



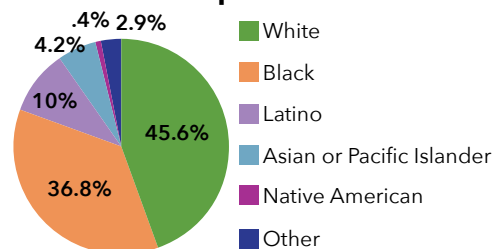
Buffalo, NY **BRONZE**

Buffalo is located in western New York near Niagara Falls and Lake Erie, and is the state's second largest city, encompassing eight counties and two Canadian municipalities. In the early 20th century, Buffalo played a critical role in commerce and trade to western cities, and the population expanded 30-fold within one generation, including significant increases in the Black population with migration of Black Americans seeking greater social and economic opportunity. Buffalo has continued to see drastic demographic shifts, including the resettlement of approximately 10,000 refugees since 2003 who are playing a large role in revitalization of the west side of Buffalo.¹

In the 1960s, Buffalo and other cities across the country experienced White flight from the newly deemed “inner city” to newly developed, government subsidized, White only suburbs. Nearly 20% of the city's White population moved, while Black migration into the city grew. In 1972, a group of parents in Buffalo won a federal lawsuit to desegregate the city's public schools, establishing a court mandate that schools be made up of at least 30% and no more than 65% non-White students. Between 1976 — 1987, Buffalo successfully implemented a model for school integration reaching a point where none of the schools had student populations over either 80% White or 80% student of color. In 1987, the court lifted its mandate because of the positive results, and since then school segregation has returned back to 70% segregated schools as it was in the early 1970s.²

50%
of supports measured through Index

Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014



U.S. Census Bureau; NHGIS; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.
Policy Link/PERE National Equity Atlas, nationalequityatlas.org

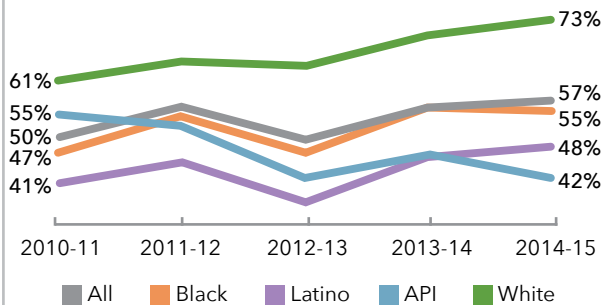
As of the 2016-17 school year, Buffalo Public Schools served almost 34,000 students across 58 schools with over 3,500 teachers and over 900 teacher assistants and aides.³ 88% of the public school population are students of color, and nearly half of are living in poverty (45.5%). 12.4% of students in Buffalo have limited English proficiency, and 72% come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Buffalo has the third highest youth poverty rate among major school districts in the U.S., and there are glaring racial disparities in childhood poverty, with more than half of Black, Latino, and Asian youth living below the poverty line, compared to 24% for White youth.

THERMOMETER INDICATORS

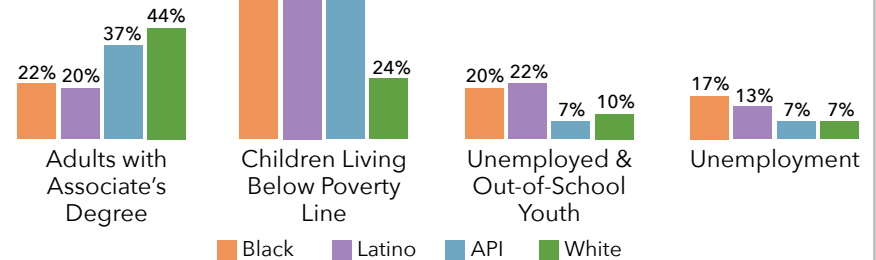


Current conditions for childhood success

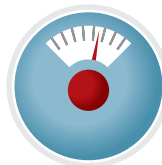
5-year Graduation Rates



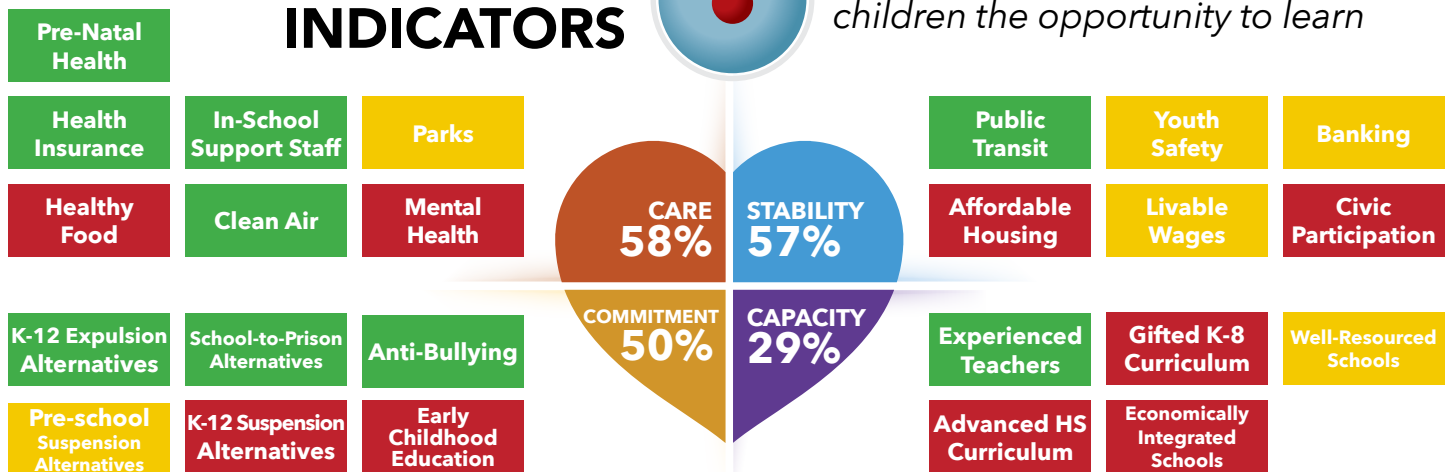
Social & Economic Prosperity



THERMOSTAT INDICATORS



Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



State of Healthy Living and Learning in Buffalo

Buffalo has 50% of the supports measured through the Index. Across the Loving City domains, Buffalo shows the highest level of supports in Care and Stability. Related to Care, community parents, teachers, students and school district professionals and elected officials have worked together since 2012 to adopt a district Wellness Policy that is focused on increasing physical activity and healthy food for students as well as access to mental, physical and sexual health services. Buffalo schools have been nationally recognized for being one of the largest districts in the country to have a wide scale Positive Behavior Intervention and Support system (PBIS). The PBIS uses individual assessment and intervention to match students with behavioral supports and social culture for social, emotional and academic success. The latest suspension data from SY2013-14 still shows high levels of suspension, particularly among Black students, and to a lesser degree Latino students.

ence, and rates of economic integration are among the lowest of the 10 cities. In addition to recommitting to school integration, Buffalo can focus on broader community integration by increasing access to affordable housing options in higher income neighborhoods and access to grocery stores, particularly for communities of color.

Say Yes to Education has been a catalyst in Buffalo to bring cross-sector leaders together to build resources and systems for whole-child supports in schools. The Racial Equity Roundtable, led by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, has grown from these relationships and is comprised of 25 leaders with the purpose of tackling the existing gaps in racial equity, and expanding opportunity in neighborhoods across the region. Having this commitment and relationship infrastructure in place positions Buffalo for continued progress to becoming a Loving City.

The greatest opportunity for increasing love is in the area of Capacity — where access to advanced curriculum, teacher salary and experi-

CARE

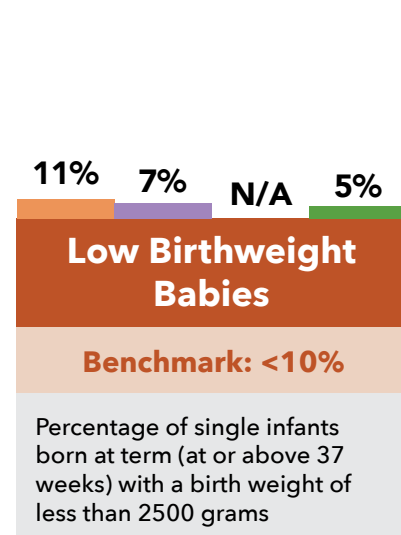
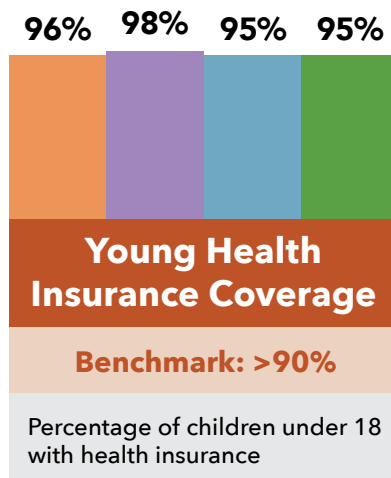
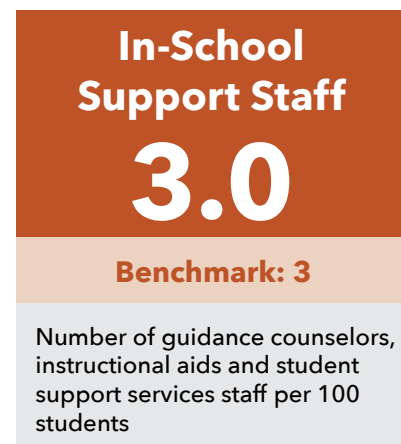
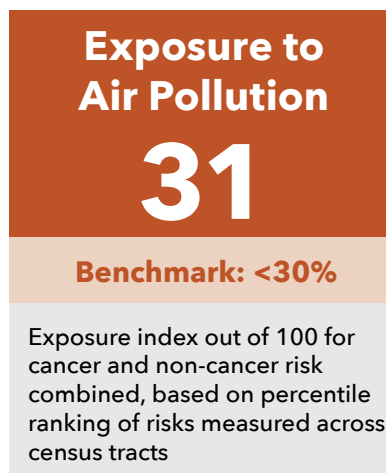
Compared to the rest of the 10 cities, Buffalo has the highest level of supports to provide children with *Care* (58%), as measured by access to healthy foods and parks, clean air, healthy babies, strong supports for students in school and mental and emotional healthcare.

Buffalo was the only city among the ten to earn points for clean air, with a pollution index significantly cleaner than others (30.67 out of 100). According to NASA, “air pollution [in Buffalo] has decreased even though population and the number of cars on the roads have increased. The shift is the result of regulations, technology improvements and economic changes, scientists say. There are also two coal plants in the region—Huntley in Tonawanda and Somerset in Niagara County—that are running well below capacity, and report significant reductions in pollution emissions. This is largely due to economic factors: the Huntley plant is at risk of closing, like many coal plants across the country, and the Somerset plant emerged out of bankruptcy a few years ago.⁴

While reduced reliance on coal is a positive for clean air environments, the city will need to consider and respond to this potential impact on unemployment, which is already high at 17%, and how that will impact the level of student supports needed to provide care and stability to set them up for success in school.

Health insurance coverage and school support staff were further reasons that Buffalo scored high in this category. Young people in Buffalo have good access to health insurance, with very low presence of racial disparities (<4% gap) in health insurance coverage between races. Schools seem generally prepared to handle student needs with an average of three in-school support staff for every 100 students.

There is still a need for greater access to grocery stores – an area where Buffalo has considerably lower levels of access compared to the other cities with 58% of low-income people living without a grocery store in close proximity. There is also a need to reduce low birthweight babies among Black and Latino populations.



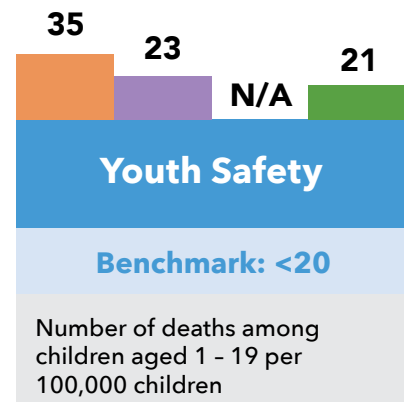
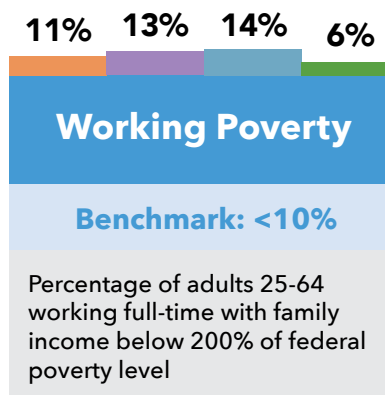
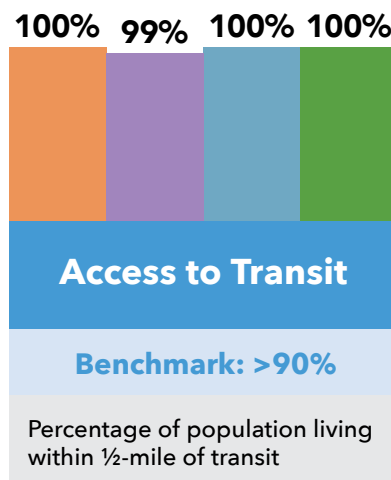
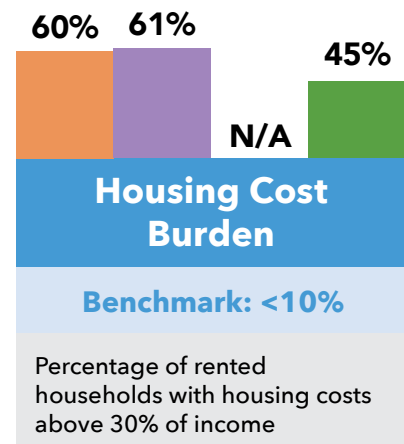
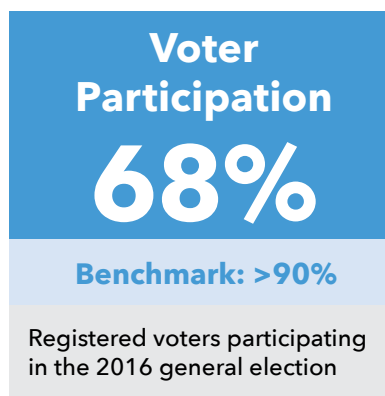
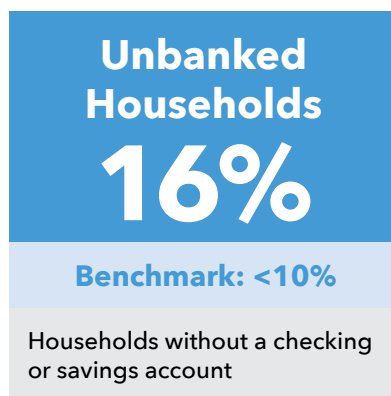
Black Latino API White

STABILITY

Buffalo has 57% of the supports needed to provide children with *Stability*, measured by housing affordability, transit access, civic engagement, working poverty, youth safety and financial security.

We saw similar levels of supports in many other of the ten cities. Along with five other cities studied, Buffalo provides nearly all residents with geographic proximity to public transit. The ten cities have relatively consistent levels of working poverty overall (between 8-11% of full time employees earning below 200% of the federal poverty line), though Buffalo has one of the lowest levels of equity across racial groups with rates of working poverty more than two times as high for Black and Latino residents compared to White.

Housing affordability is one of the city's greatest opportunities for promoting long-term economic stability in Buffalo and elsewhere, given that every state and the largest 50 metropolitan areas have housing shortages for extremely low-income renters.⁵ "In Buffalo, N.Y., renting isn't as expensive as it is in many other markets, but the area has experienced one of the sharpest upticks in its affordability burden in recent months." Local experts at the University of Buffalo have postulated that rental prices have gone up as housing stock becomes more limited and mortgage prices increase, and more expensive senior housing and high-end complexes have been built downtown.⁶



Black Latino API White

COMMITMENT

Buffalo has 50% of the supports needed to demonstrate *Commitment*, as measured by access to early childhood education, positive discipline practices and anti-bullying efforts. As with all cities, early childhood participation remains low at 52% and data disaggregated by race was not available.

As with four other cities studied, Buffalo has 0 expulsions across all racial groups. Still, school districts have a wide variety of punitive discipline approaches that keep students out of classrooms, and in Buffalo suspension still appears to be substantively utilized. Even as early as three years old, suspension is used as a discipline approach, most often with Black children. Black and Latino students in K-12 receive suspensions at higher rates as well (22% and 15% respectively, compared to 8% of White students. Buffalo leaders are

striving to limit use of suspension in K-2, as other cities across the country have done, to reduce suspension rates, and the city can also consider practice like restorative justice to create a positive school climate that teaches students positive behaviors rather than using punitive approaches.

Since many cities report zero instances of school bullying, it is a positive sign to see that Buffalo does have a number of bullying and harassment allegations because it indicates an ability for students to raise and report these negative experiences. However, more data is needed to better understand how these issues are addressed and how well the school system is doing at creating an inclusive culture free of bullying.

School Bullying Reports

598

Benchmark: >0

Number of bullying or harassment allegations on basis of sex, race, color, national origin or disability among all K-12 students

Preschool Suspensions

22

73% of Suspensions are Black Students

Benchmark: <10

Number of preschool children receiving at least 1 out-of-school suspension

Students Referred to Law Enforcement

23

74% of Referrals are Black Students

Benchmark: <50

Number of children receiving at least 1 referral to law enforcement

52%

Early Childhood Education Participation

Benchmark: >90%

Percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school

22% 15% 3% 8%

School Suspensions

Benchmark: <10%

Percentage of K-12 students receiving at least 1 suspension

0

Total School Expulsions

Benchmark: <10

Total number of K-12 students expelled & percent by racial group

Black Latino API White

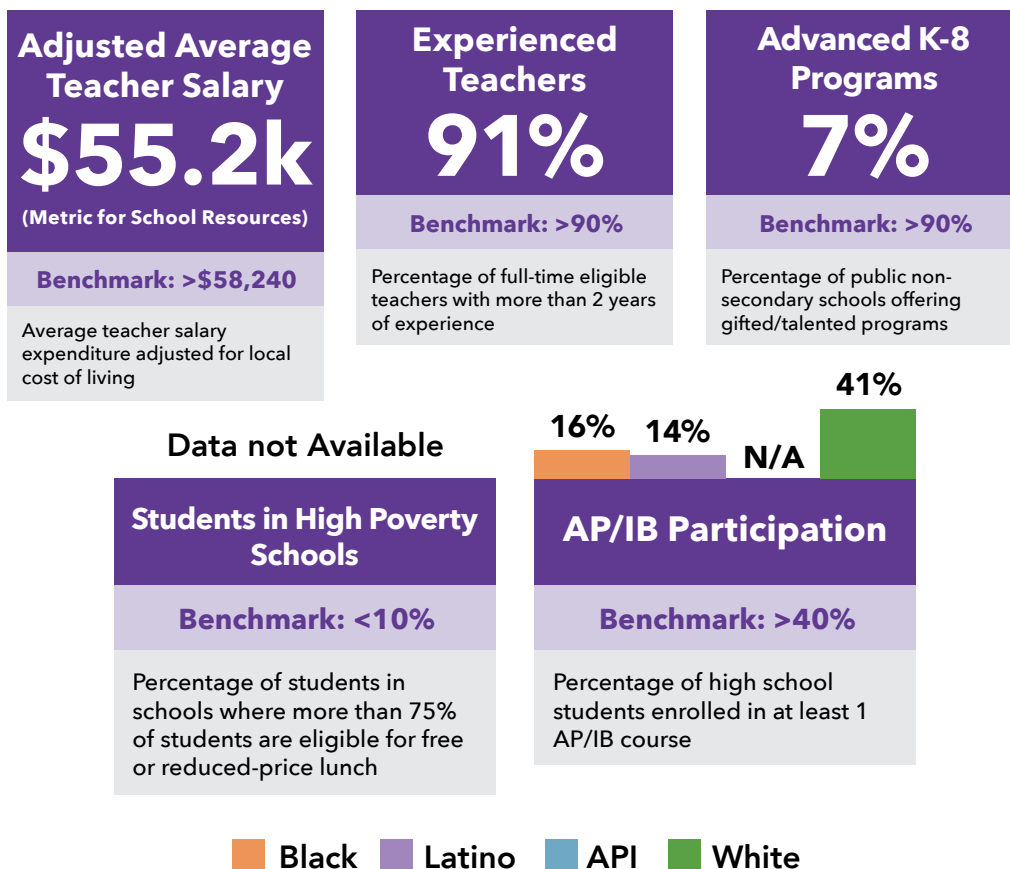
CAPACITY

Buffalo has 29% of the supports for *Capacity*, measured by access to challenging curricula and experienced teachers, well resourced schools and diverse, unsegregated schools. In Buffalo, a significant majority of the teachers have more than 2 years' experience (91%), and schools are relatively well resourced with average teacher salary once adjusted for cost of living among some of the highest among the 10 cities studied. One of the greatest gaps in capacity for student in Buffalo is access to rigorous curriculum. Only 7% of K-8 schools offer gifted coursework, and only a little over half of high schools offer at least one AP/IB class. Additionally, there are considerable gaps in access to schools with advanced curriculum based on race: only 69% of Black students and 61% of Hispanic students attend a school that offers at least one AP/IB class, compared to 86% of White students, and we see similar discrepancies in participation rates with more than twice as many White students enrolled in at least 1 AP/IB class compared to Black and Hispanic students.

Challenging curricula are linked with postsecondary success, and is critical to ensure that all students that have the potential to succeed in an advanced class are enrolled.

While Buffalo has gaps in access to schools offering AP courses, research by College Board found universally that gaps in enrollment also occur due to bias. Their research found large gaps in students of color that have the aptitude to succeed in advanced courses based on PSAT scores and the number that are enrolled, suggesting that the gap is not about ability but rather not having the encouragement and mentorship to enroll in more rigorous courses.

The Buffalo School District provides free or reduced-price lunch to all students, ensuring that students have met basic nutritional requirements, preventing hunger from interfering with schoolwork. This also helps to remove the stigma of poverty from the school environment so students can focus on academics. However, from a scoring perspective, this means that the data on concentration of poverty or segregation across the schools is not readily available. Secondary research indicated that school segregation in Buffalo remains high with 70% of schools classified as "highly segregated".





LOVING CITIES CALL TO ACTION

Across the country, we see powerful examples of organizations and community members taking steps to provide systems of supports that give all children an opportunity to learn. While each city may identify their own priorities, there are four key things that all cities can do to strengthen their system of supports. These are outlined below along with promising models and approaches to learn and build from.

1. Increase Adoption of Models for Delivering a System of **CARE** to all Children and Families

To address childhood trauma and other mental and physical health needs, cities need to equip each and every public school to be a hub for assessing and meeting healthcare and other resource needs. Models like **Communities in Schools** and **City Connects** equip schools with staff and tools to provide a system for addressing individual student and family needs at scale. For more information on CIS's model go to: www.communitiesinschools.org/our-model/.

For more information on City Connects model go to: www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lsoe/sites/cityconnects/our-approach.html.

In addition to school models that refer students to providers, **School-Based Health Alliance** is a network of local, state and national nonprofits working to “complement the work of school nurses by providing a readily accessible referral site for students who are without a medical home or in need of more comprehensive services such as primary, mental, oral, or vision health care.”⁷

SBHA and its state affiliates help schools establish and effectively run school-based health centers. For more information on SBHA affiliates, go to www.sbh4all.org/about/state-affiliates/.

2. Elevate Policies and Practices That Integrate Communities and Schools to Increase Community **STABILITY** and Equitable Allocation of Community Resources

To address community and school segregation, we need to build mainstream understanding of the history of policies in the U.S. that created segregation and wealth inequity and come to terms with the damage those policies continue to have on communities today. In his book *The Color of Law*, Richard Rothstein recognizes that we as a society have largely “forgotten the history of how our government segregated America,” and schools widely teach curricula that has been

white-washed, failing to educate the public on our history of oppression and de jure racial segregation.

The Color of Law outlines several examples of affirming policies that could be adopted if there were greater political will to reverse the damage of past policies and supports rooted in racism. One key policy change communities can adopt is inclusionary zoning policy, which can “require housing developers to set aside

a portion of the homes they build at below-market rates, and reserve the right for the public housing commission to purchase one-third of those units to operate as subsidized public housing.”⁸

Reforming the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program can also lead to greater community integration.

Increasing subsidies to be on par with housing costs in more affluent neighborhoods and increasing the number of vouchers allocated to serve all families that have been damaged by historically racist policies would be a large step in beginning to heal and repair communities.

3. Increase **COMMITMENT** to All Children Through Increased Early Childhood Education Opportunities and Greater Training for Teachers and Administrators in Anti-Racist Practices and a Culture of Inclusion and Healing

Federal programs that provide access to early childhood education need increased funding to meet the scale of need that exists.

Racial opportunity gaps are not just about gaps in access to resources; they also result from unintentional differences in the ways adults and other students treat children of color.

These “invisible forces” are hard to measure, but are becoming clearer through research from groups like GLSEN and Georgetown Law Center that put data to the implicit biases and harassment that students, teachers, administrators and other adults within the system inflict against girls and boys of color. For recommendations on practices for increasing inclusion and reducing bullying in schools see GLSEN’s report at: www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/TeasingtoTortment%202015%20FINAL%20PDF%5B1%5D_0.pdf

For recommendations on policies and practices to address bullying without using zero tolerance approaches that are more harmful than helpful to school safety and culture, go to www.schottfoundation.org/resources/two-wrongs-dont-make-right-why-zero-tolerance-not-solution-bullying.

The Communities for Just Schools Fund (CJSF) is a leader in strengthening the organizing infrastructure in local communities by giving grants to local and regional groups that organize young people, parents and caregivers, educators and other community members to advocate on behalf of students impacted by exclusionary school discipline practices. For individuals and foundations interested in contributing to local organizing, CJSF shares several ways to get involved: www.cjsfund.org/get-involved

4. Deepen Public and Private Commitment to Increasing **CAPACITY** of Public Schools

According to research by the Education Law Center and Rutgers Graduate School of Education, states are largely failing to invest adequately and fairly to provide all students with the resources and supports that they need to succeed.

For data and resources to advocate for fair school funding, go to: www.schoolfundingfairness.org/is-school-funding-fair

Endnotes

- 1 Resettled refugees help to 'bring Buffalo back' (2015 December 2). *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/2015/12/02/458007064/resettled-refugees-help-to-bring-buffalo-back>.
- 2 Byrnes, Mark. (2014, April 11). "Buffalo was once a model for integration. Now the vast majority of its public schools are segregated. Retrieved from <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2014/04/how-buffalos-once-diverse-schools-became-some-most-segregated/8823/>.
- 3 New York State Education Department. (n.d.). *Buffalo city school district*. Retrieved from <https://data.nysed.gov/profile.php?instid=800000052968>; Buffalo public schools. (n.d.). *Statistical highlights 2016-17*. Retrieved from <http://www.buffaloschools.org/files/105720/statistical%20highlights%20brochure%204-21-17.pdf>.
- 4 <http://www.investigativepost.org/2014/07/03/nasa-maps-show-air-quality-improvements/>
- 5 http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Gap-Report_2017.pdf
- 6 <http://www.governing.com/topics/urban/gov-housing-affordability-burden-cities-zillow.html>
- 7 School Based Health Alliance: <http://www.sbh4all.org/school-health-care/national-census-of-school-based-health-centers/>.
- 8 Rothstein, R. (2017 May). *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*.