

# Unequal Resources for Long Island Students Based on Race

E·R·A·S·E



RACISM

# Forward by ERASE Racism President

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For two decades, ERASE Racism has asked the question: What does successful public school education look like in the geographic region of Nassau and Suffolk Counties?

Do headlines like “19 Long Island high schools ranked among best in the country” – based on rankings by U.S. News & World Report – answer the question about the region’s public education success?

This ERASE Racism report demonstrates that a prerequisite for understanding the success of Long Island’s public school education system is an examination to determine whether structural impediments to racial equity exist. We posit that any attempt to measure the success of Long Island’s public schools must measure the district resource gap and its correlation with the racial compositions of school districts. If the answer is “Yes, there are resource gaps,” then the success of our region’s education depends on how effectively and expeditiously the structural impediments are identified and addressed.

Our resource disparity research grouped districts based on race. Of the 125 districts, we focused on 66 districts, which fall into four categories, as follows: 11 intensely segregated (90-100% non-White), 10 majority Black and Hispanic (50-89%), five racially diverse (40-60% White), and 40 predominantly White (at least 70%).

The resource disparity analysis in this report focuses on those four district categories, because they best capture the impact of racial segregation. Education segregation scholarship broadly shows that Black and Hispanic students are most impacted by racial segregation. Future research could explore other aspects of racial segregation in education on Long Island, but that is beyond this report’s scope. The report analyzes the resource distribution, on average, across these district categories.

The research findings in this report demonstrate that there are major gaps in resources. Students attending different school districts do not uniformly have access to the resources they need to succeed. They do not even have access to the same level of resources.

Our research reveals the following disparities:

1. Intensely segregated districts have, on average, nearly \$10,000 less in annual revenue per student than predominately White districts.<sup>1</sup>
2. Intensely segregated districts have a higher number of students for every guidance counselor and social worker than predominantly White districts. For instance, on average, there is one guidance counselor for about every 1,226 students in intensely segregated districts. In contrast, on average, there is one guidance counselor for every 500 students in majority Black and Hispanic districts, 339 students in racially diverse districts, and 356 students in predominantly White districts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: “Stress Monitoring System Manual” from Office of the New York State Comptroller. Link: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/fiscal-monitoring/pdf/system-manual.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

3. Intensely segregated districts have a median of 179 as their student-to-AP course ratio, meaning there is an AP course for every 179 high school students in these districts. This number is more than double the median ratio for all districts (with at least one high school) and almost two times higher than 99, the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile ratio for all districts.<sup>3</sup>
4. Intensely segregated districts have the highest average fiscal stress score of 19.70 of the four groups, according to data from the Office of the New York State Comptroller, which is more than twice the average score of predominantly White districts (8.30).<sup>4</sup>
5. Intensely segregated districts have a much higher average environmental stress score than all the other district categories, with it being almost seven times the score of Predominantly White Districts, according to an analysis by the Office of the State Comptroller.<sup>5</sup>
6. Intensely segregated districts have a higher average rate of teacher turnover.<sup>6</sup>

We know that Long Island’s population is increasingly racially diverse, and the public school population is now just over 50% students of color. However, despite this increase in student racial diversity in the aggregate, the number of intensely segregated districts has also increased. There were five intensely segregated districts in the 2003-2004 school year; in 2019-2020, there were 11 districts. The percentage of Black and Hispanic students in these districts also increased during this period, from 28 to 37 percent for Black students and 13 to 36 percent for Hispanic students.

Over a third of all Black students and of all Hispanic students are attending the intensely segregated districts that are regularly denied critical resources. That represents 65,545 students.

Contrary to the lack of resources in intensely segregated districts, our report finds that racially diverse districts are not experiencing extreme resource disparities. Out of all the demographic categories studied in this report, racially diverse districts have the lowest fiscal stress, the lowest ratio of students to guidance counselors, and the lowest teacher turnover. In addition, for many of the other measures their resources are on par with predominantly White districts. This significant finding challenges the common misperception that to attain racial diversity residents need to sacrifice school quality. While it is outside the scope of this report to look at student performance, a preliminary look at performance on 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math exams shows that most diverse districts are performing well above the median. While this data are encouraging, more research is required to understand the needs of these diverse districts and how they can be supported.

The cumulative and compounding effects of resource denial tied to increasing racial segregation illuminate a startling fact in 2022: as long as students’ access to equitable education depends on their race, Long Island public education cannot be honestly characterized as “successful.”

So what do we do in the face of the structural impediments exposed in this research?

First, we urge state and local decision-makers to adhere to and implement the policy priorities published in 2021 by the U. S. Department of Education stating the need to address racial

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<sup>3</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

<sup>4</sup> Source: “Stress Monitoring System Manual” from Office of the New York State Comptroller. Link: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/fiscal-monitoring/pdf/system-manual.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The indicators for environmental stress include a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, high teacher turnover rate, a decrease in property value, a low budget vote approval rate, high percentage of English language learners, and large class sizes. Source: “Stress Monitoring System Manual” from Office of the New York State Comptroller. Link: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/fiscal-monitoring/pdf/system-manual.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

inequality in schools. Specifically, Proposed Priority 2 – titled “Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources, Opportunities, and Welcoming Environments” – highlights the fact that “inadequate access to and the inequitable distribution of resources negatively affect underserved students’ educational experience in a number of ways, which may include fewer opportunities for educational enrichment, high-quality early learning, well-rounded coursework, and high-quality college and career pathways.”<sup>7</sup>

We also make several recommendations of our own, which can be found in the “Policy Recommendations” section of this report. They urge the New York State Education Department and the New York State Legislature to prioritize and facilitate the following:

1. Equitable funding across school districts;
2. Resource sharing across districts;
3. Racially integrated learning environments.

There is much work to be done to make public school education on Long Island a success for every school district. Using all means possible to address resource gaps is an imperative. New York and Long Island leaders and the general public can no longer ignore the unequal access to resources for African American/Black and Hispanic students. This report makes that clear.

Most immediately, the New York State Education Department and the State Legislature should take concrete steps to address the resource gaps identified in this report and ensure equity across school districts. Simultaneously, the executive and legislative branches of government – especially the Governor, Attorney General, and legislative leaders should expand inclusive and fair housing for all New Yorkers, to reduce residential segregation, which will in turn increase integration in schools. Current school attendance policies are directly tied to where students live. With high levels of residential segregation, New Yorkers are guaranteed school segregation – and the unequal education that this report highlights.

Acknowledging that there is a problem is a necessary step to successful education for Long Island, but it is only a first step. This recognition must be followed in short order with concrete actions to change course. All of this takes courage, which we hope our leaders will demonstrate.

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<sup>7</sup> “Proposed Priorities and Definitions – Secretary’s Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs.” Link: [https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/06/30/2021-14003/proposed-priorities-and-definitions-secretarys-supplemental-priorities-and-definitions-for?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=#footnote-5-p34667](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/06/30/2021-14003/proposed-priorities-and-definitions-secretarys-supplemental-priorities-and-definitions-for?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=#footnote-5-p34667) (Accessed March 31, 2022).

# Executive Summary

Over the past decade, Long Island's general population and the children who attend its K-12 public schools have become more racially diverse. However, this picture masks the fact that where these students are enrolled continues to be severely racially segregated.

The original analyses we conducted for this report show that our K-12 public education system has become even more segregated, with the number of districts classified as intensely segregated more than doubling between 2004 and 2020. Further, we found that these racially segregated districts do not have the same access to resources as predominantly White and racially diverse districts.

Our report also acknowledges that racial segregation in education is inscribed in the geography of Long Island and that one important strategy to systemically transform such segregation is dismantling housing segregation. We close the report with policy recommendations that focus on working towards equitable funding and distribution of resources across district lines. Further, absent any policy changes that alter district boundaries to produce racially integrated districts or that permit students to attend schools of their choosing that could produce racially integrated districts, Long Island's schools will remain segregated. We highlight our significant findings below.

## Main Findings

- The 2019-2020 school year marks the first time that students of color make up more than 50 percent of enrollment in public K-12 school districts on Long Island.
- Despite increasing racial diversity at the aggregate, Long Island school districts remain segregated, with the raw number of intensely segregated districts for 2019-2020 double that for 2003-2004. Out of their total enrollment, the percentage of Black and Hispanic students attending school in these districts also increased in the same time span, from 28 to 37 percent for Black students and from 13 to 36 percent for Hispanic students.
- This racial segregation leads to disparity in resources. Compared to predominantly White districts, intensely segregated districts have less funding, less financial stability, higher teacher turnover rate, less AP course availability, and more students for every guidance counselor, social worker, and teacher on average. All of Long Island's high-need districts are either intensely segregated (90% or greater non-White) or made up of at least 80 percent students of color.
- Long Island's racially diverse school districts are not experiencing significant resource disparities, especially when compared to intensely segregated schools. Out of all the demographic categories studied in this report, racially diverse districts have the lowest fiscal stress, the lowest ratio of students to guidance counselors, and the lowest teacher turnover.
- An important structural explanation of school segregation on Long Island is housing segregation, as school attendance is generally determined by where students live.

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# Introduction

In 2020, data collected for the U.S. Census Bureau's decennial population survey showed Nassau County and Suffolk County to have become more racially diverse in the last decade.<sup>8</sup> This was cause for celebration, especially for a suburban area that is often known for its post-World War II history as a White-only community.<sup>9</sup>

But how far have we come from this history? And does racial diversity at the aggregate translate into racial integration in our schools? ERASE Racism was cautiously optimistic when we entered the research phase for this report because our 2018 analysis<sup>10</sup> of Long Island's 125 school districts<sup>11</sup> showed a less than promising picture: Even though the area's general population and student body gradually turned more racially diverse, the number of intensely segregated school districts did not decrease and instead had more than doubled. Further, students in these intensely segregated districts did not have the same level of access to resources as their peers in predominantly White schools.

Unfortunately, the picture has not improved. In this report, we explore what school segregation looks like on Long Island by examining changes to the overall student demographics, the racial distribution of students across our 125 school districts, and how this racial distribution might affect the kinds of opportunities that students can access. The section of the report that analyzes demographic change includes the entire public school student population in the 125 districts. For our section on resource disparities, we focused on 66 districts that fall into the following four categories: 11 intensely segregated districts (90-100% non-White), 10 majority Black and Hispanic districts (50-89%), five racially diverse districts (40-60% White), and 40 predominantly White districts (at least 70%). This categorization system allows us to look at the impact of racial segregation on resource disparity between districts with concentrations of Black and Hispanic students and districts with concentrations of White students.

In particular, we found that intensely segregated districts—that is, those wherein students of color make up at least 90 percent of enrollment—have less funding, less financial stability, lower AP course availability, higher teacher turnover rate, and more students for every guidance counselor, social worker, and teacher than predominantly White districts.

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<sup>8</sup> Newsday, "Census 2020: LI population up 3.1%, becoming more diverse." <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/population-gains-losses-long-island-c19872> (Accessed on March 31, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Rachele Blidner, "Long Island Divided: Legacy of exclusion is tough to shed." <https://projects.newsday.com/long-island/levittown-demographics-real-estate/> (Accessed on March 31, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> ERASE Racism. 2017, "A Decade of Change: Growing School Segregation on Long Island" Link: <https://www.eraseracismny.org/storage/documents/A Decade of Change Growing School Segregation on LI 2017 Report Final.pdf> (accessed May 16, 2022)

<sup>11</sup> Out of Long Island's 125 school districts, only one district—Little Flower UFSD—is not populated based on where students reside. This is because Little Flower is the only residential Special Act public school district on Long Island, and it accepts students from multiple locations based on need..

This observed racial segregation in our K-12 public school system stems from the racial segregation of our neighborhoods, as where students live determines where they go to school. Finally, we end the report with a discussion of policy directions that can move Long Island towards a more just future.

## Demographic Overview

Within the last decade, Long Island has been experiencing a notable rise in residents of color. In Nassau and Suffolk Counties, non-Hispanic Whites comprised a little more than 70 percent of the overall population in 2010, but a little less than 64 percent in 2019.<sup>12</sup> During the same time, the Hispanic population moved from 15 to 18 percent and the Asian population moved from 5 to 7 percent, while the Black population hovered at 9 percent even though their raw number increased by about 17,000.

Table 1. Racial composition of Long Island, 2010 and 2019.

	2010 Population	2019 Population	2010 Percentage	2019 Percentage
Non-Hispanic Black	241,828	258,946	9	9
Hispanic/Latino	409,470	515,858	15	18
Non-Hispanic White	1,973,251	1,816,273	70	64
Asian	148,594	187,841	5	7
Others	38,488	61,423	1	<1
Total	2,811,631	2,840,341	100	100

Source: 2010 and 2019 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

This demographic shift is especially prominent in our K-12 public schools, in which White students comprised 70 percent in 2004 and 49 percent in 2020. Specifically, Hispanic and Asian student enrollments have each doubled, with Hispanic student enrollment increasing from 13 percent to 30 percent and Asian student enrollment from 5 percent to 10 percent. This change translates to about 70,000 more Hispanic students and 18,000 more Asian students.

Table 2. Racial composition of students in Long Island K-12 public schools, 2003-2004 and 2019-2020 school years.

	2004 Student Percentage	2019 Student Percentage	2019 Student Population
Non-Hispanic Black	11	9	39,076
Hispanic/Latino	13	30	128,570
Non-Hispanic White	70	49	206,740
Asian	5	10	40,427
Others	1	2	10,064
Total	100	100	424,877

Source: New York State Department of Education<sup>13</sup>

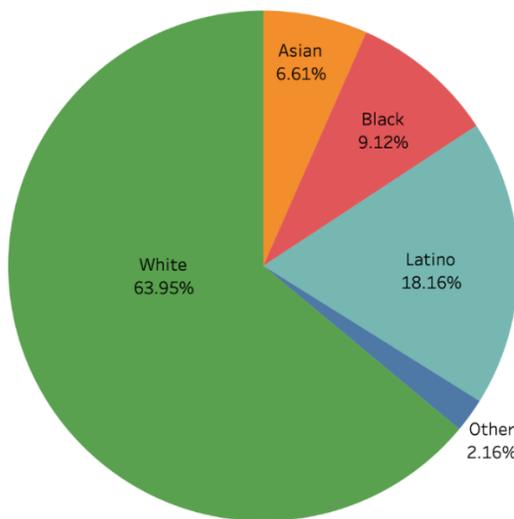
Simultaneously, we also witness a decrease in the raw number of White students (from about 317,000 students in 2004 to 250,000 in 2014 to 206,000 in 2020) as well as Black students (from about 50,000 in 2004 to 41,000 in 2014 to 40,000 in 2020). The fact that the overall Black population on Long Island increased by about 17,000 but the number of Black children in

<sup>12</sup> American Community Survey 2010 and 2019 Five-Year Estimates. Link: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

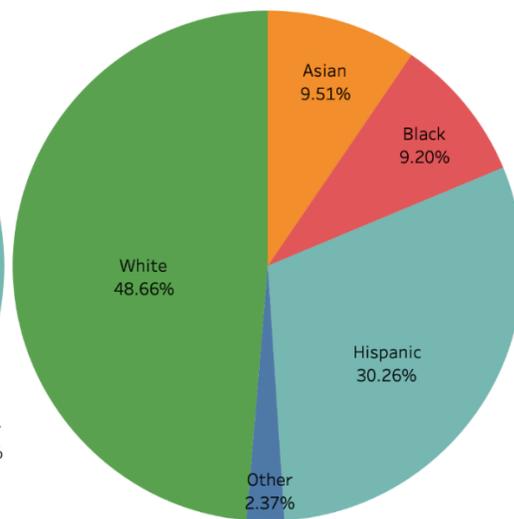
<sup>13</sup> Data can be found on NYSED's website: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

our K-12 public schools decreased should be unpacked further in a separate analysis that can adequately consider a wide range of possible factors. On the surface, a troubling possibility hints at the rising lack of affordable housing<sup>14</sup> that can disproportionately impact young Black families, who might see states in the South as better options for settling down.<sup>15</sup> This can be coupled with persistent housing discrimination that can make it difficult for young Black families to find a home on Long Island, such as the discriminatory practices by real estate agents that were uncovered in a three-year investigation<sup>16</sup> by *Newsday*.

Long Island Overall Population, 2019



Student Enrollment, 2020



These demographic changes are not unique to Long Island, as the United States and our public schools have steadily become more non-White. Looking at just demographic changes, it might seem like the country, Long Island, and Long Island schools are becoming more racially diverse. However, the impact of structural racism<sup>17</sup> remains strong, since there is evidence that our schools are becoming more racially segregated.

Almost seven decades after *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), racial segregation of students in U.S. K-12 public schools continues to persist and acts as a significant driver of education inequality. Specifically, such segregation started to return after the late 1980s as soon as busing requirements ended via Supreme Court decisions, intensifying especially

<sup>14</sup> “Long Island’s Rental Housing Crisis.” Regional Planning Association. Link: <https://rpa.org/work/reports/long-islands-rental-housing-crisis>

<sup>15</sup> Olivia Winslow. “A change in location: More Blacks leaving Long Island for the South.” *Newsday*. Link: <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/black-population-changes-in-demographics-1.50391372> (Accessed on March 31, 2022).

<sup>16</sup> “Long Island Divided.” *Newsday*. Link: <https://projects.newsday.com/long-island/real-estate-agents-investigation/> (Accessed on March 31, 2022).

<sup>17</sup> Structural racism is defined as a system in which government agencies, institutional and organizational policies and practices, and cultural values and norms perpetuate racial inequality in outcomes—whether intentionally or unintentionally.

in the 1990s.<sup>18</sup> For example, in *Milliken v. Bradley*, the Supreme Court's decision effectively meant that 1) even though explicit segregation across school districts was illegal, implicit segregation was allowed if the drawing of school district boundary lines was not done with provable racist intent and 2) having a "racial balance" in schools was not a requirement in desegregation plans. The bar for provable racist intent, of course, has always been set incredibly high, making it nearly impossible for a case to be made. Without court orders for desegregation plans, school districts began to resegregate across the country, especially in the Southern region.<sup>19</sup> Despite its reputation as a racially progressive state, New York unfortunately did not escape this picture of resegregation.<sup>20,21</sup>

So, what does the racial segregation of students in K-12 public schools look like exactly?

First, racial segregation can happen inside a school, wherein White students are tracked into courses that are considered more rigorous, higher in quality, and better for college applications (such as gifted, AP, and IB classes) while students of color, and especially Black students, are tracked into courses that are considered more general or even remedial.<sup>22,23</sup> Research shows that such tracking does not sort students based on their ability and that racial bias plays a significant part in it.<sup>24</sup> Second, racial segregation can happen within districts, wherein White and non-White students attend different schools based on how school attendance boundaries are drawn.<sup>25</sup> Finally, racial segregation can happen between districts, wherein certain districts are made up of predominantly White children and others are made up of predominantly children of color (particularly Black and non-White Hispanic children).<sup>26</sup>

For this report, ERASE Racism's research on Long Island's K-12 public education system focused on racial and resource distribution across district, rather than school, lines. In the next section of the report, we discuss this issue in more detail.

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<sup>18</sup> Orfield, Gary. 2001. *Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation*. Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, 124 Mt.

<sup>19</sup> Reardon, Sean F., Elena Tej Grewal, Demetra Kalogrides, and Erica Greenberg. 2012. "Brown Fades: The End of Court-Ordered School Desegregation and the Resegregation of American Public Schools: Brown Fades." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 31(4):876–904. doi: [10.1002/pam.21649](https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.21649).

<sup>20</sup> Cohen, Danielle. 2021. *NYC School Segregation: A Report Card from the UCLA Civil Rights Project. Still Last, Action Needed Now*. Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

<sup>21</sup> Wells, Amy Stuart, Abbey Keener, Leana Cabral, and Diana Cordova-Cobo. 2019. "The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same: The Resegregation of Public Schools Via Charter School Reform." *Peabody Journal of Education* 94(5):471–92. doi: [10.1080/0161956X.2019.1668209](https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2019.1668209).

<sup>22</sup> Francis, Dania V., and William A. Darity. 2021. "Separate and Unequal Under One Roof: How the Legacy of Racialized Tracking Perpetuates Within-School Segregation." *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 7(1):187–202. doi: [10.7758/RSF.2021.7.1.11](https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2021.7.1.11).

<sup>23</sup> Mickelson, Roslyn Arlin, and Damien Heath. 1999. "The Effects of Segregation on African American High School Seniors' Academic Achievement." *The Journal of Negro Education* 68(4):566–86. doi: [10.2307/2668155](https://doi.org/10.2307/2668155).

<sup>24</sup> Porter, Hally. "Integrating Classrooms and Reducing Academic Tracking." The Century Foundation. Link: <https://tcf.org/content/report/integrating-classrooms-reducing-academic-tracking-strategies-school-leaders-educators/> (Accessed April 5, 2022).

<sup>25</sup> Roos, Peter D. 1998. "Intradistrict resource disparities: A problem crying out for a solution." *Strategies for school equity: Creating productive schools in a just society*. 40-52.

<sup>26</sup> Kucsera, John, and Gary Orfield. 2014. "New York State's extreme school segregation: Inequality, inaction and a damaged future."

# Segregation of Students on Long Island

## *Distribution of Students on Long Island*

To start, we examine the demographic distribution of students across Long Island’s 125 school districts. In a world in which mandated school segregation does not exist, one might expect each of the 125 school districts to have a racial composition that would resemble the racial composition of Long Island’s overall enrollment, with perhaps deviations of a few percentage points: about 50 percent White and 50 percent non-White (10 percent Asian, 9 percent Black, and 30 percent Hispanic). In reality, we find this to be rarely the case. We prioritize tracking the number of districts we define as “intensely segregated,” or those in which students of color make up at least 90 percent of enrollment, which is extremely disproportionate to the 50 percent students of color for Long Island’s student population overall.

In our 2017 report on school segregation,<sup>27</sup> we found that, from 2004 to 2016, the number of intensely segregated districts more than doubled, increasing from five to 11 districts. Fast forward to the 2019-2020 school year, the number of intensely segregated districts has unfortunately stayed at 11.<sup>28</sup>

Within the last 16 years, the percentage of students attending these 11 intensely segregated districts increased from 5 to 15 percent. The percentage of Black and Hispanic students in these districts also increased. As seen in the table below, in 2004, these 11 districts enrolled 28 percent of all Black students; in 2020, they enrolled 37 percent. In 2004, these districts enrolled 13 percent of all Hispanic students; in 2020, they enrolled 36 percent. It is then no surprise that, even though almost every district saw a rise in raw count of Hispanic students, the intensely segregated districts took in a bit more than 30 percent of that rise. Further, in the chart below, we see that the racial demographics of students in intensely segregated districts are very different from the racial demographics of students in all Long Island schools as a whole.

Table 3. Percentage of students in Long Island’s 11 intensely segregated districts

	2004	2020
Percentage of all student enrollment	5 percent	15 percent
Percentage of all Black student enrollment	28 percent	37 percent
Percentage of all Hispanic student enrollment	13 percent	30 percent

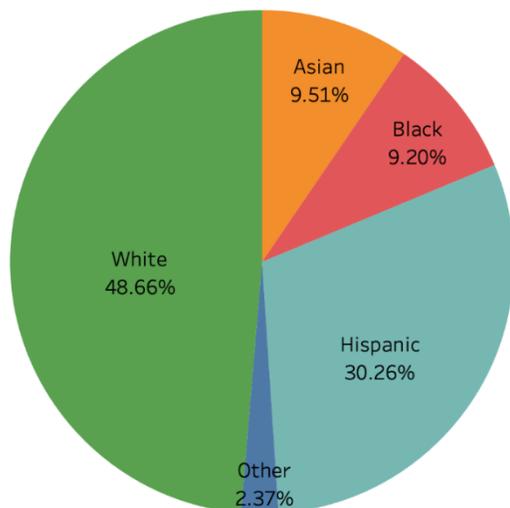
During the same period, we also document a movement of White students out of Long Island’s K-12 public schools. Only seven out of the 120 districts that existed in 2004 gained more White students. With the exception of Eastport-South Manor CSD (which saw a raw increase of 1,772 White students), these gains were also small, being generally under 50 students. Further, only five saw a growth in their percentage of White students. These gains were again quite small, ranging from 0.40 to 2 percent. It is difficult to explain this trend without another in-depth analysis that

<sup>27</sup> ERASE Racism, “2017 Infographic: School Segregation on Long Island.” Link: <https://www.eraseracismny.org/our-work/civil-rights-monitoring/498-2017-infographic-school-segregation-on-long-island> (Accessed April 5, 2022).

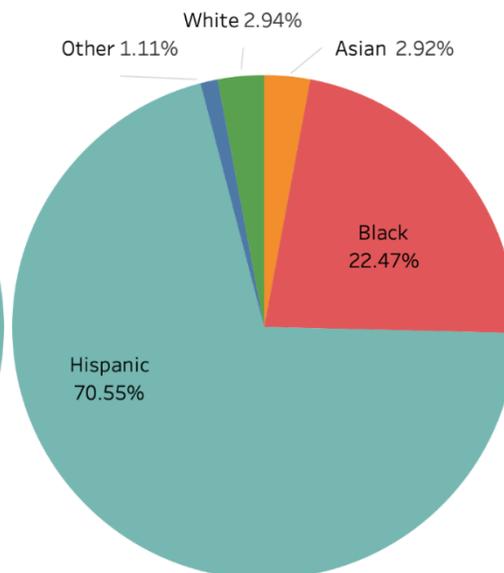
<sup>28</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

utilizes other necessary data, such as home sales, private and religious school attendance, growth or loss of certain employment sectors, and information on nearby areas.

Student Enrollment 2020



Intensely Segregated Districts 2020



The racial separation of students in our public school system is evidence of the ongoing systemic racism that persists in the region. This is coupled with the fact that Long Island’s intensely segregated districts are also its most high-need.<sup>29</sup> For the 2018-2019 school year, eight out of nine high-need districts were intensely segregated, and the remaining one was comprised of 85 percent students of color.<sup>30</sup> As a result, districts where students of color were concentrated received much fewer resources than others. Additionally, when we look at the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in a district’s enrollment, intensely segregated districts have an average of 74 percent. In contrast, the remaining 114 districts have an average of only 27 percent. We again see the interconnected nature of racial and socioeconomic segregation because, when we compare districts that were at least 70 percent White and those that were racially diverse, the average percent of economically disadvantaged students in intensely segregated districts is about 5.5 times and 2.5 times higher.<sup>31</sup> In short, students are segregated by race as well as by socioeconomic status, and this segregation has a negative impact on their access to resources and opportunities. We will demonstrate this connection in the following section.

Along with upholding racial division, racial segregation in education has significant consequences to the distribution of resources. For instance, a 2020 report by the National Center for Education

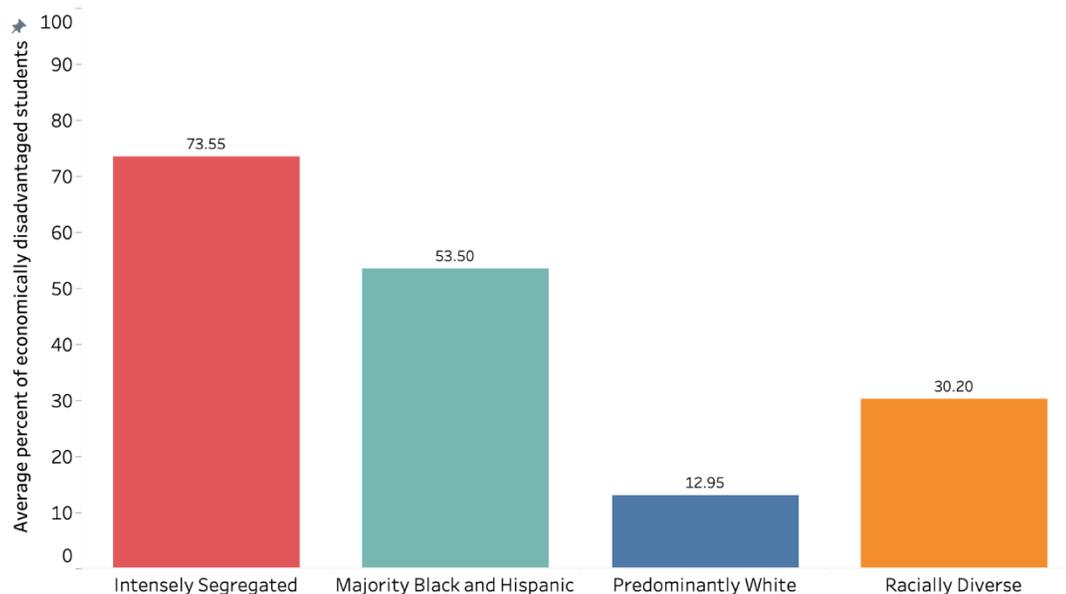
<sup>29</sup> The need-to-resource capacity (N/RC) index is a measure created and tracked by NYSED. As explained from NYSED’s website, it is a measure of a district’s ability to “meet the needs of its students with local resources” and calculated by first finding the ratio of the estimated poverty percentage to the Combined Wealth Ratio. A district with both estimated poverty and Combined Wealth Ratio equal to the State average would have an N/RC index of 1.0. School districts are labeled as high-need if they rank in the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile or above, as average-need if they rank between the 20<sup>th</sup> (0.770) and 70<sup>th</sup> (1.1835) percentile on the index, and as low-need if they rank below the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile (0.770) on the index.

<sup>30</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

<sup>31</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

Statistics (NCES) found that schools with fewer students who need free and reduced-price lunch tend to offer more dual enrollment programs,<sup>32</sup> with these programs being much more likely to get additional funding from families of students.<sup>33</sup>

Average percent of economically disadvantaged students by racial composition of district, 2019-2020 school year



### *Why are Long Island's Students Segregated by Race?*

In the United States, there are many structural causes of school segregation, and which causes are at play or how they interact differs depending on the local context. For this report, ERASE Racism focuses on the ways in which residential segregation acts as a major contributor to the unequal distribution of racial groups in our schools, since where our children attend K-12 public schools is determined mainly by where they live. Racially segregated neighborhoods inevitably lead to racially segregated schools, and undoing residential segregation, therefore, becomes a necessary part of undoing school segregation.

In that regard, although this report highlights the interconnected nature of racial and socioeconomic segregation on Long Island, it is important to emphasize that racism as a force is separate from classism. In particular, research has found that “low-income white students are more likely to be integrated into middle-class neighborhoods and are less likely to attend school

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<sup>32</sup> Dual enrollment programs are partnerships between high schools and higher education institutions that allows high school students to take college-level courses. Depending on the program, students are usually able to receive credit for the courses, both in their high school and at the future higher education institution. Access to these dual enrollment programs can help students be more likely to graduate high school and perform well in college. See “Broadening the Benefits of Dual Enrollment” by Katherine L. Hughes, Olga Rodríguez, Linsey Edwards & Clive Belfield at Columbia University Teachers College: <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/broadening-benefits-dual-enrollment.html>

<sup>33</sup> “Dual or Concurrent Enrollment in Public Schools in the United States.” Institute of Education Sciences. Link: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020125.pdf> (Accessed on March 31, 2022).

predominantly with other disadvantaged students.”<sup>34</sup> Further, middle-class Black families tend to not reside in areas with Whites of the same socioeconomic status; instead, they tend to reside in areas where their White neighbors actually are less affluent.<sup>35</sup> Put another way, structural racism severely restricts Black individuals from being able to access the neighborhoods they desire or even those they can afford, whereas structural racism makes it possible for White families of limited means to access schools and neighborhoods that go beyond their class status. While studies have not looked at Long Island specifically, and it is, therefore, uncertain whether such restriction for Black individuals and access for White individuals exists here, a recent study by *Newsday* found that Black homeowners face discrimination in real estate.<sup>36</sup>

In the context of Long Island, students generally attend schools based on where they live. This means that, if communities are segregated, schools will likely be so as well. Our analysis unfortunately uncovers this link, with the below tables illustrating a strong correlation between the racial composition of the school district and its geographic location. On average, people of color make up 83 percent of the communities with intensely segregated districts. The percentage of non-White students in the districts does not veer far from the percentage of non-White people in their corresponding areas.

Table 5. Demographics of Long Island’s 11 intensely segregated districts, 2019-2020 school year.

School District	Percent of Hispanic Students	Percent of Black Students	Percent of Students of Color	Percent of People of Color in Area
ROOSEVELT UFSD	56	44	100	99
WYANDANCH UFSD	57	43	99	97
WESTBURY UFSD	74	24	98	60
UNIONDALE UFSD	60	37	98	80
HEMPSTEAD UFSD	75	24	98	95
BRENTWOOD UFSD	86	9	97	85
VALLEY STREAM 30 UFSD	29	38	96	72
CENTRAL ISLIP UFSD	78	16	95	77
AMITYVILLE UFSD	54	38	95	NA
ELMONT UFSD	31	41	94	86
FREEMPORT UFSD	70	23	94	75

Source: NYSED and American Community Survey 2019 Five-Year Estimates

Further, we also see that racial and socioeconomic segregation on Long Island go hand in hand. The two graphs below show that the proportion of non-White students and the proportion of economically disadvantaged students in a district often mirror each other. When we look at this confluence of racial and socioeconomic segregation, exclusionary zoning ordinances—rooted in a history of racism—make it difficult for affordable multi-family housing (which aims to benefit low-income people of color) to be built in high-opportunity neighborhoods (which have historically been White-majority). Through our own work, we have observed that these zoning ordinances act as a legal barrier that deters even well-intentioned and socially conscious developers from

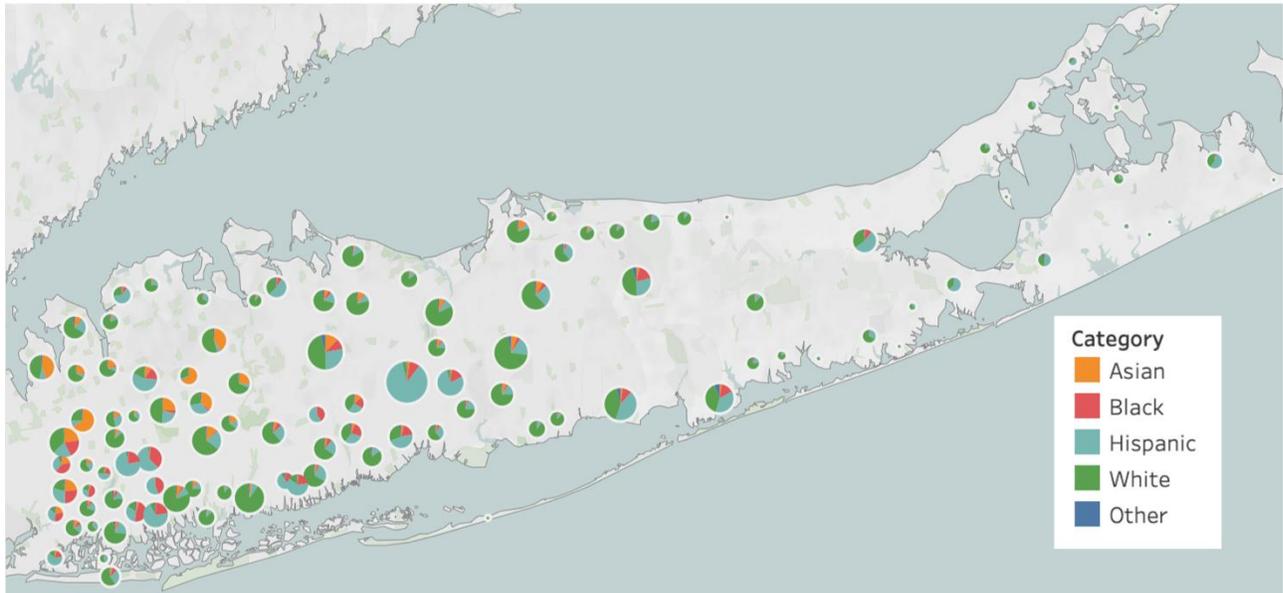
<sup>34</sup> ASCD. 2013 “Why Our Schools are Segregated” Link: <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/why-our-schools-are-segregated> (Accessed May 16, 2022)

<sup>35</sup> Alba, Richard D., John R. Logan, and Brian J. Stults. 2000. “How Segregated Are Middle-Class African Americans?” *Social Problems* 47(4):543–58. doi: [10.2307/3097134](https://doi.org/10.2307/3097134).

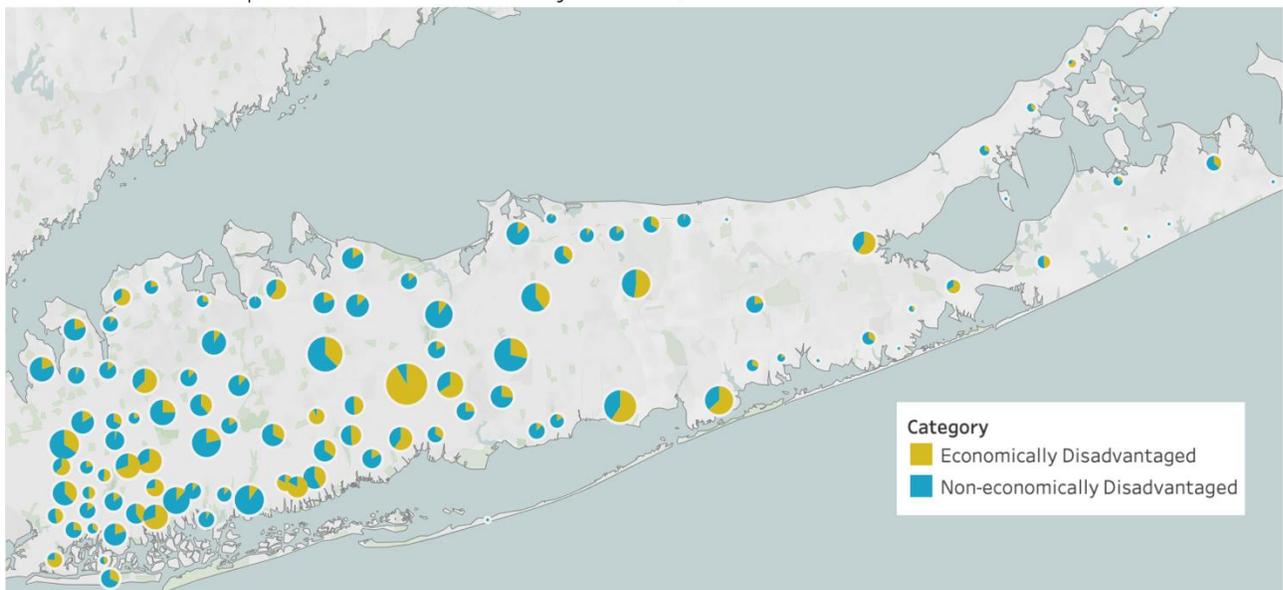
<sup>36</sup> Long Island Divided. Link: <https://projects.newsday.com/long-island/real-estate-agents-investigation/>

considering certain neighborhoods as potential sites for their projects. Consequently, affordable multi-family housing is often put in places that are low-resourced and disproportionately non-White, thus worsening residential segregation and then school segregation.

Racial composition of students by districts, 2020



Economic composition of students by district, 2020



In the next section, we look at how racial segregation of school districts affects resources (such as AP course offerings) on Long Island. Seven decades after *Brown v. Board of Education*, separate continues to be unequal.

## Disparities in Resources

Structural racism has broad impacts on distribution of educational resources. For instance, it is not a coincidence that eight out of Long Island's 11 intensely segregated districts are also categorized as high-need. No predominantly White districts and no districts whose non-White students make up less than 85 percent of enrollment are classified as high-need.

This section explores the potential disparities in funding and access to resources between districts with distinct racial compositions. We chose to focus on four types of racial demographics based on education scholarship that shows significant disparities between schools with majority Black and Hispanic students and schools with predominantly White students. Of the 125 districts, we focused on 66 districts, which fall into four categories, as follows: 11 intensely segregated (90-100% non-White), 10 majority Black and Hispanic (50-89%), five racially diverse (40-60% White), and 40 predominantly White (at least 70%). This report adds to education scholarship that shows that Black and Hispanic students are most negatively impacted by school segregation,

### *School Funding*

In this sub-section, we explore how school districts fared in regard to their revenue per student, fiscal stress score, and environmental stress score. Here, revenue includes local, state, and federal sources. Fiscal stress scores act as an index of indicators that captures the financial challenges of a school district; thus higher scores indicate more financial challenges and lower scores indicate fewer challenges.<sup>37</sup> Finally, environmental stress scores act as an index of indicators that captures the variety of challenges that a district faces, with higher scores indicating more challenges and lower scores indicating fewer challenges.<sup>38</sup> Having an index of indicators is better than simply looking at an individual indicator because it allows us to capture an issue that is multifaceted.

With data collected by NCES,<sup>39</sup> we found that, on average, intensely segregated Long Island districts received less funding than predominantly White districts and less funding than racially

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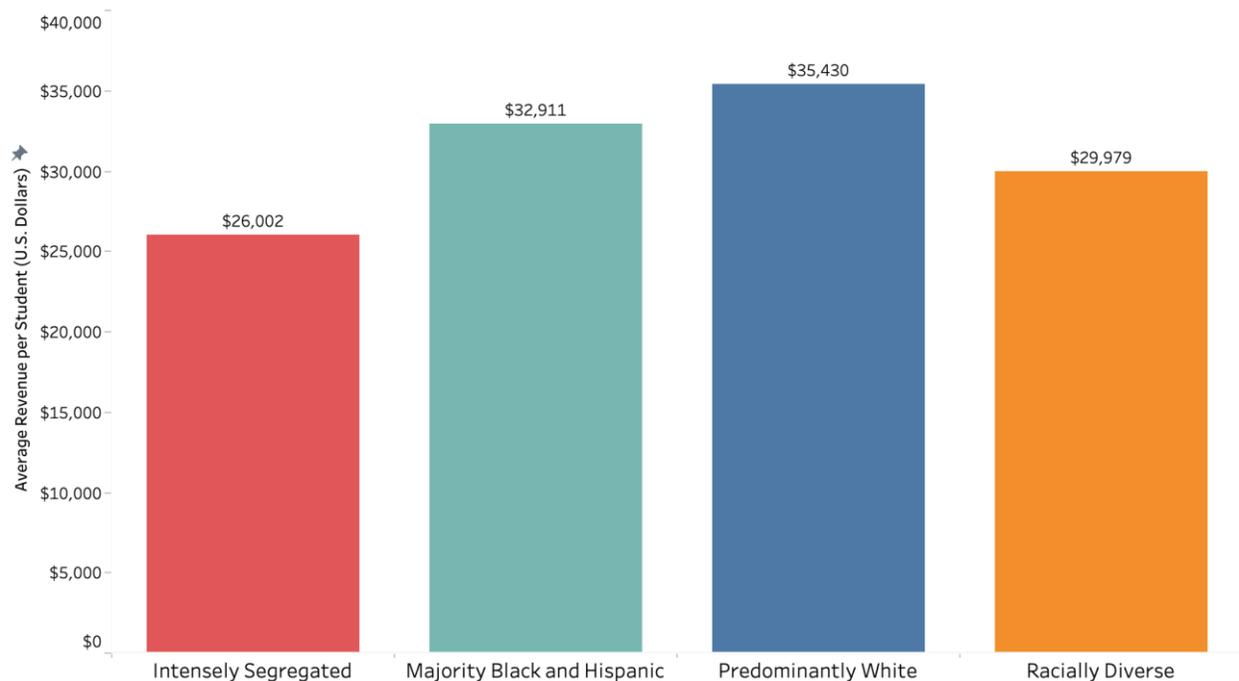
<sup>37</sup> Fiscal stress scores range from 0 (lowest scored districts) to 83.3 (highest scored district). Districts with scores 24.9 and below are classified as no designation. Districts with scores between 25 and 44.9 are classified as susceptible fiscal stress. Districts with scores between 45 and 64.9 are classified as moderate fiscal stress. Finally, districts with scores between 65 and 100 are classified as significant fiscal stress. Utilized indicators include fund balance (or the accumulated surplus or deficit since operations began), low liquidity (i.e., lack of enough cash on hand to cover operating costs), overreliance on short-term cash flow debt, and an operating deficit in one or more of the last three years. Source: "Stress Monitoring System Manual" from Office of the New York State Comptroller. Link: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/fiscal-monitoring/pdf/system-manual.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Districts with environmental stress scores 29.9 and below are classified as no designation. Those with scores between 30 and 44.9 are classified as susceptible environmental stress. Those with scores between 45 and 59.9 are classified as moderate environmental stress. Finally, those with scores between 60 and 100 are classified as significant environmental stress. The utilized indicators include a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, high teacher turnover rate, a decrease in property value, a low budget vote approval rate, high percentage of English language learners, and large class sizes. Source: "Stress Monitoring System Manual" from Office of the New York State Comptroller. Link: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/fiscal-monitoring/pdf/system-manual.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> As stated on their website, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) serves as "the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the U.S. and other nations. NCES is located within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. NCES fulfills a Congressional mandate to collect, collate, analyze, and report complete statistics on the condition of American education; conduct and publish reports;

diverse or majority Black and Hispanic districts. Specifically, we examined the amount of revenue a district received for each student from local, state, and federal sources. Instead of looking at the overall amount of money allotted to each district, this measure allows researchers to compare and contrast districts regardless of their differing enrollment sizes. As we can observe from the graph below, predominantly White districts have the highest amount of revenue per student, while intensely segregated districts have the lowest amount. The gap between these two district types is almost \$10,000 in revenue per student, with intensely segregated districts having only 73 percent of the funding of predominantly White districts. Further, intensely segregated districts' average of \$26,002 per student is much less than the overall Long Island average of \$34,580 per student.

Average revenue per student by racial composition of school district, 2018-2019 school year



These numbers are raw amounts of revenue per student. The picture is further concerning when we consider the fact that it often takes more resources to provide an adequate learning environment for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (who are disproportionately in intensely segregated districts) than students from non-economically disadvantaged ones. This means that, if we wanted to make sure students are supported equitably, we should see intensely segregated districts receiving a higher amount of revenue per student than predominantly White districts. However, unfortunately, we see that the opposite is true.

The lack of funding for intensely segregated districts is also evident in data on what state officials label as fiscal and environmental stress. Here, we use data provided by the Office of the New York State Comptroller. From the graph below, we observe that intensely segregated districts have the highest average fiscal stress score of 19.70, while racially diverse schools have the lowest. The fiscal stress score for intensely segregated districts is more than twice the average

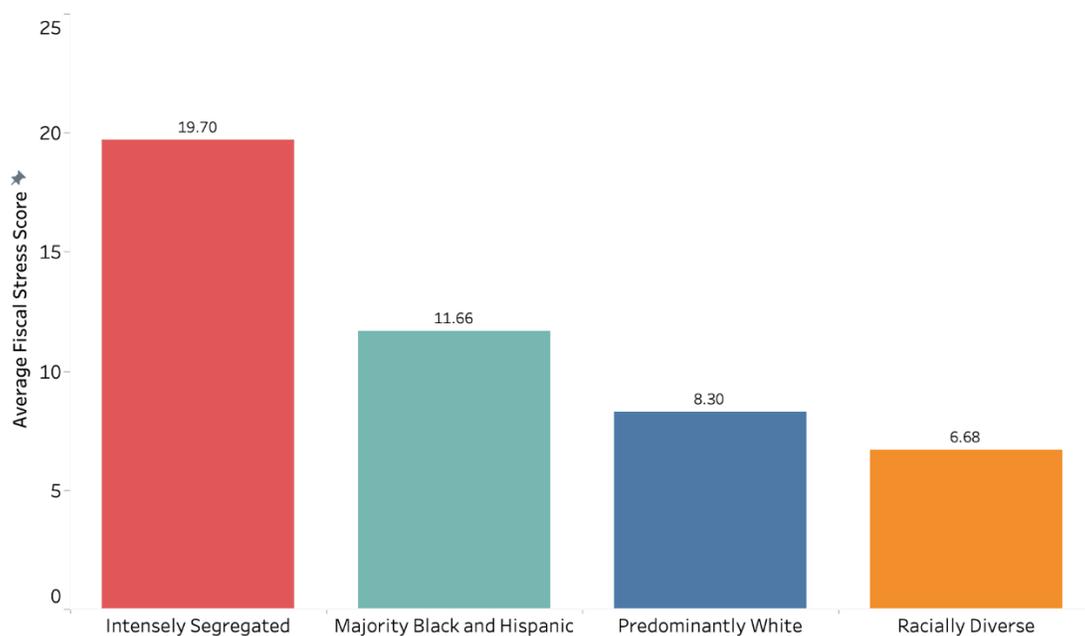
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and review and report on education activities internationally.” Data accessed in January 2022. Link: <https://nces.ed.gov/about/>

score of predominantly White districts (8.30) and more than three times the average score of racially diverse districts (6.68).<sup>40</sup> Majority Black and Hispanic districts fared better than intensely segregated ones, but they still had a higher average score than predominantly White and racially diverse ones.

It is significant that racially diverse schools had the lowest fiscal stress. A notable driver of school segregation on Long Island has been the perception, especially on the part of White parents, that increasing student diversity will lead to a deterioration in the quality of education.<sup>41</sup> While analyzing student performance is outside the scope of this report, the fact that racially diverse schools are not suffering from a significant lack of resources is encouraging and deserves more attention.

Average fiscal stress scores by racial composition of school district, 2018-2019 school year



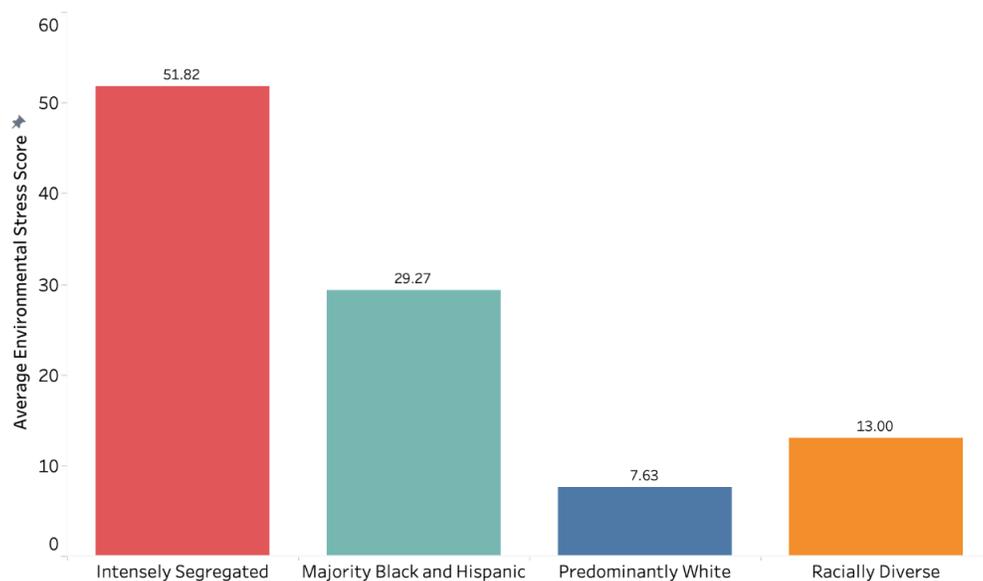
To determine whether fiscal stress scores varied widely from year to year and whether they could reliably capture the financial health of a district over a period of time, further analyses were conducted, using fiscal stress scores from 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. We found that there was a high correlation between 2017 and 2018, 2018 and 2019, and 2019 and 2020—suggesting that the fiscal stress score a district receives in one year tends to predict well the score it receives the following year, rather than offering a simple snapshot that might rapidly change.

<sup>40</sup> Fiscal stress scores range from 0 (lowest scored districts) to 83.3 (highest scored district). Districts with scores 24.9 and below are classified as no designation. Districts with scores between 25 and 44.9 are classified as susceptible fiscal stress. Districts with scores between 45 and 64.9 are classified as moderate fiscal stress. Finally, districts with scores between 65 and 100 are classified as significant fiscal stress. Source: “Stress Monitoring System Manual” from Office of the New York State Comptroller. Link: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/fiscal-monitoring/pdf/system-manual.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Roda Ph D, A., Ready, D., Stuart Wells, A., Fox, L., Warner, M., Spence, T., Williams, E. and Wright, A., 2014. *Divided We Fall: The Story of Separate and Unequal Suburban Schools 60 Years after Brown v. Board of Education*.

Unfortunately, intensely segregated districts have a much higher average environmental stress score<sup>42</sup> than predominantly White, racially diverse, and majority Black and Hispanic districts. Notably, intensely segregated districts have an average environmental stress score that is almost seven times the score of predominantly White districts. While majority Black and Hispanic districts that are not classified as intensely segregated fared somewhat better, their average score was still almost four times the score of predominantly White districts and more than doubled the score of racially diverse districts.

Average environmental stress scores by racial composition of school district, 2018-2019 school year



The fact that intensely segregated districts have less funding and higher fiscal as well as environmental stress scores has important implications for the resources that students can access.

#### *Number of Students for Every Guidance Counselor, Social Worker, and Teacher*

Intensely segregated districts have a higher number of students for every guidance counselor and social worker than predominantly White districts. Specifically, on average, there is one guidance counselor for about every 1,226 students in intensely segregated districts. In contrast, on average, there is one guidance counselor for every 500 students in majority Black and Hispanic districts, and 356 students in predominantly White districts.<sup>43</sup> Significantly, racially diverse schools have the lowest guidance counselor-to-student ratio and are able to provide one counselor for every 339 students.

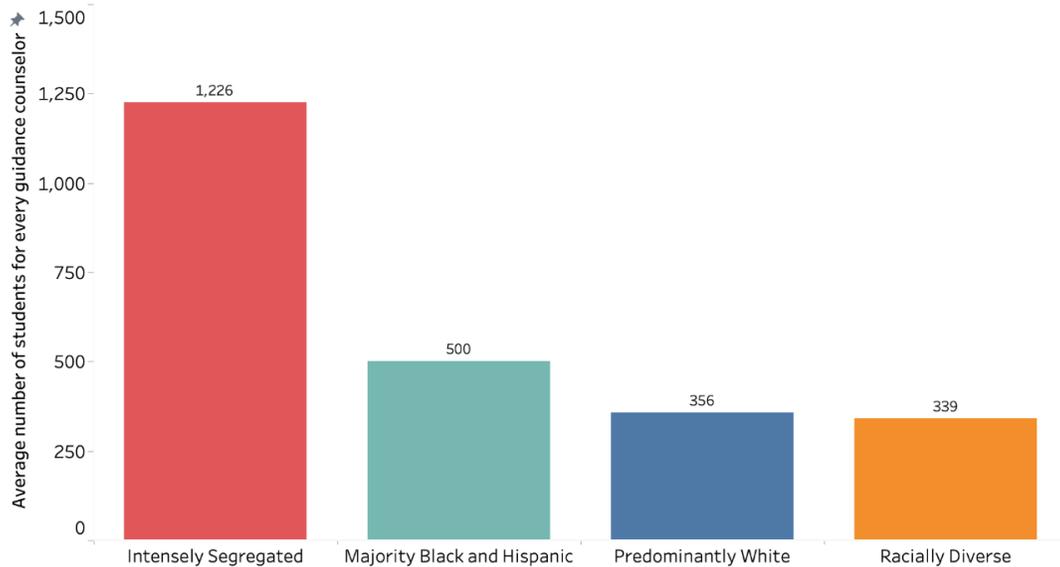
<sup>42</sup> Districts with environmental stress scores 29.9 and below are classified as no designation. Those with scores between 30 and 44.9 are classified as susceptible environmental stress. Those with scores between 45 and 59.9 are classified as moderate environmental stress. Finally, those with scores between 60 and 100 are classified as significant environmental stress. Source: "Stress Monitoring System Manual" from Office of the New York State Comptroller. Link: <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/fiscal-monitoring/pdf/system-manual.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

On average, there is one social worker for every 1,113 students in intensely segregated but every 862 students in predominantly White districts. Interestingly, majority Black and Hispanic districts have a lower number of students for every social worker than predominantly White districts, and racially diverse districts have a higher number than intensely segregated districts. It is unclear from existing data why this trend is so, but the disparity between predominantly White and intensely segregated districts remains consistent with other findings as well as a broader existing scholarship on the subject.

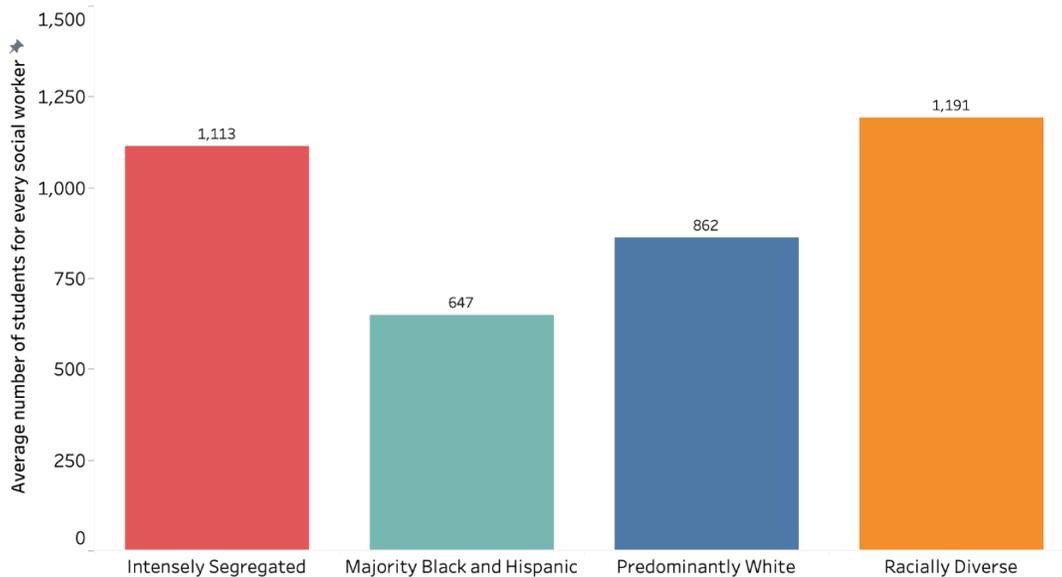
With these large numbers of students for every guidance counselor and social worker, it might be difficult to adequately interpret what they mean. For further context, on average, Long Island school districts have one guidance counselor for every 443 students and one social worker for every 905 students. Predominantly White districts fall well below these averages, whereas intensely segregated districts fall well above them.<sup>44</sup>

Average number of students for every guidance counselor by racial composition of school district, 2018-2019 school year



<sup>44</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

Average number of students for every social worker by racial composition of school district, 2018-2019 school year

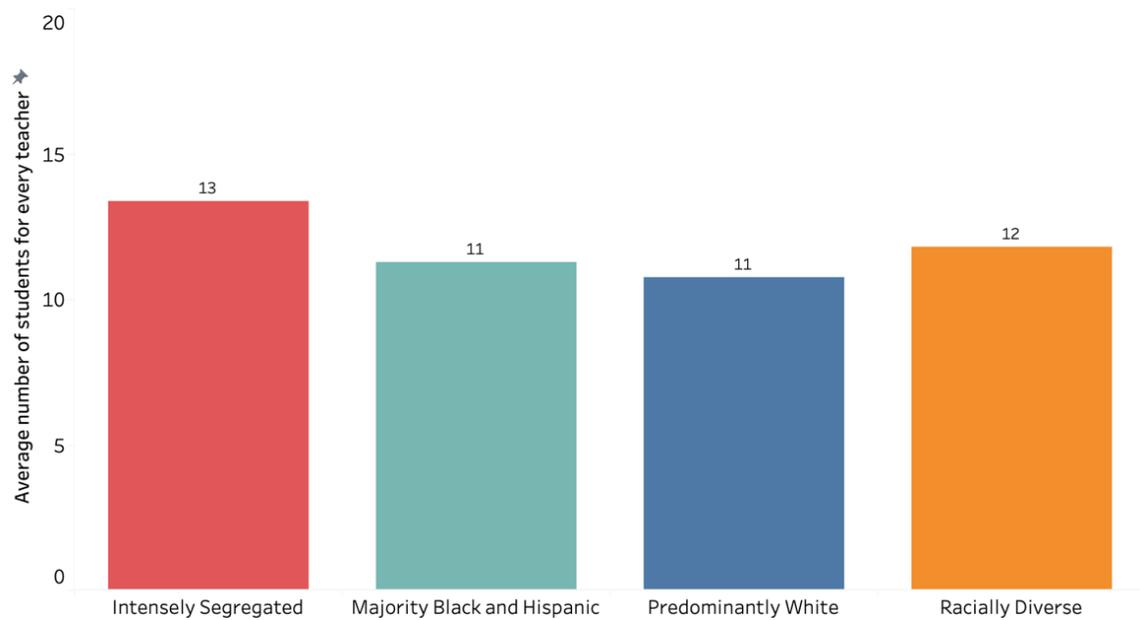


This means that it is much harder for students in intensely segregated districts than those in predominantly White districts to receive support on their career planning, college applications and preparation processes, financial aid applications, mental health, and a host of other issues that can influence their academic successes.

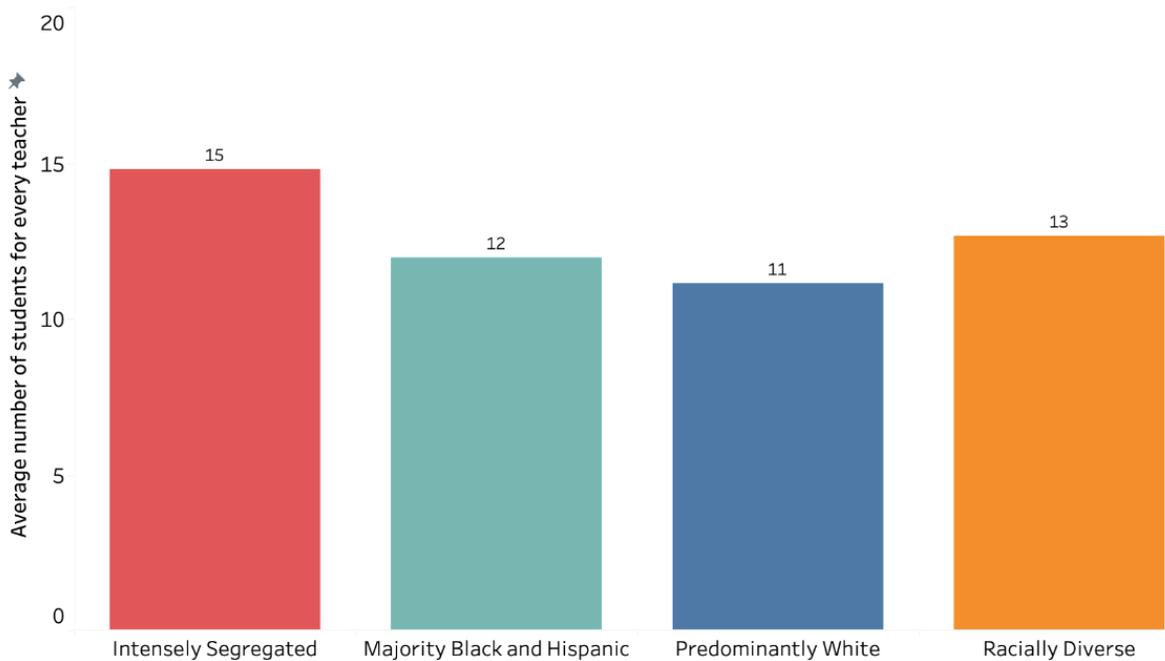
When we look at the number of students for every teacher across districts, we see the same picture playing out. In intensely segregated districts, there was on average of one teacher for every 13 students in the 2018-2019 school year and one teacher for every 15 students in the 2019-2020 school year. These figures are higher than the overall average of one teacher for every 11 students in 2018-2019 and 12 students in 2019-2020 for all Long Island districts. In contrast, in predominantly White districts, there was on average one teacher for every 11 students in both school years, putting them right at the overall Long Island averages.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

Average number of students for every teacher by racial composition of school district, 2018-2019 school year



Average number of students for every teacher by racial composition of school district, 2019-2020 school year

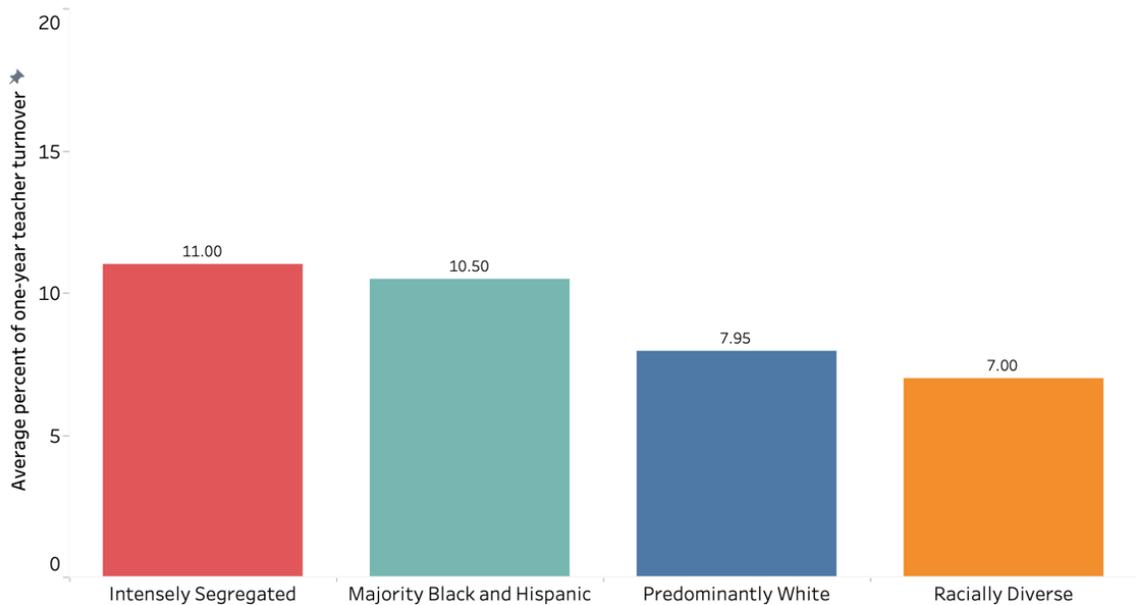


When we observe majority Black and Hispanic districts and racially diverse districts, we see that these had fewer students for every teacher than intensely segregated ones. However, they still had more students for every teacher than predominantly White ones.

### Rate of Teacher Turnover

For the 2018-2019 school year, the average rate of teacher turnover for all Long Island school districts is 9 percent. The average rate for intensely segregated districts is higher than this average, being at 11 percent. In contrast, the average rate for predominantly White districts is lower than this average, being at about 8 percent.<sup>46</sup> Significantly, racially integrated schools had the lowest teacher turnover, providing the most stable teaching environment for their students.

Average percent of one-year teacher turnover by racial composition of school district, 2018-2019 school year



### AP Course Availability

First, we looked at the distribution of school resources and AP course availability specifically. To do so, we calculated the number of high school students for every AP course offered by a district and examined whether disparities exist. The higher a district's high school student-to-AP course ratio, the more difficult it is for high school students to access these advanced classes.

Unfortunately, we found that intensely segregated districts have a median of 179 as their student-to-AP course ratio, meaning there is an AP course for every 179 high school students in these districts. This number is more than double the median ratio for all districts (with at least one high school) and almost two times higher than 99, the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile ratio for all districts.<sup>47</sup>

For districts that are at least 70 percent White, there is an AP course for every 74 high school students, making AP courses about 2.5 times more accessible than in intensely segregated districts. Similarly, for districts with the top-ranked high schools, there is an AP course for every 65 high

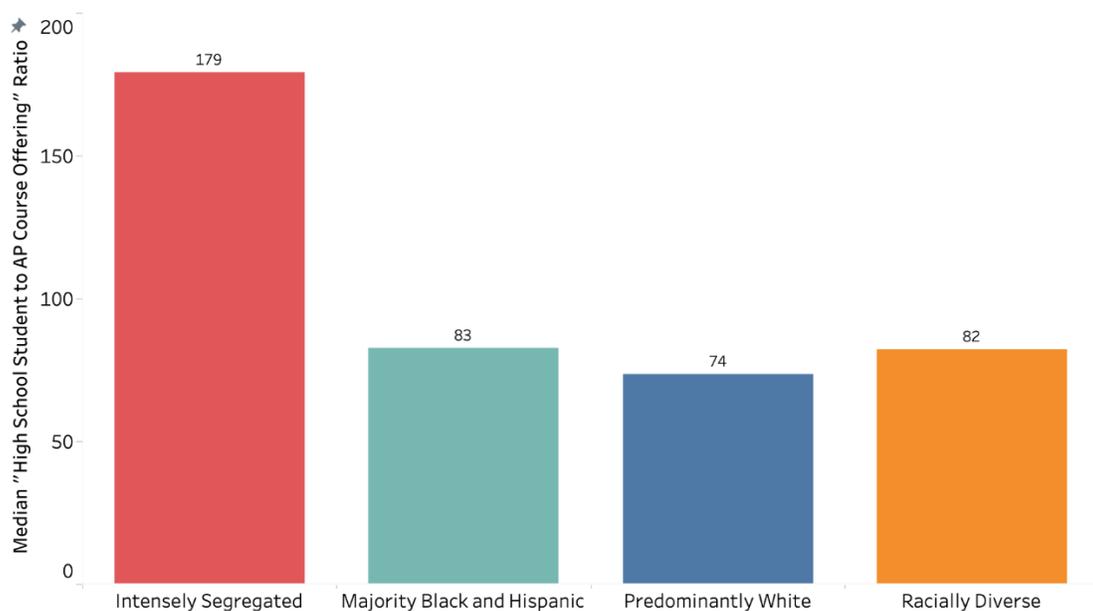
<sup>46</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

<sup>47</sup> Data from NYSED. Link: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

school students. This is almost one-third of the ratio for intensely segregated districts. Racially diverse districts also fare better, with a median ratio of 82, which is half of 179.

Further, White students make up about 61 percent and Black students make up about 7 percent of school districts with the lowest student-to-AP course ratios (25<sup>th</sup> percentile), but these two groups make up only about 43 percent and 12 percent respectively of those with the highest ratios (75<sup>th</sup> percentile). It is then not surprising that, at the aggregate, Black students are much less likely than White students to be enrolled in an AP course. But, contrary to the false narrative that Black students do not want or are not “qualified” to take those more challenging classes, the reason lies in a structural lack of access.

Median ratio of high school students to AP course offerings by racial composition of school district, 2018-2019 school year



There are other structural factors emphasized in existing research that our report did not have the data to study. For example, middle-class White parents often have more power to influence their children’s placements into advanced courses (even being able to get their children “re-placed”), and educators in charge of assigning advanced courses tend to be White and have a prejudiced view of Black students.<sup>48,49</sup> Together, different facets of structural racism, particularly differential access to resources, lead to inequities between White and Black students.

<sup>48</sup> McGrath, Daniel J., and Peter J. Kuriloff. 1999. “The Perils of Parent Involvement: Tracking, Curriculum, and Resource Distortions in a Middle School.” *Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly* 26.

<sup>49</sup> Whiting, Gilman W., and Donna Y. Ford. 2009. “Multicultural Issues: Black Students and Advanced Placement Classes: Summary, Concerns, and Recommendations.” *Gifted Child Today* 32(1):23–26. doi: [10.4219/gct-2009-840](https://doi.org/10.4219/gct-2009-840).

## Policy Recommendations

In June 2021, the U.S. Department of Education published a list of policy priorities, including the need to address racial inequality in schools. Specifically, Proposed Priority 2, titled “Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources, Opportunities, and Welcoming Environments,” highlights the fact that “inadequate access to and the inequitable distribution of resources negatively affect underserved students’ educational experience in a number of ways, which may include fewer opportunities for educational enrichment, high-quality early learning, well-rounded coursework, and high-quality college and career pathways.”<sup>50</sup> Other priorities aim to increase diversity in the teaching workforce, strengthen professional developments that decrease bias, and improve cross-agency collaboration. ERASE Racism applauds this list of policy priorities as it steers us in the right direction—a future wherein the ability of our students to succeed is not determined by the color of their skin, where their families live, or where they are assigned for school. In this section, we offer some concrete solutions that apply specifically to the Long Island context as well as a broader picture about obstacles to integration.

A persistent problem in policy solutions that try to tackle school segregation is White flight, or the ability of White students to leave a desegregating or desegregated school and school district either by moving to a different geographic location or moving into private schools. This means that fighting demographic segregation is likely a battle that—even when won—makes little progress as schools and districts will move from majority White to temporarily desegregating or desegregated (racially diverse) to segregated (majority Black and Hispanic). As a result, we should focus on solutions that can adequately and thoroughly address White flight or at least solutions that can evenly distribute resources despite White flight. This report can serve as an important starting point for combatting White flight as it suggests that school quality does not have to be sacrificed for racial diversity. As this report highlighted, Long Island’s racially diverse schools are not suffering from the lack of resources experienced by intensely segregated schools. When compared to all other school districts on Long Island, racially diverse districts, on average, have the lowest fiscal stress, the lowest ratio of students to guidance counselors, and the lowest teacher turnover rate. And in many of the other measures their resources are on par with predominantly White districts. These findings add to an arsenal of research that espouses the benefit of racially diverse schools<sup>51</sup> and should be used to combat misconceptions of racially integrated schools.

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<sup>50</sup> “Proposed Priorities and Definitions – Secretary’s Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs.” Link: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/06/30/2021-14003/proposed-priorities-and-definitions-secretarys-supplemental-priorities-and-definitions-for> (Accessed March 31, 2022).

<sup>51</sup> Wells, Amy Stuart, Lauren Fox, and Diana Cordova-Cobo. 2016. “How racially diverse schools and classrooms can benefit all students.” *The Education Digest* 82, no. 1: 17. classrooms for all students. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association

This means that policies should seek what researcher Jim Hilbert called “the removal of structures of segregation”: “Actual integration requires going beyond demographics, to include reforming the classroom and curriculum, and diversifying the teaching ranks. It breaks through school district boundaries to forge metropolitan-wide solutions. It requires changes beyond education, connecting housing and education policy.”<sup>52</sup>

### 1. *Equitable funding across school districts*

As the previous section highlighted, funding across school districts is currently not equitable or even equal. The New York State Education Department and the New York State Legislature can ensure that funding per student is equitable, especially after accounting for their different need levels. In particular, it is important to remember that students from marginalized backgrounds (such as students of color, immigrant and English Language Learner students, and economically disadvantaged students) will need more resources than those from more privileged backgrounds (such as those from high-income families) to succeed as they face more structural barriers. Morally and pragmatically, we cannot treat a student who does not have reliable access to computers, the internet, tutors, or other types of academic support or enrichment programs at school or home, and one who does – or a student who does not experience racial discrimination in everyday life and someone who does – as comparable when it comes to determining the amount of funding they will need. It is imperative that state and federal governments equalize the uneven playing field. Funding formulas will need to change and perhaps the entire structure of how education is funded should be assessed for equity and overhauled.

### 2. *Equitable sharing of educational resources across school districts*

With the rise of new technological tools and virtual spaces, cross-district collaboration can also be seen as an avenue where educational resources can be made available across district lines. In particular, a program of shared resources can help students from high-need districts access a variety of advanced courses and educational support systems not available in their home district. A student could enroll in an AP or IB course in a different district or have access to a college fair or other resources of particular interest. Barriers to the full-scale realization of such programs certainly exist (e.g., staff members needing to follow the different policies of individual districts, addressing union contract concerns, and differences in school culture), but a pilot opportunity could illuminate the potential as well as any arising issues that should be addressed. The New York State Education Department and the regional BOCES could be instigators of such a pilot opportunity and perhaps provide incentives to encourage districts to participate.

### 3. *Racially Integrated Learning Environments*

Even if funding and resources were equitable across school districts, the districts would remain segregated if the neighborhoods are segregated. Consolidation of school districts could alleviate this issue by encouraging districts to pull from wider geographical areas.

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<sup>52</sup> Hilbert, Jim. 2017. “School Desegregation 2.0: What Is Required to Finally Integrate America’s Public Schools.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi: [10.2139/ssrn.3031618](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3031618).

On Long Island, consolidation of currently small school districts into larger ones that are within town boundaries would allow for resources, especially funding from property taxes, to be distributed more evenly between neighborhoods populated primarily by Black and Hispanic students and neighborhoods of primarily White and Asian students. The fact that Long Island's two counties have a total of 125 school districts underscores both the problem and the opportunity.

At this moment, public appetite for school consolidation is low. However, starting with early childhood education programs, public funding could be targeted for cross-district programs. A phased implementation could provide more funding to the racially integrated learning environments. Over time, funding could be phased out for programs that are not racially integrated. Simultaneously, special efforts could ensure that these programs are highly successful, so parents flock to them because of their recognized success. Facilities, curricula, teaching staffs, and services that embrace evidence-based excellence and accommodate working parents would further enhance the appeal of these programs.

This would not be easy, but careful placement of facilities between different neighborhoods would ease the transition, especially if transportation is not a barrier. The "Princeton Plan" puts all same-age children together in the same school rather than separated into different schools.<sup>53</sup> This mitigates the potential for segregated schools within the same school district based on segregated neighborhoods and enhances racially integrated learning environments at each grade level.

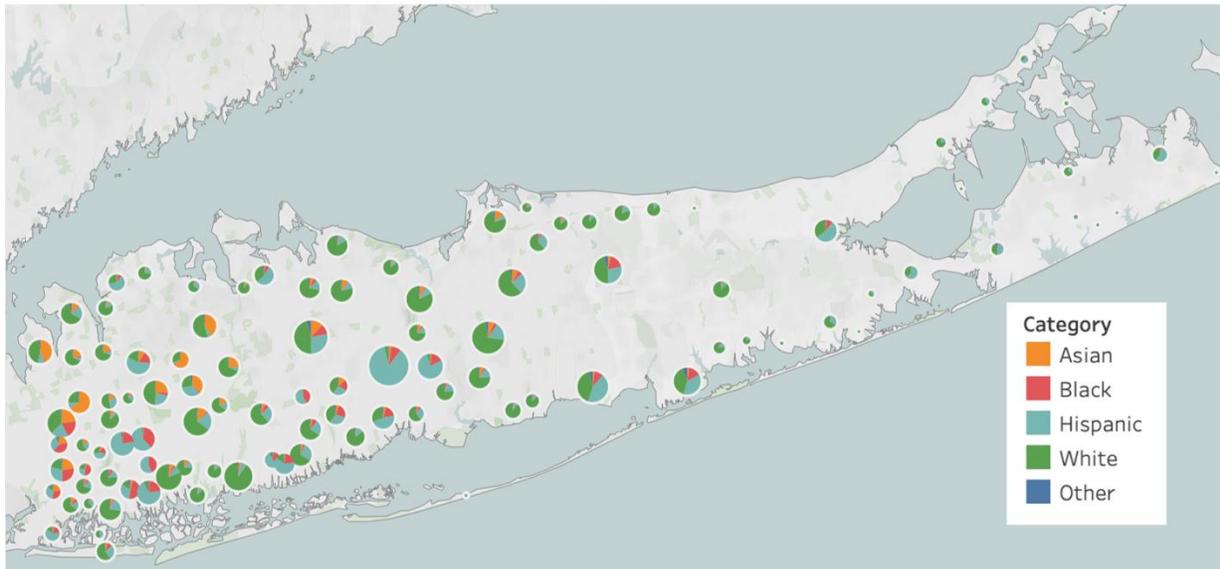
There would be issues to address. But if this were a town-wide strategy that is reinforced with a variety of town-wide programs and events in various neighborhoods throughout the town and at cross-roads locales, over time the residents would appreciate the benefits of diversity. Issues concerning school board representation would need to be considered and addressed to ensure that the voices of communities of color are not drowned out through such consolidation.

The New York State Education Department would need to strategically assess how this might work. We offer the maps below for discussion purposes.

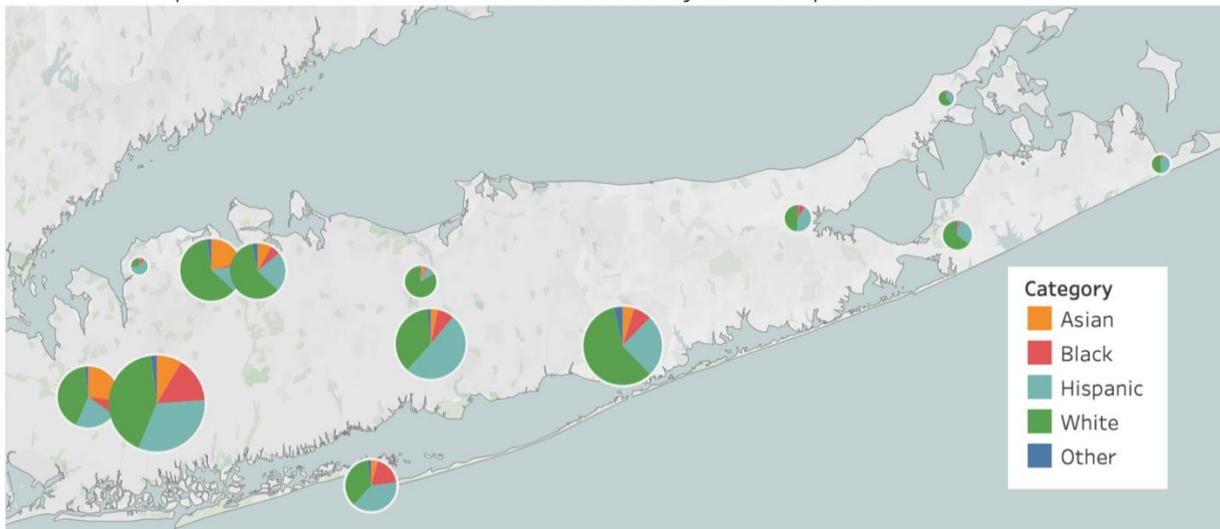
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<sup>53</sup> Bouldin, Arthur L., and Robert E. Lucas. 1971. "The Princeton Plan: Beyond the Statistics; Princeton's Investment in Children Provides New Opportunities for All."

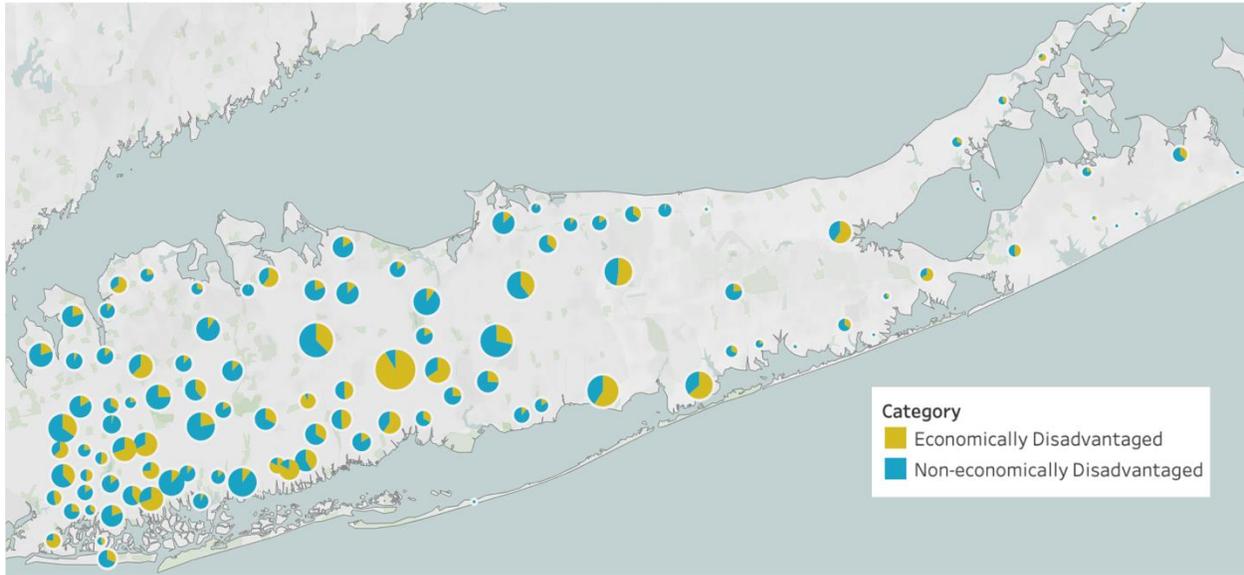
Racial composition of students by districts, 2020



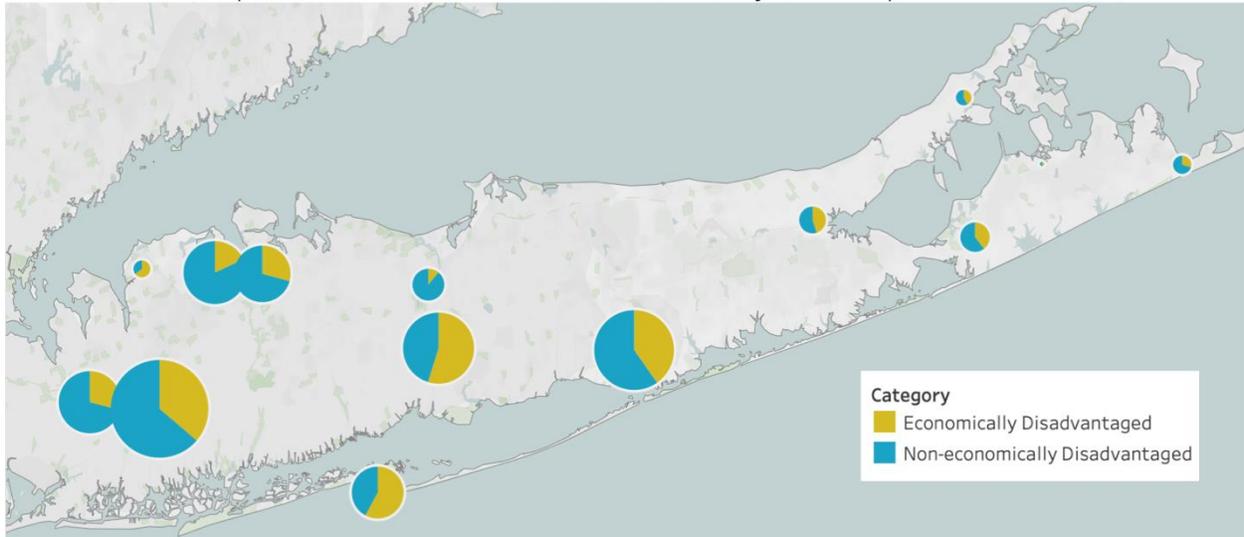
Racial composition of students, if consolidated by township, 2020



Economic composition of students by district, 2020



Economic composition of students, if consolidated by township, 2020



#### 4. Expanding Inclusive Housing

Undoing exclusionary zoning and advancing zoning options that expand inclusive housing for all Long Islanders are two important policy directions that would improve racial diversity in our schools by allowing for racial diversity in our neighborhoods. However, these efforts face a unique uphill battle because of New York State's "home rule,"<sup>54</sup> which transfers to localities control of land use, public services, and community benefits, which, in the context of structural racism and White supremacy, gives Whites the power to exclude

<sup>54</sup> Local Government Home Rule Power. New York State website. Link: [https://video.dos.ny.gov/lq/handbook/html/local\\_government\\_home\\_rule\\_power.html](https://video.dos.ny.gov/lq/handbook/html/local_government_home_rule_power.html) (Accessed March 31, 2022).

– and thus to create and perpetuate residential segregation. It also has often prevented the implementation of state-level solutions. For example, while advocates successfully pushed for inclusionary zoning in California with Senate Bill 9 (which allows for duplexes to be built on land zoned as single-family), the same battle likely looks very different in New York.<sup>55</sup> However, such a goal is still necessary as funding incentives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development alone are not enough, since neighborhoods with the most exclusionary zoning ordinances are also often those with the most resources and thus the least need for federal help.

The lack of affordable housing is a regional and statewide crisis, and yet local zoning that does not allow multi-family housing as-of-right serves as a practical impediment to developers' efforts to build the needed housing.

In New York State, “The Statute of Local Governments reserves certain powers to the State Legislature, even where the exercise of these powers could or would diminish or impair a local power. These include the power...to adopt laws relating to matters of overriding state or regional concern.”<sup>56</sup> Other states have devised ways for the State to exercise these powers via appeals processes, such as Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Illinois.<sup>57</sup> California, Oregon, Washington, and Utah require that local governments develop plans for growth and update them periodically detailing how the jurisdiction will provide housing for all income levels.<sup>58</sup> Resulting from civil rights litigation in New Jersey, “In 1975, the New Jersey Supreme Court held that the zoning power—a state power only delegated to local governments—could not be used to exclude, and that every municipality must provide its “fair share” of opportunities for low and moderate-income people to find housing.”<sup>59</sup> The Great State of New York should not continue to do nothing to address the affordable housing crisis while so many other states are making progress, some significant progress.

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<sup>55</sup> California Legislative Information and Bill Information. Link:

[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220SB9](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB9) (Accessed March 31, 2022).

<sup>56</sup> New York State Local Government Handbook 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. “Local Government Home Rule Power” Link:

[https://video.dos.ny.gov/lq/handbook/html/local\\_government\\_home\\_rule\\_power.html](https://video.dos.ny.gov/lq/handbook/html/local_government_home_rule_power.html) (Accessed on May 16, 2022)

<sup>57</sup> Kazis, Noah. 2020. “Ending Exclusionary Zoning in New York City's Suburbs” Report for the Furman Center. Page 21-25. Link: [https://furmancenter.org/files/Ending\\_Exclusionary\\_Zoning\\_in\\_New\\_York\\_Citys\\_Suburbs.pdf](https://furmancenter.org/files/Ending_Exclusionary_Zoning_in_New_York_Citys_Suburbs.pdf) (Accessed on May 16, 2022)

<sup>58</sup> Kazis, Noah. 2020. “Ending Exclusionary Zoning in New York City's Suburbs” Report for the Furman Center. Page 21-25. Link: [https://furmancenter.org/files/Ending\\_Exclusionary\\_Zoning\\_in\\_New\\_York\\_Citys\\_Suburbs.pdf](https://furmancenter.org/files/Ending_Exclusionary_Zoning_in_New_York_Citys_Suburbs.pdf) (Accessed on May 16, 2022)

<sup>59</sup> 174 S. Burlington Cty. NAACP v. Mount Laurel Twp. (“Mount Laurel I”), 336 A.2d 713, 724 (N.J. 1975).

## Conclusion

To summarize, Long Island's K-12 public schools continue to be racially segregated despite becoming increasingly racially diverse at the aggregate. The unequal distribution of White and non-White—particularly Black and Hispanic—students across Nassau and Suffolk Counties has significant consequences for access to resources. To address this inequality, State education officials and legislators should make sure that high-need, intensely segregated school districts get the funding and support they deserve. Additionally, work should be done to combat White flight and stabilize racially diverse schools, which are currently well-resourced. While the fight for education equity has been a long and multifaceted battle that has not made as much progress as might have been expected, Long Islanders can work to make sure that our children experience a more just future by supporting the recommendations articulated in this report and getting involved in policy discussions at the local, state, and federal levels.

## About ERASE Racism

ERASE Racism is a regional civil rights organization that leads public policy advocacy campaigns and related initiatives to promote racial equity in areas such as housing, public school education, and community development. We engage in a variety of research, education, and consulting activities to address institutional and structural racism. Long Island, New York was the site of ERASE Racism's initial work and continues to be its geographic home and key focus area. At present, ERASE Racism's work is expanding to encompass statewide activities and related national work.

ERASE Racism achieves its objectives through utilizing research, educating the public, policy advocacy, legal actions, and civic engagement of Long Island leaders, community organizations, and community residents of various ages and backgrounds.

We also form partnerships with other Long Island, regional, and national institutions and create or join coalitions to help make the goal of racial equity a priority throughout the country.

## Methodology

All data used in this report were collected from the New York State Education Department, with the exception of data on revenue per student (which were collected from NCES), data on fiscal stress and environmental stress scores (which were collected from New York State Comptroller's Office), and data on Long Island demographics (which were collected from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2019). Data cleaning were conducted in Microsoft Excel, with missing data being given an "NA" value.

Descriptive data analyses and visualizations were conducted in Tableau, while statistical data analyses were conducted in R. A variety of statistical significance tests were employed, depending on the nature of the independent and dependent variables. For example, to test statistical significance and effect size of numerical independent and dependent variables (such as the potential relationship between percentage of non-White students and environmental stress scores), we employed Pearson's correlation coefficient.

The classification of school districts was as follows: 1) Intensely segregated districts had at least 90 percent of their enrollment being non-White students; 2) Predominantly White districts had at least 70 percent of their enrollment being White students; 3) Majority Black and Hispanic districts had 50-89 percent of their enrollment being Black and Hispanic students combined, and 4) Racially diverse districts had about 40-60 percent White students (about +/-10 percent from Long Island's overall 49 percent for White students), 4-14 percent Black students (about +/-5 percent from Long Island's overall 9 percent for Black students), 8 to 28 percent Hispanic students (about +/-10 percent from Long Island's overall 18 percent for Hispanic students), and at least 2 percent Asian students.

## Acknowledgement

This report was researched by and primarily written by Cam Owen, PhD, who was ERASE Racism's Policy Analyst/Researcher prior to publication. The project was overseen by Elaine Gross, MSW, ERASE Racism's President.

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