



Fact Sheet

Race and Socioeconomic Status and Education

Diversity Matters in Education

- ✓ According to WCPSS data, in 2008-09, Wake County graduated 63.4 percent of its African American students and 51.1 percent of its Latino students who had entered the ninth grade for the first time in the fall of 2005. Consequently, among the state's 115 school districts, Wake County ranks 69th in graduating its African American students and 85th in graduating its Latino students.
- ✓ For the 2008-2009 school year, WCPSS schools had the lowest dropout rate in six years, at 3.47 percent, a drop from 4.17 percent the previous year. WCPSS **has** had a rate below the state average in each of the past eleven years.
- ✓ The dropout rate in 2008-09 declined for students of every race and ethnicity, with the largest improvements among Hispanic, African-American, and multi-racial students. The dropout rate for black students is the lowest since 2003-04, and for white and multi-racial students it's the lowest since before 1999-2000.
- ✓ Research has shown that even when controlling for economic status, students of color fall below their white or Asian peers on most measures of academic achievement. So race is a factor in educational achievement, apart from socio-economic status.
- ✓ Data suggest that school factors—especially racial segregation—primarily lead to black-white learning disparities. This stands in contrast to the primary role of non-school circumstances (e.g., family, health, social resources) that lead to achievement gaps by social class.
- ✓ Research also indicates that regardless of social class, black students are less often taught by certified teachers than are white students, and black students are far more likely than white students to attend predominantly minority schools, high-poverty schools and schools located in disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- ✓ Many demonstrations, including the KIPP school model, have shown that high expectations *for all students*, an emphasis on academics and learning, incentives, and teacher techniques can produce high achievement regardless of racial background.
- ✓ The goal of WCPSS should be to raise achievement and expectations for all students, across racial and socio-economic lines. Racial segregation undermines student achievement.
- ✓ Research finds that low income students perform worse than middle class students on average, with one exception: Low income students attending middle class schools perform higher, on average, than middle class students attending high-poverty schools.

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