

Brown vs. Board of Education said that separate but equal is not acceptable. And yet schools in New York City are among the most segregated in the nation. When you have a system that results in 81% of the white students attending three schools and 64% of Latino students attending a different set of three schools, that's a system that has a racially disproportionate impact and creates de facto segregation.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

District 15 is a very diverse district. It covers the neighborhoods that are some of the wealthiest in the city and some of the poorest in the city. District 15 has a process called Middle School Choice, which is designed to give students choice of which school best suits them.

However, the schools are doing the choosing. And the students that they're choosing are the students who already have advantages. The admissions process is so time-consuming that people who don't have flexible jobs, don't speak English, and are not well-connected either don't know or they can't participate in it. That has a very racially disproportionate impact on low-income Latino students in our district.

The higher-performing schools have 87% of all of the students who scored the highest on the state tests. Other schools around the district get a disproportionate number of students whose parents don't speak English, whose parents are incarcerated, students who live in temporary housing, where poverty is a real factor. And by concentrating them all together, it becomes very, very difficult to meet all of their needs.

School integration is one of the best ways to teach tolerance, to close the achievement gap so that kids have the opportunity to go to school with people who don't look like them.