

Single Sex Education Ain Grooms

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Executive Summary

Without adequate and long-term research to provide concrete evidence, we cannot assume that simply separating girls and boys will improve academic achievement. There has been a recent movement toward single-sex education, and in 2006, the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights issued new guidelines under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, allowing single-sex education in public school settings under certain guidelines. There are now over 350 public K-12 schools that are either entirely single-sex, or offer single-sex classrooms in a co-educational setting.

There are varying degrees of support for single-sex education. Supporters such as Leonard Sax, founder of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education (NASSPE), believe that because boys and girls learn so differently, single-sex classrooms are the best option to maximize learning. Supporters argue that not only does single-sex education improve academic achievement; it also decreases behavior problems, combats gender stereotypes, and is best for certain at-risk populations. Critics, including the American Association of University Women, dispute these claims,

contending that students learn best in co-educational settings, and if students are not performing well academically, then it is the school that should be reformed.

The majority of past studies about single-sex education either focused on schools in other countries, on religious K-12 schools in the US, or were comparisons of public K-12 schools in the US and religious K-12 schools in the US. Some public schools have recently done their own small-scale studies of single-sex education, however, the results are inconclusive. Current research and data produce reasons to both promote and criticize the separation of the genders, and it is imperative that policymakers, researchers, and educators take all factors, including small class size and increased parental involvement, into account when studying student academic achievement, not just the placement of the child into a single-sex classroom. Future systematic, long-term research will provide evidence for both parents and school administration to make informed educational decisions.

Introduction

Equity in our public education systems has been an issue of debate for many years, and in this country, separate has never been equal. In 1954, the Supreme Court used the *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* case to overrule the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, stating that separate public schools for black and white students denied black children equal educational opportunities. Since that time, the argument has evolved from a question of racial equity in public education to one of gender equity, questioning whether girls are receiving the same opportunities as their male counterparts.

Thirty-five years ago, the 1972 Title IX of the Education Amendments was passed prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance.ⁱ This law applies to elementary and secondary schools, as well as colleges and universities, and was designed to reinforce equity in athletics, as well as in academics. Research has shown that since Title IX was passed, the number of women receiving advanced degrees has increased dramatically.

Background Information

Despite the passing of Title IX, issues of gender discrimination still persisted. In 1991, a lawsuit was brought against the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) for sex discrimination. VMI had three options: first, to start admitting women; second, to stop receiving public funding; or third, to devise a “comparable” program for women. VMI argued that “the school’s rigorous adversative method of training was not suitable for women,” and chose the third option. However, the US Department of Justice argued that the two programs were not comparable, especially financially,ⁱⁱ and in 1996, the Supreme Court ultimately decided that the exclusion of women from VMI was “a violation of the Constitution’s guarantee of equal protection”.ⁱⁱⁱ VMI began admitting women in 1997.

The issue of “comparable education” was a focal point of the case. Had VMI been able to establish a viable educational alternative for women, their admission policies would have been legal according to Title IX. Educators have begun to use this “comparable education” option to create either single-sex schools or single-sex classrooms in co-educational settings

Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Congress approved the “use of Innovative Program funds to support same-gender schools and classrooms consistent with applicable law”.^{iv} In 2006, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the US Department of Education issued new guidelines affecting the creation of single-sex learning opportunities in public educational settings across the country. The new guidelines allow single-sex education if the school can:

1. provide a rationale for offering single-sex classrooms in a particular subject;
2. provide a co-educational class in an accessible location;
3. conduct a review every two years to conduct whether single-sex classrooms are a remedy to the original problem^v

Charter schools are exempt from all three guidelines. Single-sex schools are exempt from having to provide a rationale for offering single-sex classrooms or from having to conduct reviews every two years. Single-sex classrooms in co-educational settings must adhere to all three of the above guidelines in order to operate legally and to continue to receive federal funding. According to the National Association for Single Sex Public Education (NASSPE), as of October 2007, there are 363 schools in 38 states that offer single-sex education, either as single-sex schools or as co-educational schools that offer single-sex classrooms.

It is important to note that there are varying thoughts concerning single-sex education:^{vi}

- **Single-sex education maximizes learning** – Leonard Sax, founder of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education (NASSPE) believes that boys and girls learn so differently that single-sex education is the best option to maximize learning.
- **Single-sex education is best for some groups** – Researcher and sociology professor Cornelius Riordan and others believe that single-sex classrooms are best for at-risk students, especially African-American males.
- **Co-education is best** – Groups such as the American Association of University Women believe that students learn best in a co-educational setting, and if students are not performing academically, then the school needs to be reformed.

Brain differences between girls and boys

Those in favor of single-sex education argue that because girls and boys learn differently, separation will maximize learning and increase student academic performance. According to Leonard Sax, founder of NASSPE, girls are more comfortable in a same-sex environment due to “biological differences between boys and girls that should not be ignored.” Sax states that girls learn best in a “friendly environment”, and further explains that teaching boys requires a different approach and works best when boys are addressed formally.^{vii}

David Sadker, education professor at American University, disagrees with Sax’s claims, saying that while brain scans do show differences between girls and boys, there is no conclusive research about what those differences mean. According to Sadker, “the differences between girls and boys are dwarfed by brain differences within each

gender.”^{viii} Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization of Women (NOW) also disagrees with Sax’s research. She believes that children have distinct learning styles, but does not equate that to gender differences. She notes that gender “is not a monolith when it comes to learning style or ability.”^{ix}

Girl Crisis v. Boy Crisis

Single-sex education seeks to address the “boy crisis”, and conversely, the “girl crisis”. Michael Gurian, author of “The Minds of Boys: Saving our Sons from Falling Behind in School and Life,” offers staggering statistics: seventy percent of children diagnosed with learning disabilities are boys, eighty percent of high school dropouts are boys, and less than forty-five percent of the students enrolled in college are males.^x According to the Department of Education’s Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, boys are outperformed in reading by the third grade, and further studies show that by high school, boys are reading almost one grade level below girls.^{xi} William Pollack, an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School and author of “Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood” suggests that teaching methods fail to address boys’ learning styles, stating, “many classes simply aren’t conducted in a way boys find captivating. When boys aren’t engaged, they become discipline problems.”^{xii} Gurian suggests that “most schools are girl-friendly because teachers, who are mostly women, teach the way they learn.”^{xiii}

Some argue that girls are similarly struggling academically, but in different subjects, stating that schools are “built for boys” and girls are discouraged from taking math and science classes. Research shows that girls and boys like math equally in the

younger grades, but by the fifth grades, girls begin to think that math is “boy turf”.

Single-sex classrooms have been considered places where girls can learn and explore, and where they can consider the variety of roles and professions open to women.

Despite the argument that single-sex classes alleviate the boy and girl “crises”, some say that these “crises” are overstated. In an Education Sector report, using data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP), findings show that boys’ test scores have risen over the past thirty years, and more boys are going to college and getting bachelor’s degrees. In the report, “The Truth about Girls and Boys”, “the real story is not bad news about boys doing worse; it’s good news about girls doing better.”^{xiv} One researcher states that, “with few exceptions, American boys are scoring higher and achieving more than they ever have before.”^{xv} From 1972 to 1992, girls have made large gains and have narrowed the gap by taking more math and science courses. In fact, according to Harvard economist Claudia Goldin, “girls are as likely as boys to take advanced placement calculus in high school, and more likely to take advanced biology and chemistry,” leaving some to wonder if there really is a “girls crisis”.^{xvi}

Learning styles and classroom behavior

Classroom behavior is a concern for any teacher, regardless of the demographics of the student. Some propose that separating genders leads to improved student behavior. According to the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), teachers surveyed reported that, regardless of the academic subject, boys are two to three times more likely to be seen as “disruptive, inattentive, and unlikely to complete

their homework.”^{xvii} Benjamin Wright, former principal of Thurgood Marshall Elementary School in Seattle, says that “a lot of boys learn kinesthetically, and it doesn’t mean that they are bad kids...and it doesn’t mean they have attention deficit disorder.”^{xviii} Travis Brown, a teacher at Martin Luther King Middle School in Atlanta, explains that having an all-boy math class gives him “a chance to prepare especially for them.” He doesn’t “expect them to sit still, so I know I’m going to have to have some hands-on stuff.”^{xix}

Fourth-grade Seattle public school teacher Casie Baddeley says that she “thinks the girls focus better without the boys. They don’t worry about doing things that the boys will make fun of. They know that boys influence them, and they really do have the more confidence to speak for themselves when the boys aren’t there.”^{xx} Students at Girls High School in Philadelphia say that they are free to focus on school without the “consuming distraction” of boys, and they develop their relationships with one another. The girls say that they feel less competitive and more like a family.^{xxi}

William Perry, former principal of Marsteller Middle School in Manassas, Virginia, decided to implement gender-based scheduling for two of seven academic classes during the 1994-1995 school year, after attending a presentation by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) outlining the gender stereotypes that are occurring in schools. At the end of the first nine-week marking period, an internal evaluation was conducted: girls felt freer to speak out in classes because they didn’t need to impress the boys, teachers reported fewer discipline problems in gender-grouped classes, and boys also seemed to enjoy not having to “perform for the girls”.^{xxii}

Dr. Amanda Datnow, former assistant professor of education administration at the University of Toronto, found that “educators believed that simply by separating boys

and girls, gender equity would be achieved, but that didn't pan out." In her study of single-sex education in six school districts in California, she observed middle and high school classrooms and interviewed students, their parents, and their teachers. She noted that "the tendency was to teach according to presumptions that girls are cooperative or boys are competitive. Interestingly, removing the opposite sex did not eliminate single-sex strife. Girls were catty toward one another, and boys taunted other boys."^{xxiii} Kim Gandy, of the National Organization for Women, offers another perspective and is concerned that single-sex education may "box students into learning in a certain way."^{xxiv}

Gender stereotypes

Single-sex education in the 1960s and 1970s was used "to prepare girls and boys for the disparate roles they would assume as adults";^{xxv} for example, girls were sent to home economics classes, while boys went to "shop" classes. Although public education has changed slightly, a report published in the Teachers College Record found that teachers often unintentionally reinforce gender stereotypes in single-sex classrooms. Examples of these conflicting include telling boys that it is okay to cry, but that they must be strong, or telling girls that they can "be anything they want", but that there are underlying expectations of feminine dress and appearance.^{xxvi}

Leonard Sax also disapproves of gender stereotypes, but feels that single-sex classrooms prevent them instead of reinforce them. He states, "If you don't understand those [gender] differences and you teach boys and girls as if they were the same, the end result is a kindergarten classroom where the boys tell you drawing is for girls and a

middle school classrooms where girls tell you computers are for boys. If you don't understand gender differences, you end up furthering gender stereotypes."^{xxvii} Some argue that single-sex schools provide students with an opportunity to participate in activities that are usually associated with the other gender, including activities they might not engage in under typical circumstances, for example, girls may join the debate team while boys may join the drama club.^{xxviii}

Single-sex classrooms and African-American boys

Many argue that single-sex education will help groups that are struggling, specifically inner-city minority boys and rural white boys.^{xxix} Well-known researchers, including Dr. Alvin Poussaint of the Harvard Medical School, state that single-sex classrooms for boys are an opportunity to help African-American boys. Dr. Poussaint states that "schools...kind of give up on them, and we know that after third grade, a lot of black boys start falling behind." A 2006 report from The Task Force on the Education of Maryland's African-American Males states that "for historically disadvantaged students, single sex classes have shown a consistently positive effect on academic outcomes. In classes where gender and racial differences are suppressed – rather than served – it's almost always the African-American male that loses out".^{xxx} Dr. Spencer Holland, educational psychologist and former director of the Center for Educating African-American Males, notes that "we have all-boys classes by default; they're called special education."^{xxxi}

While there is little argument that public schools have been segregating African-American boys into single-sex classes for years, there is great discussion about

whether or not to keep African-American boys in separate classrooms. As attention to single-sex education grew, some saw this as a way to focus on developing positive attitudes for African-American boys, and developing a “sense of academic identification that would overcome educational and social deprivation.”^{xxxii} Advocates explain that boys, especially those living in the inner city, have their own set of learning needs that can best be addressed in an all-male environment.^{xxxiii} Beverly Hall, Superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools System, states that single-sex education is “a strategy designed to really turn around what is a failing environment for lots and lots of young people.”^{xxxiv}

In his book, “Girls and Boys in School: Together or Separate”, Providence College sociology professor Cornelius Riordan found that single-sex education benefits girls and minority boys. He suggests that “in co-educational settings, minority boys are ‘expected’ to fail, in comparison to their white peers and to minority girls.”^{xxxv} He states, that single-sex education is “a viable alternative for the kind of schools that at-risk students should attend, particularly those in African-American and Hispanic communities.”^{xxxvi}

Opponents argue that single-sex classrooms, especially for African-American boys, just exacerbate the problem. Dr. Pedro Noguera, sociology professor at New York University, states that single-sex classrooms for African-American boys “could easily become dumping grounds for boys the schools don’t want anyway.” He disagrees with Dr. Pouissant, suggesting “those classes could become ‘hyper-masculine environments that reinforce negative behaviors.”^{xxxvii} In the court case, *Garrett v. Board of Education of Detroit* (1991), the Court noted that “the educational

system is failing its females as much as its males.” Experts in the case testified that sex segregation in the public schools “is counterproductive for African-American boys, for whom it can create an expectation of privilege based on gender”.^{xxxviii} In this specific type of single-sex setting, African-American girls are left out of the equation, and separating the two “repeats in racialized form the familiar idea that girls are the cause of boys’ lack of educational success and that boys must be kept free of distraction.”^{xxxix}

Harvard Education School professor emeritus Charles Willie warns that “the reason why the Civil Rights movement in education started was that all those black students who had been set apart were not doing that well. The only way we can teach our students to catch up is to have them run the same race”.^{xl} Some argue that single-sex education in inner-city schools is a return to the racial segregation of the past, mirroring the days before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Single-sex classrooms and middle school

Some studies show that single-sex classrooms can be helpful to girls as they begin adolescence. As students enter middle school, they begin to explore their roles in society as males and females, and it is often a time plagued by increased hormone levels, self-doubt and peer pressure.^{xli} Girls tend to mature earlier than boys, and advocates for single-sex education contend that segregated classrooms at the sixth- and seventh-grade levels allow both boys and girls to deal with their developmental changes in a more comfortable environment.^{xlii}

A recent study shows that in elementary school, 60 percent of girls had positive feelings about themselves and their ability, yet only 29 percent of high school girls felt

that same confidence.^{xliii} Research shows that upon entering middle school, boys show an increased interest in math and science, and begin to outdistance girls on standardized tests.^{xliiv} Proponents argue that single-sex education can address the “girls crisis”, especially at the middle school level, and can assist girls in exploring a range of career opportunities.

Teacher gender

There are theories that claim that academic success in single-sex classrooms is also reliant upon the gender of the teacher. One theory states that teachers can act as “gender-specific role models”, regardless of what the teacher says or does. According to this theory, students are more engaged, and behave and perform better when taught by someone that shares their gender. In a study done by Thomas Dee, associate professor at Swarthmore College, he found that the percentage of sixth grade teachers who were female range from 58 percent to 91 percent across four subjects (math, science, reading and history), implying that girls have multiple examples of readily available “gender-specific role models, while boys do not.”^{xliv}

Dee found that another important factor tied to academic success is the student’s opinion of the teacher in relation to the teacher’s gender. He found that both boys and girls reported that they did not look forward to the subject when taught by a teacher of the opposite gender. Girls reported that they were afraid to ask questions in classes taught by male teachers, and Dee found that in science classes specifically, female science teachers were more effective in engaging girls in the subject.

Dee does note that he is not promoting single-sex education as a means of increasing students' academic achievement. He states that his study "suggests that gender interaction in the classroom matters, but it is still far from clear exactly why this is so."

Research

Much of the research around single-sex education is based on findings from studies of Catholic single-sex schools in the United States, or from studies of institutions of higher education, but not from K-12 public schools. In fact, using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), some researchers have found that single-sex Catholic schools were not especially favorable settings, and that attending these schools only benefited boys.^{xlvi}

A 2005 review by the American Institutes for Research of studies on single-sex education found that only 40 of over 2,200 studies met acceptable criteria. They report that many studies of single-sex education failed to control for important factors, including admissions policies, socioeconomic status, prior academic achievement, or ethnicity. Because so little is known about single-sex public education and its effects on achievement, both proponents and critics alike tend to rely on studies from other countries, on studies that compare single-sex religious schools to co-educational religious schools, or on studies that compare public schools to religious schools.^{xlvii} The little research that has been conducted in US schools remains inconclusive, and has not taken all age and grade levels into consideration. In fact, the US Department of

Education states in a 2005 report that there have been limited opportunities to study elementary schools, and notes that there has been a tendency to study girls' schools over boys'.^{xlviii}

Rosemary Salomone, law professor at St. John's University School of Law and author of "Same, Different, Equal: Rethinking Single Sex Schooling" agrees that because single-sex programs have been outside "legal bounds for 30 years", there has never been an opportunity to conduct research.^{xlix} Lisa Maatz, public policy director for the American Association of University Women, an organization opposed to single-sex schooling, agrees with Dr. Salomone in that not enough research exists to show that single-sex schools actually improve student performance.^l

Some feel there are three critical issues that need to be addressed when researching the effects of single-sex classrooms:^{li}

- the goals of the single-sex classes
 - o an understanding of why the classrooms were formed, whether for academic achievement (and for whom – boys, girls, or both), behavior or cultural reasons, or a combination of all
- the implementation of the single-sex classes
 - o an understanding of how the classes were implemented, whether for short term projects, on-going activities, one single-sex class per day, all single-sex classes in a co-educational school, or an entirely single-sex school
- the lack of long-term, systematic research

- the need to incorporate other factors into the research, including teachers, their teaching styles, the subject content, resources, and the reasons for the development of a single-sex classroom^{lii}

Research findings from a fifth grade study

While there have been few studies done on single-sex education, there are some smaller studies done on individual schools. In 1998, a study was done with two inner-city elementary schools (grades K-5) in the Chesapeake (Virginia) School District in conjunction with the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The students that attended both schools were from similar backgrounds: low socioeconomic status, 99% were African-American, and at least 95% of the students in each school qualified for free or reduced lunch. School A enrolled 468 students, and students were taught in co-educational settings. School B enrolled 415 students, and students were taught in single-sex settings. The sample of students was drawn from two fifth-grade classes in each school. The teachers from school A were two women, one African-American and one European-American. In school B, the males were taught by an African-American man, and the girls were taught by a European-American woman. The findings were as follows based on scores from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS):^{liii}

- girls in the single-sex classroom:
 - received the lowest science test scores
 - received higher math scores than girls in co-educational classrooms
 - outperformed girls in co-educational settings

- boys in the single-sex classroom:
 - o received the lowest math scores, and scored significantly lower than boys in the co-educational classrooms
 - o received higher grades than boys in co-educational settings
- students in the co-educational classrooms:
 - o received higher science test scores than students in single-sex classrooms
 - o boys scored in higher percentiles in math, reading and social studies than boys in single-sex classrooms
 - o received higher social studies test scores than students in single-sex classrooms

Results from this study suggest that girls benefit from being in a single-sex classroom, while boys may not. These results should not be taken to either support or condemn single-sex education. Instead, this type of study illustrates the need for large-scale research which would include a much larger sample of students and different age groups. The researchers do note, however, that there were several limitations in the study that need to be taken into account when reviewing the findings:^{liv}

- Single-sex classrooms had been in effect at School B for only one year at the time of the study
- The sample size of the study was small (four classrooms totaling only 90 students) and was limited to one grade level
- Teachers' teaching styles and individual strengths were not constant, although all four teachers used the same curriculum

Funding

As recommendations for single-sex education increase, another factor to consider is available funding. Most school districts do not have the resources to support separate schools for both girls and boys.^{lv} In 1997, then California Governor Pete Wilson authorized the opening of six sets of single-sex public academies in six districts, six each for girls and boys. In doing so, Wilson also passed legislation that awarded \$500,000 to the schools to use according to their discretion. Schools were able to use this extra money to provide special resources and additional support to their students, including smaller classes, hiring extra teachers, providing additional tutoring, counseling and field trips. An administrator at one of the single-sex schools compared the opportunity with another area public school, commenting, “they are on a bare-bones budget. They buy nothing. They’ve got nothing going on over there. They buy only paper and pencils, and even then, they are ‘still in the red’”.^{lvi}

The second year for the 12 California schools told a vastly different story. The additional funds were not awarded, and students and schools were affected. The number of teachers was reduced, programs were cut, and eventually a number of schools were closed. Currently, there is only one of the original 12 academies still open in California, the San Francisco 49ers Academy, although it should be noted that the closing of the other schools may not be solely due to budget cuts.

Single-sex schools in other areas of the country are also faced with financial challenges. In Cincinnati, several schools that began as single-sex have switched to

co-educational classes, partly due to budget cuts. John Riehemann, a high school principal, notes, “keeping boys and girls apart usually means smaller classes, fewer scheduling options and another teacher or two.” He also states that this could “fall victim to spending cuts in the future.”^{lvii}

Other factors for academic success

No one can deny that there are other factors to consider when reviewing student achievement, regardless of whether students are in single-sex or co-educational classrooms. In fact, some suggest that factors other than school type contribute more to student success than a single-sex educational setting.^{lviii} These factors, in addition to the previously mentioned issue of school funding and subsequent additional academic support, include smaller class sizes, the teachers, teacher expectations of students, and teacher interactions with students.

The 2006 report from the Task Force on the Education of Maryland’s African-American Males states that recruiting black male teachers will help black male students succeed. The report states that “black males make up 19 percent of the public school population but less than five percent of its teaching force.”^{lix} Suggestions like this echo Dee’s research which states that the gender of the teacher provides a positive gender-specific role model, especially in elementary school where women are between 60 and 90 percent of the teaching force. Some researchers suggest that students receive the most support and obtain the highest expectations when students and their teachers are from the same socioeconomic class or have a common “racial” or ethnic identity.^{lx}

Positive teacher-student interaction is an essential component to increased student achievement. According to teachers in California's single-sex academies, the settings allowed for candid conversations that were deemed necessary to the students' well-being. Amanda Datnow, former assistant professor of education administration, states, "single-sex classrooms allow girls and boys to engage in discussion about how to make life decisions that would enhance their future academic achievement," including such topics as dating and pregnancy.^{lxi}

Teachers at the California schools believed that "learning should be premised on a relation with teachers and other school adults, having as their chief concern their students' entire well-being." Researchers in the California schools are not implying that teachers at single-sex schools care more than teachers at co-educational schools, instead, their data shows that when the setting is supportive, teachers in single-sex settings can relieve the "anxiety and stress that impedes students' achievement." However, school administrators report that keeping good teachers at their schools was very difficult,^{lxii} which, when combined with potential budget cuts, may have a direct effect on student achievement.

Conclusion

There is no simple answer to the argument about single-sex education. Parents, communities, educators and policymakers want what is in the best interest of our nation's children - to be able to think critically and independently, and to be successful, active citizens. Research and data produce reasons to both promote and criticize the

separation of the genders, and it is imperative that all factors, not just single-sex classrooms, are taken into account when studying student achievement.

The focus must be on quality education for boys and girls, rural and urban, regardless of age, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Appropriate attention must be given to improving all schools and increasing resources. Dr. Asa Hilliard, professor of urban education at Georgia State University, notes, “you can have high-performing mixed schools or single-gender schools, or low achieving ones of either type.”^{lxiii}

Through his various studies of public school systems throughout the country, Charles Willie, professor emeritus at Harvard University, found that “the highest achieving students tend to be in schools most diversified in terms of race, gender, and socioeconomic status.”^{lxiv}

While critics argue that single-sex classrooms do not guarantee improved academic achievement, neither supporters nor opponents of single-sex education can dispute the fact that smaller class sizes, additional resources and more parent and community involvement can. Education Sector, an independent education policy think tank, states that the focus should be on improving inner-city and rural schools, and that “focusing on the racial and economic achievement gaps would do more to help poor, black and Hispanic boys than closing gender gaps, and it would also help girls in these groups.”^{lxv} David Sadker, professor at American University states, “the problem is fixing the co-ed classroom, not escaping from it.”^{lxvi} David Biek, assistant professor of psychology at Macon State College, states, “it is hard to see the benefit of shielding our future female engineers, doctors and researchers from even a hint of classroom

competition. After all, the real world, including the workplace, is not intentionally segregated by sex.”^{lxvii}

Without adequate and long-term research to provide concrete evidence, we cannot assume that simply separating girls and boys will improve academic achievement, nor can we assume that it is the appropriate solution for every child. While there is no “magic pill” for increasing student achievement, it is encouraging to know that policymakers are willing to support educators in alternate approaches, which is a step in the right direction.

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