NewYork Appleseed

# Supporting Real Integration: Evidence for What's Necessary

**by Kelly Bare and Bliss Broyard for New York Appleseed**

***Advocacy Briefing*** ***August 2018***

*"Diversity is about demographic change.*
*Integration is about cultural and organizational change."*

**—Dr. Prudence Carter, Dean of the Graduate School of Education at Berkeley**

***Briefing Summary***

This advocacy briefing represents a synthesis of several decades of research showing that better-resourced schools alone will not benefit disadvantaged students: their well-being—including self-esteem, engagement and participation, and a feeling of belonging—is crucial to their achievement. Protecting their well-being involves the understanding and commitment of the entire school community, which means that achieving *Real Integration* requires schools that are willing to work toward sociocultural and organizational change.

***INTRODUCTORY NOTE***

In 2016 New York City high-school students participating in IntegrateNYC4me crafted a new definition of school integration for the 21st century with the essential "Rs" for meaningful - or *Real* - integration: In addition to intentional student assignment policies (Race and enrollment) and equitable distribution of Resources, the students also called for schools that foster Relationships among students across group identities, practice Restorative Justice, and employ educators Representative of the students they serve.

New York Appleseed was persuaded. With the permission of the students, we incorporated this definition of integration into our organizational mission statement. But having committed to these priorities, we wanted to learn more about what achieving *Real Integration* meant in the day-to-day experiences of a school community. We were privileged to work with principals and school leaders who were innovating around these imperatives every day even if they didn't always have the resources and support to put their insights into practice. Thanks to them, we knew a lot already. But we also wanted to know what social-science research had to say.

Not surprisingly, most of what we uncovered corroborated the insights we are getting from school leaders about the challenges they face every day, and the strategies they are using to meet them - often without adequate support.

We hope that these groundbreaking school leaders find validation for their efforts in these pages. We also hope that this summary may help these leaders ground their work in a scholarly framework and make the case for the urgency of their efforts to the Department of Education.

For principals and other educators new to these issues, we hope this summary will provide an introduction to a larger world of thinking about what public education can and must be in a diverse nation.

David Tipson, *Executive Director*

***Sociocultural Context Influences Student Achievement***

***Unseen and too-often-unacknowledged norms and boundaries shape the culture of integrated schools. Without intentional re-engineering, they will define and limit students' experiences and achievement.***

**Carter, Prudence L.** *Stubborn Roots: Race, Culture, and Inequality in U. S. and South African Schools*, Oxford University Press, 2012.

Using interviews and observation, Carter (currently UC Berkeley) and her team conducted a comparative analysis of the institutional and group dynamics regarding racial equality, academic achievement and student well-being in eight schools in four cities in the United States and South Africa over the course of three years.

Carter found that:

- "...while more resource-rich schools enable students to traverse particular physical boundaries, racial and cultural differentiation in these schools continue to cultivate strong social and symbolic boundaries that undermine the schools' equity goals."

- "The school's norms of academic achievement, its rules for student conduct and presentations of self, its disparate curricular and pedagogical content in classes set apart by ability grouping, and group dynamics between teachers and students— all components of the sociocultural domain of schooling— can reinforce symbolic boundaries."

- "...the degree of social and cultural flexibility of both the school organization and of its students is critical to not only the diminution of boundaries but also the educational well-being of students."

**Fine, Michelle, Lois Weis, and Linda Powell**. "Communities of Difference: A Critical Look at Desegregated Spaces Created for and by Youth." *Harvard Educational Review* 67 (1997): 247– 84.

Fine (City U. of NY Grad Center), Weiss (Univ. of Buffalo, State U. of NY), and Powell (Teachers College, Columbia U.) drawing from their research at three desegregated schools concluded that:

- "[I]n order for multiracial youth relations to flourish, three political and social conditions—none natural or automatic—must be intentionally set in place: a sense of

> community; a commitment to creative analysis of difference, power, and privilege; and an enduring investment in democratic practice with youth. In the absence of these three conditions, settings that are technically desegregated will corrode into sites of oppositional identities, racial tensions, and fractured group relations, which simply mirror the larger society . . ."

**Robert Crosnoe. "**Low-Income Students and the Socioeconomic Composition of Public High Schools," *Am. Sociol. Rev..* 2009 Oct 1; 74(5): 709–730.

Crosnoe (UT Austin) used an analysis of administrative data and questionnaires for 1119 low-income high school students to assess the impact of the socioeconomic composition of a school on student achievement and well-being.

Crosnoe concluded that:

- Low-income students in a mixed SES school don't access higher course offerings and opportunities at the same rates as higher-income students unless there is specific attention and support to ensure they do.

- A lack of feelings of belonging can reduce some of the gains brought through access to higher SES schools.

- "Negative psychosocial outcomes are reduced when students are given multiple activity venues to make friendships with similar others, pursue self-affirmation, and gain recognition."

- "Schools can take active curricular and pedagogical steps to reduce status hierarchies that arise in diverse settings and become associated with perceptions of ability."

***Unconscious Bias is a Habit That Must Be Broken***

***Humans consciously and unconsciously store experiences in our brains that later influence decision-making. These memories are critical to cognitive functioning, cannot be turned off, and are activated automatically, in opposition to one's explicit, controlled beliefs. This is unconscious bias, and it is linked to a wide range of harms and discriminatory outcomes in education, health, employment, and everyday interpersonal interactions. It must be disrupted via interventions that bring attention to this unconscious process and highlight its insidiousness.***

**Devine, Patricia G., Patrick S. Forscher, Anthony J. Austin, and William T. L. Cox.** "Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 2012 Nov; 48(6): 1267–1278.

For this 12-week longitudinal study, Devine (U. of Wisconsin-Madison), Forscher (U. Arkansas), Austin, and Cox (U. of Wisconsin-Madison) demonstrated that multifaceted interventions—strategies such as stereotype replacement, counter-stereotypic imaging, individuation, perspective taking, and increasing opportunities for contact—can have a lasting effect on implicit race bias.

People who received the intervention:

- Showed dramatic reductions in implicit race bias.
- Reported both increased personal awareness of bias and concern about discrimination in society.
- Experienced a concern about the effects of bias and discrimination that grew more pronounced over time.

People in the control group showed none of the above effects.

**Dee, T., & Gershenson, S.** "Unconscious Bias in the Classroom: Evidence and Opportunities." Google Inc., 2017.

In this report, a joint project of Google, The Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis (CEPA), and the American University School of Public Affairs, Dee (Stanford U.) and Gershenson (American U.) give insight into the mechanisms through which unconscious bias

among teachers exacerbates educational inequality, as well into interventions that can help level the playing field. These insights include:

- Teacher-facing interventions that carefully leverage psychological mechanisms such as awareness, motivation, individuation, and empathy have substantial promise to reduce teachers' unconscious bias, moderate its impact, and improve student outcomes.

- Unchecked, however, unconscious bias can trigger self-fulfilling prophecies that make students belonging to stereotyped groups act in ways that conform to stereotypes, even when the stereotype was initially untrue. This is known as stereotype threat.

## *Stereotype Threat and Belonging Uncertainty Hampers Academic Success and Impacts School Discipline*

***Stereotype threat, or the fear of being perceived in a biased fashion, clouds students' social and academic interactions at school, casting doubt on their belief that they have a right to be there and impacting their ability to thrive. This threat infects students and teachers alike, making it difficult to see each other clearly.***

**Gregory M. Walton and Geoffrey L. Cohen, "**A Question of Belonging: Race, Social Fit, and Achievement," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2007. Vol. 92, No. 1, 82–96.

Walton (Stanford) and Cohen (Stanford) measured feelings of belonging and academic fit among a diverse group of 69 first year college students in two different experiments: the first leading students to believe they might have few friends in an intellectual domain, and the second introducing an intervention that mitigated doubts about social belonging in college.

Results show:

- Students may question their belonging in new social and academic setting—especially when they are targeted by stigma and negative stereotypes.

- This uncertainty makes the meaning of adverse social events ambiguous, leading "Black students to globalize the implications of social hardship into a conclusion about their potential to fit and succeed in an academic setting."

- "Simply normalizing doubts about social belonging—presenting them as common across racial groups—and portraying such doubts as temporary rather than stable made Black students' sense of fit less dependent on the quality of their day, increased their engagement in achievement behavior (e.g., time spent studying) and, it seems, improved their GPA."

**Jason A. Okonofua, Gregory M. Walton, and Jennifer L. Eberhardt,** A Vicious Cycle: A Social–Psychological Account of Extreme Racial Disparities in School Discipline, Perspectives on Psychological Science 2016, Vol. 11(3) 381–398.

Drawing upon previous research and literature on stereotyping and stigma, Okonofua (UCal Berkeley), Walton (Stanford) and Eberhardt (Stanford) theorize that bias and apprehension

about bias in school settings can fuel each other in a vicious cycle that harms teacher–student relationships and exacerbates inequality:

- "Both teachers and students are exposed to common societal stereotypes, including the stereotype that Black people are dangerous. [Authors] argue that such stereotypes create distinctive predicaments for teachers and students, which fuel harsh responses to misbehavior and, in turn, escalate misbehavior."

- "The awareness that one could be subject to bias or stereotyping in school can cause even commonplace incidents like interactions with peers or teachers that go poorly to take on a threatening pale. Racially stigmatized students contend with the risk that such events could involve bias, reflect the poor quality of their relationships, or suggest that 'people like me' do not belong or cannot succeed in school in general."

- "When students begin to mistrust teachers or doubt their belonging in school, they may behave in ways that further undermine their relationships and outcomes."

- Authors tested several different interventions that work through teachers, through students, and through the intersection of the teacher-student relationship, all of which lowered the frequency of disciplinary incidences and increased academic achievement.

***Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy Helps Students Achieve and Thrive***

***Rather than looking at a child who belongs to a historically marginalized group through a deficit lens, culturally sustaining pedagogy, a term coined by Django Paris (U. Washington), views this child's culture and life experiences as assets, and sees cultural pluralism as a necessary centerpiece of truly democratic schools. This thinking builds upon the concept of culturally relevant teaching as introduced in a landmark 1995 article by Gloria Ladson-Billings (U. Wisconsin-Madison). Research shows that culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining approaches are correlated with academic achievement and student well-being.***

**Byrd, Christy M.** "Does Culturally Relevant Teaching Work? An Examination from Student Perspectives," SAGE Open July-September 2016: 1–10.

Byrd (UCal-Santa Cruz) sampled a diverse group of 315 sixth-12th grade students from across the United States about their experiences of culturally relevant teaching, cultural socialization, and opportunities to learn about other cultures and about racism. Byrd then analyzed the responses to understand how culturally relevant teaching and racial socialization at school affects students' academic and attitudinal outcomes.

Byrd found that:

- Culturally relevant teaching was "significantly associated with academic outcomes and ethnic-racial identity development."

- Students' perceptions that teachers were using constructivist methods—acknowledging the uniqueness and complexity of the students' own life experiences and making them an integral part of the learning process—were related to their interest in school, feelings of belonging, and attitudes toward other racial and cultural groups at school.

- A school's racial socialization, meaning the messages that inflect the students' racial attitudes and understanding of how race and culture operate in society, is predictive for feelings of belonging and racial attitudes among students.

***The Bridge from Home to School Must Be Strengthened***

***Research shows that historically marginalized students moving to a "better" school require specific forms of support in order to realize the potential for improved academic outcomes. Not only do these students often lack the school readiness of more advantaged children, needing supports to bring them to grade level, many must travel outside their neighborhoods (and comfort zones) to attend racially and socioeconomically integrated schools.***

**Keels, Micere**, "The Importance of Scaffolding the Transition: Unpacking the Null Effects of Relocating Poor Children Into Nonpoor Neighborhoods," *American Educational Research Journal*, October 2013, Vol. 50, No. 5, pp. 991–1018.

Using detailed interviews and field notes over four years, Keels (UChicago) documents the experience of 80 children in the Gautreaux II residential mobility program who moved from high poverty to demographically improved neighborhoods and schools. The study challenges the assumption that access to lower poverty schools alone will improve student outcomes.

Findings include:

- "[C]hildren must first adjust to the social contexts of their new neighborhoods and schools and then bridge curriculum gaps in order to benefit from relocating to more advantaged neighborhoods and transferring to high-achieving schools."

- "[R]elocatees [to higher demographic schools] were more likely to be cut off from participation in extracurricular activities because of their inability to pay required fees."

- "This study highlights the likely continued null effects of educational policies that focus on reducing achievement inequality via structural changes in access to educational opportunities without examining whether participating students' prior schooling experiences provided them with the prerequisites required for them to benefit from the new opportunities."

***School Leaders Need Strong Support in their Change-Making Efforts***

***Principals are the key agents of change in the significant organizational and cultural shifts necessary to create truly diverse and inclusive school environments. Part of the process is leading an entire school community toward shared understandings and values, as well as toward strong interpersonal relationships—otherwise these efforts will not produce lasting change. Principals must do all of this within heavily regulated public institutions, with many competing priorities and inadequate resources. Without a school leader who intentionally centers equity and social justice in his or her work, these tectonic shifts are impossible.***

**Riehl, Carolyn J.,** "The Principal's Role in Creating Inclusive Schools for Diverse Students: A Review of Normative, Empirical, and Critical Literature on the Practice of Educational Administration," *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Spring, 2000), pp. 55-81.

Riehl (Teachers College, Columbia University) reviewed the literature about the role of school administrators in promoting diverse, fully inclusive schooling that serves all students well. She identifies the following core set of dimensions of inclusive administrative practice, each of which is evidence-based:

- Treating children as individuals rather than as representatives of a social group;
- Appreciating the cultural knowledge that students bring to school and using it to help teachers and principals learn students' cultures;
- Embracing inter-ethnic conflict and using it as an opportunity for making positive changes;
- Creating a caring environment and a high level of cooperation among students, teachers, and families;
- Holding high expectations for all students;
- Focusing on academic achievement and providing appropriate supports;
- Reconfiguring school structures through looping and de-tracking to ensure equal and effective access to instruction;
- Encouraging teachers to examine their practices for possible race, class, or gender biases;
- Taking strong steps to work with parents, such as meeting parents in their homes and work sites, providing translators whenever needed, and developing parent competencies in leadership and other areas;
- Being an advocate who calls attention to discrimination or inequity wherever it is found;
- Maintaining an environment of critique and deconstructing practices that disempower some persons and groups.

***About the Authors***

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