

The Civil Rights Project



Proyecto Derechos Civiles

Civil Rights Project Researchers Reaffirm Findings: School Segregation Increasing in Recent Decades

March 13, 2014

Several researchers have recently published articles claiming that school segregation has actually not increased in recent decades, as we have reported in our publications. It turns out that these researchers have not disputed our data, which shows the level of isolation by race and poverty experienced by African American and Latino students. They have, however, preferred to measure something else—the randomness of distribution of four racial groups across metropolitan areas. This measure has never been the goal of desegregation policies, nor the way in which progress was measured in civil rights law and enforcement.

Traditionally desegregation progress has been measured by increased diversity in schools that were formerly of one racial group, and by the percent of black and Latino students concentrated in intensely segregated or substantially integrated schools. These are the central measures we have used. The researchers looking at randomness of multiracial groups conclude that diversity at a metropolitan level has not increased. By carefully examining the Washington metro area, we demonstrate that their measure shows progress. But statistics on the actual schools attended by black and Latino students, our measure, shows a clear increase in isolation from whites and middle class students.

[CRP conducted a brief analysis](#), which foreshadows a more extensive forthcoming report, and found that the randomness statistics are interesting, but they do not sustain the claim that segregation has not increased. Furthermore, the progress they report is often misleading, because the randomness method can produce false negatives and false positives in terms of the segregation or integration of students and schools.

[Our analysis](#) explains the dispute and the basis for the conclusions in our reports.

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