

# MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS: IMPACT OF RACE/ETHNIC COMPOSITION

OCTOBER 26, 2018

- **Diversity:** # of different groups and size of each group
  - $D = 1 - \sum(n^2)$ , where 'n' represents the proportion of each race/ethnic group in the school
  - Higher index indicates having greater school race/ethnic diversity
- **Density:** proportion of one ethnic group in a local population, usually comparing a socio-historical dominant compared to non-dominant group(s)
  - Non-Latino white enrollment
  - Race/ethnic minority enrollment

N.Y. / REGION  
**New York Schools Wonder: How White Is Too White?**  
By KYLE SPENCER, FEB. 16, 2016



Brooklyn Arts and Science Elementary School is one of seven New York City public schools taking part in an Education Department initiative aimed at increasing a racial and socioeconomic balance at schools in fast-gentrifying neighborhoods. Todd Hiltner/The New York Times

How white is too white? At the *Academy of Arts and Letters*, a small K-8 school in Brooklyn founded in 2006 to educate a constituency of "diverse individuals," that question is being put to the test.

The school — along with six others in New York City — is part of a new Education Department initiative aimed at maintaining a racial and socioeconomic balance at schools in fast-gentrifying neighborhoods.



Is School Integration Necessary?

By Peter Cunningham | Contributor  
Aug. 13, 2018, at 9:00 a.m.

I recently moderated a panel during the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia sponsored by Democrats for Education Reform, featuring a civil rights attorney, an advocate for criminal justice reform, a Colorado state legislator and a charter school leader.

The topic was education "intersectionality" — which is essentially how issues outside the classroom affect performance inside the classroom. During the discussion, a member of the audience raised the issue of segregation and I said something that has gotten some attention on social media:


How LEARNING HAPPENS

THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN OUR SCHOOLS

**Mental Health In Schools: A Hidden Crisis Affecting Millions Of Students**

August 21, 2018 - 6:00 AM ET

MEG ANDERSON | KAVITHA CARDOZA



L.A. JOURNALIST

Part One in an NPR ED series on mental health in schools.

You might call it a silent epidemic.

# School Race/Ethnic Composition & Mental Health

## Study 1: Literature Review

### *Research Question*

- What is the **evidence to date** of school race/ethnic composition's impact on mental health?

### *Objective*

- Conduct a systematic literature review of the current evidence regarding the impact of school race/ethnic composition on mental health outcomes using PRISMA guidelines

### *Findings*

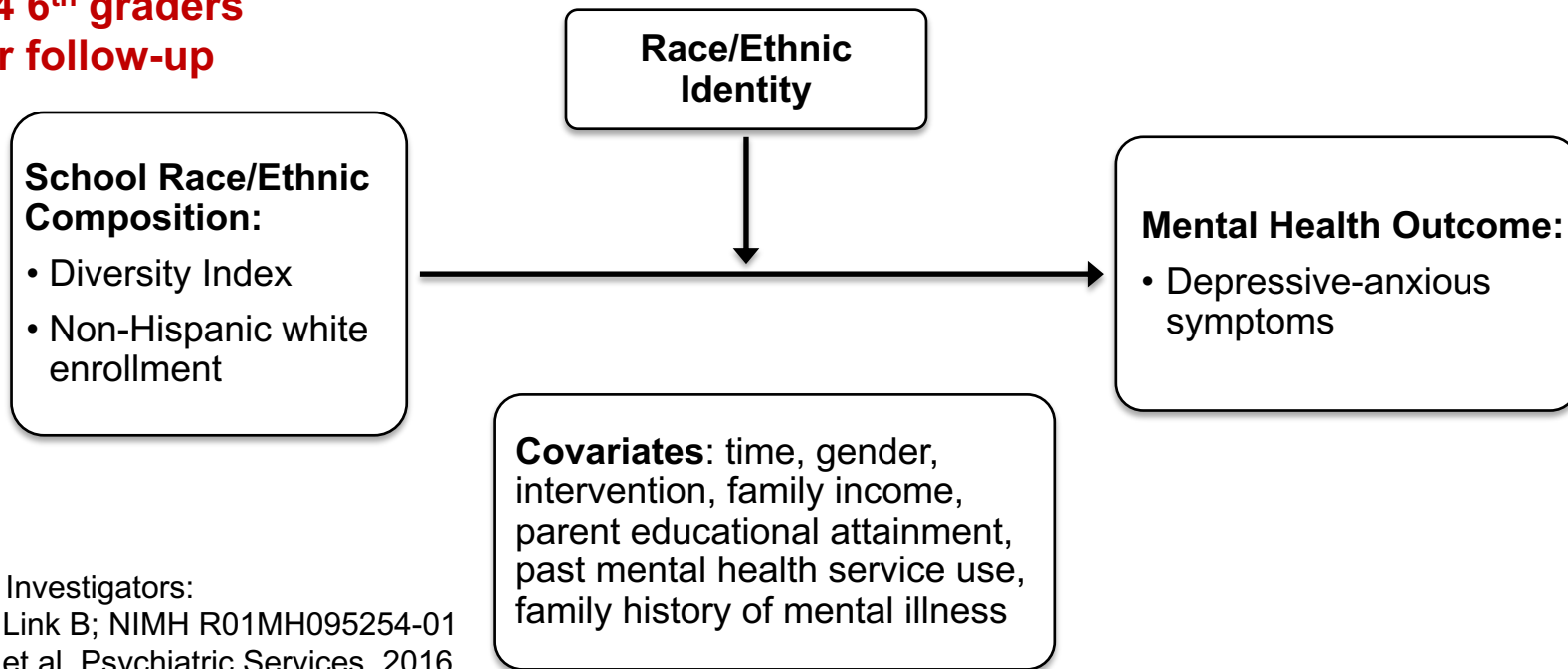
- N=11 articles for synthesis: published 2002-2017; US (n=8) & Europe (n=3); majority high school samples (n=7) (middle school (n=3) & kindergarten (n=1)); equally used convenience & nationally representative samples; study designs included 7 longitudinal & 4 cross-sectional
- For all youth, attending schools with higher vs. lower proportion of same race/ethnic peers in school was protective of mental health
- Unclear at what point of non-Latino white enrollment where risk of mental health symptoms begins to vary by race/ethnic group

# School Race/Ethnic Composition & Mental Health Study 2

**Texas Stigma Study\*, 2011–2015**

**N=484 6<sup>th</sup> graders**

**2-year follow-up**

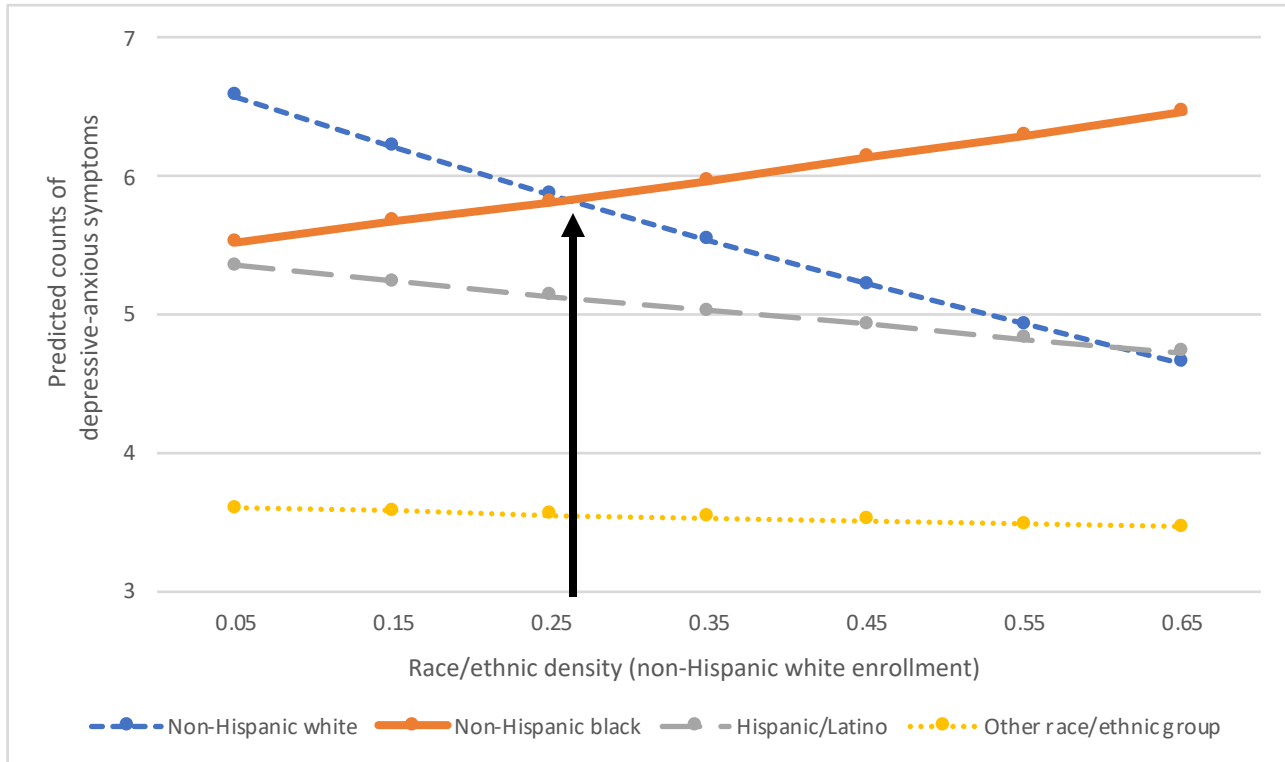


\* Principal Investigators:

Painter K, Link B; NIMH R01MH095254-01

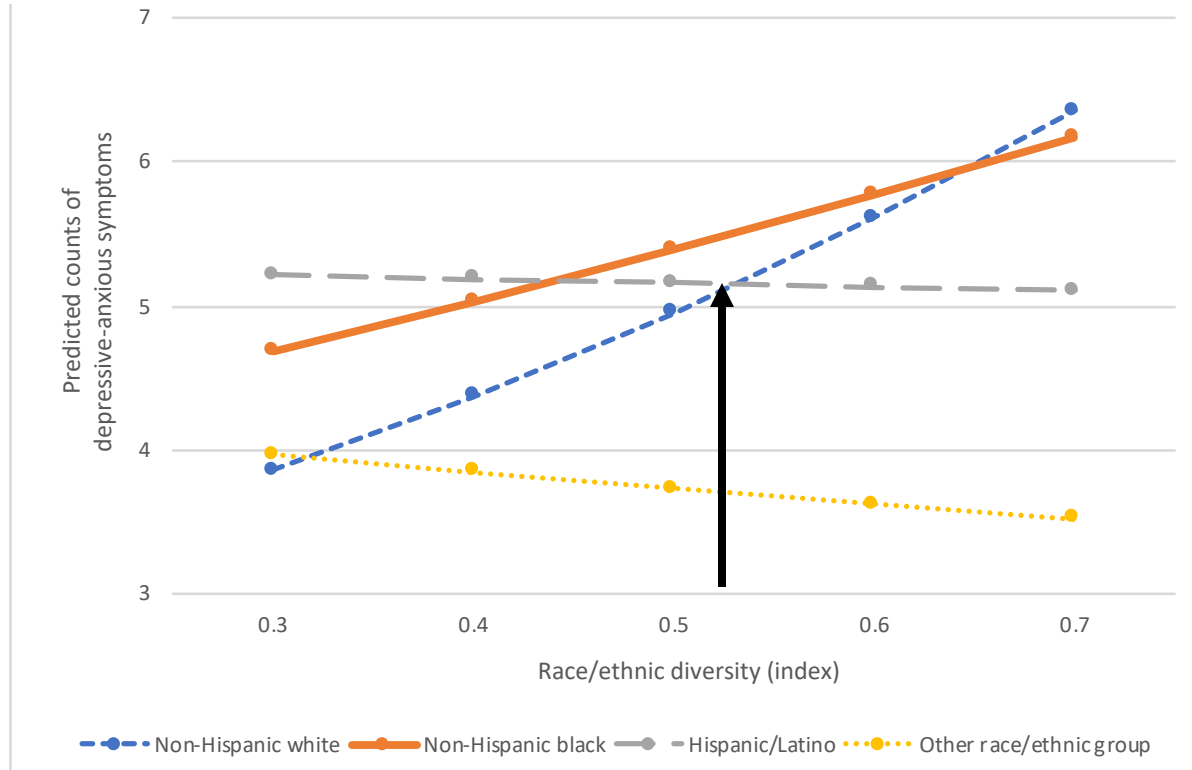
Painter K, et al. Psychiatric Services, 2016

## Depressive-anxious symptoms by race/ethnic group with non-Latino white enrollment



- No significant main effect of non-Latino white enrollment
- A significant interaction among non-Latino black compared to white adolescents

# Depressive-anxious symptoms by race/ethnic groups with diversity

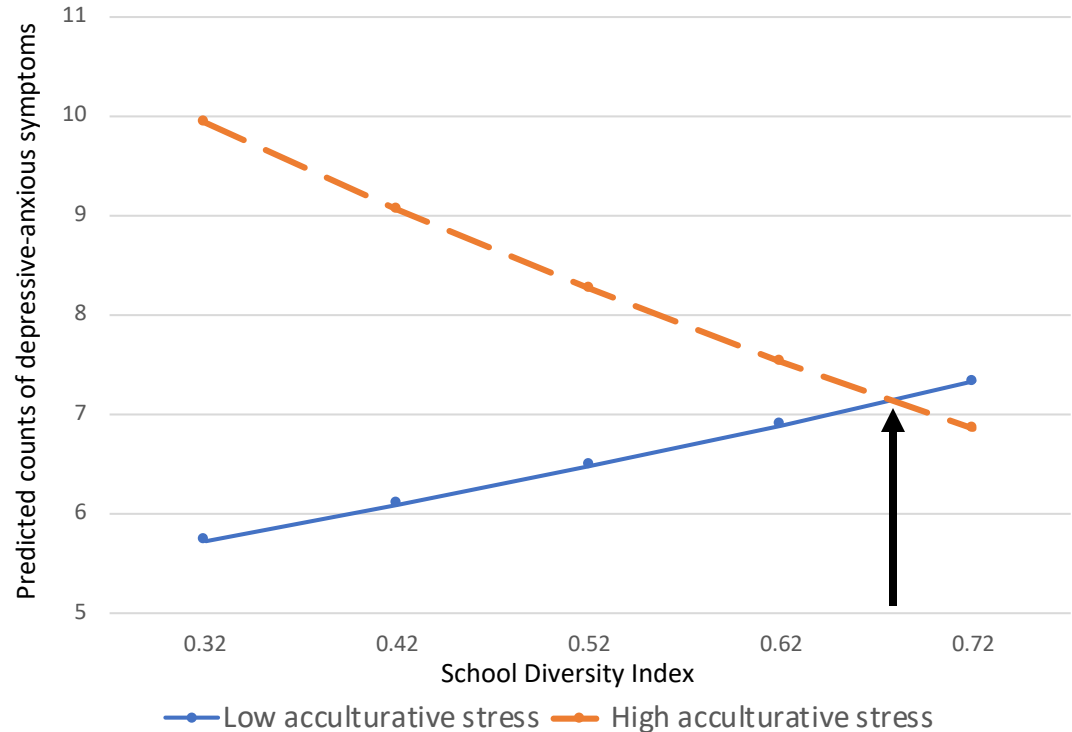


- School diversity positively associated with depressive-anxious symptoms
- A significant interaction among Latino compared to non-Latino white adolescents

## Depressive-anxious symptoms by acculturative stress with diversity

Within Latino group analysis by acculturative stress\*

\* 20-Item Social, Attitudinal, Familial, & Environmental Acculturative Stress in Children scale measured stressfulness of perceived discrimination and feeling like an outsider



- Latino adolescents with high vs. low acculturative stress saw reduced symptoms with increasing diversity

# Contributions

- Findings shed light on the value of considering mental health when developing enrollment strategies that promote diversity and inclusiveness within schools.
- Next steps: Identify ***modifiable school factors*** [race/ethnic composition of faculty/staff, availability of ethnic-specific programming] that can buffer race/ethnic composition effects on mental health

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