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ABSTRACT

AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES

HEATH, IAN G. B.A. INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1999

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF DESEGREGATION ON THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS IN PHILADELPHIA AND DEKALB COUNTY GEORGIA, 1954-PRESENT

Committee Chair: Josephine Bradley, Ph.D.

Thesis dated May 2011

This study examines how the American educational system has affected African-American students and institutions since desegregation.

The research is designed as a comparative study. It analyzes and interprets data relating to the success and hardships experienced by African-American students and teachers in educational institutions.

Historical information was used to chronicle the policies and factors which contributed to the status of African Americans in the American educational system. Data was collected from both urban and suburban school systems.
Results were compared then analyzed in order to determine if there was a difference in experiences and success rates for African-American students and teachers in both settings.

Discipline records were examined, and national test scores of African-American students and institutions were compared. Data collected during this research can be used to increase the awareness of the disadvantages which many African Americans face when it comes to education.

The conclusions drawn from these findings support the fact that African Americans have and continue to achieve despite a lack of resources or the intuition which they attend.
SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF
DESEGREGATION ON THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN
STUDENTS IN PHILADELPHIA AND DEKALB COUNTY GEORGIA,
1954-PRESENT

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
IAN G. HEATH

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MAY 2011
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AYP</td>
<td>Annual Yearly Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>CACFP</td>
<td>Child Adult Care Food Program</td>
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<td>NAACP</td>
<td>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People</td>
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<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
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<td>PSSA</td>
<td>Pennsylvania System of School Assessment test</td>
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<td>SAT</td>
<td>Scholastic Aptitude Test</td>
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<td>SEPTA</td>
<td>Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE:
This research is a comparative study examining the effects of integration in the Northern region of the U.S. versus the effects of integration in the Southern region of the U.S. The research is attempting to determine if either setting has an advantage in the education and nurturing of African-American students. In order to understand the effects of Northern integration, the Philadelphia Public School System is examined, and for Southern integration the DeKalb County Public School System (Georgia) is the focus district. The timeframe for the study is 1954 to the Present.

BACKGROUND:
The past several decades have been riddled with an increasing concern about the lack of success experienced by a large percentage of African-American students in the public school system. Adding to the crisis, disproportionate numbers of African-American males are going to prison rather than college.
African-American educational institutions continue to lag behind predominately white educational institutions when it comes to funding, resources, and staffing. Possibly the most disturbing of all is that a large percentage of the African-American population still falls below the basic literacy rate, which is extremely detrimental in today's modern society, since literacy rates have been directly linked with employment rates.\(^1\)

An examination of the educational statistics indicates that African-American students have the second highest dropout rate of all ethnic groups which is currently estimated to be between 8-10 percent.\(^2\) Traditionally, the dropout rate for African Americans has been relatively high 19.1 percent in 1980 and remained in the double digits until 2007 when it dropped to 8.4 percent.\(^3\) Hispanics are the only other ethnic group with a higher dropout rate. Despite the tremendous gains since integration, African Americans are still dropping out at alarming rates in a society where a college degree is becoming a common prerequisite for many employers. The percentage of African Americans with a college degree has never reached double digits and currently hovers around 9.6 percent. African-American females have shown the most gains in the last several decades, earning 69 percent of associates degrees, 66 percent of bachelors, 71 percent of masters, and 66 percent of doctoral degrees awarded to African-American students.


In recent years, African Americans have been able to advance in higher education, according to statistics from the Department of Education. Between 1996-97 and 2006-07, the number of white students earning bachelors degrees increased 22 percent, compared to a larger increase of 55 percent for black students. However, black students earned only 10 percent of all bachelor’s degrees awarded, which is detrimental considering that the earnings difference between those with a bachelor’s degree or higher and those with less education increased from 1980 to 2006 and is expected to grow. In 1980 a worker with a bachelor’s degree or higher earned $14,600 more than someone who did not earn a high school diploma or equivalent. In 2006, this difference increased to $23,000. In 1980, a worker with a high school diploma could expect to earn $41,400 annually; in 2006 that same worker would make $30,000. This is alarming considering the fact that inflation has been on a consistent rise. In today’s society supporting a family with such wages becomes extremely difficult. A person without a diploma would find it almost impossible to make ends meet in the future. What does this mean for the large number of African Americans who fall in this category? More importantly, what does this mean for the future of the African-American community? Education will have to play a vital role in improving conditions for African Americans.

Another constant problem when it comes to education is that African Americans as a group continue to struggle on standardized test and other formal assessments, even though many have questioned the validity of these formal assessments. A common

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stereotype is that African Americans generally do poorly on standardized tests, and it seems that when it comes to the SAT this is the truth. Based on Department of Education statistics, African Americans have consistently performed at a lower rate than any other ethnic group in both reading and mathematics, a common trend in most urban districts including Philadelphia and DeKalb. On the average African-American students are scoring one hundred points lower than whites in both section and one hundred and fifty points to Asians on the mathematics section.  

There have been numerous explanations for this trend, ranging from low attention spans to lack of resources. However, a new paradigm has begun to emerge in recent years. Many are beginning to blame integration for the lack of success African Americans seem to have in the public school system. Proponents of this argument feel that blacks have actually regressed in many ways since the incorporation of the civil rights policies of the 1950s and 1960s. Many revisionist scholars have begun to argue that these policies were one sided and perpetuated the dogma that the European model of education is better than any African-American or African based method.  

Revisionists feel that the civil rights policies failed to address the true goals of the movement in two ways. First, many of the brightest African-American teachers and students were sent to hostile white environments, which perpetuated a “white is right” theory and took these valuable resources from environments that needed them to elevate

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the rest of the population. Secondly, instead of busing black kids out, policy makers should have bused white kids into these urban environments at large rates. This movement would force tax payers to pay attention to these struggling schools and would have also made for a better cultural exchange. Part of the problem with sending African-American students to white school environments is that African-American students find themselves having to learn material which idolizes individuals who in many ways they can not relate to, individuals that look nothing like them. The only time these students get to learn about themselves is in the role of slaves, or other redundant characters which are used in black history year after year. If by chance they begin to realize their cultural identity, these African Americans find themselves facing the additional pressure of having to fit into a system whose beliefs and ideals may not coincide with that particular individual’s ethnic group. If African-American students are going to succeed some serious reforming is going to have to take place. Black success in the school environment is not determined solely on academics but social assimilation as well.  

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The theoretical framework which was used is critical race theory. Critical race theory allows scholars to examine social, cultural, educational, and political issues by prioritizing the views of minorities and respecting the multiple roles held by scholars of color when conducting research. Critical race theory originally emerged from critical legal studies and was later introduced into education due to a lack of conceptual and

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analytic tools to discuss race. Critical race theory draws from a broad spectrum of fields including law, sociology, history, ethnic and women’s studies. Emphasis and value are placed on multiple and varied voices and vantage points of people of color. In critical race theory minority voices are empowered to tell stories often much different from the ones that have been heard in the past.

Educational perspectives historically have not been seen through an African American perspective, this research is an attempt to provide an insight into areas of African-American education which may still be relatively unexplored. Being a former student of both predominately white and African-American institutions the researcher has insight on situations which other researchers may not be able to provide. The researcher has first hand experience with integration as well as an understanding of what critical issues African-American institutions face which helps guide the research. Furthermore, the researchers career as an educator provides an understanding of minority students and what it takes for them to be successful.

In order to conduct research using a critical race theory framework data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted through a race-based view rather than traditional broad based/ critical methodologies. Critical race theory focuses on how people of color transcend traditional barriers and create successful moments for themselves and others. This framework allowed the researcher to emphasize the personal, professional, and political aspects of research to illuminate issues of race in education.
METHODOLOGY:

The research is designed as a historical comparative study. It analyzes and interprets data relating to the success and hardships experienced by African-American students and teachers in educational institutions in the Northern and Southern regions of the United States. The focus was on two public school systems. In the Northern region the focus was on the School District of Philadelphia and for the Southern region the focus was primarily on the DeKalb County School System. Both school districts have a variety of integration situations within its system, ranging from predominately white educational environments, to culturally mixed educational environments, as well as predominately black educational environments.

Data was collected from both school systems, the results were compared, and the data was then analyzed to determine if there was a difference in experiences and success rates for African-American students in both Northern and Southern settings. Statistics and records conducted by the Department of Education for Georgia and Pennsylvania were examined. National test score averages from both school systems were also compared.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How does an integrated environment affect African-American public school students in Philadelphia and DeKalb County?
2. What if any, are the benefits of segregation and integration on public school children?
3. What are the effects of integration if any, between public schools in Northern regions and those of the Southern regions?
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the literature demonstrates an extensive amount of research which has been done relating to blacks in education. However, there appears to be a lack of up-to-date material which deals with issues of white students in urban/black schools and the effects of educational policies which relate to those particular students. Understanding how an integrated environment affects African Americans, academically, socially, and personally are topics which have intrigued social scientists since the beginning of the public school system. Much of the research focuses on the ways in which African-American students are treated at predominately white institutions.

Most of the traditional works have been directly concerned with the problems with integration and issues of race relations in the schools. There are many valuable resources which deal with concerns and issues that directly affect students of African American decent, more importantly how the process of integration has affected these students. Tatum explores why it is important for white educators to affirm the identities of African-American students and to reflect on their own racial identity as they teach.¹ This identity affirmation is not discriminatory, but a necessary step in the realization of the multicultural class environment. This process allows all cultures to be validated and respected, and ensures no culture is seen as dominate over the other.

¹Beverly Tatum, Can We Talk About Race (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 87-93.
Other researchers have been focused on how public schools systems deal with how
discrimination and racial stereotypes affect African-American student achievement.\(^2\)
Most of debate conducted by these researchers has dealt with the issue of school reform
especially in urban environments.\(^3\) It traces the history of civil rights policies and reform
efforts which stem from several eras, taking a look at state and local funding before
1930s and comparing it to later increases during the period of the ‘Great Society’, and the
later drop off levels of the Reagan and Bush administrations. Much of the material also
deals with the States ability to set standards and regulations for elements such as teacher
qualification, hours need for the instruction of each student, as well as rules between
administration and unionized teachers.\(^4\) The material provides valuable insight into the
problems of funding, establishing suitable curriculums of African-American children, and
how different major cities have dealt with issues facing urban school reform. It also
makes valuable critiques of initiatives such as public school choice, charter schools,
performance assessments, as well as district takeovers.

There has traditionally been a tremendous amount of research has focused on civil
rights court cases. Many scholars have attempted to interpret how *Brown v. Board of
Education* as well as other important cases has effected the education of African
Americans. Addressing the reasons African Americans were unsatisfied with their
situation prior to the Courts ruling. Several researchers took an historical analysis


approach regarding the situations facing African-American student’s pre and post Brown. These works have documented the process of integration in the public school system, which has profound impact on the knowledge base for this field of study. These methods are strictly historical, documenting the most pivotal events in the education of minorities in America. Other researchers have chosen to analyze the wording of the ruling “with all deliberate speed”, making the case that the usage of the phase was used to slow the process of integration and ultimately halt reform efforts.

Teacher interaction and whether bias plays a part in the success or failure of African-American students continues to be examined in several studies. Several researchers determine that teacher quality and their ability to relate to students are significant factors in achievement. For most of the scholars this seems to be a new focus. Many of the earlier works in the areas of urban reform focused on resources and discriminatory funding practices. These researchers have focused on reform efforts focusing on teacher quality, which have taken place in several major school districts as well as nationally. They often highlight the most significant: reform efforts which have either been highly controversial or ultimately successful. Researchers have looked at Atlanta’s reform efforts of the late 1970s and mid 1990s such as the “Atlanta


Compromise” which gave the black community administrative control of the city’s public schools in 1973, Its efforts to dismiss county board members, and “Atlanta Promise” which was an effort to pull together various community and business partners in order to fund scholarships and school programs. Many of these efforts can be used as a comparison to DeKalb counties reform efforts which are similar in scope. Researchers also attempted to take a look at how blacks in Board positions and in high administrative offices create more opportunities for black teachers, students, as well as future black executives. Others disagree with the reform efforts and argue that what are needed are high expectations, more supportive environments and system wide participation.¹⁰

There has been a continual debate on whether school facilities have any effect on the academic success of students.¹¹ Some experts feel that school facilities have no influence on students overall success. They argue that students generally tend to perform at the same level no matter what environment they are placed in.¹² Another group of researchers claim that the physical conditions of school facilities play a major part relating to the attitudes and academic success of students.¹³ Traditionally facilities for African Americans have been sub-standard compared to their white counterparts. The second group of researcher’s attempt to make the connection between poor physical


¹¹R. Clark, Family Life and School Achievement: Why Poor Black Children Succeed or Fail (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 56.


school conditions and the low success rates of African Americans. A study conducted
by Jeffrey Henig showed that reform efforts which have been numerous in recent decades
have had little effect, in some cases this dogma has been detrimental to many school
systems who try implement too many paradigm changes.\textsuperscript{14} Watkins suggests that race
plays a major role but is not the prime motivator in school reform efforts, citing several
cases in major urban cities and their attempts to prevent reform from dividing their
communities.\textsuperscript{15}

Many works have attempted to answer the question does school desegregation
actually improve race relations? Over 30 years ago Allport acknowledged that inter-
group contact in and of itself was not an instant remedy for interracial hostilities. Instead,
he cautioned that direct contact in the schools was merely a prerequisite for both
acquaintance and contact. Nonetheless, opinion still holds that interaction between people
is enough to alter positively their feelings toward one another, which at least in part
explains why most desegregation studies have continued to speculate on which factors
produce successful integration. For instance, Rothstein argued that interaction potential
had an important impact on the outcome of contact between groups.\textsuperscript{16} Several factors
influenced the interaction potential of a given situation, including physical proximity,
sustained and varied contact with others, and opportunity for interaction. Desegregated

\textsuperscript{14}Jeffrey Henig, Richard Hula, Marion Orr, and Desiree Pedesclaux,

\textsuperscript{15}William Watkins, James H. Lewis, and Victoria Chou, Race and Education: The Roles of
History and Society in Educating African American Students (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001), 48-49.

\textsuperscript{16}Stanley W. Rothstein, The Power to Punish: A Social Inquiry into Coercion and Control
classrooms have had an important impact on developing positive attitudes towards interaction with those from different backgrounds. O’Connor argues that simply putting black and white children in the same classrooms does not, however, ensure positive social learning. Evidence has shown that superficial integration does not necessarily produce changes in inter-group relations. For instance, Irvine reported that the number of interracial interactions of students did not change over three observation periods during the first term of school desegregation and that actual rate of such interracial contacts was low. Tatum found that in desegregated schools there was more same race seating than could be expected by chance alone. She reported that with few exceptions students, when free to do so, sat with others of the same racial group, and when participation in activities was voluntary, the activities were dominated by one racial group. Other studies have also indicated that most extracurricular activities follow racial and ethnic boundaries.

The social results of desegregation, and the quality of the racial contact among students, have been largely ignored by researchers, with the exception of case studies. While descriptive case studies have enhanced our understanding of the factors affecting social integration in desegregated schools, these studies a generally of only one site, and


prohibits systematic comparisons among schools. It is quite possible that even students in different schools under the same desegregation plan may develop very different interracial attitudes and behaviors based largely on school culture.\(^\text{22}\)

Another common trend found in literature related to the topic of integration and its effects on African-American students and institutions focuses on the paradox between white and black social structure. Rich takes a look into the enormous differences in the network connections which have typically favored white households. His work points out the disadvantages in resources and access to opportunities which black families have been subjected to through discrimination and racism and how this cycle has continued for generations.\(^\text{23}\)

There was material which dealt with the role of institutions play in shaping attitudes and behaviors of students in preparation of the larger society.\(^\text{24}\) These researchers looked at how schools had been used to as a tool to indoctrinate student to mainstream society and values. Some social scientists and educational researchers took the point of view that these institutions have failed to mold students into what society needs or wants them to be. They explore how many urban schools were at one time had heavy emphasis on discipline and routine, and how this philosophy is still ingrained in many institutions today. They investigated the role educators' play in this dogma and how it may have possibly affected African-American students through history.

\(^{22}\) R.C. Bogdan, and S.K. Biklin, *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982), 82.


Perhaps the most successful recent attempt to explore the effect of race on the development of social interaction has been the work of Daugherity & Bolton. This work offered considerable insight into the various aspects of race relations and student networks and activities. The collection showed that while desegregation has resulted in the de facto mix of particular student bodies, integration was not fully achieved. Moreover, it appeared that the issue of quality of interracial interaction had a large impact on the success of the desegregation process in general, and more specifically on inter-group contact between students.25

Some research focused on the social perspectives of schools as being an equalizing force in which inequalities could be erased and social barriers overcome. They explored the possibilities that poor education for blacks in institutions where resources are limited and teachers are not properly trained can be detrimental in the long term. This work also attempts to make the link between these struggling institutions and the capitalistic society of America’s need for unskilled low wage workers.26

Examining the funding levels between school district was examined in several research pieces, focusing on the disparity between school districts.27 Several of these districts even show the same disparity between their own schools. Some of the work made the link between black student enrollment and levels of funding provided for each


student by the state and federal governments. Much of the research suggested that even though African-American students are the reason for much of the funds designated for many urban school districts they never full receive the funding which is due. The case is made that these lack of funds is detrimental to African-American institutions.

Several attempts have been made to take a look at how the school systems in major cities have attempted to address the issue of integration of public schools.\(^{28}\) These researchers take a look at the role that black educators and administration has played either the success or failures of some black institutions.\(^{29}\) Scholars make the argument that having black educators and administrators positively effect African-American students. These scholars focus on the progress of several districts which have gone through racial administrative changes, monitoring the progress of African-American students. Their research seemed to point to the fact that there was a correlation between student esteem levels and racial profiles of administrators and teachers.\(^{30}\) Teacher and student interaction has been chronicled in several works, exploring the effect that educators can have on student progress and achievement.

Several works have focused on what equality really looks like based on racial attitudes and perceptions. In a study of a racially integrated high school, Ford found that


equal status was not as important for white students attitude changes as were other factors like favorable norms, common goals, and attitudes of family and peers.\textsuperscript{31}

Other researchers have suggested that equal status is difficult to define.\textsuperscript{32} Similarly, in a study of black and white high school teachers, it was reported that whites perceived the situation as equal status, while blacks did not perceive the situation as equal status. Even after controlling for education and income, the stigmatization of blacks as a minority group may limit their perception of equal status. Milner argues that the significant difference in black and whites' socioeconomic status will tend to generate contact situations where whites' are interacting with lower-status blacks. A research study conducted by Henig, Hula, Orr, and Pedesclaux, investigated the psychological differences of students attending same race institutions against those who attended integrated institutions. The study focused primarily on public school students. Multiple races and genders where compared, including students who were African American, White, Latino, and Asian, male and female. The study focused on issues of self esteem and identity. Students were asked how they felt about their institutions and teachers as well as weather or not they felt supported. The results indicated that most students felt comfortable in both settings to relatively the same degree; however African-American students seemed to feel more emotionally comfortable in environments with students from similar backgrounds. There were thought to be many possibilities for these results, however overall the conclusion was that African Americans might feel emotionally


comfortable in these environments but generally do not tend to perform academically any better in these institutions.\textsuperscript{33}

In order to understand the effects of integration between public schools in the Northern regions versus those of the Southern regions of the United States several texts were used as well as statistics and data from different government and state agencies. The education of blacks in the South has been well documented in several collections. Most of these studies focus on the effects of integration in Southern institutions since the end of reconstruction.\textsuperscript{34} Daugherity & Bolton focused on the rates at which these institutions were desegregating. Their studies examined the ratio of black students to whites at many institutions throughout the country, examining the pace at which they were integrating.\textsuperscript{35}

Many of the reform efforts of Atlanta have had a significant impact on the research available. Comparisons were made between the Atlanta Public School Systems and the DeKalb County School System. It appeared from several of the works conducted, that early on in their history, these two public school education systems went through many of the same issues concerning race. However post Brown it seems that these two systems took separate paths as far as integration policies were concerned. These researchers also examined housing patterns in these areas, discriminatory practices and


\textsuperscript{35}Brian Daugherity, and Charles Bolton, eds., \textit{With All Deliberate Speed: Implementing Brown v. Board of Education} (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 2008), 96.
how the pattern of “white flight” affected these inner-city communities and integration policies.\textsuperscript{36}

Some materials have shed light on the efforts of the DeKalb County School System to integrate its schools from the 1970s to the present. Possibly the most extensive research which addresses famous landmark cases which directly effected policies toward integration in the County’s schools, looks deeply at the causes for these policies. This work extensively examines the reasons for the radical shift in policy making in DeKalb County and how it has affected not only the students but the institutions as well.\textsuperscript{37}

However, there are very few materials which address the issues facing the Philadelphia Public School System or the issues of race and politics when it comes to education in Philadelphia, even though these are major factors in the city’s social landscape.

Perhaps the most in depth work does examine several of the issues directly dealing with the Philadelphia Public School System.\textsuperscript{38} This work chronicles the discriminatory housing patterns of Philadelphia, exploring the reasons for the systematic changes in various neighborhood schools racial composition. The researchers attempt to make a connection between regime changes and subsequent neglect of many public school buildings. The work also examines the effects paradigm shifts and certain programs have had on the academic progress of African-American students at these institutions.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[] \textsuperscript{38} Jean Anyor, \textit{Ghetto Schooling} (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997), 27-30.
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\end{footnotesize}
It becomes clear from a review of the literature that insufficient attention had been paid to factors affecting the assimilation of minority students. This is in part because most scholars writing on integration have assumed that a similar socialization process occurs for all students, regardless of race. Most studies have inferred that the goal of schooling, in general, is to assimilate culturally divergent populations that have segregated from dominant society.\textsuperscript{39} There is clearly a need to explore the quality interactions between black and white students in racially mixed schools. Ultimately many gaps were found when examining the differences between Northern and Southern integration.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Throughout the history of America it has had to deal with many issues regarding
African Americans: slavery, citizenship, and equal rights. However, possibly the most
critical issue that continually arises and has had a profound impact on the lives of African
Americans is education. Efforts to address educational issues have focused on
segregation and desegregation, reverse discrimination, tracking, educational disparities,
affirmative action, and re-segregation.

Educational goals and policies made during the Civil Rights Movement of the
1950s and 1960s intended to provide equal resources to black educational facilities as
well as ensure that black students were provided access to the same educational
opportunities as whites. In reality we find that the majority these policies have failed, and
have actually hurt black schools. Black student opportunities are still limited;
predominately black urban and rural schools have become dilapidated, under-funded, and
continuously neglected. However, this neglect and discrimination are nothing new to
blacks in America. In the early years of America enslaved blacks were denied any type of
education. Since slaves were from Africa and spoke many different languages this was
not a big issue.
The language difference was actually looked upon favorably by the slave owners because the chances of large scale organized revolts were minimal if they could not communicate. So even early on in Americas history it was ingrained in the psyche of the leaders that these people should not be educated. This stigma would end up following the descendants of these people for centuries. Reading and writing was forbidden. Those who were caught educating or being educated were dealt with harshly. In some cases the punishment was death.¹

Later on some slaves would be allowed to learn certain skills however, only those which dealt with agriculture, labor, or some type of domestic function. For most it seemed as if the leaders of the country envisioned the future of blacks as a working class populous with no need for formal education. This would eventually become the dogma associated with African Americans even generations after emancipation. Freed blacks in the North seemed to face a much different situation. Even though they too were looked upon as second class citizens, many of them had the chance to receive education. In cities like Boston and Philadelphia blacks were educated in the same schools as white children. There were many well educated African Americans who had graduated from predominately white institutions, and proved that despite what anyone said blacks were intelligent and capable of doing more than just manual, agricultural, or domestic work.²

Education for blacks in the North came with a heavy price. Despite the South’s infamous


treatment of blacks during the early years of the nation, Northern racism would actually lay the foundation for prejudice and segregation throughout the U.S. until the 1950s.³

Frustrated with the results of the modern day educational system many in the black community are looking for new strategies to tackle the achievement gap and overall status of blacks in the educational system. Some blacks are even beginning to call for the reestablishment of predominately black schools, just as the “colored Bostonians” did 160 years ago. They point to the statistics taken pre-integration showing black student’s high rate of achievement and graduation just years after the end of slavery as the argument for their usefulness.⁴ They speculate that many of these civil rights policies began to overlook the fact that blacks had been achieving since the inception of the first black institutions.⁵

Few blacks in the South received education at all until after the Civil War, as slaves they were prohibited from being educated, and there were generally no public school system for white children, either. The planter elite paid for private education for their own children. Legislatures of Republican freedman and whites established public schools for the first time during Reconstruction. Many public schools in the South were


segregated from this point forward; it was a condition that freedmen agreed to in order to establish the system.

White Democrats regained power in Southern states in the 1870s, during the next two decades they imposed racial segregation and Jim Crow laws. They disenfranchised most blacks and many poor whites by various voter registration schemes and electoral requirements. Services for black institutions routinely received far less financial support than white schools. In addition, the South was extremely poor for years in the aftermath of the Civil war in agricultural economy with falling cotton prices. Into the 20th century, black schools continuously had fewer books, worse buildings, and teachers who were paid far less than their white counterparts.6

Black schools originated under legal segregation in the Southern United States after the Civil War and Reconstruction era. After the Fourteenth Amendment was passed in 1868 guaranteeing “equal protection under the law” to black people, public schools were established to accommodate them outside the South. It was the public policy of most Southern states to keep races separated and maintain white supremacy. Initially in the South opposition to African American success resulted in only the most rudimentary schools for African Americans. In these early schools which were mostly rural, as was characteristic of the South, classes were most often taught by a single teacher, who taught all subjects, ages, and grades. Chronic under-funding led to constantly over-populated schools, despite the relatively low percentage of black students in school overall.7

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It often took decades after the South established public schools for systems to offer education at the high school level for African Americans. Blacks had been learning at a phenomenal rate since the end of slavery. These black institution’s particularly in the South, nurtured black scholars as well as provided comfort and stability for the rest.

The problem is that this stance seems to only be history repeating itself. Many cities in the North initially started off with integrated settings, however racial prejudice and discrimination forced the citizens in those communities to call for the formation of the first segregated institutions. The rational for this ideology being that in these same colored settings colored children would face far less hatred and prejudice from their peers, and they could focus on education without hostility from their teachers or administrators.

The Roberts v. City of Boston (1849) case can be used as a model to show that if minority institutions are necessary and proper in order to ensure an environment in which minority children feel safe and comfortable, then they also should be properly equipped and the standards should be equal to that of any other school to ensure an equal education. In Boston during the late 1700s and early 1800s many black residents were successful businessmen, merchants and sailors. They enjoyed many freedoms and liberties unknown to their brothers and sisters in the south. They referred to themselves as “colored Bostonians”, and were proud of their revolutionary past. Most public institutions in Boston were integrated including the public schools. Despite all this, many blacks still faced discrimination and harassment. Students weren’t only taking tests and focusing on academics because they often had to battle racism and hatred. This prejudice would later lead to a request by “colored Bostonians” to have an all colored public school formed. At
first this request was denied, however with more pressure the request was approved and two all colored schools were formed with the help of philanthropists. As time passed funding for these schools was neglected, and their conditions grew worse. Many colored Bostonians as well as white abolitionists began to protest these conditions calling for an improvement of the facilities as well as desegregation of the now all-white public schools.

In 1849 Benjamin Roberts a militant black abolitionist filed a disintegration lawsuit against the Boston City School Committee. He had been denied an admission ticket to enroll his daughter Sarah into the neighborhood school. Roberts wanted the integration of all Boston public schools and $600 in damages. It would turn out to be a seven year battle which would end up setting many precedents in the struggle for racial equality in American law. Initially Massachusetts chief justice Lemuel Shaw found that segregated schools were constitutional as long as they provide the same accommodations as white facilities. His famous “separate but equal” phrase would be synonymous with racial discrimination in America until the 1950s. His decision would later be overturned on appeal which was influenced by a large protest staged by both white and colored citizen of Boston who thought integration was the best option.

School segregation varied by states and even by cities. The most important factor in school segregation was the number of blacks living in a particular city or location. In the North, the New England states were largely integrated except for a few cities in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Parts of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, northern parts of Illinois, Ohio and rural areas of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania maintained
integrated schools. However, in larger cities, where the greatest population of black people resided, segregated schools were maintained, if any at all.\(^8\)

The price that the black community paid for integration was usually the loss of jobs for black teachers. This remained an issue into the twentieth century and significantly impacted the placement and retention of African-American teachers, forcing some blacks to advocate for separate schools as early as the nineteenth century. Segregation for the purpose of retaining black teachers versus integration, which insured their dismissal, created heated debates within black communities. Despite the discriminatory treatment that black students often received in integrated schools and the lack of black teachers as role models, many felt that the loss of African-American instructors was a sacrifice needed to be made for school integration. Others advocated for separate schools, and argued that in integrated schools, their children were subjected to the insults of white teachers and students. Again these issues would be revisited in the next century.

Even though the 14\(^{th}\) Amendment had given newly freed black their rights, it had been interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court that these rights were limited to the federal government (Civil Rights Cases 1883). Individual citizens and private companies were not subject to follow the civil rights laws. This brought many hardships to blacks throughout the United States especially those who remained in the south. In 1890 the state of Louisiana passed Act 111 which required separate accommodations on railway cars. Act also specified that the cars were to be equal as well. In order to test the legality

of this law, citizens of Louisiana both black and white decided to form a citizens committee. In 1896 the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court. The court rejected the view that the Louisiana law implied any inferiority of blacks, in violation of the 14th Amendment. Instead it contended that the law separated the two races as a matter of public policy. In a vote of 7 to 1 with the opinion primarily written by Justice Henry Billings Brown the court found that the “separate but equal” provision of public accommodations by state governments is constitutional under the “equal protection clause”. The “separate but equal” quote had been taken from a previous ruling (Roberts v. City of Boston 1849) in which blacks where looking for and initially denied integration into the Boston school system by the Massachusetts Supreme Court. Plessey V. Ferguson (1896) legitimized segregation practices in the South. Segregation eventually reached the federal government during the Woodrow Wilson administration. It was a standard doctrine in the U.S. until Brown v. Board of Education (1954).

Just as in Roberts v. City of Boston blacks were forced to travel far from their neighborhood schools in order to go to the least equipped school for the simple fact that their skin was a different color. All these factors combined to prompt a civil lawsuit known as Brown v. Board of Education (1954). Up until the 1950s in Kansas black children were denied access to schools designated for white children. 13 parents decided to challenge an 1879 Kansas law stipulating that cities with a population over 15,000 were permitted to segregate the public schools base on race. These parents felt that these segregated school systems didn’t provide their children with the same opportunities as the white children. A class action suit was filed in the three- judge district court. The court

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*Kozol, 66-79.*
found that this segregation was detrimental to the success of the black students. However the court also found the schools which the black children were attending were satisfactorily equal in relation to transportation, buildings, and qualifications of the teachers. Based on those opinions, the court denied relief of segregation in the Kansas public schools. The decision was appealed under 28 U.S.C 1253. Four other cases contained similar circumstances: Briggs v. Elliot (1952), Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County (1952), Gebhart v. Belton (1952), and Bolling v. Sharpe (1954). The District Courts ruled based on Plessey v. Ferguson (1896) in all cases, except Gebhart v. Belton (1952). The “separate but equal” doctrine was originally introduced in Roberts v. City of Boston, and was then incorporated in to Plessey v. Ferguson. Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered the opinion of the court. In a unanimous 9-0 decision the Court found that the “separate but equal” doctrine had no place in public education. The Court felt that the “separate but equal” educational facilities were “unequal”, basically stating that this train of though was backward. Therefore, the plaintiffs by cause of segregation were deprived of equal protection of laws stipulated in the 14th Amendment. This case would have a profound impact on the education system in America for decades to come. With this one ruling blacks were now allowed to be educated in the same schools as white students, this however was no easy task.¹⁰

Life for blacks throughout the country became extremely harsh. This “separate but equal” theory never came to fruition for the majority of these displaced citizens. Funding for black educational facilities began to erode buildings became dilapidated,

textbooks were old and out of date, and supplies in no way matched those of the white institutions. Segregation for blacks meant neglect in just about every facet of life. Yet, despite this neglect by the federal and state governments, blacks were learning, achieving, graduating, and matriculating into the workforce. Blacks excelled at trade schools as well as formal institutions of higher learning. During the middle part of the twentieth century the number of black professionals graduating from institutions would rival modern statistics.11 With the recent problems in education many point to these statistics to justify the rational for segregated education.

The fight for integration initially began as a crusade to achieve true equality for blacks in education. Many of those choosing to go to white institutions were doing so in an effort to receive the same opportunities and resources the rest of America was enjoying. Public schools were legally desegregated in the United States in 1954 by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education. Some Northern schools were forced into a limited form of desegregation prior to the Court's decision. However, many were still de facto segregated due to the inequality in housing and patterns of racial segregation in neighborhoods.

Elaborate schemes were derived in order to accommodate this ruling. Blacks were often escorted to school by their local national guard. Racial tension was at an all time high not only in the Southern states but in the North as well. De facto segregation was no longer the case once blacks began to “infiltrate” these predominately white

11Klein, 85.
neighborhoods. In the 1971 *Swann v. Mecklenburg Board of Education* ruling, the Supreme Court allowed the federal government to force mandatory busing on Charlotte, North Carolina and other cities nationwide in order to affect student assignment based on race and to attempt to further integrate schools. 1974’s *Milliken v. Bradley* decision placed a limitation on Swann when they ruled that students could only be bused across district lines when evidence existed of de jure segregation across multiple school districts.

Ever since the Benjamin Roberts, sued the Boston School Committee in the mid-nineteenth century for the unlawful exclusion of his daughter from the city’s white elementary schools, the struggle for racial equality in education has been closely bound up with the demand for schools desegregation. Not until the post-World War II era, however, when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s (NAACP) legal campaign, the growth of black political power, and the rise of the civil rights movement prompted government action to address the demands of those denied equal educational opportunity, did integration move from the periphery to the center of educational policy. From the time of the U.S. Supreme Courts 1954 decision outlawing state-mandated segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education* through the 1970s, no other educational issue provoked as much conflict or so preoccupied students parents, and public officials responsible for making educational policy.

The result of this struggle for integrated schools has been ambiguous. From one perspective, the fight for integrated schools accomplished much that it set out to do. At the time the Court handed down its decision in *Brown*, seventeen Southern states as well

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as the District of Columbia had laws requiring separate schools for blacks and whites, and segregation was widespread in the North even though several Northern states had provisions prohibiting it in local schools. A decade after Brown, this system of racial apartheid in the South was still intact, while in the North increasingly vocal protests had won only minor concessions from school officials who argued that segregation resulted from housing patterns and not their own actions. However, most schools eventually desegregated largely because of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration’s enforcement of strict guidelines prohibiting the distribution of federal funds to segregated schools, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals’ insistence that school districts comply with these guidelines, and a series of Supreme Court decisions that banned freedom of choice plans and approved busing. Southen schools desegregated rapidly between 1964 and 1972, as did many school districts in the North including Philadelphia. Before the ruling roughly 64 percent of African Americans nationwide attended schools with 90 to 100 percent minority enrollment in 1968, the percentage had dropped to 33 percent by 1980 and was even lower in the South. By almost any historical standard, this constituted an extraordinary achievement. However, due to the fact that compliance was left in the hands of local school officials, it typically occurred on terms advantageous to whites.

Faced with federal pressure to desegregate, Southern school districts complied by closing black schools, demoting African-American principals, and dismissing African-American teachers. At the same time, as African Americans began to go to school with whites, Southern schools officials sought to calm white fears that interracial contact

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13 Ogletree, 155-71.

14 Ashmore, 68-80.
would increase and academic standards would deteriorate by disproportionately placing black students in the least desirable academic programs, a practice that was widespread in the North as well. As a result, even though integration offered African Americans access to educational resources previously denied them, many began to question its benefits.

Due to the fact, suburbanization and white flight increasingly left so few white students in most big city school systems, few districts could accomplish any meaningful integration within their own borders. One way advocates proposed to remedy this was through mandatory metropolitan- wide integration. By the early 1970s, however, governmental support for such strong measures had begun to wane. Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter all opposed busing, as did a majority of Congress. They passed legislation barring the use of federal funds for busing to overcome racial imbalance and considered an amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting the reassignment of students to school outside their immediate neighborhood. In the 1974 in *Milliken v. Bradley*, a reconstructed Supreme Court with four Nixon appointees began what was to become a long retreat from its demand that violating school districts take aggressive action to overcome segregation and reversed a lower court ruling that ordered urban suburban integration. Without compelling evidence those suburban boundaries had been drawn with discriminatory intent, in a five to four decision the majority of the Court declared, local autonomy should take precedence over the right of African-American and Latino students to a integrated education. Due to the fact school districts in many large
metropolitan areas in the South are countywide, this decision did not resegregate Southern schools.  

Outside the South, however, especially in the Northeast and Midwest, where school district boundaries correspond to urban/ suburban political jurisdictions, Milliken effectively excluded white suburbs from the requirements of desegregation. Subsequently, integration plans in Northern and Midwestern cities focused instead on voluntary city- suburban transfers to attend urban schools. These plans offered some African-American and Latino students an alternative to segregated, inner-city schools, but, since they did not require much of whites, they did little to alter the racial composition of urban schools or of those in surrounding communities.

Despite the limitations of these programs, additional action to promote integrated schools attracted little support. Instead, beginning in the 1980s, equal opportunity was increasingly redefined to mean greater choice in schooling, and proposals such as school vouchers and charter schools were promoted as the best way to expand educational opportunities for low income and minority students. In some case, the proposals, which were initiated primarily by white policymakers who faced market based solutions to social problems, also won support from a growing number of African-American and Latino parents who were disillusioned by the slow pace of integration and who viewed school choice as a way to escape deteriorating inner-city schools.

In this climate, segregation persisted or got worse, though patterns varied by group and region. For African Americans, the South remained the most integrated region of the country. However, after a series of Supreme Court decisions between 1991 and  

\[15\] Raffel, 130-34.
1995 that allowed districts to return to neighborhood schools before integration requirements had been fully met, the proportion of African Americans in schools with 90 to 100 percent minority enrollment in the South began to rise again, though black segregation remained most intense in big cities in the Northeast and Midwest.\textsuperscript{16} Some observers at the turn of the twenty-first century seized on this evidence to pronounce integration a failure and urge that it be abandoned. But the lesson that history teaches is more complex. In essence, the struggle for integrated schools sought to make the benefits of education equally available to all citizens. By ending Jim Crow in Southern education and winning recognition for the right of African Americans to a integrated education, it accomplished a good deal toward the realization of that goal. What was equally clear however, was that without governmental support for complimentary changes in the distribution of power, control, and resources, integration based on equality of academic and social status in the classroom would remain an illusory goal.

In the 1970s and 1980s, under federal court supervision, many school districts implemented mandatory busing plans within their districts. Busing was controversial because it took students out of their own neighborhoods and further away from their parents’ supervision and support. Even young students sometimes had lengthy bus rides each day. Once busing began, black students were sent out to racial war zones where they would have to withstand both psychological and physical warfare. Many administrators and teachers were often indifferent to these students cause. Labeling these children as

trouble makers or stupid, refusing to take the time to nurture or aid these students in anyway. We can still see traces of this ideology alive in many school districts today. Black children have often been ignored, labeled, or ostracized. This either turns some off from learning, or inspires others to prove their worth, outshining even their white counterparts with very little recognition.

As blacks gradually won the right to integrated schooling, the topic of curriculum became an important issue with their community. They debated whether education should be liberating or accommodating. Self-determination is a constant theme that runs throughout the history of black education. Blacks desired to control their own destiny and to be the captains of their own ships. The many white administrators and teachers who sought to control black schooling did not always appreciate this. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, blacks boycotted, staged walk-outs, filed lawsuits, and had other protests in response to integration plans that destroyed black institutions and displaced black teachers. Many scholars argue that with integration came not only a loss of teachers and important role models and schools in one’s own community, but also a decline in black student’s motivation, self-esteem, and academic performance. Black students experienced harsh disciplining, low expectations, disproportionate placement in special education courses, and unfair tracking in classes, which placed them in the lowest rung of courses. Many black parents who supported the efforts of the NAACP to integrate schools in the 1940s and 1950s were ambivalent about the merits of school integration by the 1970s. 17

The majority of students who were bused to these white schools were usually the best and the brightest leaving behind many problems for black neighborhood schools.

Highly qualified black teachers were also often recruited to these schools so that they could handle these children. The situation for black neighborhood schools would only worsen over time. Very few if any white children were ever bused to schools in black areas. This strategy almost guaranteed a situation of neglect for these institutions. To make matters worse this movement seemed to back the theory that “white is right”. People began to believe that in order for blacks to learn or achieve they needed to be seated next to someone that was white or taught by someone who was white.

Many feel several policies which are derived from civil rights legislation were one sided, mainly the issue of busing. Busing was controversial because it sent a large number of African Americans out of their neighborhoods and away from their parents’ supervision and support. Even young children would sometimes have to endure long journeys just to attend school everyday. Busing is perhaps one of the largest programs ever used to shift the status of African Americans in education. For many years it was thought that if you could send black students to white schools and communities, it would positively affect these students. In the decades following Brown, African-American students were bused to white institutions of education in order to be in what was thought to be a better environment.

In hind sight it would seem that the true failure of the civil rights policy makers was their one sided approach in handling the inequality of opportunity minority students face. It seems as if these experts felt that black institutions were inferior to white institutions of learning, so they shifted their goals from equaling the resources of institutions to making sure that minorities had access to white institutions. Over time black institutions in urban and rural communities would face neglect and dilapidation.
This would inevitably lead to the dogma of black institutions being flawed and inferior. It also helped perpetuate the theory that "white is right," and ended up sending African-American students to hostile, non nurturing environments. These environments would end up socially isolating many minority students especially those of African-American decent.

According to the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, the integration of U.S. public schools reached its peak in 1988. Since then, schools have become more segregated because of changes in demographic racial patterns with continuing growth in suburban and newly developed communities. Changing population patterns, with dramatically increased growth in the South and Southwest, decreases in old industrial cities, and much increased immigration of new ethnic groups, have altered populations in many areas. The educational policies of the civil rights era must be reviewed and new strategies to deal with the plight of these schools need to be implemented. These policies have benefited many students both black and white alike, however if you look at the lopsided percentage of black students in special education, high school drop out rates, low standardized test scores, discipline problems in the classroom, and the rate of blacks going to prison instead of college, it is not hard to tell that a large number of students are suffering from these inept policies.

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CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The decision to integrate the American public school system changed education in America dramatically. It provided opportunities for blacks which may not have been possible otherwise. Overall many African Americans have made tremendous gains in education since the decision to integrate. African Americans have achieved in every facet of human endeavor. However, many African-American educational institutions and communities have suffered as well. Some say that this suffering is a direct result of the policies derived by the Brown v. Board of Education decision. These policies sent many of the brightest teachers and students from communities and institutions which needed them the most. This research is a comparative study of the effects of integration policies in the North versus the effects of the integration policies of the Southern region of the U.S. The research is attempting to determine if either setting has an advantage in the education and nurturing of African American students. In order to understand the effects of Northern integration, the Philadelphia Public School System is examined, and for Southern integration the DeKalb County Public School System in Georgia is the focus district. The timeframe for the study is 1954 to the Present. This chapter seeks to find how these integration policies have affected African Americans in the Philadelphia School District as well as the DeKalb County School District over the last fifty years.
Since 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision has had a tremendous effect on the Educational system in America. This decision however, has not had the same impact on all regions of America. In the Northern school districts for many African Americans de facto segregation has been the norm. Parents and school districts have come up with elaborate schemes and district lines in order to prevent true racial equilibrium in schools. In Philadelphia the situation is no different. The School District of Philadelphia is a school district based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which includes all public schools in the city of Philadelphia. Established in 1818, it is the eighth largest school district in the nation, with and enrollment of nearly 185,000 students; 210,000 when you include the charter school enrollment. African Americans lead in enrollment percentage with 64.4 percent of all students, Whites 13.3 percent, Hispanic 15.8 percent, and Asian 5.6 percent. The District has 291 public schools which include 39 middle schools, 45 high schools, 5 vocational/technical schools, 9 special schools, and 19 programs.¹

Each day, the School District provides free transportation for students who meet the eligibility requirements. In 2005-2006; 39,755 students received free bus services. The District also provides free tokens to use the public busing system, South Eastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). Those who do not meet the requirements can purchase reduced price tokens which are subsidized by the district. Many students who attend these institutions come from very humble economic situations. A study conducted by Temple University revealed that 76 percent of the Districts students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals. On average the District provides

117,000 lunches, 52,000 breakfasts, 4,200 after school snacks, and between 5,000-8,000 “at risk” dinner meals through the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).  

The city of Philadelphia has an infamous history and reputation as one of the most segregated cities in America. Prior to the Brown ruling a large percentage of the Philadelphia School District was of white decent. During the early part of the nineteenth century many new institutions and facilities were built for the large numbers of families who were enrolling in the district around inner-suburban areas. During this time blacks lived manly in the northern and southwestern areas of the city. District schools at this time were basic but provided what was thought to be a decent education. Racial profiling was commonly used by realtors in those days. Blacks were excluded from certain neighborhoods for many years. The result of these racial housing patterns was a segregated school system in which the predominately white institutions received a majority of the funds. The word institution is used due to the fact that many of the schools built during this time resembled medieval castles. It was obviously apparent that the resources were not equal.

Following the Brown v. Board of Education decision as well as passage of civil rights laws which ended discriminatory housing practices, African Americans in Philadelphia and other areas of the country were now able to live almost anywhere they desired. Many black families in Philadelphia began to move to areas in the Northern and Western parts of the city from which they had been excluded from for so many years. However, as African Americans moved into white communities and began to attend white institutions, white parents began to withdraw their children from many of these

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schools and move from these communities. White families began to leave the inner
city and move to suburban communities in order to avoid the consequences of these new
policies. As students left these schools so did many of the best teachers. This “flight”
proved to be very detrimental to these schools. This same scenario would play itself out
in almost every major city throughout the country. In subsequent decades the District
would suffer many trials and tribulations, such as reductions in state funding, charter
school takeovers, certified staff retention, as well as tests scores continually below the
state and national average. Its status as a once elite school system would come into
question as the challenge of integrating the schools became a nightmare.

In Southern school districts, the initial decades following Brown’s decision to
integrate was a trying time for both blacks and whites, many battles were fought along
the way. DeKalb County was established in 1823, and in the first fifty years of the
county’s history, all schools were private, although they did receive some funds from the
state. Public education in DeKalb began after the Civil War, in 1873, when DeKalb
citizens raised $4,200 to open public schools. In 1945 the Georgia Constitution
established the basis for free public schools as we know them today, with financing to be
provided through taxation. In 1946, more than 9,000 children were enrolled in DeKalb
schools. In 1947, approximately 60 percent of the white students who entered first grade
dropped out before graduation, and even more alarming, 93 percent of black students
dropped out. Only 25 percent of those who graduated attended college. More than 84
percent of DeKalb County students would work in non-professional fields when they quit
school. DeKalb schools experienced explosive growth in the 1950s and 1960s, with 13
new schools opening in 1955 and another 34 opening between 1956 and 1958. The decade of the sixties brought DeKalb a severe teacher shortage, mounting enrollments and increasing problems of integration. Teachers were angry about low salaries, and some people were angry at the social changes which resulted from Brown v. Board of Education and new civil rights laws, while others where angry that change was taking place slowly. It was a time of great turmoil, one that would take many years to settle in DeKalb County.

As a result of the racial inequality of the DeKalb County School System, black schoolchildren were not receiving an adequate education. Test scores were significantly lower in the all black schools in comparison to the white schools, the instructors were paid less money in the black schools, and the facilities and funding were not proportionate either. There was also a major problem of overcrowding in the all black schools, while the white schools were all running well under capacity. In 1969, the DeKalb County school system had 74,741 students and of those 3,754 or roughly five percent, was black. Of the county’s seventy-seven elementary schools and twenty high schools, five of those elementary schools and two of the high schools were attended only by blacks. The DeKalb County school system did not implement any programs for meaningful desegregation until 1966. At that time, the “Freedom of Choice” plan was introduced. The goal of this plan was to give majority students the option of attending the next nearest school according to the school zones. Unfortunately, the school zones

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were set up so that seven schools were all black. Whites who lived in the black zone would be the minority in the area, so they would be given the “freedom of choice” to chose a different school.

1968 was a big year for the DeKalb County school system. In this year, the Supreme Court decided in *Green v. School Board. of New Kent County* that the “Freedom of Choice” plan was not an effective way to desegregate. Also during this year, several black high school students from DeKalb County, including Willie Eugene Pitts, and their parents in addition to four white students and their parents decided to file a class action lawsuit against Jim Cherry, the superintendent, and the entire DeKalb County school system. The complaint dealt with the county’s failure to integrate the school system as well as the failure to comply with the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare that was mandatory under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Failure to comply with this would result in the elimination of federal funding to the school. At this time, federal funding to the DeKalb County school system was 2.3 million dollars, which was roughly eight percent of the school’s annual budget. DeKalb County did not want to concede segregation, but knew that they had to do something to stall the mounting dilemma. After the lawsuit was filed, the DeKalb County school system made an attempt to satisfy the petitioners by implementing their own desegregation plan. The “equalization plan,” as it was called, pumped an enormous amount of money into the black inferior schools to bring them up to speed with the white schools of the county. Money went into the improvement of black schools in the form of facilities, higher paid instructors, services, activities, and programs. The school system seemed to be missing

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5 Bayor, 79-110.
the boat on the unconstitutionality of the "separate but equal" doctrine. In fact, the school system provided this improvement in the hopes that the blacks would be happy with the conditions and voluntarily accept segregation in the school system.

The 1969 lawsuit brought against the DeKalb County School System charged the school system for having operated a dual school system since 1954. For the next 27 years, the DeKalb County School System was under the supervision of the federal courts. This court supervision was a major influence on the DeKalb County School System and the way it operated. At the time of the court case, the African-American population in DeKalb County was 5 percent and there were very few black schools. In 1969, those schools were closed and the African-American students were integrated into existing white schools. DeKalb County was growing rapidly, and in particular, the African-American population was experiencing exponential growth. The years following the 1969-70 school year saw a peculiar trend occurring. Nothing had changed as far as school policy was concerned, but all of a sudden the DeKalb County schools began to re-segregate. With each years report to the supervising court, the numbers began to turn upside down. What had been mostly white schools evolved into predominately all black schools. In a ten-year span, the enrollment in DeKalb County schools decreased sixteen percent. While the overall enrollment was decreasing, the black enrollment increased 119 percent.

DeKalb County was experiencing a massive demographic shift. Whites began to move out of areas that were experiencing racial integration. There was a rush to sell their

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7Bayor, 120-45.
property before the districts would be labeled as "black neighborhoods." The huge number of whites selling their properties caused real-estate values to plummet. Many decided to move out of the county to the predominately white suburbs, while others took sanctuary on the equally white north side of DeKalb County. During this transition, approximately 47,000 blacks moved from the inner city of Atlanta to the southern side of DeKalb County. The formulas and school districts that had been created prior to the demographic shift were no longer producing an equally balanced school system. With a physically divided county, the schools within the county took similar shape. By the mid-1980s the county population was 65 percent African American and the school system struggled to keep the schools diverse. African-American families were moving into the south DeKalb area, and north DeKalb continued to attract white families. As a result the housing patterns and school system were becoming re-segregated.

In 1976, the Court directed the School System to form a bi-racial committee as an advisory body to provide oversight regarding what the school system was doing to integrate the schools. This committee remained in existence for 12 years, until 1988, when a judge ordered it dismissed. The Board of Education was forced, by the existence of the bi-racial committee, to scrutinize every decision they made very carefully. This committee most likely resulted in the DeKalb School System seeking and finding innovative ways to bring students of different races together, as well as insured the schools and students were treated equally. In an effort to further integrate, the court ordered DeKalb to start the Majority to Minority program. Any student who was of the majority race in his or her home school could apply to go to another DeKalb school in which they would be the minority, in order to increase diversity. At the height of the
program in the mid-1980s, approximately 4,500 of DeKalb’s African-American students participated in the program. The Majority to Minority program was positive for nearly all the DeKalb students involved, the program certainly impacted the transferring students, but it also impacted the students in the receiving schools, which became much more diverse.

In a further effort to attract students of all races across housing lines, magnet programs were established at centrally located schools. The magnet program was designed with a 50-50 racial balance as a result of a 1989 court order. The court also ordered the school system to balance the ratio of faculty and staff at every school, and facility to reflect the county population at the time, which was 65 percent black and 35 percent white. A lottery was held in the summer of 1989 to ensure the staff was properly balanced. The DeKalb County Board of Education decided that the school system had done all that it could do, in the face of rapidly changing demographics, to integrate the school system. The Board petitioned the Court to declare the school system unitary. The Circuit Court did so, but the Appellate court disagreed, stating that DeKalb had a long way to go in order to be considered unitary. The Appellate Court decided that DeKalb must be unitary in six areas (student assignment, faculty, placement, transportation, extracurricular activities and facilities) at the same time for at least two years. The Board of Education appealed the decision to the Supreme Court and in June of 1996, the Supreme Court ruled that the DeKalb County School System was unitary. This ended the 27 years of court supervision. Throughout this long period of time, the court repeatedly referred to DeKalb as an “innovative” school system. This experience encompassed the careers of many teachers and administrators in DeKalb schools. Some people worked
their entire careers in education under the federal courts supervision. For students, numerous generations came through a school system which operated under the eye of the court. This experience made the DeKalb County School System more open and sensitive to the needs of its clients, the parents and children of DeKalb County, Georgia.

Since 1996 the District has moved quickly to establish a more responsive school system administration and to provide more choice for all parents and students. Six theme elementary schools provide a more rigorous academic regimen and greater parent involvement; Montessori programs at three elementary schools provide another choice for parents. Two charter schools, with more on the horizon, offer independent public schools. Magnet programs at sixteen schools include the School of the Performing Arts, several magnets for high achievers, finance, computer and technology magnets. Most of the magnet programs are well attended and continue to attract a broad range of students. In 1999, the Board of Education voted to remove the racial component from the Magnet program, because race based programs were being attacked successfully in courts across the country. The Board voted to phase out the Majority to Minority program in 1999, citing the cost of transportation and noting particularly that the majority of African-American parents with children in DeKalb schools were demanding that every neighborhood school be excellent.

During the 1980s enrollment dropped in DeKalb, and some neighborhood schools were adapted for use as administrative centers or specialized schools. Large urban populations have to deal with the ebb and flow in the student population, and DeKalb’s staff and Board did so in the most conservative way, selling as few properties as possible and adapting school buildings for re-use within the school system. In the early 1990s,
student enrollment began to rise again, and continues to grow. Today with new housing booming in the rural areas of south and east DeKalb, with houses going up on every vacant lot in established neighborhoods and new international families settling in central DeKalb, 2,000 additional children enter DeKalb Schools every year. This trend is expected to continue for some time to come. Due to this growth, the DeKalb Board of Education called for a referendum on a Special Purpose Local Option Tax in March of 1997. This tax was a new option for the Board of Education in Georgia. For the first time the Board could call for a vote on a special purpose tax which would pay for the cost of building new schools and improving old ones. This vote was very important for the DeKalb Board of Education, and the tax passed resoundingly, with a three to one majority. The Sales Tax passage was a vote of confidence in the school system, and a vote on the future of the children of DeKalb. Nine schools had substantial additions built for a total of 164 classrooms, and two new schools were completed during the first phase of construction. Three middle schools opened during the 2000-2001 school year, and two high schools and one middle school opened for the 2001-2002 school year. In 2003, DeKalb residents passed a second vote for another round of the special purpose penny sales tax. With the continued population growth, it seems likely a need for more schools will continue.8

Initially in Southern school districts, integration was not well received and many school districts fought to keep African Americans out of white institutions. Over the first three decades of the 20th century, the funding gap between black and white schools in the South increasingly widened. NAACP studies of unequal expenditures found that Georgia

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spent $4.59 per year on each African-American child as opposed to $36.29 on each white child. There have been many policies and programs which have dealt with the education of African Americans in this country. Some of these policies have focused strictly on education while others have focused on the social and cultural aspects of African Americans in education. Urban school districts such as Philadelphia and DeKalb County would come up with their own plans to make sure they were in compliance.

Busing was controversial because it sent a large number of African Americans out of their neighborhoods and away from their parent’s supervision and support. Even young children would sometimes have to endure long journeys just to attend school everyday. Busing is perhaps one of the largest programs ever used to shift the status of African Americans in educational institutions.

For many years, it was thought that if you could send black students to white schools and communities, it would positively affect these students. In the decades following Brown, African-American students in the North and South were bused to white institutions of education in order to attend what was thought to be a better environment. Many problems arise when you send these students outside their communities. One of the main problems is that the busing is only happening in one direction, in the majority of school systems, which promotes the ideology that attending white institutions is the right way to get the best education. It sets up the paradigm that black schools have to be horrible if they are sending some of their best student’s miles away to be trained and indoctrinated by these other institutions. This has made it extremely hard over the last several decades for African-American institutions to retain and attract the best and brightest students. In a society where it is tough enough to get a decent job being African
American those who have the opportunity to attend white institutions do so with the thought being that their resume will be taken more seriously if that have the right or “white” credentials backing them up. When you take the best and brightest students and teachers from these struggling schools you are setting the schools up to fail because the pool you are left with can not make up for the talent you lost. When parents see children leaving their school to attend other institutions, most are going to think seriously about sending their child to another school as well.

Another issue which has been plaguing school districts in the North and the South is teacher retention. Teacher retention has become a huge problem at many of these struggling institutions. Educators at these schools already face the burden of teaching in some of the nations toughest neighborhoods. A majority of these schools have suffered from low parental involvement or support, crumbling infrastructures, discipline issues, and budget issues. Despite all those normal everyday issues teachers are now finding themselves under the gun with recent policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which adds extra pressures and responsibilities to a teachers’ already hectic schedule. This brings about new tasks and meetings, which paradoxically makes it even more difficult to make the most of class time. It is these struggling schools which are facing the most pressure, loose the best staff due to not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP), and have to make serious adjustments. Once these schools get place on the “did not make improvements” list it is almost impossible to get off without making enormous changes. Many good teachers in African-American schools have been lost to these types of programs because it puts too much scrutiny on the teachers in those schools, whether or not what they were doing in the classroom was successful. This is one of those paradoxes
in school reform because even though this policy may be trying to help struggling institutions it actually hurts them because of the burden it puts on teachers and administrators.

To compound the problem many urban schools especially in the North lack enough qualified teachers to teach critical subject areas, putting African-American students at an even greater disadvantage. A large number of teachers in urban schools throughout the years have not been certified by the state. Many of these uncertified teachers are put into long term substitute positions. In many cases these teachers are teaching subjects they do not have in depth knowledge of. Unqualified teachers may be placed in these classrooms because the normal certified teacher may have had to take leave due to an unforeseen circumstance, others are used to fill in vacant positions in districts lacking certified teachers or the funds. This has been a common trend in Philadelphia Public Schools over the last several decades. Over the course of the school year having an unqualified teacher can adversely affect students who fall further behind in critical subject areas. In the era of standardized testing this type of practice could be ruining the limited chances students in these urban schools have. If anything these students need the best teachers available in order to get them caught up with their suburban peers.

In recent years, many teachers have begun to take the blame for the struggling performances of their students. Many policies have been tailored to address these concerns. In Philadelphia a tentative agreement between the School District and its teachers includes pay bonuses for educators in high-performing schools as measured by student performance. This is the District's biggest push ever into the merit area and puts
them on the cutting edge nationally. Under the bonus pay system, teachers in schools with the highest level of growth will receive bonuses as long as funds are available. Beginning in 2011-12 additional pay will be given out to educators in the Districts highest performing schools. Under provisions of the proposed pact, educators at schools that fall in the top 25 percent of the districts neediest schools and the top 10 percent of its non-neediest schools will get extra money. This could be beneficial to African-American institutions in Philadelphia which have been struggling to keep up since integration.

On the other hand, schools which continue to struggle to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) and other criteria mandated by the district will be placed in the “Renaissance Program”. In schools targeted for the “Renaissance Program,” the entire staff can be forced to transfer out and only up to 50 percent rehired at the school by its new management. Teachers working in those schools will earn more money for working an hour more a day and more days a year, however, there will be far more pressure and accountability than they have ever faced. The program also expands school based hiring of teachers by leadership teams. All vacancies in the District’s 70 plus lowest performing schools will be filled by leadership teams at those schools, rather than under the District’s existing seniority system. Teachers in all of the 70 low-performing schools under new management were given the option of transferring to another school in the district. In schools scheduled to be taken over by private for-profit firms or to become transitional charter schools, large numbers of faculty exercised the transfer option or left the district altogether. Teachers were able to opt out of the model they did not think they would like
and, if they had sufficient seniority, could transfer to a higher performing school or a school with an approach they thought they would prefer.9

The authors of the 2003 Harvard study on re-segregation believe current trends in the South of white teachers leaving predominately black schools, is an inevitable result of federal court decisions limiting former methods of civil rights-era protections, such as busing and affirmative action in school admissions. Teachers and principals in DeKalb County cite other issues, such as economic and cultural barriers in schools with high rates of poverty, as well as teachers’ choices to work closer to home or in higher-performing schools. In some areas black teachers are also leaving the profession resulting in teacher shortages. An abundant amount of teachers who teach in inner city and rural communities where there are a predominate amount of African Americans, do not want to be there. It is evident in their attitudes as well as their approach to the children they are responsible for. Teachers with preconceived stereotypes, look at the students they teach as inferior, and incapable of reaching high standards which are expected from other students. In return expectations are lowered and students are allowed to get away with mistakes and levels of achievement which would be unacceptable in other schools. In many schools in both districts, African-American students are rarely pushed to their highest levels. Critical thinking questions and higher order thinking problems are often lacking from daily instruction. It has become difficult to determine whether it is the teacher fault for not integrating these methods or is the environment and the behavior issues really just too difficult to overcome?

Another common practice which has been a continuous detriment to urban districts is the mismanagement of funds. In this method, money which was designated to be spent evenly amongst all schools in a district, are diverted to certain schools which are in the favor of members of the administration. Some say this practice is justified because residents in these areas pay more in taxes and those schools deserve higher priority when it comes to funding, others feel it is a way to justify racial discrimination. Many corrupt commissioners and superintendents have been known to move district money to predominately white schools. This practice is clearly visible in many major urban areas including Philadelphia and DeKalb. You can observe the inequality between predominately black and predominately white schools in the same district. The black schools in many cases are obviously in worst shape than the predominately white schools. The white institutions generally had better, cleaner facilities, up kept grounds, newer textbooks, and an overall more conducive environment for learning. This type of mismanagement of funds is not a new practice. Its one of the major reasons initially during the civil rights movement blacks began to demand equality from racist schools districts. It is almost inconceivable that this type of mismanagement and corruption would still take place. The true atrocity is the disadvantage that this type practice gives to minority schools and students.\(^{10}\)

Compared to most districts in the South and the North, DeKalb County seems to have eluded this trend, in many cases predominately black schools are newer and receive just as many resources as their predominately white counterparts. It seems that the intense

pressure under which this district was under for several decades finally paid off. In DeKalb County there are several predominately white institutions which have been around since the middle part of the last century. These facilities are not in bad shape they just are several decades older than some African-American facilities. This is radically different from Philadelphia Public schools where predominately black institutions are significantly older and more outdated then predominately white institutions. When observing predominately white public schools in suburban Philadelphia one notices a dramatic difference comparing these facilities to their urban counterparts. One just has to observe the grounds from the outside to see the contrast. At most suburban schools visited the landscaping was manicured and well organized. Sports areas and fields were well kept, giving a better impression of being important and well maintained. Buildings at suburban locations were well kept, painted, well lit, and in order. Some buildings visited had minor problems comparable to urban schools, however most suburban facilities were generally in better condition than most urban schools. Inside most suburban facilities one notices that furniture and resources seem not to be a problem. Desks, chairs, tables, doors, and windows at these facilities were in good condition overall. Textbooks were in good condition as well and available for every student.

Pennsylvania ranks significantly below the state average among states in terms of the percentage of state taxes devoted to education. As a result, many districts rely heavily on local property taxes, a situation that has produced gross inequities in many school districts' per pupil spending. Even though Philadelphia’s local tax rate is essentially double that of surrounding counties, property values in Philadelphia are so low that the School District was not able to compensate for the loss of state funds. General consensus
is that the reason suburban schools are generally in better condition is because the parents of the students attending these schools pay more in taxes and thus deserve to have better facilities and resources. However in reality most public schools receive the majority of these funding from the state and federal governments. Local taxes are only a small percentage of revenue generated to fund most public school systems. So in reality both urban and suburban schools should receive similar funding, and in most cases urban schools should get more funding due to the number of students attending these institutions. In 1975, Pennsylvania provided 55 percent of school funding; in 2001 it provided less than 36 percent. The Philadelphia School Districts attempt at increasing spending at struggling schools was limited by a state system which relies heavily on property taxes for local school funding. As a result, wealthier school districts with proportionately more property owners and more expensive real estate have more funds for schools. This tax issue manifests itself in the form of great disparities in school system expenditures per student. In 2000, the Philadelphia School District spent $6,969 a year per student. Seventy percent of Philadelphia’s students are at or near the poverty line. This contrasts with expenditures per student in wealthier suburban school districts: Jenkintown, $12,076; Upper Merion, $13,139.11 Many feel that the reason predominately white Philadelphia public schools have traditionally been better funded is due to racism and discriminatory administrative practices.

In the Philadelphia School District several new plans have been implemented in order to address the struggling performance of certain targeted schools the majority which happen to be predominately African American. The District has selected fourteen

schools which are eligible to be radically reinvented in September 2010 under the Philadelphia School Districts “Renaissance Schools” plan. Four paths are open to the schools, if chosen. They could be operated by charters or outside managers, with staffs that are no longer district employees, or they could be district-managed schools run either by a turnaround team selected in part by the community or by individuals identified by the superintendent or central office. The school managers will have plenty of autonomy. These selected institutions stand to have a longer school day and year, and even district run schools will see vast changes in staffing, with every teacher required to re-apply for their job and no more than 50 percent of the existing staff eligible to be re-hired. Charter and contract schools can hire whomever they like, though all current staff in the affected schools may re-apply to work at their former school.\(^\text{12}\) If teachers are not hired at their former job, they will still be eligible for positions elsewhere in the District. These particular schools qualified for the Renaissance list based on test scores and other measures, like student progress, attendance and parent and teacher satisfaction. The District has also selected 12 other schools whose performance landed them in the bottom 10 percent of schools district-wide, but who have not been given enough support to be placed in the Renaissance category. These schools are labeled “Empowerment schools,” which get additional resources from the District, but are also subject to much more scrutiny and direction from the central office.\(^\text{13}\)

Behavior seems to be another common problem in many urban schools. The learning environment can become chaotic due to the fact that many students


have issues at home which are brought to school. Fights which occur in the
neighborhood are often times manifested in local schools as gangs, drugs, truancy,
an and negative attitudes which permeate through hallways. These types of
distractions make it difficult for teachers to reach all their students at high levels.
Years of dealing with the same situations make teachers cynical, which in turn
can
lead to lowered expectations for all students. Students in suburban schools are
expected to be more creative and are allowed more freedom, however their
situation is often less chaotic than those seen at urban schools. Teachers in urban
school districts will often site behavior as the main reason it is often difficult to
simulate the same practices which may work at other schools.

If any success is to be achieved in the long term, school administrations
are going to have to come up with more creative ways of dealing with classroom
distractions and collateral duties so that teachers will be able to focus more on
their primary duty of instruction. Typically, the distractions of the few affect the
many in the majority of predominately black institutions in both Philadelphia and
DeKalb. Lack of administrative support has left discipline almost solely in the
hands of teachers. In many cases children are treated like prisoners with an
emphasis on behavior and discipline. No wonder record numbers of black males
are heading for prison; they are being prepared for that role at an early age. Many
teachers in these predominately black schools treat minority students harshly not
fearing any repercussions from parents, administrators, etc. In many cases
African-American teachers are the ones who are most guilty of this, "tough love."
One could make the case that in the early stages of integration white teachers were the main perpetrators of stereotyping and verbal abuse towards African Americans. However, in later stages of this process it seems African-American teachers have been found guilty of this same practice. Some black teachers are quick to reference that black students need this "tough love," due to the lack of structure that many black students face at home. This is a dramatic shift because in predominately white institutions in both districts, educators seem to be very cautious of the language and tones they use towards all students especially minority students. They understand the repercussions they would face if it was discovered that a white teacher had been talking to a minority student in that way in today's society of political correctness.

Many teachers believe race is becoming less of a factor in education. They see a trend toward multiculturalism in which students backgrounds are seen more as a positive aspect. In this environment all students backgrounds are incorporated into the curriculum or at least no one culture is seen as dominate. For many in education this is the ideal situation for all students, and should be the trend in which most schools should adopt. Others who are more cynical of multiculturalism feel race plays a factor but is not the prime motivational factor in school reform. Many in this camp feel that racial background is critical to the formation of social identity and needs to be emphasized. They point to African-American institutions of higher education as a clear example of educational environments in which racial identity is highlighted and celebrated. They fear that a trend towards multiculturalism will have an adverse affect on these institutions, leading to their eventual demise.
In recent years, efforts have been focused on establishing racial equality and the dynamics of the classroom environment. Many have felt that predominately black schools are the best environment for African-American students to feel comfortable and fit in with those of similar backgrounds. Some racial experts say that for real change to occur more blacks are needed in administrative positions in order to instill the notion to black students that they too can reach high professional positions. Since Brown v. Board of Education African Americans have achieved many high positions and this has paved the way for many more to advance and be given opportunities in both Philadelphia and DeKalb County. In the long term this can become a positive example for black students to emulate. This has become more of a reality in black institutions since the Brown decision, as black administrators and teachers replaced the white staff that has left these institutions in search of better opportunities. This in turn has allowed black students to see these examples on a daily basis, as well as interact with them. Some educators and administrators argue that reform efforts have not worked. They feel what students really need are high expectations, and more supportive environments. Specialized professional development aimed at training middle class teachers to have empathy for their lower class students. They feel that schools should be less focused on ethnic background and more focused on academic achievement. If one truly wants to understand how educational policies which have stemmed from integration have affected African Americans one only needs to check the statistics. The education crisis has had serious negative manifestations on African Americans.

In both the North and South, school reform has become a popular topic for politicians in recent years. Many studies conducted on this particular topic show that
reform works but becomes detrimental when you try to apply too much at a time. A vast number of educators who become the burden bearers of these new policies say there are too many programs. Politicians and administrators under intense amounts of pressure to do something about the current problems in education have had to come up with numerous methods of dealing with these situations. New policies have been implemented at extraordinary rates in many failing districts, causing both teachers and students to adapt to shifting paradigms. One policy which has had a dramatic effect on African-American education in recent years is No Child Left Behind (NCLB). No Child Left Behind was a policy implemented by former President George W. Bush. It was meant to place more emphasis on accountability with a focus on using standardized testing to assess student achievement. At first this policy seemed to be a good way to hold teachers and administrators accountable, however several years into the process more and more opposition began to build. Many of those who are opposed to No Child Left Behind feel this policy unfairly targets minority schools and students who have generally been known to score lower on these types of tests.\(^\text{14}\) Administrators and teachers at predominately black institutions in Philadelphia as well as DeKalb County are under constant pressure to show signs of success. This in turn leads to added stress and limited focus on the primary task of providing a quality well rounded education. Instead teachers are focused on teaching to the test and address only specific areas of the subject matter which they know will be tested. In the end, policies which are to be implemented in the future need to be truly tailored to that particular school, and should be beneficial to the needs of the students not the policy makers and administrators.

When it comes down to standardized test scores and success on formalized test it does seem that DeKalb County has done relatively better. Compared to the Philadelphia Public School System, DeKalb County has continually had a higher percentage of schools and African-American students achieve success on formalized tests. Both school systems however, have traditionally scored lower than national averages. Due to lack of academic success, teacher retention has become a huge problem in both Philadelphia and DeKalb County school districts. Teachers in these districts already face the burden of teaching in some of the nations toughest neighborhoods. A majority of these schools have low parental involvement or support, crumbling infrastructures, discipline issues, and budget issues. Despite all those normal everyday issues teachers are now finding themselves under the gun with Bush’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policies, which add extra pressures and responsibilities to a teachers’ already hectic schedule. This brings about new tasks and meetings, which in turn makes it even more difficult to make the most of class time. It is these struggling schools which are acing the most pressure, loose the best staff to AYP, and have to make serious adjustments.

A prominent goal of No Child Left Behind(NCLB) is ensuring that all children, no matter what their circumstances (e.g. English Language Learners, Special Education students, children from low income backgrounds) make “Adequate Yearly Progress” toward high academic standards and reach proficiency on state tests by 2014. Many of the most serious consequences mandated under NCLB for schools that do not achieve adequate yearly progress toward high academic standards or proficiency are already being implemented in Philadelphia as a result of the state takeover. The current reforms and reorganization of the Philadelphia School system, therefore, has massive implications
for the changes in school district governance, curriculum, instructional strategies, upgrading teacher quality, and funding that potentially will be implemented in failing schools and districts nation-wide. The implications are serious because it mainly affects students at predominately black schools in the district. These schools have struggled as a result of integration policies which have had the opposite results of its original intentions. Many good teachers in Philadelphia as well as DeKalb county have been lost to these types of programs because it puts too much scrutiny on the teachers in those schools, whether what they were doing in the classroom was successful or not.

In recent years, new policies have been implemented in order to combat many of the old problems with racism in school districts. These policies called for racial structure change, state takeovers, privatization, and school vouchers. Initiatives include public school choice, charter schools, performance assessments, and taking over failing districts. Districts also experimented with incentives, for instance, magnet schools to attract different students voluntarily. In 1998, the superintendent of Philadelphia School District threatened to close the city’s schools if the state did not provide the funds needed to balance his proposed budget. The state responded with a funding package which included a takeover plan for the nation’s sixth-largest school system. Two lawsuits were filed by the city and the Philadelphia School District in 1997 and 1998 to address these inadequate funding levels. The first, filed by the school district, the city and community leaders, contended that Pennsylvania did not provide an adequate education; it was dismissed outright by the state court. The second case, a civil rights suit filed in Federal District Court, by the district, the city, and other interested parties, contended that the state’s funding practices discriminate against school districts with large numbers of non-
white students. The city agreed to put this case on hold when Mayor Street negotiated the state takeover of the District, with the promise of additional funding from the state. In June 2000, under increasing pressure to find a solution to the economic and academic problems facing the District, school superintendent David W. Hornbeck ended his six-year tenure. In recognition of the assistance, the Mayor agreed to postpone for three months a federal lawsuit brought by the city claiming racial discrimination in the way the state funds the Philadelphia School District.15

In 2001 Pennsylvania’s Governor moved to take control of the schools. The state takeover of the sixth largest school district was seen as the most radical reform ever undertaken in a large urban school district. The Pennsylvania Department of Education signed a “Declaration of Distress” for the Philadelphia School District. This triggered the state takeover of the School District from the City of Philadelphia. The state of Pennsylvania formed the School Reform Commission to oversee the troubled public school system. This action was the end result of long negotiations. An additional factor layered on top of the previous local and state initiatives is No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the far reaching federal educational law that specifies a series of consequences for schools and districts that do not meet its goals. Philadelphia students continuously performed at extremely low levels of achievement on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests, levels that were mirrored in the academic levels on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). In 1996, students in most Philadelphia schools scored substantially below grade level. While there was an upward trend in the scores in the District overall during the Hornbeck years, and subsequent analysis has shown that

District scores increased at a faster pace than the average increases across the state, the absolute scores were still quite abysmal, as was the drop out rate for students in many middle and high schools in the District. Thus, in addition to having the authority to takeover the District for financial reasons, the state now had the authority to take over the District for academic ones. Since the 1990s school choice has been increasingly proposed by critics of the educational system as key to effective educational reform. The rationale for choice in urban school districts is that parents, especially those with few economic options, should be able to move children out of falling schools. Now, under NCLB, after a school is designated as “in need of improvement” for two years in a row, parents have the option of choosing to place them in another public or charter school in the District. Charter school legislation in Pennsylvania was approved in 1997. At that point, charter schools became the major form of “choice” available in Pennsylvania. The number of charter schools in Philadelphia has extended rapidly. Currently there are over 45 charter schools in the District. Philadelphia has by far the largest number of charter schools in the state.

The takeover of the Philadelphia school system was supported by Pennsylvania legislators and Department of Education officials who believed in a market-based ideology, arguing that public school systems, especially those in urban areas, are inefficient and the cause of the poor performance of their students. The rationale is that schools, like businesses, should be responsive to market forces, and that privatization and competition will result in inferior schools losing students (and eventually closing) and good schools thriving and increasing the proportion of students they serve. The takeover

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plan had six main elements: putting the District under the control of the School Reform Commission, hiring a CEO, enabling the CEO to reform the teaching staff by hiring non-certified staff as well as reconstitute troubled schools by reassigning or firing staff, allowing the Commission to hire for-profit firms to manage some schools, converting some schools to charter schools, and reallocating and redistributing school district resources. At the time of the takeover, it was expected that Edison Schools, Inc. would be one of the prime beneficiaries of the partial privatization. Youth organizers from the Philadelphia Student Union staged protests, and engaged in civil disobedience to prevent the School District from handing over control of the central administration to Edison. Youth leaders were ultimately successful in preventing a takeover of the central office, and also prevented the takeover of any high schools by for-profit companies. In the end Edison was not given as many schools as expected, primarily because of conflict of interest concerns. As of 2007 the company had not delivered the promised improvements.\(^\text{17}\)

While most of the public and legislators are interested in which providers approaches or models are most successful, especially in improving students test scores, initial research has found that no one approach has been uniformly successful or unsuccessful at every school in which it has operated. Every manager has some schools which are working well and some that are not. There are some schools in which the teachers and the principal have worked together to make learning central and some schools where this is less the case. The middle grades are, in general, less successful than elementary, although there is some variation here as well. Rather than the model itself

\(^{17}\text{Jeff Wright, “District Takeover,” Philadelphia Daily News, April 6, 2008.}\)
being critical to what occurs in a school, it is the existing capacity, especially principal leadership, at even the lowest performing schools that has been key in determining how well the school is doing. It seems that individual schools are successful when principals rely on their professional judgment and adapt the manager’s approach to build professional learning community.

The results of the struggle for integration remain unclear. From one perspective, the fight for integrated schools accomplished much that it set out to do. At the same time the Court handed down its decision to integrate, seventeen Southern States as well as the District of Columbia had laws requiring separate schools for blacks and whites, and segregation was widespread in the North even though several Northern states had provisions prohibiting it in local schools. A decade after Brown, this system of racial apartheid in the South was still intact, while in the North, increasingly vocal protests had won minor concessions from school officials who argued that segregation resulted from housing patterns and not their own actions. Southern schools integrated rapidly between the 1960s and 1970s, as did many school districts in the North, due to enforcement of strict guidelines prohibiting the distribution of federal funds to segregated schools, and a series of Supreme Court decisions that banned freedom of choice plans and approved busing,

In Southern school districts like DeKalb, compliance was left in the hands of local school officials, and typically occurred in terms advantageous to whites. Faced with federal pressure to integrate, Southern school districts complied by closing black schools, demoting African-American principals, and dismissing African-American teachers. As a
result, even though integration offered African Americans access to educational
resources previously denied to them, many began to question its benefits.¹⁸

For African Americans in the Northern school districts, de facto segregation has
been the norm. In the Philadelphia school district many of these same situations have
played themselves out in many ways. As African Americans moved into white
communities and began to attend white institutions, white parents began to withdraw
their children from many of these schools and move from these communities. White
families began to leave the inner city and move to suburban communities in order to
avoid the consequences of these new polices. As students left these schools so to did
many of best teachers. This “flight” proved to be very detrimental to these schools.
Integration reached a pivotal turning point when the Supreme Court extended integration
requirements to Northern cities and included Latinos as well as African Americans in
integration plans. However, this victory also turned out to be a partial one. Although the
Court’s decision ended the practice of sending Latinos and African Americans to school
together and calling it integration, it did little to end urban segregation. Because
suburbanization and white flight increasingly left so few white students in most big city
school systems, few could accomplish any meaningful integration within their own
borders. In the Northeast, where school districts boundaries correspond to urban/
suburban political jurisdictions, Milliken v. Bradley effectively excluded white suburbs
from requirements of integration.

¹⁸Charles J. Ogletree Jr., All Deliberate Speed: Reflections on the First Half Century of
Integration plans in Northern cities focused instead on voluntary city-suburban transfers and special magnet programs designed to hold white students in the city or entice them from the suburbs to attend urban schools. These plans offered some African-American students an alternative to segregated, inner-city schools, but, since they did not require much of whites, they did little to alter the racial composition of urban schools or of those in surrounding communities. Despite the limitations of these programs, additional action to promote integrated schools attracted little support. Instead, beginning in the 1980s, equal opportunity was increasingly redefined to mean greater choice in schooling, and proposals such as school vouchers and charter schools were promoted as the best way to expand educational opportunities for low income and minority students in both Districts. These proposals which were initiated primarily by White policymakers who favored market-based solutions to social problems, also won support from a growing number of African American parents who were disillusioned by the slow pace of integration and viewed school choice as a way to escape deteriorating inner-city schools.

During the years of 1960-1980, poverty in cities grew from 6 percent to 13.7 percent. This seriously affected African Americans and other minorities who lived in these inner city communities. Many whites fed up with crime, drugs, along with the integration of public schools left the inner cities and began heading to suburban communities in large numbers. Many of the best public school teachers and administrators began to leave as well causing a gradual deterioration of the public school system. To fill the gap left behind many uncertified staff were used in Philadelphia as well as DeKalb. This however, provided many opportunities for African Americans to
enter education as a profession. During this transitional period, teachers and administrators were tested through trial by fire. Many teachers and administrators were lacking the proper training and numbers to address the change which was occurring. Segregation increased between 1980 and 2000, although patterns varied by group and region. For African Americans, the South remained the most integrated region of the country. After a series of Supreme Court decisions between 1991 and 1995 which allowed districts to return to neighborhood schools before integration requirements had been fully met, the proportion of African-American schools with an extremely high percentage of minority enrollment in the South began to rise again, though black segregation remained most intense in big cities in the Northeast. Some critics use this as evidence to pronounce integration a failure and urge that it be abandoned, however the lesson history teaches is more complex. In essence, the struggle for equal resources in schools was an attempt to make the benefits of education equally available to all citizens. By ending Jim Crow practices in Southern education and achieving recognition for the right of African Americans to an integrated education, it accomplished a great deal toward that goal. What was equally clear, however, was that without governmental support for complimentary changes in the distribution of power, control, and resources, integration based on equality of academic and social status in the classroom would remain illusive.

In both Philadelphia and DeKalb County, roughly forty percent of the schools are high poverty schools where students receive free or reduced lunch. This means that students attending these institutions are already at a disadvantage. Many lack the basic resources just to go to school such as paper, pencils, pens, calculators, etc. This means
that in order for these students to get a fair chance urban schools are going to need to be funded at an equal if not higher rate than other schools. It seems however that the trend has historically been in the other direction in both the North and the South, with most of the funding going to suburban school districts. Urban schools are generally funded at a much lower rate than suburban schools. As a result, African-American schools have continuously been short changed when they should have the best materials available and ensure that all students are being provided for. How can one expect these students to achieve at the same level as their suburban counterparts? One would have to consider it amazing that African Americans have excelled at all considering the odds that are placed against them.

In recent years, progress has occurred in many areas for African Americans including education. The achievement gap has been steadily decreasing. African-American females have led when it comes to performing as well as other racial groups in education. African-American females are receiving advanced degrees in record numbers. However, despite these victories there are still huge numbers of African Americans who have not been as successful. It almost seems as if the black community has been split in half between those who have achieved and those who continue to struggle. Even in today's society a large percentage of African Americans live below poverty line which manifests itself through female headed households, joblessness, welfare, high dropout rates. Even though integration allowed some African Americans to attend predominately white institutions, it also ensured that those who stayed in predominately black urban institutions would be continuously disadvantaged.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the integration of public schools in 1954 many problems have surfaced in predominately African-American institutions of learning. It was thought by many that this policy would help make the educational lives of minority children better. In several cases this is true. In both the North and the South, parents were able to get their children to experience the advantages of the privileged either through relocation or by bussing them across cities and counties. Children who were able to participate in that experience reaped the rewards of integration. Collectively however, these students represent only a small fraction of the African-American community. Since integration the majority of African-American children ended up staying in facilities and institutions which were considered inferior to their suburban counterparts.

The post Brown educational situation could not by far, be what the policy makers had envisioned when they initially sought equal resources and opportunities. It seemed as if for the first several decades after the infamous decision, the state of black education was regressing. The policies which derived from this ruling may have actually had an adverse affect on the success rate for African Americans throughout the country.
Even though the main goal of the civil rights educational movement was to gain equal rights, facilities and resources, it seemed the situation in black institutions grew even worse in Philadelphia, DeKalb, and throughout the country.

Many black institutions of learning in both the North and the South were neglected, and left to fend for themselves with scarce funding. This would later manifest itself through a lack of resources by business and community partners, as well as limited participation from many parents. Many African-American institutions still are witnessing a steady decline many decades later. Symptoms of this neglect manifests itself in various but all too common ways, worn/ out dated textbooks, broken/ missing equipment, leaking pipes, water damage, constantly reused materials, lack of heat or air systems, poor/unhealthy lunch choices, damaged sports equipment, lack of uniforms, unusable facilities, and dilapidated buildings.¹

As sad as it seems, many schools lack the resources needed to properly educate all of its students. In many African-American schools textbooks can become an obstacle to a successful education. It is all too common to have one or more students at these institutions without an updated textbook in good condition. Many schools lack the proper funding to provide up to date books. Some students have to share textbooks or in some cases are not allowed to bring them home because they are a scarce and valuable resource. This situation is common in many overcrowded schools throughout the country. New students may have to wait weeks, maybe months, before they are given a proper textbook. In many

cases textbooks are worn out, written in, and falling apart at the seams. Charts, statistics, and scientific information in many of these books are out of date, making an already difficult learning situation even worse. How are students supposed to succeed in and environment in which they were already set up to fail? In other cases students have to work with limited scientific laboratory equipment, because materials which may have been damaged might not be replaced in a timely manner if it is replaced at all. In many Philadelphia Public School students were just not able to participate in or complete certain laboratory assignments or experiments because the equipment was just not available. This can be a harsh reality for a young student with dreams of becoming a scientist or chemist, not only are you black but you are also behind the curve in comparison to your counterparts when or if you make it to college.

Since this controversial decision many have looked back on the effect these policies played in the education of African Americans. The opinions have been mixed. Many think that these policies were the best results that could have been achieved at that time, while others feel that these policies have had a disastrous effect on the African-American community as a whole. The fact is that the results are mixed you cannot say that any one region or district has the best practices when it comes to integration and the academic success of African-American students. There are schools in both districts and regions in which African Americans are experiencing success and reaping the benefits of a multicultural education, but in these same districts you can see the opposite results as well. It is a mixed situation, however it does seem that the DeKalb County School system
had made more effort to integrate a larger number of its student population, and has in the process witnessed a lot of positive change and success.

The School District of Philadelphia, on the other hand, seems to be regressing. During the first several decades of integration, this School District opened many facilities and programs to African Americans, however, due to deep seeded prejudice white families and numerous staff members decided to leave the District and head for the suburbs where even to this day the black population remains low. Rioting, racial violence, and a drug epidemic pushed the remaining white population in to small communities in Northeast and South Philadelphia; this solidified racial boundaries and has made it one of the most segregated cities in the country. These are some of the main reasons why attempts at integration of the Philadelphia School District remain elusive and unsuccessful. This racial divide will not remain, integration is inevitable. If this District wants to become successful whites should be enrolled at black institutions in higher numbers. This will shine light at these institutions, force support needed to succeed, increase respect, and improve credentials. Parents of white children at these institutions will demand that improvements be made. The district will be forced to bring in better highly qualified teachers, initiate reform, increase funding, and purchase materials for school which need it the most. This should lead to increased expectations for all who attend these schools including African Americans. When it is seen that whites can achieve and succeed at these institutions, there might be a paradigm shift for thinking by black parents when it comes to education. What the district really needs to raise expectations at struggling schools may be an improved curriculum and better magnet programs this might attract white middle class students and parents. Suburban students
already have many advantages such as highly educated people in their families, a knowledge and information base which may be broad, school’s with high funding. In many cases they have more opportunities to take trips, and travel the world. They may have access to museums, computers, and summer camps. Add the fact that they may have family members who have powerful jobs, benefits and influence. It hardly seems like a level playing field. Many students in urban areas of both Philadelphia and DeKalb start of with bleak chances of making it to college or even standard reading and mathematics levels. Many come from single parent households where money and resources are not available to provide these children with cultural and educational experiences. The addition of dilapidated buildings, crumbling infrastructures, and limited resources makes the situation even more disadvantageous for minority students.

In many Philadelphia public schools it is all too common to find broken copiers and other classroom materials such as overhead projectors and teacher classroom resources damaged due to continuous use. On many occasions students and teachers will have to reuse materials which should have been discarded long ago but due to lack of funding they will have to be reused again and again. It is not difficult to see how entering an environment such as this one would almost automatically assume they were being short changed and would realize their chance at competing with other students from better funded was almost next to impossible. Most of the students attending these institutions are already at a tremendous disadvantage in most cases just by the color of their skin. A majority of students at these institutions are already suffering from the financial disadvantage and classical hiring practices which have affected their parents. The
parents of these students may in many cases lack the resources, knowledge and experience necessary to ensure their child will succeed in school which makes the future seem bleak to most.

In many of these institutions, the facilities are disturbing as well. Leaking pipes draining water into buckets or on the floors of the classroom. Restroom facilities in some of these schools might not work properly causing unsanitary conditions. Writing and graffiti left on the walls and stalls for month’s even years. Dimly lit hall ways with dull color schemes throughout the building give students a depressing feeling the moment they arrive at school. How can we expect students to achieve at high levels when they are entrenched in such dismal environments? Most of these schools are located in the worst neighborhoods of Philadelphia. The environment in which these children already live is more similar to that of third world shanty town rather than the ninth largest city in the leading economic country in the modern world. A lot of these institutions match their urban environment perfectly in the sense of looking dilapidated and dismal. One would have to wonder how you could have a tax paying population of millions and at the same time have a public institution look as if it has not been painted or remodeled in decades. This reflects the level of neglect shown to not only these institutions but also these communities.

One thing that students growing up in these communities do not need is a reminder of the situation in which they come from and will most likely be destined to. Predominately black schools should be vibrant and upbeat the total opposite of the communities in which they dwell in many cases. If the people in
charge really cared about these students and their situation and genuinely wanted to improve the reality they would make sure that these schools and institutions were the best looking and most positive place in that neighborhood. It is amazing what a little paint and attention would do to some of these places. For many students it is depressing just to pull up in front of some of these schools it almost takes the hope and life out of you. Despite these negative realities many students make the most of their situation. Its no wonder why many of these inner city schools in both the North and South loose their best students to vouchers and private schools and so many of the best teachers to higher paying and performing schools. There is almost no incentive to stay at these institutions, between the environment and the educational performance at most of these schools it is hard to figure out why anyone is there at all. Are these schools attracting the worst and least prepared teachers and students, making these schools doomed to fail anyway?

Conspiracy theorists would argue that someone has intentionally set up the system to ensure that African-American students do not achieve on the same level as white students and black institutions are being set up to fail by corrupt policies which are detrimental to their success. Just by looking at the educational data and understanding the problems that are plaguing these institutions any rational person might find it hard to disagree with these conspiracy theorists. Psychologically the status of these facilities may have adverse affects on both students and teachers. Opinion and attitudes can be shaped or changed based on environments. Arriving at some urban institutions can be a depressing experience. With the shape that most urban school facilities are in it makes it hard to attract the best staff possible.
No one wants to show up at in institution in which the facilities and resources are diminished. That type of situation attracts those who are either highly dedicated to the community or the mission or those who have no other choice and are often forced to relocation or take a diminished situation, in most cases it seems to be a mixture of the two. With improved resources and facilities failing public schools in both districts would be able to recruit not only better qualified and motivated staff but in many cases would be able to retain and attract a better quality of students. Many students and parents understand the diminished quality of public schools in African-American communities and seek to have better educational and environmental opportunities. When these students leave they take with them knowledge and opportunities which could have bettered that African-American institution. Better educational environments and opportunities will inspire students to want to come to that institution mainly because of the environment and the programs which that school provides. Very few people seek to come to a school in which the facility is dismal, the resources are lacking, and the books are tattered.

Many opposed to the current economic system feel that blacks have been denied a good education in order to keep them as low pay workers to be exploited for the capitalist system. They point to the fact that capitalist system generally needs low pay, under educated workers to take advantage of. This was the initial reason Africans were brought to this country. Many feel that this is a continual struggle in America and the reason African Americans have been and continue to
be the targets of this exploitation. However, in recent years many economists and social scientists have began to question the need for under-educated citizens in this modern era. These experts feel that this situation comes back to hurt the economy in the form of less money from tax garnishments as well as added burdens to an already troubled social welfare system. Low skilled black workers are in competition with foreign workers. In many instances foreign workers can be paid under the table, typically they do not require health benefits and in some cases are willing to work longer and harder for less pay. This makes the already grim employment prospects increasingly scarce for many African-American job seekers.

Reform seems to be the only thing consistent in the DeKalb County educational system. There have been many calls for racial structure change, state takeovers, privatization, and school vouchers. These seem to be the popular choices amongst the non stop jargon of reform which has been circulating in recent years. If true reform is ever to truly crystallize consistency is going to be the key to success. Most teachers and administrators who are close to the situation feel that this constant barrage of policy changes demoralizes those who work hard everyday, only to be told they have to switch their methods every two years based on a popular policy, program, or administration change. There is a belief that if African-American students are going to be successful there needs to be more African Americans in effective positions to stimulate change and implement new policies. Some reformers say there should be more blacks in administrative positions this would advantage black students. Since Brown v. Board of

Education, blacks have achieved high positions and this has paved the way for many more to advance and be given opportunities. Both the DeKalb County and Philadelphia School Systems have large numbers of African-American staff, a direct result of the positive effect of the decision.

There are those who feel school should be an equalizing force. However relevant that philosophy is, the truth is that in reality schools have generally not lived up to their ideals, this fact can not be understated when it comes to African Americans. What the statistics and trends seems to point at is that since the Brown decision those African Americans who were already highly likely to achieve experienced success. The real problem seems to be that the side effect of the Brown decision was that African-American schools and communities suffered the most over the long term. The best and brightest along with those who had better resources ended up attending schools outside of local African-American neighborhoods. Those most likely to be the ones to disseminate what they learned had moved out of the community. This adversely affects those who need the most, those who had the least opportunities and limited resources. These factors combined have prevented Dubois’s talented tenth theory from reaching its full potential. This paradox keeps the black community from getting needed training, knowledge, insight and culture.

Since integration blacks have achieved many high positions in both the Philadelphia and DeKalb County School Districts, and this has paved the way for many more to advance and be given opportunities. In the long term these role models have become a positive example for black students to emulate. This has become more of a reality in black institutions in recent years, as black administrators and teachers have
replaced many white staff members who left these institutions in search of better opportunities. This turnover has allowed black students to see these examples on a daily basis, as well as interact with them.

African-American students have faced many challenges in the classroom before and since integration. More emphasis needs to be placed on how teachers affect the students in their classrooms. It would be difficult to deny that teachers play a key role in the success and attitudes students have when it comes to education. It can be argued that the decision to integrate changed the role teachers play as well as the type of teachers African-American students are taught by. Many African Americans not only face the normal challenges experienced throughout the course of an academic career, many also have to deal with opposition from the one person who should be unbiased, their own teacher. Imagine you are a child who enters a classroom full of potential and curiosity. Their teacher asks a question they give their best answer only to have it struck down with a sarcastic remark, if they where even fortunate enough to be acknowledged. This is the scenario faced by young black students everyday in the classroom. They enter the academic arena wide-eyed and full enthusiasm and by the end of their academic career if they haven't dropped out from enduring years of criticism and sarcasm, they are a shell of the person they used to be.

For many African Americans, the classroom has been a war zone, a place where they have to put on their armor and thick skin to endure the criticism and harassment they know they will encounter on a daily basis by a person who should be there to nurture and inspire them. Possibly, the most overlooked as well as the most influential factor when it comes to student success is teacher quality. A teacher’s overall effectiveness and attitude
are two fundamental aspects to whether or not a student fails or succeeds in a classroom. Teachers are the foundation of the school system. They are the ones who impact students on a daily basis. A teacher can make or break a student based on a look, a conversation, or even a comment on a graded paper. Sometimes that is all it takes for a students life to be impacted. Many teachers just do not realize how important a role they play in the life of a child. We forget how influential these people are in the development of our society. It is imperative that more attention is paid to they type of teachers which are allowed to interact with students. These are individuals who can instill the confidence to help a shy kid open up and address the class, make a once academically challenged child aspire to college. There is usually at least one teacher in a students academic career who makes them feel that they can achieve goals they once thought were impossible or out of reach. These are the teachers who make school both challenging and rewarding to children everyday. Good teachers engage all their students and try to be as positive and nurturing as possible. They rarely single out individuals to chastise in front of others, nor do they isolate students in order to make them feel different or unwanted.

Effective teachers do not limit a students achievement capabilities based on their race or socio-economic status. Some teachers even to this day take one look at a child, the way they dress, and automatically assume they know everything they need to about that individual. At the same time it is not ideal to be naïve about these issues either. Some level of awareness is needed when dealing with students from lower income households. Students from lower income families face many factors in and out the classroom which could hinder them from academic achievement. In many cases students might not be able to afford certain materials for projects. They might not have the resources to do research
at home. These simple things can become obstacles to a student's success or overall level of pride. An untrained, unaware teacher might see the student's short comings as laziness or inadequacy. Outside the classroom lower income students may have other responsibilities like siblings which they may have to take care of while their parents work multiple jobs or the late shift. These students might not have someone there to check their homework or to make sure that they have that poster board for their upcoming project. A master teacher is aware of all their students' moods and attitudes. This means they have the empathy to put themselves in their students' shoes and are then able to understand how each student feels as an individual. They can then use this knowledge to better relate to each student in order to help them reach the level they are capable of achieving.

Effective teachers are well trained in their subject matter. They understand the standards and engage each student on a daily basis. They don't allow students to underachieve or make excuses. However they also are rational enough to know that you can not push every student the same way, and that each student has a certain level pressure that they can take. Unfortunately many teachers who have taught African-American students have not lived up to these ideals. In many public schools there have been too many instances of unqualified teachers in critical areas such as science and mathematics. Teachers who really do not care about the students they teach and whether or not they are actually reaching as many children as they are capable of. There are many teachers who just want a paycheck. They come to work let the time pass by, doing the minimal amount of work possible. They don't interact with the students on any real level. In many school districts in the North this is an acceptable if not common practice.³ Many teachers, whether

through instinct or frustration, stereotype their students, especially minorities. Black students have been typically seen as lazy and unmotivated; however, one only has to look to the pattern of racism, stereotyping and neglect that these students face in order to understand why they may be unmotivated. 4

African Americans who attended predominately white public schools have faced many struggles throughout the years. This is not to say that all white teachers or even the majority have racist attitudes towards minorities, however once black students were allowed to attend white institutions they faced immediate hatred and bigotry. Many were spit on, maliciously insulted, ostracized, even beaten. For many black students things only got worse once they got into the classroom, disrespectful peers and insensitive teachers were often common at integrated settings in both the North and the South. Countless numbers of black students would raise their hand to answer questions only to be ignored on too many accounts. Students were often told they were dumb, not smart enough, and not able to obtain certain professions because of the color of their skin. Some were forced to sit by their selves or in groups with other black students. For many this was a daily routine, every morning they might have to endure a long hostile journey only to get to an educational environment in which they were unwelcome. What could be the incentive for being motivated for that experience?

In recent years, it can be said that relations between black students and white teachers have gotten much better, especially in the South where classroom environments are nothing like they were before integration. Stereotypes have been replaced by high expectations in many cases. White teachers have begun to understand and become more

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aware of the role they play in the attitudes of black students toward the educational process. Whether through professional development training or personal experience teachers have begun to have the same level of expectation and success for African American students which they would for white students. This has come through many years of change and improvements. It is difficult to say that Brown policies have not had a major impact on the educational process of this country. Since Brown, black students being taught by white instructors has become common place. Although there will always be some frustration and setbacks, relations between black students and white teachers have become much more positive. Some blacks however, feel that a segregated environment is what is best for African-American students. They wish to recreate the black educational environment pre-Brown.⁵

After slavery black schools and institutions were created to educate blacks only. These were institutions largely funded by white philanthropists and ran by blacks. The level of quality was not high however the students were in an environment in which they could feel comfortable, where they could feel like they belonged. Throughout the early part of the twentieth century it was common practice for African Americans to attend these institutions. Many African Americans received valuable education and training at these institutions. African-American teachers were competent, and in many cases amongst the best in their field. These educators made sure that they were just as good as their white counterparts, and were heavily invested in the success of the product which came out of their institutions. Many felt they had to work twice as hard to get the same

level of recognition as their counterparts. This level of competition led to a sense of pride in the education of black students. Black educators were revered in the African-American community. A teacher at this time was seen as just as important and prestigious as a doctor, or a lawyer. These educators were seen as nurturers, role models, they were Dubois’s talented tenth giving back to their society. These educators understood where young black children were coming from and the obstacles they would endure as they stepped foot into the real world. Black students had mentors who could guide them through the struggles they would face. For many years this system seemed to work well. African Americans were receiving quality education and training and were able to use these skills to acquire jobs and become productive members of society. Many African Americans who attended these institutions did extremely well considering the huge disadvantage. There were two main disadvantages which these early black institutions faced, the first being the unequal distribution of resources between black and white institutions and the second and possibly the more elusive challenge would be achieving the same level of respect white institutions received. Despite the critics, many blacks with African centered paradigms have felt that all black schools are the best environment for African-American students to feel comfortable and achieve academic success.

Mainstream educators and administrators argue that radical reform efforts have not worked. They feel what students really need are high expectations, and more supportive environments. Specialized professional development aimed at training middle class teachers to have empathy for their lower class students. They feel that those who are calling for segregated environments are losing focus of the primary goal which is
insuring the success of all students. Schools should be less focused on ethnic background and more focused on academic achievement.\textsuperscript{6}

For others the situation is not that simple, they feel that integration had failed lived up to its standards when applied to African-American communities and institutions, especially when came down to equal distribution of education materials and resources. African-American institutions seem to always come up on the short end when it comes down to states and districts providing textbooks, lab materials, furniture and funding programs. To a lot of people this inequality of resources is disturbing considering the enormous disadvantage blacks are already in having to make up for generations of slavery. These disadvantages are seen as a stigma on African-American institutions, making them inferior in the opinion many whites and even blacks. This reputation has turned out to be detrimental to these institutions, especially after integration, when many blacks for the first time had the opportunity to send their children to the more prestigious white institutions. Parents began to send their children to these institutions on the assumption that their children would be getting a better education and in return opportunities that had eluded many others. Many began to wonder if this was the American dream or a terrible nightmare, for most it was just a horrible reality. The true nightmare is that we are still facing this paradox in the twenty-first century.

There have been many policies and programs which have dealt with the education of African Americans in both Philadelphia and DeKalb County. Some of these policies have focused strictly on education while others have focused on the social and cultural

aspects of African Americans in education. Later many districts would come up with their own plans to make sure they were in compliance. Busing has been controversial because it has sent large numbers of African Americans out of their neighborhoods and away from their parents’ supervision and support. Even young children have to endure long journeys just to attend school everyday. Busing is perhaps one of the largest programs ever used to shift the status of African Americans in education. For many years it was thought that when you sent black students to white schools and communities, it would positively affect these students. In the decades following integration, African-American students have been bused to white institutions of education in order to be in what was thought to be a better environment.

Many problems arise when you send these students outside their communities. One of the main problems is that the busing is only happening in one direction, which promotes the ideology that attending white institutions is the right way to get the best education. It sets up the paradigm that black schools have to be horrible if they are sending some of their best student’s miles away to be trained and indoctrinated by these other institutions. This has made it extremely hard over the last several decades for African-American institutions to retain and attract the best and brightest students. In a society where it is tough enough to get a decent job being African American, those who have the opportunity to attend white institutions do so with the thought being that their resume will be taken more seriously if that have the right or “white” credentials backing them up.7

When you take the best and brightest students and teachers from these struggling schools you are setting the schools up to fail because the pool you are left with can not make up for the talent you lost. When parents with children at struggling schools see other parents send their children to different schools, most are going to think seriously about sending their child to another school as well. This happens many times when parents of students at struggling schools are given vouchers or school choice. Many times the new school is chosen based on the perceived “white is right” mentality.

It seems that in predominately African-American schools, in both the North and the South more parents are going to have to make the education of their child a priority and take a more active role in the process. Parental involvement is an area of African-American education which has been somewhat taboo. The truth is that many parents are actively involved in their child’s education, but this however is not the case when it comes to the majority of African-American households. Setting high expectations, checking student work, and motivating are critical to student achievement. Regardless of the parent’s educational level or experience they can still have a huge impact on their child’s educational career.

If the situation is ever going to truly get better when it comes to African-American students their parents will need to become more involved in decision making around neighborhood schools. Too often African-American parents are not seen participating at the same levels as many other parents. This could be due to numerous reasons including lack of transportation, job responsibilities, mistrust of the teachers and administration, or lack of interest. This minimal parental involvement has had a detrimental effect on neighborhood schools. Even if parents cannot be involved in
decision making they still can become a valuable asset in school in other ways such as remodeling, hall monitoring, teacher assistant, or just being involved in their child's education. Increased parental involvement would be highly beneficial to the success of neighborhood schools.

It would seem that even though in the initial decades of integration the North had a tremendous advantage in the education and nurturing of African Americans, however in the last several decades Southern school districts have come up with innovative educational policies which have been more beneficial. DeKalb County in almost all categories has provided a better educational program than the Philadelphia School District since integration. Court orders and County demographics has forced DeKalb to come up with ground breaking techniques to combat racial segregation and lack of black student achievement. However, in recent years DeKalb has begun to re-segregate in a large number of its schools, but it still remains more integrated than the Philadelphia Public School District. Both districts have a long way to go as standardized test scores for African Americans remain lower than the national average. Over all the success of African-American students will depend on many of the crucial strategies put in place by both districts, teacher cooperation, as well as parental and community support.

In hindsight it would seem that the true failure of the civil rights policy makers was their one sided approach in handling the inequality of opportunity minority students faced. It seems as if these experts felt that black institutions were inferior to white institutions of learning, so they shifted their goals from equaling the resources of institutions to making sure that minorities had access to white institutions. Over time black institutions in urban and rural communities would face neglect and dilapidation.
This would inevitably lead to the dogma of black institutions being flawed and inferior. The educational policies of the civil rights era must be review and new strategies to deal with the plight of these schools need to be implemented. These policies have benefited many students both black and white alike, however if you look at the number of black students in special education, high school drop out rates, standardized test scores, discipline problems in the classroom, and the rate of blacks going to prison instead of college its not hard to tell that African-American students are in a crisis.
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