Annenberg Institute for School Reform | *Voices in Urban Education*

VUE

Winter 2006

Equity after Katrina

Now They're Wet: Hurricane Katrina as Metaphor for Social and Educational Neglect
Gloria Ladson-Billings

The Real Crisis in Education: Failing to Link Excellence and Equity
Charles V. Willie

Segregation and Its Calamitous Effects: America's "Apartheid" Schools
Jonathan Kozol

Transformation, Not Tinkering: School Reform after Hurricane Katrina
Dennie Palmer Wolf and Hal Smith

Voices in Urban Education
Number 10, Winter 2006

Publisher
Annenberg Institute for School Reform
at Brown University
Warren Simmons, Executive Director

Editor
Robert Rothman

Managing Editor
Susan Fisher

Copy Editor
Margaret Balch-Gonzalez

Production & Distribution
Mary Arkins

Design
Gilbert Design Associates, Inc.

Illustration
Carolina Arentsen

Voices in Urban Education (ISSN 1553-541X) is published quarterly at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. Articles may be reproduced with appropriate credit to the Annenberg Institute. Single copies are $10 each, including postage and handling. A discount is available on bulk orders. Call 401 863-2018 for further information.

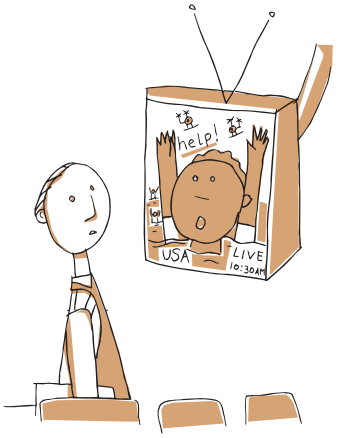
The Annenberg Institute for School Reform was established in 1993 at Brown University. Its mission is to develop, share, and act on knowledge that improves the conditions and outcomes of schooling in America, especially in urban communities and in schools serving disadvantaged children. For program information, contact:

Annenberg Institute for School Reform
Brown University, Box 1985
Providence, Rhode Island 02912
Tel: 401 863-7990
Fax: 401 863-1290
Web: *www.annenberginstitute.org*

©2006 Annenberg Institute for School Reform

Annenberg Institute for School Reform | *Voices in Urban Education*

Equity after Katrina



2 **Educational Equity, after Katrina**
Robert Rothman

5 **Now They're Wet: Hurricane Katrina as Metaphor for Social and Educational Neglect**
Gloria Ladson-Billings

The "aggressive neglect" that has existed since long before Katrina in New Orleans and other cities has denied educational opportunities – and, indeed, citizenship – to poor children and children of color.

11 **The Real Crisis in Education: Failing to Link Excellence and Equity**
Charles V. Willie

Excellence and equity cannot exist without one another, but the nation has pursued excellence alone because it lacks the will to strive for equity.

20 **Segregation and Its Calamitous Effects: America's "Apartheid" Schools**
Jonathan Kozol

Schools are now as segregated as they were when Martin Luther King Jr. died, with corrosive effects for children in racially isolated schools. And school reformers have played a role in resegregating schools.

29 **Transformation, Not Tinkering: School Reform after Hurricane Katrina**
Dennie Palmer Wolf and Hal Smith

Reformers have proposed individual strategies for achieving educational equity and excellence at scale that, by themselves, are inadequate. Residents of New Orleans and other cities afflicted by "stressed levees" deserve a transformation of their educational systems, not mere tinkering around the edges.

VUE's Web site at <*www.annenberginstitute.org/VUE*> offers more information about *VUE*, including excerpts from previous issues, audio and video clips, ordering information, and an online message board.

Educational Equity, after Katrina

Robert Rothman

The terrible destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina exposed for all the world what educators have long known: America remains deeply divided by race and class, and the lack of opportunities for poor people and people of color have devastating consequences. As Americans watched in horror, poor children and children of color were, quite literally, left behind by the storm and subsequent flooding.

The implications for education are obvious and profound. Although leaving no child behind is national policy, Katrina demonstrated that poor children and children of color lack the resources and support they need. Given those stark realities, the old solutions will not work. To live up to the promise of the idea of leaving no child left behind, America needs to address seriously the question of equity.

What would it take to achieve true equity? First, it requires a recognition that equity involves much more than financial resources. It also involves changes in power relationships so that all individuals have a say in decisions that affect them. It involves curricular and instructional changes that enable teachers to take students' cultural backgrounds into account. And it involves ensuring opportunities to learn – in and out of school – that many children are now denied.

Yet, by itself, equity is an insufficient goal. To ensure a bright future for all children, equity must be matched with excellence, and both must be achieved at a large enough scale so that all children in fact learn what they need to know to succeed as adults. Clearly,

Robert Rothman is a principal associate at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and editor of Voices in Urban Education.

though, schools in large cities are falling short of these ideals, and they have for years. Katrina merely tore the mask off this reality.

This issue of *Voices in Urban Education* examines educational equity and excellence in the post-Katrina era. The authors speak in impassioned tones about the pervasive inequities that continue to divide Americans and suggest new possibilities for addressing these inequities and for producing equity and excellence at scale.

Gloria Ladson-Billings speaks with anger and sadness about the "aggressive neglect" in New Orleans and other cities that existed long before Katrina and that has denied educational opportunities – and, indeed, citizenship – to poor children and children of color.

Charles V. Willie argues that excellence and equity cannot exist without one another, but that the nation has pursued excellence because it lacks the will to strive for equity.

Jonathan Kozol vividly details the corrosive effects of the "apartheid" in American schools and the role of school reformers in perpetuating the separation of White and Black students.

Dennie Palmer Wolf and Hal Smith describe five key strategies for achieving equity and excellence at

scale and state that residents of New Orleans and other cities afflicted by "stressed levees" deserve a transformation of their educational systems, not mere tinkering around the edges.

The solutions recommended by these authors may seem ambitious. But as they all point out, the moral imperative for ambitious changes is strong. In the days after Katrina hit, many Americans appeared willing to accept that moral imperative – and act to improve the conditions they had seen. Political leaders and commentators were talking about equity and excellence in terms that are rare in public discourse.

Six months later, however, the initial enthusiasm seems to have faded. But the need has not faded. The need in most cities is as powerful as it was on August 29, 2005, and as strong as it was two weeks before that. The test for our society is whether we are willing to address it or choose to move on. But we do not need another hurricane to act. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "The time is always right to do what is right."

Now They're Wet: Hurricane Katrina as Metaphor for Social and Educational Neglect

Gloria Ladson-Billings

The "aggressive neglect" that has existed since long before Katrina in New Orleans and other cities has denied educational opportunities – and, indeed, citizenship – to poor children and children of color.

My first glimpse of Hurricane Katrina came from almost 4,000 miles away as I attended a conference in London, England. I was even more of a news junkie than usual during this trip because London had recently experienced a terrorist attack on its transit system, and the university where my meetings were being held was located near the spot where one of the busses was bombed. However, little of what I saw on the BBC and CNN World News focused on terrorists or bombings. Instead, I saw the horror that was the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and those images left me sad, depressed, and angry. The more I watched, the more agitated I became. The e-mails I received from friends, family, and colleagues back in the States did little to alleviate my concerns. Things were not only as bad as they seemed on the news; they were worse.

By about the third day of the catastrophe, a Londoner at my hotel asked, "What in the world is happening in your country?" It was then that I had a painful insight and remarked to the questioner, "Actually, the only difference between the people you are seeing on television today and their status two weeks ago is now they're wet!" My cynical comment addressed the just-below-the-surface frustration I have been living with for many years. The hurricane was not just about government breakdowns in the face of a natural disaster. It was about the failure of government (and, by default, much of the nation) to take seriously the plight of the poor and disenfranchised. It was about the kind of nation we have created and how we can continue to live as we have for so many years.

Gloria Ladson-Billings is the Kellner Family Professor of Urban Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and is president of the American Educational Research Association.

Glaring Inequities, Long before Katrina

My first visit to New Orleans was in the mid-1980s. I went with a dear friend and colleague to give a paper at a conference. We arrived in the city late on the night of Mardi Gras. By the time we arrived at our hotel, the New Orleans police had done their final sweep of the French Quarter, all the revelers were off the street, and the city coffers were filled with the profits from another Fat Tuesday. However, in the light of Wednesday morning, the Big Easy did not look so festive or so easy.

Education clearly was not working for those in New Orleans who depended on public schools. It was not working long before the streets were flooded and the roofs were blown away.

After giving our paper, my colleague and I decided to explore the city. We traveled through the city's Garden District with its beautiful Victorian mansions and the lovely campuses of Tulane University and Loyola University. We wanted to visit Xavier University. We had read about a wonderful program in mathematics education that the university had pioneered. We also knew that Xavier was one of the more successful historically Black universities – known for its high rate of sending African American students to medical, pharmaceutical, and veterinary programs.

When we arrived at Xavier, though, we were unprepared for what we saw. We were surprised by how much deferred maintenance there was.[1] The landscape was shabby, and nothing of its environs suggested the beautiful grassy knolls and stately quads of the Tulane and Loyola campuses. Even more disappointing was the "cutting-edge" mathematics education program we came to see. Tucked away in a small building, we found an elderly nun who took us through boxes and boxes of old materials that represented the mathematics program. Both my colleague and I were working in a Catholic university in California at that time, and we knew that the church prided itself on its support of education. But how could it justify the clearly differential treatment of Xavier – the only Black university among the 253 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States – compared to Loyola?

Xavier was not the only example of inequity we witnessed in New Orleans some twenty years ago. Although we ate many meals in the French Quarter and downtown areas, we ventured into more traditionally African American communities for some outstanding meals. Unfortunately, going into those areas reminded us of the stark contrasts between the good-time, party city of tourism and debauchery and the extremely poor, hard lives of much of the city's African American residents – the people who live in what the rest of the world learned was the Ninth Ward.

Citizenship Denied

Well before the devastation of the hurricane, New Orleans was suffering from neglect. Chief among the neglected aspects of the city were its schools. Before Katrina, the statistics on Orleans Parish painted a grim picture of life for many of its citizens.[2] According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), New Orleans had a population of 484,674

1 It is important to note that in the 1990s, Xavier, like a number of historically Black colleges and universities, embarked on some much-needed capital improvements.

2 Portions of this section are adapted from Ladson-Billings, G., forthcoming.

before the hurricane, and 67 percent of that population was African American. Almost a fourth – 23.7 percent – of the total population and 35 percent of the African American population lived below the poverty line. Over 40,000 New Orleans residents had less than a ninth-grade education and 56,804 residents had between ninth- and twelfth-grade educations without diplomas. A telling statistic is that 96.1 percent of the public school population was African American, which means that most of the White families with school-aged children send their children to private schools.

Education clearly was not working for those in New Orleans who depended on public schools. It was not working long before the streets were flooded and the roofs were blown away. A well-known Norman Rockwell painting from the early 1960s depicts a little African American girl walking between federal marshals on her way to school. The girl in the painting, Ruby Bridges, was the first African American to integrate New Orleans schools. But the painting does not tell the whole story. White communities bordering New Orleans fiercely resisted allowing African American students to enter their schools (Wells 2004). Out of 137 African American students who applied to attend formerly all-White schools, only four, including Ruby, were selected. When Ruby enrolled in the William Frantz Elementary School, all of the White students boycotted the school. Only one teacher, a White woman from New York, was willing to teach Ruby. And, as a consequence of Ruby's attending the previously all-White school, her father was fired from his job and her grandparents were evicted from their tenant farm.

For most of us, the story of Ruby Bridges is one of courage and heroism. But the deeper story is how America's fatal flaw – racism – continues to distort and destroy the promise on which the nation claims to be founded. The history of New Orleans school desegregation is a part of a larger history – not just of *educational access* denied, but of *citizenship* denied. The same mentality that allowed White citizens to barricade themselves from school desegregation in the 1960s is present among White citizens who armed themselves to prevent desperate Black citizens of New Orleans in the midst of the hurricane disaster from seeking refuge from the floodwaters. What kind of "public" official (in this case, a sheriff) points a gun at destitute evacuees, says, "You're not coming in here," and leaves them to wither on a freeway overpass (Glass 2005)?

Limiting education is but one of the ways to create second-class citizenship. However, it is one of the more effective ways; once a people are miseducated or undereducated, the society can claim the need to use "merit" as the standard by which postsecondary decisions (e.g., college admission, job placement) will be made. New Orleans is a municipality where people were *systematically* excluded from social benefits – housing, health, employment, and education. Hurricane Katrina brought to the surface the horror that has existed in New Orleans for more than a century.

"Aggressive Neglect" in Our Nation's Urban School Districts

So, now that we have all seen the huge economic and social chasm that exists in New Orleans, what will be our response? One of the dangers of witnessing such a tragedy is to presume that the conditions of life for poor people of color in New Orleans are unique. Rather than think of New Orleans as an example of a larger phenomenon, we have a tendency to isolate it and think of it as something out of the ordinary. Unfortunately, Jonathan Kozol's latest book, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (2005) reminds us that the condition of schooling in New Orleans is a regular and commonplace occurrence for students in far too many of the nation's largest public school districts.

As a native Philadelphian, I looked up the data on Philadelphia. The 2002–2003 per pupil expenditure for students in the Philadelphia School District was $9,299. That same year, the per pupil expenditure for the Lower Merion School District (which is almost across the street from Philadelphia) was $17,261 – a difference of almost $8,000. What makes the children of Lower Merion worth almost twice as much as their urban neighbors? Lower Merion has a Black and Latino population of about 9 percent and a White population of 91 percent. It has a 4 percent low-income student population. Philadelphia has a Black and Latino population of 79 percent with a White and other racial/ethnic group population of 21 percent. The low-income student population of the Philadelphia schools is 71 percent of the school district. Any decent researcher knows that correlation does not equal causation, but the correlations between race (and class) and educational spending are frightening.

How can it possibly be in the public interest to continue to keep poor children of color in a cycle of low achievement, low graduation rates, high levels of unemployment and underemployment, and compromised futures? How much of this do we imagine people will continue to accept? How soon will it be before we see the civil and social unrest that characterized the 1960s? Indeed, what we see in our cities is no longer just about social and

What we see in our cities is about *moral* responsibility. We cannot call ourselves a moral people in the midst of this aggressive neglect.

civic responsibility. It is about *moral* responsibility. We cannot call ourselves a moral people in the midst of this aggressive neglect.

I term what we are doing "aggressive neglect" because, at the same time we are experiencing unprecedented poverty, some segments of our society are experiencing an incredible bonanza of wealth. The growing income disparity makes it difficult for many Americans to experience empathy with those who do not have. We blame and demonize the poor and, more pointedly, we isolate them. We do not see them; we do not acknowledge their existence. They are both out of sight and out of mind. But then Hurricane Katrina hit and we were shamed in the presence of our fellow Americans and before the entire world.

The Lengths to Which Communities of Color Must Go

But communities of color could not wait for us to hear their anguished pleas. They have tried desperately on their own to get high-quality education for their children. Just how desperately? Well, in some cases they are desperate enough to opt out of the system altogether. In Milwaukee and Cleveland, families of poor Black and Brown children are eagerly participating in voucher programs. I am a committed public school advocate (I sent all of my children to public schools), but I cannot insist that these parents select public schools when they have other choices.

Perhaps the most extreme example of desperation was made apparent to me in a *New York Times* review of the documentary film *The Boys of Baraka*. Stephen Holden (2005) begins with a disturbing but familiar statistic – "76 percent of Black male students in Baltimore city schools do not graduate from high school." (In what White, middle-class community would that be an acceptable piece of data?) But the film describes the extraordinary lengths to which some families will go to address that shameful statistic; they send their children in an experimental program to school in rural Kenya. There, on a 150-acre ranch, without television or a consistent source of electricity, twenty middle school boys from Baltimore experience a two-year academic program that successfully prepares them for Baltimore's most competitive high schools. The program's recruiter tells the parents of the prospective students that their sons' futures have three possibilities – an orange jumpsuit and bracelets (prison), a black suit and

a brown box (early death), or a black cap and gown with a diploma. Who wouldn't take the last option?

How ironic is it that children from the wealthiest, most powerful nation in the world have to go to one of the poorest nations to experience academic and personal success? What does this say about the kind of communities we have created for poor children?

The Need for "Aggressive Attention"

The tragedy of Katrina is not only that it happened, but also that it is so quickly fading from our consciousness. We are now consumed with worsening news of the war in Iraq, an escalating gasoline and fuel-oil crisis, and massive job cuts at our major automobile manufacturers. The victims of Katrina have melted into the fabrics of cities like Houston, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Memphis. We have moved on to new crises. Discussions about rebuilding New Orleans regularly omit the poor. Indeed, several conversations discuss a notion of a new city without the return of the poor. The schools that are being reopened are unlikely to be those in the Lower Ninth Ward.

Katrina may be fading from our national consciousness, but Katrina remains ever present in my mind. I know that what happened on August 29, 2005, and the days following is not just about a natural disaster. It is about how we have systematically neglected the poorest, most vulnerable members of our society. There are plenty of potential Katrina scenarios in the United States, and we must acknowledge that it will take a concentrated and focused effort to reverse them. We have to be committed to ensuring that we do not have another group of people who end up without adequate homes, jobs, health care, and education. The children in all of our cities deserve our aggressive attention – whether they are dry or wet.

References

Glass, I., ed. 2005. "After the Flood," *This American Life*, WBEZ Chicago, Episode #296 (September 9). Download available from <www.thislife.org>.

Holden, S. 2005. "Goodbye City Streets, Hello African Wilderness," *New York Times*, (November 30).

Kozol, J. 2005. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Crown.

Ladson-Billings, G. Forthcoming. Introduction to *Education Research in the Public Interest*, edited by G. Ladson-Billings and W. F. Tate.

United States Census Bureau. 2000. Search by city on the Web at <www.census.gov/index.html>.

Wells, A. 2004. "Good Neighbors? Distance, Resistance, and Desegregation in Metropolitan New Orleans," *Urban Education* 39:408–427.

The Real Crisis in Education: Failing to Link Excellence and Equity

Charles V. Willie

Excellence and equity cannot exist without one another, but the nation has pursued excellence alone because it lacks the will to strive for equity.

While I agree that the theme of confronting the crisis in education is something of value and should have a high rank on this nation's agenda, I do not identify with the contemporary crowd that is trying to tell us the sky is falling – a metaphorical way of saying formal education is failing us.

I am more inclined to agree with David Berliner, professor of psychology and education at Arizona State University, and Bruce Biddle, editor of the *Social Psychology of Education Journal* and professor at the University of Missouri. In their book *The Manufactured Crisis* (1995), they speak of "nasty lies about education" (p. xi) that have flooded this nation. They believe that public schools have been attacked with myths and fraud by some leaders in this country who are "pursuing [an]... agenda designed to... redistribute support for schools so that privileged students are favored over needy students" (p. xii).

Charles V. Willie is the Charles William Eliot professor of education, emeritus, at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The Success of Desegregation

I associate myself with this diagnosis because I have identified the current assault on public school education as a backlash to the court-ordered school desegregation that picked up speed in the 1970s and 1980s in this nation. In August 1976, a report was published on school desegregation in a sample of twenty-nine school districts in more than half of the fifty states, based on a study by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The report revealed that school desegregation in 62 percent of the school districts made "substantial progress" in the 1970s (p. 127). These local school agencies with substantial desegregation in school student bodies by 1976 (the bicentennial anniversary year of the founding of this nation) included school districts located in the north, south, east, and west of the nation.

Only three school districts in the sample of twenty-nine (10 percent) experienced little progress in school desegregation up to and through 1976, according to the report (p. 126). Even Boston, with its angry response to court-ordered school desegregation in the 1970s, had major race-related problems in only a few of its schools (p. 39).

Hawley states that "desegregation has positive consequences for children." I presume that he includes all children – White and Brown as well as Black.

The conclusion of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 1976 was that "desegregation works" (p. 293).

John Logan and Deirdre Oakley (2004) prepared a report on school desegregation from 1960 to the year 2000 for the Lewis Mumford Center at the State University of New York at Albany. They studied 1,608 school districts, including large and small districts. The Mumford Center report (Table 1, p. 3) determined that 1968 was the last year after the *Brown* court order in which only a minimal amount of school desegregation had occurred for Black students. In that year, 80.5 percent of Black students in this nation would have had to move from their current school of enrollment to another school in which they were previously underrepresented to achieve total racial balance. In other words, four-fifths of the nation's schools were segregated in 1968, but in the year 2000, only about half of all Black children (48.6 percent) would have had to change their school of enrollment to achieve total racial balance. Despite naysayers who tell us that little, if any, school desegregation has happened since *Brown*, these data reveal that school segregation for Black children has substantially decreased, with sharp declines since 1968 – the year Martin Luther King Jr. died.

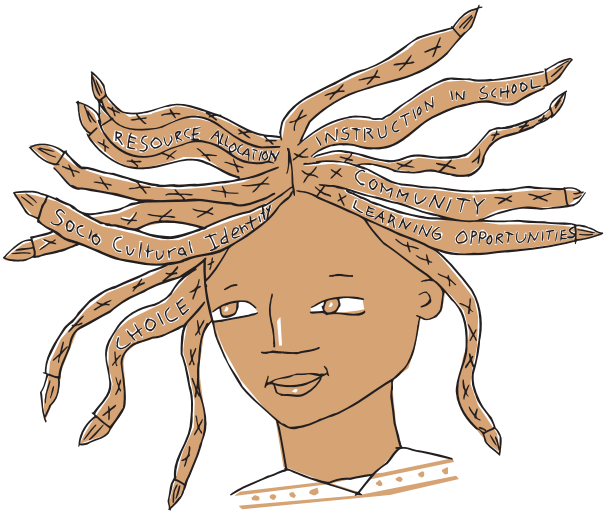
Some researchers have identified the decades of the 1970s and 1980s as the period of rapid school desegregation in the United States. Willis Hawley (1981) reports the findings of two demographers at the University of Wisconsin, Karl Tauber and Franklin Wilson. They found that "from 1968 to 1976, segregation between minority groups and white students declined by 50 percent" (p. 146). Hawley's own observations are that "racial isolation has been reduced most noticeably when courts have ordered desegregation." He, too, acknowledged that "desegregation imposed by the federal Office for Civil Rights and state agencies . . . reduced racial isolation" considerably (p. 147).

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights included a review of the professional literature in education in its 1976 report, noting that during the era of rapid desegregation:

> Many . . . schools [began] to make the curriculum more responsive to a broad range of academic and emotional needs. . . . Teachers have become sensitive to the kinds of instruction that ensures student interest and academic success. . . . Teachers' expectations of minority students tend[ed] to increase. . . . The academic performance of minority students generally improve[d]. (pp. 207–208)

Major Gains for People of Color

By 1984, desegregated public education was having a positive and major effect on people of color. In his book *Popular Education and Its Discontents*, Lawrence Cremin (1990) reviews an important article by Jomills Braddock, Robert Crain, and James McPartland published in *Phi Delta Kappan* in 1984. According to Cremin, these researchers discovered that "black students who had been educated in desegregated schools were more likely than their counterparts from segregated schools to have white friends, to live in racially mixed neighborhoods, to work in racially mixed settings,... [and to have] better employment opportunities" (pp. 94–95). Braddock and his colleagues who coauthored the article said, "The evidence... tells us that ... the impact of school desegregation, as expressed in ... the *Brown* decision, has been borne out" by their research findings on the consequences of desegregated education for Black students.



Cremin, a historian, concludes that "the *Brown* decision brought changes in education that made differences in how children thought, felt and behaved when they became adults" (p. 94). And Hawley (1981, p. 145) states that "desegregation has positive consequences for children." I presume that he includes all children – White and Brown as well as Black.

A report by Michael Stoll (2004), *African Americans and the Color Line*, in the series of pamphlets The American People, reveals that "since 1960, blacks have made tremendous gains relative to whites in educational attainment in primary and secondary education" (p. 4), and that the rise in college attendance by Black men and women through the 1980s "was at a faster rate than whites," although this rate of increased education at the college level seemed to have stalled in the 1990s (pp. 4–5).

With reference to secondary education in the United States, we know, based on reports from the National Center for Education Statistics (2000, p. 17), that the gap in the proportion of high school graduates between Black adults and White adults in 1970 (before the great push for school desegregation) was reduced from 21 percentage points in 1970 to 18 percentage points in 1985 and then to 10 percentage

points in the year 2000. We also know that the gap in the proportion of high school dropouts between Black adults and White adults in the year 1970 (before the great push for school desegregation) was reduced from 15 percentage points in 1970 to 5 percentage points in 1985; this small gap remained more or less constant at 6 percentage points into the year 2000 (p. 132).

While we have mentioned only a few indicators of educational progress, it is clear that the gap between the two racial populations mentioned in this analysis diminished as the students experienced education in schools that were increasingly diversified. These findings are supported by our studies conducted in the 1990s. In Hillsborough County, Florida, during the 1999–2000 school year, seventeen public schools received a D rating by the state of Florida because of the poor performance of their students on state-sponsored achievement tests. Three-quarters of these D-rated schools were classified as socio-economically isolated, poverty-concentrated institutions because 80 percent of their students were affiliated with low-income families. Also, half of these schools with D ratings were racially isolated because 80 percent or more of their students were affiliated with families of color. These findings suggest that, if we are interested in closing the achievement gap between racial, ethnic, gender, and socio-economic groups, we must focus on characteristics of collectivities such as student bodies and not on characteristics of individuals only (Willie, Edwards & Alves 2002).

The Role of Institutions and Groups

Education has a dual function of enhancing individuals and strengthening communities. An important function of the community is to support and sustain people. Leslie Wilkins, a statistician, has reminded us of the limitations of our approach to crime control, which focuses largely on individuals. Wilkins (1962, p. 329) points out that it is easy to say of the criminal, "He did it – deal with him." We do this, he says, because

> crime has not been considered as a failure of social controls [in the institutional system] but has been simplified to the wrongdoing of single persons.... It should be clear that dealing with him has not solved the problem of crime and seems unlikely to do so.

According to Wilkins, there are social as well as personal control mechanisms, and to operate on only half of the problem (that is, the personal mechanism) may not solve even half of it, let alone the whole.

Wilkins's observations on crime control are appropriate for understanding how to improve education in our contemporary society. We cannot advance the development and learning of knowledge by dealing with the individual only. We must also pay atten-

tion to collectivities such as school communities and to their organizational effects on individuals. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's studies (1983, p. 368) of high schools in the United States revealed that good schools "seek to create environments that will connect their students to the wider world and protect them from it." Michael Rutter and his colleagues (1979, p. 205), who studied secondary schools in England, concluded that "schools do have an important influence on their pupils' behavior and attainments." According to Ann Lynch and Arthur Chickering (1988, p. 131), "Despite the accumulated evidence concerning the power of educational environments, . . . [there is] an historical ebb and flow throughout our educational system . . . emphasiz[ing] . . . individual enhancement as the personal purpose of education."

To me, these findings mean that effective education must focus on students and schools simultaneously. To help us understand interaction between students and schools, we must develop conceptual approaches that will help integrate our observations and experiences. *Complementarity* is the major concept that has helped me to understand this interaction. The student is a person and the school is a group. All individuals depend on groups and other collectivities for their survival. There is no evidence that individuals can grow and prosper without help from groups. And there is no evidence that groups can exist and function without the presence of individuals. Thus, the individual and the group are complementary (Willie 1994, pp. 65–75). One without the other is incomplete.

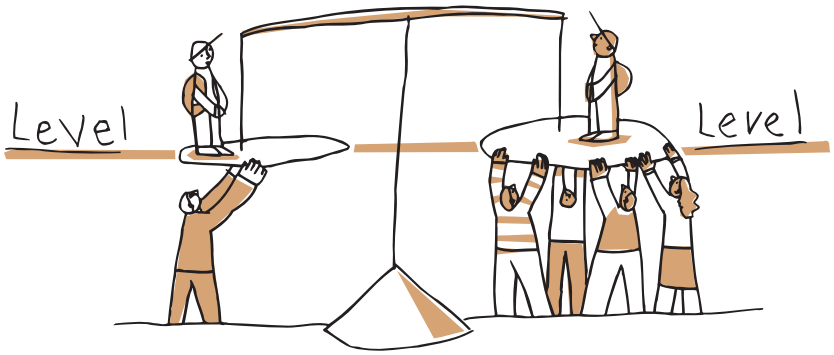
If we are interested in closing the achievement gap, we must focus on characteristics of collectivities such as student bodies and not on characteristics of individuals only.

The principle of complementarity helps one to understand the importance of the "difference" principle, which is a principle of reciprocity, according to the political philosopher John Rawls (1972, p. 64). Those with more are obligated to help those with less, according to the principles of complementarity, reciprocity, and difference. And, since no one has everything, all stand in need of assistance. A complementary relationship between those people with more and those with less gives rise to a "well-ordered society of justice as fairness" (p. 65).

The Role of Culture and Environment

With reference to learning, Howard Gardner (1985, p. xvi) has said that "a conception of different intelligences . . . has emerged as the most appropriate way . . . to conceptualize . . . human cognitive capacities." According to Gardner, "In ordinary life, these intelligences . . . work in harmony" (p. 9). Thus, we must "avoid pitting genetics against cultural factors." Furthermore, Gardner says, "Social scientists need a framework that . . . recognizes the formative role played by the environment" (p. 368).

In other words, instead of sorting out and segregating individuals by race, gender, socio-economic status, and other cultural characteristics, we in education should be discovering creative



ways of putting together different people with different talents, intelligences, and experiences so that one can do for another what the other cannot do for him- or herself.

I agree with the late Benjamin Mays, former president of Morehouse College, grandson of slaves, and spiritual mentor to Martin Luther King Jr. that no one is wise enough, rich enough, or strong enough "to go it alone" (1969, p. 108). In the field of education, no one has extraordinary capacities in all kinds of intelligences. All are interdependent; none is self-sufficient.

The Complementarity of Equity and Excellence

Education, therefore, should focus neither on cultivating excellence at the expense of equity nor on cultivating equity at the expense of excellence. In a well-ordered society, the goal of education is to seek both excellence and equity because they are complementary. Neither is complete without the other.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education stated in its 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* that the goal of this nation "must be to develop the talents of all to their fullest . . . and . . . to the limits of their capabilities." Then, it dismissed this goal by stating that "schools should have genuinely high standards rather than minimum ones" (p. 16). We are not told how to educate students with limited capacities who cannot meet the high standards. The National Commission further stated that "the twin goals of equity and high-quality school[s] (*which may be interpreted* as excellent schools) have profound and practical meaning for our economy and society, and we cannot permit one to yield to the other either in principle or practice" (p. 13, italics added). Despite the classification of equity and excellence as complementary concepts, the National Commission violated its own advice by not including any recommendations in its report on the continuing need for school desegregation, which is one way of achieving equity. In *A Nation at Risk*, school desegregation was ignored, despite the evidence that it had been an enhancement experience for education.

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, during the school year 1995–1996, the Agassiz School, which had the highest average achievement scores in the school district, also had a racially diverse student body: 51 percent White and 49 percent people of color. In Boston, in the school year 1993–1994, a "controlled choice" student-assignment plan revealed that 35 elementary and middle schools of 117 schools in the district attracted all kinds of students and were chosen by all racial groups. Racial diversity in these schools was similar to the distribution of racial groups in the entire Boston school system: 45.9 percent Black, 25 percent Hispanic, 18.3 percent White, 10 percent Asian, and 0.3 percent Native American. Students in these attractive schools chosen by students in all racial groups had higher average achievement-test scores and lower suspension and drop-out rates than students in other schools.

During the 1999–2000 school year, Lee County in Florida implemented a controlled choice student-assignment plan that guaranteed diversity in all schools. Nearly all schools in the Lee County district had racially diversified student bodies that were similar to the distribution of the racial population within the total school system. One year after diversifying most of its schools, 15 percent of the schools that were rated D and F by the state were eliminated and the proportion of schools rated A increased from 16 percent to 32 percent.

These examples indicate that diversity that enhances equity contributed to increased excellence in the school systems as a whole. For these and other reasons, my colleagues and I conclude that equity and excellence complement each other (Willie, Edwards & Alves 2002, p. 102).

Much Knowledge, Little Will

The crisis in education is that we know how to diversify our schools but do not have the will to accomplish the goal. And we do not have the will because we do not realize that dominant people of power stand in need of help from subdominant people with little power just as subdominant people with little power stand in need for help from dominant people of power.

Another reason we do not have the will to achieve equity in the distribution of educational resources and opportunities in our schools is that we have forgotten this nation was founded, as the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution states, to "form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, . . . [and] promote the general Welfare." These are benefits for the group or collectivity associated with membership in this democratic nation-state. We pay limited attention to the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities because of our preoccupation with securing the blessings of liberty for ourselves as promised in the Constitution. By focusing almost exclusively on the individual and his or her rights, including the right to be excellent, we have ignored the important fact that equity is essential in promoting the general welfare, too.

Education should focus neither on cultivating excellence at the expense of equity nor on cultivating equity at the expense of excellence. The goal of education is to seek both excellence and equity.

Excellence without equity is an abomination and so is equity without excellence. We dare not dismiss one concept in favor of the other. The two go well together.

Justice and the Public Good

Our present preoccupation with excellence in the contemporary school reform movement has ignored the equity requirements of the civil rights movement of the past and the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision. We do not recognize that equity and excellence complement each other and that one without the other is incomplete.

I think that we strain and strive for excellence because we have forgotten that adequacy is good enough. Nearly a quarter of a century ago, in 1982, I wrote an article for *Change* magazine, "Educating Students Who Are Good Enough" with the subtitle, "Is Excellence an Excuse to Exclude?" I point out in the article that "the function of education in promoting the public good is only dimly remembered by those who have had easy access to it" and that "many of affluent parentage now see education as a means of personal enhancement and individual fulfillment to which they are entitled" (p. 17). For example, slightly more than 70 percent of all first-year college students in four-year institutions said, in a survey conducted in 2002, that two very important reasons for going to college are to get a better job and to make more money. Less than one-third considered learning how to be a community leader, helping to promote racial understanding, or influencing the political structure as "very important objectives" of a college education ("Attitudes and Characteristics of Freshmen" 2003, p. 17). These ideas about formal education are quite different from those articulated by Benjamin Mays, who said, "Education is not designed merely to lift one above his or her fellows but to equip one to elevate the masses and particularly those who are least fortunate" (as cited in Willie 1982, p. 17).

Establishment of justice and promotion of the general welfare are equity issues, not issues pertaining to excellence. To link these two concepts, I introduced the theory of adequacy and explained that those who are adequate are good enough to help and not harm. Thus, adequacy has nothing to do with mediocrity; it has everything to do with the capacity to help. The patrons of a school, for example, have every right to demand that their teachers are good enough to help and not harm students. Whether a teacher wishes to become excellent is a personal matter. Whether the teacher is good enough to help and not harm is a public issue that should be guaranteed by every educational institution. Thus, some teachers will be adequate and some will be extraordinary and excellent. A good educational institution needs both kinds. The best way to guarantee both kinds of teachers is to have a diversified teaching faculty.

Around the same time that I was introducing the concept of adequacy in *Change* magazine, my colleague at

Harvard, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, was introducing in her book *The Good High School* the "good enough" concept as it applied to the schools. Just as I reassured readers that adequacy is not the same as mediocrity, she assured readers that the "good enough" concept neither connotes nor denotes reduced quality or competence. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot,

> Good enough schools welcome change and anticipate . . . imperfection. . . . It is in articulating and confronting these dimensions that one moves closer to the institutional supports of good education. (1983, p. 311)

Excellence and equity are two directions toward which all schools should be tending and which can be approached best, in the words of Lawrence-Lightfoot, by "removing absolutist standards, admitting human frailty and vulnerability as integral to worthiness" (1983, p. 311). This is the kind of school reform that will do no harm. It is the dual kind of school reform that I commend to educators. Excellence without equity is an abomination and so is equity without excellence. We dare not dismiss one concept in favor of the other. The two go well together.

References

"Attitudes and Characteristics of Freshmen." 2003. *Chronicle of Higher Education* 50, no. 1 (Almanac Issue, August):17.

Berliner, D. C., and B. J. Biddle. 1995. *The Manufactured Crisis*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Braddock, J. H., II, R. L. Crain, and J. M. McPartland. 1984. "A Long-Term View of School Desegregation: Some Recent Studies of Graduates as Adults," *Phi Delta Kappan* 66, no. 4 (December):259–264.

Cremin, L. 1990. *Popular Education and Its Discontents*. New York: Harper & Row.

Gardner, H. 1985. *Frames of Mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Hawley, W. D. 1981. "Increasing the Effectiveness of School Desegregation: Lessons from Research." In *Race and Schooling in the City*, edited by A. Yarmolinsky, L. Liebman, and C. S. Schelling. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 145–162.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. 1983. *The Good High School*. New York: Basic Books.

Logan, J., and D. Oakley. 2004. *The Continuing Legacy of the* Brown *Decision: Court Action and School Segregation, 1960–2000*. Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, State University of New York at Albany. Albany, NY: SUNY. Available for download at <http://mumford.albany.edu/census/report.html>.

Lynch, A. G., and A. W. Chickering. 1988. "Individual Enhancement as the Personal Purpose of Education." In *Social Goals and Educational Reform*, edited by C. V. Willie and I. Miller. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 105–136.

Mays, B. 1969. *Disturbed about Man*. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press.

National Center for Education Statistics. 2000. *Digest of Education Statistics 2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. GPO.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. 1983. *A Nation at Risk*. Washington, DC: U.S. GPO.

Rawls, J. 1972. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rutter, M., B. Maughan, P. Mortimore, and J. Ouston, with A. Smith. 1979. *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Stoll, M. A. 2004. *African Americans and the Color Line*. The American People series. New York: Russell Sage Foundation and Population Reference Bureau.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. 1976. *Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. GPO.

Wilkins, L. T. 1962. "Criminology: An Operational Research Approach." In *Society Problems and Methods of Study*, edited by A. T. Welford et al. New York: Philosophical Library.

Willie, C. V. 1982. "Educating Students Who Are Good Enough," *Change* 14, no. 2 (March):16–20.

Willie, C. V. 1994. *Theories of Human Social Action*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Willie, C. V., R. Edwards, and M. Alves. 2002. *Student Diversity, Choice and School Improvement*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.

Segregation and Its Calamitous Effects: America's "Apartheid" Schools

Jonathan Kozol

Schools are now as segregated as they were when Martin Luther King Jr. died, with corrosive effects for children in racially isolated schools. And school reformers have played a role in resegregating schools.

For nearly forty years, Jonathan Kozol has been chronicling the dispiriting conditions of children in urban public schools. His first book, *Death at an Early Age*, described his experiences as a fourth-grade teacher in Boston in the 1960s. *Savage Inequalities* decried the wide gaps in resources available to inner-city and suburban schools.

Kozol's most recent book, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, argues passionately that urban schools have become segregated and thus are inherently unequal to those in more affluent areas. He describes the lack of educational opportunities available to children in urban schools and the stultifying curriculum they often receive.

Kozol spoke with *Voices in Urban Education* editor Robert Rothman about the conditions of children in urban schools and the role of education reformers in perpetuating inequalities.

Jonathan Kozol is a nonfiction writer, educator, and activist, best known for his award-winning books on the plight of disadvantaged children in the United States.

Your book came out about the same time as Hurricane Katrina. Both revealed, for many people, what had been hidden from much of the public's view: the vast inequities in American society and the conditions under which many African Americans live. Why do you think these gaps have been hidden for so long, and why did it take such dramatic events to expose them?

The most stunning lesson from Katrina was not so much the inequalities as the literal physical segregation of African American people. It's remarkable. Those who visited the shelters that were created in Houston and elsewhere tell me they walked into huge rooms in which there were no White people. In other words, the shelters were colonies of segregation because the neighborhoods that were least served were also so profoundly segregated. I think racial separation, as much as inequality, is what stunned the nation.

However, the question you asked is, Why has this not been noted before? I think the media in general – the mainstream media – have been embarrassed to confront directly the degree to which their own cities and school systems have become so profoundly segregated. The major newspapers in the nation tend to favor integration as

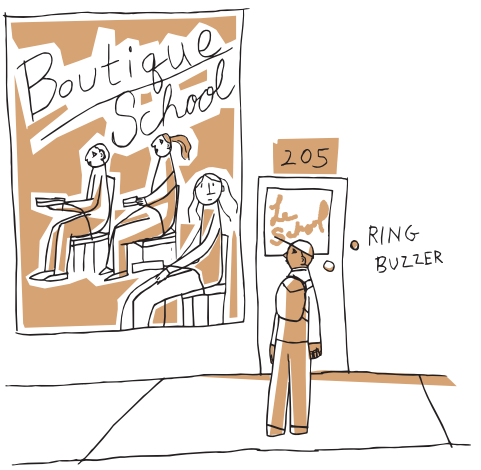
a national ideal, but in their own front yards – their own communities – they tend to support neighborhood schools, charter schools, niche academies, and what I call "boutique" public schools that have a powerful segregative effect. Most newspapers refuse to use the adjective *segregated* in a narrative description of a segregated school; instead, they use euphemisms such as a school with a *diverse* population. The word *diverse* has come to mean the *opposite* of diverse. It usually means a school that is totally Black and Hispanic, with a handful of, perhaps, Pakistani immigrants or Southeast Asians. So that's one reason: the shameful silence of the press.

The second reason is that many of those in the school-reform movement, including some of my closest friends and colleagues, have virtually shut their eyes to this issue for the past decade. They tend to speak of ways to run more innovative segregated and unequal schools, or smaller and more intimate segregated and unequal schools, or, in the case of those who are more politically or pedagogically conservative, segregated and unequal schools with Black kids wearing uniforms and chanting self-help slogans. Or segregated and unequal schools with private and corporate partners. But, by a convenient defect of vision, they have refused to name the moral travesty at the center of the issue: the fact that these, basically, are apartheid institutions.

It is remarkable that I had to write this book in order to compel educators to address this fact, because one doesn't really need statistics, one only needs to have visited inner-city schools throughout the past five years to see what's taking place. In the inner-city schools I visited, it's not simply that I don't see many White children – I never see *any* White children. If you took a photograph of a typical classroom I visited, it would be indistinguishable from a photograph of a school in Mississippi in 1935 or 1940. Segregation has returned to public education with a vengeance. The percentage of Black kids who now go to integrated schools has dropped to its lowest level since the death of Dr. King in 1968.

Backlash against the Success of School Integration

As a sort of footnote to that point, the press tends recklessly to tell the public that integration was a failure. In fact, this is a gross distortion of history. Integration, during the period of its enforcement, roughly from 1965 to 1990 – because it took about a decade before *Brown* was seriously enforced – was a spectacular success. Tens of thousands of schools all over the country integrated with remarkably healthy and optimistic results. During that period,



the so-called achievement gap between Black and Brown children, on the one hand, and White children, on the other, narrowed dramatically. Black children, in particular, made greater gains in achievement during that period than in an entire century.

Since the early 1990s, the Rehnquist Court has progressively ripped apart the enforcement mechanisms of *Brown* and even came to the point recently, in St. Louis, of denying school systems funding for *voluntary* integration. During this period, schools have been dramatically resegregated and the achievement gap between Black and Brown kids and White kids has widened progressively, or else remained flat. Even in these most recent years, as Mr. Bush has enforced his obsessive testing and accountability regime in public schools, there have been absolutely no sustained gains for minority children.

Even when there is a slight uptick in [test] scores, these are *testing* gains; these are not *learning* gains. These are a direct result of obsessive teaching to the test. The reason I know this is the following: I follow all these kids – I follow hundreds of kids that I've known in several cities, especially in the Bronx in New York – and the same fourth-graders who allegedly have suddenly made a 5-percent gain in their reading scores don't retain these skills. I meet the same kids four years later, when they are in eighth grade, and they can't write a cogent sentence or read a textbook that's basically written at the fourth-grade level. In fact, by the time minority kids are in twelfth grade, the average Black or Latino twelfth-grader in America now reads and computes at approximately the same level as White seventh-graders.

So we're not simply dealing with segregation having returned with a vengeance. We're also speaking of the absolutely predictable results of segregation, which is unequal schooling with calamitous results for those we cordon off in schools our own children – White children – don't attend.

We're also speaking of the absolutely predictable results of segregation, which is unequal schooling with calamitous results for those we cordon off in schools our own children – White children – don't attend.

Rigid, Deadening Pedagogy

In your book you describe an intellectually deadening atmosphere.

Yes – the curriculum that's been introduced as a consequence of the testing pressures.

But the schools you've been writing about for forty years are intellectually arid places. I thought that's why you wrote your first book. Are things worse now?

They're far worse. First of all, the segregated school in which I taught fourth grade in Boston was, in pedagogic terms, almost libertarian compared to what I'm seeing now in these anxiety-loaded, test-driven inner-city schools. Yes, we were stuck with the old Dick and Jane readers. But there was sufficient flexibility so that lots of teachers could do interesting things and you weren't monitored every minute of the day to make sure you were "on task." (I hate that term, so I always use it in quotes.)

You couldn't do that today?

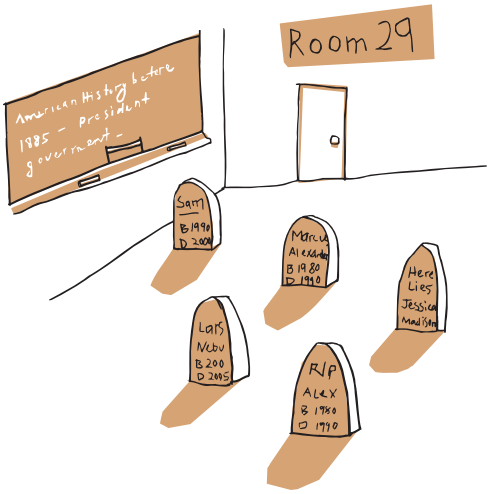
Not in the schools I'm talking about, no. Since around 1995, as states began to enforce these very rigid lists of state standards, associated directly with high-stakes examinations, and then began penalizing or humiliating school principals who couldn't deliver magical gains in a matter of two years, a state of siege has taken over in hundreds of these schools, or probably thousands, not just the ones I've visited or where I know teachers.

There hasn't been anything like this in American education since the early part of the century, when Elwood Cubberley and Edward Thorndike and their colleagues were in their prime, when they were enforcing the efficiency agenda modeled on business practices. It's that agenda that has been re-created in the past ten years. Although all the entrepreneurial and technocratic school reform experts claim that they're doing something new and radical, in fact, this is simply a tiresome reconstruction of the same agenda that was put in place during the 1920s.

The Wrong Way to Address the Achievement Gap

One thing that seems new now is that, rhetorically at least, there is some attention to the achievement gap, and it's now national policy to close the gap. Isn't that some sign of progress?

No. Because I think it's insincere. I think, certainly at the federal level, at the level of the Bush administration, it's either insincere or it's being pursued in a way that's so destructive and counterproductive that it represents the worst kind of sincerity – what Erik Erikson called "destructive conscientiousness."



Look, if you want to address the achievement gap, you do it in the ways that worked in the past. We didn't need all of these incredibly repetitive, arid, and jargon-loaded national conversations and symposiums and conferences on "ways to turn it all around," without speaking of separate and unequal schooling. We simply didn't need that. We would look at the numbers. Even to this day, the most dramatic success rates for minority kids are in integrated public schools that they attend either under some of the few remaining court orders or in voluntary programs, such as the interdistrict program that surrounds Boston, a similar program that surrounds Milwaukee, a similar program that surrounds St. Louis – although that one is now under attack by the government – and in the ultimate interdistrict program, which takes place in the Louisville area, where it's no longer necessary to cross district borders, since Jefferson County has become one large multiracial district. I have these statistics in my book, but you don't really need statistics if you spend any time in these schools.

I'm an eyewitness to what happened to Black children who were being bludgeoned by the mediocre education in their segregated schools in Boston and [saw] what happened to them when they came into a beautifully funded school with enormously supportive school principals who had been given a great deal of preparation in order to receive these kids with sensitivity and wisdom. And I'm telling you that virtually every kid I know who went into that program – and I've known hundreds since – went on to higher education. I'd say at least 95 percent went on to higher education, most to very good four-year colleges, like Brown, and Amherst, and Spelman, and Yale, and Harvard.

The fact that school reformers will not look at this reality is a gifted evasion of the central point. The central point is that the Warren Court was right: separate schools (I'm paraphrasing the decision), even when physical and other measurable factors may appear to be equal, are inherently unequal. With the exception of a handful of boutique schools, segregated schooling has never been equal to the schooling that's given to the mainstream of this nation, and it's sheer folly to pretend that they will suddenly become equal in the century ahead. It ain't gonna happen.

The Difficulty of Acting on Basic Human Decency

Do you think that part of the problem is that people really don't want equality, and that they're more concerned with their own kids? If their own kids are doing well, why care about somebody else's kids?

No! I talk with an enormous mainstream of people in the United States, and I find that the overwhelming majority – White Americans, I mean – do not wish ill to poor children of color, do not act upon racist beliefs, and, frankly, tell me again and again they wish there were a way to give the same good things they are giving to their own kids to all the children in the same metropolitan community.

I write at length about a little girl named Pineapple, who's become a favorite in my life. If any White people that I meet almost anywhere in America, with the exception of a small core of really hardened souls, ever got to know Pineapple, they'd want to do anything in the world they could do for her. But very few of these decent White people will ever meet Pineapple, will ever know of her existence. Oh, they'll read about her in academic studies, but they'll never know she's real.

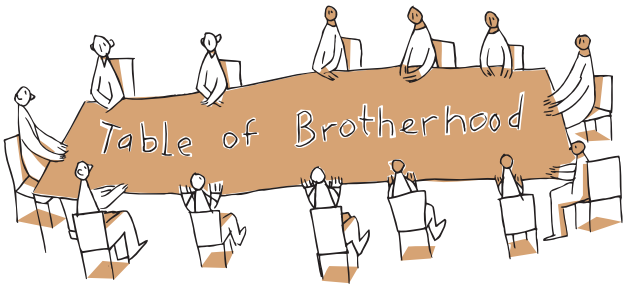
Polls taken all over the country indicate the vast majority of White Americans – White parents – still believe their children will receive a better education in an integrated school. And, needless to say, an even larger proportion of Black people continue

Segregated schooling has never been equal to the schooling that's given to the mainstream of this nation, and it's sheer folly to pretend that they will suddenly become equal in the century ahead. It ain't gonna happen.

to believe that adamantly, despite the handful of bombastic separatists who are typically quoted in conservative White media. The suburban integration program surrounding Boston, for example, has 3,300 kids in it. But, at any given time, there's a waiting list of 16,000. That represents a third of all the Black and Latino kids in the Boston public schools. And we see those waiting lists everywhere.

You asked about White people. I don't think we live in a hateful nation of people who want to give the best only to their child and who are somehow able emotionally to write off everybody else. But I think the structures we have created have made it very difficult for ordinary American people to act on their own essential decency. And I think many of us in the school-reform field have unwittingly and innocently colluded in the creation of some of those divisive structures. To give a simple example: the newest trend of the day is small and intimate urban schools. That's this year's panacea. And, by the way, in its origins, it's a beautiful idea, and individuals like Debbie Meier have carried it out with great success. But what has happened is, a gentle and pedagogically progressive notion has now been adopted, essentially, as a systematic way of doing an end run around the central obstacle to healthy and equal education for poor children. School systems now are stamping out (by "stamp out" I don't mean eradicate, but stamp them out like from a cookie cutter) small academies, recklessly, usually giving them thematic identifications that have very little connection with what is actually happening at the school. And they're usually bad schools. Their success rate is terrible, with a few exceptions.

The Gates Foundation has given its imprimatur to this movement and is helping school systems to stamp out small schools – and, in this process, has done an enormous amount of damage in many school districts by failing to make even the slightest nod toward making sure that these schools would have multiracial populations. With their resources, with the immense funds available to the Gates Foundation, they could very easily have created tremendous fiscal incentives for school systems or communities to create marvelous small schools that cut across all lines of race and class. And they simply failed to do so.



Integration, the First Step toward a Solution

If you were invited to a national commission on education, what would you say? What would it take to create an equitable system?

Number one, until our residential patterns are no longer so profoundly segregated in this nation, we need to break down district barriers between school districts in order to create the Jefferson County model, or as close to it as we can come, in every metropolitan area of the nation. As [Gary] Orfield notes in my book, it's hard to imagine this in New York City. He urged me, if I want to be optimistic, not to look at New York.

Hard cases make bad law.

Yeah, and he's right. I wouldn't start with Chicago or New York or Los Angeles, but in dozens and dozens of fairly large cities and, more to the point, in middle-sized and smaller cities, we should create not only a strong ethical pressure upon those in the suburbs who really do profess good will and, I think, are serious in their intent on this issue, but we should also put billions of dollars in federal money into providing irresistible incentives to these districts to make it possible for all the children in these metropolitan areas to sit together at that famous table of brotherhood of which Dr. King spoke.

We have to organize a very strong public political campaign in order to destigmatize the idea of students taking transportation to go to a good school. I once asked Alice Washington, who's the mother of the central figure in my book *Amazing Grace*, "What would you do if your son could escape his neighborhood high school in the Bronx, and you could give him a fifteen-minute bus ride (which is all it would have been) to Bronxville, which is the first White and wealthy suburb to the north of New York (where, by the way, $19,000 per pupil is spent every year, and where everyone graduates)?" And she looked at me and said, "Are you kidding? What mother who loves her child wouldn't jump at that opportunity?" And I said, "And you wouldn't worry that he might lose some of his African American identity?" Now, she was a strong Afrocentric person herself. She put me on to a lot of the best Black literature that I've read. And she looked at me and said, "*I'll* take care of his Black identity. *You* make sure that he can get into the same kind of good school that got you into Harvard."

So, if I were secretary of education – which is not going to happen, but if I were – I wouldn't simply toy with No Child Left Behind and try to make it a little more child-friendly or teacher-friendly or open it up a bit so it would be more respectful of good assessment practices like portfolios, which of course I used to do and which I support. I wouldn't fiddle around with those small, incremental changes. I would abolish No Child Left Behind when it is time for it to be reauthorized in 2007. I would get rid of it completely, and I would take all that money that's now going into high-stakes testing and the more important expense, which is the cost of teacher time diverted from teaching to testing and to preparation for tests, and add all that money that's now going to companies like Kaplan and Princeton Review if schools fail to make their AYP within two years.

I'd take all that money, then I'd triple it, and I'd put all of it into giving massive financial incentives to every metropolitan community in America where it is at all feasible to break down district barriers and create wonderful, very expensive, and, as I predict, inevitably very successful schools – ideally, small ones; I favor them – schools in both the cities and the suburbs to which children of all races would be more than willing to take a comfortable ride every day. In most cities this could be done with a thirty-minute ride, at most, leaving out the three or four big cities I mentioned.

The Need to Bury "Separate but Equal" Once and for All

In other words, to me the best school reform would be to turn our backs on *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which never worked, which was the most deceptive promise Americans were ever given; to stop repeating that promise, which is what most urban school reformers are doing right now, saying we can have separate but equal schools with innovative methods to make the school day more creative, to have more critical thinking, and so forth. I'd go right in on that and say, no, that isn't what *Brown* was about. That isn't what Thurgood Marshall lived for.

That's what I would do. Meantime, I would fight for three parallel goals. I would immediately create universal, full-day, richly developmental preschool, starting at the age of two and a half, for every low-income kid in America. This nation can easily afford to do that. You could probably do that with the money spent in a few months of the Iraqi war.

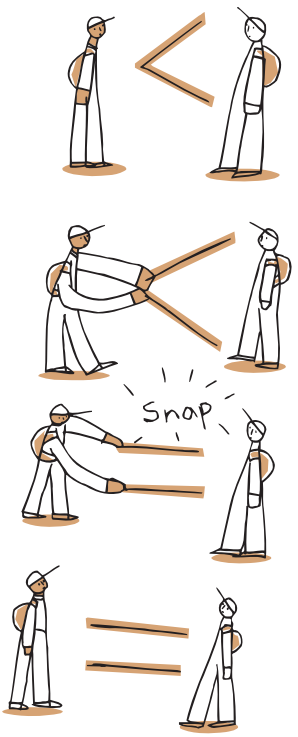
Another practice I would support would be to abolish virtually all high-stakes testing. I would revise the whole testing apparatus to do only diagnostic testing. And when children are demonstrably in bad trouble, I would never institute Skinnerian approaches like

To me the best school reform would be to turn our backs on *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which never worked, which was the most deceptive promise Americans were ever given.

Success for All. I would spend a lot of money to use remarkably successful and highly enlightened programs like Reading Recovery. It's very expensive, but it's the best way.

I'm talking about sparing no funds. I would argue strongly to the public that we are not a Third World nation, and we don't have to choose between giving kids small class size in tenth grade or giving them pre-K when they're two years old. I'm saying we're rich enough to do both.

And finally, if I were education secretary, I would advocate for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would scrap the present system of school finance entirely. It would guarantee an equally high level of public education to every child in America, so the education of our children will no longer be dependent either on local property wealth or on these so-called equalization formulas in the sundry states, which never equalize, or do so only temporarily until the legislature has a change of mood.



It's inherently irrational to have our children educated, as we say they are being educated, to be Americans; educated, as we say they are being educated, to have a wise role in the American electoral processes, in the jury system, in the economy, and, if need be, in the military; but then to finance their education on the basis of the wealth or poverty of the district or state in which they live.

So, those are a few modest proposals I would make if I were education secretary. But I don't think I'm headed for that destiny. I haven't made friends with enough corporate leaders and foundation heads.

Some people say to me, you're sixty-nine years old, why don't you make the rest of your life easy and create an inoffensive institute to establish a network of slightly more innovative schools with more critical thinking, incorporating the views of my own mentors and teachers, such as Paulo Freire and Fred Rogers, whom I miss so much, and Howard Gardner, and so forth. But I don't want to go to my grave helping to polish the apple of apartheid. I want to stir teachers and educators and decent academics to be more than technicians of innovative proficiencies – I want to stir them to be warriors of justice.

References

Kozol, J. 1967. *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Kozol, J. 1991. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York: Crown.

Kozol, J. 1995. *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*. New York: Crown.

Kozol, J. 2005. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Crown.

Transformation, Not Tinkering: School Reform after Hurricane Katrina

Dennie Palmer Wolf
and Hal Smith

Reformers have proposed individual strategies for achieving educational equity and excellence at scale that, by themselves, are inadequate. Residents of New Orleans and other cities afflicted by "stressed levees" deserve a transformation of their educational systems, not mere tinkering around the edges.

Hurricane Katrina destroyed the illusion that families and children, no matter how poor, are protected by a government's basic guarantees to its citizens in times of danger. The storm also revealed that we are even further than we thought we were from fulfilling our nation's promise of public education for all its children. As the stories of the residents of New Orleans who ended up on rooftops and in shelters revealed, the six or eight or twelve years that poor people in New Orleans had spent in public school classes left them without the skills, means, or connections to reach safety or trust broadcasted warnings. It was not the hurricane that left the worst trail of destruction at their children's schools; it was the long-term habit of undereducating, isolating, and ignoring poor Black children.

The images on the news were dramatic enough. But what the television footage couldn't show was the deeper disrepair. Ninety percent of the city's schools were failing academically. They were also failing in a human sense. As children from New Orleans relocated to schools in Biloxi, Baton Rouge, and Houston, their families reported breaking down in tears at what was, to them, an unfamiliar sight: their children in schools with current textbooks, certified teachers, guidance counselors, evaluation prior to special education placements, bands with instruments, and school staff who called their children by name.

It is a convenient fable that a storm like Katrina is a rare occurrence and that New Orleans, with its stressed levees, cross-generational poverty, and dysfunctional schools, was an unusually vulnerable city. Hundreds of miles away from the storm surge, Chicago, Baltimore, Los Angeles, and many other cities have stressed levees of their own: persistently dangerous public housing, joblessness, high youth-incarceration rates, and school facilities that lack adequate heat and are infested with vermin (see, for example, Fine, Bloom & Chajet 2003). In those cities, just as in New Orleans, public education is too often an integral part of, rather than an antidote to, the chronic storm system of being poor – and ignored – in America.

Poor children fare badly throughout their educational careers. Despite incontrovertible evidence about the benefit of preschool education, thou-

Dennie Palmer Wolf is director of Opportunity and Accountability and Hal Smith is a senior research associate at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform.

sands of poor children continue to enter kindergarten unprepared – and the most recent congressional spending bill cuts into the funding for Head Start. In New York, for two generations, the high school graduation rate for African Americans and Latinos has hovered around 40 percent. At the higher-education level, of the Hispanic and African American students who make the effort and save money to start college, fewer than half end up graduating in six years. Yet, recent Supreme Court decisions struck down the use of affirmative-action policies in college admissions, ignoring the substantial benefits to individuals and the communities to which they contribute (Bowen & Bok 1999). The reality reflected by these statistics and the lack of public will to seek and apply large-scale, effective strategies – not 150-mile-an-hour winds or nine-foot flood surges – make up the storm that relentlessly batters the lives and aspirations of poor families across generations.

The reality reflected by these statistics and the lack of public will to seek and apply large-scale, effective strategies make up the storm that relentlessly batters the lives and aspirations of poor families across generations.

A New Generation of Strategies for More Equitable Student Success

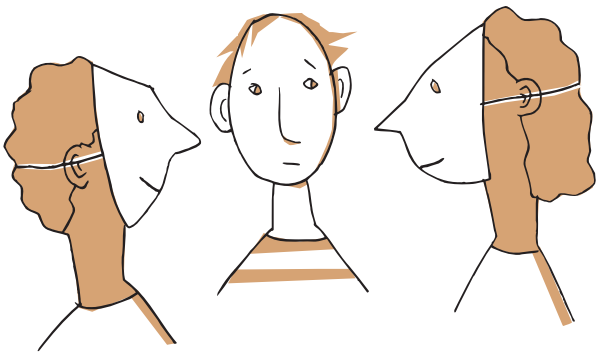
If we are honest, we must recognize that a further effect of the hurricane was to tear the roof and shingles off contemporary school reform. Anyone listening to the children and families in New Orleans is forced to ask: To what extent do we have strategies for K–12 education that could make a difference on the scale that is required? To what extent are we willing to apply those strategies forcefully? In our quest for educational justice, are we prepared to do more than just tinker with the system?

The landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* gave us, in 1954, our first bold vision of educational *equality* – the dismantling of legally sanctioned segregation. In the ensuing fifty years, however, we have learned that integration did not yield *equity* – today, a child's future performance in school and in life can still be substantially predicted by his or her race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. We also learned that the struggle for equity cannot be separated from an insistence on excellence and that a few exemplary schools or districts are no substitute for a system of high-quality education at the scale required to educate *all* children in *all* schools well.

Building on the lessons learned since 1954, community activists, practitioners, reformers, and policy-makers have generated new strategies designed to take over where the *Brown* decision fell short. The goal of advocates for each of these strategies is to achieve both equity and excellence, and to do so at scale. But, in the wake of Katrina, we must reexamine each of these contemporary strategies, asking whether –

and under what conditions – they can make a difference for families and children who have spent generations outside the promise of public education.

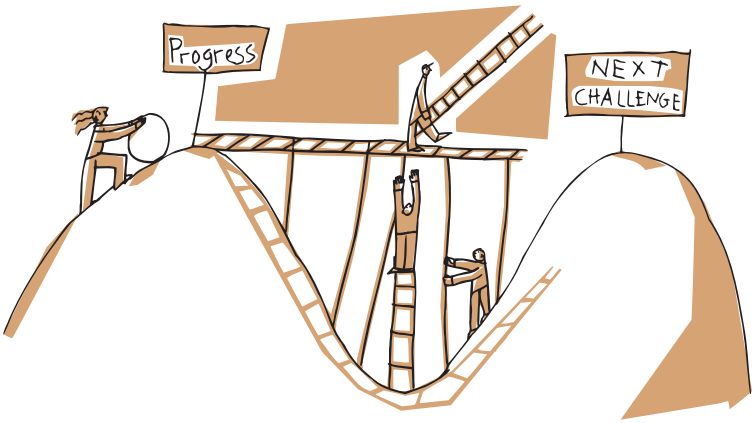
Each of these strategies – acknowledging and valuing students' and families' socio-cultural identities, improving teaching and learning, closing gaps in learning opportunities outside of school, expanding choice, and allocating resources equitably – holds promise as a way of enhancing the educational opportunities for all students. But, as they have been implemented, these strategies have failed to achieve the promise of their most ardent advocates. And, in any event, achieving equity and excellence at scale is more than a technical challenge. Above all, it is a *human* process – it will have to be fueled by mutual acknowledgment, motivation, trust, and will.



Acknowledging and Valuing Students' and Families' Socio-cultural Identities

In the weeks following the 2005 storm, a New Orleans mother who relocated to Houston reported her surprise – and joy – when a school counselor sat down to talk about her son's history, talents, and interests. This counselor represented a major strategy for educational equity and excellence: understanding the storehouse of knowledge students bring to school, rather than viewing him as deficient.

But such efforts are rare. Relatively few educators know the cultures and languages that their students bring to school. A young White teacher in an urban school may innocently assume she knows African American culture because she makes the effort to listen to hip-hop stations or reads magazines aimed at Hispanic and Black youth. But she is unaware of the longstanding intellectual traditions of Frederick



Douglass and W. E. B. DuBois that challenge these kind of simplistic constructions of African American culture. Little in her training or professional development is likely to contradict such historically inaccurate or decontextualized understandings of her students' identities or heritage. Similarly, students who speak Tagalog or Spanish are viewed as "lacking" English – not as people who will become bilingual in a global economy that demands cross-cultural communication.

Many schools assume that *academic achievement* has a universal definition, but different cultural communities may define "achievement" quite differently. When a student includes long quotations from sources, she may be graded down for failing to think for herself – when she is, in fact, trying to acknowledge the work of those who have come before. When a student uses emphatic language as a way to build an argument, he may be drawing on preaching rhetoric, but he is graded as failing to bring evidence to bear. A student who goes home to care for family members can be seen as failing to seek the extra tutoring she needs, when she is, in fact, fulfilling a critical and honorable family role.

Students who live double lives – one at home, one in school – are bombarded by differing and conflicting expectations, aspirations, and belief systems about the pathway to success. But this effort, thought, empathy, and decision making typically goes unacknowledged. School rarely helps students understand how to navigate competing visions of achievement and excellence.

Imagine if schools invested in, rather than bypassed, explicit discussions of the differing values, worldviews, and ways of working and learning that different groups have developed, seizing the occasions most likely to yield critically important knowledge of self and others. What if teachers engaged their students in discussions about the role of sources versus independent thinking or rhetoric versus evidence? Exploring these alternative frames would open up educational opportunities for children and young people to understand both their own cultures and the culture of institutions like schooling in the United States.

Until we abandon the view that school policies, teachers, and curricula are either culturally neutral or inherently more valuable, and that students, families, and communities are mired in and limited by their cultures, school reform has no way to acknowledge those students and families for whom good public education is most critical (Valenzuela 1999). In such a world, the intellectual capacity of culturally diverse children will continue to be called into question. Similarly, the aspirations and resources of families and communities will go unrecognized when, in fact, home intellectual culture is often where children learn to value reading, conversation, debate, and inquiry – regardless of the formal educational attainments of a family.

Improving Teaching and Learning

There is a growing consensus that school reform must focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning; such instructional improvement is a major strategy for achieving equity and excellence (Elmore 2000). But at present, in part driven by the impoverished implementation of No Child Left Behind, improving student achievement consists largely of moving modest numbers of students just across the boundary from the upper ends of basic levels of performance to proficiency, often through "teaching to the test." The monumental work ahead is to help the students who are far below "proficient" to become not just barely competent readers and mathematicians, but critical and creative thinkers.

This achievement will require investing in the learning of struggling students at the same level that American educators have long invested in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs. It means choosing and setting as goals the few intellectual performances that have the greatest long-term payoff, designing substantial academic supports to help students reach these intellectual goals, and replacing cheap pizza-party motivations with substantial intrinsic rewards. The Algebra Project[1] and the work done around *Reading for Understanding* (Schoenbach et al. 1990) are important examples of this kind of work.

Imagine if schools invested in, rather than bypassed, explicit discussions of the differing values, worldviews, and ways of working and learning that different groups have developed, seizing the occasions most likely to yield critically important knowledge of self and others.

Consider an example emerging from New Orleans.[2] In the project "Finding Our Folk," college students mentor high school students in collecting the stories of families who fled the devastation of the Gulf storms. The students record these powerful accounts and then translate them – including the pauses, tears, and searches for the right word – into equally powerful texts. The work is hard and takes many drafts. But it is motivated by relation-

1 More information is available on the Web at <www.algebra.org>.

2 Personal interview with Lisa Delpit, December 30, 2005. More information on the "Finding Our Folk" program is available on the Web at <www.findingourfolk.org>.

ships, relevance, eventual publication on the Web, and the sense that students are building their own and their community's critical awareness.

Another broad structural issue is that our education system does not invest in or value *growth over time*, particularly for currently low-achieving students. We *test*, we do not *diagnose*; when students fail, we remediate or repeat learning rather than find new routes to learning. When we test, we do so at the end of a year – when there is no time left to intervene. Systems pay little attention to supporting students through what are often difficult transitions: kindergarten to first grade, eighth to ninth grade, and twelfth grade to early college. No hard thinking is done to select and concentrate on a few of the most powerful concepts and strategies, such as those that link early writing to persuasive essays or early word problems about rates to calculus. School and district improvement is measured by comparing the performance of this year's fourth grade to last year's fourth grade, not by examining the growth in individual students' learning from third to fourth to fifth grades. Thus, a student who is making hard-won improvements can score below the proficient level year after year – a fact that can erode her engagement and her family's sense that school is making a difference.

These are far from technical issues. Consider a young man who reads at the third-grade level when he enters high school. If we do not want him and his family living in poverty, unable to escape a storm, earthquake, or fire, we must know how to engage and invest in his intellectual capacity – no matter how far behind he is.

Research demonstrates that a substantial percentage of achievement and academic success for high-income students can be explained by their increased access to educational opportunities in non-school settings.

Closing Gaps in Learning Opportunities Outside of School

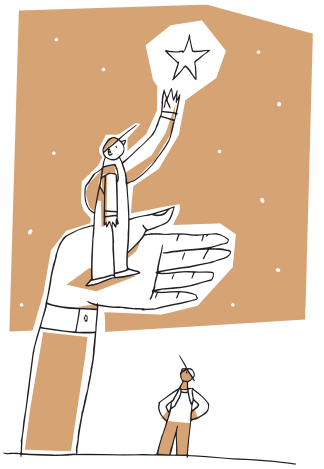
School accounts for only six of a student's waking hours. In the remaining ten, there are huge differences in students' learning opportunities. Expanding access to high-quality extended learning opportunities and supports is another important strategy for equalizing student success.

At present there is a wide variation in access to learning opportunities outside of school. At one end of the spectrum is an overcommitted third-grader whose learning extends well into the late evening through Girl Scouts, soccer, and piano lessons. On the other end are the children who have virtually no participation in out-of-school learning – the nine-year-old who spends eight hours a day watching television or searching for other diversions to pass the time or the child who has no free time as a result of being the primary housekeeper and caregiver for siblings, from the time school lets out until adults are able to take over. Somewhere in the middle is the third-grade student who has a balance of interconnected in-school and out-of-school activities that support her continual develop-

ment across a variety of measures. Her days are full and her obligations and prospects numerous, but not to the point of excess or unhealthy burden.

These students may be in the same grade, attending similar schools. But the additional productive exposure to learning opportunities, knowledgeable adults outside their families, and motivated peers can result in very different levels of development and achievement. In fact, research demonstrates that a substantial percentage of achievement and academic success for high-income students can be explained by their increased access to educational opportunities in non-school settings (Gordon, Bridglall & Meroe 2004). In many cases, elective activities in after-school programs or summer camps develop into sustained interests and talents (e.g., journalism, playing an instrument, debate, martial arts) that lead to more and more sophisticated learning options and a greatly increased understanding of what it takes to pursue an interest across settings, neighborhoods, and institutions.

An *available* opportunity is not necessarily an *accessible* opportunity. In poor neighborhoods and schools, children's access to out-of-school learning is often limited by availability or by additional costs (transportation, coordination, time to research and fill out applications). There are many options for those who know about them, can access them, can advocate for scholarships or sliding scale fees, or pay outright. But these kinds of cultural, social, and economic capital are very unevenly distributed across families, children, and youth. A student who is among the



top qualifiers for a special science camp may never access that opportunity if it requires transportation across the city, lab fees, and the presence of familiar peers for her and her family to feel comfortable in an unfamiliar setting.

Yet even when youngsters are able to take part in activities outside of school, what is counted as a learning opportunity can vary widely. In some neighborhoods, particularly those with many low-income families, the fact that children are physically safe, have adults present, and are required to do their homework or read a book or magazine may be all that is available. A privileged student, whose family has the funds, time, and social capital to do research on quality programs, could be enrolled in an after-school engineering program, rich in applied mathematics, with associated summer camps, linked to subsequent after-school programs in math and science, and with ties to selective middle school programs.

Hence, if we think about New Orleans rebuilding – or any other city revitalizing – its neighborhoods, the provision of out-of-school learning is as vital as affordable family housing. But

simply expanding out-of-school programs in terms of hours or seats is not a strategy for making any kind of substantial difference. Raw multiplication of programs can cannibalize existing resources, confuse families, and reinforce inequity by creating enormous opportunity gaps among families who do and don't have the resources to choose anything but the least expensive and most convenient options. For extended learning opportunities to become a substantial strategy in creating educational equity and excellence at scale, its advocates have to ensure more than safety and quantity. All young people need genuinely accessible, high-quality, sustained opportunities to identify and develop their skills and talents.

Expanding Parental and Student Choice of Schools

One of the most popular – and controversial – strategies for equalizing high-quality educational opportunities is expanding student and family choice of schools. After all, the argument goes, privileged families have long had the chance to choose where their children attend school. By extending choice to low-income families, advocates hope to expand opportunities for them as well. Indeed, many of the proposals to reconstruct the school system in New Orleans feature a network of charter schools from which families could select the ones they believed were best.

But this type of choice system is based on strong underlying market assumptions that all students and families enter the education arena on the same footing, with the same knowledge, and with the same conceptions about the fairness of the system. However, the system for making choices does not yet work transparently or fairly. To successfully take advantage of the choices, families have to know what the choices are, how to visit and examine schools, how to interview administrators, teachers, and current students, how to register, how to weigh factors like safety versus academic rigor, and how to protest mishandling or unfair treatment.

Moreover, many systems fail to provide genuine choice – that is, to ensure that the schools are good enough to be chosen and that they offer a range of bona fide curricular options, not just themes for the window decorations and assembly programs. For example, many cities have created career academies to link students with potentially attractive vocational opportunities. In practice, though, such academies too often hold students to lowered expectations and standards, functioning as a separate track for students who are seen as less able or desirable.

In addition, systems fail to provide families and students with ways to exercise their choice in legitimate ways (e.g., they do not help families think about choosing middle schools at the end of fourth grade, organize tours, ask experienced parents to model how to ask critical questions, or organize panels of high school students to inform younger students how to make wise choices). Potentially, this overinvestment in free-market competition switches the responsibility to students and families to make productive choices, instead of placing responsibility on the system to provide widely available, high-quality options.

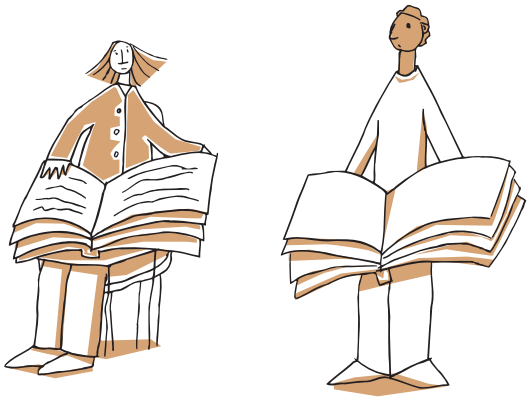
Choice is often presented as an evidence-based debate about whether breaking the public monopoly on schools will enhance the quality of public education. This limited framing of the debate crowds out discourse

about the social and political consequences for children and families when choices are technically available, but neither quality nor access is assured.

In what ways might a choice plan built on inferior options amplify inequity and inadequacy, rather than equalize opportunity and achievement? What happens to the composition of schools when choice is exercised – does choice replicate the segregation public schools are supposed to address? Given the opportunity and the benefit of reflection, how many families would make the same educational choice? How do outcomes compare for students who attempted to act on their choices by moving, but ultimately did not move, and those who completed the move to a learning environment of their choice – that is, students and families who have all exhibited agency and effort (Hoxby & Rockoff 2005)?

If choice is to make a substantial difference in the educational lives of families and children who have little experience researching and evaluating options, we need to reframe it. Perhaps a more valuable and powerful framing of choice is as the work of making the best match for each student among a wide, but equivalently demanding, set of educational options. This concept of choice depends on a school system's taking responsibility for offering a broad portfolio of distinct, but equally good, education opportunities for all students (Warren & Hernandez 2005). If choice is to be a productive strategy for producing equity and excellence at scale, this responsibility must include several guarantees.

- All choices need to be genuine, with a very clear sense of how students and families learn about, prepare to make, and can expect to benefit from the choices.



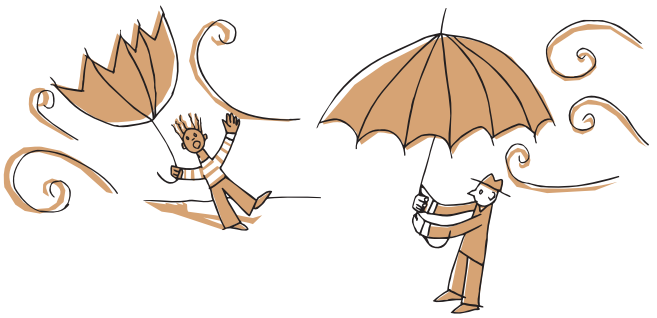
Potentially, this overinvestment in free-market competition switches the responsibility to students and families to make productive choices, instead of placing responsibility on the system to provide widely available, high-quality options.

- The district must monitor the fair operation of the system, constantly evaluating whom it serves well.
- The district must build information and support systems (e.g., find mentor families who can guide incoming families; arrange with employers for days off to visit and select schools; place multilingual notices in wide-circulation newspapers).
- Planning must guarantee that schools available as choices in the system offer a full range of high-quality educational paths (e.g., math and science schools as well as technical and career academies).

Without a vision of equity and excellence and its supporting guarantees, choice becomes the next generation of tracking, rather than a route to greater equity.

Allocating Resources More Equitably

In more than half the states, advocates representing low-income children in substandard schools have pursued an equity strategy based on funding: they have successfully sought to secure increased funding for schools to ensure that all schools have at least a basic level of resources. But, while these lawsuits have addressed real inequities, a strict focus on dollars obscures the larger question of resource *allocation*. Current fiscal and resource-allocation policies underscore a systemic social Darwinism that justifies the allocation of the lion's share of resources to narrowly defined "successful" students, at the expense of those deemed less worthy or less likely to succeed. An emerging alternative framing is to develop resource equity in terms of equivalent, rather than matched or identical, outcomes.



Rather than simply calling for additional resources, advocates should examine evidence about the conditions under which money and resources make a difference, with particular attention to those changes in allocations and distribution that foster excellence in a wider range of students. Perhaps the inequities in achievement and allocation provide a sufficient rationale for developing differential expenditure policies and strategies based on more expansive definitions of success and excellence. For strategies of resource reallocation to make a difference, proponents must also broaden the "equity versus adequacy" discussion to include considerations of what investments translate into differences for students. What changes in staffing are necessary to produce equitable and excellent educational opportunities? What professional development is necessary to fully implement a curriculum designed to improve how the least experienced adults and the most needy children learn? What works at elementary school? What has to be done differently at high school? What works in Baltimore?

How does that inform similar investments in Cleveland or New York City?

Furthermore, adequacy advocates must ground resource issues in the context of American social policy. Schools are embedded in the larger society and so reflect societal problems of unequal wealth and political power distribution, which are manifested in unbalanced resource availability and distribution throughout urban communities and the schools that serve them. How to get the money flowing is not the issue; there is no problem in this society that doesn't get more money put into it if society decides to take the problem seriously. Larger questions remain: How do we convince people that this problem is important enough to spend money on and that these groups of students are important enough to merit that spending and investment?

Current fiscal and resource-allocation policies underscore a systemic social Darwinism that justifies the allocation of the lion's share of resources to narrowly defined "successful" students, at the expense of those deemed less worthy or less likely to succeed.

Beyond Tinkering: The Need for a Total Transformation

Each of the five strategies outlined here represents, in some sense, a leap of faith. The advocates of all of them understand that urban schools are not the cramped, violent, and broken places that the media highlight. Rather, reformers know that urban communities can be places of promise, where schools are the most likely crucibles of equity and excellence at scale (AISR Senior Fellows 2000).

Yet fulfilling this inspiring vision will require a substantial commitment to implementing these strategies in ways that truly foster equity and excellence. And, more important, each strategy, by itself, is not enough. Fulfilling the vision demands *linked* strategies that lock arms, just as the Freedom Marchers did.

What will such a transformation look like? Entire cities will turn into learning systems that include, but also go beyond, schools. They will recruit and educate teachers, mentors, and volunteers who can acknowledge the "funds of knowledge" held by urban families and students (see Moll & González 2003). They will invest every resource possible in understanding curricula and teaching that accelerate the learning of low-achieving students. Districts will reorganize their work to invest in students' development over time, building pre-K–16 systems that include high-quality and timely supports, in place of grade retention and uninspired summer schools, and examining their work in terms of the value added to student learning. They will create *genuine* choice systems – with

older students and experienced families mentoring those new to the decision-making process. Each student will have a pathway that includes learning opportunities outside of school, meaning that every learning institution in a city will offer classes, projects, internships, and jobs. Behind this work there will be a guarantee of adequate resources, wisely applied.

Achieving this vision will take more than educational efforts. Mayors, city councils, and voters must invest in the redistribution of capital, rather than only in the development of immediate revenues. This means public-private partnerships to build high-quality mixed-income housing, subsidized housing for educators who will live in the communities where they work, and public transport that allows neighborhood families and their children to reach libraries, parks, and museums quickly and safely. It means funding for public education that does not depend on property taxes. It requires city-suburb and city-county systems of schools that deconcentrate poverty.

New Orleans – and Houston, with its overflow – are, in many ways, the newest crucibles for building educational equity and excellence at scale. The children and families in those cities want – and need – to know, "Will you – do you know *how* to – do more than tinker at the edges of what we need?"

References

Annenberg Institute Senior Fellows in Urban Education. 2000. *The Promise of Urban Schools*. Providence, RI: Brown University, Annenberg Institute for School Reform.

Bowen, W., and D. Bok. 1999. *The Shape of the River: Long-term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Elmore, R. 2000. *Building a New Structure for School Leadership*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.

Fine, M., J. Bloom, and L. Chajet. 2003. "Betrayal: Accountability from the Bottom," *Voices in Urban Education* 1 (Spring). Available on the Web at <www.annenberginstitute.org/VUE/spring03/Fine.html>.

Gordon, E., B. Bridglall, and A. Meroe. 2004. *Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Achievement*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Hoxby, C. M., and J. E. Rockoff. 2005. "Findings from the City of Big Shoulders," *Education Next* (Fall).

Moll, L. C., and N. González. 2003. "Engaging Life: A Funds of Knowledge Approach to Multicultural Education." In *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 2nd ed., edited by J. Banks and C. McGee Banks. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schoenbach, R., C. Greenleaf, C. Cziko, and L. Hurwitz. 1990. *Reading for Understanding*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Valenzuela, A. 1999. *Substractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Warren, C., and M. Hernandez. 2005. "Portfolios of Schools: An Idea Whose Time Has Come," *Voices in Urban Education* 8 (Summer). Available on the Web at <www.annenberginstitute.org/VUE/summer05/Warren.html>.

Annenberg Institute for School Reform

AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

Annenberg Institute for School Reform
Brown University
Box 1985
Providence, Rhode Island 02912

Non Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Providence, RI
Permit #202