



INVISIBLE STUDENTS

BRIDGING THE WIDEST ACHIEVEMENT GAP

DAVID L. KIRP

I Black Male Youth and the Achievement Gap

In assessing strategies to bridge the achievement gap separating African American males from other students, the 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* makes a sensible starting point.¹ To a unanimous Court, the royal road to equality, both in education and life chances, required ending the regime of Jim Crow in the public schools. “Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments”: this encomium to education is as well-known as any judicial text, as familiar as a constitutional catechism. “[Education] is ...is the very foundation of good citizenship.... a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.”²

The opinion in *Brown* speaks to what is now commonly called the achievement gap. Then as now, black students fared worse in school than whites, and the decision was, in part, intended to close that gap. Fast forward to today. The opening passage in *The Price We Pay*, an influential assessment of the consequences of inequity in education, reprises *Brown*. “A person’s educational attainment is one of the most important determinants of his or her life chances in terms of employment, income, health status, housing, and many other amenities.” Like the justices, these policy researchers assign education pride of place in the movement for racial equality, for they regard it as the most feasible way to bridge not just the achievement gap but the “life success gap” as well. “Unlike other attributes, such as background and personal characteristics, educational attainment can be influenced by public policy.”³ Close the black-white achievement test score gap, assert the editors of *Steady Gains and Stalled Progress*, and “the single greatest remaining challenge to racial equality...a major determinant of unequal [life] outcomes” will have

been overcome. The stakes could not be higher: “Explaining achievement gaps is not just an academic exercise; it is an economic and social imperative.”⁴

The plight of African-American male students has been a perpetual concern for policymakers seeking to equalize opportunity. On every measure of educational attainment these youth fare the worst, below all girls and boys of all other racial or ethnic groups, and despite waves of reform their situation hasn’t changed appreciably in the past thirty years.

This gap, perceptible from the first day of kindergarten, widens in subsequent years.⁵ In the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the nation’s report card, the reading scores of *eighth grade* African-American boys were barely higher than the scores of white *fourth grade* girls.⁶ Black male students are 2.4 times as likely to have been suspended and twice as likely to have had to repeat a grade as white males.⁷ At age sixteen, 54 percent of African American males, compared to 24 percent of white males and 42 percent of Hispanic males, scored below the 20th percentile on the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS).⁸ Having well-educated parents doesn’t close the gap—43 percent of black high school seniors with at least one college-educated parent scored below basic on reading, nearly twice the percentage of whites. High school graduation rates tell the same story—just 42 percent of black males, compared with 71 percent of white males and 48 percent of Hispanic males, graduated on time.⁹ Many of these young men become disconnected from both education and the workplace: among sixteen- to twenty-four-year-olds not enrolled in school, fewer than half have jobs, and about a third are in prison or jail, on probation or parole.¹⁰

It’s a double whammy to be black and male. While there’s a lively debate over whether boys or girls have it worse in school, there’s no argument over where African-American boys stand in the schools’ pecking order. Compared with black females, they are three times more likely to be suspended, their high school graduation rate is 9 percent lower and they are just half as likely to have received a college degree.¹¹

II-Is It All in the Genes?

To geneticists of the *Bell Curve* school of thought, the explanation for the achievement gap is simple—it’s all in the genes.¹² That way of thinking has been influential—*The Bell Curve* sold more than half a million copies—but many of its most gloomy implications have been debunked by a new generation of researchers.

The case for genetic determinism has rested on the consistent finding over the course of a century that identical twins, who share all their genes, are far more alike in intelligence than fraternal twins, who share only half of their genes. But those studies have a fatal flaw—they focus only on middle-class twins.

Research conducted by psychologist Michel Duyme showed that when four and five-year-old French children who were abused and neglected as infants were adopted by caring families, their IQs increased by as much as 25 points—so much for the *Bell*

Curve's assertion that intelligence is immutable. What's more, the youngsters who were raised in well-to-do homes, where parents presumably took fuller advantage of the teachable moments, gained the most. Even more startling were the findings from a study of thousands of twins from poor as well as middle-class American homes, carried out by psychologist Eric Turkheimer. Among twins with well-off parents, virtually all the variation in IQ could be attributed to genes. But the story was exactly the opposite for twins from poor families—the IQs of identical twins didn't vary any less than the IQs of fraternal twins. In other words, heredity explained almost *none* of the IQ variation for these children; the impact of growing up impoverished, with little social or economic capital, overwhelmed these children's genetic capacities. Change social capital and you can change the arc of children's lives—parents, children's first and most important teachers, and educators have a job to do.

This conclusion—that nurture shapes nature—is confirmed by a large-scale study of mental ability among eight- to twelve-month-old infants. If racial differences in IQ were mainly genetic, they would show up in these tests, but there are no measurable cognitive differences between black and white babies, economists Roland Fryer and Steven Levitt report (Asian babies do slightly, but statistically significantly, worse). That finding links the cognitive gap recorded at the start of school to a child's earliest educational experiences, confirming the vital importance of good parenting and good early education.¹³

III- "Skill Begets Skill": Birth-to-Five

A-Framing the Debate

The good news is that, despite the wide and persistent achievement gap, there is a salmagundi of promising strategies—high quality, intensive and ecologically pervasive approaches that enable African-American youth generally, and African-American boys in particular, to thrive.¹⁴ Ferrreting out these initiatives has proven to be surprisingly hard, because the “race plus gender” effects of programs that have been shown to benefit poor and minority youngsters have not been extracted. The “what works” agenda includes previously unpublished analyses of data, undertaken by the studies' authors for this chapter, which do take both race and gender into account.

Those approaches, which range from equipping parents with new skills to addressing adolescents' vulnerability to stereotyping, are sometimes advanced singly, as a solution to the achievement gap problem. But such thinking betrays a misunderstanding of how children develop, and why a progression of age-appropriate strategies—the kinds of support we want for our own children—are needed.¹⁵ The effort to bridge the gap needs to start early, well before these youngsters come to school, with support for good parenting and high quality early education, and to be maintained from kindergarten through high school.

Though these promising approaches differ in many respects, they share one key element—they emphasize individual attention, whether for infants or adolescents. Such

intensity of engagement can benefit all youngsters, but it's especially important for African-American boys. As psychologist Nel Noddings observes, "young black men and boys growing up without [adult] male role models and in conditions of poverty need, more than anyone else, that assurance that someone really cares."¹⁶

B-Support for Good Parenting

What happens early in life profoundly affects everything that follows. That's why it makes sense to focus policy attention on the first years. "It is social and economic inequality in family characteristics and environments in family characteristics and environments in the preschool years together with differences in preschooling opportunities that seem critical to the origination and formation of substantial parts of the achievement gap."¹⁷

More than anyone else, mothers and fathers shape their children's futures, and so, as the old joke goes, the smartest decision a child can make is to pick the right parents. The way that parents raise their children has a powerful effect impact on their school readiness. Children whose parents are authoritative, rather than authoritarian or distant, are likely to have learned more well before preschool, when the first effects of the achievement gap are already evident.

In this context money matters—family wealth and neighborhood quality account for nearly half of the IQ gap at age five—but among families with comparable wealth and neighborhood quality, and mothers with comparable education and verbal ability, how mothers relate to their children explains more than half of the IQ gap.¹⁸ In a large-scale observational study of parent behavior, psychologists Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Lisa Markman found that as a group, black mothers rank lower on seven measures of parenting, ranging from nurturance to books in the home. Critics of this research complain that these metrics reflect middle class values. That's indeed the case, but if school readiness is the benchmark then they are the correct metrics. The most striking differences concern children's exposure to language. A landmark study showed that children from poor, mainly black, families engaged in literally thousands fewer conversations than children from wealthier, mainly white families, and by the age of three, these children had vocabularies that were just half the size of their well-off counterparts.¹⁹ These multiple differences in the style of parenting generate a six to twelve point racial gap on a school readiness test (with a score of 100 as the median); for black male children, the gap is presumably at least as great

Parents want what's best for their offspring; and the perpetually-booming market in "how to" books as well as the ceaseless search for advice from kith and kin suggest that they are open to learning more productive ways to raise their kids. Here's where policy enters

the picture—well-conceived parenting programs have been shown to have positive effects on how parents relate to their offspring. Evidence-based home visiting programs, like the Nurse-Family Partnership, as well as center-based programs that include home visiting, like Early Head Start, enhance parents’ sensitivity to their infants’ and toddlers’ cues, discourage negativity (the “stop it” commands), lessen reliance on spanking, promote reasoning with toddlers, increase the number of age-appropriate materials around the house as well as the amount of time spent reading to kids. The effect is to boost children’s performance in the early grades. The specific impact on African-American boys hasn’t been isolated, though in a matched-sample experiment testing the effects of the Nurse-Family Partnership conducted in Memphis, where the participants were overwhelmingly African-American, children did better during their first years at school.²⁰

Unfortunately, high-quality parenting support is available only to a handful of poor families and few others.²¹ The biggest program, Early Head Start, is so meagerly funded that it can enroll less than *1 percent* of the eligible (below-poverty-line) infants. Its expansion, to which the Obama Administration is committed, is an essential strategy in bridging the black male achievement gap.²²

C-Early Education

The argument for investing in early education, as a way to close the achievement gap, rests on the glittering results from three landmark studies: Perry Preschool, Abecedarian and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC).²³ In each instance, children who enrolled in a high-quality early education program were tracked into their twenties—in the case of Perry Preschool, into their forties—and their life trajectories were compared with a matched control group. While these three experiments differed in some particulars (Abecedarian children remained in the program from the time they were infants through kindergarten, for instance, and Perry enrolled three and four year olds), in each instance highly-trained teachers, assigned to a small number of children, used carefully-crafted curricula and engaged parents to bolster their efforts.

The impact in each instance was eye-opening. Compared with the control groups, significantly fewer of the participants were left back or assigned to special education classes, significantly more youngsters graduated from high school and enrolled in college. More remarkable still were the impacts on their later lives, which included significantly lower crime rates, better health self-reports, less reliance on welfare and greater earnings. Economists converted those findings into the metric of benefits and costs: for every dollar spent, the investment returned between five and seventeen dollars. No other educational intervention—indeed, no other social policy—has yielded remotely comparable results, and those findings fueled a nationwide movement to expand prekindergarten. In recent years, evaluations of state-funded prekindergarten—not experiments, like Perry Preschool and the other models, but widely-implemented programs with substantially lower per pupil expenditures—have shown that participants

had substantially better reading and math test results than youngsters who weren't enrolled in the state preschool.²⁴

Since almost every child who attended Perry, Abecedarian and the Child-Parent Centers was African-American, the findings confirmed that high-quality early education could narrow the racial achievement gap. But what about the boys? A reanalysis of the Perry Preschool findings suggested that almost all of the educational benefits accrued to females; the main benefit to the males was lower rates of incarceration.²⁵ (The small size of the sample has led some economists to challenge these results.) Among the Abecedarian participants, an unpublished analysis of the data shows that 25.9 percent of the boys, and a comparable number of the girls, who were enrolled in Abecedarian, compared to just 4 percent of the male nonparticipants, attended college (similar data on high school graduates was not made available). But it's problematic to make too much of these numbers: Abecedarian, like Perry Preschool, enrolled barely more than 100 children.

There can be no question, however, about the impact of the third iconic preschool, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, on the life trajectories of black youth. Unlike Perry and Abecedarian, which were structured as short-term experiments, these prekindergartens have been run by the Chicago public school system since 1967, and during that time they have enrolled tens of thousands of students. What's more, unlike the Perry and Abecedarian participants these poor, mostly black youngsters live in inner-city neighborhoods, where the life stresses are especially acute. Since its inception the program has placed great emphasis on language, words and more words, as a way of narrowing the biggest socioeconomic divide and the one most clearly implicated in how students fare in school. Engaging parents as learners and as collaborators in their children's education is a hallmark of the Centers' approach.

The CPC study has followed 1520 children, half of whom participated in the program, into their mid-twenties, and it has found significant effects on education, incarceration and income. The largest impact is on high school completion. While the girls in the program had graduation rates identical to those who didn't participate, 74 percent of the boys who attended a Child-Parent Center, compared with 57 percent of the nonparticipants, graduated by age twenty-four, and they were half again as likely to attend college.²⁶

These data are indeed attention-getting, and the fact that the Child-Parent Centers are staffed by ordinary teachers, and have been up and running for more than forty years, not small-scale experiments over which researchers can exercise tight control, gives cause for confidence that the model can be scaled up. But the fact that only 10.4 percent of the CPC youngsters attended college, compared with 6.6 percent of the controls (a figure well below the 16.2 percent of girls who enrolled in a Child-Parent Center and later went to college) offers a pointed reminder that, while this program has been a success, it's not a panacea. Investing in the futures of young black males can't stop with preschool.

Unlike the Child-Parent Centers and state-funded preschools, which place a heavy emphasis on language, Head Start, the \$7 billion federal early education program, has historically stressed child development rather than academic preparation. While that approach seems intuitively sensible, for these children often lack basic health care, its implementation has been uneven; multiple evaluations have generated mostly disappointing results. A 2010 report on an ongoing random-assignment national evaluation, the first of its kind, finds that while Head Start modestly boosts reading and math skills while children are in the program, those gains disappear by first grade.²⁷

That's a gloomy picture—but it's not the entire picture. Short-term cognitive effects are not what ultimately matters, and it may be that the full effects only become apparent years later. No long-term experimental studies of Head Start have been conducted, but in seminal articles published in 1995 and 2000, economists Janet Currie, Duncan Thomas and Eliana Garces adopted an ingenious research approach. They compared the life histories of siblings who were of Head Start age in the mid-1970s, only one of whom attended Head Start, and found sleeper effects—the children who had been in Head Start were more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.²⁸

A 2009 follow-up study by public policy professor David Deming tracks these youngsters into their early twenties, and by then the differences are more striking. Head Start participants were significantly less likely to have been left back or assigned to special education, more likely to have graduated from high school or earned a high school equivalency diploma, enrolled in college, had some work experience and stayed healthy.²⁹

These effects vary by race and gender. While the studies do not specify the outcomes for black males, they conclude that African American youngsters and the most disadvantaged children gained the most. Black youngsters who participated in the program were 10.7 percent less likely to repeat a grade, 7.1 percent less likely to be diagnosed with a learning disability, 11.1 percent more likely to graduate high school and 13.6 percent more likely to attempt a year of college. Male students were 20.4 percent less likely to repeat a grade, 11.4 percent more likely to graduate high school and 10 percent less likely to be out of school and not working. It's a reasonable surmise that Head Start had powerful long-term benefits for black males.

“Large reductions in the probability of learning disability diagnosis and grade retention that the gains in Head Start may operate through improvements in school readiness [the non-cognitive elements of the program] rather than content knowledge or cognitive ability,” Deming argues. “If poverty affects stress, and stress affects test performance, then Head Start could generate academic gains...by permanently improving children's reactivity to stress or making them more familiar with the school environment prior to kindergarten.”³⁰ Economist James Heckman makes a similar argument: “Investing in early education could generate large effects by inducing ‘multiplier’ effects in later periods...Skill begets skill.”³¹

In all of the preschool studies, black males benefit; and in the most germane study, the evaluation of the Child-Parent Centers, they benefit the most. One plausible explanation is that the close-grained attention that children receive in these programs, so different from what they experience the neighborhoods in which many of these youngsters are living in and the families in which many of them are coming of age, is precisely the kind of caring relationship that black males need most and from which they can benefit from the most. The bonds they form become the foundation for social capital and engender trust at an early age, a time when the potential for learning is greatest.³²

This is an important start, but it's just a start. In a 2010 paper, public policy professor Rucker Johnson examines the life histories of several thousand children who attended Head Start in the 1970s. By the time they were in their thirties, those youngsters who went to well-funded elementary and secondary schools were more likely to graduate, had higher earnings and were in better health—for them, Head Start mattered a lot. But for those who attended poorly-funded schools, Head Start made absolutely no difference; whatever advantage they acquired as three and four-year-olds had subsequently been erased.³³ The conclusion is obvious—for African-American boys, as for children generally, there are no quick fixes, no birth-to-five “solutions.” Continuity from the earliest years onward is the key to success.

IV Reparable Harm: K-12

A-Framing the Issue

As early as kindergarten, nearly a quarter of African-American boys (three times more than whites) are convinced that they lack the ability to succeed in school.³⁴ The achievement gap continues to expand to fourth grade,³⁵ and researchers are generally pessimistic about the prospects for reversing the pattern. “None of the various school-related policies is likely to play a major role in reducing the black-white achievement gap,” policy Helen Ladd asserts, reciting the conventional wisdom.³⁶

That conclusion, while understandable in light of the persistent pattern of failure, may be premature, for several evidence-based strategies could potentially narrowing the gap. Some, like reducing class size, are well-known, but the possibility that other approaches, like comprehensive school reform and charter schools, could reduce the black male achievement gap has received little attention.

Reformers of the “no excuses” school believe the only thing that’s lacking is the will to act. In 2000, the conservative Heritage Foundation identified twenty-one schools as high-poverty and high-performing, which accepted “no excuses” such as poverty to rationalize students’ failure.³⁷ But the twenty-one schools highlighted by the Heritage Foundation turned out to be decidedly atypical—one housed the “gifted and talented” program for its entire district, for example, while another enrolled children whose parents were poor-on-paper Harvard and MIT graduate students.³⁸

A year later the Education Trust, a liberal think tank, reported on 1320 “high flyer” schools, at least half of whose students were nonwhite and poor with math and reading test scores in the top third of their state. These “high flyers” represented 10 percent of all schools with this demographic. That’s a sizeable number, and the report attracted lots of attention. Unfortunately it didn’t survive closer examination. These schools did indeed have high scores—but only for one year, in one subject, math or reading, in one grade. A reanalysis of the data found only *twenty-three* such schools—less than half a percent—that recorded high reading and math scores for two years running, in two grades.

The takeaway message is straightforward—“get tough with teachers” isn’t the hoped-for easy fix for the schools, and certainly not for black students. A series of interventions, adapted to the age of the youth, is what’s required.³⁹

B-Small Classes

A straightforward logic underlies the contention that reducing class size can boost academic performance. When classes are small, teachers are able to pay more attention to each pupil and students have a harder time remaining invisible. They experience continuing pressure to stay engaged; their attention to learning goes up, and so does their performance.⁴⁰ But whether class size really improves student performance has been much debated by policy scholars.⁴¹

The most carefully-designed test of the effect of reducing class size is the Tennessee STAR Project. During the 1980s, 11,600 students, from kindergarteners through third graders, and 1300 teachers in seventy-six schools in forty-two districts participated in the experiment. Students were randomly assigned to small (thirteen to seventeen) and regular (twenty-two to twenty-eight) classes, and teachers were randomly assigned as well.

Small classes turned out to make a notable difference. Math and reading scores improved, and more students took college entrance exams, signaling their interest in continuing their education beyond high school.⁴² African-American students gained most, economists Alan Krueger and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach found. The published studies didn’t look at race-plus-gender differences, but those differences emerge in Schanzenbach’s unpublished reanalysis of the data. More than any other group, African-American boys thrived while they were in small classes. Being randomly assigned to a small class in kindergarten improved their test scores by a statistically significant 7.2 percentile points, slightly more than the improvement in black girls’ scores.

However, while the African-American girls who had been in small classes enjoyed persistent gains through grade six and were more likely to take a college-entrance exams several years later, the gains for African-American boys tapered off dramatically in fourth grade, when they returned to regular classes. One plausible explanation is that, while the girls acquired habits of learning during the years they spent in small classes which they were able to maintain, the boys needed the individualized attention that’s the

norm in small classes. In that nurturing environment they did well—as they did in the intimate enclave of the Child-Parent Centers—but they lost that edge in the more impersonal world of the large classroom.

Experiments are one thing, general-circulation practice something entirely different: as with any reform, the particulars of implementation are critical. California adopted the policy statewide for grades k-3 in hopes of benefiting poor and minority youth, but they actually fared worse. An ill-considered plan was the culprit. “The burdens of implementation [in California] fell disproportionately on urban schools suffering from poverty, overcrowding, and language barriers, and the need to provide many special services. The possible positive effects attributable to smaller classes were often mitigated in these schools because teacher quality was lower than in other schools, as more experienced teachers left to fill new openings in less troubled schools. Urban schools were left to fill not only the vacancies created by those who transferred out, but also the newly created slots. They did so by hiring inexperienced and uncertified teachers, with the result that one-quarter of the black students in high poverty schools had a first- or second-year teacher, and nearly 30 percent had a teacher who was not fully certified.” The lesson is a familiar one: if class size reduction is to narrow the achievement gap, as it did in Tennessee, get the plan right or risk the possibility of perverse consequences.⁴³

C-Desegregation

Brown v. Board of Education treats desegregation both as a means of ending discrimination, quite apart from the specific context of the schoolhouse, and as a way to bring about equality of educational opportunity. Educators and civil rights activists have harbored the same hope ever since.

The underlying assumption is that segregation “affects both the motivation of the students and their perception of the larger opportunity structure they face in society and their exposure to high-quality school resources or even the academic climate in the school.”⁴⁴ Presumably African-American boys as well as girls are made better off, although the gender-specific effects have not been studied.⁴⁵

Oceans of ink have been spilled in the effort to show the link between segregation and student achievement. The histories run parallel: as public schools became more desegregated, beginning in the 1960s, the achievement gap narrowed; as school segregation increased, beginning around 1990, progress in closing that gap ground to a halt. What’s more, blacks’ biggest gains were in the Dixie states, where the impact of desegregation was greatest.⁴⁶ Economists have done much of the recent research in this field, searching for macro-effects of policy changes. One study concluded that court-ordered desegregation in the 1970s reduced black high school students’ dropout rates by 2-3 percent during the 1970s; that explained half of the decline during that period, while having no comparable effect on white students. Those effects were reversed when desegregation orders were terminated in the 1990s.⁴⁷

The strongest case for linking desegregation and black achievement is made in a statewide study of Texas public schools, done by economist Eric Hanushek, which compared test score variations among students who attended the same school at different times. Equalizing the racial composition of the schools, the analysis concludes, would reduce the achievement gap by about 25 percent—an impact as sizeable as for any reform strategy.⁴⁸

For the foreseeable future, though, desegregation on such a sweeping scale is a remedy only in realm of wishful thinking. The trend has been for public schools to become more, not less, segregated, a process that has been abetted by the judiciary. A generation ago, federal courts began absenting themselves from the field; in 2007, the Supreme Court overturned voluntary desegregation plans in Seattle and Louisville.⁴⁹ For those committed to desegregation the one hopeful sign is the long-term trend toward greater residential integration; in communities where school desegregation comes about through changing racial composition of neighborhoods, black youngsters are likely to benefit.⁵⁰

D-Whole School—and Whole System—Reform

Some school districts have done remarkably well in narrowing the gap. Their strategy isn't a dose of "no excuses" tough love, as critics like Washington D.C. Chancellor Michelle Rhee and New York City Chancellor Joel Klein contend, but top-to-bottom, systemic reform, a well-articulated course of study that runs seamlessly from prekindergarten through high school.

The best-documented example is Montgomery County, located just outside Washington DC.⁵¹ That school district encompasses two very different communities, one composed almost entirely of white and Asian professional families (what school authorities refer to as the "green zone"), and the other composed of mainly poor and minority families. Since the late 1990s, the school district has put enormous energy into "greening" the red zone, and it has done remarkably well.

The statistics tell a story of considerable accomplishment.⁵² On each of a dozen metrics, from kindergarten reading to SAT performance, there has been improvement among all the racial and ethnic groups; and in almost all instances, black (and Hispanic) students have narrowed the achievement gap. For instance, 95 percent of third-graders in Montgomery County are scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the state reading test; so are 80 percent of black youngsters, a 100 percent improvement since 2003. For third grade math, 94 percent of whites and 79 percent of black students scored at this level; in six years, African American children narrowed the math racial gap from 22 to 16 percentage points. In high school, 74 percent of black students took the SAT in 2009, compared with 66 percent in 2006, again shrinking the gap with white students (whose participate rate rose from 82 percent to 84 percent). The number of advanced placement exams taken by African American youngsters almost tripled between 2003 and 2009 (the number taken by whites increased 50 percent) and scores on a third of the AP exams

taken by black youth were three or higher; that's twice as many in six years (as compared with an increase of 40 percent for whites).

System-wide reform drives these results. The preschool-to-grade-twelve "pipeline" starts with a prekindergarten curriculum that emphasizes literacy and numeracy, and the district's evidence-based common curriculum extends through twelfth grade. Student evaluation is ongoing, with regular feedback and coaching for the teachers and tutoring for the students who are falling behind. High school students are pushed to take advance placement courses in order to increase the odds of being admitted to good colleges, as well as the SAT exam that most colleges require. Across the district many of the schools have been transformed from 9-3 pm, 180 day operation to a community hub, open evenings, weekends and summers.

Montgomery County is the sixteenth largest school district in the country, and maintaining consistency across such a big district like is difficult. Far more ambitious are models that aim at improving practice in multiple districts. Several comprehensive school reform strategies, which entail changing the curriculum as well as restructuring evaluation and teaching practice, have been implemented nationwide. Maintaining fidelity to the model on this scale is far harder than doing so in a place like Montgomery County, especially when the initiative is designed to accomplish something as multifaceted as shrinking the achievement gap in some of the most poverty-stricken communities in the country. Approaches that record good results in one locale often flop when tried elsewhere.⁵³

Success For All, a school-wide reform model with a strong emphasis on reading skills in grades one through four, has largely overcome these implementation problems. It has been used with more than a million students in some 1600 schools, almost all of them located in high-poverty communities. About half of the students have been black. Evidence of the program's overall effectiveness in boosting reading scores, not just while children are participating the program but for several years afterward, has been confirmed in more than forty evaluations, including a national randomized experiment. Success for All is one of only two k-12 programs given top-tier ranking by the Coalition for Evidence Based Policy, and it keeps company with studies like Abecedarian and Perry Preschool.⁵⁴

The biggest gainers are low-achieving and minority (black and Latino) students. When implemented with as much care as in the typical Success for All school district, the evaluators conclude, the model halves the minority-white achievement gap.⁵⁵ As we've seen, however, African American boys and girls sometimes respond differently to different strategies. An unpublished calculation by Robert Slavin, the lead author of the study, finds that the average gain for black males to be between one month and four months on tests of reading, a level of improvement comparable to the girls and more cost-effective than strategies such as class-size reduction.

Why might Success for All be so effective for black male students? Individualized attention is a central tenet of the model. Unlike most schools, where what happens in the classroom stays in the classroom, teachers regularly discuss with one another how each

student is performing. The reading classes are grouped by achievement, not grade level, and are taught by a teacher other than the student's regular classroom teacher. It's comparatively rare for a youngster in the program to be left back or assigned to special education, during and after the program. Another component is a parent coordinator, whose job is to engage families, enlisting their support and helping them with pressing concerns like access to social services. Students who are struggling receive extra tutoring. Those key elements of Success for All, individualized attention and parent involvement, are especially important for African-American boys.

E-“Acting White,” Academic Confidence and the Achievement Gap

These strategies focus on changing the schools—but what about changing the mindset of the students? Black youth who aspire to do well academically are often ostracized by their classmates, accused of “acting white.” That kind of punishment discourages potentially high-achieving students from investing in their own education. It may also prompt them to doubt their own intelligence.⁵⁶

Social psychologists have zeroed in on what Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson have labeled “stereotype threat”—a “social psychological predicament rooted in the prevailing American image of African Americans as intellectually inferior.”⁵⁷ Blacks are especially vulnerable to this threat. They bear a burden that those to whom the stereotype doesn't apply don't have to overcome, “performance-disruptive apprehension, anxiety about the possibility of confirming a deeply negative racial inferiority—in the eyes of others, in one's own eyes, or both at the same time.” What's more, “it is not necessary that a student believe the stereotype to feel this burden. He or she need only be aware of the stereotype and are enough about performing well...to want to disprove the stereotype's unflattering implications.”⁵⁸ The researchers have also shown that implicit theory of intelligence that youngsters hold plays a powerful role in students' calculus. If they believe intelligence is fixed and outside their control, they pay “an emotional tax that is a form of intellectual emasculation,” becoming prone to give up and disengage from learning.⁵⁹

This destructive psychological dynamic can be reversed—an appreciation of the fact that intelligence is malleable, and so within their control, effectively inoculates them against the threat. Inclined to work harder, they naturally do better. College students exposed to material on brain development, which showed the plasticity of intelligence “reported greater enjoyment of the academic process, greater academic engagement, and obtained higher grade point averages than students in the control group. While white students benefited to some extent from this effort to change students' mindset, the benefits to black males were far more substantial.” What's remarkable is how little exposure to such material is required—three sessions of advocating the malleability of intelligence “created an enduring and beneficial change.”⁶⁰

What works for college students also works for middle school youngsters—their beliefs about the nature of intelligence, and their performance in school, can be changed. Teenagers who believe that intelligence is fixed do worse in school than a matched sample of students who believe it is malleable. When these students are taught (in just four sessions) about how learning changes the brain, they set higher learning goals, are more likely to think that making an effort can pay off, are more motivated to succeed—and do better in math. “Theories of intelligence can be manipulated in real world contexts and have a positive impact on achievement outcomes.”⁶¹

Reducing “stereotype threat” doesn’t provide a quick and easy substitute for school reform—although these students did better in school, their performance didn’t come close to erasing the achievement gap—but it should be tried on a much bigger scale. Middle school, the traditional rite of passage for adolescents, is a moment when youngsters are especially susceptible to hearing the message that mental ability isn’t immutable—that trying hard makes a difference.

F-Charter Schools

Charter school systems that succeed in narrowing the achievement gap for African-American boys also seek to change students’ attitudes. They stress character education as a way of changing students’ mindset, seeing it as a prerequisite to academic success, and there’s research to back them up.

A study of 164 mostly African-American eighth-graders, carried out by psychologists Angela Duckworth and Martin Seligman, examined the correlation between students’ scores on an IQ test and a test that measures self-discipline, on the one hand, and their GPA. The self-discipline test proved *twice* as good a predictor as IQ.⁶²

The best examples of charter schools that make the development of self-discipline, and character-building more generally, an important part of students’ education are systems like KIPP, a national network of eighty-two schools, and Green Dot, which runs nineteen inner-city high schools in Los Angeles and New York City. Both enroll poor, mainly minority, youngsters; and both have an enviable track record with black adolescent males. Their success has partly to do with the kinds of practices seen in Montgomery County and many of the Success for All sites—a tight link between evaluation and improving instruction, a culture of accountability, ongoing self-evaluation and adjustment of practice.⁶³ The emphasis on character sets them apart.

Although these schools are open to all, the fact that students must apply for admission, rather than being admitted automatically, as is the case for most public schools, makes comparisons somewhat tricky. Yet even taking into account the possible differences in students’ and parents’ motivation, the differences between these charters and public schools that serve similar students are striking. At a Green Dot school in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, for instance, 68 percent of the African-American male students (the national average for all high school students) graduated in four years.

At one nearby high school, 9 percent graduated on time, and at another, just three students in 100 did so.

At KIPP's Bronx academy, 86 percent of eighth-grade students scored at grade level in math in 2006, compared with 16 percent of all eight-graders in the South Bronx. "I think we have to teach work ethic in the same way we have to teach adding fractions with unlike denominators," says the founder of a successful charter system. "But once children have got the work ethic and the commitment to others and to education down, it's actually pretty easy to teach them."⁶⁴

It's unlikely that charters like Green Dot and KIPP can be replicated on a scale big enough to "tip" public education. Still such schools serve as an existence proof; "they change the public conversation from 'you can't educate these kids' to 'you can only educate these kids *if...*'"⁶⁵

G-Beyond the Schoolhouse: Community Schools and Mentors

Traditionally, students have been in school for six hours a day, 180 days a year; what happens outside the schoolhouse strongly affects how they fare there.⁶⁶ "Youth of all descriptions find insufficient supports in their communities to be able to move confidently and safely to adulthood," writes education policy professor Milbury McLaughlin. Many schools lock up tightly at 3 p.m., sending children and youth into empty houses, barren neighborhoods, street corners, or malls. Youth interpret a local landscape void of engaging things for them to do as adult indifference."⁶⁷

For students from poor families, who often have nowhere to go and nothing to do, the consequences can be fateful. The amount of time that youngsters spend hanging out on street corners with their friends after school lets out is a better predictor of failing in school than family income or race.⁶⁸ And things are even grimmer for poor black students. They are disproportionately likely to live in neighborhoods of what "concentrated disadvantage," where crime, poverty, unemployment and teen pregnancy rates are sky-high, streets and parks are sites of danger and once-vibrant institutions have been shuttered. For a five-year-old, a study by sociologist Robert Sampson concludes, coming of age in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage has the same effect on verbal ability as missing an entire year of school. The findings are particularly noteworthy because the research compared the consequences of being raised in Chicago's best-off and worst-off African-American neighborhoods; no comparison was made with white neighborhoods because no white neighborhood was, demographically, remotely comparable.⁶⁹

Transforming the traditional school into a "community school"—open from dawn to dusk, on weekends and during the summer; offering a raft of medical, social and psychological supports, academic help, sports and activities—can offset these disadvantages. The data, though not parsed by race and gender, show that such schools have positive effects on an array of educational outcomes. Students who spend time on

after-school and summer projects have higher math and reading scores than their gone-at-3 pm classmates. Their attendance records are better and so is their behavior.⁷⁰

Mentoring is another strategy for combating this social isolation that has been effective for black youth. “African-American males are less likely than females to feel capable academically, observes social work professor Larry Davis. “There is little social pressure to graduate from high school and they often don’t understand the economic returns from education.”⁷¹ Introducing a stable and caring adult—a mentor—into these students’ lives can combat those attitudes, for mentors can help to make those connections between school and life, while also fostering students’ self-confidence.

Some mentoring programs operate in the schools. Experience Corps enrolls adults age fifty-five or older to serve as reading tutors for kindergarteners through third graders. A 2009 evaluation that randomly assigned 1000 very poor readers to a treatment and a control group shows how meaningful that simple approach can be. Over the course of a single school year, the students who had been tutored by an Experience Corps volunteer made 60 percent more progress in reading comprehension than those who didn’t. An unpublished reanalysis of that data shows that the effects did not differ across gender or race.⁷²

Friends of the Children is far more intensely involved with the youngsters that it supports.⁷³ Staffers visit kindergarten classrooms to identify youngsters who, even at this young age, are seen by their teachers as likely candidates for prison or early pregnancy because they both bring a great deal of family and social baggage and are extremely hard to manage in the classroom. Once selected by the nonprofit, those children are mentored until they graduate from high school.

This approach has a remarkable track record. Of the more than 200 graduates of the Portland affiliate, about half of them African-American, 82 percent have earned their diplomas, 13 percent higher than the national average, and 68 percent are the first members of their family to do so. Forty percent of these youngsters have gone to college, also bettering the national average. Even though 60 percent have at least one parent who has been incarcerated, 92 percent have stayed out of the juvenile justice system. The best marker for teen pregnancy is being the child of a teen mother, but while 61 percent of these youth were born to an unwed teenager, 98 percent of the girls avoided teen parenting. In New York City, almost all of the youngsters in Friends of the Children are African-American; and while that program hasn’t graduated its first cohort, the record through the first years of high school is impressive. Not a single youth has dropped out of the New York program. The promotion rate in school is 98 percent (the only exceptions are a youngster who transferred to a parochial school, where he was asked to repeat a grade, and a boy who lost a month because of family turmoil). The youngsters have done well in some of the city’s top charter and private schools, as well as selective public schools: in 2009, for the fifth straight year, their reading and math test scores were better than average in their schools. All but one has stayed out of the juvenile justice system (a boy brought a BB gun to school) and the only girl who had a child decided to put her

baby up for adoption and stayed in school. The boys have done about as well in school as the girls.

Friends of the Children is too labor-intensive and costly to serve as a national model (even though a cost-benefit analysis that's underway in 2010 is likely to confirm that it is an economically sound investment). Rather, like the Green Dot and KIPP charter school systems, it is an existence proof that the intergenerational cycle can be broken for black male youth.⁷⁴

V Conclusion: A System of Supports

The bottom line is guardedly optimistic—a surprising number of strategies, some better-known than others, have been shown to reduce the black male youth achievement gap. These include early education initiatives like the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, which prepare children for school; strategies that boost skills in elementary schools, like Success for All, class size reduction and Experience Corps; systemic reform, as in the Montgomery County public schools; and stereotype threat interventions for high school and college students, which address students' doubts about their academic skills. Other approaches, among them parenting support models like the Nurse-Family Partnership; Head Start; intensive mentoring programs like Friends of the Children; and character-building, academically rigorous charter school systems like Green Dot Public Schools and KIPP, show considerable promise. Still other strategies, among them career academies and college in high school, may well have the same kinds of effects, though the evidence is not in hand.

None of these interventions is the magic bullet that policy-makers are perpetually seeking. For one thing, implementation is a make-or-break factor. The more complicated the strategy, the more moving parts, the harder it is to replicate. It's one thing for a school to add tutors to supplement what its teachers do, as Experience Corps does, something entirely different and more difficult to take on the challenge of transforming itself, as Success for All or the Montgomery County model demand. Unintended consequences are the bane of reformers, and these bedevil the initiatives canvassed in this chapter. Class size reduction, for instance, generated substantial positive effects for black students in the Tennessee STAR program, but when it was put in place statewide, in California, school districts with many poor students actually found themselves worse off.

What's more, the schools have little control over destiny-influencing economic and social forces.⁷⁵ While this proposition might appear obvious, it's not the voguish view. Joel Klein, the no-nonsense chancellor of New York City's public schools, insists that for educators to emphasize anything other than literacy and numeracy promotes the "culture of excuse"—the contention that "schools cannot really be held accountable for student achievement because disadvantaged students bear multiple burdens of poverty." The "no excuses" argument contends that skilled teachers are all it takes to assure that all students graduate from high school and are ready for college. Pointing out other factors in youngsters' lives, like racism or poverty, which affect achievement lets the schools off the hook too easily, Klein (and likeminded school leaders such as Michelle Rhee,

chancellor the Washington DC schools) contend. “No single impediment to closing the nation’s achievement gap looms larger than the culture of excuse.”⁷⁶

As we’ve seen, what happens in schools makes a big difference in determining how students fare academically. Yet not even the most successful programs, like the Green Dot charter schools or the Montgomery County Public School System, have 100 percent high school graduation rates; and in those schools, as everywhere else in the country, black male youth do worst. And while community schools, like those run by Children’s Aid Society in conjunction with the New York City public schools, bolster academics with an array of services such as before- and after-school and summer programs, health clinics and social services, and parent involvement, which are especially beneficial to children of poverty and children of color, those initiatives aren’t the elixir.

What psychologists call the “principle of environmental maintenance of development” maintains that, because children’s needs evolve over time, relying on one strategy or another is misguided.⁷⁷ What’s required to bridge the achievement gap are a well-planned series of approaches, beginning with help for parents and continuing into college—what Geoffrey Canada, founder of the much-touted Harlem Children’s Zone, calls the “conveyor belt” approach.⁷⁸

That conclusion should be self-evident. Consider this thought experiment: Can you imagine that your obligations to a child whom you love ends after two years at a high-quality preschool or a top-flight primary school, and that for the rest of the time he or she should be left to sink or swim? Why should things be different for other people’s children—especially African-American male youth, with all the baggage they carry—the doomed-to-fail label that they wear, and often internalize, from the day they arrive at school? It is economically smart to invest in those youth, since as we’ve seen they will repay society many times over, and it’s also the right thing to do. The Golden Rule provides an apt standard for policy: *all children deserve what you would want for a child you love*. Putting that principle into practice is the best way to bridge the achievement gap and extend to the next generation the opportunities they deserve.

NOTES

¹ Joshua Aronson, Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach and Brian Rowan reviewed a draft of this paper. Aronson and Schanzenbach, as well as Robert Slavin, Geoffrey Borman, Jane Mauldon, David Deming, Pedro Noguera, Frances Campbell, Lester Strong, Joseph Radelet, Marco Petruzzi, Brian Edwards, Sean Tanner and Robert Houck provided and interpreted unpublished data.

² 347 US 483, 493.

³ Clive Belfield and Henry Levin, "The Education Attainment Gap: Who's Affected, How Much, and Why It Matters," in Clive Belfield and Henry Levin (eds.), *The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education* (Washington DC: Brookings, 2007), 1.

⁴ Katherine Magnuson and Jane Waldfogel, "Introduction," in Katherine Magnuson and Jane Waldfogel (eds.), *Steady Gains and Stalled Progress: Inequality and the Black-White Test Score Gap* (New York: Russell Sage, 2008), 2-3. See also Meredith Phillips and Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips (eds.), *The Black-White Test Score Gap* (Washington DC: Brookings, 1998).

⁵ Roland Fryer and Steven Levitt, "Testing for Racial Differences in the Mental Ability of Young Children," Working Paper 12066 (Washington, DC: NBER); Magnuson and Waldfogel, *supra* at 9, Jencks and Phillips, *supra* at 98.

⁶ Magnuson and Waldfogel at 7.

⁷ College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, *The Educational Crisis Facing Young Men of Color* (Princeton NJ: College Board, 2010).

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/educational-crisis-facing-young-men-of-color.pdf>

⁸ Peter Edelman, Harry J. Holzer and Paul Offner, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (Washington DC: Urban Institute Press) at 21.

⁹ Magnuson and Waldfogel at 7.

¹⁰ Edelman, Holzer and Offner 3.

¹¹ Peg Tyre, *The Trouble with Boys* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008); Judith Kleinfeld, "The State of American Boyhood," *Gender Issues* 26:1 (2009), 113-120.

¹² This section is adapted from David Kirp, *The Sandbox Investment: The Preschool Movement and Kids-First Politics* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 2007) 116-134.

¹³ Fryer and Levin.

¹⁴ Henry Levin et al., "The Public Returns to Public Educational Investments in African American Males," *Economics of Education Review* 26:6 (2007) 699-708; Craig Ramey and Sharon Ramey, "Early Intervention and Early Experience," *American Psychologist* 53:2 (1998) 109-120.

¹⁵ David Kirp, *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: Five Big Ideas for Transforming the Lives of Children* (forthcoming 2011).

¹⁶ Nell Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992); Melissa Roderick, "What's Happening to the Boys? Early High School Experiences and School Outcomes among African American Male Adolescents in Chicago," *Urban Education* 38:5 (2003) 538-607; Pedro Noguera, "The Trouble with Black Boys: The Role and Influence of Environmental and Cultural Factors on the Academic Performance of African American Males," *Urban Education* 38:4 (2003) 431-59; Jason Osborne, "Unraveling Underachievement among African American Boys from an Identification and Academic Perspective," *Journal of Negro Education* 68:4 (1999) 555-566.

-
- ¹⁷ David Grissmer and Elizabeth Eiseman, "Can Gaps in the Quality of Early Environments and Noncognitive Skills Help Explain Persisting Black-White Achievement Gaps?" in Magnuson and Waldfogel 141.
- ¹⁸ Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Lisa Markman, "The Contribution of Parenting to Ethnic and Racial Gaps in School Readiness," *Future of Children* 15.1 (2005) 139-168.
- ¹⁹ Betty Hart and Todd Risley, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children* (Baltimore: Brooks, 1994).
- ²⁰ David Olds et al., "Effects of Nurse Home Visiting on Maternal and Child Functioning: Age Nine Follow-up of a Randomized Trial," *Pediatrics* 120 (2007) e832-e845.
- ²¹ Other parenting programs, such as Parents as Teachers, are offered to all parents.
- ²² Kirp (2011). Economist Derek Neal speculates that another dynamic may be at work. Black families, he suggests, view investing in individual skills as a "white strategy for success. The group expects that persons who invest in market skills are more likely to default on future obligations to the group. Black-white differences in norms concerning marriage may create differences in the mapping between parental human capital and investments in children that could support persistent black-white skill differences among adults across generations." Neal, "Why Has Black-White Skill Convergence Stopped," in Eric Hanushek and Finis Welsh, *Handbook of the Economics of Education* vol.2 (Amsterdam and Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 549-568.
- ²³ This discussion is adapted from Kirp (2007) 50-93.
- ²⁴ William Gormley, Jr., Deborah Phillips, and Ted Gayer, "Preschool Programs Can Boost School Readiness," *Science* 320 (June 27, 2008), 1723-24
- ²⁵ Michael Anderson, "Multiple Inference and Gender Differences in the Effects of Early Intervention: A Reevaluation of the Abecedarian, Perry Preschool, and Early Training Projects," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 103:484, (2008) 1481-1495.
- ²⁶ Arthur Reynolds et al, "Effects of a School-Based Early Childhood Intervention on Adult Health and Well-Being: A 19-Year Follow-up of Low-Income Families," *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 16:8, 730-9 (2008)
- ²⁷ http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/impact_study
- ²⁸ Janet Currie and Duncan Thomas, "Does Head Start Make a Difference?" *American Economic Review* 85:3 (1995), 341-364; Eliana Garces, Duncan Thomas and Janet Currie, "Longer-Term Effects of Head Start," *American Economic Review* 92:4 (2000) 999-1012
- ²⁹ David Deming, "Early Childhood Intervention and Life-Cycle Skill Development: Evidence from Head Start," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1:3, 111-34 (2009)
- ³⁰ Ibid at 115.
- ³¹ Flavio Cunha and James Heckman, "The Technology of Skill Formation," *American Economic Review* 97:2 (2007) 31-47. See also Janet Currie and Matthew Neidell, "Getting Inside the 'Black Box' of Head Start Quality: What Matters and What Doesn't," NBER working paper 10091 (Washington DC: NBER, 2003); Jens Ludwig and Douglas Miller, "Does Head Start Improve Children's Life Chances? Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122-1 (2007)159-208.
- ³² Robert Sampson, Patrick Sharkey and Steven Raudenbush, "Durable Effects of Concentrated Disadvantage on Verbal Ability among African-American Children," *PNAS* 105:3 (2008), pages 845-852.
- ³³ Rucker Johnson, "School Quality & the Long-run Effects of Head Start" (Goldman School of Public Policy, working paper 2010).
- ³⁴ Neal 566.

-
- ³⁵ Roland Fryer and Steven Levitt, "The Black-White Test Score Gap through Third Grade," *American Law and Economics Review* 8:2 (2006) 249-281.
- ³⁶ Helen Ladd, "School Policies and the Test Score Gap," in Magnuson and Waldfogel, 289-320.
- ³⁷ Samuel Carter, *No Excuses: Lessons from 21 High-Poverty, High-Performing Schools* (Washington DC: Heritage Foundation, 2000).
- ³⁸ Richard Rothstein, *Class And Schools: Using Social, Economic, And Educational Reform To Close The Black-white Achievement Gap* (New York: Teachers College Press 2004) at 70.
- ³⁹ Douglas Harris, "High Flying Schools, Student Disadvantage, and the Logic of NCLB," Paper Prepared for the Harvard Achievement Gap Initiative (2005) www.agi.harvard.edu/Search/download.php?id=89
- ⁴⁰ Jeremy Finn et al, "The 'Why's' of Class Size: Student Behavior in Small Classes," *Review of Educational Research*, 73:3, 321-368 (2003).
- ⁴¹ Compare Alan Krueger and Diane Whitmore, "What Have Researchers Learned from Project STAR?" *Brookings Papers on Education Policy* (2006/2007) 205-228 with Eric Hanushek, "Evidence, Politics, and the Class Size Debate," Lawrence Mishel and Richard Rothstein (eds.), *The Class Ssize Debate* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2002) 37-65.
- ⁴² Alan Krueger and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, "The Effect of Attending a Small Class in the Early Grades on College Test-Taking and Middle School Test Results: Evidence from Project STAT," *Economic Journal* 111:468 (2001) 1-28; Alan Krueger and Diane Whitmore, "Would Smaller Classes Help Close the Black-White Achievement Gap?" in John Chubb and Tom Loveless (eds.), *Bridging the Achievement Gap* (Washington DC: Brookings 2001), 11-46.
- ⁴³ Christopher Jepsen and Steven Rivkin, *Class Size Reduction, Teacher Quality, and Academic Achievement in California Public Elementary Schools* (San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California, 2002) http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_602CJR.pdf; Brian Stecher et al., "Class-size Reduction in California: A Story of Hope, Promise, and Unintended Consequences," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82:9 (2001) 670-74.
- ⁴⁴ Jacob Vigdor and Jens Ludwig, "Segregation and the Test Score Gap," in Magnuson and Waldfogel 181-212.
- ⁴⁵ But cf Susan Clampet-Lundquist et al, *Moving At-Risk Kids to Better Neighborhoods: Why Girls Fare Better than Boys* (Princeton NJ: Princeton Industrial Relations Section, Working Paper No. 509, 2006).
- ⁴⁶ John Charles Roger and Gary Orfield, *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press 2008).
- ⁴⁷ Jonathan Guryan, "Desegregation and Black Dropout Rates," *American Economic Review* 94:4 (2004) 919-943; Byron Lutz, "Post Brown vs the Board of Education: The Effects of the End of Court-Ordered Desegregation," Finance and Economics Discussion Series Working Paper 2005-64 (Washington DC: Federal Reserve Board)
- ⁴⁸ Eric Hanushek, John Kain and Steven Rivkin, "New Evidence about Brown v Board of Education: The Complex Effects of School Racial Composition on Achievement," *Journal of Labor Economics* 27:3 (2009) 349-383.
- ⁴⁹ Roger and Orfield; David Kirp, "Racists and Robber Barons," *Nation* (July 12, 2007).
- ⁵⁰ David Card and Jesse Rothstein, "Racial Segregation and the Black-White Test Score Gap," *Journal of Public Economics*, 91:11-12, 2158-2184; Lisa Sanbonmatsu et al.,

“Neighborhoods and Academic Achievement: Results from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment,” *Journal of Human Resources* 41:4 (2006) 649–691.

⁵¹ Stacy Childress, Denis Doyle and David Thomas, *Leading for Equity: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Montgomery County Public Schools* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Education Press 2009).

⁵² Montgomery County [MD] Public Schools, *The Results Book 2010* (unpublished).

⁵³ Janet Quint et al., *The Challenge of Scaling Up Education Reform: Findings and Lessons from First Things First* (New York: Manpower Development and Research Corp. 2005)

http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/29/da/76.pdf

⁵⁴ Geoffrey Borman et al., “Final Reading Outcomes of the National Randomized Field Trial of Success for All,” *American Educational Research Journal* 44:3 (2007) 701-731; Eric Hurley et al, Effects of Success for All on TAAS Reading: A Texas Statewide Evaluation, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82:10 (2001), 750-756.

http://evidencebasedprograms.org/wordpress/?page_id=98

⁵⁵ Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden, “Reducing the Gap: Success for All and the Achievement of African American Students,” *Journal of Negro Education* 75:3 (2006) 389-400 at 393.

⁵⁶ David Austen-Smith, Roland G. Fryer, “An Economic Analysis of ‘Acting White’,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120: 2 (2005) 551-583; Signathia Fordham and John Ogbu, “Black Students’ School Success: Coping with the ‘Burden of Acting White’,” *Urban Review* 18:2 (1986) 176-206; John McWhorter, *Self-Sabotage: Losing the Race in Black America* (New York: Free Press 2000); Beverly Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* (New York: Basic 2003).

⁵⁷ Joshua Aronson, Carrie Fried and Catherine Good, “Reducing the Effects of Stereotype Threat on African American College Students by Shaping Theories of Intelligence,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 38:1 (2002) 113-125 at 114; Claude Steele, “A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape the Intellectual Identities and Performance of Women and African-Americans,” *American Psychologist* 52:6 (1997) 613-629.

⁵⁸ Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson, “Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African-Americans,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69: 5 (1995) 797-811.

⁵⁹ Catherine Good, Joshua Aronson and Michael Inzlicht, “Improving Adolescents’ Standardized Test performance: An Intervention to Reduce the Effects of Stereotype Threat,” *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 24:6 (2003), 645-662 at 645.

⁶⁰ Aronson, Fried and Good. See also Jason Osborne, “Academics, Self-Esteem, and Race: A Look at the Underlying Assumptions of the Disidentification Hypothesis,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21:5 (1995), 449-455.

⁶¹ Lisa Blackwell, Kali Trzesniewski and Carol Dweck, “Implicit Theories of Intelligence Predict Achievement across an Adolescent Transition: A Longitudinal Study and an Intervention,” *Child Development* 78:2 (2007) 246-263, 248.

⁶² Angela Duckworth and Martin Seligman, “Self-discipline Outdoes IQ in Predicting Academic Performance of Adolescents,” *Psychological Science*, 16:12 (2006), 939-944. The sample size is too small to specify the combined effects of race and gender.

⁶³ Morgaen L. Donaldson, Heather G. Peske, *Supporting Effective Teaching Through Teacher Evaluation: A Study of Teacher Evaluation in Five Charter Schools* (Washington DC, Center for American Progress 2010)
http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/03/teacher_evaluation.html

⁶⁴ Paul Tough, “What It Takes to Make a Student,” *New York Times Magazine* (November 26, 2006)

⁶⁵ Ibid. A 2010 study of black and Latino boys in single-sex schools points to similar characteristics as leading to academic success. “Academic engagement”—the “degree to which students know *how to do school*”—was the best predictor of achievement.” To engage students in this way, the study notes, requires the kind of intense relationships with “supportive adults that, as we’ve seen, characterizes successful interventions from preschool onward. *An exploratory Achievement Model of Boys in Single Sex Schools*, (New York: NYU Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010)

⁶⁶ Kirp (2011); Tama Leventhal, Veronique Dupere and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, “Neighborhood Influences on Adolescent Development,” in Laurence Steinberg and Richard Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, New York, NY: John Wiley. (2004), 411-444.

⁶⁷ Milbery McLaughlin, *Community Counts* (Washington DC: Public Education Network (2000).

⁶⁸ Patricia Lauer et al, “Out-of-School-Time Programs: A Meta-Analysis of Effects for At-Risk Students,” *Review of Educational Research* 76:2 (2006), pages 275-313.

⁶⁹ Robert J. Sampson, Patrick Sharkey and Stephen W. Raudenbush, “Durable Effects of Concentrated Disadvantage on Verbal Ability among African American Children,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105:3 (2008). 845-853.

⁷⁰ Lauer et al.; Geoffrey Borman and N. Maritza Dowling, “Longitudinal Achievement Effects of Multiyear Summer School: Evidence from the Teach Baltimore Randomized Field Trial,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 28:1 (2006), 25-48; Barbara Heyns, “Schooling and Cognitive Development: Is There a Season for Learning,” *Child Development* 58:5 (1987) 1151-1160; Kirp (2011).

⁷¹ Larry Davis et al, “Predicting Positive Academic Intention among African American Males and Females,” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 22:11 (2003), 206-226.

⁷² Nancy Morrow-Howell et al., *Experience Corps: Effects on Student Reading* (St. Louis: Center for Social Development, Washington University, 2009)
<http://csd.wustl.edu/Publications/Documents/RB09-03.pdf> ; George Rebok et al., “Short-term Impact of Experience Corps Participation on Children and Schools: Results from a Pilot Randomized Trial,” *Journal of Urban Health* 81:1 (2004), 79-93.

⁷³ Kirp (2011)

⁷⁴ A school-based mentoring program for elementary school African-American boys reports encouraging early results. Courtland Lee, *Empowering Young Black Males—III: A Systematic Modular Training Program for Black Male Children & Adolescents* (Greensboro, NC: CAPS Publications, 2003).

⁷⁵ See e.g. Richard Rothstein, *Class And Schools: Using Social, Economic, And Educational Reform To Close The Black-white Achievement Gap* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004); Diane Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* (New York: Basic, 2010)

⁷⁶ Joel Klein, "Urban Schools Need Better Teachers, Not Excuses, To Close the Education Gap," *U.S. News & World Report* May 4, 2009

⁷⁷ Craig and Sharon Ramey, "Early Intervention and Early Experience," *American Psychologist* 53:1, 109-120 (1998); Tough.

⁷⁸ Tough.

WORD COUNT

Text	8535
Endnotes	2238
Total	10,773