

# Racial Equity Issue Brief

*What is School's Out  
Washington doing to  
address structural racism?*



## **VALUE:**

AT SCHOOL'S OUT WASHINGTON WE VALUE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH THAT LEADS TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN SCHOOL AND LIFE.



*[schoolsoutwashington.org](https://schoolsoutwashington.org)*

## PROBLEM STATEMENT:

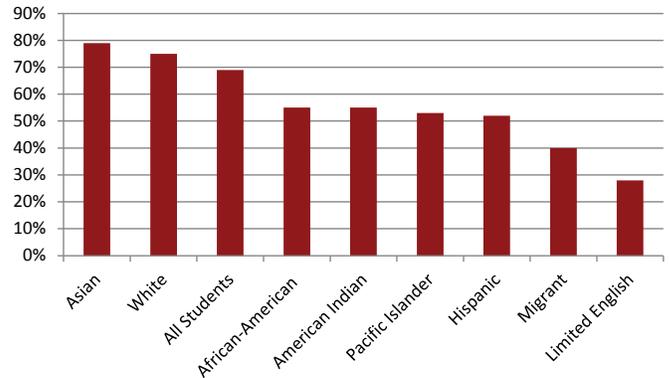
In the United States, our national values of personal responsibility, individualism and opportunity are expected to apply to everyone. However, inequities continue to exist that lead to different outcomes for different groups of people. Of particular concern are racial disparities that are deeply ingrained in our systems and institutions. Across our country, young people of color experience well-documented inequities that exist in formal and informal, overt and subtle forms.

At School's Out Washington, we are committed to addressing how these disparities impact young people in our communities. Data shows that youth of color are more likely to experience high unemployment, poor educational opportunities and less access to adequate health care than their white counterparts. For example, students of color are more likely to drop out of school or not graduate on-time. This is not mere coincidence. Root causes often lie in the racial bias embedded in the policies and practices of major opportunity arenas, such as our education, employment and justice systems, and a social context that allows bias to persist.

With nearly 1 in 5 of Washington State's 6 million residents identifying as a person of color, a number that is expected to grow to 1 in 3 by the year 2030, we must address racial inequities and how they impact young people of color as they move through our education and social systems.

**Washington Students Meeting Standard in Reading by 3rd Grade<sup>1</sup>**

*Failure to meet standard is an indicator of future drop-out*



## THE FACTS:

### POVERTY RATES IN WASHINGTON STATE (2011)<sup>2</sup>

16% of Washington State's population lives in poverty.

Ethnic Identification	Percentage
African American	41%
Latino	29%
Other	22%
White	26%

### ANNUAL DROP-OUT RATE BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN WASHINGTON STATE (2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR)<sup>3</sup>

Overall drop-out rate of all students: 13.6%

Ethnic Identification	Percentage
American Indian	26.8%
Asian	8.3%
African American	19.4%
Latino	19.8%
Pacific Islander	20.7%
White	11.8%
Low-Income	20%
Limited English	25.8%

Nationwide, the school districts with the highest minority enrollment have, on average, \$902 fewer dollars to spend per student than schools districts with the lowest minority enrollment. This adds up to a difference of \$22,550 per class of twenty-five students (p. 32).<sup>5</sup>

Washington is one of the bottom five states for narrowing the racial and ethnic achievement gap according to the Education Trust January 2010 report.<sup>6</sup>

### SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DATA PROFILE ENROLLMENT & SUSPENSION RATES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL (2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR)<sup>4</sup>

Ethnic Identification	% of Total Enrolled Students	% who Experienced Short-Term Suspensions
American Indian	1%	16%
African American	19%	27%
Latino	13%	13%
White	41%	7%

## WHY FOCUS ON RACE:

While disparities including the widening opportunity gap also impact low-income children and youth, School's Out Washington approaches inequities from a racial equity lens because race, unlike class, cannot be completely transcended in America. Research continues to show ways in which being a person of color brings disadvantages, regardless of income level or class. Racial profiling in law enforcement, hiring practices, and educational tracking in addition to many other areas creates barriers and access issues purely based on the color of one's skin.<sup>7</sup>

## WHAT IS STRUCTURAL RACISM?

Racism in 21st century America is harder to see than its previous incarnations because the most overt and legally sanctioned forms of racial discrimination have been eliminated. A structural racism lens or framework explains the big picture of racial disparity: the chronic gap between Americans of color and whites in regards to employment, health, education and other indicators of well-being. It examines how and why racial minorities experience the most severe and most intractable disadvantage in a nation where everyone is meant to have an equal opportunity to succeed.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike individual racism, manifested through racial slurs or personal prejudice, and institutional racism reflected in discriminatory practices in our institutions, structural racism provides a more comprehensive picture of racism in the United States. The lens takes into account the way that national values of personal responsibility, individualism and

equal opportunity often end up placing blame for disadvantage on individuals and families instead of recognizing the real economic, political and cultural exclusion that people of color have historically faced.

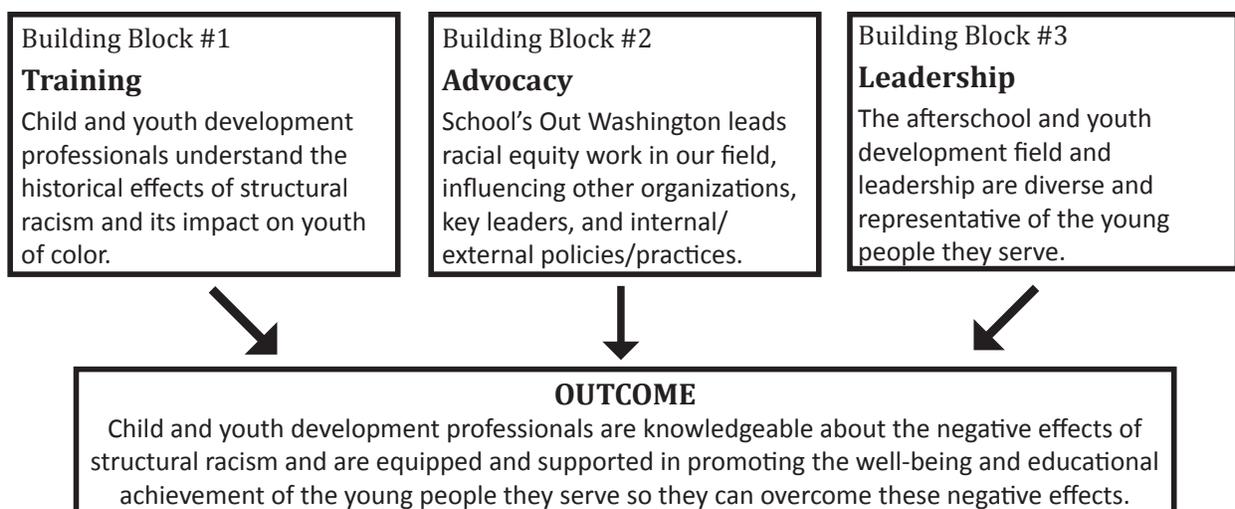
## WHAT IS SOWA DOING TO ADDRESS STRUCTURAL RACISM:

Fifty-five percent of youth who are participating in afterschool and youth development (AYD) programs in Washington State are youth of color. Given our statewide reach to these programs, School's Out Washington has the ability to impact racial equity outcomes for youth.

Through our ongoing training, advocacy and leadership, School's Out Washington is committed to leading the AYD field in Washington State toward racial equity and leveling the playing field to provide equal access and opportunity for all young people.

The work we have done in partnership with the Aspen Roundtable on Community Change uses the structural racism framework as a way of more clearly understanding and problem-solving to eliminate racial inequities, as well as a tool—a Racial Equity Theory of Change—for identifying where work is most needed and how we can align our efforts with those of others also working to promote fairness and opportunity for everyone. The following three building blocks will guide our organization as we continue to deepen our focus and integrate a racial equity lens into all of our work.

## SCHOOL'S OUT WASHINGTON RACIAL EQUITY THEORY OF CHANGE



## TRAINING

In 2013, School's Out Washington received funding from the City of Seattle to work in a partnership to develop race-based training opportunities and materials for youth-serving fields. Our partnership believes a need exists for curricula and training targeted at the youth development and education fields that provide practitioners with: 1) Frameworks for understanding how race operates in the US generally, and in their own contexts working with children and youth, specifically; and 2) Tools for professionals to develop individual action plans to address structural racism.

School's Out Washington plans to build on this work developing a total of five training modules that address structural racism from the lens of history, individual, programmatic, organizational and youth empowerment focused change.

## ADVOCACY

In 2013, School's Out Washington published the Afterschool and Youth Development State Action Plan based on feedback from a diverse sector of partners. This plan provides a 3-5 year map to move forward efforts to support ALL children and youth in preparing for success in life, school, and career through increased access to high-quality AYD programs. A commitment to racial equity emerged as one of the critical strategies to focus on in order to address the opportunity gap. The state plan provides guidance for how the field can continue in a more formal way to partner with other stakeholders and provide communities of color with the structure and programming to support children and youth of color in achieving positive outcomes and experiencing success in school and life.

You can access the Executive Summary and full report on School's Out Washington's website at <http://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/189/GetInvolved.htm>. For more

information, contact David Beard, School's Out Washington's Education Policy & Advocacy Director at [dbeard@schoolsoutwashington.org](mailto:dbeard@schoolsoutwashington.org) or (206) 323-2396.

## LEADERSHIP

In our leadership role, School's Out Washington serves on statewide and regional committees and coalitions committed to improving youth outcomes. Spanning the K-12 education sphere, in addition to other youth-serving systems, School's Out Washington is committed to addressing policies and practices that perpetuate disproportionality and racial disparities in order to close the persistent gaps that negatively impact young people of color.

Visit School's Out Washington Racial Equity Resources webpage at [http://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/1431\\_198/RacialEquityResources.htm](http://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/1431_198/RacialEquityResources.htm) to find additional tools, resources and ideas for how you can become engaged at a personal and professional level in racial equity work.

Here are links to a few organizations working on racial equity with a wealth of resources and tools:

- The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change: [www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/community-change/racial-equity](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/community-change/racial-equity)
- Racial Equity Tools: [www.racialequitytools.org/](http://www.racialequitytools.org/)
- Thrivepoint Group: [www.thrivepointgroup.org](http://www.thrivepointgroup.org)
- Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center: [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

For more information or to speak further with someone at School's Out Washington about our racial equity work, contact Jackie Jainga-Hyllseth or Pang Chang at (206) 323-2396.

<sup>1</sup> Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Washington State Report Card*. Retrieved from: <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us>.

<sup>2</sup> The Kaiser Family Foundation, [www.statehealthfacts.org](http://www.statehealthfacts.org). Data Source: Urban Institute and Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured estimates based on the Census Bureau's March 2009 and 2010 Current Population Survey (CPS: Annual Social and Economic Supplements).

<sup>3</sup> Came, D. Ireland, L. (2012). *Graduation and Dropout Statistics Annual Report 2010-2011*. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Olympia, WA. Retrieved from: [http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin/pubdocs/GradDropout/10-11/GradDropOutStats\\_2010-11.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin/pubdocs/GradDropout/10-11/GradDropOutStats_2010-11.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Seattle Public Schools Data Profile: December 2012. Retrieved from: <http://seattleschools.org/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/1583136/File/Departmental%20Content/siso/disprof/2012/Prfl2012all.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change (Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Gretchen Susi and Anne Kubisch, authors). 2005. "Structural Racism and Youth Development: Issues, Challenges, and Implications." Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

<sup>6</sup> Rowan, A.H., Hall, D., Haycock, K. (2010, January). Gauging the Gaps: A Deeper Look at Student Achievement. *The Education Trust*.

<sup>7</sup> Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change (Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Gretchen Susi, and Anne Kubisch, authors). 2005. "Structural Racism and Youth Development: Issues, Challenges, and Implications." Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*



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