

STANDING IN THE GAP

Race in Colorado: Education

ROCKY MOUNTAIN PBS
NEWS



Dear fellow Coloradan:

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in screening the Rocky Mountain PBS documentary series on equity in public education, *Standing in the Gap*.

The four-part film series and accompanying outreach program are created to engage interested community organizations and individuals on the issues of racial and ethnic inequities in education in our state. Now that the documentary series has aired on Rocky Mountain PBS, we are pleased to keep this important conversation moving forward with your help.

In this electronic toolkit, you will find the information to help guide you to an effective screening and discussion with your attending audience.

- **Episode Descriptions:** Brief synopsis of each episode featured in *Standing in the Gap*.
- **Discussion Guide:** Tips for an effective discussion and suggested questions to promote dialogue.
- **Fact Sheet:** Key findings and statistics found by our data analysts, reporters and documentarians on the achievement gaps by race and ethnicity and the re-segregation of Denver Public Schools. The data also examines the status of the 19 largest school districts in addition to DPS.
- **Audience Note Catcher:** Exercise for the audience to write down their own thoughts in response to the film. Helps prompt discussion to have a call for action at the end of the screening.

You can find more resources at rmpbs.org/standinginthegap, including all four episodes, web extras, Denver busing timeline, data on the top 20 school districts in Colorado, articles and the *Standing in the Gap* Speakers Bureau.

The Speakers Bureau is composed of community members and participants in the documentary series willing to participate on your discussion panel. Their contact information is listed at race.rmpbs.org/education/participate.

Thank you for being a part of this important discussion. Please share your thoughts with me at juliespeer@rmpbs.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie'.

Julie Speer
Sr. Executive Producer

1089 Bannock St., Denver, CO 80204 • 303-892-6666 • rmpbs.org/standinginthegap

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EPISODE DESCRIPTIONS



Episode 1 – Far Northeast Denver

Includes the Far Northeast turnaround, achievement gap data, the history of busing in Denver and DPS segregation data. This episode spotlights Denver School of Science and Technology and Montbello High School.

Episode 2 – Southwest Denver

Includes the history of Southwest Denver, poverty and education gaps, remediation rates, the immigrant experience and teachers of color. This episode spotlights Abraham Lincoln High School.

Episode 3 – Northwest Denver

Includes the history of Northwest Denver, city growth and segregation, gentrification and suburbanization. This episode spotlights North High School, Brown Elementary, Skinner Middle School and STRIVE Prep.

Episode 4 – Near North East Denver

Includes Near Northeast Denver, the history of Manual High School, gifted and talented programs and a look at the top 20 school districts in Colorado and how they compare on their achievement gaps. This episode spotlights Manual High School, East High School, Northfield High School and McAuliffe International Middle School

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DISCUSSION GUIDE



Tips for an effective community discussion:

1. Set some guidelines.
For example, everyone has a chance to talk with a 3-minute time limit. No inappropriate language.
2. Have a sign-in sheet.
Collect email addresses and other contact information for follow-up conversations, note-sharing and action steps.
3. Assign an official note-taker or recorder.
This person captures the key thoughts, ideas and potential actions.
4. Assign an official time manager.
This person gives prompts to a speaker when the allotted time is about to expire.
5. End the meeting with an action plan.
 - Agree on at least one goal (and no more than three).
 - Establish a timeline for each goal.
 - Share notes with attendees.
 - Share what you do with Rocky Mountain PBS. If you send RMPBS your contact information, we will keep you informed of developments related to Standing in the Gap. Contact Julie Speer at juliespeer@rmpbs.org.

Suggested questions for leading a Standing in the Gap discussion:

1. Do you think racial and ethnic segregation is a problem that needs to be addressed?
A. Yes. B. No.
2. Taking all things into account, I think that busing had a positive impact on DPS.
A. Agree. B. Disagree.
3. Racism is an institutional issue more than an individual issue.
A. Agree. B. Disagree.
4. From the video, one parent, Ricardo Garibay, said, "I don't think the achievement gap has much to do with the school. It has more to do with parent involvement."
A. Agree. B. Disagree.
5. Denver families have enough choices to ensure that all students have access to high quality schools.
A. Agree. B. Disagree.
6. Which of these five strategies do you think holds the most promise to eliminate the achievement gap?
(Multiple Choice)
A. Addressing Poverty. B. Additional funding for low-performing schools. C. Improve race relations.
D. Preschool/early childhood development. E. More teachers of color.

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FACT SHEET



Standing in the Gap, a four part documentary series on educational equity produced by Rocky Mountain PBS, asks whether Colorado public schools are making progress in reducing academic achievement gaps between white students and students of color, and between poor students and more affluent students. The documentaries focus on Denver Public Schools.

But the analysis of enrollment and achievement data extends to the state's 20 largest school districts, including Denver.

After two decades of court-ordered busing beginning in 1975, and less coercive efforts to integrate schools in the two decades since, Denver Public Schools is the most segregated school district today among Colorado's largest 20.

Reasons for today's patterns of segregation, largely involving Hispanic students, are different from those that caused racial isolation of blacks in schools 40 years ago. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Denver school board deliberately segregated schools through a series of policies that the U.S. Supreme Court found unconstitutional.

Today, the return to neighborhood schools in a city where many neighborhoods are racially and socioeconomically segregated is the major cause of segregated schools. The analysis covered a decade of educational benchmarks leading up to the 20th anniversary in 2015 of the end of busing in Denver.

Among key findings:

- In most of the 20 largest districts, only about half or less of poor, Latino and black students are achieving proficiency in reading, and only between 30 to 40 percent are proficient in math. For white students, it is between 75 and 90 percent in reading and 60-70 percent in math.
- The gaps show up prominently in educational attainment. Only 70 percent of black students and 66 percent of Latino students graduate from high schools in the 20 districts combined. For white students, the rate is 85 percent. Half of black high school graduates enroll in college, while four in 10 Latino graduates do. More than six in 10 white high school graduates enter college.
- Ninety percent of the teachers in the 20 districts combined are white, but almost half of the students are black or Latino.
- In Denver, more than 80 percent of the district's Latino students attend schools where at least half the students are Latino. In 78 of the district's schools, more than 70 percent of the students are Latino.
- By contrast, more than three-quarter of DPS' black students now attend schools where 30 percent or fewer of the students are black. White students in Denver tend to remain clustered disproportionately in predominantly white schools.

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AUDIENCE NOTE – CATCHER



4A's Protocol

As you view the episodes, take notes on the following four questions:

- What do you *Agree* with in the episode?
- What do you want to *Argue* with in the episode?
- What *Assumptions* are held?
- What do you *Aspire* to do or be as a result of this episode?

AGREE

ARGUE

ASSUMPTIONS

ASPIRE

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