School Desegregation 50 Years After *Brown*: Misconceptions, Lessons Learned, and Hopes for the Future

[The following is a speech given by Gary Orfield on …….. at the ……., Western Michigan University. Professor Orfield is director and co-founder of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University where he is Professor of Education and Social Policy.]

Today, I want to talk to you about what most people believe has been the experience of school desegregation in the United States and what I think it actually was. Where are we today? And what might we do to take advantage of the lessons of a half a century of attempting to realize the goal of *Brown vs. Board of Education*? I hope to suggest some ways to think about our future, as the last generations of the White majority give way to a society diverse in ways that are hard to imagine.

I'm going to start with what I consider to be misconceptions about *Brown* and the lessons of the last half-century: what we learned, what we gained during the period, why we are losing desegregation in the country, and why it never took place in some places like most of Michigan. Then I'll talk about the logic of the integrationist argument as we think about our future and what we can do about it--what our choices are as we go forward.

Did *Brown* End Segregation?

Brown vs. Board of Education, a decision 50 years ago on May 17th, declared unconstitutional schools segregated by law, as were all of the schools in 17 of our states where a large majority of African-Americans always lived, live today, and are increasingly concentrated.[1] These 17 states included all the states of the old Confederacy from Virginia through Texas and six Border States that were part of the Union but maintained legal segregation (states from Okla-

Border States that were part of the Union but maintained legal segregation (states from Oklahoma to Delaware). Those states all had absolute apartheid at the time of the *Brown* decision. There really had been no popular movement in any of those states to end segregation. What the court said on May 17th was that their entire system—really, their entire history--was illegitimate, that it was inconsistent with the basic norms of the American Constitution. That is why most people say that it was the Court's most important decision. This stunning decision was also disconcerting, in that it didn't say what was supposed to replace the segregated system, or when, or how.

The *Brown* decision was a sweeping finding for civil rights, but it was a very unusual kind of court declaration because it didn't say that Black students had the right as of that moment. If, for example, the Supreme Court says the press has a right to print something, they don't say that it has the right someday and in some way. They say that you can go print it now. Rights are usually immediate and available when they are recognized. But school desegregation was a completely different sort of thing. The high court delayed for a year, and when they came around to *Brown II* in 1955, they provided no definition for 'desegregation'. There was no deadline; they said it should happen "with all deliberate speed," and it was turned over to all of the southern federal judges to decide what to do. Since all those judges had been appointed on the recommendation of reactionary segregationist senators, they basically did as little as possible. All the politicians of the South went into total defiance. There was almost no desegregation in the decade after Brown.

Table 1
Percent of Black Students in
Majority White Schools in the South, 1954-2001

[1] Orfield, G. and Lee, C. (2004). *Brown at 50: King's dream or Plessy's nightmare?* Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

Year	Percent Black in Majority White Schools
1954	0
1960	.1
1964	2.3
1967	13.9
1968	23.4
1970	33.1
1972	36.4
1976	37.6
1980	37.1
1986	42.9
1988	43.5
1991	39.2
1994	36.6
1996	34.7
1998	32.7
2000	31.0
2001	30.2

Source: Southern Education Reporting Service in Reed Sarratt, The Ordeal of Desegregation (New York: Harper & Row, 1966): 362; HEW Press Release, May 27, 1968; OCR data tapes; 1992-93, 1994-95, 1996-97, 1998-99, 2000-01, 2001-02 NCES Common Core of Data.

Table 1 shows the percentage of Black students who were in majority White schools from 1954 until 2001. You can see that in 1954, it was 100%. In 1960, it was still virtually 100%. In 1964, when Congress eventually acted on this, it was 98%. So, 10 years after *Brown*, almost all students were still segregated. The right was not recognized.

One of the unusual things about *Brown* and school desegregation was that almost nobody obeyed the law without being directly and immediately sued. It was as if the income tax system said you must pay X% of your taxes, and the government had to sue every person to get the money. That's the kind of resistance that *Brown* created. That's the kind of resistance that we also saw in a number of places when the issue eventually came north.

Another common misconception is that *Brown* applied nationwide. There was nothing in *Brown* about the North. It was 19 years after *Brown* before the Supreme Court said anything about the North, and during that time period people in the northern states sat up on their high horses and looked down on the South.

What happened after 1964? We see all of a sudden that we go from 98% of Black students in segregated schools to many more Black students in integrated schools. Within five years, the South went from absolute apartheid to becoming the most integrated part of the United States. That happened because Congress passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and Lyndon Johnson sacrificed a lot of his political power to enforce it in the South. The South has remained more integrated than any other region since that time, although it is going backwards pretty fast right now.

Public Policy Matters

Change came through public policy when we decided to do something, which was to make desegregation a condition for education officials receiving federal grants, and to give the Justice Department the authority to sue school districts that defied the Supreme Court's order. All of a sudden, people decided that it was better to comply with the law, and they did.

Now, what happened in 1972 when progress stalled? That's President Nixon. He stopped the enforcement process. But he didn't change the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court didn't change until the early 1990s when they got the 5th vote against civil rights, Clarence Thomas. Since then, in every year since 1991, the South has become more segregated. There were three Supreme Court decisions in the 1990s that said districts could return to neighborhood schools, even if they were segregated and unequal. In fact, many of the lower courts in the South ordered people to return to neighborhood schools even if they wanted to maintain desegregation plans. In some cases, the courts even outlawed voluntary desegregation plans.

So, the lesson of Table 1 is that just announcing a principle doesn't do it if you're dealing with something that is deeply rooted in society, like race relations. The second lesson is that, if you decide to do it seriously, and put serious political leadership behind it, you can make a re-

markable transition. The third lesson is that it lasts for quite a long time; desegregation actually increased during the Reagan administration, for example. The last lesson is that, if you decide to stop doing it, it stops; it comes apart.

Many people said that *Brown* didn't make any difference, but look at where we were in 1954. There was an absolute apartheid. Even with all of the backsliding we've had, we're still about at the place where we began urban desegregation and bussing in the early 1970s. We're not anything like we were before 1954. In 1954, all of the Black students were in 98-100% Black schools. Now, only 1/8th of the students in the South are in schools like that. But, in the Northeast and the Midwest, which are the centers of segregation now, twice as high a percentage of Black students are in what we call 'apartheid schools'.

Huge Population Changes

We're going through not only changes in law, but changes in our population. Table 2 shows you school enrollment changes from 1968 to 2001.

Table 2
Public School Enrollment Changes, 1968-2001
(In Millions)

	1968	1991	2001	Change from 1968-2001 (% Change)	Change in Past Decade (% Change)
Whites	34.7	25.4	28.6	-6.1 (-18%)	+3.2 (13%)
Blacks	6.3	6.0	8.1	1.8 (29%)	+2.1 (35%)
Latinos	2.0	4.7	8.1	6.1 (305%)	+3.4 (72%)
Asians	----	1.3	2.0	----	+0.7 (54%)
Native American	----	0.4	0.6	----	+0.2 (50%)

Source: DBS Corp., 1982, 1987; Gary Orfield, Rosemary George, and Amy Orfield, "Racial change in U.S. school enrollments, 1968-84," paper presented at National Conference on School Desegregation, University of Chicago, 1968. 1991-92, 2000-01, and 2001-02 NCES Common Core of Data.

I can't show you data by race before 1968 because we didn't collect that data in most of the country. Most northern states didn't collect any data about the race of enrollments in their schools because they said that they didn't have any racial problems, and no one could prove otherwise since they refused to collect any data. One thing we did discover when we collected the data is that we are going through a big change. You can see that there are now 6 million fewer Whites than there were in 1968 in public schools, and they're not in private school, either; they just weren't born. Private schools, at the time of *Brown*, had 16% of the kids in the United States. Now they have about 11%. You can see here that Blacks increased by 1.8 million during that period, and that Latinos increased by about 6 million. In other words, we are in a huge, huge change in population.

Asians went from being basically an asterisk (a very small number) to 2 million students. Native Americans total about half a million students in the country. If you look ahead to what kind of school population we are going to have, if the Census projections are approximately right, in 2050 there will be about 40% White students, about a third Latinos, a sixth Blacks, and a tenth Asians

This is what many students are going to be seeing in their careers, and it's going to be quite stunning. What is a society like where 60% of its students are non-White? How do we make that fair? How do all of these groups get along with each other? How do they learn together? How do they work together? How do they become a single society? Or do we fall apart like so many other multi-racial societies have done? What role do our schools play in that? These are big questions.

Segregation in the Non-South

We saw a dramatic change in the South. By the 1960s, the executive branch and the Supreme Court had said that in the South, all you had to do was submit the state's constitution to win a court school desegregation order, because all those state constitutions were invalid because they all required segregation. The Supreme Court had said that by the end of the 1960s desegregation must be immediate, it must be comprehensive, it must include students, faculty, curriculum and everything, and we must, to the maximum extent possible, where there had been a history of discrimination, eliminate the racial identifiability of schools and create schools that were non-racial or multiracial. It was a radical policy, and they said in 1971 that, where there was residential segregation, the courts could bus. There were hundreds of bussing orders issued in the South in the early 1970's. We had a policy that was comprehensive, was fast, had a deadline, and had sanctions behind it. It really produced huge changes.

In the rest of the country, the changes weren't so dramatic. The reason why they weren't so dramatic is that we didn't get good policies in the non-South. In the North, the Supreme Court never said anything about desegregation at all until 1973, and when it finally decided that minority children in the North also had a right to desegregation, it said so only if you prove a substantial violation. So, there was a much bigger burden to getting a court order at all, although every single major district that was examined by the court was found to have major violations. Those violations included 'discriminatory districting,' 'discriminatory siting,' 'unequal facilities,' 'segregation of faculty,' 'transfer policies that allowed Whites to leave minority schools,' and 'in-school segregation of minority students.' Many, many violations were present in almost every northern city.

Segregation Today

If you look at the places in 2000 where White students actually went to school with minority students, what do you notice about these places? You can see they're all southern or southwestern. There's no place else where Whites have substantial contact with minority students, even though the percentage of minorities is by far the lowest in the Northeast and in the Midwest, for example. There is much less exposure of White students to minority students, and there are much higher levels of segregation. If you compare by regions, you can see that, in the South, there was a much more dramatic decline in segregation than there was in any other region. You can also see that the Northeast (where I live) is consistently, since 1970, the most segregated part of the country. The Midwest (where I grew up) is the second, even though the Midwest is the Whitest region.

Table 3
Percentage of Black Students in 50-100% and 90-100% Minority Schools, 1968, 1988, 1991, and 2001

Percentage of Black Students in 50-100% Schools				
	1968	**1988**	**1991**	**2001**
South	80.9	56.5	60.1	69.8
Border	71.6	59.6	59.3	67.9
Northeast	66.8	77.3	75.2	78.4
Midwest	77.3	70.1	69.7	72.9
West	72.2	67.1	69.2	75.8

Percentage of Black Students in 90-100% Minority Schools				
	1968	**1988**	**1991**	**2001**
South	77.8	24.0	26.1	31.0
Border	60.2	34.5	34.5	41.6
Northeast	42.7	48.0	49.8	51.2
Midwest	58.0	41.8	39.9	46.8
West	50.8	28.6	26.6	30.0

Source: 1991-02 and 2001-02 NCES Common Core of Data

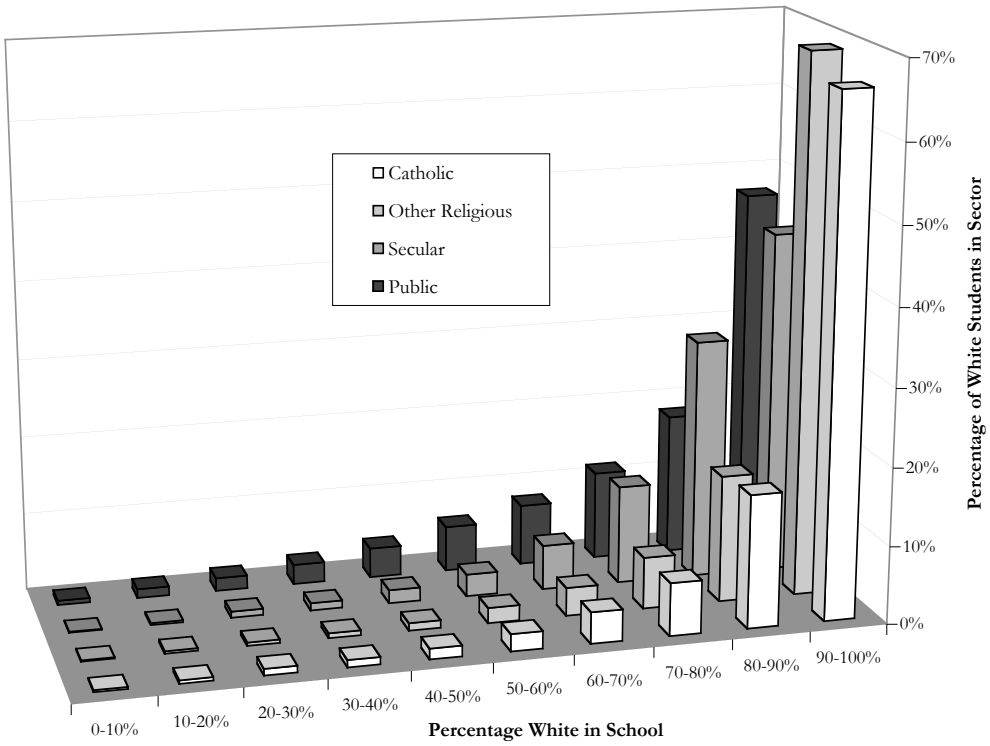
In Table 3, you can see that school desegregation reached its peak level in 1988. Then we started to turn towards increased segregation in the 1990s.

One thing that I'm not going to dwell on, but it's an interesting correspondence: the achievement gaps between Blacks and Whites at ages 9, 13, and 17 on the National Assessment of Educational Progress shrank to their narrowest points in 1988. That's not all due to desegregation, but it's not unrelated to it, and to other progressive reform policies.

Whites are highly segregated in all sectors of education. The private schools are more segregated than the public schools, and the charter schools are more segregated than the public schools, in our studies.

Figure 1: Distribution of White Students by Percentage White in School, by Sector[2]
(Source: Common Core of Data, 1997-98 and Private School Survey, 1997-98)

[2] This table can be found in Reardon, S. and Yun, J. (2002). *Private school racial enrollments and segregation*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.



You can see that Whites are concentrated in 90-100% White schools in all the major educational sectors-- in Catholic and other religious, secular, and public schools. One of the things that we found out is that the Catholic school system is the most segregated among the private schools, primarily because it is geographically based. It's built around housing segregation.

Was Desegregation a Failure?

Did we turn away from desegregation because people decided that it's not worthwhile? This is an interesting question. There's a lot of data on it, and I'm going to discuss a survey of 1,000 people around the country that was conducted in February of 2004 by a research center in Ohio. They asked: "Do you think that the *Brown* Decision was correct?" 90% of Americans say yes; 6% say no. In other words, people think that it was right to end segregation. "Do you think that the *Brown* decision made the quality of public education in this country better, worse or didn't effect it?" Of the people who thought it made a difference, four to one thought it made it better. "Generally speaking, how important is it for students of different races to attend classes

together?" Very important, 60%; somewhat important, 28%. That adds up to 88% of people saying that it's important.

The last Gallup poll on the subject that was taken shows that almost 60% of Americans feel that more should be done about desegregation.[3] But, here's the kicker. When asked, "What do you think about the amount of racial diversity in public schools in your community? Should school officials try to increase it, decrease it or leave it as it is?" the responses were: Increase it, 23%; Leave it as it is, 66%.[4] So, people would really like to have desegregation if they don't have to do anything to get it, and they kind of believe that's possible. It's like believing that we can have good services without taxes. These are things that you can't have at the same time. You can't do nothing and get desegregation. In fact, when you do nothing, you almost always feed segregation.

Why Race Matters in Schools

Why does desegregation make a difference? It makes a difference basically, not because of the color of people's skin (a lot of minority critics of desegregation say that "It doesn't help me to sit next to a White person," and that's absolutely true; there's nothing magical about skin color). So if desegregation were just that, would it make any sense? It would make some sense because of the history of race in our society, but it makes more sense because of a relationship that's profound between race and poverty in our schools.

Table 4: Distribution of Public School Students Across the Boston Metropolitan Area, by Race 2001-02 (in Percent)

	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Boston	2	44	23	14

[3] "Gallup Poll Topics: Education," poll conducted August 1999. (Gallup.com website).

[4] *Ibid.*

Satellite Cities				
Attleboro	1	0	0	1
Brockton	1	11	2	1
Cambridge	0	4	1	2
Chelsea	0	1	5	1
Everett	1	1	1	1
Fall River	2	1	1	1
Fitchburg	1	1	2	2
Gloucester	1	0	0	0
Lawrence	0	1	13	1
Leominster	1	0	2	1
Lowell	1	1	4	11
Lynn	1	3	6	5
Malden	1	1	1	3
New Bedford	2	3	3	0
Somerville	0	1	2	1
Worcester	2	4	9	5
Waltham	1	1	1	1
Inner Suburbs	12	6	4	19
Outer Suburbs	71	16	19	30
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 4 shows where Black and Latino students are concentrated in metropolitan Boston. You can see that they are very heavily concentrated in Cambridge, Boston, and a few satellite cities, basically old industrial areas that are going through social and economic decline.

Table 5: Relationship Between Segregation by Race and by Poverty, 2001-02

	Percent Black and Latino Students in Boston Schools									
% Poor in Schools	**0-10%**	**10-20%**	**20-30%**	**30-40%**	**40-50%**	**50-60%**	**60-70%**	**70-80%**	**80-90%**	**90-100%**
0-10%	74	16	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10-25%	20	27	19	6	2	4	0	0	0	0
25-50%	5	36	43	42	22	2	0	3	4	4
50-100%	1	20	34	53	77	94	100	97	96	96
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
% of Schools	**60**	**10**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**4**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**4**

Table 5 shows the relationship between racial segregation and poverty in Boston schools. Here is where the students eligible for free lunch are concentrated in metropolitan Boston. Notice any relationship there? They are the same places. In the schools that are 90-100% African-American and/or Latino, 96% of them have concentrated poverty. If you take schools that are 90-100% White, and that's most of the schools in metropolitan Boston, 1% of them have concentrated poverty. So, there's 96 times more likelihood of exposure to conditions of concentrated poverty in minority schools. That's really one of the keys of educational inequality that desegregation is about, and we need to understand the fact that race is not just skin color, it's related to tremendous inequalities in almost every dimension of life. That's why the question of 'whose schools to go to?' matters in so many ways.

The facts are apparent in Hartford, Connecticut, where plaintiffs representing African-Americans, Puerto-Ricans and others challenged the segregation in metropolitan Hartford. This is a relatively small metropolitan area that is very rich--yet has the fifth poorest central city in the United States. A study by a researcher at the Teacher's College at Columbia University, Gary Natriello, who was a witness in this case, found that a typical class in Hartford wasn't very large (23 students, that's all). They had lots of money. They had 200 reform programs going on in the city at the time that the case was litigated. Nevertheless, Hartford students were dead last in almost every test in the state of Connecticut. Why? This is the average profile of the 23 students each teacher would face in the classroom: 3 were developmentally disabled before birth by low birth weight; 3 were born with drugs in their system; 15 lived with only one parent; 10 had parents who were high school dropouts (that's a leading predictor of a child being a high school dropout); 6 of those children's parents were teenagers; 9 of them were living below the official

poverty line--15 below the free lunch line (which is a more reasonable poverty line); 8 of them didn't have affordable housing, so they couldn't stay in any place for very long (One of the delusions about school reform is that people are living in neighborhoods consistently, but poor people move all the time because they have to.); 7 of them were in a different school last year (so that no matter what the school did, the kid couldn't have benefited from it for very long because she wasn't there for very long); 9 of them had no employed parent; and 22 out of 23 of them were non-White. This relationship between poverty and race is classic in our metropolitan areas.

Another look at race and class in Hartford compares the city with three suburbs. The class size is very similar. The amount of money that they spent wasn't that different. But look at the differences in family income: there's 36% in poverty versus 1.6%, and so forth. In Hartford, 63% on free lunch, 65% single parent, 41% dropout parents; 51% of these kids did not speak English as their native language. That matters a lot when you're testing kids in English. Look at the jobless rate: 40% in Hartford, versus 8.8% in Farmington, 2% in Glastonbury, and so forth. These are different universes. They have huge effects on student achievement.

There is a striking link between academic achievement and family income for students in the schools in New York City. Of more than1000 schools, there are only a few that don't stay close to that correlation. These are the schools that everybody looks at and says, "There are some schools that can do it, why can't they all do it?" The fact that there are 5 or 6 out of 1000 that are really quite different does not say that there is some magic formula; it just says that there are some geniuses in some schools who manage to hold together a staff and do quite amazing things in spite of the odds. The basic reality is that segregation by race and poverty are very strongly linked to average test scores.

The first year that the high stakes tests were given in New York City, 15% of the kids passed all three of the tests. In other large cities in New York State, it was 8%. But in the suburban ar-

eas, you have places where 85% or 90% passed those tests. In other words, the same standards were being applied to totally different situations, and there was what would have been reported as massive failure in those highly segregated, deeply impoverished schools that had the kind of conditions that we were talking about in Hartford.

Our research shows striking relationships between segregation of schools, test scores, graduation rates, college-going rates, and the placement of highly qualified and experienced teachers. All of those things are related to the poverty of the school, and the poverty of the school is strikingly related to racial segregation.

At the Civil Rights Project we've been studying the resegregation of schools in the country, and we've commissioned a study of Georgia to look at what is happening to teachers as schools resegregate. We found that qualified teachers with experience were systematically leaving the resegregated schools.[5] A similar study in Texas showed the same pattern. Basically in both teaching forces, still overwhelmingly White, very few White teachers locate and stay to have a career in areas of high poverty, virtually all-minority schools. Minority teachers leave those schools about twice as fast as from less impoverished schools as well. So we have a situation where the most important thing that we can bring into a school to equalize it--a highly qualified teacher with experience—rarely or never happens, which systematically reinforces this inequality in most of our school districts.

No Child Left Behind

I want to relate this discussion to two more things. One is the 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) legislation that we're living with now. NCLB and all the other major standards-based reforms that started with the Reagan 'Nation at Risk' report basically ignore the segregation by

race and poverty issues. They don't say anything about it; they just say that "everyone can learn at an equal and proficient level within the same length of time and, if they don't, we're going to kick them in the rear." Basically, that's the diagnosis. It also says that every school should have highly qualified teachers in every room, but there is no mechanism to do so. There is just a requirement. The idea is that requirements and sanctions will change these things.

At the Civil Rights project we've been studying the 'No Child Left Behind' Act in six very different states (Illinois, New York, Virginia, Georgia, Arizona and California), and we're finding that the requirements for adequate yearly progress have had very disproportionate effects on minority and low income schools[6]. The higher the poverty level is, the higher the minority level is, the more likely you are to need improvement and to be subject to the sanctions. We find that the remedies that are being ordered, which also ignore the segregation realities, are often illusory or fraudulent. Under NCLB, if a school is not making adequate yearly progress for two years and it needs improvement, the children have a right to transfer somewhere else. So, we looked to see where they were actually transferring to, and we found that almost none of them transferred. Many asked for transfers and many of those were denied transfers. We found that one of the reasons was that the places that the school districts had available for transfer were almost as impoverished as the places that they were transferring from, and some of them had even lower achievement levels than the sending schools. NCLB did not address the issue of segregation at all, and they did not address the need to cross boundary lines to find some schools that were worth transferring to. The federal government is withholding 20% of Title I money in cities where transfers are within the rights of the students, but they're not providing good transfer

[5] See Freeman, C., Scafidi, B., and Sjoquist, D.L. (2002). *Racial segregation in Georgia public schools, 1994-2001: Trends, causes, and impacts on teacher quality*. Paper presented at Resegregation of Southern Schools Conference, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[6] See Sunderman, G. L., Kim, J., and Orfield, G. (2005). NCLB meets school realities: Lessons from the field. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

opportunities. They simply aren't available in most places. Students have the right to transfer, but they don't have any place worth transferring to.

We also found that the sub-group rules created all kinds of problems for minority and integrated schools. For example, they require that English language learners, as a category, make large adequate yearly progress towards 100% proficiency. But the category itself is defined in most states at a low level of proficiency. In other words, if you get anywhere close to what 'No Child Left Behind' requires, you are supposed to be exited from the bilingual programs and from that category. It's a recipe for failure. Some of these things are simply senseless, but the basic reality (and it's not just in 'No Child Left Behind,' it's in many kinds of reform) is that, if you think about reform without thinking about the inequalities that we're talking about, you often compound the effects. You take schools that are being resegregated by conservative judicial policy, and then you punish them as failing schools by conservative accountability policy, and then you give their families false choices--to transfer, for example, when there's nowhere to transfer to. It becomes a vicious cycle of the worst sort. That's just one reason why there's so much intense opposition to NCLB among educators in this country.

Some Good News

Before I get into policy options and what I think the basic argument for integration is, let me just show you a couple of good things. We have been studying children around the country who are in integrated schools in seven big school districts, and we've seen a striking pattern of positive results on many dimensions. This comes from a book we did called *Diversity Challenged*[7], which was cited by the Supreme Court in the University of Michigan case.[8] These are

[7] Orfield, G. and Kurlaender, M. (2001). Diversity challenged: Evidence on the impact of affirmative action. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

not math and reading achievements, but they are important achievements for living and succeeding in our multiracial society. We surveyed high school students in desegregated settings. One was metropolitan Louisville in Jefferson County, which has had city and suburban desegregation now for 30 years and is continuing to do so based on a court order. We asked students, "Can you discuss controversial issues related to race?" Almost 90% of Blacks and Latinos are comfortable talking about difficult issues across racial and ethnic lines, and the views of White and African-American high school juniors are virtually identical. We asked, "Are you comfortable working with students from other racial and ethnic backgrounds on group projects?" This is one of the best kinds of interracial experience, working collaboratively across racial lines on academic projects. 90% believed that they are.

We asked students how they feel about living and working in multiracial settings (whether they are comfortable working under a supervisor of a different racial and ethnic group)--all kinds of questions. We got positive results in city after city, from Blacks, Whites, Latinos, and Asians. In other words, there is a secret out there that isn't in our policy debate, which is that students who experience integration like it and feel it to be an advantage, and that Whites feel virtually the same as minorities do.

We also found that many of the minority students at these schools were encouraged to go to college. If you look at really high poverty schools, many times college recruiters don't even come to them. In our study of 5000 students in Indiana called the Youth Opportunity study, we found that there was just strikingly different treatment of poverty level schools by college recruiters. In contrast, we found that both Whites and African-Americans in integrated Louisville schools were highly encouraged to go to college. When we asked, "Did you get information?" virtually identical levels of information were reported. We saw a lot of things in these surveys

[8] *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 123 S.Ct. 2325 (2003).

that were surprisingly positive. In other words, we already have a policy that, when done, and done reasonably well across the appropriate areas, gets strikingly positive results.

Our Choices Now

Segregation almost always fails as a broad policy, although there are always some segregated institutions and communities that produce some remarkable successes. There are always those outlying cases that overcome the odds. But, there are never very many of them. As far as I could find out, there's never been an entire school district that has been separate and equal.

We've never seriously tried to integrate all of our institutions and communities, with the exception of the public schools in the South, the military, and some of our colleges and businesses. Everything else, we haven't tried for much time or with much effort. I believe that, in 215 years of American government, there have only been about 5 years where we've tried to integrate seriously, and that was the second half of the 1960s, and almost all of that was about the South. The rest of the time we have said either do nothing or move backwards. We have not made a serious effort, and yet we had remarkable success with what slight attention we gave it. We've invested much more in trying to equalize segregated schools than we have in trying to integrate segregated schools—by orders of magnitude more. We have no policy for urban desegregation. There was never any kind of metropolitan policy that was workable, even though 80% of our people live in metropolitan areas.

Resegregation has been widespread for 15 years now and is related to profound deepening of inequalities in schools that are obvious in 'No Child Left Behind' data. We're facing some fateful choices in our country. One is whether the exploding Latino community is going to

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[11] Balfanz, R. and Legters, N. (2004). Locating the dropout crisis: Which high schools produce the nation's dropouts. In Gary Orfield, (Ed.), *Dropouts in America: Confronting the graduation rate crisis,*

be ghettoized or have access to mainstream American society. They're now more segregated by race and poverty in a number of our measures than Blacks are. They're being isolated in schools that are extremely impoverished, often, in schools with few native English speakers, and then prohibited bilingual education in a growing number of our states. This is a calamity for a community with stable families, which has basically come here to work and really buys into the American Dream, yet is going to be excluded from opportunity. They're concentrated in low achievement schools with high dropout rates, and only about half of them are finishing high school, according to our calculations.

Only about half of Blacks are finishing high school, too. The dropout crisis of the United States is almost all concentrated in big city, high poverty high schools. There are a few hundred schools that account for most of the dropouts in the country[11].

Well, what can we do? We think that these are important considerations. Is it too late? I think that we can do a lot of things.

One great challenge that is on the horizon now is what happens to our suburban rings. I imagine most of you are from a suburb somewhere since our society has basically become a suburban society. We have a country where almost all of our big city school systems are overwhelmingly minority. There are some things that we can do there in terms of creating integrated and multi-class operations, but in most of those cities, not only are most of the Whites gone, but the Black and Latino middle-class are gone or going fast, and they're going into suburban rings that are resegregating. Are we going to just passively allow this system to extend into more and more suburban communities that have no tools to deal with it, or are we going to help them to maintain more and more integration in our communities? Those are the choices, really, and we know the consequence of the first choice, because we see it in all of our central cities. It's there.

What happens in the process after resegregation takes place? Impoverishment, disinvestment, decay of real property, declining work

We need to help communities that are integrated now to remain integrated. We need voluntary plans for integration across school district lines. We have examples of them across the country; they produce much better opportunities for students. We need to think about whether the reforms that we are doing are very difficult efforts to replicate certain aspects of middle-class schools in high-poverty settings that are rarely sustainable. Why shouldn't we just transfer impoverished students to middle-class schools that are already functioning, some of which have space and would be enriched culturally by having some diversity?

We need to do housing differently. We need to enforce fair housing, seriously. The average American moves every 6 years. The average American in subsidized housing with young children moves every three years or so. If we began to have our housing markets working differently, we could have a lot of change in neighborhoods relatively soon. We really need to work seriously on that. There are only a few fair housing cases litigated in the United States in any given year, or prosecuted by the federal government. There are probably millions of fair housing violations. We need community groups testing and exposing real estate practices that are discriminatory, because they really eat at the soul of communities; they resegregate integrated communities when minority families are shown into those communities and White families are shown away from those communities.

Where we have choice systems in our schools, let's attach some civil rights policies to them. We have good civil rights policies in some of our magnet schools. We have none in our Charter schools or in the 'No Child Left Behind' transfer policies. If we're going to use transfer policies, let's use them to, among other things, give real educational choices and integrate our schools (at least start integrating them).

We need programs in our schools to help teachers and administrators learn how to deal with the diversity that they are going to be confronting. It's just urgently important, and most people aren't being trained in that very well today. There was a lot of that kind of training done in the 1960s and 1970s, but there's not much now. It's absolutely essential to schools being successful and communities having good relationships and being stable. Teachers need tools. They don't need to be given hand-holding exercises and talk about how racist they are. They need to know what to do that will make minority kids more successful, more incorporated, and help White students to learn from those students and help them to all depend on each other and see each other in a condition of equal status and mutual respect. These skills are absolutely critical to how race relations work in our schools.

These are the kinds of challenges that we face. I think they are huge challenges. They're interesting, and I think there are solutions. If we don't do anything about it, we'll be celebrating the 75th anniversary of *Brown*, and people will be saying as the White majority declines rapidly, "Why didn't they do anything?" The reason that I am traveling around the country so much during the 50th anniversary of *Brown* is because I think this is a precious opportunity for us to reflect on what we've learned and what our possibilities are.