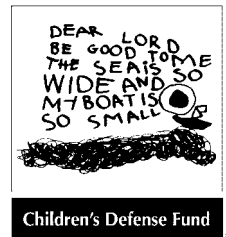


# Educational Resource Disparities For Minority & Low-Income Children

## Quick Facts



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We know what works. Virtually every study examining the resources that most effectively promote student achievement identify the same factors. Among these are quality teachers, smaller class sizes and access to high quality after-school programs, advanced curricula, and modern learning facilities. But too many of our children are denied these resources. Currently, significant disparities exist between wealthy, predominantly White communities, and those populated by poor and minority families, putting poor and minority children at significant academic disadvantage.

### ACCESS TO QUALITY TEACHING

Research demonstrates that access to quality teaching is one of the most significant factors in improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap.<sup>i</sup> Yet, poor and minority children have significantly less access to quality teaching.<sup>ii</sup>

- Schools with the highest percentages of minority, limited-English proficient and low-income students are more likely to employ beginning teachers than those with the lowest percentage of minority, limited-English proficient and low-income students.<sup>iii</sup>
- A significant body of research also has found that another indicator of teacher quality in middle and high school is whether teachers majored in the field in which they are teaching.<sup>iv</sup> Here again, gaps are profound. Classes in high-poverty schools are 77 percent more likely to be assigned to an out-of-field teacher than are classes in low-poverty schools.<sup>v</sup> Classes in majority nonwhite schools are over 40 percent more likely to be assigned to an out of-field teacher than those in mostly White schools.<sup>vi</sup>
- Level of academic attainment is another traditional indicator of teacher quality, and, again, teachers with master's degrees are less likely to teach in high-minority, low-income schools than they are to teach in high-income, low-minority schools.<sup>vii</sup>

Teacher attrition is the main reason there is a shortage of high quality teachers.<sup>viii</sup>

- The turnover rate for teachers in high-poverty schools is almost one third higher than the rate for all teachers in all schools.<sup>ix</sup>
- Teachers are significantly more likely to leave a school because of poor working conditions, and teachers in high-minority, low-income schools report significantly worse working conditions—including inadequate facilities, less availability of textbooks and supplies, fewer administrative supports, and larger class sizes.<sup>x</sup>
- High turnover is a burdensome cost to school districts and represents a loss of resources to the education system.<sup>xi</sup> For example, a study done in Texas estimates the cost of teacher turnover to be between \$216 and \$329 million each year.<sup>xii</sup>

### SMALL CLASS SIZE

Providing safe, smaller classes, led by highly qualified teachers is another key step to closing the achievement gap. Yet, small class sizes are not available to minority and nonminority students equally.

- In classes with more than 75 percent minority students, 31 percent of teachers have 25 or more students.
- In classes with less than 10 percent minority students, only 22 percent of teachers have 25 or more students.
- In classes that are 10-25 percent minority, 25 percent of teachers have classes with 25 or more students.<sup>xiii</sup>

### **ACCESS TO ADVANCED CURRICULA**

According to a study by the U.S. Department of Education, the rigor of courses taken reflects the quality of education schools deliver.<sup>xiv</sup> Yet, advanced curricula and high quality college preparation is not available to all on equal levels.

- In analyzing data from the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the National Research Council found that Black and Latino students are half as likely as Whites to be placed in gifted and talented classes. Asian/Pacific Islanders are one-third more likely than Whites to be placed in these advanced classes.<sup>xv</sup>
- The number of AP exams taken by Black students has increased 600 percent since 1984, and the number taken by Latino students has increased 460 percent. However, gaps in exam-taking persist between Blacks and Latinos and their White peers. There were 184.7 White test-takers per 100,000 White 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2000, compared to only 53.4 Black test-takers per 100,000 Black 12<sup>th</sup> graders and 111.3 Latino test-takers per 100,000 Latino 12<sup>th</sup> graders.<sup>xvi</sup>
- There also are significant gaps in access to advanced math and science courses. Whereas 45.1 percent of White and 55 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander high school graduates have taken pre-calculus, calculus, trigonometry and other advanced math courses, only 30.4 percent of Black, 26.2 percent of Latino, and 26.9 percent of Native American high school students graduate having taken these courses.<sup>xvii</sup>
- Trends are the same in the sciences. Whereas 15.9 percent of White and 29.5 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students graduate having taken Advanced Physics, Chemistry or Biology, only 10.3 percent Black, 10.7 percent Latino and 5.1 percent of Native American students graduate having completed such courses.<sup>xviii</sup>

### **SCHOOL FACILITIES AND THE NEED FOR MODERNIZATION**

Overcrowding of public schools has become a significant problem—especially as public school enrollment has reached historic levels and is expected to continue to grow well into the future.<sup>xix</sup> The problem is particularly acute for high-minority, low-income schools.

- Schools whose students are 50 percent or more minorities are nearly twice as likely to be overcrowded as schools whose students are less than 20 percent minorities.<sup>xx</sup>
- Schools whose students are 70 percent or more low-income are more than twice as likely to be overcrowded as schools whose students are less than 20 percent low-income.<sup>xxi</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> eg. Kati Haycock, "Thinking K-16," (Summer 1998) *Good Teaching Matters*, vol.3, issue 2.

<sup>ii</sup> National Research Council. (2002) *Minority Students in Special and Gifted Education* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press): 174.

<sup>iii</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics, *Condition of Education 2003* (Washington, DC).

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>v</sup> Craig D. Jerald, *All Talk, No Action: Putting an End to Out-of-Field Teaching* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, August 2002).

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>vii</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics, *Condition of Education 2002* (Washington, DC).

<sup>viii</sup> National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*, 6 (Washington, DC: Author, January 2003).

<sup>ix</sup> National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*, 10 (Washington, DC: Author, January 2003).

<sup>x</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xi</sup> Texas Center for Educational Research, *The Cost of Teacher Turnover* (November 2000).

<sup>xii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xiii</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *School and Staffing Survey (SASS)*, 1999-2000. As cited in Paul E. Barton, *Parsing the Achievement Gap: Baselines for Tracking Progress* (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, October 2003).

<sup>xiv</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics, *Condition of Education 2002* (Washington, DC).

<sup>xv</sup> National Research Council, M. Suzanne Donovan and Christopher T. Cross, Eds., *Minority Students in Special and Gifted Education* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2002): p. 51.

<sup>xvi</sup> U.S. Department of Education. *Status and Trends in the Education of Blacks* (Washington, DC: September 2003): Supplemental Table 4.7.

<sup>xvii</sup> U.S. Department of Education. National Center on Education Statistics as cited in *Status and Trends in the Education of Blacks* (September 2003).

<sup>xviii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xix</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics, *Condition of Education 2001* (Washington, DC).

<sup>xx</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xxi</sup> *Ibid.*