



Social Science and Educational Diversity: A 21st Century Perspective

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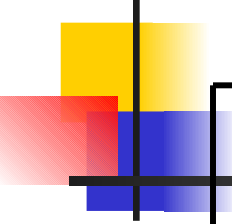
Professor of Sociology

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Presentation to the North Carolina NAACP Winter Training

March 24, 2007

Since fall 2005...

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- **My research has focused on the following question:**
 - **What does social science and educational research tell us about the effects of school and classroom composition on educational outcomes?**



My support for this effort comes from three sources:

- **American Sociological Association's Spivack Project**
- **National Science Foundation**
- **Poverty & Race Research Action Council**



Demographic change

- The US is becoming increasingly diverse as a nation
- Since the late 1980s, US schools resegregating
- Fast approaching pre-*Brown* racial isolation
- Irony: as US becomes more diverse, our schools are becoming less so



Preponderance of the Evidence Indicates Diversity Has

- **Short term effects on:**
 - Grades, test scores, racial attitudes
- **Long term effects on**
 - Educational and occupational attainment, & intergenerational perpetuation of racial understanding



Compared to racially isolated schools desegregated schools offer. . .

- **Greater teacher quality and material resources**
- **Greater depth and breadth of curricular coverage, including more AP courses**
- **Stronger academic press [expectations from teachers, peers, positive academic school climate]**



Desegregated schools also offer

- **Greater stability of teaching staff and student populations**
- **Access to broader social networks and cultural capital**
- **Greater parental involvement**



Positive effects of diversity occur at

- elementary
- middle
- and high school levels.



Cognitive outcomes of diversity

Include:

- **mathematics and language achievement.**
- **for students from all racial and social class backgrounds.**



Noncognitive Outcomes of Diversity in K-12 Schools

- **Break intergenerational transmission of racial fears and hatred**
- **Foster living in diverse residential neighborhoods**
- **Foster successful employment in diverse workplaces**



Diversity improves cognitive outcomes by

- Inhibiting automaticity in thinking.
- Stimulating critical thinking and problem solving skills of all students.
- Creating positive academic climate and inhibiting misbehavior.



Diversity will decrease prejudice and racism

- **If schools and classrooms offer**
 - **Sustained interracial contact**
 - **Contact is legitimized by authorities**
 - **All students have equal status**
 - **There are joint effort toward common goal...**



Diversity positively affects status attainment by

- Expanding social networks
- Multiplying role models
- Offering greater exposure to cultural capital



On the other hand, racial isolation is

- Harmful to African American and Latino students
- Yet research less clear about negative effects for Whites and Asians
- However, a growing body of research suggests racial isolation hurts Whites and Asians as well.



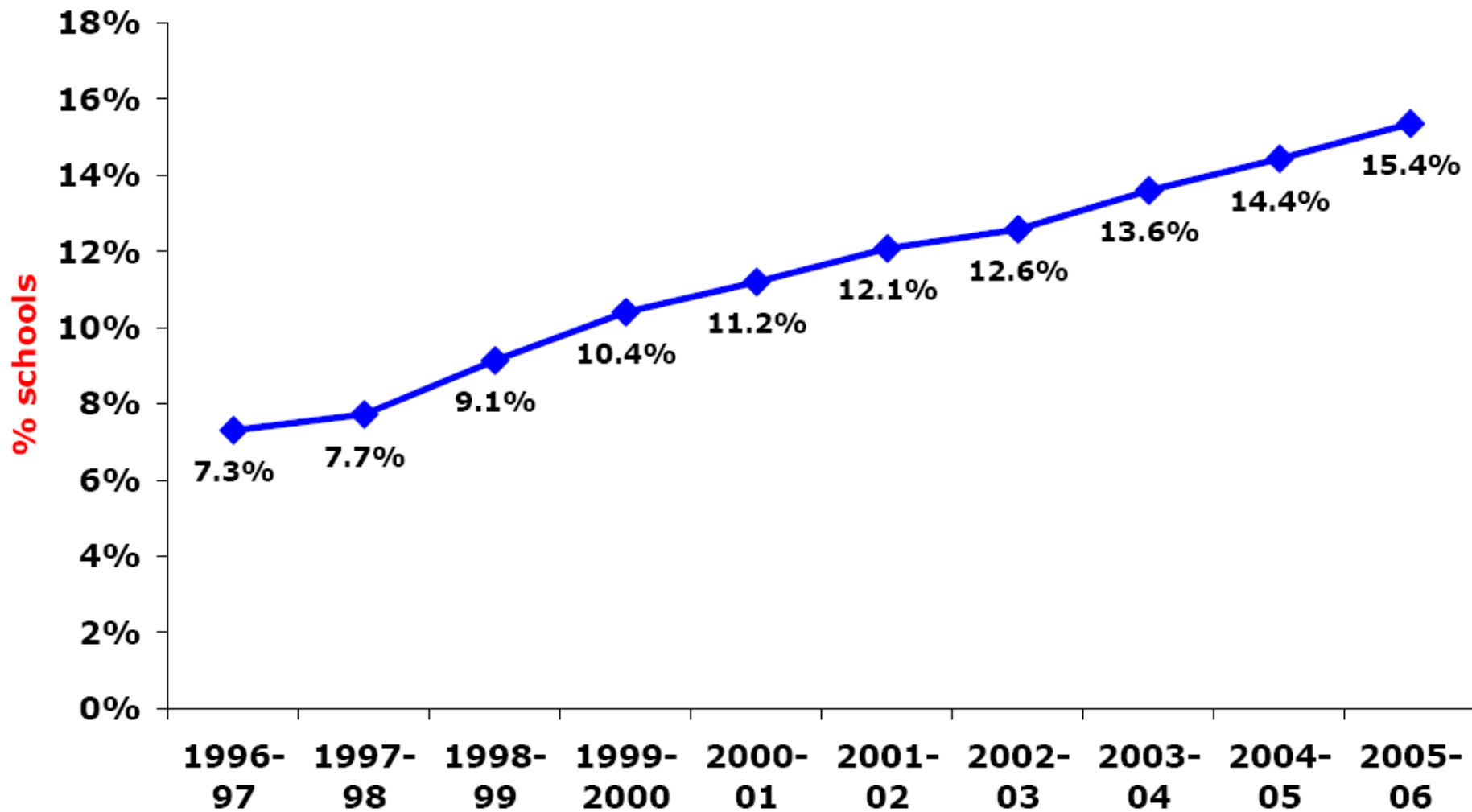
Are Social Class and Ethnic Diversity the Same? **NO**

- Racial composition is related to but not equivalent to socioeconomic composition.
- Diversity at both levels is important.

- 
-
- What is the current situation in North Carolina schools?

Schools Becoming Less Integrated

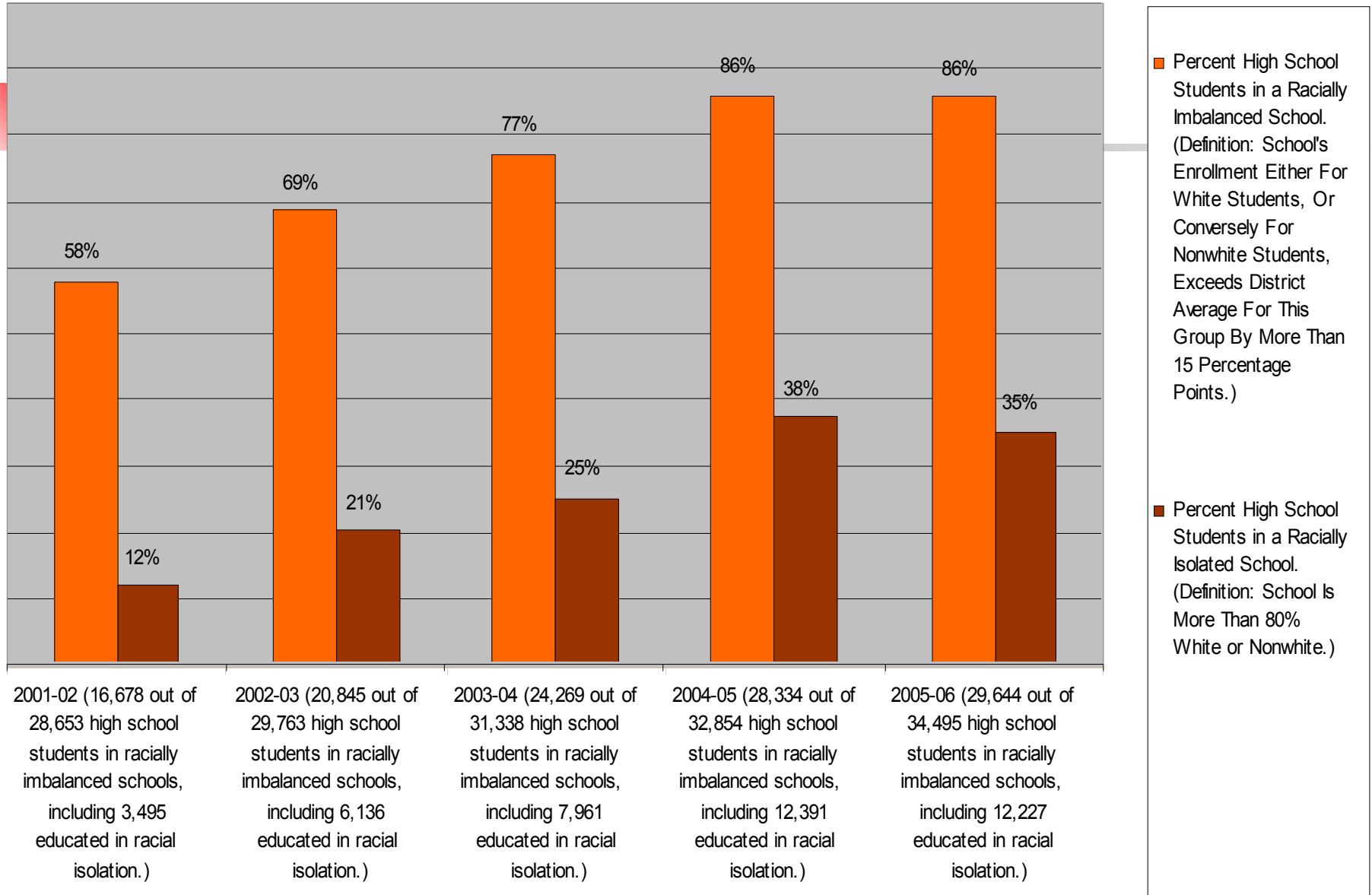
% of Schools With 80% or More Non-White Students



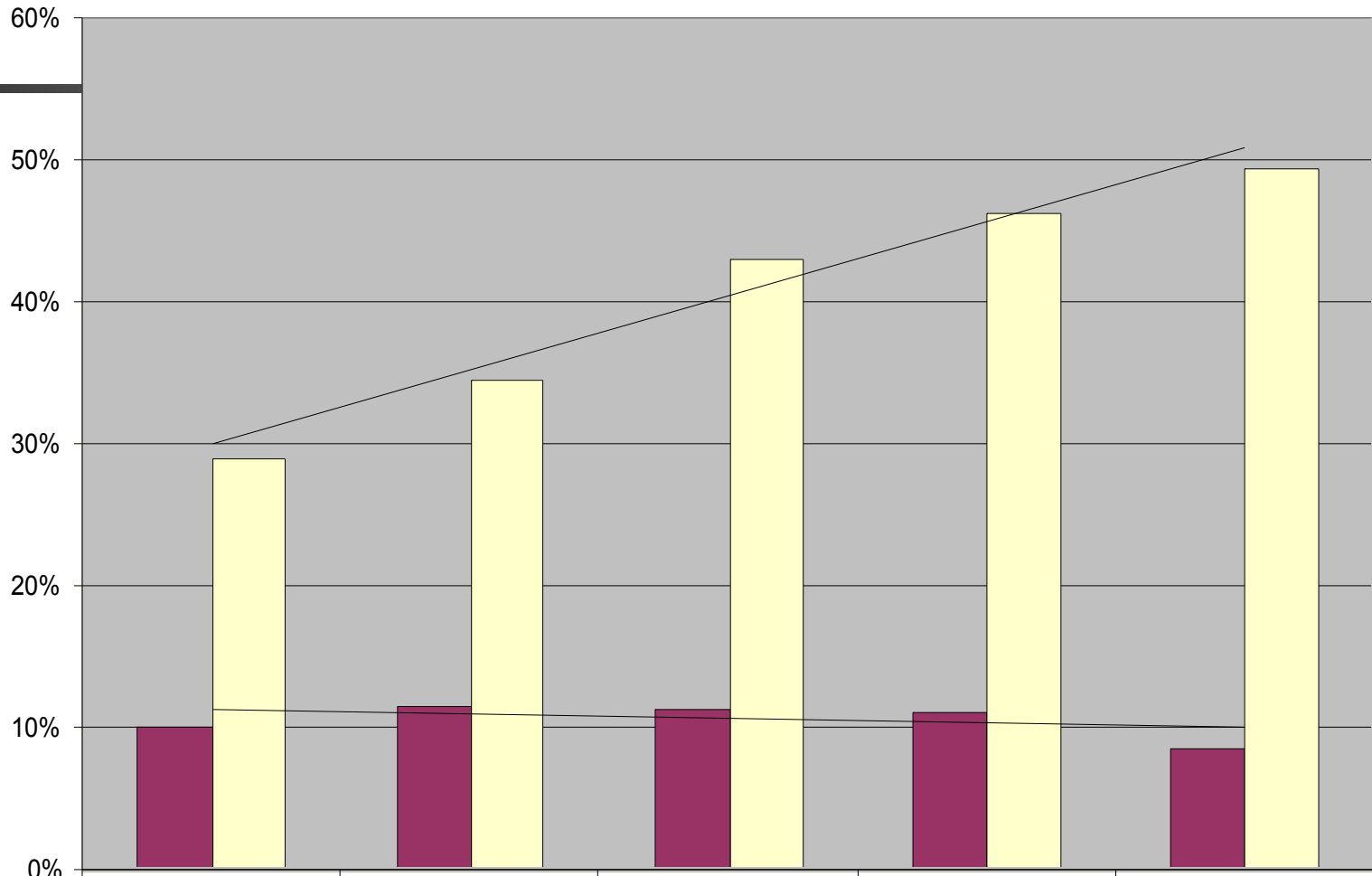
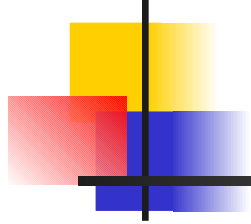
Source: Public School Forum based upon data from DPI, Financial & Business Services

Racial Isolation in Charlotte Mecklenburg High Schools, 2001-02 thru 2005-06

UNC Center for Civil Rights, January 2007



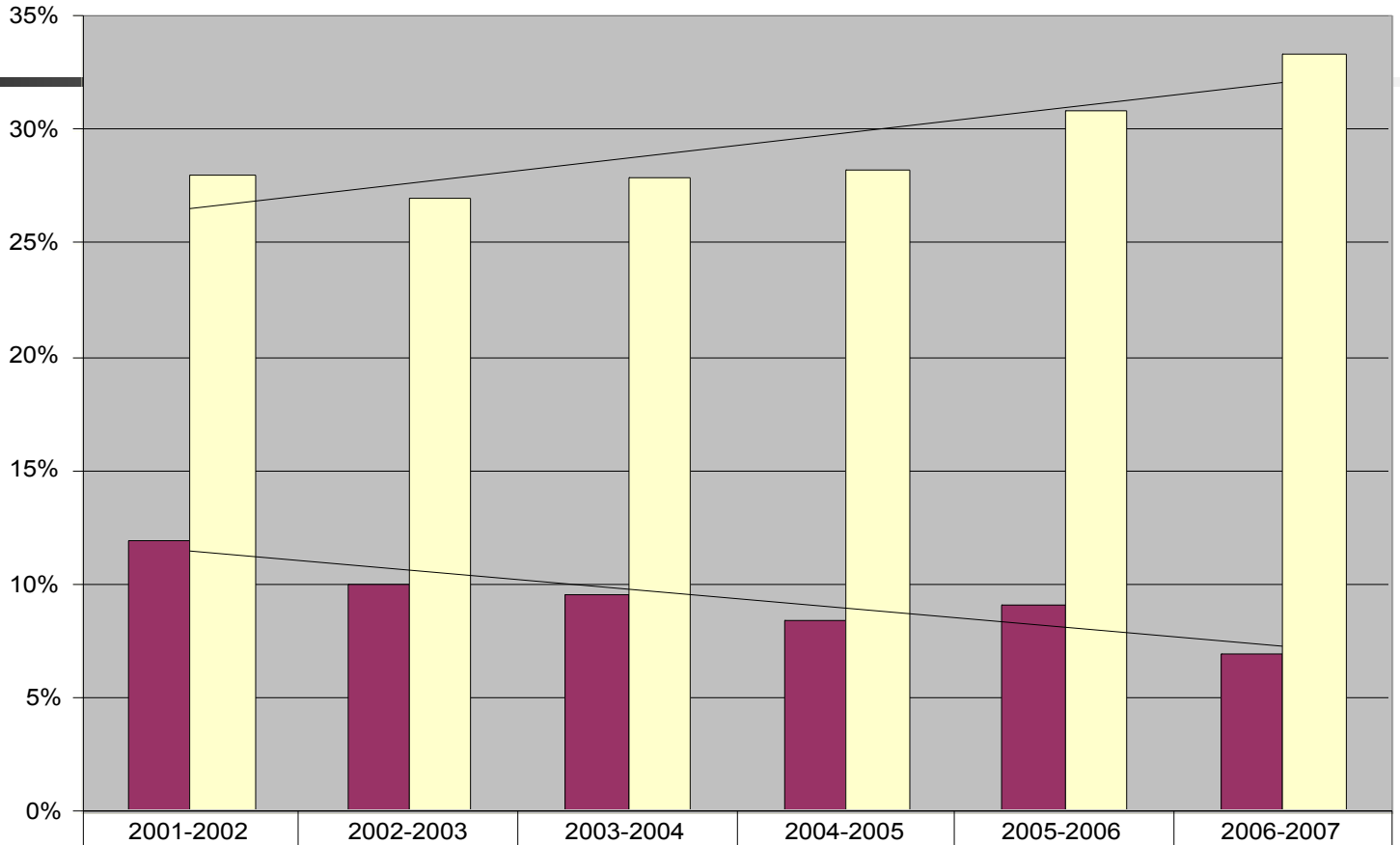
CMS Elementary Schools
Racially Isolated Elementary Schools: 2001-2006
(School is more than 80% white or nonwhite.)
 UNC Center for Civil Rights, January 2007



■ Isolated White Schools	10.1%	11.5%	11.4%	11.3%	8.6%
■ Isolated Nonwhite Schools	29.1%	34.6%	43.0%	46.3%	49.4%

Guilford County Racially Isolated Schools: 2001-2007

UNC Center for Civil Rights, January 2007



■ Isolated White Schools	12.0%	10.0%	9.6%	8.5%	9.1%	7.0%
■ Isolated Nonwhite Schools	28.0%	27.0%	27.9%	28.3%	30.9%	33.3%

Table 2: Consistency of High-Performance

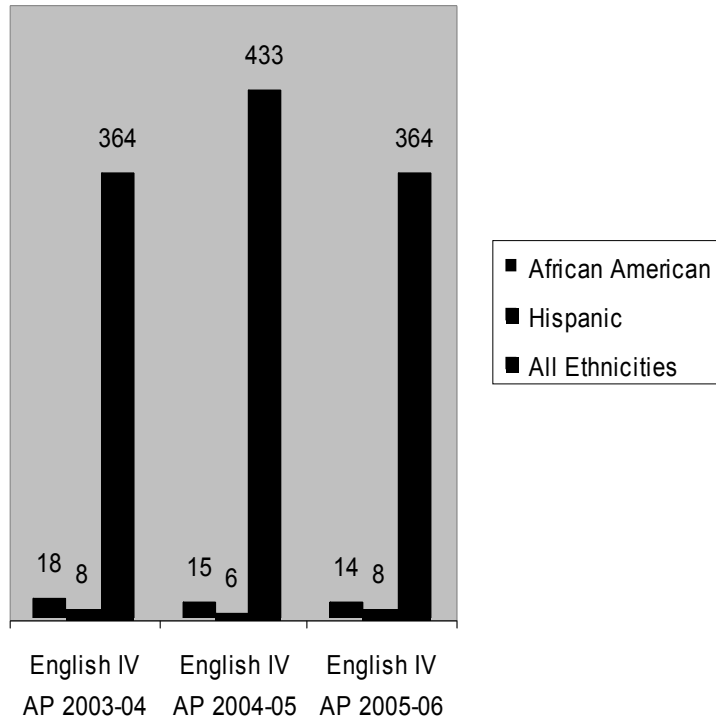
Row	Criteria			% high-poverty schools that are high-performing	% low-poverty schools that are high-performing	% high-poverty, high-minority schools that are high-performing	% low-poverty, low-minority schools that are high-performing
	Years	Subjects	Grades				
1	1	1	1	30.5	80.0	22.0	84.0
2	2	1	1	12.9	59.1	7.5	63.5
3	1	2	1	14.7	62.3	9.1	66.8
4	1	1	2	11.0	56.5	6.4	60.9
5	2	2	1	4.5	41.0	2.0	44.8
6	2	1	2	3.6	37.9	1.4	41.4
7	1	2	2	2.4	33.2	0.9	36.4
8	2	2	2	1.1	24.2	0.3	26.7
9	<i>Education Trust Definition</i>			15.6	54.2	10.4	56.7
10	<i>Erosion (from row 9 to row 8)</i>			93 %	55 %	97 %	53 %

Reprinted from *Ending the Blame Game on Educational Inequity: A Study of "High Flying Schools" and NCLB*, p. 23, by Douglas N. Harris, Assistant Professor, School of Education, Florida State University, published by Arizona State University: Education Policy Research Unit, March 2006.

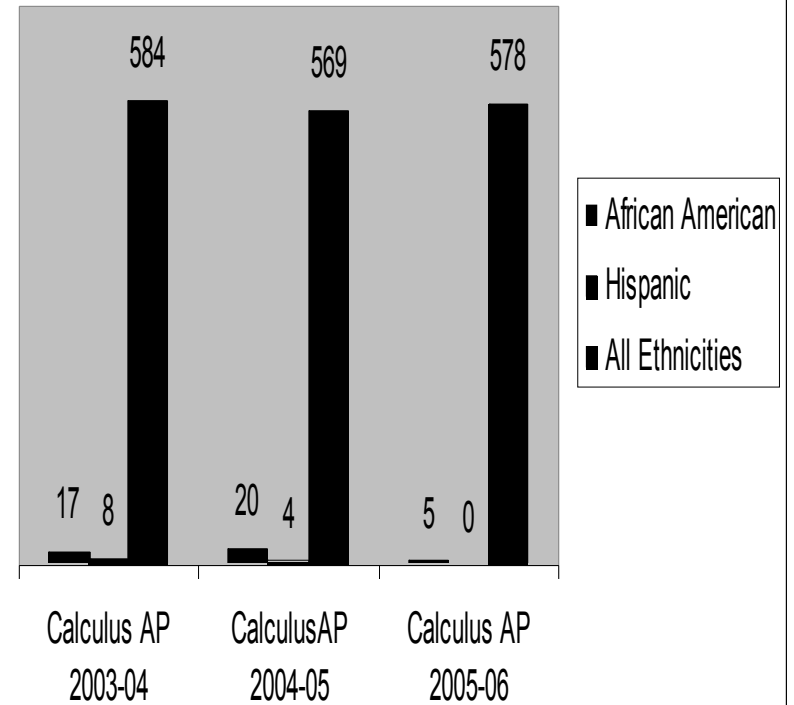
Black, Hispanic and White Participation in Advanced Placement Courses Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, 2003-04 thru 2005-06

UNC Center for Civil Rights, January 2007

English

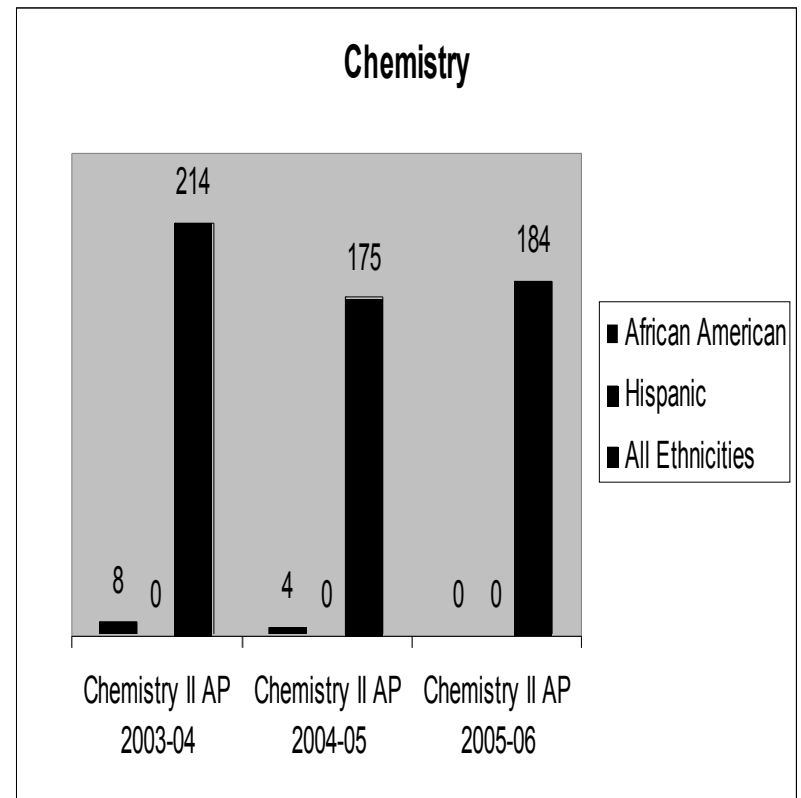
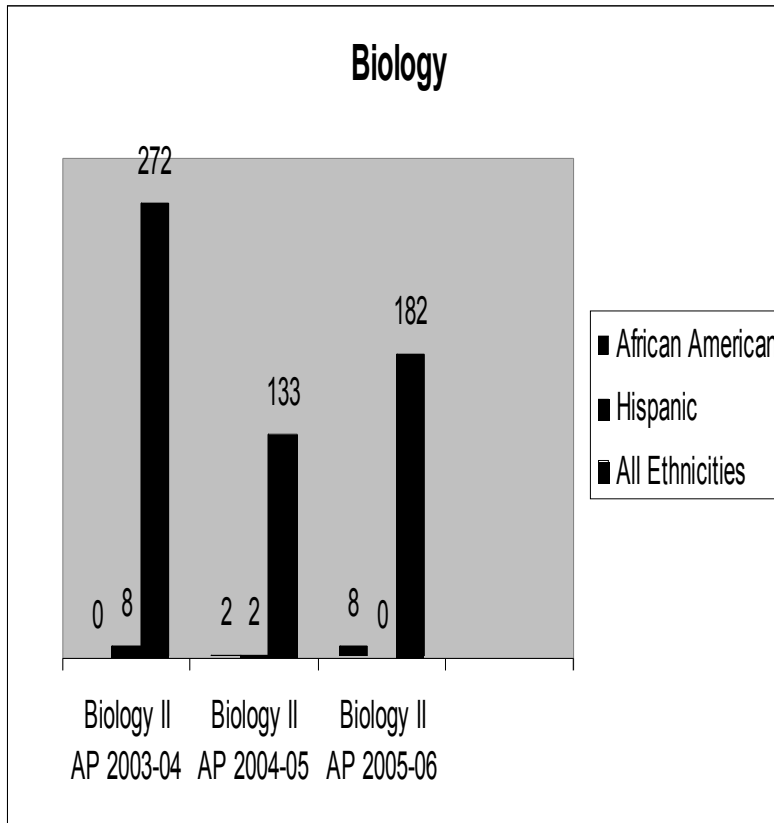


Calculus



Black, Hispanic and White Participation in Advanced Placement Courses Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, 2003-04 thru 2005-06

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What Can We Do?



Challenge Teacher, Parent, and Administrator Beliefs about Diversity

- **When do we begin to group students?**
- **How do we rationalize sorting students?**
- **How does sorting affect later opportunities?**
- **On what basis do we assign students to schools?**



Taking On Critics

- **Cultivation of Political Support**
 - **Build a political base for diverse schools**
- **Challenge Beliefs About Tracking**
 - **Gifted, average, remedial are acquired, socially constructed labels**



Acknowledge the 1000 lb. Elephants in the Room....

- Children benefit from their privileged status in the segregated and tracked educational system
- Diversity opponents' fears of
 - Diluted quality of instruction
 - Undisciplined students
 - Cultural contamination
 - More competitors for top university seats



Navigating the Politics of Educational Diversity

- **School board strategies**
- **Central office strategies**
- **School-level strategies**
- **Community Consensus**
 - **Corporate world**
 - **Civil rights and progressive groups**
 - **Religious communities**
 - **Educators**



School Board Strategies

- **Commit to principles underlying detracking**
- **Develop comprehensive reform plan**
- **Engage the community so all have effective voice**
- **Public engagement about equity and excellence**
- **Have reasonable and rigorous detracking standards**



Central Office Strategies

- **Emphasize basis of detracking:**
 - All children can learn,
 - All are entitled to high quality education
- **Ensure every school has necessary support**
- **Incentives for teachers working with heterogeneous groups**
- **Work with local media**
- **Augment public relations office with office of community & parent relations**



Building-level strategies

- Provide teaching staff with knowledge and skills for heterogeneous classes
- Faculty study groups
- Parent advisory groups
- Disseminate information about diversity



Practical Resources for Educators

- **Theory Into Practice**

2006 Special Issue devoted to

***Detracking and Heterogeneous
Grouping***

Volume 45 Number 1



Navigating the Politics of Detracking

By Kevin Welner & Jeannie Oakes

- Booklet available free
- [http://www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/
publications/detracking/index.html](http://www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/detracking/index.html)



Thank you!
