

**UCLA**

**K-12 Integration and Diversity**

**Title**

Reviving the Goal of an Integrated Society: A 21st Century Challenge

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2bw2s608>

**Author**

Orfield, Gary

**Publication Date**

2009



# Reviving the Goal of an Integrated Society: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenge

GARY ORFIELD

The Civil Rights Project



*Proyecto Derechos Civiles*

The Civil Rights Project



*Proyecto Derechos Civiles*

**Reviving the Goal of an  
Integrated Society:  
A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenge**

**By  
Gary Orfield**

**January 2009**

## **Acknowledgements**

This report was supported by grants from the Open Society Institute and the Ford Foundation. It relies on statistical tables prepared by Chungmei Lee and Erica Frankenberg. The author greatly appreciates the many helpful editorial suggestions by Erica Frankenberg and Laurie Russman.

Copyright 2009 The Regents of the University of California

This report should be cited as:

Orfield, G., *Reviving the Goal of an Integrated Society: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenge*, Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA

Cover design by Nery Orellana

# Reviving the Goal of an Integrated Society: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenge

## Introduction

Fifty-five years after the *Brown* decision, blacks and Latinos in American schools are more segregated than they have been in more than four decades. The Supreme Court's 2007 decision in the Seattle and Louisville voluntary desegregation cases has not only taken away some important tools used by districts to combat this rising isolation, but this decision is also certain to intensify these trends. Segregation is fast spreading into large sectors of suburbia and there is little or no assistance for communities wishing to resist the pressures of resegregation and ghetto creation in order to build successfully integrated schools and neighborhoods. Desegregation plans that were successful for decades are being shut down by orders from conservative courts, federal civil rights officials have pressured communities to abandon their voluntary desegregation efforts, and magnet schools are losing their focus on desegregation. Large numbers of multiracial schools are emerging but we know little about how to realize their promise. Although there are serious interracial conflicts in schools and neighborhoods shared by two or more disadvantaged minorities, very little research or assistance has been provided to solve those urgent problems. The percentage of poor children in American schools has been rising substantially and black and Latino students, even those whose families are middle class, are largely attending schools with very high fractions of low-income children who face many problems in their homes and communities. As immigration continues to transform many sectors of American society this country is falling far behind in building faculties that reflect the diversity of American students--44% of whom are now nonwhite--and failing to prepare teachers who can communicate effectively with the 20 percent of homes where another language is spoken as immigration continues to transform many sectors of American society. Millions of nonwhite students are locked into "dropout factory" high schools, where huge percentages do not graduate, have little future in the American economy, and almost none are well prepared for college. Often our failing schools are shared by two or more highly disadvantaged minority groups and we are not working on creating positive relationships between them and their teachers who are often white and untrained in techniques that might lower tension and increase school success. In states that now have substantial nonwhite school age majorities, like California and Texas, our failure to prepare the future majority through high school and college graduation are very direct threats to the economic and social future of these states. In a world economy where success is dependent on knowledge, major sections of the U.S. face the threat of declining average educational levels as the proportion of children attending inferior segregated schools continues to rise.

These are the results of a systematic neglect of civil rights policy and related educational and community reforms for decades, in addition to being the products of active opposition by the Bush Administration and the prior administrations of Reagan, Bush and Nixon. It is likely that the great growth of the Latino population with poorly educated parents and the decline of school age whites would, in any case, have created serious challenges in a rapidly changing society, but policy changes, namely the lack of constructive policies, greatly exacerbated the problems.

The Supreme Court concluded in *Brown*, that Southern segregation was “inherently unequal” and did “irreversible” harm to black students, and it later extended that ruling to Latinos. The inequality rests not on any defect of nonwhite students and parents, who have the same basic goals as whites, but on a system of segregation by race, poverty, and, increasingly, language, in which most black and Latino students never receive similar opportunities, similar peer groups, or any real chance to connect with and learn how to operate comfortably in middle class white institutions and networks. Many are in high schools where there is no real path to college because there are not enough teachers credentialed and experienced in key subjects and not enough fellow students ready to enroll in strong pre-collegiate courses taught at an appropriate level. For those students, there is no way to get the right preparation in their school regardless of their personal talent and motivation.

By the same token, many whites lack any real preparation for functioning well in diverse or predominantly nonwhite settings where many of them are destined to work and live in an era where whites will become a minority in the U.S. The dominant assumption of social policy during the conservative era was that race should be ignored, inequalities should be blamed on individuals and schools, and existing civil rights remedies should be dismantled. This was the position manifested by the Bush Administration in the Supreme Court battles over affirmative action and voluntary school integration and particularly of President Bush’s appointee as Supreme Court Chief Justice, John Roberts.<sup>1</sup> The civil rights agency officials appointed by President Bush were active opponents of these policies and advised the nation’s colleges and school districts to cut back on their efforts.<sup>2</sup> The price of ignoring race before the underlying problems are solved, it is now apparent, is to deepen divisions and perpetuate inequalities. Particularly disappointing have been the dismantling of good workable desegregation plans and their replacement by an assertion that there were policies that could produce “separate but equal” schools, the same assumption that the Supreme Court rejected in 1954. That assumption has now failed again. The failure is clearly reflected in mountains of data collected under No Child Left Behind which show the very large numbers of segregated schools that are now under sanctions. We know that the schools left behind have been very disproportionately black and Latino, high poverty schools and that the remedies embodied in NCLB have not repaired the inequalities. The best available scientific comparisons show that NCLB, in spite of putting intense pressure and sanctions on schools serving minority students, has made no significant change in the previous trends in test scores or in the racial achievement gaps.<sup>3</sup> The results have been

---

<sup>1</sup> See briefs of the U.S. Department of Justice and the opinion of the Chief Justice in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District*, 127 S. Ct. 2738 (2007).

<sup>2</sup> Gary Orfield, Patricia Marin, Stella M. Flores and Liliana M. Garces, eds., *Charting the Future of College Affirmative Action: Legal Victories, Continuing Attacks, and New Research*. Los Angeles: The Civil Rights Project, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Jackyung Lee, “Two Takes on the Impact of NCLB on Academic Improvement,” in Gail Sunderman, ed., *Holding NCLB Accountable: Achieving Accountability, Equity, and School Reform*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008., chapter 5; Jackyung Lee, *Tracking Achievement Gaps and Assessing the Impact of NCLB on the Gaps, An In-depth Look into National and State Reading and Math Outcomes Trends*, Civil Rights Project, 2006; B. Fuller, K. Gesicki, E. Kang, and J. Wright, *Is the No Child Left Behind Act Working? The Reliability of How States Track Achievement*, Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education, 2006

particularly disappointing in the high schools and there has been no significant enforcement of the dropout provisions in spite of an extremely high national dropout rate for nonwhite students.<sup>4</sup>

The success of the most multiracial electorate in American history in electing a President committed to civil rights could signal a new turn in a very long story of the struggle to realize the dream of equality before the law. It could begin to reverse the deepening isolation of the most rapidly growing parts of America's population in schools of double and triple segregation, schools where the great majority of students learn neither the academic skills they need for a good future nor the understanding of diversity they need to successfully navigate our society. At a time when an Administration which fought against the integration of schools and colleges is being replaced by the nation's first nonwhite President, who is himself a product of integrated excellent schools, there may be new interest in strategies to bring down walls of racial separation and help the country benefit from, rather than be divided by, its demographic transformation.

One of the things we've learned from a history of electing African American and Latino mayors and appointing school superintendents of color in many of the nation's largest school districts is that these victories create great hope for changes. But simply changing the leadership does not end deeply rooted issues of racial inequality. It depends on what the leaders do. President Obama inherits not only an economic meltdown and two wars to unwind but also a civil rights situation that, in many respects, has become worse due to years of neglect and active opposition by the outgoing administration and its major officials:

- Last month the National Commission on Fair Housing reported, based on hearings across the country during the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, that there has been virtually no enforcement of the laws against housing discrimination despite the fact that this discrimination and segregation are rampant even in subsidized housing and is spreading steadily into growing sectors of suburbia.<sup>5</sup>
- In employment, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the month President Obama was elected, only 62% of black men, 20 and over, had jobs as did only 17% of black teens. Among white men it was 72% with jobs and among white teens, 33%. In terms of the reported unemployment rate, the black male rate was well over twice the white rate.<sup>6</sup>
- In education, the No Child Left Behind Act has clearly failed in its goal of ending the racial and ethnic achievement gap in test scores. Its provisions that were supposed to alleviate the nation's massive dropout crisis have been almost completely ignored. The gap in college completion, which is the key to secure middle class status in the contemporary U.S., remains massive. In 2006, 28.4% of white adults reported graduating

---

<sup>4</sup> Gary Orfield, ed. *Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis* Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2004, see especially chapters by Dan Losen and Robert Balfanz.

<sup>5</sup> National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Report of the National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table A-2, "Employment Status of the Civil Population by Race, Sex, and Age," December 5, 2008. For black and white adult women the percent employed was similar, but the unemployment rate for black women was 9.2% compared to 4.9% for white women, indicating that more black women were seeking and unable to find work.

from college, compared to 18.5% of blacks and just 12.4% of Latinos, including only 8.5% of Mexican-Americans, by far the largest Latino population.<sup>7</sup>

- Gaps in wealth and in health care remain massive and both are strongly related to educational attainment.

The Bush Administration was strongly opposed to race-conscious policies to alleviate these gaps and fought unsuccessfully to end affirmative action by a Supreme Court, whose seven of nine justices were appointed by Presidents favoring a rollback of school civil rights. On the other hand, the administration did successfully urge the Court in 2007 to limit the rights of school districts to voluntarily implement desegregation plans in the Seattle and Louisville cases, known as *PICS*.<sup>8</sup>

Obviously there has been major progress in many areas of race relations since the civil rights era, and President Obama's election is extremely important evidence of the possibility of change. In other areas, including some of the most important for millions of families of color, the record has been distinctly mixed. On some fronts the progress has been stalled; on others it has been clearly reversed. There was very little discussion about these issues in last year's presidential campaign. But the future of integrated education will be strongly influenced by decisions of the new Administration and Congress about appointments, policy, school aid, research, and approaches to educational choice. The Bush administration actively discouraged school districts from pursuing voluntary integration, subsidized segregated charter schools, limited educational choice in ways that offered few if any good choices for minority students locked into failing schools, and did nothing to foster positive race relations in the nation's increasingly diverse schools.

### *Why Segregation Continues to Matter for Students and Communities*

This report is about school desegregation and resegregation and is an assessment of the current status of the promise of the Supreme Court nearly fifty-five years ago to end segregated schooling of southern blacks, which the Court ruled was "inherently unequal." We now have a society where 44 percent of our public school children are non-white and our two largest minority populations, Latinos and African Americans, are more segregated than they have been since the death of Martin Luther King more than forty years ago. Schools remain highly unequal, sometimes in terms of dollars and very frequently in terms of teachers, curriculum, peer groups, connections with colleges and jobs, and other key aspects of schooling. Segregated black and Latino schools have less prepared teachers and classmates, and lower achievement and graduation. Segregated nonwhite schools usually are segregated by poverty as well as race. Being in a school where everyone is poor, teachers transfer out as soon as they can, parents are powerless, and gangs sometimes shape the environment of the community is deeply harmful to students. These are the high schools that account for most of the nation's "dropout factories," where a frightfully large share of the students, especially young men, fail to graduate and too many end up virtually unemployable. These schools have the most students with chronic health and developmental problems, the most disruptive neighborhood conditions, and many other forms of inequality. These are the schools with the most children whose native language is not

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 2008*, table 217, "Educational Attainment by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1960 to 2006," p. 145.

<sup>8</sup> *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District*, 127 S. Ct. 2738 (2007)



English and they are filled with students who arrive at their first day of school very far behind in preschool skills such as recognition of letters, numbers, range of vocabulary, etc., when compared with children from educated middle class homes with the time and means to provide intellectually and physically stimulating experience and training. How could these schools possibly be equal under these conditions? Being in a good school with a real pathway to college and a strong reputation among employers makes a big difference.

The educational effects are, of course, only part of the impact of segregation. Skills in understanding other groups and working effectively across lines of racial and ethnic difference are already major job assets and will, of course, become increasingly valuable in an ever more diverse society. Successfully integrated schools where children of diverse backgrounds learn to work together and understand each other in a supportive environment are very good settings in which to learn these skills<sup>9</sup>, probably surpassed only by successfully and stably integrated neighborhoods, which are still far too rare in our society.

Since the federal aid program for voluntary integration efforts was eliminated in 1981, nothing significant has been done by any branch of the federal government to foster integrated education. Federal aid has, however, fostered charter schools, which are the most segregated sector of public schools, and, unlike magnet schools, charters are supported without any policies for fostering integration. Policy promises about equalizing these schools has too often used punitive policies that drive good teachers out even more rapidly. The truth is that schools that are diverse in race and social class work better but current policies are steadily reducing the number of such schools. At the same time, the ongoing racial transformation of vast segments of suburbia is creating diversity in many places where it never existed before, but government is doing little or nothing to facilitate successful and lasting integration. Too often the result is polarization in the schools, needless problems, and wave after wave of resegregation as a segregated housing market spreads.

### *About this Report*

Now in its thirteenth year, the Civil Rights Project has been consistently monitoring the nation's success in realizing the dream of the *Brown* decision, calculating segregation statistics from the enrollment data submitted by our nation's schools to the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education. Before the founding of the CRP, one of its predecessors, called The Harvard Project on School Desegregation, issued such reports. This current report takes us through the 2006-07 school year, using the most recent federal data. It shows a continuing surge in minority students, yet another increase in racial segregation of African American and Latino students, the extremely large proportion of American students who are growing up in poverty, and the development of multiracial schools in many parts of the country. It shows a continuing pattern of growing segregation of African American students, dating to the first Supreme Court decision authorizing termination of desegregation plans in 1991. Since 1968

---

<sup>9</sup> For a summary of this research see: Brief Of 553 Social Scientists As *Amici Curiae* In Support Of Respondents, *Parents Involved In Community Schools, v. Seattle School District No. 1, Meredith v. Jefferson County Board Of Education*, 2006.

when national statistics on Latino students were first collected by the federal government, there has been a continuous increase in the segregation of what is now the nation's largest group of nonwhite students. That trend continues in the 2006 data.

Since the Supreme Court declared the end to "separate but equal" schools in the South fifty-five years ago, a great deal of progress was made toward desegregated education, with gains that lasted over a quarter century into the late 1980s, in spite of the active opposition of the Reagan Administration. That period, which made Southern schools the nation's most integrated, was followed by almost two decades of backward movement triggered by three Supreme Court decisions in the 1990s which authorized a return to segregated neighborhood schools and told the lower courts to end desegregation efforts. Since that *Brown* decision, a great deal of progress has been lost.

This report is about the students in school during the year the Supreme Court heard and decided the voluntary integration (*PICS*) case in 2007. That decision outlawed very widely used forms of voluntary integration by school districts not under court order, districts that wished to foster integrated education. In the divided court, Justice Kennedy allied with four justices in striking down voluntary plans that assigned students to schools solely on the basis of their race. But he also allied with the other four in holding that integrated education was a compelling educational interest of school districts and could be pursued, quite intentionally, though some other methods. That decision has led to the abandonment of a number of desegregation efforts and its impact will become evident in the years to come. These new data do not show the impact of the *PICS* decision. The Civil Rights Project has been reporting changes across the country in its newsletter, *The Integration Report*, (<http://theintegrationreport.wordpress.com/>). It is apparent from the volume of stories about potential and actual policy changes that there will be an impact on further increases in segregation following the decision. Due to the lag in the implementation of new policies and in the release of data, the impact of this ruling will not be measured in federal data for at least two or three more years.

Many communities, mostly in the South, have lived with levels of integrated education that almost no one thought possible before the civil rights revolution, and the large majority of students who have experienced it believe it has been very beneficial for them. Our nation's great universities were virtually all white for hundreds of years, until their leaders decided to change them in the 1960s and early 1970s. Almost no one in higher education wants to go backward. Campuses like UCLA, which have been forced to abandon affirmative action policies by a state referendum, feel acutely the loss in the quality of their communities and educational experiences. These trends are very negative for individuals, for communities and for our common future, but they are not inexorable.

Critics have always claimed that every major step toward racial justice was impractical and disruptive. Our recent election is yet another sign that they are wrong and that large steps forward are possible and have been achieved. When President Kennedy was elected in 1960, there were few black voters in the South and almost no black officials. Efforts to register voters one at a time in the face of local resistance had largely failed, poll taxes were still in place, overt segregationists governed most of the region, and if anyone would have said that a black candidate for President could ever carry several southern states, it would have been considered

absurd. People were fired or intimidated if they tried to register to vote; election districts were structured in ways so that whites were always elected. One-party white segregationist politics had always been the rule in a great many communities. The Voting Rights Act showed the power of law to transform deeply rooted inequalities.<sup>10</sup> There had been similar, very dramatic change in the segregation of public schools during the brief period in the late 1960s. This was a time when the full force of the executive branch and the courts were brought to bear on Southern school segregation, bringing the South from near apartheid to having the nation's most integrated schools in just 5 years of enforcement, before the Nixon Administration shut down enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.<sup>11</sup>

## What the Data Shows

### *The Change in American Schools*

American schools, in the recently released enrollment data from the 2006-2007 school year, show continued declines in the proportion of white students, increases in minority growth, particularly of Latino and Asian students, and deepening segregation of both black and Latinos by race and poverty. At the same time, whites remain by far the most isolated population but the diversity of schools attended by whites is growing, both in terms of minority classmates and the proportion of low-income students. Part of this is due to the continuing decline of whites in the overall national enrollment, a decline of a little more than a half percent a year. Doubtless, this partially shows the processes of racial transition as very large numbers of nonwhites enter suburbia. In a predominantly suburban society, perhaps the most important current trend is the deepening resegregation of substantial portions of the nation's suburban rings, a process that threatens to leave middle class black and Latino families in relatively weak schools in declining communities.

The vast majority of American students go to public schools, and public school enrollment has grown substantially faster than private enrollment since 1980. Less than one-seventh of elementary and middle school students are in private schools, and at the high school level it is substantially less than a tenth. Private schools themselves are becoming more diverse. Back in 1970, private schools had only 6% nonwhite students at the elementary level and 4% at the high school level. By 2005, those numbers had climbed to 17% for the elementary schools and 16% for the high schools, though private schools remain far more white than public schools.<sup>12</sup> An earlier study of private schools showed that the large majority of them are religious schools and that the private sector also experiences substantial segregation in spite of its large white majority. The Catholic system is the most segregated, in part because it is built largely around residential

---

<sup>10</sup> Chandler Davidson and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Quiet Revolution in the South: The Impact of the Voting Rights Act, 1965-1990*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994; Frank R. Parker, *Black Votes Count: Political Empowerment in Mississippi after 1965*, Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1990.

<sup>11</sup> G. Orfield, *The Reconstruction of Southern Education: The Schools and the 1964 Civil Rights Act*, New York: John Wiley, 1969; Leon Panetta and Peter Gall, *Bring Us Together: The Nixon Team and the Civil Rights Retreat*, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1971,

<sup>12</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 2008*, pp. 142-143, tables 211, 213.

areas, which are highly segregated.<sup>13</sup> The basic story of American education is about public education and the projections suggest that the gradual decline in the private share will continue.<sup>14</sup>

American public schools have been far more successful than those in many other countries in educating the overwhelming majority of children and providing unifying educational experiences for a very diverse population, doubtless playing a key role in helping millions of children of immigrants from all parts of Europe and Asia find their way into the American middle class. They have been much less successful in helping students from historically excluded nonwhite communities—blacks, Latinos and American Indians.

The country's public school enrollment has changed very dramatically in the 38 years between the first collection of national data in 1968 and the data just released for the 2006-7 school year. Back in 1968, there were many more white students, accounting for about four out of every five students. As the first systematic national data of students were collected, Latinos were just registering on the national consciousness. They accounted for about one student in twenty. Asian students were present in insignificant numbers in most of the country, and it seemed that the nation's largest cities were destined to have virtually all-black school systems surrounded by almost all-white suburbs, although there were modest efforts at interdistrict transfers in a handful of communities. The epic 1965 immigration reform was only three years old and no one had any sense of how deeply it was to transform the country. American schools were overwhelmingly white and most blacks were in the South or in a few big central cities. No city had yet been ordered to desegregate fully and the courts had said nothing thus far about the duties of cities outside the South or about the rights of Latino students to desegregation remedies.

Almost four decades later, there are now only 56% white students and there will surely be a white minority of students nationally within a decade (Table 1). The Asian enrollment in 2006 is as big as the Latino enrollment was in 1968, while the Latino enrollment has soared past black students to 9.9 million students (Table 2). Since 1988 (table 3), the percent of U.S. students who are white has dropped 12% while the share who are Latino is up 9%. These are major changes and the trends are continuing in the nation's birth statistics. The two largest regions of the country now have white minorities in their school enrollments—only 44.6% percent white in the West and 48.9% in the South.

---

<sup>13</sup> Yun, J. T., & Reardon, S.F. (2005) "Patterns of multiracial private school segregation." In Janelle Scott (Ed.), *School Choice and Diversity: What the Evidence Says*. New York: Teachers College Press, chapter 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 2008*, p. 140, table 209.

**Table 1: Public School Student Enrollment Percentages by Region and Race/Ethnicity, 2006-07**

	% White	% Black	% Latino	% Asian	% Am. Indian
West	44.6	6.4	38.7	8.3	2
Border	67	21.1	5.7	2.4	3.7
South	48.9	26.5	21.5	2.6	0.5
Northeast	64	15.4	14.9	5.3	0.3
Alaska	57.4	4.6	4.4	7	26.6
Hawaii	19.6	2.4	4.5	73	0.6
National	56.5	17.1	20.5	4.7	1.2

**Table 2: Public School Student Enrollment by Region and Race/Ethnicity, 2006-07**

Regional	White	Black	Latino	Asian	Am. Indian	Total
West	5,026,869	720,551	4,358,143	938,502	229,827	11,273,892
Border	2,360,741	743,983	199,558	85,950	132,019	3,522,251
Midwest	7,064,681	1,453,328	833,904	270,408	92,706	9,715,027
South	7,548,267	4,084,400	3,317,174	407,695	70,427	15,427,963
Northeast	5,235,471	1,263,073	1,215,617	436,226	27,556	8,177,943
Alaska	76,155	6,070	5,830	9,233	35,320	132,608
Hawaii	35,352	4,261	8,155	131,854	1,098	18,0720
National	27,347,536	827,5666	9,938,381	2,279,868	588,953	48,430,404

The South, where most blacks have always lived, is 26.5% black, with an astonishing 21.5% Latino. Throughout its history, after American Indians were largely driven from the Southern region, the South had been mostly a biracial society, with black-white relations as a profound basic reality. Outside of Texas, the Hispanic presence was formerly very minor. Now, in a single generation, we have vast migrations transforming major areas of the region, creating multiracial schools and communities, and bringing linguistic and cultural diversity into many regions. In the West, we have another pattern of fundamental change. The West had long been understood as the last frontier of white migration, as the Midwest and the South poured tides of migrants into a largely white region. Now this huge region from the Rockies to the Pacific has a minority of white students and unprecedented diversity—just one-sixteenth black, but nearly two-fifths Latino and a tenth Asian, an area where Latinos are likely to surpass whites in a few years in school age population. In Alaska, 27% of the students are American Indian. In Hawaii, where President Obama went to school, 73% of students are Asian and just 20% are white.

**Table 3: Public School Enrollment by Race, 1988-89**

	Total Enrollment	% Enrollment
White	24,069,924	68.6
Black	5,454,120	15.5
Latino	4,044,694	11.5
Asian	1,206,055	3.4

Unless schools can be made to work for nonwhites, the nation will experience very difficult times. These numbers understate the true scope of the challenge since the high minority dropout rates lowers nonwhite numbers in high schools.<sup>15</sup>

### Patterns of Segregation

The percentage of students in intensely segregated schools, where the population is 90 to 100 percent nonwhite, is, of course, very low for whites—less than one student in a hundred. One-sixth of Asian students are in such highly isolated schools, some of them in the overwhelmingly Asian state of Hawaii, as are one-fifth of American Indian students. The most serious segregation affects Latinos and African Americans—in both of these populations about two of every five students attend intensely segregated schools (see Table 4), up from less than a third in 1988. An important point to note, for those who claim the *Brown* decision and the civil rights movement made no difference, is that 100 percent of Southern blacks were in such segregated schools before *Brown*. From 1970 to 2004, black students in the South were actually less segregated than those in any other region as the result of vigorous enforcement by the federal government in the late 1960s and strong requirements from the Supreme Court through the early 1970s. Even after 16 years of resegregation, there is nothing like the pattern of absolute racial segregation (in aspects of life including and beyond schools) that all Southern blacks lived with before the civil rights era. Today, the closest approximation to that level of total racial apartheid for black students, ironically enough, comes in cities like Chicago and Detroit. *Brown* did make a difference and still makes a difference particularly in the seventeen states that had segregation laws for generations.

**Table 4: Percentage of Students in 90-100% Minority Schools, 2006-07**

	% of Students in 90-100% Minority Schools
White	0.92
Black	38.5
Latino	40.0
Asian	16.2
Am. Indian	20.2

What has been substantially lost is the progress on urban segregation following the Supreme Court decision in the 1971 Charlotte case. Although whites were only 56 percent of students nationally and less than half in the largest U.S. regions, they still attended schools where more than three-fourths of their fellow students were white, on average (Table 5). Asians and American Indians, at least those outside the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, attended schools where 44% and 47% of their fellow students were white. For blacks, however, it was down to 29% and Latinos had the least contact with whites, on average. On average Latinos had only 27% white fellow students, while many schools were vastly more segregated. Nothing about these numbers clearly shows how much of school diversity--at the moment when data is collected--represents stable and lasting diversity versus how much is merely transitional, when nonwhites move into new communities and before resegregation takes place. Data we have

<sup>15</sup> Orfield, *Dropouts in America*, 2004.

recently examined, particularly in the suburban rings of our large metropolitan areas, suggests that a good share of the apparent desegregation is actually a stage in racial transition.

**Table 5: Exposure to White Students by Race, 2006-07**

	% of White Students in School of Average Student by Race
White	76.6
Black	29.4
Latino	27.0
Asian	43.8

Segregation patterns were far worse in 2006 than in 1988, near the peak of desegregation for black students. Then the average black student was in a school that was one-third white and just one-third of black students were in intensely segregated schools with 90-100 percent minority students (Table 6). Back then, Latinos were also in schools with average enrollments of one-third white, and one-third of Latinos were in intensely segregated schools. Now both groups are in schools with almost three-fourths minority students on average and about 40% are in intensely segregated schools.

**Table 6: Student Segregation by Race/Ethnicity, 1988-89**

	% of Students in 50- 100% Minority Schools	% of Students in 90- 100% Minority Schools	% of White Students in School of Average Student
White	7.9	0.4	83.4
Black	64.6	33.5	35.2
Latino	71.8	33.4	32.3
Asian	50.9	12.9	49.0
Am. Indian	37.0	17.8	55.7

For Latinos, most residing in districts which never implemented major desegregation plans, this increase in segregation is basically a reflection of growing numbers and spreading residential segregation. For blacks, whose schooling was changed by desegregation plans, especially in the South, and whose residential segregation has declined modestly since that time, a significant part of the reversal reflects the ending of desegregation plans. Their resegregation has been most rapid where desegregation had been most serious. A very important date to remember when looking at these trends is 1991, when the Supreme Court authorized a return to segregated neighborhood schools. In the *Dowell* case from Oklahoma City<sup>16</sup>, the Court held that desegregation was a temporary rather than a lasting responsibility of school systems and that following a period of time obeying a court order, the courts should end their role and the district should be free to adopt a neighborhood school system that would bring back segregated education.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* (89-1080), 498 U.S. 237 (1991).

<sup>17</sup> *Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* (89-1080), 498 U.S. 237 (1991).

### *Double Segregation: Concentrations by Poverty and Race*

A growing share of American school children come from families poor enough to qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches. It has been clear since the 1960s that both a school's achievement level and student achievement are affected by the proportion of the school's total enrollment that is poor.<sup>18</sup> There are many risk factors affecting academic achievement that are related to individual poverty and to poverty concentration. Schools with very high levels of poverty concentration tend to have weaker staffs, much less high achieving peer groups, many problems of health and nutrition, residential instability, single-parent households, few home resources, high exposure to crime and gangs, and many other negative conditions that are not caused by the school but strongly affect the school's operations and student outcomes. In the U.S. in 2006, the average white child was in a school where 32 percent of the students qualified for subsidized lunches, very similar to the school attended by the average Asian student (see Table 7). Just a decade earlier, the percentage of poor in the school of the typical white was 19%. In 1988-89, Black children were in schools with 43% classmates in poverty, in 2006-07 it is 59% and the pattern is almost the same for Latino students.<sup>19</sup> Schools with large concentrations of poor children must deal with all the problems poor children and poor families face in America, in a time when social support programs have been sharply cut back and the welfare system is a shadow of what it was before the Clinton welfare reform. The impact of massive cuts in welfare and other social programs was long masked by the economic boom that suddenly ended in the fall of 2008 and these problems will only be greatly intensified by the current and massive economic crisis, already the worst in more than a half century.

**Table 7: Average Percent of Poor Students in a Student's School by Race, 2006-07**

	% Low-income Students
White	31.5
Black	58.8
Latino	57.4
Asian	35.8
Am. Indian	52.6

Among the 27.3 million white students, only a tiny minority, about 0.4 million, attend schools where nine-tenths or more of the students are poor. At the other extreme, 5.6 million, or 20%, are in schools where there are 0-10 percent students in poverty. A majority of white students attend schools where less than 30% of the children are poor (see Table 8). White students are much less isolated from poverty than they were in the past but much more likely than black, Latino and American Indian students to be in schools with a solid middle class majority.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Rothstein, *Class and Schools Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap*, New York: Teachers College Press, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> G. Orfield and C. Lee, *Historic Reversals, Accelerating Resegregation, and the Need for New Integration Strategies*, Los Angeles: Civil Rights Project, August 2007, p. 19.



**Table 8: Percentage of White Students in Schools with Varying Levels of Poverty, 2006-07**

Percentage of Poor Students in School	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	5,577,930	20.4
10-20%	4,523,289	16.5
20-30%	4,320,261	15.8
30-40%	3,828,801	14.0
40-50%	3,300,259	12.1
50-60%	2,415,715	8.8
60-70%	1,591,444	5.8
70-80%	921,410	3.4
80-90%	485,996	1.8
90-100%	382,431	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,347,536</b>	<b>100</b>

Extreme concentrations of poverty produce the most overburdened and often overwhelmed schools, many of which have been indentified as failing under NCLB and are being subjected to sanctions. One in thirty white students and less than a tenth of Asian students, but 40% of black and Latino students attend schools where 70-100% of the children are poor. These schools are often totally dominated by the many dimensions of intense, concentrated, and isolated poverty which shapes the lives of students and families. While most whites attend school with 0-30 percent poor kids, that is true for only one-sixth of blacks and one-fifth of Latinos. Almost half of Asians are also attending such low poverty schools.

### *Multiracial Schools*

Although black and Latino students are becoming more isolated from whites, an increasing share of U.S. students attend schools of a type that was very rare when the civil rights movement was at its height—multiracial schools with more than 10% students from each of three or more racial groups. These multiracial schools have become particularly important in the West and the South. In the West, the nation’s most multiracial region, half of blacks and Asians attend such schools as do a fourth of Latinos and American Indian students and a fifth of whites (Table 9). Whether this produces a flowering of multicultural understanding, or a system where the black kids are concentrated in remediation and special education, the Latinos in ESL classes, and the Asians and whites in honors and advanced placement classes obviously depends on how the schools handle the possibilities and perils of these situations.

Much debate about the desirability of integration strategies have presented community control and ethnic solidarity in ethno-centric schools as potentially desirable alternatives to integrated schools. The demographic reality in the country, however, makes these options less available. When neighborhood schools are implemented in California, for example, blacks segregated from whites do not find themselves attending black, Afro-centric schools, but, on average, attend schools where there are more Latinos than fellow blacks. In the South, where there is now massive Latino immigration well under way, the opposite situation often occurs with Latino students who are segregated from whites finding themselves in schools where blacks may be the

majority. Instead of focusing on the integration of higher achieving whites and Asians, the more realistic alternative in these communities would be to improve relations between two or more disadvantaged nonwhite groups, who are often divided by issues of language and culture as well as racial stereotypes. Another complexity is added to the picture by the fact that 85% of the nation's teachers are still white and little progress is being made in diversifying the nation's teaching force. Regardless of the enrollment of schools, many of the teachers will be white.

The real alternative to formal desegregation efforts too often is simply letting various forms of racial polarization occur in highly impoverished multiple minority schools. There are no significant state or federal programs and little private philanthropy addressing policy to either produce better integrated schools with more racial and economic diversity or to train teachers and students about ways to more effectively run impoverished multiracial schools. Specifically, neither the federal government nor private foundations have funded major research and policy development on effective strategies for dealing with tensions and creating more positive relationships between nonwhite groups in multiracial schools.<sup>20</sup> The last federal program which provided funds for training staff, multiracial curriculum development and related efforts ended in 1981, in spite of evaluations that showed positive impacts on both learning and race relations. Neither the federal government nor private foundations have funded major research and policy development on effective strategies for multiracial schools or dealing with tensions and creating more positive relationships between nonwhite groups in the same schools. Comparing the data for 1988 with the most recent data, we see a particularly dramatic increase in multiracial schools in the South, which has always been home to the majority of U.S. blacks and now has more than one-fifth Latino students. Since this region was once the seat of the nation's traditional black-white racial paradigm but is now the nation's most rapidly resegregating area for black students, and already a predominantly nonwhite region, these issues deserve the most urgent attention there.

**Table 9: Percentage of Students in Multiracial Schools by Region and Race/Ethnicity, 2006-07<sup>21</sup>**

Region	% White	% Black	% Latino	% Asian	% Am. Indian
West	21	52	24	49	24
Border	8	16	40	36	17
Midwest	6	17	25	29	11
South	20	23	31	48	31
Northeast	11	30	37	44	19
Alaska	27	67	55	69	24
Hawaii	15	34	17	4	13
Total	14	25	28	43	21

Looking at the change in the level of multiracial schools from 1988 to 2006, we can see that even as segregation was steadily increasing for blacks and Latinos, the percent of whites in schools with significant populations of three or more racial groups doubled from 7 to 14% and the

<sup>20</sup> Frankenberg, E. & Orfield, G. (Eds.) (2007). *Lessons in Integration: Realizing the Promise of Racial Diversity in Our Nation's Public Schools*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.

<sup>21</sup> Multiracial is defined as the presence of more than ten percent of each of at least three racial and ethnic groups in the same school.

percent of blacks in such schools was up by more than half, growing from 16% to 25% (Table 10). There was no such change, however, for either Latino or Asian students on the national level. Both began with substantially higher levels of students in multiracial schools, 27% for Latinos and 42% for Asians but there was virtually no overall change over this 18-year period. The basic pattern shows that both groups were attending increasingly multiracial schools except in the West, which had the largest concentration of each group but was becoming more segregated. For Latino students, there were substantial gains in percent attending multiracial schools in the South, where the numbers of Latino students has been growing very rapidly and now account for more than a fifth of the region's total enrollment. Throughout this period, Asians have enrolled in the most multiracial schools and that percentage is increasing in most areas outside the West.

**Table 10: Percentage of Students in Multiracial Schools by Region and Race/Ethnicity, 1988-89**

Region	% White	% Black	% Latino	% Asian	% Am. Indian
West	16	49	29	55	22
Border	4	7	33	24	9
Midwest	2	8	26	18	7
South	8	11	20	34	26
Northeast	6	21	33	36	14
Alaska	10	30	24	28	8
Hawaii	15	47	16	3	12
Total	7	16	27	42	16

### *Suburbia and the Race Relations Challenge of This Generation.*

America's great cities, with few exceptions, now have largely nonwhite and poor student bodies, due in part to the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in the 1974 *Milliken v. Bradley* decision which very largely protected the nation's suburbs from any involvement in desegregation plans. Since that time, virtually the only cities to experience serious and long-lasting overall desegregation have been those located in states where school districts are organized not along municipal lines but along county lines. These districts experience both the deepest and most long-lasting desegregation. Some of them, particularly Charlotte, N.C., which was subjected to the Supreme Court's first busing decision in 1971, and Louisville, KY, which fought in the Supreme Court to maintain its voluntary desegregation plan in 2007, developed strong community support for maintaining desegregation even without a court order. Many of those long-lasting county-wide plans, which included both cities and suburbs, have now been dissolved by federal courts, with resegregation rapidly occurring there.

In other communities, where suburban rings are divided into many separate school districts, the enormous movement of middle class blacks and Latinos to suburbia has been underway for three decades. This is raising the urgent question about whether the suburbs will replicate the cities' sad story of spreading ghettos and barrios, or will they move down a path to lasting integration. There are 10.0 million whites in suburban schools, 2.5 million suburban blacks, 3.4 million

Latino students and .9 million Asian students in the South. While many cities came under desegregation court orders during the civil rights era, most suburbs did not, often because they then had few minority students. This meant that when minority families began to move to these suburbs in large numbers, there was no plan in place to produce or maintain desegregation, train teachers and staff, or recruit nonwhite teachers to help deal effectively with these new groups of students.

Although thousands of city neighborhoods had experienced resegregation and ghettoization, nothing was done in many suburban communities to prevent a similar syndrome, in spite of clear evidence, in both school statistics and housing transactions, that minority families were becoming concentrated in limited sectors of suburbia. In contrast to the big cities, which had a federal aid program (The Emergency School Aid Act) to help them adjust to desegregation when it occurred in the 1970s, suburbia had no help from the federal government, especially after the Reagan Administration shut down the program in 1981 just as suburban diversity was beginning to accelerate. A complex challenge was simply ignored, as civil rights remedies were cut back and the result has been the growing ghettoization of schools and neighborhoods in substantial sectors of some suburban rings.

The 2006 data show that the experiences of suburbanites differ by race. 54 percent of white suburban students are in schools that are 80-100% white, and only one-eighth of them are in schools that are less than half white (Table 11). On the other hand, more than two-thirds of suburban black students are in schools that are less than half white and only 8% are in schools that are 80-100 percent white (see Table 12). Latino suburban students are even more segregated (Table 13). Three fourths are in schools with a nonwhite majority and only 6 percent are in the 80-100% white schools so common in suburbia. Nearly two million of the 5.9 million black and Latino suburban students are in heavily segregated suburban schools with 0-10% white students.

**Table 11: Segregation in Suburbs for Whites, 2006-07**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	78,969	0.8
10-20%	142,048	1.4
20-30%	215,324	2.2
30-40%	321,852	3.2
40-50%	457,073	4.6
50-60%	694,950	7.0
60-70%	1,119,562	11.2
70-80%	1,554,499	15.6
80-90%	2,544,738	25.6
90-100%	2,828,421	28.4
Total	9,957,436	100

**Table 12: Segregation in Suburbs for Blacks, 2006-07**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	778,351	31.1
10-20%	253,624	10.1
20-30%	226,978	9.1
30-40%	230,990	9.2
40-50%	213,310	8.5
50-60%	213,125	8.5
60-70%	215,663	8.6
70-80%	171,977	6.9
80-90%	143,844	5.8
90-100%	54,559	2.2
Total	2,502,421	100

**Table 13: Segregation in Suburbs for Latinos, 2006-07**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	1,173,215	34.2
10-20%	496,017	14.5
20-30%	341,821	10.0
30-40%	283,269	8.3
40-50%	256,090	7.5
50-60%	240,853	7.0
60-70%	235,173	6.9
70-80%	187,953	5.5
80-90%	153,367	4.5
90-100%	59,831	1.8
Total	3,427,589	100

Asian students occupy an intermediate position, reflecting their position as a bimodal minority community combining highly privileged and substantially disadvantaged groups of students. One-fifth of Asian suburban students are in the 80-100% white schools, but 43 percent are in majority nonwhite schools (see Table 14). 49 percent of Latinos, 41 percent of blacks, 19 percent of Asians and 2 percent of whites in suburban schools attend heavily segregated schools with 0-20 percent whites. As black and Latino families take part in the long middle class exodus to suburbia, their children are often ending up in heavily segregated schools (usually also with high poverty populations), which threaten their childrens' prospects. The patterns, of course, differ across regions with widely varying population trends across the county. That variation can be seen by comparing suburban patterns in the nation's large metropolitan areas, where many millions of the nation's children go to school.

**Table 14: Segregation in Suburbs for Asians, 2006-07**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	91,549	9.7
10-20%	80,048	8.5
20-30%	72,863	7.7
30-40%	76,945	8.2
40-50%	81,457	8.6
50-60%	98,780	10.5
60-70%	129,949	13.8
70-80%	132,593	14.1
80-90%	126,833	13.4
90-100%	52,471	5.6
Total	943,488	100

*Suburban Racial Diversity in the 25 Largest Metro Areas.*

Looking at the nation's 25 largest metropolitan areas in 2000 (Census Metropolitan Statistical Areas or MSA's), we see suburban rings that are very different from the postwar suburban boom, when civil rights leaders sometimes referred to the suburbs as "the white noose." The suburbs have huge school-aged populations—more than three million people in metro New York and above one million in eight others. In five metros, there already is a nonwhite majority among the under-18 population: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Riverside-San Bernardino, Miami, and San Diego. The largest black suburban school age proportions were in Washington, D.C., Miami, and Atlanta. None of the other 25 metro areas had as much as one-fifth black students. Boston had the smallest share and there were ten metros with single digit black school age populations. For Latinos, seven areas had more than one-fourth Latino school-aged suburban population: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, Miami, Riverside-San Bernardino, Phoenix and San Diego. Los Angeles already had a predominantly Latino suburban school age population. Suburban areas of industrial cities—Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh--had the smallest proportion of Latinos (see Table 15).

In many metros outside the south and west--Chicago, New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, and Baltimore—the white percentage of suburban youths was at least ten percentage points higher than across the entire MSA, while in other areas the suburbs as a whole tended to be more reflective of the overall population. Even though Asians are highly suburbanized in many areas, the Asian share of suburbanites under 18 was over ten percent in only two areas: San Francisco and Los Angeles. In Los Angeles, Miami and Baltimore, a higher percentage of Asian youths lived in the suburbs than did white youth (see Table 17).

**Table 15: Size and Racial Composition of Under-18 Population in Suburbs of Largest 25 MSAs, 2000**

AREA NAME	Suburban Population, 2000				
	Population	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Asian
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	3,187,626	67.9	12.3	13.1	5.6
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	1,482,681	21.3	8.9	56.2	12.3
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	1,495,913	68.6	10.7	14.8	5.1
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	956,537	47.5	7.3	25.0	18.5
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	1,095,388	78.4	12.8	4.6	3.6
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	837,381	66.0	10.1	18.2	4.5
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	1,029,144	83.5	8.5	3.1	3.3
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	1,004,476	88.1	2.8	4.1	3.9
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	764,611	54.5	11.6	27.8	5.2
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	1,083,117	54.2	26.5	10.1	8.0
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	1,030,755	37.0	27.0	32.8	2.3
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	1,002,698	57.0	30.7	7.5	3.9
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	831,148	35.8	9.3	48.5	4.7
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	678,112	74.2	6.2	7.0	9.8
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	311,626	57.8	4.3	30.5	2.9
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	631,406	87.3	4.5	3.0	4.1
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	513,591	84.9	10.4	2.0	1.9
San Diego, CA MSA	386,217	48.2	6.0	36.8	7.0
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	544,720	79.2	16.3	1.9	1.8
Denver-Aurora, CO	487,555	70.8	4.6	19.1	4.1
Baltimore, MD PMSA	476,877	74.1	18.4	2.6	3.9
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	398,275	77.6	2.0	12.9	5.3
Pittsburgh, PA MSA	458,539	88.9	8.2	1.0	1.3
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	375,891	72.0	9.5	14.6	2.6
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	414,198	89.5	6.8	1.4	1.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,478,482</b>	<b>63.9</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>

Although all suburban rings in the largest MSAs increased their school age population during the 1990s, the numbers actually declined in seven central cities for that same period. It's not surprising that the largest suburban growth came in the Sunbelt (Table 16). All suburban areas of the MSAs in the south grew more than 20% during the 1990s, and suburban Atlanta, where more than 90% of all youth in the Atlanta MSA are suburbanites, grew by almost 50%. Five of the seven large southwestern MSAs also grew more than 20%. At the same time, the suburbs of the slow-growth industrial Midwest experienced the lowest growth.

**Table 16: Percentage of suburbanization in 2000 and change during 1990s for under-18 population**

AREA NAME	% suburban 2000	% change in suburban pop. over 1990s	% change in central city over 1990s
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	56.2%	17.6%	12.3%
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	55.6%	14.5%	15.0%
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	60.7%	19.9%	7.4%
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	57.5%	19.1%	11.1%
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	69.9%	13.8%	1.2%
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	57.2%	38.4%	27.1%
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	71.5%	10.9%	-1.3%
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	72.1%	15.7%	5.6%
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	56.4%	32.3%	18.9%
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	86.9%	28.0%	4.3%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	87.2%	38.0%	3.1%
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	91.5%	49.0%	-2.0%
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	81.4%	32.4%	32.4%
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	77.0%	21.4%	10.6%
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	35.7%	69.5%	38.6%
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	79.6%	19.9%	13.4%
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	69.0%	6.8%	-0.7%
San Diego, CA MSA	53.4%	20.3%	16.9%
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	79.6%	8.6%	-9.5%
Denver-Aurora, CO	73.6%	33.8%	20.8%
Baltimore, MD PMSA	73.8%	23.5%	-9.5%
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	68.3%	29.5%	18.5%
Pittsburgh, PA MSA	87.3%	1.0%	-9.4%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	71.6%	28.9%	14.9%
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	79.1%	14.4%	-8.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66.3%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>

The isolation of white youth from central city life was striking. In Detroit, Washington, Miami, Atlanta, Miami, Baltimore and Pittsburgh, over nine-tenths of whites under age 18 lived in the suburbs. It was over 80% in Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Riverside, Seattle, Minneapolis, Cleveland, St. Louis, Denver, Riverside and Cincinnati. In these areas, only a small percentage of white students were growing up with any real knowledge of the city located at the core of their metro region. The contrast between whites and their black and Latino peers, who lived in the suburbs at lower rates in every MSA, were striking (see Table 17).



**Table 17: Percentage of racial groups (under-18) that live in suburban areas, by MSA in 2000**

AREA NAME	% of racial group that live in suburbs, 2000			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	78.3%	31.8%	34.8%	46.0%
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	59.7%	46.0%	54.3%	64.5%
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	83.3%	28.5%	40.9%	70.6%
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	68.6%	43.1%	51.8%	50.5%
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	86.9%	36.6%	39.8%	66.6%
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	75.1%	35.2%	37.2%	62.1%
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	92.2%	22.8%	57.4%	81.1%
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	82.4%	27.2%	32.4%	58.3%
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	77.3%	35.2%	43.5%	60.5%
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	93.8%	75.1%	83.4%	93.4%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	90.3%	84.4%	85.6%	93.4%
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	97.5%	80.9%	94.9%	97.0%
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	82.3%	77.8%	81.5%	81.4%
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	81.5%	59.1%	71.7%	66.5%
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	39.2%	29.3%	30.1%	38.4%
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI	89.8%	38.0%	50.9%	46.9%
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	82.8%	32.0%	32.7%	77.8%
San Diego, CA	62.2%	39.4%	51.6%	34.9%
St. Louis, MO-IL	88.6%	53.6%	76.1%	82.1%
Denver-Aurora, CO	83.1%	52.2%	55.0%	78.2%
Baltimore, MD PMSA	91.0%	40.8%	77.6%	91.3%
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	71.6%	32.4%	68.1%	57.7%
Pittsburgh, PA	92.3%	56.0%	81.1%	81.5%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	79.4%	41.3%	71.8%	68.4%
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	87.5%	34.9%	75.0%	85.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	81.2%	44.1%	51.4%	60.4%

### *Small Towns and Rural Areas*

In the days of civil rights struggles, small towns and rural areas were seen as the heart of the most intense racism. Now, for some time, they have had the least segregated school districts. While the courts have drastically cut back on remedies that can overcome patterns of residential segregation, these communities typically do not have large areas of single race residence and schools can be desegregated more easily simply by forbidding action to intentionally segregate, which remains illegal. Small towns are still largely white. Of the 4.2 million whites living in small towns, 2.8 million, or 67%, are in schools that are 80 to 100 percent white. Less than one-fourth of blacks are in schools with less than one-fifth white students. 43% of the .7 million black small town students attend majority white schools, as do 37% of Latinos (Table 18). About one-third of Latinos in small towns attend schools with fewer than one-fifth whites.

**Table 18: Segregation in Towns for Whites, Blacks, and Latinos, 2006-07<sup>22</sup>**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Whites		Blacks		Latinos	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	12,268	0.3	108,230	15.7	197,057	22.0
10-20%	25,422	0.6	51,771	7.5	88,247	9.8
20-30%	58,230	1.4	68,562	10.0	93,672	10.5
30-40%	99,033	2.4	72,560	10.5	96,087	10.7
40-50%	161,782	3.8	92,802	13.5	87,052	9.7
50-60%	230,383	5.5	83,251	12.1	81,198	9.1
60-70%	342,162	8.1	77,755	11.3	81,403	9.1
70-80%	473,323	11.2	58,676	8.5	70,714	7.9
80-90%	804,793	19.1	43,655	6.3	62,205	6.9
90-100%	2,012,017	47.7	31,347	4.6	38,943	4.3
Total	4,219,413	100	688,609	100	896,578	100

The rural sectors of the nation still educate many students. Among the 8.3 million rural whites, 73% attend schools that are 80-100 percent white (Table 19). The 1.1 million rural black students seldom attend virtually all-black schools, as millions did before the civil rights era. Only one-seventh are in the 80-100 percent nonwhite schools and 51 percent actually attend majority white schools (see Table 20). The Latino picture is similar with one-sixth in the highly segregated schools and 46 percent in majority white schools (Table 21). Pre-*Brown* segregation in rural and small town America is not returning.

**Table 19: Segregation in Rural Areas for Whites, 2006-07**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	15,768	0.2
10-20%	37,784	0.5
20-30%	68,641	0.8
30-40%	116,753	1.4
40-50%	226,339	2.7
50-60%	367,083	4.4
60-70%	573,876	6.9
70-80%	827,561	9.9
80-90%	1,498,705	18.0
90-100%	4,615,275	55.3
Total	8,347,785	100

<sup>22</sup> Asians and American Indians students in small towns were small and not included in this analysis. Additionally, Asian segregation in rural areas is not shown for the same reason.

**Table 20: Segregation in Rural Areas for Blacks, 2006-07**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	163,227	14.4
10-20%	83,762	7.4
20-30%	87,647	7.7
30-40%	96,864	8.5
40-50%	129,776	11.4
50-60%	147,058	12.9
60-70%	144,854	12.7
70-80%	122,475	10.8
80-90%	100,934	8.9
90-100%	61,174	5.4
Total	1,137,771	100

**Table 21: Segregation in Rural Areas for Latinos, 2006-07**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	189,858	17.3
10-20%	117,445	10.7
20-30%	92,267	8.4
30-40%	85,935	7.8
40-50%	107,899	9.8
50-60%	110,252	10.0
60-70%	113,377	10.3
70-80%	105,349	9.6
80-90%	99,161	9.0
90-100%	76,750	7.0
Total	1,098,293	100

**Table 22: Segregation in Rural Areas for American Indians, 2006-07**

% of Total Enrollment that are White Students:	Frequency	Percent
0-10%	62,795	28.5
10-20%	9,063	4.1
20-30%	11,646	5.3
30-40%	16,021	7.3
40-50%	16,290	7.4
50-60%	19,889	9.0
60-70%	22,752	10.3
70-80%	21,444	9.7
80-90%	21,192	9.6
90-100%	19,490	8.8
Total	220,582	100

*Whites and Diversity: Why Whites Think Segregation is Over*

Even as black and Latino students are becoming more isolated, the typical white child is in a school that is more diverse than the school white children attended a generation ago. This factor makes it especially hard for whites to understand the degree to which resegregation has taken place. In 1988, 53% of white students attended schools that were 90-100% white, but that number has slipped to 36% in the newest data. 94% of whites were in majority white schools then, but that has dropped to 87% in the most recent data. The share of whites attending multiracial schools has risen from 7% to 14% (see Tables 23 & 24). These and other changes create the perception that desegregation is gaining, since the typical white experience has changed significantly, even if modestly, in that direction.

The reason why this desegregation can be happening at the same time blacks and Latinos are increasingly more isolated is due to the very substantial decline in the number and proportion of white students in the population, with a substantial increase of nonwhites, particularly Latinos and Asians.

**Table 23: Percentage of Students in Segregated Minority, Segregated White and Multiracial Schools, by Race/Ethnicity, 2006-07**

Race	90-100% Minority	50-100% Minority	90-100% White	Multiracial
White	0.92	13	36	14
Black	38.5	73	2	25
Latino	40.0	78	2	28
Asian	16.2	56	5	43
Am. Indian	20.2	48	7	21

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The U.S. is experiencing the final years of a majority white public school system. If the various racial and ethnic groups continue on their current path, segregation will become even more pronounced for black and Latino students. It will overwhelmingly combine a dual segregation by race and poverty with an increasing language separation, particularly for Latinos. The share of American students both finishing high school and graduating from college will fall, as white students are replaced by nonwhite students educated in segregated “dropout factory” settings. Obviously we should try to change these patterns.

Desegregated schools are neither a panacea nor feasible in all circumstances, but they provide very strong advantages for all groups of students when they are properly implemented. They offer the single most powerful way to reach and prepare the coming generation, which will be the first to live in an America that is truly multiracial and has no racial majority group. It is imperative that we take feasible steps to foster and sustain integration and to deal with the deeply rooted harms of segregation.

The first step should be a clear recognition by leaders of government and education that we have not fulfilled the dream of the *Brown* decision and the great civil rights laws. In fact, we have not been taking any significantly positive steps. The combination of hostile courts and a hostile executive branch have pushed us backwards and left us with few tools to address the issue. There has not been a major initiative from the White House on these issues for forty years and the last significant positive step by Congress came 36 years ago. A good basic document would first summarize the progress and regress of desegregation and educational equalization over the past half century, summarize the best research on the issue, and review the research evidence on the benefits of the federal desegregation aid program before it was cancelled by the Reagan administration. There were a number of evaluations and Congressional hearings on the substantial educational and human relations gains from the program during the Carter Administration that could be an excellent starting point. The document should next make recommendations about how to help schools and communities deal successfully with the increasing diversity of the nation. As the country’s attention focuses on the enormous economic crisis we now face, it is important to realize that these issues will not go away. Much can be done to begin to turn the page without large expenditures and by primarily relying on voluntary measures that many educators and communities will want to take.

We have had negative advocacy on these issues from the executive branch during most of the past four decades, which have been dominated by a conservative electoral coalition in which Southern white conservatives took over leadership of one of the national political parties and spurred transformation of the federal judiciary. The only two Democratic Presidents elected between Lyndon Johnson and Barak Obama were southern moderates whose administrations did not provide substantial initiatives supporting desegregation. There has been a very long vacuum of serious positive leadership and seven presidential elections won by active civil rights opponents who have appointed seven of the nine current members of the Supreme Court.

What is badly needed is leadership that recognizes that we have a common destiny, that the true American dream was that encapsulated by Martin Luther King, Jr. His dream was of an America

where our children grow up together, knowing and respecting each other, and all are prepared for the kind of education and jobs that can bring them into lives of success in the American mainstream. This is not about busing. The immediate issue is about using choice mechanisms in ways that bring our children together, not deepen the stratification among our communities. We have many examples of successful magnet and transfer programs that provide successfully integrated opportunities in our segregated urban society. On the other hand, we transfer many students from one segregated area to another and from one weak school to another. Under the Bush Administration, voluntary pro-integration efforts were attacked and federal civil rights officials urged local school boards to do less and to dismantle existing efforts.

A good message from the new administration would be that voluntary local action to achieve desegregation and work toward full integration are valuable goals, and that the government would support them rather than create obstacles. Obviously, federal policy must operate within the limits that the Supreme Court has set, but the federal civil rights agencies could take the position of helping school districts find the best ways to move forward within those limits. The federal equity centers, funded under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which have largely moved away from their original goal of desegregation consulting, could redirect a substantial share of their energy toward that goal. The Justice Department's community relations service, created to help peacefully resolve racial tension, could invest in developing and designing training in successful techniques for dealing with conflicts within multiracial and racially changing schools.

Obviously work with the federal courts will be very important in determining the nation's racial future as it has been in the past half century. When the federal courts created clear standards and fostered desegregation, major changes occurred. Every year since they reversed course in 1991, segregation has deepened. How the courts understand the causes of segregation, the way it persists over time and the workability of remedies matter greatly in the development of the law and the future of individual communities and their schools. The Justice Department can rebuild the Civil Rights Division, which has been gravely damaged by political and ideological management, so that it can be a reliable support to the courts in reaching a better understanding of these issues.

During the Carter Administration, the Civil Rights Division combined the Education and Housing Sections of the Division, recognizing that in a society where the vast majority of the people live in metropolitan areas, school and housing segregation and the related racial inequalities, comprise two sides of the same coin. Good plans and lasting progress are unlikely until both are combined together in plans that work for the entire community. There has been almost no real enforcement of the federal fair housing law, and housing and mortgage discrimination remain gigantic problems. We do not even have a policy that prevents the building of badly needed housing in areas of inferior segregated schools. Buildings are constructed for poor families, with heavy tax and other subsidies, in areas where the high schools are dropout factories. Housing-voucher tenants are often steered to interracial neighborhoods through selective marketing to holders of federal vouchers and subsidy certificates. This produces resegregated and impoverished neighborhoods with rapidly declining schools.

The average American moves every six years, and there is very strong discrimination and steering in the housing and home finance markets. Unless integrated areas have positive policies

they often become resegregated, first by race and then by poverty. There has never been a coherent federal policy to support integrated communities, deal effectively with racial issues in the schools, predatory lending activities, or federal housing programs that end up fostering resegregation and other factors. In particular, no effective implementation of Title VIII of the 1968 Fair Housing act, which requires that all federal housing and urban programs be administered in ways that foster the goals of the act, has ever taken place. President Nixon fired HUD Secretary George Romney when he began to urge suburbs to accept their fair share of subsidized housing. The U.S. Senate rejected Secretary Henry Cisneros' proposal for a substantial program of housing mobility. During the Carter Administration, a regulation was drafted to require that subsidized housing be built in ways that do not create segregated schooling, but it was cancelled as soon as the Reagan Administration took office.

These issues are particularly important now because of the very large-scale migration of black and Latino middle class families to suburbia. It is vitally important that these migrations become successful mobility into solid middle class America, as they were for millions of families from European immigrations, and not just expansion of impoverished ghettos and barrios. Many of these families, are not, however, getting the housing choices and financing available to other similar white families. So, they end up living in areas of relative decline, with far weaker schools and peer groups for the kids, more limited housing markets for their neighborhoods, less increases in home values and, particularly in troubled times, exposed to decline and even large-scale foreclosure, conditions that drastically undermine family wealth and limit the networks and the social capital they are able to provide for their children. Experienced teachers, for example, stay in stable integrated neighborhoods, but are much more likely to leave in the face of resegregation.

Thousands of suburban communities are now facing these challenges with no support or assistance, usually with no public acknowledgement of the racial problems. Suburban communities that have been successful in avoiding resegregation, holding their businesses, keeping strong real estate markets, high quality schools, and other fundamental assets, tend to be places that have had conscious positive leadership seeing integration as a community value and mobilizing against the forces of resegregation. Oak Park, Illinois, for example, faced a prediction of imminent resegregation in 1970, since it was just across the street from an expanding very poor black ghetto. But the community mobilized behind a comprehensive pro-integration policy, which has enjoyed considerable success for more than a third of a century.<sup>23</sup> The National Fair Housing Alliance is an excellent source of information on integrated suburban communities with positive policies. If federal leaders in HUD, the Department of Education and the Justice Department embraced this goal and offered serious support in dealing with the syndrome of discrimination, racial steering, declining markets and resources, poor governmental services, predatory lending, and resegregating schools that often threaten areas of minority migration, there could be a major difference in outcomes. Neighborhoods that stabilize as successful multiracial communities, like Barak Obama's Hyde Park-Kenwood, tend to experience high

---

<sup>23</sup>Carole Goodwin, *The Oak Park Strategy: Community Control of Racial Change*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979;

demand and are seen as a desirable residential location for families of all races and much better economic and social outcomes.<sup>24</sup>

There is an urgent need for basic research, and for new thought about race and schooling. Very little of that has been done as the nation's population and communities have been transformed. Experts from various federal agencies and private groups, including the National Academy of Education and the American Educational Research Association, should work together to design a new research agenda to provide basic data for the government and the public about what kind of changes are under way and what options communities and schools have in reaching the most positive educational and social outcomes. Part of that work should be to stimulate federal agencies and courts to come up with better contemporary definitions of desegregation goals and concepts. Obviously, even in the South, the old goal of getting black students access to white institutions and changing them to successful biracial institutions is no longer adequate. In the West, where Asians, on average, are doing much better than whites in educational outcomes and becoming the dominant group in some of the most high status colleges, it makes no sense to leave them out of the equation. Similarly there must be serious thought about schools with large Latino majorities but a substantial black minority or vice versa, either one of which may have very few whites.

And how should school racial policy deal with children who define themselves as biracial or multiracial rather than within a traditional racial category? Wouldn't it make more sense, for example, to consider the segregation of disadvantaged racial groups from the high achieving racial groups? Would it make more sense to consider middle class biracial students as part of the mainstream rather than as excluded racial minorities? Wouldn't it be useful to define the conditions under which race-conscious goals for any group would no longer be needed? How should poverty and social class be included in these considerations? Race still matters immensely in treatment and outcomes in American society, but race is not the same thing it was when these issues were last seriously examined at the highest levels of American government. Obviously, President Obama has experienced and thought about these issues, but federally supported research and policy has basically ignored them. They now affect a small sector of the population but are likely to become substantially more important in the future.

School choice on a large scale in American education began with desegregation struggles in the South, where southern school officials tried to avoid large-scale desegregation with plans known as "freedom of choice" in the early and mid-1960s. These plans rarely produced more than token desegregation. White students did not transfer to black and Latino schools and individual transfers of minority students to overwhelmingly white schools often produced a situation where the nonwhite students felt unwelcome and isolated. Additionally, parents often faced problems in the community when they exercised this choice. Federal civil rights officials and the Supreme Court found that these plans were inadequate in the late 1960s and moved toward sweeping requirements of mandatory district-wide desegregation plans. As the urban north faced desegregation requirements and the Supreme Court closed the door to suburban involvement, new forms of choice—magnet schools, majority to minority transfers, and controlled choice plans—which encouraged creation of good choice, but prohibited choices which increased

---

<sup>24</sup> G. Orfield, "Ghettoization and its Alternatives" in Paul Peterson, ed., *The New Urban Reality*, Washington: Brookings Inst., 1985, pp. 161-196.



segregation, were developed and approved by courts in many cities. For a decade, they received support and aid from the federal government. Now the largest federal choice investments, in NCLB and charter schools, have no civil rights requirements and may often foster increased school segregation. These policies should be changed.

One of the best outcomes in diverse schools happens when what might have been seen as a problem becomes an asset, when a disadvantaged group becomes an important resource. Dual-language magnet schools where students are systematically exposed to each other's native language, with the goal of academic fluency in both languages, is an excellent example when properly implemented. This approach can foster the kind of collaborative equal-status learning that produces the best educational and human relations outcomes.<sup>25</sup> For white students, they help deal with the nation's critical deficit in fluency in foreign languages and for both they increase employability in the rapidly growing number of bilingual communities and institutions.

The extreme mismatch between the changing student bodies and the overwhelmingly white teaching force raises urgent issues for many schools and communities. It is very difficult to have a successfully diverse school without a diverse faculty. Most communities now lack adequate plans for recruitment of diverse teachers and training of all teachers in techniques for successfully handling multiracial classes. Diverse faculties add members who have experiences and community contacts that few whites have. In a nation where one-fifth of the students come from homes where another language is spoken, teachers fluent in those languages obviously add greatly to the ability of the school to communicate with and involve parents and community members in the schools efforts. Federal policy should recognize and support the need to diversity faculties and staffs and provide assistance to school systems in training their own paraprofessionals as teachers.

The federal Office for Civil Rights and Department of Justice could help greatly in definition of preconditions for unitary status, the finding of full compliance with desegregation plans required to release a district from its obligations. The term is defined very vaguely in judicial opinions, which is not surprising given the limited capacity of judges to assess the operations of school districts. The U.S. Department of Education has the expertise needed to help the courts and also to define standards for the many U.S. districts still operating under plans negotiated with the Office for Civil Rights decades ago and not monitored for many years by the OCR. Almost nothing has been done to provide districts support in devising the kinds of plans researchers suggest would be most successful, or in helping formerly biracial districts deal positively with the additional challenges as they become multiracial.

The federal government is the most important source of funding for educational research, but its priorities have largely ignored trends in racial change and resegregation, causes and effects, and the value of alternative remedies for successfully moving toward genuine integration and closing gaps in learning and educational attainment. Almost no basic research has been commissioned on multiracial schools or race relations between two or more "minority" groups in schools and districts. The racial transformation of suburbia has been ignored. There has not been collaboration between the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of

---

<sup>25</sup> Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp "Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2006, Vol. 90, No. 5, 751-783

Education, and the Labor Department in either research or policy development though communities, schools and labor markets will all be deeply shaped by whether the country moves toward greater racial polarization or lasting integration. Both education and housing agencies need to support research on creating housing and school conditions for stable neighborhood integration. A federal research agenda in this area could be extremely helpful.

Private foundations, universities and nonprofit organizations need to play a role. Only a handful of American foundations have made any significant investment in research or development of models for addressing the resegregation and deepening stratification of America. The opponents of integration policies have been funded through conservative think tanks and legal action groups. Private foundations need to seriously fund the small number of civil rights litigation organizations working on these issues and the research and demonstration efforts needed to devise the best policies. Investing large amounts of money in very localized projects in neighborhoods profoundly affected by these problems, without any investment in understanding or work to change the underlying dynamics of resegregation, is a short-sighted strategy and likely to fail. Private philanthropy has been particularly inattentive to the racial transformation of suburbia, often choosing to focus funds on a handful of big city neighborhoods while ignoring places where a little leverage might produce very different outcomes.

The largest need now, however, is leadership. For decades the basic message has been that we do not need to do anything about these problems and should eliminate the legal and policy tools that we possessed. Deepening racial and ethnic separation and a massive transformation of our population pose complex and sensitive problems. The situation is similar to the challenge facing the civil rights movement at the beginning of the 1960s—a need to focus the public’s attention and the development of an agenda for positive change. This requires serious political leadership and that leadership needs to come from Washington, state capitals, and regional organizations. When Presidents Kennedy and Johnson spoke to the nation about the crisis of Southern civil rights in the mid-1960s, their messages had enormous impact and brought both awareness of the harm and the possible solutions into the national discussion. Members of the Cabinet, leaders in Congress, and others could help move this process forward. Civil rights organizations and journalists have vital roles to play. There are many ways in which various parts of government and the private sector can help move forward on issues of resegregation. It could make a great difference if people realize that the racial transformation of the society can’t be avoided and that the only real choices are doing it well or continuing along a path of deepening separation and more entrenched inequality, which will greatly diminish our common future. If people realize that there are more positive paths and feel that the country’s leaders and major institutions are supporting them, there could be a far better outcome.