Education Policies to Promote Diversity at School: The Experience of the United States

Richard D. Kahlenberg

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- History of Racial Segregation and Racial Desegregation through compulsory busing
- The New Integration by Socioeconomic Status and Public School Choice (Magnets/Charters)
  - Socioeconomic vs. Racial Integration
  - Choice vs. Compulsion
  - Examples of School Districts
  - Student Outcomes under Socioeconomic Integration
  - Politics of Socioeconomic Integration

1954 – Brown v. Board of Education – separate is inherently unequal

1954-1969 – Massive resistance

1969 – Compulsory busing to desegregate by race.
The Demise of Compulsory Racial Desegregation

  - White flight to suburbs possible.
  - Urban racial integration often involved low-income black and white students.
- 1990s – Supreme Court made it easier to end desegregation efforts and be declared “unitary.”
- 2007 - Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle – Supreme Court struck down voluntary efforts to integrate using race.
Emphasize socioeconomic status rather than race.

Emphasize public school choice (magnet schools, charter schools, etc.) to achieve integrated schooling.
Legal Concerns with Race do not apply to Socioeconomic Status.

Social science research suggests socioeconomic status of peers matters more than race in boosting academic achievement.

Racial diversity is important for promoting social cohesion, but socioeconomic integration will produce considerable racial integration.
Research: Academic benefits of integration not from proximity to whiteness but middle-class environment

- Racial Desegregation in Charlotte vs. Boston (1970s)
- Roosevelt Perry Elementary in Louisville.

Socioeconomic integration produces significant racial diversity in a manner that’s perfectly legal

- Among 4th graders nationally, 24% whites eligible free and reduced lunch; 70% African Americans; 73% Latinos
Integration through Choice

- Magnet Schools and Charter Schools
  - Poll parents now using private school and living in suburbs, as well as parents of city students to see what themes or pedagogical approaches are popular.
  - Build partnerships between particular magnet schools and well-regarded institutions (universities, museums, military facilities, sports teams, private sector institutions)

- Universal Choice with fairness guidelines to ensure economic integration
  - Franchise popular and over-chosen schools.

- Inter-District School Choice (suburbs and cities) in Boston, Hartford, Milwaukee, St. Louis etc.
Examples of Socioeconomic Integration

- 80 U.S. Districts, educating 4 million students, using socioeconomic status as a factor in student assignment. Examples:
  - Cambridge, MA. All schools should fall within + or − 10 percentage points of district average for free and reduced price lunch (40%).
  - Chicago, IL. 85% low-income so begin by integrating a subset of magnet and selective schools, with the goal of integrating more as middle-class return.
Examples (cont.)

- Montgomery County, MD “inclusionary zoning” housing policies.

- New York State – “turn around” failing schools by creating magnet themes that attract middle class students.
RAND researcher Heather Schwartz tests the effectiveness to two strategies: extra resources (class size reduction, professional development, extended learning time) in high poverty “red zone” schools ($2,000 more/pupil) vs. “inclusionary housing” policy that allows low-income students to attend low poverty “green zone” schools with fewer resources.

Examined 858 children randomly assigned to public housing units scattered throughout Montgomery County and enrolled in Montgomery County public elementary schools 2001-2007.
Public Housing Students in Green Zone Schools Outperformed Those in Red Zone Schools

• Low-income public housing students in low poverty schools performed at .4 of a standard deviation better in math than low-income public housing students in higher poverty schools with more resources

• Low-income students in green zone schools cut their large initial math gap with middle-class students in half. The reading gap was cut by one-third

• Most of the effect (2/3) was due to attending low-poverty schools, and some (1/3) due to living in low-poverty neighborhoods
Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Boston—Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2014

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Cohort 2014 Four-Year Graduation Rates—State Results.
Poverty Concentrations and Achievement

- National Assessment of Educational Progress 2011, Fourth Grade Math Results

![Graph showing the relationship between poverty concentration and average NAEP math score.](graph)

Classmate Characteristics, by School or Student SES

- **Teacher Disrespect**: 22.9% for high-poverty schools vs. 9.2% for low-poverty schools.
- **Mobility**: 60% for high-poverty schools vs. 30% for low-poverty schools.
- **Peer Vocabulary**: 1116 words for high-poverty schools vs. 525 words for low-poverty schools.

Parental Involvement, by Student SES

Teaching Quality, by School SES

Politics of Integration

- Stephen Colbert on Wake County School Integration

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/19/stephen-colbert-wake-county-schools_n_811048.html
Building Political Support with Key Constituencies

- Teachers Unions (La Crosse, Louisville)
- Civil Rights Groups
- Faith Groups
- Business Groups (St. Louis, Wake County)


Contact Information

- Richard D. Kahlenberg
- Senior Fellow
- The Century Foundation
- 1333 H Street, N.W. 10th Floor
- Washington, D.C. 20005
- kahlenberg@tcf.org
- www.tcf.org