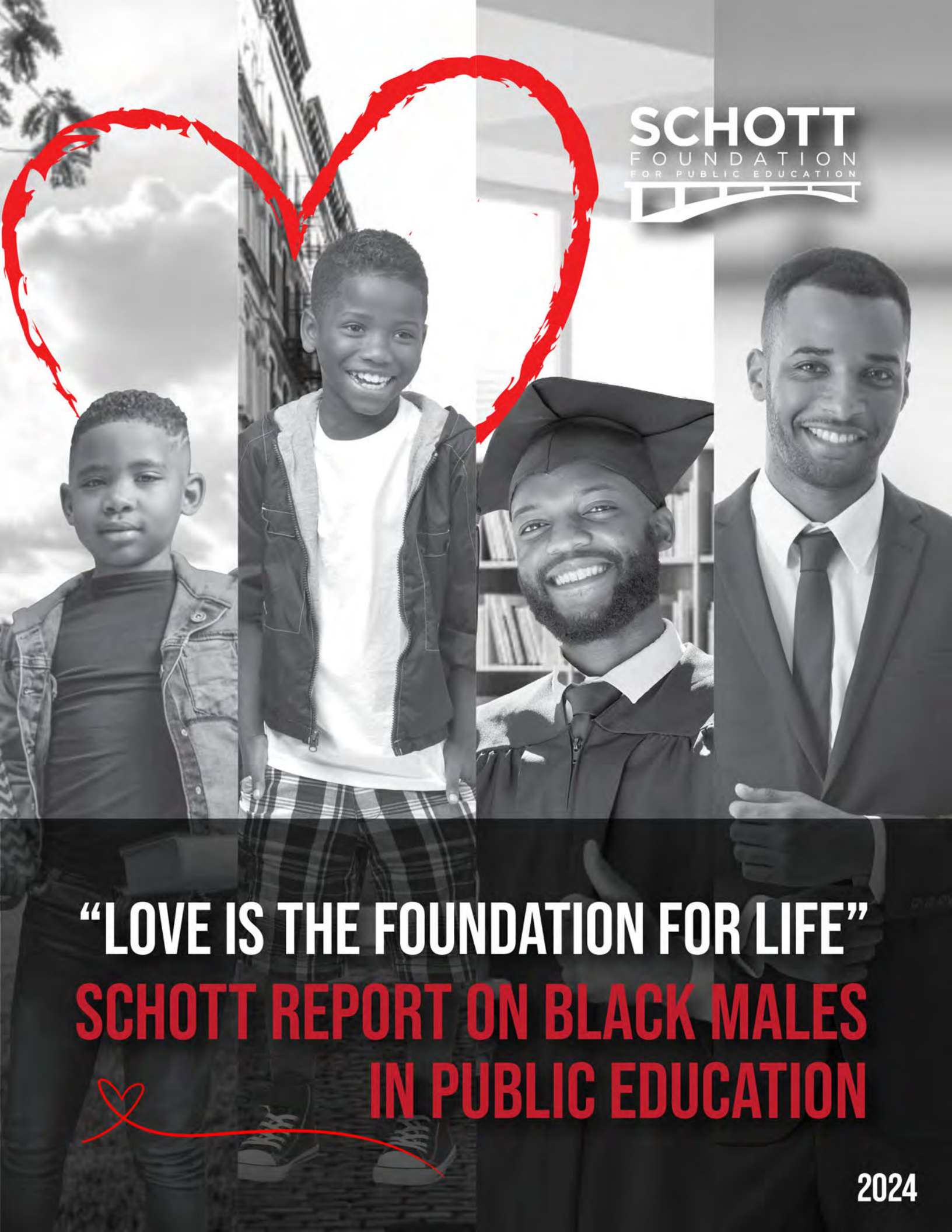

SCHOTT FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

"LOVE IS THE FOUNDATION FOR LIFE"

SCHOTT REPORT ON BLACK MALES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

2024


SCHOTT
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FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

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SCHOTT FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Preface

Dr. John H. Jackson
President and CEO
Schott Foundation for Public Education

Today, there are millions of individuals across the U.S. with college degrees who are making significant contributions to communities, businesses, science, education, and the arts. The value of an educated citizenry and its impact on families, our democracy, the economy, and within communities is undeniable. These potential contributions to humanity do not become any less valuable, nor less necessary, based on the race, ethnicity, or gender of the individual who bestows it.

Yet, over the last decade, quietly, more than 600,0000 Black students projected to be in post-secondary education are missing—a number larger than any other racial group. Despite the fact that the population of Black people, ages 18–34 years old, has increased from 9 million in 2000 to nearly 11.5 million in 2020, the total undergraduate enrollment for Black students in community colleges declined by 26% and HBCUs by 16%, and there was no increase in enrollment at four-year colleges and universities in general[1]. Even more concerning is the fact that data indicates that the majority of this enrollment decline is attributed to the decline in Black male enrollment. Black male enrollment saw a 39% decline between 2011-2020.[2] Understanding the significant contributions Black males have made, and continue to make, in our society as fathers, organizers, entrepreneurs, educators, and life partners, the ramifications of this disparity may be felt for generations.

Alternatively, because of the weight of the lagging outcomes for Black males, creating ecosystems of success for Black males presents an opportunity to make significant progress on many of the negative societal indicators impacting Black communities and families.

In 2015, when the Schott Foundation published the 5th edition of ***Black Males in Public Education: Black Lives Matter***, we did so to highlight and raise the alarm about the significant opportunities lost for families, communities, and our social infrastructure because of persistent disparities in high school graduation rates impacting Black males.

We identified these disparities then, as we do now, as statistical abnormalities. There is clear biological evidence that humans, regardless of race or ethnicity, are 99.6% the same. There are more genes to explain the variance in our eye color than our racial or ethnic differences. As such, disparities in graduation rates and academic progress that are identifiable by race and gender are skewed outcomes attributable to social policies, practices, and environments that would cause most students, regardless of race/ethnicity, to show up as underperformers.

In this 2024 update of the ***Schott Report on Black Males in Public Education***, we surface the persistent challenges that exist in far too many school districts as evidenced by low and disparate graduation rates. Yet,

1. A National Imperative: Addressing Black Student Enrollment, HCM Strategist (August 2022).
2. Black female enrollment declined during the same period by 32%.

The Executive Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (EA) collectively invested more than $26 million to support grassroots organizing and advocacy campaigns, narrative change strategies, research, and collective action. While it is virtually impossible to draw a causal relationship between these investments and the progress, it is undeniable that these combined efforts created momentum for systemic change.

we note that over the past decade, progress has been made in high school graduation rates for all students, including Black male populations in several districts. In fact, our data analysis indicates that when districts succeed at increasing the graduation rates of Black males, on average, the graduation rates for all male students in the district remain high.

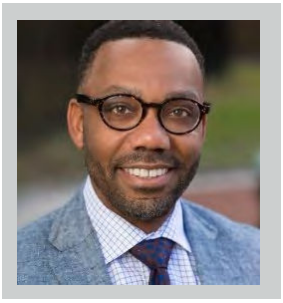
As we publish this sixth edition of the ***Schott Report on Black Males in Public Education***, we firmly acknowledge that the progress made in Black male graduation rates in several districts over the past decade did not come about solely because of our efforts in elevating the data. Change rarely happens in silos; it's attributable to the nameless and faceless people in communities organizing to address the policies and practices that lead to these disparities.

Change also doesn't happen overnight and usually requires sustained investments in a local advocacy infrastructure needed to shift systems. Over the past decade, resources from national philanthropic and field building partners such as the Campaign for Black Male Achievement, the BMe Community, Forward Promise, Cities United, the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBC), the National Youth Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, and the Obama administration's My Brother's Keeper and countless local initiatives, catalyzed the systemic progress that we see in high school graduation rates.

In addition to those efforts, from 2014-2020, more than three dozen foundation leaders formed the ***Executive Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (EA)*** driven by a single vision of all boys and men of color enjoying full opportunity and inclusion. The EA collectively invested more than $26 million to support grassroots organizing and advocacy campaigns, narrative change strategies, research, and collective action. While it is virtually impossible to draw a causal relationship between these investments and the progress, it is undeniable that these combined efforts created momentum for systemic change. During the same period of these investments, funding campaigns designed to reduce the overuse of out-of-school suspensions, promote asset-based Black male narratives, and concretize smart juvenile justice reforms, Black students' high school graduation rates improved significantly, and the racial gap decreased. Philanthropic investments matter.

It is widely accepted that you measure what matters. At Schott, we continue to measure high school graduation rates because they remain a central determinant of both life outcomes as well as life expectancy. For the past two decades, we have shone a light on the opportunities Black male students present for progress. Ultimately, we call on states, communities, and regional philanthropies to measure and improve upon the number that really matters—the average life expectancy of Black males in your community.

3. From 2012-2020.



Foreword

Dr. Andre M. Perry
Brookings Metro
Senior Fellow

Education for Life

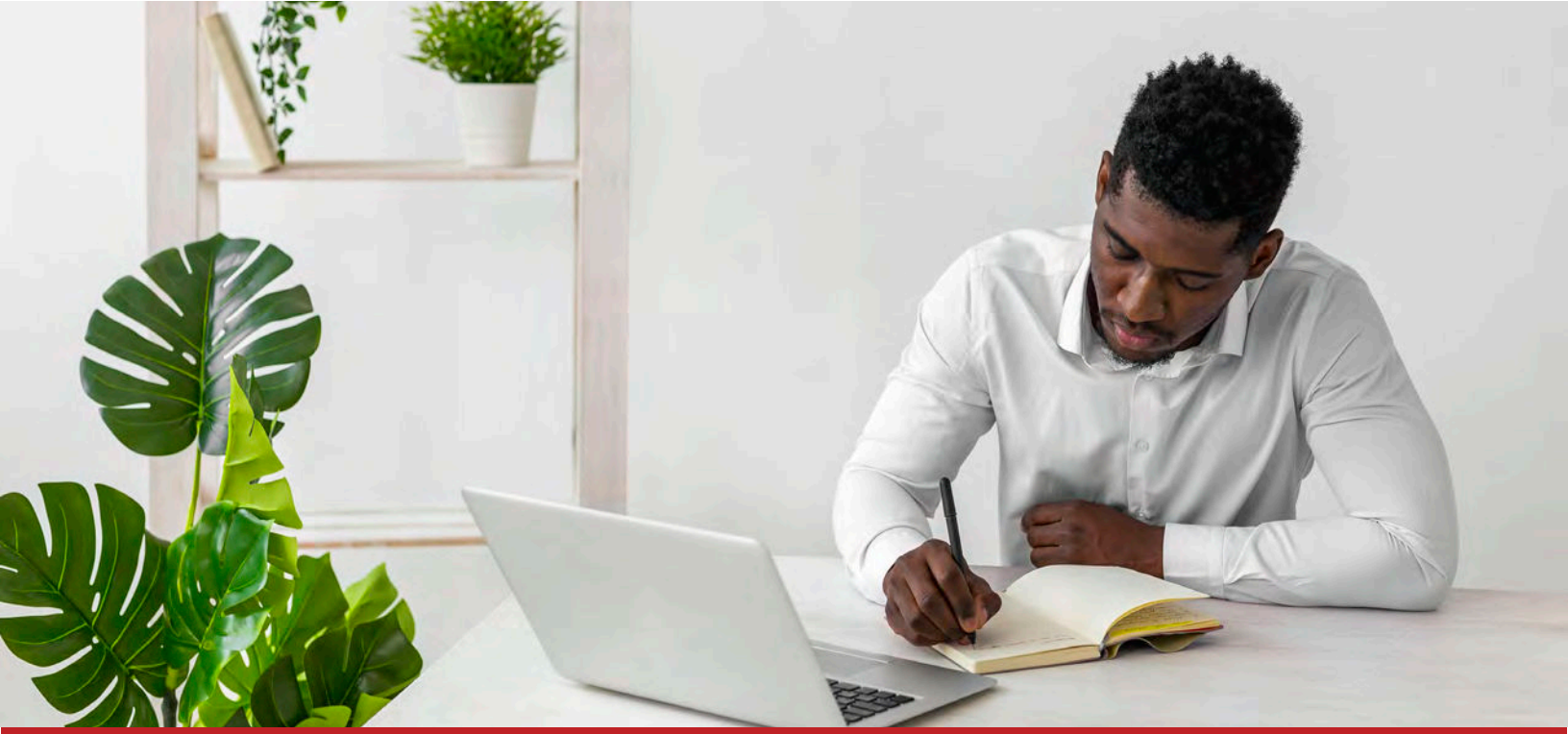
Drawing on decades of experience as a school system leader and an education researcher, I have come to deeply understand the profound impact that education has on individuals' lives. Education, often referred to as the "foundation of opportunity" and the "great equalizer," has been recognized for its ability to shape minds, instill values, and provide individuals with the skills needed to navigate society's complexities. Public and private investments in the education system are predicated on the premise that societal advancement is driven by a more educated populace. As important as education is for individual and societal advancement, those factors represent only a portion of its broad influence. Beneath its ability to prepare individuals for social engagement, there exists a less explored yet critical aspect—education's direct and significant connection to life itself.

Through my research with the Black Progress Index, released by the Brookings Institution in partnership with the NAACP, my colleague and I have discovered that improvements in K-12 and higher education levels contribute nearly 10 months to the average life expectancy in a county for each standard increase in educational achievement. In simple terms, as individuals and communities become more educated, life expectancy tends to rise.

The connection between education and life expectancy is intuitive. Increased access to information facilitates better health knowledge, leading to healthier behaviors. Typically, more educated individuals are better informed about health practices, resulting in healthier lifestyles. Moreover, higher educational attainment enhances the chances of securing safer jobs with better incomes, benefits, and retirement plans, which further support longevity. Education also expands social networks, which is significant as diverse relationships expose individuals to a wider array of healthier habits.

Education does not operate in isolation. It intersects with homeownership, business ownership, income, social networks, and family factors to impact longevity. Together, these social determinants of health, including education, provide a lens through which we can comprehend why improving educational outcomes is a necessity and why we must see the broader essential connections with other life-promoting systems.

Without question, over the last 50 years, gains have been made in getting Black students to and through high school and college. As this edition of the ***Schott Foundation Report on Black Males in Public Education*** reveals, for close to a decade, Black students experienced the highest graduation rate improvement of all racial groups. While this progress cut the national



Improvements in K-12 and higher education levels contribute nearly 10 months to the average life expectancy in a county for each standard increase in educational achievement.

high school graduation gap between Black and white students nearly in half, the ***Schott Report*** also reveals that in far too many school districts, Black males, specifically, continue to experience worse graduation outcomes when compared to their Black female peers or to male students of other races.

To change this trajectory impacting the very lives of Black males, we must broaden our lens beyond the classrooms and hallways because students do not live within school walls. They reside with families and are part of neighborhoods where the prevailing conditions directly impact not only their educational outcomes but also their life expectancy. This larger ecosystem surrounding education calls for a comprehensive approach that addresses the myriad of factors contributing to a child's well-being and success.

In my journey as a school system leader and researcher, I often heard the refrain, "If we could only fix the schools, everything would be okay." However, working directly with families showed me that children bring societal issues such as a lack of affordable housing, a racially biased criminal justice system, and pay inequality with them to the school. Housing, income, wealth, family stability, and safety are all critical pieces of the puzzle that interact with schools to shape and predict student outcomes. This reality shifted my focus, making me realize that putting all our efforts into schools alone is a form of evading the bigger picture. It neglects the broader neighborhood conditions that crucially sculpt an individual's pathway through life.

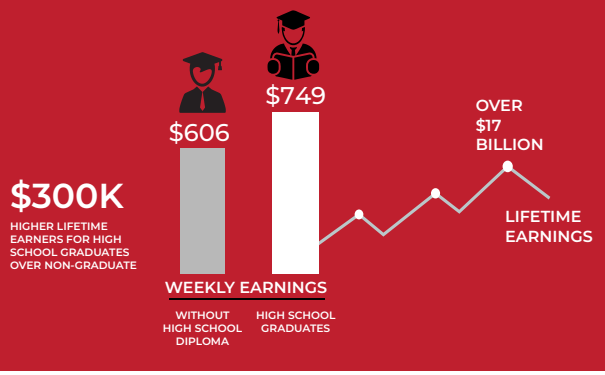
As we delve into this exploration, it is evident that the opportunities presented through educational attainment significantly influence the health outcomes and longevity of individuals. The variance in life expectancy across different regions correlates with levels of educational attainment among Black adults. The impact of this correlation on the value that Black males bring as fathers, entrepreneurs, soldiers, educators, health professionals, and organizers warrants the critical analysis and case for investment that the Schott report highlights as a pathway to enhancing our communities, economy, and democracy. Education is no longer just a pathway to personal development; it harbors the power to transform and sustain life itself.

INTRODUCTION

Why High School Graduation Matters

For close to two decades, the Schott Foundation has periodically reviewed and published data highlighting Black male four-year graduation rates. Schott has emphasized the enormous social costs of "the opportunity gap" that deprives communities across the nation of talents and contributions that are stymied by systemic failures to more fully engage and support young Black males. This current report builds on the work of the 2015 ***Black Lives Matter: Schott's 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males*** by providing perspective into how states and a select number of districts are performing in addressing racial disparities in graduation rates and supporting Black male academic progress.[4]

...Students who graduate high school are more likely to continue to post-secondary education and have consistent employment and higher wages.



High school graduation rates are a key indicator of well-being and the future success of our nation's young people. Students who graduate high school are more likely to continue to post-secondary education and have consistent employment and higher wages. High school graduates working full-time have median weekly earnings of $749, compared to $606 for those without a high school diploma.[5] The estimated lifetime earnings of high school graduates relative to those who do not graduate is approximately $300,000 higher.[6] Using this earnings estimate, the potential impact of eliminating high school graduation disparities for the latest cohort would accrue to over $17 billion in lifetime earnings.[7] Beyond the earnings potential, high school graduation has also been linked to significant improvements in health. Researchers have found that individuals without a high school degree are more than twice as likely to rate their health as poor,[8] and to suffer increased cancer mortality rates.[9]

4. The report utilizes data from the National Center for Education Statistics and various state departments of education to produce an overview of broad racial changes in four-year graduation rates at the state level and, where data was available, the report also uses these sources, in conjunction with census data, to present a more detailed race/gender descriptive analysis of graduation rates for male students in 15 regionally diverse school districts. 5. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor 2019, https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2019/median-weekly-earnings-606-for-high-school-dropouts-1559-for-advanced-degree-holders.htm (visited December 12, 2023). 6. Vining & Weiner, 2019. 7. Author's calculation by improving current ACGR of Black students from 81% to 90%. 8. Hahn & Truman, 2015. 9. Gupta et al., 2023.

Overall, a young person with a high school diploma is less likely to experience negative societal outcomes like incarceration or homelessness. A young person without a high school diploma is more than 350% more likely to experience homelessness than one with a high school diploma and 63% more likely to be incarcerated. Further, high school graduates are more likely to continue their education in college and more likely to experience home ownership. In short, higher graduation rates are indicative of expanded individual opportunities and options that, in aggregate, contribute to economic and social growth. Because many of these factors impact our overall life expectancy, high school graduation is not just a key influencer on a young person's life outcomes but also the longevity of their life. Simply stated, a high school diploma is a significant milestone in an individual's pursuit of several of our nation's guarantees—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

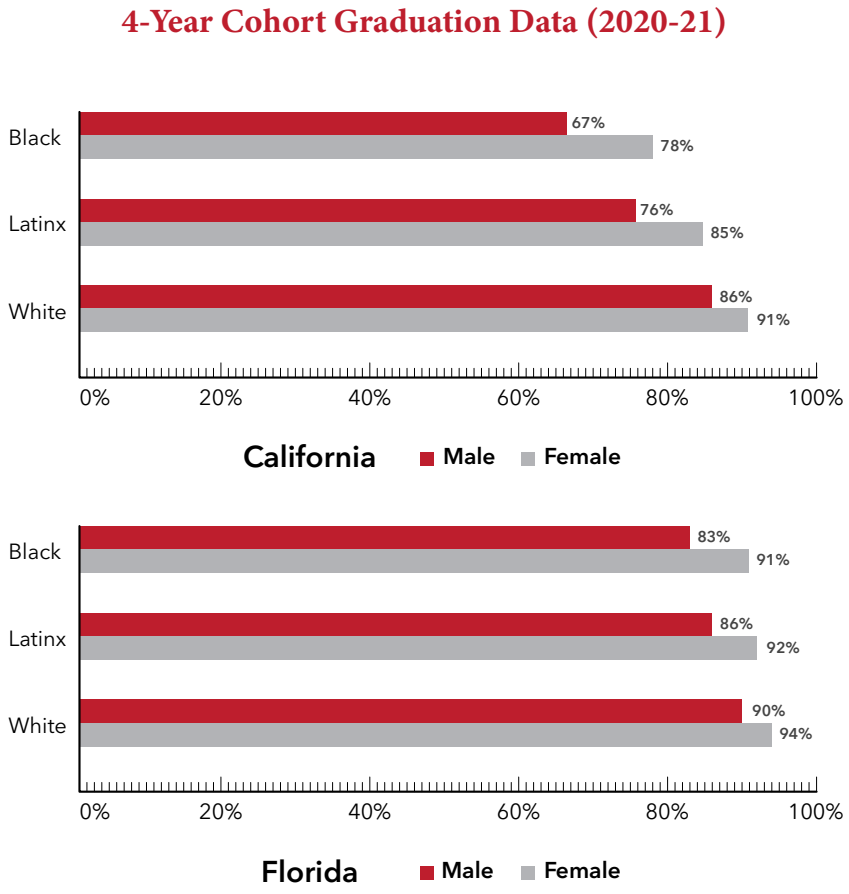
Why Black Males?

There has not been a group of young people whose life expectancy has been more impacted by the negative societal outcomes that align with low high school graduation rates than Black males. Black male students represent a very capable group of learners. Yet, their vulnerabilities are systemic, and both socially and politically manufactured and inflicted. The existence of racial gaps in graduation rates impacting Black males highlights how existing social inequalities and racialized limitations can impact an individual's future potential and create a drag on national outcomes.

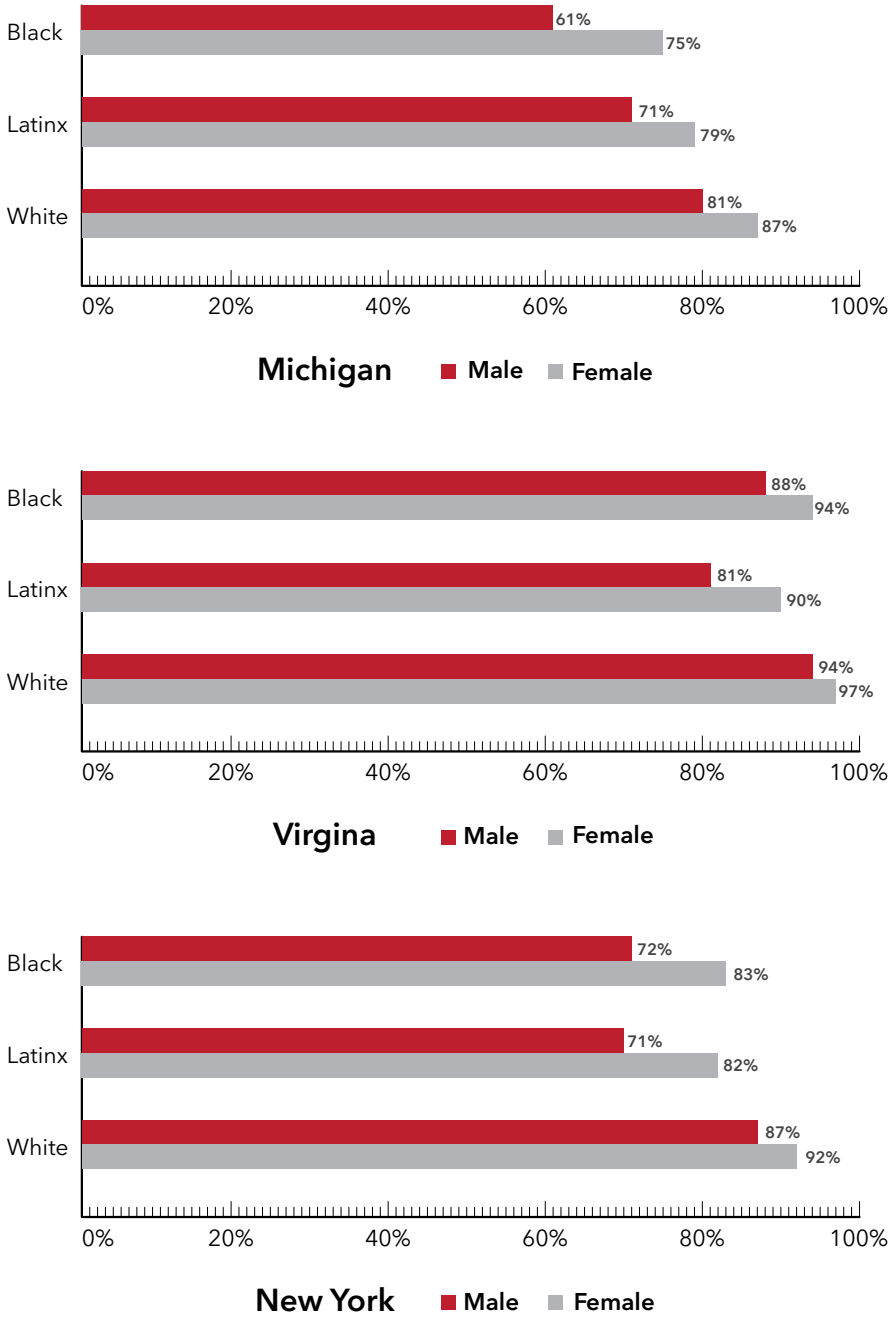
In a 2023 commentary on gender gaps in high school graduation rates, Reeves and Kalkat report that available data suggests there is considerable variation in race and gender gaps in high school graduation rates.[10] Across racial groups, female students have higher four-year graduation rates. Figure 1 highlights Reeves and Kalkat's conclusion showing considerable variation in race and gender gaps in the five largest regionally diverse states. Overall, females, regardless of race, are graduating at significantly higher rates than males across the states while Black males consistently have the lowest graduation rate regardless of race or gender.

Figure 1: State-Level ACGR by Race and Gender, 2020-2021

Reeves and Kalkat report that available data suggests there is considerable variation in race and gender gaps in high school graduation rates.



10. (Reeves & Kalkat, 2023)



Source: Adjusted four-year cohort graduation data from individual state Department of Education websites

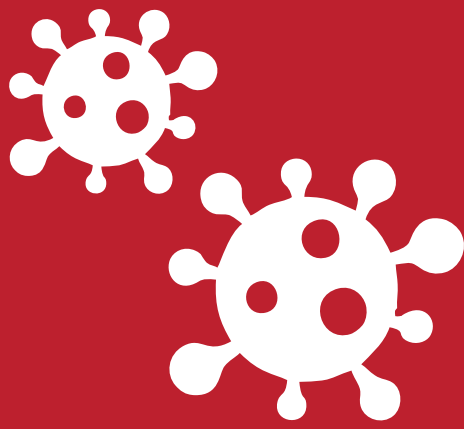
Consistent with the analysis above, many of the low societal outcome indicators for Black families (post-secondary attainment rates, incarceration, homelessness, life expectancy, etc.), are driven, in general, by the poor outcomes of Black males in each of the categories. As such, improving the outcomes of Black males in most cases is a viable pathway to significantly improve the data outcomes of Black students and families in general.

Black students are most often in schools that are both racially and economically distinct from those that white students attend.[11] Consequently, both their experiences within schools and their academic outcomes are distinct from any other group of students.[12] Black students across the country contend with a range of well-documented barriers to their academic success both inside and outside of the school setting.[13] From exclusionary discipline practices to culturally irrelevant curricula, resource shortages, or living disparities, Black students must often overcome considerable challenges to succeed academically.[14]

More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbated a range of academic disparities largely driven by health, economic, and social inequities experienced by Black students and their families.[15] In addition, Black communities were among the hardest hit by COVID-19 in terms of illness and fatalities, with one in 310 Black children losing a parent or caregiver, a rate more than two times that of white children.[16] Research reveals that across the nation, Black and Latinx communities were disproportionately impacted by food and housing insecurities and were more likely to report having significant mental health challenges associated with the pandemic.[17] [18]While national calculations of four-year graduation rates post-pandemic are not currently available, an

11. (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020)
12. (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020)

Following the pandemic... Black life expectancy declined by four years (six years lower than whites), largely driven by the decline in the Black male life expectancy by five years, which represented the largest decline of any race or gender subgroup.



analysis of available data from California, for example, suggests that the pandemic had a particularly harmful impact on Black male students from the class of 2020-2022, for whom the four-year graduation rate declined by 7%.

We also know that the pandemic was paired with a heightened awareness of the devastation that gun and abusive police-sponsored violence presents in the lives of Black families. The ultimate result was that the Black life expectancy declined by four years (six years lower than whites), largely driven by the decline in the Black male life expectancy by five years, which represented the largest decline of any race or gender subgroup.

The pandemic experience is a reminder that it is life itself that has too consistently been cut short for Black males—whether through the slow drip of a reduction in their average life expectancy caused by social constraints or the more immediate tragedy of violence precipitated by their social positioning. Despite these challenges, we explicitly acknowledge that Black male students are not themselves the problem. We remain dedicated to highlighting the need to prioritize leveraging public resources and systemic policies to create local ecosystems which create the conditions for Black male students' long-term success.

For almost 20 years, the Schott Foundation has collected and analyzed national data on the four-year graduation rates of Black males compared to other student groups as a way to catalyze efforts to build ecosystems of success for Black males. There are numerous reports and mounds of data that highlight the degree to which systemic disparities rob our country and communities of the fullness of the tremendous intellect, talent, and opportunities that Black males provide.

The absence of a comprehensive approach to understanding and improving Black male students' experiences and outcomes in public education means that reform efforts will continue to fall short of successfully providing all students an opportunity to learn. While this report highlights the need to address graduation outcome gaps primarily using a disparity analysis between Black male students and other racial/ethnic groups, we also include comparisons of Black male four-year graduation rates in higher performing districts with Black male four-year graduation rates in lower performing districts to provide an opportunity to draw insights into the "ecosystems of success" in which Black males thrive. This approach provides far more insight and information than a mere disparity analysis would provide.

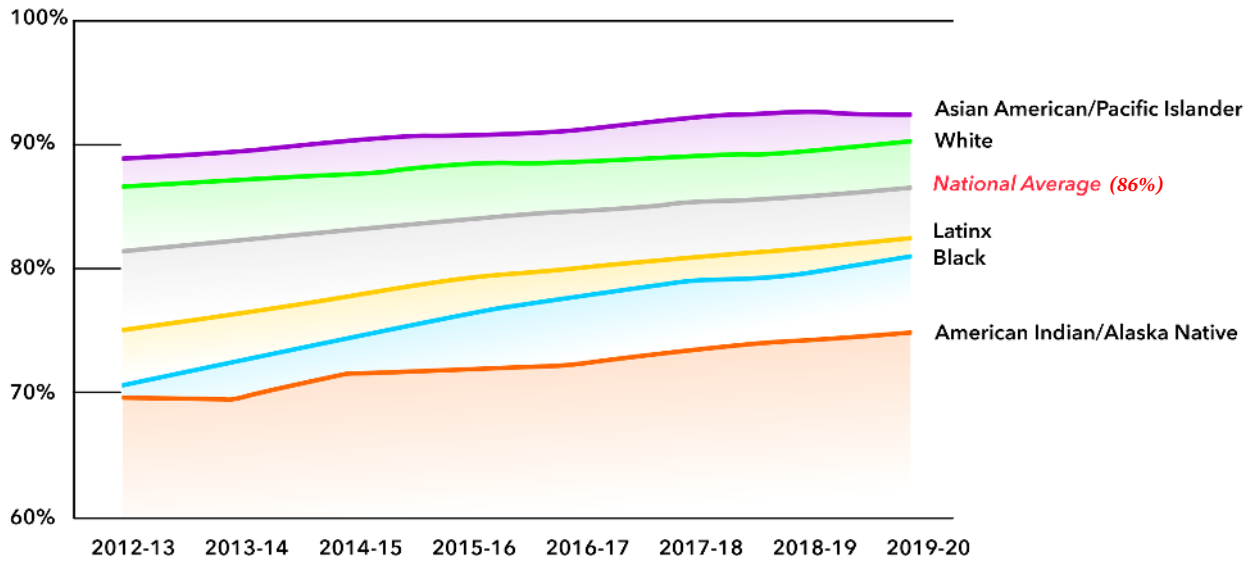
13. (McAdoo et al., 2023)
14. (Dumas, 2016)
15. (Horsford et al., 2021)
16. (Millett et al., 2020; Oladele et al., 2022)
17. (Pastor & Segura, 2020)
18. (Oladele et al., 2022)

National High School Graduation Trends and Progress, 2012-2020

At a national average of 86%, U.S. four-year graduation rates for students in the 2019-2020 cohort were the highest on record since 2010, when the United States began tracking four-year graduation rates. As Figure 2 illustrates, prior to the pandemic, U.S. graduation rates improved for every racial/ethnic group, and racial disparities narrowed, particularly for Black students.

Figure 2. Graduation Rates by Race

National Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, by Year and Race/Ethnicity

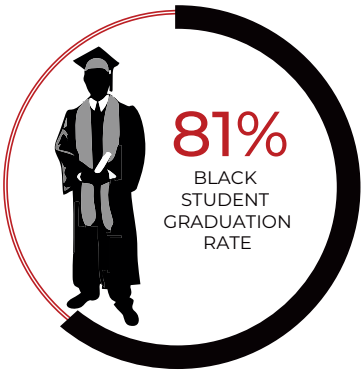


Note: The ACGR is the percentage of 9th graders who graduate within four years of starting 9th grade with a regular diploma. The years presented indicate the year the cohort graduated high school. 2019-20 is the most recent year available at the time of publication of this report. Students entering 9th grade for the first time form the cohort for the graduating class. This cohort is "adjusted" by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort and subtracting any students who subsequently transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES Table 1. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographic characteristics for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico

As Figure 2 illustrates, both Asian American/Pacific Islander and white, non-Hispanic students' graduation rates were above the national average at 93% and 90%, respectively, while Latinx (83%), Black (81%), and Native American (75%) students' graduation rates were below the national average. Yet, Black students' four-year graduation rates improved sharply by 14% between 2012-2020. Black students registered the steepest four-year graduation rate increases during the eight-year period (compared to a more modest 4% improvement in the four-year graduation rates of white students, for example).

The gap in four-year graduation rates between white, non-Hispanic, and Asian American/Pacific Islander students has remained consistent over time, likely reflecting their shared social-spatial conditions in many city contexts. The small gap in four-year graduation rates between Black and Latinx students narrowed considerably, with both groups improving over the course of the period. The gap between Black and Native American students widened considerably over the period as Native American students' four-year graduation rates did not improve as dramatically.[19]

> *"Black students' four-year graduation rates improved sharply by 14% between 2012-2020....compared to a more modest 4% improvement in the four-year graduation rates of white students,"*

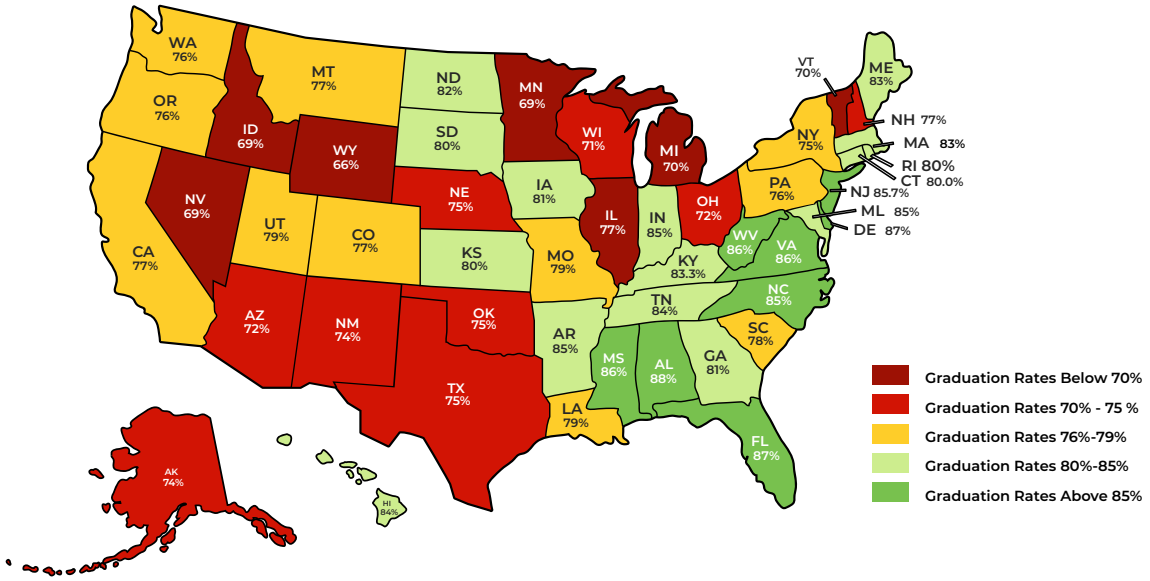


19. A more robust analysis of Native American students' graduation rates across the nation is needed. This will require overcoming federal, state, and local systems addressing severe limitations in data collection and promulgation. Schott continues to call for systems to address the challenges in data collection as well as providing the substantive supports for Native American students to thrive.

State High School Graduation Trends

Among the 50 states, predictably, there is also considerable variation in graduation rates. Only three states had a four-year graduation rate for Black students higher than the national average (86%): Alabama (88%), Delaware (87%), and Florida (87%). Conversely, Wyoming (66%), Minnesota (69%), and Idaho (69%) had the lowest four-year graduation rates for Black students.

Figure 3. Black Student Adjusted Cohort 4-Year Graduation Rates 2019-2020



1	Alabama	88
2	Alaska	74
3	Arizona	72
4	Arkansas**	84
5	California	77
6	Colorado	76
7	Connecticut	80
8	Delaware	87
9	District of Columbia	73
10	Florida	87
11	Georgia	81
12	Hawaii	84
13	Idaho	69
14	Illinois	77
15	Indiana**	84
16	Iowa	81
17	Kansas	80
18	Kentucky	83
19	Louisiana	79
20	Maine	83
21	Maryland	85
22	Massachusetts	83
23	Michigan	70
24	Minnesota	69
25	Mississippi	86
26	Missouri	79
27	Montana	77
28	Nebraska	75
29	Nevada	69
30	New Hampshire	77
31	New Jersey	86
32	New Mexico***	74
33	New York	75
34	North Carolina	85
35	North Dakota	82
36	Ohio	72
37	Oklahoma	75
38	Oregon	76
39	Pennsylvania	76
40	Rhode Island	80
41	South carolina	78
42	South Dakota	80
43	Tennessee	84
44	Texas	75
45	Utah	49
46	Vermont	70
47	Virginia	86
48	Washington	76
49	West Virginia	86
50	Wisconsin	71
51	Wyoming	66

A more robust analysis of Native American students' graduation rates across the nation is needed. This will require overcoming federal, state, and local systems addressing severe limitations in data collection and promulgation. Schott continues to call for systems to address the challenges in data collection as well as providing the substantive supports for Native American students to thrive.

On average, states with the highest Black graduation rates have comparatively higher graduation rates for all students (See Figure 4). By contrast, states with the lowest Black graduation rates are characterized by substantial inequality, with large gaps in the graduation rates of students by race (See Figure 5). These findings lead to a logical conclusion that states that limit inequities and provide ecosystems of success for Black students also benefit all students

Figure 4. States with the Highest Four-Year Graduation Rates For Black Students (2019-20)

State	Alabama	Delaware	Florida	Mississippi	New Jersey	Virginia	West Virginia	Arkansas	Indiana	Maryland
Black	88%	87%	87%	86%	86%	86%	86%	85%	85%	85%
White	92%	91%	92%	90%	95%	93%	92%	91%	93%	94%
Latinx	88%	86%	90%	84%	85%	75%	93%	87%	88%	72%

Source: NCES Table 219.46: 2019-20 Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR)

Figure 5. States with the Lowest Four-Year Graduation Rates For Black Students (2019-20)

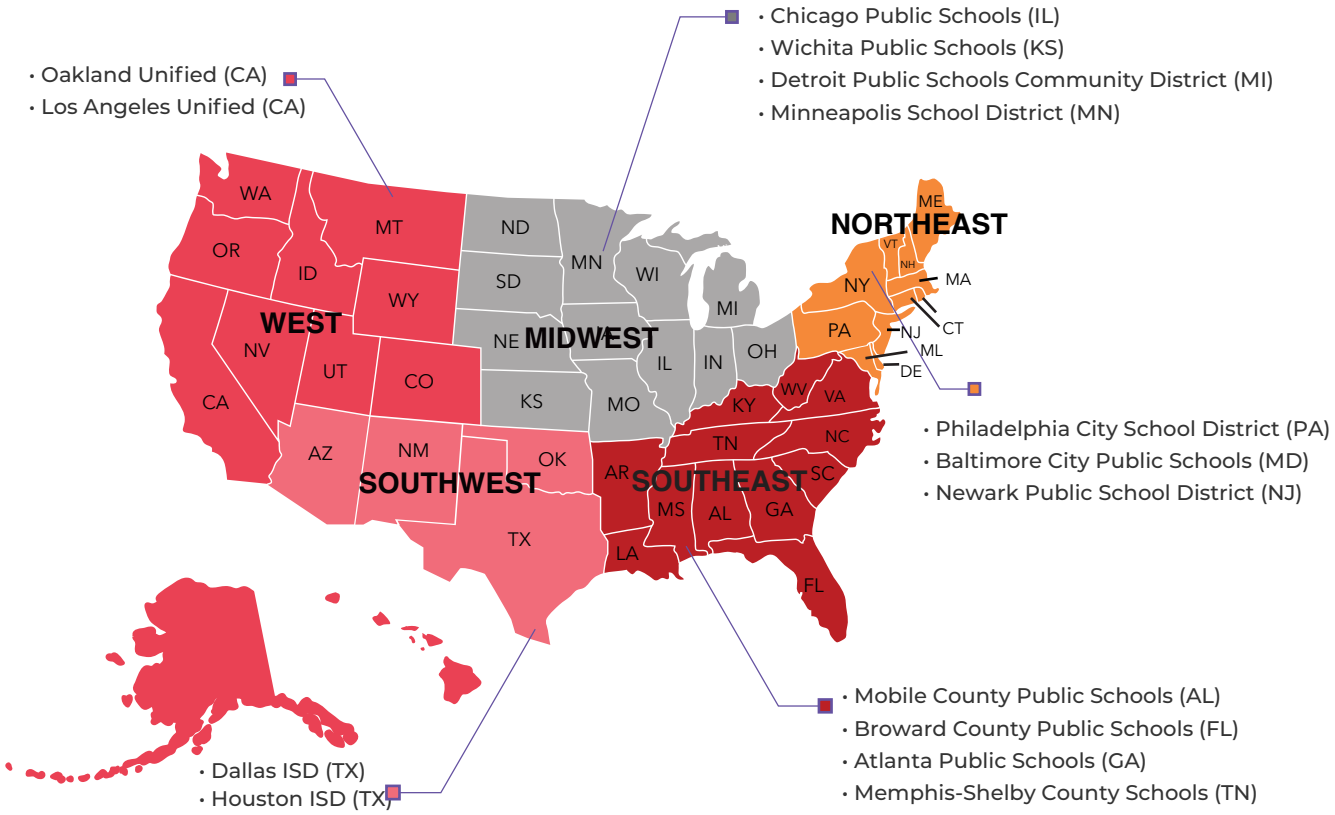
State	Wyoming	Minnesota	Idaho	Vermont	Nevada	Michigan	Wisconsin	Ohio	Arizona	District of Columbia
Black	66%	69%	69%	70%	70%	70%	71%	72%	72%	73%
White	84%	89%	84%	85%	86%	85%	94%	88%	83%	93%
Latinx	78%	70%	76%	82%	81%	76%	85%	76%	74%	64%

Source: NCES Table 219.46: 2019-20 Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR)

Black Male High School Graduation Trends, By District

State-level data inconsistencies present major challenges in collecting data disaggregated by race and gender to conduct a 50-state Black male four-year graduation rate analysis. As a result, in this report, we selected 15 geographically diverse districts to analyze the four-year graduation rates for Black males specifically. The selection of both geographically diverse districts and districts with high Black male enrollment at the district level allows for a substantive snapshot of the graduation trends in states across the nation. Figure 6 is a visual representation of the U.S. map with a representative sample of the 15 districts selected for examination in the report.[20]

Figure 6. Map of Selected Districts



20. In districts with publicly available data by race and gender, we calculated four-year cohort graduation rates for the years 2018-19 through 2021-22. For districts where such precision was not possible, we created estimates using historical data

As Figure 7 indicates, the criteria for district selection were largely based on data availability, the presence of a sizable Black male population (having at least 5,000 Black male students or a minimum of at least a 10% Black student population) in the district, and regional diversity. The selection process also took into account variations in economic, social, and environmental contexts within the districts. Together, these 15 districts represent the current and, likely, future graduation outcomes for the more than 250,000 Black male students enrolled in the districts.

Figure 7. School District Total Enrollment & Black Student Enrollment (2021-22)

District	Black Student Count	Total Student Count	% Black
Atlanta Public Schools	36,105	49,994	72%
Baltimore City Public Schools	57,798	77,807	74%
Broward County Public Schools	99,018	256,037	39%
Chicago Public Schools	118,948	330,411	36%
Dallas ISD	30,087	143,558	21%
Detroit Public Schools Community District	39,970	48,745	82%
Houston ISD	43,116	194,607	22%
Los Angeles Unified	40,281	548,338	7%
Minneapolis Public School District	9,217	30,115	31%
Mobile County Public Schools	26,435	51,658	51%
Newark Public School District	15,028	40,607	37%
Oakland Unified	9,672	46,600	21%
Philadelphia City SD	55,724	118,207	47%
Shelby County Schools	76,666	102,221	75%
Wichita Public Schools	9,466	47,334	20%

An analysis of 2021-2022 adjusted cohort four-year graduation rates among Black male high school students within the 15 selected districts reveals substantial differences. Of the 15 selected districts, the Mobile County, AL, school district had the highest Black male graduation rate at 88% and was the only district among the 15 selected with a four-year graduation rate for Black males above the national average graduation rate (86%).

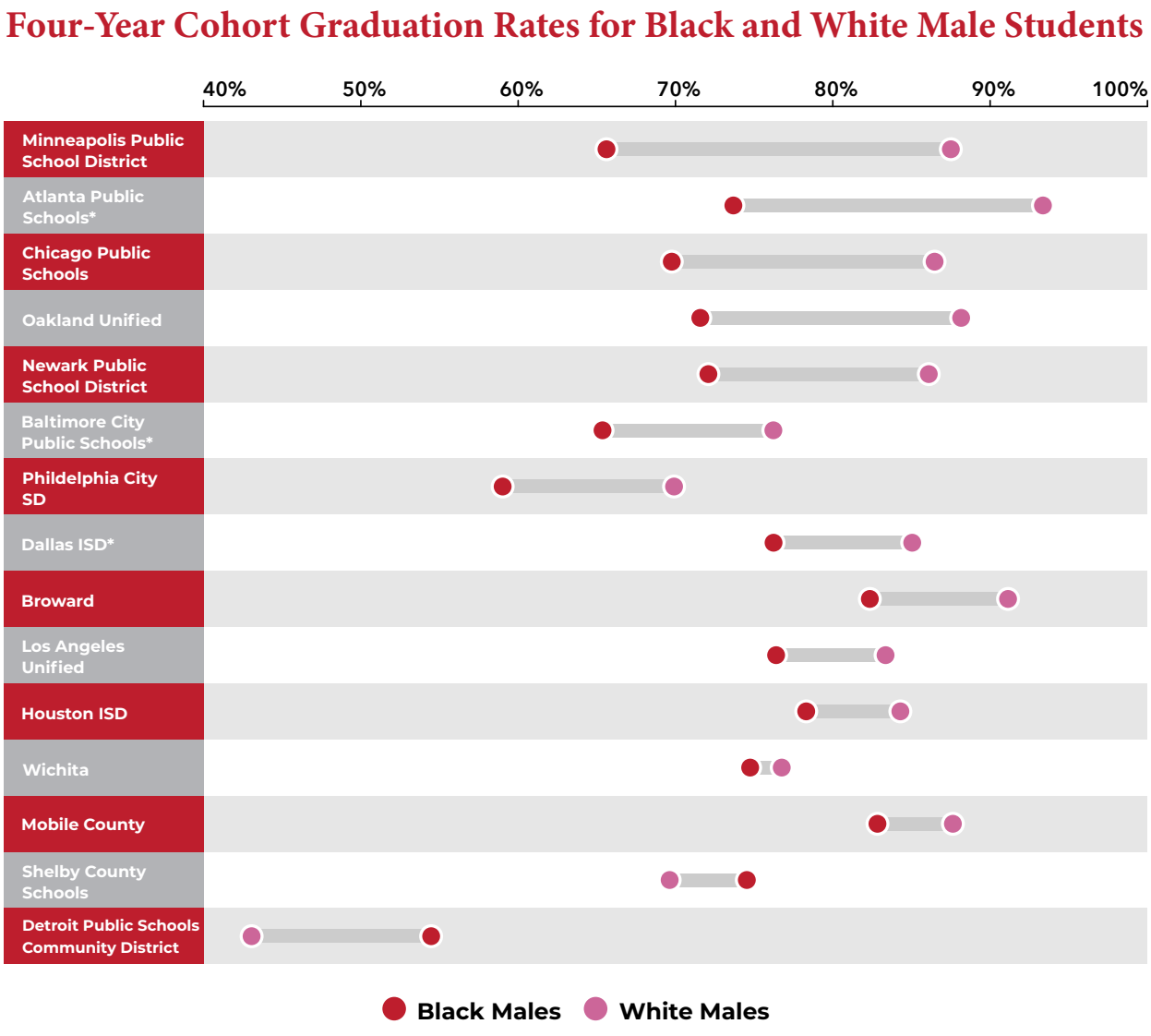
Similar to the findings from our review of state four-year graduation rates by race, on average, in the school districts where Black male four-year graduation rates were above 80%—Mobile, AL (88%), and Broward County, FL (82%)—the graduation rates for white and Latinx males in the districts were above 80% as well. Conversely, the school districts with the lowest Black male four-year graduation rates Detroit, MI (54%), Philadelphia, PA (59%), Baltimore, MD (65%), and

Minneapolis, MN (65%), also possessed the lowest four-year graduation rates for all male students.

This trend seems to suggest that when districts successfully create ecosystems of success for Black males, it benefits all male students. This conclusion did not, however, hold true positioning white male graduation rates as the key benchmark. In the Atlanta, Oakland, and Minneapolis school districts, white male four-year graduation rates were 93%, 88%, and 87%, respectively, while the Black male graduation rates were 17-22 percentage points lower, respectively. In Minneapolis, where the white male graduation rate was 87%, the Latinx male four-year graduation rate was 51%--more than 36 percentage points lower than the white male four-year graduation rate—one of the largest gaps among the 15 selected districts.

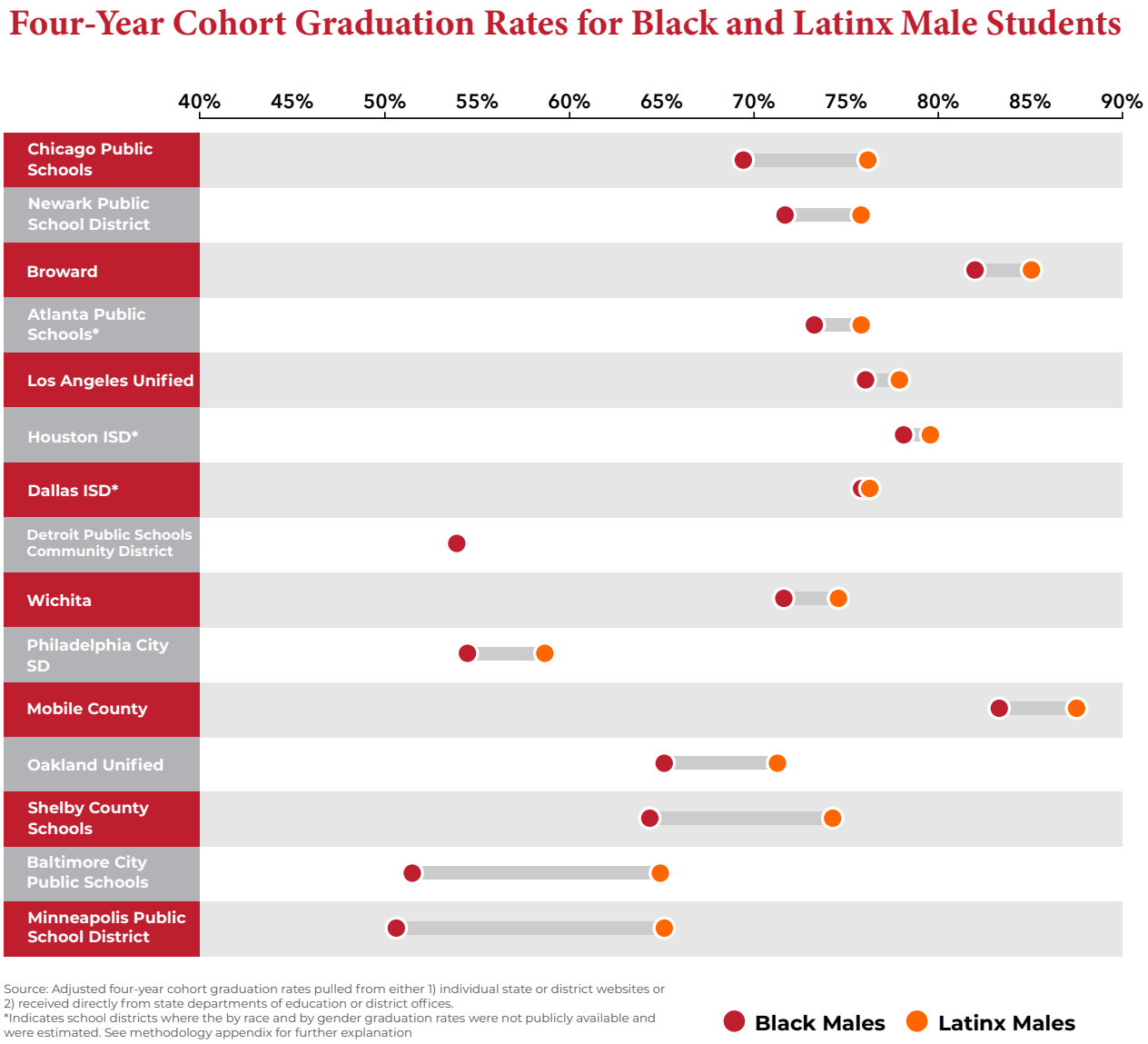
As Figure 8 indicates, in only three out of the fifteen selected districts—Mobile County, AL, Shelby County, TN, and Detroit, MI—were Black male graduation rates higher than those of their white male counterparts: in two of these three localities, Shelby County (74%) and Detroit (54%), the graduation rates for each of the groups were well below the national average (86%).

Figure 7. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates for Black and White Male Students 2019-2020



As Figure 8 indicates, among the 15 selected districts, Black and Latinx males experience similar rates of four-year graduation, with Latinx males having slightly higher rates of graduation in close to half of the 15 selected districts. Notably, in Baltimore and Oakland, Black male students graduated at substantially higher rates relative to their Latinx peers.

Figure 8. Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates for 2019-2020 Black and Latinx Male Students



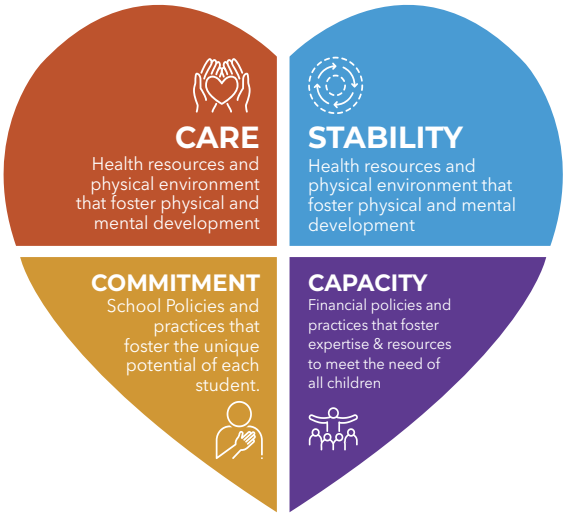
Source: Adjusted four-year cohort graduation rates pulled from either 1) individual state or district websites or 2) received directly from state departments of education or district offices.
*Indicates school districts where the by race and by gender graduation rates were not publicly available and were estimated. See methodology appendix for further explanation

In most areas where Black male students experienced large disparities in four-year graduation rates, Latinx male students did also.

WHAT NOW?

Why Building 'Loving Systems' is the Answer

Our analyses of high school graduation rates highlight clear systemic race and gender disparities. As previously stated, this is less of an indictment on Black male students, educators, or even their parents, and more indicative of local systems that lack the resourcing or specific supports to embrace and engage Black males. At a basic humanity level, systemic disparities that are identifiable by race, ethnicity or gender are emblematic expressions of institutionalized inequities within a system towards the outlying group, in this case Black males. As such, these systems must be resourced and supported around a common "North Star"—providing Black males access to a system that provides them with the care, stability, commitment and capacity to succeed. There must be a conscious commitment to providing the living and learning supports necessary for a fair and substantive opportunity to learn and to thrive.



There must be a conscious commitment to providing the living and learning supports necessary for a fair and substantive opportunity to learn and to thrive.

Improving graduation rates for Black males is about more than just improving schools and educators; it requires improvements to the ecosystem in which they exist. This is not a job that can merely be left to a superintendent or school principal. Rather, local elected officials (e.g., mayor, city council, county commission) and community partners (e.g., advocacy organizations, philanthropy, high education) must triage around the environmental, social, and economic disparities that exist within the students' living environments. Before state and local public officials can experience transformative changes in the heart of their cities, they must commit to concretizing transformative changes by creating effective support systems for all children and families.

Implementing a 'Loving Systems' Framework at a Community-Level

Loving systems' have been defined, simply, as a system of core supports that you would provide the children you love. You provide healthy food to those you love. You provide shelter to those you love. You support the health and mental wellness, and provide restorative opportunities, to those you love.

Beyond the theoretical framework, in 2018, the Schott Foundation developed the Loving Cities Index as a tool for local policymakers to assess the degree to which all students have equitable access to 24 living and learning supports in four areas of need:

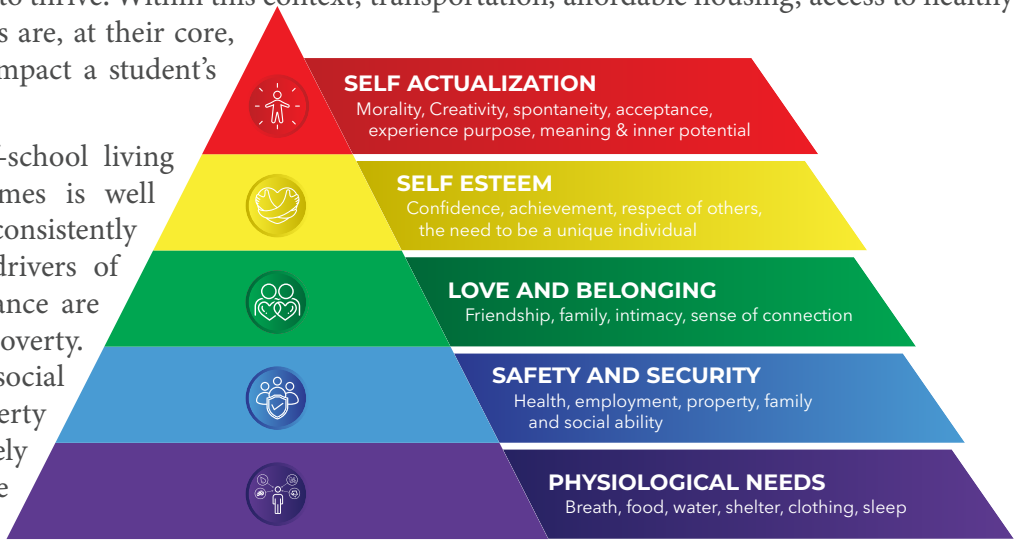
- ***CARE:*** Health resources and physical environment that foster physical and mental development.
- ***STABILITY:*** Community infrastructure supports and policies that foster physical and financial security and civic participation.
- ***COMMITMENT:*** School policies and practices that foster the unique potential of each student.
- ***CAPACITY:*** Financial policies and practices that foster expertise and resources to meet the needs of all children.

The Loving Cities Index highlights the degree to which communities identify and address the policies and practices which led to racial disparities in access to the critical supports (health, transportation, financial, etc.) that are indicative of a 'loving system'. Schott's 2018 and 2020 assessment of twenty cities revealed that while several of the cities were beginning to use a cross-sector approach to address their support disparities, none of the twenty cities were offering over 60% of the supports needed for all children in the community to thrive. Simply stated, America's cities cannot help children reach their full potential while only giving them a little more than half of the support.

We have long known that formal educational progress is a higher-level need for students. Consistent with Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs," meeting students' physiological, safety, and love and belonging needs are essential foundations for a student's educational progress.

The strategy to address the disparate educational outcomes must identify the living and learning policies and practices that are drivers for the disparate outcomes and replace them with policies and practices that provide each student with the foundational supports needed to thrive. Within this context, transportation, affordable housing, access to healthy food, and a host of other supports are, at their core, "education issues" because they impact a student's ability to learn and thrive.

The relationship between out-of-school living conditions and academic outcomes is well established.[21] Research has consistently found that among the biggest drivers of racial gaps in academic performance are differences in family income and poverty. There is a vast array of specific social conditions associated with poverty that have been found to negatively affect student performance. These include housing instability or homelessness, which makes

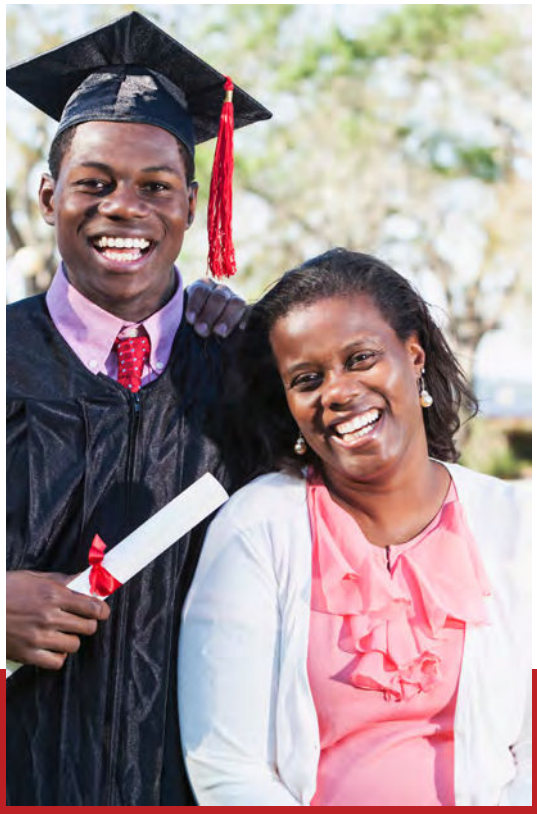


Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

finding a quiet place to study much more difficult, poor nutrition, which impacts behavior and makes it difficult to focus while in school, and poor vision, which is a major barrier to reading and math.[22] Research by Stanford's Sean Reardon reviewing over 13,000 school districts indicates that parental income remains the determinate factor in student success. Parental income is essentially a proxy for the living and learning supports–or 'loving systems'–that students must access to have a fair and substantive opportunity to learn.

In order to eliminate disparate educational outcomes for Black males, localities must assess, identify, and institutionalize the supports necessary to create a community where all students can access the systems and supports necessary to thrive. These are the types of 'loving communities' that create 'loving systems' to account for the needs and progress of all students regardless of their social and racial contexts.

Localities must support healing of students harmed by a long history of racist policies that persist to this day and replace systems of oppression with systems that institutionalize love and support.



Research by Stanford's Sean Reardon reviewing over 13,000 school districts indicates that parental income remains the determinate factor in student success.

In each city and locality, there are community organizers and partners that have been leading campaigns to transform school and community systems to support more equitable outcomes across healthy living and learning indicators. Elected officials, public sector decision-makers, and local philanthropy must come to the table with these community-based leaders to discuss this data, understand their agendas, and establish and resource a shared plan to rebuild systems to be grounded in love, rather than inequity, and ensure all children are accessing supports for care, stability, commitment, and capacity. It requires intentionality, transparency, commitment and, most importantly, action.

In the following sections, we describe important "out of school" and community-level characteristics facing Black males that may impact academic performance, health, and overall well-being.[23] These are all part of a web of racism, poverty, and environmental injustices that have a profound effect on educational outcomes.

Parental income is essentially a proxy for the living and learning supports–or 'loving systems'– that students must access to have a fair and substantive opportunity to learn.

21. (Wilson, 1987; Kozol, 2012; Bower, 2013; Chetty & Hendren, 2018)
22. (Gallagher, 2023; Fantuzzo, 2012; Ashiabi, 2007; Evans et al., 2018)
23. (The Schott Foundation, 2015; Johnson et al., 2021)

Barriers to Creating a 'Loving Community' & Ecosystem of Success for Black Males

Poverty & Unemployment

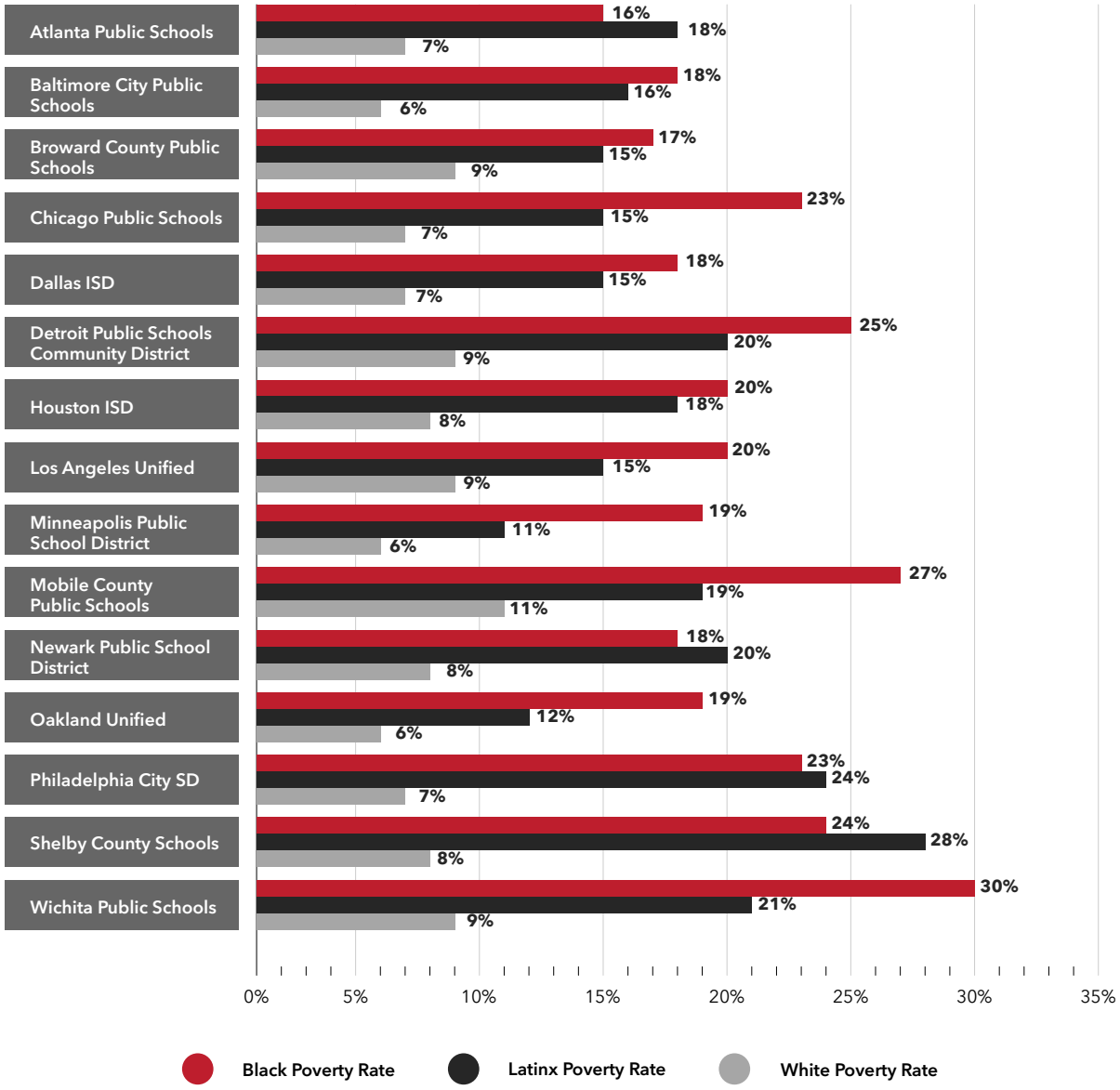
The percentage of children in poverty serves as a clear indicator of the vast array of social conditions that obstruct learning and substantially lower the likelihood that students will graduate high school.[24] The experience of living in poverty is racially disproportionate. Accordingly, in the 15 school districts included in this study, the communities where Black male students and their families live are disproportionately impacted by poverty and unemployment.

As illustrated in Figure 9, white males in the selected school districts were much less likely to live in poverty than Black and Latinx male students.[25] In each of the metropolitan areas where the 15 selected school districts are located, Black households had poverty rates that were two to three times that of whites. Although there were differences across these selected areas, rates of poverty among Black and Latinx communities were generally similar. Black poverty rates in the metropolitan areas in which these school districts are located ranged between a low of 16% in Atlanta and a high of 30% in Wichita. The highest poverty rate observed for whites was in Mobile, Alabama, which was 11% and, at that rate, was still 31% less than the lowest poverty rate observed for Black people.

24. (Lee, 2014; Baydu et al., 2013)
25. Poverty was measured using the U.S. Census Bureau indicator, which used an official poverty measurement (OPM) that takes into account income, food needs, and family size. It does not take into account the regional variation of the costs of housing and other costs of living.

Figure 9. Poverty Rate, by Race and District

MSA-level Poverty Rate, by Race and District

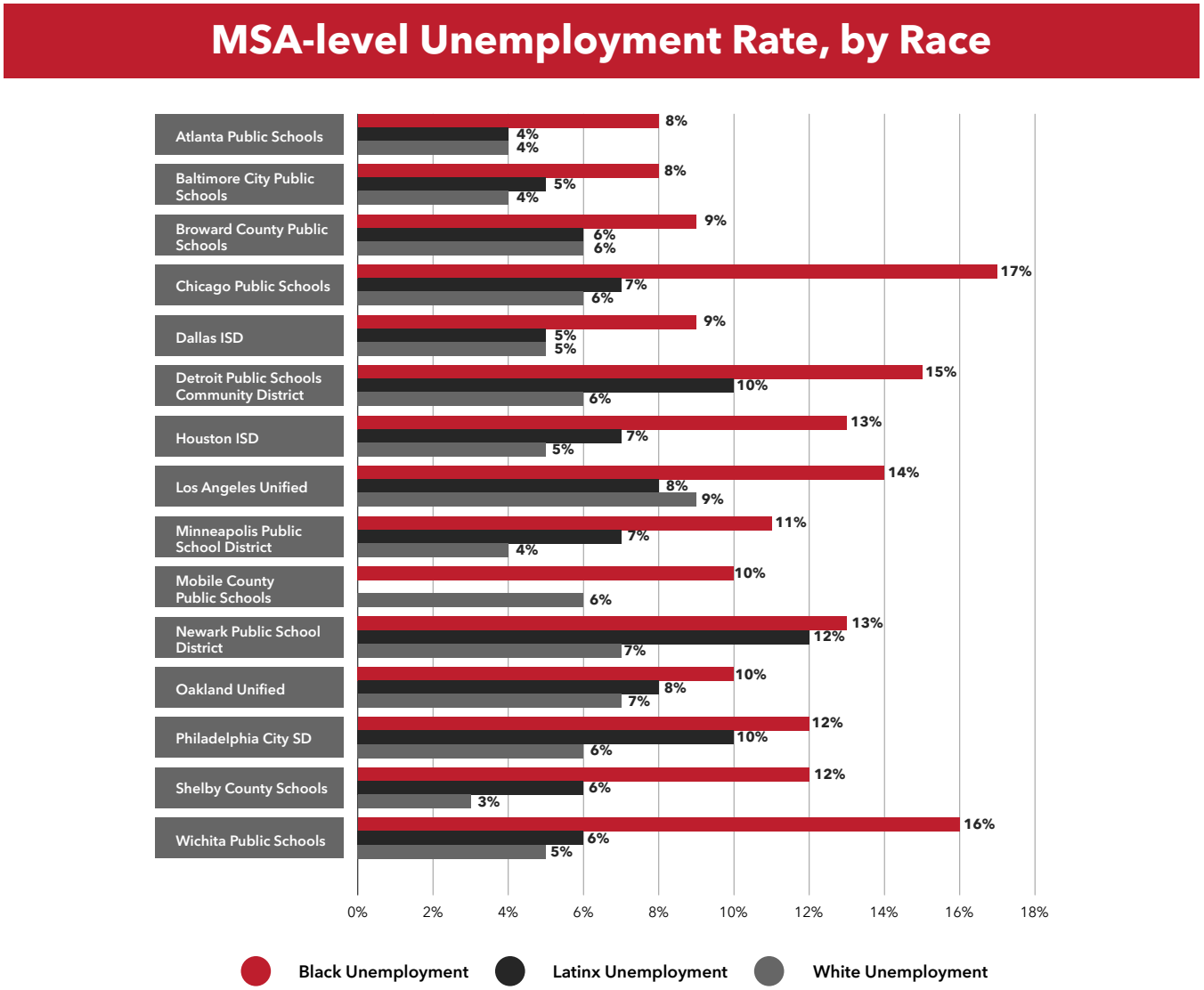


Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701. Retrieved October 9, 2023, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S1701?q=S1701&g=010XX00US$31000M1_310XX00US16980,19820,26420&y=2022.

*The U.S. Census Bureau determines poverty status by comparing cash income (individual or family) against the threshold of the costs of food and family size

Similar to poverty, unemployment rates in our selection of metropolitan areas served as an important indicator of the social and economic well-being of each community as well as the likely prevalence of social cohesion and networking opportunities for young people.[26] In Figure 10, we see that Black individuals experienced substantially higher rates of unemployment compared to non-Black individuals. In nearly all of the 15 selected districts, unemployment rates of Black people were between two to three times that of whites in the same communities. In general, the unemployment rates of Black and Latinx communities were close; however, there were notable exceptions. In Chicago, Black unemployment was 83% higher than Latinx, and in Wichita, Black unemployment was 91% higher than Latinx. These statistics highlight why student outcome analysis can never begin nor end with the mere observation of disparities in outcomes at the school level. The local goal of decision-makers in each area must be to create the types of 'loving systems' (education, housing, employment, health, and other factors) that allow students and families to have fair opportunities to learn and graduate.

Figure 10. Unemployment Rate by Race and District



26. (Wodtke et al., 2011)

Extremely Punitive and Unjust Living and Learning Communities

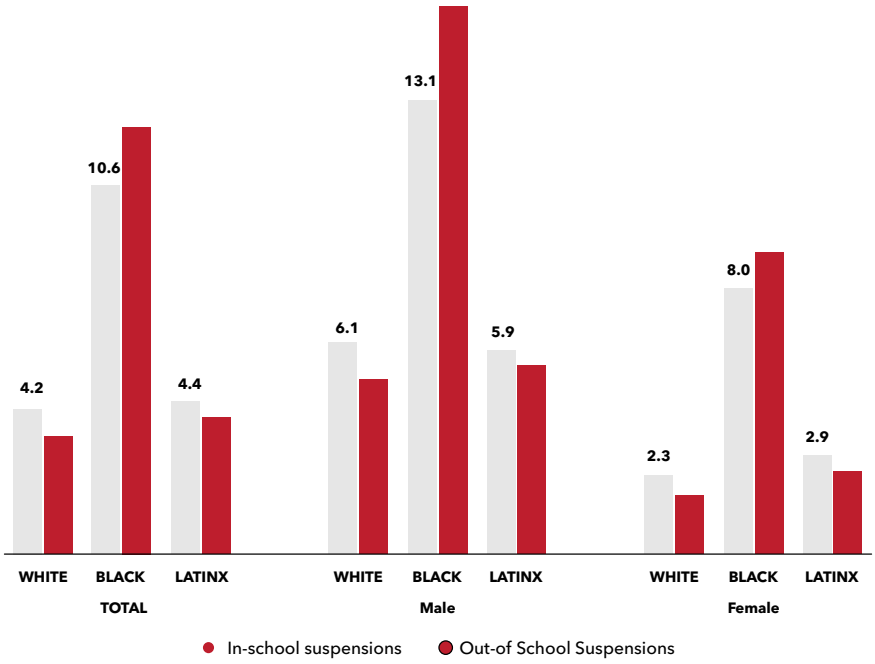
One cannot ignore the direct and indirect impact that America's proclivity for punitive, rather than restorative, corrective actions have on student success. In 1970, the U.S. had approximately 300,000 citizens incarcerated.[27] By 2010, that number had exploded to 2.5 million. While the U.S. only comprises 4% of the world's population, those incarcerated in the U.S. account for over 23% of those incarcerated in the world.[28]

This increase in punishment even extends to K-12 education, most notably evidenced in student suspensions and expulsions. Black male students experience the highest rates of out-of-school suspensions. Black male students are more than three times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their white counterparts.[29] Some states and districts have begun to reverse the tide following 2014 federal guidance on the use of suspension and expulsions. In January 2014, the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice jointly issued legal guidance, in the form of a "Dear Colleague" letter, on the subject of discriminatory practices in the administration of student discipline and violations of Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In California and Illinois, for example, there have been significant declines in both suspensions and expulsions for all students and a slight narrowing of racial disparities. Fair and just education policy must focus on more deeply understanding root causes in order to create restorative programs, policies, and practices that foster supportive, rather than punitive, conditions for Black male students.

Figure 11. National Suspension Rates, by Type and Race

Percentage of Students Receving In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions by Race/Sex, 2018



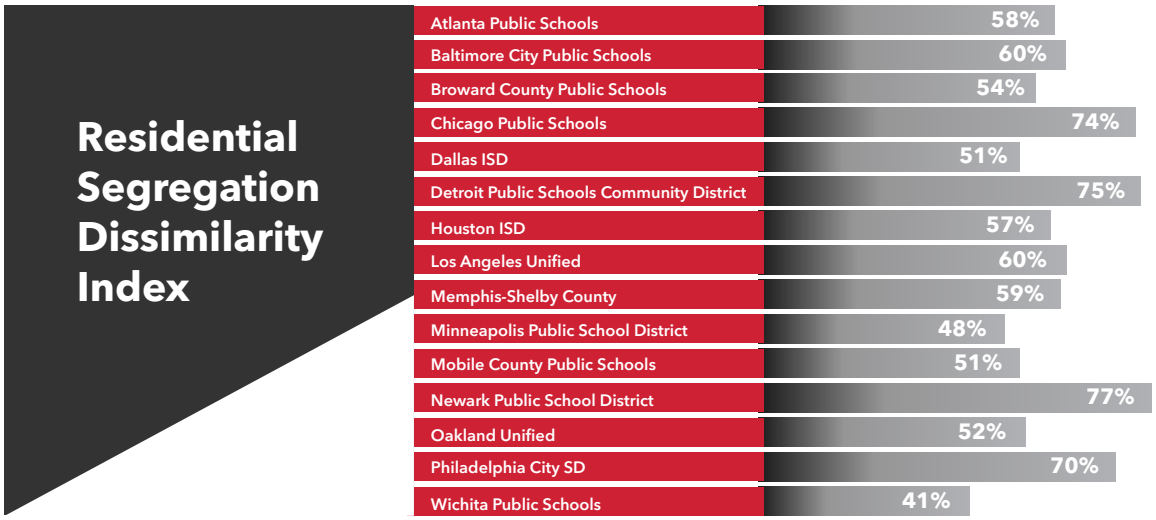
27. (1619 Project, Aug. 2019)
28. (1619 Project, Aug. 2019)
29. U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, "2017-18 Discipline Estimations by Discipline Type."

Racial Segregation and Housing Affordability

On May 17th, the country commemorated the 70th anniversary of the landmark 1954, Brown v. Board of Education decision, striking down segregation in the nation's public schools. This marked a defining moment in U.S. history as lead attorney, Thurgood Marshall, remarked in his presentation to the court, that segregation helped keep "the people who were formerly in slavery as near to that stage as possible."[30] No other group has been subjected to the same degree of residential or school segregation.[31] Research has shown that school segregation is associated with unequal access to a range of educational and economic resources which may impact academic outcomes for Black male students . Schools with high proportions of Black and Latinx students have higher shares of teachers with only one to two years of experience, lower numbers of school counselors, and worse physical facilities.[33] Notably, teachers with less experience are primarily responsible for racial disparities in out-of-school suspensions, which has a disproportionate impact on Black male students, highlighting a path, in addition to that of other resource disparities, by which segregation may negatively impact Black male graduation rates.[34]

Figure 12 displays residential segregation within the 15 selected school districts. The neighborhood dissimilarity index is an indicator of Black/white residential dissimilarity within census tracts across each city.[35] The index ranges from 0-100, with zero indicating perfect integration. All of the 15 selected school districts had relatively high levels of residential segregation. In fact, other than in Minneapolis, over half of the Black people in each area would have to move for there to be residential integration across census tracts. Chicago, Newark, and Philadelphia school districts are all within cities with extreme levels of residential segregation and particularly low high school graduation rates for Black male students.

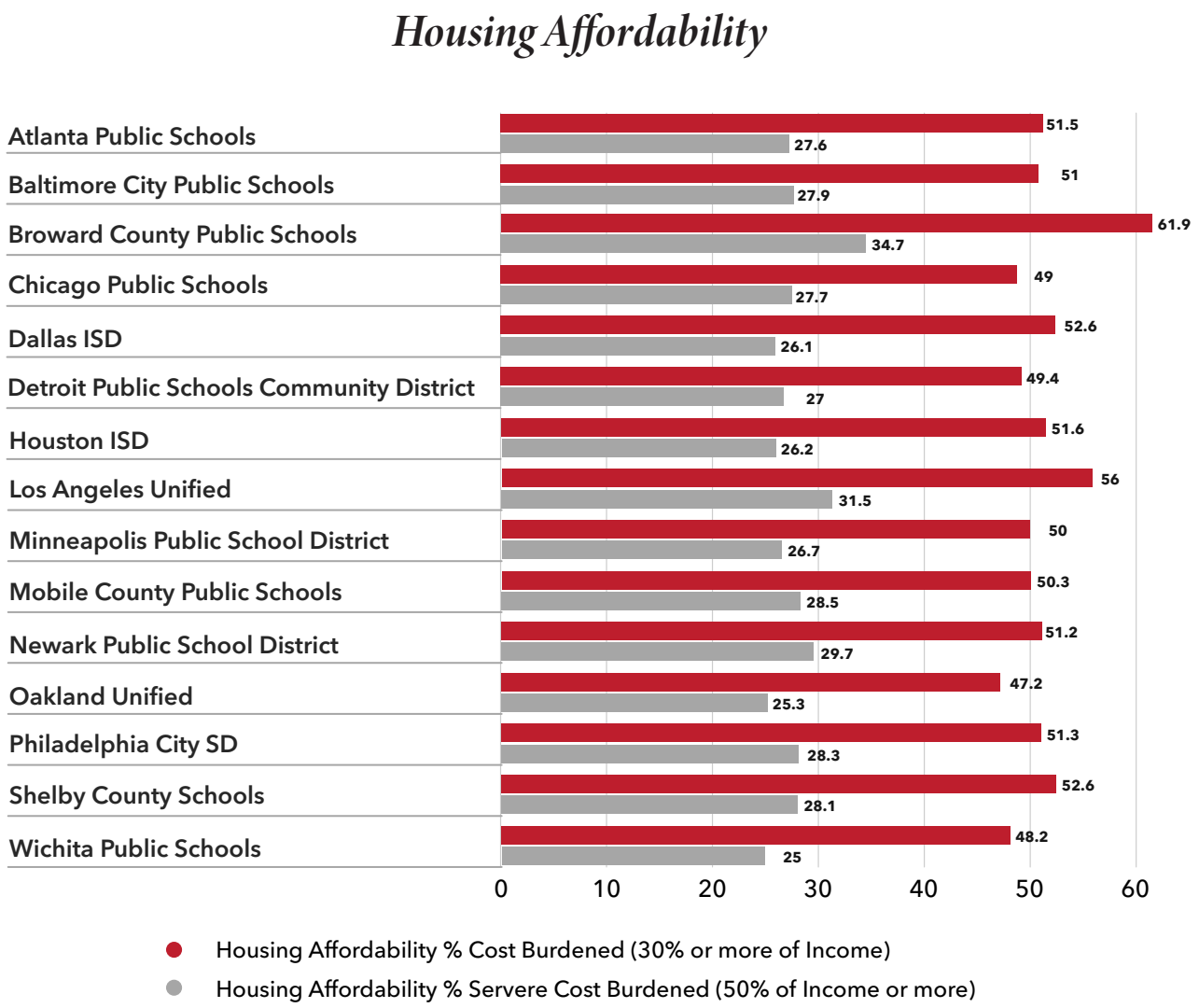
Figure 12. Residential Segregation Index, by District



30. https://www.naacpldf.org/brown-vs-board/.
31. (Massey & Denton, 1993; Orfield, 2013; Reardon & Owens, 2014; Johnson, 2019)
32. (Zelaya, 2022). 33. (Monarrez & Chien, 2021). 34. (Liu et al., 2023) 35. Dissimilarity Index=0.5* Σ (xim/Xm) - (xip/Xp)| where xim is the population of a racial group m within a smaller geography i, Xm is the population of the same racial group m within the bigger geography, xip is the population of a racial group p within the same geography i, and Xp is the population of the same racial group p within the same bigger geography. The absolute difference between these two proportions is summed over all smaller geographies that constitute the bigger geography and then divided in half.

Aside from segregation, housing in and of itself is also an education issue. Housing instability and homelessness is disproportionately experienced by Black students.[36] The last several decades have been marked by dramatic increases in student homelessness in line with equivalent declines in housing affordability. Figure 13 displays housing affordability in each of our selected metropolitan areas.

Figure 13. Housing Affordability, by District and Cost Burden



Households paying high proportions of their family income for rent have fewer resources available for other important needs and are particularly vulnerable to experiencing housing loss. In almost two-thirds of our selected cities, half the renters are cost-burdened (paying 30% or more of their incomes for rent), and one in four renter households pays more than half of their income for rent.

36. (Gonzales et al., 2021)

Summary of Findings

Our findings show that while there has been some overall improvement in racial gaps in high school graduation in the United States, progress has not been consistent across all cities/metropolitan areas and school districts. Significant disparities persist, indicating that efforts to address educational equity must be tailored to local contexts and challenges.

In the school districts included in this report, Black male students and their families reside in areas where they often face profound academic, social, economic, and environmental barriers to high school graduation. Although the specific combination of area circumstances varies tremendously, the basic fact of disadvantage does not, and Black male student high school completion appears to be peculiarly sensitive to these obstacles.

Our review of the data suggests that metropolitan areas with elevated levels of segregation, and/or with very disparate economic circumstances, tend to have persistent race and gender gaps in graduation rates. In general, Black male high school graduation rates are highest where the local system resembles more of a 'loving system' where economic inequality and racial segregation are lower. It is, however, important to note important nuances to this general observation. Several metropolitan areas in the South have high and disparate rates of Black poverty, but they have high rates of high school graduation among Black male students. It may be useful to examine the particular policies and practices in Mobile, Montgomery County, and Broward County, which have led to strong graduation rate outcomes for Black male students.

Each school district and metropolitan area has its own story regarding educational trends and disparities impacting Black male student academic outcomes and on-time graduation rates. Our exploration of the data indicates that even as we celebrate overall marked improvement, there remain considerable disparities in four-year graduation rates of Black male students and their peers. To ensure that educational opportunities are accessible and equitable for all students, our approach must be comprehensive and targeted.

15 cities identified in this report have an opportunity to lead the way in developing a strong and just education system and stronger communities in which every student can graduate and thrive.

The 15 cities identified in this report have an opportunity to lead the way in developing a strong and just education system and stronger communities in which every student can graduate and thrive. At the same time, these cities are a representative sample of the opportunities and challenges that districts with large Black male populations are facing across the nation. The patterns and conditions outlined in this summary must be monitored alongside community partners and with well-designed and well-resourced sustained interventions that are implemented over time. Further analysis is needed for measuring the scope and scale of the challenges and successes for Black males in some instances, monitoring progress and guiding the implementation of successful interventions.

A "schools alone" policy response that ignores how conditions outside of school (e.g., neighborhood conditions, employment, exposure to pollutants) impact student learning, graduation, and college-going rates will not serve young people well, especially Black males. Addressing these graduation disparities is not solely the job of educators or superintendents, but must include mayors, county officials, governors, judges, legislators, regional funders, and community partners. Our collective challenge is to help a critical mass understand and act upon the urgency of ensuring that all school-age students in the U.S. have a clear, unobstructed path to learning on a pathway to a high-quality life.

Key findings

Black Student Graduation Progress

- Progress is very much possible. For the cohort of Black students graduating in 2012[37], 7 of every 10 students who began 9th grade graduated in four years. By 2019, that number rose to 8 of every 10 Black students.
- During the eight-year period between 2012-2020, Black students experienced the highest graduation rate improvement of all groups. This progress cut the racial gap between Black and white students nearly in half as compared to 2012 and increased the nation's overall graduation rate by 4%.
- The fact that between 2012-2020, the graduation rate increased for all students (4%) and more significantly for Black students (14%) supports the need for states and localities to focus on resourcing the strategies and supports that improve the academic outcomes for the lowest performing group as a pathway to elevate the outcomes for all students.

States' Black Student Graduation Varying Outcomes

- While there has been noticeable overall improvement in graduation rates for Black students, disparities still remain, and the improvement varies substantially across states. In 2019-2020, the average U.S. four-year graduation rate was 86% compared to only 81% for Black students. Only three states had a Black student four-year graduation rate above the national average—Alabama, Delaware, and Florida.
- In 2019-2020, Alabama (88%), Delaware (87%), Florida (87%), Virginia (86%), Mississippi (86%), New Jersey (86%), and Maryland (85%) had the five highest state four-year graduation rates for Black students.
- In 2019-2020, Wyoming (66%), Minnesota (69%), Idaho (69%), Vermont (70%), and Nevada (70%) had the five lowest state four-year graduation rates for Black students.
- Black students are most often in schools that are both racially and economically distinct from those that white students attend[38].

37. (The Department of Education began collecting and reporting Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates by race in 2012. Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates reflect the percentage of public school students who obtain a regular high school degree within four years of starting high school. Details about the calculation of this measure can be found at: https://nces.ed.gov/blogs/nces/post/what-is-the-difference-between-the-acgr-and-the-afgr
38. (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020)

Federal, State, and District Data Needs

- The federal government has yet to ensure that data is consistently available and published for all states and districts to conduct a race and gender analysis of graduation rates. Understanding the graduation trends for Black, Latinx and Native males and females provides far more insight than a general analysis of the student population.

Black Male District Four-Year Graduation Rates

- Despite the progress in national graduation rates between 2010-2018 for Black students in general, in most school districts, Black males continue to experience worse academic outcomes when compared to their Black female peers or to male students of other races. Gender matters for graduation. For example, in Detroit, where the four-year graduation rate for Black male students was the lowest, the difference between Black male and Black female graduation rates was 20 percentage points. This was the largest disparity observed in the data.
- While there was an overall improvement in graduation rates for Black male students across all 15 districts analyzed, only one district, Mobile County, AL (88%), had a graduation rate above the national average (86%).
- Among the 15 districts analyzed, Detroit, MI (54%), Philadelphia, PA (59%), Baltimore City, MD (65%), Minneapolis, MN (65%), and Oakland Unified (71%) had the five lowest four-year graduation rates for Black males.
- Economic Opportunities Matter. Black male students' outcomes were better in metropolitan areas where there were lower levels of socioeconomic inequality. Conversely, Black male graduation rates were generally lower in areas with high levels of unemployment and poverty; however, special notice should be taken of improvements in Black male graduation rates in places such as Mobile County School district where one in four Black community members lives below the poverty line.
- On average, the school districts with the lowest Black male four-year graduation rates–Detroit, MI (54%), Philadelphia, PA (59%), Baltimore, MD (65%), and Minneapolis, MN (65%)–also possessed the lowest four-year graduation rates for all male students. Conversely, in the school districts where Black male four-year graduation rates were above 80%—Mobile, AL (88%), and Broward County, FL (82%)—the graduation rates for white and Latinx males in the districts were above 80% as well. This trend seems to suggest that when districts successfully create ecosystems of success for Black males, it benefits all male students.
- Housing Affordability and Segregation Matter. Black male graduation rates tend to be lower in places with more segregation, indicating likely resource disparities within schools in these areas. Detroit, Philadelphia, and Chicago are among the most segregated cities, and in each of these cities four-year graduation rates of Black male students are severely lagging.

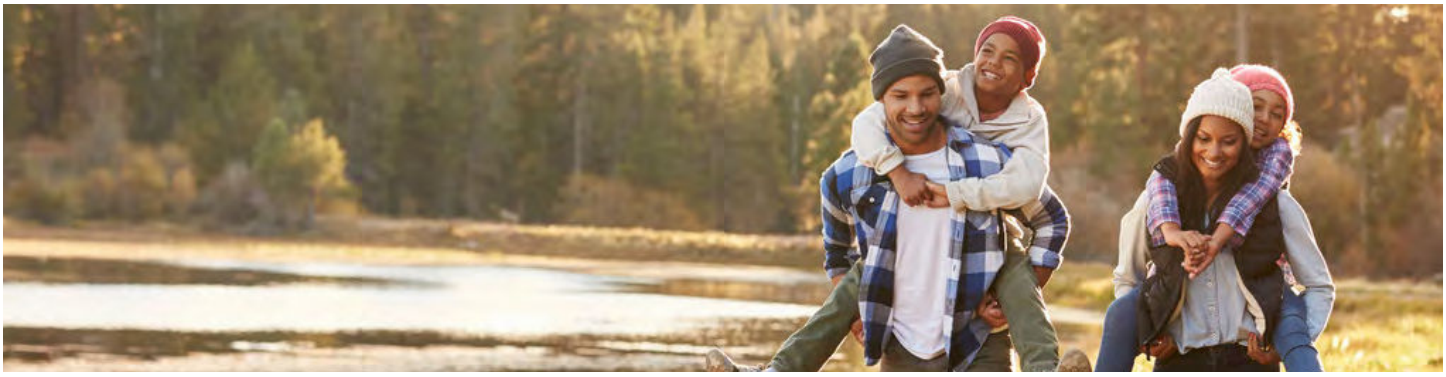
Actionable Recommendations to Build 'Loving Communities'

Decision-makers at all levels have a collective responsibility to work together in order to invest, monitor, and support the health, education and well-being of its young people, including Black males. Below is a list of actionable recommendations, at various levels and within various sectors, to collaborate on building 'loving systems' for Black males.

Federal Actions to Catalyze 'Loving Systems' in Communities

While state and local efforts are significant in ensuring Black males have access to 'loving systems', the federal government has the greatest capacity to establish this as a national norm. There are definitely threads of federal policy that can be strengthened to accelerate the momentum. In order to address housing, ***increases in federal support for the McKinney-Vento Act in targeted states*** can help ensure that all students, including Black males, experiencing homelessness are getting the necessary education services. ***Repealing the Faircloth Amendment***, which places a limit on the amount of federal housing that can be built, would also assist youth and families with housing challenges. The amendment has been a physical ban that has barred access to affordable housing for over twenty years. Removing the ban would allow communities, tenants and PHAs to reimagine how building more public housing with permanent affordability could create opportunities for residents and families to thrive.

If we value the success of all young people, including Black males, the White House Commission on Advancing Education Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans should urge the passage of a multi-year, $10-12 trillion federal 'Loving Communities' Stimulus Package.



As noted in the report, housing and food insecurity make learning more difficult. As such, ***prioritizing federal housing vouchers, food stamps, cash grants, Medicaid, and tax credits would help reduce child poverty***. Expanding funding for full-service community schools that support health, mental health, vision, and dental care in schools would also move the needle in a significant way.

However, although these "one off" approaches are helpful, they alone are insufficient given the scale of the challenge. The federal government should ***invest in a comprehensive plan to support the building of 'loving community' supports for children and families***. We know this is possible given that, throughout history, large chunks of resources have been successfully allocated to address the challenges impacting specific populations of people.

Some examples of this include the GI Bill, created by Federal policymakers to serve young people returning from war. As well, minimum wage laws were designed to ensure families could properly care for themselves. The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) subsidized entire neighborhoods to boost home ownership and help families recover from the Great Depression. Each of these federal policies was deemed a success. However, they were primarily designed to impact, and in some cases were restricted to, white families.

The federal government has, and can continue to, serve as a 'loving communities' anchor, crafting policies and funding streams that help large portions of communities to gain access to 'loving' supports.

Governments invest resources in what they value, and budgets are moral documents that reflect underlying values. The United States has created fiscal packages for everything except the existential crisis resulting from centuries of systemic racism. If we value the success of all young people, including Black males, ***the White House Commission on Advancing Education Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans should urge the passage of a multi-year, $10-12 trillion federal 'Loving Communities' Stimulus Package***. The 'Loving Communities' Stimulus package would make significant investments in our states, urban, rural, and tribal communities, and most importantly, in historically under-supported young people—like Black youth— to improve the life expectancy of statistically lagging populations. The stimulus package should be designed to kickstart progress where disparities have been most pronounced, as is the case with Black males. Specifically, policymakers should start in several key areas:

- ***Stimulate and Liberate Learning for All*** through significant investments in the health and wellness of young people from birth and throughout the public pre-K12 education system.
- ***Stimulate the Closure of Wealth Gaps through*** increasing home ownership, small business investments, and capital in Black banks and other financial institutions which more often invest in communities and people of color.
- ***Stimulate the Well-Being of America's Families and People*** by guaranteeing access to healthcare, significant state and local community infrastructure investments in job training and placement, judicial system reforms, and community infrastructure projects including investments in community organizing institutions

In recent years, the U.S. has dedicated billions of dollars to support war efforts in the Ukraine and Middle East. Should we not also prioritize building and supporting 'loving systems' within the U.S?

State Actions to Catalyze 'Loving Systems' in Communities

States can also play a significant role in supporting the development of 'loving systems' in communities. They can ***establish joint goals and benchmarks for economic and social success for thriving Black males. More state-level partnerships are needed between education, housing, and child welfare stakeholders while dedicating state community school grants to Black communities.*** States should also consider ***dedicating funds to districts based on need (e.g., Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and health disparities) to prioritize the educational success and well-being of Black students.***

There may be opportunities to incentivize districts to support students, educators, and school leaders in making improvements to classroom and behavior management policies, especially where rates of disciplinary exclusion are high.

Ultimately, ***states should partner with community advocates, the private sector, and higher education to increase the resources dedicated to educational opportunities, skills development, and job training.*** For example, after nearly a decade of statewide advocacy in Massachusetts, in 2022, voters passed a Fair Share amendment which increased taxes annually on those making $1 million or more. The amendment provides more than $2 billion in annual revenue to increase education and transportation supports to students and families across Massachusetts.

Another example occurred in 2020 in New York, where, after more than two decades of fighting the inequitable resourcing of schools across the state, organized parents, educators and student advocates, led by the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE), pushed the New York State legislature to fully invest in its funding formula in districts across the state. (A state's funding formula or foundation aid is intended to provide equitable supports to under-resourced students, in this case Black, Brown and economically disadvantage students.) The New York State legislature's allocation provides an additional $4 billion to support students and educators in their quest to provide all students with an opportunity to learn by ensuring they have access to healthy living and learning environments.

The federal government should invest in a comprehensive plan to support the building of 'loving community' supports for children and families...

State efforts should begin the process of quilting together the resources needed to address poverty, housing affordability, and the building of 'loving systems' to support Black males in their quest to learn and to thrive.

Local Actions to Catalyze 'Loving Systems' in Communities

For far too long, local elected officials and communities have lacked a common "north star" to build around and to use to track collective progress beyond political terms or sporadic moments. 'Loving communities' provide children and families with the best opportunities to thrive. As such, the 'loving communities' framework and Loving Cities Index could be a useful tool to develop a local assessment system and to adopt meaningful benchmarks. This will allow elected officials and communities to establish clear benchmarks for anti-poverty efforts carried out in coordination with nonprofit, higher education and county agencies. These partners can prioritize job training and skills development for both young people and adults in coordination with local and regional employers, while also examining city policies and policing patterns to ensure Black males, students and families are not being unfairly targeted, criminalized, or disciplined, thus negatively impacting young people.

This also presents an opportunity to collect, track, and make meaningful use of disaggregated educational data by race and gender within and across school sites to inform community and district priorities. This will give communities the ability to assess student well-being using universal screening strategies to support the use of targeted resources for students who show the most significant need for remediation, including tiered support models during the school day, expanded learning time, tutoring, and year-round academic support, apprenticeships, and careers.

These strategic benchmarks and community assessments lay the groundwork for local partners to develop strategies with Black males and parents so they can actively participate in helping identify what type of academic, social, and emotional support they need to succeed. This will build new 'loving community' partnerships with local employers and higher education institutions that can build more seamless pathways to higher education and careers.

Localities should move beyond adopting the "community school" brand without providing the community school supports. Strong community schools have the ability serve as a hub for children and families to access a range of supports, including healthcare.

Much of this can happen through a well-networked Community Schools Model platform designed to concretize care, stability, capacity and commitment for students within the community norms and policies. Localities should move beyond adopting the "community school" brand without providing the community school supports. Strong community schools have the ability serve as a hub for children and families to access a range of supports, including healthcare. This model is critical to addressing childhood learning opportunities as well as supporting the health and wellness needs that too many children living in poverty experience. There are currently over 5,000 community schools and this number is growing, with cities making significant commitments to transforming their entire public-school network into family-centered resource hubs that meet the full needs of children and their families. These are the perfect platforms to build and to support loving communities

Philanthropic and Research Sector Actions to Catalyze 'Loving Systems'

Both the philanthropic and research sectors play a critical role in catalyzing and accelerating the building, resourcing and sustaining of 'loving communities' and similar ecosystems that support the success of Black males, at the federal, state and local levels. To achieve this, however, philanthropy must push beyond the limitations of our own institution-based funding silos and portfolios which fail to meet the comprehensive requirements to create healthy living and learning environments for young people.

This is not a call for philanthropic organizations to expand their missions; rather, it is a suggestion that these organizations work with intermediaries to co-invest in philanthropic collaborations–like the Executive Alliance for Boys and Men of Color–designed to institutionalize policy and practices that create comprehensive ecosystems of success for Black males.

Understanding the significance of local and national grassroots partners in ensuring that our systems, and our democracy, remain accessible to, and works for all students and families, philanthropic partners should integrate long term sustainable funding mechanisms into their philanthropic strategy to support education and racial justice organizations. This could range from 5+ year funding commitments to endowments that support racial and education justice organizations (see EndowNow for details). Like the colleges, universities and hospitals that philanthropists endow, racial justice organizations are a part of the "brick-and-mortar" institutions that ensure our democracy works at a national and local level. Philanthropic partners should commit to this next phase of trust-based philanthropy and lean into more sustainable funding practices. (Good resources to review include Building A Trust-Based Philanthropy, The Future of Philanthropy, and Foundations Build Flexible Funding).

Research partners also play a significant role in working with philanthropic partners to invest in

campaigns that are designed to ensure the availability of federal, state, and local data disaggregated by race and gender. For close to two decades, Schott has highlighted the critical need for states, districts and localities to regularly publish education data specific to Black males. In far too many states, graduation rate data are not made widely available to the public. States and large districts should be required to publish annually online graduation data for all of its districts and high schools, disaggregated by race, ethnicity and gender, as well as for students in special programs.

Likewise, with currently available data, it is important for research partners to carefully analyze and conduct deep-dive studies focusing on the districts that are making progress with Black male graduation rates. In most states, it is easier to access data on Black male incarceration rates than graduation rates or other asset-framed data. Conducting more consistent analyses on the places and spaces where Black males are excelling will enable the availability of asset-framed data and narratives that promote Black males' contributions to communities and our broader society.

Rather than allowing racism and hate to be the reason why we continue to leave Black males behind, let's start a new chapter in the history of our communities, states and country which tells a story of how the power of love bridged "two societies" and created one America.

A CLOSING THOUGHT...

BYRON ALLEN'S OCTOBER 21, 2023, REMARKS AT THEGRIO AWARDS

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s widow, the true queen of America, Coretta Scott King, once said to me, "Byron, our greatest weapon is the truth. If we bring the truth, we will always win." So tonight, let's talk about the truth. The truth is, Black America is under attack.

At this time, 44 states are debating which Black history to teach in schools. There's only one Black history that should be taught: the truth.

Over 20 states have already put laws on the books to stop teachers from teaching the truth. They are downplaying our contributions to this beautiful country and changing our narrative and diminishing our images. Unfortunately, we have seen this before. You erase the truth, so you can repeat the atrocities again. That's why I've dedicated my life to building one of the world's biggest media companies, simply because we must tell our own stories, keep control of the narrative and our images. Representation matters. When we see positive images of ourselves, it lifts our spirits. You cannot be what you cannot see. So tonight, let's bring the truth. Here's one: slavery did not benefit Black people. It's one of the worst crimes committed against humanity. Here's another truth: unfortunately, too many Americans are struggling to succeed. Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, gay Americans, Jewish Americans, Muslim Americans, single mothers, and white Americans. We're all positioned to succeed when everyone— when everyone—can benefit from the riches of America. And when we do that, we are one, and we can compete in this global society.

Here's some more truth. The greatest trade deficit in America is the trade deficit between white corporate America and Black America. And as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us, we cannot survive with two Americas; we must achieve one America. We cannot have one America until we deal with the truth. So here is the truth. America, you are killing Black America in the classroom by making sure we do not get a proper education. You're killing us in the courtroom by making sure we do not have equal justice. You're killing us in the boardroom by making sure that we do not get real economic inclusion. And you're killing us in the hospital room by making sure that we do not have proper health care. And you're doing all of this long before you kill us in the streets.

At this time, 44 states are debating which Black history to teach in schools. There's only one Black history that should be taught: the truth.

More truth: if we do not close the education gap, we cannot close the wealth gap. I can tell you where Black America will be 40 years from now with one simple data point. What is the Black student population of the top 50 universities white corporate America recruits from? If it remains under 1 or 2%—as opposed to where it should be, proportionate with the Black population, approximately 14%—then nothing will change in Black America. And America will never realize its fullest potential.

When you come to my office and you get off the elevator, there's a sign that says: "There isn't a bank in the world where I can deposit excuses, so I don't accept them."

America, we can no longer accept your excuses. So, I'm asking America to understand, appreciate, and accept the truth that the Black community is one of America's greatest assets and not a liability.

Our contributions are enormous. It's impossible for America to be the wealthiest country in the world without the contributions of Black America. Our partnership going forward needs to be more respectful, inclusive, and balanced. Now for all the young people out there, my wish is for you to recognize yourself in these extraordinary icons. We want to inspire you to cultivate your own talents, self-determination and encourage the greatness that lives inside each of you. In this room, on the stage, or wherever you are, remember one thing: you are one of the most valuable assets we have. We need you. Your contributions make us stronger. To create the positive change, we all need and deserve, your voice must be heard. With you, we can achieve one America, and when we achieve one America, we will achieve one race: the human race.

And never forget what Harriet Tubman taught us: every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. We will see you at the top. Thank you.

"We want to inspire you to cultivate your own talents, self-determination and encourage the greatness that lives inside each of you"

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Appendix 1

Methodology Notes

ACGR-The adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) provides information about the percentage of United States (U.S.) public high school students who graduate on time with a regular diploma. Specifically, the ACGR is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class State education agencies are asked to calculate and report the ACGR using detailed data that track each student over time; it is considered the most accurate measure to report on-time graduation rates (Seastrom et al., 2006). The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) uses aggregated public school enrollment data and diploma counts to approximate a four-year graduation rate. The AFGR estimate is not as accurate as the ACGR but is more available and can be calculated from administrative data back to the 1960s.

For the districts, which did not have ACGRs by race and by gender graduation, we used NCES Table 219.40. Public high school averaged freshman graduation rate (ACGR), by sex, race/ethnicity, and state or jurisdiction: 2012-13 to create estimates. In each case, we created a weight that was equal to the NCES 2012-13 race by gender graduation rate divided by the NCES 2012-13 total race graduation rate. We used that weight to generate estimates of by race and by gender graduation weights by multiplying the weight by the individual district's total race graduation rate. We used this approach to estimate Black male graduation rates for the following districts: Atlanta Public Schools, Baltimore City Public Schools, Dallas ISD, Fulton County, and Houston ISD.

[38] It should be noted that there are some differences between states in terms of how they define regular high school diplomas.

Appendix 2

50 State Graduation Rate Table: Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: School year 2019–20.

Table 1. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: School year 2019–20

	Total	American Indian / Alaska Native[1]	AAPI	Latinx	Black	White	Two or more races[2]
United States*	86.5	74.9	92.5	82.5	81.1	90.2	NR
Alabama	90.6	93	95	88.0	88.2	92.2	92
Alaska	79.1	68	87	77	74.0	84.4	75
Arizona	77.3	63.9	91	74.0	71.7	83.0	72.8
Arkansas**	88.8	89	86	86.7	84.5	90.9	86
California	84.3	76	92.2	82.2	76.9	87.9	78.6
Colorado	81.9	67	90	75.4	76.6	86.1	82
Connecticut	88.3	88	95	79.7	80.0	93.4	90
Delaware	89.0	83	95	86	87	90.5	89
District of Columbia	73.0	NR	88	64.0	72.9	93.0	NR
Florida	90.2	84	97.7	89.7	86.9	91.9	90.7
Georgia	83.8	76	92.5	77.8	81.4	87.3	85.7
Hawaii	86.3	NR	86.6	81	84.0	86	NR
Idaho	82.2	65	87	75.7	69	84.2	79
Illinois	77	‡	‡	‡	77	‡	‡
Indiana**	90.9	89	96	88.1	84.5	92.5	88.0
Iowa	91.8	83	92	84.8	81	93.8	89
Kansas	88.2	82	94	83.8	80	90.3	87
Kentucky	91.1	90	94	84.4	83.3	92.8	89
Louisiana	82.9	787	94	72.7	78.9	87.8	83
Maine	87.4	72	94	82	83	87.8	82
Maryland	86.8	87	95.9	71.6	84.7	94.1	92
Massachusetts	89.0	86	95.0	77.2	83.1	93.2	89
Michigan	82.1	74	93.0	75.5	70.4	85.4	76.8
Minnesota	83.8	56	88.9	70.4	69.2	89.0	73
Mississippi	87.7	81	92	84	86.1	89.9	86
Missouri	89.5	88	93	86.6	78.8	92.2	87
Montana	85.9	68	92	82	77	88.7	84
Nebraska	87.5	72	86	77.7	75	92.2	83
Nevada	82.6	74	91.8	81.3	69.5	86.4	85
New Hampshire	88.1	85	92	74	77	89.4	84
New Jersey	91.0	89	96.8	84.8	85.7	95.0	92
New Mexico***	76.9	72	87	76.1	74	80.8	NR
New York	83.5	75	89.8	74.6	75.3	90.4	83.2
North Carolina	87.6	85	94.4	81.7	85.2	90.8	85.3
North Dakota	89.0	73	88	78	82	92.2	NR
Ohio	84.4	78	91.4	76.4	72.4	87.6	80.5

Oklahoma	80.8	80.3	83	76.5	75.0	82.8	84.1
Oregon	82.6	67	90	79.5	76	84.0	81
Pennsylvania	87.4	78	92.7	77.2	76.5	91.4	81.4
Rhode Island	83.6	69	91	75.9	80	87.9	77.0
Rhode Island	83.6	69	91	75.9	80	87.9	77.0
South carolina	82.2	81	93	80.1	78	85.3	na
South Dakota	84.2	53	83	72	80	89.9	78
Tennessee	90.4	91	95	95	84	93.9	na
Texas	‡	‡	‡	‡	75	‡	‡
Utah	88.2	73	87	80.2	49	90.7	88
Vermont	83.1	n<	74	82	70	84.6	76
Virginia	88.8	88	95	75.4	86	93	92
Washington	83	70	89	78	76	85	84
West Virginia	92	n<	n<	93	86	92	88
Wisconsin	90.4	85	92	84	71	94	87
Wyoming	82	62	86	78	66	84	80

1 The United States 4-year ACGR for American Indian/Alaska Native students was estimated assuming that Hawaii's student counts were zero for this subgroup.

2 No United States 4-year ACGR was calculated for the following subgroups, as not all states report these values: Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races.

‡ Not Reported 2019-2020 Illinois did not provide data this year-Covid disruption; NR Not reported-Cell size too small

* The United States 4-year ACGR includes the 50 states and the District of Columbia only. Data for Puerto Rico is excluded. The United States 4-year ACGR was estimated using both the reported 4-year ACGR data from the reporting states and the District of Columbia and using imputed data for Illinois and Texas.

**Arkansas and Indiana data had an unexpected percentage point change compared to data in the prior school year. Both states indicated the change was due to the COVID pandemic (see data notes under supporting materials).

***New Mexico reported the graduation rate for students of Two or More Races but did not report the number of graduated students or the number of students in the adjusted cohort for this subgroup. The adjusted cohort number is needed to determine how to privacy protect the data. For this reason, the rate has been suppressed.

SOURCE: National graduation rate and national subgroup graduation rates were calculated using 4-year cohort data collected as part of EDFacts FS151 (DG696): Cohorts for Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate. Graduation rates reported by state were collected as part of EDFacts FS150 (DG695): Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate; As of May 20, 2021 for 2019-20.

Appendix 3

School District Total Enrollment & Black Student Enrollment (2021-22)

District	Black Student Count	Total Student Count	% Black
Atlanta Public Schools	36,105	49,994	72%
Baltimore City Public Schools	57,798	77,807	74%
Broward County Public Schools	99,018	256,037	39%
Chicago Public Schools	118,948	330,411	36%
Dallas ISD	30,087	143,558	21%
Detroit Public Schools Community District	39,970	48,745	82%
Houston ISD	43,116	194,607	22%
Los Angeles Unified	40,281	548,338	7%
Minneapolis Public School District	9,217	30,115	31%
Mobile County Public Schools	26,435	51,658	51%
Montgomery County School District	20,805	26,583	78%
Newark Public School District	15,028	40,607	37%
Oakland Unified	9,672	46,600	21%
Philadelphia City SD	55,724	118,207	47%
Shelby County Schools	76,666	102,221	75%
Wichita Public Schools	9,466	47,334	20%

Source: Individual state Department of Education or school district websites. Links to each school district in the appendix

Appendix 4

School District Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates (ACGR) 2021-2022

District	Overall ACGR	Black Male ACGR	White Male ACGR	Latinx Male ACGR
Atlanta Public Schools	83	73	93	76
Baltimore City Public Schools	69	65	76	52
Broward County Public Schools	89	82	91	85
Chicago Public Schools	80	70	86	76
Dallas ISD	80	76	85	76
Detroit Public Schools Community District	65	54	43	54
Houston ISD	84	78	84	80
Los Angeles Unified	83	76	83	78
Minneapolis Public School District	74	65	87	51
Mobile County Public Schools	88	88	83	83
Montgomery County School District	81	77	80	52
Newark Public School District	81	72	86	76
Oakland Unified	77	71	88	65
Philadelphia City SD	68	59	70	55
Shelby County Schools	78	74	70	64
Wichita Public Schools	80	75	76	72

Source: Adjusted four-year cohort graduation rates pulled from either 1) individual state or district websites or 2) received directly from state departments of education or district offices.

* Indicates school districts where the by race, by gender graduation rates were not available publicly and were therefore estimated. See methodology appendix for further explanation.

Appendix 5

California Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate by Race and Gender 2019-2022

Years	Black Male	Black female	Latinx Male	Latinx female	White Male	White female
2019-2020	72.2	81.6	78.4	86.1	85.6	89.9
2020-2021	67.3	78.2	76	85.3	85.8	90.8
2021-2022	74.6	82.9	81.5	88.1	89	92.5

Appendix 6

Poverty, Unemployment, and Segregation Analysis

Poverty

Poverty is measured at the Metropolitan Statistical Area level (MSA) using U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Data. MSA's may include more than one county, and they are designated for areas with high degrees of economic and social integration. The measure represents the percentage of population with income below poverty thresholds in each area. Thresholds are determined by cost-of-living in each area using the Consumer Price Index. Detailed information on measurement can be found at www.census.gov/acs. Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau. "POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701, 2021, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2021.S1701?q=S1701&g=010XX00US$31000M1.

Unemployment

Unemployment rates are also measured at the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) level using U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Data. The unemployment rate represents the percentage of jobseekers in the labor force. Specifically, it is the percentage of the population who have been actively seeking a job in the past four weeks and does not include discouraged workers or those in institutional settings. Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau. "EMPLOYMENT STATUS." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2301, 2021,https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2021.S2301?t=Employment&g=010XX00US$31000M1.

Segregation in the metropolitan areas of each of the selected school districts was measured using the index of dissimilarity at the city/county level to indicate the degree to which Black and white individuals in each area were residentially distinct (cite source and link). We also look at an exposure index measured at the school district-level (Owens et al., 2022-link). The exposure index represents the school composition to which students of a given race are exposed, taking into account the overall racial composition in our selection of public school districts (Source: https://tcf.org/content/data/school-segregation-in-cities-across-america-mapped/).

Appendix 7

Environmental Justice Index

School District	Black Male ACGR	2020 Racial Segregation Divergence	Black Census Environmental Justice Index	White Census Environmental Justice Index	Black Unemployment Rate (16 years+)	Black Population Below Poverty Rate
Atlanta Public Schools	73%	0.36	0.98	0.27	7.9%	15.7%
Baltimore City Public Schools	65%	0.33	0.99	0.35	8.2%	18.4%
Broward County Public Schools	82%	0.41	0.94	0.01	9.0%	16.9%
Chicago Public Schools	70%	0.62	0.95	0.48	16.6%	23.1%
Dallas ISD	76%	0.40	0.77	0.07	9.4%	17.5%
Detroit Public Schools Community District	54%	0.81	0.97	0.99	15.4%	24.7%
Houston ISD	78%	0.32	0.93	0.28	12.6%	19.6%
Los Angeles Unified	76%	0.31	0.65	0.16	13.7%	20.3%
Minneapolis Public School District	65%	0.22	0.89	0.03	10.6%	19.1%
Mobile County Public Schools	88%		0.93		9.6%	27.3%
Montgomery County School District	77%	0.21	0.85	0.40	10.9%	26.6%
Newark Public School District	72%	0.68	0.84	0.87	12.9%	18.0%
Oakland Unified	71%	0.36	0.94	0.09	10.0%	18.5%
Philadelphia City SD	59%	0.40			11.9%	22.5%
Shelby County Schools	74%	0.35			12.2%	24.0%
Wichita Public Schools	75%	0.15	.75	0.37	15.8%	29.7%

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