



Research Brief – June 2019

*Racial Concentration and School Effectiveness in SFUSD*<sup>1</sup>, by Stephen Newton and Linda Darling-Hammond, investigated the relationship between the racial concentration of students and school effectiveness. The research was conducted to address the district's achievement gap between historically underserved and other students. The study addressed the overall question: *On average, are schools with concentrations of African-American, Latino, and Samoan (AA/L/S) students as effective as other schools in SFUSD?* To answer this question, the study assessed:

- 1) How the concentration of AA/L/S students was associated with academic achievement;
- 2) How changes in a school's concentration of AA/L/S students related to academic achievement;
- 3) How the concentration of AA/L/S students was associated with non-academic outcomes (graduation rates and mobility); and
- 4) How the concentration of AA/L/S students related to teacher experience and stability.

The researchers used SFUSD administrative data from the 1999/2000 to the 2007/2008 school years. The study expanded upon prior research that found patterns indicating lower achievement and lower graduation rates for schools serving these students by employing statistical techniques that controlled for multiple factors that can influence student outcomes. These factors included prior achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, gender, race/ethnicity, parent education, English Learner status, retained in grade, and poverty.

The study concluded that SFUSD schools with higher concentrations of AA/L/S students have been less effective, on average, in raising student achievement. However, the researchers contend that school effectiveness has multiple factors and that differences are not related to the academic achievement of individual students. The analysis shows that students who are demographically similar still show smaller gains, on average, at concentrated AA/L/S schools. Racial concentration, thus, is not the only factor influencing school effectiveness. One important factor could be, that on average, teachers at high AA/L/S schools are less experienced and have higher mobility rates.

The researchers recommend that SFUSD continue to investigate why schools are effective or ineffective by carefully studying the complex characteristics of individual schools. They recommend paying particular attention to effective schools with a high concentration of AA/L/S students.

## FINDINGS

- 1) Students in AA/L/S concentrated schools had poorer academic outcomes compared with students with similar demographics and prior achievement in other SFUSD schools.**

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<sup>1</sup> Newton S., & Darling-Hammond L. (2010). *Racial Concentration and School Effectiveness in SFUSD*. Presentation.

- a) School value-added (productivity or effectiveness) in ELA and math is lower, on average, in concentrated AA/L/S schools. (2007-2008)
  - b) The concentration of AA/L/S students impacted students' ELA and math achievement gains. This is true for both all students and specifically AA/L/S students. (2003-04 to 2008-09)
  - c) The concentration of AA/L/S students impacted students' ELA and math scores. This is true for both all students and specifically AA/L/S students. (2003-04 to 2008-09)
  - d) The academic gap grows larger for each year a student is in a less effective school.
- 2) **An increase in the percentage of AA/L/S students was associated with a decrease in average ELA and math academic achievement. (1999-2008)**
  - 3) **A higher concentration of AA/L/S students was associated with lower graduation rates (11 percent lower) and higher mobility rates (3.8 percent higher) than other SFUSD school, controlling for poverty. (2007-2008)**
  - 4) **Schools with higher levels of concentration of AA/L/S students were associated with less teacher experience and lower rates of teacher retention. (2004-05 to 2007-08)**

*Table 1: Achievement Gains by Percentage of AA/L/S Students*

	Average progress: All students - ELA	Average progress: All students - Math	Average progress: AA/L/S students - ELA	Average progress: AA/L/S students - Math
< 10 percent AA/L/S	.05	.04	.07	.06
> 89 percent AA/L/S	-.15	-.10	-.15	-.10

*Table 2: Increases in Academic Gap by School Effectiveness*

	Student in 2nd grade	Student in 11th grade
.04 SD School Effectiveness	50th percentile	36th percentile
.02 SD School Effectiveness	50th percentile	43rd percentile

*Table 3: Teacher Experience and Retention by Percentage of AA/L/S Students*

	Average years of teacher experience	Percentage of 1st-year teachers	Retention rate
AA/L/S concentrated schools	10.3 years	3.7 percent	73.4 percent
Other schools	13.4 years	2.1 percent	83.9 percent