Linking to Opportunity

Student Assignment After Seattle & Louisville

Golden Opportunity Summit on March 27, 2010
Prepared by: Gina Chirichigno

Charles Hamilton Houston | INSTITUTE FOR RACE & JUSTICE

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

A Hundred Unseen Forces

"

Men and women of all races are born with the same range of abilities. But ability is not just the product of birth. Ability is stretched or stunted by the family that you live with, and the neighborhood you live in–by the school you go to and the poverty or the richness of your surroundings. It is the product of a hundred unseen forces playing upon the little infant, the child, and finally the man.
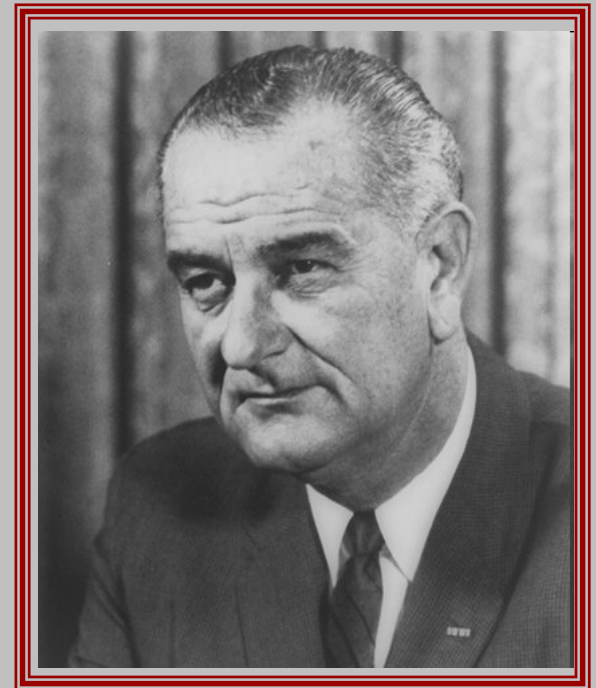
**President Lyndon Johnson
June 4, 1965**

Whose Problem Is Inequality?

> **There's a <u>lack of moral, political, and intellectual integrity</u> in this suppression of awareness of how social and economic disadvantage lowers achievement. Our first obligation should be to <u>analyze social problems accurately</u>; only then can we design effective solutions. Presenting a deliberately flawed version of reality, fearing that the truth will lead to excuses, is not only corrupt but also self-defeating.**

–Richard Rothstein

Developing an Awareness

"Successful high-poverty public schools that beat the odds paint a heartening story that often attracts considerable media attention. In 2000… [the Heritage Foundation's No Excuses report] meant to show that high-poverty schools can work well. The author proudly declared that he 'found not one or two [but] twenty-one high-poverty high performing schools.' Unfortunately, these twenty-one schools were dwarfed by the seven thousand high-poverty schools identified by the U.S. Department of Education as low performing."

- Low-poverty schools are 22x more likely to be high-performing than high-poverty schools (Harris 2006)
- Studies show that the effects of concentrated poverty rapidly increase at two thresholds: between about 7-20% and over 40%
- Low-income students make up 75.6% of BPS student population (range of 29.6 – 99.3%).

This knowledge helps explain the importance of equity-minded student assignment policies.

What is PICS?

- **In 2007, the US Supreme Court struck down two voluntary student assignment plans (i.e. not court-ordered) that were designed to reduce segregation in schools.**
- **These cases are known as "PICS" or the "Seattle/Louisville" cases (Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1).**
- **Two important legal findings:**
  - **Avoiding racial isolation and/or increasing diversity is a compelling state interest**
  - **School districts generally should not use the race of individual students to make decisions about student assignment**

"This Nation has a moral and ethical obligation to fulfill its historic commitment to creating an integrated society that ensures equal opportunity for all of its children. A compelling interest exists in avoiding racial isolation, an interest that a school district, in its discretion and expertise, may choose to pursue. Likewise, a district may consider it a compelling interest to achieve a diverse student population."

Context Matters

- **No one method will work for every school district.**

- **Each school district must analyze the PICS decision, evaluate constitutionally permissible options, and determine the assignment plan that will work best to promote integrated schools, *given its particular history, demographics and relevant political considerations.***

- **Assignment plans that account for race in this way are:**
  - **less likely to be constitutionally vulnerable; and**
  - **likely to be more effective at creating diverse schools than plans without any such consideration of race.**

There are many ways to approach the challenge of integrating schools.

Post-PICS Approaches

Safe Harbor Methods	Race-Neutral, But Not Explicitly Endorsed in PICS	Accounting for Individual Student Characteristics*	Statewide & Federal Policies
• Strategic site selection of new schools • Drawing attendance zones with general recognition of the racial demographics of neighborhoods • Strategic allocation of resources for special programs • Recruiting students and faculty in a targeted manner • Tracking enrollments, performance and other statistics by race	• Renovating and expanding existing schools • School pairing and/or grade realignment • Multi-district consolidation	• Student admissions to special programs • Student transfers • Interdistrict transfer programs *Schools or districts using these methods should be careful as to when and how they consider an individual student's race * An individual student's race should not be the sole determining factor	• Open enrollment laws (statewide) • State level funding to address racial isolation or promote diversity in schools • Magnet Schools Assistance Program

Two Primary Approaches
of Promoting Diversity & Addressing Racial Isolation

- **Approach #1**: *Race Neutral Plans* rely on factors other than race to assign students.

- **Approach #2**: *Race Conscious Plans* take account of race as one factor among many, usually as part of a process that does not classify individual students.

School districts often choose to consider student assignment factors that have been demonstrated to correlate with student achievement.

The Race-Neutral Approach

- **<u>Individual family or student characteristics</u> other than race are considered to achieve a racially diverse student body.**
- **Can be used to determine how, *e.g.*, to prioritize school choice, transfers, and selection of students into specialized schools or programs.**

*Socioeconomic Status
(e.g. free & reduced price lunch eligibility)*

Parental Income

*Neighborhood
Academic Achievement
(at prior or current school)*

*English-Language
Learner Status*

*Parental Education
Background*

Housing Status

*Household Structure
(dual parent, single parent, etc.)*

The Race-Conscious Approach:
Using a Neighborhood Diversity Index

- **School districts could classify neighborhoods by considering one or more diversity criteria to create a diversity score or index.**

- **Can take account of a wide range of neighborhood characteristics, which reflect the <u>average demographics</u> of those residing in a particular neighborhood.**

- **Priority is then given to students from neighborhoods whose diversity score or index increases the diversity of the school.**

Racial Composition

<u>Plus Other Relevant Considerations:</u>

Property Values

Family Income

Academic Achievement

Concentrated Poverty

Parental Education Background

General Geographic Information

One Caveat

Many of the nation's largest urban school districts are segregated to a degree which does not allow for effective integration within the district.

- It is best to work incrementally towards a system of regional education, by assisting low-performing schools <u>and</u> facilitating access of inner-city students to high-performing schools

- Reform efforts must extend beyond education (e.g. to housing, public health, out-of-school time, etc.)

- Consideration of tracking, service learning, early learning, and school-to-career reform opportunities

- Strengthening community support and facilitating communication amongst diverse stakeholders

Addressing Hypersegregation

- Offer students more choice (perhaps with district-run charter and magnet schools, including some which draw from the suburbs)
- Provide affordable housing in job-rich, high-opportunity neighborhoods
- Improve linkages that help students in failing schools attend low-poverty, high-performing schools
- Increase the number of high-quality teachers in the highest poverty failing schools

A well-designed student assignment plan can narrow inequality, but cannot completely eliminate it.

This is especially true in hypersegregated school districts.

The Importance of Transportation

Transportation is an <u>equity tool</u>.

- **Transportation often helped maintain school segregation prior to *Brown* (largely in the South).**

- **The first formal discussion of free transportation was written into the 1965 federal desegregation guidelines outlining how districts should comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.**

- **Rising transportation costs and declining budgets are a national phenomenon— transportation has been one of the areas where school districts have made cuts.**

Given the strong link between residential segregation and neighborhood schools, access to free transportation historically has been—and still remains— a fundamental component of desegregation efforts.
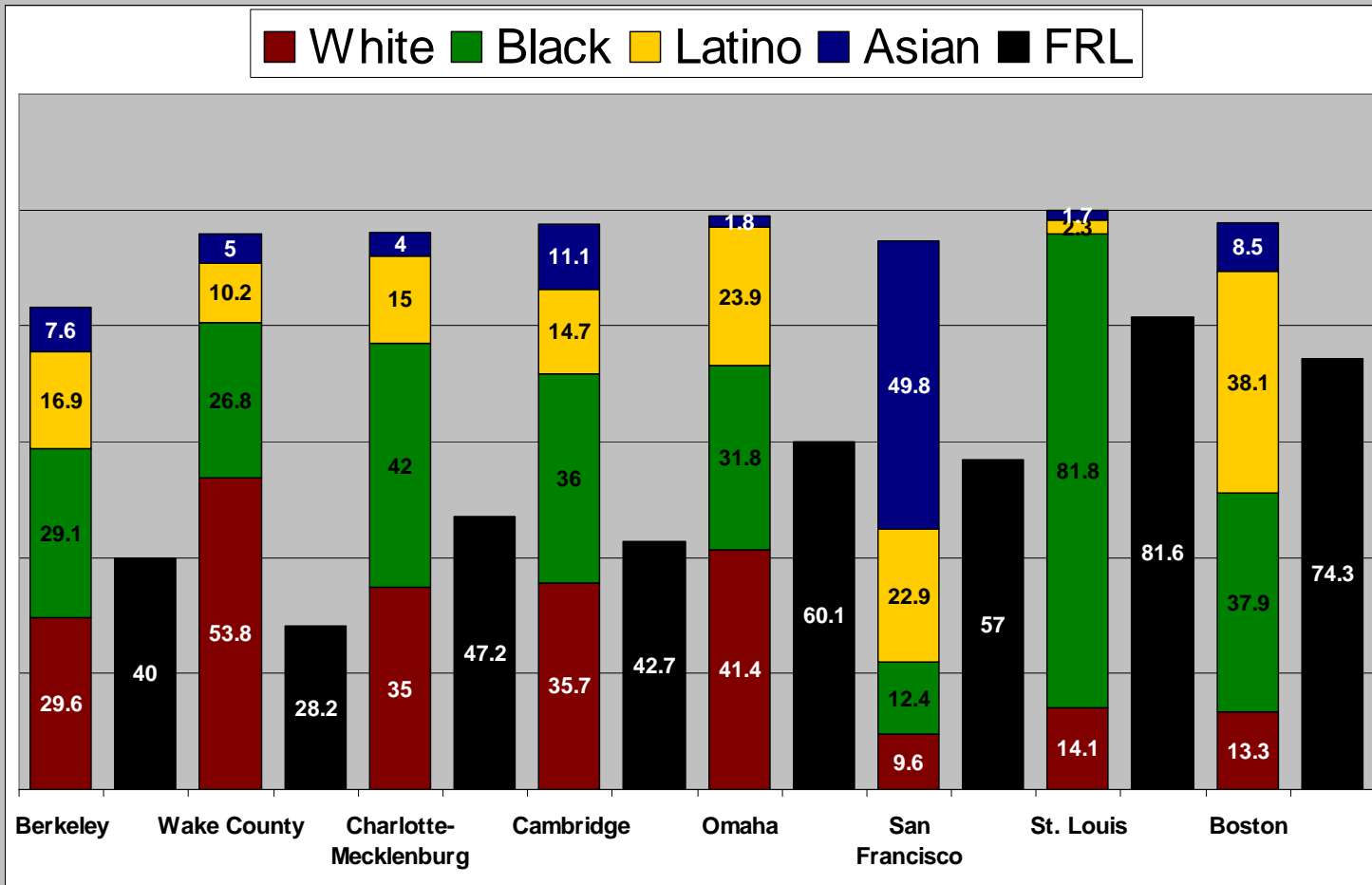
Source: Civil Rights Project Transportation Fact Sheet (2009)

Models We'll Discuss Today

- **Berkeley, CA**
- **San Francisco, CA**
- **Wake County, NC***
- **Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC**
- **Cambridge, MA**
- **Omaha, NE**
- **St. Louis, MO**

To be addressed in more detail by other presenters:

- **Louisville, KY**
- **Montclair, NJ**
- **Hartford, CT**

Programs that have removed race as a consideration in assigning students have struggled to achieve the goals of promoting diversity and reducing racial isolation in schools.

Comparison of Racial and SES Demographics

Legend: White (red), Black (green), Latino (yellow), Asian (blue), FRL (black)

City	White	Black	Latino	Asian	FRL
Berkeley	29.6	29.1	16.9	7.6	40
Wake County	53.8	26.8	10.2	5	28.2
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	35	42	15	4	47.2
Cambridge	35.7	36	14.7	11.1	42.7
Omaha	41.4	31.8	23.9	1.8	60.1
San Francisco	9.6	12.4	22.9	49.8	57
St. Louis	14.1	81.8	2.3	1.7	81.6
Boston	13.3	37.9	38.1	8.5	74.3

Important Context for Boston

- **Second Highest Percentage of Low-Income Students**
- **Highest Percentage of Latino Students**
- **38.8% of BPS students' first language is not English and 20.4% of students are limited English proficient**

Stated Goals of Plans

Equity and Diversity Goals

- Provide students with equal educational opportunities (equity)
- Overall educational excellence/quality
- Equal academic achievement at all district schools
- (Improved) Student achievement
- Maximizing/Increasing SES diversity
- Racial diversity (opportunity to attend school with students of diverse backgrounds)

Other Goals

- School-home proximity
- Utilization of specialized programs
- Maximizing student stability
- Choice

"[C]hoosing or attending one school rather than another will confer neither significant advantage nor disadvantage to pupils enrolled at any individual site."

Berkeley, CA

Plans Using a Diversity Index

	Concept	Diversity Factors	Priorities

Berkeley	• **Elementary schools divided into 3 attendance zones (11 schools)**
	• **District divided into 445 planning areas (4-8 blocks)**
	• **Diversity index 1-3 for each planning area**
		<u>Neighborhood DI:</u>
		• **% students of color**
		• **parental income levels**
		• **level of parental education**
			• **student/parent preference**
			• **neighborhood diversity index**
			• **6 priority categories, based on:**
			  – **current students**
			  – **residing w/in zone**
			  – **sibling preference**
			  – **in/out of district**

San Francisco* ***experiencing some resegregation after new plan implemented**	• **Diversity Index (DI) created for each student** • **Student's DI is compared with current student enrollment at desired school** • **Assignments based on whether student will contribute to diversity of the desired school**	<u>Individual Student DI:</u> • **extreme poverty (3 factors)** • **SES (FRL)** • **home language** • **academic achievement status (pre-K attendance OR score below 30% on most recent standardized test)** <u>Sending School Performance:</u> • **academic performance rank of sending school (rank 1-10 in CA)**	**Parents choose up to 7 preferred schools. Assignment based on:** • **school/home proximity** • **diversity index**
Louisville	• **District is divided into "Area A" and "Area B," based on demographic characteristics.** • **Diversity guideline: No school shall have <15% nor >50% of students who reside in "Area A" (exceptions for ELL programs and alt./special schools).**	<u>Diversity Index:</u> • **median household income** • **adult educational attainment of people age 25** • **% minority students in the resides area**	• **student/parent preference (parents choose 2 "Area A" and 2 "Area B" schools, and up to 2 magnet schools)** • **diversity index designation (A/B)**

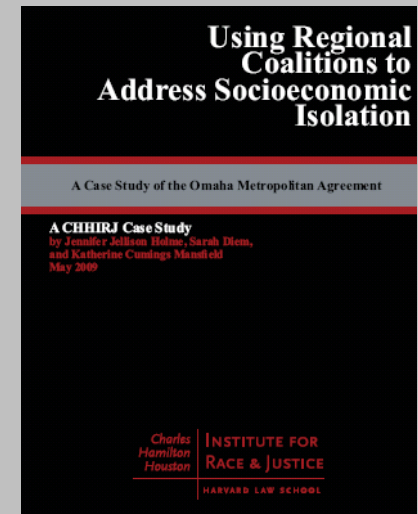# Balancing Achievement & SES w/in District

	Concept	Diversity Factors	Priorities
Wake County* **Public support and awareness is crucial.** •"Wake County's experience may not be generalizable because of the unusually strong and cohesive commitment to racial diversity and equality in its schools…" •Throughout the 1990s, well-funded anti-busing candidates failed to win a seat on the school board. •Note: This plan was recently voted down by the school committee.	**At each school:** • **no more than 40% FRL students** • **no more than 25% students performing below grade level on state exams** **Data is used to create, and modify, assignment boundaries:** • **SES (FRL) w/in "node"** • **academic performance status of "node" (reading level)**	<u>Individual Student:</u> • **SES (FRL)** • **academic performance**	-originally assigned to "base" school, must apply to attend different school -parent/student preference -SES/achievement status of schools -school/home proximity -stability -full use of capacity **Choice is done by a computerized lottery system.**
Charlotte-Mecklenburg*	-academic achievement and SES status of student and school population as a whole: • <u>SES Concentration.</u> Schools are identified as overconcentrated if they have at least +30% FRL recipients than district average • <u>Achievement Status.</u> Schools are considered underperforming if % of students reading below grade level is at least +10% than district average	<u>Individual Student:</u> • **SES (FRL)** • **academic performance** <u>School Level:</u> • **SES (FRL)** • **academic performance**	<u>Assignment Factors:</u> -neighborhood schools -parent/student preference -transfer requests <u>Goals:</u> -SES diversity -stability -home/school proximity -utilization of special programs -overall academic excellence
*experiencing some resegregation after new plan implemented	-future construction and siting decisions -affordable housing initiative included -high concentrations of low-SES students identified as "Equity +" and receive more resources		

Simple SES Classification

	Concept	*Diversity Factors*	*Priorities*
Cambridge* ***experiencing some resegregation after new plan implemented**	**-<u>Primary Priority</u>: if an assignment would place the requested school outside of the SES desired range of +/- 5% (currently +/- 15%), the student would not be admitted** **-<u>Other Assignment Factors</u>: sibling preference, home/school proximity, race/ethnicity (goal of +/- 10% district average), ELL/SpEd (not part of diversity index, but goal to reflect district ELL/SpEd average)**	<u>**Individual Student:**</u> 1. **SES (FRL)** 2. **Siblings/Distance** 3. **Race/Ethnicity* (see next column)** 4. **ELL and SpEd**	**Parents choose 3 preferred schools. Assignment based on:** **-SES (FRL)** **-home/school proximity** **-sibling preference** **-race (important to "have the option of using race or ethnicity," but has not yet been used)**

Interdistrict Models

	Concept
Omaha -in development-	• "Learning Community" (LC) between Omaha and 10 surrounding suburban districts w/open enrollment • all districts share a common tax base • free transportation is a key element • regional body oversees entire process (mixture of elected and appointed members) • LC districts will collaboratively establish magnet and focus schools that aim to reduce SES isolation
St. Louis	• explicitly race-based, eligibility tied to where students reside (the current program was adapted from legal settlement after there was a court finding of intentional discrimination) • city to suburb and suburb to city components (two-way), enables city students to attend suburban schools and suburban students to attend magnet schools in the city • four attendance areas linked to suburban school districts
Hartford	• explicitly race based (1996 Connecticut Supreme Court case *Sheff v. O'Neill* holding that the segregated conditions in the Hartford public school system violate the Connecticut Constitution) • The main tools used to operationalize *Sheff* have been inter-district magnet schools and Project Choice, which sends Hartford children to suburban schools.

Using Regional Coalitions to Address Socioeconomic Isolation

A Case Study of the Omaha Metropolitan Agreement

A CHHIRJ Case Study
by Jennifer Jellison Holme, Sarah Diem, and Katherine Cumings Mansfield
May 2009

Charles Hamilton Houston | INSTITUTE FOR RACE & JUSTICE
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Boundary Crossing for Diversity, Equity and Achievement

Inter-district School Desegregation and Educational Opportunity

A CHHIRJ Report
by Amy Stuart Wells, Bianca J. Baldridge, Jacquelyn Duran, Courtney Grzesikowski, Richard Lofton, Allison Roda, Miya Warner and Terrenda White
November 2009

Charles Hamilton Houston | INSTITUTE FOR RACE & JUSTICE
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

CHHIRJ has three publications that describe various aspects of our nation's nine interdistrict integration plans.

*Plans That Use
a Diversity Index*

Goal of Current Plan (2004)

- Increased school diversity on a number of levels (socioeconomic status, parental education, and race).

Race Conscious?

- No. The race of individual students is not considered for students at any level.

Parental Preferences Considered?

- Yes. Parents indicate their top three school options. Students are assigned by lottery.

"One of the justifications for considering the diversity factors in the student assignment plan is the extent to which these factors will contribute to school site equity…. [E]ach of these distinctive schools will share the equal responsibility of meeting the educational goals for achievement that apply to the District as a whole. In such a learning environment choosing or attending one school rather than another will confer neither significant advantage nor disadvantage to pupils enrolled at any individual site."

Parent Income by Planning Area
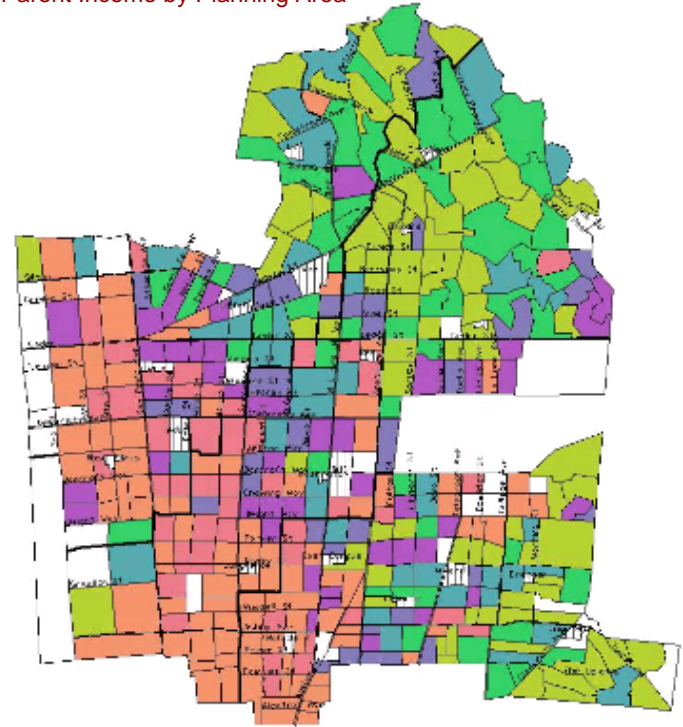
40

7.6	16.9	29.1	29.6

How It Works:

- **Choice:** Parents of elementary school children submit a preference form, indicating their top three elementary school choices.
- **The plan divides the district's 11 elementary schools among three attendance zones.**
- **The entire district is further divided into 445 planning areas (between 4-8 city blocks in size).**
- **Each planning area is assigned a diversity category designation of 1 to 3.**
- **The diversity category number is calculated based upon three factors, weighed equally:**
    1. the percentage of "students of color";
    2. the level of parental income; and
    3. the level of parental education within each planning area.
- **Utilizing the diversity categories, students will be assigned proportionately to elementary schools by lottery. The lottery gives priority based on the attributed diversity characteristics derived from the student's planning area.**

Six Priority Categories

1. **Students currently attending the school and residing in the school's attendance zone;**
2. **Students currently attending the school and residing outside the school's attendance zone;**
3. **Students with sibling(s) currently attending the school;**
4. **Students not currently attending the school, but residing in the school's attendance zone;**
5. **Students not currently attending the school and residing outside the school's attendance zone; and**
6. **Students seeking inter-district transfers.**

Within each priority category, a student is assigned to a particular school based upon their preference, as well as the diversity category number assigned to the planning area where the student lives.

San Francisco, CA

Goals of Current Plan (2000)

- Increased socioeconomic diversity.
- Equal academic achievement at all district schools.
- Racial diversity.

Race Conscious?

- No.

Parental Preferences Considered?

- Yes. Parents indicate up to seven preferred schools.

"Key findings from the research and analysis illustrate the complexity of designing a student assignment system that will meet the Board's goal of reversing the trend of racial isolation and the concentration of underserved students in the same school. Neighborhood schools [and different choice systems] are limited in their ability to reverse the trend of racial isolation and the concentration of underserved students in the same school…."

Percentage of SFUSD K-12 Students with a Score Below 300 on the Spring 2008 CST English Language Arts Test, by Planning Neighborhood

57			
49.8	22.9	12.4	9.6
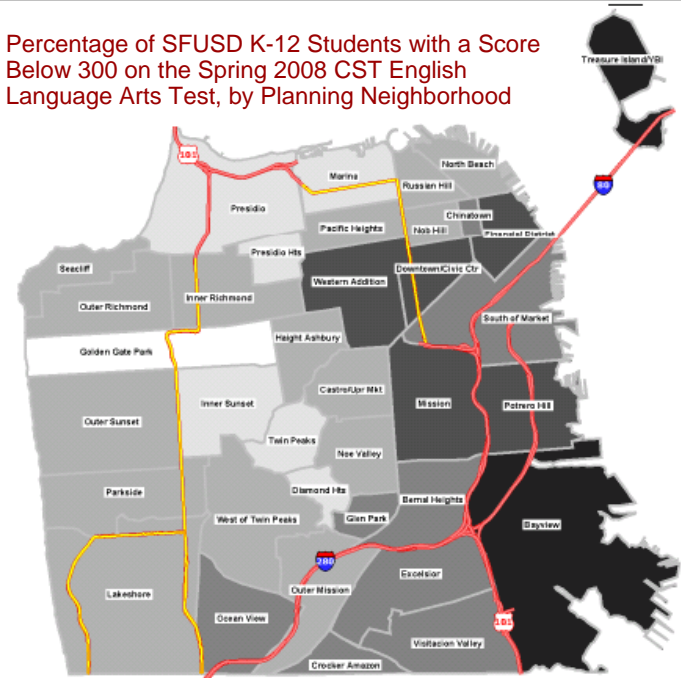
Report on School Assignment Redesign
http://portal.sfusd.edu/apps/departments/educational_placement/full_report.pdf (2009)

How It Works:

Note: San Francisco is currently reviewing their assignment policy.

- **Combines student choice (families rank up to seven district schools) with a diversity index concept.**
- **The system is only used when there are more requests than seats available.**
- **The five different factors SFUSD uses to determine student assignment have been demonstrated to correlate with academic achievement.**
- **An individual student's diversity index (see chart to right) is compared with those of the students already attending the schools that the student ranked most highly.**
- **The system selects students living in the attendance area and assigns the student whose profile is the most different from the base profile in the grade/program.**
- **When students from the attendance area no longer contribute to the diversity of the base profile, all students who requested the grade/program are considered for assignment using the same method.**

Student Assignment Diversity Index

Answers are gathered from information provided
on the student's application form
and from test score data supplied by the California DOE.

1. **Extreme Poverty:**
   1. **Does the student live in public housing or participate in CALWORKS?**
   2. **Is the student a foster youth?**
   3. **Does the family participate in a homeless program?**
2. **Socioeconomic Status:**
   1. **Does the student participate in the free/reduced lunch program?**
3. **Home Language:**
   1. **Is English the student's home language?**
4. **Academic Achievement Status:**
   1. **Incoming Kindergartners: Did the student attend preschool?**
   2. **Students entering grades 1-12: Did the student score above or below the thirtieth (30th) percentile on the most recent standardized test of record?**
5. **Academic Performance Rank of Sending School (for non-kindergartners only):**
   1. **Is the Academic Performance Index (API) ranking of the student's current school 4 or above? (California's DOE ranks every public school (from 1-10) by comparing its API to 100 comparable schools.**

Louisville, KY

Goals of Current Plan (2008)

- Diversity, quality, choice, predictability, stability, equity.

Race Conscious?

- Yes (not for individual students).

Parental Preferences Considered?

- Yes. Elementary parents indicate preferences for 2 "Area A" schools, 2 "Area B" schools, and up to two magnet schools.

How It Works:

- **Diversity guideline: No school shall have less than 15% nor more than 50% of students who reside in "Area A" (exceptions for ELL programs and alternative/special schools).**

Diversity Factors	*Area A*	*Area B*
Median household income	**Below District Average**	**Above District Average**
Adult educational attainment of people age 25	**Below District Average**	**Above District Average**
Percentage of minority students in the resides area	**Above District Average**	**Below District Average**
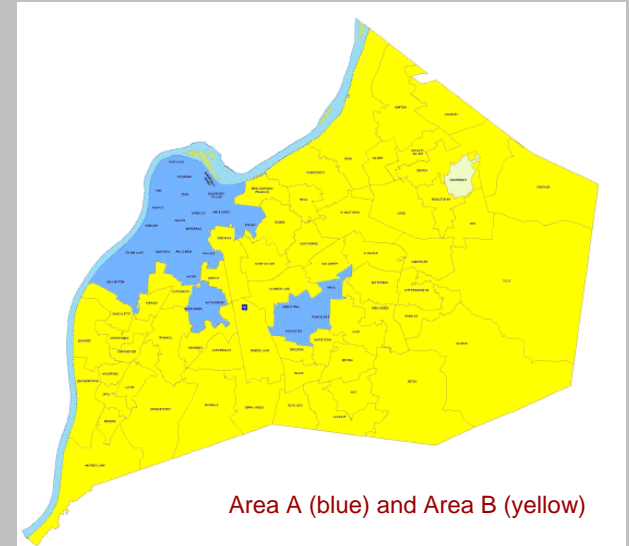
Area A (blue) and Area B (yellow)
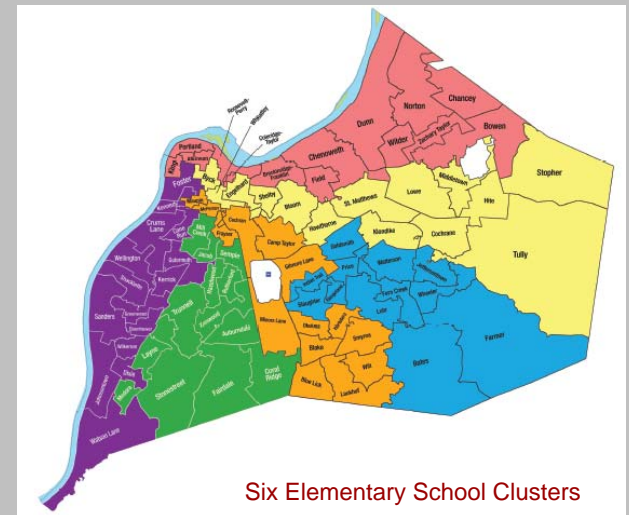
Six Elementary School Clusters

Plans that Balance Achievement & Socioeconomic Status
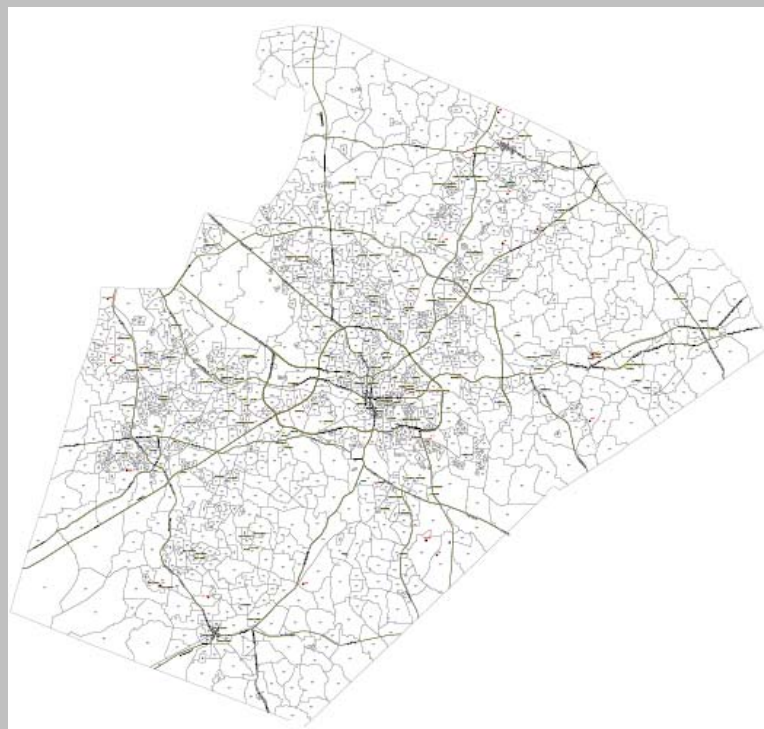
Wake County, NC

Goals of Plan (2000)

- Increased socioeconomic diversity and overall student achievement.
- No more than 40% of a school's total enrollment can be comprised of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) and no more than 25% of a school's total enrollment can be comprised of students performing below grade level on state exams.

Race Conscious?

- No. Racial diversity is not an explicit goal.

Parental Preferences Considered?

- Yes. Students are initially assigned to the "base" school that serves the attendance area where the student resides, but can apply to attend other schools. Assignment is done by lottery.

Equity-minded plans require continued community education and outreach. The Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Civil Rights Project noted in 2008 that "Wake County's experience may not be generalizable because of the unusually strong and cohesive commitment to racial diversity and equality in its schools over the twenty-year period preceding the socioeconomic plan." Despite a strong historical commitment to diversity and equity, a newly-composed school board voted down Wake County's plan in 2010.

28.2

| 5 | 10.2 | 26.8 | 53.8 |
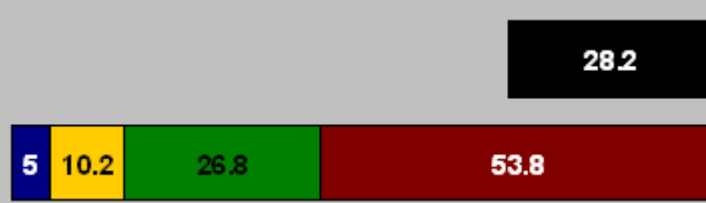
Wake County, NC

How It Worked:

- <u>Choice</u>: Students initially assigned to the "base" school that serves their home attendance area. They could apply for magnet and calendar-option schools and for transfers outside of their base school.

- Wake County considered the <u>socioeconomic status</u> (FRL eligibility) of small geographic units called 'nodes' and <u>academic performance</u> (as determined by grade level scores on standardized tests) in creating school attendance areas.

- Choice was done by a computerized lottery system—priority was given to those whose selection would positively impact crowding and diversity in schools.

- FRL and academic performance data was used to shape creation of new school boundaries, and to guide decisions when boundary adjustments are called for.

Student Assignment Factors

1. Student/parent choice for both magnet and calendar programs;
2. Socioeconomic and academic achievement status of schools;
3. Proximity to schools;
4. Stability;
5. Full use of capacity.

Wake County schools experienced a slight decline in racial diversity, but remained relatively racially diverse, under this plan.

# Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC

Goals of Current Plan (2000)

• Maximizing socioeconomic diversity; student stability; proximity from home to school; utilization of specialized programs; maximizing student stability; and overall educational excellence and student success.

Race Conscious?

• No. Racial diversity is not an explicit goal.

Parental Preferences Considered?

• Yes. Students are initially assigned to their neighborhood school, but can apply to attend other schools. Assignment is done by lottery.
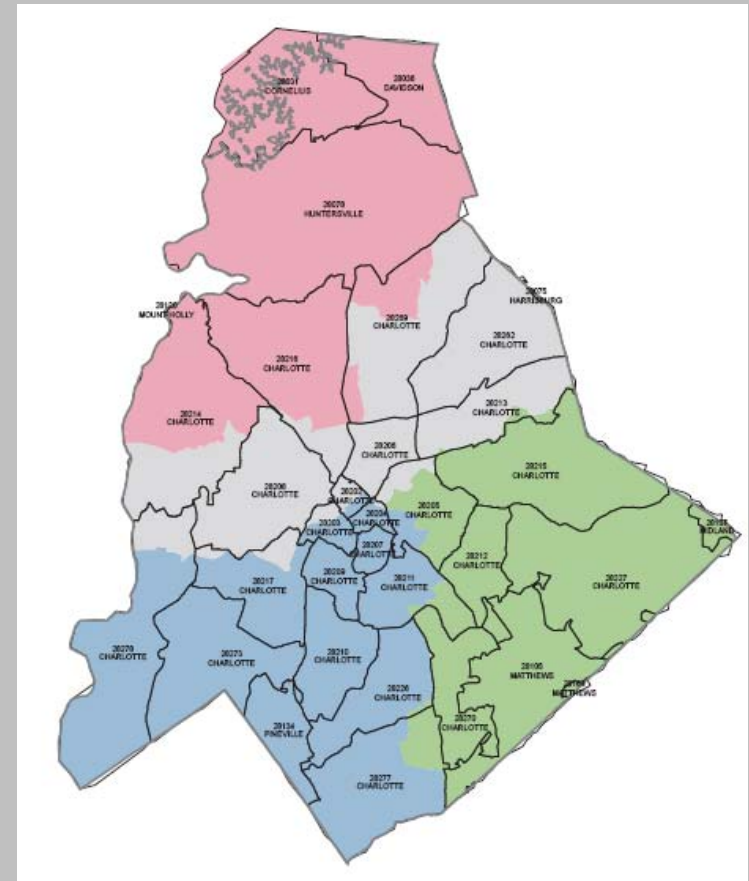
47.2

| 4 | 15 | 42 | 35 |

Student Assignment Factors

1. Neighborhood schools;
2. Student/parent choice, taking into account:
   - Individual Students: <u>socioeconomic status</u> (determined by FRL eligibility) and <u>academic performance</u> (determined by NCLB standardized test results); and
   - School-Level: the overall <u>socioeconomic status</u> and <u>academic performance</u> of students.
3. Transfer requests similarly weighted by the SES and academic achievement status of individual students and of the original and target schools.

- Schools are identified as overly concentrated if they have at least 30% more recipients than the district average.
- A school is classified as underperforming if the percent of its students reading below grade level is at least 10% more than the district average.

After Charlotte-Mecklenburg abandoned its integration plan that considered race in favor of the new plan in 2002, its schools rapidly resegregated.

Other Aspects of the Charlotte Plan That Seek to Promote Strong, Diverse Schools

- <u>Sites for Future Construction of Schools</u> – the plan directs the Board to consider, *e.g.* SES diversity of nearby housing and the availability of public transit lines to serve the schools.
- <u>Affordable Housing Initiative</u>–encourages the implementation of an affordable housing initiative in conjunction with the 10 year Capital Improvement Plan.
- <u>Additional Supports</u>– Schools with higher concentrations of low-SES status students are identified as "Equity Plus II schools" and receive additional resources.

Simple SES Classification

Cambridge, MA

Goals of Current Plan (2001)

- To provide all students with equitable educational opportunities, improved achievement and the opportunity to attend school with students of diverse backgrounds.
- Additionally, the district believes "that it is important to have the option to use race or ethnicity as one of the diversity factors in order to avoid the harms of racial/ethnic isolation and to provide students the benefits of learning from students who are of different racial and ethnic backgrounds."

Race Conscious?

- In 2001, CPS changed its student assignment plan to account for many different diversity factors. This change effectively resulted in the elimination of race as a factor that CPS considers, though it is technically still part of the CPS plan.

42.7

11.1	14.7	36	35.7

How It Works:

- **Choice: For K-8 students, parents rank three choices of schools for each of their children.**
- **CPS first looks to whether the particular student assignment would place the requested school outside of the desired socioeconomic status range (+/- 5% of the district average).**
- **CPS might also consider a variety of other diversity factors in assigning students to schools (socioeconomic status, geographic proximity, sibling attendance, and race).**

Cambridge, MA

Diversity Categories

1. <u>Socioeconomic Status</u>: **The goal is for each grade in each school to be within a range of +/- 5 percentage points of the District-wide percentage of K-8 students who are eligible for FRL.**

   - Currently, board policy aims to have the range +/- 15% percentage points of district-wide K-8 socio-economic status.
   - If a student would place the school outside of this range, the student would not be allowed to attend the school.

2. <u>Siblings and Distance</u>: **CPS assigns (1) siblings to the same school; and (2) students to one of the two schools closest to where they reside:**

   1. When requested by parents/guardians;
   2. To the extent that space is available; and
   3. To the extent that the assignment does not negatively affect the SES diversity at the school being requested.

3. <u>Race or Ethnicity</u>: **If, after consideration of the other student assignment factors, the applicant pool for a grade at a school is not within +/- 10 percentage points of the district-wide percentage of White, African- American, Latino, Asian and Native-American students in elementary schools, then race or ethnicity will be used as one of the diversity factors. Note: Race has <u>yet to be used</u> in the assignment of any students.**

4. <u>ELL and Special Education Status</u>: **While CPS does not use English Language Learner status or special education status as part of the diversity index, CPS seeks to have the population of both subsets of students at each school reflect the demographics of the district as a whole.**

Select Interdistrict Models

The METCO program is one of nine interdistrict integration programs that exist nationwide.

- **Omaha, NE* (phasing in)**
- **St. Louis, MO***
- **Hartford, CT***
- **Rochester, NY**
- **Minneapolis, MN**

- **Milwaukee, WI**
- **Palo Alto, CA**
- **Indianapolis, IN (phasing out)**
- **Boston/Springfield, MA**

* program highlighted in this presentation

Aspects of these plans may be helpful in the Boston context.

Goal of Current Plan (2007)

- Increased socioeconomic diversity.
- Decreasing the academic achievement gap.

LB 641 – State Learning Community Statute

- LB 641 created a "learning community," between Omaha and 10 of its surrounding school districts.
- Open enrollment is provided across all districts in the learning community, which all share a common tax base.
- LB 641 enables learning communities to be established in other areas of the state.

Race Conscious?

- No. The race of individual students is not considered for students at any level.

Omaha school boundaries in yellow.

60.1

| 1.8 | 23.9 | 31.8 | 41.4 |
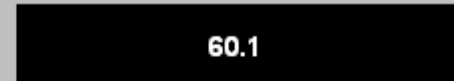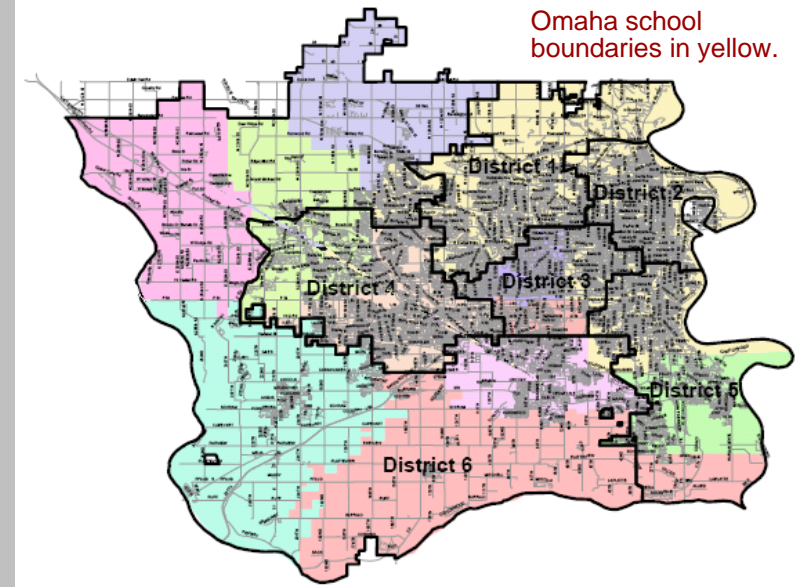
Unique Aspects of Omaha's New Plan:

1. **School districts will participate in a large scale interdistrict socioeconomic desegregation plan, all without a court order;**
2. **It will be funded through a new shared metropolitan tax base; and**
3. **A regional governing council will implement the agreement and oversee the construction of new interdistrict schools of choice and support centers in high poverty communities.**

Omaha, NE

Intense political negotiations among school superintendents of the 11 districts and key members of the state legislature ultimately led to the current agreement.

How It Works:

- **Priority in open enrollment within the learning community is given to students who bring a school building's SES diversity closer to the average SES diversity of the entire learning community.**

- **Students can also apply to:**
  - a <u>focus school</u> where they are selected through a lottery; or
  - a <u>magnet school</u> where they are selected according to their home attendance area and a lottery.

4 Major Features:

1. **Regional Governance: The Learning Community Coordinating Council**
   - 18 voting members, 3 from each of 6 electoral districts (two are elected, and one is appointed)
2. **Tax Sharing and a Common Levy**
3. **Plans to Increase School Diversity and Reduce Socioeconomic Isolation**
   - Plans describe how the LC will "provide educational opportunities which will result in increased diversity."
4. **Elementary Learning Centers**
   - The LC is required to establish "at least one" Elementary Learning Center (ELC) for every 25 high-poverty elementary schools.
   - ELCs will provide social/academic support services.

Forging Regional Solutions in Education: Lessons Drawn

1. **Messaging, Media, and Framing**
2. **Superintendent Leadership and Collaboration**
3. **Creating Interest Convergence: The Common Levy**
4. **Advancing Regional Equity While Preserving Local Control**
5. **Building on Existing Inter-Local Agreements**
6. **Community Advocacy: The Role of the Philanthropic Community, the Business Community, and Local Organizations**
7. **Leveraging the Accountability System to Get Political Support**

Goals of Current Plan (1999)

- Increased racial diversity.
- Compliance with 1999 settlement agreement.

Race Conscious?

- Yes.

A 1999 legal settlement transformed St. Louis's federally supervised desegregation program into a voluntary program that is operated by a non-profit organization called the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC).

- **City-to-County Transfers: African American students residing in St. Louis can apply to attend designated suburban schools.**

- **County-to-City Transfers: Non-African American students who reside in predominantly white school districts can apply to attend magnet schools in St. Louis.**

About 6,200 city students currently attend suburban schools and about 150 county students attend St. Louis magnet schools (peak of over 14,000 in 1999-2000).

81.6

1.7 3   81.8   14.1
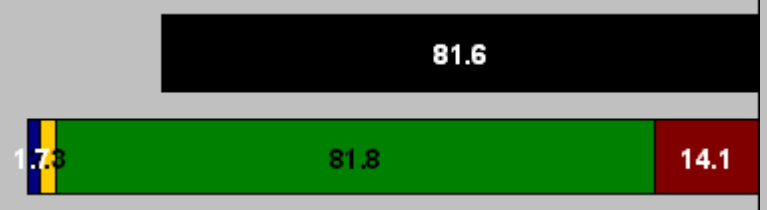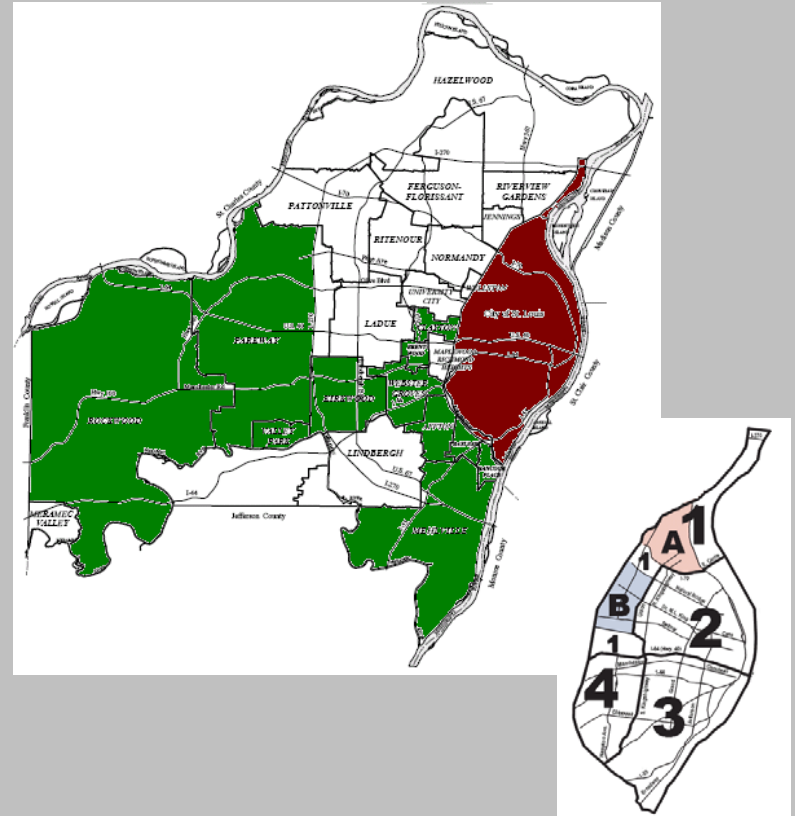
How It Works:

- Students must live in designated neighborhoods to be eligible for the program.
- <u>City-to-County Transfers</u>*:* African-American students residing in the City of St. Louis can apply to attend one of several participating county school districts.
- <u>County-to-City Transfers</u>: Non-African-American students who live in participating suburban school districts can apply to transfer into St. Louis Magnet Schools in the city.
- The county has established four attendance areas in the city linked with specific suburban school districts. VICC only provides transportation to city students complying with this attendance area structure. All county students attending St. Louis magnet schools are provided with transportation.

Student Assignment Factors

1. Parent/student choice;
2. Residential address;
3. Race;
4. Behavioral history (if student has exhibited disruptive behavior at previous school, she may be rejected); and
5. Special education status.

Priorities:

- <u>Current Enrollees</u>. Students already enrolled in the program but not attending schools assigned to their residential attendance area are given the highest priority to switch to schools/districts within their designated attendance area.
- <u>Sibling Preference/Previous Applicants</u>. Students who are siblings of an existing transfer student and students who applied the previous year and were not enrolled.
- After these initial priorities, new applications are processed in the order received.

Hartford, CT

Sheff v. O'Neill
238 Conn. 1, 678 A.2d 1267 (1996)

"[I]n the context of public education, in which the state has an affirmative obligation…to equalize educational opportunity, the state's awareness of…severe racial and ethnic isolation imposes upon the state the responsibility to remedy 'segregation…because of race…'"

"Every passing day denies these children their constitutional right to a substantially equal educational opportunity. Every passing day shortchanges these children in their ability to learn to contribute to their own well-being and to that of this state and nation."

Hartford, CT

Open Choice Program

1. **Interdistrict Magnet Schools**
   - CREC Magnets
   - Hartford Magnets
2. **Vocational/Technical Offerings**
3. **Project Choice (similar to METCO)**

- As a result of the *Sheff* case in 1996, 20 interdistrict magnet schools have been created in the Greater Hartford region.
- These schools are designed to provide high quality, accessible, reduced-isolation educational programming options to the children of Hartford and the surrounding communities.
- Many of these schools are designed and operated by CREC. CREC is a non-profit, regional educational service center serving 35 public school districts in the Hartford metropolitan region.

- Students are accepted into the program through a random lottery.
- Sibling Preference- every attempt is made to place siblings in the same town and, when appropriate based on the grade levels of the children applying, the same school.
- Students who currently attend schools identified as "in need of improvement" under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 will also receive preference in the lottery over students whose current schools are not so identified.
- Attempts are made to place students in towns located closer to where they live, though this is not always possible.
- Applications are only good for one year.
- The State of Connecticut pays for transportation through a grant to CREC.

Sheff Movement Coalition

- A group of parents, citizens, educators and other stakeholders committed to civil rights and education.
- Works to educate the public about proven voluntary integration measures and increase support for quality education for all children.

Designing Reforms that Narrow Inequality

"Closing or substantially narrowing achievement gaps requires <u>combining</u> school improvement with reforms that narrow the vast socioeconomic inequalities in the United States.
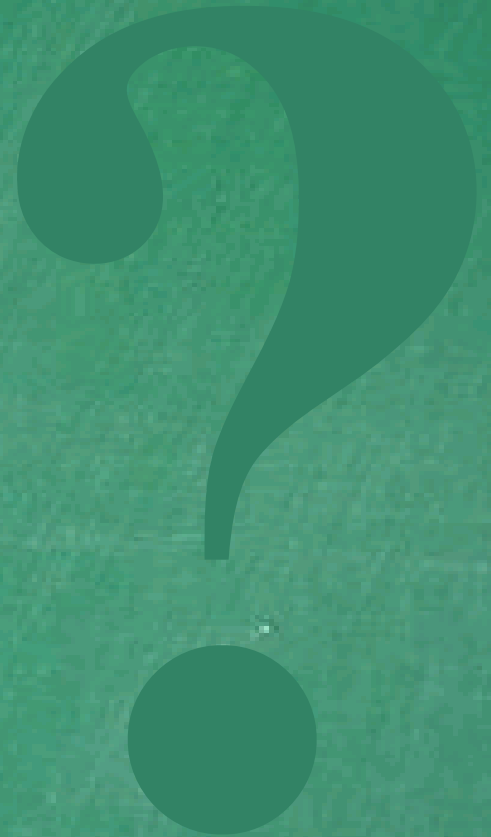
Without such a combination, demands that schools close achievement gaps not only will remain unfulfilled, but also will cause us to foolishly and unfairly condemn our schools and teachers."
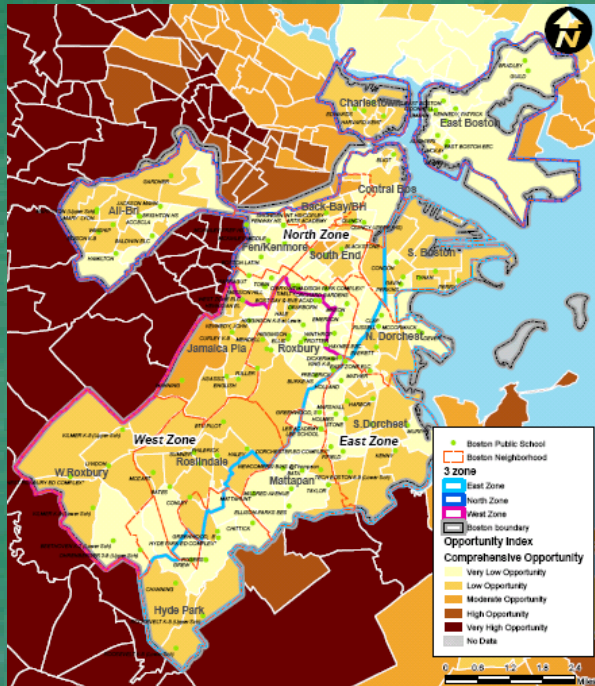
–Richard Rothstein

Well-designed student assignment plans can narrow inequality, but they cannot completely eliminate it.

Things to Consider

- Increase BPS students' access to low-poverty, high performing schools.
- Target interventions where the need is greatest (e.g. increase the number of high-quality teachers in the highest poverty low-performing schools).
- Work aggressively to strengthen community support for equity measures (including regional efforts) – start by increasing awareness.
- Integrate housing, public health, out-of-school time reforms into student assignment – coordinate and collaborate with other agencies.
- Facilitate communication amongst diverse stakeholders.
- Communicate with policymakers about the need for incentives and/or legislation that supports these types of reforms.

The student assignment process is an opportunity to explore and address longstanding challenges.