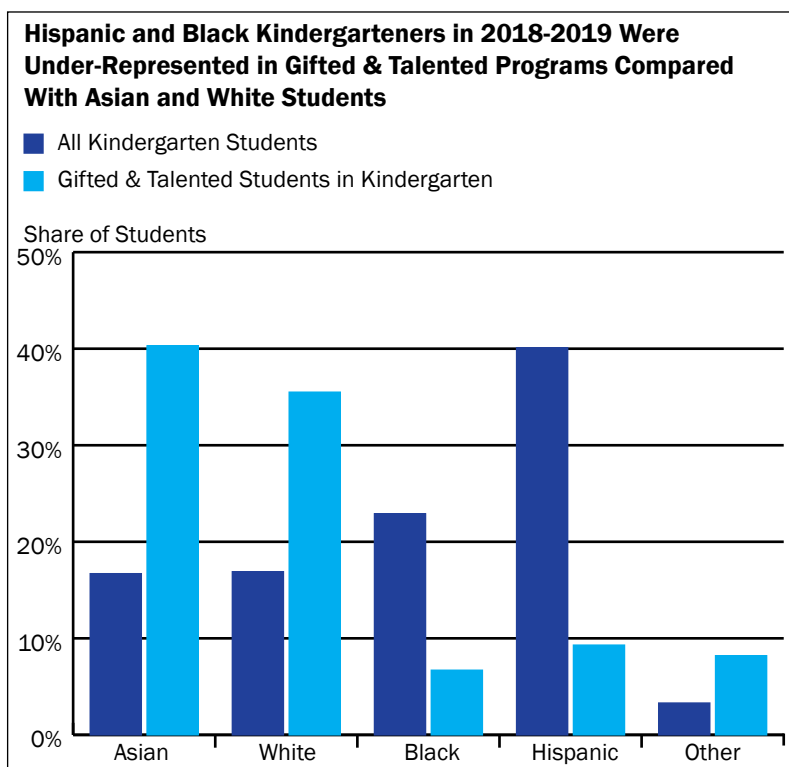


Were Black and Hispanic Kindergarteners Under-Represented and Racially Segregated in Gifted & Talented Programs in 2018-2019?

The under-representation of Black and Hispanic students in Gifted & Talented programs in New York City public schools has been well documented. Admission to the programs had been based on a competitive test, but for next school year the Department of Education will use a lottery to select kindergarten students from among those recommended by their pre-k teachers or whose parents signed their children up for interviews. The education department has also said it will not use entrance exams for 4-year-olds in the future. A recently filed lawsuit charges the city's admission processes for Gifted & Talented programs and selective schools worsens racial inequality in the school system.

There were 81 schools that offered Gifted & Talented instruction in the 2018-2019 school year, including five schools that were part of the citywide Gifted & Talented program and provided only Gifted & Talented instruction to eligible students (those with the highest scores). For the purposes of this analysis, each of the 78 schools offering Gifted & Talented instruction in kindergarten is referred to as a program. IBO used classroom-level data for the kindergarten class of 2018-2019 to look at the extent of under-representation of Black and Hispanic students across all Gifted & Talented programs compared with the citywide kindergarten class. We also looked at the demographic composition of individual Gifted & Talented programs to see if there was evidence of segregation by race.

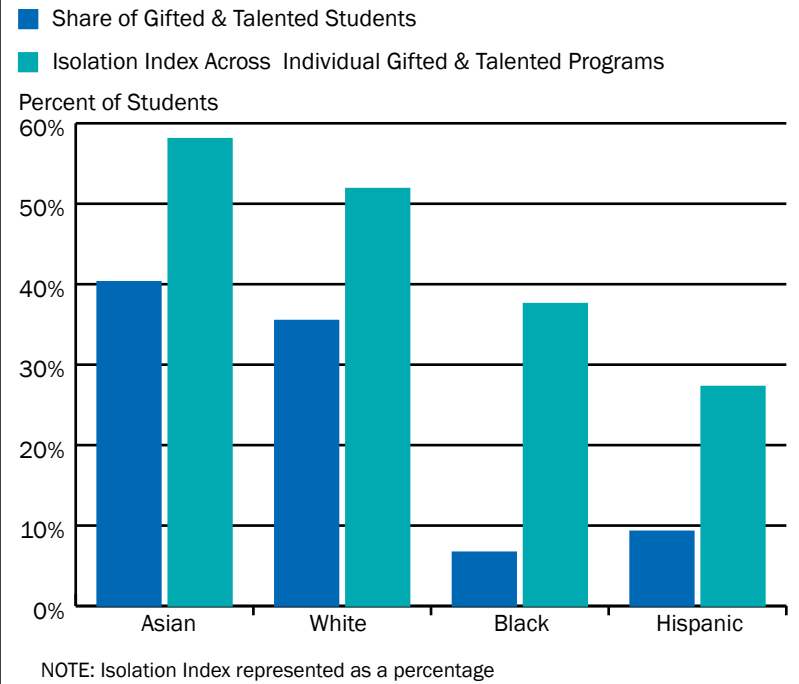


- Asian and white students comprised more than three-quarters of students across all Gifted & Talented programs in 2018-2019, despite being about a third of the overall kindergarten cohort.
- Conversely, Black and Hispanic kindergarteners comprised 63 percent of the kindergarten population but only 16 percent of students in Gifted & Talented programs.
- The disparity was particularly acute for Hispanic students. Despite being much more numerous across all kindergarten programs (40.1 percent) than Black students (22.9 percent), Hispanic students were only moderately ahead of Black students with respect to participation in Gifted & Talented programs (9.3 percent versus 6.7 percent).

In addition to this general under-representation of Black and Hispanic students in the city's Gifted & Talented program, individual Gifted & Talented programs also evidenced considerable racial segregation. For an in-depth look, IBO used a statistic—the Isolation Index—that measures the extent to which a given Gifted & Talented student is in a classroom with a high concentration of students from their same *ethnic/racial group*.¹ The greater the integration in individual classrooms, the closer the value of the index approaches the share of students from this particular race across all classrooms. As the index approaches one, the greater the segregation across individual Gifted & Talented programs. IBO expressed the index as a percentage to simplify comparison of the racial composition of individual programs with that of the aggregate Gifted & Talented population reported above—a comparison of the two values provides a sense of the magnitude of relative segregation.

- The extent of isolation in Gifted & Talented programs is highest for Asian students. On average, an Asian Gifted & Talented student was in a program where 58.1 percent of the students were also Asian. Students from the other major races also experienced segregation.
- If Black Gifted & Talented students were proportionately distributed, they would have comprised about 7 percent of the students in each program. Instead, Black students were concentrated in relatively few programs where they comprised roughly 38 percent of students on average. Hispanic students also experienced a similar concentration.
- Overall, half of the Gifted & Talented programs (39 of 78) did not include any Black students, and another 12 programs had only one Black student. Likewise, 16 programs did not have any Hispanic students and another 22 programs included a single Hispanic student. By comparison, only 18 programs had one or no Asian students and only 14 programs had one or no white students.

Isolation of Students from Four Major Races Across Gifted & Talented Programs, Kindergarteners in 2018-2019



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Prepared by Joydeep Roy
New York City Independent Budget Office

SOURCES: IBO analysis of 2018-2019 Audited Register data and 2018-2019 class-level class size data

Endnote

¹The Isolation Index is a *weighted average* of the concentration of a given racial group by classroom. See this [link](#) for more information on the index.