



ABFE

A Philanthropic Partnership
for Black Communities



Education

Fact Sheet

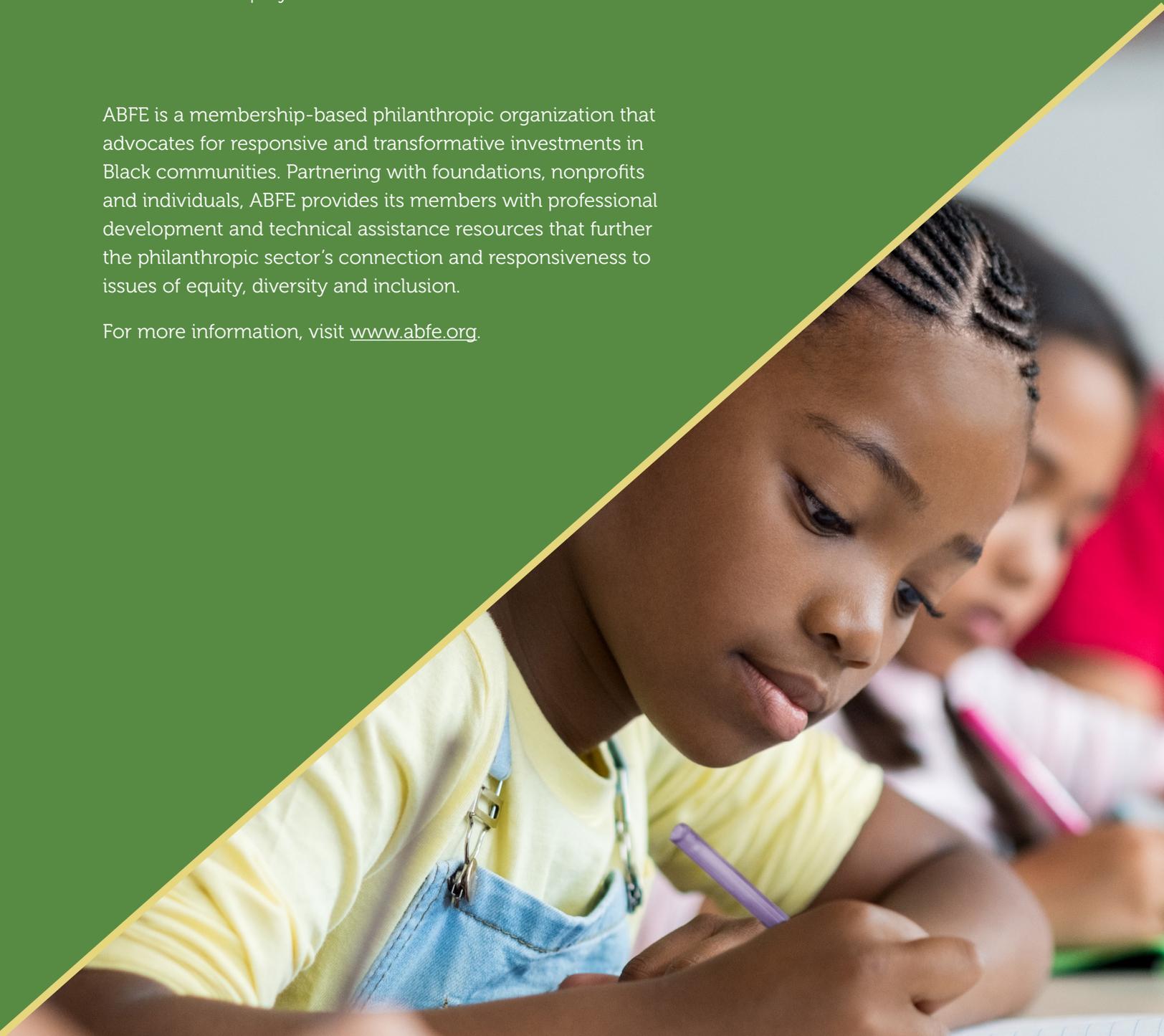
Overview

The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision turned the national spotlight on equitable education for Black children in America. Decades later, the practices, theories, and barriers to the highest and best outcomes are still evolving. Quality, easily accessible, well-resourced education opportunities are foundational for building and sustaining healthy communities.

This factsheet is intended to contextualize the current education equity situation in the United States through a racial justice/impact lens. Utilize the contents to create optimal assessments, strategies, and resource deployment.

ABFE is a membership-based philanthropic organization that advocates for responsive and transformative investments in Black communities. Partnering with foundations, nonprofits and individuals, ABFE provides its members with professional development and technical assistance resources that further the philanthropic sector's connection and responsiveness to issues of equity, diversity and inclusion.

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Barriers

Policies and practices

Segregation

In antebellum United States, it was illegal for enslaved Africans to read or write and it was illegal for individuals to educate them. Also, free people of color could not attend school. Although *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided in 1954, the *Brown II* decision of 1955 and its “all deliberate speed” moniker gave permission for states to delay desegregation or avoid desegregation by closing all schools or creating “freedom of choice plans.” In Virginia, for example, Prince Edward County closed all schools for five years until the Supreme Court ruled it illegal in 1964.¹ The 1965 Elementary Secondary Education Act, Title I, linked funding for low-income districts to school desegregation as result of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. States who wanted funding had some incentive to desegregate, however, desegregation did not fully start until after the 1968 *Green v. New Kent County* decision.²

Redlining

The federal policy of linking insurance rates to racially designated residential areas began in the 1930s and the practice also impacted schools. Municipalities and counties created school districts along those same race-based boundaries with Black schools severely under-resourced in environmentally unfriendly or difficult to reach areas. Today, majority Black districts (typically urban areas) all over the

nation have lower property taxes—a carryover from redlining. With property taxes tied to school funding, urban school budgets are at times half that of suburban budgets.

Local and State Desegregation Practices

Local responses to desegregation orders often were resolved by closing majority Black schools. Although Black students had the option to attend these schools, numerous Black teachers and administrators lost their jobs as districts chose to rely on the teachers and administrators in place at the White schools. With regard to State colleges, this also impacted state funding of HBCUs. Enrollment declined as Black students had opportunities to attend non-Black state schools with additional course offerings. Often these were HBCU Teacher Programs.

Curricular Policies

Tracking, which is when school districts group students based on actual or assumed academic abilities, is criticized because tracking can be subjective or based on standardized tests, which have biases.³

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Barriers

Unequal opportunity

Enrollment Segregation

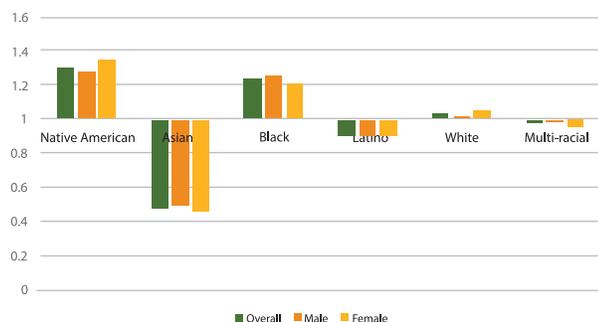
The experience of being racially segregated has not diminished for a majority of Black children. The school age enrollment of Black children has decreased from 2004 to 2014. In 2004, approximately 8.4 million Black children enrolled in K-12 settings and by 2014 it decreased to 7.8 million. This change results in Black children representing 17% of overall public elementary and secondary school enrollment in 2004 and in 2014 Black children represent 16%.⁴

As enrollment has diminished among Black children, an interesting pattern has maintained – school segregation. According to Orfield and Frankenberg,⁵ the percent of Black students in predominantly White Schools in 1954 was 0% then reached its peak in 1988 at 43.5% and in 2011 fell to 23.2%. The concern about these segregation patterns is similar to the issues raised in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Special Education enrollment

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was enacted in 1975 with the purpose of ensuring children with disabilities receive Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to meet their individual needs. However, since 1968 the US Department of Education continues to monitor the rate in which racial/ethnic children are being identified as a student with a disability Figure 1 demonstrates the relative risk ratio of special education services by

Figure 1: Relative Risk Ratio of Special Education Services by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2013-14.



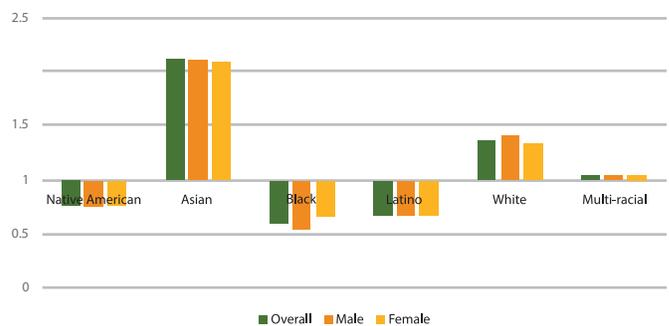
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

race and gender. In 2013-14, Black students are nearly 25% more likely than all other students to be identified as a student with a disability.

Gifted enrollment

Another important provision of educational opportunity is the potential of experiencing accelerated or advanced instruction and curricula. Under the US Department of Education, research-based information and grants are provided for the implementation of gifted education programming, however each state and local school district are able to organize their own process of eligibility. Figure 2 illustrates the relative risk ratio of gifted program enrollment by race and gender. Black children have risk of .⁶ which means they are 40% less likely than all other students to be enrolled in a gifted program.

Figure 2: Relative Risk Ratio of Gifted Program Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender: 2013-14.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

Discipline Rate

Historically, various federal agencies examine the disproportionality or over-representation in discipline. Most recently, the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act titled ESSA, outlined multiple policies regarding the identification and remedy of disproportionate suspension. Black children are at severely heightened risk or likelihood of being suspended. Black children are more than 3 times more likely than all other students to be suspended.⁶ Of particular interest is the rate for Black boys and girls, 2.79 for boys and 4.16 for girls.

Access to Diverse Voices

Another barrier existing for Black children is access to diverse voices, specifically teacher diversity. The concern here is whether Black children are being exposed to diverse voices during their educational trajectory. In a recent study of New York State teaching workforce diversity Education Trust found that “more than 115,000 Latino and Black students attend schools with no teachers of the same race or ethnicity and an additional 80,000 Latino and Black

students attend schools with just one teacher of the same race or ethnicity...nearly half of all White students — 48 percent, or more than 560,000 White students — are enrolled in schools without a single Latino or Black teacher.”⁷

This minimal access to diverse voices raises concerns regarding the quality of curricular diversity, identity development as part of school culture, instructional complexity, and perception of who is qualified to teach.

Pathways to Equity

The intention of this section is to provide a broad overview of strategies and programs that continuously offered to solve some of the unequal opportunity however they each maintain their theories of how the problem emerged and needs to be addressed. The following are eleven strategies and programs highlighted in report from New York State My Brother’s Keeper Initiative⁸:

Strategy 1: Mentoring

Mentoring, defined as a long-term face-to-face relationship between an adult and student, has demonstrated positive outcomes for children of color, and Black children specifically.

Strategy 2: Recruitment of Racial/Ethnic Minority Teachers

Racial and ethnic minority teachers can serve as models of achievement and positively influence the academic achievement and self-perceptions of students of color.

Strategy 3: Culturally Relevant Curriculum and Instruction

Commonly referenced and adopted as Ladson Billings’ (1994) coined term “culturally relevant teaching”, which is defined as an “approach that empowers students, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

Strategy 4: Rites of Passage Programs

Rites-of-passage programs provide youth with experiences and information to strengthen social and spiritual development into adulthood while encouraging the adoption of attitudes, behaviors, and practices important to healthy youth development.

Strategy 5: College Readiness Programs

The examined college readiness programs demonstrate that when a student is provided with academic and social supports, develop an awareness for college, and are prepared academically to take college level courses their chances of enrollment and success in college increases.

Strategy 6: Character Education Programs/Social Emotional Learning

Character education and social emotional learning prepare and equip Black children with the ability to navigate and manage their lives.

Strategy 7: School Policy Change

Changes to school policies have shifted assessment practices reducing special education referrals, increasing AP enrollment and success, and reducing expulsions and suspension.

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Strategy 8: Early Warning Systems

Effective Early Warning Systems promptly identify “at risk” students, immediately provide short and long-term targeted interventions and supports, monitor interventions for their effectiveness/ineffectiveness, modify ineffective interventions and supports, and report outcomes to continue supporting “at-risk” students on their path to graduation

Strategy 9: Family and Community Engagement

Family engagement refers to a partnership between families, schools, and communities to enhance and support student learning and achievement.

Strategy 10: Community Schools

Community schools, recognized as the “hub” of a community, provide programs and services through community-based partnerships that address the holistic development of youth.

Strategy 11: Single Gender Schools

Girls in single-gender/sex environments compared to girls in co-educational settings perform slightly better in all academic subjects; and under-performing boys in single-gender/sex environments compared to boys in co-educational settings perform slightly better in the subjects of under-performance.



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