



Preserving Strong and Integrated Schools in Montclair

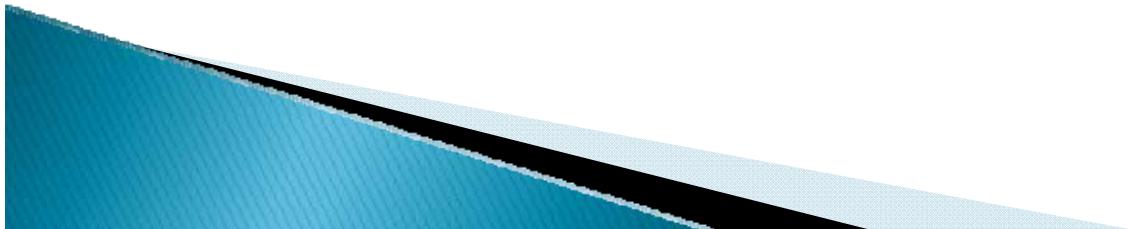
January 2010

Prepared by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
at the Ohio State University & the MPS School Assignment Task
Force.

School Assignment Task Force GOALS (December 2008)

- 1. Assess whether Montclair must comply with new law from US Supreme Court**

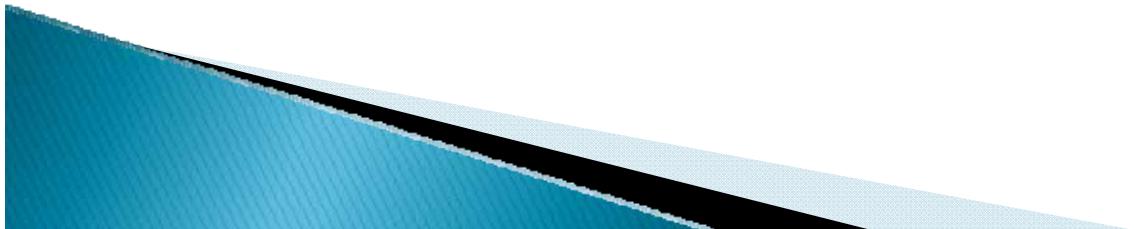
- 2. Make recommendations consistent with long-standing State Commissioner of Education order to maintain integration, and MPS goal of equal educational opportunity for every child.**



MPS Educational Goals

- ▶ High quality, integrated education for every child
- ▶ High academic achievement for all students
- ▶ Strong, diverse community of learners
- ▶ Maximizing individual student potential
- ▶ Preparing children for life in a globalized society
- ▶ Fostering citizenship in a pluralist democracy
- ▶ Avoiding racial and economic isolation of students

-MPS School Integration Task Force
December 10, 2008





KIRWAN INSTITUTE

for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

- ▶ Partners with communities, and institutions to analyze issues of race and ethnicity in ways that expand opportunity for all. Specializes in demographic mapping of housing, education and employment opportunity. Ford Fdn funded.

- ▶ Skadden Arps is a global law firm which provided an outside legal review to the Task Force, free of charge.

Skadden

Montclair's “Parental Preference” Integration Plan (1970s-2007)

- ▶ 1. Magnet schools, designed to draw a diverse mix of families from across town.
- ▶ 2. A school assignment protocol:
 - (i) special needs, ESL , retention & sibling placements
 - (ii) parental ranking of magnet schools,
 - (iii) so long as each school remains racially integrated, w/in 10% of current student population.

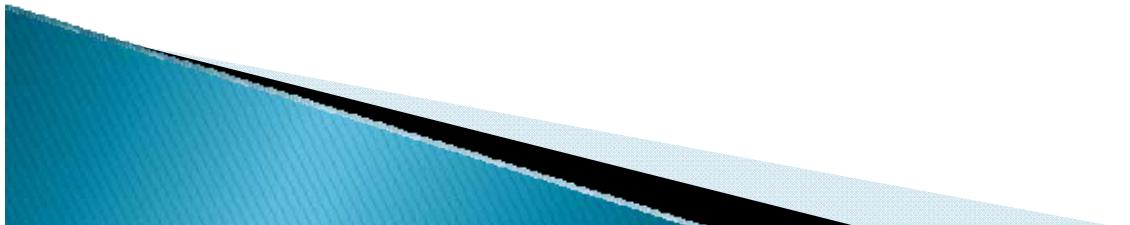
Parents Involved In Community Schools v. Seattle School Dist. No 1 (PICS) (2007)

- ▶ Seattle & Louisville voluntary integration plans used race of students in assignment, in an effort to approximate, in each school, the overall racial demographics of the student population.
- ▶ In 2007, the Supreme Court held that schools these plans impermissibly classified students by race, in violation of the U.S. Constitution.
- ▶ **HELD: SCHOOLS MAY NOT ASSIGN STUDENTS BASED ON THE RACE OF THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD.**



What May School Districts Do?

- ✓ Use race-conscious programs (e.g., magnet schools) or attendance zones.
- ✓ Targeted recruiting of students and faculty
- ✓ Track enrollment & performance by race
- ✓ Pursue socio-economic integration
- ✓ Integration plan must tie to educational goals.



Must Montclair Comply with PICS?

SHORT ANSWER: YES.

- ▶ Unlike the voluntary plans struck down in PICS, Montclair is under a state administrative order to maintain integration in its schools.
- ▶ However, the state order does not specify HOW Montclair is to achieve integration (nor did it find intentional discrimination). The HOW of integration is now constrained by federal law from the Supreme Court.

Magnet Schools

This map shows the current racial composition of Montclair neighborhoods and schools

2009-10

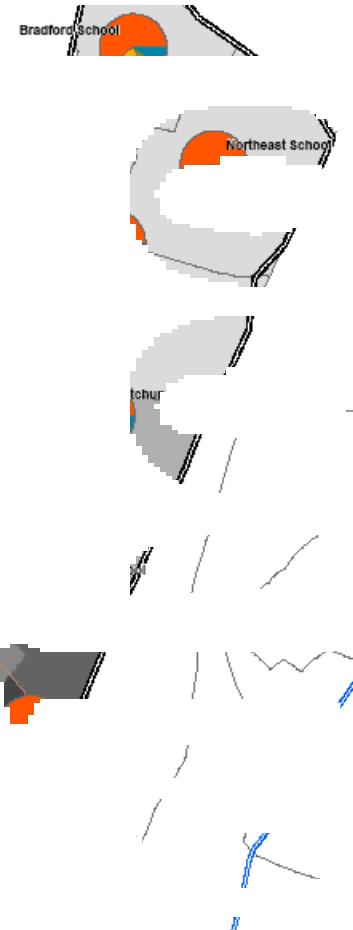
K-5 Middle

W: 51.6%	W: 49.2%
B: 32.2%	B: 37.7%
H: 8.0%	H: 7.2%
A: 7.8%	A: 3.1%
AI: .4%	AI: .1%

Racial Composition



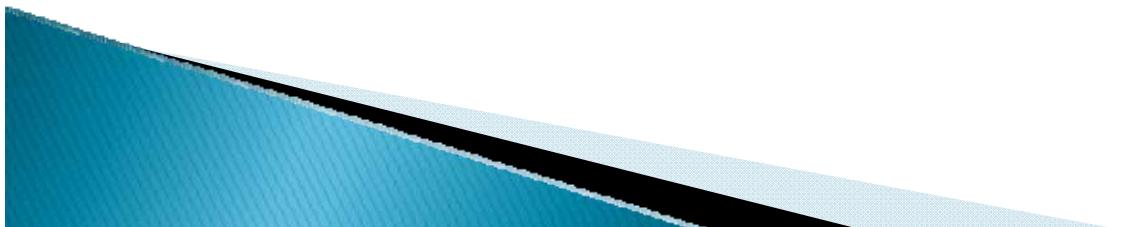
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau Date: January 08, 2010

Geographic Mapping for Schools

- ▶ The goal is to achieve schools that integrate students of diverse racial and SES backgrounds, in order to give students in each school an equal opportunity to learn.
- ▶ Mapping looks at multiple factors which correlate with educational outcomes and social benefits, in a given neighborhood.

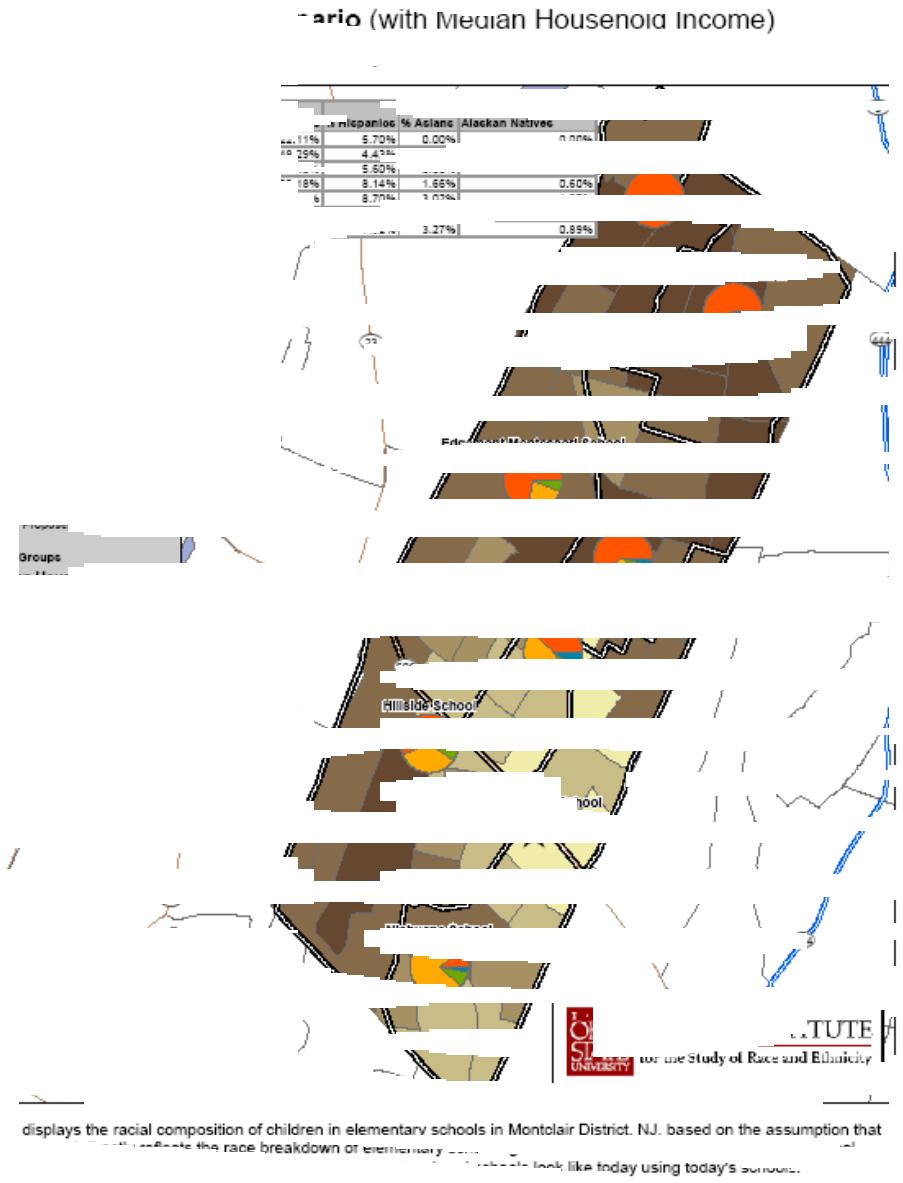


Proposed Assignment Factors for Montclair -- Using Geographic Zones

- ▶ Kirwan modeled several educational zones for Montclair, based on 5 equally weighted factors
 - ❖ Race, by neighborhood (race)
 - ❖ # of Free and Reduced Lunch students (low-income)
 - ❖ Household Poverty Rates (poverty)
 - ❖ Median Household Income (affluent, middle, low)
 - ❖ Parental Education Levels (# predictor of achievmt)
- ▶ Each factor was calculated at the **neighborhood level**, using **block-level census data**
(except for FRL)

Median Income

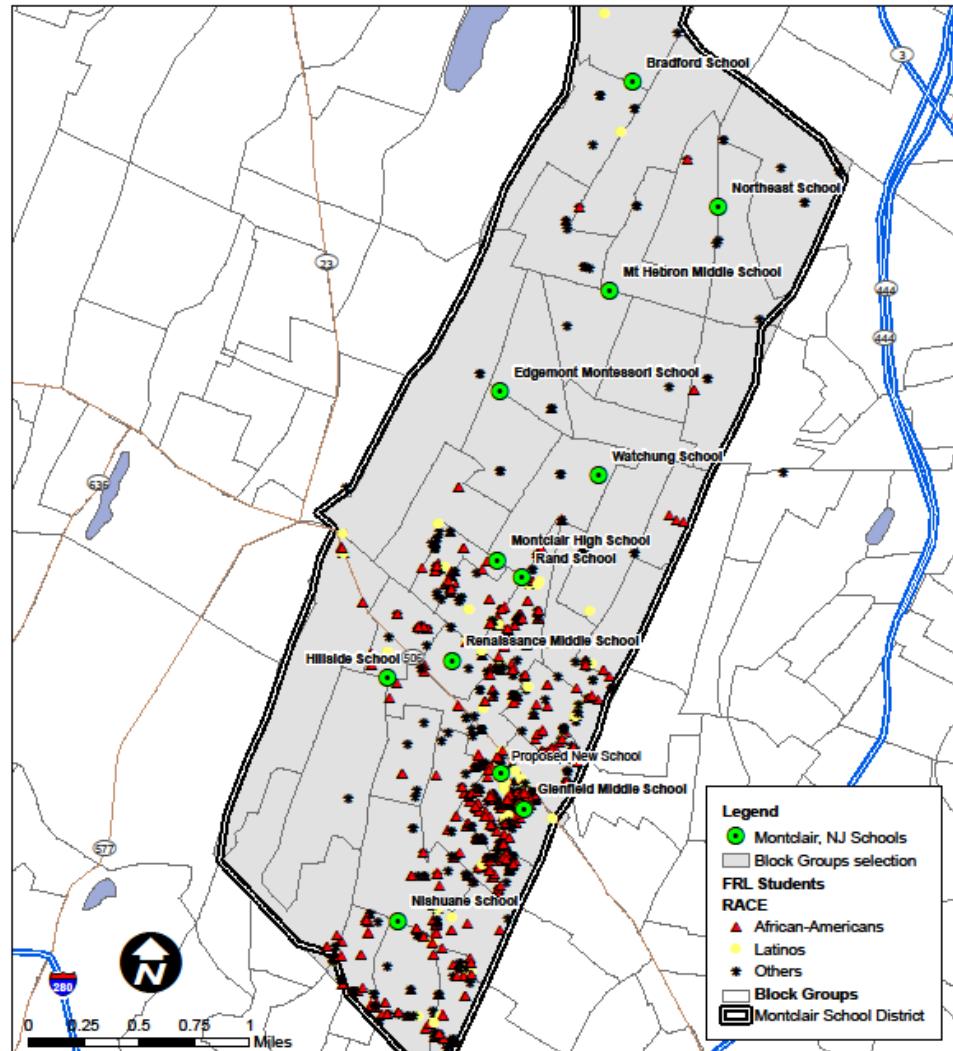
- ▶ The map on the right shows the median household income by neighborhood.



Free and Reduced Lunch

- The map shows the geographic distribution of the 1244 students who qualified for FRL in 2008–09 (out of total of 6,621 students)

Montclair, NJ
Free and Reduced Lunch Students (Race Based)

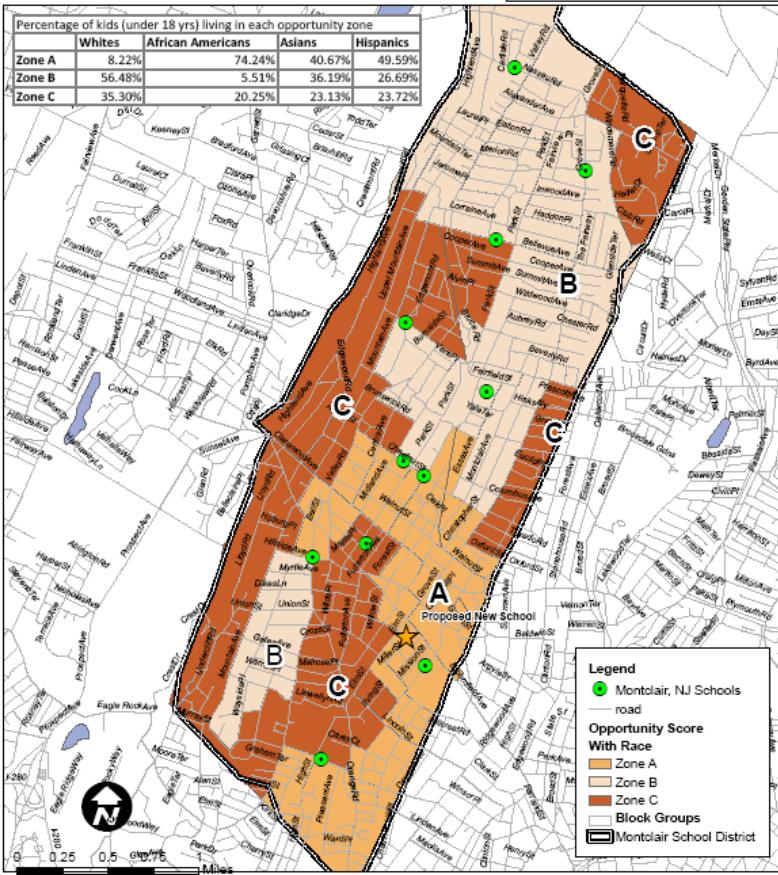


This map displays the composition of children on free and reduced lunch within the Montclair School District based upon race

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000; Montclair Public Schools
Date: April 21, 2009

Three Zone Integration Model

Montclair, NJ
Three-zones Opportunity Scenario



This map displays three opportunity zones in Montclair School District based on multi-factor analysis including race as a factor. P.S. Census block groups (our unit of analysis) are demarcated by street layout. Thus residences on one side of the street might belong to different zone than residences on the other side.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000; Montclair Public Schools
Date: Nov. 20, 2009

- ▶ GOAL: Each school has diversity of students from each zone, within 5% point deviation of K class zone baseline.
- ▶ K and transfer students are assigned based on parental preference and zone balance.

School Assignment Protocol

STEP 1: MANDATORY PLACEMENTS

- ▶ Special Needs
- ▶ ESL
- ▶ Siblings
- ▶ Retentions

STEP 2: REMAINING SEATS

- ▶ Remaining students are placed through a combination of parental preference rankings and zone balance considerations, such that each school remains within 5% pts of the K zone baseline.

Implementation of Plan

- ▶ Zone balancing plan applies to K students placement mainly
- ▶ Plan applies to middle school transfer requests
- ▶ Some allowance for late enrollees
- ▶ Any changes to school composition are gradual
- ▶ Mainly Renaissance, by giving 1st priority to students from under-represented zones
- ▶ Per current practice

Who is Affected

Likely Impact

Limitations of the Plan

- ▶ Plan predicts that racial diversity will result
- ▶ Plan predicts that SES diversity will result
- ▶ Plan keeps overall schools integrated
- ▶ But cannot *ensure* that any particular % of racial diversity
- ▶ Without individual SES data, cannot double-check to *ensure* this result
- ▶ Does not address weaknesses in draw of magnets or equity issues w/in schools

Advantages of the Plan

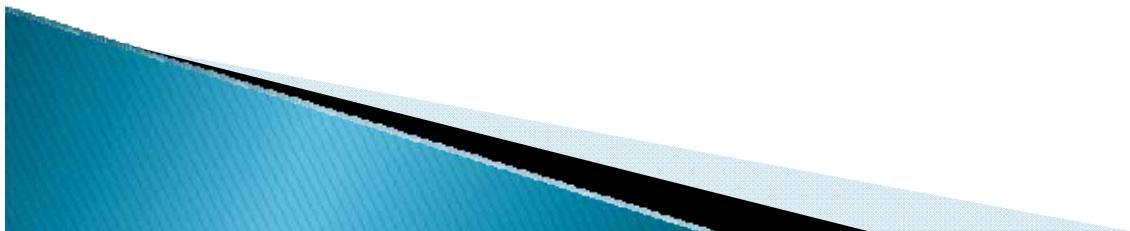
- ▶ No school has an undue concentration of lower income children
- ▶ No school has an undue concentration of affluent children
- ▶ Fuller picture of diversity
- ▶ Equalizes teaching resources & narrows achievement gap
- ▶ Equalizes fundraising capacity between schools
- ▶ Consistent with 21st c. community sentiment

What Montclairians Think

- ▶ October 23–24, 2009: 17 focus groups with 151 Montclair Residents said:
 - School Integration remains an important goal
 - Socio-economic divisions in Montclair are equally or more pronounced as racial ones
 - Achievement gap, fundraising discrepancies between schools and unequal voice within schools are problems.
 - Participants unsure if integration and achievement are related.

Montclair Focus Groups: 2009

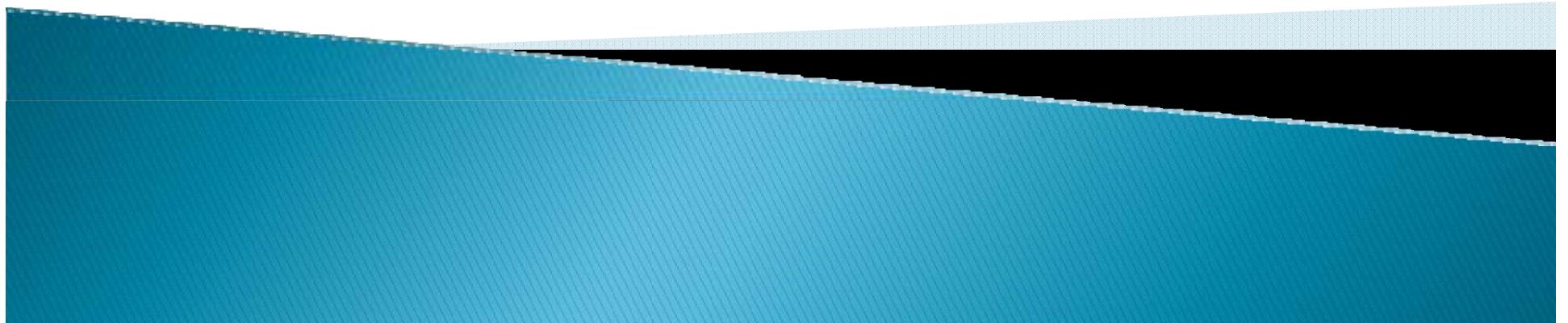
- ▶ Magnet schools are doing good job, but themes have weakened.
- ▶ Most parents decide based on start times and school “vibe.”
 - MPS should consider SES factors in integration
 - MPS should consider racial composition of students’ neighborhood
 - Many don’t want to provide income information, but ok to extract from census data
 - More effort desired on equity issues



Final Recommendations

- ▶ 1. Implement new school assignment plan in time for 2010–2011 placements
- ▶ 2. Conduct a **community survey** on perceptions of magnet schools and educational priorities of different groups. Use survey to **tweak magnet program and/or start times** to improve “organic” diversity of draw to each school
- ▶ 3. Community-led dialogues on integration

Appendix



Educational Benefits of Integration

Research Highlights:

- ▶ **Raises achievement and graduation rates**
 - Diverse schools have smaller achievement gaps than racially isolated ones
 - Low poverty schools out-perform high poverty schools by 24:1
- ▶ **Builds social skills and networks needed in a global economy; breaks down stereotypes harmful to citizenship in a multi-racial democracy**
- ▶ **Enhances critical thinking and problem-solving by placing students of diverse experiences in learning teams**

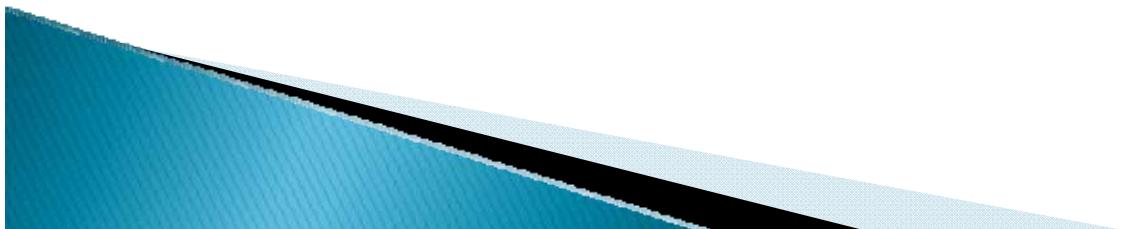
Why Magnets are Important

This map shows the racial composition that would result if MPS returned to neighborhood schools (using pre-1970s catchment zones)

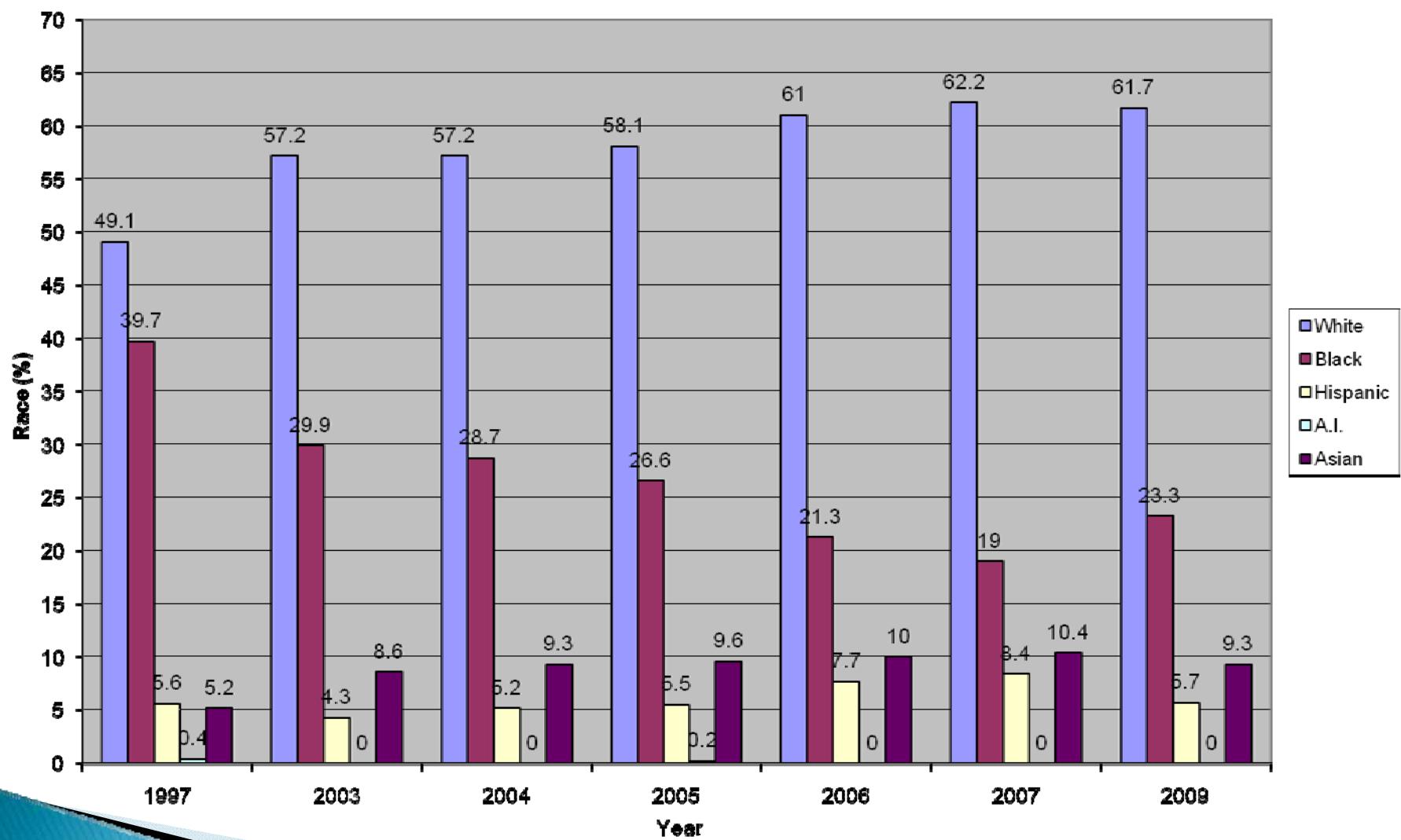


Why a School Assignment Plan is Also Important

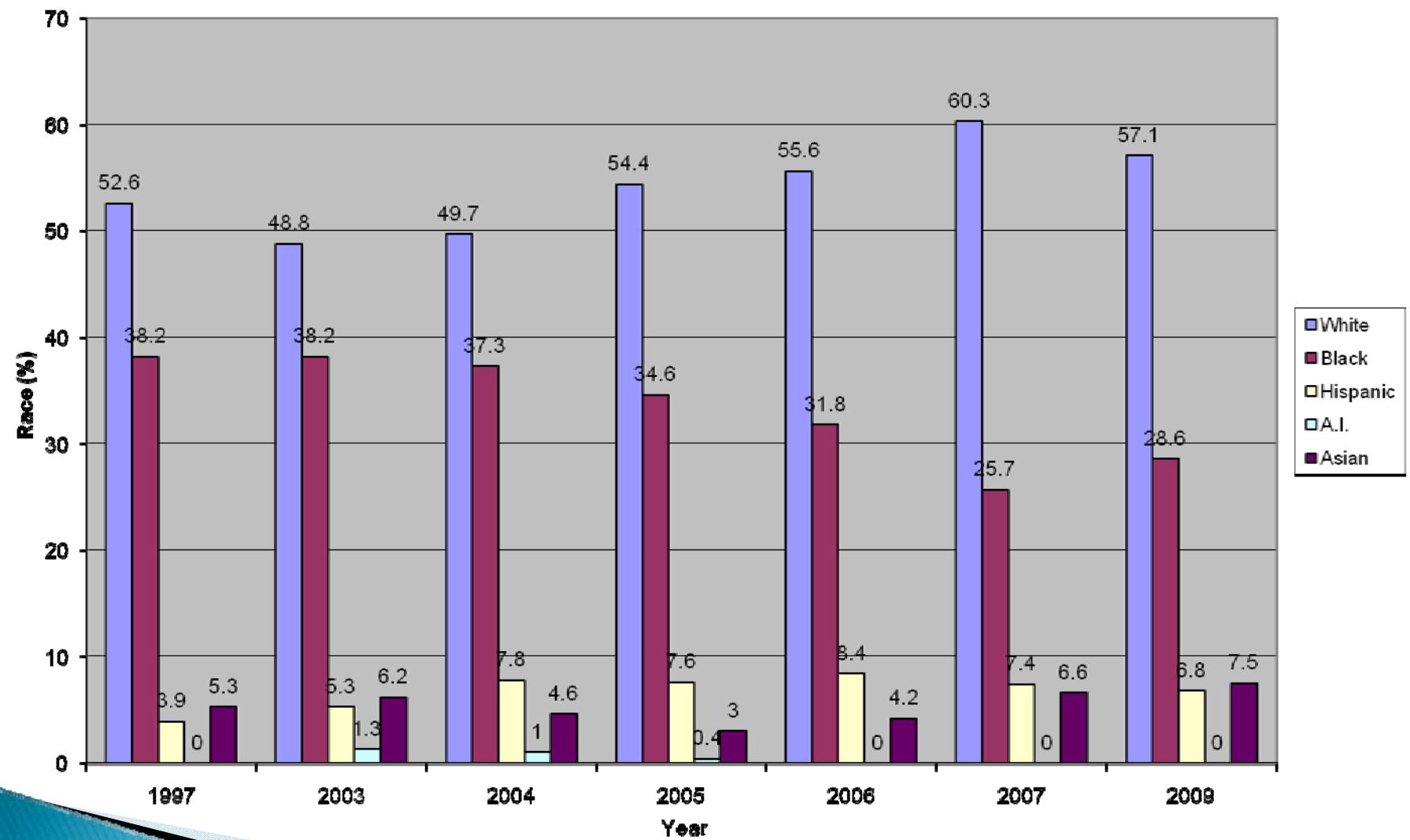
- ▶ The Magnet plan has produced evident racial and economic integration despite patterns of residential segregation within the district.
- ▶ However, there have been slow, resegregative trends over time in some schools. In addition, achievement gaps persist.



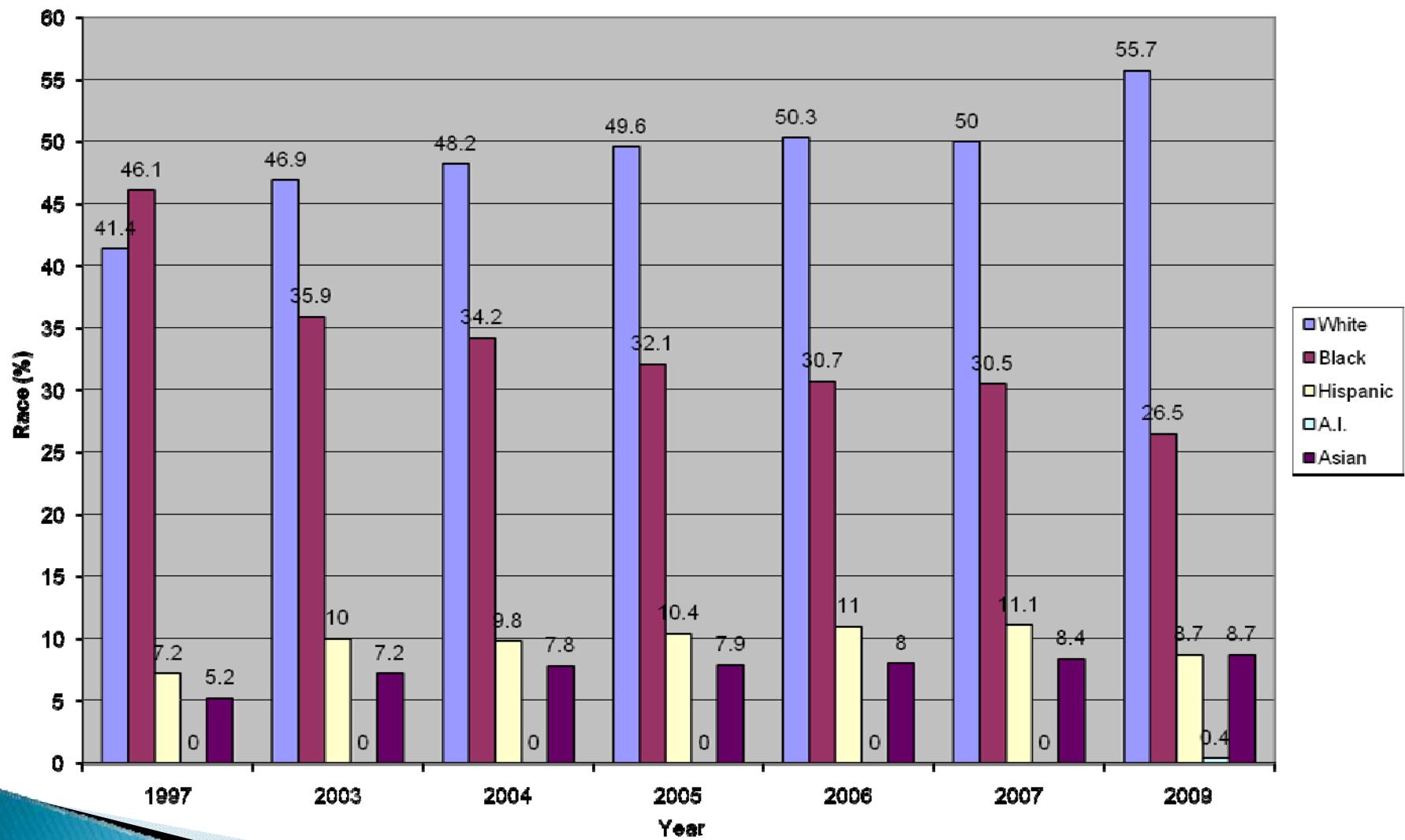
Watchung Elementary School



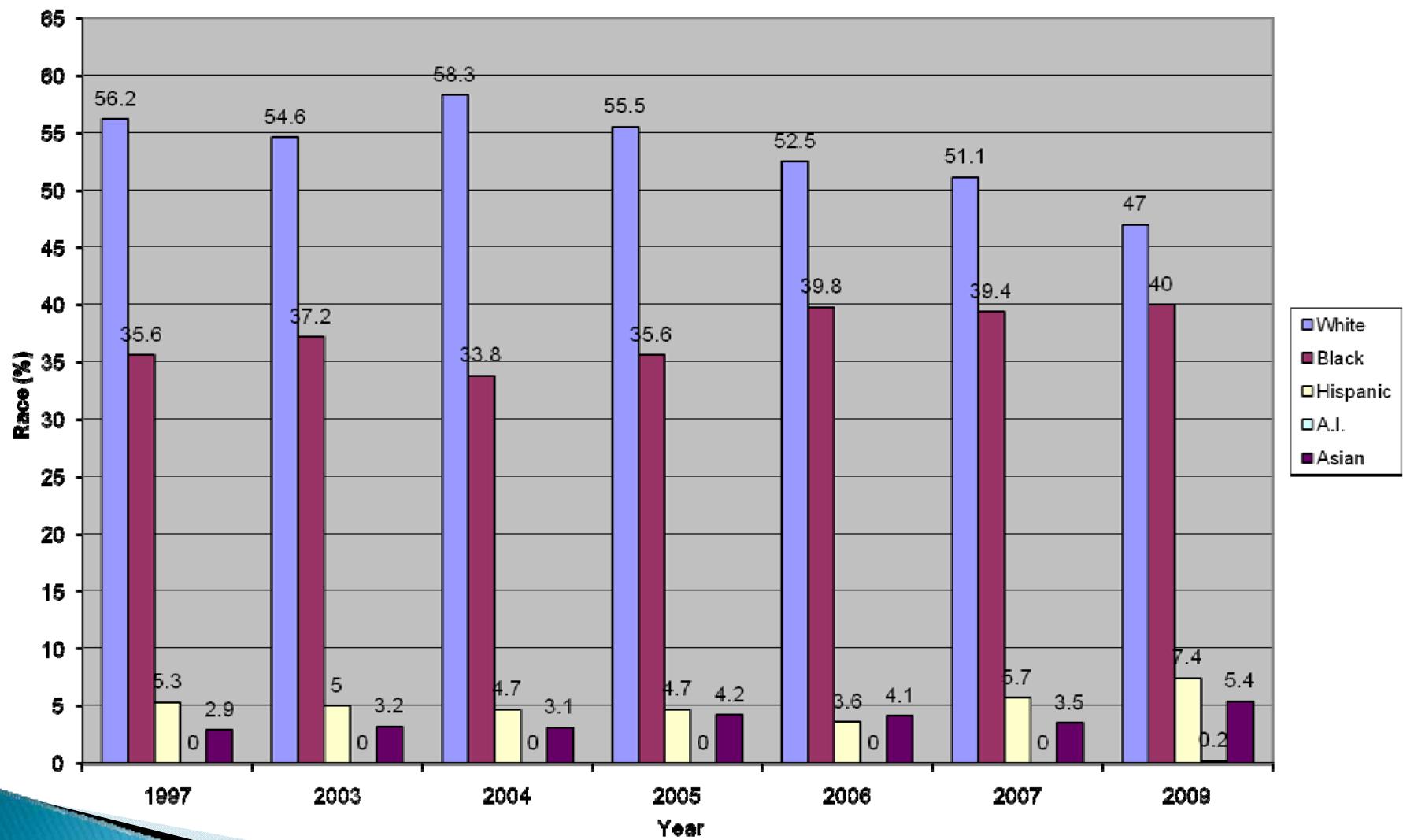
Renaissance Middle School



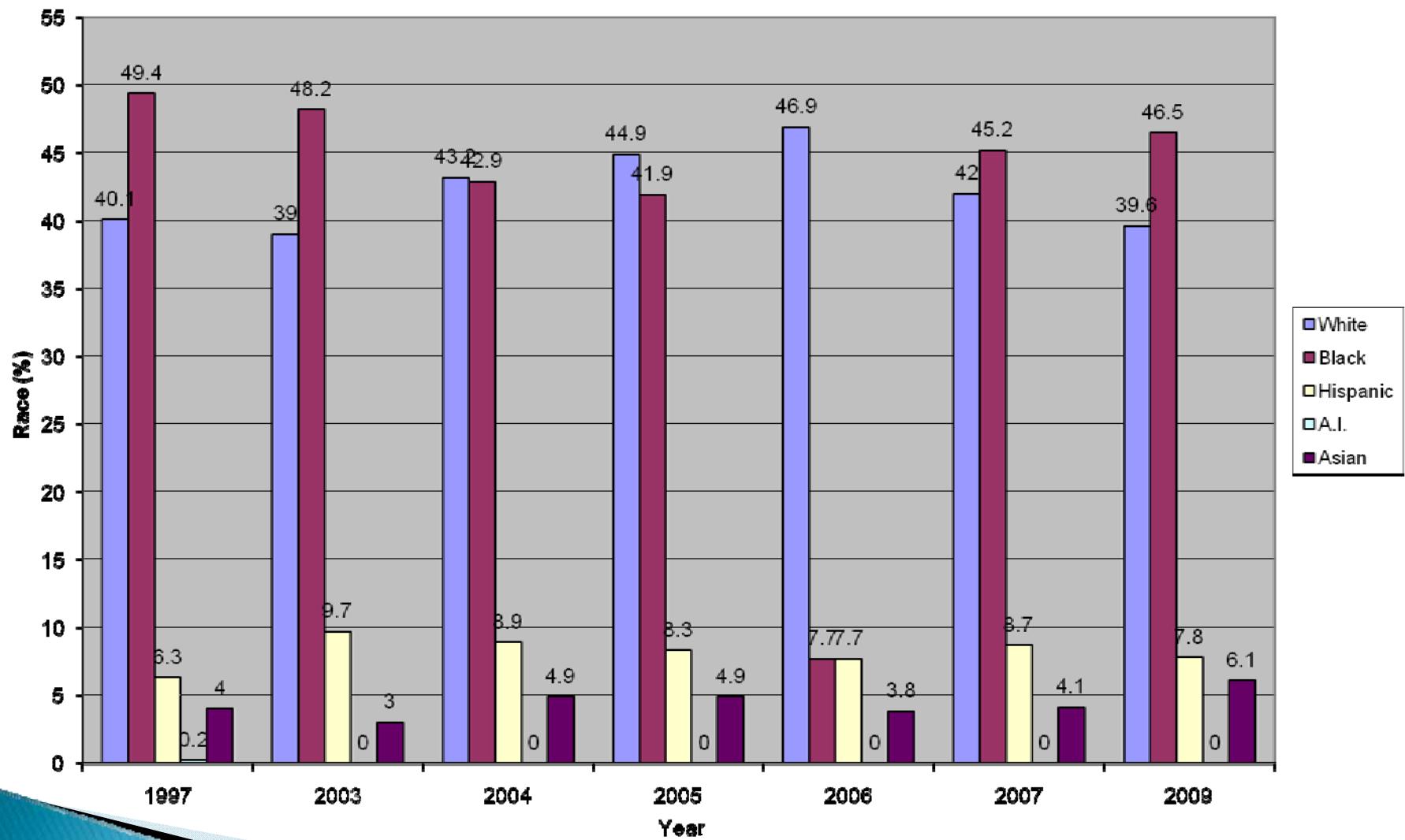
Northeast Elementary School



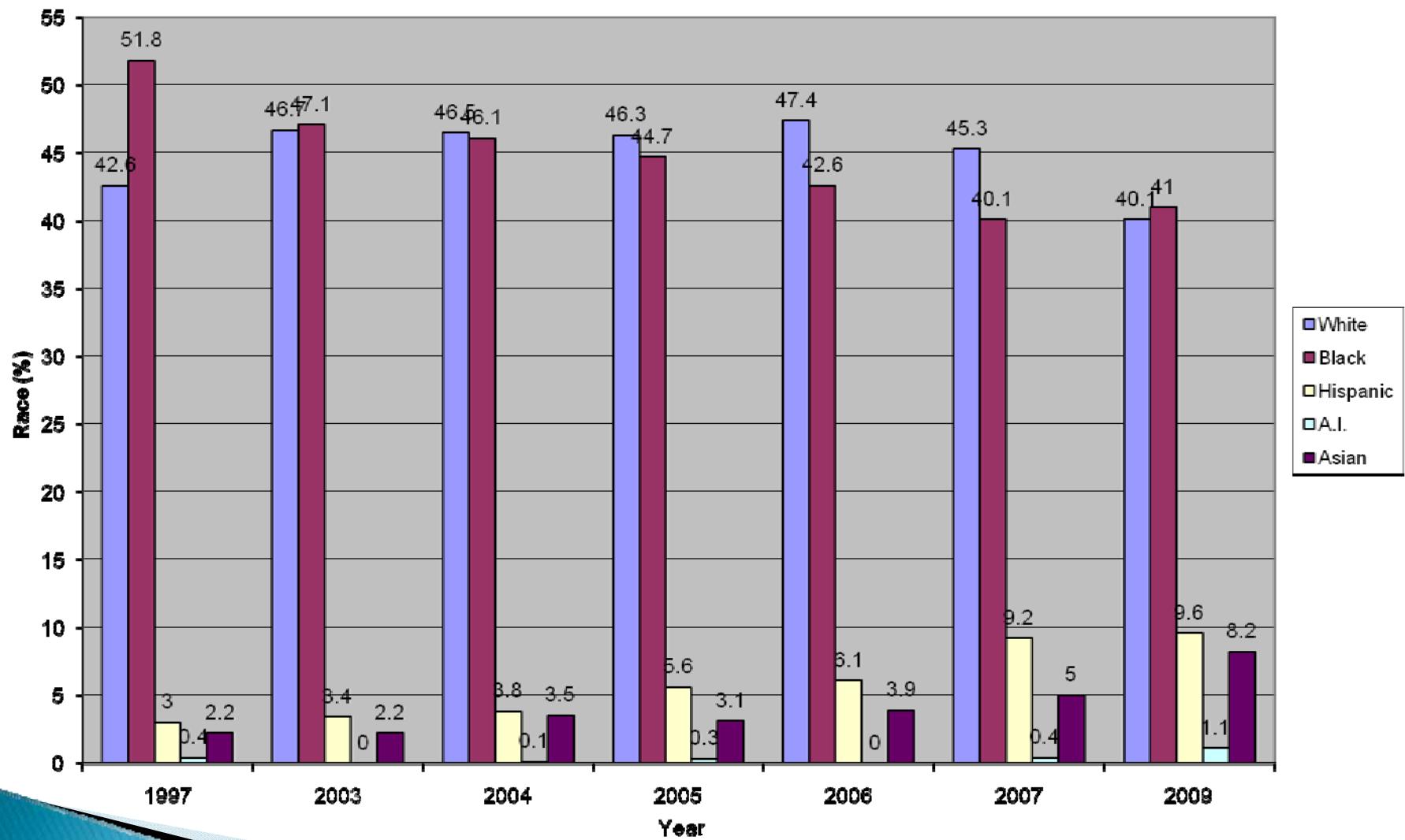
Rand Elementary School



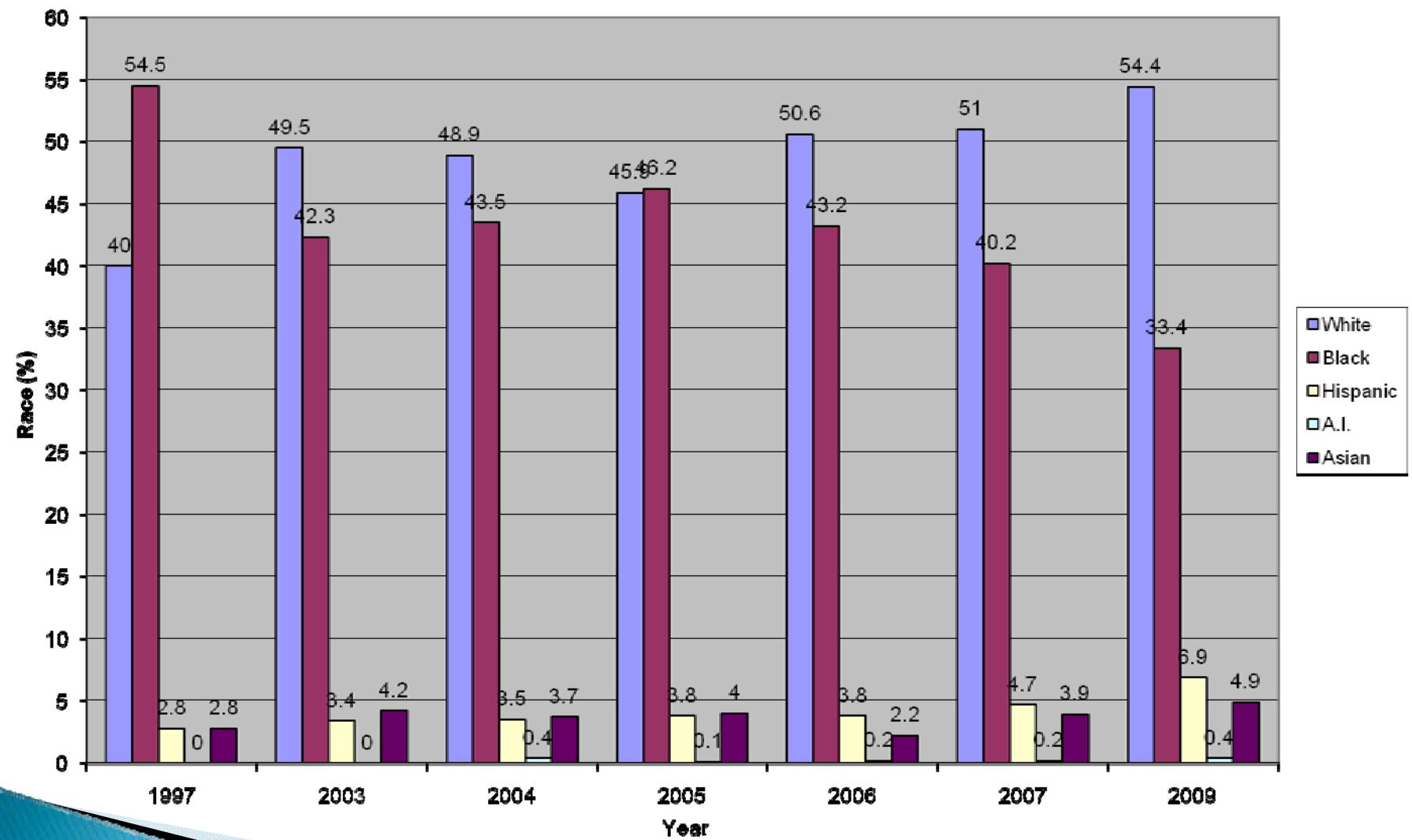
Mount Hebron Middle School



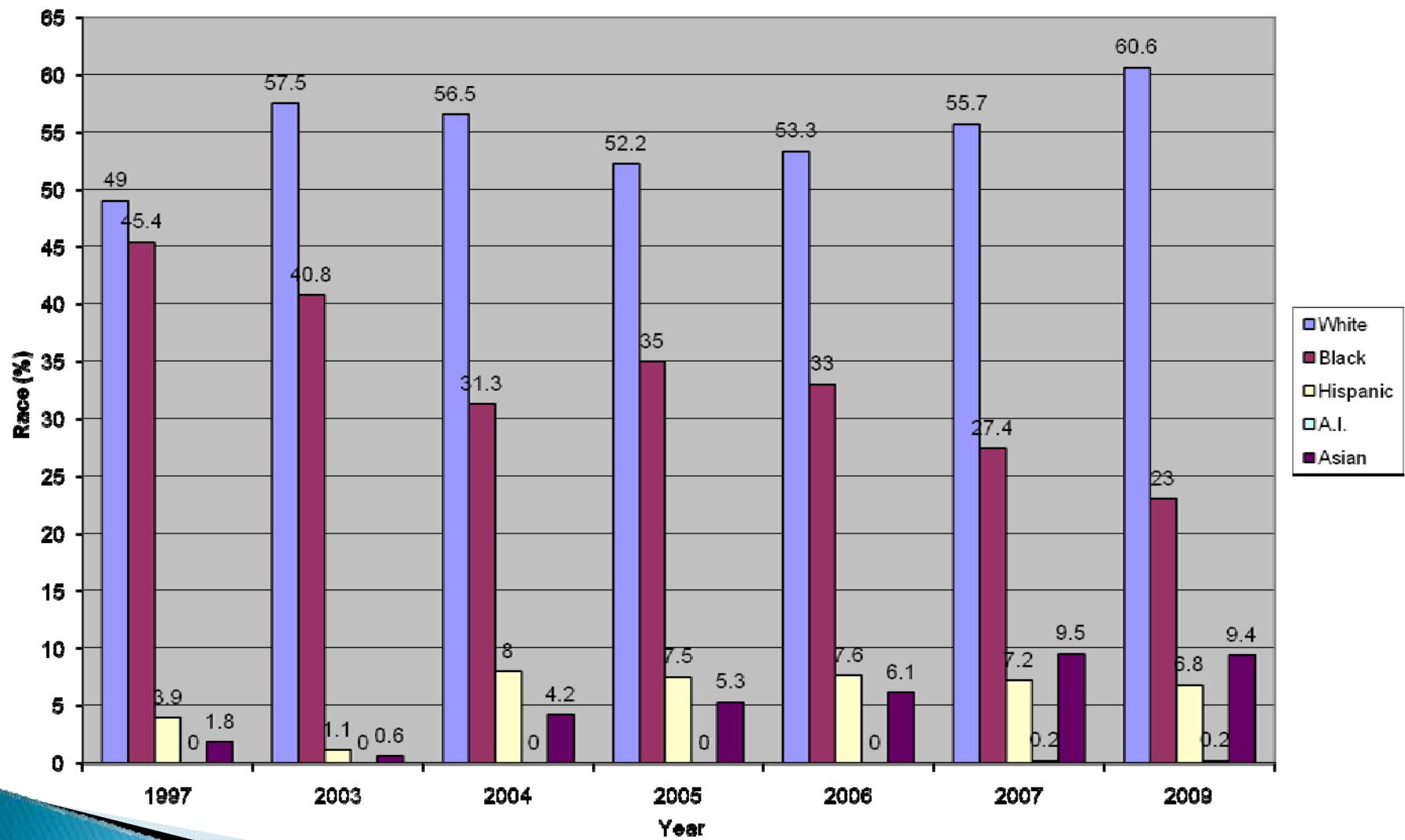
Nishuane Elementary School



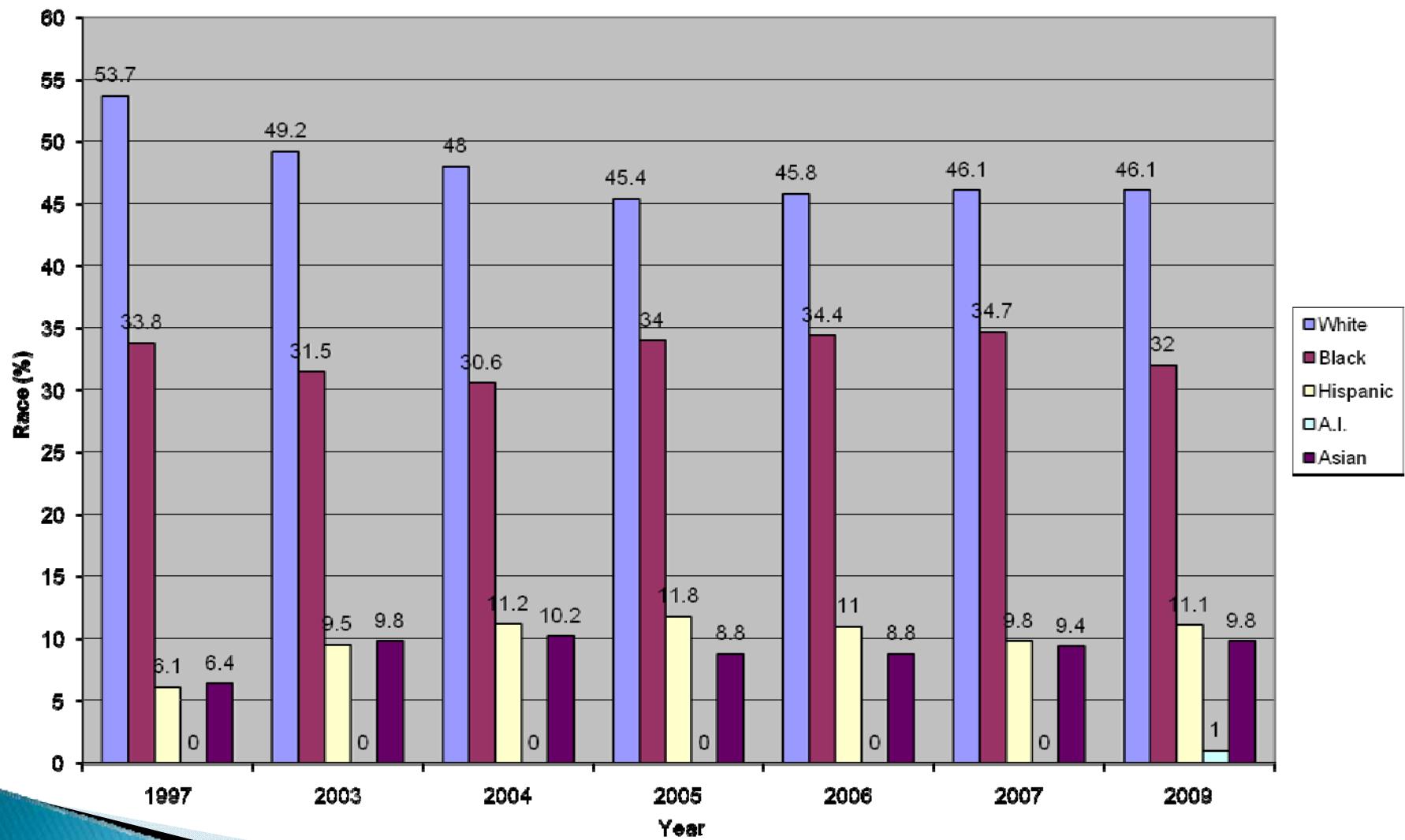
Glenfield Middle School



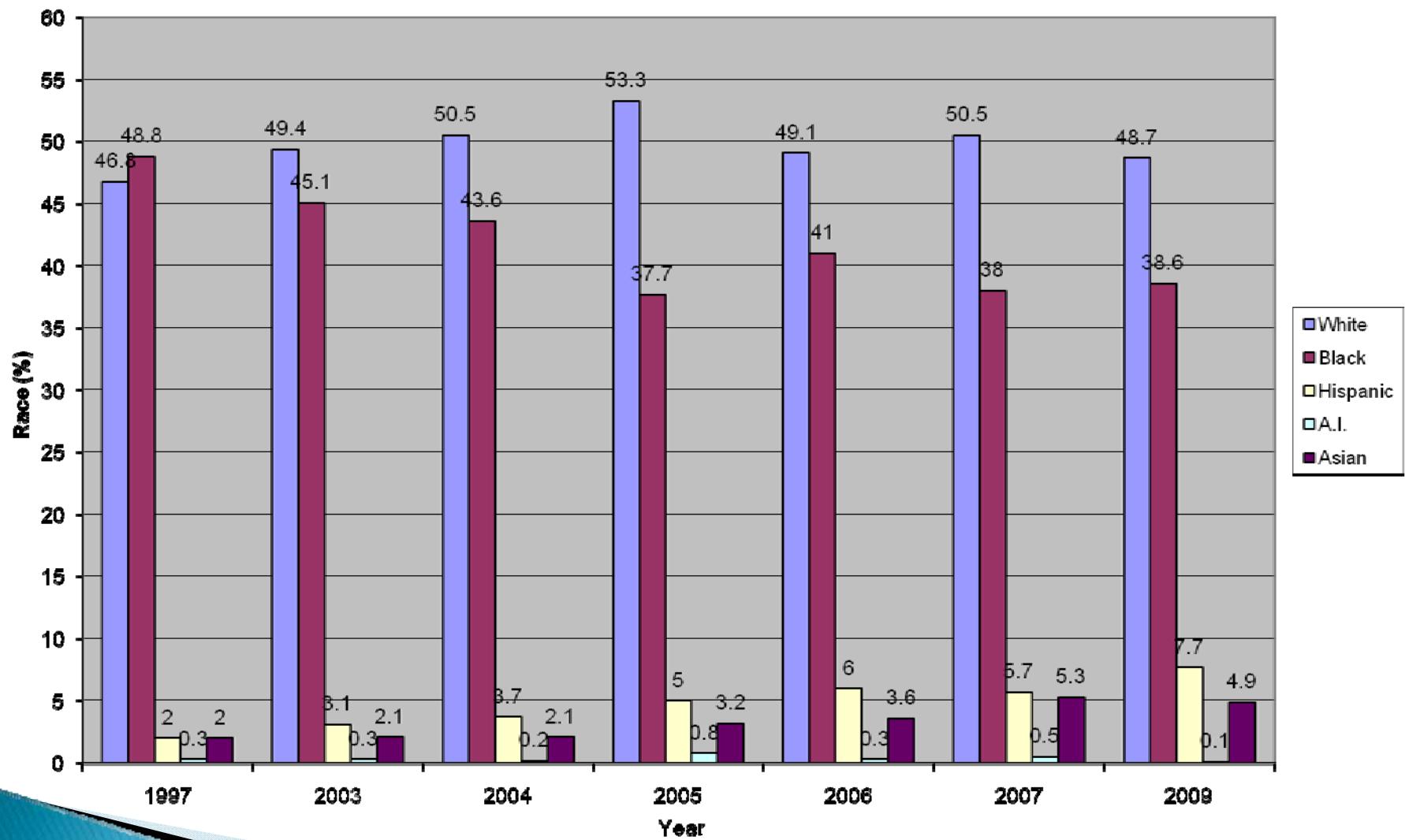
Bradford Elementary School 1997-2009



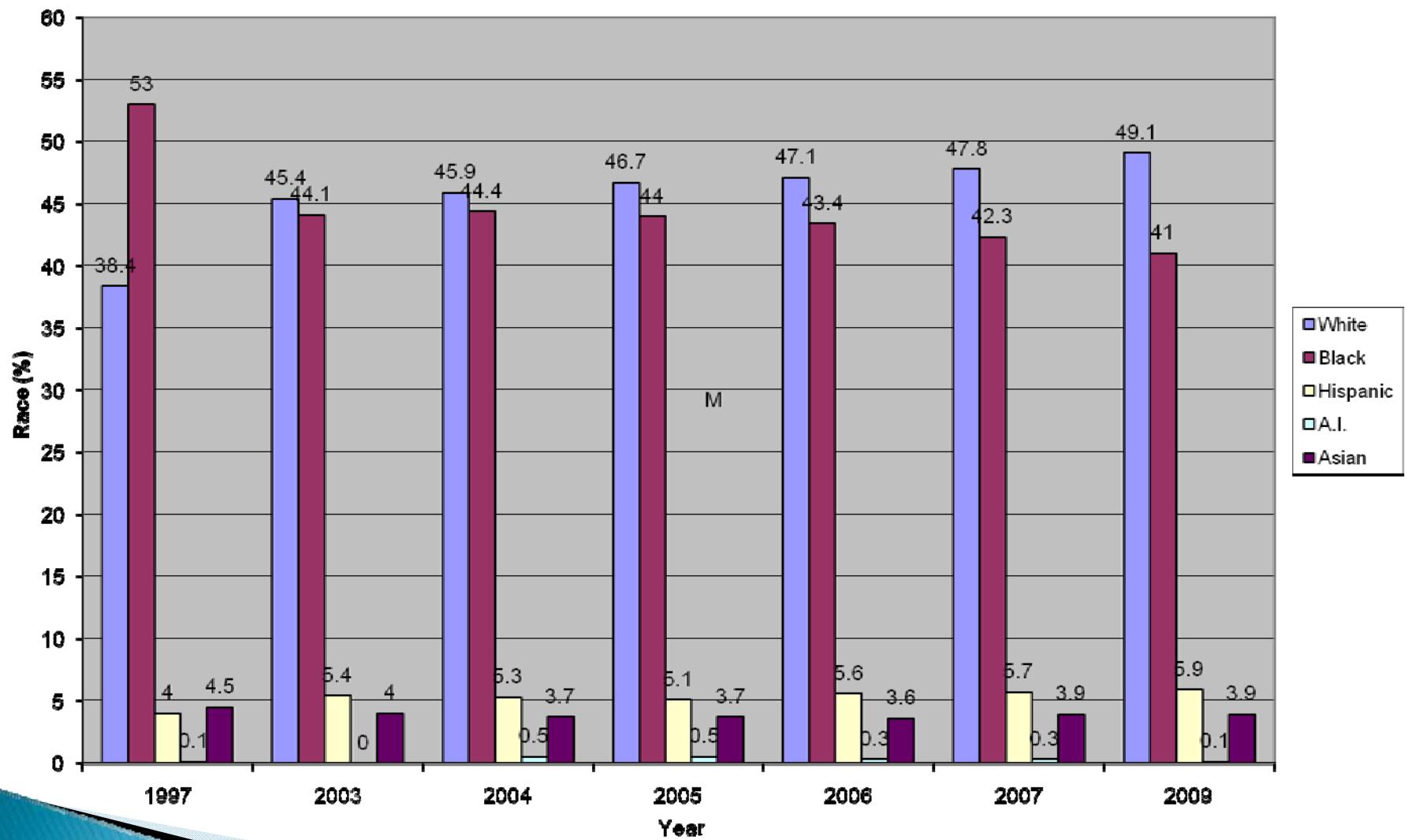
Edgemont Elementary School 1997-2009



Hillside Elementary School



Montclair High School 1997-2009



Free and Reduced Lunch by School and Race, as Reported

School	FRL students as percentage of total enrollment	% White FRL students (of total FRL by school)	% African American FRL students (of total FRL by school)	% Asians FRL students (of total FRL by school)	% Hispanics FRL students (of total FRL by school)	% of other FRL students (of total FRL by school)
BRADFORD SCHOOL	17.16%	6.58%	50.00%	1.32%	3.95%	38.16%
EDGEMONT	19.16%	1.69%	40.68%	5.08%	13.56%	38.98%
GLENFIELD MIDDLE	21.30%	5.22%	70.90%	0.00%	4.48%	19.40%
HILLSIDE	18.12%	1.79%	68.75%	2.68%	4.46%	22.32%
MONTCLAIR HIGH	21.79%	4.87%	63.11%	2.78%	7.89%	21.35%
MT HEBRON MIDDLE SCHOOL	22.29%	2.82%	69.72%	4.93%	12.68%	9.86%
NISHUANE	14.04%	2.50%	20.00%	3.75%	2.50%	71.25%
NORTHEAST	14.87%	0.00%	41.94%	3.23%	17.74%	37.10%
RAND SCHOOL	22.53%	1.22%	52.44%	2.44%	7.32%	36.59%
RENAISSANCE MIDDLE SCH	9.62%	8.70%	78.26%	0.00%	0.00%	13.04%
WATCHUNG	10.29%	6.98%	46.51%	2.33%	4.65%	39.53%
Race Total (% FRL by race of total FRL)		3.86%	58.52%	2.73%	7.64%	27.25%
Enrollment total (% FRL by total enrollment)	18.79%	0.72%	11.00%	0.51%	1.43%	5.12%

Persisting Racial Achievement Gap

ELEMENTARY	Language	Math
Black	79%	80%
Hispanic	88%	91%
White	97%	98%
MIDDLE	Language	Math
Black	71%	60%
Hispanic	81%	74%
White	94%	93%
HIGH	Language	Math
Black	79%	52%
Hispanic	96%	83%
White	99%	96%

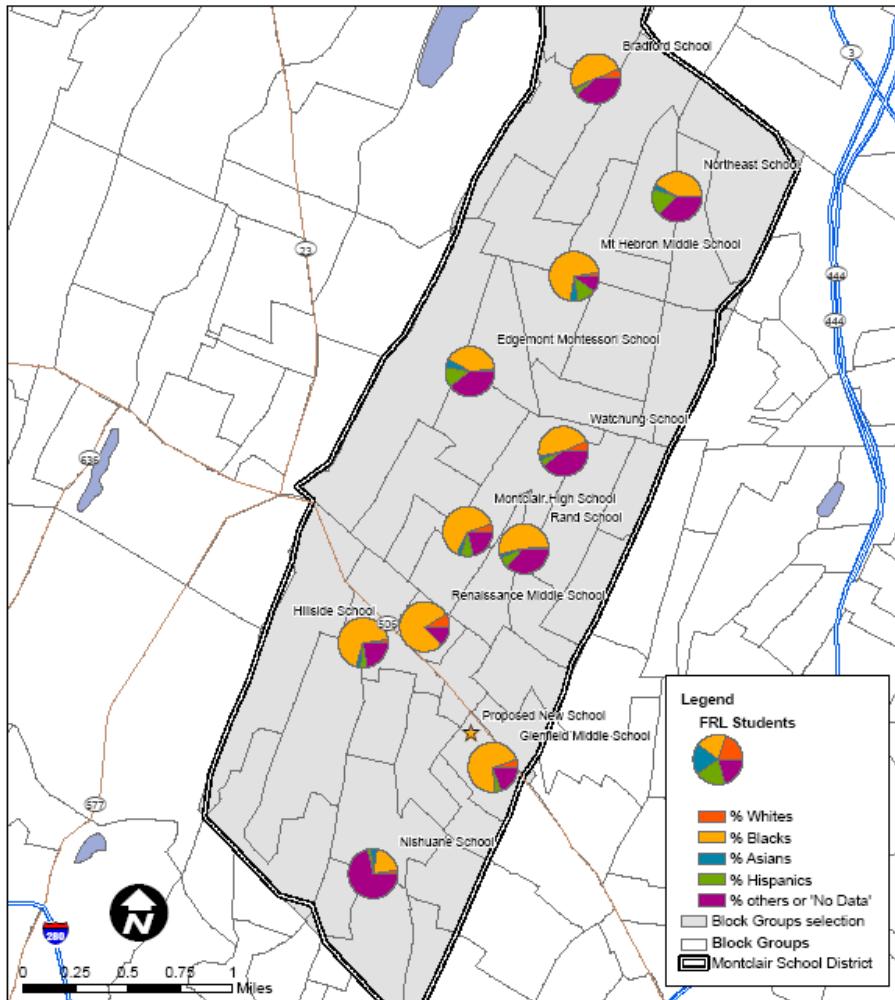
- For most groups, middle school test scores lag both elementary and high school rates.
- However, for black students, the achievement gap grows wider over time, especially relative to other student groups.

Test Scores by Age Group



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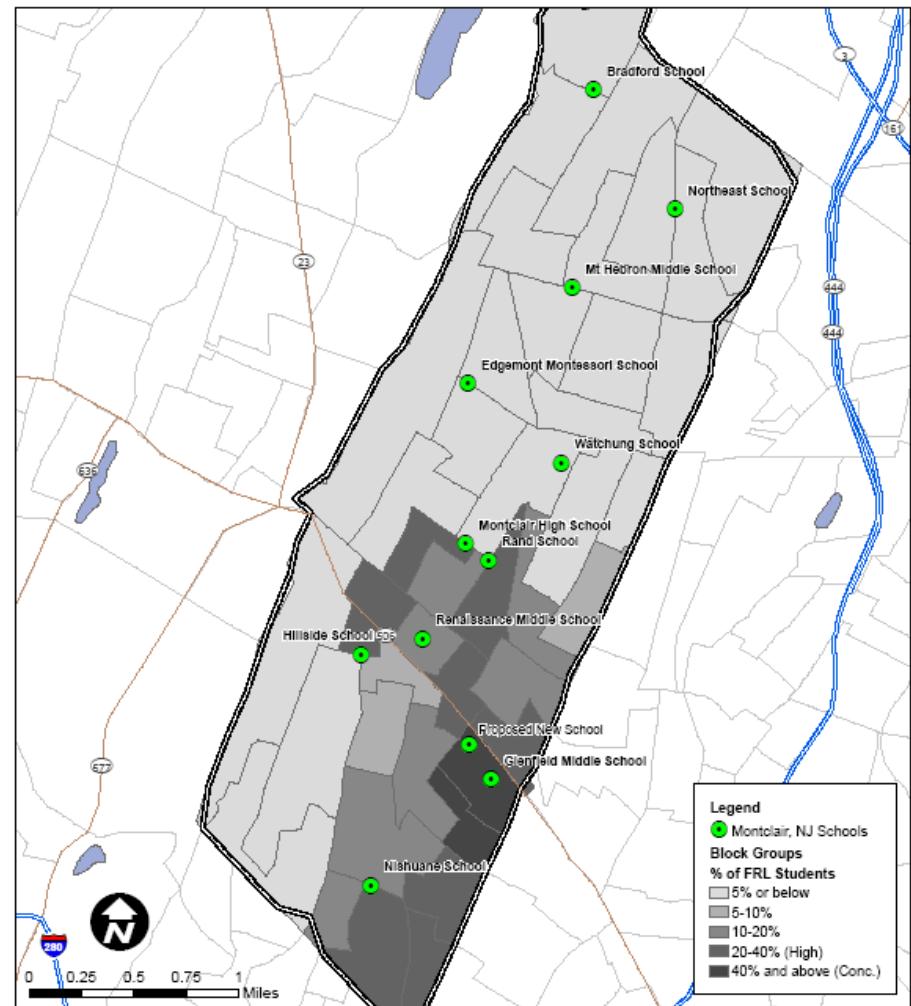
Montclair, NJ
Free and Reduced Lunch Students by School



This map displays the racial composition of children on free and reduced lunch for each school within the Montclair School District based upon data provided by the district

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000; Montclair Public Schools
Date: May 21, 2009

Montclair, NJ
Free and Reduced Lunch Students
Percentage by Block Groups



This map displays the percentage of children on free and reduced lunch by block groups in Montclair, NJ within the Montclair School District

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000; Montclair Public Schools
Date: May 14, 2009

Free and Reduced Lunch

- Individualized Data
- Less disruptive in terms of assignment
- Strong correlation with Race
- There were only 20 reported FRL students from last years kindergarten class, not enough to distribute to produce an integrative effect.
- FRL is an imprecise class-based measure, and would not produce integration among the higher income levels, and is underinclusive with respect to race

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why Three Zones?

- ▶ The Task Force and Kirwan considered 2-, 3-, and 4-zone options.
 - The **2-zone model** was easiest to administer and afforded the greatest degree of parental choice. It failed, however, to ensure an adequate likelihood of racial and economic integration.
 - The **4-zone model**, while potentially ensuring a higher degree of integration, was more complex to administer and more significantly constrained parental choice.
 - On balance, the Task Force and Kirwan determined that the **3-zone model** struck the best balance of ease of administration, likelihood of integration, and degree of parental choice.

