



# New York State Board of Regents Research Workgroup Integration, Equity and Diversity

September 12, 2017  
Continued Development of the Work Plan

## Problem Statement

If achievement gap disparities are a factor of opportunity-to-learn disparities that appear to be based on race, ethnicity, family income, fiscal resources, home zip code, language barriers, and citizenship status, what social, political, policy, and legal obstacles must the Board of Regents confront to ensure all students have equitable opportunities to prepare for college, careers and civic engagement? What leadership can the Board provide to remove these obstacles?

*“The push toward socioeconomic and racial integration is perhaps the most important challenge facing American public schools. Segregation impedes the ability of children to prepare for an increasingly diverse workforce; to function tolerantly and enthusiastically in a globalized society; to lead, follow, and communicate with a wide variety of consumers, colleagues, and friends. The democratic principles of this nation are impossible to reach without universal access to a diverse, high quality, and engaging education.”*

\* Source: Potter, H., Quick, K., & Davies, E. (2016). A new wave of school integration: Districts and charters pursuing socioeconomic diversity. The Century Foundation.

## Program Goals

We propose aligning our work with a framework that is essentially compatible with New York State's MBK commitment. Our draft goals are intended to ensure:

1. All children, especially those living in impoverished conditions, have equitable access to high quality schools and programs (Equity);
2. A commitment to constitutional compliance that frames policy decisions;
3. Differentiated instructional practices are based on need and culture (Teaching and Learning);
4. Responsive to the eradication of structural and institutional racism (alternatives to the school-to-prison pipeline);
5. Collaborative federal, state, and local community partnerships provide comprehensive and coordinated support services widely available to all residents (e.g. housing and social services); and
6. Engage families and communities in a trusted and respectful way (parent engagement).

## **Desired Outcomes:**

1. Identify the opportunity-to-learn disparities many students face that appear to be based on race, ethnicity, family income, fiscal resources, geographic location, language barriers, and citizenship status.
2. Identify the social, political, policy and legal obstacles the NYS Board of Regents must confront to address these disparities to ensure all students have equitable opportunities to prepare for college, careers, and civic engagement.
3. Identify previously-published studies to present research-based policies and best practices regarding economic and racial/ethnic integration.
4. Recommend to the Board of Regents, policy revisions that can best prioritize racial and economic integration, create a vision for school districts and individual schools, and encourage both schools and school districts to collaborate in the creation of inter-school and inter-district solutions.
5. Recommend to the Board of Regents and elected officials at all governmental levels, policies, legislation, and budgetary priorities to engage educational institutions as well as other city and state agencies in promoting integration, equity and diversity.

## **Proposed Study Questions for A Research Agenda:**

1. If achievement gap disparities are a factor of opportunity to learn disparities that appear to be based on ethnicity, family income, fiscal resources and home zip code, what social, political, policy, and legal obstacles must the Board of Regents confront to ensure all students have equitable opportunities to prepare for college, careers and civic engagement? What leadership can the Board provide to remove these obstacles?
2. How can the Board of Regents prioritize integration and create a vision for districts and schools?
3. What can the state do to encourage districts to work together on this issue and create interdistrict solutions? As the data shows, there is both an issue with within district isolation and between district isolation?
4. There are a myriad of social and institutional factors that lead to racial and economic isolation, both within and outside of education policy. How can we engage with other state agencies to begin to work together on this issue?

5. To what extent are measures of the absence or presence of economic integration policies predicative of achievement performance on NYS standardized tests?
6. How might previously published studies that examine the implications of the absence or presence of integrated educational communities inform and guide Regents policy? There are examples of past efforts that failed as well as efforts that were successful, what are the lessons to be learned?
7. What can we predict about the life goals of students who, over the course of K-12 segregated school experiences, continuously perform below proficiency levels on state and locally administered standardized tests? What can we learn about the life goals students who attend schools that seek incentives to sustain policies that focus on economic diversity? What might be the outcomes for our democracy?
8. Should schools be integrated by law, local choice or both?
9. In addition, what strategies can schools employ to start address the persistent remnants of the Jim Crow Laws?

## **Next Steps:**

- Complete a work plan.
- Review studies and literature.
- Author/ researcher/ practitioner presentations
- Identify site visit opportunities -prepare a framework, a system of guiding questions to ensure the visits offer reliable comparisons.
- Collect and analyze data to support study questions.
- Create an advisory commission of stakeholders with diverse views on the nature and scope of the goals, to guide the research agenda.
- Review and understand the statutory authority the state constitution gives the Board of Regents.
- Prepare a set of recommendations for Board consideration.

## **Criteria for Inviting Individuals to Serve on our Commission:**

1. Published author or co-author of peer-reviewed research study/studies;
2. Author or institutional leader (CEO/President, etc.) of policy brief or research report released by reputable research institution (IHE, non-profit, foundation, etc.);
3. Professional judgment of Members of the Board of Regents Workgroup and other Members;
4. Practitioners and Students (grades 6-16);
5. Community Leaders and Government Policymakers

## What might be the outcome for our democracy?

*“Commitment to the success of every student means that we acknowledge the uneven playing (resource inequalities) field that currently exists in many schools for so many children. We must have courageous conversations about the issues that impact on those that are disadvantaged by economic disparities.”*

- Chancellor Betty Rosa, New York State Board of Regents (July 2017)

\* Source: Whitehurst, Reeves and Rodrigue, (2016) “Segregation, race, and charter schools: What do we know?” The Brookings Institution.



***“THERE COMES A TIME WHEN ONE MUST TAKE A POSITION THAT IS NEITHER SAFE, NOR POLITIC, NOR POPULAR, BUT ‘WE’ MUST TAKE IT BECAUSE CONSCIENCE TELLS ‘US’ IT IS RIGHT.”***

***~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.***

