

Socioeconomic School Integration in the Nation and Wake County

Wake Education Partnership

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Districts Pursuing Socioeconomic Integration Today

- 65 U.S. Districts using socioeconomic status as a factor in student assignment.
- Wake County, (Raleigh) NC. No school should have more than 40% of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch or 25% performing below grade level.
- Cambridge, MA. All schools should fall within + or – 10 percentage points of district average for free and reduced price lunch (40%).
- San Francisco, CA. Oversubscribed schools use a preference for socioeconomic diversity, considering 7 factors.
- Jefferson County (Louisville), KY. All schools between 15 and 50% of students from “Area A” (neighborhoods below district average income and parental education and above average in minority students)

Why Districts Adopted Plans

- Indirectly promote racial integration in a manner that is legally bullet proof. Most institutions – from Ivy League universities to Fortune 500 companies – recognize racial diversity is important.
- Improve academic achievement and other educational outcomes (graduation rates etc.)

Racial Dividend of Socioeconomic Integration

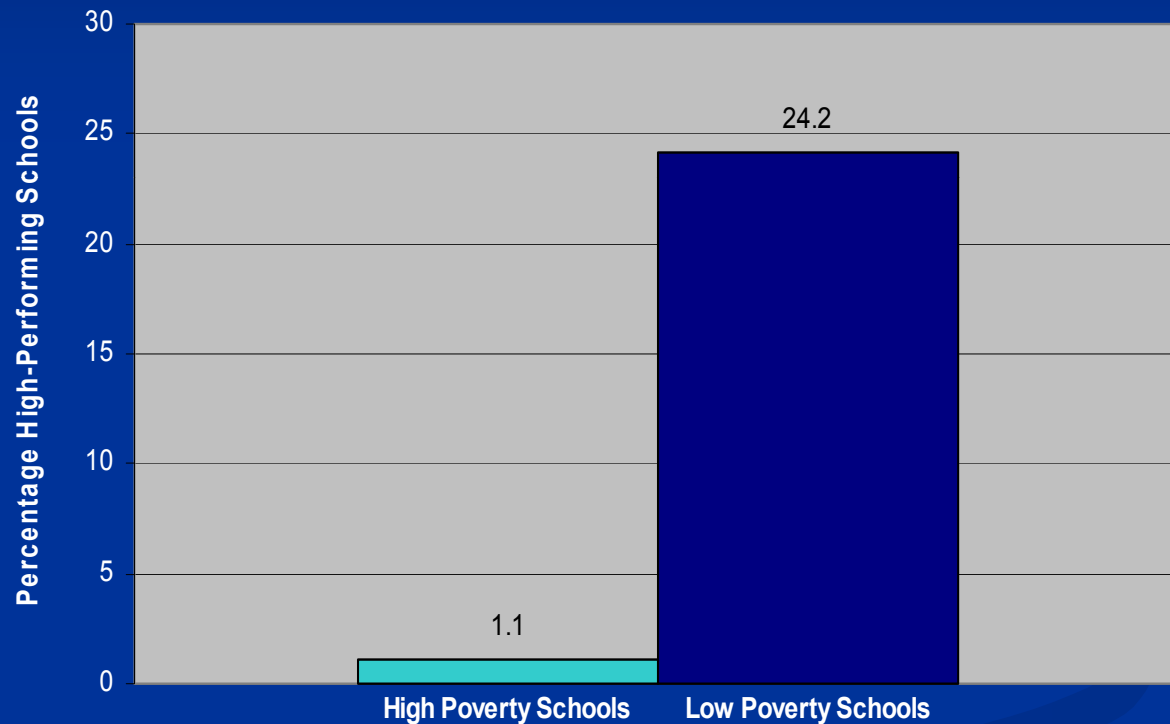
Can indirectly produce some racial diversity in a manner that is perfectly legal. (E.g. Progressive Income Tax)

- * Among 4th graders nationally, 24% whites eligible free and reduced lunch; 70% African Americans; 73% Latinos

Academic Benefits of Socioeconomic Integration

- Not just a clumsy proxy. Research: Academic benefits of integration not from proximity to whiteness but middle-class environment
- Racial Desegregation in Charlotte vs. Boston (1970s)
- Roosevelt Perry Elementary in Louisville.

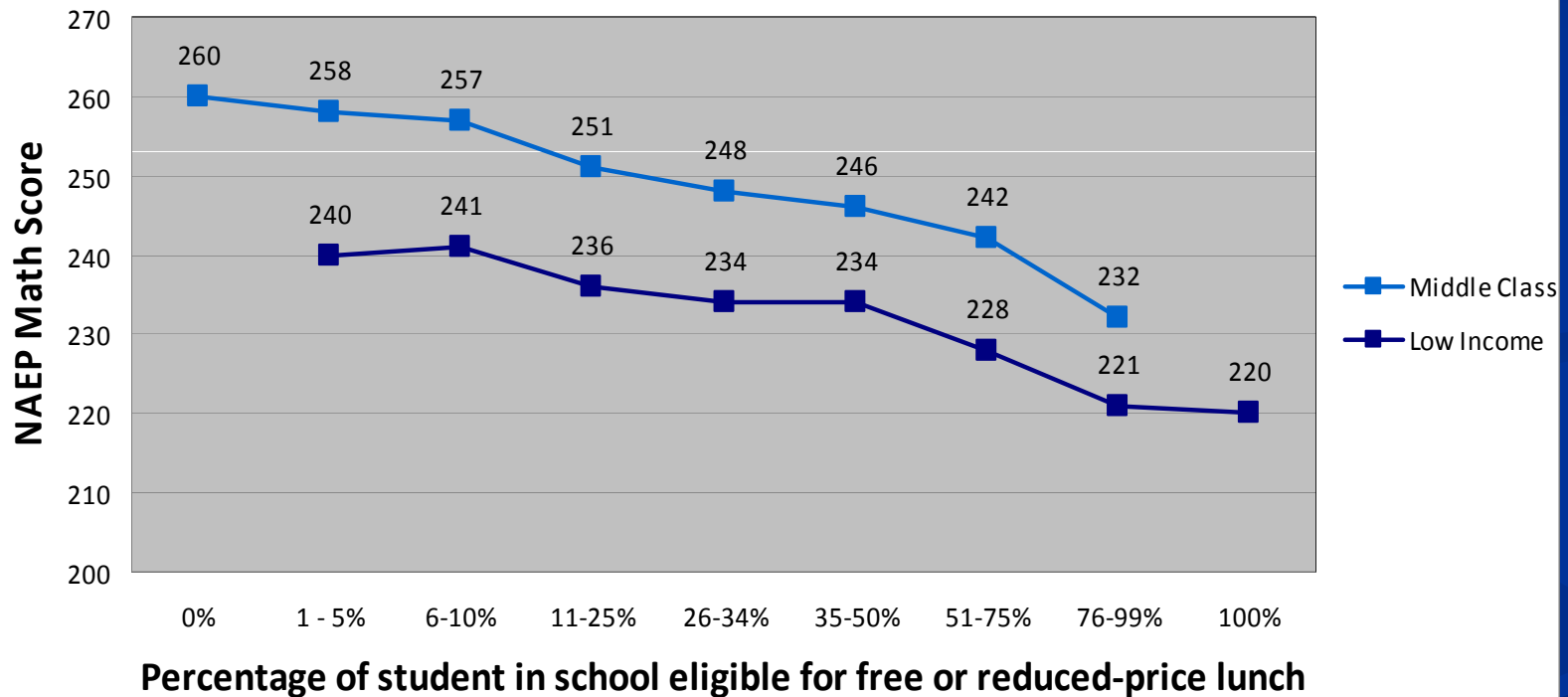
Percentage of Schools that are Consistently High Performing, by Socioeconomic Status



Note: High poverty is defined as at least 50 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; low poverty (middle class) is defined as fewer than 50 percent eligible. High performing is defined as being in the top third in the state in two subjects, in two grades, and over a two-year period.

Source: Douglas N. Harris, "Ending the Blame Game on Educational Inequity: A study of 'High Flying' Schools and NCLB," Educational Policy Studies Laboratory, Arizona State University, March 2006, p. 20.

Student NAEP Math Scores, by Type of School



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessments of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Math Assessment, Grade 4.

40 Years of Research

- 1966 Coleman Report: SES of family the biggest predictor of achievement; SES of school the second biggest predictor.
- 2002 David Rusk study of Madison-Dane County schools: every 1 percent increase in middle-class classmates increases scores of low income students by 0.64 percentage points in reading and 0.72 percentage points in math.

National Research (cont.)

- 2005 Rumberger and Palardy: school's SES had as much impact on the achievement growth of high school students in math, science, reading and history as a student's individual family SES.
- 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for 15 year olds in science showed a “clear advantage in attending a school whose students are, on average, from more advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.”

National Research (cont)

- 2006 Douglas Harris study: Math data from 18 million students found minority students have greater gains in racially integrated schools and that “a substantial portion of the ‘racial composition’ effect is really due to poverty and peer achievement.”

Effect of Socioeconomic Integration on Middle-Class Students

- No research findings of negative effects on academic achievement in integrated environments
- Numbers matter: numerical majority sets tone
- Differential sensitivity to schooling
- Benefits of learning in a diverse environment

Why Economic Mix Matters

- Peers
- Parents
- Teachers/Principals

Peers

An orderly environment. Middle class schools report disorder problems half as often as low income schools. [*All Together Now*, p.58]

A stable student population. Middle class schools see half as much student mobility as higher poverty schools [60,68]

Motivated peers who value achievement and encourage it among classmates. Peers in middle income schools are more academically engaged, more likely to do homework, less likely to watch TV, less likely to cut class and more likely to graduate – all of which have been found to influence the behavior of classmates. [51-8]

High achieving peers, whose knowledge is shared informally with classmates all day long. In middle class schools, peers come to schools with twice the vocabulary of lower income children, so any given child is more likely to expand his vocabulary through informal interaction. [p. 50]

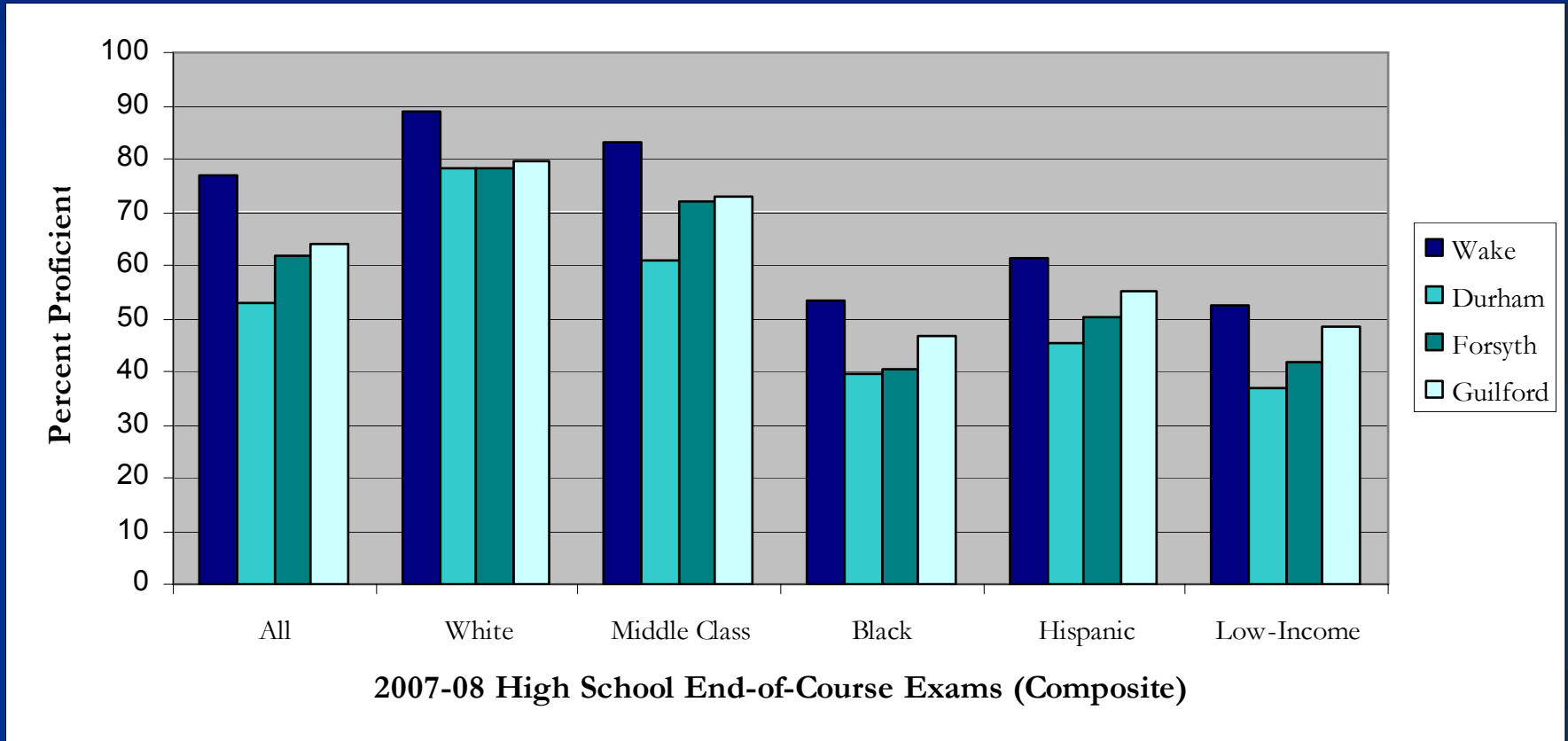
Parents

- **Political influence and school financing**
Nationally, wealthy schools spend \$900 more per pupil than high poverty schools. [Education Trust, 2005]
- **Active parental involvement** In middle class schools, parents are four times as likely to be members of the PTA and much more likely to participate in fundraising. [62-64]

Faculty (teachers and principals)

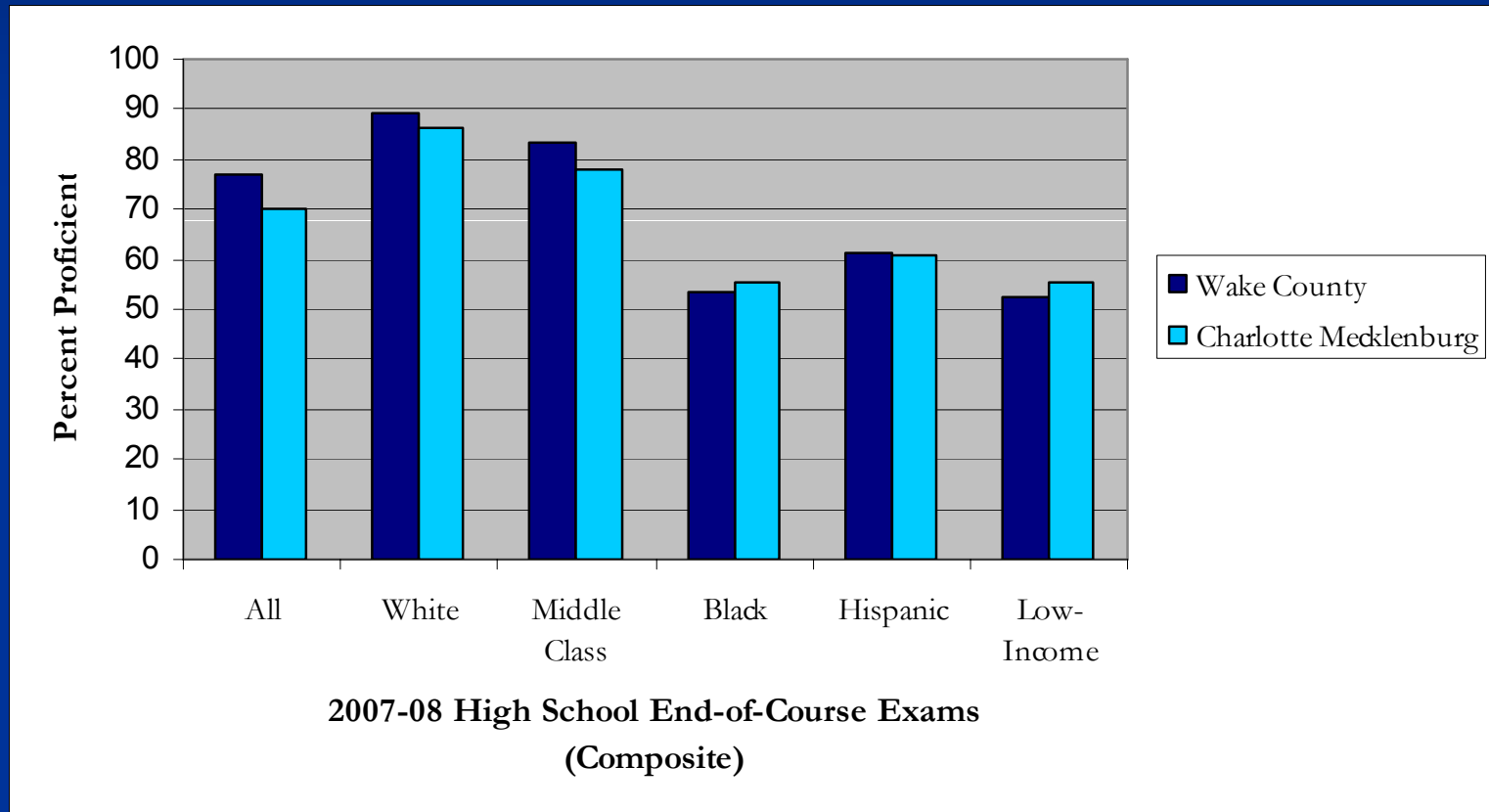
- * **Teacher Quality.** Teachers in middle class schools are more likely to be licensed, less likely to teach out of their field of expertise, less likely to have low teacher test scores, less likely to be inexperienced, and more likely to have greater formal education. In middle class schools, teacher mobility is one fourth as high. Even when paid comparable salaries, teachers consider it a promotion to move from poor to middle class schools, and the best teachers usually transfer into middle income schools at the first opportunity. [67-71]
- * **Teacher Expectations.** Curriculum in middle class schools is more challenging; and expectations are higher. The grade of C in a middle income school is the same as a grade of A in low income schools, as measured by standardized tests results. Middle class schools are more likely to offer AP classes and high level math. [72-74]

Wake County vs. Most Other Large North Carolina School Districts



Source: North Carolina Public Schools, Report of Supplemental Disaggregated State, School System (LEA) and School Performance Data for 2006-08, High School End of Course Exams (Composite)

Wake County vs. Charlotte Mecklenburg High School End-of-Course Exams



North Carolina Public Schools, Reports of Supplemental Disaggregated State, Schools System (LEA) and School Performance Data for 2006-2008, High School End of Course Exams (Composite)

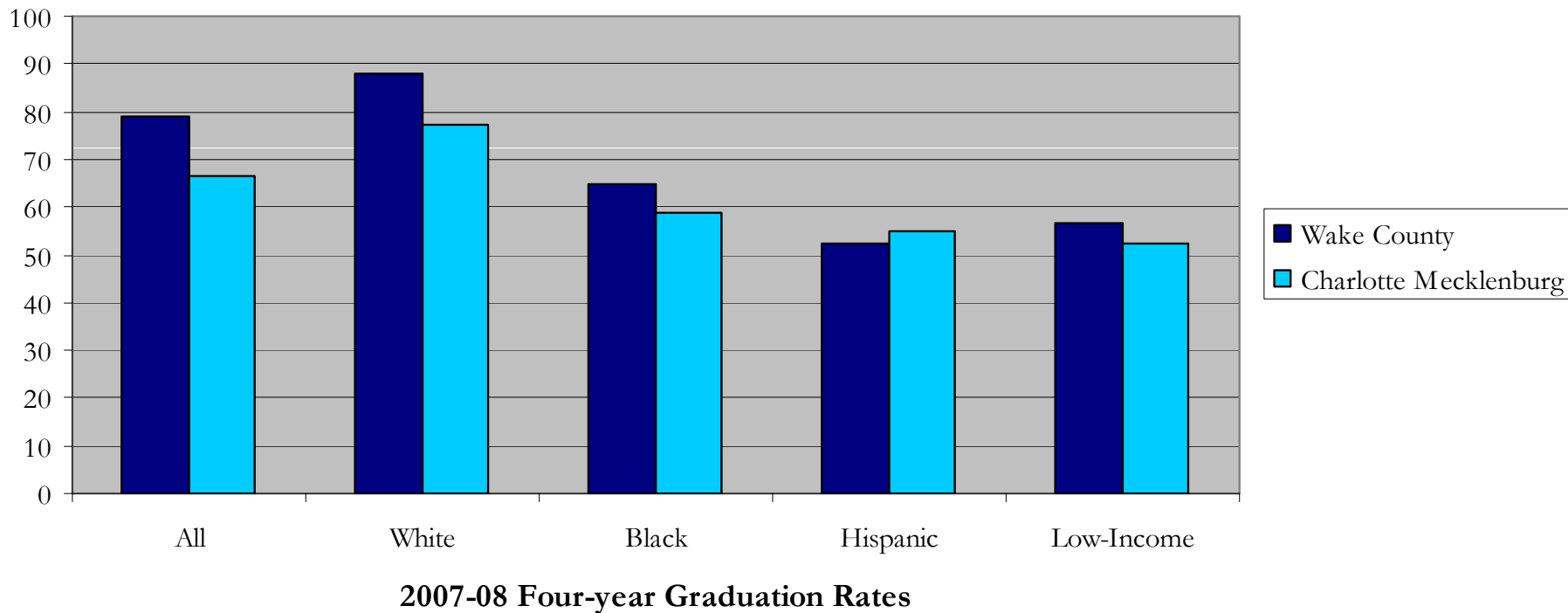
Wake more bang for the buck

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg: \$8595/pupil
- Wake County: \$8117/pupil
- Difference: \$478/pupil
- If Wake spent as much as Charlotte Mecklenburg per pupil could increase budget by \$65 million

Wake vs. Charlotte: Pre-K

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg has nationally recognized pre-K program, Bright Beginnings, first instituted in 1997
- Recruits low performing preschoolers and provides them with literacy-rich curriculum, highly trained teachers and low teacher pupil ratio 6.5 hours a day – different than Head Start
- 80% of Title I money goes to Bright Beginnings
- National research – NJ, OK – large academic gains from pre-K

Wake County vs. Charlotte Mecklenburg: Graduation Rates



Charlotte vs. Wake : Summary

- Comparable test results with subgroups in 2007-08
- Wake gets more bang for the buck
- Charlotte's Bright Beginnings Pre-K program
- Wake's superior high school graduation rates
- Better job prospects from integrated than segregated schools
- All benefit from diversity

Important to Stay the Course

- 2007: 51 of 149 schools out of compliance with 40% free and reduced price lunch cap, up from 7 schools in 2000.
- Damaging to student achievement, particularly when schools are significantly out of compliance (60% + free and reduced price lunch). All subgroups do worse.

Wake County High Poverty Schools (60%+ Low-income) Percentage of Students At or Above Grade Level in Reading and Math (2007-08)

School (Percentage Low-income), 2008-09	All	Black	Hispanic	White	Low- Income	Middle Class
Brentwood Elementary (69.8%)	35.3	26.0	27.6	73.9	34.3	38.0
Creech Rd Elementary (64.3%)	34.7	25.7	34.1	56.1	25.8	51.2
Fox Rd Elementary (60.5%)	42.6	35.5	31.6	64.9	30.3	58.2
Smith Elementary (68.1%)	35.3	30.9	25.5	51.2	28.7	52.1
Wakelon Elementary (66.7%)	30.3	28.7	24.6	42.7	22.3	44.5
District Average	61.0	33.4	35.1	78.7	31.3	74.5

Source: Wake County Public School System, “School General Information, 2008-09”; Reports of Supplemental Disaggregated State, School System (LEA) & School Performance Data, 2007-08; End of Grade (Reading and Mathematics) Grades 3 through 8.

Notes: “Low-income”= Students eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch; Shaded cells=Below district average (28 of 30 cells)

Overall: Wake a National Model

- Schools far more integrated by socioeconomic status and race than other districts in North Carolina and the nation.
- Impressive results. Explosive growth in part because schools are excellent
- Should be eligible for “Investing in What Works and Innovation” \$650 million fund in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus legislation)

For More Information

- Richard D. Kahlenberg, *All Together Now: Creating Middle Class Schools through Public School Choice* (Brookings Press, 2001; paperback, 2003).
- *Divided We Fail: Coming Together through Public School Choice: Report of The Century Foundation Task Force on the Common School* (Lowell Weicker, Chair) (Century Foundation Press, 2002).
- Jennifer Jellison Holme and Amy Stuart Wells chapter in *Improving on No Child Left Behind*, ed. by Richard D. Kahlenberg (Century Foundation, 2008).

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