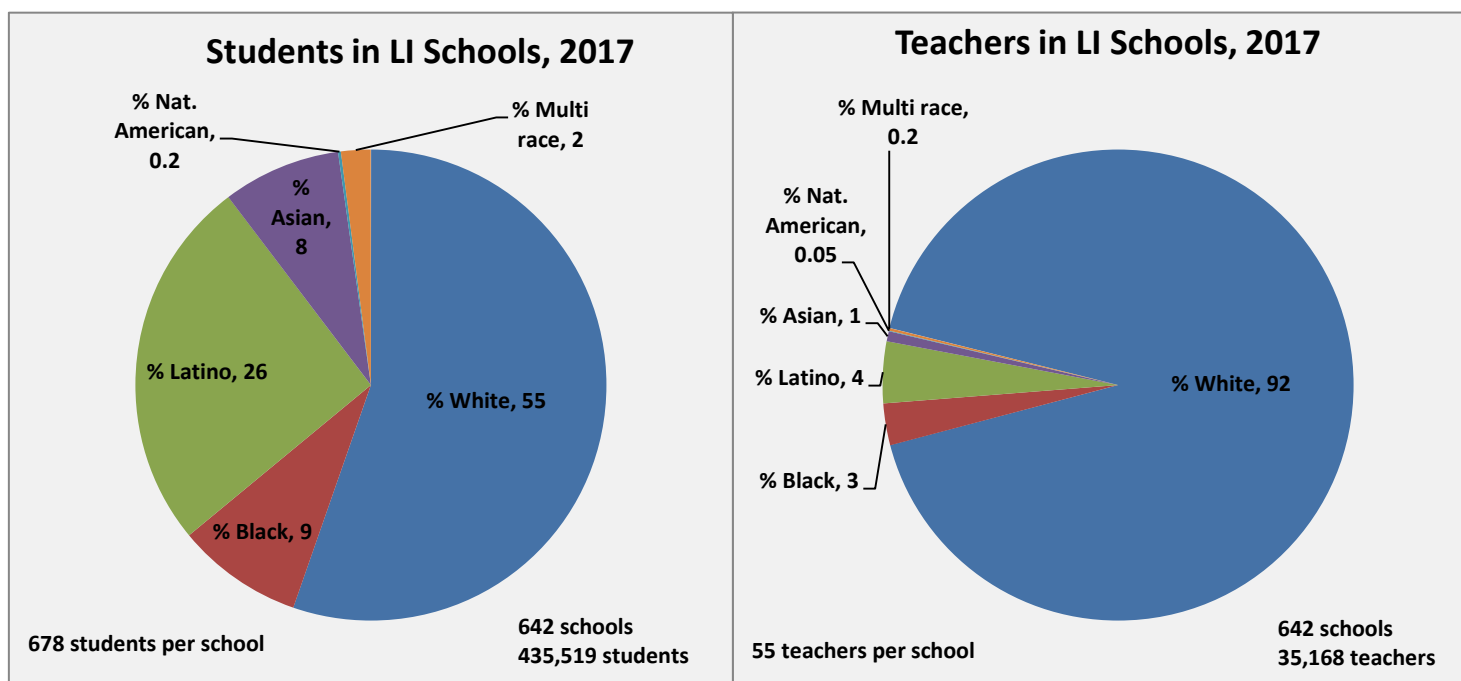
⁷⁰ Mangino (2009); Downey (2008); Anderson (1999); Portes & Landolt (1996)

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF LONG ISLAND’S STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ⁷¹

“I know how few there are in my building but I guess I couldn’t know that there are dozens of buildings without anyone who looks like me.” (A Latina Teacher from Long Island)

Students and teachers in Long Island schools, 2017

As of 2017, Nassau and Suffolk Counties (“Long Island”) have 642 public schools⁷² in 125 districts. In those 642 schools, there are 435,519 students and 35,168 teachers.⁷³ To understand these totals, it is helpful to convert them to means at the school level. This enables us to think about what is happening “on average” in Long Island’s schools. It is important to realize, however, that “averages” often are far from what is actually happening “on the ground,” because means take into account wide variations, even extreme differences, that exist across actual schools. As we will see below, most Long Island schools are far from these averages.

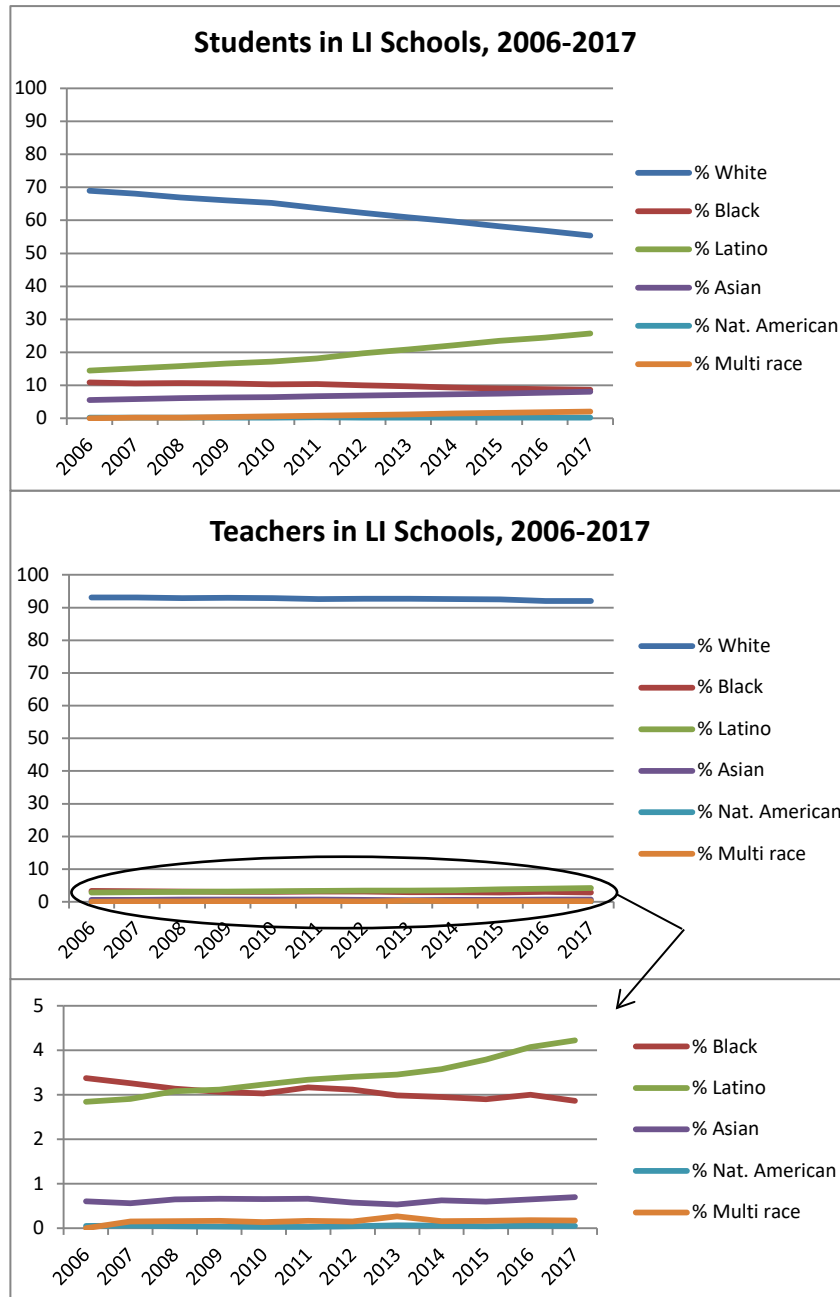


⁷¹ In all figures, percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding errors. See the Appendix for important information on data sourcing and corrections.

⁷² There are actually 645 schools, but three schools did not have data for 2017. These three schools are each a preschool-kindergarten center. We estimate that these schools have, in total, approximately 300 students and 30 teachers. For 2017 figures, this report is based on the 642 schools that do have data.

⁷³ Some teachers work at multiple schools and are counted only at the district level. Including these teachers, the total number of public school teachers on LI in 2017 is 36,257.

On average, LI's 642 schools have 678 students, who are 55% White, 9% Black, 26% Latinx, 8% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and 2% Multiracial.⁷⁴ At these 642 schools, there is an average of 55 teachers per school of which 92% are White, 3% are Black, 4% are Latinx, 1% are Asian, 0.05% are Native American, and 0.2% identify as Multiracial.⁷⁵



⁷⁴ At the individual level, rather than school-level average, LI students are 53.5% White, 26.8% Latinx, 9.7% Black, 8.1% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and 1.7% Multiracial.

⁷⁵ Percentages of teachers in each racial/ethnic category are approximately the same (within 0.5%), whether considered at the individual level or school-level averages.

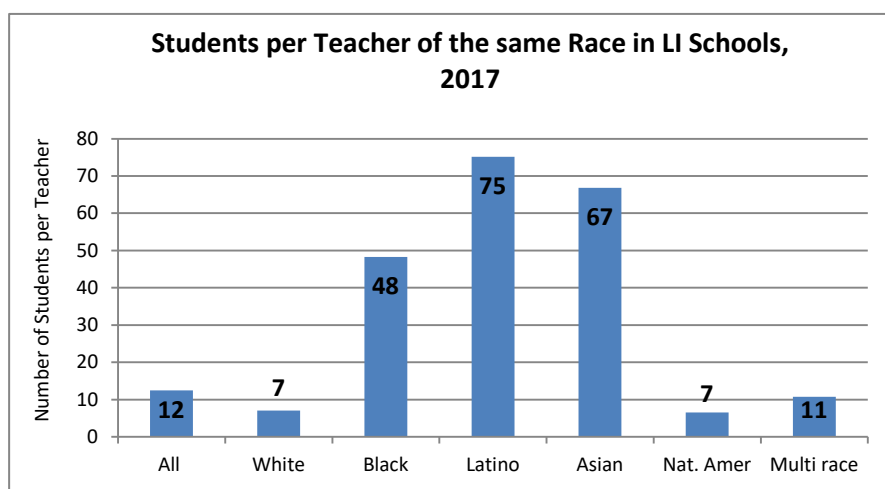
*Students and teachers since 2006*⁷⁶

Overall, the student body on LI has become increasingly diverse. In 2006, Latinxs were 14.5% of the student body; in 2017 Latinxs are 26%. Asian students went from 5.5% in 2006 to 8% in 2017. The number of Black students, on the other hand, decreased from 11% to 8.5%, and White students from 69% to 55%.

Teacher demographics have not kept up with the changing student body. Over the same time frame (2006 to 2017), the percentage of White teachers went down one percentage point, from 93% to 92%. The percentage of Latinx teachers went up slightly from 2.8% to 4.2%, but this was offset by a decrease in the share of Black teachers from 3.4% to 2.9%.

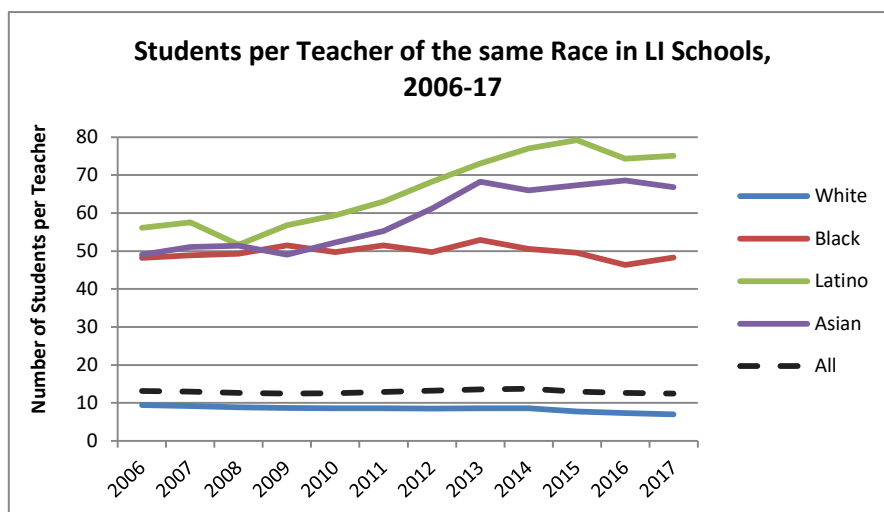
Student to teacher ratios

As discussed in the literature review, a diverse teaching corps can bring many benefits to all students; and students of color especially benefit when they are taught by a same race/ethnicity teacher. A common way to express the relationship between teacher and student demographics is to discuss the student-to-teacher ratio; simply, this is the number of students per one teacher. Generally speaking, *fewer* students per teacher is desirable (i.e., a lower student-teacher ratio).



In 2017 on average in LI schools there were 12 students per teacher, and this has remained constant since 2006. Because White teachers are over 90% of the teaching force, the student to teacher ratio is especially favorable to White students; in 2017 there were seven White students to every one White teacher. Because White students are a decreasing percentage of the student body (see above), this ratio has actually dropped from 2006, when it was nine White students per one White teacher. White students are increasingly likely to interact with White teachers.

⁷⁶ While there were 642 schools with data in 2017, the number of schools (N) varies by year (from 642 to 660). Statistics for each year use the appropriate N for that year.



With so few non-White teachers, the student-teacher ratios for non-Whites are quite different. In 2017, there were 75 Latinx students for each Latinx teacher, and this has increased substantially since 2006 (because the percentage of Latinx students has grown, while the percentage of Latinx teachers has grown much more slowly), when the Latinx student-teacher ratio was 56 students per one teacher. Asian student-teacher ratios are similar to Latinx: In 2017 there were 67 Asian students to each Asian teacher and this has grown since 2006 when the Asian student-teacher ratio was 49 to 1. The Black student-teacher ratio has remained basically the same since 2006. There are 48 Black students for every Black teacher. Non-White students in LI schools are quite unlikely to see teachers who look similar to themselves.

Schools and teacher representation

Another way to parse the relationship between student and teacher demographics is to consider individual schools and examine the racial diversity of their students and teachers. This approach is an important supplement to considering averages (as we did above) because it lets us know what is happening in real schools with real students and teachers, rather than having extremes cancel each other out, as averages do.

- *Schools without White teachers*

For example, of LI's 642 schools in 2017, there was *one* school that had no White teachers. We imagine most White people will be shocked to even think of such a school, where there are no White teachers at all. If we were to consider schools that had fewer than 2% White teachers, it would still be only this single school. This one school with no White teacher houses approximately 450 students (rounded off for anonymity) which represents about one-tenth of one percent of LI's 435,519 students. We can consider the percentage (and number) of all LI students in each racial category who attend a school that has no White teacher. For White students, nine-one-thousandths of one percent (0.009%, i.e., approximately 20/233,077) – that is, nine out of every 100,000 White students – attend a school where there are no White teachers. Among Black students, two-tenths of one percent (0.2%, approximately 85/42,114) of all Black students attend a school with no White teacher. Three-tenths of one percent

Segregation in Long Island's Schools

We can further grasp what it is like in real schools on LI in terms of segregation by race and ethnicity. As discussed above, Long Island is among the most segregated school systems in the country. On LI, many schools have almost 100% White students (and correspondingly almost no non-White students), while at the other end of the spectrum, many schools have almost no White students at all and nearly 100% students of color.

To gain insight into school segregation, we ranked LI's 642 schools (from 2017) from those with the lowest percentage of White students to those with the highest percentage. We then identified the 10% of schools at each end of the list. At the low end are the 10% of schools (N=64) with the fewest White students (in terms of percentage) and at the other end is the 10% of schools (N=64) with the most White students. Then, we looked at each 10% of schools as a group and examined the student and teacher demographics in LI's 64 "most White" and "least White" schools. While categorizing schools by the percentage of students that are White will necessarily produce "less White" and "more White" schools, the *differences* between those schools are not predetermined. If schools were highly integrated, the demographics of "less White" schools would be similar to those of "more White" schools—in a perfectly integrated school system, there would be no difference at all. Differences between "less White" and "more White" schools indicate segregation. The larger the differences, the more segregation there is.

- **"White schools"**

In 2017 LI's 64 "most White" schools (10% of all schools) averaged students that were 90% White, 6% Latinx, 1% Black, 3% Asian, and 1% Multiracial. Since 2006, these schools have seen a five percentage point decline in the number of Whites students, with a modest increase in the percentages of Latinx students (from 2.2% in 2006 to 5.5% in 2017) and Asian and Multiracial students (each increased by one percentage point from 2006 to 2017). The percentage of Black students in the "most White" schools remained at less than 1% throughout the time period.

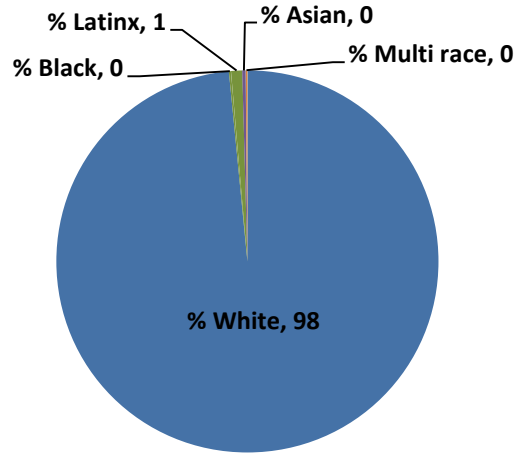
The teachers in these "most White" schools are 98% White, and this is unchanged since 2006. Less than two-tenths of one percent (0.17%) of teachers in these schools are Black. It is important to understand this number. It means that in a school building that has 100 teachers – this would be a large school, larger than 90% of all schools on LI – odds are *none* of the teachers would be Black. If there were a school that had 1000 teachers – there is no such thing, the largest school on LI has 281 teachers – only two of those 1000 teachers would be Black. The case for Latinx teachers is only slightly better, where one out of 100 teachers (1%) are Latinx. The percentage of Asian teachers is similar to that of Blacks: in the "most Whites" schools only three-tenths-of-one percent (0.3%) of teachers are Asian. The takeaway here is that students, and adults, in these schools see virtually no diversity among the students and even less among the teachers.

- *“Non-White schools”*

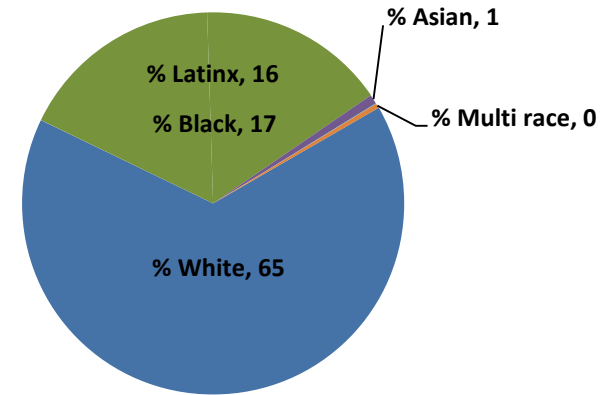
At the other end of the spectrum are the 10% of schools that are the “least White”. In 2017, the student body in these schools was 2% White and 94% Black and Latinx, 3% Asian and 1% Multiracial. And that means segregation is *increasing*, as the percentage of White students in these schools has decreased from 5% in 2006. While the percentage of Black and Latinx combined has increased by only two percentage points since 2006 (from 92% to 94%), the mix of Latinxs and Blacks has changed substantially. Where in 2007 each category was approximately 46% of the student total, by 2017 Blacks had decreased to 31% of the total student body while Latinxs increased to 63% of students. Despite these changes in the representation of non-White categories, the absence of White students remains. In these schools, there is hardly a White student to be seen.

Teachers at these highly non-White schools are reasonably diverse, although they are far from “matching” the student body. Here, 33% of the teachers are Latinx or Black, and 65% of teachers in these “least White” schools are White. Since 2006, the share of Latinx teachers has increased from 10% to 16%, while Black teachers saw a slight decrease from 19% to 17%. White teachers declined from 70% in 2006 to 65% in 2017.

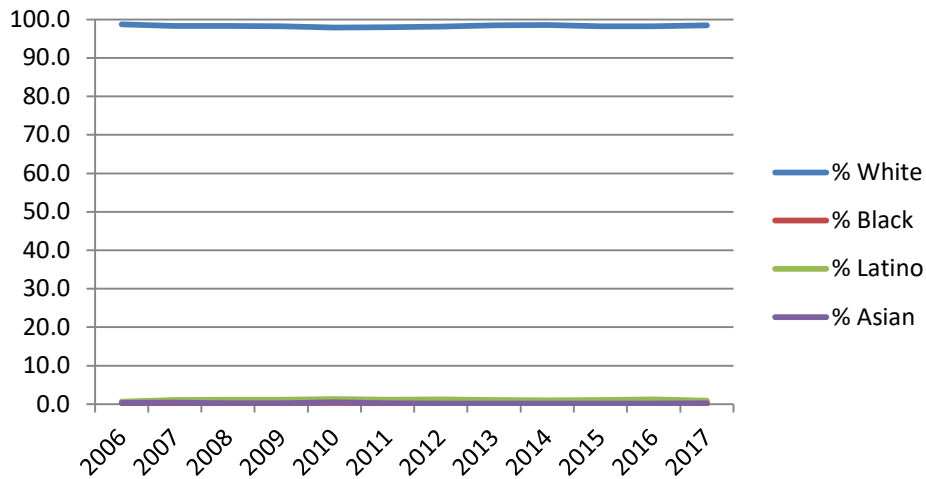
Teachers in LI's 64 "Most White" Schools 2017



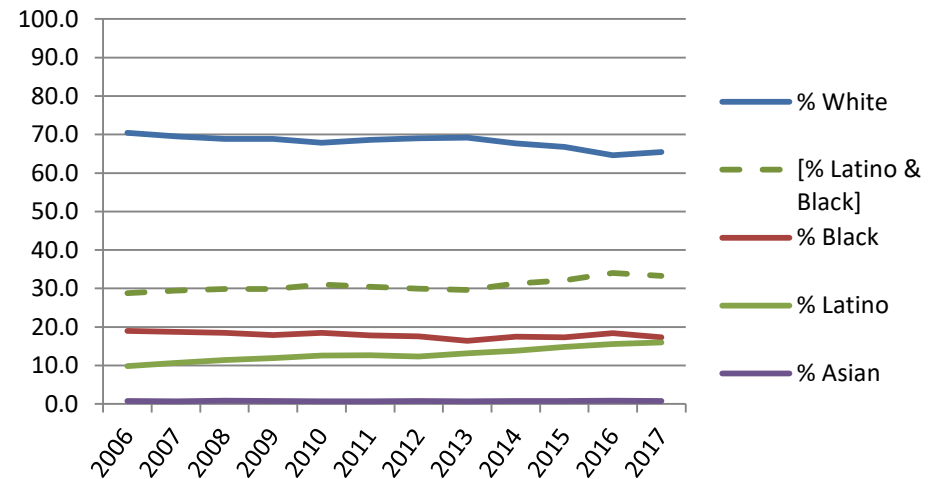
Teachers in LI's 64 "Least White" Schools 2017



Teachers in LI's 64 "Most White" Schools 2006-2017



Teachers in LI's 64 "Least White" Schools 2006-2017



APPENDIX TO STATISTICAL PROFILE: NOTES ON DATA SOURCING AND CLEANING

All raw data for this profile were collected by NYSED and provided to the authors of this report in either of two ways. Student data were culled from each school’s annual “School Report Card” and are easily available on the NYSED website. Teacher data was provided to us via data request.⁷⁷ The teacher data in particular was checked by the authors for obvious data entry errors using the following procedure: From the raw teacher data, the percentage of each race/ethnic category was calculated for each year. Then, for each race/ethnic category, the change in that category’s representation was calculated for the years 2006 through 2017. Any school that had a category of teacher race/ethnicity change by more than 50 percentage points was individually examined. This procedure revealed some obvious data entry errors. The most common error was an apparent swap of two racial categories. For example, consider this school’s numbers of White and multiracial teachers:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
N White	31	31	32	1	32	31	32	30	30	34	33	34
N multiracial	0	0	0	32	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
% multiracial	0	0	0	97%	0	3.2%	0	0	0	0	0	0

This school has between 30 and 34 White teachers for all years, except 2009 when it lists that there is only one White teacher. This same school lists between zero and one multiracial teachers for all years, except for 2009, when it listed 32 multiracial teachers. In 2009, an obvious error was made where the value for White was entered in the cell for multiracial, and multiracial in the cell for White. In our analysis, these types of obvious and incontrovertible errors were corrected (by swapping the numbers back to their obvious positions).

This school is also useful to show the type of inconsistency that was *not* changed for this analysis. The year 2011 is the only one that lists a single multiracial teacher (prior to the above correction), while at the same time, the number of White teachers is less one compared to the years just before and just after. It is possible, likely even, that this single multiracial teacher was categorized as White in other years. However, because this possibility is not blatantly clear, no change was made. Corrections to the raw data were made only when evidence of an error was unequivocal.

Out of 46,224 data points (642 schools x 6 categories of teacher x 12 years), 88 corrections were made to the teacher data (0.19% of all entries). While correcting less than two-tenths-of-one-percent of all data entries might seem inconsequential, in some cases a single error of large magnitude can have sizable effects on the output, especially in categories where there are very few teachers, like virtually all non-White categories. Take the “% multiracial” row in the above table. The 2009 error that lists 97% of teachers as multiracial has a large influence on the mean across schools because almost all other schools have close to zero multiracial teachers. This one mistaken entry of nearly 100 percentage points would cause a sizable “spike” in the 2009 mean across schools. Indeed, before we “cleaned” the data, it was the presence of several seemingly unusual “spikes” in the amount of non-White teachers that caused us to inspect the raw data more closely. The corrected data provides a substantially more accurate picture of teacher demographics in Long Island’s schools.

⁷⁷ NYSED School Report Cards can be found at <https://data.nysed.gov/>. To request teacher data from NYSED, see <https://datasupport.nysed.gov/hc/en-us/articles/209606903-How-to-request-data-from-NYSED-s-Office-of-Information-and-Reporting-Services>.

WHAT LONG ISLAND EDUCATORS OF COLOR HAD TO SAY

In a subsequent phase of this study, we plan to conduct in depth surveys of a large number of educators in a search for solutions to the problem of racial disparities in teacher hiring. In the current phase, however, we reached out to about three dozen Black and Latinx education professionals on Long Island to guide us in data collection and analysis. We also consulted more informally with White administrators. (We have not yet interviewed Asian and Native American educators, who undoubtedly face similar experiences; we hope to do so in a subsequent phase, along with school board members and administrators.) We cannot independently verify most of the statements that follow, except those related to data and other research in the field of educational equity, and do not intend to do so in this phase. Nonetheless in focus groups and individual interviews, educators of color reported – often emotionally and in detail – that they often encounter a lack of acceptance and support for themselves and their students, and they offered numerous suggestions to remedy racial disparities in recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion. We promised anonymity to participants, to encourage them to speak freely without fear of reprisal or criticism. We also are not identifying their schools or districts since the number of minority teachers and administrators is so small that to do so would be tantamount to naming the individuals. But we are sharing their experiences and ideas because we found them valuable in understanding the human dimension *behind* the data and to begin the process of developing potential policies and procedures to remedy disparities in minority hiring.

The following are some of the experiences, perceptions and suggestions from the individual interviews and focus groups with educators of color:

- **Almost every educator of color interviewed expressed concern about the impact of a lack of minority teachers and administrators on the educational experience of their students.** That includes White students. Although they knew that minority educators were grossly under-represented in the workforce, many were shocked at the overall numbers. *“I know how few there are in my building but I guess I couldn’t know that there are dozens of buildings without anyone who looks like me.”*

The educators repeatedly cited research that extolled the virtues of exposing students and fellow teachers and administrators to diversity at all levels. *“The lack of diversity has academic, social and economic consequences for all our children.”* Thus, it’s essential to do more to *“redress the glaring disparities”* between Whites and non-Whites. *“There’s a need to recognize and address the attitudes, policies, politics and culture[s] that prevent the hiring and retention of minority teachers and administrators. Hiring is intentional and the system from top to bottom is producing and perpetuating an unacceptably low number.”*

- **The pool of minority teachers and administrators needs to be expanded.** *“We need to encourage minority teachers to become administrators. We need to make the profession more attractive for our minority middle and high school students, as well as college, and potential [educators now] in other professions.”*
- **Although the minority population continues to rise, there is little effort – within districts and the region as a whole – to create a more robust pipeline of educators in what are well-paying public sector jobs supported by their own tax dollars.** *“If the governor, the legislature, the school board, superintendent and building principal make this a mandated priority, you’ll see more minority*

teachers—period,” said one educator. *“The pool is smaller than for Whites but if the districts,”* said another, *“do more than the minimum and get a little creative, they will do better.”*

- **Suggestions for change included state-funded training for school board members and administrators, and collaborations that bring together high school students, universities and districts to create a continuous pipeline.** *“Creative”* efforts, seen in several districts, include recruiting at historic Black colleges and at schools in Spanish-speaking countries. There is also a new “grow your own” movement to develop talent within districts from unconventional sources, such as teacher aids and others in the community. But the challenge of diversifying the teaching profession does not end with hiring minority teachers and administrators, the educators said. Attention must be paid to retention, as many districts lose recent minority hires, who leave not just for other districts but the profession itself.
- **Some districts “are trying hard to hire more minorities,” but they often have difficulty connecting to potential applicants and give up or scale back in frustration.** The lack of diversity itself becomes an obstacle to hiring and promotion. *“Many teachers and administrators are hired because somebody in the district knew them,”* said one educator. *“But most Whites don’t know minorities, so they can’t recommend any or vouch for them when there is an opening. The same is true for promotions. It’s hard for a minority to find a mentor in a White district.”* Added another: *“Minority teachers need to advocate for other minority teachers – if there are any others in sight.”* But even if they do, one contended, *“White teachers’ recommendations are taken more seriously than Latinx or Black’s recommendations.”*
- **The driving force for recruiting Latinx teachers has been the increase of Spanish speaking immigrants from Central and South America.** As a practical matter, and to comply with state mandates, these new students need to be educated at first in their native language – and their teachers often are Latinxs who speak English and Spanish. This helps explain the faster rate of increase for Latinxs than other minority groups.
- **Latinxs are sought, or are seen as being hired, for their language skills rather than their competence as educators.** *“I could be a stellar educator but I’m ignored by certain districts because they don’t have an ENL population,”* said a Latina administrator, now in a White district. *“I got the feeling that everybody assumed I was hired because I was Latina and not because I was a great educator with a great record.”* Being hired as a Spanish speaker was seen as both a “blessing and a curse,” as both an asset and an obstacle: *“Being able to speak Spanish is a blessing. I wouldn’t have gotten my job without it. But I also do not want to be penalized by not being able to teach monolingual classes as well.”* At the same time they share the feeling of being placed in “Latinx ghettos,” segregated in the bilingual and ENL programs despite being certified and qualified to teach in the mainstream as well. *“I want to climb the ladder. I don’t want to be stuck in the ghetto.”*
- **Black and Latinx educators, as well as the miniscule number of Asians, share some similar experiences but they also can’t be seen as monolithic in their needs and concerns.** In fact, Blacks and Latinxs reported friction between their groups, as Latinxs are sometimes perceived as “taking jobs from” African Americans who were in the system many years before the surge of residents from Spanish speaking countries. A number of segregated minority districts are seeing Blacks displaced as the majority racial group in the community, educators observed. A few noted “unproductive” and “self-destructive” rivalries within racial and ethnic groups: For example, Salvadorans have passed

Puerto Ricans as the dominant Latinx group in many communities and “*they don’t always see eye to eye*” on educational or other priorities in the communities they share, including hiring.

- **Many of the minority educators reported a lack of support by their White colleagues and, in some instances, by the leadership of their unions.** They feel that Whites, as well as minorities already in place, fear that Latinxs in particular will be displacing existing faculty -- “*taking over Black and White teaching jobs,*” according to one educator.
- **Minority teachers are forced to advocate – “*or nobody else will*” – for minority students in a way that White teachers aren’t expected to do so for White students.** “*You feel that ‘I’m all they’ve got.’*” This creates tremendous stresses, especially on Latinx teachers who, particularly in heavily White districts, are asked to translate interactions between their non-Spanish-speaking colleagues and Spanish speaking students and parents. “*Now I am responsible for what happens to that student, even if I have no other relationship and nothing to do with the issue.*” That many Latinx students and their families feel vulnerable and are reluctant to speak up due to their immigration status only adds to the stress for Latinx teachers and administrators. “*We do a lot of extra work but we are not only not paid extra for it, we do not even feel appreciated for it.*”

Additional verbatim comments from minority educators who participated in our focus groups, providing insights into their experiences and thinking:

- “*Minority women administrators have double-the-trouble in being hired and respected for their merits.*”
- “*Districts should be required to report how many minorities were candidates for a position and why they were not hired. Districts should have minority applicants.*”
- “*Minority teachers and administrators should be involved in the application process.*”
- “*Minorities might not apply for jobs on Long Island because of the reputation that ‘getting a job on Long Island is tough, that it is all about who you know to land a job’.*”
- “*White parents complain about Black principals for doing the same things that White principals did in the past.*”
- “*White teachers will file grievances against minority principals when they wouldn’t have done that against a White one.*”
- “*There’s an intrinsic fear of Black men as if our kids will not be safe around them. Our students need to see themselves in race and gender.*”

CONCLUSION: WHAT'S NEXT?

This is the first of at least three phases of a study of disparities in minority teacher hiring in Long Island's public schools. NCSS decided that the first phase had to be primarily statistical, buttressed by a review of existing research that validates the importance of a diverse educational experience for White and non-White students alike, and by speaking with minority and White educators to better understand the human dimension behind the numbers.

The second phase, which is in the planning stages, is intended to include additional statistical analysis. But the heart of this phase will be a study of school policies and practices as they relate to minority teacher recruitment and retention, and a search through academic and mainstream publications for "best practices" that could guide efforts to reduce disparities. At the same time, NCSS will consult with key state, regional and local educational leaders, and partner with Hofstra's School of Education and selected public school districts to create pilot "pipeline" programs to train more minority teachers. We are pursuing private and state funding for all of these initiatives.

The third phase will focus on bringing together major educational leaders to review the data and research. The goal is to create a high-level committee or even an official commission to recommend changes in local policies and practices, as well as possible state legislative proposals, including revenue streams for new recruitment and retention programs, to reduce the disparities in minority teacher hiring.

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