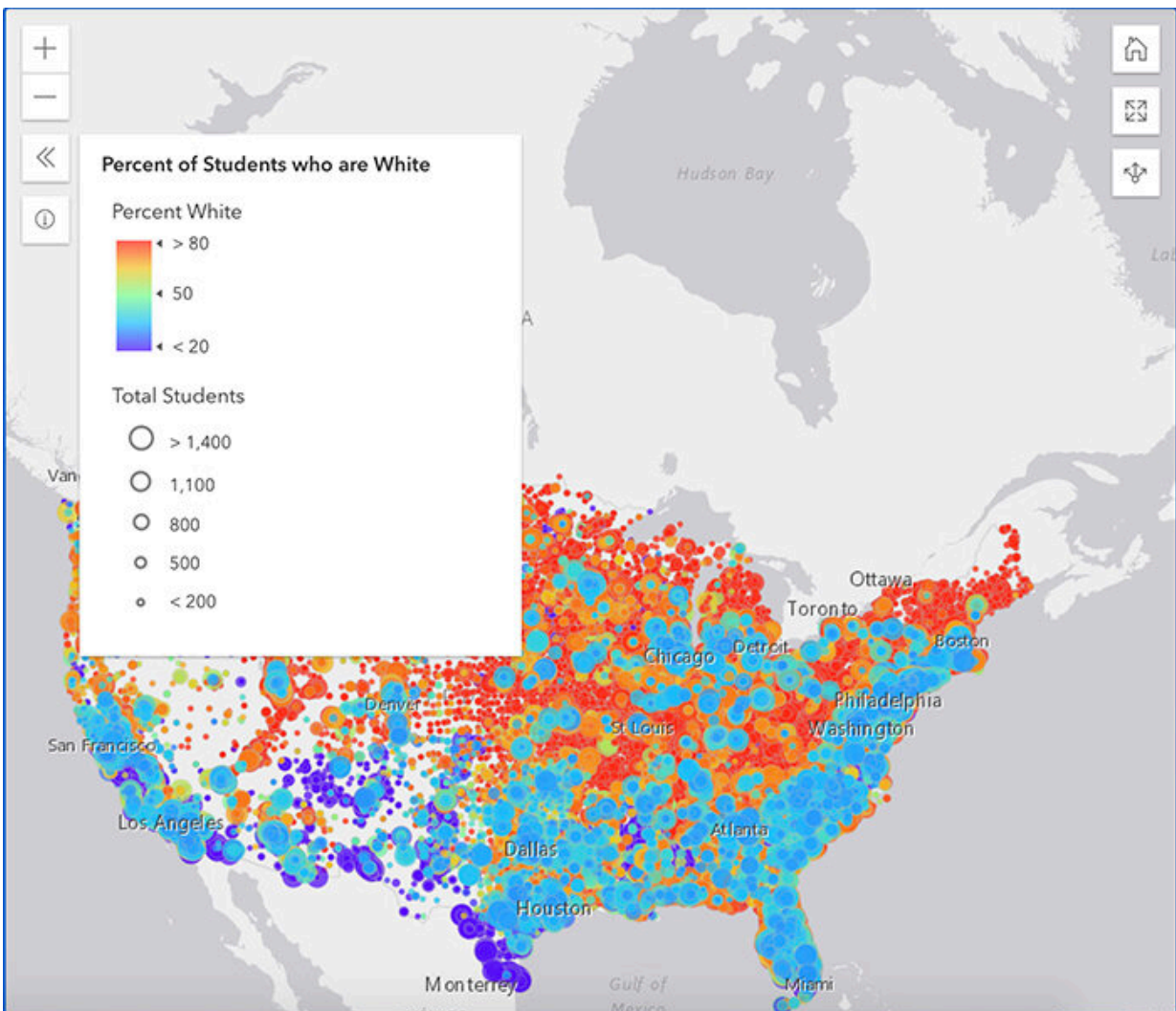


# Website features maps of school segregation across US to help spur research

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Credit: Map from the website [geographyedu.org](http://geographyedu.org)

The 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data shows that the United States population has grown more diverse and is increasingly urbanizing. Yet K-12 schools remain largely segregated. A new website developed by a University of Kansas researcher uses census and demographic data to build maps for all 50 states and the District of Columbia to explore where schools are most and least segregated to help inform discussions of how populations have shifted.

Bryan Mann, assistant professor of educational policy & leadership studies, developed [Geographies of Education](#) as an interactive site that provides maps of the United States showing racial demographics of neighborhoods and schools across the country. The site houses maps for every state with data starting from the 2000 Census. Users can select a state and see data from that year on the left side of the map. To the right of a slidable rule is data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey, an in-between census snapshot of data similar to those collected in the 10-year counts. 2020 Census data is being added as it becomes available. Colored dots for thousands of individual schools represent the racial isolation status of each school, and sliding the rule allows users to see how those makeups have changed.

Mann said there are also metropolitan maps under development that span more than one state.

"We want to help people explore places they live, places they want to research," he said. "I see this as a starting point for exploring these population changes and as a way to view those changes in depth."

Geographies of Education also houses a project featuring stand-alone maps of the U.S. that shows how racial demographics have shifted in schools across the country, as well as a map of the U.S. that shows school types. For example, users can see how many charter schools exist different locations.

The idea of the site is not simply to point out that racial segregation persists, but to help those who are curious about why it exists learn more. With that information, they can help inform policymakers who set laws and policy that guide schools to ensure that every student has the opportunity to receive an equitable education.

"My goal and my hope is people and researchers start to see these patterns and ask why these changes are happening," Mann said. "For example, why are there so many charter schools here? Or, why have so many schools remained racially isolated? I hope people engage with these maps. Different states are experiencing diversity differently. We're now looking at what these changes mean for schools."

Mann has already conducted such research in his career, and the site also houses academic publications that have come from such work and will be a repository for future research as well. One example is a publication Mann co-wrote that analyzed why a section of Alabama commonly known as the Black Belt saw schools start to desegregate after the civil rights era, only to see school segregation return. Data showed economic changes, such as industry leaving the area and related factors, and population trends were among the primary reasons.

The research illustrates the unique nature of geography in education. Mann said out that every state's map and [school](#) changes will look different. California and Mississippi will look quite different from each other, for example, and while one could make assumptions about the reasons, census data and research will hold the key to truly understanding why changes happened in a given location. Mann is working on similar research for Washington, D.C., schools.

Because schools cannot legally segregate by policy or law, future researchers can examine if causes are due to economics, an influx of immigration, urbanization or other factors.

Mann partnered with KU doctoral candidates Kenneth Ekpeterere and Chen Liang and master's student Titus Maxwell, all with the Department of Geography & Atmospheric Science, to build the site and its mapping and data-tracking capabilities. The site also features a tutorial video with Mann demonstrating how users can search maps, track changes in populations and use the tool's maps and illustrations.

While Geographies of Education is a site dedicated to helping researchers understand American schools to inform better policy, Mann also hopes teachers and anyone interested in the schools of their communities will find the [site](#) useful.

"We want this to be a publicly available tool for anyone interested in using it," Mann said. "If teachers are wanting to understand the populations of their schools, they can. Or if they want to help their students understand their communities, they can. I hope it helps people see these patterns in an easily accessible, easy-to-understand way."

**More information:** Geographies of Education website: [geographyedu.org/](http://geographyedu.org/)

Provided by University of Kansas

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