Whereas most of the metro areas examined in this report were home to historical discrimination focused largely on isolating Black residents, San Antonio provides the clearest example of residential discrimination against Hispanic residents, specifically Mexican Americans, contributing to striking modern-day disparities in school funding.

There is research detailing the use of redlining and restrictive covenants targeting Mexican Americans in the San Antonio area, particularly during the earlier half of the 20th century. The purpose, as usual, was to reinforce and further develop the racially divided landscape, relegating Mexican Americans to older, decaying neighborhoods and preserving northside suburbs for middle-class white families (Garcia 2000; Ramos 2001; Regalado, Rodriguez, and Torres 2021; Rosales 2020). During this same time, school district boundaries were drawn to preserve and exacerbate segregation (Drennon 2006).

These common practices, used primarily in other parts of the country to isolate and segregate Black communities, were used with equal effectiveness at isolating Hispanic communities in San Antonio, despite their long being the majority population (the area is the only one of our seven areas that serves a majority-Hispanic student population—around 67 percent). Today, in the San Antonio area, unlike most other areas throughout the United States, the between-district segregation of white and Hispanic students is as extensive as that between the area's white and Black students, though the latter is somewhat less pronounced than it is in our other case study areas (see Table 3).

Along with racial/ethnic segregation—and in part because of it—San Antonio is among the most economically segregated metropolitan areas in the United States, and those economic disparities fall sharply and predictably along racial/ethnic lines (Regalado et al. 2021). Figure 20 presents the composition map for the San Antonio metropolitan area.
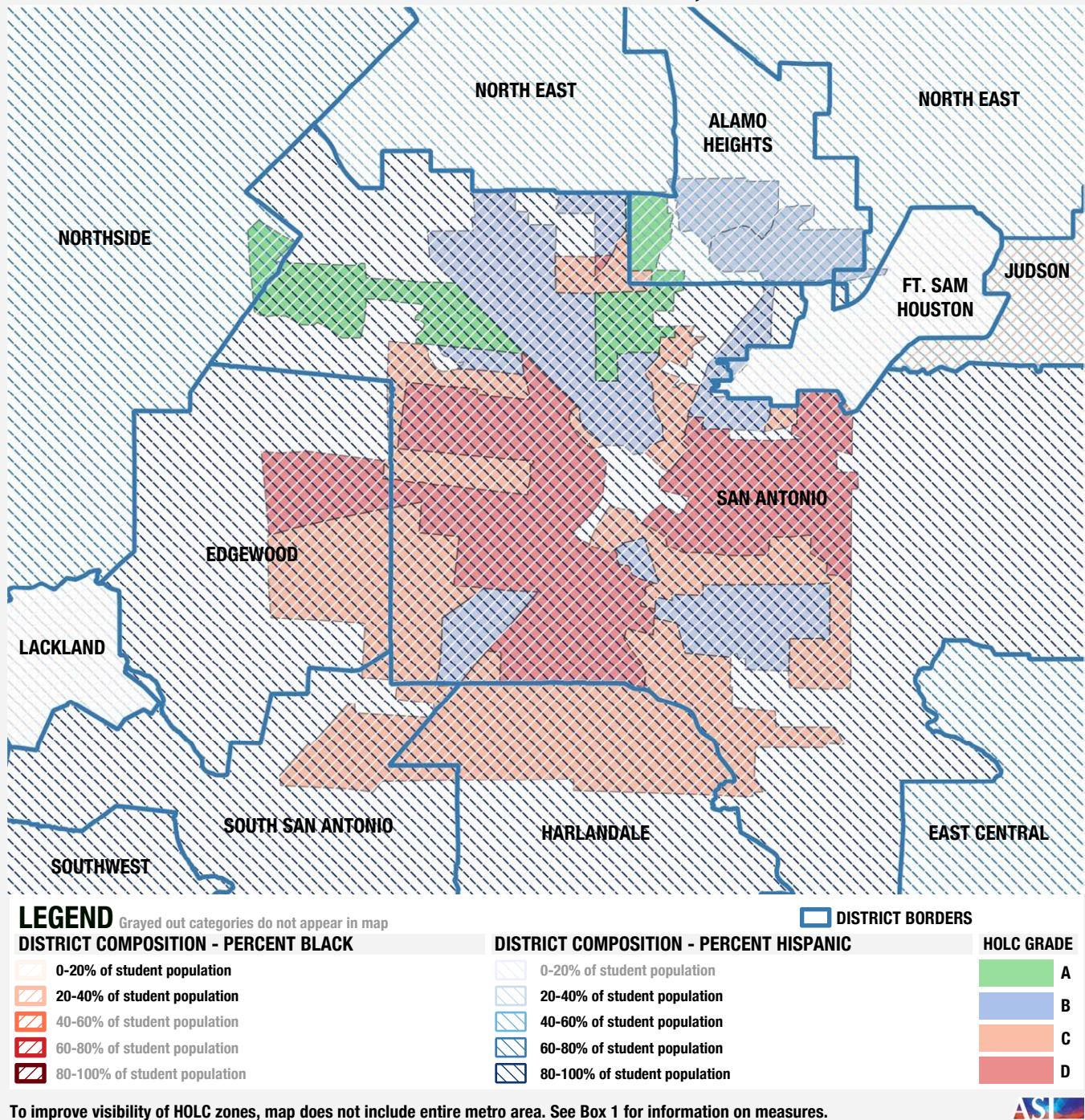
Throughout most of the metro area, school district enrollments are majority Hispanic (backward-leaning striped patterns in darker blue shades). But the Hispanic shares are particularly high (80-100 percent) in the four districts (Edgewood, Harlandale, San Antonio, and South San Antonio) that are home to virtually every square mile of the C- and D-graded HOLC areas. About four in five of the area's Black students, comparatively small as a group, are in four districts (Judson, North East, Northside, and San Antonio).

Although it is not evident in Figure 20, which presents districtwide racial composition, San Antonio's white population, as noted above, is concentrated in its northern neighborhoods, corresponding quite well with the group of highly rated A/B (green- and blue-shaded) HOLC areas. This area of the city has for generations been seen as the home of its more affluent Anglo population (Garcia 2000), while Mexican American families have populated the western neighborhoods of the city since at least 1910 (Walter et al. 2017), "spilling" over into the Edgewood district. Most of the remaining A- and B-rated HOLC zones in the map are found in Alamo Heights, which, while still heavily Hispanic by national standards, is among the relatively few in the area that serves a majority-white student population. The Alamo Heights district's neighborhoods, first developed during the 1910s and 1920s, were built with instructions "not to be sold or leased to one not of the Caucasian race" (Pettaway and Torralva 2020).

The San Antonio Independent School District and the Edgewood Independent School District (directly to the west of San Antonio) are well known to scholars of school finance and educational law as districts that brought major constitutional challenges to Texas' state school finance system—specifically arguing that the state's heavy dependence on local property taxes and local decisions on property taxation deprive children in districts like Edgewood and San Antonio of an equitable and minimally adequate education. San Antonio ISD famously brought its case against

Figure 20

SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION MAP, SAN ANTONIO METRO AREA, 2018

NORTH EAST

ALAMO HEIGHTS

NORTH EAST

NORTHSIDE

FT. SAM HOUSTON

JUDSON

SAN ANTONIO

EDGEWOOD

LACKLAND

SOUTH SAN ANTONIO

HARLANDALE

EAST CENTRAL

SOUTHWEST

LEGEND Grayed out categories do not appear in map

☐ **DISTRICT BORDERS**

DISTRICT COMPOSITION - PERCENT BLACK

- 0-20% of student population
- 20-40% of student population
- 40-60% of student population
- 60-80% of student population
- 80-100% of student population

DISTRICT COMPOSITION - PERCENT HISPANIC

- 0-20% of student population
- 20-40% of student population
- 40-60% of student population
- 60-80% of student population
- 80-100% of student population

HOLC GRADE

- A
- B
- C
- D

To improve visibility of HOLC zones, map does not include entire metro area. See Box 1 for information on measures.

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the state in federal court, arguing that strict scrutiny should be applied because the disparities resulted in deprivation of a fundamental right to education, and that wealth was a suspect class similar to classifications based on race or ethnicity. The Supreme Court, however, denied both arguments in 1973 (*San Antonio Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Rodriguez* 1973). Applying the more lenient rational basis standard, the Court ruled that the reliance on local property taxation was rationally related to the goal of local control of education, and thus did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment.

The scatterplot in Figure 21 provides a counterpoint of sorts to this decision. It shows the relationship between 2022 district racial composition (percent Hispanic students) and local tax bases (taxable wealth per student) of the districts that directly border San Antonio proper in the map (with the exception of Fort Sam Houston, which is an army base).

The two variables are nearly perfectly correlated (r = 0.93), with districts serving larger Hispanic populations (the horizontal axis) exhibiting lower taxable wealth per student (the vertical axis). And those racial/ethnic disparities are directly derivative of the carefully orchestrated segregation of Mexican American immigrants, relegating them to older east and south side neighborhoods and largely excluding them from communities like Alamo Heights (although, again, Alamo Heights today serves a student population that is 40 percent Hispanic).

Figure 21

TAXABLE WEALTH PER STUDENT BY PERCENT HISPANIC STUDENTS, SELECTED SAN ANTONIO DISTRICTS, 2022
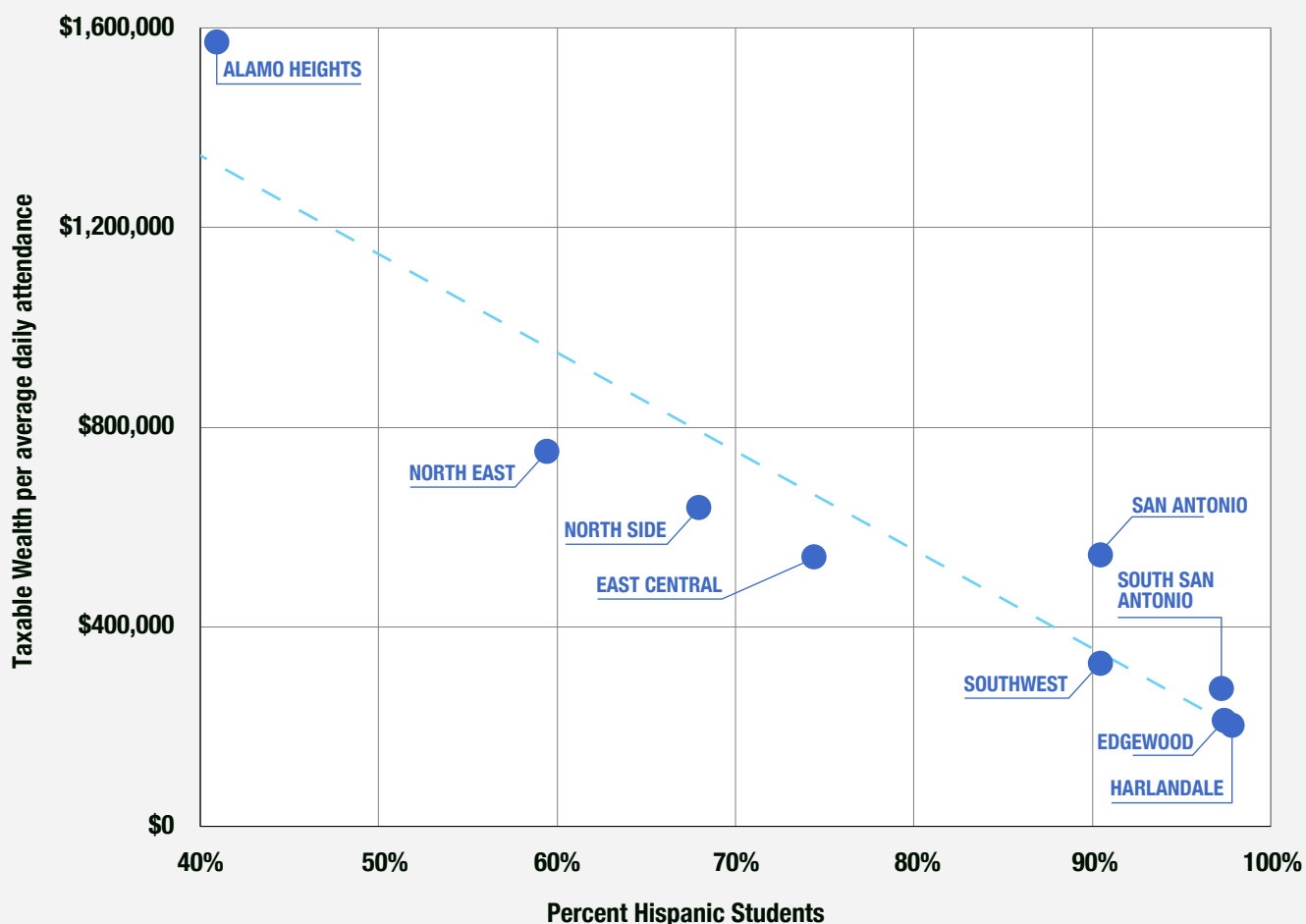
The implications of these racial and ethnic disparities for the adequacy of K-12 resources are clear in Figure 22, which presents the funding map for the San Antonio area. Much of the area in the map, including virtually all of the schools within the C- and D-graded HOLC zones, is home to schools in very high-poverty neighborhoods (red dots), whereas the majority of schools surrounded by lower-poverty neighborhoods (green and blue dots) are located in the A-/B-graded HOLC zones in northern San Antonio and Alamo Heights.

Figure 22

SCHOOL DISTRICT FUNDING ADEQUACY MAP, SAN ANTONIO METRO AREA, 2018
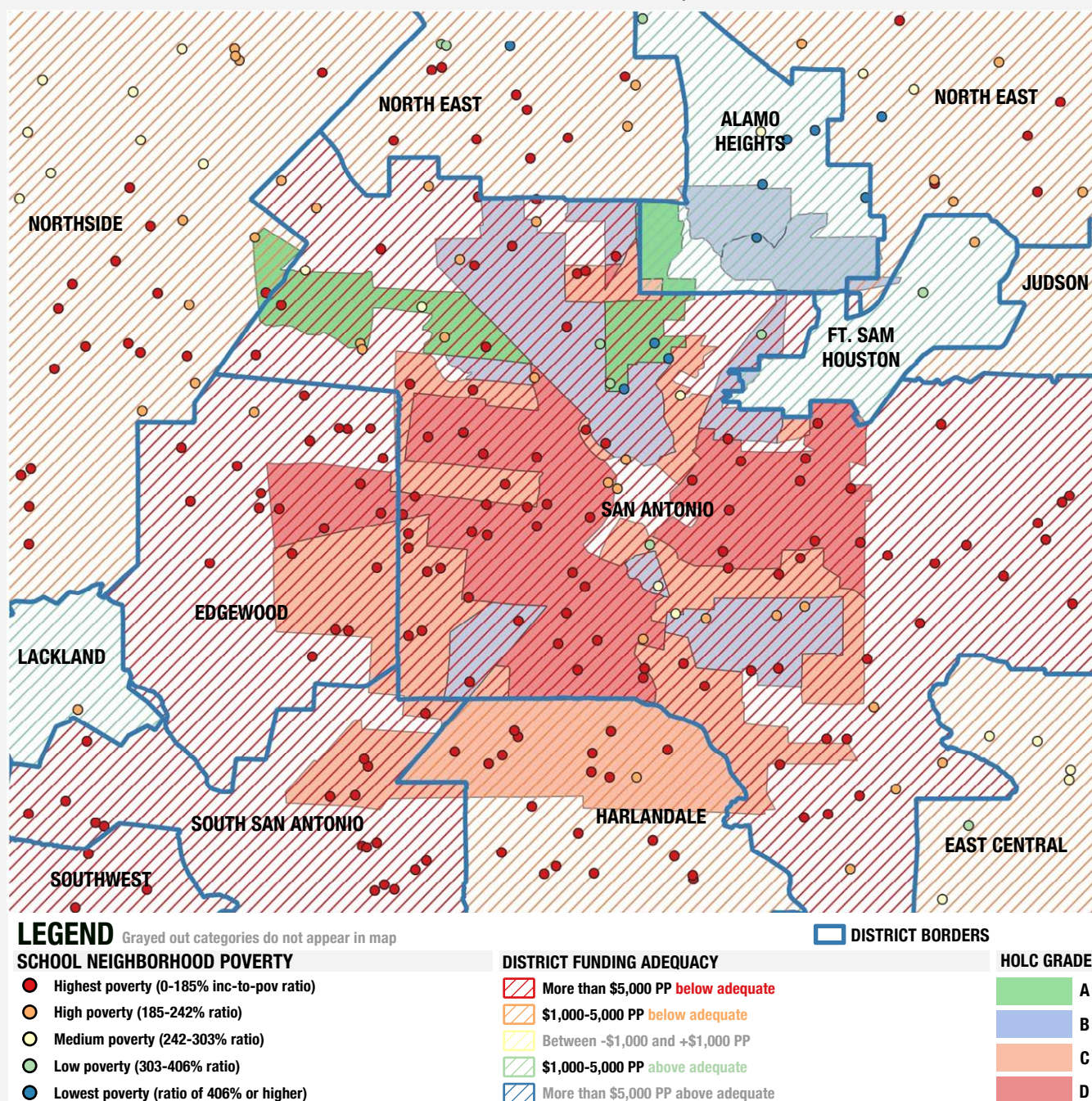
LEGEND Grayed out categories do not appear in map

DISTRICT BORDERS

SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD POVERTY
- ● Highest poverty (0-185% inc-to-pov ratio)
- ● High poverty (185-242% ratio)
- ○ Medium poverty (242-303% ratio)
- ● Low poverty (303-406% ratio)
- ● Lowest poverty (ratio of 406% or higher)

DISTRICT FUNDING ADEQUACY
- More than $5,000 PP below adequate
- $1,000-5,000 PP below adequate
- Between -$1,000 and +$1,000 PP
- $1,000-5,000 PP above adequate
- More than $5,000 PP above adequate

HOLC GRADE
- A
- B
- C
- D

To improve visibility of HOLC zones, map does not include entire metro area. See Box 1 for information on measures.

Regarding adequacy, the San Antonio metro area, like the vast majority of Texas districts statewide (Baker, Di Carlo, Reist et al. 2021), exhibits spending below estimated adequate levels. The three exceptions in Figure 22—Alamo Heights, Lackland, and Fort Sam Houston—are, not coincidentally, the only districts in the map that do not serve majority-Hispanic student populations (again, Fort Sam Houston, created in 1951, is located entirely on an army post and serves

the children of military families). Moreover, virtually all of the districts that were ungraded by the HOLC spend below estimated adequate levels, but less so than their redlined, more heavily-Black/Hispanic counterparts in the map.

Figure 23 shows the relationship between funding gaps (horizontal axis) and outcome gaps (vertical axis), with districts that are majority Black or Hispanic

Figure 23

STUDENT OUTCOME GAPS BY ADEQUATE FUNDING GAPS, SAN ANTONIO METRO AREA DISTRICTS, 2018
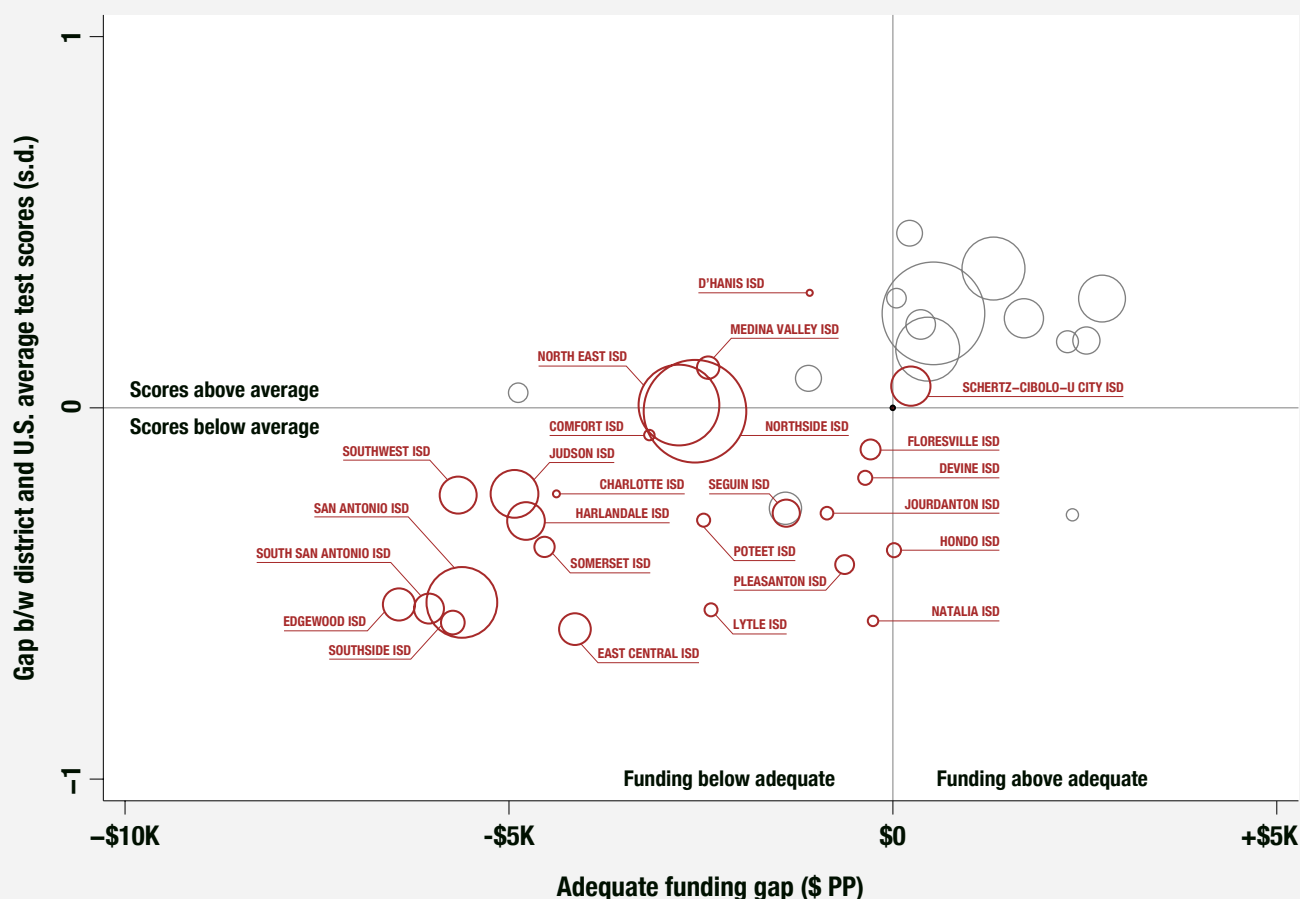
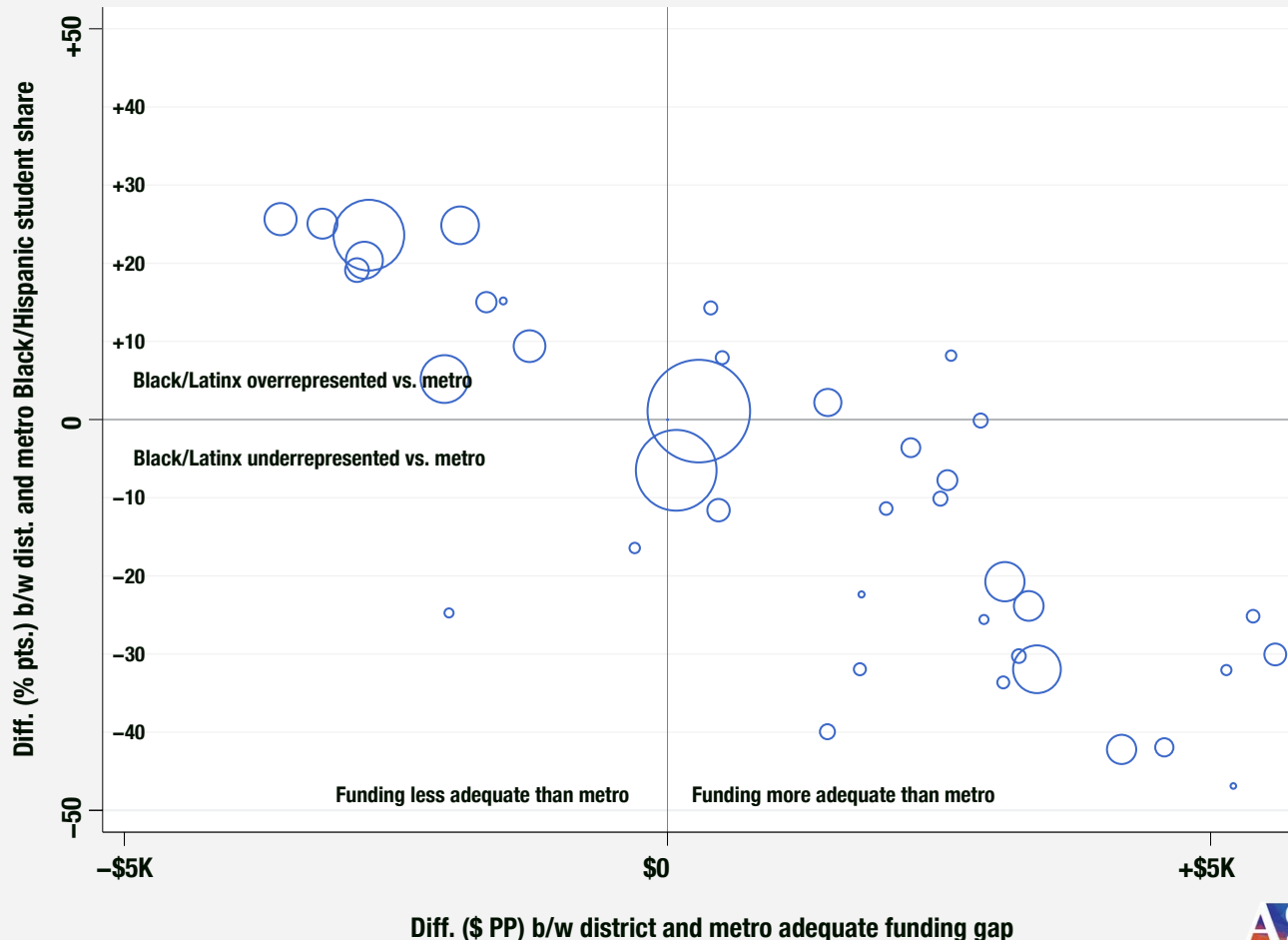**Red markers** with labels are majority–Black/Hispanic districts

indicated with red circles and district name labels. Again, districts in the lower left are those estimated to have insufficient funding to achieve national average outcomes and testing outcomes that fall below the national average.

The San Antonio metro area is somewhat unusual among our seven areas in that the vast majority of its districts are majority Black/Hispanic. Even so, the association here is quite apparent: all but three of these districts are in the lower left quadrant (below-adequate funding and below-average outcomes), whereas, with only a few (very low-enrollment) exceptions, all mostly white districts are located in the upper right quadrant (i.e., they spend enough to achieve national average outcomes and meet or exceed those outcomes).

Figure 24

RELATIVE BLACK/HISPANIC STUDENT SHARE BY RELATIVE ADEQUATE FUNDING GAP, SAN ANTONIO METRO AREA, 2018

Black/Latinx overrepresented vs. metro

Black/Latinx underrepresented vs. metro

Funding less adequate than metro

Funding more adequate than metro

Diff. (% pts.) b/w dist. and metro Black/Hispanic student share

Diff. ($ PP) b/w district and metro adequate funding gap

Data source: School Finance Indicators Database

Note: Markers weighted by student enrollment. Relative Black/Hispanic share (y-axis) is the difference (percentage points) between each district's Black/Hispanic student share and that of its metro area overall. Funding gaps (x-axis) are the difference between districts and their metro areas in the gap between actual spending per pupil and estimated spending required to achieve national average test scores. Plot includes districts with non-missing adequacy estimates in the metro area.

Given the fact that Hispanic students are so dominant in the area (and funding in the area/state is generally below adequate levels), we present an additional scatterplot in Figure 24. This additional plot, which was also presented for the Bay Area, above, defines racial/ethnic composition and funding adequacy relative to the metro area overall (note that Figure 24 has a smaller range of values on its x-axis than does its counterpart in the Bay Area case study).

The pattern of the circles here is a bit messy, with a few small districts fanning out, but it is still clearly a downward slope. In the top left quadrant there are six districts near or above the +20 percentage points line—i.e., the shares of Black and (mostly) Hispanic students in these districts are at least 20 percentage points higher than the Black/Hispanic share of all students in the San Antonio metro area (since that latter share is about 75 percent, these districts serve

essentially all-Black/Hispanic student populations). And these districts are not only funded less adequately than the metro area overall, five of them are the least adequately funded districts in the area.

Conversely, with one exception (Stockdale ISD, which serves just over 800 students), every district in which the percentage of non-Black/Hispanic students is at least 20 percentage points below the areawide average (mostly white districts) spends above estimated adequate levels, including the 12 most adequately funded districts in the San Antonio metro area. In other words, even in a metro area where two in three students are Hispanic, the districts that serve 85-95 percent Black and Hispanic students are funded substantially less adequately than the districts in which the share is 50-60 percent, all in an area that forcibly segregated Mexican Americans for decades.

This section is from the report, "**Segregation and School Funding: How Housing Discrimination Reproduces Unequal Inequality**," available at: http://shankerinstitute.org/segfunding