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New York States Brightest Third Grade Readers

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Abstract

Data of 344, 254 New York students provided information on select characteristics to determine enablers of the state's Brightest Third-Grade Readers. A mixed-methods approach revealed said readers were Blacks (n = 1485), Native Americans (n = 68), Latinos (n = 1946), Asians (n = 2802), and Whites (n = 5404). NYC produced most of the state's said brightest readers, with Brooklyn, (Md = 544, Queens, Md = 417, Nassau, Md = 365, New York, Md = 325, Bronx, Md = 202), $\chi^2(61, n = 333) = 163.62, p < .01$ producing significantly more of said readers. Wealthier NYC districts produced brighter readers. The low percentage passing rate for bright students in Bronx and other counties requires the fixing of possible exclusionary gifted programs. In the emerging majority-minority era, and in an increasingly high-tech and dangerous world, uneducated citizenry harbingers threat to national security and our Democratic Ideals.

Introduction

An existing pathology is evidenced by the preponderance of research findings illuminating the failures of Black children in school rather than their successes. Consequently, a reasonable assumption exists that, if those children were to read such research findings, they could internalize the self-fulfilling prophecy of failure and conclude they were born to fail. Such failure could progress with age, developing into a feeling of disenfranchisement and alienation from school, a place where children must feel valued and respected (Jossell, 2012). Black students need a lift in their self-esteem or their academic or technical self-concept from something or someone informing them of their capacity to excel. Schools like Chicago's Urban Prep, with its 100 percent placement of Black male graduates to college over the last eight years (Urban Prep, 2015), exemplifies such a needed motivator.

This study is warranted by the findings that Black children are still rejecting Black dolls because of their perceived unsavory characteristics (Bagby-Young, 2008; Hazel, 2006; Sharpe, 2016). Such rejection could have discreet (psychological) and adverse ramifications on academic achievement or technical competency, necessitating an antidote of self-esteem boosters. According to Dixson, Roberson, and Worrell (2017), such boosters derived from racial identification with successful peers-could positively affect students; in other words, "(students who have a stronger connection and commitment to their own ethnic identity) are meaningfully correlated with self-esteem" (p. 126). A study of high-performing Black students indicated the small positive effect of ethnic identity on GPA scores, but its impact on student academic achievement was inconclusive (Dixson et al., 2017). The basis for the recent doll rejection mirrors the pathology of self-hatred reported by Kenneth and Mamie Clark in their testimonies that helped the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* decision overturning racial segregation in schools (NAACP Defend, 2017). Hence, the current Black doll rejection could be indicative of a wider and troubling symptom.

Equally troubling, if teachers internalized what I term, "the ode to Black failure" studies, and had them inform their practice, the outcome could sabotage efforts to bridge the achievement gap, of which Blacks have long been the rear guards or defenders of their last-placed position. Understandably, unbiased researchers report the facts as they exist. If the data reveal Blacks are performing poorly in schools, then there is no denying those facts. Notwithstanding, educators are taught to catch their students doing good; thus, they should also call home to relay children's good behaviors to parents/guardians—by telling on them. The approach should be dissimilar to the dread generated by the words, "I am going to tell on you," uttered to children by adults or their peers.



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Additionally, teachers should embrace Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy's (2006) idea of mindfulness, becoming aware of, for example, the failure of even 1 out of 100 students. However, an inconsistency emerges from the fact many researchers are also educators, and, for years, despite their findings and recommendations for actions to address Blacks' school failure, the failure has been intractable, resulting in the appearance that reports of failure inform greater failure. A challenge to the saliency of focusing on Black school failure, as opposed to their successes, could emerge from this work- catching them doing good and telling on them.

Purpose

This concurrent mixed-method study amalgamated quantitative and qualitative data to examine the common core achievement scores of New York State Brightest Black Third-Grade Readers (NYS BBTGR) to determine what malleable factors most accounted for their and their peers' successes. Nonparametric statistical tests (correlational, Kruskal Wallis, Kendall's tau, and Mann-Whitney U) provided quantitative analyses to determine the relationship between student race/ethnicity, county, and county SES (independent variables) and their Level 4 scores (dependent variable). Additionally, insight gained from the researcher's experience as an educator, a parent leader, and a parent of publicly educated school children informed the qualitative data. A mixed-method approach was employed because it could best convey the needs of marginalized individuals (Creswell, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

A combined post-positivist and advocacy/participatory approach incorporating Bronfenbrenner's (2009) ecological theory guided this work. The post-positivist approach challenges the notion of absolute truth regarding human actions and behaviors. According to Creswell (2003), "absolute truth can never be found" (p. 7). Therefore, though the post-positivists search for "objective reality," researchers frame studies to explore the variables for the root cause of the problem being studied. In the process, a theory is generated, data to support or refute same are collected, and a refinement of hypotheses is made in conducting the study (Creswell, 2003). The knowledge generated is a function of the approach to develop and test research questions and hypotheses with metrics based on the scientific method (Creswell, 2003).

The advocacy/participatory approach challenge the limitations and the structural restraints of other approaches, which restrict them from advocating for marginalized people. Practitioners of the advocacy approach call for the inclusion of an action agenda to help improve the lives of participants by acting to aid in removing anchoring and debilitating conditions. An outcome must address social inequity to advance empowerment or remedy pathologies that stifle the growth of individuals in schools or other institutions (Creswell, 2003). As Rios (2012) noted, "The only way we can really think about reducing disparities in achievement is by addressing social inequality" (p. 8). Thus, advocacy may mean empowering participants by championing their cause (Creswell, 2003).

Ecological theory. Bronfenbrenner (2009) outlined four types of systems informing his theory: the macrosystem, Microsystems, mesosystem, and exosystem. For this study, I interpreted the macrosystem as considering the students in their larger learning context. The Microsystems considers the students in their environment (school, home, and neighborhood) where they interact. The mesosystem considers the interrelations between two or more Microsystems wherein the students participate, such as the relationship between home and school (and socio-economic status of their student body). The exosystem looks at how external contexts (mediating factors such as family socio-economics) affect school performance. To the extent possible, those factors will be examined through publicly available and latest data sources.



Literature Review

At the elementary school level, many non-academic factors-economic, sociopolitical, socio-cultural, familial, psychological, and contextual-influence the racial test score gap (Burchinal et al., 2011; Wasserberg, 2014). Those factors dictate student performance through their interactions with school and community characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 2009). Other studies (e.g., Coleman & Johns Hopkins University, 1966; Green, 2012) have identified post-elementary school contributory factors such as family background, school composition, teacher attitudes and perceptions, and students' sense of control within and over their environment. Among these, access to high-quality schools and instruction was crucial to the success of all students, but especially for poor and underserved minority populations (Darling-Hammond 2010; Ladson-Billings 2000; Wiggan, 2014).

While the object of this current study is an examination of NYS BBTGR, ecological theory asserts that such an exploration must incorporate all the state's brightest third-grade readers. Hence, the examination of all racial/ethnic groups as much as possible. In NY, racial groups were categorized as Asians, Bi-racial, Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans (NA), and Whites. However, New York City (NYC) excluded Bi-racial and NA from their data. Therefore, NA were included in the state data for this current study but not comprehensively in the city's data. Additionally, for the small dataset, Bi-racial will not be a focus but could be included in the qualitative discussion.

The Third-Grade Readers

The pivotal third-grade, according to Wiggan (2014), incubates basic reading skills and the shift to more complex learning. There, reading skills are utilized to learn common core subjects such as reading, writing, math, science, technology, social studies, art, and music which generally constitute a modern school curriculum. At the end of elementary school, average level reading skills are often deficient in children who were poor readers at the end of first grade (Sparks, 2011; Wiggan, 2014). A deficit in third-grade reading skills harbingers problems that could limit students' abilities to apply themselves in eighth grade, leading to potential dropping out, incarceration, or welfare dependency (Sparks, 2011; Wiggan, 2014).

Contingent on the federal mandate to particularly improve schooling for Blacks (U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DOE], 2005), each spring, NY administers an exam in English Language Arts (ELA) to students. The results categorize students as Level 1, 2, 3, or 4. In the 2016-17 school year, of the 344, 254 third-grade students tested (the study population), 11,706 (7%) attained Level 4 scores (NYSED, 2017). According to NYSED (n.d.),

Students performing at this level excel in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy that are considered more than sufficient for the expectations at this grade. (p.1)

Given (a) that student test scores were also determinants for academic intervention services and (b) the low percentages of students attaining Level 4, for the purpose of this study, Level 4 passers will be designated as gifted readers and described as NYS Brightest Third-Grade Readers (NYS BTGR). Thus, the terms *brightest students*, *Level 4*, and *BTGR* will be used interchangeably, as will Latinos and Hispanics. The brightest designation incorporated guidance from Reis et al. (2004) regarding the reading limitations of some academically gifted students and the possibility of talented readers not being identified as academically gifted.



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Identifying and Educating the Gifted Readers

Significant differences in cognitive development emerge by age three, before children begin attending schools, leading to deficits or being advanced from the first day of formal schooling (Chen & Brooks-Gunn, 2012; Noble et al., 2015). Gifted children are born with the capacity to learn at an accelerated rate compared to their peers (Lu, Li, Stevens, & Ye, 2015; Reis et al., 2004). Such children have been described as alert infants, whose first words are usually uttered by nine months. They often read before age four and can comprehend advanced language (Reis et al., 2004). Being linguistically gifted is one of the two areas most valued in our schools (mathematically/logical is the other, Gutek, 1989). Still, Howard Gardner has identified up to eight areas of intelligence (Groff, 2013).

Language arts is an academic field in which a child may manifest giftedness, and the early teaching and learning to advance such characteristics in children begin at home, with parents, relatives, and institutions in their communities (Fahey & Forman, 2015; Gallagher, 2015; Noble et al., 2015). Additionally, as Fahey et al. (2015) noted,

Studies show that the young brain is highly malleable and is shaped-either positively or negatively by a baby's day-to-day interactions with the important people in his or her life.... Reading aloud, even to the tiniest of babies, helps build crucial brain connections for language and literacy learning. Infants are soothed by the rhythm and tone of the spoken language around them and may even try to "mimic" the melodic contour of the mother's voice to attract more of her attention. (p. 2)

Research comparing professional, working-class, and welfare participants found the vocalization and vocabulary exchange within professional families exceeded those of children from working-class or welfare families (Gallagher, 2015). Talented readers performed two grade levels ahead, with advanced language and processing capabilities in reading (Reis et al., 2004).

In many schools, the process of identifying G&T students for placement in funded programs begins in the third grade (Johns Hopkins, n.d.). Gifted students can be accurately identified by their parents most of the time, and more so by professionally trained educators (Green, 2012; Johns Hopkins, n.d.; Streeter, 2007). Regarding parents' capacity to identify giftedness in their children, Streeter (2007) revealed,

His mother, Cheryl Moore, noticed something in her son early in his life. He was self-motivated, teaching himself to do multiplication and write in cursive. In kindergarten, he was tested for the gifted program and placed in it in the first grade. "He always wanted to know more," Moore said. "My answers were never enough. He would keep asking." (p. 2)

Therefore, if the theorized gifted reading students in this study were formally identified by their Level 4 third-grade scores on their first high-stakes test, such late identification may inform a pathology.

Collective Efficacy Using the "It takes a Village" Framework to Help Educate Children

The educative process is best advanced through a collaboration of home (parents), school (teachers), community, and businesses. In my experience, mindful teachers will inform parents about bright children and the procedure to have them placed in the Gifted and Talented (G&T) schools or programs. From my 20 years of experience as a classroom instructor, when teachers are tasked with so many activities not associated with the actual delivery of instruction, and when the most energy is expended trying to settle the class to deliver instruction, then teacher good intentions will be filed in the bottom drawer. The socialization of children and the



teaching and learning of respect that was once the purview of the home and other community institutions that have been reported abandoned in many communities (Gutek, 1989) currently holds true. In my observation, many children attended school “hyper.” Based on my activities as a parent leader, a solution that I have long contemplated is having a program where randomly selected screened mothers or grandmothers attend school. They would sit in their child’s class and shadow his or her schedule for the entire day. Both parent and the employer would be compensated. McGowan-Robinson (2016) provided justification. They wrote,

African American parents are the strongest advocates for their children, but historically educational systems have not valued their social and cultural capital. Schools must give space for parents to interact with each other and with the staff, as their voices speak truth to power changing perceptions and bringing about change in a system in which they have historically been silenced. (p 118)

The experience with my son, Phillip, highlights a mindful teacher, problem of getting Blacks in G&T schools, and the impact of community participation. All names used are real and is in keeping with the literature that fostering school, community, and business participation entail recognizing and honoring the contributors/participants (Ice, Thapa, & Cohen, 2015).

In 1990, when Phillip was in the third grade at PS 76 in the Bronx, his African American teacher, Ms. Cash, asked my wife and me to have him tested for the G&T program. We had him tested in the third grade. After a long delay and no result, I contacted the school and was informed he was on a waiting list (he passed but there was no available seat). We had him retested in the fourth and fifth grades with the same waiting list response. It was only after drawing on my social capital (being a friend of the school board president) that Phillip was pulled out of the sixth grade and placed in the gifted school (MS 181). Even so, we sent him to a specialized high school prep course at the Montefiore Community Center in the Bronx. As the parents’ association co-president, I also informed other parents of the preparation they must take. After a year in the G&T middle school, Phillip passed the specialized high school entrance examination and was accepted to Bronx High School of Science (BHSS), one of NYC’s specialized high schools for G&T students.

A Latina student at Richard Green Middle School, a school where parents once dread to send their children, also passed. When Narvaez received the news of her passing, she ran to me and explained: “they (the school) did not know that I was smart; it was only after I passed they placed me in the honor’s class.” The mother later thanked me for recommending the after-school prep program Narvaez attended. When I told Carlos, the Latino owner of the local Fine Fare supermarket, of her success, he presented her with a \$200 check. Not all Black or Latino children have the resolute parents to advocate for them, as many poor parents may be too preoccupied with survival to see giftedness in their children. According to Gallagher (2015),

The lack of parental encouragement and maternal depression appear to be a part of poverty’s cost. Since many minority students in our society have grown up with poverty, it is no surprise that the prevalence of giftedness in these minority groups is about one-half that of the general population. Even in these unfavorable circumstances, it should be remembered that remarkable talents sometimes emerge. (p. 14)

Baccus (2014) presented an encouraging finding, noting that “while disparity in student academic achievement persists across socioeconomic boundaries, some high poverty schools have demonstrated that poverty does not have to result in poor academic achievement (p. 22).



Community Impact

The socioeconomic status (SES) of communities have long been considered a factor in school performance (Dupere, Leventhal, Crosnoe, & Dion, 2010; Rhodes & Warkentien, 2017). Children in higher SES communities, with wealthier neighbors or with higher-educated parents, performed better in schools or on standardized tests (Chen & Brooks-Gunn, 2012; Noble, 2015). The consensus of many studies corroborates Comer's (2015) assertion that schools provide children of better-educated parents with the tools (social and human capitals) needed to succeed. However, Rhodes and Warkentien (2017) revealed Cleveland was having a problem whereby increased diverse suburban school population resulted in worsening of schools for children upscale Black professionals.

In a study of Long Island, the researcher (2006) noted that some schools spent over \$25,000 per student double NYC's then-approximately \$12,000, and they did not generate the highest performance scores on the state's fourth-grade test. Moreover, in Long Island according to Hildebrand (2015), the "gap between LI's rich and poor school districts [is] widening" (p. 1). Poor parents do not consult empirical evidence to support their belief regarding better communities, better schools. Many even risk criminal penalties from the use of faked addresses in their "boundary hopping" from county to county or from state to nearby state to flee high poverty and increasingly segregated urban neighborhoods to secure quality education (Dillon, 2007; Shammas, 2016). Good schools can significantly increase the cost of homes (Mathur, 2016), and some homebuyers are willing to pay higher costs and property taxes to secure quality education (Rhodes & Warkentien, 2017).

Homeowners have a greater capacity to pressure principals to address underperforming teachers (McCabe, 2013). Additionally, select community members will engage in gatekeeping actions to protect the interest of their school communities, even employing outmigration (i.e., white flight) if the percentage of Blacks increases beyond a comfort level (Chen & Brooks-Gunn, 2012; Rhodes & Warkentien, 2017). For instance, the exclusion of Blacks from NYC Specialized High School (SHS) is an example of select New Yorkers using their social capital to protect their interest maintaining the schools' high standards. Accordingly, one such interest is maintaining the disparity in NYC SHS. For decades, the disparity in the placement of Blacks and Latinos has resulted in calls for reform. However, many Whites, including former Mayor Bloomberg, through letter to the editors, calls to talk radios, and other means, have strenuously resisted the call for action that would, in their words, "water down" the prestige of the school by letting in "unqualified" Blacks and Hispanics (Iverson, 2015).

School Type and its Implication for Student Learning

Gifted and talented schools. Some children at an early age exhibit characteristics that predispose them to learn at a much faster rate than other children (Jean-Gubbins, Callahan, & Renzulli, 2014; Johns Hopkins, n.d.; Tempus, 2004). Although such G&T students were often disparagingly labeled as freaks (Tempus, 2004), Steenbergen-Hu and Olszewski-Kubilius (2016) noted neglecting their special educational needs could hinder the development of highly motivated students who could become the next generation of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) innovators and creators of significant breakthroughs and advances in the STEM fields. Reis and Renzulli (2010) concluded that "the need for gifted education programs remains critical during the current time period in American education when our nation's creative productivity is being challenged by European and Asian nations" (pp. 105-6).

Therefore, to fully develop the talents of the G&T students, it is incumbent upon schools to accommodate their unique teaching and learning needs (Jean-Gubbins et al., 2014; Tempus, 2004). Some states have mandated or fully funded G&T programs, while others have not (Baker, 2003; Baker, Baker & Friedman-Nimz, 2004).



Although there were no legal mandates for such funding in NY, the NYSED advises that, starting from kindergarten, such G&T students be identified and their parents/guardians be given the option of having them placed in the G&T programs (Davidson, n.d.), where they would be taught by specially trained and licensed educators (NYSED, 2009). Still, a paradox Gallagher (2015) revealed was NCLB's silence on the education of G&T students.

According to the National Association for Gifted Education (n.d.) and Finn (2014), G&T students comprise six to ten percent of the total student population. However, in 2015, about 59.7% of Whites, 14.5 % of Asians, 13.4 % of Black, 9.9% of Hispanics, and .22% of NA students in New York were in G&T programs (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016). Because of such skewed statistics and the wide disparity between groups in the nation's G&T program, it has long been perceived as elitist for its exclusion of most minorities (Ford, 2006; Green, 2012). The gifted programs have long been plagued with inequity, with White middle-class children being more likely to be identified and placed as gifted compared to lower SES and Black children (Speirs-Neumeister, Adams, Pierce, Cassady, & Dixon 2007) resulting in an excellence achievement gap. As noted in Siegle et al. (2016), "These gaps indicate a failure to identify high-ability students of color and from disadvantaged circumstances and support them to reach the high levels of achievement of which they are capable" (para. 2). The findings were visualized by Finn (2014) who revealed that, in New York City, seats were only available for 22% ($n = 2,700$) of the city's 12,000 students qualified for the gifted and talented program, evidencing a structural impediment to the placement of G&T students.

Gallagher (2016) countered Siegle et al's. (2016) attribution of structural impediments and blamed poverty for the lack of parental encouragement and maternal depression as factors that may account for the uneven distribution of gifted "minority" groups in the population. Still, he noted that extreme conditions do not suppress the possibility of the emergence of remarkable talents. Despite evidence of hopefulness in Gallagher's (2016) revelation regarding the possibility of rising above adverse conditions, the blame the victimized parents approach advanced in deficit thinking theory is evident. Deficit thinking theory posits that some parents have a depraved indifference to education and are unconcerned with the education of their children (Ford & Grantham, 2010; Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008). It places the blame on parents for their children school failure (Green, 2012; Moore, Ford, & Mil, 2016). Ford, Grantham, and Whiting (2008a) advanced dynamic thinking as a solution, noting that teachers must,

(a) engage in critical self-examination that explores their attitudes and perceptions concerning cultural diversity, and examine the influence of these attitudes and perceptions on minority students' achievement and educational opportunities; (b) acquire accurate information about various cultural groups (e.g., histories, historical and contemporary contributions, and their preferred learning styles); (c) learn how to infuse multicultural perspectives and materials into curriculum and instruction to maximize the academic, cognitive, social-emotional, and cultural development of students; (d) learn ways of advocating and negotiating for diverse students; and (e) build partnerships with diverse families, communities, and organizations.... [E]ducators are most responsive to diverse students when they are competent or striving to become competent in the students' culture. Just as teacher incompetence in a subject area hurts students so, too, does multicultural incompetence. (p. 221)

Studies (e.g., Gallagher, 2015; Green 2012; Speirs-Neumeister et al., 2007) have advanced diverse reasons for Blacks' significant absence from gifted programs. Some factors are within control of schools. Others, almost impossible to detect, are in the attitudes and perceptions of educators regarding negative cultural beliefs about who is gifted; still other factors are within the student affective domain conjuring terms such as stereotype threat or acting White, and others delineate/highlight the absence of culturally relevant and sensitive pedagogies in schools (Green, 2012). According to Muhammad (2008).



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Part of the achievement gap, particularly for gifted Black students, is due to the poor images these students have of themselves as learners. Our research shows that prevention and intervention programs that focus on improving students' achievement ethic and self-image are essential to closing the achievement gap. (para. 4)

While some of those factors cannot be explored with this current study, their reference is warranted by the study framework.

Westphalen (2005) described the pathology informing Blacks and Latinos' minuscule presence in G&T programs (Snyder et al., 2015), as well as how Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth (CTY) has been successful in addressing the problem in various states. Ford, Grantham, and Whiting (2008) advanced a framework calling for the recruitment and retention of Blacks and Latinos in G&T programs, an approach CTY has undertaken. According to Westphalen (2005), to address the lack of networking to advance gifted Latino students, CTY has established nationwide initiatives to identify and prepare them to access selective universities--demonstrating that there are many high scoring Latino children and reaching out to them is also beneficial to their families, communities, and society as a whole.

The family plays a role in whether Black G&T students will succeed in G&T programs. The need for family support emerges from the multiple stressors children could face when they are isolated in G&T classes, schools, or suburban communities. Renzulli and Park (2000) reported on the characteristic of gifted dropouts, including low SES, being "racial minorities," having less-educated parents and being engaged in limited extracurricular activities. Deficit thinking notwithstanding, the authors expanded on Gallagher's (2015) findings regarding low-SES parents and their adverse impact on G&T children. While some may think third-grade is too early a grade for students to be dropping out, such students could be isolated in G&T programs, where they face various stressors from self-doubt, are victims of unkind gestures and comments from classmates, and even teacher lower expectation (Chagas & Fleith, 2006).

In an Upper West Side public school in Manhattan, Baker (2013) reported the pathology of a gifted program, basically isolated in a regular public school and off limits to other students who could perceive the exclusive nature of its design as the G&T students could perceive their isolation. Of the 61 G&T students, there were four Blacks and seven Latinos. The author further elaborated on the disparity, noting where District 3 in Manhattan, serving affluent Whites, had five gifted programs in a few city blocks, and Black and Latino Districts 5 and 6 combined had two programs. Baker (2013) wrote of the disparity in the other boroughs, noting,

And though programs are clustered in affluent neighborhoods around Prospect Park, Brooklyn, and in northeastern Queens, the accelerated classes are absent from broad swaths of central Brooklyn and southeast Queens, where more families are poor and black or Hispanic. In District 7, in the South Bronx, there is not a single gifted program. The area, dominated by Hispanic and black residents, is among the poorest in the nation, with many people living below the official federal poverty mark. James H. Borland, a professor of education at Teachers College, said that looking at the gifted landscape in New York City suggests that one of two things must be true: either [B]lack and Hispanic children are less likely to be gifted, or there is something wrong with the way the city selects children for those programs. (pp. 2-3)

To address similar disparity, the Black, Latino & Asian Caucus (BLAC) NYC City Council members held a press conference advising Black & Latino families to advocate for G&T testing of their pre-K through second-grade children (Brooklyn Reader, 2015).

Given the activities Black parents have and continue to undertake to secure quality education for their children, even to help open up public schools (Bennett, 2000), it is questionable that they would act to



discourage academic striving in their children. Nonetheless, despite elements of the ode to Black failure narrative, Renzulli et al. (2000) provided examples of the barriers to G&T programs that Blacks have long faced, warranting the advocacy found in Brooklyn Reader (2015). However, parents must be aware of the deficit-thinking literature that promotes blaming “minority” parents and their children for their school failure (Green, 2012; Moore-Lawrence, 2017). Additionally, they should be cognizant of contrasting literature (e.g., Moore, Ford, & Milner, 2016) which offer solutions embracing recruitment and rigorous retention efforts to obtain and keep bright Black children in G&T programs/schools.

Racial/Ethnic Composition of Schools and its Implications for School Failure

At the time of this study, in the United States, students are categorized as Blacks, Latinos/Hispanics, Asians, Whites, Native Americans, or Bi-racial. The demographic mix of the student body and its racial composition influences students’ outcome measurements (Coleman et al., 1967; Kahleberg, 2012; Logan, Minca, & Adar, 2012; Mickelson & Greene, 2006). Those studies have indicated that the segregation of Blacks and Hispanics in urban schools lead to lower performance compared to when Whites were the majority of students in such schools.

Native Americans (NA). In the United States, Native Americans are listed as American Indian and Alaska Native, and, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2014), there were 566 federally recognized such First Nation groups. In Alaska, there were 11 distinct Native cultures and 22 different dialects (Chain, Shapiro, LeBuffe, & Bryson, 2017). In NY, there were eight federally identified NA nations in counties such as Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Suffolk (American Indian, n.d.). While care must be taken to sidestep the deficit thinking literature, the severe poverty and educational failure associated with NA, especially males, illuminated the literature (Chain et al., 2017; Huyser, Sakamoto, & Takei, 2010; Santos, 2017). Despite NCLB's focus on narrowing the achievement gap for minority students, the dismal performance of NA children, in all type of schools, was seen as a national tragedy (Chain et al., 2017; Santos, 2017; Zehr, 2001).

The early approach to educating NA, involved erasing and undermining their culture, was also found to inform their current school failure. Chain et al (2017) noted the need to reframe how NA were educated to enable a bicultural and culturally pluralistic approach, wherein their language and culture were respected. Native American (2011) also reported the problem of language and communication difficulties on NA student achievement. Because of the historical agreement, and despite their being sovereign nations, many NA attended schools under the control of the federal government. According to Sparks (2012), the Government Accountability Office reported pathologies and regulatory overlooking of problems in the approximately 200 schools run by the Bureau of Indian Education. Former Secretary of Education Duncan noted the crisis associated with NA youth, asserting the unacceptability of the lack of opportunities for them.

Sparks (2012) outlined the adverse educational outcome of NA and the widening of the math gap between them and other groups. Poverty was also a factor in NA poor education. However, a booster for them was found in Calcedeaver Elementary School, where NA students once had to trudge through sewage to attend school. According to Lessons (2016), Calcedeaver was currently a consistently high-achieving school in Alabama. The change resulted from a dedicated principal and NA who secured community buy-in for her quest to also make the school better for its majority NA students.

In 2014, then-President and Michelle Obama visited the Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota and acted to increase funding to build infrastructure to improve educational achievement for NA (Brown, 2015). Santos (2017) wrote, “In its effort to transfer more authority over schools to the tribes, the administration started a program to train indigenous teachers to teach in indigenous schools” (p. 2). The President’s approach was



informed by the frameworks outlined in various studies (e.g., Bowman, 2003; Garrett et al., 2014; Lesson, 2017; Pewewardy, 2002; Chain et al., 2017). Those works advocated incorporating the NA learning style, their spirituality, social support network, their linguistic diversity, and their historical pedigree to operate wellness centers grounded in indigenous cultural approach to healing, as well as operating culture- and language-immersion schools and tradition-based programs that promote resilience and the fostering of positive development within the population. Such a paradigm shift could be accommodated through the help of their wisdom keepers, whose ways of knowing and living acknowledge the inter-connectedness of everything in our world.

Despite the boost outlined in the Calcedeaver school, NA disadvantages and segregation in rural areas were stark (Logan & Burdick-Will, 2017), and the reality existed in schools such the Havasupai Elementary, in Arizona, where eighth graders read on second- to third-grade levels (Santos, 2017). Nonetheless, resilience in even “downpressed” young children has allowed them to overcome adverse conditions, especially within a caring school environment and social support network (O’Keefe, 2002; Richaud, 2013). Soler (2015), in a study on the educational initiative of First Nation communities in Onondaga, central New York, could inform the elevation of performance scores of NA groups found in Long Island, Westchester, and urban NYC areas, being that reasonable population of the group is found there.

Whites. A focus of NCLB policy was particularly to address the academic Achievement Gap (AG) that existed between low-income and minority students and their White, middle-class counterparts (Rowley, 2007). Whiteness often signaled middle-class status, and it may be seen as a marker for White privilege. It informed why urban Black teachers saw working-class White students who adopted Black dress codes and “street ways” as middle-class, while White teachers saw them as aberrant and backward (Morris, 2005). Notwithstanding, compared to Blacks and Latinos, poor White children were able to attain higher school success because their class was not encoded on their body as Latinos’ and Blacks’ were (Morris, 2005). Therefore, the whiteness of the White students in question signaled a higher status than they actually were, and it helped them avoid the tracking experienced by Black and Latino students. Additionally, their ability to employ code-switching and their social capital wherein teachers would recommend their college or career aspirations reveals the social sorting aspect of schools where some students were being prepared to become, as revealed in a popular reggae song, “Police and Thief.” The social sorting entailed therein informed the school-to-prison pipeline (Green, 2012), where a future in prison awaited members of one group, while a future in law enforcement awaited members of the other group.

With respect to achievement scores, the literature has revealed wealth as a factor in student performance. However, there are many poor Whites, and, while the preponderance of the literature noted they have outperformed poor Blacks (Leonard, 2011; Orr, 2000), wealthy Blacks have performed poorly compared to wealthy Whites. While studies in general (e.g., Lambert, 1999; Leonard, 2011) point to the low performance of Blacks compared to Whites, Orr (2000) is an example of the few studies disaggregating to determine how wealthy Blacks perform compared to poor Whites. She wrote,

Black children tend to score lower on standardized achievement tests than white children, even after taking into account parental income, education, occupation, and wealth. This effect cannot be accounted for by other differences in family characteristics, such as family size and composition. (abstract)

Poor Whites, as found in the Appalachian school system in Alabama, exemplified Whites in isolated rural America with “a generations-long culture of poverty and low expectations” and nonchalant disposition to school performance (Nowlan, 2001, para. 10). According to New York (2000), the fourth-largest of the nation’s rural population (2.8 million) people were found in NY, and 11% of them attended public school. With only 25% of said residents holding high school diplomas, it is expected that the impact of their [long established] low



educational level should negatively impact the school performance of students in the NY rural counties (Chen & Brooks-Gunn, 2012).

Asians. According to Hsin and Xie (2104), “Asian Americans have higher grades and standardized test scores, are more likely to finish high school and attend college and are more likely to attend the most elite colleges relative to whites” (para. 1). If the dominance of Asians in the NYC gifted and talented school and the findings of Hsin et al. (2104) hold, Asians will attain the title of the nation’s highest-achieving students, if not already done. However, in refuting what they termed was a myth regarding Asians as the *model minority*, Zhao and Qiu (2009) revealed educators’ view that populating the worst urban schools with majority Asian students would lead to their improvement. Other studies have referenced the model minority term, even explaining the competitiveness that exists among Asians, the strong influence of the family structure, cultural imperatives, and their need to succeed in courses that bring prestige to the family (Nguyen, 2015; Zhao et al., 2009).

Factors Affecting Black and Latino Achievement

Bohrnstedt, Kitmitto, Ogut, Sherman, and Chan (2015) explored school composition as a factor contributing to student achievement. They found that (a) schools with a higher density of Black students (SHDBS) lowered the performance of both Black and White students compared to schools with fewer Blacks; Black males attained lower performance scores in SHDBS compared to Black females. Additionally, a lack of resources and high concentration of inexperienced and ineffective teachers were associated with SHDBS. Moreover, the SHDBS had a higher concentration of low SES students, whose parents had lower educational levels, and Blacks in SHDBS may develop an oppositional culture to high achievement in order to avoid the “acting White” designation from their peers. Thompson and Davis (2013) employed a qualitative approach to explore high-performing Black male students in poor urban schools, reporting the positive impact of family and peer support, teacher encouragement, extracurricular activities, and spiritual belief contributed to their success. Other studies (e.g., Henfield, Washington, & Byrd 2014; Marsh, Chaney, & Jones, 2012) have reported similar findings.

Kahleberg (2012), in a study of Socioeconomically Integrated (SI) schools, noted that it was not the race of the Black students’ classmates that accounted for their (Blacks’) higher success; rather, it was their classmate’s middle-class values. He articulated that segregated schools in low SES communities could become SI by creating magnet programs to attract middle-class students. The SI schools--those which mandate a range between 33% and 50% of low-income students in each school, and, therefore, with at least half their student body coming from families with middle or high SES--had better resources, more involved and socially connected parents, more experienced and dedicated educators, and more students with a wide vocabulary and college aspirations (Connelly 2008; Kahleberg, 2012). Those student attributes were modeled and vicariously transposed to low SES “minority” students, which helped them succeed.

High-performing students were also found in some segregated Black and Latino schools, and, despite their low SES, they succeeded through “high-value leadership” (Olsten, 2015, abstract) which engendered an atmosphere that modeled high social, economic, and cultural capital, which are lacking in poor students. Other schools elevated student belief, attitude, and perception of achievement and striving because they had a culturally relevant curriculum and many had a higher proportion of “minority” teachers (Blake-Canty, 2017; Goldsmith, 2004). For example, Urban Prep Academy in Chicago, an all-male, high-poverty Black public school, reported that 100% of its graduates were accepted in college over the last seven years (Urban Prep, 2015). Such an outcome contradicted the trend wherein segregated schools had significantly higher dropout levels and failure in preparing students for higher education (Mcgee, 2013; Marsh, Chaney, & Jones, 2012).



While high-density minority schools lacked the resources of low-density minority schools, the positive interactions with minority teachers could lead to more optimism in students (Bidwell & Kasarda, 1975; Goldsmith, 2004). Irrespective of phenotype, student success was related to the high expectations and self-awareness found in studies (e.g., Garrett, Antrop-González, Vélez, 2010; Tino, 2012). Other studies (e.g., Goldsmith 2004; Villegas, 2012) had suggested that teachers and administrators in high-performing integrated White schools could lower minority students' angst by hiring more minority teachers to allow students of color to benefit from them. Informatively, Coleman (2007) had advocated for an approach involving culturally responsive teaching and the embrace of a caring and sharing model that could facilitate increased academic performance due to student perception of caring teachers, irrespective of color or race.

The Immigrant Effect. The "immigrant effect" was presented as a reason for the success of Asians and other "voluntary" minority groups (Schwartz & Stiefel, 2005). In general, voluntary minorities shared the immigrant experience and embrace cultural values such as hard work, optimism, and hopefulness necessary to achieve the higher educational attainment, and the greater upward social and financial mobility possible in achieving the American Dream (Akiba, 2007; Hsin, & Xie, 2014; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Many of the nation's children from multicultural and multi-language immigrant populations vary in academic backgrounds and in their levels of SES making some primed for school success and others needing educational/social scaffolding to do so (Schwartz & Stiefel, 2005). However, while a prevailing stereotype lauds Asians as the poster child for academic success (Zhao & Qiu, 2009), others blame Blacks for school failure (Collison, 2000). Asians are epitomized as hardworking and intelligent the model minority (Hsin, & Xie, 2014; Zhao & Qiu, 2009). However, Asians are not a homogenous group. For instance, many Southeast Asians are among the educated elite and professionals, with above-average educated families (Ngo & Lee, 2007), and many came not as immigrants, but as refugees who were given starter packages and welcoming embrace by the US in its fight against Communism (Ngo, Bic, Lee, & Stacey, 2007). (Such welcoming embrace has been found to positively impact school performance, and it is different from the hostile reception given to Haitians and newer refugees to the US.) But despite their disaggregation into sub-groups by the US Census Department, the scholarly literature often fails to distinguish the groups (Zhao & Qiu, 2009).

A binary condition exists within the Asian groups in that, for example, there are brilliant Koreans and Vietnamese as there are failing ones. The brilliant Vietnamese are elevated, but the failing ones are characterized as gang members (Ngo & Lee, 2007). However, the overall successes of the Asians are accentuated to demonstrate the possibility of achieving the American Dream based on hard work and good work ethics. Ngo and Lee (2007) reported researchers and educators' belief that low SES urban schools would be revitalized when populated with Asians students, such as the Vietnamese.

The model minority view portends negative implications for Asians and Blacks. Asians are often not seen as minorities in need of additional resources (Ngo & Lee, 2007). In the case of Blacks, their claim of structural racism for their failure is underscored by the success of the Asian (Ngo & Lee, 2007). The effect is an increase in social distance between Blacks and Asians. The theory of social distance suggests that problem develops when (a) groups were stereotyped as the proprietor of resources because of its closer nativity to the United States or (b) because of meritorious performance (Tawa, 2013; Tawa, Negrón, Suyemoto, & Carter, 2015). Social distancing could promote mistrust instead of cooperation that Asians, Blacks, and Latinos could employ to help each other.

Contrary to the experience of voluntary minorities, Blacks enslavement made them involuntary minorities who passed on a culture of shame (Ogbu, 2004). Unencumbered by such a culture, even the poorest Asian children are pushed, supervised, or controlled by their parents to use education to aspire for middle class values their parents saw in their native countries. Their mindset is to embrace education as a culture of hope



(Goyette & Xie, 1999; Nguyen, 2015; News & Views, 2004; Ngo & Lee, 2007). The appreciation of and the success in education reported in Asians have also been found in some Black émigrés from Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and other parts in the world (Green, 2012; Njue & Retish, 2010). Additionally, the understanding and appreciation of the value of education are similarly found in native African Americans. Carissimo's (2017) "America's Top High School Science Students Are the Children of Immigrants" is informative of the success of immigrant students. Additionally, Carissimo (2017) could be illuminating of possible future headline for some of the third-grade students comprising the data set of this current study.

A paradox is that Asian immigrants originated from about thirteen or more countries and they spoke diverse languages. However, even though Latinos migrated/immigrated from about 25 nations, they basically speak one language: Spanish. The question regarding school capacity to educate multilingual Asians as opposed to monolingual Latinos begs an answer. The question can also be asked regarding Black immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and English-speaking Black nations. The literature is informative.

For instance, Latino students have been "described as mentally retarded, linguistically handicapped, culturally and linguistically deprived semi-lingual, and more euphemistically, at-risk and in need of fixing" (Flores, 1982, 1983 as cited in Trueba & Bartolome, 1997, p. 2). The Latinos' failure may be structural. In 1995 the NYC Board of Education generated a blistering report of the programming of those children in NYC bilingual programs. The term "bilingual prison" was used as a descriptor for a program where 90% of the student placed was unable to test out or pass to the next grade in the required time (New York, 1995). Nine years later, Latino parents in Brooklyn were up in arms because the problem still persisted. School Chancellor Carmen Farina promised to correct the problem (Freedman, 2004). In contrast to the Latino plight, recent Asian immigrants, from the most adverse of circumstances and with limited English proficiency, were able to pass the NYC specialized exam, gain access to Stuyvesant--the top specialized high school, and even producing a valedictorian five years later (Ngo & Lee, 2007).

However, Asians and Mexicans had varying views on schooling. For example, many school-age Asian immigrants are expected to attend school, excel academically and make their families proud, even repaying their parents' sacrifice (Goyette et al., 1999; Nguyen, 2015). Other immigrants (e.g., Mexicans) were expected to forego attending school, obtain jobs to support their families, and send money to relatives in their native lands (Martinez, 2011; Shannon, 2008). Based on the information provided, school administrators should provide work-based learning and paid internships for Mexicans, similar disposed immigrant students, and students with tactile or hands-on learning style to allow them to succeed (Green, 2012). Work-based learning was found to be a very successful pedagogical practice viable for all students (Green, 2012).

Child-Rearing Practice

Parents' child-rearing practices have been advanced as a reason for the success of some groups of students (Fahey & Forman, 2015; Kang, 2014; Noble et al., 2015). Within the narrative of child-rearing practice is in-school involvement. As earlier cited regarding deficit thinking literature, Black parents have been faulted for their lack of such involvement. The justification for attributing deficit thinking to some parents emerged because of their infrequency in meeting with educators to, among other things; develop the requisite social capital to help their children succeed. Such labeling discounted parents who had to choose between meeting with teachers, at times convenient to teachers, or providing food and shelter for their children. Some parents who wanted to attend meetings may not have a babysitter, which could be addressed by the school providing such service at PTA meetings. There was also cultural dynamics, where immigrants from the Caribbean entrusted their children to teachers and expected them to do the right thing, even if the parents did not show up at school (Green, 2012). Another narrative regarding deficit parents was that one group would provide a child



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with a \$200 pair of sneakers, while the other parent groups would sacrifice to obtain that money and spend it on afterschool programs to have their children prepared for school success.

Summary

This literature review provided an overview that allowed for a deeper understanding of the factors involved in promoting high educational attainment in Black and other children from an early stage. It outlined the pitfalls and perils associated with educating Blacks and other disadvantaged groups, promoting an action agenda, justified by the literature and the theoretical framework, to minimize the pathologies that have long disenfranchised the groups through the educational process, which has long situated them at the rear-end of the achievement gap. Through an approach promoting and elevating the success of the high achieving third graders, it provided information regarding the processes involved in shaping stakeholders to either advance or retard giftedness in children. It also revealed the approach and the findings of other studies on the matter.

Additionally, it accentuated the complex tapestry woven from the different and multicultural interactions necessary to raise the tide of pedagogy to lift the boat of educational attainment for all the state's children. It cited several studies that highlighted the pathologies that informed failure and others that illuminated the path to success. The literature also illuminated the social, political, economic, and futuristic necessity for New York to succeed in according equal opportunity in its gifted programs, especially in light of the nation's approaching majority-minority era. In addition, it addressed a host of factors that could impede such improvement initiative by virtue of how they explicitly or implicitly influence stakeholders' attitudes and perceptions. The importance of educators developing an understanding of their students was noted as well as action parents, elected officials, and the community could employ to advocate for children in diverse communities. Finally, the literature review included the rationale for studying third graders, given that such a study could act as a pretest informing of prior knowledge for school success or the lack thereof within underperforming children; warning of failure, the need for early intervention, or change in policy informed by the literature.

Research Question (RQ) and Null Hypothesis

RQ1. Who are NYS Brightest Black Third Grade Readers (NYS BBTGR) and their peers?

RQ2. Does NYS BTGR reveal any significant relations between county SES and intelligence?

RQ3. Is there a relation between the distribution of NYC brightest third-grade readers based on student race/ethnicity and school District SES?

Null Hypothesis

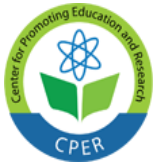
H_a1. There is no relation between County SES and intelligence as measured by Level 4 Distribution.

H_a 2. There is no relation between the distribution of NYS brightest third-grade readers based student race/ethnicity and County SES.

H_a3. There is no relation between the distribution of NYC brightest third-grade readers based on student race/ethnicity and school District SES.

Research Design, Data, and Sample

A composite of publicly available 2016-17 NYC and NYS school report card, as well as US Census Bureau Quick Fact data, were used for this mixed-methods study. The school data were first filtered with Excel to select all third-grade Asian, Black, Latino, Native American, and White students (Males and Females) who took and



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attained level 4 scores on the state’s 3rd grade ELA reading exam. Descriptive statistics and metrics derived from the use of multiple statistical analyses will be a hallmark of this study. While the Kruskal-Wallis is effective at testing relations between multiple groups, other tests (e.g., Kendall’s τ & Mann-Whitney U) were used to compare two groups. The data for RQ 1 were culled from the NYS DOE publicly available school data. The statistics comprising the data sets are illustrated Figure 1. It reveals 167,365 tested were and 11706 attained level 4 status. The discrepancy in the sum of the groups' scores results from the exclusion of bi-racial.

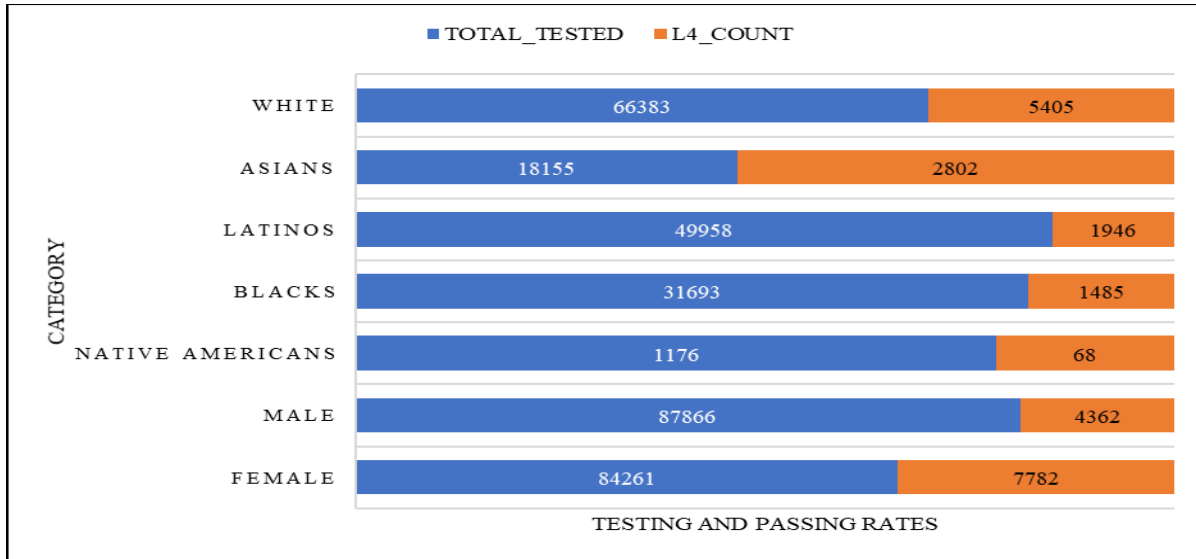


Figure 1. Distribution of New York State Brightest Third Grade Readers.

Data Analysis and Results

RQ1. Who are NYS Brightest Black Third Grade Readers and their peers?

The results placed in Figure 2 and Table 1 provides descriptive and illustrative data to help answer the question. Figure 2 indicates NYS BBTGR were 1485 of NY third grade students who attained Level 4 scores on the state’s 2016-17 Common Core ELA reading test. Their peers were NA ($n = 68$), Latinos ($n = 1946$), Asians ($n = 2802$), and Whites ($n = 5404$). The majority of the Level 4 passers were females.

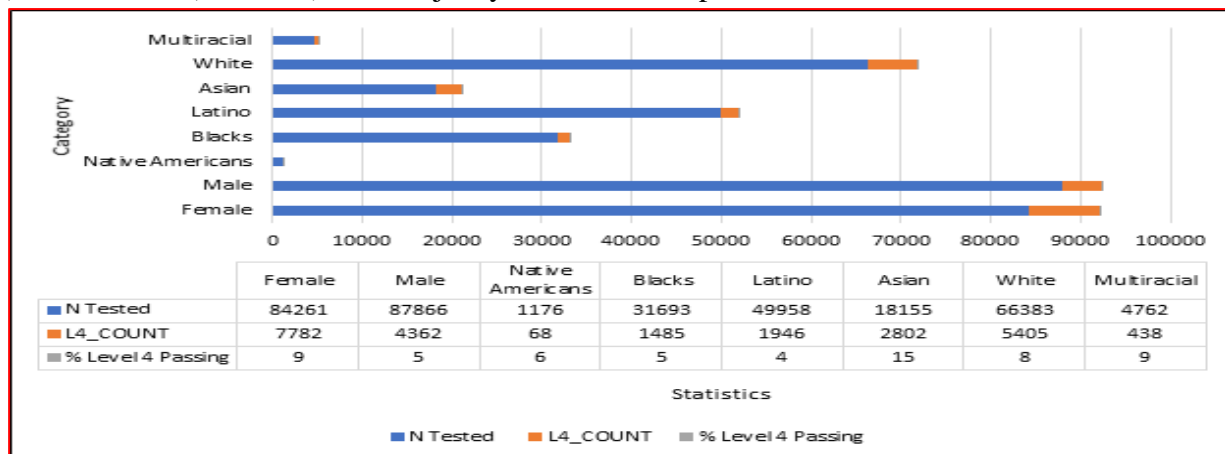


Figure 2. Racial/ethnic distribution of NYS brightest third-grade readers, N = 344,254.

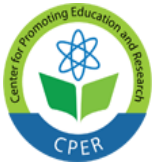


Table 1 indicates:

- NYS BBTGR was found in 25 of 62 counties.
- Brooklyn was the single county producing the majority of the state's BBTGR.
- NYC five counties generated the majority of the state's said readers.
- Either no BBTGR were found in 37 counties (indicated with a 0 or a dash for Level 4 passing), or schools were not good at producing them.
- Schools in Albany, NYS capital, were not successful at producing bright Black children.

Wealthier Westchester, Nassau, Richmond, Putnam and other counties lacked sufficient bright Black children, or the schools were not good at producing them.

Table 1.
Distribution of NY County Brightest Black Third-Grade Readers

County	N Tested	<i>n</i> Level 4 Passing	% Level 4 Passing	County	N Tested	<i>n</i> Level 4 Passing	% Level 4 Passing
Kings	8748	544	6.2	Greene	13	0	0
Queens	3548	253	7.1	Herkimer	10	0	0
Bronx	4937	202	4.1	Livingston	6	0	0
New York	2246	129	5.7	Ontario	22	0	0
Nassau	1436	102	7.1	Orleans	23	0	0
Westchester	1262	41	3.2	Oswego	13	0	0
Monroe	1811	40	2.2	Otsego	10	0	0
Richmond	625	31	5.0	Saint Lawrence	8	0	0
Erie	1736	30	1.7	Sullivan	52	0	0
Suffolk	1020	26	2.5	Warren	5	0	0
Orange	431	19	4.4	Allegany	2	-	0
Albany	613	14	2.3	Cattaraugus	12	-	0
Rockland	314	10	3.2	Chenango	2	-	0
Onondaga	953	9	0.9	Cortland	5	-	0
Niagara	237	6	2.5	Essex	4	-	0
Rensselaer	154	6	3.9	Franklin	4	-	0
Jefferson	70	5	7.1	Fulton	13	-	0
Oneida	270	4	1.5	Genesee	17	-	0
Broome	161	2	1.2	Lewis	6	-	0



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Dutchess	279	2	0.7	Madison	5	-	0
Schenectady	210	2	1.0	Montgomery	14	-	0
Chautauqua	26	1	3.8	Putnam	16	-	0
Delaware	9	1	11.1	Schoharie	1	-	0
Saratoga	35	1	2.9	Seneca	8	-	0
Ulster	86	1	1.2	Steuben	13	-	0
Cayuga	16	0	0.0	Tioga	5	-	0
Chemung	57	0	0.0	Tompkins	38	-	0
Clinton	6	0	0.0	Washington	6	-	0
Columbia	22	0	0.0	Wyoming	2	-	0

Note – (dash) indicates students data were not provided as a function of privacy law.

RQ2. Does NYS BTGR reveal any significant relations between county SES and intelligence?

A Kruskal–Wallis was conducted and the result placed in Table 2. The result revealed statistically significant differences in the Level 4 distribution scores of NYS BTGR across 62 counties (Brooklyn, $Md = 544$, Queens, $Md = 417$, Nassau, $Md = 365$, New York, $Md = 325$, Bronx, $Md = 202$: Oswego, $Md = 1$. The first five listed counties received higher ranked median scores compared to the last ranked county represented by Oswego, $\chi^2(61, n = 333) = 163.62, p < .01$. Several Mann-Whitney U tests using a stricter Bonferroni adjusted alpha of .025 to compare various county pairs revealed statistically difference in scores. For example, the test between

- Brooklyn ($Md = 544, n = 7$) and Suffolk County ($Md = 59, n = 7$), $U = 6.00, z = -2.36, p = .018, r = -.63$, revealed Brooklyn attained statistically higher median Level 4 distribution score than the wealthier Suffolk County.
- Bronx ($Md = 202, n = 7$) and Putnam County ($Md = 7, n = 5$), $U = 2.5, z = -.244, p = .015, r = -.63$, revealed Bronx attained statistically higher median Level 4 distribution score than the all state's wealthiest Putnam County.
- Queens ($Md = 417, n = 7$) and Rockland County ($Md = 26, n = 6$), $U = 3, z = -2.571, p = .01, r = -.71$, revealed Queens attained statistically higher median Level 4 distribution score than the wealthier Rockland County.
- Brooklyn ($Md = 544, n = 7$) and Orange County ($Md = 32, n = 7$), $U = 5.00, z = -2.29, p = .013, r = -.67$, revealed Brooklyn attained statistically higher median Level 4 distribution score than the wealthier Orange County.

Overall, at the macro level, wealth did not appear to be a factor, as less wealthy counties outperformed wealthier ones. The Bronx appears as a special case as it outperformed Putnam, Jefferson, and other wealthier counties. Putnam indicated that the wealthiest of all counties appeared incapable of producing Level 4 students in Asians or other racial student groups.



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Table 2.
 Median Level 4 and SES Rankings from Kruskal Wallis Test of NYS Counties

County	Md L4 Passing	Position	Md County SES	Position	County	Md L 4 Passing	Position	Md County SES	Position
Kings	544	1	50640	32	Putnam	7	33	97606	2
Queens	417	2	59758	15	Tioga	7	34	58115	16
Nassau	365	3	102044	1	Warren	7	35	57174	18
New york	325	4	75513	6	Fulton	6	36	46090	55
Bronx	202	5	35302	63	Niagara	6	37	50094	37
Westchester	121	6	86226	4	Schuyler	6	38	47229	53
Richmond	96	7	74021	8	Allegany	5	39	44085	58
Suffolk	59	8	90128	3	Columbia	5	40	59916	14
Albany	49	9	42335	62	Lewis	5	41	49976	39
Monroe	40	10	53568	22	Tompkins	5	42	54133	21
Saratoga	38	11	74080	7	Cayuga	4	43	53114	24
Dutchess	36	12	72706	9	Chautauqua	4	44	43211	59
Erie	33	13	52744	25	Cortland	4	45	43149	60
Orange	32	14	71910	10	Livingston	4	46	52724	26
Rensselaer	30	15	61754	11	Orleans	4	47	48731	50
Wayne	28	16	51627	30	Schoharie	4	48	50607	34
Jefferson	27	17	49911	40	Broome	3	49	47744	52



County	Md	Position	Md	Position	County	Md	Position	Md	Position
Schenectady	27	18	59959	13	Greene	3	50	51013	31
Rockland	26	19	86134	5	Madison	3	51	55858	19
Ontario	17	20	58070	17	Sullivan	3	52	52027	29
Oneida	15	21	49838	41	Chenango	3	53	49578	46
Clinton	12	22	50502	35	Herkimer	3	54	48893	48
Onondaga	12	23	55717	20	Otsego	3	55	49689	44
Steuben	12	24	48823	49	Wyoming	3	56	49782	42
Washington	12	25	43043	61	Saint Lawrence	2	57	46313	54
Chemung	11	26	49578	45	Yates	2	58	50105	36
Genesee	11	27	52641	28	Delaware	2	59	46055	56
Ulster	10	29	60393	12	Seneca	2	60	50073	38
Cattaraugus	9	30	47744	51	Franklin	1	61	49782	43
Montgomery	8	31	44455	57	Hamilton	1	62	52708	27
Essex	7	32	53244	23	Oswego	1	63	49571	47

RQ3. Is there a relation between the distribution of NYC brightest third-grade readers based on school district SES and student race/ethnicity?

Five tests were conducted to answer the question. A Kruskal Wallis first determined how the districts ranked on their SES compared to each other. The result placed in Table 3 reveal statistically significant differences in the SES scores of NYC BTGR across 32 school districts (District 15, $n = 4$, District 16, $n = 4$).

District 24, $n = 4$: District 12, $n = 4$), $\chi^2(31, n = 128) = 60.21, p = .001$, Districts 15 and 16 generated the similar highest median SES scores ($Md = 114013$) compared to the other districts, whose lowest median score was that of District 12 ($Md = 25834$). A Mann-Whitney U test comparing select pairs of districts at a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .0125 revealed statistically significant difference in district SES, District 15 ($Md = 114013, n = 4$)



and District 24 ($Md = 47887$, $n = 4$), $U = .000$, $z = -.2.65$, $p = .008$, $r = -.19$, with District 15 generating higher SES. The data placed in Table 3 reveal the wealthiest Districts 15 and 16 ranked 6th and 27th respectively with the distribution of Level 4 students, but the differences were not statistically significant. District 24 ranked 1st on Level 4 student distributions, with its 18th place SES ranking. District 2 ranked 2nd with Level 4 distribution and was the third wealthiest district; it generated significantly higher Level 4 scores compared to the low performing and the poorest districts. For example, a Mann-Whitney U found significant difference in Level 4 distribution between District 2 ($Md = 118$, $n = 4$) and District 5 ($Md = 2$, $n = 4$), $U = .000$, $z = -.2.31$, $p = .021$, $r = -.82$, with District 2 generating higher distribution scores.

Table 3*The Relation between District SES and Level 4 Passing*

District	Level 4 <i>Md</i>	Level 4 Rank	District SES <i>Md</i>	SES Rank
24	124	1	47887	18
2	118	2	88701	3
30	97	3	54120	15
20	78	4	67885	9
31	78	5	58011	13
15	65	6	114013	1
22	59	7	78488	8
21	56	8	32672	27
27	52	9	61543	11
29	48	10	78900	6
28	42	11	57561	14
25	41	12	45471	19
3	39	13	83345	5
26	37	14	85241	4
11	34	15	59494	12
1	26	16	37071	25
13	23	17	78900	7
4	19	18	28009	29
14	18	19	32858	26
10	17	20	31598	28



District	Level 4 <i>Md</i>	Level 4 Rank	District SES <i>Md</i>	SES Rank
19	15	21	37336	23
8	9	23	50319	16
6	9	22	48272	17
17	8	25	39114	22
7	8	24	27515	30
9	7	26	26941	31
16	6	27	114013	2
23	4	29	37166	24
12	4	28	25834	32
18	3	30	63411	10
32	3	31	43361	21
5	2	32	44528	20

Several discrepancies were found. For example, District 15 ranked 6th with the number of the brightest third-grade readers ($n = 320$) and District 16 ranked 27th with ($n = 31$) of said readers the same number attained by the poorest District 12. Additionally, the 18th wealthiest District 24 had the most ($n = 403$) of the brightest third-grade readers. Further analysis was conducted to tease out the root of the discrepancy.

A microanalysis of the four districts (12, 15, 16; 24) generated the data placed in Table 4. The data reveal the majority of District 12 test-takers were Hispanics and Blacks. Asians attained the highest % Level 4 passing rate, while Blacks attained the lowest. Said district attained a 1.7 % Level 4 passing rate. There were few Asians and few Whites. Hence, the most Level 4 deprived and highest poverty District 12, located in the Bronx, was highly segregated with Hispanics and Blacks.

The majority of District 15 test-takers were Hispanics, Asians, then Whites. Whites attained the highest % Level 4 passing rate, while Hispanics attained the lowest. The fairly integrated District 15 attained a 15.5 % Level 4 passing rate. Hence, the second most Level 4 passing and co-wealthiest District 15 was fairly integrated, and it was located in the Brooklyn.

The majority of District 16 test-takers were Blacks and Hispanics. Whites attained the highest % Level 4 passing rate, while Asians attained zero. The district attained a 6 % Level 4 passing rate. There were few Asians and few Whites. Hence, the co-wealthiest and 27th ranked Level 4 passing District 16, located in the Brooklyn, was highly segregated with Hispanics and Blacks.

The majority of District 24 test-takers were Hispanics and Asians. Asians attained the highest % Level 4 passing rate, while Hispanics attained the lowest. The fairly integrated District 24 attained a 15.2 % Level 4



passing rate. Hence, the most Level 4 passing and 24th wealthiest district was fairly integrated, and it was located in the Queens. Blacks attained the highest % Level 4 passing rate in District 24.

Overall, wealthy districts that had majority Hispanic and Blacks performed as poorly as poor districts with the groups as the majority. The districts with majority Asians or Whites attained higher Level 4 distribution scores. District poverty affected the distribution of Level 4 students. Asian and White students were wealthier compared to Black and Latino ones. Saliiently, based on the descending (highest to lowest) order of SES, while the top 50% of the 32 districts produced 4,428 Level 4 students, the bottom 50% produced 914 said students.

Table 4
Data from Microanalysis of Districts 12, 15, 16 & 24

District	Category	Number Tested	Level 4 Pass	% Level 4 Pass
12	Asians	56	3	5.4
	Blacks	481	5	1.0
	Hispanics	1276	22	1.7
	Whites	23	1	4.3
	Total	1836	31	1.7
15	Asians	593	82	13.8
	Blacks	181	13	7.2
	Hispanics	941	48	5.1
	Whites	840	177	21.1
	Total	2555	320	12.5
16	Asians	3	0	0.0
	Blacks	391	23	5.9
	Hispanics	108	6	5.6
	Whites	16	2	12.5
	Total	518	31	6.0
24	Asians	926	144	15.6
	Blacks	86	12	14.0
	Hispanics	3190	141	4.4
	Whites	697	106	15.2
	Total	4899	403	8.2

Figure 3 facilitates a comparison of Level 4 distribution with District SES. From casual or even in-depth observation, it suggests that the wealthiest NYC school districts did not generally produce most of the brightest students. However, a Kendall's τ test revealed there was a weak positive correlation between district SES and Level 4 distribution, $r = .221$, $n = 411$, $p < .001$, with slightly higher SES associated with higher Level 4 distribution of NYC BTGR.



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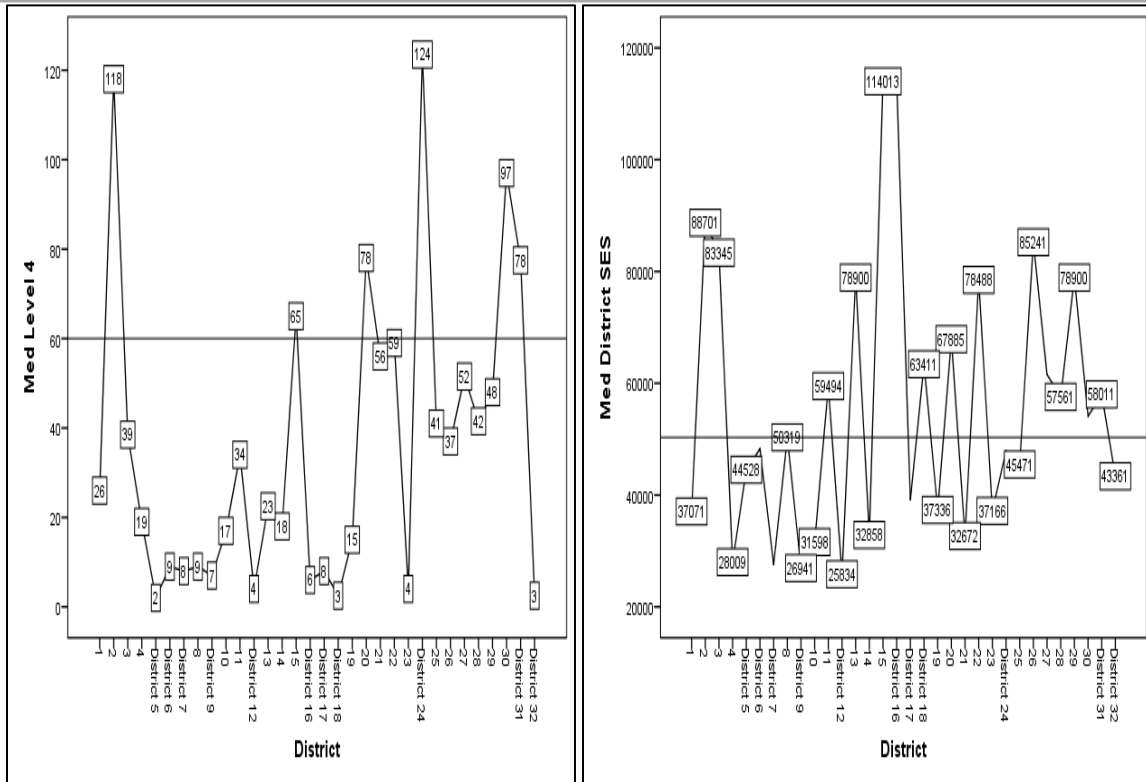


Figure 3. The Relation Between District SES and Level 4 Passing in NYC Schools Based on Median Scores. Note. Numerals in right diagram are the median number of Level 4 passings and those in left diagrams are the median County SES. Both horizontal lines represent the median demarcations.

Race, SES, and School Performance

A Mann-Whitney U using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .025, revealed statistically significant differences in student Level 4 attainment based on district SES, with Latinos ($Md = 31, n = 32$) and Blacks ($Md = 13, n = 32$), $U = 285, z = -3, p = .003, r = -.38$. Latinos obtained significantly higher Level 4 scores than Blacks. Said test found no significant relation between race/ethnicity and Level 4 passing.

Figure 4 provides visualization of the relation between SES and Level 4 distribution.

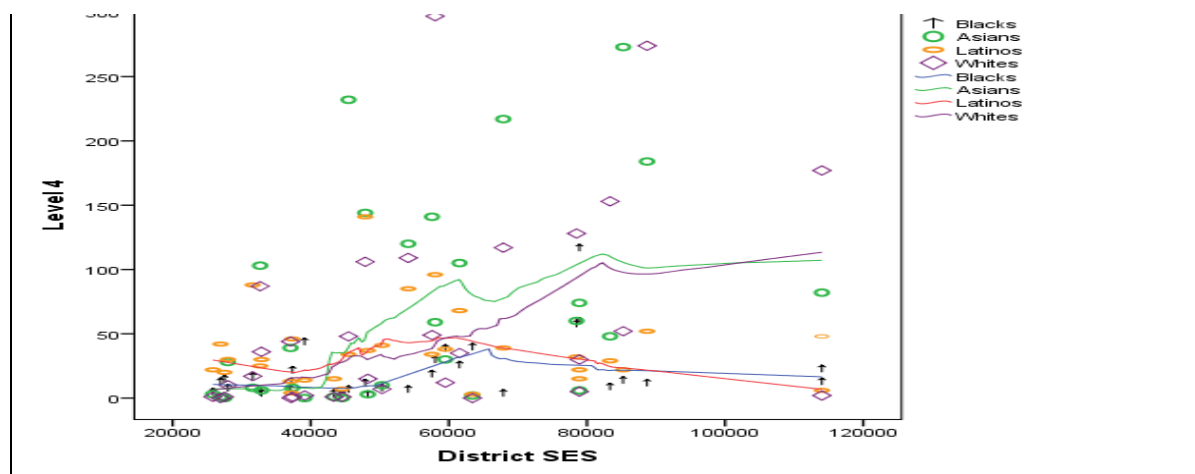


Figure 4. The comparison of the impact of NYC School District SES on Level 4 distribution based on student race/ethnicity.



Note. At about 30,000 of District SES, Latino is the highest level 4 line. Beginning at 40,000, Asian is the highest Level 4 distribution line, remaining thus until 100,000 when it is overtaken by Whites. At about 65,000 of SES, the second Level 4 distribution line is that of Whites. At about 105,000 Level 4 distributions it becomes the top line

It reveals that Latinos' Level 4 distribution was greater than all groups in poorer districts. Additionally, it was above Blacks' until about \$90,000 of district SES. It also reveals that at about \$45,000 of district SES, Asians had higher distribution of Level 4 students compared to Whites, until about \$108,000 of district SES, when Whites overtook them. Whites attained the highest Level 4 distribution at about \$60,000 of district SES, while Asians did at about \$85,000, Latino at \$50,000, and Blacks at \$80,000. Implicit in Figure 4 is that there were also Blacks and Latinos in the city's wealthiest schools. In those schools, Whites attained the highest scores followed by Asians, then Latinos, and finally Blacks. Noteworthy, in the poorest districts, there was a concentration of all the groups, but Latino outscored all groups in those districts. However, the data suggest there was significantly increased Level 4 passes when Whites, followed by Asians has a reasonable presence in the districts. More Latinos did not lead to increase in Level 4 passes.

Impact of District SES on NYC Boroughs and Level 4 Distribution

At the time of this study, the 32 school districts were distributed across five NYC boroughs (counties). Ranked in descending order of median family wealth, they were Manhattan, Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. The earlier reported positive correlation between districts and SES informed a weak positive correlation between borough and SES, $r(126) = .226, p = .001$. The higher distribution of district SES resulted in some boroughs being wealthier. Also emerged was a significant difference in Level 4 distribution based on borough (Staten Island, $n = 4$, Queens, $n = 28$, Brooklyn, $n = 46$, Manhattan, $n = 24$, Bronx, $n = 24$, $\chi^2(4, n = 126) = 21.55, p < .001$. Staten Island recorded a statistically significantly higher median score ($Md = 77.5$) than the other four boroughs, whose lowest median score ($Md = 12.5$) was that of the Bronx.

Figure 6 provides a visualization of the interactions. It reveals Whites were the brightest third-graders in second wealthiest Staten Island. It also indicates there were no trickle-down effect because Whites' scores were near 10 times that of the 30 attained by Blacks, and five times that of all city brightest Asians. Therefore, no evidence of socioeconomic integration existed in Staten Island.

Whites. Whites were the brightest readers in the wealthiest Manhattan, and their scores were about seven times that of the 30 attained by Blacks. Asians scored better in Manhattan compared to Staten Island, while Hispanics scored worse. However, it appears there were more socioeconomic integration in Manhattan, but it did not work for Blacks.

Asians. Asians were the brightest readers in Queens and their scores were about twice that of Blacks, Hispanics, and the 109 received by Whites. Queens provided evidence that it was more socioeconomically integrated than the other boroughs, and it elevated the scores of all groups. Asians attained the highest scores in Brooklyn, where Blacks attained the highest scores, and Hispanics the lowest. Again, it appears Asians elevated the scores of other groups.

Hispanics. Hispanics attained the highest score in Bronx. It was a highly segregated borough, with few Asians and Whites. Its score was less than three times that of Staten Island and Manhattan. It is interesting to note, Hispanics attained the all highest score in White concentrated and second wealthiest Staten, and less in the wealthiest Manhattan.

Black. Blacks attained the highest scores in Queens, where they were outscored by Hispanics. Hispanics outscored Blacks in all Boroughs except Brooklyn. Blacks' lowest of all score in wealthy Manhattan is glaring.



Blacks did not attain the highest score in Black concentrated Brooklyn; they did so in Queens, the most integrated borough.

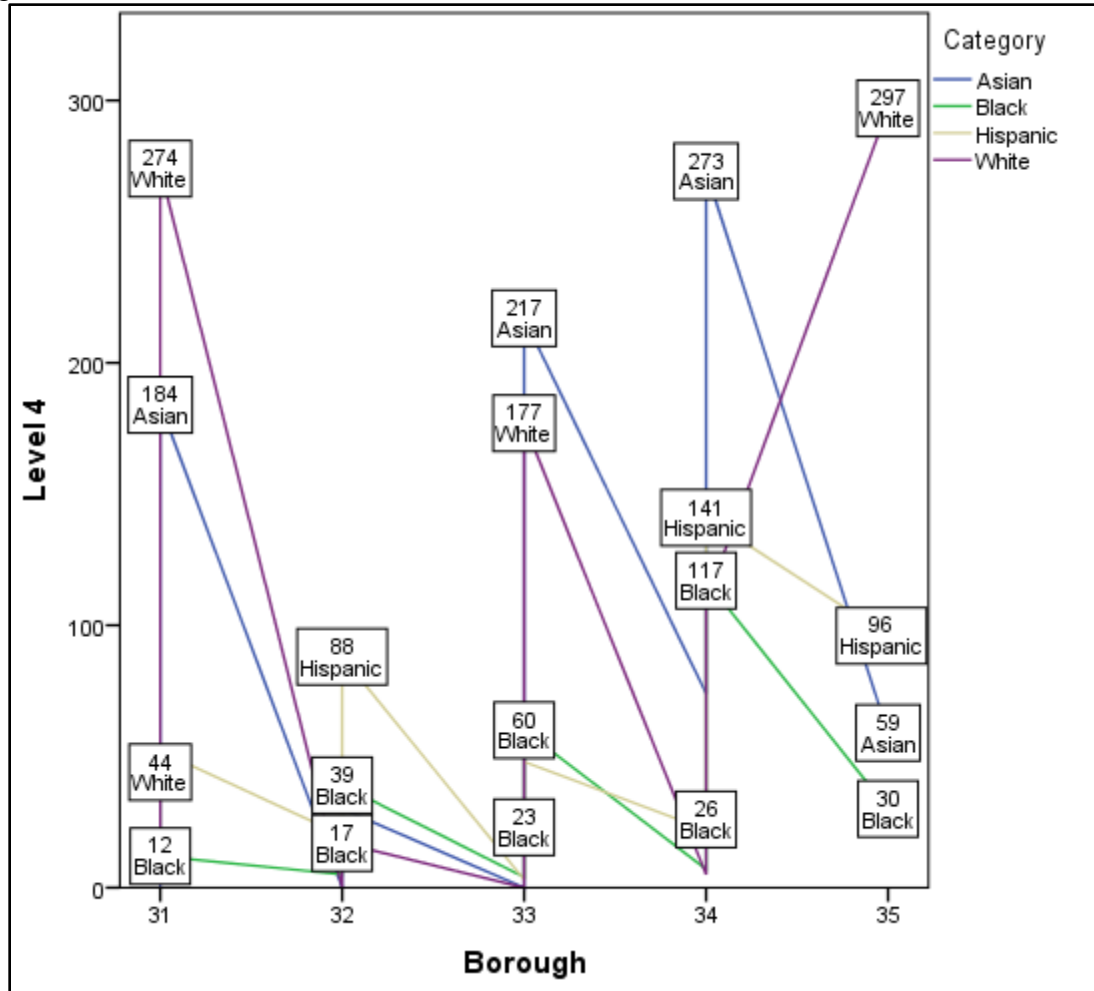


Figure 6. Level 4 distribution based on borough and student race/ethnicity.

Note. 31 = Manhattan, 32 = Bronx, 33 = Brooklyn, 34 = Queens; 35 = Staten Island.

While district zip codes and US Census data generated the previously used district SES data, the following analyses employed DOE’s own indices of district SES. Hence, triangulation was accorded with the usage of all data sets. Based on DOE SES indices and their data for all students combined, I simultaneously conducted multiple Kendall’s τ with a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .0125.¹ The result placed in Table 5 reveals % Poverty had:

- A significant and strong negative correlation with Level 4 passings, $r(30) = -.56, p < .01$, the greater the percentage poverty, the less Level 4 passing for all students.
- A significant and strong negative correlation with the number of Asian students, $r(30) = -.48, p < .01$, the greater the percentage poverty, the less the number of Level 4 Asian students.

A significant and strong negative correlation with the number of White students, $r(30) = -.25, p < .01$, the greater the percentage poverty, the less the number of Level 4 White students.

Table 5

¹ The split file function of SPSS allowed same.



Statistics on % Poverty and Their Impact on Select NYC School Demographics

		Level 4 Passing	% Poverty	# Asian	# Black	# Hispanic	# White	# Female	# Poverty
% Poverty	Correlation Coefficient	-.559**	1.000	-.476**	0.028	0.073	-.548**	-.254*	-0.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.820	0.559	0.000	0.041	0.604
	N	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32

Discussion

The search for NY brightest third-grade readers generated some intriguing results regarding race, intelligence, giftedness, the need for a reframing of the achievement gap, and serious undertakings to educate the groups whom Colby and Ortman (2014) revealed will attain majority status in about 27 years. As the data were so difficult to extract and the state and city's data were so misaligned, it is understandable how student failure was previously hidden in school data, and how failure could be presently hidden in them; thereby justifying NCLB's mandate for data disaggregation. This current study justified the need for NCLB school improvement mandate by highlighting how some New York counties, even the capital, Albany, or wealthy counties, were unable to produce bright children of color.

RQ1 sought information on the brightest Black students and they set the stage for the examination of their peers—all other similarly bright students (based on school data). The 1481 ($n = 4.7\%$) Black students who attained Level 4 status reveal their capacity to succeed in diverse localities as well as the need to monitor how such students are being taught. Their higher success in integrated and wealthier Queens school as well as less wealthy segregated Brooklyn schools was predicted by studies (e.g., Henfield, Washington, & Byrd 2014; Kahlemberg, 2012; Marsh, Chaney, & Jones, 2012). Thompson and Davis (2013) revealed the positive impact that family and peer support, teacher encouragement, extracurricular activities, and spiritual belief had on Blacks' success. While I did not examine such factors, the qualitative element of the study evidenced the factors in one successful Black school. Accordingly, Whelan (2014) noted,

Congratulations are in order! Neighbor Carla tipped us off that Clinton Hill's PS 11 Purvis J. Behan (419 Waverly Avenue between Greene and Gates Avenues) is one of only 337 schools in the country and two schools in Brooklyn to have received a 2014 Blue Ribbon School award. The Blue-Ribbon Schools Program honors outstanding public and private elementary, middle, and high schools each year based on their general academic achievement as well as their success in closing achievement gaps among subgroups of students. This year, PS 11 received an award in the "Exemplary High Performing Schools" category—an honor in which Sheepshead Bay's PS 254 can also revel. (p. 1)

A pathology conveyed by the findings was regarding Blacks' dismal performance in wealthy counties such as Westchester, Rockland, and Nassau. Such performance contradicted the literature (e.g., Chen & Brooks-Gunn, 2012; Comer, 2015) that wealthier communities and higher-educated parents predicted higher performing schools. However, Rhodes and Warkentien (2017) revelation regarding worsening of schools for children of upscale Black professionals due to the urbanization of suburban communities is informative. White flight results in the outmigration of Whites, from even suburban communities, who generally take on more active roles in school and are treated more seriously by school administrators (Chen & Brooks-Gunn, 2012; Rhodes & Warkentien, 2017). While such a factor was not examined in this current study, it is stated to warrant its investigation by future researchers.



The higher school performance of Blacks can be obtained through socioeconomic integration (Kahlemberg, 2012). Such school policy may have informed the high-performance all students attained in Queens. However, the search for SI proved elusive in that districts where Blacks attained first place with level 4 distribution (11, 13 16, 17, 18, & 23) with the exception of district 12, few other racial groups scored high or were present. It was though Blacks were in Black schools. Still, if giftedness was equally distributed in about 6-10% of all groups in the general population, the low or no percentage of bright Blacks in some counties is perturbing and in need of examination. A reason for NCLB was to aid the education of Blacks and Latinos through data-driven instruction and disaggregated school report card data available to the public, which was not required by NCLB's forerunner.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 preceded NCLB. However, under ESEA's auspices, monies earmarked for educating Blacks were siphoned to wealthier schools by administrators. They then hid Blacks' failure in schools' overall data (Green, 2006). However, its reauthorization, NCLB, was punitive, demanding the closure or reorganization of chronically failing schools. For over 12 years, some states resisted with lawsuits, the threat of non-compliance, and the mobilization of bias against it. Unions even had poor parents, for whom NCLB was designed to help, rejecting it. For better or worse, NCLB prevailed and we are progressing with transparency regarding the education of our nation's youth. While New York has been lauding the improved performance of students in general, this study also explored the Microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 2009), and it reveals the pathology in the minuscule number of bright Black children and some of their peers.

The peers of the state's 1485 brightest Blacks children were the majority female: 5404 Whites, 2779 Asians, 66 Native Americans, and 1945 Latinos. The higher distribution of females was in keeping with the literature (Matthews, Kizzie, Rowley, & Cortina, 2010). While Whites were the state's numerical majority with Level 4 passes, Asians out-percentage them by seven points. Noteworthy, Asians were the numerical majority of Level 4 passers in NYC. The findings that Latinos were the lowest percentage of all groups did not deviate from the literature (Baker, 2013). However, the finding of more Level 4 Latinos than Blacks is not widely found in the literature. In NYC, Latinos surpassed Blacks in Level 4 reading attainment in all grades from as early as 2006 (NYC DOE, 2017). Nonetheless, when the highest student population in NYC school had up to five percentage points below the expected (6-10%) number for giftedness in the general population, there may be mediating or extenuating factors (Friedman, 2004; New York, 1995), such as the paucity of gifted and talented schools in their communities, as well as child rearing practice (Fahey & Forman, 2015; Ford & Grantham, 2010).

The second-highest percentage rate for Level 4 distribution was that of bi-racial. Their performance could be the subject of numerous future studies. The interest in them stems from the nation's long fascination with race and intelligence. A posit is that, based on the races of the interracial couple, it could be determined if a particular race contributed more or less intelligence, thus determining which racial group was intellectually superior or inferior (Williams, 2017), a long quest of the eugenicists (Gould, 1973). This discussion is relevant because the topic could eventually join the deficit theory literature ascribing blame to the victims for their school failure as a function of determinism/nature.

Percentage-wise, Native Americans outperformed both Blacks and Latinos. The NA's stellar performance was also noted in Queens. Given the literature portrayal of their deficit in language and communication skills as factors for their dismal educational outcome (Sparks, 2012), such performance was surprising. However, Lessons (2016) found their high achievement in a school with a mindful and phenotypically identifiable (NA) principal. Alternatively, their "unacceptable and American Tragedy" referenced disparate educational



outcomes, found in Arizona and in rural America, prompting a series of actions from former Secretary of Education Duncan, President Obama, and a recent lawsuit (Chain et al., 2017; Brown, 2015; Santos, 2017), were found in New York. Figure 7 was deliberately placed in this section to draw awareness to the plight of Native Americans. Figure 7 illustrates the pathology where 14 New York counties tested 163 group members and only three students attained Level 4 status. It also illustrates NA low passing rates in other counties.

County	Tested	Passing	County	Tested	Passing	County	Tested	Passing	County	Tested	Passing
Albany	3	-	Erie	44	1	Queens	396	24	Rockland	1	-
Allegany	1	-	Franklin	53	0	Richmond	24	2	Saint Lawrence	9	0
Broome	6	0	Genesee	4	-	Niagara	24	1	Schenectady	2	-
Cattaraugus	59	3	Jefferson	4	-	Oneida	3	-	Seneca	1	-
Cayuga	2	-	Lewis	1	-	Onondaga	38	0	Steuben	1	-
Chautauqua	15	0	Madison	7	0	Ontario	3	-	Suffolk	18	1
Chemung	2	-	Monroe	5	0	Orange	8	0	Sullivan	1	-
Chenango	1	-	Nassau	17	1	Orleans	3	-	Tompkins	1	-
Clinton	3	-	New York	60	13	Oswego	6	0	Washington	1	-
Columbia	1	-	Bronx	151	7	Putnam	2	-	Wayne	2	-
Dutchess	2	-	Kings	176	12	Rensselaer	1	-	Westchester	14	1

Figure 7. Illustration of Native American Level 4 attainment in rural and other NYS counties.

Note. The dash (-) indicates students for whom no result is provided.

RQ2 sought to ascertain the link between county wealth and school performance. It found that county SES affected students differently. For Asians, their higher percentage Level 4 attainment score was not inhibited by county SES, except with the case of a few counties such as wealthy Putnam. They had a higher percentage passing rate than Whites in counties where Whites performed poorly--signaling the role of other factors in the group's high achievement scores reported in Goyette and Xie (1999) and Nguyen (2015). The leveraging of Whites' numerical advantage and their second-place higher percentage Level 4 passing rate allowed them to be the state's numerically brightest third-grade readers, being exposed to higher wealth from county SES compared to the other groups. The discrepancy with Blacks and Latinos' poor performance, irrespective of county SES levels, was further highlighted by the fact their higher number in some counties did not translate in more of them attaining Level 4 status. Higher Level 4 distribution would be expected if the literature (e.g., Finn, 2014) indicating 6-10% of the population being gifted held true. The anomaly suggests confounding factors reported in Baker (2013) and Westphalen (2005) where are at play, warranting need for further critical examination from political and educational leaders, which they could begin by examining schools' gifted program nomination logs, if they exist.

Blacks' unimpressive position in the achievement gap has long been reported in the literature. This current study illuminated the achievement of a new generation of Black youth with the intent of using their success to help others succeed and to bring awareness that the work to elevate the group's achievement must



convene in earnest, considering the approaching majority-minority era. An element of child-rearing practice, where one parent group strive for academic achievement to have their children looking up and, another group rewarding underperforming children with expensive sneakers to have them looking down (at their sneakers), was ascertained from the literature (Fahey & Forman, 2015; Ford & Grantham, 2010; Ford et al., 2008; Kang, 2014; Noble, et al., 2015). Such discussion is anecdotally referenced among Blacks and other groups when discussing Blacks' school performance. Therefore, Black leaders need to convene a summit to draw upon the knowledge of immigrant Blacks, progressive Asians, Whites, and Latinos to help address the school failure of Blacks, an undertaking initiated in (Brooklyn Reader, 2015). The attempt would also overcome the social distancing reported between Blacks and Asians (Tawa, Negrón, Suyemoto, & Carter, 2015).

RQ3 sought to determine the relation between NYC county (five boroughs), wealth, and student success as a function of their race. The intriguing results indicate that wealth was nebulous when it came to school performance, and student performance may be predicated on prior knowledge (what they brought to school), or what value schools added, that lead to higher student attainment. The equally wealthiest Districts 15 and 16, the poorest District 12, and the highest Level 4 producing District 24 offered insight. The co-wealthiest district 15 ranked 16 points below its co-wealthiest counterpart District 15, and it produced the same lowest number of Level 4 students as the poorest District 12. Such outcome from District 12 contravenes the literature (e.g., Levine & Painter, 2008; Rhodes & Warkentien, 2017; Turley, 2002) regarding the direct relationship between higher SES and higher school performance. Given no significant relation was found between race and Level 4 distribution, and there was one between SES and Level 4 distribution, I revisited the earlier nebulous reference with additional data analyses, which was exemplified in Figure 6.

As revealed by district SES, Blacks and Latinos live in mostly low-income communities. Hence, their lower SES impacts their Level 4 attainment. For example, the top 50% wealthiest district produced 4,428 students who attained Level 4 status, while the bottom 50% of the districts produced 914 said students. Such anomaly could be addressed by socioeconomic integration (SI). Notwithstanding the potential for SI to elevate student performance, it appears that while Queens and Manhattan exhibited evidence of same, Blacks were at the rear end of any benefit derived from SI. Additionally, Bronx revealed the adverse impact of poverty, and segregation on its elementary schools, which Asians and Whites appear to avoid, resulting in the borough's poor performance. Still, these findings do not automatically ascribe blame to poor students for school failure. A guiding tenet of this study was to use the best to inform the rest. Therefore, schools that cannot produce smart Asians were unlikely to produce smart students of any other race/ethnicity. The information provides the opportunity for educational leaders to take corrective actions. Schooling entails the interactions of teachers, students, and parents. Looking only at students leave 66% of the other factors unexamined.

The proverbial buck stops with schools. Consequently, if they are to absolve themselves of the blame for the intractable failure informing the achievement gap, school administrators need to take up the phones and call student home to inform parents that the 6-10% giftedness distribution in the general population does not apply to their children or to adults in their communities. Such approach could advance NCLB and lead to house cleaning and the employ of culturally competent and sensitive school administrators to improve our schools.

Indeed, as I struggled to have children in my community educated, one principal informed me he did not believe in gifted programs. Perhaps for such a reason, Baker (2013) reported that no gifted programs were located in Bronx's District 7, as well as that few were located in the Latino majority District 5 and 6 in Manhattan. He also outlined the opposite, where wealthy District 3 in Manhattan had several G&T programs in a few city blocks. However, while District 3 was in the top 10 districts with level 4 passing ($n = 239$), it was District 2 which had most such level 4 passing ($n = 522$) citywide. Noteworthy, Districts 2 and 3, along with District 1, had majority Whites attaining Level 4 status. The three district had 417 Whites Level 4 passers, while



District 4,5, & 6 had only 74 Hispanics attaining Level 4 status. The impact of the disparity outlined in Baker (2013) was evident.

At the time the principal relayed his opinion on giftedness to me, I mused if he could safely convey such information to parents in the suburban White Plains area he lived. Additionally, when I enquired of the guidance counselor why he had not recommended my son for the gifted program, he revealed it was a challenging program and it was better to let him remain in a school where he would soar above the rest and not have the trauma associated with failure in a challenging school. I waxed poetic: Turkey soaring does not an eagle make. Unfortunately, the belief held by those two school personnel is pervasive in NYC. Iverson (2015) revealed the pushback against Mayor Bill Di Blasio's attempt to admit more Blacks and Latinos to the NYC specialized high schools.

Given that I have provided a roadmap of the perils and travails that parents and their children can encounter in the educative processes, it is incumbent on vested stakeholders and other publics to use the information to navigate the impediments to facilitate the advancement of academics and technical competency in our underperforming children. Accordingly, the charge given to an earlier generation of students to restore Americans' confidence and pride, after the fear-inducing Soviet's space race victory, must be issued to a new generation of students, without fear of embracing multiculturalism and diversity evidenced in the faces of said students. The renewed call is necessary to advance national security and our Democratic Ideals, especially in an increasingly high-tech and dangerous world, and given the looming ascendancy of long timed underperforming groups to majority status (Colby & Ortman, 2014).

Limitations

While cursory analysis of the data reveals that some of the students were in gifted and talented schools, it is not explicitly expressed that the students in the data set were identified as being gifted and talented. Given some of the pathologies exposed, the problem should not negate the usefulness of the findings to inform practice across the state and the nation. The study sought to employ "Telling on," a characterization out of the Black ethos, in an upbeat manner, within the guidelines of best research practices, to explore a troubling topic.

Recommendations

It is the recommendation of this studies that:

- ✓ Educational leaders distribute information to parents regarding the gifted and talented program and the procedures for getting their children tested. (Not all parents can use the Internet to access that information.)
- ✓ A recommendation log be established in early childhood and elementary schools to record teacher recommendation of students for gifted and talented programs.
- ✓ Superintendents conduct a thorough analysis of the procedure on how giftedness is conducted in all schools.
- ✓ Political leaders sponsor workshops and after-school programs to help parents prepare their bright children for the gifted programs and school.
- ✓ This study be distributed to organizations and individuals involved with educating all children.
- ✓ Efforts should be undertaken to ensure the states and the city's data are aligned.
- ✓ A pretest must be conducted of all incoming kindergarten students to determine their school readiness so as to administer wide raging remedies as necessary.
- ✓ Thoroughly examine low performing districts to ascertain the root cause of their inability to produce bright students.



Recommendations for Future Study

- ✓ Qualitative research be conducted to explore all incoming students of the specialized high schools to learn of their experience (a pre-test).
- ✓ Qualitative research be conducted to explore all graduating students of the specialized high schools to learn of their experience (a post-test).
- ✓ Schools explore teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding giftedness among their students.

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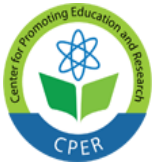
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