

## Executive Summary

**Introduction.** The purpose of this review is to examine the effects of student-teacher race matching on academic and socioemotional outcomes. The reason differences in race are important to study in educational policy analysis is that there are sizeable achievement gaps between White students and students of color, particularly African American students and Latinx students. The implications of this review will suggest cost-effective educational policies to reduce achievement gaps by improving outcomes for students of color.

**Theoretical framework.** The theoretical frameworks underlying the potential effects and reasoning for race matching stem from the effects of role models on students and culturally relevant pedagogy. The role model effect suggests that students who can identify with figures of authority along racial, ethnic, or gender lines may be more likely to succeed. Culturally relevant pedagogy suggests that teachers who validate their students' cultures and contexts and can empathize with them may be more effective in establishing student buy-in within the classroom. A theoretical framework These frameworks are particularly impactful for students of color in that they work to dispel deficit narratives, rejecting perceptions that succeeding academically is "acting White" while being proud and comfortable in one's culture is antithetical to educational success.

**Short term effects.** The most significant effect of race matching is found in subjective teacher evaluations. Teachers who are matched racially with their students are more likely to give them favorable ratings and less likely to interpret their behavior as externalizing and problematic. There are small positive effects in academic achievement, though these effects are only in some of the studies and are not corroborated by others. These effects suggest having a teacher of the same race improves standardized test scores by a small amount. Some studies found small

positive effects in socioemotional outcomes when racially matched with a teacher; for example, students reported increased feelings of inclusion in the classroom.

**Long term effects.** The long term effect evidence of race matching rely mostly on the study by Gershenson et al (2017). The authors found that having at least one black teacher between grades three and five increases the likelihood of graduating high school and aspiring to attend community college for black boys. This effect has diminishing returns for more than one black teacher, suggesting a dosage effect.

**Policy overview.** Initiatives that include race matching typically couple it with teacher mentor programs, gender matching, increased efforts to hire diverse teaching staff, and cultural responsiveness training for current teaching staff. Most of the interventions focus on a constellation of initiatives to combat achievement gaps. Effects of these programs are limited, with some evidence suggesting that initial results may not be a result of race matching. The most common policy intervention focuses on training existing teaching staff in culturally relevant pedagogy rather than explicitly matching students and teachers by race.

**Conclusion.** Studying achievement gaps and potential policies to increasing achievement for students of color is crucial given the significant educational inequality in this country. Race matching alone may not be the solution to closing gaps, given the relatively small effect displayed in the literature. An overview of current policy trends suggests that educational policymakers may see larger results from culturally relevant pedagogical training for current teachers, as well as focusing efforts on diversifying the teaching staff in their district in general. These policies may also be easier to fund given the potentially problematic optics of assigning students and teachers based on race.