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AUTHOR Carlson, Kenneth
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ABSTRACT

Education directly determines life, liberty, and happiness for that segment of the population which can afford better educational facilities. For economically and socially disadvantaged people, education only perpetuates inequality. Financial inequality results in some school districts spending more money per student than other school districts. There is a high positive correlation between a public school student's socioeconomic status and the amount of public money spent on his/her education. What are needed are new forms of school financing where local financing of education is replaced by state, and possibly federal, disbursement of public education funds. However, the essential objective is not to equalize expenditures but to equalize opportunity in the form of compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged, health care for pregnant women, and post-natal instruction in homemaking and baby care. (Author/SB)

EQUALIZING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Kenneth Carlson
Rutgers University

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Introduction

In four years, the United States will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The celebrating will signify that we as a nation still subscribe to the principles enunciated in the Declaration. The first principle stated therein is that "all Men are created equal," with equality being defined as the unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The celebration should be marked by an air of embarrassment.

In fifteen years, the United States will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Constitution. The 14th Amendment to that document says that no state "shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Unless considerable change takes place between now and 1987, we shall assemble for the ceremonies in acute discomfort.

Education directly determines life, liberty, and happiness, and it is a government function. But schooling does not promote equality; it perpetuates inequality. It is the Great Sieve, and the openings are labeled "economic and ethnic origin." For those who were born well, schooling is opportunity; for the rest, it is circumscription. We still profess what our ancestors dreamed, but the Revolution only achieved the domestication of oppression.

> . . . when the denial of equality of opportunity to major segments of the population and the shallowness of many prevailing notions of equality are weighed against America's declared ideals, the conclusion can only be that the /American/ experiment has been a tragic failure.[1]

Financial Inequality

There is a school district in Texas which spends $5334 each year on each student. There is another district which spends $264.[2] The difference is 2000 per cent. The dollar disparities between the children of the rich and the children of the poor are not usually this great, but they do have a disheartening consistency. There is the urban expenditure and there is the suburban expenditure. New York City spends $1031 per pupil and Scarsdale spends $1626; Boston spends $655 and Newton spends $842;[3] Newark spends $940 and Millburn spends $1192.[4] No wonder James Conant was once moved to write that "the contrast in money available to schools in a wealthy suburb and to the schools in a large city jolts one's notion of the meaning of equality of opportunity."[5]

There are also rural-suburban and even suburban-

suburban differences. Thus, in Los Angeles County, Beverly Hills can spend $1232 per pupil while Baldwin Park spends $577.[6] And finally, there are the inequalities between states, where New York spends an average of $1370 per pupil and Mississippi spends $521.[7]

All of the foregoing differences are due to two factors: wealth and effort. Since the school tax is a property tax, the town with a lot of highly valued property - commercial, industrial, or residential - has a plentiful resource on which to draw for support of its schools. The property value per pupil in Newark is $20,338, whereas in Millburn it is $92,856.[8] In Baldwin Park there is $3706 in property value per child, but the value in Beverly Hills is $50,885 - a ratio of 1 to 13.[9]

Effort is the extent to which a town actually draws on this taxable resource. The tax rate in Newark is $3.69; in Millburn it is $1.43.[10] Similarly, the tax rate in Baldwin Park is $5.48, compared to $2.38 in Beverly Hills.[11]

What all of this shows - and it is typical for the nation as a whole - is that poor communities spend less money per pupil but they make a greater effort to support education than do rich communities. As the California Supreme

Court pointed out in the Serrano case, "affluent districts can have their cake and eat it too; they can provide a high quality education for their children while paying lower taxes. Poor districts, by contrast, have no cake at all."[12] The same can be said for states. It should be borne in mind that taxes hurt the poor more than the rich, because the poor are already at a subsistence standard of living. Moreover, the property tax is especially regressive because it is not based on ability to pay.

A further refinement is in order at this point. There are intra-district disparities in the amount of money spent on students. The kids in the wealthier neighborhoods of a school district have more spent on their education than do the kids in the poorer neighborhoods. Patricia Sexton has provided a detailed description of this situation as it obtained in the Detroit school system.[13] Even within a school, the students in the higher tracks or ability groupings have more spent on them than do the students in the lower tracks. The higher ability students get more materials, more highly paid teachers, etc. Since the students in the higher tracks tend to be from higher social class families,[14] the relationship between how much the family has and how much public money the child gets continues to persist. In 1967, Federal Judge Skelly Wright in Washington, D.C., ruled that tracking was in violation of the 14th Amendment guarantee of equal protection under the law.[15]

Money Does Matter

There are many people who acknowledge indisputable financial inequalities, but who then go on to say that money really doesn't matter. The one thing almost all of these people have in common is money. Some of these people even spend a lot of their money to send their children to private schools. Their actions give the lie to their words.

One method by which the educational value of money can be demonstrated is that employed by Guthrie and his colleagues in their analyses of the extensive data available on the schools in Michigan.[16] The Guthrie team examined the relationships among the following variables: socioeconomic status, school services, academic performance, and success in later life. Their first set of findings confirms what has already been established in this paper, namely, that those who got, get. To put it pedantically, there is a high positive correlation between a public school student's socioeconomic status and the amount of public money spent on her education. On this issue, Guthrie et al. conclude that

> to be an elementary school child of lower socioeconomic status is to experience an extraordinary probability of discriminatory treatment. High-quality school services are provided to children from wealthy homes. Poor-quality school services are provided to children from poor homes.[17]

The second set of findings reveals another strong correlation: that between school service components and student performance as measured by standardized aptitude and subject-matter achievement tests. All of the components are affected by the availability of money, and consequently they exist to a more favorable degree in rich schools than in poor ones. Among the components are: student-teacher ratios; in-service training of teachers; the number of classes and courses taught by a teacher; job satisfaction for teachers; released time for department chairmen; the services of a school nurse and psychologist; supplementary teaching materials; library books; newer, less crowded buildings, with better illuminated halls and rooms and more sound dampening characteristics; summer school programs; and special services for students with special needs. All of these components correlate positively with pupil performance, although some may in reality only be proxy measures of others that are more directly significant. For example, a teacher's verbal ability may be an index of her general intelligence and imagination in the teaching task. At any rate, the highest correlations are those that have to do with teacher characteristics, particularly verbal ability, teaching experience, job satisfaction, and amount and type of academic preparation. Thus, there is strong evidence that schools, and especially teachers, do make a difference, and teacher quality is to some extent at least an identifiable, a cultivatable, and, most important, a purchasable commodity.

The last set of positive correlations which the authors derive has to do with the connection between school performance and success in later life. Here it should be noted that success has a social as well as a personal dimension, so that society too is a beneficiary of improved education for the individual. The better educated person is a more informed and active participant in the political process and is less likely to engage in criminal activity (or is less likely to be caught at it).

New Forms of School Financing

Given the educational potency of money, what can be done to insure a more equitable disbursement of public education funds? Obviously, local financing of education has to be done away with. This is rapidly coming to pass. State courts in California, Minnesota, and New Jersey, and the Federal district court in Texas have already found local financing of education to be in violation of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, as it applies to both students and taxpayers. A Supreme Court ruling on the Texas case is expected by September. The outcome is almost guaranteed, not just because of the pressure of mounting lower court consensus, but also due to thrusts from the legislative and executive branches of government. In Hawaii, of course, the schools have always been state financed. The Maryland state government has assumed responsibility for school construction costs, and in North Carolina most of the teacher salary bill is now picked up by the state.[18] Gubernatorial advisory commissions in New York and New Jersey have within this year recommended that these states take over almost the entire cost of school financing. Governor William Milliken of Michigan is attempting to move his state in the same direction.[19] At the Federal level, the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations has recommended that the states assume "substantially all" of the responsibility for financing the schools,[20] and the President's Commission on School Finance just brought forth the same recommendation.[21] Most of the recommendations for a state takeover also contain proposals for more equitable tax policies, e.g., a uniform state property tax and greater reliance on income taxes and sales taxes.

So the tide is running, and the question now is whether the tide can or should be stopped at the state line. The Supreme Court will eventually have to address itself to this issue, since the arguments for state financing of education are even better arguments for Federal financing. As Albert Shanker has asked, "if inequality is unconstitutional within a state, need we wait much longer before the doctrine applies <u>between</u> states as well?"[22] In a society as mobile as that of the United States, it is as patently ridiculous to confine equality of opportunity within state lines as within municipal boundaries. Furthermore, "there is no justification for relying purely on state and local taxes to finance education in a nation in which the poor states have about half the per capita income of the rich ones."[23]

Federal financing of local schools may well contradict the 10th Amendment, which reserves to the states the power to educate; however, in recent years the Supreme Court has consistently chosen the individual rights of the 14th Amendment over the states' rights of the 10th Amendment. So while Federal school financing may break new ground, it does so in a well-trampled field.

Here again the Court will be mindful of contemporary opinion in coming to its decision. Senator George McGovern has indicated in a campaign letter that he would like to see the Federal government assume a greater share of the costs of education, although how much greater was not specified. Governor Milton Shapp of Pennsylvania has proposed the creation of a National Education Trust Fund, which could eventually handle all the costs of public education.[24] Senator Hubert Humphrey has just echoed the Shapp proposal, with the recommendation that the trust fund be used to finance at least one-third of the nation's education costs.[25] To date, the most significant support for major Federal involvement in school financing has come from a majority of the President's own Commission on School Finance. John Fischer, speaking for that majority, said: "If we really mean it when we say that every American child - rather than every Californian or every Arkansan - is entitled to equal educational opportunity, we must be prepared to use Federal means to bring about such equality."[26]

Whither Local Control?

The prospect of state or Federal financing raises anew the old fear that central funding will result in central control. The power of the purse is undeniably a first-order power, and they who possess it cannot be expected to relinquish all control of the uses to which their appropriations are put. Indeed, we should demand that they devise and enforce minimal standards as a means of protecting students. It is worth noting that such standards were never applied to the Ocean Hill-Brownsville experimental program in local control until after the experiment had terminated, at which time it was discovered that the reading scores for children in the district were lower than before the experiment began and worse than those of other ghetto schools in New York City.[27] The application of standards throughout the course of the experiement might have prevented or reversed this trend.

The argument that uniform standards will lead inexorably to deadening homogenization is currently being undermined by the structural and instructional diversity which is finally surfacing in public school systems, e.g., the New York City system. The point is that stifling uniformity is not inevitable, and it can be reversed. The crucial task is to determine how much uniformity is desirable. In the case of educational expenditures, there is now a lamentable lack of uniformity.

Those who have ordered or who advocate state financing of the schools have been careful not to foreclose local control. The California Supreme Court, in the Serrano case, said that "no matter how the state decides to finance its system of public education, it can still leave decision-making power in the hands of local districts."[28] In his New Jersey decision, Judge Theodore Botter wrote that "beyond common essentials, educational goals should be adjusted to community needs."[29] The President's Commission on School Finance asserted that "local boards of education should be given wide latitude, within general state guidelines, to use resources provided by the state in ways that best meet their needs and demands."[30] The same sentiments can be invoked for Federal financing.

Ironically, those who oppose centralized financing tend to assume that local control presently exists and has only to be preserved. For many school systems, however, local control is a chimera.

> The shortage of funds in some districts actually minimizes local discretion in programming and in the ability to compete for the services of good teachers. School boards in poor districts cannot opt to institute special services when their budgets do not include adequate funds even for essentials. In this sense local control is illusory. It is control for the wealthy, not for the poor.[31]

There have been several attempts to develop school financing plans which combine a central input for equalization purposes and a local input to assure a degree of local discretion. Existing state and Federal aid formulas are mostly local input, and the "aid" is parceled out in such a way that it actually widens the financial gap between have and have-not school districts.[32] The newer schemes seek to eliminate this farce. Among the most recent of these have been the Fleischmann Commission report in New York State and the report of the Governor's Tax Policy Committee (the Sears Report) in New Jersey. The most influential plan has probably been that worked out by John Coons, William Clune, and Stephen Sugarman, and which appears in their book, Private Wealth and Public Education. The authors advance the concept of "power equalization." Under this plan, the state (or conceivably the Federal government) would establish maximum and minimum levels of spending per pupil. Within these limits, a local district can decide how much it wants to spend, and this decision will trigger a pre-set property tax rate. For rich school districts, the revenue generated by this tax rate will be more than is needed to meet the per pupil expenditures. The surplus will therefore be turned over to the state (or, again, the Federal government). The revenue resulting from the same tax rate in a poor district will not be sufficient to satisfy the desired per pupil expenditure, and the difference will be supplied by the state (or Federal government). In this way, per pupil expenditure will continue to be a product of local decision and effort, but localities will be equalized in their revenue raising capability. The Citizens Group named by the California State Board of Education to work out a means of compliance with the Serrano ruling has just adopted the power equalizing plan.[33]

Compensatory Education

What should remain in mind is that the essential objective is not to equalize expenditures but to equalize opportunity. At this time in United States history, given the fact that the rich have their private advantages augmented with public money, equalizing the distribution of this money is a straightforward way to equalize opportunity. But we should not stop there. Equal opportunity can be still more effectively promoted through the expansion of compensatory programs for the disadvantaged. Dwight Allen has stated the case rather succinctly: "equality is a racist notion when you start with a dual society that is systematically discriminatory on a racial basis."[34] Allen's remark should be extended to include socioeconomic status as well as race. In fact, Patricia Sexton may yet prove to have been prophetic in a comment she made ten years ago.

> In the long run it may turn out that the educational problems of low-income whites are more stubborn and resistant to treatment than those of Negroes. The Negro community is becoming aware of its rights and particularly its right to equal educational opportunity.[35]

Perhaps it would be well at this point to present the issue in simplified schematic form as follows.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TODAY

	Home Environment	School Environment
Rich	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Poor	XXXXXX	XXXXXX

This represents the present condition of education opportunity in the United States. Those who propose the mere equalization of per pupil expenditures would, at best, only succeed in converting this picture to the following.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AFTER
EXPENDITURE EQUALIZATION

	Home Environment	School Environment
Rich	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Poor	XXXXXX	XXXXXX——————

The poor child would still be left in a non-competitive position due to the relative disadvantagement of his home environment.

Of what does that disadvantagement consist? Quite often it consists of hunger, malnourishment, and sickness. It may consist of brain damage from having eaten peeling paint or because of vitamin or protein deficiency as early as the prenatal period. In the latter respect, it has been said that "deprived children start life at a disadvantage, social handicaps having already been converted to organic defects even at birth."[36] Educational disadvantagement in the home could result from the absence of a parent or from the inattentiveness of economically harried parents. It may simply mean parents of limited verbal fluency and conversational range due to the restricted opportunities of their own childhood. It could also mean the lack of a quiet place to study, or of books, or of variegated experiences.

> There is no mystery about it: the child who is familiar with books, ideas, conversation - the ways and means of the intellectual life - before he begins consciously to think, has a marked advantage. He is at home in the House of Intellect just as the stableboy is at home among horses or the child of actors on the stage.[37]

To equalize opportunity means to offset these disadvantages. Much more appropriately, it means to prevent them. In a provocative paper presented at the American Sociological Association convention last summer, it was contended that the best way to eradicate the ravages of poverty and guarantee equal opportunity is income equalization. The authors suggested that society be structured so that "the richest he controls a disposable income no more than three times greater than the poorest he."[38] This is the most adequate solution to the problem which this writer has encountered, but politically it is pie in the sky.

A preventive strategy which is politically acceptable is simple vitamin and protein supplementation for undernourished women during pregnancy and lactation. It has been shown that this can increase the intelligence of the children born to these women.[39] In general, high quality medical care should be easily available to the poor at all times.

A strategy which borders between prevention and compensation is infant education. The Infant Education Center Project in Milwaukee randomly assigned into two groups the new-born children of forty mothers whose I.Q.s were less than 70. The control group was given no special treatment. Each child in the experimental group was well-fed and bathed and stimulated. In addition, the mothers of these children were instructed in homemaking and baby care. In time, the experimental group children attained an average I.Q. of 125, whereas the average I.Q. for the control group children was 95.[40] Needless to say, this study and the _in utero_ studies previously mentioned cast doubt on the intelligence theories of Jensen, Eysenck, Herrnstein, Shockley and others. Infant education is the logical precursor to Headstart programs, and both can be accomplished through a national system of Day Care centers. Such a system would also provide jobs and careers for many of the poor. However, the most compelling reason for it is so there would no longer have to be a "control group."

This brings us to the compensatory efforts which can be undertakén by the regular public schools. As long as schools are so clearly identifiable along social class lines, money can be allocated to a school according to the socioeconomic status of its students. The lower the socioeconomic status, the more money the school would receive - quite the reverse of what now occurs. Guthrie and his colleagues believe that public support of education can best be based on the needs of individual schools.[41] This would be a perfectly logical procedure. " . . . the educational system should not distribute its benefits in meager amounts to those of meager abilities, anymore than the health system should lavish its energies on the healthy. Justice demands precisely the opposite."[42] The additional money which would accrue to poor schools under this system could be used for such demonstrably salutary purposes as expanding and upgrading the professional staff and the other school service components referred to earlier. The money could even be used for projects of such seemingly limited promise as summer schools. (One study arrived at the conclusion that 80 per cent of the achievement difference between black and white students was due to differential growth over the summer vacation.)[43]

Determining financial support on a school-by-school basis is not a satisfactory arrangement where schools have heterogeneous student populations. In these cases, rich students would be likely to receive as much educational service as poor students. The only answer here is to apportion money on the basis of individual student needs. This practice already has a history in the weighting formulas for academic categories of students - e.g., kindergarten, vocational, secondary - and for dramatic handicap categories - e.g., mentally retarded, blind, etc. Until such time as careful diagnosis and re-diagnosis allow the needs of other students to be better known, it will be necessary to use the gross category of socioeconomic status.*

*Another category could be established for race, since in a white dominated, racist society blacks are constantly confronted with situations that are fraught with psychological - even physical - damage. However, to put a price tag on this plight could mock it or exacerbate it or both. What else is there to say, except that reader responses are welcomed?

There would have to be safeguards, of course, to insure that the extra money allotted for lower socioeconomic status students was not diverted elsewhere. One very specific proposal in this regard is that poor families receive special stipends just to keep their working age children in school.[44]

I am not prepared to say what the dollar amounts or ratios should be for different social class categories of students. I doubt that anyone can suggest these figures with any confidence. This should not cause alarm, for who would presume to say with authority what the figures should be for the academic and handicap categories of students? Human wisdom simply does not reach this far, and yet figures, however imperfect, do get arrived at. In New York City, the More Effective Schools program was spending an additional $430 per student. An economist has estimated the educational value that different kinds of parents bring to children, and concluded that an additional $1300 a year should be spent on the education of nonwhite students to match the parental service which white students receive.[45] Bemused looks are in order.

The notion of parental service is itself a valid one. Children do learn from their parents. What and how much the children learn is a function of the parents' own level of education. Some educators have therefore urged that education programs be developed for poorly educated parents.[46] In this way these parents will become more concerned and helpful with their children's education. In a sense, then, parent education would be compensatory for the parents and preventive for their children. Whether the regular public school is the best agency to conduct parent education has been questioned. " . . . as a practical matter, if the schools failed the parents as children, it is doubtful that schools will now be able to help the parents teach their children to learn."[47] There are other agencies which may be more congenial to parents whose memories of school are bitter. The United Auto Workers has had success in upgrading the reading skills of its less literate members. Community organizations, including churches, could be publicly subsidized to undertake efforts of this sort. Understandably, financial incentives will have to be offered to parents if recruiting programs are to yield any kind of results.

There are people who believe that compensatory education is tantamount to pouring money down a rathole. The cause-effect relationship they perceive is not that of poverty breeding ignorance, but of ignorance producing poverty. They contend that the primary consideration is one of innate inferiority, and that, intellectually, some groups have just not been too well endowed genetically. Thus, to offer compensatory education is to deny reality and to fight a losing battle. The first reply to these people is to cite the successes which compensatory programs have had even though the funding has generally been parsimonious. There is also a way in which these people's very contentions can be used to allay any hidden fears they may have for their own children's competitive headstart. If compensatory education is merely intended to correct for disadvantaged home environments. then rich children, who are presumed to be genetically superior, will still have this superiority as a competitive edge on poor children. To return to the diagram of a while ago, the compensatory education picture would look like this:

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY WITH
COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

	Genetic Endowment	Home Environ.	School Environ.
Rich	xxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxx
Poor	xxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

If the people who espouse the genetic position are at all fair-minded, they will have to at least allow poor kids the limited equalization of compensatory education.

Integration

Social class segregation within schools and among schools is itself a denial of equal opportunity, regardless of the funds and facilities involved. The simple premise here is that students learn from each other. Among the things they learn are attitudes toward school. Students whose home environments do not predispose them toward formal education - generally lower class students - can yet acquire academic motivation from classmates who have it. They are deprived of these classmates, however, by such devices as tracking and the neighborhood school and the school system whose boundaries are coterminous with those of the municipality. The deprivation is mutual, for there are many things of value which the upper class student can learn from the lower class student.[48] Furthermore, the school has been aptly idealized as the marketplace for ideas, the arena in which a robust exchange of beliefs takes place. Homogeneity hardly augurs well for the attainment of this ideal. It would be more amusing if it were less appalling to watch students in a ghettoized society being taught the values of pluralism while they learn about other groups by reading books. Unfortunately, schools seem intent on having students learn about other people as they learn about everything else - on a secondhand basis. The Regents of New York State, in a statement supporting school busing, have expressed the matter well.

> . . . in a multiracial society, a person cannot be considered educated if he remains unexposed on a personal basis to the cultural richness and the individual diversity of his neighbors. It is just as serious to deny a white child the opportunity to know children of other colors as it is for minority children to be denied contact with whites.[49]

James Coleman, director of the most elaborate research yet undertaken on the effects of integrated education, insists that

> school integration . . . is the most consistent mechanism for improving the quality of education of disadvantaged children. Integration alone reduces the existing gap between black and white children by 30 per cent. All the other school factors together don't add up to nearly that much.[50]

Coleman has been faulted for the appropriateness of the statistical methods by which he processed his data.[51] The dispute with Coleman, then, revolves around the question of which is the more effective mechanism for improving learning - better school services or integration. However, it need not be an either/or proposition, since both sides agree that both approaches have value. (Coleman has written the foreword to the Coons, Clune, and Sugarman book, Private Wealth and Public Education, which argues for financial equalization rather than integration.) In fact, equalizing educational expenditures and integrating schools should prove to be reciprocally reinforcing processes. As money becomes available to poor students, rich parents will be less reluctant to have their children integrated with these students. And integration itself assures more equal distribution of education funds.

Coleman can be forgiven for so often speaking of blacks and the disadvantaged as being synonymous, for it remains a shameful reality that "the racially isolated school is one which is also isolated on the basis of economic status."[52] It is also true that school integration is almost always thought of in terms of race and not social class. But racial integration alone, as long overdue as that is with America's pretensions, does not guarantee social class integration of the schools. It may only succeed in bringing together blacks and whites from different but equally poor neighborhoods of the city. That would be a truncated victory for both groups. As Charles Silberman explains, "the benefits of integration come almost entirely from the fact that integrated schools tend to be middle class. Placing black students in lower-class white schools does not help their achievement at all."[53]

Lest one be concerned that there may not be enough middle class schools to absorb poor blacks and poor whites, she should know that the social class structure of the United States is no longer pyramidal / now, in fact, there is a big bulge in the middle. The problem is in finding ways for those on the bottom to penetrate the hard underbelly. One way has been Project Concern, a voluntary program in Connecticut in which randomly selected students from the black ghettos of four cities are bused to schools in twenty-six suburbs. The bused students gain 1.2 years worth of reading skills in a four-month period, while the control groups back in the ghettos fall farther behind the national averages. The estimate is that the bused students have a three times better chance of achieving well in reading and arithmetic than the control groups. Coleman had found that such programs do not depress the educational achievement of the advantaged students, and the Project Concern experience bears him out.[54]

As commendable as Project Concern is, there is a serious flaw to voluntary programs which was made evident by a case in New Jersey. A voluntary program there brought first- and second-graders from Newark to the schools of suburban Verona. The students did significantly better in reading, mathematics, and listening achievement than their peers who continued in the Newark schools.[55] Sadly and incredibly, public opposition in Verona forced the termination of the program. Again, the educational achievement of the advantaged students had not been depressed, so it is difficult to fathom the fears that must have seized the good people of Verona. Maybe it was the fact that the program involved twenty-six little kids - a veritable invasion!*

The Verona tragedy demonstrated the extreme vulnerability of voluntary programs to community hysteria.

*There are reports that some of the Veronans who most vociferously opposed the program are teachers in the Newark schools. If the residents of Newark know these reports to be true, it can only have injected more venom into the relationship between them and the suburbanites who teach their children.

Mandatory programs, which are usually ordered by the courts or by state education commissioners, have been restricted to integration within already existing school districts. Even so, similarly positive results have been reported for these programs as for the voluntary programs.[56] The problem is that the white middle class flight from urban centers has meant that city school districts are rapidly running out of people to integrate with.

It was this situation which led to the Federal district court directive that the school system of Richmond, Virginia, be merged with the school systems of the surrounding counties of Chesterfield and Henrico. The reasoning behind the directive was that if segregated schools are in violation of the Constitution, so also are segregated school systems. As the presiding judge, Robert Merhige, wisely reflected:

> . . . school authorities may not constitutionally arrange an attendance zone system which serves only to reproduce in school facilities the prevalent pattern of housing segregation. . . . To do so is only to endorse with official approval the product of private racism.[57]
>
> Just as the city's geographic borders, viewed as limits upon pupil assignment, do not correspond to any real physical obstacles, so alsc are they unrelated to any marked practical or administrative necessities of school operation. The

> boundaries of Richmond are less than eternal monuments to a city planner's vision.[58]

What Merhige did could have been done by the Virginia state legislature, and done more democratically. In the interest of economy, states have ordered the regionalization of many school districts over the years. In the past twenty years, the number of American school districts has been reduced from over 100,000 to only 17,000.[59] Is it too much to expect a state to compel consolidation in the interest of equal rights? The answer, regrettably, is that it is. Legislators (and members of the executive branch) are too politically vulnerable to make a habit of putting principle before popularity, especially with an issue as emotional as that of integration. The best hope for principled action lies with the long-tenured and life-tenured judges of the courts - a melancholy commentary on representative government.

The Merhige ruling was also based on the concept of de jure segregation - the fact that the schools of Virginia had a history of legislated segregation. Without this history, the situation in Virginia would presumably have been constitutional. Frankly, the distinction is difficult to appreciate. To quote from Justice Warren's majority opinion in the

Brown case:

> To separate [black students] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.[60]

The important consideration, therefore, is the _effect_ of segregation, not the cause. If segregation is unconstitutional because it is inherently unequal, then the causes of that segregation in the public schools would appear to be beside the point, or of secondary importance at best. Federal Judge Stephen Roth has declared that "if racial segregation in our public schools is an evil, then it should make no difference whether we classify it _de jure_ or _de facto_. Our objective, legally, should be to remedy a condition which we believe needs correction."[61]

Cases now pending in Texas seek to broaden the Supreme Court's definition of segregation to include Chicanos as well as blacks. Hopefully, this will bring the Court a step closer to recognizing and acting against social class segregation in the schools.

To return to the issue of _de facto_ segregation. It is encouraging to realize that the constitutionality of this is fact becoming an academic issue. Recent court suits have established the probability that all segregation in America is of a de jure nature. As Judge Roth ruled concerning school segregation in Detroit:

> Governmental actions and inaction at all levels - federal, state and local - have combined with those of private organizations, such as loaning institutions and real estate associations and brokerage firms, to establish and maintain the pattern of residential segregation.[62]

Judge Roth ordered for metropolitan Detroit the kind of school consolidation which Judge Merhige ordered for the Richmond area. Similar findings of de jure segregation have appeared in court rulings in Denver, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Pontiac. As for social class segregation of a de jure nature, the California Supreme Court, while concerning itself in the Serrano case more with school financing than segregation, did say that

> we find the case unusual in the extent to which governmental action is the cause of the wealth classifications. . . . such patterns are shaped and hardened by zoning ordinances and other governmental land-use controls which promote economic exclusivity.[63]

Two misgivings loom large at this point. First, that the creation of new school districts to eliminate segregation may lead to the continual re-creation of districts as ethnic and social class balances shift. Second, that integration might produce such heterogeneous classroom populations that nothing will occur but wasteful confusion.

The first concern assumes the prevalence of a situation which, on the contrary, will have been markedly reduced by integration, namely, the existence of ethnic and social class enclaves to which the frightened can flee. To paraphrase Joe Louis, those who would avoid the problems of the poor and would avoid poor children themselves may still run, but they'll have trouble hiding. To be sure, there will still be parents who will try to escape by burying their heads out in the exurbs or by resorting to very parochial private schools or very private parochial schools. They are to be pitied, for the loss will be to their children. And if there are too many of them, a national commitment to integration could overtake them in time, anyway. This predicament will insure greater population stability in school districts. It would also be well be begin viewing school districts more in population than geographic terms. This would provide increased flexibility in making minor readjustments in district compositions as they become necessary.

In an age of computers, the specific readjustments should not be difficult to determine. They can be timed for natural breaks in students' careers, e.g., the transition from elementary school to junior high school, to minimize disorientation.

The anxiety about a defeatingly heterogeneous classroom population is really misplaced. It should be focused on the conditions which obstruct success for heterogeneous classes. Among these are large class sizes, self-contained classrooms, one adult per class, uniform curricula and materials -- in short, all the things that prevent individualized instruction. Integration and its concomitant heterogeneity can compel the abandonment of these outworn educational practices. Smaller classes, nongraded classes, departmentalization, team teaching, paraprofessionals, a wide array of materials, schools without walls are some of the advances that might accrue to a school system because of integration. It has been reported that the integration plan in Mobile, Alabama, was made more acceptable to the public by the school superintendent's decision to use it as an opportunity to introduce other reforms such as individualized instruction.[64]

Busing

Integration means busing. To endorse integration while rejecting busing is to say that the goal is worthwhile but the only effective means is unacceptable. This is where President Nixon ended up when he said that "desegregation must go forward until the goal of genuinely equal educational opportunity is achieved," at the same time that he proposed legislation which would "call an immediate halt to all new busing orders by Federal courts."[65] It was left to a Southern governor, Reubin Askew of Florida, to draw the issue incisively and courageously.

> I don't like busing, but we've got to break the cycle of black poverty. We can't afford to isolate and not utilize 12 per cent of our people. No large corporation would do it.[66]
> The way to end busing is to seek the broader community desegregation which will make it unnecessary. . . . In the meantime, we must decide which is worse - temporary hardship and inconvenience, or continuing inequality and injustice.[67]

Askew is clearly an exception to the pessimism about elected officials which was registered earlier in this paper. The only gratuitous word in his statement is the word black in the first sentence.

Most Americans still indicate a determination to have it both way, however. The latest poll taken by the National Opinion Research Center shows that 75 per cent of white Americans support school integration.[68] The latest Gallup poll, taken more recently, puts the figure at 66 per cent.[69] 79 per cent of the Floridians, black and white, who voted on the integration referendum on March 14 voted in support of integrated education.[70] The Gallup poll and the Florida vote also measured attitudes toward busing. The former revealed that 69 per cent of white Americans are opposed to busing. The latter indicated that 74 per cent of the voting Floridians oppose busing.

The most pertinent comment on poll results was that made by Andrew Greeley and Paul Sheatsley of the National Opinion Research Center. " . . . attitudes are not necessarily predictive of behavior . . . but one can see them as a sign of progress and as creating an environment for effective social reform."[71] Where there are conflicting signs, however, political leaders have to decide which of the signs is progressive and which reactionary. Or they have to decide which of the signs has greater electoral significance. Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey, and Nelson Rockefeller - all politically desperate and dangerous men - made their decisions on the second basis, and on that basis they undoubtedly chose correctly. In so doing, however, they did not act as leaders but as craven lackeys of popular fears and prejudice. The opportunity to appeal to the decent instinct of Americans, which are reflected in the polls, was let pass for the sake of cheap political gain.

The hubbub over busing might suggest to a foreigner just arrived in America for the first time that yellow buses are lethal instruments, and too much exposure to them can cause cancer. She would then have to reconcile this impression with the fact that about 40 per cent of American students are bused, with only about 3 per cent being bused for purposes of integration.[72] In Charlotte, North Carolina, the city which last April produced the Supreme Court ruling that busing was an acceptable tool with which to accomplish court-ordered integration, the number of bused students only rose from a previous total of 46,076 to 46,849.[73] Even in the Richmond area, where Judge Merhige's consolidation directive is to take effect, 68,000 students are already being bused and consolidation will only increase this number by 10,000.[74] Many students who walk to school spend more time getting there than students who are bused. The hazards they encounter along the way are as great as the dire perils which are supposed to confront students on buses.

It would be well at this point to consider the attitudes of blacks toward busing. The Gallup poll and the Florida referendum indicate that most blacks are not opposed to busing. Added to this is the fact that the leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the NAACP, the National Urban Coalition, the National Council of Negro Women, the A. Philip Randolph Institute, and the Urban League requested a meeting to dissuade Nixon from his anti-busing position.[75] The National Black Political Convention has generally been reported as having opposed busing. However, Richard Hatcher, one of the convention leaders and mayor of the host city, Gary, Indiana, has challenged the reportage on the convention. He cites the following convention resolution as evidence that the convention did not take a hard stand against busing.

> Let us further resolve that this convention oppose busing in instances where it serves as an instrument of destruction of quality education in black communities and that this convention support busing in cases where it serves the end of equal education for black people.[76]

Still, among blacks there is considerable and growing opposition to busing. (One source has estimated that as much as 40 per cent of the black vote in the Florida referendum was opposed to busing.)[77] Unlike the white opposition to busing, the black opposition is more forthrightly a disavowal of integration itself. Roy Innis of the Congress of Racial Equality rejects the "subtle implication that blacks cannot learn unless in the presence of whites."[78] William Raspberry, the black columnist, elaborates on this.

> . . . let us end the humiliation of chasing after rich white children. And it is humiliating. For one thing, it says to black children that there is something inherently wrong with them, something that can be cured only by the presence of white children. Some of us don't believe that. Some of us believe that given adequate resources, financial and otherwise, black children can learn, no matter what color their seatmates happen to be.[79]

Raspberry could easily find a lot of whites who would be eager to provide those adequate resources as a means of forestalling integration. Nixon himself is rather stingy in this regard, offering to equalize educational opportunity with only 2.5 billion dollars of previously appropriated or requested money.

Other blacks also say that Coleman is wrong, and they aim to prove it by strengthening the self-images of black students through projects such as Newark's African Free School. They can refer to a three-year study of integration in the Evanston, Illinois, schools to show that integration was damaging to the self-esteem of black eighth-grade boys.[80] They, and white separatists as well, can point to the study of 700 high schools done by the Syracuse University Research Corporation which found that classroom disruption was positively related to integration.[81]

There is an ironic counterpoint to this last study, which was done two years ago. The Coleman data of six years ago show that integrated schooling leads to substantial improvement in racial attitudes among students.[82] The five-year-old report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Racial Isolation in the Public Schools, points out that integration is most likely to be favored by adults, black and white, who grew up in integrated situations.[83] Apparently, the effect of integrated schooling on students' racial attitudes is a good deal more positive when there are not a lot of adults and politicians around to poison the atmosphere. Given such an atmosphere, the present disruption in high schools is not surprising. One can hope that it will turn out to be but a brief transition to genuine integration. Continued separation will only intensify the hate and distrust and fear that exist on both sides, and that puts all of us in a perilous state mentally and morally.

Since I so strongly support busing as a necessary means to a desired end, it behooves me to give a further demonstration of its logistical feasibility, regardless of the current political climate. How expensive and burdensom busing will be depends on how many get bused how far. This brings up the relevant unit for integration. As Judges Merhige and Roth have directed, this should be the metropolitan region, i.e., the central city and its suburbs. This unit is large enough to cover a wide spectrum of ethnic groups and all social classes, without being so large as to be impractical. Out of such a unit, several representative school districts could be created, most likely by simply dividing the area into so many pie-shaped wedges. Theodore Lowi, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, has plotted such school districts for metropolitan Chicago in a way that limits the one-way commuting distance to less than twenty miles and the time to about thirty to forty minutes.[84] These figures are higher than they need be, since Lowi does not think in terms of cross-busing, which he should insofar as the benefits of integration do not redound to one party alone. If the districts can be kept this compact for metropolitan Chicago, most other urban areas should be able to do still better. And that would mean that kids would not be getting bused all over kingdom come, as George Wallace likes to put it.

For a city which borders on the state line, it may be necessary to create an interstate school district. A recent map in the New York Times showed the racial patterns for Bergen County, New Jersey, which is immediately west and northwest of Manhattan. The map was startlingly monochromatic. Had the map shown income patterns, the single color might have been green, for Bergen County is not a depressed area. Thus, parts of Bergen County and Manhattan could be merged into a single ethnically and economically integrated school district. A precedent for this kind of interstate operation already exists, and interestingly enough it has to do with transportation. I am, of course, referring to the Port of New York Authority. It would obviously be a better way for the kids in Bergen County to learn about blacks and Puerto Ricans than to go field tripping into Manhattan to see Purlie or a revival of West Side Story.

No matter how carefully planned the integrated districts are, some parents are still going to object to the length of the bus ride. They will say that it makes their children's school day unreasonably protracted. Since the duration of the bus ride will be difficult to shorten, the only answer is to shorten the length of time kids spend in school. This should raise no greater hue and cry than it has where schools have gone on split sessions because of overcrowding. It may also be possible to conduct some learning activities on the bus. After all, Adelphi University has even managed to do this with commuting businessmen on the Long Island Railroad.

A ploy to which opponents of busing still resort is to say that we should wait until residential integration makes school redistricting unnecessary. Since residential integration is darting uphill like molasses in January - it may even be darting downhill - this position certainly seems disingenuous. It also ignores the fact that school integration will remove a major inducement to residential segregation, of both a racial and class nature. Finally, it overlooks the practical reality that children accept integration better than adults. Thus, it is not a chicken-or-the-egg conundrum: priority should be given to school integration.*

A final consideration relative to busing and integration. The abolition of the neighborhood school necessitates a re-definition of community control. The community should now be the school itself - parents, students, and staff. To be sure, there will be standards imposed from some remote central source, but hopefully these will be minimal and wise. The rest will be left to the collective judgment of the three parties most directly involved in the school. For all of these parties, this will mean more power and responsibility and opportunity than they have heretofore known. For all of them, it will also mean more education.

Conclusion

There is no better way to end this paper than with a statement from someone who has fought the battle long and well. In this case, that someone is Theodore Hesburgh,

*This is not intended to de-emphasize the fight for residential integration. There are some promising developments in that direction, among which are the new HUD guidelines which bar the concentration of public housing in inner cities and George Romney's promotion of housing allowances for the poor.[85] There have also been several successful court challenges to restrictive zoning ordinances. Finally, Senator Abraham Ribicoff is pushing a bill which would prevent any Federal installation from moving to a community which refused to provide land for workers' housing.[86] Similar bills could be introduced in state legislatures.

chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

> If we are to emerge from our present state of inequality, it will not be by insisting on minimum compliance with minimum laws. Generosity, magnanimity and human understanding will alone allow us to transcend, in our day, our dismal history of racial inequality.[87]

Notes

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[4]New Jersey Education Association, Basic Statistical Data of New Jersey School Districts (Trenton, 1971), p. 23.

[5]James Bryant Conant, Slums and Suburbs (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), pp. 2-3.

[6]Greenbaum, 508.

[7]Gene I. Maeroff, "School Districts: Why They Are Inherently Unequal," New York Times, September 5, 1971, p. E-7.

[8]New Jersey Education Association, p. 23.

[9]Greenbaum, 508.

[10]New Jersey Education Association, p. 23.

[11]Greenbaum, 512.

[12]Ibid., 514.

[13]Patricia Cayo Sexton, Education and Income (New York: The Viking Press, 1964).

[14]This has been so often demonstrated that it is almost a trusim. Recent documentation is provided by Richard Rothstein, "Down the Up Staircase: Tracking in Schools," This Magazine is about Schools, V (3), Summer, 1971, 103-140; and

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[20]_Ibid._

[21]John Herbers, "School Financing by States Urged in Federal Study," _New York Times_, March 7, 1972, pp. 1, 19.

[22]Albert Shanker, "Where We Stand," _New York Times_, October 10, 1971, p. E-11.

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[24]Milton J. Shapp, "An Education Trust Fund," _New York Times_, October 30, 1971, p. 31.

[25]"HHH, McGovern Blast Nixon," _New Brunswick (N.J.) Home News_, March 21, 1972, p. 1.

[26]John Herbers, "School Financing: A New Way to Foot the Bill," _New York Times_, March 12, 1972, p. E-3.

[27]Diane Ravitch, "Community Control Revisited," _Commentary_, LII (2), February, 1972, 74.

[28]Greenbaum, 524.

[29]Robinson v. State of New Jersey, Superior Court of New Jersey, L-18704-69 (1972), pp. 63-64.

[30]Herbers, "School Financing: A New Way to Foot the Bill."

[31]Robinson v. State of New Jersey, p. 64.

[32]Guthrie, p. 128; Philip Meranto, School Politics in the Metropolis (Columbus, O.: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 32, 97; Milton Schwebel, Who Can Be Educated? (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 4; Arthur E. Wise and Michael E. Manley-Casimir, "Law, Freedom, Equality - and Schooling," Freedom, Bureaucracy, and Schooling, ed. Vernon F. Haubrich (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1971), p. 60.

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