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## ***Proficient and Passed Over: Across New York, even meeting state learning standards does not lead to fair representation in advanced math courses for students who are low-income and students of color***

*Civil rights, education, parent, and business groups release new data on disparities in advanced courses and call on state leaders to adopt 4 policy solutions*

NEW YORK – Even when they scored proficient on the state math assessment in grade 7, students who are low-income and students of color were less likely than their non low-income and White peers to be enrolled in an advanced math class in grade 9, according to data released for the first time today by The New York Equity Coalition.

Enrollment in advanced math was 22% higher for students who are not low-income compared to students who are low-income who were also proficient, 16% higher for White students compared to their Black peers who were also proficient, and 20% higher for White students compared to their Latinx peers who were also proficient.

In addition, updating its previously published analysis on course access disparities from the 2016-17 school year, the coalition found that in 2018-19, high school students across New York State who were not low-income and White students were approximately twice as likely to be enrolled in a range of key advanced courses like Physics, Calculus, Computer Science, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, music, and advanced foreign languages than their low-income and Black and Latinx peers.

These new data — available at [www.EquityinEdNY.org/PassedOver](http://www.EquityinEdNY.org/PassedOver) — together underscore a persistent crisis first identified in the coalition’s 2018 *Within Our Reach* report with two basic features: Students who are low-income and students of color are less likely than their peers to attend schools where key gatekeeper and advanced courses are offered. And even when they do attend schools that offer these courses, they are less likely to be given access.

Building on important policy wins for students including landmark guidelines from the State Education Department on equitable course access; adoption by the Board of Regents of a statewide accountability system that strongly incorporates College, Career, and Civic Readiness; Governor Cuomo’s call last year that “every student can graduate high school with college credit, a skilled credential, or meaningful work experience by 2025;” and additional funding in the state budget for AP, IB, and dual enrollment courses, the coalition calls on state leaders to enact 4 new policies this year:

1. **Improve access to advanced courses:** The state should continue to significantly increase investment in AP, IB, and dual enrollment courses in high-need school districts — including planning time for teachers, support for students, and implementation of equity-driven

course enrollment policies — and in expanding access to school counselors who are culturally responsive.

2. **Support parents and students:** The state should require school districts to provide every family with clear and concise information, in multiple languages, beginning in the late elementary grades about the courses their child can take in middle and high school to prepare for college, careers, and active citizenship — including the benefits of enrolling in advanced courses and the support available.

3. **Eliminate barriers to enrollment:** The state should enable automatic enrollment in the next available advanced course for students who demonstrate readiness using one of multiple measures. Families would always have the right to decline this automatic enrollment. States like North Carolina, Washington, and Colorado have enacted similar legislation.

4. **Eliminate enrollment disparities:** The state should ensure that any school or school district that has disparities in advanced course enrollment is implementing an action plan to improve equity with parent, educator, and student input.

Additional findings released today include:

- **Proficient and Passed Over:** In addition to students who are low-income and Black and Latinx students, the coalition’s data revealed that even when students who are current and former English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and students in temporary housing demonstrate that they met the state’s academic standards by scoring “proficient” or “advanced” on their grade 7 state math assessment in 2016-17, they were less likely than their peers to be given the chance to take advanced math classes in grades 8 in 2017-18 and/or in grade 9 in 2018-19.

- **Algebra 1 in middle school:** School districts enrolled students who are not low-income at a rate 74% greater than their low-income peers in Algebra 1 in 2018-19. White students were enrolled in the course at a rate 28% greater than their Latinx peers and 17% greater than their Black peers.

- **AP/IB math and science:** At the high school level, school districts enrolled students who are not low-income at 2.3 times the rate of their peers who are low-income in AP/IB math and science courses in 2018-19. White students were enrolled at 2.1 times the rate of their Black peers and 2.2 times the rate of their Latinx peers.

- **Disparities within the same school:** At the high school level, students who are low-income represented 48% of enrollment in schools that offered Calculus in 2018-19, while representing only 33% of Calculus enrollment. Likewise, 35% of students in schools that offered Calculus were Black and Latinx, while only 22% of students enrolled in Calculus were Black and Latinx. These patterns hold true across many types of advanced courses.

· **Limited gains from 2016-17 to 2018-19:** In 2018-19, the enrollment rate of Black and Latinx students in AP/IB courses was 27%, a noticeable increase from 20% in 2016-17. This enrollment increase was almost entirely driven by increased access to Arts, History, Social Sciences, and World Language courses – and there was much more limited improvement in enrollment in Math and Science courses. Outside of AP and IB courses, enrollment increases for Black, Latinx, and American Indian students in other advanced courses from 2016-17 to 2018-19 was marginal. Due to differences between 2016-17 and 2018-19 source data, comparisons are approximate.

“It is imperative that we as a community and as a state do all that we can to provide a high-quality education that prepares students with the skills, knowledge, and credits to enter and succeed in a postsecondary education,” **said Brenda McDuffie, president and CEO of the Buffalo Urban League.** “We have a responsibility to ensure that every child is prepared at the highest levels and that all barriers to achieving this are removed. State leaders have the chance to open doors of opportunity for historically under-served students by taking action to ensure more of our young people have access to courses that will set them up for success in the future. Our children deserve it.”

“Data show that students who take advanced coursework have higher high school completion rates and are more likely to attend college,” **said Heather Briccetti, president and CEO of The Business Council of New York State.** “It is crucial that students from all backgrounds have access to these courses and understand the rigors of college. Students who don’t think college is an option for them often gain confidence from these courses and realize they could be successful in college and career.”

“The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF) believes that every student has the right to an education that functions from the belief that each child possesses unique gifts, talents, and interests that should be cultivated and celebrated,” **said Ramon Peguero, Esq., president and CEO of the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families.** “CHCF joins its partners in The New York Equity Coalition in elevating the evidence presented in *Proficient & Passed Over* that low-income students and students of color are systematically being held out from opportunities that match their readiness and that would further develop their skills and interests. We see the release of *Proficient & Passed Over* as an opportunity for New York State to intentionally remove barriers and support families and students in accessing coursework that matches student readiness, fosters educational growth, and develops college, career, and civic readiness.”

“All parents want the very best for our children, and that includes access to high-level courses that will prepare them for college, careers, and civic readiness,” **said Samuel L. Radford III, past president of the District-Parent Coordinating Council of Buffalo and co-chairperson of We the Parents.** “We as a state must do better, and that needs to start now in middle and high schools across New York where students of color are routinely denied access to the courses that will prepare them for a bright future. We call on state leaders to do the right thing for our children and take action this year to ensure all students have access to these critical courses.”

“Educational equity requires fair representation in gatekeeper and advanced courses for students who are low-income and students of color,” **said Ian Rosenblum, executive director of The Education Trust–New York.** “New York has made important progress signaling the importance of course access equity, and our leaders now have the opportunity to level the playing field so that all students can enroll — and succeed — in advanced coursework.”

“New York leaders from Governor Cuomo to Mayor de Blasio put access to advanced courses as an essential component of their education agendas. In reality, the effects of racial segregation ensure these courses are only available to students who come from high-income homes or are White,” **said Paula L. White, executive director of Educators for Excellence–New York.** “We are talking about students of color, students from low-income households, students who are homeless who academically qualify to partake in advanced courses, and in many cases attend schools where they are offered but are systematically blocked from the opportunity. Let’s not replicate Governor Wallace on the schoolhouse steps, it is time to ensure that admittance policies are unbiased and that every student in New York has access to courses that put them on a path to college and well-paying careers.”

“EPIC – Every Person Influences Children strives to help families, schools, and communities raise children to be responsible and successful adults,” **said Jamie Rackl, director of family engagement and professional development for EPIC.** “We implore communities, elected officials, and school personnel to really examine the data collected and distributed by The New York Equity Coalition in order to create policies, opportunities, and environments that support the success of ALL students.”

“The Hispanic Federation stands with The New York Equity Coalition to push for greater access to rigorous coursework that ensures future educational opportunities for students from underserved communities,” **said Diana E. Cruz, director of education policy at Hispanic Federation.** “We are doing students a disservice if they are demonstrating readiness to take advanced coursework, but are not fully supported to enroll. Focusing on the expansion of advanced courses and dismantling barriers to close enrollment gaps is critical for long-term student success. We look forward to continuing our efforts with partners to guarantee that students have equal access to courses that can be pivotal in their educational journey.”

“New York’s leaders must act now to ensure all students have access to the courses that will prepare them for a successful future,” **said Arva Rice, president and CEO of New York Urban League.** “We cannot afford to waste any time ensuring that all students will have access to the rigorous courses that will teach them the skills they need to succeed in college, the workforce, and life. The future of our communities and our state depend on it.”

“We need to transform the system to guarantee that all students are given equal opportunities to develop to their fullest potential,” **said Barbara Ann Heegan, president and CEO of the Otsego County Chamber of Commerce.** “To have any hope of closing the achievement gap, we must first close the opportunity gap. As a result of these efforts, a solid increase in the number of minority and poor students excelling academically in their schools.”

“There are few greater examples of inequity than that of encouraging children to achieve while denying them the very access that achievement should rightly provide,” **said Sebrone Johnson, vice president of operations for the Urban League of Rochester.** “Schools and school districts must work to eliminate both conscious and unconscious biases that lead to

placement disparities in advanced courses. So, as we continue to champion the needed supports for the students we must demand accountability from the systems.”

“Ensuring all students have access to the rigorous coursework that will set them up for future success is not just a civil rights issue, but an economic one,” **said Sorraya Sampson, president and CEO of the Urban League of Westchester County.** “The success of our community here in Westchester County relies on all students having access to the opportunities that will prepare them for college, careers, and civic readiness. State leaders can play a critical role ensuring these opportunities for all students, particularly those who have been historically underserved by our education system.”

“Exclusion from advanced and accelerated courses, which improve students’ ability to attend competitive colleges, has a negative impact on the educational and economic outcomes specifically for low-income students of color,” **said Martha Kamber, president and CEO of YWCA Brooklyn.** “YWCA Brooklyn’s college access program serves young women of color attending under-resourced high schools who have been disproportionately impacted by limited access to advanced and accelerated courses that are readily available to their more affluent peers. We see firsthand, through our college access program, the devastating effect of institutional racism and inequity in public education. Access to advanced and accelerated courses, as well as increased educational expectations for all students, regardless of the school they attend or the neighborhood they live in, will have a significant positive impact on their educational and economic future.”

Visit [www.EquityInEdNY.org/PassedOver](http://www.EquityInEdNY.org/PassedOver) for fact sheets on access to Algebra 1 and Earth Science in middle school, and to Physics, Calculus, Computer Science, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, music, and advanced foreign languages in high school in the 2018-19 school year, the “Proficient and Passed Over” data tool, a fact sheet on policy solutions, and examples of promising practices across New York State.

The New York Equity Coalition includes Better Schools Better Neighborhoods, Brooklyn YWCA, the Buffalo Urban League, The Business Council of New York State, Business Council of Westchester, Capital Region Chamber, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Democrats for Education Reform-NY, District-Parent Coordinating Council of Buffalo, The Education Trust–New York, Educators for Excellence, EPIC-Every Person Influences Children, Hispanic Federation, National Center for Learning Disabilities, New York Urban League, Otsego County Chamber of Commerce, Public Policy Institute of New York State, Read Alliance, Turnaround for Children, UnidosUS, United Way of New York City, the Urban League of Rochester, and the Urban League of Westchester County.

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