

Every Student Succeeds Act: “High Concept Ideas” for Consideration for Inclusion in State Plan

Promoting Socioeconomic and Racial Integration

Topic: Promoting Integration and Avoiding Racial and Socioeconomic Isolation

High Concept Idea: To ensure students are prepared for post-secondary success and positive civic engagement and to reduce achievement gaps, we will leverage the diversity of New York students by treating multiple forms of socioeconomic and racial integration of schools and districts as evidence-based interventions.

Additional Information about High Concept Idea:

Multiple strategies are available for achieving the demonstrably beneficial effects of socio-economic and racial integration. LEAs in the state have effectively implemented known strategies and innovated new ones. Without identifying any “one right way,” we will encourage LEAs to adopt existing or develop new integration strategies as evidence-based interventions.

Relevant Requirements of ESSA law and/or draft rulemaking:

Section 1003(b)(1)(A) of ESSA provides that SEAs may allocate funds to LEAs on a formula or competitive basis for school improvement as described in §1111(d). Such funding may extend to “evidence-based” interventions. For an intervention to be considered evidence-based under § 1003, § 8101(21) requires that at least one study support the efficacy of the intervention through strong, moderate, or promising evidence.

Rationale for High Concept Idea:

A rich body of research including a number of high-quality studies shows that, everything else equal, schools that are racially and economically segregated produce lower educational achievement and attainment for students of color and low-income students than schools with less segregation, which in turn limits their lifetime opportunities.¹ At the same time, the same body of research shows that increased socioeconomic and racial integration leads to higher academic outcomes for students of color and economically disadvantaged students without lowering outcomes for other students, closes the achievement gap between students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, fosters critical thinking skills and the ability to communicate and work with people of all backgrounds, decreases the likelihood of teenage pregnancy and interaction with the juvenile justice system, and increases the likelihood of college going and success, among students of color and economically disadvantaged students, again, without negatively affecting results for other students.²

Among the high-quality studies demonstrating that students in integrated settings achieve these positive academic and non-academic outcomes are the following. In 2009, Robert Bifulco et al. produced a study that compared academic results in Connecticut between students selected through a blind lottery to attend integrated

¹John Kuscera and Gary Orfield, “New York State’s Extreme School Segregation: Inequality, Inaction and a Damaged Future,” *School Segregation in the Eastern States*, (Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project, 2014), 29.

² Amy Stuart Wells, Lauren Fox, and Diana Cordova-Cobo. “How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students,” *The Century Foundation*, (New York, NY: The Century Foundation, 2016), 9.

magnet schools and those who were not selected and as a result attended highly segregated schools.³ Included in the study were students from urban areas who were mostly black and Latino. Among these students, the ones randomly selected to attend magnet schools made greater gains and performed significantly better in high school math and reading and on middle school reading tests than the otherwise identical class of urban students who were not selected. The study also included suburban students who were generally more affluent and included a larger percentage of white students. Among this group of students, those selected to attend magnets also outperformed their peers who were not selected for magnet schools and attended traditional suburban schools. As a randomized control trial, Bifulco et al.'s study provides "strong" evidence as defined by ESSA that integration contributes to positive academic outcomes and thus qualifies an evidenced-based intervention under ESSA §§ 1003 and 8101(21).⁴

Several other studies provide strong or moderate evidence, as required by ESSA, that integration improves outcomes for students of color and low-income students. A study of urban, mainly students of color and low-income students selected to participate in inter-district transfers to traditional suburban schools in the greater Hartford, Connecticut area found smaller achievement gaps between students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds in the integrated settings, including no achievement gap on grade 3 reading scores between black, white and Latino students and less than a five percent gap as of grade 10 between low-income students and their peers, compared to a gap of 28% of students at the state level.⁵ Another national study found a larger SAT score gap between black and white students in segregated districts than comparable students in integrated school settings, and predicted that switching students from a segregated to an integrated setting had the potential to reduce the score gap by up to 25%.⁶ Finally, studies demonstrate that students of color who attend integrated schools are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college than otherwise similarly situated students in segregated schools, while the likelihood that white, middle-class students in integrated settings graduated high school and attended college at the same rate as otherwise similarly situated students in segregated settings.⁷ Other studies with

³ Bifulco, R., Cobb C. D., & Bell C. (2009). Can Interdistrict Choice Boost Student Achievement? The Case of Connecticut's Interdistrict Magnet School Program. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 323.

⁴ The study also satisfies the requirements that it cover over 350 students at multiple sites and that the intervention has a statistically significant positive effect on student outcomes. U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., NON-REGULATORY GUIDANCE: USING EVIDENCE TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION INVESTMENTS 8, n. IX (2016), <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceuseseseinvestment.pdf>.

⁵ Amy Stuart Wells, Lauren Fox, and Diana Cordova-Cobo. "How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students," *The Century Foundation*, (New York, NY: The Century Foundation, 2016), 12.

⁶ David Card and Jessie Rothstein. "Racial Segregation And The Black-White Test Score Gap," *National Bureau of Economic Research*, (Massachusetts, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2006), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w12078>.

⁷ Roslyn Arlin Mickelson and Mokubung Nkomo, "Integrated schooling, life course outcomes, and social cohesion in multiethnic democratic societies," *Review of Research in Education*, (Davis, CA: SAGE Publishing, 2012), 197-238.

strong or moderate evidence, as required by ESSA, demonstrate significant long-term impacts on integration, such as increased civic engagement,⁸ increased likelihood of living in an integrated setting,⁹ and higher earnings.¹⁰

In addition, inclusion of different perspectives within classroom and group settings promotes creativity¹¹ and develops critical thinking skills.¹² Working cooperatively in racially and economically diverse classrooms and sharing experiences and perspectives with students with different backgrounds leads students to raise their expectations, anticipate and appreciate differences of opinion, and work more effectively to form consensus.¹³ A meta-analysis, qualifying under ESSA standards as moderate evidence, examined a variety of studies of school settings demonstrated a positive correlation between integration of groups and the ability to cooperate, understand, and show empathy toward people of diverse backgrounds.¹⁴

Promoting integrated school environments is a cost-effective strategy for raising student achievement for districts; for instance, a moderately strong research study found that socioeconomic integration raises high school graduation rates, which generate “higher individual earnings and public savings to the point of exceeding integration’s costs.”¹⁵ High-quality early childhood education is the only intervention that has shown a higher return on investment than racial and socioeconomic integration.¹⁶

Other Ideas Considered, if any:

Topic: Promoting Integration and Avoiding Racial and Socioeconomic Isolation

High Concept Idea: To ensure students are prepared for post-secondary success and positive civic engagement and to reduce achievement gaps, we will leverage the diversity of New York students by developing measures of racial and/or socio-economic integration of schools and use that measure appropriately to incentivize integration of schools throughout New York State.

Additional Information about High Concept Idea: Developing a measure that

⁸ Michal Kurlaender, and John T. Yun, “Fifty Years after Brown: New Evidence of the Impact of School Racial Composition on Student Outcomes,” *International Journal of Educational Policy, Research and Practice* (2005), 6(1), 70.

⁹ Amy Stuart Wells, *How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students*, (New York, NY: The Century Foundation, 2016), 28.

¹⁰ John Kucsera, “New York State’s Extreme School Segregation: Inequality, Inaction and a Damaged Future,” (Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project, 2014), 29.

¹¹ Phillips, K. (2014). How Diversity Works. *Scientific American*, 311(4).
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>

¹² Amy Stuart Wells, Lauren Fox, and Diana Cordova-Cobo. “How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students” (New York, NY: The Century Foundation, 2016), 8.

¹³ Phillips, K. (2014). How Diversity Works. *Scientific American*, 311(4).
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>

¹⁴ Tropp, L. R., & Prenovost, M. A. (2008). The Role of Intergroup Contact in Predicting Children’s Interethnic Attitudes: Evidence From Meta-Analytic and Field Studies. In S. R. Levy & M. Killen (Eds.), *Intergroup attitudes and relations in childhood through adulthood* (pp. 236–248). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ Basile, M. (2012). The Cost-Effectiveness of Socioeconomic School Integration. *The Future of School Integration*, 149.

¹⁶ Kahlenberg, R. (2012) All Walks of Life: New Hope for School Integration. *American Educator*, 36(4),

recognizes the extent to which LEAs and schools achieve racial and/or socio-economic integration will incentivize integration and provide valuable information to families and the public. There are various ways to measure school integration for this purpose, including Dissimilarity, Interaction/Exposure, Entropy, and Diversity Indices.

A Dissimilarity Index measures the distribution of groups of students within smaller units, such as schools, to determine the level of segregation in a larger unit, such as a district. The Dissimilarity Index indicates the smallest number of members of each of these groups of students who would need to shift among schools in order to reach the same distribution of students within each school as exists within the district as a whole. An Interaction/Exposure Index measures the likelihood that a person within one group will come into contact with a person of another group in a given setting, such as a school. While the Dissimilarity and Interaction Indices can measure the segregation of only two groups at once, the Entropy and Diversity Indices can measure the distribution of members of multiple groups. The Entropy Index does this by measuring the deviation of each geographical unit, such as a school, from the area's, or district's, "entropy" or racial and ethnic diversity, which is greatest when each group is equally represented in the area. A Diversity Index is a weighted average of the number of students in each group in a given school. A school is "integrated" when the diversity index rating falls within a certain range relative to the proportion of students in those groups in the district as a whole.

Once a method of measuring integration is selected, the measure can be employed in different ways to incentivize schools and districts to integrate. One approach, among many that are possible, is to include the measure in NYSED's data dashboard, to inform the public about the level of integration in the district and encourage districts with high levels of racial and socio-economic isolation in some schools to address this issue in their improvement plans. Another approach is to incorporate one of these indices into an LEA accountability system, if NYSED continues to identify LEAs.

Relevant Requirements of ESSA law and/or draft rulemaking: Section 1111(h)(1)(D) of ESSA requires SEAs to report annually required indicators and allows states to include additional information about all schools that will best provide parents, students, and other members of the public with information regarding the status and progress of each school. Section 1111(c)(4)(B) of ESSA requires SEAs to incorporate into their annual reports on elementary and middle schools and high schools four indicators. The fourth indicator gives states significant flexibility to add their own metrics into their accountability plan. This indicator may include any measure that: 1) allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance; and 2) is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide.

Rationale for High Concept Idea: A rich body of research including a number of high-quality studies shows that, everything else equal, schools that are racially and economically segregated produce lower educational achievement and attainment for students of color and low-income students than schools with less segregation, which in turn limits their lifetime opportunities. At the same time, the same body of research shows that increased socioeconomic and racial integration leads to higher academic outcomes for students of color and economically disadvantaged students without lowering outcomes for other students, closes the achievement gap between students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, fosters critical thinking skills and the ability to

communicate and work with people of all backgrounds, decreases the likelihood of teenage pregnancy and interaction with the juvenile justice system, and increases the likelihood of college going and success, among students of color and economically disadvantaged students, again, without negatively affecting results for other students.¹⁷

Developing a measure of integration will allow NYSED to encourage districts to build on the growing number of innovative and sustainable incentive-based strategies being explored by school districts in the state and around the country to increase the integration of schools.¹⁸ These incentive-based strategies allow districts to innovate at the local level and respond to the needs of their own communities. Over 80 school districts nationwide, including several in New York, have been working toward achieving integrated schools with plans that rely on incentives rather than mandates.¹⁹

Currently, at least one state, and a number of schools districts use socioeconomic and/or racial diversity as a measure of accountability. Connecticut subjects schools that do not reasonably mirror the racial makeup of the communities they serve to intervention and review by the State.²⁰ Affected districts must fashion plans to mitigate the racial imbalance present in the school. Failure to take corrective action triggers intervention by the State. Several school districts, such as Jefferson County, Kentucky and Berkeley Unified School District in California, divide students into relevant socioeconomic and/or racial demographic categories, then audit schools to determine if they enroll a representative number of students from each category.²¹ Schools that do not enroll representative numbers of students are required to develop plans to reach enrollment goals.²² In addition, several districts produce annual reports on the diversity of their schools and district. Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, for example, defines school diversity based on race, socio-economic status, language, and disability, and produces an annual report on whether schools meet the diversity criteria. The district also includes information on staff diversity in their annual report.²³

Other Ideas Considered, if any:

¹⁷ John Kuscera and Gary Orfield. "New York State's Extreme School Segregation: Inequality, Inaction and a Damaged Future," in *School Segregation in the Eastern States*, (Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project, 2014), 29; Amy Stuart Wells, Lauren Fox, and Diana Cordova-Cobo. "How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students" (New York, NY: The Century Foundation, 2016), 9.

¹⁸ Halley Potter, Kimberly Quick & Elizabeth Davies, A New Wave of School Integration, The Century Foundation (Feb. 9, 2016), <https://tcf.org/content/report/a-new-wave-of-school-integration/> (listing several dozen districts currently implementing an incentive-based integration plan); Richard D. Kahlenberg, School Integration in Practice, Lessons from Nine Districts (Oct. 14, 2016), <https://tcf.org/content/report/school-integration-practice-lessons-nine-districts/> (detailing the integration plans of nine of the over 100 districts with integration plans).

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-226e-2 (West).

²¹ See e.g., Jefferson County Public Schools. (2016). Student Assignment Plan (p. 17). Retrieved from <https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/sites/default/files/Student%20Assignment%20Handbook%202016-17%20%28Updated%20March%209%202016%29.pdf>. Berkeley Unified School District. (2016). BUSD Student Assignment Plan/Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.berkeleyschools.net/information-on-berkeley-unifieds-student-assignment-plan/>;

²² *Id.*

²³ Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. (2016). 2015-16 Annual Diversity Report (p. 2). Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57752cbcd1758e541bdeef6b/t/57927bc1579fb3fb9d306e2f/1469217732838/2015_16_Annual%2BDiversity%2BReport.pdf.