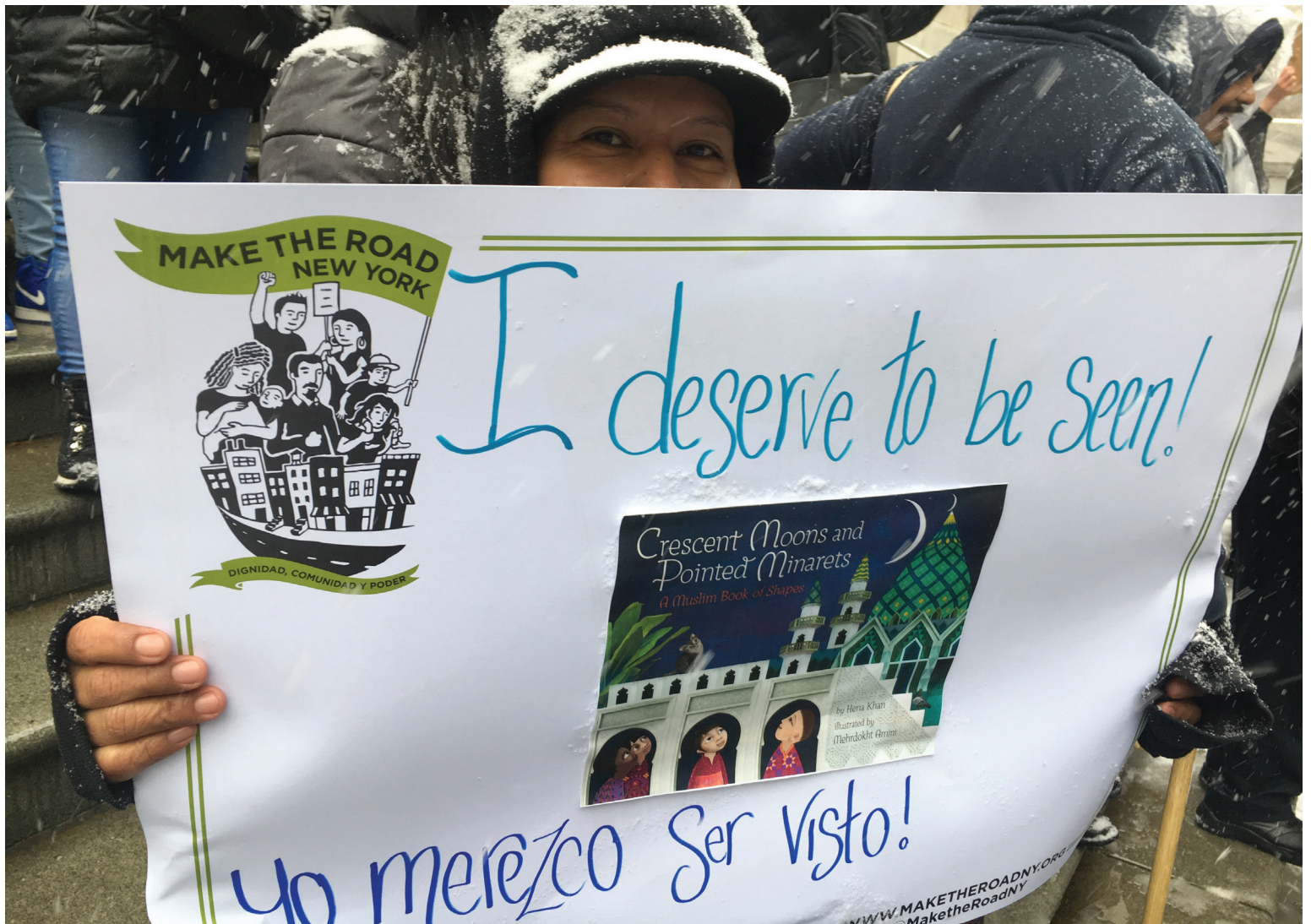


A young girl with glasses and a red shirt is reaching up to a high shelf in a library. The shelves are filled with books of various sizes and colors. The lighting is soft, and the overall atmosphere is quiet and focused.

Diverse City, White Curriculum:

The Exclusion of People of Color from
English Language Arts in NYC Schools

A REPORT FROM THE NYC COALITION FOR EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE



About this Report

This report was written at the request of the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ), by the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative (EJ-ROC) at the NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools. The demographic analysis was conducted by Jacqueline Aboulafia, Huiying B. Chan, Timothy Davis, Charlotte Dubiel, Jahqué Bryan Gooden, Megan Hester, Tahia Islam, Teona Pagan, and Alyana Vera. Graphic design by HOUSEOFCAKES. For questions or more information about CEJ, contact ncapers@nyccej.org or visit www.nyccej.org. For more information about EJ-ROC and the NYU Metro Center, contact nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu.

Introduction

Every few weeks or months, a racist incident in the nation’s public schools explodes on social media - a mock slave auction, a teacher cutting a child’s dreadlocks, blackface at a school party, racial slurs on the walls—shining a light on the deep inequities and racial hostilities that students of color live with every day. Some people are outraged, schools are defensive or apologetic, and then the public gaze moves on. But there is little attention to another ongoing, daily injustice inflicted on millions of students: experiencing year after year of school curriculum that does not reflect them, their families or their communities.

The lack of representation in curriculum presents a developmental challenge for students striving to establish their identity and sense of self; it also presents an academic challenge, as research shows that students engage more deeply and achieve at higher levels when their curriculum connects to their identities and experiences. Research demonstrates that for students of color and white students, culturally responsive education decreases dropout rates and suspensions, and increases grade point averages, student participation, self-image, critical thinking skills and graduation rates (Browman, 2011; Butler-Barnes, 2018; Carter, 2008; Laird, 2005; Morell, 2013).¹ Research from Tucson, AZ shows that students who took Mexican-American Studies classes scored better in Math, Reading and Writing, and were significantly more likely to graduate from high school—low-income and academically struggling students made the largest gains.² Students were also more engaged in literature and history lessons, and more likely to have a positive perception of their ability to succeed in math and science.³ Research from the San Francisco Unified School District shows that 9th graders who took Ethnic Studies courses improved their attendance on average by 21 percentage points, their GPA by 1.4 grade points, and their earned credits by 23 credits.⁴

Over the past three years, parents with the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ) have pushed the NYC Department of Education (DOE) to embrace culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE) as a key strategy for an equitable education system with high levels of engagement and achievement for all students. This campaign has included advocating for anti-bias and cultural competency trainings for school staff, as well as diverse and culturally responsive curriculum. In February 2019, CEJ partnered with the NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools (NYU Metro Center) on a report exposing the exclusion of people of color from commonly-used K-5th grade English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum in New York City. That report, *Chronically Absent*, showed that while 85% of NYC public school students are Black, Latinx or Asian, 84% of the books in ten commonly-used K-5th grade curricula are written by white authors and 51% have white main characters.⁵ While CRSE goes far beyond demographics, representation is a critical and foundational component. As scholar Rudine Sims Bishop stated, “When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part” (Bishop, 1990).⁶

NYC DOE Chancellor Richard Carranza has been a lifelong champion of culturally responsive education and has said that: “the idea of having culturally responsive and sustaining curricula and pedagogy is

not a matter of just educational practice. In many of our communities, it’s a matter of life and death.”⁷ Under Carranza and his top leadership, the NYC DOE has made important strides toward CRSE. Over the past 18 months, tens of thousands of DOE staff have received implicit bias training. In July 2019, DOE adopted a definition of culturally responsive-sustaining education as: “a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple forms of diversity (e.g., race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and ability) are recognized, understood, and regarded as indispensable sources of knowledge for rigorous teaching and learning.” The definition explains that “CRSE uses educational strategies that leverage the various aspects of students’ identities, including the rich cultural, racial, historical, linguistic characteristics of students to provide mirrors that reflect the greatness of who their people are and windows into the world that allow students to connect across cultures.”⁸ In September 2019, Carranza announced that the DOE is revamping the NYC Reads 365 booklist and launched a CRSE Fellows program for a cohort of 60 teachers to support the expansion of culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy. The DOE also committed that “vendors will be required to comply with the CRSE definition whenever the DOE solicits new Core curriculum,” but has not specified a timeline, nor has Mayor Bill de Blasio dedicated any funds.⁹ Meanwhile, the more than 875,000 children in 3-K to 8th grade in NYC public schools continue to spend their days immersed in curriculum that largely does not reflect their backgrounds and identities, or those of their classmates.

How Diverse Are NYC Curricula?

This new report extends CEJ's initial analysis to early childhood and middle grades, and shows that the massive over-representation of white authors and characters is most severe in Mayor de Blasio's signature 3-K and Pre-K programs that have brand new curriculum, and not much better in the middle grades, which is a critical time period for identity development. We analyzed 1,200 books across 16 commonly-used curricula and booklists from 3-K through 8th grade, examining the racial/ethnic demographics of the book authors and the cover characters (as a proxy for main characters) and comparing that to the demographic composition of NYC public schools.

These numbers describe a curriculum that is damaging for children of all backgrounds. Scholar Rudine Sims Bishop explained thirty years ago:

Children from dominant social groups have always found their mirrors in books, but they, too, have suffered from the lack of availability about others. They need the books as windows onto reality, not just on imaginary worlds. They need books that will help them understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in, and their place as a member of just one group, as well as their connections to all other humans.... If they see only reflections of themselves, they will grow up with an exaggerated sense of their own importance and value in the world - a dangerous ethnocentrism (1990).

The availability of both mirrors and windows in books is essential to the healthy development of all children, but many New York City schools are currently offering only mirrors to white children, and only windows to children of color.

The following sections detail the extent and nature of racial inequity in curriculum in each of three grade bands: early childhood (3-K and Pre-K), elementary grades, and middle grades.

DIVERSITY IN NYC CURRICULA, 3-K TO 8TH GRADE

We analyzed more than 1,200 books across 15 commonly-used curricula and booklists from 3-K and Pre-K through 8th grade, examining the racial/ethnic demographics of the book authors and the cover characters (as a proxy for main characters) and comparing that to the demographic composition of NYC public schools. Across all eleven grades, white authors and characters are massively over-represented.



NYC STUDENT POPULATION



AUTHORS OF BOOKS



HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS

MIDDLE EASTERN

N/A

> **0.2%** 3 OF 1,205 AUTHORS

1% 6 OF 783 BOOKS

NATIVE AMERICAN

N/A

> **1%** 15 OF 1,205 AUTHORS

3% 25 OF 783 BOOKS

LATINX



4% 47 OF 1,205 AUTHORS

8% 62 OF 783 BOOKS

ASIAN

16%

5% 55 OF 1,205 AUTHORS

10% 80 OF 783 BOOKS

BLACK

26%

7% 82 OF 1,205 AUTHORS

27% 211 OF 783 BOOKS

WHITE

15%

7%

27%

DE

Of the 1,205 books we analyzed, 1,003 books were by white authors yet white students represent only 15% of NYC's student population.

This nearly five times more books than by all authors of color combined.

It is important to note that when it comes to Native American representation in the curricula, proportionality is not the correct measure. The number of Native American students in NYC public schools is low due to colonization and genocide, but it is still crucial that all students learn the past and present of Native American cultures and communities on whose land we reside.

 41%

783 BOOKS

 51% 399 OF 783 BOOKS

 83%
1,003 OF 1,205
AUTHORS

3-K and Pre-K for All

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio launched Pre-K for All in 2015 and 3-K for All in 2018. These initiatives have been a centerpiece of his education agenda and his political legacy—touted widely locally, statewide and nationally. Yet this analysis shows that the curricula developed and promoted for these programs—3-K For All Explorations curriculum, the Pre-K For All Foundational curriculum, Scholastic Pre-K booklist, and the DOE’s NYC Reads 365 Pre-K booklist as well as the NY Public Library booklist—have almost no representation of students’ cultures and communities.

Across all five of these curriculum and booklists, there are extremely few authors of color:

Of the 42 texts in the **Pre-K 4 All curriculum**, there are 0 Black authors, 0 Native authors, 0 Middle Eastern authors, 1 Latinx author, 1 Asian author, and 40 white authors.

Out of 121 texts in the **3-K Explorations Curriculum**, there is 1 Latinx author, 1 Native author, 3 Black authors, 7 Asian authors, and 109 white authors.

Of the 20 texts in the **NYC Reads 365 Pre-K booklist**, there are 0 Black authors, 0 Native authors, 0 Asian authors, 1 Latinx author, and 19 white authors.

Of the 38 texts in the **Scholastic Pre-K booklist**, there are 0 Black authors, 0 Latinx authors, 0 Native authors, and 2 Asian authors, and 36 white authors.

Of the 12 texts in the **NYPL booklist**, there are 0 Latinx authors, 0 Asian authors, 0 Native authors, 1 Black author, and 11 white authors.

While a large number of 3-K and Pre-K texts feature animals or cartoons, we analyzed the books featuring human main characters to assess the diversity of representation.¹⁰ While there is greater diversity among cover characters than authors, white characters are still significantly overrepresented compared to the NYC student population and most of the characters of color are written by white authors.

In the **Pre-K 4 All curriculum and NYC Reads 365 booklist**, every single book that centers a Black or Asian character is written by a white author.

In the **3-K Explorations Curriculum**, 20 of the 22 books that center Black characters are written by white authors.

In the **Scholastic booklist**, every single book that centers a character of color is written by a white author.

The lack of representation extends to non-racial identities as well. Of the 205 books covered in this analysis, **only one cover represents a person with disabilities**, although there are more than 170,000 students with disabilities in NYC schools through 8th grade, making up 20% of NYC public school students.

REPRESENTATION OF AUTHORS AND HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS IN 3K & PRE-K

 NYC STUDENT POPULATION

 AUTHORS OF BOOKS

 HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS

LATINX

 41%

> 1%

 5%

BLACK

 26%

> 2%

 32%

ASIAN

 16%

 5%

 11%

WHITE

 15%

 92%

 55%

NATIVE AMERICAN

N/A

0%

 1%

MIDDLE EASTERN

N/A

0%

0%

REPRESENTATION OF ALL COVER CHARACTERS IN 3K & PRE-K

NYC STUDENT POPULATION

ALL COVER CHARACTERS

LATINX



BLACK



ASIAN



WHITE



NATIVE AMERICAN

N/A

0%

MIDDLE EASTERN

N/A

0%

ANIMALS

N/A



When animals are added to the analysis, the under-representation of people of color is even more stark.



This analysis shows that in every one of the DOE’s early childhood curricula and booklists, students read many times more books featuring animal characters than books about all characters of color combined. While books about animals have their place in ELA curricula, they should not be to the exclusion of books about people of color.

Even in New York City’s most touted education initiative, students of color are denied the opportunity to see the positive reflections of themselves and their identities that white students are granted. These statistics are especially shameful because the 3-K and Pre-K curricula were *newly created* by the DOE in the last few years, yet are still so unrepresentative of NYC students. While some schools may adapt or customize their own curriculum to their student population, many more are likely to use these free resources promoted by the DOE—resources that exclude the stories of students’ communities, causing damage to student achievement, academic engagement, and social development.

Elementary Grades

To assess diversity and representation in K-5th grades, CEJ and the NYU Metro Center analyzed three booklists (Scholastic, NYC Reads 365, and the New York Public Library booklist) and six K-5 curricula (Ready New York/CCLS, EL Education, ReadWorks, Pearson ReadyGen, Junior Great Books, and Great Minds) for author and character diversity. Across all six grades, white authors and characters are massively over-represented.¹¹

REPRESENTATION OF AUTHORS AND HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS IN K-5TH GRADE

 NYC STUDENT POPULATION
  AUTHORS OF BOOKS
  HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS

LATINX



BLACK



ASIAN



WHITE



NATIVE AMERICAN

N/A



These numbers demonstrate that most of the 200,000 Latinx children, 130,000 Black children and 80,000 Asian children in NYC public elementary schools could graduate 5th grade almost never having read a book by an author of their cultural background. Many Latinx and Asian children can graduate 5th grade having barely ever read a book about a character of their cultural background.

Specifically:

Of the 74 books in the ReadWorks curriculum, **only 4 are by Black authors.**

Of the 87 authors in the EL Education curriculum, **only 4 are by Latinx authors.**

Of the 82 authors in the Great Minds curriculum, **there is not a single Asian author.**

Among the 9 curricula and booklists, **not a single one had an author of Middle Eastern descent**, and 8 out of 9 didn't have a single cover character of Middle Eastern descent.

Among the 9 curricula and booklists, **five did not have a single Native American author.**

While the representation of Black cover characters is most proportional to school system demographics, very few of those characters appear in books written by Black authors. **The majority of Black characters are written by white authors.**

The small number of **Asian authors and characters represents such a vast range of countries and cultures**, that it is extremely unlikely that an Asian child will encounter an author or character from their own cultural identity.

REPRESENTATION OF ALL COVER CHARACTERS IN K-5TH GRADE

NYC STUDENT POPULATION

ALL COVER CHARACTERS

LATINX



BLACK



ASIAN



WHITE



NATIVE AMERICAN

N/A



ANIMALS

N/A



This invisibility can have extremely damaging impacts on children’s concept of themselves and their engagement in school. When we add animal characters to our analysis, we find that over the course of six years from kindergarten to 5th grade, students read more books whose cover characters are animals than books whose cover characters are Latinx, Black or Asian people.

To break those numbers down further:

In 8 out of the 9 curricula, **more books feature animals as cover characters than Latinx or Asian people** as cover characters.

In 7 out of the 9 curricula, **more books feature animals as cover characters than Black people** as cover characters.

In 5 out of the 9 curricula, **more books feature animals as cover characters than Latinx, Black and Asian people as cover characters combined.**

For the K-5th grade curricula, CEJ and NYU Metro Center took this analysis a step further to look at how culturally responsive the curricula are, because books with diverse authors and characters may still communicate negative or deficit-based messages about people of color, women, immigrants, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, and other marginalized identities. We convened teams of parents, teachers, organizers, and community members to use the NYU Metro Center’s Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard to evaluate sample units from 7 curricula for Representation, Social Justice, and Teachers’ Materials.¹²

Some common themes that the scoring teams found are:

When non-US countries and cultures are covered in the curriculum, **the focus is often on poverty, violence and deprivation, rather than strengths and assets.** This makes the curriculum appear to be diverse while it perpetuates a narrative that other countries need help from the United States and its values, resources, and institutions.

People in countries outside the USA are often presented as being strange or different (one curriculum cautioned teachers about “hard to pronounce names” in a story about Nepal), rather than identifying points of identification and connection.

The curricula **rarely encourage teachers to connect learning to students’ own experiences or allow students to bring their own knowledge** into the classroom, thus missing opportunities for students to engage and identify with the texts.

In many curricula, the **only guidance for teachers related to cultural diversity concerns English Language Learners (ELLs).** This guidance is usually about language acquisition and does not acknowledge that ELLs bring rich experiences and knowledge from their home countries, or that multilingualism is a strength that can be tapped for learning.

The teams used their scores to identify which of five categories the curriculum falls into: Culturally Destructive, Culturally Insufficient, Emerging Cultural Awareness, Culturally Aware or Culturally Responsive. The teams felt that the majority of the curricula were Culturally Destructive.

These scores indicate that problematic issues embedded in these seven ELA curricula

go beyond numerical representation to the discussions and activities that students are engaged in. The Scorecard Analysis suggests that the DOE's ELA curricula are riddled with deficit messages communicated every day about people of diverse identities. To address these deficiencies, it is necessary to revamp not only the texts that students are reading in ELA classes but the instructional materials as well.



Middle Grades

Research shows, and any adult can testify from personal experience, that the middle school years are critical for development of a child's sense of self, identity and community. Healthy or unhealthy messages and perceptions about racial, cultural and sexual identities can have significant impacts on a student's social-emotional wellness and academic achievement. Research shows, for example, that when Black girls have a positive understanding of their racial identity, they are more academically motivated, more curious and have greater academic persistence and achievement.¹³ By providing students with diverse literature, schools can help students develop healthy identities and become sensitive to other cultures and identities.

We analyzed eight commonly-used middle school curricula (Ready NY/CCLS, EL Education, Great Minds, Pearson MyPerspectives, Code X, McGraw-Hill Wonders, ReadWorks and Houghton-Mifflin Journeys) and three booklists (NYC Reads 365, NY Public Library and Scholastic) for the diversity of characters and authors.¹⁴

It is clear from this chart that too many of the books NYC middle school students are reading do not reflect their identities:

10 out of 11 curricula and booklists have zero Middle Eastern authors. The Code X curriculum for 6th and 7th grade is the only curriculum that has Middle Eastern authors.

Nearly half of the curricula and booklists (5 out of 11) do not have a single Native American author. The remaining six curricula and booklists only have one or two Native American authors.

In the 110 books in the McGraw Hill Wonders 6th grade curriculum, **every single author we could identify is white.**

Of the 53 books in K-8th grades in the Ready NY CCLS curriculum, **2 are by Asian authors, 3 by Black authors, and 4 by Latinx authors.** The other 44 by White authors.

Of the 124 books in the Great Minds curriculum from K-8th grade, **only 5 are by Latinx authors.**

REPRESENTATION OF AUTHORS AND HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS IN 6TH-8TH GRADE

NYC STUDENT POPULATION

AUTHORS OF BOOKS

HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS

LATINX



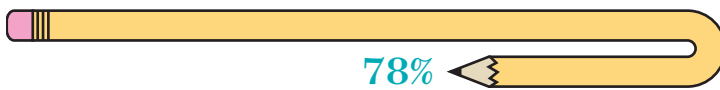
BLACK



ASIAN



WHITE



NATIVE AMERICAN

N/A



MIDDLE EASTERN

N/A



While the story characters are more diverse than the authors, representation is still severely lacking.

In EL Education curriculum for 8th grade, **nearly half of the books feature Black characters and topics related to civil rights, but almost all of these books are written by White authors.**

Of the 26 books with human cover characters in the CodeX curriculum, **only 1 is Asian.**

Of the 29 books on the Scholastic middle school book list, **only 1 is about a Latinx character.**

Middle school curriculum should provide opportunities to explore the experiences of diverse identities beyond race and ethnicity. Research suggests that sexuality and gender identity should be normalized during this age, and one step towards normalization is inclusion in texts. We examined a sample of two booklists and three curricula to determine if there was any representation of the LGBTQ+ community. We found:

Out of 44 books in the Ready NY CCLS middle school curriculum, there are **no main characters that identify as LGBTQ+.**

Out of 19 books in the EL Education middle school curriculum, there are **no main characters that identify as LGBTQ+.**

Out of 40 texts in the NYC Reads 365 middle school booklist, **only one has a storyline that represents LGBTQ+ identities.**

This is yet another missed opportunity for middle schools to engage, affirm and challenge students academically based on the identities and issues they care about.

Conclusion

In recent years the percentage of children’s books published by authors of color has grown from 7% (2013) to 22% (2018).¹⁵ There have been more than 3,500 children’s books published by authors of color and more than 5,000 published about people of color in the last decade—788 books by authors of color and 1,023 books about characters of color in 2018 alone. This is more than enough to fill the 10-15 books per grade that are usually part of a curriculum. Take Latinx students for example, who represent 41% of NYC students but are most drastically under-represented in the curricula: in the past decade, there have been 812 children’s books published by Latinx authors and 1,084 books about Latinx characters. Yet many of the major curriculum providers can find barely one book to include in their curriculum.

These books are not hard to find—a simple Google search will reveal dozens of websites, blog posts, and curated booklists with excellent literature by and about people with a wide diversity of identities. Individual teachers and schools have long found these resources on their own and created culturally responsive curriculum for their classrooms. But this should not be the responsibility of each individual teacher and school.

Spurred by the release of CEJ’s last report, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) has taken significant steps to revamp their curriculum, and support teachers to develop culturally responsive teaching practices. Within the span of just a few months, TCRWP created a new list of K-5 read-aloud books that mirrors the diversity of NYC students, shared accompanying lesson plans, wrote and distributed new middle school reading units, assembled a Diverse Book List with input from schools and educators across the country, and launched multiple professional development opportunities, including an Equity Institute and workshops on culturally responsive teaching. While there is still much work ahead, TCRWP’s efforts demonstrate that it is possible to make significant change quickly that will impact students lives. EL Education is also in the process of revamping their middle school curriculum with a culturally responsive lens, and is looking to do the same for their K-5th grade curriculum. The DOE’s Middle

School Quality Initiative has created a booklist that is significantly more diverse than any of the other curricula and booklists we examined. Creating truly culturally responsive classrooms and schools is ongoing, lifelong work, but the

enormous progress that some schools and organizations have made within a short period of time is evidence that with commitment and urgency, it is possible to begin addressing these inequities immediately.

CEJ CALLS ON THE NYC DOE TO ACT IMMEDIATELY TO MEET THE FOLLOWING DEMANDS:

1. The NYC Department of Education must invest funds to create or purchase a culturally responsive English Language Arts curriculum for all students, from 3-K through 8th grade.

The DOE must develop or acquire instructional and teachers materials that are engaging, asset-based, and culturally responsive, and reach students in every class, every grade, every day. This can be done through dedicating funds in Mayor de Blasio's fiscal year 2021 budget and issuing a Request for Proposals for the creation of new curriculum, aligned to the state's Next Generation learning standards.

Because many teachers are not accustomed to teaching curriculum by and about the diverse cultures of their students, the DOE will need to provide extensive professional development in the new curriculum and culturally responsive pedagogy. A 2018 survey of NYC teachers from the NYU Metro Center found that 93% of teachers surveyed said they would be willing to modify their lessons to connect with students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, only 41% said they have the proper resources to do so, and only 29% said they receive ongoing professional development to help them diversify their curricula and instruction.¹⁶ There are many experienced educators in NYC who have deep expertise in culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy and could be tapped for this effort.

2. The NYC Department of Education must cut ties with all curriculum/book vendors whose materials are not reflective of NYC student demographics in their content and authorship, and consistent with CRE principles.

Companies that promote curriculum and booklists with virtually no representation of Black, Latinx, Asian, Native American and Middle Eastern communities have no place in New York City schools and should not be receiving tax dollars from our diverse residents. As the largest school district in the nation, New York City has the opportunity to lead in this area, and influence how children's curriculum vendors operate nationally. By refusing to purchase from vendors who sell white-dominated curriculum and increasing the demand for books by authors of color, New York City can push curriculum vendors to diversify their materials and increase the availability of culturally responsive curriculum for school districts across the country.

APPENDIX A: CURRICULUM RESOURCES

1000 Black Girl Books

grassrootscommunityfoundation.org/1000-black-girl-books-resource-guide

A database and resource list compiled by 13-year old Marley Dias that highlights stories with Black girls as protagonists.

American Indians in Children's Literature

americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com

Provides booklists, reviews, and analyses of indigenous people in children's books and curriculum.

Baltimore County Public Schools Library Information Services

<https://bcpslis.pbworks.com/w/page/129831582/Diverse+and+Multicultural+Book+Lists#Hispanic/Latino/LatinX>

Offers diverse lists of prestigious book awards. Book lists include the Arab American Book Award and the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature.

Blog Roll Call: Diversity in YA Literature

<http://www.teenlibrariantoolbox.com/2018/10/blog-roll-call-diversity-in-ya-literature-a-list-of-resources-to-help-librarians-diversify-their-shelves/>

A blog that provides resources to help librarians diversify their bookshelves. Noteworthy book lists include YA pride and Latinos in Kidlit.

Jane Addams Children's Book Award

<http://www.janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org/jacba/#jacbaDatabase>

An annual award that recognizes books that engage children in thinking about peace, social justice, global community, and equity for all people.

Jump Into a Book

https://www.jumpintoabook.com/2019/01/lets-get-linky-the-2019-multicultural-childrens-book-day-link-up/?doing_wp_cron=1562598811.8937580585479736328125

Co-founders of Multicultural Children's Book Day, an organization committed to providing updated multicultural book lists every year.

Lee and Low

<https://www.leeandlow.com/>

The largest multicultural children's book publisher in the US, offers collections of books by grade, level, and interest.

Multicultural Children's Book Day

<https://multiculturalchildrensbookday.com/multicultural-reading-resources/diversity-book-lists-for-kids/>

An organization that celebrates and promotes diverse children's books and offers categorized lists such as countries, world religions, and experiences of refugee children.

National Education Association (NEA)

<http://www.nea.org/tools/resources-addressing-multicultural-diversity-issues-in-your-classroom.htm>

Offers a categorized list of book lists by theme. Noteworthy lists include the Asian-American List and the Bilingual List.

Queer Books for Teens

<http://queerbooksforteens.com/best-of-lists/>

A comprehensive database of LGBTQIAP+ young adult literature that focuses on the intersectionalities of racial and sexual identities.

Social Justice Books

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/>

Identifies and promotes the best multicultural and social justice children's books and materials for educators.

Teaching Tolerance

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts>

A multigenre, multimedia collection of diverse short texts that include political cartoons, non-fiction, photographs, and literature.

We Need Diverse Books

<https://diversebooks.org/resources/where-to-find-diverse-books/>

An organization that promotes diverse children's books and offers a categorized list of diverse booklists by theme.

Writability

<http://avajae.blogspot.com/2015/11/diverse-books-resource-list.html>

A blog that provides a diverse books resource list that emphasizes characters with disabilities and explores the intersectionality of identities that include disability.

Zinn Education Project

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/>

A site that offers free, downloadable lessons and articles that emphasize the role of working people, women, people of color, and organized social movements in shaping history.



APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

Identifying Curricula

To identify commonly-used curriculum in NYC schools, CEJ parents asked their children’s teachers and administrators to see the curriculum that their children were being taught—a request authorized by the NYC DOE Parent Bill of Rights.¹⁷ In some cases, schools shared curriculum readily; in other cases, there was resistance to sharing that information with parents. Several parents were given the runaround, asked to set up meetings with administrators to explain their request, or promised the information without results. CEJ compiled a list of the curricula that parents collected, as well as those that were shared by teachers and those that are recommended on the DOE website.

Author Analysis

To perform the analysis, researchers at the NYU Metro Center obtained the booklists and curriculum texts on the websites of curriculum companies and entered more than 1,200 books into spreadsheets by grade and author. To identify authors’ race/ethnicity, we searched for biographies and images of the authors on personal websites, LinkedIn, publishing companies websites, news articles, and professional associations. While we were able to find the vast majority of the authors’ race/ethnicity, we could not identify a small number of authors, and they are omitted from our analysis.

The demographic analysis of authors is likely an undercount of the number of white

authors. The authors excluded from our analysis because they couldn’t be found online are likely to be employees of the curriculum companies, rather than independent children’s book authors. Based on the demographics of the curriculum companies, those authors are likely to be white. Additionally, authors of color are more likely to publicly identify with their race/ethnicity than are white authors, so they were easier for the researchers to find and count.

Character Analysis

Researchers searched curriculum company websites and booksellers to find book covers and documented whether the covers depicted humans, animals or other images, as well as the race/ethnicity of human cover characters. We counted every ethnic identity on a cover only once, to ensure that one book with five Latinx children on the cover wouldn’t count the same as five books about Latinx characters. We found some texts that were excerpted from magazines or written exclusively for the curriculum, in which case there was no relevant cover image. There were also some texts where we couldn’t identify the race/ethnicity of the cover character. In both of these cases, the texts were excluded from the analysis.

The demographic analysis of cover characters is likely also an undercount of the number of white characters. There were numerous book covers with characters whose race/ethnicity could not be determined, or where the character’s race/ethnicity was unclear

because of how the character was imaged. In those cases, we did not search the book to find identifying information about the main character. But given the overwhelming predominance of white characters in the curriculum overall, a majority of those characters are likely to be white as well.

Identifying LGBTQ+ characters required that we look beyond the cover characters as a proxy for story characters. We read the book summary and skimmed the full text if it was accessible online. If that did not give us enough information about the characters we read reviews, searched for keywords and used goodreads.com to determine if the book falls under the genre “LGBTQ” or queer”. The plot did not have to be centered around the character’s identity to count, as long as there was a character that identifies as LGBTQ+.

One of the shortcomings of the author and character analysis was the inadequacy of the racial/ethnic categories. To compare curriculum demographics with NYC student demographics, we used the DOE’s racial/ethnic categories and added categories for Native American and Middle Eastern. We counted multiracial authors and characters as persons of color, and we counted the few AfroLatinx authors and characters as Latinx. We recommend that the DOE publish more comprehensive, detailed analyses of NYC student demographics, including categories for students who identify as Native American, Middle Eastern, multiracial, Afro-Latinx and other identities.

APPENDIX C: 3K AND PRE-K REPRESENTATION

REPRESENTATION OF AUTHORS, 3K AND PRE-K

Story Authors	NYC Students	PreK4All Foundational	3K4 All Explorations	Scholastic Pre-K Booklist	NY Public Library	NYC Reads 365 Booklist	TOTAL AVERAGE
Latinx	41%	2%	1%	0%	0%	5%	2%
Black	26%	0%	3%	0%	8%	0%	2%
Asian	16%	2%	6%	5%	0%	5%	4%
White	15%	95%	91%	95%	92%	90%	93%
Native	No DOE data	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Middle Eastern	No DOE data	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS, 3K AND PRE-K

Story Characters	NYC Students	PreK4All	3K4All Explorations	Scholastic Pre-K Booklist	NYC Reads365 Book	AVERAGE
Latinx	41%	7%	4%	0%	13%	6%
Black	26%	27%	33%	27%	25%	28%
Asian	16%	0%	13%	7%	13%	8%
White	15%	67%	48%	67%	50%	58%
Native	No DOE data	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Middle Eastern	No DOE data	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

APPENDIX D: ELEMENTARY K REPRESENTATION

REPRESENTATION OF AUTHORS, K-5TH GRADES

	NYC Students	Ready NY CCLS	Exped. Learning/Engage NY	Great Minds	NYC Reads 365 (DOE Booklist)	NY Public Library Booklist	Scholastic Booklist	Pearson ReadyGen	ReadWorks	Junior Great Books	Total Average
Latinx	41%	6%	5%	5%	4%	13%	3%	5%	4%	7%	6%
Black	26%	0%	8%	8%	6%	11%	5%	8%	5%	6%	6%
Asian	16%	0%	2%	2%	5%	8%	3%	8%	5%	3%	4%
White	15%	94%	84%	83%	84%	68%	90%	79%	85%	81%	83%
Middle Eastern	No DOE data	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Native American	No DOE data	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%

REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS, K-5TH GRADES

	NYC Students	Ready NY CCLS	Exped. Learning/Engage NY	Great Minds	NYC Reads 365 (DOE Booklist)	NY Public Library Booklist	Scholastic Booklist	Pearson ReadyGen	ReadWorks	Junior Great Books	Total Average
Latinx	41%	0%	5%	9%	7%	18%	4%	10%	11%	10%	8%
Black	26%	27%	37%	22%	34%	26%	30%	20%	28%	23%	28%
Asian	16%	9%	13%	5%	6%	12%	4%	16%	15%	13%	10%
White	15%	55%	43%	58%	51%	41%	61%	49%	44%	51%	50%
Middle Eastern	No DOE data	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Native American	No DOE data	9%	2%	6%	1%	3%	0%	2%	2%	3%	3%

APPENDIX E: 6TH-8TH GRADE REPRESENTATION

REPRESENTATION OF AUTHORS, 6TH-8TH GRADES

	NYC Students	Ready NY CCLS	EL Education	Great Minds	NYC Reads 365 (DOE Booklist)	NY Public Library Booklist	Scholastic Booklist	Pearson Perspectives	Code X	ReadWorks	McGraw Hill	Houghton-Mifflin Journeys	Total Average
Latinx	41%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	5%	8%	0%	4%	4%
Black	26%	6%	18%	12%	8%	0%	3%	17%	22%	23%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	16%	0%	11%	15%	8%	25%	3%	7%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	15%	78%	71%	65%	83%	50%	90%	69%	64%	69%	100%	93%	93%
Middle Eastern	No DOE data	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Native American	No DOE data	0%	0%	8%	3%	25%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	4%	4%

REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN COVER CHARACTERS, 6TH-8TH GRADES

	NYC Students	EL Education	Great Minds	NYC Reads 365 (DOE Booklist)	NY Public Library Booklist	Scholastic Booklist	Pearson Perspectives	Code X	ReadWorks	McGraw Hill Wonder	Houghton-Mifflin Journeys	Total Average
Latinx	41%	0%	0%	7%	0%	3%	6%	8%	18%	13%	11%	7%
Black	26%	45%	21%	17%	20%	7%	25%	35%	45%	23%	16%	25%
Asian	16%	15%	14%	13%	40%	7%	13%	4%	0%	5%	11%	12%
White	15%	40%	50%	60%	40%	76%	50%	46%	36%	50%	53%	50%
Middle Eastern	No DOE data	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	8%	0%	2%	0%	1%
Native American	No DOE data	0%	14%	3%	0%	3%	6%	0%	0%	8%	11%	5%

ENDNOTES

1. Some examples of studies are: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0034654315582066>; <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/cdev.12995>; <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11162-005-2966-1>
2. <https://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/rbtf1/%20LvuZi8zZ6ltbw/full>
3. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mexican-american-studies-student-achievement_n_6249592?1421108833
4. <http://news.stanford.edu/2016/01/12/ethnicstudies-benefits-011216/>
5. <http://www.nyccej.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/reportCEJ-Chronically-Absent-FINAL.pdf>
6. <https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>
7. <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2019/10/08/anti-bias-training-and-culturally-responsive-education-are-a-matter-of-life-and-death-carranza-says/>
8. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/vision-and-mission/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education>
9. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/news/announcements/contentdetails/2019/09/23/chancellor-carranza-announces-efforts-to-accelerate-learning-and-instruction-for-2019-20-school-year>
10. We did not include the analysis of the New York Public Library (NYPL) booklist characters. Only 4 of the 12 texts had human cover characters, and each of those had multiple characters on the front. To avoid skewing the data toward such a small sample, we excluded NYPL from the character analysis.
11. Teachers College Reading and Writing Project was included in the original analysis, but is now in the process of revamping their K-8 curriculum to make it more diverse. Because that new curriculum is in process, they were not included in this analysis.
12. <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/resources/culturally-responsive-scorecard>
13. <https://source.wustl.edu/2017/12/healthy-racial-identity-important-adolescent-african-american-girls/>
14. ReadWorks, McGraw-Hill Wonders and Houghton-Mifflin Journeys only had 6th grade curriculum available. For Ready NY/CCLS, we were only able to obtain curriculum samples, rather than the entire curriculum, for 6th and 7th grades, so the analysis is based on those samples, which are likely representative of the larger curriculum.
15. <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp>
16. https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/atn293/coe/Metro_Center_Teacher_Survey_Results_FINAL.pdf
17. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/policies-for-all/parents-bill-of-rights>



NYC Coalition for Educational Justice

Led by parents, the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice is organizing a movement to end the inequities in the city's public school system. We are a collaborative of community-based organizations whose members include culturally and racially diverse parents, family members and community residents. We are motivated by the urgent need to obtain a quality, well-rounded and culturally responsive education for all students. We mobilize the power of parents and the community to affect policy change and create a more equitable educational system.

nyccej.org



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