

# ***Diversity and Educational Gains***

## ***A plan for a changing county and its schools***



A report to the Jefferson County Public Schools

by

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**The Civil Rights Project**

*Proyecto Derechos Civiles*



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## *Diversity and Educational Gains*

### Executive Summary

In response to the school board's request, we have prepared a plan that builds upon and extends the nationally respected JCPS accomplishments in operating diverse schools for nearly four decades. We interpreted our charge as reviewing the existing plan, making it more effective and efficient and lowering excessive transportation times. With access to new Census data and extensive information from the school district and other local institutions, we have assessed the degree to which the current plan is the most efficient and effective way to accomplish the board's primary goal of maintaining a diverse school system. The school district showed strong leadership and deserves great credit for devising and implementing a new plan after 2007 Supreme Court decision but transportation times have been long, and plan is still broadly out of compliance. In some important respects, the A-B divisions worked much less effectively than the long-established cluster plans.

Our surveys of JCPS parents and high school students about their attitudes and experiences showed a very strong desire for diverse schools and for school choice. Students felt well prepared for the community's diverse future and strongly supported integration. Parents were most concerned about excessive transportation, and also very strongly supported the goals of integration. Our survey also showed the need for improving spread of information to parents about school options. Our research convinced us that it was time to begin a serious review of the quality of magnet options.

We summarize research that shows significant benefits of integrated schools but that equalizing the opportunities requires more school level training and accountability on issues on successfully managing diversity at the classroom level. Our survey of students showed some very positive experiences with teachers but also raised some challenges. We believe the value of diversity could be significantly increased by training and systemic implementation of research-based cooperative learning strategies.

School segregation is primarily produced by housing segregation of both blacks and whites in parts of the county, especially in the far eastern and western sections. Hispanics and Latinos are not segregated now. Housing subsidies contributed to segregated, unequal neighborhoods, which makes education and diverse schools more difficult. The school board should ask housing agencies and the metro government to stop housing program operations that reinforce segregation and for help in creating stably diverse neighborhoods and stabilizing transitioning areas. There are a number of long-term stably integrated neighborhoods in JCPS and we propose to give the families that live in the most stable ones absolute preference to attend the closest school in the second year of the plan, encouraging the gradual replacement of transportation by residential integration.

The existing plan isn't an accurate reflection of diversity within county. A and B designations by resides areas are too large to be meaningful in describing communities and falsely characterize as uniform what are in fact very diverse areas. Some of the six clusters are very large; there are long transportation times and 40% schools don't meet the standards of having between 15 and

50% of students from “A” areas. A neighborhood student assignment plan, on the other hand, would create intense double segregation by race and poverty.

Due to the nature of the changing residential patterns, however, it’s possible to create diverse schools with less transportation by creating a multifaceted diversity measured by Census block groups and smaller, more compact clusters. The proposed plan is built on an analysis of 540 small neighborhoods and uses a new definition and newer data. Diversity is computed using educational attainment, household income, and percentage of white residents in the block group. These three factors are combined into a composite diversity factor of 1, 2, or 3. Each small neighborhood is classified on the combination of these variables and integration is accomplished by bringing together children from the nearest possible diverse neighborhoods, greatly reducing maximum travel time. The 13 proposed clusters are smaller and more like the traditional 12 cluster plan. Each is connected with one of the existing transportation compounds and each has considerable diversity. The proposed clusters being fine-tuned; our suggestions are based on extensive computer analysis but need review by JCPS experts with knowledge of local conditions and capacity before a final list can be released.

Primary schools are the focus at the beginning of this new plan because they were the part of the current plan that produced public concern and discontent and the lengthy transportation requirement. Needed boundary changes for upper grades would come in 2013-14. We propose no mandated change for children already happy in their schools—they could stay there or their families could transfer to a school in the new smaller cluster or a magnet school.

We call for review of magnet schools next year for implementation in 2013-14. We recommend a focus on full school magnets and elimination of replacement of those magnets that are not magnetic. Transportation should be provided to all schools and admissions criteria strictly limited to make sure magnets are accessible to all interested families.

Kindergarteners would be closer to home under this plan and we recommend that they be included in the normal cluster arrangements so that they can have educational continuity. Kindergarten parents in our January survey were among most supportive of all parents. Most kindergarten kids are already in cluster schools.

Any student assignment plan needs to consider how to efficiently and effectively transport students to schools. We believe that the considerable possible savings in a new cluster plan could be enhanced by computerized routing and communications systems that could operate in a real time environment. We recommend that the district’s outside transportation consultant work with JCPS to identify a firm to do this job.

We propose to improve the existing school finder webpage to allow parents to find available school options for their home address as well as information about each school, links to Google maps, JCPS bus finder, and district and state educational data, partnering with community groups to train parents how to access and use this information. We call on the district to move to online applications to streamline process and reduce staff burden in enrollment. This will enable monitoring and additional outreach efforts as necessary to help improve compliance with diversity plan and help transportation planning.

Annual monitoring and evaluation. The superintendent should annually report to the board and the public about the plan's effectiveness in meeting goals and propose needed initiatives as well as help to identify emerging issues such as any segregation of Hispanic or Asian students and monitor school equity issues like student discipline and special education identification.

Experience elsewhere shows that there is ample time to implement this plan for next fall and our experience is that delaying decisions will increase divisions and the ultimate decisions will be no easier; valuable time and energy will be lost. We have every confidence that the staff of the JCPS can implement a new plan effectively and well once the Board makes the decisions and hope that this is the beginning of another step forward in the nationally respected leadership role of Jefferson County Public Schools.

## *Diversity and Educational Gains* *A plan for a changing county and its schools*

Gary Orfield and Erica Frankenberg

This report is a response to the Jefferson County School Board's request for an independent study of the best way to carry successfully into the future its long-term commitment to diversity in its schools. The Board's first principle is preservation of diversity in the schools. Our assignment from the board was two-fold: to build on the long-term commitment to diverse schools through a student assignment plan that provides broad family choice, and to recommend ways to improve the plan. This report is our response to that request.

Our basic conclusion is that it is possible to have a higher level of diversity than is provided by the current plan, to provide choices for families much closer to home, to prevent disruption of students currently happy in their existing schools, and to accomplish this at less long-term cost than the current plan. Further recommendations relate to moving beyond school level diversity to genuinely equal opportunity within diverse schools, to more fully realizing the potential educational values of diversity and choice through staff development and accountability, and to improving the school choice process by providing better information and easier processes of exercising informed choice than are available under the current plan. We believe that the elementary plan can be sharply improved next fall and that review of magnets and the assignment plans for the upper grades can be accomplished the following year. We also believe that the school district needs, and is entitled to, help from housing agencies and local government, whose decisions have increased rather than minimized the challenges the school board faces. We suggest long-term improvements in enrollment management, transportation, and continuous evaluation that could provide tools to make the district more efficient and effective in important ways.

From the standpoint of district parents, we propose to offer every family a set of choices with much better instant on-line information, a guarantee that no one will be assigned to a long bus ride, more efficient transportation, and a very serious effort to assure equal treatment for students of all backgrounds, more access to challenging academic programs, and good relations among students in the schools where they are assigned. By the second year, there would be a strengthening of magnet programs and special enrollment preference for the district's most stably integrated communities. The great majority of parents who submitted an on-time application received their first choice of schools this year and we expect that that would continue. There would be a strong emphasis on transparency and accountability, including an annual report on compliance and progress toward district goals.

***Background.*** When the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) initiated countywide desegregation under a court order in 1975, with only a few weeks of preparation to undertake sweeping transformations, there was fierce resistance and major controversy. The educators and the people of JCPS, however, rose to the challenge so successfully that in just a few years the court recognized the accomplishments and turned operating control of the district back to the local leaders. Over the years the plan was modified with the creation of many popular magnet programs and a much greater emphasis on parental choice. Repeated surveys of both parents and students show that the community is proud of its accomplishments, understand the value of diversity in education and want to continue integration within a framework that emphasizes wide parental choice and good options. This is why the JCPS fought in court, all the way up the Supreme Court, to preserve its locally-designed policies. This is also why, after the Court rejected the previous plan, the district was not defeated but invested in designing a new strategy which complies with the Court's new standards and preserves diverse schooling in the community. The school board, the staff and the community deserve great credit for this effort.

The plan was necessarily designed and implemented quickly. It is not surprising that there were bumps along the road. Even with all the changes that were needed, the great majority of families received assignments at one of their top choice schools, which also supported the goals of the school board. It is very much to the credit of the JCPS leadership that, in light of some problems of implementation, the school board authorized an independent outside review of the plan and asked for recommendations for improvements. We were pleased to accept this assignment from a school district we deeply admire. After months of studying the data and examining possibilities, we are convinced that it is possible to provide what the parents surveyed earlier this year clearly want<sup>1</sup>: continued diversity; a wide array of good school choices; better information to parents; and an end to unnecessarily long-distance transportation of students. In our visits to the district and discussions with board members, Dr. Donna Hargens, and community leaders, it was also clear that there was strong support for an increased focus on more fully realizing the strong potential educational advantages of diverse schools.

This report is our response to those directives. We realize, of course, that the ultimate decisions lie with the board and the community. In the course of preparing this report, we have learned a great deal from the excellent staff of the JCPS who have provided the data we requested and never attempted to limit or control our independent work.

We are offering a roadmap. If the board decides to implement this plan, the success will depend on the work of the district staff, in which we have great confidence. We recommend that the superintendent appoint a coordinator, who would serve from the time the plan is adopted until it is securely implemented, and who would report back monthly about progress in implementation and any needed support from the board and staff. Since this will require coordination across various parts of the district and with outside agencies, this should not be an additional assignment for someone with many day-to-day responsibilities already, unless he or she is relieved of many of those burdens. This would be a challenging full-time job and, in order to

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<sup>1</sup> Report of survey results can be downloaded at <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/experiencing-integration-in-louisville-how-parents-and-students-see-the-gains-and-challenges>

have the authority to make things happen, this coordinator should report directly to the superintendent.

**The Current Plan.** The current plan, adopted in 2008 after the 2007 Supreme Court decision, changed the primary focus from racial desegregation to a broader type of diversity (emphasizing socioeconomic characteristics like household income and educational attainment as well as race). It replaced the long-standing 12-cluster system by dividing the county into six clusters drawing students from two broad areas, area A and area B, which were defined by the combined characteristics of the people who lived in a school's "resides" area. Diversity was defined as bringing together students from both A and B areas within specified guidelines. The plan assumed that this simple division could adequately define the diversity of the county and that bringing together A and B students within a prescribed ratio would produce effective diversity. Some of those six clusters stretched across the width of a long, highly urbanized county and often required that families not getting their top choices of schools (though most did) send their students on buses for very long distances. Our survey of JCPS parents, published in January 2011, showed that parents were strongly in favor of diversity and deeply committed to school choice, but they were also very critical of the long bus rides the plan sometimes required. The parents of students with the longest bus rides also were less supportive of the integration policy overall and its implementation.

The plan accomplished a great deal but fell far short of its own diversity goal, since almost 40% of schools this year did not fall within the prescribed diversity standards of having between 15-50% of students from "A" areas. The actual range is from 5.5% "A" students in one school to two schools with more than 80% "A" students. The plan was further complicated by the fact that there were many students with "A" characteristics in "B" areas and vice versa, since the division of the county into these categories was based on rather large geographic areas, not particular neighborhoods. So the plan could produce what *seemed to be* diverse schools, in terms of the percentage of "A" area students, but many were not truly diverse schools because the neighborhoods they brought together were not actually diverse. For example, there were 28 elementary schools with over 60% of students who were black, seven of which were over 80% black. Twelve schools had more than nine-tenths students on free/reduced price lunch. Years of research have convinced us that integration has powerful educational and social impacts but that saying something is integrated does not make it so. It was time for a review of this plan.

Before introducing our proposal for a new plan, we want to recognize and commend the efforts of JCPS and community leaders in designing and implementing the A-B plan. It was critical for the community that the momentum of maintaining diverse schools not be lost after the Supreme Court decision. Dr. Berman, the board and the community had to pioneer a new solution with little explicit guidance or support from the courts or anyone else. This effort required complex changes and put a great burden on the district's transportation system. In spite of the difficulties, the district persisted and clearly there have been fewer difficulties this year. Our surveys of both students and parents last school year show that a great deal of good was accomplished. Some important ideas from the 2008 plan are incorporated in the new plan we propose.

**Why Diverse Schools are Important for Educational Progress and the County's Future.**

Because integrated schools were originally mandated as a remedy for generations of official



segregation, many people see it as a matter of rights and argue that it would be better to focus on educational reform rather than desegregation. As the courts conclude in many cases that mandated desegregation must end and even some forms of voluntary desegregation must be limited, educators and communities need to know what research shows about the educational value of integrated schools and how it can be enhanced. Since the *Brown* decision, there has been a half-century of research on desegregation, but many people are not familiar with the results of hundreds of studies conducted in all parts of the country. We know much more today than in the past and the findings from research are important for parents and teachers. We know that the vast majority of Americans say that school integration is a positive thing but that they are ambiguous about what should be done to achieve it. Substantial majorities of parents of children in desegregated schools (as well as graduates themselves) said that their experience was a positive one, even when it was mandated rather than through choice systems. There is very strong evidence that segregation by race is usually segregation by poverty as well. These doubly segregated schools are inferior, not so much in budget as in the quality of teachers, curriculum, and the background of their classmates, all of which turn out to have a large impact on students' achievement and future lives.

One of the very important findings in desegregation research is that desegregation has significant educational achievement advantages for nonwhite and poor children without creating any achievement losses for affluent and white children.<sup>2</sup> In other words, it creates a net gain with no loss primarily because the achievement of more privileged children is more determined by their home background and opportunities, while that of more disadvantaged children is influenced more by the quality of their school experiences and peer group.<sup>3</sup> Aside from changes in test scores and graduation rates, there are important gains of other sorts such as preparation for life after graduation in diverse communities, colleges, and workplaces for all groups of students.<sup>4</sup> These gains were clearly recognized in Jefferson County in our survey of high school students during the last school year, when huge majorities of white and African American and Hispanic students said they felt well prepared in this respect. These findings were similar to a survey a decade ago, when JCPS students reported important gains from their integrated schooling.

The National Academy of Education, a group of 100 of the nation's leading scholars, recently reviewed the massive body of research on school integration and found compelling evidence of its educational value. When desegregation is properly implemented, it is not an alternative to

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<sup>2</sup>Arthur L. Coleman, Francisco M. Negrón, Jr. and Katherine E. Lipper *Achieving Education Excellence for All: A Guide to Diversity-Related Policy Strategies for School Districts: A Guide to Diversity-Related Policy Strategies for School Districts*,

Joint publication of [National School Boards Association](#), [The College Board](#), and [Education Counsel, LLC](#), 2011. The Civil Rights Project has summarized this research in several publications, including a recent manual published for communities and educators: <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/integrating-suburban-schools-how-to-benefit-from-growing-diversity-and-avoid-segregation/tefera-suburban-manual-2011.pdf>; Social Science Findings about School Desegregation by the Civil Rights Project in the appendix of this report.

<sup>3</sup>*Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Coleman Report), Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966; Nancy St. John, *School Desegregation: Outcomes for Children*, New York: John Wiley, 1975 ; Janet W Schofield , “[Maximizing the benefits of student diversity: Lessons from school desegregation research](#),” in G. Orfield and M. Kurlaender (eds.), *Diversity Challenged*, Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2002.

<sup>4</sup>Mickelson, R. A. (2008). Twenty-first century social science research on school diversity and educational outcomes. *Ohio State Law Journal*, 69, 1173-1228.

education reform or a barrier to educational change, but is, rather, an important education reform in itself. Desegregation increases learning, raises rates of graduation, and helps students from all backgrounds learn to understand, live, and work together in a diverse community, in a nation where half of the children born this year are not white and where all will live in a society of great diversity. Not only does desegregation generally have educational value, but there are also extensively-researched ways to enhance the educational and social gains of diverse schools.

In sum, there are and have been important educational reasons why districts like JCPS have sought to integrate schools, as well as benefits to the community, reflected in earlier attempts to pair housing integration efforts with JCPS's plan. Large majorities of parents in our survey also said they understood and supported the benefits of integration in the district. As JCPS moves forward with its diversity efforts, it should continue to disseminate both national and JCPS-specific evidence about why integration is important for students and the community.

***Our Background.*** The team that worked on this new plan included Professor Gary Orfield of UCLA, Professor Erica Frankenberg, of Pennsylvania State University, and Bruce Wicinas, a computer mapping specialist from Berkeley, California. Orfield has written or edited five books and many articles and reports on desegregation issues and been involved as an expert witness or a court-appointed expert in numerous cases, including in Jefferson County as a witness for the school district. Frankenberg is the first editor of the University of Virginia Press book, *Lessons in Integration*, and the forthcoming University of North Carolina Press book, *Integrating Schools in a Changing Society*, as well as many articles and reports. She is a graduate of an integrated magnet school in Mobile, Alabama, has her doctorate from Harvard University, and is an assistant professor of education. Wicinas is a highly experienced software engineer and expert in modeling and integrated systems engineering. His work played a central role in developing the successful Berkeley plan, which has proved effective in retaining diversity and was upheld in two major court decisions.<sup>5</sup> Among the great advantages we had was the availability of a great deal of data, that was not available to the makers of the last plan, and the possibility of using advanced computer mapping programs to develop and analyze alternatives. We also had full cooperation from the district's very capable staff, which meant that we were able to examine many alternatives. Orfield and Frankenberg wrote this report. Much of the statistical work and the maps included were produced by Wicinas. The information and data provided by the JCPS staff were critical for this work.

We understood that our assignment from the school board included reviewing the existing plan, making the plan more effective and more efficient, and lowering transportation times. We think that those goals are both feasible and important, but that they are just part of improving the local plan. More needs to be done to assure that the school choices are genuinely good ones, the access to good information about them becomes fairer, and the district strengthen the training of staff and equity efforts within each school to better realize the potentials of diverse schools with more successful integration within as well as among schools. The comprehensive nature of such efforts is essential for any student assignment plan that offers choice in such a large, diverse district.

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<sup>5</sup> To read more about Berkeley's integration plan, see <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/integration-defended-berkeley-unified2019s-strategy-to-maintain-school-diversity>

**Contents of the Report.** The first section of this report explains the way we approached the problem of understanding the communities of Jefferson County and developing a new elementary school assignment plan to preserve diversity and end long-distance transportation of students. It is followed by a description of the housing segregation that is a root cause of the county's segregation and has been compounded by housing subsidy programs. We suggest that the housing authorities should be requested to develop supportive policies to lower segregation and expand opportunity. We propose that the most stably integrated neighborhoods be granted absolute preference for neighborhood schools next year. The next section explains a number of the policy decisions embodied in the plan, including the new definition of diversity, the development of new clusters designed with transportation in mind, the inclusion of kindergarten students, the educational reasons for grandfathering students who want to remain in their existing school, the reason for the initial focus on the elementary grades, and the plan for reviewing magnet school quality and possible assignment changes for the middle and high schools during the following year. The final section proposes a number of changes in processes, technology, and organization to improve the efficiency of operation of the plan and to enhance its educational effects. These include computerization of the transportation and enrollment systems, major increases in easily accessible information for parents, and training of teachers and principals in strategies to enhance the educational benefits. Taken together, with enhanced evaluation and accountability, these efforts should improve the climate of diverse schools.

**Improving Student Assignment.** The current plan was easy to understand on a map, dividing the district into six clusters, and dividing families into two large categories. The plan sought to have the same percentage range of "A" students in schools, as was the case with black students under the prior plan. As we explored the data on the county and its schools, drawing heavily on new data from the 2010 Census, we discovered that the A and B plan radically oversimplified the demographic realities of a complex county, with a wide array of neighborhoods that often existed in close proximity to very different neighborhoods. By broadening the consideration of diversity from the individual child to a school's entire "resides" area (a necessary alteration due to the 2007 Supreme Court decision), the plan could not account for diversity that exists among smaller geographical areas. Further, when coupled with the six contiguous clusters, this resulted in some students having very long bus rides. Our assessment of the new Census and geographical data is that it is not necessary to cross the entire county to achieve diversity. We believe returning to a plan similar to the traditional JCPS clusters used in the desegregation plan for many years, and refining the measure of diversity, will more accurately reflect the diversity and will shorten the overall transportation burden.

Our plan is not built around any preconceptions and does not try to squeeze very important differences into excessively restrictive categories and boundaries. It starts with the realities of the district's hundreds of neighborhoods and its transportation infrastructure. It replaces the use of "resides areas" by using computer analysis of geo-coded data to figure out the clusters of schools and neighborhoods that can most efficiently accomplish the dual goals of diversity and proximity.

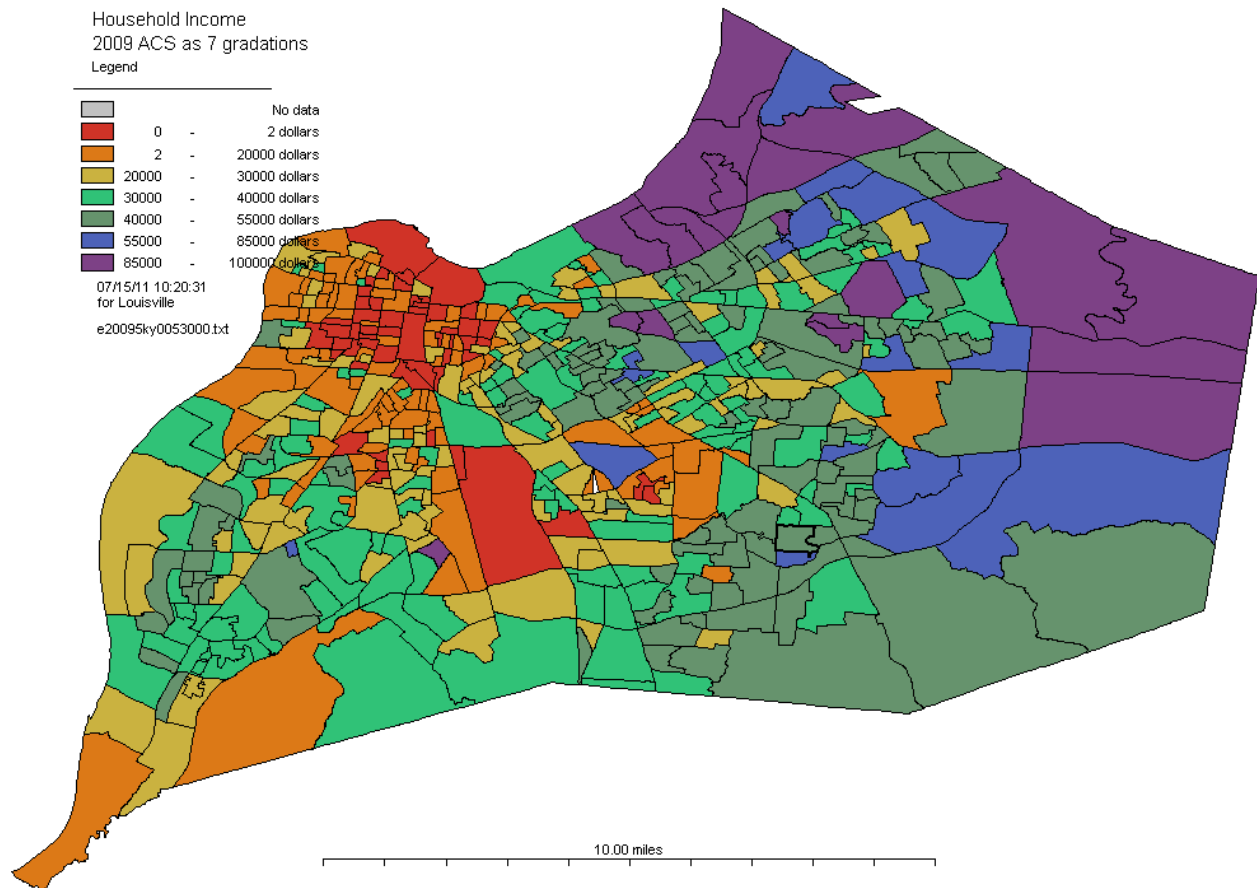
It seems like it should be a simple problem to shorten bus rides and maintain diversity. It was anything but that. A complex and changing county requires a complex plan. The first stage of our

analysis was to assess whether it was possible to make minor adjustments to the existing A-B plan in order to make it operate more effectively. Our in-depth analysis of more than 540 communities within Jefferson County shows that the county is far more complex and diverse than the A-B plan assumed, and that there were no simple tweaks that could make that plan work well and create truly diverse schools. Within each of these broad zones, there were areas that were more like the other zone than what their zone was supposed to represent. This meant that it was easy to be sending a student to another school to foster diversity when that did not actually happen, such as when a group of poor children who lived in B were combined with a pocket of poor children who lived in A. Also because the clusters were so large and diversity required bringing students from far away, the travel times could be very long.

There was more complexity in the population that could be reflected well in two categories, A and B. After looking at a great deal of information about Jefferson County, it became very apparent that the social structure of the county is not a two layer cake but much more like a marble cake with complex patterns of diversity spread out across much of the county, with the notable exceptions of some dramatically segregated areas at the eastern and western extremes (in terms of household income and race). There are many places where students can be brought together successfully in areas not far from their homes. No one needs to go completely across the county, unless they decide to access a great magnet opportunity. This is a sign of the increasing integration of a community that has become less segregated residentially, in part because students have been growing up together across racial lines in the county schools for generations. It is time to have a plan that takes advantage of this reality rather than needlessly transport students much longer distances.

The following two maps (see Maps 1 and 2) show a number of important things about the distribution of income and race across the county. First, there is wide variation along these dimensions often in areas right next to each other. Second, only the Northwest corner of the country has a substantial area that is very poor and racially segregated with few white residents. The maps also show that there are large areas of relatively low-income whites as well as African Americans. The maps, in short, tell us that there are multiple dimensions of inequality and that they are widely distributed across the county. When we mapped English Language Learners we found still another pattern, with little severe concentration to this point. What all this tells us is that you do not need to go across the country to get very considerable diversity.

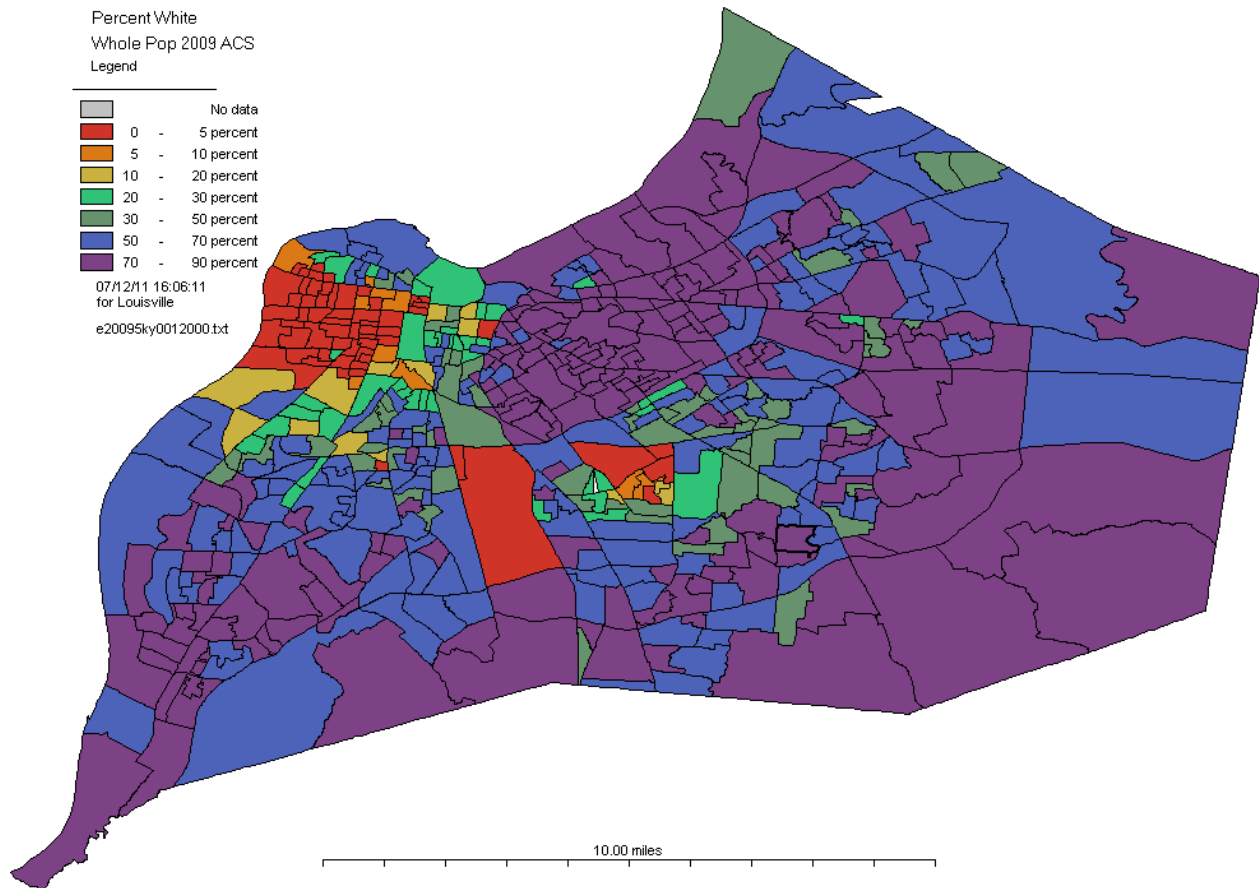
## Map 1: Distribution of Family Income Across Jefferson County, U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009



The eventual goal of the plan should be to have more stably integrated neighborhoods where students could just walk to diverse schools. Early in the history of the desegregation plan, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights recognized that goal and worked to coordinate school and housing desegregation efforts. They found that the simple policy of providing counselors who drove families with housing subsidies to see integrated neighborhoods where they could live rather than segregated ones had a significant impact. But this coordinated effort was lost over time. Later in this report we will discuss such possibilities for the future of the plan.

Because of the differences among nearby neighborhoods in various parts of the county, there are many opportunities to achieve diversity, by bringing students together from neighborhoods relatively close to each other, and guarantee that none of the non-magnet school choices will require transportation across the length of the county. By changing the maximum travel times dramatically, it should be possible to get students to school and home more quickly and to use transportation resources far more effectively. We believe that this will also address many of the parental concerns about small children being far from home.

**Map 2: Uneven Distribution of White Population Across Jefferson County, U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009**



We had the great advantage of having fresh and up-to-date census data in a county that is changing, with a rising African American, Asian and Latino population and a still large and relatively stable white population. (Across the U.S., the population is becoming more diverse. Nearly half the babies born last year were nonwhite, so the entire country is going through these changes, often much faster than in Jefferson County.) As we examined the data and the maps, two things became very apparent. The first was that we could bring diversity much closer to the places people lived, but the second was that there was no neat and simple way to do it, with a few boundaries on a map. It was also clear that in order to make some of the clusters work, particularly where there were very segregated housing patterns, the cluster would have to include some areas somewhat further away in the parts of the county with more diverse populations. Because of the widespread differences within the county, it was not possible to make all the clusters equal without very long-distance transportation, but all of them will be substantially integrated. The hardest problems will be in producing significant diversity for students in the extreme West and East of the county, the very places where the longest bus rides exist under the present plan. This new plan does it within a much shorter maximum distances. These are areas where housing and urban development policies, and fair housing counseling and enforcement could well be part of the long-term solution. Practical decisions have to be made to deal with the

reality of the size and location of the existing schools. In some areas, the existing set of school buildings creates special challenges: they either provide far too few seats or significantly too many spaces for the students who live in nearby communities. Moving forward, future school board decisions about locating new schools and adjusting school capacity should carefully consider how these decisions could help the integration plan.

Examining more than 540 neighborhoods defined by the Census in Jefferson County, we have grouped them around the existing transportation depots, adding outlying areas when it was the only way to create diversity. Then we attached each cluster of neighborhoods to a set of schools. It was a very complex process, but that is the nature of the distribution of people across the county by the three variables we developed defining the hundreds of neighborhoods—income, parental education, and race or ethnicity. Though the planning was complex, we believe that the experience for families should be significantly simpler than it is now. We recommend that parents each receive a simple list of the school available to them (as occurred under the pre-2008 plan), together with information about those schools on a greatly enhanced computerized system. The enhanced computerized system, an expanded version of the existing school finder perhaps paired with the bus finder interface, will be a much more user-friendly feature and enrich families' ability to understand their options in the school district. We mention below two models successfully pioneered elsewhere. Because there is uneven access to computers and information in the city, this effort must include working with libraries, schools, colleges, and other institutions and providing training for parents in how to use a simple and parent-friendly system to make their choices. There will also be personal counseling available from district staff. So though the demography is very complex, the plan should actually provide simpler, closer, and more easily understandable options for parents. A much more complex map should end up offering simpler and better choices to parents with shorter bus routes.

***The Clusters.*** We have identified tentative clusters of the more than 540 neighborhoods across the county, each of them related to one of the existing transportation depots to try to help maximize transportation efficiency.<sup>6</sup> Most of these clusters work out well in terms of school capacity. Because school location and capacity is not closely correlated to population in some areas, we are providing a tentative list of schools by cluster. We recommend that the capacity issues be fully reviewed by the school district's experts, who informed us that they believe this could be completed within the next week. The two crucial issues for parents to know now is that the clusters are all far more compact than the existing transportation routes and substantially diverse in terms of our three levels of diversity. Even from the most segregated areas at the extremes of the county, children would be guaranteed a school much closer to home than under the existing arrangements. (The tentative list of school clusters subject to review by JCPS experts can be found in the appendix.)

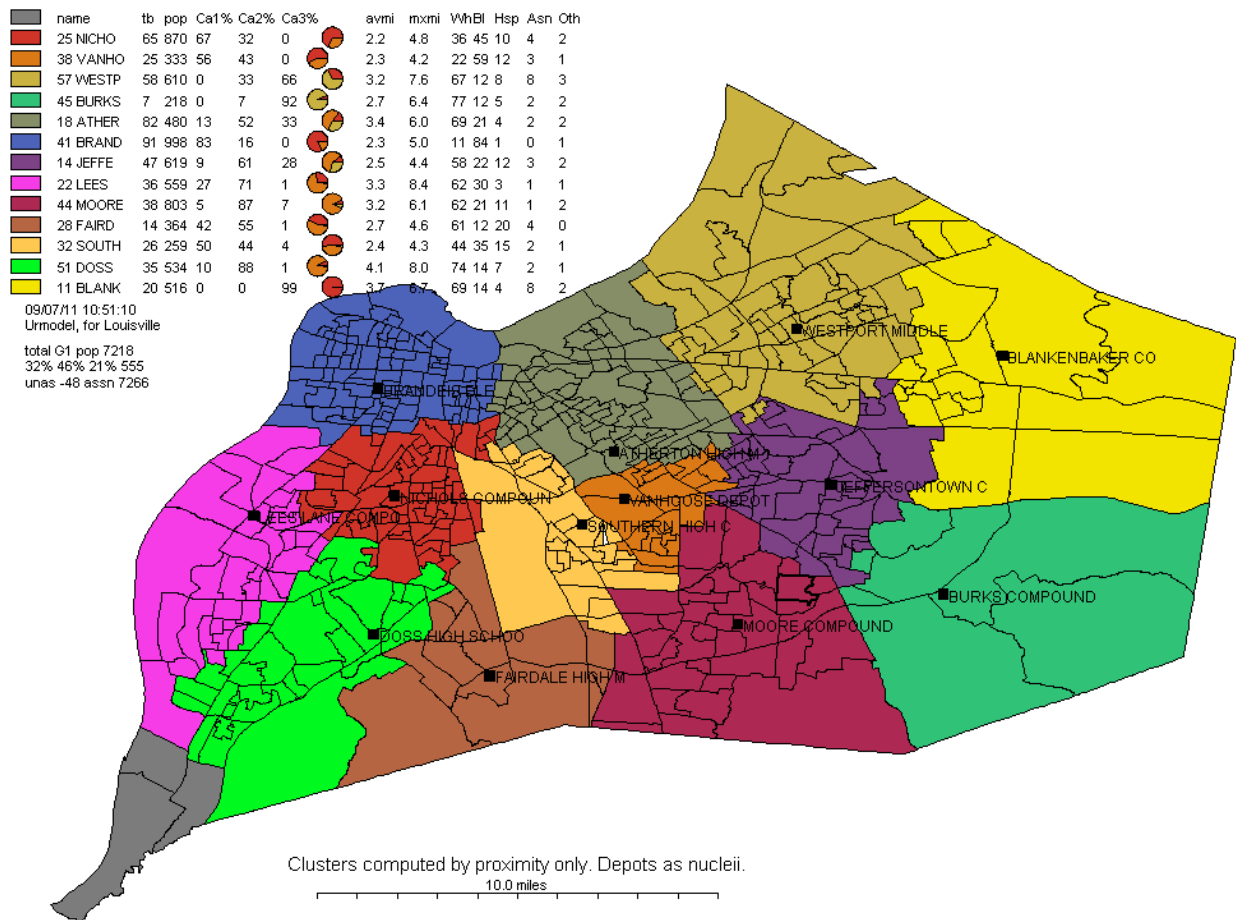
***Why Neighborhood Schools Wouldn't Work in Jefferson County.*** During our work we looked at what would happen to the county if it were to return to neighborhood schools. The analysis showed that it would produce intense segregation. Particularly in the East and West of the county and some areas in the South, it would produce schools that were almost entirely segregated for low-income African Americans and other schools that would be all-white with virtually no low-income families. Both groups of children would grow up with virtually no

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<sup>6</sup> Two of those depots are currently used exclusively for special education transportation.

contact with the diversity of Jefferson County. The following map, which shows not neighborhoods but sections of the county, indicates how extremely unequal the schools would become (map 3). Some regions would have a handful of whites, very low parental education, and many families in poverty, while others would have a very small minority of nonwhites, high incomes, and high levels of family education. The white population would vary from 11 to 74%, the black population from 12 to 88%, and the Hispanic population from 1 to 20%. At the school level, the segregation would be far more extreme.

**Map 3: Inequality in a proximity-based division of Jefferson County, U.S. Census American Community Survey 2009**





***Our Proposal for a New Plan.*** The basic structure of the plan replaces the six current clusters with thirteen clusters of schools, each of which provides considerable diversity among three groups of neighborhoods. The types of communities, which we could call categories 1, 2, and 3, replace “A” and “B” areas. We define these new categories by Census block group, which is considerably smaller than a “resides” area. Neighborhoods would be defined as a 1, 2, or 3 based on average levels of parent education, income, and percentage of white students. The middle group of neighborhoods, number 2, in which the combination of these variables most reflects the county averages, is the largest, including more than 40% of the neighborhoods. The least advantaged group of neighborhoods, number 1, includes about a third of the county, and the most advantaged neighborhoods, number 3, amount to about a fifth. The classification of each small neighborhood in category 1, 2, and 3 was done by a complex computer program that simultaneously looked at income, parent education and percent of whites in an area, combined the factors and found natural breaks in the data. For those who are technically minded, the description of the variables, the computer formulas that were used, and a map of the county according to these combined categories, can be found in appendix A.

None of the proposed clusters overwhelmingly serves children from any one of these three levels. All have considerable diversity and many, particularly in the center of the county, often reflect the countywide distribution of the three levels. Magnet schools will add to that diversity in some communities. It was impossible to achieve a level of diversity approximating that of the entire district at the far reaches of the county without very long bus rides, but none of these clusters has the extreme segregation that neighborhood assignment would produce and each has important choices, relatively nearby, for parents to consider. Under the existing plan nearly 40% of the schools are falling short of their goals. We think that this plan would produce an increase in the level of actual school-level diversity.

We were asked to do an independent report and that is what we've done here, but we realize that in making the ultimate decision about clusters, we need the advice of the JCPS experts who know the most about school capacity, conditions and adaptability. This proposed set of clusters should be taken as a draft only (Appendix B). They are an indication of how much more limited the maximum ride times would be from this plan. In the next week, the clusters should be reviewed and necessary modifications made to more correctly match capacities to clusters, and to deal with other problems not evident in the data we were provided. These clusters were prepared through the use of computer programs designed to maximize diversity and proximity. Among their advantages is the fact that they are totally independent of any local politics. The computing work, which explored huge numbers of possible combinations of more than 540 small neighborhoods, must now be enriched by the deep knowledge of JCPS data experts. *Until that review is done, no one should make plans or reach conclusions on the basis of this draft.*

We report not only black and white numbers but also the small and rapidly growing numbers of Latinos and Asians in various neighborhoods. National birth and immigration statistics show that these numbers are virtually certain to grow significantly so it is very important to think in terms of an increasingly multiracial community.

All parents will also, of course, retain the option of choosing magnet or traditional schools, which we propose to strengthen with a review of their success in attracting students, enhancing

diversity, and offering strong educational choices. With the right to stay in a child's existing school, options for other schools that do not require long bus trips, better parent information, and improved magnet options in the second year, this plan will increase parent options and directly address the leading challenges of implementing the existing plan.

***The Nature of the Jefferson County Community: Housing and Neighborhoods.*** A

desegregation plan has to start with an understanding of the area. In 2010, the Jefferson County population included 741,000 people living in more than 300,000 housing units. The overall population was 73% white, 21% African American, 4.4% Latino, and 2.2% Asian. According to the state's vital statistics, about 10,000 children were being born each year in the county during the 1990-2006 period, the most recently published state data.

The Metropolitan Housing Coalition's 2010 report, *The State of Fair Housing in Louisville: Impediments and Improvements*, concluded that 48% of the metropolitan area's white population lived in communities with fewer than 5 percent African American neighbors and another 26% lived in communities with less than a tenth African Americans. In other words, 74% of whites lived in areas that did not have a composition that would produce well-integrated neighborhood schools. 102 neighborhoods (Census tracts) showed this pattern of huge white majorities. At the same time, about 40 percent of the black residents lived in neighborhoods with more than 80 percent black population, though the county had only one-fifth black residents. These areas of segregated African American residence included 18 neighborhoods. The Housing Coalition's analysis showed that these often were areas of concentrated poverty, housing vacancies and social problems. The report found that those neighborhoods tended to have the worst health care and the most predatory mortgages. These troubled communities were also the locations where local officials had concentrated most of the housing projects and the families receiving subsidies for private housing. The report concluded:

Metro Council districts with the highest poverty levels are also the same areas with the highest concentrations of subsidized housing, and the greatest number of health problems, the least access to healthcare, and the greatest number of foreclosures and vacant properties. These neighborhoods also experience the greatest concentration of homeless students.

In other words, the public funds going into housing subsidies were actually contributing to school segregation and to a wide array of related social and economic problems that created more challenges for schools. A basic reason why metropolitan Louisville needs a plan to maintain school diversity is that too many of its neighborhoods are limited to a single group and far too many African American children are growing up in communities with multiple serious barriers to success. Map 4 clearly shows that the great majority of the very long distance bus routes in the county go to and from this area of intense residential segregation in the northwestern corner of the county.

**Map 4: Transportation from Depots to and from Schools, Current plan (Does not include transportation for students from home to depots)**



In spite of this grim record, there is clear evidence that Jefferson County has made progress on housing integration and, in fact, the long-term school desegregation effort has contributed to it. In a recent study statistically comparing a variety of metro areas with and without desegregation plans, Professor Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, of Virginia Commonwealth University, concluded:

Louisville-Jefferson County reported sharp declines in the share of black residents living in intensely segregated neighborhoods—but much less severe spikes in the share of black residents living in predominately minority neighborhoods. Specifically, the share of black residents living in 90-100% underrepresented minority communities fell by almost half, from roughly 45% in 1990 to about 25% in 2010, while the share of black residents in predominately minority neighborhoods increased from 20% to 30%.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Siegel-Hawley, G. (2011). *City Lines, County Lines, Color Lines: An Analysis of School and Housing Segregation in Four Southern Metropolitan Areas, 1990-2010*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles, p. 181.

Her study linked the decline in extreme segregation in the Jefferson county area to the fact that school integration was more stable than in similar cities without broad desegregation. A basic limit on the success, she notes, was the use of subsidized housing in ways that exacerbated the segregation, rather than helped the school district reach its goal with less transportation of students. Unfortunately the early vision of school-housing collaboration in Louisville has been lost.

We recommend that the school board formally request the housing authority, the planning officials, and the metro government to adopt policies favoring the development of stably integrated neighborhoods and the placement of all subsidized family housing in locations where it fosters naturally integrated neighborhoods, including housing built with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. Neighborhoods in the areas of greatest segregation of white families should be told that the school board's goal will be to create increasingly small clusters of schools as the neighborhoods become more integrated.

We recommend that the school board also request county authorities, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, and University of Louisville researchers to use available HUD or foundation funds to support regular audits of fair housing practices by realtors and rental agents in the county, checking for any evidence that, among other things, they are using the racial composition of schools either within the county or between counties in steering families to other neighborhoods or districts. Where they find good practices, the agencies should be commended, and where they find violations, they should be actively prosecuted. It would also be positive to launch collaborative city-school district training of real estate and rental agents about the positive outcomes of the school district and the attitudes of the county's residents about the positive values of diversity.

We also recommend that local planning, civil rights agencies and the school system focus special attention on racially changing communities. In such communities, it is very important to avoid racial steering by real estate agents, to maintain high quality public services and security, to address any signs of deterioration of the housing stock, to promote a positive image of the community and the neighborhood's schools, and to foster positive race relations. Such communities could well be considered as sites for new magnet schools.

**Rewarding Stable Neighborhoods.** Early in the history of the Jefferson County desegregation plan, there was an explicit effort to link school and housing desegregation and to move from transporting students to fostering neighborhood integration. The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights actually hired counselors to help poor, largely African American families receiving housing subsidies by showing them housing they could select outside traditional areas of segregation. Many of the families chose to move to the largely white areas and, under the plan at that time, they were automatically eligible for exemption from the plan. Neighborhoods that became integrated under the definitions then in the plan were given neighborhood schools. As the plan evolved and became more choice-based, this explicit link with housing was lost. We recommend that it be restored. The ultimate goal of a diversity plan is to make itself less necessary by creating the conditions under which, in the case of the plan, diversity gets built deeply into the fabric of communities. Integrated schools in stably integrated neighborhoods, where students from diverse backgrounds can share experiences both in school and in the

neighborhood, are the ultimate goal and the basis of a truly healthy community in our racially changing society.

It would be a very good support for stably integrated neighborhoods, and an incentive for others moving in this direction, to offer residents of neighborhoods that have been substantially and stably integrated by race and class for a decade or more, an absolute right to attend their neighborhood school, in addition to the normal range of choices offered to everyone in the cluster. Our preliminary examination of resides data from elementary schools areas from 2000-2010 shows that there are a number of such neighborhoods. This effort might start a year from next fall (Fall 2013) with the ten neighborhoods that seem to best exemplify this goal for a decade or more.

**Defining Diversity.** Diversity can have many meanings. The U.S. Supreme Court said in the Jefferson County decision in 2007 that it cannot be pursued by assigning any individual student to a school solely on the basis of their race or ethnicity. Diversity within the A-B plan was defined with a strong emphasis on household income, adult educational attainment, and race. All parts of the county were designated as either A or B based on the average composite scores on these three dimensions combined for an entire school's resides area. The new plan will, like the existing one, be based on a multiple dimensional definition of diversity and will be based on geographic areas, not the characteristics of individual students. The definition of diversity used in this plan combines the newest information from the Census on income, on race and ethnicity, and on parent education. Because there were very wide variations on these measures across the county, we find it is more appropriate to divide the areas into three categories of diversity rather than two. The other distinction in the new plan is to look at much smaller areas in the county that reflect the differences much more accurately than the larger "resides" areas in the current plan. Not only is this more accurate but it makes it much easier to find diverse areas close to each other.

The basic goal of the diversity plan will be to create clusters that avoid isolation of any of the three kinds of areas defined by combining these various diversity characteristics -- to the greatest practical extent -- without excessive transportation. Within each cluster, school assignment policies will attempt to reflect as closely as possible that cluster's distribution of category 1, 2 and 3 neighborhoods. Applicants from neighborhoods that make the school more reflective of the cluster average would be given preferences in enrollment decisions and recruitment efforts. Counseling and recruiting parents would be used to bring out-of-balance schools as close as possible to the cluster average. The yearly accountability report would show the composition of each school within each cluster.

**Focusing on Elementary Schools.** Primary schools are the focus at the beginning of this new plan because they were the part of the current plan that produced public concern and discontent and the lengthy transportation requirements. The middle and high school diversity plans operate within clusters that already provide fewer transportation problems and the middle school boundaries were redrawn by the school board this year. We think that there should be no changes in those boundaries and assignment processes for the coming year. We think that the JCPS staff should review the situation after the new elementary clusters are in operation to see whether it would be more effective to adopt similar methods for middle school and high school

clusters. We believe that implementing a new elementary plan would improve both the convenience and support for the plan in general, as well as creating more real diversity in the schools. Since children would be closer to each other there would also be better opportunities for out-of-school and afterschool activities and relationships.

**Grandfathering Existing Students.** A basic principle of this plan will be to expand, not limit, good choices for parents. Families with children in schools will have the choice of continuing in their existing school or choosing another, which will often be nearer. One of the fundamental choices in designing a new plan is whether to implement the new policy uniformly at the same time, or to make it possible for students happy in their existing school to remain there. The first choice saves transportation money and confusion. It is easier to administer. The second offers parents the opportunity to assure continuity for students happy with their existing schools. We recommend allowing students to remain where they are if they wish. No child will be forced to leave a school he or she loves. But we also recommend sensible limits and strong parent information efforts about the new plan's options that we think will be very attractive to many parents. We recommend that grandfathering be limited to children already in a school, not to their younger siblings and that it not be extended beyond their existing school (e.g., if student is in elementary, permitted to remain there until 5<sup>th</sup> grade and then be assigned under new plan for 6<sup>th</sup> grade). We believe it is likely that many parents will choose to transfer to nearby choices and recommend that priority be given to counseling the parents of children who are now on very long bus rides about these new choices. The district should schedule sessions at all schools to welcome and inform parents about their offerings.

**Reviewing Magnet and Traditional Schools.** Magnets have long been an important part of the Louisville desegregation plan and we recommend that they be continued and strengthened under the revised plan. We make recommendations regarding revisions to consider such that magnet schools can support the working of the entire student assignment system.

The basic function of magnet schools is to create strong educational incentives for voluntary desegregation by offering an authentically distinctive and attractive program that successfully draws applications from diverse groups of parents. It is a mistake to believe that simply designating a school as a magnet will make it succeed in producing educational gains. If magnet schools are not magnetic enough to attract students over a reasonable period of time, then they should be terminated. Otherwise the idea will be depreciated, a potentially valuable tool will fail, and the district will be forced to accept resegregation. Alternately, the district will need to mandatorily assign students to a school designed to foster voluntary choices, diluting the concentration of students and parents committed to the goal of the school.

**We recommend:**

1. Transportation should be provided to all magnet/option/traditional schools to ensure that all students in all parts of the districts have fair and equitable access to these schools.
2. All schools have a maximum of one magnet theme (eight elementary schools currently have two magnet programs).
3. Partial magnet programs in schools be ended or converted into full school magnets encompassing the entire student body over a three-year period.

4. Magnet admissions should be managed centrally by the district rather than individual schools.<sup>8</sup> In a number of schools, magnet applicants that would have helped the school's A/B composition were not admitted, thus limiting the potential of the magnet school program to aid the school's diversity.
  - a. In addition to managing admissions, the district should monitor those magnet schools with serious underrepresentation of and demand from nonwhites and students from poor families. The district, in partnership with these schools, should create goals and recruitment strategies to increase demand among these groups.
  - b. Magnet school applications should be the same as applications to non-magnet school to make it easier for any family to select this option. Enrollment should be on preference and diversity by neighborhood only unless the board specifically approves a screening system. Any selection mechanism other than something minimal, such as requiring a visit to the school, tends to produce stratification in magnet populations. This does not, in any way, mean that magnet schools cannot have demanding academic programs and inform potential students about them. We encourage challenging curricula but want all students to have equal access to trying to meet those standards.
5. Where there is very excessive demand for a magnet school with a certain theme (particularly among all segments of the district population), the district should consider the possibility of creating another school using this theme in a different part of the district. There should be a special emphasis on upgrading magnet options in the far western section of the county where severe residential segregation creates serious obstacles to integrated schooling.
6. Magnets that draw few applications over several years be eliminated or replaced by a more viable theme. We believe that some schools have been remarkably successful, others are solid performers that might be strengthened, and some should be reviewed by a committee appointed by the superintendent. We have attached a list of the schools we think should be reviewed now. Each of these programs have had less than 20 applicants during 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years, and should be reviewed and adjustments considered for the 2013-14 school year:
  - Breckinridge small class
  - Cane Run small class
  - Coral Ridge
  - Crums redesign
  - Englehard redesign
  - Frayser
  - Hazelwood
  - Maupin small class
  - Portland—both programs
  - Price AP
  - Slaughter
  - Wheatley redesign
7. Consideration should be given to creating one or more statewide magnet schools situated in Louisville and sponsored by the state government, enrolling students from anywhere in the

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<sup>8</sup> In the automated application software we propose below, there could be special fields added for magnet schools, for example, to allow for consideration of magnet schools that require applicants to attend a building tour.

state, perhaps located at Shawnee High School. Some of these statewide programs in North Carolina and Illinois are extremely popular and successful.

8. Magnet schools should not be judged solely on state tests since their essence is to offer something additional that is typically not offered or evaluated. We recommend that the JCPS work with local universities in developing evaluations that show the value added by the special offerings in the magnet programs—such as studies showing the growth in musical performance skills or skills in business operation if those were the magnet themes. This information, even if it were only based on student and parent questionnaires, would obviously be very valuable to other parents considering magnet options.
9. Cluster or district-wide magnet and traditional schools should continue as is until they are reviewed in the overall magnet review.

***Including Kindergarten.*** We recommend that Kindergarten be included in the plan, since the plan will address the parental concern about having young children far away from home. For most families, this has already happened and the great majority of kindergarten parents were positive even under a plan that required longer bus rides than the new one will. For those parents who stay at home during the day (a shrinking minority), it would be better obviously to be close to their kindergarten students. But this means that those children, as they became adjusted to their first school and known to the staff, would have to face a transfer at first grade, which disrupts educational and social continuity and forces another adjustment. Since there is good evidence that going to school on a bus is actually safer than walking, and the distances would no longer be great, we think that the educational and student adjustment issues, as well as transportation efficiency, argue strongly for including kindergarten in the student assignment process, unless a particular child faces very special medical or other problem.

We recommend inclusion of Kindergarten students for several additional reasons. Virtually all desegregation plans begin in Kindergarten as shown in many local plans.<sup>9</sup> In this school year, the distribution of Kindergarten students, is actually more integrated than the early elementary grades. In our survey of JCPS parents (January 2011 report),<sup>10</sup> kindergarten parents were actually more positive about a number of student assignment questions than were parents of older children. Here is an example of a few findings from our survey of parents:

- (1) “The highest percentage of parents strongly agreeing about the importance of guidelines to create racially and economically diverse schools were parents of kindergarten students (65%).”
- (2) “Close to 90% of kindergarten parents were satisfied, and 45% were ‘completely satisfied’ with the quality of their child’s education.” (80% of all JCPS parents were satisfied).

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<sup>9</sup> Berkeley, California’s plan is for K-5 grade students: <http://www.berkeley.net/index.php?page=student-assignment-plan>; Cambridge, MA’s controlled choice plan is for K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students: <http://www3.cpsd.us/media/theme/ProCambridge/network/10516/media/CPS%20Redesign/documents/Policies/ControlledChoice.pdf?rev=0>; Montclair, NJ’s voluntary integration plan consists entirely of magnet schools (e.g., no zoned/cluster school) and applies to students K-12: <http://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/WebPage.aspx?Id=165>; San Francisco, CA’s newly implemented student assignment policy includes kindergarten students: <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/assets/sfusd-staff/enroll/files/board-of-education-student-assignment-policy.pdf>; City-suburban desegregation programs like METCO in metropolitan Boston begin with kindergarten students being bused to suburban school districts and has a waiting list of more than 900 kindergarten students who wish to participate: [http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/110616\\_METCOMeritsMore.pdf](http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/110616_METCOMeritsMore.pdf). For educational reasons, the suburban superintendents often wish to take children as early as possible.

<sup>10</sup> <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/experiencing-integration-in-louisville-how-parents-and-students-see-the-gains-and-challenges>



- (3) “Parents of kindergarten students were the most supportive of the plan’s implementation (58%) who rated implementation as a 5, 6, or 7.” (compared to 54% of all parents)
- (4) They were equally likely as parents of older children to use bus transportation.

Finally, although not part of our survey, JCPS staff has reported that when kindergarten students attend a school that will not be their school for the primary grades, parents are often upset by the need to change schools for first grade.

**Considering Hispanic, Asian and ESL Students.** The dynamics of population changes in the U.S. for the last several decades, which are likely to continue well into the future, is that the growth of the population and its multiracial diversification are being driven by the migration of young people from Latin America and Asia, both internationally and within the U.S. In our public schools nationally, we now have a fifth who are Latino students and about a twentieth who are Asian; about a tenth of our students are classified as English-language learners. Though the changes have been slower in Kentucky than elsewhere, they are becoming-- and will continue to become-- more visible and significant. One-fifth of the public school students in the South are now Latino. In preparing this plan, we have examined the housing patterns of all of these groups and noted that so far there is little serious residential segregation. Where there are modest concentrations of ESL students, it is in different areas than the concentrations of African American families. We believe that the district should take into careful account the new multiracial diversity that will be increasingly evident, prepare its staff, and reflect in its curriculum the multiracial society of the future. ESL students should be incorporated into the new plan and counted accordingly towards the school’s diversity. This diversity is not only a challenge but also an opportunity for white and African American students in Louisville to interact directly with students from distant lands and different cultures, and with native speakers of Spanish and other world languages. In a globalizing world, careful organization of dual-language magnets and other strategies to tap these possibilities would give students in this part of Kentucky opportunities that could not have been provided before. It is very important to frame these changes as a significant opportunity to enrich the community, rather than as a threat, and to work on identifying educators from these groups that can help the school system manage well the continuing changes. We do not yet find significant problems of segregation of Hispanic students and English language learner students in Jefferson County, but a careful watch for the emergence of this problem, which has often developed elsewhere, should be part of the annual review of the diversity plan.

**Improving Transportation Systems.** Our parent survey during the last school year showed that transportation was a distinct sore point in the community’s generally positive attitude toward desegregation. The school district’s transportation team deserves congratulations for a much more effective opening of school this year. The investment in planning clearly made a major difference. Comparing JCPS transportation with other large school districts, the outside transportation consultant noted, however, that the JCPS system has not yet made effective use of the power of contemporary computer programs to raise the efficiency and lower the long-term cost of transportation. We strongly believe that transporting students to good, diverse schools is a safe and solid educational investment, and is very positive for the future of the community. At the same time, it is very important, particularly in difficult economic times, to be sure that the district’s money is spent effectively and that transportation operates as efficiently as possible. It

is well known in the computer world that routing is one of the most complex sets of decisions, given all of the millions of combinations of possible patterns of moving children across a large county. The existing system gets children to school and home, but it is humanly impossible to compare all the combinations and permutations of possible ways to do this more quickly and at lower cost. The initiation of a new system of clusters where major savings should be possible offers the perfect opportunity to do this at the elementary school level. We recommend that the district's transportation consultant be asked to work with district staff and identify a contractor to design a computerized system and the related management systems and staff training to administer it. It should be used at least for the elementary routes for next fall. Part of this assistance should set out rules for bus stops of the sort most commonly used in major city transportation planning, since there is a clear link between large numbers of stops, longer travel times for students on the buses, and less opportunity for multiple uses of buses. Obviously, any change of this magnitude would require full on-the-ground tests of the routes developed in advance of school opening in order to identify and solve potential problems and assure a smooth opening of school. We believe that substantial savings of money and time are possible.

**Strengthening the Academic Benefits through Training and Monitoring.** Creating diverse schools is an invaluable precondition for equalizing school opportunity, improving achievement and increasing graduation, by bringing students from very unequal neighborhoods and family resources into schools where there are richer opportunities, better-prepared classmates and more experienced teachers. Whether or not these possibilities are realized depends, of course, on how the school treats students after they arrive there. In the worst case, if diverse students are brought into the same building but end up in classes largely segregated by race and family background, the academic benefits will be minimized and **stereotypes of privileged students and of poorer backgrounds that may be reinforced** as students experience very different and separate education within the same school. On the other hand, if students are challenged, treated with fairness and respect, positively incorporated in the life of the school, and encouraged and supported to take challenging courses, it can be a life-changing experience.

Jefferson County has a number of training activities that challenge prejudice and produce culturally sensitive teaching. Sometimes such training inadvertently creates oversimplified racial and ethnic stereotypes about learning styles of entire racial groups and creates resentment. These programs can be very useful but should always be independently evaluated to make sure that they are having clear, positive long-term impacts. The evaluation should be done, not right after the in-service, when evaluations are almost always positive, but later, and should focus on whether the teacher sees gains in useful tools for instruction and classroom relationships.<sup>11</sup>

We suggest tying staff development strongly to enhancing the academic gains within diverse schools. Desegregation, properly done, is a powerful educational reform. We recommend that the potential academic benefits can be enhanced by giving teachers and principals the opportunities to master research-based techniques and build productive interpersonal relationships across student subgroups. Many teachers believe that this can be done simply by treating all students the same and ignoring their race and ethnicity, and by letting their class

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<sup>11</sup> Stephan, C., Renfro, L., & Stephan, W. (2004). The evaluation of multicultural education programs: Techniques and a meta-analysis. In W. Stephan & W. Vogt (Eds.), *Education programs for improving intergroup relations: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 227-242). New York: Teachers College Press.

organize itself in study groups, etc. without any plan for integration. Often professional development focuses on racial prejudice, but does not provide teachers with useful research-based tools about making diverse classrooms function more equitably and productively, techniques that improve both student attitudes and achievement. This is greatly facilitated by intentionally grouping students in integrated groups for academic purposes.<sup>12</sup> Also, very important, is strengthening students' connection with their schools by taking positive steps to assure that extracurricular activities, so important to many students' lives, welcome and seek out students from all backgrounds and treat everyone fairly.<sup>13</sup> As transportation may be reduced under the new plan, the district could consider adding late transportation to allow students more opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, which JCPS parents supported in the earlier survey.

**Monitoring Equity.** It is important that these key elements of equity be monitored and discussed within each school and be part of the accountability system. There should be special sensitivity, for example, about how students are selected for gifted and talented programs or honors courses while also avoiding over-assignment to special education, especially for young males of color.<sup>14</sup> There should also be careful monitoring of grade retention, since it is directly related to the likelihood of dropping out and typically is a costly and unsuccessful educational treatment according to a National Academy of Sciences report.<sup>15</sup> Carefully monitoring discipline and expulsion issues by race and ethnicity, while also developing strategies such as positive behavior supports, should be part of the annual monitoring report.

**A Diverse School Needs a Diverse Faculty.**<sup>16</sup> Though colleges are failing to produce a generation of new teachers that matches the diversity of students, affirmative action recruiting and strong efforts to develop and retain African American and Hispanic teachers and administrators is very important. There is increasing evidence of the value of teachers of color both for students' achievement and for creating positive home-school relationships. There is also evidence that minority teachers and staff are less likely to inappropriately suspend or put into special education students of color. Since 2006, schools in JCPS had an average of approximately 83.5% of teachers who were white (with schools ranging from 51.5% to 100% white) and just over 15% of teachers are black. As Latino and Asian students comprise a larger percentage of JCPS students, recruiting teachers from these groups should be a priority.

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<sup>12</sup> Cohen, E. (2004). Producing equal-status interaction amidst classroom diversity. In W. Stephan & P. Vogt (Eds.), *Education programs for improving intergroup relations, theory, research, and practice* (pp. 37-54). New York: Teachers College Press; Cooper, R., & Slavin, R. (2004) Cooperative learning: An instructional strategy to improve intergroup relations. In W. G. Stephan & W.P. Vogt (Eds.), *Education programs for improving intergroup relations: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 55-70). New York: Teachers College Press; Schools should facilitate learning in diverse classrooms through strategies such as cooperative learning (Cooper & Slavin, 2004); peer-mediated instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2009); and differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2003). See also (Burriss & Garrity, 2008)

<sup>13</sup> Denson, N. (2009). Do curricular and co-curricular diversity activities influence racial bias? A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*. 79 (2). 805-838

<sup>14</sup> D. Losen and G. Orfield, eds., (2002). *Racial Inequity in Special Education*, Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

<sup>15</sup> J. Heubert and R. Hauser, eds., *High Stakes: Testing for Tracking, Promotion and Graduation*, Washington: National Academy Press, 1999.

<sup>16</sup> This was recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1968 *Green* decision.

**Upgrading Technology and Information Systems.** The basic entry point for parents into the assignment process should be an excellent, easy-to-use, information rich website. Implementing significant changes in student assignment for any reason can create confusion and frustration for parents trying to figure out the nature and implications of the changes. One of the great potential advantages of the age of the Internet is that we have potentially powerful tools to create a much better flow of readily understandable and useful information for the families who would face changes under the new plan. We suggest that JCPS enhance its existing school finder through its website and include a direct link to this information year-round on the front page of the district website. Other cities have already developed effective models<sup>17</sup> where parents can just type in their address and find out what their choices for schools may be, where they are, and receive some important information about them. We recommend that the district develop and implement a model that would include information about the schools, pictures and maps, data on the school's offerings, faculty and administration, and student performance, including not just scores but especially how much students gain during a year of studying there. The system could be linked to Google street views or other websites, such as public transportation in Jefferson County, which would provide information to parents so that they could go from their homes by car or even bus to visit schools that might interest them.

**Equalizing Information in Applications and Placements.** A central problem that we identified in our parent survey was that parents in the poorer parts of the county had less information and understanding of their choices. The school system has been remarkably successful in giving the vast majority of parents initially enrolling in the early grades their first choice of school, if they file their applications on time. In 2011, for first grade, 82% of Area A families submitted on-time applications and 90% of Area B families did. 96% of those who got their first-choice school submitted their application on time. The value of timely applications—with application dates and clear instructions for applications— should be highly publicized.

The fact that middle-class families are much more likely to have high-speed access to the internet in their homes also raises a problem. We think that in order to try to equalize information access, the district should work closely with libraries, colleges, businesses, churches, and other institutions to provide free Internet access to interested parents. The district, perhaps in partnership with community organizations, should offer training sessions in how to use the information system. As we found in our survey of JCPS parents, different groups of parents obtain information about applications and schools through different ways. TV outlets, radio stations and newspapers (including any ethnic media outlets) could also be asked to help distribute this information. The district should also continue to provide person-to-person counseling to parents, especially for those new to the system, at its headquarters and at selected schools in different geographical regions of the county. With serious implementation of this system, families in Louisville would not only have the choice of closer options but also much more information to make informed choices.

**Automation of Student Application Processes.** We recommend automation of the basic application processes to reduce the staff burden in processing and to make it possible for staff to

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<sup>17</sup> Examples include Metropolitan Hartford: <http://internet2.trincoll.edu/GMaps/SmartChoices.html>; San Francisco Unified School District, which recently adopted a new student assignment plan: <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/enroll-in-sfusd-schools/interactive-school-selector.html>

devote more time to parent information and counseling work throughout the community. With clear rules and priorities programmed into the system, it would be possible to give parents more rapid responses and to substantially reduce paperwork. To avoid the current situation in which two-fifths of the schools are out of compliance, enhanced counseling and recruiting efforts would be very helpful. With computerized real-time records of assignments and a computerized transportation system, there could be closer coordination between the enrollment and transportation planning functions as well as more ability to spot and respond to problems, such as the need for more counseling and recruitment work among certain subgroups or particular transportation challenges. It would also relieve the administrative burden on schools that currently must enter the applications that are submitted to each school site during the enrollment cycle.

**Improving Evaluation.** We recommend that JCPS ask the superintendent, perhaps in consultation with external advisors, to annually assess the student assignment system and produce an annual report to be submitted to the school board. We believe this will be important for considering whether any minor changes to the student assignment system need to be made depending on changes in parents' choices, demographics, school capacity new buildings, and other such shifts that require on-going monitoring and minor adjustments made to the plan. Further, this annual report will provide transparency to the entire JCPS community about the effectiveness of the plan.

### **Steps Forward: September 2011-August 2012**

A series of action steps are needed to move from the plan to a successful solution. The presentation of this plan today is the beginning of a process that will require an organized effort over the next year and include community meetings and board decisions. Once the board has made its decisions and published the choices parents will face for next fall, a number of steps must be put in place as soon as possible. First, the board should receive from Dr. Hargens a detailed plan to address the following issues:

- implementation of intensified parent information and counseling
- implementation of new computer gateway for parent information and enrollment
- request for active support from housing agencies and city government
- development of computerized bus routing for new clusters (or entire system)
- development of supplemental staff training
- development of racial equity monitoring instruments
- provide for parent visits and registration procedures
- full-scale run through of transportation issues
- implementation of first year changes by the opening of school in August

### **Second Year: August 2012-August 2013**

- magnet school review and decisions
- designation of stably integrated areas to receive neighborhood school preference
- needed changes in middle and high school clusters (possibly minimal)
- implementation of ongoing evaluation procedures, recommendations for adjusting the plan if needed (e.g., more outreach to certain groups if applications are not submitted on-time)

We have every confidence that the staff of the JCPS can implement a new plan effectively and skillfully once the Board makes the decisions and sets the process in motion. We hope that this is the beginning of another step forward in the nationally respected leadership role of Jefferson County Public Schools. Our conclusion is that there is ample time to implement this plan for next fall and our experience is that delaying decisions will increase divisions, as many groups seek local advantages and foster controversy. The ultimate decisions will be no easier with delays but valuable time and energy will be lost.

## Appendix A

### “Factors” and Combination Methodology

Bruce Wicinas

The following “factors” were computed for each of the 540 “small neighborhoods” (Census block groups) of the city.

#### I. Computation of Socio-Economic Factors and Race Factor

- A. Socio-Economic Factor, “Household Income”: This is taken direct from Census American Community Survey (ACS)<sup>18</sup> B19013.
- B. Socio-Economic Factor, “Educational Average”: This is a weighted average computed from Census ACS matrix B15002, using the following methodology:

“Weight” per applied to educational attainment categories:

- 1 - Finished grade 8 or less;
- 2 - Did not finish high school;
- 3 - Finished high school;
- 3.5 - Some college or associate degree.
- 4 - Bachelor’s degree;
- 5 - Masters or professional degree;
- 6 - Doctorate.

Using the weights above the weighted “average” is computed as follows. The average yields a decimal number between 1.0 and 6.0.

“Education Average” =

$$\frac{\sum_{\text{over all the above categories}} (\text{Population of category} * \text{Weight per category})}{\text{Total population}}$$

- C. Race Factor, “Percent non-white”: For the purpose of combining a “race” factor with multiple other factors, a single-numeral measure of race is desired. This single-percentage diversity measure is computed from ACS B02001.

$$\text{“Percent non-white”} = \frac{100 * \text{Sum of non-white population}}{\text{Total population}}$$

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<sup>18</sup> The American Community Survey is a continuous sample surveyed by the U.S. Census Bureau and in effect replaces the long version of the decennial Census.

## II. Combining Factors to yield county diversity map

Socio-Economic + Race Classification, Unadjusted: The three measures detailed above were combined to yield an integer “classification” code limited to values 1, 2 and 3.

## III. How do we combine this diverse data to get a simple 1, 2 or 3?

Each of the three “factors” varies over a different data “space.” Average household income varies from \$6,300 to \$156,000 (in Jefferson County.) The Education average varies from 1.7 to 4.3. The “Percent non-white” varies from 0 to 100. To combine the three factors in a way that gives them equal weight, each factor must be “mapped” (linearly transformed) from these disparate “outcome spaces” (range) to a “common outcome” space – a decimal value between 1.0 and 3.9. When each factor has been transformed to a decimal value that varies identically then we can give each the same “weight.” The three components are then three “mapped” (linearly transformed) factors.

Income category =

Income <= \$42000	1
\$42000 <=Income <= \$62000	2
Income > \$62000	3

Education category (see categories above)=

Education Average <= 3.5	1
3.5 <= Education Average <= 3.7	2
Education Average > 3.7	3

Race category =

Percent white <= 73	1
73 <= Percent white <= 88	2
Percent white > 88	3

Each category value is an integer, 1, 2 or 3.

The three category values are combined by applying respective weights:

Socio-Economic Combination Category =

$$1 + .23 * (\text{Income Category}) + .33 * (\text{Education Category}) + .33 * (\text{Percent White category})$$



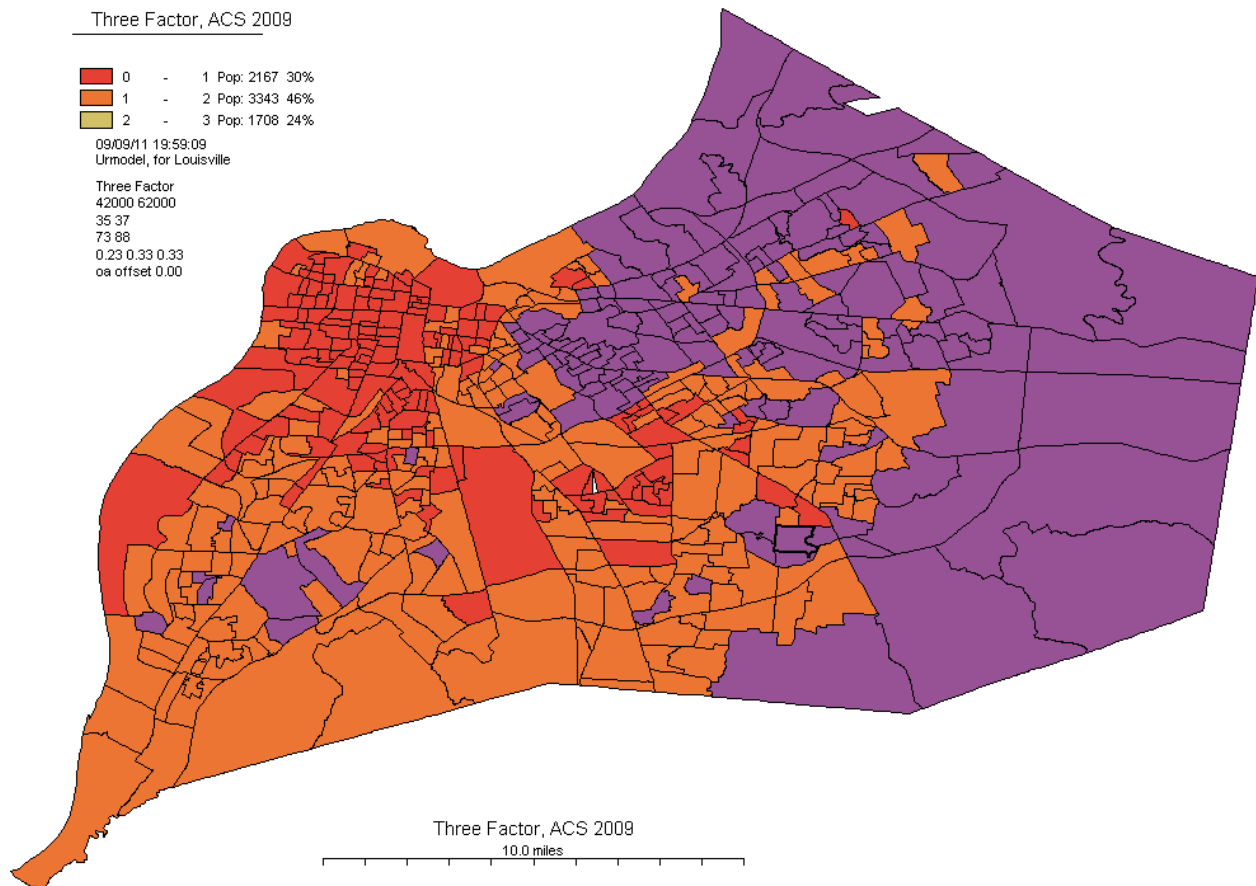
The breakpoints and factors in the formulas above were chosen, by many iterations, simply to divide the district's grade 1 population into desired proportions and to reveal the "grain" of demographic distinctions across the county. The sum of this weighted average was then categorized into three diversity code values of 1, 2, and 3 as shown below.

Weighted Avg. 1 to 2 →	Weighted Avg. 2 to 3.0 →	Weighted Avg. 3.0 and above →
SocioEc Category 1	SocioEc Category 2	SocioEc Category 3

The following is an example computation of this for three tract blocks of Jefferson County.

Tract Block	Average Income	Average Education (adult male)	Percent white	Computation, Socio-Economic Weighted Average	Socio-ec Category
200,2	19046 (cat 1)	2.8 (cat 1)	86 (cat 2)	$1 + (.23 * 1) + (.33 * 1) + (.33 * 2) = 1.89$	1
9400,6	35433 (cat 1)	3.4 (cat 1)	95 (cat 3)	$1 + (.23 * 1) + (.33 * 1) + (.33 * 2) = 2.23$	2
13100,2	87917 (cat 3)	4.0 (cat 3)	95 (cat 3)	$1 + (.23 * 3) + (.33 * 3) + (.33 * 3) = 3.69$	3

Here is a map illustrating the distribution of categories 1, 2, and 3 across Jefferson County.



## Appendix B Preliminary Cluster List

### **Jeffersontown Compound**

Middletown Elementary  
Hite Elementary  
*Greathouse/Shryock Trad  
Elem\**  
Klondike Lane Elementary  
Tully Elementary  
Watterson Elementary  
Jeffersontown Elementary

### **Atherton High**

Dunn Elementary  
Field Elementary  
Engelhard Elementary  
Bloom Elementary  
Shelby Elementary  
Hawthorne Elementary

### **Lees Lane Compound**

Byck Elementary  
Roosevelt/Perry  
Elementary  
Wheatley Elementary  
*Carter Traditional Elem\**  
Crums Lane Elementary  
Wellington Elementary  
Kerrick Elementary  
Shacklette Elementary  
Greenwood Elementary  
Eisenhower Elementary  
Sanders Elementary  
Johnsontown Road  
Elementary  
Wilkerson Elementary

### **Nichols Compound**

Cochran Elementary  
Cane Run Elementary  
Frayser Elementary  
Mill Creek Elementary  
*Schaffner Elementary\**  
Jacob Elementary  
Semple Elementary  
Gutermuth Elementary  
Rutherford Elementary

### **Fairdale High**

Foster Elementary  
Maupin Elementary  
Kennedy Elementary\*\*  
Auburndale Elementary  
Minors Lane Elementary  
Blake Elementary  
Fairdale Elementary  
Coral Ridge Elementary  
Watson Lane Elementary

### **Southern High Compound**

Mcferran Elementary  
*Audubon Traditional  
Elem\**  
Camp Taylor Elementary  
Gilmore Lane Elementary  
Indian Trail Elementary  
Slaughter Elementary  
Okolona Elementary

### **Vanhoose Depot**

Chancey Elementary  
Norton Elementary  
Goldsmith Elementary  
Price Elementary  
Rangeland Elementary

### **Brandeis Elementary**

Portland Elementary  
Atkinson Elementary  
Chenoweth Elementary  
King Elementary  
*Lincoln Elementary\**  
Breckinridge/Franklin  
Elem

### **Burks Compound**

Cochrane Elementary  
Farmer Elementary  
Bates Elementary  
Laukhuf Elementary  
Wilt Elementary

### **Doss High School**

*Young Elementary\**  
*Brandeis Elementary\**  
Hazelwood Elementary  
Kenwood Elementary  
Layne Elementary  
Stonestreet Elementary  
Dixie Elementary  
Medora Elementary  
Trunnel Elementary

### **Westport Middle**

Zachary Taylor Elementary  
Wilder Elementary  
Bowen Elementary  
Coleridge Taylor  
Montessori El\*\*  
St Matthews Elementary  
Lowe Elementary

### **Blankenbaker Compound**

Stopher Elementary  
Wheeler Elementary  
Fern Creek Elementary

### **Moore Compound**

Luhr Elementary  
Hartstern Elementary  
Smyrna Elementary  
Blue Lick Elementary

*\*District-wide magnet or  
traditional schools are  
shown in their geographic  
cluster but would remain  
as they are now and open  
to students from across the  
school*

*\*\*Includes partial district-  
wide magnet program*

*\*\*\*Brown School not  
included because it is K-12*

## SOCIAL SCIENCE FINDINGS ABOUT SCHOOL INTEGRATION

### ■ Racially integrated student bodies are essential for K-12 schools to further their mission to prepare children to be global citizens in our increasingly diverse society.

- School districts that adopt voluntary integration plans seek to obtain the numerous benefits of racially integrated schools and avoid the harms associated with racial isolation—all of which further the vital role of schools in our society.
- Race-conscious plans that seek to maintain racially integrated schools benefit all students and do not disadvantage any group because all students would be guaranteed admission to a school. In contrast to institutions of higher education, admission to most K-12 schools is not based on any particular kind of merit.
- Americans of all races and ethnicities substantially support the idea of racially integrated schools. Public opinion polls show widespread support for the ideal of integration. The majority of parents whose children have attended integrated schools believe that integrated schools have improved the quality of their child's education. Teachers also believe that integrated classrooms provide unique educational benefits that cannot be attained in single-race classrooms.

### ■ Racially integrated schools promote social cohesion and reduce prejudice.

- Racially integrated schools promote cross-racial understanding in ways that are not possible in segregated school environments. Students in racially integrated schools are also more likely to have friendships with individuals from other

racies and are more willing to live and work in integrated settings than those in segregated schools.

- Students in racially diverse schools are less likely to develop racial stereotypes or prejudice than students who are not in daily contact with people of other races. Well-established techniques for structuring racially diverse schools have proven to improve the academic and social outcomes for all students in desegregated settings.
- Metro areas with completely integrated schools have experienced declining residential segregation.

### ■ Racially integrated schools enhance students' learning, expand their future opportunities, and benefit society at large.

- Research suggests that the critical thinking skills of all students improve in racially integrated classrooms. Diverse learning opportunities make all students better problem solvers and communicators.
- The academic achievement of black and Latino students is generally higher in desegregated schools compared with black and Latino students in segregated minority schools.
- Integrated school environments do not harm the test scores of white students. In fact, white students who grow up in racially segregated neighborhoods are likely to benefit from integrated school environments as they gain the opportunity to understand and value multiple perspectives and emerge from school better prepared for living and working in our increasingly diverse American society.

- Minority students who attend integrated schools are connected to higher-status social networks, which improve their chances of attending more selective colleges and getting higher-status jobs.
- Because students who are products of integrated schools tend to enjoy higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance, racially diverse schools lead to a more educated workforce.

■ **As the Supreme Court recognized in *Brown v. Board of Education*, racially segregated minority schools are unequal. The racial segregation of students in schools is increasing and the stakes for our society to provide an equal education to all children are higher than ever in light of the demographic changes in our society.**

- Historically, the vast majority of segregated minority schools have been plagued by a lack of resources that are essential to a learning environment. Segregated minority schools generally have fewer qualified and experienced teachers, higher teacher turnover rates, larger class size, fewer advanced classes, inferior infrastructure, and fewer basic educational supplies.
- Racially integrated schools provide exposure to middle-class, college-going peer groups that minority students may not otherwise obtain in schools of concentrated poverty. For non-native English speakers, integrated schools can also provide important exposure to native English speakers.
- Very few high-poverty, segregated minority high schools have graduation rates of more than half the students they enroll in the ninth grade. Of those students who do graduate, few are prepared for college, diminishing their future opportunities and contributions to society.

■ **Years of experience and social science research show that schools cannot achieve racial integration without making it an explicit goal through policies that consider race. School districts that have not been able to implement race-conscious policies have not achieved the racial integration necessary to obtain the short-term and long-term benefits of integrated education.**

- Colorblind approaches generally work to the disadvantage of minority groups. Because we live in a society with deep residential segregation, choice plans that are not racially conscious have not produced the same racial diversity as plans that consider a child's race. Choice plans that do not have a racial component assume that everyone is equally able to choose any option, and do not consider the constraints, including lack of information, that limit the choices made by those without access to high-quality networks.
- The experience in districts that have abandoned their race-conscious desegregation plans has shown that race-neutral student assignment plans often result in racial resegregation, and in some districts, declining achievement for minority students.
- Although in most circumstances it would not produce nearly as high a level of desegregation as existing racial desegregation plans, socioeconomic integration is educationally valuable in its own right and may offer some opportunities for integrated education. In defining social and economic desegregation policies, primary emphasis should not be on individual free lunch status—special attention should be given to areas of concentrated poverty, areas with concentrations of low-achieving students, areas where linguistic minorities are segregated, and geographic diversity.