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# **Divided We *Fail*:** **Segregation and Inequality** **in the Southland's Schools**



by  
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**The Civil Rights Project**



*Proyecto Derechos Civiles*

## **Foreword: Are We Segregated and Satisfied?**

Southern California is one of the world's most diverse, urbanized communities with people from every part of the globe, no racial majority, and a sense that it is way ahead of the rest of the country. Certainly it is in terms of a diversity of cultures, languages, music and cuisines, as well as the way its population foreshadows the transformation that is taking place now in the rest of the country. In political terms, Southern California provided a large, progressive victory for the election of Barack Obama as President, and Los Angeles is governed by its first Latino Mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa. Many places in Southern California pay homage to the region's Mexican origins. People tend to be proud and satisfied about the region's diversity, and tend to think it is working out.

But there is a very different story. California is backwards in terms of racial and ethnic justice. The truth is that the civil rights revolution in the South never really arrived in Southern California, home to what is by far the nation's largest population of Latinos, the second largest Asian population and the West's largest population of African Americans. The South was forced to desegregate its schools and became the most integrated region of the country (in terms of schools) for more than a third of a century. But in Los Angeles, they changed the state constitution to block a desegregation plan. Southern California has subsequently done very little since the desegregation of Los Angeles was halted by that state proposition more than three decades ago. LA became the first major city in the nation to abandon mandatory desegregation after little more than a year of a limited order. Many nearby communities took no action as racial change and resegregation occurred.

The region has voted for four major anti-civil rights changes to the state constitution, one of which (forbidding fair housing enforcement) was overturned by the Warren Court in the 1960s. However, those banning affirmative action, drastically limiting the state constitution's rights to desegregation, and prohibiting affirmative action in hiring and employment have been allowed to stand and limit rights enjoyed in the large majority of U.S. states. About the time that the Latino population of the state was beginning to explode in the late 1970s, a state tax limit, Proposition 13, began to dramatically cut support for what had been a leading state system of well-supported public schools. Since then, California's school system has deteriorated markedly. Between the 1970s and the present, California has changed from a state where the average Latino student was enrolled in a substantially integrated school with a white majority to the most segregated state for Latino students, who are dramatically isolated from a rapidly declining but politically powerful white minority. African American students, though now accounting for only one-twelfth of the region's enrollment, are also highly segregated from whites and Asians (who perform better in schools than whites, on average, and are the most integrated population). Black students rarely attend all-black schools, favored by some desegregation critics, but more often enroll in largely Latino neighborhood schools where they are a declining minority in schools doubly disadvantaged by racial and socioeconomic isolation.<sup>1</sup> People can say sitting next to a white or Asian child makes no difference, but being in a middle-class school -- where most of the students head to college, experienced and expert teachers offer many college credit AP courses, your friends are fluent native English speakers, and colleges and employers seek out their well-

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<sup>1</sup> See section in report entitled, "Double Segregation in Southern California: Concentrations of Students by Race and Poverty" for further discussion of these trends.

prepared students -- actually makes a decisive difference in the educational and life opportunities afforded to students.

There is almost no public discussion of segregation in Southern California though the differences in schools and neighborhoods one or two freeway exits apart are often shocking. If one compares the outcomes in the "dropout factory" schools, where the major product is dropouts or students totally unprepared for college, with the kind of opportunities that exist in schools serving affluent communities, it seems they could be serving different countries. The fact that California's level of public funding for schools has become one of the worst in the U.S. makes the private resources more affluent communities can give their schools all the more important.

Two common reactions to the issue of school segregation typically blunt honest dialogue about its ongoing impact. The first is that desegregation was tried and it failed. It was actually tried far less in Southern California than in many other parts of the country that many Californians would consider less sophisticated. Further, there is increasingly compelling evidence that where desegregation was implemented seriously it succeeded in changing the lives of many students. (Though it certainly did not eliminate the entire achievement gap, much of which remains rooted in very unequal opportunity in the years before kindergarten--and in homes and neighborhoods of concentrated poverty). The national achievement gap was at its low point in the period when desegregation was at its high point, though of course no one claims that desegregation was the only cause.

The other criticism involves the issue of white flight. Certainly there was white flight when desegregation plans were implemented, but it was often a temporary acceleration in a housing trend that dated back all the way to the emergence of post-war white suburbia. Ending desegregation or never having any desegregation plan (which is true of a great many Southern California communities) did not stop the decline in the percentage of whites in the schools, which is primarily linked to differential birth rates, age structures, spreading residential segregation, and both U.S. and international migration patterns. Experience in the U.S. South shows that desegregation was most stable and long-lasting in areas where it included both the city and the suburbs, exactly the suggestion to the Los Angeles court that precipitated the successful campaign to restrict desegregation rights in California's constitution. White flight has since accelerated in many communities with no desegregation plans, including large segments of what were the whitest communities in the region in the 1970s and 1980s. When racial change goes neighborhood by neighborhood, community by community, first the white middle class exits, and then middle class families of any race often stop moving in. Tracking closely with housing patterns, school resegregation in these communities also accelerates.

Even if desegregation was a good idea, another argument goes, it is too late, since there are simply not enough whites to go around. Obviously it would have been much better if we had been serious about this issue during the civil rights era. If one thinks about making all the schools of Southern California majority white, it is obviously impossible at a time when the entire region has only one-fourth white students. More than a third of the students, however, are white and Asian, and many more are middle class. While all schools cannot become diverse by race, ethnicity and class, a great many could. There are means by which much more could be done through choice mechanisms, such as regional magnet schools. It would be considered

absurd to say that because we can cure only a half or a third of patients of a serious disease, we should do nothing.

Segregation is an educational and social disease. Sometimes its impacts are ameliorated for a while in some places, but the broad relationship is clear and strong. Isolation by poverty, language, and ethnicity threatens the future opportunities and mobility of students and communities excluded from competitive schools, and increasingly threatens the future of a society where young people are not learning how to live and work effectively across the deep lines of race and class in our region. Critics say we should just put the money into equalizing the schools where they are and insist that they achieve. That has been California and the nation's basic policy for more than four decades. That is what Headstart, Title I, No Child Left Behind and a variety of California reforms have tried to do. California adopted the full set of standards and accountability reforms pioneered in the South in the 1970s, and then market-based reforms like charter schools in the 1990s. We test teachers and students intensely and punish or exclude those who fall behind. Schools are threatened and sanctioned. These efforts have failed, primarily because they do not equalize the factors that are most strongly related to student learning—the peer groups of well-prepared and motivated students backed by communities with power to shape school opportunities, and the expert and experienced teachers who very strongly prefer to work with those students in those communities.

We must, of course, try everything possible to make our highly stratified schools more equal, especially in terms of excellent teachers, but we also must think very hard about the failures of the past four decades, when virtually no effort has been made to give poor, nonwhite students access to good middle class schools. Integrationists favor a full range of strategies to help the many schools that will remain doubly and triply (race, poverty, and language) segregated under any policy scenario at this point in our demographic transformation. But we're foolish not to try to accomplish something that works much better where it is possible.

Effective desegregation is only possible under some circumstances and it will not cure all the inequalities rooted in many aspects of life in our region, but it is reckless to think that we really know how to create and operate "separate but equal" schools on a large scale. That has never been done in the 115 years since *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The trend in the post-civil rights era has been to point to the rare "break the mold" schools with segregated enrollments and high scores and to ignore how odd it is that we celebrate the one school that succeeds in those terms, as if it shows that the 100 that do not will somehow be transformed. Obviously we should praise and support those unusual schools and their leaders but also recognize that the mold of segregation is a very strong and harsh one that is rarely broken. Wherever we can, we should produce stably integrated schools in stably integrated communities. This will require serious collaboration between school and housing officials, the enforcement of fair housing law, and the strong commitment of local governments. Right now that means, for example, looking at the hundreds of racially changing suburbs in Southern California, creating schools diverse by race and class in gentrifying urban communities, and reviving and strengthening the magnet schools and integrated dual-language programs in our central cities. It means looking at the impact of our subsidized housing programs on the segregation and resegregation of communities and schools. It means trying to avoid the ghettoization and barrio creation processes, those that transformed many city neighborhoods from middle class to impoverished communities in a decade or less

through the resegregation of housing and neighborhood schools. Communities that remain attractive to all and that offer all students the opportunity to prepare both for a good college and for the society in which they will live and work will have great advantages compared to those that do not. In Southern California, clearly those who learn how to operate fluently across social divisions will have a skill invaluable to individuals and essential for communities in the region's future.

I urge readers to set aside their assumptions and presuppositions as they read the stark statistics in this report by two young scholars. These statistics show the scale and the hard realities of the racial transformation and resegregation across Southern California. They show the relationship between those trends and opportunity for students. They show that we are isolating and giving inferior education to the groups that will dominate our region's future. In race relations, people tend to ignore many signs of inequality as long as possible, until a crisis or a social movement or large community failure makes it explosively apparent. Often it is too late by then for a good solution. People then ask, "Why didn't anyone tell us?" These reports are telling you now.

Gary Orfield

## **Executive Summary**

There are 3.6 million public school students in the six counties that make up Southern California (defined here as Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside counties). A fifth of all U.S. Latinos, now the nation's largest minority group, attend school in this region.

Over the last forty years, as a rapid and fateful transformation of the population occurred--and as the deeply imbedded educational inequalities became more and more evident--California has done less and less to address these issues. Civil rights enforcement in education declined dramatically, while, in its place, rose increasingly assertive national and state policies mandating that schools become equal and successful. Those policies were implemented without changing any of the external challenges faced by marginalized families and communities, or the internal realities of disparate teachers and educational opportunities across schools of various racial concentrations.

Southern California schools show profound segregation by race, poverty and language status, all of which are visibly related to disparities in educational opportunity and outcomes. This analysis provides the first comprehensive, region-wide study of enrollment and segregation patterns in the six-county Southern California region. It then addresses the question of why these trends matter: evaluating how segregation is related to graduation rates and college attendance, as well as the distribution of learning opportunities in Southern California. The report is based on data from 2008-09 provided by the U.S. Department of Education and the California State Department of Education.

### **Rapidly Diversifying Student Population in Southern California**

- In fifteen years, the characteristics of the student population in Southern California have shifted dramatically. From 1995 to 2009, each of the four coastal counties in the region - Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego – reported sharp increases in shares of Latino students; while the inland counties of San Bernardino and Riverside saw the Latino proportion climb even more steeply. For example, roughly 39% of San Bernardino's student population was Latino in 1995, compared to 56% in 2009. Shares of white and black students declined across Southern California during the same period. Enrollment patterns for Asian students suggest their numbers are growing substantially but evenly across the six-county region.
- In 2008, Latino students made up more than one out of two Southern California schoolchildren, but were most heavily concentrated in Los Angeles and the inland counties of Riverside and San Bernardino. One in ten students in the Southern California region in 2008 was Asian, amounting to the second largest concentration of Asian students in the country. A full 17% of students in Orange County schools were Asian, almost twice the share for the overall region. Black students overall represented 8% of the Southern California student population. Schools in Los Angeles County and San Bernardino reported the highest enrollments of black students; Ventura and Orange County reported the fewest.

Enrollment numbers for San Bernardino and Riverside suggested a substantial black migration to the far reaches of the Inland Empire.

### **Deepening patterns of segregation for black and Latino students**

*Amidst swift demographic shifts in Southern California's student population, levels of segregation have significantly worsened. As the white population declined, patterns of isolation for Latino students deepened.*

- In 1970, the average Latino student attended a metro area school in Los Angeles that was roughly 45% white. By 1980, the proportion of white students in the average Latino students' school had decreased by more than half, to 21%. Most recently, in 2008, the typical Latino student in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) went to a school where 6% of the students were white.

*During the desegregation battles, black students in the region experienced a brief increase in levels of exposure to white students.*

- In 1970s-era Los Angeles, the average black student went to a school that was roughly 14% white, a figure that increased to 16% by 1980—one year prior to the abandonment of the city's partial desegregation plan. San Diego's black students went to a school that was, on average, 36% white in 1970 and 42.5% white ten years later. By the start of the 21st century, however, the typical black student in the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) attended a school that was roughly 20% white. For the average black student in LAUSD, that figure was only 6%.

### **Contemporary racial segregation in Southern California**

*Given the racial complexity of the region's students, we examined segregation in several different ways. Yet all measures pointed to a basic fact: Southern California's students were extremely stratified in schools across the six counties.*

- In 2008, more than two out of five Latino students and nearly one-third of all black students in the region enrolled in intensely segregated learning environments--schools where 90-100% of students were from underrepresented minority backgrounds. Just 5% of Southern California's Asian students attended intensely segregated minority schools, and 2% of the region's white students did the same.
- White students made up 25% of the region's public school enrollment. Yet the average white student in Southern California attended a school that was nearly 50% white, a figure that highlights persistent patterns of disproportionate white isolation across the region.
- Together, white and Asian students made up 36% of the region-wide population. On average, however, black and Latino students in Southern California attended a school where less than a quarter of students are white and Asian.



## **Double and triple segregation by race, poverty and language**

### *Overlap between concentrations of race and poverty in schools*

- More than half of Southern California's students were eligible for free and reduced price lunch (FRL) in 2008, a rough proxy for relative student poverty in the region. That figure represents a notable increase in the number of students from all racial groups living in poverty in just one year (from 53% to 56%, with a pronounced increase occurring in the Inland Empire), and was emblematic of myriad challenges facing under-funded school systems in the six-county area.
- Keeping in mind that 56% of Southern Californian schoolchildren qualified for free or reduced priced lunches, the average white student in the region attended a school where FRL students made up just a third of the population. Contrast that figure to the school of the average black or Latino student, where more than half - 63% and 69%, respectively -- were FRL eligible students. These figures highlight a racial chasm in students' exposure to poverty across the region.
- Poor children were substantially more likely than non-poor children to attend schools with higher concentrations of black and Latino students. One of the starkest examples of that relationship existed in Orange County. In the OC, FRL eligible students attended schools where, on average, nearly two-thirds of the students were Latino. Students ineligible for FRL in Orange County, on the other hand, went to schools where under one-third of the students were Latino.
- Poverty concentration in Southern California's middle and high schools is even greater than racial and ethnic isolation. Virtually all secondary students were considered low-income once the student body of a middle or high school became more than 80% underrepresented minority.
- Schools also tended to reflect the racial and socioeconomic makeup of their surrounding neighborhoods. On average, over a quarter of households (26.2%) surrounding high schools enrolling majority White/Asian students (those enrolling 0-49% underrepresented minority students) earned greater than twice the state median of \$62,500 annually, in comparison to 15.6% and 7.8% of households surrounding segregated (those enrolling 50-89% underrepresented minority students) and intensely segregated schools, respectively.

### *Overlap between racial and linguistic concentrations in schools*

- Southern California's Latino students were most likely to attend schools with high concentrations of English Language Learners (ELLs). The average Latino student in the region attended a school where ELL students comprised nearly 30% of the total enrollment. This figure, in tandem with patterns suggesting Latinos are most likely to experience schools with high and overlapping concentrations of poverty and students of color, suggests that Latino students in the region experience triple segregation (by race, poverty, and language). Linguistically isolated educational settings face many of the challenges found in high poverty, high minority schools.
- In Southern California, ELL students were much more likely than non-ELL students to be enrolled in schools with high concentrations of Latino students,

according to a 2005-06 data sample from the U.S. Department of Education. The average student classified as an English Language Learner attended a school that is 73% Latino. In comparison, non-ELL students attended districts where Latino students made up 38% of the population. Non-ELL students in Southern California also reported significantly higher levels, on average, of exposure to white students.

### **Racial Opportunity Gaps in Southern California**

- Teacher quality is an extremely influential, school-level factor related to students' academic success. In 2008, students in intensely segregated schools were close to three times as likely to have a teacher lacking full qualifications than students attending majority white and Asian schools.
- A critical step for postsecondary success is access to college preparation resources in high school. In California, this equates to access to A-G courses taught by instructors qualified in the content area. Across Southern California counties, intensely segregated and segregated schools of color experienced a greater shortage of A-G courses and college preparatory teachers than majority white and Asian schools.
- Another critical predictor for postsecondary success—and related economic mobility—is secondary students' exposure to an advanced mathematics curriculum, especially for students of color. A measure of such a curriculum is access to advanced mathematics (Algebra II and higher) or Advanced Placement (AP) mathematics courses in high school. In 2008-2009, the higher the underrepresented concentration of students in a Southern California high school, the less likely a rigorous mathematical curriculum was offered to its students.
- Overcrowding creates unsafe and ineffective learning environments. Over twice as many intensely segregated secondary schools were identified by the state as critically overcrowded compared to predominately white and Asian schools (those enrolling 0-10% underrepresented minority students).

### **Racial Outcome Gaps in Southern California**

- Across Southern California, less than 50% of Grade 9 students in intensely segregated schools graduated on time. In schools educating a majority of white and Asian youth, 81% graduated on time.
- In terms of college matriculation, 22% of Grade 9 students from intensely segregated schools enrolled in some form of California postsecondary institution in the fall after graduation; in majority white/Asian schools, close to twice that amount (43%) of students enrolled in a two-year or four-year postsecondary institution.

As the number of white students continues to decline and as students from historically excluded groups become the large majority in Southern California, it is time to reopen the policy discussion on the issue of school segregation; not as a panacea, not as something that is feasible everywhere, but as a critical element in developing the region's human capital and preparing students from all groups for the society in which they must learn to

collaborate effectively on the job and in community life. Without appropriate shifts in policies and attitudes, segregation in Southern California will continue to deepen and evolve in increasingly harmful ways--threatening the future viability of the region. Divided, we fail.

## **Divided we Fail: Segregated and Unequal Schools in the Southland** **Gary Orfield, Genevieve Siegel-Hawley & John Kucsera**

In the fifty-seven years since the Warren Court handed down *Brown v. Board of Education*,<sup>2</sup> California has become the nation's most racially diverse state. Yet while California is seen as progressive along many social and political dimensions, it has done almost nothing to confront segregated and unequal education in the densely populated, six-county<sup>3</sup> span of Southern California.

The issue of school segregation was raised in California's courts and by civil rights advocates a half century ago, with little to show for those efforts. In the ensuing policy vacuum, Southern California's student population has been transformed by vast migrations from Latin America and Asia. Whites have become a minority, and the new Latino student majority has gone from experiencing high levels of integration four decades ago to being more segregated in California than in any other state in the nation.<sup>4</sup> Within this context, powerful evidence indicates that the region's schools are failing to provide the level of education necessary for the success of the rising racial majority, in addition to reinforcing the serious stratification of the region.

More than any other state outside the South, California has acted to prohibit or reverse civil rights policies, leaving itself with few tools to deal with sweeping changes and profound inequalities. Segregation in the state is directly related to educational and economic failures, in addition to the lack of preparation for students of all races to live and work well together in multiracial communities and institutions.

Beyond K-12 schooling, California's higher education system—where affirmative action has been outlawed—operates an extremely stratified admissions process.<sup>5</sup> The state's 1960 Master Plan for higher education only provides four-year college eligibility for the top third of California's students, without open access to four-year public colleges for the remaining two-thirds.<sup>6</sup> The system rarely helps students from weak, segregated high schools complete college in a state where the net gains of the economy tend to go to those with postsecondary education. For the Latino student majority, stark figures link

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<sup>2</sup> *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

<sup>3</sup> The six counties analyzed in this report are: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura.

<sup>4</sup> See Table 13 in Orfield, G. & Lee, C. (2007). *Historic Reversals, Accelerating Resegregation, and the Need for New Integration Strategies*. Los Angeles: Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

<sup>5</sup> University of California Statement of Intent to Register (SIRs) for Domestic Freshmen Fall 2010 Term, available at: [http://www.ucop.edu/news/factsheets/2010/frosh\\_cccsirs\\_table1.pdf](http://www.ucop.edu/news/factsheets/2010/frosh_cccsirs_table1.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Master Plan Survey Team (1960). *A Master Plan for Higher Education in California, 1960-1975*. Sacramento: California State Department of Education. Available at: <http://www.ucop.edu/acadinit/mastplan/MasterPlan1960.pdf>.

inferior educational opportunities to the failure to substantially raise college completion rates across generations, in addition to diminished intergenerational job mobility.<sup>7</sup>

While large numbers of Southern California's black and Latino families have followed the path out to suburbia created by whites after World War II, the basic housing reality is usually one of suburban resegregation, not lasting integration.<sup>8</sup> Communities and school districts are left to handle racial transformation on their own, and too many are playing out the cycle of resegregation that transformed thousands of central city neighborhoods decades ago. The state has no serious policy initiatives to deal with either school segregation or the housing segregation to which it is intimately linked.

Southern California schools show segregation by race, poverty and language status, all of which are visibly related to disparities in teacher qualifications, curricula, overcrowding and graduation. There are obvious spatial dimensions to this inequality, found in both the differences between the racial compositions of schools within districts, as well as in the differential educational opportunities between the coastal regions and in the less affluent inland communities, where many minority families became homeowners through predatory lending practices (e.g., subprime loans) in the years before the housing market crashed and now face no other option than foreclosure action.<sup>9</sup> The latter disparities are especially apparent in the greater Los Angeles "Inland Empire" schools that reach far into the California desert.

As the number of white students continues to decline and as students from historically excluded groups become the large majority in Southern California, it is time to reopen the policy discussion on the issue of school segregation; not as a panacea, not as something that is feasible everywhere, but as a critical element in developing the region's human capital and preparing all students for the society in which they must learn to collaborate effectively on the job and in community life.

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There are 3.6 million public school students in the six Southern California counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura. Almost a fifth of all U.S. Latinos, now the nation's largest minority group, go to school in

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<sup>7</sup> Gándara, P. & Contreras, F. (2009). *The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

<sup>8</sup> Institute on Race & Poverty. (2006). *Minority Suburbanization, Stable Integration, and Economic Opportunity in Fifteen Metropolitan Regions*. Minneapolis: Institute on Race and Poverty.

<sup>9</sup> Analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data in: Jason Harley, "Mortgage Denial Rates: Mortgage Discrimination in Southern California," draft report for Civil Rights Project, Nov. 15, 2010.

Southern California.<sup>10</sup> They face grave challenges. Roughly one in four of the region's Latino students reside in homes where Spanish is the first language—and live in neighborhoods with few fluent English speakers—but very little effort has been made to integrate them into schools and classes with sizable shares of English-speaking classmates. In the resulting segregated educational contexts, teachers are forbidden, under threat of criminal sanctions, to teach students in their home language.<sup>11</sup> This reality unfolds across the region, despite research strongly indicating that students first learn to read, among other skills, more effectively in the language they actually speak.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, schools are also judged—and sanctioned, in the name of tough accountability standards—according to achievement on tests written in English; even when the tests underestimate students' actual knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the state's decision to implement a high school exit exam, again in the name of accountability, has taken diplomas from hundreds of thousands of Latino students who met all of their high school course requirements—a decision which has, unsurprisingly, exacerbated already dismal dropout rates.<sup>14</sup>

Ironically, as the speedy and fateful transformation of the future population occurred—and as deeply imbedded educational inequalities became more and more evident—less and less was done to address these issues. Civil rights enforcement in education declined dramatically; in its place rose increasingly assertive policies mandating that schools become equal and successful. Those policies were implemented without changing any of the challenging external realities of families and communities or the internal realities of disparate teachers and curricula. Such reforms, predictably, have failed; too often making bad conditions worse.<sup>15</sup>

Efforts to equalize education across lines of race, ethnicity and language have been severely hampered by broader limitations on civil rights policy and public funds,

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<sup>10</sup> The Southern California region educates roughly 18.5% of the nation's Latino students. According to figures from NCES' Common Core of Data in 2008-09, the six Southern California counties enroll 1,805,370 Latino students. According to the same dataset, there are 9,757,446 Latino students enrolled in regular public schools nationwide.

<sup>11</sup> California Ballot Proposition 227. ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS INITIATIVE STATUTE. Available at: <http://primary98.sos.ca.gov/VoterGuide/Propositions/227.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Gándara, P. & Hopkins, M. (2009). *Forbidden Language: English Learners and Restrictive Language Policies*. New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>13</sup> Rumberger, R. & Gandara, P. (2004) Seeking Equity in the Education of California's English Learners. *Teachers College Record*, 106(10), pp. 2032–2056 at p. 2040-2042.

<sup>14</sup> Reardon, S., Atteberry A., Arshan, N. & Kurlaender, M. (2009). Effects of the California High School Exit Exam

on Student Persistence, Achievement and Graduation. Stanford University: Institute on Education Policy and Practice. Available at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/irepp/cgi-bin/joomla/index.php>.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* See also Darling Hammond, L. (2010). *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity will Determine the Future*. New York: Teachers College Press, Chapter 3; Sunderman, G., Kim, J. and Orfield, G. (2005). *NCLB Meets School Realities: Lessons from the Field*. Corwin Press.

often under the leadership of prominent Southern California political leaders—including Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, both of the Los Angeles suburban areas, and Governor Pete Wilson, who rose to power as mayor of San Diego. Since 1960, the voters of California have supported six major state propositions designed to limit the rights of minorities. One prohibited fair housing legislation (later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court) and another radically limited school desegregation remedies.<sup>16</sup> Another three slashed services for immigrants, forbade affirmative action in hiring and college admissions, and outlawed bilingual education.<sup>17</sup> And beginning in 1978, a series of propositions dramatically limited taxes and funds for state and local programs, to include, of course, education.<sup>18</sup> This has been the arc of California's recent policy in the two arenas—funding and civil rights—that likely matter most to educational opportunity.

This research examines two critical and related issues: patterns of segregation and the associated outcomes and opportunities for students. Part I presents data related to racial, ethnic and linguistic school segregation across the region. Part II illuminates the kinds of educational resources (e.g., teacher quality and curriculum) and outcomes (e.g., graduation rates) that are linked to existing segregation. We focus primarily on information gleaned from the most recent federal and state data available, but in several places offer prior numbers to better contextualize today's trends. Before delving into the analysis, we present a brief overview of desegregation efforts since the 1960s across the state and region. We then examine school enrollment patterns for the region and its six counties, followed by an analysis of segregation trends by race, class and language. We close with a discussion and implications for policy.

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<sup>16</sup> See California Ballot Propositions 1 and 14.

<sup>17</sup> See California Ballot Propositions 187, 209, and 227.

<sup>18</sup> See California Ballot Proposition 13.

## Desegregation in Southern California: Early promises, subsequent failures

California's courts were among the first to hear arguments detailing the harms of school segregation for minority students, and to rule against the practice as it involved Latino students. The 1946 *Mendez* decision in the Los Angeles suburb of Westminster was an important forerunner to *Brown*.<sup>19</sup> In general, the state maintained a positive policy on integration until serious resistance developed in the 1970s. In 1958, for example, California established a commission to deal with teacher equity issues. The group subsequently became known as the Commission on Equal Opportunities in Education, which implemented policies set forth by the legislature and the state Board of Education with the help of a staff known as the Bureau of Intergroup Relations.<sup>20</sup> At the height of the civil rights era in the mid-1960s, the Bureau began to play an active role in advising school districts on integration issues; first in Oakland and then in a variety of other districts.

California law until the late 1960s was interpreted by the state Supreme Court to mean that school segregation was inherently unequal, regardless of its cause or origin. This acknowledgement resulted in a decidedly lower standard of proof in desegregation cases heard by the state courts—unlike the federal judicial system, which traditionally placed a great burden on civil rights groups. In federal school desegregation cases, civil rights advocates were forced to gather together massive resources in an effort to compile evidence proving complex historical violations in large cities.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, the California Supreme Court simply ruled that segregated schools were illegal, whatever their cause, and that, if necessary, desegregation could take place across district boundary lines (something the U.S. Supreme Court made extremely difficult in its 1974 Detroit decision<sup>22</sup>). Given this context, a number of Southern California's major legal battles over segregation went to state courts rather than to the federal judicial system.

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<sup>19</sup> *Mendez v. Westminster Mendez, et al. v. Westminster School District, et al.*, 64 F.Supp. 544 (C.D. Cal. 1946), aff'd, 161 F.2d 774 (9th Cir. 1947) (en banc).

<sup>20</sup> The Bureau of Intergroup Relations is the staff for the Commission on Equal Opportunities in Education, which was established by the Legislature and the State Board of Education. The bureau assists and advises school districts in three fields: (1) nondiscrimination in employment of teachers because of race, religion, national origin, age, or marital status; (2) alleviation of racial and ethnic segregation of pupils in the schools; and (3) intergroup education, including improvement of curriculum materials, teacher resources, and skills in working with children of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. In November 1964, the Bureau of Intergroup Relations was established as the staff for the Commission on Equal Opportunities in Education. Established in 1958 (as the Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity for Teachers), in 1963 this office was given responsibility for assisting and advising schools in problems of de facto segregation. This assignment brought it into action in the summer of 1964, when a boycott was planned to protest de facto segregation in Oakland schools.

<sup>21</sup> Civil rights groups were never able to mount city-wide cases in either Chicago or New York, the two other largest systems. See Orfield, G. (1979). *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution. Chapter 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Milliken v. Bradley*, 418 U.S. 717 (1974).



*A rightward shift: Governor Reagan and statewide propositions help undermine early desegregation efforts*

In spite of the state's promising legal context, an ongoing struggle occurred over the parameters of civil rights law and the politics of implementing it. Following the 1965 Los Angeles riots, the election of Ronald Reagan as California's governor (1966-1974) heralded a dramatic swing to the right. Reagan was a civil rights adversary; he had opposed California's fair housing law and was one of the few Republican leaders outside the South who opposed the historic 1964 Civil Rights Act ending segregation in public accommodations, forbidding job discrimination and prohibiting discrimination in all institutions receiving federal money.<sup>23</sup>

Just a few years prior to Reagan's election, in 1963, plaintiffs filed the Los Angeles school desegregation case. However, due to long delays in the courts (including a five-year delay on appeal), the electoral defeat of the first judge, who ruled that the city must desegregate, and the subsequent reluctance of any other judge to take the case—in addition to a massive legal battle—it would be sixteen years before a Los Angeles desegregation plan was approved by the state Supreme Court.<sup>24</sup> And in the meantime, California voters adopted the first proposition intended to block desegregation orders.

The state-wide presidential election ballot of 1972 contained a proposition repealing a California law requiring districts to study and consider options to diminish segregation. Known as the Wakefield Anti-Busing Proposition, it explicitly forbade the race-conscious assignment of students for purposes of desegregation. Sixty-two percent of Californians voted to adopt the Wakefield Anti-Busing Proposition in the 1972 election.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately, though, it was overruled by the California Supreme Court as illegitimately eliminating basic constitutional rights.<sup>26</sup> (In an ironic twist, the fundamental principle of the overturned 1972 Wakefield initiative, which stated that “no public school student shall, because of his race, creed, or color, be assigned to or be required to attend a particular school,” would be written into the U.S. Constitution three decades later through the U.S. Supreme Court's 2007 *Parents Involved*<sup>27</sup> decision. The key vote in the case came from California's own Justice Anthony Kennedy, appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1988.)

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<sup>23</sup> Perhaps signaling the impending political shift, just prior to Reagan's election, California voters enacted a proposition taking away the legislature's power to enact a fair housing law. That referendum was eventually overturned by the Supreme Court and the state did outlaw housing discrimination. See *Reitman v. Mulkey*, 387 U.S. 369 (1967).

<sup>24</sup> *Crawford v. Los Angeles Board of Education*, 17 Cal 3d 280 (1976).

<sup>25</sup> California Secretary of State, “Proposed Amendments to Constitution; Propositions and Proposed Laws Together with Arguments,” General Election, Tuesday, Nov. 7, 1972, pp. 33-34; 56-58. *Crawford v. Los Angeles Board of Education*, 17 Cal 3d 280 (1976).

<sup>26</sup> *Crawford v. Los Angeles Board of Education*, 17 Cal 3d 280 (1976). The California constitution required desegregation regardless of the cause of the segregation and desegregation plans could cross boundary lines.

<sup>27</sup> *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*, 127 S.Ct. 2738 (2007).

The proposition that actually succeeded in eliminating desegregation rights was called Proposition 1, approved by two-thirds of California voters in 1979. Proposition 1 originated as a direct result of a Los Angeles desegregation order and the recommendations of court-appointed experts to include the suburbs in the remedy.<sup>28</sup> It was explicitly designed to roll back desegregation rights in the state.

After the passage of Proposition 1, school desegregation could continue only with a finding of intentional segregation (previously the California Supreme Court found segregation to be inherently unequal under the state constitution, regardless of the cause). Still, the trial judge in Los Angeles' *Crawford* case held that there had been a finding of intentional discrimination in the district, only to be overturned by the appellate court which promptly ordered the termination of the mandatory desegregation plan. The state Supreme Court—under fierce attack by conservatives—then refused to hear the case, stunning observers who had watched it uphold desegregation mandates for decades. Civil rights groups appealed Proposition 1 all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where a more conservative Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that the California proposition was legal.<sup>29</sup>

Because of the intense political pressure brought to bear on the *Crawford* case, court administrators were unable to find a single judge in Los Angeles willing to take it on after the first judge was defeated for reelection. California's trial judges for the Superior Court were locally elected officials and, consequently, very reluctant to take on controversial cases. Paul Egly, the suburban judge who did eventually agree to hear the *Crawford* case, quickly found himself in a maelstrom of judicial and political battles. Egly was deeply disappointed by the way the city's active mass media played up the struggle against the court, at the expense of reporting on the evidence presented. In the end, he was heartbroken over the abandonment of the issue by the state Supreme Court (which was itself under assault). Egly's judicial career was over and he

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<sup>28</sup> Desegregation experts produced a variety of statistical analyses that suggested more wide-ranging remedies were necessary in the region. Finding "virtually zero probability that the city's demographic patterns would produce integrated neighborhoods and schools without intervention," social science researchers warned the courts that, barring swift action, segregation would spread rapidly into the predominately white San Fernando Valley. See Orfield, G. (1984). "Lessons of the Los Angeles Desegregation Case." *Education and Urban Society* 16: 338-353, p. 349. Expert reports submitted to the courts in 1978 outlined the urgent necessity for better housing policies, particularly if the emphasis on busing was to be eliminated in the future. *Ibid.* One of the desegregation experts also showed that stably desegregated neighborhood schools were virtually non-existent, further concluding that the average school enrolling its first black student would experience total resegregation within seven years. In the end, demographic predictions from 1978 came to pass, and many of those in the San Fernando Valley neighborhoods who were persuaded that blocking busing would prevent white flight were wrong. In fact, the turn away from broader desegregation strategies actually stripped their communities of policies that may have created more stability.

<sup>29</sup> *Crawford v. Los Angeles Board of Education*, 458 U.S. 527 (1982).

was left shocked at the outcome, still expressing his sense of betrayal by the courts, by local officials and by the media decades later.<sup>30</sup>

Since it was impossible for civil rights groups to obtain sufficient resources to carry out a federal lawsuit proving the history of discrimination among the hundreds of Los Angeles schools, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1982 decision regarding Proposition 1—and the state Supreme Court's refusal to hear the case—marked the end of desegregation in the city (apart from a small program of magnet schools) after less than two years of implementing a modest plan. No other major city had abandoned desegregation so rapidly. The judicial actions signaled an elimination of rights that had consistently been found to be part of the California constitution—and a virtual guarantee that nothing of consequence could be done to desegregate California's largest cities in state courts.

### *The Supreme Court limits desegregation and equity*

President Nixon had the unusual good fortune to appoint four new Supreme Court justices in his first term. They supplied four of the five votes to limit desegregation across city-suburban lines in the 1974 *Milliken v. Bradley*<sup>31</sup> decision, which made it far more difficult to successfully desegregate central cities and racially changing suburbs—critical issues for Southern California during that period. The same four justices were also a critical voting bloc in *San Antonio Independent School Dist. v. Rodriguez*,<sup>32</sup> a 5-4 decision that failed to establish a federal right to equal school resources. In essence, Nixon appointees' decisions meant there was no federal right to either meaningful desegregation or equal schooling for groups that had been historically excluded in Southern California and the nation.

### *Pasadena: A federal desegregation case*

The only case that went to the U.S. Supreme Court from Southern California produced a clear limit on desegregation policy.<sup>33</sup> In 1976, a ruling involving the Pasadena school district reasoned that courts did not have to adjust school desegregation plans as the demographics of communities changed.<sup>34</sup>

Prior to making its way to the Supreme Court, the trial judge in Pasadena's *Spangler* case concluded that the district was not yet fully desegregated. And because racial change led to the

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<sup>30</sup> Ettinger, D. S. "The Quest to Desegregate Los Angeles Schools," *Los Angeles Lawyer*, March 2003, pp. 55-67. G. Orfield and P. Gándara interview with Judge Egly, May 23, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> 418 U.S. 717.

<sup>32</sup> 411 U.S. 1 (1973).

<sup>33</sup> *Pasadena Board of Education v. Spangler* 427 US 424 (1976), argued 27-28 Apr. 1976, decided 28 June 1976 by vote of 6 to 2; Rehnquist for the Court.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

resegregation of five schools in the four years after the 1970 plan was implemented, the trial judge had directed the district to readjust the plan regularly to prevent racial resegregation.

Yet in a clear sign of changes to come, the Supreme Court ruled, 6-2, that the lower court's order was not permissible. The Pasadena case was the first triumph of Justice William Rehnquist (later elevated to chief justice by Reagan) in what would be a continuing effort to roll back federal desegregation requirements.<sup>35</sup> The Court held that unless plaintiffs could show that racial change was linked to new segregative actions, the judicial system had no power to require further desegregation "once the affirmative duty to desegregate had been accomplished and racial discrimination through official action [was] eliminated from the system."<sup>36</sup>

The *Spangler* decision was a critical barrier to the evolving process of urban school desegregation,<sup>37</sup> particularly in Southern California, an area of great mobility, massive immigration, and vast racial change. Given the rapid racial transition occurring in the region, the decision effectively allowed desegregation plans to become outdated almost as soon as they were implemented. *Spangler* demonstrated an unwillingness to deal with the nature of demographic change in metropolitan areas, where the great majority of Americans lived. The ruling also reflected a judicial tendency to look at a single court order, which may have produced desegregation for a few years, as fully repairing the damage caused by generations of discrimination.

#### *San Diego: The limits of voluntary integration strategies*

San Diego, a large city with a sizeable white population, had favorable conditions for desegregation. Yet the desegregation process came late to San Diego and was never applied vigorously. In the end, San Diego's plan amounted to a purely voluntary approach—largely in the form of a modest magnet program—and no transfer of white students to segregated nonwhite schools.

The desegregation lawsuit in the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD)<sup>38</sup> was filed thirteen years after the *Crawford* case, shortly following the 1976 California Supreme Court's decision upholding the Los Angeles ruling. In the next year, the Superior Court in San Diego

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<sup>35</sup> Davis, S. (1989), *Justice Rehnquist and the Constitution*, Princeton Univ. Press, pp. 56-63.

<sup>36</sup> *Pasadena Board of Education v. Spangler*, 427 U.S. 424, at 425.

<sup>37</sup> *Milliken v. Bradley*, a U.S. Supreme Court case decided in 1974, represented another critical roadblock to desegregation. *Milliken* absolved most suburban jurisdictions for patterns of segregation within central cities and the courts also stopped looking seriously at the factors that caused the creation and spread of housing segregation. Instead, judges increasingly assumed that patterns of housing segregation were natural trends in urban communities, taking their existence as justification for passively accepting the spread of segregation—rather than a reason for forging more durable orders (for instance, combining housing and school remedies).

<sup>38</sup> *Carlin v. Board of Education*, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego Superior Court No. 303800 (1967-1998).

decided to follow a completely voluntary integration method of the sort that had never produced district-wide desegregation. The district created magnet schools, concentrated in the inner city, and a program called VEEP (Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program) to permit voluntary transfers of black and Latino students to outlying white schools. The order left the white parts of the city virtually untouched and failed to desegregate neighborhood schools that were initially identified as illegally segregated in the court order.

San Diego district officials later supplemented VEEP and magnet programs, which had long provided free transportation to students, with an open enrollment option allowing students to attend any school in the district without the offer of transportation. Of course, lacking transportation provisions, choice plans do not offer real options for families who cannot provide their own transport to school every day and place disproportionate limits on disadvantaged families. All three voluntary choice strategies continue to the present day, with charter schools rounding out the array of options currently available in the district.

Yet recent reports based on San Diego schools raise concerns that, of the four major school choice programs in the district, just two continue to promote racial diversity. Not surprisingly, magnet schools and VEEP – both of which maintain important civil rights protections, including free transportation and specific diversity goals tailored to meet state standards – have a positive effect on integration in the district.<sup>39</sup> Open enrollment and charter schools, on the other hand, have a segregating effect on students in San Diego public schools. Both of the latter programs attract disproportionately higher percentages of white students.<sup>40</sup>

The San Diego narrative suggests that little desegregation occurred in the district, primarily due to the voluntary nature of a plan that relied on families to navigate the choice system. Of the 23 schools the courts found segregated in 1976, not only were 9 still segregated a third of a century later, but they were also under sanctions for failing to meet the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.<sup>41</sup> In the meantime, though the court had avoided any mandatory desegregation because of fears of white flight, the district changed from a situation where about three fourths of students were white to one where under one fourth are white.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Koedel C., Betts, J., Rice, L. & Zau, A. (2010). The Social Cost of Open Enrollment as a School Choice Policy. NBER. Available at: [http://economics.missouri.edu/working-papers/2009/WP0910\\_koedel.pdf](http://economics.missouri.edu/working-papers/2009/WP0910_koedel.pdf) See also Betts, J. et al. (2006). *Does school choice work? Effects on Student Integration and Achievement*. San Francisco: California Public Policy Institute.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* See also Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G. & Wang, J. (2010). *Choice without Equity: Charter School Segregation and the Need for Civil Rights Standards*. Los Angeles: UCLA Civil Rights Project.

<sup>41</sup> Magee, M. (17 May 2004). "Carlin's Legacy," *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Available at: [http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20040517/news\\_lz1n17carlin.html](http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20040517/news_lz1n17carlin.html).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Growth of school choice in Southern California: Promise or peril?*

Like SDUSD, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has also experienced growing interest in school choice options. Together, magnet and charter schools enroll nearly one out of five students in LAUSD.<sup>43</sup> The growth of choice in the region's two largest school districts presents possibilities to either promote or detract from efforts to increase school diversity. Schools of choice offer an important opportunity to disentangle patterns of residential segregation from school segregation trends because they are able to draw students across traditional attendance boundaries—and, in some cases, across district boundary lines.

However, the example of San Diego illustrates some of the ways in which the design of school choice can impact racial diversity. Choice programs that contain civil rights considerations—like the provision of free transportation, outreach to a diverse set of communities, diversity goals embedded in the admissions process—ultimately tend to be associated with higher levels of diversity.<sup>44</sup> Magnet schools, a system of choice with historical roots in the desegregation era, are often (but not always<sup>45</sup>) structured with these civil rights protections in mind. By contrast, the charter sector is governed by a disparate set of state laws related to racial diversity and recently have received little in the way of federal guidance on the importance of designing programs to promote diversity.<sup>46</sup> Without strong federal or state policy in place, and with little evidence of enforcement of existing policy,<sup>47</sup> it follows that charter schools have been linked to high levels of segregation—particularly for black students.<sup>48</sup>

A report released by the Civil Rights Project/Proyecto de Derechos Civiles last year found that, state-wide, minority students in California's charter schools were more likely to enroll in intensely segregated environments (where 90-100% of students were minorities) than minority students in regular public schools. This trend held true for the San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos metro area, but was not the case in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana or the

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<sup>43</sup> Los Angeles Times. (2011). *Graphic: Types of school*. Available at: [http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-011010-me-charter\\_magstats-g,0,7622003.graphic](http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-011010-me-charter_magstats-g,0,7622003.graphic). Author's calculations.

<sup>44</sup> Frankenberg, E. & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2008). *The Forgotten Choice: Magnet Schools in a Changing Landscape*. Los Angeles: UCLA Civil Rights Project.

<sup>45</sup> Frankenberg, E. & Le, C.Q. (2008). The Post-Seattle/Louisville Challenge: Extra-Legal Obstacles to Integration, 69 Ohio St. L. J. 1015, pp. 1047-48.

<sup>46</sup> Siegel-Hawley, G. & Frankenberg E. (forthcoming). Does Law Influence Charter School Diversity? An Analysis of Federal and State Legislation. *University of Michigan Law Review*.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G. & Wang, J. (2010). Choice without Equity: Charter School Segregation and the Need for Civil Rights Standards. Los Angeles: UCLA Civil Rights Project; Gary Miron et al. (2010). *Schools Without Diversity: Education Management Organizations, Charter Schools and the Demographic Stratification of the American School System*. University of Colorado at Boulder Education and the Public Interest Center and Arizona State University Education Research Policy Unit. Available at: <http://www.epicpolicy.org/files/EMO-Seg.pdf>. Finnegan et al. (2004). *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program: Final Report*. U.S. Department of Education Office of the Deputy Secretary Policy and Program Studies Service. Available at: [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/29/d8/04.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/29/d8/04.pdf).

Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario metropolitan statistical areas. However, the report also found that California's charter schools enrolled a disproportionate share of white students, suggesting that charters may be facilitating patterns of white segregation in some locales.<sup>49</sup> Evidence from Southern California suggests that white segregation in charter schools is indeed an issue, particularly in the Inland Empire.

*Further struggle: State politics realign courts, dismantle desegregation offices and alter the constitution*

Under Gov. George Deukmejian (1983-1991) a brutal and successful attack on the California Supreme Court was carried out. In 1986, in an extraordinary election, the Chief Justice and two Associate Justices were recalled by public vote and removed from the Court in a battle connected to the Governor's reelection campaign.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, during Deukmejian's term, the Intergroup Relations office was shut down and the state stopped playing any active role on the desegregation issue.<sup>51</sup>

Over the next thirty years, as racial isolation and educational inequality became far more severe, particularly for Latino students, the desegregation issue simply disappeared in state policy. In the hopes of better serving Latino students, the state adopted a bilingual education law in 1980, but let it lapse and then adopted a proposition forbidding the use of native language instruction.<sup>52</sup> California—like other states around the country—also implemented a policy framework of high stakes testing and high school exit exams, which put segregated minority schools and their students under intense pressure, leading many of the segregated schools to be branded as failures. Many of the students in weak schools failed to pass the high school exit test, losing their diplomas after passing all of their courses—partly because of lack of high level academic English that was very difficult to acquire in segregated schools in segregated neighborhoods.<sup>53</sup>

Paradoxically, California continued to provide streams of funds to pay desegregation costs in communities with “desegregation” plans—that often had only very limited transfer opportunities—where there was virtually no actual integration. LAUSD was the largest beneficiary of these funds, which, over the decades, amounted to several billion dollars. No

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<sup>49</sup> For more discussion, see Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G. & Wang, J. (2010). *California Fact Sheet*. Available at: <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/choice-without-equity-2009-report/CRP-CWE-California-facts-2010.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> Wicker, T. (15 September 1986). “In the Nation; A Naked Power Grab,” *New York Times*, Sec. 4, p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> In the 1990s, another administration led by Gov. Pete Wilson would preside over the enactment of three constitutional amendments limiting rights of immigrants, forbidding most bilingual education, and prohibiting affirmative action.

<sup>52</sup> Bilingual Education Improvement and Reform Act (California AB 507); Prop. 227, English Language Education for Immigrant Children.

<sup>53</sup> Rumberger & Gándara, 2004.

accountability was attached to the desegregation funding.<sup>54</sup> School districts continued to spend desegregation money on segregated schools, even as they named some of the most isolated and unequal educational settings after civil rights leaders who fought tirelessly for integration.

*California's leaders on the national stage: Rolling back desegregation in Southern California*

It is interesting to consider that the movement for integration of American schools was triggered by a Supreme Court led by a former California Governor, Earl Warren; conversely, the greatest pushback to minimize and reverse desegregation came from two Southern California presidents, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan.

After his election, Nixon terminated enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a piece of legislation that had used federal funds and the power of the Justice Department to produce widespread school desegregation in the South. Nixon's changes to civil rights policy affecting schools and housing, along with his success in naming four conservative justices to the Supreme Court, brought an end to the expansion of desegregation law and set the stage for a rollback. In subsequent years, President Reagan and the first Bush Administration completed the political transformation of the Supreme Court (as well as many of the lower courts), which led to a series of decisions that produced a dismantling of desegregation plans across the country.<sup>55</sup>

Both then President Nixon and Governor Reagan assailed the Los Angeles desegregation order. In his major 1970 desegregation statement, President Nixon called Judge Gittelson's Los Angeles decision "probably the most extreme judicial decree so far."<sup>56</sup> Governor Reagan called the ruling, by a judge he had appointed, "utterly ridiculous." Yet in contrast to the executive leadership, the California Supreme Court concluded that the decision was "completely justified."<sup>57</sup>

Nixon and Reagan were the only two Presidents ever elected from Southern California. Both were profoundly opposed to integration plans and no one did more than they did to lock the metropolitan Southland into increasingly rigid school segregation and educational inequality as it went through racial transition. Although much of the initial desegregation action was triggered

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<sup>54</sup> Der, H. Resegregation and Achievement Gap: Challenges to San Francisco School Desegregation, in Symposium, Rekindling the Spirit of Brown v. Board of Education, 6 *Afr.-Am. L. & Pol'y Rep.* 226; 11 *Asian L.J.* 308; 15 *Berkeley La Raza L.J.* 99; 19 *Berkeley Women's L.J.* 427; *Calif. L. Rev.* (2004).

<sup>55</sup> Le, C. Q. (2010). Racially Integrated Education and the Role of the Federal Government. *North Carolina Law Review*, 88.

<sup>56</sup> President Richard Nixon, "Statement about Desegregation of Elementary and Secondary Schools," March 24, 1970.

<sup>57</sup> The state court went on to rule that, while the lower court had proved that school segregation in Los Angeles was de jure in nature, under the California Constitution all segregation, no matter what the cause, harmed students of color. In the words of the court, "the de facto-de jure distinction retains little, if any, significance for the children whose constitutional rights are at issue here." (*Crawford v. Los Angeles Board of Education*, 17 Cal 3d 280 at 301).



by issues of black segregation, the largest harm was afflicted on growing Latino communities, substantially integrated in 1970 but concentrated in schools characterized by multiple levels of segregation and inequality by 2000.

In sum, desegregation in Southern California has been severely undermined by short-sighted and circumscribed efforts to provide students of color access to the region's most highly resourced schools. In what has become the most multiracial, complex locale in the country, token efforts to integrate have done little to alter profoundly separate educational systems. Southern California schools are now divided along the dimensions of race, class and language, further complicating efforts to achieve equal educational opportunity.

### *The Data*

This analysis provides the first comprehensive, region-wide study of educational enrollment and segregation patterns (Part I) and associated educational opportunities and outcomes (Part II) in Southern California. Most of the analyses are based on federal data provided by the U.S. Department of Education, as well as state data from the California Department of Education, for the school year 2008-09. Given the demographic intricacies of the Southern California region, we examine racial, socioeconomic and linguistic enrollment trends using several different measures of segregation. We rely heavily on two inversely related indices, exposure and isolation, with each providing an important perspective on the distribution of students in the region. Both indices help describe the demographic composition of schools where the average member of a racial/ethnic group learns.<sup>58</sup> We also report the share of underrepresented minority students<sup>59</sup> in schools with concentrations of students of color—those where more than half the students are from underrepresented minority groups—along with the percent of minorities in intensely segregated schools, places where 90-100% of students are underrepresented minority youth.<sup>60</sup>

Throughout the report, the term segregation refers to levels of racial isolation for students. It does not indicate whether or not isolation trends are overtly caused by law or discrimination. Segregation is a fact, not a judgment, and saying that a group is segregated does not necessarily mean that desegregation is feasible in the area under study. The causes of segregation and the possible remedies are separate issues. Most research on the educational impacts of segregation indicates that the harm comes from the condition of isolation and its associated inequalities, not from the processes that produced the segregation.

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<sup>58</sup> Frankenberg, E., Orfield, G. & Lee (2002). *A Multiracial Society with Segregated Schools: Are We Losing the Dream?* Cambridge: Harvard Civil Rights Project.

<sup>59</sup> This analysis considers black, Latino and American Indian students to be underrepresented minority students, based on patterns of segregation and related gaps in opportunity and outcomes for these racial groups in Southern California.

<sup>60</sup> Orfield, G. (2009). *Reviving the Goal of an Integrated Society: A 21st Century Challenge*. Los Angeles: UCLA Civil Rights Project.

## **Part I**

### **Unprecedented diversity and deep divisions: The contours of enrollment and segregation in Southern California schools Genevieve Siegel-Hawley & John Kucsera**

Over the last fifteen years, the characteristics of the student population in Southern California have shifted dramatically. The demographic transformation of students reaches every corner of the region, from LAUSD and SDUSD to the hundreds of smaller districts blanketing the Southern California landscape. From 1995 to 2009, each of the four coastal counties in the region—Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego—reported sharp increases in the percentages of Latino students; but the inland counties of San Bernardino and Riverside saw their percentages climb even more steeply. For example, roughly 39% of San Bernardino's student population was Latino in 1995, compared to 56% in 2009. By way of comparison, across the four coastal counties, Latino students made up 47% and 51% of the student population in 1995 and 2009, respectively. The percentages of white and black students declined across Southern California during the same period, while enrollment patterns for Asian students indicated their numbers were growing substantially but evenly across the six-county region.

Together, Los Angeles County and Orange County serve more than half of the Southern California region's 3.4 million students. At the district level, LAUSD and SDUSD enroll the largest shares of Southern California students, though LAUSD enrolls far more, reporting approximately six times more than the number of students in SDUSD.

Students from different racial groups are unevenly distributed across the region (see Table 1). Latino students make up more than one out of every two Southern California schoolchildren, but are most heavily concentrated in Los Angeles and the inland counties of Riverside and San Bernardino. Just under half of students attending school in Orange and San Diego counties are Latino. At the district level, LAUSD is overwhelmingly comprised of Latino students, much more so than SDUSD.

Black students overall represent 8% of the Southern California student population. Schools in Los Angeles County and San Bernardino report the highest enrollments of black students; Ventura and Orange County report the fewest. Enrollment numbers for San Bernardino and Riverside suggest a substantial black migration to the far reaches of the Inland Empire, while Orange County's numbers show a very small, almost negligible movement to the locale.

One in ten students in the Southern California region is Asian, amounting to the second largest concentration of Asian students in the country. A full 17% of students in Orange County schools are Asian, almost twice the share for the overall region. In the opposite direction, Asian

students tend to be underrepresented in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. And unlike trends for Latino students, Asians make up a much larger share of SDUSD than LASUD.

American Indian students comprise less than 1% of the student enrollment in the overall region and in Los Angeles County. In areas where American Indian students are enrolled, however, they are disproportionately concentrated in segregated schools.<sup>61</sup>

Broadly speaking, student enrollment trends inland—in San Bernardino and Riverside counties—most accurately reflect overall regional demographics. These two counties make up large portions of the Inland Empire, a vast area well east of Los Angeles. Beyond Riverside and San Bernardino, the Inland Empire also includes some of California's desert country, where a large expansion of relatively affordable housing occurred in the midst of the 2000-2006 boom. During the recent recession, the Inland Empire proved to be among the most vulnerable areas in the country when it came to predatory lending and subsequent foreclosures—a trend negatively affecting many families of color who had moved to the suburbs seeking homeownership, jobs, and educational opportunity. As California gradually emerges from the Great Recession, some Inland Empire communities continue to face depression-like conditions.

Table 1 *School Enrollment, 2008-2009*

	Total Enrollment	White (%)	Black (%)	Latino (%)	Asian (%)	American Indian (%)
Southern CA	3,223,875	25%	8%	56%	10%	0%
Los Angeles	1,410,131	17%	9%	63%	11%	0%
Orange	459,213	35%	2%	46%	17%	1%
Riverside	385,739	28%	8%	58%	5%	1%
San Bernardino	378,678	24%	11%	60%	5%	1%
San Diego	451,763	36%	7%	46%	11%	1%
Ventura	138,351	41%	3%	49%	7%	1%
Non-LAUSD	849,740	21%	9%	56%	14%	0%
LAUSD	560,391	10%	10%	73%	7%	0%
Non-SDUSD	329,942	39%	5%	46%	9%	1%
SDUSD	121,821	26%	13%	44%	16%	1%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties. Total enrollment is the total number of white, black, Latino, Asian, and American Indian students only; thus, row percentages should equate to or near 100%

<sup>61</sup> Thirteen percent of the region's American Indian students—who make up less than 1% of the overall regional enrollment—enroll in intensely segregated schools. A full 27% of American Indian students in Los Angeles County attend intensely segregated settings, and 17% of San Bernardino's American Indian students do the same. Due to the small size of the American Indian student population, we do not present figures for this subgroup in the following tables. Please contact the authors of the report for further data on American Indian students.

White students make up just a quarter of Southern California's students (compared to a little more than half of all U.S. students), but are significantly overrepresented in Orange, San Diego and Ventura counties. The latter, located just north of Los Angeles County, is the most heavily white county in the region. A quick glimpse at the percentage of white students in LAUSD (10%), versus white students in other Los Angeles County school districts (21%), also shows that white students are disparately concentrating in certain Los Angeles County communities that are not linked to LAUSD. Similar patterns occur in San Diego County. Such racially disparate enrollment trends are buttressed generally by patterns of severe housing segregation, numerous district boundary lines that dice the six-county region into hundreds of different school systems, and the lack of any type of policy to help ameliorate the situation.

### **Educational fault lines: The segregation of students by race, income and language**

Amidst the convulsive demographic shifts of Southern California's student population, levels of segregation have significantly worsened. As the white population declined,<sup>62</sup> patterns of isolation for Latino students deepened. In 1970, the average Latino student attended a metro area school in Los Angeles that was roughly 45% white. By 1980, the proportion of white students in the average Latino students' school had decreased by more than half, to 21%. In San Diego, where white students comprised a larger majority, the white share of students in the average Latino students' school went from about 67% in 1970 to 45% in 1980.<sup>63</sup>

During the desegregation battles, black students in the region experienced a brief increase in levels of exposure to white students. In 1970s-era Los Angeles, the average black student went to a school that was roughly 14% white, a figure that increased to 16% by 1980. San Diego's black students went to a school that was, on average, 36% white in 1970 and 43% white ten years later.

By the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, black students were resegregated into more racially isolated schools. In 2000, the typical black student in SDUSD attended a school that was roughly 20% white. And for the average black student in LAUSD, that figure was only 6%.<sup>64</sup> Almost identical trends surfaced for Latino students in the early 2000s.<sup>65</sup> None of these patterns are necessarily surprising since almost nothing—legally, politically, socially—has been brought to bear on the issue in recent memory.

Given the racial complexity of the region's students, we examine segregation in several different ways. Yet all measures point to a basic fact: Southern California's students are extremely stratified in schools across the six counties.

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<sup>62</sup> The proportion of white students declined steeply in the two largest school systems--in 1968 whites made up 54% of students in LA, a share that dropped to 24% in 1980. In San Diego, white students comprised 56% of the total population in 1968, slipping to just over half of the student enrollment by 1980. *See* Orfield, G. (1983). *Public School Desegregation in the United States, 1968-1980*. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Frankenberg, Orfield & Lee, 2003, Table 19.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

*Minority isolation*

Intensely segregated minority schools refer to educational settings where 90-100% of students come from underrepresented minority racial backgrounds. These schools are nearly always associated with stark gaps in educational opportunity (see Part II for further detail). More than two out of five Latino students and nearly one-third of all black students in the region enroll in these intensely segregated learning environments (Table 2). By contrast, 5% of Southern California's Asian students attend intensely segregated minority schools, and just 2% of the region's white students—who make up 25% of the overall population—do the same.

The level of intense racial segregation in schools varies by locale (though schools in Los Angeles County are the most isolated for all racial groups). More than half of Latino students in Los Angeles County attend intensely segregated schools, a figure that tops out at 66% in LAUSD. At the district level, however, Latino students in Los Angeles experience very different levels of racial isolation. Compared to the LAUSD percentage, only 45% of Latino students in non-LAUSD districts attend intensely segregated schools. North of Los Angeles County, in Ventura, significant patterns of racial segregation for Latino students exist even though whites constitute a near majority of students (which should result in more interracial exposure if students are evenly spread across the county). Nearly two out of five Latino students attend an intensely segregated school in Ventura. Latino students are also substantially segregated in Orange County, where almost one out of three Latino students attend intensely segregated schools. To the east, a more severe trend (39%) persists for Latino students enrolling in San Bernardino County schools.

Table 2 *Percentage of Minority Students in Segregated Minority Schools, 2008-2009*

	White Share of School Enrollment	50-89% Minority School Enrollment Rate for				90-100% Minority School Enrollment Rate for			
		White	Black	Latino	Asian	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Southern CA	25%	29%	50%	45%	35%	2%	33%	42%	5%
Los Angeles	17%	32%	42%	37%	36%	3%	47%	55%	6%
Orange	35%	13%	39%	46%	23%	1%	6%	32%	2%
Riverside	28%	48%	69%	61%	52%	2%	10%	25%	3%
San Bernardino	24%	43%	61%	50%	47%	5%	25%	39%	8%
San Diego	36%	27%	61%	59%	43%	1%	12%	22%	3%
Ventura	41%	12%	30%	38%	21%	2%	10%	37%	7%
Non-LAUSD	21%	29%	51%	42%	27%	3%	35%	45%	5%
LAUSD	10%	45%	30%	31%	63%	5%	62%	66%	12%
Non-SDUSD	39%	26%	65%	61%	43%	1%	6%	20%	3%
SDUSD	26%	29%	57%	52%	42%	1%	18%	26%	3%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

Patterns of intense segregation for black students in the region are also severe (see Table 2). Along the coast, almost half of black students in Los Angeles County attended intensely segregated schools, rising to 62% when limited to LAUSD. Levels of isolation are lowest in Orange County (6%), where black students make up just 2% of the student population. Inland, black students are less isolated in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, where, as we saw above, the student population more often reflected broader regional demographics. And further south, in San Diego, the level of isolation for black students depends on whether or not they enroll in SDUSD, the largest district in the county. Eighteen percent of black students attending SDUSD are in 90-100% minority schools, compared to 6% of county black students enrolled in non-SDUSD districts.

Asian students are most likely to be racially isolated in LAUSD schools (12% attend intensely segregated settings) than in other districts. In Orange County, where the largest concentrations of Asian schoolchildren reside, just 2% of Asian students attend intensely segregated minority schools. That same figure rose to 6% in Los Angeles County. Importantly, Asian student isolation remains significantly lower than trends for black students in the region, though each comprise a similar share of the student population.

At all geographic levels, white students are by far the least likely to attend intensely segregated schools in Southern California. Though white students make up a quarter of the region's enrollment, they are represented by single digit percentages in Southern California's most segregated schools. In Orange County, just 1% of white students enroll in 90-100% minority schools—though whites comprise 35% of the overall population in the county. In the Inland Empire counties, where white students make up roughly a quarter of the student enrollment, 2% of Riverside's white students—and 5% of San Bernardino's—attend intensely segregated schools. The next section shows that most white students are attending schools in Southern California where they are substantially overrepresented—places where patterns of white segregation may begin to emerge.

### *Student exposure to other races*

The average level of exposure students of one race experience to either their racial group or another group provides an alternative assessment of segregation. For example, a 10% exposure rate of blacks to whites means that the average black student is in a school where whites make up 10% of the student enrollment. The contemporary demographics of Southern California are substantially more complex than earlier battles over desegregation that occurred between just two racial or ethnic groups. Still, both the uneven distribution of white students in the region, and the accompanying unequal share of educational resources and outcomes—like

challenging course offerings and graduation rates<sup>66</sup>—suggest that looking closely at the proportion of white students in a school remains critical.<sup>67</sup>

Using the white share of student enrollment as a baseline, we examine the average white composition of Southern California schools attended by white, black, Latino and Asian students. The first line of Table 3 shows that the average white student in Southern California attends a school where close to 50% of their peers are also white, a doubling of the regional average of white schoolchildren.<sup>68</sup> In comparison, Latino students enroll in schools that are, on average, 15% white, while the average black student enrolls in a school that is 18% white. Finally, Asian students in the region attend schools where nearly 28% of the students are white.<sup>69</sup> Since white students make up 25% of Southern California's population, it is clear that Latinos and blacks are significantly isolated from white students, and that whites are actually slightly overrepresented in the schools of Asian students. Latino students across the region experience the lowest levels of exposure to white students. From LAUSD—by far the most important school district in the U.S. for Latino students—where the average Latino student attends a school that is roughly 6% white, to Ventura, where the Latino exposure to whites is 23%, Latino students generally attend schools where whites represent roughly half their share of the overall county or district enrollment.

Black students across the region experience the highest level of exposure to whites in Ventura and Orange counties, where there are relatively small black populations. Further inland, black exposure to white students is roughly equivalent to the regional average in Riverside and slightly less so in San Bernardino. In San Diego, both blacks and Latinos experience disproportionately low levels of exposure to whites.

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<sup>66</sup> We discuss how educational opportunity is distributed according to racial segregation in Part II.

<sup>67</sup> See, e.g., Ladd, H. (2008). "School Policies and the Test Score Gap." In Magnuson, K. A., & Waldfogel, J. (Eds). *Steady gains and stalled progress: inequality and the black-white test score gap*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

<sup>68</sup> While whites are not typically attending all-white schools in this diverse region, they are attending schools with very disproportionate numbers of white students and with much lower shares of students in poverty.

<sup>69</sup> Using several different measures, then, Asian students – without disaggregating by subgroup (or county) – are most integrated with whites.

Table 3 *Exposure to White Students by Race, 2008-2009*

	White Share of School Enrollment	White Exposure to White	Black Exposure to White	Latino Exposure to White	Asian Exposure to White
Southern CA	25%	49%	18%	15%	28%
Los Angeles	17%	45%	12%	9%	21%
Orange	35%	58%	36%	18%	33%
Riverside	28%	41%	26%	22%	36%
San Bernardino	24%	41%	21%	18%	30%
San Diego	36%	54%	25%	23%	34%
Ventura	41%	61%	43%	23%	51%
Non-LAUSD	21%	47%	15%	12%	22%
LAUSD	10%	37%	8%	6%	18%
Non-SDUSD	39%	57%	32%	25%	40%
SDUSD	26%	44%	19%	18%	25%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

Regionally, Latinos make up 56% of total public school enrollment. However, the average white student goes to a school where Latinos comprise just a third of the students (see Table 4). Black students experience much higher levels of exposure to Latinos—a typical black student attends a school with just over half of the student body identifying as Latino. This means that black students are often attending schools with far more Latino students than fellow black students, placing two historically disadvantaged groups of students together in racially complex community settings, where neighborhoods are often transitioning from predominately black to Latino. Asian students, on average, experience disproportionately low levels of exposure to Latino students. Finally, whites are typically the most segregated racial group across the nation, but in this region Latinos are the most isolated: the average Latino student in Southern California attends a school that is almost three-quarters Latino.

Latino students are also distributed unevenly across the six-county area, and levels of exposure vary accordingly. Los Angeles County has the highest concentration of Latino students and also displays the most extreme isolation. Latinos in LAUSD typically attend a school where more than 80% of their fellow students are also Latino. But even in counties with lower shares of Latino students, such concentrations persist. For example, 46% of Orange County students identify as Latino, yet the typical Latino student in Orange County goes to a school that is 69% Latino. These results suggest that not only is Southern California the epicenter of the nation's Latino population, but it is also a region of extreme Latino segregation.



Table 4 *Exposure to Latino Students by Race, 2008-2009*

	Latino Share of School Enrollment	White Exposure to Latino	Black Exposure to Latino	Latino Exposure to Latino	Asian Exposure to Latino
Southern CA	56%	33%	53%	71%	37%
Los Angeles	63%	33%	53%	76%	39%
Orange	46%	24%	42%	69%	31%
Riverside	58%	44%	56%	67%	46%
San Bernardino	60%	43%	58%	68%	47%
San Diego	46%	29%	46%	61%	35%
Ventura	49%	27%	43%	70%	36%
Non-LAUSD	56%	31%	53%	71%	34%
LAUSD	73%	42%	53%	82%	56%
Non-SDUSD	46%	29%	48%	63%	36%
SDUSD	44%	30%	44%	56%	33%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

Table 5 *Exposure to Black Students by Race, 2008-2009*

	Black Share of School Enrollment	White Exposure to Black	Black Exposure to Black	Latino Exposure to Black	Asian Exposure to Black
Southern CA	8%	6%	21%	7%	6%
Los Angeles	9%	7%	27%	8%	6%
Orange	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Riverside	8%	7%	12%	7%	9%
San Bernardino	11%	9%	15%	10%	10%
San Diego	7%	5%	15%	7%	8%
Ventura	3%	3%	6%	2%	3%
Non-LAUSD	9%	6%	22%	8%	5%
LAUSD	10%	9%	33%	8%	8%
Non-SDUSD	5%	4%	9%	5%	5%
SDUSD	13%	9%	21%	13%	13%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

Though black students comprise a small minority of the student population in Southern California (just 8%), they often attend schools where they are substantially over-represented (see Table 5). Region-wide, the typical black student attends a school where blacks make up 21% of the student body—and in Los Angeles County that number climbs to 27%, three times the share of black students in the county. Down south, in San Diego County, where black students account

for 7% of students, the typical black student goes to a school that is 15% black. Black students also head to schools where they are overrepresented in the Inland Empire, though by less significant margins.

Like black students, Asians attend schools with disproportionately higher shares of same-race students (see Table 6) but, because they represent only a tenth of the total regional enrollment, they very seldom attend segregated Asian schools. Asians typically go to schools in the region where nearly 30% of their fellow students identify as racially similar. Orange County, reporting by far the largest concentration of Asian students (17% of the overall student population), sends the average Asian student to a school where one-third of students are also Asian. And in Los Angeles County, where Asians make up 11% of the student population, the typical Asian student goes to a school that is 32% Asian—three times their share of the population in the county.

Other racial groups in the region report relatively low levels of exposure to Asian students, on average. The typical Latino student goes to a school where 7% of their fellow students are Asian; for black students that figure is 8%. Interestingly, though black and Asian students comprise roughly even shares of the Southern California population, the typical white student in the region attends a school where black students make up just 6% of the population, but where Asian students account for 12% of the population. This trend leads to our last analysis of racial exposure levels—the combined exposure levels of black and Latino students to Asian and white students.

Table 6 *Exposure to Asian Students by Race, 2008-2009*

	Asian Share of School Enrollment	White Exposure to Asian	Black Exposure to Asian	Latino Exposure to Asian	Asian Exposure to Asian
Southern CA	10%	12%	8%	7%	29%
Los Angeles	11%	14%	7%	7%	33%
Orange	17%	16%	18%	11%	34%
Riverside	5%	7%	6%	4%	9%
San Bernardino	5%	6%	5%	4%	13%
San Diego	11%	11%	13%	9%	22%
Ventura	7%	8%	7%	5%	10%
Non-LAUSD	14%	15%	9%	9%	38%
LAUSD	7%	12%	5%	5%	18%
Non-SDUSD	9%	9%	9%	7%	19%
SDUSD	16%	15%	16%	12%	28%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

The above patterns show that Asian students are the most integrated racial subgroup with white students in Southern California. Examining the combined exposure of white and Asian groups to the combined population of black and Latino student groups provides another way to explore patterns of segregation across the region, as well as the degree of segregation between relatively historically advantaged groups and disadvantaged groups in a multiracial setting.<sup>70</sup>

Together, white and Asian students make up 36% of the region-wide population (Table 7). Yet, on average, black and Latino students in Southern California attend a school where less than a quarter of students are white and Asian—and in Los Angeles County that figure drops to 16%. Just north of Los Angeles, Ventura County reports one of the lowest percentages of combined black and Latino enrollment (together with Orange County) but, at -19%, has one of the largest differential levels of black and Latino exposure to white and Asian students. In Orange County, where Asians and whites make up just over half of the student enrollment, the black and Latino students go to schools where, on average, just 30% of students are white and Asian. The Inland Empire counties report the smallest differences between shares of white and Asian students and black and Latino exposure levels. Finally, black and Latino students typically attend schools with the highest combined shares of white and Asian students (32%) in San Diego County.

Table 7 *Black and Latino Exposure to White and Asian Students, 2008-2009*

	White and Asian Share of School Enrollment	Black and Latino Student Exposure to White and Asian Students	Difference
Southern CA	36%	22%	-14%
Los Angeles	28%	16%	-11%
Orange	52%	30%	-22%
Riverside	33%	26%	-7%
San Bernardino	29%	22%	-7%
San Diego	47%	32%	-14%
Ventura	48%	29%	-19%
Non-LAUSD	35%	21%	-14%
LAUSD	16%	11%	-5%
Non-SDUSD	48%	33%	-16%
SDUSD	42%	31%	-11%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

### *What the exposure numbers for different racial groups mean*

Though Southern California is very diverse, students from the major racial and ethnic groups are being educated in dramatically different settings. White students are, on average, not

<sup>70</sup> With the understanding, of course, that there are significant variations within all groups.

in segregated white schools, but they are in schools that are twice as white as their regional student cohort. Black and Latino students on average are very isolated from significant contact with whites, while Asian students have a much more integrated educational experience. As we explore the layers and dimensions of segregation from opportunity in the region's schools, these numbers will take on greater and greater significance.

*Double Segregation in Southern California: Concentrations of students by race and poverty status*

A popular criticism of the desegregation movement often includes some variation on the statement, "Just sitting next to a white kid doesn't mean that a student of color will receive a better education."<sup>71</sup> The observation rings true, especially amidst the incredible diversity of the Southern California region. Yet, even beyond studies describing the psychological and social harm of separating children by race—research that shaped the outcome of the *Brown* decision—a vast amount of social science evidence documents the restricted educational opportunities associated with concentrating student poverty.<sup>72</sup> Child poverty, along with deeply intertwined parent education levels, remains incredibly influential in determining student achievement and educational attainment.<sup>73</sup> High poverty schools are linked to a host of limiting conditions. These include high rates of faculty and staff turnover, which consistently reinforces a cycle of less-experienced and less-qualified teachers, in addition to fewer material resources and challenging course offerings. Schools with large concentrations of impoverished students are also much more likely to be described as "drop out factories," educational settings that graduate fewer than 50% of their students.<sup>74</sup> So when concentrations of minority students are closely overlaid with profound pockets of student poverty—as we show in detail below—the racial composition of the classroom begins to matter very much indeed. This "double segregation," where students are isolated by both race and class, is visible across the region, up and down the coastline, through Orange County, and deep into the heart of the Inland Empire.

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<sup>71</sup> Adams, J. (8 October 1991). "Division of Blacks over Busing is Ironic." *Louisville Courier Journal*, B1.

<sup>72</sup> Orfield, G. & Lee, C. (2005). *Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality*. Cambridge: Harvard Civil Rights Project. Available at: [http://bsdweb.bsdyt.org/district/EquityExcellence/Research/Why\\_Segreg\\_Matters.pdf](http://bsdweb.bsdyt.org/district/EquityExcellence/Research/Why_Segreg_Matters.pdf). Linn, R. L. & Welner, K.G., Eds. (2007). *Race-Conscious Policies for Assigning Students to Schools: Social Science Research and the Supreme Court Cases*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Education. Wells, A. S. and Crain R. L. (1994). Perpetuation theory and the long-term effects of school desegregation. *Review of Educational Research*, 6, 531-555.

<sup>73</sup> Brooks-Gunn, J. and Duncan, G. The Effects of Poverty on Children. *The Future of Children* 7(2), Children and Poverty (Summer - Autumn, 1997), pp. 55-71.

<sup>74</sup> Balfantz, R. & Letgers, N. (2004). "Locating the Dropout Crisis: Which High Schools Produce the Nation's Dropouts?" In Orfield, G. (Ed.) *Dropouts in America*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, pp. 57-84.

More than half of Southern California's students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch, a rough proxy for student poverty in the region.<sup>75</sup> That figure represents a notable increase in the number of students from all racial groups living in near poverty in just one year (from 53% to 56%)<sup>76</sup> and is emblematic of myriad challenges facing under-funded school systems in the six-county area.

In Southern California, almost all students are considered poor once the student body of a middle school or high school begins to serve a population comprised of 80% or more underrepresented minority students. Based on data from the California State Department of Education, Table 8 presents the share of poor students in secondary schools across all six Southern California counties by the degree of underrepresented student concentration.

Table 8 *Percentage of Secondary Schools with Greater than 50% Poor Students in Southern California*

	Greater than 50% poor students	
	Middle Schools	High Schools
All schools	63%	54%
0-10% underrepresented minority	6%	6%
10.1-20% underrepresented minority	6%	4%
20.1-30% underrepresented minority	9%	6%
30.1-40% underrepresented minority	20%	15%
40.1-50% underrepresented minority	26%	14%
50.1-60% underrepresented minority	53%	46%
60.1-70% underrepresented minority	75%	58%
70.1-80% underrepresented minority	94%	85%
80.1-90% underrepresented minority	99%	97%
90.1-100% underrepresented minority	99%	96%

*Data Source:* California Department of Education, 2008-2009

Segregated schools with high percentages of underrepresented minority and poor students also tend to have much lower numbers of middle-class families living nearby. Exploring the average share of households who earn greater than twice the state median income and live in a one-mile radius of a Southern California high school can help illustrate the socioeconomic status of the community surrounding high schools.<sup>77</sup> According to this analysis, on average, over a

<sup>75</sup> The official poverty level in the U.S. is substantially lower than cut-off for qualifying for free and reduced lunch (which can go up to 180% of the poverty line for reduced priced lunch), but all of these families are poor enough to have trouble paying for food. As such, we use the term "poor" to describe their situation.

<sup>76</sup> See Table 2A in Appendix.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), tract-level estimates, 2005-2009; U.S. Census Bureau, Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER)/Line shapefiles, 2009; We chose to explore an indicator of affluence, such as two times the median income, rather than an indicator of poverty, such as poverty status, as the federal poverty guideline may fail to consider California's high rate of inflation. According to the ACS 2005-2009 estimates, twice the median income for households in the state of California was \$120,784; we used \$125,000 or greater as the cut-off; A special thank you is given to a key researcher at IDEA, Jared Planas, for his assistance in statistically analyzing spatial data for this analysis.

quarter of households (26.2%) surrounding schools with 0-49% underrepresented minority students earned greater than the twice the median state income of \$125,000 annually, in comparison to 15.6% and 7.8% of households surrounding segregated and intensely segregated schools, respectively (see Figure 1).

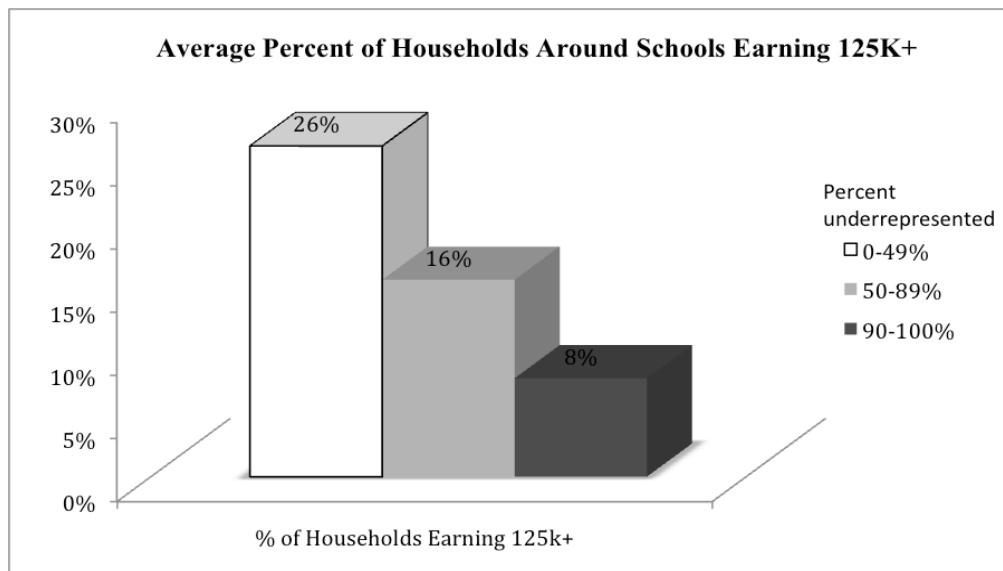


Figure 1: Average percentage of households living in a one-mile radius of Southern California (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura County) secondary schools by underrepresented concentration, who earn greater than twice the state median income of 125K. Data from the American Community Survey, tract-level estimates, 2005-2009.

On average, only 12.7% of households surrounding schools eligible for Title-I funding (schools where greater than 50% of the student body is poor) earn greater than twice the state median income, in comparison to 24.3% of households who surrounded non-Title 1 schools (where less than 50% of students are poor). In other words, the share of families that could be considered affluent doubled in the neighborhoods surrounding more affluent schools. Thus, residential affluence data support the school-level poverty data and clearly identifies the persistent association between socioeconomic isolation and racial concentration in both schools and neighborhoods.

Students from different racial backgrounds experience very disparate exposure to low income students (see Table 9). Keeping in mind that 56% of Southern Californian schoolchildren qualify are considered poor, the average white student in the region attends a school where poor students make up just 33% of the population.<sup>78</sup> Contrast that figure to the school of the average black or Latino student, where either 63 or 69%, respectively, of students are poor. A racial chasm of exposure to poverty opens up across the region.

<sup>78</sup> These figures have noticeably worsened since 2007-08 (see Table 2A in the Appendix), a trend that is likely linked to the recent recession.

In Los Angeles County, which educates the most students in the region, near two out of every three students qualify as poor. Yet the average white student in the county goes to a school where a little under a third of students are considered poor. In other words, twice the share of low income students exists in the county than in the average white students' school. Asian students in Los Angeles County, while experiencing higher rates of poverty exposure than whites, attend schools where poor students make up a far lower proportion than the overall county average. Black and Latino students, on the other hand, experience educational settings comprised, on average, of 66% or 73% poor students. In LAUSD, by far the largest district in Los Angeles County, the typical Latino student goes to a school where 80% of students are poor. The remaining school districts in Los Angeles County report a much lower share of poor students (54% compared to 76% in LAUSD), but Latino students in the other county school systems still attend educational settings with disproportionately high shares of poor students.

Orange County reports tremendous racial and class stratification within its school systems. It is a place where great wealth amasses along the coastline's bay and beach scenes. But it also contains orchards and strawberry fields, with their accompanying impoverished labor force, as well as a number of high poverty urban communities—some, incongruously, not far from Disneyland. Latino students are most prone to patterns of double segregation in Orange County, attending schools where, on average, a full 65% of students are considered poor (see Table 9). Black students—who, again, make up just 2% of the overall student population in Orange County—attend schools where two of five students are poor. Conversely, white and Asian students in the county are least likely to attend schools with large shares of poor students.

The Inland Empire counties of San Bernardino and Riverside contain the closest equivalent share of poor students compared to the Southern California average, but both show signs of differential exposure to poverty by race.<sup>79</sup> Like Orange County, white and Asian students in these counties experience educational settings with fewer poor students, while Latino students attend schools with the highest concentrations of poverty. Black students, on average, attend schools generally reflective of the overall share of poor students in the Inland Empire.

The most northern and southern areas of the region, Ventura and San Diego counties, each report extreme racial variations in exposure to poverty. In Ventura, poor students make up 41% of the population, yet the typical white student in the county attends a school where impoverished students represent roughly a quarter of the population. In San Diego County, 46% of students are poor, yet white students enroll in schools where, on average, just 32% are considered poor. Latino students in both districts attend schools with disproportionately higher shares of poor students. Black students experience a similar trend in San Diego, but are exposed to equivalent proportions of poor students in Ventura. The typical Asian student at the northern

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<sup>79</sup> Both Inland Empire Counties reported a fairly substantial increase in poor students over the one year period from 2007-8 to 2008-9. See Table 2A in Appendix.

and southern end of Southern California attends schools with lower than average concentrations of poverty.

Table 9 *Exposure to Poor Students by Race, 2008-2009*

	FRL Share of School Enrollment	White Exposure to FRL Students	Black Exposure to FRL Students	Latino Exposure to FRL Students	Asian Exposure to FRL Students
Southern CA	56%	33%	63%	69%	41%
Los Angeles	63%	32%	66%	73%	44%
Orange	42%	20%	40%	65%	35%
Riverside	54%	43%	57%	64%	42%
San Bernardino	61%	51%	66%	70%	46%
San Diego	46%	32%	60%	60%	40%
Ventura	41%	26%	44%	60%	31%
Non-LAUSD	54%	29%	62%	67%	38%
LAUSD	76%	44%	71%	80%	60%
Non-SDUSD	40%	29%	49%	55%	29%
SDUSD	63%	43%	71%	74%	58%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

Comparing the average levels of poor and non-poor students by race represents another way to examine the relationship between race and poverty in Southern California schools (see Table 10). Poor children are substantially more likely than non-poor children to attend schools with higher concentrations of black and Latino students. One of the starkest examples of that relationship exists in Orange County. In Orange County, poor students go to schools that are, on average, nearly two-thirds Latino. Non-poor students in Orange County, on the other hand, go to schools where under one-third of the students are Latino.

Conversely, region-wide, poor students in Southern California are much less likely to attend schools with significant shares of white students. Recall that white students make up roughly a quarter of the overall population in the region. Yet the average poor student goes to a school that is 14% white, compared to the average non-poor student who attends a school that is nearly 40% white.



*Table 10 Free Reduced Lunch (FRL) and Non-FRL Exposure to Students by Race, 2008-2009*

	FRL Exposure to				Non-FRL Exposure to			
	White	Black	Latino	Asian	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Southern CA	14%	8%	65%	7%	37%	6%	39%	14%
Los Angeles	8%	9%	66%	7%	29%	8%	42%	16%
Orange	16%	2%	66%	13%	49%	2%	28%	20%
Riverside	21%	8%	66%	4%	37%	7%	47%	7%
San Bernardino	19%	11%	65%	4%	32%	10%	48%	7%
San Diego	23%	9%	55%	9%	44%	5%	34%	12%
Ventura	24%	3%	67%	5%	51%	3%	35%	8%
Non-LAUSD	10%	10%	65%	9%	32%	7%	38%	19%
LAUSD	5%	8%	66%	4%	20%	11%	53%	10%
Non-SDUSD	26%	5%	59%	6%	45%	4%	35%	11%
SDUSD	17%	14%	48%	14%	39%	10%	30%	18%

*Data Source:* 2008-2009 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data)

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties; FRL = Free Reduced Lunch.

### *Language: A third dimension of segregation*

In a region where more than a quarter of students are classified as English Language Learners, and where many other students come from homes where the dominant language is not English, examining the extent to which students are linguistically isolated from one another becomes particularly salient. Educational inequities already exacerbated by racial and socioeconomic separation become more complicated with an added linguistic layer. Indeed, students in the complex Southern California region, perhaps more than any other, face a triple segregation—by race, class and language.

Linguistically isolated educational settings face many of the challenges found in high poverty, high minority schools, often under more extreme conditions. Schools segregated by language are usually located in central cities, distinguished by overcrowded facilities with larger class sizes, more student poverty and health problems, and high rates of tardiness and teacher turnover.<sup>80</sup> Parent involvement levels are lower in linguistically isolated schools, and the number of qualified teachers available is inversely related to the number of English Language Learner students served by a school.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Gandara, P. & Orfield, G. (2010). *A Return to the Mexican Room? The Segregation of Arizona's English Language Learners*. Los Angeles: UCLA Civil Rights Project. Cosentino de Cohen, C., Murray, J., Clewell, B. (2005) *Promise or Peril? NCLB and the Education of ELL Students*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* IDEA (2007). *Latino Opportunity Report 2007*. Los Angeles: UCLA IDEA.

Southern California's Latino students are most likely to attend schools with high concentrations of English Language Learner students according to a 2005-6 dataset provided by the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education.<sup>82</sup> The average Latino student in the region attends a school where English Language Learner students comprise nearly 30% of the enrollment. This figure, in tandem with patterns suggesting Latinos are most likely to experience schools with high and overlapping concentrations of poverty and students of color, suggests that Latino students in the region do indeed experience triple segregation.

English Language Learners comprise a roughly proportionate share of the enrollment in schools attended by the average black student across the region. White students, by contrast, enroll in schools where English Language Learner students make up, on average, just 10% of the enrollment. The figure varies by county, but not widely. Whites in the region's two largest districts, Los Angeles and San Diego Unified, as well as white students in the inland counties, are most likely (highest concentration is 16.5% in LAUSD) to enroll in schools with higher percentages of English Language Learners.

Asian students experience a slightly lower rate of exposure to English Language Learner students than the regional average—the average Asian student in Southern California attends a school where English Language Learners comprise approximately 18% of the student population (compared to the regional English Language Learner average of 23%). Asian exposure levels to English Language Learners rise slightly in Orange County, which encompasses several large concentrations of Asian communities, but a mismatch tends to exist between the county or district share of English Language Learners and average Asian exposure levels. Even though many Asian students are children of immigrants and grow up in a home where an Asian language is spoken, few are educated in linguistically segregated settings.

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<sup>82</sup> NCES' Common Core of Data, the federal dataset we have relied upon for the previous tables in this report only collects information on English Language Learner students at the school district level (not for individual schools within a district). As such, the following tables present school-level sample data from 2005-6 collected by the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education. The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is usually collected every two years, and the Department of Education, researchers, and advocates use the data to monitor racial disparities and other civil rights violations. The questions go beyond information available through the Common Core of Data to examine key education and civil rights issues in the public schools. The 2006 CRDC included 62,484 public schools, and 61,275 of these public schools reported 0 or more students (e.g., those that reported a value and not "missing") classified as English Language Learners. A total of 52,901 public schools with English Language Learner data are merged into the CCD data as these schools are classified as regular schools per CCD and report at least one student enrolled in the 2005-06 school year. The English Language Learner data are available for 51,988 traditional public schools (for further discussion, see Frankenberg, E. & Siegel-Hawley, G. & Wang, J. (2010) *Choices without Equity: Charter Schools and the Need for Civil Rights Standards*. UCLA: Civil Rights Project).

*Table 11 Exposure to students classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) by Race, 2005-06*

	ELL Share of School Enrollment	White Exposure to ELL Students	Black Exposure to ELL Students	Latino Exposure to ELL Students	Asian Exposure to ELL Students
Southern California	23%	10.6	19.8	28.9	17.9
Los Angeles	25%	10.7	20.6	30.2	17
Los Angeles Unified	35%	16.5	23.8	39.6	24.6
Orange	27%	11.7	21.9	39.3	24.3
Riverside	22%	15.1	21.3	26.4	16
San Bernardino	19%	8.5	17.1	24.3	10.9
San Diego	17%	9.3	18.7	23.6	16.3
San Diego Unified	35%	15.2	24.3	33.8	23.3
Ventura	12%	6.3	8.7	17.9	7.1

*Data Source:* U.S. Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), 2005-06.

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties; ELL = English Language Learners.

In Southern California, English Language Learner students are much more likely than non-English Language Learner students to be enrolled in schools with high concentrations of Latino students. The average student classified as an English Language Learner attends a school that is nearly three-quarters Latino. In comparison, non-English Language Learner students attend schools where Latino students make up just under two-fifths of the population. Non-English Language Learner students in Southern California also report higher levels, on average, of exposure to white students, but roughly the same levels of exposure to black and Asian students.

We further elaborate on the experiences of ELL students in middle and high schools using data from the California Department of Education. Across the southern region, only 7% of students enrolled in majority white/Asian middle and high schools are classified as English Language Learners. In stark contrast, 18% and 31% of underrepresented minority students in segregated and intensely segregated secondary schools, respectively, are identified as English Language Learners. Moreover, intensely segregated schools are over six times more likely than white/Asian schools to report that more than a third of their total enrollment is comprised of English Language Learner students. This English Language Learner concentration in segregated schools is particularly evident in Orange, San Diego, and Ventura counties, where over 80% of intensely segregated schools had greater than 33% of English Language Learner student enrollment (see Table 13).

Table 12 English Language Learner (ELL) and Non-English Language Learner (Non-ELL) Exposure to Students by Race, 2005-6

	ELL Exposure to				Non-ELL Exposure to			
	White	Black	Latino	Asian	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Southern California	12%	7%	73%	8%	21%	6%	38%	8%
Los Angeles	7%	8%	78%	7%	14%	8%	43%	9%
Orange	16%	1%	67%	15%	38%	2%	31%	16%
Riverside	20%	7%	69%	4%	27%	6%	45%	5%
San Bernardino	11%	10%	76%	3%	18%	7%	37%	3%
San Diego	19%	8%	62%	11%	23%	4%	27%	9%
Ventura	22%	2%	72%	4%	25%	1%	19%	3%
Non-LAUSD	11%	9%	68%	12%	15%	6%	32%	10%
Los Angeles Unified	4%	7%	84%	5%	11%	12%	63%	7%
Non-SDUSD	22%	4%	65%	8%	22%	2%	26%	7%
San Diego Unified	15%	12%	58%	15%	26%	10%	29%	15%

Data Source: U.S. Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), 2005-06.

Note: Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties; ELL = English Language Learners.

Table 13 English Language Learner (ELL) Enrollment in Southern California Secondary Schools by Underrepresented Minority (URM) Student Concentration

	ELL Enrollment			% of Schools with ELL Enrollment > 33%		
	0-49%	50-89%	90-100%	0-49%	50-89%	90-100%
	URM	URM	URM	URM	URM	URM
Southern CA	7%	18%	31%	7%	12%	43%
Los Angeles	8%	16%	29%	2%	5%	32%
Orange	8%	26%	45%	2%	26%	88%
Riverside	5%	16%	34%	0%	9%	69%
San Bernardino	5%	15%	31%	0%	5%	42%
San Diego	7%	21%	42%	1%	22%	82%
Ventura	7%	27%	36%	0%	33%	80%

Data Source: 2008-2009, California Department of Education.

Note: Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

Latino and black students in Southern California experience a very high level of segregation by both race and poverty, which we call double segregation. Latino students are unique in experiencing triple segregation by race, poverty and language. These patterns help produce different educational opportunities and trajectories—examined below in Part II—in schools with high and overlapping concentrations of students of color, students in poverty and English Language Learners.

## **Part II**

### **Separate and unequal learning opportunities in the Southland**

**John Kucsera**

Segregated schools of color in Southern California are providing inequitable learning opportunities for our low-income youth and students of color. Part II of this analysis argues that persistently low college preparation and attendance rates for marginalized youth in Southern California counties are profoundly related to racially (coupled with socioeconomically and linguistically) isolated schools. These segregated contexts are places where learning resources and opportunities are far from equitably distributed. This section uses data on Southern California middle and high schools to explore the learning opportunities and resource disparities linked to school segregation that help explain some of the variation in racial achievement and college matriculation gaps.<sup>83</sup>

#### **Racial opportunity gaps in Southern California**

For quite some time, prior research has explored a variety of reasons for the gaps among more white, more affluent, and predominately English-speaking schools in comparison to segregated schools with a higher shares of minority, poor, and English Language Learner students.<sup>84</sup> Such reasons include peer effects (e.g., group socialization theory – arguing that higher achieving peers can influence student behavior) to parent effects (e.g., more affluent parents have time and resources to contribute to the school and their child's, as well as peers', education) to school resource or opportunity effects (e.g., higher quality teachers in more affluent and white schools). The latter effect has received considerable attention from policymakers, especially in California.

In Southern California, the opportunity gaps between schools across varying racial concentrations are staggering. Secondary schools with higher concentrations of

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<sup>83</sup> Acknowledgement is due and gratitude is offered to the Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access (IDEA) and University of California All Campus Consortium On Research for Diversity (UC/ACCORD), spearheaded by Drs. John Rogers and Daniel Solórzano, for their trailblazing work on documenting the educational opportunity disparities in secondary schools across the state of California. Many concepts and data analytic approaches used in this report were adapted from IDEA and UC/ACCORD's annual educational opportunity reports (see <http://idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications>).

<sup>84</sup> Coleman, J., Campbell, E. Q., Hobson, C. J., McPartland, J., Mood, A. M., Weinfeld, F. D., & York, R. L. (1966). Equality of educational opportunity. Washington, DC: U.S. GPO; Oakes, J. (2003). *Critical conditions for equity and diversity in college access: Informing policy and monitoring results*. Los Angeles, CA: UC All Campus Consortium in Research for Diversity; Rumberger, R., & Palardy, G. (2005). Does segregation still matter? The impact of student composition on academic achievement in high school. *Teachers College Record*, 107(9), 1999-2045.

underrepresented minority (black, Latino, and American Indian) students face greater barriers (e.g., fewer high-achieving peers; fewer parents who have postsecondary credentials and thus, knowledge about college) and fewer learning opportunities and resources than majority white/Asian schools. These barriers and lack of opportunities can substantially affect underrepresented students' achievement and chances of postsecondary success. For example, some structural factors that prior research has found to influence student achievement and college matriculation include the safety of the school, access to qualified secondary teachers, access to college preparatory curricula and teachers, and access to a rigorous mathematics education.<sup>85</sup> These mediating opportunity factors considerably differ between majority white/Asian schools and segregated schools of color within Southern California counties.

### *School safety*

Overcrowding creates unsafe and ineffective learning environments. In these environments, students perform worse, absences are higher, the degree of student attention is lower, and violence occurs more often.<sup>86</sup> For solutions, administrators convert facilities, like gymnasiums or storage rooms, into learning classes, or place students on year-round, multi-track schedules where students experience a loss in instruction time.<sup>87</sup>

In 2000, 14% of U.S. public schools were overcrowded and 8% were severely overcrowded (i.e., schools enrolling greater than 25% of their intended capacity).<sup>88</sup> Schools enrolling mostly students of color were much more likely to be overcrowded and severely overcrowded than schools with majority white and Asian enrollment.<sup>89</sup> Linked to the rapid increase in the school-age population, segregation, and Proposition 13 that shifted approval of school construction bonds from the local to state level, similar overcrowding patterns are found in California.

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<sup>85</sup> Allensworth, E., Nomi, T., Montgomery, N., & Lee, V. (2009). College preparatory curriculum for all: Academic consequences of requiring Algebra and English I for ninth graders in Chicago. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 367-391; Cooper, C., Chavira, G., & Mena, D. (2005). From pipelines to partnerships: A synthesis of research on how diverse families, schools, and communities support children's pathways through school. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 10(4), 407-430; Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). Inequality and the right to learn: Access to qualified teachers in California's public schools. *Teachers College Record*, 106(10), 1936-1966; Grodsky, E., & Jackson, E. (2009). Social stratification in higher education. *Teachers College Record*, 111(10), 2347-2384. Oakes, J. (2003). *Critical conditions for equity and diversity in college access: Informing policy and monitoring results*. Los Angeles, CA: UC/ACCORD.

<sup>86</sup> Ready, D. D., Lee, V. E., & Welner, K. G. (2004). Educational equity and school structure: School size, overcrowding, and schools-within-schools. *Teachers College Record*, 106, 1989-2014.

<sup>87</sup> Oakes, 2003.

<sup>88</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (2000). *Condition of America's public school facilities: 1999* (NCES 2000-032). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

In the 2007-2008 school year, California had the largest average class size for secondary schools in the nation.<sup>90</sup> As a result, more than one-fifth of middle and high schools in Southern California counties have been identified as critically overcrowded by the state (i.e., those with population densities equal to or greater than 175% of the state's recommended per-acre pupil population density).<sup>91</sup> Overcrowding is even more prominent in intensely segregated schools. The figure below shows that the difference in overcrowding between intensely segregated schools of color and predominately white/Asian schools (those enrolling 0-10% underrepresented minority students) ranges from 6% to 25%, with a 17% point difference on average (or a 15% point difference in total) across the six Southern California counties (see Figure 2).<sup>92</sup>

The variation in overcrowding between school contexts across counties, such as Los Angeles and Orange, could be explained by residential patterns (e.g., migration, segregation) and student enrollment growth. For example, in the 2005-2006 school year, 23% of intensely segregated schools of color across Southern California counties were considered critically overcrowded.<sup>93</sup> Only 1.7% of majority white/Asian schools, and 0% of predominately white/Asian schools were considered critically overcrowded.<sup>94</sup> These results, in comparison to the 2008-2009 overcrowding percentages, indicate that critical conditions of overcrowding continues to affect segregated schools of color, and that, perhaps due to the population growth over the last few years or budget restrictions overcrowding has increased for all schools of all racial contexts across Southern California.

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<sup>90</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2007-2008.

<sup>91</sup> Source: California Department of Education (CDE), California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) Student and School Data Files, 2008-2009; CDE, Certification of School Site Density, 2003. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/co/cos.asp>; This file presents schools that were critically overcrowded (i.e., a pupil population density at or above 175% of the CDE's recommended pupil population density) in 2003. No updated file has been posted.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Source: CDE, CBEDS, Student and School Data Files, 2005-2006; CDE, 2003.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

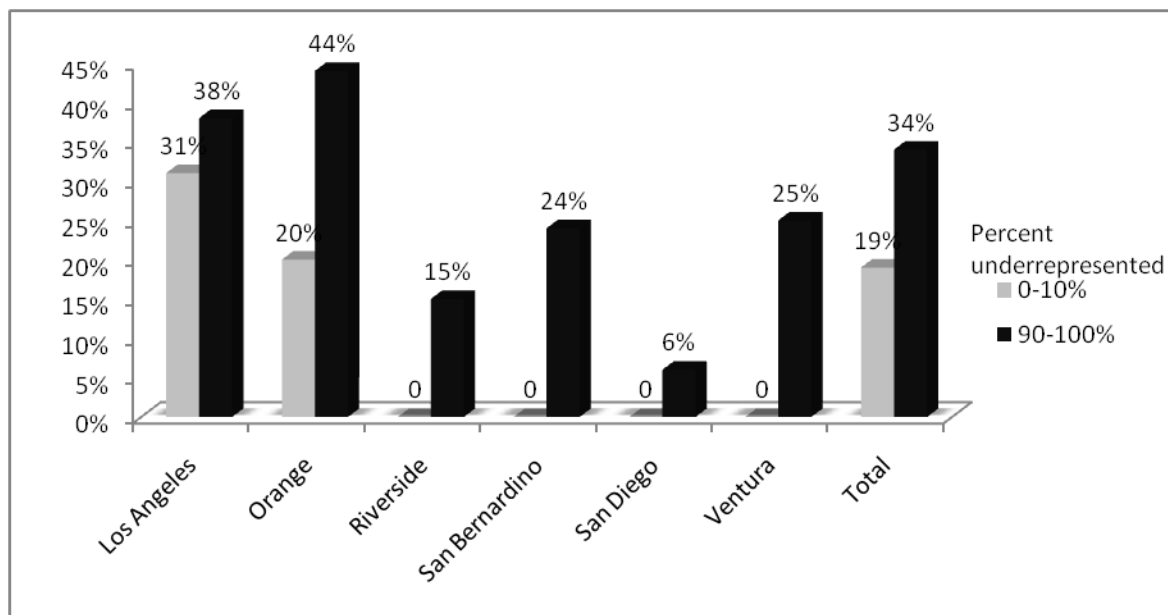


Figure 2: Percentage of Southern California (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura County) secondary schools (by underrepresented minority concentration) identified as critically overcrowded by the California Department of Education, 2003, 2008-2009.

### Qualified teachers

Teacher quality is a very powerful factor related to educational achievement and attainment. A number of studies have found significant relationships between teachers' preparation, their certification, and student achievement.<sup>95</sup> Teacher preparation is also linked to teacher attrition, with those who complete student teaching, requisite college courses, and full state certification more than twice as likely to stay in teaching.<sup>96</sup> As a result, schools with a severe shortage of such qualified teachers, where more than 20% of teachers lack full credentials, can greatly reduce students' learning possibilities and staff retention.<sup>97</sup> Across the Southern California counties, 18% of intensely segregated schools of color—nearly one out of five—experienced a severe shortage of qualified teachers in the 2008-2009 school year.<sup>98</sup> In contrast, not one predominately white/Asian schools experienced a severe shortage of qualified teachers (0%) and rarely experienced a teacher that was not fully qualified.<sup>99</sup>

In the 2005-2006 school year, 14% of teachers in an intensely segregated secondary school and 8% of teachers in a segregated secondary school of color lacked a

<sup>95</sup> Darling-Hammond, 2004.

<sup>96</sup> National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2003). No dream denied: A pledge to America's children. New York: Author.

<sup>97</sup> Rogers, J., Oakes, J., Fanelli, S., Medina, D., Valladares, S., & Terriquez, V. (2007). California educational opportunity report: The racial opportunity gap. Los Angeles, CA: IDEA and UC/ACCORD.

<sup>98</sup> Source: CDE, 2008-2009; CDE, CBEDS, Staff Data Files, 2008-2009.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.



full teaching credential, on average, in comparison to only 4% of teachers in the average, majority white/Asian school.<sup>100</sup> In the 2008-2009 school year, these percentages improved to 8% and 5% of teachers missing a full teaching credential in the average intensely segregated and segregated schools of color, respectively. By contrast, for the average majority white/Asian school, only 3% of teachers lacked a full credential.<sup>101</sup>

### *College preparation resources*

The University of California and California State University systems developed an “a-g” subject requirement to ensure that all students graduate from high school academically ready for college. Completion of these courses ensures that students have attained a general body of knowledge, as well as the critical-thinking and study skills required by four-year, postsecondary institutions. Although these requirements were developed as a tool for greater college readiness and access only students who fulfill them are eligible for four-year public colleges. Many high schools, especially those serving a majority of students of color, do not offer a sufficient number of approved courses that prepare students for college. For example, one study showed that low-income youth of color have less curricular intensity, even controlling for prior achievement, and this marginalization moderately affects their college preparation.<sup>102</sup>

Another educational equity indicator that can be used to assess the degree of college readiness schools offered is the percentage of teachers qualified to teach such a-g courses. With teachers serving as one of the strongest predictors for student success,<sup>103</sup> teacher misassignments, especially in college preparatory courses, are a critical concern.

Close to one-fifth of Southern California high schools routinely assign improperly trained teachers to college preparatory courses.<sup>104</sup> A severe shortage of qualified teachers exists at schools where one in five teachers (or 20%) are misassigned and lack the appropriate credential for the subject matter being taught.<sup>105</sup> The misassignment is most common in college prep math courses, where 27% of high schools have greater than one out of five math teachers missing the appropriate teaching credential.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Source: CDE, 2005-2006; CDE, CBEDS, Staff Data Files, 2005-2006.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Attewell, P., & Domina, T. (2008). Raising the bar: Curricular intensity and academic performance. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 30(1), 51-71.

<sup>103</sup> Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Securing the right to learn: Policy and practice for powerful teaching and learning. *Educational Researcher*, 35, 13-24.

<sup>104</sup> Source: CDE, 2008-2009.

<sup>105</sup> Severe shortage percentage/category adapted from Rogers et al., 2007.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid; CDE, 2008-2009.

Intensely segregated and segregated schools of color experienced a greater shortage of a-g courses, college preparatory teachers, and college preparatory mathematics teachers than majority white/Asian schools in the 2008-2009 school year (see Figure 3).<sup>107</sup> For example, 19% of high schools across Southern California offer too few (66% or less) a-g courses to students. On the other hand, just 12% of majority white/Asian schools have such a severe shortage compared to intensely segregated schools of color, where 27% of schools offer too few a-g courses. A similar pattern but greater variation is observed with shortages of college preparatory and mathematics college preparatory teachers across underrepresented school concentration. Intensely segregated schools of color are close to three times more likely to experience a severe shortage of a-g teachers and college-prep mathematics teachers than majority white/Asian schools.

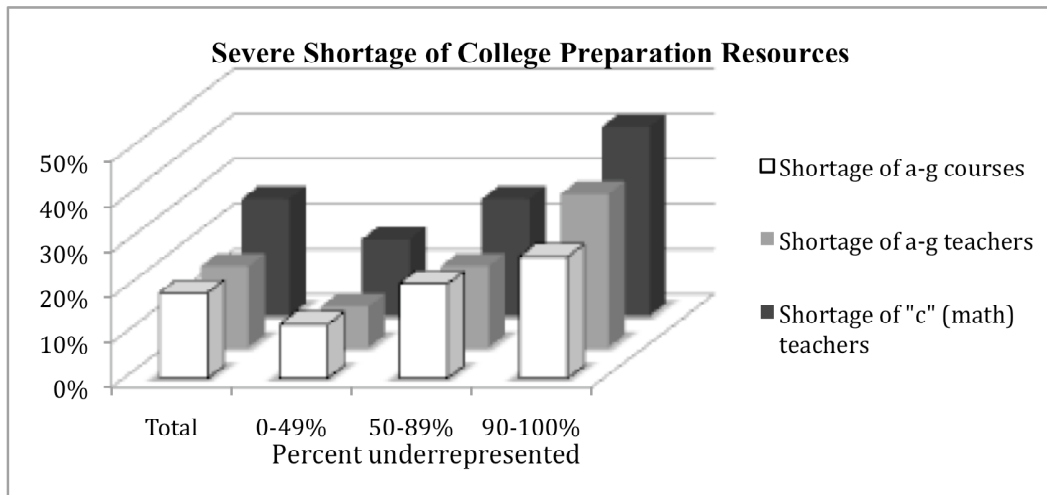


Figure 3: Percentage of Southern California (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura County) high schools by underrepresented minority concentration (black, Latino, American Indian enrollment) with a severe shortage of a-g courses (fewer than two-thirds), and a-g and “c” teachers (20% or more of college preparatory teachers or college preparatory math teachers lack the appropriate subject matter credential). Data from California Department of Education, 2008-2009; Severe shortage percentages/categories adapted from Rogers et al., 2007.

### Mathematics education

Students exposed to advanced math pathways (Algebra II and higher) in high school are significantly more likely to score higher on college entrance exams, enroll and experience success in college, as well as earn in the top quartile of income from employment.<sup>108</sup> Algebra I by Grade 9 is generally the prerequisite to begin an advanced math pathway in high school. Two factors that can influence a middle school’s student

<sup>107</sup> Source: CDE, 2008-2009; CDE, 2008-2009.

<sup>108</sup> National Mathematics Advisory Panel. (2008). *Foundations for success: The final report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

achievement, and thus, the racial achievement gap, are lack of access to rigorous mathematics courses, such as Algebra I, and severe shortages of teachers certified in mathematics.

Across Southern California counties, 42% of middle schools, 44% of intensely segregated schools, and 38% of majority white/Asian schools, enrolled fewer than half of their eighth graders in Algebra or the equivalent in 2008-2009 school year (See Figure 4).<sup>109</sup> In Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego counties, the results between underrepresented minority school concentrations are starker, as depicted in the figure below. These results suggest that, in comparison to majority white/Asian schools, intensely segregated schools in these three counties fail to enroll a significant portion of their Grade 8 students into Algebra I to begin their mathematics trajectory.

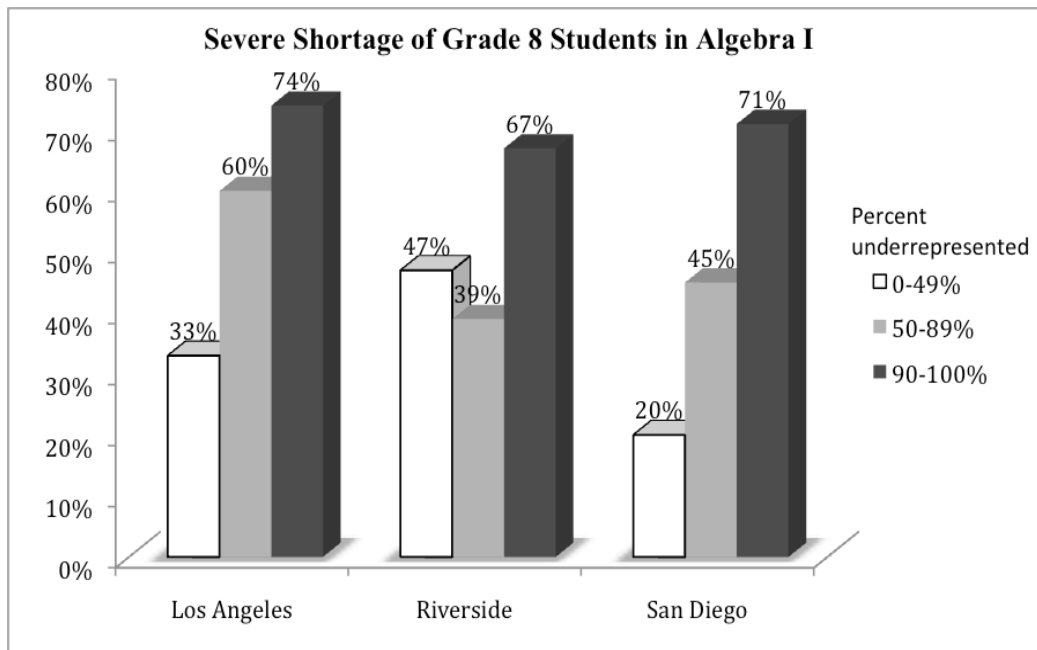


Figure 4: Percentage of Southern California (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura County) middle schools by underrepresented minority concentration (black, Latino, American Indian enrollment) with a severe shortage (fewer than 50%) of Grade 8 students enrolled in Algebra I. Data from California Department of Education, 2008-2009.

Mathematical content and pedagogical-content knowledge are strong predictors of mathematics teachers' instructional--and thus, student learning--effectiveness.<sup>110</sup> Some studies have used teaching certification in mathematics as a measure of such knowledge and found certification does improve students' mathematical performance.<sup>111</sup> As a result,

<sup>109</sup> Source: CDE, 2008-2009; Percentage/category adapted from Rogers et al., 2007.

<sup>110</sup> National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008

<sup>111</sup> See Darling-Hammond, 2006.

there is some evidence that middle school math teachers lacking a credential in mathematics can hinder student development.

In addition, approximately half of the middle schools in the six Southern California counties have a severe shortage of math teachers (i.e., schools with fewer than half of math teachers holding a secondary mathematics credential).<sup>112</sup> The figure below depicts schools with severe shortage of math teachers by underrepresented minority concentration. Similar to other learning opportunities, a higher concentration of students of color leads to fewer resources. As the graph indicates, close to twice the number of intensely segregated schools experienced a severe shortage of mathematics teachers in comparison to majority white/Asian schools.

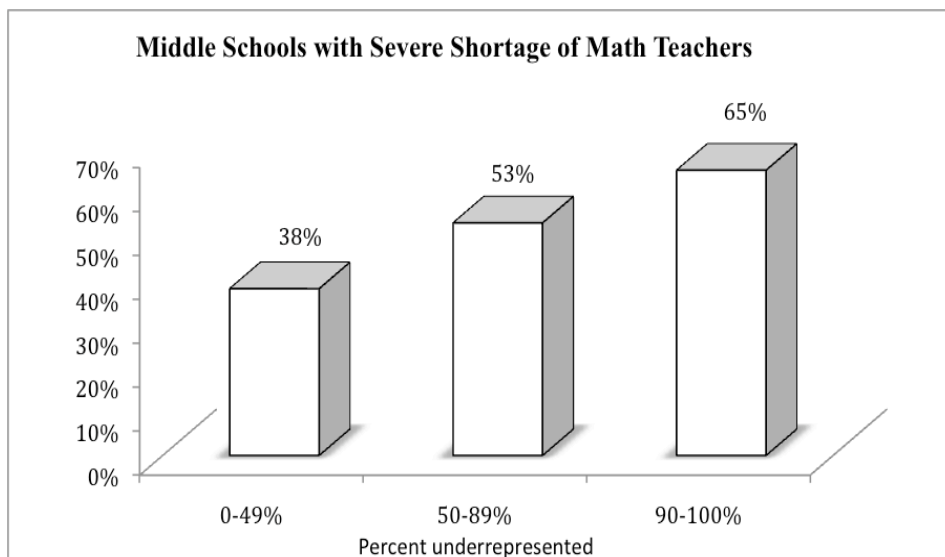


Figure 5: Percentage of Southern California (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura County) middle schools by underrepresented minority concentration (black, Latino, American Indian enrollment) with a severe shortage (fewer than 50%) of math teachers holding a secondary mathematics credential. Data from California Department of Education, 2008-2009.

With inadequate preparation at the middle school level, high schools need to provide intensive curricula and instruction in mathematics to students, particularly students of color. Research has suggested that students of color benefit more from taking rigorous academic courses (i.e., accepted to more prestigious or selective colleges) than white students.<sup>113</sup> However, Southern California high schools also fail to provide adequate mathematical preparation to students in schools with higher underrepresented minority concentration.

<sup>112</sup> Severe shortage percentage/category adapted from Rogers et al., 2007.

<sup>113</sup> Stearns, E., Potochnick, S., Moller, S., & Southworth, S. (2010). High school course-taking and post-secondary institutional selectivity. *Research in Higher Education*, 51(4), 366-395.

Table 14 presents the percentage of high schools across Southern California counties that fail to enroll at least 50% or more of their total eleventh and twelfth grade enrollment into advanced mathematics courses beyond Algebra II; Table 15 also presents the percentage of Southern California high schools that fail to enlist at least 10% or more of their freshman cohort into Advancement Placement (AP) Math four years later.<sup>114</sup> Both of these tables suggest that the higher the underrepresented minority concentration in school, the less likely a rigorous mathematical curriculum is offered to students, even though these students would benefit the most from such coursework.

Table 14 *Percentage of Southern California High Schools with Less than Half of Grade 11 and Grade 12 Students Enrolled in Advanced Mathematics Coursework by Underrepresented School Concentration*

	Less than 50% of Upper-Class Enrolled in Advanced Math
All schools	79%
0-10% underrepresented minority	25%
10.1-20% underrepresented minority	55%
20.1-30% underrepresented minority	74%
30.1-40% underrepresented minority	71%
40.1-50% underrepresented minority	76%
50.1-60% underrepresented minority	85%
60.1-70% underrepresented minority	84%
70.1-80% underrepresented minority	90%
80.1-90% underrepresented minority	92%
90.1-100% underrepresented minority	89%

*Data Source:* California Department of Education, 2008-2009.

*Note:* Underrepresented minority reflects total black, Latino, and American Indian enrollment.

Table 15 *Percentage of Southern California High Schools with Less than 10% of 2009 Cohort Enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) Mathematics by Underrepresented School Concentration*

	Less than 10% of 2009 Cohort Enrolled in AP Math over Four Years
All schools	29%
0-10% underrepresented minority	0%
10.1-20% underrepresented minority	7%
20.1-30% underrepresented minority	9%
30.1-40% underrepresented minority	10%
40.1-50% underrepresented minority	32%
50.1-60% underrepresented minority	33%
60.1-70% underrepresented minority	23%
70.1-80% underrepresented minority	44%
80.1-90% underrepresented minority	51%
90.1-100% underrepresented minority	44%

*Data Source:* California Department of Education, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009.

*Note:* Underrepresented minority reflects total black, Latino, and American Indian enrollment.

<sup>114</sup> Source: CDE, 2008-2009; Percentages/categories adapted from Rogers et al., 2007.

Similar to Southern California segregated and intensely segregated middle schools, high schools with a student body comprised of majority underrepresented students also employ more math teachers lacking the appropriate secondary mathematics credential. In Southern California high schools, the average segregated and intensely segregated schools reported a little over half of their math teachers (54.0% and 61.1%, respectively) with the appropriate credential.<sup>115</sup> In majority white/Asian schools, over two-thirds of math teachers (68.5%) maintained a mathematics secondary credential.<sup>116</sup>

*Summary (opportunity indices)*

Across the six Southern California counties segregated and intensely segregated schools considerably offered fewer learning opportunities and resources associated with student learning and college success in comparison to white and affluent schools. For example, a little over a quarter of majority white/Asian schools had at least one of the aforementioned learning barriers in each category of school safety (critically overcrowded), qualified teachers (severe shortage of qualified teachers), college preparation resources (severe shortage of a-g courses, college preparatory teachers, or college preparatory math teachers), mathematics education (severe shortage of math teachers holding the appropriate secondary certificate, or severe shortage of students enrolled in advanced mathematics or AP Math courses) (see figure below). However, this percentage is considerable in comparison to the three out of five segregated and the four out of five intensely segregated schools that experienced at least one of these learning barriers in each category.

Another summary index is the percentage of high schools, by underrepresented school concentration, that experienced any of the learning barriers discussed in this section (i.e., critically overcrowded or severe shortage of qualified teachers, a-g courses, college preparatory teachers, college preparatory math teachers, math teachers holding the appropriate secondary certificate, or students enrolled in advanced mathematics or AP Math courses) (see figure below). With 94% of intensely segregated schools, 82% segregated schools, and only 55% of majority white/Asian schools experiencing at least one of these learning opportunity barriers, this summary index clearly shows that segregated schools across Southern California counties experience inequitable educational opportunities in comparison to white/Asian majority schools.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

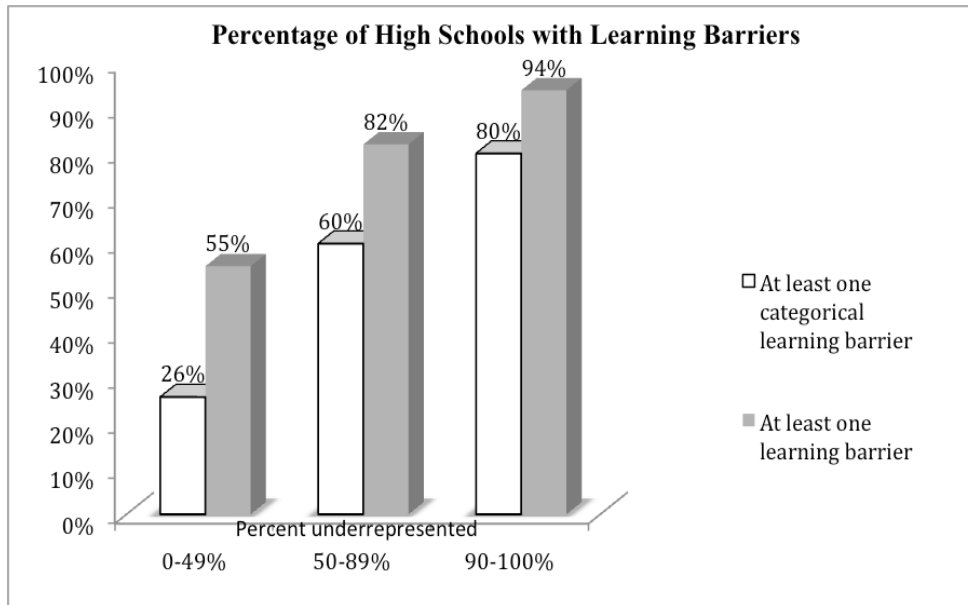


Figure 6: Percentage of Southern California (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura County) high schools by underrepresented minority concentration (black, Latino, American Indian enrollment) with at least one learning behavior in the four resource categories of school safety, qualified teachers, college preparation resources, and mathematics education; and high schools by underrepresented minority concentration with at least one learning barrier regardless of resource categories.

### Racial outcome gaps in Southern California

In Southern California, more affluent and white schools have higher graduation rates, a greater number of students completing the course sequence required for California State University or University of California admission (a-g requirements), and higher postsecondary enrollments rates the following fall in comparison to secondary students of color in segregated and intensely segregated schools. With research supporting how the aforementioned disparities in learning opportunities and barriers are associated with and can influence student achievement and postsecondary success, it is no surprise that segregated schools of color perform considerably worse than majority white/Asian schools on close to every achievement outcome, including standardized scores, graduation rates, dropout rates, and college matriculation.

In the 2008-2009 school year, segregated schools had far lower graduation rates, as well as lower shares of students who graduated college ready (completed a-g requirements). Figure 7 below presents the 2008-2009 these numbers by underrepresented school concentration, as well as the Fall 2009 postsecondary enrollment rates for the California Community College, California State University, and University

of California systems.<sup>117</sup>

Across the six Southern California counties, more than 50% of Grade 9 students in intensely segregated schools failed to graduate on time. For majority white/Asian schools, in contrast, over four out of five students graduated. In addition, only one out of five (18% and 21%) Grade 9 students in intensely segregated and segregated schools met the a-g graduation requirements on time, in comparison to close to double this number of students (39%) attending majority white/Asian schools. With college enrollment, 22% and 31% of Grade 9 students from intensely segregated and segregated schools of color enrolled in some form of California postsecondary institution the immediate fall in comparison to 43% of students in majority white/Asian schools.

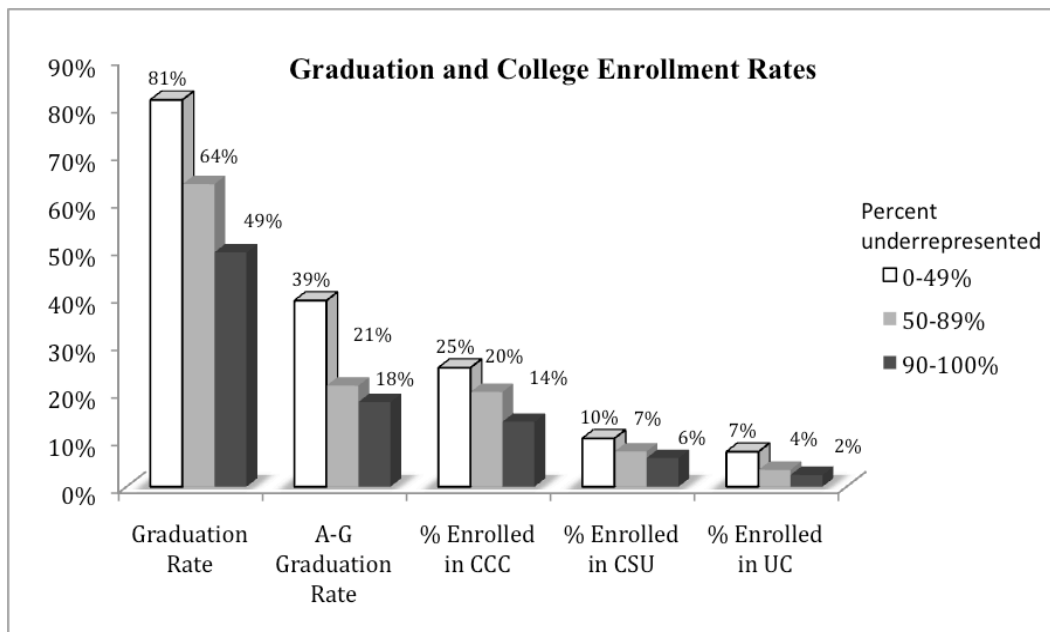


Figure 7: Graduation rates and A-G graduation rates in 2008-2009, as well as the percentage of students who immediately/first-time enrolled in the California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU), or University of California (UC) systems in Fall 2009. Data from the California Department of Education (CDE), 2007-2008, 2008-2009; and California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), Fall 2009; and calculated using the Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI)<sup>118</sup>.

Further, across Southern California, 14.6% and 8.3% of intensely segregated and

<sup>117</sup> Source: CDE, CBEDS, Student and School Data Files, 2007-2008, 2008-2009; California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), Enrollment - First-Time Students at Public Institutions / College Going Counts, Fall 2009

<sup>118</sup> Swanson, C. (2004) *Who Graduates? Who Doesn't? A Statistical Profile of Public High School Graduation, Class of 2001*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute; Orfield, G., Losen, D., Wald, J., & Swanson, C. (2004). *Losing Our Future: How Minority Youth Are Being Left Behind by the Graduation Rate Crisis*. The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, The Urban Institute, Advocates for Children in New York, & The Civil Society Institute



segregated schools of color were considered dropout factories in 2008-2009—where over 50% of students failed to graduate on time.<sup>119</sup> This is considerable in comparison to the 2.6%, or 20 out of the 735 majority white/Asian secondary schools that failed to graduate at least 50% of their students on time.<sup>120</sup>

These statistics presented in this report do not show an ambiguous pattern. A student who attends a segregated school, especially an intensely segregated one, experiences great barriers and few resources, and that student is subsequently less likely to graduate and immediately enroll in a postsecondary institution. If the same student was in a school with many white and Asian students, s/he is very likely to be in a setting where almost everyone graduates and where there is a much better chance of entering one of the state's excellent colleges. These are two very different channels of opportunity and they are linked powerfully to race.

### **Part III**

#### **Discussion and concluding thoughts**

The story of desegregation efforts in Southern California is fraught with irony. In a region that was among the first in the country to acknowledge the detrimental consequences of school segregation – in a state where the highest court defined broad desegregation obligations under the constitution - its ultimate failure to implement any comprehensive desegregation plan has left a lasting legacy of extreme educational stratification. In essence, Los Angeles avoided comprehensive desegregation for as long as possible, rid itself of the judge who eventually ordered it—and then, when the time came to finally take action, amended the state constitution to prohibit the use of busing for integration purposes. The amendment also sought to protect the heavily white suburbs of Los Angeles (where people incorrectly believed they could stop racial change) from desegregation. Experts in the Los Angeles case proposed a plan to meet the demographic changes and challenges ahead. But after the passage of Proposition 1, inaction became the ruling principle. Unfortunately, the history of American cities shows that the default setting built into the housing market and the associated system of fragmented school districts is spreading segregation in neighborhoods and schools.

The South engaged in “massive resistance” to desegregation, but that resistance was eventually broken in many communities--both by the courts and enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.<sup>121</sup> In California the resistance succeeded, the courts accepted it, and segregation simply became the norm. Since opponents of desegregation triumphed

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<sup>119</sup> Source: CDE, 2007-2008, 2008-2009

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> For discussion of Massive Resistance, see Orfield, G. (1978). *Must we Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

three decades ago, there has been virtually no discussion of these issues. The consistent political tendency since then has been to blame school bureaucracies and teachers for the problems of schools—and to ignore the reality that school systems today face double or triple segregation with profoundly unequal opportunities. Such patterns should not be surprising, the dynamics that created them were apparent long ago.

The typical Southern California Latino student walks into school each morning with a student population that is more than 70% Latino, with whites comprising roughly 15% of the population and where less than 10% of students identify as black or Asian. Black students, however, experience much higher rates of exposure to Latinos. The average black student in Southern California attends a school that is 21% black and 53% Latino and very impoverished.

Two out of five Latino students and a third of all black students in the region enroll in intensely segregated learning environments where more than 90% of students are from underrepresented minority racial backgrounds. Just 5% of Southern California's Asian and white students enroll in intensely segregated minority educational settings. In fact, white children in the region typically attend schools where they are substantially overrepresented in the student population. In a region where white students make up just 25% of the population, the average white student in Southern California attends a school that is approximately 50% white.

Our findings point to a long-term, systemic trend of severe school segregation, strongly related to inequality in both opportunities and outcomes, and further compounded by a climate of high stakes standards and accountability.

One could regret this history but still ask, what can be done at this juncture with segregation so extreme? Or further, how can desegregation, as it is historically understood, be carried out in a megalopolis of such demographic complexity? There are no easy answers to these questions. Yet it is feasible to do *much* more to confront issues of isolation and corresponding educational inequity in the region, since, at present, virtually no action is being taken. And based on this portrait of educational inequality in Southern California, we argue here that doing nothing should no longer be an option.

Obviously, the standards for desegregation in this largely Latino society will be very different. This is not the old black-white desegregation issue of the South, but it is very clear that there are a great many advantaged students and successful schools in the region, as well as a great many students locked into schools that are doubly and triply segregated and unequal along all major

dimensions. Though there are practical limits to desegregation by either race or class, there are many opportunities and many communities where there are possibilities of desegregation—just as there are threats of resegregation and decline or polarization in others. Still, together white and Asian students make up 35% of Southern California's student enrollment. And almost half of the region's students do *not* qualify for free or reduced lunch prices, a common proxy for poverty. Based on these simple demographic characteristics, tremendous variation exists among schools on almost every measure of educational effectiveness (like graduation and college going rates, teacher experience or access to rigorous coursework). It remains vital, then, to devise policies that distribute educational resources more evenly across the region--or, conversely, that help disadvantaged students access higher performing schools. Integration by some combination of socioeconomic status, race and/or linguistic background is legal and offers real possibilities. There are scores of suburban communities in the midst of unplanned racial change where the outcomes could be much better with a good plan for school and housing integration, in addition to many gentrifying city communities that would become more desirable to families of all backgrounds with schools that were strong and diverse.

School choice – leveraged in a way that promotes, rather than detracts, from racial diversity – is another avenue for further integration in the region. Choice without planning for diversity often increases stratification. Yet with appropriate civil rights policies it can have the opposite impact. In fact, the explosive growth of school choice in Southern California, particularly in San Diego and Los Angeles, may represent as yet untapped possibilities for promoting diversity. There are integrated and segregated magnets, pilot schools and charters in the area. All need appropriate policies for outreach and recruitment,, plans for successful diversity, fair treatment, and good transportation for families who need it.

If we do not act, if we stand by passively, segregation in Southern California will continue to deepen and evolve in increasingly harmful ways, threatening the future viability of the region. The majority of our children will have little contact with paths to opportunity and most students will have little positive experience with people of other racial, ethnic, linguistic, and class backgrounds. Ultimately, the way forward should be directed by an effort to prepare students to work and live in a region of almost unparalleled diversity. We must begin viewing language as an asset for all children, one that enables them to communicate more fluidly and effectively in a global society, and create as many opportunities as possible to interact with native speakers of other languages.

White students, who represent the most isolated group in the region, are currently sadly underprepared for success in a bilingual, multiracial society where they will comprise a very small and shrinking minority. Indeed, all racial or ethnic groups in Southern California must have access to schools and faculties that are organized to promote the many academic and social benefits of diversity. Developing these conditions for students in the Southland is a basic necessity—for their future success and for the success of the region's communities.

## Appendix

Table 1A *School Enrollment, 2007-08*

	Total Enrollment	White (%)	Black (%)	Latino (%)	Asian (%)	American Indian (%)
Arizona	1,071,193	45%	6%	41%	3%	5%
Southern California	3,426,416	25%	8%	57%	10%	0%
Los Angeles	1,564,555	16%	10%	64%	11%	0%
Orange	469,164	35%	2%	46%	17%	1%
Riverside	391,046	29%	8%	58%	5%	1%
San Bernardino	394,337	25%	11%	59%	5%	1%
San Diego	468,041	35%	7%	45%	12%	1%
Ventura	139,273	42%	2%	49%	7%	1%
Los Angeles Unified	668,972	9%	11%	74%	6%	0%
San Diego Unified	128,326	25%	13%	44%	16%	1%

*Data Source:* 2007-2008 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data).

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties.

Table 2A *Exposure to Students Eligible for Free Reduced Lunch (FRL) Status by Race, 2007-08*

	FRL Share of School Enrollment	White Exposure to FRL Students	Black Exposure to FRL Students	Latino Exposure to FRL Students	Asian Exposure to FRL Students	American Indian Exposure to FRL Students
Southern California	53%	31	60	65	40	46
Los Angeles	59%	31	63	69	43	55
Los Angeles Unified	69%	44	67	73	59	63
All other districts in Los Angeles County	52%	27	58	65	38	47
Orange	41%	19	38	62	33	23
Riverside	53%	39	53	62	40	52
San Bernardino	58%	46	61	64	42	59
San Diego	46%	30	58	58	39	41
San Diego Unified	62%	42	70	74	56	55
All other districts in SD County	39%	27	45	52	28	38
Ventura	41%	24	42	57	29	34

*Data Source:* 2007-2008 Common Core of Data (Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data).

*Note:* Southern California includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties.

