Literature Review on Segregation in Public Schools

Christie Blazer, Supervisor

Research Services
Office of Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
1500 Biscayne Boulevard, Suite 225
Miami, Florida 33132

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At A Glance

Fifty-three years after the United States Supreme Court's landmark ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, there is evidence that many of America's schools are still segregated by race and ethnicity. Researchers have found that segregation is almost always linked to educational inequality. Segregated schools usually have fewer resources, more economically disadvantaged students, and less qualified teachers. However, students' educational outcomes are affected by many factors, including family, neighborhood, housing, and school. This Literature Review provides a brief history of segregation in the public schools, an update on the status of school desegregation in the United States, and a summary of policy recommendations for promoting school integration. Research on the impact of segregation on students' academic and social outcomes and the relationship between segregation and the quality of schools and teachers is reviewed. A summary of desegregation efforts undertaken in Miami-Dade County Public Schools is also provided.

School segregation is often perceived as an obsolete issue. While some educators claim the problem has been solved, others say there is no solution to the problem, and a third group claim we have learned to make separate schools equal (Orfield & Lee, 2006). However, based on the literature reviewed for this report, none of these claims appears to be true. Many of America's schools are still segregated and segregation is almost always linked to educational inequality (Orfield & Lee, 2006). Segregated schools usually have fewer resources and higher concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. Linguistic isolation, or students' lack of exposure to fluent speakers of academic English, is also common in segregated schools (Orfield & Lee, 2006; Orfield & Lee, 2005a).

Brief History of School Segregation

In 1954, the majority of Black children attended schools where all of the other students were also Black. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court outlawed segregation with their ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education.* The intent of *Brown* was to provide minority students with a higher quality education, based on the belief that predominantly White schools offered students better educational opportunities (Harris, 2006; Orfield & Lee, 2006; Kashatus, 2004).

Although the Supreme Court declared segregated schools to be unconstitutional in 1954, it took years for school districts to comply with the desegregation order as they searched for a legal justification to delay the integration of their schools. *Brown v. Board of Education* had required integration of public schools "with all deliberate speed," but the Supreme Court's 1969 *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education* ruling required school districts to end segregation "now and hereafter." The *Alexander* decision, combined with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and authority granted to the United States Justice Department to bring lawsuits against segregated districts, resulted in a rapid increase in school desegregation. From 1968 to 1972, the percent of Black students in racially isolated schools dropped from 78 percent to 25 percent (Orfield & Lee, 2005b; Duncan, 2003).

Despite the fact that Hispanic students participated in school desegregation programs across the country, few integration plans included reforms specifically addressing the provision of equal education for Hispanic students. Most segregation plans were designed only to desegregate Black students, so Hispanic segregation rapidly increased and, in some areas of the country, became significantly higher than Black segregation. Hispanic desegregation was mandated by the Supreme Court in their 1973 *Keyes v. Denver School District* ruling, but the decision was enforced in very few locations outside the city of Denver. In the 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* decision, the Supreme Court addressed equal educational opportunity for linguistic minorities. The Court ruled that public schools were required to provide an equal education to limited English proficient students. For the first time, the Court focused on the content of instruction as a measure of equal access but it did not dictate specific educational approaches (Arias, 2007; Orfield & Lee, 2006; Orfield & Lee, 2005b).

The dismantling of desegregation plans began with the Supreme Court's 1991 *Dowell v. Oklahoma City* decision, which allowed school districts to more easily obtain unitary status and end their desegregation plans. In *Dowell*, the Court ruled that unitary status had been achieved if the school board had "complied in good faith with the desegregation decree since it was entered" and the "vestiges of past discrimination have been eliminated to the extent practicable." Following the *Dowell* decision, a series of court orders released districts from their desegregation plans all across the country (Florida State Advisory Committee, 2007; Orfield & Lee, 2005b).

Over 50 years after the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education*, many of America's schools have become increasingly resegregated (Kashatus, 2004; Frankenberg et al., 2003). In fact, several authors contend that desegregation of Black students, which increased continuously from the 1950s to the late 1980s, has receded to levels not seen since the 1960s, before widespread busing for racial balance began. Additionally, Hispanic students have also experienced steadily rising segregation since the 1960s (Kashatus, 2004; Frankenberg et al., 2003; Frankenberg & Lee, 2002).
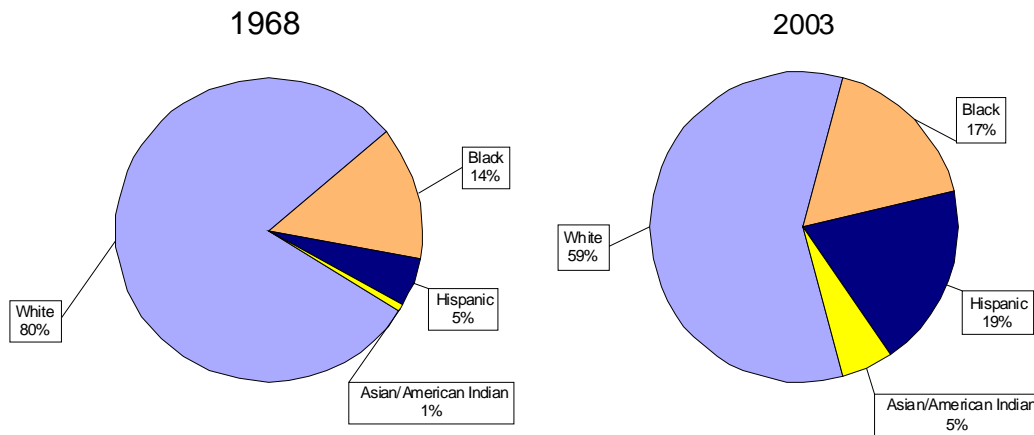
The termination of desegregation orders did not automatically end school districts' integration efforts. Many school districts have tried to maintain racial diversity by keeping their old policies in place without a court order or voluntarily implementing policies and student assignment methods designed to promote integration (Marcus, 2006; The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, and the Center for the Study of Race and Law at the University of Virginia School of Law, 2005, subsequently referred to as *Looking to the Future;* Orfield & Lee, 2004; Orfield, 2001).

The Current Status of School Desegregation in the United States

Against this backdrop of resegregation in recent years, public schools are now enrolling greater numbers of non-White students, with minority student enrollment approaching 40 percent. Not only are there more minority students in America's public schools than there were during the Civil Rights Era, but the minority population is also more diverse. In the last decade, there have been significant demographic changes in the ethnic and racial composition of the nation's school children. From 1991 to 2001, the number of White students in public schools rose by 13 percent, while the number of Black and Hispanic students increased by 37 percent and 74 percent, respectively (Orfield & Lee, 2005b; Foster-Bey, 2004; Orfield & Lee, 2004). Minority communities are growing much faster than White communities, with Hispanic and Asian communities exhibiting the largest increases. Hispanics are the youngest minority group, have the largest families, and tend to have children at younger ages, resulting in population growth independent of immigration. For Black

families, child bearing rates are similar to those of the White population, but the Black population is younger and therefore gives birth to relatively larger numbers of children (Orfield & Lee, 2006; *Looking to the Future*, 2005). Figure 1 compares the percent of each racial/ethnic group enrolled in public schools during 1968 and 2003.

Figure 1. Percent of Public School Enrollment, by Racial/Ethnic Group, 1968 and 2003

1968

- White 80%
- Black 14%
- Hispanic 5%
- Asian/American Indian 1%

2003

- White 59%
- Black 17%
- Hispanic 19%
- Asian/American Indian 5%

Source: *Looking to the Future*, 2005.

White students attend schools with increasing numbers of minority students, but remain relatively isolated from other racial/ethnic groups. For example, the average White student attends a school where 78 percent of his or her peers are also White, whereas the average Black student attends a school where 30 percent of his or her peers are White. Asian and American Indian students attend schools with larger proportions of White students (45 percent and 44 percent, respectively) than Black or Hispanic students, probably because their populations are much smaller and less residentially segregated than either the Black or Hispanic populations (Orfield & Lee, 2006).

Resegregation is a trend seen in almost every large school district since the mid-1980s, often because larger districts enroll fewer White students, without whom even the most well-designed desegregation plan cannot succeed (*Looking to the Future, 2005).* While the 26 largest city districts enroll over 20 percent of the nation's Black and Hispanic students, less than three percent of White students attend these urban schools (*Looking to the Future,* 2005; Frankenberg et al., 2003). Central city Black and Hispanic students typically attend schools with a higher percent of minority students than do Black and Hispanic students in suburban and rural areas. Rural schools have the highest levels of integration, perhaps because many of these areas are less residentially segregated and there may be only one school for a large geographic area (*Looking to the Future*, 2005; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Orfield, 2001; Colvin, 1999).

Schools are not resegregating because the American public wants segregated schools. On the contrary, the public has become more supportive of desegregated schools in recent years. Poll data reveal that Americans of all races express a preference for integrated schooling and believe it is important for students to work with others from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds (*Looking to the Future*, 2005; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Frankenberg et al., 2003; Orfield, 2001). Sixty-seven percent of Americans believe that desegregation has improved Black students' education and 50 percent believe that desegregation has improved White students' education (Orfield & Lee,

2004). However, almost 70 percent of Black parents believe their children do not have the same educational opportunities as White students (Nichols & Hooper, 2004).

Research Limitations

When considering the empirical findings on desegregation which follow, the reader should be aware of the following limitations specific to the desegregation research:

- Most studies on the effects of segregation have used correlational analyses that look for relationships between variables. However, the existence of a relationship between two variables (for example, segregation and lower levels of academic achievement) does not imply there is a cause and effect relationship between them. More research is needed to determine if segregation actually causes less favorable student outcomes. Thus far, this cause and effect relationship has not been categorically confirmed (Forster, 2006; Harris, 2006; Gamoran & An, 2005; Armor & Rossell, 2002).

- School integration is rarely a random phenomenon, but usually the result of both government and family choices (for example, most families choose a neighborhood in which to live and students' attendance zones are usually based on their parents' or guardians' legal residence). Research designs must address the possibility that there are other factors contributing to the lower achievement of students attending high-minority schools, such as lower socioeconomic status, parents' levels of educational attainment and engagement, and environmental conditions (Card & Rothstein, 2006; Gamoran & An, 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004).

- Researchers usually use the racial composition of the school district as the standard against which segregation in individual schools is measured. This approach measures the racial distribution across the entire district, but ignores the demographic composition of the community in which the district is located. In other words, a community in which the population is only 5 percent White will not have 50 percent White/50 percent minority enrollment in each of its schools, no matter how effective a desegregation plan it establishes. The technique also disregards the segregation levels in individual schools within the district, as well as within-school segregation (Forster, 2006).

- Many studies use a binary approach when analyzing the effects of desegregation, examining differences between White versus minority students. Research is needed to determine the differential impact of desegregation on specific racial or ethnic groups, such as Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian students (Forster, 2006).

Relationship Between Segregation and Poverty

Researchers have found that the relationship between segregation by race and segregation by poverty is extremely strong, although studies have not confirmed there is a causal relationship between race and poverty. They have documented, however, that Black and Hispanic students are much more likely to attend low-income schools than White students. In 2003, 47 percent of Black students and 51 percent of Hispanic students attended schools where 75 percent or more of the students were low-income (as measured by the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs). In contrast, only five percent of White students attended low-income schools (Orfield & Lee, 2006; Boger, 2005; *Looking to the Future,* 2005; Orfield et al., 1997).

Orfield and Lee (2006) concluded that the majority of predominantly minority schools face conditions of concentrated poverty and do not provide the same educational opportunities as predominantly White schools. Researchers have found that high poverty schools are associated with conditions that contribute to educational inequality for minority students, including:

- lower levels of student achievement;
- more limited curricula taught at less challenging levels;
- fewer resources;
- less experienced and credentialed teachers and higher teacher turnover;
- fewer post-secondary opportunities, such as job offers or college admissions, because of the school's reputation or lack of teacher and alumni networks;
- more students with untreated health problems;
- students with weaker preschool experiences;
- higher student mobility rates;
- lower levels of parental involvement; and
- more exposure to neighborhood violence (Orfield & Lee, 2006; *Looking to the Future*, 2005; Kashatus, 2004; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Frankenberg et al., 2003; Frankenberg & Lee, 2002; Betts et al., 2000).

Even when there are not financial inequalities between high poverty and low poverty schools, high poverty schools bear added instructional costs, including more remedial education and special education programs, continual training and supervision of new teachers due to higher teacher mobility, student counseling and social services, and health emergencies. Therefore, financial equality does not always translate into educational equality (Orfield & Lee, 2006).

Policy Recommendations for Promoting School Integration

A summary of policy recommendations for promoting school integration is provided below. No one approach, or combination of approaches, has been shown to be more successful than the others. The most effective integration plans consider the unique geographic, demographic, historical, and political characteristics of the school districts for which they were designed (Rumberger et al., 2006; *Looking to the Future*, 2005; Frankenberg et al., 2003).

- Magnet schools can be created in low-income neighborhoods to attract students from middle- and upper-class neighborhoods. A portion of the magnet school's student population is drawn from the children who live in the immediate geographic vicinity; the remaining students are selected from other parts of the district. The ratio of students who live within the attendance zone versus those drawn from other parts of the district guarantees that the school will be racially integrated. Achieving long-term racially integrated student populations in magnet schools usually depends on whether the school's unique programming, curriculum, or theme is desirable to middle- and upper-class families (Harris, 2006; *Looking to the Future*, 2005; Orfield, 2001).

- School choice plans can be designed to promote racial integration. Students and parents rank their school preferences from a list of available options and are given wide latitude in choosing the schools their children will attend. Available schools are those in which students' enrollment will result in populations that reflect the district's racial demographics. Other enrollment factors districts may consider, in addition to race, are geographic proximity, the presence of a sibling at the desired school, a parent's child care needs, and the student's socioeconomic status (Harris, 2006; *Looking to the Future,* 2005; Dounay, 1998).

Offering districtwide school choice programs in geographically large school districts may not be practical because of extended transportation distances and times. As an alternative, district staff can design school choice plans that permit students to select from several clusters of schools that are combined to provide at least a moderate amount of racial diversity (*Looking to the Future*, 2005; Dounay, 1998).

- Race-conscious voluntary transfers can be considered on an individual student basis. In these cases, students are permitted to transfer within the district if the transfer improves the racial balance of the school they are leaving and/or the school they will be attending. School districts that encourage such transfers can reduce the level of racial isolation in segregated schools while increasing the level of integration in others without requiring students to enroll in schools they do not wish to attend. School districts can use No Child Left Behind transfer money to create schools with improved racial and ethnic balances. Transfers that increase segregation should be prohibited (*Looking to the Future,* 2005; Orfield & Lee, 2005b).

  Integrating schools can be difficult when the district's population is comprised overwhelmingly of White or minority students. To address this problem, some school districts have teamed with neighboring districts to permit inter-district transfers that improve their schools' racial balance. Forty-six percent of the nation's school districts have inter-district transfer programs (*Looking to the Future,* 2005; Brown, 2004; Dounay, 1998). However, unless these programs are specifically designed to improve schools' racial balances, they may actually increase segregation. Colvin (2004) analyzed inter-district transfer programs in Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Wisconsin and found that White students participated at a significantly higher rate than minority students.

- The creation of integrated bilingual schools decreases linguistic isolation. At these schools, students of each language group interact, learn, and help each other acquire fluency in a second language. In addition, state departments of education should support training of more bilingually certified teachers (Rumberger et al., 2006; Orfield, 2001).

- School district officials can design attendance zones to promote integrated student populations. Americans tend to live in racially homogeneous neighborhoods and this fact is reflected in school attendance patterns. Since school districts are typically required to redraw their attendance lines every few years (for example, when opening, closing, or consolidating schools, or to address significant changes in student enrollment), the opportunity to make racial diversity a priority in attendance line drawing arises on a regular basis. Although shifting attendance zones creates uncertainty about where children will attend school each year, it also ensures some degree of integration, as long as districts create zones that don't align with nearby neighborhoods (Forster, 2006; Harris, 2006; *Looking to the Future,* 2005; Orfield, 2001).

  School districts can also combine two attendance zones that are in close proximity to each other. Paired attendance zones provide families with a guarantee that their children will attend a school that, while not necessarily in their neighborhood, is at least still close to home (Harris, 2006).

- If racial integration is not possible, school districts may want to consider integrating schools based on economics. Some researchers argue that socioeconomic integration is a more effective way to increase educational opportunities than racial integration. School districts experimenting with socioeconomic or income-based school integration include Wake County,

North Carolina and San Francisco, California (Kahlenberg, 2006; Orfield & Lee, 2005b; Frankenberg et al., 2003).

In those districts where economic segregation does not produce sufficient racial integration, race may also be considered in student assignments (Kahlenberg, 2006). Findings from studies that have tried to determine if economic integration can successfully preserve racial integration have been mixed, but Orfield (2005) suggests that economic sorting may be an option for school districts "not desiring severe resegregation and its consequences."

Economic integration programs are on firmer legal ground than racial integration plans. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that any use of race for school assignment is subject to "strict scrutiny" (i.e., the policy must further an overriding state interest yet be drawn with narrow specificity to avoid any intrusion of First Amendment rights). The use of socioeconomic status for school assignment is only required to meet the "rational basis" test (i.e., there is a reasonable and not arbitrary basis for enacting a particular policy) (Kahlenberg, 2006; Legal Explanations, 2006; Lectric Law Library, 2005).

- School districts can promote and fund teacher exchanges between schools. Teachers can be provided with additional incentives to teach in schools with high concentrations of minority students (Rumberger et al., 2006; Orfield, 2001).

- Schools can be offered financial incentives to integrate their student populations. Specifically, financial rewards and positive recognition should be given to predominantly White schools that accept significant numbers of minority students from failing, segregated schools. Awards can be offered to school staff or community members for designing school district integration plans (Kozol, 2005; Orfield & Lee, 2005b; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Frankenberg et al., 2003; Orfield, 2001).

- As part of a widespread effort to educate the community about the benefits of integration, school districts should document, through various outcome measures and school district surveys, the value of the interracial school experience. When schools become resegregated, districts should make the community aware of the academic and social impact the policy change will have on students. The local community should understand that integrated schooling prepares all students to live and work in multiracial settings and provides a better foundation for diverse postsecondary and employment experiences. School districts may also wish to seek the support of private foundations and community groups to create or continue desegregation efforts (Orfield & Lee, 2004; Orfield, 2001).

Within-School Segregation

Even in integrated schools, it is common for students to divide themselves into smaller groups along racial or ethnic lines and consequently have less interaction with those outside of their own groups. Schools that seem integrated on paper do not always have integrated classrooms or common areas. When research finds that desegregation has no impact on educational outcomes, a potential explanation may be the prevalence of within-school segregation (Card & Rothstein, 2006; *Looking to the Future, 2005*).

If minority students rarely attend classes or interact with White students in desegregated schools, they are not being provided with a racially integrated educational experience. Policies used to maintain within-school racial segregation include magnet programs in which White students are

assigned to predominantly minority schools but taught throughout the day in separate classrooms; pull-out classrooms that result in minority students attending separate classes for most of the day; and academic tracking, or placing students in separate classrooms based on perceived academic ability (*Looking to the Future,* 2005; Clotfelter et al., 2002).

The creation of heterogeneous classrooms, sometimes referred to as detracking, increases classroom diversity and helps reduce within-school segregation. Research shows that minority and White students with similar academic abilities are often assigned to different tracks, with Black and Hispanic students disproportionately found in lower tracks. Lower tracks usually have less challenging curricula, lower educational expectations, and lower student achievement (*Looking to the Future,* 2005; Mickelson, 2001; Oakes & Guiton, 1995).

The literature reviewed for this report indicated that special education and discipline policies often reflected racial inequalities and contributed to within-school segregation. Minority students, especially Black students, were more likely than White students to be identified as emotionally or mentally disabled and, even when appropriately placed in special education classes, often received lower quality services than disabled White students. Black and Hispanic students were more likely to be severely punished than White students and were more often identified as at-risk for entry into the criminal justice system (*Looking to the Future,* 2005). Three of four meta-analyses conducted by Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) found that teachers tended to favor White students more than Black and Hispanic students. Their analyses determined that teachers had higher expectations, made more positive referrals, and directed more encouragement and questions toward White students, compared to Black and Hispanic students. The authors concluded that such preferences may lead to lower expectations and differential academic performance. Downey and Pribesh (1999) found that teacher judgments of student behavior differed according to the race of the teacher, with White teachers judging minority students' behavior more critically than minority teachers. Farkas (2002) suggested several possibilities for this finding: White teachers perceived the behavior of minority students to be worse than that of White students; minority students actually behaved worse than White students; minority teachers judged the same behavior by minority students more leniently than did White teachers; or minority teachers were more skilled at getting minority students to behave. Clearly, more research is needed to determine why White and minority teachers differ in their judgments of students' behavior.

Card and Rothstein (2006) studied the extent of within-school segregation in metropolitan areas across the United States. They found no significant relationship between the extent of within-school segregation and the number of advanced or honors courses taken by Black students. They did, however, find that White students were more likely to take honors and advanced placement courses in cities with more integrated schools and neighborhoods, suggesting that as segregation increased, White students had relatively less exposure to minority students. White students were also more likely to participate in "high track" courses when schools were more integrated, often further reducing Black students' levels of classroom exposure to White students. The authors concluded that within-school segregation increased when schools were more highly integrated, potentially negating the benefits of school desegregation.

Impact of School Desegregation on Students' Academic Achievement

Reviews of the research on the impact of desegregation on students' academic achievement have reported mixed results and suggest that the effects of desegregation on academic achievement are variable and may depend on a number of other factors (Hawley, 2004; Schofield, 1995). Schofield (1995) concluded that voluntary desegregation efforts were more likely to have

positive effects than court-imposed programs. Both Hawley (2004) and Schofield (1995) concluded that minority students who were desegregated at an earlier age benefitted more than those desegregated at a later age. Hawley (2004) also reported that the integration of schools that remain majority White appears to have no negative effect on White students; however, White students in predominantly non-White schools often achieve at lower levels than students from similar financial backgrounds that attend majority White schools. Research on the impact of racial integration on students' academic performance has focused on achievement test scores, dropout and graduation rates, and level of educational attainment.

Achievement Test Scores

- Researchers in Florida examined the relationship between segregation and students' FCAT scores, using data obtained from the Florida Department of Education's *Florida School Indicators Report* and *School Advisory Council Report* for the 1999-2000 school year. After controlling for socioeconomic status, instructional quality, class size, per-pupil expenditures, and student mobility, the authors found that significantly lower percentages of students in predominantly Black schools passed the FCAT Reading and Math sections (i.e., scored at Achievement Levels 3 through 5) than students in either integrated or predominantly White schools. The difference in performance between students in integrated and predominantly White schools was not statistically significant. The authors concluded that policies attempting to "resolve the achievement gap by funding equity or classroom size changes" would not succeed if segregation was not addressed (Borman et al., 2004).

- Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin (2004) tracked three successive cohorts of Texas public elementary students as they progressed through school. The authors controlled for family and school factors, including student achievement levels, teacher experience, class size, school mobility rates, and family background. Evidence was found indicating that a higher percentage of Black schoolmates was associated with lower mathematics scores for Black students with higher achievement levels, as measured by scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills. In contrast, a higher percentage of Black schoolmates was less related to the achievement of Black students with lower achievement levels. Black concentration was not related to White students' achievement levels and Hispanic concentration was not related to either White or Black students' achievement levels.

- Caldas and Bankston (1998) examined the effect of Louisiana public schools' racial composition on the academic achievement of Black and White students. They found that, even after controlling for socioeconomic status, students who attended predominantly Black schools had lower scores on the state's graduation exit examination.

- Armor (1995) analyzed the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores of students in schools throughout the country with racial compositions ranging from predominantly Black to predominantly White. After controlling for student socioeconomic status, Armor (1995) found that both Black and White students' math scores were significantly higher in schools that were over 40 percent White. Similar results were obtained for Hispanic students. In reading, however, scores only increased significantly for Black students attending predominantly White schools (90 percent and above White enrollment).

- Gamoran and An (2005) examined the student achievement data of over 60,000 students in Nashville, Tennessee. Student data were collected over a five-year period, prior to and following the end of court-ordered desegregation. The authors concluded that the Black-White

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mathematics achievement gap remained unchanged over the five-year period. The Black-White reading achievement gap was approximately two points smaller at the conclusion of the five-year period, a statistically significant but substantively small reduction in the 20 to 25 point achievement gap. Further analysis indicated that a large portion of the achievement gap was attributable to differences in students' socioeconomic status.

Gamoran and An (2005) stated that some observers may have been encouraged by their finding that minority student achievement did not decrease following the end of court-ordered desegregation policies. The authors suggested that "fewer bus rides, simpler feeder patterns, and greater access to neighborhood schools are appreciated by residents." However, they concluded that "the racial gap remains wide, and the policy shift shows little sign of bringing about substantial change."

- Harris (2006) analyzed achievement test data from over 22,000 schools nationwide using the National Longitudinal School-Level State Assessment Score Database. He found that both Black and Hispanic students attending high-minority schools received lower achievement test scores. However, when he controlled for the effects of poverty and peer achievement, racial composition appeared to have no direct effect on the scores of either Black or Hispanic students. Harris (2006) concluded that the socioeconomic status of the student and the achievement levels of his or her classmates, not the student's race in and of itself, were responsible for differing levels of academic performance.

- Armor and Rossell (2002), who argue that school desegregation has failed to deliver on its promise of providing social and educational benefits to minority students, cited several studies that failed to attribute differences in test scores to schools' racial composition. For example, a case study in Charleston, South Carolina compared the reading achievement of Black third and fourth grade students in schools with varying degrees of racial integration and found no significant differences in test scores, or test scores gains, between predominantly Black schools, predominantly White schools, and racially balanced schools. In another study, achievement test scores were analyzed following the merger of predominantly Black Wilmington, Delaware with predominantly White New Castle County to form a single, more integrated school district. Analysis of the performance of Black students attending majority White schools located in middle-class neighborhoods found no significant gains in Black students' test scores or reductions in the Black-White test score gap.

Dropout and Graduation Rates

Dropout and graduation rates appear to be related to race and ethnicity, as well as the racial/ethnic composition of a school. Nationally, 77 percent of Asian students and 75 percent of White students graduate high school, compared to only slightly more than half of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students. The dropout problem is concentrated in high-minority, high-poverty schools. Nationwide, only 56 percent of ninth grade students graduate four years later in districts that are predominantly (over 50 percent) minority. The graduation rate falls to 42 percent for districts in which 90 percent or more of the students are minority (*Looking to the Future*, 2005; Orfield & Lee, 2005a).

Guryan (2003) complied Census data to estimate the effect of school integration on Black students' high school dropout rates. He found that the dropout rate declined by 3.8 percentage points in districts that desegregated between 1970 and 1980, but remained constant in districts that did not initiate desegregation plans over this same period of time. After controlling for student and family

background characteristics, such as students' age and gender, family income, parents' level of education, and median district income, the estimated effect of desegregation on Black high school dropout rates decreased slightly (to -2.8 percentage points), but was still significant. Integration of schools did not appear to have an effect on White students' high school dropout rates. The dropout rate for White students in districts that desegregated between 1970 and 1980 increased by 0.5 percentage point, an increase that was not statistically significant.

Level of Educational Attainment

- High-minority schools often communicate lower expectations to students and offer a more limited range of occupational and educational options. According to Orfield and Lee (2004), the general assumption is that predominantly White schools have higher social and economic status and offer minority students a higher set of educational and career options.

- Studies have found that Black students who attended racially integrated schools had higher levels of educational attainment, pursued degrees in higher paying career fields, and earned higher wages than graduates from segregated schools (Ashenfelter et al., 2006; Dawkins & Braddock, 1994; Boozer et al., 1992). Desegregation also appears to facilitate the establishment of networks that provide information and personal connections that help students guide their educational and career choices (Harris, 2006). Although desegregation appears to be a factor in Black students' levels of educational attainment and career earnings, research is needed to determine if other variables, such as family socioeconomic status, are perhaps stronger predictors of students' academic and career success.

- Hallinan and Williams (1990) found that both Black and White students who had cross-race friendships had higher educational aspirations than those with primarily same-race friendships.

Social Impact of Attending a Desegregated School

Research on the social outcomes of racial integration have focused on the characteristics of peers at integrated versus predominantly minority schools and the effect of desegregation on students' interpersonal relationships.

Characteristics of Peers

- Kahlenberg (2006) reported that students learn a great deal from their peers and that higher-achieving classmates create a higher quality educational environment. He concluded that more learning occurred in schools where students were well-behaved. Misbehaving students who skipped class, did not do their homework, or engaged in violent acts did not belong to any one particular racial or ethnic group, but were more likely to be found among the poor of all races and ethnicities.

- Harris (2006) suggested that one of the most important ways racial integration benefitted minority students was that it placed them in schools with more economically advantaged students, where there are reports of fewer classroom disruptions, higher expectations, and greater parental support at school and in the home.

- Kahlenberg (2006) concluded that it was an advantage to attend a school where parents were actively involved and held schools accountable for students' performance. He found

that levels of parental involvement were more closely related to socioeconomic status than race. In low-income schools, for example, parents were found to be four times less likely to become members of the PTA.

- Weiner, Lutz, & Ludwig (2006) analyzed Vital Statistics data from the National Center for Health Statistics on homicide victimization rates from 1968 through 1988. Their sample included school districts that represented half of the country's minority student public school enrollment. They examined homicide victimization rates, population estimates, police expenditures, and census data and found, in schools with court-ordered desegregation plans, homicide victimization rates decreased by approximately 20 percent for Black youth and up to 35 percent for White youth. The authors suggested the reduced homicide victimization rates were due to a combination of factors related to the integration of public schools, including increased spending on law enforcement in areas with court-ordered desegregation and White students transferring to private schools or predominantly White public schools. The reader is reminded that the existence of a relationship between desegregation and homicide victimization rates does not confirm there is a cause and effect relationship between them. The researchers did not definitively determine that desegregation (or related factors, such as increased law enforcement or school transfers), as opposed to any number of other factors, led to lower homicide victimization rates.

Interpersonal Relationships

- Studies have shown that exposure to students of varying races and ethnicities is related to reduced racial stereotypes and prejudice and increased cross-racial friendships (Holme et al., 2005; Killen & Stangor, 2001; Schofield, 1995). Studies have also reported that when students from desegregated schools reached adulthood, they were more likely to live and work in multiracial settings, compared to their more segregated peers (*Looking to the Future,* 2005; Kurlaender & Yun, 2003; Gurin et al., 2002; Kurlaender & Yun, 2001).

- Frankenberg, Lee, and Orfield (2003) reported on a survey administered to students at racially integrated high schools in Jefferson County, Kentucky. The vast majority (93 percent of White students and 95 percent of Black students) said they felt comfortable working with students of other races on group projects.

- Wells, Holme, Revilla, and Atanda (2005) interviewed 242 students who had graduated from six high schools 25 years earlier (in 1980). Schools, located in California, Kansas, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas, varied in terms of size, racial/ethnic composition, social class of residents, and the policies by which they were desegregated. Regardless of racial or ethnic background, the graduates of all schools expressed gratitude for having attended a desegregated school. They said desegregated schools gave them one of their only opportunities (or only opportunity) to interact with people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds and provided experiences not available through books, videos, or field trips. The researchers found that the perceived benefits of attending a desegregated school varied across racial/ethnic groups. White graduates said they gained a greater appreciation of other cultures and reported they were less likely to make stereotypical assumptions based on race. Minority students emphasized their increased comfort level and ability to function in predominantly White settings.

- Similarly, the Civil Rights Project (2002) reported that students in integrated schools stated they felt very comfortable living and working with students from other racial and ethnic groups.

They indicated that their school experiences increased their level of understanding of others' points of view, prepared them to work in employment settings with people of different races and ethnicities, and increased their understanding of the backgrounds of others.

Impact of Neighborhood on Students

Several studies have indicated that neighborhood segregation, as well as school segregation, may have an impact on students' levels of academic achievement, but they have not established a causal link between neighborhood characteristics and educational outcomes. In other words, families choosing to live in different neighborhoods may differ on other characteristics that influence their children's academic performance.

- Card and Rothstein (2006) studied the effects of school and neighborhood segregation on Black students' SAT scores in metropolitan areas across the United States. The study compared the Black-White achievement gap in segregated and integrated neighborhoods and schools and controlled for variables believed to affect student achievement, such as family background and income of the city. The researchers found evidence that the Black-White test score gap was higher in more segregated cities. A move from a fully segregated to a completely integrated city reduced the Black-White SAT score gap by 45 points (approximately one-fourth of the raw score differential). Analyses suggested that neighborhood segregation had a consistently negative impact on students' achievement, while school segregation did not have an independent effect. Card and Rothstein (2006) concluded that school segregation affects Black students' achievement but that neighborhood composition (percent of minority families and average family income) may be a more important determinant of the Black-White test score gap than school composition.

- Sanbonmatsu, Kling, Duncan, & Brooks-Gunn (2006) examined the extent to which changes in residential neighborhood affected students' academic achievement. Analyses were based on the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's randomized housing mobility experiment, Moving to Opportunity (MTO). The study's experimental group consisted of families randomly selected to receive housing vouchers. Families in the control group did not receive vouchers, but were still eligible for public housing. Data, including reading and mathematics achievement test scores, were collected for over 5,000 children at the five MTO sites (Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York) for a four to seven year period following random assignment to experimental or control groups.

  Families offered housing vouchers moved, on average, to residential neighborhoods that were substantially less impoverished and sent their children to schools that were of modestly higher quality. No evidence of improvements in reading or mathematics scores, behavior or school problems, or school engagement, overall or for any age group, was found. The experimental voucher offer was, however, associated with positive health outcomes and fewer criminal arrests for females and reduced exposure to drugs and violence for both males and females. The authors offered several possible explanations for their findings: although families in the experimental group moved to less impoverished areas, most did not move to ethnically-integrated neighborhoods (60 percent of experimental group families relocated to neighborhoods with 80 percent or more minority residents); potential gains associated with neighborhood improvements may have been diminished by the disruption of changing schools; and experimental group families may have continued to send their children to schools in their old neighborhoods under school choice programs.

- Leventhal, Fauth, and Brooks-Gunn (2005) analyzed the educational outcomes of a subsample of children from the New York City MTO site at two and one-half year and five-year follow-up intervals. They reported findings similar to those of Sanbonmatsu, Kling, Duncan, & Brooks-Gunn (2006) and concluded that providing families with housing vouchers to move to low-poverty or more affluent neighborhoods was not sufficient to significantly raise children's levels of academic achievement. The authors stated that "the policy ramifications of enhancing low-income minority children's educational outcomes involve multiple dynamics, including family, neighborhood, housing, and school."

Quality of Schools and Teachers at Predominantly Minority versus Integrated Schools

Several studies have examined if there are differences in the quality of predominantly minority and integrated schools and if the characteristics of teachers differ, depending on the percent of minority students enrolled in a school.

- Wiener and Pristoop (2006) analyzed financial data from each of the nation's public school districts, gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Education for the 2003-04 school year. They found that school districts serving the largest concentrations of minority students received, on average, $908 less revenue per student from state and local funds than school districts serving the fewest minority students. In 28 states, the highest-minority school districts received, on average, less money than the lowest-minority districts. In Florida, however, high-minority school districts received, on average, $17 more per student than low-minority districts.

- Gamoran and An (2005) compared students in Nashville, Tennessee who were enrolled in traditional attendance zone schools to those enrolled in enhanced option schools (with reduced class sizes, an extended school year, and a mix of additional resources, including preschool options, after-school tutoring, and social and health services). They found that students enrolled in enhanced option schools, even when they had a high poverty concentration and were racially isolated, had greater achievement test score gains than students in racially mixed schools without extra resources. Gamoran and An (2005) concluded that the provision of additional school resources may be a more effective strategy than racial integration for reducing the achievement gap. It should be noted, however, that enrollment in an enhanced option school reduced the Black-White achievement gap by only one to two points, compared to the overall Black-White achievement gap of 20 to 25 points.

- The Education Trust reported on the distribution of teachers in the Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee Public Schools (Peske & Haycock, 2006). Data collected in all three school districts found large differences between the qualifications of teachers in the highest-minority and highest-poverty schools and the qualifications of teachers serving in schools with fewer minority and low-income students. Students in high-minority schools were assigned to novice teachers at double the rate of students in schools with fewer minority students.

- Jerald's (2002) Education Trust report analyzed the 1999-2000 federal *Schools and Staffing Survey*. He reported that, nationwide, classes in high-minority and high-poverty schools were more likely to be taught by out-of-field teachers. In high-minority schools (50 percent or more minority enrollment), 29 percent of core academic classes were taught by teachers who were not certified in the subject area they were teaching. In low-minority schools (15 percent or less minority enrollment), 21 percent of the core academic classes were taught by teachers

who were classified as out-of-field. Classes in predominantly minority schools were over 40 percent more likely to be assigned an out-of-field teacher than those in predominantly White schools.

- A nationwide investigation conducted by the Gannett News Service (Schouten & Bivins, 2002) found that at predominantly Black schools, nearly 60 percent of principals used substitute teachers to fill long-term vacancies. At schools with low proportions of Black students, approximately 25 percent of principals used substitutes to fill these vacancies. The investigation, which analyzed data from the 1999-2000 federal *Schools and Staffing Survey* and interviewed education researchers, school officials, and parents across the nation, also found that minority students were most likely to have teachers with the least experience. More than half of the nation's Black and Hispanic middle school students were taught core academic subjects by teachers who lacked even a college minor in the subject they taught.

- Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2004) found that novice teachers were overrepresented in North Carolina school districts with higher proportions of minority students, even after controlling for other district characteristics, such as percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs and total enrollment. Statewide, for example, the probability of a Black seventh grade student being placed in a math class with a novice teacher was 54 percent higher than the probability of a White student being placed with a novice teacher. In English, the probability that a Black student would be placed with a novice teacher was 38 percent higher than the probability that a White student would be placed with a novice teacher. Teachers with the lowest scores on the state's licensure tests taught in schools with lower proportions of White students, while teachers with the highest test scores taught in schools with higher proportions of White students.

- Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2002) examined differences between the qualifications of minority students' teachers and White students' teachers in the state of New York. They found that 17 percent of minority students had teachers who were not certified to teach in any of their current teaching assignments, compared to four percent of White students. Twenty-one percent of minority students' teachers, but only seven percent of White students' teachers, had failed either the General Knowledge or Liberal Arts and Science certification examination.

- Card and Rothstein (2006) compared predominantly Black and predominantly White schools in metropolitan areas throughout the United States. Contrary to the findings reported above, they found no significant differences in experience levels between teachers at predominantly Black and predominantly White schools. Black-White gaps in the number of full-time teachers per student and expenditures per pupil appeared to be unrelated to the degree of school segregation.

On A Local Note

Effective June 30, 2002, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida granted unitary status to Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). The term unitary describes a school system that has made the transition from a segregated system to a desegregated, or unitary, system. The court's declaration of unitary status released M-DCPS from court jurisdiction and provided that the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida was no longer mandated to supply periodic reports to the court. The district was, however, required to monitor itself to avoid reverting back to a segregated educational system. The School Board of Miami-Dade County,

Florida developed the Post-Unitary Status Plan of Action in order to comply with this requirement and to ensure that all students in M-DCPS, regardless of their race and ethnicity, continued to be provided with equal opportunities to participate in educational programs.

The original 1970 court judgment, approving M-DCPS' desegregation plan, provided standards for the hiring of faculty, the pairing, grouping, and rezoning of schools, and the appointment of a Bi-Racial Advisory Committee that would function independently and serve as advisor to the court. As part of the Post-Unitary Status Plan of Action, M-DCPS assumed responsibility for appointing committee members to the Bi-Racial Advisory Committee. The committee was renamed the Diversity Equity and Excellence Advisory Committee (DEEAC) and now reports directly to the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The DEEAC reviews issues pertaining to successful maintenance of a multicultural school system, including the recruitment and diversity of personnel, student transportation, selection of school sites, and establishment of attendance zones; approves all annual compliance reports; and makes recommendations to the Superintendent of Schools.

The Office of Diversity Compliance was established by the School Board in July 2002 to monitor the district's post-unitary status commitments to the court. Staff are responsible for systematically analyzing data regarding specific areas where racial/ethnic disparities in educational outcomes have been noted, providing reports, and making recommendations for improving M-DCPS' efforts to maintain unitary status.

As part of the district's self-monitoring process, the Office of Diversity Compliance prepares an annual diversity compliance report to monitor and measure the district's progress toward eliminating disparities in educational outcomes between racial and ethnic groups, avoid racially isolated schools, and promote the educational benefits of diverse school membership. The document, entitled *One or Two?,* reports on the status of six areas: enrollment and achievement; faculty composition; discipline; advanced academics and gifted education; special education; and retention and graduation. Each of the six areas is monitored to identify disparities between students by the following characteristics: gender; race/ethnicity; participation in free or reduced lunch programs; limited English proficiency status; and special education designation.

The district's 2002-03 and 2003-04 student enrollment, by ethnicity, as presented in the most recent annual diversity compliance report (2006), is provided in Table 1.

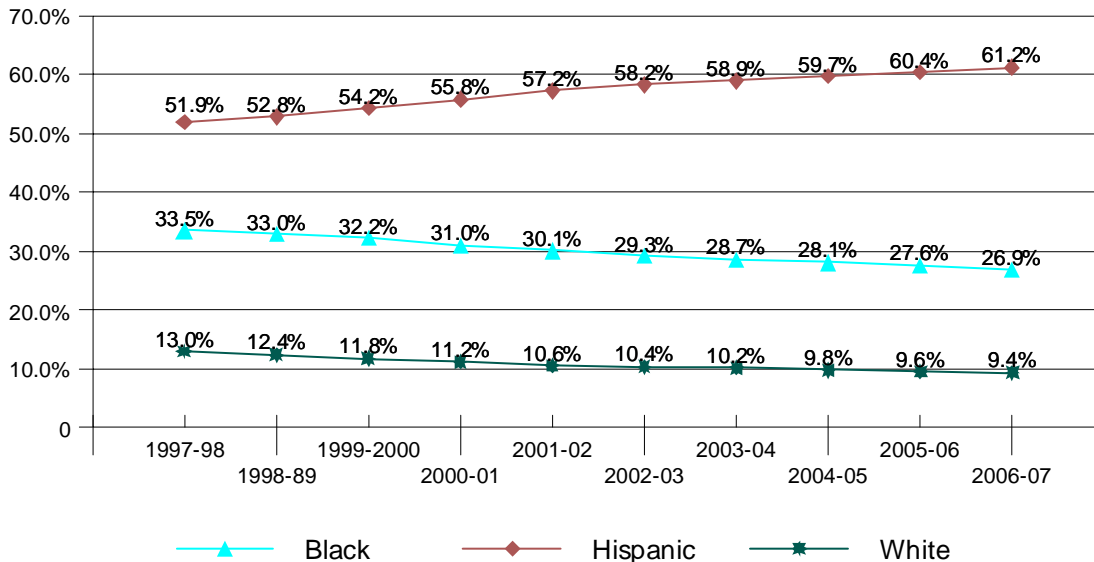Table 1. 2002-03 and 2003-04 M-DCPS Student Enrollment, By Ethnicity

	2002-03	2003-04
Black	29.3%	28.3%
Hispanic	58.2%	59.3%
White	10.4%	10.1%
Other*	2.2%	2.3%

*Other includes American Indian, Asian, and Multiracial categories.
Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools. (2006). *One or Two?* 2005-06 Annual
    Diversity Compliance Report.

Figure 2 illustrates the steady decline in the proportion of White and Black students and the increase in Hispanic students in M-DCPS.

Figure 2. Ten-Year Trends: Percent of Students Enrolled in M-DCPS, by Ethnicity

The *One or Two?* report found that, during the 2003-04 school year, 36 percent of students in Regions 1 through 6 and 41 percent of students in charter schools attended racially isolated schools (as defined by 85 percent or greater enrollment of any one racial group). At the school level, 39 percent of schools in Regions 1 through 6 and 58 percent of charter schools were racially isolated during the 2003-04 school year. The percent of racially isolated schools in Regions 1 through 6 remained stable from 2002-03 to 2003-04; however, the percentage of racially isolated charter schools increased from 52 percent in 2002-03 to 58 percent in 2003-04. The authors of the *One or Two?* report remind the reader that, during the 2003-04 school year, charter schools represented only 3.27 percent of the total M-DCPS school population.

The Florida State Advisory Committee's (2007) report to the United States Commission on Civil Rights analyzed differences in school-level integration patterns between districts with unitary status and school districts under court jurisdiction or never subject to litigation. Of the 67 school districts in the state of Florida, 33 districts have not been involved in school desegregation litigation and the other 34 have been sued in federal court to eliminate racial segregation. As of 2006, the courts had declared that 18 of these 34 school districts (including M-DCPS) achieved unitary status. All analyses in the committee's report were based on data from the 2003-04 school year. The index of dissimilarity was used as the unit of measurement for integration. The index of dissimilarity measures the segregation of one racial/ethnic group from another. The index can range from zero to 100 and measures whether the proportion of Black students at each of the schools within a district reflects the same proportion of Black students in the entire district. A value of 60 is considered very high and means that 60 percent of one ethnic group would have to change schools in order for the two groups to be equally distributed. For consistency across the state, analyses were limited to Black and White students. Computation of indices was confined to regular elementary schools. Middle

and senior high schools were not included in the analyses since they are often "feeder" schools for several elementary schools and it was felt their inclusion would bias the district's true index. Charter schools, special schools, vocational schools, and pre-kindergarten/kindergarten schools were also excluded from the analyses, based on the belief that their inclusion would distort the results.

M-DCPS' index of dissimilarity was found to be 77. The average index of dissimilarity for the 18 Florida school districts that had achieved unitary status was 47. In contrast, the average index of dissimilarity for Florida school districts still under court jurisdiction was 31 and the average index for schools never involved in school desegregation litigation was 34. As stated by the Florida State Advisory Committee (2007) in their report to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, these findings indicated there was a "significantly lower level of racial integration between Whites and Blacks at the elementary schools in [Florida] school districts released from court jurisdiction than school districts still subject to a Court Order and school districts never litigated to desegregate."

Regression analyses were conducted to further examine differences in integration patterns among the three groups of school districts. Districts with unitary status had, on average, larger enrollments, more schools, and higher percentages of minority students. When analyses controlled for total district enrollment and the percentage of a school that was White, no significant difference in the integration patterns among the three groups of districts was found. The researchers concluded that the higher index of dissimilarity found at school districts that had achieved unitary status was not the result of the district being removed from court jurisdiction.

In his response to the advisory committee's report (September 2006, included in the Florida State Advisory Committee's report), Dr. Rudolph F. Crew, Superintendent of M-DCPS, suggested that studies consider that many school districts have multiple racial/ethnic groups of students. M-DCPS has grown over the years from a Black/Non-Black dichotomy to a multiracial school district. The Superintendent noted that analyses comparing only the percent of White and Black students fail to account for 62 percent of M-DCPS' students. The Superintendent's response also recommended that analyses disaggregate outcomes by school type. During the year in which analyses were conducted, approximately 90 percent of M-DCPS' students attended assigned schools that drew their enrollment from specific geographical boundaries. These schools' enrollment percentages do not change significantly unless the composition of the neighborhoods from which they draw their students also change. To more accurately reflect changing enrollment patterns, analyses should include charter and magnet schools that typically have more fluid enrollments.

Summary

Fifty-three years after the United States Supreme Court's landmark ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, there is evidence that many of America's schools are still segregated by race and ethnicity. However, public schools reflect the sociocultural conditions that exist in the immediate local community. This report provided a brief history of segregation and an update on the status of desegregation in the United States. Policy recommendations for promoting school integration were reviewed, including the creation of magnet schools and student transfer programs, the provision of financial incentives to schools that promote integration, and the design of attendance zones that increase the number of integrated schools. Research on the impact of desegregation on student achievement has produced mixed results and suggests that the effects of desegregation on student performance are variable and may depend on a number of other factors, such as socioeconomic status, achievement level, and the academic performance of one's classmates. The school students attend is only one of the many factors that influence their academic achievement, which also include family, neighborhood, and housing conditions. The majority of studies indicate that desegregation places low-income, minority students in schools with higher educational expectations,

greater parental support, and fewer classroom disruptions. Social benefits of attending integrated schools include reduced racial stereotypes and prejudice, the development of more cross-racial friendships, and an increased ability to function effectively in multicultural settings. Studies have also shown that high-minority schools are frequently staffed with fewer certified teachers and teachers with less experience, even as research has begun to suggest that the provision of additional resources (including teachers with strong cognitive skills) may be a more effective strategy than racial integration for reducing the achievement gap. This Literature Review also provided a review of desegregation efforts in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

All reports distributed by Research Services can be accessed at http://drs.dadeschools.net under the "Current Publications" menu.

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