

Dylan Knoll  
Educational Equity

I'm a white male in 8th grade at a great school. My school has funding for computers, good teachers, three language offerings, and lunch. It has funding for extracurriculars like music, art, and drama. I went to a good elementary school, which helped me to get into this good middle school. All the schools I've attended have been properly funded. Not everyone in NYC has the same experience. A highschooler named Sherard Stephens went to an under-resourced highschool, Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science, in South Bronx. He was reminded constantly that his school had a lack of resources. For example, his school shared a building with another school. Also, the school was very disorganized. Instead of the schedule being posted prior to the semester, everyone is stuck on the first day. When he went to school each morning he was greeted by a metal detector. He said, "We were viewed as thugs before students." He applied for a college-prep program called Sponsors for Educational Opportunity. He had to spend extra time out of school just to get an adequate education.<sup>1</sup> Many students in NYC are unable to attend schools that are properly funded due to their race, gender, economic status, and where they live.

School segregation still exists in NYC which means different schools receive different funding. This happens because of racial and economic inequalities. Lower-income neighborhoods have poorer facilities and services in their schools because they are getting less money from the property taxes in that neighborhood. Due to poverty, there are a lot of kids in these neighborhoods that need more help which requires more money. Families can't afford to fund any extracurriculars that would help these students to get ahead.<sup>2</sup> Segregation also happens because parents can decide where their kid goes to school when they're younger and they'll pick a school based on their preferences and bias. For example, a family that is Asian and speaks Mandarin might want their kid to go to a school that has Mandarin options.

I think a possible solution is to give more resources and money to underfunded schools. I think that if people talked about these issues more in the media, it would raise awareness of the problem. An organization called Teens Take Charge has proposed ways to raise awareness of this issue. Some examples are, to do a protest for equal education and diversity in schools. This protest could take place in Washington DC to show the government that a lot of people care about these issues. One way to fix

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<sup>1</sup> Teens Take Charge, Sherard Stephens, April 28, 2017

<https://www.teenstakecharge.com/testimony-1/2017/5/21/sherard-stephens>

<sup>2</sup> Public Schools fund, Under De Blasio, Is Struggling To Lure Wealthy donors, May 12, 2015,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/13/nyregion/new-york-public-schools-fund-under-mayor-de-blasio-struggles-to-secure-donations.html?searchResultPosition=1>

the gap in diversity is to help students in segregated schools apply to colleges with guidance counselors. We could also replace the gifted and talented program with school-wide enrichment.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Teens Take Charge, Enrollment Equity Plan  
<https://www.teenstakecharge.com/enrollment>