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Am Educ Res J 2008; 45; 913 originally published online Jul 29, 2008;

DOI: 10.3102/0002831208320243

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Student Diversity and Secondary School Change in a Context of Increasingly Standardized Reform

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This article analyzes three decades of educational reform strategies pertaining to ethnocultural diversity in the United States and Canada and how they affect the efforts of four secondary schools, two in each context, to respond to increasing student diversity. Data include 186 teacher interviews drawn from a large ethnographic study. The article describes the current effects of increasing standardization on racially diverse schools and concludes with recommendations for policy reform that embrace poststandardization.

KEYWORDS: comparative education, diversity, policy, reform

Standardization has become the enemy of diversity (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). With market competition, it has constrained schools and teachers in their ability to respond to the diverse students in their classes (Fusarelli, 2004; Hargreaves, 2003; Rotberg, 2004). Indeed, increasing standardization has reinforced what Tyack and Cuban (1995) term “the grammar of schooling” in secondary schools—with its one teacher—one class system of age-graded curriculum, individual seatwork mixed with whole-class teaching, and pencil-and-paper testing. Through this resistant grammar, immigrants, minority students, and children from the lower class have been either marginalized or assimilated (Franklin, 1986). Historically, however, societies have addressed racial and cultural pluralism differently. So too have educational reform strategies that embody monocultural, multicultural, and antiracist approaches, respectively (Gilborn, 2004; Moodley, 1986). It remains unclear, however, how these different policy strategies have affected the actual practices of responding to diversity within schools (Banks, 1986).

This article draws on and analyzes data from a larger study that examined educational change over three decades in eight secondary schools in the United States and Canada (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2003, 2006). It

focuses on four of the schools (two in the United States and two in Canada) that experienced marked increases in the racial and ethnocultural diversity of their student populations; it examines how policy and school-level responses within the two countries have been characterized by monocultural, multicultural, or antiracist orientations, respectively; and—in light of these varying historical legacies—it documents how the schools do or do not respond to student diversity within an encroaching and culminating age of standardization and market competition. While not the first to investigate how changing demographics affect school change (see, e.g., Grant, 1988; Louis & Miles, 1990), this study is one of the few to examine these phenomena longitudinally (see also Dorfman, 2000) and comparatively in two national and social contexts.

Educational Approaches to Diversity

Educational approaches to diversity have been influenced by monocultural, multicultural, and antiracist orientations (Bonnett & Carrington, 1996; Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994; Troyna & Carrington, 1990). Since the early 1970s, they have also occurred through three periods of educational change (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2003, 2006).

Following Gilborn (2004), monocultural education entails educational practices that emphasize and reify Eurocentric knowledge and traditional, testable academic skills over other cultural forms of knowledge while using seemingly equity-based, culture-free, and color-blind discourses and practices aimed to improve student learning and achievement. For instance, from the 1970s on, advocates of the school effectiveness and effective schools paradigm (Edmonds, 1979) cautioned that race and culture had little to do with minority student achievement and that direct instructional strategies focused on literacy and numeracy skills, highly structured learning environments, and strong leadership were the keys to all students' achievement.

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Banks (1986) described a second orientation of multicultural education as a set of practices that incorporated the histories, cultures, and worldviews of previously marginalized racial and ethnic groups into the curriculum, pedagogical strategies, assessment practices, material artifacts, and organizational practices of schools. Others added to this the importance of also providing explicit instruction in the dominant academic knowledge, discourses, and skills that give full access to and participation in mainstream society (Apple, 1993; Delpit, 1995; Gee, 1989).

A third orientation of critical multiculturalism or antiracism goes beyond cultural awareness and appreciation to advocate explicit teaching against race and racism. Troyna and Carrington (1990) define antiracist education as “a wide range of organizational, curricular and pedagogical strategies which aim to promote racial equality and to eliminate attendant forms of discrimination and oppression, both individual and institutional” (p. 1).

In addition to these three orientations, Hargreaves and Goodson (2006) argue that in both the United States and Ontario, Canada, educational policy and strategy from the 1960s to the early 21st century fall into three broad historical periods. In the first period, an age of optimism and innovation extended to the mid-1970s and saw increasing attention to diversity in education and social reform more generally. A second period of complexity and contradiction lasted to the mid-1990s and contained remnants of progressivism amid the growing influence and impact of common learning standards and stricter test-based accountability. Finally, a culminating period of standardization and marketization, permeated by a standardized and monocultural curriculum along with high-stakes testing, continues to influence much of educational policy and practice.¹ In this age, market competition is established through mechanisms of parent choice linked to hierarchies of competitive performance among chosen providers in relation to centrally prescribed and standardized outcomes (Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998).

This article argues that after the initial period of optimism and innovation, each successive period has seen an increasing commitment to standardization and marketization alongside, but not in exact parallel with, a movement of strategies for responding to diversity from monocultural through multicultural and/or antiracist approaches and then into a monocultural restoration.

Moves toward standardization, it is sometimes claimed, will produce highly skilled, globally competitive workers and will increase local school districts' student and teacher performance rates (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007; Slavin & Madden, 2001). Educators have also sometimes embraced common curricula and learning standards as a means of improving teaching and learning (“District Gets an Earful,” 2003–2004). Even within the context of standardization, philanthropic foundations, university partnerships, and committed local-level leadership have sometimes been able to implement alternative learning structures, such as small learning communities; to develop multiple forms of assessments; and to create educational partnerships with local communities (see, e.g., Dei,

James, Karumanchery, James-Wilson, & Zine, 2000; *School District of Philadelphia School Reform Commission*, 2005; Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner Paredes, 1999). Research dollars that have followed these sorts of initiatives may have cumulatively exaggerated their incidence, however.

In practice, in many schools, common curricula and learning standards have institutionalized inequitable systems of academic tracking and uneven student achievement, with racial minority students being disproportionately represented in lower academic tracks while their higher performing, mostly White peers occupy the higher levels of schooling (Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac, & Zine, 1997; Oakes, Hunter Quartz, Ryan, & Lipton, 2002).² Moreover, the trend toward increasing curriculum standardization and high-stakes testing has significantly reduced teachers' flexibility in incorporating more culturally responsive practices into their classrooms (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Sloan, 2006), though some teachers have been affected more than others (Corson, 1998; Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Skerrett, in press). Veteran staff members, particularly those who teach high-status academic contents to students in the upper academic tracks; teachers who lack preparation for teaching diverse learners; and those who have had little prior experience with diversity have been least responsive to student diversity. In contrast, younger teachers; teachers of the humanities, English as a second language (ESL), and lower status academic subjects; and educators who teach students in lower academic tracks have typically employed more culturally responsive curricula and pedagogies. Standardization may often erode diversity but not always in the same place or to the same degree. We need to know not just how the encroachment of standardization confounds diversity but also how it configures it in different conditions and contexts.

Design and Methodology

The Change Over Time? study from which the data reported in this article are drawn consisted of interviews with 186 teachers who had worked in eight U.S. (New York State) and Canadian (Ontario) secondary schools in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. This enabled patterns of educational change to be compared across contiguous national settings and reduced the risk of attributing all change events to one country's own reform agendas. Of these eight schools, four were selected because they had deliberately and self-consciously innovative identities, so we could examine the course of more locally driven innovative efforts over long periods of time. One was a magnet school, one was a small alternative school that originally was "without walls," one was designed around the principles of learning community and learning organization, and one was a school with a long-standing reputation as an innovator in technical and commercial education.

From the total sample, four schools (two in each country) form the basis of this article. These were selected because they had experienced the most rapid and intense change in the racial and economic diversification

Table 1
School Case Site Characteristics

United States	Canada
Barrett Magnet Elite magnet school established to counter "White and bright" flight	Talisman Park Traditional academic collegiate with moderate movement toward greater diversity
Sheldon Traditional city high school encountering urban decline	Stewart Heights Conventional high school facing urban expansion and increased ethnocultural diversity

of their student populations while also representing a range of school types. The two U.S. schools comprise a magnet school established to counteract "White and bright" flight to the suburban perimeter (Barrett) and a neighboring urban school with an increasingly unionized staff that catered to students not attracted to the magnet (Sheldon). The two Canadian schools were located in southern Ontario. They consisted of an academic collegiate in a leafy suburb facing modest changes in its student population (Talisman Park) and a high school with a stable staff that once served a small all-White rural community but now catered to a student body of increased ethnocultural diversity in the context of rapid urbanization (Stewart Heights). Table 1 identifies the selected schools and summarizes their chief characteristics.

There was some deliberate overlap among interviewed teachers of membership across the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s cohorts to establish historical continuity and depth in the sample, with some teachers spanning all three periods, occasionally within the same school. Teachers at different career points; teachers of different gender, race, and ethnicity; and a mixture of teachers in regular classroom roles and leadership positions were also included in the sample (Hargreaves & Goodson 2003). There were 50 repeat interviews or questionnaires with Cohort 3 teachers, along with interviews with administrators for Cohorts 2 and 3 (see Table 2). A total of 112 interviews took place in the four schools that are the focus of this article

The semistructured interviews were conducted with participants' informed consent and ranged from 1 to 2 hours. Interview questions pertaining to this article asked teachers to talk about how their schools and they, as individual teachers, changed over time and how they felt their schools dealt with change. Interviewers asked teachers to talk about what they and their ways of teaching students were like when they first came to their schools and how they and their teaching changed or remained the same over time. Teachers were also asked to recall any significant reforms that occurred during the time they taught at their schools and the ways in which these reforms affected them.

Interview data were methodologically triangulated with school observations and documentary evidence (Denzin, 1970; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Table 2
Number of Teacher Interviews by School and by Cohort

School	Cohort 3 (1990s)	Cohort 2 (1980s)	Cohort 1 (1970s)	Total
Talisman Park	14	5	7	26
Stewart Heights	17	6	3	26
Sheldon	14	12	10	36
Barrett	14	9	1	24
Total	59	32	21	112

Archival information took the form of school yearbooks, department and staff meeting minutes, curriculum plans, and press cuttings. Observational data encompassed staff and departmental meetings, school improvement and staff development workshops, leadership team meetings, and parents' evenings. These data supplemented and provided points of comparison and engagement with the oral testimonies of teachers and administrators. Demographic data were also collected at the district level to provide a sense of context. University and school district ethical protocols were respected throughout the project. The individuals, districts, and schools are fully anonymous in this article.

In one of the schools, Stewart Heights, supplementary data were also collected from teachers in the English and social studies departments, subsequent to the formal conclusion of the Change Over Time? study. Interviews here were conducted with 13 teachers about the relationship of the curriculum and their teaching to the diversity of their students.

Methodologically, this article is based on a subset of half of the eight cases, and primarily on one of five key analytical themes drawn from the overall project. Case studies of over 150 pages per school were developed separately according to the broadest orientating categories derived from the interview schedule and associated codings concerning themes such as leadership, reforms, professional development, and technology (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), each case and its author raised emergent issues that were then tested and investigated in the other cases. Collation and contrast of the cases then generated a second-order analysis of five key themes that shaped patterns of educational change throughout the 30 years or more of the study's focus. The themes deriving from this process of analytic induction (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) were the changing demographics of students, the changing demographics of teachers, the changes in leadership turnover and leadership style, the impact of waves of reform, and the tightening interrelationships among schools. Case writers were then asked to periodize their schools in terms of when the schools underwent major shifts in direction for whatever reasons. Almost identical periods emerged of optimism and innovation, complexity and contradiction, and marketization and standardization. These periods were then cross-referenced in a gridlike analysis with the five change forces in the case of each school and also across them.

This article picks up one of the five themes as its focus (changes in student demographics) and its interrelationship with the other four themes, across the three identified periods, in relation to the four schools (two in each country) that had the most significant amounts of diversity. The cross-case data analyses draw on the school case reports but do not cite them directly. All interviews were assigned clear, multiple identifying codes to enable effective coding, traceability, cross-referencing, and checking for disconfirming data as analytical propositions began to emerge.³

The U.S. Schools

Barrett Magnet and Sheldon Comprehensive High schools are located in the Bradford district, which is part of the rustbelt of the northeast United States.⁴ From the 1960s, the district experienced great economic, political, and demographic changes that led to the development of large, segregated communities of poor and minority groups throughout the city, while leaving pockets of middle-class African American and White families in some of its old neighborhoods. School district poverty rates increased from 23% in 1980, to 69% in 1990, and to 77% in 1999. The total minority student population within the district also grew from 60% in 1980, to 73% in 1990, and to 82% in 1999.⁵

These demographic changes greatly affected the schools' structures, missions, and student composition. School desegregation and busing in the 1970s, for instance, resulted in Sheldon Comprehensive High School's student body changing from majority White and socioeconomically mixed to primarily minority and poor. An estimated 20% prebusing minority population prior to 1970 has now steadily increased to the current 89% minority rate with 65% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch.⁶ Subsequent changes in educational policy had inverse and interconnected effects on Sheldon and Barrett Magnet. When the federal government introduced magnet schools and programs around the country in 1972, the Bradford district received millions of dollars to achieve the magnet goals of voluntary school desegregation, rigorous academic instruction, and high student performance. In 1980, under community pressure, the district selected Turner Junior High School, an underperforming and violence-plagued school, for reconstitution into a magnet school. Renamed Barrett Magnet High School, it drew away "the best and the brightest" students from Sheldon. Sheldon subsequently lost its status as the former "shining star" of the district when its middle-class, academically strong, and White students moved to the suburbs or to magnets like Barrett, and large numbers of poor, academically challenged, and minority students were bussed in from across the city to replace them.

Sheldon High School

Sheldon High School opened in 1959 as a comprehensive neighborhood school in the Bradford district, which was then an 80% middle-class district

with some poor and also wealthy families. Between 1959 and 1970, schools in this district were often racially homogeneous, and even with a 20% minority student population, racial hostility was present at Sheldon, a spillover into the school of the race riots that plagued the United States during the period of school desegregation.

Sheldon's original "jewel" status in the district was quickly established due to its large modern facilities; varied electives; and cohesive faculty members, who were committed to an academically inclined, overall middle-class and White student population.

When I first came to Sheldon High School [1963] I was very, very impressed with the building because it was a brand new spanking building. And it had tremendous resources . . . a very seasoned and experienced staff, an excellent student body. . . . We drew from the Florence area down here, which has . . . you know high socio-economic area. Medium income area.⁷

Three key events dramatically changed Sheldon's student demographics. The first was the closing of Drake High School, a failing city school, in 1981 and the busing of those students to Sheldon.

Drake was your typical, hardcore urban school with all the problems that are associated with that—drugs, weapons, discipline, lack of parental involvement. I mean, police cars were there all the time. . . . So anyway, that's one of the reasons why I decided to go to Sheldon because Sheldon was considered to be the *prima donna* of the schools in the city, and I thought this will be a real change of pace for me, a real change in atmosphere, a change of students. When I got to Sheldon, that perception was blown away because what they did was in the closing of Drake, they naturally—the students had to go someplace so the students were—they had open enrollment and a lot of them chose Sheldon so that the problems that were at Drake, a lot of them filtered over to Sheldon High School. So, I didn't really see any major change in the student behavior or academic level.⁸

The second factor affecting Sheldon's student demographics was the district's school desegregation plan—busing—that led to race riots at the school in the 1970s. One teacher recalled being caught up in a full-scale race riot in the school cafeteria.

I found myself literally in the middle of a student riot—an actual full-blown 100% violent riot, and this was in 1970. I mean kids were throwing chairs, kids were injured. And I think that really became the beginning of the end of a high school that was a shining star in this state, well known by educators throughout the state to come and visit.⁹

Finally, in the 1980s, the district's magnet program also affected Sheldon, with some of its old clientele—middle-class, White, academically strong

students—leaving the school to attend specialized magnet schools such as Barrett Magnet. One teacher recalled how she and a colleague resisted the magnet recruitment process: “I objected to having recruiters come in here, into my class, and take away my class time for the sole purpose of getting them out of my school. . . . We locked the door and we refused to let them in.”¹⁰

Taken together, these changes resulted in a profoundly changed school. By 2005, Sheldon was the same large complex of facilities, but its students, faculty, and culture had undergone an “urban” transformation. During the 2004–2005 school year, there were 1,761 students enrolled at Sheldon, 61% of whom were Black, 25% of Hispanic background (due to large-scale immigration of Puerto Rican American families into the district), 11% White, and 2% Asian American. Students with disabilities accounted for 19% of the student population. Approximately 65% of the student body qualified for the free and reduced lunch program. On any given day, attendance was around 82%, and the average class enrollment was 25 students. With a dropout rate of 13%, a suspension rate of 20%, and just 40% of graduating seniors passing the state-required exam,¹¹ Sheldon lost its middle class and now has a much more academically diverse student population. In contrast, veteran, mostly White staff now comprise the majority of Sheldon’s 166-strong teacher force.

Changes in student demographics and in educational policy over the decades affected Sheldon’s teachers and drew some, though limited, responses from them. In the mid-1960s, Sheldon’s administration responded to growing racial unrest caused by increasing student diversity by creating small teacher-led discussion groups to foster racial tolerance and understanding. However, this approach was only partially successful, as teachers, lacking the training needed for this work, found it difficult to change students’ prejudicial attitudes that reflected racism in the broader society.

I remember, though, in the sixties—it was fairly early sixties too—they thought that there were some racial problems developing and they organized, the administration organized these group discussions. Like there were a couple teachers assigned to maybe like 20 students and you met to talk about race relations. And I can remember kids . . . maybe I had all White kids in my group, but I remember the White kids saying, “They don’t belong here.” I mean very nasty attitudes.¹²

There were other attempts to respond to diversity at Sheldon during the optimism and innovation of the 1970s. One of the school’s academic departments, the humanities, began attending to the diverse learning needs of its students. At a time when the school’s total minority population increased from 10% in 1966 to 22% in 1970, representing greater racial diversity than at any other period in the school’s history, the department offered a variety of 10-week, minicourses based on students’ varying interests and diverse cultures. These electives often contained a global focus or theme to help students understand the interconnectedness of their lives with others around the world. There were courses on topics such as war, Vietnam, science fiction, Black figures in national history, slavery, the civil rights movement, short

stories, sports literature, and the Bible as literature. Developing the curriculum in a mosaic-like way based on “individualized instruction” and “relevance,”¹³ teachers were trying to “enlist kids in the areas of their interest and yet also ask them to perform to appropriate academic standards.”¹⁴

While these optional courses appealed to students’ varying cultural and intellectual interests, their elective nature and the fact that they also aligned with Sheldon’s honors, comprehensive, and noncomprehensive diploma tracks illustrated an additive approach to diversity that left the overall school curriculum and its racially defined system of academic tracking fundamentally undisturbed. The honors program, for example, had developed in response to wealthy, White parents’ demands for more academically rigorous courses for their children when Sheldon was gradually taking in greater numbers of minority and poor students who were more often assigned to the noncomprehensive diploma track.¹⁵ The Booster Club consisted of parents from the high-status Belview neighborhood who “wanted to make sure that Sheldon would continue to be . . . a school that is preparing their kids for Yale, Harvard, whatever, for college.”¹⁶ According to another teacher, “The Belview White population had a tendency to go into the Honors program and were isolated in many cases from the rest of the school which became Black, Hispanic and Asian—a minority.”¹⁷

Toward the end of the 1970s, as it entered the age of complexity and contradiction, Sheldon began to shift away from these multicultural and antiracist attempts to a more fully monocultural approach. For example, it felt compelled to do away with its multicultural electives, as the district, in response to tightened state regulations for the noncomprehensive diploma, increased the content requirements for core subject area courses. In the face of increasing curriculum standardization and accountability in the form of state exams that were linked to graduation, Sheldon and its teachers were constrained in their efforts to teach to student diversity. In one teacher’s words, “You teach to the test. I’d much rather be trying to teach them a book or a story or something that they might enjoy, but we’ve got to prep them for the test.”¹⁸ Another teacher expressed the view that the new standardized tests were “limiting creativity in the classroom tremendously.”¹⁹

Meanwhile, increasing standardization in the form of state comprehensive exams and stringent graduation requirements reinforced the traditional teaching styles of many of Sheldon’s Old Guard teachers. One veteran English teacher described the new state comprehensive exams as “an innovation in terms of expectations” but not in terms of pedagogy for an “old-fashioned school” like Sheldon.

For a conservative school, for an old-fashioned school, the new comprehensive exams, despite the terminology, despite the rubrics, despite a number of things, is just good old-fashioned writing. . . . So the staff is going to be ready for that because it’s not . . . even though it’s an innovation in terms of expectations, it’s not innovative pedagogically. It’s old school . . . old, old school.²⁰

Therefore, these teachers felt validated and vindicated in their continued use of traditional teaching strategies that lent themselves to covering a large amount of academic content without differentiating instruction for students' varied learning styles.

This diversity of student needs was best exemplified in Sheldon's rapidly expanding ESL student population, which compelled teachers to confront the challenges to diversity that were increasingly being posed by the growth of a monocultural, standardized, and high-stakes curriculum and assessment system. Sheldon's ESL curriculum became an especially contentious area of debate. In 1986, the district instituted its only Spanish bilingual program and housed it at Sheldon, leading to even greater numbers of English language learners in the school. This created intense conflict among staff about the structure that would best serve students who were learning English. Some staff members (generally older, White teachers) advocated for a monocultural approach of complete instruction in English, while Hispanic teachers and ESL teachers argued for the use of Spanish as the language of instruction and the teaching of English as a separate subject. With strong support from the school's principal, English-only instruction prevailed, a decision that led to confrontation between the principal and Sheldon's Hispanic teachers, the ultimate exit of several of them from the school, and increased numbers of ESL students failing in school.

[The principal] has gotten rid of people whom he felt were antagonistic to him or to his program or whatever. Mostly Hispanic teachers. It's a real problem. . . . There were some very active Hispanic teachers in support of the bilingual program as an entity and there were some real confrontations. And some of them just left.²¹

According to one more recently hired Spanish bilingual teacher, there were not enough Spanish-speaking staff at Sheldon at the end of the 1990s.

Newly developed district policies were directed not only at ESL programs but also at mainstream programs. In 1988, the district implemented a school choice plan as a school improvement method. This allowed students to select the schools they wished to attend, regardless of academic standing. Sheldon developed and advertised rigorous, academically diverse programs such as the Teaching and Learning Institute for students interested in teaching careers. However, it was still difficult to attract promising students to Sheldon, as it retained its old reputation as a comprehensive, academically lagging district school. In fact, school choice led to even more of Sheldon's students exiting its doors to sign on to schools like Barrett, which were also now open to all students.

We have a TLI program, Teaching and Learning Institute. This program is designed to attract young kids in who are going to go into teaching as a career. And it's a pretty good program that is designed to bring in kids. It's a very regimented program. It's got high standards to it . . . but we don't have the label "magnet school." All the

others do. . . . The idea is that Sheldon is just a comprehensive . . . so we've had to struggle to be innovative to create our own little "mini-magnets."²²

Another teacher commented, "We're losing some of our better kids to those magnet programs because we're a comprehensive high school."²³

With magnet schools in the district attracting the more academically and artistically inclined students, Sheldon saw a marked increase in its special needs student population. It was described sarcastically and in a self-stigmatizing way by several teachers as "the special education magnet." In the mid-1980s, there were three special education teachers at Sheldon. Over the next 15 years, special education became the largest department, with 25 teachers at the time of these interviews, while within the district as a whole 17% of the students received special education services in 2000. One teacher commented bitterly on how school district leadership favoritism toward magnet schools had contributed to the growth in the number of students with special education needs at Sheldon and further damaged its fragile academic reputation.

"Let's make some of the other schools magnet schools: the law magnet school at Washington etc., etc. We'll make Sheldon High the special ed. magnet." So, all of a sudden, when we became the special ed magnet, we, by far, it was the largest department in Sheldon High. I'm sure it is today, the special ed department. . . . Now, you got an entirely different type of kid coming in. So, in this respect, it changed; and it was central office's decision to change it.²⁴

Therefore, market-driven policies intended to improve schools in a standards-based educational climate had the unintended negative effect of aggravating Sheldon's academic decline. In 1992, Sheldon was named a "priority school" by a new superintendent, a lusterless nadir to its original jewel standing.

Barrett Magnet High School

By contrast, seesawing educational policies over the years alternately facilitated, then challenged, and finally restored the stellar reputation of nearby Barrett Magnet High School. With their creative and diverse curriculum foci and rigorous academic instruction, magnet schools such as Barrett exemplify the transition from the age of optimism and innovation to an era of complexity and contradiction. These specialized schools and programs emerged in 1975–1976 through a congressional amendment to the Emergency School Aid Act of 1972. Their purpose was to foster voluntary school integration in the aftermath of the challenges posed by mandatory racial desegregation, stem the tide of White and bright flight from urban centers, and increase students' interest in their education. From the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, the federal government poured millions of dollars into these programs

under various legislative policies. And as the age of standardization and marketization emerged, magnet schools were used to stimulate market competition among schools and thus improve academic performance. The Bradford district received its share of federal funds for magnet programs, and Turner Junior High School, a troubled school, was selected for reformulation into a magnet school.

In the 1970s, Turner was plagued by poor attendance, low academic performance, and school violence. It served a primarily poor, African American student population. In 1980, pressure from the community to either close or reconstitute the school resulted in its being reformulated into a magnet school. Renamed as Barrett Magnet High School, it was highly successful in achieving the magnet goals of racial desegregation and academic excellence. Its federally protected selective status allowed it to attract and retain the "best" students and teachers in the school district, and throughout the 1980s, it served as a pilot for many district and state initiatives. For example, in 1982, when the school board voted to increase graduation requirements in math, science, and foreign language, Barrett was chosen as the first site for this reform. The school also received state and national accolades for its success. In 1985, it was recognized by the state education department as one of the top-10 most successful schools in the state, and in 1989, it was visited by then-President George Bush in a promotional event of magnet school choice and school-business partnership programs.

Barrett's 96 teachers now serve about 1,100 students who represent the various neighborhoods, social classes, and racial categories of the city. In 2004–2005, Barrett's student population was 73% Black, 14% White, 9% Hispanic, and 5% Native American and Asian. Sixteen percent of the student body was identified as having special needs, and the school boasted a 98% success rate on the state graduation exam. Fifty-nine percent of the total student population at Barrett was eligible for the free and reduced lunch program, and 1% was identified as limited-English-proficient students.²⁵

In its early years, Barrett had been a culturally diverse learning environment for the academically elite. It was an irresistible magnet for Bradford's growing Black middle class, and it also served as a beacon of hope for battle-weary, White middle-class parents who wanted to remain in their neighborhoods and have their children served in schools that hosted high academic achievers. It quickly secured a reputation among the district's prospective eighth graders that "if you do not want to work, do not come to Barrett."²⁶ Moreover, students who performed poorly were encouraged to transfer to other district schools.

Locally, Barrett had stimulated market competition, another magnet goal, and was causing rivalry and envy among district schools due to its ability to select its students based on their academic motivation and promise. In time, however, the very market-driven philosophy that had facilitated Barrett's academic success as a magnet now rebounded on it through loud and bitter complaints throughout the district about unequal distributions of financial resources and academically talented, behaviorally tractable students

during an era of increasingly standardized curriculum requirements and the growth of high-stakes testing. In the midst of the age of complexity and contradiction that saw more stringent graduation requirements and increased efforts to link student performance to measures of teacher quality, Barrett and the Bradford district more generally were confronted with serious challenges of envy management. One teacher commented,

Suddenly parents did have a say in where their kids went to school over the whole community and . . . Barrett High School had gotten more money . . . had better facilities, had a faculty which wanted to be there, and I have to admit, had a common sort of pedagogical goal, which we don't have.²⁷

Another teacher lamented how "Barrett Magnet is siphoning off a lot of the better students . . . because they've started [yet] a new magnet program. . . . It's just annoying, it's upsetting, and it's discouraging sometimes that we have to compete with other schools to get the good kids."²⁸

In 1988, as the district responded to these feelings of envy and demands for equity by implementing a school choice plan that allowed students to select their preferred secondary schools, Barrett lost its protected and selective status and was no longer able to select its students.

When Barrett became a magnet, it attracted a particular kind of faculty and leadership. These teachers were committed to high academic performance standards, and they valued academically talented students. Many of these founding faculty saw symmetry between high-stakes standardized testing and the strong push for academic excellence that Barrett had always conveyed to its students. Indeed, they censured colleagues at other schools who did not have these high academic performance expectations for their students, and they welcomed the standards movement as a way to "wake up a lot of people and make teachers really do the job that they should have been doing for years."²⁹ Some of these faculty greatly resented the growing academic diversity within the student body, fearing that the new, nontraditional students would destroy the academic culture and reputation of the school. "So in the reorganization they nailed us with those 100 kids and they nailed us with that check-off thing. These 100 kids were really some hard characters."³⁰ Barrett responded as Sheldon had some years earlier by creating additional academic tracks or curriculum levels: a local or competency diploma, a comprehensive diploma, and the honors/advanced placement program. This more finely graded, vertically organized academic structure replaced the simpler, preexisting split between comprehensive and honors/advanced placement tracks and preserved intellectual and physical space for the high-achieving Barrett student who was channeled into rigorous academic courses.

At the other end of the tracking spectrum was Barrett's growing special education body. The school designated a somewhat symbolically ironic space for special education in the school's basement, where less rigorous

coursework was pursued. This led one teacher to comment, “We do very well with the high-level kids. We do a shitty job with the low-level kids and we do an in-between job with the middle kids—in-between to poor with them.”³¹ The small number of teachers who wanted to engage their colleagues with teaching to their diverse students’ needs were often marginalized by their departments and the school. Often newer to the profession, and as ESL or special education teachers themselves, they held insufficient power to lead such school change efforts. A special education teacher discussed this lack of dialogue about how to address the dilemma of some special education students being unrealistically required to pass standardized tests in order to graduate.

It is a real dilemma. On the one hand I think we should raise standards and students should achieve, but I think that we have to have some kind of avenue for students that have not been dealt the same deck of cards as the other ones. We do not have that.³²

As a group, these teachers regarded the standards system “as a structure that is out of our control.”³³ While some of their older colleagues who taught academically elite students and courses embraced the standards movement, these teachers whose students posed greater teaching challenges and whose departments and subject matters were lower status, resented the implications and impact of curriculum standards and high-stakes testing. While these teachers supported high standards and well-defined subject matter, they resisted these reforms because of the restrictions placed on differentiated curriculum and the tightly regulated learning pace and assessment formats in use. This sense of helplessness that teacher-advocates felt in the face of externally imposed testing mandates was compounded by school leadership that resisted full inclusion.

This building has always been three houses with Transition Tech, the special education house, separate from the rest of the building. I don’t think that will ever change with the principal we have. She really likes this model and she thinks it works.³⁴

Thus, the inclusion of special education and, more generally, the greater academic diversity of Barrett’s student body contributed to fragmentation and balkanization among staff and administration and caused differentiated teaching and learning opportunities for teachers and students.

Your department head and your teachers who are teaching the gifted and talented are somehow always seen as better teachers. In fact, they are probably more tenured teachers . . . just as we find that so often the new kids get the new teachers. So children who probably need the most support and development sometimes do not have the experienced teacher working with them. They have a new teacher.³⁵

This division and resultant inequity increased when, with the onset of the school choice plan, Barrett drew on its reputation as a designated magnet school by applying for and securing International Baccalaureate (IB) status, which regained the school's ability to select already academically successful students. This outmaneuvered Sheldon's efforts to attract academically inclined students with more school-based programs. The IB program has further divided this staff and reinforced standardized curriculum and traditional teaching at Barrett. More money has been poured into this program than into special education or other school programs, and it has fed a culture of elitism, both among teachers and students. In the words of one special education teacher,

There is so much hoopla over the IB program that I often think that the other kids are kind of left out. . . . I get a feeling when I sit down at lunch that the IB teachers feel more important or maybe I feel less important.³⁶

Another special education teacher added,

This IB program . . . does not affect special ed. We are still low man on the totem pole, and that is the way we are thought of. Even people I work with think because I am a special ed teacher I am also learning disabled and not as smart as they are.³⁷

In the face of the district's efforts to diversify and create more equitable distributions of its student body, Barrett took on a complex, fragmented, vertically organized structure—just as Sheldon had in the late 1970s and 1980s. Initial school-by-school differences that drew higher achieving and already motivated students to the magnets while repelling the rest to schools elsewhere then turned into complex, within-school differences, as increased market savvy among all schools, and district responses to envy and inequity across them, moved the management of inequity inward. The “best and the brightest” students enjoyed the top positions in the elite programs that maintained some “magnetic” advantage; the general student population and teachers made up the middle; and the special education students and their teachers occupied the physical and reputational basement of the school, as they faced and often failed to meet the increasingly standardized curriculum and accountability measures.

The Canadian Schools

Talisman Park Collegiate and Stewart Heights Secondary School are located in the same school district in southern Ontario. While they do not share as interrelated a history as Barrett Magnet and Sheldon Comprehensive High, they have, by virtue of being very close to one of Canada's most culturally diverse cities, each experienced significant demographic shifts in their student populations. During the period encompassed by the study, the

schools' almost exclusively White and ageing teaching staffs remained demographically stable. Faced with comparable movements in curriculum standardization and tested accountability to those of the U.S. schools, the Canadian schools and their teachers, in addition to being demographically encumbered, were similarly constrained by monocultural policy pressures in meeting the diverse needs and demands of their multicultural student bodies. In the light of their demographic legacy and the pressures of policy, how effectively did these two schools respond to student diversity?

Talisman Park Collegiate

Opened in 1920, Talisman Park is an elite collegiate situated in an affluent, leafy, primarily White suburb on the outskirts of a vibrant, culturally diverse, Canadian metropolis. A flagship school much sought after by teachers, it serves about 1,000 students in a clean, orderly, and comfortable atmosphere. Despite its racially homogeneous history, diversity surreptitiously knocked on the doors of this collegiate in the later years of the 20th century. In particular, the composition of Talisman Park's student body gradually changed from affluent, White, and academically inclined students when, in 1980, the school's boundary was extended to include a multicultural, working-class community to the north. By 1990, out of a total enrollment of 1,300, there were 90 students representing 22 different nationalities, with a growing influx of immigrant families into the catchment area, and by 2001, 24% of Talisman Park's 1,145 students were born outside Canada and 29% reported that their home language was one other than English.³⁸

Talisman Park had always been strongly traditional in its academic mission. Even during the era of progressive and innovative educational reform, it continued as a nonsemestered school when others in the region changed to semesters (with students studying half of their subjects in one semester in double-time periods and half in another) to offer alternative learning structures. Its teachers later endorsed the credit system of educational reform in the 1970s and 1980s, which mandated that 16 out of 24 high school credits be in core academic subjects as a graduation requirement, even though this reduced flexibility in offering elective courses. For Talisman Park's professionally autonomous and creative teachers, the reduction in flexibility became a catalyst to design innovative, team-taught courses to attract students choosing their elective courses.

In the '70s and '80s . . . teachers liked [the credit system] because they were doing different things. Students liked it because they had a choice. . . . You weren't teaching to a captive audience. . . . Students were there because they had an interest in the activity.³⁹

And, in the early 1990s, when destreaming (detracking) was legislated for Grade 9 students, many of Talisman's seasoned, veteran teachers who taught in core disciplines resisted and resented it. One special education teacher recalled that math and science teachers were

very traditional, very rigid . . . the kind of people who would want to turn Talisman Park into an academy so they don't have to deal with "bad" kids or the kids who are hard to teach. . . . They still might be very committed to kids and to education . . . but it's a narrow conception.⁴⁰

Whatever the prevailing policy climate, most of Talisman Park's teachers, and especially those who taught mainstream academic subjects, tended to align themselves with traditional curriculum, pedagogy, and schooling structures.

In the 1980s, incoming students altered the racial and cultural makeup of the school and challenged its traditional notions of teaching, learning, and achievement. By 1990, Talisman Park's historically White and affluent student population comprised 22 different nationalities and accounted for 7% of the population. Some veteran teachers, especially a coffee circle of mainly male teachers who met every day before school started to gossip and gripe about the school's and government's most recent efforts at change, nostalgically recalled how students had changed from "mostly White kids" "having fewer problems" who "felt this was their school" to students who no longer saw the school as the "social hub" of their lives, demonstrated less "school spirit," and did not come out to support the football team. These teachers resented initiatives like curriculum integration and destreaming; held on to conventional teaching practices; and lamented the loss of students who wanted to learn, as well as the singing of Christian hymns.

But not all teachers were unwilling to adapt to Talisman Park's changing student population. Younger teachers and teachers of the humanities and ESL were more likely to critically examine their own teaching practices as they attempted to meet their students' diverse needs. For example, a young English teacher commented,

It's a fairly multicultural school. I notice as an English teacher that we have a lot of novels, classics, that were written (long ago) by White men and women, primarily White men. . . . I'm hoping . . . we will buy new books that reflect the ethnicity in the school.⁴¹

Meanwhile, Talisman Park's humanities department expanded its curriculum to include courses like World Issues and the Pacific Rim. The school formally recognized Black History month and instituted a peer-tutoring program. In addition, it complemented modern language courses with exchange programs to Switzerland, Germany, France, and Belgium and introduced an Elite Athlete service for students who participated in provincial, national, and international athletic competitions. While these curricular changes were intended to serve the multicultural needs of the changed student body, they were only offered as electives or developed for specific populations (such as English language learners). The changes did not permeate the core of the school's curriculum, nor did they reflect the antiracist stance of provincial educational policy.

These mismatches of need and provision came to a head in the early to mid-1990s when curriculum standardization and high-stakes assessment led in 2001 to 25% of Talisman Park's students failing all or part of the first provincial Grade 10 literacy test—prompting attention to a district mandate for a school improvement plan for unsuccessful students. The school's strategy for raising achievement involved the English department, rather than the whole school, developing an academic strategy for literacy improvement that was designed to raise overall scores by focusing on and providing preparation for students who had scored slightly below the norm. Concomitantly, attention to students with even weaker academic skills was sacrificed to provide intervention for those most likely to pass.⁴² In this school improvement plan, "brighter" students and those with "potential" to succeed received more academic attention and resources than their least capable peers.

Despite dissatisfaction with the standardized curriculum and high-stakes testing of the late 1990s, as evidenced in the response of 58% of Talisman Park's teachers that "the new curriculum had reduced their variety of assignments and failed to engage students from different cultural backgrounds" (Hargreaves, 2003), most staff, apart from younger colleagues or those in guidance and minority subjects, still rejected the idea of returning to the interdisciplinary, detracked groupings of the recent past. Sixty-eight percent of teachers stated that they did not favor a return to the common curriculum for Grade 9, and 61% claimed that the new academic curriculum was appropriate to their students' learning needs (Hargreaves, 2003). In effect, the opposition to standardized reform was not to its monocultural restoration of an exclusionary curriculum that inhibited teachers' capacity to respond to diversity but to its erosion of teachers' preferred autonomy to teach in the ways that they wanted, in accordance with their own selections for subject-specialist content.

Stewart Heights Secondary School

Stewart Heights Secondary School opened in 1958 in what was then a rural, mostly Anglo village in southern Ontario. A portrait of traditional academic success, the school boasted an 80% college-going rate. Between 1986 and 1995, the region experienced steady population increases (and demographic changes) due to immigration and the busing in of students from other communities. By the end of the 1990s, Stewart Heights had metamorphosed from a "village school" into an urban, multicultural "mosaic": 48.7% of its population was born outside of Canada, and 52% spoke English at home. The percentage of immigrants in the school's attendance area (recorded for both 1991 and 1996) was almost 9% higher than the regional average, and by 1999, immigrants accounted for 40% of the population in the region and represented more than 100 ethnic groups who spoke over 67 different languages.⁴³

Currently, Stewart Heights serves over 1,600 students in a still traditional, yet greatly diverse, environment. As in the other schools, this diversity is

absent in the almost exclusively White teaching staff that has always served this school. And because teachers have remained at the school for many years, they were living witnesses to the growth of diversity among the student body. A veteran female accounting teacher recalled,

Well it was a small school when I first got there . . . hardly any ethnic groups of students but that certainly changed over the years. By the time I finished teaching, in my last accounting class, I had about 30 kids in it, and one day one of the boys said to me, Miss, do you realize you're the only White person in this room? And I hadn't thought about it, but I was.⁴⁴

While faculty members came to recognize this demographic shift in the student population, they struggled to find specific ways to address the distinctive educational needs of their new students. In a 2001 school district survey of responses to educational reform, only 32% of the teachers at Stewart Heights considered the new Ministry-mandated curriculum appropriate for their culturally diverse students (compared to 53% in the other surveyed schools), and 55% felt that the curriculum made it more difficult to engage students from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, 68% of the teachers at Stewart Heights felt that the new curriculum diminished their range of classroom teaching strategies (compared to 46% in the other schools; Hargreaves, 2003).

The English and social studies departments at Stewart Heights were more adaptable than other departments to their changed student body, and they made some strides in revising the curriculum to make it more culturally responsive. The social studies department head explained that a responsive provincial curriculum facilitated these school-based changes.

Our government, our ministry of education . . . I'd be the first to say that our curriculum, certainly in the social sciences, and it's easiest to do it there, I reckon, also with English, have been very, very responsive to the need to deal with issues relating to diversity.⁴⁵

Similarly, a veteran English teacher described how the department's anthologies changed over the years to include multicultural literature, which in turn helped her own teaching to become more responsive. "I just continued on and gradually and slowly I made my own little adjustments in the curriculum because the texts came out and it all worked together."⁴⁶ The English department also offered an independent study unit (ISU) in which students choose texts that they are particularly interested in reading. In this way, it created a space for students to read about their culturally based interests. Teachers of this course also encouraged students to read texts based on their cultural backgrounds. "Through the ISU it's always been very easy and I encourage students to do things from their heritage."⁴⁷

Yet outside these pockets of change, the English curriculum remained highly classical and Eurocentric, while student diversity increased, with

teachers differing in their views about the appropriateness of the traditional curriculum for the student body. One teacher explained how “Shakespeare is the one I’ve found that it’s almost taboo to suggest we do something else even in another year.”⁴⁸ The English department head gave credence to his perception with her proclamation that Shakespeare is “classic,” “timeless,” and “applies to every age.”⁴⁹ Yet a first-year teacher, who had received culturally responsive teacher preparation, was uncertain about whether the current curriculum was set up to meet students’ diverse needs:

I do my best to draw on what they know and apply it to the texts that we study, but I don’t know. . . . I hope that the curriculum for the school is set up to meet those needs, but I don’t know.⁵⁰

Similarly, a middle-career teacher worried that because of the Eurocentrism of the curriculum teachers could sidestep teaching to student diversity, should they choose.

I know as a department we’re trying to be as open as possible with the texts, with what we’re trying to do but I’m sure you could teach this stuff and just ignore everything else quite easily, quite easily. Yeah, you could sit there and [say,] “Go read Acts 1 and 2 and write answers to these questions, take them up, I mean here’s your test.”⁵¹

While all teachers recognized and responded to the changed cultural makeup of their classrooms, the quality of their responses to the diverse population varied as a result of their prior experiences with diversity, of teacher preparation, and often, of their generational status. For one teacher of 5 years’ experience who had grown up and been educated in culturally diverse communities, diversity was “the substance” of his teaching.

I try to make it the substance of what we’re learning or discussing. And it’s an incredible resource for me as a teacher, the fact that we do have this cultural diversity. When you’re trying to get students to understand that sometimes our perceptions are limited or that often we only see one side of a situation, let’s say even in international situations, it’s great. . . . When we’re talking about the Iraq war and I have a student from Iraq in my class, that’s invaluable.⁵²

In contrast, a teacher of comparable age and professional status but who grew up in a largely homogeneous (White) context and whose teacher preparation was not focused on culturally responsive teaching described a more narrow approach to diversity in her teaching.

I don’t sit down and have multicultural discussions but whenever I can, “Oh, what is this like in your culture? What is this like in your culture?” But does it change my curriculum? No. But I am, especially lately, the last few years, more aware of what kinds of students are sitting in the classroom.⁵³

Therefore, while the English department made some changes to curriculum and while its teachers remained aware of student diversity, the extent and depth of response across teachers ranged from uncertain, incidental, and optional to more substantive and sustained.

Like the English department, the social studies department and its teachers also recognized the changes in student diversity and likewise adapted the curriculum. The social studies department head discussed how increasing student diversity had changed the curriculum to address issues of racism and discrimination in Canadian history.

We have made sure in our history classes that we get at least some of the good examples of our failures in the past to do the right thing out in the open. So for instance when we study World War II, we make sure that the kids understand that the government of the day took thousands of people, many of whom didn't speak Japanese and were born in Canada, and put them in camps. . . . When we talk about this in class it's not very long before a kid puts up his or her hand and says, "Well that's racism." Well, it is.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, while this veteran teacher addressed diversity in his curriculum, his pedagogy and assessment of student learning remained unresponsive to student diversity. These contrasting views illustrated the lack of deep professional, schoolwide engagement in culturally responsive teaching that should accompany a diverse curriculum.

We've got a very cosmopolitan, diverse, multicultural community here and so we can't under any circumstance tailor our instruction or our evaluation along the lines of race, you know. You're a member of a class, here's your quiz, here's the lesson, here's the homework.⁵⁵

Outside its core curriculum, Stewart Heights did develop other initiatives to respond to the growth in diversity. In 1990, it implemented a bilingual education program for its rapidly expanding ESL population. The ESL department head, who identified with an immigrant background and who had extensive training and apprenticeships with ESL populations, reported that she selected curriculum based on its relevance to the immigrant experiences of her students. She chose texts that were

very much like situations the kids went through themselves. That's one of the criteria I look for. How can you relate to this book? What can you learn from this that makes you feel better or makes you understand the big picture?⁵⁶

In contrast, another ESL teacher, with little previous experience with diversity and professional training for ESL, related how changes in the student population had altered her views about teaching and her students.

When I first started in the late '80s, the type of students I worked with were a lot different than the ones I have now. So I had senior English and I had large classes and I had students who could stand on their own two feet and not need to see me till the class or maybe they would need help and I could see them after school. The kids I have now, the ESL kids, are a lot like teaching elementary kids. . . . They're with me all day long and they seek me out at lunch.⁵⁷

The greater academic and social support needed by these students was clearly felt and expressed by this teacher. What she did not discuss was how she had altered her pedagogy to successfully meet these needs or how educational policy had contributed to the teaching and learning hurdles present in her classroom. As in the mainstream departments, ESL teachers' responses to student diversity also varied.

Overall, while collectively Stewart Heights' teachers perceived the changed needs of their students and while they sensed that the curriculum needed to adapt to meet those needs, their understandings, desired approaches, and inclusionary, multicultural orientation often fell short of a sustained, focused approach that combined culturally responsive structures, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Responses to diversity were varied instead of consistent, discretionary rather than required, improvised instead of insisted upon, and often appended to the common curriculum rather than integrally included within it.

Cross-Country Thematic Summary

At four schools, in two countries, over three decades, increasing standardization undermined the efforts and abilities of change-oriented teachers, such as younger teachers, particularly those with culturally responsive teacher training; ESL teachers; and teachers in humanities, special education, and other lower status curriculum areas to develop a more multicultural or antiracist curriculum and to be more pedagogically responsive to student diversity. For example, as education policies turned increasingly toward curriculum standardization, high-stakes testing, and teacher accountability, Sheldon's humanities department was compelled to eliminate its multi-interest and multicultural electives, and Barrett's culturally responsive ESL and special education teachers were increasingly alienated from their mainstream colleagues, who embraced and endorsed the standards movement and the rewards that it brought them.

In contrast, standardization reinforced and validated the traditional curriculum and teaching strategies of veteran teachers who lacked professional training or experience with diversity and of teachers in higher status, mainstream subject departments. Sheldon's Old Guard teachers were nostalgic for the school's once bejeweled status, mourned the loss of its "best" students, came into conflict with teachers in the implanted and expanded ESL program, and focused on teaching the few "top-end people" who remained. In Canada, Talisman Park's coffee circle of mainly male veterans pined for the

period preceding recent, large-scale immigration, when hymns could be sung, support for the football team was spirited, and all students wanted to learn. Stewart Heights's responses to diversity shrank into the ESL and special education programs or were displaced into after-school activities. And the vast majority of older teachers in mainstream subjects rejoiced in the government's more recent eradication of mandatory detracking that had been introduced by its predecessor.

When the monocultural restoration of curriculum standardization and testing was compounded by the promotion of increased market competition among schools for status, students, and test score success, significant differentiations and divisions increased between and within schools. Barrett Magnet's teachers and principals developed strategies for student selection and ejection, in relation to an aggressively standards-based curriculum, that kept it ahead of the pack. When federal special education policies and reworked student selection strategies at the district level forced Barrett to accept a more diverse student body, the school introduced an elite IB program to maintain its selective edge—a move that changed the emphasis of neighboring Sheldon's new programs from culturally responsive and thematic to more standards based. Barrett's veteran staff hid from the new "hard characters" who had joined the student body by picking their own programs, and the more responsive staff members who assertively advocated for addressing the needs of their growing ESL, special education, and academically challenged students were stigmatized by their principal and consigned to the basement of the building.

In Canada, Talisman Park recovered respectability in its reputation and published test scores by coaching students just below the passing mark; however, in this environment of increasing immigration, it discounted the needs of its more severely struggling students. Stewart Heights, meanwhile, coasted along the middle with an average academic performance among increasing numbers of immigrant families and students that belied its once strong academic reputation when the school was smaller and more culturally homogeneous and when its staff and students looked more alike.

While these were the dominant change trends, the increasingly standardized reform efforts did not go entirely unresisted. For example, Barrett's Hispanic ESL teachers' challenge of the English immersion program as an inappropriate literacy practice and its special education teachers' contention that students with special needs were disadvantaged by the high-stakes accountability system confirmed that many teachers resentfully but ultimately complied with, rather than directly confronted, reform policies. Sheldon's efforts to combine academic rigor with student interest and career-themed programs marked an attempt to combat the negative effects of standardization and market competition. And in another of the cases in the wider sample, Durant High School, which was not selected for this analysis because it had not experienced substantial shifts in student diversity, students protested in straitjackets outside the district offices and teachers formed a network of performance assessment-based schools that then secured state-level waivers

from some of the standardized requirements in order to preserve the school's innovative identity.

Yet in line with evidence from countries that have moved through these cycles of standardization and marketization before either the United States or Canada, after an initial stage of organized union protest in some places, teacher resistance becomes muted and shrinks over time. Those in elite magnets who benefit from the reforms enthusiastically embrace them, others engage in reluctant compliance, some exit to more economically favored and flexible environments, and another group moves out of the profession altogether into other careers or early retirement (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Helsby, 1999; Troman & Woods, 2000). During a monocultural restoration, standardization ultimately overpowers diversity, resulting in increasingly differentiated and unequal educational experiences for students, between and within schools, depending on their racial, socioeconomic, and linguistic characteristics as well as their academic strengths and abilities.

The impact and response of educational policy and school practice to increasing cultural and racial diversity across four schools in these two countries has occurred in conjunction with, although not in exact correspondence to, three strikingly similar periods—beginning with optimism and innovation, transitioning through complexity and contradiction, and culminating in marketization and standardization.

Over time, and particularly from the mid-1990s, the schools have operated increasingly as intricate yet inescapable, hierarchically organized academic structures with clear racial and ethnic definitions. At the highest elevations of this vertical structure are the schools that can attract and select students, initiate elite programs, appoint teachers who support traditional standards, and improve their reputations and test scores by moving those students already close to the passing mark just above the line. In the lowest elevations are the often stigmatized ESL and special education programs and underperforming schools in which racial and cultural minorities are concentrated. There, culturally responsive strategies are sometimes attempted but in environments where the schools have been robbed of their highest achieving students and where the programs have been relegated to the peripheries of the curriculum and the building.

Recommendations

In line with research evidence from other countries' contexts of large-scale, high-stakes reform, this article has documented how contemporary standardized curriculum and assessment practices have inhibited secondary schools' capacity to respond to student diversity in ways that address depth of learning rather than easily tested basic achievement. In discussing the effects of standardization, we have not argued against standards-based reform, but our evidence has raised questions about the effects of reform strategies of standardization that stipulate and prescribe standards in large numbers and great detail—linking them to high-stakes assessments that are

applied uniformly to all students, whatever their differences. What direct implications can be drawn and recommendations made concerning how secondary schools might respond more effectively and equitably to the often increasing ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of their students?

First, we can and do recommend what Goodson (2001) describes as internal strategies for educational change—strategies devised and developed independently by teachers and others within schools themselves. We do not cover the gamut of solutions for increasing responsiveness to diversity here but stay close to the issues exposed by our own evidence. For instance, within our data, seeds of change in responsiveness to diversity were clearly evident among younger teachers or among those who occupied positions in the lower reaches of the subject status hierarchy that defines the conventional grammar of schooling (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). The increasing trend to break high schools into smaller learning communities (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2004, 2005; McQuillan, 1998) offers an opportunity to capitalize on the greater sensitivity to diversity of many of these more marginal teachers. Not only do smaller learning communities promise smaller units of organization, more personalized knowledge and treatment of diverse groups of students, clearer areas of curriculum focus, or opportunities for teachers to work together to develop thematic units of study (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006), but they also create powerful opportunities for skilled school leaders to rely on more than their established department heads to spearhead change by including and empowering younger teacher leaders as well as teachers in more marginal curriculum areas to create a whole curriculum that connects more effectively with the learning and lives of all students.

As Sarason (1990) argues, all changes affect each other and internal changes will neither spread nor last unless the policy environment ultimately supports rather than undermines them. Therefore, in line with Goodson's (2001) analysis, internal strategies must be accompanied by external ones if there is to be effective and sustainable responsiveness to diversity. Here, the most important area for external change is moving beyond existing strategies of curriculum and assessment standardization toward an era of poststandardization that will encourage greater flexibility for teachers to be creative and innovative in responding to the diverse needs of all their students.

The limits of educational standardization in creating sustainable solutions for raising standards and narrowing achievement gaps in secondary schools are already being grasped as nations like England and Wales find that the early gains produced by standardization quickly reach a plateau and inhibit their capacity to respond to increasing student mobility and diversity and also to compete internationally as successful knowledge economies (Hopkins, 2007; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). In high-performing Finland, which has the narrowest achievement gaps in the world, cohesion is created not by standardized uniformity but by a compelling, inclusive, and inspiring societal mission that attracts the best candidates into teaching and supports them in meeting their students' needs (Aho, Pitkanen, & Sahlberg,

2006; Grubb, 2007). Meanwhile, in more culturally diverse Ontario, the province's current government, advised in education by international change expert Michael Fullan, has retained high-stakes assessments but also has provided more flexibility in how they are met. It has injected increased financial and human support for teachers and developed sophisticated systems for stronger schools to help their weaker and similarly placed peers in order to narrow the achievement gap (Fullan, Hill, & Crevola, 2006; Sharratt & Fullan, 2006).

In the United States, in reaction to the educational results and economic performance of other countries, the influential authors of *Tough Choices or Tough Times?* (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007), who include two former secretaries of state, leading school superintendents, and high-profile corporate CEOs, argue against the excesses of standardization and in favor of a more creative curriculum taught by highly qualified teachers in order to raise standards and equalize outcomes among all students. With many exceptions to current policy already occurring in innovative school districts and inspiring foundations that support small learning communities that connect learning to student lives in communities of meaning and support, there is already much to build upon.

The examples we have described suggest that an era of poststandardization may now be emerging in which schools, communities, and highly qualified professionals become networked in cultures of trust, cooperation, and mutual responsibility, with an inclusive mission that inspires rather than imposes engagement with diversity, in order to develop more flexible and locally responsive solutions to diverse student populations (Hargreaves & Shirley, in press). However, while flexibility can increase capacity to deal with diversity, it can also permit discretion not to deal with diversity at all. The greater flexibility of poststandardization, therefore, only makes sense in a system and society that are driven and held together by a compelling mission and moral purpose to teach and act against racism and to actively embrace diversity. Poststandardization is firm on goals but flexible about means. Standardization, however, is insistent on means though often evasive about the moral purpose of its goals.

In light of poststandardized alternatives and in view of impending shifts already being advocated by corporate and political leaders, we hope that the evidence presented in this study will serve not as a witness to an inevitable tragedy for diversity of inescapable, high-stakes standardization but as an epitaph to an age of inflexibility and nonresponsiveness in North American secondary schooling that may finally be running its course.

Notes

This article arises from the Spencer Foundation-funded project Change Over Time? (Major Grant 199800214) directed with Professor Ivor Goodson. We hope this article will demonstrate and draw attention to the reciprocal need for theories of educational change to pay more explicit attention to issues of diversity and for research on responding to diversity to engage more explicitly and strategically with theories of how to bring about educational change.

¹For a detailed discussion of the educational histories involved in the three stages of educational change, see Hargreaves and Goodson (2006).

²We draw from Porter's (1965) metaphoric description of Canada as a vertical mosaic where citizens of Anglo descent occupy higher educational, socioeconomic, and political positions than do Canadians of non-White backgrounds.

³Teacher quotes are coded using a standard, sequenced format:

Facesheet information

- Interviewer code (2-digit code)
- School code (2-digit code)
- Teacher code (3-digit code)
- Age (per age bracket)
- Current status (active, retired, or other)
- Total years teaching (as indicated)
- Years at the school (as indicated)
- Grades
- Subject (as indicated)
- Gender
- Role (teacher, department head, administrator)
- Cohort (C1, C2, or C3 or multiple code for period overlap)

Framework

	Subhead	Code
Life/work (LW)	Emotions	LW1
	Demographics/class/race	LW2
	Generations	LW3
	Career stage	LW4
	Unions	LW5
	Personal projects/missions	LW6
	Commitment	LW7
	Time	LW8
External context (EC)	Student demographics	EC1
	Policy/reform	EC2
	Levels of (system) support (e.g., PD)	EC3
	School interconnections (e.g., magnets)	EC4
	Technology	EC5
	Networks/nested systems	EC6
	Economy/society	EC7
	Time	EC8
Culture (CU)	Commitment (repeats Life/work)	CU1
	Professionalism	CU2
	Teacher socialization	CU3
	Modes of adaptation/resistance	CU4
	Old/new	CU5
	Isolation/collegiality	CU6
	Purpose/mission/philosophy	CU7
	Experience of change	CU8
	Time	CU9

(continued)

	Subhead	Code
Internal structure/ process (IS)	Curriculum	IS1
	Decision making	IS2
	Timetable	IS3
	Student grouping	IS4
	Staffing	IS5
	Departmentalization	IS6
	Size/overcrowding/losing population	IS7
School/institutional identity (II)	Special type of school	II1
	Perceived experience of change	II2
	Nostalgia/memory/myth	II3
Leadership/ mentorship (LM)	Succession	LM1
	Teacher leadership	LM2
	Vision/philosophy	LM3
	Gender	LM4
	Style/influence	LM5
	Unions	LM6
	Administrative "grammar"	LM7
	Time	LM8

Interviewer and school codes for Stewart Heights are two-letter alpha codes that correspond to the first letter in the first and last name of the interviewer and the school, respectively. The school's teachers are identified by age bracket, current status, total years teaching, years at the school, grades, subject, gender, role, and cohort, in accordance to the overall coding system described above.

⁴Prime responsibility for the reports were taken in the following way: Talisman Park (Shawn Moore), Stewart Heights (Dean Fink and Sonia James Wilson), and Barrett Magnet and Sheldon (Michael Baker). It is not just the case authors' data and interpretations but sometimes also their exact words that appear in the cross-case analyses that follow.

⁵Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004–2005 (see Baker & Foote, 2006).

⁶Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004–2005 (see Baker & Foote, 2006).

⁷14/08/409/56-60/A/36/36/9-12/Business/M/C3/EC1/II3

⁸17/08/472/56-60/A/32/14/7-12/Social Studies/M/C2/C3/EC4/II2

⁹14/08/409/56-60/A/36/36/7-12/Business/M/C3/EC1/II2

¹⁰16/08/422/51-55/A/31/31/9-12/Social Studies/M/C1/C2/C3/EC4/II2

¹¹Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004–2005 (see Baker & Foote, 2006).

¹²16/08/421/56-60/R/28/28/7-12/Foreign Language/F/C1/C2/C3/EC1

¹³14/08/402/51-55/A/31/29/7-12/English/M/C1/C2/C3/IS1

¹⁴16/08/420/51-55/R/28/12/7-12/English/M/C1/C2/IS1/IS2

¹⁵Oakes, Hunter Quartz, Ryan, and Lipton (2002) document how efforts to detrack middle schools are often undermined by elite White parents who argue for their children to be moved into protected honors programs or more elite program streams such as the International Baccalaureate.

¹⁶14/08/402/51-55/A/31/29/7-12/English/M/C1/C2/C3/II1

¹⁷17/08/470/56-60/R/30/15/9-12/Social Studies/M/C2/C3/IS4

¹⁸11/08/453/56-60/A/36/36/7-12/English/M/C1/C2/C3/EC2

¹⁹16/08/422/51-55/A/31/31/9-12/Social Studies/M/C1/C2/C3/EC2

²⁰14/08/402/51-55/A/31/29/7-12/English/M/C1/C2/C3/CU4/CU5/CU7

²¹14/08/402/51-55/A/31/29/7-12/English/M/C1/C2/C3/IS5/LM3

²²14/08/409/56-60/A/36/36/7-12/Business/M/C3/EC4/II1

- ²³14/08/408/46-50/A/15/9/10-12/Social Studies/F/C3/EC4
- ²⁴17/08/473/61+/R/31/24/7-12/Reading/M/C1/C2/C3/EC2/EC4/II2
- ²⁵Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004–2005 (see Baker & Foote, 2006).
- ²⁶15/10/624/41-45/A/19/19/9-12/Social Studies/M/C1,C2,C3/EC4,II1
- ²⁷14/08/402/51-55/A/31/29/7-12/English/M/C1/C2/C3/EC1/II2
- ²⁸11/08/453/56-60/A/36/36/7-12/English/M/C1/C2/C3/EC4/IS1/II2
- ²⁹10/602/41-45/15/15/English/F/C1
- ³⁰15/10/624/41-45/A/19/19/9-12/Social Studies/M/C1,C2,C3/EC1,EC2,II2
- ³¹14/10/600/31-35/10/10/9-12/Science/M/C2,C3/IS4
- ³²10/ 626/46-50/A/13/13/Sped/F/C2
- ³³10/ 607/41-45/A/17/10/Computers/F/C2
- ³⁴10/ 625/ 41-45/A/19/8/ Sped/F/C2
- ³⁵10/633/51-55/A/22/18/Admin/F/C1
- ³⁶10/ 626/ 46-50/A/13/13/Sped/F/C2
- ³⁷10/625/41-50/A/19/8/Sped/F/C2
- ³⁸These data are based on school records augmented by Statistics Canada.
- ³⁹04/03/083/56-60/R/32/26/9-13/Health-Geog-PE-History/M/T-DH/C1-C2/IS1/IS3
- ⁴⁰04/03/070/46-50/A/22/18/9-12/CareerEd-Coop-SE-FR-PeerMentors/C3-C@/IS1/II1/II3
- ⁴¹04/03/067/2630/A/2/2/912/EngBus/F/T/C3/LW2/CU8/EC1/IS1/EC2/II2
- ⁴²Booher-Jennings (2005) studied a similar phenomenon in a Texas elementary school.
- ⁴³These data are based on school records augmented by Statistics Canada.
- ⁴⁴56-60/R/34/33/Business/F/T/C1
- ⁴⁵AS/SH/51-55/A/30/20/11/History/M/DH/C2, C3
- ⁴⁶AS/SH/46-50/A/24/24/10, 12/English/F/T/C2, C3
- ⁴⁷AS/SH/46-50/A/24/24/10, 12/English/F/T/C2, C3
- ⁴⁸AS/SH/31-35/A/8/6/9-12/English/M/T/C3
- ⁴⁹AS/SH/46-50/A/20/3/9, 11/English/F/DH/C3
- ⁵⁰AS/SH/21-25/A/1/1/9/English/F/T/C3
- ⁵¹AS/SH/31-35/A/5/4/9-12/English/M/T/C3
- ⁵²AS/SH/31-35/A/8/6/9-12/English/M/T/C3
- ⁵³AS/SH/31-35/A/7/7/9/English/F/T/C3
- ⁵⁴AS/SH/51-55/A/30/20/11/History/M/DH/C2, C3
- ⁵⁵AS/SH/51-55/A/30/20/11/History/M/DH/C2, C3
- ⁵⁶AS/SH/46-50/A/26/20/9-12/ESL/F/DH/C2, C3
- ⁵⁷SJW/SH/41-45/A/19/9/9/OAC/ESL/F/T

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Manuscript received August 15, 2007

Revision received January 14, 2008

Accepted April 30, 2008