

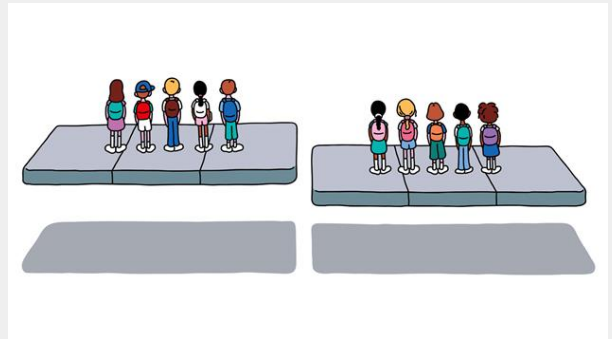
Educational Inequalities Among the Rich and Poor in America

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Introduction:

Education, once known as the “great equalizer,” has not fulfilled that promise. Today, the gap between the rich and poor in America is so wide that education can not possibly compensate for those inequalities.¹

- In this presentation, we discuss:
 - Historical trends and patterns that have led to educational inequality
 - Policies and laws intended to fight educational inequality
 - The current state of affairs pertaining to education
 - Who wins and who loses in regard to education
 - Education’s impact on other life chances



Historical Trends and Patterns:

- Since 2000, per capita median has remain unchanged while poor incomes have declined and rich incomes have received unprecedented growth. The largest gap in educational inequality is now due to socioeconomic status.²
- Within the nation's 60 largest urban school systems, more than 3/4 of the student body is composed of people of color, and practically 2/3 are poor, qualifying for a federally funded lunch.³
 - Poor health and nutrition has been shown to have an impact on student performance.²
- More than 40% of average reading scores and 46% of the average math scores across the country are impacted by child poverty rates.²
 - In wealthier suburban districts, students achieve an 80% passing score on state-adopted achievement tests. For poorer, urban districts, that number decreases to only 8%. This is largely due to the fact that poorer districts can not afford more experienced teachers or more advanced technology.²
- In 1972, upper-class Americans were spending five times as much money per child than other, low income families. This means that children of upper-class households have better academic resources such as advanced technology and experienced teachers and attend more elite private schools and universities.²



Policies Intended to Fight Inequality:

- No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)
 - Designed to improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged.³
 - Resulted in schools promoting high standardized test scores without realizing how this creates a stronger disadvantage for children in poverty, as they do not have the same access to resources and quality teachers as higher-income students. Therefore, this results in lower test scores for poorer students.²



- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
 - Newer version of the NCLB Act where all students are taught to higher academic standards while protecting disadvantaged and high-need students.³
 - Each state is responsible for having a plan in place to identify schools that are underperforming and are legally obligated to help "struggling" schools get back on track.³
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - Provides education to children with disabilities and ensures special education/related services to those children.³

Policies Intended to Fight Inequality:



- **Head Start Program**
 - Designed to weaken the link between a family's socioeconomic status and their children's educational achievement.²
 - This bill was intended to serve children in poverty but did not because of inadequate funding.²
- **GI Bill**
 - This bill provided college payments to returning war veterans. However, this was much more available to white people than people of color.⁴
- **Tracking in Poverty Districts**
 - Tracking was created to allow educators to evaluate students, and then place them in a program with a curriculum that is supposed to suit their abilities.⁴
 - This leads to children falling further behind, lower test scores, less challenging curriculum, and lower expectations, because if a child scores low on the evaluation test, they are placed in a lower track than a child who scored higher.⁴
 - Math is usually used to place students into tracks, which is particularly disadvantageous for poor students because of the scarcity of experienced math teachers in poorer districts.³

Who Wins/Who Loses?

The Winners: High SES Families.⁴

- Attend elite private primary and secondary schools
- High income communities = more funds going to the schools
- College preparatory programs
- Higher scores on standardized tests
- Smaller class sizes
- Higher chance of attending private universities
- Benefit of social capital



The Losers: Low SES Families.⁴

- More of a financial burden to attend college
- Low income communities = less funding for schools
- Lower parent participation in the schools
- Less experienced teachers
- Bigger class sizes
- Placed in lower tracks and take gen-ed courses
- Emphasis on behavior modification

Educational Success Among Minority Groups:

- Districts with the most students of color receive 15% less per student in state and local funding than the whitest districts.⁶
- Fewer than 3 in 10 black or Latino students are in gifted programs.⁶
- Only 1/3 of schools with high black and Latino demographics offer calculus.⁶

Enrollment of black students in majority-white Southern schools peaked at

43.5%

in 1988.

Enrollment of black students in majority-white Southern schools declined to

23.2%

in 2011.

Almost

90%

of black students in Washington, D.C., attend segregated (less than 10% white) schools.

81.7%

of black students in New York City attend segregated schools (less than 10% white).

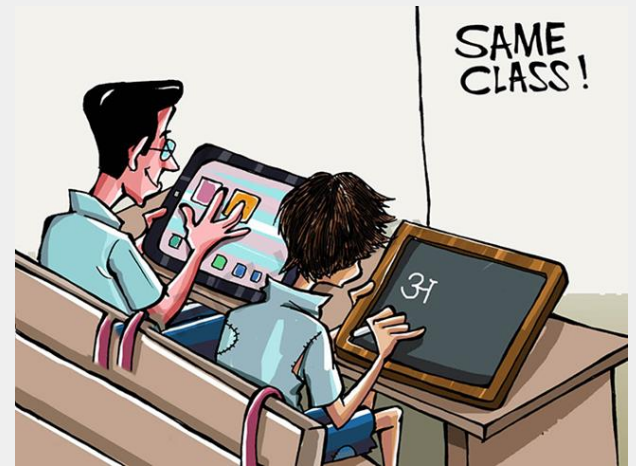
In 2011-2012, three states had more than

50%

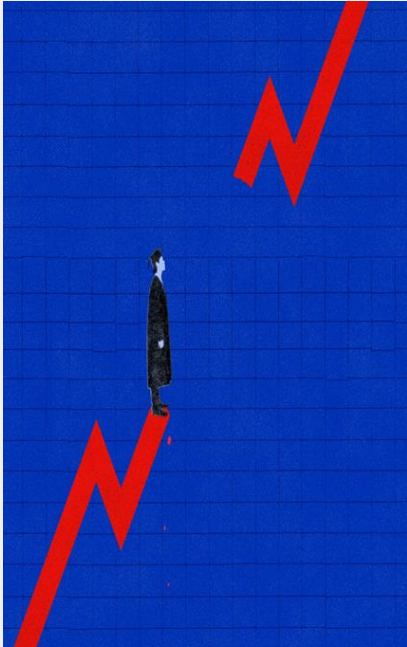
of their Latino students in segregated schools (less than 10% white): New York, California and Texas.

The Digital Divide:

- The digital divide is the gulf between those who have ready access to computers and the internet and those who don't because of socioeconomic status, race, gender, etc.⁷
- Digital access has transformed society, favoring those with privileged access.
- Some of the contributing factors for digital dividends in the educational system include poverty, poor infrastructure, corruption, etc.⁷
- The difference in technological access within a poor school zone compared to a privileged school zone can be seen based on test scores, advancement in subjects, etc.⁷
- Individuals hailing from low-income families are limited in their access to information that is crucial in advancing their education, applying for jobs, and coming up with innovative ideas since they can't afford connectivity to the web.⁷
- The digital divide has worsened due to COVID-19, as the less privileged don't have the income to afford a technological device or the internet connection that is needed to continue their educations virtually. Low-income schools are poorly funded, so even they often can not help to disperse technological resources.
- We can fix digital dividends by enforcing more technological literacy within every school district so that every child is given an equal opportunity for success.



Education's Impact on Other Life Chances:



- Members of lower socioeconomic statuses are less likely to attend college and obtain advanced degrees. Therefore, they are less likely to be employed in higher-wage jobs with fewer opportunities for advancement and upward social mobility.
- This then affects housing, as most struggle to afford rent, especially when it consumes most of their income.
- The inability to hold a fair-paying job also affects health, as lower-income households can not afford nutritious foods, hospital and/or doctor visits, medicine, etc. as readily as those of a higher socioeconomic status can.

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