The Choice Is Ours: Expanding Educational Opportunity for all Twin Cities Children
Executive Summary

This report reveals the disturbing extent of school segregation in the Twin Cities region, and describes segregation’s harms to children and the region. It is a wake-up call to all of us.

Most importantly, this report envisions a brighter future for the region, its children, and its families. The Institute on Race and Poverty describes how expanding an already successful school choice program, coordinated with appropriately focused affordable housing policies, can help lead to equal access to opportunity for the region’s disadvantaged children and their families.

In this report

- Schools in the Twin Cities region, like many of the region’s neighborhoods, are segregated. There are many severely segregated schools in the central cities, yet a growing number of suburban schools are, or quickly are becoming, segregated.

- Economically and racially segregated schools and their students face performance challenges largely because of segregation. Students from all socio-economic backgrounds perform worse in high-poverty schools, and better in low-poverty schools.

- Graduation rates hover around 55 percent in Minneapolis public schools, where three-quarters of the students are poor; much of the rest of the region enjoys graduation rates of 88-100 percent.

- Segregated schools, and neighborhoods, isolate children from the socio-economic diversity that fosters high expectations, and cultures that support them; they isolate children from the networks important for accessing, and learning to access, academic and life opportunities.

- Even among only the poor, isolation in poor schools and neighborhoods falls disproportionately on persons of color:
  
  -- Poor Latino and African American families are two to three times more likely to be isolated in segregated neighborhoods than are poor white families. Racial and exclusionary zoning, racial steering in real estate markets, and housing discrimination are among the direct and structural forces shaping segregation.

  -- Compared to poor white children, Latino and African American children are more than twice as likely to attend schools of concentrated poverty, an isolation reflecting residential segregation.

- Families who can, tend to choose schools that do not have excessive poverty enrollments. This quickly worsens school segregation, makes neighborhoods unstable, and worsens residential segregation.
But when all of a region’s schools provide equal access to educational opportunities, families can live anywhere, assured that their children can attend good public schools.

School integration policies, applied at a metropolitan scale, can offer this assurance, thus improving outcomes for children and their schools, and stabilizing neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, federal desegregation law does not enable integration plans that can operate at the geographic scale that corresponds with housing markets and patterns in metro regions. While significant school integration progress was made during the 1960s and 1970s, it slowed during the 1980s, and has quickly been reversing ever since.

African American children today are, therefore, more likely to be isolated in segregated schools than they were in 1970.

Since the 1990s, however, litigation in state courts has become a promising way for disadvantaged students to seek redress of their right to equal educational opportunity.

State-court litigation against the State of Minnesota and City of Minneapolis during the 1990s led to a settlement creating a promising interdistrict school choice model, “Choice is Yours,” that permits some students in segregated Minneapolis schools to attend nonsegregated schools in the western suburbs.

Its first four years at a pilot scale were successful for all involved, and academic achievement was higher for participating Choice is Yours students than for eligible students who chose to remain in Minneapolis schools.

Choice is Yours is a model that should be expanded to include more schools, and more districts, as part of a comprehensive approach to provide quality, integrated schools for all of the region’s children.

In contrast, charter schools are more segregated than traditional public schools, and their performance is unproven at best. Nor is simply spending more money for segregated schools producing results.

School segregation reflects residential segregation, and for many poor persons is an outcome of a history and ongoing practice of government decisions to isolate affordable housing in areas of concentrated poverty and in segregated, or segregating, neighborhoods.

Indeed, affordable housing in the Twin Cities region has been concentrated in poor and segregated neighborhoods.

To help integrate schools, and ensure equal access to opportunity, affordable housing should not be concentrated in racially or economically segregated areas, and decisions to site units should be coordinated with an expanded school choice program so opportunities are available for families to live near their children’s schools in places where job opportunities also are more abundant.
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Introduction

Many Twin Cities schools are segregated. Segregated schools harm children, communities, and the metropolitan region. Segregated schools intensify the region’s segregated residential patterns, concentrating poverty and magnifying its harms. This isolates the most disadvantaged children from educational and economic opportunity. Even worse, some schools are “hypersegregated,” with enrollments that are nearly 90 percent black and poverty enrollments that are similarly concentrated. In significant part because of this racial and social segregation, only 52 percent of black children and 20 percent of Hispanic children in Minneapolis are expected to graduate. Those that do graduate or obtain an equivalency degree will likely have tremendous difficulty finding a path to college or a living-wage job with benefits.

The response to the problem of school segregation in Minnesota’s metro regions has been “separate and much more than equal funding” of central-city schools. Minnesota increased funding to segregated schools when it was under the threat of a metropolitan desegregation lawsuit, both in the 1970s, based on the federal equal protection clause, and in the 1990s, based on the state constitution. Since 1995, state funding formulas have guaranteed that twice as much money is spent per pupil in the most segregated city schools than in the average suburban district.

Part One
Segregation Hurts Everyone

Segregated Schools Hurt Children

Research shows that more than three-quarters of the difference in academic achievement among students is explained by the socioeconomic status of their peers, rather than general differences in school facilities and programs. Not only do racially and economically segregated schools hurt all children, they harm disproportionate numbers of nonwhite children.

“The percentage of poor children in a school is an extremely strong predictor of inequality in educational outcomes . . . .” As fifty years of sociological data have made clear, “being born into a poor family places students at risk, but to be assigned then to a school with a high concentration of poverty poses a second, independent disadvantage that poor children attending middle-class schools do not face.” The harms of economically segregated schools disproportionately fall on poor, nonwhite children. They are much more likely to live in poor neighborhoods and to be educated in schools with high proportions of poor students than their white counterparts.

A key difference between white poverty and black poverty is that few poor whites are segregated in areas of concentrated poverty. Only one-fourth of poor white families live in neighborhoods (census tracts) with poverty levels over 20 percent. Conversely, three-quarters of poor blacks and two-thirds of poor Latinos live in such high-poverty tracts. As a result, poor Latino and black children are 2.3 times more likely than poor white students to attend schools of concentrated poverty, cut off from meaningful exposure to middle-class networks.
Although poor students have lower math test scores, on average, than do non-poor students, all children do better in economically diverse schools, and all children do worse in schools of concentrated poverty:

- Poor students attending low-poverty schools perform better than non-poor students attending high-poverty schools.
- Both non-poor and poor students have lower achievement in high-poverty schools.

Among the harms of attending poor schools is the risk of being poor as an adult. When studies control for individual achievement and family background, they still find that “attending a school with high concentrations of poverty increases the chances of adult poverty by a factor of between three and four compared with attending a low-poverty school.”

Other harms of economically segregated schools (and neighborhoods) include the harms associated with racially segregated schools, as described below, and with dropping out of school. These harms include unemployment, imprisonment, and impoverishment.

Schools of concentrated poverty offer fewer resources, weaker educational preparation, and “substantially lower achievement levels.” Compound by racial isolation, segregated schools prevent access to the social contacts and cultural familiarity “necessary for career and educational advancement,” especially for black children. In short, students in segregated schools are “deprived of the most effective educational resources contained in the schools: those brought by other children as the result of their home environment.”

Racially and economically segregated schools have significantly higher dropout rates than do nonsegregated schools. On average, dropouts experience:

- Higher unemployment
- Lower earnings
- Higher incarceration rates
- Unstable families
- Unstable social structures

Racially and economically segregated schools tend to be overcrowded, staffed by larger shares of uncertified teachers, have low expectations, and limited facilities.

In addition, nonwhite economically segregated schools “often transmit lower expectations to minority students and offer a narrower range of educational and job-related options.” Thus, studies have found, for example, that the jobs that black students from racially segregated schools obtained were lower paying and more racially isolated than the jobs obtained by whites. High-poverty, segregated schools too often do not encourage students “to develop the levels of self-esteem or the styles of presentation which employers perceive as evidence of capacity or ability.”

In schools with concentrated poverty enrollments, even the most motivated and gifted students are pulled down by peer groups who resent their success, as social scientists have shown. John Ogbu and Sygmittia Forthman developed theory around what has become known as “oppositional culture.” Born out of an intense pressure not to give in to what is seen as a “white” educational and
social system, Ogbu and Fortman argue that impoverished black students are forced to embrace this oppositional culture, or be ostracized from their peer group for “acting white.”

Oppositional culture derides and punishes individuals seeking to succeed in the dominant culture. Because this can perpetuate negative social networks, integration is valuable in offering “social networks and interpersonal skills that in turn may provide access, information, contact, and sponsorship.” Indeed, even disadvantaged students who are committed to succeeding found they “lacked the knowledge or access necessary to implement a plan of action.” The racially integrated school environment offers these ingredients for success, and provides “alternative role models and opportunities as well as affection and validation.”

There is nothing short of integration to substitute for the benefits of integration. Even beyond the academic achievement and attainment benefits, “the networking effects of desegregation may be far more important than [even] the cognitive effects.” For children to have a fair chance, these benefits must, as public schools were envisioned to do, offer these opportunities equally. Effectively desegregating schools is a “tide that can raise all boats,” narrowing gaps that weigh on a metro region’s vitality.

**Twin Cities Schools Are Segregated By Race and Class**

The Twin Cities region is severely segregated by class and race, and school districts such as Minneapolis are dangerously segregated as a result. The acutely segregated schools in Minneapolis are crushed by poverty enrollments exceeding 80 percent in many cases. This exposes students not to opportunity, but to a culture of intergenerational poverty and its attendant challenges.

During the 1960s, the Minneapolis School District’s racially discriminatory decisions caused and contributed to racially segregated schools in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The district was found, among other things, to have drawn its school boundaries in a discriminatory manner. The resulting 1972 federal school desegregation case produced a desegregation remedy that lasted only a few years and affected only schools within the city boundaries. At the time, Minneapolis schools overall were 14 percent nonwhite.

During the 1980s and 1990s, as the suburbs grew rapidly, schools closed in some districts while other districts on the edge of the region built new ones. During those decades, the region, especially its central cities, became more racially and ethnically diverse. Minneapolis gained increasingly higher shares of minority and poverty enrollments, the latter increasing from 43 to 66 percent between 1990 and 2000. The middle class increasingly chose to locate away from high poverty schools further out into the suburbs, and the schools they left became severely racially and economically segregated.

By 2003, forty-six percent of reporting Minneapolis schools were hyper-segregated, with enrollments between 81-100 percent nonwhite. Sixty-seven percent of Minneapolis students presently are on free or reduced-price lunch. (Table 1-1) This concentration of poverty is extreme in the national context and is especially so within the Twin Cities regional context.
The concentration of race and poverty in Twin Cities schools is revealed in the following maps of the region’s elementary school enrollments. Figure 1-1 displays the racial distributions in Minneapolis schools for the 2004-2005 school year. With the exception of a cluster of schools in southwest Minneapolis and a few others in the city, the overwhelming majority of schools are racially identifiable by a minority group. Nearly all of the schools in north Minneapolis are majority black and many of the schools in central Minneapolis are majority Latino. The few stably integrated schools in southeast Minneapolis do not offset a clear pattern of segregation elsewhere in the city. (Figure 1-1.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Poverty Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkins</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edina</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnetonka</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Table 1-1
Poverty Enrollments by School District, 2005

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Figure 1-2 displays the school lunch status of children in Minneapolis Public elementary schools. It shows that the majority of Minneapolis elementary schools are majority poor. (The proportion of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch indicates the level of poverty within a particular school.) The concentration of poverty virtually mirrors the racial enrollment data of Figure 1-1.
The Minneapolis School District graduates only 55 percent of its students. Yet more than 91 percent of adults in the Twin Cities region have at least a high school diploma, and more than 33 percent have at least a college degree. In contrast to the 55-percent graduation rate in Minneapolis, adjacent school districts graduate 88 to 100 percent of their students. Some students of color in the city are even less likely to graduate: in 2005, about 51 percent of blacks and only 20 percent of Latinos graduated. Even these statistics overstate graduation rates. In a global
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economy that no longer offers living-wage jobs for high school dropouts, what do we realistically expect will happen to these children, or to the vitality and livability of the Twin Cities region?

Academic attainment and achievement declined in the Minneapolis Public Schools as economic and racial segregation become more severe. As the poverty concentration in the district increased from 46 to 68 percent from 1992 to 2005, graduation rates dropped from 67 to 55 percent (Table 1-2).

Table 1-2
Minneapolis Public Schools Graduation Rates, Poverty Enrollment, and Nonwhite Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grad Rate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Nonwhite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

The city’s 55-percent graduation rate compares poorly with rates of 88-100 percent in adjacent districts. The results for basic skills tests reflect these differences. As Table 1-3 reflects for a sample of districts contiguous to Minneapolis, the percent of students passing the February 2005 tests further illustrates how poor performance results correlate with a school district’s level of poverty.

Table 1-3
Percentage of Students Passing 2005 Basic Skills Tests for Selected Minnesota Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Pass</th>
<th>% Pass</th>
<th>% Pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richfield</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edina</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

When families make these comparisons, those who can afford to will “vote with their feet,” accelerating patterns of middle class flight. Overall, Minneapolis enrollments have dropped sharply, declining 18 percent between 2000 and 2004, from 48,000 to 39,913 students. In contrast, public school enrollments declined only 2.1 percent statewide during the same period.

When poverty burdens become too large in a school, enrollments can change rapidly until concentrated poverty is extreme. Concentrated poverty in schools puts neighborhoods at risk of changing quickly as non-poor families go elsewhere in search of low-poverty “good” schools. Racial segregation in Twin Cities schools reflects a larger pattern of residential segregation in the Twin Cities region. As Figure 1-3 displays, patterns of segregation are emerging in the near-south suburbs of the Twin Cities. Schools such as Valley View Elementary and Partnership Academy have become clearly racially identifiable, while others such as Oak Grove Elementary and Washburn Elementary are quickly headed in that direction.
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Figure 1-3: Southwest Suburban Public Elementary Schools Race and Ethnicity, 2004-2005

Legend
- Scale: 500 students
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Black
- White

Data Source: Minnesota Department of Children Families and Learning, Data Center (6/22/2016)
As with the Minneapolis public elementary schools, economic segregation is mirroring the racial segregation in southern suburbs. Some schools are already more than two-thirds poor. (Figure 1-4.)

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The northwest suburbs of Minneapolis are facing even greater patterns of segregation than the southwest suburbs. More than half of the elementary schools in the Osseo school district are racially identifiable and majority poor. (Figures 1-5 and 1-6.)
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More than 25 percent of the region’s 373 elementary schools have enrollments that are greater than 50 percent nonwhite. This segregation affects more than 40,000 elementary school students. (Table 1-4.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools’ Percentage Students of Color</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percentage of Schools</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 10</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>59,412</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 25</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>65,184</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>28,760</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 75</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>17,721</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or more</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>26,993</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>198,070</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Table 1-4

Distribution of Schools and Students by Racial Composition of School in 2002, Twin Cities Metro Region

Housing Segregation Underlies School Segregation

Federal policy, along with public and private discrimination, enabled housing segregation to harm communities nationwide. Families living in concentrated poverty send their children to neighborhood schools, which then become schools of concentrated poverty. Economically
segregated housing and schools are also racially segregated. Housing segregation reinforces the harms of school segregation by limiting not only school networks, but community networks as well.

**Housing Segregation Exists Nationwide**

Residential racial segregation today does not merely reflect economic differences—race is the difference. For example, on average a black family in the U.S. that earns over $60,000 per year “lives in a neighborhood with a higher poverty rate and lower educational attainment than the average white family earning less than $30,000.”\(^{52}\) Compared to other groups of comparable economic status, segregation results in blacks living in neighborhoods that are 15-20 percent less affluent.\(^{53}\) Indeed, “black homeowners reside in neighborhoods that are more segregated and less affluent than their renting counterparts.”\(^{54}\)

Residential racial segregation was shaped during the twentieth century by a combination of public and private discrimination.\(^{55}\) Among the complicit institutions were “[t]he real estate industry, banks, appraisers, and insurance agents”; these “translated private prejudice into public action.”\(^{56}\) Government policies sanctioned that public action with the discriminatory Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan policies, and with the federal highway program.\(^{57}\)

When huge federal subsidies funded development of the interstate highway systems in metro regions in the mid-1900s, many minority urban neighborhoods were destroyed while white suburbanization increased rapidly. This occurred during the second major migration of black citizens to northern states,\(^{58}\) while private racial discrimination in housing was legal. That discrimination, and the comparatively greater access that whites had (and have) to automobiles, shaped the suburbanizing landscapes of metro regions. Although the federal Fair Housing Act\(^{59}\) outlawed housing discrimination in 1968, residential steering still manages to create neighborhood and regional segregation.

**Steering in Real Estate Markets**

Minorities and whites are consistently shown different segments of the housing market, thereby increasing residential segregation. John Yinger’s 1989 housing discrimination study found that perspective homebuyers of color were shown fewer homes, received less attention from brokers, and were more likely to see homes in racially integrated suburban neighborhoods than were whites.\(^{60}\) For example, blacks were almost three times as likely as whites to not even be shown one home, and twenty-five percent more likely to be shown only one home. Because they are shown fewer homes, persons of color often must settle for less than an optimum purchase, resulting in higher housing costs.

The neighborhoods where black homeowners buy “tend to be less affluent, have poorer quality public services and schools, and experience more crime and social disorganization compared to the suburbs that comparable whites reside in.”\(^{61}\) Discrimination in housing and financing markets costs blacks and Hispanics, on average, more than $3,000 per household whether or not they actually encounter discrimination.\(^{62}\) These costs are reflected in the length and breadth of housing searches that blacks and Hispanics must endure because of discrimination in the market. It does not include the social costs that minorities encounter through discrimination—loss of proximity to opportunity, benefits of diverse neighborhoods, and costs of racial isolation, among other things.
In April 2006, the National Fair Housing Alliance (NHFA) completed a three-year, twelve-city housing discrimination study. Using 145 sales tests in three geographic regions across the country, the NHFA found three patterns of discrimination:

- outright denial of service to blacks and Latinos;
- significant financial incentives offered to whites but not to blacks or Latinos;
- steering of potential purchasers on the basis of race or national origin.

The NHFA tests revealed steering at a rate of 87 percent among testers who were given an opportunity to see homes. Testers were generally steered to neighborhoods based on race or national origin, as well as religion and family status. The NHFA also reports that schools are used as a proxy for racial or ethnic composition of neighborhoods and communities. Rather than telling white testers to avoid certain neighborhoods because of racial or ethnic composition, many real estate agents would tell the tester to avoid certain schools—schools that were racially identifiable.

**Exclusionary and Racial Zoning**

Racial zoning policies and violence served to segregate the urban landscape in the early 1900s. Additionally, at the time of the first major migration of black citizens to jobs in northern industrial cities after WWI, law enforcement officials too often looked the other way while physical violence and intimidation were used to restrict nonwhites to certain overcrowded portions of northern cities.

**Segregated Affordable Housing**

Housing and school segregation is also caused by the government placing disproportionate amounts of low-income family housing in poor, segregated neighborhoods. This became such a problem that the 1968 Fair Housing Act, and the regulations promulgated under it, order the Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) and all federal and state grantees of federal funds to affirmatively further fair housing. Specifically, these regulations state that there is a presumption that building low income family housing in poor, segregated or racially resegregating violates the Fair Housing Act.

A federal court, in a case called *Shannon v. HUD*, stated that affirmatively furthering fair housing requires federal and state grantees of federal funds to take racial and socioeconomic data into consideration—a colorblind approach is “impermissible.” The court said that in placing affordable housing several factors should be taken into account. These include the racial composition of neighborhoods and their schools; the location of public, middle-class and luxury housing; the racial effect of local regulations; and past and current practices of local authorities. This command has often been ignored.

Despite the mandates in the Fair Housing Act, some public affordable housing programs continue to contribute to segregated housing patterns. For instance, units receiving support under the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in the Twin Cities are disproportionately located in areas that already have greater than average shares of poverty and affordable housing—the central cities and certain inner-ring suburbs. The majority of LIHTC sites are clustered in qualified census tracts, which, as defined by HUD, are census tracts in which at least 50 percent of households have an income that is below 60 percent of the region’s adjusted gross median income. (Figure 1-7.)
How households are distributed within existing LIHTC units also tends to maintain or even intensify racial segregation in the housing market and schools. Figures 1-8a and Figure 1-8b demonstrate this. Areas with the highest concentrations of LIHTC units occupied by people of color closely parallel the distribution of elementary schools with very high percentages of students...
of color. The distribution of LIHTC units occupied by people of color appears to be pro-integrative in only a very few places in the suburbs.

Overall, these patterns mean that affordable housing provided under the LIHTC not only tends to concentrate low-income households in areas already experiencing significant poverty, but also nonwhite households in racially segregated neighborhoods, creating more racially identifiable schools with staggering poverty enrollments.
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Figure 1-8a: Percentage Population in Surveyed Twin Cities LIHTC Households Headed by Person of Color by Elementary School Zones, 2002

Legend
- No Area LIHTC Units (293)
- 0.0 to 9.9% (9)
- 10.0 to 24.9% (9)
- 25.0 to 49.9% (22)
- 50.0 to 74.9% (13)
- 75.0 to 100.0% (26)

Key:
- Principal Arterial Roads
- County Subdivisions
- Counties

Note: LIHTC population demographics are from a 53% survey of all LIHTC units in the 7-county area. School zones are boundaries for the area closest to school locations.

Data Source:
2005 Minnesota Department of Education
2005 Minnesota Housing Finance Agency

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These patterns have affected suburbs as well as the central cities. During the 1980s and 1990s when the Twin Cities’ share of nonwhite residents increased from 5 to 15 percent, the region lacked school and housing policies to inspire development in ways that did not confine its small share of impoverished residents to a few neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. Thus, as segregation’s patterns carve deeper into the landscape of the central cities, they also are being etched onto suburban school districts and neighborhoods.
Several school districts adjacent to Minneapolis now have concentrated poverty enrollments ranging from 47 to 66 percent, with some districts experiencing jumps as high as 23 percentage points in only four years (Table 1-5).72

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>%-Point Change 2001-05</th>
<th>Percent 2001</th>
<th>Percent 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Heights</td>
<td>+23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richfield</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Center</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbinsdale</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis Park</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkins</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden Prairie</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edina</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnetonka</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minnesota Department of Education73

Yet there is time and the means to intercept these patterns in suburban districts, and to begin erasing their imprints in the central cities. The sample of school districts adjacent to Minneapolis begins to illustrate relevant cautions and possibilities (Table 1-5):74

1. There are untenable concentrations of poverty of half to nearly three-quarters of students not only in the region’s central city schools, but also in several suburban districts (as, above, Columbia Heights, Richfield, and Brooklyn Center).

2. Some districts are already racially integrated and provide educational opportunity to a fair share of disadvantaged students. The region should concentrate on maintaining stable integration in these places and guarding against the possibility of resegregation in these communities (such as Bloomington, St. Louis Park, and Robbinsdale).

3. Most districts in the Twin Cities can provide educational opportunity to many more disadvantaged students. Some districts (Edina and Eden Prairie), have been accepting students from poor backgrounds; many more are in a position to offer hope to more children and a stronger future to the Twin Cities.

Because residential racial segregation in the Twin Cities is being replicated in the suburbs, some suburban school districts are becoming racially segregated as a result, including Brooklyn Center and Richfield (Table 1-6).
Although many nonwhite residents are finding homes in the region’s suburbs, many are likely  
steered toward, or unwittingly locate in, economically stressed suburbs. For example, although  
the proportion of black residents living in Twin Cities suburbs grew from 16 in 1990, to 36 percent  
in 2000, most black suburbanites live in the region’s most economically at-risk suburbs.  
Without affordable housing choices throughout the Twin Cities, especially where jobs and  
opportunity are expanding, segregating schools and neighborhoods could be resegregated by rapidly  
increasing concentrations of poverty.

During the 1980s, “the Twin Cities became the nation’s fourth fastest ghettoizing region” as the  
number of its concentrated poverty (greater than 40 percent) neighborhoods tripled. The region  
now is as racially segregated as many major metro regions with significantly larger nonwhite  
populations. Although the region became more racially and ethnically diverse between 1980 and  
2000, 86 percent of Twin Cities residents still lived in racially segregated neighborhoods when the  
new millennium began.
Part Two
Integration Helps Everyone

Students benefit from economically and racially integrated schools. And so do neighborhoods and metro regions. Anything short of racial and social integration does not compensate for what’s missing in segregated schools: a large share of students who bring to school the high expectations and aspirations, as well as the access to opportunity networks that is associated with living in middle-class families.

Integrated Schools Help Students

Since James Coleman’s seminal 1966 report, empirical research has continued to show “that a student’s achievement is highly related to characteristics of other students in the school.” As the Supreme Court confirmed in 2003, “numerous studies show that student body diversity promotes learning outcomes, and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and better prepares them as professionals.” The reasons for this phenomenon range from the effects of a student’s peers on aspirations and attitudes toward education, to the attention policymakers give to middle- and upper-class parents and schools.

Social and Opportunity Benefits

For both white and black students, interracial contact in primary and secondary school makes it more likely that they will live, work, and attend college in more integrated settings. For black students, the interracial contact helps reverse perpetual segregation, in part because desegregated schools permit “access to high-status institutions and the powerful social networks within them.”

For both black and, especially, white students, integrated classrooms improve the stability of interracial friendships, and make adult interracial friendships more likely. Desegregated schools decrease racial prejudice among students and increase comfort around people with different backgrounds. These outcomes flow from the interactions between the races that, consistent with the widely accepted inter-group contact theory, enhance understanding and empathy and reduce stereotyping.

Integrated schools are important settings for inter-group contact because students in that setting are accorded equal status; there are authorities to facilitate the contact; students are engaged in common activities and goals; and personal contacts displace stereotyping. A similar process can occur when parents from diverse backgrounds work together on behalf of their children’s schools. These are important aspects of promoting democratic values and bringing members of our society together.

Indeed, the United States Supreme Court recently noted the many times that it has, in discussing equal educational opportunity, “acknowledged the overriding importance of education in preparing students for work and citizenship, describing education as pivotal to ‘sustaining our political and cultural heritage’ with a fundamental role in maintaining the fabric of society.” Student diversity “promotes ‘cross-racial understanding,’ helps to break down racial stereotypes, and ‘enables [students] to better understand persons of different races.’”

The most recent research confirms that both white and black children who attend desegregated schools are “less likely to express negative views about members of the other race,” and black
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graduates are “less likely than graduates of segregated schools to believe that anti-black discrimination is wide-spread.” In addition, many studies already had confirmed that these students were “more likely to attend integrated colleges, live in integrated neighborhoods as adults, and send their children to integrated schools.”

**Academic Achievement and Attainment**
Integrated schools improve outcomes for poor children and nonwhite children without reducing the academic results for white children. Among the important reasons are that social networks and connections increase hope and possibility. When children see, connect with, and understand real models and paths to success, they become more motivated and clearer about what is necessary in the larger economy and society. When they do not see others succeed, and when they have no connection with success in the larger society, it become harder for them to imagine, much less achieve, a path upward. The evidence is clear that achievement greatly increases when disadvantaged children attend school with economically diverse enrollments.

**Achievement**
“[M]inority students who attend more racially integrated schools show increased academic achievement and progress, which are typically measured by scores on achievement tests.” For black students, the achievement gains are especially consistent when their desegregated school experience began in the primary grades. Test scores for Latino students also are higher on average when they attend desegregated schools.

In addition, studies consistently find achievement gains for students attending economically diverse schools, as contrasted with those attending schools of concentrated poverty. Overall, as the Supreme Court has summarized, “numerous studies show that student body diversity promotes learning outcomes, and ‘better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and better prepares them as professionals.’”

**Attainment**
Black students who attend racially and economically integrated schools complete more years of schooling than those who attend segregated schools. This is true for post-secondary education attainment, as well. College attendance rates are higher among black students attending racially integrated schools, and especially for blacks in northern states, than for students attending segregated schools. For example, research on desegregation achieved by school choice in St. Louis found that attending a racially integrated school resulted in twice the rate of college enrollment compared with those among the 12,000 students studied who attended segregated schools.

As the Supreme Court has found, the benefits of diversity “are not theoretical but real, as major American businesses have made clear that the skills needed in today’s increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and
viewpoints. For black students, examples of the occupational benefits of attending non-segregated schools include:

- Higher occupational aspirations.
- Career planning consistent with the aspirations.
- Modest earnings increases.
- Increased likelihood of working in professions in which blacks historically were underrepresented.

In addition, both white and black students tend to have higher educational aspirations if they have cross-race friendships, as contrasted with students who had only same-race friendships. Finally, as to the overall benefits of middle-class schools, they “will raise the achievement and improve the life chances of the poor without reducing the achievement of the middle class . . . furthering the secondary goal of promoting a vibrant democracy and unity amid diversity.”

**Integrated Schools Help Communities**

If school integration involves all of a region’s socioeconomic groups, the benefits to all students and neighborhoods are significant. Students experience greater performance gains when desegregation plans extend beyond a region’s central city to include its middle and upper-class students. Communities and the region benefit because metro-wide desegregation plans help stabilize integrated neighborhoods. Moreover, by ensuring that all students may choose to attend socially and economically integrated schools, it becomes easier to intercept patterns of resegregation and neighborhood decline, and their costs; maintain vibrant cities; develop a skilled work force; and better prepare new generations to be effective in a diverse democracy.

**Neighborhood Integration and Stability**

When school integration is “fully implemented” on a metro-wide scale, it “can indeed lead to more integrated residential patterns.” Between 1970-90, for example, it appears that regions with metro-wide desegregation plans had residential segregation decreases twice the national average. In addition, metro-wide plans enhance neighborhood stability.

Metro-wide plans prevent two problems that can make small-area plans counter-productive. First, metro-wide plans reach beyond areas of residential segregation to include enough schools and students to ensure that all schools can be effective middle-class schools. Second, they prevent the destructive consequence of concentrating desegregation efforts in only a few less-affluent white neighborhoods that often already are struggling to maintain racial balance and stable integration. By asking every school to educate a small share of less fortunate children, a region prevents further concentration of poor children and eliminates the need for families to flee untenable poverty enrollments.

In contrast, desegregation plans affecting only a small portion of a metro region, typically a central city, trigger greater residential segregation and worsen school segregation. Desegregation plans covering small geographic areas enable racially identifiable schools to persist, and real estate practices and preferences become school-identified and race-based. Because an Upper Midwest metro region like the Twin Cities is fragmented into hundreds of local jurisdictions, the dynamics
that fuel rapid neighborhood decline and segregation tend to be worse because a single-district desegregation effort “isolates schools with a majority of low-income and minority students.”

Indeed, the results of 2005 research by the Institute on Race and Poverty [IRP]\textsuperscript{114} further confirm the importance of having a sufficient scope for desegregation. IRP’s analyses suggest that white families are less likely to leave integrated neighborhoods if they have confidence that their children’s schools will remain integrated, regardless of the racial mix of the neighborhood.

Specifically, the research found that metro-scale school desegregation has stabilizing effects on integrated urban neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{116} IRP studied neighborhood change in the 100 largest U.S. metro regions between 1980 and 2000 (the Twin Cities rank in the top 15). IRP asked: At what racial mix in 1980 does it become more likely than not that an integrated neighborhood will have resegregated by 2000?\textsuperscript{117} For black-white integrated neighborhoods in 1980, that number averaged 36 percent or more black in 1980 for the 100 metro regions.\textsuperscript{118} In other words, if a neighborhood was 36-49 percent black in 1980, it was more likely to resegregate by 2000 than to still be integrated in 2000.

In contrast, the fifteen metro areas\textsuperscript{119} among the 100 that had metro-wide desegregation programs during the same period had a very different, and encouraging, outcome. In those metropolitan areas, an integrated neighborhood was more likely to remain integrated than to resegregate, \textit{regardless of the percentage of residents who were black in 1980}. In other words, regardless of whether an integrated neighborhood was 11 percent black in 1980 or 49 percent black, it was more likely to still be integrated in 2000 than it was to be segregated. This suggests that metro-wide desegregation helps remove fuel for “white flight”: rapidly racially segregating schools amid a context lacking regional policy assurance that the schools will not become sites of concentrated poverty. With metro-wide integration, parents throughout a metro region have assurance that all schools in a region offer good environments for learning.\textsuperscript{120}

The Twin Cities are among the highly fragmented metro regions in IRP’s study that either had no current desegregation plan or had small-area plans (for example, a single school district within a multi-district metro region). These cities, mostly in northern states, experienced less stability among their integrated neighborhoods during the 1980s and 1990s. In contrast, when the boundaries of school districts include racially and economically diverse families, they foster shared interest in schools by a range of citizens in schools. This is a logical outcome when all “sectors of the community” depend on the same school system, and “all races and classes have a vital interest in its success.”\textsuperscript{121}

In short, in fragmented metro regions like the Twin Cities, educational outcomes can be improved, and neighborhood stability enhanced, by paying attention to the geographic scale at which desegregation efforts are designed. In addition, the damage from many generations of discrimination and segregation cannot be reversed without long-term commitment to desegregation. The benefits of that commitment flow not only to children, but to the entire region.

\textbf{Community and Regional Vitality}

Because schools that become segregated are a significant factor in destabilizing neighborhoods, ensuring that all Twin Cities schools are middle-class schools not only benefits students but helps
intercept patterns of resegregation and the huge costs of resegregation. The region’s future is helped in other ways, too. Giving all children a fair start with the choice to attend opportunity-rich middle-class schools helps create the skilled workforce the region needs to replace impending baby-boom retirements. During a period of skilled labor shortages nationwide, the region’s children will replace these retirees. The retirees will be 90 percent white; the Twin Cities’ next generation of workers will be 75 percent white. Segregated schools and a wide gap between white and nonwhite graduation rates will not yield the skilled workers needed for the region’s economy. Even if not morally moved by fairness to offer genuine educational opportunity to all children, the region cannot ignore the costs of failing to educate all of its children.

Nor can the region afford to slip from its place in the increasingly competitive global economy. To retain its stature amid the nation’s metro regions, the Twin Cities region must foster the vitality both of the suburbs—old and new—and central cities. This is extremely important because a significant shift is happening that cannot be ignored: metro areas that respond to the challenges of concentrated poverty and segregation by pulling away from their core cities are, despite extensive suburbanization, the places increasingly losing population and economic growth to less fractured metro regions.

By permitting segregation to hurt schools and neighborhoods in its central cities and adjacent suburbs, a metro region jeopardizes its competitive edge and long-term quality of life. Empirical research confirms that the success of a region’s central cities and suburbs tends to move together, and shows that vibrant central cities can be engines of growth for metro regions. Not only are population growth and economic growth correlated for both cities and regions, but economic growth in a large central city can have positive spillover effects of one to two percent on its suburbs for every one percent increase in the central city.

Part Three

Federal and State Legal Issues in Education: “Separate but equal educational facilities are inherently unequal.”

Segregated schooling is not equal educational opportunity. This is what Brown v. Board of Education declared in 1954. Federal court intervention during the 1970s and 1980s brought considerable integration and educational opportunity by attacking obviously intentional discrimination. But progress peaked in the late 1980s, and was followed by the Supreme Court’s doctrinal retreat from Brown’s promise. Since the early 1990s, the Supreme Court has permitted schools in many metro regions to resegregate rapidly.

If federal desegregation lawsuits were the vehicle for bringing obviously intentional segregation to a halt, then state constitutional remedies are the leading edge of Brown and the desegregation movement today, promising to end the harms of structural, and less-obviously intentional, segregation. While federal courts must tread carefully in state and local affairs because of federalism concerns, those federalism concerns are absent when state courts enforce state constitutional rights—and those state constitutional rights are more expansive. A hopeful consequence is that not only can liability be found, but solutions can transcend the limitations of federal desegregation remedies. Places like the Twin Cities need not be constrained by the
enrollments will allow the Choice is Yours program to adapt effectively to regional demographic changes and will ensure that efforts of districts to integrate will not be in vain.

**Conclusion**

It is clear that children are benefiting from the Choice is Yours program. Attending racial and economically integrated schools will result in lower dropout rates, more children going to college, increased law-abiding taxpayers, and less challenging lives for our poorest youth. The Choice is Yours program means more opportunity. Integration is a panacea and does not solve all the problems of inequality, but integration has demonstrated clearer effects on expanding opportunity than any other type of solution. It is fair to say that it is a necessary but not sufficient part of any solution. Money by itself is not working. Charter schools are unproven. Integration is at the core upon which all other solutions are built. We must start here and build upon the foundation that integration provides.

The more comprehensive the solution—the more children that have a chance to go to integrated opportunity-rich schools—the more positive of a regional effect the Choice is Yours program will have. The program will not only enrich children’s lives, but the program can help to eliminate segregated and poverty-ridden schools. To the extent that we can bring CIY to scale, we can help children, neighborhoods, and the region.

The places in the nation that have created the most metropolitan-wide systems of integration have not only had the most positive effects on children but have actually stabilized the otherwise always-present pattern of resegregation. Of the 100 largest regions in the nation, stably integrated regions are the only ones that do not exhibit signs of white flight. No one, white or not, wishes to flee from success. Thus, this report suggests that while an incremental solution is good, a comprehensive one can truly break many of the cycles of individual and regional inequality.

Segregation hurts everyone. Integration helps everyone. Will we choose to address these problems while they are still manageable? The choice belongs to all of us.
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12 Russell W. Rumberger & Gregory J. Palardy, *Does Resegregation Matter? The Impact of Social Composition on Academic Achievement in Southern High Schools*, in *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* BACK? 127, 127-128 (John Charles Boger & Gary Orfield, eds. 2005). In addition to the racially disproportionate burden on nonwhite children of attending poor schools, the rate of individual poverty is 2.5 times higher among nonwhite children. Id. at 127.


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20 “Low graduation rates show a strong relationship with indicators of school segregation and this relationship is independent of poverty.” Gary Orfield et al, Losing Our Future: How Minority Youth are Being Left Behind by the Graduation Rate Crisis, 4 (Executive Summary, 2004), at www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/dropouts/LosingFuture_Executive.pdf (visited Nov. 2005).


28 Case studies vividly relate this intense peer pressure, and its effects. See, e.g., Ron Suskind, A Hope in the Unseen (1999); Alex Kotlowitz, There Are No Children Here (1991).


37 Table 1a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minneapolis School District and City of Minneapolis Demographics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minneapolis Public Schools</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent White, Non-Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Schools Reporting–</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Over 80% Nonwhite</td>
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<tr>
<td>– 61-80% Nonwhite</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>City of Minneapolis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent White</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


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43 In 2000, the 13-county Twin Cities region’s percentage was 90.6; nationwide, it was 80.4 percent. U.S. Census Bureaus data for 2000.


46 However, the Minnesota Department of Education no longer conducts four-year completion studies, arguably the most accurate measure of academic attainment. The last year for which these data are available, 2000-2001, indicated that only 32% of blacks and 31% of Latinos were graduating. See Minnesota Department of Education, 2001 Completion Study, available at http://education.state.mn.us/mde/static/001234.pdf. (visited Oct. 2005)


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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>48,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>48,155</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>46,037</td>
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<td>2003-04</td>
<td>43,397</td>
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<td>2004-05</td>
<td>40,499</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>39,913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51 Myron Orfield, Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability 39 (1997).


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65 Out of 290 total visits, there were 51 instances where black or Latino testers were offered no service or reduced service. National Fair Housing Alliance, Unequal Opportunity – Perpetuating Housing Discrimination in America: 2006 Fair Trends Housing Report. 9 (2006).


70 42 U.S.C. § 3608 (d) (2005). The section in its entirety provides:

All executive departments and agencies shall administer their programs and activities relating to housing and urban development (including and Federal agency having regulatory or supervisory authority over financial institutions) in a manner affirmatively to further the purposes of this subchapter and shall cooperate with the [HUD] Secretary to further such purposes.


72 Some of the poverty burden these schools carry is from school choice enrollments of disadvantaged Minneapolis students. Care must be taken when designing and implementing choice programs so that participating districts and schools remain solidly middle class and able to deliver quality education over time.

73 Data for each district were accessed through the index at Minnesota Department of Education, School Report Card (2005), http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/index.do (visited Oct. 2005). Some suburban districts with higher poverty enrollments include those accepting Minneapolis students under the Choice is Yours program. These poverty concentrations near or exceeding 50 percent are in the 9 of 11 districts in inner-ring suburbs that, during the 1980s, saw poverty enrollments increase to over 20 percent. Myron Orfield, Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability 47-48 (1997).

74 Within most districts, in addition, there is significant difference in the economic and racial compositions of individual schools, and unconscionable segregation occurs in particular schools in most of these districts.


Myron Orfield, Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability 3 (1997).


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91 Richard Kahlenberg, All Together Now: Creating Middle-Class Schools through Public School Choice 45 (2001).


93 See studies cited in Richard Kahlenberg, All Together Now: Creating Middle-Class Schools through Public School Choice 228-257 (2001).

94 See, e.g., Richard Rothstein, What Do We Know About Declining (Or Rising) Student Achievement? 129-30 (1997).


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113 Diana Pearce, Breaking Down the Barriers: New Evidence on Impact of Metropolitan School Desegregation on Housing Patterns (1980). Pearce’s 1980 “research for the National Institute of Education showed that in areas without metropolitan desegregation plans, housing advertisements were replete with racial signals.” In contrast: “Such racial signals were absent, however, in the metropolitan areas with area-wide desegregation.” Gary Orfield, “Metropolitan School Desegregation: Impacts on Metropolitan Society,” In Pursuit of a Dream Deferred: Linking Housing and Education Policy 121, 135 (john powell, Gavin Kearney, & Vina Kay, eds., 2001).


118 For white-Hispanic the turnover point was 27 percent, and for multi-ethnic, 24 percent. Results vary, too, by population size. The black-white turnover point is 29 percent in the largest 25 metro regions, and 42 percent for the other 75 regions.

119 Charlotte NC, Daytona Beach FL, Greensboro NC, Indianapolis IN, Lakeland FL, Las Vegas NV, Louisville KY, Nashville TN, Orlando FL, Pensacola FL, Wilmington DE, Raleigh-Durham NC, Sarasota FL, Tampa-St. Petersburg FL and West Palm Beach FL.

119 If fear of racial transition and racial and class isolation affects residential choice, then the most wide-ranging desegregation plans must distribute desegregation across an area broad enough to create a stable middle-class white majority in virtually all schools. Under such circumstances, the benefit of flight declines . . . . The motivation for flight also declines . . . .” Gary Orfield, “Metropolitan School Desegregation: Impacts on Metropolitan Society,” In Pursuit of a Dream Deferred: Linking Housing and Education Policy 121, 125 (john powell, Gavin Kearney, & Vina Kay, eds., 2001).


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