

Reorganizing the Professional Culture in Wisconsin Schools to Eliminate Racial Achievement Gaps

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In this study, we examine the relative strength of professional cultures in schools serving Black, Latinx, and White students. We then examined the impact that the strength of school professional culture has on the achievement of Black, White, and Latinx students.



Segregation and Racism in Wisconsin

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2020/06/30/mps-board-begin-discussions-desegregating-schools-metro-milwaukee/3266815001/>

Over 70% of Black students in Milwaukee attend a “hyper-segregated school” > 90% students of color.

"People know that segregation ... makes it easier to rationalize fewer resources to black families, black schools, black neighborhoods." MPS Board Member Bob Peterson.

Our study includes the majority of Black or Latinx “hyper-segregated” Wisconsin schools.

Connecting racialized disparities with school professional culture & gaps

WISCONSIN'S RACIALIZED DISPARITIES HURTS BIPOC FAMILIES

Wisconsin BIPOC families face a greater number of obstacles in every area of well-being*

Black Wisconsinite poverty rates are more than 2.5x the overall Wisconsin poverty rate, and 3-4x the white poverty rate*

Poverty rates for Latinx, Indigenous and Asian families are more than twice the rates of poverty among whites*

POTENTIAL STEPS TOWARD EQUITY

Our study also shows that improving a school's professional culture can positively impact racialized gaps in achievement.

Equitable resource allocation and is one step toward improving professional culture.



RESOURCE ALLOCATION CAN INFLUENCE PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

In this study, highly segregated, inequitably-resourced schools face:

Lower teacher retention[^]

Low trust between teachers^{^^}

Less staff commitment^{^^}



RACIALIZED DISPARITIES SHAPE OUR SCHOOLS

Economic inequality and Wisconsin racial segregation are linked**

Family well-being is often directly related to a school's available resources*

Racial segregation is connected to inequitable school resource allocation***

What did we do?

We followed 211 schools (102 from MPS) from 2016 to 2019 to measure the change in the achievement of Black, Latinx, and White students as a function of the strength of their professional culture.

Within these schools, 73% (15,332 out of 20,982) of all teachers completed surveys across all three years.

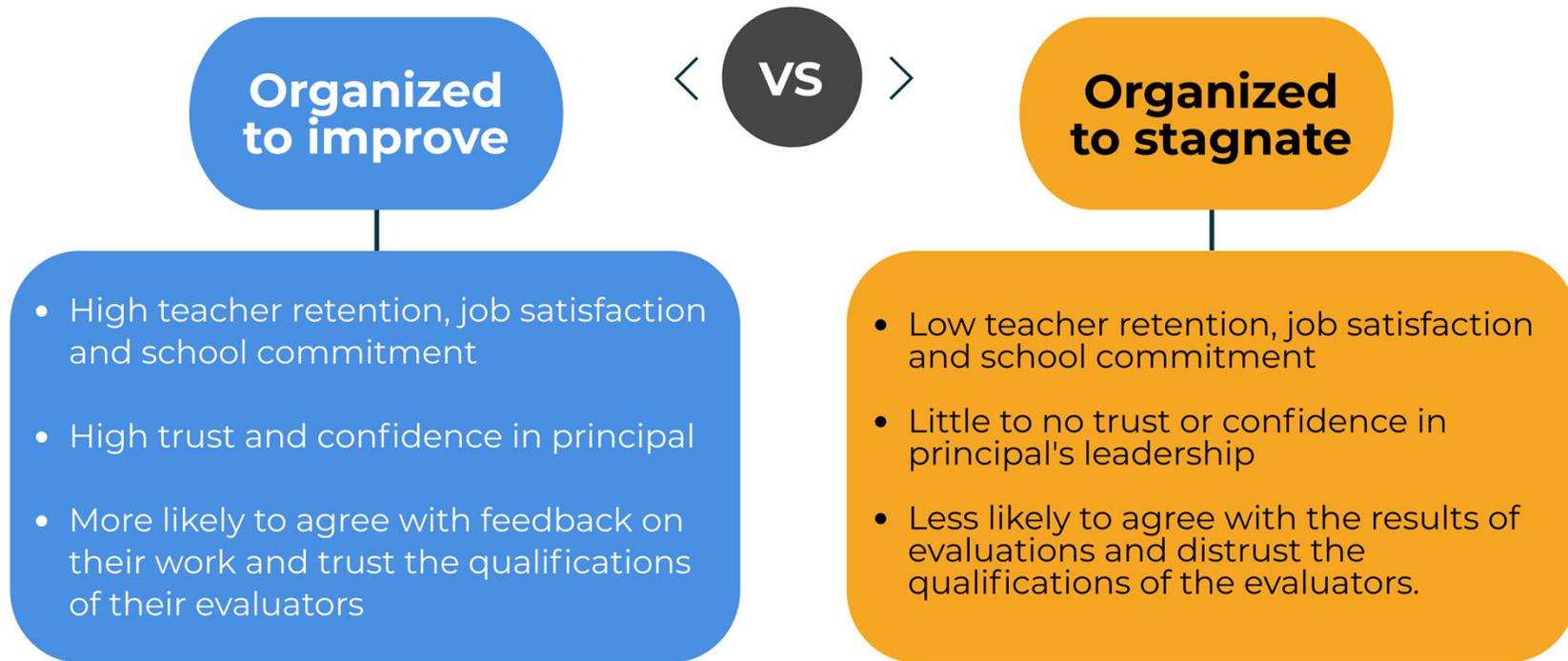
Survey results were linked to publicly available DPI data on school characteristics and student achievement.

How are we measuring a school's professional culture?

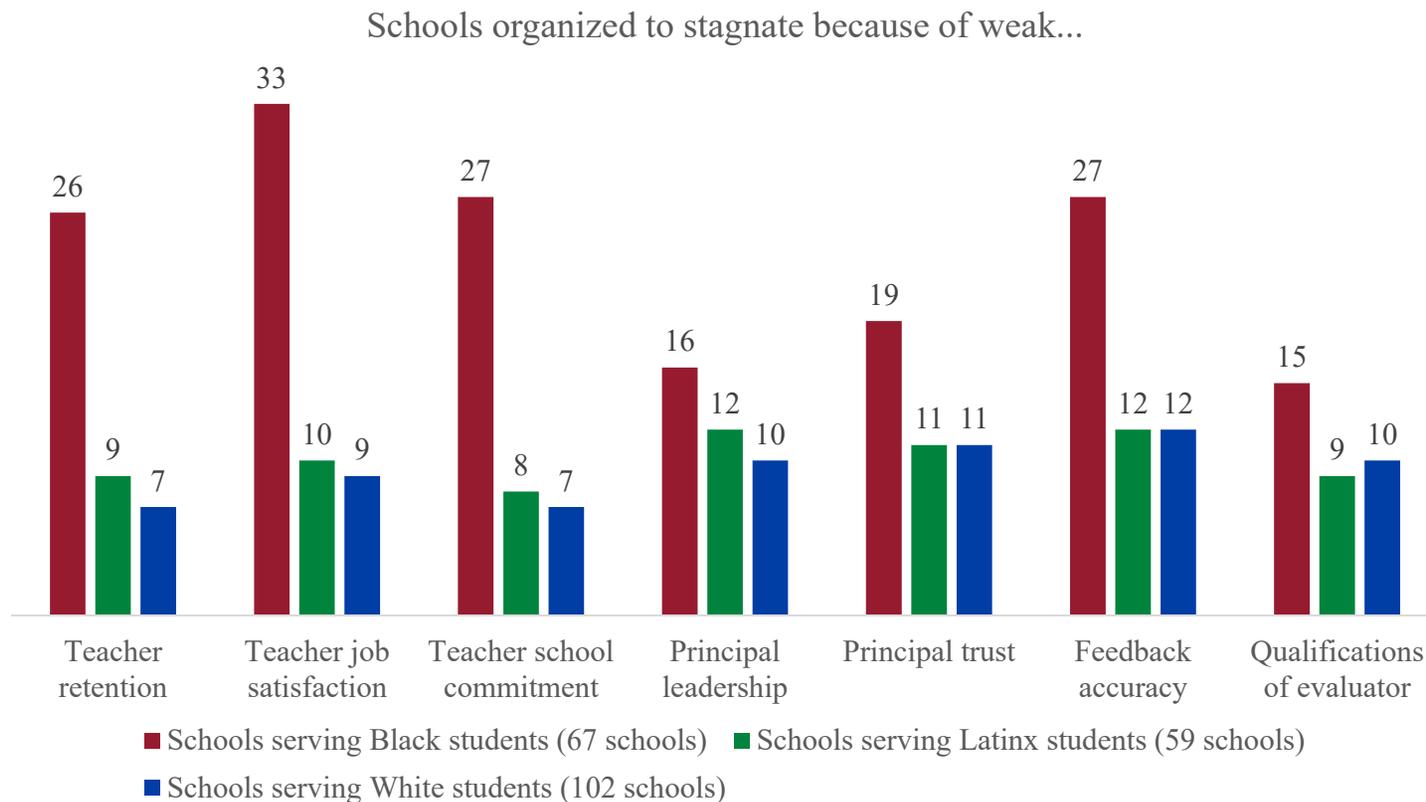
Professional culture is measured by:

- Teacher retention,
- Teacher collaboration,
- The value teachers place on their educator effectiveness process and the trust they place in their administrator to provide accurate and fair feedback,
- Teacher commitment to their school,
- Teacher satisfaction with their job,
- Trust between educators

Understanding school professional culture in relation to survey results

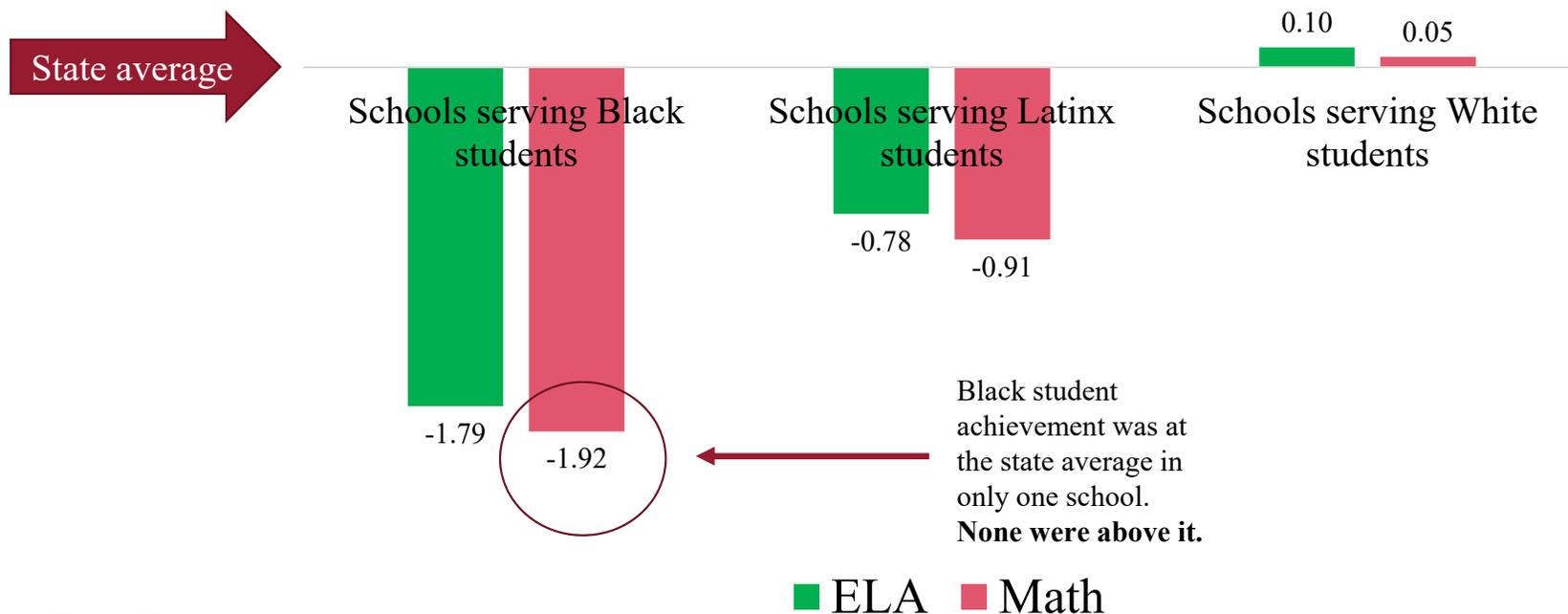


Segregation and racism create the conditions that lead to inequities in the effectiveness of schools serving Black, Latinx, and White students.



Inequities in the effectiveness of schools serving Black, Latinx, and White students create the conditions that lead to large achievement gaps.

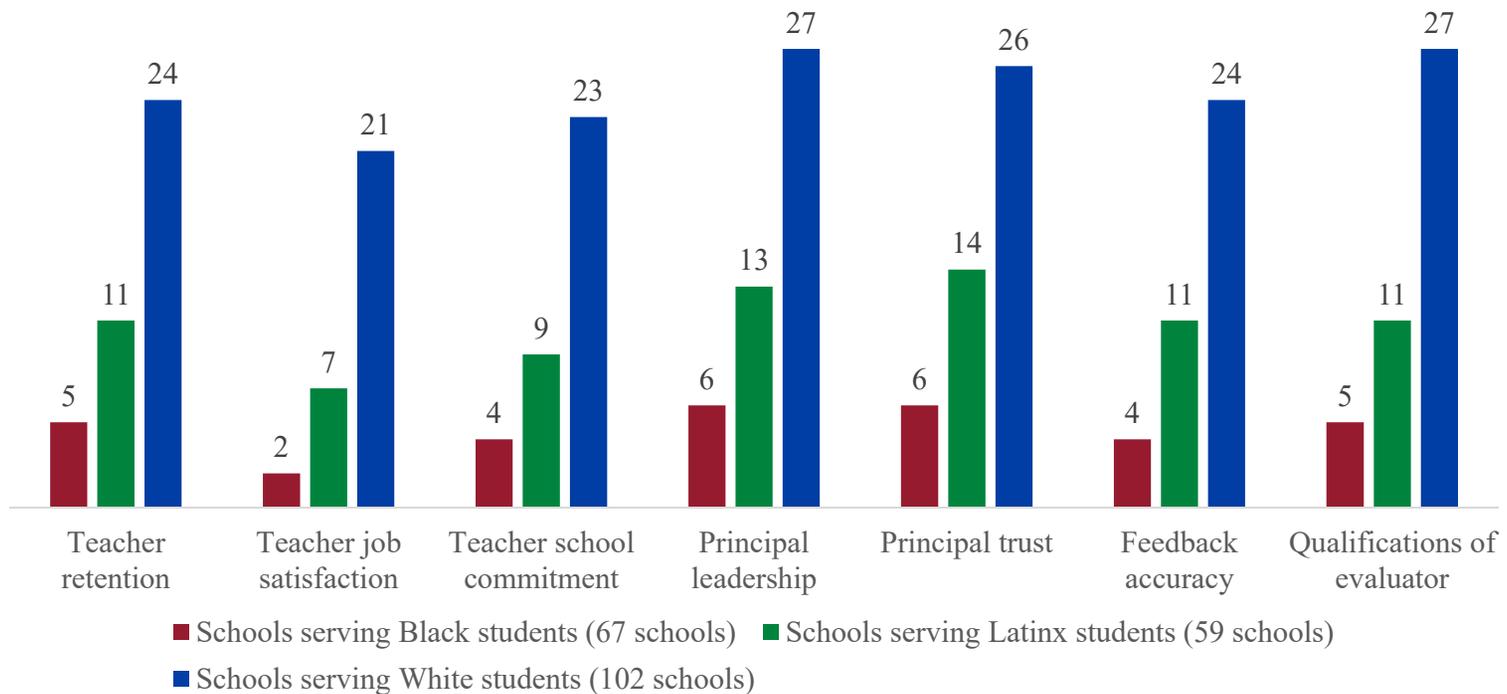
School standardized Forward Exam scores compared to state average



Disrupting Systemic Racism Through School Organization.

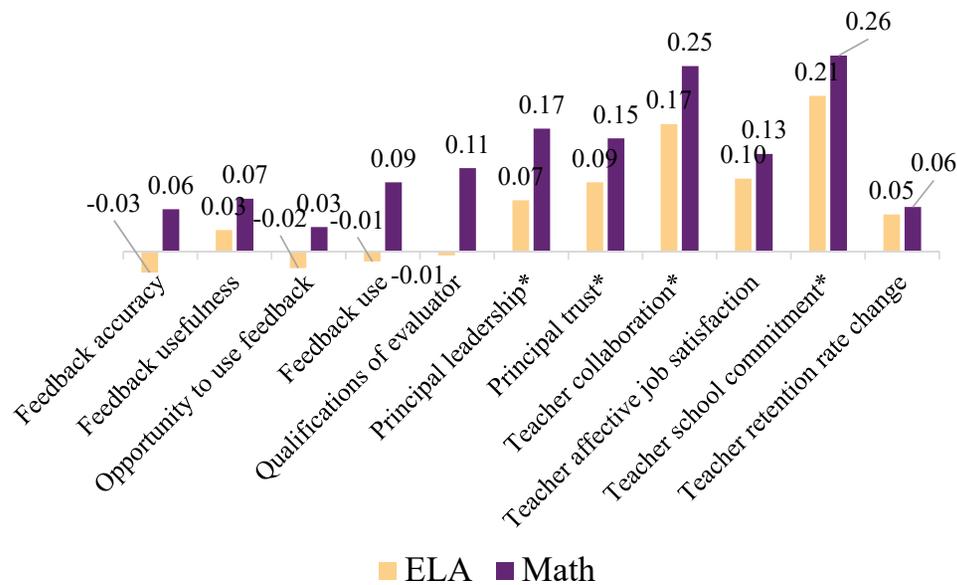
Segregation and racism create the conditions that lead to inequities in the effectiveness of schools serving Black, Latinx, and White students.

Schools organized to improve because of strong...

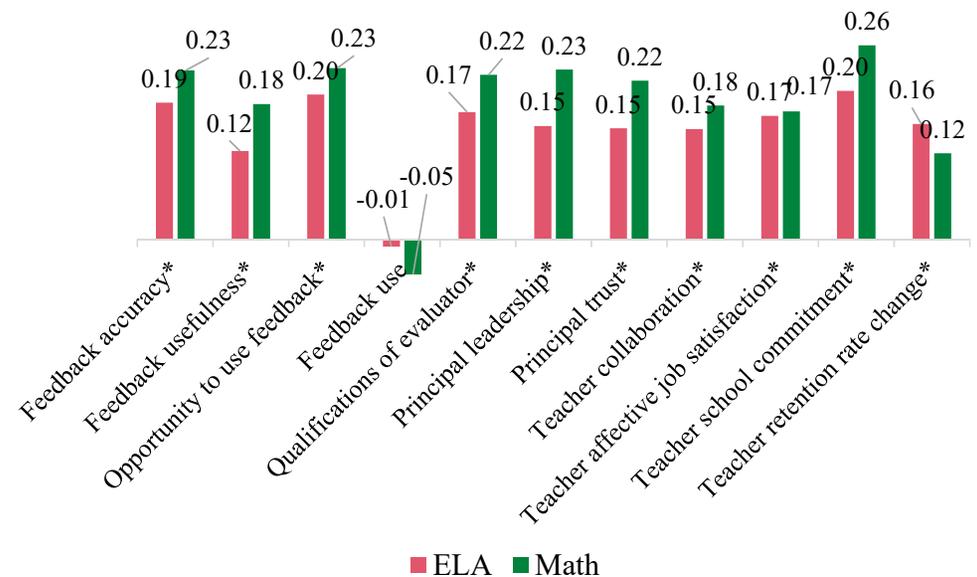


More organized schools at least partially overcame the disparities that harm BIPOC families.

Predictors of Black Student Achievement from 2016 to 2019



Predictors of Latinx Student Achievement from 2016 to 2019

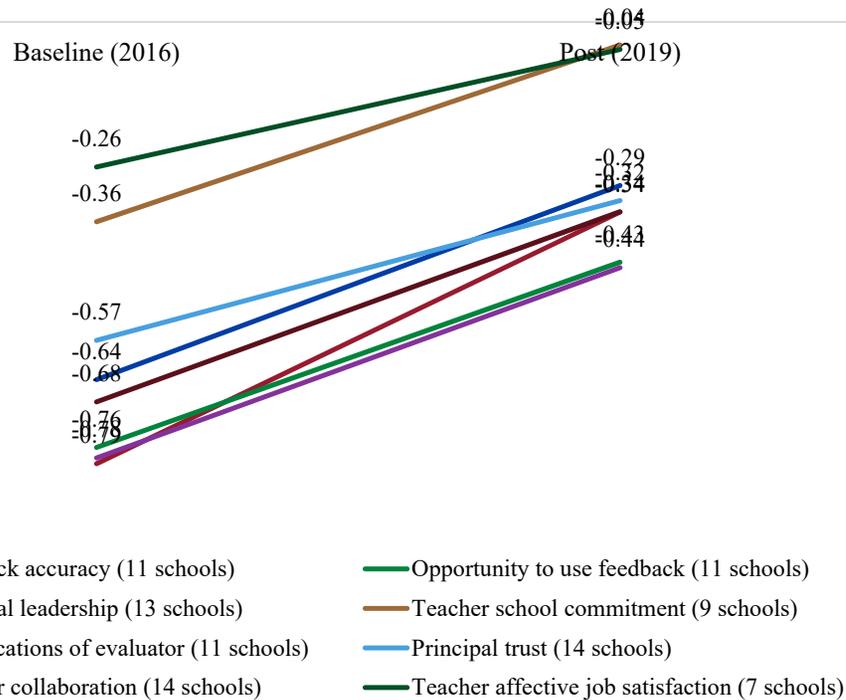


We tested every aspect of school professional culture for which we had data as a predictor of improvements in students achievement. Our models control for baseline achievement, teacher retention, and school demographics.

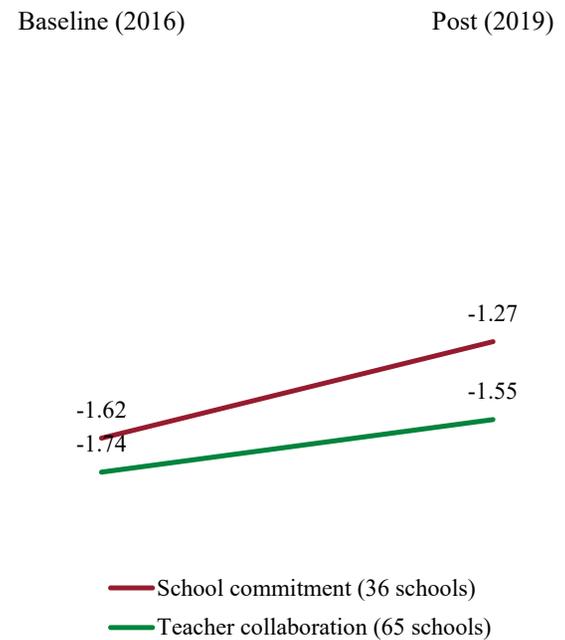
To what extent did they overcome these disparities?

Achievement Gaps were reduced by as much as 100% in schools with a strong professional culture.

Latinx ELA Achievement Gap Reduction in Organized Schools

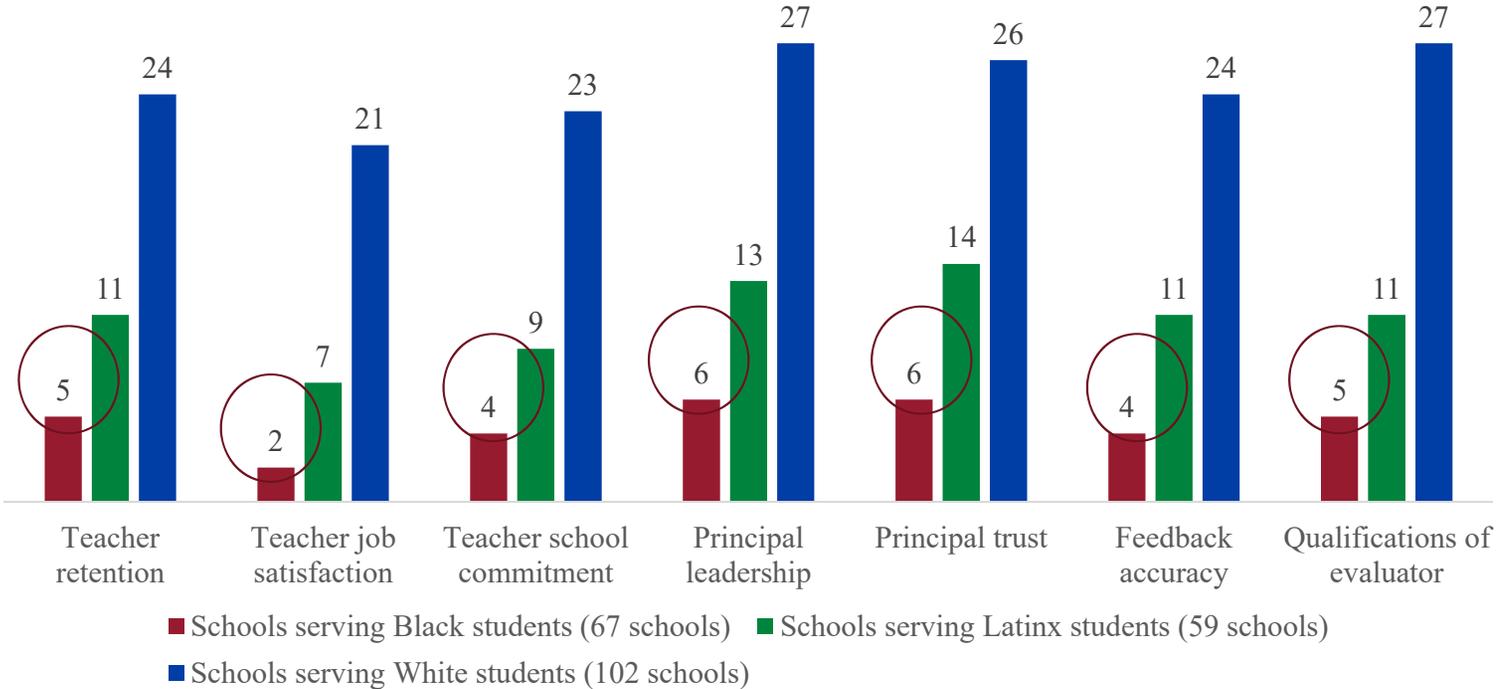


Black ELA Achievement Gap Reduction in schools NOT Organized to Stagnate.



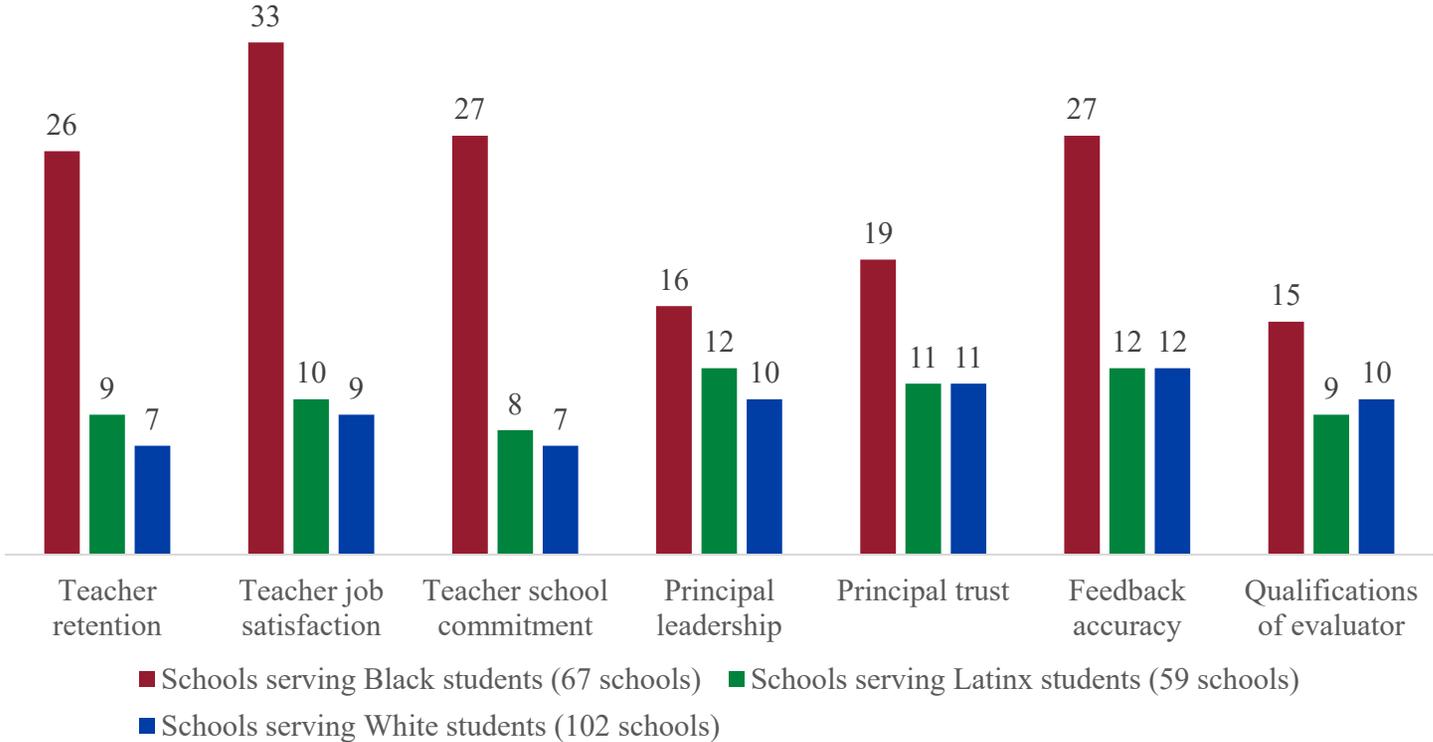
Too few schools serving Black students had a strong professional culture to measure its impact.

Schools organized to improve because of strong...



Schools serving Black students that didn't have a weak professional culture did improve though.

Schools organized to stagnate because of weak...



Summary findings

- Far fewer schools serving Black and Latinx students have a strong professional culture than schools serving White students. Instead, schools serving Black and Latinx students are more typically organized with a weak professional culture, with teachers less committed to their school, who view their EE process less favorably, and who view their principal as a less effective leader.
- Schools *organized to improve* with teachers who perceived the EE process as effective and their principal as a strong leader, and who were committed to their school realized more than a 50% reduction in the Latinx student achievement gap.
- Very few schools serving Black students were *organized to improve*. Just being partially organized however, was associated with a reduction in the achievement gap for Black students.
- **School professional culture had no impact on the improvement of achievement for White students. Considering this, and the findings for Black and Latinx students, organizing schools for improvement improves racial equity and reduces achievement gaps.**

Discussion

The achievement gaps between Black, Latinx, and White students are due to institutional racism. Marginalized and disadvantaged students attend disorganized schools that serve to further marginalize and disadvantage students. Relatedly, students who rely most on their school for their educational opportunities are the least likely to attend schools organized to provide opportunities. Educator bias (Jones, 2019; Starck, Riddle, Sinclair, & Warikoo, 2020) and other aspects of institutional racism still affect the overall organizational culture of schools. Schools struggle to hire and retain teachers of color (Jones, 2019; Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Frietas, 2010) and retain teachers more generally when they have large numbers of students of color (Jones, 2019). Schools also struggle to effectively engage families of color and blame parents for it (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005).

Discussion

After closing schools due to COVID-19, there is an urgency for sending students back to school. There should be an equal urgency for fixing the schools we are sending Black and Latinx students back to. With schools closed, there is a growing concern that marginalized groups have been disproportionately affected and that achievement gaps have likely widened. We must consider the organizational conditions of schools Black and Latinx students are returning to.

Discussion

How can we hold school districts accountable for organized schools to be more anti-racist and provide more equitable education opportunities?

Discussion

Looking up your own school:

www.udisp.com

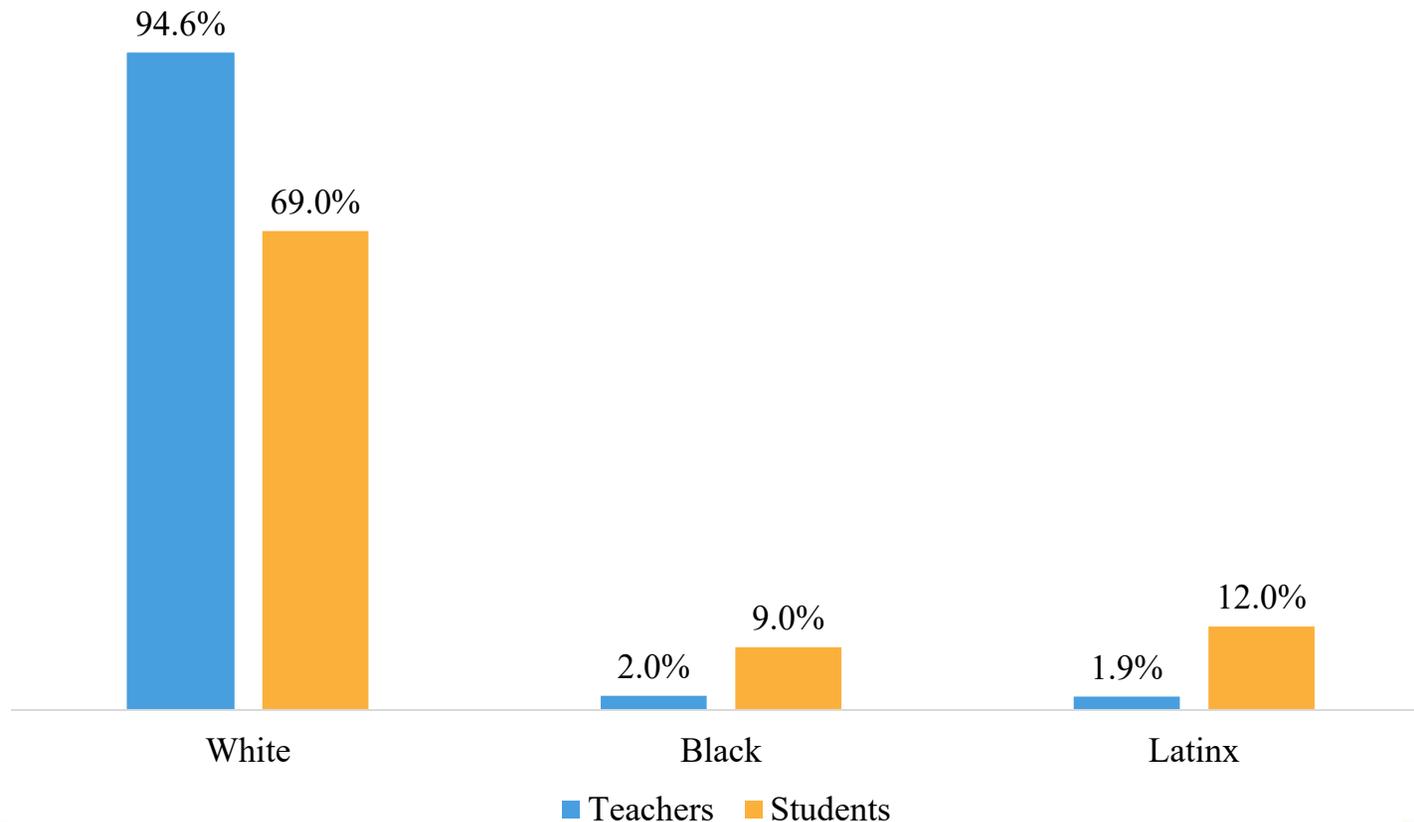
Race, Relational Trust, and Teacher Retention in Wisconsin Schools

We examined the retention of teachers from different racial/ethnic backgrounds as a function of the professional culture of their school. Specifically, we explored the impact of trust between educators on the retention of Black, Latinx, and White teachers.

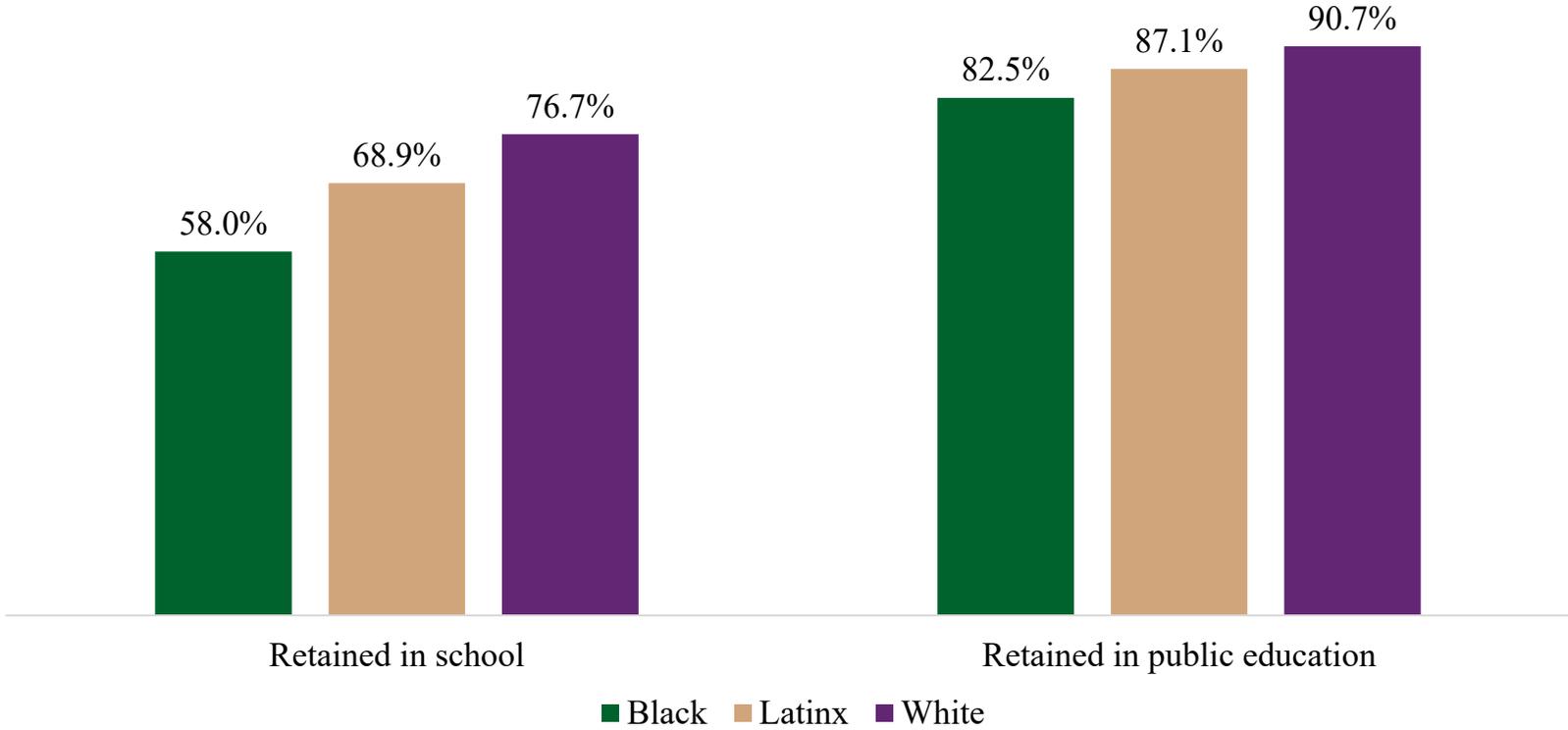
Schools serving Black and Latinx students cannot be organized to improve if they cannot retain their educators.



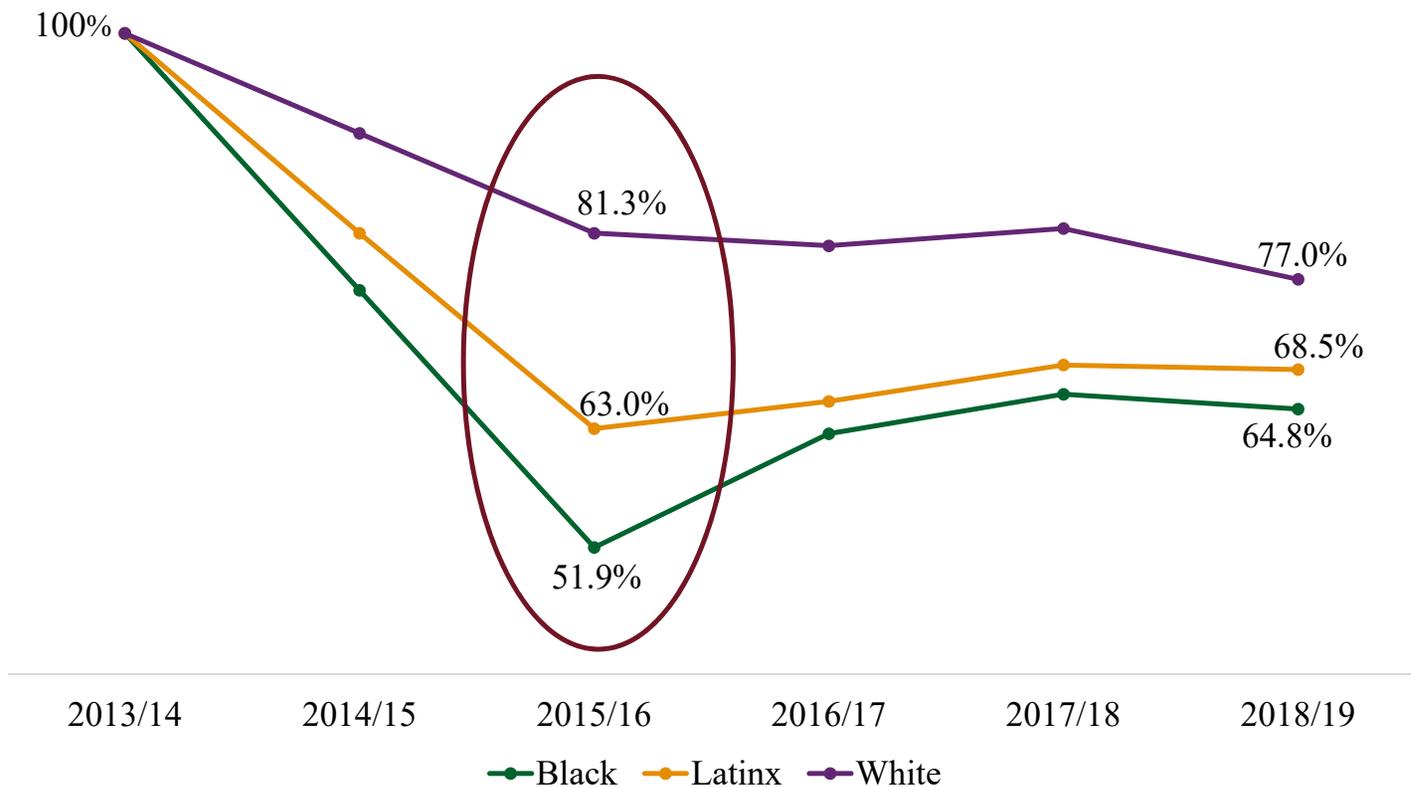
Wisconsin does not have enough teachers of color to work with our students of color.



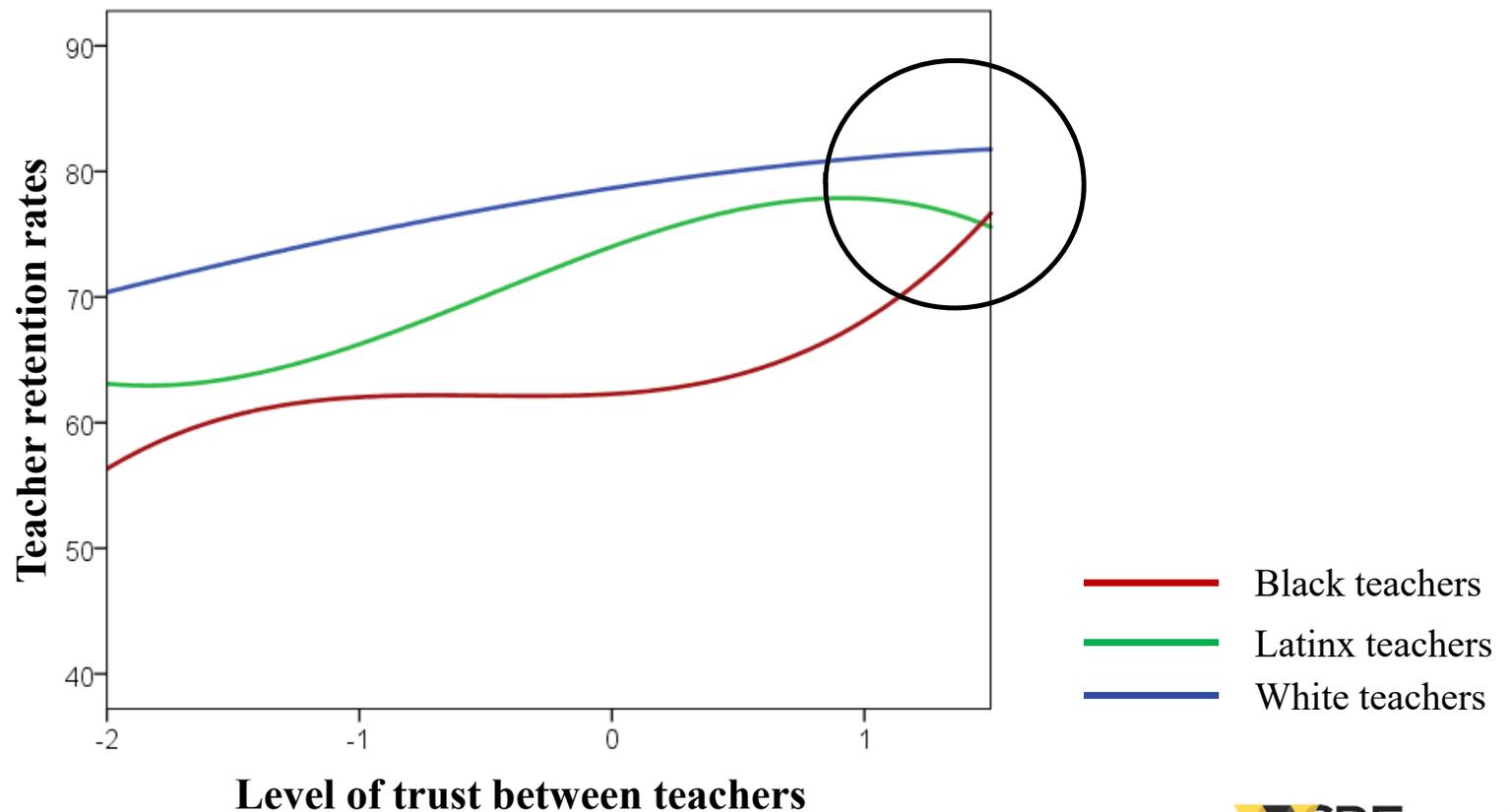
Nearly half of Black teachers in Wisconsin public schools leave their school after just two years.



After just two years, Black and Latinx teachers are much less likely to stay in public education than White teachers.

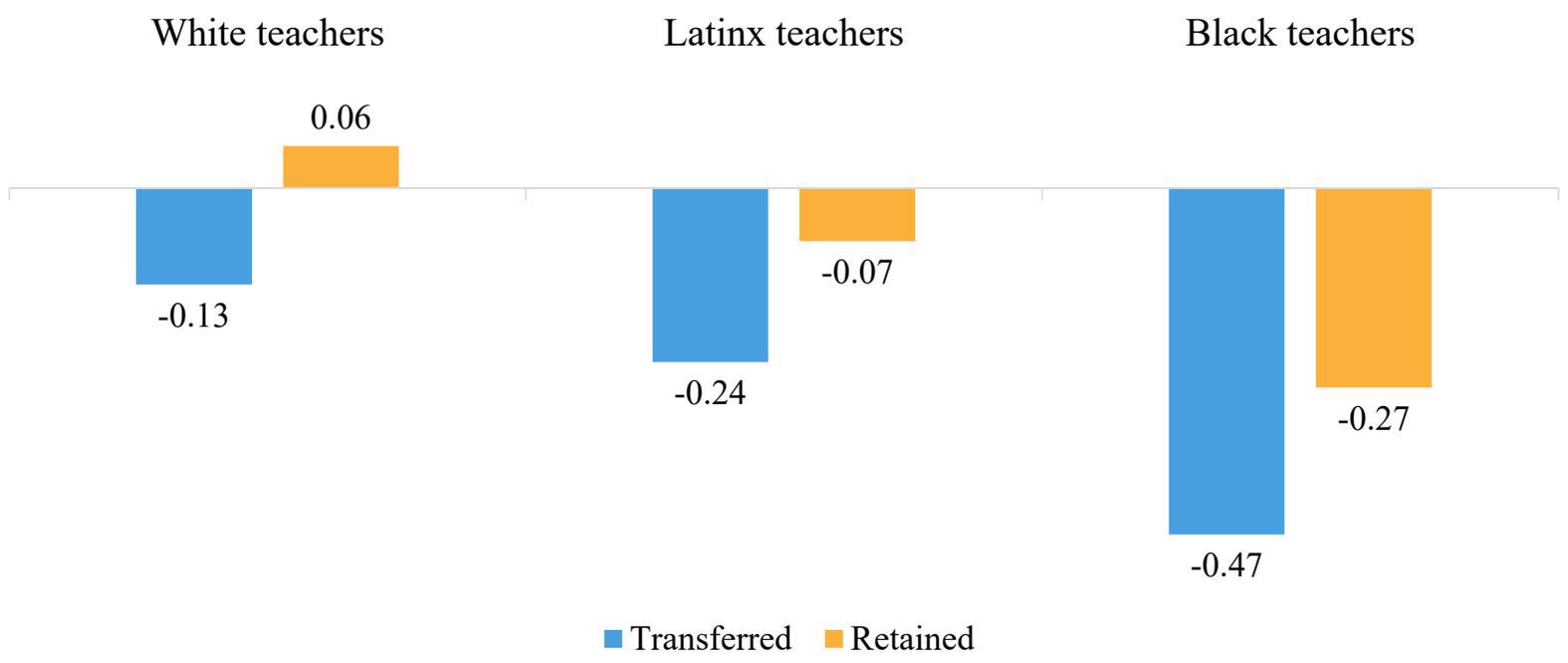


Black and Latinx teachers reported having less trusting relationships with other teachers



Black and Latinx teachers reported having less trusting relationships with other teachers

Trust between teachers, as experienced by...



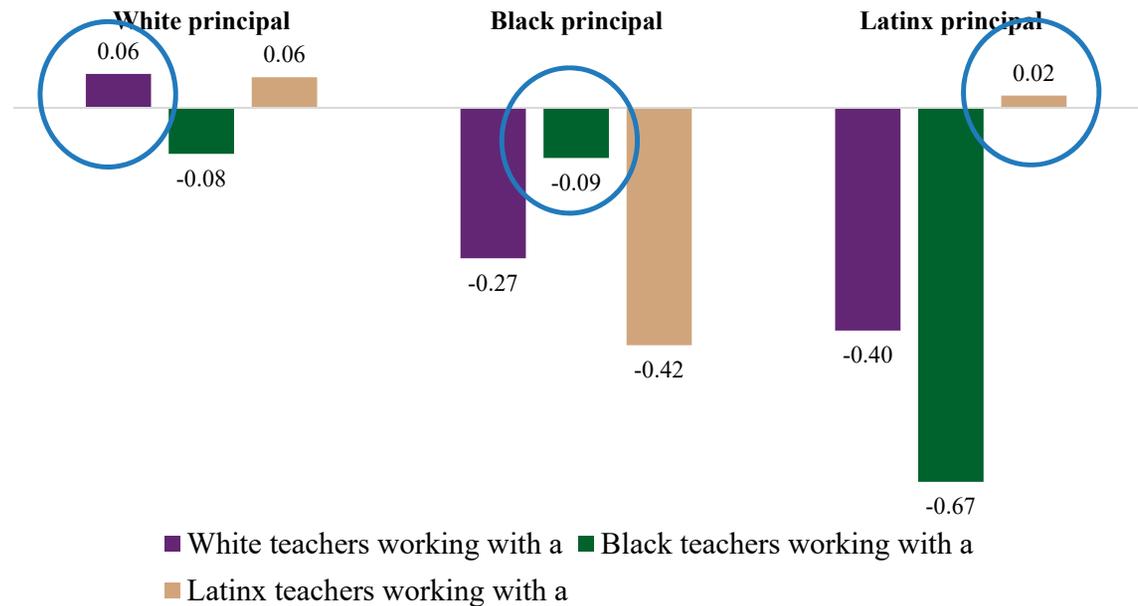
Slide 25

MS16 Changed graph colors to blue and yellow to ensure they are different than the graphs that have specific colors assigned to White/Black/Latinx teachers

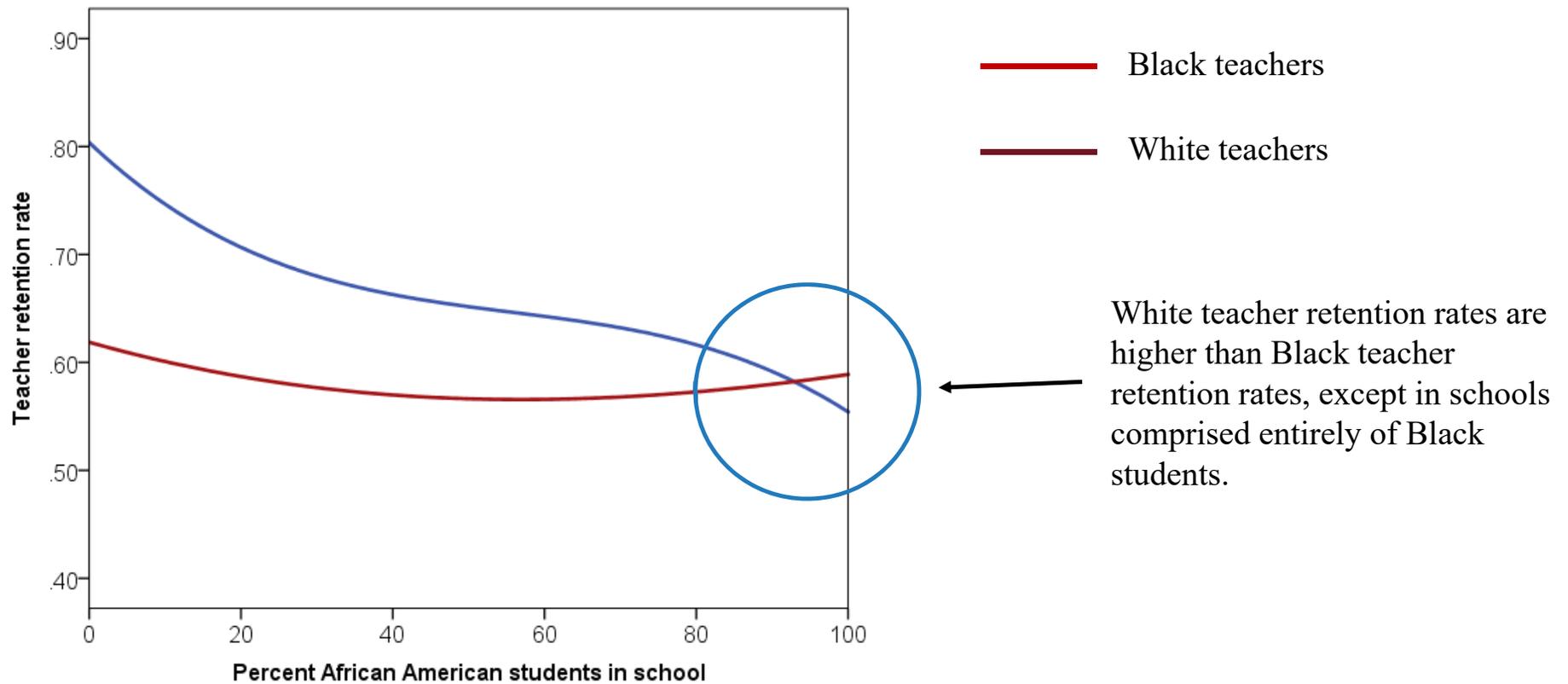
Mitrano, Sara, 10/21/2020

Teachers have more trusting relationships with principals from their same racial background

After adjusting for school differences, White and Black teachers reported stronger trust with principals from their same racial background.



White teacher retention rates decrease in schools with more Black students



Where do we (WEERP) go from here?

1. Community engagement – We are engaging in a conversation with the Milwaukee Equity Coalition on Tuesday. We are also having conversations with other community organizations.
2. District engagement – We are reaching out to MPS administration and the school board to discuss the implications of the study.
3. Increased awareness – UWM has featured the study on its website. We are also presenting as part of a IES-sponsored panel in December.
4. Building an understanding – The results of this study likely only generalize to more segregated schools with large numbers of Black or Latinx students. Our next study expands the work to all types of schools statewide.