



HOW MODERN DAY

SCHOOL SEGREGATION LEADS TO OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION



An Intelligent Partnerships Publication



Modern Day School Segregation Leads to Occupational Segregation

Recent research done by Equitable Growth and the Economic Policy Institute found that segregation in the United States school system is currently experiencing levels of discrimination and racial isolation comparable to those in the 1960s and 1970s. As of 2020, African American and Hispanic American students are five times as likely as White students to attend highly segregated schools. Overall, students of color are more than twice as likely to attend high-poverty schools compared to White students.

These dejecting statistics highlight the growing socioeconomic disparities millions of students face nationwide. Yet, these inequalities did not appear suddenly. Instead, they are observable issues continually exacerbated by local and state officials, thus negatively impacting America's youth and, subsequently, the national economy.

Educational Socioeconomic Disparities: Low-Income vs. High-Income Neighborhoods

The educational system in the United States does not provide equal funding for all students. Public schools are typically funded through local, state, and federal dollars to provide free education. However, property taxes of local land and properties fund school districts within the district's boundaries. Since families tend to live in areas with people of a similar socioeconomic status, higher-income students are more likely to attend more well-funded schools that are often majority-white and lower-income students typically attend underfunded and majority-minority schools.

This dichotomy creates a socioeconomic pattern that disproportionately provides more funding in support of whiter school districts while simultaneously depriving low-income minority schools of necessary educational resources. Additionally, more affluent districts often secure supplemental funding through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and fundraisers to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for already well-funded schools.

On average, schools found in 75% of low-income neighborhoods are primarily attended by students of color, while schools in 75% of high-income neighborhoods consist of majority White students. Furthermore, majority nonwhite school districts receive about \$2,600 to \$4,400 less per student than wealthier and whiter school districts.

Source: [Biz Library](#)



How This Impacts Students

Students in low-income neighborhoods and consequently low-income school districts suffer from a wide array of disparities that affect their ability to receive a quality education afforded to those in wealthier neighborhoods.

1

Low-income schools often have less experienced or non-certified teachers, fewer quality books, lower quality curricula, and few classroom materials. Research conducted by the Washington Center for Equitable Growth also finds that they have inadequate labs and larger class sizes, which has proven detrimental to the learning process, especially in elementary years.

2

Compared to high-income schools, which rank at approximately the highest 70th percentile for their math and reading, low-income neighborhoods rank at approximately in the bottom 30th percentile.

3

Low-income and minority students lack exposure to a variety of incomes, backgrounds, and professions, as well as diverse peers, teachers, and career paths. Without this representation, this division tends to persist well into the workplace as low-income and minority students are often unprepared for college courses and are funneled into low-wage jobs.

4

Students of color from low-income districts are at a severe risk of falling victim to the school-to-prison pipeline as Black students are expelled three times more often than White students and are therefore three times more likely to enter the justice system within one year of leaving school.

Source: [Urban Institute](#)

Source: [Interrogating Justice](#)

21st Century Racially Segregated Schools

Although racially segregated schools were outlawed in 1954, school segregation in the South and other regions has increased over the past three decades. Since 1988, Black students enrolled in majority-White schools in the South decreased from 43% to 23.2%. Furthermore, 43% of Hispanic and 37% of Black students attend schools where less than 10% of students are White. Asian students, although still affected by segregation, are more likely to be concentrated in middle-class schools with majority-white counterparts.

While the U.S. prides itself on representing a melting pot of races, the school system still favors wealthier, predominately White districts. Despite serving the same number of students, schools in White districts receive approximately \$23 billion more in funding annually than nonwhite districts. This is partially due to high-income families “buying into” choice school districts, or withdrawing their children from their assigned school districts in favor of alternative educational pathways – including religious schools, various prep schools, and home-schooling programs – which drains school funds and worsens the culture of segregated schools.

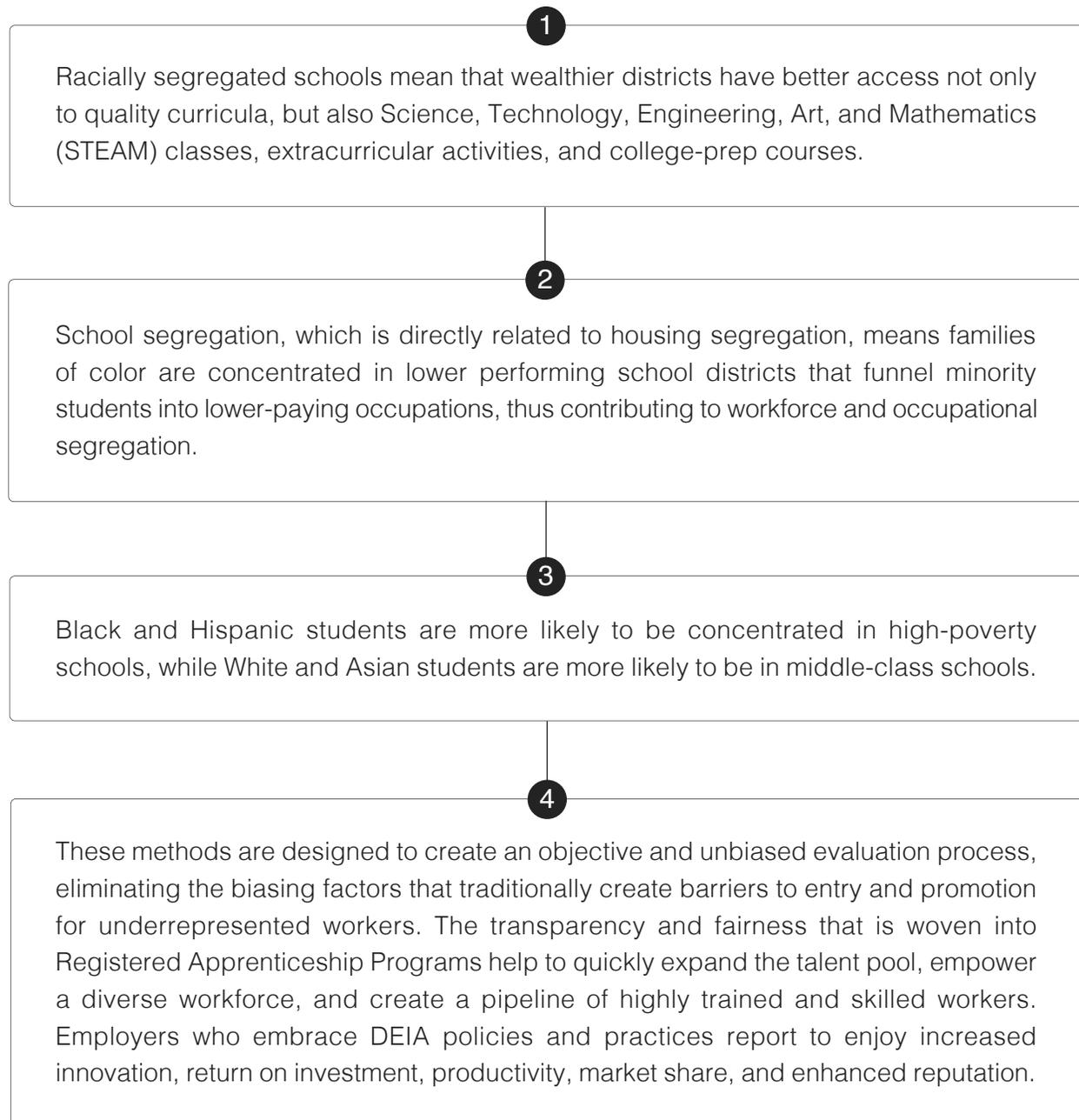
Source: [U.S. News](#)





How This Impacts Students:

Students concentrated in segregated school districts lack necessary exposure to varying educational and technological advances, family sustaining career paths, and they are more likely to be culturally and economically disadvantaged.



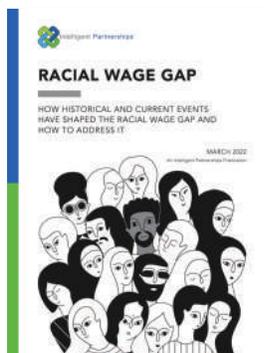
Source: [Chalkbeat](#)

Source: [Economic Policy Institute](#)

How this Affects the Economy and Workforce

Since education is largely linked to future earnings, students from low-income neighborhoods with limited access to a quality education struggle to impact the workforce in a progressive manor. With the necessity of a college degree impacting the hiring market, low-income students are less likely to be hired in family sustaining careers as approximately only 25% of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds graduate from college. As the job market continues to increase educational and experience requirements, those from low-income neighborhoods tend to quickly fall behind, thus setting them on a trajectory of a lifetime of lost wages. When students from low-income school districts receive a lower quality education, the overall economy suffers from a loss of potential talent, innovative ideas, and progressive thinking.

Furthermore, since a majority of students from low-income school districts are students of color, their educational disadvantages exacerbate the racial wage gap. The racial wage gap is a financial epidemic that has cost the nation billions of dollars in lost wages due to minority students receiving poor education and consequently being funneled into low wage jobs that often keep families in the pipeline of generational poverty.



For a detailed overview the racial wage gap, check out our free eBook: How Historical and Current Events Have Shaped the Racial Wage Gap and How to Address It [here](#)



Ending the segregated school system means tackling racial inequality head-on. In order to leverage equality in school districts across the nation, there are necessary steps districts can take to change the current trends.

Reduce Residential Segregation 1

Equitable Growth suggests that housing segregation is a driving factor for public school segregation. Fixing this issue requires policy reforms to “create mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods that are home to a diverse array of families. These reforms notably include building affordable housing in upper- and middle-class neighborhoods ... [and] removing single-family zoning laws that exclude low-income and minority families.” By reducing racially segregated neighborhoods, school districts will have a larger and more equal pool of federal funds.

Additionally, eliminating reliance on property taxes to fund education would essentially eliminate district inequity. Although all 50 states currently rely on property taxes to fund public schools partially or entirely, some states such as Indiana and Michigan have shifted from majority reliance on local property taxes to a reliance on state property tax revenues for a substantial source of educational funding. A change such as this requires tax ceilings/floors and a restructuring of state sales and use tax rates—a potential reason this concept is not widely spread throughout the nation, as stated by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Source: [Equitable Growth](#) Source: [NCSL](#)

Re-zone School Districts 2

Although technically illegal, the effects of redlining—the pre-1960s act of refusing African American’s mortgages in specific neighborhoods in order to preserve White-only suburbs – is still seen in cities across the country. Unlike busing, which aimed to diversify school districts by transporting students within or outside their local school districts, current school district zoning measures emphasize outdated redlining practices as it places low-income students in low-income schools and high-incomes students in high-income schools. By re-zoning school districts, schools can provide a broader mix of students from varying income and racial backgrounds.

School Finance Reform 3

Since public schools are funded by property taxes, low-income neighborhoods afford fewer and worse quality educational resources (materials, teachers, curricula, etc.) compared to the high-quality resources middle- and high-income schools can afford. A fresh take on how public schools are finances can provide a fair opportunity for students of all financial background to earn a quality education. However, this sort of reform relies on state and local policymakers to encourage substantial change on targeted federal funding for all school districts.

Youth Apprenticeship Programs 4

While combating the foundational issue of modern-day school segregation is an uphill battle, a readily attainable way to advocate for disadvantaged students is to promote youth apprenticeship. A Youth Apprenticeship Program is a learning system specifically for high school and postsecondary students ages 16 to 24. The purpose of a youth apprenticeship is to help students gain experience in a real workplace environment while developing high-level skills in a specific trade or occupation and providing wages for either a full-time or part-time job. Students are able to prepare for the workforce through a combination of classroom instruction and workplace learning while experiencing diversity among genders, ethnicities and industries.

This apprenticeship model also gives students an opportunity to develop necessary workplace skills with hands-on and/or shadowing experience while earning dual credits for college. The successful completion of a Youth Apprenticeship Program prepares students to either enter a Registered Apprenticeship Program, enroll in college, or start working full-time. This is especially helpful for under-represented job seekers—people of color, women, those in underserved communities, and people with disabilities—as it helps them start sustainable careers while earning a progressive wage upfront.

Source: [Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov)

Source: [Jobs for the Future](https://www.jobsforthefuture.org)

Registered Apprenticeship Programs 5

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) provide a direct pathway for disadvantaged students to enter a family-sustaining career while being paid from day one. Unlike the traditional pathway of gaining a career through college, many students from low socioeconomic backgrounds lack the opportunity to enter and graduate from college, thus stunting their opportunity for high-paying and sustainable careers. Since RAPs provide competitive wages, classroom and on-the job learning, and industry recognize credentials, apprenticeships are proven and progressive way to foster a pipeline of highly trained and valuable workers who may have otherwise been funneled into poverty wage careers.

Additionally, Registered Apprenticeship Programs intentionally expands acceptance of technical education while reducing barriers into professional environments that typically require a college education for entry level roles. By expanding experience-based learning models, students from all backgrounds have an alternative route to gain solid employment without the traditional pathway of a college education.

Where to Go From Here ?

Making effective changes in the educational system requires an acknowledgement that there is an existing institutional inequality and a resulting inequity for low-income students and students of color. Looking at the statistics, it is clear that students of color have fewer resources, opportunities, and exposure than their white counterparts. Trends regarding school segregation and racial isolation show that this discrimination will only worsen if policymakers don't step in and reassess school districts, zoning, and funding to aid in the desegregation of school districts. By addressing and fighting against school segregation, low-income and minority students can receive access to a fair chance to earn a quality K-12 education.



intelligent Partnerships

Accelerate the Impact of Inclusion™

We bring decades of experience helping clients in diversity management, strategic engagement and workforce design. We encourage our partner organizations to prioritize our community's health and safety and remain an available resource. Should you have any questions or need strategic design and implementation support, please feel free to contact our team at: [\(877\) 234-9737](tel:8772349737) or iPartnerships.net

- **HELPING OUR PARTNERS** *Create Value Where Disruption Occurs.*
- **PRIORITIZING** *Innovation Through Collaboration.*
- **PROVIDING USEFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES THAT AID IN** *Solid Decision Making And Measurable Market Impact.*
- **FACILITATING REAL WORLD APPROACHES TO THE** *Future of Work.*



Engage with us



[\(Click icons\)](#)

© 2021 Intelligent Partnerships

Errors & Omissions Liability (E&O): Intelligent Partnerships, Inc. makes no guarantee that the statements, analysis, projections, estimates, graphs, reports, numbers, and any derivatives sourced from this resource are free of errors and omissions. This information is derived from publicly available sources and is intended to provide general information. Users should seek legal expert validation independent of any resources provided here. The information is current as of the published date. Intelligent Partnerships, Inc. assumes no liability for erroneous outcomes derived from this information or its use.