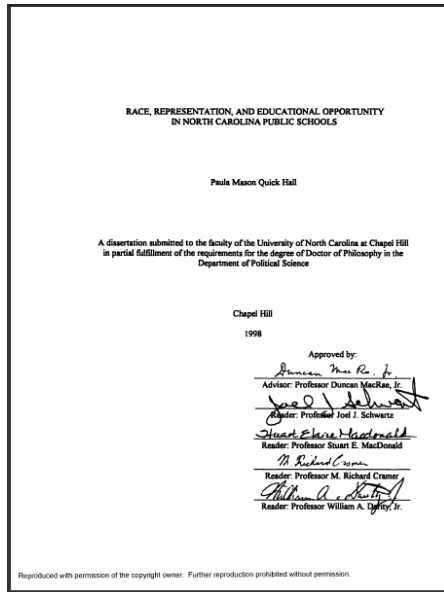


Race, Representation, and Educational Opportunity in North Carolina Public Schools



This study, completed in 1998, found that African Americans were not represented on school boards in proportion to their numbers in either the district population or school enrollments. Their votes were diluted in most elections by at-large voting systems. The effect of African American presence on school boards is seen in the racial composition of school system administrative staffs. African Americans were underrepresented among administrators, and that affected their representation among teachers. Recruitment of African American teachers was influenced by the presence of African American principals. Thus, the pattern of representation from school boards to classrooms was characterized by racial disproportion.

This research shows that African American students in North Carolina have not had educational opportunities equal to those of white students. There have been differential rates of placement in special education classes for gifted and for mentally handicapped students, corporal punishment, and suspension over a period of at least eight years. This study found consistent evidence that the proportion of African American teachers in schools and school districts affects punishment of African American children and their placement in special education classes. African American students were more likely to be in classes for academically gifted, and less likely to be in classes for either educable or trainable mentally handicapped pupils at schools and in districts with larger proportions of African American teachers. African American students were less likely to be given corporal punishment or suspended from schools where there was greater representation of African Americans among teachers. Small school size also had a positive effect on opportunities for African American students.

To view the full dissertation, [click here](#).