

*Unpacking Our
History Article Packet*

Education Part IV

Beyond Brown 1980s-2010s

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
7-8:30 PM, on Zoom**

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Racial Inequality in the U.S. Education System Post-*Brown*: An Introduction to the History and Policies that Shape Our Contemporary Context

Juontel White, Schott Foundation for Public Education and Diana Cordova-Cobo, Research. the Ira A. Lipman Center for Journalism and Civil and Human Rights August 2022

Racial Segregation Within and Across Schools

The education system in the United States today is notably different from the education system in place during the *Brown v Board* decision. As noted in the introduction, student demographics have shifted across city and suburban neighborhoods in the United States since 1954 through multiple waves of migration and immigration spurred by national and international events. The current education system is also distinctly more privatized, deregulated, and driven by free market principles than ever before. Yet, as these changes and others have taken place, the underlying conditions of racial inequality and segregation across schools that led to the *Brown* decision remain present across contemporary schools and classrooms. These conditions perpetuate educational disparities for students of color.

In a 2019 report by The Civil Rights Project that looked at the promise of the *Brown* decision 65 years later, researchers found that the intense levels of segregation that had decreased during the 1960s and 1970s were on the rise again. Furthermore, another strand of research has documented that even when school buildings are racially desegregated, Black and/or Latinx students often experience within school segregation – where they are more likely to be placed in lower academic tracks or lower-quality programs compared to their white peers. This reality has stark implications for the academic outcomes of students of color because of the highly unequal schooling conditions and access to opportunities that accompany across or within school segregation.

Resegregation: Reversing *Brown* in the South and Intrenching Segregation in the North

Despite the positive outcomes desegregation had for students of color, the 1990s saw the reversal of the progress toward racial equity made in the prior three decades through court-ordered desegregation plans. That started an era in which racial segregation trends have reversed since the height of desegregation in the 1970s and 80s. As noted above, *Brown* was meant to address the legal racial segregation taking place across 17 states in the middle of the 20th century. In the 1990s, courts began systematically removing judicial oversight for desegregation plans in school districts across these states. Three rulings between 1991 and 1995 – *Board of Education v. Dowell*, *Freeman v. Pitts*, and *Missouri v. Jenkins* – made it easier for school districts to free themselves of court oversight with respect to desegregation. In fact, by 2012, researchers found that almost half of the nearly 500 school districts under court-ordered desegregation plans were released from their judicial oversight. At the same time, the Supreme Court has limited the use of race-based school assignment policies in the current era, making it difficult to pursue judicial remedies to racial segregation in schools. In the South in particular, school segregation was generally lower than neighborhood segregation until the 1990s. Once desegregation orders were lifted from the 1990s onward, school segregation increased relative to neighborhood segregation.

To be clear, Northern states largely entered the 1990s still racially and socioeconomically segregated. For example, Black student segregation persisted in New

York City public schools even as neighborhood segregation declined for Black communities in the same time period. So, even as the reversal of desegregation plans led to resegregation across the South, school segregation was only further entrenched within and across Northern and Western school districts. The combination of these realities has led to staunch school segregation patterns along racial and ethnic lines through today. The UCLA Civil Rights Project, which has tracked school segregation trends over the past few decades, found that segregation for Black students has increased across the country from the high point of desegregation in the 1980s. This is true even as Black students make up an increasingly shrinking share of the public school student population in many contexts and are no longer concentrated only in city schools.

In fact, suburban schools have seen the sharpest decline in the share of white students in recent years due to increased suburbanization of Black and Latinx families. The UCLA Civil Rights Project also found that Latinx students are the most segregated when compared to Black, Asian, or white students. Additionally, when Black students make up a smaller share of the student population, they are more likely to be in schools with predominantly Latinx student populations. As the share of Latinx students has grown in public schools from 5 percent in 1970 to 25 percent in 2018, Latinx segregation has intensified. Latinx students are also sometimes segregated based on language status. These trends hold true across contemporary city, suburban, and rural contexts.

In addition to racial segregation, Black and Latinx students in schools today are also more likely to be in high-poverty schools that are under-resourced. Particularly noted in the research is that, in addition to having fewer material resources and opportunities, low-income Black and Latinx students are more likely to have less experienced teachers. Schools that are predominantly students of color and high-poverty have twice as many teachers with less than one year of teaching experience and five times as many teachers who don't meet state certification requirements than low-poverty, predominantly white schools. This is important because teacher quality increases with years of experience so students with less experienced teachers are likely to have poorer academic outcomes. As was true before *Brown*, segregated schools remain "separate and unequal" in our contemporary context.

In an effort to remedy these symptoms of segregation, school choice policies have become increasingly popular in public school districts since the late 1990s and grew from examples such as the intentionally desegregated magnet programs of the 1970s. Today, due to the limits on race-based school assignment policies, school choice policies do not include provisions for racial desegregation. Increasingly, however, schools are leaning on socioeconomic desegregation to achieve the same ends. In most school districts, school choice policies include open student assignment policies that aim to give student school choices beyond their school attendance zone and/or charter schools. Both are framed as providing better educational opportunities for lower-income students of color in particular in the context of an underfunded education system. The former has been implemented in larger city school districts and across metropolitan areas.

The most well-documented case of a widespread school choice plan is in New York City public schools, where the high school choice system was put into place nearly two decades ago. The high school choice system, and subsequent middle school, elementary school, and preschool choice systems, are at the center of research efforts to understand whether choice policies actually alleviate racial and socioeconomic inequality and segregation. Research to date has largely concluded that it does not alleviate these conditions at any level of K-12 education. A majority of elementary school students stay

within their school districts or neighborhoods in New York City. Two of the major obstacles for Latinx immigrants in the high school choice process are proximity and exposure. Immigrant parents still largely sent their children to schools in the neighborhood even if the school was not as highly regarded as a school further away. Additionally, there is an over-concentration of “high needs” students in predominantly Black and Latinx high schools due to a lack of transparency, oversight, and controls for diversity or fairness in the high school choice process.

Another strand of research has further documented how anti-Blackness and racial bias shape the perceptions of schools as “good” or “bad” when parents are in the position to evaluate schools in the educational marketplace. Schools with predominantly Black and/or Latinx students are frequently labeled as “bad” schools while schools with predominantly white students are “good” schools, despite evidence that shows little or no difference in the quality of instruction or resources a school has to offer.

Even when schools are desegregated at the building level under school choice systems, “second generation segregation” persists along racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines within schools through academic tracking and program assignment. Within school segregation, like across school segregation, has severe implications for the academic outcomes of students of color even when they are considered “high-achieving.” Research consistently shows that, even when Black and Latinx students have similar test scores and prior achievement as their white peers, they are more likely to be tracked into lower academic tracks and programs. There are long-term implications for students’ self-esteem, aspirations, and academic outcomes when such tracking occurs. While the aforementioned research focuses heavily on lower-income Black and Latinx students, qualitative research on desegregated suburban schools that focuses on middle-class Black families also finds that Black students in these contexts have separate and unequal schooling experiences when compared to white students in the same school building.

The implications of an unequal and separate schooling system – whether across school or within school segregation – continue to shape the day-to-day experiences and academic outcomes for students of color in schools almost 70 years after *Brown*. This reality is inextricably linked to the separate and unequal conditions that led to the *Brown* ruling in the first place.

Funding and Opportunity Gaps in Public Schools

The U.S. public school system is funded through a varied configuration of federal, state, and local allocations, with state and local governments constituting the majority (between 60-80 percent on average). State and local education budgets are, respectively, comprised of sales, income, and property taxes. Throughout the nation’s history there have been only two groups of color for whom the federal government has constituted the majority of education funding: Native Americans and African Americans. Both were served by federal agencies formed in the mid and late 1800s. In 1842, after forcibly resettling Native American tribes east of the Mississippi, the U.S. established the Bureau of Indian Affairs to manage coordination of provisions to these tribes, including the provision of schooling on the newly formed reservations. Similarly, after the 1865 Emancipation Proclamation legally emancipated enslaved Black Americans, the U.S. established the Freedmen’s Bureau, an agency purposed to aid the newly emancipated in the transition to self-sufficiency by providing rations of food, clothing, and monies, job assistance, and education for youth.

The Bureau was short-lived and closed in 1872 as a result of white hostility and

corruption by federal officials. After that, funding for segregated Black schools largely became the responsibility of states and local districts. During the Jim Crow era, in every region of the nation, states and local districts managed education budgets in racially unequal ways, namely by significantly limiting funding to schools for students of color and funneling the bulk of funding to all-white segregated schools. This limitation was furthered by the local funding structure; the levy of local property taxes to fund schooling has resulted in an unequal baseline of funding for schools. Simply, schools in low-income, working-class neighborhoods glean far less in property tax revenues than those in wealthier neighborhoods.

In 1965, to address this disparity and provide additional funding support to underserved schools, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's foregrounding education reform. It provides funding for "Title I" schools – those with higher portions of low-income students – aimed at supporting educator professional development, school instructional materials (including textbooks and curriculum), establishing school libraries, parent engagement promotion, and support for education programs. Designers of the bill envisioned it would close the gap between the reading, writing, and mathematics levels of children in low-income urban or rural communities (overwhelmingly students of color) and their middle-class counterparts, who were overwhelmingly white. Additional amendments to ESEA related to other protected classes were adopted in subsequent years. For instance, an amendment adopted in 1969 added special allocations for schools serving children in public housing, with disabilities, and refugee children. Additionally, the 1972 amendment, common referred to as "Title IX" extended discrimination protections to include sex-based discrimination.

Importantly, while the federal government disbursed funding through states to be allocated directly to local schools and districts, local districts were required to match federal Title I funds. This further burdened schools in low-income neighborhoods as local funding allocations in these areas were insufficient to match the federal allocation. To address this financial burden, parents of schoolchildren in various states sued local officials on the grounds that the funding structure violated 14th Amendment rights. For a program designed to equalize funding in high-needs underserved schools, the requisite that such schools would have to match dollars was a paradox. The law unduly burdened low-income communities and, as a result, became the subject of a lawsuit. In *Serrano v Priest* (cases established in the 1970s), a California parent sued the state treasurer. The California court ruled in favor of Serrano, leading California districts to remove the matching requirement and many other states to follow suit.

By the following decade, the 1980s, the nation's leaders became increasingly interested in the "space race" – advancing technology and science to enter space orbit – as a means of national security. That resulted in pressure to make school curriculum more rigorous in the aligned areas (i.e., math and science). During this period, states increasingly adopted learning standards to identify shared benchmarks for the knowledge and skills students would gain through their courses. To incentivize academic gains, new provisions were added to the receipt of federal funding: Schools would receive increased funding if they demonstrated that achieved standards contributed to academic improvement.

This incentivized funding model was the core approach of the 2001 federal education policy, "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB). Signed and championed by President George W. Bush, NCLB sought to close the then-dubbed "achievement gap" by requiring that states develop standardized tests in reading, math, and science. Schools would

administer such tests to students annually, and schools with an average test score of “proficient” or above received bonus funding. Schools with average standardized test scores below proficient were penalized by decreased funding and a stringent accountability plan to demonstrate when the school would achieve proficiency. States that failed to achieve average test score proficiency in consecutive years would be eligible for state takeover, typically after four to five years. This meant that the state would assume control of the operations of a school or district.

Studies have shown that under-resourced Title I schools are more likely to be at risk of falling below proficiency. This is because the resource deficit in such schools (e.g., books, teachers, program funding, and more) limits the educational quality and student academic learning. This system is inherently unequal because it penalizes low-performing schools for their low performance rather than providing sufficient resources needed to improve students’ academic performance. In 2015, ESSA was reauthorized by President Obama, though its restrictions were slightly relaxed. Overall, the high-stakes testing regime not only deepened funding and resource inequality in K-12 education but also shifted the curricular experience for students, especially in low-income neighborhoods.

Accountability and High-Stakes Testing

High-stakes testing is often the main indicator of academic achievement that researchers and policymakers rely on in their reporting. To be clear, standardized testing is one form of assessment that teachers and school systems can employ in the classroom. What makes these tests “high-stakes” is that, in the contemporary education system, they have been tied to student graduation rates, school funding, teacher evaluations, and a host of other outcomes. A single test score can have profound implications for the long-term trajectories of schools, teachers, and students. The high-stakes nature of these tests is also why the crisis of “the achievement gap” between white students and students of color is frequently cited as a sign that our public schools are failing students. This achievement gap, however, has been present since the inception of high-stakes testing and researchers are increasingly questioning whether we should be primarily focused on high-stakes testing outcomes as an indicator of racial equity in the education system.

This framing of the “achievement gap” places the onus on students to meet a predetermined level of proficiency as measured by a yearly test. However, researchers that examine the current achievement gap in the context of a long history of inequitable education policies and practices have argued that we should not focus our attention on an “achievement gap,” but rather an “opportunity gap.” Employing the lens of an opportunity gap allows us to shift our attention to how systemic inequities embedded within accountability systems and high-stakes testing shape the experiences of students of color in school. The overreliance on high-stakes testing as an indicator of school quality, teacher efficacy, and student intelligence has only further exacerbated racial inequality in schools post-*Brown*.

The Origins of Contemporary High-Stakes Testing

Education researchers typically place the origins of our current accountability system with the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act, but standardized testing became commonplace in the education system in the beginning of the 20th century and was arguably high-stakes even then. At the beginning of the 20th century, the “school efficiency” framework emerged as a way of applying the factory model of production

growing at the time to the way students were trained in schools. Schools during this time period began to think about the inputs and outputs of the education system. Testing quickly became a means of measuring the outputs – mainly the knowledge students had. During this same time period, vocational tracking and ability grouping increased as well and tests became an efficient way of deciding which students would be placed where. These ways of measuring student knowledge for sorting and for measuring academic outputs became widespread largely because they were based on the assumption that these tests were providing objective and value-free measures of human intelligence.

This assumption has largely been proven false by researchers across disciplines. Instead, the origins of standardized education testing in the United States have been linked to eugenist assumptions about which groups of people are inherently more intelligent based on nationality and race. The first widely used standardized test in schools was the National Intelligence Test in 1919. By 1920, over 400,000 tests were sold across the country. This test was adopted from a series of exams created by Stanford professor Lewis Terman and others to test the intelligence of military recruits during World War I. The team that ran this testing, including Terman, concluded that European immigrants' intellectual capabilities could be judged by their country of origin, that darker-skinned Europeans were less intelligent, and that Black Americans were the least intelligent of all people. After the National Intelligence Test, Terman went on to co-develop the Stanford Achievement Test in 1922. Nearly 1.5 million copies of this test were sold and by 1932 the majority of cities were using such tests to track students within schools. As the research on "the achievement gap" has emphasized, white students continue to outperform students of color on high-stakes tests in K-12 schools. Similarly, higher-income students continue to outperform their lower-income peers. However, in light of the racist and classist history of standardized testing, it is at least in part the case that standardized testing is functioning as designed.

In addition to shaping the sorting of K-12 students within schools, these racist ideologies also shaped the development of tests that determined access to higher education. Psychologist and known eugenist Carl Bringham was part of the WWI team with Terman and later commissioned by the College Board to create the SAT in 1926. Bringham then went on to design the initial Advanced Placement (AP) tests, while advocating that tests were a means of showing the superiority of "the Nordic race group." Later on in his career, he changed course on some of his ideologies about intelligence and ethnic groups. Both of these tests, however, are still in place today and function to sort students in the higher education sphere. Since then, the underlying racist assumptions that undergirded test development have persisted and there continue to be racialized achievement gaps on college entrance exams, which in turn create racial disparities related to who enrolls and completes college.

Researchers argue that high-stakes tests continue to be harmful towards students of color and lower-income students in the United States and it is imperative to develop alternate forms of assessment. And, because high-stakes tests act as a gatekeeper, the long-term implications of testing for student outcomes are stark. In sum, how students score on these tests can determine the access and opportunities they have to higher level programs and elite universities. As lower-income Black and Latinx students fare worse on these exams, they also are less likely to have such access and opportunities.

The Policies that Created Our Contemporary High-Stakes Schooling Environment

Today's public school students take more standardized tests over the course of

their K-12 schooling than students at any other time in the history of the U.S. education system. This is especially true in large city school districts, where there are also more likely to be higher shares of students that are lower-income and/or racially marginalized. The average student in such a school takes about 112 mandatory standardized tests between pre-kindergarten and the end of 12th grade. That is an average of about eight a year and is estimated to take up between 20 and 25 hours of instructional time every school year. This does not account for the additional tests teachers create to align to their own curriculum at the classroom level. The series of policies that led us down this path can be traced back to the 1980s. Standardized tests were already widely used in schools before then, but during this time period panic on behalf of policymakers and other stakeholders led to the beginning of our current accountability system.

As discussed in the prior section, the share of K-12 public school funding that comes from the federal government fell by about 30 percent between 1980 and 1988. The 1981 Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, which was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, shifted the focus of federal funding for public schools. It broadly reduced funding while also shifting the impetus for federal funding to serving "low-achieving" students in poor schools instead of simply serving poor students. As a result, funding became associated with achievement for the first time in federal policy.

Two years later, in 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education under the Reagan Administration released a report titled "A Nation at Risk." That report's main argument centered on the need for a greater emphasis on academic excellence in the education system because the shortcomings of the system posed a danger to the future success and security of the country. The report, intentionally alarming, made education a central feature of politics in the United States and set the stage for a new era of accountability in education policy.

Between "A Nation at Risk" and the No Child Left Behind Act, other reauthorizations of ESEA further elaborated on the use of standardized tests to hold schools accountable. Each subsequent administration after Reagan had an education agenda related to academic achievement and linking standardized testing to federal funding. For example, the 1988 reauthorization under the Bush Administration required states to set academic achievement goals that students receiving federal support should attain and to identify schools where students were not reaching these targets. Then the 1994 Goals 2000: Educate America Act under the Clinton Administration established National Education Goals and the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) to promote the development and use of high-quality national and state standards and assessments. Furthermore, to receive federal funding, states had to create a strategy for meeting the National Education Goals and include student assessments as part of that strategy.

What sets the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) apart is the extent to which punitive sanctions were placed on schools that did not meet their achievement goals. NCLB mandated that children in grades three through eight be tested every year using state tests. It also required schools to make adequate yearly progress towards 100 percent proficiency on state tests for all student groups or face escalating sanctions. After five years of inadequate progress, schools were required to reconstitute, meaning the same school would reopen as a public charter school, replace school staff considered responsible for lack of progress, or turn operation of the school over to the state or a private management company. Given the racist and classist origins of standardized

testing, it is unsurprising that schools serving low-income students of color were more likely to be sanctioned and reconstituted under NCLB.¹²⁸ NCLB also required states to release school report cards – the beginning of a highly racialized school grading system that falsely equates school quality with high test scores. These school grades also work to further the resegregation trends described above because test scores weigh heavily into the calculation of what is defined as a “good” school or a “bad” school and schools that serve student populations that are predominantly lower-income, Black, and/or Latinx tend to have lower standardized test scores.

At the time, however, the critiques of NCLB that are common in education research today were less prominent. Even the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) supported the passage of NCLB because it believed the law would hold schools and districts accountable for undeserving Black students and other students of color. However, after a few years of shuttered schools with little movement toward closing the achievement gap, several civil rights organizations have come out against NCLB, noting the “unintended harms” high-stakes testing has on students of color and low-income students.

The next major shift in the accountability system was under the Obama administration. Until then, the penalties for not meeting accountability goals were concentrated at the school level. As part of the 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, the Obama administration introduced a competitive grant program for states called Race to the Top. Race to the Top was basically a state competition for a portion of the \$4 billion allocated for financial incentives if states completed the following actions: 1. Adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed and compete in the global economy; 2. Build data systems that measure student growth and success and inform instructional improvement; 3. Recruit, train, and retain effective teachers and principals; and 4. Further school reform efforts that turn around failing schools.

Whether intended or not, Race to the Top had the practical effect of putting more pressure on states to evaluate both schools *and* teachers based on high-stakes test outcomes. Teacher evaluations were also cemented in the policy landscape as part of the 2015 reauthorization of ESEA.

The consequences of creating a learning environment where teachers are evaluated based on the standardized test results of their students are severe. Students report higher anxiety related to test prep in schools and lower confidence in their academic ability than in past years. Teachers also report feelings that their students have lost “their love of learning” as they are pressured to “teach to the test” and lose instructional time for more hands-on activities. Black and Latinx students are more likely than their white peers to be in schools that narrow curriculum to teach to the test and are more likely to be in schools with higher frequencies of standardized tests. Furthermore, teachers are essentially incentivized to seek out positions in schools where students are already “high-achieving,” usually schools that are well-resourced and predominantly white. Teachers are disincentivized from working in schools where students are underperforming, more likely to be schools with higher shares of lower-income students and students of color. This contributed to the clustering of less experienced teachers in lower-income Black and Latinx schools, where arguably more experienced teachers are needed. In sum, the accountability policies that shaped our contemporary context have a profound effect on the day-to-day experiences of educators and students in the classroom – and have broad implications for students of color.

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Education in the 1980's: A Concern for 'Quality'

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Diane Ravitch

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Decades cannot easily be characterized without running the risk of oversimplification. The 1920's weren't really "roaring," except for a relatively small number of people, and the 1950's were not as dull and conformist as legend has it. As we look back on the 1980's, then, we can be sure that any effort at blanket labeling will be only partially successful.

Yet in education, this decade did have a distinctive character. Certain ideas and themes came to the fore; the national discussion about education shifted, and policies at the local, state, and federal levels reflected new priorities.

The overriding concern in the 80's was the quality of American education. Study after study documented the poor performance of students in every subject area, in comparison both with those of the past and with those of other countries, or warned about the folly of failing to educate poor and minority children.

What happened in the 80's was a response to the dominant trends of the 70's. In the 70's, the conventional wisdom held that "schools don't make a difference." A bevy of surveys and studies in those years debunked the ambitious reform programs of the 60's. The most influential and widely publicized studies suggested that, compared with family background, schools had relatively little influence on students' life chances. This determinist view of schooling led many to conclude that if schools don't matter, then what you do in school doesn't matter either. This logic justified the deconstruction of the curriculum and the lowering of standards and undercut those who believed that all children should study science, mathematics, history, literature, foreign language, and the arts.

If schools don't make a difference, some people reasoned, why require children to study foreign languages or anything else they don't choose on their own? Why insist that teachers have strong academic credentials? Why withhold diplomas from children who can't read or write? Why not give everyone a diploma, since so many employers insist on them?

As the 70's wound to a close, the consequences of this laid-back approach became evident. The College Board discovered that scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test had fallen steadily since the mid-60's. A prestigious commission concluded in 1979 that foreign-language instruction was in a state of crisis because of low enrollments. The following year, another eminent commission warned that science and mathematics education was in dire condition because of declining enrollments and low achievement.

The conventional wisdom itself came under fire as the 70's ended. The influential "effective schools" research of Ronald Edmonds showed that schools do make a difference and that school policies have a significant effect on student achievement. Mr. Edmonds's findings were complemented by Michael Rutter's Fifteen Thousand Hours, a major British study of the differential effects of school climate.

One other thing about education in the 70's: The public was apathetic about the subject. Education was not an important public issue. It received little attention from the media, and the debates among educators were unknown to the general public.

Against this backdrop, the 1980's began. When Ronald Reagan was elected President, his stated educational goals were to abolish the Education Department and promote prayer in the schools and tuition tax credits. In retrospect, it seems apparent that his first Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell, had other priorities. Mr. Bell appointed the National Commission on Excellence in Education in August 1981 and directed it to examine the quality of education in the United States.

The commission's report, *A Nation at Risk*, became the paradigmatic educational statement of the 80's. With its alarming predictions of national catastrophe resulting from a "rising tide of mediocrity," this document captured headlines from coast to coast. Overnight, the crisis in education hit the top of the charts. The national newsmagazines discovered the schools, as did the television networks. For a change, their interest did not flag the morning after.

A Nation at Risk provided a much-needed national jolt, shaking Americans out of their complacency and indifference to the state of the schools. What sunk in—to business leaders, editorial writers, and civic agencies—was that America could not prosper unless its schools were successful.

The commission's critique quickly turned into a nonpartisan chorus, joined by such illustrious reformers as Theodore R.Sizer, Mortimer J. Adler, John I. Goodlad, and Ernest L. Boyer. Neither their diagnoses nor their prescriptions for improvement were identical, but all agreed that major changes were needed in American education.

In a shift of major proportions, the locus of educational policymaking moved from the federal government and local governments to the states. Several governors promptly assumed the mantle of educational leadership. For governors like Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Bill Clinton of Arkansas, Richard Riley of South Carolina, and Thomas H. Kean of New Jersey,

this was a risky gamble, because the political payoff that comes from investing more in education is necessarily a long-range investment, not the quick return that gets headlines and votes.

Appointed Secretary of Education by President Reagan in his second term, William J. Bennett brought a combative style to the office. To the targets of his wrath—the educational interest groups and bureaucrats he called “the blob”—Mr. Bennett was a pit bull in the bully pulpit. He barnstormed the country, calling attention to his “three C’s”: content, character, and choice. He stepped on toes, taught the Federalist Papers to 5th graders, and kept the issue of education on the front pages. The “What Works” pamphlets, prepared by Assistant Secretary Chester E. Finn Jr., brought research findings to the general public in readable prose, a commendable innovation.

Meanwhile, hundreds of flowers began to bloom in the educational desert. As Emerson said about the 1840’s, almost everyone seemed to have a reform plan in his vest pocket. Commission reports tumbled off the printing presses like autumn leaves, offering criticism of some aspect of the schooling process and demanding reform.

Although there was a brief effort to label reforms as “the first wave,” “the second wave,” and so on, the changes came so fast that it became impossible to keep them neatly sorted.

Since American education is highly decentralized, reform efforts moved across a broken front in the 50 states and 15,000 districts. State legislatures pursued reform in different ways: They raised graduation requirements, increased teachers’ salaries, devised career ladders, and opened up alternative certification for new teachers.

Reform of teacher education and of the teaching profession became a key item on the agenda of the 80’s. The Holmes Group, a consortium of 96 higher-education institutions, called for an overhaul of teacher education. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy endorsed restructuring of schools to strengthen the role of teachers. And, in a related move, a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was created to develop examinations on which to base national certification of expert teachers..

Each subject area in the curriculum became the object of close scrutiny and demands for reform. Reports on mathematics education—“Everybody Counts”—and science education—“Science for All Americans”—represented state-of-the-art thinking in these fields.

The National Geographic Society and the Bradley Commission on History in Schools produced practical guidelines to reform the teaching of history and geography, which, like the science and mathematics reports, were well received in schools across the country.

The best-selling success of two books about education—Allan Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind* and E.D. Hirsch Jr.’s *Cultural Literacy*—showed there was significant public interest in the content of the curriculum. While stirring controversy within educational ranks,

both books forced people to see the curriculum as a vehicle for ideas and substance, not just a package of skills. Once cultural content became a matter of contention, pitched ideological battles began about whose culture should be taught in the classroom. Defining the cultural content of the curriculum is sure to be a major issue for the 90's.

Energetic national leadership in curricular reform came from California, where Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig launched a far-reaching revision of all subject areas. At his behest, the state curricular frameworks in science, mathematics, history, reading, and health were completely rewritten to reflect the best thinking in each field. Mr. Honig also pressed textbook publishers for better books, prodded the state assessment program to go "beyond the bubble"—that is, beyond multiple-choice testing—and supported major staff-development programs.

One of the most significant shifts during the 80's was the changing role and nature of testing. With the expansion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the advent of state-by-state assessment, the pressure for school improvement seems sure to increase. Public opinion does respond to test results.

As the decade ends, however, the tests themselves are changing in significant ways. The trend toward limiting or eliminating multiple-choice questions seems decisive. NAEP had already developed free-response items and short-essay questions; the venerable sat, which was created to replace the College Board's essay examinations, is also moving away from its near-total dependence on multiple-choice questions.

Throughout the decade, tireless advocacy by Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, reminded educators and the general public that the "nation at risk" could not afford to ignore its children at risk—those youngsters, largely from poor and minority families, who are more likely to fail in school, drop out, become pregnant, or abuse drugs. Ms. Edelman kept up pressure on school officials and the Congress to support programs directly addressing these children's needs.

In the closing years of the decade, support mounted for policies allowing students and their parents to choose the public schools the children would attend. This approach was a far cry from the earlier idea of expanding choice to private schools with vouchers or tuition tax credits.

Perhaps one of the most promising developments of the 80's was the private sector's recognition of the need for better schools. In many districts, the local business community created partnerships with the public schools, set up scholarship programs, and provided summer jobs for students. At the national level, corporate leaders lent their support to school reform.

In the closing months of the decade, President Bush convened a first-ever education summit of the nation's governors. The participants agreed to set national goals for improvement in such areas as academic performance, children's readiness for school, the dropout rate, and adult literacy. During the early 90's, the governors will need to become specific about their goals. Even stickier will be devising the means to reach them.

As a result of these many activities, a new cohort of actors and strategists came to national prominence. Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, and Mr. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, became for many the most articulate voices of the national reform movement.

Mr. Honig surfaced as a modern-day Horace Mann, actively leading reform battles in his state. Lee S. Shulman of Stanford University was the driving intellectual force behind the establishment of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The work of Lauren Resnick popularized the idea of the "thinking curriculum." Mr. Sizer of Brown University provided the intellectual impetus for school-based management and pioneered the creation of the Coalition of Essential Schools.

Linda Darling-Hammond of the Rand Corporation and, later, Teachers College, Columbia University, became a forceful advocate for improved professionalism in teaching. Judith Lanier, chairman of the Holmes Group, spearheaded the movement to strengthen teacher education.

Business leaders, like H. Ross Perot, David T. Kearns, and Owen B. Butler, promoted school improvement. Mr. Adler, though hardly a newcomer, became the intellectual father of the Paideia movement.

As the new decade begins, old problems remain. Chief among them is the lagging achievement of poor children. Raising standards without providing the means to reach them will push these children even further behind. A challenge for the 90's will be to provide learning environments that promote the success of children who are presently failing.

A likely source of assistance in meeting that challenge will be technology—which, in the past, has never lived up to its promise. But with the electronic advances of the past decade, high technology is now poised to enter the schools with a dazzling array of treats. An explosion of new hardware and software will shower the schools with programs allowing youngsters to perform experiments, conduct research, write essays, solve problems, and interact with a multimedia universe.

Another area ripe for renewal in the 90's is civic education. The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the advance of the global democratic revolution elsewhere seems likely to revive attention to the teaching of democratic values and institutions in American schools.

What happens in the 90's will determine whether we remember the 80's as a time of change or a time of talk about change. Now comes the hard part. Sounding an alarm is not the same thing as solving a problem. Many parents continue to be complacent about their children's education; many adolescents continue to devote more time to their after-school jobs than to their schooling. The corner has not been turned.

Whatever else the 80's were, they were a decade when politicians and educators and business leaders concluded that we must not choose between quality and equality; a decade when American schools were asked to raise their expectations so that all students might learn more; a decade in which a consensus developed that America could not afford to neglect its schools, nor any part of the rising generation.

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Schools Grew More Segregated In 1990s, Report Says

EdWeek.org/leadership/schools-grew-more-segregated-in-1990s-report-says/2001/08

August 8, 2001

Washington

Despite the ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court nearly a half-century ago that school segregation was unconstitutional, the nation's schools became increasingly more separated by race in the 1990s, according to a report by the Harvard Civil Rights Project.

While schools in the South still have more integration of African-Americans and whites than before the desegregation movement, they lost ground on that front over the past decade, the report released last month says. And it highlights a newer phenomenon that has emerged with the increased Hispanic presence in the United States: Segregation of Latinos from non-Hispanic whites in schools is even greater than it is for blacks.

"Segregation is actually increasing," Gary Orfield, a co-director of Harvard University's Civil Rights Project and the lead researcher for the study, said at a July news conference.

"Ignoring that reality leads to adoption of education policies that punish people who haven't had equal educational opportunities. ... It's a direct threat to the future of a multiracial society."

The study found that 70 percent of black K-12 students attended predominantly minority schools in the 1998-99 school year, compared with 66 percent in 1991-92 and 63 percent in 1980-81. Latinos were even more likely to attend predominantly minority schools, with 76 percent attending such schools in 1998-99, up from 73 percent in 1991-92.

Mr. Orfield writes in his study that U.S. schools are becoming "reseggregated" in part because the federal courts have ended strong desegregation plans that were adopted after the 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the landmark case that concluded racially segregated schools were "inherently unequal." He also attributes segregation in schools to how people sort themselves in deciding where to live. Isolation of minorities in inner cities has occurred because of "white flight" to the suburbs, he said.

Educational experts generally praised Mr. Orfield for persisting in tracking the level of racial segregation in schools during the 1990s and agreed that the increase in racial and ethnic separation is a disturbing trend. But some scholars disagree with him on the causes of such segregation.

"We are in complete agreement that there is something wrong with a society in which people of one color live in one place, and people of another color live in another place," said Christine H. Rossell, a professor of political science at Boston University who studies school

segregation.

But she added that she believes some school systems have become resegregated because of the very desegregation plans that Mr. Orfield favors. In some school systems, she said, such plans led initially to integration, but they also prompted "white flight" as some whites refused to enroll their children in school systems with mandatory busing.

In addition, Ms. Rossell said, Mr. Orfield doesn't place enough emphasis on the fact that American schools are "becoming less white" and showing renewed segregation in part because the proportion of white students is shrinking overall, owing to a low white birthrate compared with those of other racial groups.

Mr. Orfield's report, "Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation," concludes that white children are the most isolated of any racial group, which he said at the press conference could lead to problems with their interacting with people of other races as adults.

Mr. Orfield said he was particularly concerned about what statistics show about the isolation of African-American and Hispanic students in schools. The average black student attends a school in which 55 percent of the students are of his own race; the average Hispanic student attends a school in which Latinos make up 53 percent of the enrollment.

The problem with having predominantly minority schools, Mr. Orfield maintains, is that those schools are virtually always inferior in quality "in every dimension" to those with predominantly white student populations.

Education analysts with minority advocacy groups said they shared Mr. Orfield's concern about racial isolation.

"We do view segregation as a problem," said Raul Gonzalez, an education policy analyst for the National Council of La Raza, a Washington-based Hispanic-advocacy group. "There has been a history at the state and local level of neglect of schools that are attended by minority students, and that's why there has been school finance litigation in nearly every state."

John H. Jackson, the national director of education for the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People, said his organization considers increasing segregation to be a trend in "the wrong direction."

But the nation should first improve the quality of predominantly minority schools through such means as reducing class sizes and providing highly qualified teachers to urban school districts, he said.

The solutions listed in Mr. Orfield's report, however, point more directly toward addressing segregation first. He advocates, for example, the expansion of the federal magnet school program, which supports the establishment of such schools in districts, but attaches certain

desegregation requirements.

He supports the development of what are called two-way bilingual schools, where students whose first language is English and students whose first language is Spanish attend the same classes with the goal of becoming competent in both languages.

Mr. Orfield also calls for the exploration of school and housing policies that could prevent the resegregation that he says is occurring in inner suburbs, as well as policies making it easier for students to transfer between districts.

Mary Ann Zehr

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Black-white segregation edges downward since 2000, census shows

B brookings.edu/articles/black-white-segregation-edges-downward-since-2000-census-shows/

Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau released its 2013-2017 American Community Survey five-year estimates. Those data show that black-white neighborhood segregation varies widely across metropolitan areas, and has declined only modestly since the beginning of this century. Most white residents of large metropolitan areas live in neighborhoods that remain overwhelmingly white, and while black neighborhoods have become more diverse, this is largely due to an increase in Hispanic rather than white residents.

Black-white segregation remains high in northern metropolitan areas

Segregation levels between blacks and whites within metropolitan areas were very high through the middle part of the 20th century. After the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, black-white segregation began to decline, especially in growing parts of the country like Atlanta and Dallas to which blacks were relocating, where they faced less housing discrimination than in the past.

By the early 2000s, the highest levels of segregation continued to exist in northern metro areas where black population growth had levelled off and new development was sparse (Table 1). (The segregation index shown here varies from values of 0—complete integration—to 100—complete segregation).^[1] Even in 2000, three metro areas had segregation indices exceeding 80, and nine more registered indices over 70. In metro areas like Detroit, Milwaukee, and New York, black populations tended to remain more concentrated in central cities, entrenched residential patterns persisted in contrast to those in growing parts of the South and the West.

TABLE 1

Metro areas with highest black-white segregation
2000 and 2013-2017*

2000		2013-2017			
	Segregation Index**		Segregation Index**		
1	Detroit	85.7	1	Milwaukee	79.9
2	Milwaukee	83.3	2	New York	76.1
3	Chicago	81.2	3	Chicago	75.3
4	New York	79.7	4	Detroit	73.7
5	Cleveland	78.2	5	Cleveland	72.9
6	Buffalo	78.0	6	Buffalo	72.2
7	St. Louis	74.0	7	St. Louis	71.7
8	Cincinnati	73.6	8	Cincinnati	67.3
9	Indianapolis	71.7	9	Philadelphia	67.0
10	Philadelphia	71.0	10	Los Angeles	66.8
11	Kansas City	70.8	11	Pittsburgh	66.1
12	Los Angeles	70.0	12	Hartford	65.7

* Among 51 metro areas with populations exceeding one million and with black populations exceeding 3 percent of metro population (metro area names are abbreviated).

** Segregation Index is a dissimilarity index, which represents the percent of blacks that would need to relocate to be fully integrated with whites across metropolitan neighborhoods.

A value of 100 indicates complete segregation; a value of 0 equals complete integration (See values for all metro areas and further details in Table A).

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2000 Census, and 2013-2017 multiyear American Community Survey (released December 6, 2018)

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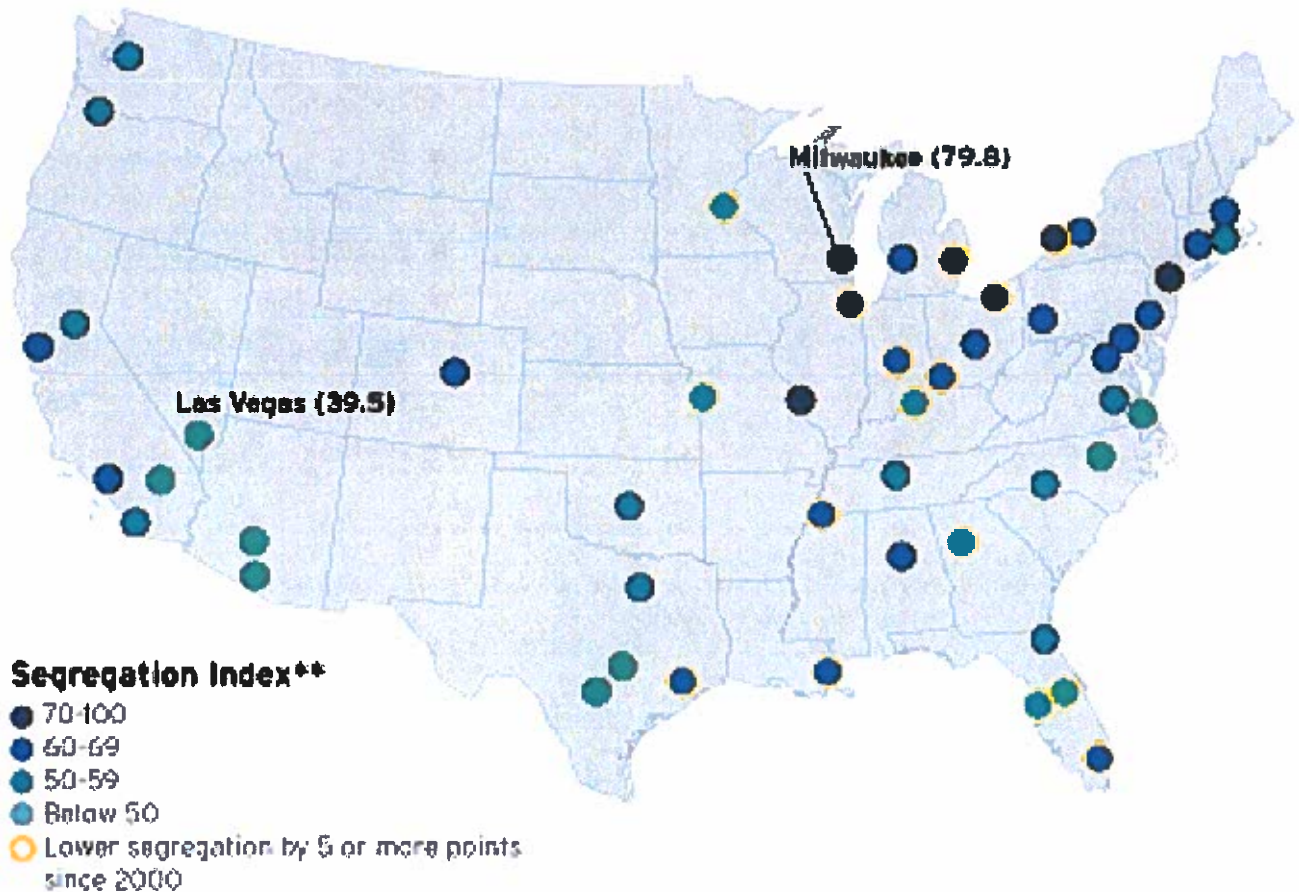
By the 2013-2017 period, these areas still ranked among the most segregated, though segregation levels declined in each since 2000. Even so, at least three in four black residents in Milwaukee, New York, and Chicago would need to relocate in order to live in fully integrated neighborhoods with whites. In another four areas—Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, and St. Louis—seven in ten blacks would have to relocate to live in a completely integrated neighborhood with whites.

These highly segregated areas, however, do not tell the full story. Black-white segregation levels vary greatly across the 51 major metropolitan areas with populations of at least 1 million, with Las Vegas registering the lowest value at just under 40 (Map 1) ([download Table A](#)). In 19 of these areas, segregation values are in the 60s, including a mix of large coastal areas (e.g. Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Miami, Los Angeles, and San Francisco)

and a smattering of areas in the nation's interior. In 16 metro areas, segregation values are in the 50s, including Sun Belt growth centers such as Atlanta, Dallas, Tampa, and Charlotte, N.C. The nine areas that exhibit values below 50 include several other Southern migration magnets (e.g., Raleigh, N.C., Austin, Texas, and San Antonio) along with a few Western metros (e.g., Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Riverside, Calif.).

MAP 1

**Black-white segregation in US metro areas
2013-2017***



* 50 metro areas with populations exceeding one million and with black populations exceeding 3 percent of metro population (metro area names are abbreviated)
 ** Segregation Index is a the dissimilarity index which represents the percent of blacks that would need to relocate to be fully integrated with whites across metropolitan neighborhoods
 A value of 100 indicates complete segregation; a value of 0 equals complete integration (See values for all metro areas and further details in Table A).

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2000 Census and 2013-2017 multiyear American Community Survey (released December 6, 2018)



Black-white segregation fell in most metro areas since 2000

Overall, in 45 of these 51 metro areas black-white segregation has declined since 2000. Most only achieved modest reductions of 1 to 4 points. Yet 16 areas did show declines of 5 points or more. Detroit led the way with a decline of nearly 12 points, and other Midwestern and Northern metro areas including Kansas City, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Chicago, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Minneapolis also posted large drops in segregation. Southern and Western metro areas with marked drops in segregation included Tampa, Fla., Louisville, Ken., Orlando, Fla., Houston, Memphis, Tenn., Atlanta, New Orleans, and Miami. Many of the latter areas registered noticeable black population gains from 2000 to 2017, and in most areas that experienced neighborhood segregation declines, black suburbanization facilitated greater integration.

While modest and widespread segregation decline continues an earlier trend, segregation levels greater than 50, which most areas exhibit, are still high by most standards.

Notwithstanding the significant progress in some metro areas, the average segregation level among these 51 places fell only modestly, from 62.8 in 2000 to 59.4 in 2013-2017. While this modest and widespread segregation decline continues an earlier trend, segregation levels greater than 50, which most areas exhibit, are still high by most standards.

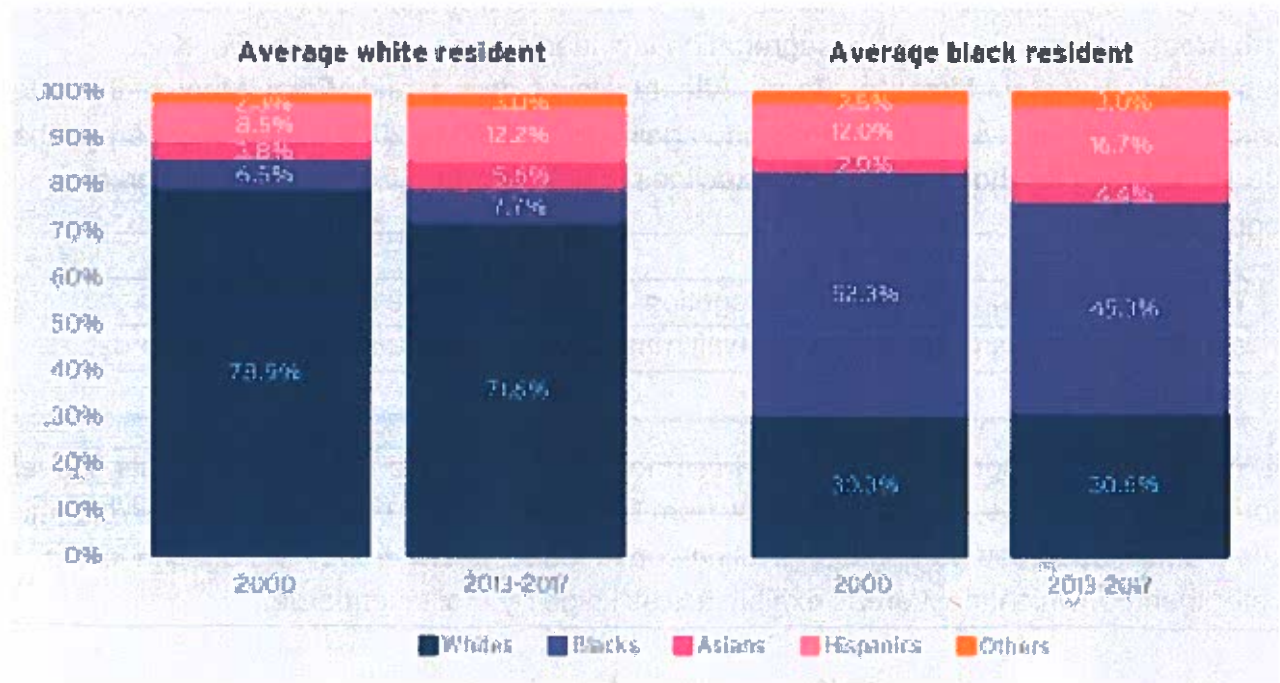
Hispanics are making white and black neighborhoods more racially diverse

Another way to examine shifts in segregation is to look at the racial profiles of neighborhoods where the average white or black resident lives.^[2]

FIGURE 1

Neighborhood racial profiles for average white and black residents

2000 and 2013-2017, residing in 100 largest metropolitan areas



Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2000 Census, and 2013-2017 multiyear American Community Survey (released December 6, 2018)



In 2013-2017, the average white resident of the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas lived in a neighborhood that was 72 percent white. That white share declined from 79 percent in 2000. On average, whites were exposed to less racial diversity than existed in these metropolitan areas overall, which were 64 percent white in 2000 and 55 percent white in 2013-2017. Much of the increase in white exposure to non-whites was attributable to a rise in Hispanic neighbors. The average white resident’s neighborhood was 12.2 percent Hispanic in 2013-17, up from 8.5 percent Hispanic in 2000. There were smaller increases in these neighborhoods for blacks, Asians, and other nonwhite racial groups.

This pattern of increased white exposure to non-white groups was consistent across metropolitan areas. In each of the 51 major metro areas, the average white resident lived in a neighborhood that was less white in 2013-2017 than in 2000 ([download Table B](#)). The largest shifts toward more diverse white resident neighborhoods—where the white exposure index dropped at least 10 percentage points—occurred in metro areas with growing Hispanic, black, and Asian populations, including Las Vegas, Orlando, Riverside, Miami, San

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Jose, Atlanta, Houston, Tampa, and Dallas. Clearly, the increased diversity in white resident neighborhoods is related to the growth and in-migration, metropolitan-wide, of other racial groups.

The overall trend toward greater neighborhood diversity occurred for blacks as well. (Figure 1). The average black resident of the 100 largest metro areas lived in a neighborhood that was 45 percent black in 2013-2017, down from 52 percent in 2000. (Blacks comprised 14 percent of all large metropolitan residents in both years.) Yet the white population share of that neighborhood remained almost exactly the same as in 2000. The increased diversity was mainly attributable to Hispanics, who comprised 17 percent of the average black resident's neighborhood in 2013-2017, up from 12 percent in 2000.

This trend, too, was fairly pervasive across individual metropolitan areas, particularly in the 10 metro areas with largest black populations ([download Table C](#)). In most of these places (except Detroit and Chicago), much of the increased neighborhood diversity for blacks came from increasing numbers of Hispanics and other nonwhite racial groups. In Washington, D.C., for instance, the average black resident's neighborhood saw its black population share drop from 58 percent to 54 percent, its white population share drop from 28 percent to 25 percent, and its Hispanic population share rise from 8 percent to 12 percent.

This analysis shows that black-white neighborhood segregation continued to decline pervasively, albeit modestly, between 2000 and the mid 2010-2020 decade. Significant regional differences persist in segregation levels and trends, emphasizing the value of a metropolitan view on the dynamics that contribute to—and inhibit—greater racial integration in American society.

¹ Segregation levels are measured by the index of dissimilarity, which compares the distribution of blacks across a metropolitan area's neighborhoods (census tracts) with the distribution of whites across those neighborhoods. Values vary from 0 (complete integration) to 100 (complete segregation) where the value indicates the percentage of blacks that would need to change neighborhoods to be distributed the same as whites.

² The neighborhood (census tract) racial makeup for the average white (or black) resident in the metropolitan area is the weighted average of racial compositions of all neighborhoods in the metropolitan area, where weights represent the sizes of each neighborhood's white (or black) population. This measure is sometimes referred to as an "exposure" measure.

