The Journal of Negro Education, 87 (3), 294-310

The Nouveau Talented Tenth: Envisioning W.E.B. Du Bois in the Context of Contemporary Gifted and Talented Education

Donna Y. Ford — **Vanderbilt University**
Brian L. Wright — **University of Memphis**
Christopher J. P. Sewell — **Williams College**
Gilman W. Whiting — **Vanderbilt University**
James L. Moore III — **The Ohio State University**

Similar to W.E.B. Du Bois, we believe that access to educational opportunities is a fundamental right that should be provided to all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin. Too often, however, the educational experiences for Black students are significantly uneven in comparison to other demographic groups. These students commonly do not have access to advanced curricula, courses, programs, facilities, and teachers—important factors regarded as the hallmark for receiving a quality pre-K–12 education. To this end, the authors critically investigated the under-representation of Black students in gifted and talented programs in the United States. Using data from the 2015-16 Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, the authors discovered, again, negative gifted and talented trends among Black students, suggesting that racial discrimination and bias may significantly contribute to their low participation in such advanced academic programs. We link the findings to the court decisions of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas *and* McFadden v. Board of Education for Illinois School District U-46. *Recommendations for dismantling the under-representation or low representation of Black students in gifted and talented[1] are offered.*

***Keywords**: W.E.B. Du Bois, gifted and talented, educational access, Brown v. Board of Education, McFadden v. Board of Education for Illinois School District U-46*

INTRODUCTION

Education has long been heralded as the passport to prosperity and the most consistent path for social and economic mobility in American society (Moore & Lewis, 2012). During the first half of the 20th century (pre-*Brown* era), legalized segregation was the law in America, and Black people were legally deprived from social and economic opportunities beyond their relegated inferior status within racially stratified social structures (Anderson, 1988; Foster, 1997; Siddle Walker, 1996). Black students were further educated in under-resourced and segregated schools whose funding levels were significantly lower than schools where their White counterparts attended (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Broadly speaking, the school resources for Black students differed significantly from the education resources afforded to White students. Even when attending some of the more resourced segregated Black schools, measured educational inequities remained in comparison to White schools (Ferguson, 2008). Instead of addressing the apparent educational inequalities experienced by Black students, the larger society—governed primarily by White people—merely accepted them as societal norms and, in turn, enacted structural and cultural barriers in order to highlight stereotypes of Black anti-intellectualism, laziness, and the myth of intellectual inferiority.

Despite these challenges, some of the segregated Black schools were still able to achieve some success with their students. Over time, a rich tradition of Black educational excellence (for and by us) was birthed out of the two-tiered segregated school system (Du Bois, 1903a, 1903b, 1948).

[1]We use the terms gifted, and gifted and talented interchangeably.

This blueprint laid the initial groundwork for many Black students across the nation (Woodson, 1990), and the importance of Black educational institutions (HBCUs) could not be denied. They were the primary institutional drivers of talent and leadership development for the Black community (Du Bois, 1903b), and Black educators were significant players in cultivating the genius of Black students and developing them to reach their highest potential (Siddle Walker, 1996). For example, Black educators founded and managed schools that encouraged, supported, and cultivated the gifts and talents of Black students and, in many respects, reflected the educational philosophies of W.E.B. Du Bois (1903a, 1903b, 1948).

Du Bois (1903a, 1903b) advocated that Black people be trained in the classical liberal arts tradition, arguing that "education must not simply teach work—it must teach life" (Provenzo, 2002, p. 92). He viewed education as a central facet of life for Black people (Du Bois, 1948). Stated differently, Du Bois saw education as instrumental in preparing Black people for the racist, discriminatory, and hostile world that was (and is) America. In his seminal book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois prophetically stated,

> The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (1903a, p. 15).

In light of Du Bois' assertion, the authors argue that the conundrum of race (post-*Brown* decision) still persists in American schools for Black students overall and for the purposes of this article, especially for those who are gifted and talented.

In this article, the under-representation of Black students in gifted and talented programs in the United States are investigated. Using data from 2015-16 Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection (https://ocrdata.ed.gov), negative trends in gifted and talented programs were discovered as they relate to Black students, suggesting that racial discrimination and bias significantly contribute to their low participation in such advanced academic programs. Accordingly, we undertake a critical comparative analysis based on the court decisions of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) and *McFadden v. Board of Education for Illinois School District* U-46 (2013), a contemporary case in gifted education focused on racially segregated gifted education.

Shifting the landscape of education in general, and gifted and talented programs in particular, will require acknowledging the stubborn and persistent conundrums of race and racism in which miseducation has resulted in the loss or severely compromised generational heritage, self-identity, agency, and voice of Black students. This miseducation is widespread when considering all that is related to the recruitment and retention of Black students in gifted education. This egregious example of how schools reproduce inequality and inequity with respect to gifted education programs, which remain majority White and affluent, is evidence that ongoing and robust action to desegregate gifted programs in the U.S. must involve challenging the 'ideological illusion' (Lawrence, 1983) that integrated spaces are race neutral. This illusion has contributed to the continued practice of blaming the victim (e.g., people of color) and, in the case of this article, Black families for failing to cultivate Black students' strengths and assets in hopes of being recruited for gifted education programs. In so doing, institutions are absolved of any responsibility regarding what we contend are manufactured barriers to Black students' educational access and opportunity to gifted and talented programs.

Committed to holding districts, schools, administrators, and teachers accountable with respect to the desegregation and integration of gifted education programs, we challenge districts while positioning Black families to take their rightful seat at the table and to demand and lead conversations that challenge the demographics of gifted education. The strong connection between race and education, specifically the stratification of students through ability grouping and tracking, has dominated the educational discourse throughout the 20th century and beyond. Thus, questions still remain with regard to fully educating those demographic groups frequently excluded from advanced academic opportunities (e.g., courses, programs, curricular offerings, etc.). Too many schools have yet to address impasses in relation to educating Black students then and now in the

21st century. Until educators learn how to *equitably* deliver culturally responsive pedagogical strategies to fully reach and educate Black students, efforts to educate "other people's children" (Delpit, 1996) will continue to abysmally fail. We make this claim, in part, because:

> American prosperity was built on two and half centuries of slavery, a deep wound that has never been healed or fully atoned for—and that has been deepened by years of [racism] and discrimination, segregation. . . . until America reckons with the moral debt it has accrued—and the practical damage it has done--to generations of [B]lack Americans, it will fail to live up to its own ideas. (Coates, 2014, p. 55).

The landmark Supreme Court decision of *Brown*, helped to engender conversations about access to an equitable education for Black students as they grappled with the two-tiered public education system, which violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In the unanimous decision, the Supreme Court struck down the idea of schools being separate but equal while also noting that the desegregation of schools should be done with [all] deliberate speed (Moore & Lewis, 2014). Since the *Brown* decision, anti-Black racism and its deleterious effects on education still dictate the experiences of Black students as we write this article. The achievement and opportunity gaps, and education debt have led to many Black students not having access to high-quality education (Baker, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006), highly qualified teachers (Barton & Coley, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), and access to rigorous academic coursework (Ford, 2011, 2013).

For Du Bois, efforts to close these gaps were to be achieved by the "Talented Tenth." By educating those at the top of the Black race, he believed, racial, social and economic uplift would ensue. In the following study, these authors consider whether Du Bois' vision has been realized through the lens of gifted and talented education, and the concept of double consciousness—the feeling as though one's identity is divided into several parts, making it difficult or impossible to have one unified identity. In contemporary terms, scholars speak of intersectionality. For Black students, these academic and psychological dilemmas may consist of their struggling with being Black *and* gifted and talented.

Evidence of this psychological struggle regarding Black identity development manifests in perpetual doubt regarding the intellectual prowess of this population borne out of the institutions of slavery and American apartheid, otherwise known as Jim Crow, and systemic racial terrorism that perpetuated the myth and lies of Black people as genetically inferior. Through the practice of miseducation, combined with racist and discriminatory schooling, this stubborn ideology has kept gifted education programs overwhelmingly White. Moreover, we argue that this racist ideology has contributed to inequitable educational experiences that, in many respects, informs and has shaped the recruitment and retention of gifted Black students, resulting in their denied access and opportunity to benefit from gifted programs (Ford, 2013). Guided by this view, the authors examine under-representation trends for gifted education in all states, along with methods for calculating representation and equity. What follows is a review of the literature that explores the Talented Tenth and double consciousness, with attention to gifted education.

WASHINGTON, DU BOIS, AND THE TALENTED TENTH

At the turn of the century, Black intellectuals and leaders began to debate the best course forward for the race, especially given the institution of American apartheid. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois were at the center of this debate. Washington (born a slave) advocated for self-help, racial solidarity, and accommodation to which Du Bois sharply disagreed and considered conciliatory to White America. In his famous Atlanta Compromise speech, Washington (1895) emphasized agriculture, believing Black people should focus on what they knew as a result of slavery, of being enslaved. He urged Black Americans to accept or tolerate discrimination for the time being and concentrate on elevating themselves through hard work and material prosperity. For Washington, agricultural education was the fundamental way in which Black people could begin to achieve freedom and engage in economic prosperity.

In contrast to Washington's educational philosophy that promoted the politics of respectability, Du Bois believed that education of the masses must carve out a viable path toward success and freedom. In "The Talented Tenth," Du Bois (1903b) called for Black people to be saved by its "exceptional men" These men would be the top-tenth of the community to identify and extrapolate "the best of the race" in an effort to "guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the worst" (Du Bois, 1903b, para. 1). While Du Bois understood the intentions behind Washington's educational philosophy to "uplift the race," the notion that Blacks could somehow win the respect of White Americans toward full acceptance as citizens and be integrated into all strata of society was short-sighted, particularly given the entrenchment of racism as it was yoked to Whiteness as an identity, institution, and ideology. Moreover, this short-sighted stance on the part of Washington ignored Du Bois' philosophy of agitation and protest for civil rights by rejecting the idea and ideal of self-help and colorblind/cultureblind practices in favor of sound education from educational experts that went beyond money to focus more on the development of men that would be critical to the success of the community (Du Bois, 1903b). Undertaking this task required a focus on:

> [. . .] [T]he best and most capable of their youth must be schooled in the colleges and universities of the land . . . All men cannot go to college but some men must; every isolated group or nation must have its yeast, must have for the talented few centers of training where men are not so mystified and befuddled by the hard and necessary toil of earning a living, as to have no aims higher than their bellies, and no God greater than Gold. This is true training, and thus in the beginning were the favored sons of the freedom trained. (Du Bois, 1903, para. 16)

Critical to the understanding of the Talented Tenth is the notion that having leadership from *within* the community was and is essential to the growth and power for the Black community. Du Bois rationalized this as "either you must help furnish this race from within its own ranks with thoughtful men of trained leadership, or you must suffer the evil consequences of a headless misguided rabble" (Du Bois, 1903b, para. 30). Thus, having the ability to not only have a trade to acquire a vocation but also be considered erudite in one's ability to engage in society would come with the well-rounded liberal arts education that he advocated the Talented Tenth could provide.

In 1948, while addressing the membership of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, Du Bois presented a more nuanced vision of the Talented Tenth. Without constant learning and revision, the goals of Black advancement, greater access and opportunity would be undercut. Du Bois called for the members to see how:

> [. . .][T]heir own place in life is primarily a matter of opportunity, rather than simply desert or ability. that if such opportunity were extended and broadened, a thousand times as many Negroes could join the ranks of the educated and able, instead of sinking into poverty, disease and crime; that the primary duty of this organization would be to find desert, ability, and character among young Negroes and get for them education and opportunity; that the major opportunity should be seen as work according to gifts and training with pay sufficient to furnish a decent standard of living. (Du Bois, 1948, para. 44)

By identifying the combination of intelligence, achievement, and opportunity, Du Bois (1948) called for the members of Sigma Pi Phi to be part of the "Guiding Hundredth." This leadership, charged with creating of pathways for Black people, would help to ensure the consistent innovation and leadership needed to guide the race, regardless of the circumstances of the time.

We acknowledge this bold and revolutionary stance on the part of Du Bois, and are mindful that such an approach, on the surface, seems reminiscent of a past practice in which Black people were excluded all together in a two-track educational system, with different tracks for the laboring and the learned. Scholarship would allow a very few of the laboring class to advance, by "raking a few geniuses from the rubbish" stated by Thomas Jefferson, in 1779 (Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2009).

The idea of tapping the potential of the "best and the brightest" based largely on traditional academic factors (such as grades, standardized tests, etc.,) used to determine high academic

achievement may perpetuate the view of elitism; it might also miss gifts and talents not always apparent at first glance and valued in school among Black students (Ford, 2013). Programs such as "A Better Chance" (http://www.abetterchance.org) has helped students of color deemed academically talented gain access to the some of the nation's top independent schools for over 55 years. Similarly, the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO; https://metcoinc.org), founded in 1966 in Boston aims to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity, and reduce racial isolation by permitting students of color (especially Black students in Boston and Springfield) to attend public schools in predominantly White affluent communities. This practice has the potential to contribute to an "us (*the top of the race*) and them (*the bottom of the race*)" mentality among Blacks, undermining the development of a healthy racial-ethnic identity, as well as agency and voice among Black students as they develop the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed academically in an institution that, from its inception, was never designed for them.

We further argue that such an approach contributes to double consciousness of Black students as they negotiate and navigate predominantly White settings (i.e., gifted and talented programs, Advanced Placement classes) where they are exposed to the White gaze, defined as the world through the eyes of White people who harbor undertones of, or is blatant in, their racism. In other words, the "fear" that White people have of Black people is guided and informed by the entrenchment of the racist ideology of White supremacy. This pernicious racist practice tends to trap Black students in the unexamined imagination of White people that can and does make learning and living while Black difficult. For example, the White female teacher who sees a Black student and lowers her expectations, or a White police officer who sees a Black person and feels "unsafe" and reaches for his gun. This White gaze has been explored by Du Bois and James Baldwin who, in his collection of essays *Nobody Knows My Name*, wrote "I have spent my whole life . . . watching White people and outwitting them so that I might survive" (1992, p. 217). We now explore the psychological work of double consciousness taken up by Black students in predominantly White spaces and what is lost and/or compromised when they return to their families and communities.

Double Consciousness (Acting White): "Two Warring Souls"

Du Bois situated his discussion of the double consciousness of the Black experience within a socio-historical context. It is within this context that Du Bois described the Negro existence as a duel between two distinct identities. He posited and opined that Blacks were forced to choose between establishing a positive Black identity versus a positive American identity. To develop one's identity without the other contributes to "two warring souls" that are caught in mutuality of obligation. In some instances, the challenge and dilemma that this obligation invokes in Black people to establish a positive American identity code for "White identity," has meant sacrificing a positive Black identity in order to shift the White gaze. This gaze, clouded by the haze of deficit thinking and practices, serve to invalidate the strengths and assets of Black students, thus creating an unwelcoming and hostile environment where school leaders and teachers hold Black students to lowered expectations. They view Black students as academically unmotivated and incapable of engaging in higher order thinking and advanced work, resulting in closed doors of opportunity and access needed for them to succeed in the American educational system. As gifted Black students work against developing an inferior racial identity (often in classroom environments where they are the only or one of a few), under this pervasive White gaze, there is an extra burden placed on them to "prove" their intellectual worth while maintaining their 'creditability' as a Black person which can lead to tensions between their home and school environments. This contributes to double consciousness—a continuous identity conflict that many Black students experience in general, and gifted Black students in particular, as they develop the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed academically in a racist, racialized, and discriminatory educational system. As Ford (2010) found, such internal and external pressures contribute to underachievement. This duality of self is a foray into code switching, code mixing, and code meshing to navigate and negotiate what it

means to Black and American in society at large and in schools where White people fail to "police" their often negative and stereotypical imagination of Black people. How do we development astute self-awareness in Black students in their ability to defy negative stereotypes in their pursuit of education and the American Dream?

For Du Bois, the emancipation of Black people, while led by the Talented Tenth, would require a level of self-awareness of one's place in the larger society. Part of this awareness includes how it was and is necessary for Black people to be able to see themselves through their own eyes and the eyes of others. Through the metaphor of the veil, Du Bois articulated some of the tensions of what it means to be both Black and American:

> . . . the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Du Bois, 1903b, p. 8)

This double consciousness demands a level of self-awareness and astuteness when moving through a society that historically has been not responsive to Black people. The psychological work beyond the veil requires Black people to remain vigilant in evaluating and challenging a society that is rooted in slavery and has disproportionately assaulted the intellect, achievement, and creativity of Black people and their Black bodies, souls, and minds. This trauma requires having facility around and with the veil if one expects to obtain access and opportunity. The veil, in the physical, "hung between us and Opportunity" (Du Bois, 1903b). For gifted Black students, the veil operates as a barrier to bringing their whole self to the education environment for fear of being "othered." Behind the veil is the often ignored cultural capital of Black students that represents and reflects their histories; community and family; faith and religion, attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be educated, and other cultural traditions such as the use of African American English (AAE), particular styles of dress, food, funds of knowledge and ways of comporting self in society given the often unspoken rules of conduct, to help them navigate from home to school. Thus, knowing how to operate beyond the veil of the Black community requires an unapologetic, uncompromising, and fearless sense of self, agency, and voice. Helping to see a life full of opportunity beyond the veil prepares Black students to reject the widely debated "Acting White" phenomenon that, despite its controversy, has real meaning in the lives countless Black students in White spaces.

Racial-Ethnic Identity and African Americans

Some researchers (e.g., Ford, 2011; Fordham, 1996; Ogbu, 1991, 2003) believe that youth who de-emphasize group and cultural identity, and are thereby 'raceless,' achieve more academically because they are less likely to:

- develop negative academic attitudes and
- succumb to negative peer pressures.

Several studies have examined the idea that de-emphasizing race can reduce the deflating effects that negative in- and out-group stereotypes have on performance (e.g., Steele, 1997; Taylor & Antony, 2001; Willie, 2003). These scholars found that race, social class, and gender could each disrupt performance when made salient, especially in the context of negative stereotypes about the group's academic performance and the White gaze that too often results in White teachers' lowered and negative expectations when encountering Black students long before they have had an opportunity to demonstrate their promise, potential, and possibility (Wright, 2011). The reality for many Black students who contend with the White gaze beyond the veil, as they attempt to develop

the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed academically, is their desire to belong and fit into often hostile school environments, which is why we focus on the ideals of both desegregation and integration. This hostile environment manifests in negative images taught through the hidden and written curriculum, the dominant group's control of the educational system (including gifted education programs), and the disempowerment experienced by Black students contribute to this duality. The fact that educational institutions continue to produce a social order that is unequal according to race, class, gender, ability, and disability demands a critical look at the persistent under-representation of Black students in gifted and talented programs due, in large part, to *de jure* and *de facto* segregation, which is the overall focus of this article. In the section that follows, we discuss the racial segregation that persists in gifted and talented programs.

Segregated Gifted and Talented Programs: A Contemporary Case

In contemporary America, there is no place for *de jure* and *de facto* segregation in gifted education (and Advanced Placement classes). By contemporary, the authors mean post *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). While schools can be desegregated (which is still rare), programs can be segregated, with gifted education being an example. In the 2013 court ruling *McFadden v. Board of Education for Illinois School District U-46*, the Judge found intentional segregated gifted education programs for Hispanic and Black students (See_http://www.maldef.org/news/releases/maldef_u46_discrimination_case/).

Educators and policymakers must have guidance and goals regarding how to determine when under-representation is unreasonable or unacceptable, and when discrimination or bias is operating. Relevant questions include but are not limited to: 'When are under-representation and over-representation significant?' and 'How severe must under-representation and over-representation be to be considered discriminatory?' Borrowing from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), we apply the 80% equity rule, also called a 20% allowance by Ford (2013). Ford revived an Equity Index Range (EIR) to guide educators and decision makers:

- in determining a target goal for what is the *minimally* accepted level of under-representation for each group (i.e., relative to race/culture, gender, income, etc.) and
- determining the *maximum* level of over-representation.

Noteworthy is that the EIR is not a quota, which is illegal at the time of this writing. The vital stipulation is that, when the percentage of representation are outside of the designated EIR, it is beyond statistical chance; thus, human error is operating (e.g., attitudes, biased or inappropriate tests and instruments, and policies and procedures that are potentially discriminatory against Black students (Ford, 2013).

Calculating the Equity Index Range is a two-step process, given that one is calculating the minimum and maximum representation percentages. For minimum representation: (a) total Black enrollment of nation, state, district, or building (BE) times 80% (BE x 80%) and (b) for maximum representation: total Black enrollment of nation, state, district, or building (BE) times 120% (BE x 120%).

In the following tables, state-by-state analysis of gifted education using the Equity Index Range is presented. Four tiers are presented based on different equity and representation statuses Tier 1 is designated as 'equitable over-representation'; that is, over-representation exists but does not exceed the maximum percentage. This is the ideal tier for gifted Black students, as it is closest to mirroring their representation. Tier 2 is 'equitable under-representation,' meaning that under-representation exists and is within the EIR. Tiers 1 and 2 represent the states where Black students have the highest probability of being identified as gifted. Combined, there are only eight states. Tier 3 is 'inequitable under-representation,' meaning that under-representation exists and is outside of the EIR; this includes states with 25%–49% under-representation. Tier 4 is 'inequitable under-representation'—under-representation exists and is outside of the EIR; this includes states with 50% or higher under-representation. Tiers 3 and 4 are the most inequitable states for gifted Black

students—they have the lowest probability of being identified as gifted in these 41 states and Washington, DC.

In the nation, Black students are under-represented by 36%; they comprise 15.5% of schools but only 9.9% of gifted education enrollment. Gifted Black students' representation is not within the equity range of 12.4% to 18.6%. Since gifted education is not federally mandated and not funded, it would be assigned Policy Type 6 and the appropriate description would be 'inequitable under-representation.' The authors used three sources regarding state mandates and funding:

(a) http://www.davidsongifted.org/Search-Database/entryType/3;
(b) http://www.nagc.org/information-publications/gifted-statel and
(c) http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/key%20reports/2014-2015%20State%20of%20the%20States%20summary.pdf.

A unique case is Massachusetts. Ironically, Massachusetts is the birthplace of W.E.B. Du Bois. Black students are over-represented in gifted education by 37% (8.8% of state enrollment versus 12% of gifted enrollment). This is the only state that exceeds its specific equity maximum of 10.6%. Gifted education is not mandated and not funded in Massachusetts (Policy Type 1). It is one of two states that has no definition of gifted and talented, and yet is the most equitable regarding the representation of Black students in gifted and talented education. This begs the question of gifted and talented policies and procedures, instruments, and training at state and district levels; recall the previous discussion of Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO).

As shown in Table 1, only two states are Tier 1, equitable over-representation, which means that representation is within the minimum and maximum EIR for Black students. Illinois and Rhode Island mandate gifted education but provide no funding. Rhode Island has the largest degree of over-representation of all states (42%) and lists all five areas of gifted (intellectual, academic, creative, visual and performing arts, and leadership). Illinois lists four areas of gifts and talents (excludes leadership). Surprisingly, neither uses 'potential' in their definition.

Table 1

Tier 1: Equitable Over-Representation for Gifted Black Students (14%–42%)

State	Representation in Gifted and Talented Education (State vs. Gifted Enrollment)	Within Equity Range (Minimum–Maximum)	Areas of Gifted and Talented in Definition	Policy Type	Gifted and Talented Policy (Mandate and Funding)
Illinois	14% (17.4 vs. 19.9%)	19.9 % (14–20.9%)	Intellectual, Academic, Creativity, Visual & Performing Arts	3	Mandated; Not funded
Rhode Island	42% (8.1 vs. 13.9%)	13.9% (6.5– 9.7%)	Intellectual, Academic, Creativity, Visual & Performing Arts, Leadership	3	Mandated; Not funded

Table 2 consists of six states (Georgia, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Utah, and Vermont) in which under-representation exists for Black students (14 to 22%), but the percentage is within their respective ERI. Three of the six states (50%) mandate and partially fund gifted education (Policy Type 2). Noticeably, four states (66%) have very small Black enrollments (less than 10%), four states (66%) mention 'potential' in their gifted and talented definitions, and four (66%) include the five areas of gifted and talented.

Table 2

Tier 2: Equitable Under-Representation for Gifted Black Students (-14% – -22%)

State	Representation in Gifted and Talented Education (State vs. Gifted Enrollment)	Within Equity Range (Minimum - Maximum)	Areas of Gifted and Talented in Definition	Policy Type	Gifted and Talented Policy (Mandate and Funding)
Georgia	-20% (37.1 vs. 28.9%)	29.8% (29.7–44.8%)	Intellectual, Academic, Creative	1	Mandated; Fully funded
Arkansas	-14% (20.4 vs. 17.5%)	17.5% (16.3–24.4%)	* Intellectual, Academic, Creativity	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Wisconsin	-16% (9.7 vs. 8.1%)	8.1% (7.7–11.6%)	Intellectual, Academic, Creativity, Visual & Performing Arts, Leadership	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Minnesota	-17% (9.7 vs. 8.1%)	8.1% (7.7–11.6%)	* Intellectual, Academic, Creativity, Visual & Performing Arts, Leadership	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Utah	-22% (1.3 vs. 1%)	1% (1–1.6%)	* Intellectual, Academic, Creativity, Visual & Performing Arts, Leadership	5	Not Mandated; Partially funded
Vermont	-22% (2.3 vs. 1.8%)	1.8% (1.8–2.7%)	* Intellectual, Academic, Creativity, Visual & Performing Arts, Leadership	6	Not Mandated; Not funded

Note. *Designates that the definition includes the term 'potential' and appears to be a version of the 1993 federal definition of gifted and talented.

Tier 3 represents inequitable under-representation for gifted Black students for states whose under-representation ranges from 26% to 49%. This is the largest category, comprised of 24 states. One-half of the states have Black enrollments less than 10%. Thirteen states are designated as Policy Type 2, mandate with partial funding. This is followed by Policy Type 3 (n = 5, mandate, no funding) and Policy Type 6 (n = 4, no mandate, no funding). Slightly more than one-half (n = 13) designate 'potential' in their state definition. Only eight states (33%) include all five areas of gifted and talented in their definition.

Table 3

Tier 3: Inequitable Under-Representation for Gifted Black Students (-26%– -50%)

State	Representation in Gifted and Talented Education (State vs. Gifted Enrollment)	Within Equity Range (Minimum - Maximum)	Areas of Gifted and Talented in Definition	Policy Type	Gifted and Talented Policy (Mandate and Funding)
Oklahoma	-44% (9.1 vs. 5.1%)	5.1% (7.3% – 11%)	Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership	1	Mandated; Funded
New Mexico	-26% (1.9 vs. 1.4%)	1.4% (1.5 - 2.3%)	Intellectual Academic Creativity	2	Mandated; Partially funded
North Dakota	-27% (3.4 vs. 2.5%)	2.5% (2.7 – 4.1%)	Areas Not Listed	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Hawaii	-28% (2.1 vs. 1.5%)	1.5% (1.7 – 2.5%)	* Intellectual Academic, Creativity, Visual & Performing Arts, Leadership, Psychomotor	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Nebraska	-31% (6.7 vs. 4.6%)	4.6% (5.3% – 8%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Montana	-36% (1 vs. .6%)	.6% (.8% – 1.2%)	* Intellectual Academic	2	Mandated; Partially funded
West Virginia	-38% (4.7 vs. 2.9%)	2.9% (3.7% - 5.7%)	Intellectual Academic	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Idaho	-39% (1.1 vs. .7%)	.7% (.9 – 1.3%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership	2	Mandated; Partially funded

Table 3 continues **State**	**Representation in Gifted and Talented Education (State vs. Gifted Enrollment)**	**Within Equity Range (Minimum - Maximum)**	**Areas of Gifted and Talented in Definition**	**Policy Type**	**Gifted and Talented Policy (Mandate and Funding)**
California	-42% (6.2 vs. 3.6%)	3.6% (4.9 – 7.4%)	Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership	2	Not mandated; Partially funded
Louisiana	-45% (44.2 vs. 24.1%)	24.1% (35.3– 53%)	Intellectual Academic	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Colorado	-47% (4.7 vs. 2.5%)	2.5% (3.8– 5.6%)	Intellectual Academic Visual & Performing Arts	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Texas	-48% (12.5 vs. 6.5%)	6.5% (10 – 15.1%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Missouri	-48% (14.3 vs. 7.4%)	7.4% (11.4 – 17.1%)	* Intellectual	2	Not mandated; Partially funded
Mississippi	-49% (49.6 vs. 25.5%)	25.5% (39.7 – 59.5%)	Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Maryland	-31% (35.3 vs. 24.5%)	24.5% (28.3 – 42.4%)	Areas not listed	3	Mandated; Not funded
Delaware	-37% (31.3 vs. 19.8%)	19.8% (25 – 37.6%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership Psychomotor	3	Mandated; Not funded
Alaska	-38% (3.4 vs. 2.1%)	2.1% (2.7 – 4.1%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity	3	Mandated; Not funded
New Jersey	-48% (15.2 vs. 7.9%)	7.9% (12.2 – 18.3%)	Academic	3	Mandated; Not funded

Kentucky	-50% (10.7 vs. 5.4%)	5.4% (8.6 – 12.8%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership	3	Mandated; Partially funded
Wyoming	-35% (1.2 vs. .8%)	.8% (.9 – 1.4%)	Academic	5	Not Mandated; Partially funded
District of Columbia	-31% (73 % vs. 50%)	50% (58.3 – 87.4%)	Areas not listed	6	Not Mandated; Not funded
New York	-45% (18 vs. 9.9%)	9.9% (14.4 – 21.6%)	* Intellectual Academic Visual & Performing Arts	6	Not mandated; Not funded
Michigan	-47% (18.1 vs. 9.6%)	9.6% (14.5 – 21.8%)	Intellectual Academic Visual & Performing Arts	6	Not Mandated; Not funded
Connecticut	-48% (13 vs. 6.7%)	6.7% (10.4 – 15.6%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts	6	Not Mandated; Not funded

Note. * Designates that the definition includes the term 'potential' and appears to be a version of the 1993 federal definition of gifted and talented.

Tier 4 represents states that have the most inequitable under-representation for gifted Black students. Under-representation ranges from 51% to 69%. This is the second largest category, comprised of 18 states. Eight states have Black enrollments less than 10%. Eleven states (61%) are designated as Policy Type 2, mandate with partial funding. The remainder are Policy Types 1, 3 and 6. Most (n = 12) designate 'potential' in their definition. Only five states in this tier include all five areas of gifted and talented in their definition.

Table 4

Tier 4: Inequitable Under-Representation for Gifted Black Students (-51% – -73%

State	Representation in Gifted and Talented Education (State vs. Gifted Enrollment)	Within Equity Range (Minimum - Maximum)	Areas of Gifted and Talented in Definition	Policy Type	Gifted and Talented Policy (Mandate and Funding)
Florida	-60% (22.9 vs. 9.1%)	9.1% (18.3 – 27.5%)	Intellectual	1	Mandated; Fully funded
Iowa	-66% (5.4 vs. 1.8%)	1.8% (4.3 – 6.4%)	* Intellectual	1	Mandated; Fully funded

Table 4 contnues			Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership		
Virginia	-51% (23.3 vs. 11.5%)	11.5% (18.6 – 28%)	* Intellectual Academic	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Maine	-51% (3.3 vs. 1.6%)	1.6% (2.6– 4.0%)	* Intellectual Academic Visual & Performing Arts	2	Mandated; Partially funded
South Carolina	-51% (35.1 vs. 17.1%)	17.1% (28.1 – 42.1%)	* Intellectual Academic Visual & Performing Arts	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Alabama	-53% (33.5 vs. 15.6%)	17.5% (26.8 – 40.2%)	* Intellectual Academic Creative	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Indiana	-60% (11.8 vs. 4.8%)	4.8% (9.4 – 14.2%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership Interpersonal Technical & Practical Arts	2	Mandated; Partially funded
North Carolina	-60% (21.6 vs. 10.3%)	10.3% (20.8 – 31.3%)	* Intellectual Academic	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Washington	-61% (4.6 vs. 1.8%)	1.8% (3.7 – 5.5%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Leadership	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Tennessee	-64% (23.1 vs. 8.4%)	8.4% (18.5 – 27.7%)	Intellectual Academic	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Kansas	-67% (7.3 vs. 2.4%)	2.4% (5.8 – 8.7%)	* Intellectual Academic	2	Mandated: Partially funded
Ohio	-68% (15.6 vs. 4.9%)	4.9% (12.4 – 18.7%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership	2	Mandated; Partially funded
Nevada	-73% (9.9 vs. 2.7%)	2.7% (7.9 – 11.9%)	Intellectual Academic	2	Mandated; Partially funded

Table 4 continues State	Representation in Gifted and Talented Education (State vs. Gifted Enrollment)	Within Equity Range (Minimum - Maximum)	Areas of Gifted and Talented in Definition	Policy Type	Gifted and Talented Policy (Mandate and Funding)
Oregon	-52% (2.4 vs. 1.2%)	1.2% (1.9 – 2.9%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership	3	Mandated; Not funded
Arizona	-53% (5.1 vs. 2.4%)	2.4% (4.1 – 6.1%)	Intellectual Academic	3	Mandated; Not funded
Pennsylvania	-74% (15. vs. 3.9%)	3.9% (12 – 18%)	Intellectual Creativity	3	Mandated; Not funded
South Dakota	-60% (2.7 vs. 1.1%)	1.1% (2.1 – 3.2%)	No definition	6	Not mandated; Not funded
New Hampshire	-69% (1.9 vs. .6%)	.6% (1.5 – 2.3%)	* Intellectual Academic Creativity Visual & Performing Arts Leadership	6	Not Mandated; Not funded

Note. * Designates that the definition includes the term 'potential' and appears to be a version of the 1993 federal definition of gifted and talented.

Conclusion

Based on the latest OCR data for 2015-16, Black students remain under-represented in gifted education in 47 states and the District of Columbia. At no time in the history of gifted and talented education have Black students been equitably represented. Progress is evident for Asian students who are over-represented (4.7% of schools nationally vs. 9.6% of gifted education nationally), and Hispanic students (24.8% of schools vs. 18% of gifted education) who are under-represented, but this is improving. While not the focus of this article and study, we are very disappointed to find that Native American students decreased from being proportionally represented in gifted education (2013-14) to being under-represented in 2015-16 (1.1% vs. .8%).

Surprisingly and disappointingly, we found few patterns among states in Tiers 1 and 2 to make solid recommendations for increasing Black students' representation in gifted education. The same exists with Tiers 3 and 4, which would have provided information on what to *avoid* relative to barriers. It was noticeable that Tiers 3 and 4 include many states with few Black students (under 10%). Furthermore, many have 'potential' in their definition but may not have policies and instruments in place that actually measure and support potential. The mismatch is glaring. With gifted education not federally mandated, there is no consistency nationally, among states, between states, between districts, and within districts (buildings) relative to definitions, funding, criteria, instruments, teacher training, and/or programming. This was also noted for the states in the most recent gifted education reports (see National Association for Gifted Children, http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/key%20reports/20142015%20State%20of%20the%20States%20summary.pdf).

We want readers to contact states (and districts) in Tiers 1 and 2, as well as Massachusetts to look for promising practices, policies, and assessments. Also essential is that gifted education state

directors and coordinators convene to analyze district data with attention to those districts where Black students are equitably represented. Specifically, within the *same* state (which means districts are operating under the same mandate, funding, and definition), what contributes to the four tiers? Why is one district equitable but another is not? We hope such questions will be the focus of gifted state conferences and addressed in future State of the States in Gifted Education reports (see http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/gifted-state/2014-2015-state-states-gifted-education)

Given the limitations and the capacity to delve more into the contextualized policies and procedures, criteria and cutoff scores, and the specific instruments for every state, our recommendations cannot be tailored to every state. Therefore, we present what is minimally essential for the nation and states to consider if they truly desire racial equity in gifted education philosophy, assessment, representation, and practice.

Beyond Lip Service: What Would Du Bois Recommend?

- Educators must cast a wider net when screening Black students. Percentiles should be based on building demographics to create norms.
- Set the Equity Index Range (EIR) for every district and school building based on racial and ethnic demographics.
- Study the impact of teacher and family recommendations. If found to contribute to under-representation and over-representation, then remove either or both.
- Adopt universal screening, keeping in mind the test/instrument, cut off scores adopted, and grades and months when students are screened. Remove tests and instruments (including checklists) that are biased against Black students.
- Include non-verbal assessments, specifically the Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test (NNAT), which we deem to be the most equitable test of intelligence based on race, income, and language.
- Adhere to culturally responsive professional testing and assessment principles, such as those by the American Psychological Association, American Educational Research Association, and National Association of School Psychologists.
- Provide ongoing professional development that focuses on all educators being culturally competent.
- Provide professional development that focuses on educators having ongoing gifted and talented training.
- Hire more Black teachers in general, and as gifted education teachers and administrators. Cultural congruence between students and educators has a positive effect on Black students being identified as gifted.
- Ensure that the gifted and talented committee is racially and ethnically diverse.
- Work with superintendent and school board to develop strategies to contend with the status quo who resist desegregating and integrating gifted education, and to reach out to support and advocate for Black families and communities.

References

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the south, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Baker, P. B. (2005). The impact of cultural biases on African American students' education: A review of research literature regarding race-based schooling. *Education and Urban Society, 37*, 243-256.

Baldwin, J. (1992). *Nobody knows my name*. New York: Vintage.

Barton, P. E., & Coley, R. J. (2009). *Parsing the achievement gap II: Policy information report.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Coates, T. (2014, June). The case for reparations. *The Atlantic, 313*, 54-71.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Unequal opportunity: Race and education. *The Brookings Review, 16*, 28-32.

Delpit, L. (1996). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom.* New York: New Press.

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1903a). *The souls of Black folk*. New York: New American Library.

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1903b). *The talented tenth* (pp. 102-104). Retrieved from http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-talented-tenth/

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1948). *The talented tenth memorial address*. Retrieved from https://www.sigmapiphi.org/home/the-talented-tenth.php

Ferguson, R. F. (2008). *Toward excellence with equity: An emerging vision for closing the achievement gap*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ford, D. Y. (2010). *Reversing underachievement among gifted Black students: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Waco, TX: Prufrock.

Ford, D. Y. (2011). *Multicultural gifted education* (2nd ed.). Waco, TX: Prufrock.

Ford, D. Y. (2013). *Recruiting and retaining culturally different students in gifted education.* Waco, TX: Prufrock.

Foster, M. (1997). *Black teachers on teaching*. New York: New Press.

Fordham, S. (1996). *Blacked out: Dilemmas of race, identity, and success at capital high.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.'

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher, 35*, 3-12.

Lawrence, C. (1983). "Justice" or "just us": Racism and the role of ideology. *Stanford Law Review, 35*, 831-856.

McFadden v. Board of Education for Illinois School District U-46; 984 F.Supp.2d 882 (2013).

Moore III, J. L., & Lewis, C. W. (Eds.). (2012). *African American students in urban schools: Critical issues and solutions for achievement*. New York: Peter Lang.

Moore III, J. L., & Lewis, C. W. (2014). 60 Years after *Brown v. Board of Education*: Educational advancement or decline? *The Journal of Negro Education, 83*, 191-193.

Ogbu, J. (1991). Minority coping responses and school experience. *The Journal of Psychohistory, 18,* 433-456.

Ogbu, J. (2003). *Black American students in an affluent suburb: A study of academic disengagement.* New York: Routledge.

Provenzo, E. F. (Ed.). (2002). Du Bois on education. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira.

Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation. (2009). *Historical timeline of public education in the U.S.* Retrieved from https://www.raceforward.org/research/reports/historical-timeline-public-education-us

Siddle Walker, V. (1996). *The highest potential: An African American school community in the segregated South.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Steele, C. (1997). A burden of suspicion: How stereotypes shape the intellectual identities and performance of women and African-Americans. *American Psychologist, 52*, 613-629.

Taylor, E., & Antony, J. (2001). Stereotype threat reduction and wise schooling: Towards the successful socialization of African American doctoral students in education. *The Journal of Negro Education, 69*, 184-198.

Villegas, A.M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. J*ournal of Teacher Education, 53*, 20-32.

Washington, B. T. (1895, September 18). *Atlanta Compromise Speech* at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia.

Willie, S.S. (2003). *Acting Black: College, identity, and the performance of race.* New York: Routledge Press.

Woodson, C. G. (1990). *The mis-education of the Negro.* Trenton, NJ: Africa World. (Original work published 1933)

Wright, B. L. (2011). I know who I am, do you? Identity and academic achievement of successful African-American male adolescents in an urban pilot high school in the U.S. *Urban Education, 46*, 611-638.

AUTHORS

DONNA Y FORD is a Professor and Cornelius Vanderbilt Endowed Chair in the Department of Special Education & the Department of Teaching and Learning, Peabody College of Education, Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. BRIAN L. WRIGHT is an Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator of Early Childhood Education in the Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership, College of Education, University of Memphis, in Tennessee. CHRISTOPHER J. P. SEWELL is Associate Dean of the College at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. GILMAN W. WHITING is an Associate Professor and Director of the Scholar Identity Institute & Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of African American and Diaspora Studies at Vanderbilt University. JAMES L. MOORE III is the Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at The Ohio State University, where he is also the EHE Distinguished Professor of Urban Education in the College of Education and Human Ecology and inaugural executive director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male.

All comments and queries regarding this article should be addressed to donna.ford@vanderbilt.edu