Excerpt from Remedial Expert Report of John Powell (Thompson v. HUD)

**Educational Opportunity**

While the African American labor force is isolated from economic opportunities, African American children remain concentrated in the poorest performing and most economically segregated school districts in the nation. Educational opportunities for most African Americans are segregated by race and class. Almost half of African American students in the U.S. attend a central city school district, compared to 17% of White students.¹ Research measuring dissimilarity for metropolitan school districts in 2000 found that black/white dissimilarity in schools was .65, thus nearly 2 out of 3 children would need to transfer to integrate the nation’s metropolitan school districts. While neighborhood segregation declined slightly during the 1990’s, school segregation increased. Racial segregation is accompanied by economic segregation and African American children are much more likely to attend high poverty schools than their white counterparts. The average African American child attends a school with a 65% student poverty rate, compared to 30% for the average White student’s school.² Segregated high poverty schools are also failing African American students. Three quarters of White students in ninth grade graduate on time while only half of African American students finish high school with a diploma in four years.³ Researchers feel that this is creating a educational crisis for urban youth, as stated by Gary Orfield at the Harvard Civil Rights Project.

When an entire racial or ethnic group experiences consistently high dropout rates, these problems can deeply damage the community, its families, its social structure, and its institutions.⁴ Racial and economic segregation harm the quality of education received by children for a number of reasons. Poverty creates numerous challenges for families and their children’s learning processes that schools must address. In segregated areas, the scale of these challenges is much greater as the number of kids experiencing them is greater. As one study has found, “high poverty schools have to devote far more time and resources to family and health crises, security, children who come to school not speaking standard English, seriously disturbed children, children with no educational materials in their homes, and many children with very weak educational preparation.”⁵ Low-income students and

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students of color are also less likely to have qualified teachers, more likely to have teachers who completed an alternative certification program, and more likely to be taught by substitute teachers.  

Because of these educational impediments, research has consistently found that both racial and economic segregation negatively affects students. For example, one study finds that there is a “consistent negative effect of high poverty concentrations in school on students’ academic achievement.”7 Another study finds that the poverty of a school, far more than the poverty of an individual, determines educational outcomes, and that impoverished students do better if they live in middle-class neighborhoods and/or attend more affluent schools.8

Conversely, a wealth of research indicates that students who receive education in integrated environments fare better than their segregated peers. For example, a recent analysis of school desegregation in Louisville, Kentucky found that students of color who attend more integrated schools demonstrate increased academic achievement levels and higher test scores.9 Intergenerational gains also ensue when students of color attend desegregated schools. One study concludes “improving economic and educational opportunities for one generation of minority individuals raises the socioeconomic status of the next generation, so that those who follow are more apt to begin school at the same starting point as their non-minority classmates.”10 Attending a desegregated school also translates into higher goals for future educational attainment and occupational choices11 and improved social networks.12

The benefits of an integrated education do not just accrue for students of color. Diverse educational settings contribute to all students’ ability to participate in a pluralistic
society.13 Blacks and Whites who attend desegregated schools are more likely to attend a
desegregated college, live in a desegregated neighborhood, work in a desegregated
environment, and possess high career aspirations.14

Educational disparity has far reaching implications due to the fact that educational
attainment is linked to many life indicators including health, income and employment.
There is a strong positive relationship between the education level and health status of an
individual; the lower the level of educational attainment the higher incidence of mortality
rates and more common the prevalence of specific diseases such as cancer and heart
disease.15 This can be largely attributed to the relationship between educational
attainment and earnings. In the United States, each successively higher education level is
associated with higher earning power, and data over the last 25 years shows that this gap
is only widening.16 Furthermore, higher levels of educational attainment are associated
with greater labor force participation rates and a lower probability of unemployment. The
gap in employment rates between college and high school graduates has been widening
steadily as well.17

Educational opportunity is segregated by race and class in the Baltimore region. The
dissimilarity index for African American and White students in the Baltimore
region’s schools was .73 in 2000 indicating that nearly 3 of 4 African American students
in the region’s public schools would need to change schools to desegregate the region’s
schools.18 The average African American student in the Baltimore region attends a school
with a student poverty rate of 42%, while the average White student attends a school with
a 19% student poverty rate.19

The majority of African American children in the Baltimore region are
concentrated in the Baltimore City school district, the poorest performing district in the
region. In 2005, 51% of African American K-12 students in the region attended schools
in the Baltimore City district, compared to 23% of the region’s total student population.20
For low-income African American children (those most likely to be living in subsidized

13 See MICHAEL KURLAENDER & JOHN T. YUN, IS DIVERSITY A COMPELLING EDUCATIONAL
Summary available on-line at http://www.diversityweb.org/Digest/W01/louisville.html
14 Robert Crain and Amy Stuart Wells, Perpetuation Theory and the Long-Term Effects of Schools
Desegregation, 531 REV. OF ED'L RESEARCH (Winter 1994); M. Dawkins and J.H. Braddock, The Continuing
Significance of Desegregation: School Racial Composition and African American Inclusion in American
15 Center for the Advancement of Health. December 2002. LIFE LESSONS: STUDYING EDUCATION'S EFFECT ON HEALTH. Vol 7, No. 12. Available at:
http://www.cah.org/factsolflife/vol7no12.cfm
Healthy People 2010. November 2000. A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO HEALTH IMPROVEMENT. Available on-line at:
17 Joint Economic Committee Study. January 2000. INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION: PRIVATE AND PUBLIC RETURNS. UNITED STATES CONGRESS.
18 School segregation database for Metropolitan Areas by the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative
19 John. Logan. CHOOSING SEGREGATION: RACIAL IMBALANCE IN AMERICAN PUBLIC
20 Data from Maryland on-line database for school district indicators and demographics and
www.mdreportcard.org
housing) this concentration is more extreme. In 2000, 59% of African American children (all persons under 18 years of age) in the Baltimore region were found in the City of Baltimore, while 77% of the region’s African American children in poverty (as defined by the Census Bureau in the 2000 Census) were found in the City of Baltimore. Analysis of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch supports this finding. In 2003, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students (the federal government’s definition for free and reduced lunch children) in the Baltimore City School District was 73%, nearly three times the rate of the Baltimore County district (29%), and more than four times the rate of any other district in the region. Test scores in the Baltimore City district are considerably lower than those of its regional counterparts. Only 37% of Baltimore City students who took proficiency exams passed the reading proficiency test and only 26% passed the math proficiency test in 2003. The pass rates for all other districts in the region were approximately double the rates of Baltimore City. The Baltimore City District also contains the lowest percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers among all districts in the region. In 2004, almost two-thirds of classes taught in the Baltimore City schools were not taught by highly qualified teachers (65.7%). In comparison, 37.0% of classes taught in the Baltimore County district were not taught by highly qualified teachers. For other districts in the region this figure was considerably lower: Anne Arundel County (17.8%), Carroll County (13.1%), Harford County (19.9%) and Howard County (18.3%).

Maps 5 through 8 depict indicators of educational quality/opportunity in the region’s elementary school catchment areas. Most of the elementary schools in the City of Baltimore perform poorly based on all indicators (with the notable exception of the northern central area within the City of Baltimore). As seen in Map 5, the highest concentration of schools with large numbers of students eligible for free and reduced lunch (students in poverty) is located in the City of Baltimore. Conversely, low poverty schools are primarily located in the region’s suburban counties. Proficiency test scores show similar spatial disparities, with most of the City of Baltimore’s elementary schools performing poorly and suburban elementary schools (primarily in Baltimore County and Howard County) performing better (Maps 6 and 7). Spatial patterns of teacher qualification also follow these trends; the largest number of schools with large proportions of classes are taught by non-highly qualified teachers located in the City of Baltimore (Map 8).

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21 Data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census of Population and Housing. 
http://www.census.org

22 Source of data: No Child Left Behind School Partnership Database for Maryland School Districts at: 
http://www.schoolresults.org

23 Source of data: No Child Left Behind School Partnership Database for Maryland School Districts at: 
http://www.schoolresults.org

24 Source of data: 2004 Maryland Report Card.  Maryland Department of Education at: 
http://www.msp.msde.state.md.us

25 Source of data: 2004 Maryland Report Card.  Maryland Department of Education at: 
http://www.msp.msde.state.md.us
Map 1: Concentration of African American Population in the Baltimore Metropolitan Region 2000 (Percent African American by Census Tract)

Legend:
- Water
- Counties in Region

Percent African American
- Less than 20%
- 20 to 40%
- 40 to 60%
- 60 to 80%
- 80 to 100%

Prepared by: Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity
Date Prepared: 06.29.2005
Sources of Data: U.S. Census Bureau, STF3 Dataset (Census 2000)
Map 5: Percentage of Elementary Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch 2004 (Students in Poverty)

Legend:
- Water
- Counties in Region

% of Students Free and Reduced Lunch
- 0 - 8.7
- 8.7 - 22.2
- 22.2 - 50.2
- 50.2 - 81.2
- 81.2 - 96.7

Note: Boundaries represent, elementary school catchment areas (received from school districts). Data represents individual school data for each catchment area. Areas with missing data were given the corresponding data for the district average.

Prepared by: Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity
Date Prepared: 06.29.2005
Source of Data: State of Maryland Dept. of Education
Map 6: Percentage of Elementary Students Proficient in Reading 2004

Legend:
- Water
- Counties in Region

% of Students Proficient in Reading
- 28.1 - 57.5
- 57.5 - 69.7
- 69.7 - 77.5
- 77.5 - 86.5
- 86.5 - 98.4

Note: Boundaries represent, elementary school catchment areas (received from school districts). Data represents individual school data for each catchment area. Areas with missing data were given the corresponding data for the district average.

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Date Prepared: 06.29.2005
Source of Data: State of Maryland Dept. of Education
Map 7: Percentage of Elementary Students Proficient in Math 2004

Legend:
- Water
- Counties in Region

% of Students Proficient in Math
- 10.1 - 50.2
- 50.2 - 63.4
- 63.4 - 74.1
- 74.1 - 83.3
- 83.3 - 98.5

Note: Boundaries represent, elementary school catchment areas (received from school districts). Data represents individual school data for each catchment area. Areas with missing data were given the corresponding data for the district average.

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