



March 22, 2019

Disparities in Educational Opportunity

Implications for the U.S. Economy and Policy

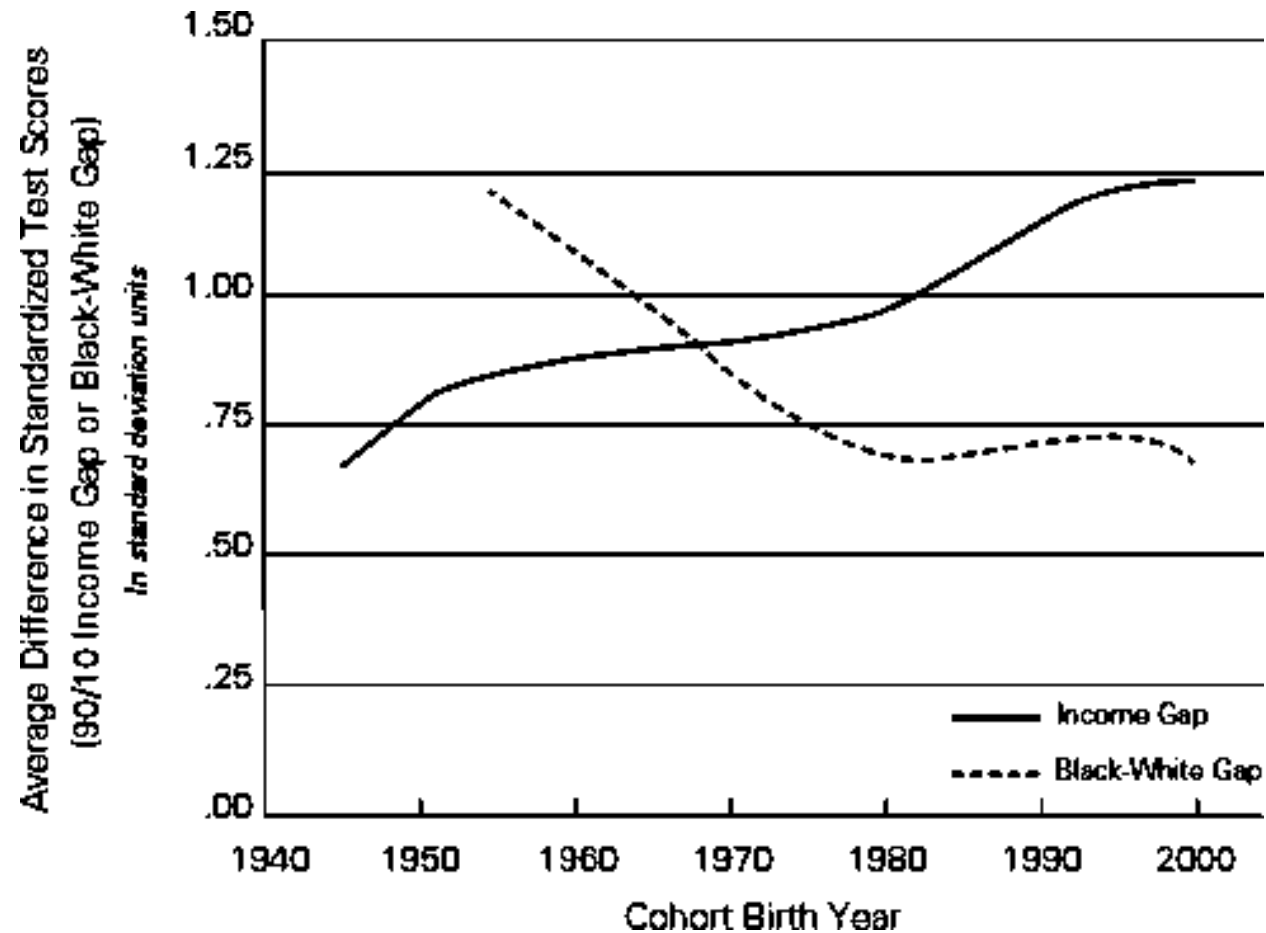
Erica Greenberg



What is Educational Opportunity?

- *Access to coordinated, excellent instruction that provides the skills all students will need to thrive in a rapidly changing economy and society* (Duncan and Murnane 2014)
- Disparities by: race, ethnicity, nativity, socioeconomic status, gender, geography, etc.
- Challenges of observation: opportunity vs. outcomes

History of Disparities in Educational Outcomes



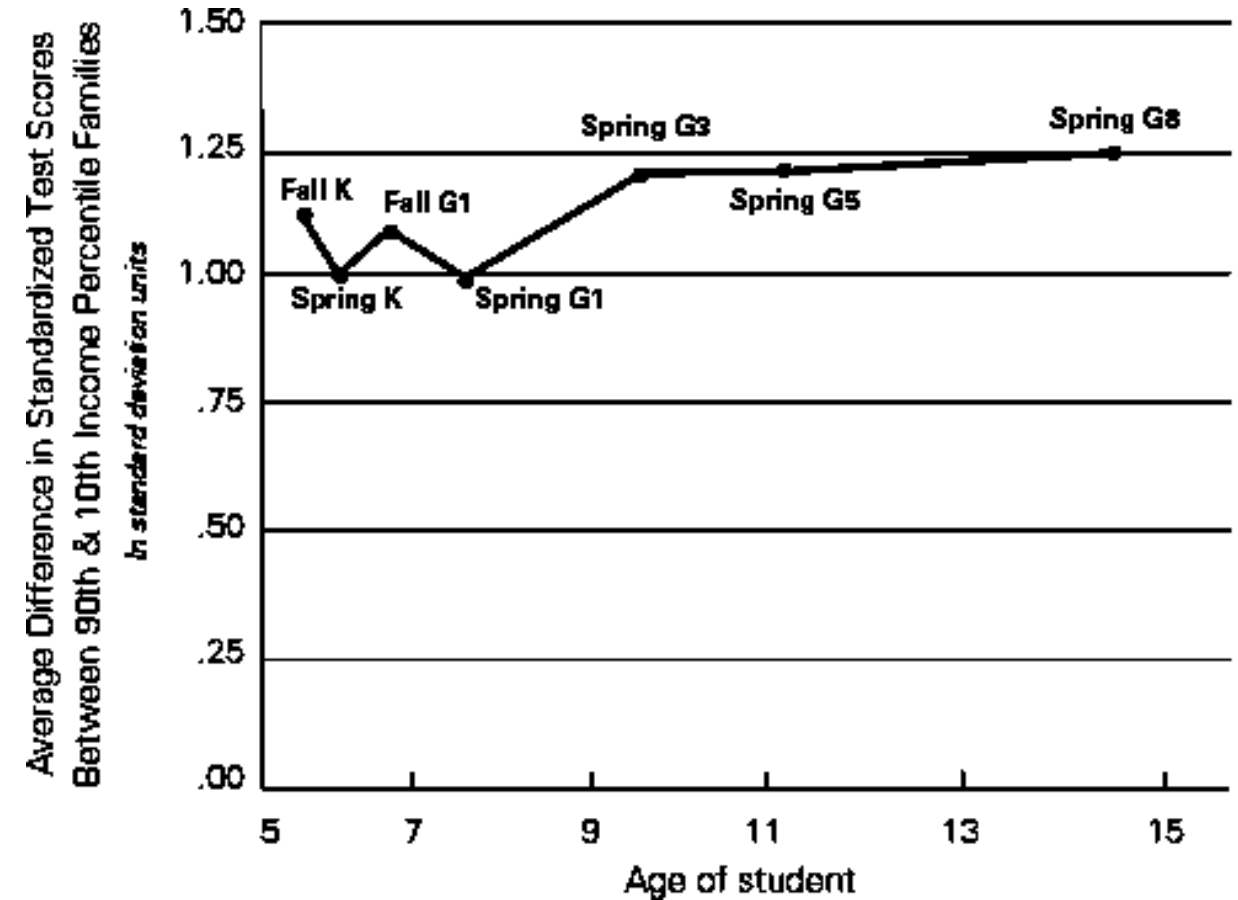
Growth in the Income-Based Test Score Gap

Decline in the Black-White Test Score Gap

Source: Sean Reardon, The Widening Income Achievement Gap, *Educational Leadership* 70(8), 10-16. Adapted from "The Widening Socioeconomic Status Achievement Gap: New Evidence and Possible Explanations" (p. 98) by S. F. Reardon, in R. J. Murnane & G. J. Duncan (Eds.), *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances*, 2011, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

When do Disparities in Educational Outcomes Arise?

- By 9 months – and disparities widen through 2 years (Halle et al. 2009)
- Preservation through school and growth into postsecondary education (Baker, Klasik, and Reardon 2018; Reardon 2013)



What is Happening During Children's Early Years?

- Substantial disparities in educational opportunity
 - Among children 3-5, 71% of poor children versus 84% of non-poor children are read to regularly at home (NHES 2016)
 - Among children 0-5, 46% of poor children versus 63% of non-poor children experience any regular early care and education (NHES 2016)
 - Quality varies across settings (Bassok, Fitzpatrick, Greenberg, and Loeb 2016)
 - Yet, gaps in early childhood experiences and in early school outcomes are narrowing (Bassok et al. 2016, Reardon and Portilla 2016)

What, then, Can Schools and Other Institutions Do?

- Can schools
 - Reverse early disparities?
 - Hold inequality at bay?
 - Perpetuate broader inequities?
- Disparities persist because of forces well beyond education.

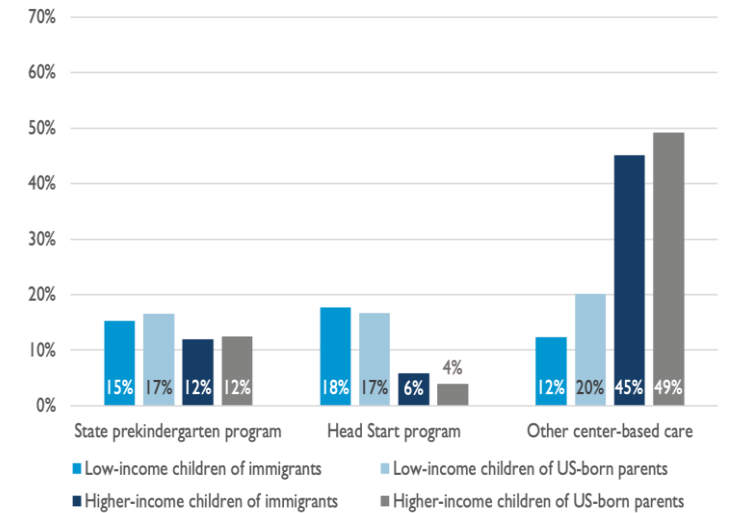
Longer-Term Implications for the U.S. Economy

- Lost human capital
- Economic inequality
- Global competitiveness

Policy Implications

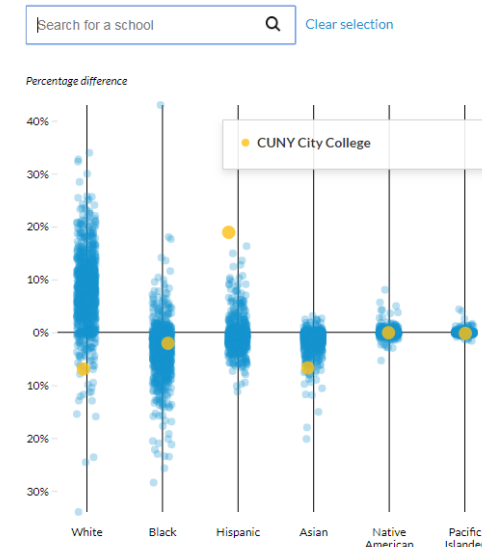
- Investments in evidence-based initiatives
 - Young children
 - Schools, colleges, and universities
 - Health, housing, income supports
- Policy innovation paired with evaluation

High-quality public programs like state prekindergarten and Head Start are closing gaps in access.



Source: Erica Greenberg, Victoria Rosenboom, and Gina Adams. Paper for US 2050.

How diverse are teaching degree programs compared with the colleges that house them?



Source: Constance Lindsay and Victoria Lee. Which Colleges Are Helping Create a Diverse Teacher Workforce? Urban Institute.

How Will We Know if Policies Are Working?

The long-term measure of success will be the educational attainments and earnings of adults who grew up in low-income families and the restoration of intergenerational mobility.

- Duncan and Murnane (2014), *Restoring Opportunity*

Toward US 2050

The project's goal is to foster a clearer vision of America's future and spur a sense of urgency to address pressing policy concerns, thereby laying the groundwork for better outcomes.