



BAD AND BETTER NEWS ABOUT SCHOOL SEGREGATION



First, the bad news.

Latino students are becoming more racially segregated, according to a [study](#) led by NEPC Fellow [Bruce Fuller](#), a professor of education and public policy at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1998, the average Latinx child attended an elementary school in which nearly 40 percent of classmates were White. By 2010, that share of White classmates had declined to 30 percent.

Now, some news that is, possibly, better.

Fuller and his co-authors also found that children from lower income families are increasingly attending schools with middle-class peers. The average child from a low-income family attended a school that was 50 percent middle class in 2010, up from 40 percent 12 years earlier.

The study's authors suggest that this could be due to more Latinx families moving up into the middle class. However, they also propose that more middle-class families overall may have ended up in poorer neighborhoods as a result of the 2008 recession.

Why does this matter? Research has consistently concluded that students benefit from economic and racial integration. A summary of that research is presented in a [report from the National Academy of Education](#).

So, while an increased level of economic integration may be promising, higher rates of racial segregation are cause for concern. In fact, issues related to race-based school segregation

recently played a role in the Democratic primary presidential debates.

So what can policymakers and educators do about school segregation?

Fuller and his colleagues offer several recommendations:

- Expand dual-language and magnet program offerings that encourage integration;
- Implement school choice programs that balance parental preferences with school integration objectives; and
- At the very least, ensure that racially segregated schools that serve historically marginalized minorities do not receive fewer resources than majority-White schools.

NEPC Resources on School Segregation

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