

THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY

Ability Grouping in Support of
Acceleration, Integration &
Academic Excellence

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2020



FUTURE OF NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Major education decisions are being made in NYC that will impact a generation of students

- Phase out G&T
- Remove SHSAT
- Eliminate all academic screens



HEADLINES AND POLICY PROPOSALS TELL A SINGLE STORY

- 50 years after Brown vs. Board of Ed, NYS schools are the most segregated in the country (UCLA report)
- 2019 only 7 Black students got into Stuyvesant
- 70% NYC public schools are Black and Hispanic
- Elimination of accelerated programs will create integration and "research shows" academic performance increases in integrated classrooms



IS THE SINGLE STORY TRUE?

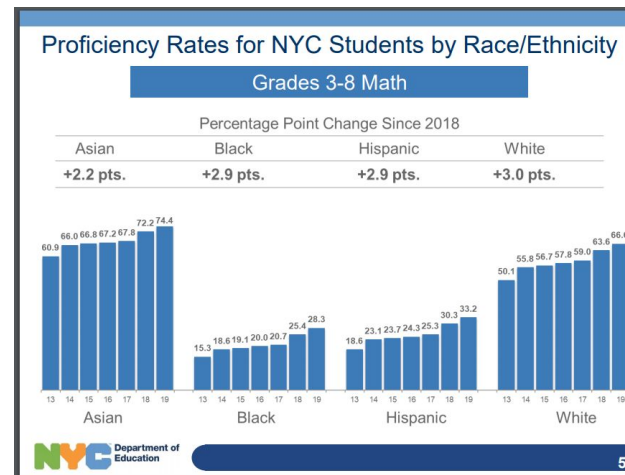
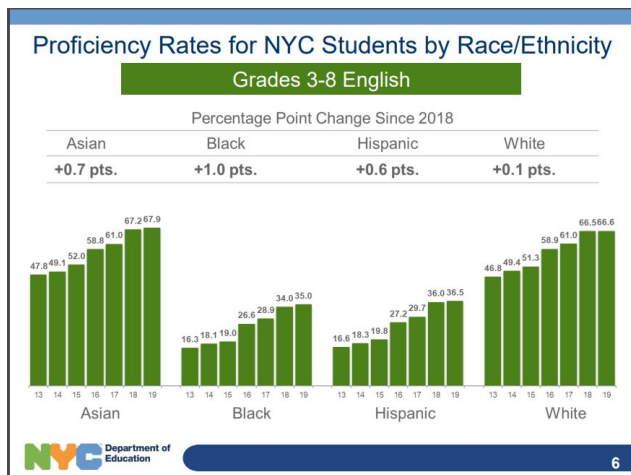
What does the data say?

What do families want?

What do teachers know?

NYC ACHIEVEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY GAP

2019 ELA and Math Proficiency Rates by Race/Ethnicity



G&T Testing: D3 (UWS) 61% vs. D7 (S. Bronx) 6%

SHSAT Test Takers: 7 in 10 Asian students vs. 1 in 4 Black & Hispanic students

Given the above, grouping students by academic achievement results in racially disparate classrooms.



WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

1. **“All students may benefit from tracking if tracking allows teachers to better tailor their instruction level. Lower-achieving pupils are particularly likely to benefit from tracking when teachers have incentives to teach to the top of the distribution”.**
 - Study by Esther Duflo, Pascaline Dupas and Michael Kremer, 2011 in Kenyan schools
(Duflo and Kremer shared the *2019 Nobel Prize in Economy* with Banerjee for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty)

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

(Cont'd)

In the US, similar results were reported:

- “low-ability students may actually experience larger test score gains when they are schooled in tracked settings. We can find no evidence that detracking America’s schools[...] will improve outcomes among disadvantaged students.” (Figlio and Page, 2002)
- “a student will have higher achievement whenever she is surrounded by peer with similar characteristics” (Hoxby and Weingarth, 2005)
- “[for lowest skilled students] the benefits of tracking and the resulting better-targeted pedagogy may outweigh the impact of being exposed to lower-skilled classmates” (Cortes and Goodman, 2014)

PLACE



WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

2. **Tracking helps high-achieving minority students**

- “a comprehensive tracking program that establishes a separate classroom in every school for the top-performing students has the potential to significantly boost the performance of higher-achieving minority students—even in the poorest neighborhoods of a large urban school district.” (Card and Giuliano, 2016)
- Higher percentages of Black and Hispanic students scored well on the AP test in states where there was more tracking. (Loveless, 2011)

THE DOWNSIDES OF DETRACKING

1. Detracking **penalizes high-achieving students**

- “moving [high-achieving students] from a class composed of above average students to a heterogeneous class leads to an 8.4 percent decrease in scores (Argys, Rees and Brewer 1996)
- “the gap between high and low achievers shrinks—but it is accomplished by depressing achievement at the top” (Loveless 2009)

THE DOWNSIDES OF DETRACKING

2. **Detracking removes access for minority students**

- San Francisco removed Algebra in 8th grade. They claim it is a success as fewer students fail 9th grade algebra. But FOIA data on the first cohort show:
 - Students have to double up in math to access Calculus in 12th grade
 - Decrease in number of students taking Calculus
 - Decrease in number of minority students taking Calculus or high-level Math

THE DOWNSIDES OF DETRACKING

(Cont'd)

- In NYC, the decrease in G&T and tracked programs in minority neighborhood is linked to a decrease in test scores and SHS admissions
 - “Establishing more middle school G&T programs with accelerated learning can help improve performance on the SHSAT as well as performance in high school and beyond.”
(Diaz and Adams, 2017)

G&T DESERTS CUT ACCESS TO ACCELERATION

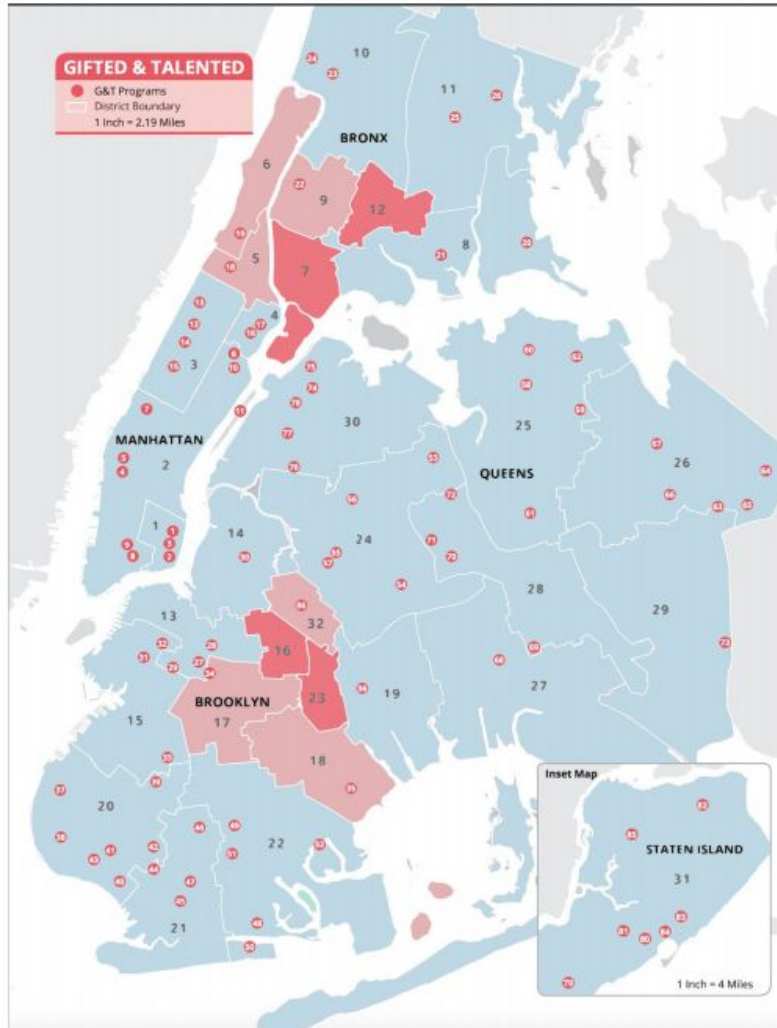
For the 2017-2018 academic year, NYCDOE school districts whose enrollment is at least 90% Black or Hispanic have zero or one District G&T program:

| District | Total Enrollment | Black Enrollment | Hispanic Enrollment | Combined Percentage | District G&T Programs |
|----------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 9 | 32,850 | 9,103 | 22,555 | 96% | 1 |
| 23 | 8,564 | 6,415 | 1,782 | 96% | 0 |
| 7 | 18,438 | 4,840 | 12,918 | 96% | 0 |
| 32 | 10,530 | 1,815 | 8,157 | 95% | 1 |
| 18 | 14,697 | 12,665 | 1,134 | 94% | 1 |
| 12 | 21,883 | 5,368 | 15,249 | 94% | 0 |
| 6 | 21,524 | 1,519 | 18,404 | 93% | 1 |
| 16 | 6,041 | 4,452 | 1,187 | 93% | 0 |
| 17 | 20,091 | 15,063 | 3,284 | 91% | 1 |
| 5 | 10,493 | 5,257 | 4,284 | 91% | 1 |

Data Sources:

- 2019 NYC Gifted & Talented Admissions Guide
- NYC OpenData - "2013 - 2018 Demographic Snapshot School"

There are 10 districts that have none/one G&T program. This represents one-third of the school districts in NYC; all with >90% B/H students.



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FAMILIES WANT

32,000 students take the GT test

- 15,000 tests for kindergarten seats but only 1 in 5 eligible gets a seat at the 5 citywide G&T schools

28,000 students take the SHSAT for 5,000 seats in 8 schools; just 125 seats in the entire borough of Queens

Applications to Screened Admissions Schools:

- **Beacon HS** 5407 appl for 284 seats (5.3%)
- **Townsend Harris** 7173 appl for 247 seats (3.4%)
- **Bard HS Manh** 3736 appl for 126 seats (3.3%)
- **NEST+M** 5736 appl for 126 seats (2.2%)

More than 9,000 signers to PLACE NYC Petition to save academic-screened admissions

DOE's Admissions Engagement on Screened Admission

> 71% of participants spoke to keeping screened admissions



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Panelists

- **Joseph Chou** Retired math AP of Francis Lewis High School (23+ years)
- **Maggie Feurtado** Retired accelerated 7th grade math teacher/MS
Dean NYC Lab MS (17 years)
- **Jonathan Plucker, Ph.D.** President, NAGC (National Association for Gifted Children) Board of Directors; Julian C. Stanley Professor of Talent Development at Johns Hopkins University



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