AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Racism and Bias: Their Role in Maintaining Racial Disparities in PreK–12 Education

APA BEA RACIAL DISPARITIES TASK FORCE



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APA BEA RACIAL DISPARITIES TASK FORCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this APA BEA Racial Disparities Task Force report is to examine the role of racism and bias on educational opportunity and achievement disparities experienced by children. Specifically, we seek to link racism explicitly to opportunity gaps by examining how racism operates on multiple levels. Using critical race theory, intersectionality, and structural determinants of learning, we identify how racism works at the systemic, institutional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal levels to impact students' access to learning opportunities, school experiences, and educational outcomes. Racism compromises racial and ethnic minoritized (REM) students' ability to thrive, be healthy, and be on track for educational success. Some of these achievement gaps are due to historical legacies of racism and current inequities that limit households' economic viability and stability among families of color, which then impacts students' access to safe and adequate housing, food, and health care, as well as high-quality schooling. Institutional racism is also directly and indirectly linked to students' achievement, as evidenced by policies that create inequities in access to resources, de facto segregation due to race and family income, and inequitable access to high-quality instruction. Other ways racism directly and indirectly impacts educational disparities is through interpersonal experiences, such as implicit biases and suspension and expulsion policies. These exclusionary practices often result in the school-to-prison pipeline that excludes and eventually removes students, primarily Black students and students with disabilities, from the learning environment, resulting in disengagement and dropping out of school. Internalized racism is also a factor that influences how students of color perceive their intelligence and ability as less than their White peers, resulting in lower performance and achievement. Finally, we provide recommendations to alleviate the impact of racism on students' learning opportunities and experiences at all levels that could reduce the achievement gap.

Key Terms

Various terms are used in this report, especially when referencing racial and ethnic minority children, families, and communities. For ease of reading, this document employs one term for each group, even while recognizing the diverse nature of groups, including diversity within groups, and how groups are referenced historically and contemporaneously. This document also recognizes that many of these terms are rapidly changing based on political status, age, region, and other factors. Where definitions existed within the U.S. Census, this document uses those terms, allowing us to align with reported national research outcomes.

Term used in this report	Definition/Rationale
Black	We use the term Black as a panethnic description of anyone from the African diaspora including but not exclusively limited to African Americans, Africans, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Hispanic, or any other group that identifies as Black and/or having any ancestral heritage from Africa. Other terms also used include African Americans.
Hispanic	We use the term Hispanic to be consistent with the U.S. Census and also as a gender-inclusive term to refer to people from Latin America, Spain, and beyond. Other terms also used include Latino/a/x/e.
Native American	Although we use the term Indigenous, we recognize that many data sources, such as the U.S. Census, use Native American. We recognize the term is embedded in ethnic nomenclature, racial attitudes, the legal and political status of American Indian nations and American Indian people, and cultural change (Horse, 2005). Nevertheless, we recognize that Native Americans and tribal communities are Indigenous people, making it clear that this group occupied the land first, without assigning the American nationality. Another term also used is American Indian.
Asian American/Pacific Islander	We recognize that Asian American/Pacific Islanders have roots in at least 29 Asian countries and 20 Pacific Islander cultures (Ghosh, 2003). We name the group based on the specific group(s) referenced. Other terms also used include Asian and Pacific Islander.
Middle Eastern or North African (MENA)	The term Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) is used to describe individuals whose ethnic heritage originates in the Arab League countries, and sometimes Iran and Turkey. The term MENA, also referred to as South West Asian or North African (SWANA), categorizes an ethnic group that historically has been labeled in the U.S. Census as racially White but experiences rates of discrimination comparable to other non-White groups and lacks representation, whose members are perceived by others as non-White, and who self-identify as MENA (Awad et al., 2021; Maghbouleh et al., 2022). Naming of this group is critical to identifying mechanisms of exclusion in educational settings and needed areas of support.
Minoritized	McCarty (2002) proposed, "'Minority' is stigmatizing and often numerically inaccurate **...** 'Minoritized' more accurately conveys the power relations and processes by which certain groups are socially, economically, and politically marginalized within the larger society" (p. xv).
Dual Language Learner (DLL) and Multilingual Learner (MLL)	Dual language learners (DLLs) are children under the age of five who have at least one parent or guardian who speaks a language other than English at home and are acquiring two or more languages (sequentially or simultaneously). The term dual language learners encompasses other terms frequently used, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), bilingual, and children who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE). Other commonly used terms, such as English language learners (ELL) or English learners, typically refer to school-age children who have been formally identified as needing additional supports to learn English. Multilingual learners (MLLs), sometimes used for older children, captures a broader group of children who are proficient in or learning two or more languages. MLLs come from a variety of backgrounds in terms of language, culture, immigration/visa status, and time spent in the United States. The majority of children around the world are bi- or multilingual, with some having been exposed to English or taken English classes. Others may be children of refugee families, who may have limited or interrupted literacy development in both their home languages and English.

Term used in this report	Definition/Rationale
Intersectionality	This term is used to note that individuals simultaneously occupy multiple social categories, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and social class, that influence their experiences of privilege, discrimination, oppression, and marginalization. For example, an LGBTQI student from a high-income household may have different experiences from an LGBTQI student from a low-income household.
Racial and ethnic minoritized students (REM)	We use the term REM to denote that while Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern or North African students are the majority in many school districts and educational settings, their culture and learning needs are still not centered or prioritized. We sometimes use this term interchangeably with students of color.
Students of Color	We use this simplified term to indicate the rich racial and ethnic diversity of students with particular attention to Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, Asian American or Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern or North African, and bi-/multiracial students. We recognize that students with different racial and ethnic backgrounds are likely to have unique experiences.
Implicit Bias	The set of beliefs and values people are unaware that they possess and that they express and unconsciously, unintentionally, and automatically act upon.
Explicit Bias	The set of beliefs and values people are consciously aware that they possess and/or those beliefs and values they openly express and intentionally act upon.
Ableism	A set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against individuals with physical, mental, or developmental disabilities.
Stereotype Threat	An internalized process that when activated can depress the performance of members of historically oppressed and marginalized groups.
Sexual and gender diverse (SGD)	Sexual and gender diversity refers to the wide spectrum of sexuality and gender as well as sexual characteristics. We use the term sexual and gender diverse (SGD) to refer to those who identify along this wide spectrum but outside of the categories of gender binary (male and female), binary of sexual characteristics, or heterosexuality.
White	For the purposes of this report we use this word to refer to the racialized definition of skin color that is generally used to describe people of primarily European ancestry who have access to power and privileges due to the perception of their race. Like many of the terms used to describe race, the inclusion or exclusion from this racial group has changed over time (e.g., Irish and Italian immigrants), and Whiteness as a term collapses the ethnic heritages of many into a single category based on the external perceptions of their race.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The US population is becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse, with change most evident in the school-age population. In 2020, racial and ethnic minoritized (REM) individuals comprised over half of children under age 18, and by the year 2060, REM individuals will represent almost two-thirds of all children (Vespa et al., 2018). Moreover, there is a marked contrast between diversity in the school-age population and the overwhelmingly White education workforce (Taie & Goldring, 2017). It is important to have a school workforce that recognizes that some students, by virtue of their cultural group membership and identities, are more likely to encounter barriers to educational success. Educators must be adequately prepared to meet these students' needs. Although it is incumbent upon schools to educate all students, schools and educators may not be adequately equipped to address the unique needs of REM students as evidenced by persistent racial/ethnic disparities in education. These disparities include opportunity gaps between REM and White students, overrepresentation of REM students in special education and underrepresentation in gifted education, and excessive use of exclusionary discipline practices. With knowledge of teaching, learning, and well-being, psychologists are well positioned to serve as advocates for diverse students to address educational inequities and challenge the institutional and systemic barriers that may prevent students from reaching their full potential.

In August 2010 an APA Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities was organized to explore disparities in PreK–12 education by (a) identifying what psychological science has to say about the nature and source of educational disparities; (b) identifying interventions that have been successful in addressing these gaps on the part of schools, families, communities, and young people themselves; and (c) making recommendations to psychologists and the public regarding implications from this body of work to practice, policy, and research. This task force produced a report received by the APA Council of Representatives on August 3, 2012. APA's Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education (CPSE) agreed with the need to update the research and conceptualizations in the 2012 report. This decision was partially informed by findings from the Coalition's 2018 Educator Needs Survey indicating that teachers had the lowest efficacy scores on communicating with families of color and working with diverse students. Discussions at the well-attended 2019 Education Town Hall on Educational Disparities at the APA Convention also confirmed the need for distributing materials based on current psychological science to educators and administrators. Finally, the Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) has indicated concern for addressing educational disparities at all levels of the educational system from PreK through graduate education in psychology.

In June 2020, BEA approved a task force to update the recommendations from the 2012 Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Education report. The task force identified four areas to consider in their report. These four new sections address (a) racism and bias and their role in creating educational disparities; (b) disparities at the intersection between race and disability; (c) discipline disparities and school pathways to the juvenile justice system; and (d) racial/ethnic mismatch between the educator workforce and school-age population. In this report, we share this updated research and provide recommendations for research, practice, advocacy, and educator preparation.

The Current Status of Educational Disparities

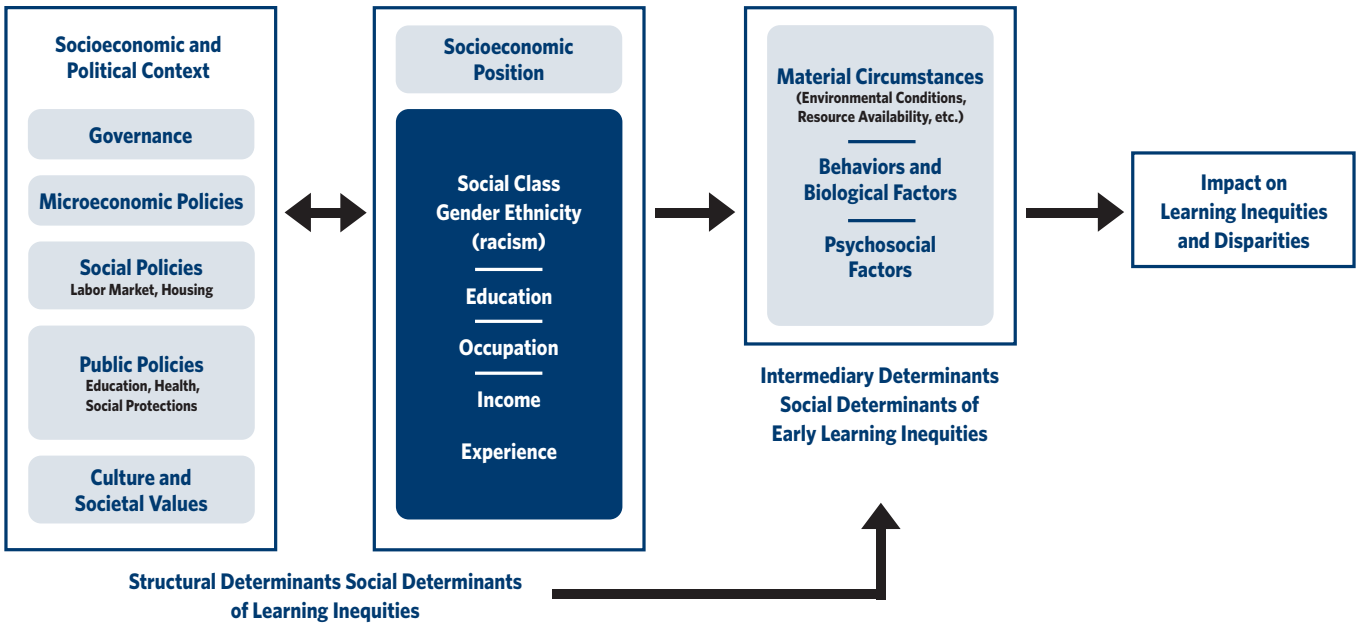
The 2012 APA Presidential Task Force Report on Educational Disparities defined educational disparities as "(a) differential or biased treatment of ethnic and racial minority students within the educational system, (b) differences in socioeconomic status, and (c) different responses to educational systems or different sets of educational needs" (p. 11). In this updated report, we seek to extend this definition to emphasize the historical and contemporary impact of institutional racism and systemic inequities and the intersectionality of students' identities, all of which impact the experiences and outcomes of students from historically underrepresented and marginalized communities. Buttressed by critical race, intersectionality, and social determinants of learning theories, we examine how the legacy of racism contributes to today's achievement and opportunity gaps. *Critical race theory* integrates legal studies and social science to underscore the creation and use of race to distribute power, access, and opportunity (i.e., racism) and the use of power to oppress and limit opportunity (Bell, 1976; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). *Intersectionality theory* posits that individuals simultaneously occupy multiple social categories, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and social class, that influence their experiences of privilege, discrimination, oppression, and marginalization, which then impact their experiences and outcomes (Cho et al., 2013; Walby et al., 2012). Using psychological science, we examine the status of educational disparities in experiences and outcomes with a focus on racial, ethnic, linguistic, ability, and economic disparities. In particular, we seek to focus on how systems and institutions deprive students of equitable opportunities for learning rather than blame students for these disparate educational outcomes that were set in place centuries ago and are maintained through current inequitable policies and practices.

Thus, we recognize that racial disparities in educational outcomes (i.e., the "achievement gap") result from inequitable distribution of opportunities or the inputs (e.g., resources, experiences, access) that support learning and achievement (Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023). Using the *social determinants of learning* (see Figure 1) framework, adapted from the social determinants of health, we recognize the complex, integrated, and overlapping social structures and economic systems responsible for most educational inequities that lead to disparities. These social structures and economic systems include the social environment, physical environment, educational institutions, and structural and societal factors (Iruka, 2020). Social determinants of learning are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources throughout local communities. Socioeconomic and political contexts, such as social policies about housing and education, lead to families' socioeconomic position—education, income, or occupation—which then impacts their resources and living conditions, greatly affecting students' opportunities to thrive. For example, according to EdBuild (2019), the legacy of segregation and redlining through historical housing and transportation coupled with policies about educational funding has resulted in racial and ethnic minoritized students being likely to attend low-wealth and low-resourced schools compared to their White and wealthier peers.

Achievement disparities are the visible product of discriminatory policies that have persisted over time and have many costs (Alvarez et al., 2016). An analysis by Citigroup indicates that racism costs the United States at least $16 trillion over 20 years due to wage gaps and lack of housing credit, access to higher education, and bank lending, to name a few factors (Ouvaroff & Liu, 2020). The achievement disparity is evident between (a) White youth (and some Asian American youth such as Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese) and REM youth (e.g., American Indians, Black/African Americans, and Hispanics), (b) youth from low-income households compared to youth from higher-income households, (c) Native English-speakers vs. English language learners, and (d) nondisabled students and students with disabilities. According to the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, at fourth grade, 45% of White children and 55% of Asian youth were at or above proficient in reading compared to 18% of Black students, 23% of Hispanics, and 19% of American Indians/Alaska Natives. (Note these national data often do not capture within-group differences of our ethnic-racial and ethnic groups, and lack important disaggregation of data for Asian American/Pacific Islander and MENA youth.) Although there has been some closing of the racial and ethnic reading gaps since 1992, these gaps in reading remain (see Figure 2). Similar findings are also seen with fourth grade mathematics: 52% of White and 66% of Asian/Pacific Islander students are at or above proficient compared to 20% of Black, 28% of Hispanic, and 24% of American Indian/Alaska Native students. As with reading, there has been some closing of the racial and ethnic mathematics gaps since 1990, but substantial gaps in mathematics remain (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 1.

Social determinants of learning

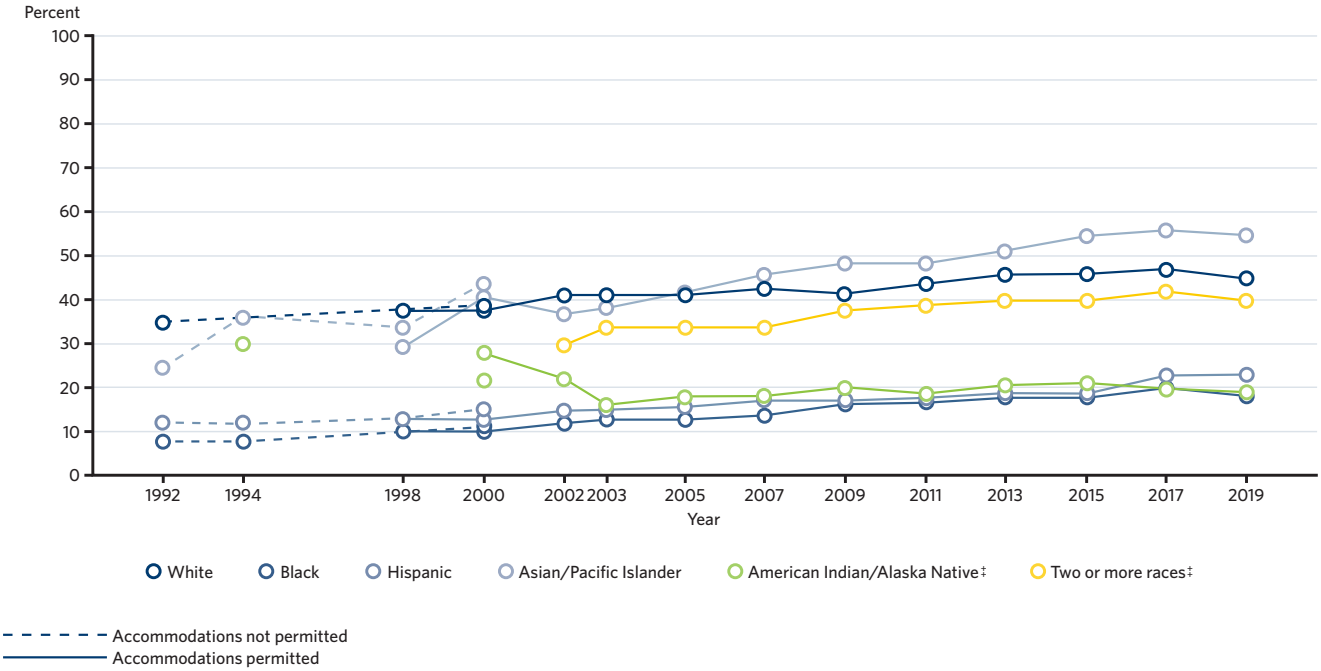


Source. Iruka, 2020

Behavioral indicators also show racial disparities. According to the U.S. Department of Education's 2017–2018 Office of Civil Rights Data Collection, Black males and females represent about 8% of enrolled K–12 students, but they account for 25% and 13%, respectively, of students who received out-of-school suspensions. In contrast, White males represent 24% of student enrollment and 25% of students who received out-of-school suspensions; White females represent 23% of students and 8% of students who received out-of-school suspensions (Office for Civil Rights, 2021). These racial disparities are seen in other outcomes, including high school graduation rates and college enrollment and completion rates. Authors of a 2020 report from the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the UCLA Civil Rights Project and the Learning Policy Institute analyzed federal data from the 2015–2016 school year for nearly every school district in the country, and found that Black students lost 103 days per 100 students enrolled, 82 more days than the 21 days their White peers lost due to out-of-school suspensions (Losen & Martinez, 2020). This removal from the classroom likely contributes to higher dropout and lower secondary school graduation rates. For example, compared to White students, youth of color between ages 16–24 are more likely to drop out, though gaps in dropout rates have been closing (Hussar et al., 2020). Unfortunately, there are still large racial disparities in education (see Figure 4). Specifically, Asian and White students' graduation rates are 89% or higher compared to Black, Hispanic, and Native American students, who have graduation rates between 74% and 81%.

FIGURE 2.

Trend in fourth-grade 2019 NAEP reading achievement levels by race/ethnicity, 1992–2019

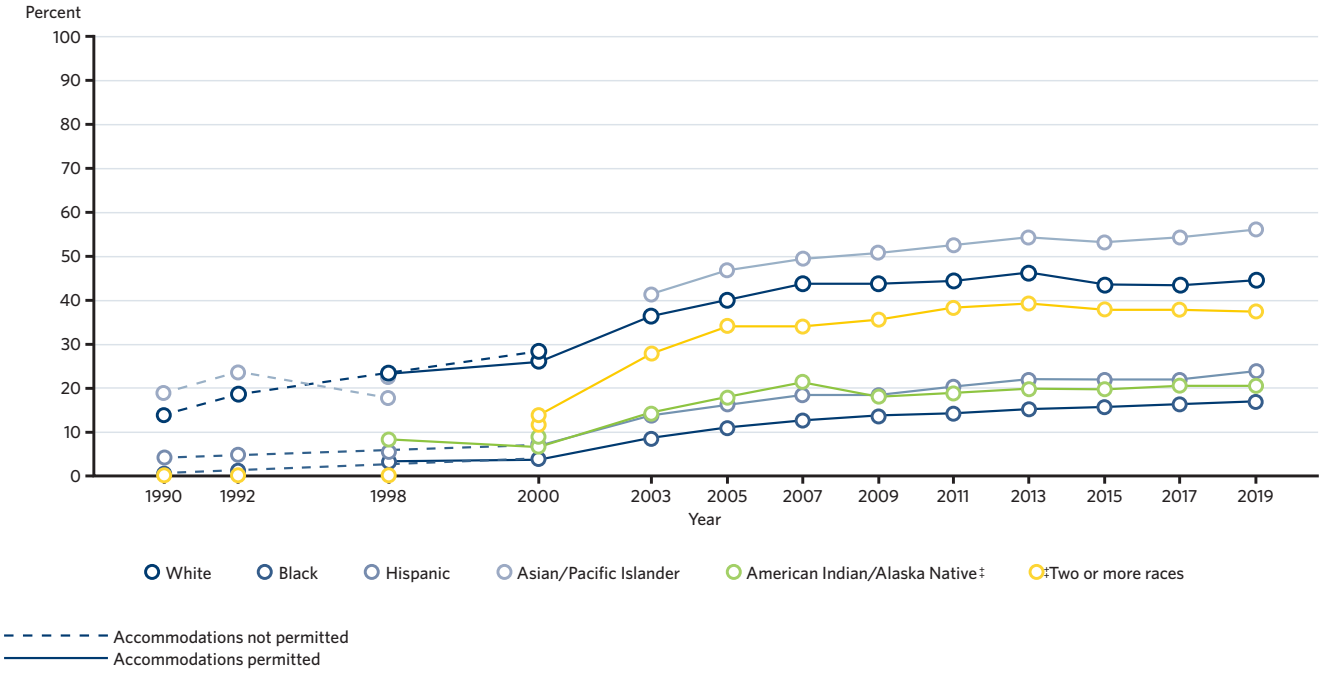


‡ Reporting standards not met
Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment
NOTE: Black includes African American. Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories excludes Hispanic origin. Prior to 2011, students in the "two or more races" category were categorized as "unclassified". Some apparent differences between estimates may not be statistically significant.

Source. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992, 1994, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019 Reading Assessment

FIGURE 3.

Trend in fourth-grade 2019 NAEP mathematics achievement levels by race/ethnicity, 1990–2019

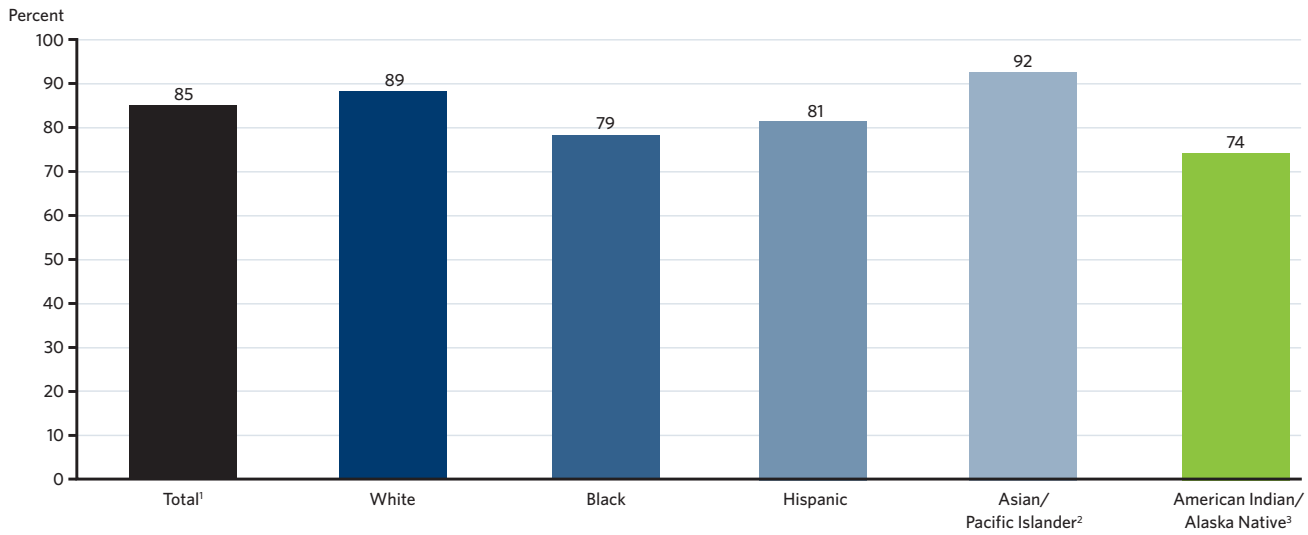


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Source. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992, 1994, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019 Mathematics Assessment

FIGURE 4.

Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students, by race/ethnicity, 2017–2018



Race/ethnicity

[1] Includes other race/ethnicity categories not separately shown.

[2] Reporting practices for data on Asian and Pacific Islander students vary by state. Asian/Pacific Islander data in this indicator represent either the value reported by the state for the "Asian/Pacific Islander" group or an aggregation of separate values reported by the state for "Asian" and "Pacific Islander". Asian/Pacific Islander includes the "Filipino" group, which only California and Hawaii report separately.

[3] Estimated assuming a count of zero American Indian/Alaska Native students for Hawaii.

NOTE: The ACGR is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting ninth grade. The bureau of Indian Education and Puerto Rico are not included in the U.S. average ACGR. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Source. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Consolidated Performance Report, 2017–2018, *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 219.46

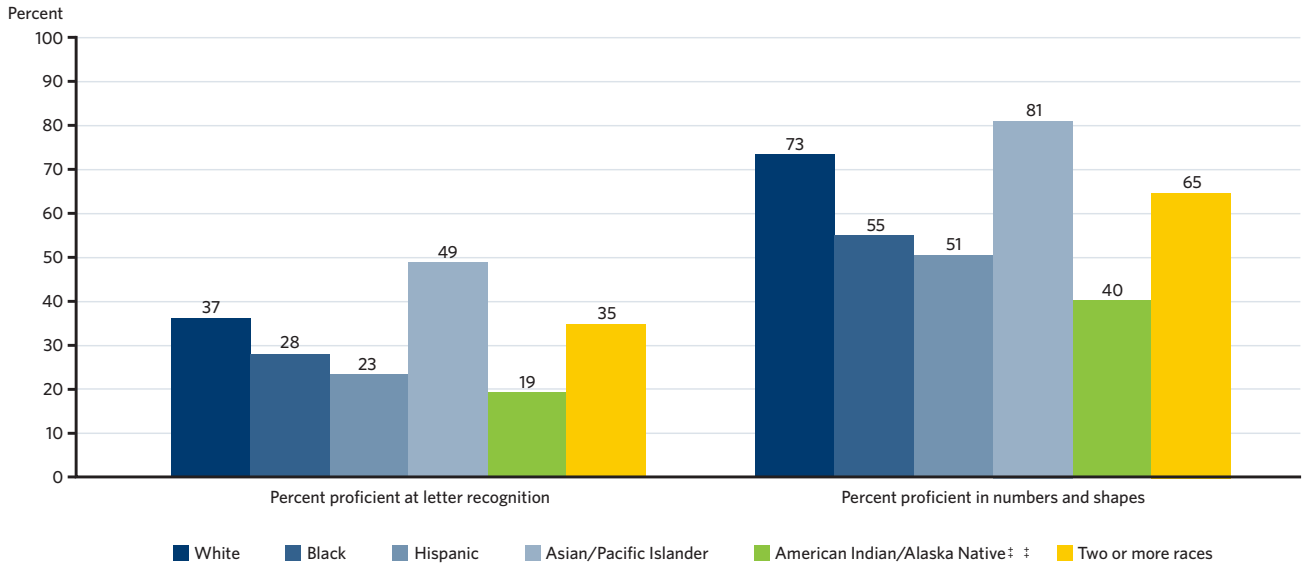
Although most of the national data focus on children 8 years and older, data show that these disparities begin early and are evident in prekindergarten (PreK) when children are about 4 years old. Using the U.S. Department of Education Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), Aud and colleagues (2010) found that Black, Hispanic, and Native American 4-year-olds scored significantly lower than White and Asian American children on letter, number, and shape recognition (see Figure 5), noting these outcomes do not capture the multiple intelligence of Black children and other children of color (Maker et al., 1994).

Racial disparities in suspension and expulsion, especially for Black children, also exist during the PreK years.

- Black preschool children were expelled at rates that were more than twice their share (38.2%) of total preschool enrollment (18.2%) (Office for Civil Rights, 2021).
- Black children represent 18% of preschool enrollment, but 43% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions; in comparison, White children represent 43% of preschool enrollment, but 34% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions.
- Black boys represent 10% of preschool enrollment, but 34% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions and 30% of expulsions.
- Black girls represent 9% of preschool enrollment, 9% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions, and 8% of expulsions.

FIGURE 5.

Percentage of children from the 2001 birth cohort who were proficient in letter and number and shape recognition at about 4 years old, by race/ethnicity, 2005–2006



Source. Aud et al., 2010

Role of Racism and Systemic Inequities in Educational Disparities

Racism, as defined by many scholars (e.g., Jones, 2000; Miller et al., 2019), is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on phenotypic properties (e.g., skin color and hair texture associated with "race"). This system unfairly disadvantages people belonging to marginalized racial groups and damages their well-being, unfairly advantages individuals belonging to socially and politically dominant racial groups, and ultimately undermines the full potential of the whole society. Racism ranges from daily interpersonal interactions shaped by race to racialized opportunities for a high-quality education (APA, 2021). Moreover, racism can be internalized in that individuals from marginalized racial groups come to accept negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves. In this section, we provide a summary of how racism operates at the different levels in education, contributing to educational disparities.

SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES

Speculations about the reasons for achievement gaps among ethnic-racial groups are present in numerous publications, ranging from books and articles to working papers and op-eds. These disparities are not solely a "student" problem but rather are caused, in part, by adults and a racialized and inequitable system impacting home, school, and community environments (Ford & Moore, 2013). Scholars note that economic marginalization is one of the underlying issues related to the gap (Reardon & Portilla, 2016). However, accounting for poverty does not eliminate disparities, especially when there is a confounding relationship between race and income. More than twice the number of Black children live in low-income households compared to White children (64% vs. 31%); over three times as many Black children (19%) live in deep poverty households compared to White children (6%; see Figure 6). Similar economic disparities are evident for Hispanic and Native children. Poverty and lack of financial resources and assets reduce students' opportunity to thrive and limit access to high-quality experiences, resources, and services in both education and health care. Children living in poverty are also likely to experience other disadvantages, including unsafe and insecure housing, food insecurity, and other adverse childhood experiences (e.g., abuse and neglect; parents with substance abuse or mental illness) compared to children living above the poverty line (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). These inequitable life circumstances create opportunity gaps in children's learning experiences and outcomes.

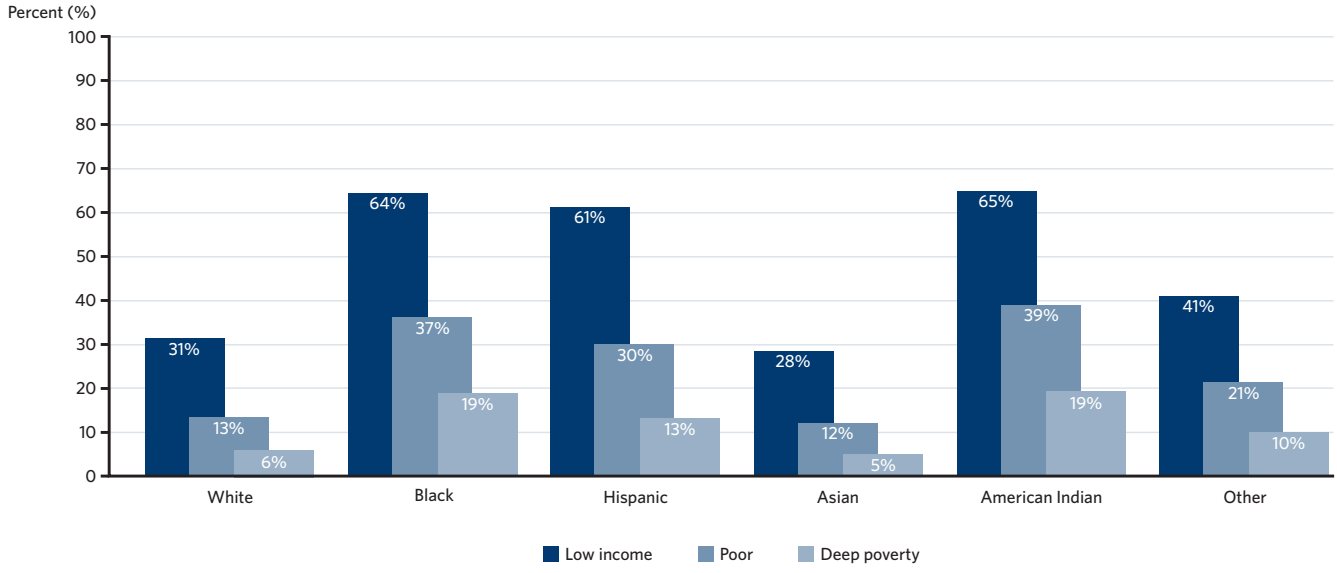
Beyond poverty and income, there are disparities in wealth accumulation between Black families and other families of color compared to White families. As of 2013, the median household wealth for Black families was $1,700 and $2,000 for Hispanic families compared to almost $117,000 for White families (see Figure 7), and this wealth gap is

projected to grow over time (Asante-Muhammad et al., 2017). Wealth impacts the communities in which families live and, subsequently, the school, community, and health resources, as well as assets to call upon during emergencies and in support of children's development and learning.

As stated by Asante-Muhammad and colleagues (2017), "wealth is the buffer families need when faced with unexpected economic shocks like a lost job or a broken-down car. Wealth is also the capital available to families to take advantage of economic opportunities, like buying a home, saving for college, or investing in the stock market. Ultimately, wealth can be the difference between a family maintaining and strengthening their economic status or flailing in economic insecurity" (p. 6). Wealth has been accumulated by White families for centuries, especially through home ownership not afforded to Black families. When home ownership (and other asset development possibility) was available to Black families, it was in what were deemed "unfavorable communities" with limited increases in equity due to racist policies such as redlining and underwriting by substandard loans (Massey, 2008; Sosina & Weathers, 2019).

FIGURE 6.

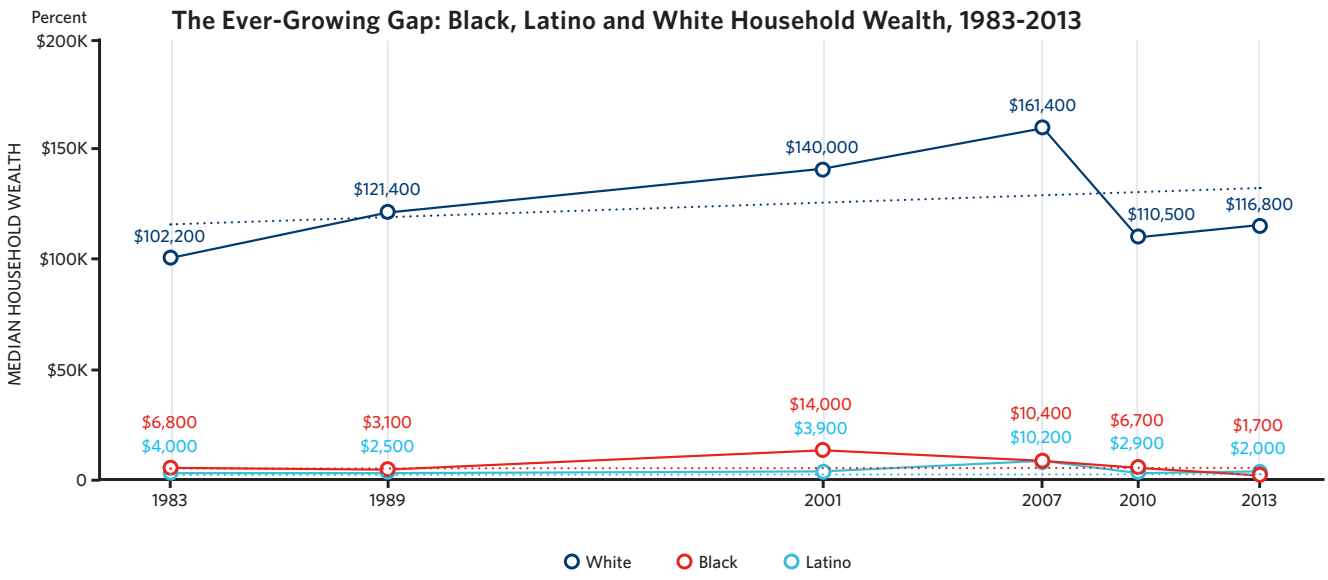
Percentage of young children in low-income and poor families by race/ethnicity, 2016



Source. Koball & Jiang, 2018

FIGURE 7.

The Black, Latino, and White household wealth gap, 1983–2013



Source. Asante-Muhammad et al., 2017

Racial and ethnic gaps exist across economic levels, disability status, and English learner status. For example, among students who are eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), a federal program that provides low-cost or free lunches for schoolchildren, 29% of White and 34% of Asian students were at or above proficient in reading in 2019 compared to 14% of Black, 18% of Hispanic, and 15% of American Indian/Alaska Native students. Looking at students who are *not* eligible for NSLP, 54% of White, 66% of Asian, 30% of Black, 37% of Hispanic, and 36% of American Indian/Alaska Native students are proficient or above in reading. Among students who are eligible for NSLP, 35% of White and 44% of Asian students were at or above proficient in mathematics in 2019 compared to 16% of Black, 23% of Hispanic, and 16% of American Indian/Alaska Native students. These figures are 61% of Whites, 79% of Asians, 35% of Blacks, 43% of Hispanics, and 49% of American Indians/Alaska Natives for students not eligible for NSLP (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2020). Educational attainment and disparities for Asian American/Pacific Islander youth are only viewed from a broad lens in most large reports. Disaggregation of data for Asian American/Pacific Islander youth indicates that for those whose family histories include forced displacement, greater disparities exist in educational attainment (AAPI Data, 2022). This dynamic is likely also true for other groups that have historically been unattended to in national data inquiries, including MENA youth.

Achievement disparities exist regardless of income because of the "historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that have created an education debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 4). That is, these disparities exist because of systemic historical and contemporary diverse and complex factors, including the enslavement period, legalized apartheid (e.g., Jim Crow, redlining), forced family separation, assimilation and genocide of indigenous youth; socioeconomic neighborhood and school segregation (Orfield, 2014; Reardon et al., 2019; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005); inequitable resource distribution (Lee & Wong, 2004); and the disproportionate placement of underprepared teachers in high-poverty schools (Borman & Kimball, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2004). Most importantly, achievement disparities should not be looked at as an annual problem but as an ongoing phenomenon that is compounded over time based on an accumulation of the disparities experienced by REM children, families, and communities over their lifetimes and across multiple generations.

Thus, accessing similar economic resources and coming from high-income households and communities do not result in REM youth having similar or better academic

outcomes when compared to White students. The main reasons articulated for this long-standing gap are racism and other systemic inequities. The expression of racism in U.S. society as a whole and in educational systems specifically is rooted in anti-Blackness, or the beliefs, actions, and cultural values that specifically exclude and discriminate against Black individuals and are closely related to colorism and anti-darkness or unequal treatment and discrimination based on skin color. In an evidence-based policy statement, the American Academy of Pediatrics stated the following:

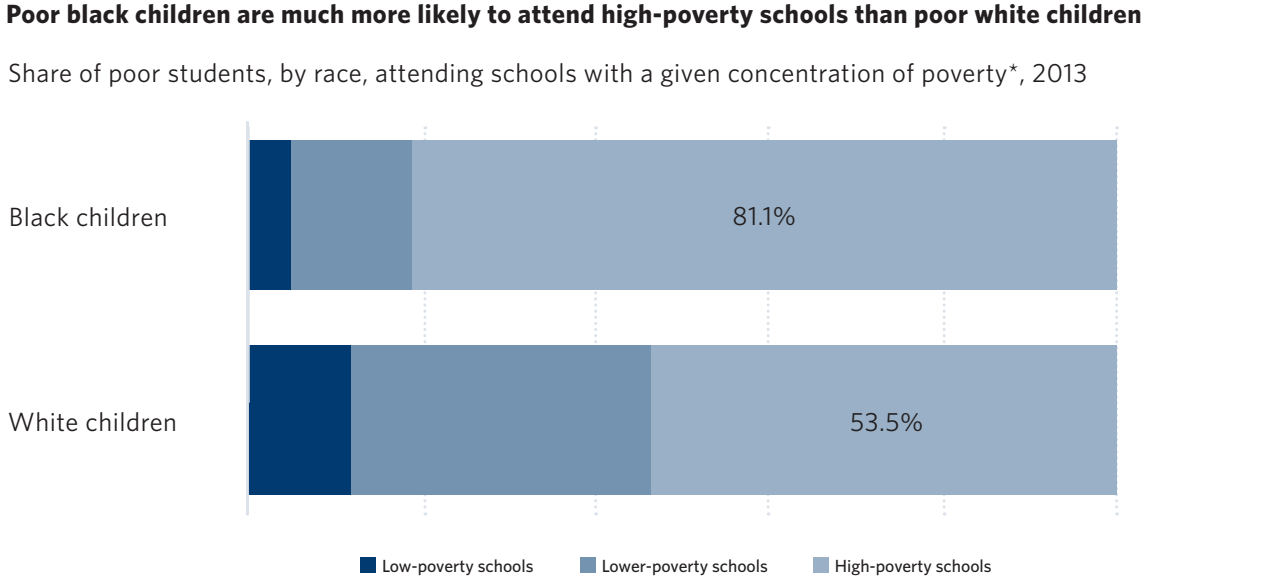
> Racism is a social determinant of health that has a profound impact on the health status of children, adolescents, emerging adults, and their families. Although progress has been made toward racial equality and equity, the evidence to support the continued negative impact of racism on health and well-being through implicit and explicit biases, institutional structures, and interpersonal relationships is clear. (Trent et al., 2019, p. 1)

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL INEQUITIES

Ladson-Billings (2006) noted the historical debt derived from the fact that Black people were first barred from education and then, when it was provided, encountered learning opportunities at a lower dosage and quality (e.g., fewer days and hours of school; substandard school environment and textbooks). The economic debt as described by Ladson-Billings includes the lower school funding experienced by REM youth. A 2018 EdBuild report showed that non-White school districts received $23 billion less than White school districts, despite serving a similar number of children. These fiscal disparities are alarming when many Black students and other students of color, regardless of income, attend low-wealth schools (Carnoy & García, 2017). Eighty-one percent of Black children attend high-poverty schools compared to 54% of White children (see Figure 8). Attendance in low-resourced schools is associated with lower-quality instructors and instruction and exposure to more adversities such as violence and high levels of trauma (Haycock & Peske, 2006). This disparity in school funding is based on historical policies of segregation and current practices that base primary school funding on property taxes, subjecting communities that are primarily Black and living in poverty to a low tax base from which to fund schools.

FIGURE 8.

Share of students in poverty, by race, attending schools with a given concentration of poverty, 2013



Poor students are defined as those who are eligible for free lunch programs.
High poverty schools are those in which 51-100% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Lower-poverty schools are those in which 26-50% are eligible, and low-poverty schools are those in which up to 25% are eligible.
SOURCE: Based on "Five key trends in U.S. student performance: Progress by blacks and Hispanics, the takeoff of Asians, the stall of non-English speakers, the persistence of socioeconomic gaps, and the damaging effect of highly segregated schools" by Martin Carnoy and Emma Garcia (2017(

Source. Carnoy & García, 2017

Other educational policies and practices found to create educational inequities include tracking, discipline disparities, and limited access to bilingual programs for dual and multilingual learners. Tracking or ability grouping is the "process whereby students are divided into categories so that they can be assigned to groups in different kinds of classes . . . tracking, in essence, is sorting" (Oakes, 1985, p. 3). Sorting students on the basis of academic performance was originally intended to allow for more individualized instruction and was *never* intended to be permanent. However, students assigned to the lower tracks were subject to lower expectations from teachers and received less challenging curriculum, limiting both their achievement gains and their academic mobility (Mason et al., 1992; Weinstein et al., 2004). Moreover, as students in the lower tracks were primarily minoritized students (i.e., Black, Latine) and students from low-income backgrounds, tracking promoted the idea that students who are White and middle class or upper middle class were more intelligent than their counterparts in the lower tracks (Turner & Spain, 2020). In sorting by race and class, tracking contributes to inequitable access to educational resources and challenging learning experiences, widened race- and class-based gaps in achievement, increased within-school segregation, and diminished opportunities for multicultural education. Tracking is also detrimental even when a school is predominantly composed of one race or students experiencing the same socioeconomic conditions, as teachers' expectations are shaped in part by the groups to which students are assigned (Rubie-Davies & Flint, 2020). Contemporary research indicates that all students should be exposed to advanced curriculum and that grouping arrangements should always be flexible and use mixed-ability groups (Rubie-Davies & Flint, 2020).

Dual language and multilingual learners (DLLs/MLLs), who are in a household where a language other than English is spoken and who are simultaneously acquiring two or more languages, are likely to experience educational inequities. Language immersion models that provide instructional support and present content in at least two languages for DLLs/MLLs are found to improve the developmental, linguistic, social, and academic outcomes for all students (Barnett et al., 2007; Valentino & Reardon, 2015). Unfortunately, DLLs/MLLs who are likely to benefit from these resources and support are less likely to access it, with one obstacle being the shortage of bilingual professionals, including teachers and psychologists with appropriate credentials (Ding et al., 2019). Furthermore, there is evidence that educators have lower academic expectations for children who are DLLs/MLLs, resulting in lower academic and cognitive success (Umansky & Dumont, 2019). Thus, in not attending to the linguistic needs and assets of DLLs/MLLs to ensure equitable access to rich learning environments and materials, we are widening the language-based gaps that will likely impact children who are also from racially and ethnically minoritized communities, those from low-income household, and those with disabilities.

INTERPERSONAL INEQUITIES

One way racism operates is through interpersonal interactions, which is evidenced by how children are differentially treated through interactions with teachers, administrators, and school staff. *Implicit bias*, also known as unconscious bias, is based on attitudes that developed over the course of an individual's lifetime (Baron & Banaji, 2006). These biases or attitudes, shaped in many ways by past lived experiences, can, and often do, influence how we perceive and interact with others (Staats et al., 2017). Although school professionals generally have students' best interest in mind, they are also susceptible to implicit bias. For instance, Starck and colleagues (2020) found that both teachers and the general public hold pro-White implicit biases, with the difference between nonteachers and teachers being negligible. The implicit bias demonstrated by teachers also affects their students (Pit-ten Cate & Glock, 2019). For instance, in an examination of teacher attitudes, Chin and colleagues (2020) found that in locations where teachers hold higher levels of implicit and explicit racial bias, Black/White differences in suspension and academic achievement are larger. Relatedly, Quinn (2020) found that when teachers rated students' writing samples, assigned grades were lower when teachers perceived the students were Black instead of White. Of note is the fact that when predicting outcomes, implicit measures of bias tend to be more predictive of student outcomes than explicit measures of bias (Denessen et al., 2022).

Studies suggest that implicit bias is much more prevalent than explicit bias, either because respondents consciously reject explicit biases or because they wish to present themselves as unbiased on explicit measures (Nosek et al., 2002). It has been shown that teachers prescribe harsher disciplinary consequences to students perceived as Black versus White for committing the same infraction (Neal et al., 2013; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) recruited 57 racially diverse K–12 teachers to view the fictitious school discipline records of students with stereotypically Black or White names. The records indicated that students had committed the same two infractions; however, teachers who reviewed the records of students with Black names tended to recommend harsher disciplinary consequences for a second infraction and describe this second infraction as being indicative of a behavioral pattern but did not ascribe the same patterns to White students. Work based on eye-tracking data by Gilliam and colleagues (2016) showed that when preschool teachers were primed to expect problem behaviors, they were more likely to watch Black boys longer and report that Black boys needed their assistance more frequently when, in fact, there were no problem behaviors in the videos. Thus, implicit biases color interpersonal relationships and interactions

and militate against students' opportunity to learn when teachers have biased perceptions of them. Moreover, negative perceptions of students based on race and other socio-demographic factors limit access to gifted and talented programs and may result in Black students being placed in lower-ability tracks (Legette, 2020).

INTERNALIZED RACISM

Explicit and implicit assumptions placed upon children have a detrimental impact on their sense of self, especially their racial and ethnic identity. Work by scholars shows a positive link between ethnic identity on the one hand and achievement and socio-emotional well-being among school-age children and adolescents on the other (Brown & Chu, 2012). Studies focused on elementary school students indicated low racial-ethnic pride and attitudes, high perception of racial barriers, and high racial mistrust were associated with lower reading and mathematics scores on standardized tests for Black children (Smith et al., 2003). Researchers have also found that experiences of discrimination, real or perceived, by teachers and peers were associated with youth's lowered self-esteem and increased levels of anger, depressive symptoms, and involvement in problem behaviors (Wong et al., 2003). Internalized racism also affects students' academic achievement and orientation toward learning (Neblett et al., 2006). Research has found that children receiving messages about having positive self-worth and self-identity (i.e., positive racial-ethnic identity), balanced with messages about racial inequalities in experiences and learning opportunities, results in higher school grades (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Sanders, 1997), academic curiosity, and persistence (Neblett et al., 2006).

Stereotype threat is another way racism impacts students' learning and educational opportunities. A term introduced by researchers in the 1990s (e.g., Lee & Ottati, 1995; Steele & Aronson, 1995), *stereotype threat* occurs when a person is engaged in an activity for which there is a negative stereotype associated with their identity. For example, stereotype threat may be activated when a female student exposed to stereotypes that paint women as bad at math is asked to check off her gender at the beginning of a high-stakes mathematics test. This perception depresses performance of members of historically oppressed and marginalized groups, preventing them from performing to their full ability. The impact of stereotype threat among different populations, as well as interventions to reduce it, have been examined across several disciplines (Whaley, 2018). Evidence indicates that, beyond detrimental impacts on test taking, stereotype threat also affects students' daily learning, further contributing to racial disparities in outcomes (Appel & Kronberger, 2012; Osborne, 2001). This risk of being judged based on stereotypes has consistently been found across gender and racial groups (Gupta et al., 2011; Hartley & Sutton, 2013; Wasserberg, 2014).

In summary, there is a need to recognize the multiple ways racism creates disparities in the learning outcomes of REM students because it is entrenched in laws, culture, and practices, including how White families make decisions to maintain their privilege (e.g., within school tracking; de facto White-only communities). The structural racism that has led to REM youth being likely to grow up in poor households and communities has also resulted in their likelihood of attending segregated schools with fewer economic resources and being taught by less-qualified teachers. Furthermore, it is critical to note that racism serves a function in U.S. society, and that while REM youth are racialized differently (differential racialization), racism is structurally and institutionally similar but experienced differently, such as the disproportionate and harmful treatment of Black people by the criminal justice system. Beyond structural racism, REM students are also dealing with interpersonal racism such as use of harsh and unfair exclusionary practices that remove them from the learning environments. These inequitable experiences and interactions inside and outside school buildings, starting during the early years (i.e., preschool), may contribute to children internalizing diminished worth and ability to learn, leading to lack of engagement with schooling and other adverse outcomes, including participation in the school-to-prison pipeline. Thus, racism and biases impact the learning experiences and outcomes of Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous children and other children of color in multilayered and complex ways.

Intersection of Race and Disability

REM students with disabilities are placed at increased risk for school failure due to the impact of both racism and ableism. *Ableism* is a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against individuals with physical, mental, or developmental disabilities. It is characterized by the belief that disabled individuals need to be "fixed" and that they cannot function as full members of society (Smith et al., 2008). Ableist beliefs are grounded in the medical model of disability, in which disability is defined as a physical condition intrinsic to the individual which affects their quality of life and can lead to disadvantages in society (Bogart & Dunn, 2019). The goal is for individuals to be cured of their disability by a professional to live a more normal life. This view is in marked contrast to the social model of disability, which suggests that society disables individuals through lack of accommodations and opportunities for participation (Berghs et al., 2019). As a result of the medical model, individuals with disabilities are often made to feel excluded and undervalued and are treated as if they are incapable (Haegele & Hodge, 2016). These deficit beliefs about individuals with disabilities impact the types of resources received and opportunities for success. Within the context of educational systems, REM students with disabilities are

further deprived of opportunities as they navigate simultaneous experiences of racism and ableism. Moreover, the intersection of racism and ableism creates unique forms of racialized ableism that place REM students with disabilities at greater risk for adverse outcomes than their REM peers without disabilities and White students with disabilities (Annamma & Morrison, 2018).

REM students are significantly overrepresented in special education. Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students are more likely to receive special education services than White and Asian students (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2020). Specifically, American Indian/Alaska Native students have higher odds of being classified in every disability category than their peers except autism and orthopedic impairment. Notably, American Indian/Alaska Native students are over four times as likely to receive services in the category of developmental delay. Black students are twice as likely to be identified under emotional disturbance and intellectual disability, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students are almost twice as likely to be identified with specific learning disability.

Although REM students are overrepresented in some categories, they are underrepresented in others. Scholars who study disability indicate a social stratification of disability where some categories are considered low status, leading to fewer resources and supports compared to high-status categories. For example, Black and Hispanic students are underrepresented in the category of autism. Similarly, Skrtic and colleagues (2021) find racial sorting in hierarchy of disability, with Black and Hispanic children with disabilities being overrepresented in low-status categories, such as intellectual disability and emotional disturbance, and White students being overrepresented in high-status categories, such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and autism. Furthermore, REM students are often diagnosed at a later age and misclassified under the category of emotional disturbance (Cavendish et al., 2014). This over- and underrepresentation in special education programs can lead to negative short- and long-term harm for REM students (Kramarczuk Voulgarides et al., 2017).

Academic outcomes for students in special education are lower when compared to their counterparts in general education. Students with disabilities are much more likely to score in the "below basic" range on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading and mathematics. More specifically, in the mathematics domain, 74% of Black children with disabilities perform at the below basic level in comparison to 43% of their White peers (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2019). A similar pattern is present in reading performance, with 87% of Black youth performing at the below basic level compared to 64% of White children. Additionally, students with disabilities have a 16% high school dropout rate compared to 7% for students in general education (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2019). With regards to graduation, 85% of students in general education graduate with a high school diploma, whereas 73% of students in special education do (U.S Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2019). There are racial differences in high school graduation rates such that Black, Native American/Alaska Native, and Hispanic students with disabilities are less likely to graduate with a regular diploma compared to White students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2020).

Although these statistics are disappointing, they are not surprising given the structural inequities driven by both racism and ableism. Special education programs have been underfunded since the 1975 passage of P.L. 94-142 (the precursor to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEIA] of 2004). IDEIA provides grants to states to subsidize the cost of educating students with disabilities based on a funding formula in which the number of disabled students in a state is multiplied by a gradually increasing percentage of the national average per pupil expenditure (APPE), beginning at 5% in FY1978, increasing to 40% in FY1982, and remaining at 40% thereafter (Dragoo, 2019). However, the grants-to-states program has never met the authorized full funding of 40% of APPE. Underfunding of IDEA at the federal level increases the financial burden to states and school districts. As previously stated, REM students are more likely to attend under-resourced schools with less-experienced teachers and less funding (Kokka, 2016). Underfunded special education programs, under-resourced schools, and disparities in special education identification have led to a system in which REM students with disabilities are less likely to experience affirming and effective programs and supports, likely leading to lower academic success.

Some scholars have argued that special education is a new way of resegregating REM students in response to school desegregation following the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision (Blanchett et al., 2009). The way interpersonal racism contributes to racial/ethnic disproportionality in special education suggests that this argument has some merit. The disability categories with the highest levels of disproportionality are those that allow for the most subjective decision-making: emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, and specific learning disability (SLD; Sullivan et al., 2019). For instance, Harry and Klingner (2014) interviewed parents and school psychologists in their 2-year qualitative study of the special education placement process. Their results indicated that special education placement was highly subjective, and that teachers and school psychologists acknowledged that the process was flawed and problematic. Additionally, school psychologists reported high confidence in making SLD identification

decisions when using the ability-achievement discrepancy model but were less confident in using a response-to-intervention model (Maki et al., 2018). This finding is problematic considering that the ability-achievement discrepancy has been termed the "wait to fail" model and is associated with the overidentification of REM students.

This issue is also problematic given that special education services may not be as efficacious as once thought. For instance, several analyses of national data have shown that minoritized students demonstrate fewer gains from special education services and in some scenarios negative effects are present (Graves & Ye, 2017; Morgan et al., 2010; Sullivan & Field, 2013). From a practical standpoint, research has shown that low-performing students who receive targeted and quality interventions demonstrate growth at more significant rates than children who are placed in special education (Burns et al., 2020). However, Black boys are frequently overrepresented in special education programs that have proven to provide lower-quality instruction and are ineffective.

The effectiveness of interventions in the general education classroom is important because there are still differences in least restrictive environment placement for children in special education. Placement in the least restrictive environment has increased over the years, mostly accounted for by the specific learning disabilities category, but not for students with emotional or behavioral disorders and intellectual disabilities (McLeskey et al., 2012). Unfortunately, the emotional and behavioral disorders and intellectual disabilities categories are most likely to show an overrepresentation of minoritized students. Approximately two-thirds of White students with disabilities are educated in the regular classroom for 80% or more of the day; however, this percentage is lower for Asian (56.9%), Black (58.8%), Hispanic (62.1%), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (56.2%), and multiracial students (64%; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2020).

In addition to academic placements, there are disparities related to mental health services for children in special education. Great variability in the types and quality of mental health services provided to children in special education exists (Proctor & Romano, 2016; Santiago et al., 2014). When quality mental health services are provided (e.g., manualized treatments, evidence-based practice, culturally tailored interventions), school-based mental health services have proven to reduce absences and decrease school suspension (Kang-Yi et al., 2018). Unfortunately, staffing ratios, credentialing, Medicaid reimbursement rates, and underrepresentation of minoritized school psychologists collectively impact the provision of services at schools (Eklund et al., 2017). Additionally, REM students are less likely to be referred for school-based mental health services, especially for internalizing concerns (Gudiño et al., 2009).

The use of exclusionary discipline policies (e.g., suspension, expulsion) is associated with decreased academic achievement, increased rates of dropping out of school, and lower likelihood of employment (Green et al., 2019). For students identified with a disability, exclusionary discipline policies are amplified. Categories traditionally associated with racial disproportionality such as emotional disturbance and "other health impairment" show excessive exclusionary discipline rates (Bal et al., 2019). Additionally, these categories are associated with multiple suspensions, indicating that punitive procedures are ineffective interventions (Sullivan et al., 2014).

Similar to other aspects of internalized oppression (e.g., internalized racism, model minority stereotype), ableism can also present significant psychological and social problems. Facing ableism is associated with lower health outcomes and reduced well-being (Branco et al., 2019). Issues of ableism can be pronounced in schools where discussions around ability and life paths rely only on metrics such as IQ test scores, special education labels, and academic tracking (Friedman & Owen, 2017; Graves & Ye, 2017).

In summary, the intersection of race and disability is a significant issue that needs continuous monitoring by educational stakeholders. Given that outcomes for REM students enrolled in special education are not equitable when compared to their White peers, additional research on identification and intervention practices is warranted.

Racial Disparities in School Discipline

As noted previously, exclusionary discipline practices—disciplinary reactions that result in a child being removed from the classroom—have a disproportionate impact on marginalized students, including students with disabilities and students of color, specifically Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander students. Office discipline referrals (ODRs)—which are used for Class I or Class II transgressions such as disruptive behavior and other minor infractions—are the least invasive. In their most basic form, ODRs require documentation of student behavior for tracking and potentially a visit of the student with a school administrator. More severe Class III and Class IV violations are met with punishments that move students into more restrictive environments (e.g., alternative schools) or remove them from the classroom (i.e., suspension or expulsion). School suspension involves removal of a student from the classroom setting, generally for a day or longer. The suspension may take place in school or out of school. Expulsion involves removing a student from the school and referring them to a different or alternative school. The decision to employ these disciplinary measures in schools, in theory, depends on the student's behavior. For example, a school or district may have a handbook detailing the type of student behaviors

that are addressed by suspensions and expulsions, such as engaging in violent actions, destruction of school property, or bringing an illicit substance to school. However, these decisions often come down to more subjective practices. ODRs, for example, might encompass categories such as "showing disrespect" or "noncompliance," which rely on school staff observation and judgment of student behavior.

Schools employ discipline strategies such as ODRs, suspensions, expulsions, and physical restraint under the umbrella of school safety. School administrators, parents, teachers, and students have a shared vision of a safe school building. However, there is limited evidence that exclusionary discipline strategies help make schools any safer, and in fact these strategies may make school environments more hostile (APA, 2008; Hemphill et al., 2006). Furthermore, the use of disciplinary exclusion hinders student learning (e.g., Morris & Perry, 2016) and has a uniquely damaging impact on marginalized youth, including Black, Latinx, Native American, and Pacific Islander students. More specifically, Black, Latinx, Native American, and Pacific Islander youth experience disproportionally higher rates of ODRs, suspensions, and expulsions when compared to their White peers. During the 2013–2014 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that a higher percentage of Black students received out-of-school suspensions than any other racial group, with Black males carrying the bulk of out-of-school suspensions (17.6%). The data further elucidate higher rates of out-of-school suspensions for Hispanic (6.4%), Pacific Islander (4.5%), Indigenous or American Indian/Alaska Native (6.7%), and multiracial (5.3%) students when compared to their White (3.4%) or Asian (1.1%) peers. A report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2018) also revealed that students with disabilities experienced comparable rates of disparities in student discipline and discrimination. Similar levels of disproportionality have been identified in patterns of ODRs (Smolkowski et al., 2016) and expulsions (Ksinan et al., 2019), even for children as young as five (Gilliam, 2005). Furthermore, there is racial disparity in the use of mechanical restraint for students with a disability. For example, Black children represent 19% of the population but 36% of students who are subjected to mechanical restraint compared to White children, who represent 55% of students with disabilities and 47% of those who are subjected to mechanical restraint (Office for Civil Rights, 2014).

The racial discipline gap cannot be separated from the historical legacies and current practices of racism and racial bias in law enforcement (Zaino, 2019). The disproportionate use of punitive measures that have adversely impacted individuals in minoritized communities emanated from Black codes and Jim Crow laws that limited the rights of freed enslaved people and legitimized the use of violent law enforcement practices against Black people (see The History of the Police in America, 2021). Likewise, exclusionary school discipline policies have been linked to higher rates of student involvement with the carceral system. For example, students who receive even one suspension are then twice as likely to be involved with the juvenile justice system (Monahan et al., 2014; Mowen & Brent, 2016). This inextricable relationship between school discipline practices and the carceral system describes the school-to-prison pipeline.

Although there are many factors at play regarding disparities in discipline strategies, implicit racial bias stands out as one of the most insidious culprits of racial disproportionality in student discipline (Anyon et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2002; Staats, 2014). Vignette studies help elucidate the role of racial bias in decision-making around student behavior in schools. For example, in one study, pre-service teachers were asked to rate vignettes depicting disruptive behaviors by Black students and White students (Kunesh & Noltemeyer, 2019). Study participants were asked to rate whether they thought the described behavior was likely to occur again, indicating beliefs about behavior stability. Results suggested that participants were more likely to attribute the behavior of Black students to stable causes than White students, though they did not rate the behaviors of Black students as more inappropriate than White students.

The dual process model provides insight into how bias may enter teacher decision-making regarding student behavior. When deciding, individuals employ two types of thinking: slow and deliberate or fast and automatic (Reisberg, 2006). Slow and deliberate thinking relies on rationally assessing and responding to a problem. These cognitions are complex and employ data to make decisions. Automatic thinking, on the other hand, is intuitive, requires less effort, and happens quickly. This type of thinking is important for efficiency; however, because it does not engage higher-level thinking strategies and relies on intuition versus engaging external data that might compete with previous learning, it is the most susceptible to bias (Staats, 2014; Todd, Thiem, & Neel, 2016). This type of thinking is particularly susceptible to bias under stressful or ambiguous situations (Reisberg, 2006). Traditional behavioral referral systems such as ODRs rely on this second model of thinking that is fast, automatic, and based on intuition. As noted earlier, this process of intuitive thinking is highly influenced by teachers' experience, emotional load, and biases (Vanlommel et al., 2017), and is especially susceptible to bias in times of stress or ambiguity (Girvan et al., 2017). For example, in a review of discipline data from 1,824 U.S. schools and 1,154,686 students, findings indicated that racial disproportionality in ODRs was more pronounced for behavior categories that are more ambiguous, such as disruptive behaviors or noncompliance (Girvan et al., 2017). Relatedly, the differential hypothesis attributes the disproportionate discipline of African American students to a difference in treatment of problem behavior (Skiba et al., 2002). In an analysis of this hypothesis, McCarthy and Hoge (1987) reported that Black and White students showed similar misbehavior rates,

although Black students had higher rates of suspension compared to White students.

If exclusionary discipline practices supported student success, then the use of these practices might be justified. However, these practices do not contribute to school safety (see Raffaele Mendez, 2003), and in fact launch students into a negative cycle of behavior that lays the foundation for the school-to-prison pipeline (Christle et al., 2005), and potentially more serious consequences (Sullivan & Proctor, 2016). One stark outcome for students who have received behavioral referrals is academic struggle. The link between behavioral discipline and school failure, including lower grades and higher high school dropout rates, is well documented. For example, Marchbanks et al. (2015) indicated that students who have received an out-of-school suspension in Texas are 77% more likely to drop out of school than peers who have not received any suspensions. More recent data indicate that no matter the magnitude of the disciplinary action—for example, out-of-school versus in-school suspensions—they are equally harmful, and students receiving disciplinary referrals early in a school year are the most likely to experience lower academic outcomes compared to those who do not receive disciplinary referrals (Anderson et al., 2019; Pearman et al., 2019). Exclusionary discipline also has implications for opportunities to learn, with days of lost instruction due to out-of-school suspension contributing to the widening achievement gap (Losen & Martinez, 2020).

Okonofua et al. (2016) used a social-psychological framework to understand the escalation that can occur after a racially stigmatized student receives a disciplinary response to a behavior. From a student's perspective, the discipline response is evidence that they might not belong and that the teacher or school does not care about their learning goals. For a teacher, stereotypes of Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander youth include perceptions of these students as troublemakers and their behaviors as enduring, problematic, and posing a barrier to the teacher fulfilling their teaching goals. Furthermore, teachers may have lower expectations regarding student academic ability, impacting their response to student behavior with harsh discipline practices (Santiago-Rosario et al., 2021). Harsh responses by teachers to racially stigmatized youth then launch these same youth into questioning their sense of belonging in school, which can result in disengagement from the learning environment.

Identity markers such as race, gender, language, religion, socioeconomic status, disability status, and sexual orientation have long been sources of discrimination for individuals who identify as or are perceived as belonging to a particular group not promoted by the status quo. The same can be said for children in schools and classrooms. Several studies have revealed that race and ethnicity are extremely salient factors when examining educational inequities (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2004). For students who belong to a historically marginalized group in the United States, educational disparities take on many forms, including higher rates of discipline and encounters with school resource officers that result in arrests or referrals to law enforcement, compared to the rates among students who do not belong to a marginalized group, including Whites (Jarvis & Okonofua, 2020). It is important to note, however, that experiences of discipline-related educational disparities do not affect all minority groups equally. Most notably, Asian students reported lower percentages of disciplinary actions (e.g., out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, expulsion) than Whites (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018).

The role of stigma and stereotypes in who receives disciplinary responses has a unique impact on students of color and sexual and gender diverse youth. The mechanisms of stereotyping and reliance on implicit biases, through which teachers might label Black youth as troublemakers, are also used to label Asian heritage youth as "model" students or uniquely capable of academic success. Like all racial and ethnic minoritized youth, Asian heritage students are not a monolith. The disproportionately fewer discipline referrals received by Asian heritage youth may be an indicator of a broader problem and an outcome of implicit racial bias. First, that the categorization of youth with such varied life experiences might be described under a single category renders the nuances in this group invisible. For example, in early reports of school discipline disparities, Asian and Pacific Islander heritage youth were conceptualized as a single racial/ethnic category. More recent research has indicated that Pacific Islander youth experience suspensions at rates higher than their White peers. Furthermore, the stereotype of Asian heritage youth as smart and uniquely capable academically has resulted in the under-identification of Asian youth for needed mental health (Lee et al., 2009) and academic support services (Hartlep, 2015).

Sexual and gender diverse (SGD) youth also experience disproportionally higher rates of school discipline, even more so for students whose identities are at the intersection of multiple oppressive system, such as SGD racially and ethnically minoritized youth. Although research on discipline disparities for SGD youth is still in the nascent stages, a growing body of work indicates a link between discriminatory school practices and higher rates of school discipline for SGD youth (Palmer & Greytak, 2017).

In sum, racial disproportionality is a problem that persists in the face of many school reform efforts such as social-emotional learning (Gregory & Fergus, 2017) or even schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports (McIntosh et al., 2018). This persistence is the result of ongoing racial biases at system and individual levels that are not addressed by simply supporting students' social, emotional, and behavioral functioning. To truly change racial disproportionality in school discipline practices, schools must consider identifying and addressing the

impact of racism on both interpersonal interactions and systems-level school practices. One method that has been demonstrated to improve the outcomes of diverse students is exposure to a diverse PreK–12 workforce (Gershenson et al., 2016, 2018).

Education and Workforce Disparities

In 2016, a report entitled *The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce* indicated that public schools' elementary and secondary educator workforce was predominantly White (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, 2016). Moreover, the report revealed that over the next several years, the trend in the education pipeline would not result in a change in the workforce because diversity decreases as students move through the educational system toward teacher preparation studies. For example, students earning college degrees are less diverse than students graduating from high school (Lindsay, 2021). Additionally, not only were a majority of education majors White but also White students in teacher preparation programs had higher graduation rates than Black and Hispanic students. Moreover, previous research has demonstrated that a mismatch between educators and students often leads to low academic outcomes for minoritized children in public prekindergarten classrooms and elementary, middle, and high schools (Lindsay, 2021). In this section of the report, we review the demographic characteristics of the current education workforce and provide a historical overview of ethnic-racial minority teachers, with a particular focus on Native American, Hispanic, and Black teachers (we note the limited research on the Asian American and Pacific Islander and MENA workforce).

ETHNICITY/RACE AND GENDER PROFILE OF THE CURRENT EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

Diverse workgroups result in higher-quality products, and the benefits derived from diversity also extend to education settings. Research has demonstrated that ethnic-racial minority children benefit from having access to teachers and professionals of the same ethnic-racial groups as themselves (Bates & Glick, 2013; Blake et al., 2016; Egalite & Kisida, 2018; Egalite et al., 2015; Grapin et al., 2016; James et al., 2020; Jang, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, 2016) and minoritized teachers often have higher educational expectations for minority students (Gershenson et al., 2016). Moreover, racial bias is also mitigated when White children see teachers and administrators of color in leadership positions (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, 2016).

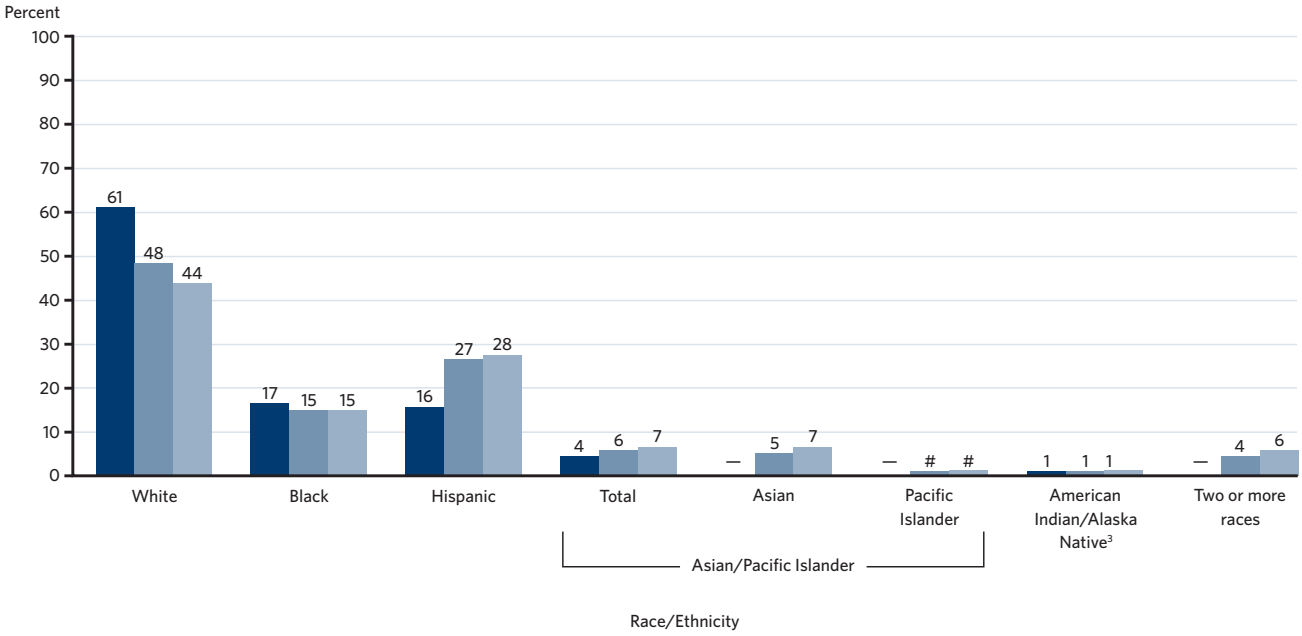
Over the last decade, the number of White children enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools has continued to decrease while the enrollment of REM children has either remained steady or been on the rise (de Brey et al., 2019; see Figure 9). By 2029, more than half of the students in the United States will be a student of color. Paradoxically, while the numbers of White children attending public schools have continued to decline, the education workforce has nevertheless remained overwhelmingly White (de Brey et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, 2016), including teachers (79%) and principals (79.6%; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey, 2017–2018; see Figure 10). Furthermore, other school professionals who provide services and support for minority students are also predominantly White (Blake et al., 2016; Mulhern, 2020). For example, recent data indicate that 87% of school psychologists were White and only 5% and 6% were Black or Hispanic, respectively (Walcott et al., 2018).

In some categories the ethnic-racial disparities between the educator workforce and the student body are not quite as stark. For example, 25.2% of social workers who serve children are African American and 9.61% are Hispanic, with 54.7% of this group being non-Hispanic White (https://datausa.io/profile/soc/child-family-and-school-social-workers#demographics). Similarly, although the majority of the degrees in counseling and guidance (59.2%) are granted to Whites, 15.2% and 13.2% are awarded to Hispanic and Blacks, respectively (https://datausa.io/profile/cip/school-counseling-guidance-services#demographics).

There are also disparities between the education workforce and the student body in the United States by gender. Although boys make up 51% of K–12 students, education professionals are disproportionately female. Seventy-six percent of teachers are female (89% in elementary schools and 64% in secondary schools), and more than 80% of school counselors (82.7%), school social workers (81.8%), and school psychologists (83%) are also female. Only principals—at 54% female—are relatively close to gender proportionality. In sum, the educator workforce is not as ethnically diverse as the students it serves and is also disproportionately female, which likely results in occupations with a high percentage of women receiving less financial compensation, fewer resources, less protection, and lower status.

FIGURE 9.

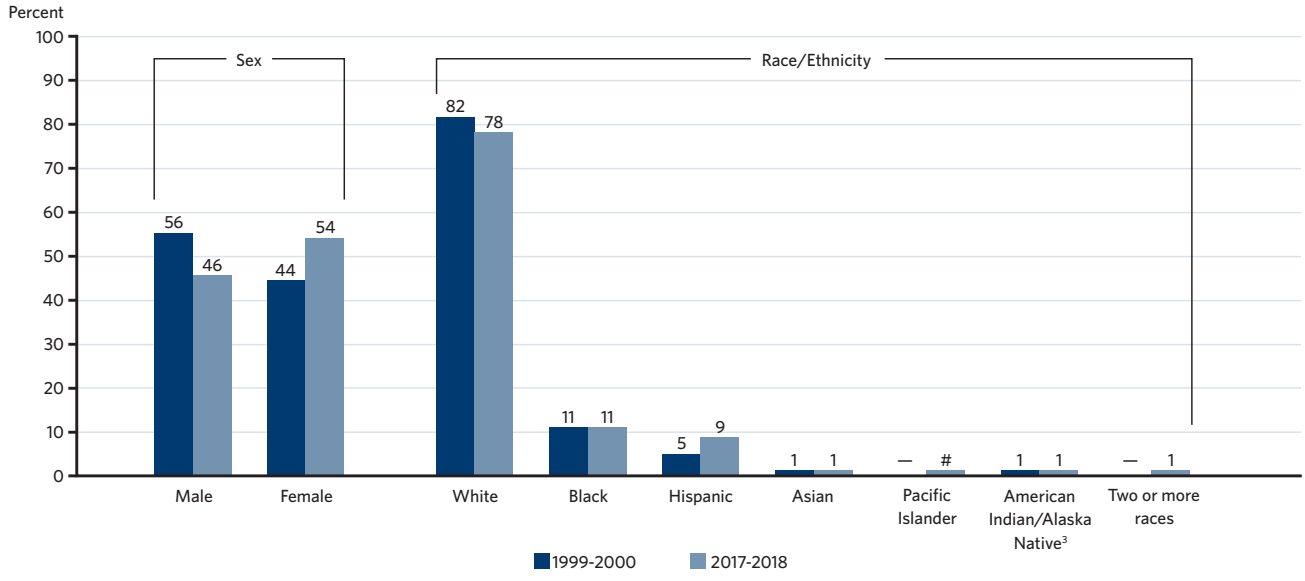
Percentage distribution of students in public schools by race/ethnicity, 2000, 2017, and 2019



Source. de Brey et al., 2019

FIGURE 10.

Percentages of public school principals by sex and race/ethnicity, 1999–2000 and 2017–2018



Source. National Center for Education Statistics, 2022

A Historical Overview of Disparities in the Education Workforce

To promote equity in the educational experiences of all children, especially those from racially and ethnically minoritized groups, there have been increased calls to ensure diversity in the educational workforce so that students' identities, culture, and instructional needs and assets (e.g., abilities, talents, strengths) are authentically and fully integrated into the learning process. Ensuring diversity in the education workforce requires attending to the historical underpinning of the experiences of minoritized educators, which likely contributed to the lack of diversity in the current workforce. Although we briefly summarize the educational history of various groups—American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic, and Black populations—this is not meant to be an exhaustive review of all the issues or of all minoritized populations. The historical review provided in this report is intended solely to offer context for the presented research.

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE

The history of the education of the American Indian in the United States is one based on genocidal and colonial practices. Before the invasion of North America by White European settlers, the education of the North American First People involved the transfer of knowledge, culture, religious practices, and history through an oral tradition from elders to youth, men to boys, and women to girls, all for the benefit of the community's survival (Juneau et al., 2001; Reyhner & Eder, 2017). The arrival of European settlers resulted in indigenous educational traditions being dismantled. The United States signed treaties with indigenous nations with a provision for providing education, medical care, and agricultural training. However, the US government's educational approach supplanted traditional education and cultural practices with that of the White European settlers. In 1969, the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare produced a report entitled *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge* that delineated the government's continued failure to adequately educate Native American children. This report resulted in the passage of the Indian Education Act of 1972, which provided money for programs for children on and off reservations, and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, which allowed Native Americans to run their own schools (Reyhner & Eder, 2017). A report published in May 2022, titled *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report,* details the existence of 408 boarding schools in the United States between 1819 and 1969 that targeted American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children for forced assimilation. The report describes 53 burial sites for children across these 408 schools (Newland, 2022). Investigation of these boarding schools as sites of genocide and forced assimilation is ongoing.

In 1990, the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force report was presented by the White House Conference on Indian Education. The findings from the report revealed that a hostile climate in schools continued to have negative effects on the academic, cultural, and spiritual development of American Indian children. The authors of the report also concluded that many of the schools continued to use a Eurocentric curriculum and that teachers had low expectations of students and often exhibited either overt or subtle forms of racism toward the students (Reyhner & Eder, 2017). The task force report included recommendations that schools promote students' tribal language and culture, that Native American teachers be trained to work with Native American students, and that tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs colleges be strengthened.

Today, there are 32 accredited Tribal Colleges and Universities that provide many American Indian students with an education that will allow them to become teachers in their communities. Although Tribal Colleges and Universities play a critical role in the education of the next generation of Indigenous teachers, they nevertheless face several challenges. First, whereas public colleges and universities receive support from states, Tribal Colleges and Universities depend on financial support from the federal government and are woefully underfunded (Lamb, 2016). The lack of funding often results in colleges' inability to provide high-quality teacher education preparation. Tribal Colleges and Universities also find it difficult to attract faculty who are willing to work in remote locations, and many of the students who are interested in becoming teachers are parents and do not have the funding to attend college. Moreover, as many homes in American Indian communities lack internet connections, online education is not feasible (Lamb, 2016). Finally, many American Indian students are unable to pass the high-stakes exams required for them to be licensed as teachers in their home states.

HISPANICS AND THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE

The demography of the Hispanic population in the United States is complex. We use the word Hispanic here to refer to Spanish-speaking populations, acknowledging that the use of Spanish language in North and South America is a result of European colonization of these lands. As noted in the glossary of terms, we use the term Hispanic to maintain continuity with the latest U.S. Census report that provides important demographic information used in this APA report. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Hispanic students made up 27% of the school population in the 2018–2019 school year but only 9% of the teaching workforce in 2017–2018. As with all ethnic minority groups, there is a disproportionately lower percentage of Hispanic teachers in the education workforce in comparison to the population of Hispanic students, which in turn has a negative impact on their educational achievement and attain-

ment (e.g., graduation and dropout rates, Verdugo, 2006; exclusionary practices, Shirrell et al., 2021).

To assess the status of education of Hispanic children and the Hispanic education workforce in the United States, it is important to understand the history of education of Hispanics in America. For this report, we will focus on Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans in the United States, as the history of these groups captures many of the educational issues experienced over the centuries for most Hispanics (Verdugo, 2006).

Hispanic Americans are not a homogenous group, and their racial and ethnic diversity are reflected in their culture and economic and financial well-being. There are White, Black, and Indigenous teachers and students who are ethnically Hispanic; thus, it is critical to examine the intersection of racial and ethnic identity for the Hispanic education workforce.1 Moreover, not all Hispanics are immigrants or come from Latin America (Verdugo, 2006). In the U.S. context, many who demographically are counted as ethnically Hispanic are indigenous to the land.

In 1609, Indians and Mestizos inhabited what is now called Santa Fe prior to the arrival of the Pilgrims. In 1846, Mexico entered into a war with the United States (the Mexican–American War), and in 1848, the war ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The signing of the treaty led to three important outcomes. First, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Colorado, Nevada, and parts of Utah were ceded to the United States, providing America with the resources that would increase its national wealth. Second, Mexicans who decided to remain in those territories became American citizens. However, Mexicans of darker skin experienced higher levels of discrimination (e.g., economic resources, jobs). Third, the war led to Mexicans being viewed as conquered people (Verdugo, 2006).

During the middle of the 19th century, conflicts arose over the dominant language to be used in schools, and many Mexicans left public education and went to parochial schools where they could learn in their native language (Verdugo, 2006). Hispanics returning from the Second World War, having won more Medals of Honor than any other ethnic or racial group, felt they should be treated with the same dignity and respect as their White peers. However, racism did not allow this to happen. Hispanic families continued to live in impoverished housing and receive low-quality education, leading Hispanics to establish organizations to advocate for their rights. For example, in 1945, the case of *Mendez v. Westminster* involved Hispanic parents advocating for their child to attend an all-White public school. The ruling in the case was that separate but equal schools for Mexican American children in Orange County, California, was unconstitutional, and this case was one of the precedents subsequently cited in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Although the legal outcome allowed children of Mexican ancestry to attend public schools, it did not improve the choices for other ethnic and racial minority children. California and other states were still entitled to segregate schools based on race and ethnicity (United States Courts, n.d.).

Puerto Ricans in the United States. The history of education for Puerto Ricans in the United States differs from that of Mexicans and was influenced by colonialization focused on learning English so that Puerto Rican children could assimilate into American culture as part of the great migration of Puerto Ricans to the U.S. mainland. Although Puerto Ricans came to the United States as full citizens, they were often unable to obtain decent-paying jobs or safe housing with access to high-quality public schools for their children (Verdugo, 2006). In the 1950s, Puerto Ricans began organizing and establishing leadership groups to address the dismal educational prospects for their children. The organizers of these groups advocated for more highly visible programs for their children and more Puerto Rican educators (Verdugo, 2006).

Cubans in the United States. The history of the arrival of Cubans in the United States is quite different from that of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. Many of the first Cuban immigrants to arrive on the shores of the United States came from the middle and upper classes of Cuba and therefore were more educated than either their Mexican or Puerto Rican counterparts. Moreover, Cuban immigrants came to the United States as political refugees fleeing communism during the Cold War, and it was politically expedient to the United States that they succeed. Thus, the United States partnered with school systems to ensure Cuban refugees received a high-quality education and invested money in programs from 1960 to 1972 to ensure the success of Cuban refugees (Verdugo, 2006).

Contemporary Challenges Facing the Hispanic Education Workforce. Currently, schools attended by Hispanic children tend to be woefully underfunded and Hispanic students do not have access to a high-quality education workforce (Lindsay et al., 2007; Verdugo, 2006). Teachers working with Hispanic students tend to either be uncredentialed or lack the appropriate credentials to ensure the success of Hispanic students. Moreover, regarding postsecondary education, Hispanics face many obstacles, especially access to higher education. Even once they are admitted, the resources to ensure they graduate can be limited (Turner et al., 2017). To ensure that Hispanic children can succeed

1 At the publishing of this report, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President released a federal register notice regarding an initial proposal to combine the Hispanic ethnic question with the racial categories and to create a new ethnic category called MENA—Middle Eastern, North African for the Race and Ethnicity Standards: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-01-27/pdf/2023-01635.pdf.

academically it is important for them to have access to high-quality teaching staff who understand their cultural and linguistic background and are culturally competent. As with other ethnic-racial minority groups, Hispanic students preparing to become teachers often have difficulty passing licensure tests, making it challenging for them to enter the workforce (Verdugo, 2006).

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE BLACK EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Disproportionality between Black teachers and Black children in the school system was not always this stark (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, 2016). Prior to the public school system's desegregation, African Americans often chose to teach as a profession, with African American men, who served as role models for the students and the community, comprising a large percentage of the workforce (Madkins, 2011). These teachers knew their students and their students' culture and backgrounds and did not see them as dysfunctional, and African American students performed well academically (Madkins, 2011; Sealey-Ruiz & Lewis, 2011). However, with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the desegregation of schools, Black teachers' presence in the workforce began to decline (Madkins, 2011). To meet the mandate to integrate the public school system, many Black children were bused to predominately White schools where Black teachers were nonexistent. During this time, over 39,000 Black teachers lost their jobs, and by 1978, Blacks comprised only 12% of the teaching workforce (Madkins, 2011).

As the school system's demographics have become more diverse, there has been a call from local school districts, states, and the federal government to diversify the education workforce (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Although a diverse workforce would facilitate Black students' academic success, several barriers have impeded the ability of teacher preparation programs to meet this need. Three of those challenges include (a) lack of educational opportunity, (b) increased career opportunities in other fields, and (c) standardized test performance (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Madkins, 2011).

In sum, teachers are critical agents in supporting students in the classroom and meeting their cognitive, academic, and socio-emotional needs in culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining ways. However, historical and contemporary racism has resulted in the lack of diversity in the education workforce, especially as more racial and ethnic minority students make up the majority of the student population. For example, while desegregation policies sought to integrate schools, they had a dampening effect by significantly reducing the Black workforce and the number of people of color interested in becoming educators. Further, the funding needed to provide pathways to acquire educational and leadership credentials and other opportunities has been limited and narrow. Nevertheless, some indications in our history show where the needs of marginalized students (e.g., Cubans) were meaningfully addressed. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the norm. There is recognition that while a diverse workforce is not a silver bullet to address racial and ethnic disparities in learning outcomes, it is a positive and promotive path that must be attended to and can be informed by the historical and current barriers that have limited the diversity of the workforce.

REPORT SUMMARY

To address racial disparities from PreK through 12th grade, the root causes of racism and systemic inequities in all aspects of students' schooling experiences must be addressed. While there is a need to identify the disparities (i.e., early literacy and numeracy rates, reading and mathematics scores, suspension and expulsion, and graduation rates), there is also a need to focus on potential causes of these disparities that are not based on presumptions that REM youth, as well as those living in poverty, those who speak a language other than English, and those who have disabilities, are less able academically or intellectually, and their families and communities are deficient. We did not seek to be exhaustive with the multiple and complex ways that bias, racism, and other -isms impact learning experiences and outcomes, seeking instead to highlight concrete scenarios that have a detrimental impact on the learning, well-being, and achievement of REM youth, also, when possible, considering other intersectional identities such as gender, income, language, and ability.

We also recognize that our underlying theoretical frame includes critical race theory, which has been politicized. The lens of this framework has been used in many instances to show the systemic inequities built into the education arena. The evidence is clear that there are discriminatory systems, policies, and practices from historical to present times that create inequities in the experiences of students of color compared to their White peers. Although we must focus on the issues of biases in suspension and expulsion rates and reduce the internalization of inferiority based on race and ethnicity being carried by students of color, there is urgency in attending to the practices and policies that create inherent inequities prior to children's birth and throughout the life course, including during their formal educational years. That is, children of color are likely to be born living in poverty and remain in poverty across their life span. Furthermore, their families' economic wealth and their ZIP code determine their access to quality early learning experiences, which lay the foundation for later learning, and their access to well-resourced schools that can provide a high-quality learning environment. Even when students of color can access well-resourced schools with well-educated and racially and ethnically diverse teachers, they are likely to experience inequitable discipline practices and curriculum and teaching approaches incongruent with their culture, traditions, and language. Thus, we must recognize that racial and ethnic diversity alone will not solve the systemic inequities that reify and maintain educational disparities.

With racial and ethnic disparities still a major challenge in public education, this report seeks to move the focus from students to the educational system and other adjacent systems that ensure equitable access, support, and experiences to high-quality education from PreK through grade 12. Considering the impact of racism and all of its forms (i.e., cultural, systemic, interpersonal, internalized) on the educational experiences and outcomes of students, this committee sought to underscore how these racialized policies, processes, practices, and attitudes have a detrimental impact on students of color. Thus, the task force provides the following recommendations with the hope that they can help to reduce educational disparities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The task force recognizes the enormity of addressing educational disparities comprehensively. We also recognize that the educational system is not solely responsible for educational disparities among ethnic and racial groups. Thus, the recommendations presented here identify specific research, practice, and advocacy actions—some of which can be conducted in the short term—to improve the educational access, experiences, and outcomes of minoritized students. These actions would move us a step closer to delivering on the promise of equal educational access and excellence for all youth.

Research

Although research on educational disparities has attended to systemic societal inequality as contributing to these disparities, emerging research suggests that school-related factors play an outsized role in marginalizing students. Therefore, we call for research that focuses on the root causes of disparities in schools, including (a) the role of racism in student experiences, (b) the intersectionality of marginalized identities that impacts opportunities to learn, (c) the ways in which implicit bias creates differential treatment in the educational system, and (d) the mechanisms for change in settings that cause racial stress.

- **RECOMMENDATION #1R:** Psychological research must center on systemic factors of structural racism that are the root causes of disparities and attend to the ways racial and ethnic differences overlap with other marginalized identities, such as social class, gender, gender identity, language, place of residence, immigration status, among other things.
- **RECOMMENDATION #2R:** It is critical for research to track academic achievement data and long-term educational outcomes post-COVID and provide resources and tools for education professionals to use these data to meet students where they are academically and increase their progress.
- **RECOMMENDATION #3R:** More longitudinal and experimental research studies are needed to examine interventions that have the potential to modify environments that foster implicit biases. Studies are also needed that examine if and how implicit bias affects teachers and students' outcomes, including their academic and social outcomes.
- **RECOMMENDATION #4R:** More research is needed to supplement extant knowledge of how multiple identities (e.g., sexual orientation, social class, gender, disability, gifted, immigration status) intersect with race, ethnicity, and linguistic status in ways that may exacerbate educational disparities and/or require alternative strategies to redress disparities in academic achievement.
- **RECOMMENDATION #5R:** Research is needed to examine the psychological and educational impacts of statewide or local policies limiting discussion of and teaching about race, the history of racism in the United States, and the continued impacts of systemic racism, especially in light of state legislations that limit culturally relevant instruction, materials, books, and resources (e.g., limit of Advanced Placement African American Studies curriculum) on students, families, and educators. Noting that similar policies have also targeted LGBTQI students, especially transgender youth, there is a need for research to understand the educational and psychological toll on these students.

Specific subgroups of students have unique needs and challenges in the educational system. For example, many students of undocumented parents are U.S. citizens, but because one or more members of their family are undocumented, the children face significant barriers accessing educational and psychological services to which they are entitled and that they require for their educational and socio-emotional development. Thus, research on availability of school support professionals (e.g., mental health providers) and specific educational interventions that may have differential impacts on students needs to be conducted, especially related to students who are vulnerable (e.g., students experiencing chronic poverty and housing insecurity; immigration challenged or undocumented and mixed-status students; queer and gender diverse students; students who are separated from parents due to incarceration, foster care, or other reasons).

- **RECOMMENDATION #6R:** Research funding should be allocated to projects that focus on the experiences of differentiating interventions for racially and ethnically minoritized students who are part of special populations (chronic poverty, housing insecurity, undocumented, mixed-status, immigrants, queer and gender diverse students). Furthermore, these educational interventions should attend to and identify the unique psychological factors that have contributed to academic success of students from these special populations. For example, how and under what conditions do equity-focused social emotional learning approaches work for different groups? How do stereotypes affect the social and emotional outcomes for Asian American and Pacific Islander students based on national origin? This also requires attending to the professionals who will implement various interventions, such as mental health professionals.
- **RECOMMENDATION #7R:** Greater emphasis should be given to pursuing evidence-based interventions that

implement multiple pathways (e.g., academic support programs; leadership development; and family, school, and community partnerships) that can lead to higher achievement for ethnic minority students. For example, consider issues of cultural sensitivity and the important role that religious organizations have had in ethnic and racial minority communities; further research is needed into the effectiveness of programs from these community organizations in augmenting the formal education received in schools. School, Counseling, and Educational Psychology specialties seem particularly well-suited to conducting this research.

- **RECOMMENDATION #8R:** Educators need access to culturally tailored practices and resources, as well as cultural adaptation of programming that addresses issues of racism, culture, race, and identity.

Despite substantial funding, the achievement gap remains one of the largest and most stagnant social challenges to date. Research is needed that focuses on opportunity gaps, especially regarding access and experience for specialized programs (e.g., special education, ELL, gifted and talented). There is a need to also examine how racially and ethnically minoritized students are experiencing these educational programs and services as well as factors that support their engagement and academic success.

- **RECOMMENDATION #9R:** More research is needed that focuses on racial and ethnic disparities in identification for and experiences in gifted, advanced placement, and academic enrichment programs.
- **RECOMMENDATION #10R:** More psychological research is needed on factors that contribute to the success of ethnic and racial minority students who participate in selective academic programs. Academically selective programs that achieve success with ethnic and racial minority children should be studied to understand how and why they are successful with these groups of students.
- **RECOMMENDATION #11R:** Psychologists should further investigate the transactional processes within school that redress teacher-student dynamics associated with discipline and academic achievement gaps. This psychological research should address the nature of teacher responsiveness, with particular attention to strategies that enhance students' engagement in their education. Further research is needed to examine the long-term efficacy of interventions based on principles of stereotype threat.
- **RECOMMENDATION #12R:** Research needs to address specific questions on the experiences of racial and ethnic minoritized youth, and dig deeper into color-evasive educational programs that address student characteristics without considering the unique needs of REM youth.

Exclusionary policies and practices (i.e., suspension, expulsion) continue to have disproportionately negative effects on the learning experiences of racially and ethnically minoritized students, especially Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and Native American students and students with disabilities. Emerging evidence points to similar disparities for queer and gender diverse youth, as well as ELL students. Punitive behavioral responses, whether administered in school or requiring students to leave school, lead to feelings of exclusion from the learning environment and may launch already marginalized youth into further cycles of exclusion.

- **RECOMMENDATION #13R:** Conduct a systematic review of extant literature on the impact of implicit bias on disciplinary disparities to identify specific gaps that will inform future research and improve practice.
- **RECOMMENDATION #14R:** Examine the impact of intersecting identities on disciplinary outcomes, and examine the role of environments that allow students to explore the multiple identities they hold without fear of discrimination and stigma, especially given the growth of the gender diverse student population (i.e., students identifying as nonbinary) and other marginalized identities.
- **RECOMMENDATION #15R:** Conduct research to identify the root causes of disruptive behaviors (perceived or real) and effective interventions to meet the specific needs of different subgroups with attention to race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and language.
- **RECOMMENDATION #16R:** Use multi-method research paradigms, including qualitative research that centers students' voices regarding issues of behavior and discipline.

Practice

Educators are critical to students' engagement and learning. However, addressing ethnic and racial educational disparities requires that teachers are well trained and competent in engaging in anti-bias, anti-racist, culturally responsive, and sustaining practices. Considering the toll of the pandemic, calls for racial reckoning, school shootings, and so much more, there is also a need for educators to be trained in trauma-informed practices. Accomplishing this goal requires attending to the pre-service and in-service training of teachers in taking an asset-based approach to how they engage with and teach students, and ensuring educators are provided with ongoing training and supports.

- **RECOMMENDATION #17P:** It is urgent that attention is paid to recruiting and retaining diverse education professionals, including leaders, professionals, and

staff, as racial and ethnic minoritized students make up the majority of students in the schools and the majority of currently employed educators are White.

  - » Create programs for principals and superintendents on best practices to retain teachers of color.
  - » Engage in deliberate and targeted recruitment of educator candidates of color and males in the high school and college years (e.g., a people of color educator corps) aimed at encouraging and supporting students of color to become teachers, counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists.
  - » Create programs to maintain sustainability of the efforts to recruit a diverse educator workforce.
  - » Strengthen education workforce support and professional development, including mentoring and examining nontraditional and culturally grounded models of mentoring, especially in rural and isolated areas.

- **RECOMMENDATION #18P:** Identify and promote anti-bias, anti-racist, culturally grounded, and trauma-informed competencies in the training of education professionals. For example, prejudice habit-breaking interventions have shown significant effects on decreasing implicit bias, but maintaining them requires ongoing professional development, including attention to anti-bias and anti-racism. It is also critical to incorporate understanding of Pan-African, Indigenous, and other non-Western sources of education, interpersonal engagement, and collectivistic principles. Examine and address specific issues that may deter equitable access to the learning environment, such as stereotypes (e.g., Asian American and MENA individuals as model minority) and stereotype threat (e.g., Black males as oppositional). More data continues to emerge about the mental health challenges of students due to the adversities they experience, thus requiring educators to integrate trauma-informed practices in their classroom to support students' socio-emotional competencies.
- **RECOMMENDATION #19P:** Ethnic, racial, linguistic, and ability diverse students bring important academic strengths to their education. More attention should be given in teaching and learning to discern and build on the social, cultural, linguistic, experiential, and intellectual assets students from diverse backgrounds carry with them into classrooms. Psychologists can help train and consult with the education workforce to leverage the assets of children of color and children from diverse backgrounds.
- **RECOMMENDATION #20P:** The field of psychology can make important contributions by continually introducing the education workforce to theories and models explaining how culture, identity, and context (including the historical legacy of racism and systemic inequities) interact, and how psychological interventions and approaches can reduce inequitable experiences and learning outcomes for ethnic, racial, linguistic, and ability diverse children (e.g., effective use of technology for teaching).
- **RECOMMENDATION #21P:** It is critical to eliminate the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices and attend to creating a learning environment through home-school-community partnerships that supports and promotes the emotional health, well-being, and learning opportunities of children.

  - » Incorporate interventions that address implicit bias in decision-making around student behavior.
  - » Modify color-evasive approaches that do not work. For example, social emotional learning programs often have overall positive results, but are color evasive in nature and not specific to racially and ethnically minoritized learners.
  - » Utilize restorative justice approaches to embrace students with behavioral struggles in the school setting rather than address their behavior primarily through exclusionary discipline practices.
  - » Provide ongoing training and development in the areas of classroom and behavior management to, as metrics of success, decrease the number of reported infractions and improve the overall school climate.
  - » Limit class size and make other school structural changes that promote the possibility of strong teacher-student relationships.

- **RECOMMENDATION #22P:** Education professionals, including classroom teachers, school leaders, and staff, must build their capacity to access and examine student outcome data (e.g., academic achievement, high school graduation, participation in advanced placement classes, discipline, etc.) through an intersectional lens to provide targeted resources, supports, and opportunities as well as ensuring equitable access to extracurricular opportunities such as sports and the arts. This approach to intersectionality data disaggregation and analyses will allow for comparison within and across groups of students (e.g., boys vs. boys in gifted/talented programming; girls vs. girls participating in sports).

Advocacy

A great amount has been learned from research about what works to advance educational equity and the long-term

benefits of implementing equitable policies, However, translating this research into action needs to be accelerated, particularly in schools. To accomplish this will require addressing inequities with a multisector and systems-based approach and lens, considering multiple issues that lead to and exacerbate racial disparities, from segregation and workforce diversity to funding and resources. It is also important that advocacy groups and organizations are active in ensuring that inequities are addressed even in a hyperpartisan and racist environment.

- **RECOMMENDATION #23A:** The resegregation of schools appears to be a backward step in closing ethnic and racial gaps in academic achievement, and further resegregation of schools may lead to a widening of ethnic and racial disparities. The APA and psychologists should educate the public and policymakers about the consequences of increasing ethnic and racial segregation on the educational experiences of ethnic and racial minority children.
- **RECOMMENDATION #24A:** More educational resources should be allocated to subsidizing job-embedded, continuous improvement professional development to increase the capacity of teachers to deliver evidence-based, gap-closing instructional and learning strategies.
- **RECOMMENDATION #25A:** Policymakers and other advocates should consider the way racial bias impacts school dynamics, resulting in racial disparities in school outcomes such as academic achievement and exclusionary discipline. Policymakers should remain cautious when using race-neutral universal programs such as social and emotional learning (SEL) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to address these outcomes. Although SEL and PBIS programs create stronger school climates broadly, they do not uniquely address the impact of racial bias on school discipline practices and in school culture. Cultural adaptation of programming that addresses issues of racism, culture, race, and identity can help enhance these otherwise effective programs so that positive outcomes are available for all students and issues of racial disparities in school outcomes are directly impacted.
- **RECOMMENDATION #26A:** Support school-based efforts to expand resources available to students and teachers in response to student behavior. Center advocacy on limiting the use of school resource officers, physical restraints, zero tolerance, and other punitive measures, and instead focus on increasing support for school staff to respond to youth behavior, including through developmentally appropriate training for dealing with adolescents and students with disabilities and other challenges. Supporting teacher and school staff training in understanding the link between student behavior and academic success is critical.
- **RECOMMENDATION #27A:** Call for collection of data on availability of mental health providers in schools, regardless of degree level and field of study, to facilitate increasing student access to school-based mental health services.
- **RECOMMENDATION #28A:** Promote disaggregation of student data (e.g., academic achievement, high school graduation, participation in advanced placement classes, discipline) by race with an intersectionality lens (e.g., race and disability status; national origin and class) from the preschool years and continuing through grade 12. To aid in this effort, we strongly encourage the collection of subgroup racial data such as national origin and tribal names.
- **RECOMMENDATION #29A**: Increase the racial/ethnic diversity of educators.
  - » Increase teacher salaries and compensation packages to be more competitive in attracting a more diverse workforce.
  - » Create loan suspension and loan forgiveness programs for students of color and males who become teachers, school psychologists, counselors, and school social workers and stay in the profession for at least five years.
  - » Create targeted funding streams to support teacher education programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and Tribal Colleges and students of color attending those programs.
  - » Create scholarship programs for teachers of color who have been in the profession for at least five years to complete administrative credential programs.
- **RECOMMENDATION #30A:** Create a fund for community organizations whose mission it is to advance restorative justice in school responses to student behavior.
- **RECOMMENDATION #31A:** Increase access to high-quality early childhood education (ECE) programs that address structural racism and bias to begin to mitigate racial disparities in the early years and ensure that working poor and low-income families, who are also likely to be from racially and ethnically minoritized populations, have access to ECE services that support children and their families.
- **RECOMMENDATON #32A:** Help families become informed consumers of the U.S. educational system by providing information about how their children can be successful in schools, including prerequisite skills for

elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as in higher education. Attending to family engagement is especially important for families who are immigrants and non-native English speakers, who have high aspirations for the educational attainment of their children but lack critical knowledge about succeeding in U.S. schools and services available to their children, as well as preparing and applying to universities in the United States.

- **RECOMMENDATION #33A:** Expand access to high-quality bilingual education that provides linguistically competent education to children, given that the evidence of the effectiveness of more intensive bilingual education, as well as the problematic nature of some English as a second language programs, is well established.
- **RECOMMENDATION #34A:** Call for examination of the psychological and educational impacts of statewide or local policies limiting discussion of and teaching about race, the history of racism in the United States, and the continued impacts of systemic racism, especially in light of state legislations that limit culturally relevant instruction, materials, books, and resources (e.g., Florida's limit of the College Board's Advanced Placement African American Studies curriculum). Similar policies have also targeted meeting the educational needs of transgender youth and LGBTQI students.

LIMITATIONS

This report is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of all the ways bias, racism, and other -isms may limit students' learning opportunities. We also recognize that our data and research has not adequately attended to the whole array of racial and ethnic diasporas of students, families, and communities. Although much of our literature is focused on Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and in some instances Asian American and Pacific Islander students, we recognize the need to examine the experience of all students across and within these macro racial categories. Unfortunately, existing education data continue to show significant harm being experienced by Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous students. We also recognize the need for more research and data on the educational experiences and inequities experienced by Asian American and Pacific Islander students (made especially visible during the global pandemic), MENA students, biracial and multiracial students, students experiencing trauma and homelessness, students who identify as LGBTQI, and students with other intersecting identities.

CONCLUSION

We laud the educational progress that has been made since the 1960s. However, all students receiving an education that sets them up to be productive and civically engaged adults must come to the forefront of education research, practice, and policy. To be the superior country we want to be, we must dismantle systemic racism and other inequities. We know this work will not be easy or simple, but continuing the status quo will not deliver on the promise of education or our national aspirations. The recommendations proposed in this report cannot operate in isolation. Paired with coalitions of psychologists, families, advocates, policymakers, and educators, we believe this report will move attention to racial equity of our children and youth to the center of a thriving multiracial and global society.

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