

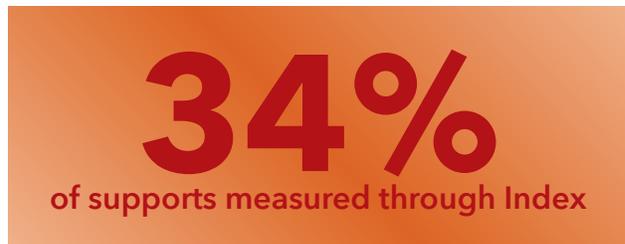


# Charlotte, NC **COPPER**

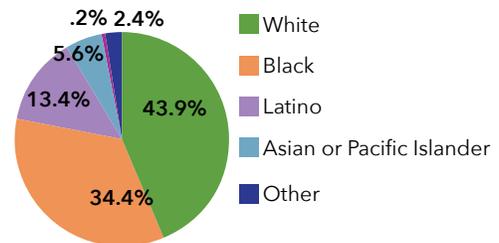
Charlotte resides in Mecklenburg County and is the largest city in the state of North Carolina and the 17th largest city in the U.S. Charlotte is home to the third-largest banking center in the country, after New York and San Francisco.<sup>1</sup> Between 2004-2014, over 850,000 people moved to the metropolitan area, qualifying Charlotte as the fastest-growing city in the U.S. at the time, a growth rate of almost 60%.<sup>2</sup>

Charlotte’s demographics have shifted significantly as well: in 1980 the city was around 67% White and today is less than 45% White.<sup>3</sup> In the 1870s, Charlotte was fully integrated with Black and White families living side by side, but as with nearly all other American cities, local and federal policies instituting racial segregation were implemented throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>4</sup> Today, neighborhoods and schools remain highly segregated, and poor children in Charlotte have the lowest odds of making it to the top income bracket of any place in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> Along with Maryland and New York, North Carolina is among the 15 states whose top 1% of earners took home all income growth between 2009 and 2013.<sup>6</sup>

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) serve over 170 municipalities in the greater Charlotte region with over 110 elementary schools, 50 middle schools, 35 high schools, and 3 special schools. 10% of students are limited English proficient, and 55% of students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. “CMS is one of the largest employers in Mecklenburg County with



**Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014**



*U.S. Census Bureau; NHGIS; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Policy Link/PERE National Equity Atlas, [nationalequityatlas.org](http://nationalequityatlas.org)*

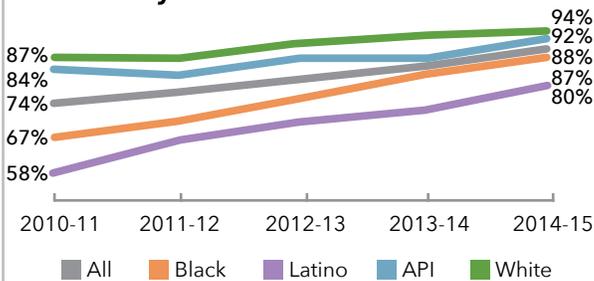
more than 18,000 teachers, support staff and administrators. CMS is fortunate to have tremendous support from Charlotte’s corporate, faith and business communities and more than 90,000 mentors and volunteers support learning and instruction in CMS classrooms.”<sup>7</sup>

# THERMOMETER INDICATORS

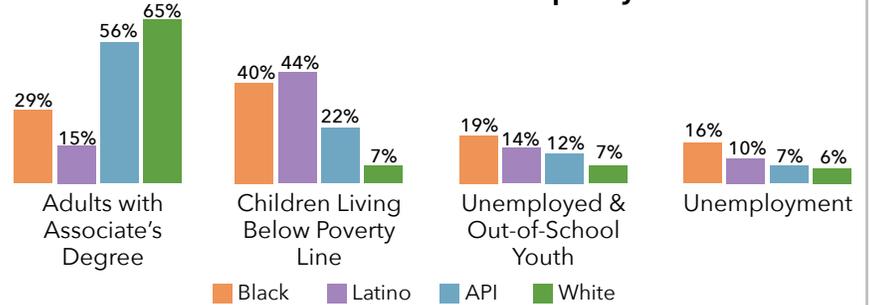


Current conditions for childhood success

## 5-year Graduation Rates



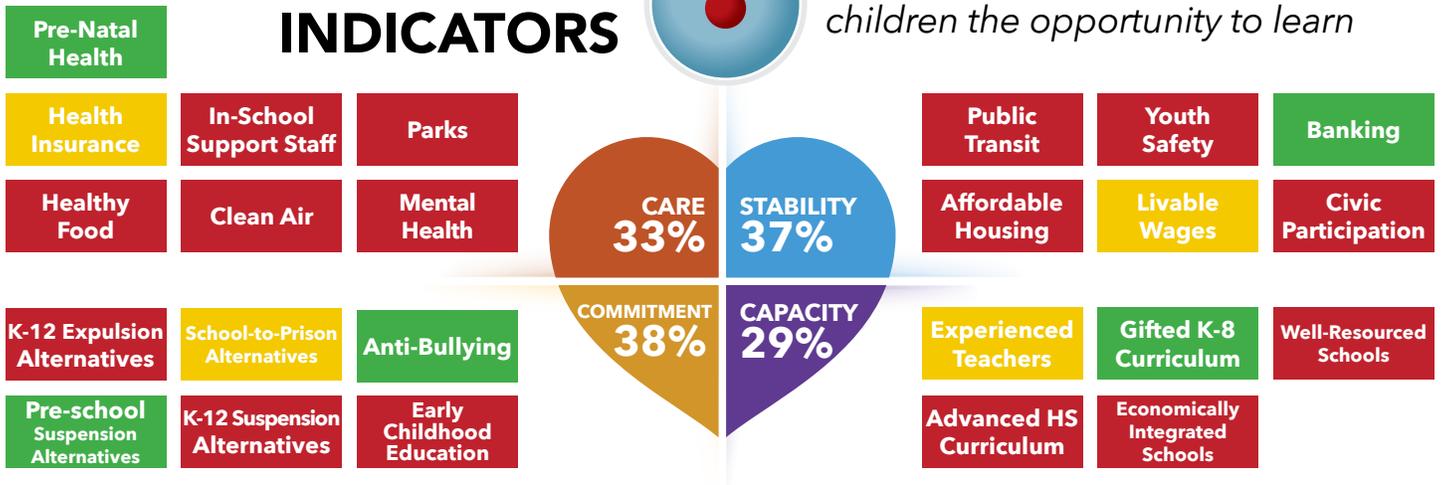
## Social & Economic Prosperity



# THERMOSTAT INDICATORS



Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



## State of Healthy Living and Learning in Charlotte

Charlotte has 34% of the supports measured through the Index, which is slightly below average for the 10 cities measured. In terms of living environment, Charlotte has one of the lowest rates of access to public transportation (only 71% of the population lives in close proximity), and lacks access to grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods, with particularly low access for Black and Latino low-income people. Charlotte offers significantly less access to parks than any other city, with only 27% of the population living in close proximity to a public park. As with many other cities, Charlotte also had low voter turnout in the 2016 general election (66%). The September 2016 shooting of Keith Lamont Scott by a Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer sparked major protest and created a clear concern among communities of color and advocates about the use of excessive force by police in Charlotte. The Scott shooting came on the heels of the mistrial of a case involving an officer who killed Jonathan

Ferrell, another unarmed African American man. The protest seemed to also ignite an increase in civic engagement in Charlotte, as Braxton Winston II, an active protester of the police's actions, was elected to the City Council in November 2017 and Charlotte also elected its first African American female Mayor, Vi Lyles.

Charlotte schools provide K-8 gifted and high school AP/IB classes, though enrollment in AP courses are largely inequitable, as with other cities. There is still utilization of harmful discipline including expulsions and referrals to law enforcement, which are utilized predominantly against the Black student population. Inadequate school resourcing and inequities in access to mixed income schools as opposed to "high poverty schools" creates a system of separate and unequal, where many children are not provided the opportunity to learn.

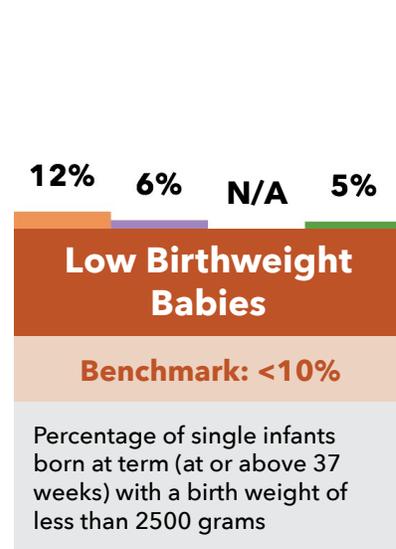
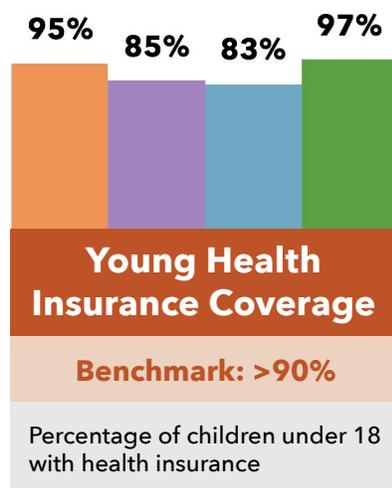
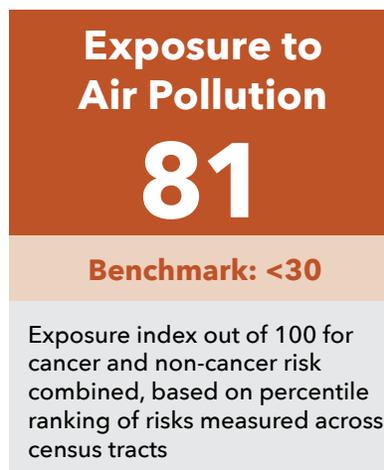
# CARE

Charlotte has 33% of the supports to provide children with *Care*, including access to healthy foods and parks, clean air, pre-natal health, in-school support staff and mental health supports.

Charlotte has the lowest level of supports in this area compared to the other cities studied. While youth health insurance rates are strong across racial groups, there seems to be inequities in access to pre-natal care given the significantly higher rates of low birthweight babies among Black families compared to other racial groups. Charlotte also has a relatively lower number of in-school support staff compared to other cities studied, including guidance counselors, instructional aids and student support services staff. There is not data available to

measure access to mental health across cities, despite the importance of this support to the national dialogue on community needs, so all cities received zero points in this area.

Air pollution is an issue of concern in the Carolinas, where a changing climate, particle pollution, ozone pollution and diesel pollution prevent children from breathing clean air. Charlotte is also known for its poor parks; a recent study by the Trust for Public Lands has ranked the city as one of the worst in the country for its ParkScore.<sup>8</sup> Maps available from ParkScore suggest there are many areas in the city with high need for a park. These areas align precisely with neighborhoods that have historically been majority people of color.<sup>9</sup>



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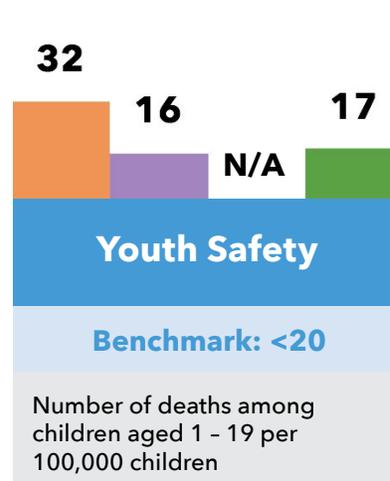
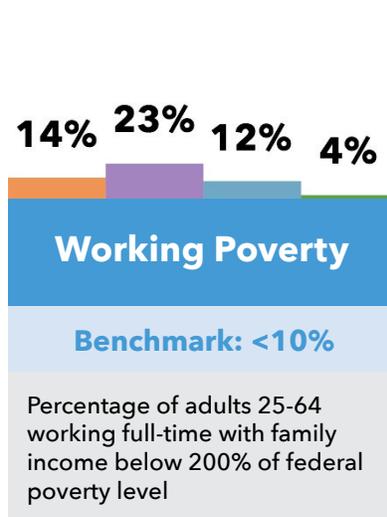
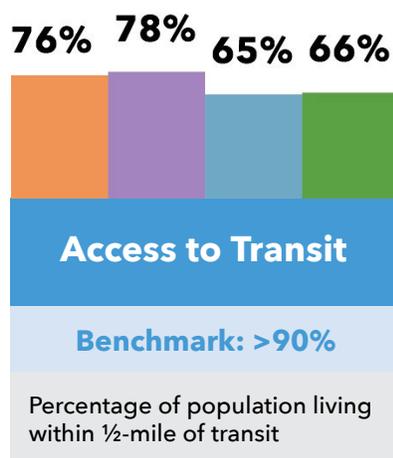
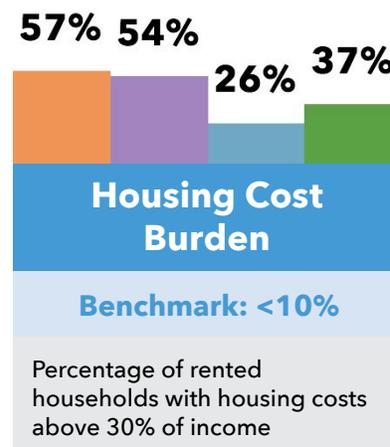
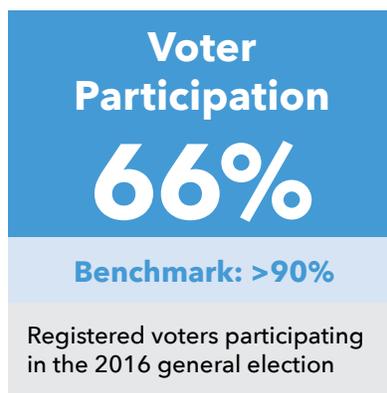
# STABILITY

Charlotte delivers 37% of the supports needed to provide children with *Stability*. This domain includes supports for affordable housing, transit accessibility, civic engagement, livable wage jobs, youth safety and access to banking.

To build a more stable city for youth in Charlotte, community leaders can look to improving low income housing options in resource-rich neighborhoods for residents, particularly residents of color. More than 50% of Black and Latino people in Charlotte pay more than 30% of their budget on rent, which constrains resources critical for other costs of living. The challenge of housing affordability is compounded by the lack of livable wages for lowest paying jobs. Specifically, in Charlotte 14% of Black peo-

ple and 23% of Latino people working full-time earn an income below 200% of the federal poverty line.

Charlotte can also improve stability by improving transit access, youth safety and promoting civic participation. Charlotte produced one of the lowest scores for transit access, second to Little Rock. Transportation access opens economic opportunity for residents, and can help families rise out of poverty. Likewise, civic participation can help communities increase support to address local resident needs, but with only 66% of the voting eligible population participating in the last presidential election, all of Charlotte's residents do not have a voice in the political process.

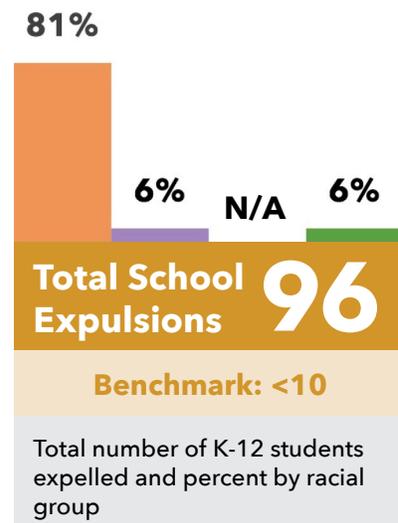
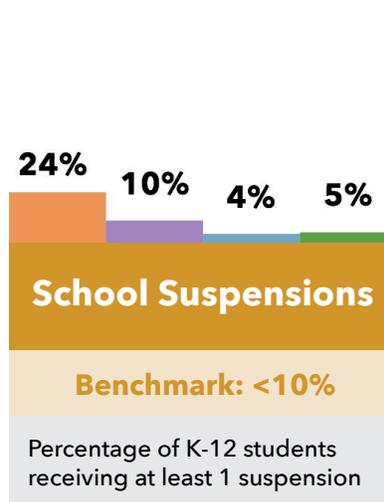
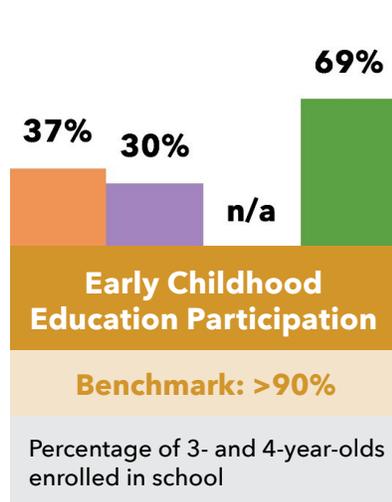
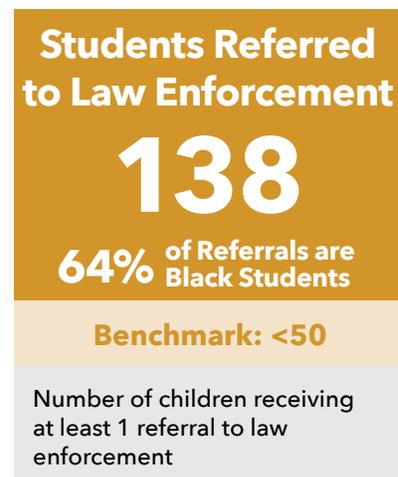
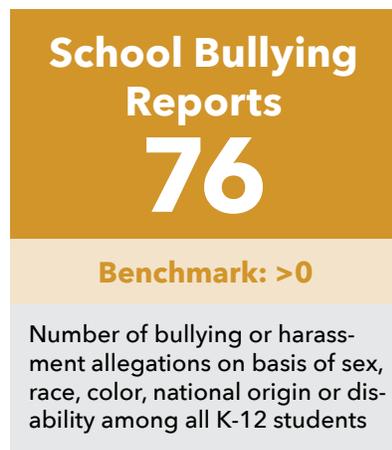


# COMMITMENT

Charlotte delivers 38% of the supports for *Commitment*, including access to early childhood education, positive discipline practices in pre-school and K-12, and anti-bullying efforts. While school expulsion is nearly 0% for all racial groups, K-12 suspension is high at 14% overall, and suspensions for Black students is nearly five times higher than the rate for White and Asian students and double that of Latinos. Additionally, in the 2013/14 school year, 138 students were referred to law enforcement. Advocacy for school discipline reform and restorative justice in schools in Charlotte by groups such

as the One Network are working to create change needed to make Charlotte's learning environments more committed to every youth.

While all other cities studied have similarly low rates of early childhood participation overall, participation among Black and Latino students in Charlotte are particularly inequitable. Only 37% of Black children and 30% of Latino children have access to early childcare, while nearly 70% of White children participate.



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# CAPACITY

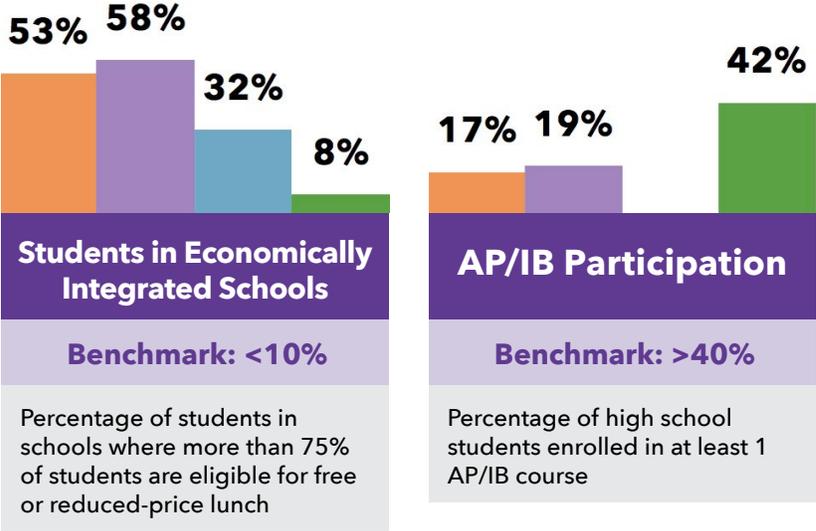
Charlotte delivers 29% of the supports that build *Capacity*, including access to challenging curricula, qualified, well-compensated teachers and integrated schools. Although 97% of K-8 schools and 96% of high schools offer gifted and advanced coursework (far higher than any other of the 10 cities studied), participation in AP continues to be low particularly for students of color. Specifically, only 17% and 19% of Black and Latino students respectively participated in at least 1 AP course, compared to 42% of White high school students.

There is room for improvement for the Charlotte School District to increase school resourcing, including raising teacher salaries, which is on average \$47,808 when adjusted for local cost of living. There is also a need to better integrate schools with policies that address the high levels of racial and economic segregation that exists among neighborhoods.

**Adjusted Average Teacher Salary**  
**\$47.8k**  
 (Metric for School Resources)  
**Benchmark: >\$58,240**  
 Average teacher salary expenditure adjusted for local cost of living

**Experienced Teachers**  
**85%**  
**Benchmark: >90%**  
 Percentage of full-time eligible teachers with more than 2 years of experience

**Advanced K-8 Programs**  
**97%**  
**Benchmark: >90%**  
 Percentage of public non-secondary schools offering gifted/talented programs



Black Latino API White



# 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/](http://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](http://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.”<sup>10</sup>

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/](http://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.”<sup>11</sup>

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.schoolfundingfairness.org/is-school-funding-fair)

## Endnotes

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- 5 Semuels, A. (2017, April 4). Why it's so hard to get ahead in the south. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/04/south-mobility-charlotte/521763/>.
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- 7 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. (n.d.). Background, facts and history. Retrieved from <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/mediaroom/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx>.
- 8 The Trust for Public Land, ParkScore 2017 (<http://parkscore.tpl.org/map.php?city=Charlotte#sm.00000gl0kttt2b-d8csir32760djk4>)
- 9 Clean Air Carolina, 2017 (<https://cleanaircarolina.org/learn/issues/>)
- 10 School Based Health Alliance: <http://www.sbh4all.org/school-health-care/national-census-of-school-based-health-centers/>.
- 11 Rothstein, R. (2017 May). *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*.