Identifying Areas of Racial Isolation through Non-racial Means: A First Step toward the Creation of Racially Diverse, Successful Schools

Summary Findings

In the recent Supreme Court ruling in Parents Involved in Community Schools ("Parents"), a majority of justices agreed that preventing racial isolation and promoting diversity in education are compelling governmental interests. Many hundreds of school districts across the nation doubtless agree. However, a majority of justices also effectively concluded that school districts can use the racial classification of individual students to realize those interest only in very limited circumstances. Therefore, many school districts that until now achieved a measure of diversity in their student populations through the racial classification of individual students will be searching for race-neutral means to avoid racial isolation while promoting high educational performance. It is our hope that analyses like the ones presented in this preliminary report will be of help to the districts in their critical efforts.

Because of the general correspondence between income and race, many observers assume that schools integrated by income will also be substantially integrated by race. In fact, this is often not the case. African Americans and Latinos are indeed disproportionately low-income. However, persistent racial segregation in housing and the fact that there are more whites in poverty than people of color would combine to thwart many efforts at racial integration that rely on income measures. In light of this severe limitation to income-based strategies, we conducted a preliminary analysis using two other race-neutral models we believed had promise to identify areas of racial isolation.

First, we used an approach that targeted neighborhoods of spatially concentrated poverty. People of color are much more likely than whites to reside in high-poverty neighborhoods. (This geographic strategy would best be utilized in tandem with strategies that prevent the creation of high-poverty, low-performing schools.) We found that in Louisville, targeting neighborhoods of concentrated poverty “captured” populations of color quite well: high-poverty areas in Louisville contained 50% of the non-White population. In Seattle, this approach worked less well: high-poverty neighborhoods contained just 27% of the total non-White population. This information could be profitably used by the school districts in fashioning their new student assignment plans.

Second, we conducted a multi-factor analysis that identified neighborhoods of low educational opportunity. (Again, this strategy would best be coupled with a parallel strategy that promoted the creation of high-educational opportunity schools.) This approach drew on factors correlated with educational performance, such as parental educational levels. Our preliminary findings indicate that this more robust analysis better captures a significant number of students of color, rather than using poverty rates alone. In fact, the study results were striking: in Louisville, 56% of families in high poverty neighborhoods were African American, whereas nearly 76% of the families residing in low educational opportunity areas were African American. In Seattle, the difference was

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1 The following paper is a working draft. As this research is further refined, this paper will be updated and re-released. For more information about this research, please contact Jason Reece at reece.35@osu.edu.
even greater: high poverty neighborhoods were 35% African American, whereas low educational opportunity areas were 81% African American. The multi-factor opportunity index approach identified areas outside of the high poverty zones. The opportunity index analysis also allowed for targeting a larger geographic area within the district, in contrast to the limited geographic area that was identified as high poverty.

Our preliminary analyses suggest that under different demographic and geographic conditions, different models may be more or less useful in identifying areas of racial isolation. The next step is to compare these race-neutral approaches to a race-conscious approach. Our ultimate goal is to be able to present school districts struggling to respond to the Supreme Court’s recent mandate with a menu of analytical options with which to inform their school assignment decisions.

**Introduction**

Seattle, Washington and Jefferson County, Kentucky school districts’ voluntary limited race-conscious student assignment plans were recently and successfully challenged before the Supreme Court. Although the Court did not completely prohibit the use of race-conscious plans by school districts, districts must carefully implement plans that are narrowly tailored. That is, they must show that they considered methods other than explicit racial classifications to achieve their stated goals, using racial classifications only as a “last resort.”

Unfortunately, the ruling may have a significant negative impact on these districts and hundreds of similar voluntary race-based integration policies throughout the nation. Currently, schools in both Louisville and Seattle are more racially diverse than their underlying neighborhood demographics (See Maps 1 and 2). If Seattle and Louisville return to neighborhood-based school assignments, their school diversity will certainly decrease.

For example, in Charlotte, North Carolina in the early 1980s (under a race-conscious integration regime), only 5% of black students attended racially imbalanced schools. Under a non-race conscious, neighborhood-based, limited-choice integration regime implemented in 2002, the schools rapidly re-segregated. Within two years of initiating the program, racial integration had decreased to the extent that 7.4% fewer middle-schools and 22.6% fewer elementary schools exhibited racial balance. High school racial re-segregation occurred at nearly the rate of the elementary schools. Similarly, after Denver, Colorado ended race-conscious integration in 1995, it did not implement any type of integration policy in its place. As a result, around half of its schools rapidly re-segregated.

**I. Research on income integration strategies**

A recent study using data from 89 urban school districts found that very high levels of racial segregation can persist under most practical income integration strategies, and that generally, given the extent of racial residential segregation in the U.S., it is unlikely that
race-neutral income-integration policies would significantly reduce school racial segregation.\textsuperscript{2}

This study estimated the extent to which race-neutral income integration plans would produce ancillary racial integration, using data from large urban school districts. The researchers found that the range of possible racial segregation consistent with income integration is quite wide, depending largely on the size of racial income disparities within a given district and on the operational definition of “income integration” in a given plan. The authors concluded that:

In general, given current levels of racial income disparities in the United States and practical constraints on income integration plans, we find that income integration does not guarantee any reduction in racial school segregation – very high levels of racial segregation are possible under any practical income-integration policy.\textsuperscript{3}

The authors do speculate on the effects of using expanded measures of SES that might include parental education, neighborhood poverty rates, public housing assistance, prior student achievement, proficiency in English, etc., a multi-factor approach similar to the geographic strategy tested in this paper.

A recent story in the \textit{New York Times} reported that the San Francisco public schools began using factors like family income instead of race in school assignments in response to a previous lawsuit.\textsuperscript{4} School officials found that the district is racially re-segregating as a result. The year before the change in the plan (2001-2002), when schools still used race as a factor in assignment, 30 schools had students of a single racial ethnic group making up 60\% or more of the population in at least one grade. Three years later (2005-2006), 50 schools were segregated by this measure.

The literature concerning racial segregation and integration in the school system implicitly acknowledges some degree of correlation between race and socioeconomic status (SES), but the precise degree of correlation and the utility of SES as a means to promote racial integration remain in question. This uncertainty has prompted a search for other variables which might be more successful in achieving racial integration. Furthermore, in testing the efficacy of different methods to promote racial integration, the degree of residential racial segregation and its prominence within and between school districts are increasingly brought to bear as a mitigating factor. Although economic integration strategies can produce more racially diverse schools, they do not always achieve that outcome. The geographic and demographic conditions within the school district influence the likelihood of producing both economically and racially diverse schools.

\textbf{II. Spatially concentrated poverty}


\textsuperscript{3} Reardon et. al. (2006): 50.

A second approach is to utilize race-neutral concentrated poverty and test score measures, such as in the Wake County, North Carolina plan. Under the Wake County plan, no school can have more than 40% of its students from concentrated poverty zones (the district has mapped out 700 “neighborhood zones”) and no more than 25% of its students scoring below grade level on standardized tests. This approach attempts to ensure district-wide, high-performing schools while avoiding racial isolation. Preliminary results from Wake County show that this can be quite successful in raising test scores: Only 40% of black students in 3rd-8th grade in Wake County scored at grade level on state reading tests in 1995; by spring of 2006, 82% did. Preliminary results showed a slight increase in “racially identifiable” schools, which has since stabilized.  

1. The effects of concentrated poverty on school performance

The socioeconomic status of a school, after the influence of family, remains the greatest predictor of student success and achievement. One researcher found that a middle-class school is twenty-two times more likely to be consistently high performing than a high-poverty school. The Century Foundation found that on average, low-income students attending middle-class schools perform higher than middle-class students attending a low-income school. In many cases, the low-income students attending a middle-class school pass proficiency exams at rates more than twice those of their counterparts trapped in high-poverty schools.

Environmental or “neighborhood” conditions produce profound impacts on the likelihood of educational success for students, especially for low-income students. In addition, a significant body of literature and research reveals that students who are able to relocate from neighborhoods with poor educational opportunities to high opportunity areas experience substantial academic improvements.

2. The correlation between concentrated poverty and race

Geographic conditions are critical to understanding racial and economic segregation in both housing and schools. Residential segregation in neighborhoods, cities, and metropolitan regions is still widespread and is directly responsible for the racial segregation found in our schools. In 2000, nearly two-thirds of African Americans and

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Whites were spatially segregated from each other in the nation’s major metropolitan areas. Discrimination in real estate and rental housing, mortgage lending, concentrated subsidized housing and exclusionary zoning work to spatially isolate most African American households. One way to produce truly integrated schools is to address the underlying spatial segregation which isolates most students of color.

Racial segregation is often correlated with the isolation of high poverty neighborhoods. Poor whites are not nearly as spatially concentrated in metropolitan areas as poor people of color, who are often limited to central city and older suburban neighborhoods of declining opportunity. In 2000, nearly three-fourths of all people living in concentrated poverty neighborhoods (neighborhoods with poverty rates higher than 40%) were either African American or Latino.

Because schools draw from their surrounding neighborhoods, some schools draw principally from primarily African American or Latino neighborhoods of highly concentrated poverty, whereas others draw from wealthy, white, suburban districts. Schools comprised overwhelmingly of students from poor families face multiple obstacles that make educating children difficult, such as the inability to attract and retain qualified teachers, maintaining high teacher expectations, the lack of college prep courses, and perceptions regarding school safety. Because these high poverty failing schools are often majority African American or Latino, a vicious circle of disadvantage keeps poor students of color from achieving the economic mobility that a quality education can provide. One strategy to avoid racial isolation and promote successful schools could therefore potentially focus on integrating students from high or concentrated poverty neighborhoods.

3. Using concentrated poverty measures to promote ancillary racial integration: test case in Louisville and Seattle

To assess the potential racial makeup of schools by focusing on high or concentrated poverty neighborhoods, our analysis was limited to neighborhoods with poverty rates higher than 20% within the Seattle and Louisville school districts. Our scenario assumed that students within these high poverty communities would be eligible for voluntary integration into high performing schools elsewhere in the region. Studies show that the effects of concentrated poverty rapidly increase at two thresholds: between about 7% and 20% (when a neighborhood is “tipping” into high poverty), and over 40% (at which point a neighborhood is in extreme high poverty). The USDA Economic Research Service has also used a 20% poverty rate to delineate areas of “high poverty” in the U.S. The Seattle and Louisville school districts have limited number of neighborhoods with

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poverty rates exceeding 40%; therefore, we determined the high-poverty cut-off rate to be 20% to capture the “tip” into high poverty.

4. Results

Table 1, Figure 1 and 2 present the results of an analysis of the racial makeup of high poverty neighborhoods in both school districts. In Louisville, roughly two out of three residents in high poverty areas are non-White and more than half are African American. In total, approximately half of the district’s non-White population and more than half of the district’s African American population were located in these high poverty neighborhoods. In the Seattle district, roughly 1 out of 4 of the district’s non-White residents reside in high poverty neighborhoods (considerably less than Louisville); while roughly a third of the African American population is located in these high poverty neighborhoods. In Seattle, which is more racially diverse, roughly 1 out of 4 Asians and Latinos live in high poverty neighborhoods. In summary, focusing on high poverty neighborhoods would allow for the targeted integration of a large number of non-White residents, but with different degrees of success depending on context. In Louisville this strategy would be more successful. Louisville is therefore better off than Seattle using the high poverty approach to capture the African American population in particular and the non-white population overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Louisville, KY School District</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Non-white total</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Population by Race within School District</td>
<td>530,648</td>
<td>129,282</td>
<td>8,999</td>
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<td>Racial Breakdown within High Poverty Areas</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
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<th>Asian</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Non-White total</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population by Race within District</td>
<td>383,387</td>
<td>46,116</td>
<td>73,817</td>
<td>29,865</td>
<td>181,946</td>
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<td>% of Total Racial population in District within High Poverty Areas</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
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<td>25.5%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Breakdown within High Poverty Areas</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
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II. Using a Multi-Factor Index to Assess Educational Opportunity

The central purpose of this strategy is to identify neighborhoods which are the most disadvantageous environments for educational success, looking at a number of factors producing cumulative disadvantage for students residing in these neighborhoods. To map educational opportunity in the Seattle and Louisville districts, our analysis focused on
factors correlated with students’ academic performance and achievement. This approach assumed that while concentrated neighborhood poverty is often robustly correlated with race, the complex reality of race in the United States is not reducible to income differentials, and therefore that a multi-factor analysis might better capture the legacy of this complex historical dynamic. Again, schools utilizing this approach could also stipulate that no more than 25% of students failing standardized tests are concentrated in one individual school.

1. Educational Opportunity Indicators

Wealth and student achievement are highly correlated. Wealth is positively related to both academic achievement and standardized test scores. In fact, several researchers have argued that it is such a critical factor that it can account for much of the racial achievement gap; when controlling for wealth, Conley found that the academic achievement gap between black and white students largely disappears. Again, like any factor that impacts education, the effect does not lie solely in wealth alone, but also in the correlates such as access to human capital and parental education levels. To assess wealth, we used median income and median home value.

Scholars have long known that the educational levels of parents are one of the most critical factors influencing a student’s academic achievement. When students’ parents have high levels of education, those students have increased test scores, greater educational aspirations, and higher grade point averages. Parents with higher educational levels are also more frequently involved with their children’s education, not only at home, but inside the school as well. It is important to note that these increased levels of parental involvement in the school not only benefit the children of those parents involved, but all of the students in the school.

Thus, schools located in neighborhoods with higher levels of educational attainment tend to perform better, in part due to this parental involvement effect. This is one way in which the average educational attainment level of a neighborhood impacts student achievement. Additional ways are through social capital and collective socialization. Social capital is limited as students are not exposed to adults who can provide positive resources such as computers, information such as assistance with school work, or social

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13 Due to time constraints, we used demographic data shown to correlates with test scores, but not test scores themselves for individual school districts. Our next iteration will include test score data in the educational opportunity index.


networks.\textsuperscript{18} When entire neighborhoods are comprised of individuals with low levels of educational attainment, this may limit collective socialization, particularly in terms of exposure to positive role models and beneficial educational influences.

There is a strong correlation between average neighborhood educational levels and income, and researchers have conclusively demonstrated the direct and critical impact of living in a high-poverty neighborhood on students’ academic performance and achievement. In many ways this is due in part to many of the aforementioned correlates such as decreased social capital and lower levels of parental involvement, but neighborhoods of concentrated poverty are also limited in terms of supplemental educational resources that directly impact achievement, such as educational infrastructure including school facilities and libraries, and programmatic resources including after-school and tutoring programs. Furthermore, students in areas of concentrated poverty are at risk for a number of additional factors that decrease educational performance such as exposure to lead and environmental toxins, psychological distress due to living in a high-risk environment, and limited access to high quality, affordable healthcare. Finally, these neighborhoods are critical as they have a direct impact on the school experience these students face. Put simply, students learn less when surrounded only by other low-income students. We used poverty rates, child poverty rates, and aggregate figures for economically disadvantaged students in school to get a robust measure of concentrated poverty for student populations.

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<td>Total population by Race within Low Educational Opportunity Areas</td>
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<td>% of Total Racial Population in District within Low Educational Opportunity Areas</td>
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<td>75.7%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Breakdown within Low Educational Opportunity Areas</td>
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<td>28.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total population by Race within Low Educational Opportunity Areas</td>
<td>121,999</td>
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<td>% of Total Racial population in District within Low Educational Opportunity Areas</td>
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<td>Racial Breakdown within Low Educational Opportunity Areas</td>
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<td>10.2%</td>
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<td>5.5%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
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2. Areas of Low Educational Opportunity: Seattle and Louisville Scenario

To capture low educational opportunity areas, we created a comprehensive index for neighborhoods measuring the factors discussed above.\textsuperscript{19} The relative opportunity index


\textsuperscript{19} We have not yet produced an opportunity index that using race as one of the factors to test its efficacy in comparison to these two race-neutral models. The race-neutral models may work relatively well in some contexts, but it is possible that a race-conscious model (whether using census tract or individual data) may
ranking was based on breaking block groups into quintiles, a standard technique of geographic analysis. Neighborhoods were then ranked based on their index score, with the two-fifths of neighborhoods scoring poorest categorized as low educational opportunity neighborhoods.20 These results are mapped out in this report (please review the maps 3 to 6 included in this report).

3. Findings

Our index of educational opportunity provides striking results in respect to capturing racial and ethnic populations. Table 2 and Figure 3 presents these results for both the Louisville and Seattle district. Approximately half of the residents living in low educational opportunity neighborhoods were non-White in each District. In respect to the proportion of the district’s non-White residents living in these communities, the results were even more explicit. In the Louisville district, 68% of the district’s non-White residents were located in the low educational opportunity areas, with 76% of the district’s African American residents located in the low educational opportunity neighborhoods. Similar results were found in the Seattle district, with 72% of all non-White residents in the district found in the low educational opportunity neighborhoods. For African Americans, 81% (or 4 out of 5) were located in these low educational opportunity communities. In summary, using a multi-factor educational opportunity index is a better alternative to create racial diversity than focusing just on income or neighborhoods of high poverty.

Figure 2: Percentage of total racial population in district within low education opportunity areas

These results imply that a geographic strategy focusing on multiple socio-economic factors would impact a significant number of students of color and provides a better alternative to create high performing and diverse schools than simple economic

produce the best outcome of all the models, enabling districts to be consistently high-performing while avoiding racial isolation.

20 The methodology discussed above is the standard methodology and technique of geographic analysis utilized in “neighborhood opportunity” analysis conducted by the Kirwan Institute. Utilizing the relative distribution of block groups allows for targeting a larger geographic area than simply using thresholds (such as poverty rate), this distinction helps explain why the opportunity index approach is more inclusive and captures a larger segment of the population than a simplistic model targeting only high poverty census tracts.
integration strategies. It should be noted that the effectiveness of any strategy is highly sensitive to the unique geographic and demographic conditions within individual school districts. Districts seeking to create diverse and successful schools should explore all alternatives to determine what specific strategy would be best to meet these goals.

The multi-factor geographic approach modeled in this study suggests that there are more effective ways to address racial isolation outside of just using SES or concentrated poverty. The effectiveness of any strategy will be impacted by the specific characteristics of school districts. Modeling and analysis conducted for this report used neighborhood and school level data and did not utilize individual student data (data on the individual characteristics of students). Future research and exploration of these models would be enhanced and refined by using individual student level data. As these types of data become available future research by the Kirwan Institute will include this information.

We also recommend combining various student integration models to meet the individual needs of school districts and increasing the probability of producing more diverse and successful schools. The multi-factor education opportunity model could be adapted to include limitations on the number impoverished students and number of students not passing proficiency exams within individual schools (similar to the Wake County model). We also recognize that there may be some school districts which cannot effectively address racial isolation using any model, due to the demographic conditions within the district. Appendix A at the end of this report explores other strategies to think about diversity and educational success for these districts.
This map displays the racial composition in elementary schools within Jefferson County, KY with an underlay of non-White population distribution by block group.
This map displays the racial composition in elementary schools within the city of Seattle, WA with an underlay of non-White population distribution by block group.

Prepared by: Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
Date: July 31, 2007
This map displays the high poverty (Poverty rate 20% or above) areas overlaid with 'Low' opportunity areas in Jefferson County, KY.

Prepared by: Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity | Date: July 31, 2007
This map displays the high poverty (Poverty rate 20% or above) areas overlaid with 'Low' opportunity areas in the City of Seattle, WA.

Prepared by: Kirwan institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
Date: July 31, 2007
This map displays the racial composition in elementary schools within Jefferson County, KY with an underlay of distribution of opportunity by block group based on education, poverty and economic indicators.

Prepared by: Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity | Date: July 31, 2007
This map displays the racial composition in elementary schools within the city of Seattle, WA with an underlay of distribution of opportunity by block group based on education, poverty and economic indicators.

Prepared by: Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
Date: July 31, 2007
Appendix A: Addressing Hyper-Segregated School Districts

Integrative strategies to improve school diversity and academic achievement are not possible in many large urban districts. Many of the nation’s largest urban school districts are segregated to a degree which does not allow for effective inter-district desegregative strategy (economic or racial). In 2000, the ten metropolitan regions with the largest number of African American students recorded dissimilarity scores ranging from 62.1 in Dallas to 88.5 in Detroit. In fact, eleven metropolitan regions have African American-White dissimilarity above 80.0 and fifty six metropolitan regions report dissimilarity scores higher than 70.0.1 Reardon’s 2006 study of economic integration noted the challenges created by the high degree of urban segregation for any economic integration strategy. The authors emphasize that “absent income reassignment options that rely on inter-district or metropolitan transfers to achieve regional income balance among schools, the effect on racial school desegregation is likely to be extremely limited.”2

Conditions of hyper-segregated urban school districts are most pronounced in the Northeastern and Midwestern states, most notably in older urban cities found throughout the nation’s rust belt. Detroit is one of the best examples of a hyper-segregated district. In 2005, of the 141,000 students in the City of Detroit public school district, only 2.8% were White. Nine out of ten students in the district are African American and nearly three out of four were eligible for free and reduced lunch.3 The economic segregation in the Detroit region is so pronounced that even County wide integration strategy would be difficult, due to Wayne County’s 48% rate for free and reduced lunch students.

What can hyper-segregated districts such as Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago or New York do to increase academic performance and produce more diverse educational opportunities for their students? The following are recommendations to improve the educational opportunities for urban students in the nation’s most segregated school districts. These recommendations are based on research, model programs and successes in public school districts across the nation.

Thinking Regionally:

- **Regional Education**: Ultimately, the most important goal in achieving racial and regional equity in education is to create racially, ethnically and economically diverse schools. In order to accomplish this in a sustainable manner, a more regional approach to remediying education must be considered. Given the contentious history surrounding similar initiatives, we acknowledge that such an approach will likely be met with resistance, thus it is best to work towards a system of regional education incrementally. This requires assisting low-performing schools and facilitating access of inner-city students to high-performing schools.

- **High-performing, low-poverty schools throughout the region**: It is critical that low-income students of color be granted access to high-performing, low-poverty schools. Offer students more choice in where to attend school; provide affordable housing in job-rich, high-opportunity neighborhoods; and improve linkages that help students in

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1 Source: Lewis Mumford Center at NYU-Albany, on-line at [http://mumford.albany.edu/census](http://mumford.albany.edu/census)
2 Reardon et. al. (2006): 67.
3 Source: [www.schoolmatters.org](http://www.schoolmatters.org)
failing schools attend low-poverty, high-performing schools. In addition, the districts highest quality teachers must be concentrated in the highest poverty failing schools.

- **District Magnet/Charter Schools:** District run magnet and charter schools are a conduit to produce high quality educational opportunities in hypersegregated districts. It is also important that schools within the city be able to attract students from the wealthier suburbs. We recommend that the student body be racially, ethnically and economically balanced by including neighborhood students, inner-city students, and children from the suburbs. Downtown employees who live in the suburbs could be incentivized to place their children in these schools.

- **Linking Housing and Education through Mobility:** In order to provide African American populations greater access to opportunity and increased life chances, the reform efforts must extend beyond education. One example of how this could be accomplished is through the alignment of housing and education policy. Minneapolis is considering just that, by connecting students who are utilizing the intra-district transfer program to housing near the school. This will not only provide increased opportunities to students and their families, but will also decrease the negative impact of long commute times for students.

- **Linking Housing and Education through Affordable Housing Production (LIHTC):** Using the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program to Connect Low Income Children to High Quality Schools. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (LIHTC) is the largest federal program that supports affordable housing opportunities for low income families. LIHTC has worked to provide housing to millions of low income families, but by typically concentrating affordable housing units in high poverty, poorly resourced inner city school districts, the LIHTC program exacerbates the educational challenges facing low income children. Policy makers must insist that a significant number of family LIHTC units be sited in low poverty neighborhoods with high-performing schools, a reform that would provide particularly large benefits for low-income students and for the nation as a whole.

**Additional Strategies**

- **Detracking:** Ability grouping or tracking creates even further segregation within schools, as students of color are grossly represented in the lowest tracks. Detracking has demonstrated that it not only improves academic achievement for those previously in lower tracks, but for all students at every ability level. We recommend that courses be comprised of students at heterogeneous ability levels. Throughout this process, it is important that resource support be provided to teachers, and academic support is available for students.

- **Service Learning:** Despite the multiple roles of public education, the responsibility to create an engaged citizenry is often overlooked. Service learning is one method through which this can be accomplished. Research on service learning demonstrates its success for students in developing civic engagement, increasing awareness of

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community needs, promoting an understanding of politics, and fostering greater commitment to community service. Service learning is a very flexible practice and thus has potential to be customized and easily implemented without great structural rearrangement.

- **Collaborative Education:** Education is a public institution with a wide range of stakeholders including parents, businesses, civic leaders and grassroots organizations. There are a number of initiatives across the country that deliberately seek to incorporate the voice of these stakeholders through efforts that provide job training and after school programs, initiatives that facilitate parent involvement with the school, and the establishment of open, two-way communication lines between schools and the communities.

- **Early Childhood Education:** Intervening early in a child’s life is critical, and establishing universal preschool could produce tremendous academic gains for low-income students of color. Although these programs are typically established and funded at the state level, there has been some movement on the district and regional level. Currently, Invest in Children is working to establish universal preschool in Cleveland.

- **Linking P-12 to Universities & Employment:** Our current education pipeline is fragmented and disjointed. There is a movement underway to establish a K-16 education system, which seeks to ease students’ transition between secondary and post-secondary education. Multiple benefits of this alignment exist for students, teachers, schools and universities. Given the unique dynamics of Cleveland and the rich base of higher education institutions, this relationship should be collectively and creatively established.

- **School-to-Career Programs:** In order to achieve greater racial and regional equity, students must be provided with real and sustainable employment and career opportunities. School-to-career programs have been shown to have positive effects on all students’ educational and occupational outcomes, including increasing college attendance rates and rates of employment. They also provide another means to establish connections to businesses, universities, and the community. It is critical that these programs be implemented with caution in order that they do not constrain students’ choices and are not used in a way that reinscribe hierarchy.