

Implementation

Graduate students at the University of Washington, Bothell used two of the suggested methodologies to conduct a research study. The students' data set included 2,835 residential unlawful detainer (UD) filings in King County, Washington during 2008. In addition, monthly rental values were collected in 28 cities within King County's boundaries. Across 72 zip codes in King County a significant correlation exists between a tenant's race, as identified in the 2000 U.S. Census, and UD filing rates. Statistical analysis demonstrated a moderate positive correlation between percentage of African-American tenants and UD rates and a moderate negative correlation between percentage of White tenants and UD rates. These correlations illustrate that living in a predominantly African-American zip code area in King County increases a tenant's likelihood of facing eviction, while living in a predominantly White zip code area decreases a tenant's likelihood of facing eviction. The data also showed that this is true, to a lesser extent, for other ethnic minorities, including tenants identifying as Multi-Racial, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

For further information, contact Merf Ehman at Columbia Legal Services, Merf.Ehman@ColumbiaLegal.org □

Calling all DC-area Federal Employees!

PRRAC is now a member of the **Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capitol Area**—the workplace giving drive for federal employees in the Capitol area.

PRRAC is listed under the "Local Independent Organization" section on the CFC website at www.cfcna.org—our CFC number is 11710.

The Effects of Racially and Economically Isolated Schools on Student Performance

Over the past two decades, the United States Supreme Court has issued rulings that severely limit the ability of school boards to use race as a factor in student assignment policies as one way to foster diversity. To increase our understanding of the impact of these rulings, PRRAC commissioned this study to address a single question:

What is the effect on student performance of racially isolated schools?

In answering this question, we recognized the need to also address the following:

If the effect on student performance is negative, can better-qualified teachers and other resources make up for the effect of racial isolation?

Using English I and Algebra I scores for 9th-grade North Carolina public school students on End-of-Course (EOC) exams for 2007-2008, we analyzed the performance of the population of North Carolina 9th graders as a whole (N=134,646) and a subpopulation of students in three counties (Pitt, Wayne and Halifax) with high levels of racial and economic isolation. The five school systems in these three counties comprise our "Focus Site" (N=3,625).

Our decision to study economic as well as racial isolation was based on North Carolina's high poverty levels (particularly in urban areas and in the coastal plain and mountains) and the significant impact of economic isolation on student performance.

We controlled for individual student race and ethnicity, economic disadvantage (eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, or FRPL), and designation as gifted. We also analyzed the effect of school-level characteristics, including teacher experience, teacher training (advanced degrees), teacher accreditation (fully licensed), the percentage of economically disadvantaged students, and the percentage of students who were Black

or Latino. The bivariate relationships between racial isolation and test scores provide a clear picture of the effects of racial and economic isolation and the academic cost to students who are enrolled in these schools.

More than 8,000 9th graders in North Carolina (and an estimated 100,000+ students in all grades) attend schools that are more than 75% Black, and most of these schools are also high-poverty and low-performing schools. We found that racial concentration, per se, had no significant effect, but that disparities in academic performance were tied to concentrations of poverty and the significant disparity in instructional resources (fully certified teachers and teachers with advanced degrees) present in the highly segregated schools. Analysis for a Focus Site subpopulation of systems that had a high percentage of high schools with severe levels of racial and economic isolation produced similar findings.

We found that fully licensed teachers and teachers with advanced degrees can improve student performance. We found that teachers in North Carolina's most segregated schools (more than 75% Black) were significantly less likely to be fully licensed and significantly less likely to have advanced degrees.

We also found that Black students are much less likely to be designated gifted, and that alternative schools (e.g., schools for exceptional or at-risk students) are likely to be severely segregated (more than 75% Black) and to have teachers who are poorly trained for their students' disabilities and in their subject areas.

We calculated the cost of racial and economic segregation on academic performance for one severely segregated North Carolina high school. Goldsboro High School, in Wayne County was 99.4% Black in a school
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system that was 56% minority and 81% economically disadvantaged in a county that averages 65.8%. If an attempt was made to counterbalance such economic and racial isolation by improving resources (such as increased training and tenure of teachers) at this single school, the cost would be \$1,580 per student. As Goldsboro High School had 616 students (2007-2008), this equals \$970,000. (It should be noted that our previous research—funded by the Paul Green Foundation—in Wayne County schools showed that the county’s residential patterns did not necessitate racial or economic segregation. In that study, we used Geographic Information Systems to illustrate that school attendance zones could be designed to provide integrated neighborhood schools.)

Our analysis suggests three complementary strategies for improving academic performance in North Carolina’s high schools: (1) create school attendance areas that will create racially and economically balanced schools; (2) require teachers to be fully licensed; and (3) provide fund-

ing to hire teachers with advanced degrees in the subject area taught. In addition, we agree with the National Research Council’s 2002 recommendations that the state should undertake a thorough review of its policies toward gifted and “special needs” students, and that educators should be required to first provide special needs students with high-quality instruction and social support in a regular setting before determining whether special services are needed, in order to make sure that minority students who are poorly prepared for school are not assigned to special education for that reason.

In sum, investments to improve resources can increase academic performance, but these investments are not being made in North Carolina’s predominantly-Black schools. Moreover, such efforts can only mitigate some of the adverse academic impacts created by attendance at racially and economically isolated schools. Investments to improve resources and the quality of education programs that overcome the effects of economic disadvantages can increase academic performance in the short term and future employment opportunities in the long

term. Strong academic performance in our schools is critical to the state’s and nation’s competitiveness in a global economy.

This research is integral to advocacy provided for and by students and their families in highly segregated schools, as they attempt to demonstrate the harms of such hypersegregation. The report has been submitted by the NAACP to the U.S. Justice Department—together with additional research by Ann Moss Joyner of the Cedar Grove Institute—to support a Title VI claim against Wayne County Board of Education. This Title VI complaint was the first such claim accepted by the Obama Administration’s Justice Department for investigation. It uses GIS to demonstrate that hypersegregated schools are not necessary to achieve “neighborhood” schools in Wayne County. More recently, the research has also been provided to groups opposing the elimination of Wake County’s Diversity Policy.

Further information is available from Ann Moss Joyner, ann@mcmoss.org. □

Use of Force in a Washington State School District – Neither Reasonable nor Necessary

In 2008, after receiving complaints of continuing reliance on physical restraints and handcuffs at public schools in Washington State, and particularly in the Kent School District (20 miles south of Seattle, in King County), the ACLU of Washington requested public records, including redacted incident reports detailing the use of physical, mechanical and/or chemical restraints (i.e., physical force, handcuffs and/or pepper spray) against students. We reviewed more than 400 separate reports, which as a whole reflect inadequate training and oversight for school staff authorized to use force against students and resulting evidence of the unnecessary

use of force.

The Kent School District is not the only place in Washington where students are handcuffed, sprayed or forcefully “escorted” to the principal’s office. Unfortunately, we do not presently have the ability to review data from all districts around the state to see where the use of force is most common, because those data are not (yet) collected. They are generally not collected as part of discipline data, because schools are not allowed to use force as a means of discipline. Schools are allowed, however, to use “reasonable physical force” “as necessary to maintain order” or to prevent students from harming themselves, other stu-

dents or staff or school property.

This exception to the prohibition on physical force allows for wide variation in practice as schools and districts interpret the meaning of “reasonable physical force” that is “necessary” to maintain order. In 2008, the Washington state legislature considered but did not pass a bill that would have narrowed this exception by prohibiting the use of handcuffs and pepper spray in schools, except in emergency situations and by trained personnel. The legislature did allocate funding for the Washington State School Directors’ Association to facilitate a task force and develop a model policy regarding the use of