Minority Students in Less Racially Diverse Schools Face More Mental Woes

Black and Latino kids attending schools with a greater proportion of white students experience a higher risk of mental health problems.

April 29, 2021 By Alicia Green

New findings published in the journal Ethnicity and Disease reveal that Black and Latino students who attend less racially and ethnically diverse schools report twice the rate of mental health issues compared with their white peers, announced Texas A&M Today, the official news hub of Texas A&M University.

For the study, researchers collected mental health survey assessments from 389 sixth graders at 14 Texas public schools located in urban areas.

Results showed that Black and Latino students' experience of depressive-anxious symptoms doubled when there were a higher number of white students in a school.

Some Latino students saw a decrease in mental health problems the more racially and ethnically diverse a school was. In addition, Latino students with higher levels of stress experienced about one fifth the number of symptoms for depression and anxiety in schools with more diverse classmates.

Conversely, researchers found that a boost in school diversity was associated with white students experiencing higher levels of depressive-anxious symptoms.

Scientists believe these findings are key because although U.S. school populations are diverse, integrative curriculum and enrollment policies in the educational system have stalled or worsened over time.

Investigators noted that imbalances in the racial and ethnic enrollment in schools can fuel feelings of harassment, isolation and unfair expectations among students in minority groups, which endangers children's mental health.

For related coverage, "The Kids Are Not All Right. Maryland Bill Aims to Help."

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