

The Civil Rights Project



Proyecto Derechos Civiles

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New York Schools Most Segregated in the Nation

UCLA REPORT IDENTIFIES ALARMING TRENDS THROUGHOUT STATE

LOS ANGELES--A report released today by UCLA's Civil Rights Project finds that public school students in New York continue to be severely segregated. Public school students in the state are increasingly isolated by race and class as the proportion of minority and poor students continues to grow, according to the CRP report, "*New York State's Extreme School Segregation: Inequality, Inaction and a Damaged Future.*"

The study explores trends in enrollment and school segregation patterns from 1989 to 2010 at the state and regional levels, including the New York City metropolitan areas of Long Island and the New York City District, and the upstate metropolitan areas of Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse.

The report also documents the history of school desegregation in the state and across its geographic regions, including key desegregation cases and remedies in Yonkers, Rochester, and Buffalo.

In New York City, in particular, the report highlights both historical and current practices and policies perpetuating racial imbalance and educational inequity across schools, and challenged by parents and community organizations.

Educational problems linked to racially segregated schools, which are often intensified by poverty concentration, include a less-experienced and less-qualified teacher workforce, high levels of teacher turnover, inadequate facilities and learning materials, high dropout rates, and less stable enrollments. Conversely, desegregated schools are linked to profound benefits for all students.

"This report runs the geographic gamut: from the upstate metros dealing with transforming demographics and an urban-suburban divide, to Long Island, one of the

most segregated and fragmented suburban rings in the country, and New York City, the largest school district in the country,” said John Kucsera, lead author of the report.

Specific findings at Various Geographic Levels

Statewide:

- At the state level, the proportion of Latino and Asian students has nearly doubled from 1989 to 2010, as the exposure of these groups to white students has decreased.
- Concentration levels have increased for black students in intensely segregated minority schools (where less than 10% of the student body is white), and there has been a simultaneous and dramatic increase in black exposure to Latino students over the last 20 years.
- In terms of poverty concentration, statewide patterns show that schools become more low-income as their enrollment becomes majority minority.
- Nearly 50% of public school students were low-income in 2010, but the typical black or Latino student attended a school where close to 70% of classmates were low-income. Conversely, the typical white student attended school where less than 30% of classmates were low-income.

Upstate Metropolitan Areas:

- In Buffalo, the typical white student attended a school with 30% of poor students compared to 73% for the typical black student, two and one half times more.
- Black and Latino students experienced a substantial increase in the percentage concentrated in intensely segregated schools (those with less than 10% white students) since 1989.
- In the Syracuse metropolitan area, the proportion of black students grew by 4%, but black isolation rates skyrocketed. The average black student attended school in 1989 with a third of students from their own race; twenty years later, the typical black student attended schools with nearly half black students.
- The majority of school districts in upstate New York remain predominantly white. In the Rochester metro, however, near a quarter of school districts are drastically changing, with most substantially integrating nonwhite students.
- In the Albany metro, 97% of the metro’s multigroup segregation – measured by the distribution of racial groups in schools across the metro – occurred between rather than within districts. A total of 59 out of 65 districts in 2010 were predominantly white or nonwhite.

New York City:

- Across the 32 Community School Districts (CSDs) in New York City, 19 had 10% or less white students in 2010, which included all districts in the Bronx, two-thirds of the districts in Brooklyn (central to north districts), half of the districts in

Manhattan (northern districts), and only two-fifths of the districts in Queens (southeast districts).

- 73% of charters across New York City were considered apartheid schools (less than 1% white enrollment) and 90% percent were intensely segregated (less than 10% white enrollment) schools in 2010. Only 8% of charter schools were multiracial¹ and with over a 14.5% white enrollment (the New York City average).
- Magnet schools across the New York City district had the highest proportion of multiracial schools (47%) and the lowest proportion of segregated schools (56%) in 2010. However, 17% of magnets had less than 1% white enrollment and 7% had greater than 50% white enrollment, with PS 100 Coney Island having a white proportion of 81%.

New York Metropolitan Area:

- For the New York City metro in 2010, the five boroughs represented nearly 60% of the state's total black students, two-thirds of the total Asian and Latino students, but only 10% of white students.
- In Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, where charter schools consist of around 10% of all public schools, nearly all charters were intensely segregated in 2010, with less than 10% white student enrollment. 100% of the Bronx charters, 90% of those in Brooklyn, and 97% of the Manhattan charters were intensely segregated.

Author Kucsera states, "Many of these areas, particularly suburban ones, have experienced dramatic demographic transformation coupled with a lack of diversity-focused policies, and this inevitably leads to problematic segregation patterns."

With the help of various New York-based community groups, researchers, and civil rights organizations, the report provides a host of recommendations and actions to help create and maintain integrated schools from the federal level down to local communities and schools. These include altering school choice plans to ensure they promote diversity, supporting communities that are experiencing racial change by helping them create voluntary desegregation plans, and creating regional or interdistrict programs in urban/suburban areas.

"In the 30 years I have been researching schools, New York State has consistently been one of the most segregated states in the nation--no Southern state comes close to New York," commented CRP Co-Director Gary Orfield. "Decades of reforms ignoring this issue produced strategies that have not succeeded in making segregated schools equal. It is time to adopt creative school choice strategies to give more New York children an opportunity to prepare to live and work effectively in a highly multiracial state."

¹ We define multiracial schools are those with any three races representing 10% or more of the total student body.

Read the report and see a complete breakdown of the data at <http://goo.gl/aE49v8>.

This report is the fifth in a series of 12 reports on East Coast school segregation trends.

About the Civil Rights Project at UCLA

Founded in 1996 by former Harvard professors Gary Orfield and Christopher Edley, Jr., The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles is now co-directed by Orfield and Patricia Gándara, professors at UCLA. Its mission is to create a new generation of research in social science and law on the critical issues of civil rights and equal opportunity for racial and ethnic groups in the United States. It has monitored the success of American schools in equalizing opportunity and has been the authoritative source of segregation statistics. CRP has commissioned more than 400 studies, published more than 15 books and issued numerous reports from authors at universities and research centers across the country. The U.S. Supreme Court, in its 2003 Grutter v. Bollinger decision upholding affirmative action, and in Justice Breyer's dissent (joined by three other Justices) to its 2007 Parents Involved decision, cited the Civil Rights Project's research.

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