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A STATE PROFILE OF EFFORTS TO CREATE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

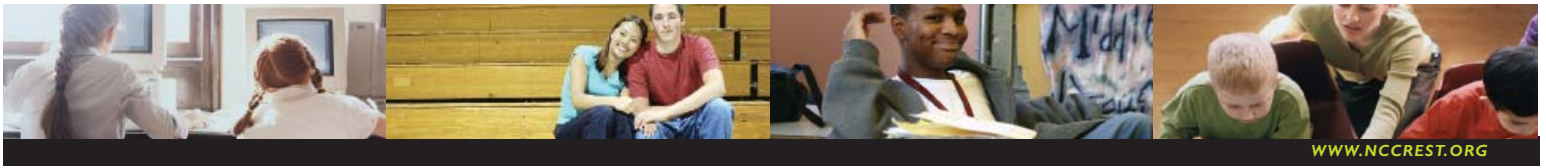
OHIO

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR ALL



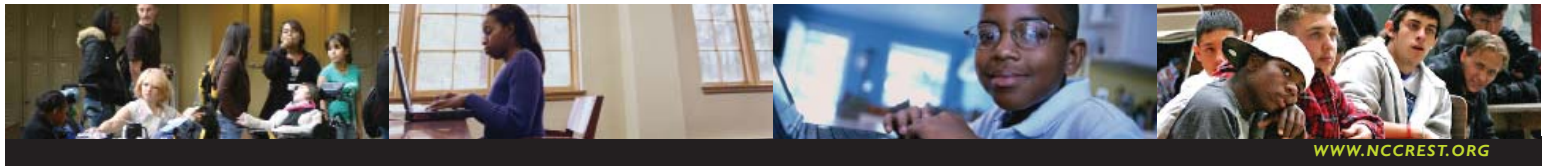
NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Culturally Responsive
Educational Systems

NCCREST



THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

NCCRESt is a technical assistance and dissemination project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. The mission of the NCCRESt is to support state and local school systems to assure a quality, culturally responsive education for all students. NCCRESt exists to provide technical assistance and professional development to close the achievement gap between students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their peers, and to reduce inappropriate referrals to special education. NCCRESt is designed to coalesce students, families, practitioners, policy makers and researchers around interventions and strategic improvements in practice and policy that are culturally responsive. Culturally responsive education systems are grounded in the belief that culturally and linguistically diverse students can excel in academic endeavors if their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning and development and if they are provided with access to high quality teachers, programs, curricula, and resources. The outcomes of NCCRESt's work are intended to (a) increase the use of prevention and early intervention strategies, (b) improve the contexts for educational systems improvement, and (c) enhance the teaching and learning of practitioners and students alike.



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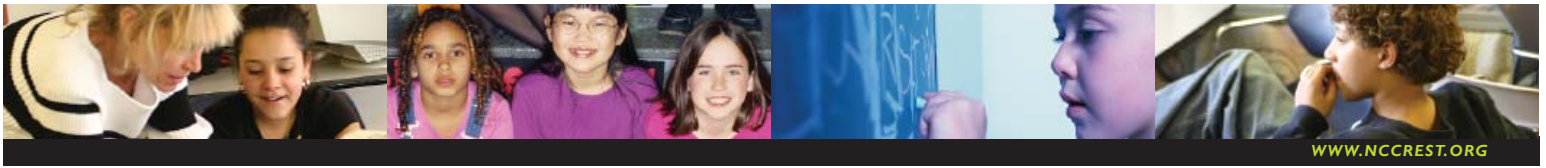
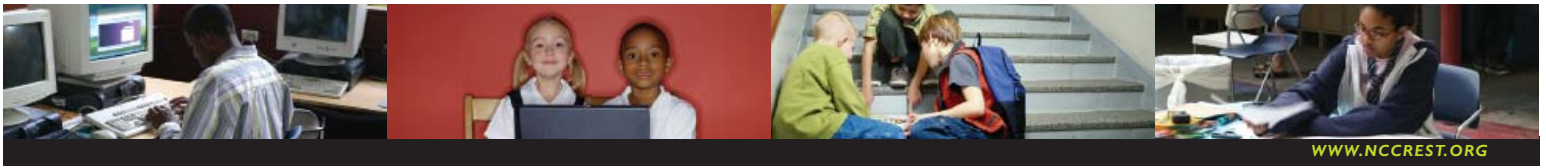


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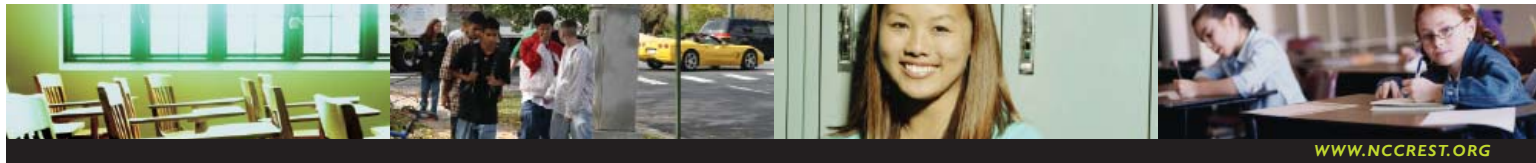


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose. The purpose of the State Profile Series is to explore different state contexts through particular attention to educational data, policy, and practice in order to understand what the convergence of the elements reveals about the development of culturally responsive, equitable educational systems. We use NCCREST’s conceptual framework for culturally responsive educational systems, which focuses on the connections between people, policies, and practices which conveys the interrelatedness of these three domains—that is, that each domain affects and is affected by the others. This dynamic creates complex interplay that must be examined to understand the current context of inequity in education and culturally responsive educational systems. This report provides a snapshot of Ohio’s efforts to provide for the education of students identified as having disabilities and students identified as culturally or linguistically diverse (CLD). In preparing this report, we explore the various factors related to the development of culturally responsive systems.

Context. In examining the contextual factors that impact Ohio’s educational system, we must acknowledge that there is a national context that affects what goes on at the state level. States’ educational systems are also heavily impacted by federal policies, particularly the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). This powerful legislation affects policies and practices at every level of educational systems—state, local education agency (LEA), school, classroom, and individual. Marginalization of individuals from CLD backgrounds is not isolated to the educational system. In attempting to understand educational inequity, we explore the national and state context as a critical factor in the continued marginalization of students identified as CLD in today’s educational systems.

Located in the Midwest, at the center of the nation’s industrial region, Ohio is home to over 11.47 million people. It is the seventh most populous state in the nation, having experienced rapid growth in the 1950s followed by a drastically decreased growth rate. More than 84% of residents are White, indicating that the state is less diverse than the nation, where approximately one-third of residents are members of a racial minority. More residents possess high school diplomas than is typical nationally, but rates of post-secondary education lag behind national figures. Residents who are CLD tend to be younger, have less education and lower income, live in urban areas, and be harder hit by current unemployment trends.

People. The Ohio Department of Education currently serves approximately 1.75 million students in 614 public education agencies. The majority of students in Ohio are White, totaling 1,331,047, followed by Black (287,962), Multiracial (59,032), Hispanic (45,249), Asian or Pacific Islander (25,761), and Native American or Alaska Native (2,461). Less than 2% of students are classified as ELLs. The proportion of students who are economically disadvantaged has more than tripled since 2000.

Ohio students tend to perform above the national average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in both reading and math. While most student subgroups have made impressive gains, there continues to be large gaps for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students classified as economically disadvantaged. Racial achievement gaps are also substantial. Recent analysis indicates that Ohio’s disparity in opportunity to learn for students from CLD and economically disadvantaged backgrounds relative to their White peers is among the worst in the nation, especially for Black students. While access to college preparatory curriculum is high (as measured by CLD students’ enrollment in AP classes compared to White and Asian students), relative to other states, access to early childhood education and effective teachers is limited. High poverty schools are less likely to have highly qualified teachers compared to low poverty schools. In high poverty settings, 10-13% of teachers lack appropriate qualifications, compared to less than 1.2% in low poverty schools.

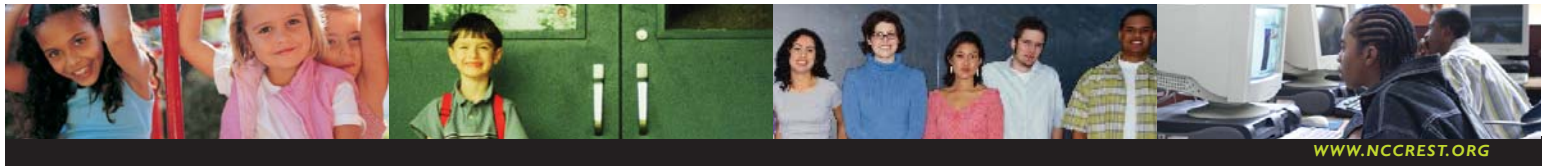
Nearly 15% of students receive special education services, with Black and American Indian students approximately 30% more likely to be identified than their White peers. Black students in particular are 2 to 2.5 times more likely to be identified as having emotional or cognitive disabilities. What’s more, Black and Hispanic students are 1.5 to 2 times more likely to be removed from general education settings for the majority of the school day in order to receive services, and CLD students in general are more likely to be subject to disciplinary consequences. At the same time, Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students are also 40% to 60% less likely to be identified for gifted/talented programs.

Policies. Beginning in 2000, Ohio developed a standards based system with content standards for every subject and grade level, which is aligned with curriculum and assessment. The state has also developed a number of policies to support innovative educational opportunities to better prepare students to meet the needs of a dynamic, competitive society, such as forthcoming standards for business education. Unfortunately, disparities in school and special education funding have been recognized in Ohio for many years, yet no solutions have been provided, and the state continues to be challenged by ongoing racial and economic segregation. Nevertheless, the state has made important steps in creating supportive learning environments, particularly in its policies around family involvement, school climate, and learning supports. These policies, which are distinct yet coherent, emphasize creating districts and schools that have the potential to establish powerful structures for early intervening and stakeholder participation to the benefit of all students.

Practices. Ohio has made efforts to address the achievement gap, improve early childhood education and interventions, and increase inclusionary practices. Both in policy and practice, the state has recognized the need for ongoing continuous improvement and the importance of addressing how a variety of factors that influence achievement. School-wide prevention, early intervening and professional learning are emphasized. The Ohio Improvement Process emphasizes statewide support and capacity building through continuous improvement efforts. The state has established standards for teachers, principals, and superintendents to guide professional learning and support teachers and administrators through the various stages of their careers. The main ideas embodied in the standards are consistent with the basic notions underlying state policies on early intervening and school climate. In addition, a number of initiatives target early learning experiences, as well as improving secondary educational experiences. The state recognizes the need for educational equity through programs such as Schools of Promise, the Teacher Equity Plan, and 21st Century Learning Centers.

Recommendations. Ohio has made impressive efforts to address disparities in outcomes—both in policy and practice, the state has recognized the need for ongoing continuous improvement and the importance of addressing how a variety of factors that influence achievement. School-wide prevention, early intervening and professional learning are emphasized. Efforts to ensure equity must be expanded state-wide to truly ensure that all students have access to high quality opportunities to learn.

The state must consider how conceptualizations of access and disproportionality support or hinder efforts to promote equity. It appears that state support for increasing general education access for students with disabilities and decreasing minority disproportionality in special education is limited. There are few policies or practices aimed at specifically improving access to LRE, and state criteria for significant disproportionality raise concern about the degree to which LEAs are expected to truly explore and address disproportionality. There continues to be a lack of clarity across many states about the relationship of disproportionality to education policies, practices, and procedures that create the context within general education for a pipeline to special education that results in over- and under-identification. States need to be concerned about asking LEAs to look at



the precipitating policies and practices that result in under- and overrepresentation and that create challenges for multidisciplinary teams making special education decisions at the local building level. Disproportionality cannot be adequately addressed by only altering a specific process that determines who is eligible to enter special education. A variety of studies have demonstrated that students are often referred to special education for reasons that have to do with teacher quality, curricular adequacy, opportunities to learn, and the social and cultural expectations of buildings. State-wide efforts in these areas should be linked to efforts to address disproportionality.

In addition, “outcomes” must be conceptualized as more than test scores in order to acknowledge the variety of ways in which student experiences contribute to specific results. Race-based disparities are apparent in a variety of domains within educational systems, such as discipline, school completion, and access to learning opportunities. Educational data must be made transparent so that educators and stakeholders can engage in awareness raising, critical conversations, and ongoing reflection. In-depth analysis is necessary to understand the experiences of students and the relationship between outcomes disparities in resources and access. In the end, policy must be translated into practice in coordinated ways that lead to systemic change at all levels.

INTRODUCTION

The nation’s student population is becoming increasingly diverse and a growing proportion is identified as disabled. In the last 30 years, the proportion of students speaking languages other than English has doubled from 9% to 20%, the proportion of students receiving special education has risen from 3.7 million to 6.7 million (9% of all students), and the proportion of students who are racial minorities has risen from 22% to more than 44% nationally (Planty et al., 2009). Yet, there are many indications that students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds and those with disabilities are not afforded the same access and opportunities as their mainstream White peers. This failure to provide equitable education to all students is a cause for concern and has widespread consequences. Creating equitable systems is critical to safeguarding the nation’s social, civic, and economic future. Quality education is an important determinant of individuals’ socioeconomic outcomes, health, and civic engagement, which in turn affect the communities in which they reside and the greater society. Review of national assessment data shows little change in the nation’s achievement gaps, and disproportionality in special education continues to be a problem despite four decades of attention from the scholarly, education, and political communities. Ohio is a state that performs better than most in educational outcomes, yet students considered culturally and linguistically diverse, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds continue to receive inequitable educational opportunities that potentially limit their life’s chances (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2009).

Opportunity differs from state to state. While there are commonalities in the systemic, institutionalized inequities experienced by certain peoples throughout this nation, the degree of access and the students’ outcomes vary across contexts. We know that no state has yet to create a truly equitable system that maximizes the potential of public education to provide access and opportunity for all students, including those from historically marginalized groups (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2009).

The purpose of this State Profile Series is to explore different state contexts through particular attention to educational data, policy, and practice, in order to understand what the convergence of the elements reveal about the development of culturally responsive, equitable educational systems.

This report provides a snapshot of Ohio’s efforts to provide for the education of students identified as having disabilities and students identified as CLD¹. We use NCCREST’s conceptual framework for culturally responsive educational systems, which focuses on the connections between people, policies, and practices to convey the interrelatedness of these three domains—that is, that each domain affects and is affected by the others (see Figure 1).

This dynamic creates complex interplay that must be examined to understand the current context of inequity in education and the development of culturally responsive inclusive educational systems. In preparing this report, we explore the various factors related to the development of such systems. Data were compiled from a variety of sources including state department websites, government documents, and reports. Specific references are provided at the end of the document. The report relies heavily on data from the Ohio Department of Education and draws from a variety of other sources including the U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Ohio newspapers, and scholarly publications.

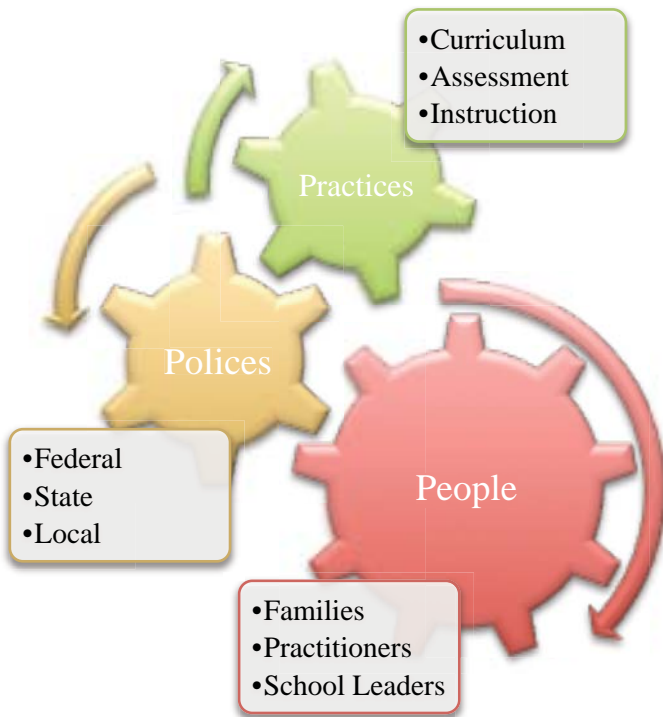


Figure 1. NCCREST Conceptual Framework

¹ This report uses the five federal racial categories (White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian/Pacific Islander) as general terms that include people from a variety of cultural, national, linguistic, and racial backgrounds because these are the labels used by the state and because this is a federally funded project. However, we recognize the inherent limitations of this terminology in reflecting the racial origin or complexity of people who are culturally and linguistically diverse. We acknowledge that these terms may not be preferred by the groups themselves, and may even be offensive to many, as they reflect generalities made by dominant society.



CONTEXT

Educational systems do not exist in isolation; that is, they are part of the broader social and societal context (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1994). In this section, we present data on the demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural-historical milieu of Ohio in order to contextualize the information on the educational system that will be provided in later portions of this report. We seek to understand the context in which Ohio schools are embedded, with particular attention to resources, access, and outcomes that may influence the experiences of students, families, and educators in schools.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

In examining the contextual factors that impact Ohio's educational system, we must acknowledge that there is a national context that affects what goes on at the state level. States' educational systems are also heavily impacted by federal policy. Two federal policies of particular interest to this report are the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act, which are discussed below. This powerful legislation affects policies and practices at every level of educational systems—state, local education agency (LEA), school, classroom, and individual.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is a comprehensive reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. NCLB redefines the federal role in K-12 education with the goals of improving student achievement and reducing the gap between the achievement of students identified as CLD and their White peers. NCLB has focused public and professional attention on educational outcomes through annual measurement of student progress, a focus on AYP and the disaggregation of test scores. The legislation is based on four arenas: (1) accountability for results, (2) emphasis on scientifically-based practice, (3) parental options, and (4) local control and flexibility. States must measure students' progress in math, reading, and science through assessments aligned with state academic content and standards, provide student data to parents, and offer detailed report cards about schools and LEAs, breaking down the achievement data by race/ethnicity, language, SES, and disability status. NCLB requires states to identify schools that are not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP), apply a set of interventions and sanctions, and allow students in low-performing schools to transfer to higher-performing schools or receive supplemental educational services. Even though NCLB increased federal influence in education, states have autonomy when defining their criteria for academic success.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), originally passed in 1975 as the Education for All Children Handicapped Act (P.L. 94-142) and most recently amended in 2004, guarantees a "free and appropriate" public education for all children with disabilities. In the four decades of attention to the overrepresentation of students from CLD backgrounds in classes for the intellectually disabled²

² While recognizing that most states use the term "mental retardation," we use "intellectual disability" because this is term preferred by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

(i.e., mentally retarded), these students have consistently been found to be disproportionately represented in special education. In general, the risk of special education identification has increased for students of all ethnic backgrounds since the passage of IDEA, but the increases have been greatest for students who are CLD.

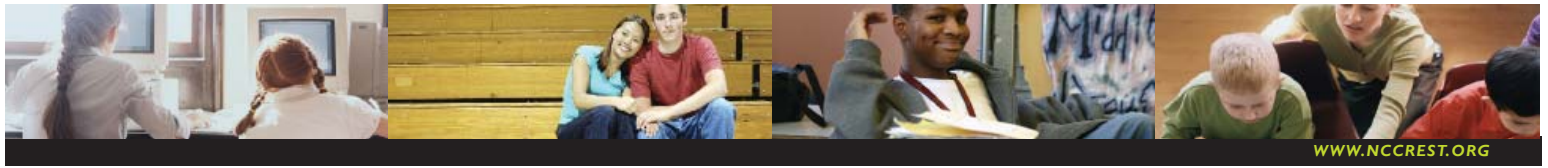
Under the newest regulations, states must have policies and procedures in place to prevent the inappropriate disproportionate representation of students identified as CLD in special education. States are required to collect and examine data to determine if significant disproportionality exists in identification, placement, or discipline. When significant disproportionality is found, states must review and revise policies, procedures, and practices related to identification and placement to ensure compliance with IDEA. Any local education agency identified as having significant disproportionality must also reserve 15% of funds for comprehensive early intervening services.

Understanding and addressing disproportionality and inclusive practices goes beyond merely looking at special education data. Rather, it includes examining what is happening in general education classrooms and exploring the operating assumptions upon which educational practices and policies are formed. There are inherent tensions and contradictions that must be addressed; understanding disproportionality requires shifts in perceptions and practices for educating all students. States can improve learning opportunities for students by establishing culturally responsive schools and educational systems. Efforts to create culturally responsive schools involves an intricate weave of widely varying beliefs, policies, and practices at all levels—family and community, classroom, school, LEA, state and federal government, and society at large. Effective solutions to disproportionality are grounded in an understanding of the intersection of culture, learning, and disability; the sustained use of research knowledge in professional practice; the means to support teacher learning and enhance students' opportunities to learn; and improved general education instruction in classrooms and through alternative programs (e.g., Title I).

LOCAL CONTEXT

Efforts to create culturally responsive educational systems must be understood within the socio-historical context of the individual state and of the nation. The disproportionate representation of students identified as CLD in our nation's schools, inequity in opportunities to learn, and the disparity in educational outcomes are manifestations of the inequity of the system as a whole and are related to disparity in other domains (e.g. socioeconomics, higher education, health care, etc.). The marginalization of individuals from CLD backgrounds is not isolated to the public educational system. In attempting to understand educational inequity, we explore the national and state context as a critical factor in the continued marginalization of students identified as CLD in today's schools.

Located in the Midwest, at the center of the nation's industrial region, Ohio is home to over 11.47 million people. It is the seventh most populous state in the nation, having experienced rapid growth in the 1950s followed by a drastically decreased growth rate (Ohio Department of Development, 2009). The state experienced only a 1% increase in population between 2000 and 2007, compared to 7.2% nationally. Most of the increase is due to in-state births, as the state experiences a high level of out-of-state migration and an aging population. Most residents, 80%, are concentrated in the state's metropolitan areas which developed around the state's many waterways, with more than half living in Cincinnati, Cleveland, or Columbus, even though developed areas only account for 14% of the state's lands (Staley & Hisrich, 2001). The state's highways system allow a high flow of cargo and business traffic, as it is within one-day's travel of 70% of manufacturers in North America (Ohio Department of Transportation, 2003).



The state is regarded as both a swing-state and bellwether for the competitiveness of the presidential races and the tendency to vote for winning candidates. Ohio has voted for every president since 1964 (Pollard, 2008), in addition to the state being the home of eight U.S. presidents. The current governor is a Democrat, as are the majority of the state's U.S. representatives and state legislators.



Figure 2: State of Ohio from http://edexcellence.net/flypaper/images/20090105_Ohio.jpg

state. Nearly 94% of households speak only English, compared to 80.5% nationally (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Trade, health, government, and manufacturing are the leading industries in the state, employing more than 63% of the workforce. In some counties, nearly 40% of the workforce is employed in manufacturing (Ohio Department of Development, 2009). Manufacturing companies currently employ more than 659,900 people. This represents a significant loss from 2002, when more than 868,700 people were employed in manufacturing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Nonetheless, it accounts for 18% of the state's gross domestic product, which is driven by metals, machinery, and automobiles, and OH is home to a number of major firms, including GE, GM, Chrysler, Honda, and AK Steel among others. The state is also the site of the headquarters for 59 of the country's top publically traded companies (CNN, 2008). Technology and research also play a major role in the state's economy. The state has a higher concentration of technology operations than the national average, and has over \$8.2 billion in Research and development contracts through the National Science foundation (Ohio Department of Development, 2009).

Ohio's adult population tends to have more basic education than national averages (see Figure 3). More than 87% of adults have at least a high school diploma, in line with the national average or 85% (School Data Direct, 2009), while 23.5% have a bachelor's degree, relative to the national average of 27.8%. The state's unemployment rate was 10.4% in May 2009, compared to the national rate of 9.1%, and up more than 5 percent from the previous year (U.S. Dept of Labor and Statistics). The rate was 15-16% for Black and American Indian residents, and 10% for Hispanics. Individuals with low levels of education, that is, less than a high school education, are also hit hard by unemployment, with rates of 14.9% in 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Per capita income varies substantially from one county to the next, ranging from \$18,366 in Noble to \$44,651 in Geauga. Median earnings in the state were \$32,226, with males making approximately \$39,995, while women made \$25,842 comparatively, with major gaps at every educational level.

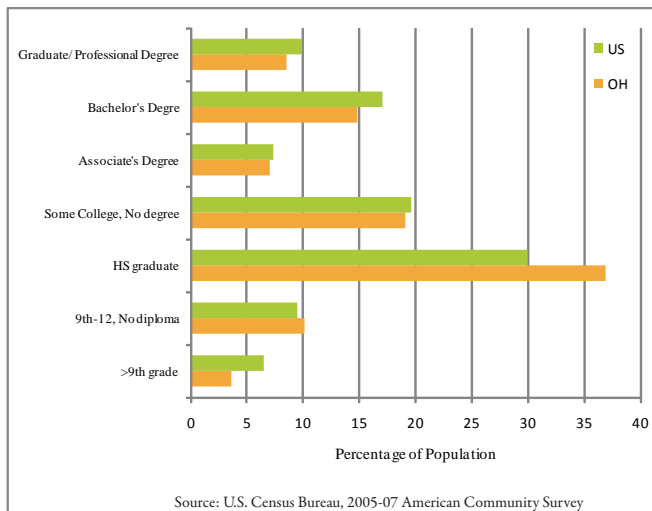
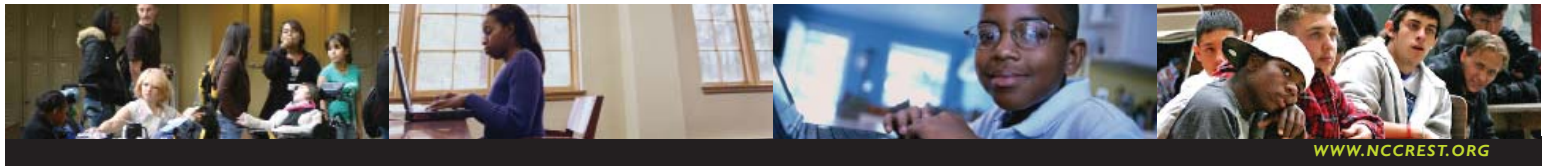


Figure 3: Educational Attainment of OH Adults Aged 25 or Older

More than 84% of residents are White, indicating that the state is less diverse than the nation, where approximately one-third of residents are members of a racial minority. Nearly 29% of residents claim German ancestry, 15% Irish, and 10% English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Blacks constitute 11.7% of the population with 1,346,290 residents, followed by Hispanics (273,920, 2.3%), multiracial residents (177,512, 1.5%) and Asians (174,382, 1.5%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). This contrasts to the diversity nationally, where nearly 15% of people are Hispanic, even though the growth in the state's Hispanic population has been comparable to national rates (Ohio Department of Development, 2009). This group tends to be younger than White residents, have less education, as is true of Black residents, and are largely concentrated in the northern portion of the

Blacks are 2.66 times more likely than Whites to live in poverty, as more than 30% are at less than 100% of the federal poverty level and the median income is nearly a third of the state average. More than 24% of Hispanic residents fall in this category, and more than half include households with small children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). More than 16% of the state's population is categorized as disabled, of which 36.4% are employed and 22.3% live in poverty, compared to 78.5% and 10.6% of the general population, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). In contrast, the state's Asian residents, are more educated, make more per capita, and are less likely to fall below the poverty level (Ohio Department of Development, 2009). Rates of poverty are also highest in Appalachian Ohio, which comprises the southeastern region of the state (Ohio Department of Development, 2009).

We review this data because of its importance in contributing to achievement gaps and disproportionality in various educational outcomes. Educational inequity does not occur in isolation; rather it is a systemic problem stemming from inequities throughout the whole system. Ohio's disparities in socioeconomic and education provide evidence of continued marginalization of individuals from CLD backgrounds. As we continue in this report, it is important to keep in mind the context provided here to aid in the understanding of the educational system within Ohio.



PEOPLE

Within our framework, “people” includes all those in the broader education system, including students, educators, administrators, families, and community members whose opportunities culturally responsive systems endeavor to improve. This section describes trends in Ohio’s student and teacher demographics, and explores a number of educational outcomes relevant to culturally responsive systems, including disproportionality in special education identification and placement, gaps in achievement and educational progress, and opportunities to learn. This section is important in understanding the people who are affected by educational systems and helps describe the current context of the education in the state.

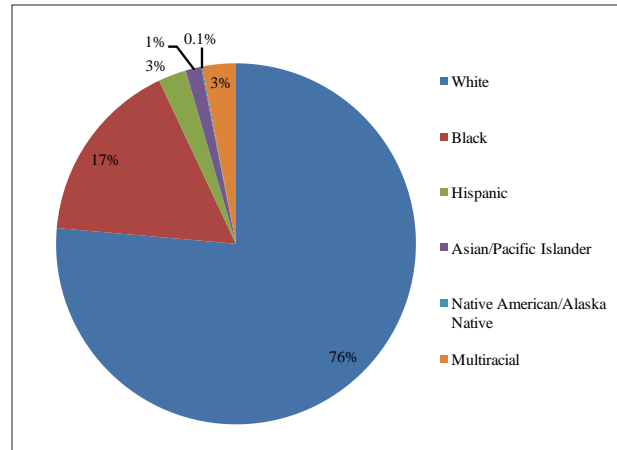


Figure 5: Student Race 07-08 School Year

| 2007-08 Ohio State Overview | |
|--|-----------|
| Total Student Enrollment | 1,751,511 |
| Percent of students receiving special education services | 14.6% |
| Public School Districts | 614 |
| Expenditures Per Pupil | \$9,939 |
| Teacher/Student Ratio | 18.6/1 |
| Graduation Rate | 86.9% |
| Average ACT Score | 21.7 |
| Average SAT Score | 1078 |
| Median Family Income | \$31, 321 |

Figure 4. Ohio State Overview

STUDENTS

The Ohio Department of Education currently serves approximately 1.75 million students in 614 public education agencies. Enrollment in Ohio public schools has remained consistent over the past 10 years, with the exception of a fleeting increase in students between 2004 and 2006 (Ohio Department of Education, 2009). Compulsory age of attendance is six through 18 (Planty, et al., 2009) and kindergarten attendance, either half-day or full-day is required. The majority of students in Ohio are White, totaling 1,331,047, followed by Black (287,962), Multiracial (59,032), Hispanic (45,249), Asian or Pacific Islander (25,761), and Native American or Alaska Native (2,461) (see Figure 5). The percentage of students in various racial groups has remained relatively stable over the past eight years. The proportion of students classified as Limited English Proficient has risen from 0.8% to 1.8%, and represents more than 110 languages. Nearly a third are from families identified as immigrants. A dramatic increase of 26% was seen in the number of students classified as economically disadvantaged from the 1999-00 school year to 2007-08, increasing from 12% to more than 37%, although this is still below the national average. The proportion of homeless students has also increased from 0.1% to 0.5%.

Gifted & Talented

Approximately 16% of students are identified as gifted, or as exhibiting “superior cognitive ability,” based on intelligence testing or performance on other standardized assessments. State law allows eligibility to be determined via a variety of assessment procedures (e.g. individual or group intelligence tests, state or national achievement tests), and requires that schools identify all gifted children, but does not require the provision of services for identified students. Children who are Asian or Pacific Islander are 1.44 times more likely to be identified as gifted compared to White children. In contrast, Black children were .64 times less likely to be identified as gifted, Hispanic children were .61 times less likely, and American Indian/Alaskan Native and Multiracial groups were both about .42 times less likely to be identified.

Special Education Identification

Ohio has 14.6% of students identified as receiving special education services, slightly higher than the national average of 13.6% for 2007-08 school year. The rate of students receiving services has increased 1.6% since the 2001-02 school year. Figure 6 indicates the approximate percentage of students receiving services under each IDEA category. The relative risk ratio provides a groups’ risk of being identified in a particular category relative to White students. A relative risk ratio of 1.0 indicates that the groups are equally likely to be identified. A value less than 1.0 indicates that the target group is less likely to be identified while a value greater than 1.0 indicates that the target group is more likely to be identified than the comparison group (i.e., White students).

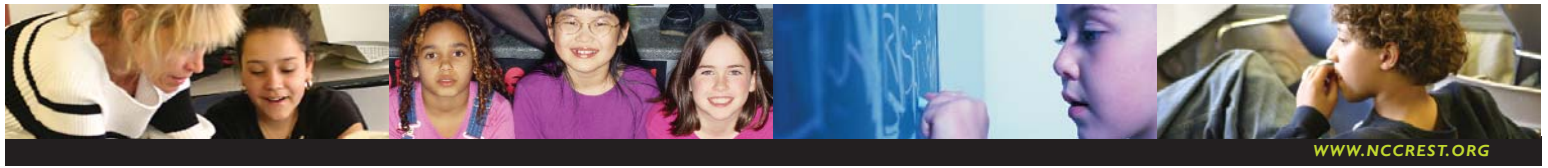


Figure 6: IDEA Category and Incidence Rate for Students

| IDEA Category | Incidence Rate |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Multiple Disabilities | 4.79% |
| Deaf-Blindness | 0.0001% |
| Hearing Impairments | 0.68% |
| Visual Impairments | 0.68% |
| Speech and Language Impairments | 11.64% |
| Orthopedic Impairments | 0.68% |
| Other Health Impaired | 9.59% |
| Emotional Disturbance | 7.53% |
| Cognitive Disabilities | 13.7% |
| Specific Learning Disabilities | 42.47% |
| Autism | 4.11% |
| Traumatic Brain Injury | 0.68% |
| Preschool child with disability | 2.74% |

Asian/ Pacific Islander children consistently have the least risk across disabilities compared to the other races. Across races, when looking at all disability categories, the risk ratios have been relatively consistent since the 1999-00 school year. However when looking at the high incidence disabilities (i.e., Cognitive Disability, Specific Learning Disability, and Emotional Disturbance) there are upward trends in identification for certain groups. Black children have gradually had an increase in risk for being identified as having a Cognitive Disability or Emotional Disturbance. As Figure 7 shows, Black, non-Hispanic children are more than two times as likely to be identified as having an Emotional Disturbance or a Cognitive Disability compared to White children, with relative risk increasing since 1999. American Indian/Alaskan Native children, while not at the same risk as Black children, have seen a consistent increase of the risk for Cognitive Disability identification from 1.06 in 1999-00 to 1.46 in 2007-08.

Figure 7: Relative Risk of Special Education Identification, Compared to White Students

| | All Disabilities | Emotional Disturbance | Cognitive Disability | Learning Disability |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 0.35 | 0.17 | 0.25 | 0.28 |
| Black, Non-Hispanic | 1.27 | 2.41 | 2.26 | 1.11 |
| Hispanic | 0.96 | 0.91 | 0.97 | 1.06 |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | 1.31 | 1.55 | 1.46 | 1.53 |
| Multiracial | 0.95 | 1.67 | 1.08 | 0.97 |

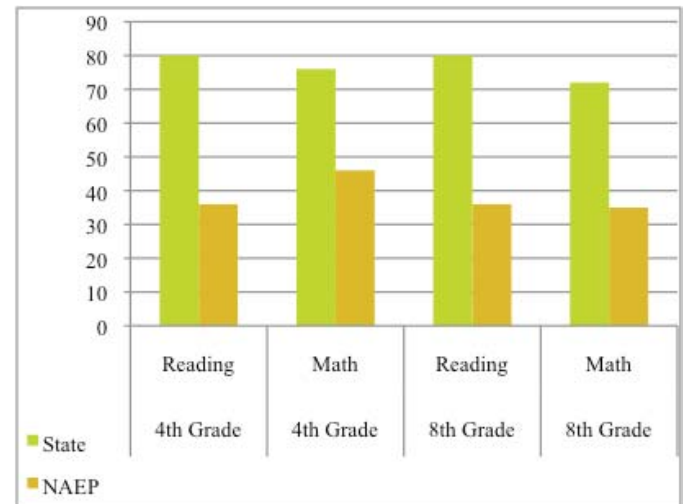
Special Education Placement

Ohio has been improving its provision of services in the least restrictive environment for students identified as for special education. The percent of children with disabilities removed from the regular classroom less than 21% of the day was 52.0% for 2007-08 school year, up 5.8% over the past five years (Ohio Department of Education, 2009). In addition, the percent of children with disabilities removed from the regular classroom for more than 60% of the day was 13.2% for 2007-08, down from nearly 18%. Finally, the percent of children with disabilities who were served in separate facilities was 4.8% in 2007-08, a decrease of more than half since 2003. When examined by race (see Figure 8), it is apparent that Black and Hispanic students are less likely to be placed in the least restrictive environment than their White peers and are more likely to be removed from general education for most of the day. In addition, Black students with disabilities are more than six times as likely as White students to be served in correctional facilities.

OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

Recent analysis indicates that Ohio's disparity in opportunity to learn for students from CLD and economically disadvantaged backgrounds relative to their White peers are among the worst in the nation, especially for Black students (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2009). While access to college preparatory curriculum is high (as measured by CLD students' enrollment in AP classes compared to White and Asian enrollment) relative to other states, access to early childhood education and effective teachers is limited (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2009). Black students are nearly 80% less likely to attend well-resourced, high-performing schools than their white peers and are four times more likely to attend poorly resourced, low-performing schools (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2009).

Figure 8: Proficiency Levels across Grades for State Assessment and NAEP





EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

National Assessment of Educational Progress

Ohio students tend to achieve above the national average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in both reading and math based on mean subtest scores (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). Indeed, the state ranks 10th overall nationally for 8th grade proficiency (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2009). Ohio has shown ongoing improvement in 4th graders' performance on the math portion of NAEP with 46% of students scoring at the proficient or above proficient levels in 2007, a 22% increase since 2000, and higher than the national average of 40%. While most student subgroups have made impressive gains, there continue to be large gaps for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students classified as economically disadvantaged. Racial achievement gaps are also substantial. The state has also identified gaps between rural and urban students compared to their suburban peers (Ohio Department of Education, 2009).

In 2007, there was a 35% difference between White and Black students scoring at proficient or above on math for 4th graders. The difference between White and Hispanic students was 28%. The gaps have remained relatively stable since 2000. Students perform less well in 8th grade, when 36% scored proficient or above, compared to 32% nationally.

In reading, the proportion of students achieving proficiency and above has remained relatively stable in both 4th and 8th grade, at approximately 35% and 36%, respectively. However, the percent of students scoring at proficient or above for children with disabilities has decreased by 4% from 2005 to 2007 for 4th graders despite increases among 8th grades. Students classified as ELL or economically disadvantaged have not shown consistent improvement in reading proficiency since 2003 and there is a large difference between economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged, and ELL and non-ELL students in proficiency levels. Large differences in 4th grade reading proficiency are evident between races with a 29 point difference between White and Black students and 22 point difference between White and Hispanic students.

Statewide Assessment

The Ohio Achievement Test and Reading Achievement Tests are administered every year for children in grades 3-8. The Ohio Graduation Test is administered to children in grades 10 and above every year. A large difference in proficiency across races is seen throughout the grade levels, a gap the state has identified as a major concern (Ohio Department of Education, 2009). Figure 10 depicts overall proficiency by race for the 2007-08 state assessment. These high rates of proficiency contrast sharply with NAEP rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2008; see Figure 9). Nevertheless, this proficiency is high relative to most other states. However, recent analysis indicates that students from CLD backgrounds and those considered economically disadvantaged have little access to the state's best schools, which may explain some of the disparity in state assessment performance among different student groups (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2009). As of the 2005 academic year more than 62% of schools were making adequate yearly progress, while 17.6% were classified as needing improvement and 2.5% were in restructuring (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). While more than 110,100 students were eligible for tutoring, less 11% participated, compared to 14.5% nationally. Likewise, while more than 175,500 were eligible for choice programs, just over 1% of this group participated, compared to 2.2% nationally.

As of the 2005 academic year more than 62% of schools were making adequate yearly progress, while 17.6% were classified as needing improvement and 2.5% were in restructuring (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). While more than 110,100 students were eligible for tutoring, less than 11% participated, compared to 14.5% nationally. Likewise, while more than 175,500 were eligible for choice programs, just over 1% of this group participated, compared to 2.2% nationally (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

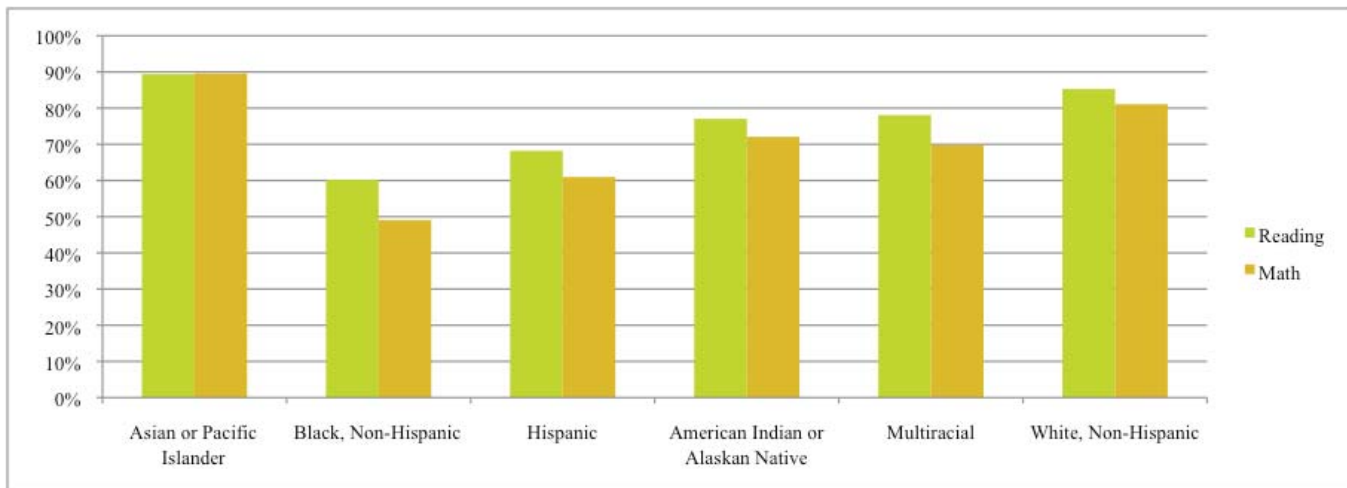


Figure 9: Percent Proficient or Above Across Grade Levels on OH State A

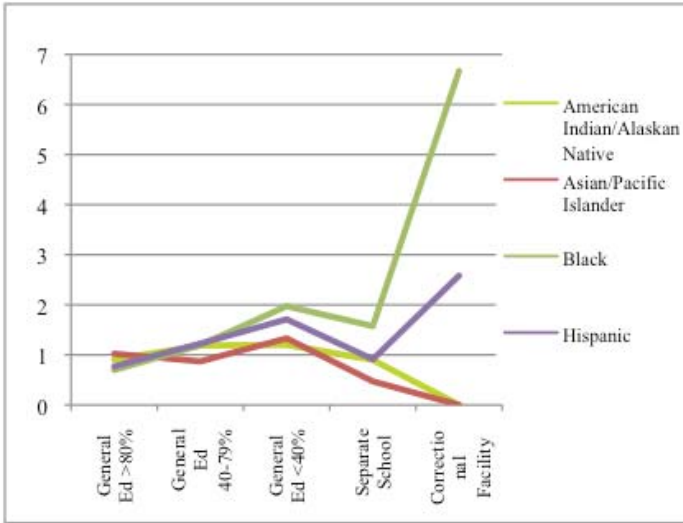
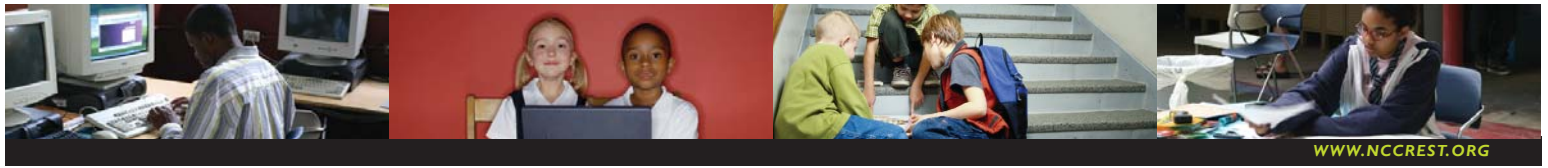


Figure 10: Relative Risk of Special Education Placement, Compared to White Students, 2007

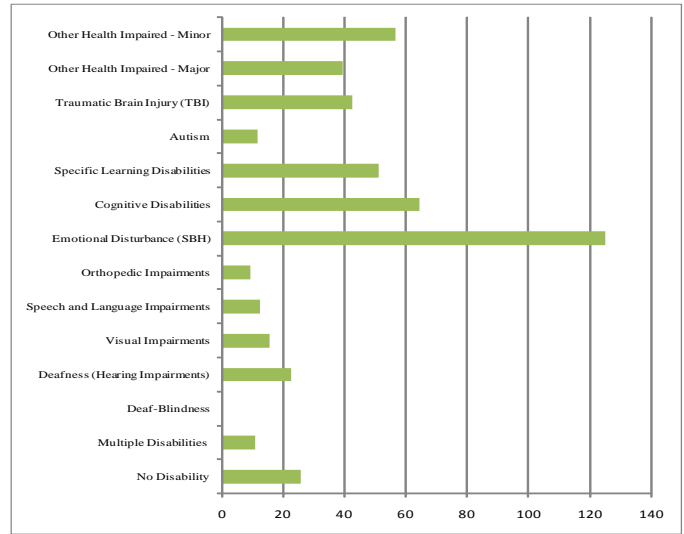


Figure 11: Discipline Rates per 100 Students

School Completion

Only 17% of Ohio residents report not completing high school, a considerable decrease over previous decades; one-third of residents lacked a high school diploma in 1980 (U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2009). More than 20% of residents 25 and older have completed college. Rates of high school completion and higher education are lowest for Blacks and Hispanics, and highest for Asians.

Ohio's graduation rate has steadily increased since the 2000-01 school year according to the Ohio Department of Education's calculations for graduation, although the specific formula used is unclear. As of the 2006-07 school year, approximately 87% of students graduate. Rates vary when examining graduation by race. For the 2006-07 school year the graduation rates for children identified as; Black, non-Hispanic 71.3%, Hispanic 67%, Asian or Pacific Islander 92.3%, American Indian or Alaskan Native 79.7%, Multiracial 77.2%, and White 90.3%.

Examining the graduation rate for children with disabilities is a bit perplexing. There is no explanation on the Ohio Department of Education's website for how the rate is calculated for this group, a problem since there are many options that could be included such as a certificate of completion. However this issue will be resolved shortly due to the U.S. Department of Education's recent regulations that include a federal standard for calculating graduation rates (Samuels, 2008). This standard will require districts to report their graduation rate as the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular diploma, divided by the number of students who entered four years earlier. All states must use this method by the 2011-12 school year.

Discipline

The rate of discipline across disability categories for 2007-08 school year is reported in the preceding Figure 11 (per 100 students). Most glaring is that students with emotional disabilities are nearly five times more likely to encounter discipline problem than their non-disabled peers. Within this group, Black students with ED are 4.7 times more likely than White students to be involved in a discipline incident, while Hispanic and American Indian students are more 1.6 times more likely. This is especially problematic given that more than 41% of discipline incidents result in out-of-school suspensions (U.S. Department of Education, 2008), thereby limiting students' access to and participation in educational settings.

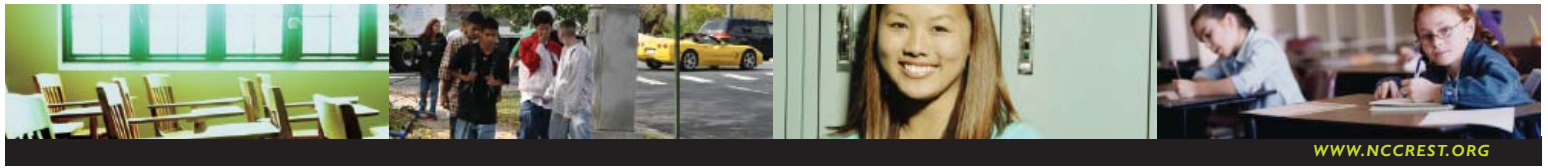
EDUCATORS

Almost all teachers in Ohio have a Bachelor's degree or higher (99%) and 59% hold a Master's degree or higher. The majority of Ohio's full-time teachers are White, non-Hispanic (94%), and 75% are female. The state's student-teacher ratio was 16.6 in 2007, up from 14.7 in 2003 (School Data Direct, 2009). The state has seen decreasing numbers of instructional staff in the preceding 6 years, with numbers falling from 143,270 in 2003 to 130,188 in 2007. This includes the loss of nearly 15,000 teachers, 4,400 district administrators, and 1,400 school administrators, while the number of instructional coordinators has tripled and support staff has increased by 30% (School Data Direct, 2009). The decrease in teaching staff has primarily been seen at the elementary level, where there are 44% fewer teachers than in 2003. These drastic changes in staffing trends come at a time when operating expenditures per student have increased in all areas, with instructional expenditures in particular increasing more than 18% between 2002 and 2006 (School Data Direct, 2009).

Approximately 98% of core courses in the 2007-08 school year were taught by highly qualified teachers, in line with Ohio's Teacher Equity Plan whose goal is "... to have a highly qualified teacher in every classroom for every student – regardless of race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, disability or English language proficiency" (Ohio Department of Education, 2009). High poverty schools were less likely to have highly qualified teachers compared to low poverty schools. In high poverty settings, 10-13% of teachers lacked appropriate qualifications, compared to less than 1.2% in low poverty schools.

SUMMARY

Ohio's student population is generally reflective of regional demographics. The state has been making progress in proficiency levels on the NAEP and graduation rates. However, there are troubling discrepancies in NAEP results, discipline rates, and graduation rates across races. Children identified as Black are disproportionately identified as having a disability, are less likely to be served in general education settings, have higher discipline rates, and lower graduation and NAEP results. These disparities in access and outcomes are a cause for concern, and underscore the necessity for systemic change efforts to ensure equitable opportunities to learn for all students. In addition, the changes in staffing raise concerns about organizational capacity to support learners. It may be that some of the reduction in force created more efficiency, but the implications of the loss



of so many teachers is something to be examined more closely. One issue that resonates in Ohio and nationwide is the disparity between the qualifications and experiences of teachers in affluent communities and those in high-poverty, urban areas, in addition to the decreasing diversity of the teaching and professional force (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1999). Much of the field is unprepared to provide appropriate, powerful opportunities to learn to students from diverse backgrounds.

Understanding both national and state education data is an important step in improving educational systems. In this section, we have only provided a basic overview of Ohio's educational data. In-depth analysis is necessary to understand the experiences of students and the relationship between outcomes disparities in resources and access. Policies and practices, which will be explored henceforth, are important in understanding educational outcomes, as they provide an understanding of available educational opportunities.

POLICY

Policies include guidelines enacted at federal, state, LEA, and school levels that influence funding, resource allocation, accountability, curriculum, instruction, and other key aspects of schooling. This section explores Ohio's educational policies, with particular attention to the implication such policies have for students identified as CLD and/or disabled.

Innovative Education

In the recent version of House Bill 1 (HB 1), Section 3301.07 (2009), the state board will require public schools to emphasize teaching of energy and resource conservation beginning in the primary grades. Each district board of education will solicit leading business persons in the community involved in energy production and conservation to assist in instructional recommendations for students. HB 1 also states that the State Board of Education (SBE) will adopt standards by July

2010 for business education in grades K-12. "Business education" includes accounting, career development, economics, personal finance, entrepreneurship, information technology, management, and marketing.

GOVERNANCE

The SBE sets education policy and directs planning and evaluation of Ohio public schools as well as appointing the superintendent of public instruction. The SBE consists of 19 members, 11 of which are elected and eight appointed by the governor, all of whom serve four-year terms. Each of the 11 elected board members represents a specific school district. The eight appointed members are assigned to represent rural or urban school districts (four each). The Superintendent of Public Instruction serves as secretary of the State Board of Education.

ASSESSMENT

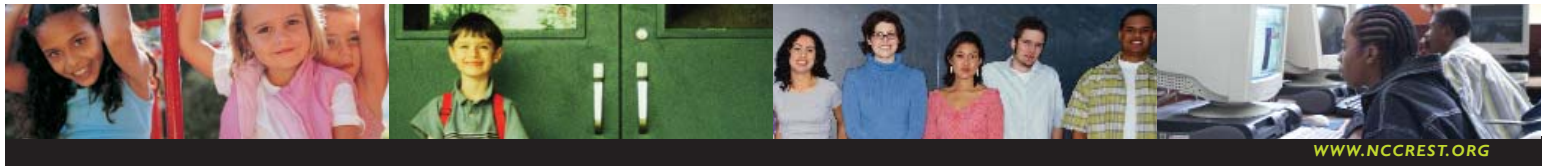
Beginning in 2000, Ohio developed a standards based system with content standards for every subject and grade level, which is aligned with curriculum and assessment, including Ohio's Grade 3-8 Achievement Tests in reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writing. Alternative assessments are designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The alternative assessments include grade-level content but also include a collection of evidence showing the student's performance reflecting the level of achievement for each individual student (Ohio Department of Education, 2009).

Accommodations are provided on state assessments that assist students with an IEP, 504 or Limited English Proficient (LEP) status allows for use of special testing accommodations. Examples of accommodations include: English audio CD-ROMs, large print formats, oral translation scripts, and bilingual forms of printed tests in Spanish, Korean, Somali, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese.

In order to graduate with a high school diploma, students must pass all five parts of the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT). Students take the test beginning the spring of their sophomore year in high school and have seven opportunities to pass. Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) are aligned to Ohio's academic content standards, which were adopted by the State Board of Education in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Failure in one subject area of the OGT may qualify a student for the Alternative Pathway for diploma eligibility. A diploma may still be awarded to students whose IEPs excuse them from the OGT

| Preliminary Designation | | Value-Added Measure | Final Designation |
|-------------------------|-----|--|----------------------------|
| Excellent | and | Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years | Excellent with Distinction |
| | | Otherwise no effect on rating | Excellent |
| Effective | and | Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years | Excellent |
| | | Otherwise no effect on rating | Effective |
| Continuous Improvement | and | Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years | Effective |
| | | Otherwise no effect on rating | Continuous Improvement |
| Academic Watch | and | Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years | Continuous Improvement |
| | | Otherwise no effect on rating | Academic Watch |
| Academic Emergency | and | Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years | Academic Watch |
| | | Otherwise no effect on rating | Academic Emergency |

Figure 12: Value-Added Measure for Ohio School District AYP Designation



requirement. Federal law requires every student must take the OGT or an alternate assessment. LEP students must pass the OGT to be awarded a diploma.

Adequate Yearly Progress

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) must be assessed for each school within a district as required by No Child Left Behind. Categorical placements are made based on school achievement records and each state has different methods of determining AYP. In Ohio, district report card designations are determined through a multi-step process. First, the preliminary rating is assessed which is passed on 1) the percentage of indicators met, 2) the performance index score, and 3) AYP status. There are two ways that AYP can affect the primary designation:

1. If district meets AYP in the current year, it will not be rated below Continuous Improvement
2. If district does not meet AYP for three consecutive years and does not meet AYP in more than one student group for the current year, it will not be rated higher than Continuous Improvement

Once the preliminary designation is determined, the district's rating is then subject to the value-added measure (see Figure 12 for how the value-added measure affects the designation).

Upon further investigation, glaring differences are seen in student population demographics between schools in "Academic Watch" and schools designated as "Excellent with Distinction" (see Figure 13). For example, the average rate of special education placement is 18.4% in districts designated with Academic Watch, compared to just 11.61% in Excellent with Distinction districts. Three of the eight districts on Academic Watch have special education placement rates of 20 or more percent. In addition, seven of the same eight districts report more than 70 percent of their students as economically disadvantaged. Less than ten percent of students are placed in the same category among a random sampling of nine districts designated Excellent with Distinction.

Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

State law requires that students unlikely to pass the Ohio Achievement or Graduation Tests be identified for intervention. Ohio's Comprehensive System of Learning Support (CSLS) refers to school, community, and family resources, practices, and factors that support student learning (Ohio Department of Education, 2009). The guidelines are designed to assist districts and schools in early identification and intervention, and encompass special education, gifted education, and LEP services. The guidelines are based on the assumption that every student should demonstrate academic growth every year, and provide steps and process indicators to assist districts and schools in planning, implementation, and evaluation of their CSLS.

SCHOOL CHOICE & SPECIAL FUNDING OPTIONS

Various Scholarships

Ohio offers 14,000 scholarships through the EdChoice Program to students in persistently under-performing schools. The scholarship is used for the student to attend a participating chartered nonpublic school, and only covers tuition; parents/caregivers are responsible for any other fees. Students must re-apply each year to continue receiving funds.

Cleveland Municipal School District recently started the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program, a program that provides funding for students to attend private schools within Cleveland for grades K-8. Parents/caregivers are still responsible for a certain percentage of private school tuition (10-25) depending on the family gross annual income. Scholarships are awarded based on a lottery selection, with priority given to students from low-income families.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Under state Senate Bill 311 the State Board of Education is required to adopt recommendations to support parent engagement while districts are required to adopt policies on parent involvement that encourage effective communication and allow for family's active participation in educational experiences. The SBE provides guidance to districts via the provision of models and professional development, and the Board's recommendations feature an inclusive definition of family that acknowledges the wide array of caregivers involved in students' lives. Respect, collaboration, and community partnerships are emphasized.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

The SBE also provides guidelines to assist districts and school in creating safe, supportive learning environments, emphasizing that every student should feel welcomed and respected. The guidelines are aimed at administrators, and emphasize data-based decision making, ongoing self-assessment, professional learning, best practices, stakeholder involvement, community partnerships, close collaboration with families and respect for parent decisions. The SBE has established nine guidelines with a number of benchmarks for successful schools and descriptions of related policies and practices.

EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF STUDENTS

School Funding

District schools rely on local, state, and federal funding. Districts receive the majority of funding from the local (48.3%) and state levels (43.6%). The remaining 8.2% of funding comes from the federal level. In 1991, the Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding, represented over 500 school districts and filed suit in the Perry against the State of Ohio for failing to provide adequate funding to educate the state's students (*DeRolph v. State of Ohio*; Ohio Historical Society, 2009a). In the suit, districts claimed that the state failed to provide an "efficient" educational system by relying too heavily upon local property taxes to fund schools. The districts argued that school systems in areas with higher property values could provide more funding opportunities for their students, while students in lower-income areas suffered. In 1994 a judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, but was later overturned in appeals. The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled that the school-funding process in Ohio is unconstitutional on multiple oc-

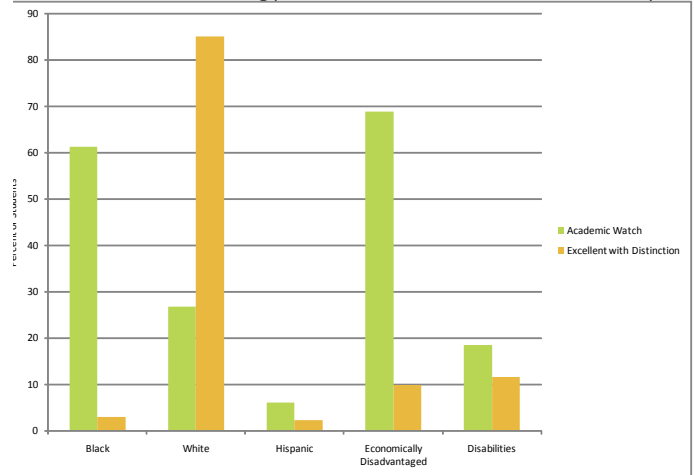
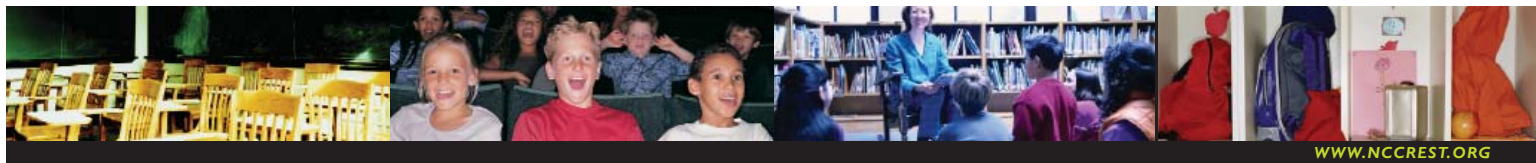


Figure 13: Difference in Student Populations Between Schools Designated Academic Watch or Excellent with Distinction



casions (later over-turned), however it has provided no clear guidance on how to remedy the funding situation. In addition, *Doe v. State of Ohio* (C2-91-46) (Ohio Legal Rights Service, 2009) challenges the way Ohio funds special education and related services and challenges ODE's procedures for implementing IDEA. After a year of negotiation, a partial settlement was reached in May 2009 in regard to the way ODE implements IDEA; however it does not settle the challenges to the way Ohio funds special education.

Language Support

The Lau Resource Center at the Ohio Department of Education was named after the Supreme Court case in 1974 of *Lau v. Nichols*, a class-action suit filed on behalf of Chinese-speaking students in San Francisco public schools. In its decision, the court stated "there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (414 U.S. at 566, 1974). Among the goals of the Lau Resource Center are to value students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as vital resources, promote collaboration between schools and families with culturally and linguistically diverse students, and to promote multicultural education.

State guidelines require that districts identify all students whose primary or home language is not English. ELLs must be identified using the Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition. The type of language support provided is at the discretion of individual districts, assuming that it is based on best practice and sound theory, and that staff are properly trained. In order to exit LEP programs, students must attain proficiency on this test, in addition to successfully completing a trial period in general education classes for at least one year and receiving a score at or above proficiency on the state assessment in reading and writing.

School Segregation

Federal courts were involved in ending segregation in Ohio schools as late as 1986 (Ohio Historical Society, 2009b). This was especially evident in Cleveland where many residents moved into the suburbs, while African-Americans remained in the city. Segregation has again become an issue in Ohio as many districts cut busing to save money in tough budget years. Limited busing has led to a de facto segregation of schools.

A formidable concern for Ohio students is the economic segregation seen in schools in metropolitan areas. Economic and racial segregation tend to highly correlated in urban areas in Ohio, and the majority of CLD students attend high-poverty schools (Powell, Reno, & Reece, 2005). A study produced by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University (Powell, Reno, & Reece, 2005) reported Black students in the metropolitan areas of Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo attend schools that are 2 to 3 times more impoverished than their White peers. The average White student typically attends a school with a poverty rate (measured by percent of students receiving free/reduced lunch) of 23% to 30% in these metropolitan areas. In contrast, the average Black students in these same regions attend schools with poverty rates of 61% to 78%.

Glaring differences are seen in student population demographics between schools in "Academic Watch" and schools designated as "Excellent with Distinction" per Ohio AYP standards (see Figure 13).

As illustrated in the graph, Black students are the racial majority in schools on Academic Watch, while Whites are the racial majority in schools that are Excellent with Distinction. In addition, the average rate of special education placement is 18.4% in districts designated with Academic Watch, compared to just 11.61% in Excellent with Distinction districts. Three of the eight districts on Academic Watch have special education placement rates of 20 or more percent. In addition, seven of the same eight districts report more than 70 percent of their students as economically disadvantaged. Less than ten percent of students are placed in the same category among a random sampling of nine districts designated Excellent with Distinction. Schools in high-poverty areas are more likely to be composed of

Black students, and are more likely to be in the three lower AYP categorizations (Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, and Academic Emergency).

SUMMARY

Educational policy is an important element in the institutionalization of opportunities to learn, and can either support or hinder the development of equitable, culturally responsive systems. Policy analysis and advocacy are critical in creating systemic changes that support equitable access, participation, and outcomes in educational systems. Multiple examples of racial and economic segregation have been provided in this section, a systemic problem underlying educational opportunities. Disparities in school funding and special education funding have been recognized in Ohio for many years, yet no solutions have been provided. Challenges to special education funding have also raised concerns about the state's education policies. Nevertheless, the state has made important steps in creating supportive learning environments, particularly in its policies around family involvement, school climate, and learning supports. These policies, which are distinct yet coherent, emphasize creating districts and schools that have the potential to establish powerful structures for early intervening and stakeholder participation to the benefit of all students.

PRACTICES

Within this report, "practice" is used to refer to the procedures, models and strategies utilized by educators to foster positive educational outcomes. Here, we explore state-level general and special education practices and programs designed to improve student outcomes.

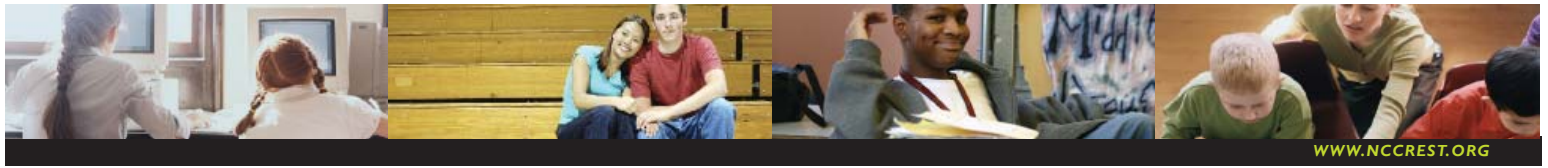
THE OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Ohio recently began the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) to provide a statewide system of support for improving achievement for all student groups through district and school capacity building. The OIP includes four steps: (1) use data to identify areas of greatest need; (2) develop a plan to address those areas of need that is built around a limited number of focused goals and strategies to significantly improve instructional practice and student performance; (3) implement the plan with integrity; and (4) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the improvement process in changing instructional practice and impacting student performance (Ohio Department of Education, 2009).

The OIP also requires districts rather than the ODE to determine critical needs and appropriate strategies to address them effectively. Needs assessment is guided by the web-based Decision Framework tool that guides administrators through the process of considering relevant data by asking critical questions. Districts with high levels of need receive additional assistance from the State Diagnostic Team. Districts are therefore able to utilize state, local, and regional resources more effectively to assist in achieving their goals. There is also a focus on developing effective leadership to support district-wide scaling up and sustainability based on meta-analytic studies of leadership structures that support student achievement.

Ohio Integrated Systems Model (OISM)

OISM is a three-tiered, school-wide model of prevention and intervention used in addressing the academic and behavioral needs of all students. In the districts where OISM is being implemented, district and building leaderships are being formed to develop action plans to include high quality professional development for implementing school-wide academic and behavior supports and progress



monitoring. A district priority of closing achievement gap and a commitment to multi-year, long-term improvement through internal capacity building, and parent participation are emphasized. Professional learning specifically addressing culturally responsive practices is provided and the need to support the success of all students is foregrounded. The OISM requires the use of collaborative strategic planning and problem-solving processes. Launched in 2005, OISM is spearheaded by the Office for Exceptional Children and grew out of statewide behavior and academic support initiatives as well as the state's operating standards for schools. The model for professional development and technical assistance is built around (1) communities of practice as universal assistance, (2) capacity building as targeted assistance, and promotion of systems change as intensive assistance.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The state has established standards for teachers, principals, and superintendents to guide professional learning and support teachers and administrators through the various stages of their careers. The main ideas embodied in the standards are consistent with the basic notions underlying state policies on early intervening and school climate. While not directly tied to teacher preparation or licensure, they do inform both systems. These standards also undergird the state's career lattice framework, which allows for horizontal, vertical, and diagonal movement within careers.

LITERACY

The state funds 16 full-time regional literacy consultants to support administrators, teachers, and school-based literacy consultants in developing and implementing district literacy plans. Consultants assist with the development, implementation, and evaluation of these plans, in addition to providing ongoing professional learning around research-based literacy practices.

EARLY LEARNING

Early Literacy

As of March 2007, the ODE required every child entering public kindergarten complete the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy. The ODE developed this brief assessment to assess a child's developing literacy within the first six weeks of kindergarten and assist in instructional planning. The state provides resources for teachers and families in order to increase understanding of early literacy skills. Scores are used to target identified students for further assessment and instruction, and strategies, lessons, activities, and additional resources are provided on the ODE website.

Even Start

Even Start is a family literacy program designed to improve educational outcomes of low-income families with young children. The program contains four components which are designed to build on one another: early childhood education, adult basic and literacy education, parenting education, and parent-child together time.

Help Me Grow

The ODE and Ohio Department of Health work together to provide Help Me Grow, a program that provides direct services to babies and toddlers who are at risk for developmental delays or who have developmental delays or disabilities through a family-centered approach.

Parent Academy

Parent Academies are free two-hour workshops for parents on various childhood

related topics to help parents support and encourage their child's learning and development. Workshop topics include: academic content standards, school improvement, conditions for learning, and reading.

IMPROVING SECONDARY EDUCATION

High Schools That Work

Beginning in 1998, Ohio joined the High School that Work (HSTW) network. Since then, participation has increased from 13 to 100 high schools. HSTW is a national network of more than 1,200 schools in 32 states that agree to adopt the program's school improvement model in an effort to improve student outcomes. The state has also designed its own Making Middle Grades Work program in 2002 to extend these efforts. There are now approximately 90 schools involved in this program. Goals of the program include building knowledge through action research, encouraging data-based decision making, supporting professional learning providing technical assistance, rigorous curriculum and career preparation, and creating a statewide network. For ten years now the state has held an annual School Improvement Institute for education and community member sharing strategies for improving outcomes.

Increasing Post-Secondary Enrollment

In 2008, Governor Strickland announced a new initiative called Seniors to Sophomores, a program designed to help students accelerate their college education. The program allows qualified high school seniors to earn both high school and college credit for certain courses. High school seniors can earn up to one year's worth of college credits at no cost. Forty-nine of Ohio's school districts received funding for this program in the 2008-09 school year.

Ohio also has ten Early College High Schools throughout the state, small schools designed so students can earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or up to two years of credit towards a Bachelor's degree. The priority of these schools is increase the amount of postsecondary degrees among students in low-income families, first-generation college students, ELL students, and students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

EQUITY IN EDUCATION PRACTICES

Inclusion

The premise of inclusive schools is that all children should have access to similar educational outcomes despite disability (Ferguson, 2006). In an effort to increase inclusionary practices, Ohio received a SpecialQuest Birth-Five grant in 2007 from the Hilton Foundation and the Office of Head Start. The major goal of the grant is to work with SpecialQuest in supporting high quality inclusive services for children from birth to five years old with disabilities and their families.

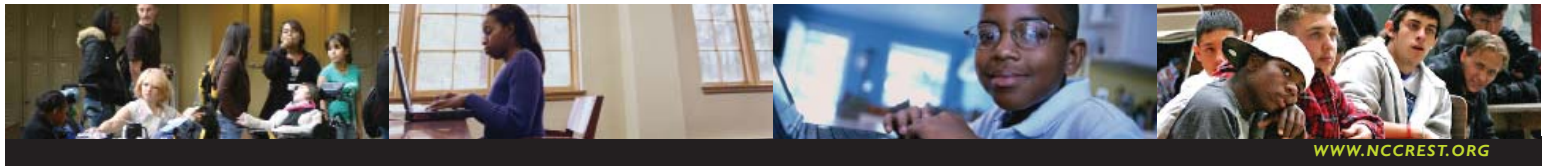
The state also reports that in an effort to increase students' with disabilities access to general education, the state includes focused monitoring of this area in district investigations when this group performs poorly on state assessments and is working to improve data reporting related to placement in the least restrictive environment.

Racial and Economic Equality

Ohio has multiple programs designed to address racial and economic inequality within the public school system.

Schools of Promise

The concerning difference in achievement scores among races was discussed in the People section of this report, with the most prominent difference seen be-



tween Black and White students' achievement scores. To help close achievement gaps in Ohio, the ODE developed a program to identify, "Schools of Promise" for their progress in ensuring high achievement for all students and to increase awareness of the ability of Ohio schools to close achievement gaps. An additional effort to close achievement gaps began in 2007 when the superintendent of Middletown Public Schools collaborated with Miami University, ODE, Pacific Educational Group, Inc., and West Wind Educational Policy Inc to create The Consortium on Racial Equity in K-12. The Consortium examines achievement gaps and racial equity within the schools and also aims to educate teachers to understand their own racial biases and eliminate their negative effects in the classroom. Currently, there are six Ohio school districts involved in the consortium.

Teacher Equity

Highly qualified teachers in Ohio are more likely to be teaching in schools with less poverty, fewer students of color, and in schools with higher achievement. Recognizing this unfortunate trend, the state's Teacher Equity Plan established 68 strategies to ensure equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers across all schools, with an emphasis on career-long support and improving the distribution of the least experienced or qualified teachers and the goal of ensuring that there is a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. In 2006, the Office of Teacher Equity was established to implement the plan. The Office has established an infrastructure for collecting and analyzing teacher equity data and has focused on establishing partnerships with districts and other agencies to support this work. Conveying the necessity of teacher equity has also been a priority of the Office.

In addition, The Council Attracting Prospective Educators (CAPE) is one effort in Ohio to identify and attract young people from diverse backgrounds to a career in teaching, with a goal of increasing the minority representation in the teaching profession within Ohio. Established in 1990, the Council hosts a five-day academy for high school students in a university setting, with the goal of developing leadership skills, interacting with professional role models, and exploring education careers. Up to 50 students participate each summer with the support of high school administrators.

21st Century Community Learning Center

The goal of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) is to help students to meet state academic achievement standards in reading and math through expanded learning opportunities. This federally funded grant program supports high-quality, before- and after-school learning opportunities and activities for students who attend eligible schools.

Student Health

The benefits of healthy eating are numerous and well-known. However, individuals in low income homes tend to eat fewer servings of vegetables and fruit than do those in higher income homes and African Americans tend to have the lowest intakes of fruits and vegetables among ethnic and racial groups (USDA, 2005). Ohio has two programs in place in public schools to help children develop healthy eating habits; Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and Coordinated School Health Program.

ODE receives funds from the Department of Agriculture's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program which is designed to provide fresh fruit and vegetable snacks to students during the school day in schools that have at least 50 percent of their students eligible for free or reduced lunch. As noted in the People section of this report, minority students are more likely to be economically disadvantaged in Ohio. Therefore this program is targeting the populations in highest need for nutritious food: low income, and African American.

A more widespread program, the Coordinated School Health Program focuses on helping schools and communities integrate best practice wellness strategies. Eight related health areas are included in this initiative: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, counseling and psychological

services, healthy school environment, healthy promotion for staff, and family/ community involvement.

Special Education Disproportionality

Racial disproportionality in special education is an area of federal priority. Each year, states are required to examine district's identification data to determine whether significant disproportionality exists, and to determine what disproportionality is due to inappropriate policies, procedures, or practices as part of the state's Annual Performance Report (APR). Ohio defines significant disproportionality as risk ratios greater than 3.5 and a minimum cell size of 30. In previous years, the criteria had been set at 2.0. Districts with significant disproportionality must complete the disproportionality self-review in order to ensure compliance with IDEA. The review consists of an eleven item check sheet in which districts indicate compliance (yes/no) with specific aspects of the federal legislation (e.g., "Educational programs and experiences shall be designed and implemented to provide a general education of high quality for all students. Instruction shall include intervention that is designed to meet student needs.").

Ohio's most recent APR indicated that no districts were found to have disproportionality in overall special education identification by the state's criteria. The state explained the change in criteria by stating that individual student placement had such a significant impact on district risk that the increase from 2.0 to 3.5 was necessary. In previous years, between 6 and 9 districts were identified as having significant disproportionality, but none indicated any inappropriate policies, practices, or procedures in their self-reviews. The state also described improvement activities aimed at addressing disproportionality, including observing Wisconsin's Summer Institute Addressing Disproportionality, participating in Miami University's Consortium on Racial Equity in K-12 Education, and hosting a Special Education Leadership Conference to provide guidance on special education policies and programs. The state has also developed policy guidance documents.

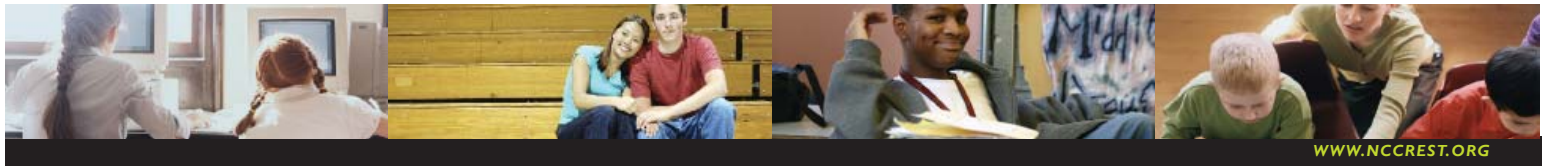
Technical Assistance from NCCRESt

NCCRESt staff provided technical assistance and professional development to Ohio from 2004 to 2007. As a partner state, Ohio received in-depth monthly coaching and mentoring along with national meetings, site visits, problem solving sessions, leadership academies, a variety of tools and materials developed through the Project and targeted assistance with state identified issues related to disproportionality and culturally responsive systems.

Additionally, NCCRESt developed a workshop in 2006 focused on creating culturally responsive systems that was presented to the Ohio Big 8 Community of Practice Meeting. The workshop involved eight districts in Ohio where discussion and planning began across the district level using the "Pyramid of Learning" integrated systems model. In 2007, NCCRESt held professional development workshops with presentations on understanding culture and diversity and systems change.

SUMMARY

Ohio has made efforts to address the achievement gap, improve early childhood education and interventions, and increase inclusionary practices. Following the Ohio Improvement Process model, Ohio will need to collect and analyze data to ensure progress is being made with the programs in place. Both in policy and practice, the state has recognized the need for ongoing continuous improvement and the importance of addressing how a variety of factors that influence achievement. School-wide prevention and early intervening and professional learning are emphasized.



SYNTHESIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

All students should be afforded high-quality opportunities to learn. Yet, educational data for the state, and for the nation at large, suggest that systems are falling behind in their obligation to equitably prepare all children to be contributing members of society. Such disparities are tied to the inequities that shape the current sociopolitical context and create a number of negative economic, social, and political conditions. Providing all children with access to highly effective teachers, rigorous curriculum, and instructional resources are important elements of creating more equitable systems.

Education is a critical factor in determining a number of later social and economic outcomes for individual, and for the larger community, as it is estimated that 60% of the population will need post-secondary education for the U.S. to be competitive globally (Lemke et al., 2004). The economic consequences of poor education are high—include high health costs, crime related costs, lost taxes, and lost lifetime earnings (The Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2009). Without equitable educational opportunity, we will continue to fail to cultivate our greatest resource – our citizenship. Culturally responsive education systems are grounded in the belief that all students can excel in academic endeavors if their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning and development and if they are provided with access to high quality teachers, programs, curricula, and resources.

One important aspect of understanding educational systems is viewing them as embedded within a broader social context. Located in the Midwest most residents are concentrated in the state’s metropolitan areas. More than 84% of residents are White, indicating that the state is less diverse than the nation, where approximately one-third of residents are members of a racial minority. It is the seventh most populous state in the nation, having experienced rapid growth in the 1950s followed by a drastically decreased growth rate (Ohio Department of Development, 2009). More than 84% of residents are White, indicating that the state is less diverse than the nation, where approximately one-third of residents are members of a racial minority. Residents who are CLD tend to be younger, have less education and lower income, live in urban areas, and be harder hit by unemployment. More residents possess high school diplomas than is typical nationally, but rates of post-secondary education lag behind national averages.

The Ohio Department of Education currently serves approximately 1.75 million students in 614 public education agencies. Ohio students tend to achieve above the national average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in both reading and math. While most student subgroups have made impressive gains, there continue to be large gaps for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students classified as economically disadvantaged. Racial achievement gaps are also substantial. Recent analysis indicates that Ohio’s disparity in opportunity to learn for students from CLD and economically disadvantaged backgrounds relative to their White peers are among the worst in the nation, especially for Black students. Glaring differences are seen in student population demographics between schools in “Academic Watch” and schools designated as “Excellent with Distinction” per Ohio AYP standards with Black students as the racial majority in schools on Academic Watch, and Whites are the racial majority in schools that are Excellent with Distinction. The average rate of special education placement is 18.4% in districts designated with Academic Watch, compared to just 11.61% in Excellent with Distinction districts. Three of the eight districts on Academic Watch have special education placement rates of 20 or more percent. In addition, seven of the same eight districts report more than 70 percent of their students as economically disadvantaged. Schools in high-poverty areas are more likely to be composed of Black students, and are more likely to be in the three lower AYP categorizations (Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, and Academic Emergency).

While access to college preparatory curriculum is high (as measured by CLD students’ enrollment in AP classes compared to White and Asian enrollment), relative to other states, access to early childhood education and effective teachers is limited. Almost all teachers in Ohio have a Bachelor’s degree or higher (99%) and 59 percent hold a Master’s degree or higher. High poverty schools were less likely to have highly qualified teachers compared to low poverty schools. In high poverty settings, 10-13% of teachers lacked appropriate qualifications, compared to less than 1.2% in low poverty schools.

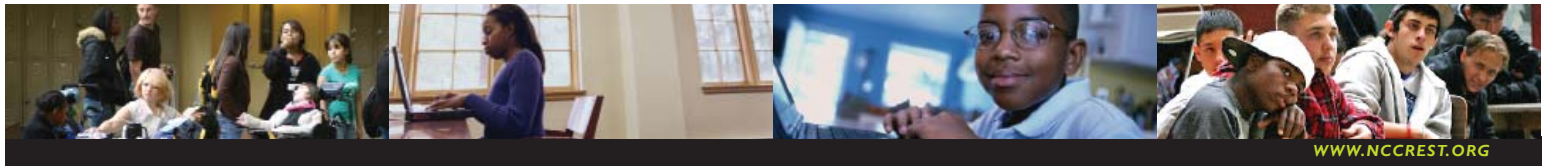
Nearly 15% of students receive special education services, with Black and American Indian students approximately 30% more likely to be identified than their White peers. Black students in particular are 2 to 2.5 times more likely to be identified as having emotional or cognitive disabilities. Additionally, Black and Hispanic students are 1.5 to 2 times more likely to be removed from general education settings for the majority of the school day in order to receive services, and CLD students in general are more likely to be subject to disciplinary consequences. Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students are also 40% to 60% less likely to be identified for gifted/talented programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ohio has made impressive efforts to address disparities in outcomes. Both in policy and practice, the state has recognized the need for ongoing continuous improvement and the importance of addressing how a variety of factors that influence achievement. School-wide prevention, early intervening, systems change, and professional learning are emphasized. Efforts to ensure equity must be expanded state-wide to truly ensure that all students have access to high quality opportunities to learn.

The state must consider how conceptualizations of access and disproportionality support or hinder efforts to promote equity. It appears that state support for increasing general education access for students with disabilities and decreasing minority disproportionality in special education is limited. There are few policies or practices aimed at specifically improving access to LRE, and state criteria for significant disproportionality raise concern about the degree to which districts are being pressured to explore and address disproportionality. There continues to be a lack of clarity across states about the relationship of disproportionality to education policies, practices, and procedures that create the context within general education for a pipeline to special education that results in over- and under-identification. States need to be concerned about asking districts to look at the precipitating policies and practices that result in under- and overrepresentation and that create challenges for multidisciplinary teams making special education decisions at the local building level. Disproportionality cannot be adequately addressed by only altering a specific process that determines who is eligible to enter special education. A variety of studies have demonstrated that students are often referred to special education for reasons that have to do with teacher quality, curricular adequacy, opportunities to learn, and the social and cultural expectations of buildings. State-wide efforts in these areas should be linked to efforts to address disproportionality.

What’s more, “outcomes” must be conceptualized as more than test scores in order to acknowledge the variety of ways in which student experiences contribute to specific results. Race-based disparities are apparent in a variety of domains within the educational systems, such as discipline, school completion, and access to learning opportunities. Educational data must be made transparent so that educators and stakeholders can engage in awareness raising, critical conversations, and ongoing reflection. In-depth analysis is necessary to understand the experiences of students and the relationship between outcomes disparities in resources and access. In the end, policy must be translated into practice in coordinated ways that lead to systemic change at all levels.



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