

*“The Transformative Power of Diversity in Education is Enormous”: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century*

Joanna Lee Williams, Ph.D.

Society for Research in Child Development

Child Development in a Diverse Majority Society Lecture Series

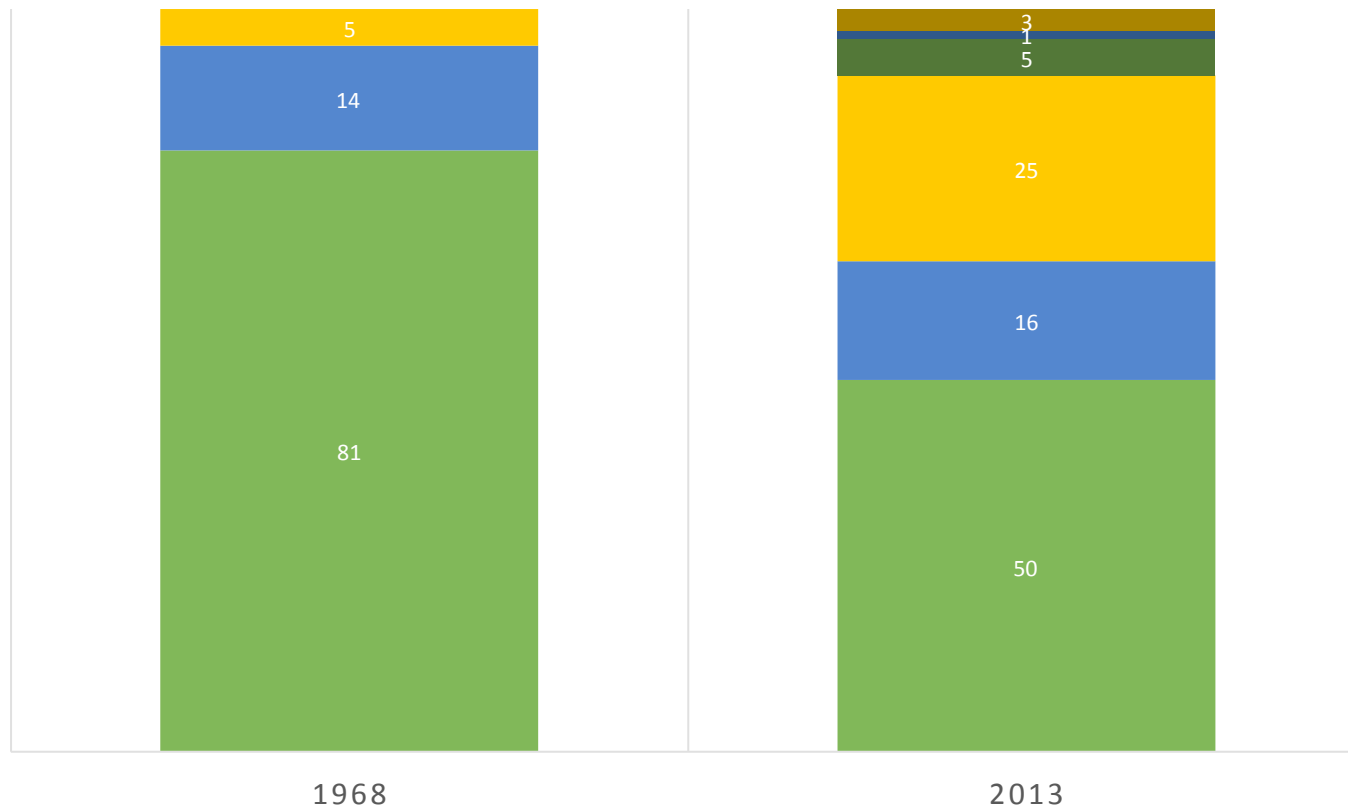


*The transformative power of diversity in education is enormous; it boosts empathy and reduces bias, and greatly increases the chances that low-income students will attend college without in any way compromising the academic outcomes of their middle class peers. It exposes students to perspectives and ideas that enlarge their world views. –John King, Former Secretary of Education, July 1, 2016*

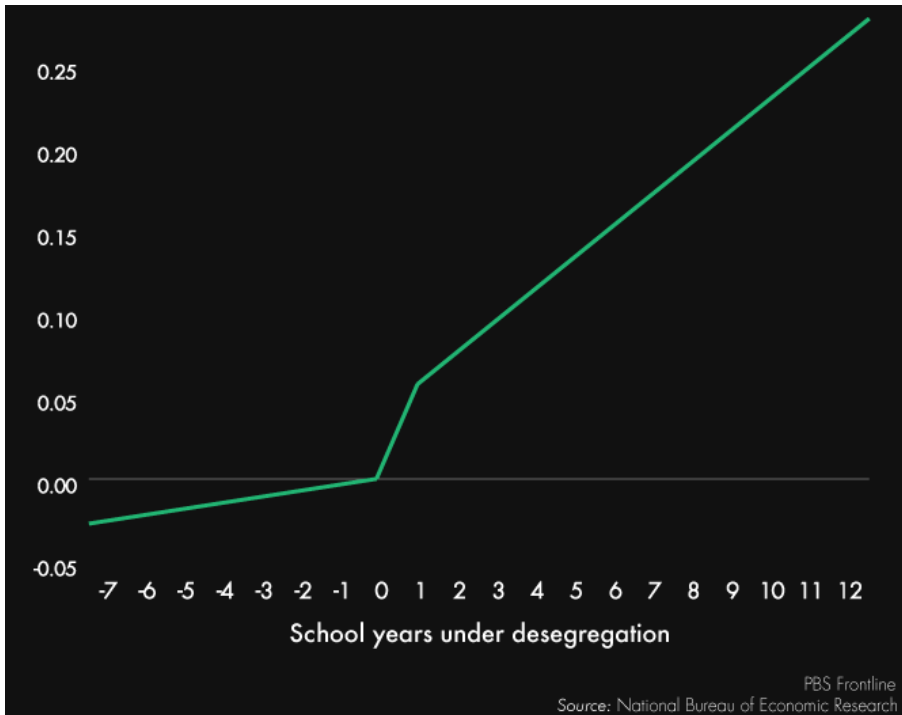
- How and why is school racial/ethnic diversity beneficial?
- What gets in the way of realizing the benefits?
- Where do we go from here?

## PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY RACE, 1968 AND 2013

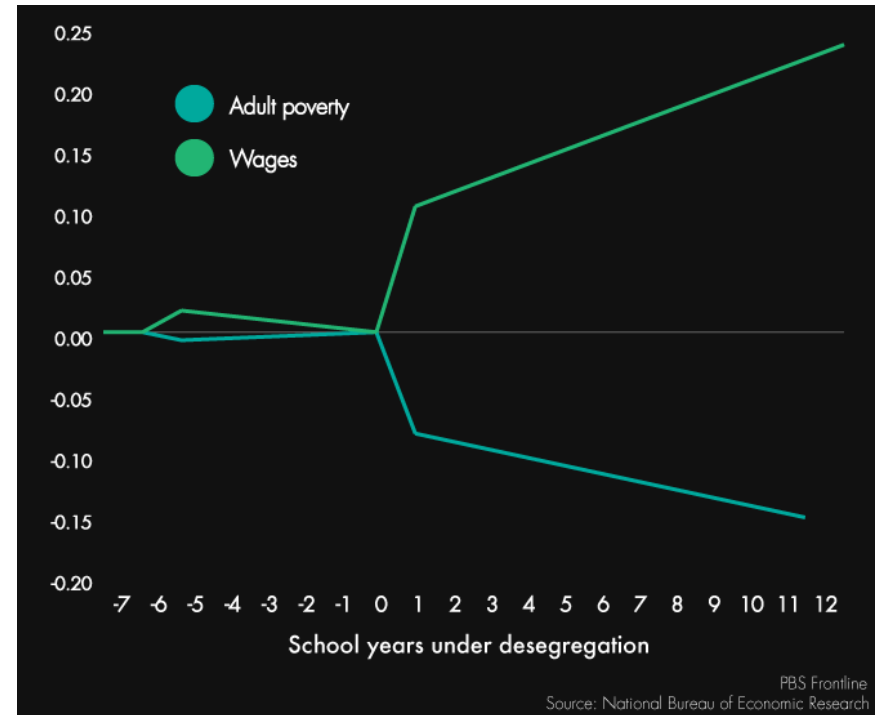
White Black Hispanic/Latinx Asian/Pacific Islander American Indian/Alaska Native Two or more races



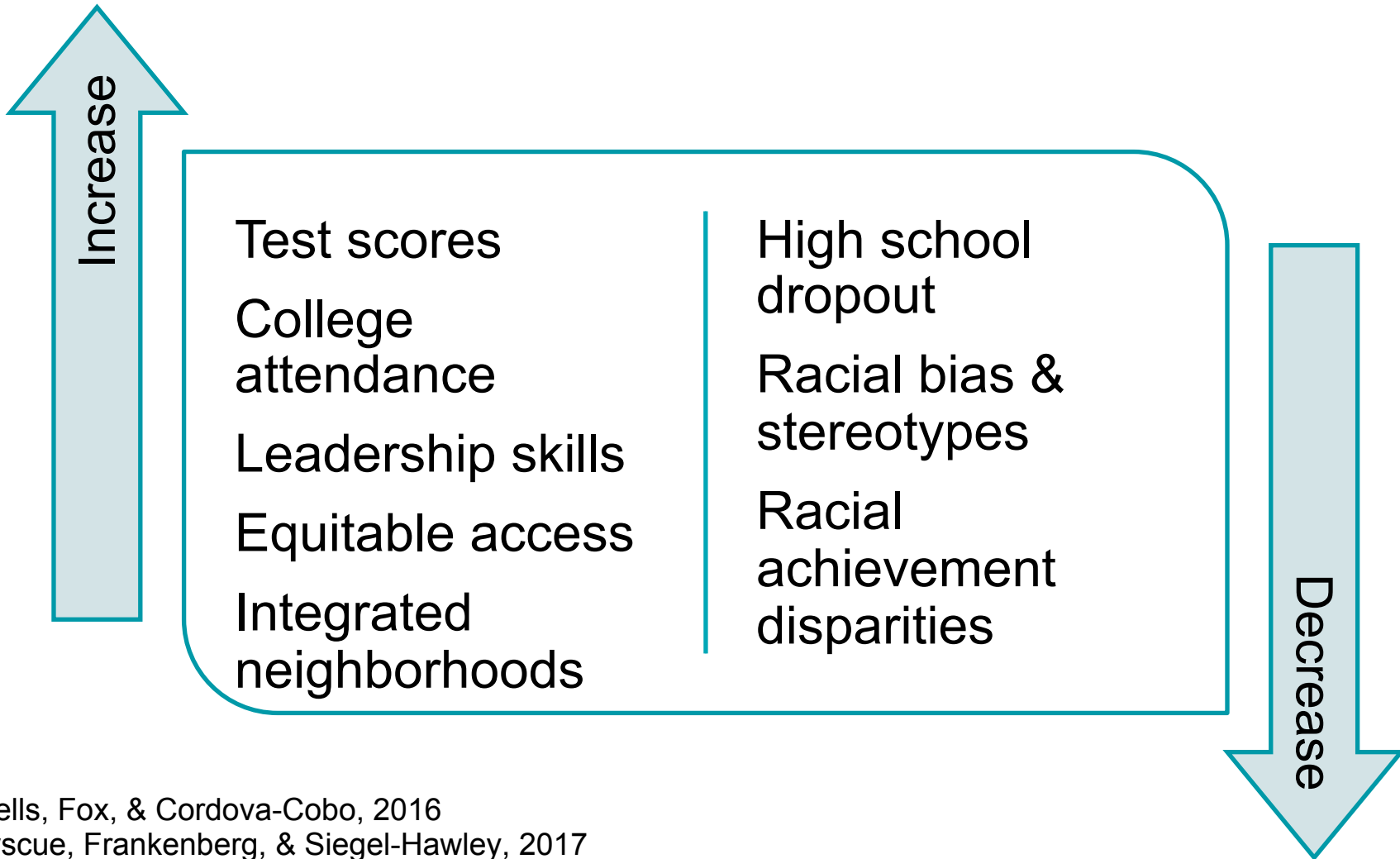
How and why is school racial/ethnic diversity beneficial?




**Probability of High School Graduation for Black Americans Who Attended Desegregated Schools After Brown vs. BOE**



**Wages for Black Americans from Desegregated Schools After Brown vs. BOE**



Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016  
Ayscue, Frankenberg, & Siegel-Hawley, 2017



***“Diversity jolts us  
into cognitive  
action in ways  
that homogeneity  
simply does not”***

**-Katherine Phillips, Paul Caello Professor  
of Leadership & Ethics, Columbia  
Business School**

Phillips, 2014



Equal Group Status

Common Goals

Intergroup  
Contact

Intergroup  
Cooperation

Institutional Support

Allport, 1954

# Race/Ethnicity and Social Adjustment of Adolescents: How (Not if) School Diversity Matters

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EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST, 53(2), 64-77, 2018  
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ISSN: 0046-1520 print / 1532-6985 online  
DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2018.1428805



Opportunity for cross-ethnic friendships

Exposure to multiple ethnic groups

Balance of power among ethnic groups

Formation of cross-ethnic friendships

Complex social identity

Less social vulnerability

More positive intergroup attitudes

Better mental health

Graham, 2018



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Graham, 2018

What gets in the way of realizing the benefits?





EDUCATION

## School Segregation Is Not a Myth

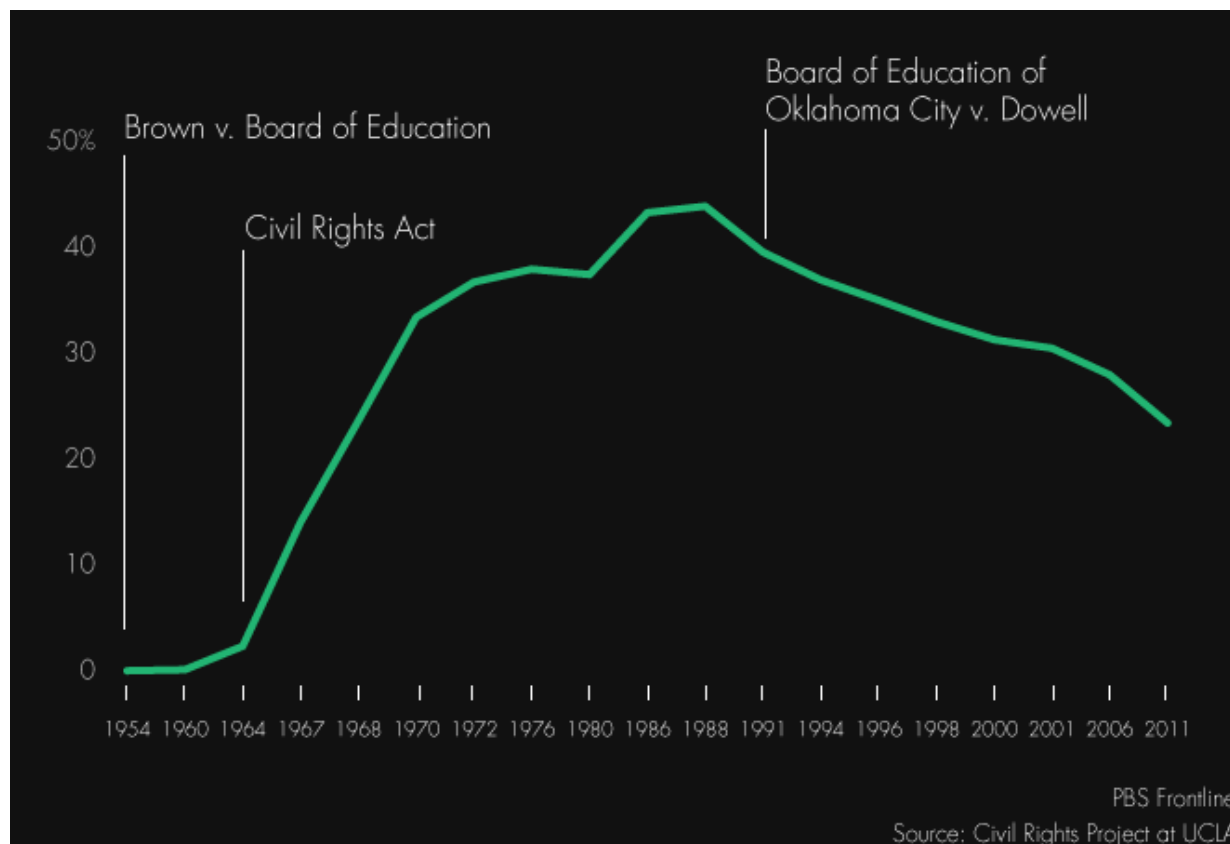
Skeptics claim that concerns over racially divided schools are false alarms—but they're missing the full picture.

WILL STANCIL MAR 14, 2018

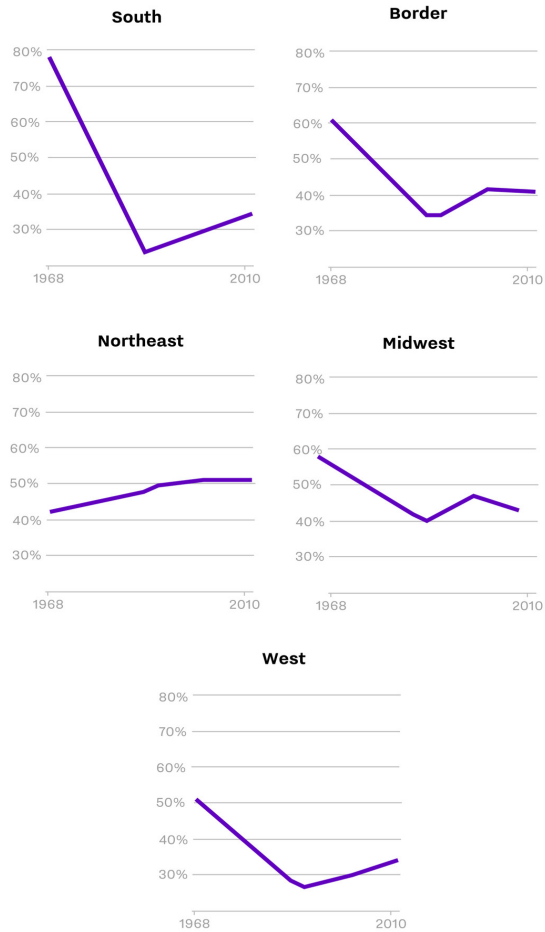




## Percentage of Black students attending Historically White schools in the South

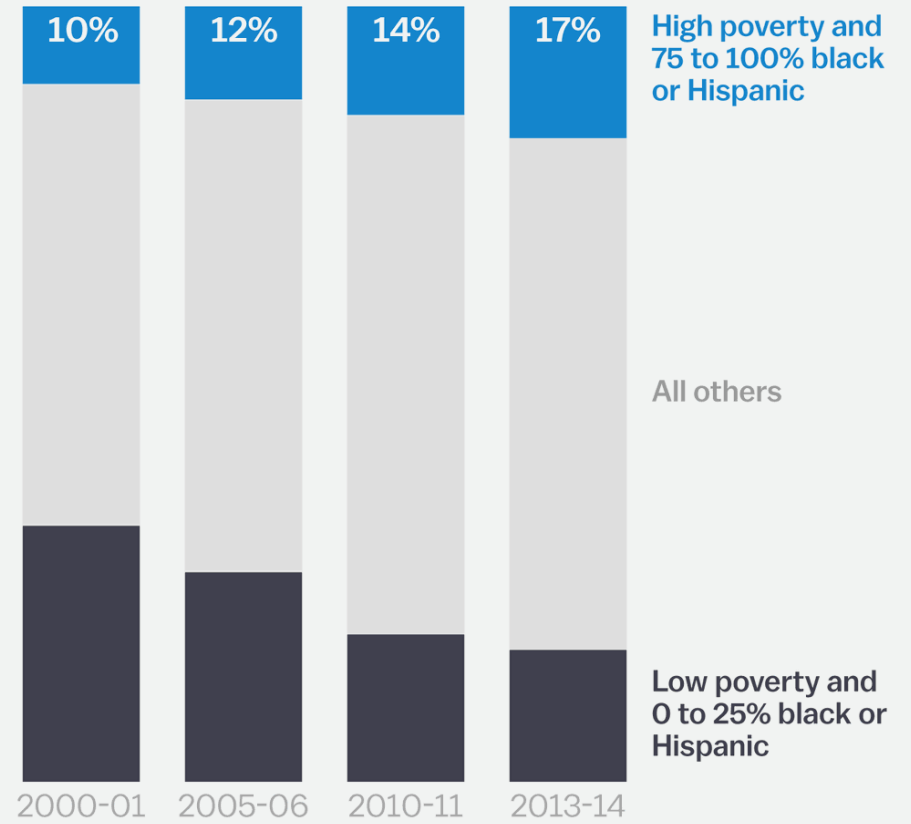


**Percentage of black students in schools that are 90 to 100% minority**

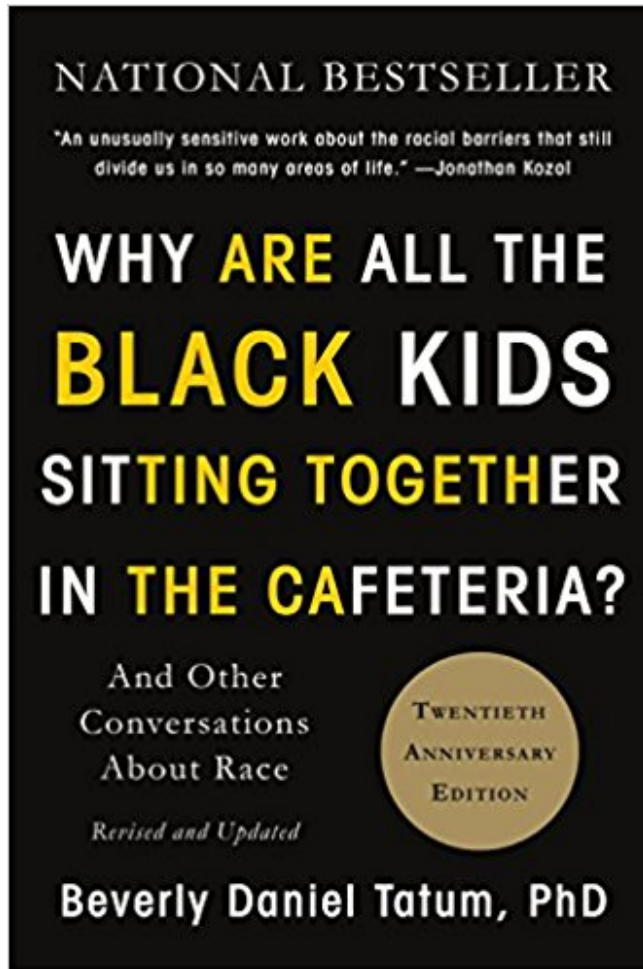


Data from the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and Office of Civil Rights, via UCLA's Civil Rights Project

**More and more poor, predominantly minority schools**

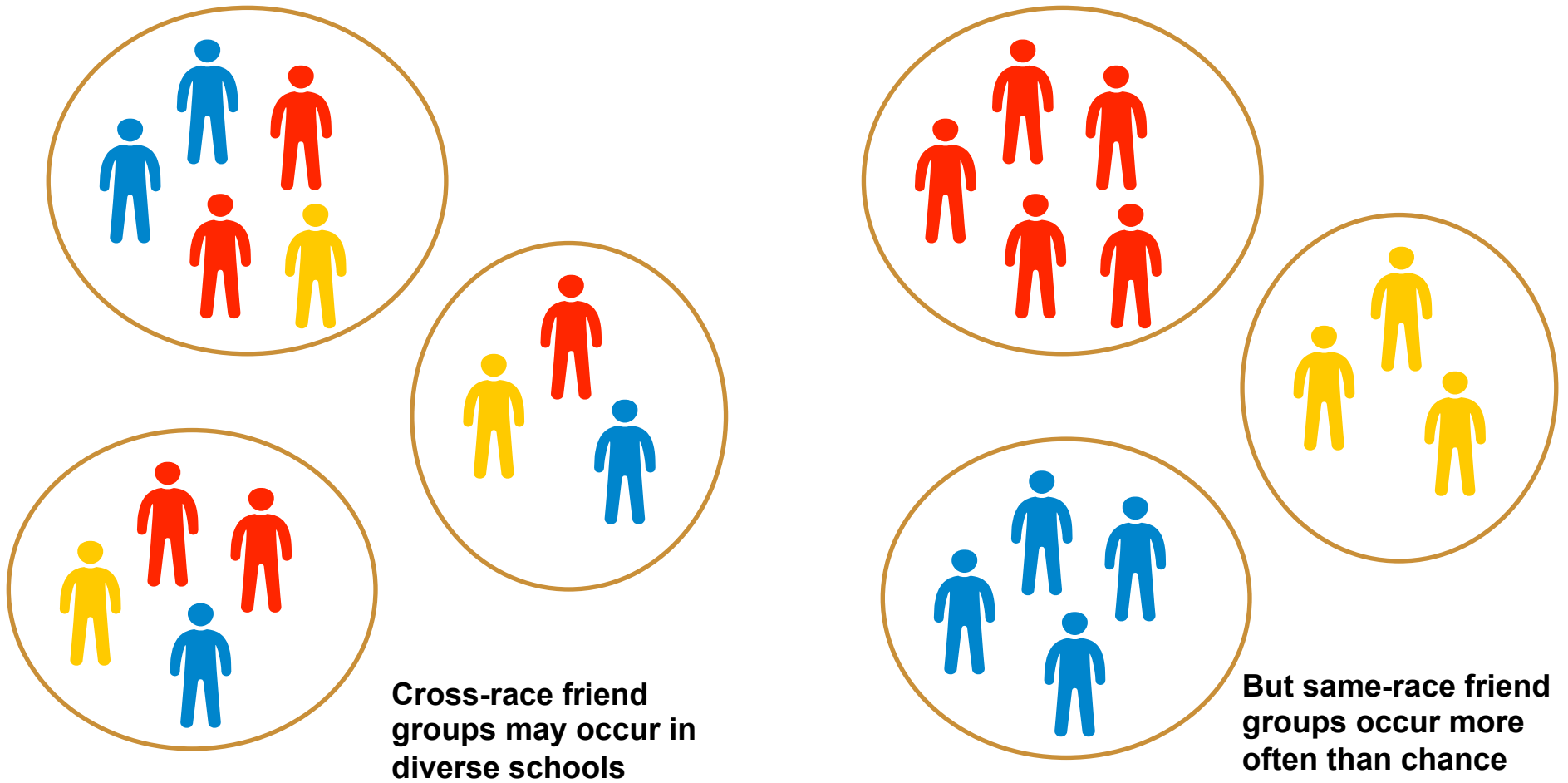


Data from a 2016 United States Government Accountability Office report. High poverty is a school where more than 75 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch; low poverty is a school where less than 25 percent qualify.



“Walk into any racially mixed high school cafeteria at lunchtime and you will instantly notice that in the sea of adolescent faces, there is an identifiable group of Black students sitting together”

(Tatum, 2017, p. 131)



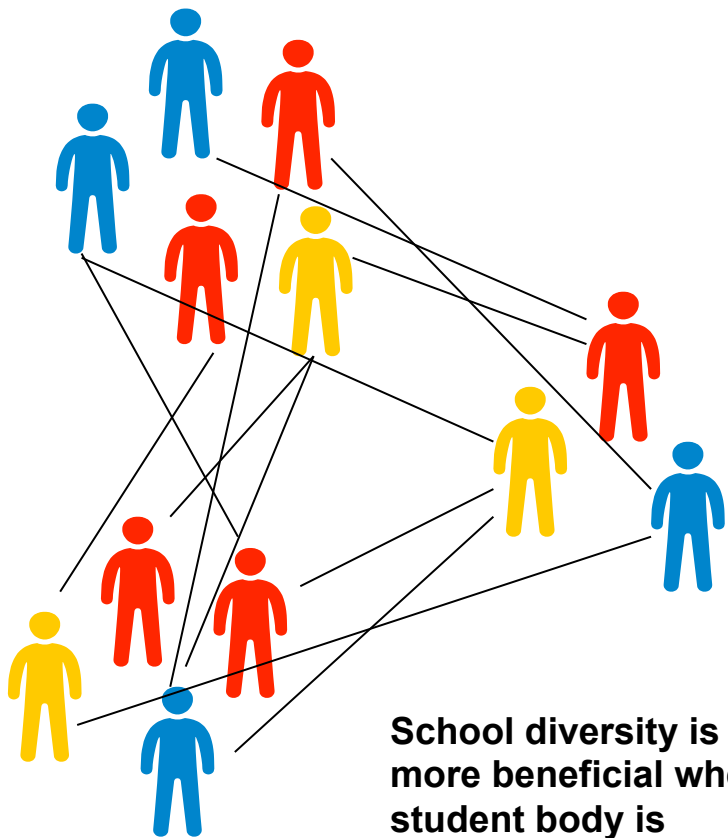
Moody, 2001

**Cross-race friend groups may occur in diverse schools**

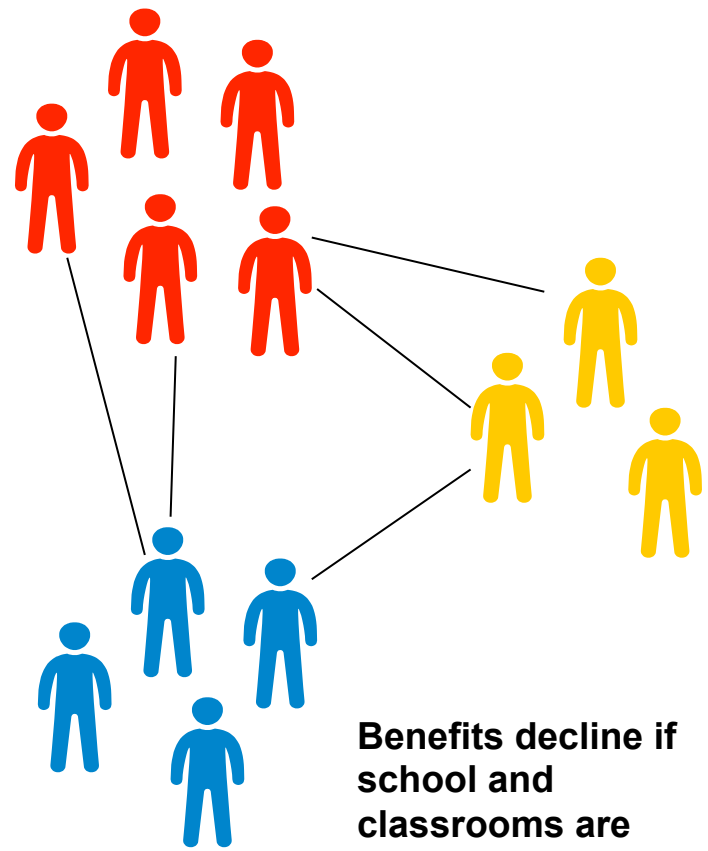
**But same-race friend groups occur more often than chance**



Benner & Graham, 2011  
Seaton, & Yip, 2009



**School diversity is more beneficial when student body is integrated**



**Benefits decline if school and classrooms are segregated**

Kogachi & Graham, 2017



## Black, Latinx, & Native American Students

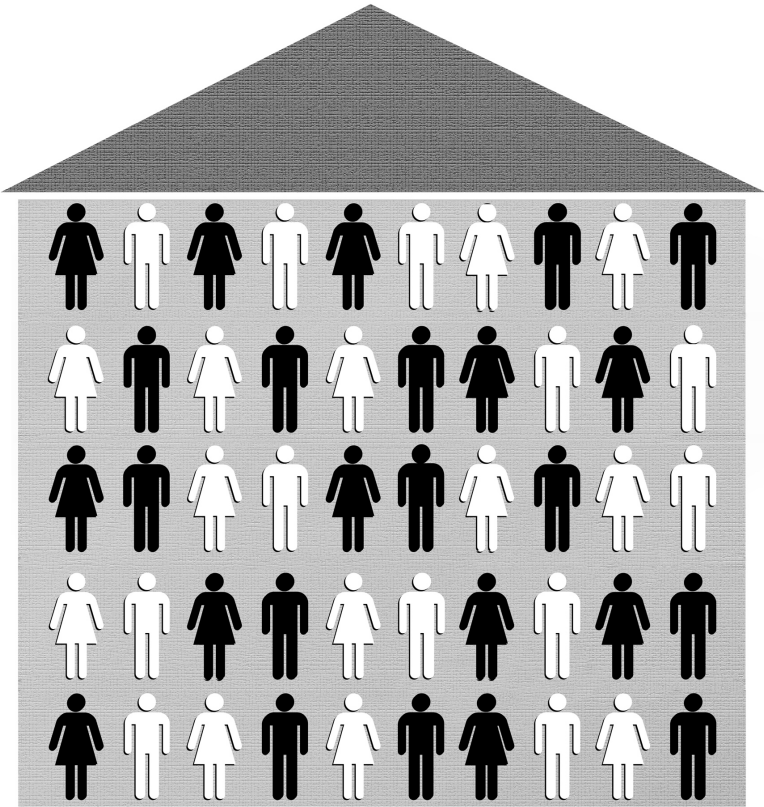
- Higher teacher ratings of social and academic competence when in diverse peer groups with many White friends

## White Students

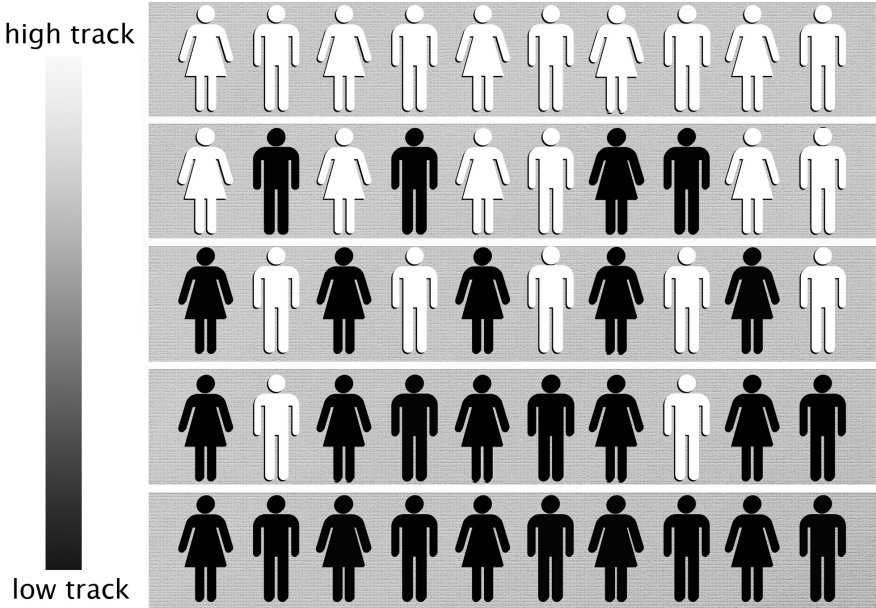
- Teacher ratings of social and academic competence not related to peer group composition



**“Diversity without contact” (Hewstone, 2015)**

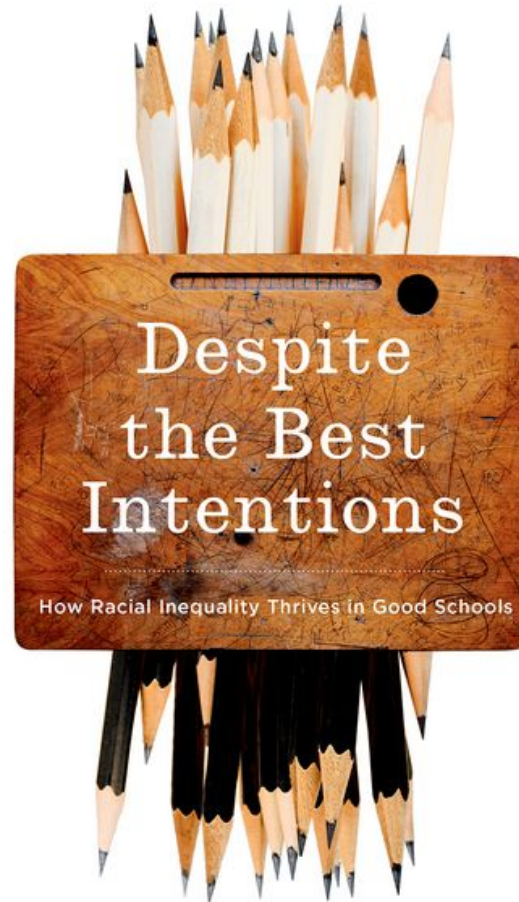


Overall racial composition of magnet school



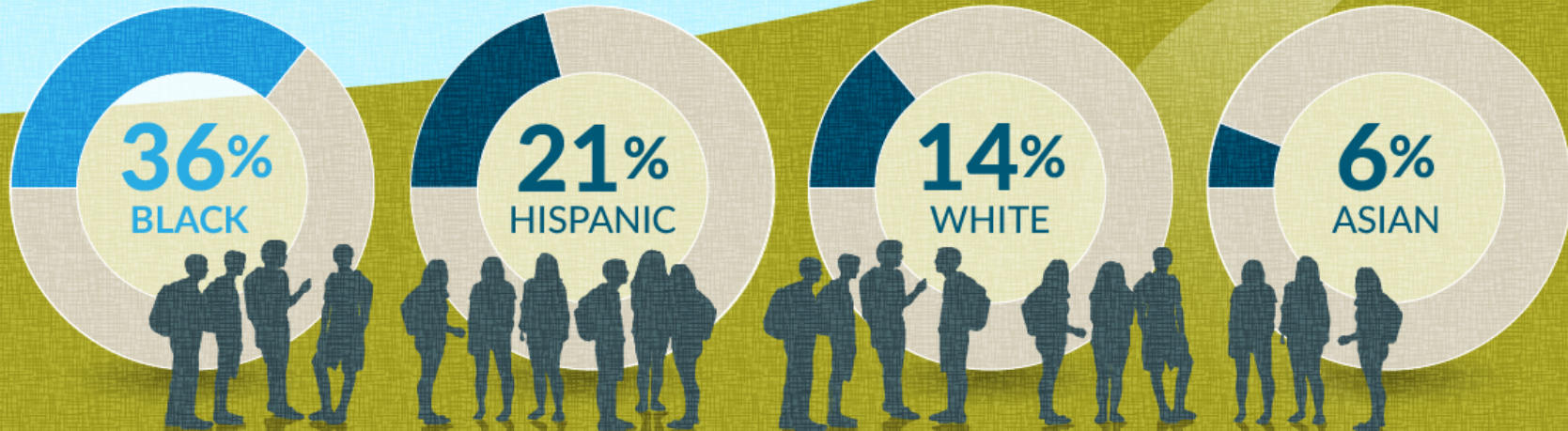
Segregation level of the classroom

AMANDA E. LEWIS & JOHN B. DIAMOND



## Suspensions and Expulsions by Race/Ethnicity

Among students who started high school in 2009, a higher percentage of Black students than of Hispanic, White, and Asian students had ever been suspended or expelled by 2012.



Note: Includes suspensions and expulsions prior to high school as well. Starting high school is defined as starting 9th grade.

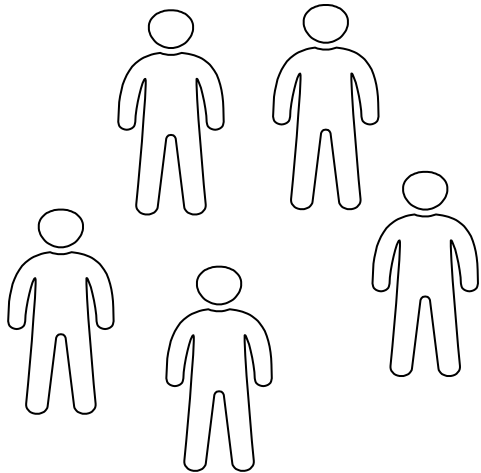
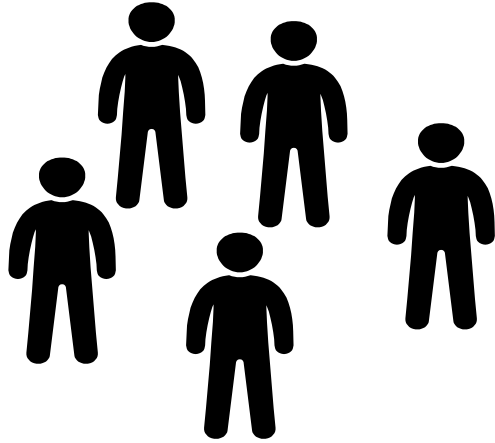
SOURCES: *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2015*, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education and Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

For more information on the Indicators of School Crime and Safety project, visit [www.air.org/project/indicators-school-crime-and-safety](http://www.air.org/project/indicators-school-crime-and-safety). | [EDUCATIONPOLICY.AIR.ORG](http://EDUCATIONPOLICY.AIR.ORG)

**EDUCATION  
POLICY** Center

at American Institutes for Research ■





“The main point of  
history is about  
segregation  
between Black and  
White”

-Jasmine, Biracial 7<sup>th</sup>  
grade student

There should be other topics that bring up other races... we're just under-rated 'cuz it's always just about White people and like war... Like now we're just learning about World War II, and that had like a bit of [information about] Asians, but that was just like showing their bad side, and you never get to see, like, what their culture is or any of that. We [Latinos] only come into news when it's about immigration...



Created by sandra  
from Noun Project

What do you feel you have learned about people who are White or European American?




Created by Graphic Engineer  
from Noun Project

That they're more superior than us.... They get to seem like they're good, but, it's equal. We've all done some bad and some good.

Where do we go from here?



Positive social  
and academic  
benefits of  
diversity under  
the right  
conditions



Segregation;  
saying diversity  
but meaning  
assimilation;  
marginalizing  
cultural wealth



# 1. Resist and Challenge Resegregation Between Schools



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
*Civil Rights Division*



**U.S. Department of Education**  
*Office for Civil Rights*

July 3, 2018

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the Department of Justice and the Department of Education are withdrawing the following documents:

- December 2, 2011 Dear Colleague Letter Regarding the Use of Race by Educational Institutions;
- 2011 Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity in Postsecondary Education dated December 2, 2011;
- 2011 Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools dated December 2, 2011;
- September 27, 2013 Dear Colleague Letter on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity in Higher Education After *Fisher v. University of Texas at*

## 2. Resist and Challenge Resegregation Within Schools



Segregation level of the classroom



<https://www.brookings.edu/interactives/are-you-a-dream-hoarder/>

### 3. Resist and Challenge Xenophobic Rhetoric





## Diversity Requires Action

“This is how diversity works: by promoting hard work and creativity; by encouraging the consideration of alternatives even before any interpersonal interaction takes place. The pain associated with diversity can be thought of as the pain of exercise. You have to push yourself to grow your muscles. The pain, as the old saw goes, produces the gain. In just the same way, we need diversity—in teams, organizations and society as a whole—if we are to change, grow and innovate.” (Phillips, 2014, p. 47)

**Diversity: Necessary, but Insufficient**



What are the contact conditions needed  
for promoting equitable outcomes in  
diverse schools?

A background of thin, light-colored lines radiating from a central point, creating a sunburst effect.

# Thank you!

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