

RACIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE SCHOOLS

In the three decades since the Civil rights era began, there has been rapid transformation of the racial composition of the nation's public schools. The most rapidly growing racial/ethnic group is Latinos, who have increased from 22.4 million to 32.4 million in the last decade, a growth of more than 45%.⁸⁷ This change in overall population is reflected in the public school enrollment. Table 1 shows the change in public school enrollment since 1968 for the three largest racial groups: white, black, and Latino students. Black and Latino students now make up more than a third of the total student population in public schools as compared to 1968, when only one in five students were non-white. High birth rates and increased immigration have resulted in an increase of Latino school enrollment, which is now more than 7.5 million and quickly approaching the black public school enrollment of about 8 million students. White public school enrollment has dropped by almost 6 million since 1968 to 29 million in 2000. In 1968, whites comprised 80% of the public school population; today, only 62%. Asians, currently almost 2 million students, comprise about 4% of total public school enrollment and are rapidly increasing. The smallest racial group, Native Americans, is slightly more than 1% of the enrollment.

This growth in the non-white student population, especially among Latino students, is significant in its pace and magnitude. To better understand the extent of this change, consider that for every Latino student in a public school in 1968, there were 17 white students and three black students (see Figure 1). In contrast, there are only about four white students and one black student for every Latino student in 2000. Looking at only the last six years, there has been a 38% increase in Latino student population, compared to a 13% increase in black school enrollment and a decline of 1.2% in white enrollment during the same time period. In fact, some school districts, located primarily in the Sunbelt, already have Latino majorities.⁸⁸ The demographic changes that have altered schools' racial composition in some states forecast our country's multiracial future in which there will be no one majority racial group.

Table 1
Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 1968-2000 (In Millions)

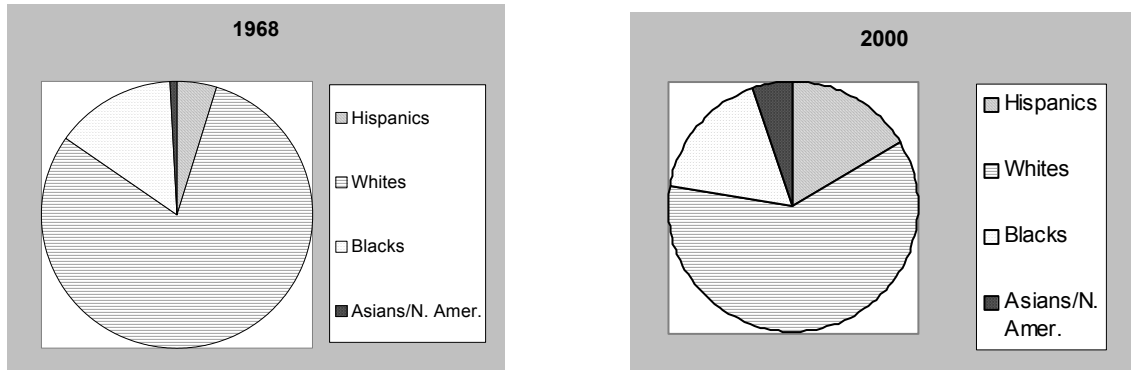
	1968	1980	1994	1996	1998	2000	Change 1968-2000
Latinos	2.0	3.2	5.6	6.4	6.9	7.7	+5.7 (283%)
Whites	34.7	29.2	28.5	29.1	28.9	28.8	- 5.9 (-17%)
Blacks	6.3	6.4	7.1	7.7	7.9	8.1	+1.8 (29 %)

Source: DBS Corp., 1982, 1987; Gary Orfield, Rosemary George, and Amy Orfield, "Racial Change in U.S. School Enrollments, 1968-84," paper presented at National Conference on School Desegregation, University of Chicago, 1968. 1996-7, 1998-9, 2000-1 NCES Common Core of Data.

⁸⁷ Statistical Abstract of the United States in 2001, table 15, p. 17.
(<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/01statab/stat-ab01.html>)

⁸⁸ See District Section *infra* page 53.

Figure 1
Percentage of Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 1968 and 2000



Source: Gary Orfield, Rosemary George, and Amy Orfield, "Racial Change in U.S. School Enrollments, 1968-84," paper presented at National Conference on School Desegregation, University of Chicago, 1968. 2000-1 NCES Common Core of Data.

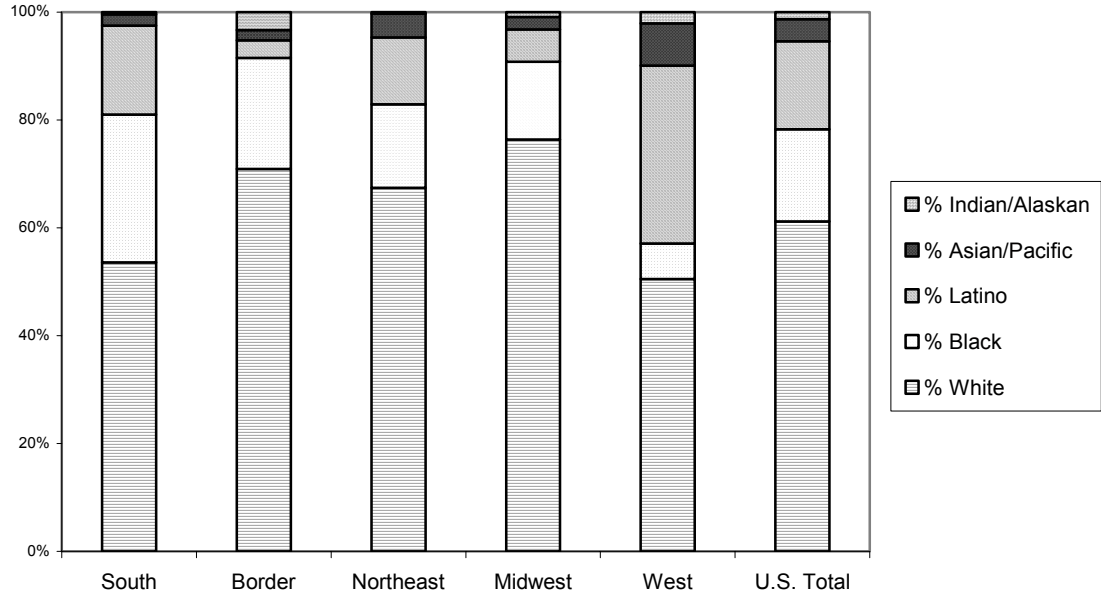
The increasingly multiracial student population—more prevalent in some regions than others—complicates the traditional black-white model of integration. Every region in the country has become less white, including Hawaii and Alaska, where both Latino and black growth outpace white enrollment growth.⁸⁹ The two largest regions—the South and the West—enroll more than half of all students in the U.S. and have the highest concentrations of black and Latino students, respectively (see Table 2). In fact, these regions are quickly approaching student populations where whites are in the minority. By contrast, the Northeast and Midwest still have large white majorities. Three-fourths of all Midwestern and two-thirds of Northeastern public school are white.

Table 2
Regular Public School Enrollments by Race/Ethnicity and Region, 2000-01

Region	Total Enrollment	% White	% Black	% Latino	% Asian Pacific	% Indian Alaskan
South	14,361,152	53.6	27.4	16.5	2.1	0.4
Border	3,478,610	71.0	20.6	3.3	1.9	3.3
Northeast	8,227,746	67.4	15.5	12.4	4.4	0.3
Midwest	9,837,237	76.3	14.4	6.0	2.3	0.9
West	10,785,326	50.5	6.6	33.0	7.8	2.1
Alaska	133,356	61.5	4.6	3.4	5.5	25.0
Hawaii	184,360	20.4	2.3	4.5	72.3	0.4
Bureau of Indian Affairs schools	46,938	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
U.S. Total	47,054,724	61.2	17.1	16.3	4.1	1.3

⁸⁹ For 1998 enrollment figures see Orfield, G. (2001). "Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation." Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project, p. 20.

Figure 2
Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Region, 2000-01



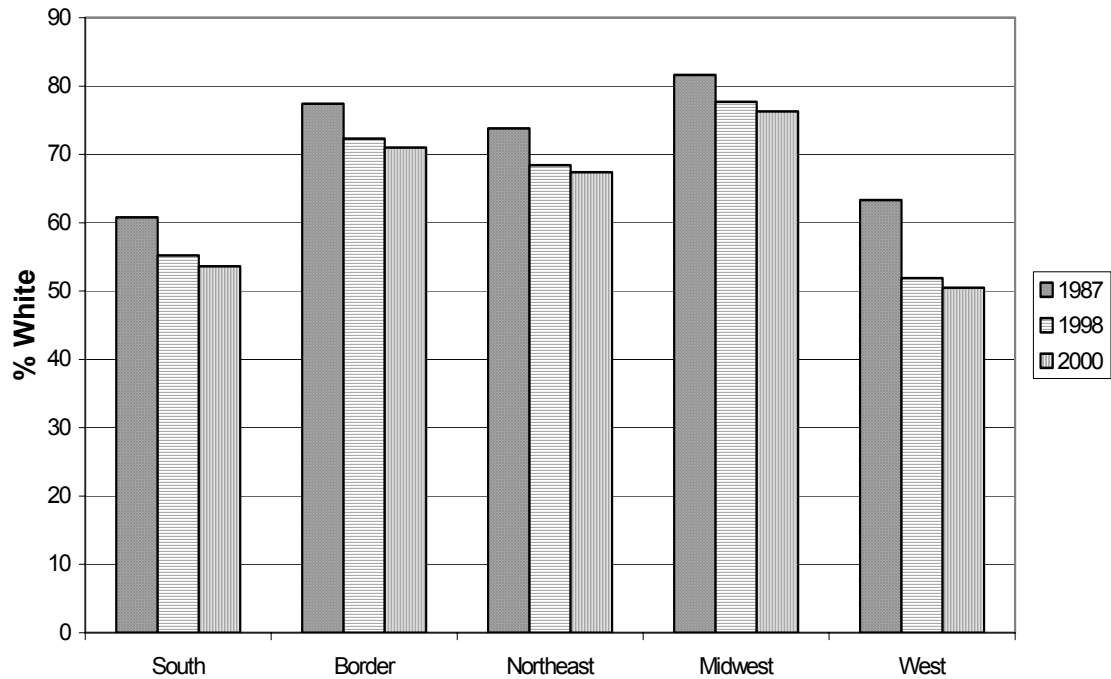
There are now six states, including the country's two largest (California and Texas) where white students are a minority of the enrolled public school population. Together, they have one-fourth of total public school enrollment. By racial/ethnic group, more than 20% of black, 60% of Latino, almost 50% of Asian, and 20% of Indian students nationwide are attending schools in these six states (see Table 3). By contrast, only one in six white students, nationally, attends public schools in these states. Two states alone, California and Texas, have twenty percent of total US public school enrollment and 56% of total Latino enrollment. Additionally, roughly half of the student population in Louisiana and Mississippi is black. This indicates how concentrated minorities are within some states.

Table 3
Public School Enrollments in Majority Non-White States by Race/Ethnicity, 2000-01

Region	Total Enrollment	% White	% Black	% Latino	% Asian/Pacific	% Indian/Alaskan
California	6,015,676	36.1	8.5	43.4	11.1	0.9
Hawaii	184,360	20.4	2.3	4.5	72.3	0.4
Louisiana	742,713	48.9	47.8	1.4	1.3	0.6
Mississippi	497,870	47.3	51.1	0.8	0.7	0.1
New Mexico	320,306	35.3	2.4	50.2	1.1	11.1
Texas	4,059,619	42.0	14.4	40.6	2.7	0.3
U.S. Total	25.1	16.1	21.3	58.0	48.1	19.1

In contrast to the increasing minority enrollment, the percentage of total students enrolled in public schools who are white has dropped in all regions since 1987, most rapidly in the West and South (See Figure 3). White students in these two regions will soon no longer be the majority: currently, 51 and 54 percent of public school enrollment in the West and South, respectively, is white. Other regions have had similar but less substantial drops in white school enrollment.⁹⁰

Figure 3
White Students as Percentage of Total Enrollment by Region and Year



Source: 1987-88, 1998-99, 2000-01 NCES Common Core of Data.

The country's public schools have undergone rapid demographic changes since the Civil rights era. White students are no longer overwhelming predominant: in six states, white students are a minority. These changes are multiracial as well: in 1968, most non-white students were black; within the next few years, there will be more Latino students than black in our public schools. The transformation of the student population has been accompanied with growing patterns of segregation, which we now turn to.

⁹⁰ One of the major reasons for the decrease in white enrollment is a lower birth rate among whites. The U.S. Statistical Abstract shows that minority families tend to have larger and younger families; as a result, the white proportion of total enrollment in public school enrollment has decreased as seen above in Table 1. It is interesting to note that there have not been substantial changes in white private school enrollment. A recent study shows that white enrollment in private schools has remained fairly stable at 12% for most of the last three decades. The white enrollment rate in 2000 is just less than the 1968 level of about 13%. For a more detailed discussion see Reardon, S. and Yun, J.T. (2002). *Private School Racial Enrollments and Segregation*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

THE STATUS OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The U.S. is experiencing a more diverse, multiracial population than ever before. For the typical student of each race (white, black, Latino, Asian, and American Indian), the percentage of white students in his or her school fell.⁹¹ As a result of this diversity, white students are attending public schools with more minority students than before, as measured by the exposure index (see Table 4). White, black, and Latino students all attend schools in which the majority of the student body is composed of students of their own race, as calculated by the exposure index. Of all racial groups, whites remain the most isolated group: the average white public school student attended schools that were comprised of almost 80 percent white students. Blacks are the second largest group in the school of the average white student, comprising only 8.6% of the total enrollment.

At the aggregate level, the average Asian student attends the most integrated schools.⁹² However, that is not to say that Asians are not segregated. While it is true that Asians are the most integrated of all the minorities, they still attend schools that are on average 22% Asian, despite being only 4% of the total student population. Almost half of the student body in the schools of Asian students, on average, is white, while about a third of the student body is, combined, Latino and black. In the last two years, the drop in the percentage of white students in the school of the average black was sharper than for students of any other race (2.5%).⁹³ Native American students attend schools, on average, in which half the student body is white. Their exposure to black students is lowest among all racial groups. Native American students attend schools with slightly less than one-third students of their own race, on average.

Table 4
Racial Composition of Schools Attended by the Average Student of Each Race, 2000-01

Racial Composition of School Attended by Average:					
Percent Race in Each School	White Student	Black Student	Latino Student	Asian Student	Native American Student
% White	79.7	30.9	28.6	45.8	49.4
% Black	8.6	54.3	12.0	12.0	7.2
% Latino	7.6	11.4	53.7	19.3	10.7
% Asian	3.1	2.9	4.9	22.2	2.6
% Native American	0.9	0.5	0.8	0.7	30.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

⁹¹ For 1998 data, see: Orfield, G. (2001). *Supra* note 89.

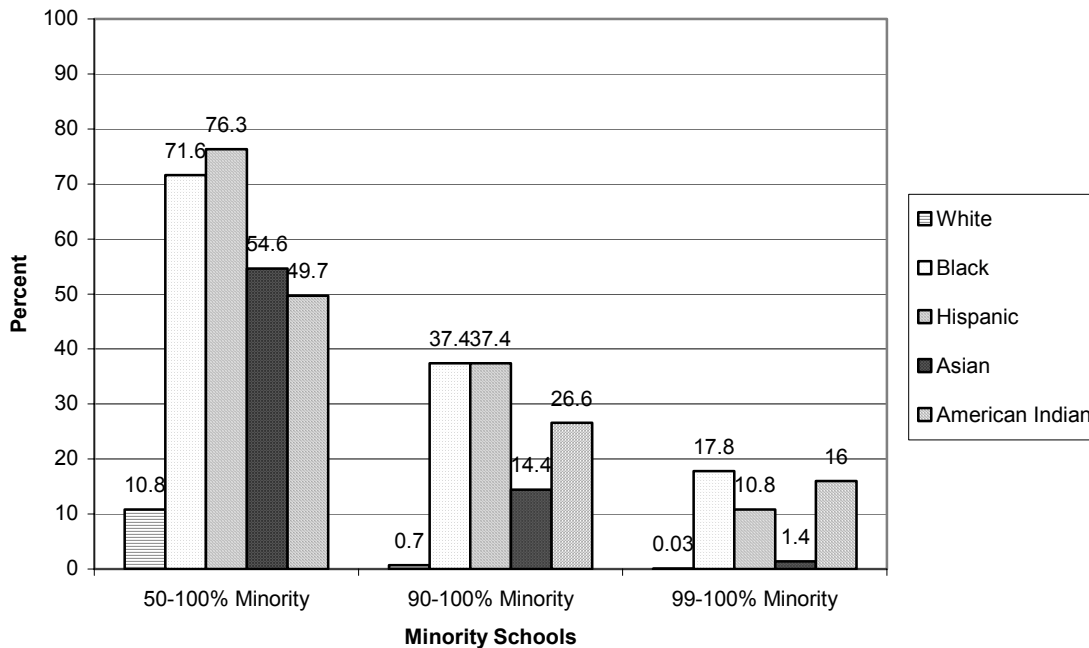
⁹² According to a recent report released by the Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, there are now at least six distinct Asian groups, with very large differences in social background, educational levels, and linguistic abilities. Because of these distinct background characteristics, the data may not apply to certain Asian subgroups. (Logan, J.R., Stowell, J., and Vesselinov, E. "From Many Shores: Asians in Census 2000." University of Albany: Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, October 6, 2001.) The complexity of the issue is beyond the scope of this report and will be addressed in a forthcoming report.

⁹³ Orfield, G. (2001). *Supra* note 89.

Just over ten percent of white students attend schools that have a predominantly minority population. By contrast, almost three-fourths of black and Latino students attend schools that are predominantly minority. Less than one percent of white students attend 90-100% minority schools while about 40 percent of blacks and Latinos attend these schools. Of all minority groups, Asian students are the least likely to experience racially isolated schools, in part due to their relatively low numbers. Less than 15% of Asian students attend intensely segregated schools, schools that are 90-100% minority, and just over 1% attends 99-100% minority schools.

Almost 2.4 million students, or over five percent of all public school enrollment, attend apartheid schools, defined as 99-100% minority schools. Of these, 2.3 million were black and Latino students and only 72,000 were white. More than one in six black children attend a school that is 99-100% minority, a rate that is higher than that for students of any other racial group. One in nine Latino students attend virtually all minority schools. By contrast, less than one in a thousand white students attend these schools.

Figure 4
Percentage of Students in Minority Schools by Race, 2000-2001



A substantial percentage of students now attend schools where at least three races are each 10% or more of the total student population respectively. Only 14% of white

students attend these multiracial schools, the lowest of any student group (see Table 5). In fact, black students are twice as likely and Latino students three times as likely as white students to attend multiracial schools. Only one in four Native American students are found in multiracial schools. The percentage of Asian students in multiracial schools is substantially higher than any other racial group. Three-quarters of all Asian students in this country attend schools with three races or more present.

During the 1990s, the percentage of students of every race in multiracial schools has increased. In 1992-93, 40% of Asian students were in multiracial schools; by 2000-01, this proportion had almost doubled. The percentage of white students in multiracial schools almost doubled as well during this eight-year time span, though whites are still the least likely to be in such settings. The percentage of black, Latino, and Native American students in multiracial schools also grew in the 1990s, suggesting an urgent need for more research and policy about issues facing multiracial schools.

Table 5
Percentage of Students in Multiracial Schools by Race, 1992 and 2000

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American
1992-93	7.8	16.3	26.6	41.0	16.2
2000-01	14.3	28.9	38.8	75.0	24.9

Source: 1992-3, 2000-1 NCES Common Core of Data.

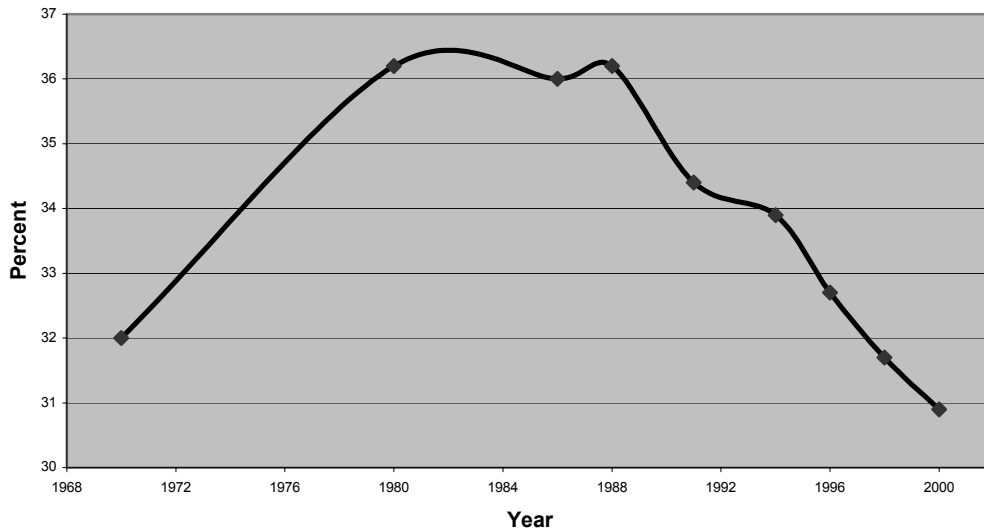
NATIONAL TRENDS IN ENROLLMENT BY RACE

Black Resegregation

As a result of Supreme Court rulings in the late 1960s and early 1970s that demanded that Southern school boards do more to ensure that desegregation plans actually reduced racial isolation, the South went from the most segregated to the most integrated region for black students in only a relatively short period of time.⁹⁴ Black students' exposure to white students actually increased in the South during the 1970s and remained constant through the 1980s, even as the overall white proportion of enrollment decreased. However, since the late 1980s, there has been a consistent decline in black-white exposure.

A measure of these trends in school segregation is the exposure of minority students to whites. The percentage of white students in schools of the average black has declined since 1988 (see Figure 5). The percentage of white students in schools of the average black has declined since 1988, and is lower in 2000 than in 1970, before busing for racial balance began. From 1988 to 2000, there was a 5.3 percentage point decline in the share of white students in schools of the average black student to the current low of 30.9% (see Figure 5).

Figure 5
Percentage of White Students in Schools Attended by the Average Black Student, 1968-2000

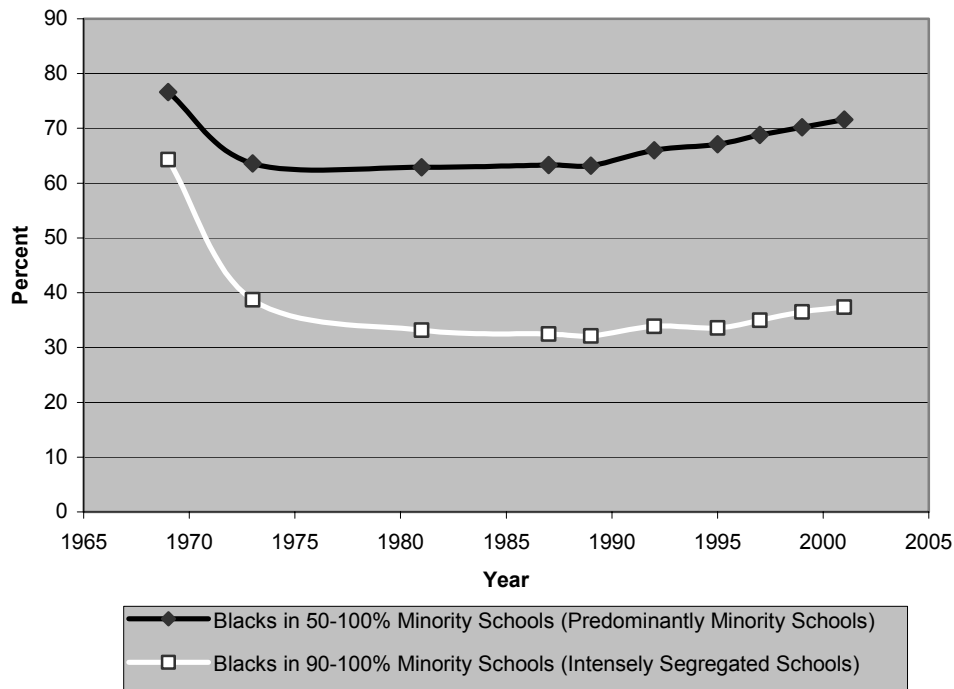


Source: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights data in Orfield, Monfort & Aaron, *Status of School Desegregation, 1968-1986*; 1988-89; 1991-92, 1996-97; 1998-99; 2000-01 NCES Common Core of Data.

⁹⁴ See Table 10 *infra*

If one of the aims of desegregation was to cut segregation in public schools and to create interracial schools, then another measure of school segregation is the number of minority students remaining in predominantly and intensely segregated minority schools. Over 70% of black students attend predominantly minority schools, defined as schools with 50-100% minority student populations. In addition to decreasing exposure of black students to white students in their schools, the percentage of black students in intensely segregated schools is now larger than it has been since the early 1970s. The percentage of black students in extremely racially isolated schools decreased sharply from the late 1960s when two out of every three black students were in such schools. However, the percentage of blacks in intensely segregated schools has increased since a low of 32% in 1988. There was a 2.4 percentage point increase for black students in the last four years alone. Over a third (37.4%) of black students face intense isolation by 2001 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6
Percentage of Black Students in Predominantly Minority and Intensely Segregated Schools, 1968-2000



Source: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights data in Orfield, *Public School Desegregation in the United States*, Table 1; 1988-89; 1991-92, 1996-97; 1998-99; 2000-01 NCES Common Core of Data

Segregation of Latino Students

The growth in the Latino student population is happening throughout the country. Although the four primary states in Table 6 with Latino enrollments greater than 150,000 in 2000 are in the West, there are also two states in the South, two in the Northeast, and one in the Midwest. Florida, for example, has had the highest rate of growth in Latino student enrollment in the last thirty years with an unparalleled increase of 614%; Illinois shot up 304% during the same time period. With an increase of almost 2 million since 1970, California has had the largest absolute change in Latino enrollment, a 270% increase.

Table 6
Growth of Latino Enrollments, 1970-2000⁹⁵

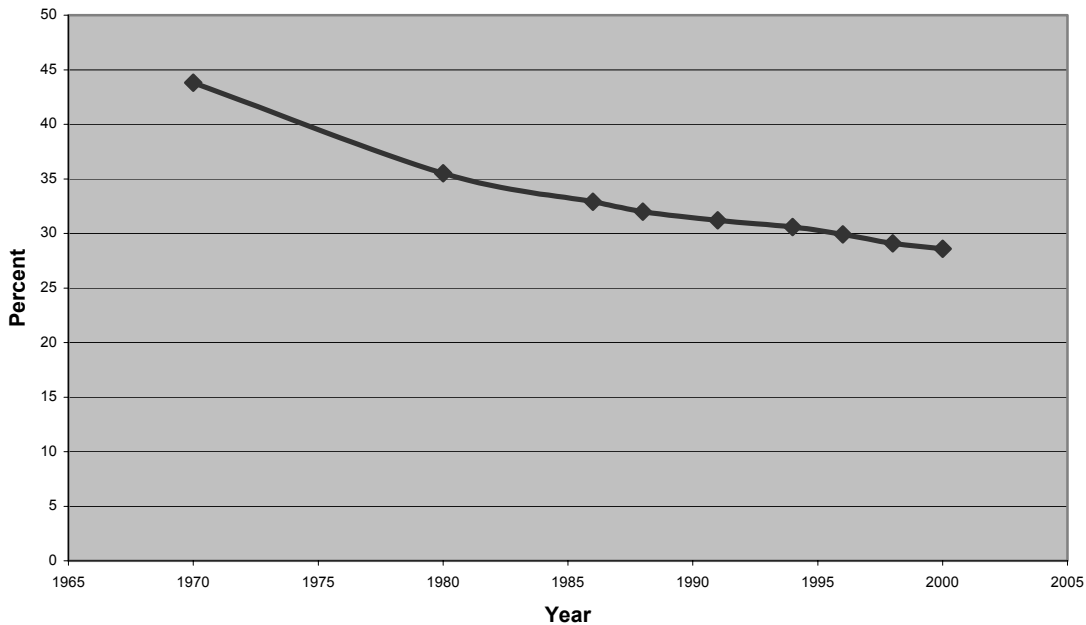
States	1970	2000	Enrollment Change (1970-2000)	Percent Change (1970-2000)
California	706,900	2,613,480	1,906,580	269.7
Texas	565,900	1,646,508	1,080,608	190.9
New York	316,600	533,631	217,031	68.6
Florida	65,700	469,362	403,662	614.4
Illinois	78,100	315,446	237,346	303.9
Arizona	85,500	297,703	212,203	248.2
New Jersey	59,100	201,509	142,409	240.9
New Mexico	109,300	160,708	51,408	47.0
Colorado	84,281	159,547	75,226	89.3

Source: DBS Corp.1982; 1987; 2000-01 NCES Common Core of Data Public School Universe.

Unlike black students who have been the focus of hundreds of desegregation orders and Office for Civil Rights enforcement efforts, Latinos have remained increasingly segregated, due, in part, to demographic changes in the population and limited legal and policy efforts targeted to increasing desegregation for Latinos. Latinos were not included in most desegregation court orders due to their small presence in most Southern districts during the 1960s. As a result, Latino students have, until recently, consistently been more isolated from white students than the average black student (see Figure 7). Currently, the average Latino student goes to school where less than 30 percent of the school population is white.

⁹⁵ Table includes states with more than 150,000 Latino students in 2000

Figure 7
Percentage of White Students in Schools Attended by the Average Latino Student, 1968-2000

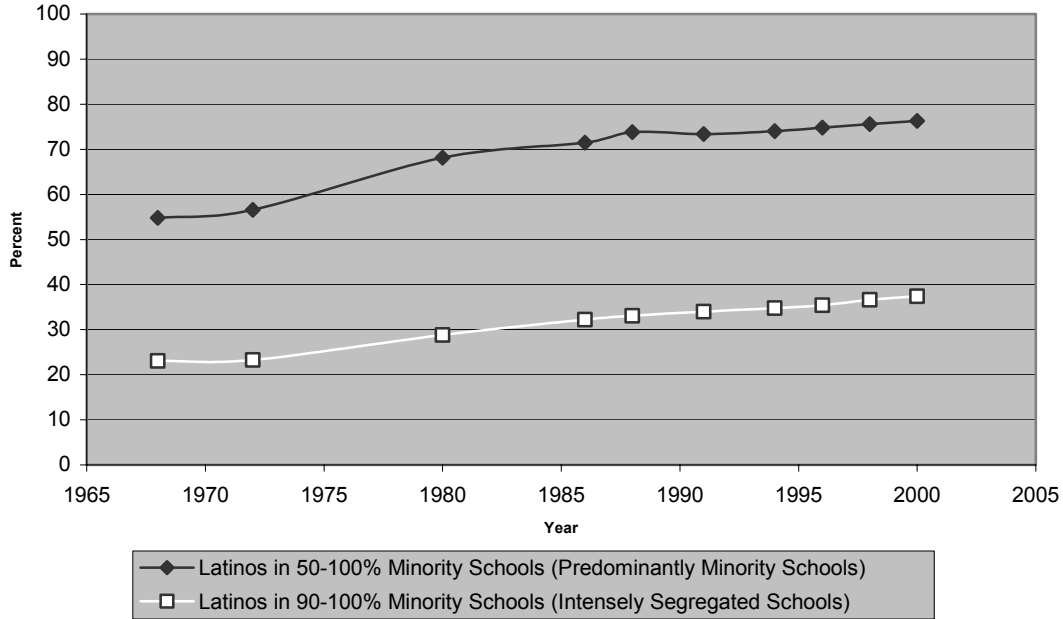


Source: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights data in Orfield, Monfort & Aaron, Status of School Desegregation, 1968-1986; 1988-89; 1991-92, 1996-97; 1998-99; 2000-01 NCES Common Core of Data.

The percentage of Latino students in predominantly minority schools has steadily increased since the 1960s and actually exceeded that of blacks in the 1980s. In the last decade, with the dismantling of desegregation orders and the resegregation of blacks, the level of black segregation is now comparable to that of Latinos: seven out of ten black and Latino students attend predominantly minority schools. The percentage of Latinos in predominantly minority schools is slightly higher than that of blacks (76% for Latinos, 72% for blacks).

More Latinos than ever before are also now in intensely segregated schools (90-100% minority), rising from 462,000 in 1968 to 2.86 million in 2000, an increase of 520% in a little over 30 years. After a low of 23% in the late 1960s, the percentage of Latinos attending these schools has consistently increased to reach an unprecedented 37% in 2000 (see Figure 8).

Figure 8
Latinos in Predominantly Minority and Intensely Segregated Schools



Source: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights data in Orfield, *Public School Desegregation in the United States*, Table 10; 1991-92, 1996-97; 1998-99; 2000-01 NCES Common Core of Data.

English Language Learners (ELLs) who are Latino attend schools where over 60% of students are Latino, compared to the average Latino who attends a school where 54% of the students are Latino (Table 4 above). By comparison, the isolation is less severe for Asian ELL students, for example; only one-quarter of their schools, on average, are Asian (see Table 7).

Table 7
Racial Composition of Schools Attended by English Language Learners, 2000-01

<i>Average Percent of Each Race in School (%)</i>	<i>Racial Composition of School Attended by Average:</i>		
	English Language Learner	Latino English Language Learner	Asian English Language Learner
White	26	22	36
Black	12	11	14
Latino	52	61	25
Asian	7	5	25

Source: 2000 Office of Civil Rights E&S Data. Table adapted from Catherine Horn "The Intersection of Race, Class and English Learner Status". CRP Working Paper, August 2002.

Relationship between Racial Segregation and Poverty

These consistent trends towards increasing segregation for the nation's minority students should be considered in the context of segregation's strong correlation to poverty.⁹⁶ High poverty schools have been shown to increase educational inequality for students in these schools because of problems such as a lack of resources, a dearth of experienced and credentialed teachers, lower parental involvement, and high teacher turnover.⁹⁷ Almost half of the students in schools attended by the average black or Latino student are poor or near poor.⁹⁸ By contrast, less than one in five students in schools attended by the average white student is classified as poor (see Table 8).

In 2000, the U.S. experienced the peak in the economic boom of the 1990s. While the percent poor in the school of the average white student decreased from 1998 to 2000, however, the percent poor in the school of the typical black student has increased. In 2000, the percent poor in black or Latino students' schools were almost twice the percent poor in schools of the typical Asian student. The typical Native American student attended a school with roughly 30% poor students, a five-percentage point decrease from 1998.

Table 8
Percent Poor in Schools Attended by the Average Student, By Race and Year

Percent Poor	White	Black	Latino	Asian	Native American
1996-97	18.7	42.7	46.0	29.3	30.9
1998-99	19.6	39.3	44.0	26.3	35.1
2000-01	19.1	44.8	44.1	26.2	31.3

Source: 1996-97; 1998-99; 2000-01 NCES Common Core of Data Public School Universe.

A large number of all public schools are either 90-100% white or 90-100% black and Latino. In 2000, almost half of all schools had less than 10% black and Latino students. By contrast, one-tenth of all schools were 90-100% black and Latino. Fifteen percent of the intensely segregated white schools had more than half of the student body receiving free or reduced lunch. By contrast, a staggering 86% of intensely segregated black and Latino schools had more than half of the students on free or reduced lunch (see Table 9). Students in an intensely segregated minority school, then, were almost six times as likely to be in a predominantly poor school as those students attending 90-100% white schools. Over four-fifths of schools with less than 30% white students were schools in which at least half of the students were poor.

⁹⁶ The correlation between percent black and Latino enrollment in a school and percent poor, or the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch at school, is moderately strong ($r=.61$).

⁹⁷ Natriello, G., McDill, E.L. & Pallas, A.M. (1990). *Schooling Disadvantaged Children: Racing Against Catastrophe*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

⁹⁸ Poor or near poor students are measured as those who are eligible for the federal government's free or reduced lunch program.

Table 9
Relationship Between Segregation by Race and by Poverty, 2000-01

% Poor in Schools	Percent Black and Latino Students in Schools									
	0-10%	10-20%	20-30%	30-40%	40-50%	50-60%	60-70%	70-80%	80-90%	90-100%
0-10%	25.1	19.3	9.3	5.1	5.1	4.8	5.1	4.7	4.2	4.6
10-25%	28.1	29.5	26.0	15.7	9.4	5.0	3.2	2.4	1.6	2.3
25-50%	32.0	35.1	40.7	43.5	39.5	30.6	20.3	12.3	9.4	7.3
50-100%	14.7	16.1	24.1	35.6	46.0	59.6	71.4	80.6	84.8	85.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
% of U.S. Schools	44.5	11.4	7.7	6.1	5.4	4.6	3.9	3.5	3.7	9.2

Figure 9
Relationship Between Segregation by Race and Poverty, 2000-01

