

The logo features a blue speech bubble with rounded corners and a tail pointing downwards. Inside the bubble, the text "SPRING WEBINAR SERIES" is displayed in a bold, sans-serif font. "SPRING" is in green, while "WEBINAR" and "SERIES" are in orange. The background of the slide is white, with a horizontal bar at the top consisting of segments in cyan, green, yellow, orange, and dark blue. A solid dark blue bar is at the bottom.

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WEBINAR  
SERIES**

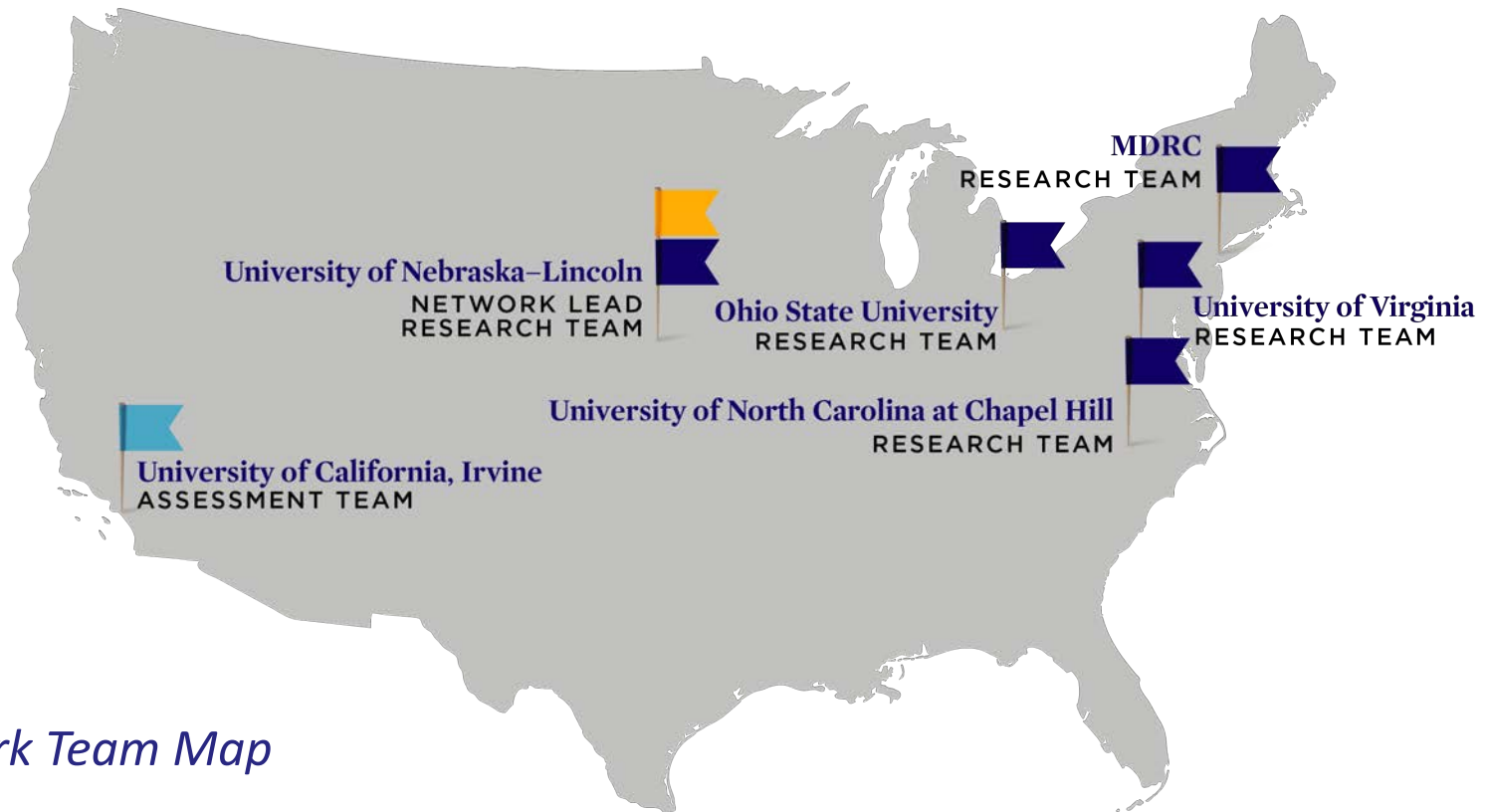
[earlylearningnetwork.unl.edu](http://earlylearningnetwork.unl.edu)

# Network Mission

*To advance the understanding of policies and practices that narrow the achievement gap and maintain early learning success as children transition from preschool to elementary school and beyond.*



# Network Team Map



## *Network Team Map*

- ◆ Five Research Teams
- ◆ One Assessment Team
- ◆ Network Lead





*Webinar 3: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

Building Toward Racial Diversity, Equity and  
Inclusion in Early Learning



**Iheoma Iruka, Ph.D.**

The University of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill



**Meghan McCormick, Ph.D.**

MDRC



# Beyond Achievement Gap Gazing: Examining What Matters

Iheoma U. Iruka<sup>a</sup>, Susan M. Sheridan<sup>b</sup>, Natalie Koziol<sup>b</sup>, Hannah Kerby<sup>b</sup>, Amanda Prokasky<sup>b</sup>, and Amanda Witte<sup>b</sup>

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May 18, 2021



# Take Home Points

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- Some **gaps still remain** even after accounting for SES and PreK attendance and skills, so focus on gap-closing factors still needed
- More supports needed to **strengthen home-school connection** to reduce Black-White gaps
- Need for more **culturally-relevant** malleable factors to explain Latino-White gaps (e.g., *familismo, respeto*)
- Need to examine the existence of these gaps **beyond kindergarten** and whether these or other malleable factors are still relevant over time

# Rationale

- Need to uncover malleable factors that reduce or eliminate these gaps.
- Children develop in connected systems that influence their learning and life outcomes and they may have different meaning across racial groups.
- Affirmative and enriching home and classroom environments and their connection have the potential to reduce achievement gaps.





# What did we find?

- Black-White and Latine-White gaps existed at the end of kindergarten in language, reading, math, and problem behavior.
- There were Black-White gaps in home practices and parent-teacher conferences and connection.
- Latine-White gap only in home-school conferencing.



# What did we find? cont'd

- **Home-school connections reduced the Black-White gap in problem behaviors and math**
- **No known factor reduced the Latine-White or Black-White gap in expressive language**



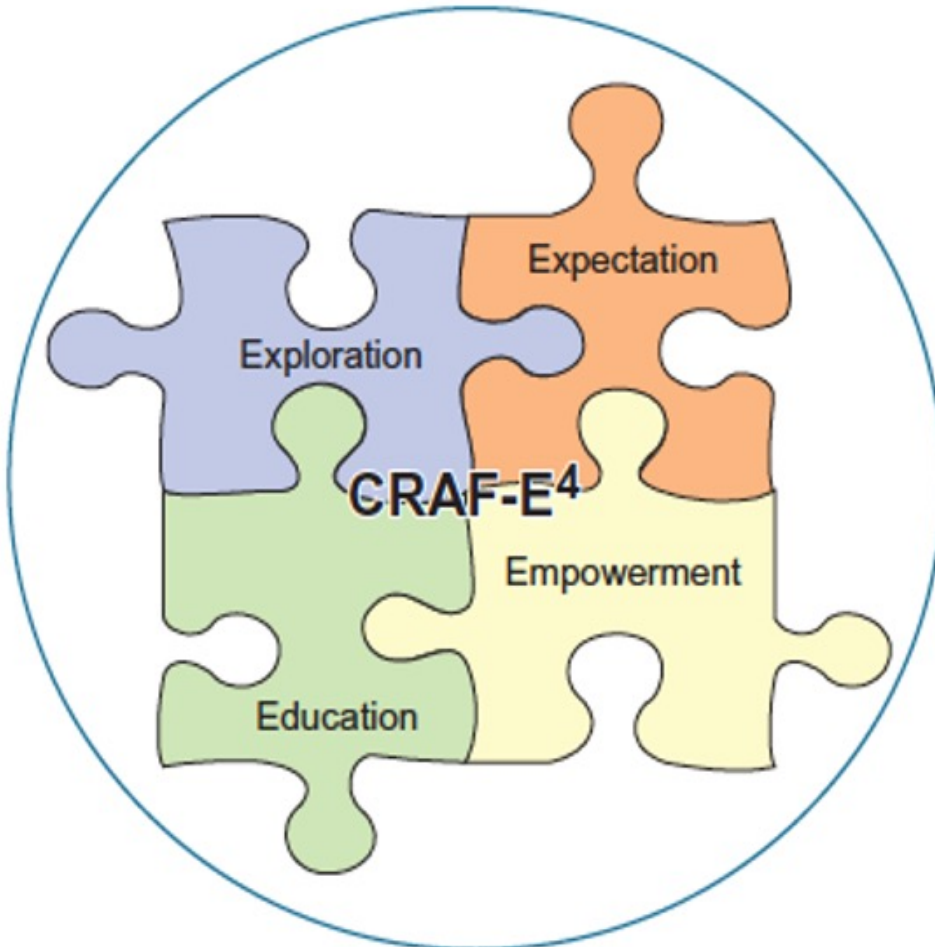


# Conclusion

- Some **gaps still remain** even after accounting for SES and PreK attendance and skills, so focus on gap-closing factors still needed
- More supports needed to **strengthen home-school connection** to reduce Black-White gaps
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- Need to examine the existence of these gaps **beyond kindergarten** and whether these or other malleable factors are still relevant over time



# Call for Educators



Iruka, I. U., Curenton, S. M., & Eke, W. A. (2014). *The CRAF-E<sup>4</sup> Family Engagement Model: Building Practitioners' Competence to Work with Diverse Families*. San Diego, CA: Elsevier.

**FOCUS** EARLY LEARNING



Early childhood and K-12 educators have a lot to learn from each other, Iheoma Iruka says.

## Early learning and K-12 go hand in hand

A conversation with IHEOMA IRUKA

**Q:** You advocate for early childhood and K-12 systems to work together and learn from one another. Why is that important?

**A:** There's a lot we can and should do to align the early childhood and K-12 spaces. It's not just about aligning curriculum or assessments but also about teachers coming together and sharing approaches. Early childhood educators need to know what happens once their kids move on to K-12. And K-12 educators should really understand what's happening in the early childhood space.

A lot happens before children enter your school. If you're not supporting those children, families, and communities, you're going to pay the cost somewhere, whether in suspension data, remediation data, or somewhere else. All the data will show you that you're spending a lot of money to deal with the things that you

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# Can Preschool Instructional Practices Promote Racial Equity in Academic Outcomes? Evidence from the Boston Public Schools

Meghan McCormick, MDRC (Twitter handle: @Meghan\_McCorm)

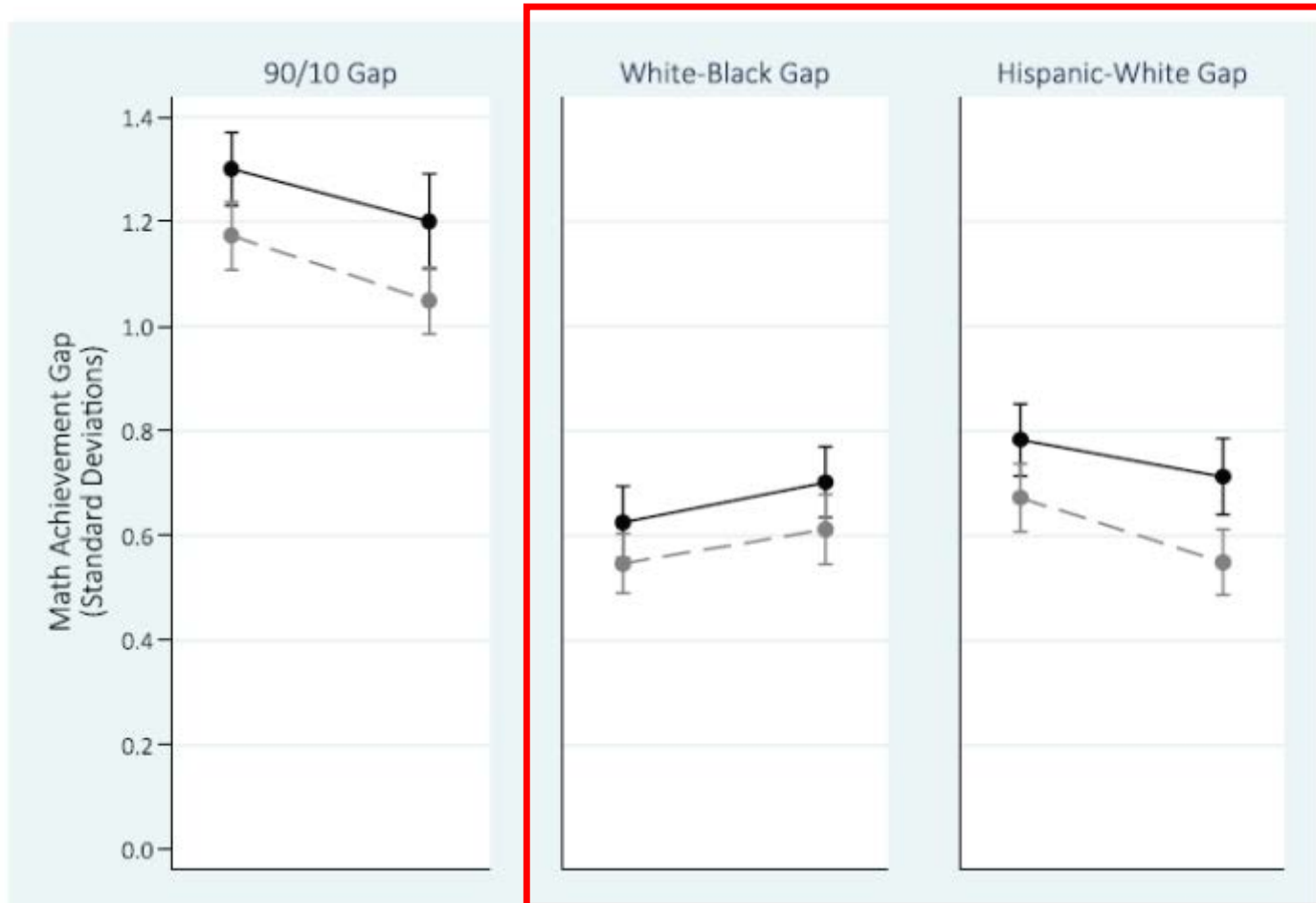
JoAnn Hsueh, MDRC (Twitter handle: @hsueh\_joann)

Christina Weiland, University of Michigan (Twitter handle: @weilanch)

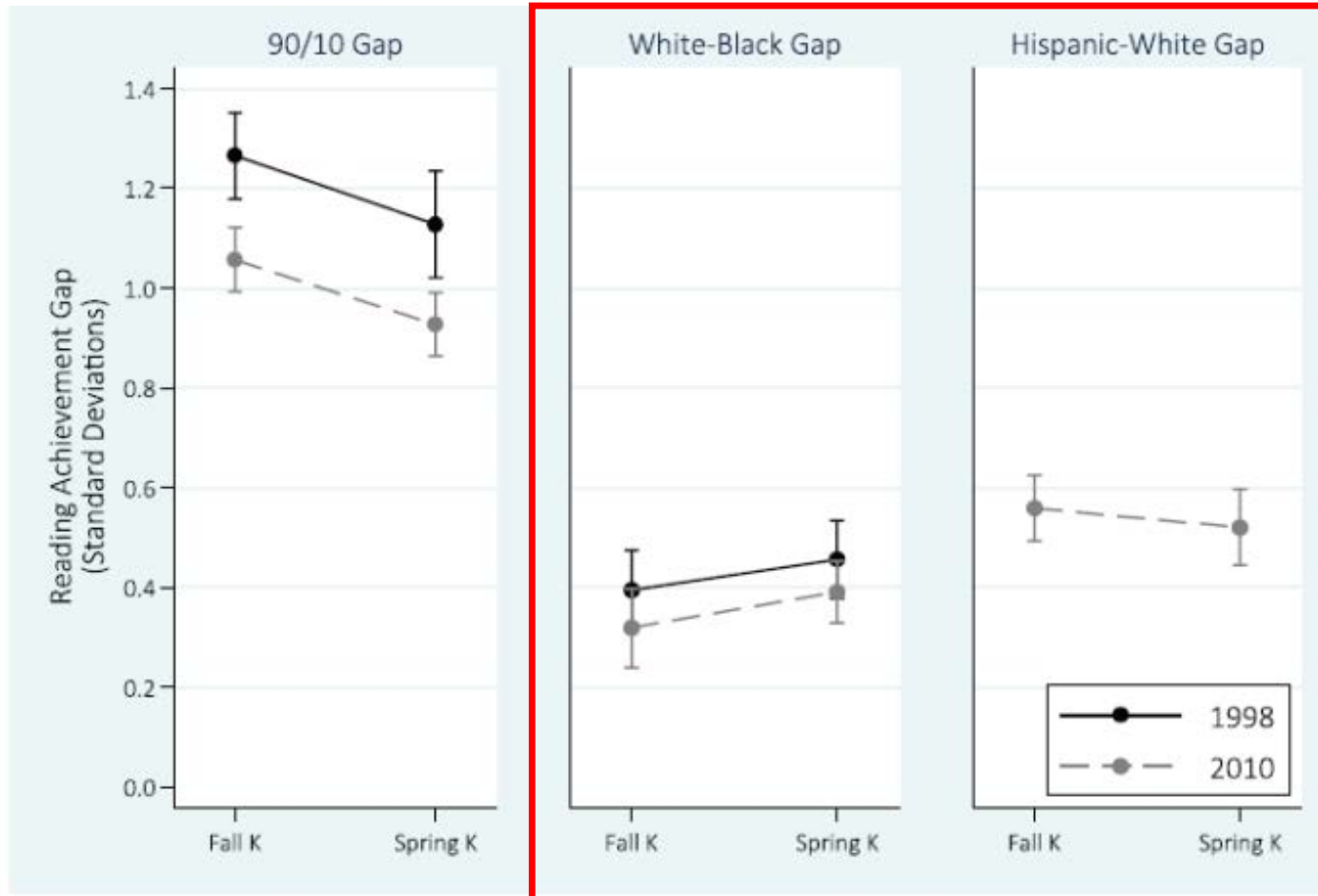
Jason Sachs, Boston Public Schools (Twitter handle: @BPSEarlyLearn)

Catherine Snow, Harvard Graduate School of Education

# Opportunity gaps at kindergarten entry are substantial and stay stable across schooling (Reardon & Portilla, 2016)



# Opportunity gaps at kindergarten entry are substantial and stay stable across schooling (Reardon & Portilla, 2016)



# Little consistent evidence about the role of PreK in promoting racial equity

Enrollment in PreK has been identified as one strategy for reducing achievement gaps prior to kindergarten entry (Jenkins et al., 2018; Valentino, 2018).

Some studies have shown that PreK programs are particularly beneficial for lower-income and Hispanic students (Bloom & Weiland, 2015; Duncan & Magnuson, 2013).

Yet, other studies of PreK have found no differential benefits by family income and race (Lipsey et al., 2018; Weiland et al., 2019)

More work is needed to understand the key factors in PreK classrooms that not only benefit all students but actually stand to promote racial equity.



# The BPS prekindergarten program: Opportunity to build evidence on promoting racial equity

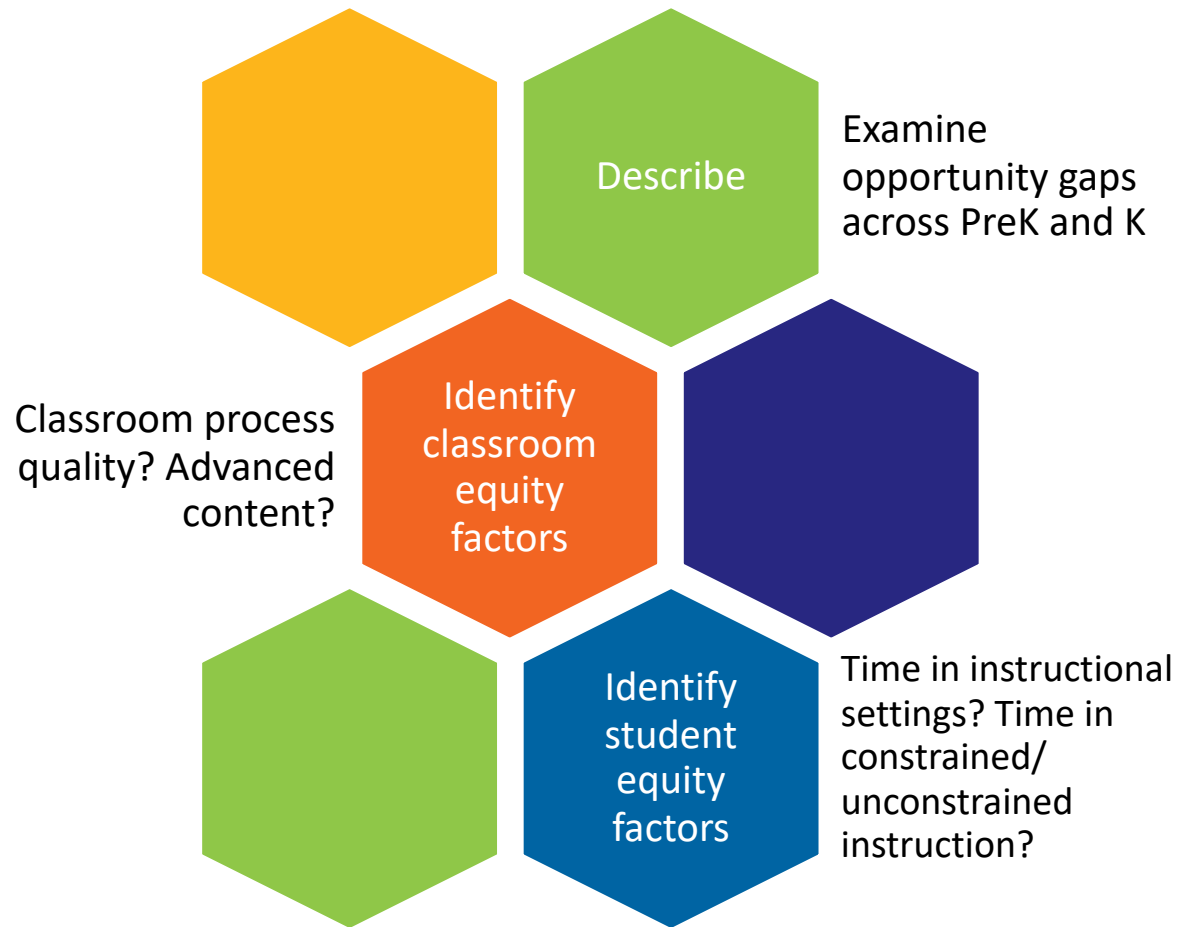
## High-quality public prekindergarten program for four-year old students

- Existing evidence base on the BPS prekindergarten program:
  - Substantial impacts on language, literacy, math, and executive functioning skills at the start of kindergarten identified in a rigorous study (Weiland & Yoshikawa, 2013)
  - Two evidence-based curricula paired with coaching & training
  - Slots in the PreK program allocated via lottery
- BPS PreK model implemented in CBO PreK programs funded with preschool expansion grant (PEG) funds





# The current study



# Recruitment & enrollment of students/schools

Random sampling procedure

BPS public schools (N = 20) & partner CBOs (N = 10)

Randomly selected group of teachers & students in participating schools/CBOs



# Data Sources/Measures

Child  
assessments

Classroom  
observations

Teacher  
surveys

Administrative  
data

Parent surveys



# Examples of constrained and unconstrained language/literacy activities

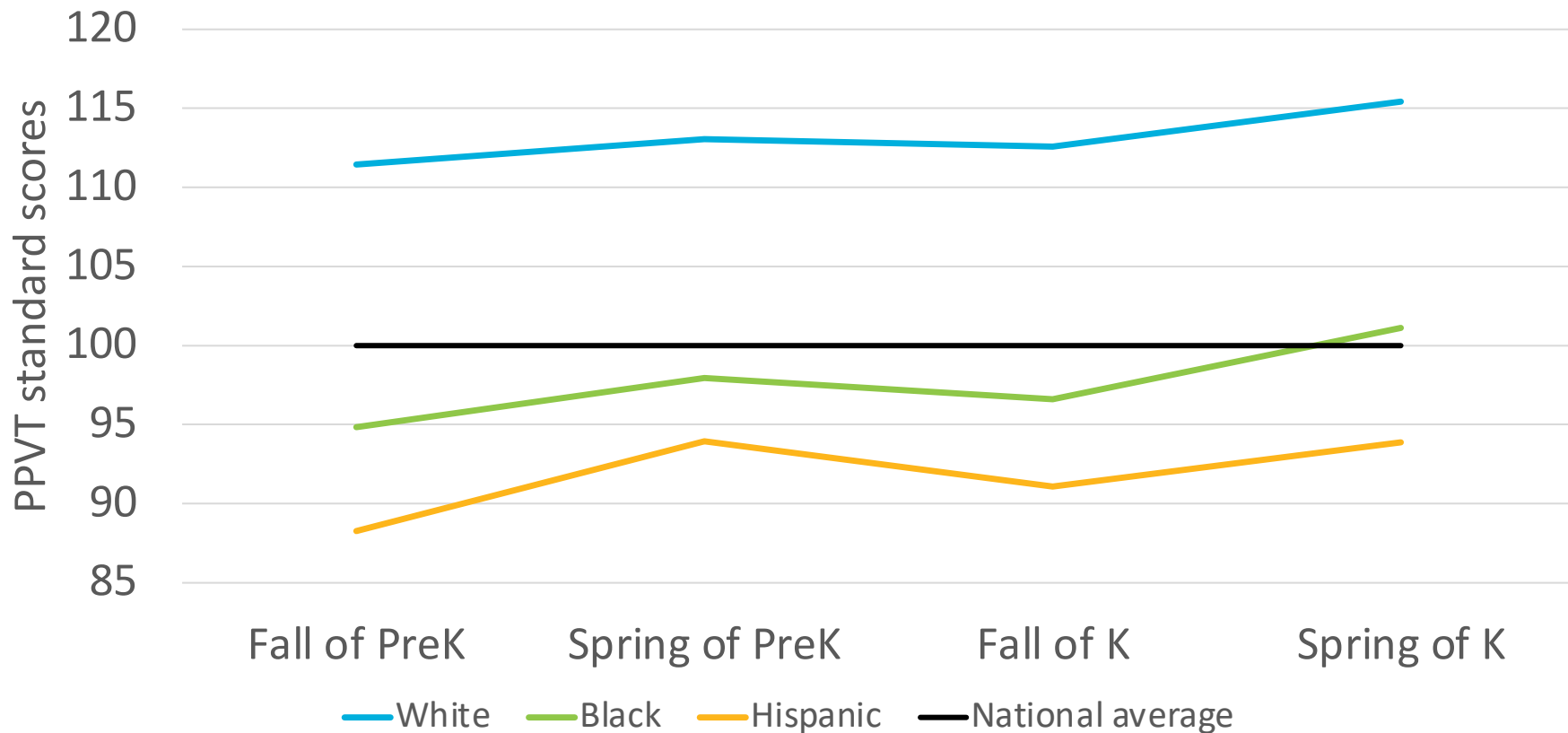
Constrained	Unconstrained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phonological awareness</li><li>• Morpheme awareness</li><li>• Word decoding</li><li>• Word encoding</li><li>• Grapheme-phoneme correspondence</li><li>• Fluency</li><li>• Basic print and text concepts</li><li>• Recalling</li><li>• Key details</li><li>• Writing production</li><li>• Writing instruction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oral language</li><li>• Print vocabulary</li><li>• Comparing/contrasting</li><li>• Predicting</li><li>• Inferencing</li><li>• Summarizing</li><li>• Prior knowledge</li><li>• Retelling</li><li>• Explaining relations between texts</li><li>• Text reading</li><li>• Writing planning &amp; editing</li></ul>

# Examples of more constrained and more unconstrained math activities

Constrained	Unconstrained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number sense and concepts</li><li>• Operations</li><li>• Algebra</li><li>• Geometry – lines</li><li>• Geometry – two dimensional shapes</li><li>• Geometry – three dimensional shapes</li><li>• Geometry – spatial sense</li><li>• Measurement – conventional units</li><li>• Measurement – non-conventional units</li><li>• Measurement – linear</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data analysis</li><li>• Probability</li><li>• Geometry – composing shapes</li><li>• Measurement – concepts</li><li>• Measurement – area</li><li>• Measurement – volume</li></ul>

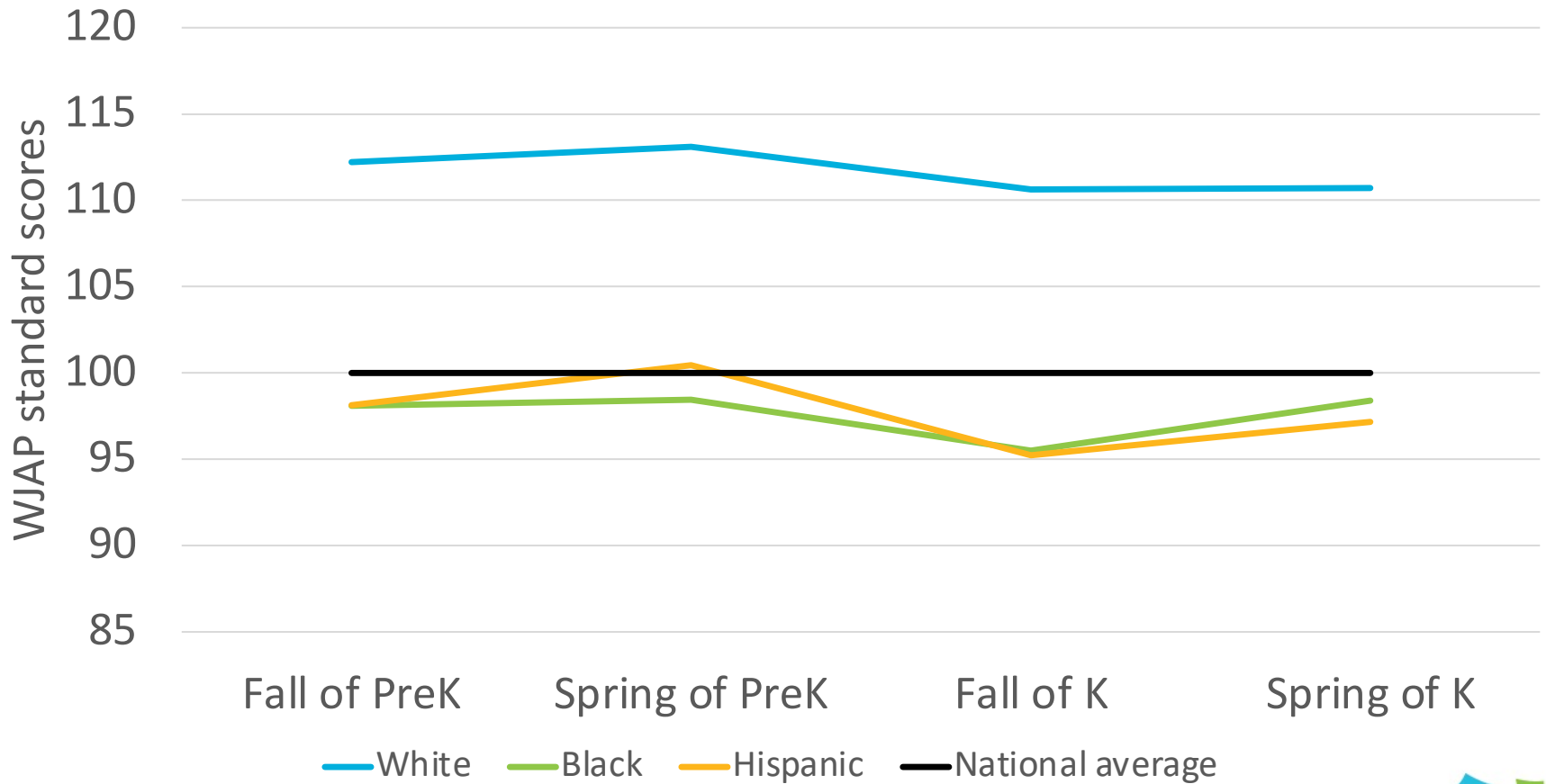
# Descriptive results: Variation in language skills by race

Language skills: PPVT

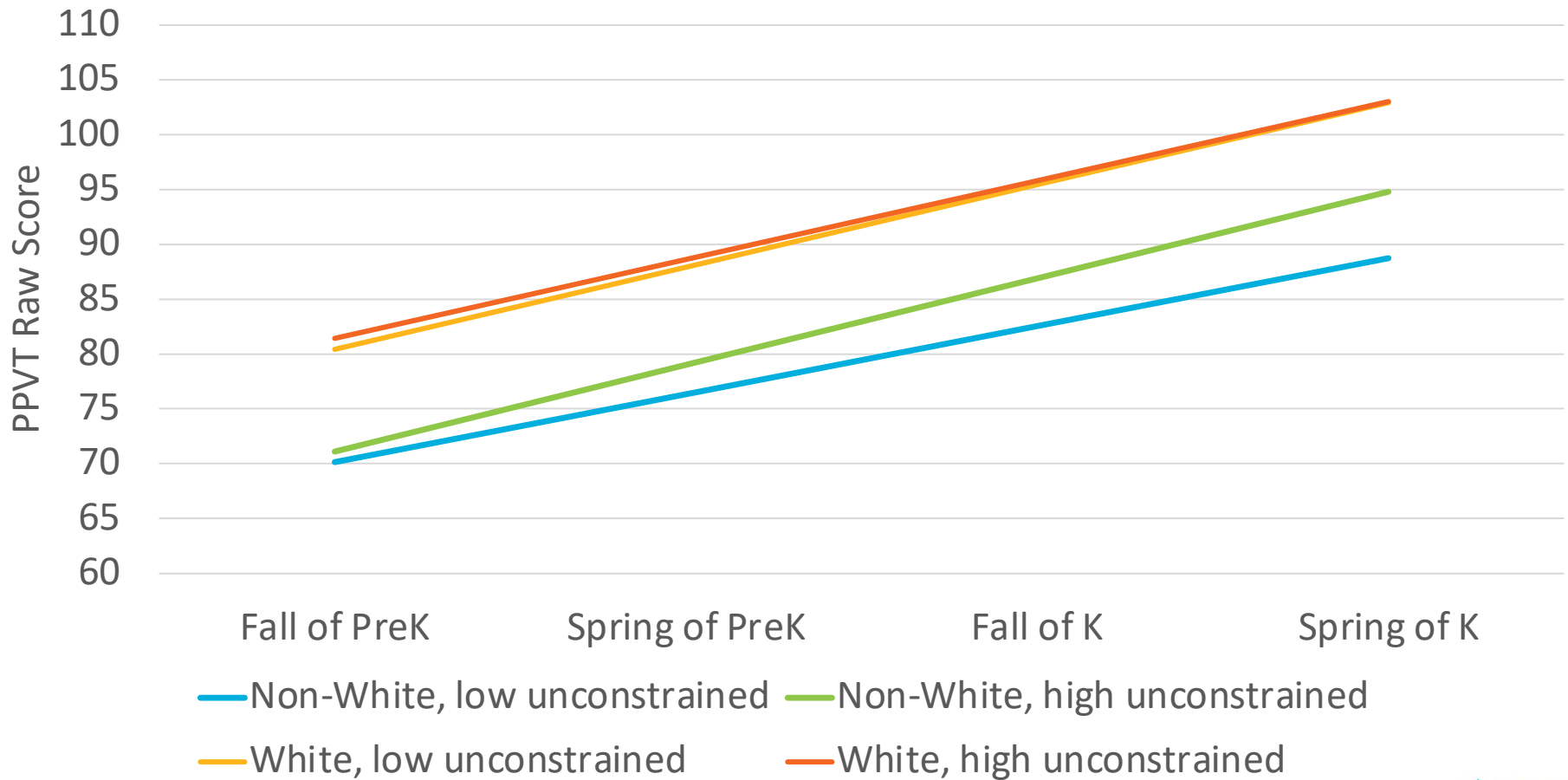


# Descriptive results: Variation in math skills by race

Math skills: Woodcock Johnson Applied Problems

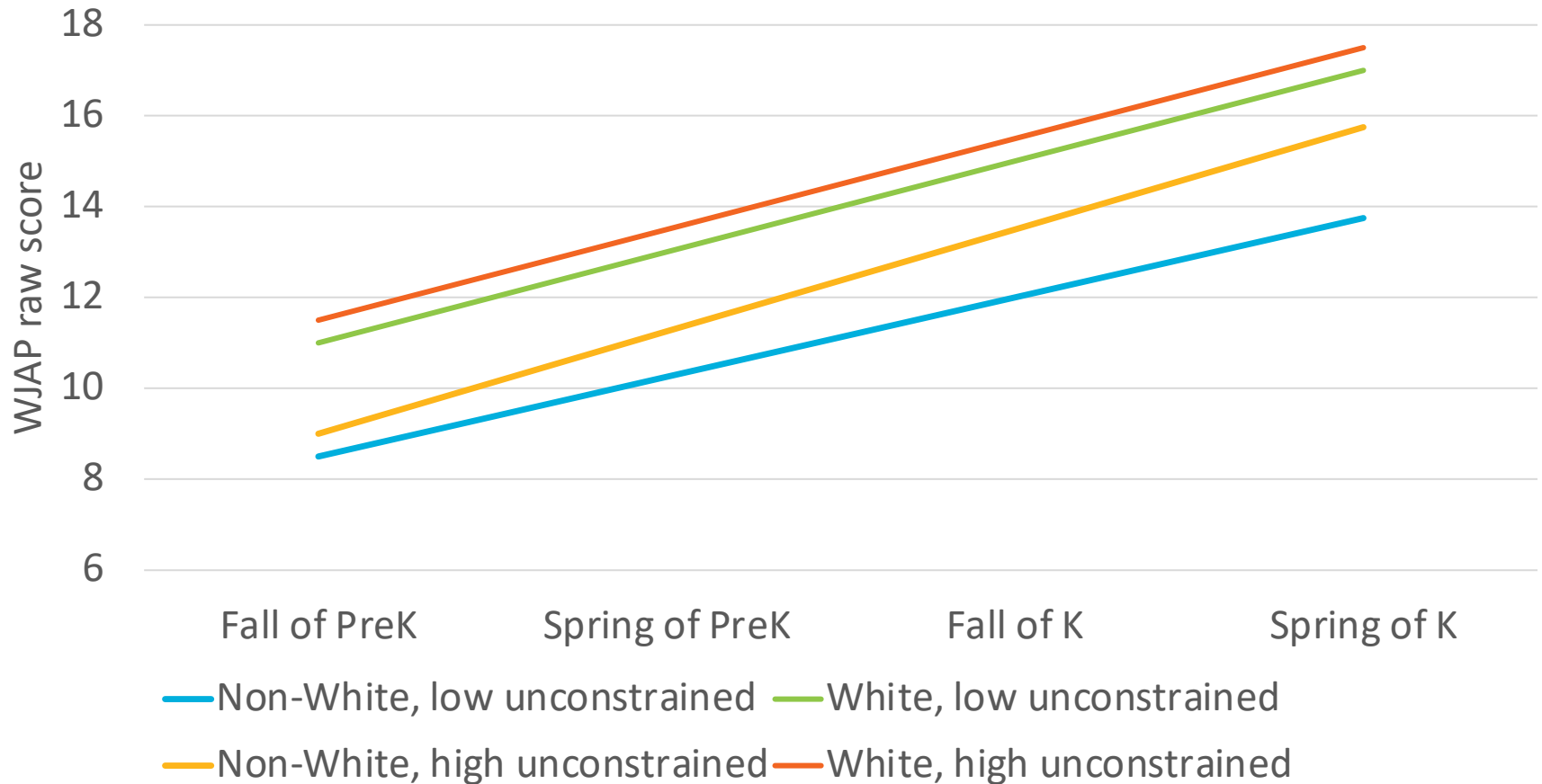


# More time in unconstrained language instruction promotes racial equity in language outcomes.

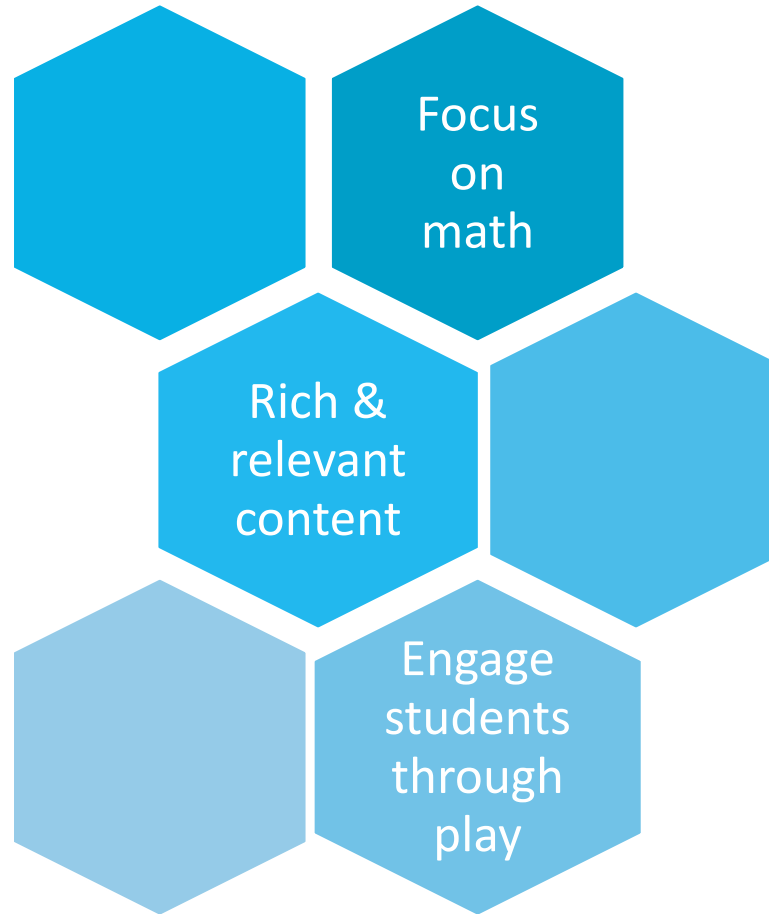




# More time in unconstrained math instruction promotes racial equity in math outcomes.



# Practice Recommendations



# Thank you!

## **Contact Information**

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# Q&A

- **What questions do you have?**
  - *Put them in the Zoom Q&A box*
  - *Post them in the comments section of our Facebook Live video*  
[@earlylearningnetwork](#)





# Upcoming Webinar

**June 1: Individualized instruction and assessment**

*11:00 a.m. CDT | 12:00 p.m. EDT | 9:00 a.m. PDT*

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# Thank You

*The Early Learning Network is funded by the Institute of Education Sciences.*

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