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ABSTRACT

This report is one of a series exploring the way several important school districts across the country are dealing with the problems of separate and unequal education for minority students. The working of the choice and magnet school program of the Montgomery County (Maryland) public schools, a system that has never been under a court order to desegregate and in which desegregation has always been under the complete control of local officials, is profiled. Montgomery County is an affluent and highly educated community. A variety of data-collection methods were used to examine levels of segregation and concentrated poverty and the effectiveness of the county's 14 elementary magnets, 2 middle school, and 1 high school magnet, as well as to analyze schools' transfer requests and achievement trends. The study shows that choice plans and policies that are not well supervised and lack some key components to promote equal access may create merely the appearance of solving racial problems, and they may actually foster growing segregation over time. Some policy options for equal education are explored. Seventeen tables present study findings. (SLD)

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SLIPPING TOWARDS SEGREGATION
*Local Control and Eroding Desegregation
in Montgomery County, Maryland*

by

Susan E. Eaton
with assistance from Elizabeth Crutcher

Foreword by Gary Orfield

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The Harvard Project on School Desegregation
Gary Orfield
Director

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FOREWORD

Slipping Towards Segregation

Local Control and Eroding Desegregation in Montgomery County, Maryland

This report on Montgomery County is one in a series of studies by the Harvard Project on School Desegregation exploring the way several important school districts across the U.S. are dealing with the problems of separate and unequal education for minority students. In this report we examine the working of a choice and magnet school plan created and administered by a school district that has never been under a court order to desegregate and whose desegregation policies have always been under the total control of local officials. Since Montgomery County is one of the nation's most affluent counties and operates the nation's second largest suburban school system, it also offers an informative site to examine the ability of a suburban system with ample resources to cope with a substantial growth of minority population. Since it is a highly educated and affluent community with considerable diversity and a progressive tradition, it should give us a good idea of the best that might be possible in addressing racial issues. These issues are of growing importance, as the rapid growth of minority enrollment and segregation is a major trend across the nation.

We chose Montgomery County for analysis not because we thought that it was a bad case of race relations. In fact, the county is considerably less segregated than many large school districts and it did take some integrative actions without a court order. The county has long seen itself as an enlightened and progressive community in the area of race relations and equal opportunity. Political leaders and community members have shown genuine leadership on affordable housing issues.

This study explores the question of whether purely voluntary choice and locally controlled policies can solve problems of segregation and inequality the courts have been struggling with since the *Brown* decision. If voluntary choices offered and monitored only by local officials without any external control could resolve problems of segregation and inequality it would be very good news after forty years of desegregation efforts. Magnet and choice plans have become widespread across the nation and the great majority were devised as ways to create desegregation, according to a 1994 federal assessment.

This study shows that choice plans and policies that are not well supervised and lack some key components to promote equal access may merely create the appearance of solving racial problems, may permit or even foster growing segregation over time and may lack adequate mechanisms for either integration or equalizing opportunity for minority students. At their best they may help neighborhood efforts to forestall rapid resegregation. At their worst they can increase options for the best-prepared White and Asian families or the more affluent families able to provide their own transportation while excluding disadvantaged families on whose behalf desegregation plans are supposed to operate. Though the early phases of the magnet school plans appear to have made some significant contributions to stabilizing some neighborhoods near Washington, D.C., the choice plans lack some basic features essential for equity.

Segregation is a serious educational issue. And the rapid growth of segregation for Latinos and African Americans in Montgomery County occurs both by race and poverty. This report shows that the share of African American and Latino children in schools with

relatively high levels of poverty was many times that of Whites and rapidly increasing in recent years as White exposure to poverty remained at relatively low levels. Since concentrated poverty is very strongly related to unequal achievement at the school level, this rapid growth of concentrated poverty conditions for minority students suggests growing inequality in educational experiences and the development of more schools suffering from the dual problems of racial and economic isolation. The county's educational leaders are well aware of the link between concentrated poverty and educational inequality but chose to attack it primarily through relatively small added resources for some of the high poverty schools rather than a plan to prevent the spread of such segregation.

There is an extremely strong relationship between concentrated poverty and lower average academic achievement. Concentrated poverty means teachers and administrators have to work with much higher proportions of children with untreated health problems, with developmental disabilities, with one parent and an unstable home situation, who often move frequently even during school years, who are more likely to be native speakers of another language, and many other differences. On average, these children's parents and neighbors have much less education and much less connection to the job market. The children are disproportionately affected by concentrated crime, drugs and violence and social norms of teen pregnancy in their communities. On average there is much lower parental involvement in school activities in such schools. The schools are likely to be seen as more stressful and less rewarding workplaces and the most qualified teachers are more likely to transfer out. Our recent national statistical report showed that segregated minority schools are fourteen times more likely than white schools to have a majority of poor children.

The achievement data from the county schools confirm that the national pattern of unequal achievement in high poverty schools is very apparent in Montgomery County. Although the county has recognized this fact in its planning and has announced a policy to make such schools equal through special funding, it has not yet actually provided significant funding.

In terms of academic achievement, we find many districts proclaiming that they can make segregated schools equal but none with evidence that they have accomplished it on a broad scale. It is very difficult to do because so many critically important differences exist in the school communities, particularly when the segregation is by poverty as well as race or ethnicity. In our April report on four districts implementing large compensatory programs in segregated schools, we found no evidence of equal outcomes. In a May report, we found that when Norfolk, Virginia returned to neighborhood schools it rapidly concentrated poverty and educational inequality and that parent participation in those schools actually declined. Given these relationships, we think that it is very important to examine the ways in which various approaches contribute to greater or lesser segregation or to greater or lesser inequality among segregated schools. We were surprised that the massive Montgomery County 1990 *Study of Minority Achievement* provided no data on growing segregation by race and income and its relationship to unequal levels of school achievement. The overall relationship between segregation and educational inequality remains very powerful and is evident in the county's own data.

Until we have proven methods of making segregated schools equal at the system level, when we allow segregation to spread we are creating schools that are extremely likely

to produce inferior education which will primarily affect minority students. Since schools are central defining institutions in neighborhoods, accepting school resegregation often involves accepting the spread of residential segregation. Some communities have no realistic alternatives. Montgomery County has many.

In Montgomery County, as in the nation as a whole, attention to school segregation was at its peak more than two decades ago, in the early 1970s and attention was focused on the segregation of African-American students. Since that time there has been a large growth of non-white enrollment and that growth has been multiracial and multinational. The growing diversity is apparent in many parts of the country but the ways to prevent segregation have received little attention and the special needs of the very rapidly growing and educationally disadvantaged Latino communities have been largely ignored as those communities have come to be even more isolated than African Americans in Montgomery County, just as they have across the nation.

The basic emphasis of educational policy since the Reagan's Administration 1983 *Nation at Risk* report has been on raising educational standards. That report and most of the other educational reform documents since then simply ignore segregation and assume that there is a way to make schools isolated by race and poverty equal, primarily through increasingly demanding curriculum and testing methods. These themes are very prominent in Montgomery County. Though our study is basically about desegregation policy, we examine the evidence on the local effect of these policies to decrease the racial gaps in the country's schools. Although we see clear signs that education is improving for most groups in the county, including African Americans, positive trends on some measures are balanced by growing gaps on other measures for African Americans and the situation of Latino students is even worsening on some measures.

Although Montgomery's segregation is rapidly growing it is still at modest levels compared to many large districts. Though there is nothing as severe as the isolation that characterized many city and some suburban districts, there is rapid movement towards segregation that could have powerful long-term consequences. The problems are still eminently solvable and the county surely has the resources and the talent to solve them if it wishes. What is worrisome is the rapidity of the change and the district's decision to weaken further some of the policies it previously failed to enforce.

We do report some positive findings in this report about the contribution of the earliest desegregation cluster which was a significant response to a smaller and more localized process of segregation a generation ago. Unfortunately, that record of recognizing and trying to respond to developing conditions has not evolved as segregation became a more major force in the county in the past five years.

I was surprised to find types of desegregation policies rejected by highest courts as inadequate almost three decades ago still in place in Montgomery County. I expected a sophisticated school system such as Montgomery County would at least subscribe to basic civil rights requirements for choice plans developed in the mid-1960s in southern school districts. The school desegregation guidelines issued by the federal government in 1965 -- long before mandatory busing was approved by the Supreme Court -- required free transportation for those choosing another school. School systems were not allowed to approve transfers that increased segregation. Without transportation and good information, poor

children whose families cannot afford to provide transportation really had no choice. Where choice is a basic mechanism for desegregation and a school district covers a vast area, as it does in Montgomery County, these needs become urgent. Without free transportation to students exercising a choice, choice can be limited on the basis of family wealth.

To our dismay we found that these protections were not in place in Montgomery County. Families were expected to provide their own transportation in the choice system, under which parents can request transfer from their assigned school. A newly released U.S. Department of Education study shows that at the elementary level, about three fourths of districts offering non-magnet choice provide transportation for those choosing. Almost all of those districts have more limited resources than Montgomery County, which provides free transportation to secondary magnets and some elementary magnets but not to minority students transferring out to white schools.

There were other severe problems. The district permitted transfers that hindered desegregation both under its transfer choice policy and magnet programs, undermining the desegregative purpose of the plans. I think that both the newly defined desegregation standards and the procedures implementing them are far too weak for the transfer and magnet programs to have any substantial positive effect on segregation. In at least one case, the school district even moved a heavily White program knowing that the move would produce an extremely segregated school. This was justified based upon space needs, but data suggest there would have been less segregative alternatives.

Several of these policies are of a sort that would likely be considered violations in federal desegregation cases. Because of our very limited resources and the limits of the data the school district was able to supply, I do not know the extent of some of these practices and patterns of decisions. The issues clearly bear close examination in the local community.

In the most recent data the district could provide, the school system permitted transfers that increase segregation, failed to act when there were alternatives that could produce greater desegregation, moved at least one program in a way that increased segregation, provided no transportation for the non-magnet choice plan, used selection criteria for the best magnets that disproportionately exclude African American and Latino students and justified some of its seemingly needless desegregation efforts as necessary to persuade Whites who might otherwise leave particular neighborhoods to stay.

Although magnet schools are generally set up for desegregation purposes, funded through desegregation budgets, and have explicit desegregation goals, unless there are policies fixed outside of local politics by a court or other external authority, the civil rights purpose of such schools often tends to be eroded by other concerns. Without controls, magnet systems often work best for stable, educated families with the knowledge of the choices, contacts telling them how the schools are working, and understanding of application deadlines and strategies. Minorities, low income students, and limited-English-speaking families are less likely to be included, particularly when there are academic requirements screening out students -- a system that is likely to exclude most minority and low income students. This is the pattern we found in Montgomery County's secondary school magnets. The problems have been documented both in the district's own evaluations and in a large external evaluation prepared by a team of Yale researchers in 1990.

Though the county is not under a desegregation order, it is worth comparing these

actions with long-standing Supreme Court requirements for desegregating formerly de jure segregated districts such as Montgomery. In 1968, a unanimous Supreme Court ruled on a Virginia case, *Green v. New Kent County*, holding that purely voluntary choice plans were permissible only when they produced full desegregation rapidly. The Court concluded that the experience with choice tended to "indicate its ineffectiveness as a tool of desegregation." (Choice plans outside of the magnet school context rarely have much success in decreasing segregation. The U.S. Education Department's 1994 study from the American Institutes for Research reports that they typically reach only one minority student in 25 and one white student in 50.) In *Monroe v. Board of Commissioners*, decided the same day in 1968, the Court struck down a transfer plan that allowed Whites to transfer from integrated to White schools, as a "device to allow resegregation of the races." Quoting its 1955 decision enforcing *Brown*, the Court rejected plans designed to offer Whites special options because of fear of white flight, noting "it should go without saying that the validity of these principles cannot be allowed to yield simply because of disagreement with them." Even though the Supreme Court has recently provided means to end desegregation orders, those options are open only to districts who have fully complied with the doctrines from the 1968 and later cases. Montgomery County clearly has not.

This report finds especially negative trends for Latino students, a group that will be the nation's largest minority group in public schools within twenty years and the group that is already the most segregated. They are the most segregated group in Montgomery County, as in they are in the nation, with rapidly increasing isolation and severe educational gaps. While African-American-White leaning gaps were becoming less intense on some measures in the county, the Latino-white gaps were growing. District officials express the belief that this is because they are receiving more poorly prepared Latino students in recent years. The county is unusual among districts with sizable Spanish-speaking enrollments in offering virtually no bilingual instruction.

This report and an upcoming companion report on Prince George's County, Maryland, are neither designed nor intended to produce new desegregation plans. Designing new plans requires a great deal of knowledge of local conditions, which is wholly beyond the scope of our study. We do point to issues that should be considered if the local plan is to realize its basic objectives. We would be happy to meet with district leaders to discuss possible implications of our work for local studies and local policy deliberations.

Our fundamental interest is in examining the way different approaches to resolving the desegregation issue are working in a number of prominent school districts across the nation. We have already issued reports on several major districts with different types of plans and have more in the works. These reports, together with forthcoming national statistical studies, are intended to help inform a national discussion.

The fact that we study segregation and local policy toward segregation does not mean that we consider desegregation a cure-all or oppose other school reforms. Obviously, obtaining access for minority students to competitive schools is only one part of a complex process of change that should include systematic educational reform and vigilant attention to processes which resegregate and discriminate against some students inside of desegregated schools. A good desegregation plan is one key component of a much larger set of needed changes.

This study is not meant to be a legal brief or the final word on issues of segregation and resegregation in Montgomery County but it does show the inadequacies of existing policies. Obviously, the county has the resources and talent to study and solve the problems. This report shows trends moving in the wrong direction and weak and ineffective policies. It opens up vitally important questions that must be faced if Montgomery is to avoid the development of growing pockets of severe isolation and inequality which would affect the future of communities across the county.

The county's progressive image has created a fierce resistance to serious analysis of rapidly changing conditions. In none of the other communities we studied was there such a sense that it was illegitimate to ask questions about local policies. We were repeatedly told that because the district employs an outstanding Washington law firm and a fine African American superintendent, we should assume that things were all right. Given the local assumption that the school system was one of the best in the country on issues of equity, it was seen as unfair to ask questions about the plan. Because of the district's reputation, fierce and highly inaccurate attacks on our draft report, which was leaked in Montgomery County by sources unknown to us, were uncritically accepted by the local press without even waiting to see what our finished report would actually conclude. Our project was criticized for supposedly making recommendations for additional busing -- recommendations that were not in the draft and that are not contained in this final report.

It is true that Montgomery County had success in the 1970s with policies that contributed to slowing resegregation and maintaining multiracial schools in some areas near the District of Columbia. These policies gave the county a positive image long after their inadequacies in dealing with growing problems should have spurred the search for more effective approaches. The county's positive self-image may very well be an obstacle to timely action. There is no permanent solution to a problem as deeply rooted as school segregation; leadership is needed not from one generation but from each generation so that solutions can be crafted specific to the conditions of the time.

There is a great deal that could be done without mandatory busing. Nearly two-thirds of county students are already bused to school and the share is highest in the outlying segregated white areas where there was fierce criticism of proposals to limit or charge for busing. Federal courts have issued virtually no major pure mandatory busing orders for a decade and a half. Almost all contemporary orders employ combinations of choice, magnets and reassignments or redistricting. Some of these possibilities are being examined across the country today. Almost all newer desegregation plans have educational reform goals and some even try to undo patterns of segregated housing.

The issue in this report is not busing; the issue is the workability of the county's current approach in dealing with intensifying segregation and educational inequality between segregated and integrated schools. I doubt that a solution would require any significant new involuntary busing. The problems facing Montgomery County can be solved in a number of ways. Since they are rapidly increasing, however, simply letting existing patterns and practices run will tend to make them much worse. If the trends continue, the county may face a very difficult choice between deep division and inequality and very difficult mandatory changes. A great deal could be accomplished by better voluntary choice and transfer policies. For example, school officials could provide better information, recruitment,

transportation, and could systematically reject transfer requests that would increase segregation. Supporting housing policies could be invaluable. The crucial first steps are admitting the problem, discussing positive solutions for growing school and housing isolation and putting them into action before the existing trends produce much deeper divisions as they surely will during the next decade if they are left unchecked.

Gary Orfield
Harvard University
August, 1994

Slipping Towards Segregation

Local Control and Eroding Desegregation in Montgomery County

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Growing numbers of suburban communities in the 1990s will face rapid racial, ethnic and socioeconomic change in their schools and neighborhoods. Until recently, these communities have been sheltered from race- and poverty-related issues, and have little knowledge about what policies and programs will achieve equality and prevent racial and economic segregation.

The Harvard Project on School Desegregation report, *Slipping Towards Segregation: Local Control and Eroding Desegregation in Montgomery County, Maryland*, offers some important lessons to these racially changing school systems, to state and federal policy makers, to parents and to civil rights advocates who want to prevent racial polarization and economic divisions from taking hold in their communities.

Unlike many of its southern neighbors, Montgomery County's school system has never been under a court order to desegregate its schools. Since voluntarily beginning desegregation in 1958, Montgomery County officials have employed their own locally-controlled magnet schools and other desegregation policies. The county school board and administrators have been the only supervisors of magnet schools and other policies developed to support racial integration. Long after the first desegregation policies and programs were crafted, the school district's Black and Latino population began to increase dramatically. This report considers whether or not the county's locally controlled school policies have succeeded in achieving racially integrated schools in the face of this major demographic change.

This report finds that while the voluntary "local control" approach may be the most politically palatable one, Montgomery County's policies and administrative actions have not systematically broken up pockets of segregation and concentrated poverty. Equally significant is that local officials have failed to take action that would prevent segregation and concentrated poverty from increasing. Data show that levels of segregation and concentrated poverty have increased rapidly since 1988 in Montgomery County. These increases are evident even when accounting for the demographic change that occurred in the district over time.

Despite the limitations outlined in this report, Black and Latino students in Montgomery County, overall, are still far better integrated than their counterparts nationwide. This indicates that local school officials could still take action to prevent widening racial and economic divisions from becoming more deeply entrenched. Indeed, Montgomery County has many favorable conditions that increase the likelihood for successful desegregation. The county is wealthy, is supportive of public education, has a solid middle class enrollment, and has a history of progressive ideals and activism. Many urban school districts, such as neighboring Washington, D.C., and Prince George's County simply do not have a large enough white enrollment to achieve system wide racial integration. But in Montgomery County, about 58 percent the county's 113,700 students are White.

The integration-related policies as they exist in 1994 seem intended not to create desegregation per se, but to prevent other school policies from worsening existing

segregation. However, evidence suggests that school officials have been unable to do even that much in recent years. Indeed, data in this report show that one publicly touted policy -- the controlled transfer policy -- has contributed to segregation in some cases. In recent years, school officials have taken actions knowing they would increase or sustain high levels of segregation and concentrated poverty in what are now two of the most segregated, poorest schools in the district.

This report argues that the effectiveness of desegregation efforts in Montgomery County has been severely limited because there has never been an outside monitor or strong control of programs and policies originally designed to reduce racial isolation. This case study suggests that unmonitored voluntary local efforts cannot be relied upon if the goal is to reduce or prevent the spread of economic and racial isolation or to create equal access. Locally devised, locally enforced desegregation efforts will work only for as long as a local school board wants them to. The lessons from Montgomery County teach us that unchecked plans and seemingly promising policies may be highly vulnerable to local politics, administrative neglect, shifting priorities and apathy. If the county is to preserve local control and achieve desegregation, it needs much stronger policies that are closely monitored.

The following sections outline central findings that are explained more fully in the body of the report.

Levels of Segregation and Concentrated Poverty

This report employs several standards to measure segregation and poverty in the Montgomery County school district. Researchers determine changes since 1988 in the percentage of students in schools that were disproportionately minority, disproportionately white, predominantly minority and the percentage of students in schools where the percentage of least one ethnic and racial group was disproportionate. Researchers also consider changes in the percentage of students attending schools where there are high levels of concentrated poverty. Each measure shows part of the picture.

The purpose of these sections is not to overemphasize racial balance or advocate a formalistic following of various guidelines. Rather, the measures allow researchers to apply various standards to measure segregation trends that have occurred over time in the county schools.

Data show that, even when accounting for demographic change, the percentage of Black and Latino students in disproportionately minority schools has increased over five years. Curiously, even as the county grew much more diverse over time, the percentage of white students in isolated, disproportionately white schools also increased. Since 1988, measures of exposure to concentrated poverty have increased dramatically for Black, Latino and Asian students. White students, however, have remained nearly unaffected by these increases in concentrated poverty as the percentage of whites attending high poverty schools remained relatively stable over five years.

Magnet Schools

This report considers the effectiveness of the district's 14 long-standing elementary magnets, the two middle school magnets and the one high school magnet in creating racial integration.

The magnet schools, contained primarily in the two southernmost areas of the county likely have produced more integration than would have existed if no strategy were in place. But both the secondary and elementary school magnet schools have not been successful in creating integration at all the schools where they are located.

Secondary school magnets have been successful in attracting substantial numbers of White students, but admission standards used for the separately contained magnet programs segregate the specialized programs. The magnet *programs* within secondary schools enroll disproportionate numbers of White and Asian students, while the larger, non-magnet *school* remains predominantly Black and Latino.

Elementary magnets located in the Blair Cluster have simply been unsuccessful in attracting enough White students to desegregate the schools. Six of the 10 magnets have high levels of concentrated poverty. District records show that in 6 of the 10 Blair magnets, more White students transferred out of the schools than into them in the 1992-93 school year. The white flight underscores the failure of some magnets in this cluster since schools originally designed to attract Whites are having trouble retaining even those who are there.

In the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster, just one of the four magnet schools would be considered racially imbalanced when using standards employed in this report. None of the schools have high levels of concentrated poverty. However, within the cluster itself, there are striking differences between two closely situated schools. Rock Creek Forest school is 36 percent Latino and 20 percent African-American while nearby Westbrook, which is not a magnet school, enrolls 84 percent White students. Just 3 percent of the students at Westbrook are African-American and 5 percent are Latino.

The distinct demographics of the two cluster areas might explain why the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster was more successful than Blair in achieving integrated schools. Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster is closer to affluent White areas. Because of this, there is a larger nearby pool of White students from which to draw. The overall minority population in Bethesda-Chevy Chase is lower than Blair's. This means fewer Whites need to be attracted to achieve an acceptable racial balance. There is also evidence that, in recent years, housing changes in the area contributed to the increasing white enrollment in the cluster. It appears that some of the magnets in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster are not needed for desegregation purposes, since white enrollment at the schools is substantial. Meanwhile, other high minority schools have emerged in the county. These newer disproportionately minority schools might benefit from magnets similar to those in the predominantly White Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster, but school officials have made no such adjustments.

School officials and others said they believe the magnets contributed to integration by preventing middle class flight from diverse neighborhoods and schools. It is certainly plausible that magnets were one of the factors that deterred middle class flight and prevented even higher levels of segregation and concentrated poverty from emerging.

Analysis of Transfer Requests

Researchers examined 1992-93 records of student transfers to and from three non-magnet schools. We examined such records in response to school officials' public complaint that we failed to consider desegregation-related policies other than the county's magnet schools. In a letter to authors and in statements to the press, officials cited the county's controlled transfer policy as one that contributed to racial integration. (In Montgomery County, any parent is permitted to submit a transfer request, asking for transfer from and to a particular school. Transfer requests to magnet schools are included in the transfer data.) The county district's legal representatives later informed us, however, that they had no reports on the actual impact of transfers on desegregation. The district could provide us only with a box of individual transfers that we then matched to school racial composition. The three schools examined by researchers were all disproportionately minority in 1991, which is the year prior to when the transfer occurred. At each school, the population of at least one ethnic group also differed by more than 20 percentage points from the percentage of that racial or ethnic group districtwide. If the transfer contributed to disproportionate minority composition at either the sending (the school sending the student) or receiving school (the school receiving the student), it was defined as having a negative effect on racial balance.

The evidence suggests not only that the county's "controlled" transfer policy is not far-reaching enough to have any measurable positive effect on desegregation, but that transfers may be having a *negative* effect on desegregation. Based upon this evidence, the very policy that school officials have publicly cited as working in favor of integration, has failed to do so in transfers to and from at least three of the county schools most vulnerable to increasing segregation. Transfer approvals contributed to segregation by facilitating white flight from racially and ethnically changing schools and by allowing minority students to transfer into schools that were already disproportionately minority.

Achievement Trends

The report considers achievement because after reviewing a preliminary version of this report, school officials complained that, in concentrating exclusively on desegregation efforts, we overlooked "the continuing success of our (Montgomery County Public Schools') policies in addressing racial and ethnic disparity in academic achievement." So, while this report is primarily an examination of the effectiveness of locally controlled desegregation efforts in a school district undergoing rapid racial and ethnic change, researchers took school officials' suggestion. In the final section of this report, school district achievement data is reviewed to determine whether or not racial and ethnic gaps in achievement have narrowed. Researchers do not relate achievement patterns to desegregation policy.

Overall, the data, while limited, do suggest some patterns. In the area of basic skills as measured by the Maryland Functional Tests, African-American and Latino students have made progress and, while differences do remain, the initial wide disparities in passing rates between Latino and Whites and African-Americans and Whites have narrowed. However, when looking at the percentage of students who had failed at least one basic skills test by 11th grade, the disparities between Whites and African-Americans and between Whites and Latinos are much wider than disparities illustrated by display of simple passing rates alone.

Under the California Achievement Test, used in the district from 1980-89, the gap

between Whites and African-Americans did narrow over time, but the gap between Whites and Latinos widened. Part of this growing difference between Whites and Latinos could, of course, be caused by new Latino immigration into the district. Despite African-Americans' progress over time on this measure, African-Americans continued to register the lowest percentile ranks in two of four grade levels and the largest gaps in three of four levels.

On the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program gaps remain large not only between non-whites and Whites, but between high poverty schools and other schools. In fact, high poverty schools were able to match districtwide performance on less than a tenth of the possible tested categories. Wide achievement gaps between Whites and non-whites are also apparent when the county's new Criterion Reference Test results are examined. Gaps remain when considering the percentage of students completing algebra by ninth grade, the percentage of students enrolled in advanced courses and the percentage of students taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

CONCLUSION

The magnet school program and other self-regulated policies designed to foster racial integration are unreliable and ineffective means for achieving desegregated schools and maintaining racial integration over the long term. The policies and programs as they have played out in MCPS simply have not been effective enough and have not been enforced strongly enough to offset the demographic change that contributes to school segregation and concentrated of poverty.

The eroding commitment to desegregation is manifest in the increasing segregation and concentrated poverty that has gone unremedied over the years and also in official actions that knowingly increased or sustained segregation at two of the most segregated, high poverty schools in the county, Broad Acres and Oak View Elementary Schools. The policies that do exist simply do not spell out specific strategies for achieving desegregation and reducing segregation and concentrated poverty.

Both the elementary and secondary magnet school magnets in the school district are fundamentally flawed. The elementary model has simply been unsuccessful in attracting substantial numbers of White children to heavily minority areas or in offsetting the demographic change that brought more minority students into certain schools. In 1992-93, in six of the 10 predominantly minority elementary magnets in Blair, more white students transferred out of the schools than transferred in. The programs have not been adjusted or refined to correct the shortcomings and formal transfer programs have not been developed that would allow minority students to transfer to other schools and provide them free transportation to do it.

Secondary magnet schools, on the other hand, do attract sufficient numbers of White students to a magnet program contained within a school. But this model fails to create actual racial integration. This is because though White students do, in fact, attend a predominantly minority high school, once inside the school, data received from the school district show the White students attend many classes in a smaller, non-integrated program that is kept separate in most instances from the larger, still predominantly Black and Latino school and its students. This model, while better than nothing, undermines the achievement of racial integration and equal access because it excludes and stratifies students along racial and ethnic lines.

The mission of locally controlled desegregation policies appears to have evolved from their original purposes to create racial integration and abolish segregation to a less reformatory goal to simply prevent other school policies from increasing or worsening existing segregation and concentrated poverty. The data and the facts show, however, that in recent years officials have been unable to live up even to this self-imposed mandate.

(end executive summary)

Slipping Towards Segregation *Local Control and Eroding Desegregation in Montgomery County*

INTRODUCTION

Educational leaders in Montgomery County, Maryland have never faced a desegregation lawsuit and, as a result, have been able to avoid the type of desegregation orders that forced change on many school districts. School officials in this suburban 495-square-mile district of 114,000 students near Washington, D.C., found safe haven in 1977 with a voluntary magnet school program. The county passed and refined locally devised, locally controlled desegregation-related policies as it experienced enormous demographic changes during the next two decades.

Montgomery County offers a case study of a school district where desegregation methods widely assumed to be preferable to mandatory measures were employed. The county is an informative site for an examination of locally controlled, unsupervised desegregation efforts because it has many favorable preconditions that increase the likelihood for success. Though diverse, Montgomery County is a suburban district that is not overwhelmed by problems associated with poverty and disenfranchisement common in the inner city. The county is relatively wealthy -- in 1990 it was the 7th wealthiest county in the United States as measured by per-capita income¹ -- and the schools are relatively well-funded as a result. The wealth per pupil in Montgomery County was \$375,093 in 1993.² And the per pupil expenditure was \$7,377. The wealth and expenditure per pupil in Montgomery County far exceeds the state averages in wealth per pupil at \$219,365 and per pupil expenditure at \$5,823.³ During the 1980s, the region had the highest percentage of college graduates of any metropolitan area in the United States.⁴ The county is generally liberal in ideology and most residents vote Democratic, suggesting that there might be more community support for

¹U.S. Census Bureau, Information Services, June 6, 1994.

²Maryland School Performance Report, State and School Systems, 1993. page 43.

Wealth per pupil is an indication of the potential resources available for each local system in the state of Maryland. It is the taxable wealth in relation to the September 30, 1992 enrollment of a school system.

³Maryland School Performance Report, 1993, State and School Systems, page 11.

⁴Hayes, Floyd W. *Politics and Expertise in an Emerging Post-industrial Community: Montgomery County, Maryland's Search for Quality Integrated Education*, Office of Program Research, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1985, p. 1.

policies designed to create integration and reduce inequality.⁵

The county's most visible vehicle for creating racial integration is its specialized magnet schools and magnet programs. Contained in 15 of the district's 123 elementary schools, 2 of the district's 26 middle schools and 1 of the district's 20 high schools,⁶ magnet schools were born under a threat of court intervention in the late 1970s and from a moral mission on the part of liberal political leaders to create racial integration in schools that were becoming increasingly segregated. Magnet schools began as a local response to a problem of polarization in one section of the county -- a problem that, in the 1990s, shows signs of spreading rapidly to other areas of the county and appears unlikely to reverse itself.

The hope behind the magnet schools was that they would provide appealing, specialized and distinct educational programs to attract Whites to predominantly African-American schools thereby creating desegregation without coercion. The schools were a byproduct of a local policy passed in 1975 to promote voluntary integration. The publicly stated hopes behind this "Quality Integrated Education Policy" and other related policies that followed were that they, too, would support efforts toward integration in schools and prevent polarization without coercion from an external agency or monitor. The Quality Integrated Education policy was first hailed by proud educational leaders as a symbol of the county's bold commitment to equality and diversity in education. By 1983, the school district had amended the policy so that once a school's minority composition differed more than 20 percentage points from the racial composition of the school district as a whole, officials would need to *consider* taking action that might correct the imbalance.⁷

"We believe in an inclusive society and we intend to do something about that," school board member Roscoe Nix said on an October night in 1975 when the school board, despite considerable community opposition, passed the original Quality Integrated Education (QIE) policy that suggested desegregation standards for schools.⁸

"I am proud of the fact that we are not attempting to appeal to that which is fearful, but to appeal to that which is good," said Nix, who would later become the outspoken president of the county's NAACP chapter. "This may not have satisfied everyone, but it avoids playing on fear and appealing to the beast in people. Quality education and integration

⁵Hayes, Floyd W. *Politics and Expertise in an Emerging Post-industrial Community: Montgomery County, Maryland's Search for Quality Integrated Education*, Office of Program Research, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1985, p. 1.

⁶Larson, John and James Witte, Susan Staib and Marilyn Powell, *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, Oct. 1990. The Department of Educational Accountability, Montgomery County Public Schools.

⁷History of the policies evolution differed depending upon which school officials characterized events. However, the only official, documented characterization of events received by researchers came from School Superintendent Paul Vance, whose July 1 letter to Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton describes the 1983 amendment. On file with the Harvard Project on School Desegregation.

⁸Brown, Chip, "Montgomery Schools: A New Set of Values," *The Washington Post*, July 20, 1981. p. B1, B3. Also, Sorenson, Joan, "QIE Passed 6 to 1," *The Montgomery County Journal*, A1, A10.

are not mutually exclusive goals." ⁹ At the time, many political leaders and community activists in Montgomery County were optimistic about the policy and the resulting magnet schools, saying they had found a route toward integration that was far preferable to mandatory plans. The county's public commitment to desegregation corresponded with its image as a progressive, liberal community that valued diversity.

But this idealism dwindled and shifted over the years to produce results that in 1994, contrast with the goals and priorities articulated in 1975. Data show that some of the schools in the district, including a majority of the original magnets, have grown disproportionately minority and are enrolling disproportionate numbers of disadvantaged students. As of 1994, some schools in the county are predominantly minority while others remain nearly all White. While some of the changes in racial composition are due to demographic change, the school system is still 58 percent White, 12 percent Asian and only 30 percent African-American and Latino, and only 21.5 percent poor¹⁰, suggesting that imbalances, polarization and concentrations of poverty could be greatly reduced. Segregation and concentrated poverty have increased sharply since 1988.

Clearly, the locally controlled policies and voluntary programs neither triggered action that created racially integrated schools nor spurred action that would prevent the emergence of such characteristics during demographic change. In some cases, school leaders chose not to take action to correct new racial imbalances that emerged as more African-American and Latino families settled in the county. Since 1975, district policies with regard to desegregation and equity have been amended. New policies do document levels of segregation and provide information that will guide school officials in funnelling extra resources to high-poverty, racially and ethnically changing schools. But the policies do not prevent substantial growth of segregation and racial isolation and do not spell out specific strategies and requirements for preventing segregation and integrating schools. The integration-related policies as they exist in 1994 seem intended mostly to prevent other school policies from worsening or exacerbating the segregation that does exist. However, some evidence suggests that, in practice, one publicly touted policy may even be exacerbating segregation. Also, an examination of transfers into the predominantly minority county magnet elementary schools shows that in six of ten schools, higher numbers of whites were approved for transfer from the schools than transferred into the schools.

This report argues that the effectiveness of desegregation efforts in Montgomery County has been severely limited because there has never been a strong control or outside monitor of the programs and policies originally designed to reduce racial isolation. This report offers no prescription or recommendation for the county. Rather, its intention is to use the Montgomery County case to inform other racially and ethnically changing suburban districts, state lawmakers and federal policy makers who want to craft policies to prevent patterns of polarization from emerging. The central conclusion is not that the county's

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Poor, in this case, refers to a student whose family income was so low that it qualified him/her for free and reduced meals. As is the case in most U.S. school districts, this is the only poverty-related data available in MCPS.

policies and programs have created segregated schools, -- although some policies may be compounding the problem. The central lesson from this case is that the locally controlled programs and policies have proved ineffective over the long term in reversing increasing trends of segregation and concentrated poverty.

The evidence in this case study suggests that "local" unchecked voluntary efforts cannot be relied upon if the goal is to reduce racial isolation and create equal access over the long term. The history and events in Montgomery County show that the "local control" that has been widely embraced by federal courts and policy makers may result in educational and political leaders letting the difficult task of desegregation slide so that patterns of segregation emerge without consequence as the goal of desegregation erodes. Clearly, locally devised and locally controlled desegregation efforts will work only for as long as local school boards want them to.

"I don't think that this county can live up to its progressive image now," Nix said nearly two decades after his expectant proclamations in 1975. "The policies and programs do not foster integration. If you look at the elementary schools, the middle schools, the high schools... you have intense isolation."¹¹

Programs and Policies in Historical Context

The next section offers a brief overview of the evolution of locally controlled desegregation policies and programs in Montgomery County.

Magnet Schools and the Original OIE Policy

Since 1977, Montgomery County has used two distinct magnet school models in an attempt to desegregate its public education system. The model at the elementary level is based upon choice, with parents requesting transfer to specialized schools in areas with high numbers of minority students. At the middle and high school level, students must win admission based upon school performance and teacher recommendation. The magnets are used primarily in two southern sections of the county.

Under the elementary school model, families simply request transfer to one of the specialized programs at the elementary level. Some students, by virtue of where they live, are already assigned to an elementary magnet school. The school district's stated policy is that a child will be allowed to transfer into an elementary school magnet as long as space is available and as long as the transfer does not increase segregation. (The exceptions to this rule are the Gifted and Talented programs and French "immersion" magnets that require screening and testing at the higher elementary grades.) Elementary magnet programs include communication arts, computer literacy, French, Spanish, reading and language arts, science and math, an academy program that emphasizes interdisciplinary instruction and Gifted and Talented programs. At the elementary level, entire schools are usually transformed into a

¹¹Interview with Roscoe Nix, April 8, 1994.

magnet in what is commonly referred to as a "dedicated" magnet.

Applicants to the middle and high school magnets are screened by a selection committee who decides which students will be admitted to the programs. Unlike the elementary schools, the middle- and high school level magnets are small, separate programs usually of about 100 students contained within a larger, regular school. The two middle school magnets, at Takoma Park and Eastern Middle Schools, include a communication arts magnet and a computer/math/science magnet. The high school magnet, Blair High School, offers interdisciplinary courses of study in advanced math, science and computer science. Free transportation is provided to all secondary magnets in the Blair cluster and to some of the elementary magnets in that cluster area.

Most of the magnet schools are located in one of two "clusters,"¹² where much of the county's minority population has traditionally lived. Both clusters are just across the Washington, D.C. line in the southeastern section of the county. All ten of the elementary schools in the Blair Cluster are magnets. Four of the seven elementary schools in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster are magnet schools. One elementary school magnet was recently placed in Maryvale Elementary School in the Rockville Cluster. The county's three secondary level magnets are located in the Blair Cluster. This report considers levels of segregation in all sections of the county but, in considering magnets, focuses special attention on magnets in the Blair and Bethesda-Chevy Chase clusters since these have the longest history in the county.

The 17-year history of magnets in Montgomery County needs to be discussed within the context of the rapid demographic change that has affected the region during the last two decades. As mirrors of their community, the public schools reflect the profound shifts in population.

In 1970, just 8 percent of the school population were members of minority groups. That percentage grew rapidly, to reach 18 percent in 1978. By 1988, about 34 percent of the county students were members of minority groups.¹³ In the 1993-94 school year, 42.3 percent of students were members of minority groups.¹⁴ Poverty rates in the schools also have risen. In 1993, 21 percent of elementary schoolchildren had family incomes low enough to participate in the Free and Reduced Meals Program.¹⁵ The school system enrolls students

¹²The school system is divided in to 21 cluster areas.

¹³According to MCPS Department of Educational Accountability Studies, this decline was driven by a declining White population that was consistent with a national patterns of declining birth rates among Whites. Stated in, Larson, John and James Witte, Susan Staib and Marilyn Powell, *Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, Oct. 1990. p. 1.

¹⁴Montgomery County Public Schools Enrollment by Race and Ethnic Groups: 1968-1993. MCPS, October, 1993.

¹⁵Data could not be provided for all previous years, but according to Requested Fiscal Year 95 Capital Budget and the Fiscal Year 1995 to Fiscal Year 2000 Capital Improvement Program, Submitted to the Montgomery County Board of Education by School Superintendent Paul Vance: "Socioeconomic diversity in the students population also has been increasing. Partly as a consequence of recessionary times, participation in

from more than 100 nation, with about In just the first three months of 1994, the district added 959 international students, representing an increase of 88 students from the previous year at the same time. In the 1992-93 school year, more than 9,000 students -- about 8 percent of the MCPS population -- needed English As a Second Language classes.¹⁶ The increase in the number of non-English proficient speakers has risen dramatically since 1979, when about 2,000 students required such services. The district does not offer bilingual education classes but does offer English classes at all elementary schools and some secondary schools. At the secondary level, some students who are not proficient in English must be bused to schools where the ESOL classes are delivered.

The following chart illustrates the racial and ethnic changes.

Enrollment in Montgomery Public Schools For Various Years, 1970 to 1993¹⁷

Year	White	African-American	Latino	Asian	Total Enrollment
1970	92 percent	5 percent	2 percent	1 percent	125,344
1980	78 percent	12 percent	4 percent	6 percent	98,843
1985	70 percent	15 percent	6 percent	9 percent	92,871
1990	62 percent	17 percent	9 percent	12 percent	103,732
1993	58 percent	19 percent	11 percent	12 percent	113,687

Through the 1970s and until the mid-1980s, growth in the minority population was concentrated in the southern section of the county near the Washington, D.C. border. This area, which includes the neighborhoods of Takoma Park and Silver Spring, will hereinafter be referred to as the "Blair Cluster," named for the high school that serves the area.

In the 1970s, the Rosemary Hills Elementary School in the affluent, mostly White Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster, was about 30 percent African-American. This, of course, represented a sizable disproportion since, at the time, just about 5 percent of the district's students were African-American. School officials became concerned about the polarization in both the Blair and Chevy Chase clusters. At that time, the other regions and schools

the Free and Reduced Meal Program has reach all-time highs in recent years. This year the percent of elementary schoolchildren approved for the program is 21 percent of total elementary enrollment." page 1-5. November 2, 1993.

¹⁶Current and Former ESOL Students in MCPS During 1992-93 School Year. From a Memorandum to Members of MCPS Board of Education From Paul Vance, Superintendent of Schools. April 25, 1994.

¹⁷Montgomery County Public Schools Enrollment by Race and Ethnic Groups: 1968-1993 .MCPS. October, 1993.

remained predominantly White.

The PTA at Rosemary Hills had filed a complaint with the federal government and had threatened to sue the school board over the increasing segregation. To avoid the PTA lawsuit and, as school leaders tell it, to fulfill a desire for integrated schools, the seven-member school board in 1975 passed the desegregation policy to guide it in meeting its goal of "quality and integrated education."

But the original Quality and Integrated Education Policy, known as the "QIE Policy," was little more than an informal guide for school officials. In fact, the policy never *required* the board to take any action to eliminate racial segregation in schools. The policy, once revised in 1983, required only that the school board *consider* taking action if the minority composition of any school differed more than 20 percentage points from the minority composition of the district as a whole. For example, if the school system was 30 percent minority¹⁸ (African-American and Latino) a school would have violated the guidelines if its African-American/Latino enrollment was more than 50 percent or less than 10 percent. With no monitor or firm guidelines, the policy depended upon local school board action for implementation.

Though the QIE policy carried no penalty or incentive, political events in the 1970s and early 1980s did provide the impetus for school leaders to pass it and then use it to foster integration. In 1974, the Office of Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare investigated the district at the request of the Rosemary Hills PTA. The OCR, which during the Nixon administration was directed not to require mandatory school desegregation, found the county in compliance with the law. Despite the favorable ruling, the investigation nonetheless forced the topic of racial integration onto the agenda.¹⁹ In the early 1970s, the NAACP had successfully sued the neighboring Prince George's County school system, forcing it to institute a mandatory busing plan.²⁰ Montgomery County's NAACP chapter and other African-American community groups were outspoken participants in school board discussions during this time. In the 1970s, the problem of racial polarization was confined to two specific areas and therefore easily manageable and unlikely

¹⁸Since Asian students are usually not included in desegregation plans as a disadvantaged group in areas without a history of segregation of Asians, this report considers only African-American and Latino as non-whites. Asians are counted neither as Whites nor non-whites in calculating disproportions and imbalances. Asian families, on average, in the United States, have higher incomes and educational levels than whites.

Asian students are not severely segregated either by race or income and, overall, they do not show evidence of receiving inferior education. In fact, they tend to be very similar to or to outpace Whites on many measures of academic achievement. For example, they are more likely to complete ninth grade algebra, more likely to be in honors classes than Whites. They also have a lower dropout rate and a lower suspension rate than Whites in Montgomery County, based upon the MCPS Second Annual Report, pages 15-17.

¹⁹Hayes, Floyd, *Politics and Expertise In An Emerging Post-industrial Community: Montgomery County, Maryland's Search For Quality Integrated Education*, Office of Program Research, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Presented at the 1985 Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, 1985.

²⁰Crutcher, Elizabeth and Susan E. Ea on, *Magnets and Media: Prince George's County's "Miracle Cure."* The Harvard Project on School Desegregation. In press. August, 1994.

to cause countywide political problems.

In this political climate, school leaders developed plans for integration. But because there was never a lawsuit, the least disruptive, most politically palatable forms of desegregation could be embraced. Informed observers explain that mandatory student reassignment was considered politically unsafe. There was such fierce opposition to the idea of busing that few community members would advocate for it. Informed observers said African-Americans did not rally around a stronger desegregation policy because they feared that a one-way busing plan would emerge and place a disproportionate share of the burden on African-American families.²¹

Harriet Tyson, a former Board of Education member, articulated her board's dilemma at the time:

"...We couldn't politically bus in parts of the county," explained Tyson, a former board member and an architect of the magnet plan, said. "...and for whatever reasons of political wisdom or cowardice, we decided...to take advantage of the naturally occurring differences in the schools that were in that part of the county...We put out brochures that described the characteristics of each of these schools...and encouraged people to choose schools based upon programs."²²

Magnets seemed especially appropriate for the Blair area. The Board of Education was hesitant to break up the established Blair community by busing students from it. Because the school enrollment in the area was predominantly minority, the busing of students within the cluster would have been futile. School officials reasoned, then, that the only way to create desegregation without disrupting the families who lived in the area was to somehow attract Whites there.²³ The magnet solution emerged as a result of discussions with community leaders and parent groups.²⁴

In the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, school officials sought a slightly different remedy that paired the increasingly African-American Rosemary Hills Elementary School with the predominantly White North Chevy Chase and Chevy Chase Elementary Schools. Under the plan, Rosemary Hills would enroll kindergarten through second graders and the other schools would enroll students in the higher elementary grades. Though the White parents in this relatively affluent cluster were not uniformly pleased with the remedy, their children were nonetheless permitted to continue attending schools in their cluster area and were compensated for the changes in racial composition with extra money. This remedy did require some busing but it was not extensive. The average trip, according to one report, was

²¹Interview with Harriet Tyson, March 9, 1993.

²²Interview with Harriet Tyson, March 9, 1993.

²³Interview with Blair Ewing, March 7, 1994.

²⁴Interview with Blair Ewing, April 7, 1994.

about 2.5 miles.²⁵

Desegregation Efforts Prove Vulnerable: A Conservative Majority Takes Control

The stated goal of integrated education soon proved vulnerable with the 1978 election of a conservative school board whose majority was hostile to racial integration efforts. The board is commonly known as the "Greenblatt" Board, named for outspoken conservative member Marian Greenblatt who won her seat after an anti-busing election campaign. The board's reign coincided with rapidly declining student enrollment. (Enrollment declined from about 127,000 to 90,000 from 1973 to 1983.)²⁶ The enrollment decline resulted in the board closing schools and redrawing attendance zones in a way that exacerbated segregation. At the time, Roscoe Nix, the former board member and NAACP president charged that the Greenblatt board practiced "proud and open racism."²⁷

For example, explained school board member Blair Ewing, a dissenting board member at the time and a longtime supporter of county desegregation efforts, the "Greenblatt" board in 1981:

"redrew (the Blair area) in such a way that it included all high minority areas and excluded almost all areas that had substantial numbers of (White) kids."²⁸

In 1982, the anti-desegregation board was stopped in its tracks when the state of Maryland rejected the school reorganization plan approved by the board. The state, which nearly always routinely approved of local school reorganization plans, was opposed to the redrawing of attendance zones for Blair High School and Eastern Intermediate School and to the proposed closing of the Rosemary Hills Elementary School in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. At the time, the Maryland State Board of Education called the Greenblatt Board's proposal:

"an unreasonable and arbitrary deviation from their racial and

²⁵Brown, Chip, *Montgomery Schools: A New Set of Values*. The Washington Post, July 20, 1981, pages, B1, B3.

²⁶According to the MCPS Department of Accountability studies, this decline was driven solely by the declining White population that was consistent with a rational and national pattern of declining birth rates among Whites. *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, Oct. 1990, by DEA; John Larson, James Witte, Susan Staib and Marilyn Powell. p.1-1.

²⁷Brown, Chip. *Montgomery Schools: A New Set of Values*. The Washington Post, July 20, 1981. pages, B1, B3.

²⁸Interview with Blair Ewing, March 7, 1993.

educational policies...which exacerbate the already substantial racial imbalance that exists at that school (Rosemary Hills)..."²⁹

The existing voluntary magnets were not attacked outright during the anti-desegregation reign, but neither were they a priority of the board. Soon after the state's admonishment in June 1982, the board lost its conservative majority.

After the election, the new board expanded and improved the magnets in what is referred to today as "the second generation of magnets." In this second phase, magnet programs were expanded to the three secondary schools in the Blair Cluster, to the remaining three elementary schools in the Blair Cluster and to four of the elementary schools in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster including the paired schools that were desegregated. The magnets also came to be viewed as devices to retain the White population in the two clusters. In addition to magnet schools, school officials have also supported integration by adjusting boundary lines and pairing schools.

Diminishing Attention to Desegregation

But the weak nature of both the magnet program and the locally controlled desegregation policies is manifest in the pockets of segregation that have developed in the district with no response. In acknowledging that segregation does persist in the county, school officials' publicly stated defense has primarily to stress that the patterns are caused by housing patterns and are not the result of school policies.³⁰ Barron Stroud, director of the QIE Program, said that changing legal standards as articulated by the Supreme Court suggest that school officials are not legally responsible for correcting racial imbalances in schools when those imbalances can be attributed to demographic change.³¹ Those decisions,

²⁹Opinions of Maryland State Board of Education 582, 583 (1982)

³⁰Personal Correspondence from Superintendent Paul Vance to Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, page 2, July 1, 1994. On file with the Harvard Project on School Desegregation.

Memorandum from John C. Larson to School Superintendent Paul Vance, page 3, June 27, 1991. On file with the Harvard Project on School Desegregation.

Telephone interview with John C. Larson, July 6, 1994.

Interview with Barron Stroud, April 7, 1994.

³¹Interview with Barron Stroud, April 7, 1994.

The 1990 *Dowell v. Oklahoma City Board of Education* said a lower court could release a school district from supervision if the district had desegregated its students and faculty for just a few years and met other requirements established by the Supreme Court's 1968 *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* decision that ordered total dismantling of segregated school systems. This was the case even when demographic change had created more segregation.

The *Pitts v. Freeman* decision, in 1992, from DeKalb County, Georgia, went even further. It said that various requirements for desegregation need not be present at the same time and that schools are not responsible for correcting segregated conditions caused by demographics, such as housing segregation. Under *Pitts*, a district could, for example, dismantle its plan for student desegregation without ever having desegregated its faculty.

however, apply only to the legal situations of school districts who have complied with all requirements of a federal court order for a number of years.

The QIE Policy, as it has evolved, seems intended primarily to prevent other school policies and decisions from worsening the segregation that does exist. In other words, the purpose of policies are not to desegregate or prevent segregation but to sustain current conditions. But recent evidence shows that school polices are not always implemented in a way that reaches this goal. Indeed, in 1989, the school board voted not to take any action to decrease the intense segregation at Broad Acres Elementary School, which, in 1993, was about 31 percent African-American, 52 percent Latino with about 94 percent of students whose low family incomes qualified the students for free and reduced price school meals.³² In addition, county school officials in 1991 moved the heavily white French Immersion program out of the heavily minority Oak View School to Maryvale School, helping cause white enrollment at Oak View to decline from 42 to 6 percent in just one year. The program move did free up some much needed space in Oak View³³ and alleviated increasing segregation at Maryvale. But, at the time, the segregation levels at Maryvale were much lower than they were at Oak View -- Maryvale was 57 percent African-American/Latino -- and all the other schools in Maryvale's cluster area remained predominantly white, suggesting that transfers or boundary changes might have been feasible.³⁴

In fact, John Larson, the coordinator of evaluation for MCPS, has said that the purpose of the current QIE Policy is not to end segregation in schools or to counteract the effects of segregated housing. Rather, the purpose of the QIE Policy is to prevent other school policies and school decisions from worsening the segregation that does exist.

"How much can schools really do to create integration?" Larson said. "In some schools, the rate of demographic change has outstripped the ability of school policy to control the segregation but that does not mean that we won't take some action to make sure that school policies don't contribute to that segregation."³⁵

These actions and non-actions appeared to represent a shift in philosophy for the

³²Student Enrollment by Race and Ethnic Group: 1988-1993. And Free and Reduced Meals Summary Report, November 29, 1993.

³³Telephone discussion with Oak View principal, Dr. William Baranick July 11, 1994.

³⁴All of the elementary schools in the Rockville Cluster, where Maryvale is located, had space available as of 1993-94, according to MCPS Utilization Rates. Utilization rates were as follows for the four other elementary schools in the Rockville Cluster: Barnsley, 88%; Flower Valley, 89%; Meadow Hall, 81%; Rock Creek Valley, 68%.

Requested FY 95 Capital Budget and the FY 1995 to FY 2000 Capital Improvements Program, Submitted by School Superintendent Paul Vance to the MCPS Board of Education, November 2, 1993.

³⁵Telephone interview with John Larson, July 6, 1994.

school board, which, as recently as late 1988, had paired the Bel Pre and Strathmore Elementary Schools in the Kennedy Cluster in an effort to improve ameliorate segregation there.

Policies in 1994

The Amended QIE Policy, Diversity Profiles and Educational Loads

The centerpiece of the civil rights policy in the county is the Quality Integrated Education (QIE) policy, most recently amended on the anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, May 17, 1993. The policy supports action to "promote diversity so that the isolation of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups is avoided and the full benefits of integration are achieved."

The policy points to particular values arising from school integration which "foster racial and cultural understanding" and "expands postsecondary opportunities for diverse populations."³⁶ There are no specific requirements for creating integrated schools or preventing the spread of segregation in the policy, a great deal of which is devoted to improving academic performance and targeting schools for additional aid in the future. The policy provides some extra funds to schools with high numbers of disadvantaged students and officials said they expect to provide more in the coming years.

In May 1993, the school board eliminated the specific desegregation standards in the QIE policy that required consideration for action once the minority composition of a given school differed 20 percentage points from the minority composition of the district as a whole.

The district replaced the standard with a new formula designed to assess the "diversity profile" of each school.³⁷ Under this policy, crafted by Larson, officials use a statistical formula to determine 1) the degree to which the population of each racial and ethnic group differs from the population of that ethnic group in the school district as a whole and 2) the rate of change in that ethnic group during the last four years.³⁸ Larson explained that school officials become concerned about racial and ethnic change only when that change is creating racial compositions that differ from the overall racial composition of the school

³⁶Quality Integrated Education Policy, Montgomery County Board of Education.

³⁷Telephone Interview with John Larson, coordinator for evaluation in the Department of Educational Accountability, Montgomery County Public Schools, July 6, 1994.

³⁸Telephone Interview with John Larson, coordinator for evaluation in the Department of Educational Accountability, Montgomery County Public Schools, July 6, 1994. Personal Correspondence from Superintendent Paul Vance to Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, July 1, 1994. On file with the Harvard Project on School Desegregation.

district overall.³⁹ In other words, if the change that is occurring is bringing in more minority students to previously all-White schools, then school officials would not view this as a negative situation since the change would be creating integration. According to Larson, school officials then use the rankings of schools in making future decisions about where to build schools, how to draw attendance boundaries in the future when reducing overcrowding, and whether or not to grant students requests to transfer to certain schools.⁴⁰ For example, under the policy, if officials in the future need to reduce overcrowding at a middle school, officials might use information about a schools' diversity profile to determine how to draw new attendance boundaries so as to not worsen segregation.⁴¹

After elimination of a specific standard, MCPS officials in 1993 also developed a determination of need formula designed to provide information so school officials can eventually funnel extra money or resources to segregated schools that have high numbers of disadvantaged students and rapid mobility. According to the most recent need determination conducted by the school department, the schools with the greatest concentration of poverty and the most segregation are also the schools with the largest "educational load" -- the term used by the district to determine school needs.⁴² Some extra money is already provided to the needy schools, but future budget configurations for future years will take these 'educational loads' into account when allocating resources and are designed to result in even more money being delivered to needy schools.⁴³ Larson, who designed the policy, said it is still unclear exactly how much extra money will be given to the various schools.⁴⁴

So, the "educational load" policy, while underscoring the link between severe need schools and racial, ethnic and socioeconomic segregation, does nothing directly to reduce that segregation and concentrated poverty. In instituting this policy, school officials effectively document the strong link between segregation and concentrated poverty and severe need but contend that it is not necessary to reduce the intensity of those two school characteristics. Under the new policy, the clear connection between these factors does not result in school officials eliminating the isolation and concentrated poverty in the schools but accepts it and

³⁹Telephone Interview with John Larson, coordinator for evaluation in the Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, July 6, 1994.

⁴⁰Telephone Interview with John Larson, coordinator for evaluation in the Department of Educational Accountability MCPS, July 6, 1994.

⁴¹Telephone Interview with John Larson, coordinator for evaluation in the Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, July 6, 1994.

⁴²Educational Load Variables for Schools in Spring, 1993, Montgomery County Public Schools.

⁴³Interview with School Superintendent Paul Vance, April 8, 1994. Interview with Barron Stroud, director of QIE Policy, April 8, 1994. Interview with Blair Ewing, school board member since 1977, April 7, 1994.

⁴⁴Telephone Interview with John Larson, coordinator for evaluation in the Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, July 6, 1994.

seems to define it as out of their control and something that might justify added resources sometime in the future.

Officials cited two principal justifications for these policy changes. First, they said the original QIE policy, that red-flagged a school for examination once it's minority population differed 20 percentage points from the district as a whole, unfairly stereotyped high minority schools as inferior. Second, school officials said they wanted a policy that reflected their commitment to achievement by funnelling extra resources to schools in an effort to help schools reach high standards regardless of the increased educational burdens associated with poverty.⁴⁵

"It (the original QIE Policy) gave the impression that a high minority school is a negative thing," said Barron Stroud, director of the district's Quality and Integrated Education division. "It is not consistent with the determination of need...Just simply because you have a large minority population does not mean it's a negative thing...It's a real change in philosophy. It's a new way of looking at how we consider resources in all schools. It's saying to people, 'Just because you've got a high minority population, it's not an excuse not to stick to high standards, it's not an excuse for low achievement.'"⁴⁶

It should be noted, however, that integration standards as they existed under the former 20 percent differential standard do not necessarily have to stigmatize high-minority schools. On the contrary, many of the district's segregated schools are disproportionately White. School officials could have cited these schools as being out of compliance and crafted policies that might have encouraged the transfer of minority students to these schools, which officials said have more space to accommodate transfers anyway.⁴⁷

Some school officials acknowledged this. Anne Briggs, director of facilities management, for example, noted that some high minority schools are running out of the space needed to accommodate White transfers but that little attention has been given to integrating all White schools in the county.

"You see a lot of those schools in the upcounty (northern) area that are almost all-White...That's the other end of the policy that maybe

⁴⁵Interview with School Superintendent Paul Vance, April 8, 1994. Interview with Barron Stroud, director of QIE Policy, April 8, 1994. Interview with Blair Ewing, school board member since 1977, April 7, 1994. Interview with Anne Briggs, director of facilities management, April 8, 1994.

⁴⁶Interview with Barron Stroud, Director of QIE Policy, April 7, 1994.

⁴⁷Interview with Wayveline Starnes, coordinator of enriched and innovative instruction, April 7, 1994. Interview with Anne Briggs, April 8, 1994.

we should be taking a look at."⁴⁸

The Transfer Policy

The Montgomery County school system permits transfer under some circumstances and attempts to explain the rules to interested parents in the "School Transfer Information Booklet," a complex 13-page single-space document setting out rights and conditions. This policy has been cited by school officials as one that aids desegregation efforts. The document has been written at a college reading level and there is no transfer office whose duties it would be to explain the possibilities to less educated parents.

The first sentence in the second paragraph, for example, reads:

"Board policies (JEE, FAA and ACD) and coordinating regulation (JEE-RA) provide the guidelines used in the students transfer process."

The basic message is that "approval or denial of an individual transfer request will be made in light of the utilization, enrollment and diversity of the schools involved, as well as the total number of transfer requests and their impact, the stability of the school population, and the individual reasons for the transfer. Transfers are not permitted into or out of schools in holding facilities or undergoing boundary changes in order to stabilize enrollment and, as a result, no data is provided for these schools."⁴⁹

The explanation of civil rights reads as follows:

"based on the diversity profile, transfers in the restricted categories (2 or 4) will be permitted only to the extent that they are offset by the annual change at that school for the identified racial/ethnic group."⁵⁰

Many more similarly complex sentences are followed by pages of graphs showing how facility considerations, population considerations and administrative concerns either permit or limit transfers into and out of each school. The document provides no information about the educational quality or options available at a school a parent might want to transfer a child to. There is no counseling center for a student to receive such information and help in understanding possibilities. This transfer system is obviously one that requires sophistication, understanding of complex rules, and private information about school quality to work to improve a child's educational opportunities. It is the kind of transfer system that greatly advantages highly educated people over others.

The potentially unequal effects are compounded by the transportation policy.

⁴⁸Interview with Anne Briggs, director of facilities management, MCPS, April 8, 1994.

⁴⁹School Transfer Information Booklet, MCPS, 1994-95. Page 1.

⁵⁰School Transfer Information Booklet, MCPS, 1994-95. Page 1.

Montgomery County provides no transportation for students transferring through the voluntary transfer policy. Transportation is provided only for high school magnets and a few grade school magnets in the Blair cluster.

There is no policy designed to encourage transfers that would integrate the growing concentration of whites in schools with very few minority schools. In other words, there is no public place designated to provide, disseminate or advertise transfer information to students. In addition, under the policy, parents would have to work with administrators in two different regions of the district, and parents have to provide their own transportation. There is neither central office nor school level recruiting to attract transfers except in the magnet programs, which have not expanded to deal with new areas of racial change. Since providing transportation is strongly related to income and two parent status and since there is a much higher fraction of low income students in the more segregated African American and Latino schools, this transportation policy might strongly discourage the kinds of transfers that would voluntarily lower segregation in both the sending and receiving cluster.

It should be noted that the analysis of transfer requests conducted in this report is not an analysis of the current transfer regulations -- or of adherence to those regulations -- that were put in place in 1994. Rather, the analysis is based upon 1991 and 1992 data and measures of segregation that were in place during those years. It is not possible to analyze the results of the current policy as it will not affect transfers until the Fall of 1994.

Long Range Facilities Planning Policy

The school board has a Long-Range Facilities Planning Policy, most recently admended in November 1993. This is pointed to by district officials as an important policy that will desegregate schools. The basic requirement of the policy, as it is implemented, is that racial and ethnic data be gathered on each of what the district considers to viable sites to serve the area needing a school and then try to chose the alternative site and set of boundaries more likely to produce racial diversity.⁵¹ Deputy Superintendent Kathryn Gemberling said that this policy is considered very seriously in site selections.⁵²

Obviously a site selection and zoning policy producing more integration can be a positive contribution to school desegregation. There is no policy, however, that would prevent the building of a new school in a segregated white area if the best site were selected within that growing area.⁵³ Our study was not able to assess the actual impact of the decisions made under this policy. Whatever effect it did have, if it was significantly positive, was not sufficient to prevent rapidly increasing segregation of African Americans, Latinos and whites within the district.

Potential Policies for Desegregation

School leaders are discussing the possibility of employing a not yet devised

⁵¹Interview with Maree Sneed, Hogan and Hartson, July 29, 1994.

⁵²Interview with Kathryn Gemberling, July 28, 1994.

⁵³Montgomery County Board of Education, FAA, Nov. 22, 1994.

"controlled choice" program among several high schools in the eastern section of the county so as to avoid segregation in those schools.⁵⁴ Since the discussions are still preliminary, it is still unclear whether the discussions would produce a policy that the Board of Education would approve. School officials and community groups are also considering additional magnet programs in a group of schools.

Goals of the Report

The following sections consider the effectiveness of the system's locally devised and locally controlled policies for creating racial balance in the county schools. Using several standards, the author's first document the degree to which segregation and concentrated poverty exists in the county schools and the degree to which it has increased over five years since 1988. The report considers concentrated poverty because of the documented link between concentrated poverty and poor school performance⁵⁵ and also because school officials have acknowledged, through their educational load policy, that a high poverty level is a school characteristic that correlates with low achievement and therefore deserves extra compensation.⁵⁶

Authors consider the existing evidence about the effectiveness of county magnet schools in combating segregation. The report also reviews data on transfer requests made to and from three schools to determine whether or not officials are, as they have claimed, denying transfers that work against racial balance and also whether or not the transfer policy will have a significant effect upon existing school compositions. It is beyond the scope of this report to conduct an exhaustive, comprehensive review of transfer requests and for this reason, authors reviewed data on three schools most vulnerable to increasing segregation. The transfer policy is significant because it has recently been a primary public justification used by Montgomery County school officials in defending the district's desegregation policies.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Interview with Kathryn Gemberling, deputy superintendent, July 27, 1994.

⁵⁵See, for example, Final Report of the National Assessment of the Chapter 1 Program, Reinventing Chapter 1: The Current Chapter 1 Program and New Directions, December 1993. This report found that disadvantaged children in schools with high rates of poverty performed much more poorly in school when compared with disadvantaged children in schools with less poverty. Their report concludes that the achievement gap between disadvantaged and other students means the schools with concentrated poverty will have much greater difficulty in meeting the National Education Goals.

⁵⁶Educational Load Variables For Schools in Spring, 1993. Montgomery County Public Schools.

⁵⁷Deutsch, Judith Sloan., *Vance Blasts Schools Study*, Bethesda Gazette, July 13, 1994. A-1 and A-20. A portion of the article reads: To deal with that demography John Larson, a researcher for the county schools explains the system's current stringent transfer policy controls students moving in or out of schools based on minority levels. The tightened control of transfers is part of the system's revamped Quality Integrated Education

The report will also present data on achievement trends. The report considers achievement because after reviewing a preliminary version of this report, school officials complained that, in concentrating exclusively on desegregation efforts, the researchers overlooked "the continuing success of our educational policies in addressing racial and ethnic disparity in academic achievement."⁵⁸ So, while this report is primarily an examination of the effectiveness of locally controlled desegregation efforts in a school district undergoing rapid racial and ethnic change, we nevertheless took school officials' suggestion. In the final section of this report, school district achievement data is reviewed to determine whether or not racial and ethnic gaps in achievement have narrowed. This question is significant because school officials have repeatedly cited successful efforts to improve minority achievement and narrow racial and ethnic achievement gaps as justification for expending less effort on desegregation. The analysis notes the limitations of existing achievement data.

This report is not intended to provide policy prescriptions to the Montgomery County Public Schools. Rather, its purpose is to inform other educators and policy makers about the apparent limitations of Montgomery County's locally controlled, unchecked desegregation efforts.

Isolation Amidst Diversity

This study evaluates racial and ethnic disproportion, concentrated poverty and the increase in predominantly minority schools by using several measures. Each standard is outlined in the following sections.

Racial/Ethnic Disproportion

This report applies the Montgomery County Board of Education's recently rescinded guideline that considered a school racially imbalanced and required consideration for action once the minority population differed more than 20 percentage points from the minority population in the district as a whole. Since Asian students are not historically included as a disadvantaged minority in most desegregation plans, minority composition, for the purposes of this report, will include the combined percentage of African-American and Latino students

program...."

In a story by Spayd, Liz, *Montgomery School Chief Attacks Racial Balance Study*, The Washington Post, July 12, 1994, Page 1 and A10, Spayd reports: "When problems occur, they are addressed through a change in transfer policies specific to individual racial or ethnic groups, officials said. If a school has a desirable mix of black and white students, but too heavy a concentration of Latino students, officials could decide to prohibit more Latinos from transferring into the school."

⁵⁸Personal correspondence to Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton from Paul L. Vance, with contributions from legal counsel in the law firms of Hogan and Hartson, and Reese and Carney, "as well as insight and observations from school system administrative staff, including the Office for Instruction and Program Development and the Department of Educational Accountability." July 1, 1994. Page 4. On file with the Harvard Project on School Desegregation.

This correspondence was released by the school system to Washington-area media.

when making calculations. Asian students are not severely segregated either by race or income and they do not show evidence of receiving inferior education. In fact, they tend to be very similar to or actually outpace White students on many measures of academic achievement. For example, they are more likely to complete ninth grade algebra, more likely to be in honors and AP classes than Whites. They also have a lower dropout rate and a lower suspension rate than Whites.⁵⁹ On all these measures and many others, Asians' situation is fundamentally unlike that of African Americans and Latinos. Though there are highly disadvantaged Asians in Montgomery County -- just as there are highly disadvantaged Whites -- the overall picture is of a high achieving population with low segregation and poverty levels. In this way, Montgomery County is unlike some urban areas, such as those in California where there is a long history of overt discrimination against Asian students and where there are still large concentrations of low income students with academic deficiencies in urgent need of better schools.

Asians, then, are counted as neither minorities nor Whites. Since the overall percentage of African-American and Latino students was 30 percent in 1993, a school is defined as "racially or ethnically disproportionate" once the combined percentage of the African-American and Latino populations is smaller than 10 percent or larger than 50 percent. The calculations for 1988 are based upon the non-white composition at that time, which was 23 percent African-American and Latino. This also allows us to take racial and ethnic demographic change into account when determining disproportions.

The second standard uses a 20 percentage point differential standard and calculates disproportions based upon how much the composition of each racial or ethnic group differed from the racial and ethnic composition of the district as a whole. This adjusted standard is appropriate because when the original minority/white standard was put into effect the school system was essentially biracial (African-American and White) and, as a result, did not take the isolation of Latinos into account separately. Using this standard allows us to consider the degree of isolation for each racial and ethnic group. This also allows us to take racial and ethnic demographic change into account when determining disproportions. In other words, disproportions for 1988 are based upon the overall racial and ethnic composition of the district in 1988; correspondingly, 1993 calculations are based upon the overall racial and ethnic compositions in 1993. Montgomery County officials also consider the enrollment disparities for each ethnic group (as opposed to White vs. non-white) when calculating disproportions under the county's "diversity profile" standards.

This report also separates disproportionate schools into two categories: "disproportionately minority" and "disproportionately white." These calculations are also based upon both 1988 and 1993 overall racial and ethnic compositions.

Predominantly Minority

This report employs a simple measure to determine the increase in predominantly minority (African-American/Latino) schools since 1988. Schools are defined as predominantly African-American/Latino if more than 50 percent of students are members of

⁵⁹Second Annual Report, MCPS. pages 15-17.

either group.

Concentrated Poverty

The measure of concentrated poverty employed in this study is one used by researchers Paul Jargowsky and Mary Jo Bane who authored definitive papers on concentrated poverty in 1990. The researchers define as "extremely poor" neighborhoods those where more than 40 percent of the residents live below the poverty line.⁶⁰ Since the MCPS determines poverty rates based upon the percentage of students whose low family incomes qualify them for free and reduced-price meals, a school will be considered "high poverty" when 40 percent or more students qualify for free or reduced meals.

This standard is also useful because the 40 percent concentration represents approximately twice the districtwide level of poverty. About 21.5 percent of elementary students in the district as a whole qualify for free lunch in 1993.

The following sections employ the standards discussed above and outline and explain the significant findings with regard to desegregation and poverty.

Racial/Ethnic Imbalance

As of the 1993-94 school year, the minority compositions of some schools were disproportionate when compared with the minority composition of the district as a whole. Specifically 31 percent of students attended schools that would violate the now defunct rule that red flagged a school for possible remedies if its non-white (African-American/Latino) composition differed more than 20 percentage points from the district as a whole.

This represents an increase from 1988, when only 10 percent of all MCPS students were enrolled in such schools. In other words, the share of students in isolated schools more than tripled in just five years.

The following chart illustrates these changes.

⁶⁰Jargowsky, Paul A. and Mary Jo Bane. *Neighborhood Poverty: Basic Questions*. In Inner City Poverty in America, Lynn and McGahey (eds). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. 1990.

Percent of Students in Schools Where African-American & Latino Population Differs More Than 20 Percentage Points From MCPS African-American & Latino Population, 1988, 1993⁶¹

	1988	1993
MCPS Students	10 %	31 %

When applying the 20-percent differential standard to each ethnic group as opposed to calculating disparities between overall non-white enrollment, 27 percent of MCPS students attend such schools.

This is an increase from 1988, when 20 percent of students attended such schools. The following chart illustrates these changes.

⁶¹Student Population By Race and Ethnic Group: 1988-1993. And Montgomery County Public Schools Enrollment by Race/Ethnic Groups: 1968-1993.

(Calculations for 1988 based upon racial composition of the school district in 1988. In 1988, MCPS was 16 percent African-American, 7 percent Latino, 65 percent White and 11 percent Asian. Based upon Montgomery County Public Schools Enrollment by Race/Ethnic Groups 1968-1993, October 1993.)

In 1988, these schools include Rock Creek Forest, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Pine Crest, Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, Takoma Park, Highland, Strathmore, Broad Acres, Blair HS, Eastern MS, Takoma Park, East Silver Spring, Maryvale, Cresthaven, Harmony Hills, Ritchie Park.

In 1993, these schools included Rock Creek Forest, Blair HS, Eastern Middle School, East Silver Spring, Highland View, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Oak View, Pine Crest, Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, Takoma Park, Einstein HS, Glen Haven, Highland, Gaithersburg, Summit Hall, Lee, Strathmore, Greencastle, Broad Acres, Burnt Mills, Cresthaven, Harmony Hills.

Westbrook, Hoover, Seven Locks, Wayside, Damascus, Baker, Cedar Grove, Clarksburg, Clearspring, Damascus, Woodfield, Laytonsville, Farmland, Luxmanor, Wyngate, Cashell, Ritchie Park, Poolesville ES, Poolesville HS, Darnestown, Jones Lane, Greenwood, Whitman, Pyle, Bannockburn, Bradley Hills, Burning Tree, Cawderock Springs, Wood Acres, Wootton HS, Frost, Cold Spring, Duffief, Lakewood, Stone Mill, Travilah.

Percent of Students in Schools Where the Percentage Population of At Least One Racial/Ethnic Group Differed More Than 20 Percentage Points From MCPS Population, 1988, 1993⁵³

	1988	1993
MCPS Students	20 %	27 %

Some schools that violate these two standards nevertheless appear integrated based on other standards. The purpose of this section is not to advocate a formalistic following of the now defunct QIE guidelines. Rather, the 20 percent guideline allows us to measure demographic trends in the county and adopt a gauge of racial integration and racial imbalance. These data should not be interpreted as advocacy for school assignment policies designed solely to achieve perfect numerical integration. The intention of these data and tables is to provide evidence illustrating increasing levels of racial and ethnic segregation.

Disproportionately/Predominantly African-American and Latino

It is important to explain the difference between predominantly minority and disproportionately minority, both of which are considered in this section.

A school is defined as *predominantly* minority simply if more than 50 percent of students are either African-American or Latino. A school is *disproportionately* minority if the percentage enrollment of its African-American/Latino population is more than 20 percentage points higher than the systemwide African-American/Latino enrollment percentage was in the year being considered. While the first standard is an absolute one often employed in studies of racial segregation⁵⁴ the second standard is adjusted so as to account for demographic change that occurred over time.

⁵³Student Population By Race and Ethnic Group: 1988-1993. And Montgomery County Public Schools Enrollment by Race/Ethnic Groups: 1968-1993.

In 1988, these schools included, Rock Creek Forest, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Pine Crest, Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, Takoma Park, Highland, Strathmore, Broad Acres, Montgomery Blair, Eastern, Takoma Park, East Silver Spring, Maryvale, Cresthaven, Harmony Hills.

In 1993, Westbrook, Rock Creek Forest, Blair HS, Eastern MS, Takoma Park, Highland View, New Hampshire Ests, Oak View, Pine Crest, Rolling Terrace, Seven Locks, Wayside, Damascus, Baker, Cedar Grove, Clarksburg, Clearspring, Damascus, Rockwell, Woodfield, Einstein HS, Glen Haven, Highland, Gaithersburg, Laytonsville, Wyngate, Kennedy, Lee, Kemp Mill, Strathmore, Greencastle, Poolesville, Monocacy, Poolesville, Darnestown, Jones Lane, Belmont, Greenwood, Springbrook, Key, White Oak, Board Acres, Burnt Mills, Cannon Road, Wheaton HS, Harmony Hills, Bannockburn, Carderock Springs, Wood Acres.

⁵⁴See, for example, Orfield, Gary, *The Growth of Segregation in American Schools*, The Harvard Project on School Desegregation & National School Boards Association. December, 1993.

Predominantly Minority

In 1993-94, 24 percent of all African-American students attended schools where more than 50 percent of the students were either Black or Latino. Among Latinos, about 28 percent attended these schools. Overall, about 13 percent of MCPS students attended such schools in 1993-94.

The percentage of students in *predominantly* minority schools (more than 50 percent minority) increased since 1988 as more African-American and Latino students enrolled in the district. In 1988, only 6 percent of MCPS students overall were enrolled in predominantly minority schools. As for African-American students, only 13 percent were enrolled in predominantly minority schools in 1988, compared to 24 percent in 1993. Only 14 percent of Latino students were enrolled in predominantly minority schools in 1988, but by 1993, 28 percent of all Latinos were enrolled in predominantly minority schools.

Percent of Students in Predominantly Minority Schools, 1988 and 1993.⁵⁵

	1988	1993
MCPS Students	6%	13%
African-American Students	13%	24%
Latino Students	14%	28%

It is important to note that the change illustrated in the above chart is, at least to some degree, the result of demographic change that occurred in the county since 1988. The following section accounts for that demographic change in measuring changes in segregation levels. The changes illustrated above are large and rapid. But despite these changes, Montgomery County's Black and Latino students are still far more integrated than African-American and Latino students in the nation as a whole. Specifically, in the 1991-1992 school year, 73 percent of Latino students were in predominantly minority schools nationwide. That year, 66 percent of all African-American students were in predominantly minority schools nationwide.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Student Population By Race and Ethnic Group: 1988-1993. And Montgomery County Public Schools Enrollment by Race/Ethnic Groups: 1968-1993.

The schools in 1988 include Rock Creek Forest, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Pine Crest, Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, Takoma Park, Highland, Strathmore, Broad Acres.

The schools in 1993-94 include Rock Creek Forest, Blair HS, Eastern, East Silver Spring, Highland View, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Oak View, Pine Crest, Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, Takoma Park, Einstein HS, Glen Haven, Highland, Gaithersburg, Summit Hall, Lee, Strathmore, Greencastle, Board Acres, Burnt Mills, Cresthaven, Harmony Hills.

⁵⁶Orfield, Gary, *The Growth of Segregation in American Schools*, Harvard Project on School Desegregation & The National School Boards Association, 1993, Table 3.

Disproportionately Minority

The percentage of MCPS students and of minority students in disproportionately minority schools has also increased over time. In other words, this calculation accounts for the 7 percentage point increase in minority population (from 43 percent to 50 percent) but even when adjusting the standard for demographic change, segregation has increased for both minority groups.

Specifically, in 1988, 20 percent of African-American students were in schools that were disproportionately minority. That percentage increased to 24 percent in 1993. Among Latino students, 24 percent were in disproportionately minority schools in 1988 and that percentage increased to 28 percent of all Latino students in 1993.

Percent of Students in Disproportionately Minority Schools, 1988, 1993⁵⁷

	1988	1993
MCPS Students	9%	13 %
African-American Students	20%	24 %
Latino Students	24%	28 %

The preceding chart is particularly informative since it illustrates the increasing levels of segregation for African-American and Latino students that are apparent even when the standard is adjusted for the demographic change that took place in the district over five years.

Disproportionately White Schools

A school is defined as disproportionately white if the white population of the school is more than 20 percentage points higher than the white population in the district overall.

According to school district data, 16 percent of all white students in the school system attended these disproportionately white schools in 1993-94. About 11 percent of all

⁵⁷Student Population By Race and Ethnic Group: 1988-1993. And Montgomery County Public Schools Enrollment by Race/Ethnic Groups: 1968-1993.

Calculations based upon the African-American/Latino populations in 1988 and the African-American/Latino populations in 1993. In 1988, MCPS was 23 percent African-American/Latino. In 1993, MCPS was 30 percent African-American/Latino.

In 1988, these schools included Rock Creek Forest, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Pine Crest, Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, Takoma Park, Highland, Strathmore, Broad Acres, Blair HS, Eastern Takoma Park, East Silver Spring, Maryvale, Cresthaven, Harmony Hills.

In 1993, these schools included Rock Creek Forest, Blair HS, Eastern, East Silver Spring, Highland View, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Oak View, Pine Crest, Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, Takoma Park, Einstein HS, Glen Haven, Highland, Gaithersburg, Summit Hall, Lee, Strathmore, Greencastle, Board Acres, Burnt Mills, Cresthaven, Harmony Hills.

MCPS students attended these disproportionately white schools in 1993-94. This is an increase from 1988 when just 12 percent of white students and 8 percent of all MCPS students attended disproportionately white schools.

It should be stressed, however, that many of these disproportionately white schools in this 495-square-mile district are located far from predominantly minority neighborhoods. It is beyond the scope of this report to offer recommendations or policy prescriptions or to point out which schools could feasibly be integrated by school or housing policies. The display of these data should not be interpreted as advocacy for specific housing or school policies.

Percent of Students in Disproportionately White Schools, 1988 and 1993⁵⁸

	1988	1993
MCPS Students	8 %	11 %
White Students	12 %	16 %

The data in the preceding chart shows that not only did it become more likely over time for minority students to attend high minority schools, but that the chance of Whites being in isolated disproportionately White schools also increased over five years even as the county grew more diverse.

Concentrated Poverty

Research has shown that racial and ethnic segregation often concentrates poverty in neighborhoods and schools.⁵⁹ Concentrated poverty, meanwhile, has long been correlated with low academic achievement. A 1992 evaluation of the federal Chapter 1 program, for example, showed that disadvantaged children in high poverty schools did less well on achievement measures than disadvantaged students in schools that were not predominantly

⁵⁸Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group: 1988-1993. Calculations based upon the racial composition of the school district at the time.

In 1988, these schools included, Damascus, Baker, Cedar Grove, Clarksburg, Clearspring, Damascus, Woodfield, Luxmanor, Cashell, Ritchie Park, Poolesville ES, Poolesville HS, Darnestown, Belmont, Greenwood, Wood Acres.

In 1993, these schools included Westbrook, Seven Locks, Wayside, Damascus, Baker, Cedar Grove, Clarksburg, Damascus, Rockwell, Woodfield, Laytonsville, Wyngate, Cashell, Poolesville, Monocacy, Poolesville HS, Darnestown, Jones Lane, Belmont, Greenwood, Bannockburn, Carderock Springs, Wood Acres.

⁵⁹For the most recent discussion of this fact, see Massey, Douglas and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, Harvard University Press, 1993.

See also, Orfield, Gary, *The Growth of Segregation in American Schools: Changing Patterns of Separation and Poverty Since 1968*, The Harvard Project on School Desegregation & National School Boards Association. December, 1993.

poor.⁶⁰ Again, for the purposes of this report, "concentrated poverty" schools are defined as those where more than 40 percent of enrolled students qualify for free and reduced meals.

Based on school district data, 19 schools, all of them elementary schools, had enrollments where more than 40 percent of the students qualified for free and reduced meals. About 16 percent of MCPS elementary school students attended such schools in 1993-94. Free lunch is not a good indicator of secondary school poverty levels because many poor secondary students do not apply for free and reduced meal programs.

About 25 percent of all African-American elementary school students attended such schools in 1993-94. According to the data, about 40 percent of all Latino elementary students overall attended such schools. About 8 percent of all White elementary school students attended such schools in 1993-94 and about 17 percent of Asian elementary school students attended such schools.

This represents a dramatic increase from 1988 for all groups but Whites. In 1988, only 6 schools had such high concentrations of poverty. In all, just 5 percent of the total elementary school population was in such high poverty schools in 1988.

Among African-American elementary students in 1988, 11 percent were in high poverty schools. About 14 percent of Latino elementary students were in high poverty schools in 1988. About 6 percent of elementary Asian students were in high poverty schools in 1988. The percentage of elementary level whites in high poverty schools increased only 1 percentage point, from 7 to 8 percent over five years.

The chart below displays these trends

⁶⁰See, for example, Final Report of the National Assessment of the Chapter 1 Program, Reinventing Chapter 1: The Current Chapter 1 Program and New Directions, December 1993. This report found that disadvantaged children in schools with high rates of poverty performed much more poorly in school when compared with disadvantaged children in schools with less poverty. The report concludes that the achievement gap between disadvantaged and other students means the schools with concentrated poverty will have much greater difficulty in meeting the National Education Goals.

Percent of Students in High Poverty Elementary Schools in 1988 and 1993⁶¹

	1988	1993
Elementary Students MCPS	5%	16%
African-American (Elem. Students)	11%	25%
Latino (Elem. Students)	14%	40%
White (Elem. Students)	7%	8%
Asian (Elem. Students)	6%	17%

The preceding chart illustrates the dramatic increase in the percentage of African-American and Latino students attending high poverty elementary schools from 1988-1993. Of course poverty, overall, did increase over the five years in elementary schools, thereby making the existence of concentrated poverty more likely.⁶² According to school district data, about 17 percent of the elementary school population qualified for free and reduced lunch in 1988.⁶³ About 21 percent of all elementary students qualified for free and reduced meals five years later in 1993.⁶⁴ Therefore, poverty increased about 4 percentage points, but student exposure to *concentrated* poverty increased at a much more dramatic rate, especially for Black and Latino students. This shows that relatively small changes in poverty levels are

⁶¹Calculations for poverty levels in 1988 derived from data found in two reports. Free and Reduced Price Meals School Summary Report, November 29, 1993. For years 1988/89. And Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group: 1988-1993.

In 1988, these schools included Broad Acres, Highland, Maryvale, Montgomery Knolls, Rolling Terrace, Strathmore.

in 1993, these schools included, Broad Acres, Burnt Mills, Gaithersburg, Glen Haven, Harmony Hills, Highland, Highland View, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Oak View, Pine Crest, Rolling Terrace, Rosemont, South Lake, Summit Hall, Twinbrook, Viers Mill, Washington Grove, Weller Road.

⁶²According to school district data, about 17 percent of the elementary school population qualified for free and reduced lunch in 1988. Calculations derived from data found in Free And Reduced Meals Summary Report, November 29, 1993, Years 1988-89 and Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group, 1988-1993. According to a July 1 memo to authors, about 21.5 percent of all elementary students qualified for free and reduced meals. Therefore, poverty, overall, increased about 4.5 percentage points but concentrated poverty increased at a much more dramatic rate, especially for Black and Latino students.

⁶³Calculations derived from data found in Free And Reduced Meals Summary Report, November 29, 1993, Years 1988-89 and Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group, 1988-1993.

⁶⁴Fiscal Year 1995 to Fiscal Year 2000 Capital Improvement Program, Submitted to the Montgomery County Board of Education by School Superintendent Paul Vance. Page 1-5.

compounded because they are confined mostly to the poorest, segregated schools while other schools remain unaffected.

Most significant is that the increase in the percentage of African-American and especially Latino elementary students in high poverty schools is far more dramatic than was the increase for students districtwide. Asian students were more than twice as likely as whites to be in such schools, almost mirroring perfectly the countywide averages. White students remained nearly unaffected by the increases in concentrated poverty, with the percentage of whites in high poverty schools increasing only one percentage point over five years even as poverty rates increased overall and concentrated poverty increased for all other racial and ethnic groups.

Magnet Schools

The following sections consider the success of each of the two magnet school models and the possible reasons why they did not achieve racial integration in all schools. The sections also consider whether magnets have retained White residents in the southernmost sections of the county. This latter question is important to consider because some school officials have said that the goal of magnets has shifted from racial integration to neighborhood stabilization.

Have Secondary Level Magnets Produced Desegregation?

Although desegregation is the stated goal of secondary school magnets, the schools as organized reinforce patterns of racial stratification. Other research has also shown that exclusive magnet models of the type used in Montgomery County secondary schools stratify students along economic lines⁶⁵ but Montgomery County officials were unable to provide data that would allow us to determine whether or not this is the case.

Data show that the separate, exclusive magnet programs at this level, while they do draw Whites, may not contribute to desegregation in the larger school, whose racial and ethnic compositions are highly disproportionate. This means that minority schoolchildren do not have the same degree of access to the magnet programs that are so attractive to White students. This has been a controversial point for many years, especially among advocates for minority schoolchildren. In 1990, for example, Yale University psychologist and social scientist Edmund Gordon, who had been hired by the school board to study minority student achievement, criticized this trend:

"The students of color are not enrolled in the magnet programs and must witness daily the gross inequities between their experience and those of their White magnet-enrolled counterparts," Gordon's report to the school board said. "The "school-within-a-school" model must be seriously examined, and the effort to serve the entire student body must be strongly supported."⁶⁶

The chart below illustrates the situation:

⁶⁵See, for example, Wheelock, Anne. *Locked In, Locked Out: Tracking and Placement in Boston Public Schools*. The Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 1990.

⁶⁶Gordon, Edmund W., *Study of the MCPS Minority Achievement Plan*, 1990, and Minutes of the Board of Education, August 28, 1991, p. 20.

Racial Composition of Secondary Schools, (including total school, magnet and non-magnet) Montgomery County Public Schools, 1993⁶⁷

SCHOOL	Total School (with magnet)	Magnet Only	Non-Magnet Students Only
Blair H.S.	White -- 33% Black -- 33% Asian -- 17% Latino -- 19%	White -- 54 % Black -- 7 % Asian -- 34 % Latino -- 5 %	White -- 26% Black -- 38% Asian -- 14% Latino -- 22%
Takoma M.S. ⁶⁸	White -- 35% Black -- 32% Asian -- 17% Latino -- 19%	White -- 53 % Black -- 13 % Asian -- 28 % Latino -- 19 %	White-- 28% Black -- 43% Asian-- 9% Latino-- 20%
Eastern M.S.	White -- 33% Black -- 29% Asian -- 14% Latino-- 23 %	White-- 70% Black -- 10% Asian-- 17% Latino-- 4%	White-- 21% Black-- 44% Asian-- 15% Latino-- 21%

The chart illustrates that at Blair High School's math and science program, just 7 percent of the 400 students in the specialized program are African-American and only 5 percent are Latino. About 34 percent are Asian and 54 percent are White. This represents severe disproportions when compared with the larger, separate school in which the magnet program is contained. At the separate non-magnet school, 38 percent of students are African-American and 22 percent are Latino. About 14 percent are Asian and 26 percent are White.⁶⁹ The disproportions within Blair High School's non-magnet school are even more distinct when comparing the racial and ethnic makeup of the school with the district's overall composition.

At Eastern and Takoma Park Middle School, there are disproportionate numbers of White and Asian students who have access to the magnets and disproportionate numbers of

⁶⁷Data for Eastern and Takoma Park Middle Schools provided by MCPS, Office of Innovative and Enriched Instruction, May 23, 1994. Data for Blair High School provided by the Department of Educational Facilities, Planning and Capital Programming, MCPS, February 18, 1994.

⁶⁸Racial Composition statistics for Takoma Park as provided by the Office of Innovative and Enriched Instruction differed slightly from those provided by the district's Information Office, which were referred to in a previous section of this paper. This is because the Office of Innovative and Enriched Instruction collected the data toward the end of the school year. (Office of Innovative and Enriched Instruction).

⁶⁹The Department of Educational Facilities, Planning and Capital Programming,, MCPS, February 18, 1994.

African-American and Latino students who are not enrolled in the magnet program.

The influx of White students to the separate magnet program does help balance the overall racial composition of the school. (For example, without the magnet program, Blair High School would be 38 percent African-American and 26 percent White. With the program, it is technically 33 percent African-American and 31 percent White.)⁷⁰ But again, this racial balance may be something of a smoke screen, since in reality, the magnet program's racial composition is predominantly White and Asian and the larger school is predominantly African-American and Latino. Under this model, at Blair, White students are about 7 times more likely to be enrolled in a magnet program than African-Americans. At Takoma, Whites are about 4 times more likely than African-Americans and more than 3 and one-half-times more likely than Latinos to be in the magnet program. At Eastern, Whites are 7 times more likely than African-Americans to be in the magnet program and about 17 times more likely than Latinos to be in the magnet program.

Wayveline Starnes, who as director of enriched and innovative instruction oversees the magnet program, stressed that magnet school students take only four classes separated from the non-magnet students and are actually integrated for many of their other classes, such as physical education.⁷¹ But a 1990 internal Department of Educational Accountability report found that magnet students did not mix with regular school students and the programs had no "integrative effect" on the school as a whole. The racial composition of classes in the regular secondary school remained unchanged, the report said, because schedule configurations limited opportunities for magnet and non-magnet students to share classes. Further, when magnet and non-magnet students did mix it was usually in advanced classes where White and Asian non-magnet students mixed with White and Asian magnet students, the report said.⁷²

"When seen from the viewpoint of the school as a whole, the influx of high achieving magnet students and the introduction of a block of courses attended largely by them has the effect of producing less overall classroom integration throughout the school," the DEA report said. "Racial separation between classrooms follows directly from student racial differences in academic performance throughout (Montgomery County Public Schools.)"⁷³

⁷⁰Department of Educational Facilities Planning and Capital Programming, MCPS, February 18, 1994.

⁷¹Interview with Wayveline Starnes, coordinator of enriched and innovated instruction, April 7, 1994.

⁷²Larson, John and James Witte, Susan Staib & Marilyn Powell, *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, The Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, Oct. 1990, pp. E-4.

⁷³Larson, John and James Witte, Susan Staib and Marilyn Powell. *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, The Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, Oct. 1990, p. E-4.

The DEA report, however, did conclude that secondary school magnets programs attracted White students from outside the cluster and that White students transferring to magnets had more contact with students of other races than they would have had in their home schools.⁷⁴ However, the report also concluded that the influx of White students to the magnet program leaves the non-magnet program unaffected, meaning that larger school remains racially and ethnically imbalanced.⁷⁵

Many informed observers conceded that mixing of non-magnet and magnet students is very limited. But observers also stressed that official school policy does make it possible for mixing to occur, but that students have not taken advantage of those opportunities.⁷⁶ Critics have suggested that it would be more effective for school officials to reconfigure schedules to improve integration rather than leaving the task to students.⁷⁷

The separation between the magnet programs and regular schools at the secondary level has been a sticking point for several years. In his 1990 minority achievement report, Gordon, the Yale researcher, cited comments from students who complained about the segregation:

...the division between magnet programs and regular programs was a very big issue in some schools ...The segregation of the magnet program from the rest of the general curriculum was very disturbing to many students and caused communication gaps between magnet and non-magnet students. First of all, Latino and African-American students complained about not having access to information about the magnet program which may keep someone from looking into the possibility of attending a magnet. 'What is a magnet?', 'I didn't know there was a magnet in this school' and 'If I had known I could get into a magnet, I would have worked harder in middle school but now it's too late' were common responses from African-American and Latino students when asked about their knowledge of or participation in the magnet program. Asian students commented that they were usually the only people of color in the magnet program and that they rarely even had to deal with African-American or Latino students in their school except in physical education classes or after school hours. Students in the magnet felt uncomfortable with the separation issue, but students not in the magnet program seemed to be hit the hardest. One student

⁷⁴Larson, John and James Witte, Susan Staib & Marilyn Powell, *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, The Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, Oct. 1990, pp. E-4.

⁷⁵Gordon, Edmund W., *Study of the MCPS Minority Achievement Plan* and Minutes of the Board of Education, August 28, 1990, p. 20.

⁷⁶Interview with Blair Ewing, school board member since 1977, April 7, 1994; interview with Wayveline Starnes, coordinator of innovative and enriched instruction, April 7, 1994.

⁷⁷Interview with Roscoe Nix, April 8, 1994. Interview with Joseph Hawkins, DEA Evaluator, April 13, 1994.

said, 'The magnet students get the best of everything and we get nothing. I just feel like I'm not even wanted here,' to which many other students nodded in agreement. ...It was common among non-magnet and magnet students to label themselves as smart or stupid according to their participation in the magnet and consequently, seemed to justify this segregation and inequality on the basis of talent and merit.⁷⁸

The separate nature of the secondary magnets has contributed to a perception of inequity shared by some community members and MCPS staff members. For example, Roscoe Nix, the former president of the county NAACP and former board member, offered a sharply critical view of secondary magnet programs. Secondary school magnets, he said, are "restrictive and elitist."⁷⁹

"What this program has done, is to create an elite, exclusive program to which minority students do not have equal access," Nix said. "In my mind, the program the way it exists now should really be abolished. It benefits a very small group of students and excludes many more."⁸⁰

Joseph Hawkins, program evaluator for MCPS, said his years of experience with the magnet program showed him that while the secondary magnets may be beneficial from a public relations standpoint, they still create inequality:

"From a P.R. standpoint, they have been a tremendous benefit. Before the Blair magnet, for example, it was not uncommon for people to go around and say, 'Oh, Blair's the worst school in the county, it's violent, it's bad...' You never hear that anymore. You hear just the opposite. That school has gone on to do a lot for students. It's won awards and it's got people around here very excited. However, it also raises serious concerns about equity. You have a situation where Whites and Asians are enrolled in this special program, and, in a lot of cases, the African-American students are on the outside, looking in. I don't see any concerted effort to really change that."⁸¹

Acknowledging that all students do not have equal access to magnet programs,

⁷⁸Gordon, Edmund, *A Study of Minority Student Achievement in Montgomery County Public Schools*, Final Report, November 16, 1990. pages 235-236.

⁷⁹Interview with Roscoe Nix, April 8, 1994.

⁸⁰Interview with Roscoe Nix, April 8, 1994.

⁸¹Telephone interview with Joseph Hawkins, DEA Evaluator, April 13, 1994.

Starnes, the MCPS coordinator of enriched and innovative instruction, echoed reactions from other school leaders by stressing that magnets have improved the image and quality of education in the Blair area:

"The Blair magnet program today is just a top school. Everyone wants to go there. That is a tremendous improvement," Starnes said. "We are talking about a very high minority area and people are clamoring to get their kids into these schools."⁸²

As for schools' ability to attract Whites, the DEA reports show that secondary school magnets have been successful at attracting Whites and therefore created more integration than would have existed if there were no desegregation policies.

The ability of magnets to attract Whites was based on two findings. The percentage of minority students at each school dropped significantly after the magnet programs' first years and has held fairly steady since. In September 1983, the minority composition at the three magnet secondary schools were between 30 to 40 percentage points higher than the 26.9 MCPS average minority composition. By September 1989, the racial balance had improved such that the schools were only between 22 to 29 percentage points above the average MCPS minority composition.⁸³ As of 1993, Blair's minority composition of 68 percent at the secondary school level differed only 26 percentage points from the county average.⁸⁴ This is clearly an improvement from a decade ago.

The improvement in racial composition is not a conclusive indicator of the magnet program's *effect* on racial balance since other factors, namely demographic changes within the Blair area also could also have contributed to the stable White enrollment. Because of this, the DEA study narrows its investigation to isolate the magnets' ability to attract White students from outside the cluster. To do this, the investigators calculated the difference between the White secondary school age residents and the White enrollment at the secondary schools.

The calculations revealed that the three secondary magnets in the Blair area had, at least until 1989, themselves been attracting White students. At Blair, for example, the number of White residents from the area in grades 9 through 12 declined 34 percent between 1985 and 1989. But because of White students transfers into Blair High School, the number

⁸²Interview with Wayveline Starnes, April 7, 1994. interview with Paul Vance, April 8, 1994; Interview with Blair Ewing, April 7, 1994; Interview with Anne Briggs, April 8, 1994.

⁸³Larson, John and James Witte, Susan Staib and Marilyn Powell. *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, Oct. 1990, p. E-4. This calculation included Asian students.

⁸⁴Montgomery Public Schools Enrollment by Race and Ethnic Groups: 1968-93. Montgomery County Public Schools, October, 1993. Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group: 1988-1993 (listings by school) Montgomery County Public Schools.

This calculation includes Asian so as to be consistent with the DEA calculations.

of White students in the school declined only 13 percent.⁸⁵

Also in the Blair cluster, the number of White residents at the middle school age level increased by about three percent between 1985 and 1989. But, at Takoma and Eastern Middle Schools, the White enrollment increased by 34 percent because of transfers who came to the magnet programs from outside the area.⁸⁶ It is obvious then, that the highly competitive academic programs in the secondary schools are attracting White students from outside the cluster area.

The conclusion, then, is that while the competitive programs are succeeding at luring Whites into a predominantly minority area, it may be at the cost of using admission standards that exclude significant numbers of African-American and Latino students from the elite, well-regarded program(s) that make the schools so attractive.

From a philosophical standpoint, the secondary school magnet models are at odds with the goals of creating diversity and equal opportunity. This is because the admission requirements result in the stratification of students along racial and ethnic lines. The goal of integration is all but defeated under this model, as racial composition at the larger, non-magnet school varies significantly from the racial composition of the secondary school level in the district as a whole. This does not mean that the existing policies and programs have not been better than having no policies and programs in place. The programs certainly could have had a positive effect on school reputations and on the continued residential diversity of the area. However, it does mean that reliance on attracting whites in this way has costs that need to be considered.

⁸⁵Larson, John and James Witte, Susan Staib & Marilyn Powell, *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, The Department of Educational Accountability, Oct. 1990. page 2-3.

⁸⁶Larson, John and James Witte, Susan Staib & Marilyn Powell, *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, Secondary School Magnet Programs*, The Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, Oct. 1990. pp. 2-6.

Have Elementary Level Magnets Produced Desegregation?

The Blair Cluster

Of the ten elementary school magnets in the Blair cluster, all but one are more than 50 percent African-American or Latino and, therefore, disproportionately minority.

When considering disparities between each ethnic group, eight of the 10 schools have enrollments in which the percentage population of at least one racial or ethnic group differs more than 20 percentage points from the racial composition of the district as a whole. In 6 of the 10 magnets, more than 40 percent of the students in the schools qualify for free and reduced meals.

It should be noted, again, that in six of the ten magnet schools in the Blair Cluster, more whites transferred out of the schools than into the schools in the 1992-93 school year.⁸⁷ This trend is discussed below.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase

In the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster, just one of the four magnet schools would be considered racially imbalanced based on the standards applied above. None of the schools have high levels of concentrated poverty.

However, within the cluster itself, there are striking differences between two closely situated schools. Rock Creek Forest school is 36 percent Latino and 20 percent African-American while nearby Westbrook, which is not a magnet school, enrolls 84 percent White students. Just 3 percent of the students at Westbrook are African-American and 5 percent are Latino

Cluster Differences

The distinct demographics of the two cluster areas might explain why the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster was more successful than Blair in achieving integrated schools. Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster is closer to affluent White areas. Because of this, there is a larger nearby pool of White students from which to draw. The overall minority population in Bethesda-Chevy Chase is lower than Blair's. This means fewer Whites need to be attracted to achieve an acceptable racial balance. Research, which will be examined in the following section, also suggests the area might be more attractive to White families because of the higher relative concentration of White families in the neighborhoods. There is also evidence that, in recent years, the conversion of a 5,000-resident subsidized housing project into a middle class development with higher numbers of White residents was partly responsible for increasing White enrollment in the schools in the Bethesda Chevy-Chase area.

⁸⁷Calculations derived from data found in Student Transfer Report, Department of Management Information and Computer Services, MCPS, July 11, 1994.

A Limited Role for Elementary Magnets?

School officials acknowledged that magnets have not been able to create substantial integration in all schools. But some officials, such as Wayveline Starnes, who oversees the programs, echoed the statements of other school officials who stressed that elementary magnets have been important vehicles in creating at least some degree of interracial contact and diversity in many schools that otherwise would be even more segregated.

"Have magnet schools been the perfect solution for Montgomery County? No," Starnes said. "But there are schools that have been able to hang onto a very active White population that really fights for the school and stays involved. In that way, I think that magnets, while they aren't achieving racial integration on most measures, are making sure that some of these schools don't become completely segregated...They haven't achieved the type of racial integration we had been hoping for in the beginning, but maybe we were expecting too much at the beginning."⁸⁸

In many cases, it is clear that there would be even higher levels of segregation if there were no magnets or no desegregation strategy. But it might also be possible to better integrate many of the schools. In some cases this would require slightly more aggressive measures such as changes in school assignment policy, more boundary changes or pairing of schools and, possibly, school assignments between cluster areas or neighborhoods. But school officials say they have no intentions of employing such school assignment policies.⁸⁹ Starnes and other officials stress that part of the problem is that space at magnet programs is short and that the schools cannot take in any more transfers without displacing students who already live in the schools' attendance zone. But it might also be possible to offer magnet options at some of the heavily White schools and recruit students from the heavily minority neighborhoods for transfer there. School officials have not pursued such options.

Some school officials say privately that the fear that more aggressive measures would trigger middle class flight from the schools may have affected decisions about desegregation. School Superintendent Paul Vance also noted that a persistent emphasis on desegregation might deflect attention from the issue of achievement.⁹⁰

Unknown Political Costs and Benefits

Of course it is impossible to predict what kind of political and enrollment losses would be incurred from implementation of more productive policies. However, some anecdotal evidence suggests that while the relatively small-scale reassignment plan in

⁸⁸Interview with Wayveline Starnes, coordinator of enriched and innovative instruction, April 7, 1994.

⁸⁹Interview with Blair Ewing, school board member, April 7, 1994; Interview with School Superintendent Paul Vance, April 8, 1994; Interview with Barron Stroud, director of QIE Policy, April 7, 1994; Interview with Anne Briggs, director of facilities management.

⁹⁰Interview with School Superintendent Paul Vance, April 8, 1994.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase did cause tension and dismay at first, parents adjusted to the new configurations. In fact, when the school board, under new conservative leadership, threatened to undo the arrangements and programs that the integration policy had created, press reports of school board meetings indicate that many White parents whose children were bussed fought to keep their racially integrated schools. (The Greenblatt Board did convert Rosemary Hills to a K-6 school for a year, which effectively undid the desegregation efforts. But once the board lost its conservative majority, the new board re-paired Rosemary Hills with the Chevy Chase and North Chevy Chase Elementary Schools.)

"I wish they would just leave us as we are," Martha Wells, a mother of five, told the press in 1981 after the Greenblatt Board proposed an end to busing for racial balance in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster. "We have all worked out our problems."⁹¹

Lynn Berkeley, who told the press she fought the racial integration plan "tooth and nail"⁹² when it was first proposed in 1974 told the press four years later in 1978:

"One of the most beautiful things is that parents mix who never would have gotten together in other circumstances and it's a very enriching experience," she said.⁹³

Another parent, Malcolm McLaughlin, who even sued the school board to prevent the busing and pairing plan, continued to view the plan as a "personal inconvenience" and a "waste of money"⁹⁴ but added:

"But aside from some personal inconvenience, I don't think it's made any difference in the education our kids are getting," McLaughlin said.⁹⁵

⁹¹Muscatine, Alison, *Montgomery Parents Fight End of Integration Plan at Schools*, The Washington Post, October 3, 1981. p. A1, A6.

⁹²Krucoff, Carol, *Montgomery School Integration: Finding Advantages in Diversity*, Washington Post, September 7, 1978, A1, A20.

⁹³Krucoff, Carol, *Montgomery School Integration: Finding Advantages in Diversity*, Washington Post, September 7, 1978, A1, A20.

⁹⁴Krucoff, Carol, *Montgomery School Integration: Finding Advantages in Diversity*, Washington Post, September 7, 1978, A1, A20.

⁹⁵Krucoff, Carol, *Montgomery School Integration: Finding Advantages in Diversity*, Washington Post, September 7, 1978, A1, A20.

Competing Priorities
Flaws in Policy and Programs

The county has tried to achieve racial balance in the elementary magnets by making the programs/schools attractive enough so students from outside the cluster area will want to transfer to them. Officials are supposed to monitor the applications and approve those that would aid integration efforts. District officials have said that transfers should not negatively affect the racial balance of a school. In other words, transfer applications that would exacerbate racial isolation or hinder integration efforts either in the magnet or the school from which the student wishes to transfer, should be denied. But, as evidence shows, school officials at least during some earlier years, failed to deny transfer requests that hindered racial balances. A limited review of transfer requests, which will be discussed in a subsequent section of this report, suggests that school officials, at least as late as 1991, were still approving transfers to that hindered desegregation efforts even when school policies were designed aid such efforts.

The study of transfer requests to magnets conducted by the school system's Department of Education Accountability shows that among the approved transfer requests to magnet schools, many of them actually worked against desegregation. The study found that among transfer requests between 1983-85, about 86 percent of transfer requests in Blair and 85 percent of transfer requests in Bethesda-Chevy Chase were approved. Of those, 38 percent of the transfer requests in Blair and 30 percent in Bethesda-Chevy Chase, had a negative effect on the racial balance of a school.⁹⁶ In addition, 22 percent of the approved requests in Blair and 28 percent in Bethesda-Chevy Chase had no effect on racial balance of the receiving school.

The report noted:

"given the 86 percent approval rate...,the current administrative practices produce essentially an open market condition."⁹⁷

The report also said:

"...the administrative approvals and denials of transfer requests produce very little change to this condition."⁹⁸

The DEA report showed that, overall, transfers did not improve racial balance in the

⁹⁶Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July, 1986, The Department of Educational Accountability. E-9.

⁹⁷Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, The Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS.

⁹⁸Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, by Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, page E-8.

Blair cluster elementary schools from 1981-85. In fact, the transfers exacerbated imbalance in five of the ten schools in the Blair cluster.⁹⁹ In two schools, Pine Crest and Piney Branch, the incoming transfers had no effect on racial balance,¹⁰⁰ according to the report.

On the other hand, the transfers had a small but "positive effect" on the racial balance of schools in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster.¹⁰¹ Although the effect of transfers to the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster usually had a positive effect during these years, in two of the schools, Rock Creek Forest and North Chevy Chase, racial balance nevertheless worsened because of demographic changes.¹⁰²

"Transfer effects in (Blair) elementary magnet schools go against racial balance about as often as they contribute to racial balance," the report said. "while in B-CC the transfer effects on school racial balance are consistently positive."¹⁰³

A more recent examination of transfer request to Blair elementary magnets for the 1992-93 school year shows that six of the ten magnet schools lost white students as a result of transfers. In other words, the number of white students approved for transfers into the predominantly minority magnet schools was smaller than the number of white students who were allowed to transfer out of those schools.¹⁰⁴ For example, at East Silver Spring, 15 white students were approved for transfer into the magnet that year, but 23 white students

⁹⁹The elementary schools include East Silver Spring, Rolling Terrace, Forest Knolls, Takoma Park and Montgomery Knolls.

¹⁰⁰Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, by Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, p. 3-33.

¹⁰¹Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, by Department of Accountability, MCPS, p. 3-38.

¹⁰²Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, by Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, p. E-7.

¹⁰³Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, by Department of Accountability, MCPS p. E-8.

¹⁰⁴Calculations derived from data found in Student Transfer Report, Department of Management Information and Computer Services, MCPS, July 11, 1994.

The effect of white transfers in and out of magnets was as follows for the ten Blair magnet schools. East Silver Spring, -8 white students; Forest Knolls, -2 white students; Highland View, -8 white students; Montgomery Knolls, +9 white students; New Hampshire Estates, +8 white students; Oak View, +37 white students; Pine Crest, -3 white students; Piney Branch, -2 white students; Rolling Terrace, -5 white students; Takoma Park, +10 white students.

were given approvals to transfer out of the school.¹⁰⁵ This shows not only that the magnet program is not powerful enough to attract high numbers of white students, but that in a majority of magnets, whites are more likely to flee the schools than come to them.

An earlier, but more comprehensive review of MCPS transfer requests by George Washington University Professor Jeffrey Henig suggests that if desegregation is a goal in a magnet plan, parental choice should be controlled.

In his study, Henig analyzed more than 450 requests made in 1985 for transfer into MCPS elementary magnets. A bivariate analysis of transfer requests by race showed that White families are most likely to seek transfer into schools where the percentage of minority students is relatively low. African-American and Latino parents, however, were more likely to seek transfer to schools where there were higher proportions of minorities. Minority families sought to attend schools in neighborhoods where incomes were relatively lower and where there was more poverty.¹⁰⁶

These findings are consistent with the DEA study indicating that many magnet school transfers hindered rather than fostered racial balance. Henig's study suggests that families might feel more comfortable in educational settings with members of their own race and ethnicity and economic class. But, more significant, it illustrates that unregulated parental choice that allows these trends to manifest themselves may result in segregated schools. Unregulated transfers like these are usually prohibited in choice plans approved as part of desegregation decrees in court cases.

Henig concludes:

Montgomery County provides a conducive environment for choice: its wealth and lack of severe urban problems means that school officials have more room for innovation than do their counterparts in many struggling school systems, and the absence of a history of court-ordered busing and severe racial polarization increases the likelihood that parents will be free to evaluate schools on the basis of their programs, resources and performance instead of the racial and class composition of their students and the neighborhoods in which they live. Even in this conducive environment, giving freer rein to parental choice would seem to have done little to diminish the potency of racial and class factors in structuring the school environment...¹⁰⁷

Henig's research reveals another flaw in the magnet school program. Henig shows

¹⁰⁵Student Transfer Report, Department of Management Information and Computer Services, MCPS, July 11, 1994.

¹⁰⁶Henig, Jeffrey, *The Exercise of Choice Among Magnet Schools: The Montgomery County Case and Its Implications*, April, 1993, George Washington University, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷Henig, Jeffrey. *Choice in Public Schools: An Analysis of Transfer Requests among Magnet Schools*. *Social Science Quarterly*, 71, 1, 1990. page 80.

that at least in the years his research covered, the school system failed to provide what is perhaps the most important precondition for desegregation plans that are based on choice. This missing element is a well-informed constituency.

Henig's research, based upon a survey conducted by the MCPS Department of Educational Accountability, reveals that more than one-third of elementary school parents - the constituency to which the transfer program is aimed - were not even aware that magnet programs existed.¹⁰⁸ The findings were based upon a telephone survey of 1,083 parents. Responses to a survey question revealed that about 35 percent of the parents had never "heard the term 'magnet school' or 'magnet program.'" Even more dismaying is that 36 percent of the parents with students *in magnet schools* had never heard the term "magnet school or magnet program." This ignorance on the part of parents with children in magnet schools might be explained by the fact that some students, by virtue of where they live, are automatically assigned to magnet programs and these parents may not be aware that their neighborhood school is a magnet school. About 32 percent of parents whose children were not enrolled in magnets said they had heard the term "magnet" school. Latino parents were least likely to have heard the term "magnet school" or "magnet program," with 59 percent saying they had never heard either term. White parents were the most well-informed, with about 28 percent saying they had never heard the terms.¹⁰⁹

Further, Henig notes, the fact that transfers account for only 10 percent of the student population of elementary magnet schools suggests that either information about magnets is not sufficiently disseminated or that the magnets are not enticing enough for parents to move their children. According to this data, school officials are essentially presiding over what is primarily a neighborhood school plan, with a small amount of choice as a supplementary program.

Analyzing the 1985 transfer requests, Henig calculated that the average number of transfer requests to each school was 33.2 students. Based on this data, he concludes that this is a low participation level, considering that the average school enrollment at magnets is 350 students.¹¹⁰ These data, though dated are useful because it illustrates the way the achievement of racial integration became eclipsed either by apathy, inattention or competing political forces during a time when the county was experiencing rapid demographic change. More vigorous attention to desegregation during that period may have very well resulted in program refinement or expansion that might have avoided the segregation apparent in some of the schools in 1994.

In conceding that racial integration has not been achieved in many schools, most school officials stressed that racial integration, per se, is no longer the primary purpose of

¹⁰⁸Henig, Jeffrey, *The Exercise of Choice Among Magnet Schools: The Montgomery County Case and its Implications*. George Washington University, April 1993, p. 6.

¹⁰⁹Henig, Jeffrey. *The Exercise of Choice Among Magnet Schools: The Montgomery County Case and Its Implications*. George Washington University, April, 1993.

¹¹⁰Henig, Jeffrey, *The Exercise of Choice Among Magnet Schools: The Montgomery County Case and its Implications*. George Washington University, p. 11.

magnet schools. Rather, they said, the magnets' primary purpose is to stabilize the population of the southern area clusters. School Superintendent Paul Vance articulated this view:

"They (the magnets) have been important tools for integration in the sense that they really reclaimed a lot of the White, middle-class presence that had been draining from that area," Vance said. "They are an important stabilizing force."¹¹¹

Neighborhood and School Stabilization

Did Magnet Schools Prevent White Flight From Schools and Neighborhoods?

The question of whether or not secondary school magnets stemmed White flight or stabilized neighborhoods is difficult to answer empirically. Answering the question conclusively would require a longitudinal study of how many families who live in a given area would have left or put their children in private schools over time if it were not for the magnet schools. To date, no such study has been conducted. This section will review the existing data to determine the degree to which the population in the schools and neighborhoods in the Blair and Bethesda-Chevy Chase clusters have stabilized. One can only speculate about the degree to which the magnet schools may have caused or contributed to this stabilization.

The Blair Cluster

White enrollment in the Blair Elementary schools has been stable for nearly a decade. Specifically, 1,530 White students attended the elementary schools in 1988 and 1,534 White students attended those same schools, five years later, in 1993.¹¹² This is a positive, significant development because many areas with high concentrations of minorities tend to destabilize, with the White population decreasing and the minority population increasing.¹¹³ A 1986 report by the MCPS Department for Educational Accountability documented the limitations of magnets effect on racial balance and the low transfer rate. But it also concluded that by 1985 racial balance had stabilized in Blair's elementary schools.¹¹⁴ This is significant

¹¹¹Interview with School Superintendent Paul Vance, April 8, 1994.

¹¹²Calculations derived from data found in Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group, 1988-1993. Montgomery County Public Schools.

¹¹³Hughes, Mark and Julie E. Sternberg, *The New Metropolitan Reality: Where the Rubber Meets the Road in Antipoverty Policy*. The Urban Institute. December, 1992.

¹¹⁴Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, The Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS. p. 3-33.

because it means that school officials did meet their objective to keep the White population stable in these schools.

However, this does not mean that the *percentage* of White students will remain the same, even if the *number* of Whites remains stable. This is because the White transfer rate may not be strong enough to offset the larger number of African-American and Latino students who are assigned to Blair-cluster elementary schools and who will move into secondary schools in the coming years. In other words, the African-American and Latino enrollment in Blair's elementary grades is increasing, while the White population, again, remains the same. Specifically, the number of African-American and Latino students in Blair Elementary Schools increased from 2,169 in 1988 to 2,727 in 1993.¹¹⁵ This is an increase of about 26 percent. The number of African-American students has increased by about 14 percent over five years, from 1,398 students in 1988 to 1,591 students in 1993. The number of Latino students in Blair cluster elementary schools has increased about 47 percent since 1988, with 771 Latino's attending the schools in 1988 and 1,136 attending those same schools, five years later, in 1993.¹¹⁶

The following chart illustrates the population changes in Blair since 1988.

Enrollment in Blair Elementary Schools, 1988-1993¹¹⁷

	1988	1993	Change
White Students	1,530	1,534	0%
African-American Students	1,398	1,591	+14%
Latino Students	771	1,136	+47%
African-American/Latino Students	2,169	2,727	+26%

The trends displayed above indicate that even though the population of Whites has remained stable over time, for the schools to stabilize the proportion or percentage of whites or to contribute to desegregation, the Blair magnets would have to attract higher and

¹¹⁵Calculations derived from data found in Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group, 1988-1993. Montgomery County Public Schools.

¹¹⁶Calculations derived from data found in Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group, 1988-1993. Montgomery County Public Schools.

¹¹⁷Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group 1988-1993.

increasing numbers of White students to offset the racial and ethnic changes that have occurred in the district. Alternatively, the cluster would have to be expanded or more minority students would have to decide to transfer out of the area. In other words, the successful stabilization of the White population, while a significant accomplishment, is not sufficient enough to counteract the population shifts occurring in the cluster area that contribute to school segregation.

These trends have already begun to manifest themselves at Blair High School and the middle schools in the Blair cluster. Since 1988, the proportion of White 9th- through 12th-graders has declined from 37 percent to 31 percent in 1993. The percent of African-American students has stayed the same, but the percentage of Latino students has increased from 15 to 19 percent in 1993. The percentage of Asian students has increased just 1 percentage point from 12 percent in 1988 to 13 percent in 1993.¹¹⁸

The percentage of White students at Eastern Middle School declined from 39 percent in 1988 to 33 percent in 1993. The percentage of African-American students during this time increased from 28 percent to 29 percent. The percentage of Latino's also increased, from 20 to 23 percent. The percentage of Asian students increased from 13 to 14 percent.

At Takoma Park Middle School, the percentage of White students declined from 42 percent in 1988 to 37 percent in 1993. During this time, the percent of African-American students rose from 31 to 32 percent. The percent of Latino students increased from 14 percent to 15 percent. The percent of Asians rose from 13 percent to 15 percent.

Racial balance trends in elementary and secondary schools cannot determine whether or not the secondary magnets actually have *affected* the stabilization of neighborhoods by retaining Whites and middle-class residents. This is because the magnet school enrollment at secondary schools and elementary schools is, to at least some degree, an indicator not of stabilization of the White population in the neighborhood, but rather, of the attractiveness of the schools to students outside the neighborhood. In other words, enrollment numbers at the school level include not just neighborhood residents, but residents from outside the cluster area as well. So, to determine neighborhood stabilization it is necessary to consider population trends outside of the schools.

The most recent report from Blair showed that the percentage of White Blair cluster *residents* in grades 9 to 12 declined at a faster rate than the county average. Specifically, the percentage of White students living in the area declined 34 percent between 1985 and 1989, compared to a countywide drop of 27 percent.¹¹⁹

Unless more affordable or mixed-income housing is opened in other areas of the county or formal transfer programs, with transportation are developed for minority students to predominantly White schools, Blair cluster will continue to enroll a highly disproportionate

¹¹⁸Student Population By Race and Ethnic Group, the Blair Cluster. Montgomery County Public Schools, October, 1993.

¹¹⁹A Microscope on Magnet Schools, *Secondary School Magnet Programs*, Oct. 1990, The Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, John Larson, James Witte, Susan Staib and Marilyn Powell, p. 2-3.

number of minority students and disadvantaged students. This, again, is underscored by the fact that in six of the ten Blair elementary magnets, more white students transferred out of the programs than transferred in 1992-93.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster

Desegregation in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster has improved remarkably since 1975 when an intensely segregated, high poverty school -- Rosemary Hills -- sat in the middle of a predominantly White, affluent area. In recent years, racial balance has improved even more and schools that were once heavily minority have evened out considerably.

Since 1985, the racial balance in the cluster magnets, overall, has improved dramatically from being 18 percentage points from the overall county average to just 3 percentage points from the county average.¹²⁰

Since 1988, the number of White students attending magnets in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster has actually increased. In 1988, 799 White students attended magnet schools in this cluster and five years later, in 1993, 1,060 White students attended these same schools.¹²¹ This is a 33 percent increase. The number of African-American students attending these schools has declined from 356 in 1988 to 317 in 1993, an 11 percent drop. The number of Latino students has increased only slightly from 249 to 267, an increase of 7 percent. Most of the Latino students are concentrated in the Rock Creek Forest School. The number of Asian students in this area is still small but increased 35 percent since 1988 when 57 students attended the schools. In 1993, 77 Asian students attended the Bethesda-Chevy Chase magnets. There is little question, then, that the population in this area has been stable. What is not as clear, is how much effect the magnet schools had on achieving this stabilization

¹²⁰Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985: Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, The Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, p. 3-33.

¹²¹Student Population By Race and Ethnic Group, the Blair Cluster. Montgomery County Public Schools. October, 1993.

Enrollment in Bethesda Chevy Chase Magnet Schools, 1988-1993¹²²

	1988	1993	Change
White	799	1,060	+33%
African-American	356	317	-11%
Latino	249	267	+7%
Asian	57	77	+35%

However, in 1986, MCPS' DEA concluded that other factors, such as housing and birth rates and changes in school assignments had more of an effect on racial balance, in both Bethesda-Chevy Chase and Blair than did the transfers to magnet programs.¹²³

Housing shifts also have contributed to the most recent racial changes and stabilization apparent in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. In several interviews, school officials noted that the large, dilapidated 1,122-unit, 30-acre¹²⁴ Summit Hills low-income housing complex near the Washington, D.C. line, had housed several hundred, mostly minority students since the 1960s. The Summit Hill complex, officials said, became run down and, eventually, new ownership took control. The new owners improved conditions, but increased the rent thereby bringing in several hundred, mostly White young professionals, many of whom commuted to Washington, D.C. to work.¹²⁵ This change is reflected most prominently in enrollment figures from the Rosemary Hills Elementary School, which is now 67 percent White.

School officials were even quick to credit the changes in racial composition to the changes at the Summit Hills complex.¹²⁶

¹²²Student Population By Race and Ethnic Group, the Blair Cluster. Montgomery County Public Schools. October, 1993.

¹²³Larson, John & Rita Kirshstein; *A Microscope on Magnet Schools, 1983 to 1985; Implementation and Racial Balance*; July 1986, The Department of Educational Accountability, p. 3-33.

¹²⁴Hankin, Sam. *Maryland Rental Discrimination Suit Settled*, The Washington Post, May 14, 1988, page A10.

¹²⁵Interview with Anne Briggs, director of facilities management, MCPS, April 8, 1994; Interview with Barron Stroud, director of Division of Quality Integrated Education, MCPS, April 7, 1994; Interview with Wayveline Starnes, director of enriched and innovative instruction, MCPS, April 7, 1994; Interview with Blair Ewing, school board member MCPS, April 7, 1994.

¹²⁶QIE Director Barron Stroud, Coordinator of Enriched and Innovative Instruction Wayveline Starnes, Director of Facilities Management Anne Briggs, Board of Education member Blair Ewing, Former Board of Education member Sharon DiFonzo.

"The change you see there is really because of housing," said Wayveline Starnes, the director of enriched and innovative instruction. "Magnet schools could not have produced changes that dramatic."¹²⁷

There appears a widespread belief that magnets prevent Whites from leaving the Blair and Bethesda-Chevy Chase neighborhoods and their neighborhood schools, thereby contributing significantly to the population stabilization in Blair and the improvement in racial balance in Bethesda-Chevy Chase. For example, School Superintendent Paul Vance, like others, credits the magnets with success in this area.

"In both clusters, magnet programs have been generally successful in stabilizing enrollment by increasing parents' confidence in the schools' ability to offer a variety of unique educational opportunities for students," Superintendent Paul Vance wrote in a memo to the school board in 1991.¹²⁸

Vance reiterated his position in a 1994 interview:

"The success of magnets is that they have been able to keep neighborhoods stable," Vance said. "That has been their strength."¹²⁹

Blair Ewing, the board member, also credits the magnets with preventing racial and economic isolation in the Blair cluster.

"Even though the Blair area has always been the highest minority community and the community with the highest rate of poverty, we have managed to retain a substantial number of solid middle class White citizens who have confidence in the schools and who sent their kids to the schools, Ewing said. "I've lived in the neighborhood since 1968 and the neighborhoods have not deteriorated."¹³⁰

It is certainly plausible that magnets helped retain Whites in the neighborhoods thereby preventing higher levels of residential segregation. Housing changes did contribute to demographic trends in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase region and, also, the white population in the Blair area declined faster than the decline countywide. The most accurate conclusion is that magnet schools may have been one of several factors that stabilized or improved the

¹²⁷Interview with Wayveline Starnes, coordinator of enriched and innovative instruction, April 7, 1994.

¹²⁸Memorandum from Superintendent Paul Vance to the Board of Education, January 14, 1992.

¹²⁹Interview with School Superintendent Paul Vance, April 8, 1994.

¹³⁰Interview with Blair Ewing, March 7, 1993.

racial balance in the two neighborhoods thereby preventing even higher levels of school segregation.

No Pressure, No Action

There appears little community pressure to craft systematic, new policies and programs that might more effectively prevent and reverse trends of segregation and concentrated poverty in the schools. Joseph Hawkins, the DEA evaluator stressed that policies to decrease racial segregation and economic isolation are not often discussed in the district.

"I don't see any community pressure out there at all from any group and that might be one of the problems," Hawkins said. "I think that as a public system we should be working to help people understand one another and I think one of the best ways to do that is through integrated schools. I certainly don't think it's right to turn away from that goal."¹³¹

Roscoe Nix, the former school board member and NAACP president said this lack of community pressure may have allowed the school board and educational administrators to ignore the increasing segregation in the district.

"There is not a strong, organized voice out there advocating for these policies," Nix said. "We've certainly seen the commitment slide as the pressure came off and discussion ended. There is no impetus for change."¹³²

Sandra Robinson, the former coordinator for magnet programs in the district said school officials have failed to re-examine fundamental policies regarding the magnet programs. For example, she said, it makes little sense to consider Rosemary Hills School in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster a magnet, since today, only about 29 percent of its students are either African-American or Latino. If the goal is to increase integration, she said, the programs should be refined and adjusted to reach that goal.

"The leadership of the school system doesn't see it in their interest to push the programs...There's a lack of vision of what these programs can do in terms of being a model."¹³³

¹³¹Interview with Joseph Hawkins, DEA Evaluator, April 13, 1994.

¹³²Interview with Roscoe Nix, April 8, 1994.

¹³³Interview with Sandra Robinson, March 11, 1993.

Wayveline Starnes, the coordinator for enriched and innovative instruction agrees that demographic changes in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase mean that the magnets in that cluster are not there primarily to promote integration, but to provide innovative schools that satisfy the local constituency.

"Those schools really don't need transfers in order to balance out the student body," Starnes explained. "But those programs are an important part of the schools now and we want to keep those parents happy and supportive of those schools."¹³⁴

School officials have not ignored issues of racial isolation entirely. In addition to occasional boundary changes, school officials are currently discussing the possibility of employing a "controlled choice" program among several high schools in the eastern section of the county so as to avoid segregation in those schools. No action had been taken on the proposal as of July, 1994.

Meanwhile, several schools have resegregated significantly in recent years with no district response. Since 1989, for example, the enrollment at Rock Creek Forest School in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster has been disproportionately Latino, while the Westbrook School is disproportionately White. In the Paint Branch cluster, the Greencastle School is disproportionately minority, while the other elementary schools in the cluster are either better integrated or heavily White. In the Springbrook Cluster, the Broad Acres and the Oak View Elementary School are highly segregated, while four other schools in the cluster area have more than 40 percent white students.¹³⁵

School officials in recent years took action that either worsened or sustained the segregation levels at Oak View and Broad Acres, the schools with the highest levels of segregation and poverty in the district. There are other similar imbalances in the county that have gone unremedied for several years.

The lack of access for African-American and Latino to secondary school magnets has also been a long-standing issue among advocates for minority children. Edmund Gordon, the Yale consultant, even cited this problem in his 1991 report to the school board. Racial composition statistics as received by the MCPS school system show the programs are still disproportionately White and Asian.

¹³⁴Interview with Wayveline Starnes, April 7, 1994.

¹³⁵Calculations derived from data found in Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group, 1988-1993. Montgomery County Public Schools, p. 2. Page 5-85.

Analysis of Transfer Requests

Transfer requests at three schools were examined for the 1992-93 school year. The three schools examined were all disproportionately minority (more than 50 percent African-American/Latino) in 1991 (the year prior to the school year for which the transfer was requested, 92-93). At each school, the population of at least one ethnic group also differed by more than 20 percentage points from the percentage of that racial or ethnic group districtwide in 1991. In Montgomery County, parents are permitted to request transfer from an assigned school. Parents must file an official request that is then reviewed by school officials. MCPS General Counsel Judith Bresler said that during the years considered here, district policy required that transfers that would exacerbate segregation at schools where the minority (Black/Latino) population differed more than 20 percentage points from the district average be denied.¹³⁶ In 1991, the Black/Latino population was 28 percent.

The three schools considered are Glen Haven, Greencastle and Broad Acres Elementary Schools. Authors considered transfer activity in these three non-magnet schools because in a July 1 letter to authors, school officials complained that we did not consider other policies in addition to the county's magnet school programs.¹³⁷ School officials cited the district's controlled transfer policy as one that contributed to racial integration. The district informed us, however, that they had no reports on the actual racial impact of transfers.¹³⁸ (In Montgomery County, any parent is permitted to submit a transfer request, asking for transfer from and to a particular school. Transfer requests to magnet schools are included in the transfer data.)

It should be noted that the school district does not provide transportation for students who wish to transfer from schools. Because of this, the program would likely not be permitted as a desegregation policy if it were crafted as part of a legal agreement. According to a July, 1994 U.S. Department of Education study, Montgomery County's lack of transportation for transfers is unusual, especially at the elementary and middle school levels.¹³⁹ According to the study, 72 percent of school systems that offer elementary transfer choice options also provide free transportation. Also according to the study, 57 percent of all middle schools and 48 percent of all secondary school districts provide transportation.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶Telephone discussion with Judith Bresler, July 21, 1994.

¹³⁷Personal Correspondence to Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton from School Superintendent Paul Vance, July 1, 1994.

¹³⁸Telephone discussion with Judith Bresler, General Counsel to MCPS, July 21, 1994.

¹³⁹Judith Bresler, general counsel for MCPS, confirmed July 21, 1994, that the district does not provide free transportation to students who transfer from their home schools.

¹⁴⁰Steel, Lauri and Roger Levine, *Educational Innovation in Multiracial Contexts: The Growth of Magnet Schools in American Education*, Prepared for the U.S. Department of Education under contract by American Institutes for Research, Palo Alto, California, July, 1994. Page 101.

Transfer requests to and from each of the three schools were examined. If the transfer contributed to the disproportionate minority composition at either the sending or receiving school, it was defined as having a negative effect on racial balance.

For example, if a white student transferred from a disproportionately African-American or Latino school it would negatively effect desegregation at the sending school. At the same time, if a minority student transferred to a disproportionately minority school from a school that had a lower percentage of minority students, then that also was defined as working against desegregation at the receiving school. If Black/Latino students transferred from a disproportionately minority school to another disproportionately minority school, the move was also defined as having a negative effect on racial balance (at the receiving school).

Asian student transfers were counted as having no effect on racial balance, as no schools were disproportionately Asian in 1991.

The evidence suggests not only that the county's "controlled" transfer policy is not far-reaching enough to have any measurable positive effect on racial balance, but that transfers may be having a *negative* effect on racial balance. Based upon this evidence, the very policy that school officials have publicly cited as working in favor of integration, has failed to do so in transfers to and from at least three of the county schools most vulnerable to increasing segregation.

When informed that documented transfers were hindering desegregation efforts, MCPS General Counsel Judith Bresler said that is "not standard operating procedure." She said the only reason such transfers might be allowed is if there were "extenuating, hardship circumstances that made it necessary for a child to transfer to a particular school."¹⁴¹ She said that there has been no report on what overall impact transfers have had on desegregation or resegregation in the school district, she said. There is no civil rights monitoring of transfer data.¹⁴²

A discussion of transfer trends in the three schools follows. Each school is considered separately.

Greencastle Elementary School

Greencastle is located in the county's Paint Branch cluster, in the eastern section of the county. In 1991, Greencastle Elementary School was 42 percent White, 44 percent African-American, 6 percent Latino and 8 percent Asian. The percentage of white students at the school declined from 51 percent in 1988 to 34 percent in 1993. The percentage of African-Americans increased from 33 percent to 52 percent during those years, while the Latino and Asian populations have been relatively stable.

According to school district data:

* There were 23 transfer requests for transfer from Greencastle for the 1992-93 school year.

¹⁴¹Telephone discussion with Judith Bresler, General Counsel to MCPS, July 21, 1994.

¹⁴²Telephone discussion with Judith Bresler, General Counsel to MCPS, July 21, 1994.

* Of those requests, 15 were approved. Six were denied. Two were withdrawn.

Of the 15 approved:

* 9 worked *against* desegregation, mostly at Greencastle, the sending school. This occurred when white students were allowed to leave the increasingly minority Greencastle for such schools as nearby Galway and Burtonsville, where higher percentages of the students were White. In one instance, an African-American student was allowed to transfer to another disproportionately minority school.

* 4 worked *in favor of* desegregation. This occurred when African-American students from Greencastle chose schools with smaller percentages of African-American students and where the racial compositions of those receiving schools were not disproportionately minority.

* 2 had *no effect* on desegregation.

Of the 6 denied requests:

* 3, if approved, would have had a negative effect on desegregation.

* 1, if they had been approved, would have had a positive effect upon desegregation.

* 2 would have had no effect on desegregation.

According to school district data, there were 27 requests for transfer into Greencastle school for the 1992-93 school year. Of those, 23 were approved. One was pending and three were denied.

Of the 23 requests approved:

* 21 worked *against* desegregation. This occurred mostly when African-American students transferred to Greencastle from schools that had lower, (not disproportionate) percentages of minority students.

* 2 worked *in favor of* desegregation, when White students transferred from schools with higher percentages of White students.

Of the three denied:

* All, if approved, would have worked against desegregation.

Glen Haven Elementary School

Glen Haven Elementary School is located in the Einstein Cluster, in the southeastern section of the county. In 1991, Glen Haven was 35 percent White, 37 percent African-American and 17 percent Latino. From 1988 to 1993, the percentage of whites in this school declined from 45 to 37 percent. The percentage of African-Americans in the school increased from 29 to 36 percent and the percentage of Latinos rose from 13 to 18 percent during those years.

According to school district data, there were 20 requests to transfer from Glen Haven in the 1992-93 school year. Of those, 14 were approved and 6 were denied.

Of the 14 approved requests:

- * 11 worked *against* desegregation at either the sending or receiving school. This occurred either when Whites at Glen Haven left for schools with higher percentages of Whites or when minority students left Glen Haven to attend schools that had disproportionate percentages of African-American or Latino students. For example, a Latino student left Glen Haven, (17 percent Latino) to attend New Hampshire Estates School, with 31 percent of students Latino and 67 percent minority in 1991.

- * 3 worked *in favor* of desegregation at either the sending or receiving school or both.

Of the 6 denied:

- * 3, if approved, would have worked in favor of desegregation.

- * 3, if approved, would have worked against desegregation.

According to school district data, there were 23 requests to enter Glen Haven in the 1992-93 school year. Of those, 11 were approved, 11 were denied and 1 was pending.

Of the 11 approved:

- *8 worked *against* desegregation.

- *1 worked *in favor* of desegregation.

- * 2 had *no effect* on desegregation.

Of those denied:

- * 5, If approved, would have worked in favor of desegregation

- * 5, if approved, would have worked against desegregation

- * 1, if approved, would have had no effect on desegregation

It should be noted that one denial, of a White student who wanted to leave Kemp Mill for Glen Haven, was refused, according to school district data, because the grade 1 at Glen Haven was too full. However, according to the data, five other students were approved for transfer into that grade that year. One of these transfers even worked against desegregation at Glen Haven.

Broad Acres Elementary School

Broad Acres Elementary School is located in the southern end of the Springbrook Cluster, which is located in the county's southeastern section. In 1991, Broad Acres was 4 percent White, 37 percent African-American, 41 percent Latino and 18 percent Asian. The percentage of White students at the school declined from 7 percent in 1988 to 3 percent in 1993. During those same years, the African-American population also declined from 39 to 31 percent. The Latino population increased from 32 percent in 1988 to 52 percent in 1993. In 1989, the county school board voted *not* to take action that would have reduced the segregation and concentrated poverty at Broad Acres.

According to school district data, there were 7 requests for transfers from Broad Acres for the 1992-93 school year. Five of these were approved. One was denied. One was listed as pending.

Of the 5 approved requests:

- * All 5 worked *against* desegregation at the receiving school. This occurred when minority students left Broad Acres to attend another disproportionately minority school.¹⁴³

- * The one request that was denied would have worked against desegregation had it been approved.

According to school district data, there were 14 requests made for transfer to Broad Acres. Eleven of the requests were approved. One request was denied. One was withdrawn. One request was still pending.

Of the 11 approved requests:

- * 8 worked *against* desegregation because African-American or Latino students transferred into Broad Acres.

¹⁴³All racial compositions based upon 1991 enrollment data, Student Population by Race and Ethnic Group, 1988-1993, supplied by the Montgomery County Public Schools. However, in the case of Oak View school, 1992 enrollment data was used to determine racial disproportion because county school officials in 1991 decided to move a heavily white magnet program out of Oak View by the 1992 school year because of overcrowding, knowingly reducing the white enrollment at that school. In 1991, Oak View was 42 percent White; the following year, 1992, it was 6 percent white.

* 3 had *no effect*, as Asian students transferred into Broad Acres.

* The one denied request, if approved, would have worked against desegregation

The following chart indicates the net result of approved transfers to and from school studied here by subtracting the number of requests that worked in favor of desegregation from the number of requests that worked against desegregation

Net Result of Approved Transfer Requests On Desegregation Either At Sending or Receiving Schools, 1992-93.¹⁴⁴

To/From School	Percent of Approved Requests that Worked Against Desegregation	Net Result of Transfers on Desegregation
Greencastle Elementary	79%	-24
Glen Haven Elementary	76%	- 15
Broad Acres Elementary	81%	- 13

These data indicate that the very transfer policy that has been cited by school officials as proof of a progressive, effective desegregation strategy, has worked against the goal of desegregation to and from each of the schools examined. School officials have argued that their definition of segregation now differs from the standard used above and that they have recently employed a more complex formula to determine when a school needs transfer controls.¹⁴⁵ That formula, which involves a range of plus or minus 1.5 standard deviations from a group's share of total enrollment permits transfer that can increase the segregation of Latino and African American students and hinder desegregation efforts. Nevertheless, at the time that the 20 percent standard was in place, it appears that school officials ignored the standard and approved transfers that hindered segregation efforts even at Broad Acres, the county school where segregation is most extreme. Clearly, no matter what standard of

¹⁴⁴Calculations derived from data found in Student Transfer Report, Department of Management Information and Computer Services, MCPS, July 11, 1994.

¹⁴⁵Telephone interview with John Larson, coordinator of evaluation, Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS. Telephone discussion with Judith Bresler, General Counsel to MCPS, July 21, 1994.

segregation is applied, if the transfer policy really is designed to support integration, as school officials have repeatedly claimed, then transfers should have been controlled at Broad Acres where only 4 percent of the students were White in 1991. Similarly, if the transfer policy were designed to support integration, it would also seem logical that schools that are disproportionately minority and that are becoming more segregated over time, such as Glen Haven and Greencastle cited here, would also be monitored and have transfer controls in place. The data show clearly that this simply was not the case. Further, school officials have also argued that the standard for determining when a school needed transfer controls was changed to a "more flexible one"¹⁴⁶ partly to allow minority students more opportunity to transfer as the old policy rejected larger percentages of African-American and Latino students. But according to these data, there were many instances where white student transfers could have been denied but were not. The conclusion is basic: the transfer policy as employed by the school district in these three schools hindered desegregation efforts by facilitating white flight from racially and ethnically changing schools and by allowing minority students to transfer into schools that were already disproportionately minority. It was not possible to examine data countywide. We recommend that the school district prepare a report to determine the actual impact of transfers.

Achievement Trends

It is difficult to determine conclusively whether the school district has successfully narrowed the achievement gap between African-American and White students and between Latino and White students. There are several reasons for this, most of them related to limitations and problems with the available data. This section offers an overview of the data and measures to be displayed while explaining the limitations of each measure. School officials criticized authors for failing to note what they referred to as "the continuing success our educational policies in addressing racial and ethnic disparities in academic achievement."¹⁴⁷ However, the data, while imperfect, offers a much more complicated picture of achievement trends in the districts. While the gap between White and African-American students and between Latino and White students has narrowed on basic tests, when other measures are considered, gaps have even widened in some cases and persist on the most recent measures available.

The Success For Every Student Plan

In January, 1992, the Montgomery County Board of Education adopted the "Success For Every Student Plan." The plan was built, in part, on the findings and recommendations found in the 1990 Student of Minority Achievement in Montgomery County Public Schools.

¹⁴⁶Telephone discussion with Judith Bresler, General Counsel to MCPS, July 21, 1994.

¹⁴⁷Personal Correspondence from Paul Vance to Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, July 1, 1994. This document was released by the school district to the Washington-area media. On file with the Harvard Project on School Desegregation.

The plan called for a concerted effort to raise student achievement and to reduce racial gaps in academic success in the county. It emphasized the need to improve math performance, acknowledging that math "continues to be the largest separating factor in student success among some students." Math was described as "the gateway subject that helps to determine success in future academic study."¹⁴⁸ The plan set many goals for academic improvement and promised to watch the outcomes. The report did not cite segregation of minority students by race or poverty as problems. None of the strategies provided explicit measures to reduce segregation. One sentence under the goals called for "reducing the isolation of ethnic groups and language minorities by increasing the diversity in staffing, classroom compositions and schools to reflect more accurately the society in which we live," but none of the specific strategies spelled out any way to reduce segregation.¹⁴⁹

In December, 1993, school officials released the Second Annual Report on the outcomes of the SES plan. The report summary said that "disparities still exist but less so now than two years ago in many of the outcome areas." School officials stressed the steadily improving passing rates on the state's minimum competency test, The Maryland Functional Test. The district reported progress for African American and Latino students on some measures but it did not show narrowing gaps on some of the most important measures. In some key areas, in fact, gaps between Whites and non-whites increased because as minority students made progress, the White students were making much more progress, thereby widening further already large gaps.

A July 1994 report from the Board of Education-appointed Advisory Committee for Minority Student Education concluded that a review of data and school district practices showed that "...not much progress has been made during the last five years even though plans have been put on paper."¹⁵⁰ In its recommendation, the committee continued:

Our analysis of Success for Every Student proved to be a formidable undertaking. The main reason for this was the lack of data and information....The Advisory Committee's conclusion is that if Success for Every Student is to succeed, more monitoring is essential at the implementation level. There seems to be great potential in the overall plan, but it requires more accountability for implementation efforts and results."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸Success For Every Student Plan: Vision and Goals, Outcomes, Strategies and Assessments. January 6, 1992. Updated April 14, 1994. page 3.

¹⁴⁹Success For Every Student Plan: Vision and Goals, Outcomes, Strategies and Assessments. January 6, 1992. Updated April 14, 1994. page 14.

¹⁵⁰Memorandum to Members of The Board of Education From Advisory Committee for Minority Student Education, July 25, 1994. Pages iii and 1.

¹⁵¹Memorandum to Members of The Board of Education From Advisory Committee for Minority Student Education, July 25, 1994. Page 1.

Assessment measures are considered below. Each measure is considered in a separate section. This report does not relate achievement measures to desegregation trends.

Completion of 9th Grade Algebra

It is instructive to look, for example, at what the district has defined as one of its key goals -- increasing the rates of completion of algebra by ninth grade. The completion of algebra at this time has been shown to be a key factor in determining whether or not a student will attend college. Overall, in the district, completion rates climbed by 6.3 percent from 1990-91 to 1992-93. For whites, the increase was 8.3%. For Asians, the increase was 5.4 percent. Both of these increases came from already high starting points. For African Americans, there was a 5.9 percent increase from a starting point that was less than half the Asian rate. For Latinos, who had the lowest initial rate, the gain was also the lowest, at only 3 percent. Latinos, then, ended up with a completion rate of about 36 percent, compared to 82 percent for Asians and 77 percent for White students.¹⁵² The percentage gains are even more dramatic if one realized that Whites eliminated one fourth of their gap with Asians, but African Americans eliminated only a tenth of that gap and Latinos only a twentieth of the gap. On this measure, then, the system made good progress but the gap between White and African American students and White and Latino students became even wider.

Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses

Another good measure of college preparation is the percentage of students enrolled in honors or advanced placement courses. A relatively large share of students in Montgomery County take such courses and that share increased from 1990-1993. The overall increase was 3.6 percent to a district rate of 49 percent.

The increase was 5 percent among Whites, to 56 percent; 4.3 percent increase among Asians, to 65 percent, but only 2 percent among African Americans and 3 percent among Latinos. Both African Americans and Latinos ended up at 27 percent -- less than half the rate of the other two groups. So, overall, the rates of enrollment were improving, but the gaps between racial and ethnic groups were actually growing wider despite efforts to reverse that trend.¹⁵³

Percent of Students Taking the SAT and SAT Scores

According to data included in the Advisory Committee for Minority Student Education's July report, the percentage of students taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test has remained constant in the district, overall, but declined slightly for African American and White students and declined most substantially for Latino students. This test is a necessary

¹⁵²Success For Every Student Plan: Vision and Goals, Outcomes, Strategies and Assessments. January 6, 1992. Updated April 14, 1994. Page 17.

¹⁵³Success For Every Student Plan: Vision and Goals, Outcomes, Strategies and Assessments. January 6, 1992. Updated April 14, 1994. Page 17.

prerequisite for the vast majority of four-year colleges and many two-year colleges.

Specifically, about 74 percent of all students districtwide took the SAT in Fiscal Year 1991 and the same percentage took the test in Fiscal Year 1993. Among African American students, about 56 percent took the test in FY 1991 and 54 percent took it in FY 1993. The percentage of Latinos taking the test declined from 48 percent in FY 1991 to 39 percent in 1993.¹⁵⁴ The gap between Whites and African Americans remained stable in these two years, but the gap between Hispanics and Whites widened on this measure.

The committee noted that SAT scores overall increased in the district and also increased for Whites, (1024 to 1036) Asians (1016 to 1030) and African Americans (798 to 822) and declined for Latinos (918 to 901).¹⁵⁵ The gap between White students and African American students declined on this measure (from 226 to 214 points) and the gap between White students and Latino students increased (from 106 to 135). As is revealed in other measures cited below, despite the progress of African American students over time, this group continues to have the largest achievement gaps and lowest scores on this measure. SAT scores are of limited value because takers do not represent a valid sample of the student population.

Often, SAT scores decrease when larger shares of a population take the test, thereby increasing the chance that low individual scores will lower the overall average. In cases such as this, lower overall scores could very well be seen as a sign of success, as larger shares of students are at least taking the exam, which is an important one for gaining future access to college. However, this appears not to be the case in Montgomery County since lower percentages of Latinos took the test over these two years and the percent of African American students remained stable.

In citing the data regarding the three above-mentioned measures, The Advisory Committee for Minority Student Education its July report concluded that:

"The Board of Education must clearly establish direct lines of accountability for these discouraging results. There must be clear consequences for failing to improve. The community that this committee represents feels a sense of outrage that so few gains in academic achievement are noticeable."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴Memorandum to the Board of Education from Montgomery County Board of Education Advisory Committee for Minority Student Education, July 25, 1994. Page 3B. Figure 4.

¹⁵⁵Memorandum to the Board of Education from Montgomery County Board of Education Advisory Committee for Minority Student Education, July 25, 1994. Page 3C. Figure 5.

¹⁵⁶Memorandum to the Board of Education from Montgomery County Board of Education Advisory Committee for Minority Student Education, July 25, 1994. Page 3.

Maryland Functional Tests

One of the measures, the Maryland Functional Tests, delivered in high school, is an examination only of the most basic skills needed to earn a diploma and therefore cannot provide information about performance on more challenging tasks. School district performance on the exam is measured only by how many students passed the test, not by a raw score. Thus, the data, for example, document no differences between a student with a perfect score and a student who barely passed. Neither can simple passing rates illustrate how performance on the test translates into classroom skills. Further, the math and writing functional tests have been delivered by the state since the early 1980s and the reading test has been delivered since 1977. The longevity of these tests means it is more feasible to gear teaching and curriculum to the examinations.

The results of these tests are displayed below. The first chart displays passing rates 1) for the first year the test was given and 2) for the most recently reported year. The second chart displays remaining gaps between the percent of students who failed at least one test at the end of 11th grade.¹⁵⁷

% Ninth Graders Passing Maryland Functional Tests in Reading, Math and Writing: Initial Year of Measure and 1992 or 1993¹⁵⁸

	% Passing Reading 1977/1992(Fall)	% Passing Math 1982/1992 (Fall)	% Passing Writing 1983/1992(Winter)
African-American	67 / 97	34 / 71	45/97
Latino	78/94	42/74	50/96
White	91/99	70/92	69/99

¹⁵⁷ After the initial 9th grade test, students who fail are permitted to take the Functional Test again in subsequent years in order to earn a diploma.

¹⁵⁸ The data are derived from two reports.

Results for the Winter 1993 Administration of the Maryland Writing Test: Memorandum from Steven Frankel to School Superintendent Paul Vance, May 13, 1993. Results from the Fall 1992 Administration of the Maryland Functional Reading Test and the Maryland Functional Mathematics Test, Memorandum from Steven M. Frankel to Kathryn Gemberling, deputy superintendent for instruction, December 29, 1992.

% Of 11th Graders Who Failed At Least One Maryland Functional Test, School Year, 1992-1993, By Race and Ethnic Group and Gender.¹⁵⁹

	African-American Students	White Students	Latino Students
Males	12.4%	3.0%	17.0%
Females	17.0%	3.1%	15.2%

From the data displayed above, it is clear that gaps between the racial and ethnic groups have narrowed over time. However, it is also important to note that when statistics are examined to show the percentage of students who failed at least one test, the gaps between African-Americans and Whites and between Latinos and Whites are more apparent and are significantly wider. In addition, gaps in Math passing rates are 21 and 18 points respectively between Whites and African-Americans and Whites and Latinos.

The California Achievement Test

Measured overall improvements on the California Achievement Test, used by the district from 1980 to 1989, were based on outdated norms that were established in 1977. This means that the norms used for comparison were not representative of the actual national norms that existed the year the test was taken.¹⁶⁰ The problem with this is that while percentile ranks are presented as a representation of what percentage of students in the nation scored lower than Montgomery County students, the use of outdated norms produces results that are misleading. For example, when this test was delivered in Montgomery County in 1989, the percentile rankings did not reveal how Montgomery County performed relative to how the nation was performing in 1989. Rather, the test results showed how Montgomery County students in 1989 performed relative to how students were performing in the nation in 1977. This is particularly misleading because elementary-level academic achievement increased substantially during these years nationwide.¹⁶¹ This means that while the display of county percentile ranks might create the appearance of improved achievement relative to the nation from 1980 to 1989, the data, because of the outdated norms, simply do not show this. The increased percentiles based on 1977 norms *do* demonstrate that there was improvement within the district over time, but the percentile rankings *do not* demonstrate that the scores

¹⁵⁹Calculations derived from data found in Montgomery County Public Schools, School Performance Program, Report, 1993. Montgomery County Public Schools, Disaggregated Data, Data-Based Areas, School Year 1992-93. Page 11.

¹⁶⁰Telephone discussion with Steve Ferrara, state Department of Education, July 11, 1994.

¹⁶¹Koretz, Daniel, *Trends in Educational Achievement*, Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office, April 1986.

kept pace with the improvements that were occurring nationwide.¹⁶²

The following chart displays the percentile ranks in 1980 and 1989 on the total battery of the California Achievement Test delivered in grades three, five, eight and eleven and the increase or decrease in percentile points for each racial and ethnic group.¹⁶³ The second chart displays the gaps between Whites and African-Americans and the gaps between Latinos and Whites during the same time period and indicates whether the gap narrowed or widened over time.

Percentile Rankings on the California Achievement, Total Battery, for African-American, White and Latino Students 1980/1989¹⁶⁴

	African-Americans	Whites	Latinos
Grade 3	48/65 (+17)	79/87(+8)	63/67(+4)
Grade 5	52/67 (+15)	82/88(+6)	70/70 (0)
Grade 8	50/63(+13)	79/86(+7)	67/63(-4)
Grade 11	39/54 (+15)	76/82(+6)	59/56(-3)

The data displayed above indicate that African-Americans made the largest apparent gains in achievement but that Latinos made progress only in grade three and actually fell behind in grades eight and eleven from 1980 to 1989. Also, while African-Americans did make the most progress, overall, their 1989 percentile scores still fell slightly below that of Latinos in grades three and five and matched the ranking in grade eight.

¹⁶²CTB McGraw Hill, Burlington, New Jersey. CTB McGraw Hill publishes the California Achievement Test. New norms were not established until 1991.

¹⁶³Percentile ranks indicate what percentage of students nationwide scored higher. In other words, if a test comparison was based on current national norms, (which MCPS' tests were not) a 90th percentile ranking means that 10 percent of students nationwide scored higher on the test.

¹⁶⁴MCPS Results on the California Achievement Tests (1980-1989) Montgomery County Public Schools. Scores provided by the Department of Public Information, Montgomery County Public Schools.

Gaps in Percentile Rankings on the California Achievement Test Between White and African-American Students and Gaps Between White and Latino Students 1980/1989¹⁶⁵

	African-Americans	Change in Gap 1980-89	Latinos	Change in Gap 1980-89
Grade 3	-31/-22	narrowed 9 points	-16/-20	widened 4 points
Grade 5	-30/-21	narrowed 9 points	-12/-18	widened 6 points
Grade 8	-29/-23	narrowed 6 points	-12/-23	widened 11 points
Grade 11	-37/-28	narrowed 9 points	-17/-26	widened 9 points

The data in the above chart illustrate mixed results in closing the gap between whites and minority groups. The gap between African-Americans and Whites from 1980 to 1989 narrowed by between six and nine percentile points depending upon the grade level considered. However, the gap between Whites and Latinos widened in every grade level by between 4 and 11 percentile points. Further, in spite of African-Americans' success in narrowing their gap between Whites, the largest achievement gaps under this measure in 1989 nevertheless still existed between Whites and African-Americans in every grade but eight, where African-Americans shared the same achievement gaps as Latinos. In other words, even as Latino students increasingly fell behind Whites and even as Latino achievement worsened in some grades and African-Americans progressed, African-American students still registered the lowest rankings in two grade levels and had the largest achievement disparities in three of the four tested grade levels.

The district stopped using the CAT in 1989, replacing it with the norm-referenced Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. Unfortunately, results for the CTBS measure were not available disaggregated by race and ethnicity.¹⁶⁶

The Maryland School Performance Assessment Program

The state-mandated criterion referenced test, the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program, (MSPAP) has been in place only since 1992, so trends cannot be established over time. In addition, school officials did not have scores disaggregated by race/ethnicity at the school level making it impossible to compare achievement trends of

¹⁶⁵MCPS Results on the California Achievement Tests (1980-1989) Montgomery County Public Schools. Scores provided by the Department of Public Information, Montgomery County Public Schools.

¹⁶⁶Telephone interview with John Larson, coordinator of evaluation, Department of Educational Accountability, MCPS, July 6, 1994.

African-Americans and Latinos between schools. This is unfortunate because it would be useful to determine whether or not racial and ethnic achievement levels differed between high poverty schools or disproportionately minority schools. Further, the scores, as released by the state, are disaggregated by race/ethnicity and then disaggregated again by gender. Therefore, it is impossible to aggregate the scores back to race/ethnicity to determine how a racial or ethnic group performed overall.¹⁶⁷ This is a problem because without knowing the actual number of students who took a given test, rates as displayed may be misleading.

For example, if there are 100 African-American students who took the exam and 20 were female and 80 were male and 8 females and 16 males reached the satisfactory standard on the test, that would mean that 40 percent of females and 20 percent males reached the standard and the statistics would be displayed in this way. However, it would also mean that, overall, 24 percent of African-American students overall (or 24 of 100 students) reached the standard. It would be informative to know facts such as this, but without actual numbers of test takers for each category, the computations cannot be performed.

The data displayed below show the percentage of males and females in each racial/ethnic group¹⁶⁸ who reached the state-established "excellent" standard and the state-established "satisfactory" standard. The standards are based upon the number of objectives mastered by students and differ for each subject and sub-category.¹⁶⁹ The state has established achievement goals for local school systems. For school systems to meet the state goal, at least 25 percent of students should meet the excellent standard and 70 percent should meet the satisfactory standard. This test was delivered in the spring of 1992.

¹⁶⁷School officials were unable to locate the data that would have made it possible to aggregate these scores back to the race/ethnicity level. Telephone discussion with John Larson, July 12, 1994.

¹⁶⁸Again, because Asian students are not historically included in desegregation plans, comparisons will be made between Whites and the other two minority groups, African-Americans and Latinos.

¹⁶⁹State Department of Education, Office of School Performance, Telephone discussion, Steve Ferrara, State of Maryland, Baltimore Maryland, July 11, 1994.

Percent of Students Reaching the State's Excellent Standard and Percent Meeting the State's Satisfactory Standard, By Race and Ethnicity and Gender, Grades Three, Five and Eight, Maryland School Performance Assessment Program, (MSPAP), Spring, 1993¹⁷⁹

		African-American Students % AT		White Students %AT		Latino Students %AT	
		EX	SAT	EX	SAT	EX	SAT
		M/F	M/F	M/F	M/F	M/F	M/F
G R A D E 3	Reading	.3/1	16/25	3/6	43/54	.3/1	23/29
	Math	.3/0	13/13	4/4	50/52	1/.3	14/21
	Social Studies	.3/.4	22/25	5/7	53/60	1/1	25/27
	Science	1/1	19/25	3/7	50/60	2/.3	21/30
G R A D E 5	Reading	1/3	14/27	5/8	37/51	2/1	22/22
	Math	2/2	34/37	17/15	70/72	4/3	44/35
	Social Studies	1/1	21/25	7/9	50/57	1/1	25/22
	Science	1/1	23/29	6/7	58/61	1/1	33/22
G R A D E 8	Reading	.5/2	13/29	4/8	36/52	1/3	18/27
	Math	1/1	20/27	12/13	62/63	1/2	29/27
	Social Studies	.3/2	14/27	5/8	44/56	1/3	20/28
	Science	.8/1	14/24	7/11	47/54	1/3	18/26

These data show clear, substantial gaps between Whites and African-Americans and between Whites and Latinos. Disparities in meeting the satisfactory standard range from a low of 7 percentage points between African-American females and White males in reading in grade eight to a high of 43 percentage points between White females and African-American males in math in grade eight. Whites outscore Latinos and African-Americans on every measure at every grade level. Clearly, a narrowing gap in basic skills apparent on Maryland Functional Tests, is not synonymous with a narrow gap in more challenging measures, such as the MSPAP or, as will be discussed in a later section, the county's Criterion Reference Test.

¹⁷⁹Montgomery County Public Schools, School Performance Program, Report, 1993.

School Comparisons on the State Testing Program (MSPAP)

The two charts that follow illustrate achievement differences between five of the most high poverty schools that are also predominantly African-American and Latino and the district average.¹⁷¹ Grade levels are considered separately. Again, there are limitations to this data. This measure has been in place only since 1992, so trends could not be established over time. School officials could not produce scores disaggregated by race/ethnicity at the school level making it impossible to produce comparative achievement trends of African-Americans and Latinos between schools. Further, the school-level scores, as released by the county, are disaggregated by gender. Therefore, it is impossible to aggregate the scores to determine how a particular racial or ethnic group at each school performed overall.

¹⁷¹Trends in third grade could not be considered for Oak View, because data were not available. Trends could not be considered for New Hampshire Estates in fifth grade because data were not available.

Percent of Students Meeting State's Excellent (EX.) and Satisfactory (SAT.) Standard in High Poverty, Predominantly Minority Schools and The District Average, Grade Three, School Year 1992-1993¹⁷²

School	Subject	Grade 3 % At	
		EX..	SAT.
		M/F	M/F
Broad Acres	Reading	0/0	6 / 38
	Math	0/0	3 / 23
	Soc. Stu.	0/0	12 / 27
	Science	0/0	6 / 27
Harmony Hills	Reading	0/4	29 / 33
	Math	0/0	30 / 33
	Soc. Stu.	0/4	26 / 26
	Science	0/7	26 / 37
New Hamp. Ests ¹⁷³	Reading	3	24
	Math	3	11
	Soc. Stu.	3	27
	Science	3	38
Highland	Reading	0/0	9 / 13
	Math	0/0	15 / 7
	Soc. Stu.	0/2	11 / 12
	Science	0/0	17 / 12
Rolling Terrace	Reading	3/0	32 / 32
	Math	3/0	24 / 21
	Soc. Stu.	3/5	26 / 23
	Science	0/3	24 / 23
DISTRICT AVERAGE	Reading	2/5	37 / 46
	Math	3/3	40 / 42
	Soc. Stu.	4/5	46 / 51
	Science	3/5	42 / 52

¹⁷²Montgomery County Public Schools, School Performance Program, Report, 1993. All these schools are listed as high need schools under the school district's Educational Load Variables computed by the school district and used to determine which schools may need extra monetary compensation in the future.

¹⁷³Data for New Hampshire Estates were available only for female students. No information about male students were provided.

Percent of Students Meeting the Excellent (EX) and Satisfactory (SAT) Standards in High Poverty, Predominantly Minority Schools and the District Average, Grade 5, 1992-93.¹⁷⁴

School	Subject	Grade 5 % At	
		EX. M/F	SAT. M/F
Broad Acres	Reading	0/ 3	3 / 20
	Math	0/ 0	16 / 19
	Soc. Stu.	0/ 3	0 / 13
	Science	0/ 0	6 / 16
Harmony Hills	Reading	5/ 0	24 / 31
	Math	0/ 0	44 / 42
	Soc. Stu.	0/ 0	26 / 31
	Science	0/ 0	35 / 19
Highland	Reading	0/0	5 / 19
	Math	0/4	28/30
	Soc. Stu.	0/0	15 / 19
	Science	0/0	13 / 26
Oak View	Reading	3/4	26 / 24
	Math	13/2	37 / 41
	Soc. Stu.	0/2	26 / 22
	Science	0/0	32 / 26
Rolling Terrace	Reading	3/0	24 / 28
	Math	0/3	31 / 29
	Soc. Stu.	5/0	14 / 21
	Science	5/0	26 / 21
DISTRICT AVERAGE	Reading	4/7	32 / 44
	Math	14/12	62 / 63
	Soc. Stu.	6/7	43 / 48
	Science	5/5	50 / 52

The preceding two charts show that in most instances, students in the high poverty, predominantly minority schools were much less likely to meet either the state's excellent or satisfactory standards. In fact, the high poverty schools matched the districtwide averages in

¹⁷⁴Montgomery County Public Schools, School Performance Program, Report, 1993. All these schools are listed as high need schools under the school district's Educational Load Variables computed by the school district and used to determine which schools may need extra monetary compensation in the future.

less of a tenth of the cases illustrated in these charts.¹⁷⁵

But the exceptions should be noted. In Grade 3, females at Harmony Hills matched the districtwide average meeting the state's excellent standard in reading, social studies and exceeded the districtwide average meeting the excellent standard in science. At New Hampshire Estates, males matched the districtwide average meeting the state's excellent standard in reading, math and science. At Rolling Terrace, males matched the districtwide average meeting the state's excellent standard in reading and math and females at Rolling Terrace matched the excellent standard in social studies and science.

In Grade 5, at Harmony Hills, males matched the districtwide average meeting the excellent standard in reading. At Oak View, females matched the districtwide average meeting the excellent standard in reading and males at Oak View matched the districtwide average meeting the excellent standard in math. At Rolling Terrace, males matched the districtwide average meeting the science excellent standard.

Of course, students who are poor score less well on standardized measures for a variety of reasons, not all of which are attributable to school policies or school characteristics. The display of these statistics is not intended to prove that the poverty levels at these schools *caused* the relatively low performance. However, the data do suggest that students in these schools are in institutions with much lower than average competition and achievement levels.

The MCPS' New County Criterion Reference Test

The county also delivers its own self-designed criterion reference test intended to test what the district teaches. Results from the spring 1993 first administration of this test in grades four, six and seven reveal achievement gaps between minority students and White students. This test is delivered to a random sample of students at each grade level and results are reported based upon what percentage of students met the county-established standard. The county's standard for upper-grades is linked to completion of algebra in ninth grade. These data are limited because they show trends only in math and because there was no data available for previous years and this year's results are not yet available.¹⁷⁶ The charts below show the percent of students from each racial or ethnic group who met the standard for spring 1993. The fourth chart displays the gaps between Whites/African-Americans and between Whites/Latinos.

¹⁷⁵Students met or exceeded the districtwide performance if either gender category in a school matched or exceeded passing rates earned by either gender category in the district average.

¹⁷⁶These data represent the first administration of the CRT test in Montgomery County.

For this reason, only math tests were delivered. The district plans to administer this test again to obtain data on other subject areas.

Percent of Grade Four Students Who Met County Standard on MCPS Criterion Reference Test, Math, Spring 1993¹⁷⁷

African-American	51%
White	85%
Latino	57%
Asian	87%

Percent of Grade Six Students Who Met County Standard on MCPS Criterion Reference Test, Math, Spring 1993¹⁷⁸

African-American	31%
White	68%
Latino	30%
Asian	72%

Percent of Grade Seven Students Who Met County Standard on MCPS Criterion Reference Test, Math, Spring 1993¹⁷⁹

African-American	31%
White	68%
Latino	37%
Asian	79%

¹⁷⁷Grade 4 CRT Math Spring 93, By Ethnic and Gender Groups Within-School Tested For Regular Students Who Had Stayed in MCPS For 2 Years or More.

¹⁷⁸Grade 6 CRT Math Spring 92, By Ethnic and Gender Groups Within-School Tested For Regular Students Who Had Stayed in MCPS For 2 Years or More.

¹⁷⁹Grade 6 CRT Math Spring 93, By Ethnic and Gender Group Within-School Tested For Regular Students Who Had Stayed in MCPS For 2 Years or More.

Percentage Point Gaps Between Whites/African-Americans and Whites/Latinos, MCPS CRT Math Test. Based Upon Percent Who Met MCPS Standard, Spring, 1993¹⁸⁰

	African-American/White	Latino/White
Grade 4	51 / 85 (gap: 34 perc. pts.)	85 / 57 (gap 28 perc. pts.)
Grade 6	31/68 (gap: 37 perc. pts.)	68 / 30 (gap 38 perc. pts.)
Grade 7	31/68 (gap: 37 perc. pts.)	68 / 37 (gap 31 perc. pts.)

Clearly, sizable gaps remain between Whites and non-whites when achievement is measured by the county's own CRT test. Gaps are largest between African-Americans and Whites in Grade 4 and between Latinos and Whites in Grade 6.

Assessment Data Analysis: A Summary

Overall, the data do suggest some patterns. In the area of basic skills as measured by the Maryland Functional Tests, African-American and Latino students have made progress and, while differences do remain, the initial wide disparities in passing rates between Latino and Whites and African-Americans and Whites have narrowed. However, when looking at the percentage of students who had failed at least one basic skills test by 11th grade, the disparities between Whites and African-Americans and between Whites and Latinos are much wider than those revealed through a display of simple passing rates alone.

Under the California Achievement Test, delivered in the district from 1980-89, the gap between Whites and African-Americans did narrow over time, but the gap between Whites and Latinos widened. Part of this growing difference between Whites and Latinos could result from new Latino immigration into the district. Despite African-Americans' progress over time, African-Americans continued to register the lowest percentile ranks in two of four grade levels and the largest gaps in three of four levels.

On the MSPAP, gaps remain large not only between non-whites and Whites, but between high poverty schools and other schools. The racial and ethnic achievement gaps are also apparent in the county's own new test.

Measures of algebra completion and enrollment in advanced placement or honors courses show some progress overall, but the rates reveal widening gaps between Whites and Latinos and Whites and African Americans.

The bottom line is that the data do not sustain any strong argument that the racial gaps in Montgomery County educational attainment have narrowed considerably. There has been a convergence in passing rates for a low standard minimum competency test but such tests of attainment over a low threshold do not provide good comparative information. There

¹⁸⁰Grade 4, 6 and 7, CRT Math Spring 93, By Ethnic and Gender Groups Within-School Tested For Regular Students Who Had Stayed in MCPS For 2 Years or More.

are clear and large gaps remaining on tests of higher order skills and on success rates in key pre-collegiate experiences.

CONCLUSION

The magnet school program and other self-regulated policies designed to foster racial integration are unreliable and ineffective means for achieving desegregated schools. The policies and programs as they are presently designed and administered in MCPS simply have not been strong or effective enough to offset the demographic change that contributes to school segregation and concentrations of poverty in the public schools. There is also evidence to suggest that at least one school policy designed to support desegregation -- the transfer policy -- may be working against desegregation.

The eroding commitment to desegregation is manifest in the increasing segregation and concentrated poverty that has gone unremedied over the years and also in official actions that knowingly increased or sustained segregation at two of the most segregated, high poverty schools in the county, Broad Acres and Oak View Elementary Schools.

Both the elementary and secondary magnet school models used by the school district are fundamentally flawed. The elementary model has simply been unsuccessful in attracting substantial numbers of White children to heavily minority areas or in offsetting the demographic change that brought more minority students into certain schools. In 1992-93, in six of the 10 predominantly minority magnets in Blair more white students transferred out of the schools than transferred in. The programs have not been adjusted or refined to correct the shortcomings and formal transfer programs have not been developed that would allow minority students to transfer to other schools and provide them free transportation to do it.

Racial isolation has decreased significantly in the Bethesda Chevy Chase cluster, but evidence suggests that housing changes had more of an effect on this trend than magnets. There is also a much larger population of Whites who reside in this area, making desegregation easier to achieve. It seems that the magnets in this area are not needed to create desegregation since substantial numbers of white residents in the cluster are White. However, there are many other segregated schools that have emerged in recent years which might benefit from magnets, but no programs have been placed there.

Secondary magnet schools, on the other hand, do attract sufficient numbers of White students to a magnet program contained within a school, but this model fails to create actual racial integration. This is because though White students do, in fact, attend a predominantly minority high school, once inside the school, they end up attending many classes within a smaller, often non-integrated program that is kept separate in most instances from the larger still mostly Black and Latino school and its students. This model, while better than nothing, undermines the goal of racial integration and equal access because it excludes and stratifies students along racial and ethnic lines.

The mission of locally controlled desegregation policies has evolved from its original purposes to create racial integration and abolish segregation to a less reformative one that seeks simply to prevent other school policies from increasing or worsening existing segregation and concentrated poverty. In other words, school officials do not expect to counteract or improve conditions, but do say publicly that they want to sustain the current levels of integration by ensuring that school policies do not worsen the situation. But the data

show, however, that, in recent years, officials have been unable even to live up to this self-imposed mandate.

Other goals, such improved minority achievement and the retainment of middle-class residents, might be viewed as conflicting with a productive integration policy. As Blair Ewing, the school board member said:

"We want to make sure we maintain that strong middle class investment in the city schools. That is very important for us right now," Ewing said. "We will continue to help minority students and the poor, but our focus is going to stay on maintaining high standards and meeting those standards. We have to find a way to both and we are trying to do that and it's really not easy."¹⁸¹

These basic flaws remain and shifting priorities have occurred, it seems, because the district does not live by any rule or regulation that would require integration efforts to continue and continue to stay effective. Consequently, policies born from good intentions to create racial integration became watered down and eventually powerless in creating substantial desegregation in the face of rapid demographic change. School officials allowed segregation and concentrated poverty to increase as community and political pressure diminished.

The Montgomery County experience should prove informative to the many suburban districts across the nation facing racial and ethnic change in the 1990s. School officials in these changing suburban districts who want to achieve integrated schools should consider the evidence in this case study before pouring all their resources into voluntary plans aimed at attracting Whites to schools in high minority areas. Also, this evidence suggests that mutually supportive housing and school policies designed to create and sustain integration may also be a necessary course in preventing segregation in an area experiencing demographic change.

The Montgomery County experience suggests that failing to institute and stick to strongly enforced desegregation policies will make achieving racial integration increasingly difficult as the locally controlled voluntary effort: that lack clear requirements may be vulnerable to competing political interests and apathy. State lawmakers who want to avoid racially polarized suburban school districts should consider passing statewide legislation that sets standards and requirements for racial or ethnic integration in local districts. This is because locally controlled efforts depend upon local political will that can be diluted quite easily -- through school board elections, the hiring of a new school leader and shifting community priorities that pressure elected officials and educators. The Montgomery County experience underscores the need for federal policies and strategies designed to reduce and prevent rapid segregation of suburban areas undergoing change.

Lastly, civil rights litigators and activists who are concerned about racial polarization or concentrated poverty in their community schools should consider lawsuits, legal negotiations or should assist in the development and implementation of state and federal legislation aimed at reversing those trends rather than trusting and relying on local, voluntary

¹⁸¹Interview with Blair Ewing, April 7, 1994.

efforts that do not have the force of law behind them and which can be ignored, undone or watered down over time. School systems such as Montgomery County, which have abundant resources to devise and implement policies for integrated education should be pressed to do so before racial, ethnic and economic divisions become more deeply entrenched.