

# **Charter Schools**

## **A Response to the Achievement Gaps**

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### Introduction

The racial and SES-based student achievement gaps that plague United States public school children have devastating effects on post-secondary opportunities and success of low-income and minority students. Children from poor families tend to achieve significantly lower than their wealthier peers; Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians tend to have lower achievement than whites and Asians. Generally, individuals with higher educational achievement have greater access to higher paying jobs, while poor and minorities who have fewer marketable skills are employed in low-wage jobs with little opportunity for advancement or promotions. As a result, minorities and individuals who grow up in poor families become impoverished adults at an alarming and disproportionately high rate. Because of these disturbing, long-term effects, educators and policy makers have become quite concerned with the achievement gap and are making significant efforts to understand the problem in order to develop ways to successfully tackle it.

One cause that undoubtedly contributes to the achievement gap is school quality. Although low-income areas and neighborhoods with high concentrations of minority students have a greater need for top schools, better schools tend to be located in wealthier communities with more resources and community support. Thus, in order to improve public education, it is crucial that children from minority and low-income families have access to quality schools and receive an education that fosters capabilities equal to that of their more privileged peers. This will reduce some of the inequalities that underprivileged high school graduates face and improve their post-secondary academic and career opportunities. However, the existence of student achievement gaps in the United States indicates that the public education system only further sets back

disadvantaged students. As a result, many efforts to close the achievement gaps have focused on public school reforms. Unfortunately, quality of education is not the only factor attributed to lowering achievement of minority and poor students. There are many other family and community factors unrelated to school quality that impair their educational attainment. Therefore, people question whether efforts solely based on school reforms can be successful. The negative effects of family and community factors create a different set of needs for schools with high concentrations of low-income and minority students. Accordingly, different school models and curricula with more resources may be necessary to generate poor and minority student achievement that is equal to white and wealthier children. One controversial reform is the charter school movement. Although charter schools across the board have not had great success at improving low-income and minority student achievement, two models in particular have done quite well: Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) and YES Prep.

### ***The Achievement Gap***

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Research and analysis of educational data uncovers two areas of learning disparities: 1. the racial gap—minorities have lower levels of educational achievement than Whites, and 2. the socioeconomic gap—low-income students achieve lower than their wealthier peers. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, one of the ten regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education, published a report entitled *All Students Reaching the Top: Strategies for Closing the Academic Achievement Gaps*, which confirms that “[d]ecades of data on national trends in standardized tests in reading, mathematics, and science confirm the existence of

achievement gaps for certain ethnic-minority student populations and students living in poverty” (Bennett et al. 3).

The statistics that corroborate the existence of the achievement gaps are based on a variety of measures of student achievement, which introduces an important question: what measures of student achievement should be used when assessing the achievement gap? This is difficult to answer because it asks a seemingly qualitative question, yet we quantitatively decide what we consider “success” and how it should be defined and measured for all students. Perhaps the most commonly considered measure that reveals the achievement gap is standardized test scores, which include: cognitive test scores, SATs, Standard 9, ACTs, and AP/IB tests. Other measurements of the achievement gap include retention rates, pass rates, dropout rates, graduation rates, grade point average, course selection, and college enrollment and completion rates. Regardless of what student achievement measure one chooses to consider, the overall implication is unswerving: poor and minority students achieve significantly lower than their peers.

The SAT Reasoning Test, formerly known as the Scholastic Assessment Test and Scholastic Aptitude Test, is a standardized test used for college admissions. An individual’s SAT score is one of many factors that colleges consider when making admissions decisions. Although its usefulness and accuracy are hotly debated, it is used to gauge student preparedness for college-level academics. It is particularly helpful because it provides a standardized measure of college readiness. Although other factors are also useful indicators of college achievement, they do not offer a standardized measure because of wide variations across high schools. For example, while high school grade-point average (GPA) is important, grading standards and course rigor certainly

vary across schools. Originally the SAT consisted of two sections: mathematics and verbal, but in March 2005, the format of the test was changed. Now the SAT has a mathematics section, a critical reading section, and a writing section. Possible scores on each of the three sections range from 200-800. For the 2006-2007 school year, the national average SAT score combining all three sections was 1511 (1017 excluding the new writing section).

Figure 1 in the Appendix contains data from a table from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics that demonstrate the continuing achievement gap. By race/ethnicity, the average total SAT scores for 2007 are (the number in parentheses indicates the average score excluding the new writing section):

White 1579 (1061); Black 1287 (862); Mexican American 1371 (921); Puerto Rican 1360 (913); Other Hispanic 1372 (922); Asian/Pacific Islander 1605 (1092); American Indian/Alaska Native 1454 (981); Other 1502 (1009). Only the average scores for Whites and Asians exceed the national average of 1511 (1017); the remaining race/ethnicity group averages fall below the national average and Blacks scored the lowest. The data in Figure 2, also from the National Center for Education Statistics, shows yearly average SAT scores by family income. Only the average SAT scores for the three highest family income brackets meet or exceed the 2007 national average. The average SAT scores of students in the seven family income brackets that are below \$70,000 per year are lower than the national average. Also, the data in the chart demonstrate a strong trend: with the exception of one income bracket, as family income increases, average SAT scores increase. There are significant gaps between the average SAT scores of poorer children and wealthier children. Specifically, the average score of students from the highest

category of yearly family income (greater than \$100,000) is 336 points higher, 222 points higher excluding the new writing section, than students from the lowest category (less than \$10,000).

Figures 3 and 4 contain data on the percentage of high school dropouts among 16 through 24 year olds by race/ethnicity and family income quartile. The dropout rate for all races and income levels was 9.3% in 2006. Figure 3 demonstrates the considerable differences in dropout rates among races: 5.8% of Whites, 10.7% of Blacks, and 22.1% of Hispanic students dropped out in 2006. According to Figure 4, there are also substantial gaps in dropout rates according to family income quartiles: 16.5% in the lowest income quartile, 12.1% in the middle low quartile, 6.3% in the middle high quartile, and 3.8% in the highest quartile. It is evident that whites and wealthier students are less likely to dropout than minorities and poor students.

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### ***Causes of The Achievement Gap***

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Widespread disagreement about the causes of the achievement gaps continues. Quality of schools and instruction are major contributing factors. Learning opportunities are not equally distributed among all students. “Specifically, data show that African American, Latino, and low-income students are less likely to have access to experienced and qualified teachers, more likely to face low expectations, and less likely to receive equitable per student funding” (Flores 29). However, schools and teachers are not solely to blame. Characteristics of students, as well as family and neighborhood circumstances undoubtedly are factors of student achievement. Poor students often face “before and beyond school” factors that create obstacles to learning. Because minority children are

poor at a disproportionately high rate, non-school related factors have troublesome effects on minority educational attainment. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), out of the 73 million children in the United States in 2006 39%, or 28.4 million, lived in “low-income families” (Douglas-Hall and Chau). The federal poverty level is defined as \$20,650 for a family of four, \$17,170 for a family of three, and \$13,690 for a family of two; however, “research suggests that, on average, families need an income equal to about two times the federal poverty level to meet their most basic needs” (Douglas-Hall and Chau). Therefore, the NCCP defines “low-income” as families with incomes below \$41,300 for a family of four, \$34,340 for a family of three, and \$27,380 for a family of two. The percentage of children living in low-income families varies widely by race: 61% of Latino children (8.8 million), 61% of black children (6.5 million), 28% of Asian children (0.8 million), and 26% of white children (11.1 million) live in poverty (Douglas-Hall and Chau). Accordingly, the factors that affect poor student achievement apply to minority children at a higher rate than white students.

### ***“Before and Beyond School” Factors That Affect Student Achievement***

The Educational Research Service, “a nonprofit organization serving the research and information needs of education leaders and the public,” referring to causes of lower student achievement unrelated to schools as “socio-cultural causes,” explains:

Students living in persistent poverty are more likely than other students to suffer from many conditions that impede their learning, including:

- poor health care (including inadequate prenatal care for their mothers);
- frequent changes in residence, requiring transferring to new schools repeatedly;
- lack of books and other educational resources in the home;
- parents with lower levels of education; and
- unstable family structure

(ERS)

Additional “before and beyond school” factors that poor students face include: lack of parent participation, young children not read to, prenatal exposure to drugs and AIDS, low birth weight, lead exposure, hunger and poor nutrition, excessive television watching, low probability of two-parent homes, and personal injuries and accidents (Barton 15; Renchler). “Any one or a combination of these factors puts low-SES students at great risk for having substandard levels of academic achievement. Not unexpectedly, these circumstances lead low-SES students to drop out of school far more frequently than their higher SES counterparts” (Renchler). According to McCormick, “as many as one million at-risk students drop out each year” (qtd. in Renchler). In addition to parent and family effects, poor children face neighborhood dangers that affect student achievement. Drugs, violence, and gangs are prevalent in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty. Also, impoverished neighborhoods lack networks for children to find safe activities.

The above socio-cultural causes are all related to family and neighborhood issues. In wealthier communities, children benefit from guidance, support, the strong emphasis families place on education, and climates that promote learning. It is important to realize that although poor children lack such benefits, it is possible for schools to intervene and offset some of the damaging effects. Schools can make efforts to directly address some of these issues. For example, schools can encourage parental involvement, provide students access to educational resources they may not have at home, and provide nutritious meals. There are, however, some factors schools cannot directly address. For instance, schools cannot prevent families from moving, nor can they change previous



factors such as birth weight, lead exposure, or prenatal exposure to drugs and AIDS. Though schools cannot eliminate all the negative impacts poor children experience, schools can “educate these students beyond their poverty, [and] give them the intellectual tools and social skills necessary to become productive, working adults” (Renchler).

### ***School Factors That Affect Student Achievement***

“Unfortunately, students who start out with disadvantages often encounter school conditions that only add to the problem” (ERS). Segregation is a historical factor that has contributed to the achievement gap, specifically, the Black-White achievement gap.

Educational researchers Russell Rumberger and Douglas Willms explain that since court rulings such as *Brown v. Board of Education* concluded that “segregated schools were inherently unequal” efforts have been made to desegregate schools (Rumberger and Willms). While much progress has been made, communities remain segregated, and such segregation continues to affect the achievement gap. Families tend to congregate in neighborhoods with high concentrations of the same race and ethnicity. Due to market prices and affordability, communities are also divided by income levels. As a result, racial and income concentrations in schools are prevalent. These forms of segregation undoubtedly contribute to minority and low-income students’ underachievement.

### ***Effects of Segregation: Poor Quality Education Due to Lack of Funding and Resources***

In general, segregated schools offer poorer quality education. This is widely known and most relevant literature agrees that “schools serving predominantly minorities or low socioeconomic groups [have] lower funding levels, poorer teachers, and lower levels of other resources that contribute to student achievement” (Rumberger and Willms

378). Schools with high concentrations of minority and low-income students have a political disadvantage in getting equal resources. They receive inadequate funding and are staffed with less qualified teachers who often end up teaching subjects they have no experience teaching. Although low-income areas have a greater need for top teachers, they have difficulty recruiting them. Highly qualified teachers are attracted to wealthier areas because they have better schools with more resources and community support. It is also generally understood that teachers in these schools often have low expectations for these students, which “[leads] them to have low expectations for themselves” (ERS). Because teachers have low expectations, they develop a less rigorous curriculum that bores students and fails to challenge them. As a result, the students never fully develop skills that would enable them to achieve at their highest potential. Lack of adequate funding and teacher shortages in segregated schools result in larger class sizes and less individual attention. Evidence shows that as class size increases student achievement decreases. With lower funding, lower levels of resources, and poorer teachers and administrators, it is understandable that student achievement would suffer.

*Effects of Segregation: Peer Stimulation and Climate in Segregated Schools*

Differences in racial and social class composition have variable effects on student success (Rumberger and Willms 379). Student achievement results from more than the material children are taught in the classroom. Rumberger and Willms refer to the other factors within schools as “contextual effects.” Contextual effects often result from before and beyond school factors reinforced by segregation. They stem from factors such as: peer effects; academic, social, and disciplinary climate of the school (379); parental involvement; expectations – both that students have for themselves and that other people

have for them; and incentives and encouragement. This long list of contextual factors indicates that attendees of schools with predominantly poor and minority students will not benefit from the positive effects that such factors have at schools with mostly white, wealthier students. The contextual effects improve achievement of more advantaged students but fail to improve, and may even lower, the achievement of disadvantaged students.

### ***Charter Schools***

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A great deal of educational research and discussion focuses on understanding the achievement gap and its causes and effects in order to determine what approaches may effectively shrink the gap. There are undoubtedly many factors that contribute to the lower achievement of poor and minority students. School quality/quality of education that students receive is arguably one of the most significant factors affecting student achievement, and it is also a factor where it is possible to intervene through reform efforts. In order to reduce the achievement gap, it is more plausible to generate improvements within the education system than to use policy to address or control other harmful factors such as unstable family structures, parental education level, or parental involvement. Therefore, efforts to reduce the achievement gap have led to numerous educational reform attempts. While many of these reforms have produced promising results for increasing poor and minority student achievement, none has been identified as an ultimate solution. They all have troublesome pitfalls and shortcomings. One reform that has received much attention and sparked a great deal of controversy is the charter

school reform movement. Choosing to enroll in charter schools is becoming an increasingly popular alternative to failing public schools.

A report for the U.S. Department of Education, entitled *K–8 Charter Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap*, explains that “traditional public schools have struggled to successfully educate poor and minority students,” and in segregated communities with high concentrations of low-income and minority families, “school options for families are woefully meager” (U.S. Department of Education 1). Charter schools directly address the lack of quality schools available to poor and minority students, and are increasingly utilized as a reform strategy for closing the achievement gap. They are implemented in districts with failing schools in order to give students an alternative. Charter schools operate on three basic principles: choice, accountability, and freedom. Since the passing of the first charter school legislation in Minnesota in 1991, the number of schools using that charter school model has increased rapidly. According to 2007-2008 estimates from the Center for Education Reform (CER) “more than 4,100 charter schools are serving over 1.2 million children across 40 states and the District of Columbia” (CER).

The U.S. Charter Schools website describes chartering as a “radical educational innovation that is moving states beyond reforming existing schools to creating something entirely new. Chartering is at the center of a growing movement to challenge traditional notions of what public education means” (U.S. Charter Schools). Charter schools are generally considered independent public schools; they are publicly funded with taxpayer dollars, yet are free from many of the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to other public schools. In exchange for those freedoms, each charter school is bound to the terms of its unique contract, or “charter,” which lays out a school’s mission, program, goals,

students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. Basically, charter schools exercise increased autonomy in return for accountability. “They are accountable for both academic results and fiscal practices to several groups: the sponsor that grants them, the parents who choose them, and the public that funds them” (U.S. Charter Schools). Because chartering allows schools to be independent of the traditional public school system, they are able to “deliver programs tailored to educational excellence and the needs of the communities they serve” (CER). The relative autonomy is viewed as providing families with greater educational choice. They are expected to be successful because charter schools have the freedom to institute their own rules and policies, and create unique environments that can overcome some of the factors that result in low achievement of poor and minority students.

Unfortunately, charter school performance has been mixed, and taken as a whole, the evidence is discouraging. Katie Kingsbury sights several studies and data that demonstrate that on average, charter schools do not do better than regular public schools, and may actually do slightly worse (Kingsbury 14-18). However, this information should not be used to make generalizations that all charter schools are unsuccessful. Instead, it should encourage researchers and education specialists to investigate more closely the charter school models that are raising poor and minority students’ achievement. A closer examination of this minority may reveal important suggestions for education policy reforms. Looking at the strategies that high-performing charter schools implement may uncover the tactics, policies, and approaches that can be used to successfully improve student achievement in failing school districts, and thus reduce the achievement gap.

### **Knowledge is Power Program**

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The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) began in 1994 as a fifth grade program in Texas, and has experienced significant growth across the country. KIPP currently serves over 14,000 students in its 57 schools spread across 17 states and the District of Columbia. KIPP schools are free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools that give underserved children, who are most commonly poor and minority students, the opportunity to “develop the knowledge, skills, and character traits needed to succeed in top quality high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond” (KIPP). Students are accepted regardless of prior academic record, conduct, or socioeconomic background; however, enrollment is limited by the number of students the schools can accommodate, so students are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. All but two of the KIPP schools are charter schools and the majority of them, 48 of the 57, serve middle school students from fifth through eighth grade. In the last few years, KIPP has expanded and now includes seven high schools, six elementary schools, and one Pre-K through eighth grade school. More than 90 percent of KIPP students are either African American or Hispanic/Latino, and more than 80 percent of KIPP students are eligible for the federal free and reduced-price meals program (KIPP). This demonstrates that KIPP schools perpetuate, and even exacerbate, racial and SES segregation. Although KIPP’s model fosters segregation, its intense instructional techniques address the effects of segregation, negative peer stimulation, bad climate, and lack of resources, without desegregating the schools. It improves the quality of school and the quality of education the students receive.

### *KIPP's Strategies*

KIPP schools provide a safe and structured learning environment that is conducive of significant academic gains, and the model operates based on five core principles: “high expectations for behavior and academic performance, with a college-prep emphasis; choice by families and faculty to join; extended school time, including longer days and Saturday classes; substantial autonomy for principals in school operations, instruction, and hiring; and a focus on strong results on standardized tests and other measures” (Robelen 19). These principles are known as the “Five Pillars”: “High Expectations, Choice and Commitment, More Time, Power to Lead, and Focus on Results” (KIPP). In addition to these principles, KIPP employs other important strategies including a focus on mastering the basics, professional development, and character education. These principles and strategies which set the model apart from traditional public schools produce KIPP’s success. They eliminate many of the negative school factors that affect poor and minority student achievement. Those school factors that are not eliminated, such as segregation, are either improved or their negative effects are overcome by other improvements. Although KIPP’s tactics cannot eradicate the “before and beyond school” factors, they make it possible for students to triumph over them and succeed despite the difficulties.

### *High Expectations*

KIPP schools, for example, do not tolerate low expectations. Teachers and administration recognize that their students have a history of low performance, but this does not impact their expectations. “KIPP schools have clearly defined and measurable high expectations for academic achievement and conduct that make no excuses based on

the students' backgrounds" (KIPP). The unique model brings students, parents, teachers, and staff together to "create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior" (KIPP).

Upon entering a KIPP school it is immediately apparent that the environment is unlike the other public schools one would find in the same neighborhood. The walls in the hallway are decked in motivating banners that serve as constant reminders of the school mottos: "Word hard. Be Nice." "There are no shortcuts." "No excuses." "We are a team and family." "Team Always Beats Individuals." "All of Us Will Learn." "Read, Baby, Read." The walls that are not festooned with slogans are used to showcase student success. The spacious, bright, and organized classrooms are occupied by encouraging teachers, who develop engaging lesson plans and are dedicated to their students, and attentive students, who are eager to learn and actively participate. The sound of loud, motivational and educational chanting often emanates throughout the building. Between classes the order in the hallways is impeccable as students move "quickly and quietly" in structured lines to their next classes. However, these environmental observations are not the only factors contributing to the schools' success. Perhaps more important are the less visible practices, goals, techniques, and strategies the KIPP model employs. Such elements of KIPP's model successfully tackle some of the contextual problems mentioned in the discussion of causes of the achievement gap. This is evidence that KIPP vastly improves the academic, social, and disciplinary climate of the school. KIPP schools encourage and reward hard work. Teachers challenge students with more rigorous curricula and more difficult work than they would receive in their traditional



public schools, with the expectation that they will succeed. When the teachers express high expectations, the students develop high expectations for themselves.

### *Choice and Commitment*

The free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory approach of KIPP gives underserved children, the opportunity to attend schools that succeed. Accordingly, they empower students and parents by giving them a choice and allowing them to opt out of failing neighborhood schools. “Students, their parents, and the faculty of each KIPP school choose to participate in the program. No one is assigned or forced to attend a KIPP school” (KIPP). However, those who choose to enroll in KIPP are required to sign a contract demonstrating that they are dedicated to learning: “everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success” (KIPP).

### *More Time: Longer Hours, Less Wasted Time*

One of KIPP’s mottos is that “there are no shortcuts” when it comes to success in academics and life. KIPP’s belief in this motto is demonstrated through its increase in instructional time. KIPP requires longer hours in the classroom and estimates that KIPP students spend 60% more time in school learning than the average public school student. The normal school day runs from 7:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., excluding any additional homework that is assigned or other activities. Students also attend half-day classes on Saturdays and are required to attend a three week summer school session. “With an extended school day, week, and year, students have more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive high schools and colleges, as well as more opportunities to engage in diverse extracurricular

experiences” (KIPP). Furthermore, KIPP demands high attendance. By maintaining attendance rates that exceed 95%, KIPP ensures that students are not missing valuable instructional time. Not only does extended time in the classroom improve the education that students receive, but by increasing the amount of time spent in school it decreases the amount of time children spend in unfavorable homes and neighborhoods. By doing so, KIPP schools indirectly address some of the negative effects of before and beyond school factors by removing students from environments where they face damaging socio-cultural circumstances.

*Power to Lead and Professional Development Ensures Quality Teachers*

“The principals of KIPP schools are effective academic and organizational leaders who understand that great schools require great school leaders. They have control over their school budget and personnel. They are free to swiftly move dollars or make staffing changes, allowing them maximum effectiveness in helping students learn” (KIPP).

Because each principal maintains significant control over his/her school, its budget, and its curricula, KIPP schools are better able to address the specific needs of students in each school. The principals and administrators at KIPP schools work as a team with teachers to strategize and create lesson plans. Thus, the principals are in tuned to the needs of their schools and are able to make informed decisions. “[T]he principals never sit in their office shuffling papers. They are both teachers and instructional leaders—coaching teachers, helping them plan lessons to reach all children, and so forth” (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 53). In addition to a week of professional development that is required each year, this teamwork atmosphere creates a system of constant professional development. Each member of the staff is supported by all other staff members. Furthermore, each

KIPP school's team meets frequently to review curricula, discuss teaching methods and techniques for classroom management, and talk about the organization of school resources. This aspect of KIPP's model provides teachers and administrators with nonstop feedback throughout the year, and recognition of each other's hard work and successes. This produces better quality teachers, prevents them from getting burnt out, and ensures that they remain positive with high expectations for all students.

*Focus on Results and Mastering the Basics*

KIPP schools place a strong emphasis on producing results that demonstrate improved student achievement. The KIPP model focuses relentlessly “on high student performance on standardized tests and other objective measures. Just as there are no shortcuts, there are no excuses. Students are expected to achieve a level of academic performance that will enable them to succeed at the nation's best high schools and colleges” (KIPP). KIPP also concentrates on quantitative results to ensure that students have mastered a core set of basic academic skills. This strategy sets KIPP apart from most modern education philosophies. Katie Kingsbury explains that KIPP “stands in contrast to recent applications of progressivism, in [which, according to Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom,] the teacher does not teach skills directly, but expects students to ‘construct their own answers to problems’ naturally through ‘discussion, collaboration, and discovery’ (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 2003:61)” (Kingsbury 24-25). On the contrary, KIPP believes that students must first have a “solid grounding in facts” which can then be combined with “abstract reasoning” because “the latter is useless without a supply of the former” (Kingsbury 25).

By stressing that basic concepts must be mastered first, KIPP's approach intervenes where other public schools fail to. KIPP supplies students with basic knowledge that other schools wrongly assume all children have learned at home or in previous grades. KIPP realizes that children from impoverished and minority families are more likely to grow up in unfavorable homes and neighborhoods that do not foster skills equal to those of children from wealthier families and communities. As a result, KIPP stresses the importance of a core set of basic academic skills because without a strong foundation, students have nothing to build on.

### *Character Education*

In addition to mastering basic academic skills, KIPP schools also emphasize character education. This teaches specific social skills and self-discipline, often referred to as "soft skills," that contribute to academic and personal development and success. Similar to the discussion of basic academic skills, traditional public schools tend to overlook "soft skills," but KIPP schools are different. KIPP's "education in 'self-discipline' includes learning how to dress for success and how to sit in a classroom chair (no heads on desks), the importance of looking directly at the person to whom you are talking, and the point of standing when greeting someone" (Chubb and Loveless 146). Such soft skills help students to develop better study habits which can improve student achievement. Additionally, they make individuals more attractive candidates in interviews with potential employers and college recruiters.

### ***Results of KIPP Schools: Data Reveals Improved Student Achievement***

By strictly adhering to their principles and using the strategies that the model was founded on, KIPP schools have seen noteworthy results. Not only has KIPP reported statistics that demonstrate its success in raising student achievement, but KIPP has also been the subject of several independent studies which support this claim. This discussion will focus on two independent reports.

The 2002 report prepared by the Education Performance Network (EPN) at New American Schools (NAS), a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational research group, presents the findings of separate evaluations of three KIPP schools: the KEY Academy in the District of Columbia, the Gaston College Preparatory in North Carolina, and the 3D Academy in Houston, TX. “The primary purpose of the analysis was to determine whether or not these schools, in their first year of operation, were able to replicate the academic success of the two original KIPP schools in Houston and New York, as measured by student achievement gains” (Doran and Drury 6). The researchers collected various test-score data from the schools for each student “including Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores, scale scores, and performance level” (Doran and Drury 6). Prior achievement data were also collected for each student when available, but this was not always possible because all schools do not administer the same tests.

In general, the results of the study verify that students’ test scores improved at impressive rates after their enrollment in KIPP schools. Across all three schools, students made statistically significant gains in math and reading that were much larger than those of their counterparts attending traditional public schools. The report emphasizes a few of the most noteworthy outcomes at each school. At the KEY Academy in D.C., “[a]ll students in all [demographic] subgroups increased levels of academic performance on the

Stanford-9 when compared to their pretest scores. On average, KIPP students increased 23.5 NCE points in math and 12.1 NCE points in reading from [the] fall [of 2001] to [the] spring [of 2002]” (Doran and Drury 7). Gaston Prep’s student performance exceeded the achievement of all other schools in the county. Furthermore, Gaston “showed an increase of 36 percentage points in the pass rate in reading in 2002 on the End-of-Year exam. The school had a 93 percent passing rate in reading in 2002 on the End- Of-Year exam. Only 57 percent of these same students passed the state reading test the year before while attending other schools” (7). At 3D Academy, “[p]assing rates improved for all demographic subgroups of students for both the reading and math portions of the [Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)] test” (8).

In 2005, the Educational Policy Institute (EPI), a non-profit, non-partisan, and non-governmental organization dedicated to policy-based research on educational opportunity for all students, “conducted an analysis of recent academic data collected from 24 KIPP schools on behalf of the KIPP Foundation” (EPI 3). The researchers examined data of standardized test results from the 2003-2004 school year, comparing national norms with KIPP students’ results, in order to determine whether KIPP schools have a positive impact on student learning of fifth grade students. After surveying the results on the Stanford Achievement Test of a single cohort of fifth graders across the 24 KIPP schools, the group found that the cohorts posted gains that were significantly larger than what is considered normal. A growth score of zero on the normal curve equivalent (NCE) is considered “normal growth,” yet the “KIPP 5<sup>th</sup> grade cohorts experienced average gains of 9 to 17 points across all tests” (3).

### ***YES Prep***

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YES Prep is a charter school model that has been implemented in Houston, Texas to serve low-income minority students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Founded in 1998, its mission is “to increase the number of low-income Houstonians who graduate from a four-year college prepared to compete in the global marketplace and committed to improving disadvantaged communities” (YES Prep). YES Prep aims to reduce achievement disparities and the harmful effects they have on the lives of poor and minorities by mandating that students must be accepted to a four-year college in order to receive their high school diploma. Accordingly, it significantly improves student achievement by ensuring that 100% are accepted into four year colleges. Like KIPP, YES Prep’s model employs strategies that set it apart from conventional public high schools and produce successful results. Unfortunately, unlike KIPP, there is little information about YES Prep and its success in raising student achievement. Because it is a relatively new charter school model, it is difficult to find any independent studies on YES Prep, so the majority of information that is available comes from YES Prep’s website.

### ***YES Prep’s Strategies***

“YES Prep’s ultimate goal is to create a critical mass of college educated students who can then return to Houston and bring real change to [the] city’s disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities” (YES Prep). In order to reach this goal, YES Prep implements a charter school model that is very unique from traditional public schools. YES provides a small, intimate learning environment, but yet it is big enough to offer the activities and resources that will prepare students for collegiate success.

YES Prep distinguishes itself from traditional public schools in a number of ways. First, YES Prep's strategy for "commitment to excellence" differs from conventional schools. "Every year parents, teachers, and students sign a contract that says they will do "Whatever It Takes" to pursue the YES mission of collegiate success" (YES Prep). This addresses several issues that contribute the achievement gaps. To start off, it implements high expectations for students by setting high goals for collegiate success. It also forces all parties to get involved and be committed to learning. It holds parents accountable and encourages parental involvement. Students are also making a commitment to their education and are responsible for upholding their end of the deal. Similar to some of KIPP's strategies to keep students in school longer and away from the negative effects of before and beyond school factors, students at YES Prep "[b]enefit from an extended school day that includes clubs and athletics" and "attend a three-week summer school session." They benefit from improved education, more time spent learning, and less time being influenced by negative socio-cultural factors. Also, in order to graduate, YES students must be accepted to a four year college.

Secondly, YES Prep places an emphasis on "building positive relationships." YES schools implement a "unique student support model that includes small faculty advising groups, social services, tutoring sessions, and a college counseling department that begins working with students in ninth grade. In addition, all staff are given school-sponsored cell phones to be accessible to their students after school hours" (YES Prep). Thirdly, YES creates great opportunities for students. "Students participate in week-long spring college research trips, monthly field lessons and exciting summer programs" (YES Prep). The college research trips to schools and the comprehensive college counseling



program introduce students to the college atmosphere and makes attending college seem like a realistic option. Without these trips and college counseling from YES, attending college often seems impossible to poor and minority students who are never informed of possible opportunities available to them.

Finally, YES differentiates itself from other education models based on its goal of achieving social justice. “YES means “Youth Engaged in Service”. Students complete monthly service projects in the local community and log hundreds of volunteer hours over their seven years at YES” (YES Prep). YES students “[d]evote one Saturday each month to community service” (YES Prep). This makes students aware of problems facing their communities that they may be oblivious to, but that are likely impacting their lives. It also encourages students to get involved in efforts to address such problems.

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### *Results of YesPrep Schools: Data Reveals Improved Student Achievement*

YES Prep’s education strategies have led to improved student achievement for its poor and minority students. YES Prep is most concerned with college acceptance, enrollment, and graduation rates as a measurement of their success on improving student achievement. YES Prep boasts that “90% of YES alumni have either graduated from college or are still enrolled in four-year or two-year school (compared to the national retention average of 50% for all ethnic groups and 22% for low-income students)” (YES Prep).

Because YES Prep is most concerned with college acceptance rates of its students, demanding 100% acceptance, standardized tests used for college admissions are of particular concern to them. It is important to restate that because YES schools are

relatively new, there is little information available about YES Prep's model, and it is difficult to find any independent studies that analyze YES Prep's success. As such, the following data were reported on YES Prep's website. Figure 5 is a graph of SAT scores that compares the averages of YES Prep, Houston, the state of Texas, and the nation. According to the graph, in 2006, the most recent year with available data, the average SAT scores of YES Prep students (1048) exceed the averages of Houston (947), Texas (997), and the nation (1021). The average SAT score of 1048 further demonstrates improved student achievement when compared to the averages of minority and poor students cited previously in "The Achievement Gap" section and also reflected in Figures 1 and 2. Although the average score of YES Prep students is still lower than the average score of white students (1061), it still demonstrates significant improvement as a score of 1048 is higher than the average score of all race/ethnicity groups with the exception of whites and Asian/Pacific Islanders. The average SAT scores of YES Prep students also illustrates improved achievement when comparing it to average scores by family income bracket. Only the average score of students in the highest income bracket (1100) exceeds the average score of YES Prep students.

### ***Conclusion***

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This paper discusses the charter school movement as one possible reform that may address the causes of the racial and SES-based achievement gaps that persist in the United States. It concludes that in general, charter schools have not seen great success in raising student achievement. However, the data and studies cited within this document point to two charter school models that consistently succeed in improving student

performance. KIPP and YES Prep improve school factors that contribute to the achievement gaps, but also address many of the non-school related factors. While information about KIPP's model and success is widely available, studies and literature on YES Prep is limited. Since initial standardized test data implies that YES Prep schools are increasing student achievement, we can expect to see more literature written about YES in the near future. This paper discusses the strategies that KIPP and YES schools employ and demonstrates how they contribute to the schools' success. However, further research will undoubtedly uncover new information that will improve our understanding of what makes KIPP and YES Prep schools succeed.

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**Appendix****Figure 1.**

SAT score averages of college-bound seniors, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1986-87 through 2006-07

Race/ethnicity	1986-87	1990-91	1996-97	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>SAT—Critical reading</b>											
<b>All students</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>502</b>
White	524	518	526	528	529	527	529	528	532	527	527
Black	428	427	434	434	433	430	431	430	433	434	433
Mexican American	457	454	451	453	451	446	448	451	453	454	455
Puerto Rican	436	436	454	456	457	455	456	457	460	459	459
Other Hispanic	464	458	466	461	460	458	457	461	463	458	459
Asian/ Pacific Islander	479	485	496	499	501	501	508	507	511	510	514
American Indian/ Alaska Native	471	470	475	482	481	479	480	483	489	487	487
Other	480	486	512	508	503	502	501	494	495	494	497
<b>SAT—Mathematics</b>											
<b>All students</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>515</b>
White	514	513	526	530	531	533	534	531	536	536	534
Black	411	419	423	426	426	427	426	427	431	429	429
Mexican American	455	459	458	460	458	457	457	458	463	465	466
Puerto Rican	432	439	447	451	451	451	453	452	457	456	454
Other Hispanic	462	462	468	467	465	464	464	465	469	463	463
Asian/ Pacific Islander	541	548	560	565	566	569	575	577	580	578	578
American Indian/ Alaska Native	463	468	475	481	479	483	482	488	493	494	494
Other	482	492	514	515	512	514	513	508	513	513	512
<b>SAT—Writing</b>											
<b>All students</b>	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	<b>497</b>	<b>494</b>
White	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	519	518
Black	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	428	425
Mexican American	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	452	450
Puerto Rican	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	448	447
Other Hispanic	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	450	450
Asian/ Pacific Islander	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	512	513
American Indian/ Alaska Native	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	474	473
Other	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	493	493

† Not applicable.

NOTE: Data are for seniors who took the SAT any time during their high school years through March of

their senior year. If a student took a test more than once, the most recent score was used. The SAT was formerly known as the Scholastic Assessment Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Possible scores on each part of the SAT range from 200 to 800. The critical reading section was formerly known as the verbal section. The writing section was introduced in March 2005.

SOURCE: College Entrance Examination Board, College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile [National] Report, selected years, 1986-87 through 2006-07, retrieved August 28, 2007, from [http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news\\_info/cbsenior/yr2007/reports.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2007/reports.html). (This table was prepared August 2007.)

Note: Data was extracted from Table 134 of the “Digest of Education,” a report from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics.

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**Figure 2.**

SAT score averages of college-bound seniors, by family income: Selected years, 1995-96 through 2006-07

Selected student characteristic	1995-96			1999-2000			2002-03 <sup>1</sup>		2004-05 <sup>1</sup>		2005-06				2006-07			
	Critical reading score	Mathematics score	Percentage distribution	Critical reading score	Mathematics score	Percentage distribution	Critical reading score	Mathematics score	Critical reading score	Mathematics score	Critical reading score	Mathematics score	Writing score <sup>2</sup>	Percentage distribution	Critical reading score	Mathematics score	Writing score <sup>2</sup>	Percentage distribution
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<b>All students</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>100</b>
Family income <sup>6</sup>																		
Less than \$10,000	429	444	4	425	447	‡	420	444	426	458	429	457	427	4	427	451	423	4
\$10,000, but less than \$20,000	456	464	8	447	460	‡	437	452	443	463	445	465	440	7	453	472	446	8
\$20,000, but less than \$30,000	482	482	10	471	478	‡	460	467	463	474	462	474	454	8	454	465	444	6
\$30,000, but less than \$40,000	497	495	12	490	493	‡	480	484	480	487	478	488	470	10	476	485	466	9
\$40,000, but less than \$50,000	509	507	10	503	505	‡	495	498	496	500	493	501	483	8	489	496	477	8
\$50,000, but less than \$60,000	517	517	9	511	515	‡	504	508	505	509	500	509	490	9	497	504	486	8
\$60,000, but less than \$70,000	524	525	7	517	522	‡	511	514	511	515	505	515	496	8	504	511	493	8
\$70,000, but less than \$80,000	531	533	6	524	530	‡	518	523	517	522	511	521	502	9	508	516	498	9
\$80,000 to \$100,000	541	544	7	536	543	‡	529	536	529	534	523	534	514	13	520	529	510	14
More than \$100,000	560	569	9	558	571	‡	555	568	554	565	549	564	543	24	544	556	537	26

— Not available.

‡ Not applicable.

# Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

<sup>1</sup> Percentage distribution not reported since this year had less than 80 percent combined unit and item response rate.<sup>2</sup> Writing data are based on students who took the SAT writing section, which was introduced in March 2005.<sup>3</sup> Beginning in 2005-06, the College Board has reported third, fourth, and fifth quintiles as the bottom three quintiles instead of reporting them separately as in previous years.<sup>4</sup> Data may not be comparable over time because of additions to the list of majors and changes in subspecialties within majors.<sup>5</sup> Home economics was changed to Family and consumer sciences/human sciences as of 2006-07.<sup>6</sup> Because income categories have not been adjusted for inflation over time, the distribution of students has shifted toward the higher income categories. Differences between specific categories over time should be

interpreted with caution.

NOTE: Data are for seniors who took the SAT any time during their high school years through March of their senior year. If a student took a test more than once, the most recent score was used. The SAT was formerly known as the Scholastic Assessment Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Possible scores on each part of the SAT range from 200 to 800. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and survey item nonresponse.

SOURCE: College Entrance Examination Board, College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile [National] Report, selected years, 1995-96 through 2006-07, retrieved August 28, 2007, from [http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news\\_info/cbsenior/yr2007/reports.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2007/reports.html). (This table was prepared August 2007.)

Note: Data was extracted from Table 136 of the “Digest of Education,” a report from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics.

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**Figure 3.**

Percentage of high school dropouts among persons 16 through 24 years old (status dropout rate), by sex and race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1960 through 2006

Year	Total status dropout rate				Male status dropout rate				Female status dropout rate			
	All races <sup>1</sup>	White	Black	Hispanic	All races <sup>1</sup>	White	Black	Hispanic	All races <sup>1</sup>	White	Black	Hispanic
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1960 <sup>2</sup>	27.2 (—)	— (†)	— (†)	— (†)	27.8 (—)	— (†)	— (†)	— (†)	26.7 (—)	— (†)	— (†)	— (†)
1967 <sup>3</sup>	17.0 (—)	15.4 (—)	28.6 (—)	— (†)	16.5 (—)	14.7 (—)	30.6 (—)	— (†)	17.3 (—)	16.1 (—)	26.9 (—)	— (†)
1968 <sup>3</sup>	16.2 (—)	14.7 (—)	27.4 (—)	— (†)	15.8 (—)	14.4 (—)	27.1 (—)	— (†)	16.5 (—)	15.0 (—)	27.6 (—)	— (†)
1969 <sup>3</sup>	15.2 (—)	13.6 (—)	26.7 (—)	— (†)	14.3 (—)	12.6 (—)	26.9 (—)	— (†)	16.0 (—)	14.6 (—)	26.7 (—)	— (†)
1970 <sup>3</sup>	15.0 (0.29)	13.2 (0.30)	27.9 (1.22)	— (†)	14.2 (0.42)	12.2 (0.42)	29.4 (1.82)	— (†)	15.7 (0.41)	14.1 (0.42)	26.6 (1.65)	— (†)
1971 <sup>3</sup>	14.7 (0.28)	13.4 (0.29)	24.0 (1.14)	— (†)	14.2 (0.41)	12.6 (0.41)	25.5 (1.70)	— (†)	15.2 (0.40)	14.2 (0.42)	22.6 (1.54)	— (†)
1972	14.6 (0.28)	12.3 (0.29)	21.3 (1.07)	34.3 (2.22)	14.1 (0.40)	11.6 (0.40)	22.3 (1.59)	33.7 (3.23)	15.1 (0.39)	12.8 (0.41)	20.5 (1.44)	34.8 (3.05)
1973	14.1 (0.27)	11.6 (0.28)	22.2 (1.06)	33.5 (2.24)	13.7 (0.38)	11.5 (0.39)	21.5 (1.53)	30.4 (3.16)	14.5 (0.38)	11.8 (0.39)	22.8 (1.47)	36.4 (3.16)
1974	14.3 (0.27)	11.9 (0.28)	21.2 (1.05)	33.0 (2.08)	14.2 (0.39)	12.0 (0.40)	20.1 (1.51)	33.8 (2.99)	14.3 (0.38)	11.8 (0.39)	22.1 (1.45)	32.2 (2.90)
1975	13.9 (0.27)	11.4 (0.27)	22.9 (1.06)	29.2 (2.02)	13.3 (0.37)	11.0 (0.38)	23.0 (1.56)	26.7 (2.84)	14.5 (0.38)	11.8 (0.39)	22.9 (1.44)	31.6 (2.86)
1976	14.1 (0.27)	12.0 (0.28)	20.5 (1.00)	31.4 (2.01)	14.1 (0.38)	12.1 (0.39)	21.2 (1.49)	30.3 (2.94)	14.2 (0.37)	11.8 (0.39)	19.9 (1.35)	32.3 (2.76)
1977	14.1 (0.27)	11.9 (0.28)	19.8 (0.99)	33.0 (2.02)	14.5 (0.38)	12.6 (0.40)	19.5 (1.45)	31.6 (2.89)	13.8 (0.37)	11.2 (0.38)	20.0 (1.36)	34.3 (2.83)
1978	14.2 (0.27)	11.9 (0.28)	20.2 (1.00)	33.3 (2.00)	14.6 (0.38)	12.2 (0.40)	22.5 (1.52)	33.6 (2.88)	13.9 (0.37)	11.6 (0.39)	18.3 (1.31)	33.1 (2.78)
1979	14.6 (0.27)	12.0 (0.28)	21.1 (1.01)	33.8 (1.98)	15.0 (0.39)	12.6 (0.40)	22.4 (1.52)	33.0 (2.83)	14.2 (0.37)	11.5 (0.38)	20.0 (1.35)	34.5 (2.77)
1980	14.1 (0.26)	11.4 (0.27)	19.1 (0.97)	35.2 (1.89)	15.1 (0.39)	12.3 (0.40)	20.8 (1.47)	37.2 (2.72)	13.1 (0.36)	10.5 (0.37)	17.7 (1.28)	33.2 (2.61)
1981	13.9 (0.26)	11.3 (0.27)	18.4 (0.93)	33.2 (1.80)	15.1 (0.38)	12.5 (0.40)	19.9 (1.40)	36.0 (2.61)	12.8 (0.35)	10.2 (0.36)	17.1 (1.24)	30.4 (2.48)
1982	13.9 (0.27)	11.4 (0.29)	18.4 (0.97)	31.7 (1.93)	14.5 (0.40)	12.0 (0.42)	21.2 (1.50)	30.5 (2.73)	13.3 (0.38)	10.8 (0.40)	15.9 (1.26)	32.8 (2.71)
1983	13.7 (0.27)	11.1 (0.29)	18.0 (0.97)	31.6 (1.93)	14.9 (0.41)	12.2 (0.43)	19.9 (1.46)	34.3 (2.84)	12.5 (0.37)	10.1 (0.39)	16.2 (1.28)	29.1 (2.61)
1984	13.1 (0.27)	11.0 (0.29)	15.5 (0.91)	29.8 (1.91)	14.0 (0.40)	11.9 (0.43)	16.8 (1.37)	30.6 (2.78)	12.3 (0.37)	10.1 (0.39)	14.3 (1.22)	29.0 (2.63)
1985	12.6 (0.27)	10.4 (0.29)	15.2 (0.92)	27.6 (1.93)	13.4 (0.40)	11.1 (0.42)	16.1 (1.37)	29.9 (2.76)	11.8 (0.37)	9.8 (0.39)	14.3 (1.23)	25.2 (2.68)
1986	12.2 (0.27)	9.7 (0.28)	14.2 (0.90)	30.1 (1.88)	13.1 (0.40)	10.3 (0.42)	15.0 (1.33)	32.8 (2.66)	11.4 (0.37)	9.1 (0.39)	13.5 (1.21)	27.2 (2.63)
1987	12.6 (0.28)	10.4 (0.30)	14.1 (0.90)	28.6 (1.84)	13.2 (0.40)	10.8 (0.43)	15.0 (1.35)	29.1 (2.57)	12.1 (0.38)	10.0 (0.41)	13.3 (1.21)	28.1 (2.64)
1988	12.9 (0.30)	9.6 (0.31)	14.5 (1.00)	35.8 (2.30)	13.5 (0.44)	10.3 (0.46)	15.0 (1.48)	36.0 (3.19)	12.2 (0.42)	8.9 (0.43)	14.0 (1.36)	35.4 (3.31)
1989	12.6 (0.31)	9.4 (0.32)	13.9 (0.98)	33.0 (2.19)	13.6 (0.45)	10.3 (0.47)	14.9 (1.46)	34.4 (3.08)	11.7 (0.42)	8.5 (0.43)	13.0 (1.32)	31.6 (3.11)
1990	12.1 (0.29)	9.0 (0.30)	13.2 (0.94)	32.4 (1.91)	12.3 (0.42)	9.3 (0.44)	11.9 (1.30)	34.3 (2.71)	11.8 (0.41)	8.7 (0.42)	14.4 (1.34)	30.3 (2.70)
1991	12.5 (0.30)	8.9 (0.31)	13.6 (0.95)	35.3 (1.93)	13.0 (0.43)	8.9 (0.44)	13.5 (1.37)	39.2 (2.74)	11.9 (0.41)	8.9 (0.43)	13.7 (1.31)	31.1 (2.70)
1992 <sup>4</sup>	11.0 (0.28)	7.7 (0.29)	13.7 (0.95)	29.4 (1.86)	11.3 (0.41)	8.0 (0.42)	12.5 (1.32)	32.1 (2.67)	10.7 (0.39)	7.4 (0.40)	14.8 (1.36)	26.6 (2.56)
1993 <sup>4</sup>	11.0 (0.28)	7.9 (0.29)	13.6 (0.94)	27.5 (1.79)	11.2 (0.40)	8.2 (0.42)	12.6 (1.32)	28.1 (2.54)	10.9 (0.40)	7.6 (0.41)	14.4 (1.34)	26.9 (2.52)
1994 <sup>4</sup>	11.4 (0.26)	7.7 (0.27)	12.6 (0.75)	30.0 (1.16)	12.3 (0.38)	8.0 (0.38)	14.1 (1.14)	31.6 (1.60)	10.6 (0.36)	7.5 (0.37)	11.3 (0.99)	28.1 (1.66)
1995 <sup>4</sup>	12.0 (0.27)	8.6 (0.28)	12.1 (0.74)	30.0 (1.15)	12.2 (0.38)	9.0 (0.40)	11.1 (1.05)	30.0 (1.59)	11.7 (0.37)	8.2 (0.39)	12.9 (1.05)	30.0 (1.66)
1996 <sup>4</sup>	11.1 (0.27)	7.3 (0.27)	13.0 (0.80)	29.4 (1.19)	11.4 (0.38)	7.3 (0.38)	13.5 (1.18)	30.3 (1.67)	10.9 (0.38)	7.3 (0.39)	12.5 (1.08)	28.3 (1.69)
1997 <sup>4</sup>	11.0 (0.27)	7.6 (0.28)	13.4 (0.80)	25.3 (1.11)	11.9 (0.39)	8.5 (0.41)	13.3 (1.16)	27.0 (1.55)	10.1 (0.36)	6.7 (0.37)	13.5 (1.11)	23.4 (1.59)
1998 <sup>4</sup>	11.8 (0.27)	7.7 (0.28)	13.8 (0.81)	29.5 (1.12)	13.3 (0.40)	8.6 (0.41)	15.5 (1.24)	33.5 (1.59)	10.3 (0.36)	6.9 (0.37)	12.2 (1.05)	25.0 (1.56)
1999 <sup>4</sup>	11.2 (0.26)	7.3 (0.27)	12.6 (0.77)	28.6 (1.11)	11.9 (0.38)	7.7 (0.39)	12.1 (1.10)	31.0 (1.58)	10.5 (0.36)	6.9 (0.37)	13.0 (1.08)	26.0 (1.54)
2000 <sup>4</sup>	10.9 (0.26)	6.9 (0.26)	13.1 (0.78)	27.8 (1.08)	12.0 (0.38)	7.0 (0.37)	15.3 (1.20)	31.8 (1.56)	9.9 (0.35)	6.9 (0.37)	11.1 (1.00)	23.5 (1.48)
2001 <sup>4</sup>	10.7 (0.25)	7.3 (0.26)	10.9 (0.71)	27.0 (1.06)	12.2 (0.38)	7.9 (0.39)	13.0 (1.12)	31.6 (1.55)	9.3 (0.34)	6.7 (0.36)	9.0 (0.90)	22.1 (1.42)
2002 <sup>4</sup>	10.5 (0.24)	6.5 (0.24)	11.3 (0.70)	25.7 (0.93)	11.8 (0.35)	6.7 (0.35)	12.8 (1.07)	29.6 (1.32)	9.2 (0.32)	6.3 (0.34)	9.9 (0.91)	21.2 (1.27)
2003 <sup>4,5</sup>	9.9 (0.23)	6.3 (0.24)	10.9 (0.69)	23.5 (0.90)	11.3 (0.34)	7.1 (0.35)	12.5 (1.05)	26.7 (1.29)	8.4 (0.30)	5.6 (0.32)	9.5 (0.89)	20.1 (1.23)
2004 <sup>4,5</sup>	10.3 (0.23)	6.8 (0.24)	11.8 (0.70)	23.8 (0.89)	11.6 (0.34)	7.1 (0.35)	13.5 (1.08)	28.5 (1.30)	9.0 (0.31)	6.4 (0.34)	10.2 (0.92)	18.5 (1.18)
2005 <sup>4,5</sup>	9.4 (0.22)	6.0 (0.23)	10.4 (0.66)	22.4 (0.87)	10.8 (0.33)	6.6 (0.34)	12.0 (1.02)	26.4 (1.26)	8.0 (0.29)	5.3 (0.31)	9.0 (0.86)	18.1 (1.16)
2006 <sup>4,5</sup>	9.3 (0.22)	5.8 (0.23)	10.7 (0.66)	22.1 (0.86)	10.3 (0.33)	6.4 (0.33)	9.7 (0.91)	25.7 (1.25)	8.3 (0.30)	5.3 (0.31)	11.7 (0.96)	18.1 (1.15)



— Not available.

† Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Includes other racial/ethnic categories not separately shown.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the April 1960 decennial census.

<sup>3</sup> White and Black include persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

<sup>4</sup> Because of changes in data collection procedures, data may not be comparable with figures for years prior to 1992.

<sup>5</sup> White and Black exclude persons identifying themselves as more than one race.

NOTE: "Status" dropouts are 16- to 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and who have not completed a high school programs regardless of when they left school. People who have received GED credentials are counted as high school completers. All data except for 1960 are based on October counts. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in prisons, persons in the military, and other persons not living in households. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity except where otherwise noted. Standard errors appear in parentheses. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1967 through October 2006. (This table was prepared August 2007.)

Note: This data was extracted from Table 105 of the "Digest of Education Statistics," a report from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

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**Figure 4.**

Percentage of high school dropouts among persons 16 through 24 years old (status dropout rate), by family income quartile: 1970 through 2006.

Year	Status dropout rate		Status dropout rate, by family income quartile							
			Lowest quartile		Middle low quartile		Middle high quartile		Highest quartile	
1	2		3		4		5		6	
1970	15.0	(0.29)	28.0	(0.92)	21.2	(0.65)	11.7	(0.50)	5.2	(0.34)
1971	14.7	(0.28)	28.8	(0.90)	20.7	(0.63)	10.9	(0.49)	5.1	(0.32)
1972	14.6	(0.28)	27.6	(0.85)	20.8	(0.62)	10.2	(0.46)	5.4	(0.33)
1973	14.1	(0.27)	28.0	(0.85)	19.6	(0.60)	9.9	(0.45)	4.9	(0.31)
1974	14.3	(0.27)	---	(†)	---	(†)	---	(†)	---	(†)
1975	13.9	(0.27)	28.8	(0.82)	18.0	(0.58)	10.2	(0.45)	5.0	(0.30)
1976	14.1	(0.27)	28.1	(0.79)	19.2	(0.60)	10.1	(0.45)	4.9	(0.29)
1977	14.1	(0.27)	28.5	(0.80)	19.0	(0.60)	10.4	(0.46)	4.5	(0.29)
1978	14.2	(0.27)	28.2	(0.80)	18.9	(0.60)	10.5	(0.46)	5.5	(0.31)
1979	14.6	(0.27)	28.1	(0.79)	18.5	(0.60)	11.5	(0.47)	5.6	(0.32)
1980	14.1	(0.26)	27.0	(0.77)	18.1	(0.60)	10.7	(0.46)	5.7	(0.32)
1981	13.9	(0.26)	26.4	(0.75)	17.8	(0.57)	11.1	(0.47)	5.2	(0.30)
1982	13.9	(0.27)	27.2	(0.78)	18.3	(0.63)	10.2	(0.48)	4.4	(0.29)
1983	13.7	(0.27)	26.5	(0.77)	17.8	(0.62)	10.5	(0.50)	4.1	(0.29)
1984	13.1	(0.27)	25.9	(0.76)	16.5	(0.61)	9.9	(0.48)	3.8	(0.29)
1985	12.6	(0.27)	27.1	(0.78)	14.7	(0.60)	8.3	(0.46)	4.0	(0.29)
1986	12.2	(0.27)	25.4	(0.75)	14.8	(0.60)	8.0	(0.45)	3.4	(0.28)
1987	12.6	(0.28)	25.5	(0.76)	16.6	(0.63)	8.0	(0.46)	3.6	(0.28)
1988	12.9	(0.30)	27.2	(0.85)	15.4	(0.68)	8.2	(0.51)	3.4	(0.30)
1989	12.6	(0.31)	25.0	(0.84)	16.2	(0.71)	8.7	(0.52)	3.3	(0.31)
1990	12.1	(0.29)	24.3	(0.82)	15.1	(0.65)	8.7	(0.51)	2.9	(0.28)
1991	12.5	(0.30)	25.9	(0.83)	15.5	(0.66)	7.7	(0.49)	3.0	(0.29)
1992	11.0	(0.28)	23.4	(0.79)	12.9	(0.62)	7.3	(0.48)	2.4	(0.26)
1993	11.0	(0.28)	22.9	(0.77)	12.7	(0.62)	6.6	(0.46)	2.9	(0.29)
1994	11.4	(0.26)	20.7	(0.71)	13.7	(0.58)	8.7	(0.45)	4.9	(0.33)
1995	12.0	(0.27)	23.2	(0.69)	13.8	(0.59)	8.3	(0.46)	3.6	(0.29)
1996	11.1	(0.27)	22.0	(0.72)	13.6	(0.60)	7.0	(0.45)	3.2	(0.28)
1997	11.0	(0.27)	21.8	(0.71)	13.5	(0.59)	6.2	(0.42)	3.4	(0.29)
1998	11.8	(0.27)	22.3	(0.71)	14.9	(0.62)	7.7	(0.45)	3.5	(0.29)
1999	11.2	(0.26)	21.0	(0.70)	14.3	(0.60)	7.4	(0.44)	3.9	(0.30)
2000	10.9	(0.26)	20.7	(0.70)	12.8	(0.56)	8.3	(0.46)	3.5	(0.29)
2001	10.7	(0.25)	19.3	(0.68)	13.4	(0.57)	9.0	(0.47)	3.2	(0.27)
2002	10.5	(0.24)	18.8	(0.62)	12.3	(0.53)	8.4	(0.43)	3.8	(0.28)

2003	9.9	(0.23)	19.5	(0.64)	10.8	(0.49)	7.3	(0.40)	3.4	(0.26)
2004	10.3	(0.23)	18.0	(0.60)	12.7	(0.52)	8.2	(0.42)	3.7	(0.27)
2005	9.4	(0.22)	17.9	(0.60)	11.5	(0.51)	7.1	(0.39)	2.7	(0.23)
2006	9.3	(0.22)	16.5	(0.58)	12.1	(0.51)	6.3	(0.37)	3.8	(0.27)

— Not available.

† Not applicable.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

<sup>1</sup> Includes persons employed, but not currently working.

<sup>2</sup> Because of changes in data collection procedures, data may not be comparable with figures for years prior to 1992.

NOTE: "Status" dropouts are 16- to 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and who have not completed a high school program, regardless of when they left school. People who have received GED credentials are counted as high school completers. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in prisons, persons in the military, and other persons not living in households. Some data have been revised from previously published figures. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors appear in parentheses.

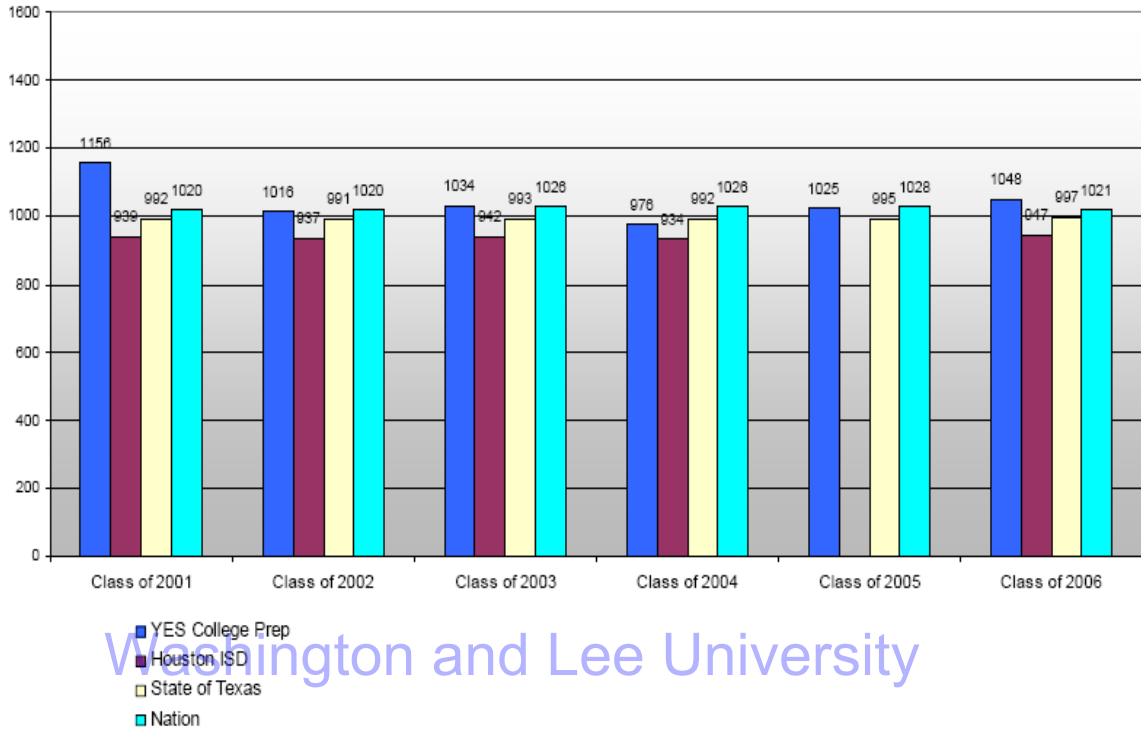
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1970 through October 2006. (This table was prepared August 2007.)

Note: Data was extracted from Table 106 of the "Digest of Education," a report from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

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Figure 5.

**SAT Score Comparison**  
**Mean Scores for the Classes of 2001 - 2006**



Note: Graph taken from YES Prep's website.

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