

Springfield, MA **COPPER**

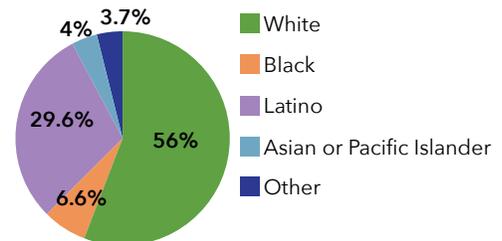
Springfield, MA is one of the oldest cities in the group of 10, first incorporated as a town in the 1641. It is conveniently located “midway between New York and Boston, and on the road between New York and Canada.” In the eighteenth century, Springfield became industrialized as the power of the nearby Connecticut River provided the opportunity for milling, manufacturing, and transportation development. In 1777, General George Washington established a national weapons arsenal in Springfield, spurring significant economic growth and attracting artisans, metal workers, inventors, and others to the area.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Springfield was a manufacturing center and home to major companies such as the G&C Merriam Company (publishers of the nation’s first dictionary, Merriam-Webster), Milton Bradley, and Smith & Wesson.¹ Like other Rust Belt cities, Springfield experienced economic decline as a result of technological advancements after World War II. As the city has sought to reinvent itself in recent decades, it has turned to the education and health sectors, tourism and hospitality to boost the local economy.² Springfield is one of eight cities across the state known as “Gateway Cities” that have historically been gateways to the middle class for generations of residents.

While the Springfield metro area was 90% White as recently as 1980, the population has witnessed a huge influx of Latinos, growing from less than 1% in 1980 to over 15% of the population as of 2010.³ In particular, the Puerto Rican population of Springfield, and Western Massachusetts more broadly, has been progressively expanding and a vibrant cultural community has taken root as more islanders seek greater economic opportunity.⁴ Massachusetts is home to some of the largest income disparities in the country, ranking in the top five states in earnings gap ratios between the highest 5% of earners and the lowest 20% of earners.⁵ In Springfield,

39%
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

income segregation and racial segregation are among the lowest for the 10 initial cities.⁶ Nevertheless, there are clear racial patterns in opportunity, with only 10% White unemployment compared to 20% Black unemployment.

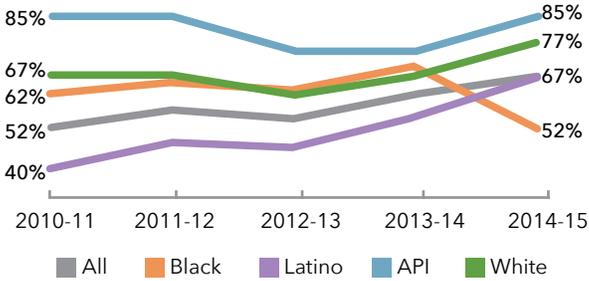
In the 2016-17 school year, Springfield Public Schools managed nearly 60 schools, of which 34 offer instruction from pre-K through 8th grade, with the other 24 institutions serving middle and high school students. Approximately 26,000 youth comprise the student body, with Latino students accounting for nearly two-thirds of the student population at 65%, Black students about 20%, White students 12%.⁷ 17% of students are limited English proficient and over 40% of Springfield’s children are living below the poverty line, with 53% of Latino children experiencing poverty compared to 20% of White children. The numbers on youth mortality are particularly troubling, with rates among Black youth more than 2.5 times that of Whites (47.5 vs. 18.1) and 1.5 times among Latinos relative to Whites (27.5 vs. 18.1).

THERMOMETER INDICATORS

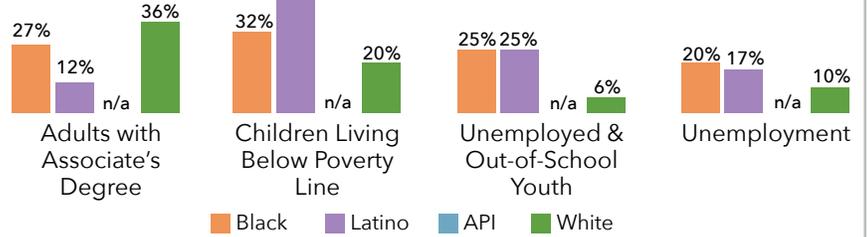


Current conditions for childhood success

5-year Graduation Rates



Social & Economic Prosperity

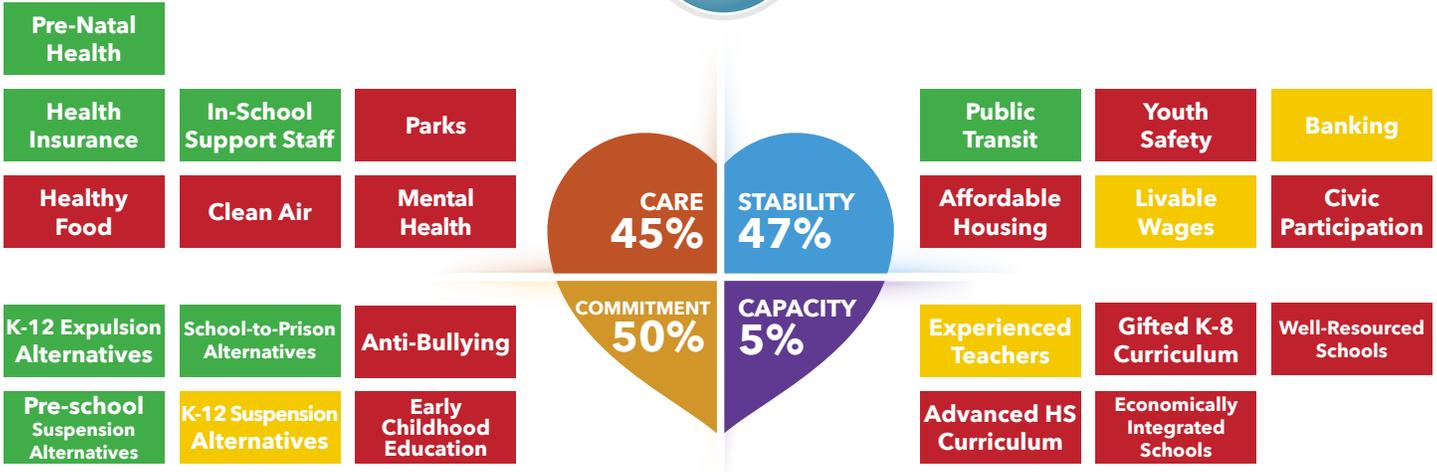


Note: n/a indicates not available

THERMOSTAT INDICATORS



Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



State of Healthy Living and Learning in Springfield

Springfield has 39% of the supports measured through the Index. In terms of learning environments, Springfield has one of the higher level of suspension (19%), which impacts Blacks students most significantly (25% of Black students suspended), but also affects White and Latino students to a lesser degree (15% and 19%, respectively). Springfield only earned one point in Capacity, because of having some of the lowest levels of access to rigorous curriculum, teacher salary and school resourcing. While only 2% of K-8 schools offer gifted coursework, 95% of students attend a school that offers at least one AP/IB class. Still, only 8% of High School students are enrolled in at least one AP/IB class, hindering Springfield's children from achieving post-secondary aca-

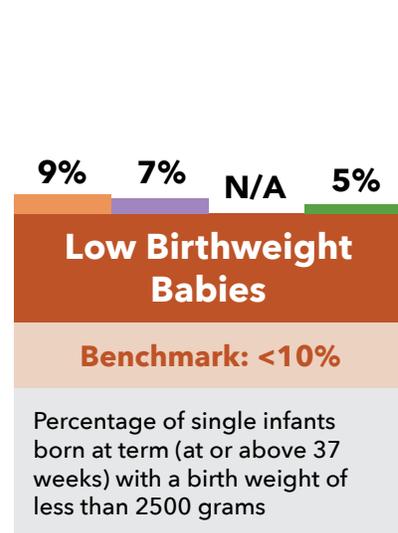
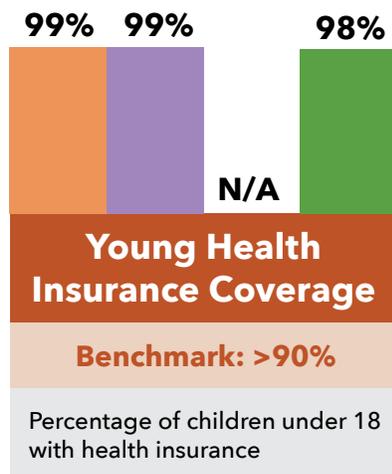
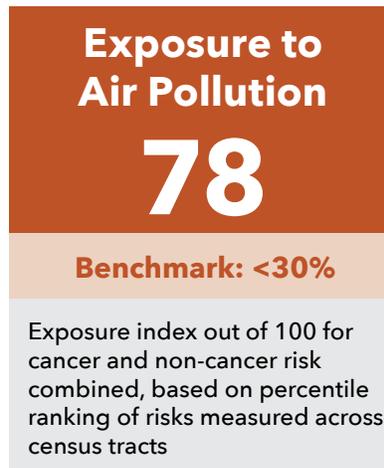
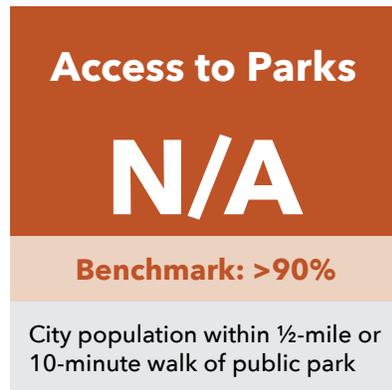
ademic success. Springfield has the lowest teacher salary of the group of 10 once cost of living is adjusted for (\$29k) and only 75% of teachers have at least two years of experience. When we look at the broader community supports, we see relatively low levels of early childhood education participation (49% of 3- and 4-year olds in pre-school), high housing cost level burdens (62% of renters pay more than 30 percent of household income on housing), and 2-3 times higher levels of food deserts compared to all other cities studied (74%). While rates for these indicators are fairly similar across racial groups, Springfield doesn't earn points for equity because rates across racial groups are far from the minimum benchmarks that define ideal levels for loving cities.

CARE

Springfield has 45% of the supports measured for *Care*, including access to healthy foods and parks, clean air, pre-natal health, in-school support staff and mental health supports.

Children in Springfield have health insurance coverage, and low birthweight across racial groups is relatively low and equitable. Additionally, Springfield has one of the highest rates of in-school support staff among the cities studied with over four guidance counselors, instructional aids and student support services staff per 100 students.

To provide more care, community leaders should look first to improving healthy living environments for its people, and particularly people of color. A relatively low percentage of Springfield residents have access to healthy foods, with three quarters of the low-income population living in a neighborhood without a grocery store in close proximity. Additionally, air quality in the city is very poor. Because Springfield is not a large enough city to be included in ParkScore's analysis of park access across the country, data was not available on access to parks.



Black Latino API White

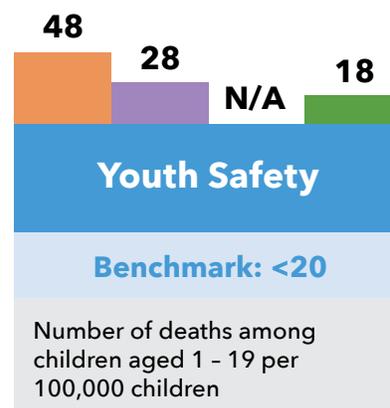
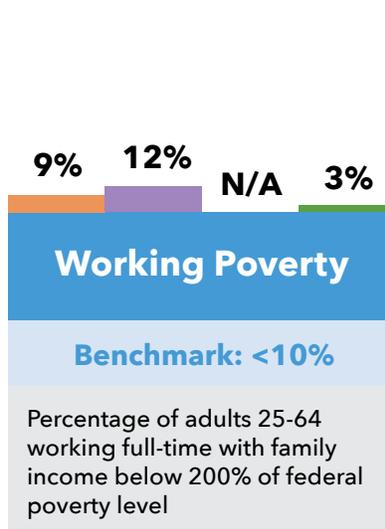
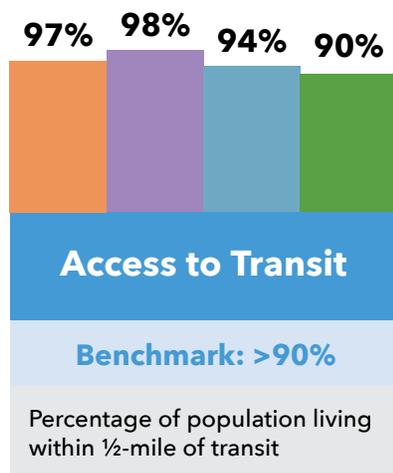
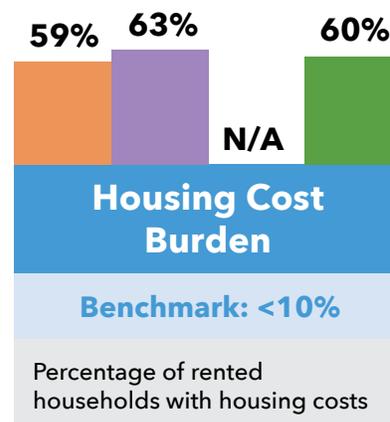
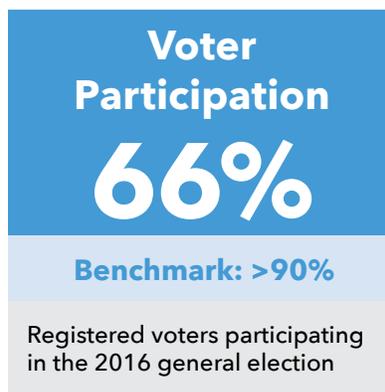
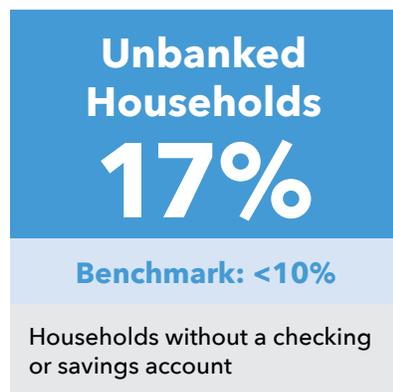
STABILITY

Springfield has 47% of the supports measured for *Stability*, including supports for affordable housing, transit accessibility, civic engagement, livable wage jobs, youth safety and access to banking.

Transportation access is relatively strong, with the vast majority of residents living in close proximity to bus or rail lines. As with other localities, high levels of working poverty among people of color and low access to affordable housing create instability where families are earning little and spending a disproportionately high amount on housing. While there are not large discrepancies by race in the proportion of people paying more than 30% of income to housing, overall residents in Springfield face the

largest rates of housing cost burden of the localities studied. Similarly, the percentage of the population that does not have a bank account is considerably higher than other areas studied, and levels of civic engagement are relatively low.

Rates of youth mortality for Black children is also disturbingly high, and comparable to rates in much larger cities, like Baltimore. Providing safe and stable living and learning environments is critical to ensuring all children have the opportunity to learn and thrive.



Black Latino API White

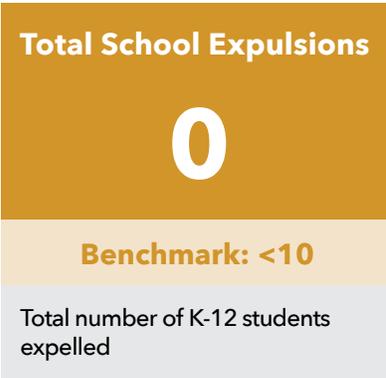
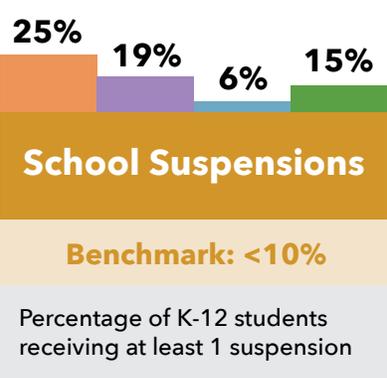
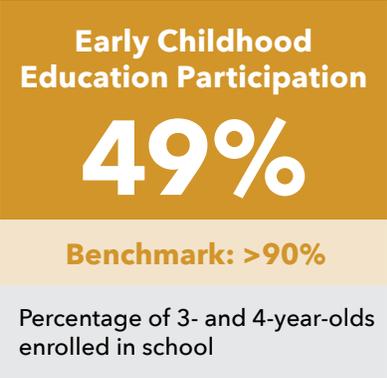
COMMITMENT

Springfield has 50% of the supports measured for *Commitment*, including providing students with access to early childhood education, positive discipline practices in pre-school and K-12, and anti-bullying efforts.

According to the data reported to the Office of Civil Rights, Springfield does not engage in pre-school suspension or K-12 expulsions. Still, suspension is used at an alarmingly high rate, with nearly 1 in every 5 children receiving at least 1 suspension in the 2013/14 school year. Rates across racial groups are high, though Black students face the highest levels

of suspension (25% of students receiving at least 1 suspension in 2013/14). Data is not reported on number of students that are referred to law enforcement, or instances of school bullying, so it is difficult to assess levels of commitment to every student in learning environments.

Similar to other cities studied, less than half of 3 and 4 year olds participate in early childhood education, which can create large gaps in student's readiness to learn later in grade school.



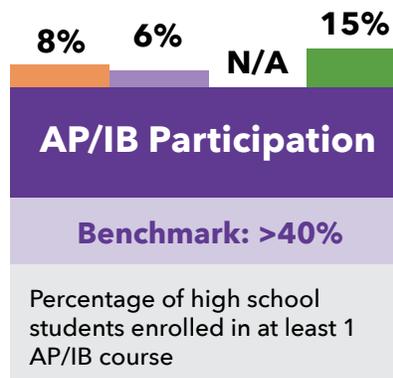
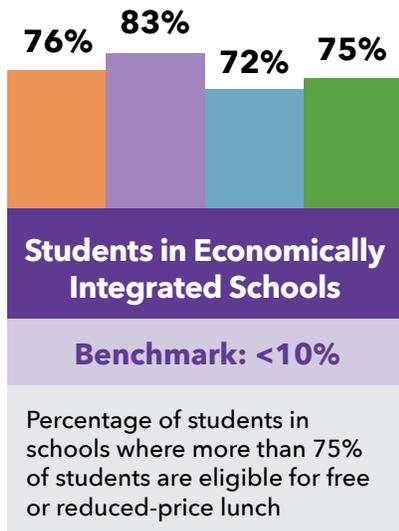
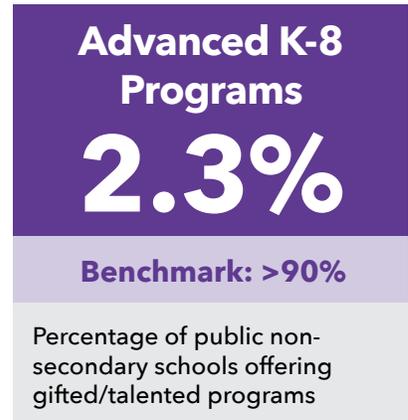
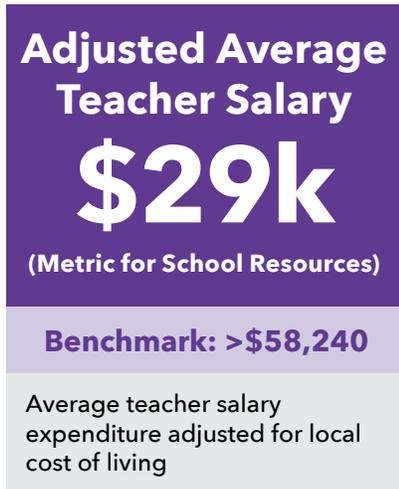
Black Latino API White

CAPACITY

Springfield has only 5% of the supports measured for *Capacity*, including access to challenging curricula, experienced, well-compensated teachers and diverse, un-segregated schools.

Teacher salary is among the lowest of the cities studied (\$29k on average once adjusted for cost of living), and a quarter of teachers in Philadelphia have been teaching for less than two years. Additionally, the school system has such a large number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch that the vast majority of all students at-

tend schools where over 75% of the student population lives in poverty. Despite most students attending schools that offer at least 1 AP or IB course, student enrollment in AP/IB courses is far lower than other cities studied (only 8% of students enrolled in an AP course). The School district has faced years of financial struggles, and lack the resources to pay teachers fairly and provide students with the comprehensive supports needed to have the opportunity to learn and thrive.



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/.

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.”⁸

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.”⁹

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

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- 9 Rothstein, R. (2017 May). *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*.