

THE TALE OF TWO NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

KINGSTON HIGH SCHOOL & BYRAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

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The Alliance for Quality Education is a coalition mobilizing communities across the state to keep New York true to its promise of ensuring a high-quality public school education to all students regardless of zip code. Combining its legislative and policy expertise with grassroots organizing, AQE advances proven-to-work strategies that lead to student success and echoes a powerful public demand for a high-quality public school education for all of New York's students.

The Public Policy Education Fund was founded in 1986 to address critical social, economic, racial and environmental issues facing low and moderate income New York State residents. Our areas of work have included health care, education, after-school programs, voter participation, economic development and consumer issues. PPEF uses many tools in its work, including grassroots organizing, research and policy development, public education on a wide range of policy issues, and community outreach.

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In New York State, every child has the right to a quality education as granted by the state's constitution. New York houses some of the best schools in the nation and even in the world. While some school districts provide a top notch education, with advanced coursework and extracurricular clubs and activities that help launch students into Ivy League schools, others have a small selection of Advanced Placement courses and few college level electives, and only a handful of extracurricular activities. The school districts that are able to provide extraordinary opportunities to their students are incredibly well resourced, frequently spending \$30,000 or more per pupil, with that money going into programs, classes and activities. These districts are usually made up of mostly White students that come from affluent families who already have great opportunities in life. Low income districts usually have a much more diverse student population, often predominantly educating Black and Brown students. They also educate greater percentages of students with higher educational needs resulting from living in poverty, disability or learning English. Due to Governor Cuomo's failure to fund the State's Foundation Aid formula, they also have much less funding available to educate their students.

This paper provides a comparison between the advanced coursework available in an affluent high school and in a high school in a low income community. In this report, we focus on advanced courses as an example of the pattern of inequity that exists across the state and because of the importance of AP courses during the college admissions process. This comparison illustrates that more resources mean more opportunities for students, and that money matters in education. The great inequities that exist between our schools are a function of the Governor's denial to meet the state's constitutional obligation to provide all students with a "sound basic education." The fact that high schools that educate predominantly Black and Brown students are in districts owed the most amount of Foundation Aid and are able to offer fewer college level or advanced courses, is evidence of the educational racism that is perpetuated by the Governor Cuomo's policies.

A NOTE REGARDING THE SCHOOLS USED

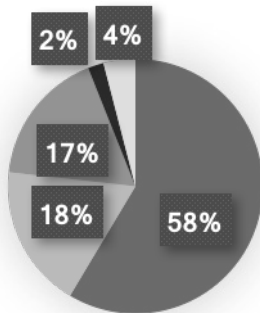
The two high schools described in this report are Kingston and Byram Hills High Schools. In our comparison of course work we aim to illustrate that funding enables access to great programming. We by no means suggest that students in affluent areas should have less. Instead, we demand that the Governor and State Legislature live up to their obligation and ensure that students in low income communities are not left behind because their communities do not have high property values and their families are not high income earners. Neither poverty nor race should be a determinant of the quality of education students receive.

KINGSTON HIGH SCHOOL AND BYRAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

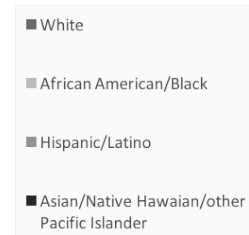
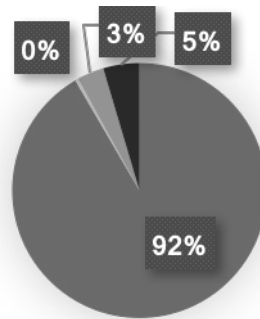
Kingston High School is located in the city school district of Kingston. It is a high need school district with a diverse student population. According to the State Education Department, 56% of the students in Kingston High School are economically disadvantaged, which means that they are participating in the free or reduced price lunch, or their family participates in government assistance programs such as Social Security Insurance (SSI), food stamps, foster care, etc. In Kingston High School, 21% of students are identified as students with disabilities.

Byram Hills High School is located in the town of Armonk in Westchester county. This area includes high income earners and high property values, as well as low poverty, conditions that provide ample financial resources to the local public schools. Below are graphs illustrating the make-up of each school district. Kingston High School has more than half its students living in poverty and is predominantly Black and Brown. Byram Hills High School has only 3% of its students living in poverty and is predominantly White.

Kingston High School Student Demographics



Byram Hills High School Student Demographics



	ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
KINGSTON HS	56%	22%	4%
BYRAM HILLS HS	3%	13%	0

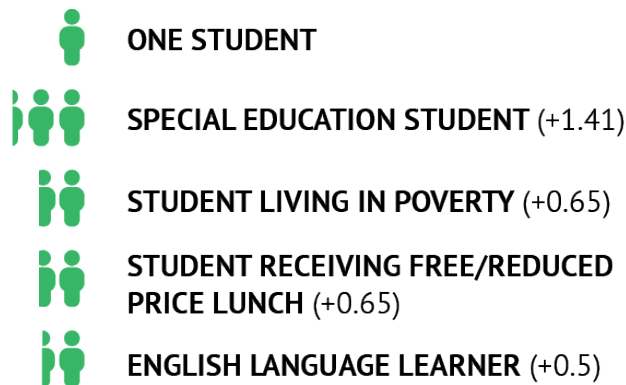
THE REAL SPENDING PER PUPIL: STUDENT NEED MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Education research shows that students who live in poverty, students in special education, and students who are English Language Learners are more expensive to educate.¹ That research is backed by state law in New York. The State has determined how much more it costs to educate students in need by applying mathematic factors that account for living in poverty, being an English learner, and having a disability. The result of applying these factors is an increased enrollment count, called the *equity index*.

When the total spending per pupil is calculated using the increased student count after the equity index is applied, we are able to see a more accurate spending per pupil. School districts that have more high need students require more resources to educate them and should be spending more per pupil than districts that have fewer such students. Yet, the opposite is true in New York. Taking into consideration student need and reflecting that in spending paints an accurate picture of a school's ability to provide for all the needs of their students.

NEEDS OF STUDENTS

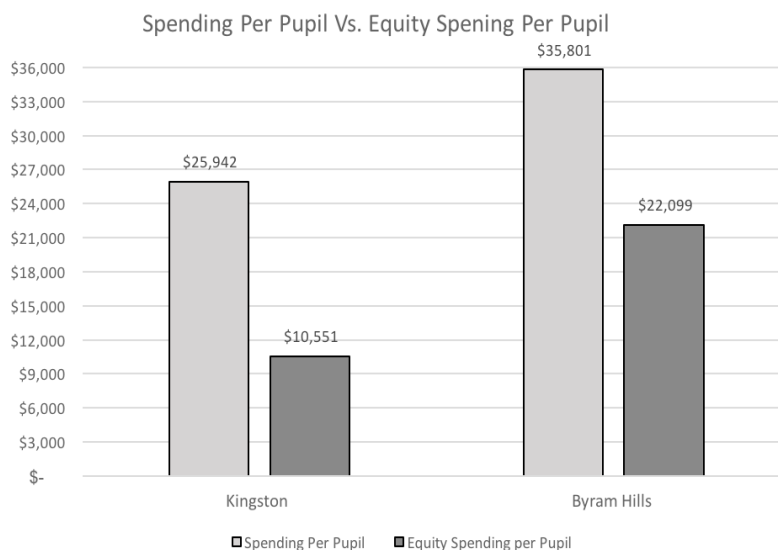
EVERY STUDENT COUNTS AS:



Below, we show the spending per pupil for each of the school districts in this report. Byram Hills has by far less need and higher spending. Kingston has the greater need, and receives less funding. When the equity index is applied, Kingston has by far less funding per pupil than Byram Hills, when according to the Foundation Aid formula it should receive more money to support its high need student population.

¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/archives/11-7-02sfp3.htm>

Students who live in poverty are counted two and a half times more than students who do not live in poverty in New York State. Students who are English Language Learners are counted one and a half times more, and students who are classified as special education are counted 2.41 more as defined in the Foundation Aid Formula which was created in 2007 as a statewide settlement to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit.



The spending gap between Kingston and Byram Hills is \$9,859 per pupil. Kingston’s ability to deploy resources to meet all students’ needs and provide the opportunity to have a more evenly distributed playing field is severely hindered by this gap.

When the equity index is applied to reflect the student count when account for need, the gap grows to \$11,548.

A COMPARISON OF HIGHER LEVEL COURSEWORK AVAILABLE

The table below offers a description of the advanced course work available at each high school. Kingston offers fewer Advanced Placement courses (16). Byram Hills offers 23 Advanced Placement courses, and also offers additional opportunities to students who have completed their AP requirements that are highly competitive.² We look at the higher level coursework in Kingston as it provides an example of the pattern of inequities that exist across the state in lower income communities and communities of color.

To students who qualify to take AP courses, Byram Hills High School offers the opportunity to participate in a program that integrates literature, philosophy, art, and an intensive writing experience. Another program offers students the opportunity to participate in science research and earn up to 12 college credits.

² Links to all course descriptions: Byram Hills file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/PROFILE%20CLASS%20OF%202018.pdf
 Kingston: <https://ny24000343.schoolwires.net/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=46&dataid=119&FileName=COS%20for%202018-19.pdf>

“[Science Research] course allows self-motivated students to pursue original and independent research under the mentorship of professional scientists and academics. It is a three-year program that is accredited by the State University of New York and can qualify students for up to 12 college credits. The Intel Science Talent Search has ranked this course as one of the top 5 High School Research programs in the world. College credit is awarded through the University in the High School program of the State University of New York.”³

Kingston offers opportunity to earn college to students with excellent academic record. Kingston has a science program through the State University of New York, but it is limited to one course. A comparison of the Advanced Placement courses is listed below.

	KINGSTON HIGH SCHOOL	BYRAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL
# OF AP CLASSES OFFERED	16	23
LIST AP OFFERED	AP English Language & Composition AP English Literature & Composition AP Statistics AP Calculus AB AP Calculus BC AP Biology AP Chemistry AP Physics C AP Computer Science AP United States History AP European History AP Macroeconomics AP American Government & Politics AP Media and Communications AP Media and Communications II AP Environmental Science	AP English Language & Composition AP English Literature & Composition AP Statistics AP Calculus AB AP Calculus BC AP Biology AP Chemistry AP Physics C AP Computer Science AP United States History AP European History AP World History AP Human Geography AP Computer Science Principles AP Spanish AP French Language and Culture AP Italian Language and Culture AP Music Theory AP Art Photography AP Art Studio AP Photography AP Graphic Design AP 3-D Design **Students who have taken AP courses have the opportunity to participate in other highly competitive programs such as Interdisciplinary perspectives in literature, Expanded Math, Peer Leadership, Science Research, Chemistry Lab and research assistant.

3 Look at link above

SYSTEMIC INEQUALITY

There are some schools in the state, located in very affluent communities that offer a world class education. These communities have local wealth allows them to raise a high level of revenues for their local schools. Schools such as Scarsdale and Byram Hills in Westchester, or Syosset and Jericho on Long Island offer college level classes and electives that allow students to enter college with several credits already earned, and allows them to build a portfolio that makes them highly competitive for the colleges and universities of their choice. Byram Hills high school is highlighted in this report as a way to illustrate the great opportunities that the students enjoy at these public schools. Every student, regardless of where they go to school is entitled to a great education.

In order to make equity a reality for all students and increase access to opportunities for Black, Brown and low income students, Governor Cuomo and the State legislature must commit to fully funding the Foundation Aid formula in the 2018-19 state budget.

APPENDIX: SPENDING PER PUPIL VS. EQUITY SPENDING PER PUPIL

Research shows that students who live in poverty, students in special education, and students who are English Language Learners are more expensive to educate. State law includes within the funding formula “weights” or mathematical factors are accounting for poverty, students with disabilities or students that are English language learners. The weights are applied to the enrollment of the school district, counting every student in poverty an additional 2.3 times, every student who is an English learner an additional 1.5 times, every student who has a disability an additional 2.41 times to bring the total enrollment number up to account for the increased resources necessary to educate them. For each school district in the state the average spending per pupil is publicly reported. This is the amount of funding that school districts have available to spend in order to provide for personnel, classroom materials, transportation, building maintenance, and everything that schools need to function. We also show the equity spending per pupil, after we apply the Equity Index to the total expenditures of the school district. The Equity Index is a way of increasing the total student count in order to reflect the actual need of the students in the school district. The weightings that is written in New York state law are everyone one student who:

- lives in poverty counts as measured by participation in the free lunch program as an additional .65;
- census poverty counts as an additional .65;
- is an English learner counts as an additional .50;
- is in special education counts as an additional 1.41.