The Journal of Negro Education, 75 (3), 495-505

Still Separate and Unequal: Examining Race, Opportunity, and School Achievement in "Integrated" Suburbs

John B. Diamond **Harvard Graduate School of Education**

Recent research examines the Black/White achievement gap in integrated, affluent suburban schools. This gap is particularly vexing more than 50 years after the Brown v. Board of Education *(1954) decision emphasized creating educational equity through school desegregation. Drawing on a case study of one suburban school district, this article details the structural, institutional, and symbolic inequalities that characterize such settings and contribute to educational inequality. The case reveals that, even in ostensibly integrated suburbs, Black and White students navigate a racialized educational terrain that provides cumulative advantages for Whites and disadvantages for Blacks. Implications for the future of race and educational achievement are discussed.*

More than 50 years after the *Brown* decision (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954), African Americans have made substantial gains in educational attainment. In 1940, only 12% of African Americans had graduated from high school and 2% had graduated from college (Bowen & Bok, 1998). According to 2000 census data, 72% of the Black population over 25 years old has graduated from high school and 14.3% have graduated from college (Baunman & Graf, 2003). However, despite these achievements, racial disparities between Black and White students in educational test scores, outcomes, and attainment remain (Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Lee, 2002). While racial achievement gaps on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP, the only nationally representative assessment of student achievement) closed substantially during the 1970s and 1980s, they have widened over the past decade and a half (Lee, 2002). In light of the *Brown* decision and its focus on creating equality of educational opportunity through school integration, racial gaps are particularly troubling in integrated suburban school districts (Ferguson, 2002; Ogbu, 2003). On the surface, these schools seem to be the fulfillment of *Brown*'s goals—racial integration coupled with high achievement. However, underneath the surface, a persistent pattern of racial inequality remains.

While Black students in integrated, affluent suburbs often outperform Black students in urban schools and less affluent suburbs, wide gaps in grades, test scores, and course-taking practices exist between Black and White students in these contexts (Noguera & Wing, 2006; Ogbu, 2003). This has been raised as a vexing problem in recent research (Ogbu, 2003) and among practitioners in some of these districts. In fact, concern for this issue led to the founding of one national and several regional school district consortia focused on challenging racial achievement gaps.

Some scholars and practitioners wonder why racial gaps persist in communities in which Black and White students attend the same schools and come from families with similar social class characteristics. While some see affluent suburbs as bastions of racial integration and progress, racial separation and inequality are still prevalent in such locations. However, in the contemporary context, this separation is maintained through much more subtle processes of exclusion than in the past. In this article, the ways in which race, class, and educational opportunities intertwine to reinforce racial achievement gaps are examined. In particular, in the contemporary U.S., students navigate a racialized educational terrain in which structural, institutional, and symbolic advantages and disadvantages are distributed unequally based on race. The concept of the racialized educational terrain draws on Bonilla-Silva's (2001) racialized social system framework, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this article. The racialized educational terrain focuses on

the ways that multiple disadvantages accumulate within the racialized terrain specific to education. African Americans are disadvantaged in these three ways: (a) structurally by having limited access to valued resources outside of schools, (b) institutionally by being positioned systematically in the least advantaged locations for learning inside schools, and (c) ideologically by having their intellectual capacity questioned and their cultural styles devalued both within schools and in the broader social discourse. These disadvantages are key ingredients that contribute to racial achievement disparities generally, and, particularly, within suburban contexts. However, in the post-Civil Rights era, the mechanisms that support these inequalities have increasingly become subtle and require responses that account for the shifting racial terrain that students navigate. Indeed, "...there is no magic, in either mixed schools or in segregated schools" (Du Bois, 1935, p. 335), because race continues to provide structural, institutional, and symbolic advantages to some groups and disadvantages to others regardless of the racial composition of schools.

In this article, the author draws on survey, school, and census data primarily from one school district, Lakeside (a pseudonym), to illustrate how advantages and disadvantages associated with race accumulate within the contemporary educational terrain. This article borrows material from the author's ongoing research on this and other suburban school districts (Diamond, 2005, 2006; Diamond, Lewis, & Gordon, 2006). In the conclusion, some of the ways that the racialized educational terrain may shape race and achievement in the future are explored and strategies for creating a more just situation are suggested.

Understanding Race and Achievement in Integrated Suburbs

Disparities in achievement in affluent, integrated suburban schools raise challenges for common perceptions of racial achievement gaps. For example, if achievement gaps are a function of social class disparities or differences in students' educational opportunities, then why should these gaps persist in these suburbs? In responding to this question, some analysts, like anthropologist Ogbu (2003), have emphasized cultural arguments that focus on students' and parents' educational orientations. Ogbu studied schools in Shaker Heights, Ohio, at the invitation of the school district and members of the Black community, and argued that "community forces"—educational orientations, beliefs, and behaviors within the Black community—were key ingredients that helped explain the racial achievement gaps found there. Ogbu suggested that as a result of racial discrimination in employment, skepticism about the ultimate payoff for educational investment, and perceptions of unfair treatment by school personnel, members of the Black community disengage from the educational process. This argument builds on a long line of work using Ogbu's cultural ecology and oppositional culture frameworks (Carter, 2005; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1974, 1978; Tyson, Darity, & Castellano, 2005).

While exerting a major influence on scholarly and popular perceptions of the Black/White achievement gap (O'Connor, Horvat, & Lewis, 2006), one major problem with cultural arguments of this type is that most research does not support them (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Cook & Ludwig, 1998). While conservative commentators like McWhorter (2000) develop abstract cultural arguments that disconnect cultural patterns from their structural roots and blame African American culture for school failure, an increasingly well-established body of survey, interview, and observational research challenges cultural explanations which suggest that African American peer groups disparage educational achievement (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2002; Tyson, Darity, & Castellano, 2005). This body of research indicates that Black students are just as engaged in school as their White peers (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998), study just as hard (Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Ferguson, 2002), and have more positive attitudes toward school (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998). Although the evidence is mixed, some research also indicates that high-achieving Black students are popular with their peers (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2002). Fryer (2006) takes exception, suggesting that, in integrated schools, high-achieving African American students with grade point averages (GPAs) of 3. 5 or above (on a 4. 0 scale) have fewer friends than their lower-achieving counterparts. For some schools, research suggests that Black

parents contact schools and participate in parent-teacher organizations at higher rates than White parents from the same social class (Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Henig, Hula, Orr, & Pedescleaux, 1999; Kerbow & Bernhardt, 1993). The historical record is replete with examples of high levels of educational investment among African Americans—including the struggle for school integration itself, which suggests a history of investment in education (Anderson, 1988; Perry, 2003).

Perhaps this culture of disengagement is particular to elite suburban schools like Shaker Heights (Ogbu, 2003). Survey research from 15 suburban school districts, including Shaker Heights (involving close to 40,000 6th- to12th-grade students); do not show high levels of oppositional orientations among Black students. In fact, the research shows that African American students were more likely than Whites to report that their Black friends think it is very important to study hard and get good grades (Diamond, 2005; Ferguson, 2002). Nevertheless, very few Black, White, Latino/a or Asian students report that their peers make fun of them for doing well in school. Finally, as with the research using nationally representative data sets, students from all racial groups taking similar classes reported spending about the same amount of time on homework (with the exception of Asian students who spend significantly more time; Ferguson, 2002). The studies by Diamond (2005) and Ferguson (2002) raise serious questions about the cultural argument put forward by Ogbu's study of Shaker Heights.

A second critical assumption in Ogbu's study is that Whites and Blacks in Shaker Heights are in similar social class situations. In a critique of "social class status" theories of the achievement gap, Ogbu contends that "none of the versions of class-inequality can explain why Black students from similar social class backgrounds, residing in the same neighborhoods, and attending the same schools, don't do as well as White students" (Ogbu, 2003, p. 35). In the introduction to his book, Ogbu writes that "according to the 1990 census, about 32.6% of the Black households in Shaker Heights and 58% of the White households, had an average annual family income of $50,000 to over $100,000" (Ogbu, 2003, p. xii). In contrast to Ogbu's claims, the racial disparities in income mentioned above (25%) cannot be ignored. In places like Shaker Heights and Lakeside, Black and White students attend the same racially desegregated schools, but Black and White students and their families lead very separate and distinct lives outside of the schools. The boundaries associated with this separation are often tied to social class. The oppositional cultural arguments that have long held sway with scholars, educators, and the general public lack consistent empirical support (Carter 2005; Tyson, Darity, & Castellano, 2005).

In what follows, an alternative perspective is presented that weaves together the structural, institutional, and symbolic levels using the unifying construct of the radicalized educational terrain. The educational experiences of African Americans are tied to the structural, institutional, and symbolic consequences of being African American in the U.S. It is the cumulative weight of these forces that combine to shape (and at times, undermine) African American opportunity and achievement. While the author emphasizes race in this discussion, other forms of social hierarchy, such as social class and gender, are also fundamental to shaping students' educational experiences and opportunities within racial categories.

Race and Student Achievement in the Suburbs: The Case of Lakeside School District

Located in a Midwest suburb, Lakeside High is an impressive school. It is expansive in structure, and, according to school officials, it is among the largest high school campuses in the country. Its physical assets include multiple swimming pools, gymnasiums, and state-of-the-art facilities for science, art, as well as vocational training. In many ways the school has the appearance of a small college campus. Expansive athletic facilities stretch out in the rear of the building, and a large, well-manicured grass lawn leads to the main entrance. According to data from the Lakeside School District's Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Department, in 2001-2002, the student populations was nearly 3,000 students, 48% White, 40% Black, 7% Latino/a, and 2% Asian. The percentage of students whose families are low-income is approximately 30% (based on the

percentage of students who receive free- or reduced-price lunches). The academic accomplishments of the school are impressive. A large majority of its graduates attend college, and several National Merit scholars have attended the school. In many ways, the school is a picture of racial integration given its large population of African American and White students. The teaching staff also has become increasingly diverse over the past several decades. Although African American teachers made up less than 4% of the teaching staff in the late 1960s, 20% of teachers were African American in 2004.

While Lakeside High has a number of admirable qualities, there are striking racial gaps in student achievement. According to school district data, African American students have lower GPAs, do not perform as well on standardized tests, and are less likely to be found in honors and advanced placement (AP) classes. The school revealed that nearly 90% of its White graduates went on to 2- or 4-year colleges in 2001, while about 75% of its African American graduates entered college (Ferguson, 2002). Although they do not track which colleges their students attend, Black students from this district are more likely to attend 2-year colleges. On the ACT examination during 2001, the mean score for White students was nearly 27 while the score for African American students was 18. African American, Latino/a, and Asian students make up more than 50% of the schools' population, but only 20 students of color ranked among the top 100 students in the 2001 graduating class. Finally, 75% of the failing grades were given to students of color during the same year.

In order to address these achievement gaps, Lakeside belongs to Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN), a national consortium of suburban school districts focused on addressing racial achievement gaps. In 2001, the 15-member districts of this consortium surveyed 40,000 6th- to 12th-grade students. Across these districts, similar racial gaps in achievement exist. For example, Ferguson (2002) reports that 50% of the White students in these districts report GPAs of A or A- while only 15% of African American students reported grades in this range. Conversely, 44% of African American students reported GPAs of C+ or lower whereas only 14% of Whites reported grades in this range. These data raise the question of whether the racial achievement patterns at Lakeside are symptomatic of a problem that exists across similar school districts nationwide. In the next section, the concept of the racialized educational terrain as an analytic tool for understanding these racial disparities in educational outcomes will be more fully discussed.

THE RACIALIZED EDUCATIONAL TERRAIN

In the U.S., people have differential access to valued resources based on race. Bonilla-Silva (2001) has detailed the racial cost to being African American in terms of discriminatory problems related to income and earnings, occupational mobility, labor market participation, home loan approvals, various interactions with the legal system (including increasing rates of incarceration), and every day forms of racial discrimination. He characterizes the U.S. as a racialized social system and argues that in such systems:

> [T]he placement of actors in racial categories involves some form of hierarchy ... The race placed in the superior position tends to receive greater economic re-numeration and access to better occupations and prospects in the labor market, occupies a primary position in the political system, is granted higher social estimation (e. g., is viewed as "smarter" and "better looking"), and often has license to draw physical (segregation) as well as social (racial etiquette) boundaries between itself and other races. (Bonilla-Silva 2001, p. 37)

Because they live in a racialized society, African American and White students, even in the same schools and communities, navigate a racialized educational terrain. This construct extends Bonilla-Silva's (2001) work by explicitly connecting the idea of a racialized social system at the structural level to its impact on the institutional (school) and symbolic (ideological) levels within the education sector.

The surface image of racial equality in places like Lakeside masks a great deal of racial inequality underneath. By recognizing this inequality on the structural, institutional, and symbolic levels, educators are in a better position to make sense of racial disparities in achievement. While

much of the discourse on these communities suggests that they are racially equal, structures outside and inside schools and within the broader social discourse place Black students in a vulnerable position compared to their White counterparts. Therefore, as researchers attempt to compare the achievement of Black and White students, they must attend to the inequality in their educational opportunities and experiences.

AFFLUENT SUBURBS: STILL SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

Structural Inequalities Outside Schools

One often thinks of African Americans in affluent suburbs as highly privileged. However, there are reasons to be cautious about this assumption. While Blacks who live in the suburbs are often better off economically than their African American counterparts in urban cities, they are often not as well off as suburban Whites. As Pattillo has shown, even middle-class African Americans often teeter on the fence between privilege and peril when compared to middle-class Whites (Pattillo, 2005; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999). Across the MSAN school districts, African American and Latino/a families were in far more precarious economic situations than were Whites (Ferguson, 2002). In Lakeside, for instance, while census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000) show that for the overall population the median household income was nearly $80,000 and 40% of families earn more than $100,000 annually, most African Americans were at the bottom of the income distribution. As Table 1 shows, African American median family income ($46,582) was less than half of the median family income for White families ($101,371). Median home values were different by race as well. White family's median home values were 2.16% higher than those of Black families. While overall poverty levels in Lakeside was low, 5% of Black families lived below the poverty line compared to less than 1% of White families. There was also racial disparities in parents' educational backgrounds. While 74.4% of Whites in Lakeside over 25 years old held bachelor's degrees, only 23.5% of African Americans had college degrees.

Table 1

Characteristics of Blacks and Whites in the Lakeside Community

Characteristics	Black	White
Percent of Residents Over 25 years old with a Bachelors Degree or Higher	23.5%	74.4%
Families Below Poverty Level	5.1%	0.89%
Median Family Income in 1999 Dollars	$46,582	$101,371
Median Home Values in Dollars	$158,300	$342,700

Source. U.S. Census Bureau. (2000.) *Census 2000, Summary file 2 (SF 2) and Summary file 4 (SF 4)*; using American Fact Finder. Retrieved May 20, 2006 from http://factfinder.census.gov

Residential segregation is also a major issue in some suburban areas. For example, in Lakeside, African Americans (and Latino/as) are concentrated in far southern and western areas of the city and Whites are distributed across the rest of the city (Diamond, 2005). The index of dissimilarity is nearly 70%, meaning that in order for this community to be fully integrated, 70% of Whites (or Blacks) would need to move. As one might expect given the demographics cited above, the areas with the largest African American and Latino/a populations are also the lowest income census tracks. If community, race, and income are compared, we find the same census tracts with the highest percentages of low-income and African American residents and the same tracts with high-income and White residents (Diamond, 2005).

These patterns are even more striking given what is known about race, income, and wealth. The work of several sociologists indicates that wealth, rather than income, gives a more useful measure of racial inequality in the U.S. (Conley 1999; Oliver & Shapiro 1995; Shapiro, 2004). Even when Blacks and Whites earn the same income, African Americans have far fewer assets than their White counterparts. For example, Conley (1999) reports that among people earning less than $15,000 per year, White families have median assets of $10,000 while Black families have no assets. Among those earning $75,000 or more per year, the median assets for White families are $308,000 while the median for Blacks is $114,600 (Conley, 1999). Conley also found that, in terms of high school graduation and college completion, African Americans and Whites have similar outcomes once wealth is considered.

Wealth has important implications for education. Parents with greater assets are free to use them to pay for tutors, purchase educational materials (e.g., computers), and pay for private schools and more expensive colleges (Ferguson, 2002). Across the suburban school districts surveyed, there are differences in students' home environments that are likely associated with these patterns of race, income, and wealth. For instance, Ferguson (2002) reported that compared to White households, African American students' homes had fewer computers. In fact, 22% of African American students reported having no computers in the home compared to 3% for White students. In contrast, only 27% of African American students had two or more computers at home compared to 57% of Whites. This is the case even though African Americans students come from larger families (51% have three or more siblings compared to 19% for Whites). In terms of books in the home, another indicator of home intellectual resources, 40% of Blacks had 100 or more books while 79% of Whites had that many (Ferguson, 2002).

Therefore, as a result of the interplay between residential segregation and inequalities in family economic resources, the lives of Black and White students in Lakeside are structurally unequal. The typical Black and White students have distinct life experiences outside of school, which likely have important consequences for their lives inside schools.

Institutional Patterns Inside Schools

These structural patterns are also reflected in the institutional processes of schools. The separation of students outside school extends to their experiences in schools and classrooms. While students often attend the same classes during the early grades, Black and White students' classes become differentiated as they move toward the upper elementary and middle school years. The separation between students by race becomes increasingly acute as they move through grades five through eight (Diamond, 2005; Ferguson, 2002). At Lakeside, for instance, during 4th grade, students are tested in mathematics, and based on these tests and teachers' recommendations, they are placed into different "tracks," since 5th grade mathematics is an important gateway to early algebra and the subsequent trajectory leading to higher-level mathematics (e.g., calculus, Diamond, 2005). In 5th grade, the vast majority of students placed in this upper level mathematics sequence are White. By 8th grade, almost all of these White students have taken algebra I, an important milestone that enables students to take high-level mathematics before high school graduation (Diamond, 2005).

This differentiation of students into distinct educational environments is reflected in student achievement on standardized assessments. During their 10th-grade year in high school, Lakeside students take the PLAN test (part of the three-test ACT series). In 2000-2001, out of a possible 25 points, African Americans averaged 13.9, whereas, Whites averaged 20.6. Although this does not account for the skills with which students begin school, it demonstrates a disparity that is at least associated with the different learning opportunities mentioned above.

By the time students reach the 12th grade, very few students of color are included in upper-level mathematics courses. In 2001, while Blacks made up 40% of the student population in Lakeside High School, they made up only 9% of the students taking AP calculus (Diamond, 2005: Ferguson, 2002). In contrast, Whites make up 50% of the student body but 82% of these students were taking this class by 12th grade. Beyond the higher level classes, Whites and Blacks are distributed differently across course levels. Lakeside has essentially four instructional levels in all subjects—levels 1 and 2, honors, and advanced placement. African American students are

concentrated in levels 1 and 2, some are in honors courses in 11th and 12th grades, but Black students make up only 10% of students who ever take AP courses (Diamond, 2005; Ferguson, 2002).

These differences in track placement are very important. Oakes (1985, 1994) notes that students in lower educational tracks are typically taught by less qualified teachers using instructional materials and strategies that are less challenging and engaging, and therefore, ultimately, learn less. By being overrepresented in these tracks, Black students are systematically placed in the school contexts least conducive to educational achievement.

Symbolic Patterns in School and Society

In addition to the structural and institutional processes, there is also a symbolic meaning attached to race. Lewis (2003) has argued, "Ascribed race automatically tells us something about people, can immediately provide them with legitimacy or cause their status to be questioned" (p. 178). For instance, commonly held social beliefs reinforce perceptions that Blacks are intellectually inferior to Whites. Perry (2003) argues "[t]he idea of African American's intellectual inferiority still exists as part of the 'taken for granted notions' of many people in the larger society, irrespective of political orientation" (p. 96). A majority of Whites still believe that African Americans and Latino/as are less intelligent than they are (Ferguson, 1998). They are also more likely to attribute negative cultural characteristics to Blacks such as laziness, criminality, and lack of work ethic (Rubio & Williams, 2004). Some teachers also hold lower expectations of Black students' potential than they do White students (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Ferguson, 1998; Rist, 1970). The symbolic level serves as an ideological function by obscuring and justifying structural and institutional inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). For instance, structural inequality is explained by Blacks' supposed lack of work ethic, and the differences in educational opportunity are justified by a lack of intelligence or investment in education (Gould, 1999).

These ideas about race and intelligence may impact students' performance through what Steele (2003) calls stereotype threat—"the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that might inadvertently confirm that stereotype" (p. 111). In an environment in which their academic capacity is questioned, Black students may not perform as well on academic tasks.

Prior work has suggested that social class does not account for racial differences in achievement because these disparities are even found in affluent suburbs (Ogbu, 2003). Simplistic comparisons that do not systematically unpack the distinct resources and opportunities of African Americans and Whites are misleading. One cannot separate the educational experiences, attitudes, and achievement of students from the broader patterns of racial inequality that exist in communities, schools, and classrooms. To do so, distorts the understanding of race and educational achievement. Students' home and school lives are largely differentiated even in ostensibly integrated communities. Students live in different neighborhoods with different resources. Their families have different incomes, assets, education, and employment circumstances. Their home intellectual environments are also unequal. They go to the same schools, but Whites and Blacks have different access to challenging, high-level instruction and experience different expectations regarding their intellectual capacity. Finally, even in an "integrated" community and in "integrated" schools, the educational terrain that students navigate is racialized, separate, and unequal.

LOOKING FORWARD: LINKING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE

In the mid-1930s, Du Bois (1935) wrote, "the Negro needs neither segregated schools nor mixed schools but [quality] education" (p. 328). His words have proven prophetic. Limited school integration in an unequal society has not, in and of itself, meant higher achievement for Black students. In fact, while there were steady declines in racial achievement gaps on the NAEP in the 1970s and 1980s, it is unclear whether or not this can be attributed to desegregation efforts. Clotfelter (2004) argues that, while its impact on achievement is inconclusive, desegregation may

be associated with some modest gains in reading for Black students, no gains in mathematics, and no impact (positive or negative) for White students. Attending integrated schools may also be associated with more tolerant racial attitudes (an important issue in the increasing racially diverse society). However, integrated schools (to the extent that they have existed) have failed to create equal opportunity for all students, in part, because racial inequality in the society as a whole or within the schools, in numerous cases, has not been directly confronted. As a result, reforms designed to address racial inequality have failed on three fronts. Firstly, they have not sufficiently addressed the racial inequalities that result from contemporary and historic discrimination. Instead, the educational policies have often treated these inequalities as if they were a separate issue, or, in an ironic twist of logic, suggested that these broader inequalities result from educational limitations within communities of color. As the discussion above shows, even in affluent, ostensibly integrated suburban communities, the racial inequality is stark. Educators need to attend to this structural inequality if they seek to reduce racial achievement gaps in schools.

Secondly, the institutional inequalities within schools that contribute to educational disadvantages for Black students have not been effectively addressed. These Black students are consistently placed in the least advantaged locations for learning while their White counterparts are often placed in the most advantaged locations. Efforts to transform the institutional practices that lead to these patterns have often fallen prey to political conflicts driven by those who seek to maintain their children's educational advantages (Noguera & Wing, 2006). These school-based inequities need to be eliminated.

Finally, the deeply ingrained belief that Whites are intellectually and culturally superior to Blacks has not been fully confronted and dismissed. The intertwining of race and intelligence has a long and troubling history. There is often a failure to acknowledge the powerful ideological role that these ideas play in justifying structural and institutional inequality and potentially creating psychological barriers of achievement for Black students (Steele, 2003).

While these structural, institutional, and symbolic issues are critical to reinforcing educational inequality, reforms (including those emphasizing desegregation) have often been highlighted as manipulating school structures. Whether it was the creation of the "one best system" of bureaucratic school organization in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the push for desegregation, especially since the 1950s, the move toward decentralization in the 1960s and 1970s, the school restructuring movement of the 1980s and 1990s, or the current accountability and small-schools movements, education reforms have focused mostly on changing the organization of schools (e.g., governance structures or student composition). In fact, school desegregation efforts have often equated racial balance in student enrollment with educational opportunity. Bell (2004) writes, "In school desegregation, the goal of equal educational opportunity became merged with racial balance and busing as a means to its attainment. The rejection of the means was viewed as a defeat of the goal" (p. 120).

National civil rights leadership has often resisted efforts to address the educational needs of Black students by means other than school desegregation. But school desegregation has proven to be an illusive (and not altogether effective) goal. While some measure of desegregation was achieved during the period of active enforcement of desegregation laws (particularly in the South), the current trend is toward increasing re-segregation (Clotfelter 2004; Orfield & Easton, 1996). Researchers at the Harvard Civil Rights Project have tracked this pattern over the past decade and found that Black and Latino/a students are currently far more likely than Whites to attend schools with mostly populated students of color (Sunderman & Orfield, 2006). Whites, however, attend schools in which the vast majority of students are White. Likewise, the typical Black or Latino/a student attends a school with much higher poverty rates than the typical White student.

Conclusion

Given current population trends (the expansion of communities of color as a percentage of the total U.S. and suburban populations), the incremental nature of structural change, and the resistance to desegregation among Whites (Clotfelter, 2004), the typical school attended by Black and Latino/a students should be expected to become increasingly populated by other Black and

Latino/a students who are low income. This means that one critical educational challenge that is faced is to provide quality educational opportunities for students of color regardless of the race and social class composition of their schools. While educators and lawmakers may push for integration across race and social class lines and continue the struggle to make integrated schools and communities as racially equal as possible, they must not allow the commitment to integration to overshadow the quest for quality education for all students.

That quest can be advanced by studying the historic and contemporary contexts that have led to success among Black students. Historically, African Americans have shown a strong commitment to education, being among the earliest advocates for universal public education in the South following emancipation (Anderson 1988; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). Blacks also created successful educational institutions prior to the Civil Rights era desegregation efforts (Walker, 1996). The post-Civil Rights era is also full of examples of successful educational contexts for African American students (Morris 2004; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). However, researchers and practitioners have not sufficiently learned from these successes and applied the lessons from them to reform efforts.

Because students navigate an educational terrain with distinct advantages and disadvantages based on race, educational strategies need to be adopted that simultaneously attack the structural, institutional, and symbolic inequalities that characterize the educational system and society. This means reconnecting issues of educational opportunity and achievement to the broader struggle for social justice (Anyon, 2005; Rothstein, 2004). Indeed, the future of quality education for students of color will depend in part (as it always has) on continuous activism by communities of color within the political, economic, social, educational, and ideological realms. It will also depend on an increased commitment among those in powerful positions to create social policies that enhance rather than inhibit opportunity for all groups. However, given the slow pace of structural change and the potential permanence of racial inequality (Bell, 1992), a more active search for strategies that enhance educational opportunities is needed, even in the context of a separate and unequal society.

Work on this article was supported by the Merck Dean's Dissemination Fund at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The author thanks Bernice Barnett and Amanda Lewis for their assistance.

References

Ainsworth-Darnell, J., & Downey, D. (1998). Assessing the oppositional culture explanation for racial/ethnic differences in school performance. *American Sociological Review, 63*, 536-553.

Anderson, J. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the South: 1865-1935*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Anyon, J. (2005). *Radical possibilities. Public policy, urban education, and a new social movement*. New York: Routledge.

Baunman, K. J., & Graf, N. L. (2003). *Educational attainment: Census 2000 brief*. Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau.

Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism*. New York: Basic Books.

Bell, D. (2004). *Silent covenants:* Brown v. Board of Education *and the unfulfilled hopes of racial reform*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2001). *White supremacy and racism in the post-Civil Rights era*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Bowen, W., & Bok, D. (1998). *The shape of the river: Long term consequences of considering race in college and university admissions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Carter, P. L. (2005). *Keepin' it real: School success beyond Black and White*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Clotfelter, C. (2004). *After* Brown*: The rise and retreat of school desegregation*. Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press.
Conley, D. (1999). *Being Black, living in red: Race wealth and social policy in America.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Cook, P., & Ludwig, J. (1998). The burden of "acting White": Do Black adolescents disparage academic achievement? In C. Jencks & M. Philips (Eds.), *The Black-White test score gap* (pp. 375-400). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
Diamond, J. B. (2005).[Review of the book *Black American students in an affluent suburb*]. *The Journal of Negro Education, 74*, 288-291.
Diamond, J. B. (2006, April). *Are we barking up the wrong tree? Rethinking oppositional culture explanations for the Black/White achievement gap.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
Diamond, J. B., Lewis, A., & Gordon, L. (2006, April). *Rethinking oppositionality: Positive and negative peer pressure among Black students in a suburban high school.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
Diamond, J. B., Randolph, A., & Spillane, J. (2004). Teachers' expectations and sense of responsibility for student learning: The implications of school, race, class, and organizational habitus. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 35*, 75-98.
Downey, D., & Ainsworth-Darnell, J. (2002). The search for oppositional culture among black students. *American Sociological Review, 67*, 156-164.
Du Bois, W. E. B. (1935). Does the Negro need separate schools? *The Journal of Negro Education, 4*, 328-335.
Fehrmann, P. G., Keith, T. Z., & Reimers, T. M. (1987). Home influences on school learning: Direct and indirect effects of parent involvement on high school grades. *The Journal of Educational Research, 80*, 330-37.
Ferguson, R. (1998). Teacher perceptions and expectations and the Black-White test score gap. .In C. Jencks & M. Philips (Eds.), *The Black-White test score gap* (pp. 273-317). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
Ferguson, R. (2002). *What doesn't meet the eye: Understanding and addressing racial disparities in high-achieving suburban schools.* Special Edition Policy Issues Report. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved May 20, 2006 from http://www.ncrel.org/gap/ferg/
Fordham, S., & Ogbu, J. U. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the "burden of acting White." *Urban Review, 18*, 176-206.
Fryer, R. (2006). Acting White. *Education Next, 6*, 52-59.
Gould, M. (1999). Race and theory: Culture, poverty, and adaptation to discrimination In Wilson and Ogbu. *Sociological Theory, 17*, 171-200.
Henig, J. R., Hula, R., Orr, M., & Pedescleaux, D. (1999). *The color of school reform: Race, politics, and the challenge of urban education.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Jencks, C., & Phillips, M. (1998). *The Black-White test score gap.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
Kerbow, D., & Bernhardt, A. (1993). Parent intervention in the school: The context of minority involvement. In B. Schneider & J. E. Coleman (Eds.), *Parents, their children, and schools* (pp. 115-146). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
Lee, J. (2002). Racial and ethnic achievement gap trends: Reversing the progress toward equity. *Educational Researcher, 31*, 3-10.
Lewis, A. E. (2003). *Race in the schoolyard: Negotiating the color line in classrooms and communities.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
McWhorter, J. (2000). *Losing the race: Self-sabotage in Black America.* New York: Free Press.
Morris, J. E. (2004). Can anything good come from Nazareth? Race, class, and African American schooling and community in the urban South and Midwest. *American Educational Research Journal, 41*, 69-112.
Noguera, P. A., & Yonemura Wing, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Unfinished business: Closing the racial achievement gap in our schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Oakes, J. (1994). More than misapplied technology: A normative and political response to Hallinan on tracking. *Sociology of Education 67*, 84-89.
O'Connor, C., Horvat, E., & Lewis, A. (2006). Framing the field: Past and future research on the historic underachievement of Black students. In E. McNamara, E. Horvat, & C. O'Connor (Eds.), *Beyond acting White: Reframing the debate on Black student achievement* (pp. 1-24). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Ogbu, J. U. (1974). *The next generation: An ethnography of education in an urban neighborhood*. New York: Academic Press.
Ogbu, J. U. (1978). *Minority education and caste*. New York: Academic Press.
Ogbu, J. U. (2003). *Black American students in an affluent suburb: A study of academic disengagement*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
Oliver, M., & Shapiro, T. (1995). *Black wealth/White wealth: A new perspective on racial inequality*. New York: Routledge.
Orfield, G., & Eaton, S. (1996). The growth of segregation: African Americans, Latinos, and unequal education. In G. Orfield & S. Eaton (Eds.), *Dismantling desegregation: The quiet reversal of* Brown v. Board of Education (pp. 53-72). New York: The New Press.
Pattillo-McCoy, M. (1999). *Black picket fences: Privilege and peril among the Black middle class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Pattillo, M. (2005). Black middle class neighborhoods. *Annual Review of Sociology, 31*, 305-329.
Perry, T. (2003). Achieving in post-Civil Rights America: The outline of a theory. In T. Perry, C. Steele, & A. Hilliard (Eds.), *Young, gifted, and Black: Promoting high achievement among African American students* (pp. 109-130). Boston: Beacon Press.
Perry, T., Steele, C., & Hilliard, A. (Eds.). (2003). *Young, gifted, and Black: Promoting high achievement among African American students*. Boston: Beacon Press.
Rist, R. (1970). Student social class and teacher expectations: The self-fulfilling prophecy in ghetto education. *Harvard Educational Review 40*, 411-451.
Rubio, M., & Williams, D. R. (2004). The social dimension of race. In B. Beech & M. Goodman (Eds.), *Race and research* (pp. 1-26). Washington, DC: American Public Health Association.
Shapiro, T. M. (2004). *The hidden cost of being African-American: How wealth perpetuates inequality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Steele, C. (2003). Stereotype threat and African American student achievement. In T. Perry, C. Steele, & A. Hilliard (Eds.), *Young, gifted, and Black: Promoting high achievement among African American students* (pp. 109-130). Boston: Beacon Press.
Sunderman, G. L. , & Orfield, G. (2006). *The unraveling of NoChild Left Behind: How negotiated changes transfer the law*. Retrieved May 20, 2006 from http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/esea/NCLB_Unravel.pdf
Tyson, K., Darity, W., & Castellino, D. (2005). It's not "a Black thing": Understanding the burden of acting White and other dilemmas of high achievement. *American Sociological Review, 70*, 582-605.
U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *Census 2000, Summary file 2 (SF 2) and Summary file 4 (SF 4)*; using American Fact Finder. Retrieved May 20, 2006 from http://factfinder.census.gov
Walker, V. S. (1996). *Their highest potential: An African American school community in the segregated South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

AUTHOR
JOHN B. DIAMOND is Assistant Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

All queries and comments regarding this article should be addressed to
john_diamond@gse.harvard.edu