



## Socioeconomic achievement gaps outpacing those based on race

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### Dive Brief:

- A new study, "[Mind the Gap: 20 Years of Progress and Retrenchment in School Funding, Staffing Resources & Achievement Gaps](#)," commissioned by Educational Testing Service (ETS) and written by Bruce D. Baker of Rutgers University and Danielle Farrie and David G. Sciarra of the Education Law Center of New Jersey, reports that income-based achievement gaps between students now surpass racial-achievement gaps, and that a lack of resources exacerbates disparity.
- The report analyzed two decades worth of National Assessment of Educational Progress data related to revenue and school expenditures, finding that human resources that include pupil to teacher ratios, average class sizes and teacher wages are linked to the quality of education, or lack thereof, in disadvantaged districts.
- Key findings include the fact that teacher compensation has dropped between 2000-2012 in every U.S. state, per-pupil staffing has decreased in recent years, and that a link does exist between better educational outcomes and classrooms that have more resources.

### Dive Insight:

Breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty can happen through education, and by making sure equitable opportunity exists for both poor and wealthy children. At the same time, districts should consider that some research has also shown that resources and an influx of funding alone isn't enough to improve student and school performance. It takes human capital, one of the key areas studied in the new ETS report.

Recently, the libertarian-leaning Cato Institute [released a report](#) saying no link exists between spending and academic achievement. For example, [Baltimore's](#) city school system ranked second among the nation's 100 largest school districts in how much it spent per pupil in fiscal year 2011, but that didn't necessarily equate to [improved school quality](#).

A race gap also exists schools, and those attended by a majority of more affluent and white pupils have been shown to receive more funding. A six-month investigation by 20 NPR member stations found great discrepancies in school spending across states and districts. That investigation agreed with findings from the Education Law Center's report, "Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card."

School quality has also been linked to the amount of income tax revenue from feeder neighborhoods, which serves to widen the gap between school systems in wealthy and poor neighborhoods. Research by data analyst David Mosenkis also found that poverty alone does not account for funding level disparities among Pennsylvania school districts.

### **Recommended Reading**

eSchoolNews : Resource gap may be key to closing achievement gap