Magnet Schools: Desegregation or Resegregation? Students' Voices from Inside the Walls

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ABSTRACT

The literature is inconclusive concerning the effectiveness of magnet schools in achieving desegregation, particularly in the case of school-within-school programs. The uncertainty in this matter is supported by the dearth of literature that looks beyond the racial make up of an overall school setting to examine the racial composition of classrooms. Toward this end, this present qualitative study employs four student participants to analyze the condition of desegregation at their magnet high school. We used interviews, journals, and throwaway cameras to collect data. In short, we found that though the entire school setting is significantly racially heterogeneous, the classes are racially segregated and are maintained systematically, structurally, and by the attitudes and behaviors of teachers and administrators.

Forty-five years after the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education (1954) decision, scholars are still sifting through the pros and cons of this historical event as school

districts continue with the practice of desegregation, or perhaps more appropriate for this present research, the appearance of desegregation. With this in mind, this present article uses the voices of four students to examine whether a school district's magnet program at Jefferson High School¹ in a mid-sized Southern city is currently successful at desegregation. As a starting point, we define successful school desegregation as the achievement of racially heterogeneous schools and classrooms. Whether children, particularly bicultural or historically excluded students, are successful with respect to educational outcomes in desegregated settings, such as magnet schools, is another issue.

Nevertheless, the fact that we have chosen to: a) move beyond just counting the overall racial population at a school site as a measurement in determining the success of desegregation plans, b) hear the voices of students in this matter makes this work distinctive from other inquiries and significant to the social foundations of education. Moreover, and beyond the field of education, the axiomatic impact of the Brown decision to the social dynamics in the United States is immeasurable (Kluger, 1975; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Thus, social scientists need to continuously reexamine, discuss, and reflect on this matter.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Much of the body of literature regarding magnet schools and desegregation focuses on whether these schools have achieved a predetermined racial balance on the overall school site through either voluntary or involuntary plans (Black, 1996; Fife, 1992, 1994; Lyons & Walton; Monti, 1986; Reynolds, 1986; Rossell, 1979, 1985, 1988, 1990a; Rossell & Clarke, 1987). It is generally accepted in the literature that voluntary magnet school programs will achieve greater long-term interracial exposure when compared with involuntary programs that produce greater white flight (Rossell, 1990a). However, this position has been challenged by others (Armor, 1995; Fife, 1994) who contend that over a period of time voluntary plans end up with the same amount of white flight as involuntary desegregation plans.

Nevertheless, while quantifying the actual number of different racial groups on a campus and determining which method creates the greatest racial balance are both necessary to the study of school desegregation, these methods are not a sufficient approach to depict the full range of human experience in these settings. The aforementioned literature only explores desegregation in terms of examining magnet schools as a whole rather than within specific classrooms.

In fact, Rossell (1990a), whose work saturates the magnet school literature defined the term *interracial exposure* as "the percentage White in the average

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minority child's school" (p. 486). However, a predecessor of the term interracial exposure was the term *racial balance* that was used in the Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (1971) decision, which essentially stated that a school must reflect the racial make-up of the school district or system. Moreover, the Swann decision maintained that mathematical ratios were possible but not an absolute requirement. Thus, with respect to magnet schools, racial balance is commonly defined as plus or minus 20 or 25 percentage points from the overall racial composition of a school (Armor, 1995). We find that such definitions and methods completely ignore the constitution and dynamics of magnet school classrooms.

Some scholars (Eyler, Cook & Ward, 1983; Feld & Carter, 1998; Rossell, 1990b; Russo & Talbert-Johnson, 1997) saw the above criteria and method for evaluating school desegregation as being problematic, particularly in magnet programs such as the one in our present study, that are classified as a "program within a school" or "school within a school." This type of magnet program is embedded in the context and building of a regular school. Consequently, Rossell (1990b) asked two questions that are germane to our present examination: "Are the resident students really in a desegregated school if they only see the opposite race magnet students for part of the day? To what extent are resident students allowed to use the resources of the magnet program?" (p. 56)

Using the aforementioned questions to examine the body of literature concerning school within school magnet programs, we find many accusations and suppositions but few studies. Much has been written about the tracking of Bicultural students into lower academic tracks and white students into honor or higher academic tracks in regular school settings (Oakes, 1985). Thus, scholars using these findings, generalized the occurrence of tracking to include magnet programs.

With this in mind, Eaton (1996), in, perhaps the most exhaustive work on school resegregation entitled Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education, asks "are secondary magnet schools desegregated?" (p. 218). Drawing predominately on Gordon's 1990 report entitled A Study of Minority Student Achievement in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Eaton discusses how many secondary magnet schools reinforce patterns of racial desegregation. Looking closely at Gordon's work, we find that in order to examine bicultural achievement in MCPS Gordon and his associates analyzed more than 10 district-wide positions and programs, none of which included the magnet program. Yet, in almost as an aside to the report, Gordon includes some statements for some

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students who express their discontent with segregation in magnet programs and the inequitable allocation of resources.

Building on Gordon's work and the earlier work of Schofield (1982) who examined racial tension between Blacks and Whites in magnet schools, we decided to talk with students on a high school campus where there is a "school within a school" magnet program. It was our aim to discover, among other things, how the students define desegregation. Moreover, did they view their "school within a school" program as being segregated or desegregated? Lastly, we wanted to find out the students' perspectives on the social, political, and academic repercussions fostered by the dynamics of their schooling situation.

BACKGROUND

The school district where Jefferson Highschool is located has used magnet schools to attempt racial balance for 21 years. The white flight of the 1970s and 1980s that made new areas of the Jefferson district and other school districts surrounding the city grow significantly is being followed by a significant migration of Blacks and Latinos to the same areas. Still, because of housing patterns, there are primarily Black and Latino schools. Of the four high schools, one is primarily Latino and one is primarily Black. Three forces appear to have shaped the racial makeup of the schools: forced busing, a magnet program, and quickly changing housing patterns.

White students make up 50 percent of students in the district, and all other groups, primarily Black and Latinos, make up the balance. The district has used both majority-to-minority and minority-to-majority transfer strategies. Twelve of the district's 42 campuses are magnet schools, and all but one require that out-of-neighborhood majority students compete to enter the programs (alternative and special campuses are not included). The one exception is a minority-to-majority school whose attraction is a program that allows struggling but motivated seventh graders to take special classes that allow them to skip the eighth grade. In general, students must have a 3.2 GPA and pass both the reading and mathematics portion of the annual statewide assessment. However, neighborhood students have first choice for a seat in any magnet program. Transportation is provided for all students living more than two miles from their chosen school.

Jefferson High School is situated in a predominately Black and Latino neighborhood. The school's population is 51% Latino, 40% White, 7% Black, and 3% Asian. The majority of the White students are bused in to attend the Jefferson Exemplary Program (JEP) – a school within a school majority-to-minority magnet program that began in the early 1980s with one of its reported aims to create a

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desegregated school setting. Close to 40% of the school's approximately 1,800 students are in JEP. To be considered for JEP, students must have an overall GPA of 3.5 with no grade below a B, letters of recommendation, and must have passed all portions of the state assessment test.

METHOD

Our literature review revealed that the common method of gathering information about the attractiveness and success of desegregation programs is the use of surveys administered to parents. We find this methodology of surveying parents problematic because surveys are usually inflexible and limit in-depth answers, explanations, and the examination of experiences that influence how a participant answers questions; and the voices of students or children, the most important component of the desegregation paradigm, are ignored. According to Nieto (1994), there is a dearth of research focusing on student perspectives. Moreover, she contends that student participation is invaluable to the process of school reform and change. Therefore, we decided to engage students as participants to bring in their necessary voices to the school desegregation discourse by employing qualitative methods.

We gathered seven names of potential participants through a process called community nomination, whereby the names of the participants were solicited through individual contacts with the community (Foster, 1997). We selected four students based on their availability and whether they participated in JEP: two of our participants were JEP students.

We used three methods to collect data that included open-ended interviews, student journals, and pictures taken by the participants. One author facilitated all interviews. The initial interviews were face-to-face and tape-recorded lasting approximately one and one half-hour each. During the initial interview, participants received a journal and a camera and were asked to chronicle events that underscored information they offered in the interview. There was a second interview that was face-to-face and tape-recorded lasting approximately one hour each. We conducted follow-up interviews that lasted 15 minutes by telephone after receiving the journals and cameras. During the fall semester when we conducted the study, unscheduled and non structured phone conversations took place when 3 of the 4 participants would call in to report occurrences that they thought would be of interest to us. Qualitative analysis of the data occurred through a process of open and axial coding whereby the data were first deconstructed and labeled randomly then selectively categorized (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The majority of the data used for analysis came from the interviews. The

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pictures the students took were mainly of their peers in classrooms for the purpose of collaborating their contentions concerning the state of desegregation. One student wrote extensively in her journal while the other three only had a page or two of entries: we included this data in our analysis. The authors on several occasions visited the campus for various reasons. We went to a funeral and to football games and talked with administrators and teachers. While our visits and conversations with school personnel are not part of the data analysis, they provided us with information about the school's dynamics.

RESULTS

As noted in our literature review, the meaning of school desegregation with respect to how it is actually practiced in educational settings is dialectical. Some measurements of school desegregation have focused on the overall racial composition of the entire school site while other assessments examined the racial distributions within classrooms. Aaron, a biracial 17-year-old (he is White and Latino but identifies himself as being Latino) JEP student, explains how he would define desegregation in this context: (Some of our participants use nonstandard English but their meanings are clear and should not confuse the reader. Therefore, we chose not to use sic in order to affirm and validate the participants' way of communicating). (All names have been changed to protect the identity of the school and participants.)

Aaron: I would define desegregation by the classroom. There would be at

least an equal number or at least more than what I have experienced

so far in my JEP classes.

Interviewer: Why would you define it that way?

Aaron: Well, I have seen in my JEP classes – maybe on one hand, I can count

the number – the number for three years of Latino and African-American students that I have had in my classes with me and they have

all been the same students.

Interviewer: mmm

Aaron: And that I don't consider it to be desegregated, because it still is all the

white majority in the classes at a high school where Whites aren't the

majority – they are the minority.

Like all of the participants, Leon, a 17-year-old Black male student in regular classes also agrees that one should determine whether a school is desegregated by looking at the racial composition of classrooms. Moreover, he took pictures of

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classes to underscore Aaron's and all the participants' contention that Jefferson High School is racially segregated. Leon said, "You see, man, I would look at the classes [to define desegregation]. I see classes where there is nothing but Whites – no Mexicans, no Black, no Chinese – just White, White people, you know."

We underscored the word regular in the above paragraph because it was a term given to us by the participants. The term appeared in our data more than 80 times to refer to regular classes, students, or teachers, although this word did not appear in any of our questions. With respect to our interviews, it is important to note that, though we had a predetermined set of questions, all of our interviews opened with the item: Tell me about your school. From this single open-ended item students began to tell the story of schooling through their eyes and needed only probing and summary questions to support the dialogue. Thus, the term regular emerged embodying pejorative connotations. Alexandra, a 17-year-old White student taking regular classes, and Delilah, a 17-year-old Black JEP student expounds on the usage of the term regular:

Interviewer: The term regular, is this your term or do . . .

Alexandra: Oh no.

Interviewer: I mean do teachers use this term?

Alexandra: Yeah, well they use this term, yeah, because we're the regular

students . . .

Interviewer: . . . and they say this out loud?

Alexandra: ... right ...

Delilah: Just a regular student, they don't have . . . you'd just be in regular

classes.

Interviewer: Regular classes. Now, is that the title - regular classes or?

Delilah: Yes, it's just regular classes.

3oth from pictures and interviews, the participants describe those who are the regular students at Jefferson High School.

Interviewer: Who are the students in the regular program?

Aaron: I've never been in too many regular classes before so I wouldn't . . .

Interviewer: What's your general impression?

Aaron: Well, from what I can ascertain, there are more students who are

minorities.

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Interviewer: OK, who would be in the JEP program?

Aaron: From the students that I've seen, there are mostly White.

Interviewer: And the students in your regular classes are . . .

Alexandra: A lot. A lot of Hispanics.

Interviewer: Is there a difference? What's the difference between regular classes

and . . . ?

Delilah: Umm, JEP classes you may find, maybe, and this is really stressing it,

maybe one or two minorities and regular classes you'll find all of them

[Bicultural students].

To this point the participants voice, what we categorized and labeled in data analysis as systemic segregation. Systemic segregation is the consequence of a system that produces racially homogeneous classrooms within a school setting that is significantly heterogeneous. According to the students, a student's grade point average and scores on the annual statewide assessment determine his or her placement in academic programs. We will examine this method of tracking students more closely in the discussion section of this present article. Below, however, we present what emerged from the data as another category that we call attitudinal/behavioral reinforcement of segregation.

Alexandra: I'm best friends with this guy I know and he is like JEP straight across theboard. Everyone loves him. The teachers just let him out of class whenever he wants, you know.

Alexandra also adds these statements below that speak to the attitudinal/behavioral reinforcement of segregation:

Interviewer: So, you're saying this teacher is an exception, but most of the teachers

would rather teach . . .

Alexandra: Yeah.

Interviewer: . . . the JEP students.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Interviewer: And they just tell you? How do you get the sense? How do . . . ?

Alexandra: What, uh, I get a pretty good idea since they kind of just don't care

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(giggle) in the regular classes, they're just like whatever . . . you could do some worksheets or . . .

Interviewer: So it's the method they use, they use worksheets or . . .

Alexandra: Yeah.

Interviewer: or it's also like how to . . .

Alexandra: I think the general perception, like I had one teacher tell me that the

reason I was doing so bad in class was because I was in class with all these lazy Mexicans, you know, so I don't think, I think the teacher's

attitude is a little different than mine.

Leon's statements support Alexandra's contentions in that he says that the students not in the regular program "just get treated better." When asked why this dynamic occurs, Leon responded, "Cuz you know, they just JEP program. They're smarter than everybody, you know. I think they more – I can't find the words – they think they more organized than other people and more wiser or learn quicker, you know, at a faster rate – that's how it is."

While Leon and Alexandra's statements are critical to our understanding of student perspectives in schools, it is important to note that they are both students in the regular program. We understand the social dynamics of high school settings in which groups can harbor resentment toward other groups for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, Leon and Alexandra appeared to have no animosity toward students in other programs. Moreover, our two JEP participants supported Leon and Alexandra's statements about differential or preferential treatment.

At this juncture, it should be clear that Bicultural students in this setting are overwhelmingly represented in the regular program and that they are under represented in high level programs, particularly in JEP. Undercurrents of the deferential attitude and behavior voiced by the students are the issues of race, racism, and prejudices as mechanisms that foster unequal treatment. This can be best characterized in Alexandra's teacher saying that she was in class with "all these lazy Mexicans." Yet, although the issue of race surfaces as an apparatus of stratification, Delilah's statements further illuminate the dynamics at Jefferson High School by bringing another factor that may also contribute to attitudinal/behavioral segregation.

Delilah: Umm, I think you have more respect if you are in the gifted and

talented programs.

Interviewer: By whom?

Delilah: Respect from the teachers, respect from the principals, because I know,

and then again it matters where you come from. Like I mean when the first time I walked into Jefferson High it was like they didn't have any respect for me, I guess because I'm black, I don't know. . . . and then when I said 'I'm a transfer student from Columbus High' they were like, "Oh, my gosh!" And then they were like – just fall to their feet.

Delilah is aware of attitudinal and behavior distinctions made because of race. For example, she writes the following referring to a school administrator: "I feel that he watches the Black and Hispanic students more than he does the White ones." In support of this statement she also writes that Black girls are reprimanded for wearing items such as bandannas, whereas, White girls are allowed to wear them. However, while she recognizes race as a factor, her statements indicate that class is also a mechanism that generates attitudinal and behavior reinforcement of segregation. In her words, when the school administration discovered that she was from the more affluent and predominately White side of town, it engendered significantly better service and treatment. This class and track distinction is also evident in the class-room among teachers:

Delilah:

Like umm, respect as in she [the teacher] pays a whole lot more attention to me and she make sure she sees me, she makes sure she sees me, she makes sure she looks over my shoulder and makes sure I am doing something. If I do things, because I do math a different way from everybody else, and if I do it a different way and it so happens that she has the wrong answer and I go, "Oh, your answer's wrong." Well the other kid who was in her class before I came in her class would tell her, "Oh this is wrong. Well she is like, "No the book is right." But if I tell her it is wrong, she'll go, "Oh, OK let me do it again."

With teachers in mind, we move to our third category called structural segregation that emerged from our data analysis.

Interviewer: Just in your opinion, how are the students in the regular program treated as opposed to the ones in the JEP?

Aaron:

That's something I wouldn't begin to know too much about. I do know some of the teachers on the lower end of the program that I've had experience with in the honors and the regular ones were definitely not the same quality teacher as those in the JEP program.

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Interviewer: What do you mean by quality?

Aaron: Umm, the teachers in the JEP programs were better at teaching, I mean

they just seemed to hold a better concept of how to teach students,

how to get students to respond.

Interviewer: Is there a different age in these teachers, I mean are the teachers older,

or are there first year teachers teaching JEP students, or are there first

year teachers teaching regular students or is it just ...?

Aaron: Most of the teachers I've had have to been older, I haven't had any first-

year teachers.

Other respondents have already voiced a difference in the quality of teaching, which we noted in our presentation of the attitudinal/behavior category. Yet Aaron's statements deal with the assignment of teachers rather than how they treat students. His contentions maintain that certain programs are assigned better and more experienced teachers. Therefore, the practice of teacher assignment presents itself as a structural barrier of desegregation by denying access to those benefits received from superior schooling such as the admission to academic programs within, out of, and after one's experience at Jefferson High School.

Working also as a means to continue segregation is the structure of the school building and where the students are assigned. Aaron's statements speak to this situation:

Interviewer: Is there encouragement from teachers and/or administration to mix JEP

students with students that are not involved in this program?

Aaron: Thaven't seen any such encouragement. I my the one thing I be

I haven't seen any such encouragement. Um, the one thing I have seen towards discouragement, that is, the regular classes are on the first floor, and all the JEP classes are on the second or third floor or on the west wing of the school. So I mean there is not a whole lot of

intermingling.

Similarly, Leon describes the same type of isolation and segregation:

Leon: The only thing I like, I mean I'm talking about it, the building, you

know what I'm saying. I don't think it's [JEP] even in the building, it

might be, but I don't see none of them people.

Interviewer: hmm

Leon: They all be, they all with the same people but in, you know, the same

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classes but they got their own little class and there are two different buildings almost: How to meet people? Look, it's like, my classes are all right together. I go like this here (he draws a square in the air and laughs). It's like they don't want you to meet nobody, you know.

Lastly, with respect to the category of structural segregation, we will look at the allocation of resources. The students say that Jefferson High is ahead of most schools when it comes to technology. They also report that, though there are no restrictions on who could use equipment that they knew of, the non regular students were more likely to use it. The most salient responses with respect to differential allocation of resources came from Alexandra and Leon concerning field trips:

Alexandra:

Yeah the JEP always goes on trips and has big field trips, and I think they get a lot more than the regular students, like uh, they [regular students] get a lot of worksheets and a lot of busy work.

Leon:

That's how it is with the JEP students. Like one day I came in and there was a big ole crowd of White people; they was all crowded by the band hall, you know, just real crowded and they was all going – I don't know where they were going. They get to go on this trip and that trip; they spend more time on trips than in school and we just the opposite of that. The trip, I guess they say, is educational or something, I don't know.

In conclusion, we asked the participants to articulate some of the political, social, and educational consequences of the school setting that they presented and have experienced.

Aaron:

. . . those are the students you normally hang around with and do things with so you tend to ignore other students. So you tend to form groups and those groups end up being formed on the basis, more of color than anything else because the classes that you're in that is what you are exposed to. Futuristically, you won't, that won't give you the opportunity to be diverse when you get into the job field because the student who was in the JEP program and was only around White students – what do they do when all of a sudden they are put into a classroom in college or on the job when all the other students around them are of color? They might not necessarily know what to do.

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Interviewer: That's social, are there consequences?

Aaron: When I would see students in the regular classes, which are more

minority, students tend to see themselves as not being on the same pier as JEP students so they're not as good as JEP students and so there, I would see that as more of a way of discouragement from necessarily going further into education, and then this would be something that I carry down, um, well your father was in the regular classes, you should just stay in the regular classes, it's easier way and it would just be a

domino effect and it would be very hard to break out of.

Delilah: I think, what it is now, has been affecting teenagers now; most people

may not agree with me, but this is the way I see it – I see it as um, the White people that hang out with the White people think they are better than everybody and the Black people that hang out with just the Black people they want to be, I don't know, the White people. And I think the effects that it has on us in the future would be this: Our country will be ran by the White people and the Black and Hispanic people will be stuck, the ones that are like this now. I know some people and they say in other states that it's not like this, but those of us, well I should say, in this state, it'd be ran by a White person, or a Black or

Hispanic person that wants to be White.

Interviewer: Is this school working to change this dynamic or. . . . ?

Delilah: I don't think they want to.

Leon: Everything will be the same ole, same ole - the same old stuff, you

know.

Alexandra: Like come on, what are most students really going to do with a regular

education?

While all participants responded to the question in their own unique manner, they also drew similar conclusions concerning their general schooling experience and political, social, and educational outcomes. The respondents maintain that, though they attend a racially heterogeneous school, the classes remain purposely segregated. Therefore, currently, there is little interaction with different racial groups in and outside of the classroom. Limited racial contacts coupled with unequal teacher expectations and treatment will not only uphold current asymmetrical power relations, but will also perpetuate disenfranchisement along the lines of race and tracking in the future.

DISCUSSION

Revisiting one of our research focus questions, which we drafted out of the literature (Rossell, 1990b), we asked the following question: "Are the resident students really in a desegregated school if they see the opposite race magnet students for only part of the day" (p. 56)? Clearly the participants contend that both resident and magnet students attend segregated classes. This circumstance influences the amount of desegregation in situations out of the classroom, which the students suggest are limited and not encouraged in either setting. Thus, the respondents rebuff the predominant practice of only looking at the entire racial composition of a school setting rather than examining specific classroom populations.

From the data, we conclude that segregation is maintained systematically, structurally, and with individual and collective attitudes and behaviors of people in authority. With respect to maintaining segregation systematically, we briefly discussed that the main factors for being admitted into JEP are the annual statewide assessment test scores and GPA.

Research in the school district where Jefferson is located indicates that the free or reduced-price school lunch is the best predictor of outcomes on the state assessment test. In other words, those students who are involved in the school lunch program are more likely not to pass the state test (Burley & Butner, 1998). Clearly, Bicultural children are disproportionately represented school lunch programs. Thus, JEP could be eliminating potential Bicultural prospects with qualifying GPAs on the basis of state test scores, which do not appear to have a significant correlation either with SAT scores or success in college (Colvin, 1999).

Using the phrase – a school within a school – from the literature to describe magnet programs situated on regular campuses can be taken literally at Jefferson High School, according to the participants. Structurally, Jefferson has three floors with wings or attached buildings on each side of the long hallways on each floor. This arrangement works effectively to segregate students. We found that tracks are relegated to specific parts of the building for a day and perhaps for an entire four-year high school experience.

Tatum (1997) calls the systematic and structural maintenance of a system of privileges racism. In other educational literature, systematic and structural disenfranchisement is described in terms of access to opportunity (Mac Iver, Reuman, & Main, 1995). Three out of the four measures of educational opportunity permeate our data:

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- (a) students' access to college-preparatory, accelerated, and advanced placement courses,
- (b) students' access to information and anticipatory socialization experiences needed to successfully negotiate the complexities of the lengthy college preparation and application process, and
- (c) students' access to courses where the teachers "teach for understanding" and emphasize the development of higher order knowledge instead of emphasizing the drill, practice, and recall of facts (p. 376)

Systematic and structural mechanisms could work by themselves to ensure the status quo or what Leon calls "the same ole same ole" in society and at Jefferson. Notwithstanding the importance of these factors, we find that the respondents focused more on the individual and collective attitudes and behaviors of people in authority as being the catalyst that buttresses and justifies segregation.

The respondents voiced notable distinctions in treatment and academic expectations of students based on the intersecting factors of track, class, and race. Teachers taught differently, gave different types of assignments such as worksheets, and openly expressed discontentment for teaching particular students due to the aforementioned factors. These happenings, according to the students, are not esoteric or covert; rather, they are known to teachers, students, and administrators and are audaciously part of the school's culture. When we asked Delilah about the possibility of that culture's being changed by administrators and teachers, her response was "I don't think they want to." This phenomenon where the attitudes and behaviors of administrators and teachers constitutes the catalyst that buttresses and justifies segregation is not very particular in schools where Bicultural students desegregate traditional White schools and is well documented in the literature (Oakes, 1985; Schofield, 1988; Well & Crain, 1997).

Looking at the second question asked in the literature concerning the allocation and use of resources at schools within schools settings, we found discrepancies in two areas. However, we noted previously that the students reported equal access to technological equipment. Nevertheless, two of the students contend that JEP students are afforded many more educational experiences outside of school than other students experience. Superseding this account, however, is the differential allocation of human resources. JEP students, according to the participants, have more experienced, capable, and qualified teachers.

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Juxtaposing the students' responses with respect to consequences of the picture they construct concerning school within school programs against the desegregation literature, we find that their responses challenge the foundation and rationale for continuing school desegregation programs. Wells and Crain (1994) analyzed 21 studies to determine the long-term effects of school desegregation. They concluded that their "review supports the theory that interracial contact in elementary or secondary school can help Blacks overcome perpetual segregation" (p. 552). In short, they write that perpetual segregation limits opportunities for Blacks to network with White classmates and teachers that may lead to future employment and excludes them from educational resources (Wells & Crain, 1994).

We agree with Well and Crain's and others' (see Braddock, 1980; Granovetter, 1983; McPartland & Braddock, 1981) assertion that perpetual segregation may limit networking opportunities for Blacks and other Bicultural students. However, we cannot assume as a result of this present research that meaningful racial contacts occur in desegregated settings. Our respondents describe perpetual segregation in the context of a desegregated school site; thus, we call this situation resegregation. Resegregation, according to the students, facilitates the same deleterious circumstances created from being excluded from resources and having limited interracial contacts in traditional segregated schools.

CONCLUSION

We see the educational enterprise as having four major players: the parents, teachers, administrators, and students. Like legs of a table, we need the participation of all four entities for education to work most effectively. Too many times we use standardized test scores as the only means of listening to students. Thus, it is one of the aims of this present article to validate the need for educators to listen to the voices of students particularly at a time when many educational agencies appear to be engaged in massive reform.

With respect to reform, it is time to examine the practice of school desegregation more closely. In other words, we must get past the numbers, which is the focus of much of the body of literature, and investigate the experiences of students particularly as more districts utilize magnet schools and school-within-schools programs as a means to desegregate. With the experiences of our respondents in hand, through reform efforts, the possible structural and systematic resegregation of students in magnet schools as suggested here by our participants can be remedied if there is a desire to do so, which the respondents and others question.

We realize a more comprehensive study involving teachers, parents, administrators, and students is needed to give our present work additional validity. Nevertheless, the school administrators in the present study seemed unaware of the issues raised by the students and by our analysis. Thus, beyond any critique concerning the validity of our methodology and findings, we hope that practicing administrators can begin to look at their magnet school programs with the questions and issues raised here in mind.

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