Loving Cities INDEX

Creating Loving Systems Across Communities to Provide All Students an Opportunity to Learn

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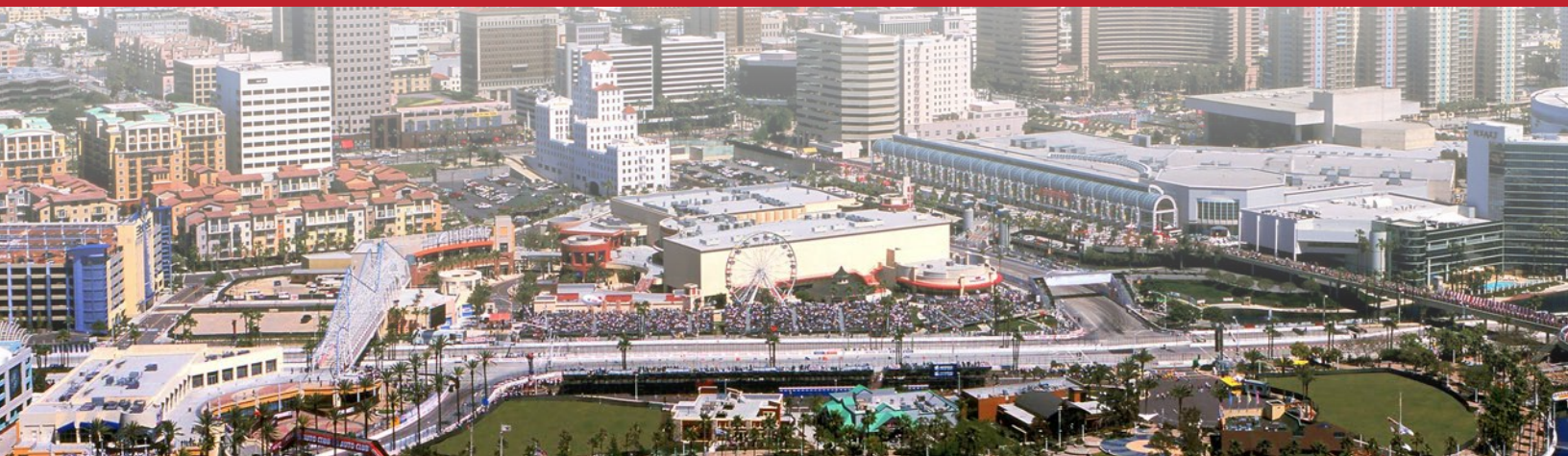

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Schott 25 Foundation for Public Education years

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Preface

by Dr. John H. Jackson
President & CEO,
Schott Foundation for Public Education

Today, most significant indicators related to education, health and the economic success of children and families continue to show pervasive gaps in outcomes for people of color and low-income individuals. This is unacceptable. These gaps in outcomes are created not by the students and families themselves, but the larger systemic inequities in access to the critical resources needed to succeed. Considering the social and political moment, the public, private and philanthropic sectors must go beyond the normal separate silos approach to shift from a standards-based agenda where we only analyze shortcomings to a supports-based agenda where we focus on the resources needed for all students to overcome obstacles created by inequity and achieve high outcomes.

The Loving Cities Index is not about simply "spreading love," it is about the recognition that love is an action word and should be proactively represented in the policies and practices in the systems of those who purport to care and love our young people. As a noted scholar and philanthropic change agent, Dr. Gail Christopher, once reminded me, "Racism is nothing more than institutionalized lovelessness." It is in this context that we seek to institutionalize the policies and practices which create loving systems.

Through the Loving Cities Index, the Schott Foundations heeds the calls of our thousands of students, parents, educators and advocacy partners to address the cross-sector opportunity gaps which produce challenged systemic outcomes in our schools. Each day school systems serve thousands of students in communities whose cities fail to provide the basic needs to their students, such as healthy food and affordable housing—and yet, in spite of those challenges, the public school system successfully graduates many of these student. But cities must do better. We still lose too many students. This requires cities to provide both a healthy living and learning environment to support the tireless work of students, parents, grassroots advocates and those in the education system.

Today, the public education system remains the primary platform of opportunity for over 90 percent of our nation's students. The list of sectors enriched through our public education system is as diverse as its students. Simply stated, education is a critical institution in our democracy

— and is the vital underpinning to addressing opportunity gaps and providing an opportunity to learn and succeed for all children.

Schott's ultimate goal is to catalyze cross-sector partnerships and collaborations and build the necessary public support and political will to drive cities to adopt and implement policies and practices needed to construct a comprehensive system of supports that provide all children an equal opportunity to learn. This framework is relevant to all localities, big and small, urban and rural. In this report, we have put the emphasis on examining cities, but this framework is also important to rural communities where it is even more critical for schools to serve as a hub for resources that can support the whole child and whole community.

The Schott Foundation developed the Loving Cities Index to provide a national unifying framework to understand how well localities across the country are doing at providing a system of supports for children and families. Many cities have taken steps to work collaboratively with stakeholders to deliver comprehensive supports that help students thrive, but in every community across the country there are still large gaps in access to the resources and supports needed for students to achieve. The Index helps identify bright spots where cities have been successful in creating systems that deliver supports, and call attention to areas where large gaps in access and equity persist and new policies and practices are needed to improve outcomes.

Education attainment is a higher order need and consistent with noted human development psychologist Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs," it is virtually impossible to systematically improve learning outcomes without supports that address the more foundational physiological (air, water, food, etc.), safety (physical, health, financial), and love/belonging needs that most humans require. As Maslow notes, "the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher-level needs." We are eager to work with partners, both old and new, to help move toward meet these basic needs and more loving cities where all our children thrive. It's not only the road to a more just and education future for students but the road to a stronger humanity.

Foreword

by Rev. Dr. William Barber
President & Senior Lecturer, Repairers of the Breach

The fight to save the soul of our country is underway.

The U.S. faces a moral crisis where the poor are undermined and our children face the most uncertain future. If the country we promised to our children is to be realized, we need to run, not walk away from the extremist rhetoric and policy agenda coming out of the White House. In its place, we must return to the first emotion universally experienced by all. In order to win the fight for our nation's soul and to render the promise onto our children, we must embrace love.

Since *Brown v. Board of Education*, the gutting of public education has only left a legacy of systemic racism. The policies of the past and present — ones rooted in racism and bias must be eradicated, and in its place, we need to create supports that institutionalize love in cities across this nation. When love, not hate, is the driving force, all students — regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or where they live have an opportunity to learn and to succeed.

As a product of public schools, I am a champion of investments in these worthy institutions. However, education reform efforts of the past have failed because they solely looked at reforming education from within the classroom. In order to create true loving cities, we must challenge the notion that school-based reforms alone can provide all students a fair and substantive opportunity to learn.

A large and growing body of research shows a clear connection between economic and racial inequality and opportunity gaps in areas like housing, health care and community involvement. Yet, for more than three decades, too many city, state and federal systems continue to implement and institute policies that create opportunity gaps for poor black, brown, and white students who have significantly lower levels of access to resources.

For decades, parents, students, teachers and community organizations in our community have been calling for a more comprehensive approach to increase the opportunity to learn for all young people. To address those calls, The Schott Foundation has created the Loving Cities Index, which provides a quantitative measurement of the level of support in cities to provide children and families with healthy living and learning environments where they can thrive. The Loving Cities Index measures 24 different types of supports, like access to healthy food, affordable housing, sustainable wages and public

transportation, all of which have a proven connection to academic or economic success. The Loving Cities Index provides a frame to align policy-makers, philanthropy and community members around a supports-based agenda, recognizing that the standards-based approach that has dominated education reform agendas for decades have failed to provide students an opportunity to learn.

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call For Moral Revival is aligned with this approach. Already, we have united tens of thousands of people across the country to call for a moral revival to challenge the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the nation's distorted mortality. Hate retreats and love invades when we improve access and make considerable investments to supports like affordable housing, sustainable wages, public transportation and civic participation. Institutionalizing love means stopping a President who tells the international community that "every nation wants to be free from poverty" one day and signs a tax bill that hurts poor people the next. Institutionalizing love means creating a healthy living and a healthy learning environment that provides all students an opportunity to learn from birth.

The power to change course and wage a righteous war against extremism in our government lies in us all. This power resides with local mayors, county commissioners, school boards and community organizations. It lives in our houses of worship and lingers within the halls of elected power. This is a power that parents, teachers, friends, and neighbors all possess. The time has come for cities across this nation to assess the level of care, stability, commitment and capacity supports they provide to students as these are the components that create the loving system that all young people deserve and humanity and morality requires.

A New Day:

Replacing Racially Biased and Hate-Filled Policies to Create Loving Systems and Communities Where All Students Have an Opportunity to Learn

Throughout American history, the policies and practices that created opportunity gaps from birth have been baked into the ecosystem of local and state systems. It is well documented that many of these policies and practices were rooted in implicit racial bias at best, and explicit racism and hate at worst. Even today, far too often the policies and practices that govern how cities manage and resource housing, education, healthcare, transportation, workforce development, criminal justice, and civic engagement reinforce inequity in outcomes for children and families of color compared to their White peers by creating a system of barriers to success across all facets of a child's living and learning environments.

Today, our best shot for healing communities of their achievement gap is by addressing the larger living climate opportunity gaps. Likewise, our best chance for supporting healing in communities harmed by practices rooted in hate is through current practices which institutionalize love in systems.

In the midst of our current challenges and unique political moment, it is necessary to declare a new day in America for our young people. *America's new day* must start by acknowledging the fact that providing all children an opportunity to learn requires that we start by providing them with the supports they need to thrive outside the school, starting at birth. We have long known that students thrive in climates with strong social and economic opportunities, with healthy and safe living environments and well-resourced schools.[1] Yet, for decades, city, state and federal systems have built their policy and practice infrastructure around the use of common standards to measure student success,[2] while failing to create common supports to address the gaps in access to healthy living and learning environments. Healthy *living* environments for students are impacted by a family's access to affordable healthcare, food, housing, livable wages, transportation, and safe communities, which are all deeply linked to a child's opportunity to learn. Healthy *learning* environments inside schools create a culture of academic rigor and success; healthy learning environments are impacted by school resourcing, access to early education, experienced teachers and support staff, economic integration in school districts, advanced curricula and restorative discipline approaches.

In *America's new day*, governors, mayors, and school boards cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that gaps in academic achievement are more impacted by opportunity gaps in community and educational environments than shortcomings inside classrooms.

After decades, of robust debates on education standards, assessments, accountability, labor contracts, and traditional versus charter public schools — two facts remain true at a systems level: the public school system remains the primary institution of education for over 90% of students in America[3]; and parental income remains the number one predictor of student outcomes[4] — not type of public school, labor contract or brand of assessment. For far too long, efforts to improve educational outcomes have focused narrowly on the role of schools, classrooms and teachers, while ignoring the large and growing body of research that confirms what parents and families have long known — at the district level, health, housing, and parental employment opportunities are all intimately linked to high school and college attainment.[5] This fact alone should have tremendous implications for how cities and states design policies, practices and programs to provide all students — regardless of race, gender or zip code — an opportunity to learn and succeed.

Over many years, research has quantified the connection between economic and racial opportunity gaps and achievement gaps. Nationally, **42.6%** of students of color in the United States attend a high poverty school (where at least 75% of the population qualify as poor or low-income), while only **7.6%** of white students are in high poverty schools.[6] The difference in outcomes between high poverty schools and low poverty schools is stark: Stanford University analysis of reading and math test scores from across the country found that "Children in the school districts with the highest concentrations of poverty score an average of more than four grade levels below children in the richest districts."[7]

***A new day* requires that we no longer promote the false narrative that the American public education system is a failing proposition**, which inaccurately places blame and policy focus on regulating principals, educators, students and parents.[8] In spite of the pervasive opportunity gaps, the U.S. public school system has created success stories from every sector of our society. These individuals sit on corporate boards and the benches of our courts; spark grassroots movements and non-profit organizations; they lead our churches and synagogues and run our colleges and universities, from Ivy League institutions to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) that most recently gave us mayors of color in cities like Atlanta, New Orleans and St. Paul.

As the only public mandatory network of institutions in our country, the U.S. public school system continues to be our best hub to link families and students to the supports needed to thrive from birth. In the face of significant and growing economic opportunity gaps, for many the U.S. public education system remains a critical contributor in helping to overcome barriers created by our broader living systems in hopes of achieving high school and post-secondary attainment.

Providing students an opportunity to learn from birth is as much — if not more — the responsibility of mayors, county commissioners, and city council members as it is superintendents, school boards, principals, teachers, and parents. Placing the blame at the doors of educators, parents, students and the public school system is the easy route that has proven to do very little to solve the problem.

Today, our best chance for healing communities harmed by practices rooted in hate is by instituting policy and practices that provide children and families with love and support starting at birth. Loving Cities provide healthy living and learning supports which create conditions in which all students have an opportunity to learn and succeed.

A new day requires that we take a more student-centered approach and commit to improving living environments *as well as* learning environments. We must be willing to take the more difficult route of partnership over parting, and building trust over blame. Instead of promoting school vouchers that have proven ineffective, we should dramatically increase housing vouchers to families to provide stable, healthy living environments that help to reintegrate communities and schools. These are the types of opportunities that proclaiming a *new day* requires us to seize.

Loving Cities have systems at their core that are designed to provide care, stability, commitment and capacity to children and families. Community residents, elected officials, and partners in schools, agencies, and businesses have the power to adopt, implement and support policies and programs that ensure equitable access to the supports and opportunities proven to lead to better academic and economic outcomes. It is time to heed the calls of parents, students, teachers, and organizers, as well as extensive field research, and replace policies and practices that reinforce the status quo of inequity with those that institute loving through a system of support for all children.

Schott created the Loving Cities Index to assess local systems as a whole and quantify the level of supports being delivered and, when possible, the level of equity in access to those supports. The Index framework draws from the wisdom of communities and a strong research base to identify 24 indicators that represent supports associated with academic and economic success. These indicators reflect key city policies and practices needed provide care, stability, commitment and capacity, and ultimately provide all students with the healthy living and learning environments needed to learn. We believe that, by prioritizing these measures, over time cities can significantly accelerate educational outcomes, particularly for students of color.

To quantify how close a local system is to being a loving city, we set ideal benchmarks for each of 24 indicators based on what we believe is needed to be a loving city, and used those benchmarks to apply points across indicators. We divided total points earned by total possible points to calculate the level of supports in place, or level of love in local systems.

Ideally, we believe cities should achieve a minimum of 80% of the possible points for indicators of healthy living and learning to be considered a model Loving City, or meet the "platinum standard." We consider cities at the "gold standard" if they achieve at least 70% of the points, "silver standard" for 60% of the points, and "bronze standard" for at least 50% of the points; those

Today, no American city serving large populations of poor and students of color is delivering the level of cross-sector supports needed to appropriately say all students have a fair opportunity to learn or to thrive, regardless of race or economic background.

with under 50% of the points are considered "copper standard."

This Loving Cities report collects and synthesizes data on an initial 10 American cities that are at different points on the trajectory to institute systems that create Loving Cities and have been central to the national conversation on "education reform." We scored each of these cities using the Loving Cities Index to quantify and compare the supports being delivered, and looked qualitatively at how each of these 10 cities are taking action in their own ways to create positive change for children.

The ten cities on average have 42% of the supports needed to be a Loving City as measured by this Index (ranging from 34% to 52%). This mid-range of scores suggests that there are policies and practices in place across these cities to provide access to some supports, but there are still significant gaps in delivering the full system of supports that are needed for all students to thrive. We would expect that the trends in access to resources and supports in these ten cities are predictive of trends we would see across most cities around the country serving large numbers of low-income and young people of color.

The cities of Minneapolis, Long Beach and Buffalo demonstrated the highest levels of supports among the ten cities included, achieving "bronze standard" (50%+) on the Loving Cities Index, while the other seven cities are at the "copper standard" level (<50%). These scores reflect the reality that many of the 10 cities are taking action to improve living and learning environments and seeing the results in educational outcomes, though there is still tremendous need for additional policies and practices that institute love and support for all students both in and outside the classroom to ultimately increase rates of graduation and post-secondary attainment.

Overall, there are some areas where most cities are succeeding in providing supports, and areas where there are tremendous gaps across the 10 cities and all other communities across the country. In terms of providing healthy living environments, most cities are providing fairly strong access to pre-natal services and health insurance, but need to vastly increase access to clean air, healthy food and mental health services to provide Care for all families. Providing Stability will require more progressive steps to dramatically increase civic participation and correct for the damage of historically racist policies that instituted segregation and ensured inequitable access to affordable housing, livable wages and public transportation that persist today.

In terms of providing healthy learning environments, based largely on the work of local advocates, we see some momentum within cities to reduce school suspensions, expulsions and referrals to law enforcement though many cities continue to have large disparities in rates of sus-

pension for Black students compared to White, Latino and Asian. Additionally, access to early childhood education is still largely unattainable for the majority of families across all 10 cities. Within Capacity, we see that school resourcing formulas and school district zoning (in conjunction with broader community segregation) are setting schools up to keep students separated by race and income, maintaining the relic of separate and unequal learning environments initially designed by segregationist agendas.

When we look at all the data across these indicators together, as the Loving Cities Index is designed to do, we can see the ways in which our systems are still deeply impacted by historical policies rooted in racism and hate, and how that is creating a system of barriers for students of color and low-income students, instead of a system of supports. This report provides details for the most and least accessible supports across cities, why these matter and what we can do to improve access to supports, based on research and recommendations from leaders across sectors.

Several of the cities in this report should be highlighted for their efforts to swim upstream against a purely standards-based agenda and do the more difficult work of instituting a supports-based agenda and building the types of community partnerships necessary to deliver critical supports for students to have an opportunity to learn. In key areas, their efforts to shepherd in a new day for students, parents, educators and for their community have begun to yield positive outcomes. Data in this report should not be used to damage or discredit cities for their performance today, but rather to guide priorities on policies and practices that can create Loving Cities that have systems in place to improve community outcomes in the future.

Our intention is to celebrate the commitment and progress that cities are making in establishing a system of supports for all students and build awareness among stakeholders for the additional policies and practices needed for continued improvement.

This is a new day, with unique needs, which requires city leaders to behave in new ways to create systems of partnership that provide students with the care, commitment, stability and capacity to thrive. We hope to inspire a new generation of leaders to create the type of cross-sector loving systems which allow all young people, regardless of race, ethnicity or economic background to claim that they live in a loving city from birth.

BLUE BIRD
DIESEL

The Loving Cities Index

Loving Cities are created by having a system of local and state policies and practices that provide all children and families with:

1. **CARE** through access to mental and physical health services from birth, nutritional food and healthy community spaces

2. **STABILITY** through consistent expectations and practices that reinforce a culture of inclusion and healing among students and adults

3. **COMMITMENT** through economically and civically empowered communities that democratize access to healthy living and learning environments

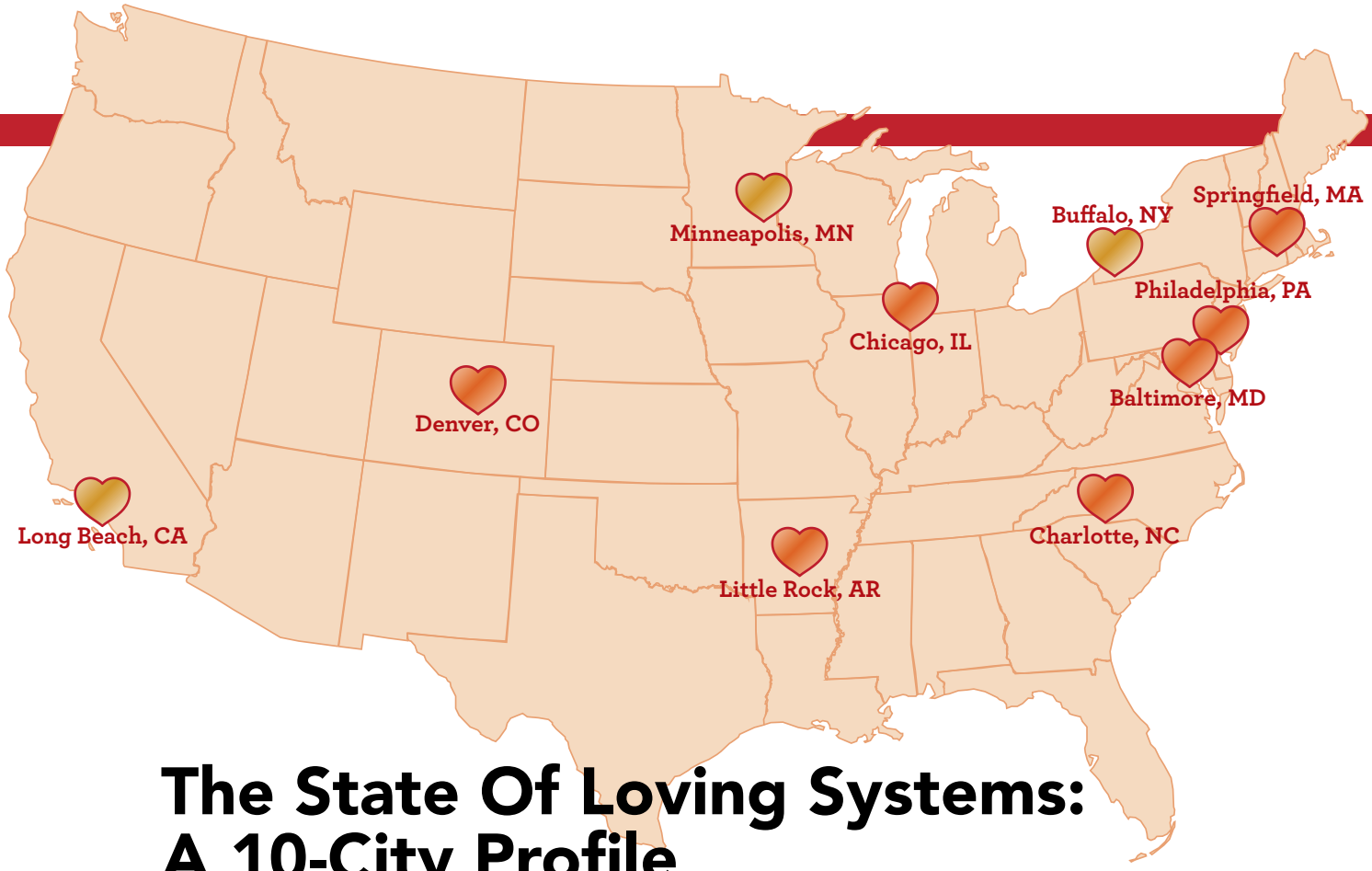
4. **CAPACITY** through well-resourced learning climates that meet the physical, emotional and academic needs of students

The Index framework draws from the wisdom of communities and a strong research base to identify 24 indicators that represent supports associated with academic and economic success. These indicators reflect key city policies and practices needed to provide care, stability, commitment and capacity, and ultimately provide all students with the healthy living and learning environments where they can learn. The Schott Foundation believes that, by prioritizing these measures, over time cities can significantly accelerate educational outcomes, particularly for students of color.

Thermometer vs. Thermostat

When we look at a thermometer, we can see what the current temperature in the room is, but we have no way of adjusting it. A thermostat is the tool that can change the temperature; "moving the dial" on the thermostat if the room is too cold will increase the flow of heat to the room until the temperature reaches the desired level.

As such, the indicators measured in the Loving Cities Index are what we call "thermostat" support indicators, and reflect a shift away from focusing on "thermometer" indicators. "Thermometer" indicators are community level outcome indicators like high school graduation, post-secondary attainment, poverty and unemployment, which are important to look at, but can be difficult to interpret or move the needle on because they only provide a static snapshot of the existing community climate. "Thermostat" support indicators provide insight on the various inputs or supports that are available to manipulate or change the existing community-level climate or outcomes. Thermostat indicators are more active and provide clear focus for creating positive change that will ultimately impact the "thermometer" measures of outcomes. The Loving Cities Index shifts focus to "thermostat" indicators to help communities set clear goals and track progress.



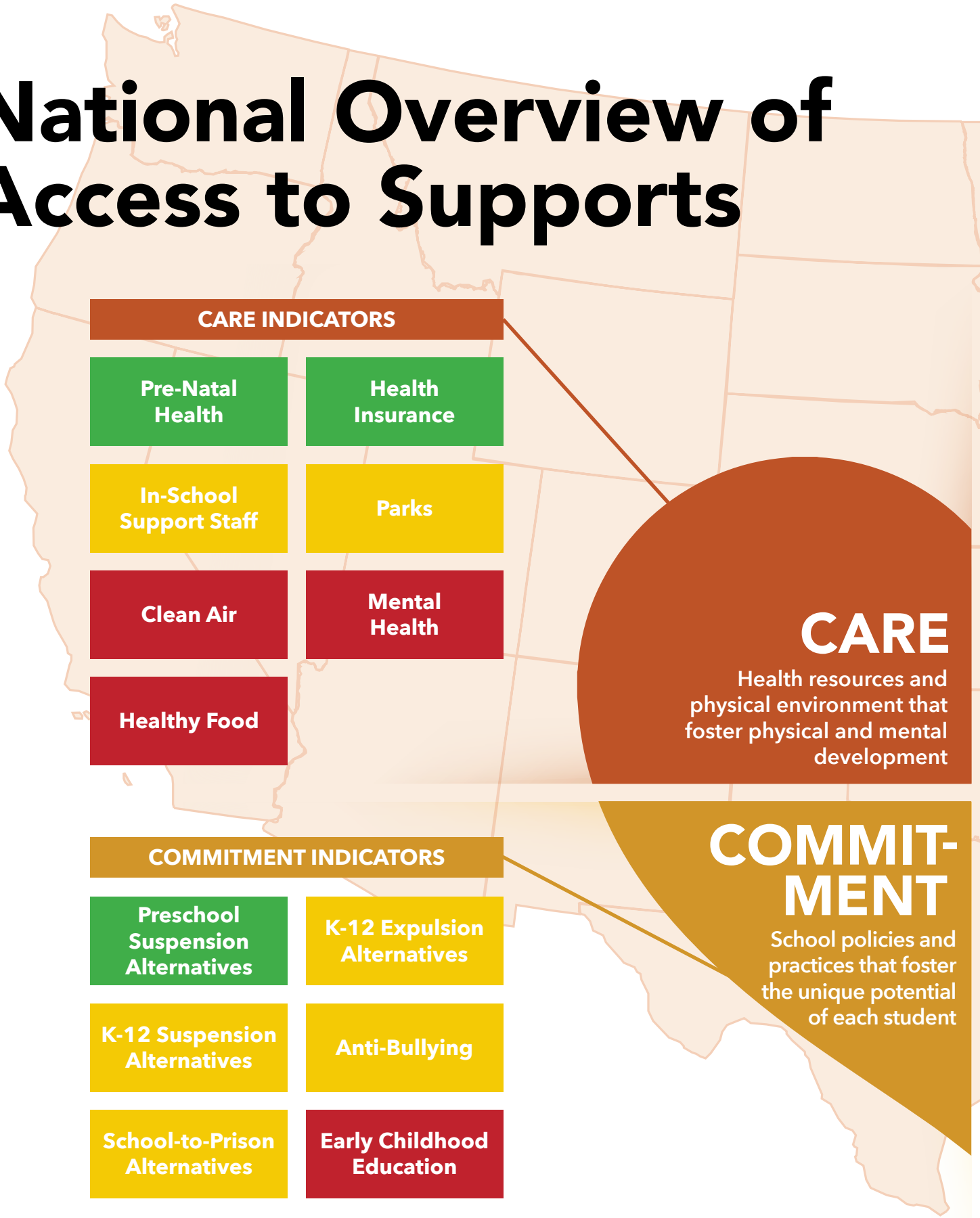
The State Of Loving Systems: A 10-City Profile

The Schott Foundation studied 10 cities using the Loving Cities Index to assess the systems of supports in place at the local and state levels to provide children with an opportunity to learn. To do this, the Schott Foundation and its research partners collected data for and scored 24 indicators that make up a system of supports and for which public data was consistently available. Each indicator represents access to a critical support with a known connection to student academic success.* For each indicator, a city can earn up to three points for levels of access to that support, and when data disaggregated by race is available, cities can earn up to three more points for equity in access across racial groups.

The 10 cities on average have 42% of the supports needed to be a Loving City as measured by this Index (ranging from 34% to 52%). This mid-range of scores suggests that there are policies and practices in place across these cities to provide access to some supports, but there are still significant gaps in delivering the full system of supports that are needed for all students to thrive. This is a trend that we predict will be seen in most cities around the country servicing large number of poor and young people of color. The 10 cities overall have under half of the supports for Care and Stability, indicating large gaps in availability of supports outside of classrooms that enable students to come to school ready and able to learn. Similarly, we measure just under half of the supports for Commitment in schools, while the system is providing only a third of the Capacity supports needed for schools to adequately serve their students.

* See Literature Review section for overview of research on the set of indicators and Methodology section for details on approach to scoring.

National Overview of Access to Supports



The following chart provides a snapshot of the 24 indicators measured through the Index, color coded to signify how strong access to each support is across cities. Green boxes signify areas where nearly all cities in the study provide strong levels of access and equity of supports; yellow boxes signify areas where there's a mix of strong and weak supports across cities; and red boxes signify areas where nearly all cities provide weak levels of support.

STABILITY

Community infrastructure supports and policies that foster physical and financial security and civic participation

STABILITY INDICATORS

- Public Transit
- Youth Safety
- Banking
- Affordable Housing
- Livable Wages
- Civic Participation

CAPACITY

Financial polices and practices that foster expertise and resources to meet the needs of all children

CAPACITY INDICATORS

- Gifted K-8 Curriculum
- Experienced Teachers
- Advanced HS Curriculum
- Economically-Integrated Schools
- Well-Resourced Schools

CARE

The domain of Care includes access to healthy foods and parks, clean air, pre-natal health services, school support staff, and mental and emotional health care. On average, the 10 cities are delivering approximately 46% of these supports. Buffalo demonstrates the highest level of Care (58%) as measured through this Index, with higher scores in clean air relative to other cities and adequate resources for in-school support staff, including guidance counselors, instructional aides and support services staff who connect students with resources to meet their individual needs.

Access to Health Insurance

Health plays a critical role in academic and life outcomes for children, and health insurance is critical to ensuring families can afford quality care and proactively manage health. In all 10 cities, over 90% of children under the age of 18 have health insurance and Springfield, Buffalo, and Philadelphia stand out among the group for having nearly 95% of children insured across racial groups. In some cities, including Charlotte, Minneapolis, and Baltimore, we see high levels of disparity between access for Latino and Asian children compared to White and Black children. This could be illustrative of the inter-connection between immigration policy and health and education outcomes. While there are federal and state programs set up to ensure low-income families can access affordable health insurance, immigration status and English language proficiency may affect families' ability and willingness to seek coverage and services.[9] Dental coverage is also a critical to overall health, though less data is available on levels of access or utilization of dental services across communities. Data shows an overall increase in dental visits among low-income children, which can be attributed to the Affordable Care Act's requirement for public insurance to cover dental for children.[10] Without health insurance and adequate preventative check-ups and treatments, children and families are less likely to be able to participate regularly in school and jobs.

Pre-natal Services

Neonatal health has been linked with educational performance in elementary and middle school, even when controlling for other family socioeconomic factors.[11] Cities overall seem to have high levels of pre-natal health services based on the relatively low rates of low birthweight babies. Still, in every city low birthweight rates are worse for Black babies compared to their White and Latino counterparts. In Baltimore, the city-wide collaborative "B'more for Healthy Babies" has contributed to a 38% decrease in infant mortality from its launch in 2009 to 2015 by offering a host of services around pre-natal care and equipping new parents with the tools and resources they need.[12]

In-school Support Staff

Schools are increasingly adopting models to diagnose and treat students' physical and mental health needs, either on site at schools or in partnership with providers in the community. Providing this level of support to children and families requires staffing guidance counselors, special educators and other non-teaching staff, who research shows play an essential role in bolstering student academic success.[13] There is a wide range in the number of in-school support staff available in public schools across the country. Of the 10 we studied, Chicago has .65 support staff per 100 students on average, while Minneapolis, Little Rock and Springfield all have between 4 – 5.25 per 100 students. Organizations like **Communities in Schools** and **City Connects** are providing significant infrastructure to public schools in cities to be able to offer this student-centered model of delivering wrap-around services. The **School-Based Health Alliance** and its affiliates also play a major role in helping deliver healthcare services on-site at schools.

Parks

Access to healthy food, recreational spaces and resources for physical activity are all inter-connected and together can ensure that youth are less likely to experience increases in body mass index associated with obesity and other chronic diseases.[14] [15] Community environments with clean air and safe, abundant parks promote healthy living behaviors that help to prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and asthma.[16] When looking at access to public park land, the cities studied typically had between 80–97% of the population within a 10-minute walk of public park land, with the exception of Charlotte, which is an outlier with only 27% of the population within walking distance of a public park. Springfield and Little Rock did not have data available to score this indicator.

Photo: Love Park, Philadelphia.

Clean Air Environments

Historical housing and zoning policies rooted in racism created White-only neighborhoods that were protected against commercial building that could impact property value and health concerns, and created a higher likelihood of environmental hazards in communities designated for Black and Latino families.[17] These hazards put people at higher risk for chronic diseases and premature death,[18] and can affect attendance in school and at work because of illness, while also putting families at greater financial risk from the high costs associated with getting care and treatment. Links have also been drawn between the exposure to pollution in utero with lower performance on standardized academic assessments later in life.[19] As such, the clean air indicator is an important measure of the level of care in a community, and provides yet another clear example of the interconnection between housing, healthcare, education and economic policies and outcomes. Of the ten cities studied, only Buffalo achieved the ideal target for levels of exposure to air pollution (Buffalo's exposure index was 30 out of 100). The other cities have exposure indexes between 70–97 out of 100 using the 2011 National Air Toxics Assessment.

Healthy Food

Public and private investments in critical resources differ significantly across neighborhoods within a city or locality. One critical community resource that we can measure access to is grocery stores, which provide families with healthy, affordable food to sustain children's growth and development. Healthy eating and physical activity have shown positive associations with higher student achievement in math and reading.[20] Long Beach and Chicago were the only cities with less than 30% of the low-income population living in a food desert, though both cities still have significant disparities in access by race. For example, in Chicago, 43% of low-income Black residents live in a food desert compared to only 8% of low-income White residents. Springfield has the highest rate of food deserts, with 74% of the population living without access to a grocery store.

The drastically different levels of access to a critical resource like healthy food that we see in communities are illustrative of a wider problem of ensuring that markets for social goods serve *all* community members. In addition to grocery stores, we know from those living in communities with high concentrations of poverty that there are still large gaps in access to resources like Internet, ATMs, discount stores, and other daily conveniences that we all need to live, work and thrive.

Mental Health Services

Health practitioners have long studied and understood the effects of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) on children's cognitive development and ability to achieve in life, and have found direct correlations between ACEs and negative health indicators in adults including drug abuse, obesity, heart disease and cancer. Because so many of the effects of trauma and toxic stress manifest in a school setting – children who have been exposed to trauma are more likely to display internalizing and externalizing behaviors, repeat a grade, have lower GPA, and be less engaged in school – school personnel are often the first to realize that a student may need help. [21] Research shows that nearly 50% of school-going children are exposed to a traumatic event like physical or sexual abuse, abandonment, neglect, death of a loved one, violence, accidents, bullying, or living in chronically chaotic environments in which housing and financial resources are not consistently available.[22]

Despite the importance of understanding and addressing the impact of adverse childhood experience on students, we found universally poor tracking of mental health supports, which made it impossible to identify an indicator that measures access to mental health services across individual cities. Because of the importance of mental health supports to student academic and long-term success, we felt it must be included in the Index, so zero points were given each city to reflect inadequate tracking. Consistent collection of data on access to mental health services, as well as supports like mentoring, can help us better understand the level of care that is systemically provided by communities and the outcomes people are experiencing as a result of that care. Buffalo provides a great example of a locality where community members have taken steps to increase access to mental health. The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo supported a partnership between Buffalo Public Schools, **Say Yes to Education**, and community-based mental health providers to bring mental health services directly into public school buildings.

CARE SPOTLIGHT

NoVo Foundation
create. change.

Einhorn Family
Charitable Trust

NoVo Foundation and Einhorn Family Charitable Trust Lead the Way in Philanthropic Investment in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Philanthropic organizations like NoVo Foundation and Einhorn Family Charitable Trust have been leaders in investing in public school models that support whole-child approaches. **NoVo Foundation** has committed to advancing social and emotional learning in school systems and community institutions serving youth, in partnership with CASEL, the leading Social and Emotional Learning practice, policy and research organization in the United States. NoVo defines Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as "the process of developing fundamental skills for life success within supportive, participatory learning environments, attained through both curricula and instructional practices." They believe an SEL approach to education is a way to unlock a broad range of human capacities, both intellectual and emotional.[23]

Einhorn Family Charitable Trust has also adopted an approach focused on the social and emotional development of youth to build behaviors such as empathy, kindness, cooperation and civility as part of their mission to help people get along better. Through their support of Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, they are investing in school partnerships, parent training and engagement with emerging school leaders across the country to influence the adoption of practices that build nurturing environments and positive interaction.[24]

STABILITY

The domain of Stability includes housing affordability, public transit access, civic engagement, livable wages, and financial security. In communities across the country, families' living conditions are deeply impacted by the combination of unfair full-time wages, low access to affordable housing causing the suburbanization of poverty, and limited access to public transit from low income suburbs to jobs and resources concentrated in city centers. This creates a system where community resources and opportunities may be available but there are racial and economic gaps in who can access and benefit from them. On average, the 10 cities are delivering approximately 46% of the supports the Index measures related to Stability. Minneapolis demonstrates the highest levels stability for children (63%), with the highest rates of voter turnout and youth safety.

Photo by April Sikorski

Youth Safety

There is a range of community risks that impact rates of mortality among children from one community to the next, with gun violence being a major safety crisis in many of the cities we've profiled. While a few cities showed low rates of youth mortality, including Minneapolis and Long Beach, every one of the 10 communities measured had significantly higher rates of mortality among Black youth compared to their White, Latino and Asian counterparts. Little Rock and Baltimore have extremely high rates of youth mortality, with 37.5 and 39.8 deaths per 100,000 people ages 1-19, respectively, with Black children two times more likely to die compared to White children. While Chicago's rate of youth mortality is somewhat lower than Little Rock and Baltimore, the rate of mortality among Black children in Chicago is four times that of White children. In Chicago, many have shown the connections between school closures and youth involvement in or with gun violence.[25] More consistent data across cities can help show the quantitative connection between factors like school closures and school funding and violence in communities.

Public Transportation

Access to public transportation is a critical community lifeline for millions of people that rely on buses and trains to get to school, work, health services and other community resources. Overall, 8 of the 10 cities included in the Index received full points for geographic proximity of public transportation overall and by racial group – Little Rock and Charlotte were the outliers with 66% and 71% of the population living in geographic proximity to public transit, respectively. While this is a positive sign, this data does not take into account availability of public transportation from more affordable suburbs outside the cities' limits into the cities where jobs are more readily available. Additionally, available data on transit access does not touch upon other factors like cost of public transit that affect usage. A 2010 survey of Boston public transportation users highlighted the numerous connections between the ability to afford public transportation and access to critical opportunities, including school participation, employment and health services. According to survey responses, 48% of students had been late to school and 20% had been absent because they didn't have money for public transportation. The barrier of public transportation costs can also affect youth and adult employment and access to healthcare. The Boston public transit survey found that every week, 10 or more patients miss appointments at Boston Medical Center's Adolescent Clinic due to the lack of public transportation funds, and explains that these missed appointments also strain the healthcare system because doctors and nurses "end up treating expensive crisis situations instead of focusing on prevention."[26]

Affordable Housing

Today, cities continue to face crises related to housing affordability with particularly wide gaps in access to affordable housing for people of color. The stark inequities in affordable housing, coupled with inequitable access to livable wages and transportation, are relics of past policies and practices that created racial segregation across our country. Throughout the 20th century, we had a system of federal, state and local policies that mandated segregated housing by race, and invested massive sums of public dollars exclusively in White homeownership and White-only neighborhood development while refusing to invest similarly in Black individuals and communities. Though such policies have been recognized as racist and hateful, communities across our country have done little to correct for the impact on wealth distribution and the persistence of economic segregation in today's communities and schools, which continue to deeply impact education, health and economic outcomes for current generations.[27]

In the 10 cities studied, between 47-62% of renters pay more than 30% of their income towards housing, with Black and Latino rates often 10-20% higher than Whites, which is well above the ideal benchmark for a loving city, resulting in zero points on this indicator for all 10 cities. There are also extremely high levels of racial and economic segregation in communities, which contribute to segregation in public schools, as well.[28] Without affirmative integration policies in communities to make housing affordable to people of all incomes levels, schools will continue to be swimming upstream to address the damage caused by the creation of high concentrations of poverty in communities and schools, making it nearly impossible to drive dramatic improvement in academic outcomes.

Livable Wages

Access to livable wages continues to be a problem in cities and localities across the country, with minimum wage policy still largely below what families need to be able to pay for basic needs like healthcare, housing and other related bills, nutritious foods, and enriching extracurricular opportunities.[29] While overall cities have between 7-11% of full-time workers living in poverty, differences by racial groups are as high as 12-25% in many cities.

Little Rock shows the most stark racial differences among the cities: only 5% of White full-time workers are living in poverty, compared to 31% for Latinos and 15% for Black workers. Movements like the Fight for $15 are striving to combat working poverty by pushing for a $15 minimum wage – a rate that would allow all full-time workers to get by just above the federal poverty line. Now, $15/hour is law in California and New York State, and dozens of city and county governments have voted to enact higher minimum wages, with some examples of private companies like Target Corporation self-imposing a $15/hour minimum.[30] However, 27 states have passed laws aimed at rolling back raises set by individual cities, as well as other progressive local policies including paid leave, demonstrating the power more conservative rural interests are wielding over local city policy.[31]

Civic Participation

Low levels of voter turnout across cities may also indicate that the elected officials with the greatest ability to impact local systems are not representative of the needs and interests of all community members. Of the 10 cities studied, Minneapolis had the highest voter turnout in the 2016 general election year (81%), while most others had under 70% turnout. More and better data are needed to understand the connections between voting participation among socioeconomic and racial/ethnic groups and the policies and practices designed to get out or suppress the vote.

Photo: Fight for $15 Rally, Minneapolis.

Historical and Modern Housing Policy Created the Segregation and Racial Inequities in Distribution of Wealth, Still Experienced Today

The *Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein documents our country's history of racial discrimination in housing, employment, education and transportation policies throughout the 20th century that created the racial and economic inequities in outcomes that we see in communities today. Rothstein describes the start of public housing developments in the 1930s, which frequently demolished integrated neighborhoods, creating white-only single-family home neighborhoods and cramped "inner-city" Black-only buildings.

Segregation was further established by New Deal policies that subsidized the development of White-only suburbs with deeds that prohibited resale to African American families and provided White families federally-backed mortgages enabling homeownership. At the same time, Black families could not apply for mortgages because of their race and instead had to utilize exploitive private markets to either rent at high costs or attempt to purchase over long periods of time, paying high interest rates and not accumulating any equity until the full loan was paid off. Systems of zoning and redlining determined which neighborhoods Whites and Blacks could live in, ensured that Black neighborhoods were undervalued and underinvested in, and allowed toxic sites to be built in Black neighborhoods. After the pervasive set of policies and practices were ruled unconstitutional, there were no payments or programs to repair the damage done to Black families, and increases in property value made integrating into White neighborhoods economically prohibitive. These economic barriers to integration created through housing policies persist today, and communities across the country are largely as segregated now as in the 1970s.

Throughout this same period, there were also policies of employment discrimination in the public and private sectors where Black individuals were relegated to lowest paid, remedial jobs even when qualified for higher positions, and not allowed in a post that would put them in a managerial position over a White person — creating income disparity and racist norms that implicitly affect our work culture today. With the creation of White suburbs there was also a need for new transportation infrastructure to move easily from suburbs to jobs and entertainment in the city, and government entities intentionally designed interstates to further segregate Black communities from White, often using eminent domain to displace Black families and destroy successful Black business centers without compensation or relocation support. Even today, policymakers typically prioritize investments in highway systems that disproportionately support middle- and upper-income individuals over public transit investments that low-income families rely on.

Education systems historically have been deeply impacted by this system of community segregation and income and wealth inequity, and also by federal, state and local regulations further instituting racism and inequity in schools. School districts were drawn intentionally to separate Black and White students, and White schools were designed and resourced to provide educational rigor and a path to post-secondary degree attainment. Black schools, on the other hand, were intentionally designed to put students on a path to vocational careers, based on overt racial bias predetermining what Black students were capable of. Additionally, as populations in communities shifted, Black schools became overcrowded while White school populations decreased, but communities largely refused to integrate Black students into those empty seats or use empty White school buildings to educate Black students.

By laying out these policies and the myriad other policies and practices outlined in *Color of Law*, Rothstein debunks the mainstream belief that segregation was and continues to be a function of individual and private sector bias, and highlights the numerous, comprehensive and intentional efforts to create and enforce segregation through local, state and federal law. Rothstein recognizes that we need to not only remove harmful, racist policies but also institute affirming policies that create integration in communities and schools, to narrow equity gaps and ensure prosperity for all families, communities and society at large.[32]

COMMITMENT

The domain of Commitment includes early childhood education, alternatives to suspension, expulsion and referral to law enforcement, and anti-bullying practices in schools. On average, communities are delivering approximately 44% of the supports the Index measures related to Commitment. Baltimore and Long Beach demonstrates the highest level of support related to Commitment, earning 63% of the total possible points, with the lowest rates of suspension and lowest inequity in suspension by race. Baltimore has earned national recognition for their city-wide efforts to reduce suspensions and introduce restorative justice. None of the 10 cities earned points for access to early childhood education, and there continues to be large inequities in some of the cities around suspension, expulsion and referrals to law enforcement.

Note on Suspension Data: Data on student suspensions can be classified in a number of different ways, making it challenging to have a sense of the overall percentage of the student population impacted by negative discipline policies as a whole. Cities can unintentionally or intentionally use specific suspension practices and reporting methods to downplay the prevalence of suspension, and this can serve as a tool by which to maintain the status quo of over policing young Black and Brown children by limiting transparency and accountability. Since our goal in this report is to provide an assessment of how loving local and state systems are towards children and suspensions of all kind are proven to be damaging, we chose to aggregate both in-school and out-of-school suspension rates for the purpose of applying a score for suspension as part of the Loving Cities Index calculation. This ensures that none of the cities get undue credit for lower out-of-school suspension rates by over-utilizing in-school suspension, or vice versa.

Early Childhood Education Participation

Access to early childhood education is critical to a child's long-term success. The physical, social and emotional health of children in the first five years of life is tied to long-lasting impacts on brain and cognitive development, language, motor skills, and academic learning.[33] Still, cities show extremely low rates of participation in early education, and when that data disaggregated by race was available, we typically saw large disparities in access by racial group. Little Rock has the highest rate of early education participation (61%) and Charlotte has the lowest (45%). In Charlotte, 69% of White students participate in early childhood education compared to only 37% and 30% of Black and Latino children, respectively. The federal program Head Start was created to address the gap in access to early childhood education, but since it is under-funded there are not enough available seats to meet the need, and those seats are reserved for the lowest-income families, leaving many without an affordable option.[34] Early childhood education not only affects students' academic success, but also is a critical economic resource for families – with reliable, affordable childcare, families can participate more deeply in the workforce and bring home increased income.[35] Availability and affordability are tremendous issues facing families today – supply in most cities is too low and prices too high, making early childhood education out of reach even for middle-income families.[36]

K-12 Suspension & Expulsion Alternatives

For over a decade, the Schott Foundation's efforts to collect and publish national data on the four-year graduation rates for Black males compared to other sub-groups has highlighted how the persistent systemic disparity in opportunity creates a climate and perception of a population who is less valued.[37] We've seen progress in cities and states committing to roll back "zero tolerance" policies that take a punitive, harmful approach to discipline and replace those with restorative justice approaches that create safer schools and healthier learning environments. Four out of 10 cities reported suspension rates equal to or below 10% of the student population, but Baltimore was the only city that also had less than a 5% difference in suspension rates among different race/ethnicity groups. Chicago and Little Rock stand out as cities with particularly high rates of suspension and large inequities in suspension rates across race. Baltimore's success here reflects major policy change under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Andres Alonso who, with considerable community buy-in and support from local and national philanthropic institutions, replaced zero tolerance policies that lead to school push-out, particularly among students of color, with restorative discipline approaches.[38] Still, Baltimore is one of four cities with relatively high number of expulsions, largely affecting Black students compared to White. In Baltimore 95% of the 541 expulsions in 2013/14 were received by Black students. Still, the data overall suggest that there have been significant strides in discipline policies to minimize the number of children removed from classrooms.

Preschool Suspension Alternatives

As more attention has been brought to inequity in suspension rates in K-12, many have also called attention to high and inequitable levels of preschool suspension and expulsion. Six of the 10 cities reported zero preschool suspensions. In Chicago, Baltimore and Buffalo, data shows that preschool suspension is used largely against Black children. In Chicago, there were 103 preschool suspensions, and 96% of those children were Black. Yale University has been a leader in researching preschool expulsion. Their first report in 2005 highlighted that preschoolers are expelled at three times the rate of K-12, and found that expulsion rates were lowest in public school and Head Start classrooms compared to faith-affiliated centers and for-profit child care.[39] More recent research highlights a clear connection between implicit bias and rates of expulsion, and recognizes significant differences based on the race of the teacher. "Researchers used sophisticated eye-tracking technology and found that preschool teachers 'show a tendency to more closely observe black students, especially boys, when challenging behaviors that are expected'... Findings suggested that when the preschool teacher and child were of the same race, knowing about family stressors led to increased teacher empathy for the preschooler and decreased how severe the behaviors appeared to the teacher. But, when the teacher and child were of a different race, the same family information seemed to overwhelm the teachers and the behaviors were perceived as being more severe."[40]

School to Prison Alternatives

In addition to suspension and expulsion policy contributing to a "school-to-prison pipeline," particularly for Black and, to a lesser extent, Latino students, many states continue to have police officers on site at schools who have the power to charge students in court for misdemeanors such as disorderly conduct, disrespect and fighting. Chicago, Denver and Baltimore reported some of the highest levels of referrals to law enforcement. In Chicago, 4,848 referrals to law enforcement were made in 2013-14, and 63% were against Black students compared to 3.5% for White students. The U.S. Department of Education reported state data on referrals to police and courts, and Pennsylvania, Colorado, North Carolina and Minnesota were among the 15 states with the highest rates of referrals to law enforcement.[41] There is also a real and growing "school-to-deportation pipeline," though it is considerably harder to quantify. There are documented cases of Immigration and Customs Enforcement using suspensions and observations of students' interactions with others at school as bases for detaining immigrant students.[42]

Anti-Bullying

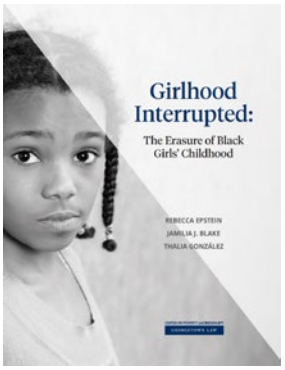
There was limited data available across cities and localities to understand the existing scale of bullying in school climates. This Index looked at the number of reported allegations of harassment or bullying on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin or disability, and found that four of the 10 cities did not report any allegations. No reports in cities are likely an indication of under-reporting, so we gave those cities zero points in this area. Research from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) surveyed a sample of students across the country and highlights the scale and repercussions of harassment and bullying which can keep students from coming to school and succeeding academically. The report showed that 73.9% of students reported personally experiencing some type of peer victimization. Additionally, 17.7% of secondary students and 36.6% of LGBTQ students surveyed reported missing one or more days of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. GLSEN's research found that students reported hearing teachers or school staff make negative comments related to students, including 25% hearing negative comments about gender expression, 20.6% hearing sexist remarks, 15.3% hearing homophobic remarks, and 14.4% hearing racist remarks. Additionally, only about 50% of teachers reported engaging in at least one practice related to creating a positive environment for LGBTQ youth. To combat school bullying we need to understand the real scale of the problem. The limited data available highlights the type of information that we need to collect universally to adequately measure and improve school climate conditions and ensure all students feel safe and able to come to school and learn.[43]

COMMITMENT SPOTLIGHT

Racial and Gender Stereotypes Based on How Adults Perceive Children May Be an Underlying Force Impacting Implicit Bias in Policies and Practices Around Providing Support to Children of Color

The Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality published a research report, *Girlhood Interrupted*, showing that adults view Black girls as less innocent and more adult-like than their White peers, especially in the age range of 5-14. Some of the stereotypes of what the report calls "adultification" included that Black girls need less nurturing, protection, support and comfort, and are more independent and knowledgeable about adult topics including sex.

The implication of this stereotype has far reaching and negative impacts on Black girls. This perception likely influences the way teachers and law enforcement treat Black girls compared to their White peers, and in part explains inequities in rates of suspension, referrals to law enforcement and the juvenile justice system, charging of crimes, and prosecutorial discretion.



The report calls on legislators, advocates, and policymakers to examine the disparities that exist for Black girls in the education and juvenile justice systems and engage in necessary reform. As communities consider policies and programs that institutionalize love through a system of supports, it will be critical to consider how bias among adults impacts the level of supports given to Black girls in particular.[44]

CAPACITY

Overall, cities are providing the lowest level of support in the domain of Capacity, which includes access to challenging curricula and guidance from capable, qualified, well-compensated teachers in diverse, equipped, and unsegregated schools. On average, cities are delivering approximately 28% of these important supports, with Little Rock and Long Beach scoring the highest (48% and 43%, respectively). There are differences among the cities in terms of which supports need the most attention in order to improve the level of access to capacity-related supports, but all of the cities scored particularly low in access to economically integrated schools. In the 10 cities, an average of 63% of students attend high poverty schools, where more than 75% of the student population is eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. When data are disaggregated by race, we see that in most cities the vast majority of Black and Latino students attend high poverty schools, compared to a small portion of White students, highlighting the persistence of "separate and unequal" schools despite the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling over 60 years ago declaring separate public schools for Black and White students as unconstitutional.

Advanced Placement Curricula

Providing students with challenging curricula that will prepare them for college-level coursework directly contributes to student retention, graduation and post-secondary achievement. Some research shows that four-year college enrollment is significantly influenced by participation in advanced placement courses and examinations (even after controlling for demographics and high school level predictors); additionally, students who did not participate in AP examinations were less likely to attend four-year colleges across and within ethnic subgroups.[45] [46]

Given the connection to academic success, we ultimately want to see that the vast majority of high school students are enrolled in at least one advanced placement/international baccalaureate (AP/IB) class. All 10 cities studied fell well below that ideal target. Chicago and Minneapolis had the highest rates of AP participation (35% and 31%, respectively), though in both cases the rates of Black students enrolled was over 30 percentage points lower than White students. Of the 10 cities studied, Buffalo and Baltimore had relatively low percentage of schools offering advanced coursework, with only 69% and 72% of students attending a school with AP/IB offerings, and several other cities had nearly all White students attending schools with AP/IB, while 10-15% of the Black and Latino populations did not have those supports in their schools.

Still, research shows that the biggest contributor to racial and economic gaps in participation in AP coursework is a result of failing to enroll students of color and low-income students that are ready in advanced coursework. The College Board researched PSAT scores and found that 75% of Native American students, 72% of Black students and 66% of Hispanic students whose PSAT scores suggested that they had the potential to be successful in AP math, were not in fact participating in those advanced classes, with similar findings in science. The report highlights several approaches that work in increasing enrollment of students of color and low-income students, including changing enrollment requirements by offering more "open access" to AP courses and automatically enrolling students who scored proficient on state exams and utilizing AmeriCorps and other programs to provide supplemental academic and self-advocacy skills to support any preparation gaps.[47]

K-8 Gifted Classes

Another factor affecting participation in AP coursework and post-secondary institutions is access to gifted classes in lower and middle school. In half of the cities studied, 95% or more of primary and middle schools offered gifted coursework. At the same time, Buffalo, Springfield and Philadelphia had less than 10% of schools offering gifted coursework. This gap in access to a critical school resource makes it that much more difficult for students to enroll in advanced placement coursework that will prepare them for post-secondary success. Springfield, for example, has the lowest rates of AP enrollment, with only 8% of high school students enrolled in at least one AP/IB class. While the vast majority of high school students across racial groups in Springfield attend a school that offers AP/IB, only 2.3% of lower and middle schools offer gifted curricula, suggesting that this could be a major barrier to enrollment.

Well-Resourced Schools

Ultimately, capacity often rests on the level of resources provided in a district, since that dictates ability to pay experienced, high-quality teachers, and provide extracurricular programming, physical infrastructure and technology, among other things. In high-capacity systems, students engage more in school-related activities and demonstrate better academic outcomes.[48] Students with access to social and emotional learning programs demonstrate increased achievement outcomes and advanced emotional development skills.[49] To measure school resourcing, we looked at average teacher salary adjusted for cost of living, since staff salaries comprise a significant amount of school expenditures. Little Rock and Chicago have some of the highest average teacher salaries among the 10 cities studied ($63k and $58k, respectively), while Springfield and Philadelphia have the lowest ($29k and $29.5k, respectively). To better understand how fair and adequate school resourcing is, publicly available data on public and private spending should be disaggregated by type of school, to compare spending per student in charters vs. public schools, and should disaggregate by race and economics to show differences in resourcing for schools attended by Black and Latino students and low-income students.

The Education Law Center and Rutgers Graduate School of Education created a project to better understand if school funding is fair. They found that students in the lowest funded states can have less than a third of the resources per capita of the best funded states. Many states, including North Carolina, are considered "low effort" states, meaning they invest a low percentage of their economic capacity to support public education systems. Additionally, 14 states have "regressive" funding schemes, meaning that states provide less funding to school districts with higher concentrations of poverty, including Pennsylvania, New York and Illinois. "Students in certain regions face a 'double disadvantage' because their states have low funding levels and do not increase funding for concentrated student poverty," which includes students in Colorado. There are four states whose school funding policies are considered "progressive," including Delaware, Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Jersey – they have relatively high funding and fund at higher rates in high poverty districts.[50]

Experienced Teachers

Schools staffed with credentialed and experienced teachers perform better on standardized assessments and demonstrate increased productivity in elementary and middle school grades.[51] [52] School resourcing and teacher salary, among other factors, can deeply affect the ability to attract and retain experienced, high quality teachers. Four of the 10 cities had over 90% of teachers working two or more years in schools, with Long Beach and Philadelphia over 95%. Springfield and Denver have the two lowest rates of experienced teachers (75% and 63%, respectively), which can make initiatives to increase advanced curricula and restorative discipline policies more challenging, given that both require experienced, tenured teachers to be successful.[53]

Economically Integrated Schools

High capacity schools are out of reach for too many students, particularly students of color, because of a legacy of school segregation. Although racial school segregation was legally banned over 60 years ago, the problems are persistent. Students exposed to poverty face greater academic achievement gaps than those who are not, and in communities segregated by race, there are significant differences in school poverty rates between White and Black students.[54] A recent study of race and income in 97 cities showed that in 83 cities where data were available, most Black students attend schools where poverty is highly concentrated – the majority of their classmates qualify as low-income (measured by eligibility for free- and reduced-price lunches). In 54 of these cities, a staggering majority of Black students (80%) attended schools where low-income students are the majority.[55]

Every one of the cities studied showed these same dramatic trends in inequitable access to economically integrated schools. While Charlotte and Minneapolis had the lowest rates of students enrolled in high poverty schools (39% and 46%, respectively), they still show a 50-60 percentage point difference between rates for Black and Latino students compared to White students. Springfield showed extremely high rates of enrollment in high poverty schools across racial groups (approximately 80% for each racial group), reflecting a somewhat different challenge compared to other cities such as Chicago that also has approximately 80% of students in high poverty schools, but dramatic differences between White and Black and Latino students (35% of White students in high poverty schools compared to approximately 90% of Black and Latino students).

CAPACITY SPOTLIGHT

We Need to Better Measure the Level of Supports for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Students and Parents to Ensure All Students Have an Opportunity to Learn and Thrive

Language access is also a critical support that cities and schools need to offer to provide all children and families an opportunity to learn and thrive. According to the Center for Popular Democracy, "over 25 million people in the United States are limited English proficient (LEP), which means that they are unable to read, write or speak English well." Resources like interpretation and translation services are often not provided, even though federal civil rights laws require that most public and many private institutions do so. Faced with the lack of federal enforcement, local governments across the country are instituting laws requiring city agencies, health care entities and other service providers to make interpretation and translation services available free of charge.[56] Schools also need to carefully consider the resources that LEP students and families need to be able to fully participate and succeed in an academic environment. To better understand the level of supports that are in place, there is a need for more comprehensive data collection on supports like the number of bilingual teaching and non-teaching staff and the availability of translation of school-related information for parents.

Overview of the 10-City Index

Among the 10 cities studied in the index, Minneapolis, Long Beach and Buffalo demonstrated the highest levels of supports with 50-52% of supports measured — achieving 'Bronze Standard.' Minneapolis had the strongest level of supports for Stability, with the highest rates of voter participation and youth safety. Long Beach stood out from the group for having one of the strongest levels of support in Commitment, with some of the lowest levels of problematic discipline policies that create school-to-prison pipelines (though suspension impact Black students at much higher rates than White and Latino students). Buffalo had the strongest level of Care with some of the strongest systems in place for mental and physical health supports.

While there are bright spots for all 10 cities studied, The Loving Cities Index shows that the work is far from over even for the cities with relatively higher Index scores. All cities have high levels of racial inequity in people working full time but earning less than 200% of the federal poverty line, and crisis in housing markets where the majority of residents, especially people of color, cannot find rental options affordable to their income levels. Livable wages and affordable, safe housing are critical supports to provide children and families with stable living environments where they can access quality jobs, education and health resources, all of which contribute to helping children succeed in school.

We also see low levels of Capacity to provide children with an opportunity to learn stemming from the extreme levels of economic and racial segregation in schools across all 10 cities studied. Students living in poverty face trauma and toxic stress that affect their physical, emotional and behavioral health, and we rely heavily on schools and teachers to be able to provide those students with the individualized supports they need to thrive. But when schools are highly segregated economically those needs cannot be adequately managed and inequity in our school resourcing formulas means schools with the most need often have the least resources. These capacity constraints affect the level of experienced teachers, access to advanced curricula, and the ability to offer support staff and services that meet all children where they are.

Loving Cities Index Scores

PLATINUM 80%+

No Cities Yet

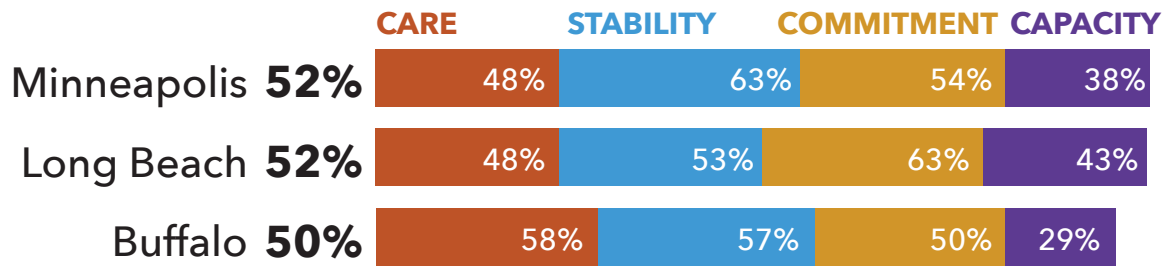
GOLD 70%+

No Cities Yet

SILVER 60%+

No Cities Yet

BRONZE 50%+



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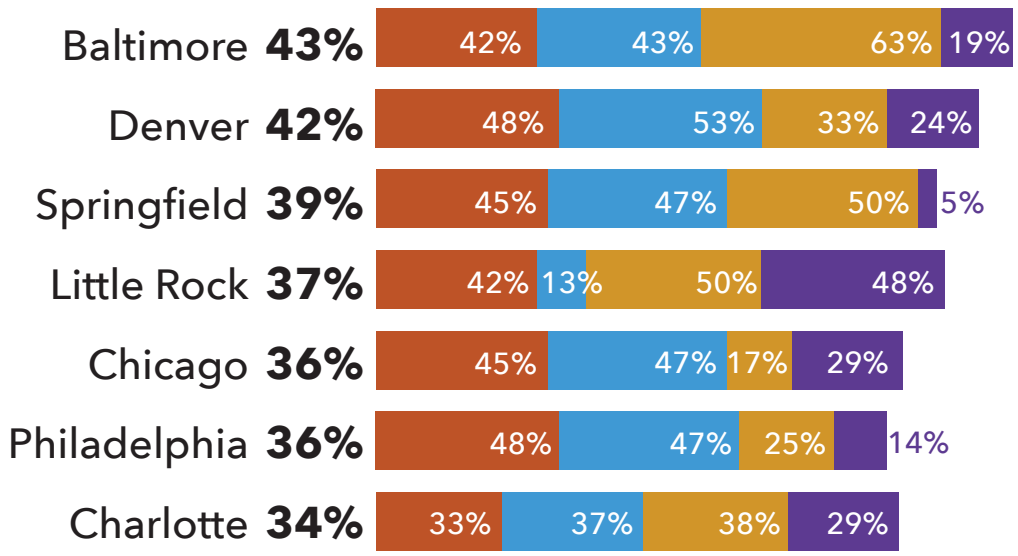


Photo: Chicago skyline.

City Profiles

The following section provides a two-page snapshot of Loving Cities Index data from each of the 10 cities studied. See the Loving Cities website for the full set of data points collected on each city and long-form city profiles at www.lovingcities.org.

Sources for the thermometer and thermostat data included in charts and in the body of the report can all be found in Table 1 of the methodology section.

Photo: Denver skyline.

Minneapolis, MN BRONZE

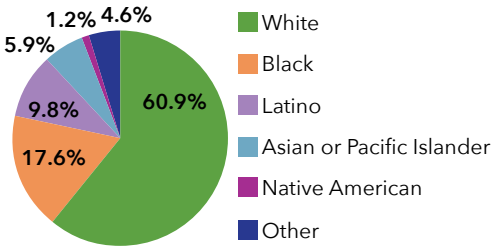
Minneapolis is located on the banks of the Mississippi River in central Minnesota, and together with sister city and state capital St. Paul comprise the "Twin Cities" and 16th largest metropolitan area in the nation. The city was initially incorporated after the discovery of a waterfall at the head of the Mississippi river that led to the birth of the lumber- and milling-related industries that continue to play a major role in the local economy today. Today, the healthcare industry and a burgeoning tech economy also serve as a major source of jobs and economic growth.[57]

Minneapolis has historically played an influential role in the national discourse on racial equity, despite a strong and consistent majority White population over the course of its history, and it is one of the least racially and economically segregated cities relative to the other nine studied. In recent years, leaders of Minneapolis have made great efforts to welcome refugees from Southeast Asia and to prioritize racial equity in planning and development efforts. However, the Twin Cities area (Minneapolis/St. Paul) is also confronting the need to rebuild confidence in the Police Department particularly among communities of color following the July 6, 2016 shooting of Philando Castile by a St. Anthony Police officer (a nearby suburb) during a traffic stop with Castile's girlfriend and her four-year old daughter in the car. The incident ignited major protest across the Twin Cities area after the dash cam video was released. The police officer was later acquitted which further creates a tense climate between community advocates and police in the Minneapolis area.

As of January 2016, Minneapolis Public Schools operated 74 non-charter schools, including 45 K-8 institutions, seven middle schools, eight high schools, and 14 alternative and special education schools. Over 35,000 students were enrolled in MPS at the time, 38% of whom were Black, 34% White, 18% Latino, and the remaining 10% Asian and Native American.[58] Black children in Minneapolis are a staggering eight times as likely as White children to be living under the poverty line, and Latinos and Asians are at least five times as likely. Young adults of color in Minneapolis are over-represented in the population of youth that are not in school or working, including more than one in five Black students and nearly one in five Latino students.

52%
of supports measured through Index

Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014

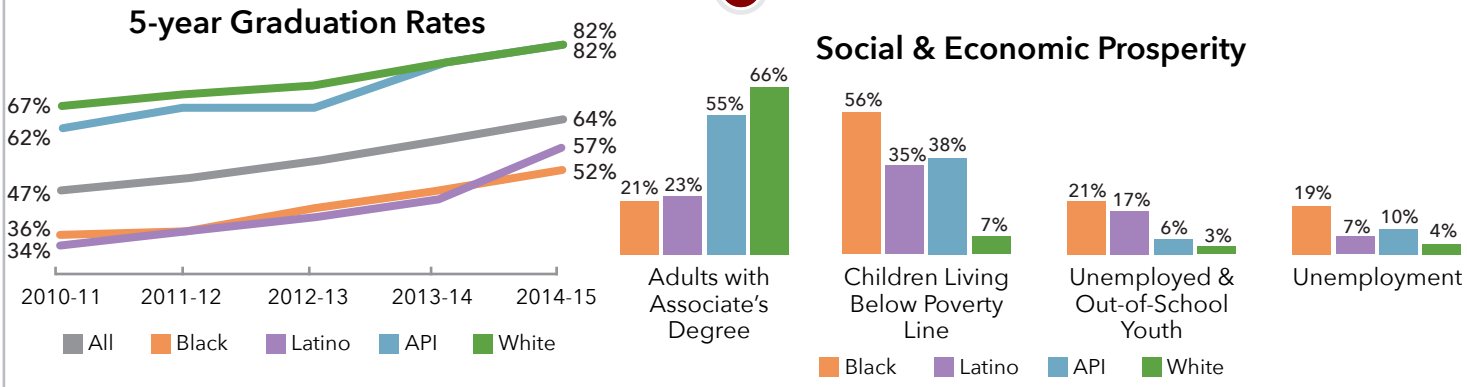


U.S. Census Bureau; NHGIS; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.
Policy Link/PERE National Equity Atlas, nationalequityatlas.org

Racial disparities in health are consistent with these economic and social inequities. The mortality rate among Black children (28.6) is 1.5 times the rate among Whites (16.3), Latinos (16.7), and Asians (17.5). Similarly, Black families endure higher rates of infant mortality (8.73) compared to Whites (3.53) and Asians (3.59).

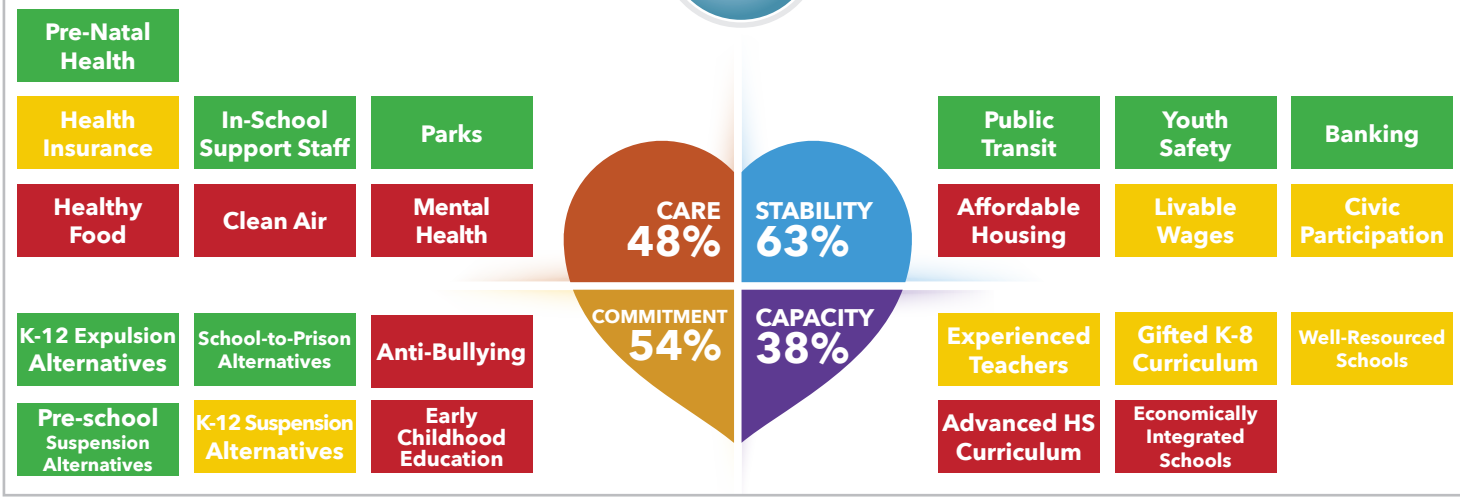
THERMOMETER INDICATORS

Current conditions for childhood success



THERMOSTAT INDICATORS

Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



State of Healthy Living and Learning in Minneapolis

Minneapolis has 52% of the supports measured through the Index, which is the highest among the 10 cities measured. Minneapolis shows some of the highest level of supports in Commitment and Stability, with 0% expulsion rates across all racial groups and the lowest level of working poverty (7%) among the 10 cities measured, though rates are considerably higher for Latino full time workers (23%) compared to other racial groups. The greatest gaps in access are in supports related to Capacity. Though Minneapolis has one of the lowest rates of school economic segregation (46% of students attend "high poverty schools" where 75% or more of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch), it still is considerably higher than what an ideal target for a loving city would be and there are wide inequities between the rate of White students in high poverty schools compared to other racial groups. Additionally, students are not being enrolled in rigorous coursework, with only 30% of high school students enrolled in one or more one or more AP/IB classes, and wide inequity in enrollment between White and Black and Latino populations (51% of White students enrolled in AP/IB compared to 17% and 19% of Black and Latino students, respectively). While Minneapolis had the highest level of supports related to Stability, gaps in access to affordable housing, livable wages, healthy food and health insurance, particularly for children of color, continue to create gaps in the opportunity for all students to learn and thrive.

Long Beach, CA BRONZE

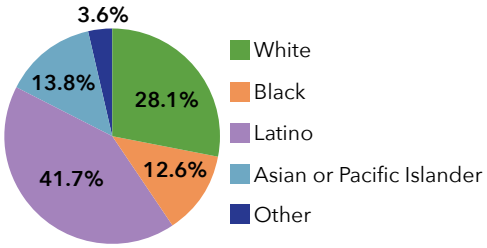
The city of Long Beach, located in the Los Angeles metropolitan area in Southern California, is one of the 10 largest cities in California and 50 largest cities in the country, by population. In the 1920s, Long Beach discovered oil reserves that were among the most productive in the world at the time, which became a cornerstone of the city's economy. Over the years, the city has hosted auto and aircraft manufacturing. Ford Motor Company operated a factory there from the 1920s-1960s, and Douglas Aircraft Company located there for World War II production. To support wartime manufacturing in Long Beach and other cities, the federal government created racially segregated public housing developments to support the influx of workers to factories in cities. The government established an agenda of racial segregation using public housing and market regulations to manipulate housing patterns, and today Long Beach and other cities across the county remain highly segregated by race and class.

Today, Long Beach's economy is centered around its port, which has become one of the busiest in the United States, and the naval base located in the bustling harbor area.[59] Like many places in the country, Long Beach has high levels of income inequality. In 2012, the city's highest earners had incomes nine times that of those with the lowest incomes, placing it among the top 25 large cities in the country with steep levels of inequality.[60]

The Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) is the third largest in California, serving nearly 74,000 students from pre-K to high school at 85 schools located in the cities of Long Beach, Lakewood, Signal Hill, and Catalina Island. Approximately one-fifth of students are English Language Learners and nearly 70% are from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. LBUSD is the largest employer in Long Beach, and prides itself for collaborating broadly with the community, including partnerships with more than 1,300 local businesses and thousands of Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) that assist teachers and students in classrooms. Long Beach schools have received significant praise and accolades for their success and are often upheld as a model for replication. Still, inequities persist in graduation rates and post-secondary attainment that can likely be attributed to broader inequities in social and economic prosperity. Approximately one-third of children of color in Long Beach are living below the poverty line, compared to 9% of White children, and rates of unemployment, working poverty and access to affordable housing and grocery stores differ widely by racial group.[61]

52%
of supports measured through Index

Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014

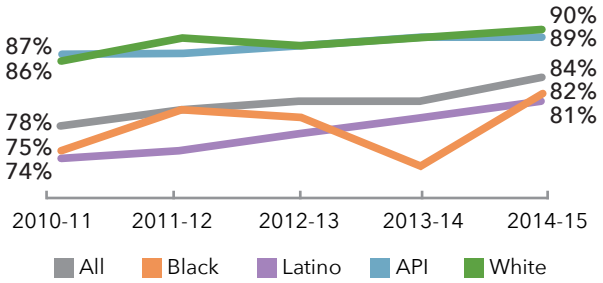


U.S. Census Bureau; NHGIS; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.
Policy Link/PERE National Equity Atlas, nationalequityatlas.org

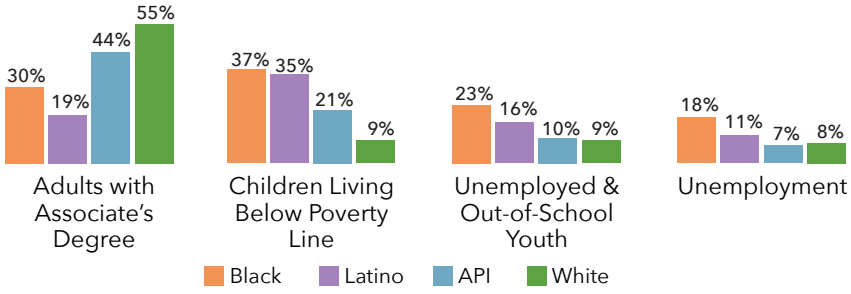
THERMOMETER INDICATORS

Current conditions for childhood success

5-year Graduation Rates

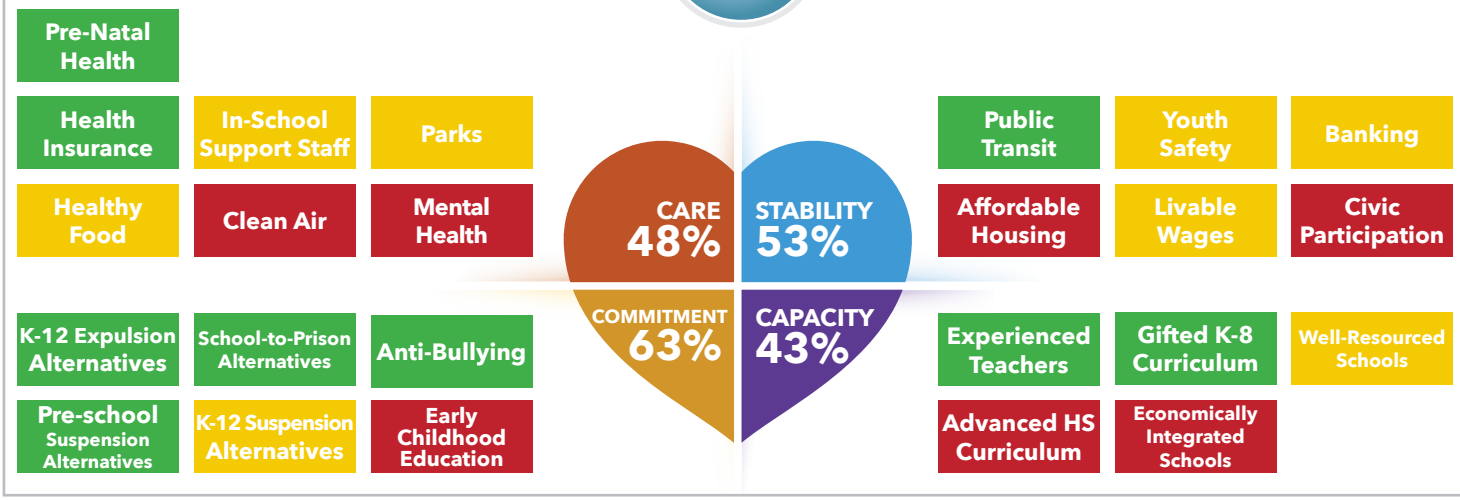


Social & Economic Prosperity



THERMOSTAT INDICATORS

Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



State of Healthy Living and Learning in Long Beach

Long Beach has 52% of the supports for healthy living and learning measured through the Index, which is one of the highest among the 10 cities measured, though this still leaves substantial room for growth in instituting a comprehensive and equitable system of supports. Long Beach had the highest level of Commitment relative to other domains, with reportedly low numbers of pre-school suspension, K-12 expulsion and referrals to law enforcement. Still, there were comparably high rates of suspension for Black students (23% compared to 5% and 8% for White and Latino students, respectively). In Capacity, Long Beach had the highest rate of experienced teachers (98%) compared to others, though relatively low access to AP/IB curricula with only 26% of High School students enrolled in at least one AP or IB course. In terms of living environment, the city demonstrates relatively strong access to healthy food (15% of low income individuals lack access to grocery stores) and some of the lowest levels of school economic segregation overall (50% of students in high poverty schools), though this is still significantly higher than the minimum benchmarks for both indicators. Long Beach, like other communities, needs to address access to and integration of low-income housing, and access to fair salaries so people that are working full-time earn enough to live well above the federal poverty line. Currently, 17% of Latinos working full time do not earn enough to live above 200% of the poverty line, compared to 3% of Whites working full time. Income remains the number one predictor for student academic success because it impacts where families can afford to live and availability of resources and opportunities in their community, so addressing inequity at the community level can bolster academic outcomes in the community.

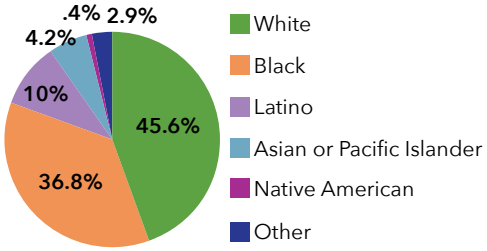
Buffalo, NY BRONZE

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.[62]

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.[63]

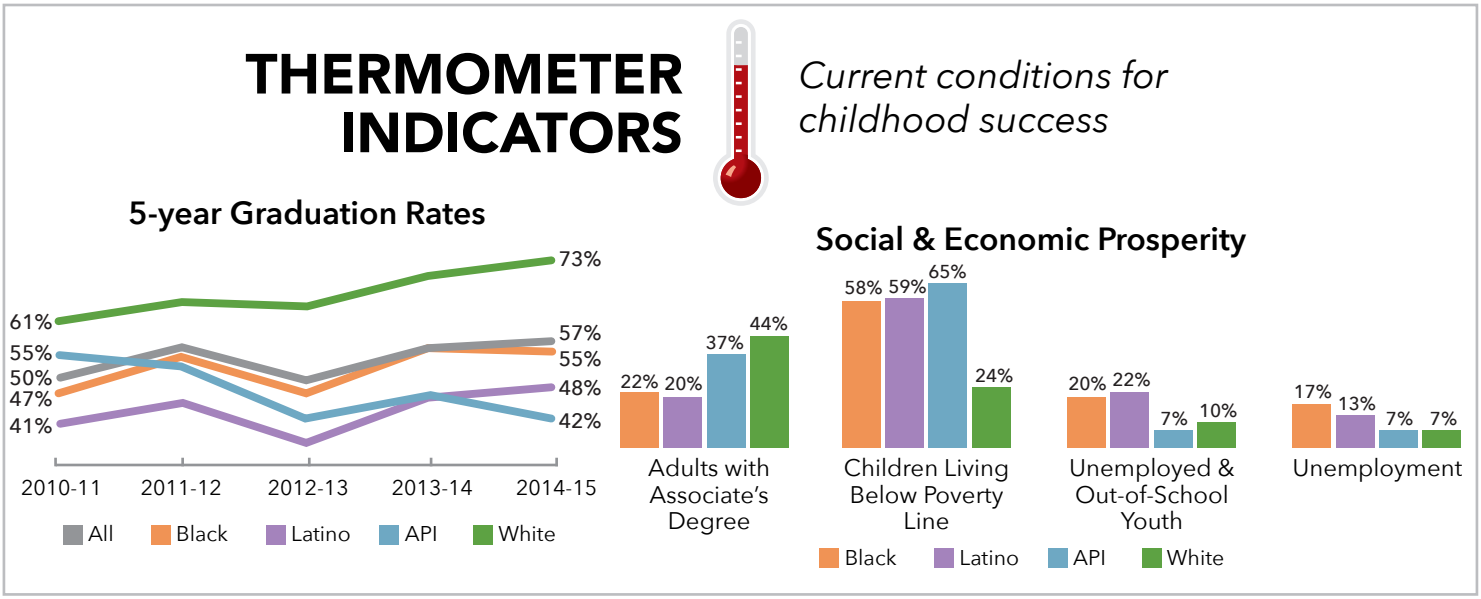
50%
of supports measured through Index

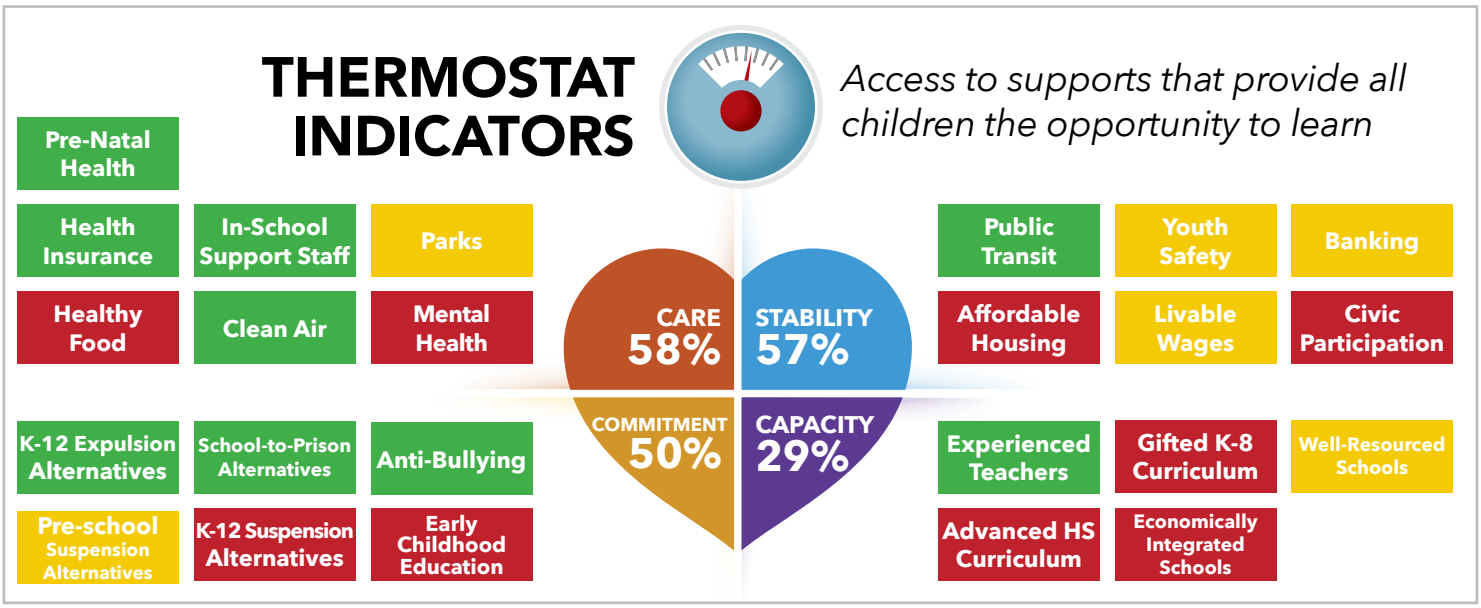
Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014



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.[64] 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.





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.

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

Baltimore, MD COPPER

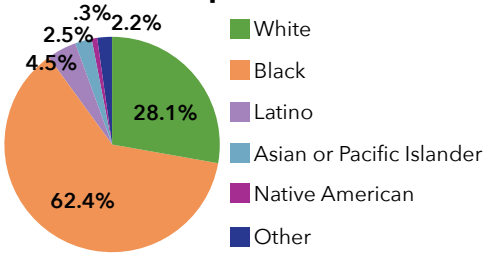
A port city located on the banks of the Patapsco River, Baltimore is one of the largest U.S. cities with a majority-Black population, and it has a long and complex history related to race. In the early 20th century, as in many American cities, Baltimore civic leaders endorsed broad plans to "protect White neighborhoods" from Black newcomers.[65] Today, Baltimore struggles to overcome the legacy of these early racial divides. Of the 10 initial cities, Baltimore has the second highest rate of racial segregation, with 62% of the population required to relocate to achieve racial integration, behind only Philadelphia at 63%.[66]

As a post-Industrial city today, Baltimore relies on low-paying service jobs and major anchor institutions, including hospitals and universities, to support the local economy. Although its income inequality is not as stark as other states where the 10 cities studied are located, Maryland is one of fifteen states in which all income growth between 2009 and 2013 was absorbed by the top 1% of earners.[67]

Baltimore City Public Schools operate independently of the slightly larger Baltimore County Public School District; serving nearly 85,000 students across 186 schools (including 34 charter schools), with over 5,200 teachers.[68] While more than one-third of all Baltimore's children under age 18 live below the poverty line, Black children are more than three times as likely as White children to live in poverty; Latino children are more than twice as likely as White children. Unlike many other cities, the average graduation rate among Black students has been comparable or higher than White students from 2010-11 through 2013-14; however, the White graduation rate surpassed the Black graduation rate in 2014-15.

43%
of supports measured through Index

Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014

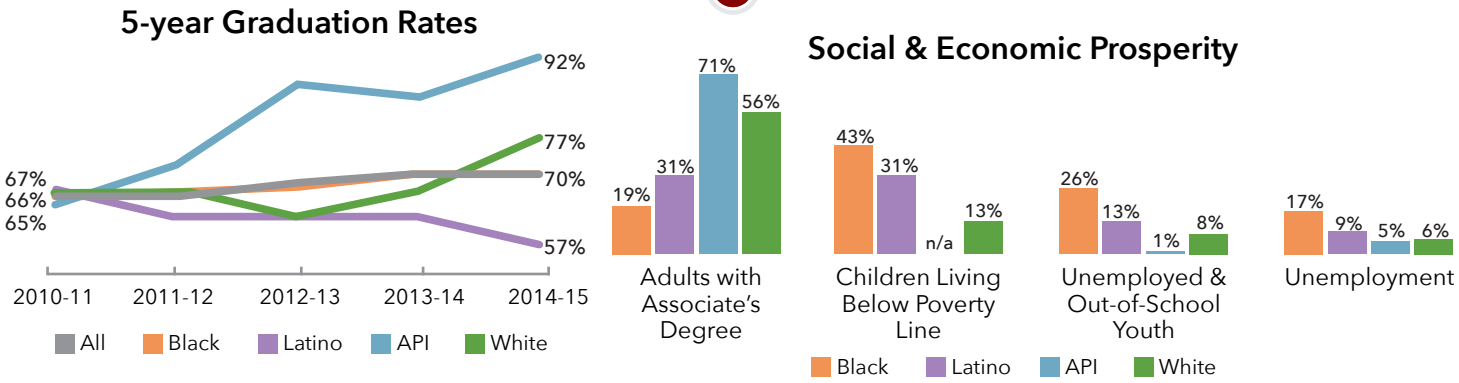


U.S. Census Bureau; NHGIS; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.
Policy Link/PERE National Equity Atlas, nationalequityatlas.org

Baltimore is one of 10 cities identified by the U.S. Department of Justice as responsible for a surge in violence in 2015 and 2016.[69] Research shows close connections between community violence and concentrated poverty, segregation and over-incarceration of Black males, three areas where Baltimore is also among the highest in the country. Violence disproportionately affects Black children, who experience rates of mortality twice as high as White children.

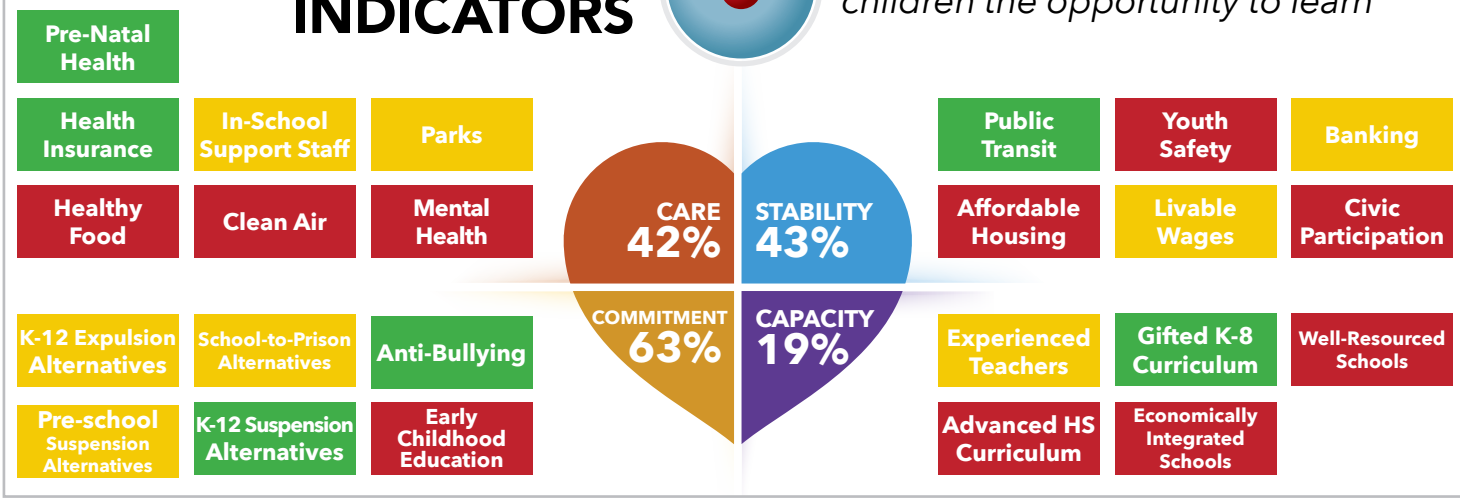
THERMOMETER INDICATORS

Current conditions for childhood success



THERMOSTAT INDICATORS

Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



State of Healthy Living and Learning in Baltimore

Baltimore has 43% of the supports measured through the Index. Baltimore has high highs and low lows in access to critical supports across the Loving Cities domains. Baltimore's system offers the greatest level of Commitment compared to the other cities — standing out from the group for having relatively low suspension rates (7% of students) with consistently low rates across racial groups. Still, there were 541 expulsions in the 2013-14 school year, and 95% of those expelled were Black. Baltimore also delivers relatively strong supports for Stability, with good access to transportation and some of the strongest rates in terms of livable wages and racial equity in livable wages. At the same time, Baltimore is among the lowest in supports for Care and Capacity — almost 50% of low-income populations lack a grocery store in their neighborhoods, teacher salaries and experience are among the lowest and, as with other cities, school economic segregation continues to create separate schools with unequal resourcing for low-income students and students of color. As with other cities, Baltimore can address these inequities with policy and programming that supports housing affordability and integration. In 2015, Baltimore City Public Schools produced a Five-Year Strategic Plan outlining goals to maximize academic achievement and equity by the year 2020. The plan includes priorities around school climate, quality curricula and parent engagement, but does not explicitly speak to addressing health, housing and safety outcomes that impact student learning.[70]

The local community has taken great strides to overcome inequity and has made great progress in certain areas. National racial justice advocates have heralded Baltimore's positive community outcomes, as compared with other majority-Black cities, and have called for the city's leadership to accelerate the progress.[71] However the 2015 death of Freddie Gray because of spinal cord injuries obtained while being transported in Baltimore police custody has led to tremendous community questions and advocacy around the need to create a climate free from the fear of police-sponsored violence. None of the officers involved in the incident with Freddie Gray were convicted.

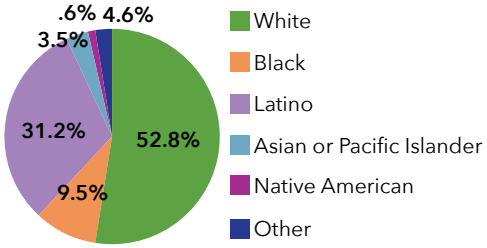
Denver, CO COPPER

Denver sits on the western tip of the Great Plains states, and has long served as a sojourn for traveling Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples. The discovery of gold in 1858 brought prospectors from the eastern United States into this region, ignoring the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, which was supposed to safeguard Native lands. Today, Denver's economy relies on its stronghold in farming, ranching, and food processing, facilitated by its proximity to rail, and tourism. A burgeoning economy is growing in the tech sector as well.[72]

Denver's racial make-up is largely a mix of Whites (representing 53% of the city's population in 2014) and Latinos (31%). In 2015-2016, Denver operated 199 schools, serving just over 92,000 students. At the time, the school district was comprised predominantly of Latino (56%) and White students (23%). Over one-third of the students are identified as limited English proficiency, and over 70% of the students in the district are economically disadvantaged. The city's population has changed rapidly, as Latino and mixed-race populations have grown in size over the past twenty years, and are projected to continue growing in the coming decades. Like many places in the country, Denver is segregated by income and race, and there are wide disparities

42%
of supports measured through Index

Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014

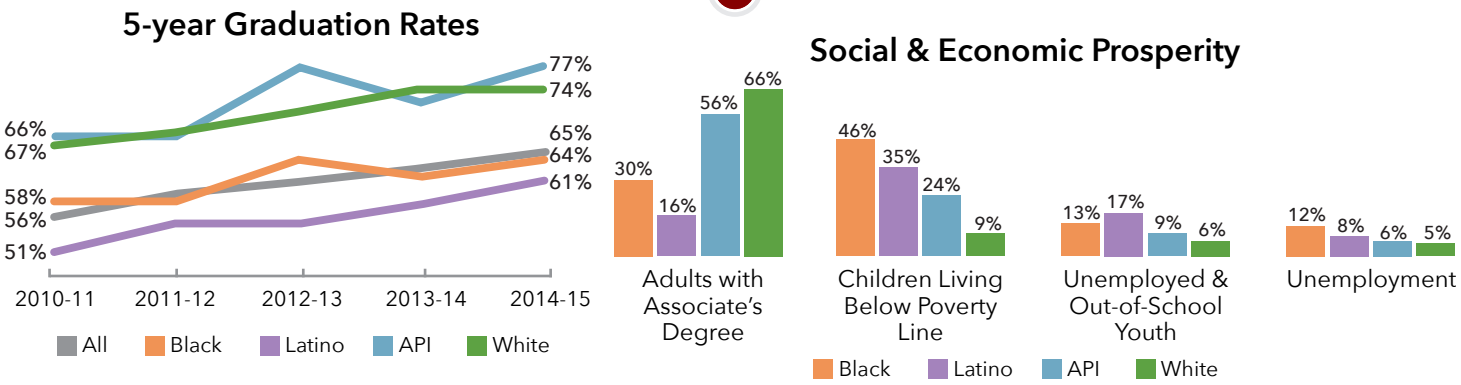


U.S. Census Bureau; NHGIS; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.
Policy Link/PERE National Equity Atlas, nationalequityatlas.org

for children and people of color. Denver's Black youth are more than five times as likely as White youth to be living below the poverty line, and Latino youth are nearly four times as likely, and we see similar disparities in graduation rates and rates of "opportunity youth" (children not in school and not working). The outcomes for health and safety illustrate further disparities among youth: rates of infant mortality in Denver are nearly three times as high for Black children as they are for Whites; and 2.5 times higher for youth mortality.

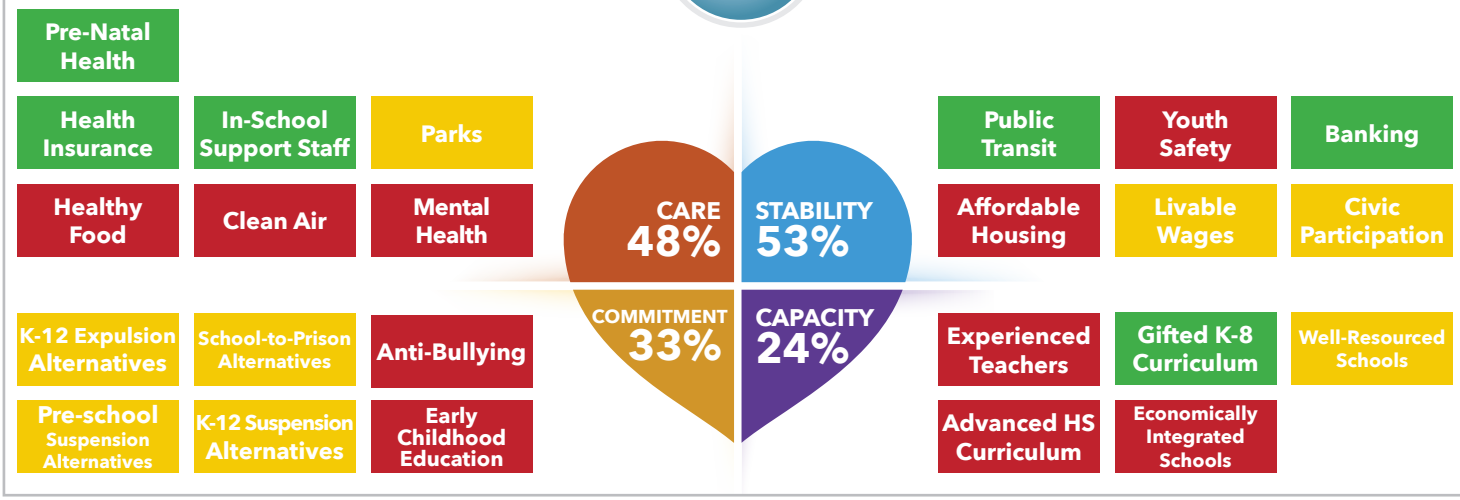
THERMOMETER INDICATORS

Current conditions for childhood success



THERMOSTAT INDICATORS

Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



State of Healthy Living and Learning in Denver

Overall, **Denver** has 42% of the supports measured through the Index, which is above average among the ten cities studied. Denver demonstrates one of the highest levels of Stability measured, with low levels of unbanked households (households without a checking or savings account) and geographic accessibility of public transportation, though increasing affordability of transit for low-income students and parents has been a priority for local organizing groups like Together Colorado.

The greatest opportunity for deepening systemic love is increasing the Capacity of public schools to effectively serve all youth, with a significant need to address economic and racial segregation. In Denver, only 16% of White public school students attend a "high poverty" school, compared to 76% of Latino and 52% of Black public school students. The system of segregation in Denver and countless other communities deeply affects gaps in the opportunity to learn for low-income students and students of color. In addition, Denver has one of the lowest levels of access to AP/IB coursework of the 10 cities studied, with only 79% of students attending a school with at least one AP/IB class and only 23% of students participating in at least one AP or IB class, and the lowest level of teacher experience. Additionally, only 63% of teachers having more than two years of experience. There is also opportunity to improve levels of Commitment, particularly when it comes to suspension and expulsion of Black students who are experiencing punitive discipline policies at significantly higher rates than White, Latino and Asian students.

Springfield, MA COPPER

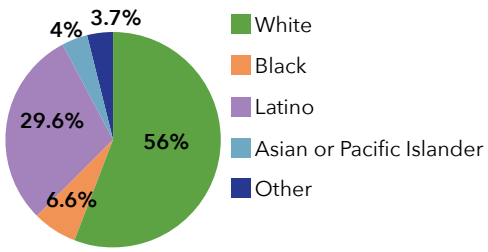
Springfield, MA is one of the oldest cities in the group of 10, first incorporated as a town in the 1641. It is conveniently located "midway between New York and Boston, and on the road between New York and Canada." In the eighteenth century, Springfield became industrialized as the power of the nearby 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.[73] 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.[74] 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.[75] 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.[76] 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.[77] 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

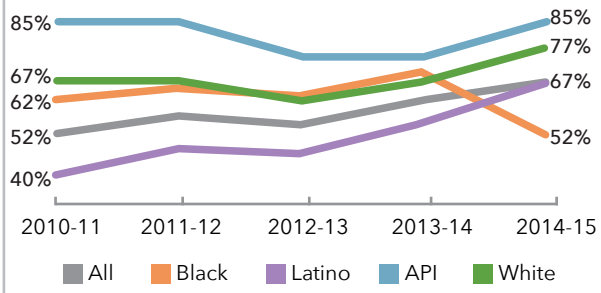
income segregation and racial segregation are among the lowest for the 10 initial cities.[78] Nevertheless, there are clear racial patterns in opportunity, with only 10% White unemployment compared to 20% Black unemployment.

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%.[79] 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).

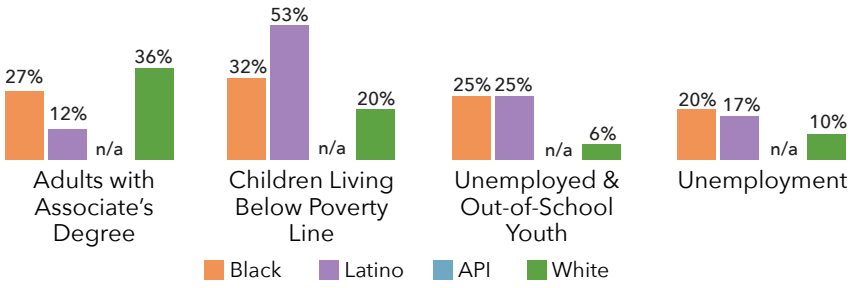
THERMOMETER INDICATORS

Current conditions for childhood success

5-year Graduation Rates



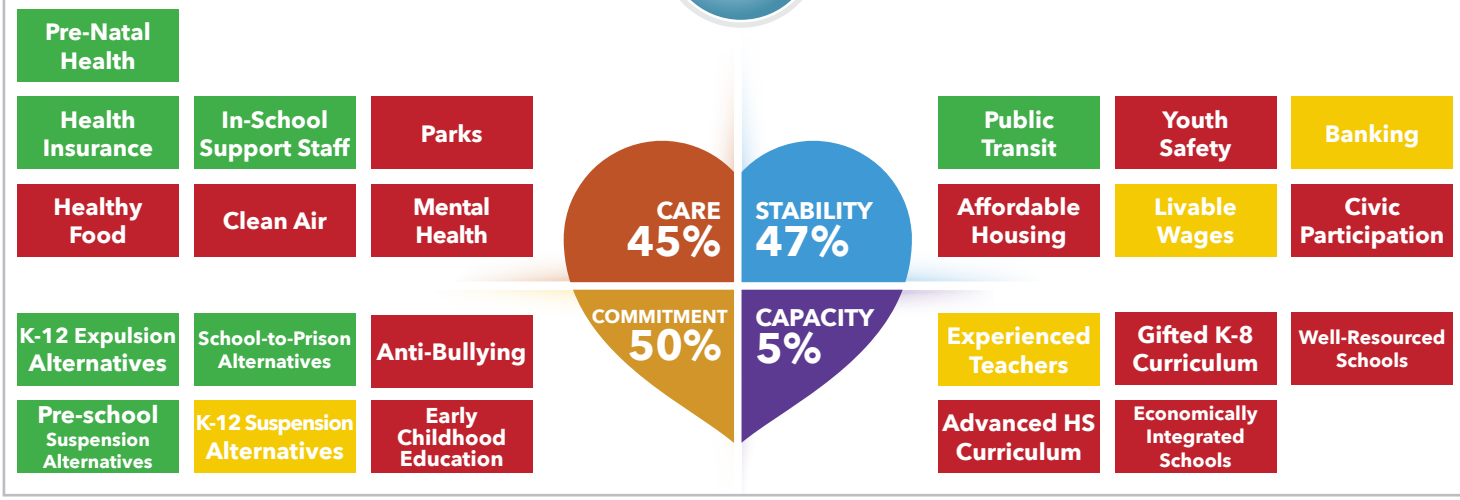
Social & Economic Prosperity



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 academic 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.

Little Rock, AR COPPER

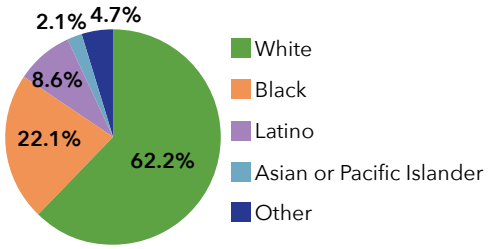
Little Rock, the capital city of Arkansas, is located at the geographic heart of the state on the Arkansas River, and has a population of approximately 200,000.[80] The city's riverside location contributed to its early growth as a major commercial hub. This growth stagnated after Arkansas ceded from the Union just prior to the Civil War, but was resuscitated with the development of transcontinental rail lines during Reconstruction (1865-1877). Today, the local economy relies on the river, where the Port of Little Rock and the McClellan-Kerr Navigation System facilitate regional and national commerce, as well as jobs in the service, retail, and industrial sectors.[81]

Arkansas has some of the highest income inequality in the country; incomes of the top 5% of households are nearly 15 times as high as the bottom 20% and five times as high as the middle 20%.[82] Additionally, the population is significantly segregated by income and to an even larger degree by race.[83] Black children in Little Rock are almost four times as likely as the city's White children to be living below the poverty line. The outcomes for health illustrate further disparities among youth. Rates of infant mortality in Little Rock are nearly three times as high for Black youth (12.3) as they are for Whites (4.8); and Black youth mortality (54.5) is double that of Whites (26.2).

In 2012-2013, the Little Rock School District served nearly 24,000 students at 48 schools, including four pre-schools, 26 elementary schools, seven middle schools, five high schools, and six academy and non-traditional schools. At the time, the district was comprised predominantly of Black (67%) and Latino students (11%); White students made up only 19% of the overall student population, despite the city's population being majority White.[84] 9.5% of students are limited English proficient, and over 60% come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Little Rock has had a long, complicated history in the movement towards education equity, receiving national attention for the resistance to school integration sixty years ago requiring National Guard troops to protect nine Black students striving to attend a newly-integrated, White-only school.[85] In 1982, the Little Rock School District filed a lawsuit arguing that two nearby districts were attracting the White students and concentrating Black students within Little Rock, leading three schools in those districts to be placed under court supervision until 2007 for being unconstitutionally segregated.[86]

37%
of supports measured through Index

Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014



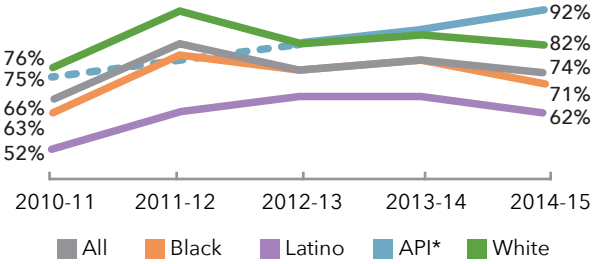
U.S. Census Bureau; NHGIS; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.
Policy Link/PERE National Equity Atlas, nationalequityatlas.org

In early 2015, the Arkansas State Board of Education "dissolved Little Rock's democratically elected local school board, the most racially inclusive and representative of its majority-black constituency in nearly a decade. In making the decision, the state overruled widespread public outcry to take control of the largest school district in the state." Since the takeover, the state has passed Act 930, which bestows the state education administrator with greater oversight powers, raising concerns from parents over local control and the emergence of charter schools.[87]

THERMOMETER INDICATORS

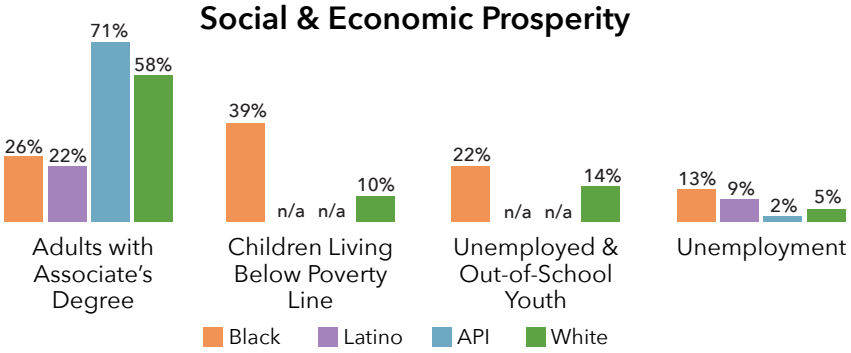
Current conditions for childhood success

5-year Graduation Rates



*Data was not available for API for 2011-12 SY

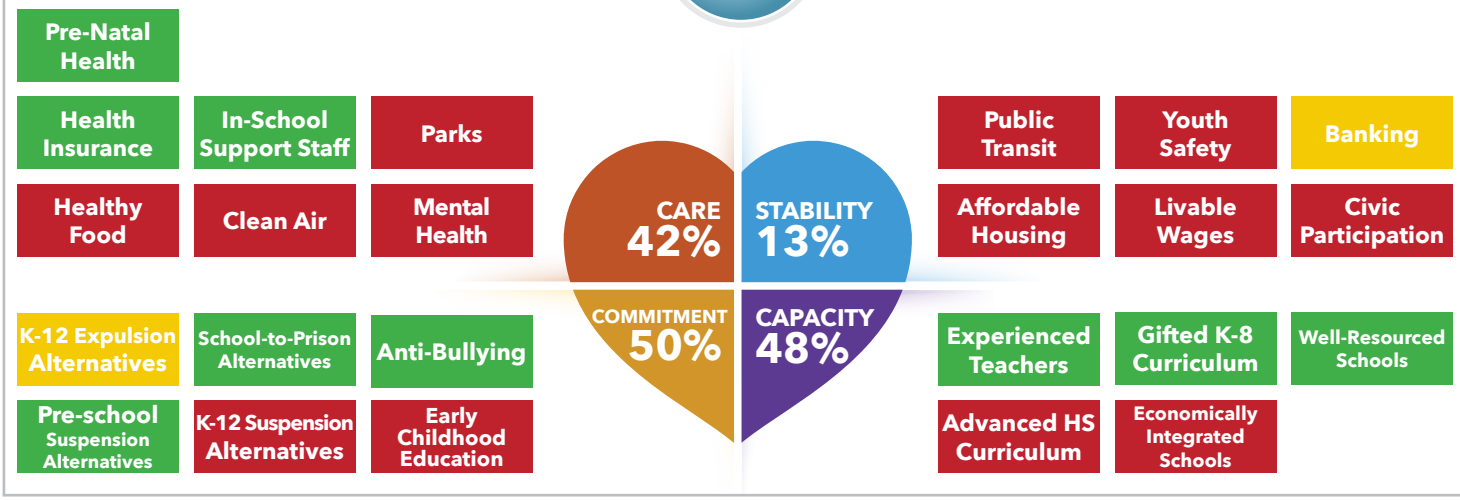
Social & Economic Prosperity



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 Little Rock

Little Rock has 37% of the supports measured through the Index. In terms of learning environments, Little Rock has the strongest level of Capacity measured, with the highest teacher salaries among the 10 cities once adjusted for cost of living (which we are using as a proxy for school resourcing), and relatively high teacher experience with 91% having at least two years of experience. K-8 schools largely offer gifted coursework for students, though there is room to increase access to rigorous curriculum in high schools. While 94% of students attend a school that offers AP/IB, only 29% of students are enrolled in at least one AP/IB class. Little Rock has the lowest levels of support in community Stability compared to the other 10 cities. While Little Rock has relatively lower housing cost burden compared to others (47% of renters spend more than 30% of income on housing), it is still considerably higher than the minimum benchmark for points, and is paired with the lowest rates in access to transportation and fair wage employment. Specifically, only 66% of the population lives in proximity to public transit, with Black, Latino and American Indian populations significantly more likely to live far from public transport compared to White populations. Additionally, 31% of Latino and 15% of Black people working full-time have salaries below 200% of the federal poverty line, compared to only 5% of White people. This is exacerbated by the fact that Little Rock had one of the lowest voter turn-outs compared to the other 10 cities in the 2016 general election (66% of registered voters), indicating that elected officials likely do not represent the needs and interests of all children and families.

Chicago, IL COPPER

Chicago has a long and complex history as one of the most economically important cities in the world. The city first surged in size in the late 19th century, following the completion of multiple major rail lines and a project linking it to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. Throughout the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, Chicago was a major hub for European immigrants, and saw exponential growth in the African American population, with the Great Migration from the rural South.[88]

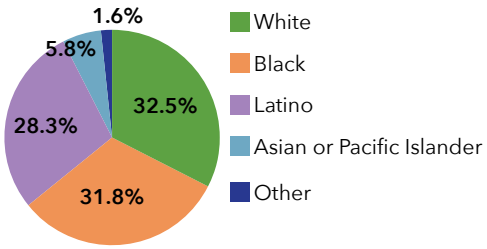
Today, the impact of systemic housing discrimination and redlining that segregated the city following the Great Depression remain relatively intact, offering drastically disparate opportunities to people based on race, immigration status, and language ability.

While Chicago is a major financial hub and home to several Fortune 500 companies and one of the most prominent international central business districts, Illinois ranks among the top ten most unequal states, with incomes of the top 1% of households 25 times as large as the bottom 99%, and the former gaining over 55% of all income growth between 2009 and 2013.[89] Health and safety outcomes among young Black children are also troubling, with Black infant mortality at three times that of White children, and youth mortality rates nearly four times the rates of White children. In 2016, Chicago's homicide rate was the city's highest in 20 years. "Between 2015 and 2016, Chicago experienced 58 percent more homicides and 43 percent more non-fatal shootings… A total of 764 people were murdered in Chicago in 2016."[90]

In the 2016-17 school year, Chicago Public Schools served 380,000 students (38% Black, 47% Latino and 10% White) in over 500 instructional facilities, placing it among the largest public school districts in the nation. 17% of students in the district are limited English proficient, and nearly 86% come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Chicago's Black youth are more than six times as likely as White youth to be living below the poverty line, and Latino youth are more than four times as likely. We see these same patterns in socioeconomic disparities in educational outcomes, with nearly a 14% difference in graduation rates between Black students and White students.

36%
of supports measured through Index

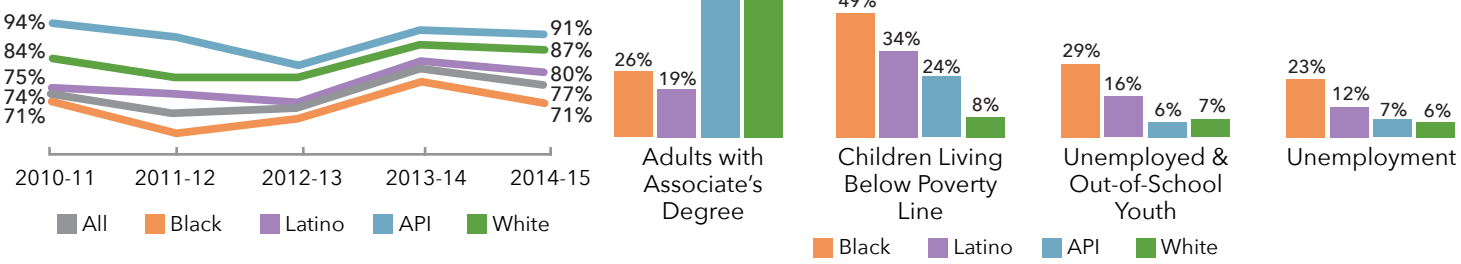
Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014



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

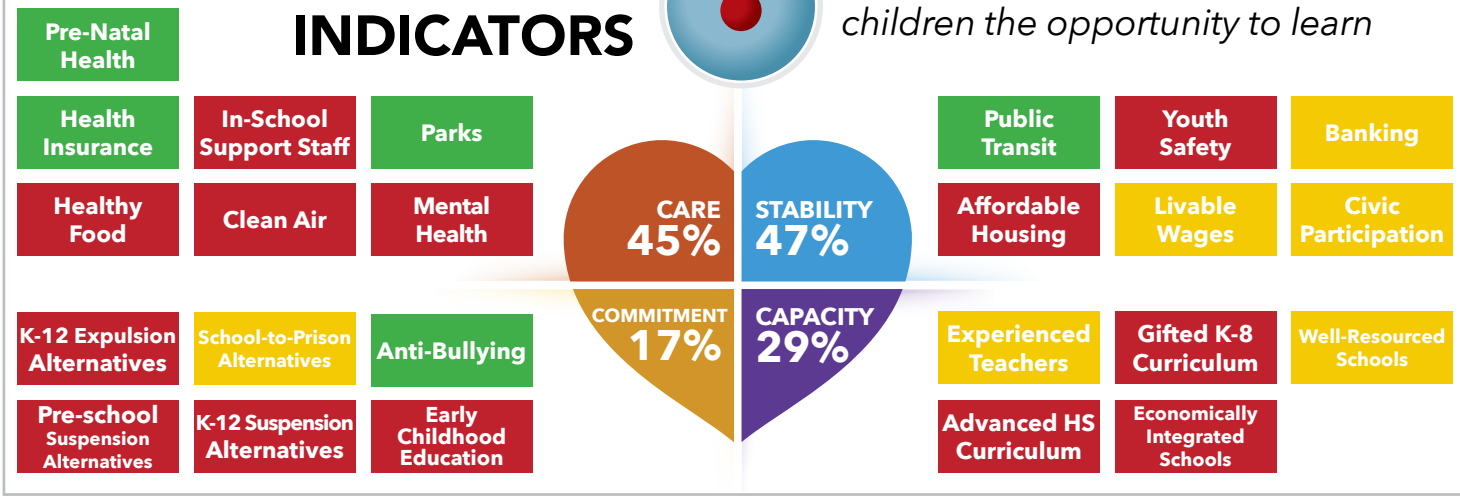
THERMOMETER INDICATORS

Current conditions for childhood success



THERMOSTAT INDICATORS

Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



State of Healthy Living and Learning in Chicago

Chicago has 36% of the supports measured through the Index. Chicago earned points related to healthy living environments by having the highest voter turnout in the 2016 general election (72%) and access to healthy food and parks compared to the other cities. At the same time, Chicago has the lowest number of in-school support staff in the group of 10 (.65 support staff per 100 students), which has proven to be a critical resource for schools to help provide students with holistic, wrap-around supports, and one of the weakest youth safety rates due to high numbers of youth deaths per capita. There is also progress needed in healthy learning environments to ensure students can succeed. In Chicago, the number of students attending high poverty schools is exceptionally high at 83%, and the rate is over 54 percent higher for Black and Latino students compared to White. The system of segregation instituted through federal, state and local housing policies in the 20th century deeply affects segregation of schools and gaps in the opportunity to learn for low-income students and students of color. In addition, low access to advanced K-8 and high school AP curricula (particularly for students of color) means that many students are not receiving rigorous curricula that puts them on track for post-secondary attainment. Chicago also has one of the highest levels of suspension rates (25% of K-12 students), with 44% of Black students receiving at least one suspension compared to only 7% of White students. This overarching trend of a highly punitive climate in communities of color extends to several Chicago neighborhoods. Following the investigation of the shooting of 17-year old LaQuan McDonald by a Chicago police officer, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a 2017 report highlighting a trend of excessive use of force by the Chicago Police Department. Local advocates highlight that their communities are often under-protected but over-policed. Recognizing the connection between community violence and concentrated poverty, segregation and over-incarceration of Black males, Chicago recently established an unprecedented collaborative effort with multiple service organizations called "Partnership for Safer Chicago" that will create systems for violence prevention services and re-entry services, as well as deep social service supports for employment and development.[91]

Philadelphia, PA COPPER

Philadelphia is one of the country's most historic cities, and is located in the Delaware Valley on the mid-Atlantic coast.[92] As immigration from Europe ballooned, Philadelphia quickly became the leading commercial and cultural center of the American colonies, and like other places, native tribes were killed, enslaved, or otherwise displaced. By 1765, Philadelphia had a population of 23,000 people, comprising the largest city in north America.

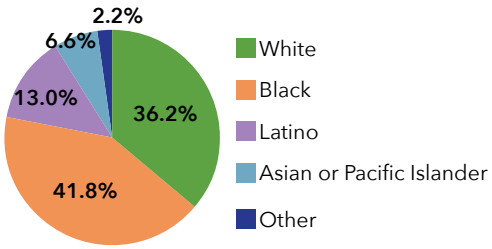
The city's continued growth was driven by industrialization through the early 20th century and World War I. "The region's major industries included textiles, locomotive manufacturing, shipbuilding, iron and steel production, and sugar refining. With the discovery of petroleum, Philadelphia became an oil storage and refining center."[93]

Between 1880 and 1930, the Black population of Philadelphia grew from 32,000 to 220,000, due in part to the availability of jobs during the two world wars.[94] The housing crisis in Philadelphia and other industrialized cities across the country during this time led to the start of public housing projects that at the time largely spurred development of white-only, single family homes and an agenda of segregation and employment discrimination that continue to impact community segregation and wealth inequity in Philadelphia and across the country.[95] Today, Philadelphia is the most racially segregated of the 10 cities studied, even though socioeconomic segregation is relatively low.[96] In 2015 and 2016 Philadelphia was one of 10 cities the U. S. Department of Justice identified as responsible for a spike in violence. Research shows close connection between segregation and concentrated poverty and community violence, and the prevalence of those two factors in Philadelphia help explain why we also see high levels of violence in communities.[97]

In the 2016-17 school year, the School District of Philadelphia served 130,000 students, of whom half are Black

36%
of supports measured through Index

Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014

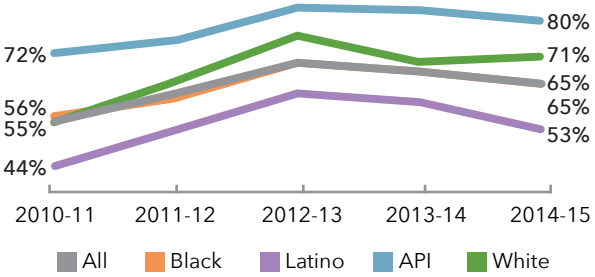


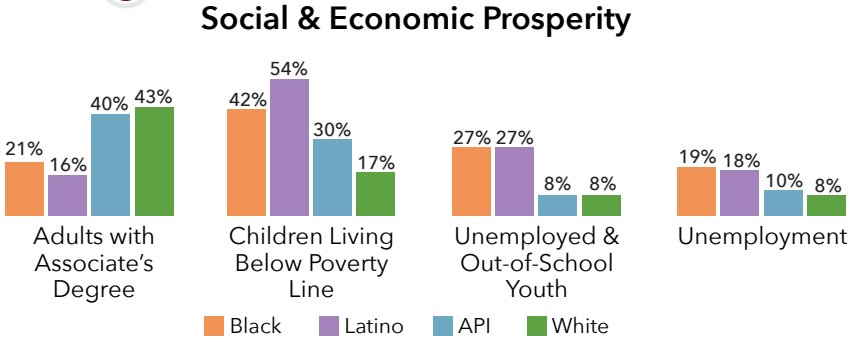
U.S. Census Bureau; NHGIS; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.
Policy Link/PERE National Equity Atlas, nationalequityatlas.org

youth, 20% are Latino, 14% are White, and 15% nearly evenly split between Asians and youth of multiple races. These students attend 251 facilities, including 151 elementary schools, 16 middle schools, 57 high schools, and 27 alternative schools.[98] 86% of students in Philadelphia's public school system come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and young Black and Latino Philadelphians are more than twice as likely to be living in poverty as White children. Disparities in health further highlight the racial disparities in healthy lifestyles. Rates of infant mortality in Philadelphia are more than 2.5 times as high for Black youth (11.7) as they are for Whites (4.3). Likewise, youth mortality rates for Black (37.8) and Latino (36) youths are more than twice that of Whites (17.2) and more than 1.5 times that of Asians (23.6).

THERMOMETER INDICATORS

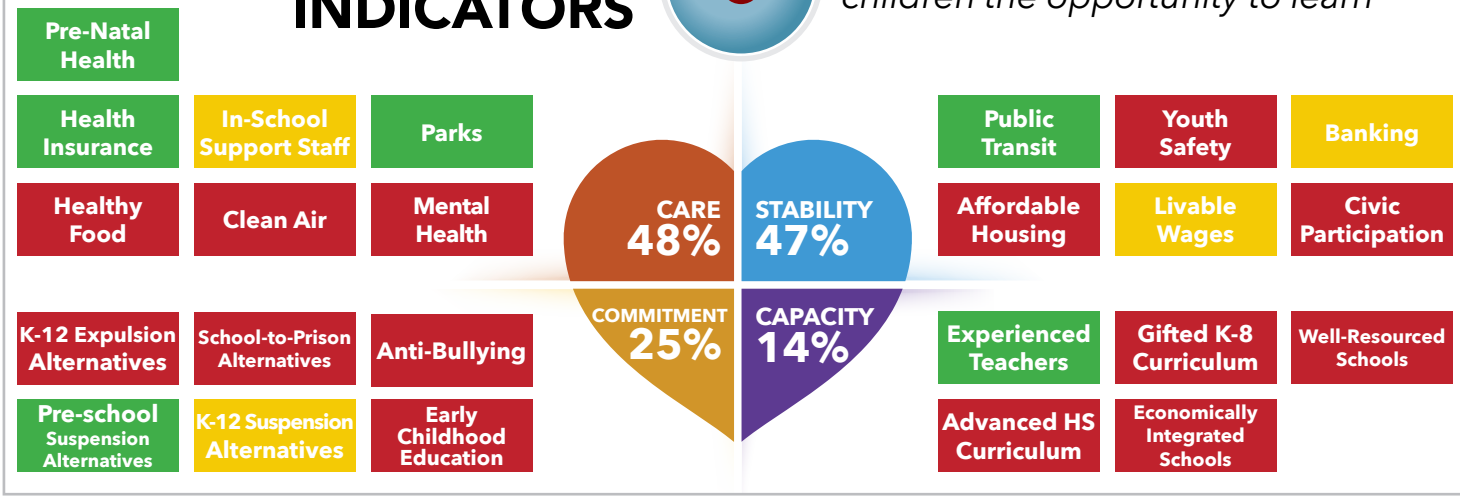
Current conditions for childhood success





THERMOSTAT INDICATORS

Access to supports that provide all children the opportunity to learn



State of Healthy Living and Learning in Philadelphia

Philadelphia has 36% of the supports measured through the Index, which is below average for the 10 cities measured. In terms of healthy living environments, the number of renters experiencing housing cost burden is among the highest (57% of renters pay more than 30 percent of household income on housing), and there are relatively high rates of full-time workers earning under 200% of the federal poverty level among Latino and Asian people, and to a lesser degree Black people, compared to White people. Along with other cities, Philadelphia has public transportation infrastructure, with nearly 100% geographic access for residents across racial groups. Level of supports for Capacity are among the lowest in the group of 10 cities studied. In particular, none of the K-8 public schools offer gifted curriculum, and only 81% of students attend a school offering at least one AP/IB class. These contribute to one of the lowest levels of participation in AP/IB coursework, with only 19% of students enrolled in at least one AP/IB class. While teacher salaries on average are the second lowest ($29,400 once adjusted for cost of living), Philadelphia has one of the highest rates of experienced teachers (95% with 2+ years teaching experience). Philadelphia also has one of the highest levels of students in high poverty schools (72%) – with 81% of Black and 84% of Latino students in high poverty schools compared to 35% of White students. In two places, Philadelphia did not receive points because the data were not available (including expulsion rates and voter participation).

Charlotte, NC COPPER

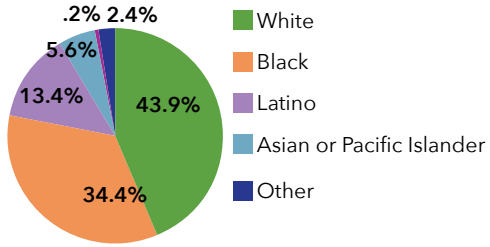
Charlotte resides in Mecklenburg County and is the largest city in the state of North Carolina and the 17th largest city in the U.S. Charlotte is home to the third-largest banking center in the country, after New York and San Francisco.[99] Between 2004-2014, over 850,000 people moved to the metropolitan area, qualifying Charlotte as the fastest-growing city in the U.S. at the time, a growth rate of almost 60%.[100]

Charlotte's demographics have shifted significantly as well: in 1980 the city was around 67% White and today is less than 45% White.[101] 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.[102] 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.[103] Along with two other states with initial cities included in this report (Maryland and New York), North Carolina is among the 15 states whose top 1% of earners enjoyed all income growth between 2009 and 2013.[104]

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 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."[105]

34%
of supports measured through Index

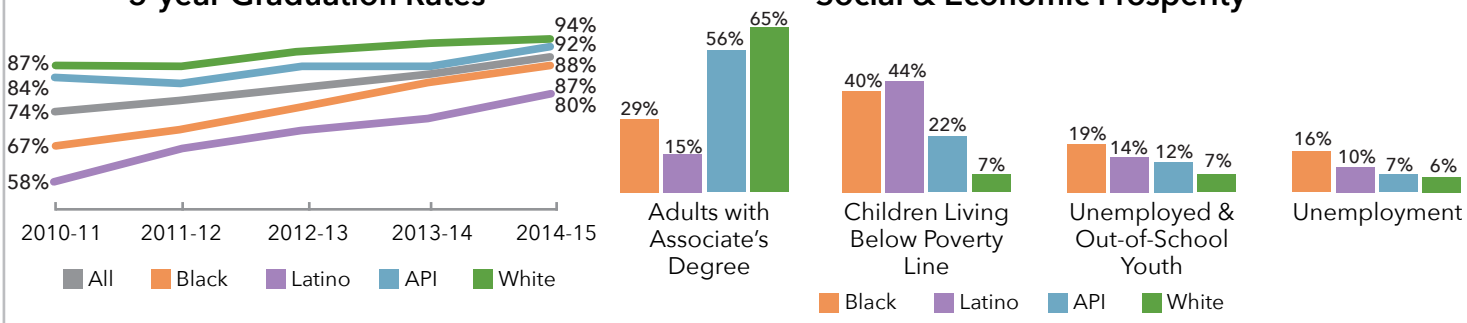
Racial/Ethnic Composition: 2014



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

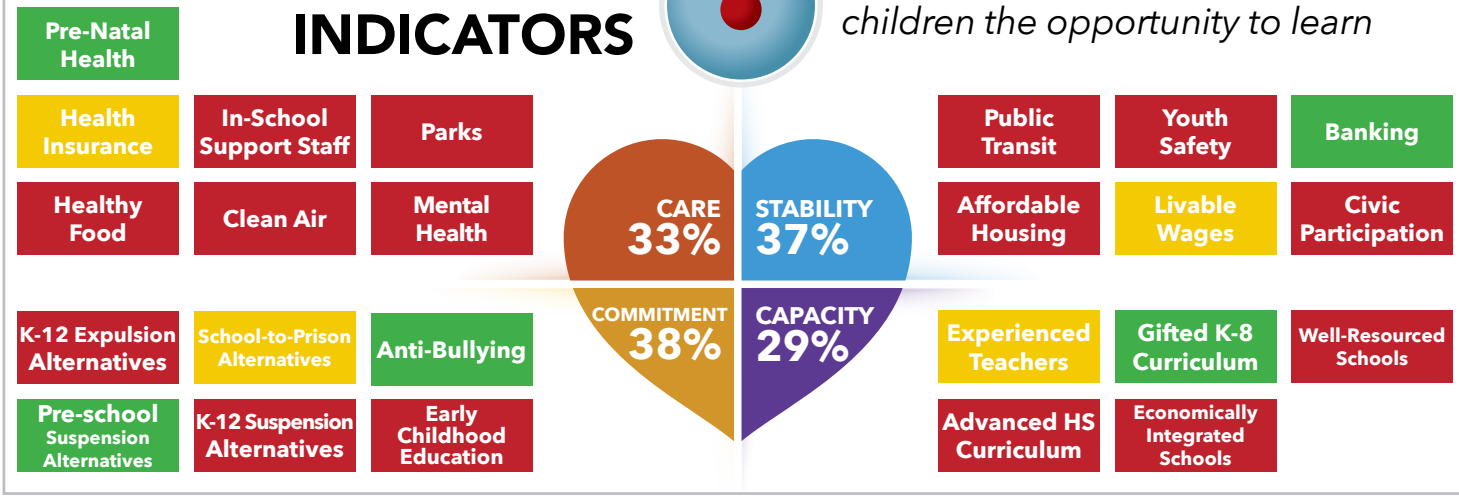
THERMOMETER INDICATORS

Current conditions for childhood success



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 (71% of population 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 in close proximity to a public park, and as with many other cities 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 punitive 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.

HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO CREATE LOVING SYSTEMS

All cities and localities can use the Loving Cities Framework to look holistically at their thermostat climate data and determine local successes and challenges in delivering a system of thermostat supports to help all children thrive. In each city and locality, a diverse set of stakeholders can come together around this data to discuss and develop priorities to build upon systems of support and ensure policies and practices deliver care, stability, commitment and capacity for all children.

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. Communities in Schools has affiliates in 25 states and the District of Columbia, serving 1.5 million students in 2,300 schools. "CIS places a school support staff in each school who identifies challenges students face in class or at home and coordinates with community partners to bring outside resources inside schools - from immediate needs like food or clothing to more complex ones like counseling or emotional support." The results of providing integrated students supports are dramatic: 91% of CIS-served seniors graduated or received a GED and 99% of students stayed in school.[106] For more information on CIS's model go to: www.communitiesinschools.org/our-model/.

City Connects has a similar approach being implemented across 79 sites in Boston, Springfield, and Brockton, MA; New York City; Dayton and Springfield, OH; Hartford, CT; and Minneapolis, MN. In addition to individual assessment and referrals to community providers, City Connects uses an advanced tracking system so they can continue to track student utilization of providers and individual progress. Longitudinal studies have shown that students are 50% less likely to drop out with City Connects support and demonstrate higher school readiness, standardized test scores, and higher grades on report cards.[107] 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.[108] SBHA understands that healthcare for young people, no matter their zip code, is critical to giving them an equal opportunity to learn and grow, and that school-based health care is a powerful tool for reaching children who unjustly experience disparities in access and outcomes. As of 2013-14, there were "2,315 school-based health centers that served students and communities in 49 of 50 states and the District of Columbia, 20% growth since 2010-11." 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 lack of broad understanding of how we created opportunity gaps affects the ability to build political will around solutions that meet these root causes of inequity in outcomes, so shifting the narrative to raise consciousness is critical to the adoption of loving systems.

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."[109] Montgomery County, Maryland is a local example that has such policies in place, and the connection to improved educational outcomes is clear. "The program success is evidenced by the measurably higher achievement of low-income African American students who live and attend school in the county's wealthiest suburbs.[110]

Reforming the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program can also lead to greater community integration. Section 8 is "by far the nation's largest low-income housing program" with 2.2 million vouchers authorized to date to help extremely low-income families live in lower-poverty neighborhoods. Because of practices in place for calculating the maximum subsidy and rules that allow discrimination against renters using vouchers, families generally only have the ability to move to incrementally higher income neighborhoods, and as a result this program has contributed to the maintenance of economic and racial segregation.[111] 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.

ACTION SPOTLIGHT

Local Case Study: Buffalo's Commitment to Equity in a Time of Growth

The city of Buffalo has a history of racial inequity, like every other place in America, but the community is working together to build their local economy and ensure all residents have the opportunity to take part and fulfill their highest potential. 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 populations over 80% either White or 80% students of color. In 1987, the court lifted its mandate because of the great results, and since school segregation has returned back to 70% segregated schools as it was in the early 1970s.[112]

Today, the Buffalo community has been at the forefront of providing cross-sector systems of supports for children and families. Say Yes to Education Buffalo brought leaders from every sector together to commit to giving a scholarship to every student that graduated high school and was accepted to a post-secondary program, while simultaneously working to put local systems in place to provide students with the wrap-around supports they needed to succeed. Among other supports, every public school in Buffalo offers mental health clinics and physical health providers needed to be healthy and succeed in school. Twenty-five community leaders have come together to form the Racial Equity Roundtable, led by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo with the purpose of tackling the existing gaps in racial equity, and expanding opportunity in neighborhoods across the region — where people live, work and raise their children. Their approach relies heavily on resident engagement, and cross-sector collaboration and data, and their website outlines a clear, comprehensive plan for collective action.[113] For more information go to www.racialequitybuffalo.org

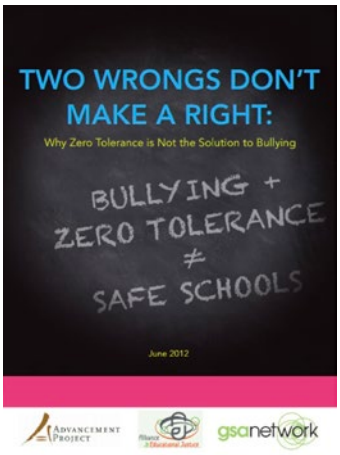
3. Increase COMMITMENT to All Children Through Increased Early Childhood Education Opportunities and Greater Training for Teachers and Administrators in Anti-Racist Practices and a Culture of Inclusion and Healing

Access to early childhood education continues to be out of reach for roughly 40% of children nationally, despite the overwhelming evidence of its positive impact on academic success and other long-term outcomes.[114] Federal programs that provide access to early childhood education need increased funding to meet the scale of need that exists. For the early childhood programs that do exist, they are in many ways further along than K-12 in adopting a holistic, whole-child approach to development. The BUILD Initiative is one of the leaders helping states build systems to support early childhood development. Their approach emphasizes building systems that provide access to quality early care and education as well as primary and preventative healthcare and early interventions. BUILD provides tools, resources and data to help families and communities build coordinated, systemic responses for each of these early childhood development needs to ensure all children are on a path for a lifetime of learning.[115]

For more resources go to: www.buildinitiative.org/TheIssues/EarlyLearning.aspx

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. Racial differences in rates of suspension and expulsion and data on levels of harassment that students are confronted with at school can give us some indication of the racial and ethnic bias that students face from peers and adults. 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/TeasingtoTorment%202015%20FINAL%20PDF%5B1%5D_0.pdf

The Advancement Project, Alliance for Educational Justice and GSA Network also provide an important resource to understand the connection between policy and practices in response to bullying and utilization of zero tolerance policies that increase the school-to-prison pipeline in their report, *Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right: Why Zero Tolerance is Not the Solution to Bullying*. The report says, "many lawmakers have been sensitized to the harms caused by bullying, harassment, and hostile school climates, and have responded with an unprecedented surge in policy and legislative activity…21 states passed new legislation or updated existing legislation to address bullying in 2010 (compared to one in the year 2000). 23 states signed anti-bullying bills into law in 2011, and an additional four addressed the issue in 2012." The report goes on to explain that while these steps marked good intentions, the policy changes largely fail to address deeper issues around bullying, and the highly punitive approaches are in fact a form of bullying themselves, and are likely to exacerbate the problems caused by the school-to-prison pipeline.[116] 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.



Cities like Baltimore have made great strides in adopting policies and practices that create a culture of inclusion within schools and end the cycle of push-out. In 2016, Baltimore had a nearly 20% drop in the number of suspensions, a reflection of the increased focus on positive behavioral interventions in city schools, and of recognizing the need to understand what's going on in a child's life that may be manifesting as behavioral issues and providing students with supports rather than removal.[117] Building on these efforts to shift school culture, Open Society Institute-Baltimore, in collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools, Family League of Baltimore, and the Baltimore School Climate Collaborative, adopted a plan in 2017 to implement restorative justice practices in all Baltimore City Schools within five years. "The use of restorative practices in schools has been shown to support

effective leadership and engaging classrooms; develop positive relationships among all stakeholders; and create engaging classrooms and welcoming and safe school communities."[118]

The Communities for Just Schools Fund (CJSF) is a national donor collaborative that "provides resources in support of community-led organizations that are working to ensure positive and supportive school climates that affirm and foster success of all students." 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

We need to invest equitably in schools to ensure that districts are able to provide a system of supports for all children, particularly those living in poverty. 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. State by state, there is more than three times the dollars invested in children in the highest funded state (New York, $18k per child) than children in the lowest funded state (Idaho, $5.8k per child). These differences are often not a reflection of differences in cost of living or amount of state resources overall, but rather biased policy that affects the opportunity for all children to learn.

In the report *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card* (NRC), research shows that only four states (Delaware, Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Jersey) have "progressive" school funding policy where there are sufficiently high funding levels and higher rates of funding for high poverty districts. Fourteen states have a "regressive" school funding policy, where less funding is provided to school districts with higher levels of student poverty, fueling deeper opportunity gaps in access to educational supports and failing to correct for the opportunity gaps in living environments. The NRC also labels many states as low "effort" states, because they invest a low percentage of their economic capacity to support their public education systems.[119] For data and resources to advocate for fair school funding, go to: www.schoolfundingfairness.org/is-school-funding-fair

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Research Underpinning the Loving Cities Framework

CARE Health resources and physical environment that foster physical and mental development

Measured by access to:

- Health insurance
- Pre-natal services
- Mental health services
- In-school health coordinators
- Grocery stores/healthy food
- Parks
- Clean air

Good health sets a strong foundation for educational success; providing supports that foster physical and mental health are critical to providing healthy living and learning environments.

Even before a child is born, health plays a critical role in future outcomes. The physical, social and emotional health of children in the first five years of life is tied to long-lasting impacts on brain and cognitive development, language, motor skills, and academic learning.[120] Neonatal health has been linked with educational performance in elementary and middle school, even when controlling for family socioeconomic factors and quality of resources (e.g., school quality).[121] Links have been drawn between the exposure of pollution in utero with lower performance on standardized academic assessments later in life.[122] Additionally, low birth weight is a predictor of academic performance in children and adolescents.[123]

Youth experiencing chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and cancer, are significantly more likely to face barriers to educational attainment compared to their healthier counterparts.[124] This effect is sometimes seen because of the disruptive nature of caring for an ailment; for instance, asthmatic students miss school more often, and consequently score lower on tests than their healthier peers.[125] [126]

Youth who live in neighborhoods with greater access to healthy foods, recreational spaces, and resources for physical activity are less likely to experience increases in body mass index associated with obesity and other chronic diseases.[127] [128] Healthy eating and physical activity have shown positive associations with higher student achievement in math and reading.[129] Community environments with clean air and safe, abundant parks help to promote healthy living behaviors that prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and asthma.[130]

It is estimated that more than half of adults have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience, such as abuse, neglect, or family/household challenges. In a recent study, 12.5% of all adults in a 17,000-person sample reported experiencing four or more adverse childhood experiences.[131] Exposure to trauma at this level has been associated with learning and behavior problems, as well as obesity.[132] Mental health support for children and families, good health insurance coverage, as well as access to in-school support staff for students — such as instructional aides and guidance counselors — can help ensure that children who need support are identified and connected to resources for total health and wellbeing.

STABILITY

Community infrastructure supports and policies that foster physical and financial security and civic participation

Measured by access to:

- **Livable wage jobs**
- **Affordable housing**
- **Public transit**
- **Youth safety**
- **Banking**
- **Civic participation**

Stable communities minimize the social and economic hardships that can distract children from learning and growing by providing families with access to support for financial security. This can include safe, affordable housing, well-connected and accessible transportation, and diverse and attainable economic opportunities for families. Though the structural supports for economic security are often considered outside the traditional scope of efforts to reform education, they have critical importance influencing student success. Housing security impacts educational outcomes; children residing in stable housing, free of the threat of displacement or eviction, demonstrate higher levels of academic achievement.[133] Parental employment is associated with lower rates of disciplinary action at school, higher grade retention, and positive postsecondary attainment.[134] [135] [136] Family liquid assets are predictive of college attendance and attainment.[137]

One of the most critical determinants of economic security — civic engagement — also has direct implications for student outcomes. Civic engagement plays an important role in determining social and political capital — that is, power to allocate community resources, set investment priorities, and ultimately, determine who benefits from shared social and economic decisions and who doesn't. International studies spanning a century show that higher rates of voter turnout result in greater spending on social and economic priorities such as affordable housing, living wage jobs, and education.[138] The role of civic engagement in education is also well documented.[139] Investments in Pre-K-12 education are associated with higher educational attainment, higher income, and reduced poverty as adults; the effects are even far more substantial for students from low-income backgrounds.[140]

Encouraging diverse and consistent opportunities for economic growth and civic participation requires multifaceted approaches to community development. Communities that promote stability create an ample supply of affordable housing for residents. They offer broad access to affordable and well-connected transit, and a diverse selection of living wage jobs, to ensure that people can access economic opportunities and stay out of poverty when they are working full time. Education advocates can partner with a host of experts and advocates in community development, housing and transportation equity to create community change. Addressing the multiple factors that influence holistic youth development and success underscores the importance of partnerships between educational institutions and other city organizations and leaders.[141]

COMMITMENT

School policies and practices that foster the unique potential of each student

Measured by access to:

- **Early childhood education**
- **Anti-bullying efforts**
- **Suspension alternatives**
- **Expulsion alternatives**

Caring communities provide students with safe and positive environments for learning and positive school discipline. Communities with caring systems provide access to affordable early childhood education and offering positive, inclusive approaches to school discipline, aligned with principles of restorative justice.

The evidence is clear that exposure to effective, quality early childhood education, including high-quality preschool education programs, can significantly improve the academic performance of students over the long term.[142] [143] The evidence is so ubiquitous that efforts to provide universal preschool span international borders, and are documented to have existed as early as the early 19th century.[144] In the U.S., the most successful efforts to expand early childhood education to low-income students occurred beginning in 1964 through the Head Start program, a part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Head Start supports the development of over 750,000 young children by providing free early childhood education to low-income families.[145] Together with continued high-quality education and efforts to move children out of poverty, Head Start has contributed to greater rates of high school graduation and post-secondary attainment, as well as improved health outcomes, compared with populations who have not participated in early childhood education.[146] [147]

Healthy learning environments require that children feel safe and secure among their peers and with teachers and school administrators; attention to bullying and positive school discipline practices are paramount. Higher rates of bullying and teasing at school have been associated with poorer outcomes on standardized assessments.[148] In places where bullying is more prominent, students engage in school less and ultimately perform more poorly on assessments.[149] Likewise, schools with higher levels of exclusionary discipline (such as suspensions and expulsions) have lower levels of student performance, even among students who are not the direct subject of exclusionary discipline.[150] On the contrary, schools that employ restorative justice practices — focused on misbehavior prevention, positive dialogue, and conflict resolution — have reduced rates of suspension and expulsion, narrowed racial and gender gaps in discipline, and improved academic outcomes.[151]

CAPACITY

Financial policies and practices that foster expertise and resources to meet the needs of all children

Measured by access to:

- **Economically integrated schools**
- **Experienced teachers**
- **Adequate resourcing**
- **Gifted K-8 curricula**
- **Advanced HS curricula**

Communities with high-capacity learning environments ensure that students are engaged and challenged, through exposure to socially and economically diverse peers, experienced and well-paid teachers, and challenging curricula. In high-capacity systems, students engage more in school-related activities and demonstrate better academic outcomes.[152]

Communities with high capacity provide greater access to high quality teachers, which makes a difference for student outcomes. Schools staffed with experienced and credentialed teachers perform better on standardized assessments and demonstrate increased productivity in elementary and middle school grades.[153] [154] Higher teacher quality also strongly predicts better future economic returns for students, with poor teacher quality severely impeding individual economic growth.[155] Persistent teacher absence can negatively influence mathematics achievement.[156] In short, teaching experience matters, and experienced teachers must be distributed in more equitable ways.[157]

Challenging and diverse curricula and supports are also more accessible in high-capacity learning environments. Although findings are split, some research suggests that students with access to gifted/talented programs performed better on cognitive assessments than gifted students not enrolled in such programs; in large part, the students performed better than the general student population.[158] [159] Similarly, some research shows that four-year college enrollment was significantly influenced by participation in advanced placement courses and examinations, even after controlling for demographics and high school level predictors; additionally, students who did not participate in AP examinations were less likely to attend four-year colleges across and within ethnic subgroups.[160] [161] Students with access to social and emotional learning programs demonstrate increased achievement outcomes and advanced emotional development skills.[162] In addition, schools that provide nutritious lunches demonstrate higher performance on assessments.[163]

High-capacity schools are out of reach for too many students, particularly students of color, because of a legacy of school segregation. Although school segregation was legally banned over 60 years ago, the problems continue and are pernicious. Students exposed to poverty face greater academic achievement gaps than those who are not, and in communities segregated by race there are significant differences in school poverty rates between White and Black students.[164] A recent study of race and income in 97 cities showed that in 83 cities where data were available, most Black students attend schools where poverty is highly concentrated — the majority of their classmates qualify as low-income (measured by eligibility for free- and reduced-price lunches). In 54 of these cities, a staggering majority of Black students (80%) attended schools where low-income students are the majority.[165]

Methodology

SELECTING INDICATORS

To identify an approach to measuring the level of love in cities, particularly for children of color, The Schott Foundation and our research partners, Mesu Strategies (MS), created a list of known social, economic and environmental influences on academic success and student wellbeing. This list drew primarily from experiences and expertise from grantees, partners and community members in Schott's network, and previous research and ideas compiled by the Kirwan Institute. Mesu Strategies reviewed literature related to these factors to identify those with greater weight of research evidence (findings outlined in the "Literature Review" section above).

MS reviewed data sources to determine:

- availability of data for multiple cities (including but not limited to the ten initial cities)
- geographic specificity of the data (e.g., state, county, city, census tract, other)
- frequency of data collection (e.g., annual, decennial, etc.)
- availability of data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender
- type and rigor of methodology (e.g., sample, census, or model; validity and reliability of approach)
- data accessibility (e.g., publicly available vs. private, available by purchase only)
- likelihood of continued data availability (e.g., possibility of future data collection)

MS provided this information to Community Wealth Partners and the Schott Foundation, and together we identified factors to include in the Loving Cities Index based upon a combination of criteria, including:

- the availability and quality of relevant data for each factor
- the availability and quality of disaggregated data for each factor
- the strength of the research evidence linking the factor with academic success and student wellbeing,
- the opportunities to create change related to each factor, and
- public access/availability to data sets.

Factors were also selected to achieve balance across categories.

SELECTING CITIES

The Schott Foundation aimed to profile a diversity of cities by size and geography, and include communities that we know are further along on their journey to adopt loving systems of supports. Our goal is for the report and findings to be valuable to communities in localities across the country, so we aimed to include cities that reflect different types of characteristics that define the living and learning environments in local places, and include those with significant political importance to the national dialogue and policies.

DATA COLLECTION AND PREPARATION

For each factor, we gathered and organized data from matching time periods and consistent geographies across all ten cities studied, striving for consistency across factors wherever possible. This required that we use data related to the largest or primary public school district in each city for which multiple school districts were present. It also required utilizing consistent population-weighted averages when aggregating block-group level data

to the city level for certain indicators (such as walkability). For factors with data available by race and ethnicity, MS then assembled data into four ethnic and racial groupings for each city: Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic/Latino, of any race, and Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander. Where there were inconsistencies across data sources, MS made adjustments to align the data as closely as possible for comparison. For information on data sources see Table 1 below. For more detailed information on steps taken to prepare data, please contact the Schott Foundation directly.

RESULTS, SCORING AND ANALYSIS

Using SPSS, Excel and ArcGIS, MS calculated results for the factors for each city. MS then scored the results for each factor in each city based upon threshold targets and targets for racial equity determined by the Schott Foundation and Community Wealth Partners (detailed in Table 1 below). Building upon the data and scores, MS developed profiles of each city in the Loving Cities Index and a national profile, drawing from an expanded literature search in PubMed, Google Scholar, and Web of Science, as well as desktop research on community conditions drawing from local and national resources (as cited). Community Wealth Partners and the Schott Foundation drew from these profiles and the complementary research and policy agendas from partners in the field to develop the national and local profiles of the status of institutionalized love in localities across the country and the call to action.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

The Loving Cities Index offers a novel representation of the holistic community factors that contribute to academic success and student wellbeing. However, like any static, quantitative tool, the Loving Cities Index provides only a limited window into the realities of the community experience. The Loving Cities Index measures 24 community and school climate factors as selected variables among many political, economic, and social forces that contribute to complex student outcomes. The thresholds and targets set in the Index are offered as a means for comparison and measurement, and not as a definitive declaration of where community conditions should be. The Loving Cities Index was created remotely by researchers and program managers outside of the cities in the Loving Cities Index initial cohort; they strived to reflect priorities of partners locally but this may not directly represent the full set of priorities of community residents. We are committed to meaningfully engaging communities and technical advisors as we continue to develop this Index and plan to make iterations and additions to the indicators in future revisions of this initial tool. We invite constructive dialogue on all content and methodologies to improve this tool in its next iteration.

SCORING STRATEGY

Cities could earn a maximum total score of 108 points for 24 indicators across four domains: Care (33 points), Stability (30 points), Commitment (24 points), and Capacity (21 points). The table below lists each indicator with a description of the metric used, the source, and the scoring benchmark set by the Schott Foundation and Community Wealth Partners.

Table 1. Loving Cities Index Indicators, Sources and Benchmarks

Note: In the descriptions for scoring equity below, we consistently refer to "disparity gap." This is calculated by subtracting the lowest rate among racial groups from the highest to determine the inequity in outcomes from one racial group to another.

CARE

Indicator Definition	Source/year(s)	Scoring Benchmark
Youth Health Insurance: The percentage of children under age 18 with health insurance.	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2015 5-year American Community Survey 2011-2015	**Performance:** 3 points for >=90% coverage; 2 points 80%-89%; 1 point 70-79%; 0 points <70% **Equity:** 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >15% gap
Access to Healthy Foods: The percentage of the census tract population that resides further than 1/2 mile from a supermarket.	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food Access Research Atlas; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 5-year American Community Survey (census tract level data) 2011-2015	**Performance**: 3 points for <=10% food desert status; 2 points 11-20%; 1 point 21-30%; 0 points >30% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >15% gap
Access to Parks: The percentage of total population within .5 miles/10 minute walk of public parkland.	Trust for Public Land, ParkScore 2016	**Performance**: 3 points for >=90% access; 2 points 80%-89%; 1 point 70-79%; 0 points <70%
Clean Air Environments: Index of exposure to air toxics for cancer and non-cancer risk combined. Values range from 1 (lowest risk) to 100 (highest risk) on a national scale. The Index value is based on percentile ranking each risk measure across all census tracts in the U.S. and taking the average ranking for each geography and demographic group.	National Equity Atlas (analysis of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2011 National Air Toxics Assessment and U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 5-year American Community Survey) 2010-2014	**Performance**: 3 points for <=30 index; 2 points 31-40; 1 point 40-50; 0 points >50
Healthy Birthweight: The number of singleton infants born at term (at or above 37 completed weeks of gestation) with a birthweight of less than 2500 grams by county, divided by the total number of singleton infants live born at term to county resident mothers, averaged over 2011 to 2015.	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network 2011-2013	**Performance**: 3 points for <=10% low birth weight prevalence; 2 points 11-20%; 1 point 21-30%; 0 points >30% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >50%
Mental Health Supports: access to licensed family mental health providers.	None available	**Performance**: 3 points for >=90% access; 2 points 80%-89%; 1 point 70-79%; 0 points <70% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >15% gap Note: No data source existed, but we still scored because of importance, with all cities given 0 points.

In-School Support Staff: Number of student support staff per 100 students. Student support staff include guidance counselors, instructional aides, and student support services staff.	National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Data Files, 2014-15 Local Education Agency (School District) Staff and Membership Universe Survey Data 2014-2015	3 staff/100 students = 3 points 2 staff/100 students = 2 points 1 staff/100 students = 1 point Note: This was determined based this on the national average of in-school support staff. According to Brookings Institute there has been about one non-teaching staff for approximately every 27 students (about 3 for every 100 students), a number that has been fairly consistent since the 1990s.[166]

STABILITY

Indicator Definition	Source	Scoring Benchmark
Financial Security: The percentage of households with neither a checking nor savings account.	Corporation for Enterprise Development 2013	**Performance**: 3 points for <=10% households without checking or savings; 2 points 11-20%; 1 point 21-30%; 0 points >30%
Livable Wages: The percentage of adults ages 25 through 64 who work full-time with family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Full-time work is defined as usually working at least 35 hours per week and working at least 50 weeks during the year prior to the survey.	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2015 5-year American Community Survey 2011-2015	**Performance**: 3 points for <=10% working poverty; 2 points 10-15%; 1 point 15-20%; 0 points >20% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >15% gap
Transit Accessibility: The percentage of the population residing within a half mile of transit.	Center for Neighborhood Technology, AllTransit 2016	**Performance**: 3 points for >=90% within half miles of transit; 2 points 80%-89%; 1 point 70-79%; 0 points <70% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >15% gap
Voter Turnout: Percent of voters in a county that voted in the 2016 general election. Voters include registered voters in all counties except Los Angeles County, where universe includes voter-eligible population.	United States Elections Project 2016	**Performance**: 3 points for >=90% turnout; 2 points 80%-89%; 1 point 70-79%; 0 points <70%
Youth Safety: The number of deaths to persons aged between 1 and 19 years old per 100,000 persons.	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WONDER Databases 2011-2015	**Performance**: 3 points for <=20 deaths per 100,000; 2 points 20-25 deaths; 1 point 25-30 deaths; 0 points >30 **Equity**: 3 points for <=10 disparity gap; 2 points 10-15 gap; 1 point 15-20 gap, 0 points >20
Housing Cost Burden: The percentage of renter-occupied households with housing costs of more than 30 percent of household income. Housing costs include rent and utilities, including heating fuels.	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2015 5-year American Community Survey 2011-2015	**Performance**: 3 points for <=10% housing cost burden; 2 points 11-20%; 1 point 21-30%; 0 points >30% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >15% gap

COMMITMENT

Indicator Definition	Source	Scoring Benchmark
Access to Early Childhood Education: The number and rate of Head Start program facilities per 10,000 children under age 5 in each county.	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2015 5-year American Community Survey 2011-2015	**Performance**: 3 points for >=90% participation in early childhood education; 2 points 80%-89%; 1 point 70-79%; 0 points <70%
Pre-School Suspension: The number of preschool children receiving at least one out-of-school suspensions; and the percentage of the suspensions by racial group (equity).	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-2014	**Equity**: 3 points for <=10 pre-school suspensions; If more than 10 pre-school suspensions, 3 points for <=10% difference in proportion of suspensions by race compared to proportion of student population by race; 2 points 11-20% gap; 1 point 21-30% gap; 0 points >30% Note: The total percent of the national preschool student population receiving suspensions at a population level is less than 1%, which makes overall performance difficult to reliably score. Still, there are a significant number of children experiencing inappropriate use of exclusionary discipline practices and large inequities in how this affects students of different races. Because of this we focus on scoring equity rather than performance, however cities with below 10 suspensions were deemed to have too small of a sample size to make a reasonable assessment of equity and instead received full points for having seemingly low utilization of exclusionary discipline policies overall.
Suspensions Alternatives: The percentage of K-12 students receiving at least one suspension of any type (e.g. in-school, out of school).	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-2014	**Performance**: 3 points for <=10% suspension rates; 2 points 10-15%; 1 point 15-20%; 0 points >20% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >15% gap
Expulsion Alternatives: The percentage of K-12 students expelled from public school, irrespective of educational service provision or expulsion under zero tolerance policies.	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-2014	**Equity**: 3 points for <=10 expulsions; If more than 10 expulsions, 3 points for <=10% difference in proportion of suspensions by race compared to proportion of student population by race; 2 points 11-20% gap; 1 point 21-30% gap; 0 points >30%
Anti-Bullying: The number of K-12 students disciplined for bullying or harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, or disability divided by the total number of K-12 students.	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-2014	**Performance**: 3 points for >0 reports of harassment; 0 points for 0 reports of harassment. Note: several cities reported zero allegations of harassment of bullying, which is more likely a result of under reporting than positive culture. Because this data was unreliable but the indicator is so important, in this version of the Index we gave cities full points for reporting and zero points for not reporting. In the future we hope there is more consistent and comprehensive data collection to score this more rigorously.

CAPACITY

Indicator Definition	Source	Scoring Benchmark
K-8 Gifted curriculum: The percentage of non-secondary schools that offer gifted/talented programs.	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-14	**Performance**: 3 points for >=90% schools offering gifted/talented programs; 2 points 80%-89% of schools; 1 point 70-79% of schools; 0 points <70% schools Note: Data did not exist on percent of students that attend a K-8 school with gifted programming or participation rates in gifted classes, so we resorted to percent of schools offering and were not able to score equity.
High School advanced curriculum: The percentage of High school students enrolled in at least 1 AP/IB course.	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-14	**Performance**: 3 points for >=40% students enrolled in 1+ AP/IB course; 2 points 30-39%; 1 point >20-29%; 0 points <20% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points <15% gap Note: the performance scoring is based on the logic that AP/IB are generally intended for Juniors and Seniors, therefore a target of 40-50% of High School students enrolled in at least one AP class is more appropriate.
School Economic Integration: The percentage of students in schools where more than 75 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.	National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Data Files, 2014-15 Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data 2014-2015	**Performance**: 3 points for <=10% students in high poverty schools; 2 points 11-20%; 1 point 21-30%; 0 points >30% **Equity**: 3 points for <=5% disparity gap; 2 points 6-10% gap; 1 point 11-15% gap; 0 points >15% gap
Well-resourced schools: The average teacher salary expenditures in a city's largest public school district. Salaries adjusted for cost of living.	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-14	**Performance**: 3 points for >=$58,240, 2 points $53,240 — 58,239, 1 point $48,240 — 53,239; 0 points <$48,240 Note: This was based on the rationale that teachers should be making more than 400% federal poverty level after adjusting for cost of living as an absolute minimum, which for an individual would be $12,060 x 4 = $48,240. Average salaries must be above $48,240 to receive a point, and every additional $5,000 in average salary (approximately 10%) is an additional point.
Teacher Experience: The percentage of FTE teachers with more than two years' experience.	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2009-2010	**Performance**: 3 points for >=90% teachers with >2 years' experience; 2 points 80%-89% of teachers; 1 point 70-79% of teachers; 0 points <=70% teachers

Thermometer Data

Indicator Definition	Source
Graduation rates: The regulatory four-year adjusted-cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who formed the cohort for that graduating class. The four-year adjusted cohort rate also includes students who graduate in less than four years.	United States Department of Education, ED-Facts Initiative SY 2010-11 – SY 2014-15
Adults with Associate degrees: The percentage of adults age 25 or older with an Associate degree or higher.	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2015 5-year American Community Survey 2011-2015
Children Living Below Poverty: The percentage of children under age 18 with family income below the federal poverty level.	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2015 5-year American Community Survey 2011-2015
Public School District Poverty: Percent of students in the school district that qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2014-2015
Youth not in school or work: The percentage of people ages 16 through 24 who are not enrolled in school and not employed.	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2015 5-year American Community Survey 2011-2015
Unemployment rate: The percentage of people in the labor force age 16 or older that are unemployed. Unemployed is defined as being without work and actively seeking it. The labor force includes those who are employed or unemployed.	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2015 5-year American Community Survey 2011-2015
Limited English Proficiency: The percentage of students in the district whose native language is a language other than English.	Office for Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2014-2015
Infant mortality: The number of deaths to persons aged less than 365 days per 1000 live births. Universe includes all live births.	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WONDER Online Databases 2011-2014

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