



# School Counseling to Close the Achievement Gap: A Social Justice Framework

Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, Ph.D.

[Cholcomb@umd.edu](mailto:Cholcomb@umd.edu)

# Today's Agenda

- Assess your “Equity/Diversity IQ.”
- Define and describe the achievement gap.
- Define social justice and equity.
- Learn how to assess equity in schools.
- Discuss six key elements of a social justice focused school counseling program.
- Begin developing a “vision” for your school counseling program!

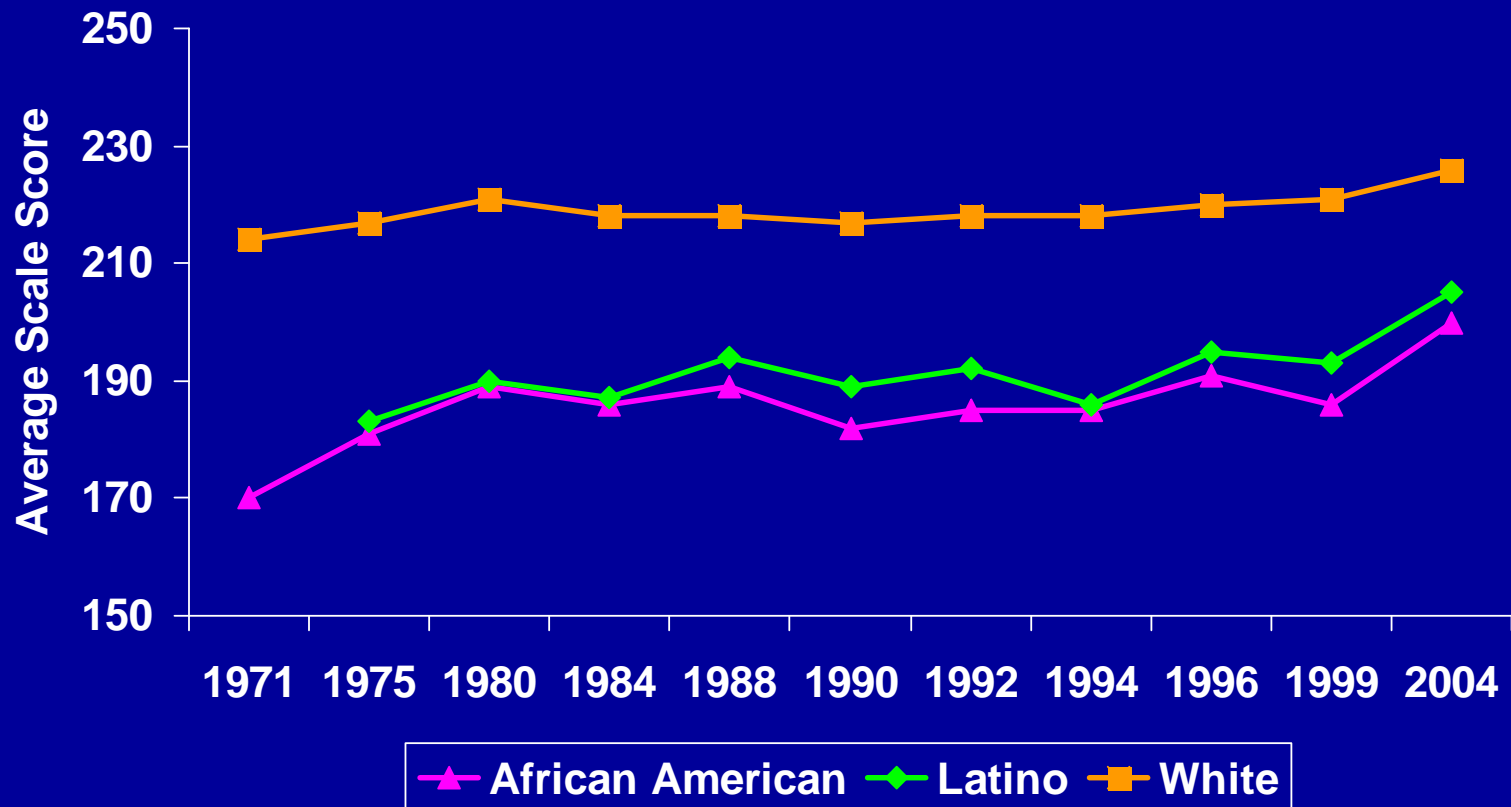
# Getting Started--Respect Activity

Find someone in the room who you do not know. Introduce yourself and spend 5 minutes talking about RESPECT! What does it mean for you to show respect, and discuss what it means for you to be shown respect?

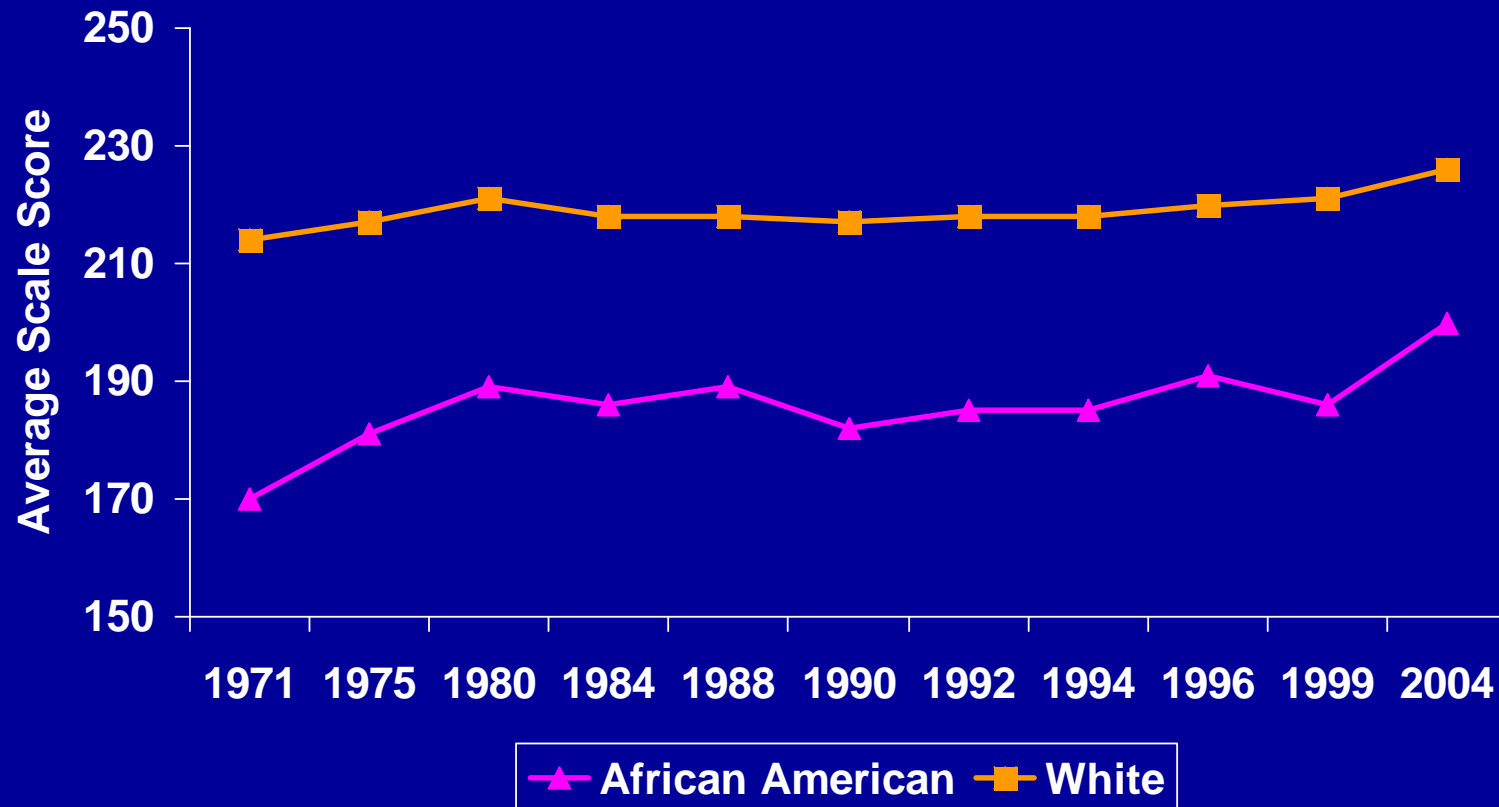
What is your  
Equity/Diversity  
IQ?

# The Achievement Gap

# NAEP Reading, 9 Year-Olds Record Performance for All Groups



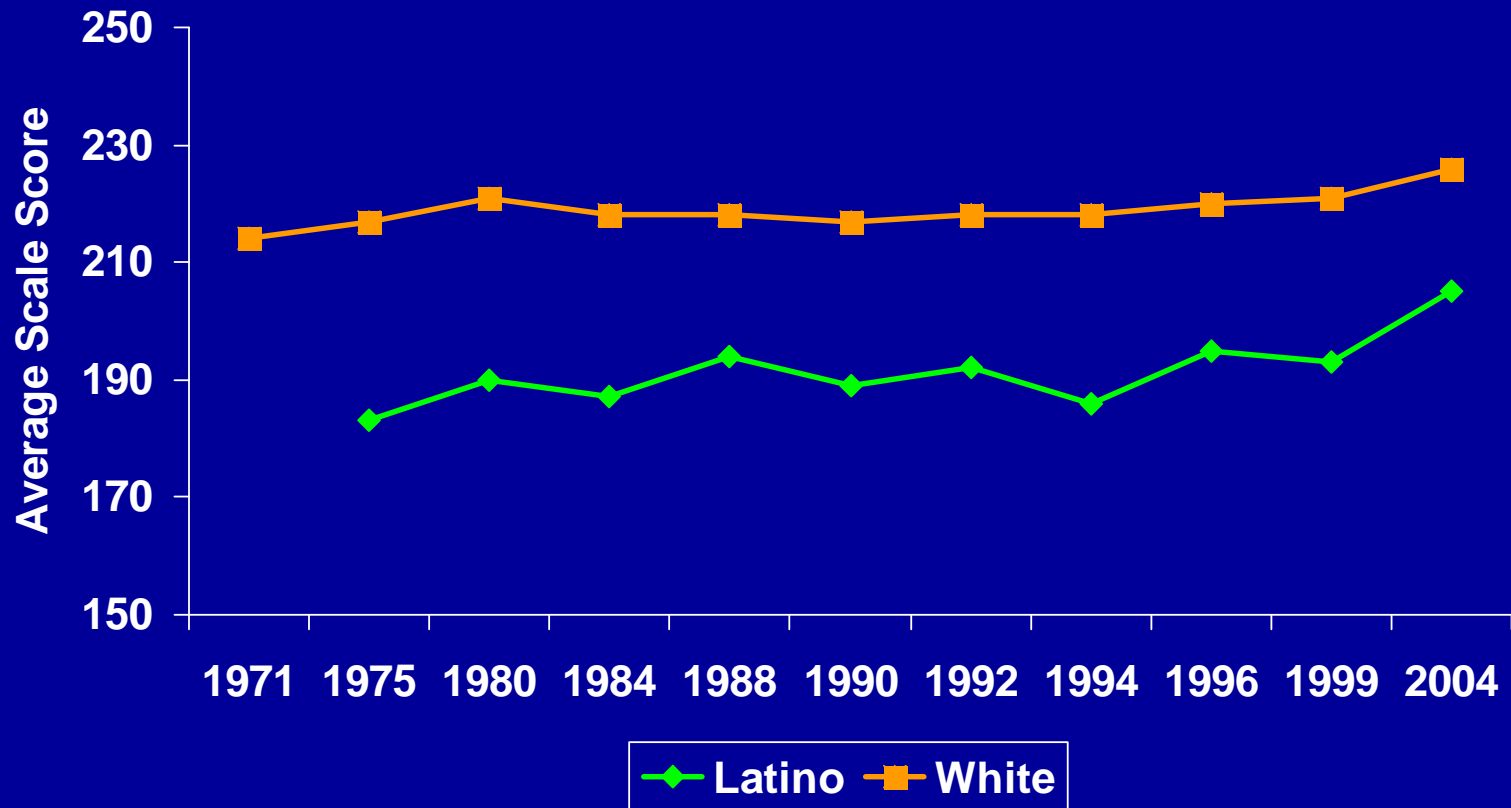
# NAEP Reading, 9 Year-Olds African American-White Gap Narrows to Smallest Size in History



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress

# NAEP Reading, 9 Year-Olds

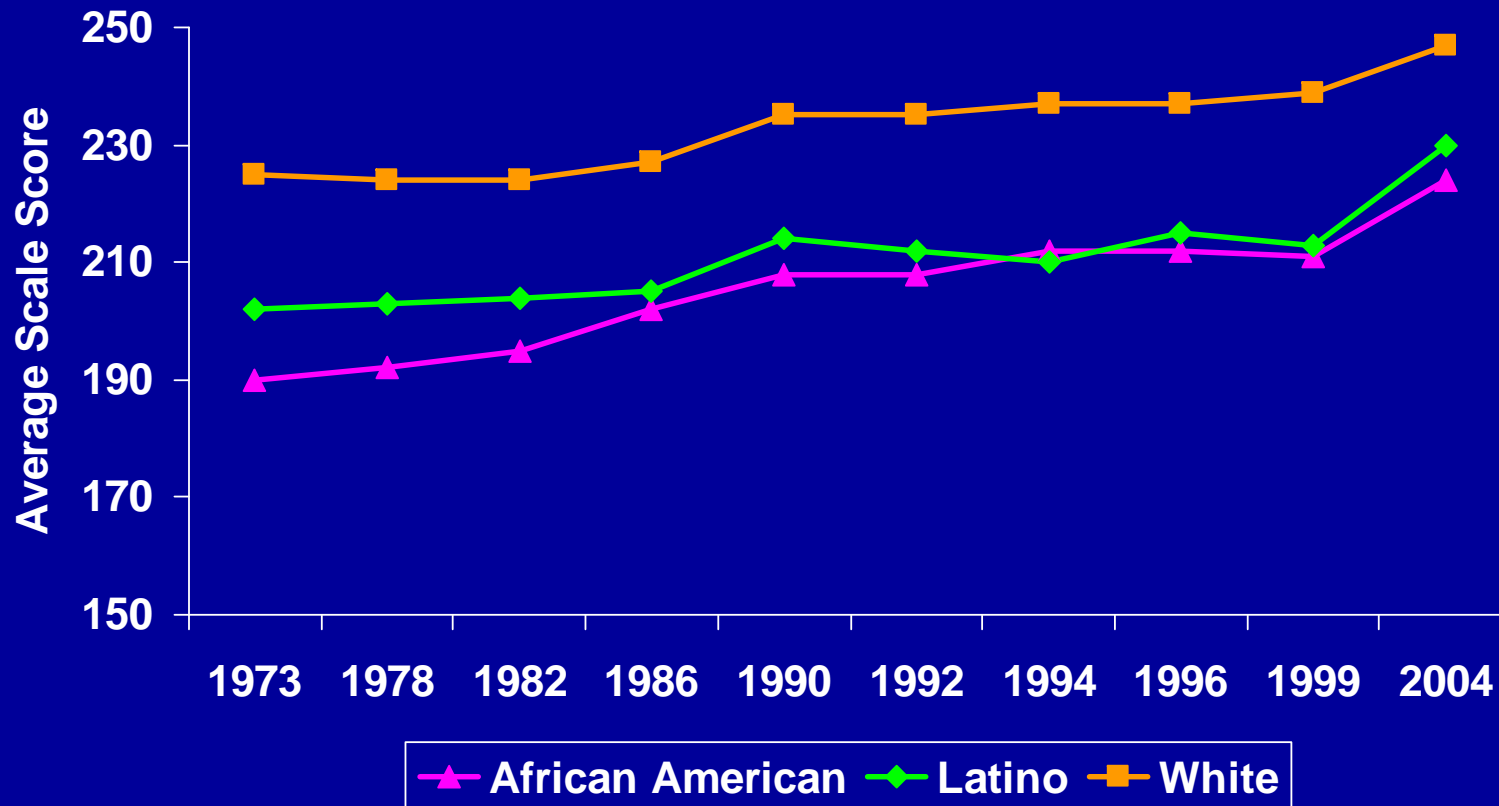
## Latino-White Gap Narrows to Smallest Size in History



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress

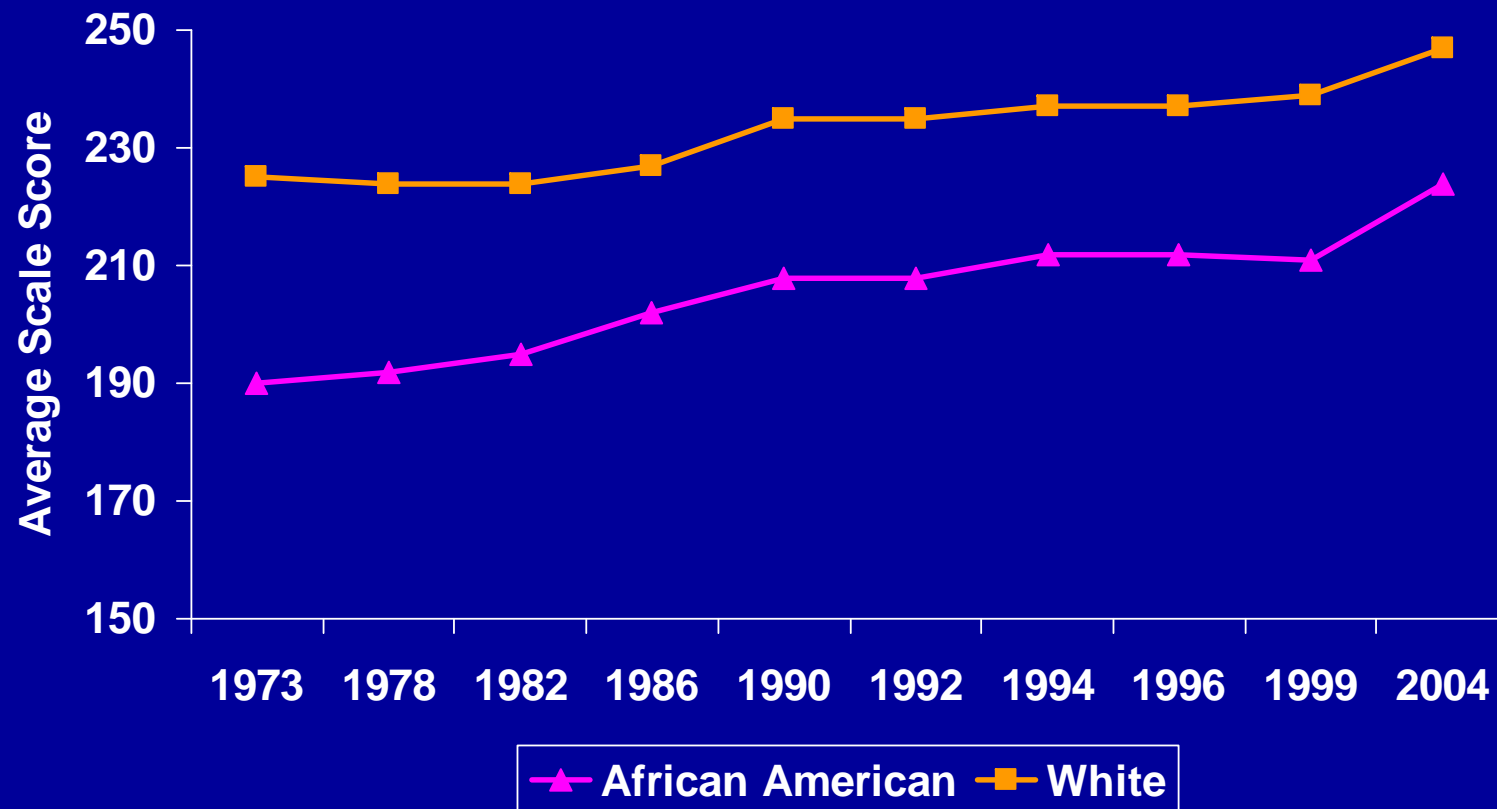
# NAEP Math, 9 Year-Olds

## Record Performance for All Groups



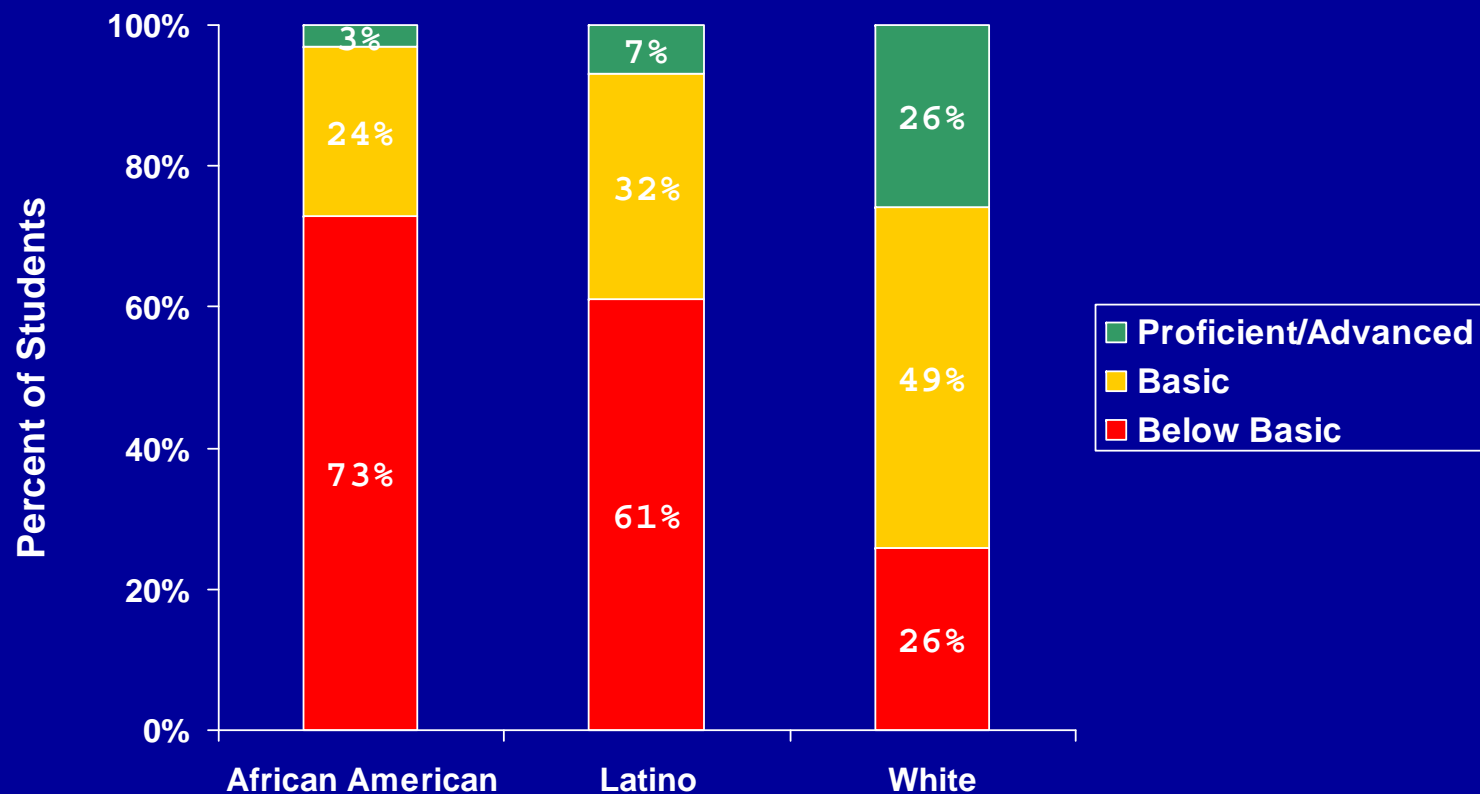
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# NAEP Math, 9 Year-Olds African American-White Gap Narrows to Smallest Size in History



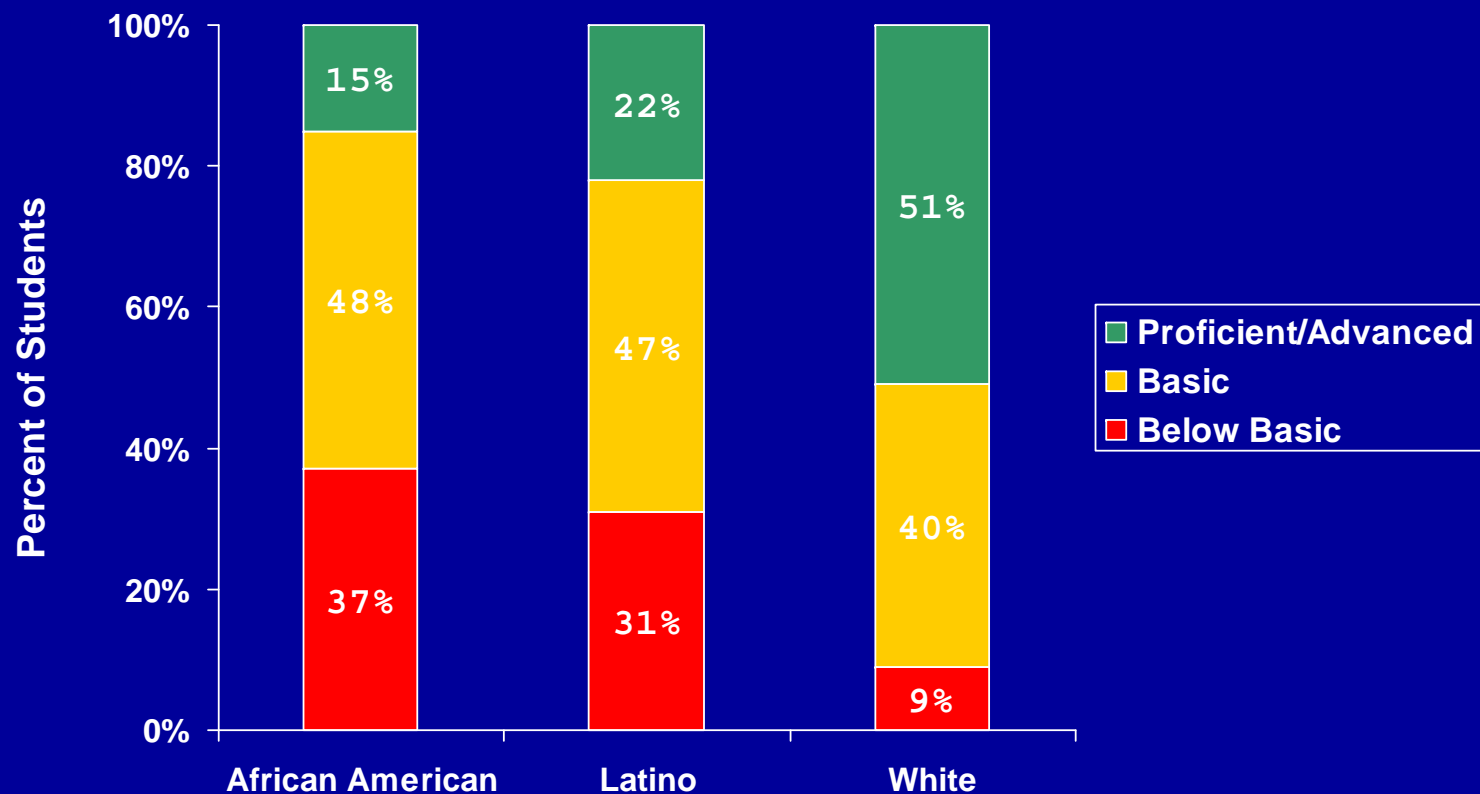
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress

# 1996 NAEP Grade 4 Math by Race/Ethnicity, Nation



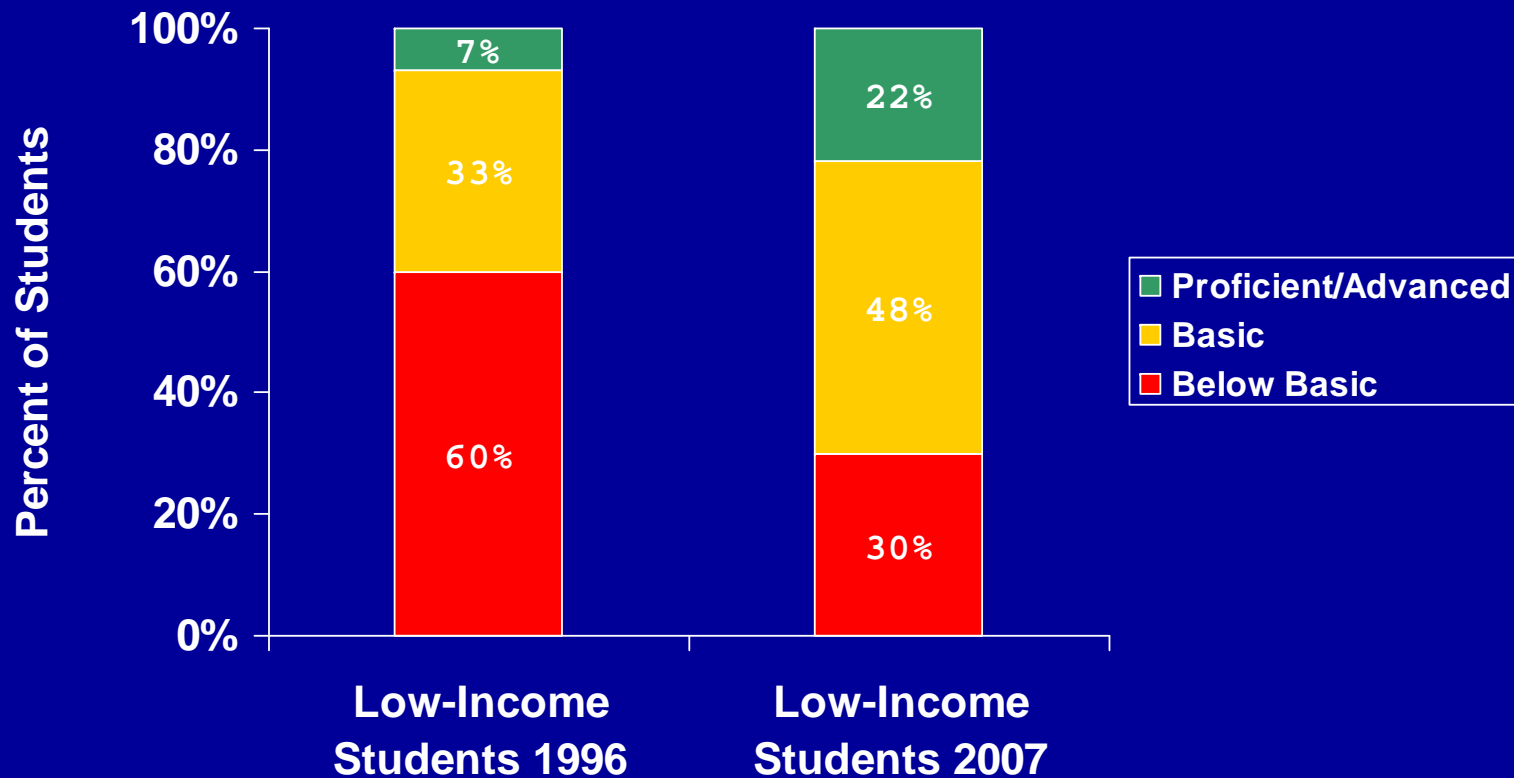
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/>

# 2007 NAEP Grade 4 Math by Race/Ethnicity, Nation



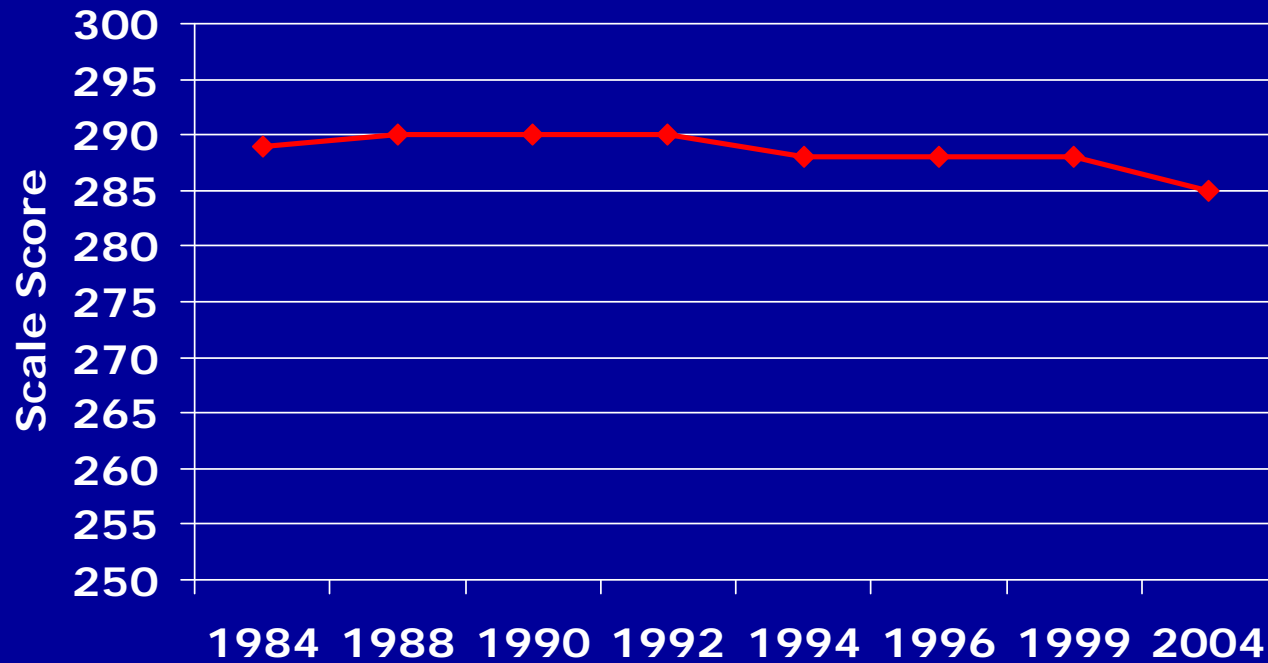
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/>

# NAEP Grade 4 Math Low-Income Students, Nation 1996 compared to 2007

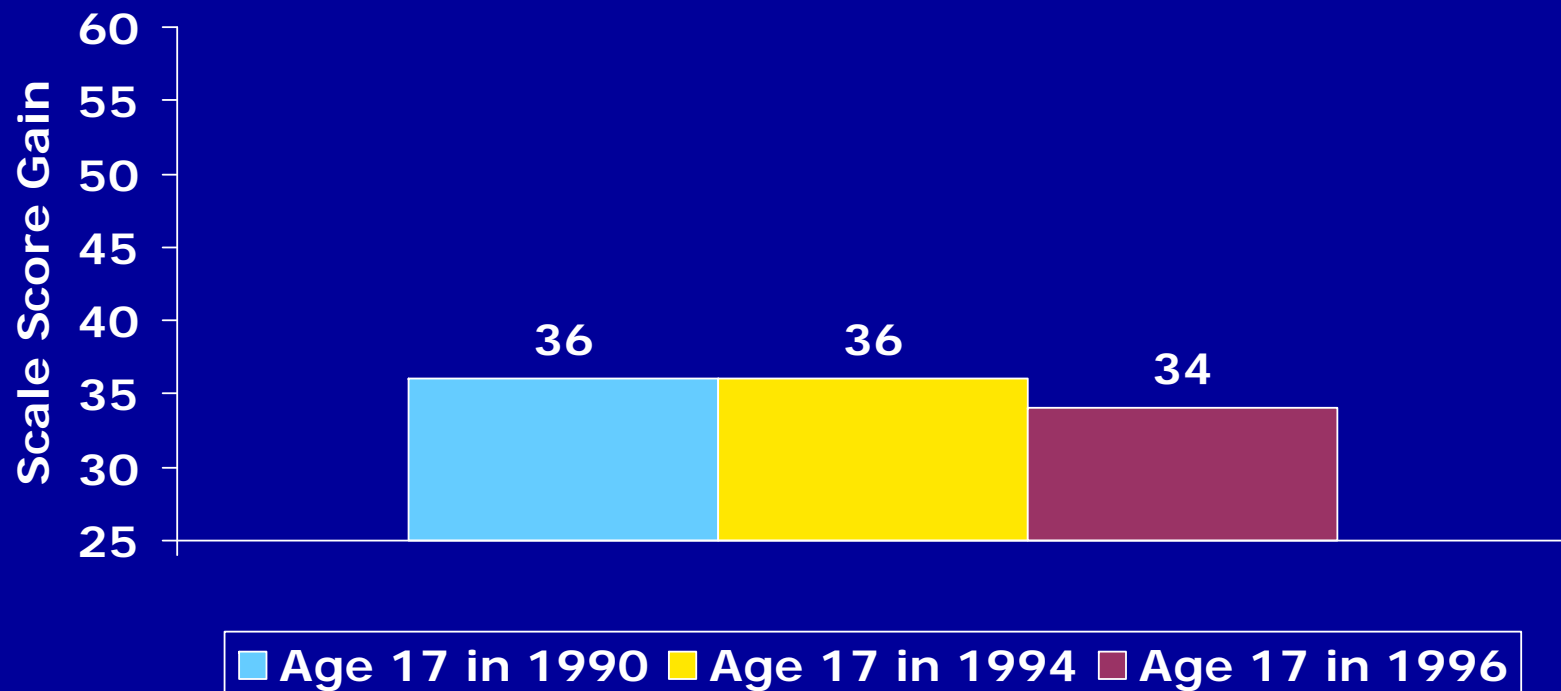


But, we're not really building on  
these successes in our schools!

# Achievement Flat or Declining in Reading, 17 year olds, NAEP

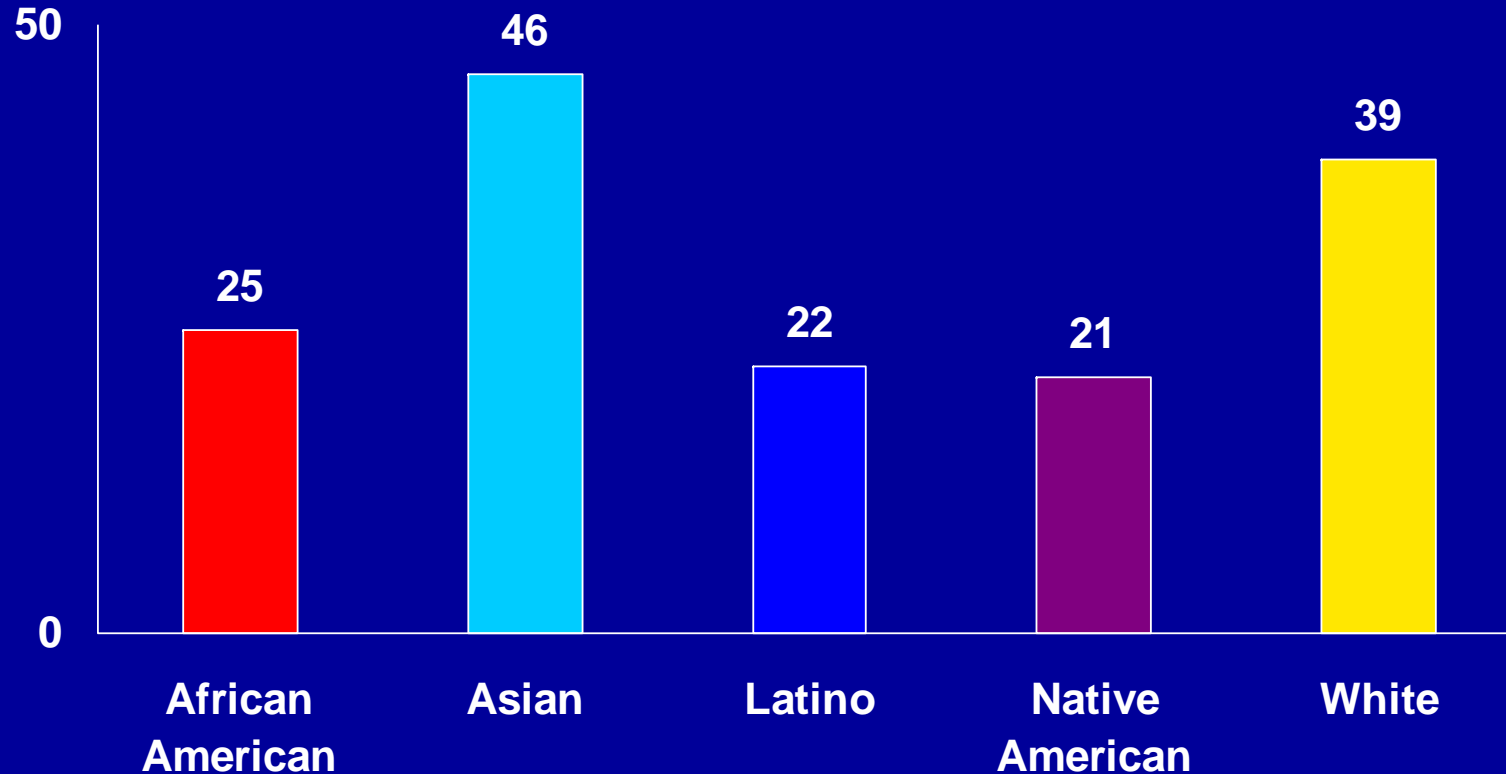


# Value Added Declining in High School Math...



Note: Scale score gains reflect the difference between the scale scores of 17-year-olds and the scale scores of 13-year-olds four years prior.

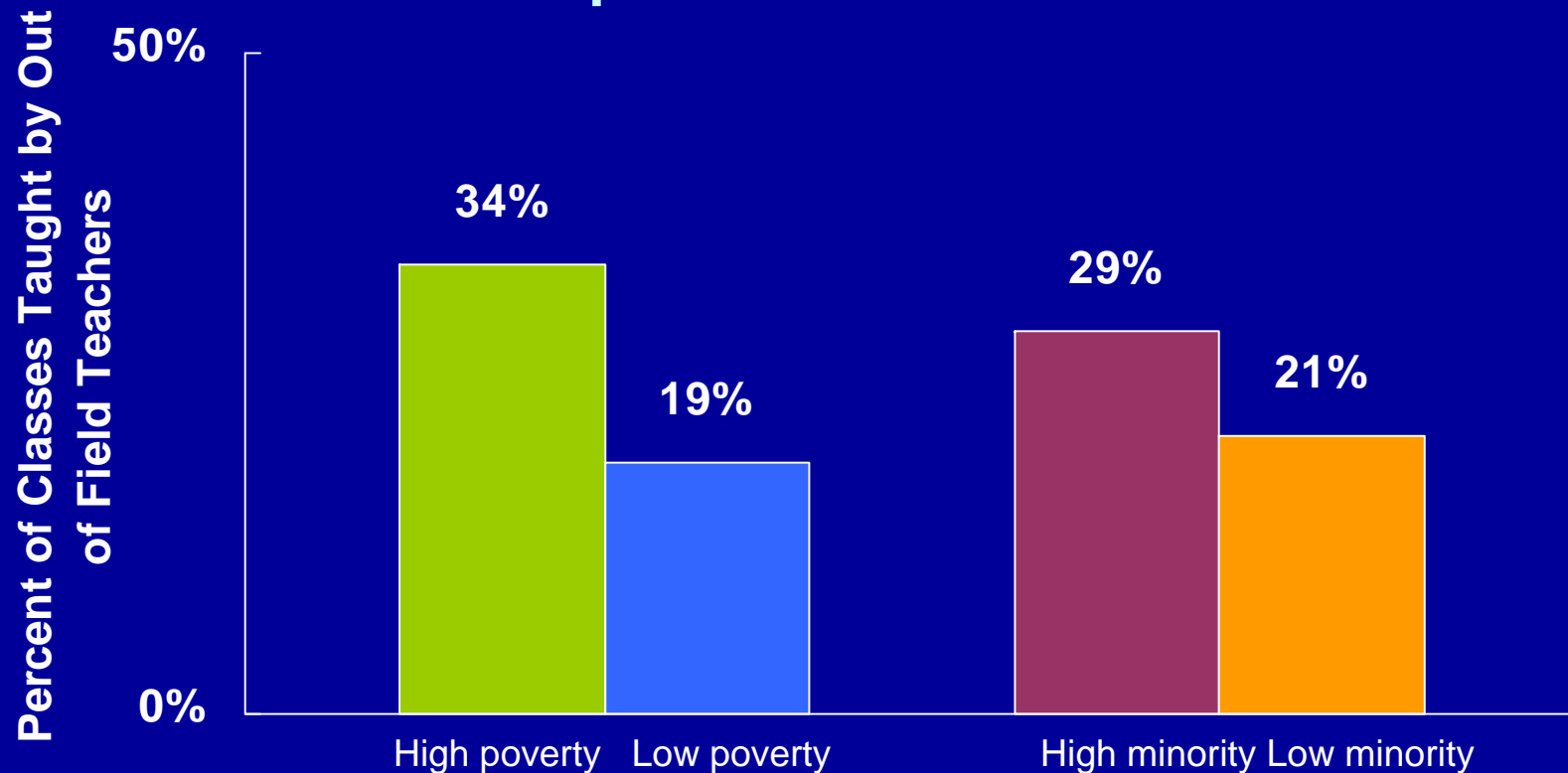
# African American, Latino & Native American high school graduates are less likely to be in a full college prep track



Full College Prep track is defined as at least: 4 years of English, 3 years of math, 2 years of natural science, 2 years of social science and 2 years of foreign language

Source: Jay P. Greene, Public High School Graduation and College Readiness Rates in the United States, Manhattan Institute, September 2003. Table 8. 2001 high school graduates with college-prep curriculum.

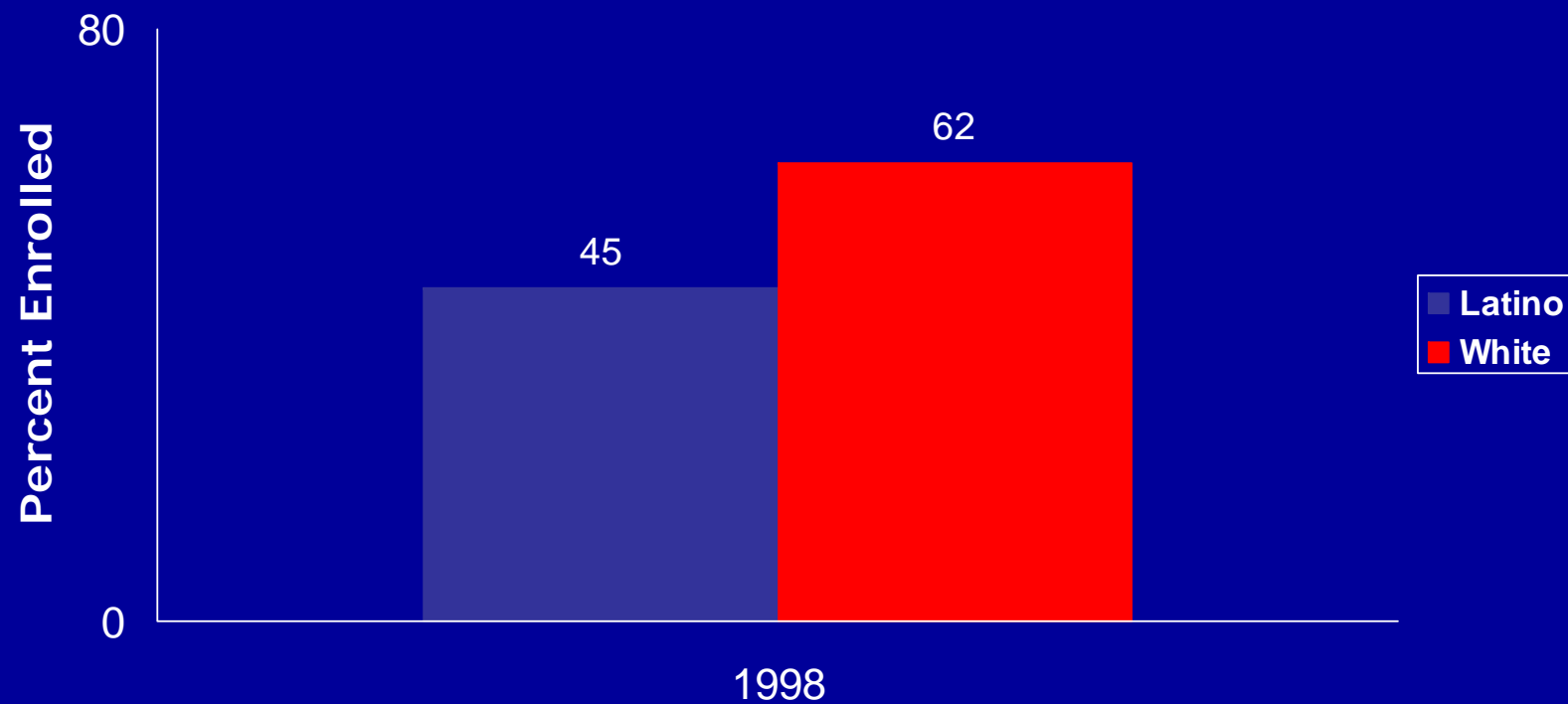
# US: Poor and Minority Students Get More Inexperienced\* Teachers



**\*Teachers with 3 or fewer years of experience.**

Note: High poverty refers to the top quartile of schools with students eligible for free/reduced price lunch. Low poverty-bottom quartile of schools with students eligible for free/reduced price lunch. High minority-top quartile; those schools with the highest concentrations of minority students. Low minority-bottom quartile of schools with the lowest concentrations of minority students

# Fewer Latino students are enrolled in Algebra 2



Source: CCSSO, State Indicators of Science and Mathematics Education, 2001

## Of Every 100 White Kindergartners:

**94** Graduate from  
high school

**66** Complete at least  
some college

**34** Obtain at least a  
Bachelor's Degree

(25-to 29-Year-Olds)

# Of Every 100 African American Kindergartners:

- 89** Graduate from  
High School
- 51** Complete at Least  
Some College
- 18** Obtain at Least a  
Bachelor's Degree

(25-to 29-Year-Olds)

## Of Every 100 Latino Kindergartners:

- 62** Graduate from high school
- 31** Complete at least some college
- 10** Obtain at least a Bachelor's Degree

(25-to 29-Year-Olds)

Of Every 100 American Indian/Alaskan  
Native  
Kindergartners:

**71** Graduate from  
high school

**30** Complete at least  
some college

**12** Obtain at least a  
Bachelor's Degree

**(25 Years Old and Older)**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *We the People: American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States*.

Data source: Census 2000, [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/censr-28.pdf](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/censr-28.pdf)

# What Can We Do To Address The Achievement Gap?

School Counselors Can....

Perform and Behave Within a  
Social Justice Framework!!!

And

...Promote Equity Among All  
Students!

# What is Social Justice?

- Social justice refers to the idea of a just society
- Social justice targets marginalized groups of people in society, schools, etc. (whereas equality or equal rights are applicable to everyone).

Social Justice recognizes that there are situations in which the application of the same rules to unequal groups can generate unequal results.

# Traditional vs. Social Justice Approach to School Counseling

## **Traditional SC Approach**

1. Dependence on counseling theories and approaches with little to no regard for cultural background
2. Emphasis on individual student factors (e.g., unmotivated, depressed)
3. Emphasis on equality
4. Reliance on labels
5. Little to no use of data
6. Focus on maintaining status quo
7. Focus on enrolling students in “comfortable” courses

## **Social Justice Approach**

1. Major focus is on highlighting the strengths of students (empowerment-based counseling)
2. Emphasis on socio-cultural and environmental factors (e.g., poverty, discrimination, neighborhoods) that influence student behavior
3. Major goal is to challenge oppression
4. Emphasis on equality and equity
5. Avoidance of labeling
6. Dependence on data
7. Focus on changing existing policies and strategies
8. Focus on enrolling students in more rigorous courses

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# What is Equity?

Equity requires that school counselors treat students differently on the basis of aspects of students' cultures, including ethnicity, gender, income background, etc. in order to create equality

# Assessing Equity in Schools?

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- Are teachers paying attention to, asking probing questions of, and encouraging all students?
- Are students being discouraged from speaking and writing in their native language and encouraged to give up their culture?
- Are students of color in positions of leadership?
- How do your colleagues explain the disproportionate failure or success by students of color, language minority students, and students from low-economic classes?
- Do educators from different ethnic backgrounds communicate with each other?
- Do bilingual teachers have as much power in the school as regular education teachers?
- Which parents have the most influence in the school?
- Do the most experienced and better qualified teachers teach the classes with a disproportionately high number of White or affluent students?

So where do I start?

# Six Key Elements to Social Justice Focused School Counseling

1. Counseling and Intervention Planning
2. Consultation
3. Connecting Schools, Families, and Communities
4. Collecting and Using Data
5. Challenging Bias
6. Coordinating Student Services

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# Counseling and Intervention Planning

- Must be culturally competent and alert
- Assess environmental factors that impact client problem
- Use a strengths perspective or “empowerment-focused” approach
- Use cultural specific approaches and strategies

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# Critical Factors That Affect School Counseling and the Counseling Relationship

- Cultural differences
- Prejudice, history of discrimination, and oppression (e.g., faulty beliefs)
- Discomfort, fear
- Migration/acculturation
- Social class (poverty)
- Language differences

# Three Components of An Effective Counseling Relationship

- Working Alliance

alignment between the counselor and student. *The student must see him/herself as an individual with an issue, rather than as the issue!*

- Transference/Countertransference

unconscious process by which students' negative feelings, attitudes, and behaviors are transferred onto the counselor.

- Real Relationship (Terrell & Cheatham, 1996)

genuineness, respect, authenticity, and openness that both the counselor and student have established

# Empowerment-Focused Counseling

- Developing critical consciousness is key to this counseling process
  - Acknowledge group identification (common experiences and concern with a particular group)
  - Group consciousness-- understanding the differential status of power of groups in society
  - Self and collective efficacy: perceiving one's self as a subject of social processes and as capable of working to change the social order

# Counseling Practice



- Edward, an African American 9th grader in a high poverty school in a northeastern inner city, is told to see the school counselor because of recent confrontations with his English teacher. Edward tells the counselor that he is tired of being told what to do by these “f---g teachers.” “They want to tell us what to do...I don’t need anyone telling me what to do. I look after myself. These teachers come in here and then go back to their nice families and nice houses, and leave us here...with nothing. I hate y’all!” The counselor recognizes Edward’s anger and frustration. The counselor validates Edward’s anger, “I hear your anger and frustration with teachers.” Let’s talk.
  - What could the counselor say next in order for Edward to explore his group’s (or groups’) history of oppression? (Developing critical consciousness)
  - How might you link his group’s history to future empowerment? What types of activities could you try with Edward? Describe.
  - Practice what you would say.

# Sample Counselor Responses

- Edward, I believe we have a pretty good relationship...do you think so? I'm glad to hear that. I want to talk to you about a subject that I think we should talk about and it's relationship to your problems with teachers and school. I want to talk to you about being an African American male. What does being African American and male mean to you? What do other people think of African American males? How does that meaning relate to your interactions with teachers? How do you *feel about others' perceptions of you* (of African American males)?
- Edward, let's talk about fairness and equity. You talk a lot about fairness when you discuss your teachers. How would you define equity and equality? Do you see inequities in other places in this city? Tell me.

# Important!



- Don't be afraid to talk about race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc. Students will appreciate your willingness to dialogue about these “silenced” topics!!!
- Remember, students need role models of responsible “talk!”

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- Consultation

- Acknowledge cultural differences between the consultant, consultee, and client.
- Develop a “quality” helping relationship with the consultee
- The use and power of questioning
- Learn to assess a school’s culture (e.g., norms, rituals, value system, communication patterns)
- Culturally appropriate and empowerment-focused parent consultation

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- Connecting Schools, Families, and Communities
  - CREATE PARTNERSHIPS
  - Five Principles of Effective Partnerships
    - Policies
    - Leadership
    - Communication
    - The Community
    - Evaluation

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- Collecting and Using Data
  - Data can be useful in determining inequities in schools...What do I want to know about my school's ability to educate students? What questions do I have about my students? My school's community?
  - Types of data that can be collected...achievement, attainment, school culture
  - Program evaluation methods (SOARING model)

# What types of data are collected at your school? By school counselors?



- Achievement Data (PSAT, SAT, ACT, state tests, etc.)
- Attainment: promotion and retention rates, G/T patterns, special education identification, graduation rates, post secondary patterns
- School Culture: attendance, student-faculty relationships, drop out rates, staff attitudes, school climate

# SOARING

## Accountability System

- S: Standards
- O: Objectives
- A: Assessment
- R: Results
- I: Impact
- N: Network
- G: Guide

By Sylinda Gilchrist, Ph.D. Norfolk State University

# Challenge Bias

- Be aware of your own attitudes, stereotypes and expectations
- Actively listen to and learn from others' experiences
- Acknowledge and appreciate diversity, don't just tolerate it!
- Be aware of your own hesitations to intervene
- Expect tension and conflict
- Work collectively with others

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# Respond to the following...

Alice and Judy are counselors at a high school with a science and math magnet program. The magnet program consists of primarily White and Asian students (96%), whereas the remainder of the student body is primarily African American and Latino (95%). Each spring, Alice and Judy make trips to promote the magnet program at middle schools with When you ask them why they do not visit some of the other middle schools in the district, they comment that “students at the other middle schools would never be successful in our magnet program.” How would you challenge them?

# Coordinate Student Services

- Collaborate with community organizations
- Implement scheduling that encourages rigorous course taking
- Say “no” to gatekeeping
- Say “no” to tracking
- Coordinate college preparation interventions
- Coordinate tutoring/academic/mentoring services
- Participate on special committees (IEP, G/T)

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# 3 R's of School Reform

- Rigor: high expectations!
- Relationships: students need the support of adult mentors and role models
- Relevance: programs need to be relevant to students' lives

Based on work by Dwayne Ashley, President of Thurgood Marshall College Fund

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# Building a Vision

- My main goals for students, as a result of interacting and working with school counselors are.....
- At this time, there are student inequities in my school. List those inequities and include data to support these statements.
- My vision for students is...
- Student achievement will be evident as a result of these school counseling activities:
- To promote social justice, I will work with teachers to....
- To promote social justice, I will work with parents to....

# Quote

The main hope of a nation lies in the proper education of its youth.

Erasmus

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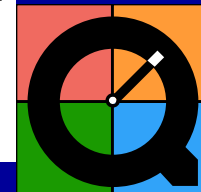
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Questions, comments,  
feedback.....

Thanks for coming  
today!