A silhouette of a person holding a lit sparkler against a night sky with other fireworks.

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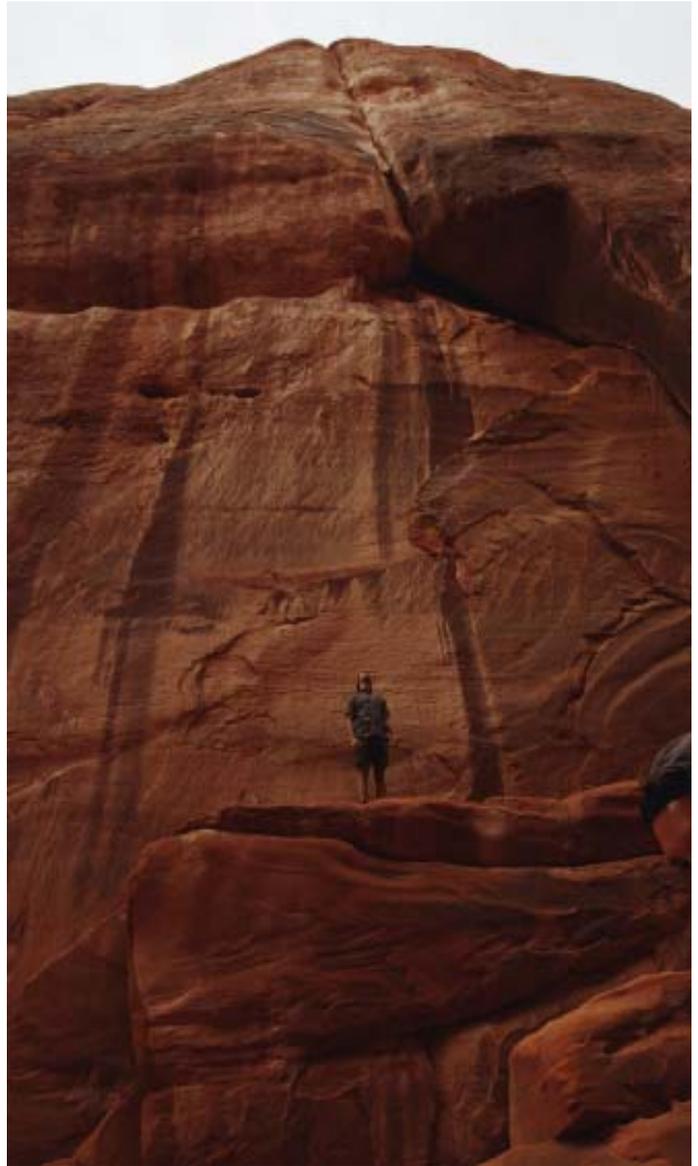
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Coopetition - A Fantastic Way to Boost Your Business

By: Lisa Montanaro

By now, you have probably heard the term "Coopetition." Coopetition is a contraction of the words cooperation and competition, meaning essentially cooperative competition. In the business world, coopetition means collaborating or partnering with your competitors in an innovative way so that both parties benefit. The most successful entrepreneurs realize early on that the old military adage, *"To know your enemy, you must become your enemy... Keep your friends close and your enemies even closer"* applies

just as well to the business world. Of course, we all know that your competitors are not truly your enemies (at least I hope they aren't!), but the idea of keeping them close is the point. A creative collaboration with your biggest competitor in the same industry may be the best opportunity for boosting your business.

Many of you are already familiar with the idea of collaborating with your competitors through membership in an industry specific professional association. For example, I am a member of the National Association of

Professional Organizers(NAPO), the premiere association for my industry. I attend the annual conference every year as a participant or presenter, belong to a local organizers' neighborhood (an informal chapter), frequently engage in discussion on the organizers' email list, and serve as a mentor and business coach to new organizers and organizers-to-be. I have partnered with other organizers in various ways, as well as share referrals back and forth. This coopetition with other organizers has enriched my business in ways that are immeasurable. I've

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benefited greatly from these relationships and from keeping an open mind in my approach to dealing with my competitors.

It is smart business to capitalize on the positive aspects of a competitive situation. However, for cooperation to work effectively, both parties need to clearly define their roles, making sure not to overstep boundaries. The goal is to find a way to partner with your competitor (read: colleague!) so that both parties can substantially benefit from the collaboration. Look around at your competition, and identify competitors that share the same zest for business and success that you do. You want to make sure that you align yourself with a competitor that you respect and admire, and that exudes the same sense of professionalism and level of expertise.

What are some ways that you can engage in competition that will boost your business? Here are some examples of strategic alliances between competitors that are innovative, creative, and effective:

- **Develop a joint venture project together.**

Some of the best business ideas are born out of competitors joining together. For example, in my industry, organizers are collaborating together to offer certification prep courses, train new organizers, design organizing products, etc.

- **Share a booth at an expo, tradeshow or business showcase.**

Not only will this help each party keep costs down, but as we all know, two minds are often better than one. You may come up with great new ideas to market your industry and businesses, offer more products, and gain more attention from participants and the media.

- **Co-present with a competitor.**

Co-presenting is a wonderful tool when done well. I have had the opportunity to present with colleagues to offer workshops that I may not have been able to do on my own. The participants benefit from hearing

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two different presenters, which helps keep the workshop fresh and interesting. Each presenter only has to do half the work, which makes your job easier overall.

- **Advertise with a competitor.**

Advertising is expensive. Sharing that expense with a colleague or competitor to promote types of service, your industry, or an event you are doing together is a great way to maximize advertising costs.

- **Refer leads to each other.**

This is probably the most common form of co-competition. But don't lose sight of how powerful it is! What you give out almost always comes

back. If you cannot service a prospective client, find a colleague or competitor that can. The potential client will view you as a true professional and resource-provider, and the competitor will be grateful and will usually reciprocate in the future.

- **Co-author an article or book together.**

Writing does not come easy to many people. Consider sharing writing responsibility by co-authoring an article or book with a competitor. This may be the most effective way to get published in your industry. For example, if you teamed up with 9 competitors in your industry and all wrote one chapter, voila, a 10-chapter book is born!

- **Offer a teleclass or webinar together.**

You've probably seen this many times where two business experts team up to offer a teleclass or webinar together. Many times they are in complementary industries, such as an interior designer (or life coach, or wardrobe consultant, etc.) and professional organizer, or a financial planner and accountant. Again, two minds are better than one, work is shared among the presenters, and the participants get to hear from two experts. It's a win-win situation for all involved.

Think broadly, keep an open mind, and seek out collaborative opportunities to boost your business with co-competition. Used wisely, it is a fantastic tool to add to your business.

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How Men and Women Use Power and Influence In the Workplace

By: Richard Lepsinger

Within cross-functional teams of people representing different departments, positions and even cultures, a leader's success often depends on his or her ability to gain the cooperation and support of others. Research by our colleagues has shown some influencing styles vary across cultures, but we wanted to know if gender differences might also play a role in using power and influence in the workplace.

To answer this question, a study was conducted using a 360 degree feedback questionnaire to gather data on the influencing styles of 223 leaders (116 men and 107 women) across organizations and industries.

While we found some significant differences, we also found some surprising similarities.

Here's a summary of what we found and how your leaders can use them to maximize their influence.

Differences Between Genders

Of the four most effective influence tactics - reasoning, inspiring, consulting and collaborating - men and women use reasoning and collaborating to the same extent.

These findings might be somewhat surprising if you believe the stereotype that men lead with a more task-oriented focus and women with a more interpersonal approach. For

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those particular tactics, both men and women tend to do it the same.

There are, however, some significant differences regarding the two other core tactics - inspiring and consulting. Women tend to use inspiring more frequently than men, especially with colleagues and direct reports. Women also use consulting more frequently than men with bosses and with their direct reports.

Here are some other important findings from our research:

- Women use apprising (explaining how carrying out a request or supporting a proposal will benefit the other person or advance their career) significantly more with direct reports compared to men.
- Men use apprising- helping someone understand the benefit to them personally - more than women when influencing their bosses
- Men could benefit from using consulting more often with their direct reports, especially when they have authority to make a change but need others to help them implement it. However, women may be using this influencing style too often with their bosses.
- Women use recognizing (using praise or flattery) significantly more than men when influencing their colleagues and direct reports
- Women use legitimizing (establishing the legitimacy of a request and verifying they have the authority to make it) significantly more than men when influencing colleagues. This may indicate they are more likely to feel their authority is being challenged.

Tips for Maximizing Influence

Most of the gender differences involve influence attempts with colleagues and with direct reports. Men and women seem to approach bosses in a similar manner; yet their approach to colleagues and direct reports are a bit different. Some of the gender differences were consistent with gender stereotypes. Women tend to use some of the softer, more personal tactics like inspiring, consulting, apprising and recognizing more than men.

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However, some of the findings are less consistent with the stereotypes. Both men and women use collaborating to the same extent and they both use consulting to the same extent with colleagues. We also found men and women use pressure to the same degree. Overall, we found that there were more similarities than differences between male and female leaders when it comes to gaining support and gaining commitment.

Your leaders can use the following tips to maximize their influence.

1. Don't consider gender. The gender of the influencer and person being influenced has no effect on whether influencing attempts are successful. To be successful, the influencer must know the person he

or she is trying to influence. What are his or her needs? What is he or she looking for? What does he or she see as benefits? What are his or her values?

we found that there were more similarities than differences between male and female leaders when it comes to gaining support and gaining commitment.

2. Don't rely on reasoning. Though it's the most popular tactic, reasoning doesn't work in every situation. Reasoning works best when used with other influencing tactics. If you're going to use reasoning, be sure to talk about the benefits of what you're pitching, not just the facts.

3. Build a solid the foundation. The trust and relationship you have with

the person you're influencing play a vital role in how successful you are. However, many influencers fail to take time to build trust within teams. Having this relationship in place ahead of time helps you build credibility with the person so you don't have to rely on a single influencing tactic.

Just like other skills and characteristics of effective leaders, the ability to influence others can be learned and improved upon with training. To help your leaders strengthen their skills in this area, start by making them more aware of the styles they use most often. This interactive guide covers the 11 most common influencing styles, which ones are most effective and how and when to use them. You'll also find tips and tricks your leaders can use to maximize their ability to gain commitment to their ideas and proposals.

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Vacation Planning for Government Contractors - Rule 1

By: Gloria Berthold Larkin

Do Not Plan Vacation During the Final Fiscal Year Quarter: July 1 through September 30.

Federal government contractors are used to the ebb and flow of the federal fiscal year which starts on October 1 and ends September 30. Generally, the new fiscal year starting in October translates to limited contract activity in October and November, a brief ramp up in early December, and then in “normal” years, after the December holidays, a steady climb in contracts until the last three months (July-September) when use-it-or-lose-it

spending requirements cause a contracting spike.

This year will be even more dramatic because Congress has failed to approve the budget in a timely manner. While the term “continuing resolution” may cause a yawn of boredom from the general public, federal government contractors take the issue very seriously because it directly impacts their bottom line.

No New Spending Initiatives

When Congress operates under a

continuing resolution (CR) the federal agencies have authority to only spend money to operate in a maintenance mode-under which no new initiatives can be contracted. This fiscal year, approximately 25% of the federal budget has been spent through the first six months, when normally at least 40% would have been spent. The difference amounts to over \$110 billion in contracts that are on hold. When these contracts are on hold, companies start to layoffs because they cannot afford to keep highly paid staff “on the bench” waiting for contracts to be signed and started.

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Timing is Everything

While the CR initially causes a reduction in jobs because of the delay, when the budget is finally approved, the resulting flood of contract opportunities causes the contracting community to go into high gear. As a result, work weeks are run on a 24/7 schedule to handle the avalanche of bidding opportunities advertised in FedBizOpps and other federal contract listing sites.

Sand in Your Laptop

Responding to a multi-million dollar Request for Proposal (RFP) can take upwards of 200 hours, with no guarantee of success. When a company chooses to bid on multiple RFPs simultaneously, every available person is called in to help; required to put in many late nights and weekends in order to make the bid deadline. Experienced firms anticipate this and do not allow vacations in the summer “high-season” because rarely can they get quality work from staff who are trying to balance vacations and winning-quality RFP responses.

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Women are better than men at crowdfunding, according to a new study

By: Emma Hinchliffe

In Silicon Valley, venture capital funding still overwhelmingly favors men.

Male investors often don't fully understand the value of ideas women entrepreneurs pitch them. They throw capital at food delivery service after food delivery service, but ignore ideas that cater to groups they're not part of.

There's one type of funding, though, where women are outdoing men. According to a new study from

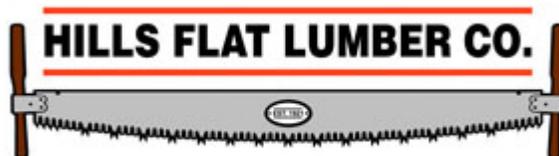
consulting firm PWC and The Crowdfunding Center, women are flat-out better at crowdfunding than men. An analysis of 450,000 campaigns found that campaigns led by women were 32 percent more successful at meeting their fundraising goals than campaigns led by men. People who support crowdfunding campaigns contribute more to women, too: an average of \$87 per individual backer to women and \$83 per backer to men.

"When women choose to access crowdfunding they are more than capable—and very often more capable

than men."

"What the data in this report shows clearly is that when women choose to access crowdfunding they are more than capable—and very often more capable than men. This undermines these traditional assumptions and casts things in a new light," the report said. "It demonstrates that opportunities for women entrepreneurs have not been equal, but thanks to crowdfunding, female entrepreneurs can now access the market directly—and this makes a huge difference."

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This isn't because women dominate crowdfunding by sheer numbers. Of the 450,000 campaigns from around the world, PWC found 139,000 were led by men and 55,000 were led by women.

Even though women are still lagging behind by overall numbers, they do a better job at finding support for their projects and meeting their fundraising goals. Twenty-two percent of campaigns led by women reached their target compared to 17 percent of campaigns led by men.

These discrepancies stand across sectors, even in traditionally male-dominated industries like tech.

Other studies have shown the potential of crowdfunding to increase access to capital for groups underrepresented through traditional funding channels. A study by researchers at Yale University and the University of California, Berkeley, found that the success of crowdfunding campaigns throughout the United States was forcing venture capitalists to look outside Silicon Valley while investing.

One possible explanation for the success of women on crowdfunding platforms is that the "micro-VCs"—or the people who back a project on Kickstarter—are a more diverse group than investors in Silicon Valley. Investors with more perspectives than just the white men of venture capital see the potential in women's ideas.

Women also tend to use more inclusive language to describe their campaigns, which is more successful in wooing crowdfunding backers than the business language men more often use, the study found.

But like any other industry, crowdfunding has its own glass ceiling. Men still raise more money than women overall because more men are crowdfunding by sheer numbers. Men tend to set higher fundraising goals, too. Of 63 campaigns PWC studied that raised over \$1 million, only seven were led by women.

If women can reach parity in the number of campaigns they're running and the amount of money they're asking for, this study shows that they'll easily outstrip the success rates of projects started by men.

Sounds like it's time to back a woman-led project on Kickstarter.

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Your Clarity of Purpose and Success

By: *Bud Bilanich*

Clarity of purpose and direction is one of the keys to career and life success that I discuss in several of my books. You can develop your personal clarity of purpose and direction by doing three things. First, define what success means to you. Second, create a vivid image of your success in your mind. Third, clarify your personal values. Your values will guide your decision making in ambiguous situations.

Clarity of purpose and direction begins with a clear picture of how you define professional success.

When I was 25, if you asked me what I wanted to be doing when I was 50, I would have told you, "Running a one person consulting, coaching and speaking business from my house." Guess what? I have been running a one person consulting, coaching and speaking business from my house every since 1988. My clarity of purpose propelled me toward my goal.

I have a friend who is a serial entrepreneur. He started a software business when he was 27. He built it up and sold it to a major computer manufacturer by the time he was 35.

He has since started and sold four other companies. His clarity of purpose lies in the challenge of creating something new, building it into a viable, sustainable business and then moving on.

I have another friend who recently retired as the Executive VP of Human Resources for a Fortune 50 company. We were chatting a few days ago. She told me that when she was in college, she decided that she was going to join a good company and work her way up the ladder. She took an entry level HR job with a company

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she liked. It took her over 25 years, but she eventually became the most senior HR person in that company. Her clarity of purpose and definition of success was different from mine, but she reached her goal.

My second friend told me that her son has yet a different definition of success. He is not interested in climbing the corporate ladder, or in being an entrepreneur. He wants an interesting job where he can contribute, but he doesn't want to spend inordinate amounts of time at work. He wants to spend as much time with his family as he can. His definition of success is different from his mother.

All four of us are professional successes — according to our clarity of purpose.

There is no one correct definition of professional success. There are as many definitions as there are people in this world. Your definition of professional success is what's right for you — not anyone else. I would not have been happy building and selling a number of businesses in succession, climbing a corporate ladder or working for a large company in an individual contributor position. However, as you can tell from the stories of the three people above, they were. They knew what they wanted and they went after it.

That's why defining your clarity of purpose is so important. Your clarity of purpose provides both a foundation and launching pad for your professional success. The old saying, "If you don't know where you're going, you won't know when you get there" is a cliché true. Getting clear on your personal definition of professional success is the first step to becoming a career and life success.

If you haven't already done so, I suggest you take some time and think about your clarity of purpose? How do you define professional success for yourself? Keep that purpose and definition of success in mind as you go about your daily business. Think about how what you do can help you reach your purpose.

The common sense point here is simple. Defining your personal clarity of purpose is the first step in becoming a personal and professional success. Use your purpose in life to guide your career and life decision making. Once you are clear on what you want from life, it becomes relatively easy to determine what you need to do to get you there. It all begins with clarity — and only you can determine what success means for you.

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Becoming An Expert In Your Field

By: *Raymond Gerson*

Some people become jacks of many trades and masters of none. Others go deep into a particular career field and become masters of one. Is it better to become an expert in a particular career or to know a little about many different careers? Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages, but in today's job market most of the better jobs need people who are capable of becoming experts in their field.

Going deep into a particular career that suits you is likely to bring you both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. By becoming an expert or master in

your field you will increase the possibility of making a positive and powerful difference for others. Employers are not looking for employees with shallow knowledge and average skills. Customers are not interested in purchasing products or services from entrepreneurs who lack expertise in their field. This is why going deep into a specific and well-suited career will offer you many advantages.

Earl Nightingale, known as "The Dean of Personal Development," used to encourage people to devote one extra hour a day studying about their field.

He said if you do this you will become an expert in your field in five years. That one hour per day will add up to 1,825 hours in a five-year period. This amount of study can make a major difference in your level of knowledge and expertise.

Recently I witnessed a good example of someone who went deep into one line of work, and although still very young, he was on his way to becoming a master of his trade and craft. My wife and I needed a plumber to come to our house and fix a leak.

Two men arrived to fix the plumbing

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problem. One was a young man who looked like a teenager, but he was 26 years old. The other man appeared to be in his late 30s or early 40s. I assumed that the younger man was there to learn about plumbing from the older one, but I was mistaken. The younger man owned the plumbing business and he was teaching the older man how to become a plumber.

The young man began working in the plumbing business as an apprentice at the age of 18. Now at only 26 he was about to get his Master's Plumber License. He had decided to go in-depth in the field of plumbing and was fast becoming an expert already. He told me that his friends had been jumping from one career to another every couple of years. They were not doing well financially and felt unsuccessful at any work they had tried. The young man said that going deep into one field had paid off for him.

I wondered if the young plumber was really making that good of a living. And then he handed me the bill. "Hello!" and "whoa!" were the first words that quickly came into my mind. Seeing the bill made me realize that he was making a good living indeed. This story is just one example of the value of going for depth of knowledge and skill in a particular field of work instead of going shallow in many different areas.

You can probably think of examples of people you know or know of who have become experts because they focused their attention on attaining deep knowledge and skills in their career field. This is not to say that one cannot become an expert in more than one career, but it is unlikely to happen in a large number of dissimilar careers. It is easier to gain expertise in other careers that are similar enough for you to use some of your transferrable skills.

Once you have realized the type of work you were designed for and you have chosen a suitable career then you can prepare yourself for it. Preparation might include getting the necessary education and credentials, training and skills, extra studying on your own, mentoring or coaching if needed and more practice and experience once you are working in your career. You might find hidden treasures and rewards by going deep.

In the book, *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill, he tells the true story of a man who owned a gold mine. After a few years of digging and not finding any gold the man gave up and sold the mine. The new owner dug three feet deeper and struck gold and became wealthy. Like digging for gold in a mine you can go deep into your career field, achieve expertise and reap the rewards that await you.

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Why education inequality persists — and how to fix it

By: Valerie Strauss

This was written by John Jackson, president of the Schott Foundation for Public Education, and Pedro Noguera, the Peter L. Agnew professor of education at New York University.

By John H. Jackson and Pedro Noguera

If it takes a village to raise a child, the same village must share accountability when many children are educationally abandoned. In New York City, the nation's largest school system, on average student outcomes and their opportunity to learn are more determined by the

neighborhood where a child lives, than his or her abilities.

A new Schott Foundation for Public Education report, "A Rotting Apple: Education Redlining in New York City," reveals that the communities where most of the city's poor, black and Hispanic students live suffer from New York policies and practices that give their schools the fewest resources and their students the least experienced teachers. In contrast, the best-funded schools with the highest percentage of experienced teachers are most often located in the most

economically advantaged neighborhoods.

Schott's new report documents gaps that have not only long been accepted in New York City but are also institutionalized by city and state policies.

The report finds that a black or Hispanic student is nearly four times more likely to be enrolled in one of the city's poorest performing high schools than an Asian or white, non-Hispanic student. According to review of 2009-10 data, none of the city's strongest schools are located in

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the poorest neighborhoods of Harlem, the South Bronx, and central Brooklyn. Schools with the highest scores are found in northeastern Queens, the and the Upper East Side. As a result of New York City policies, black, Latino and low-income students have very limited access to those schools.

Districts with higher poverty rates have fewer highly educated, experienced teachers and less stable teaching staffs. Students from low-income New York City families of all ethnic groups have little chance of being tested for gifted-and-talented program eligibility. Few black and Hispanic students are selected for the city's top exam schools, such as Stuyvesant and the Bronx High School of Science.

The real outrage, then, is not our vivid language but how education in New York City is more likely to reinforce existing patterns of inequality than to serve as a pathway to opportunity. It is as if New York is testing black, Latino and poor students on their swimming abilities after knowingly relegating them to pools where the water has been drained. These students are then stigmatized as failures, their parents labeled as less than fully engaged, and their teachers called ineffective. Ultimately, their community's schools are closed rather than being supplied with the necessary resources and supports to flourish. One cannot ignore the impact of such policies and practices on the public image of blacks and Latinos males and the profiling that exists in our society.

Under these circumstances it is reasonable for parents to call for no more tests and reject the closure of their neighborhood schools that have been drained of resources, for students to walk out, and for parents to seek to enroll their students in better schools even when district laws don't permit them to do so.

Yes, some schools in high-poverty, high-minority areas perform well, but not nearly enough to say that New York City is offering all students a fair and substantive opportunity to learn. Even in the days of legal, state-sponsored segregation, some students and schools were able to swim upstream against a current of inequality. This should not cause us to be any more accepting of bad policies. We should not forget that many more students, schools and good teachers are drowning because of policies that exacerbate racial and wealth inequities.

Parents, teachers, and political leaders must reject long-standing practices that undermine students' opportunity to learn in the city's most neglected communities. In their place, they must advocate for genuine reforms, which will assure equitable access to good schools and programs.

As a first step, New York State should restore funding for education equity that was dramatically reduced over the

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past two years. Recent cuts have undermined the ruling in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity's lawsuit that the state must provide a "sound basic education" to all children. At the same time, the city's Department of Education should direct additional resources to schools based on student needs. Schools serving children from homes with fewer resources should receive significantly more per-student funding than those serving students in wealthier neighborhoods.

Every kindergarten student should take the gifted-and-talented program test to identify talent at an early age. Similarly, all middle schools should offer the courses necessary for the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test. Tutoring should be offered to low-income students so they can do their best on these crucial gatekeeper exams.

Finally, every school should conduct an "opportunity audit" to determine if they are offering each student a fair and substantive opportunity to learn.

The New York City public school system is the biggest apple on the U.S. education tree. By enforcing policies that aggressively dismantle educational inequality — rather than reinforce educational redlining — many more students can thrive in our classrooms, our labor force, and our democracy.

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Inequality in American Public Schools

Black students account for 18 percent of the country's pre-K enrollment, 48 percent with multiple out-of-school suspensions.

By: Steven Hsieh [Twitter](#)

Comprehensive data [released Friday](#) by the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights offers a striking glance at the extent of racial inequality plaguing the nation's education system.

Analysts found that black, Latino and Native American students have less access to advanced math and science courses and are more likely to be taught by first-year instructors than white students. Black and Native American

students are also suspended and expelled at disproportionate rates.

For the first time in history, the Education Department also examined school discipline at the pre-K level, finding that black students as young as four years old are already facing unequal treatment from school administrators.

The Education Department released four papers with the data, analyzing inequality in [school discipline](#), [early](#)

[learning](#), [college readiness](#) and [teacher equity](#) (pdfs). Here's a breakdown of some of the key findings, taken straight from those papers. During the 2011–12 school year:

1. Black students accounted for 18 percent of the country's pre-K enrollment, but made up 48 percent of preschoolers with multiple out-of-school suspensions.

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2. Black students were expelled at three times the rate of white students.
3. American Indian and Native-Alaskan students represented less than 1 percent of students, but 3 percent of expulsions.
4. Black girls were suspended at higher rates than all other girls and most boys.
5. American Indian and Native-Alaskan girls were suspended at higher rates than white boys or girls.
6. Nearly one in four boys of color, excepting Latino and Asian American students, with disabilities received an out-of-school suspension.
7. One in five girls of color with disabilities received an out-of-school suspension.
8. A quarter of the schools with the highest percentage of black and Latino students did not offer Algebra II.
9. A third of these schools did not offer chemistry.
10. Less than half of American Indian and Native-Alaskan high school students had access to the full range of math and science courses, which consists of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, calculus, biology, chemistry and physics.
11. Black and Latino students accounted for 40 percent of enrollment at schools with gifted programs, but only represented 26 percent of students in such programs.
12. Black, Latino and Native American students attended schools with higher concentrations of first-year teachers (3 to 4 percent) than white students (1 percent).
13. Black students were more than three times as likely to attend schools where fewer than 60 percent of teachers meet all state certification and licensure requirements.
14. Latino students were twice as likely to attend such schools.

The Department of Education's civil rights survey examined all 97,000 public schools in the US, representing 49 million students. Explore the datasets, organized by school, state and district, [here](#).

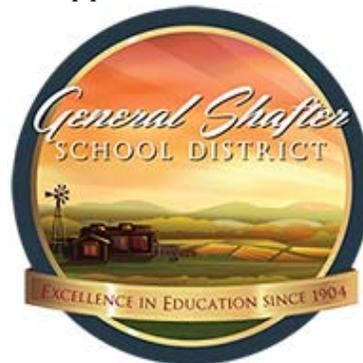
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