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The Right to Learn Across the Tracks: An Analysis of School Funding and Integration in Seattle, Houston, Philadelphia, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

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The Right to Learn Across the Tracks:
An Analysis of School Funding and Integration in Seattle, Houston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Washington, DC

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April 16, 2008

Submitted to the faculty of Ursinus College in fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in Politics and Sociology
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“Unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever learn to live together”
*Milken v. Bradley*

Millions of children attend school every day. Most children attend the same school as their neighbors, only a few minutes from their house. Students who live in large, suburban houses tend to go to small, well maintained schools filled with children who are usually white and wealthy. Similarly, those living in small urban apartments tend to go to large, over-crowded, and poorly maintained schools that are generally filled with racial minorities from lower socioeconomic statuses. Not only are the schools themselves vastly different, the quality of education in each school is drastically different. Urban students have historically had less funding and a lower quality of education, while suburban students have historically had excellent education with high levels of funding. There is a clear discrepancy between urban and suburban schools, and more importantly, a clear discrepancy in the type of education that black and white students receive. This discrepancy has led to an apartheid-like system where black children are rarely able to achieve the academic success of white students because of systemic barriers.

This great inequity is based on student’s economic, social, and geographic locations. Theorists have developed at least two schools of thought for why these discrepancies exist. The first general body of thought believes that education inequity is due to isolation caused by structural factors such as housing, educational, and
economic discrimination\(^1\). This results in a system where white students are being raised separately from black students. As a result, white privilege is retained as white students are educated in the best schools with the greatest resources and black students are educated in the nation’s weakest schools. Other theorists suggest that political and economic power caused an apartheid system because education for white students is funded considerably higher than education in predominately black areas\(^2\). The two theories agree that there is isolation, and that the isolation causes inequity, but the difference occurs in the source of power. Those believing in structural barriers believe that the government set up a series of policies which denied minorities of the power to create quality schools. This differs from the funding based approach which believes that the power was rooted in individual level decisions by the majority (in this case, whites). Thus, structural theorists would point to housing and employment discrimination as reasons why minorities reside in ghettos, while individual based theorists would look at white-flight and the invention of the automobile as the reason why whites were able to leave urban areas. Although each of these theories has merit, the evidence suggests that the actual cause is a combination of both of these. The educational achievement gap is caused because black students are raised by parents with less political and economic power in communities isolated from communities with the greatest amount of power.

Through examining the per pupil expenditure of tax dollars spent on education and levels of integration, clear patterns emerge that suggest: 1) White students are educated separately from black students, 2) Differences in funding based on race or

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location do not explain the achievement gap, 3) Increased enrollment in private schools has no impact on the level of funding in public schools, and 4) The causes of the achievement gap are rooted in political power and structural factors that negatively affect minority students' academic achievement. These factors combine in a way which results in black and white students being isolated from each other. This isolation results in an apartheid system where white, suburban students are well prepared to enter college, while and urban, minority students do not have the skills necessary pursue higher education or obtain jobs with decent salaries.

The Achievement Gap

Minority students radically underperform when compared to their white peers. In 2004 there was five-year gap in math and reading levels of black and white children. In large, segregated school districts, less than half of the students entering 9th grade will graduate in four years. Similarly, black students average a grade point average that is a full letter grade lower than their white peers. Black students do worse on high-stakes standardized exams and are less likely to take honors and Advance Placement courses. These gaps are inexcusable. They demonstrate that there is a different quality of education found in predominately white schools. This difference in quality, among other factors, causes minority students to realize that their education is not the same as the education that students in the suburbs receive.

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5 Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*.
7 Ferguson
and more importantly, it is not going to prepare them for life after high school, so they either stop working towards academic achievement or drop out of school\textsuperscript{8}.

These attitudes are most prevalent in crowded urban schools. In these schools students feel as if their teachers and administration are not invested in their education. Similarly, because of the high-stakes testing approach that many cities and states have instituted to improve urban education, many minority students are failing these exams and are forced to repeat classes. While some students may take an extra year or two to graduate, the majority of students will drop out. This creates a caste-like system because these high school drop outs do not have the skills needed to obtain jobs that possess enough political and economic power necessary to bring substantial change to improve the educational system in their community.

A commonly cited reason why black students underperform is because they are not surrounded by successful mentors\textsuperscript{9}. When students have role models of people in their community who have been able to go to college and have successful lives, it gives students hope that they can achieve similar success. This is why poor and minority students in suburban schools are much more likely to graduate and graduate on time--they have the role models to foster the motivation to succeed\textsuperscript{10}.

The reason why integrated schools produce higher graduation rates and college enrollment among minority students is because they reduce the discrepancy between the quality of education that white children traditionally receive and the quality of education which minority children traditionally receive. White children have more money spent on their education, are more likely to attend private schools,

\textsuperscript{8} Suskind. \\
\textsuperscript{9} Suskind. \\
\textsuperscript{10} Diamond, 495.
and to learn in smaller classes\textsuperscript{11}. These reasons, combined with other structural barriers, create a fundamentally inequitable system of education. Thus, although desegregation occurred, true integration never occurred. In order to close the achievement gap and ensure that all children, regardless of color, get a chance to succeed, it is necessary to integrate schools.

Integrated schools are a far better solution than simply raising the amount of funding and the quality of racially homogenous schools. With diverse schools there is a broader range of backgrounds that students bring that can add depth to the discussion and foster greater growth. The power of diverse classrooms may not show up on standardized tests, but the ability for students of different backgrounds to learn their differences and commonalities will help members of racial minorities learn how to increase their political power and members of racial majorities learn the importance of reducing structural barriers to success. This will happen when students of different backgrounds learn side-by-side and see how those of ethnic groups live and interact within the social and political world.

**The Reality of Integration in the US**

Schools in the United States are not integrated. As Jonathan Kozol, documenter of urban education, explained, “Most of the urban schools I visited were 95 to 99 percent nonwhite. In no school that I saw anywhere in the United States were nonwhite children in large numbers truly intermingled with white children”.\textsuperscript{12}

Because minorities in cities tend to be in poverty, this has created a school system where almost all urban students are poor and have numerous structural barriers

\\textsuperscript{11} Kozol. *Savage Inequalities*.
\textsuperscript{12} Kozol. *Savage Inequalities*.
preventing their success.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, failing urban schools become self-fulfilling prophecies where school administrators tolerate an inferior level of education because they believe that their students will not be able to succeed\textsuperscript{14}.

By ending segregation, or desegregating schools, the law required that all children, regardless of race, have the opportunity to attend the same schools. This allowed for predominately white school districts and predominately black school districts to maintain their homogeneity. Similarly, it allowed for a situation in which white children, who lived in white neighborhoods, were allowed to continue to go to white schools. In reality, most schools did not change their demographic patterns after \textit{Brown v. Board}, but instead adopted open-enrollment plans where students could attend any school within the district.\textsuperscript{15} This led to the majority of students attending the same school that they would have before the historic court ruling. Thus, the effect of \textit{Brown} was minimal in the daily lives of students.

However, it is important to remember that \textit{Brown} did not require that school districts be integrated. As Leonard Steinhorn and Barbara Diggs-Brown explained: “desegregation may unlock doors, but integration is supposed to open minds, which is why some say that integration makes desegregation look easy”.\textsuperscript{16} A desegregated school is a stepping stone, but to truly maximize cross-cultural understanding and improve the overall state of education for every child in America, it is necessary to integrate schools. If the law required integration, the courts would have stipulated racial quotas, protection against \textit{de jure} segregation, and equity in funding.

\textsuperscript{13} Kozol. \textit{Savage Inequalities}.
\textsuperscript{14} Kozol. \textit{Savage Inequalities}.
Integration is important because a diverse school acts as a microcosm of an ideal society where teachers and administrators can reduce social ills in creating a balanced social environment where every child has “...an opportunity to escape the limitations of the social group in which he was born.”\(^{17}\) When students learn from peers of different religions, ethnic heritages, and customs, they are much more likely to succeed academically, as well as succeed in working with diverse groups in the future.\(^{18}\) In diverse schools, students are forced to interact with students of different backgrounds and experiences. This interaction shows students that they have more in common with students of different backgrounds than they had believed; thus, students in diverse schools have less apprehension in working with students of different backgrounds in the future. Thus, when the students become participants in the democracy, they will be more willing to consider the needs of the least fortunate. Similarly, those born disadvantaged will learn how to use their political power to improve the environments in which they were raised.

Integration has a positive impact on education. Minority students are more academically successful in integrated, wealthy schools than in segregated, impoverished schools\(^{19}\). Integration based on race and based on class has been shown to be beneficial for education, but the combination of the two provides the best effects\(^{20}\). Similarly, minority students perform much better in middle-class schools—over half a grade level in 4\(^{th}\) grade. Minority students attending integrated schools

\(^{17}\) John Dewey. Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. (New York: MacMillian, 1957)


\(^{19}\) Diamond.

\(^{20}\) Diamond
have higher grades and do better on standardized tests, two traits that will greatly improve these students' odds of going to college²¹. Because college graduates earn higher salaries than non graduates and are more educated, they can better influence the political process. Thus, urban black students who attend integrated schools are better suited to be able to improve their neighborhoods than those who attend their segregated, neighborhood school. While many successful students do chose to leave the neighborhood in which they were raised, many do come back in an attempt to gentrify and improve the neighborhood²².

There are also positive effects for white students who attend integrated schools. Although there are minimal academic benefits for students attending these schools, the greatest benefits are social. As the American Psychological Association explains: "interaction between children and adolescents of different races helps not only to "break down stereotypes", but to prevent the development of stereotypical thinking"²³. Circuit courts agreed, stating that "...there is a great value in developing the ability to interact successfully with individuals who are very different from oneself"²⁴. Integrated schools lead to great educational benefits, where white students are able to learn from students who were raised drastically different than them. This cross-cultural understanding helps these students become better citizens, because they realize that the bubble that they were raised in is not the reality of the world.

²¹ Diamond.
²² Suskind and Moore.
²⁴ Judge Alex Kozinski. 9th Circuit. From Anti-Defamation League. Amicus Curiae to Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle. 2007.
Similarly, attending school with middle class peers creates a system where minority students are much more likely to succeed. In these schools, students are much more likely to do their homework, graduate, watch less television, attend class, have fewer disorder problems, and have an increased vocabulary\textsuperscript{25}. These aspects of education reflect the structural nature of poverty. Poor students are much more likely to come home to an empty home than wealthy students. Because they are home alone, they are more likely to be watching television and less likely to have a parent available to help them with their homework\textsuperscript{26}. Because of the low wages that poor parents are paid, they have to work longer hours in order to be able to make ends meet. Thus, they spend less time with their children and on their child’s education\textsuperscript{27}. This does not mean that minority parents are not invested in their child’s education; it simply means that because of their other commitments they have less free time to be able to help their children succeed academically.

In an integrated school, poor students will learn vocabulary words and study habits from the wealthier student. Similarly, the wealthier parents will be able to take positions such as the “room mother” to expose poor children to the vocabulary and academic support that the student might be lacking at home. Through these interactions, minority students are exposed to the cultural capital that white, middle-class students have been taught since birth. The advantages for minority children to attend integrated, middle class schools are numerous, thus school districts should go to great lengths to integrate their schools.

\textsuperscript{25} Kahlenberg.  
\textsuperscript{26} Suskind.  
\textsuperscript{27} Suskind.
In Department of Defense schools, which are integrated schools that are generally filled with lower-class, transient students, black and Hispanic students did better than their counterparts did in forty-eight states in 1998 and forty-two states in 2005. When controlling for all factors known to influence student success, between one-quarter and one-third of the gap remains. Department of Defense officials believe that integration is the reason for this improvement, and because of integration, minorities attending these schools “have the very highest levels of achievement for minority students.” These schools are the only truly integrated schools in the United States, and learning from their example suggests that continued integration would yield positive results for minorities in all integrated schools.

However, the news is not all positive. Black students at integrated schools still underperform when compared to their white peers. In an integrated school, black students traditionally have lower grades and are three times more likely to get a failing grade. The reason why black students fail is not because of the color of their skin, but instead because there are structural reasons, such as growing up in poverty, lower parental education level, and longer commute to school, that causes black students to have more obstacles to face in pursuit of academic excellence. Even within integrated schools, black students are less likely to attend four-year colleges and take honors and AP classes, thus not taking advantage of academic opportunities.

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29 Alexander
30 Alexander
31 Diamond.
32 Diamond.
that would better their chances of succeeding after high school graduation. There are clear benefits to attending integrated schools, but they are not an automatic cure for failing schools and the racial achievement gap.

The racial achievement gap exists in integrated schools for many reasons, with one of the most prevalent being that in an integrated school, students still may not have very much interaction with students of other races. Even in progressive, integrated schools, "...honors and accelerated classes tend to be mostly white, and special education, basic-skills, and vocational classes tend to be mostly black." Although there are social factors such as poverty, lower parental education, lack of early childhood education, and family instability that contribute to lower education success, blacks in integrated schools should be performing at higher levels than what they are. Through the tracking process many scholars suspect that black students are not pushed to their highest potential. Thus, because teachers are less likely to challenge their black students to take a tougher course load, there tends to be segregation within a school. For integrated schools to be successful students need the chance to learn alongside students of other races and teachers need to make stronger efforts in encouraging minority students to take tougher course loads.

**Political Power and Education**

Because the majority of school funding occurs between state government and local government, those within the individual school district have the most power to determine at what level they would like to support the school and what standards they

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33 Diamond.  
34 Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown.  
35 Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown.
would like to apply to their school district. The majority of states make these decisions through the direct election of school board members. But, some states, such as New York, also require a direct popular vote on school budgets. This allows those in each district with the most political power, traditionally those with the greatest social and political power, to control educational policy by holding down spending.

Political power is determined by a series of conditions. First, those with political power must have the right to vote. In the United States this means that people need to over eighteen years of age, are US citizens, and are not felons. Additionally, people must be registered to vote. Voter registration favors those who are upper and middle class because registration traditionally happens when people apply for a driver’s license, something that many lower class and urban citizens do not do. It is necessary to change ones registration every time a person moves, which makes it more difficult for lower class families because they are more likely to be transient. Lower class residents are also disenfranchised in voting because the voting polls are frequently only open during the day, which places a strain on families whose

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37 The rules about felons voting vary state by state, but almost every state will not let a felon vote while in prison, and some will not let them vote while on parole or at all after they have been convicted.
parents have to commute long distances or work during the hours that the polls are open.

Secondly, political power requires a desire to influence the political process. There are many registered voters who do not have the desire to enter or change the political process. It is only with this desire to influence that a person can have political power. For instance, many citizens care about the level of educational spending because it directly affects their taxes or child’s education. But, many people simply do not have the time, desire, or energy to devote to caring enough about a certain political issue to foster the desire to influence the political process. If schools are integrated, this will not change overnight, but a greater number of parents will be involved if they see that the demographics and quality of education in their schools are changing.

The third aspect of political power requires the ability to convince others to work together to generate political change. This can be done through endorsements, grassroots organizing, and/or fundraising. In school funding, this aspect of political power can be fostered through working in the Parent Teacher Association, writing editorials to local newspapers, and in informal social networks such as little league and scouts. In these networks parents can be convinced to support or oppose certain candidates for the school board and the funding choices that they represent. In all of
these aspects, a parent must have time and social capital, or peer-respect within a community, invested in the school system, something that many lower class parents do not have because their occupations do not allow them the time needed to invest in gaining political capital, or ability to influence the political process. Lower class families in suburban districts also face this problem, but because suburban areas tend to be wealthier, it is a lesser problem.

The parents with the most political power are traditionally upper and middle class, because the ability to foster political power requires a great deal of time that many working class families do not have. This creates a system where the upper and middle class parents decide the course of funding and policy directions within their own school district. Thus, in areas where there are high percentages of children attending private school, it would be in the best interest of the parents with the most political power to choose to use their power to keep taxes low because their children are not benefiting from public education. Similarly, in areas where the majority of parents with political power send their children to public school, they expect to work within the system to produce high quality education for their children.

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Legal Requirements of Integration

In the United States, the legal requirements of integration differ greatly from reality seen within classroom walls. The laws about school integration are convoluted because both state and federal governments have had different rulings about integration. The US Supreme Court decided in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas that “…segregated public schools are not ‘equal’ and cannot be made ‘equal’, and hence [students] are deprived the equal protection of the laws,” this legal rhetoric means that because a segregated black school and a segregated white school were not equal in quality, and could not be made equal through legal means, school segregation is not constitutional\(^\text{39}\). The Supreme Court believed that segregated schools halt “educational and mental development” and “deprives [black children] of some of the benefits that they would receive in a racially integrated schools”\(^\text{40}\). Thus, school districts were ordered to allow black students to have the ability to attend white schools\(^\text{41}\). While the language of Brown was strong, the following year the Court weakened its position by saying that schools had to integrate with “all deliberate speed”, allowing school districts to delay desegregation for an undetermined period of time. These three words gave school districts the discretion to desegregate slowly, if at all, as long as there was a justified reason for the delay.

Following Brown, the US Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title IV of this act gave assistance for schools to prepare and implement their desegregation plans, as well as giving the attorney general the power to bring class

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\(^{41}\) Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas
action lawsuits against any school which discriminated against minority students\textsuperscript{42}. This bill sent a strong signal that it was no longer acceptable for schools to discriminate based on race. The result of this bill was that it did help students in segregated schools because the attorney general was able to get a court to order school districts to desegregate\textsuperscript{43}.

The US Supreme Court built upon this mandate in 1968 when they held that in order to receive federal funding and be in compliance with federal law schools needed to eliminate black and white schools in \textit{Green v. County School Board}\textsuperscript{44}. Regardless of the ease of being able to transfer from a black school to a white school, integration plans using transfers were deemed unconstitutional because they allowed school districts to maintain racially segregated schools\textsuperscript{45}. This was an important position because it mandated that school districts truly desegregate, not just allow for cross registration. Although this ruling did not provide for quotas or mandate integration, it was an important step in truly desegregating schools. However, like the rulings for the past fifteen years, \textit{Green} had little impact on changing the student body and most high schools because the basis of most segregation today is due to housing segregation.

Despite the minimal effects of past rulings, the Supreme Court continued to rule in favor of integration in its 1971 ruling of \textit{Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education}. This ruling held that bussing students from predominately black

\textsuperscript{42} Armor.
\textsuperscript{43} Patrick J. McGuinn. \textit{No Child Left Behind and the Transformation of Federal Education Policy, 1965-2005}. (Lawrence, KN: University of Kansas, 2006)
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Green v. County School Board of New Kent County}. 391 U.S. 430. (The Supreme Court, Washington, DC. May 27, 1968)
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Green v. County School Board of New Kent County}
neighborhoods to predominately white schools, and vice versa, was necessary because the achievement gap was caused by segregation and governmental policy has led to housing segregation\textsuperscript{46}. The court believed that the bussing initiative was necessary to attain the system-wide ratio of black and white students\textsuperscript{47}. \textit{Swann}, at least theoretically, was a vast step in mandating that schools needed to be integrated, instead of simply desegregated. The cross bussing initiative was vital for insuring that white students and black students would learn side by side with each other. Despite the promise of this ruling, few school districts had successful cross-bussing programs because although many white parents supported the idea of having a few black children in their children’s classrooms’, few white parents were willing to send their children to black schools or allow enough black students to significantly affect diversity levels\textsuperscript{48}.

However, in the 1980s lower level courts weakened their position on desegregation. When district courts approved each district’s desegregation plan, as required by \textit{Brown}, there was discrepancy in the requirements to be in compliance with federal law. For example, in Norfolk, VA, the city was allowed to continue to have neighborhood schools with voluntary transfers\textsuperscript{49}. This plan was acceptable even though it continued a policy of homogenous schools because the school board did not show an active effort to discriminate against minority students. This created a precedent that the only school districts that had implemented \textit{de jure}, or state sponsored, segregation would need to desegregate, while schools which had only

\textsuperscript{46} Armor.
\textsuperscript{47} North Carolina State Board of Education \textit{v. Swann}, 402 U.S. 43 (The Supreme Court, Washington, DC. April 20, 1971)
\textsuperscript{48} Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown.
\textsuperscript{49} North Carolina State Board of Education \textit{v. Swann}. 
experienced de facto segregation, or segregation that happened in daily practice, but was not explicitly stated by rule, would be allowed to continue with their original plans.

The court ruled similarly in Oklahoma City where the school district was allowed to end their integration program in favor of neighborhood schools because the district had shown “good faith” in desegregating their schools and had made efforts in eliminating discrimination. Because courts had been so lenient in defining its requirements of desegregation, this ruling allowed school districts that made minimal efforts to desegregate to end their programs. Thus, it allowed wealthy schools to continue de jure segregated schools.

With the weakening of jurisprudence, state legislatures took it upon themselves to draft their own forms of integration policy. Because forty-eight state constitutions grant the right to education, something that the federal constitution does not, state supreme courts had the ability to rule on different aspects and apply different remedies on the constitutional infractions of the right to education.

Twenty-six states have ruled that all children, regardless of race, must have an “adequate” or “equal” education, in contrast with a “different” or “inequitable” education, thus striking down inequitable spending across district lines. This means that it is unconstitutional for school districts to underfund schools at such an extreme level that would result in some children not having enough money spent on their education to learn the basic skills necessary for participation in democracy.

Similarly, state supreme courts in Connecticut and Minnesota granted states the

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51 Kahlenberg.
52 Kahlenberg.
power to integrate across district lines, while federal policy only had the power to require school districts to integrate within their individual district\(^5\). However, this position was not universally held: the New York State Supreme Court found that although students living within the city limits of Rochester, NY were more likely to drop out of school and had much lower scores on state assessment tests than those living in the suburbs; the government could not be accountable for where people live\(^4\). They held that school districts could not be integrated on a whim; instead they needed concrete reasons showing discrimination and segregation. This means that even though the courts recognized that urban schools provide a lower quality of education than suburban schools, and the reason for this is because of past segregation, the court deemed that it is not constitutional to use de facto discrimination to require school districts to cross-integrate.

The federal court ruled similarly in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle*. In this case the court held that integration based on an individual’s race is unconstitutional, especially in areas that were not affected by legal racial segregation in the past. This meant that areas that integrate their schools to improve diversity or to reduce the racial achievement gap are unable to unless there is a clear history of past discrimination. In the plurality opinion, the court found that it is unconstitutional to use an individual’s race as a tie-breaker in determining which school he or she will attend, regardless if the act is to increase or decrease diversity within a school. The court found that “even in the context of mandatory desegregation, we have stressed

\(^5\) Kahlenberg.

\(^4\) Kahlenberg.
that racial proportionality is not required..."55 Thus, the demographic pattern of a particular school does not need to be reflective of its community. Simply, it is okay to have black and white schools, as long as school attendance is not based upon race. This ruling has stated that racism is not a problem in United States schools because the period of de jure segregation has ended; however, many social scientists, as well as the more liberal members of the court, believe that just because the law is race neutral does not mean that it is equal.

School Integration in the US

The main reason why schools are not integrated is because even though white Americans support the idea of racial integration, they are against it in practice56. Two-thirds of families believe that white suburban children should be bused to a predominately black urban school to achieve racial balance, but only seven percent actually would enroll their own child in a failing, urban school57. Similarly, although few Americans claim to be prejudiced, white Americans generally prefer to live in neighborhoods that are ninety-five percent white58. This demonstrates the idea that whites tend to support "tokenism". They want to claim to be in favor of diversity and have a black friend or two because it is politically correct, but living in a truly multi-ethnic neighborhood is undesirable because of long held stereotypes about minority culture59. Although not all whites decide to live in predominately white neighborhoods for prejudiced reasons, the reasons why many white, middle-class
families decide not to live in ethnically diverse areas are typically social problems
rooted in, or conditioned by, racial inequality.

The idea of tokenism is applied to schools frequently. Many parents and
school administrators believe that if there is a black or Hispanic student in every
classroom then it is a diverse environment. This is why “...the last ten to fifteen years
have seen a steady unraveling of almost twenty-five years worth of increased
integration”\textsuperscript{60}. Since Brown was mandated, “...there has not been a single year since
Brown in which more than 36 percent of the nation’s black children attended majority
white schools”\textsuperscript{61}. In fact, most students currently attend a segregated school. Most
black students attend a school that is “...sixty to seventy percent black and the
average white student attends a school which is eighty-percent white”\textsuperscript{62}. This means
that students are learning that those with similar upbringings as their own are the
norm, instead of learning to appreciate the different values and cultures that exist in a
diverse school. When the US Supreme Court decided Brown, they imagined that
schools would truly be diverse and multi-cultural. The Supreme Court held that “to
separate [children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of
their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that
may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever undone”; thus, they would be
quite upset at the extreme homogeneity that exists today\textsuperscript{63}.

\textsuperscript{60} Deborah N. Archer. “Moving Beyond Strict Scrutiny: The Need for a More Nuanced Standard of
Equal Protection Analysis for K through 12 Integration Programs”. University of Pennsylvania Journal
\textsuperscript{61} Paul Street. Segregated Schools: Educational Apartheid in Post-Civil Rights America. (London:
Routledge, 2005), 3.
\textsuperscript{62} Archer.
\textsuperscript{63} Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas
Tokenism mainly happens in neighborhoods that are affected by white flight, the process by which white families move out of cities and integrated suburbs to live in racially homogenous areas. White flight was sparked by desegregation. As cities such as Washington, DC and Kansas City desegregated, many white families moved out to distant suburbs where it would not be economically advantageous for black families to live. As an effort to avoid sending their children to predominately black schools, white families moved into racially homogenous neighborhoods. One major reasons why this happened is because families feared the unknown and the threat of integrated schools.

White flight and suburbanization continues today, and is still seen through property exchanges. It is well known that the quality of public schools affects the value of homes. Because the neighborhoods with the best schools tend to be majority white, and the families that can afford the high property costs to live within the best school districts tend to be white, the decisions to move into a segregated district may not be based on prejudice. However, regardless of intent, the decision impacts the political situation because the families that move into the wealthy suburbs, where the best schools are located, have the most political power. By shifting that political power from urban schools to suburban schools, it likely results in black students receiving a lower quality education.

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64 Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown.
65 Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown.
66 Armor.
Private Schools

Another, often indirect, action that those with wealth and power take in order to segregate their children from poor and minority children is to send their children to private school. Approximately 10% of the students in the United States attend private schools, are tutored, or are home schooled\(^68\). Private schools are much more racially homogenous than even segregated public schools. The areas with the highest percentage of private school students are major urban cities where the public schools are racially mixed (see below). This creates a system where the wealthiest children in cities, where the majority of the best private schools are located, are deprived of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>% of private school students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Phoenix</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Detroit</td>
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opportunity to learn in a diverse environment. Additionally, because so many wealthy parents make the decision to remove their children from the public schools, they do not work to ensure that their public school is performing as well as it possibly could. The absence of these parents, the ones who have the time and resources to invest in the community, is seen in the priorities of the school board and makeup of the Parent Teacher Association. Areas with high quality public schools and influential parents traditionally have high attendance at Parent Teacher Association meetings and have elected a school board that is powerful in improving the quality of education\textsuperscript{69}. The absence of dedicated parents fosters the achievement gap’s growth because the wealthiest children continue to thrive in the best educational system that money can buy, while the poorest children do not have the resources to ever be able to compete\textsuperscript{70}.

Many parents in districts where there is low parental involvement choose to send their children to private schools because they claim that the quality of education is better and that students who graduate private schools are more academically successful than those attending public schools\textsuperscript{71}. Although both of these facts have validity, because the only students who attend private schools are the ones who have parents with the resources to afford to send them to private school, there is no way to have a fair comparison. When controlling as many outside factors as possible, studies

\textsuperscript{69} Diamond
\textsuperscript{70} Kozol. \textit{Savage Inequalities}.
have shown that there is a minimal difference in academic success between private and public school students.\textsuperscript{72} Another common reason why parents send their children to private school is because they want to send their children to a school with other students who ‘share their values’.\textsuperscript{73} Although this does not sound like a biased motive, it is. By ‘sharing their values’ many parents are desiring to send their children to schools that are free from influences of drugs, broken families and crime, and have a greater community emphasis on education.\textsuperscript{74} These values are not specifically white or black values, but are values correlated with economic security and privilege. Because white Americans are the only group who have experienced the kinds of privilege to avoid stereotypical attitudes about having immoral values, by parents claiming to send their children to schools because of ‘shared values’, they are really saying that they want their children to go to an economically homogenous school. This is not to say that many parents would not support safe, well-funded integrated schools. If presented with that option, fewer parents would have objections to integrated schools.

Racial minorities who send their children to private schools are also seeking a homogenous environment for their children. Many of the schools that these students attend are religiously-based. Even though they may be racially homogenous environments, religious private schools are homogenous in the sense that over 95% of the students attending religious schools tend to be members’ of the denomination of

the school that they are attending. Therefore, even racially diverse private schools tend to be homogenous in one sense. Because private schools are not required to release as much data about their students to the government as public schools, it is difficult to determine whether or not there is class based diversity. This has significant implications for private school students because they only have the benefit of seeing the world through the eyes of people who have grown up in a similar manner. Without observing how the poorest and most disadvantaged in society live, they are less likely to understand the structural problems of poverty and are less likely to value the importance of being exposed to diverse thought.

Through examining the levels of integration in public and private schools across the United States, it is clear that the spirit of Brown was never fulfilled. Students are still learning in an overwhelmingly homogenous environment. Even in diverse neighborhoods there is a difference: the poor and minority children attend the public schools and the wealthy children attend private school. Thus, the urban public schools remain overwhelmingly minority, while private schools are overwhelmingly white. There is a clear discrepancy between black and white students in terms of size of school and quality of education.

For Americans to truly achieve the diverse learning environment envisioned by the Supreme Court when they ruled in Brown, regions need to take dramatic steps to increase the diversity in schools. For this to happen, the US government needs to reconsider its governance of education. Schools should be integrated at the regional

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75 Sander.
76 Chang.
level, with common standards of excellence and funding. In order to be accredited by the state, private schools would need to be integrated to a level reflective of the county in which it is located. When these steps are taken, the disparity in education quality and the achievement gap will be reduced.
Methodology and Scope of Study

To determine whether or not schools are truly integrated, both racially and economically, within the United States, public school districts and private schools in five metropolitan areas across the country were studied. The metropolitan areas studied were Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington, DC, Seattle, and Houston. The metropolitan areas include the immediate city and the surrounding suburban areas. Many of these areas spread across multiple states and counties. There are urban areas within the suburban counties. For example, Norristown, Pennsylvania is located within suburban Montgomery County outside of Philadelphia and Arlington, Virginia is located in suburban Washington, DC. However, for this case study, only the largest urban centers were used. Using metropolitan areas as the unit of focus illustrates the differences that occur between cities and their suburban regions. This level of analysis illustrates white flight and includes many different several different school districts.

These geographic regions were chosen because they each have had a unique experience regarding race relations. The cities studied will show the impact of white flight on public schooling, as well as how integration levels in schools that historically have had problems with segregation compares to those cities which have

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77 as defined by the US Office of Budgets and Management
78 The counties included are: Philadelphia: New Castle (DE), Cecil (MD), Burlington (NJ), Camden (NJ), Cumberland (NJ), Gloucester (NJ), Salem (NJ), Berks (PA), Bucks (PA), Chester (PA), Delaware (PA), Montgomery (PA), and Philadelphia (PA). Chicago: Cook (IL), DeKalb (IL), DuPage (IL), Grundy (IL), Kane (IL), Kendall (IL), Lake (IL), McHenry (IL), Will (IL), Jasper (IN), Lake (IN), Newton (IN), Porter (IN), Kenosha (WI). Washington, DC: Washington (DC), Calvert (MD), Charles (MD), Frederick (MD), Montgomery (MD), Prince George's (MD), Anne Arundel (MD), Howard (MD), St. Mary (MD), Arlington (VA), Clarke (VA), Fairfax (VA), Fauquier (VA), Loudoun (VA), Prince William (VA), Spotsylvania (VA), Stafford (VA), Warren (VA), Jefferson (WV). Seattle: King (WA), Snohomish (WA), Pierce (WA). Houston: Harris (TX), Fort Bend (TX), Montgomery (TX), Brazoria (TX), Galveston (TX), Liberty (TX), Waller (TX), Chambers (TX), Austin (TX), San Jacinto (TX).
not instituted discriminatory policies. Together the examples of these five cities combine to illustrate the reality of race relations in the United States and how these relationships affect schooling.

Philadelphia is one of the oldest cities in the United States and has had historic problems with education and white flight into suburban areas. In the 1990s the problems progressed to the point that 49% of ninth graders failed to progress to the 10th grade and as many as 25% of the students were absent in a given day. This high failure rate resulted in the state legislature taking control of Philadelphia city schools and instituting a variety of charter schools to improve the quality of education for its urban students. Although it is too soon to know the effects of these reforms, preliminary reports suggest that educational improvement is not occurring.

Similarly, Chicago’s education system has experienced significant reforms in the past fifteen years. The mayor adopted a business model in order to improve education in public schools. Because these reforms failed, Chicago’s schools have been scarred. Like Philadelphia, there is a vast difference between the quality of suburban schools and urban schools. The historic inequity problems, combined with high crime and poverty rates, have caused Chicago schools to become weak and unable to prepare their students for college and the workforce.

The case of Chicago is much different than the case of Seattle, because Seattle is a wealthier city that has never experienced segregation and racial bias in

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79 Cuban and Usdan, 101.
80 Cuban and Usdan, 101.
81 Cuban and Usdan, 101.
82 Cuban and Usdan, 101.
schooling\textsuperscript{84}. Similarly, the school system is not failing, like it is in Chicago and Philadelphia, but it does need improvement. However, it is clear that parents do not have complete confidence in the quality of the public schools because 35\% of wealthy students and 10\% of poor students attend private schools\textsuperscript{85}. This results in an overrepresentation of minority students in the public school system where over 1/3 of elementary schools are over 50\% black\textsuperscript{86}. Seattle has the same lack of integration and high level of white students attending private school as do the cities experiencing white flight. This suggests that there is systematic discrimination in every section of the country.

Washington, DC and Baltimore are heavily minority cities that have a history of discrimination and segregation within schools\textsuperscript{87}. Similarly, like Philadelphia, the suburban areas in this region have historically been for the white and wealthy, while the urban areas are almost exclusively for poor minorities and students\textsuperscript{88}. Because of the historic discrimination and segregation, it is expected that this region would continue to have high levels of inequity, as well as a lack of commitment to integration.

Houston was chosen because it is a heavily minority city. Because of the diversity and high exposure rates that students and parents have, there should be higher levels of integration within schools. Similarly, because Houston was a rapidly growing economy, there is a greater mix of racial minorities in both cities and the

\textsuperscript{84} Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1.
\textsuperscript{85} Cuban and Usdan, 54.
\textsuperscript{86} Cuban and Usdan, 54.
\textsuperscript{87} Kozol, Savage Inequalities.
\textsuperscript{88} US Census Bureau.
suburbs. This will give an example of how many growing, southern cities view the importance of integration and equality in their schools.

Together, the diversity in cities studied will give a representative example of patterns found across America. In each metropolitan area, the school districts within the area were used to gather information about the public schools. District level analysis is used because a school district provides a small enough focus to determine demographic patterns, with a large enough scope to see patterns across regions and different areas. Additionally, the district level is the smallest level which per pupil funding is required to be reported. Thus, this level of analysis is best to compare funding inequity.

For each public school district, enrollment, diversity, and expenditure information was collected by Standard and Poors’ and the Council of Chief State School Officers’ database entitled “School Data Direct”\textsuperscript{89}. This information was used to calculate the racial homogeneity of each school district. Homogeneity was defined by three different levels: 95\% homogenous, 90\% homogenous, and 85\% homogenous. For each of these levels the school district could be homogeneously black, homogeneously white, or homogeneously Hispanic. Diverse schools were calculated in a similar way. To be considered diverse, school districts must contain at least 15\% of three different ethnic groups. Although this is not a perfectly diverse environment, it is the minimum level of diversity needed for classrooms to generally

have several minority students. Therefore, those students who are minorities would not be considered the "token black kid".\(^{90}\)

Although the US census bureau allows a person to be Hispanic and white or black, the data used did not have this option. Instead, the data used for this sample had students, or their parents, select the one ethnic identity that they most identify with. This means that some schools may actually be more or less diverse than the numbers represented. Additionally, those that chose to self-identify as biracial or multi-ethnic will be counted as "other", and therefore not included in this study. The extent that this might skew the data is unknown, but best estimates would suggest that many schools are slightly more diverse than reported.

In addition to the racial homogeneity, "School Data Direct" provided information to determine how many students of each racial category attend each school, as calculated by:

\[
(\% \text{ of minority students}) \times (\text{total students}) = \text{total minority students}
\]

This information is necessary to show the correlation between school size and racial diversity with the following formula, where \(X\) equals the total number of students where the percentage of minority students is equal to 85\%, 90\%, or 95\%, respectively:

\[
\frac{X}{\text{number of total students}}
\]

This information demonstrates the difference in size between mainly white schools and mainly minority schools. Because there is a correlation between smaller schools

\(^{90}\) Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown, 33.
and academic success\textsuperscript{91}, it is important to demonstrate whether or not there is a racial disparity based on race in US public schools.

In addition to racial equality, it is necessary to examine economic equality to illustrate the injustice between white and minority children. This can be done through calculating the per pupil expenditure, or the amount that each district spends to educate each child. This will determine whether or not a racial discrepancy exists based on race. Per pupil spending by race is calculated by:

\[
\frac{\sum (s_{xy} \times E_{xy})}{s_{xy}}
\]

Where \( S \) is equal to per-pupil spending of student \( X \) is school \( y \) and of the race \( E \).

This number will demonstrate whether or not there is a significant difference in the amounts that white children have spent on their education, compared to the amount that black children receive. Additionally, these numbers can be compared to the average level of funding, regardless of race, to determine if there is a racial disparity.

A similar analysis was done for private schools. To collect data for private schools, The National Center for Educational Statistics’ \textit{Private School Universe Study} was used\textsuperscript{92}. This database provided the number of students enrolled and the race of each student for each school. A school level analysis was used for private schools because individual schools are not governed by a larger district which dictates fiscal policy. Thus, it is the smallest unit of analysis in which financial data is released.

\textsuperscript{91} Kozol, \textit{Savage Inequalities}.
Because there is a wide variety of schools with different missions and levels of education, the type of private school was limited to insure an accurate representation. Specifically, the types of schools that were excluded include pre-kindergartens and kindergartens, special educational schools funded by the states, behavioral health alternative schools, home-school supplemental programs, and rehabilitation centers. The sample included traditional day and boarding schools that were both religious and secular in nature.

In this analysis, three types of schools emerged. The first, and most common, is a religious day school. These schools are traditionally Catholic and Lutheran and have a relatively low, subsidized tuition and small student bodies. The second type are prestigious day and boarding schools that tend to be larger, attract a student body from a wider geographic area, and charge tuition that is comparable to private universities. Finally, the last type of school is an independent school which is a hybrid of the two previous types of schools. Like religious schools, these schools tend to be smaller and attract students from a smaller geographical area, but like prestigious schools, they have the ability to set their own tuition and are not governed by another organization.

The *Private School Universe Study* did not release the cost of tuition at individual private schools. To obtain this information to have an accurate comparison to public schools, it was necessary to contact each school individually. Because of the sheer volume of the public schools in the areas studied, a 15% random sample was taken from each metropolitan area to determine school funding. Each school's website was then visited to obtain the cost of tuition and mandatory fees. Schools that
did not list their tuition online were contacted via email and phone to obtain tuition rates. Because many schools have multiple tuition schedules, the rate used was for enrolling the first child in the family in the highest grade that was offered by the school, and for a member of the parish or church affiliated in the school. These parameters were chosen because most children who attend a religious-based school attend are members of that denomination 95% of the time. The highest grade and only child were used because they were ways to ensure consistency in analyzing tuition costs.

The type of data provided by The National Center for Educational Statistics gave similar information as “School Data Direct”; however, because it gave different variables, it was analyzed in a different way. To calculate student diversity ratio to determine how homogenous and diverse schools were, the following equation was used:

\[
\frac{\text{number of students of race } X}{\text{total number of students}}
\]

All other equations that were used were the same as used for public schools.

Thus, an accurate comparison can be made between public schools and private schools. Assuming there is a correlation between spending and educational success, it is possible to determine whether or not there is inequity between black and white children in the United States by determining how racially homogenous a school is and how much funding the school spends on each child. If there is a discrepancy in funding, class size, or homogeneity of schools, then it would suggest that there is

93 Sander, 2.
structural racism in American education. If this is the case, actions are needed to remedy ensure that all children have the same access to education.

One of the biggest factors that parents can make is choosing which school their children will attend. In making this decision, the overwhelming majority of parents decide instead their children to their local, neighborhood public school. These schools are reflective of the demographics in which they are located, which because of existing discrimination and white flight, are traditionally racially and economically homogeneous. Even though federal and later Supreme Court decisions mandated that these schools be integrated, most of them are racially diverse. This is significant because the public school system is structured to be controlled locally, where individual communities can determine the direction and funding levels of schools through direct elections. Because schools are funded by taxes set by elected officials, school funding is a reflection of how much the community is willing to spend on educating their youth. Thus, in poor communities many districts decided to tax themselves at higher rates than wealthy counties because they have a stronger desire to provide education; however, the wealthy schools still receive more funding on average, because of higher property values. This fosters a system where white and minority students receive significantly different qualities of education and do not benefit from learning from peers who were raised in a considerably different manner than they were.

As problematic as racial and socioeconomic homogeneity is in the public school system, in the private school system it is worse. A small minority—from 4% to 17% of families in the metropolitan areas studied—choose to send their children to
Race and Schooling

One of the biggest decisions that parents can make is choosing which school their children will attend. In making this decision, the overwhelming majority of parents decide to send their children to their local, neighborhood public school. These schools are reflective of the communities in which they are located, which because of housing discrimination and white flight, are traditionally racially and economically homogenous. Even though Brown v. Board and later Supreme Court decisions mandated that these schools be integrated, few of them are racially diverse. This is significant because the public school system is designed to be controlled locally where individual communities can determine the direction and funding levels of schools through direct elections. Because schools are funded by taxes set by elected officials, school funding is a reflection of how much the community is willing to spend on educating their youth. Thus, in poor communities many districts decided to tax themselves at higher rates than wealthier counties because they have a stronger desire to improve education; however, the wealthy schools still receive more funding, on average, because of higher property values. This fosters a system where white and minority children receive significantly different qualities of education and do not benefit from learning from peers who were raised in a considerably different manner than they were.

As problematic as racial and socioeconomic homogeneity is in the public school system, in the private school system it is worse. A small minority, from 4% to 17% of families in the metropolitan areas studied, chose to send their children to

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94 Kozol. Savage Inequalities, 208.
private schools. These rates are lower than the rates presented by Sander earlier, because his rates included students who were homeschooled and tutored privately. A few of these parents decide to home school their children for a wide variety of reasons, while the majority of families who opt out of the public school system choose to send their children to private school. The majority of private schools are religiously based, with parents traditionally deciding to send their children to the school affiliated with the church, mosque, or synagogue which the family attends. Although many religions have some sort of religious school system, the most common type of religious schools are Catholic schools, followed by Lutheran, Jewish, and fundamentalist and Evangelical Christian schools, respectively. Thus, the most common type of private school is a Catholic school and the most common private school student is white and Catholic.

In examining the types of schools that students attend across the country, there is a clear difference between the type of students that attend public schools and the type of students who attend private school. Several patterns emerge when looking at the demographic breakdown of school attendance, specifically: 1) minority children are overrepresented in urban schools, 2) white children are much more likely to attend a suburban public school than an urban public school, 3) few students attend diverse schools, 4) white children are significantly more likely to go to private school than

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95 Sander, 2.
96 Sander, 2.
minority children, and 5) white children in urban areas are more likely to attend private school than their peers in other environments. These patterns suggest that white children are receiving a higher quality of education than minority children because white parents have the economic and social power to pay to place their children in the best possible schools. When white parents decide to live in areas where there are undesirable schools, they are likely to use their social and economic privileges to remove their children from the public school system and place them in an environment more conducive to learning. This *de facto* segregation was exactly what *Swann* was trying to prevent. The Supreme Court wanted students of all races to have the opportunity to learn in quality schools, regardless of their race and any inherent prejudices that had caused a minority student to be placed in an inferior school. In order for all students to have the same opportunity and equal access to education, these inequalities need to be realized and remedied.

**Minority Overrepresentation in Urban Schools**

Partially because of private schooling, and partially because of *de facto* segregation, urban schools are much more likely to be overrepresented with minority students. In urban counties, those containing the major city or cities which the region was named after, every region was overrepresented with black and Hispanic students. This means that in every geographic area, there were statistically higher

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97 Armor, 29.
98 *For the purpose of this study, minority is described as being self-identified as black or Hispanic. Although there are other racial minorities that are experiencing inequality regarding educational access, the stereotypes and segregation that these groups have faced is different.*
99 *For Chicago this was Cook County. In DC-Baltimore, both counties bearing the same name were used. For Philadelphia, both Philadelphia and Camden counties were used. Harris County was used for Houston and Kings County was used for Seattle.*
100 *at p=.001*
percentages of black and Hispanic students in urban school districts than suburban school districts.

In Seattle, the least overrepresented city, there is an approximately one percent difference in the number of minorities in the region and the number of minorities within the urban schools. This differs drastically with the Washington, DC-Baltimore region, which has the largest overrepresentation rate. In this region there is a thirty percentage point difference between the percentage of minority students in urban schools compared to the percentage of minorities in the entire region. In Chicago, Philadelphia, and Houston, there are differences of ten to fifteen percentage points. This is important because it means that minorities are much more likely to be clustered in urban environments and white families are more likely to be clustered in suburban areas outside of the city. There is a clear difference in urban environments in that urban schools are far more likely to contain a higher minority population than suburban schools.

This overrepresentation is consequential because urban schools, in general, are weaker than suburban schools. These urban school districts tend to be predominately minority. As Cuban and Usdan explain, "nearly every study of the

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101 Kozol. Savage Inequalities. 29.
[educational system] shows that African American children, and especially those in “predominately” (over 85%) African American and/or high poverty schools (more than 90% low income students) fare the worst” in school achievement and quality of education 102. While suburban school districts have an average class size of seventeen to nineteen students and enough textbooks for everyone in the class, urban schools have an average of 30 children in each class and do not have adequate learning materials 103.

Residual and de facto housing segregation and economic barriers do make it more likely for minority families to live within the city limits instead of in the suburbs. As a result, minorities are still overrepresented in urban public schools. These schools tend to be weaker because, for structural and economic reasons, minority parents are less likely to be educated, have stable jobs, and have a stable family life 104. For example, in one Ohio suburb, 90% of white children were raised by parents with a combined four or more years of college and fewer than five percent are parented by those who have earned only a high school diploma or have not graduated, only 45% of black children are parented by two college graduates and over a quarter are raised by parents with only a high school diploma or have not graduated 105.

Because of this, urban black parents are unaware at the political and structural power that they have to generate change and improve their school 106. Theorists believe that if black parents took the same actions to improve their schools as white parents did,

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103 Kozol. Savage Inequalities. 126 and 152.
104 Ferguson, 373.
105 Ferguson, 373.
urban schools would be considerably more successful\textsuperscript{107}. This lack of involvement combines with the fact that uneducated parents do not have the educational experience to help their children with the homework and instill good study skills. Thus, many minority students are at a disadvantage. Additionally, because of the types of jobs available to those without a college degree in urban environments, uneducated parents typically are not there when their children arrive home from school and are not a strong force while at work to encourage their children to study and complete their school work. In many urban schools, many of the students are raised in this type of environment. The culture of the school becomes one where students are not motivated to achieve academic success because they do not have role models of those people were raised in their neighborhood and became successful\textsuperscript{108}. Integrated schools would improve the situation because minority students would see their peers succeeding and going to college; therefore, they would be more motivated to reach for success because they believe it is possible.

The overrepresentation of poor minority students in urban public schools has the long term effect of causing those with the least political power in a geographic area to reside within a single district, which ultimately results in the school in that area, which is typically urban, being considerably weaker than suburban schools\textsuperscript{109}. Students in these schools are more likely to give up on pursuing academic success because they have no evidence that suggests that they would ever be able to go to college or obtain a good job\textsuperscript{110}. Because they believe that their best chance is life is to

\textsuperscript{107} Kozol. Savage Inequalities. 138.
\textsuperscript{108} Suskind.
\textsuperscript{109} Kozol. Savage Inequalities 138.
\textsuperscript{110} Suskind.
have a quality of life similar to their parents—low paying jobs without the possibility of upward mobility—urban students do not feel like they should work to aspire to higher things, because they do not believe it is a reality.

Urban schools create a cycle of failure where they continue to decay because those with the political power to improve the situation flee public schools for the private arena. Thus, the poor, minority students in urban schools are not getting the same educational experience as their white peers, and the cycle of inequality continues to grow through the generations. Despite Brown v. Board of Education, minority students are still learning in a segregated system. This is unacceptable and goes against the principles upon which the United States was founded on.

**White Overrepresentation in Suburban Schools**

This segregation extends beyond urban schools--white students are also significantly overrepresented in suburban schools. While this is to be expected because of the overrepresentation of black students in urban schools, the causes of this type of segregation are different. They stem from individual, rather than societal based decisions. These individual level decisions have been crafted by society where those with the greatest political power are able to demand change, and as a result, are receiving the greatest benefits. Thus, the privileged white class has created a system where their children are able to
receive the best education that money can buy because suburban parents have used their racial and socioeconomic privilege to demand it.

While black, middle-class families have the same purchasing power as white, middle-class families; housing discrimination has limited the opportunities that these families have had to move into predominately white neighborhoods. When black families do move into white neighborhoods, white families are much more likely to leave; thus, lowering the property value and political power that the middle-class, black families have. Additionally, many black families decide to move into gentrified neighborhoods in an attempt to raise the standard of living within poorer neighborhoods.

In the cities studied, there is a great range of the levels of overrepresentation. Where there is extreme overrepresentation of white students in suburban schools (Washington, DC and Philadelphia), there is housing segregation and white flight. In these cities, there is 42% and 28% difference, respectively. In Houston the same pattern of overrepresentation applies, but to a lesser extent. There is a 12% overrepresentation rate, which is high, but not as high as Philadelphia and Washington, DC. This is because the culture of the metropolitan area is distinct in the sense that it is very rare for middle-class, white families to live within the city. Thus, most upper and middle class families live and send their children to school in the suburbs. This overrepresentation is significant to a $p = .001$ level.

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112 Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown.
113 Moore.
Structural barriers in these areas have prevented equal opportunities for all people. A system has been created where white children are learning in the suburbs with the best resources that money has to offer, while a high concentration of blacks remain in urban schools which lack the resources needed to compete. Similarly, because minority and white students are geographically located apart from each other, it is possible that many white students in the suburbs never interact with more than a handful of minority students, while minority children will rarely see a white child in their neighborhood. This creates a system where students are simply oblivious to the reality of the world in which they live. Suburban students believe that everyone has the same chance of success that they do, and this false illusion creates a generation who desires to help themselves, instead of helping others.

However, an interesting pattern emerges in Seattle: whites are actually underrepresented in the suburban areas. This is significant in light of the recent Supreme Court case *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District 1* where the Court ruled that Seattle schools are not experiencing segregation. These findings suggest the same conclusion that the court decided: there are limited to no racial barriers preventing students of different races in Seattle from attending the same type of schools. However, just because this pattern emerges does not mean that these schools are not homogenous and that the quality of education that white students receive is of the same quality that minority students receive. Because there are multiple schools within the school district, it is possible

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114 Kozol. *Savage Inequalities.*
115 Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown. 127.
116 *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District 1.*
that not all schools are equal. In future studies, it will be necessary to examine if this is the case.

In Chicago, the racial difference was slight: only a fraction of one percent. This means that the percentage of white students attending suburban schools is approximately equal to the percentage of white students in the metropolitan areas. This is the ideal situation, and for this aspect of integration, a goal that other cities should strive to achieve. In an ideal environment that reflected educational equality, this range of overrepresentation would be the goal which other cities would strive to achieve.

Although there is nothing inherently unequal about white students attending neighborhood suburban schools, the inequality emerges from racial and class bias. Many suburban communities go to great lengths to keep low income housing and public transportation out of their town, thus creating a system where only economically privileged families can afford to move in\textsuperscript{117}. Additionally, due to housing discrimination, many realtors go to great, and often illegal, lengths to steer families of color away from white, suburban neighborhoods because as a neighborhood diversifies, the property values decrease\textsuperscript{118}. Therefore, the overrepresentation of white students in suburban schools does reflect a series of policies where whites have systematically been given privileges that allow for white dominance to continue, while minorities have been systematically discriminated against to ensure that they are not able to challenge white power.

\textsuperscript{117} Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown. 35-40.
\textsuperscript{118} Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown. 35-40.
Racial Attendance Discrepancy in Private Schools

While all parents theoretically have the choice about whether or not to send their child to private school, because of private school tuition rates, which will be discussed later, only children who are economically privileged tend to have the financial means necessary to be able to attend such schools\textsuperscript{119}. Even with the ability to receive financial aid, there are significant application and testing costs, which tend to preclude lower and working class families from considering private education.

The reality of education in the United States is that it is a pay-to-play system where there is a great racial gap in the type of education that children receive. In the metropolitan areas studied, a significantly\textsuperscript{120} higher percentage of white children attend private school than attend public school. This concentration stems from several socioeconomic reasons, including housing segregation and historic inequalities in education which have lead to income gaps\textsuperscript{121}. Because of these factors, white families are much more likely to have the financial means to be able to afford private school and are considerably more likely to be socialized to believe that sending their children to private school is important.

When looking at the composition of the student body in each of the metropolitan areas studied, public schools contained significantly more racial minorities. Even in the most diverse metropolitan areas, Chicago and Houston, there is a great discrepancy in the racial breakdown of public and private school. The difference in Houston, the most diverse city, is actually greater than the difference in Philadelphia, the least diverse metropolitan area. This suggests that white families

\textsuperscript{119} Sander, 2.
\textsuperscript{120} at a $p=0.001$ level.
\textsuperscript{121} Street, 3.
prefer to send their children to homogenous schools, regardless of how much they are exposed to diversity.

This racial discrepancy has created a dual-track system where the children who are most likely to succeed based on socioeconomic and cultural factors are educated in an environment separate from the children who are least likely to attend college\(^\text{122}\).

Similarly, because a disproportional number of white students attend private schools, the diversity ratio of the entire school system is therefore skewed. The extent to which white children are overrepresented in private schools, defined by:

\[
\frac{\text{% of white private school students in region } X}{\text{% of whites in region } X}
\]

varies greatly from city to city. This overrepresentation rate is not entirely accurate, because it does not reflect the racial diversity of the population from 5-18 years of age, but instead the entire population\(^\text{123}\). Because many minority families have more children than white families, the overrepresentation rate is most likely is higher\(^\text{124}\).

According to this calculation, it appears that there is slight overrepresentation in

\(^{122}\) Fairlie and Resch. 6.
\(^{124}\) US Census Bureau.
Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and Chicago, and strong levels of underrepresentation in Houston and Seattle. To control for higher levels of birthrates among minority families, the racial attendance of private compared to public was calculated:

\[
\frac{\text{% of private school population that is white}}{\text{% of school population that is white}}
\]

With that control, the same patterns emerge: here the same patterns emerge. This suggests that regardless of the popular assumption, in Seattle and Houston, minority students are underrepresented in private schools. Similarly, and as expected, whites are overrepresented in private schools in Chicago, Seattle, and Washington, DC.

There is a high overrepresentation rate in three of the cities studied. As stated previously, private schools do not provide a better education than quality public schools. However, because of the constant change in educational policy due to non-educators attempting to improve education with short-sighted and untested ideas, the
majority of public schools do not provide a consistent, high-quality education, and need significant improvement to prepare students. Similarly, the outcome for private school students is not better than those in a similar socioeconomic status. With these findings, it is important to remember that this is the aggregate of many private schools. Some private schools are far better than the best public schools, some are far worse than the worst public school, and the majority are somewhere in the middle. Often the median private school is better than the median public school, but not better than a good public school.

Wealthy students from stable homes with educated parents tend to succeed in both public and private schools. The overrepresentation rate suggests that these parents have opted out of improving public education and creating quality public schools, and instead sending their children to an alternative educational system where only the most privileged have access. However, if these parents would send their children to public schools and pressure the government to reduce poverty, increase family stability, and improve the quality of education, all students would be able to succeed. If wealthy parents demanded a consistent level of quality education in these schools, their own children would receive an education just as good as the education that they receive in private schools and the overall quality of education within the community would improve. However, the advantages of their privilege would diminish.

In examining the homogeneity rates in private schools, these schools are overwhelmingly homogenous and not reflective of the diverse nature of the

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125 Cuban and Usdan.
126 National Assessment of Educational Progress, 23.
metropolitan areas which they represent\textsuperscript{127}. In Philadelphia, the metropolitan area with the most homogenous schools, over 60% of private school students are learning in an environment that is 85% homogeneous. This means that the majority of students are learning in a classroom with three children of color, at most. For children to learn to appreciate diversity and understand different cultures, they need to be exposed to more than a few minority children.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{homogeneity_chart.png}
\caption{Homogeneity in Private Schools}
\end{figure}

In Seattle, Houston, and Washington, DC, between 30%-40% of private school students are learning in a school where there is not more than a handful of minority students. This range of percentages is better than the percentages in Philadelphia, but it is not ideal. There are still extremely high percentages of students who are learning in homogenous environments. Chicago is the city with the smallest percentage of private school students attending homogenous schools. Yet, over 20% of its students learning are learning in a homogenous environment.

While there are a handful of homogenously black or Hispanic schools, the percentages of students who attend these schools are miniscule. Instead, the overwhelming majority of homogenous schools are predominately white. This is because the overwhelming majority of the private school students in the country are

\textsuperscript{127} When p=.001
white\textsuperscript{128}. The homogeneity patterns and overrepresentation rates demonstrate that there is a huge racial attendance gap in US private schools. White children are much more likely to attend private schools, and the schools that they attend are filled with mostly white peers. Because society is not homogenously white and elitist, the preponderance of white private school students is a social problem because it fosters a system where those with the most social and economic power remain separated from average Americans.

When white parents decide to send their children to private schools, it is a decision to reduce diversity in public schools and to create a segregated schooling system that is not reflective of the environment in which it is located. Additionally, by having a significant number of the privileged class sending their children to private schools, society is becoming less and less reflective of the belief that the United States was founded upon-- that "all men were created equal". Even though this may not be the intent of many parents when they decide where to send their child to school, it is the result and there are serious societal consequences that result.

These homogenous learning environments teach children that everyone is more or less the same. Because these schools are not reflective of the actual world in which children live in, private school students tend to not be aware of the privilege which they enjoy and the hardship that others experience\textsuperscript{129}. Even if private school curriculums include some sort of diversity training, cultural exchanges, or community service, this is not a way to teach children to understand what life is like on the other side of the tracks. It instead teaches private school students to feel sorry for those less

\textsuperscript{128} Sander, 2.

\textsuperscript{129} Dewey, 22.
fortunate. This pity does not help children understand what it is really like to be raised on minimum wage and how systematic discrimination throughout the years has caused some groups of people to continue to be privileged, while others continue to fall behind. This reality cannot be taught via field trips or service projects, but only through daily interaction with the social ills that plague our society. It is only through this interaction that true cultural diversity and understanding can happen. And, it is only then can the barriers of segregation be fully crumbled. If parents can be convinced that racially diverse schools have positive long term effects, for both their own children and society, many parents will be much more willing to integrate schools.

**Lack of Diverse Schools**

For students to truly learn how to respect others, and their diverse backgrounds, it is necessary to learn in a diverse environment. When examining the number of students who attend diverse schools, the majority of students do not learn in diverse environments. Diverse schools, defined by having a student body comprising of at least 15% each of black students, Hispanic students, and white students, indicate that society is reducing *de facto* discrimination. Additionally, diverse schools create environments where students learn to appreciate other cultures and the privileges
and disadvantages existing in our society. It is only with this understanding of
different elements of society can people truly begin to reduce prejudiced behavior and
create an environment where all people have an equal opportunity to succeed.
Although many critics will say that it is possible to understand diversity by attending
a racially homogenous school, there is a difference between appreciation and
understanding. True understanding can only come through daily interaction with
those who are facing discrimination and poverty. This understanding is learned
through constant exposure, not through a textbook or infrequent service project.

In the areas studied, there were two different ranges of diversity. In Seattle
and Chicago there are relatively low levels of diverse schools. Seattle has the lowest
level of diversity at slightly over 5%; however, this is partially because of the low
population of blacks and Hispanics within the city. Chicago also had low levels of
integration; however, Chicago is a much more diverse city. This illustrates that school
districts in the Chicago metropolitan area are carefully drawn to ensure homogeneity
in schools and to reduce racially diversity. For Seattle and Chicago to progress to be
truly ethnically diverse, the appropriate governmental entities will need to redraw
school district lines to ensure that there is a greater rate of diversity.

Philadelphia, Houston, and Washington, DC are much more diverse than
Seattle and Chicago. With diversity ranges from 25%-35%, a fair share of students
are attending school in districts that are considered diverse. These schools represent
many different views of society and have students from different races and
backgrounds. These diverse schools teach children the reality of the world that they
live in and appreciate the necessity of integration. However, 65%-75% of students are
learning in a homogenous environment. This is a huge percentage and means that although these cities are better than the cities they are being compared to, they still have a long way to go to fully diversify.

However, just because these school districts are integrated does not mean that the schools themselves are integrated. In some diverse school districts, there is only one high school, but in the many of school districts there are many high schools. Depending on how school attendance is determined, there is no way to guarantee that the schools themselves are diverse. In fact, it is much more possible because of housing segregation that many of these diverse school districts are actually comprised of homogenous schools.

Even in diverse schools there is no guaranteeing that intermingling will happen between students of different races. When examining diverse schools, Larry Steinhorn and Barbara Diggs-Brown found that "...honors and accelerated classes tend to be mostly white, and special education, basic skills, and vocational classes tend to be mostly black". They found that black and white students rarely integrate within the classroom; therefore, even students in integrated schools have not achieved the goals of integration. Thus, for the goals of Brown to be truly fulfilled, true intermingling within the classroom, as well as outside of the classroom, must happen. This can happen through untracked classes, athletic teams, and extracurricular activities.

130 Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown. 47.
131Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown. 47.
Geographic Environments and School Choice

When families choose which neighborhoods to live in they are not making a direct choice about the racial demographics of their children’s classroom, but rather an indirect, and often subconscious decision. However, when it comes to private school choice the decision is much more direct. Theoretically, if all schools were equal, roughly the same percentage of white and minority students would attend each type of school. But this is not the case. As stated above, there are high numbers of minorities in urban schools, and a relatively high number of white students in suburban schools. Urban schools are not equal to suburban schools, and because of this, white parents in urban regions are more likely to send their children to private schools than their suburban counterparts.

As seen below, in every city there are higher rates of private school attendance in urban areas. White parents in urban environments are far more likely to choose to send their children to private school than white parents in suburban schools. With the exception of Washington, DC, which will be discussed below, white, urban parents were approximately five percentage points more likely to send their children to private school than suburban parents. Although five percentage points may not seem significant, it is important to remember that the five percent which attend to private school are
traditionally the wealthiest students who do not have access to quality public schools.\textsuperscript{132}

In Philadelphia, the city studied with the highest percentage of students in private school the difference in attendance rates is the lowest, only 2.5%. This is partially because of the historic nature of Philadelphia's Main Line suburbs where there is a higher number of prestigious schools than in other regions. Additionally, Philadelphia has a higher population of Catholics and a greater tradition of Catholic schools than other cities. Both of these factors are directly correlated to private school attendance\textsuperscript{133}. However, despite this low discrepancy between suburban and urban private school attendance, Philadelphia still has the second highest urban private school enrollment.

In Washington, DC, white parents send their children to private school at a higher rate than they do in any other city in the sample. These white urban parents are fifty-six percentage points more likely to send their children to private school than their suburban counterparts. This is partly because suburban Washington, DC is known for excellent public schools and urban Washington, DC is known for horrible public schools\textsuperscript{134}. Additionally, property values in Washington, DC are at two extremes, where only the extreme wealthy can afford to live in the historic neighborhoods, and only the poorest of the poor will live in the gang-ridden ghettos that encompass the rest of the city. Thus, because white urban parents are considerably wealthier than many white urban families in other cities, there is

\textsuperscript{132} Sander, 2.
\textsuperscript{133} Winkle, Steward, and Polinard.
\textsuperscript{134} Suskind.
considerably more disposable income available to send their children to private school.

Across the board the fact that white urban families are more likely to send their children to private school is not a coincidence. Winkle, Steward, and Polinard found that “...the higher the percent black in the district, the higher the private school enrollment”\(^{135}\). Parents are consciously choosing to send their children to a homogenously white environment. While these decisions are individual in nature, they have wide implications for society. Because white parents remove their children from urban schools, they are not as concerned about funding their public school as they are with other policies. This contributes to the achievement gap between white and black children because white children in Washington, DC learn in well-funded, quality public schools, while black children learn in underfunded public schools that do not provide them with the skills for success\(^{136}\).

In all of the cities studied, there are clear patterns of *de facto* segregation regarding the types of schools that black and white students attend. White parents, who have considerable social and economic privilege, are able to use their political power to get their children access to the best possible education. This has enabled the public school system to foster an environment where black students are far more likely to attend urban schools, while white students are far more likely to attend private schools and suburban schools. These different patterns in school attendance reflect the remnants of past educational and employment access, as well as current

\(^{135}\) Winkle, Steward, and Polinard. 1252.

\(^{136}\) Suskind.
housing segregation. Schools are not just separate, they are also unequal. The current state of American education goes against the fundamental premises of the Constitution and the principles upon which this country was founded. It is necessary for metropolitan regions to work together to reduce de facto segregation and to make all schools truly representative of the population and equal in quality so that all children have an equal chance to succeed. It is only when schools diversity, will the vision of *Brown* and *Parents v. Seattle* be realized.
Financing of Public Schools

There have been historic differences in funding between black and white children, as well as urban and suburban children. This has resulted in a significantly different quality of education for students attending large, mainly minority, urban schools and those attending smaller, mainly white, suburban schools. Because schools are funded from federal, state, and local taxes, residents of the school district have considerable political power in determining how much money to spend on education. Districts where there are high percentages of students attending private schools have a higher percentage of the electorate with a less vested interest in ensuring that the public school system succeeds. Thus, according to rational choice theory, parents of private school students should vote to reduce school spending and parents of public schools should vote to increase public school spending. However, because property values are affected by the quality of public schools, parents who send their children to private schools and households without children in school do have an interest in promoting the quality of the school system. Even though there is discrepancy on whether or not there is a correlation between school funding and academic success, school funding illustrates more than how much each student receives to learn; it reveals how engaged parents are in the political process. If parents

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137 Kozol, Savage Inequalities.
138 Owusu-Edusei and Espely
agree to be taxed at a higher rate to improve the quality of the education, it shows the community is favorable to quality public education.

**History of School Funding**

There has been a considerable political debate over who should have control over schools, and their funding, for the past sixty years. Prior to 1950 education was mainly viewed as a local issue\(^\text{139}\). Municipalities, states, and school districts determined the level of funding and made all determinations of the type of education that each school was to provide\(^\text{140}\). The federal government was only involved through the Morrill Act of 1862, which granted land for public education and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 which gave federal appropriations for vocational education programs\(^\text{141}\). Thus, the federal government had very little oversight in public schools and provided very little funding. This set the precedent for local control of schools.

In the 1950s the Federal government began to take a more active role in setting education policy, specifically regarding school funding, with the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the creation of the National Defense Education Fund which offered financial support to states to improve math, science, and foreign

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\(^{139}\) McGuinn, 26.

\(^{140}\) McGuinn, 26.

\(^{141}\) McGuinn, 25-26.
language proficiency\textsuperscript{142}. This showed a shift in governmental policy where the federal government took an increased role in regulating and funding education, although the majority of school funding and decisions were still left up to individual districts.

The civil rights movements of the 1960s led to a greater role of the federal government overseeing education, especially regarding the desire to create equal opportunities to all students. Because education was seen as the solution to poverty, it was included in the \textit{Civil Rights Act of 1964}\textsuperscript{143}. Similarly, the \textit{Elementary and Secondary Education Act} was created to increase funding and mandate improvement regarding education in poor school districts\textsuperscript{144}. The Supreme Court ruled that individual school districts must integrate immediately, thus increasing the power that the federal government has over individual school districts\textsuperscript{145}.

The Federal government then continued to take greater strides to control education when the National Commission on Excellence in Education showed that school districts were drastically underperforming in the United States and that radical reform was necessary\textsuperscript{146}. This caused states to increase education spending and to set curricular and achievement standards\textsuperscript{147}. President George H.W. Bush proposed a

\textsuperscript{142} McGuinn, 27.
\textsuperscript{143} McGuinn, 29.
\textsuperscript{144} McGuinn, 33
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Green v. County School Board of New Kent County}.
\textsuperscript{146} McGuinn, 42.
\textsuperscript{147} McGuinn, 58.
plan that continued federal oversight of education, but did not provide any additional funding\(^{148}\). To combat the political trouble President Bush was experiencing, which prevented him from reaching his goals, the President organized the Charlottesville Summit where US Governors set the National Education Goals. Through this process the governors created a complicated system where states began to work to achieve federal goals and standards\(^{149}\). This resulted in states funding education at a considerably higher level; however, the majority of funding still came from local sources. This gave states more authority to oversee the quality of instruction and institute assessments, while individual districts and schools lost the ability to run their school in the manner of their choice.

Under the Clinton presidency, the US Congress failed to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* on time because of political pressures from taxpayers and the legislature\(^{150}\). This created a political environment where education became a central issue in the 2000 presidential election. Both candidates created plans to improve the education system and heavily emphasized the issue during their campaigns. With the election of George W. Bush and a congress willing to compromise to improve education, it was possible to pass significant educational

\(^{148}\) McGuinn, 58.
\(^{149}\) McGuinn, 64.
\(^{150}\) McGuinn, 137.
reform through the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, renamed No Child Left Behind, which gave unprecedented power to the federal government to increase its control and funding of education. Through these policies, states had to make adequate yearly progress, and in return, would receive financial support from the federal government to work towards these goals. However, the program was not fully funded and has been a source of considerable political debate in recent years.

Currently, there is still a variety of sources that fund and oversee each school. However, the bulk of education funding comes from local property taxes. Thus, because poor school districts are located in more economically depressed areas, even though they pay similar tax rates as suburban schools (and sometimes higher), their property values, and thus their tax revenue is lower. To try to remedy this gap, state governments attempt to even the levels of funding by producing a baseline foundation to provide each child with a minimum level of education. Thus, state governments provide “...that every child has “an equal minimum” but not that every child has the same” quality of education. This means that state governments have dictated that it is okay for the poorest children to receive an education that is significantly worse than the education of their wealthy peers, as long as the

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151 McGuinn, 168.
152 McGuinn, 168.
disadvantaged receive a basic level of schooling. This allows the cycle of inequity to continue because the poorest students learn how to count change, while the wealthiest students use top of the line computers to speak with students in foreign countries.

**Quality of Schools and Funding**

The standard measure to determine the level of funding for individual schools and school districts is the average per pupil spending. This figure is calculated by dividing a district’s or school’s total spending (excluding construction costs) by the total number of students in the district. This dollar amount is normally calculated by individual districts and then reported to the state as part of their fiscal report. It is a means of comparison to show how much each child receives to fund his learning. A higher per pupil expenditure suggests that teachers are paid higher salaries and textbooks and laboratory supplies are regularly updated. However, it also may mean that there is a high number of special needs students in the school, whose special needs are funded by the state, or that the school district is larger and the transportation costs are greater. Similarly, a low per pupil funding level suggests lower teacher salaries and inferior learning materials; however, it could also be a reflection of a school being located in an area where there is a low cost of living and where every child walks to school. Finally, in many areas a school may get donations that significantly enhance the quality of education and save the school thousands of
dollars. This can be seen through donations of laboratory and supplies from universities or companies, as well as computers and office supplies. Similarly, poor students in urban schools frequently cannot afford school supplies such as notebooks and crayons, so the school districts purchase them on behalf of the student. This creates a system where two schools can have the same per pupil expenditure, but one school receives over $1000 per student in donated goods and the other has to spend $200 per student for school supplies. Thus, although per pupil spending is a good indicator of the overall discrepancy of school funding, there are many variables that affect school funding that are not necessarily indicators of school quality.

Because the largest aspect of school funding occurs at the local level, traditionally through property taxes, there are great differences in equality between school districts. This results in neighbors attending schools where one child attends school where they have considerably more funding than their neighbor. For example, in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania in suburban Philadelphia, students in the northern half of the county have a per pupil expenditure of $9,523, while students in the southern end of the county receive $17,776 to learn. Similarly, in Fort Bend, Texas there is a 70% discrepancy between the neighboring school districts of Kendleton and Needville. This shows that when looking at the individual districts, instead of the aggregate like is used in this study, there are vast discrepancies.
Only school districts are required to report their level of per pupil funding, so for large school districts it is possible, and even likely, that inequities will occur in funding levels within the district\(^{156}\). Dennis J. Condron and Vincent J. Roscigno found that within individual schools within a school district, as well as among school districts, that there are inequalities of funding\(^{157}\). They found that this spending could range up to $4,000 per pupil within schools in the same district\(^{158}\). When controlling for Title I funding, they found that there is a direct relationship between spending, race, and class within an individual district\(^{159}\). However, with this Title I funding, low poverty schools have higher per-pupil funding than other schools. Because Title I funding was designed to even the inequities between schools with historically academic underachieving groups, the idea of the program is for all schools to be funded at approximately the same level by state and local governments, and then the Title I funding will be used to provide additional services and resources to narrow the education gap. This is not what is happening. Instead, school districts are factoring in Title I funding when determining local funding, and then reducing local funding to schools receiving high levels of Title I funding.


\(^{157}\) Condron and Roscigno.

\(^{158}\) Condron and Roscigno, 30.

\(^{159}\) Condron and Roscigno, 27.
This discrepancy is important because it abandons the mission of the Title I program. Schools with additional funding do better than underfunded schools. As a result, scholars have found that there was no improvement in the achievement gap between wealthy and poor schools under this program\textsuperscript{160}. Although there is no direct correlation between school funding and academic success, as in there is no magic level of school funding that will produce consistently passing levels on assessment tests; however, a well funded school district will perform better than an underfunded school district\textsuperscript{161}. By underfunding schools that have a high percentage of historically underachieving students, these underrepresented groups will face significant obstacles in passing standardized tests and performing at a level that would enable the students to go on to higher education. Because states will not allow students to graduate or pass a specific course without passing the state-issued standardized test, many students with poor instruction are forced to retake courses that they would have been capable of passing if they had quality instruction. Condron and Roscigno suggest that a $1000 increase in per pupil funding yields a 6-10\% increase in passing state standardized tests; however, it is unknown at what level an increase in funding will no longer increase student achievement\textsuperscript{162}. Specifically, they found that “if the lowest

\textsuperscript{160} McGuinn, 26.  
\textsuperscript{161} Condron Roscigno, 18.  
\textsuperscript{162} Condron Roscigno, 30.
spending schools were funded at the level of the highest-spending schools, the percentage of students passing the tests could increase 24 percent to 40 percent, depending on the test\textsuperscript{163}. Thus, if school districts would fund all schools equally before they applied Title I funding, it is possible that many minority children would succeed at significantly higher levels and the educational achievement gap would narrow. This would mean that there would be more qualified workers in the work forces, so it would benefit the economy, as well as possibly reducing poverty.

**State of School Funding**

In the United States there are extreme differences when it comes to determining the level of school funding across the country. These differences tend to follow three trends: 1). black and white students do not receive the same amounts of funding, 2). suburban areas receive less funding than urban schools, and 3). those areas with the greatest percentage of private students tend to be funded at higher levels than those schools which have high percentages of public school students. All three of these trends contradict popular thought; however, understanding these trends is important because they illustrate that great strides have been made in equalizing public education since the passage of *Brown v. Board of Education* and that even with

\textsuperscript{163} Condron Roscigno, 30.
high levels of funding of schools that cater to traditionally underachieving groups, increased funding has not resulted in increased academic success.

In the cities studied, there was a vast difference in the actual amount spent per student. In Chicago, Seattle, and Houston, a large percentage of the students each received approximately the same amount of money ($8000-$9000, $7000-$8000, and $6000-$7000, respectively). This means that all of the school districts get roughly equal amounts to spend per child, with a slight variance for cost of living adjustments and community values. However, in Washington, DC and Philadelphia there is a different situation. Here there is a wide variety and range of spending. This shows that there is a much greater variance and more inequality that can be found. Because of this, it is to be expected that Philadelphia and Washington, DC will have greater variance in amount spent per student per race and geographic areas. Additionally, it would be expected that Houston, Seattle, and Chicago would have a smaller disparity.
Funding Discrepancies Between Black and White Students

In all of the areas studied, there is discrepancy in school funding based on race. When examining the district-wide per pupil expenditures across major metropolitan areas, there are differences in expenditures based on race. These numbers include any Title I funding or additional funding by state levels to individual school districts. In Philadelphia, white students received more for their education than students of other races. This is the opposite of the other four regions where Hispanic students actually had the greatest expenditure per student of any racial group. However, as a whole, spending for minority students and spending for white students is roughly equal.

When examined closely, by only using schools that are at least 85% racially homogenous, the numbers tell a different story. As seen below, studies show that the more racial minorities within a school, the higher the funding is. Although this is contrary to popular belief, the main reason for this discrepancy is because of funding specifically targeted to underperforming schools in recent years. In an attempt to get low-performing, urban schools to meet “adequate yearly progress” mandates set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act, many urban school districts found ways to increase funding.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{164} McGuinn, 178
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Funding</th>
<th>Homogenous Black</th>
<th>Average White</th>
<th>Homogenous White</th>
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This increase in funding is a relatively new trend and has not been observed in previous studies\(^{165}\). However, there has not been enough time to see if these increases will actually yield a higher quality of education and if the increase in funding will allow students have equal opportunities to succeed academically. Additionally, because many of these schools have been historically underfunded for so long, short-term increases in funding do not necessarily mean that the money is directly being spent on instructional advancements. Instead, it may be used to replace crumbling infrastructure and to update learning materials. While a new textbook or an overhead projector will increase student learning, it would not have the same effect as increasing spending on increasing teacher training or recruitment that many suburban school districts are able to do to ensure that they have the highest quality faculty available to produce the best quality of instruction to their students.

\(^{165}\) Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*. 
Discrepancy in Funding Between Urban and Suburban Students

Just as the funding patterns according to race are not what many would expect, the funding patterns between suburban and urban schools are not what many, such as Jonathan Kozol, have suggested\(^\text{166}\). In *Shame of the Nation* Jonathan Kozol showed the dramatic differences between urban and suburban schools, but in reality, school districts in the sampled urban counties received more funding, on average, than school districts in suburban school districts.

As seen below, in Philadelphia and Washington, DC, students in urban locations received approximately $1,000 less for their education than their suburban peers. In these cities with the greatest historic segregation and white flight, this is more expected because both suburban Philadelphia and suburban Washington, DC schools historically are some of the best public schools in the nation, while their urban schools are considered to be horrific. Thus, discrepancies in funding, at least to some level, were expected in these locations.

\[^166\text{Jonathan Kozol. The Shame of the Nation.}\]

\[\text{Funding Discrepancy Between Suburban and Urban Schools}\]

- Philadelphia
- DC
- Houston
- Chicago
- Seattle

However, just because society deems it acceptable to fund suburban schools better than urban schools, does not make it right. One thousand dollars per student is a significant amount-- between 10% and 17% of the amount allotted per student. With an additional $1,000, failing urban districts could employ better quality
teachers and provide the teachers with better training. Similarly, it could buy students more textbooks and learning supplies that would give them the resources needed to learn. This inequity is problematic and unequal. In Washington, DC and Philadelphia there is a significant difference in funding between black and white students.

However, in Seattle, Chicago, and Houston the numbers follow a different pattern. In each of the cities, the difference between the urban and suburban schools was less than 4% of the annual budget, so school spending was roughly equal based on location. In fact, in Seattle and Houston, urban schools actually received slightly more for each child than suburban children. While without examining longitudinal data it is impossible to know if there has been a relatively new funding increase in response to increased political pressure in recent years or if funding levels have always been equal despite what scholars and politicians have led Americans to believe. 167

The actual differences between students of different ethnic and racial groups in the major metropolitan areas, as seen below, show specific trends that looking at the macro-level data do not. In every city, other than Seattle, white students in the suburbs received much more for their education than white students in urban areas. However, with the exception of Philadelphia, black students received more funding in urban schools, compared to black students in suburban schools. Hispanic students had a mixed result; they received more funding in urban schools in Washington, DC, Houston, and Seattle, but there is more funding in suburban areas in Chicago and Philadelphia. This shows that there is no clear-cut pattern regarding race, geography,

167 Jonathan Kozol. The Shame of the Nation.
and school funding. Because school funding is a local and state-wide decision, the trends vary from state to state and region to region.

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<tr>
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The reasons for this increase stem from local and state level policies of increasing government funding to improve public education to meet the demands of the public, as well as the federal mandates required by the 'No Child Left Behind Act'\(^\text{168}\). After a series of failed mayoral reforms in major cities across the country during the 1990s, the local governments have begun to increase funding to urban schools in hope of making a difference in the quality of education\(^\text{169}\). Although the funds have increased, it is important to remember that there were stipulations with the


\(^{169}\) Cuban and Usdan, 160
increased allocation that increased the amount that school districts had to pay to meet the requirements set by the state or the city.

**School Funding Based on Private School Attendance**

Similar to the common assumptions made about public school funding according to race and geographic location, the assumptions made about the relationship to private school enrollment are also false. In areas where there is moderate to high private school enrollment, defined as having 7% or more of the student body of the county attending private school, the public school funding levels are actually higher than in the areas where there is a low rate of private school attendance. Seven percent was used because in the ten largest major cities in the United States, private enrollment is at least 7%; thus, it is a good baseline\(^\text{170}\).

In every region public school funding was higher in the regions where there was high private school attendance. This increase ranged from slight to vast. In Seattle the difference was the smallest at only $180, but in the Philadelphia region the difference was much greater—approximately $2400. Houston had no counties with greater than 7% private school enrollment, despite having an 8% overall enrollment according to other calculations, so no comparison could be made\(^\text{171}\).

\(^{170}\) Sander, 1.

\(^{171}\) Sander, 1.
This contradicts the popular assumption that those with political power, who traditionally send their children to private school, will use their power to ensure a lower tax rate through underfunding their public schools. However, it is also true that areas which can historically afford to send their children to private schools are wealthier and have higher property values, thus the tax rate is most likely lower in these regions, even though the overall per pupil expenditure is higher. The tax rates were not included in this analysis, and further research should be done to determine what impact tax rates have on educational quality and funding.

An increase in funding in areas with high private school enrollment could suggest that by removing a large percentage of the eligible children from the public school system, the overall pool of money will increase. If all else—tax rates, property values, school population size, and political power—were equal, areas with high enrollments in private school would automatically have a higher per pupil expenditure because a larger portion of students removed from the public school population. Therefore, this result is not entirely surprising from a logical standpoint; however, it contradicts rational choice ideology because parents who send their children to private school should be using their political power to lower their taxes through underfunding public schools. However, parents who send their children to private schools could just be unsuccessful at lowering their tax rates or could realize that property values increase with quality public schools. It is possible that parents who send their children to private schools will vote to increase school funding to keep the price of their real estate high. Regardless of the reasons, the effect that private schools have on public schools is positive.
There is a wide discrepancy in how public schools are funded in the United States. However, the discrepancy does not follow the expected patterns. Urban, minority students in areas with high private school enrollment have a higher per pupil expenditure than any other group. Although this contradicts popular thought, increased political pressure occurring from reports of failing urban schools has caused various levels of government to increase school funding and make marked improvements in funding of urban education. Thus, there is substantial progress being made in improving the equity of public school funding. However, without examining longitudinal data it is impossible to know whether or not this funding will improve education and whether or not these are relatively new trends reflective of the change in the political climate. What is most likely happening is that there is short term change that is occurring because of the political pressure of No Child Left Behind. Once there is a change in administration and political attention decreases, the levels of funding could return to previously low levels, or the new administration could focus on improving the quality of education in ways that would have long-term systemic change.
Cost of Private Education

The cost of private education at the grade and high school levels is something that is rarely examined by government officials and colleges. It is assumed that because parents consciously decide to pay for the education, the cost is an economic decision equal to purchasing a house or a car, one with largely personal impacts. However, like housing and transportation, there is a dual system of funding for these commodities: public and private. Like education, there is government subsidized housing and public transportation, and those poorest in society will use the publically funded mechanism, while those who have greater financial means will use the alternate private system because they can afford to invest their own resources for a superior product. This leads to a system where public education is not as strong as it potentially could be because those with political power are the ones opting out of the system.\textsuperscript{172}

If this is true, this privatization has significant impacts on the course of the country. Because those who can afford to send their children to private schools also have the discretionary income for indirect, hands-on educational experiences such as traveling, museums, and cultural activities. Similarly, those who have high levels of discretionary income can afford direct educational services such as tutoring, computers, books, and pre-school. Discretionary income traditionally results from a well paying job, something which usually requires education. Because parental education has a direct effect on a child's achievement, parents who are able to send their children to private school are traditionally well educated.

\textsuperscript{172} Fairlie and Resch, 32.
Thus, the advantages that private school students have, and the wealth that they are traditionally associated with having, are considerable. It is unreasonable to assume that a student born in a single-parent household where the parent only has a high school diploma will be able to compete at the same level as a student born in a dual-parent household where the parents have graduate degrees. In the first case, the parent is likely to have to work two jobs in order to be able to pay for the family’s basic needs, causing him or her to be out of the house for many hours a day. This means that the child is most likely alone or in the care of a neighbor or relative, someone who he or she has been in care of since birth, instead of a pre-school teacher. Because of the lack of resources and the time constraints of the parents, children will hear fewer words, read fewer books, and spend less time on a computer than their wealthy peers. These wealthier peers will have been raised in a household where it is not uncommon to have a stay at home parent who will work with the children, in addition to sending the children to preschool, so that they take advantage of the critical early years of a child’s development. This means that wealthy children will enter schools where they are considerably more educationally advanced than poor children.

However, in an economically integrated school wealthy children are able to use their advancement to help their poorer peers advance. Additionally, the wealthy children are able to learn from the poor children about their hands on experiences, something that is necessary for cross cultural understanding and the eventual

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173 Suskind.  
174 Suskind.  
175 Ferguson  
176 Ferguson  
177 American Psychological Association.
eradication of poverty\textsuperscript{178}. Private schools prevent this understanding from happening because it creates a caste-like system where the wealthiest children attend private school and middle class children attend public school. Although many middle class students attend private school and wealthy students attend public school, to have the choice to attend private school, it is necessary to have at least a few thousand dollars of discretionary income a year to pay for private schooling.

**Sources of Private School Funding**

The formula to calculate the cost of private school differs from the calculations used by public school. These calculations are set on a case-by-case basis by each school. Because private schools do not receive the same types of discounts that many school districts receive for aspects such as buying in bulk, many of their costs for learning supplies are actually higher. One of the ways that they counteract this is by passing on activity and textbook fees to students, as well as requiring that their students purchase their own school supplies (not all urban schools require this, but most suburban do). Similarly, private schools also can reduce costs through eliminating transportation to school. Additionally, private schools traditionally save money by hiring non-unionized and uncertified teachers who are paid less than public school teachers. In religious schools, many of the administrators and teachers are clergy whose salary is paid by the religious organization connected to the school. Clergy are paid much less than a public school administrator and teacher. Thus, the cost of private schools may be less than the costs to educate a child in public school. However, it is impossible to know what the exact costs are, because few schools

\textsuperscript{178} Dewey, 20.
actually release full financial reports that are easily accessible to the public, even though they are required to by law.

Traditionally, schools are funded through combination of measures: tuition, endowment, fundraising, and institutional support. Depending on the type of school, these measures combine in creating a budget to fund the school. Traditionally, religiously based institutions utilize all four methods, while secular schools tended not to implement fundraising and were not supported by a church connected to the school. Those schools serving students with special needs were traditionally funded by the state with occasional funding by tuition. The schools that tended to base the cost of their education heavily on endowments were the prestige private schools: schools which traditionally have been open for at least one hundred years, have tuition in excess of $20,000, and cater to a student body composed of the upper class.

Endowments occur when alumni and friends of a school donate money to a school to help cultivate success and excellence. Many schools with large endowments use the interest from these funds to help cover the costs of scholarships, building state of the art facilities, and subsidize the cost of the education. However, to have an endowment schools need to have wealthy donors who are able to give substantial gifts to build an endowment. Traditionally, this only happens when schools have been in existence long enough to build a reputation large enough to get their students into prestigious colleges and universities and alumni are able to make enough money to donate to their alma mater. This means that the only schools that regularly rely on support from their endowment are prestige schools because they are the only schools
that continuously produce students who earn enough money to significantly donate to increase the endowment.

The most common source of funding of private schools is tuition. All but a handful of the schools studied instituted tuition. Tuition rates varied widely, as seen below, with the lowest tuition being $0 and the greatest tuition being $33,390 annually. The schools that have no tuition are traditionally either religious schools where the denomination covers the entire cost of a student’s education or schools that are paid for by foundations. In Houston the majority of tuition ranged from $3,000-$6,000 per year, while in Chicago the range was less: from $2,000-$5,000. Philadelphia and Washington, DC had wider ranges, with $2,000-$7,500 and $3,000 to $10,000, respectively. Seattle has the highest average tuition rates with the majority ranging from $6000 to $12,500. Traditionally, the schools with the lowest tuition are religiously affiliated and those with the highest tuition are secular, prestige, private schools. Many of the schools, especially religiously affiliated schools, had multiple tuition rates depending on a family’s individual demographic. Thus, if families were a member of the church, synagogue, or mosque affiliated with the school, they traditionally received a discount. Additionally, if parents had multiple children within the school, they tended to receive a discount.

Institutional support is also a key element in funding education for many private schools. This support can come from either the religious institution supporting the school or from a branch of government. Traditionally, the government only funds students with disabilities. In this case the school district or state will pay the private school tuition to enroll the disabled student in the school. This typically happens
because the needs of the child are so great that the public school cannot accommodate them. The other form of institutional support comes from individual churches. These groups traditionally will subsidize the cost of education for contributing members of their church. The Catholic Church provides this type of support. They do this to members who normally contribute at least $20 per week, so in reality parents who send their children to private Catholic schools are actually paying $1040 a year beyond the price of the tuition.

Religiously affiliated schools, especially Catholic schools, were the only ones which utilized fundraising as a way of covering the cost of their education. Many Catholic schools have a requirement to fundraise a certain amount of money every year through either purchasing gift cards, turning in receipts, selling items, and donating services. Similarly, the entire congregation is responsible to support these fundraisers, even if members of the church community do not send their children that school. If families do not raise their targeted fundraising amount, they have to pay the amount out of pocket. This creates a process where although religious schools have lower tuition, their actual cost is higher because parents are required to fundraise to cover the rest of the cost to educate their child.

Thus, the actual cost of educating a child differs from the tuition. Many private schools subsidize tuition through either support from the government or a religious organization, interest from their endowment, and fundraising. This creates a system where there is great disparity in how much a parent pays to send his or her child to a private school. However, Catholic schools, which have the lowest tuition,
Cost of Private School Tuition

Houston

- under 1000: 5%
- $1000-$1999: 10%
- $2000-$2999: 15%
- $3000-$3999: 23%
- $4000-$4999: 15%
- $5000-$5999: 12%
- $6000-$6999: 9%
- $7000-$7999: 9%
- $8000-$8999: 5%
- $9000-$9999: 5%
- $10000-$19999: 4%
- $20000-$39999: 4%
- $40000+: 2%

Chicago

- under 1000: 4%
- $1000-$1999: 21%
- $2000-$2999: 17%
- $3000-$3999: 18%
- $4000-$4999: 7%
- $5000-$5999: 21%
- $6000-$6999: 14%
- $7000-$7999: 14%
- $8000-$8999: 12%
- $9000-$9999: 7%
- $10000-$19999: 2%
- $20000-$39999: 2%
- $40000+: 2%

Seattle

- under 1000: 23%
- $1000-$1999: 4%
- $2000-$2999: 4%
- $3000-$3999: 9%
- $4000-$4999: 4%
- $5000-$5999: 4%
- $6000-$6999: 4%
- $7000-$7999: 4%
- $8000-$8999: 4%
- $9000-$9999: 4%
- $10000-$19999: 4%
- $20000-$39999: 4%
- $40000+: 4%

Philadelphia

- under 1000: 3%
- $1000-$1999: 4%
- $2000-$2999: 23%
- $3000-$3999: 4%
- $4000-$4999: 3%
- $5000-$5999: 3%
- $6000-$6999: 3%
- $7000-$7999: 3%
- $8000-$8999: 3%
- $9000-$9999: 3%
- $10000-$19999: 3%
- $20000-$39999: 3%
- $40000+: 3%

DC

- under 1000: 1%
- $1000-$1999: 22%
- $2000-$2999: 13%
- $3000-$3999: 6%
- $4000-$4999: 6%
- $5000-$5999: 6%
- $6000-$6999: 6%
- $7000-$7999: 6%
- $8000-$8999: 6%
- $9000-$9999: 6%
- $10000-$19999: 6%
- $20000-$39999: 6%
- $40000+: 6%
- unable: 6%
are the schools with the greatest diversity, both racially and economically. Similarly, prestige schools tend to be the least diverse and tend to have the highest tuition rates.

**Costs of Private Education**

Although there are many factors affecting the cost of private education, there are clear rates and patterns that emerge regarding private school attendance and tuition. First, white children are more likely to pay higher rates to go to private school than minority children. Second, there is no correlation between tuition in private schools and the racial demographics of the area in which that school is located. Third, the cost of private school is not reflective of the distribution of wealth in the area. Fourth, the cost of tuition regionally is tied with the historic nature of white flight. These four conditions combine to create a system where private school attendance is not based simply on race and class, but instead on values. Those that value prestige will send their children to the prestige schools located within these areas, while the most common values are religious in nature. The people that attend these schools are not the wealthiest in society, but do have enough discretionary income available to send their children to private school.

**Tuition Cost and Race**

There are racial discrepancies between what white and minority children pay to attend private school. As seen below, in every city, other than Seattle, white children pay significantly more than minority children to attend private schools. Combined with the patterns of private attendance, it is clear that the private schools that white students attend tend to be homogenous and have a significantly higher tuition rates. In Seattle, Hispanic students pay about $180 more than white students.
With the exception of Seattle, the racial differences are significant. In Philadelphia, black students paid $1,300 less and Hispanic students paid $1,700 less than white students. Similarly, in Chicago minority students paid about $1,700 less than white students. The differences in Houston and Washington, DC were the most extreme. Hispanic students in Washington, DC paid $2,600 less and black students $3,700 less. Similarly, in Houston black students paid $2,800 less and Hispanic students $3,600 less.

These differences are important for several reasons. First, because of institutional discrimination and the types of schools that minorities have historically been allowed to gain admission into, few minorities attend prestige schools. Thus, they are not attending schools with extremely high tuition, as well as a higher probability of future success. Instead, many minority students attend religious schools and secular, non-prestige schools. These schools have lower educational expenditures and tend to have lower levels of graduate success\(^\text{179}\). Thus, minority students are not attending private schools which will give them significant benefits upon graduation; however, these schools are still often better than urban schools and do have long-term benefits for students.

\(^{179}\) Sander and NAEP
Tuition Cost and Racial Diversity

While there is a correlation between race and cost of education, there is no correlation between the cost of tuition and the racial demographics of a particular county. When examining the cost of tuition, per pupil, compared to the percentage of white students in each county, there is simply no correlation between tuition and racial makeup. As seen below, there are no valid conclusions which can be drawn from the data other than there is no correlation. This means that some white students in counties with a high percentage of minorities are just as likely to pay high tuition rates as students in mostly white areas.

However, because tuition data was gathered based upon a 15% random sample of the entire private school population in a given region, some counties are underrepresented and others are overrepresented. Additionally, because tuition rates vary so much, it is possible that the sample only included prestige schools in a given county that skewed the data artificially high and several Catholic schools in other regions that skew the data artificially low. Regardless of the possible explanations, the data is clear that there is not a set correlation between the racial makeup in a given location and the cost of tuition.

The lack of correlation between tuition and racial demographics is significant because it means that, as a whole, there is no distinct economic advantage to living in
particular regions to pay for private schools. While some would think that living in a heavily minority populated area would yield private schools with lower tuition, this is not the case. Similarly, it was believed that in suburban areas with quality public schools tuition would be high. Again, this was not the case. Instead, each school determines its funding on an individual case.

**Cost and Public School Expenditure**

Just as private school tuition is not based on race, private school tuition is not based on public school expenditure. According to classical economics, it is expected that in areas with high per pupil expenditures there are quality public schools, the private schools would need to charge less tuition in an effort to gain a significant percentage of the market share. However, it would also be plausible that the pattern would reverse because those living in economically thriving areas would have a higher tax base and their public schools would be better funded. Thus, parents with high levels of discretionary income would be in areas were the public schools are well funded.

However, neither or these patterns emerged. When comparing the average tuition levels in counties compared to the average per pupil expenditure, it becomes clear that no patterns emerge. In some cities, such as Philadelphia and Washington, DC, the tuition rates fluctuate without regard to public school expenditures. However, in Chicago and Seattle, private school tuition rises as public school expenditures increase. Finally, in Houston, private school tuition decreases as public school funding increases.
The lack of pattern is noteworthy because it demonstrates that private schools operate truly on an individual basis, without regard to market value or community demographics. This is significant because it suggests that there is another motivating force that causes parents to make the decision to send their children to these schools. These reasons, at least on a macro level, may not be based in economic status or racial bias. Instead, it becomes clear that the only economic factor involved is having enough discretionary income to send children to private school. Unlike car ownership, there are many families who have the financial means to afford to send their children to school, but opt not to. This is not necessarily based on race or biased behavior; but, instead is contributed to by a wide variety of social factors.

**Cost and Location**

Because there is no correlation between private school tuition and public spending, nor is there a correlation between tuition and racial diversity, it is expected that there will not be much of a correlation between geographic location and tuition cost. And, at a first glance below, the findings appear to follow the same random pattern that other levels of analysis have shown. However, the findings actually show a correlation: in areas where there is great white flight tuition costs are significantly
higher in the suburban areas compared to the urban areas, while in areas where there has not been historically large levels of white flight, tuition costs are higher in urban areas.

This results in suburban students in Philadelphia paying $4,200 more than their urban peers to attend private school. Similarly, private students in Washington, DC pay $3,200 more than their suburban peers to attend private school. This is a significant amount. It is reflective of the fact that students in suburban Washington, DC and students in Philadelphia are paying more for their education. One of the reasons for this discrepancy is because in these cities there are more prestige private high schools with astronomically high tuition. In these cities the prestige schools within the cities are religiously based with church-supported tuition, while the secular prestige schools are located in the suburbs. These schools skew the data to make it appear that the tuition is considerably more on average than what the majority of people pay.

In Seattle, Houston, and Chicago follow the reverse trend. In these regions there are fewer prestige schools which skew the average tuition. Additionally, the secular prestige schools which do exist are located within urban counties, resulting in the skew of the data in favor of the urban areas. Additionally, because white flight is not as prevalent in these cities, the wealthy are more likely to live within urban
counties; thus, there is more discretionary income available for more expensive schooling.

Because a significant percentage of students attend private school each year, it is necessary to understand how private school's tuition affects the education funding process and to determine which children are pulled out of the traditional education system. The findings are clear: there is no uniform way that private school tuition in the US affects public education. Most students who attend private school do not attend prestige schools with tuition rates in excess of $20,000. Instead, they most likely attend the local Catholic school with annual tuition from $2,000-$8,000. Parents who send their children are sending their children to these schools are not considerably wealthy and do not hold great political power, instead they are sending their children to these schools because of the values that these schools institute in their children. This average student has no impact in skewing the political process and negatively affecting public education, so it is important not to place blame on individuals, but instead on the systemic reasons why a dual educational system harms the overall education of all children.
Conclusion

Many politicians and educators believe that the reason for the academic achievement gap between white and minority students occurs for either economic or social reasons. The economic theorists believe that white, suburban peers outperform their minority, urban peers because suburban students traditionally come from wealthier homes where the students attend smaller schools which receive more funding. Contrastingly, the socially based theorists believe that the achievement gap results because those students who were raised in environments most prone to academic success are the ones who attend segregated suburban and private school. Based on this sample, neither of these theories appears to be accurate. These conclusions were drawn from anecdotal evidence and do not reflect the current climate of public education in the United States. Although they may have been accurate before No Child Left Behind, and many view them as accurate today, this sample has questioned their validity.

This study reflects that what politicians and policy experts assume is correct is simply not so. Politicians and activists have made the country believe that for equality in education to occur, it is necessary to increase funding for public schooling. Yet, it is known that urban schools within the cities studied do not fare as well on standardized tests as suburban children, yet urban children receive more funding. It is important to remember that with comparisons such as this one, historical situations are being compared with the current state. Progress is possible, and it looks like it is occurring. This goes against what scholars have lead Americans to believe. However, it is important to realize that although increases in funding can buy new textbooks and
smart boards, this funding may be frivolous. There is no reason why students need smart boards, when overhead projectors and chalk boards have educated children excellently for years. Similarly, there is no need to build a fitness center when children can obtain physical fitness through running and playing inexpensive games such as basketball and kickball.

This is not to say that per pupil expenditures are not important, they are because they reflect the values of the community. Because parents believe that increased spending improves schools, the districts with the highest tax rates should be the communities with the highest value of education. Additionally, discrepancies in per pupil spending are important to understand because it reflects a spirit of inequality that is crucial to understand when the system is accused of being discriminatory and biased in favor of a particular group.

Just as the public has been misled by the importance of per pupil funding, politicians have led Americans to believe that their neighborhood schools are acceptable, instead of encouraging Americans to question the very principles which America holds true. By courts and legislatures refusing to encourage school districts to integrate, politicians are sending the message to the American people that apartheid schooling is okay. Despite research that clearly says that schooling is best when it is integrated, the government continues to support the racially biased practices of neighborhood schools and quota-less integration.

Similarly, the public is misled about private schools. Many parents believe that private schools are much better than public schools. This is simply not the case. Private school students are only more successful because of the social factors that
occur outside of the classroom. Thus, the evidence suggests that school choice programs are not a solution to fix the public school system. Instead, it would be much more beneficial to improve the quality of public education and reduce the structural barriers that disadvantaged students experience.

For public schools to increase their quality and improve student achievement for all students, regardless of race and socioeconomic status, it is necessary to 1). Combine school districts and reassign school attendance, 2). Eliminate poverty, and 3.) Institute comprehensive school reform. These three reforms would improve public education in a way that would save taxpayers money, as well as substantially improve the quality of education.

**Consolidated School Districts**

Because there are vast discrepancies between urban and suburban districts in the types of students and funding of education, it is necessary to combine school districts so that there will be a more equal playing field. Although this would not be plausible across state lines, if school districts within a metropolitan district combined and reassigned school attendance zones, utilizing cross bussing and transfers, school achievement would increase because the worst schools would not be filled with students who statistically have the worst chances of success. Within these districts, all students and schools would receive the same quality of teachers, who receive the same salaries and teaching materials. This will reduce the inequity that occurs between suburban and urban schools.

Because all students will be attending schools with equal resources within the school system, it will reduce the need for school districts to adopt expensive building
projects to lure people moving into the district into their schools. There will be no need to build new lacrosse fields or swimming pools unless the facilities require it. Additionally, wasteful “prestige” spending that occurs between neighboring school districts when purchasing unneeded new computers and smart boards can be eliminated because there will be no need to have competition. Instead there would just be solid, well-performing schools. Because parents do not pay tuition at public schools, it is ridiculous that public schools are constantly trying to outdo each other with little potential benefit.

Combining school districts will benefit the tax payers substantially because it school districts will be buying large quantities of supplies and will be able to receive discounts for purchasing in bulk. Similarly, because tax rates vary greatly between school district, it would equalize the tax base. Thus, low income parents would pay less in school taxes than they currently do, while many wealthy parents would not experience an increase. Because parents are able to have better funded schools at a lower cost, combining school districts is extremely logical.

A combined school district will improve society because it will instill a message that all students are equal, regardless of race and income. Additionally, it will send a strong message to students that society wants to give every child and equal chance of success. It is necessary to combine school districts to have this intermingling and distribution of wealth occur. It is not that the expenditure itself has a tremendous impact on education, but more that the inequity in funding demonstrates an inequity in societal values.
Eliminate Poverty

All of the school reforms in the world would not make a substantial difference without eliminating the root of many education problems—poverty\textsuperscript{180}. Children who are raised in poverty enter school with less preparation for school, do worse in school, and are less likely to graduate\textsuperscript{181}. By instituting specific programs to reduce poverty, and its effects on children, the government can improve school success and the quality of live for its citizens.

Instituting a reasonable minimum wage that is high enough for a person to reasonably raise a family working 40 hours a week is necessary to improve education. Because many parents are working two or three jobs, they are not home when their children are home. Thus the children are less likely to do their homework and are less likely to be read to. By increasing the minimum wage so that parents can be around to help their children grow and develop will substantially increase the quality of education, as well as reduce a number of social problems associated with absent parents.

To combat poverty, parents need to find a decent job. Good jobs require an education that teaches the skills that employers are looking for in a skills-based economy\textsuperscript{182}. The best way to train workers is to make community colleges affordable for working parents. This can be through programs that allow parents to take one or two free courses a semester, providing child care, and focusing on technical

\textsuperscript{181} Diamond, 496.
\textsuperscript{182} Edward Gordon. The 2010 Meltdown: Solving the Impending Job Crisis.(Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2005), 38.
certificates instead of traditional degrees. Giving parents the resources that they need
to be able to provide for their families will allow parents to raise their family out of
poverty. Additionally, when students see that their parents are able to succeed in
college, they will be more likely to want to work to attend school.

Similarly, instituting policies where all students can enter full-day preschool is
necessary because the earliest years of life are the most formative in shaping a child’s
academic ability and desire to learn. Because many poor parents cannot afford pre-
school, this service must be affordable to all children. Similarly, because of
transportation issues and to combat the effects of poverty, pre-schools should not
follow the traditional school hours. Instead they should start their day shortly before
parents have to report work and end after parents end working for the day. This
extended school day will help give the children who need it the most a boost in their
educational promise. Additionally, it will allow working parents to send their children
to pre-school, because many current pre-kindergartens require parents to pick up and
drop off their children during the work day. This is not an option for low income
parents. Eliminating poverty is not the only solution to improving public education,
but it is necessary first step to ensure that all children come to school able to learn.

Comprehensive School Reform

Reducing poverty and integrating schools will reduce the structural barriers
affecting education; however, it will do little to generate actual improvement of the
educational system. The problem is that the current system is flawed. Because
politicians want credit for reforms, they institute reforms based on business-models
and new ways of teaching the material, as well as mandating tests, without consideration of what actually works to improve schools.

For schools to improve the quality of education, they have to institute reforms that have been proven to work. Because politicians have rarely taught in the classroom and generally have little expertise in educational policy, they are not well-suited to craft education policy. Instead, education scholars and teachers should work together to develop a sound curriculum with proven, longitudinal results, and institute that curriculum for a set period of time. This will allow teachers to learn how to teach the new curriculum, as well as to make sure that the constant changing of the curriculum has a negative impact on the students. This curriculum should be comprehensive and should allow individual teachers and schools enough academic freedom to teach in a way that will have the most impact on their students.

While the new curriculum should have uniform assessment, excessive high-stakes testing is a waste of resources and negatively affects learning. Instead, schools should adopt comprehensive examinations periodically that test to make sure that students are progressing in the basic skills necessary for academic test. The questions should be basic and straight-forward; making sure students can meet the standards at the simplest and most basic level. Thus, standardized tests should be pass-fail and measure competence, not excellence. Assessing excellence is the role of individual teachers, not the role of the government. The US government will be able to mandate high achievement through its standards, and with these standards will the overall quality of education improve.
Schools in America are not performing at the levels which they could be, and should be. It is up to politicians and citizens alike to work to improve the system. Without demanding equality in quality and access, the United States will never be a land where “all men are created equal”. To generate significant improvement, individual men and women will have to pressure their school boards and state legislatures to make comprehensive changes to the educational system. If these changes are made, all American children will be able to have a chance to live out their childhood dreams. However, if the system continues in its current direction, poor children will know that dreaming of becoming a doctor or an artist is unreasonable. Without pressuring the government to make drastic improvements to education, the American dream of every child being able to do anything he or she puts his or her mind to will become a myth and apartheid like segregation will continue. American children deserve to fulfill their dreams. They deserve better than the education we are currently giving them.
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