RACIAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS

Johnson, Elizabeth
University of Maryland and ejohns15@terpmail.umd.edu

Kweon, Byoung-Suk
University of Maryland and kweonb@umd.edu

1   ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate whether all students, regardless of racial and socioeconomic status, have equal access to the Green Ribbon Schools. Research on the benefits of green school programs are positively correlated with green spaces, particularly with enhanced attention and improved academic performance. The Green Ribbon award honors schools that are environmentally conscious and focus on sustainability. States that nominate more than two schools must have one school that serves at least 40% of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the awarded public Green Ribbon Schools are equally distributed among disadvantaged populations. The list of ED Green Ribbon public schools for the years 2013 through 2015 was collected from the Department of Education. Racial/ethnic and socioeconomic data was collected from the Elementary/Secondary Information System. The study found that the majority of awarded public Green Ribbon Schools did not serve at least 40% disadvantaged students. The majority of Green Ribbon Schools (61%) are primarily attended by White students. Just under 50% of Green Ribbon Schools serve at least 40% socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The chi-squared test found that race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status of the students were not equally distributed for the Green Ribbon Schools ($\mathcal{X}^2 = 30.60$, $p < 0.0005$). This study is important because it shows that disadvantaged populations are less likely to get an education that may allow their students to learn about sustainability. The recognition process of bestowing Green Ribbon awards can become more conscious in reaching schools that serve disadvantaged populations.

1.1   Keywords

School Environments, Environmental Justice, Green Ribbon Schools, Children