

School Committee Resources on Heterogeneous Classes

Below you will find a selection of resources that we have used or found helpful. They include scholarly articles, local media and books. Additionally, we included a sample of times when concerns about leveling or course enrollment came before the school committee on prior occasions.

Additional resources or copies of the books cited can be supplied as requested.

Articles

[Four decades of research on the effects of detracking reform:Where do we stand?—A systematic review of the evidence](#)

Rui, Ning

Journal of Evidence-Based Medicine, July 2009

Center for Research and Evaluation in Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania, USA

The only available meta analysis of detracking. Highlights the benefits of detracking for historically low performing students without harming the success of higher performing students. Provides substantial quantitative backing across forty-four years of research. Notable for coming from outside of the field of education.

Answers in the Tool Box. Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Attainment.

US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1999

[Summary of Findings](#)

[Full Report](#)

A large scale and detailed review of the factors that contribute to the rates at which students complete bachelor's degrees. Notably identifies that the quality and intensity of high school curriculum is a key school-based factor and is especially important for Black and Latine students.

[Detracked — And going strong](#)

Phi Delta Kappan, 2017

Article written by Evanston Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction looking back at the results of their 9th grade detracking initiative after 5 years. Notes improved scores on the ACT and increased enrollment and performance in AP courses. Bavis was at ETHS at the start of the initiative and remains at ETHS 14 years later.

[Retrospective on Detracking in Evanston](#)

The Evanstonian 2022.

Local media piece written upon the retirement of longtime superintendent Eric Witherspoon. Highlights the impetus for making the changes, initial pushback, and the ongoing success 12 years after beginning the work.

Relevant Prior School Committee Discussions

[Jan 2017 MSAN Students \(video\)](#)

[Dec 2017 MSAN Students](#) (no video available, [minutes](#))

[June 1, 2017 Data presentation](#) including course enrollment ([video](#))

January 17, 2023 Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting discussing new English course ([video](#))

[Jan 19 2023 BHS School Improvement Plan Presentation \(video\)](#)

January 19, 2023 Full Committee discussion of new courses including English ([video](#))

[Jun 8 2023](#) McGarvey-Thompson ([video](#))

These examples serve to highlight the ongoing nature of the discussion about course levels and disparate enrollment. The MSAN student presentations offer brief perspectives from students of color. The June 2017 data presentation helps reinforce the persistence of the disparities.

The January 2023 meetings highlight prior discussions of the work to reimagine 9th grade and provide context for how we arrived at the new English course.

The June 2023 McGarvey-Thompson presentation unpacks some of the historical concerns and situates leveling within a broader context. McGarvey-Thompson also incorporates some student input. At this meeting the Committee expressed concerns about the ongoing racial disparity in course recommendations.

Books

[Building a School of Opportunity Begins With Detracking](#) (chapter)

Corbett Burris, Carol

Chapter in *Excellence Through Equity: Five Principles of Courageous Leadership to Guide Achievement for Every Student* (ASCD, 2015)

Succinctly summarizes Corbett-Burris's learnings and core claims about the importance of heterogeneous classes.

On the Same Track: How Schools Can Join the Twenty-First-century Struggle Against Resegregation

Corbett Burris, Carol

Beacon Press 2014

A comprehensive look at detracking schools. Includes foundational research, experiential examples, discussion of process and a variety of successful and unsuccessful case examples.

Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality 2nd Edition

Oakes, Jeannie
Yale University Press 2005

Key early qualitative study in tracking and the impacts on students. Examines curriculum, instruction, student/teacher relationships, and affective classroom environment.