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A Separate Education: Segregation of American Students and Teachers

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Abstract

Despite the obvious connection between the two, student and teacher segregation are rarely examined together. To help fill that gap, this essay explores what is known about the extent of interracial exposure for students and teachers in U.S. public schools. This article reviews evidence underscoring the paramount importance of school integration. A description of the legal landscape governing desegregation follows, as well as a discussion of why current patterns of racial isolation persist. The essay next describes the demographics and segregation of today's students and teachers. In particular, the essay focuses on the growing segregation of students of color, the lingering isolation of white students, and the ways in which the overwhelmingly white teaching force reinforces patterns of student segregation. We close with a discussion of the implications of these trends.



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On April 13, 2010, a federal judge ordered a rural Mississippi school district to halt a two-pronged pursuit of racial segregation. Renewed scrutiny from the U.S. Department of Justice had shed light on the district's practice of isolating black students into separate classes, in addition to allowing white students to transfer to the only majority white school in the vicinity (Hsu, 2010). The developments in Mississippi are eerily reminiscent of scenes that unfolded more than a generation ago across the South. That court monitoring and Justice Department oversight remain an ongoing necessity calls into question once again the strength of our nation's commitment to fulfilling the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In the following article, we draw on our recent analyses of student and teacher segregation trends to show that the racialized patterns in Mississippi are not an anomaly, or a mere relic of the Deep South's historical resistance to desegregation (Lassiter, 2007; Orfield, 1978). On the contrary, we find similar patterns of racial separation across the country, for both students and teachers.

The Link Between Student and Teacher Segregation

The racial composition of teachers is known to act as a signal to families, identifying a school as either white or nonwhite (Parker, 2009). Consequently, segregation of students and teachers is reinforcing, born out in a cycle of racially identifiable schooling. Breaking this cycle remains critical for three reasons. The first, discussed in detail below, is that separate educational settings continue to be associated with profoundly unequal education opportunities (e.g., Linn & Welner, 2007; Kozol, 1992). Eliminating the underpinnings of student segregation – racially isolated faculties being one – is thus important. The second reason is closely linked to the academic and social environs within a school building. Racially diverse teaching staffs are better able to reach a broad array of students' learning styles, communicate with families of different backgrounds, provide leadership reflecting the importance of positive cross-racial relationships, and serve as role models for different students (Sleeter, 2007). And third, in the other direction, if future teachers attend racially isolated schools, their own schooling experiences will ill prepare them for teaching in diverse environments (Frankenberg, 2009a). Despite the obvious connection between the two, however, student and teacher segregation are rarely examined together. To help fill that gap, this essay explores what is known about the extent of interracial exposure for students and teachers in U.S. public schools.

We begin by reviewing evidence underscoring the importance of school integration. A description of the legal landscape governing desegregation follows, as well as a discussion of why current patterns of racial isolation persist. The essay next describes the demographics and segregation of today's students and teachers. We close with a discussion of the implications of these trends.

The Importance of Racially Integrated Schooling

Since the early psychological studies submitted to the courts during *Brown*, social science research continues to describe the harms of a segregated education and affirm the benefits of racially diverse schools. As a noted economist points out, "The more unevenly students of different races are distributed across schools, the more potential there is for resources, such as quality teachers, to be unevenly distributed by race" (Ladd, 2008, p. 313). Research indicates that opportunity gaps abound for students in segregated schools, measured in part by access to Advanced Placement courses, rigorous curricula, and new, engaging textbooks (Berlak, 2001). Racially and socioeconomically isolated schools are also the most likely to be considered "drop out factories," where fewer than 50% of students graduate high school (Balfanz & Letgers, 2006). In an economy increasingly and heavily reliant upon highly trained, college degree-bearing professionals, these trends are deeply concerning.

Just as segregated schools are associated with a host of negative outcomes, racially integrated schools are related to a number of positive ones. Students attending integrated schools are more likely to adopt multiple perspectives and to avoid making artificial assumptions (powell, 2005; Hawley, 2007). These skills are important components of critical thinking processes. In integrated schools, students of all backgrounds benefit from enhanced classroom discussion, more advanced social and historical thinking, greater commitment to increasing racial understanding, improved racial and cultural awareness, and higher levels of student persistence (Millem, 2003).

Beyond the K-12 schooling experience, integrated school environments eventually translate into loftier educational and career aspirations for students, an enhanced awareness of the process involved in attaining such goals, and superior social networks (powell, 2005, Wells, 2001). Students of all racial backgrounds who attend diverse schools are also more likely to attend integrated colleges, live in integrated neighborhoods, have cross-racial friendships and work in higher-status occupations (Carlson & Levin, 1998; Sorensen & Hallihan, 1985; Wells & Crain, 1994). Finally, the public and private sector benefits from the cultivation of a workforce with higher cross-cultural competence, increased levels of creativity, and better problem-solving abilities.

Despite the wealth of research pointing towards favorable outcomes for students of all races in integrated settings, some scholars suggest that segregated spaces are still necessary. Prior to *Brown*, W.E.B. DuBois' 1935 article, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?" explored the question of whether black students would ever receive an adequate education in institutions dominated by whites. More recently, historian Vanessa Siddle Walker suggested that segregated schools in the South, though profoundly shaped by inadequate resources, may have offered black students important "affective traits, institutional policies and community support" (1996, p. 3). Newer research also demonstrates a link between teachers' race and their perceptions of student performance. This research suggests that teachers are more likely to negatively perceive other-race students than students of their same race, a finding that holds for white and nonwhite students alike (Dee, 2005). These arguments reflect, in part, the destructive effects of racism and white privilege within schools – and also speak to the challenge that school desegregation efforts have faced in attempting to eradicate these barriers, where they exist, in a segregated, racially unequal society.

In response to the concerns raised by DuBois and Siddle Walker, among others, and data showing troubling patterns of inequality within desegregated schools, others have argued that racially diverse schools can be structured to provide welcoming, supportive learning environments for students of all backgrounds. "True integration" is more comprehensive than traditional desegregation efforts. It reaches beyond student assignment plans, deep into school policies, curricula and classroom arrangements—down to even the cooperative groups in classrooms. As civil rights scholar John Powell writes, "true integration moves beyond desegregation...it means bringing students together under conditions of equality, emphasizing common goals, and deemphasizing interpersonal competition" (2005, p. 297). Schools that provide strong (and fair) leadership around issues of racial diversity, in addition to giving students many and varied opportunities to work cooperatively with each other without the adverse effects of tracking, are more likely to promote the multilayered benefits of racial diversity (Hawley, 2007; Schofield, 1995). And those academic and social benefits are increasingly vital in our growing multiracial society.

Even with the many years of accumulated evidence suggesting that racially integrated schooling is a desirable goal, efforts to attain racially diverse students and faculties have waned. As a result, patterns of segregation and resegregation (when previously desegregated schools return to a segregated state) for students and teachers persist. By way of partial explanation, in the following section we delve into the evolving legal structures governing student and faculty desegregation.

Legal Framework for School Desegregation

From the early development of Charles Hamilton Houston's strategy to combat segregation through the courts, the judicial system has been intricately linked to the process of school desegregation. The dismantling of state-sanctioned segregation was remanded back to district courts following the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Many school systems in the South strongly resisted *Brown's* mandate, and it would be fourteen years before the 1968 Supreme Court ruling in *Green* established clear guidelines for desegregating schools. Among the six factors required of districts were two inter-related directives: the racial makeup of both the student body *and* the faculty at a school must be considered during the desegregation process (*Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, 1968). Since evidence suggested that faculty diversity significantly helped to erode the racial identity of a setting – moving from a "black" or a "white" school to just being a school - the issue was revisited in subsequent court cases (*Singleton v. Jackson Municipal Separate School District*, 1970). Eventually, along with the development of student assignment plans that more evenly distributed students of different races across districts, the courts stated that school-level faculty racial composition should closely approximate the district average.

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One of the challenges of school desegregation immediately after *Brown* was that the Supreme Court separated the declaration of the illegality of *de jure* segregation from the ruling a year later about implementation. In a 1955 decision commonly referred to as *Brown II*, the Supreme Court decided that federal district courts were best suited to fashion a remedy to segregation, a determination which required black plaintiffs in each jurisdiction to separately file a challenge to segregation practices—a requirement that put plaintiffs at risk in their own communities. Not surprisingly, in 1964, just 0.2% of black students in the South attended majority white schools (Orfield, 1978).

Almost a decade and a half after *Brown*, the Supreme Court finally indicated what it required in terms of desegregation. *Green* declared that dual school systems must be eliminated “root and branch,” and the 1971 *Swann* decision legitimized the use of metropolitan, two-way transportation for the purpose of desegregation (*Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, 1971). And arguably, the attention of the executive and legislative branches were at least as important as Supreme Court decisions in furthering integration during the latter half of the 1960s (Orfield, 1969). During that time span, Congress passed two important civil rights milestones: the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965.¹ Spurred onward by the legislation, government agencies mounted intensive and proactive investigations of southern school systems, to include offering federal government aid to cases filed by black plaintiffs. Agencies also exacted compliance from southern school districts with existing court orders by threatening to withhold greatly expanded federal funding of education as authorized by ESEA (Epperson, 2008). In the midst of this fervor, however, the election of Richard Nixon heralded the beginning of a new era of conservative backlash to school integration.

Nixon appointees helped shift the ideological composition of the Supreme Court. In a case out of Detroit, Michigan, heard just three short years after *Swann*, the Court would severely hamper the process of desegregation in school systems beyond the South. A newly conservative Supreme Court issued the 1974 *Milliken* decision, essentially granting amnesty to northern suburbs for their role in fostering patterns of metropolitan school segregation (*Milliken v. Bradley*, 1974). This was significant since, unlike the South, northern metropolitan areas were divided into separate city and suburban school districts. *Milliken* thus limited desegregation remedies to what were often majority nonwhite urban districts.

Why School Segregation Exists Today

The steady rise of school segregation has been largely guided by three factors: (1) Supreme Court decisions since 1990; (2) residential segregation patterns; and (3) the growth of school choice.

As described above, the Supreme Court’s decisions in the late 1960s and early 1970s, coupled with circuit court decisions, were instrumental in the decline of black segregation in the South, largely because they mandated more wide-scale desegregation plans.² Yet in recent years, the federal courts have not only ceased to require desegregation compliance but have, in fact, first lessened legal requirements and subsequently prohibited even voluntary actions to address lingering segregation. As a result, scores of school districts—including districts that had stable, decades-long desegregation plans—have ended or reduced their desegregation efforts.

The Supreme Court’s most recent decision striking down Louisville and Seattle’s voluntary integration plans limits the types of policies that districts can voluntarily choose to implement. A few years prior, the well-publicized decisions in 2003 about race-conscious affirmative action efforts in higher education, *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*, eliminated some, but not all, types of race-conscious policies in university admissions policies. These judicial decisions, along with the election of Barack Obama, have instigated national conversations in which many have questioned whether racial inequality, segregation, or disparate outcomes still exist and whether voluntary or remedial race-conscious policies are needed. Taken together, these developments may make districts and community members perceive that *any*

¹ More broadly, the federal government mounted comprehensive efforts to combat inequality and poverty under the Johnson Administration. The Great Society and the War on Poverty encompassed a variety of domestic programs such as Head Start aimed at eliminating social, economic, and racial inequality.

² Decisions of the Fifth Circuit, which had jurisdiction over a number of southern states at that time, were instrumental to implementation of wide-ranging, thorough desegregation plans.

race-conscious policies are legally suspect, morally unnecessary, and create enough doubt to cause risk-adverse district leaders to focus on other pressing issues.

Second, as districts end or reduce desegregation efforts that sought to decouple school and residential segregation - such as magnet programs or more comprehensive efforts to transport students out of their neighborhoods to create more diverse schools - school composition is likely to become more tightly linked to neighborhood composition. This would not be of concern if residential segregation were not so high.³ Yet since it still is, the return to neighborhood schools, along with district boundary lines that in some regions of the country fracture metropolitan areas into dozens (or more) of small, usually racially homogeneous school districts, helps to explain rising segregation within and across district lines (Clotfelter, 2004).

Third, the last several decades have witnessed a dramatic growth in the extent to which families are able to choose which schools their children attend. Families have traditionally exercised an informal method of school choice, by buying or renting property within a particular school district (Holme, 2002). Recently, however, many school districts have devised assignment plans incorporating choice, which decentralizes the assignment of students. Since the central office typically made student assignments after weighing school capacity and a number of district objectives (often including racial diversity), the erosion of central oversight leaves school enrollment decisions in the hands of families operating without a broader perspective of how their choices and decisions impact other families, schools, or the pursuit of district goals. Further, because there is unequal access to knowledge about school choices, families are likely to make choices in ways that exacerbate segregation (Fuller et al., 1996). Recent studies of charter schools confirm that school choice without careful civil rights protections is associated with stark patterns of racial isolation (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley & Wang, 2010; Mathis et al., 2010).

Student Segregation

With this understanding of several of the forces influencing the student composition of schools - which, as we will show, have some bearing on patterns of faculty composition - this essay next explores current trends regarding segregation for today's students and teachers.

Increasing Diversity of Student Enrollment

More than five decades after the *Brown* decision, student enrollment looks vastly different than it did when Chief Justice Earl Warren and his colleagues considered the legality of state-imposed segregation in K-12 schools. In 1950, just before the lower courts began to consider the cases from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware that were ultimately combined into the *Brown* case, nine out of ten U.S. residents were white, and the vast majority of non-white residents were black (Clotfelter, 2004).

As of July 2008, Census estimates show that less than two in three U.S. residents are white.⁴ Equally striking is the growth of non-white groups. Hispanics of any race are now the second largest group (15.4%). Another one-eighth is black, while other groups included multiracial (1.7%); Asian (4.5%); and American Indian/Alaskan Native (1.0%). And, importantly, the public school enrollment is even more diverse than the entire population. Just 56.5% of public school students in 2006-7 were white, while over one-fifth were Latino and another one-sixth were black (Orfield, 2009).

In a more demographically complex society, discussion of segregation must also move beyond the simple black-white segregation at issue in *Brown*. Traditionally, most analyses of segregation focus on students of color, because research shows that schools with high concentrations of minority students tend to provide unequal educational opportunity. Newer research about the benefits of integration for students of all races also makes it important to understand white student segregation (Perry, 2002; Kurlaender & Yun, 2007).

³ While residential segregation has declined (Frey, 2001), it still remains quite substantial.

⁴ Non-Hispanic whites made up 65.6% of the population.

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Growing Segregation for Black and Latino Students

As described above, a decade after *Brown*, limited desegregation had occurred for black students--with less than 1% of black students in the South attending majority white schools (Orfield, 1978). However, by 1970, following the most intense period of desegregation, black students were more integrated with whites in the South than in any other region of the country. Nearly twenty years later, in 1988, 43.5% of black students in the South attended majority white schools (Orfield & Lee, 2007), compared to only 35.4% of black students nationally (Orfield, 2009). Yet by 2005 this percentage had plummeted: just over one-quarter of southern black students attended predominantly white schools.

These statistics demonstrate several points about desegregation efforts. First, *Brown* and subsequent policy and legal efforts made a tremendous difference in increasing racial integration in the South, which ultimately became the most integrated region in the country for black students. Second, this progress is being rapidly undone. Because of the geographic concentration of black students in the South, the region's resegregation trends impact the nation's as well.⁵

In contrast to the peaks and valleys of black segregation trends, Latinos have experienced growing levels of segregation since the late 1960s, as the group has exponentially increased in size. The Supreme Court did not explicitly recognize that segregation violated the rights of Latino students until the 1973 *Keyes* decision. By this time, President Nixon had been re-elected, campaigning against "forced busing," as desegregation efforts were maligned. As a result, there was less attention to implementing comprehensive desegregation plans in districts educating most Latino students. So, by the late 1980s, Latino students comprised just over one-tenth of all public school students and one-third of Latinos were in 90-100% minority schools. And in 2006-07, the percentage of Latino students in public schools had surpassed black students, as had their concentration in high minority schools: more than 40% of all Latinos attended intensely segregated minority schools (Orfield, 2009).⁶

The isolation of white students is not as frequently discussed. Yet white students have higher isolation than students of any other race. The "typical" white student attends school where more than three out of four students are also white (Orfield, 2009). Further, 29% of all public schools in 2005-06 had 90% or more white students (Frankenberg, 2008). These high levels of white segregation limit the exposure of white students to students of other races and lessen the opportunity for students of color to attend schools with substantial numbers of whites.

Promising Trends: Multiracial Schools and Increased Exposure for White Students

While the rising percentage of minority students—and continued high residential segregation patterns—contribute to increasing minority segregation (particularly for Latino students), growing racial diversity is also a factor in two positive developments in student interracial exposure.

First, although whites remain the most isolated group of students, their isolation has been decreasing over time. In 1988—at the height of black desegregation in the South—more than half of all white students attended schools that were 90-100% white. By 2006-07, this share had declined to an astonishing 36%. Similarly, the exposure of white students to other white students – an indicator of white segregation - declined by almost seven percentage points, larger than the decline in exposure indices for students of color.

Second, the number of students in multiracial schools, or schools that have substantial shares of students from at least three racial groups, is also increasing. These types of schools are reflective of the growing complexity of our nation's population and may provide richly diverse educational experiences for students. While the percentage of white and black students enrolled in multiracial schools has increased, students from these racial groups are less likely than Latino and Asian students to be enrolled in multiracial schools (Orfield, 2009). Particularly large increases in multiracial schools occurred in the South, which by

⁵ See, for example, table 14 in Orfield & Lee, 2007.

⁶ Asian students, on the aggregate, display the most integration, though there are differences within this group. A substantial number of American Indian students attend Bureau of Indian Affairs schools.

2006-07, had transformed from a largely white-black enrollment to a multiracial region where white, black, and Latino students each comprised more than one-fifth of the enrollment.

How Poverty Relates

Far too often, segregated schools are not simply segregated along racial lines, but also along the dimensions of class (and sometimes language). As a result, this differentially exposes students from various racial backgrounds to concentrations of poor students, and creates schooling environments that may not offer students opportunities equal to those of students in less segregated, middle-class schools.

In 2005-06, 85% of racially isolated schools (where 80-100% of students were black and Latino) were also schools where a majority of students were from low-income households. Just 20% of schools with low percentages of minority students (less than 20% students were black and Latino) reported similarly high levels of student poverty (Orfield & Lee, 2007). More recent analyses of schools in 2007-08 find that this overlap in racial and poverty concentration has increased, and is consistent among both traditional public schools and charter schools (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010).

Not surprisingly, given these trends, white and Asian students have considerably lower exposure to low-income students than their black and Latino peers. Just over 20% of white students are in majority low-income schools, while an almost equal share attends schools where less than one-tenth of students are from low-income households. By contrast, the typical black or Latino student attended a school in 2006-07 where nearly 60% of students were from low-income households, almost twice the share of low-income students in the typical white student's school. These patterns represent substantially different educational environments, and are important to understand when examining differential graduation rates, to name just one example, by student race.

Teacher Segregation

Examining patterns of teacher segregation illustrates the multidimensional, reinforcing nature of racial isolation among the students, teachers and even administrators in the nation's public schools.

The composition of teachers does not reflect the growing diversity of the public school enrollment, and has fallen far short of the earlier, desegregation-era goal of having the teaching force reflect community demographics. In the first decade of the 21st century, the U.S. teaching force remains overwhelmingly white and female. According to the 2003-4 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 84% of teachers identified as white, eight percent black and six percent Hispanic. Three-quarters were female. Diversity among prospective teachers in preparation programs also remains low (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 1999; Hodgkinson, 2002) although there is some evidence that alternative certification programs help to attract and retain more teachers of color to the profession (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006).

The process of becoming a teacher and ultimately obtaining a teaching job is long and decentralized, and there is no one reason to explain why the teaching profession remains overwhelmingly white. As educational policy continues to increase requirements for teaching, such as needing a bachelor's degree, differential educational attainment by race limits the pool of eligible teachers. Just one in six blacks over the age of 25 has a bachelor's degree, while only one in eight Latinos do (American Community Survey, 2006). Further, most states have implemented teacher testing before granting certification, with a number of states reporting disproportionately low passing rates for prospective teachers of color (Gitomer, Latham, & Ziomek, 1999; Jan, 2007). Pre-testing of teacher candidates by preparation programs may further winnow the pool of minority candidates. Finally, an unintended consequence of the growth of diversity in other professional occupations may be that these opportunities attract individuals of color who would have, in an earlier era when occupational options were more limited, gone into teaching.

A combination of factors, then, helps to explain why the teaching force remains racially homogeneous. Yet despite the presence of a large majority of white teachers, educators are still dispersed across schools in remarkably segregated patterns. We review these trends below.

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Distribution of Teachers

Teachers, like students, are not evenly distributed across schools. Recall that white teachers makeup roughly 84% of teachers overall. An analysis of the 2003-04 SASS data found that urban schools have disproportionately high shares of black (15.1%) and Latino teachers (10.4%). While a majority of urban teachers are white (70.5%)—considerably higher than the percentage of white students—the lower percentage of white teachers reflects disproportionate sorting by location of school (Strizek, et al., 2007). Suburban schools, by contrast, had a teaching force that was 87% white, and rural schools reported an even higher percentage of white teachers.⁷

On a more positive note – in terms of better fulfilling the goal of integrating both students and faculty - higher percentages of black and Latino teachers are found in regions of the country where same-race students comprise higher shares of the enrollment. For example, the South has the highest regional percentage of black students, and in a national sample of teachers in 2005, 19% of teachers in schools in the South were black, also the highest of any region (Frankenberg, 2009a). Similarly, 11% of teachers in the West were Latino, which enrolls the largest share of Latino students. Of course, due to the homogenous nature of the teaching force, these percentages of teachers remain lower than their respective share of students. The two regions of the country with the least racial diversity among students—the Midwest and Northeast—also have the lowest diversity among teachers: 94% and 95% of teachers in these respective regions were white.

Further supporting the previously discussed judicial decisions regarding both faculty and student segregation, we find today that the relationship between student and teacher racial composition at the school level is strong. Simply put, schools with few students of color have few teachers of color, while similar patterns hold for schools with few white students. The “typical” white teacher taught in a school where 70% of students were white, compared with black, Latino, and Asian teachers who taught in schools where less than 40% of students were white (Frankenberg, 2009a). Further, while the typical black teacher taught in a school with 55% black students, the typical white teacher’s school enrolled a mere 10% black students.

Even among urban schools—which we saw above had more diverse faculties than other geographic locations—differences existed by student racial composition. Nationally, among urban schools serving student bodies with a large majority of white students, white teachers made up more than 95% of these teaching staffs in 2003-04 (Frankenberg, 2009b). In urban schools with a majority of nonwhite students, by contrast, only 60.8% teachers are white.

Due to the overlap in student racial and poverty concentration described above, it is not surprising that differences in teacher composition emerge when examining the connection between teacher race and student poverty. Just as students of color are disproportionately exposed to higher percentages of poor students, so too are teachers of color. In 2005-06, the typical white teacher taught in a school where 38% of students were from low-income households, while the typical black teacher’s school was comprised of 60% low-income students (Frankenberg, 2009a).

Teachers’ Own Exposure to Diversity, or Lack Thereof

In addition to the reinforcing nature of student and teacher composition, research also shows that teachers’ prior experiences may expose them to little racial diversity. Given the racial mismatch between students and teachers, this finding raises concerns that the teaching force has very little familiarity working with students (or even knowing other people) from different backgrounds.

Research on teachers suggest that most teach close to where they grew up (Gomez, 1993) and have had little exposure during their own schooling experiences—even teachers in diverse schools—to students of other races (Freeman, Brookhart, & Loadman, 1999). In our recent survey of teachers, most reported that the elementary schools they attended had very low percentages of students from other racial-ethnic groups (Frankenberg, 2009a).⁸ White teachers attended school with an average of 10% of students

⁷ Similar discrepancies among principals by school location existed, according to 2003-04 SASS data.

⁸ Asian teachers were an exception to these trends.

from other races, while black teachers were exposed to 28% of other-race students. There are significant differences in the early educational exposure of novice teachers, however, with black teachers in particular experiencing much more diverse elementary schools.

White teachers are often on faculties where the vast majority of their peers are also white. White teachers surveyed in 2005-06 estimated that nearly 90% of their fellow faculty members, on average, were white (Frankenberg, 2009a). By contrast, black, Asian, and mixed race teachers reported that two-thirds, or less, of their faculties, on average, were white. These patterns of racial homogeneity for whites, on one hand, and diversity for teachers of color, on the other, show substantial differences in teachers' perceptions of the racial composition of their own faculties. Because 87% of teachers reported that they turned to other faculty members who were part of the racial group they were seeking to learn about as a resource for understanding diversity issues (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008), this faculty isolation leaves white teachers few options for doing so, and may also burden the few teachers of color on such heavily white faculties (McIntyre, 2009).

A Consequence of Student and Teacher Segregation Patterns: Compounding Inequality

Student segregation has major implications for faculty stability. One of the most consistent trends related to educational inequality concerns the differential mobility of teachers leaving schools with higher numbers of low-income or minority students. Across different states, studies find that schools with higher percentages of black and Latino students have higher rates of teacher turnover (Loeb & Reininger, 2004; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Watson, 2001); white educators, who, again, make up the vast share of the teaching force, are particularly likely to do so. Our comparison of teachers' reported likelihood of either leaving their current school or leaving the teaching profession altogether was significantly higher—several times higher, in fact—among teachers in schools with 90-100% black and Hispanic students than for teachers in schools with less than 10% of minority students (Frankenberg, 2009a). This comparison, however, did not account for other school or teacher factors that might explain these patterns of mobility. One study found that when accounting for the working conditions at a school, the effect of student composition in predicting teacher mobility weakened (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005). Yet, if teachers of color are more likely to teach in heavily black and Latino schools, their reported plans to leave the teaching profession could help to perpetuate the low percentages of teachers of color. Further, higher teacher mobility will likely mean exposing students to more inexperienced teachers and will also cost schools significant resources in hiring and training new teachers.

Conclusion

Political and societal avoidance, along with an overwhelmingly conservative judiciary (Oliphant, 2010), have helped facilitate a drift towards more racially separate schools, even as the student population becomes increasingly diverse (Orfield, 2009; Orfield & Lee, 2007). The result: greater numbers of students of color are being funneled into segregated schools, constricting life opportunities along the way. And white students, who remain the most racially isolated group of schoolchildren, miss out on the chance to develop the increasingly important set of skills needed to work and live with members of other racial groups. Both of these facts threaten future workforce preparation – and, by extension, the vitality of the U.S. households and the economic structure.

Like students, the nation's teachers are racially distributed among schools in starkly identifiable ways. Schools with fewer students of color have fewer teachers of color. The reverse is also true, that predominately white schools have far more white teachers. The composition of teachers thus continues to imprint upon schools a marked racial identity, buttressing racially isolated student enrollments and providing few opportunities for interracial contact. A lack of contact across racial lines extends significantly into the past for white teachers, many of whom had relatively few early diverse schooling experiences. Indeed, today's segregated schools may be preventing tomorrow's teaching force from gaining valuable interracial experience to prepare them for the incredible diversity of the public schools in the decades to come. And beyond the lost opportunities and the self-perpetuating cycle of teacher and student

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segregation, the clear relationship between segregation and teacher mobility compounds the inequality of racially and socioeconomically isolated schools.

Where do we go from here? Political, social and judicial forces were responsible for the dramatic reduction in school segregation in the South, a region that also consistently maintained the highest percentage of black teachers. And as the country experienced desegregation, public opinion grew dramatically more favorable towards accepting the importance of racially diverse schools, even as the commitment to policies facilitating integration faltered. Yet those same political and judicial forces also must be held accountable for the current shift away from the democratic goal of an integrated society. The growing segregation of students and continued homogeneity and segregation of teachers demonstrates the harsh consequences of the rise of colorblind policy-making in a still segregated and stratified society.

The recent events in Mississippi may be part of a first step towards a reinvigorated commitment to *Brown*, along with several other new initiatives from the Obama administration (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, forthcoming). Despite the many constraints school districts face, the damaging consequences of allowing segregation to hamper the attainment of fundamental educational goals—equitable student opportunity and faculty stability—require renewed commitment and creativity to fulfilling *Brown*'s promise in an increasingly complex society.

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