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BLACK MINDS MATTER: A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF THE PERSISTENT UNDERREPRESENTATION OF BLACK STUDENTS IN GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT
Gifted education programs have facilitated educational segregation since their inception and recent research has determined these programs to be *the* most inequitable in the field. Although a substantial body of research has established that racial inequities in gifted placement practices exist, there is an existing gap in the research around how discriminatory placement trends have evolved over time. The present study examines longitudinal gifted program enrollment data from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) between 2011 and 2018 to compare participation rates between White and Black students over time. The analysis revealed that White students have consistently participated in gifted programs at a significantly higher rate than their Black peers over this timeframe. Moreover, despite a tendency to assume that although equity in gifted education programs has not yet been achieved, it is slowly becoming more equitable over time, the analysis also revealed that Black students have become even less likely to participate than their White peers since 2011. The need to adopt and widely implement effective approaches to diversify gifted education programs has become more dire over time, and this study serves as a call to action to ensure that educational opportunity is equitably distributed to students regardless of race.

Keywords: gifted, academically advanced, equity, underrepresentation

Students of color are severely under-identified as gifted and, as a result, participate in gifted programming at a much lower rate than White students (Grissom et al., 2019; Ricciardi et al.,

2020). Although there remains a consensus that equity has not yet been achieved in the field of gifted education, it is unclear how much progress has actually been made over time (Worrell & Dixson, 2022). To date, the majority of research investigating racial equity in gifted education programs has focused on making comparisons across various racial/ethnic subgroups at a particular point in time (e.g., Carman et al., 2020; Crabtree et al., 2019). An existing gap in this body of research lies in the investigation into the extent to which the under- and over-representation of certain racial subgroups has changed over time. There is a tendency to find solace in the sentiment that although we have not yet attained absolute equity, the field is making progress over time toward that overarching goal. However, research has yet to verify this claim.

The purpose of the present study is to fill this gap in research to better understand if America's gifted education system is moving toward achieving the overarching goal of racial equity. Although it is clear that gifted education continues to exclude students from historically marginalized groups, it is critical to determine whether we are moving closer to achieving equity in the field in order to critically examine where our gifted education system stands and determine the path forward. Specifically, this study investigates the extent to which the United States has made progress in the equitable representation of Black students in advanced academic programs. By analyzing nationally representative data from the 2011-2012 and 2017-2018 school years, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Have gifted program participation rates become more proportional between White and Black students between 2011 and 2018 in the U.S.?
2. Have gaps in the likelihood that Black and White students would participate in gifted programming decreased between 2011 and 2018 in the U.S.?
3. How have differences in the level of underrepresentation in gifted education between Black male and female students evolved between 2011 and 2018 in the U.S.?

Literature Review

Gifted Education as White Property

Gifted education has consistently been found to be *the* most segregated educational branch in the U.S. public school system (Ford, 1995; Ford & King, 2014a). Utilizing critical race theory (CRT) to study inequities in the field of gifted education facilitates an analysis of systemic barriers that preclude certain students from accessing valuable educational opportunities. This paper utilizes critical race theory (CRT) as the theoretical frame through which the review of the literature and analysis of the data are interpreted. Particular emphasis is placed on the Whiteness as property tenet of this theory to understand and interpret exclusionary practices and outcomes in the field of gifted education (Mensah & Jackson, 2018). As Kolivoski et al. (2014) assert, "Whiteness is the ultimate property value, leveraged to perpetuate advantages and privileges among Whites" (p. 270). Property comes with an inherent set of rights including possession, use, disposition, and exclusion (Decuir & Dixson, 2004).

In this way, gifted education is conceptualized as historically being a form of White property. "Racial identity has been legally tied to personal liberties, or lack thereof" (Barlow &

Dunbar, 2010, p. 4) and inherently grants the right to exclude (Barlow & Dunbar, 2010). As a result, gifted education reinforces and heightens existing White privilege. Since its beginning, the U.S. educational system has replicated and perpetuated racial and economic hierarchies that exist in the larger society. The educational system serves as a status maintenance system in many respects, perpetuating hierarchies that exist in our larger society (Vanfossen et al., 1987). The gifted educational system nested within it, on the other hand, actually exacerbates inequities (Ford, 1995).

The Gifted Gap

Just like race and class, giftedness is a social construct. In a sense, gifted children did not exist until the early 1900s because giftedness had not yet been defined (Borland, 2005). "Giftedness emerged in the manner that it did, and has more or less remained, because it served, and continues to serve, the interests of those in control of the schools and the disciplines that informed and guided American education at that time" (Borland, 2005, p. 3). Research in the field of gifted education has increasingly focused on racial inequities over recent years, but segregation in gifted programming is nothing new. Advanced academic programs have been segregated since their inception: "[g]ifted education programs […] have long been a White space – over-enrolled by White students, taught by White teachers, and protected by White middle-class parents" (Wright et al., 2017 p. 48). Research dating back to the 1930's has found that Black students are identified for and participate in gifted programs at a much lower rate than their White peers (Jenkins, 1936).

In 1954, the ruling of *Brown vs. Board of Education* deemed school segregation on the basis of race to be unconstitutional. As a result of this ruling, public schools across the country became integrated. However, simultaneously, gifted programs gained notable traction and appear to have served as a work-around for middle- and upper-class White families. Schools themselves may have needed to be integrated, but gifted programs, over-enrolled by White students, facilitated within-school segregation post-*Brown v. Board of Education* (Ford & King, 2014a). Although there exists disagreement about the reasons for segregation within our educational system, "[d]enied opportunities, regardless of intent and reason, have resulted in segregated gifted education" (Ford & King, 2014a, p. 306).

To date, gifted education is not a federally mandated program, so there is a great deal of discretion in determining how to both identify gifted students and deliver advanced academic programs across the country (Wright et al., 2017). The most recently released federal data revealed that White students comprised 47.3% of the overall student population but 58.4% of the gifted population in comparison to Black students who comprised 15.1% of overall student enrollment but only 8.2% of the gifted enrollment (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Even when researchers control for variables such as academic performance, age, grade, and family income, Black students are significantly less likely to be identified as gifted and participate in advanced academic programs compared to their White peers (Grissom & Redding, 2015; Hodges & Gentry, 2020). Gifted education has historically served, and continues to serve, as a vehicle for replicating

larger inequities in our society within our educational system, protecting and often heightening the advantages of White privilege.

The Inaccessible Benefits of Gifted Education

The exclusion of historically marginalized groups from gifted education programs is concerning not only because of the vast inequities it reveals within our educational system, but also because these students are denied the well-established benefits of advanced academic programs. Participation in gifted programs is associated with positive future outcomes such as higher academic achievement, improved self-efficacy, and more positive self-concept (Bhatt, 2009; Card & Giuliano, 2014; Marsh et al., 1995; Rogers, 2007). Students who participate in gifted education are also exposed to more challenging curricula, surrounded by bright peers, and are more likely to be successful in their careers than students who do not (Bhatt, 2009; Card & Giuliano, 2014; Marsh et al., 1995; Rogers, 2007). In addition to the clear academic benefits of gifted programs, students who participate in these programs reap additional social and personal benefits including increased interpersonal skills and a heightened sense of belonging, maturity, and independence (Mickenberg & Wood, 2008).

Importantly, research suggests that the benefits of advanced academic programming are even more profound for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds who experience more pronounced benefits in academic acceleration, standardized test scores, and success in higher education when compared to their peers (Card & Giuliano, 2014; Mickenberg & Wood, 2008). Students from underrepresented backgrounds also report greater increases in open-mindedness, goal-setting skills, and college preparation as a result of participation in gifted programming (Mickenberg & Wood, 2008). If students from historically marginalized groups are not being identified as gifted at equitable rates, they are deprived of educational opportunities that directly contribute to personal, academic, and professional success. Moreover, if academically advanced students do not have access to an appropriately rigorous education, they and often underachieve and fail to fulfill their potential (Ford & King, 2014b; Ricciardi et al., 2020).

Alternative Approaches in Identification

Over the past decade, a number of interventions have been incorporated into gifted program identification practices to increase diversity in advanced academic programs, including the development of novel assessments, the implementation of universal screening, and the utilization of local norms. First, alternative identification methods have been developed with the goal of addressing group differences in standardized assessment scores used to determine eligibility for gifted programming. Both the Cognitive Abilities Test (CoGAT) and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) include nonverbal sections which are thought to be inclusive of a more diverse range of students than traditional quantitative and verbal assessments and are increasingly being used to make gifted placement decisions (Kurtz et al., 2019). In fact, as of 2019, over 50% of districts across the country were using the CoGAT in their gifted identification model and this assessment has been found to identify a much more equitable proportion of Black students in

comparison to their White peers (Funk, 2009; Kurtz et al., 2019). Similarly, Naglieri and Ford (2003) investigated the efficacy of the NNAT with a sample of approximately 20,000 students and found that Black and White students achieved similar mean scores on the assessment and that this assessment identified high-scoring White and Black students at equivalent rates.

Universal screening is another approach aimed at increasing equity in gifted education that has gained traction in recent years. The premise behind universal screening is that students are referred for gifted testing in a biased manner, so all students should be tested in order to eliminate this bias (Morgan, 2020). Card and Giuliano (2016) examined the impacts of incorporating this approach and found that the implementation of universal screening resulted in a 74% increase in the chance of Black students being identified as gifted. Matthews and Rhodes (2020) analyzed gifted identification practices across a number of school districts and ultimately recommended that districts utilize universal screening at an early age in order to increase diversity in advanced academic programming. As the authors explain, "universal screening provides the best opportunity to identify the highest number of students with gifted potential" (p. 430).

Finally, the use of local norms has been widely utilized in recent years in order to increase participation in gifted programming for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Local norms involve comparing a students' gifted identification assessment scores to other students in the building and/or district instead of comparing them to nationally normed data or to pre-set cutoff scores (Peters et al., 2019). Peters et al. (2021) found that applying local norms to a large district with which they were working would increase the representation of Black students in gifted programming by over 200%. Similarly, Carman et al. (2018) compared the use of national and local norms while utilizing the CoGAT in the Houston Independent School District. The authors found that using local norms instead of national norms doubled the number of Black students identified as gifted in the school district.

Taken together, the review of the literature clearly establishes that gifted education programs continue to facilitate a form of modern-day segregation, reserving the most valuable educational opportunities for students of a particular demographic (Kasten, 2013). Gifted education has historically served, and continues to serve, as a vehicle for replicating larger inequities in our society within our educational system, protecting and often heightening the advantages of White privilege. What is less clear, however, is the extent to which gifted education has become more equitable over time (Worrell & Dixson, 2022). The present study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by investigating trends in gifted education participation over the past decade to determine what, if any, large-scale progress has been made in achieving more equitable representation of Black students in advanced academic programs.

Methods

The present study analyzes publicly available census data collected through the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). The U.S. Department of Education has conducted the CDRC biannually since 1968 in order to report on data surrounding civil rights issues in the country's public school system. Recently, the CDRC has begun to collect data regarding gifted and talented

program enrollments by race/ethnicity, gender, disability status, and English Language Learner status. For the purposes of the present study, overall student enrollment and gifted enrollment rates are analyzed by race/ethnicity for the 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2015-2016, and 2017-2018 school years. Data from approximately 50,000,000 students attending 96,000 schools in 17,000 districts were included in each school year's dataset (U.S. Department of Education, 2012; 2014; 2016; 2018).

These data are analyzed via descriptive and inferential statistics to better understand how equity in gifted education programs has changed between 2011 and 2018 in the United States. This study operationalizes equity as involving proportional participation both (1) *within* a racial subgroup across overall enrollments and gifted education enrollments and (2) *across* racial subgroups in gifted education enrollments. Here, the author takes the position that talent is equally distributed across racial subgroups, but that opportunity is not. However, it is important to note that this study seeks to identify whether improvements have been made in making gifted education more equitable, not whether the field is equitable in an absolute sense as research has consistently illustrated that vast inequities exist in the field regardless of how equity is conceptualized (e.g., Carman et al., 2020; Crabtree et al., 2019; Ford, 2013).

The present study first measures equity in gifted education programs by comparing the composition of Black and White students across overall and gifted educational enrollments. For instance, if gifted education programs were equitably serving students across racial subgroups, gifted enrollment rates for each subgroup should match overall public-school enrollment rates; if 10% of the student population is Black, then we would expect that 10% of the gifted population would also be Black if the system were serving Black students proportionally through advanced academic programs. First, equity was evaluated in this way by measuring the underrepresentation of Black students in gifted programs using the Relative Difference in Composition Index (RCDI; see equation below) which was calculated based on gifted enrollment and overall enrollment data (e.g., Ford et al., 2020). RCDI values were then compared over time to determine if and how the underrepresentation of Black students in gifted education has changed between 2011 and 2018.

$$RCDI = 100\% - \frac{Black\ Students\ as\ a\ \%\ of\ All\ Gifted\ Program\ Enrollments}{Black\ Students\ as\ a\ \%\ of\ Overall\ Student\ Enrollments}$$

The intersectionality of race and gender was also examined by applying the RCDI to the representation of Black male, White male, Black female, and White female students to gain a more nuanced understanding of how inequities have manifested in advanced academic programs over the timeframe mentioned above.

Equity in gifted programming is also evaluated by comparing participation rates within each racial subgroup in a given educational program. According to this approach, if our country's gifted education programs were equitably serving students across all racial subgroups, we would expect that the same percentage of each racial subgroup is participating in gifted and talented programs (e.g., 10% of Black students, 10% of Hispanic/Latino students, 10% of White students,

etc.). In this study, equity was also evaluated by comparing gifted participation rates over time via a series of binomial tests with a significance level of .05.

Trends in equity in gifted education was further analyzed by comparing the likelihood of participating in advanced academic programs between demographic subgroups. In instances of equitable educational opportunity, students of different subgroups are just as likely as other subgroups to participate in an educational program. Trends in equitable racial representation in gifted education programs was analyzed by calculating odds ratios to examine the probability of Black students participating in gifted programming in comparison to their White peers. Odds ratios were then compared over time to detect changes in equity over time. The present study analyzes national data using each of these three approaches to understand how equity in gifted education programs has changed over time.

Results

To determine the extent to which the underrepresentation of Black students in gifted education programs has changed between 2011 and 2018, gifted program compositions were first compared to overall enrollment compositions by race (see Table 1). During the 2011-2012 school year, Black students made up 15.89% of the overall student population, but only 8.81% of the gifted population, resulting in an underrepresentation of 44.56% according to the RCDI. During the 2017-2018 school year, Black students comprised 15.11% of all student enrollments, but only 8.21% of gifted enrollments, resulting in an underrepresentation of 45.67%. The underrepresentation of Black students increased by 1.11 percentage points between 2011 and 2018.

Table 1

Black Students' Underrepresentation in Gifted Programs (2011-2018)

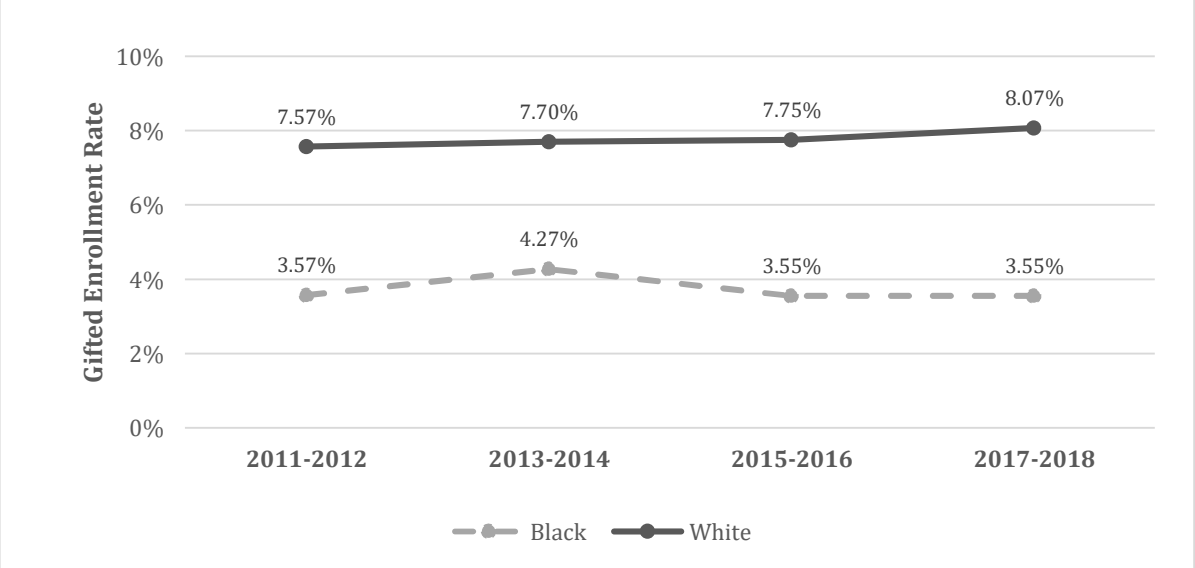
Year	Black Students as a % of Overall Enrollments	Black Students as a % of Gifted Enrollments	Underrepresentation of Black Students
2011-2012	15.89%	8.81%	44.56%
2013-2014	15.50%	9.93%	35.94%
2015-2016	15.44%	8.50%	44.95%
2017-2018	15.11%	8.21%	45.67%

Equity in advanced academic programs over this timeframe was further analyzed by comparing gifted and talented program participation rates between White and Black students. Between 2011 and 2018, gifted participation rates increased from 7.57% to 8.07% for White students and decreased from 3.57% to 3.55% for Black students (see Figure 1). A binomial test revealed that White students participated in gifted programs at a significantly higher rate than Black students in the 2011-2012 (.076 > .036, $p < .001$), 2013-2014 (.077 < .043, $p < .001$), 2015-

2016 (.078 > .036, $p < .001$), and 2017-2018 (.081 > .036, $p < .001$) school years. During the 2011-2012 school year, White students participated in gifted programs at 2.12 times the rate as Black students; their relative participation rates increased to 2.27 times the rate of Black students in the 2017-2018 school year. The participation rates of Black students have remained relatively consistent over time with the exception of the 2013-2014 school year, and participation rates of White students has increased steadily over time, resulting in a slight widening of the gap in participation rates over time.

Figure 1

U.S. Gifted Program Enrollment Rates by Race/Ethnicity (2011-2018)



Odds ratios were then calculated to measure differences in the likelihood that students would be enrolled in gifted programs by race/ethnicity between 2011 and 2018. This analysis revealed that during the 2011-2012 school year, Black students were 66% less likely to participate in gifted programs than White students [OR = 0.439 (95% CI: 0.473, 0.441), $p < .001$]; during the 2017-2018 school year, Black students were 68% less likely to participate in gifted programs than their White peers [OR = 0.419 (95% CI: 0.418, 0.421), $p < .001$]. Over time, Black students have actually become even less likely than White students to be enrolled in advanced academic programs.

Next, an analysis examining the intersectionality of race and gender was conducted to gain a more nuanced understanding of inequities in gifted program placement practices over time. The underrepresentation of Black male and female students was first calculated using the RCDI (see Table 2). During the 2011-2012 school year, Black males comprised 8.12% of the overall population of public-school students and 3.87% of the gifted population, resulting in an underrepresentation of 52.34% according to the RCDI; during the 2017-2018 school year, Black males made up 7.72% of overall student enrollments, but only 3.67% of gifted program enrollments, resulting in an underrepresentation of 52.46%. Black female students comprised

7.77% of all enrollments during the 2011-2012 school year, but only 4.94% of gifted enrollments, representing an underrepresentation of 36.42%; during the 2017-2018 school year, Black female students represented 7.39% of the overall student population, but only 4.54% of the gifted population, representing a 38.57% underrepresentation. Over time, male students have consistently been more underrepresented in gifted programming than Black female students and the underrepresentation of Black female students has increased over time.

Table 2

Black Students' Underrepresentation in Gifted Programs by Gender (2011-2018)

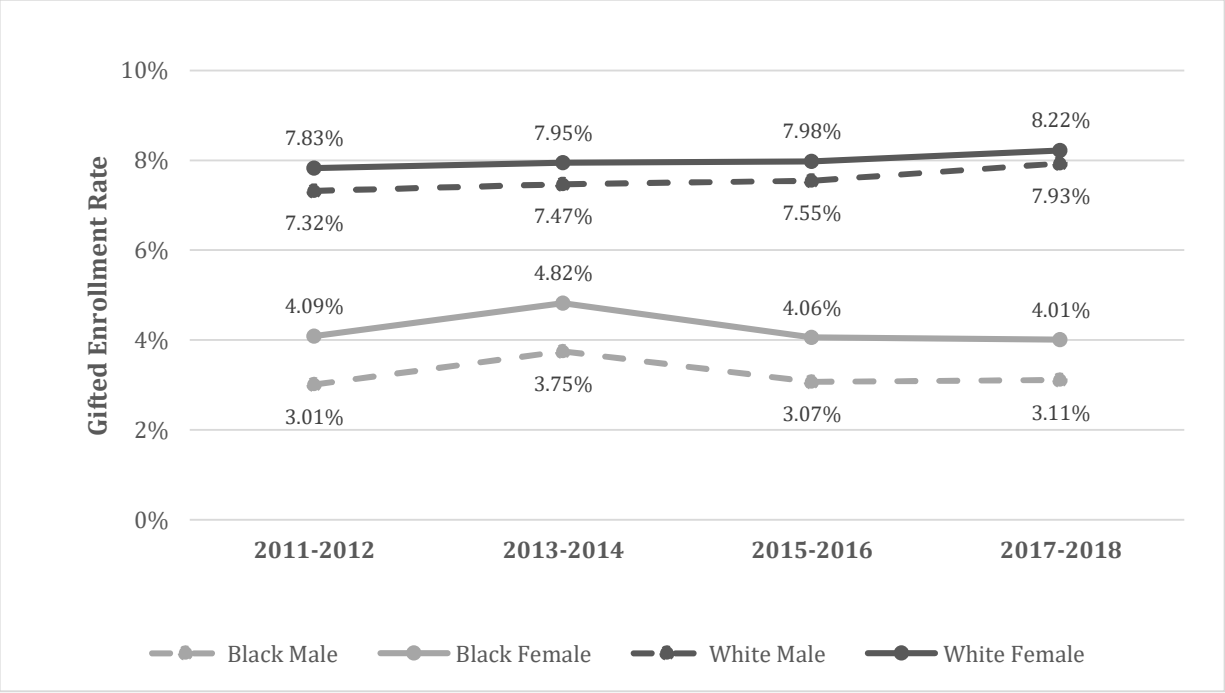
Year	Black Students as a % of Overall Enrollments	Black Students as a % of Gifted Enrollments	Underrepresentation of Black Students
2011-2012	M 8.12% F 7.77%	M 3.87% F 4.94%	M 52.34% F 36.42%
2013-2014	M 7.93% F 7.58%	M 4.46% F 5.48%	M 43.76% F 27.70%
2015-2016	M 7.89% F 7.55%	M 3.76% F 4.75%	M 52.34% F 37.09%
2017-2018	M 7.72% F 7.39%	M 3.67% F 4.54%	M 52.46% F 38.57%

Next, equity in advanced academic programs by gender was analyzed by comparing gifted and talented program participation rates between White and Black students. A series of binomial tests were conducted to compare the gifted participation rates of Black male students to White male students and Black female students to White female students (see Figure 2). This analysis revealed that the proportion of White male students who participated in gifted programs was significantly higher than the proportion of Black male students who participated in the 2011-2012 ($0.073 > .030$, $p < .001$), 2013-2014 ($0.075 > 0.038$, $p < .001$), 2015-2016 ($0.076 > .031$, $p < .001$), and 2017-2018 ($.079 > .031$, $p < .001$) school years. Similarly, the proportion of White female students who participated in gifted programs was significantly higher than the proportion of Black female students who participated in the 2011-2012 ($0.078 > .041$ $p < .001$), 2013-2014 ($0.080 > 0.048$, $p < .001$), 2015-2016 ($0.080 > .041$, $p < .001$), and 2017-2018 ($.082 > .040$, $p < .001$) school years. During the 2011-2012 school year, White male students participated in gifted programs at 2.43 times the rate as Black male students; their relative participation rates increased to 2.54 times the rate of Black male students in the 2017-2018 school year. A similar relationship was found when examining trends amongst female students: during the 2011-2012 school year, White female

students participated in gifted programs at 1.90 times the rate as Black female students with relative participation rates increasing to 2.05 times the rate of Black female students in the 2017-2018 school year.

Figure 2

U.S. Gifted Program Enrollment Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender (2011-2018)



Odds ratios were then calculated to measure differences in the likelihood that students would be enrolled in gifted programs by race/ethnicity and gender between 2011 and 2018. During the 2011-2012 school year, Black male students were 60% less likely to participate in gifted programs than White male students [OR = 0.401 (95% CI: 0.398, 0.403), $p < .001$]; during the 2017-2018 school year, Black male students were 63% less likely to participate in gifted programs than White male students [OR = 0.373 (95% CI: 0370, 0.375), $p < .001$]. Similarly, Black female students were 50% less likely to participate in gifted programs than White female students [OR = 0.502 (95% CI: 0.499, 0.504), $p < .001$]; during the 2017-2018 school year, Black female students were 53% less likely to participate in gifted programs than White female students [OR = 0.467 (95% CI: 0.464, 0.470), $p < .001$].

Discussion

Despite substantial efforts to increase racial diversity in gifted education over the past decade, Black students continue to be strikingly underrepresented in advanced academic programs and significantly less likely than their White peers to participate in gifted programming (Carman et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2019). As this study reveals, between 2011 and 2018 the underrepresentation of Black students increased from 44.56% to 45.67% and White students

have consistently participated in gifted programs at significantly higher rates that Black students. Moreover, this analysis reveals that Black students have actually become even less likely than White students to be enrolled in advanced academic programs over time: whereas Black students were 66% less likely to participate than White students in the 2011-2012 school year, they were 68% less likely to participate in the 2017-2018 school year. The simultaneous decrease in the representation of Black students in gifted programming over time combined with the increase in the representation of White students has resulted in a widening of the gifted gap across these subgroups.

The second series of analyses aimed to understand how gender differentially affected gifted program participation rates over time. Between 2011 and 2018, the underrepresentation of Black male students increased slightly from 52.34% to 52.46% and the underrepresentation of Black female students increased from 36.42% to 38.57%. A comparison of participation rates by gender across racial subgroups revealed that White male students were enrolled in gifted programs at significantly higher rates than Black male students; the same was true when the participation rates of White and Black female students were considered. This analysis also demonstrated that Black male students have become less likely to participate in gifted programs than White male students and Black female students have become less likely to participate than White female students since 2011.

Although research has consistently established that racial equity has not been achieved in gifted education programs, there is a sentiment across the field that we are moving in the right direction in making the field of gifted education more accessible (e.g., Peters et al., 2019; Worrell, 2017). In addition, considerable resources have been directed toward increasing the diversity of students participating in these programs over the past decade and research has supported the efficacy of these efforts (Card & Giuliano, 2016; Matthews & Rhodes, 2020; Naglieri & Ford, 2003). However, aside from a short-lived increase in the representation of Black students in gifted education during the 2013-2014 school year, not only has equity in the representation of Black students in advanced academic programs not improved since 2011, but it has also gotten worse. Identification practices continue to place students in gifted programs at differential rates based on race/ethnicity, setting up “separate academic paths that are explicitly unequal and that lead to unequal life chances” (Kasten, 2013, p. 238). When considering the intersectionality of race and gender, the negative impacts of inequities in identification and placement become even more profound for Black male students.

Although one of the major strengths of this study is the large-scale dataset and the associated generalizability of the results, this also serves as an important limitation. Because this analysis considers national data that is not disaggregated by state, district, school, etc., it is unable to highlight examples of relative success that likely exist at a smaller scale. In addition, because the first publicly available national data capturing gifted enrollments was from the 2011-2012 school year, the present study was only able to complete a comparison over a seven-year period. Although this study would be strengthened by examining a longer time frame, the data show

striking realities about our educational system and the lack of sustained progress that has been made since 2011.

Conclusion

As Ford and King (2014b) emphasize, "[d]enying access to gifted education based on race is a violation of civil rights in education" (p. 3). The present study revealed that White students continue to be overenrolled in gifted education, further heightening the privilege they already experience in comparison to students of other racial backgrounds. Black students, on the other hand, continue to be strikingly underrepresented in gifted programs and are precluded from experiencing the profound benefits of these programs as a result. "Although brilliance and talent are evenly distributed, opportunity is not" (Crabtree et al., 2019, p. 218). Conceptualizing gifted education as White property facilitates our understanding of how advanced academic programs have historically excluded students of color and underscore systemic inequities in the educational system that must be addressed in order to address this persistent injustice.

The present study aims to serve as a call to action for the field of gifted education, and our educational system as a whole, to critically evaluate if and how progress has been made to achieve equity in representation across academic programs and make necessary adjustments in order to achieve this goal. Although substantial effort has been directed toward increasing equitable identification of students in gifted programming over the past ten years and there is a general consensus in the field that racial representation is improving in these programs, this analysis revealed that the situation is worse for Black students than it was in 2011; Black students have become even more severely underrepresented since then and even less likely than their White peers to be identified as gifted. Large-scale, systemic change takes time, but this study reveals that the representation of Black students in gifted education is going in the wrong direction; what Ford (1995) deemed *the* most segregated branch of our education system has actually become even further segregated over the past decade. There is a clear and urgent need to address discriminatory practices in the field of gifted education to begin to move the needle in the right direction and work toward meeting the academic needs of all students, regardless of race.

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