WHOSE TURN IS IT NOW? MAINTENANCE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE FACE OF GENTRIFICATION

A Scholarly Research Project

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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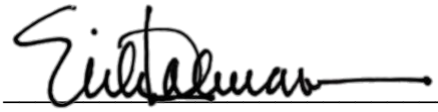

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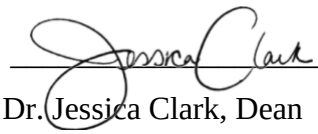

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ABSTRACT

An ongoing struggle for affordable housing in Southern California has led many predominately White, middle, and upper middle- class families to seek home ownership in divested urban communities. This phenomenon, known as gentrification, can benefit a community by increasing property values, but often comes at a cost to longstanding, Black and Brown residents of the neighborhood. Prior research has identified areas of harm including residential displacement, declining enrollment, and segregation of neighborhood schools. This qualitative case study addressed two questions: the impact of gentrification on the Black and Brown students attending the neighborhood school; and the strategies needed to balance competing interests between gentrifiers and longstanding families. The study's findings made it abundantly clear that inequitable district and site- based policies combined with White families' self-serving interests adversely affect the minority student experience. Operating as a counterweight to the harm, interview and observation data suggested that mindful school leadership and uniting parent interests played an integral role in establishing equitable practices, policies, and access. Moreover, the data showed that the probability of leader reflectiveness and mindfulness was intensified when school leadership and active parents were themselves people of color. The implications of the study may help shape district and school policies in communities experiencing gentrification.

DEDICATION

To Linda, Bill, Connie, Bridget, and Geraldine “Granny” for your timeless love and support and Dr. Edward Bouchet for blazing a trail for others who look like us.

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"A man's mind, stretched by new ideas, may never return to its original dimensions." Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

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Whose Turn Is It Now? Maintenance of Racial Equity and Engagement in the Face of Gentrification

Introduction

The movement of White middle and upper-class families into urban neighborhoods and Black suburbanization has shaped communities across the country for decades (Henig & Gale, 1987). Many urban areas nationwide, previously divested by governmental policies and practices, are now experiencing an influx of White middle and upper-socioeconomic status (SES) families moving into the community. This phenomenon, coined *gentrification,* is defined as "the conversion of socially marginal and working - class areas of the central city to more affluent residential use" (DeSena, 2019 p. 62). As a result of gentrification, real estate values have increased, brick and mortar storefronts have emerged from dilapidation, and school choice has expanded as a means for families to avoid the neighborhood schools.

Candipan (2019) and others have provided a number of studies, which have examined the impact of gentrification on neighborhoods and school choice. Several phenomenological and case studies have described the decision-making process parents have engaged in prior to enrolling their children into the neighborhood school (Siegel-Hawley et al., 2017). Additional investigations have supported a hypothesis that gentrification into neighborhoods of color results in greater segregation between schools participating in open school choice when families opt out (DeSena, 2009). Still others like Freidus (2019), project the expectations and privilege of newcomer families onto the local school administration, district personnel, and parent organizations in their quest to gain political capital.

Despite the increasing amount of research, the degree to which gentrification of the neighborhood school is impacting the educational opportunities and learning environment of Black and Brown students has yet to be addressed. Also absent from the research are the plausible considerations, practices, and policies necessary to achieve a balance between the competing interests of long-standing residents and the gentrifying newcomers. This action research project takes a qualitative approach to explore the impact of gentrification on primarily Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet (a

pseudonym). This chapter introduces the study's background information and provides a brief literature review about gentrification and its causes before articulating the study's research problem, purpose, and questions and explaining the significance of the study.

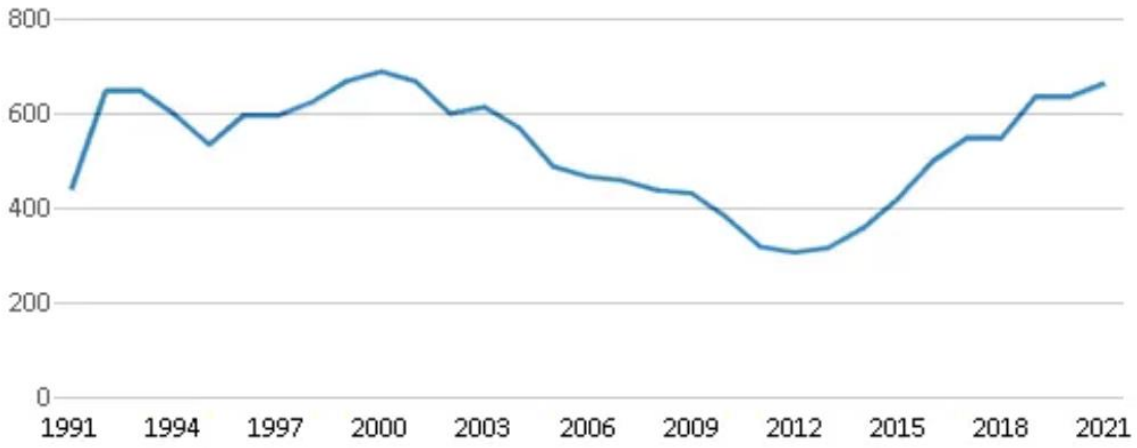
Background Information

Louverture High School Early College Magnet (abbreviated as Louverture from this point forward) is a local institution having served the neighborhood community of students for nearly 100 years (Trower Unified School District, 2022 the citation has been omitted to protect anonymity). Located between the boundaries of unincorporated Butler and the urbanite city of Trower (a pseudonym) in Southern California, Louverture is one of four public high schools belonging to the Trower Unified School District (TUSD) with a student body of approximately 900. Trower is also home to 14 private and charter high schools, which - when enhanced by school choice - presents many options for families moving into the area. Trower, not unlike many urban areas across the country, is witnessing the impact of gentrification in its community with the migration of White middle and upper middle-class families in search of affordable housing.

Unfortunately, the preceding decades have not served Louverture well. Identifying with Quartz et al. (2020), Black suburbanization, increased gang activity, and an equally pervasive drug culture forced many families - White and non-White - to consider schools other than Louverture. In 2016, while submerged amid continued declining enrollment, Louverture's former principal recognized that the staff's herculean efforts to support Black and Brown students were insufficient to keep the school in operation indefinitely. His forward-thinking vision included the conversion and rebranding of Louverture from a traditional comprehensive high school to an Early College Magnet to attract the growing presence of gentrifying families to the campus. A similar transition had occurred at Louverture's primary feeder school, Toussaint Dual Immersion Magnet Elementary, just a few years prior with very positive success. Figure 1 illustrates Toussaint's significant drop in enrollment beginning in early 2000 and dramatic increase following the school's rebranding (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Enrollment trend of Toussaint Elementary School following its rebranding.



Ayscue and Siegel-Hawley (2019) identified magnet schools as conduits for desegregation of public education by creating choice. Magnet schools vary in academic emphasis from the Arts to STEM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, mathematics) to - in the case of Louverture - early college access. In TUSD, magnet schools are available to all students regardless of residential boundaries. The new academic model placed every student in at least one community college class and created the potential for students to obtain a diploma and an associate degree concurrently. In addition, the administration made a concerted effort to significantly reduce the concerns for safety. This was accomplished by eliminating the inciteful nature of gang culture while simultaneously reducing the presence of drugs on the campus (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, n.d.).

With safety far less a concern than in years prior, White families who had previously discredited Louverture as unacceptable for their children began taking school tours and subsequently enrolling their children in Louverture in ever-increasing numbers. The prospect of saving on future college tuition became the overriding theme during registration.

Not only did these parents bring their sons and daughters to Louverture, but they also brought demands. At the forefront of the demands were course offerings and student programming. Unfortunately, the limited resources of TUSD were not sufficient to hire additional

teachers. Therefore, with class sizes capped at a predetermined maximum, the potential existed for Black and Brown students to be increasingly squeezed out of the advanced classes being offered at Louverture. Moreover, families who selected Louverture viewed themselves not only as beneficiaries of Early College opportunities but also as "rescuers" of a sinking ship. This perceived position of power forced Louverture teachers to revisit their commitment to providing authentic, culturally relevant content considering the changing demographics.

Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, *Black and Brown students* are defined as "persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa" or "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race" (United States Census, 2022). *Gentrification* is defined as the conversion of socially marginal and working-class areas of the central city to more affluent residential and commercial use, by a higher socioeconomically advantaged group (DeSena, 2019). Most often this group is represented by White young professionals. *Socioeconomic Status (SES)* is defined as a social class designation given to an individual based on education, economic and employment status. *School Choice* is defined as a variety of educational options for families, both public and private including inter-district and intra-district transfers, magnet, and charter school programs (Jacob, 2011).

Current Literature

Boston, Denver, and Portland are among numerous urban communities across the United States experiencing a rebirth of sorts by the movement of White middle and upper-class socioeconomic status (SES) families into the neighborhoods of Black and Brown families (Diem et al., 2017). Commonly referenced as gentrification, the influx of wealthier families into divested urban areas has done more than raise property values (Pearman II, 2020). The influx of wealth into these areas is often viewed as either a benefit or detriment to neighborhood schools. District policies that allow parents to opt out under the preference of school choice intensify school segregation as new resources shift from the neighborhood school to an out-of-area campus (Candipan, 2019). Further research identifies the mindset of families

considering their neighborhood school as they seek to insert privilege and political positioning to advance their expectations of school success (Freidus, 2019; Siegel-Hawley, 2017).

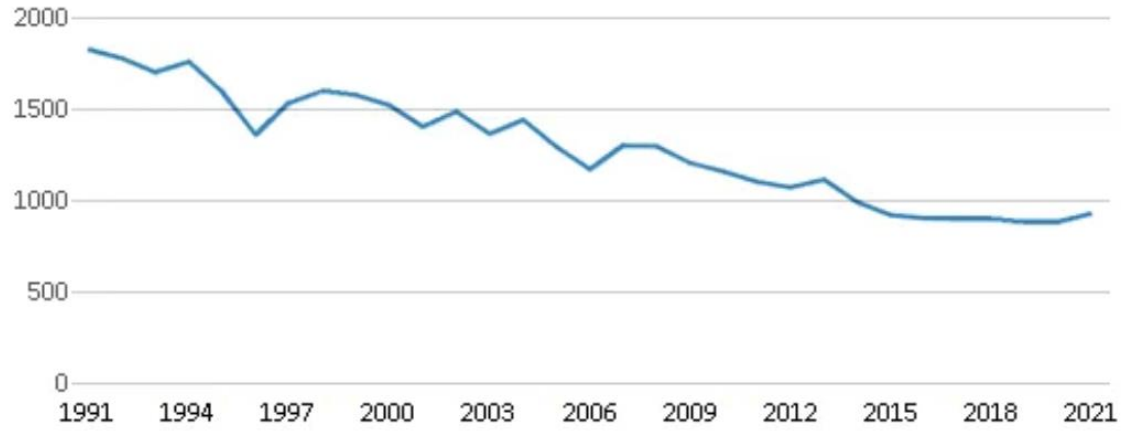
Notwithstanding the budding amount of available literature exploring the various effects of gentrification on divested neighborhoods, such research is extremely limited in addressing the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture Early College Magnet.

Gentrification

Over the last two decades the combination of escalating real estate prices and divestment of lower socioeconomic neighborhoods has led mainly White middle and upper-class families to seek affordable housing in urban communities. This increasing phenomenon, known as gentrification, is displacing longtime residents, and impacting neighborhood schools (Siegel-Hawley, 2017). As the median home price in NW Trower increased from $234,000 in 1998 (Tamaki, 1999) to $1,200,000 in 2022 (National Association of Realtors, 2022) longtime residents were either priced out of the homebuyer market or forced out of the rental market as landlords sought higher rents or converted apartment units to condominiums. Unfortunately, the corresponding increase in property taxes did not translate into increasing enrollment at Louverture. In fact, an opposite effect occurred at the neighborhood high school. Louverture's enrollment dropped from approximately 2000 to 927 during a similar period (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Louverture decrease in attendance from 1991-2021



Pearman II (2020) examined, among other concerns, the breadth of neighborhoods becoming gentrified across the country and the degree to which gentrification was impacting neighborhood schools. Critical to the data collection was a fundamental, two-factor determination of what constituted divestment and gentrification.

> A school catchment area was classified as *divested* if (a) it had a median household income in 2000 that was below the 40th percentile of its respective city average and (b) it had a housing supply built in the 20 years preceding 2000 that was below the 40th percentile of its city (p. 190).

According to the study, a school neighborhood was considered *gentrified* "if it met the divested criteria (a) and (b) and subsequently underwent between 2000 and 2014 (c) an inflow of college-educated residents that exceeded the growth of college-educated persons in the city overall, and (d) an increase in real housing prices" (p. 190). The resultant data showed nearly 18% of divested communities throughout the nation were experiencing gentrification and nearly 25% of schools within these communities underwent corresponding transitions. Additionally, schools situated amid neighborhoods gentrified by White middle SES families experienced a decline in enrollment greater than in areas where Black gentrification was occurring. Although no qualitative data was generated in this study to explain the variance, Pearman II (2020) anecdotally suggests the ability to opt for out-of-area schools as the primary reason.

Avoidance and Assimilation

While a secondary cause for declining enrollment is the displacement of longtime residents, predominantly Black and Brown families due to increased rents and the inability to access affordable housing for purchase, White family avoidance or need for assimilation is equally harmful (Candipan, 2020). Louverture and TUSD have not been immune from the negative ramifications of school choice as individually and collectively both have experienced declining enrollment over the years. Pearman II and Swain's (2017) place stratification and special assimilation theories offer possible explanations.

Pearman II and Swain (2017) investigated the potential cause for gentrification through the lens of school choice expansion policies. Looking specifically at comparisons between "place stratification and spatial assimilation," (p. 215) they hypothesized that White families would "be less deterred from moving into low-income, minority neighborhoods in central city areas if they are afforded expanded school choice" (p. 216). School choice, for the purposes of the Pearman II and Swain (2017) study, included charter, magnet, open enrollment, and private schools.

Pearman and Swain (2017) posits place stratification theory is present when "racial composition" becomes the predominate factor over any other considerations (p. 215). In the case of school choice, the place stratification theory would apply if a White family avoided relocating to a minority neighborhood, even when out-of-area schools were available. Conversely, the spatial assimilation theory suggests White families are "less deterred" from moving into divested urban communities, so long as school choice is available (p. 216).

Where the place stratification theory views racial stratification as a dominant factor, overriding any perceived school quality benefits derived from expanded school choice, spatial assimilation produces opposite results (Pearman II & Swain, 2017). The spatial assimilation model places expanded school choice at the forefront of parental considerations to move into divested communities given they can opt out of the neighborhood school. Simply put, the ability to potentially evade lower-performing schools while taking advantage of affordable home pricing increases the likelihood of White gentrification in divested communities.

Unfortunately, when place stratification and spatial assimilation co-exist, it almost assuredly will result in segregation and decreased enrollment at the neighborhood school. On the one hand, White families will not even consider moving into the area. On the other hand, families that are willing to move into minority neighborhoods will seek other schooling options.

Additional Factors

School Choice Presents a Challenge

School choice and the ability to opt-out of neighborhood schools in gentrifying communities in favor of out of area schools has changed the demographic landscape of public education in Southern California, where this study was conducted, as well as nationwide. In a national study, Candipan (2019) provided a quantitative assessment examining the likelihood of all families, longtime residents as well as newcomers, to opt out of neighborhood schools in gentrifying communities. Whereas the data did not discern a singular causal factor, the study identified higher socioeconomic status (SES) and the number of school options available to families as significant root causes for avoiding the neighborhood school. The number of school options is of special interest to TUSD where 14 public, charter, magnet, and private schools exist within the boundaries of this twenty-three square mile city.

Several negative outcomes arise when open school choice permits families the ability to enroll their children throughout the district, as well as out of the area. First, the decision of families to opt out of the neighborhood school results in declining enrollment (Lipman, 2009). Second, when White middle and upper-class families seek out-of-area educational opportunities, it deepens racial segregation by leaving a preponderance of Black and Brown students on the campus. Moreover, it diverts valuable financial resources from the neighborhood school (Lipman, 2009). In the case of Louverture, the sheer volume of options places the school, and to a lesser degree TUSD, at a tremendous disadvantage socially and economically. Families simply have too many options, public and private, making the competition for students fierce. School choice competition is also present at the elementary school, but not quite at the level of secondary schools.

Parental Decision Making

Notwithstanding the impact of school options, parental convictions will ultimately determine the selection of a school. Amongst the plethora of considerations is the reluctance of White, middle, and upper SES families to send their children to schools where the preponderance of students are non-White (Candipan, 2019). Cambridge, Denver, and Portland public schools saw similar racial trends of increased

enrollment of White students where a predominance of White students already existed at the school (Diem et al., 2019). Where White family assimilation away from local schools is pervasive, the opportunity for "between – school tracking" promulgates, leaving neighborhood schools in crisis (DeSena, 2009 p. 65). For example, despite an increase in the overall Trower population of nearly 5% since the year 2000, TUSD enrollment has declined 20% during the same period. Safety concerns have fueled White assimilation with many families opting for one of the 10 private or charter school choices. Candipan (2019) further determined that where gentrification was occurring in "more socioeconomically (and demographically) stable neighborhoods" (p. 229) newcomer movement away from the local school was comparable to that of longtime residents.

In exploring the power of parental influence on school choice in gentrifying communities, Freidus (2019) provided a qualitative assessment of newcomer, parent expectations for a Brooklyn public school. The observance of data from a local parent listserv displayed the importance of social capital in the determination of school selection. Specifically, "The overall choice system frequently comes from peer social networks and from interactions with district authorities, both of which are predicated on social capital" (Freidus, 2019 p. 1125). For example, as more newcomer families shared their thoughts and possible intentions among members of the listserv group, a growing wave of influence took hold. Individual thoughts were blended in and at times persuaded toward the thoughts of the group. The formation and subsequent bonding of parent groups also serve to mitigate the apprehension for middle-class families selecting the local school for their children (Siegel-Hawley et al., 2017). However, as the listserv members and unified ideas increased in number, their social capital also rose. The extrapolation of parent values from the listserv conversations more importantly displayed a hierarchy of White parental expectations and privilege, marginalizing the needs of Black and Brown families throughout the decision-making process (Freidus, 2019).

Shifting beyond the decisions of parents who opt out of their local schools, a small number of studies have examined the philosophical considerations of gentrifiers selecting the neighborhood school (Seigel-Hawley et al., 2017). Pervasive in the findings was a parental tightrope act, which balanced

demonstrating social justice principles with the maintenance of school safety and academic achievement. Siegel-Hawley et al. (2017) found that anxiety levels were lessened in the presence of similarly situated families, and so long as safety could be maintained, all other variables could be managed. Freidus (2020) identified, through interviews, the desire of newcomer families to not only move into communities experiencing desegregation but to actively participate in the integration of neighborhood schools. TUSD remains challenged to push a continued message of safety and academic excellence while designing specialized programs, that will facilitate White assimilation at the neighborhood school.

District Policy Decisions

The economic and social capital thrust into a gentrifying community can further advance the marginalization of Black and Brown students by influencing school district policies. Diem et al. (2019) addressed the challenges to racial dynamics within several districts across the country. Drawing distinctions between districts with longstanding policies for diversity and those who had developed policies amid gentrification, Diem et al. (2019) found that allowing for school choice often exacerbated the racial divide between schools experiencing gentrification.

Districts such as Denver Public Schools attempted to improve diversity through open school choice policies by enlarging attendance boundaries and redesigning schools with diversity in mind. Nonetheless, families that had the ability to transport their children were at a distinct advantage over those who lacked flexible transportation options (Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). In contrast, Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) has been substantially more effective with their "controlled choice" model (Diem et al., 2019 p. 33). This system balances school choice applications with the targeted demographic outcomes of the CPS. TUSD's present system affords families multiple opportunities to secure one of their ranked, school selections and caps enrollment solely on campus capacity leading to a widening of the segregation divide.

Research Problem Statement

While the body of research on gentrification upon urban neighborhoods continues to grow, exploration of the effects of gentrification on Black and Brown students attending local schools has been

limited. Not enough is known about the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet.

Research Purpose Statement and Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture School Early College Magnet.

The study was guided by two research questions: 1) What is the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet? 2) How can a balance be struck between the competing interests of gentrifiers and longtime residents?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are significant for TUSD and for Louverture in four ways. First, they help determine the degree to which gentrification is limiting or impacting the academic programming possibilities of Louverture's Black and Brown students. Second, they allow for close examination of the level of interaction between Black and Brown students and their new peer group. Third, the findings help determine what impact rebranding has made in the school choice considerations of newcomer families to Louverture. Finally, they allow Louverture staff to reflect on their current practices to provide authentic diverse instructional opportunities, balance the competing interests of parents, and facilitate equity to an ever-changing demographic of students.

The findings of this case study will assist site and district leadership in recognizing common factors associated with gentrification and ascertaining the best practices to maintain balance when competing interests are present.

Chapter Summary and Organization of the Report

This chapter introduced the study's background information and provided a brief literature review about gentrification and its causes before articulating the study's research problem, purpose, and questions and explaining the significance of the study. Chapter 2 will present a more in-depth literature review. Chapter 3 will describe the research methodology and methods of the study. Chapter 4 will report

and discuss the study's findings and results, and Chapter 5 will draw conclusions and offer recommendations and implications for practice.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Background Information

The rebirth of many formerly blighted urban communities across the country has been fueled by the relocation of upper-class, predominantly White individuals and families taking advantage of favorable real estate pricing (Pearman II, 2020). This phenomenon, known as gentrification, spurs a synergy for revitalization in the affected communities leading to increased property values, business development, and neighborhood school transition (Pearman II, 2020). Although gentrification can bring substantial resources to an otherwise fiscally challenged area, in many instances the benefits have occurred to the detriment of longstanding residents. Among the numerous challenges facing longstanding residents is access to quality schools. Thus, if the phenomenon of gentrification is producing noticeable changes on school campuses, what competing factors must be considered to protect the interests of Black and Brown students attending neighborhood schools.

Chapter 2 frames the literature review into detailed areas of the gentrification phenomena in schools and communities, school district policies which can encourage or combat segregation, and school selection considerations demonstrated by families. The chapter will begin with a cloud-level examination of the history of urban education then subsequently narrow to the specific effects of gentrification as it applies to communities and schools, and finally taper to the impact gentrification has on neighborhood schools and the Black and Brown students they serve. The findings identified in Chapter 2 will guide an evaluation of the impact gentrification is having on the Black and Brown students attending Louverture Early College Magnet. The data recorded will further assist in identifying strategies that will lead to a balance between the interests and expectations of newcomer families and the longtime Black and Brown attendees of the neighborhood school.

Summary of the Problem

The return of middle and upper middle-class families to urban communities across the country is changing the landscape for public education in myriad ways. This transition, coined gentrification, is not

new as neighborhoods in various countries worldwide have experienced the phenomena (DeSena, 2009). Oftentimes, the families most affected by the influx of predominantly White, higher socioeconomic status (SES) families, are the longtime residents and the neighborhood schools (DeSena, 2009). To better understand the many ramifications of gentrification on the neighborhood it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the history of urban education. This will be followed by an explanation of gentrification and the general impact it has on neighborhoods. The review will then examine how districts and schools are substantiating the privilege of newcomer families with internal policies. Within the context of district policy, the literature will explain how school choice is providing additional tools for higher SES families to create the best opportunities for their children, often at the expense of Black and Brown children. Next, will be an exploration of motivations and strategies of gentrifying families as they seek the best learning environment for their children. Finally, an analysis of the direct effects of gentrification on youth will be presented.

The History of Urban Education

The challenge to provide meaningful public education to lower SES Black and Brown students in urban cities has been a struggle spanning over decades, especially in the Los Angeles region. While the legendary Supreme Court case, Brown v. Board of Education (1954) was meant to desegregate public schools, its value has been eroded by subsequent judicial decisions. A series of court rulings have undermined racial integration nationwide by eliminating or crippling desegregation policies. Such actions occurred despite the existence of substantial data which showed poorer students displayed greater growth when they are intermixed and exposed to students of higher SES (Kahlenberg, 2000).

Further attempts to integrate urban public schools in the 70's and 80's through busing and redrawn attendance boundaries were met with objection, additional litigation, and the beginnings of White flight from the city to the suburbs (Miralles, 2022). Compounding the problem and accelerating the exodus of White middle-class families away from urban cities was the eruption of gangs and drugs in the inner city (Quartz et al., 2020). Adding to the challenge of urban education was the substantive immigration of English Learners into the educational system (Quartz et al., 2020). The movement of

White middle-class families away from urban areas in turn caused the divestment in infrastructure, business, and most importantly education. Mirroring the decrease in urban resources was a lowering of academic performance and declining enrollment, thereby increasing the achievement gap (Billingham, 2015).

Bower and Rossi (2019) further elaborated on urban community factors contributing to the growing achievement gap between Black and White students in an evaluation of the Promise Neighborhood model. Topping their list were three prominent categories: “Housing and Neighborhoods, Health and Health Care, and Family and Home” (Bower & Rossi, 2019 pp. 1178 -1181). Within the headings, subtopics such as crime and violence, home and food insecurity, mobility, neighborhood blight, mental health, language barriers, and family structure were among the 18 identified elements of impediments to academic success for Black and Brown children in the inner city.

Beginning in the 1990’s, the country began to recognize the need to reform educational systems in urban communities. Initially the idea was to simply throw money at the problem (Kahlenberg, 2000). However, as Kahlenberg (2000) stated, “educators know that a school’s quality derives less from the per pupil expenditure than from the people who make up the school community” (p.18). This practice led to a carousel of teaching and learning initiatives, which rarely outlasted the professional development time committed to the initiative’s rollout.

As the rooting of reinvestment into urban communities took hold a new reform effort emerged in the form of Charter schools (Quartz et al., 2020). The Charter school movement had a twofold purpose: 1) to create a marketplace for educational design and improvement, 2) to use this autonomy based model of education to lure middle-class families back to the city. This effort was supported by the enhancement of public school choice, which in many instances allowed families to enroll their children in institutions other than the neighborhood school. The charter school reform has, in many ways, met the needs of White middle-class families to take advantage of reinvestment opportunities and the relatively affordable housing of urban communities. Moreover, it has afforded them a level of security and to a lesser degree exclusivity in the quest for school options for their children (Quartz et al, 2020).

Aikens and Barbarin (2008), recognized the movement to charter institutions has not occurred without a premium cost to the Black and Brown families. Resources directly attached to per pupil funding have been shifted away from the neighborhood school. The shortage of students who would otherwise attend the neighborhood school then propagates the idea of school closure when enrollment drops to certain levels. Even when lower SES, Black and Brown families attempt to take advantage of the charter school reform measures, their financial and other resource limitations create additional challenges, further exacerbating the problem (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). The already prevalent educational gaps in reading and other academic areas for Black and Brown students cannot be narrowed without both financial resources and socioeconomic integration (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Gentrification has the potential to either remedy or exacerbate the situation for urban communities.

Gentrification and Causation

To assess the impact of gentrification, research must begin with its definition. DeSena (2019) describes gentrification as "the conversion of socially marginal and working-class areas of the central city to more affluent residential use" (p. 62). Other researchers often include the descriptors of White, middle-class, divested, minority to the definition (Pearman II, 2020). Pearman II (2020) provides, among other values, a numerical context of gentrification in neighborhoods and in neighborhood schools. He does so by establishing specific criteria by which neighborhoods can be identified as experiencing gentrification. First, he defined divestment as a neighborhood school whose median household income was below the 40th percentile of the city average and pre-1980 constructed housing was valued below the 40th percentile of the city average. A school neighborhood was considered gentrified if the prior elements were met plus residential housing prices increased and an influx of college-educated persons outpaced the growth of college-educated persons in the city (Pearman II, 2020 p.190). From this lens, Pearman II (2020) determined that while 4% of US urban schools were situated in catchment areas experiencing gentrification, 23% of those schools were becoming gentrified. Also, worth noting was the overall decline in student enrollment at neighborhood schools and the absence of an increase in White gentrifying students during the same period. Pearman II (2020) also found persuasive data that showed the greatest

decline in neighborhood school enrollment occurred when the gentrifiers were White. What is left behind are the Black and Brown students whose longstanding residency is marginalized by middle-class White families.

Declining Enrollment and Segregation

Declining enrollment in schools within gentrifying neighborhoods creates a dangerous and oftentimes fatal resources deficit further serving to widen the achievement gap between Black and Brown students and their White peers (Billingham, 2019; Goldsmith, 2004). DeSena (2009) formulated a viewpoint that gentrification amounted to a form of tracking when White families failed to enroll their children in the neighborhood schools. He argued the allowance of families to select schools outside of their neighborhood catchment areas results in stratification and social inequality or between school tracking. DeSena's (2009) qualitative study of two Brooklyn, New York neighborhoods identified comprehensible differences between long-time residents and the newcomers to the community. The long-time residents tended to be less educated and struggled to meet the demands of increasing housing. In contrast, the gentrifiers were almost exclusively college educated and driving up the cost of housing with their affluence (DeSena, 2009). Gentrifiers also expressed dissatisfaction with the neighborhood schools even though test data placed them near the top in the state. Instead, gentrifying families opted for special programs outside of the catchment area leaving poor, mainly Black and Brown students behind to attend the neighborhood school. DeSena (2009) calls this "between school tracking", but the result is segregation.

A counterargument to gentrification-inspired segregation is offered by Billingham (2019) who examined enrollment and segregation patterns across 97 urban districts over a twenty-year period. Billingham (2019), while recognizing the achievement gaps inherent with segregation, distinguished between interdistrict and intradistrict White student movement as the basis for his findings. He conceded that segregation continues to increase as White gentrifying families either opt out of the public school system or seek more advantageous academic environments in other districts (Billingham, 2019). However, Billingham (2019) is resistant to accepting the separatist tendencies of White middle-class

families who bond together for a shared intradistrict school choice. The study additionally ignores the void created at neighborhood schools when more informed and opportunistic families take advantage of specialized programs in other parts of the district. Despite Billingham's (2019) attempt to minimize patterns of segregation as a result of gentrification, the policies and practices of intradistrict mobility by middle-class families leave Black and Brown children fighting for survival (Candipan, 2020).

A causal connection between gentrification and segregation of local schools was identified by Candipan (2020). Recognizing gentrification as "significant numbers of higher-SES residents moving into historically divested neighborhoods" (Candipan, 2020 p. 217), Candipan sought to study the likelihood of gentrifiers opting out of the neighborhood school. Counter to proposed arguments that revitalization of urban communities by gentrifiers would desegregate schools, the quantitative data described otherwise. Parents in gentrifying neighborhoods were more likely to opt out of the neighborhood school than parents in socioeconomically stable communities, so long as other school options were available. This is consistent with Sohoni and Saporito's (2009) determination that White students exited neighborhood schools, in search of private, magnet and charter schools at a higher rate than non-White students. Moreover, gentrifiers opted out more frequently than longstanding residents and selected schools with higher proportions of White students. When middle-class families exercise their right to opt out for greener playgrounds, Black and Brown students are left holding a bag of despair and hopelessness.

Pearman II and Swain (2017) examined causal relationships between the application of school choice and the likelihood of higher SES gentrification in a divested neighborhood. School choice, which will be discussed later in greater depth, "provide(s) households alternatives to neighborhood schools by allowing them to choose different schooling options outside their neighborhoods" (Pearman II & Swain 2017 p. 214). In this quantitative study of national data, Pearman II and Swain (2017) compared how racial and residential stratification influenced higher SES families' decisions to move into lower SES urban neighborhoods. The essential question in their study was whether school choice can override the race component of moving into a divested community. Recognizing four options of school choice; private, voucher, magnet, and charter the data showed the influence of racial stratification was

overwhelmingly diminished when options other than the neighborhood school were presented. In other words, living in a diverse neighborhood was valued by potential gentrifiers so long as their children were not obligated to exercise such diversity in the neighborhood school. This attitude results in segregation and depletion of resources for the Black and Brown students left behind.

The crossover movement of Black family suburbanization and gentrification has also contributed to segregation in urban areas. Henig and Gale (1987) investigated the political ramifications of Blacks moving to Prince George's County and White gentrifiers relocating to the District of Columbia. Important to the research of the author's project was a finding of significant, political capital immediately garnered by gentrifiers. The election of a DC school board member was indicative of the expectations gentrifying families had for the neighborhood public schools (Henig & Gale, 1987).

Counter to the voluntary transition in and out of urban communities is the displacement of longtime Black and Brown families from their roots under the notion of advancement. Displacement is at the core of Lipman's (2009) research on the effects of Chicago's politics regarding mixed income schools and housing. Lipman (2009) provides a powerful and persuasive argument that local and federal supported policies geared toward improving the lives of low SES families have generated an unintended opposing result. Citing Chicago's Renaissance 2010 and Plan for Transformation, Lipman (2009) notes how *temporary* school closures and housing dislocations had resulted in permanent displacement for low income Black and Brown families. Yet middle-and upper-income White families were the beneficiaries of revitalized housing and rebranded schools. Although Chicago may have a unique set of policies causing the uprooting of low SES families, displacement of Black and Brown families is occurring nationwide. Gentrifying families are driving up demand and pricing for affordable housing to the point lower income families cannot keep pace.

District and School Site Policies

The influx of financial, political, and social capital into once struggling, but now gentrifying communities does not come without certain expectations for change. Streets and potholes are to be paved and commercial lands improved with the luster of new trendy coffee shops and restaurants, boutique

stores, and business entities. However, oftentimes more important than increased business development are the school options that will meet the needs of gentrifying children. Within the community, middle and upper middle-class families demand educational options that meet their self-interests (Jacobs, 2011). These demands often force the hands of districts and school sites to acquiesce or otherwise lose much needed funding through declining enrollment. One such popular strategy to entice wealthier families to send their children to the neighborhood is the rebranding of a school (Cucchiara, 2008).

Cucchiara, (2008) explored the effects of rebranding through a partnership between a local business development area (CCD) and the School District of Philadelphia. The partnership was designed to keep and attract more affluent families in the otherwise revitalized part of the city. More specifically, Cucchiara (2008) provides an ethnographic study of Grant Elementary School families as the cultures and socioeconomic paths of two distinct groups converged under the current educational policy. Grant, which was known as a good school, had experienced declining enrollment with neighborhood children opting for schools out of Grant's attendance boundaries. The school maintained a student body predominantly composed of lower socioeconomic African American and Asian American students. Thus, the partnership felt the need for a revised school model to retain and draw in families.

However, the goal was not to simply draw in neighborhood children per se, but to exclusively target upper middle-class families. In so doing, the partnership implemented a multistage approach, which effectively isolated the targeted schools (including Grant) from other inner city schools. This included creating significant separation from District oversight constraints to the extent the new schools resembled a mini district. Further exclusivity was generated through renaming a designated school, modifying signage, improved customer service, and in all ways geographically possible distinguishing target schools from any other area schools (Cucchiara, 2008). In turn, as more and more parents bought into the rebranding concept, a sense of elitism began to creep into Grant's culture. Cucchiara (2008) cites an interview with one parent who reiterated "this is not an inner city school, this is a Cobble Square school" referencing the geographical boundary created by the rebranding (Cucchiara, 2008, p. 992). Lost in the urgency to change the image of Grant were the families who had weathered many storms of the school.

Grant and the district administration created a class based stratification system in the effort to retain neighborhood White students in lieu of transfer students who were escaping the challenges of other Philadelphia schools. Those who sought refuge for their children away from troubled, low-performing Philadelphia schools were predominantly Black (Cucchiara, 2008). The intentions of the partnership had been realized but to the detriment of students of color who are most deserving of service.

The effects of district policy have also been examined abroad. In a qualitative examination of the effectiveness of the Education Reform Act as it pertained to South Wales schools, Herbert (2000) surveyed Headteachers (the equivalent of Headmaster or Principal in the US) of 40 schools. The response and results were not unlike what is happening to urban schools in the United States. When unrestricted school choice was applied, parents compared proximity, test scores, and reputation as primary factors in their decision making. A secondary consideration was the feeder school pattern. By recognizing and understanding the clients' needs, Headmasters did their best to market their respective school in the best light possible. Of course, if the institution was situated along a beautiful, tree lined street and had received several years of high test marks the marketing required less effort (Herbert, 2000). In contrast, the concrete campus erected in the middle of a blighted neighborhood, where disadvantaged students scored lower on common assessments, struggled to promote its brand. The open school choice policy further intensified the problem for challenged schools as the better students opted for schools with higher academic marks (Herbert, 2000). Ultimately, the Education Reform Act benefited the privileged middle and upper middle-class and heightened the level of segregation in South Wales.

Not all districts implore policies that intentionally segregate and marginalize students of lower socioeconomic status. In a case study by Diem et al. (2019), the challenge of balancing diversity with the desire to attract and retain gentrifying families was observed in five metropolitan cities across the country. Using a Critical Policy Analysis, the Diem et al. (2019) team focused on five issues: the basis of a policy, the difference between policy and implementation, how knowledge and power influence policies, any inequities, and the effect on underrepresented groups. The primary question of the study was assessing how much consideration was given to families of color when districts were courting White families. The

answers to the question were as vast as the distance between cities. Where school choice equated to unfettered intra-district transfers to any school with space, Black and Brown populations suffered the greatest (Johnson & Williams, 2010). This premise played out as expected in three of the school districts observed. Beyond the purposeful solicitation of more affluent White families, reasons for the harm included the lack of information necessary to make informed decisions, as well as the financial impediments to attending a school beyond the neighborhood boundaries (Seigel-Hawley & Wang, 2010).

Conversely, Cambridge and Berkley Public School Districts were able maintain or even increase diversity by moving away from the open choice model (Diem et. al., 2019). Instead, each district enacted diversity policies that limited White student movement. Both districts combined micro boundaries, algorithms, and restricted parent choice to maintain diversity at all district schools in the face of gentrification. While the examinations of Cambridge and Berkeley public school districts provide guidance in maintaining diversity, each plan fell short in addressing how Black and Brown families fare when displaced by district policies.

School Choice

Although much of the available research suggests that school choice leads to segregation "along racial, economic and linguistic" lines (Siegel-Hawley & Wang, 2010, p. 460). Jacobs (2011) espouses that school proximity is the primary factor of school choice of families selecting Charter schools for their children. The study examines the weight Washington DC parents placed on proximal distance to their residence when a charter school was an option for consideration. Utilizing a quantitative approach, Jacobs (2011) sought to compare whether segregation occurred more likely than not due to costs, academics, other accessible information, or proximity to one's residence.

In a charter school system where more than 92% were Black, a similarly proportionate number of students lived within the surrounding area (Jacobs, 2011). The data suggests that the basis of segregation, at least as it pertains to charter schools in Washington DC, is much more a factor of proximity and less a factor of parental preference for Academic quality. These results provide, at a minimum, an alternative possibility for segregation as a result of school choice (Jacobs, 2011).

The influence of school choice in the segregation of neighborhood schools was also advanced by Lash and Sanchez (2017) in a case study of the Mission Promise Neighborhood (MPN) schools in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). MPN is a federally supported offshoot of the well-recognized Harlem Children's Zone program designed to take a comprehensive approach to child development. Lash and Sanchez (2017) set out to investigate how the implementation of the SFUSD school choice policy in the wake of area gentrification, shaped and in certain ways disrupted the intentions of the MPN program to reach its service participants. At the time of the study, the Mission District was predominantly Latino and Asian with more than 60% of the students in the identified region English Learners (Lash & Sanchez, 2017).

The study took a careful look at the influence of allowing SFUSD students to apply and attend any school in the district, including those within the MPN zone (Lash & Sanchez, 2017). Additionally, the study examined the degree to which students within the MPN boundaries and those outside of the boundary enrolled in the neighborhood MPN school. Interestingly, the data indicated that a higher percentage of students from outside of the MPN area attended an MPN school than those within. Moreover, the enrollees at the MPN schools were of lower socioeconomic status and often English Learners (Lash & Sanchez, 2017). This information is consistent with prior studies, which showed gentrifying families opting out of the neighborhood school when unlimited school choice is in effect.

Welsh (2018) found that even when limited school choice was in place, student mobility resulted in racial and academic segregation. Although Welsh (2018) focused the study on Clark County, Nevada intradistrict movement not necessarily connected to gentrification, he nonetheless observed a similar pattern of harm when students changed schools. Student movement for achievement reasons created equivalent distress and stratification as the mobility of higher achieving students compounded the harm to already struggling schools.

In contrast, Colburn (2012) presents an argument which suggests that school choice enhances the ability to improve all schools by forcing institutions to compete in a market driven approach to education. Colburn (2012) equates the competition generated in the general marketplace, which drives product

development between competitors to the competition between public schools. Absent substantiated data, he hypothesized that schools will be incentivized to diversify and experiment to attract and retain students. Absent from this argument is the cyclical impact of gentrifying families opting out of the local school for a more innovative setting and the subsequent funding loss that follows such decisions. The continued loss of resources makes it virtually impossible for the historically struggling school to ever improve or compete.

Although Colburn (2012) lacked substantiated data to support his hypothesis, the rapid emergence of charter schools is an example of neoliberal marketability in the context of education as well as evidence of the potential harm to traditional schools. With a more than threefold increase in the number of charter schools across the country and more than 3.1 million students enrolled, the detriment of school choice is exacerbated by their mere existence (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.). The National Center for Educational Statistics (n.d.) defines a charter school as a "publicly funded school that is typically governed by a group or organization under a legislative contract—a charter—with the state, district, or other entity" (para.1). Additionally, charter schools are exempt from numerous governmental restrictions and oversight which afford a significant level of autonomy.

May (2006) addresses the allure of the charter school movement in a survey of 260 Ohio families who opted out of the traditional school model in favor of a charter school. Pervasive in her findings was a constant notion that charter schools provided better academic outcomes although the data suggests otherwise (Berends & Waddington, 2018). Equally present in the responses from parents were unsubstantiated perceptions of better teachers, smaller class sizes, and academic excellence. In fact, for the latter, charter schools in Ohio had three times the failure rate as traditional schools and only one third the number of schools receiving exemplary ratings as its traditional counterparts. Thus, May (2006) found that changing the "perception gap" was paramount for traditional public schools to compete with charter schools (p. 28). She believed this could be accomplished by addressing safety concerns and finding ways to personalize the educational experience for children. Yet, missing from the quantitative study was the resultant segregation that occurs when local Black and Brown students and gentrifying families opt away

from the neighborhood schools in favor of charter schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

Recognizing the harm and despair to Neighborhood Middle School (NMS), a South Los Angeles community school experiencing a boom of charter schools within its boundaries, Quartz et al. (2020) identified three areas of importance for reformation. These included finding a balance between self-interest and the greater good of the community, creating hope over despair, and prioritizing the means with the ends (Quartz et al., 2020). Inherent within the group's efforts was a continued reflection of the school's position of value to the neighborhood and the insistence of collaboration throughout any future reformative efforts. During the team's interviews of parents, staff and former students, **t**here emerged a consistent frustration with the lack of parental input in educational reform. This is despite myriad reform efforts being introduced over the last three decades. In many respects, the history and reformation efforts of NMS parallel the challenges that have been transpiring at Louverture High School Early College Magnet over the identical time periods.

The issue of school choice has not been relegated to just public school systems. Godwin et. al. (1998) argued in favor of a voucher system to promote diversity and improve academic achievement for inner city and minority students. Placing the inequities of public education on a national scale, Godwin (1998) acknowledged the inherent harm caused by segregation and the benefits wealthier families experience because of their social and economic capital. The Godwin (1998) proposal sought to require a standardized acceptance rate to enhance and maintain diversity in each school that is the beneficiary of vouchers. The plan further sought to incentivize schools to relocate or expand their campuses to relieve the burden of transportation on underserved communities (Godwin, 1998).

On its face, the Godwin (1998) plan has value, but in reality, it causes further harm to Black and Brown communities. First, at what numerical acceptance rate can Black and Brown students feel comfortable and welcomed in a foreign environment. How is the holistic experience of diversity accomplished when students are not residents of the community? Can the relocation or expansion of a school into an urban area preserve the cultural component of the neighborhood? The last question is

analogous to the critical race theory and interest convergence factor explained by Milner (2008) in the evaluation of teacher education. In short, critical race theory challenges the status quo by identifying and exposing institutional racism. Interest convergence in the sense of racial equity seeks an intersecting point where the needs of the dominant group meet the needs of the subordinate group. As the literature will bear, unless higher SES families have a communal approach to the learning process convergence will never occur nor will racial separations be mended.

Parental Considerations

District policies and subsequent School Choice options have been the catalyst that generated student movement in gentrifying neighborhoods. Still, it is ultimately the families whose educational selection facilitates or exacerbates neighborhood school diversity. The power of each White middle and upper middle-class family cannot be undersold. Kimelberg and Billingham (2012) confirmed the social capital middle-class families possessed in the Boston Public School system. Seeking the perspective of middle-class Bostonian families, Kimelberg and Billingham (2012) performed a case study using Bostonian parents as the subjects. The goal: to assess the reasons prospective parents either selected or avoided a Boston Public (BP) school.

Three elements became abundantly evident from the qualitative study. First, White families that decided to choose a BP school wished to expose their children to diverse student populations (Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). Second, there was a strong attachment to the neighborhood school. Lastly, families felt more comfortable and confident in knowing families *like* them were also attending the school. The latter two factors unfortunately play a greater role in segregation. Otherwise, diverse communities dwindled. Therefore, as clusters of White families with higher SES were able to afford the surging costs of housing in a high-priced marketplace (Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). In turn, as these same families began filtering into the neighborhood and collectively making school choice selections, local students became marginalized. While the study identified reasons for middle-class families to select neighborhood schools in gentrifying areas, it did little to address the concerns of the local Black and Brown residents who were displaced or who remained.

Siegel-Hawley et al. (2017) validated several of the findings of Kimelberg and Billingham (2012) in their study of middle-class families at an impoverished, southern elementary school where 90% of the students were African American. Similarly, the desire of middle-class parents to provide a learning environment different from their own. Although, the studies differed in advancing the concerns of middle-class families prior to making their decision to seek a diverse setting. Apart from supporting social justice and promoting community reinvestment, middle-class parents were burdened with the possibility of subjecting their children to unsafe learning environments (Siegel-Hawley et al., 2017). Not unlike Philadelphia families, many feared being in the minority of a school rather than the majority (Cucchiara, 2013). Still, others questioned academic rigor, instruction, and leadership.

To alleviate these fears, families reverted to their political power, social capital to influence policies and to encourage others to join the bandwagon. Despite parent interviews that promoted a community school environment, one of the White interviewees stated "All of us decided we weren't going to do this alone. If we were going to do this, we needed to do it as a group, not just singular" (Siegel-Hawley et al., 2017, p.418). Although the "us versus them" mentality flies in the face of promoting social and racial justice, it was an essential element to gaining buy-in from other similarly situated families. Additionally, families sought clustered opportunities for their children, sometimes at the exclusion of lower SES students. Moreover, these families struggled to understand and accept the efforts of long-time residents and site leadership, which caused a level of strife within the school's community by marginalizing Black families (Siegel-Hawley et al., 2017, p.418).

The involvement of middle-class parents was further explored in a comparison of elementary schools in gentrifying neighborhoods of Boston (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009). A comparative analysis addressed the effectiveness of parental involvement when the driving force was based on self-interest or the schools' interest. In this study, each set of families had the capacity to bring valuable resources to either Grant or Monroe Elementary School. Grant Elementary was generally supported by upper middle-class families, while Monroe Elementary had a middle-class base of stakeholders. Both schools had

student populations from lower socioeconomic status, had a high concentration of Black students and at various times within the last thirty years, were at risk of closure (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009).

Despite the similarities, the two schools were diametrically opposed in their respective approaches to school improvement. For example, the parents at Grant sought changes such as removal of the principal and programs that would benefit their children specifically (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009). Unfortunately, not all Grant parents bought into the changes initiated by the White families. Black parents felt more and more marginalized as the promotion of programs benefitted classes of gentrifying families. In contrast, the Monroe parents sought meaningful change "so that all kids are enriched" (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009, p.985). At Monroe, social stratification was far less an issue than at neighboring Grant. While this study clearly identified the benefits of placing the needs of all stakeholders at the forefront of programmatic and policy decisions, it also shed light on the importance of social capital.

The strength of social capital among gentrifying parents was further advanced by Roberts and Lakes (2016) and later by Freidus (2019). In an analysis of the school choice, decision making processes by middle-class mothers, Roberts and Lakes (2016) noticed a strong correlation between a mother's activeness on social media and the ultimate decision of where to enroll her child. The setting encompassed two neighboring and gentrifying communities, Kirkwood and Grant Park tied together by Parkwood Elementary School in the Atlanta Public School system (Roberts & Lakes, 2016). Each school's demographics contained a substantial number of Black, lower SES students and has often been the case in urban communities, experienced low performance and declining enrollment. The questions presented to 30 moms revolved around assessing school options, their role in the decision making process, and the mode of communication used to exchange information (Roberts & Lakes, 2016).

Clear in the results was the importance of access to information. The data posits the more educated the individual, the more she was involved in the school selection process (Roberts & Lakes, 2016). Roberts and Lakes (2016) also identified several types of decision makers, which they deemed loner, follower, searcher, and collaborator. The latter three types were heavily dependent on social networking to provide influencing information. However, the African American mothers surveyed felt

marginalized and were at times excluded from the social networks. The results further indicated where self-interests were prevalent and ultimately promoted through social media, segregation was enhanced as resultant programs became tailored to middle- lass families (Roberts & Lakes, 2016). Moreover, gentrifying families who opted out of Parkwood for private and charter schools further reduced the opportunity for diversity in the school.

Freidus (2019) found a similar influence of social capital in a case study of PS 808, a Brooklyn, New York school which was also experiencing gentrification. Between 2002 and 2012 PS 808's White student enrollment increased from 2% to 30%. In recognizing the increase of White, middle-class families in the selection of neighborhood schools in gentrifying communities, Freidus (2019) sought out the reasoning behind the decisions. In so doing, she discovered a social network geared towards informing and encouraging certain school choice options. The Freidus (2019) data suggested gentrifying families were "determined to both contribute value to and acquire value from their school choices" (p.1123). However, to effectively realize both outcomes required coordination. Social media provided just the vehicle to generate a community of people seeking the same purpose but who were otherwise disconnected.

The assembled listserv initially served two functions: a resource for information about the PS 808 and as previously mentioned a tool to build community (Freidus, 2019). Unfortunately, the latter function of the listserv led to increased complications within the existing PS 808 community. Within the listserv a Parent Association (PA) was born that held differing perspectives of the school than the longstanding PS 808 PTA (Freidus, 2019). The PA group sought to develop rather than enhance a community where the tenured residents believed a community already existed. Instead of working collectively to support or propose new educational programs, the listserv parents used their political and economic capital to force the change they desired. The word diversity had meaning only in its representation of school demographics, not in the collective sense of families working and students learning together. Subsequently, the more comfortable listserv families became with this extrapolated definition of diversity,

the greater their enrollment in the school. In contrast, the new association with diversity by White, middle-class families meant marginalization to Black and Brown families.

Youth Perspective

A significant amount of research has been generated regarding the adult interests and effects of gentrification, but little research has addressed the student perspective of the phenomena. Tucker-Raymond and Rosario (2017) took into consideration the perspective of local seventh - grade students on matters of gentrification, social status, and identity. The observed school community resided in the heart of Chicago, where neoliberal policies were implemented to create mixed-income neighborhoods in an otherwise Puerto Rican-dominated community (Lipman, 2009). The classroom demographic makeup was 40% African American and 60% Latino with most of the Latino students of Puerto Rican descent (Tucker-Raymond & Rosario, 2017).

Students involved in this study were guided through authentic coursework to discuss, in a historical context, their perception of the neighborhood utilizing a Socratic seminar style of discussion. The inquiry began with students paired together and provided with a culturally responsive prompt. Prior to being given the prompt, pre-discourse materials including newspapers, photographs, and videos were shared with the class (Tucker-Raymond & Rosario, 2017). Once the initial prompt was presented each pairing was free to pursue the conversation in the direction of their partner's response. The results of the dialogic study displayed that students were keenly aware of the gentrification occurring in their neighborhood. Moreover, numerous students displayed aggravation and frustration with the influx of White middle and upper class residents who they believed were forcing their lifestyle on them (Tucker-Raymond & Rosario, 2017). The sentiments of the students were examples of tangible feedback that gentrification does have an effect on Black and Brown students, but more remains to be studied.

Formoso et al. (2010) also investigated the impact of gentrification on child development and the deconcentrating of poverty in urban communities. They held the position that two neighborhood-level mechanisms were influential in child outcomes: institution resources and collective socialization (Formoso et al., 2010). Institutional resources pertained to funding directly targeted for institutional

settings such as parks and schools. “Collective socialization” referred to the interaction and support of families (Formoso et al. 2010, p.396).

In the sense of institutional resources, Formoso et al. (2010) opined that affluent families and their resources were the catalysts to the well-being of low-income families. Payment to the property tax base, contributions to community projects, and investment in schools would not only afford them improved service, but simultaneously provide a benefit to all residing in the neighborhood. Subsequently, the team found that collective socialization in the form of parent-to-parent support, mixed ability classes, mentoring, and neighborhood congeniality would lead to a positive social environment for all youth (Formoso et al. 2010). Formoso et al. (2010) cautioned that cooperation and participation were needed from affluent and low-income families.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 framed the literature review into detailed areas of the gentrification phenomena in schools and communities, school district policies which can encourage or combat segregation, and school selection considerations demonstrated by families. Chapter 3 will describe the study’s research methodologies and methods.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology and Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of gentrification on the Black and Brown students at Louverture. The two research questions that guided this study were: 1) What is the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet? and 2) What balance can be maintained between the competing interests of gentrifiers and longtime residents? A qualitative case study design was used to address the two research questions using a grounded theory, action research approach. This chapter describes the study's research methodology and methods in detail.

Research Methodology

Related Studies

Several studies have utilized various combinations of qualitative case studies and action research. In alignment with the qualitative action research of Lipman (2009), the methodology of this case study sought to gain insight on the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet. Lipman (2009) examined the relationships between cultural and social processes, school and district policies, and the overall communal situation as it pertained to the displacement and marginalization of lower socioeconomic status (SES) families. Additionally, she observed, surveyed, and interviewed school and community stakeholders in hopes of gaining a greater perspective of the effects of gentrification in Chicago.

Freidus (2020) engaged in a qualitative assessment of parental influence in the gentrifying community of Brooklyn, New York. The case study presented by Freidus (2020) provided a glimpse into newcomer parent expectations and the importance placed on social capital. The observance of data through a communal listserv displayed "the overall choice system frequently comes from peer social networks and from interactions with district authorities" (Freidus 2020, p.1125). Qualitative, ethnographic research was also utilized to explore socioeconomic, familial stratification differences and their relative influence on neighborhood schools (Cucchiara, 2008).

This Study

This study employed a qualitative case study design using a grounded theory, action research approach.

Qualitative Case Study

This study was best served by the engagement of qualitative research. Qualitative research provides "the means to understand the largely cultural features of human social settings, incorporating meaning, purpose, values, and propensities as well as organizational and operational patterns of people's lives" (Stringer & Ortiz Aragón, 2021 p. 47) Qualitative research has deep acceptance in the observance of social science issues, particularly in the presence of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). The qualitative approach provided for meaningful analysis of pre-existing data, while also allowing for the collection of additional information through semi-structured interview questions, and site-based observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Case study was the research design selected for the study. This design model allowed the research to begin from a broad perspective of gentrification and district policy then taper to a narrowed viewpoint of parental preference and ultimately the student experience of Black and Brown students at Louverture (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell and Creswell (2018) identified case studies as a "qualitative design in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (p. 247). Utilization of a case study approach to research on the effects of gentrification on a neighborhood school allowed for a gathering of valuable information from Louverture's community stakeholders in a purposeful and intentional manner. In contrast, much of the current research on the effects of gentrification on schools either involves quantitative studies or case studies, which were limited in scope to parental considerations for school choice (Candipan, 2020; Freidus, 2019).

Grounded Theory and Action Research

A grounded theory, action research approach was also applied. Grounded theory methods consist of "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories grounded in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006). To better understand a studied phenomenon,

grounded theory seeks to cultivate theories which explain the interactions within the phenomena of interest (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this instance the phenomenon was gentrification. Creswell and Creswell (2018), assert the methods supporting grounded theory are derived from sociological practices in which the researcher develops a theory based upon participant interactions and viewpoints. This study examined the trending phenomena of gentrification in an identified public school and its potential effect on the Black and Brown students from the lens of the school's stakeholders.

"Action research is any research into practice undertaken by those involved in that practice, with the primary goal of encouraging continued reflection and making improvement" (Ip, 2017). Morales (2016) further defined action research as an approach which:

> (I)s grounded on a participatory worldview bringing together action and reflection, theory, and practice, in participation with others to pursue practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and communities." Moreover, "action research is an ongoing organizational learning process, a research approach that emphasizes co-learning, participation, and organizational transformation (p. 159).

Creswell & Creswell (2018) identify case studies as a "qualitative design in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (p. 247). To that end, this case study explored Louverture's method for programming, scheduling, and supporting Black and Brown community stakeholders in and around the campus.

Transformative Worldview Inquiry

This action research case study encompassed a grounded theory, qualitative and transformative worldview inquiry approach, designed to assess and, if necessary, improve the educational experience for Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet. As described by Creswell and Creswell (2018), a transformative worldview lends itself nicely to institutional and systemic reform in the face of inequality, injustice, and marginalization. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide a voice for those students who have been marginalized by gentrification in urban communities across the country.

Research Methods

Research Setting

Research Site

Trower Unified School District (TUSD) comprises 20 schools supporting K-12, public education for more than 14,000 students residing in Trower and neighboring communities. According to TUSD data, 69% of the student population identifies as African American or Latinx and 17% identify as White. The racial make-up of Louverture is 92% Black and Brown students and 5% White students positioned within a catchment area of a similar neighborhood demography. The research site was selected because it is positioned in the heart of NW Trower and represents the neighborhood high school in the area.

Researcher Positionality

The study was not only a reflection about a national phenomenon, but it also represented research in the very same community where this researcher resides. As such, the researcher was one who fluctuated between "insider and outsider," defined by Herr and Anderson (2015) as one who is 'researching their own practice or setting' or who is not directly connected to the setting (p. 41). Being a member of the NW Trower community clearly made the researcher an insider, but the position as a former administrator at Louverture warrants an outsider designation.

Given the researcher's long tenure in the community awareness of significant changes in demographics by the influx of gentrifying, predominantly White middle-and upper-class residents to NW Trower was readily apparent. Moreover, the researcher was present and involved as an administrator at Louverture, during its rebranding from a traditional, comprehensive school to a specialized *magnet* program. In maintaining the trustworthiness of data, it was equally important to understand how the researcher's relationship as a former administrator might have impacted interactions with participants. Although the researcher no longer works on the campus, many strong relationships were forged over the years with staff, parents, and students. These prior relationships had the potential to influence the selection of participants and their potential responses to the research questions. Relationships with staff also had the propensity to influence the interpretation of data. In all cases, where the potential for bias was

high, the researcher either sought a replacement for the participant or encouraged participants to be forthcoming with their responses by emphasizing the importance of the research. Such reassuring conversations put the participants at ease, thus further ensuring validity and trustworthiness.

Research Participants

The participants in the study included current and former members of the Louverture community. Among the participants were administrators, other school staff, longtime and gentrifying parents, and Louverture alumni. Each participant demonstrated a connection to the school, in their respective capacity for a minimum of two years. A special effort was made to secure parent participants who are or were actively involved at the school. There were eight interview participants in total. The number of participants was selected to gain sufficiency in the subject matter (Seidman, 2005).

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Once TUSD approval for the research project was secured, a multifaceted approach was taken to identify potential candidates for participation. First, consideration was given to individuals who potentially had first-hand knowledge of the gentrification occurring in the NW Trower community and Louverture specifically. For school staff, an effort was made to secure participants who were very familiar with or directly responsible for student programming, schedules, and placement. Additionally, participation was sought from individuals who had the capacity or opportunity to observe, firsthand, the interaction between Black and Brown students and their gentrifying peers. The outreach for alumni focused on those participants who might have been affected by the influx of gentrifiers, and those who may have benefited from their presence on campus. The quest for parent participants combined a search for individuals who actively connected to the campus and who were recommended by members of the Louverture staff. Table 1 reflects the affiliation, number of years connected, gender, and race of the participants. (see Table 1)

Table 1

Participant comparison of school location, self-reported gender and time connected to the school

Participant No.	School Classification	Gender	Years w/school	Race
1	Secondary	Male	11	Black
2	Secondary	Female	25	Latina
3	Secondary	Male	5	Latino
4	Elementary	Female	11	Latina
5	Elementary	Female	6	Latina
6	Elementary/Secondary	Female	15	Black
7	Secondary	Female	4	Black
8	Secondary	Male	8	White

Persistent care was taken to check for representativeness among the participants, which resulted in the interviewing of eight participants who were at least tangentially connected to the Louverture community (Miles et al., 2020). In some circumstances, a direct appeal was made to former colleagues, parents, and alumni. Supplemental participants were selected based on the recognition of recurring themes and plausibility considerations.

Given Louverture's recent public perception as a struggling school, it was sometimes necessary to express to participants that the findings would not be a condemnation of the efforts, but rather an opportunity to recognize positive occurrences at the school. To that end, participants were each asked to share any details or thoughts not otherwise addressed in the semi-structured interview questions. Each participant brought their own perspective to the conversation and the data collected was not meant to be representative of all members of the school's community.

At the time of recruitment, all participants were supplied with a document explaining the action research study purpose, process, and potential outcomes of the data. Each interviewee signed a letter of informed consent to participate and was afforded TUSD's letter of authorization. Participants were requested to provide additional oral consent at the time of the interview.

Data Collection

Timeline

The data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews and unstructured observations. Data collection began with initial interviews and subsequent transcriptions, using Otter taking place in early April and concluding in early August (otter.ai). In May of 2022, approximately halfway through the data collection phase, it became readily apparent that recruitment be expanded to the primary Louverture feeder elementary school, Toussaint Dual Immersion Magnet. The descriptive coding process did not begin until early July and due to the extended time between a few of the initial interviews and the analysis, rereading transcriptions and listening to the initial recordings was warranted. While the intent was to complete the data analysis phase approximately two to three months after the final pieces of data were collected, it was necessary to extend the proposed timeline into late October.

Unstructured observations of student relationships occurred during the months of October and November well into the 2022-2023 school year to afford time for relationships to form with students new to the campuses. Observational data was subsequently collected and reviewed during the month of November utilizing the two-column collection method and subsequently triangulated with participant interview responses (Mertler, 2020).

Semi-structured Interviews

Similar to the data collection methods used in Cucchiara (2008), semi-structured interview questioning of TUSD staff, parents, and recent Louverture alumni were the leading tools for data collection in this case study. Semi-structured interviews consist of baseline questioning with the option to follow up or ask alternative questions depending on the circumstance (Mertler, 2020). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow for participants to freely express their experience without being constrained (Stringer & Ortiz Aragón, 2021). The semi-structured approach seemed to be the most effective format to elicit genuine responses.

All interview questions were researched and developed in alignment with the intended objectives of the study and each participant was presented with twelve baseline questions (see Appendices A, B, &

C). The virtual interviews commenced at the start of April, 2022 and were concluded in August, 2022. Audio recordings of each 30-minute interview were captured during a virtual meeting and subsequently transcribed and coded to support the accuracy and anonymity of the participants' reflections (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Arslangilay (2018), in assessing the impact of migration on school culture, recognized the value of interview-based reflection as an essential data collection tool. Researcher notes, taken simultaneously with the interviews, provided a tertiary level of accuracy during each interview. The anonymity of all participants and documents was maintained under strict confidentiality by substituting any names with pseudonyms and codes and encrypting files used to hold data.

Unstructured Observations

Unstructured observations geared towards acknowledging the interactions and reactions completed the qualitative data collection process. Unstructured qualitative observations are defined as the 'observance of all potentially relevant phenomena and taking extensive field notes without specifying in advance exactly what is to be observed' (Johnson and Christensen, 2014 p. 329). Mertler (2020) viewed unstructured observations as a flexible way of observing behavior. Prior to the observation, a checklist was created as a reminder of the objectives to look for including schoolwide demographics and social interactions. Direct observation at the school site also served as a balance to subjective reflections offered by participants (Family Health, n.d.). As a non-participant observer, a specific effort was made to be as inconspicuous as possible to gain a genuine perspective about the learning environment without attracting undue attention (Mertler, 2020). It should be noted that the non-participatory observations of student engagement reflected a mere snapshot of activity during student free time and did not reflect how students interacted in a classroom setting.

All observation notes were captured in a two-column format with the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants protected by codifying the data (Mertler, 2020). Due to privacy considerations of students and the limited scope of the CUHSR proposal, there was no student interaction between the researcher and the subjects during the unstructured observations. Following the capture of actual observational data, the next step was to craft interpretations of the information.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this case study was guided by the central research questions that propelled the study: 1) What is the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet? and 2) How can a balance be achieved amidst competing interests? Imperative to the data analysis process was ensuring the validity of the information gathered. At the core of validity are neutrality and objectivity which is solidified with credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable data (Mertler, 2020). Throughout the data collection process, the aforementioned characteristics were maintained.

Interviews

The initial data analysis phase of the study incorporated the assistance of a commercially available software program, MAXQDA to disaggregate the information (maxqda.com). The data management program was utilized to facilitate a four-step data management plan that followed the recommended coding process presented by Creswell and Creswell (2018). The four steps included organizing, reading, broadly coding, and generating themes from the data. Once all interview audio recordings had been transcribed, the next step entailed descriptively coding the initial recordings to identify overarching individual narratives (Miles et al., 2020). A computer software program, OtterPilot was used for transcription (otter.ai). Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend interpreting the codes from three different lenses: expected, surprising, and of special interest. Expected codes represent data the researcher expected or assumed would occur. Codes that were surprising under the circumstances were grouped together as were extremely unusual findings. Thus, the initial listing of codes was subsequently pared down to the seven most prominent categories represented in the interview participant responses (see Table 2).

Table 2

Summary of Participant Experiences and Observations: Identified Categories

Type of Experience or Observation	Frequency
Leadership	8 of 8
Accessibility	8 of 8
Parental Involvement	8 of 8
Appeal	8 of 8
Awareness	7 of 8
Programming	7 of 8
Stakeholder Engagement and Limitations	7 of 8

In succession, any extraneous information was removed with the remaining data identified with labels and consolidated into meaningful categories. For example, the word *guidance* was mentioned often by the participants, but the context of its use produced a variety of meanings (i.e., counselor, direction, assistance etc.).

Rather than determine the categories solely based on frequency, an alternative method was used to capture the categorical positioning of the participants. A combination of both the numerical mention of a word and the participant's enhanced description and/or emotional connection to a given question assisted in narrowing the focus to the seven applicable categories. For example, while only two of the participants commented negatively about the intrusive nature of gentrification, significant weight was given to the passion of their responses as it affected their housing options.

Finally, further investigation of the data was initiated to determine narrative and counter-narratives for each of the major themes. This was accomplished by generating a comparison between the participant responses to the current literature.

Unstructured Observations

The primary purpose of the unstructured observations was to compare what participants offered in their responses regarding the degree of student engagement between newcomers and longtime students and what was occurring on the campuses. A comparative method is often used to analyze multiple data sources (Mertler, 2020). In this study, a two column structure of notes captured actual observances and the researcher's interpretation of the observances. For instance, students were first observed sitting in

groups and later an interpretation of the group's make up followed. The interpretations were used to further describe the interactions between various groups of students. In turn, the data were then compared to comments presented by participants for consistencies and discrepancies. For example, it was impossible to determine the socioeconomic diversity of student groupings. In certain instances, it was possible to visually identify racial groups. Lastly, several strategies and procedures were instituted to support the trustworthiness of the study's data. The strategies included triangulating varying sources of data, exercising multiple observations, informational reviews with participants of interview notes and summary findings, and generating detailed notes (Mertler, 2020).

Synthesis of Interview and Observational Data

An inductive analysis was the simplest and most efficient method for synthesizing the data. Following Mertler's (2020) three guiding principles for inductive, qualitative analysis, the data was organized, described, and interpreted to develop themes. First, a word cloud software program was used to generate a list of the most uttered words and phrases by the participants (worditcloud.com). From there, extraneous, non-essential words were removed from the list and the remaining collection of words or phrases were reduced to seven basic categories (see Table 2). The coding of the information into categories was shadowed by a further description of the categories and their alignment with the research questions. During this phase of analysis, it was important to also identify 'contradictions or conflicts' between varying participant responses, as well as between their responses and the researcher's observations (p. 175). For example, there were competing views on the value of gentrification among the participants. Through this process, several themes emerged including stakeholder engagement and involvement, enhanced school appeal, and mindful leadership. In turn, each of the developing themes was interpreted through the lens of how they might shape current or future practices in TUSD and the respective school sites.

Additionally, like Jabbar and Wilson (2018), the range of interview response data and observations were triangulated using a comparison method approach to further identify relevant and common themes. Further comparisons of the acquired data to prior literature findings, which were

subsequently viewed in combination with the inductive analysis process assisted in the development of two hypotheses. The formulation of two hypotheses served as a launchpad toward specifically addressing the primary research questions of the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture and how to strike a balance between the competing interests of newcomers and longtime residents.

The first hypothesis espouses that gentrification is having a positive and negative impact on the neighborhood school and its residents. The second hypothesis offers that mindful, and responsive leadership are critical in balancing stakeholder expectations and influence fueled by gentrification at Louverture.

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the study's research methodology and methods in detail. Chapter 4 will present the findings acquired from the methods described in this chapter.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the qualitative case study conducted at Louverture High School Early College Magnet in the Summer of 2022. The purpose of the study was to examine if and how the current phenomenon of gentrification, currently occurring at Louverture High School Early College Magnet is affecting the educational experiences for Black and Brown students at the school. This chapter reports and discusses the study's findings and answers the study's two research questions.

Stakeholder Expectations and Involvement

Before engaging in a quest to address the impact newcomer families were having on the Louverture campus, it was essential to unpack participants' interpretation of gentrification in the NW Trower community. This finding included participants' perceptions of a shift in student demographics. Next, the research progressed to the expectations stakeholders displayed as a consideration for enrollment. Finally, consideration of stakeholder involvement was reviewed as it pertained to parent participation and student programming.

Awareness of Gentrification

All eight participants had strong ties to the Louverture community with several being both long-standing residents and former students of the school. Everyone's passion and commitment to Louverture and the neighboring community were reticent in the depth of engagement and emotional charge to several the study's interview questions. Each of the participants was at least somewhat familiar with the term gentrification and its impact on the Louverture catchment area. Without exception, every participant was able to acknowledge and then explain the gentrification movement occurring in Northwest Trower. Most of the participants defined gentrification as an influx of upper middle-class families relocating into urban areas in search of affordable housing and business opportunities. Interestingly, the two youngest participants projected viewpoints that disparaged the act of gentrification in the community. For example, Participant 8 defined gentrification as, "Minorities being pushed out of their communities, possibly by

White people who are taking their opportunities and using them for their own benefit." Participant 1 defined gentrification in a similar way:

> Gentrification occurs when your community becomes run down and White people buy up all the property dirt cheap, which then causes property values to rise. The people that have been here can't really afford mortgages or they have really high rates, so they have to leave.

DeSena's (2019) explanation of gentrification as a conversion of working-class neighborhoods to affluent communities is consistent with the beliefs of this study's participants. This is not to suggest that the participants presented a common viewpoint on the value of gentrification in Northwest Trower. In fact, several of the participants were polar opposites in their assessment of the phenomenon. While Participant 4's altruistic beliefs were aligned with the findings in Freidus (2020) of the desire of White families to integrate and diversify gentrifying neighborhoods, Participant 7 viewed the current influx of upper socioeconomic status families as a significant intrusion into an otherwise established community. What was unequivocally present with all participants was an awareness that gentrification was occurring.

It was quite fortuitous that all the participants were at least somewhat familiar with the concept of gentrification, but also had the capacity to derive their own interpretation of the phenomenon. This seed of knowledge was paramount to the remaining questions of the interview. Even though the defining of gentrification was one of the study's initial interview questions, the responses demonstrated an emerging ideology of protection and preservation for the Black and Brown students at Louverture and Toussaint schools (Keels et al., 2013).

Changing Student Demographics

The participants' familiarity with the changing demographics in Northwest Trower and in the Louverture community varied by individual stakeholder. At one end of the spectrum, Participant 2 believed that small changes were occurring in the neighborhood, but little change was happening on the campus. At the other end of the spectrum, Participant 4 clearly identified changes in the student demographics on campus and in the neighborhood. Consistent with findings by Cucchiara (2008), she recognized a significant, upward trend in the socioeconomic status (SES) of families enrolling at the

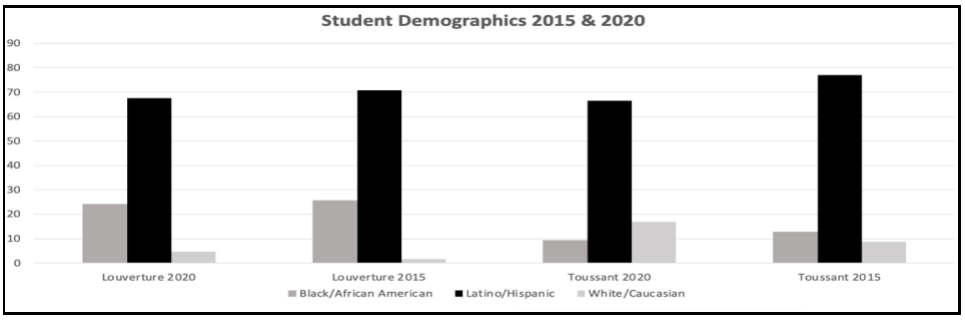
elementary school, as well as a similar albeit small shift in the racial demography at Toussaint ES. Participant 4, noting the statistical changes in SES demographics stated:

> Yeah, so the socioeconomic level of our families definitely has risen. Like I said, I think we were close to like, I know that when I got there, it was like either 92 or 93%. And I know it had been higher than that prior for students who receive free and reduced lunch. And now officially, I saw it was 63 points or something.

Field observations combined with the researcher's prior experiences with both campuses supported the perspective of changing demographics offered by Participant 4. Figure 3 provides an illustration of the racial trends occurring at both Louverture and Toussaint since 2015 with the percentage of White students on the rise and the percentage of Black and Brown students declining.

Figure 3

Changes in student demographics.



The changing economic demographics occurring at both Louverture HS and Toussaint ES respectively are accentuated when considering the change in the percentage of families who qualified for federal Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) in 2015 and 2020 respectively. In just a span of five years Toussaint saw a 30% drop in the number of qualifying FRL students. Although Louverture has, in contrast, experienced a slight uptick in qualifying students for Free and Reduced Lunch, there are several plausible explanations. First, in 2015 TUSD transitioned from paper registration documentation to online completion of student forms. This systemic change of process placed many families who lacked either the ability to access the digital platforms or were unfamiliar with its use at a significant deficit. In 2015, Louverture attempted to support families during the registration process by offering in-school assistance,

but the collection of all but the most essential data was forgotten in the effort. Thus, the number of FRL recipients was significantly underreported in 2015.

Participant 3 could not speak to the specific, overall percentage of FRL qualifying students, but did report that he has observed a decline in the number of students who qualify for fee waivers for Advanced Placement (AP) exams. According to federal guidelines, students who qualify for FRL also are eligible for a fee waiver or discounted pricing for Advanced Placement examinations. Keels et al. (2013), in an examination of gentrifying institutions, identified a similar correlation in Chicago Public School system. Supporting this view, Participant 3 stated:

> Where you do see it is when I check off whether they get that fee reduction, because they're Free and Reduced Lunch. I would say that about 40-45% of the students who are taking AP classes do not qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch, while that is not the case for the majority of our students. So, the students who are taking the AP classes, they are socioeconomically better off than the majority of our students.

Another consideration for the increase in FRL students is the *lag effect*. In recent years, TUSD has experienced the greatest changes in demography at the elementary level. Therefore, it stands to reason that the significant downward trend occurring will be replicated once the elementary aged children at Toussaint enroll in high school at Louverture in the coming four to eight years. According to one source, the lag effect of gentrifying students subsequently transitioning to high school will likely impact the data analysis of this research in several additional areas, such as student programming, increased parental capital and schoolwide expectations (Grimm et al., 2021).

The trend in student racial and ethnic demographics is also reflected in Figure 8. Recognition of the changing racial and ethnic landscape was readily acknowledged by all the elementary participants and all but one of the secondary participants. The data reflects modest declines in the percentage of Latino/Hispanic and Black/African American students respectively attending Louverture, but it does display a small increase in the percentage of White/Caucasian students. In contrast, Toussaint ES has experienced a nearly 100% increase in the number of White/ Caucasian children enrolling at the school

and a 5-12% decrease in the amount of Black and Brown students present on the campus. Participant 2 recounted information that supports the trends happening at Louverture:

> Because I'm the one who updates the profile…School profile 21-22. Okay, so our Caucasian population has gone up to 5%, and our African American population has gone down to 27%. And I see our American Indian or Alaskan population has gone up to 4%, which we have never really had before either.

Participant 6 shared a few interesting thoughts and experiences of how the changing demographics have been a benefit to some stakeholders:

> There's a different demographic at Toussaint. There are still the black and brown kids that are there, but there's a healthy mixture of California. What I like to call California mixture. There's a little bit of everybody in Toussaint now. I'm not sure personally that I think it's a negative thing. I believe that the experiences that we have had and the people in the families I think in that sense, have made it a beneficial transition for people.

Participant 4 in referencing the benefits of the changing demographics added, "Because I really think that diversity helps both sets of kids. I think you learn how to be inclusive, and you learn how to get along with other cultures by living it."

The continued shifting in student demographics either racially or socioeconomically was readily identified by the participants. Although there may have been differing viewpoints on the benefits of gentrification about the Trower community, the shift in demographics was viewed favorably by all. Similar to Siegel-Hawley et al. (2016), the blending of diverse student groups on a singular campus is a welcomed addition to the student experience.

School Appeal

Because the interviews and field observations revealed sufficient evidence to suggest that changing economic and racial demographics are ever present in NW Trower, the next question to ask became why upper middle-class families are now beginning to opt for the neighborhood school instead of private and out of district public secondary institutions.

Rebranding and Programming

Moving beyond the general acceptance of gentrification and changing student demographics at Louverture and Toussaint, it was important to gain perspectives of why there has been an increased interest in both schools by newcomer families in recent years. Within the last ten years both schools have been rebranded with Toussaint ES adding "Dual Immersion Program (DLP) Magnet" to its name, and more recently Louverture HS receiving the additional label of "Early College Magnet" and to its title. Loosely replicating the findings of Siegel-Hawley et al. (2016), the newcomers to NW Trower seem to have found solace in the rebranding and commitment to safety at both Louverture HS and Toussaint ES.

Like the outcomes in Cucchiara (2008), all eight of the participants unequivocally acknowledged that rebranding was making a substantial difference in the numbers and types of families registering for each school. For example, Participant 6, who is a longtime resident of the area and a former attendee of Louverture, was extremely candid in her account for selecting Toussaint as the school of choice for her children: "I'll be completely honest; I never saw my kids attending Toussaint. The Dual Immersion program was the draw." Participant 6 emphasized her strong position was based on the school's previously poor reputation. The serious consideration of this longstanding family potentially opting away from the neighborhood school mimics the findings of parents in blighted communities nationwide selecting out of area schools to meet the needs of their children (Pearman II, 2020).

Equally lured by Toussaint's rebranding as a dual immersion magnet school, Participant 5 explained her school selection process. She echoed the sentiments identified by Siegel-Hawley et al. (2016) and Kimelberg and Billingham, (2012) of parents seeking a diverse public education for their children, sharing very concrete reasons why she and her husband elected to enroll their children at Toussaint:

> My husband and I have always been big supporters of public schools. We think they're very important. For Democracy and community. So, we're always looking to enroll in a public school. With Toussaint, the dual language program that was pretty new, I think it was two years old the time we came in, and that was a big draw for us. I tried to teach my kids Spanish, but it's really

> hard. And so, we really wanted to enroll them in a dual language school. So, the fact that it was a public school, it had some interesting programs, and it was a Spanish Dual Language School was a big draw.

Participant 4, whose views as a site administrator provided a historical interpretation of the benefits of rebranding, commented about the enrollment draw of the Dual Immersion program stating:

> And so, what I've seen is a lot of people that are coming to the school that are very well aware that it's a school where there are a lot of minorities, and primarily Hispanic. I mean, we were, at one point, I think close to 80%. Now it's like 66% And then also African American families. That was our second biggest demographic. And they know and we know that the families are from low SES circumstances, and yet these are families that still want to come. And I don't want to say this was like the first year that we opened the dual language program, or the second or by the third. I think more and more people were starting to learn that we had a dual language program at Toussaint, and they started to tour the school and they were impressed with what we were doing. And that group I want to say it was the third year of the dual language program and is where we got a whole bunch of families from a higher socioeconomic group with just as amazing positive energy.

A third consideration, peer influence, identified by Kimelberg and Billingham (2012) was also mentioned as significant factor in school appeal and selection. Participants 4 and 5 noticed that bonds between similarly situated socioeconomic status (SES) families played a substantial role in their choice of school. This type of school selection process, *deciding en masse,* was evident at both schools and subsequently generated positive and energized school climates. Students involved in the process often experienced an immediate sense of belonging among their cohort of friends. However, participants from both schools suggested there was a limited crossover engagement between Black and Brown students and their White peers.

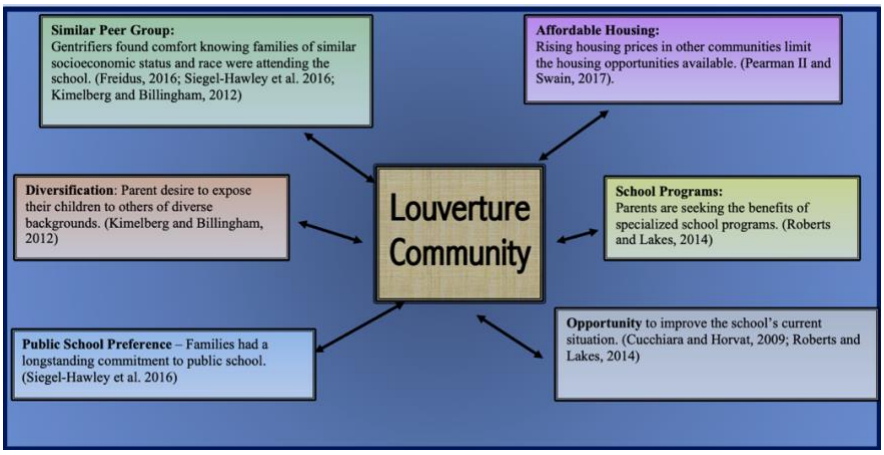
Participant 1, aligning with the findings of Lipman (2009) in support of rebranding schools as magnet institutions, provided similar sentiments for the reasons Louverture has garnered interest from gentrifying families:

> We have 30 college classes that are brand new so it's pretty much kids can take high school classes in college at the same time. And when you talk to them, it's going to be a lot of white kids that their parents understand the benefit of this. You're going to send them here. And so, you understand it's going to benefit everybody, but yeah. It is better for our kids because I'm going to force you to take the class. But you're going to see a lot of people who traditionally would never have set foot on the Louverture campus and have kids whose parents would have poo pooed the idea. You're going to get robbed, you're going to get mugged, you're going to get AIDS, you're going to be a gang member, all types of shenanigans that they would have thought would have never sent their kids here. But now they're here.

All eight participants responded that the respective schools were more attractive than in previous years, and that accessibility to special programs was frequently the primary reason for each school's attractiveness. Figure 4 highlights the alignment and similarities to prior research of the decision-making process of a newcomer, Upper SES families who have relocated to the Louverture catchment area employed when selecting the neighborhood school.

Figure 4

Reasons for selecting Louverture HS or Toussaint ES.



Curriculum and Programming

Most participants were intimately familiar with curriculum and programming on the study's respective campuses. Overall, the participants maintained that Louverture and Toussaint school staff were sensitive to the cultural needs of their students. Every participant further affirmed that both schools do an excellent job of incorporating cultural relevance to curricular content and extracurricular programming. At the elementary school, Participants 4 and 5 mentioned that specific efforts such as the Fun Fiesta, an afterschool, school-community celebration recognizing dance and food from various Latin countries, was created with cultural relevance in mind. However, Participant 6, sharing concerns consistent with the findings of Siegel et al. (2016), believed there was a lack of cultural relevance as applied to the Black community at the elementary school. Participant 6, speaking to the African American cultural responsiveness stated:

> I will say that it's not anyone's fault, but for example, they're very, very supportive of the ELA. You know, it's one of those things where that piece is still very strong, and they stick within the community. On the African American side. I don't know why but we just have not been able to get anything going particularly related to our students.

Participant 5, speaking to the intentions of two parent groups, remarked:

> The programming through the PTA and Elio fund, absolutely everyone can come. Everyone's welcome. A lot of our programming is free, especially as a PTA because our main goal as a parenting group is to establish community, so a lot of our events are just fun and free.

Student Engagement and Interaction

The manner in which students were engaged on the respective campuses was also considered through the study's participant interviews. Specific attention was paid toward how longstanding enrollees of Louverture, and Toussaint were interacting with the newcomers given the differences in SES and racial makeup. Only Participant 3 had not observed the interactions between students at either campus. Of the remaining participants, none of them observed substantial interaction between Black and Brown students

and their White peers except when involved in athletics at the secondary level or recess at the elementary school.

For example, Participant 4 acknowledged how programming differences between Dual Language Immersion Program (DLP) and English only classes often interrupted the opportunity for Black and Brown students to engage with their White counterparts:

> When you walk into a DLP class you're going to see students that are in that group that has a higher SES and I'm talking in general. It's not all of them, but it is a lot of them. And when you walk into an English only class, you see a little bit less diversity. And you see more or less of the students that are high achieving. And I am talking just in general. It's something that has been really difficult to kind of break through because the gentrified folks are looking for the dual language experience.

The observations of social stratification on the schoolyard by Participant 4 are not far removed from the findings of Roberts and Lakes (2014), suggesting gentrifying families often seek to reproduce their social class privilege at the neighborhood school.

> Comments made by Participant 6 supported the perceived distinction between student grouping: It's not your neighborhood school anymore. Those kids are still there, but they're in the English mainstream program. There's the English mainstream school and there is the dual immersion school. And as much as I've been part of different conversations, it's been a topic on different agendas and meetings that I've been a part of, as much as they tried to merge and make the two one you can sense and feel the differences.

Participant 6 further reflected upon an unusual yet characteristic circumstance of social class privilege, which occurred at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020:

> When the pandemic hit in 2020, immediately, groups of parents heard about pods all over the country, immediately. Parents were reaching out and our kids went into a pod with four other students in their grade level and as parents, we hired a Spanish teacher to supplement the Spanish language component of dual immersion. Students not just at Toussaint, I mean, across the country

> who were lagging behind, you know, didn't have access to the internet and didn't have access to just the basic things."

Despite the increase of White students on the Louverture campus, crossover student engagement between Black and Brown students and White peers remains limited. Participant 7, sharing her experience as a student on the Louverture campus expressed the following comments surrounding student engagement:

> I don't really see much interaction between different groups of students. I saw that previously during my freshman year, but I definitely saw that a lot in my senior year. Just walking around seeing different groups of students just being together and not with other groups of students, if that makes sense. So, there was a lot of separation there.

In concert with the limited racially based student engagement asserted by the participants, the field observations on the Louverture and Toussaint campuses produced marginally different findings. At the high school, students were frequently clustered in groups of four to five students, oftentimes in mixed race groupings. The groupings were often Black and Brown students clustered together as those two demographics represent the primary racial groups on campus. Students who appeared to be White were primarily with other White students, although there were several of these student groupings which included a Black or Brown student. Mixed groupings, where present, occurred far more frequently with male students than female students.

Similar results of student groupings were observed at the elementary school with the exception of student groupings being almost exclusively male or female. It was also a bit more challenging to estimate a student's race as there appeared to be a substantial number of mixed-race students on campus. Notwithstanding the changing demographics occurring at both schools, the participants believed there was little interaction at either the high school or the elementary school between lower socioeconomic status students and their recently enrolled White, upper middle-class peers.

Accessibility

Each of the eight participants believed that at least in theory, all community stakeholders possessed access to the Louverture and Toussaint educational experiences. However, mirroring the findings of Siegel-Hawley et al. (2016), they also acknowledged that not all members of the respective school communities have unfettered access to existing programs. Several participants reasoned that limited access is certainly not intentional on the part of the schools, but rather an unintended result of social class stratification. One area where a few participants identified a lack of access was the opportunity for elementary students to participate in certain extracurricular programs. Participant 4 cited the high demand for afterschool programming and a site-created glitch in the registration process that disenfranchised many Black and Brown families. The second challenge in providing access was the inability of lower SES parents to miss valuable time from work or sacrifice childcare to attend school-based meetings.

The efforts to maintain the inclusion of Black and Brown student programming was not exclusive to the elementary school. Participant 3, referencing high school programming, also felt it very important to note:

> We don't discourage the students from taking those AP classes. If they want to, they can take them. However, we know because of systemic racism that simply not discouraging students is not good enough. Sometimes you have to be more proactive and get students in there… Black and Brown students succeed in these classes.

Mindful Leadership

The question of leadership was not specifically asked of the participants during the interviews, yet all eight interviewees referenced, directly or indirectly the intentionality of site based leaders to ensure equity on the respective campuses. There was an intense suggestion that the racial makeup of each school's leadership teams (inclusive of staff and parents) foster an ongoing sense of empathy and consideration for Black and Brown students.

Empathy

One of the principal determinants for a student's success in school is the campus climate (Frieberg & Stein, 1999). Campus climate is defined by Rankin and Reason (2008) as "the current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of faculty, staff, administrators, and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential" (p. 264). For K-12 students enjoying a healthy campus environment is critical during their formative years.

Personifying the results in Sather (1999), Louverture and Toussaint leadership, comprised of principals and assistant principals, consistently considered the implications of decisions and actions which may adversely affect the Black and Brown student experience. Participant 3, reflecting on how Covid 19 circumstances heightened the staff's awareness to and need for culturally sensitive responsiveness, commented:

> I think, in a way, Covid helped us quite a bit. Because when we went on lockdown - or safer at home order - as administrative staff, we were out there doing home visits, trying to get kids back in. We were looking at what were the issues that were affecting our students. Some kids were struggling with food insecurity, they didn't have enough. We did a home visit where the mom wasn't there because she was in court trying not to get evicted. We had other students who didn't have reliable internet service, so as much as they tried, you had that little thing swirling. We relayed that information back to the teachers, and then we went from there. We talked about what were the instructional practices, and what were the mindsets that teachers needed to have, that we all needed to have, to help out our students.

Recognizing the importance of inclusivity Toussaint, at least from a racial diversity perspective, the school maintains a PTA, which replicates the school's demographics. Participant 4 confirmed and echoed the comments of other participants stating:

> What it looks like today is that a lot of our parents are a lot more active. As far as the demographics, our PTAs are so super, super diverse. I mean, when we talk about some things sometimes you hear about schools that will say Oh, yeah, you know, the whole PTA is White or

> whatever. Oh, not us, this past year, our president was half white, half Asian. Our Vice President was African American. Our secretary, I can't remember who the Secretary was. But anyways, it (PTA) was as diverse as the communities."

Participant 5 acknowledged the opportunities for inclusion afforded to Black and Brown families, but she was also aware of the challenges, citing the following:

> They have an equal opportunity; I would say but it has always been a struggle to get them to raise their voices. A lot of the Spanish only families it's been hard to reach that group; one because they might not have the time and the resources to attend events. You know, it always depends on when we place the meetings. We've tried doing them right after school late at night having childcare and translation, but it can be hard to reach their parents again because most of the PTA is English speaking and they can feel ostracized. So that has always been an ongoing battle.

Within the context of the high school, the parental involvement component fell more in line with the research and findings of Keel et al. (2013) and Cucchiara and Horvat (2010) in which newcomer parents flexed their political and economic capital. This is not to suggest that exclusion is ensuing, but a demonstrative shift seems to be occurring when a school with a largely dominant minority student body has a White PTSA president. Recognizing a shift in parental engagement and opportunity, Participant 7 commented:

> I would say what I have seen my freshman and sophomore year was that we had a black mother as our PTSA President and now we have a white mother as our PTSA. President, as well as the cabinet are mostly white parents.

Among the chorus of participant responses, it was readily apparent that all stakeholders find it a necessity to ensure equity and access for all students. The participants also believe that the respective schools are making a concerted effort to be inclusive. However mindful the schools might be, participants observed the unintended consequences of certain actions, systems, and processes which in turn impeded or deprived Black and Brown parents the ability to be active advocates in their children's' education.

Discussion

The existence of gentrification in NW Trower is readily apparent in the community and most importantly in the neighborhood schools. This section of the chapter addresses the study's two research questions through a synthesis of the qualitative findings and results.

Research Question 1: Impact of Gentrification

The study's initial research question asked, what is the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet? The study's findings suggest that gentrification is alive and well in the community and is contributing to a change in student demographics both racially and socioeconomically. Generally speaking, the participants favored the increased diversification of the student bodies. Not considered by any of the participants was the potential for lost state and federal revenue, should the percentage of families qualifying for Federal Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) drop below 40% (California Department of Education, 2022). A substantial reduction of qualifying FRL families could also, indirectly, impact scholarships opportunities that are often tied to the economic status of the school.

The findings further suggested that two of the primary driving forces for newcomer enrollment were the rebranding of Louverture and Toussaint coupled with the comfort of knowing similarly situated families would also enroll in the respective schools. Not unlike the findings of Freidus (2019), the newcomers arrived, armed with the desire to change their respective schools. The increase of gentrifying families has, at times, also led to programmatic inequities, as well as conflicting ideas of school expectations.

Research Question 2: Balance of Competing Interests

The study's second research question asked, what balance can be maintained between the competing interests of gentrifiers and longtime residents? The study's findings strongly suggest that empathetic and representative leadership is the key to maintaining a system balance for each of the schools and the students they serve. Moreover, the results strongly hinted that persons of color in leadership were frequently reflective of the implications their decisions might have on Black and Brown

students. For example, Participant 4, who is Latina, recognized early on the challenge of balancing the exuberance of the Toussaint gentrifiers with the need to maintain the involvement of Black and Brown families. The administrators and counselors at Louverture were also persons of color, who continue to be mindful of equity and accessibility for all. Furtherance of this model requires district level intentionality to support, retain, and when necessary, hire persons who can identify with the challenges of a marginalized student body (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). This sentiment was relayed on numerous occasions throughout the interviews and often served as a counterbalance to the persuasive expectations of gentrifiers.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the eight community stakeholder interviews, field observations, and answered the study's two research questions. Chapter 5 will identify the implications for practice, offer recommendations for future research, discuss the limitations of the study, and draw final conclusions relative to the study's themes and sub-themes.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Introduction

The last several decades have been marked by a return to divested, urban neighborhoods across the country by predominantly White, middle, and upper middle-class families whose focus is to convert blighted and challenged areas into vibrant residential communities (Candipan, 2020). This phenomenon, known as gentrification, has had both positive effects such as rising home values and community redevelopment as well as disparate impacts such as residential displacement and declining enrollment on the communities and schools of Black and Brown families who have existed in such neighborhoods for scores of years. In building on prior research around gentrification, the purpose of this qualitative action research project was to examine 1) The impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students at Louverture High School Early College Magnet; and explore 2) What balance can be maintained between the competing interests of gentrifiers and longtime residents?

This chapter will include a brief review of the gentrification phenomenon, a discussion of the three major findings as they related to the existing literature in the areas of stakeholder expectations and involvement, school appeal, and mindful leadership. Additionally, the chapter will suggest several implications for practice, followed by identifying considerations for future research, stating the limitations of the case study, and finally offering a summary of the chapter.

Comprehensive Synthesis

The Louverture and Toussaint stakeholders participated in a series of interviews and field observations that produced data and considerations in response to their perception of the gentrification occurring in NW Trower. Through the codification of similar participant responses several themes began to surface. The three themes identified were stakeholder expectations and involvement, school appeal, and mindful leadership. These themes relate directly to parental processes for enrollment, student engagement and programing, plus site and district-level leadership. Collectively, these three themes served to answer

the study's research questions regarding the impact of gentrification and how a balance can be achieved between gentrifiers and longtime resident interests.

Stakeholder Expectations and Involvement

The initial observation of impact was the differing viewpoints of gentrification between the younger and older participants. The younger participants perceived gentrification as a significant intrusion to the way of life for Black and Brown families much like the findings of Keels et al. (2013). For these two individuals, they were disgruntled by the displacement of Black and Brown families who were priced out of the local housing market. These two individuals were equally concerned about the impact of declining enrollment caused by the newcomers opting for school choice to avoid the neighborhood school. In contrast, the more seasoned participants expressed increased home value and esthetics as positive outcomes of gentrification.

A second identified impact was the developing and expected sphere of influence newcomer families sought at both Louverture and Toussaint. Following the patterns of Freidus (2016); Kimelberg and Billingham (2012); and Siegel-Hawley et al. (2016), newcomer families looked to similarly situated peers to join them in the journey to the new schools. As a collective, newcomer parents were able to influence the direction of student programming through their contribution of resources both in time and financial offerings. Such actions replicated the same considerations and sought similar spheres of influence as was found in prior literature (Cucchiara and Horvat, 2009; Roberts and Lake, 2014). While their efforts were intended to enhance the student experience for all, systemic failures resulted in inequitable and unintended consequences for Black and Brown student participation.

Notwithstanding the communal concerns of gentrification and the struggle for school influence, all participants favored the impactful change in student demographics visible on the campuses. Further emphasizing positive impacts of gentrification, several participants appreciated the exposure to various cultures their children were experiencing as the student populations diversified. Much like Siegel-Hawley et al. (2016), by enrolling in the neighborhood school, other families fulfilled a philosophical belief toward public education.

However, absent from any consideration were the potential long-term financial effects that changing socioeconomic demographics may have on federal funding. Both schools have been longtime recipients of Title I Program funding, which requires a minimum of 40% of attending families to qualify as low-income households. This funding supports school meals, programs, and staffing, but will be lost if the current trends continue.

Enhanced School Appeal

Comparable to the findings of Roberts and Lakes (2014), TUSD's conversion of Louverture and Toussaint to Early College and Dual Immersion Magnets respectively has had a tremendous impact in luring NW Trower, newcomer families toward neighborhood schools. As one participant stated: "You're going to see a lot of people who traditionally would never have set foot on the Louverture campus." Even longtime families have reconsidered the decision to utilize school choice as an opt out of the Trower Unified School District in favor of the new and improved neighborhood school. Unfortunately, the impact of the conversions has not been completely favorable. At the elementary school level, the decision not to convert the entire school to Dual Immersion has unintentionally facilitated a social class divide. Gentrifying parents are specifically seeking the *new* program, while the longstanding families simply remain content with their children attending the school closest to home. The coexistence of the two programs has led to social class stratification among the children with students tending to cluster with their programmatic peers. The impact of student stratification was more apparent during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic when Dual Immersion families formed academic cohorts to combat learning loss.

Mindful Leadership

The importance of site leadership imparting balance within the school communities became quickly apparent during the interviews. Virtually every participant either referenced their own role as an administrator or administrative actions were referenced by other stakeholders. Often mentioned was the need to preserve the type of positive campus climate identified by Rankin and Reason (2008) and balancing the expectations of newcomer parents with the expectations and considerations of longtime Black and Brown parents. At times, administrative actions required the dismantling of systems which had

resulted in implicit bias against lower socioeconomic, Black, and Brown students. On other occasions, administrators informed staff members of the challenges facing Black and Brown students compared to their higher SES peers. Leading through empathy and mindfulness produced strategies to counterbalance several academic inequities of poverty.

One very subtle, yet instrumental observation was the self-identification by most leadership participants as being of African American or Latinx decent. This is not to suggest one must be Black or Brown to successfully lead a school. Nevertheless, in the face of gentrification, school leaders who can personally identify with the challenges realized by students who look like them is immeasurable.

Implications for Practice

This study identified three implications for stakeholders in communities and schools experiencing gentrification. The implications include: 1) developing and implementing district policies that favor neighborhood schools; 2) recognition by site leadership of newcomer expectations; and 3) the monitoring of student engagement and programs to promote equity in all facets of the school's offerings.

District Policies and Decision Making

The first implication requiring consideration is the potential negative consequences of unfettered school choice policies. While the opportunity for school choice creates possibilities for students to attend schools beyond their neighborhood school boundaries, unrestricted access to school choice has led to declining enrollment in the neighborhood school (Pearman II and Swain, 2017; Pearman II, 2019; Candipan, 2020). Essential to limiting the transfers is a recommendation to place a numerical cap either on the number of students who can transfer away from the neighborhood school or the number of students a Trower USD school can receive. Second, districts must offer comparable and desirable academic programs at schools across the district, so that students are encouraged to remain at their local school. Third, district leadership should be strategic and intentional in its efforts to support, retain, and hire site level leaders who thoroughly understand, and when possible, self-identify with the longstanding residents of the community (Darling-Hammond et al. 2022). Finally, district personnel must execute long range financial planning should the percentage of FRL qualifiers drop beyond the floor necessary to achieve

Title 1 certification. For example, Toussaint has witnessed a decrease of more than 25% in FRL qualifiers over the last 5 years. A loss of Title 1 funding would have a disparate impact on the lower SES, Black, and Brown students it is designed to support.

Mindful Site Leadership

The next implication for consideration is recognition by site-level administrators of the challenges and pressures facing schools that are becoming gentrified. Newcomers have clearly delineated expectations and insist on fulfilling those desires, oftentimes at the expense of lower SES Black and Brown families. Thus, being mindful not only of gentrifiers' intentions, but also being cognizant of the implications created by implementation of a targeted program or action. Site leadership should remain vigilant in ensuring all members of the school's community are heard in PTA, School Site Council, and other support groups consistently and with fidelity. Having members of the leadership team who can identify directly with the Black and Brown populations in urban communities can certainly assist in the effort to maintain balance (Darling-Hammond et al. 2022).

Student Engagement

The implications for student engagement are primarily dependent on two variables. The first variable addresses whether a school program promotes or inhibits diversification. In the case of Toussaint Elementary School, the multiple program model has resulted in a distinguishable separation of social classes with upper SES families opting for Dual Immersion and longtime residents deferring to the traditional English Only course of study. Moreover, there is little opportunity for crossover as the classes for each program are intimately connected to one another. In contrast, Louverture offers a single specialized program which is taken by all students. This format has, combined with a push by school administrators, has led to diversification in college and advance placement courses.

A second variable considers the extracurricular and out of classroom experiences that may foster student engagement between gentrifiers and their Black and Brown counterparts. Toussaint has worked diligently to create cultural events such as the Fun Fiesta to bring its increasingly diverse school community together. Although these activities are enjoyable to most, one of the participants described a

sense of forgottenness as it related to Black cultural inclusion in school community events. Greater efforts can still be offered to increase the student engagement between gentrifying students.

Unlike the limited opportunities for comingling between racial groups at the elementary level, the high school is afforded numerous chances to connect students of varying racial and socioeconomic status through interchangeable classes, athletics, and other extracurricular activities. As a result, most structured groupings reflect the current diversity of the school. However, there is still room for improvement to shift from compulsory diversification through classes, teams, and clubs to voluntary student engagement during unstructured times such as lunch and other schoolwide events.

Acknowledging these implications for practice will assist district leadership and site administrators in the effort to develop a comprehensive approach to achieve equity. In turn, acknowledging these implications for practice will help foster a balance between the quest for change brought upon by well-intentioned, gentrifying families and the need to maintain the voice of all stakeholders, especially those of Black and Brown families. Ideally, acknowledging these implications for practice will more succinctly address the need for the implementation of *do no harm* school choice policies; foster greater intentionality in staffing and hiring practices; display discernment in the face parental expectations; and encourage mindfulness in the opportunities for student engagement and programmatic decisions.

Suggestions for Future Research

Louverture and Toussaint represent only a pinhole of the many schools located in divested urban neighborhoods which are currently experiencing the effects of gentrification (Pearman II, 2019). It is recommended that this study be replicated in various school settings and in differing parts of the country to affect a broader range of findings to be subsequently shared through literature. Future research may propose a mixed methods studies approach to assess short and long term impacts including academic success rates, program development and retention. Research of this nature can provide a quantitative component to further support the impact of gentrification on Black and Brown students.

Encased within the primary recommendation for future research is the suggestion of analyzing school and system wide training practices, which assist site and district leadership in recognizing common factors associated with gentrification and ascertaining the best practices to maintain balance when competing interests are present. Findings in this area could facilitate proactive policies, systems, and procedures in advance of a rapidly changing student body. Finally, additional research should assess the benefits and concerns when specifically targeting future Black and Brown leadership that readily identifies with the longstanding residents in gentrifying schools and communities.

Limitations

This case study, while implemented with fidelity and purpose, still contained several limitations that might have unintentionally influenced the study's findings. The first limitation is the relatively small sample size of participants. The study consisted of eight participants, which represented less than .15% of the potential pool of stakeholders. Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend ten to 50 participants depending on the research topic. In this instance, broadening the reach to 25 or more would have provided stronger validity to the results. Along those same lines, a second limitation was the lack of an equitable quantity of middle school stakeholders. Specifically, stakeholder perceptions representing the TUSD feeder middle school might have furthered noticeable trends or filled in gaps in the data. A third limitation was the inability to gather longitudinal data due to the relatively short duration of the study. Collecting stakeholder data, analyzing site/district based information, and performing observations over an extended period of time, such as three to five years, could have provided richer evidence of the impacts of gentrification while calibrating the value of strategies utilized to protect the interests of Black and Brown students. The final limitation was the inability to expand the study to other local communities experiencing gentrification. This would have allowed for a comparison of factors common to gentrifying schools and neighborhoods, as well as evaluated the types of strategies used to combat the potential harm to Black and Brown students. For these reasons, this study is best considered a pilot study that other researchers can use as a starting point for further research.

Conclusion

Louverture Early College and Toussaint Dual Immersion Magnet schools are rapidly returning to their rightful status as pillars in the community from decades long past. The influx of private resources, often secured by the efforts of newcomer families, has improved the school facilities to a standard far beyond what Trower Unified School District could financially provide. In addition, staff and students have garnered significant attention with numerous honors including Teacher, Administrator, and Coach of the Year, California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) athletic championships in Football and Water Polo, and vastly improved Music programs. Of special note is the rebirth of the Louverture Water Polo in 2018, a program that had been dormant for more than twenty years until rekindled by the demands of gentrifying families. Additionally, Louverture recognized its first student admitted to Harvard University in the Twenty-first century. Notwithstanding each school's recent accolades, there remains a question of how Black and Brown students will be supported today, tomorrow, and well into the future of a constantly changing environment ignited by gentrification. This study offered an early attempt at addressing this very important question.

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APPENDIX A

Administrator/Counselor Interview Questions

Name:
Race:
Relation to the school:

1. How long have you been employed at John Muir High School Early College Magnet (Muir)?

2. Are you familiar with the term gentrification? If so, do you believe it is happening at Muir?

3. During your tenure as a staff member, have you observed a recent change in the student demographics at Muir? If so, in what ways?

4. Have you been involved in the programming/scheduling of Black and Brown students at Muir?

5. Has gentrification affected the opportunity for Black and Brown students to access desired classes such as AP, Pasadena City College offerings, or Academy selection? If so, how? If not, how was it balanced?

6. Given the majority of minority students on the campus, do you believe the cultural content of programs and curriculum is reflective of the school's demographics?

7. Has the opportunity for Black and Brown students to receive local scholarships been impacted by gentrification? If so, how?

8. Are Black and Brown parents able to maintain an equal voice and influence in school policies?

9. Have special programs (academic or extracurricular) or policies been created specifically to meet the interests of gentrifying students?

10. Have you observed regular interactions between Black and Brown students and newcomers? If so, have the interactions between Black and Brown students and gentrifying students improved or detracted from the overall school culture? If so, how?

11. Does the influx of gentrifying students make Muir more or less attractive as a school of choice? Why or why not?

12. Any thoughts you would like to add regarding gentrification?

APPENDIX B

Parent Interview Questions

Name:
Race:
Relation to the school:

1. How long have you been affiliated with Jackson Elementary School? What drew you to the school? What is your best guest of the demographic makeup of the student body?

2. Are you familiar with the term gentrification? If so, do you believe it is happening at Jackson?

3. During your time as a parent, have you observed changes in the student demographics at Jackson? If so, in what ways?

4. Have you been involved in the development or support of programming/scheduling at Jackson?

5. Do you believe that all students at Jackson have the same opportunities and access to programs? If so, how is this accomplished? If not, what are the challenges?

6. Have you had any input in the curriculum and/or teaching practices occurring at Jackson?

7. Given the majority of minority students on the campus, do you believe the cultural content of programs and curriculum are reflective of the school's demographics?

8. Do you believe Black and Brown parents are able to maintain an equal voice and influence in the school's policies?

9. Have special programs (academic or extracurricular) or policies been created specifically to meet the interests of gentrifying students?

10. Have you observed regular interactions between Black and Brown students and newcomers? If so, have the interactions between Black and Brown students and gentrifying students improved or detracted from the overall school culture? If so, how?

11. Does the continuing change of student demographics make Jackson more or less attractive as a school of choice? Why? or why not?

12. Any thoughts you would like to add regarding gentrification and what is occurring at Jackson?

APPENDIX C

Alumni Interview Questions

Name:
Race:
Relation to the school:

1. How long have you been affiliated with John Muir High School Early College Magnet (Muir)?

2. Are you familiar with the term gentrification? If so, how would you define it? Do you believe it is happening at Muir?

3. During your attendance at the school, have you observed a recent change in the student demographics at Muir? If so, in what ways?

4. Have you been a part of the programming/scheduling of Black and Brown students at Muir?

5. Has gentrification affected the opportunity for Black and Brown students to access desired classes such as AP, Pasadena City College offerings or Academy selection? If so, how? If not, how was it balanced?

6. Given the majority of minority students on the campus, do you believe the cultural content of programs and curriculum are reflective of the school's demographics? If so, why? If not, why not?

7. Has the opportunity for Black and Brown students to receive local scholarships been impacted by gentrification? If so, how?

8. Do you believe Black and Brown parents are able to maintain an equal voice and influence in school policies?

9. Have special programs (academic or extracurricular) or policies been created specifically to meet the interests of gentrifying students?

10. Have you observed regular interactions between Black and Brown students and newcomers? If so, have the interactions between Black and Brown students and gentrifying students improved or detracted from the overall school culture? If so, how?

11. Does the influx of gentrifying students make Muir more or less attractive as a school of choice? Why? or why not?

12. Any thoughts you would like to add regarding gentrification?