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Sociology 201

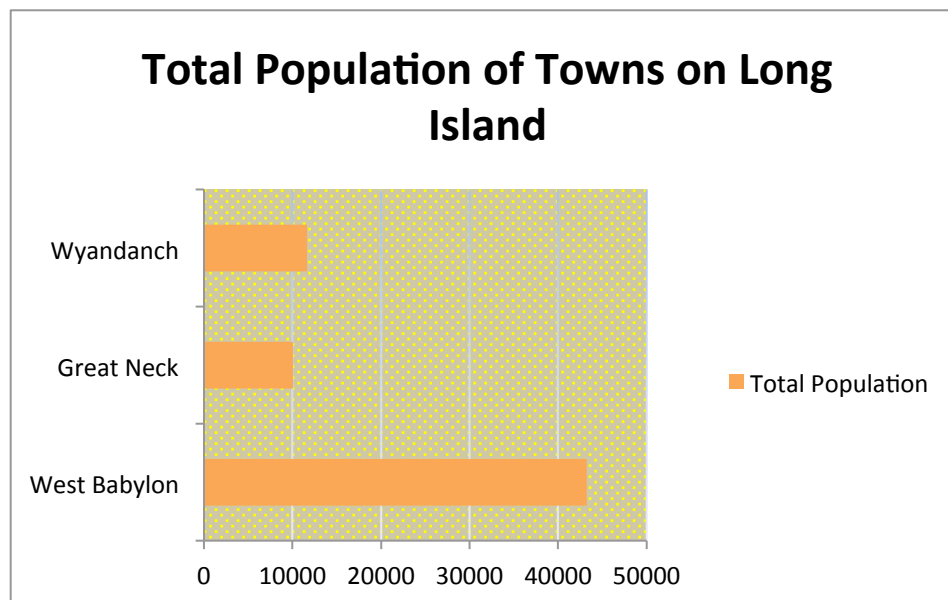
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Education: A Trap and a Cycle

Suffolk County, New York is a bustling economic center with almost two-million inhabitants. Most of the adults who inhabit the county encourage their children to attend and complete high school. While almost ninety percent of people over twenty five years of age have acquired a high school diploma, funding throughout the various school districts in Suffolk County is greatly varied. For example, school districts like Wyandanch receive significantly less state aid than school districts like Great Neck. The council that determines the amount of state aid that will be given to school districts allocates funds based on academic performance. What effect does the funding have on the students of New York? How is a school district to improve its academic performance if funding isn't given?

The school districts in Suffolk County vary greatly in population. For example the town of West Babylon has 43,213 inhabitants while the towns of Great Neck and Wyandanch have populations of just fewer than 12,000. However, funding for each school district is not based on population. This fact is obvious to the citizens of Suffolk County. Great Neck receives greater

State and Local aid than Wyandanch by significant margins.

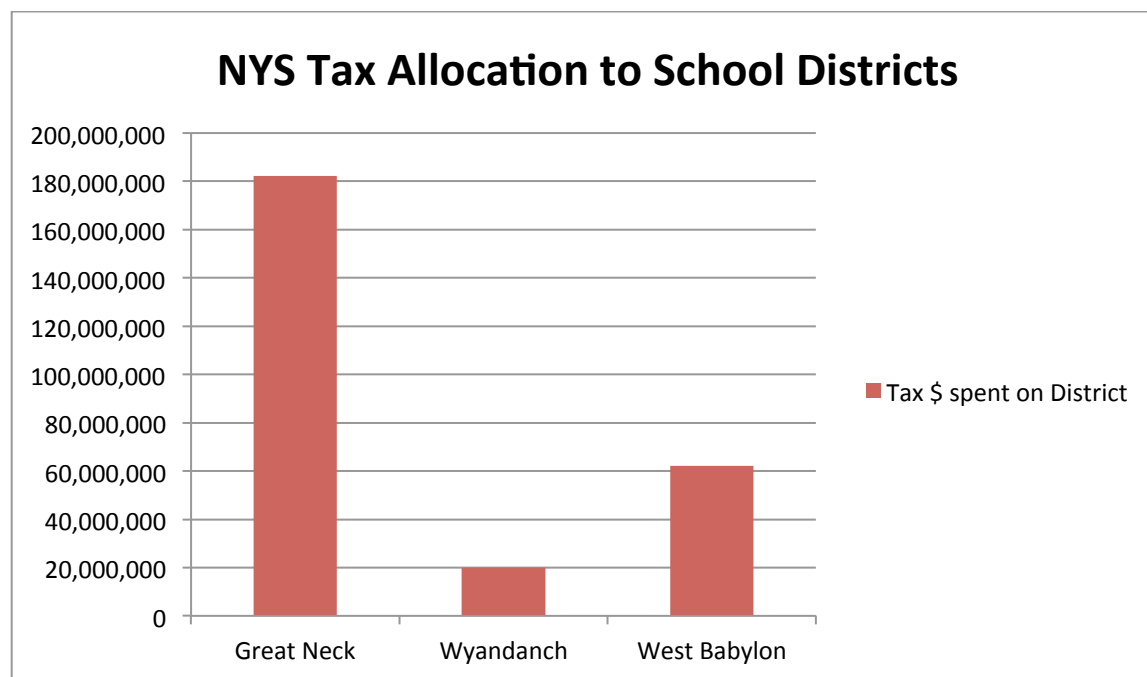


Observe how Wyandanch and Great Neck have similar town sizes.

The district of Great Neck has a median household income of \$78,736. While this is slightly lower than the Long Island median income, Great Neck's school district is held in very high esteem. The school district has some of the highest standardized test averages in the country. The students there have constant pressure to achieve at a high level. This pressure eventually caused a scandal to occur due to the stress level of some students. Many students at Great Neck High School felt that their own personal test scores were inadequate compared to others at the school. This feeling of inadequacy caused many students to hire a college student to take their SATs for them. How high can standards be placed before people crack under the pressure? These students were given all of the support, funding and environment they needed to achieve their highest academic potential. Jane Doe from Great Neck feels as if standards are placed too high and that students encounter great amounts of stress in the areas of academics. She knows that Great Neck is only a crime free haven because of the tremendous amounts of money that is poured into the school district. Was there too much funding for this school? Were

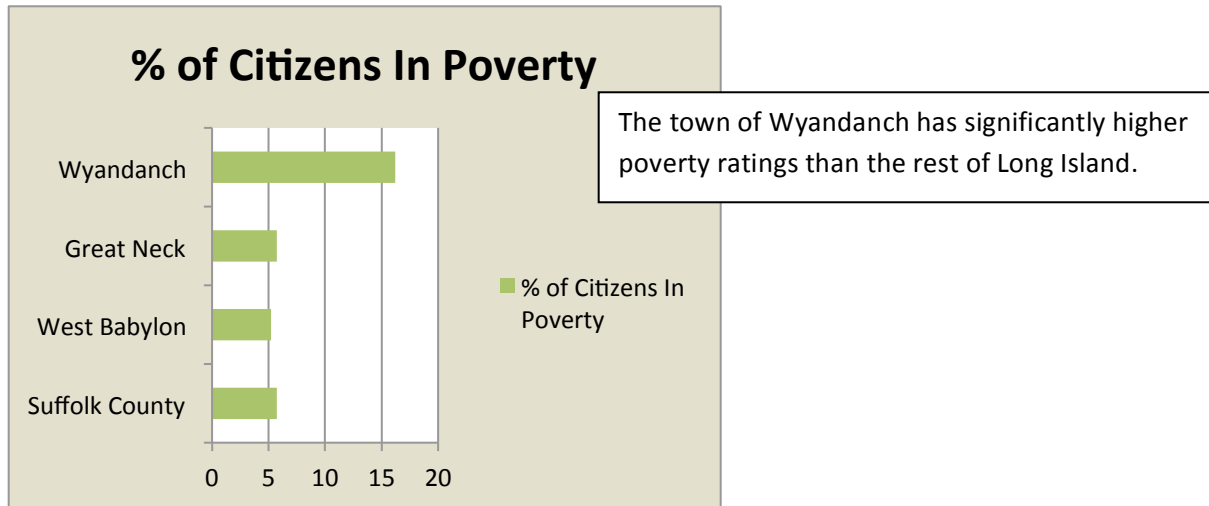
the standards too high for the average student to handle even with the finest tools and faculty?

Some of the excess funding spent at this school might have done a lot of good at a school district like Wyandanch.

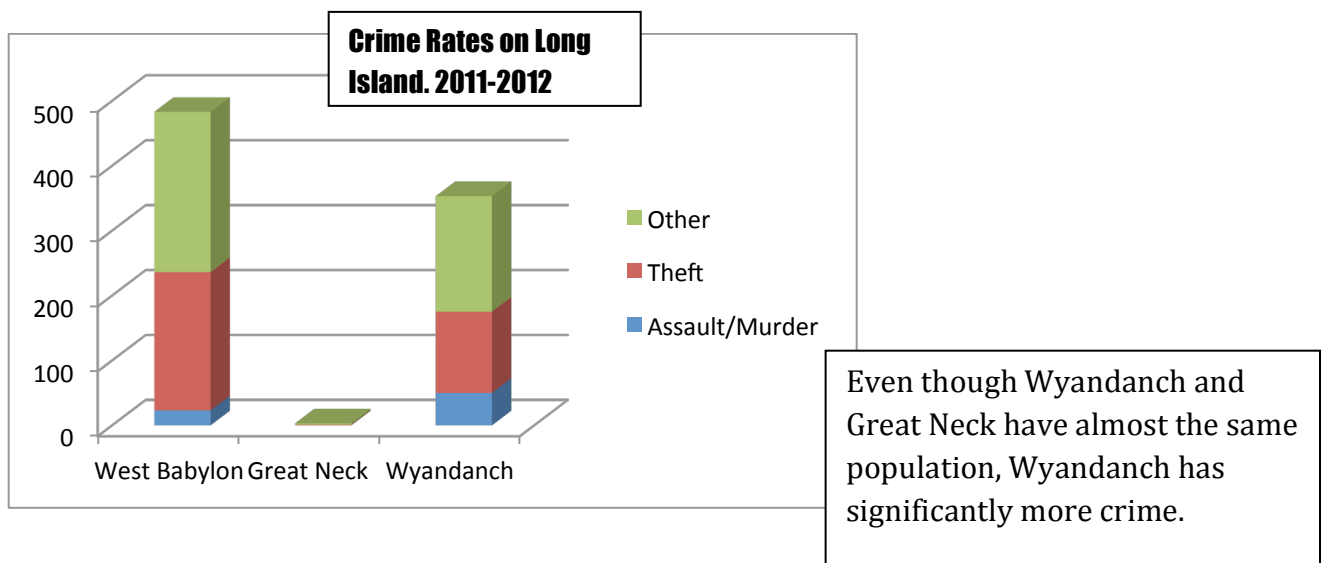


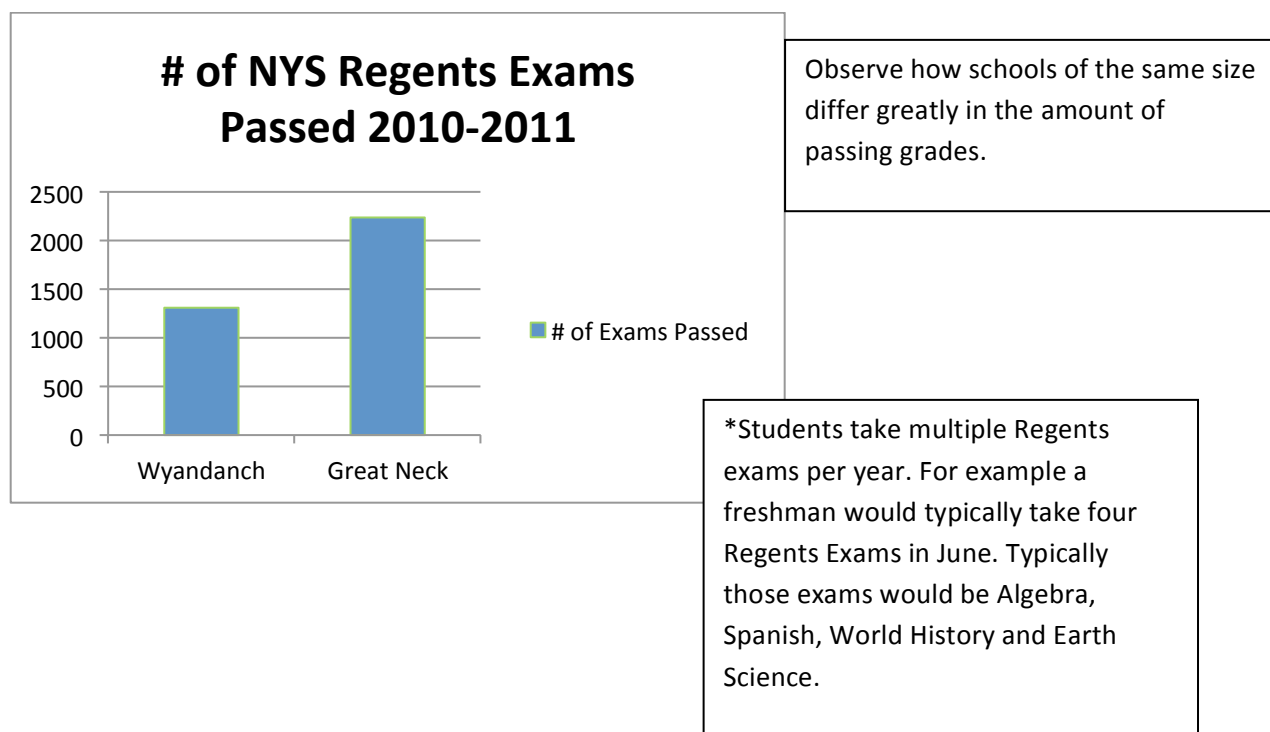
The district of Wyandanch has a median household income of just \$54,052. Compared to the median income in Great Neck, this is a small amount. With the average income at the level it is, taxes for local education cannot be placed too high. It would make sense that the state would allocate many of its resources to supplement the money that the local citizens cannot afford. However, the state of New York does nothing to supplement the money Wyandanch's citizens cannot pay. The poverty rate in Wyandanch is at 16.2%. That number is significantly higher than the Long Island average. This fact alone should prompt the state of New York with the reason it needs to provide equal funding for the Wyandanch school district. However the state of New York does not provide enough aid to make Wyandanch's school district competitive with most schools on the island. Even average school districts on Long Island, like West Babylon, receive

far more aid per student than Wyandanch.



These low standards and expectations in the town of Wyandanch have perpetuated the cycle of poverty and unemployment. The low standards in education have also led to extremely high crime figures in Wyandanch. David Jones of Wyandanch spoke of how the kids who go to school simply give up because they do not feel invested in. He says the kids feel that they will only make money if they sell drugs or steal. David also believed that the staggering crime rates in Wyandanch could be “calmed down” if the state of New York would simply give more money to the school district so that students feel could feel like they “have a shot” at a better life.





The educational system on Long Island should be up for a change. The inequality is rampant and there is no mobility for school districts. It appears that without good grades a district cannot increase its funding. However, at the same time, a district most likely will not be able to improve its grades without an ample supply of funds. The system should be revised. This issue cannot wait. Things cannot get better without changing something.

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