

An Evaluation of the School Choice Plan in
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Its
Perceived Effects on Academic Achievement
for all Students

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Abstract

Is our nation on the verge of a segregation movement in our public schools even after two prominent court cases Plessy verses Ferguson 1894, and Brown verses Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas 1954? The Supreme Court held that segregation was legal as long as separate facilities provided for blacks were equal to facilities provided for whites. Public schools, transportation facilities, residential neighborhoods, public and private theaters, restaurants, and even public restrooms and drinking fountains, were designated for white use only. In the meanwhile, separate and supposedly equal facilities were set aside for "coloreds" only. Delay tactics by local school boards slowed down the separate but equal phenomena. Textbooks were handed down and school buses were handed down, but while the paperwork was being done, it got lost on someone's desk, causing black schools to wait for weeks and sometimes months to get equal buses and books. Brown was to bring an end to this separate but equal legal doctrine.

Dedication

To My wife Tezella Greene Cline and our two sons Tyler James Cline and Timothy Lee Cline! Thank You for all your support and love during this process! To my mother, Yvonne Davis Cline, who was with me when I started this process, but she died June 8th, 2005. I miss you Mom!

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When I started this process, my brother Bobby was alive and well, my mother was alive and well, and Bernard had already gone home, I want them to know that "The Storm Is Over Now", and God has completed what he started in me. I miss and love you all. To my sisters Tracey Cline and Kimberly Sanders for being the sisters that you are, and Mikle Cline, my oldest brother, thank you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Problem

Does ethnicity of the student prevent equal levels of learning at an equal pace? Are schools required to teach all children effectively, no matter what their socio-economic status, gender, or ethnicity? Educators and researchers have longed for the answers to these questions. For years, educators have been looking for ways to teach children in schools that are racially identifiable and have the highest percentages of children on free and reduced lunch. School districts that have choice as a way of assigning students are increasing the number of racially identifiable schools. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, a choice plan was implemented in June 2001. That plan created more schools of poverty within the district. The district also offered additional resources, teacher incentives, and financial assistance as a way to leverage the student make-up of the school district and the individual schools at all levels.

Research Questions

The researcher selected the following research question(s) for the study:

What effect did the school choice plan have on student achievement and race in Charlotte - Mecklenburg Schools?

The researcher will:

- Identify and investigate outcomes of the decision that declared Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools unitary.
- Investigate patterns prior to the implementation of a school choice plan in 2002.
- Analyze how, after implementation in 2003, student achievement in certain schools of higher percentages of poverty was negatively impacted.

The Null Hypotheses:

- There is no statistically significant difference in ethnicity in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools after implementation of the school choice plan.
- There is no statistically significant difference in free and reduced lunch students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools after implementation of the school choice plan.

- There is no statistically significant difference in achievement in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools after implementation of the school choice plan.

Historical Perspective

The public school system in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has a rich and very interesting history. This history was built by the efforts of individuals who firmly believed in educating the community, growing the economy, and in supporting the individuals that they served.

The public schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District began in the year of 1882, when J.T. Williams was chosen as the first superintendent of the segregated system. Two schools were created in 1882, the South School (white only) and the Myers Street School for the African American students. In 1888, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools became known as "The largest public school system south of Baltimore". During that time, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools opened the system's second school for white students in 1900. It was known as the North School and it served students to grade ten. North School was considered the finest school building in North Carolina. Beginning in 1907, the city school system expanded to include several county schools. Starting with the development of Alexander

Graham High School, three years later, another high school was needed, so Central High School was built, and Alexander Graham School became the state's first junior high school. Grade twelve was then added to the graded school system. In 1949, the Institute of Government (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) recommended that Charlotte Schools and Mecklenburg County consolidate to provide equal opportunities for all children. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools flourished during that time.

A study was then recommended to look at extending and consolidating the two systems to alleviate local school problems. On January 13, 1958, the final report provided a plan to make the two systems into one unified district. On June 30, 1959, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System was born as residents voted two to one in favor of consolidation. After eleven years of discussion and study, the two largest school systems in North Carolina were merged. Dr. Elmer Garinger (the City superintendent) was appointed the first superintendent of the newly merged, yet still segregated, school system.

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in the Case of Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, that the "separate but equal" policy, which had been in effect

since 1896, was unconstitutional. In this case, the court also declared that the separate schools were "inherently unequal" and all schools must "desegregate" with "all deliberate speed." This case called "Brown" was actually a collection of five cases from Delaware (Gebhart v. Belton), Virginia (Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County), Kansas (Brown v. Board of Education), South Carolina (Briggs v. Elliott), and the District of Columbia (Bolling v. Sharpe). The Court heard them together as combined cases because each raised the issue of the constitutionality of racially segregated public schools (Balkin, 2001).

Thurgood Marshall, the lead legal strategist for the NAACP, worked to overturn "Jim Crow Laws". The Supreme Court's decision of Brown has become a legal and a political rallying point for plaintiffs. The Brown Case became the most famous Supreme Court opinion because it offered the confirmation of the Supreme Court's power of judicial review and the most honored opinion in the Supreme Court's corpus. (Balkin, 2001 pp. 4)

During the time mentioned, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools were very much segregated into segments of black schools and white schools within the consolidated system.

There were no integrated hotels, restaurants, restrooms, churches, cemeteries, theaters, or schools. For three years, Charlotte made no move to implement the Brown v. Board of Education (1954) decision. The city and individual communities took a wait-and-see attitude. It was the African-American community's move that began the desegregation of the system in 1957. To take advantage of their legal right to attend all white schools, four black students entered all white schools in 1957. A picture of one of the students and her grandmother, surrounded by an angry, jeering mob, was seen in newspapers throughout the Southeast. Despite this negative attention, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools received national recognition for desegregating its schools with relative ease. The problem that the system faced next was even more daunting. There continued to be great disparities between the city schools and the county schools. This was created by "white flight" to the developing suburbs. "White flight" was a way of fighting desegregation. Segregation in Charlotte was still a real issue ten years after the Brown v. the Board of Education (1954) decision. In 1964, the system had eighty-eight single race schools - fifty-seven white and thirty-one black. The following year 1965, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools experienced one of the most famous court cases in

the history of the county - Swann v. the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Board Of Education (1965). This court case involved Rev. Darius Swann, his wife Vera, and their son James. They were missionaries in India and upon returning to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, their son went to the school closest to their home, Seversville, a school with 297 white students and twenty-six black students. James was then instructed that he was at the wrong school and should be assigned to Biddleville, an all black school. In his statement, Reverend Swann said that, "children were able to transfer out of integrated schools, but not allowed to transfer into them, and that the law should be equally binding, otherwise the law is discriminatory."

After discussing the issue with the Superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Craig Phillips, it was brought before the Board Of Education, and their case was denied. On January 19, 1965 the Swann family along with nine other families filed suit against Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The suit alleged that:

- Dual zones remained in operation, black and white school districts side by side.

- The school board permitted transfers out of integrated schools, but discouraged transfers into the schools.
- Most school faculties were completely segregated.

On July 12, 1965, the court case was heard before Judge Braxton Craven, who ruled in favor of the school board saying that they had shown clear intent and had made steady progress toward ending the policy of segregated schools. On October 24, 1966 the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the verdict. Two years later, a decision was handed down from the U.S. Supreme Court involving a Virginia case - Green v. New Kent County (1968). The ruling from Green handed down that freedom of choice was a sufficient remedy, but the case was taken to the Supreme Court where the ruling was reversed. Kent County had an obligation to eliminate the historic patterns of segregation. This decision was used as an opportunity to reopen the Swann Case in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The case alleged that:

- Continued segregation was harmful to children, reflecting itself in test scores of black schools where students started out below grade level.

- The school system's plan for geographic student assignments perpetuated the segregation issue with the location of new school facilities, the existing facilities, and the school boundary lines established for new facilities.

Attorney Julius Chambers, representing the families, alleged that the decisions made by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, did not meet the "Affirmative duty" standards of New Kent County. Judge James B. McMillan declared that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools were not yet desegregated. According to Judge McMillan, the black students still attended schools that were predominately black and most of the teachers were white. The Board was then directed by the Judge to submit a plan of positive desegregation to be completed by the fall of 1970. Following the Supreme Court's siding with the McMillan decision, the Board of Education was mandated to develop an acceptable student assignment plan that would encompass a busing plan that the Board would support. Under this plan, the busing issue had to be distributed as equitably as possible. The plan was approved on July 9, 1974 and the Swann case was closed for the time being.

In 1997, a Charlotte parent, Bill Capacchione, alleged that his daughter was twice denied entrance into a magnet program because she was not black. The Swann attorneys announced that they would join the case to fight the Capacchione suit, saying the school system had not fully desegregated and should not be released from court-ordered desegregation. In 1998, U.S. District Judge Robert Potter reactivated the Swann case and consolidated it with the Capacchione suit. Six parents joined the suit saying that the school system used race-based policies to influence how students are assigned and where schools are built. These parents argued schools are fully desegregated and the continued use of race-based policies is unconstitutional. The trial began in Federal Court, and a ruling was made on September 9, 1999 by Judge Potter that the school system must stop using race as a factor in assigning students to schools.

In November 1999, Dr. Eric Smith, superintendent of schools, proposed a new student assignment plan that would send students to schools in closer proximity to where they lived. The plan would provide families with a "choice" that would probably segregate by socio-economic status. This assignment plan was developed on the framework of choice zones and offered stability to families K-12. The

Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board unanimously approved the plan after public hearings and feedback from the community. The new plan was adopted on June 1, 2001, with a focus on the following:

- Give families a chance to chose a school close to home
- Preserve the integrity of choice
- Address growth in a reasonable manner
- Offer stability through K-12 feeder patterns

After this process, on June 7th, 2000, the Fourth Circuit Court heard both sides of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools desegregation case and a ruling was issued on November 30th, 2001. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools was not unitary in some areas such as facilities, student assignment, student achievement, and transportation sending it to the lower court for reconsideration. The areas that were considered unitary were faculty, staff, extracurricular activities, and student discipline. The United States Supreme Court on April 15th, 2002 announced that they were not going to hear the petition filed by the plaintiffs. This decision let stand the Fourth Circuit's decision that Charlotte-

Mecklenburg Schools had achieved unitary status. This decision closed the chapter on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' nationally recognized desegregation case.

Purpose

The purpose of this causal-comparative study is to investigate and identify outcomes of the court decision that declared Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools unitary, and investigate patterns prior to the implementation of a school choice plan in 2002, and analyze how after implementation in 2003, student achievement in certain schools was negatively affected. If there are factors that influenced achievement in certain schools, the data could be used by school divisions to determine if the choice plan is appropriate and effective, regardless of ethnicity, or socioeconomic status of students involved.

Definition of Terms

Affirmative Action - A policy designed to redress past discrimination against women and minority groups through measures to improve their economic and educational opportunities; "affirmative action has been extremely controversial and was challenged in 1978 in the Bakke decision".

Causal-comparative study - a type of quantitative research that seeks to discover possible causes and effects of a behavior pattern or personal characteristics by comparing individuals or groups.

Desegregation - the action of incorporating a racial or religious group into a community.

Discrimination - Unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice.

End-of-Grade Test - The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests are designed to measure student performance on the goals, objectives, and grade-level competencies specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

End-of-Course Test - The North Carolina End-of-Course Tests are used to sample a student's knowledge of subject-related concepts as specified in the North Carolina Standard Course

of Study and to provide a global estimate of the student's mastery of the material in a particular content area.

Ethnicity - an ethnic quality or affiliation resulting from racial or cultural ties; "ethnicity has a strong influence on community status relations".

Fourteenth Amendment - An amendment to the Constitution of the United States adopted in 1868; extends the guarantees of the Bill of Rights to the states as well as to the federal government.

Free and reduced lunch - By law, students of families meeting specified income criteria receive lunches either free or at a reduced-price. Eligibility determinations are made by an official at each school and are based on family size and income information provided on an application submitted by a parent or guardian.

Jim Crow Laws - the laws made to enforce racial segregation, and included laws that would prevent black people from doing things that a white person could do. For instance, Jim Crow laws regulated separate use of water fountains, public bath houses, and separate seating sections on public transport.

No Child Left Behind - The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in 2002, has expanded the federal role in

education and set requirements in place that affect every public school in America. At the core of No Child Left Behind are measures designed to close achievement gaps between different groups of students.

Poverty - the state of being poor; lack of the means of providing material needs or comforts and having deficiency in amount or scantiness.

School Choice Plan - a public school program that allows students to choose to attend any of various participating private and public schools, usually based on a system of vouchers or scholarships.

Segregation - the policy or practice of separating people of different races, classes, or ethnic groups, as in schools, housing, and public or commercial facilities, especially as a form of discrimination.

Socio economic status - involves social, as well as, economic factors in a student's living environment. It describes the relationships between people in hierarchical societies or cultures that identify class as a social structure. Social classes with more power usually subordinate classes with less power.

Unitary - or fully integrated schools, a non-racial system of public education perceived as the ultimate end that the Supreme Court hopes schools achieve in declaring

unconstitutional segregated school systems fully
integrated.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka Kansas

May 17, 2004, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the United States Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) of Topeka, Kansas. This decision brought an end to the legal doctrine of "separate but equal", enshrined by the same court nearly sixty years earlier in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1894). In the *Plessy* case, the Supreme Court held that segregation was legal if the separate facilities provided for blacks were equal to those provided for whites. The sole dissent came from Justice Harlan, who argued, "that the constitution was color-blind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens." (ABA Division For Public Education May 2003). Judge Harlan's concerns were fully realized in the regime of Jim Crow laws which enforced the segregation of blacks and other people of color from many of the facilities enjoyed by white citizens across the United States of America. Public schools, transportation facilities, residential neighborhoods, public and private theaters, restaurants, and even public restrooms and drinking fountains, were designated for white use only. In the meanwhile, separate

and supposedly equal facilities were set aside for "coloreds" only. Any hopes to change the laws were dashed state by state, through a democratic process that erected legal barriers so that black citizens could not exercise their right to vote. In courthouses across the nation, blacks were systematically excluded from juries and service to the court system.

Segregation was the law, but it was always met with resistance from the white community. Less than fifty years after *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), a group of individuals committed to fighting the Jim Crow America, formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This group of black attorneys progressively chipped away at the legalization of segregation. The all-white jury and the covenants that restricted home ownership in certain neighborhoods by race, laws disenfranchising black voters, and segregated graduate and professional schools were all challenged, successfully by the attorneys. The attention then turned to the politically charged area of public school segregation. This legal strategy focused on the standard set by *Plessy*, and therefore, would be taken seriously by states. In looking at schools district by district and state by state, white and colored schools were very separate, but in most cases, were not equal. In

every aspect of the standard, it was stressed that through legal challenges, black schools would be brought up to par with their white-only equivalent schools. The strategy that was used required that the legal fight had to be district by district and not state by state. This is where the work began for laying the foundation and groundwork for *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954). This case actually included appeals from decisions in four separate states: Kansas, Delaware, South Carolina, and Virginia. Each state represented individual acts of courage by families willing to face local resistance and even hostility to bring an end to segregation. The conditions in these four cases varied from very stark differences in South Carolina between the colored and white schools, to closer equality in Kansas schools. In all four states, however, the schools were segregated by law, and the NAACP took the position that equality could not be achieved until segregation was brought to an end. Even though the decisions went against the NAACP in the trial courts, its position was strengthened by some of the decisions. In South Carolina, Judge Julius Waties Waring dissented from the decision and opinion of his two colleagues who also heard the case, declaring, "Segregation is per se inequality". In the state of Kansas, the three-judge panel

ruled a finding of fact that segregation has a detrimental effect on colored children, especially when it is enforced by law.

The four cases under *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) were argued on appeal to the United States Supreme Court in 1952, with the issue being whether segregation deprived students of equal protection under the law as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court requested reargument of the case in 1953. But before the reargument could take place, Chief Justice Vinson died and was replaced by Chief Justice Earl Warren. Under the direction and guidance of Judge Warren, on May 17th, 1954, a unanimous Court in *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954), ruled that segregation of public schools was unconstitutional.

The Courts' Involvement

In the late 1960s, the Court became more sensitive and assertive holding that schools must do more than reframing from constitutional violations. In the case *Green v. County School Board* (1968), the Court held that segregated schools had an affirmative duty to create unitary schools and to eliminate the vestiges of past racial discrimination, "root and branch." To help define the school's desegregation duties more specifically, the Court pointed out some

important indicators of a racially segregated school. These factors are known as the Green Factors. The factors used were: student assignments, faculty, staff, transportation, extracurricular activities, and facilities. Consequently, Courts used these "Green Factors" as a guide in determining desegregation plans and whether a school district has achieved unitary status. More importantly, the factors have become a standard by which to determine whether school districts have achieved "unitary status", or fully integrated schools. Unitary status, a non-racial system of public education, is the ultimate end that the Supreme Court hopes to achieve in declaring unconstitutional segregated school systems unitary.

In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971), this decision struck down racially-neutral student assignment plans that produced segregation by relying on existing residential patterns in the South. The Court in *Swann's* case ruled that segregation must be achieved in each of a district's schools to the greatest possible extent and approved busing as a way to achieve it.

Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1 (1969), argued school districts were responsible for policies that resulted in racial segregation in the school system,

including construction of schools in racially isolated neighborhoods and manipulating attendance zones. Once intentional segregation was discovered on the part of the school board in a portion of the district, the whole district was presumed to be illegally segregated. This case also recognized Latino rights and African-American students.

Milliken v. Bradley (1974) set the stage for the Supreme Court to block the efforts for inter-district, city-suburban desegregation remedies as a means to integrate racially isolated city schools. The Court prohibited such remedies unless plaintiffs could demonstrate that the suburbs or the state took actions that would contribute to the segregation of the city itself, which proved very difficult to do. Milliken shut out that option of drawing from heavily white suburbs in order to integrate city districts with very large minority populations.

School Choice

An educational policy that flies in the face of desegregation is school choice. School choice is easily the most controversial educational policy of this time period. Its supporters advocate school choice seemingly for

political maneuvering as a way to improve public schools. The opponents will argue that it will increase segregation by not only race, but also social class while using the public school as a dumping ground for the students who are the most difficult to educate. There has been numerous school choice policies implemented in the United States and other countries within the last two decades. Research findings (Center of Education Reform, 1996; Elam, Rose, and Gallup, 1993; Heritage Foundation 1993) seem to have fueled the debate with sharp differences in results and arguments. To date, the research regarding the results of school choice are far from conclusive (Cookson 1994).

The school choice debate seems to be about two issues: 1) How students should be assigned to schools, and 2) Which schools should receive public funding?

Traditionally, American public education resolved the first of these issues by geographically determining which students would attend which schools. Forty-nine of fifty states, Hawaii being the exception, are divided into school districts which include a varying number of schools within certain jurisdictions. Children who resided within a given district were expected to attend the school within that district. In districts with more than one school per level,

the schools were usually divided into attendance zones. This approach seems to be cut and dry; yet some districts have been able to exercise school choice within the zones. If parents have sufficient economic resources to pay tuition, they can move or buy a better opportunity to be educated at a school of preferred choice. The families of lower socio-economic children and the uneducated have few, if any, choices for their children.

The second key issue for school choice is which schools should receive public support. In the 1920s, a landmark Supreme Court decision, *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925), upheld the right of parents to comply with the compulsory school attendance laws by sending their children to private schools, either religious or secular. Then a series of court cases laid down the general principle that tax money should not be used to support religious schools because the First Amendment requires the separation of church and state.

Court decisions have not always been consistent with each other, and over the years a large quantity of permissible and impermissible types of public aid has evolved. For example, while public money cannot be used for teacher salaries or school construction, the provision of

Title 1 services, transportation, "loaned" textbooks, and various special services is constitutional. The extent of support provided to the parochial schools was considerably different from state to state. Yet, even in states that heavily subsidized private education, parents paid large sums of tuition payments and many other expenses associated with private schools. This seemed unfair, because they felt they had to pay for both tuition and taxes to support public schools they did not use. This is once again a dimension of school choice that is opened almost exclusively to those that had the financial resources and economic means. This system, far from being fair or equitable, permits some parents to choose their child's school with relative ease while for others such choices are prohibitively expensive and unattainable. Lee, Croninger, and Smith (1996) theorized: "How did the many Detroit's of our nation develop the disastrous environments that they currently offer families? One by one, families left the cities. But, the other residents were unable to leave . . . choice bears an unsettling resemblance to the very social, economic, and political processes that created the problems of urban education (pp. 88-89)."

Many advocates of school choice believe that parents have a right to educate their children in schools that

provide a religious education. It has been felt by the opponents of school choice that it weakens the democratic state of the nation in which we live. Historically, the American public school has played a key role in providing the intellectual and social foundations of self-government.

Factors That Affect Lower Socio-economic Children

There are factors that prevent education from being the great equalizer. Schools serving low-income students face the challenges of receiving fewer resources, attracting qualified teachers, meeting student needs, and fostering parental support. This inequality of school quality has been widely recognized and publicized. However, the inequalities facing children before they enter school are less publicly discussed in the media. Schools should be expected to increase student achievement for all students, regardless of race, income, social class, and prior achievement.

Disadvantaged children start kindergarten with significantly lower cognitive skills than their more advantaged counterparts. These same disadvantaged children are then placed in low-resource schools that magnify the inequality. The aforementioned conclusions are based on an analysis of the U.S. Department of Education's Early

Childhood Longitudinal Study (2006). They reported observed differences in young children's achievement scores in literacy and math by race/ethnicity and socio-economic status as they began kindergarten.

There were several conclusions that were drawn:

- There are substantial differences by race and ethnicity in children's test scores as they begin kindergarten; the average cognitive scores of children in the highest SES group are sixty percent above the score of children in a lower SES group. Average math achievement is twenty-one percent lower for blacks than for whites and nineteen percent lower for Hispanics.
- Race and ethnicity are associated with SES. Thirty-four percent of black children and twenty-nine percent of Hispanic children are in the lowest quartile of SES compared with only nine percent of white children. Cognitive skills are much less closely related to race/ethnicity after accounting for SES. Even after taking race differences into account, children from different SES groups achieve at different levels.

- Family structures and educational expectations have important associations with SES, race/ethnicity, and with young children's test scores though their impact on cognitive skills are much less than either race or SES. Although fifteen percent of white children live with only one parent, fifty-four percent of black, and twenty-seven percent of Hispanic children live in single parent homes. Similarly, forty-eight percent of families in the lowest SES quintile are headed by a single parent, compared to only ten percent of families in the highest quintile.

Achievement Gap and Racial Inequities

Inequity in education has many causes and correlates that contribute to the devastating effects that it has on children (Principal Leadership 2004 pp. 24-29). A new phenomenon is surfacing that is hard to discuss. When you ask educators how to explain the achievement gap between differing racial and socio-economic groups, the explanations reign from family conditions, peer culture, poverty, curriculum, pedagogy, cultural differences, teacher expectations, unequal access to resources and language differences. The reluctance to include race as a

prerequisite is controversial, yet vital to the problem of educational inequities. Educators are challenged as never before to demonstrate that all students are learning and that learning for subgroups is being accelerated, as demonstrated annually by students' scores on tests that measure their progress toward meeting state standards. Each state, school district, and school will be expected to make adequate yearly progress toward meeting state standards. Schools search for ways to accelerate achievement, even in the midst of teacher shortages, administrator shortages, decaying buildings, antiquated equipment, and an influx of students from other countries (Principal Leadership March 2004).

Segregation: Then and Now

The Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* opened a new era and with it, new hopes for racial equality. This decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, (1954) looks different. One swift and unanimous decision by the top judges in the land was going to end segregation in public schools. Southern politicians reacted with such a fury and fear that they immediately called the day "Black Monday". (American School Board Journal, Juan Williams, April 2004). Governor James Byrnes of South

Carolina who advocated segregation said that this decision was an end of civilization as we know in the South. Georgia Governor, Herman Talmadge, struck an angry note when he said Georgia has no intention of mixing race in schools as long as he was Governor. He touched on Confederate pride from the days when the South went to war with the Federal Government over slavery, by telling his supporters that the Supreme Court's ruling was not law in his state. He said it was "the first step toward national suicide". "The Brown decision should be regarded as nothing but a mere piece of paper." he said. Meanwhile, newspapers for the black readers were reacting with exultation. "The Supreme Court decision is the greatest victory for the Negro people since the Emancipation Proclamation," said Harlem's Amsterdam News (1954 May). A writer in the Chicago Defender (1954 May) explained, "Neither the Atomic Bomb nor the Hydrogen Bomb will ever be as meaningful to our democracy." Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP lawyer, predicted the end of segregation in all American schools by the fall of 1955.

Ten years later, however, very little school integration had taken place. True to the words of former governors, Southern states had hunkered down in a massive resistance campaign against school integration. Some Southern counties closed their schools instead of integrating blacks and

whites in the same classroom. In other towns, segregationist academies opened, and in most cases, if not all, white students left public schools for the racially exclusive alternative sites. What is ironic is the fact that, in most places, the governors, mayors, and school boards found it easy enough to ask for more time before integrating schools. This slow-as-molasses approach accomplished its purpose. In 1957, President Eisenhower had to send troops into Little Rock just to get nine black children safely into Central High School. In the late 1960s under the threat of losing Federal monies, large scale integration began in Southern public schools. In many places, North and South, black and white children did not go to school together until a federal court ordered school children to ride buses across town to bring the races together.

Today, fifty years later, a study by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University (August 2002) finds that the percentage of white students attending public schools with Hispanic or black students has steadily declined since 1988. In fact, the study concludes that school integration in the United States is "lower in 2000 than in 1970", before busing for racial balance began. In the South, home of the majority of America's black population, there is now

less school integration than there was in 1970. The Harvard study concluded, "At the beginning of the twenty-first century, American schools are now twelve years into the process of continuous resegregation." (Williams, J. (2004), *the Ruling that Changed America*, American School Board Journal, 18-22).

At the start of the new century, fifty years after Brown changed the face of America, segregated housing patterns have continued. An increase in the number of black and brown immigrants has concentrated minorities in impoverished big cities and created a new reality of public schools segregated by race and class.

If Brown v. Board of Education did not have the predicted impact on public schools as initially thought, was it a success? Yes! It is hard to even imagine America before Brown because the ruling completely changed a nation. It still stands as a laser beam that first signaled that the federal government no longer gave its support to racial segregation among Americans. (American School Board Journal, *Brown v. Board Of Education*, April 2004, pps. 20-21).

Before Brown v. Board of Education, the federal government lent its power to the enforcement of the laws of

segregation. An 1896 Supreme Court ruling, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) permitted "separate but equal" treatment of black and white people. Before *Brown v. Board of Education*, the federal government had struggled to even pass a law banning lynching. After the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was a violation of the Constitution, the federal attitude toward enforcing second-class citizenship for blacks shifted. Once the highest court in the land held that equal treatment for all, did not allow for segregation then the lower courts, the Justice Department, and Federal prosecutors, as well as the FBI, all switched sides. They may not have always acted to promote integration, but now they no longer used their power to stop it.

An irreversible shift had begun, and it was a direct result of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. This change in attitude at the highest level created a wave of highly anticipated joy among black people, who were alert to the possibility of achieving racial equality. This was the beginning of a national change in attitude among black Americans. After *Brown*, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man on a racially segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. That stand led to a year-long fight and bus boycott and the emergence of nonviolent protests

for equal rights. That same year, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged as did the nation's hope of civil rights for not only black Americans, but all Americans.

Even when a black fourteen year-old boy, Emmitt Till, was killed in Mississippi for supposedly whistling at a white woman, there was a new unexpected reaction that yielded a change in attitude. One of his elderly relatives broke down the tradition of sitting back and sat on the witness stand to testify against the white men he saw abduct the boy. Until Brown, the simple act of a black man standing up to speak against a white man in Mississippi was viewed as futile and would result in more white-on-black violence. The sense among black and white Americans, that a new era had been ushered in, created a new found boldness nationally. The idea that most black parents in Little Rock did not want to risk harm to their own children by allowing them to join efforts to integrate Central High School, was broken down by nine children. This act in conjunction with the efforts of the NAACP, found a way to make history. That same attitude festered in 1962 when James Meredith became the first black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi. Breaking away from past practices, the Federal Government sent troops to protect Meredith's rights.

The following year, Governor Wallace made a public stand against integration at the University of Alabama when he stood briefly at the door to block the entrance of black students. He then stepped aside in the face of the Federal authority. Additional bold actions were taken by both black and white citizens, nationwide in the 1960s. The Freedom Rides, lunch counter sit-ins, and protest marches for voting rights, all found their roots in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). So did the 1963 March on Washington, at which the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. famously described the vision he had of a promised land where the sons of slaves and the sons of slave owners could finally join together in peace. The desire for change became a demand for change under the impatient voice of Malcolm X, the militant Black Muslim who called for immediate change by violent means, if necessary. Then, in 1964, a decade after *Brown*, the Civil Rights Act (1964) was passed by Congress responding to the political changes taking place because of the landmark case.

This change of attitude nationally, had an impact on cultural changes also. Churches started wrestling with the Christian and Jewish principles of love thy neighbor, even if thy neighbor had a different color of skin. Major league baseball teams no longer had to worry of a revolt from the

fans if more than one black was allowed to play on the team. Black writers, actors, athletes, and musicians began to cross over into the mainstream of the American culture.

White America began growing support for the equal rights movement. College-educated young white people in the 60s often defined themselves as a group that willingly embraced racial equality. Previously, all-white institutions of learning, colleges, and universities were now beginning to open their doors to black students. The resulting arguments of affirmative action in college admissions led to the Supreme Court 1978 decision in the *University of California Regents v. Bakke* (1978). *Bakke* (1978) outlawed the use of quotas.

"The growth of an educated black middle class is the greatest legacy of *Brown*", says Juan Williams, Senior Correspondent, for National Public Radio. The number of black students graduating from high school and college has soared since the inception of this landmark case. Incomes, home ownership, and investment opportunities in the stock market have also soared since the 1980s. The political and economical clout of black America continues to bring the "mountain top" experience that Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned closer to reality.

A Changing Demography: Hispanics

"Legal segregation might be dead, but many of our schools remain overwhelmingly black and poor," says Lawrence Hardy in the American School Board Journal. This condition resulted from years of white flight from central cities due to recent court decisions that accelerated a return to neighborhood schools. At the same time, the Hispanic population is finding themselves in ever-increasing segregated schools across the country, especially in the West. One demographic change in our society was already made clear when the Census Bureau in June of 2003 marked a milestone in U.S. History. Hispanics became the largest minority group in this nation of immigrants surpassing African-Americans by some 500,000 people (American School Board Journal, April 2004: Lawrence Hardy pp. 40).

At more than 38.8 million, the Hispanic population is growing in states with well-established Hispanic communities in Texas, Arizona, and California. Robert Suro, Director of the Pew Hispanic Center, told the Washington Post, "This is the official reminder that we are moving into new territory."

Fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the education of this fast-growing population is increasingly the biggest challenge facing our schools today. Just like African-Americans, Hispanics are more likely to be poor, live in substandard housing, and be unemployed. While studies show that Hispanic families place a high value on education, their children are three times more likely to drop out of school. Louis Hobbs, Superintendent of Indian River School District in Georgetown, Delaware, says that, "They drop out and go to work and send money home to their families."

Today, American schools are so heavily segregated that more than two-thirds of black and Hispanic students are in schools where a majority of the students are not white. Most of the white students in America attend a school that is almost 80 percent white. Hispanics are now the most segregated group of students in the nation because they live in highly concentrated clusters.

This surge in the Hispanic population may be the biggest story in minority education in the post *Brown* years, but it is by no means the only story to be told. Demographic trends have had a decided impact on African-

American students as well, resulting in what many are calling the resegregation of United States schools.

After tremendous gains in integration since the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, African-American students' contact with white students has been declining, according to a recent report by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University (2002). It also showed that in the South, peak integration occurred in 1988, when 43.5 percent of black students attended majority white schools. By 2001, that number had dropped to 30.2 percent.

Gary Orfield, founding co-director of the Civil Rights Project, believed that there were two Supreme Court rulings since *Brown v. Board of Education* that helped reverse the gains. The decisions were *Milken v. Bradley* (1974) which struck down a Detroit desegregation plan that involved the city and its largely white suburbs, and *Dowell v. Oklahoma City* (1991) which allowed courts to declare school districts "unitary" if they were deemed to have eliminated the vestiges of dual and unequal systems. This designation has enabled school systems to get out from under their court-ordered desegregation plans and return to neighborhood schools.

"The school desegregation orders were making schools substantially more integrated than the Southern neighborhoods," Orfield says, "Now we are reverting back to neighborhood patterns. So if we don't do anything about the schools, and we don't do anything about the neighborhoods, we're going to have a substantially higher level of segregation than we had traditionally, or over the last thirty years, in the South." "In the North, we never really desegregated the schools much," he adds, "So we basically have the neighborhood pattern there." Absent any kind of desegregation remedy, those neighborhood patterns have resulted in "virtual apartheid" in some parts of the country, Orfield Civil Rights Project (2002) reported.

In the Northeast, for example, more than half of the black students attend schools that are ninety to one-hundred percent non-white. In the South, almost one-third of black students go to these overwhelmingly minority schools.

The reverse is also true for white students. "Nationally, the typical white student goes to a school that is seventy-nine percent white," says researcher Chungmei Lee, who co-authored the Civil Rights Project report. The report also noticed that Hispanics are

increasingly segregated, particularly in the West, while Asian-Americans remain the most integrated minority.

School integration is important to students living in an increasingly diverse society and world that has grown smaller as a result of globalization, as stated by Orfield. Studies show that schools that are integrated have a positive impact on cross-racial friendships and the educational aspirations of both whites and African-Americans.

On a more concrete level, highly racially identifiable schools and poverty go hand in hand for African-American and Hispanic students. According to the Civil Rights Project Report (2002), "Only fifteen percent of intensely segregated white schools were schools of concentrated poverty or schools with more than half of the students on free or reduced priced lunch. In contrast, eighty-eight percent of the intensely segregated minority schools (or schools with less than ten percent white) had concentrated poverty, with more than half of students getting free lunches.

The good news in this report showed that the economy which had been strong in the 1990s, report the number of people living in high-poverty neighborhoods decreased by

twenty-four percent, or 2.5 million from 1990 to 2000, according to a Brookings Institution report. The number of African-Americans living in such neighborhoods dropped from almost a third in 1990 to nineteen percent in 2000.

"But the Brookings Report (2000) clearly showed that the favorable trend of the 1990s was more temporary than long-term," Harvard professor William Julius Wilson wrote. "Unemployment and individual poverty rates are on the rise again; more than 2.4 million jobs have disappeared in the last two years. And given the continuing increase in the Hispanic population, the number of high-poverty barrios is likely to grow rapidly in a sluggish economy."

White Flight and Urban Schools

"Despite the improved economic status of African-Americans, and most other Americans during the 1990s, housing discrimination persists," said John R. Logan, Director of the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research in Albany, N.Y. "Even middle-class African-American families tend to live in very different and poorer communities than working-class white families," Logan said. "There is separation based solely on race." Choice plays a large role in where African-American families live, he said. Choice does not; however,

adequately explain housing patterns. "Among Asians, we believe that choice is a stronger factor than discrimination in neighborhood location", Logan said. "And among African-Americans, it is very much out-weighted by discrimination."

The fifty years since *Brown v. Board of Education* have seen another population dynamic as well. That is the tremendous growth of white suburbs. "Inner-ring" suburbs surrounding large cities have grown increasingly segregated; however, some observers contend that this trend has marginalized city residents. The vast majority of them are minorities who have less access to good jobs, adequate housing, and quality schools.

"One year after Rosa Parks made her historic stand against racial segregation in public transportation, the federal government elected to be the primary funding source of a 41,000 mile interstate highway system. This system would promote suburban expansion and contribute to the divestment of central cities," wrote John A. Powell, former executive director of the Institute of Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota Law School and now in a similar position at Ohio State University (The American School

Board Journal, April 2004, White Flight and City Schools pp. 42-43).

Powell said that school desegregation plans "had just begun to prove themselves" when the court system started dismantling them, "declaring the power of local governments in metropolitan regions to be more sacred and important than racial justice in education."

"The blows to civil rights efforts of these and other governmental interventions - in shaping what today are racially and economically imbalanced and inequitable metropolitan regions - cannot be overstated," he wrote in the Journal of Urban Ecology.

As a result of white flight and depopulation, many urban school districts are becoming smaller, poorer, and more segregated. For example, the percentage of white students in Chicago City Schools dropped from thirty-seven percent in 1968 to less than ten percent in the year 2000, according to Mumford Center statistics. In 1968, the St. Louis schools were thirty-five percent white; by the year 2000, the district was only seventeen percent white, and overall enrollment had dropped by more than half. Despite the numbers presented, observers are less pessimistic about the results of desegregation than either Orfield or Powell.

While acknowledging the fact of the reality of segregation in many cities, Logan notes in a very recent report that, on average, schools have desegregated substantially since 1968. For the analysis used from the Mumford Center, Logan used an index of dissimilarity, which tells what share of black or white students would have to change schools to achieve a fully racially-balanced school. The index goes from zero, totally integrated, to one-hundred, completely segregated. Logan writes, "By 1990, average within-district segregation had fallen to below fifty on this index, desegregation was widespread, and segregation scores dropped even more in districts without court-mandated plans."

But since 1990, the situation has changed. Even though Logan disagrees with Orfield's contention that schools are substantially resegregating, he concludes that desegregation "has stopped in its tracks" (American School Board Journal, April 2004, pp. 44.) It is difficult to gauge the level of school and neighborhood integration, but demographers have a pretty good idea of what the nation as a whole will look like in the future. Steve Murdock, a state demographer and sociologist at Texas A & M said, "If you want to see the America your children and grandchildren will live in, all you need to do is look at Texas

demographics. The State of Texas is about fifty-three percent non-Hispanic white, and that's what we're projecting for the United States at mid-century." As of the 2000 Census, the nation was sixty-nine percent non-Hispanic white. (The Census Bureau has the category non-Hispanic white because Hispanics can be of any race. So "non-Hispanic white" mean whites who aren't also Hispanics. There's also a "non-Hispanic black" category too) Larry Hardy researcher June 26, 2006.

"For Texas, providing Hispanic students a sound education is not just important for the children and families, it is essential to the state's economy as well", Murdock said. As long as Hispanic children are less likely to complete high school or go to college, their earning power will be considerably less than others. And if lower-income residents are making up an increasingly larger share of the population, state tax revenues will be affected. This trend could be felt earliest, and most severely in states with large immigrant populations, such as Texas, California, and New York. But eventually, it will affect the entire country, as the United States becomes a "majority minority" nation (American School Board Journal, April 2004, pp. 44).

The question that stands out now is where does this leave African-Americans, the once dominant minority group? It may be inevitable that there will be some degree of competition between minority groups for scarce economic and educational resources says Jennifer Hochschild, a professor of government at Harvard. "No group, historically, has moved over cheerfully for another group," Hochschild said. On the other hand, Hispanic and African-Americans share similar problems, hopes, aspirations, and dreams. They could develop strong coalitions to support the education of all minority children to benefit their ethnic group.

Perhaps a more disturbing divide is one that could develop between a younger generation that is majority minority and an elderly one that is wealthier and largely white. In the book, *The American Dream and The Public Schools*, Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick, director of the undergraduate program at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, call this the 'racial generation gap.'

Competition for resources will grow as the "dependency ratio" increases. This is the ratio of the dependent young and old to those of working age, is how the authors describe it. According to the United States Census, that

ratio will rise from sixty-three dependents per one-hundred workers in 1992 to eighty-three per one-hundred in 2030. Whether this nation can unite across these racial divides will say a lot about the politics of the twenty-first century. It will influence the kinds of neighborhoods we choose to live in and the quality of education we offer our children in the public schools.

W.E.B. Dubois believed that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line. Dubois defined this color line as the relationship between darker and lighter races "in Africa and Asia, in America and the islands of the sea". This color line has shifted because of wars, revolutions, migrations, laws, and social change. But, race remains a volatile issue in the twenty-first century. In fact, Abigail Thernstrom and Stephan Thernstrom wrote in their book, "No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning", racial inequality is the nation's great unfinished business. They called racial inequality in schools, "the most important civil rights issue of our time." Fifty years since *Brown v. Board of Education*, they said that educational equality along racial lines remains an elusive problem to grasp. Other experts tend to agree, citing the persistence of racial problems that show up in wide achievement gaps between white and minority students.

Poverty and the Achievement Gap

One of the most disheartening situations in U.S. education is the achievement gap between black, Hispanic, and Native American students and their white and Asian peers, says Gina Burkhart, executive director of the Illinois based North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. The picture that she paints in "Closing the Achievement Gap", a large scale study launched in 2002 and expanded in 2003, is bleak, but not completely without hope. Nancy Kober, a researcher used by NCREL, said past achievement trends provided a glimmer of optimism and hope. Kober notes that, "minority students' achievement rose significantly in the 1970s and 80s. In the 1990s achievement gaps widened, and have remained that way today. If we look at her analysis, we see:

- On the National Assessment of Educational Progress 1999 Reading Test, the scores of black students at age seventeen were about the same as those of white students at age thirteen.
- On the 1999 NAEP science test, Hispanic nine year olds scored more than three grade levels lower than white students of the same age.

- On the 2000 SAT college entrance exams, black students on average scored twenty-three points lower on the math test and ninety-five points lower on the verbal than white students.
- Hispanic students on average scored eighty-nine points lower in math and seventy points lower in verbal than white students.

Students of all races have made gains in achievement, Kober points out, but white students still out distance minority students by an ever-increasing margin, thus perpetuating and widening the racial achievement gaps. (Burkhart 2002)

The goal of improving minority students' achievement is embedded in the Federal Law of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). To comply with NCLB requirements, states and school districts must administer statewide reading and math tests each year in grades three through eight, and they must report results for academically targeted groups of students, including racial and ethnic minorities and children living in poverty. Beginning in 2002-2003, state and district report cards were required to portray overall achievement, as well as achievement by subgroups of students.

Written in NCLB is the hope that faced with consequences for failing to make "adequate yearly progress", low performing schools must concentrate their efforts on raising achievement for all students. For the first time in our nation's history, raising achievement levels among racial and ethnic groups and closing racial achievement gaps are "explicit goals of federal policy", said Ronald Ferguson, from Harvard University. He believed that closing achievement gaps will depend on more than just standardized-based reforms and standardized tests. He points to schools that are "reputedly excellent", but where, in fact, black and Hispanic students are consistently under-represented at the top and over-represented at the bottom of the achievement spectrum. Ferguson expressed concern that unequal achievement does not command more attention in so-called high achieving schools. Too often, he said, such schools are excellent for honors students on their way to prestigious colleges and universities, but they fail miserably with most of their poor, minority students.

Many school officials believe they can do little to combat poverty and other out-of-school influences on student achievement. Kati Haycock, director of Education Trust in Washington, D.C., calls that belief a myth.

Haycock cites several examples of high-poverty schools across the country where minority students consistently perform at or near the top on most state tests. The leaders in these schools know that is a myth, she says. The leaders in those schools refuse to allow socioeconomic or other factors as excuses to deny minority students a high-quality education.

Many schools in the states of Texas and North Carolina typically defy that notion, according to the Education Trust. Statewide, Hispanic eighth graders in Texas are twenty-five points ahead of their peers in Minnesota on the NAEP writing test. And in North Carolina, black eighth graders are seventeen points ahead of their peers in Michigan.

Success stories on a smaller scale are equally as encouraging. Ginger Reynolds, a researcher with Learning Point Associates and NCREL, described "programs with promise" in "Identifying and Eliminating the Achievement Gaps: A Research-Based Approach." A great example of this is in El Paso Texas. Located in the poorest congressional district, Sageland Elementary has a student population that is seventy percent Hispanic. This school's student achievement scores have gone from the bottom quartile in

all areas academically to a high of the ninety-sixth percentile.

The principal attributes these increases to several efforts: adopting instructional best practices; promoting heavy involvement by parents and the business community; and developing a community-wide school reform effort that involves scrutinizing disaggregated data and using the information to deploy and re-deploy existing resources. There are similar reports from minority students in Seattle's Nathan Hale High School. Administrators credit team teaching, mentoring, interdisciplinary studies, teacher development, and a school-within-a-school model for improvement of minority student test scores, attendance, and discipline referrals.

In an attempt to explain the gap in achievement, researchers at the Education Trust studied selected schools and communities across the nation. It should come as no surprise, Haycock said, to find that many minority students attended under-funded schools and received poor-quality instruction.

However, a number of other school factors contribute to the ever-increasing achievement gaps. In several schools, the researchers found students sharply divided

along racial lines. In Providence, for example, it was noted that twenty-three percent of the school's students were black, but only nine percent of the black students were admitted into the district's gifted and talented program and Advanced Placement Courses. Similar racial imbalances were found in other cities and states also: Austin, Texas; Durham, North Carolina; Boston, and San Francisco.

Haycock also reported a "teacher gap" in high-minority, high-poverty schools. On average, she reported, that teachers in these schools have less experience, attend less selective colleges, and fail certification tests more frequently than teachers in wealthier schools with fewer minority students.

Another factor that was found by Haycock, and probably the most damaging, is teachers' lack of faith in the ability of minority students to learn and succeed. During six years of observations of teachers and students in high-minority and high-poverty classrooms, Haycock said, "the researchers frequently found that teachers gave minority students few assignments, and the work they did assign typically had little meaning and was of little value." In one class in particular, an eleventh grade English teacher

told students to "read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and color a poster about it."

In a sentiment shared by many educational experts and supported by Samuel Casey Carter of the Washington-based Heritage Foundation in his study of twenty-one high-performing, high-poverty schools, he attributes much of the minority students' success in these schools to principals who "hold their students and teachers to the highest standards." (American School Board Journal, Research, The Persistence of Racial Inequality in the Nations' Classrooms). The schools that Carter studied were different in many ways, yet they worked from a common belief that "children of all races and income levels can meet high academic standards."

A 1999 government study of nine successful elementary schools in Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, and East Saint Louis, all of which enrolled mostly high-minority, high-poverty students, points to the need for strong school leadership to reduce racial achievement gaps. In these schools, researchers found that principals set high expectations for teachers and students and create a "collective sense of responsibility for school improvement."

Closing the achievement gap has become a focal point for the efforts of many school systems in the United States. This gap, according to many educators, refers to the academic achievement differences between racial and ethnic groups within the United States. The evidence is clear. Most African-American and Hispanic students perform significantly below their white counterparts. Few researchers will discount the educationally and developmentally detrimental effects of poverty. The achievement gap is nearly always addressed in terms of racial and ethnic educational outcome differences.

It is difficult not to accept and perpetuate a race-based explanation for the achievement gap when most educational statistics are reported by racial and ethnic status. When the statistics are reviewed, there appears to be adequate justification for reporting the educational statistics in this manner. Majority students are consistently found to academically out-perform African-American and Hispanic students. Consider the National Assessment of Educational Progress' (NAEP) - 1990 - 2000 Nation's Report Card on academic achievement. The Report Card reports a significant gap between white students, African-American students, and Hispanic-American students. There is a significant pattern that emerges when you look

at fourth grade students falling below the proficient level in math, reading, and science by racial and ethnic status. The same observed statistics occurred in eighth grade. These results seem to provide evidence to suggest that the achievement gap is, in some manner and some degree, a function of racial and ethnic status.

Environmental Factors and Cultural Mismatches

One fairly enticing explanation for the racial/ethnic achievement differences in the United States is that children from minority families frequently enter the school environment to think and behave differently than expected from teachers and administrators in America's public schools. This is characterized as a cultural mismatch. This argument is then bolstered by the fact that the largest percentage of teachers and administrators in American schools represent the majority population. In 1999, only one out of ten teachers represented a minority in this country and African-American and Hispanic-American administrators were just eight percent and three percent of the total. A culturally related mismatch in cognitive style, behavior patterns, and school-related competencies put some minority children at a very significant

educational disadvantage, according to some theorist perspectives (Ogbu, 1994).

Stereotypes regarding minority children abound in the research, as well as the popular literature. For example, Mexican-Americans have been characterized as aloof, passive, and slow to acculturate. Valdes, in his 1996 book entitled *Con Respeto*, contends that these cognitive and behavioral patterns are a direct result of how parents socialize their children. Mexican-American children are taught to not only respect adults, but never question their authority. Some Mexican-American children, particularly first and second generation Americans, may not question a teacher or even ask for clarification. Therefore, from the perspective of the teacher, the child is considered a passive learner.

This cultural mismatch paradigm has been documented to account for the achievement gap between African-American and white children, as well. According to Burts, Hart, and Charlesworth in an article published in 1992 in *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, African-American children thrive in a learning environment that is relationship-oriented and highly active. Many African-American children, according to these authors, are not taught to thrive in

highly regulated, rule-oriented environments. These behavioral characteristics are believed to be a function of living in families often comprised of extended kin where active participation in the home is encouraged. Additionally, African-American children, particularly males, are brought up to be assertive. Thus, highly regulated, rule-oriented school environments, may require African-American children to think and act in ways that are different from their home environments, placing them at a disadvantage in school.

There is, however, research evidence to show that much of the achievement gap may be attributed to class differences, as opposed to racial and ethnic cultural differences. A number of studies have found that when socioeconomic status is statistically controlled, cultural factors no longer predict achievement outcomes. (Children, Families, and School: Viewing the Achievement Gap from a Different Angle, NC Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003.) A growing number of researchers believe that much of the achievement gap is a function of socioeconomic status, not of race and ethnicity. Several studies illustrate this view. Stevenson and Colleagues (1990) studied mathematics and reading achievement in first, third, and fifth grade. The initial

results yielded a very significant gap between white students, African-American students, and Hispanic students. However, when socioeconomic status was statistically controlled, a mathematical technique that removed the influence of income on achievement, the performance gap was no longer significant. Similar results were obtained in a study of eighth and tenth grade white, African-American and Hispanic students.

Socioeconomic status and Achievement

If cultural differences are not largely responsible for the achievement gap, how can we explain the fact that so many African-American and Hispanic children are performing so poorly in school compared with children from majority families in this country? The answer may lie in the high percentage of African-American and Hispanic families living at or near the poverty level. In the United States census 2000, it showed that 7.5 % of white (non-Hispanic) families live at or below the poverty level. Over twenty-two percent of African-American or Hispanic families live at or below the poverty level.

In terms of real numbers, there are significantly greater numbers of white children performing poorly in school than either African American or Hispanic children.

It is very unfortunate that the perceptions of educators may be influenced that more minority children are underachieving than majority children.

Low income families and families living in poverty differ substantially from middle and upper income families in each racial and ethnic group. Families that are able to provide more financial resources, regardless of race/ethnic status, are able to provide the educational resources that support school readiness and academic achievement. Books, magazines, educationally relevant compact discs, videos, and computers in the home are proven aids to children. In addition, parents with greater financial resources also provide more opportunities for their children to participate in extracurricular activities. Families with more resources provide activities in reading, coloring, and game playing. Children are often engaged in discussions of current events and travel opportunities through museum visitation and cultural events (Foster, 2000).

There are fundamental differences between these families. Recent research is starting to show that there are similarities in how low-income parents interact with their children regardless of a racial identity. There is no question that children from low-income families have less

access to educational opportunities, materials, and cultural events. A more important fact is that children of poverty are more likely to experience corporal punishment are less likely to be monitored by adults, have less contact with their fathers, and may have substantially poorer quality interactions with their parent(s). In other words, poverty is insidious. It affects nearly every aspect of a child's home environment and does so in similar ways across racial and ethnic groups within the United States. (Children, Families, and School: Viewing the Achievement Gap from a Different Angle, North Carolina Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003.)

If this is true that socioeconomic status is the strongest predictor of academic achievement, one would expect to find children from low-income families performing at similar levels of achievement. To help gain a better understanding of the effect of socioeconomic status, data has been gathered from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, a nationally representative sample of over twenty-thousand children. First grade math and reading scores were compared for children living in low income and poverty conditions with those living in families with middle and upper levels of income for African-American, Hispanic, and white children. The reading scores for the three

racial/ethnic groups with lower economic resources were quite similar. When you look at the combinations of the three groups, there were no statistically significant differences between them. This same pattern was found for the three groups with higher levels of income. Equivalent results were found for general knowledge and teacher measures of self-regulatory behaviors. Finally, those with higher levels of income were significantly different from those with lower income levels.

It appears to be clear that when children from families with similar income levels are compared, even if they are different ethnically, the achievement gap totally dissipates. The gap only remains between those that have significant income level differences. In terms of achievement in mathematics and reading at both the kindergarten and first grade levels, the findings do not support a cultural mismatch interpretation of the achievement gap. The findings do support the view that families with lower levels of income or who are in poverty, cannot provide the educational opportunities and support to children that families with greater resources can provide. This seems to make a great deal of difference regardless of one's racial or ethnic identity. Research evidence is not yet sufficient to make a definitive decision whether

cultural differences matter. It appears that cultural differences that exist between African-American, Hispanic-American, and white children, in and of themselves, do not put early elementary school children at a relative educational disadvantage.

The evidence does suggest that those children from families with lower levels of income, whether white, African-American, or Hispanic are at risk for poor performance the moment they enter the educational environment. The economic achievement gap is real and the revelation appears early and often. According to some researchers (Alexander & Entwisle, 1988 Child Development Monograph), children, who are economically at-risk and who are poor performers in comparison to their more advantaged peers at the end of the first grade, are likely to find themselves on a trajectory for long-term academic failure in school. Predicting achievement at the end of high school from scores obtained in the first grade is a particularly sad commentary on our schools. Yet, this is what the data from a growing number of studies suggests.

If we want to eliminate the achievement gap, our efforts should be focused on children at or near the poverty level. Those efforts should be initiated early in

life at the formative stages. The efforts should not focus on race, but on socioeconomic status. It is not safe to assume that poor African-American children are any less advantaged or academically at-risk than any other racial or ethnic group. It is very true that African-American and Hispanic children proportionally are closer to being at or near the poverty level more than their white counterparts. It is just as important to realize that when white, African-American, and Hispanic families have higher levels of economic resources, the educational outcomes are significantly improved and essentially equal in the early elementary years, a critical time in the development of children's self-esteem and self-efficacy for school. The important point is that when minority parents possess adequate resources financially, they have the capability, the knowledge, and the desire to effectively support their children's efforts.

The achievement gap between poor and middle-class black and white children is widely recognized as one of our most important educational challenges. There is a commonplace belief that poverty and race cannot cause low achievement. From this premise, there is an attitude that schools are failing disadvantaged children. We see many highly successful students from lower-class backgrounds,

and their success seems to prove that social class cannot be what impedes most disadvantaged students.

Parental Influence and Achievement

The article, "Class and the Classroom", Richard Rothstein suggests that "the success of some lower-class students proves nothing about the power of schools to close the achievement gap. In every social group, there are low-achievers and high-achievers alike. On average, the achievement of low-income students is below the average achievement of middle-class students but, there are always some middle-class students who achieve below typical low-income levels. Similarly, some low-income students achieve above typical middle-class levels. Demography does not determine a child's destiny, but a student's family characteristics are a powerful influence on their relative average achievement." (American School Board Journal, October 2004).

There is some research out there that supports this thinking. Rothstein states, "That lower-class children are successful, but in those cases the schools were selective in their enrollment procedures." For example, a school may be enrolling children who qualify for subsidized lunches because their parents are graduate students living on low

stipends. In other cases, such schools define high achievement at such a low level that all students can reach it, despite big gaps that remain at more meaningful levels.

It seems plausible that if some children can defy the odds of demography, all children can. In that belief, we find traps that set up reasonable people for unreasonable expectations. It has been proclaimed that the success of some poor children proves that social disadvantage does not cause low achievement. Partly, our confusion comes from failing to examine the concrete ways that social class actually affects learning. Describing these may help to make it more obvious why the achievement gap can be substantially narrowed only when school improvement is combined with social and economic reform.

Consider how parents of different social classes tend to raise their children. Young children of the educated class parents are read to more consistently and encouraged to read more alone when they get older. Most children whose parents have college degrees are read to daily before they begin kindergarten. Few children whose parents only have a high school diploma or less, benefit from the opportunity of daily reading. White children are more likely to be read to than black children in their pre-kindergarten years.

A five-year-old who enters school recognizing some words and who has turned the pages of many books and stories will be easier to teach than one who has rarely held a book. The second child can be taught, but with equally high expectations and effective teaching, the first will be more likely to pass an age appropriate reading test than the second. This is where the achievement gap begins. If a society with such differences wants all children, irrespective of social class, to have the same chance to achieve academic goals, it should find ways to help lower-class children enter school having the same familiarity with books as middle class children. This requires rethinking the institutional settings in which we provide early childhood care, beginning in infancy. (American School Board Journal, October 2004.) It has been acknowledged that the impact of such differences is real, but hard to accept. It is, however, extremely hard to believe that good schools should have such a difficult time overcoming this concept. If Americans had a broader concept of the international perspective on education, it would be easier to understand. Class backgrounds influence relative achievement everywhere in the world. The inability of schools to overcome the disadvantage of illiteracy and less literate homes is not an American failure, but a universal

reality. The number of books in students' homes consistently predicts their test scores in almost every country. Turkish immigrant students suffer from an achievement gap in Germany, as do Algerians in France, as do Caribbean, African, Pakistan, and Bangladesh pupils in Great Britain, and as Okinawans and low-caste Buraku in Japan. (American School Board Journal, October 2004.)

A 2000 international survey of fifteen-year-olds, by the U.S Department of Education, determined that "most participating countries do not differ significantly from the United States in terms of the strength of the relationship between socioeconomic status literacy in any subject. (American School Board Journal, October 2004). Remarkably, this report was published at the same time that a bill was being guided through Congress, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), that demanded every school in the nation to abolish social class differences in achievement within twelve years (Rothstein, 2004).

Urging less-educated parents to read to children cannot fully compensate for the differences in school readiness. Children who see parents read to solve their own problems or for entertainment are more likely to want to read themselves. Parents who bring reading materials home

from work demonstrate, by example, to children that reading is not a segmented burden, but a seamless activity that bridges the gap between work and leisure. Parents who read to children, but do not read for themselves send a totally different message.

How parents read to children is as important as whether or not they read. Extensive literature confirms that more educated parents read aloud differently. When working class parents read aloud, they are more likely to tell children to pay attention without interruptions or to sound out words or name letters. When they ask children about a story, the questions tend to be more factual, asking for names of objects or memory of events.

On the other hand, parents who are more literate are more likely to ask questions that are creative, interpretive, or connective, such as, "What do you think will happen next?" or "Does that remind you of what we did yesterday?" Middle-class parents are more likely to read aloud to have fun, to start conversations, or as an entrée to the world outside. Their children learn that reading is enjoyable and are more motivated to read in school.

There are stark class differences not only in how parents read, but in how they converse with their children.

Explaining events in the broader world to children at the kitchen table may have as much influence on test scores as early reading itself. Through those conversations, children develop vocabulary and become familiar with contexts for reading in school. Educated parents are more likely to engage in such talk and it begins in infants and toddlers conducting pretend conversations long before infants can understand language.

Typically, middle-class parents ask infants about their needs, and then provide answers for the children. ("Are you ready for a nap now? Yes, you are, aren't you?") Instructions are more likely to be given indirectly: "You don't want to make that noise do you?" This kind of instruction is really an invitation for a child to work through the reasoning behind an order and to internalize it. Middle-class parents implicitly begin academic instruction for infants with such indirect guidance.

Yet, such instruction is quite different from what policy-makers nowadays consider "academic" for young children: explicit training in letter and number recognition, letter-sound correspondence, and so on. Such drill and practice in basic skills can be helpful, but is unlikely to close the social class gap in learning.

Middle-class parents draw their children into adult conversations as soon as they become verbal to allow them to practice communication skills. This develops a sense of entitlement in children and it allows them to practice giving their own opinion. Children, who ask for reasons rather than accepting adult opinions, develop intellectual skills which later on will develop into success in academics in school. There are some lower-class students that develop these skills, and middle-class students that do not. Overall, a sense of entitlement is based on the social class of the child.

Parents whose professional occupations utilize authority and responsibility typically believe more strongly that they can affect environments and solve problems. At work, they explore alternatives and negotiate compromises. Then, at home, they naturally reflect these personality traits when activities are designed for children to figure out the solutions on their own. Even the youngest middle-class children practice traits that make academic success more likely when they negotiate what to wear and eat. Middle-class parents are more likely to explain why the rules are reasonable.

But, on the other hand, parents whose jobs are to follow orders or do mundane tasks show less sense of efficacy. They are less likely to encourage their children to negotiate over clothing or food and more likely to instruct them by giving orders without extended discussion. Following orders, after all, is how they themselves behave at work. Their children are more likely to be more accepting about obstacles they face, in and out of school.

Middle-class children's self-assurance is enhanced in after-school activities that may require large fees for enrollment and almost always require parents to have enough free time and resources to provide transportation. Organized sports, music, drama, and dance programs build self-confidence and discipline in middle-class children. Lower-class parents find the fees for such activities more daunting, and transportation may also be an issue. Organized athletic and artistic activities may not be available in their neighborhoods, so lower-class children's sports are more informal and less confidence-building, with less opportunity for team building and self-discipline. For children with greater self-confidence, unfamiliar school challenges are seen as exciting. These children, who are more likely to be from middle-class homes, are more likely to succeed than those children who are less self-confident.

Homework intensifies academic differences between these two groups of children because middle-class parents are more likely to help with homework. Yet, homework would increase the achievement gap even if all parents were able to assist. Parents from different social classes supervise homework differently. Consistent with overall patterns of language use, middle-class parents, especially those whose own occupational habits require problem solving, are more likely to assist by posing questions that break large problems down into smaller ones that help children figure out correct answers. Lower-class parents are more likely to guide children with direct instructions. Children from both classes may go to school with completed homework assignments, but middle-class children are more likely to gain in intellectual power from exercise than lower-class children. Twenty years ago, two researchers, Betty Hart and Todd Risley, from the University of Kansas, visited families from different social classes to monitor the conversations between parents and toddlers. Hart and Risley found that professional parents spoke more than two-thousand words an hour to their children, working-class parents spoke about thirteen-hundred words, and welfare moms spoke about six-hundred words a minute. So by the age of three, the professionals' children had vocabularies that

nearly doubled or were fifty percent greater than those of working-class children and twice as large as those of children on welfare.

The Kansas researchers also tracked how often parents verbally encouraged children's behavior and how often they were reprimanded. Toddlers of professionals got an average of six encouragements per reprimand. Working-class children had two encouragements per reprimand. Children of welfare parents were reversed, as they had an average of one encouragement per two reprimands. Children, whose initiative was encouraged from a very early age, are more likely to take responsibility for their own learning.

Schools cannot make up deficits like this in isolation. For all children to achieve the same goals, the less advantaged would have to enter school with verbal fluency that is similar to middle-class children.

Social Class and Child's Performance

Social class differences in role modeling also make an achievement gap almost inevitable. Middle-class professional parents tend to associate with similarly-educated professionals. Working-class parents have fewer professional friends. If parents and their friends perform jobs requiring little academic skills, their children's

image of their own future is influenced. On average, these children must struggle harder to motivate themselves to achieve than do children who assume, on the basis of their parents' social circle, that the only roles are doctor, lawyer, teacher, social worker, manager, administrator, or business person.

Even disadvantaged children usually say they plan to attend college. College has become such a broad rhetorical goal that black eighth-graders tell surveyors they expect to earn college degrees as often as white eighth-graders do. But, despite these intentions, fewer black children, in comparison to white children, actually graduate from high school four years later. Fewer enroll in college the following year and fewer still persist to get bachelor's degrees.

This discrepancy is not due simply to the cost of college. A bigger reason is that while disadvantaged students say they plan to go to college, they don't feel as much parental, community, or peer pressure to take the courses or get the grades they need to become more attractive for college admission. Lower-class parents say they expect their children to get good grades, but they are less likely to enforce these expectations with rewards or

punishment. School personnel can stress doing well in school to lower-class children, but that belief is in direct conflict with children's self-image formed early in life and reinforced at home on a daily basis.

John Ogbu and other researchers noted that a culture of under-achievement may help explain why even black middle-class children often do not do as well in school as white children from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. On average, middle-class black children do not study as hard as white middle-class children and black middle-class children are more disruptive in class (Rothstein, 2004).

This culture of accepted under-achievement is easier to understand than to find a cure for it. Throughout American history, many black students who excelled in school were not rewarded for that effort in the labor market. Many black college graduates could find work as servants or Pullman car porters, or in white-collar fields, as assistants for less qualified whites. Many Americans believe that the practices of discrimination have disappeared and that blacks and whites with similar test scores now have similar earnings and occupational status. Labor market discrimination, however; continues to be a

major obstacle for black males with only high school educations.

Evidence for this comes from employment discrimination cases, such as the prominent 1996 case in which Texaco settled for a payment of 176 million dollars to black employees after taped conversations revealed racist attitudes, not only restricted to Texaco, but other companies as well. Other evidence comes from studies that find black workers with darker complexions have less success in the workforce than those with identical age, education, and criminal records, but lighter complexions.

Still more evidence comes from the studies in which blacks and whites with similar qualifications are sent to apply for job vacancies. Typically, the whites are more successful than the black candidates. In one recent study, where well-groomed, articulate black and white college graduates posing as high school graduates with identical qualifications, submitted applications for entry-level jobs, the applications of the whites with criminal records, got more positive response than blacks with no record at all.

So the expectation of black students that their academic efforts will be less rewarded than the efforts of

their white peers is rational for the majority of black students who do not expect to complete a college education. Some will reduce their efforts in the academic arena as a result of this.

Minority students have high expectations for their future, but many of their teachers and principals do not share that view, concludes a report released from, "The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 2001: Key Elements of Quality Schools." This study polled 763 public school students, grade seventh through twelfth graders, 1273 teachers from kindergarten to grade twelve, and 1004 principals from March through May. Of the 291 African-American and Hispanic students surveyed and questioned, nearly three-fourths reported that they have high expectations for their future. In schools with a large minority population, only forty percent of the teachers, and just half of the principals polled agreed with the students. The survey asked students, teachers, and parents about their expectations for the students' future. A large gap was found between the number of students who expected to go to college and have professional careers, and the number of teachers and parents who expected the children to achieve at that level. The interesting point here is that

the students expected to reach a higher level than the adults did. (Education Week, October 10, 2001.)

Despite these big racial and social class differences in raising children, role modeling, labor market experiences, and cultural characteristics, the lower achievement of lower-class children is not caused by these differences in isolation. Just as important and adding to the fray are the differences in the actual social and economic conditions of the children from these homes.

Health of Lower Socio-economic Children

Overall, lower-income children are poorer in health, have poorer vision, and have poorer prenatal conditions. Their eyes are poorly trained because of the amount of time in front of television as toddlers. When it is time to read, lower-income children have tracking problems and are unable to focus on the passage at hand. A large percentage are identified as learning disabled and this may well be an indication of undiagnosed vision problems that could be treated by optometrists and a placement in special education classes unnecessarily.

Lower-class children have poorer oral hygiene, more lead poisoning, more asthma, poorer nutrition, and less adequate pediatric care along with a host of other

problems. This concentration of problems is highly affected by toothaches and the resulting discomfort that causes a lack of focus on academics.

Because low-income children live in communities where landlords use high-sulfur home heating oil and where diesel trucks frequently pass en route to industrial and commercial sites, they are more likely to suffer from asthma, leading to more absences from school, and when they are able to attend, drowsiness from laying awake at night wheezing. Recent surveys in Chicago and in New York City's Harlem community found one of every four children suffering from asthma, a rate six times as great as that for all children (Rothstein, 2004).

In addition, there are fewer primary-care physicians in low-income communities, where the physician-to-population ratio is less than a third the rate of middle-class communities. For that reason, disadvantaged children, even those with health insurance, are more likely to miss school for relatively minor problems, such as common ear infections, for which middle-income children are treated promptly. Each of these well-documented social class differences in health is likely to have a palpable effect on academic achievement.

The growing unaffordability of adequate housing for low-income families also affects achievement. Children whose families have difficulty finding stability in housing are more likely to be mobile, and student mobility is an important cause of failing student performance. A 1994 government report found that 30 percent of the poorest children had attended at least three different schools by third grade, while only ten percent of middle-class children had done so. Black children were more than twice as likely as white children to change schools this often. It is hard to imagine how teachers, no matter how well trained, can be as effective for children who move in and out of their classrooms as they can be for those who attend regularly.

Differences in wealth are also likely to be important determinants of achievement, but these are usually overlooked because most analysts focus only on annual family income to indicate disadvantage. This makes it hard to understand why black students, on average, score lower than whites whose family incomes are the same. It is easier to understand this pattern when we recognize that children can have similar incomes, but be of different economic classes. In any given year, black families with low income

are likely to have been poor for longer than white families with similar income in that year.

White families are also likely to own far more assets that support their children's achievement than are black families at the same income level, partly because black middle-class parents are more likely to be the first generation in their families to have middle-class status. Although the median black family income is about two-thirds the median income of white families, the assets of black families are still only twelve percent of those of whites. Among other things, this difference means that, among white and black families with the same middle-class incomes, the whites are more likely to have savings for college. This makes white children's college aspirations more practical, and therefore, more commonplace.

Changing Policies and Programming

If we are able to properly identify the actual social class characteristics that produce differences in average achievement, policies then should be designed to narrow the achievement gap. The improvement of instructional practices is among the first characteristics to be addressed, but a focus on school reform alone is bound to be frustrating and ultimately unsuccessful. In order for it to work, school

improvement must combine with policies that narrow the social and economic differences between children. Where these differences cannot be narrowed, schools should then be reformed or redefined to cover more of the early childhood, after-school, and summer times when the disparate influences of families and communities are now most powerful.

Since the gap is already prevalent at the age of three, the most important new investment should be in early childhood programs. Pre-kindergarten classes for four-year-olds are needed, but they barely begin to address the problem. The quality of early childhood programs is as important as the existence of such programs themselves. Too many low-income children are parked before television sets in low-quality day-care settings. To narrow the gap, care for infants and toddlers should be provided by adults who can create the kind of intellectual environment that is typically experienced by middle-class infants and toddlers. This requires professional caregivers and low child-adult ratios.

After-school and summer school experiences for lower-class children are also needed to narrow the gap between white and black children. This certainly does not mean

remedial programs where lower-class children get added drill in math and reading. Remediation should be a part of an adequate after-school and summer program, but only a part. The advantage that is gained by middle-class children after-school and in the summer comes from the self-confidence they acquire and the awareness of the world outside that develops through organized athletics, dance, drama, museum visits, recreational reading, and other activities that develop inquisitiveness, creativity, self-discipline, and organizational skills. After-school and summer programs can be expected to narrow the achievement gap only by attempting to duplicate such experiences.

Provision of health-care services to lower-class children and their families is also required to narrow the achievement gap. Some health-care services are relatively inexpensive, such as school vision and dental clinics. A full array of health services will undoubtedly cost more, but cannot be avoided if the intention is to truly raise the achievement level for lower-class children.

This connection between social and economic disadvantage and an academic achievement gap has long been well-known and researched. Most educators, however, have avoided the obvious implication: Improving lower-class

children's learning requires ameliorating the social and economic conditions of their lives (Rothstein, 2004).

Equity in Funding - Leandro Case

As we look at the process of improving lower socioeconomic students' academic achievement, funding for these children is also an issue. Who then should be responsible for ensuring that all students are given an opportunity for academic success? The state of North Carolina is ultimately responsible for ensuring that each of the children must have access to a sound basic education, a state judge declared in his fourth and final ruling in this eight-year-old case of *Leandro v. State of North Carolina* (1994). North Carolina must do more to provide well-trained teachers and administrators, as well as enough resources for delivering an effective instructional program.

Judge Manning sent a letter to Howard Lee, Chairman of the State Board of Education and Mike Ward, State Superintendent, ordering that the state specifically help Hoke County Schools reverse high turnover among teachers, improve teacher quality, and improve staff development (Charlotte Observer, March 31, 2004). "It is now time for the school children of Hoke County to be provided with

those resources as specifically identified by the team, and which are now being provided," Manning wrote. "The law in this case is clear about what educational resources are to be available for the children of Hoke County, and if additional funding is required to provide them, the constitution of North Carolina requires it to be forthcoming."

Hoke is one of five poor school systems that sued the state in 1994 claiming they received inadequate funding. Several school systems including Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Wake, and Durham, joined the lawsuit, also arguing for more money to educate students.

Hoke County was picked as the test case in the court proceeding known as *Leandro v. the State of North Carolina* (1994), after one of the families in the initial lawsuit. Manning has issued several rulings in favor of the smaller systems. In his letter, Judge Manning cited the state's obligation "to many small counties like Hoke County that share its problems". Gerry Hancock, general counsel for a group of seventy poorer school systems, welcomed the Judge's latest ruling. He said, "The judge has made it clear that these issues cannot be addressed within the resources within Hoke County and resources provided by the

state, the plaintiffs have always believed that this could not be done within existing resources."

While advocates celebrate the ruling for focusing on the children with the greatest needs, state officials were still trying to decipher how the decision would affect North Carolina's school finance system and the balance of power over local schools. Still, the ruling left little doubt that the court expected action for disadvantaged children. Judge Howard E. Manning of the Wake County Superior Court wrote in his bluntly worded 112 page report;

"The state of North Carolina must roll up its sleeves, step in, and utilizing its constitutional authority and power over the local educational agencies, cause effective educational change when and where required."

"It does not matter whether the lack of an equal opportunity to obtain a sound basic education is caused by teachers, principals, lack of instructional materials, or other resources, or a lack of leadership and effort," the ruling continues . "The state must step in with an iron hand and get the mess straight."

(Education Week, April 10, 2002).

To the disappointment of some, the judge did not say whether the state needs to increase its budget for

education. But his ruling suggested that many school districts could use state money in a more cost-effective manner. The ruling leaves it up to the state to work with local districts to improve the educational programs. Some observers said that the decision would leave the state little choice but to pump more money and resources into its K-12 schools. "This is an absolute slam-dunk for all children in North Carolina," said Gregory C. Malhoit, the director of the Rural Education Finance Center in Raleigh, the state capital. Judge Manning said, "The state cannot stand back and point the finger at the local school systems for failing to meet the educational needs of children at risk of failure". "This is empowering to the state if they take the initiative to step up to it", said John H. Dornan, executive director of the Public School Forum of North Carolina, a non-profit research organization in Raleigh. "It essentially says it is your job, get busy."

State officials were also pleased with the focus on disadvantaged children, but some leaders worried that the ruling could undermine local control over education. Mike Ward, State Superintendent of Public Instruction said, "Philosophically, we are very much attuned to the needs of at-risk youth, but there is potential in this ruling to upend North Carolina's notion of who's in charge of

schools." The school chief also took issue with the judge's suggestion that school funding may be adequate. He cited the state's low ranking nationally in per-pupil funding. Even though the state projects a shortfall of more than one billion dollars in the overall state budget, he said, North Carolina needs to commit more money to schools.

The ruling came in a lawsuit brought in May of 1994 by five low-wealth districts, which charged that the state was not providing adequate additional resources for disadvantaged children. A group of urban districts later joined the case, saying that they too, were being underfunded. The state sought to dismiss the complaint in *Leandro v. State of North Carolina* (1994), and ultimately appealed to the State Supreme Court, which sent the case back for trial in the Superior Court in Raleigh to determine whether all children had access to a sound basic education.

Is the state providing the resources that by law they should provide to give access to all children for a sound basic education? After a six-week trial in the fall of 1999, Judge Manning issued a three-part preliminary ruling in the case. In the first two parts, both issued in October 2000, he concluded that the state's educational system was

"sound, valid, and constitutional," but that in order to provide equitable educational opportunities for all children, the state needed to set up a high-quality pre-kindergarten program for four year-olds deemed at-risk of failing in school. In the third part of the decision, issued in March of 2001, Judge Manning found that disadvantaged students throughout the state were not being served appropriately by schools, not necessarily because of inadequate funding, but because North Carolina had no "coordinated, effective educational strategy" for addressing their needs. The judge ordered the state to draw up a strategic plan for doing so.

The state has consistently argued that it is providing the necessary resources for an appropriate education for all children, but that school districts may not be applying the money effectively. Judge Manning vehemently disagreed.

Bolstering those cases even more is the fact that educational research offers evidence that specific interventions help improve student test scores. That research includes studies of the positive effects of reducing class sizes in early grades, providing pre-school programs, and ensuring students learn from highly qualified teachers.

Studies, such as these, give judges confidence that specific measures, whether prescribed or picked by states themselves, will yield results in the classroom, school plaintiffs say.

States, on the other hand, can argue that states adopted challenging standards to give school leaders motivation to improve student achievement. Mr. Lindseth argued that test scores tied to those standards should not be considered definitive barometers of students' abilities. He said that, "In virtually every state, even the ones with high-quality school systems, large numbers of children do not meet those standards."

Finally, the federal and state governments need to develop policies, from both the social and economic perspective, that enable children from poverty to attend school more equally ready to learn. These policies could range from offering health services for poverty children and families, providing stable housing for working families with children, taking aggressive action against discrimination, and boosting the incomes of working families employed in low-wage occupations. For nearly half a century, economists, sociologists, and educators have been aware of the disparities that exist. Most, however,

have avoided the obvious implication of understanding this. Raising the achievement of lower income children requires improving the social and economic conditions of their lives and not just the new wave of reforming schools. (The Achievement Gap, Richard Rothstein, November, 2004).

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

The following research question(s) were selected for the study:

What effect did the school choice plan in 2002, after the court case, have on student achievement and race in Charlotte - Mecklenburg Schools?

- Investigate and identify outcomes of the decision that declared Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools unitary
- Investigate patterns of segregation and poverty prior to the implementation of a school choice plan in 2002
- Analyze how after implementation in 2003, student achievement in certain schools of higher percentages of poverty was negatively impacted and how schools became one race schools

Did the choice plan affect student achievement in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools by setting up more racially identifiable schools? End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests were used to determine how student achievement was affected by the implementation of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' choice plan. The student populations of certain schools

were affected by population shifts of free and reduced lunch status students, such as, the demographics of certain schools. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools went from being a national model for desegregation to moving back toward segregated schools, especially within the inner city. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools began as a segregated school system and in comparison, has evolved back to when it had eighty-eight one-race schools (fifty-seven white, and thirty-one black in 1964).

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools was declared unitary in certain areas: faculty, staff, extra-curricular activities, and student discipline. The areas that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools were not unitary were: facilities, student assignment, student achievement, and transportation as determined by the Fourth Circuit Court. Therefore, the Supreme Court decided not to hear the case and let stand the decision that declared Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools unitary. (Unitary status is a non-racial system of public education perceived as the ultimate end that the Supreme Court hopes schools achieve in declaring unconstitutional segregated school systems fully integrated.) As a result of the Fourth Circuit Court's decision, schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg continued to assign students according to race

in order to achieve integration. This practice continued until it was challenged in 1965.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is located in the south-central part of North Carolina in Mecklenburg County, near South Carolina. Charlotte has an estimated population of 1.4 million people in Mecklenburg County.

Charlotte is the largest city in North Carolina and the twentieth most populous city in the United States. As of 2004, census estimates show there are 594,359 people living in the city limits, and 801,137 in Mecklenburg County for a total of 1,395,496 people. The county's population is projected to reach one million in 2010.

Charlotte's population is ethnically diverse:

- 58.26 % White
- 32.72 % Black
- 16.38 % Other

The median income for a household in the city is \$46,975, and the median income for a family is \$56,517. 10.6 % of the population and 7.8 % of families are below the poverty line. (The Wikipedia Encyclopedia, the Free Encyclopedia, (Online) 2005). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/main_page.

Subjects

Currently, in 2006, Charlotte - Mecklenburg Schools has a total student population of one hundred-seventeen thousand, eight-hundred and five students. For the purpose of this study, the researcher utilized the total approximate number from elementary schools and middle school students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

The racial breakdown of the school district consists of thirty-nine percent white, and forty-three percent African-American, 6 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent other. Charlotte - Mecklenburg Schools has 9 alternative schools, thirteen senior high schools, twenty-eight middle schools, and eighty-seven elementary schools.

The population of this study is the total student population of elementary and middle school students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, approximately eighty-five thousand-eight hundred and forty-three students. The researcher believed the high school data would misrepresent the student outcomes.

High schools were changing, tests were being developed, multiple tests at particular grade levels were being offered, which misrepresented the data. Also, all new schools, closed schools, magnet schools, and alternative

schools were removed from the study so that the data would not misrepresent students and their current assignment. Some students were selected by a lottery or were choosing to attend a school of their choice which also misrepresented the data.

The researcher utilized descriptive statistics to summarize all students of elementary and middle schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg for participation in the study. Descriptive Statistics are mathematical techniques for organizing and summarizing sets of data in educational research. This data will be used to discuss the ethnicity of certain schools that were substantially impacted before and after the implementation of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school's choice plan. Descriptive statistics were chosen for two purposes: first, to document the range of variation in the ethnic make-up of schools prior to the choice plan, and to document the range of the change in student make-up after the implementation of the plan. Secondly, descriptive statistics was used to determine whether common themes, patterns, and outcomes cut across the variations of certain schools before the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' choice plan and after implementation of the school choice plan.

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized a t-test to determine a statistically significant difference in schools, prior to the implementation of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' choice plan in 2002 and after implementation 2003. The t-test is any statistical hypothesis test in which the test statistic has the student's t-distribution to check if the null hypothesis is true. The results are listed below in the table by T-test score, mean, and standard deviation per tested year for this study.

Data from each elementary and middle school in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools were collected from the Instructional Accountability Department of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. The data were broken down by percentages of ethnicity, percentages of free and reduced lunch, and by school levels, (elementary and middle). The researcher also assessed the breakdown of each school prior to the implementation of the school choice plan, and after the school choice plan using the same aforementioned criteria. The tables were categorized by level and ethnicity, and free and reduced lunch status as recorded by the data that were analyzed. Data collection began in September of 2002 and continued until March of 2006.

Limitations

There were limitations noted in the study. The researcher was actively involved in the professional and personal lives of the individuals being researched. In conducting the research, the researcher played a dual role of an informal participant, as a former principal of one of the schools within the study, Marie G. Davis Middle School, and as the researcher.

As principal, the researcher was directly involved with the demographic change that took place within the school because of the school choice plan. The staff make-up was significantly affected by the researcher who selected and deselected the staff members. Being an informal participant and researcher provided the researcher with an inside view of the researched issue.

The researcher does have a bias in this study as a limitation. The researcher believed that all children, no matter what their ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, can learn, given the right support, atmosphere, leadership, and expectations within the school. The researcher also believed that more differentiated staff development opportunities should be available for teachers, principals, and support staff to teach children of poverty. For that

reason, the researcher chose this study to investigate the influence of the school choice plan on student achievement.

The increase in the enrollment of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools during the years of 2001-2003 will affect the outcome. Student enrollment increased approximately five-thousand students a year during this time. This increase in enrollment of the district exhibited an increase in the overall student numbers for schools reviewed in the study.

Overall, average student enrollment per school went from 401 to 418 students between 2002 and 2003 for all of the schools in the study. The average number of free lunch students per school went up from about eighty-nine students to 129 students during that same time period per school. However, saying that free lunch increased by about forty students on average per school, (about a forty-five percent jump), outside of the context of the fact that overall enrollment went up, may be misleading. Many people would see that as a massive leap, ignoring the basic change in overall enrollment. If you take free lunch as a percent of total enrollment, the data looks different. In 2002, free lunch was about twenty-two percent of the population and in 2003 it was about thirty-one percent of the population. Thus, you might say that the percent of students receiving

free and reduced lunch in 2003 was thirty-one percent, up from twenty-two percent the year before, controlling for changes in the total enrollment.

Likewise, the average number of black students on grade level per school increased from 101 to 132 (an increase of thirty percent), but the overall average enrollment of black students changed from 188 to 208. Citing the change in black students on grade level may be misleading outside of the context of the overall increase in students. Thus, 101 is about eighty-six percent of 188 and 132 is about forty-two percent of 188, so you might say, controlling for overall changes in the number of black students enrolled, there were about nine percent more students proficient (number of students at or above grade level) in 2003 than 2002. The problem with that number is that it is meaningful only in the context of all students in the state in terms of change in proficiency (number of students at or above grade level).

If you look at just Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, you see that the overall percent on grade level rose from sixty-nine percent in 2002 to seventy-five percent in 2003. Thus, the change in black proficiency (number of black students at or above grade level) is exactly in keeping with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' district mean

change (nine percent versus six percent is not much of a significant difference in change).

Summary

Chapter Three presented the subjects of the study, which included all the students in elementary and middle school of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The researcher was able to utilize End-of-Grade and End-of-Course data from 2002 and 2003 and breakdown of student ethnicity with reference to charts and tables to show data in a different format for understanding. The data were collected in April 2001 from official reports secured by permission from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools district Accountability Department. Data were collected prior to implementation of the school 2002 choice plan and again after implementation 2003 of the choice plan. The data were compared to show substantial changes in student population and shifts from school to school at the elementary and middle school levels. Chapter Three also explained the researcher's bias and role in this study along with the limitations of the study. The chapter then concluded with how the data was collected and compared by varying school levels.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

Chapter Four is a summary of the data gathered from student End-of-Grade and End-of-Course test data, analysis of ethnicity, free and reduced lunch status, breakdown by elementary and middle school level, percentages of student change, percentage before choice plan implementation, and percentage after implementation of the choice plan. Chapter Four will present the research questions and a listing of the null hypotheses and their resolution utilizing a t - test to determine statistically significant differences in schools prior to implementation of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' choice plan in 2002 and after implementation 2003.

The t-test statistical procedure was employed to determine if there were differences among school years prior to implementation of the school choice plan in 2002, and after implementation in 2003. It was also employed to determine if there were differences in student's achievement levels, free and reduced lunch differences, and racial differences in schools.

The researcher utilized a pre-established alpha level of .05 to check for significant differences in the data.

Research Questions

The researcher selected the following research question(s) for the study:

What effect did the school choice plan have on student achievement and race in Charlotte - Mecklenburg Schools?

- Identify and investigate outcomes of the decision that declared Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools unitary
- Investigate patterns prior to the implementation of a school choice plan in 2002
- Analyze how after implementation in 2003, student achievement in certain schools of higher percentages of poverty was negatively impacted

The Null Hypotheses:

- There is no statistically significant difference in ethnicity in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools elementary and middle schools after implementation of the school choice plan in 2003.
- There is no statistically significant difference in free and reduced lunch students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools elementary and middle schools after implementation of the school choice plan in 2003.

- There is no statistically significant difference in achievement in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools after implementation of the school choice plan in 2003.

Data were collected from the North Carolina End-of-Grade and End-of-Course testing model from elementary and middle school students. Data were then compared for statistical significance, prior to implementation of the choice plan in 2002 and after implementation in 2003. The researcher ran the data with the raw count data, and with the percent data. There were a few schools with unusually high or low student enrollments that sway the results greatly. Changing from raw counts to percents helps mathematically, but it does not change the fact that these schools were in some way really different from the rest of the schools in the study. The researcher then compared how many standard deviations the 2003 means were from the 2002 mean scores (See table 4).

There were also differences in the number of students on grade level enrolled between 2002 and 2003. On average, the percent of students on grade level rose between 2002 and 2003 from 68.15 percent (SD = 13.07) to 75.17 percent (SD = 13.10), a statistically significant difference (See table 4). Also, the differences of black students on grade

level rose between 2002 and 2003. On average we found the percentage increased from 55.52 percent (SD = 12.27) to 67.20 percent (SD = 11.02) a statistically significant difference (See Table 4). There were also differences in the number of students on free and reduced lunch enrolled between 2002 and 2003. On average the percent of students on free and reduced lunch rose between 2002 and 2003 from 49.89 percent (SD = 20.42) to 55.16 percent (SD = 24.55), a statistically significant difference (See table 4).

Finally, the differences in the number of students enrolled on free and reduced lunch and grade level increased between 2002 and 2003. On average the percent of students on free and reduced lunch and grade level rose between 2002 and 2003 from 52.26 percent (SD = 9.96) to 65.22 percent (SD = 10.39), a statistically significant difference (See table 4).

Table 4

Percent of Students by Year on Grade Level, Black, on Grade Level, and Black, on Free Lunch and on Grade Level

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Dev.</u>
Percent on Grade level	2002	73	68.15	13.07
Percent on Grade level	2003	73	*75.17	13.10
Percent of Black	2002	73	50.082	16.67
Percent of Black	2003	73	52.44	23.52
Percent of Black on Grade level	2002	73	55.52	12.27
Percent of Black on Grade level	2003	73	*67.20	11.02
Percent of Free Lunch	2002	73	49.89	20.42
Percent of Free lunch	2003	73	*55.16	24.55
Percent of Free Lunch on Grade level	2002	73	52.26	9.96
Percent of Free Lunch on Grade Level	2003	73	*65.22	10.39

Bold * signifies significance

The size of the schools in the study, ranged from student populations of 139 students to 1347 students. This size differentiation impacted the study significantly, because of student distribution, and growth in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools prior to implementation and after implementation of the school choice plan in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (see table 5).

Table 5

Range of Difference in school size from Minimum to Maximum

<u>Percent</u>	<u>Student population</u>
of Students	
100% Max	1347
99%	1347
95%	1108
90%	771
75% Q3	458
50% Median	297
25% Q1	229
10%	185
5%	152
1%	139
0% Min	139

Although there were differences in the number of students enrolled between 2002 and 2003, with some schools gaining many more students due to reassignment, there was no overall difference in the number of students enrolled in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools [T (73) = 1.33, p = .188] (See Table 6).

Table 6

Total Number of Students in school years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	400.9	273.6	73	417.8	310.4	73	1.33	0.188

Not Statistically Significant

There were also differences in the number of students on grade level enrolled between 2002 and 2003. On average

the percent of students on grade level rose between 2002 and 2003 from 68.15 percent (SD = 13.07) to 75.17 SD = 13.10) (Table 4) a statistically significant difference (See Table 7).

Table 7

Number of Students on Grade Level in school years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	7.02	210.4	73	313.28	237.5	73	3.87	* < 0.0002

* < Statistically Significant

The total number of black students in school years 2002 and 2003 with a p value of 0.0739 was not statistically significant (See Table 8).

Table 8

Total Number of Black Students in school years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	187.6	134.2	73	208.1	183.7	73	1.81	0.0739

Not Statistically Significant

The total number of black students on grade level in the school years 2002 and 2003 had a p value $<.001$ was statistically significant (See Table 9).

Table 9

Total Number of Black Students on Grade Level in years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	101.35	70.08	73	132.4	107.67	73	5.02	* $<.001$

* Statistically Significant

The total number of students on free and reduced lunch in school years 2002 and 2003 was statistically significant with a p value of <0.0074 (See Table 10).

Table 10

Total Number of Students on Free or Reduced Lunch in years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	177.7	116.45	73	208.9	156.3	73	2.76	* <0.0074

* Statistically Significant

The total number of free and reduced lunch students on grade level in school years 2002 and 2003 was statistically significant with a p value of $<.0001$ (See Table 11).

Table 11

Total Number of Free or Reduced Lunch Students on Grade Level 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	89.32	51.54	73	128.49	82.71	73	6.85	*<.0001

< * Statistically Significant

The researcher hypothesized at the .05 pre-established alpha-level there would be no statistically significant difference among total number of elementary and middle school students, for the school years 2002 and 2003. After adjusting for initial differences on the school choice plan in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, it is clear that this hypothesis was not significant at the .05 alpha-level. Therefore, it is determined that the number of students on grade level was statistically significant and had a main effect ($p=0.0002$). This significance means there were differences among total number of students on grade level for the 2002 and 2003 school years.

To determine the differences in the total number of black students among the school years 2002 and 2003, a t-test was utilized to check for statistically significant differences. It was quite clear that this hypothesis was not significant at the pre-established alpha-level of .05.

Therefore, it was determined that total number of black students was not statistically significant at 0.0739. When the total number of black students on grade level, in school years 2002 and 2003, it was determined to be significant at the pre-established alpha-level of .05. Black students on grade level were compared in school years 2002 and 2003. This hypothesis was significant at the .05 alpha-level. Therefore, it is determined that the school choice plan had a significant effect ($p < .001$). This significance means that the school choice plan had a statistically significant effect on the total number of black students after implementation of the choice plan. The total number of students on free and reduced lunch was compared for school years 2002 and 2003. The researcher hypothesized that there would be no statistically significant difference among students on free and reduced lunch status in school years 2002 and 2003. It was clear that this hypothesis was significant at the pre-established alpha level of .05. Therefore, a determination that the school choice plan had a significant effect on students with free and reduced lunch status, with a p value of (<0.0074). To determine the effect of the school choice plan on total number of students on free and reduced lunch on grade level, the researcher compared the school years

2002 and 2003. This hypothesis was significant at the .05 pre-established alpha-level. The school choice plan had a statistically significant effect on total number of free and reduced lunch students on grade level with a p value of (<.0001).

Summary of Chapter Four

Chapter Four presented and summarized the research questions, the null hypotheses, identified patterns prior to implementation of the choice plan 2002, identified patterns after implementation of the choice plan 2003, and the substantial changes in school populations at the elementary, and middle school level in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

Chapter Four also presented the statistical procedure employed, a paired t-test, that was used to determine differences among school years prior to the choice plan 2002 and after implementation of the choice plan 2003. The pre-established alpha-level of .05 was employed to test for significance in the data. Tables and charts were included in Chapter Four to help explain presented information for each sub group of students.

Chapter Five

Additional Discussions and Further Analysis

With the influx of approximately 5,000 students per year, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' student demographic is changing. Is this student population shift at the school level caused by the economy, losses of manufacturing jobs in North Carolina, job layoffs, or the effect of the school choice plan? Is the change in achievement based on the choice plan, or the new students coming into the district? These factors were what the researcher believed would limit the analysis of the achievement data. It would be very difficult to do a statistical analysis because of the shift in students. The students that attended a certain school prior to the choice plan were no longer attending that school after implementation of the plan. The problem was that the research would be comparing a different set of students from one year to the next because of a shift in students. Also contributing to the limitations were the new students coming into Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and their affect on achievement. Were the students coming in at or above grade level, on free and reduced lunch, black, white, or other? Did the total number of students increase or decrease because of the plan, or was it because of the significant growth in the school district?

The choice plan in 2002 was set up to correct the imbalances of segregation that the courts made legal and constitutional in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The 2002 choice plan assigned more students of poverty and color to the urban schools more frequently than to the suburban schools. The choice plan, as forced by the courts, created segregation in the public school setting. In essence, black children and students of poverty, start out behind their white counterparts and never catch up, even if their schools were equally equipped and these students were assigned to city schools at a higher percentage.

Segregation in our schools is still prevalent today. Gary Orfield said that, "race matters strongly and segregation is a failed educational policy." School systems are being court ordered to end successful desegregation plans that they would prefer to continue implementation. The South is the region that is steadily moving backwards in desegregation.

"Research regarding desegregation has led to some troubling findings that are on the horizon:

- Segregated schools have much higher concentrations of poverty and other problems.

- Much lower average test scores, levels of student, teacher qualifications, and advanced courses.
- With few exceptions, separate schools are still unequal schools.
- In systems with desegregation plans, minority students, transfer to better schools and learn more.
- When teachers are trained and use techniques to create positive academic interactions in racially diverse schools, the benefits of desegregated schools increase substantially."

(The Civil Rights Project: Harvard University, Erica Frankenberg, Chungmei Lee, and Gary Orfield. January 2003.)

The data used to investigate the effect of the choice plan were the North Carolina End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests. The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests from school years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 is designed to measure student performance on the goals, objectives, and grade-level competencies specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for grades 3-8 and 10.

Secondly, the North Carolina End-of-Course Tests for 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 were used. End-of-Course Tests are

used by the state of North Carolina to sample a student's knowledge of subject-related concepts as specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and to provide a global estimate of the student's mastery of the material in a particular content area. The North Carolina End-of-Course tests were initiated in response to legislation passed by the North Carolina General Assembly - the North Carolina Elementary and Secondary Reform Act of 1984. Currently, students enrolled in the following courses are required to take the North Carolina End-of-Course tests: Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, English I, Geometry, Physical Science, and Physics.

Finally, disaggregated data from all schools showing race, free and reduced lunch, and ethnicity was collected. The End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests were given at the end of the school year, as required by the state of North Carolina to every child in school.

Permission was granted from former Superintendent Dr. James Pughsley, to conduct the study on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' choice plan. After permission was granted, the researcher reviewed the data from school years 2001-2003 (See tables 1, 2, and 3). The data collected was placed on charts and compared; identified by school and by level. (Tables 4, 5, and 6)

Then, a comparison of elementary schools and middle schools' End-of-Grade and End-of-Course test data, free and reduced lunch status, and ethnicity before and after the school choice plan was implemented.

The researcher then met with Dr. Susan Agrusso, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Accountability, to gather the data needed for the study. Disaggregated data was requested for the school years 2001-2003 pre- and post-choice plan implementation. The Instructional Accountability Department of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools provided the data. The information for End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests is used to compare schools before unitary status and after unitary status was obtained. This data that was obtained included a break down of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools by race, gender, and free and reduced lunch status of tested students.

Student reports on school performance on End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests for the selected school years 2001-2003 were obtained. Membership information also was produced with the total number of students per school the percentage of students that were above grade level, and the number of students that were served by the free and reduced lunch program that were above grade level. Grade level, for the purpose of this study, was defined by the state of

North Carolina as scoring a level three or above on the End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests.

The formula that the state uses to calculate the growth for each school is by composite score. The total weighted growth composite for a school was the sum of the weighted growth components. The composite must be equal to or greater than zero to meet the expected and high growth standards that North Carolina requires.

For schools with any combination of grades three through eight, growth was computed using pretest to posttest differences in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 for grades three through eight in reading and mathematics on a matched set of students. The ninety-one day membership rule, only those that have been in attendance ninety-one days or more, was used to determine inclusion in the cohort. Students taking the NCCATS (North Carolina Cognitive Abilities Test) had their scores included in growth calculations if they have End-of-Grade scores from the school year.

Using the End-of-Course prediction formulas, the school's ABCs goal, or expected End-of-Course score, was determined for each course. This expected score was based on the state's average End-of-Course score plus an adjustment based on the proficiency of the school's cohort

of students on specific End-of-Course and/or End-of-Grade tests.

The performance composite for any school was the total number of scores at or above grade level in each subject included in the ABCs model, divided by the total number of valid/total scores. The performance composite was reported as a percentage. Schools that did not meet their growth standards and that had a performance composite below fifty percent may be identified as low-performing. A confidence interval was applied to the performance composite of low-performing schools to ensure that it is significantly below fifty percent. For a school with any combination of grades three through eight, the performance composite for the school includes the total number of students who score at or above grade level in reading, mathematics, writing (grades four & seven), and any course with an End-of-Course test that may be offered at the school (Department of Public Instruction State of North Carolina, Accountability Service Division, ABC Program Information, 2001-2002).

The perceived effects of a school choice plan in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools were assessed and the effects the choice plan had on student achievement in schools of high poverty and lower socioeconomic status. The method of

assessment was to utilize a simple paired T-Test comparing means and a standard deviation to check for differences.

Data were then collected and analyzed on the history of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to gain a better understanding of the segregation of the school system prior to implementation of the school choice plan and the court cases involved that led to school choice.

The researcher then reviewed the data for the schools with the percentage of students in elementary schools and middle schools, grades kindergarten through eighth grade, in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools that were above and below forty-four percent. The racial breakdown for the district was an average of forty-four percent African-American students, thirty-nine percent white students, and seventeen percent other. This data was set up in chart form to compare and contrast the schools prior to the implementation of the choice plan and after implementation.

As new phenomena emerged from the comparisons, they were compared to the earlier findings prior to the implementation of the school choice plan. This data became the basis for the contextual elements of the study.

Student data, from the school years 2001-2002, were compared with the students in 2002-2003 using the same test

model from the state of North Carolina, the ABCs Accountability testing model. The ABCs End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests were given to all students in grades three through eight and grade ten.

The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests are designed to measure student performance on the goals, objectives, and grade-level competencies specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. (Department of Public Instruction State of North Carolina, Accountability Service Division, ABC Program Information, 2001-2002.)

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will not have to defend what they are doing with the choice plan in a court of law, but it will have to answer questions concerning the failure of some of the high schools. Judge Manning decided not to get involved in a student-assignment plan. However, since this study began, nine schools have joined the poverty aid list in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Next year, beginning in 2006-2007, sixty-two of the district's 142 schools will qualify, as high poverty and get additional aid. This is an all-time high with half the district's high schools being on the high-poverty list. It was found that the poverty levels are growing at a steady pace in Charlotte.

In 2002, a court-ordered desegregation plan was replaced by a student assignment plan of school choice that

combined neighborhood schools, magnet schools, and theme schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Since then, students have moved from their zone schools to other magnet schools or themes outside their district. The student moves have created vestiges of poverty and even more schools that are closer to that designation as the shift continues. This pattern has played out across the county, leaving suburban schools crowded, schools in low-income neighborhoods under filled, and magnet schools with long waiting lists for prospective students. This phenomena coupled with a growing student population adds to the list of ever-growing schools that are racially identifiable, and higher numbers of students on free and reduced lunch in certain schools.

With all that being said, at its October 2005 School Board Meeting, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Board dropped its three-year-old choice plan. The School Board also approved new boundaries for several of its neighborhood schools. Students may still apply for seats in the under-filled neighborhood schools and specialized magnets.

Most of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' magnet programs were created in the 1990s to help the system meet court-ordered desegregation goals that would ensure a racial balance of black and white students. That balancing act led

to the court challenge that overturned the desegregation plan and created the now defunct neighborhood choice plan.

Jonathan Kozol explains it best in his book, *The Shame of the Nation* along with his familiar theme of inadequacy of the education we provide poor and minority students. He has a new focus today that concentrates on the return of a substantial degree of segregation in urban schools in America. He says, "Black and Hispanic students are concentrated in schools where they make up almost the entire student body." It is true that court ordered desegregation has been abandoned in many cities, as judges are being persuaded that there is no effect on student achievement and on closing the achievement gap for black children and other minorities. The judges' attitude has been affected by the number of white children leaving urban schools to land in suburban or private schools. (The Shame of the Nation: Separate and Unequal, September 25, 2005, New York Times). School systems are now being forced to end even successful desegregation plans that they would prefer to continue. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are no different as they are being forced to end what was perceived as a successful plan to keep schools balanced racially.

In their article, "A Multiracial Society with Segregated Schools: Are We Losing the Dream?", Erica Frankenberg, Chungmei Lee, and Gary Orfield write in the Civil Rights Project Harvard University, "Desegregation has had a long established link to the important gains for both minority and white students. Race matters strongly and segregation is a failed educational policy." Frankenberg, Lee, and Orfield believe we need to address the policies that will cause an integrated education by the following:

- Continuing desegregation plans;
- Amending transfer policies in the Federal No Child Left Behind Act to give students a real choice of better integrated schools;
- Designing educational choice plans that diminish segregation;
- Linking housing mobility programs with educational counseling; and
- Increasing city-suburban transfer options in metropolitan areas.

"A great deal of long-lasting progress was achieved when this issue was last seriously addressed, a third of a century ago. If we are not to lose those gains and if we

are to be ready for a profound multiracial society with no racial majority, we must begin to face the trends documented here and devise solutions that will work."

(The Civil Rights Project: Harvard University, Erica Frankenberg, Chungmei Lee, and Gary Orfield. January 2003.)

The school choice plan was devised to help parents find a viable school within a particular zone to meet the needs of the children. This study found both positive and negative factors that impacted the students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools prior to implementation of the choice plan and after implementation. The data revealed statistical significance for the following areas: Percent of students on grade level, percent of students on free and reduced lunch, percent of students on free and reduced lunch on grade level.

The data that was not statistically significant was: the total number of students and the total number of black students. Based on the information provided, one could draw conclusions that the percentages of students on grade level prior to implementation of the choice plan, was less than the pre-established alpha level .05. The t test is to show that there is a statistically significant difference of less than .05. The t test for total students was not

significant because it was more than .05, which means the difference in 2002 and 2003 was not significant. The t test for grade level students was less than the pre-established alpha level of .05, and therefore this test showed significance. The comparison of black student from 2002 and 2003 above the pre-established alpha level and therefore was found not to be significant. The number of black students on grade level was below the alpha level and was found to be significant. The number of free and reduced lunch students was less than the pre-established alpha level and was found to be significant. Finally the number of free and reduced lunch students on grade level was below the pre-established alpha level and was found to be significant.

The data showed that big schools were big before the choice plan and were big after the choice plan, and small schools were small before and after implementation. We had big schools that had big gains, and small schools with small gains that proportionately affected the data.

On average, the percent of students who were on grade level rose between 2002 and 2003 from 68.15% (SD = 13.07) to 75.17% (SD = 13.10). There was an increase of about seven percent more students on grade level in 2003 than in 2002. This is a statistically significant difference

[68.15% (SD = 13.07) to 75.17 SD = 13.10). However, it is worth noting that this difference may be due to cohort differences as much as a change caused by the district-wide change regarding school choice. It is also worth noting that the change for the state in terms of percent of students on grade level in the same period was total students at or above grade level in 2002, seventy-three percent, and in 2003 seventy-nine percent.

History of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Magnet Program

1969 - Federal judge orders CMS to desegregate, using busing if necessary.

Early 1970s CMS opens a handful of "open" and "traditional" magnet schools.

1992 - Superintendent John Murphy proposes an extensive magnet program as an alternative to busing. Seats are assigned by race to ensure that enrollment reflects district wide racial proportions. Fifteen schools offer magnets in 1992-93, with new programs specializing in math and science, German language, Montessori and education of gifted students.

1993 - Rising cost of busing kids to magnets raises concerns. Non-magnet parents complain that infusion of cash to create magnets is shortchanging other schools. Eight new magnets debut, including arts and International Baccalaureate.

1994 - CMS officials say magnets are helping the district meet desegregation goals. Critics question whether it is enough to counteract "resegregation" based on population trends. Citizens' panel concludes that magnets do not create racial balance, but do widen inequities between schools.

1995 - CMS keeps adding magnets, bringing total to thirty-one schools. Murphy leaves CMS; many wonder whether magnets will survive.

1996 - Eric Smith, hired as superintendent, quickly vows to continue magnet program.

1997 - 40 schools have magnets. A parent task force on student assignment supports magnets as part of CMS desegregation plan. A white parent challenges CMS's race-based assignment in federal court, saying his daughter was twice denied a magnet seat because she is not black.

1998 - Court battle over race-based assignment gears up. School board hires a national expert to study effectiveness of CMS magnets.

1999 - Student assignment case goes to trial; federal judge orders CMS to stop using race. CMS appeals as officials begin crafting race-neutral "school choice" plans.

2000 - Magnet seats for 2000-01 are assigned without regard to race.

2001 - Magnet enrollment peaks at about 20,000, in 48 schools. Appeals court ends court-ordered desegregation. Board approves a choice plan for 2002-03.

2002 - Choice plan debuts, with major shakeup in magnet programs and locations. Berry Academy of Technology opens

as CMS's largest and most expensive magnet school. Magnet enrollment drops to about 17,000.

2003 - Superintendent James Pughsley proposes abolishing the "open" magnet program, but keeps it alive after outcry from parents and staff.

2004 - Magnet enrollment hits 19,400, in fifty-one schools. Berry is declared state's only "low-performing" high school. Staff and parents from all magnet schools meet to talk about challenges created by choice plan.

2005 - CMS officials promise detailed analysis of all magnets, part of a sweeping student assignment review.

Doss Helms, Ann (January, 2005).The History of CMS Magnet Programs. The Charlotte Observer, page 12.

Table 1 - Elementary Schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools**Table 1 Percentage by Ethnicity Elementary Schools (Pre & Post School Choice Plan)**

School	Af Am	Post	White	Post	Other	Other Post
Albemarle Road	55.6	61.71	23.7	9.95	21	29
Allenbrook	68.5	64.71	14	13.73	18	21
Ashley Park	73.6	94.48	11.1	2.76	15	3
Bain	5.3	94.48	91.1	2.76	3	2
Berryhill	7.9	23.49	35.9	34.52	56	42
Beverly Woods	21	18.79	53.8	73.22	25	8
Blythe	23.5	18.88	66	69.83	11	11
Briarwood	84.5	77.68	10.9	1.21	5	11
Chantilly	2.2	76.64	33	5.51	65	18
Clear Creek	34.5	19.87	60.3	72.18	5	7
Cotswold	53	43.27	35	39.8	12	17
Crown Point	35.6	32.18	46.9	46.46	17	22
David Cox	30.5	38.37	52.1	46.24	17	12
Dilworth	67.4	61.15	29.4	29.57	4	10
Druid Hills	82.5	85.47	11.7	1.28	15	14
Eastover	39.3	28.95	57.3	64.96	4	8
First Ward	77.1	92.78	12.5	2.08	10	6
Greenway Park	48.4	43.5	37.8	33.2	4	14
Hickory Grove	60.3	60.15	27.9	15.84	12	24
Hidden Valley	44.6	67.72	1.6	1	55	32
Hornets Nest	52.1	70.99	43.8	12.97	4	16
Huntersvill	27.9	9.06	60.6	82.25	89	91
Idlewild	61.4	56.58	13.7	11.51	25	69
Irwin Avenue	61.6	78.89	22.2	9.69	16	11
J.H. Gunn	47	49.6	32.3	25.52	11	24
Lake Wylie	35.3	24.81	51.2	54.99	13	20
Lebanon Rd	41.5	31.04	46.1	39.84	13	30
Lincoln Heights	70	65.18	14.8	10.94	15	24
Long Creek	36.5	23.03	58.9	68.33	4	9
Mallard Creek	40.5	23.03	58	68.33	2	9
Matthews	11	10.08	82.8	80.14	6	10
McAlpine	8.5	11.77	84.8	68.98	6	19
Merry Oaks	55.8	48.8	15.7	11.09	28	40
Montclair	42.4	31.12	17.2	11.16	41	58
Morehead	69.5	75.52	23.4	15.87	7	10
Myers Park Tradit	47.3	25.73	49.5	64.32	3	10
Nathaniel Alexand	59.8	71.24	32.8	10.23	7	19
Nations Ford	65.3	61.54	23.8	6.45	11	33
Newell	46.6	48.66	30.4	18.28	24	44
Oakdale	53.7	68.13	39.4	18.6	7	14
Oakhurst	49.7	53.94	41.5	33.1	8	13
Olde Providence	22	11	68	75	10	14
Pawtucket	63.5	54.45	26.7	22.13	9	23
Pineville	27.7	22.67	57.6	53.96	14	23
Pinewood	47.6	41.11	27.9	20	24	39
Piney Grove	56.2	45.48	33.9	27.26	10	27
Rama Road	40.3	42.19	43.3	36.05	16	11
Reedy Creek	44	45.28	47.8	39.47	8	16
Reid Park	68.8	93.85	24.5	0.88	6	5
Sedgefield	60.4	62.64	11.5	8.88	24	30
Selwyn	33.8	15.96	64	79.42	2	6
Shamrock Gardens	64	58.04	11.7	9.22	24	33
Smithfield	40	25.38	39.3	39.22	21	36
Statesville Road	46.5	51.71	24.5	17.77	30	32
Steele Creek	46.9	45.45	37.5	26.28	15	29
Sterling	49	65.5	17.3	5.36	34	30
University Park	49	67.39	41.4	20.54	10	12
Westerly Hills	75.3	71.39	5.4	6.78	20	21
Winding Springs	49.7	66.21	42.7	17.47	8	17
Windsor Park	65.1	45.03	15.7	11.11	20	44
Winterfield	55.5	47.51	12.4	7.47	33	46

Table 2 Middle Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Percentage of Race (Pre & Post Choice Plan)

School	AA	Post	White	Post	Other	Other Post
Albemarle	55	63.26	26.7	11.88	19	25
Alexander	23	38.26	73	48.76	4	14
A. Graham	40.9	27.9	56.8	66.82	4	5
Spaugh	61.7	90.6	27.1	4.54	12	6
Bradley	41.2	17.73	53.6	75.87	6	6
Carmel	30.5	24.89	62	60.16	8	15
Cochrane	72	74.46	4.6	7.08	24	19
Coulwood	57.5	51.2	35.1	35.43	7	14
Crestdale	10.2	13.5	82.3	76.96	7	6
Eastway	66.4	59.65	11.9	12.05	23	28
Kennedy	51	57.12	37.7	17.49	11	25
Marie G.	47.9	94.83	43.2	1.48	9	3
Martin	63.1	67.96	28.4	12.24	9	20
McClintock	37.8	47.66	47.9	36.28	14	16
Northeast	31.3	36.06	62.2	51.75	7	12
Northridge	59.3	75.44	31.8	10.51	10	14
Northwest	46.6	53.11	50.1	41.65	4	6
Piedmont	42.2	54.22	39.4	34.66	19	12
Quail	34.7	32.74	48.5	43.68	16	23
Randolph	54.4	48.51	39.7	36.84	6	14
Ransom	68.4	76.41	18.7	11.04	13	13
Sedgefield	56.2	58.37	44.9	13.43	.01	29
South Charlotte	10.1	9.14	79.8	80.78	11	11
Spaugh	61.6	91.2	27	7.8	10	11
JT William	62.3	88.82	30.3	1.54	8	11
Wilson	68.2	64.6	21.3	16.11	11	20

Table 3 Free and Reduced Lunch Percentage Comparison by Elementary School (Pre and Post)

<u>School Name</u>	<u>ADM</u>	<u>#F/R</u>	<u>2002%</u>	<u>2003%</u>
ALBEMARLE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	671	371	55.3	70.0
ALLENBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	336	254	75.6	86.08
ASHLEY PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	404	265	65.6	88.45
BAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	784	79	10.1	15.23
BARRINGER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	519	137	26.4	50.54
BERRYHILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	373	273	73.2	80.41
BEVERLY WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	563	202	35.9	25.29
BRIARWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	622	477	76.7	85.66
CHANTILLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	316	173	54.7	88.24
CLEAR CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	511	218	42.7	48.42
COLLINSWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	438	291	66.4	66.11
CORNELIUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	919	98	10.7	19.69
COTSWOLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	541	284	52.5	53.21
CROWN POINT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	797	341	42.8	40.51
DAVIDSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	828	61	7.4	9.45
DAVID COX ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	753	165	21.9	27.81
DEVONSHIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	532	432	81.2	90.00
DILWORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	411	225	54.7	50.91
DRUID HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	369	238	64.5	93.49
EASTOVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	465	157	33.8	32.85
ELIZABETH LANE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1033	37	3.6	4.03
ELIZABETH TRADITIONAL ELEM. SCHOOL	516	127	24.6	31.12
FIRST WARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	407	257	63.1	83.65
GREENWAY PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	836	404	48.3	56.58
HAWK RIDGE ELEMENTARY	955	22	2.3	6.24
HICKORY GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	785	296	37.7	55.80
HIDDEN VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	685	580	84.7	91.96
HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	261	238	91.2	54.94
HORNETS NEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	868	315	36.3	53.60
HUNTERSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	658	242	36.8	13.37
HUNTINGTOWNE FARMS ELEM. SCHOOL	494	167	33.8	58.22
IDLEWILD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	643	415	64.5	76.76
IRWIN AVENUE OPEN ELEMENT. SCHOOL	532	325	61.1	71.73
MOREHEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	929	440	47.4	59.68
AMAY JAMES MONTESSORI SCHOOL	335	104	31	21.81
LAKE WYLIE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1021	272	26.6	25.70
LANSDOWNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	638	207	32.4	35.79
LEBANON ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	777	302	38.9	54.84
LINCOLN HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	503	307	61	72.79
BLYTHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1105	383	34.7	20.26
LONG CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	561	187	33.3	31.12
MALLARD CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	727	144	19.8	22.57
MATTHEWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	888	121	13.6	16.70
MCALPINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	689	35	5.1	13.22
MCKEE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1287	15	1.2	4.66
MERRY OAKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	537	436	81.2	92.62
MONTCLAIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	463	349	75.4	85.78
MYERS PARK TRADITIONAL ELEM. SCHOOL	548	146	26.6	30.17
NATHANIEL ALEXANDER ELEM. SCHOOL	869	275	31.6	92.03
NATIONS FORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	396	223	56.3	91.92
NEWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	642	281	43.8	64.35
J. H. GUNN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	654	351	53.7	61.71
OAKDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	479	250	55.2	69.05
OAKHURST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	452	195	43.1	97.93
OAKLAWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	346	217	62.7	94.88
OLDE PROVIDENCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	753	122	16.2	11.29
PARK ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	253	167	66	36.09
PAW CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	710	331	46.6	42.49
PAWTUCKETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	470	314	66.8	99.00

Table 3 (cont'd) Free and Reduced Lunch Percentage Comparison by Elementary School (Pre and Post)

School Name	ADM	F/R	2002	2003
PINEVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	815	243	29.8	41.95
PINEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	511	337	65.9	84.12
PINEY GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	635	279	43.9	60.64
RAMA ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	561	239	42.6	63.01
REEDY CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	806	198	24.6	36.73
REID PARK ELEMENTARY	491	210	42.8	96.26
SEDGEFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	441	357	81	90.29
SELWYN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	453	152	33.6	18.89
SHAMROCK GARDENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	521	447	85.8	93.42
SHARON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	456	184	40.4	20.20
SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	744	339	45.6	48.99
STARMOUNT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	199	124	62.3	59.26
STATESVILLE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	521	388	74.5	70.80
STEELE CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	886	360	40.6	50.26
STERLING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	506	367	72.5	81.42
THOMASBORO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	392	340	86.7	96.20
TUCKASEEGEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	586	411	70.1	63.46
UNIVERSITY PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	654	298	45.6	51.59
UNIVERSITY MEADOWS ELEMENTARY	879	450	51.2	57.63
VILLA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY	289	58	20.1	24.91
WESTERLY HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	459	387	84.3	93.73
WINDING SPRINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	609	250	41.1	59.62
WINDSOR PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	588	405	68.9	87.21
WINTERFIELD ELEMENTARY	575	409	71.1	84.73

Table 4

Percent of Students by Year on Grade Level, Black, on Grade Level, and Black, on Free Lunch and on Grade Level

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Dev.</u>
Percent on Grade level	2002	73	68.15	13.07
Percent on Grade level	2003	73	*75.17	13.10
Percent of Black	2002	73	50.082	16.67
Percent of Black	2003	73	52.44	23.52
Percent of Black on Grade level	2002	73	55.52	12.27
Percent of Black on Grade level	2003	73	*67.20	11.02
Percent of Free Lunch	2002	73	49.89	20.42
Percent of Free lunch	2003	73	*55.16	24.55
Percent of Free Lunch on Grade level	2002	73	52.26	9.96
Percent of Free Lunch on Grade Level	2003	73	*65.22	10.39

Bold * signifies significance.

Table 5

Range of Difference in school size from Minimum to Maximum

<u>Percent</u>	<u>Student population</u>
100% Max	1347
99%	1347
95%	1108
90%	771
75% Q3	458
50% Median	297
25% Q1	229
10%	185
5%	152
1%	139
0% Min	139

Table 6

Total Number of Students in school years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	400.9	273.6	73	417.8	310.4	73	1.33	0.188

Not Statistically Significant

Table 7

Number of Students on Grade Level in school years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	277.23	210.4	73	313.28	237.5	73	3.87	* < 0.0002

* < Statistically Significant

Table 8

Total Number of Black Students in school years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	187.6	134.2	73	208.1	183.7	73	1.81	0.0739

Not Statistically Significant

Table 9

Total Number of Black Students on Grade Level in years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	101.35	70.08	73	132.4	107.67	73	5.02	*<.001

* Statistically Significant

Table 10

Total Number of Students on Free or Reduced Lunch in years 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	177.7	116.45	73	208.9	156.3	73	2.76	*<0.0074

* Statistically Significant

Table 11

Total Number of Free or Reduced Lunch Students on Grade Level 2002-2003

	2002			2003			T Test	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr</u>
Total	89.32	51.54	73	128.49	82.71	73	6.85	*<.0001

< * Statistically Significant

Appendix # 1

All Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Data before and after Choice Plan

Name of School	Grade Levels	Total Number of Students 2001-02	Total Number of Students 2002-03	Total # of Students At or Above Grade Level 2001-02	Total # of Students At or Above Grade Level 2002-03	Total # of Black Students 2001-02	Total # of Black Students 2002-03	Total # of Black Students At or Above Grade Level 2001-02	Total # of Black Students At or Above Grade Level 2002-03	Total # of Free and Reduced Lunch Students 2001-02	Total # of Free and Reduced Lunch Students 2002-03	Total # of Free and Reduced Lunch Students At or Above Grade Level 2001-02	Total # of Free and Reduced Lunch Students At or Above Grade Level 2002-03
Albemarle Road Elementary	K-5	330	379	244	297	194	265	130	202	189	271	125	205
Albemarle Road Middle	6-8	931	983	524	626	512	584	241	348	499	563	232	312
Alexander Graham Middle	6-8	608	715	478	618	226	193	107	116	198	180	94	105
Allenbrook Elementary	K-5	149	161	72	104	101	97	44	60	124	132	56	83
Ashley Park Elementary	K-5	185	129	106	82	129	120	60	75	121	113	57	68
Bain Elementary	K-5	427	375	373	345	20	23	17	20	45	52	36	40
Berryhill Elementary	K-5	183	148	97	111	80	41	38	23	146	109	71	76
Beverly Woods Elementary	K-5	240	298	190	276	86	56	45	44	91	58	49	42
Briarwood Elementary	K-5	265	281	129	176	223	222	112	142	207	241	95	148
Carmel Middle	6-8	815	1018	623	821	222	277	92	168	213	267	84	148
Chantilly Elementary	K-5	142	140	97	77	72	112	45	62	83	129	49	70
Clear Creek Elementary	K-5	250	221	185	202	101	57	52	48	113	68	66	58

Appendix # 1 Continued
All Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Data before and after Choice Plan

Cotswold Elementary	K-5	225	195	146	155	117	82	53	55	138	99	63	64
Crestdale Middle	6-8	1347	1376	1239	1240	136	212	93	150	100	226	57	158
Crown Point Elementary	K-5	345	340	266	303	105	102	67	84	144	137	87	113
David Cox Road Elementary	K-5	358	469	309	396	131	181	109	135	63	134	38	90
Dilworth Elementary	K-5	190	232	121	179	127	133	66	86	107	113	50	68
Druid Hills Elementary	K-5	194	247	119	133	156	223	86	121	128	226	57	119
Eastover Elementary	K-5	199	182	162	165	69	46	40	34	58	50	30	35
Eastway Middle	6-8	771	816	367	481	526	545	245	307	609	646	264	366
First Ward Elementary	K-5	186	324	145	242	140	290	103	210	117	261	82	188
Greenway Park Elementary	PK-5	381	327	267	265	200	148	120	106	207	167	120	116
Hickory Grove Elementary	K-5	409	391	265	294	249	247	136	179	177	202	85	129
Hidden Valley Elementary	K-5	243	242	141	171	208	191	121	137	215	210	123	146
Hornets Nest Elementary	K-5	503	408	365	291	259	291	157	191	177	217	91	134
Huntersville Elementary	K-5	296	417	219	389	87	49	39	35	114	48	53	30
Idlewild Elementary	K-5	297	255	197	195	202	177	128	140	204	189	124	137

Appendix # 1 Continued
ALL Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Data before and after Choice Plan

Irwin Avenue Open	K-5	229	287	154	195	129	197	68	123	127	198	60	113
J H Gunn Elementary	K-5	362	346	218	270	187	185	97	132	212	204	107	145
James Martin Middle	6-8	1108	1776	736	1116	677	1261	367	723	427	967	177	488
John T Williams Middle	6-8	657	627	546	430	396	566	303	382	185	471	123	296
Lake Wylie Elementary	K-5	509	505	375	440	185	143	105	111	162	132	83	100
Lebanon Road Elementary	K-5	376	336	277	257	157	124	93	80	162	168	90	114
Lincoln Heights Elementary	K-5	232	274	139	207	155	185	77	131	139	180	65	121
Long Creek Elementary	K-5	275	276	194	226	91	63	40	38	83	60	28	34
Mallard Creek	K-5	362	401	284	334	149	155	95	108	101	90	54	61
Marie G Davis Middle	6-8	611	535	553	261	268	489	215	229	145	474	108	228
Matthews Elementary	K-5	461	508	419	472	46	62	34	49	62	99	39	77
McClintock Middle	6-8	722	911	527	663	272	403	133	220	271	397	133	228
Merry Oaks Elementary	K-5	241	235	147	177	155	137	89	96	195	198	112	147
Montclair Elementary	K-5	183	213	116	151	78	82	39	56	143	173	84	119
Myers Park Trad Elementary	K-5	258	241	203	204	130	119	86	86	65	74	31	48

Appendix # 1 Continued
All Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Data before and after Choice Plan

Nathaniel Alexander Elementary	K-5	426	570	324	416	240	413	154	295	143	295	86	192
Nations Ford Elementary	K-5	175	199	137	151	106	142	71	100	96	154	64	110
Newell Elementary	K-5	329	363	240	263	147	207	103	137	176	218	111	140
Northeast Middle	6-8	1211	1197	905	1023	368	273	186	187	377	281	200	195
Oakdale Elementary	K-5	238	193	146	120	129	132	59	76	140	138	71	79
Oakhurst Elementary	K-5	210	300	155	253	104	186	66	148	93	160	57	122
Olde Providence Elementary	K-5	386	336	353	314	99	32	77	25	59	38	38	27
Pawtucket Elementary	K-5	221	216	125	163	132	128	68	95	152	143	71	101
Piedmont Open Middle	6-8	696	822	494	688	286	423	160	318	294	360	141	249
Pineville Elementary	K-5	418	332	304	277	120	75	64	54	156	125	70	86
Piney Grove Elementary	K-5	310	295	243	253	147	124	100	100	148	151	93	120
Quail Hollow Middle	6-8	1142	1154	790	829	392	366	185	216	443	496	207	268
Rama Road Elementary	K-5	277	291	172	217	110	119	28	65	124	136	41	80
Ranson Middle	6-8	1076	714	576	516	770	516	369	357	593	417	257	258
Reedy Creek Elementary	K-5	412	326	307	276	190	146	114	110	112	102	58	74
Reid Park Elementary	K-5	152	212	118	122	100	204	69	115	84	203	54	114

Appendix # 1 Continued
All Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Data before and after Choice Plan

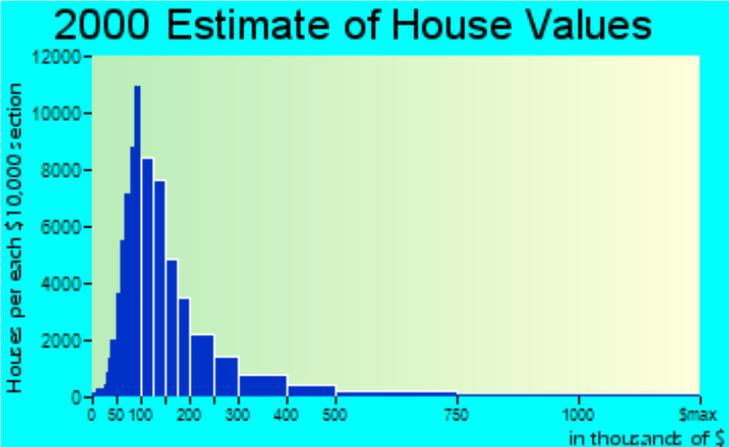
Sedgefield Elementary	K-5	139	219	71	153	87	149	36	96	125	192	63	130
Sedgefield Middle	6-8	225	232	164	215	88	43	36	34	85	38	34	31
Selwyn Elementary	K-5	239	258	130	167	156	170	80	104	210	239	107	154
Shamrock Gardens Elementary	K-5	230	245	163	204	91	58	30	33	87	51	27	28
Smithfield Elementary	K-5	333	450	251	345	133	141	80	85	147	199	87	116
Spaugh Middle	6-8	589	538	71	46	334	482	60	43	291	470	60	43
Statesville Road Elementary	K-5	235	232	141	179	112	121	71	93	177	152	101	106
Steele Creek Elementary	K-5	458	486	335	396	218	240	126	183	209	241	121	176
Sterling Elementary	K-5	200	186	132	127	105	124	57	79	134	148	79	95
University Park	K-5	289	263	209	217	147	154	89	114	128	137	74	101
Westerly Hills Elementary	K-5	221	180	103	113	169	145	76	90	182	155	84	93
Wilson Middle	6-8	570	513	273	315	376	332	147	181	444	387	193	229
Winding Springs Elementary	K-5	239	187	167	152	126	129	74	101	91	94	46	71
Windsor Park Elementary	K-5	298	218	151	154	190	131	83	84	215	157	93	102
Winterfield Elementary	K-5	268	238	154	169	173	153	94	107	197	181	101	123

Map of Eastern North Carolina
Charlotte, North Carolina

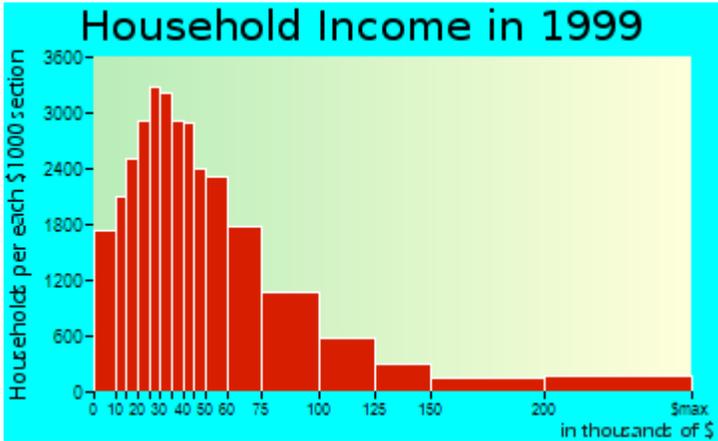


Provided by City Data.com

House Values and Household Income of Charlotte North Carolina

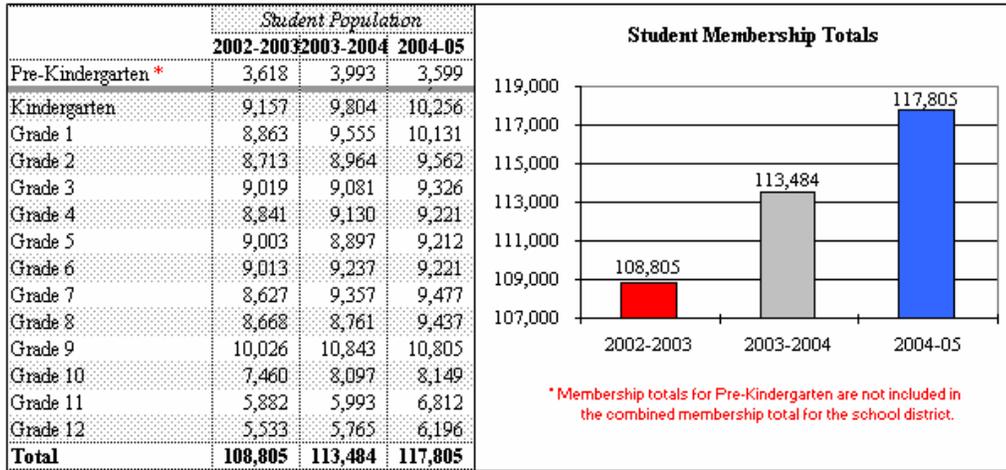


Household Income of Charlotte North Carolina



Provided by City Data.Com

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Student Profile



	<i>Racial Distribution</i>					
	2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Afr. Amer.	46,405	42.6%	48,561	42.8%	50,646	43.0%
Asian	4,731	4.3%	4,879	4.3%	4,976	4.2%
Hispanic	8,740	8.0%	10,619	9.4%	12,638	10.7%
Native Amer.	602	0.6%	624	0.5%	663	0.6%
Multi-Racial	1,540	1.4%	2,012	1.8%	2,566	2.2%
White	46,787	43.0%	46,789	41.2%	46,316	39.3%

<i>2004-05 Gender Distribution</i>		
	Students	
	Number	Percent
Female	57,665	48.9%
Male	60,140	51.1%

	<i>Limited English Proficiency **</i>		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Number	7,622	8,706	10,582
%	7.0%	7.7%	9.0%

	<i>Per-Pupil Expenditure</i>		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Constant Dollars	\$3,882	\$3,908	\$3,877
Actual Dollars	\$7,066	\$7,272	\$7,431

** Limited English Proficiency (LEP) = count from the SIRCB120 file and percent is calculated using Student Population total the top of the page.

	<i>Free/Reduced Lunch Status</i>		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Number	43,389	48,043	55,723
%	39.9%	42.3%	47.3%

	<i>Exceptional Children</i>		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Gifted and Talented	14,362	14,362	14,455
Gifted and Talented %	13.2%	12.7%	12.3%
Students with Disabilities			
<i>Learning</i>	5,484	5,604	5,525
<i>Speech/Language</i>	2,429	2,454	2,567
<i>Mental</i>	1,881	1,459	1,996
<i>Behavioral</i>	1,003	1,604	1,083
<i>Other</i>	1,667	1,983	2,262
Disabled Total	12,464	13,104	13,433
Disabled Percent	11.5%	11.5%	11.4%

	<i>Number of Schools</i>		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Elementary	85	87	88
Middle***	28	30	30
High***	17	17	17
Alternative/Special	4	4	4
Total	134	138	139

*** Northwest School of the Arts is counted as both a middle and high school.

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Vita

Terry Lee Cline

A native of Cherryville, North Carolina, he is the son of Reverend Lee Thomas Cline and the late Yvonne Davis Cline. He is married to Tezella Greene of Lincolnton, North Carolina, and is the father of two sons, Tyler James and Timothy Lee. He attended Gaston County Schools, Cherryville Junior/Senior High School, and **Livingstone College** in Salisbury, North Carolina and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Intermediate Education/Reading, K-12 in 1981. He also received a Master of Arts Degree in Supervision and Administration in 1989 from **Hampton University**. He received his Doctorate of Education from **Virginia Tech** in 2006. In college, Terry Cline received many awards, such as Dean's List, Who's Who in American University and Colleges, Carl E. Leslie Award, the National Dean's List, and several others. Mr. Cline joined New Mount Olive Baptist Church in Newport News Virginia in January of 1990. In June of 1996 he accepted the call of God and preached his initial sermon in July 1998 and received his license under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Randolph Rylander, New Mount Olive Baptist Church. He was ordained in 2001 at Gethsemane Baptist Church in Virginia. Currently he is serving as Pastor of Pine Street Church in Lincolnton, North Carolina. Terry Cline started teaching in the Newport News Public Schools in 1982. His next transfer he became Assistant Principal. He was then appointed Principal. As principal in Newport News, Virginia, he received numerous awards. These awards include: Hampton-Newport News Chapter CHUMS Community Service Award, Citizen of the Year Award, Community Service Award Carver Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1996 Men of Distinction Star Award sponsored by 100 Black Men, and SCA Virginia Middle School Principal of the Year 1995-96. In Charlotte, Principal of the Year Finalist in 2003-04, Attended Oxford University Roundtable in London, England. He became the Principal of West Charlotte Senior High School, Smith Middle School and Academy of International and Foreign Languages, Marie G. Davis Middle School in Charlotte, North Carolina, from 1997-2004. Currently, he is Associate Superintendent of Lenoir County Public Schools in Eastern North Carolina.