

New Data Dashboard Highlights Opportunity Gaps



With the [future](#) of federal education data in doubt, a [new online resource](#) aims to help parents, educators, and advocates make sense of race-based opportunity gaps at the state and national levels.

Funded and maintained by the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) and The Schott Foundation for Public Education, the Opportunity to Learn Dashboard tracks 18 indicators across 16 states. The project seeks to provide information about factors impacting the degree to which children of different ethnicities and races are exposed to environments conducive to learning.

However, indicators directly related to schools explain only a minority of the variation in achievement-related outcomes. Therefore, the dashboard includes out-of-school factors such as access to health insurance and affordable housing, as well as within-school factors such as exposure to challenging curricula and special education spending.

“Awareness of this information is critical to ensure that every student has equitable access, which means ‘fair access’ to opportunities to learn,” [said](#) NEPC Fellow [Dan Losen](#), NCYL’s Senior Director of Education.

The dashboard is user-friendly in that it combines state-level recommendations for closing opportunity gaps with charts containing information about how and why the data are im-

portant. In doing so, it highlights some eye-popping disparities:

- In the United States, Hispanic children are twice as likely as White children to lack health insurance.
- More than 70 percent of White California students enroll in college, as compared to 59 percent of the state's Black students and 58 percent of Hispanic students.
- In North Carolina, nearly a quarter of Black students with disabilities were suspended in 2022-23, as compared to an 11 percent rate for White students with disabilities.

Because most of the data included in the dashboard are collected at the federal level, it is unclear when (or whether) updates or additional information will become available. Users are encouraged to use a [template](#) developed by Losen and the ACLU to request data collected by states.

“These profound inequities in students’ opportunities to learn must not be hidden from public view,” Losen [said](#). “In this time, the highlighted factors will help schools and districts make more fair and lasting improvements to schools that will benefit all students and society as a whole.”

NEPC Resources on Student Achievement

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