# ACHIEVEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA:

Where are we? What can we do?

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Learning American Student Achievement Institute

Indianapolis, IN January 2014



### America: Two Powerful Stories

# 1. Land of Opportunity:

Work hard, and you can become anything you want to be.

# 2. Generational Advancement:

Through hard work, each generation of parents can assure a better life — and better education — for their children.

# These stories animated hopes and dreams of people here at home

And drew countless immigrants to our shores

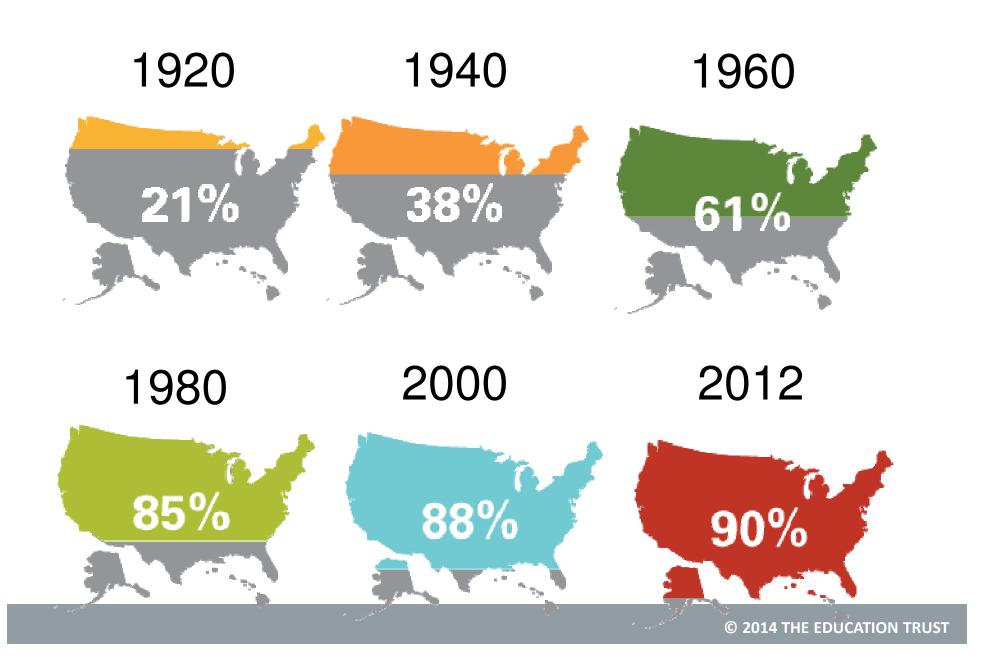
# Yes, America was often intolerant...

And they knew the "Dream" was a work in progress.

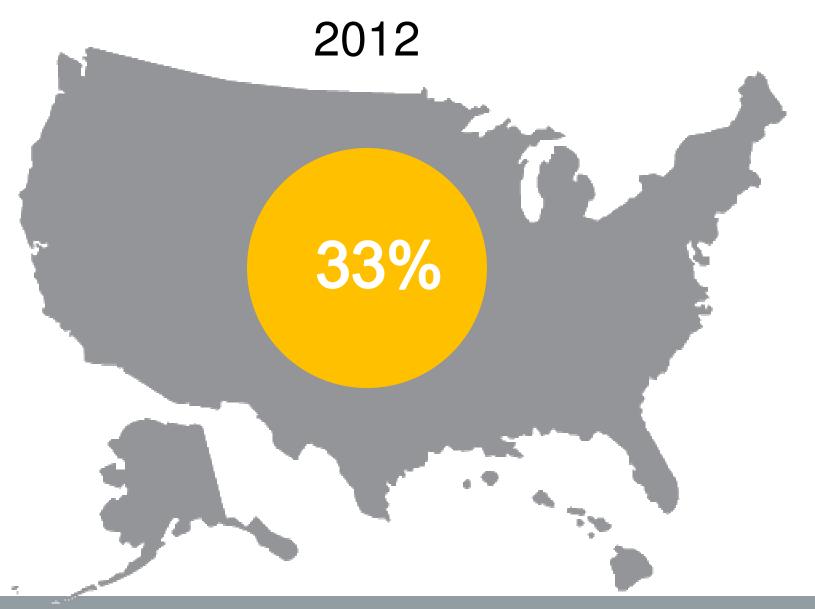
### We were:

- The first to provide universal high school;
- The first to build public universities;
- The first to build community colleges;
- The first to broaden access to college, through GI Bill, Pell Grants, ...

### Percent of U.S. adults with a high school diploma

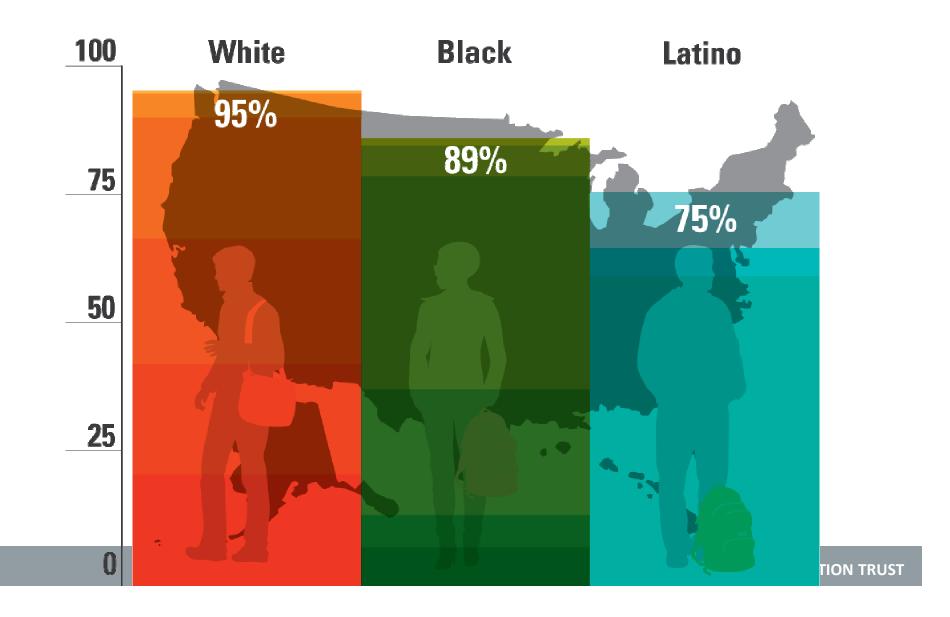


### Percent of U.S. adults with a B.A. or more

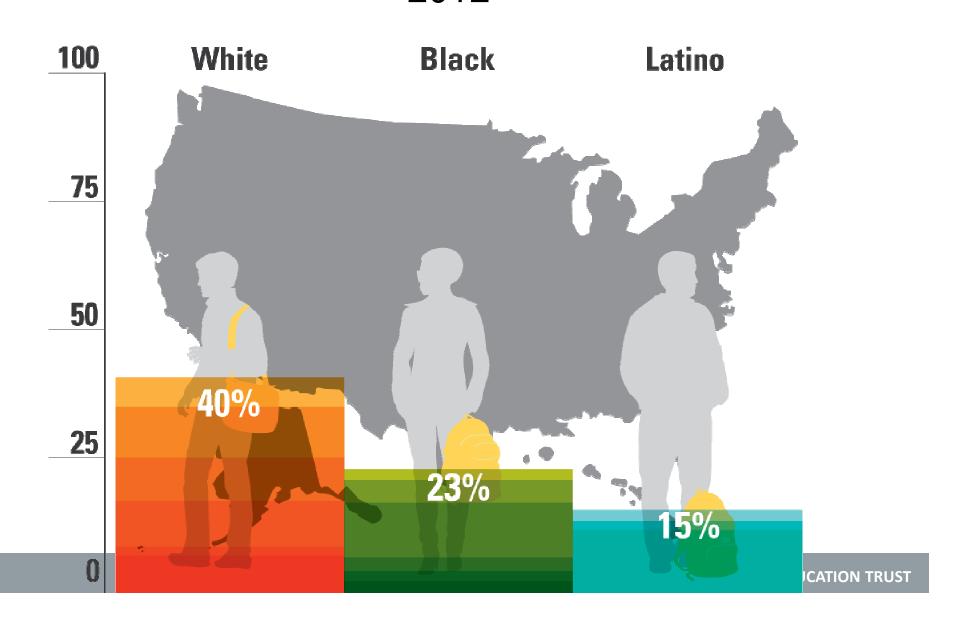


Sometimes, progress was painfully slow--especially for people of color.

Percent of U.S. adults with a high school diploma, by 2012



# Percent of U.S. adults with a B.A. or more, by race 2012



Then, beginning in the eighties, inequality started growing again.

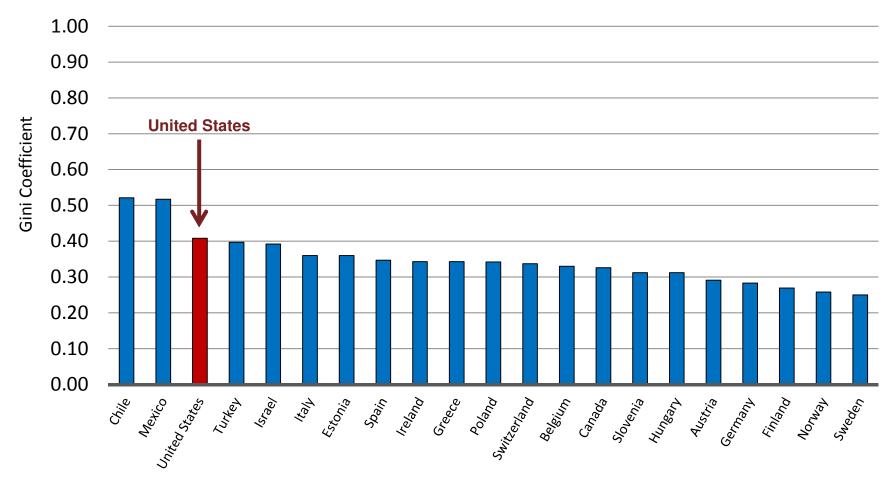
In the past four years alone, 95% of all income gains have gone to the top 1%.

### In 2012:

- In 2012, the top 5% of Americans took home 22% of the nation's income; the top .1% took home 11%.
- And the bottom 20% took home just 3%.

Source: DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2012," U.S Census Bureau, September 2013; Stiglitz, "Inequality is a Choice," New York Times, October 13, 2013.

# Instead of being the most equal, the U.S. has the third highest income inequality among OECD nations.



Note: Gini coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates total income equality and 1 indicates total income inequality.

Source: United Nations, U.N. data, <a href="http://data.un.org/DocumentData.aspx?q=gini&id=271">http://data.un.org/DocumentData.aspx?q=gini&id=271</a>: 2011

### Median Wealth of White Families

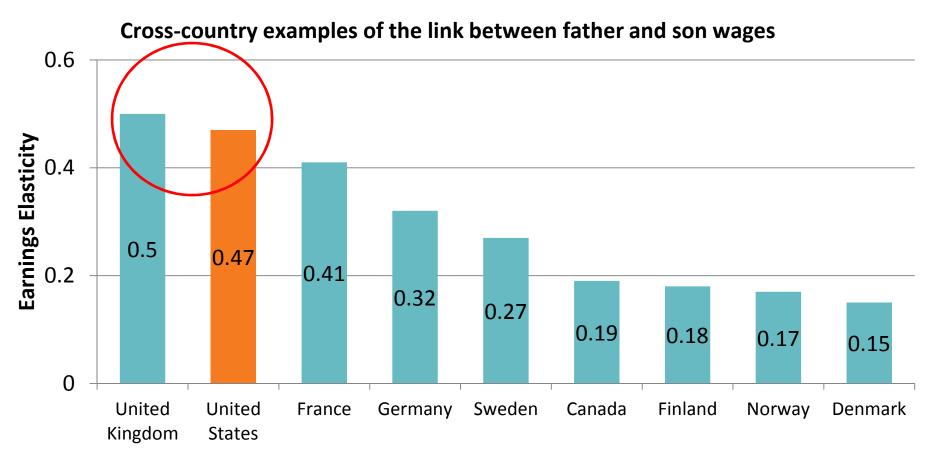
20 X that of African Americans

18 X that of Latinos

Source: Rakesh Kochhar, Richard Fry, and Paul Taylor, "Twenty-to-One: Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics," Pew Social & Demographic Trends, 2011.

# Not just wages and wealth, but economic mobility as well.

# Now, instead of being the "land of opportunity," the U.S. has one of lowest rates of intergenerational mobility.



Source: Tom Hertz, "Understanding Mobility in America" (Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2006).

# At macro level, better and more equal education is not the only answer.

But at the individual level, it really is.

What schools and colleges do, in other words, is hugely important to our **economy**, our **democracy**, and our **society**.

# So, how are we doing?

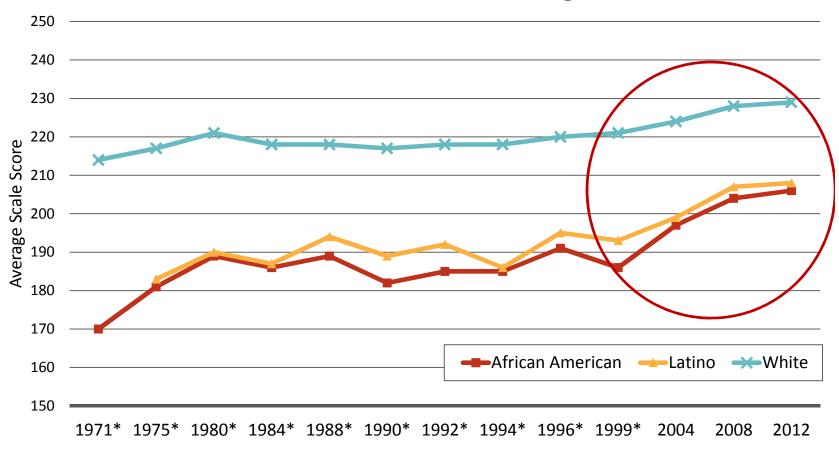


## First, some good news.

After more than a decade of fairly flat achievement and stagnant or growing gaps in K-12, we appear to be turning the corner with our elementary students.

# Since 1999, large gains for all groups of students, especially students of color

9 Year Olds - NAEP Reading

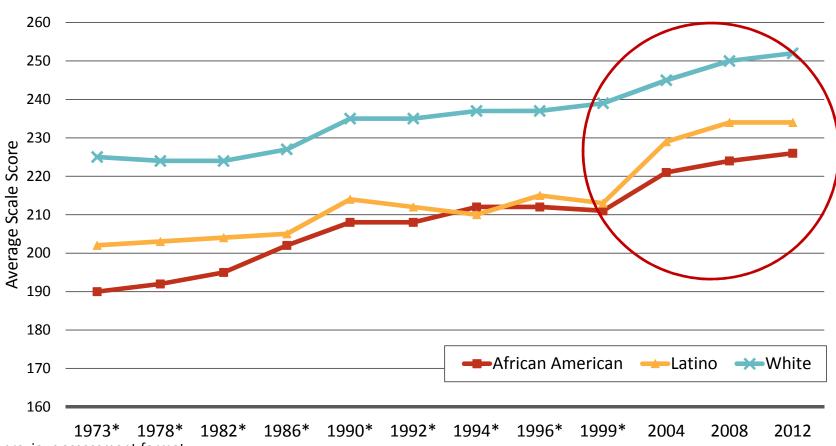


<sup>\*</sup>Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

# Since 1999, performance rising for all groups of students

#### 9 Year Olds – NAEP Math



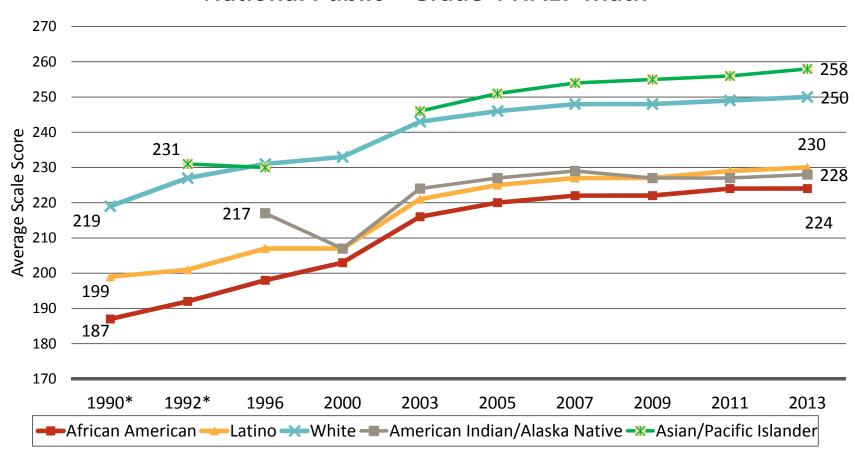
<sup>\*</sup>Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

# Looked at differently (and on the "other" NAEP exam)...

# All groups have improved since 1990, some gap narrowing

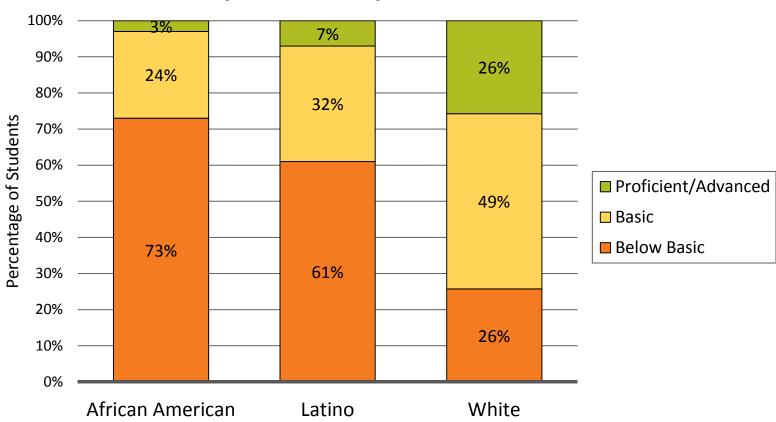
#### National Public – Grade 4 NAEP Math



<sup>\*</sup>Accommodations not permitted Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 249)

### 1996 NAEP Grade 4 Math

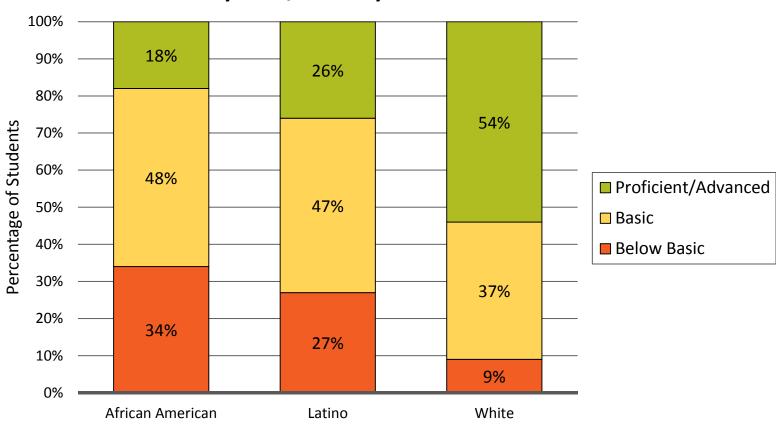
#### By Race/Ethnicity - National Public



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/

### 2013 NAEP Grade 4 Math

#### By Race/Ethnicity – National Public

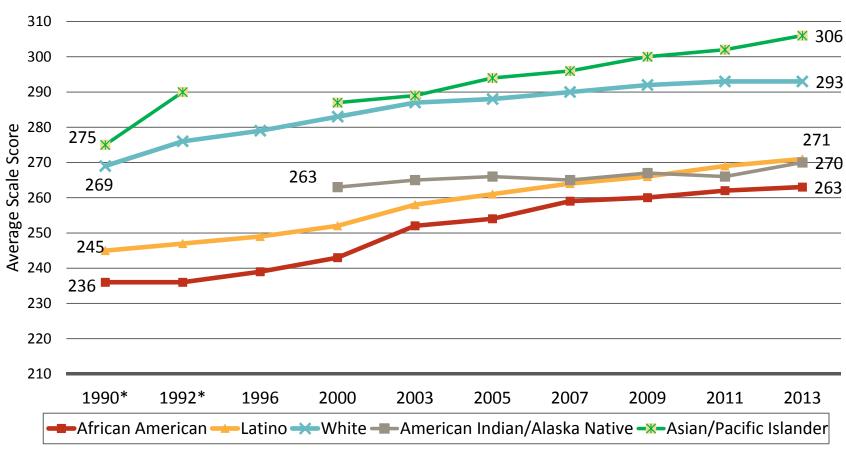


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/

Middle grades are up, too.

# Over the last decade, most groups have steadily improved and gaps have narrowed

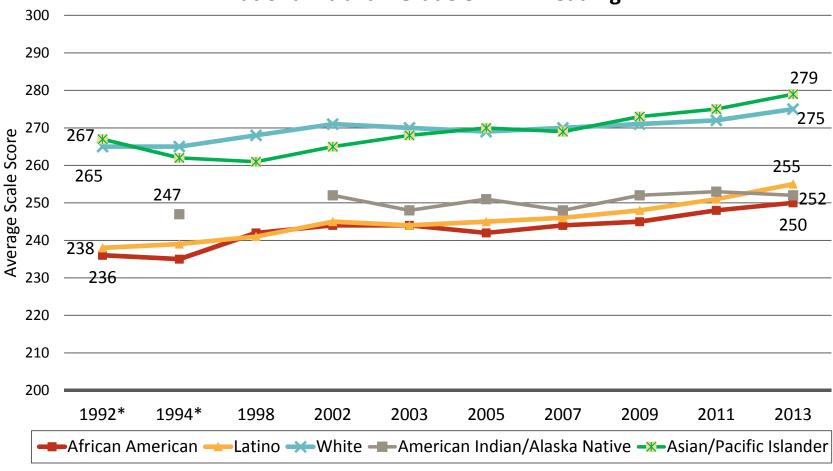
#### National Public - Grade 8 NAEP Math



<sup>\*</sup>Accommodations not permitted
Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 299)

### Some gap closing over the last decade





<sup>\*</sup>Accommodations not permitted Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 281)



### **Bottom Line:**

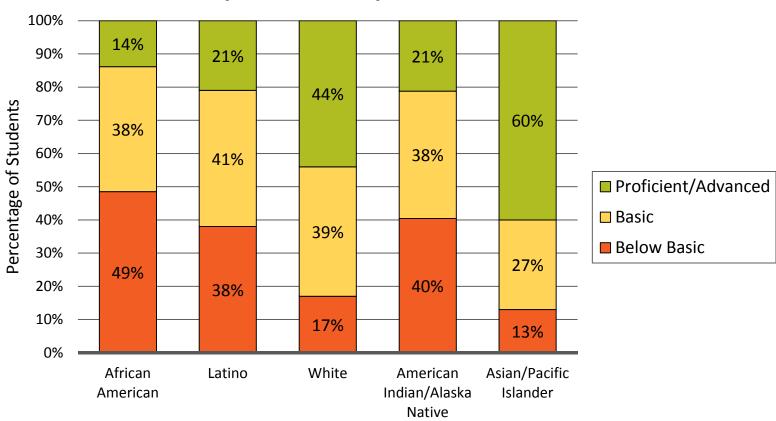
When we really focus on something, we make progress!

# Clearly, much more remains to be done in elementary and middle school

Too many youngsters still enter high school way behind.

### 2013 NAEP Grade 8 Math

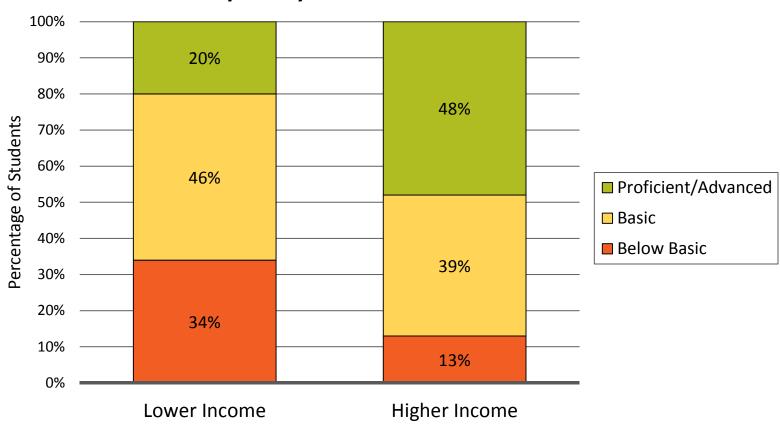
#### By Race/Ethnicity – National Public



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/

### 2013 NAEP Grade 8 Reading

#### By Family Income - National Public



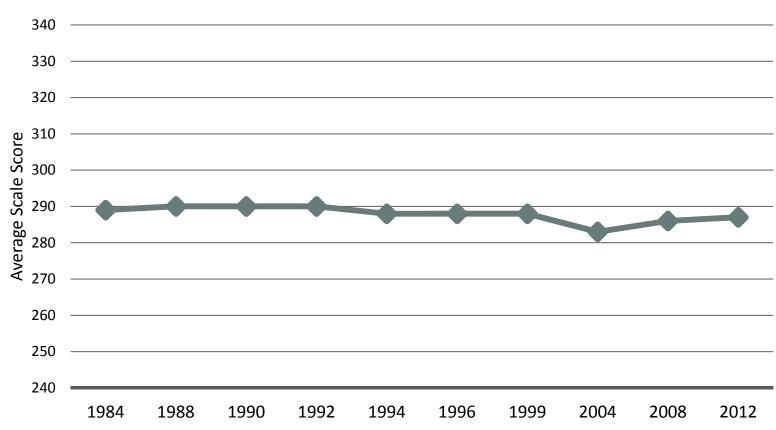
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/

But at least we have some traction on elementary and middle school problems.

The same is NOT true of our high schools.

#### Achievement is flat in reading for students overall.

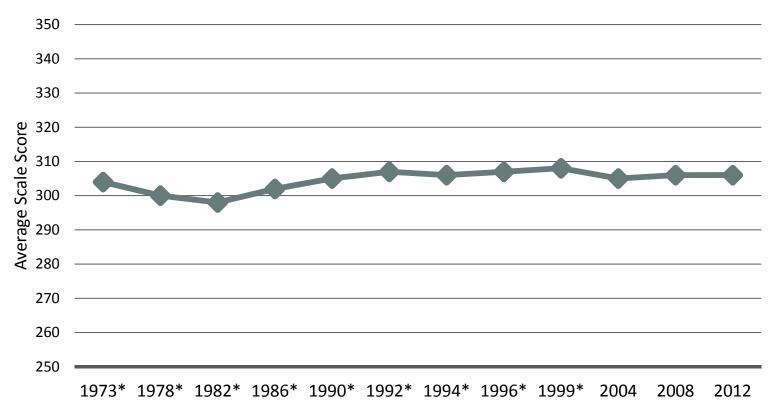
17-Year-Olds Overall - NAEP



Source: NAEP Long-Term Trends, NCES (2004)

### Math achievement for students overall is flat over time.

#### 17-Year-Olds Overall - NAEP



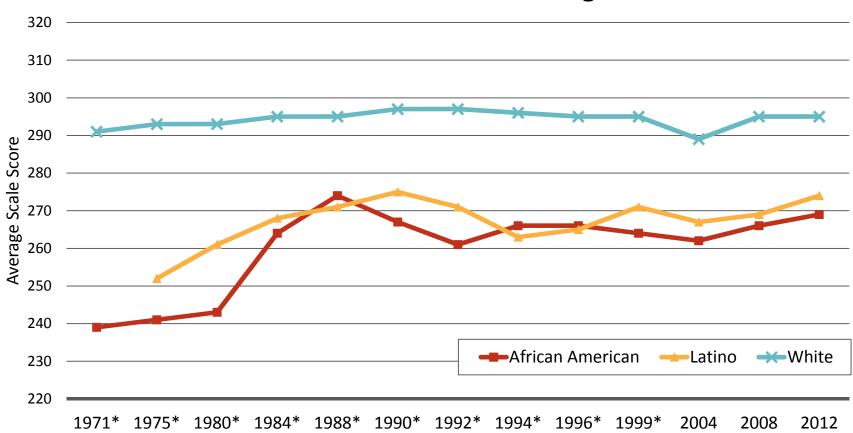
<sup>\*</sup> Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress

And despite earlier improvements, gaps between groups haven't narrowed much since the late 80s and early 90s.

# Reading: Not much gap narrowing since 1988.

#### 17 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

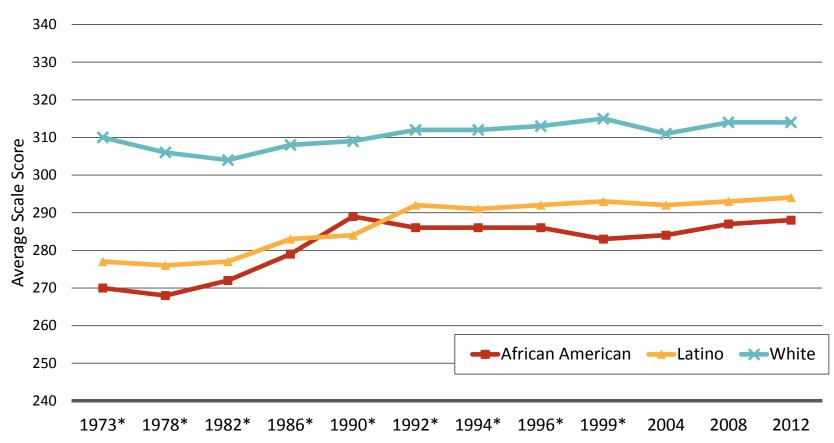


<sup>\*</sup>Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

#### Math: Not much gap closing since 1990.

17 Year Olds – NAEP Math



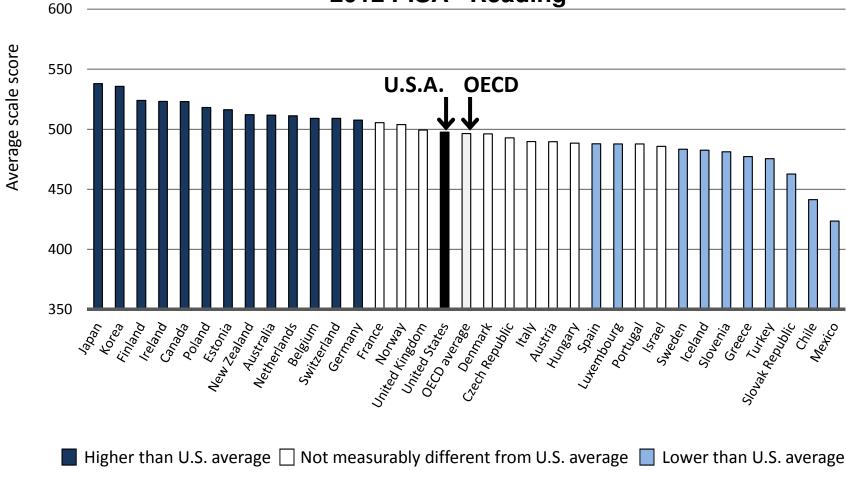
<sup>\*</sup>Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Trends in Academic Progress 2012"

Moreover, no matter how you cut the data, our students aren't doing well compared with their peers in other countries.

# Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in Reading

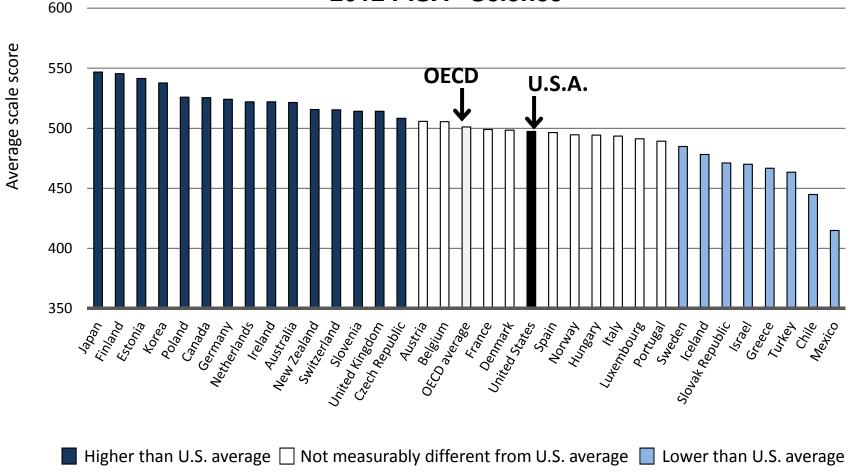
2012 PISA - Reading



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/pisa2012/pisa2012highlights-5a.asp">http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/pisa2012/pisa2012highlights-5a.asp</a>.

# Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 20<sup>th</sup> in Science

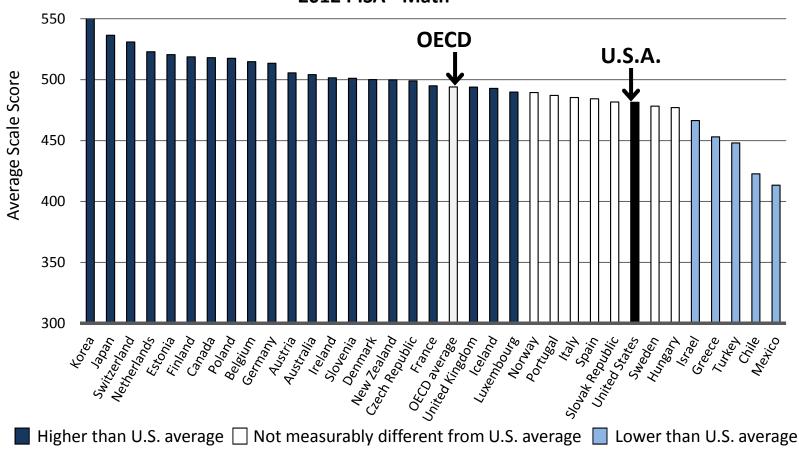
2012 PISA - Science



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/pisa2012/pisa2012highlights 4a.asp.

# Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 27<sup>th</sup> in Math Literacy

2012 PISA - Math

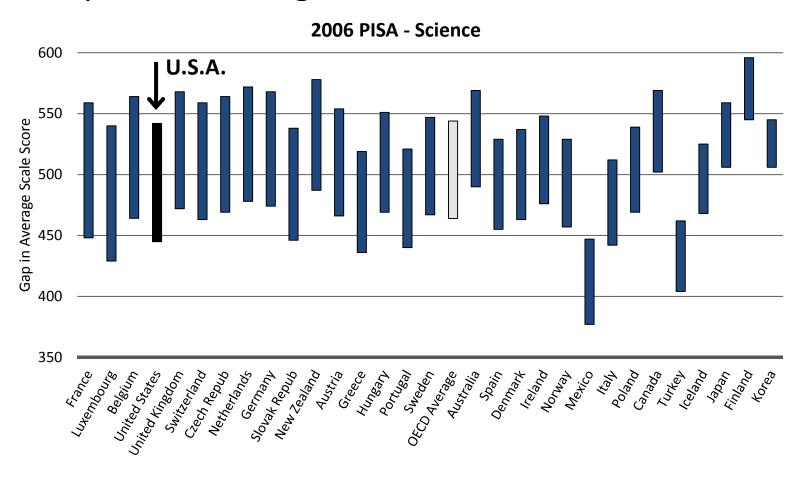


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa2012/pisa2012highlights">http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa2012/pisa2012highlights</a> 3a.asp.

#### Only place we rank high?

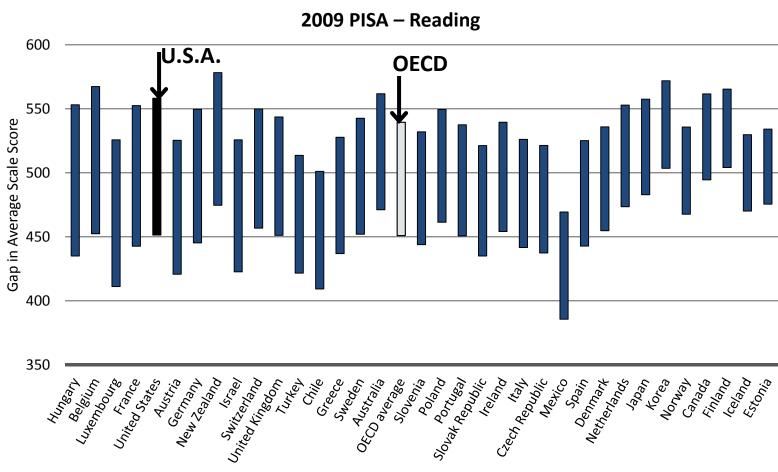
Inequality.

# Among OECD Countries, U.S.A. has the 4<sup>th</sup> Largest Gap Between High-SES and Low-SES Students



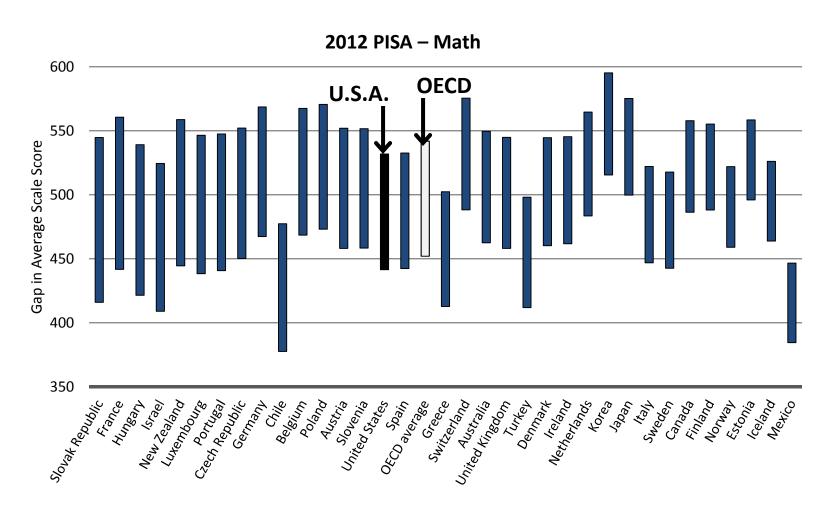
Source: PISA 2006 Results, OECD, table 4.8b

# Among OECD Countries, U.S.A. has the 5<sup>th</sup> Largest Gap Between High-SES and Low-SES Students



Source: PISA 2009 Results, OECD, Table II.3.1

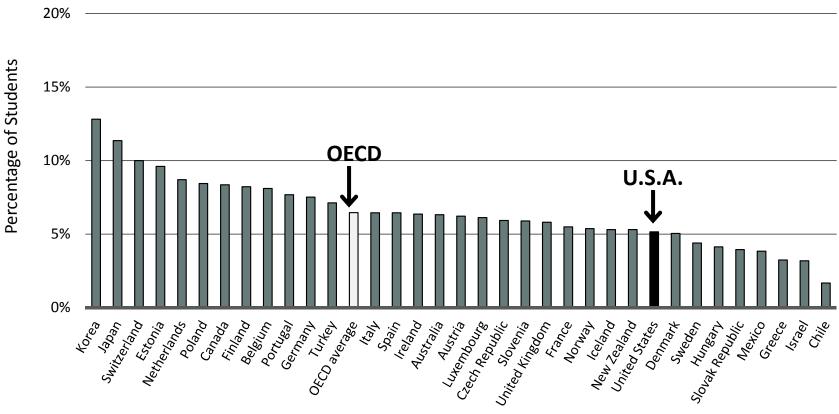
### The U.S. Gap Between High-SES and Low-SES Students is Equivalent to Over Two Years of Schooling



Source: PISA 2012 Results, OECD, Annex B1, Chapter 2, Table II.2.4a

The U.S. ranks 26<sup>th</sup> among 34 OECD Countries on the Percentage of Low-SES Students who are High-Performing





Note: High-performing, low-SES students are those who are in the bottom quarter of the ESCS in their country but perform in the top quarter across students from all countries after accounting for socioeconomic background.

Source: PISA 2012 Results, OECD, Annex B1, Chapter 2, Table II.2.7a

# Gaps in achievement begin before children arrive at the schoolhouse door.

But, rather than organizing our educational system to ameliorate this problem, we organize it to exacerbate the problem.

#### How?

By giving students who arrive with less, less in school, too.

Some of these "lesses" are a result of choices that policymakers make.

# Funding Gaps *Between Districts:* National inequities in state and local revenue per student

	Gap
High-Poverty versus	<b>-\$773</b>
Low-Poverty Districts	per student
High-Minority versus	<b>-\$1,122</b>
Low-Minority Districts	per student

Source: Education Trust analyses of U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Census Bureau data for the 2005-06 school year.

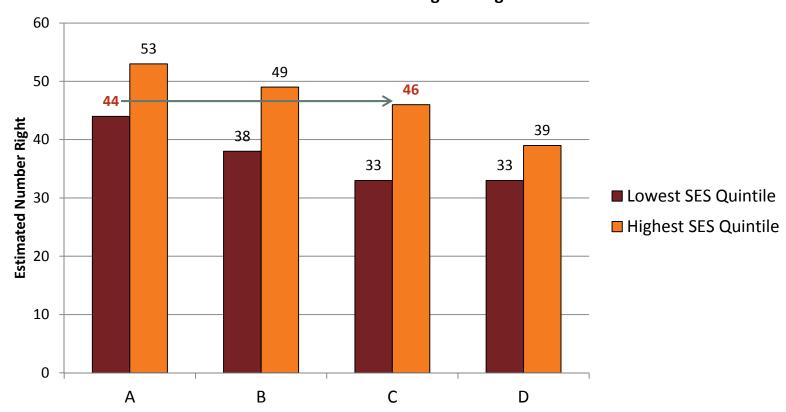
In truth, though, some of the most devastating "lesses" are a function of choices that educators (and school board members) make.

# Choices we make about what to expect of whom.....



# Low SES students are receiving A's for work that would earn high SES students C's or lower.

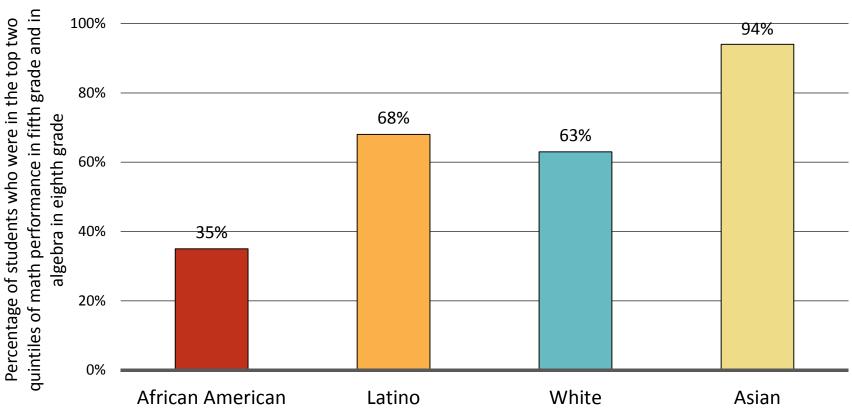
Performance on the HSLS Algebra Assessment by Grade and SES Among Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra



Source: Education Trust analysis of data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009.

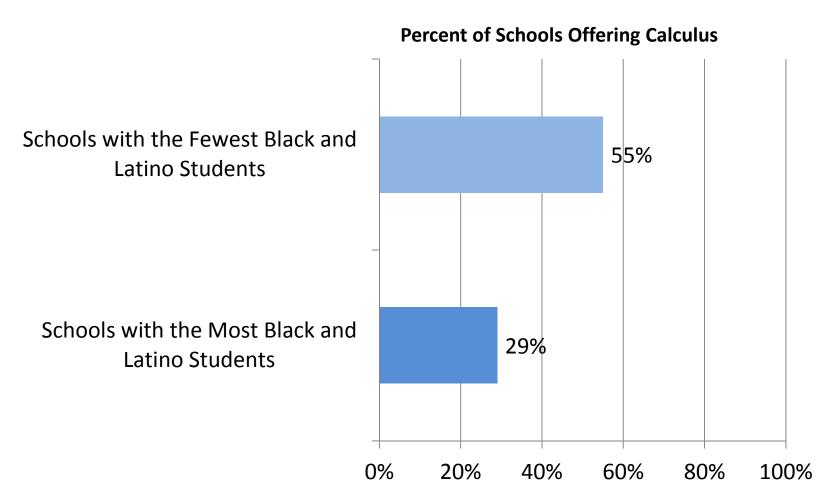
# Choices we make about what to teach whom...

# Even African-American students with *high math*performance in fifth grade are unlikely to be placed in algebra in eighth grade



Source: NCES, "Eighth-Grade Algebra: Findings from the Eighth-Grade Round of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K)" (2010).

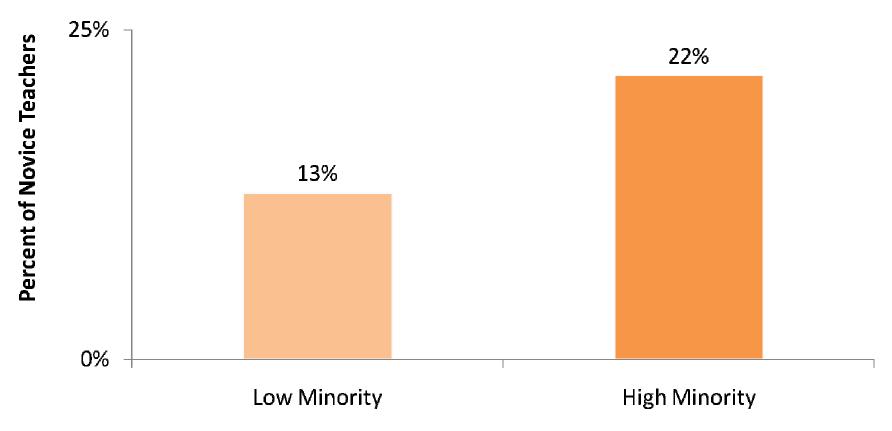
### Students of color are less likely to attend high schools that offer calculus.



Source: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights , Civil Rights Data Collection

# And choices we make about who teaches whom...

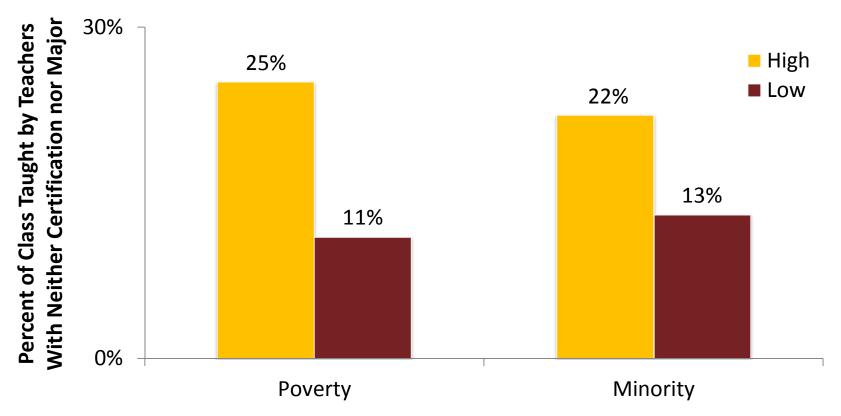
### Students at high-minority schools more likely to be taught by novice\* teachers.



Note: High minority school: 75% or more of the students are Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander. Low-minority school: 10% or fewer of the students are non-White students. Novice teachers are those with three years or fewer experience.

Source: Analysis of 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey data by Richard Ingersoll, University of Pennsylvania 2007.

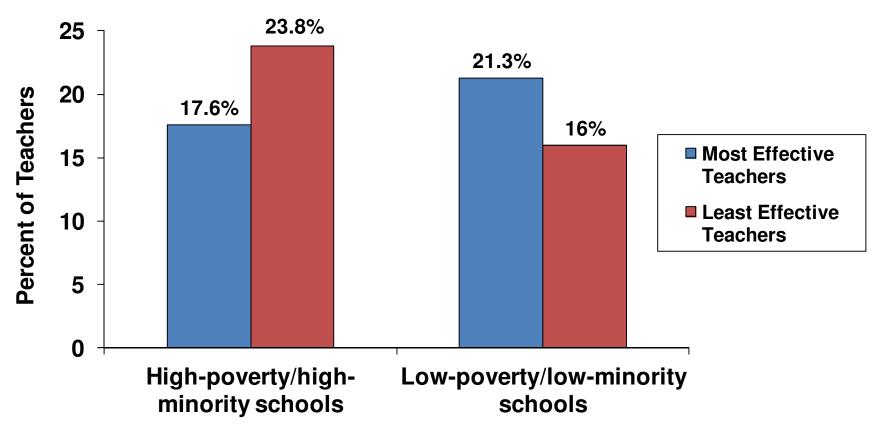
Math classes at high-poverty, high-minority secondary schools are more likely to be taught by out-of-field\* teachers.



Note: High-poverty school: 55 percent or more of the students are eligible for free/reduced-price lunch. Low-poverty school: 15 percent or fewer of the students are eligible for free/reduced-price lunch. High-minority school: 78 percent or more of the students are black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander. Low-minority school: 12 percent or fewer of the students are non-white students.

\*Teachers with neither certification nor major. Data for secondary-level core academic classes (math, science, social studies, English) across the U.S. Source: Education Trust Analysis of 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey data.

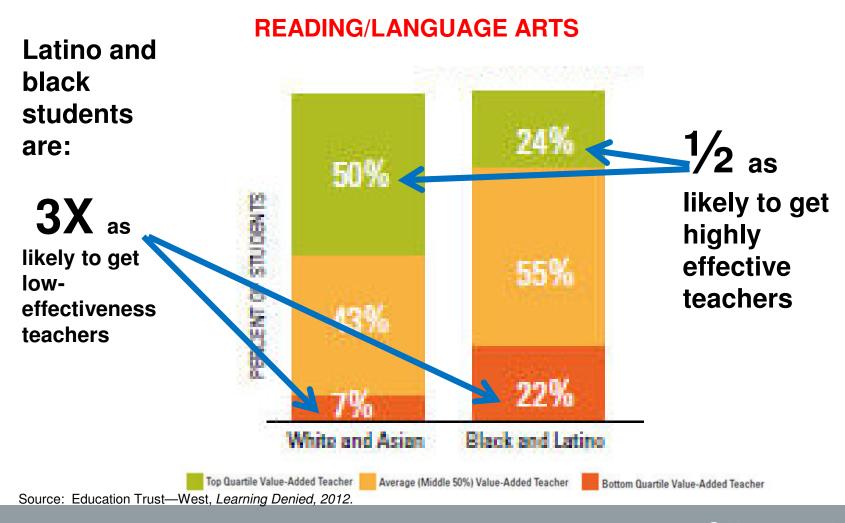
Tennessee: High-poverty/high-minority schools have fewer of the "most effective" teachers and more "least effective" teachers.



Note: High poverty/high minority means at least 75 percent of students qualify for FRPL and at least 75 percent are minority.

Source: Tennessee Department of Education 2007. "Tennessee's Most Effective Teachers: Are they assigned to the schools that need them most?" http://tennessee.gov/education/nclb/doc/TeacherEffectiveness2007 03.pdf.

# Los Angeles: Black, Latino students have fewer highly effective teachers, more weak ones.

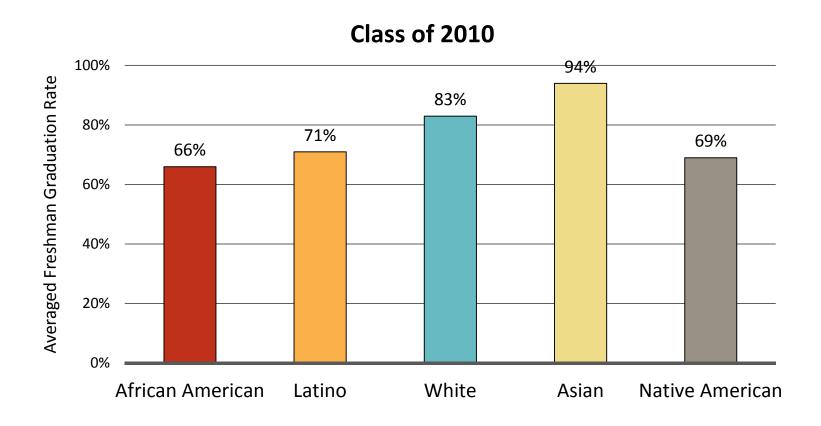


#### The results are devastating.

Kids who come in a little behind, leave a **lot** behind.

And these are the students who remain in school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

# Students of color are less likely to graduate from high school on time.



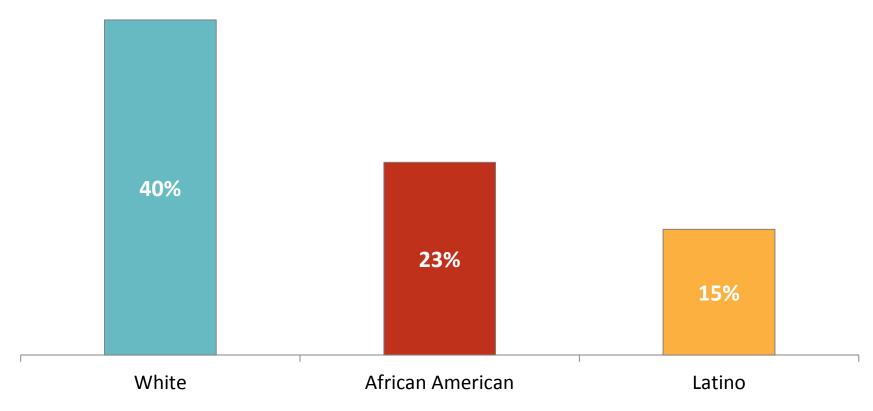
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Public School Graduates and Dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2009-10: First Look" (2013).

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Add those numbers up and throw in college entry and graduation, and different groups of young Americans obtain degrees and **very** different rates...

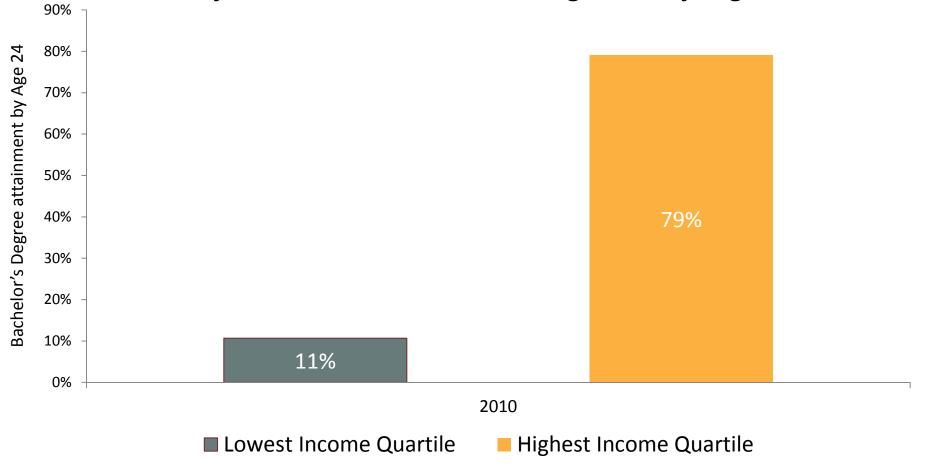
### Whites attain bachelor's degrees at nearly twice the rate of blacks and almost three times the rate of Hispanics

Bachelor's Degree Attainment of Young Adults (25-29-year-olds), 2012



Source: NCES, Condition of Education 2010 (Table A-22-1) and U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment in the United States: 2012.

Young adults from high-income families are 7 times more likely to earn bachelor's degrees by age 24



Source: Tom Mortenson, Bachelor's Degree Attainment by age 24 by Family income Quartiles, 1970 to 2010, Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2012.

### What Can We Do?

An awful lot of Americans have decided that we can't do much.

### What We Hear Many Americans Say:

- They're poor
- Their parents don't care
- They come to schools without breakfast
- Not enough books
- Not enough parents

Source: N/A

But if they are right, why are low-income students and students of color performing so much higher in some schools...

## George Hall Elementary School Mobile, Alabama

- 549 students in grades PK-5
   99% African American
- 99% Low Income

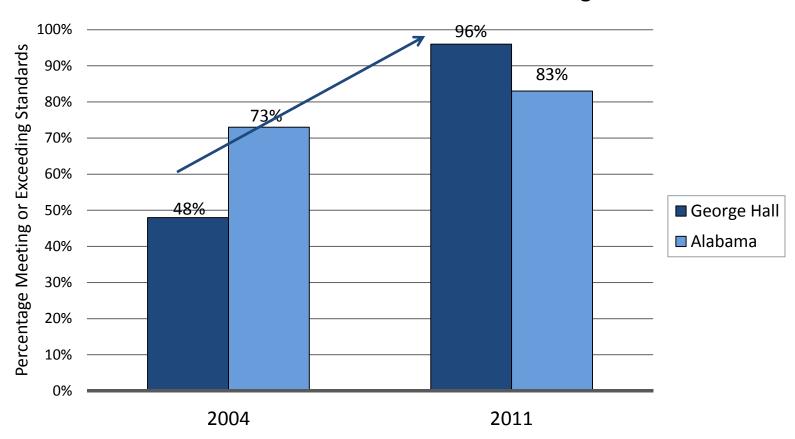


Note: Enrollment data are for 2009-10 school year

Source: Alabama Department of Education

### Big Improvement at George Hall Elementary

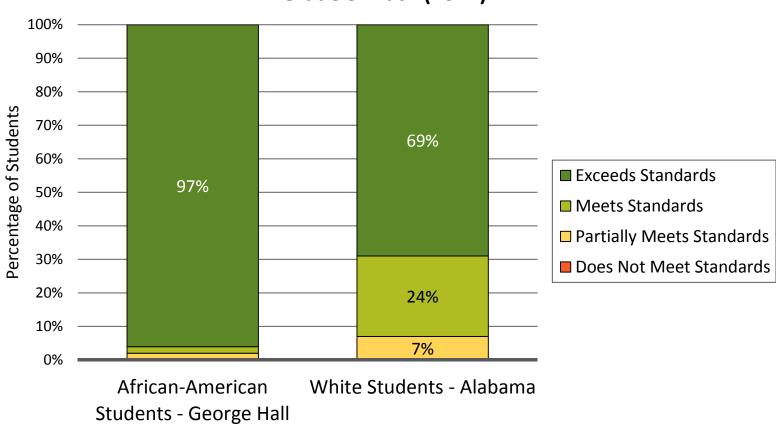
#### **Low-Income Students – Grade 4 Reading**



Source: Alabama Department of Education

### Exceeding Standards: George Hall students outperform white students in Alabama

#### **Grade 5 Math (2011)**



Source: Alabama Department of Education

## Halle Hewetson Elementary School Las Vegas, NV

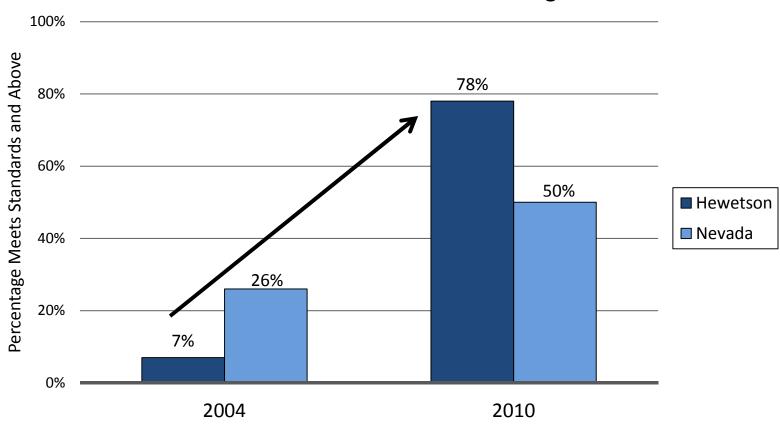
- 962 students in grades PK 5
  - 85% Latino
  - 7% African American
- 100% Low Income
- 71% Limited English
   Proficient



Note: Data are for 2010-2011 school year Source: Nevada Department of Education

## Big Improvement at Halle Hewetson Elementary

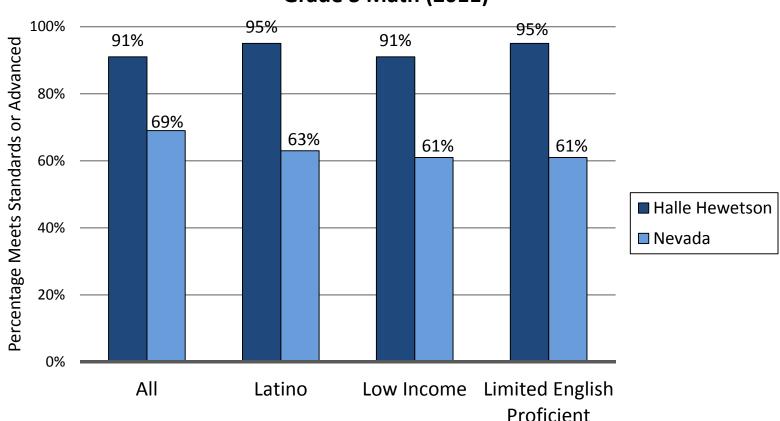
#### **Latino Students – Grade 3 Reading**



Source: Nevada Department of Education

## High Performance Across Groups at Halle Hewetson Elementary

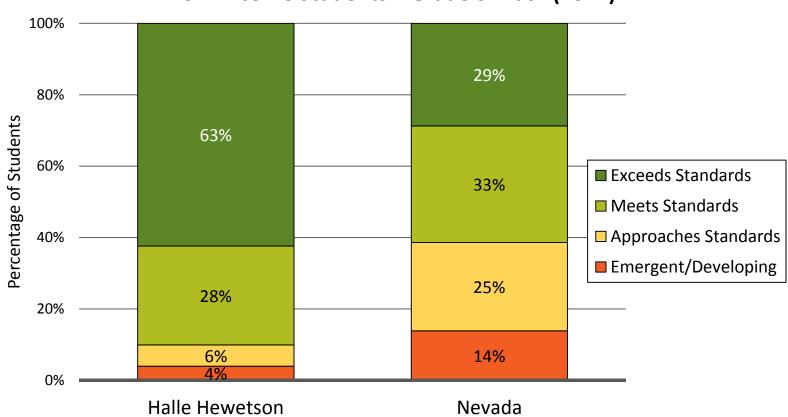
### **Grade 3 Math (2011)**



Source: Nevada Department of Education

## Exceeding Standards at Halle Hewetson Elementary

**Low-Income Students – Grade 3 Math (2011)** 



Source: Nevada Department of Education

## Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High Elmont, New York

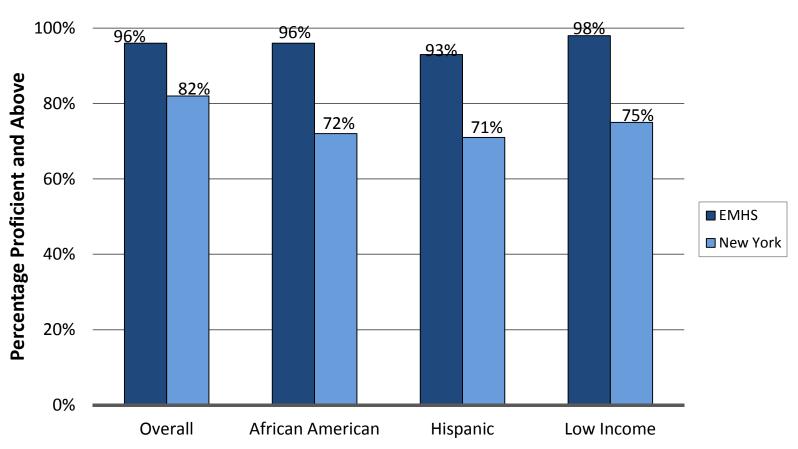
- 1,895 students in grades 7-12
  - 77% African American
  - 13% Latino
- 25% Low-Income



Source: New York Department of Education

### High Performance by ALL Students at Elmont Memorial High School

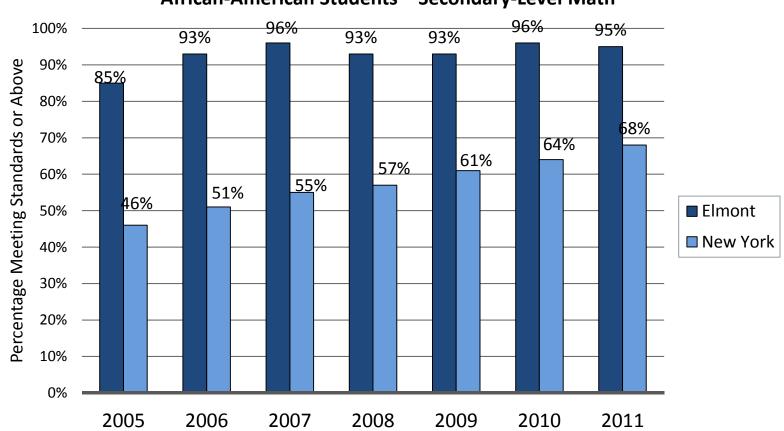
**Secondary Level English (2012)** 



Source: New York Department of Education <a href="https://reportcards.nysed.gov/schools.php?district=800000049235&year=2012">https://reportcards.nysed.gov/schools.php?district=800000049235&year=2012</a>

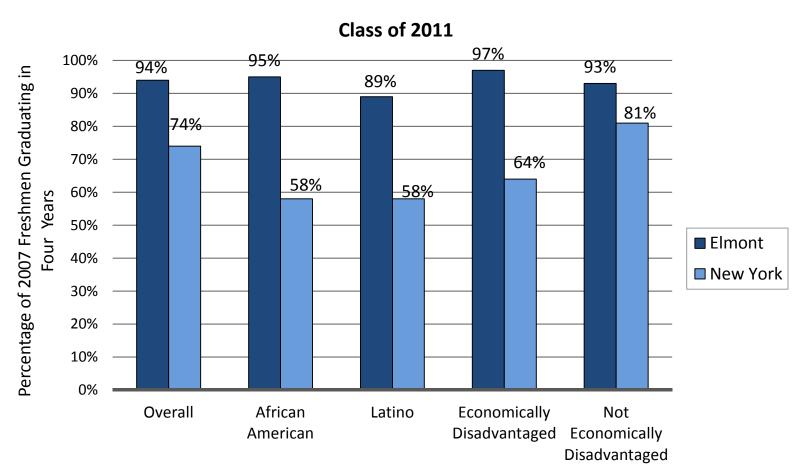
## Improvement and High Performance at Elmont Memorial High

#### African-American Students – Secondary-Level Math

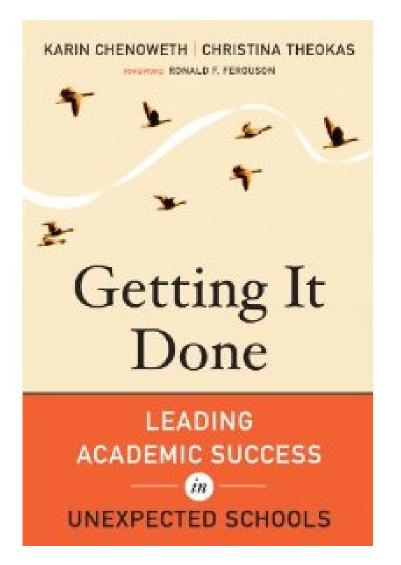


Source: New York State Department of Education

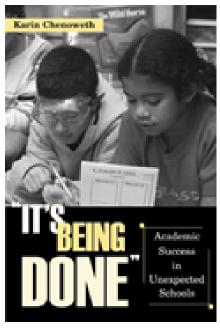
### High Graduation Rates at Elmont Memorial High School

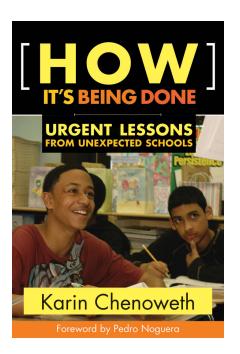


Note: Includes students graduating by June 2011. Source: New York State Department of Education



## Available from Harvard Education Press and amazon.com

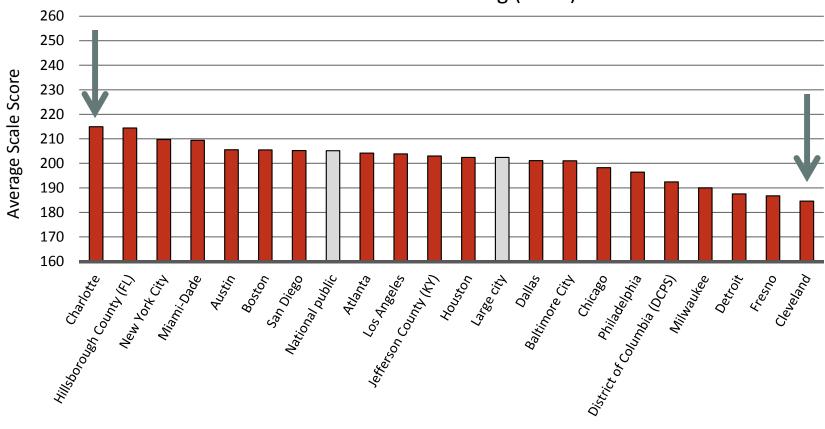




Very big differences at district level, too—even in the performance of the "same" group of students.

## Average Scale Scores, by District African American Students

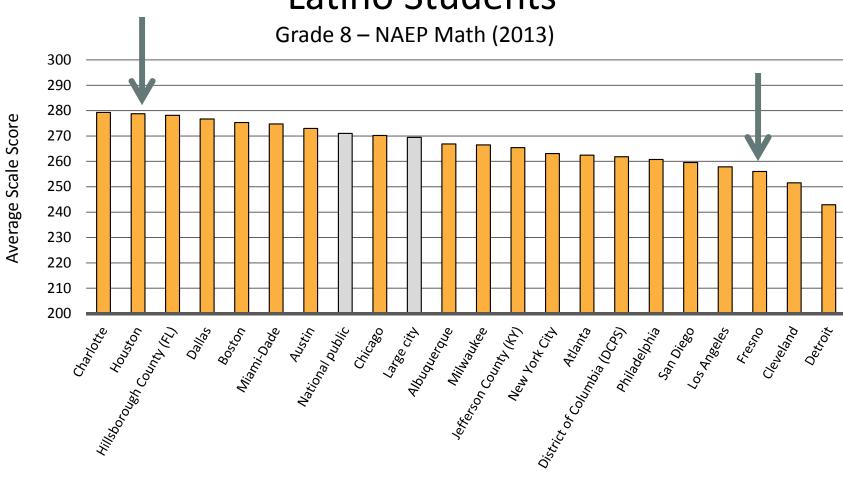
Grade 4 – NAEP Reading (2013)



Note: Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES

### Average Scale Scores, by District Latino Students

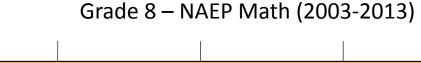


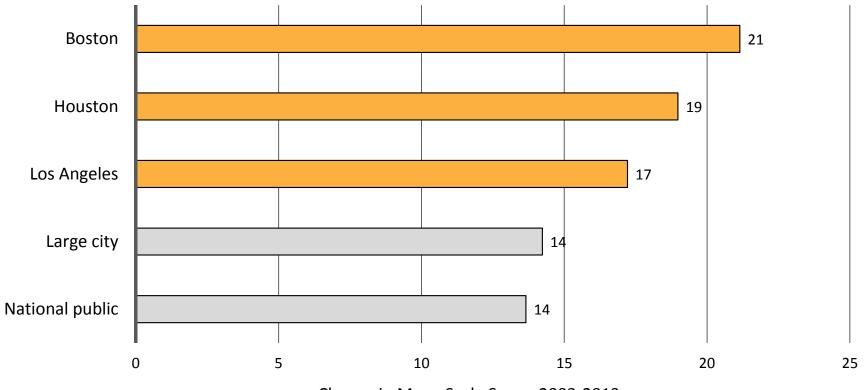
Note: Basic Scale Score = 262; Proficient Scale Score = 299

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES



## In Boston and Houston, low-income Latino students made far faster progress between 2003 and 2013 than the country as a whole



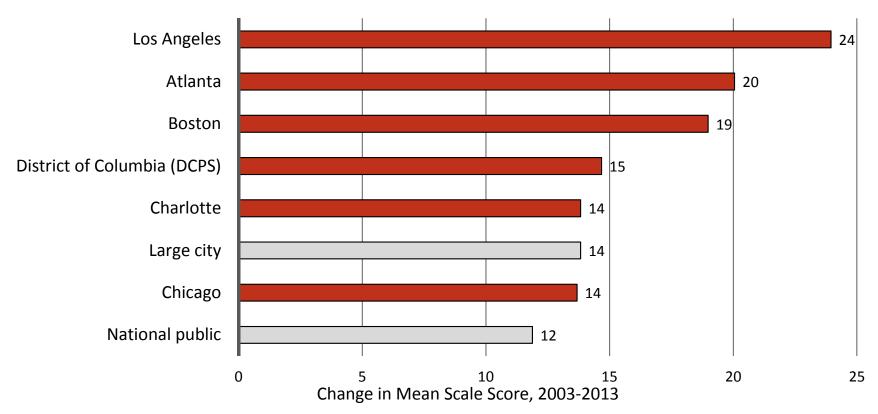


Change in Mean Scale Score, 2003-2013

Note: Chart includes only districts that participated, and had members of this specific subgroup, in both the 2003 and 2013 NAEP TUDA administrations . Source: NCES, NAEP Data Explorer

## Low-income African American students in Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Boston improved at a far faster rate than their counterparts nationally

Grade 8 – NAEP Math (2003-2013)



Note: Chart includes only districts that participated, and had members of this specific subgroup, in both the 2003 and 2013 NAEP TUDA administrations . Source: NCES, NAEP Data Explorer

Even big differences—in performance and improvement— among whole states.

## In other words, WE CAN DO THIS!

### What will it take?

## #1. It starts by just believing.

"Many people say all children can learn. Well that's true. But a parakeet can learn too. We look for people who believe that children can excel."



--Jeffrey Litt
Founder and superintendent
Icahn Charter School (DTM 2011)



"Through my teaching experiences, I learned that my students were capable of learning just about anything I was capable of teaching."

-Molly Bensinger-Lacy, principal, Graham Road Elementary School (DTM 2008)

## **Believing** is not just for those inside of schools.

### For Those Outside of Schools?

When you see troubling data on your schools, it doesn't help if you just ignore it. You can help create demand for change by pointing to the successes—and by pressing for similar results elsewhere.

Yes, this may make you "annoying."
But in the end, you don't do education leaders any favors by being too nice.
The good ones will use your demands to leverage change.

#2. Grab the Common Core
State Standards and put them
to work.

# We always talk about the issue of low expectations as if it were some abstract concept.

But where those expectations find their most concrete form is in the daily assignments that children get from their teachers.

Students can do no better than the assignments they are given...

### Grade 10 Writing Assignment

A frequent theme in literature is the conflict between the individual and society. From literature you have read, select a character who struggled with society. In a well-developed essay, identify the character and explain why this character's conflict with society is important.

### Grade 10 Writing Assignment

Write a composition of at least 4 paragraphs on Martin Luther King's most important contribution to this society. Illustrate your work with a neat cover page. Neatness counts.

### Grade 7 Writing Assignment

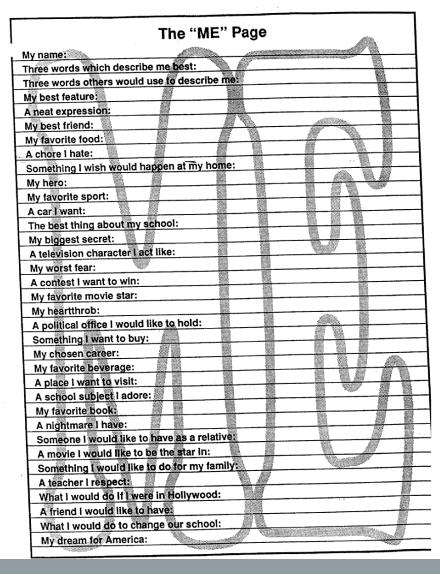
### **Essay on Anne Frank**

Your essay will consist of an opening paragraph which introduced the title, author and general background of the novel.

Your thesis will state specifically what Anne's overall personality is, and what general psychological and intellectual changes she exhibits over the course of the book

You might organize your essay by grouping psychological and intellectual changes OR you might choose 3 or 4 characteristics (like friendliness, patience, optimism, self doubt) and show how she changes in this area.

## Grade 7 Writing Assignment



•My Best Friend:

•A chore I hate:

•A car I want:

• My heartthrob:

The new standards represent an opportunity to change this, but that won't happen automatically.

And teachers in schools where expectations have been lower will need more help.

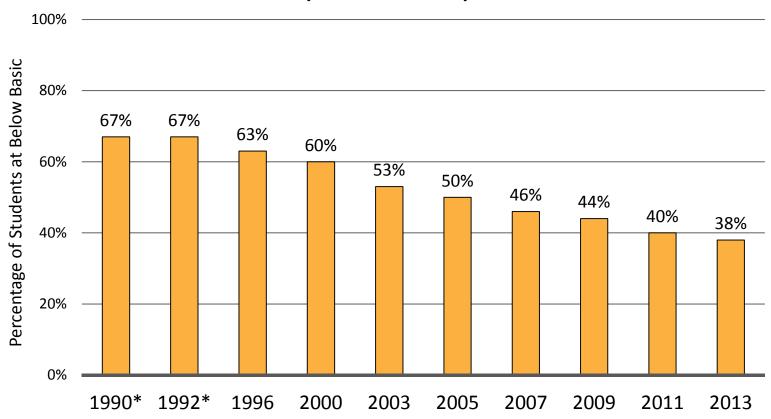
Folks outside of education—
especially employers--can help,
too, by explaining why new
standards are so important.

By pressing for systematic and careful implementation. And by preparing the public to receive new results. Otherwise, they will appear "lower" and result in huge backpedaling.

Third, mine the data, develop a culture of responsibility around it, and aim high.

### Percentage Below Basic Over Time

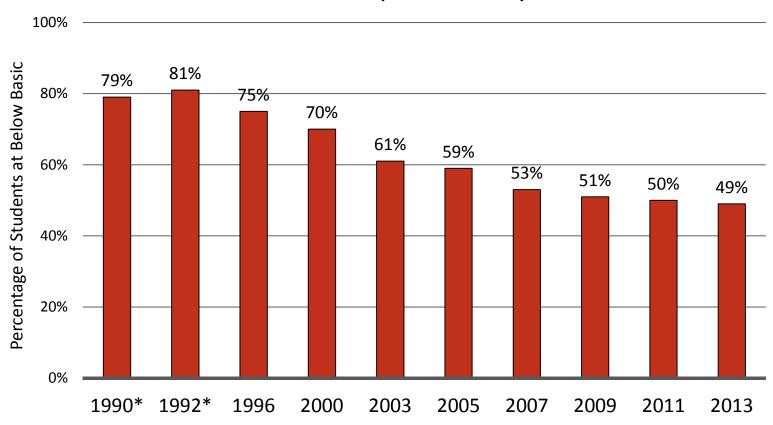
### Latino Students (National Public) – Grade 8 NAEP Math



<sup>\*</sup>Accommodations not permitted

### Percentage Below Basic Over Time

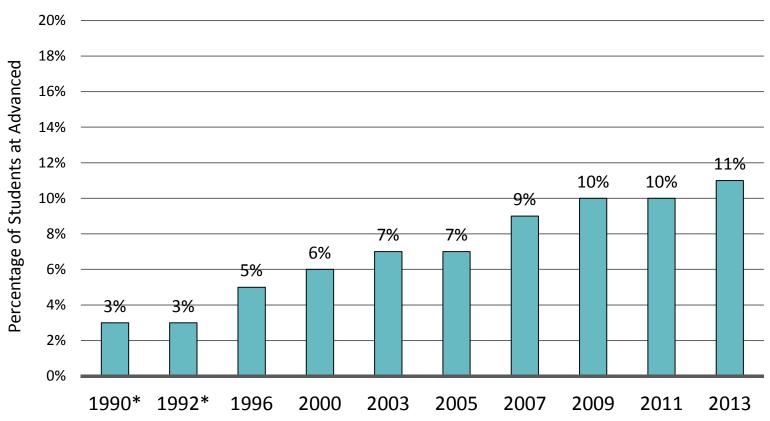
#### African-American Students (National Public) – Grade 8 NAEP Math



<sup>\*</sup>Accommodations not permitted

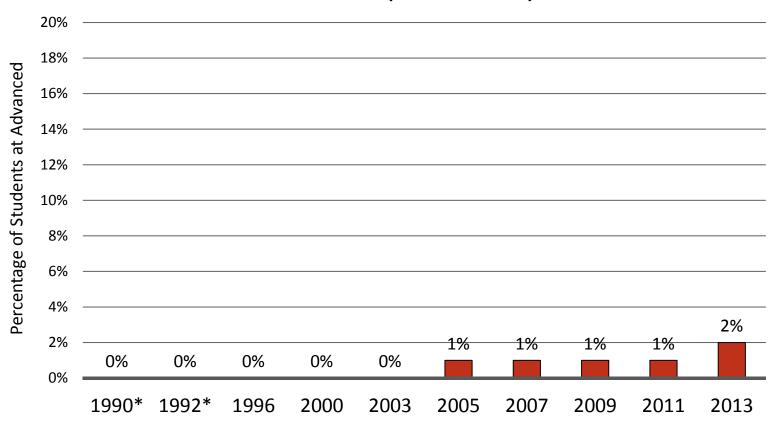
# Yet while we're making progress in getting White students to the Advanced level...

### White Students (National Public) – Grade 8 NAEP Math



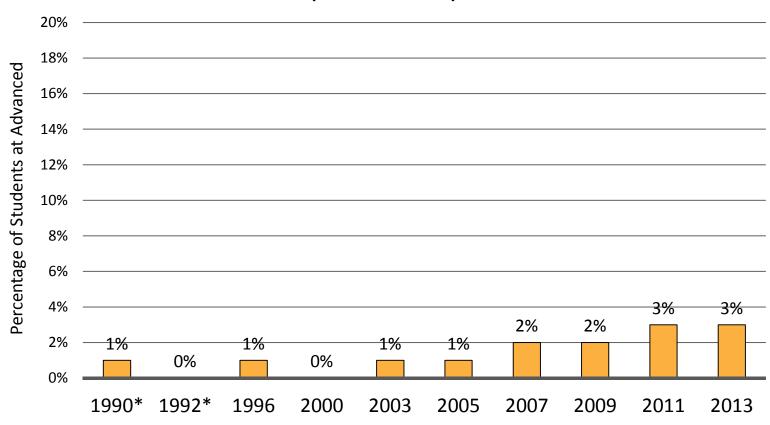
<sup>\*</sup>Accommodations not permitted

#### African-American Students (National Public) – Grade 8 NAEP Math



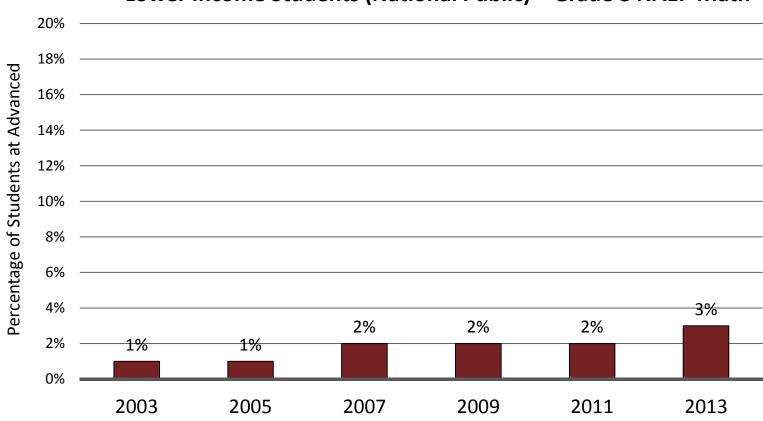
<sup>\*</sup>Accommodations not permitted

#### Latino Students (National Public) – Grade 8 NAEP Math



<sup>\*</sup>Accommodations not permitted

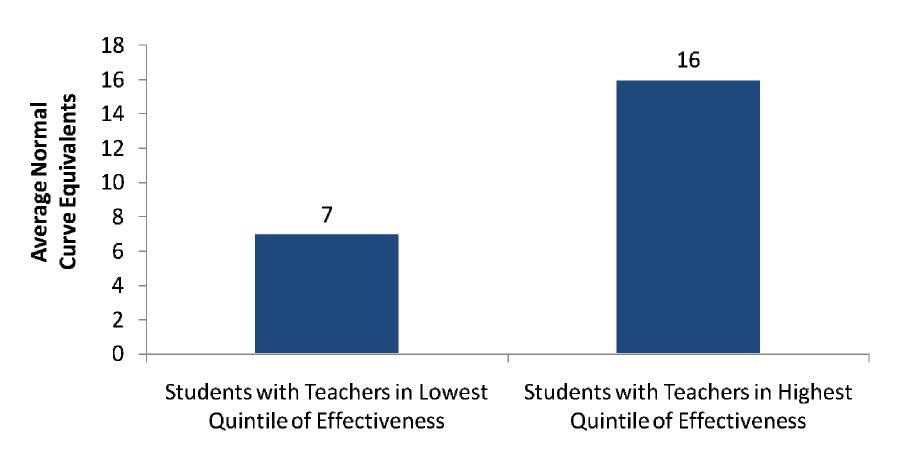
### Lower Income Students (National Public) – Grade 8 NAEP Math



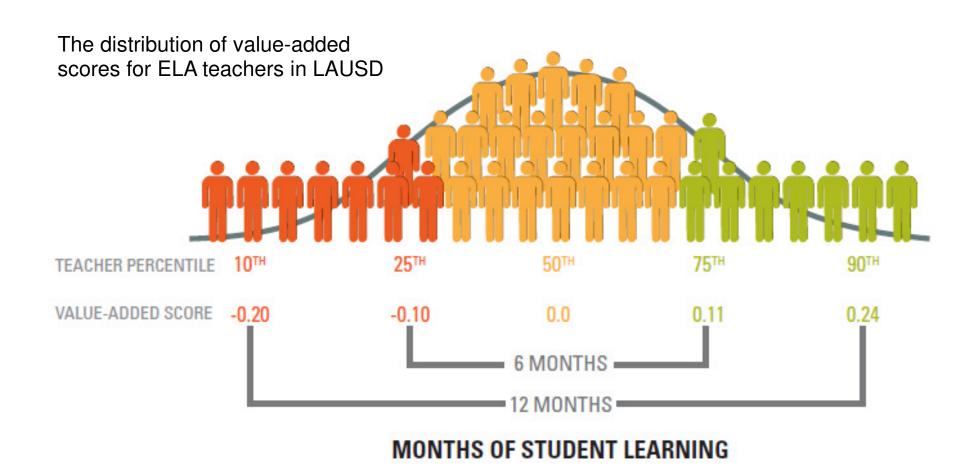
We've got to grow <u>every</u> child, including those who come in at higher levels.

# Fourth, help keep momentum in the teacher effectiveness movement.

# Students in Dallas Gain More in Math with Effective Teachers: One Year Growth From 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Grade

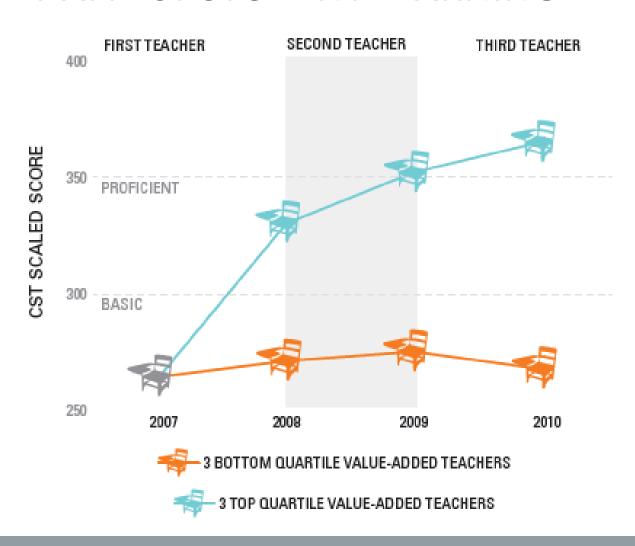


## DIFFERENCES IN TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS ACCOUNT FOR LARGE DIFFERENCES IN STUDENT LEARNING



## ACCESS TO MULTIPLE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS CAN DRAMATICALLY AFFECT STUDENT LEARNING

CST math proficiency trends for second-graders at 'Below Basic' or 'Far Below Basic' in 2007 who subsequently had three consecutive high or low value-added teachers



# So, there are VERY BIG differences among our teachers.

### BUT...

We pretend that there aren't.

## The Widget Effect

"When it comes to measuring instructional performance, current policies and systems overlook significant differences between teachers. There is little or no differentiation of excellent teaching from good, good from fair, or fair from poor. This is the Widget Effect: a tendency to treat all teachers as roughly interchangeable, even when their teaching is quite variable. Consequently, teachers are not developed as professionals with individual strengths and capabilities, and poor performance is rarely identified or addressed."

The New Teacher Project, 2009



In districts that use a two-rating teacher performance evaluation system—most commonly "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory"—the "unsatisfactory" rating is rarely used.

Site	Number of Satisfactory Evaluation Ratings SY03-04 - SY07-08 <sup>1</sup>	Number of Unsatisfactory Evaluation Ratings SY03-04 - SY07-08 <sup>2</sup>
Denver <sup>3</sup>	2,676	22 (0.8%)
Jonesboro <sup>4</sup>	246	0 (0%)
Pueblo <sup>5</sup>	1,284	2 (0.2%)
Toledo <sup>6</sup>	1,768	3 (0.2%)

All data for tenured/non-probationary teachers.

<sup>1</sup> Source: District extant data supplied between April 2008 and March 2009

<sup>2</sup> Source: District extant data supplied between April 2008 and March 2009

<sup>3</sup> Number evaluation ratings assigned between SY 2003-04 to SY 2007-08

<sup>4</sup> Number of evaluation ratings assigned between SY 2003-04 to SY 2005-06

<sup>5</sup> Number of evaluation ratings assigned between SY 2005-06 to SY 2007-08

<sup>6</sup> Number of evaluation ratings assigned between SY 2005-06 to SY 2007-08

## Make sure your state and districts are acting on this knowledge by:

- Putting into place an honest evaluation system, that takes student growth into account;
- Training principals and expert teachers in evaluation and feedback techniques;
- Providing support to teachers who are struggling;
- Working hard to hold onto the strongest ones, and chasing out the weak ones; and,
- Assuring that all groups of children get their fair share of strong teachers.

Fifth, principals matter hugely. States and districts need clear plan to grow new leaders.

# This is way too important to be left to higher education.

And this is something that business can help with.

Sixth, all this is easier if you start early: push your state and districts to provide pre-k educational services early, especially to low-income children.

High quality pre-school is the best investment we can make. It pays to prevent problems rather than ameliorate them later.

# Finally, mind the gaps in opportunity and achievement.

# True, gaps in achievement begin before children arrive at the schoolhouse door.

But remember: rather than organizing our educational system to ameliorate this problem, we organize it to exacerbate the problem.

Those practices aren't good for kids. They are not good for our country. And they are not good for business.

We are taking the diversity that should be our competitive advantage in the international marketplace, and obliterating it.

Don't just stand by and watch, even if they are not "your" kids. Speak up. Demand the data.

Demand progress.

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